

Blow The Whistle On Bashers

The meeting on the 27th of June at the Mardi Gras Workshop was a result of the Sydney Gay & Lesbian Rights Lobby Conference held earlier this year.

The meeting had a relatively good attendance and discussed many issues, from cans of 'Mace' to personal alarms, taking into consideration issues such as expense, availability and legality.

With the Street Watch Report now a reality and the availability of cold, hard, facts and figures being documented on the violence presently occurring in and around the inner-city area and at many beats, the need for such measures are self explanatory. However, an emphasis on defensive and non-violent tactics was evident amongst the group.

It was resolved that the group adopt three main methods in an effort to reduce the incidents of violence presently occurring.

'Safe Houses' were looked on as an effective strategy. The group will try and arrange with owners of various supportive businesses around the Darlinghurst and Newtown areas, a program whereby anyone who is being threatened, or has been bashed, can enter a shop or office participating in the program and receive help and advice.

Self defence classes were also discussed, using the experience of people presently teaching self defence classes and the models of similar programs

currently in operation overseas.

The whistle project — 'Blow The Whistle On Bashers', started with a bang, or rather a blow at the Stonewall march on the 30th of June, with the demand for whistles being greater than the rather limited supply available. Whistles joined the parade at Belmore Park and were blown enthusiastically along the route to Taylor Square. Over \$300 was collected with all profits going back into the project.

Those who were still suffering the effects of the previous night's party at ACON were good proof of the effect that the rather loud shrill can have on the nerves (and ear drums) of any unsuspecting person within hearing range when a forceful breath is applied to the small tin whistle.

However, the group stresses that whilst the use of whistles in a street march such as Stonewall can work wonders, the success of the project is extremely dependant on the owners of whistles using them only

when necessary.

The whistle should be carried whenever you are out and kept where it is easily accessible (usually with your set of keys). If you are being attacked, or if you believe that you are about to be attacked, blow your whistle loud and hard — this should be enough to startle your attacker/s, hopefully sending them running, or at least giving you enough time to flee.

If you hear a whistle being blown, or see someone being attacked — blow your whistle. Only get involved if you feel it is safe to do so. Blowing your whistle is a show of support. Call the police, ring 000 or 20966 — it is important that every bashing is reported.

Whistles are \$5.00 (employed) and \$3.00 (unemployed) and will hopefully be available through the Lobby and many of the venues in the near future.

If you are interested in getting involved in the group or just want more information ring the Gay & Lesbian Rights Lobby on 360 6650.

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