



**Parents, Families & Friends of Lesbians and Gays NSW Inc.
(Incorporating Western Sydney)**

November - December 2015 Newsletter

VOLUME 18 – ISSUE 10

PFLAG NSW Inc. (Incorporating Western Sydney) meets on the **4th Saturday of every month.**

The AGM and Christmas Party will be held:

Saturday 28th November at 2pm in the Conference Room, Wesley Lodge Motel. Wesley Lodge is situated at the corner of Hawkesbury & Queens Roads, Westmead, opposite Westmead Hospital and within walking distance of the railway station.

Car entry to the Wesley Lodge carpark is from Hawkesbury Rd via a boom gate.

For Information contact: Judy on (02) 9869 1454 Postal Address: PO Box 3751, Marsfield NSW 2122.

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President's Report

"I stand here today as an out and proud gay man. But I certainly wasn't always so. It was a secret I carried for a long time – indeed, I didn't tell anyone until I was in my early 20s." – Robert Simms, new Greens senator for SA in his first speech to the Senate on October 13 – SMH 14/10/15.

Senator Simms said he was about 12 when he realised he was gay, but these days is very comfortable in his own skin. He told the Senate it was important to talk about his experience.



"I want to say today to any young person who might be struggling with their own journey with sexuality or gender identity, things really do get better"

There are 450 schools in Australia that run the Safe Schools Coalition program designed to help staff and students support and accept same-sex attracted, intersex and gender diverse people. The national anti-bullying program, aimed at preventing homophobia and discrimination in schools is under attack by the Australian Christian Lobby, who is calling for the program to be axed. Sally Richardson, national program director of the Safe Schools Coalition, said in the SMH of November 5, that it is disappointing that not everyone can understand why it is necessary to have positive inclusion of young people in schools. She added that figures showed 80 % of young LGBTI people had been bullied or harassed at school and 8% had dropped out of school because of homophobic bullying. I often wonder if there is anything "Christian" about the Australian Christian Lobby.

I was heartened however, when I read an article in the Hawkesbury Gazette of September 9, that featured a story about gay, lesbian and transgender (rainbow) students at Colo High School having formed their own support group, "Standout". The article included a lovely photo of the students from Standout with Colo High School teacher, Alex Stefan, in front of the school's rainbow mural. PFLAG is invited annually to speak to the Year 11 students at Colo High as part of their Crossroads program.

Thanks to Jackie Braw and NSW Police for inviting PFLAG to be part of their "25 Years and GLO-ing" conference which was held at Goulburn Police Academy from October 21 -23 to commemorate the 25 years that the Gay & Lesbian Liaison Officer Program has been operating in NSW. The conference featured a comprehensive array of lectures, from research and current strategies working with young LGBTIQ people to ageing and the role of police in supporting older LGBTIQ people to domestic and family violence issues. The keynote address was given by Human Rights Commissioner, Mr. Tim Wilson, who was very well-received. It was inspiring to hear stories from the many GLOs, who are obviously very passionate about their vocation. Narelle and I were very grateful to Jackie and NSW Police for providing us with comfortable accommodation, stimulating lectures and a sumptuous Celebratory Dinner on the Thursday night. Ray and I will be attending the Surry Hills Police Community Engagement Meeting on December 1 at Surry Hills Police Station.



A great night was had by all at “Stella Does Bingo” at the Metropolitan Church of the Good Shepherd, Granville on Friday night, October 30. Just about everyone on the PFLAG table came away with a motza of prizes – we felt a bit guilty really. I’d like to thank Pastor Robert Clark, “Stella” (aka Fr Stephen – who looked radiant in black) and all at MCC for making us feel so welcome and for providing us with a great night of entertainment. MCC Good Shepherd does such great work for the GLBTI community and for many marginalised people in the community.

2015 has been full of activity for PFLAG and we couldn’t have fulfilled the many and varied commitments, without the support of the dedicated members of our committee and other members, who have helped carry the weight when needed.

There is a very special person, to whom PFLAG owes a deep debt of gratitude, who has been reliably working, often behind the scenes, chronicling all the business done by PFLAG for close on 20 years and that is our super secretary, Narelle Phipps. Whilst Narelle will be remaining on the committee as PFLAG’s Public Officer, she will be standing down as secretary at the AGM and enjoying a well-deserved break from her endless minute-taking and letter, email and submission writing. Thanks so much Narelle for all you have done for us.

Many thanks to Sue & Les for their dedication to the committee, for revolutionising the preparation of our float for Mardi Gras, for their media interview with SBS at Mardi Gras this year, for organising guest speakers and for their support of new parents. Due to increased family commitments, they’ll be standing down from the committee for 2016, but have generously offered to continue to assist with Mardi Gras, for which we are most grateful.

I would like to thank Vice-President, Ruth and Treasurer, Ron for their ongoing support in the running of PFLAG and for their outreach work in the Blue Mountains, Ray, for always being there to share the load with me, Pam, Arthur, Mollie, Gillian, Carol, Geoff, Marilyn, Louise and Natalie. You have all been involved in so many different activities this year, even though your lives outside of PFLAG have become so much busier. I will elaborate in my Annual Report. Natalie only joined us at the AGM last year as newsletter editor and what a dynamo she’s turned out to be!

It is a privilege to be part of the PFLAG committee, with the respect afforded to us as PFLAG’s representatives and the many lasting friendships we have made. We would warmly welcome new members to join the committee. Just phone Judy on 9869 1454 or Narelle on 9874 3624 and we’d be happy to nominate you.

We are in the process of updating the **PFLAG website**, so apologies to anyone who may have difficulty accessing features of the site at present.

Thanks to all who came along to the family meeting in October to support new families and to Ruth for facilitating the meeting for us.

I wish you all a wonderful Christmas and a healthy and happy 2016. - **Judy**

PFLAG NSW AGM

In accordance with the requirements set down in the constitution governing PFLAG New South Wales Inc. the next Annual General Meeting of the group will be held as follows:

Date: Saturday, 28th November 2015

Venue: Wesley Conference Centre, Wesley Lodge, corner Hawkesbury & Queens Roads Westmead

Time: 2pm Sharp

The AGM will be combined with our Christmas Party.

“I hope that many of you will be able to attend the **AGM and Christmas Party**. Please bring a plate of finger food to share – Judy”

Thank You to Pollys!

“Good News from the Pollys Club – ‘We have just had notification that PFLAG has been successful in our application for a Pollys Club grant. We will receive a cheque for \$1000, towards the setting up of our new PFLAG website, at the Pollys Club Christmas Function at Marrickville Town Hall on December 5. We are extremely grateful to the Pollys for their generosity to PFLAG.’ – Judy”

Twenty10 Hamper Appeal



The end of the year and the start of a new one can be pretty tough for anyone. There's pressure to spend time with families, money can be tight, and many support services close their doors. For the younger clients of Twenty10 incorporating GLCS NSW (Twenty10) it can be a particularly challenging one and for many a time spent without family.

Twenty10 tries to make the Silly Season a little happier, healthier and easier for around one hundred LGBTIQ young people by giving them a small hamper of goodies - food, toiletries and a few treats. There are a few ways that you, your workplace, or group can help.

Further details, including assistance with organising a goods donation, can be found at: www.twenty10.org.au/newsletters/hampers or email: info@twenty10.org.au

Upcoming Meetings

2015 Annual General Meeting & Christmas Party

November 28th

Please remember to renew your membership prior to the AGM, if you have not already done so!

Please note: there is no December meeting

2016 Meetings

- January 23rd
- February 27th
- March 26th

Upcoming Events

World AIDS Day Mass – Acceptance Sydney

LGBT Catholics, their families and friends are invited to commemorate World AIDS Day at a special Mass on **Friday, November 27th**.

Venue: St Joseph's Church, Newtown at **8pm**.

Doors open: 7.15pm.

Further details: www.gaycatholic.com.au/events

Tree of Hope – World AIDS Day Ceremony 2015

You are invited to join the Tree of Hope in remembering people around the world living with HIV and AIDS by acknowledging, reflecting and giving thanks.



Date: **Wednesday 2 December**

Time: 2.00 pm

Where: Catholic Care, 2C West Street (cnr Thomas St),
Lewisham
Followed by afternoon tea

RSVP: Marg 9509 1240 or treeofhope@catholiccare.org

Polly's Club – Santa's Little Helper

You're invited to kick off the festive season with Polly's!

Date: Saturday 5th December

Time: Doors open 7pm

Where: Marrickville Town Hall

Further details: Please see the attached flyer with this newsletter!

Advance Notice: Mardi Gras 2016

Mardi Gras 2016 will be held on **Saturday, 5th March**.

Further details will be available on the website in the New Year.

PFLAG NSW Contacts

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Spotlight on History: Harvey Milk



Harvey Milk, was a visionary civil and human rights leader who became one of the first openly gay elected officials in the United States when he won a seat on the San Francisco Board of Supervisors in 1977. Milk's unprecedented loud and unapologetic proclamation of his authenticity as an openly gay candidate and his subsequent election gave never before experienced hope to LGBT people everywhere at a time when the community was encountering widespread hostility and discrimination. His remarkable career was tragically cut short when he was assassinated nearly a year after taking office.

In 2002, Milk was called "the most famous and most significantly open LGBT official ever elected in the United States".^[2] Anne Kronenberg, his final campaign manager, wrote of him: "What set Harvey apart from you or me was that he was a visionary. He imagined a righteous world inside his head and then he set about to create it for real, for all of us."^[3] Milk was posthumously awarded the Presidential Medal of Freedom in 2009.

www.milkfoundation.org

Regular Announcements

PFLAG Merchandise

We now have for sale: PFLAG T-shirts @ \$25 each and white PFLAG caps @ \$10 each. We also have rainbow umbrellas and kites @ \$15 each or 2 for \$25 and rainbow lanyards and PFLAG badges @ \$3 each or 2 for \$5. Contact Judy on 9869 1454 or see us at the meetings.

Civil Marriage Celebrant

Rev Robert Clark of Metropolitan Community Church of the Good Shepherd, Granville, is a Civil Marriage Celebrant. You can check out his website: www.weddingswithflair.net

Wear It Purple: Board Nominees Sought

Youth-led support organisation Wear It Purple seeks volunteers for both board positions and to mentor youth teams. Assistance is required in the following positions / areas:

- Payroll assistance
- Financial matters (Xero software used)
- Creative assistance with website, print material, merchandise design
- Office or similar storage and space for weekend youth action committee meetings

Mentors are sought to help with:

- Event management and management of timeframes
- Management of successful workshops
- General mentoring and life skills

Contact Nicole at: treasurer@wearitpurple.org

