



(PFLAG NSW - Incorporating Western Sydney)

**January 2016
Volume 19, Issue 1**

PFLAG NSW Inc. (Incorporating Western Sydney) meets at 2pm on the **4th Saturday** of every month.

Please note: due to renovations at Wesley Lodge:

Our January 23rd 2016 meeting ONLY will be held at:
Metropolitan Community Church, 37 East St Granville.

Meetings will revert to Wesley Lodge, Westmead from February 2016 onwards.
Thank you to Rev. Robert Clark and MCC Good Shepherd for the use of MCC premises.

For Information contact: Judy on (02) 9869 1454 or Natalie on 0406 124 239
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President's Report

"I'll be asking the PM to make a place in that 12,000 refugee intake for LGBTI people being persecuted in the Middle east – in Iraq, in Syria – by terrorist organisations like Daesh"- Senator Dean Smith, the Liberal Party's only openly gay federal parliamentarian, appealing to Prime Minister, Malcolm Turnbull after the recently-elected Liberal government in Canada announced they would specifically seek LGBTI refugees as part of their own refugee intake – Star Observer, Jan. 2016.

The Star Observer also reveals that protestors recently rallied outside the London Headquarters of the Commonwealth, demanding member states address state-sanctioned homophobia, as 40 of the 53 member states currently criminalise homosexuality. The catalyst for the protest was a ground-breaking report linking the criminalisation of homosexuality to increased HIV transmissions. After the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting in Malta, the new Commonwealth Secretary- General, Baroness Scotland, said she hoped to build a consensus on LGBTI issues.

Although, it's certainly a lot more accepting here in Australia for LGBTI people, we still have a number of human rights issues to address. Thank you to all those members who have signed and returned the letter, addressed to PM Malcolm Turnbull, appealing for a free vote rather than a plebiscite on Marriage Equality. If you were unable to scan the letter and forward to Shelley Argent, you can post it to PFLAG NSW, PO Box 3751, Marsfield, 2122 and I'll forward it on to our National Spokesperson to present to the PM. According to Australian Marriage Equality, we are only 5 votes away after Queensland front bench opposition MP, Shayne Neumann, finally jumped on board to support it.

Thank you to all who attended our AGM and Christmas Party on November 28. Thanks also to Pastor Robert Clarke from MCC Good Shepherd, Granville, who acted as Returning Officer for our elections. The results are as follows:

President : Judy Brown

Vice-President: Ruth Green

Secretary: Natalie Cooper

Treasurer: Pamela Garske

Publicity Officer: Ray Brown

Education/Research Officer: Ron Green

Newsletter Editor: Natalie Cooper

Public Officer: Narelle Phipps

Librarian: Louise Pethybridge

Committee members: Mollie Smith, Carol McCance, Arthur Garske, Marilyn Godfrey, Geoff Thomas, Gillian Maury, Adela McDonald, Wanda Terre.

I would like to thank all the members of the committee for assuming their roles for 2016 and particularly welcome new members, Adela McDonald and Wanda Terre. I look forward to working with you all this year.

N.B. Committee members, members, family and friends who wish to participate in **PFLAG's 2016 Mardi Gras contingent on March 5** should **register with Judy ASAP** either by emailing info@pflagaustralia.org.au or phoning 9869 1454 or 0439 466 125, as our number has been restricted to 90 participants this year.

Ray and I attended the Surry Hills Police Community Engagement meeting @ Surry Hills on December 1, where we heard the latest updates from all the participating organisations. Member for Sydney, Alex Greenwich, advised of upcoming Trans/Intersex law reform and revealed that the Attorney-General, Gabrielle Upton, is conducting a review of the Anti-discrimination Act to be completed by February. I was particularly interested in that review, as I had expressed my concern to Alex re the current situation where Church organisations are exempt from the Anti-discrimination Act and can openly discriminate against teachers and students who are LGBTI.

We had an enjoyable evening at the Pollys Club Christmas Function at Marrickville Town Hall on December 5. The show as always was most entertaining and we gratefully accepted the \$1000 cheque at the Charity Presentation to assist us with the setting up of our new PFLAG website. Our website has been in a state of transition for a little while and we apologise for the inconvenience caused. We will be receiving a quote at our committee meeting in January and expect the work to begin soon after to rectify the situation.

We also attended Lord Mayor Clover Moore's Christmas Reception for volunteers at Sydney Town Hall on December 13. The Lord Mayor welcomed guests on arrival and mentioned to us that PFLAG was one of her favourite organisations. It was a very pleasant afternoon and we managed to catch up with a number of friends from the LGBTI network. When we watch the City of Sydney's Year in review on the big screen, it always amazes us what has been achieved over the last 12 months, especially for those that are marginalised in the community.

It was also great to be able to share in the Christmas Carol Service for MCC Good Shepherd, Granville on Sunday, December 20. PFLAG is always very warmly welcomed, the liturgy is thought-provoking and affirming and the supper is sumptuous.

Pam, Arthur, Jeff and Natalie were privileged to be in attendance at the Sydney Town Hall for the MCC Sydney Christmas Eve Service. Pam reported that Cate McGregor was a fabulous guest speaker, who, amazingly, used no notes.

I hope to see many of you at our **first Family Meeting for 2016 on January 23rd**. Due to renovations to our meeting room at Wesley Lodge, we will be using the premises of MCC Good Shepherd at 37 East St. Granville for our January meeting only. It is close to Granville Railway Station and there is plenty of street parking available. Thanks to Pastor Robert Clarke & MCC for their generosity.

Remember Rudy's adage: ***"When you don't need PFLAG anymore, that's when PFLAG needs you to help others!"***
Judy

Fair Day: Request for Help!

Fair Day is on **Sunday 21st February 2016** in Victoria Park, Camperdown.

Fair Day is a family fun day full of entertainment, food, fashion and stalls. Lots to see, do, buy and eat! It is traditionally the Mardi Gras season's biggest day-time event. Each year dedicated PFLAG people set up the stall early on the Sunday morning. We spend time chatting to our many visitors, giving out information, brochures and booklets, selling our rainbow merchandise, having a good look around, generally having a fun time, and then packing up at 4 pm.

This year, we will have for sale our rainbow fold-up umbrellas, kites, neck lanyards, loom bands, rainbow scrubbers, PFLAG badges, caps, T-shirts and our DVD "Bouncing Castle".



Helpers are very welcome and essential!

Fair Day is also a major fund-raising opportunity for us. Come for a couple of hours or for the day and enjoy the camaraderie, and the chance to talk about PFLAG. Our raffle prize will be a beautiful SEIKO Le Grand Sport Solar Chronograph watch, **value \$695**, kindly donated by Jason Lancett from SEIKO. Tickets are \$2 each, \$5 for 3, \$10 for 7, \$20 for 15.



This year we need people power to help set up the stall early on the Sunday morning (say 8.30 am – the parking is usually pretty good at that time) and also to help dismantle the stall about 3.30-4 pm.

Please phone Judy on 9869 1454 to register your enthusiasm and your willingness to assist.

2016 Gay Christian Network Conference

Nearly 1500 LGBTI Christians and their allies descended on Houston, TX, for the annual GCN Conference from 7th – 10th January. Having the event in Houston was amazing timing, given the recent repeal of HERO (the Houston Equal Rights Ordinance), largely due to outspoken conservatives.



GCN Executive Director, Justin Lee, said: ‘A vital part of our work is countering the kind of misinformation that was used to smear LGBT people in Houston....to educate them about the truth of LGBT people’s lives and about their responsibility to stand up as Christians for those who too often have been treated as outcasts’.

This was the second GCN conference I’ve attended and the workshops this year were particularly outstanding in delivering really positive, strategic ways to work for change: LGBT inclusion and the work needed to end ‘ex-gay’ / conversion practices being the standouts. The opportunity to network and learn is incredible.

Parents, family / friends and clergy make up an increasingly significant number of attendees and are welcomed as an important part of the community. PFLAG Houston Chapter had a table in the Exhibit Room, and I enjoyed meeting with their representatives.

www.gaychristian.net

- **Natalie Cooper**

Subject to Change

Daniel Mercieca is the Executive Producer of this Australian coming-of-age drama, with same-sex attracted young people as lead characters for the first time on Australian TV. The producer is also the son of a former PFLAG Sydney mum – and hopes that a major network will pick it up as a series. *Subject to Change* can be viewed on YouTube:

<http://subjecttochnage.com.au>

Upcoming Events

Fair Day

Sunday, 21st February

Victoria Park, Camperdown

www.mardigras.org.au/fairday

Mardi Gras Film Festival

Thurs 18th Feb – Thurs 3rd March

Various venues. Schedule and ticketing at:

www.queerscreen.org.au

Sydney Gay & Lesbian Mardi Gras Parade

Saturday, 5th March

Start: Oxford & Flinders Sts, Darlinghurst

www.mardigras.org.au

Sydney Gay & Lesbian Choir: Still Something to Sing About – An Exhibition Celebrating the 25 year history of the Choir

Thurs 25th Feb – Wed 9th March

www.sglc.org.au

Social Club for Young LGBT People with Intellectual Disability

Begins January 2016, Chippendale

Includes party on **14th February**

For information:

rainbowbridgesocialclub@gmail.com

SBS RESOURCE FOR ALL THINGS LGBTIQ

SBS has launched its new LGBTIQ hub. Edited by Drew Sheldrick, the site will draw on content from across SBS TV, radio and online, and will also feature original content.

View the new site at:

<http://www.sbs.com.au/topics/sexuality>

Domestic and Family Violence (DFV) in the LGBTI Community

Researchers from Western

Sydney University and

University of Central

Lancashire (UK) are

conducting a study into the

extent of DFV in the LGBTI

community.

If you are over 18 years, an

LGBTI person and in a regular

relationship of more than 3

months, please participate in

the online survey.

More information:

<http://tinyurl.com/qualityrel>

Regular Announcements

PFLAG Merchandise

We now have for sale: PFLAG T-shirts: \$25 each; white PFLAG caps @ \$10 each. Rainbow umbrellas and kites @ \$15 each or 2 for \$25. 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 may check out his website:

www.weddingswithflair.net

Upcoming Family Meetings (all at 2pm)

<i>January 23rd</i>	<i>MCC Good Shepherd, Granville</i>
<i>February 27th</i>	<i>Wesley Lodge, Westmead</i>
<i>March</i>	NO meeting (Easter)
<i>April 23rd</i>	<i>Wesley Lodge, Westmead</i>

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