

Let's hold Sydney in our hearts as it endures the current lockdown



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EDITORIAL



Well, the past month has been eventful, especially in NSW and other eastern states. As I write this, the situation is continuing to change, especially in NSW. I'd like to sympathise with our colleagues there. As a Victorian, having experienced our long drawn out second wave, I can understand the frustration. We are now coming out of our 5th wave here, hoping it can be contained. I have had my second jab of Astra Zenaca and hope that other older members are doing likewise. With the continuing concern, especially regarding the Delta variant, it was an unfortunate but wise decision to cancel the Bunbury AGM. In any case, let's hope that we may still be able to schedule a mid-year meeting in 2022. Being a member of an organisation such as CN, which cares for its individual members, we are very fortunate. If you are feeling lonely due to lockdown, call a nearby member for a chat - he may well be feeling the same loneliness.

It was with great sadness that I heard of the death of Mal Cosh, a long-standing member. In my quite frequent visits to Mal and Neil's home in Emerald, I remember their concern and practical help to any of our members who were in any way in difficulties. This made a big impression on me. Also, they threw open their home every year for Autumn Leaves, bringing often over 50 members together, providing an array of delicious small dishes and initiating and cementing friendships.

Mal and I shared a love of classical music. He told me with great pride of an event in Perth in the 50's when he was a young reporter. The world famous German soprano Elisabeth Schwarzkopf was visiting major cities in Australia giving recitals. The paper nominated Mal to accompany her on a shopping expedition. He found her both modest and friendly. For any of you who are not aware of the quality of her voice, the Four Last Songs by Richard Strauss are an excellent example of her talent. Mal and Neil made another contribution to my musical pleasure. When visiting them I was immediately impressed with their wonderful hi-fi arrangement, where they connected their Smart TV with an excellent speaker system. In conjunction with a \$15 per month subscription to YouTube (to avoid commercials), you had an amazing collection of music at your fingertips, often with DVD'S being displayed rather than CD's. I went home and immediately followed suit. When TV gets boring, which often happens, it's wonderful to switch to YouTube and space out with music of your choice.

Another fond memory which I have of Mal was wandering the streets of Florence and Siena together on our Tuscan holiday. We both

had a similar approach to experiencing an exciting city—taking our time to soak up the ambience and not trying to see everything. We happened by chance upon a choral mass in an ancient church, which was magical.

I can clearly remember Mal's incisive contributions at AGM's. He demanded the highest levels of probity and correct procedure in our CN practices, similar to those which he had experienced in his time in business. His calm and considered interventions enlivened otherwise boring AGM's! Sharp as a tack! We will miss you Mal.

I was also saddened to hear of the death of Bruce Adams. His unbirthdays were always fun and I attended several. He contributed greatly to CN, being in charge of memberships in the early years before the whole thing became computerised.

When I turned 85 in mid-June, I realised it was time to give a younger member a chance of becoming newsletter editor. As a result, I will step down after the October edition. At a pinch, I could do December if another member has not already stepped up before then or guide a new editor in his first edition. The main requirement is to develop a knowledge of Microsoft Publisher, which is more flexible than Microsoft Word. Nevertheless, a good knowledge of Word is a great advantage in learning to use Publisher. I certainly hope that one of you will take up the challenge. I will be available to answer any queries and steer you through the basics of Publisher. It's true that the Facebook group is performing some of the functions of the newsletter. But not all of us use Facebook. Since my identity was stolen there I have not been back. Also, the Events Coordinator role will return to its earlier importance once we return to 'Covid Normal'. However, the advantage of the newsletter is that it provides a venue for longer articles such as life stories of members and other stories with relevance to us as gay men. Please contact me and committee members if you would like to take over.

Finally, please read the contribution by Graham Short. In my view, the strong volunteer ethos in the Australian community is one of the most inspiring features of our nation.

John Roy (Mallacoota)



Presidents Report August 2021

Well today is the first day out of Lockdown 5 for Victorian's and I am back working in the office which is great. I have missed it, even if it was for a short time.

2021 is certainly proving just as challenging as 2020. Members in Sydney are still in lockdown and seeing high daily numbers of COVID cases. We think of all members who are affected by lockdowns; it is not easy and can be tough and lonely for some. Others who are more introverted may like it. I am of the belief they are necessary for the greater good. I know for one I don't want to see COVID cases like I hear about overseas. I am also fortunate as well to be fully vaccinated. Vaccination is another topic of discussion.



We are still having some very wintry days here in Hors-ham; today we had sunshine, rain, wind and coldness all in one day. Crazy indeed. It looks like it has sure been a crazy winter across the whole of Australia.

As far as the AGM goes, you should all know by now the committee has decided in the interests of all mem-bers to cancel the AGM again for 2021. No trip to WA unfortunately. Thanks to Cliff and his team for the work they have done assisted by Jeffrey as Conference Coordinator. Nominations for committee roles should

be going out to all members soon, so have a think about whether or not you would like to get involved in CN more and play an important role in keeping our organization going ahead into the new year.

We have sadly lost some members over the last couple of months. Whilst it is sad, we should also rejoice in the life they had and the part they played in our lives and as part of Country Network. I for one am richer for knowing them and having their influence in my life.

The Olympics are being held in Tokyo as we speak and whether you like them or not, it is providing us with some other news which is a nice distraction to always hearing about COVID. Whether you like them or not is another discussion we can have.

Well that's all from me, I hope you are all well and keeping safe. Keep reaching out to each other, it's what we do very well.

Until next time.

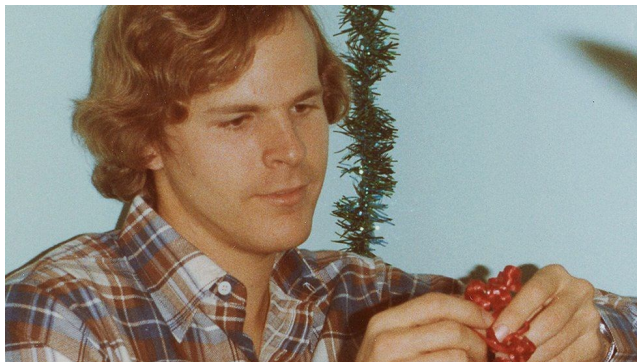
Big Hugs Charlie



**SYDNEY
THE
BEAUTIFUL**



SYDNEY GAY HATE MURDER ACCUSED WANTS EVIDENCE THROWN OUT BEFORE TRIAL



Scott Phillip White, who was last year arrested for the gay bashing murder of visiting US mathematician Scott Johnson in 1988 in Sydney, wants the trial court to declare that evidence that the NSW Police has collected against him is inadmissible.

White has been granted a pre-trial hearing on the issue in October, reported AAP. Lawyers representing White argued that a considerable “body of evidence” gathered by New South Wales Police should be deemed inadmissible. According to the AAP, White’s legal team

will seek that key evidence previously used to build the case against him, be struck out, before the jury trial commences in June 2022.

If successful, the result will be felt most by Johnson’s family who were left impacted by his violent murder. White’s arrest in 2020 as a watershed moment for the investigation as well as for the spate of gay hate murders that occurred in Sydney between 1970 and 2010.

Arrest After 30 Years

White’s arrest in May 2020, came more than 30 years after Johnson’s naked body was found at the base of the cliffs at Blue Fish Point.

As part of the investigation across three decades, three inquests into the cause of Johnson’s death were undertaken. The first held in 1989, wrongfully concluded Johnson had committed suicide.

Twenty-three years on, a second inquest in 2012 returned an open finding on the cause of death.

In 2017, the third inquest set the records straight, finding that Johnson’s death was neither suicide nor an open finding. He had died as the victim of a violent gay hate crime that formed part of a large chain of similarly motivate attacks over a number of years on Sydney’s North Shore.

A 2018 police review of 88 suspicious deaths between 1976 and 2000 revealed 27 men were likely murdered because of their sexuality, with cases peaking in the late 1980s and early 90s.

Gay Bashing Was A Sport

Despite the frequency of these attacks, rarely were they properly investigated by the police. “Poofster bashing” as it was called was talked about like a sport. Many perpetrators of these attacks will never face trial.

In May 2021, a bipartisan Parliamentary committee had recommended that the NSW Government should conduct a judicial inquiry to investigate the historical hate crimes in Sydney against the gay and transgender community.

In 2016, Johnson’s murder and the attacks on Sydney North shore were bought together in four-part SBS drama series *Deep Water*. The series is credited for binging new attention to these historic hate crimes.

NSW Police offered a \$1 million reward for information that would solve the case. Johnson’s brother Steve added \$1 million and doubled the reward offered for information about the case.

Last week the court was also reportedly told of Steve’s intention to fly from the US where he lives, to Australia in order to attend the pre-trial hearing.

Jessi Lewis © Star Observer July 2021



Burnet Support for HIV Consensus Statement

17 July 2021



Burnet Institute Deputy Director, Professor Margaret Hellard AM, is among a multidisciplinary group of HIV experts from around the world who are co-authors of a Consensus Statement on the role of health systems in advancing the long-term well-being of people living with HIV. Published in the journal *Nature Communications* to coincide with the 11th IAS Conference on HIV Science, the statement identifies key issues health systems must address to move beyond an emphasis on viral suppression to deliver integrated, person-centred healthcare for people living with HIV (PLHIV) throughout their lives. **“Whilst Australia’s efforts to end HIV and AIDS is making great progress through highly effective treatments and prevention, the need for a person-centred approach to support people living with HIV is of vital importance,”** Professor Hellard said. “This includes addressing other physical health issues and mental health issues, as well as stigma which has an enormous impact on people’s wellbeing. Globally, we need to increase our efforts to ensure there is equity in access to HIV and broader health care, and social services. **The impact of poverty, social isolation, difficulty in accessing services and discriminatory laws and attitudes means that many people globally are not getting the care they deserve.** This includes adolescent girls and young women, people from the GLBTI+ community and people who inject drugs.”

The experts note that while there’s been a decline in AIDS-related mortality and morbidity following the global scale-up of highly effective antiretroviral therapies, PLHIV often report poor well-being



and health-related quality of life (HRQoL). Negative factors include drug and alcohol dependence, poverty, social isolation, difficulties in disclosing HIV status, and persecution due to discriminatory laws and attitudes. “These problems call for a broad health system response to the health-related needs of PLHIV,” the experts write. “The central goal should be integrated, person-centred healthcare that promotes the importance of HRQoL, recognising the right of all people to enjoy the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health.”

To this end, the experts developed 31 Consensus points on the role of health systems in advancing the well-being of PLHIV, under four key headings:

- Framing a more comprehensive health agenda for PLHIV
- Multimorbidity
- Self-reported HRQoL, and
- Stigma and Discrimination

Recommendations from the experts include:

- The need for new clinical and public health targets in all countries to optimise resources, achieve better engagement and improve health outcomes of PLHIV
- Urgent attention from policy makers and service providers to mental and physical health comorbidities that are highly prevalent among PLHIV worldwide
- Recognition of self-reported HRQoL as a core outcome in the clinical management of individual patients, and
- Provision of information to patients in healthcare settings about their rights and channels for reporting stigmatising and discriminatory behaviours and experiences.

“Prevention and treatment of HIV infection including access to ART remain a major public health and human rights challenge that requires urgent, sustained attention,” the experts conclude. “This consensus statement addresses the concurrent role of health systems in advancing the long-term well-being of PLHIV.”

Burnet Institute is one of 68 institutes and organisations who have endorsed the Consensus Statement.



MY LIFE IN VOLUNTEER SERVICE

In the February Country Networker the President (Charlie) suggested that members may like to share stories of their community service they have had, with other members. I can list 4 jobs that I have held for the N.S.W. Government spanning quite a number of years, 50 of which were as a Justice of the Peace. I am now retired from them all.

For 5 years a volunteer for the local Court . Provide information and support services to defendants, victims of crime, witnesses and other users of the court system. Make appropriate referrals to legal and welfare services. Assist users of the Court system to find appropriate court services staff and access court room.

For 10 years volunteer on the community aid panel (a panel for first time young offenders) The panels are comprised of community volunteers who provide a community-based alternative to traditional case processing. This process allows volunteers to hold juveniles accountable for crimes committed in their own communities. The panels are comprised of community volunteers who provide a community-based alternative to traditional case processing. This process allows volunteers to hold juveniles accountable for crimes committed in their own communities and allows victim participation and reparation in a timely manner.

Sourced via CRIMEWATCH®:

<https://berks.crimewatchpa.com/southheidelbergpd/53263/post/community-youth-aid-panel-program-volunteer-recruitment>

The Community Youth Aid Panel Program is an innovative diversionary program designed to keep juveniles from becoming more deeply involved in the juvenile justice system.

For 13 years volunteer in Policing (clocking up some 5,000 hours). The Volunteers in Policing (VIP) aim to allow community members to assist police by performing functions that are not core police duties. VIPs are an integral part of the police team and through their work, police are able to concentrate on core duties and drive down crime across the state.

And 50 years as Justice of the Peace. Justices of the Peace (JPs) are volunteers appointed by the Governor of New South Wales. The primary role of a JP is to witness a person making a statutory declaration or affidavit, and to certify copies of original documents. JPs come from all sections of the community and are available across NSW.

The Attorney General has now classified me as JP (Retired) - a thank you for 50 service in that role. That's only a small part of my community service, and I have enjoyed community work more than my day job as a bank officer.

Graham Short (Coffs Harbour)



VALE MAL COSH & BRUCE ADAMS



Ode - Mal (Ernest) Cosh

1929 - 2021

Being born in 1929 and living openly gay from the fifties, Mal was bound to end up with some bruises. But it also unlocked doors to a world of clandestine bars, pop-up parties and laneway romances. Whilst many shameless stories were shared, often involving bottles of gin whilst dancing the Gay Gordons at The Purple Onion, his discretion and integrity determined a few of those stories died with him. From floating slowly down the Nile and Viennese operas to Russian sailors and Istanbul Hamams, he was gifted with the perfect blend of mischief and culture.

Squeezing every last drop, Mal lived as his dreams would have scripted; even dying peacefully in our bed holding my hand. He stepped off stage with no regrets. If judged by the life he led and the friends he kept, he should be proud; as should all those who were fortunate to have shared a part of his journey.

Mal: forever my love. I would gladly trade all my tomorrows for one more yesterday. **Neil**

Our Ernest Blessing

If a June night hadn't taken him,
July then surely would.
Here comes our Ernest offering
from century, bad and good.

Of courage through most fearful times,
In states both east and west.
He gathered hearts like works of art,
then took them to his breast.

Arrested by fools for passions unbridled,
then locked inside a gaol.
No bars were there strong enough,
to thwart his epic trail.

Not Madam or mammon nor grievances past,
Could keep him forever or hold him at last.
The dearest, the queerest, the wickedest smile,
we loved him and kept him, for such a long while.

With Icarus spirit, of unfettered joy,
came this warrior prince, this century boy.

We'd gladly have heard more of his oft' told stories

The chases, those terrors, and intimate glories.

To Heaven, we'd bear him, were it not such a flight

But he's found his own way there, and not without fight.

He'd tell you it's nonsense, when I'm gone - there's no more

But I know he'll find something more wondrous in store.

There's not one soul who knew him
Did not feel his light.

That quickness of wit
our mischievous sprite.

He wasn't a believer,
we commend - nonetheless!
He gets cold at night time,
and needs woollies to dress.

Make sure his dinner is properly cooked,
he doesn't like it cold.
And if he's back on red wine now,
make sure it's French and *old*.

Take our Ernest blessing,
return him to his youth
warm him with all the love there is.
Free him, now, at last to truth.

Neal Drinnan

*If music is the language
of love, play on.*

Ode - Bruce Adams

1934 - 2021

Bruce Adams was the catalyst for much of what we enjoy today in CN Victoria. His home was often considered a drop-in house for friends and strays alike; all were welcome. Monthly soirees eventually stretched his abode and the troops were willingly marched on to the local pub, except for his yearly "Un-Birthday Bash" where he claimed all who attended to be another year younger. If only it were so.

Sadly, Bruce suffered from dementia these past couple of years and was rarely seen at



the social gatherings that were borne from his dedication in providing social opportunities to the lost and found.

If you believe in the ripple effect; Bruce was one of the first to throw his stone into the pond. Now, those ripples well beyond his knowledge, laid the foundations to friendships and partnerships; all because one man decided to make a difference.

Your ease of friendship and simplicity of kindness will be sadly missed, yet treasured by all who had the good fortune to call you their friend.

R. S. P. Brooce

Whitsunday Escape (contd)



What happened was one of the crew, Graham, the one who originally got the trip planned, decided to get up in the middle of the night for a pee over the back of the boat but coming back into the cabin of the boat slipped over and fell on his back. The pain wasn't immediately there, so he and the rest of us went back to sleep until about 4:30am and he realized that the pain was getting worse and that we would have to go back to port. Around 6:30am we pulled up anchored and head-

ed back to the marina about 15 miles or so away. The Whitsunday Escape group guided us into port and then we tied up at another part of the marina where the paramedics could come and get him. That was no easy job as you had to get someone who couldn't walk, put him onto a stretcher and then carry him off the boat. It would have made a great paramedic rescue episode! Graham ended up with a crushed vertebrae, so he spent the rest of the time we were in the boat in hospital, with treatment and rest recovery taking around 12 weeks. One of the things that Graham had written along with all the notes of the trip was a page of what medicine he had been taking; usually when you reach 80 then you are going to be taking something or have something wrong. The paramedics were most impressed with the list.



After checking over the boat and filling up with more water, we set out across the Whitsunday Passage, with one less crew member, to head to the northern part of Hook Island. The Whitsunday Island group is made up of a number of islands; the biggest ones are Whitsunday Island and Hook Island; to the north, you also have those famous resort Islands, Hayman Island, Hamilton Island and Daydream Island which we avoided. You could visit but that always came at a cost.

Day 3 After spending the night at Butterfly Bay we motored south towards Whitsunday Island, and sailed through the gap between Hook Island to the north and Whitsunday Island to the south. Most of day 3 we motored; there was one period where we hoisted the sails and sailed for about 2 hours in rain into a south-easterly wind. About this time we came to the conclusion that trying to sail into the wind was never going to be fast, but it was probably one of the best sailing adventures of the trip.

Day 4 started out with a walk to Hill Inlet lookout to get some of those picture postcard photos, then we sailed around to Whitehaven Beach and



did another walk, which was longer than the first.

Day 5 we sailed over to Haslewood Island to try some snorkelling to have a look at some coral. I think we picked the wrong area to try. After that we motored south towards Lindeman Island; half way there I realized that I should have tried the autopilot and realized it would steer the boat straight without any effort, why didn't I try this on day 2. Lindeman Island was another one of those Islands which had a famous resort which is no longer operating.

Day 6 was probably our longest sailing day, we sailed from Lindeman Island to Long Island for lunch at Happy Bay before sailing to Cid Harbour for the night. Cid Harbour is a popular mooring spot on the western side of Whitsunday Island but is also a place where you can't go swimming due to sharks.



Day 7 we got up early and sailed back to the marina; it was quite a fast sail and once we reached the sheltered side of North Molle Island, we pulled down the sails and motored the rest of the way to Coral Sea Marina. One of our crew wanted to get some medical attention on his foot and we were able to make a restaurant booking for the Friday night; we weren't able to book with the same restaurant and had to go to one a bit further away. During the spare time on the Friday afternoon we were able to clean up the boat and go for a walk into Airlie Beach and try out the Airlie Beach Lagoon; oh and enjoy a warm hot shower with good water pressure.

Day 8 it was time to finish the packing up and catching flights home, with others catching a train north.

Highlights: sailing in rain on day 3 and the long sail on day 6 from Lindeman Island to Cid Harbour.

Whitsunday Escapes allow you to sail the boat anywhere in a 50mile radius of Airlie Beach; next time I would go straight to Whitehaven Beach, and give Lindeman Island a miss; there is nothing there.

Bevan Webber (Qld)

