

Hotline on gay assault planned

By **DARREN HORRIGAN**

Boys and girls as young as 13 are involved in the violent gang bashings of homosexuals on Sydney streets, says the co-ordinator of the Police Gay Liaison Unit, Mr Fred Miller.

In announcing the establishment of another police hotline for the homosexual victims of gang bashings, Mr Miller said last night that gangs of up to 10 teenagers are keeping alive a sick and ugly tradition.

"This has become a night sport for some young kids in Sydney, who just come into the city area for a night of poofster bashing," Mr Miller said.

The gay assault hotline will run for 24 hours from 10 am Saturday, April 29, to 10 am Sunday, April 30.

Last October, Sydney's homosexual community began a five-month street-watch program to monitor offences against gays. Since November 1988, 39 assaults have been reported to the police.

"The attacks are rarely reported to police," Mr Miller said.

"Many gay people do not want to go to court and have their sexuality revealed, so they say nothing. Some of these people are probably bisexual or have not come out of the closet and they are afraid their families or girlfriends will find out.

"But we are urging victims of assaults to report attacks to police so they can clamp down on the trouble spots."

The first two such hotlines, in 1985 and 1986, met with little success. But the last one, operated in 1987, led to the arrest of a well-known gang of five gay bashers from the North Shore.

The trouble spots, says Mr Miller, are public toilets and parks in the Surry Hills, Moore Park, Waterloo, Alexandria, Chippendale, Darlinghurst and Newtown areas.