

# **ENOUGH IS ENOUGH**

**Anti-gay hate crimes project**

**Register of Victims**

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While we in the LGBTIQ communities might know something about the spate of gay hate crimes that occurred in Sydney from the early 1980s, this information has never been effectively collated and then distributed to the wider Australian community, to members of State Parliament, to the legal profession, to the Council of Civil Liberties, or to other relevant bodies.

What should be compiled is a register of those who have probably died or been ‘disappeared’ [or been assaulted] in the series of gay hate crimes that occurred in Sydney over this period [and possibly even earlier, from the 1970s].

Much of this material is readily available; indeed, there are dozens of documents, newspaper articles, reports, and references, etc, covering much of what is known about gay hate crimes. But it is in scattered sources in different places, so it needs to be brought together, and put in the form of something like a **Register of those who died or were ‘disappeared’ by Gay Hate Crimes**. From the material in this Register can be compiled a **Briefing Note** that, with the relevant material attached, can be easily referred to and widely distributed.

Sources for such a **Register** would be the material accumulated by [former] detective Stephen Page in Operation Taradale; the book *Bondi Badlands*, by Greg Callaghan; the document by Sue Thompson, *The Epidemic of Gay Hate Violence in the 1980s and 1990s*; the Report by Jenny Mouzos and Sue Thompson, *Gay-Hate Related Homicides: An Overview of Major Findings in New South Wales*; Sue Thompson’s *Report on the Death of Scott Johnson*; Allen George’s *Hate Crimes against Lesbians and Gay Men in New South Wales*; Steve Tomsen and Gail Mason’s *Homophobic violence*; the book *Faces of hate: hate crime in Australia*, edited by Steve Tomsen, Chris Cunneen, & David Fraser; Steve Tomsen’s *Gay Killings in NSW: Victimization and the Legal Response*; the articles by Rick Fenely in the *Sydney Morning Herald*; Thomas Lynch’s University of Sydney thesis on Gay Hate Crimes in Sydney from the 1970s; and the material accumulated by investigative journalist Dan Glick. And undoubtedly there is more relevant material that could be accessed.

Such a body of evidence, relating to the disappearance of deaths of possibly some 70 men, can easily be accumulated, and it beggars belief that NSW Police have no interest in re-investigating these cases. Attitudes in the police force are an issue in this matter; indeed, in the case of Scott Johnson, it was only the Coroner’s decision in April 2014 that an open verdict be recorded, that overturned the previous verdict of suicide – as reported by police in 1989.

And if the recent public response by Detective Chief Inspector Pamela Young\*, effectively dismissing the level of homophobia that existed at that time, and suggesting that there might be only one incidence of homophobia by a police officer at Manly involved in the Scott Johnson case, is any indication of police attitudes, then the police are part of the problem, not part of the solution.

A first step would be to get the **Brief** and the attached **Register** read into the NSW Parliament's *Hansard*. This could be done by either or both Alex Greenwich and Bruce Notley-Smith in the Legislative Assembly, and simultaneously in the Legislative Council by either or all of David Shoebridge or Penny Sharpe or Trevor Khan. Then it would all be on public record.

**Garry Wotherspoon**

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- DCI Young was the officer formerly in charge of reinvestigating the circumstances of Scott Johnson's death and the police response, until Coroner Michael Barnes asked that she be removed from investigating the case, after she said on the *Lateline* program that she thought Johnson had most likely suicided. As the Coroner pointed out, in doing this, she had '*engaged in a departure from the usual standards of conduct*'. Indeed, if such a document as the **Register**, as outlined above, was compiled and widely distributed, it would be increasingly difficult for the police to publicly argue that, in any individual case of death, as with Scott Johnson, that it was probably a suicide, if it occurred at what was a known gay beat.