

MEDIA WATCH

Paul Paech

Poofster bashing or first degree murder?

In Australia, poofster bashing has usually been regarded as an amusing, childish and essentially innocent sport.

Rumour has it that our esteemed police force has even indulged in a bit of it from time to time themselves. For most people, the death of South Australia's Dr George Duncan was just "unfortunate", amounting to little more than a sad accident caused by a few well meaning chaps being a bit careless because they'd had a few too many drinks.

But now, after AIDS, poofster bashing has turned into something more sinister, something that leaves people with more than a few bruises and a few broken bones and the odd shattered notion about being gay.

Today, poofster bashing amounts to first degree wilful murder.

AIDS means that people must now accept that most men really enjoy having sex, and that — one time or another — some of them

are likely to do it not just with woman but (gasp) with other men.

And all the laws in the world won't stop them from doing it.

They will do it practically anywhere they possibly can: in public toilets (there's been a really busy beat in Moscow's Red Square for ages); you won't stop them doing it in locker rooms at gyms, and at colleges; from doing it in prisons; from doing it in the armed forces and in the scouts and on holidays; from doing it in cars parked in quiet suburban streets; from doing it in sandhills at beaches; etc etc etc.

Even (don't you worry about that) in Queensland.

Now, just as there are men having sex with men, there are health bureaucrats and economists who are doing sums about the economic implications of AIDS, about the effect the loss of a goodly proportion of the very generation of men who were so valuable to those societies.

These people know that unless AIDS is prevented from spreading, all sorts of

people, and not just homosexual men, will soon discover that life is rather less prosperous and less happy without gay men around.

Imagine, if you can, what

would happen if every person who had ever engaged in homosex suddenly disappeared from the positions they now hold in restaurants and hotels, in schools and universities, in courts of law and in factories and in garages, in hospitals, in shops, in mail delivery services, in parliament and the public service, etc.

Imagine that our gay writers, our gay dancers, our gay musicians, our gay painters, our gay historians, our gay priests, our gay gallery owners, businessmen, promoters, gardeners, TV stars, etc etc

also disappeared.

Anyone who's got half a soul knows that the unique and special energy of gays is an essential part of the material comfort and economic prosperity — and to a large extent the happiness — of everyone.

That prosperity and happiness will disappear if the spread of AIDS is not stopped.

Which seems to me to mean the open and frank recognition by governments of what homosexual men are doing. And then developing educational programmes that make sure that they do it right:



Cartoon comment in the West Australian.

Safe. All the time, every time.

Witness the recent embarrassing spectacle of would-stay Queensland Premier Russell Cooper, desperately trying to gain votes from the "decent folk" of his state.

"When homosexuality is decriminalised by those other people on the ballot paper," he threatens, "there'll be an influx of homosexual men from South Of The Border" — and the implicit additional thought that these men are all planning to infect your decent young children with AIDS!

What people like Cooper are effectively saying, in an age of AIDS, is that homosexuals should be denied access to information that will allow them to have safe sex. Which is not far different from saying that they should be put to death.

But then again, maybe I shouldn't worry. Maybe Russell Cooper is crazy!! After all, he wants to try to censor rock and roll music!

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