

GAY COMMUNITY NEWS

GAY BASHERS TAKE BEATING

Police at Marrickville and Glebe believe they have smashed a gang of youths responsible for recent violence against homosexuals in the Marrickville area.

Police sources attribute their success in rounding up the "poofster bashing" gang to prompt reporting of violent incidents by victims.

The local police are concerned that many gay people who are bashed are reluctant to report the offences. "Gay people are reluctant to report bashings because of an underlying lack of public sympathy for the victims of homosexual bashings," said Mr. Frank Watters, a Sydney Art Gallery director, who takes a strong interest in the rights of homosexual men.

"Gay beatings and violence against women - rape - offences are similar in that many people believe somehow that the victim somehow incited the offence," he said.

ROUND-UP

In a round up last Monday, a number of youths were apprehended and charged after one of them produced a stolen credit card at Grace Brothers in Glebe.

Police from Marrickville and Glebe were involved in a joint operation to apprehend the gang which has been operating since October.

Members of the gang appeared in Balmain Court and were remanded on bail to a hearing to be held on November 26.

They face a number of charges ranging from stealing and assault to aiding and abetting. All face multiple charges.

All three were released on bail on the condition that they appear regularly at their local police station until the case is heard later in November.

Police making the charges asked that the bail be conditional in view of the severity of the charges.

BASHINGS

Together the youths are allegedly responsible for a number of bashings and car thefts which had resulted in \$10,000 worth of property being destroyed.

According to youth worker, Mr. Shane Brown, himself a homosexual, increasing violence against "gays" can be attributed to a conservative back-lash that has followed a wider liberalising of attitudes toward homosexuality.

He says that the film "Cruising" has no

doubt had an added effect on violence against homosexuals.

"Many attacks are not reported because of the oppressed position of "gays" in society.

"Many feel that they can't report incidents like bashings because they are scared they will be apprehended themselves for being gay," Mr. Brown said.

Mr. Brown feels that homosexuals should be encouraged to take self-defence classes because they are prone to such attacks.

REPEAL

He says that the reason homosexuals frequent parks is because there are so few places where they can meet and talk without being subject to discrimination.

Changes to the law and massive re-adjustment of society's attitudes are needed before violence against "gays" can be stopped, says Brown.

He emphasised that a report is currently being compiled by the State Anti-Discrimination Board to look into the discrimination faced by homosexuals.

Even a repeal of the laws against homosexuality would not get rid of a latent fear or hatred of homosexual people, said art gallery director, Frank Watters.

Mr. Watters is especially concerned with the issue of violence, in the gay movement itself.

He earlier produced a pamphlet conjunction with an associate, Karl Blond, directing people's attention to a trend for violence and aggression to be linked with being sexually attractive, in some popular films, such as Mad Max, The Warriors and Cruising.

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