



Welcome

Hi Folks! This has been a busy time for PFLAG and we need your input to keep us moving forward. Attached is a survey we would appreciate you taking the time to complete and send back. Additionally, we are sending membership forms so that you can claim your donation on this years tax return!

- Shelley

Next Meeting

Our next meeting is on the 4th of June, 1:30pm at 187 Melbourne Street, West End (cnr. Edmonstone & Melbourne Streets). Parking and entrance located at rear of building (off Edmonstone Street).

Our guest speaker will be Brett, an employee at QUAC. He is an indigenous male who will be discussing sexuality and cultural differences while trying to fit into mainstream society.

Events - Workshop

Are you still struggling because of your religious beliefs? If so, this event may be helpful!

"Impact of Christian fundamentalism on the lives of LGBTI people" is a workshop that may be helpful to parents who struggle with their child's sexual orientation because of religious beliefs

This is organised by Allan Hough, past President of the Queensland AIDS Council, the Metropolitan Community Church and Acceptance, which is a Catholic organisation.

Guest Speakers will be Anthony Venn-Brown former leader in the Assembly of God, and Paul Martin - psychologist and former leader of Exodus.

Event details...

Date: 23rd of June 2005

Time: 7:30 pm

Place: Queensland Positive People Statewide Centre, which is located at 2809 Vulture Street, in West End, QLD.

Gay Rights and the new Pope

Tasmanian gay activists have expressed fears that the election of Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger as Pope Benedict XVI may lead to the repeal of equal rights for lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people around the world.

Tasmanian Gay and Lesbian Rights Group spokesperson, Rodney Croome, said that many of the Vatican's condemnations of homosexuality issued under Pope John Paul II were authored by Ratzinger.

"Cardinal Ratzinger coined the term "objective disorder" to describe homosexuality, has labelled same-sex relationships "immoral, unnatural and harmful", and wants laws allowing gay adoption repealed", Mr Croome said.

"Ratzinger is more disdainful of homosexuality than John Paul II, with none of the late Pope's expressed concern about harassment of, and violence against, homosexual people."

"Under Benedict XVI LGBT people can expect an even stronger push by the Catholic Church to repeal existing human rights protections and block further reform."

For more information contact Rodney Croome on 0409 010 668. *This is a media release by the Tasmanian Gay & Lesbian rights group.*

Wickham BBQ

The BBQ at the Wickham Hotel on the 22nd of April was great fun! Many thanks to the Gay and Lesbian Business Network for their support this year. We raised \$325, which will go towards advertising costs.

The hamburgers were tasty and the company was friendly & informal. It wasn't a late night and the parking was easy, so please keep this in mind for future functions at the Wickham.

We can never have too much support... :-)

Events - Pride Fair

OOPS!!!! The Brisbane *Pride Fair* is actually on the 25th June, not the 26th as I have been telling people. Lyn and Kieran Walsh are organising the event again this year, so come along and support PFLAG at this event.

This is always a fun day and the LGBT community like to see us there supporting them.

If you would like to help setup, please call Lyn or Kieran on (07) 3245 1132.

Bouncing Castles

Finishing the month of April, the Brisbane Queer Film Festival included such films as Bouncing Castles, which depicted parents just like us, coming to terms with their child's sexual orientation.

The film, produced for PFLAG Western Sydney, was very popular among viewers! There's good news for those who missed it though, we have a copy that may be borrowed.

Many thanks to Stephen from the Brisbane Powerhouse, who assisted us with the PFLAG information stall at the Powerhouse during the festival.

Resources - Printing update...

We have now had a 3rd edition of the booklet for parents dealing with LGBT children "coming out".

A booklet for those contemplating "coming out" is also about to be printed.

Another 2000 PFLAG brochures are about to be reprinted this year. I hope these last longer than the last group that were done in January.

Because we have extra funds we are able to advertise more regularly in the Courier Mail.

Finally, we have been included in MIMs, which I'm told is a directory for Doctors!

The Catholic Church and Vilification

I received an article from a PFLAG family that had been printed in the Catholic Leader in February 2005. The article, written by Susan Champness, was extremely homophobic and amazingly uninformed.

A formal letter of complaint has been sent to the Anti Discrimination Commission about this.

We have received a letter acknowledging our concerns, but are still waiting to see what the outcome will be.

We will keep you informed about this...

Big Gay Day

This was a big success. Many thanks to the Wickham Hotel for making us one of the recipients at this fun fundraising event this year. We made \$5376.50 which will go a long way with advertising or printing of resources. Thanks also to all parents who volunteered.

I'm told that the Wickham was quite surprised at the enthusiasm of our group. A huge bouquet should go to Maxine - many thanks for her enthusiasm and her co-ordinating the large number of people who came along to help and for her ability to keep them on track; it was great to view the sea of PFLAG hats in the crowd!

Lindsay Nutley (from GLWA) and I were on "Conversations" on ABC 612 and 4BC as a promotion for the Big Gay Day which was great publicity for PFLAG. The ABC program goes all over Queensland, and we have received some very positive feedback!

Country Tour

We are back from our country tour, and the PFLAG trip to Charleville seemed to go very well. Many thanks to Ron and Diane for being part of this exercise. Ron is a natural on the radio and a good driver too! Thank you to the Gay and Lesbian Business Network and Klub Kruse (a gay club in the Valley), for part-sponsoring us with this project. The excess costs were covered by private donations.

We were on the ABC radio in Toowoomba in the morning and on commercial station 4WK in the afternoon. At Charleville we did 5 interviews and 10 advertisements that were broadcast to Goondiwindi, Dalby, Emerald, Roma and all small places in between. The feedback we had from our interviews was great. We don't expect to receive many calls, but it was our hope that families with LGBT children would hear us which would help to break their isolation, while informing the general communities about the issues of being gay and family fears and concerns. I am sure we stimulated a little conversation while not trying to be too controversial which wouldn't have been helpful to anyone.

Membership

Please remember we are 100% voluntary and receive no government funding.

Plus now we have costs because Queensland Health no longer permit the Queensland AIDS Council to financially support any LGBT organization we really need your support.

PFLAG relies on private donations and membership fees and PFLAG is tax deductible because we operate under the auspices of Queensland AIDS Council.

Membership is \$25 annually.

To renew your membership, or to become a member, please call Shelley.

From the last meeting...

Last meeting, the Anti Discrimination Commissioner for Queensland, Susan Booth, was our guest speaker. Susan spoke about the difference between discrimination & vilification, and she made us aware of the rights that our LGBT children have in Queensland.

With regard to equal rights, there is still a long to go for all, but it is much better now than it was even five years ago - especially for the transgender community. The gay community now have almost the same rights as heterosexual de facto couples, especially regarding property and next of kin issues. Another bonus for same sex couples is if their wills are contested by others family members it's more likely their case will fail.

Ultimate price paid for my ignorance prejudice

Adrian Piccoli

I have killed a man. In fact, I have killed men, not through what I have done, but through my own pathetic and stupid prejudice. Not long ago, I went to the funeral of a young gay friend of mine who had died of a rare wasting illness.

He ultimately died of a broken heart - he died because he was sorry to be gay. He was a country bloke who didn't want to be gay, but he just was.

He didn't want the prejudice that he would inevitably face. I guess he wanted the textbook life that we generally romanticize about and call "normal", but it just wasn't him. At the cemetery, I saw two of his friends, both male, holding hands as they lowered the casket, bawling their eyes out at the loss of their beloved friend. Through their tears my eyes were finally opened. Their love and respect was what mattered. Who cares what people do as long as they love each other?

I felt like a complete moron. In all these years of thinking that being gay was odd or unusual, in actual fact I was perpetuating prejudice that was killing young men - and which still kills young men.

I killed my friend through my failure to accept difference, and through the lack of understanding from other country blokes, just like me, who made him hate being gay. It is not overt prejudice or open vilification. It's the more dangerous, subtle, constant things we do that must have gnawed away at his soul. It was people such as me who give gay people a funny look, who make gay men ashamed in country Australia.

And I haven't just killed him. I have killed many. Killed them at the end of a rope in the back shed or at the barrel of their father's gun or next to an empty bottle of grog.

It's a tough realisation to come to. I have been brought up and remain a strong Catholic, believing in strong "family values" and that heterosexual relationships were what God was all about. But only a week after the funeral, I went to a wedding where the Priest read the Gospel where He says "of all of my commandments the most important one is to love they neighbour". Unless they cut out a bit on the end that said "unless they are gay," I reckon God didn't care much about who you love, so why do we?

Thomas, if you can hear me, forgive me for now I *understand*.

Adrian Piccoli is the National Party State MP for Murrumbidgee (email: Adrian.Piccoli@parliament.nsw.gov.au).

This article appeared in The Daily Telegraph on 11th March 2005.

Anger over Council grant for young gays

Chris Griffith (City Hall Reporter, The Courier Mail)

LIBERAL councillor Michael Caltabiano has launched a blistering attack on a gay and lesbian service seeking a \$35,000 Brisbane City Council grant to teach "same sex attracted" teenagers as young as 12 abseiling, circus routines and photography.

Cr Caltabiano, who helps Lord Mayor Campbell Newman prepare his council budget, said he would change the way community grants were allocated after learning that the Open Doors Youth Service in Fortitude Valley was recruiting 12-year olds to the gay and lesbian community.

Continued overleaf...

Anger over Council grant for young gays (*Continued...*)

"It's just in total discord with what the ratepaying community of Brisbane would see as an effective use of their money," he said. "After this fiasco we are now committed to specifying in the budget exactly what these grants can be used for, and this (project) will not be one of them."

Documents show the council's grants committee recommended funding of \$5,000 to Open Doors while rejecting proposed grants to Cerebral Palsy League of Queensland, Wynnum Manly Jazz Festival; and Indooroopilly State High School. Open Doors sought the grant to employ workers to deliver "social and support activities for LGBT young people 12-21, over an 11-month period".

"These contract workers may include arts workers, abseiling instructors, photography professionals, multimedia specialists, circus teachers ..."

Cr Caltabiano said many 12-year olds did not know their sexual orientation. His comments incensed Labor councillors, and yesterday Open Doors spoke of the need for peer support among young gays. Deputy Mayor David Hinchliffe's office released a research paper noting the higher suicide rate amongst young gay and lesbians, and the risk of HIV.

"According to professor James Sears of the University of South Carolina, the average student realises his or her sexual orientation at the age of 13," the report stated. Open Doors co-ordinator Megan Probert said her organisation was federally funded and counselled young gays referred by schools, hospitals, mental health units, and parents. The grants submission specified an age range of 12-21 because that was the targeted youth market.

Council community services committee chairwoman Kerry Rae said no grants had been finalised.

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