

... in three months to join the seven other South American rheas on public display.

Picture by RICK STEVENS

# Gang suspected as link found to murders

By DEBORAH CORNWALL

Sydney detectives believe a gang of teenage gay-bashers may be behind a series of Sydney murders over the past three years.

Police stepped up their investigations into the murders yesterday following a new lead which has linked the disappearance of a 24-year-old Wollongong television journalist, Mr Ross Warren, in July 1989 with the unsolved

murders of five other men.

One of the murder victims, a 35-year-old schoolteacher, Mr Wayne Tonks, was found suffocated in his Artarmon flat in May last year. There were no signs of forced entry into the unit or a violent struggle.

At the time, local detectives refused to confirm rumours in the homosexual community that Mr Tonks's death may have been

related to two other murders last year in a park in Alexandria.

The victims were bashed to death in the park toilets. Both men had scribbled their telephone numbers on the toilet walls and had met their deaths after being phoned at home and enticed to the toilets.

While Mr Tonks was not killed in Alexandria, his home phone number was also found on a public toilet.

This led police to interview four youths in Alexandria, where Mr Tonks taught social sciences at the Cleveland Street High School.

Homicide south Detective Sergeant Steve McCann said yesterday police were now exploring the link between Mr Tonks and the two Alexandria Park deaths, and their connection to Mr Warren's disappearance and the deaths of two other men whose bodies were

dumped over the cliff at McKenzies Point off South Bondi.

Sergeant McCann said he believed there had been numerous attacks on homosexuals at McKenzies Point in recent years which had not been reported to police.

While police initially suspected Mr Warren may have staged his disappearance, they now believe he met with foul play at McKenzies Point.