

# Anti-gay crime wave

□ Sydney's gay heartland is in

the grip of an unprecedented wave of violent murders and bashings. Teenage gangs, straight from the nightmare world of *A Clockwork Orange*, are terrorising the yuppie eastern and inner-city suburbs. Police, residents and gay groups are mobilising against further mayhem. **KEITH GOSMAN** and **CINDY JONES** report.

**T**HE stories are always the same. The king hit, the thudding boots and then the bloodstained pavement. Sometimes it's the hospital, sometimes the morgue.

And everyone has got their own story to tell about the anti-gay crime wave which has seen half-a-dozen men killed and hundreds bashed over the past two years.

Local MP Clover Moore said one local resident was brutally bashed

## KILLED



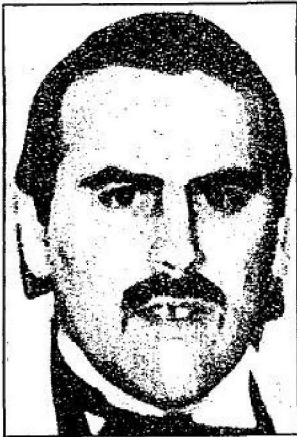
**CLEVELAND** Street High School teacher Wayne Tonks, 35, was found suffocated in his small flat in Artarmon on May 21 last year.

His hands and legs had been bound with masking tape and a plastic bag pulled over his head. He had also been hit over the head with a porcelain piggy bank.

There were no signs of forced entry or a violent struggle. The unit had been ransacked by the killer, whom police believed was "searching for something".

Tonks was last seen at the Chatswood TAB at 5 pm on Saturday May 19 and police believe he was killed late that night.

## KILLED



**RICHARD** Johnson, 33, was lured to Alexandria Park on January 24 last year after a group of youths found his phone number on the wall of a public toilet.

They had called him and invited him to the park for sex but instead brutally attacked him.

The eight schoolboys ranging in age from 16 to 18 knocked Johnson to the ground, kicking and punching him and stomping on his chest, breaking several ribs, bursting his liver and causing severe lacerations.

A man walking his dog found Johnson's body the next morning slumped in the park.

## KILLED



**MAURICE** John McCarty, 46, died in hospital early last Monday after being bashed with a wine bottle at his Newtown home.

The circumstances of his murder appear similar to those of Tonks'.

Police believe McCarty had met his murderer at a popular gay club on Sunday night and had invited him home for a drink.

## KILLED

60pc higher than previously thought.

Sgt Thompson said a study of records at St Vincents Hospital, covering 12 months, suggested that 60pc of assaults went unreported which was "what we expected to see".

Gay anger at the violence was demonstrated when 600 people marched through the city in March last year.

The Executive Chief Superintendent of the Sydney Police District, Alf Peate, told the marchers more than 30 people had been bashed in the inner city in the previous two months.

One prominent gay who was bashed that March was Labor MLC Paul O'Grady, who claimed Kings Cross police told him to "get lost" when he tried to report being attacked by thugs.

Mr O'Grady, who suffered a broken cheekbone in the attack, said yesterday: "There's a lot of anger in the gay community about the bashings and the perceived inaction of the police and the community generally on this issue."

Larry Galbraith, editor of the gay paper, *The Sydney Star-Observer*, said gay men were now becoming more careful on the streets.

"They are avoiding walking in the streets alone at night," he said.

Local MP Clover Moore said one local resident was brutally bashed on a recent Monday night outside a bookshop on busy Oxford Street—the main gay thoroughfare.

Despite being only five doors from her electorate office, Ms Moore said the victim lay senseless in the gutter for 30 minutes before help arrived.

"No matter how much the police presence is increased, the violence just seems to keep continuing. It's just horrific," Ms Moore said.

"We have gangs of youths coming into Paddington and Darlinghurst and going after people who they might think are unusual.

"I think it's absolutely appalling. Groups are being singled out for violent and discriminatory behaviour.

"We seem, as a society, to have moved into a very depressing cycle. I believe it's now a very reactionary period," she said.

Respected criminologist Dr Paul Wilson paints a very bleak picture of upsurge in anti-gay youth crime and accusing education authorities of not doing enough to discourage violence.

"I believe this is an enormously serious problem which is a sad reflection on Sydney, particularly," Dr Wilson said.

"I don't think there is any doubt that the situation in Sydney is worse than anywhere else in the country, even on a population basis.

"I'm absolutely appalled that the views among school kids seem to be so pro-bashing gays.

"I think it shows that aggression and insipid violence is fairly wide-

searching for something."

Tonks was last seen at the Chatswood TAB at 5 pm on Saturday May 19 and police believe he was killed later that night.

At the time, speculation was rife in the gay community that Tonks may have picked up his murderer from a local homosexual "beat" or meeting place. His phone number was found scrawled in a public toilet in Artarmon.

## KILLED

**WILLIAM** Allen, 50, met his attackers outside a toilet block in Alexandria Park on December 28, 1988.

Witnesses who saw Mr Allen in the park that night said he told them he had been bashed and robbed by two boys.

When police found his body slumped over his bath the next day it was discovered with a large gash over the left eye, a splinter fracture behind the eye and a broken jaw.

spread among young people in certain schools.

"And that violence will not only be expressed against gays but also against women, and in bashing and violence generally," he said.

**P**UBLIC concern about the rash of gang violence has been focused recently by the conviction of eight teenagers who bashed a 33-year-old homosexual man to death last year outside a public toilet in Alexandria.

Four of the boys, all inner-city residents, will be sentenced tomorrow in the Supreme Court by Mr Justice Badgery-Parker.

Crown prosecutor Mark Tedeschi, QC, last week submitted that the growing violence towards homosexuals should be taken into account in sentencing the youths.

"It is my submission that the deterrence aspect is therefore more impor-

tant and causing severe lacerations.

A man walking his dog found Johnson's body the next morning slumped in the park.

Four youths involved in the crime pleaded guilty to manslaughter last year and were given minimum sentences of detention ranging from four-and-a-half years to eight years.

Three other youths were found guilty of murder earlier this year and a fourth guilty of manslaughter. Their sentences will be handed down tomorrow.

## KILLED

**KRICHAKORN** Rattanajurathaporn, a 34-year-old Thai kitchen-hand was punched and kicked at South Bondi cliffs on July 21, 1990 before meeting his death at the bottom of the cliff. His body was found wedged between rocks at Mackenzies Bay the next day.

Three teenage boys will appear in court later this month when the committal hearing resumes.

## KILLED

**POLICE** are also investigating the death of John Russell, 31, whose body was found at the base of South Bondi cliffs on November 24, 1989.

## MISSING

**WOLLONGONG** TV weatherman Ross Warren, 24, disappeared in July 1989 and police now believe he may have been murdered.

Warren was last seen in Oxford St, Paddington in the early hours of July 22, 1989, after spending the night drinking with friends.

"They are avoiding walking in the streets alone at night," he said. "But I also think there is a feeling of anger and frustration that they should not be made to feel frightened and pushed off the streets."

Sgt McCann said: "Many gays are reluctant to come forward about bashings, not wanting to identify themselves as gay.

"They have to start coming forward so we have an insight to where these attacks are happening for our investigations. It's too late when we are looking at a dead body."

**P**OLICE Minister Ted Pickering said the Government shared community

concern about the gay bashings and had introduced a series of measures, such as the mobile police station at Taylor Square, to crack down on the young attackers.

Mr Pickering said the gay communities' response to the mobile station indicated that they accepted the police were serious about deterring the bashers. The station had made seven arrests for bashing in the past three months.

He said the Newtown police patrol was in the process of establishing a community anti-violence committee involving local gay businessmen and individuals as part of the anti-bashing bid.

A similar committee had already been established at nearby Surry Hills, Mr Pickering said. More police had also been put back on the beat in the Kings Cross, Darlinghurst and Paddington areas to further dissuade bashers, he said.

When the mobile sta-

force was investigating possible links between the gay murders.

"There is smoke, but not necessarily fire," he said.

"We can not say at the moment whether there are links between any of them, we are simply looking at some similarities between them," he said.

The investigations are concentrating on assaults at Alexandria and South Bondi—where there are notorious gay meeting places.

**P**OLICE figures issued last month showed the level of street violence in some inner-suburbs might be far worse—up 34pc—than earlier crime statistics had revealed.

Senior Sergeant John Thompson, the patrol tactician attached to Surry Hills police, said preliminary analysis showed that the number of assaults were between 30pc and



**BASHED:** Mr O'Grady.



**ANGER:** Mr Galbraith.

tant in this case than in just about any other case that would come before the courts," Mr Tedeschi said.

Also last week, there was more public horror over the savage murder in

Newtown of Maurice McCarty, 46, a staghand with the Australia Ballet, who was clubbed to death with a wine bottle he had apparently shared with his killer.

Police have established

a special taskforce to investigate the spate of gay murders and bashings over the past two years.

Detective Senior Sergeant Steve McCann, of the South Region Homicide squad, said the task-



# sweeps Sydney



GAY ACTIVIST: Lex Watson... "In the past if you were bashed, as a result of gay bashing, you lied about it."

tion opened last December. Ms Sue Thompson, of the police gay liaison unit, said police had conducted an eight-month campaign to encourage members of the gay community to report bashings.

Prominent gay activist and Sydney University lecturer Lex Watson said the unit had undoubtedly been a plus for the gay community because it meant there was now a focal point for discussion and the accumulation of information about bashing.

"In the past if you were bashed, as a result of gay bashing, you lied about it.

"You didn't tell anybody, or maybe just a handful of people, because if you did tell the truth you raised the suspicion that you were homosexual."

Mr O'Grady said the police had not reacted as quickly to the gay bashing as it did last year to the colour gang threat in George Street.

"What we have got is a mobile mini-bus which has been there three nights a week. During the Easter Show its hours were cut back because of extra manning pressure in controlling the Show.

"Now there are more

in school and often is uninterested in school.

"Some of them undoubtedly would have conflicts about their own sexuality.

"It's also significant that at least some gay bashers belong to minority groups like Aborigines or migrants who themselves have been set upon by others," Dr Wilson said.

Paul O'Grady: "It's not just working class people. It's not just people from State schools who are doing it. It's from right across the board."

Lex Watson does not subscribe to popular theories that many bashers suffer from Freudian repression.

"One of the things that keeps cropping up in this recent debate is the suggestion that a lot of the kids doing this are personally confused about their sexuality.

"There will be such circumstances, but it's a very nasty, albeit unintended, attempt to say 'look the blame isn't really ours - ie the heterosexuals - because the people who are really doing it are closet homosexuals'.

"The critical thing to be recognised about homophobia is that it is sociological not psychological

prevention officers in schools but saw their appointment as being a police matter.

"I believe the education system has been unfairly targeted recently but I guess I can see that the homosexual community is looking for somewhere to lay the blame.

"I think students learn their values primarily from home. I think that is

the biggest influence on a child's life."

Dr Wilson said current student attitudes showed that an enormous amount of effort had to be placed with young people in schools.

He thought the student video was a good idea but added "I don't think that it is enough to change the kids."

Mr O'Grady wants

rational and non-discriminatory material about homosexuality discussed in schools but he said many people were "fearful of the response from community leaders".

These leaders attempted to scare people away from discussing sexual issues in schools by branding them as promoting particular lifestyles by simply talking about them.

# BALL.

# 2 WEEKS

...during the show.  
 "Now there are more likely to be bashers in that area when something like the Easter Show is on."

**A** REPORT completed last year by the NSW Gay and Lesbian Rights Lobby found 90pc of attacks were by men under 25 in packs up to 15-strong. Eighty per cent of the victims, average age 32, suffered head injuries.

The report also found that most attacks occurred between Thursday and Saturday nights in Oxford Street, Darlinghurst, and King Street, Newtown.

But, the experts and the gay community are divided about the age, origin and background of the bashers.

Dr Paul Wilson, director of research, Australian Institute of Criminology, described the typical basher.

"He's clearly somewhere between the ages 14 to about 20. He's more often than not from the western suburbs. He's generally not a high achiever

...logical not psychological in origin."

**T**HE State's education system has become the latest target of gay action in trying to stem the increasing tide of violence.

Some students have responded to the challenge themselves and last week 20 of them from Cleveland Street and Newtown Highs launched a video *Truth or Dare* which investigates the issue.

And workshops dealing with homophobia were held last July at Cleveland Street which has been singled out as being a problem school.

Also last week, the Gay and Lesbian Rights Lobby called for changes to the school curriculum and the appointment of violence prevention officers.

Hetty Cislowski, the Education Department's director responsible for school welfare programs, said the department would co-operate fully with vio-



**BLEAK PICTURE:** Criminologist Dr Paul Wilson.