

# Treatment by police hurt more than the bashing

By SANDRA HARVEY

Mr James Timmins, 41, was bashed so badly in Darlinghurst on Monday morning he has spent the past four days in hospital.

But what hurt him more than his broken fingers, bruised groin and swollen face was the "appalling treatment from police", who he says refused to help him because he is homosexual.

Before he approached Kings Cross police for help, he said two taxi drivers refused to radio police.

Mr Timmins said he and a friend were set upon by a gang of youths at 12.30 am outside the Oxford Hotel at Taylor Square, where they had been drinking earlier that night. At the time, he was waiting for a bus and his friend was about to hail a cab.

"I don't know where they came from, they were just there," Mr Timmins recalled from his hospital bed yesterday. "The only two I got a good look at were a guy and a girl."

"One said, 'come on, let's go', and he swung at me, kicked me in the groin and I just went down. I came up again to see my friend up against the fence, his glasses were gone and his face was covered in blood."

Mr Timmins' attackers knocked him to the ground a second time and continued to kick him in the groin. Several of his fingers were broken as he tried to protect himself.

"It was quite obvious they were there for the sole intent of bashing some gays," he said. "There was no attempt to rob us, it was a gratuitous assault."

When he came to, his friend was gone. He hailed two cabs but

both refused to call police.

He spotted two of his attackers in Victoria Road, so at a distance, he followed them towards Kings Cross. When they stopped in a delicatessen, he went ahead to the police station.

"There were two young constables," he said. "One was on the phone, the other was sitting there with his feet up on the bench, and I staggered in and said, 'Can somebody help me?'"

"He looked up — didn't even take his feet off the bench — and said, 'What do you want?' I said, 'I've been bashed and I've seen two of them and they are across the street and if you go now you can get them'."

"The first thing he said to me was: 'Have you been drinking at the Albury?'" (The Albury hotel is a popular gay bar.)

Mr Timmins said they made no further attempt to help him.

"I can only assume that his comment about the Albury was 'Oh, another faggot-bashing, we're not really worried about it'. It was really, like, how dare you even bother us."

Mr Timmins gave up and rang a friend for help. Later that day he was admitted to hospital, where he was still recovering last night.

Yesterday, Ms Sue Thompson, the Gay and Lesbian Client Consultant for the NSW police, said gay-bashing in inner Sydney was on the increase.

Extra police for foot patrols in the inner city would start in the next two weeks, she said.

She was not aware of Mr Timmins' assault, but said that if he made a formal complaint it would be investigated.