

TASKFORCE TO PROBE GAY DEATHS

POLICE have created a special taskforce to investigate a spate of gay murders and bashings in Sydney over the past 18 months

The move comes after the murder of gay Australian Ballet Company worker Maurice McCarty on Sunday and a 34 per cent rise in the number of gay bashings in Surry Hills and Darlinghurst

McCarty, 47, was the sixth man killed in savage attacks on Sydney gays since 1988

The key element of the new taskforce, which consists of three Homicide Squad detectives, is the creation of a crime information unit to investigate possible links between the unsolved killings and attacks on gay men in Alexandria and South Bondi

Police have also appealed for bashing victims to come forward

Police Gay and Lesbian Client Group Consultant Sue Thompson said many gay people still hid their homosexuality

"Sometimes these people do not even want to acknowledge to themselves that they have homosexual feelings, much less come forward to police," she said

"It is these people in particular who may have valuable information about attackers"

Homicide detectives are still investigating similarities between three unsolved murders and the suspicious disappearance of a man

● The body of **John Alan Russell** was found at the bottom of a cliff at South

By LES KENNEDY and
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Bondi on November 23, 1989. Police believe he was thrown from the cliffs

● **Ross Bradley Warren**, 24, a WIN-4 television presenter, was reported missing on July 21, 1989. He was last seen drinking with friends at several bars in Oxford St, Darlinghurst, in the early hours of the morning. His car was found at cliffs at Tamarama Beach, not far from where Russell was killed

● **Cleveland St High School teacher Wayne Tonks** was killed on May 15, 1990, in his Artarmon unit

● **William Emanuel Allen** was killed on November 28, 1988, after being attacked in a toilet block in Alexandria Park

Bashing victims who are reluctant to speak to the crime taskforce can call Ms Thompson at the gay liaison office on 339 5222.

● In some editions of Tuesday's paper it was stated that "a gay rights group is being blamed" for splashing red paint on Sydney buildings.

This was not meant to refer to the Gay and Lesbian Rights Lobby, which was quoted later in the story. We accept their assurance that they were not involved in the incident and apologise for any embarrassment caused.