

Park 'infested with gays'

By KAREN DAVEY

A PARK used by families and schoolchildren in Sydney's south-west has become a haunt for homosexuals.

Sergeant Colin Lawrence, of Revesby Police, said Deepwater Park at Milperra was "infested with homosexuals" during the day.

The \$1.5 million park won a State Government environmental award when it was built five years ago by Bankstown City Council as an educational wetlands.

The park, on the banks of the Georges River, is a popular family and tourist spot and attracts busloads of schoolchildren each week.

"Unfortunately the bushland is riddled with little tracks and has become infested with homosexuals," Sgt Lawrence said.

"You see their little heads bob up and down in the bushes — it's like going hunting. There are little goat tracks all through the bush and they've cut out little hide-outs.

"They make little shelters out of cardboard and drag in old mattresses — anything they can lay their hands on."

He said the park was advertised as a meeting place in gay newspapers.

He said police had arrested people, including a 74-year-old man, for wilful and obscene exposure after they had propositioned officers during undercover operations.

He said he did not have the manpower to regularly patrol the park.

"It may be offensive to the average person with a family but there's a thin line between what is and what isn't offensive," he said.



CLOSED: The toilet block at Deepwater Park, Milperra.

"It seems a lot of people think it's OK for a bloke to pick up a bloke. It's a no-win situation — the police get accused of harassing them."

The rampant homosexual activity at the 80-hectare park forced the council to close the public amenities block 18 months ago.

Sgt Lawrence said the toilet block was used exclusively by homosexuals as a "clubhouse" until its closure. After its closure, hoodlums wrote graffiti on the wall which read: "Bankstown Poofsters Bashers Operate Here. Beware."

Council spokesman Phil Doughty said the toilet block was closed during the week because it was being used as a meeting place by gays and drug addicts.

Mr Doughty said the recreational wetlands area, off Webster Road, was frequented by "homosexuals driving anything from trucks to Mercedes-Benz".

"We have developed a lovely park which should be accessible to everyone but this behaviour is interfering with other people's enjoyment," he said.

However, Mr Doughty said he publicity would frighten away families from the park and the adjoining tourist attraction, Blue Gum Farm.

Bankstown Alderman Grant Lee said he was inspecting a regeneration project with a council officer last week when they stumbled on two half-dressed middle-aged men.

"We were about 500 metres down one of the tracks when we saw them — they were in business suits and we later saw them drive off in Volvos," he said.

"You can't bury your head in the sand forever, especially when there are constant complaints from the public about naked men running around in the bushes."