

## Gay and Lesbian Issues and Psychology An Interest Group of the Australian Psychological Society

### Editor's Note

This edition sees the end of the first year of the new format and greater member participation. There is the usual Convener's Report, Minutes from this year's AGM, as well as a book review on Conversion Therapies, reflections on a workshop held in Melbourne on working with Lesbian-headed families, and reflections on the Forum held at the APS Conference on the Gold Coast.

Wishing all a safe and festive time over the holiday period and look forward to communicating with you in 2003.

Graeme Kane

National Secretary and Editor



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### GLIP's National Breakfasts!

#### 1. Attention Queensland Members

Put this in your diary

Sunday 19th of January 2003

9.30 am BREAKFAST

VENUE: Moray Cafe

Corner of Moray and Merthyr Streets  
New Farm

Come and celebrate the inaugural

Brisbane GLIP Breakfast

RSVP to Lynette 07-3254 0304 or 0403 369 242  
joostetherapy@bigpond.com

#### 2. Attention Melbourne Members

Put this in your diary

Sunday 9<sup>th</sup> February 2003

10am BREAKFAST

VENUE: Rotunda

Esplanade

Williamstown

Melways 56 B11

RSVP to Ela Jodko 9539 1557

Or Mobile 0419 155 707

elaexplore@today.com.au

### Terms of Reference

We are wanting to establish a working group to review GLIP's Terms of Reference. I've attached them below for your consideration. Members interested in reviewing, please contact me about being a member of the working group that we hope to establish in 2003.

1. To encourage the study and foster research of homosexual (gay and lesbian) issues
2. To promote the development of gay and lesbian issues within the discipline of psychology
3. To provide a forum for research, discussion and support of practitioners dealing with gay and lesbian issues
4. To liaise with other professional groups whose aims are congruent with those of the Interest Group and in accordance with those of The Australian Psychological Society Limited
5. To serve the broader discipline with a network of practitioners to whom referral could be made with regard to gay and lesbian issues
6. To provide expert advice to The Australian Psychological Society Limited on issues relating to their area of interest when the need

### Interview with Dr Vivienne Cass - Sydney Gay Games 2002

I had the pleasure of interviewing Vivienne on the phone on the 29th November this year about her thoughts and feelings on the Sydney Gay Games.

The Gaymes' motto is – Participation, Inclusion and Personal Best. It is these three themes or values that Vivienne said were felt and observed by herself and many others.

Vivienne noted that "many participated for the first time and were cheered and encouraged along by the volunteer marshals." People from all walks of life, ages, genders, sexualities, physical abilities, and countries participated, making Sydney a truly diverse, joyful and vibrant place to be. Everywhere she looked she saw "great big smiles on everyone's faces."

Vivienne felt that experience was "incredibly bonding. Something that participants will talk about for years." Including herself. Vivienne participated in the 10km race with 359 other participants, coming fourth in her age group. She reflected that she was not nervous about the race results as she was only competing against her personal best and not against others. She did acknowledge having to train for months prior in order to complete

the course. And coming into the Stadium was an incredible experience with everyone cheering and clapping as participants entered for their final lap.

From a psychological perspective, Vivienne felt that the Gaymes provided a great boost to participants' self-esteem and confidence. Sydney was the place to "just be, without having to prove oneself or fight for one's rights".

And of course, Montreal is just around the corner beckoning.

Check out all the gossip and news at:  
<http://www.sydney2002.org.au/frameset.asp>

Check out the plans for the Montreal Gay Gaymes 2006 at:  
<http://www.montreal2006.org/>

Graeme Kane

## National Convener's Report



### On the Web at last!

Yes, we finally have a presence (thanks to our webmaster, Graeme Kane). It's not what we hoped for, but it is a beginning. We want to add resources and useful links, so please send them on so we can build up a good site. And if you have ideas of what you would like to see there, do let us know so we can get busy and get it organized. By the way, the APS have ruled against the web site as a spot to advertise your private practice.

### Annual Conference of the APS, Gold Coast

One of the major GLIP events since the last GLIP News has clearly been our participation in the annual conference of the APS. Our conference symposium (our 4th) was the best attended of any we have run so far. I didn't do a count but my impression was that there would have been about 40 in attendance. Clearly gay and lesbian issues are becoming of interest to more APS members. I would like to take this opportunity to again thank our presenters who took the time and trouble to write a paper and travel to the Gold Coast to present it. As reported in our last edition the symposium was entitled 'Queering' sexual identity: Examining the pros and cons of a gay or lesbian self, and our presenters were:

Dr. Daryl Higgins (Deakin University—dhiggins@deakin.edu.au)

Dr. Martin Holt (University of Western Sydney - m.holt@uws.edu.au)

helen fawkner (The University of Melbourne - hjf@unimelb.edu.au)

The fourth paper was unfortunately withdrawn just prior to the conference. A summary of the symposium by Dr Daryl Higgins can be read on page 5.

The GLIP Conference Drinks was also well attended despite the fact that it followed the annual general meeting of the Society and as a consequence took place later in the day than we would have liked (hence the kitchens were closed and we had minimalist food!). Many thanks to Graeme Kane who took quite a few photographs of those in attendance, some of which can be viewed at:

[http://www.psychsociety.com.au/units/interest\\_groups/gay\\_lesbian/prof\\_dev.asp](http://www.psychsociety.com.au/units/interest_groups/gay_lesbian/prof_dev.asp)

### The APS Conference 2003 - Perth

The next conference will be in Perth, and with the theme of diversity, we obviously should participate strongly, and in a wider range of activities than a research focused symposium. So maybe it is time for some of you to visit Perth or visit Perth again. In which case start thinking about how you might participate in the conference. The call for submissions will be out in the New Year.

### GLIP Award

A milestone in the history of the Interest Group was awarding of the inaugural GLIP Award for the best fourth year thesis on gay and lesbian issues. Aydin Karacanta of Macquarie University won the Award for a thesis entitled 'The roles of empathy, guilt and personal distress in changing attitudes towards helping a gay and lesbian out-group'. The thesis examined the different emotional responses of heterosexual viewers to a video in which an actor playing a gay university student describes being violently attacked due to his sexuality. It then looks at how these emotional responses impact on the viewers' subsequent intentions to volunteer their time to help in a gay anti-violence project on campus. Aydin found that those viewers who were instructed to focus on the feelings of the gay victim in the video were more likely to feel empathy towards him and later to assist the project than those who focused on themselves and felt guilty about the victim's plight. The message from this study seems to be that if you want people to support programs aimed at reducing discrimination against disadvantaged groups, don't blame your audience. They are more likely to come on board if they focus on the suffering of and empathise with the victims.

The judges considered that the study was very well planned and executed, and, that, for fourth-year level, the thesis was exceptionally well written and the statistical analyses were appropriate and clearly communicated.

The judges also gave an honourable mention to Simon Morris of Monash University for his thesis entitled 'Self-esteem and gender conformity in homosexual and bisexual men'. This study explored the role of femininity and masculinity in the prediction of well being of gay and bisexual men and specifically addresses issues pertaining to the social desirability of traits that are considered masculine and feminine. The judges found that

this study was also very well written and executed. The difficulties of recruiting sufficiently large community samples from minority populations such that correlational designs are meaningful are highlighted in this thesis, particularly in relation to a bisexual population. The fact that a sample of over 200 gay men participated in the study adds credence to the findings. The National Executive decided to award Simon a \$50 book voucher in recognition of this commendation

Many thanks to our judges, Dr. Vivienne Cass and Dr. Everarda Cunningham, for their excellent work in judging our 6 entries, and thanks to the six entrants who took the time and trouble to enter for what is after all not a very big cash prize. I shall be writing to each of you shortly and returning copies of your thesis.

### The GLIP Award Working Party

Some issues have emerged about how to better apply the criteria for the award of the prize, and consequently I have formed a small committee to review the criteria, and also to consider increasing the monetary value of the prize. This committee met recently and hopefully will be able to report to the National Executive before the prize is advertised again early next year.

### Annual Meeting and Seminar

Other events of note since the last edition were our AGM and the seminar that followed entitled 'Psychologists working with lesbians and lesbian-headed families' This combined event was held in August in the National Offices of the Society in Collins Street, Melbourne. The goal of holding the annual meeting at a time other than the annual conference was to increase participation by holding it in a centre where more members live and having a seminar to follow, which would make attendance more worthwhile. I think we can fairly clearly say that these goals were not achieved. We only had about six people attending each event. This was disappointing, particularly for our secretary, Graeme Kane who did a considerable amount of work setting this up. On behalf of the interest group I was like to thank Graeme for his efforts in this regard.

### Future Activities

The experience of the combined AGM and seminar has certainly made us question the wisdom of the interest group running events of this nature. We have now determined that in the future we will endeavour to combine with other groups within the APS for the purposes of running seminars, workshops, etc., and for this purpose we will identify topics that the groups have in common.

The other thing we have determined it that it might be of more lasting value if we put our energies (such as they are) into publications as they have more lasting value and can reach a wider range of people. With this in mind I have formed an editorial committee for the purposes of producing a book on gay, lesbian and bisexual issues. I am delighted that, thanks to Damien Riggs, the call for papers is now out (see page 3).

We are still considering the issue of how to best spend the money that the APS allocates to us and over summer we hope to firm up our plans. As always, your input would be greatly appreciated, even if it is just to say that you agree with what we are doing! At times we are rather starved for feedback.

Gordon Walker  
National Convener

### Email Addresses of National Executive:

Gordon Walker	Convener	<a href="mailto:gordon.walker@med.monash.edu.au">gordon.walker@med.monash.edu.au</a>
Graeme Kane	Secretary	<a href="mailto:graeme.kane@iechs.org.au">graeme.kane@iechs.org.au</a>
Tony Collins	Treasurer	<a href="mailto:tcollins@dnet.aunz.com">tcollins@dnet.aunz.com</a>

## A call for papers for an edited book on Gay and Lesbian Psychology: Australian Perspectives

In association with the Gay and Lesbian Interest Group of the APS, Gordon Walker, Graeme Kane, Vivienne Cass and Damien Riggs are looking for contributions to a new book of Australia perspectives on Gay and Lesbian Psychology.

Following the recent British Psychological Society's publication of *Lesbian & Gay Psychology: New Perspectives* (Coyle & Kitinger, 2002) and considering the current political climate in Australia where normative ideologies are controlling the outcomes of policy decisions and thus impacting upon the experiences of those groups positioned as outside-the-norm, it seems an important time to engage with the ways in which such issues are played out within the arena of psychology. Also drawing on the difficulties that the lesbian and gay interest group in the UK experienced in becoming a division, it is topical that psychologists in Australia have an understanding of the politics of gay and lesbian psychology.

As both a means of social control, and as a potential site of social action, psychology offers a space where individuals and groups may come together to offer critiques of the status quo. Gay and lesbian psychology has a rich history of 'speaking the unspeakable', and challenging heteronormative practices. This call for papers is therefore a call for Australian perspectives on the ways in which psychology may already be engaging with issues facing gay and lesbian individuals, but also to offer new perspectives on the future of gay and lesbian psychology.

The intention is that the book will provide a space for a wide range of voices within the field, and accordingly we encourage the submission of work from

new writers in the field, as well as those individuals working in the field of critical studies of psychology. The literature on gay and lesbian psychology already presents a robust tradition of challenging ideologies of homosexuality-as-pathology, and positioning differing sexualities as equally valid, and thus this call for papers seeks fresh perspectives on the aims and practices of gay and lesbian psychology. It is because of this that papers should seek to move beyond a focus on gay and lesbian identities as simply an expression of sexuality, and instead to focus on the ways in which social contexts work to construct certain identities as more acceptable than others.

Some potential topics may include:

- Examination of heteronormative practices and their impact on G&L experiences
- The politics of G&L psychology in academia
- G&L therapy
- G&L psychology as site for social action
- Looking at multiple axes of oppression/difference
- Challenging dominant psychological epistemologies – alternate methodologies
- Discourses of sameness/difference and G&L experience
- G&L experiences of parenting, discrimination etc.
- The future of G&L psychology – pitfalls and potentialities

Proposals and enquires should be sent to:

gordon.walker@med.monash.edu.au  
damienriggs@yahoo.com.au

## Working with Lesbian Clients

Jan is a Clinical Psychologist who works in public health and private practice. She also teaches and supervises postgraduate students enrolled in doctoral programs at Melbourne and Latrobe Universities.

In her presentation, Jan touched on particular challenges, themes and experiences she has found resonate particularly strongly for lesbian clients (individuals and couples). In discussing these, she highlighted the excellent document compiled by the Gay and Lesbian Rights Lobby, "Enough is Enough". Jan also reflected on aspects of her work with lesbian clients that she finds particularly enriching and inspiring. The potential challenges of working as a lesbian therapist in a small community were also raised, as were some particular considerations for heterosexually identified therapists.

### Exploring the effects of heterosexism and discrimination

Every day, Lesbian women experience wide-ranging effects of living in a heteronormative culture which relegates them to the position of "Other". Depending on their situation, and the extent to which their sexuality or relationship status is known, many lesbian women have experienced being marginalised, pathologised, excluded, discriminated against or simply rendered invisible. Being aware of the wide ranging effects of marginalisation, heterosexism and discrimination on lesbian health and well-being, and exploring these effects where appropriate and relevant, was emphasized by Jan as an extremely important aspect of therapy with lesbian clients.

She emphasised that some of these effects reached back to profound hurts experienced as early as childhood and adolescence, with women describing experiences of bullying; isolation; depression; self-harm; homelessness; substance use; reduced educational opportunities; the erosion self-worth and self-confidence; and a loss of hope, optimism, and trust from a young age. Women also speak of the impacts of heterosexism, marginalisation and homophobia on their opportunities to build friendships and collegiate relationships; on their partner relationships and relationships with in-laws and family members; on their parenting and employment experiences; and on their experiences as health care recipients. Other women have spoken about their pain in relation to exclusion from religious organizations.

### Celebrating Lesbian Strengths

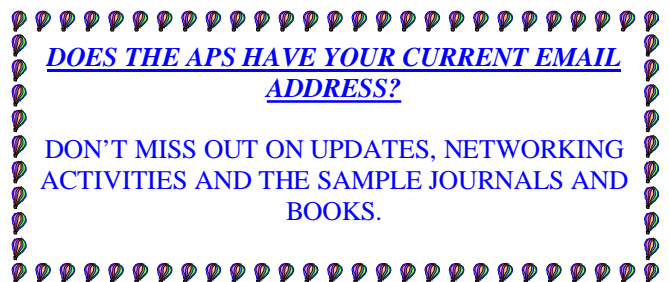
In the face of these daily challenges for lesbians and lesbian couples, it is Jan's experience that lesbians invariably develop remarkable strengths, which should be celebrated: Determination; tolerance; gutsiness; courage; adaptability; inner strength; empathy; optimism; strong friendships and

social supports; agency and self-determination; commitment to social action and social change; generosity in educating family members, work-colleagues (and sometimes their therapists!); liberation from heterosexual constraints; a greater level of involvement and engagement; a high level of warmth and communication; contact with a wider range of people; a higher level of tolerance and valuing of diversity; a high and ongoing level of closeness between children and parents; and the capacity to forgive.

**Jan Tonkin BA (Hons), MPsyCh (Clinical)**  
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Placement Coordinator  
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## Minutes of GLIP AGM – 14<sup>th</sup> August 2002—Melbourne

### Welcome

- Gordon Walker (National Convener), Graeme Kane (National Secretary), Vicki Sinnot, John Thain, Gary Khoo.

### Apologies

- Tony Collins (National Treasurer) and Ian Sheppard.

### Confirmation of the Minutes of the 2001 Annual General Meeting

- Graeme Kane moved. Gary Khoo seconded.

### Reports from the Office Bearers of the National Executive

#### **Gordon Walker - Convener**

- Noted that the relationship with Haworth Press had proven to be advantageous for members with the provision of new releases and sample journals.
- GLIP News has more contributions and grown.
- Raised the need to review Terms of Reference. Probably time to do so. And to consider what is the purpose(s) of the IG: To provide personal and professional focus or a body to inform the APS with guidelines and be a source of knowledge?
- GLIP Award to be announced at APS Conference by President. Gordon made this decision as he felt this would raise profile of the Award. Noted that for it to continue, we will need to consider other ways of ensuring it is paid for from reserves. Either through profits from PD activities or through donations from members.
- APS Conference - activities on the one day = Sunday. Same as last year.
- GLIP will finally have a web presence by end of the year.
- Had contacted Psychiatrist IG with two letters and a meeting. Have not heard anything further after follow-up letter.
- Noted the continued discussion of the Guidelines in InPsych. Some APS members uncomfortable in following them however Professional Insurance Broker requires members to abide by Code and the Guidelines. Perhaps PD is required to assist APS members to ensure they abide by Guidelines. Discussion around whether references from APA Guideline should have been left in. Proposed to have link on GLIP web page to APA Guidelines, and to use InPsych Ethical

Dilemmas section.

- Thanked Ela Jodko for her efforts at bringing Melbourne members together for breakfast.

#### **Tony Collins - Treasurer**

- Gordon noted that there was no report again this year.

#### **Graeme Kane - Secretary**

- Tended written report. Noted that Gordon had covered similar areas, however would note the following.
- Considering moving GLIP News to quarterly. But will survey members prior to doing this. Hoping not to email members large file in future but use email alerts and members could download themselves.
- Developing a relationship with Bulldog Books - local distributor of Haworth Press publications to assist members obtain resources locally.
- Email alerts - most popular and well-received initiative of IG. Thanked Gordon for encouraging this. Recent survey, that revealed this, to be put in next GLIP News.

### Other Business

#### **Title of IG**

- Vicki Sinnot raised the issues of bisexuality and transgender, and whether the Interest Group should be more inclusive of other sexualities and gender identities. Noted that this issue had been raised before, and that she felt the Interest Group looked closed and rigid in terms of its formulation as a group. That is, not very inclusive. Should we be "Sexuality" Interest Group?
- Graeme Kane noted that the Guidelines refer to bisexuals yet the IG doesn't seem to know whether it includes bisexual issues or not.
- It was decided that when terms of reference is reviewed, that this issue could be addressed. A working group of members to be involved.

#### **Proposed 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Conference - 2003**

- Proposal of 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Conference in Sydney and Melbourne for 2003. Still developing as an idea. Issue of cost and interest.
- Vicki suggested that other organisations like ASSERT may wish to be involved. Felt there were a number of organisations that were not linking up and working together.

**Close 7.20pm by Graeme Kane**

## Book Review: Sexual Conversion Therapy: Ethical, clinical and research perspectives.

Ariel Shidlo, Michael Schroeder and Jack Drescher Editors. The Haworth Medical Press Inc, New York 2001

Originally, the collection of papers that make up this book were published in *The Journal of Gay and Lesbian Psychotherapy*, Vol 5, Numbers 3/4, 2001. The ten papers that make up the book are ordered sequentially: taking the reader through the history of conversion therapies, the theories and techniques involved, subjective case studies and experiential accounts of having undergone conversion therapy, some positive reports of help, many stories of induced pain, deep suffering and disillusionment. The last three chapters devoted are to ethical issues which give the reader a salutary tale of how not to treat clients who present with sexual identity issues. Beginning with the question "What needs fixing?" the book unfolds a full and detailed account of conversion therapy.

In the first chapter Jack Drescher sets the scene by looking at the history of sexual conversion therapies. Up until the 1973 decision by the American Psychiatric Association to remove homosexuality as a mental disorder from the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders* (DSM III) homosexuality was considered to be an illness the causes of which some believed could be eradicated.

The treatment of homosexuality has had a number of guises over the years; Psychoanalytic Psychotherapy, Cognitive Behavioural Therapy, Electro Convulsive Aversion Therapies, Drug Induced Aversion Therapy and more recently Conversion or Reparative therapy. The last two are the subject of this book. Drescher discusses psychiatrists of the analytic school who proposed numerous theories of homosexuality that rejected the notion put forward by Freud suggesting that it is necessary for all heterosexuals have a homosexual part just as homosexuals have a heterosexual part (albeit unconscious.) Foremost amongst the psychiatrists who rejected the theory of bisexuality and believed that homosexuality was pathological and actively worked towards presenting a 'cure' for were Sando Rado, Bieber, Socarides and later Siegel and Nicolosi.

*The View from Irving Bieber's Couch* is a moving and personal account of

Paul Moor's psychotherapy with Dr Bieber. For fourteen years Paul Moor attended therapy three times a week. During this time he describes how his confidence was undermined and the dependency on his therapist grew. The therapy appears to have relied on his attempting to please the therapist and when Moor has an interview with Dr Kinsey and reports that meeting to his therapist, Bieber's disapproval led Moor to feel Bieber no longer wanted him as a client and the therapy was terminated without resolution of his issues.

In Martin Duberman's *Excerpts from Cures: A Gay Man's Odyssey* the reader is plunged into the world of a tormented mind. This is an account of a man who suffered internalised homophobia and associated illnesses including depression, low self esteem and suicidal ideation. He tells of his experience, with a rye sense of humour, of the number of attempts he made through therapy to change himself into a heterosexual.

Imagine studying to become a Psychiatrist knowing that as a gay man you could not possibly reveal your sexuality to your professional colleagues because of their known homophobia. Such was the case for Richard A. Isay. In *Becoming Gay: A Personal Odyssey* Richard describes the anguish of knowing that if he were to reveal his sexual identity to his peers and associates he would almost certainly have been asked to leave the course. At that time the Psychoanalytic Training did not admit homosexuals into training because homosexuality was regarded as being a pathological mental illness. Having married and fathered two boys it was not until 1996 that Richard Isay published his ground breaking book *Becoming Gay* by which time he was the Chairperson of the American Psychiatric Association's Programme Committee and felt secure enough in himself to "come out".

Jeffrey G. Ford writes from personal experience about his involvement with the Ex Gay Movement. This is a religious movement which came into being in 1998 when a collective of churches placed advertisements in a number of prominent American news papers claiming that homosexuality can be cured. The movement is very much active in the USA at this time. (Perhaps you



caught a couple of recent episodes of the popular television series *Queer As Folk*, which dealt with the subject) Ex-gay people offer support to people who are not happy with their sexual identity, at the same time placing huge emotional demands on them to change. The author concludes that the pseudo-scientific claims of reparative therapy are suspect and warns of the risk and potential harm associated with these experimental therapies.

Lee Beckstead presents findings from research that investigated the dichotomy which many clients of conversion therapy are faced with; to be an "out" gay or to be an ex-gay. In this chapter people who felt they had benefited from conversion therapy tell of their experience. The chapter also deals with the clinical, research and political implications of conversion therapies and suggests there may be more effective and scientific approaches to this form of therapy.

In *Therapeutic Antidotes* Douglas Halderman points out that in a study of conversion therapy practitioners an acceptable level of successful outcomes was considered to be 30%. This chapter looks at helping gay and bisexual men recover from conversion therapy. His premise is; given the low efficacy of conversion therapies, is there a potential for such treatments to actually harm clients? Under headings such as Depression Related to Loss, Intimacy Avoidance, Sexual Dysfunction, De-Masculinization and Spirituality and Religion, Halderman draws a vivid picture of some of the

outcomes when conversion therapy is not successful and states: *"It must be remembered, however, that a client's request to change sexual orientation is fraught with socially driven implications. Such a request should not be met with reflexive agreement on the part of the therapist, but should be carefully questioned and examined."*

The final three chapters of this book look at the ethical considerations of conversion therapies. I admit that after reading them I was interested to check the ethical guidelines put out by the APS on the subject of homosexuality and their Position Paper on Reparative Therapies. The guidelines and paper agree closely with those of the American Psychiatric Association, the American Psychological Association and the American Counselling Association. These chapters are essential reading for all therapist who work with gay, lesbian and bisexual clients, and have application in Australia as well as America.

This book argues successfully against the use of conversion therapies and raises questions about the imposition of moral values, religious beliefs and their place in the therapeutic setting. I found this book a very informative and interesting and recommend it as being of great value for therapists working with GLB clients.

**Robert Morris**

Manager Counselling Services, Drummond Street Relationship Centre

## Queering up the APS: A reflection on the GLIP APS Conference Symposium & Drinks 2002

As a psychologist working with gay, lesbian or bisexual clients, do you sometimes despair of having to do the hard work yourself of trying to understand how theories, programs, or modes of practice that have been developed for the general population of clients might—or might not apply to your particular clientele? The GLIP-sponsored symposia at the annual APS Conference are an opportunity where you can share the hard with supportive colleagues. It's not a case of one-size-fits-all! (I once found a g-string, which claimed to be this, but...). Acknowledging issues of identity, and understanding how different groups see themselves is important. The annual symposia also provide opportunities to explore issues that psychologists face in working with these groups.

**Gordon Walker**, the symposium Chair and organiser, reminded us that Queer theory provides an important lens through which we can consider aspects of identity. Each paper discussed different aspects of identity within different subgroups or communities of same-sex attracted people. We were all disappointed that—due to unforeseen circumstances—the paper on the first experiences of sexual desire and sexual identity in a group of young lesbian women.

I then presented a paper, 'Qualitative interviews with gay and married men,' reporting the preliminary analysis of in-depth interviews conducted with men who have sex with men who were previously—or currently—married to a woman. The term I use to describe their situation is 'mixed orientation marriage'. Some thought of themselves as 'gay' before they married; some realised after – with many experiencing feelings of adolescence after coming out. A few saw themselves as genuinely attracted to both men and women. A common theme was the importance of children – as a reason for marriage (along with other societal pressures and the internal pressure to be 'straight'), and as one of the best things about their life. The men described their periods of confusion and inner turmoil. Most situated themselves in a caring stance in relation to their wife/ex-wife, expressing concern for her well-being, regret for the pain that they directly or inadvertently caused her; and considering her their best friend. Some situated themselves in an antagonistic standoff. I discussed these self-representations in the light of the previous literature, with a focus on suggestions for therapeutic goals.

Next was **Martin Holt** (University of Western Sydney), who presented a paper 'Shopping for identity? Lesbians, gay men and consumption.' Lesbians and gay men are increasingly visible in contemporary consumer cul-

ture, and are increasingly encouraged to express their identities through consumer practices such as shopping, fashion, music and going out. Martin argued that this presents both opportunities (enhancing visibility) and hazards (those lacking material resources, the ability or will to follow changing fashions are likely to be excluded from commercial lesbian and gay subcultures). He explored these issues in relation to material from an ongoing qualitative interview study of young lesbians, gay men and consumption being carried out in Sydney, Australia. Martin spoke about the tension between using consumer practices such as fashion to make lesbian or gay identities visible, and the continuing desire for 'authentic' expressions of lesbian and gay identity that presume an underlying essential lesbian or gay self.

The final paper, 'Body image, eating attitudes and behaviours in men: The role of sexual orientation,' was presented by **helen fawkner** (University of Melbourne). Body image disturbance has been associated with health risk behaviours such as steroid use, sexual risk taking and excessive exercise, and is a central defining feature of eating disorders. A large proportion of men experience body dissatisfaction, and although men account for a small percentage of the eating disordered population, there is evidence that the rate of eating disorders among men is increasing, and that men are less likely to seek treatment and less likely to have a positive outcome following treatment. Helen reported on the complex relationships among body image, eating attitudes and behaviours, and sexual orientation in gay and heterosexual men. She concluded that appropriate intervention and public health strategies can be developed to effect positive change and improve health behaviours among men at risk of body image and eating disturbance.

As always, the GLIP APS Conference Drinks was a great opportunity to network, catch up with old friends, and make new ones, in a relaxed and supportive environment. The support of the APS Conference organising staff and other Head Office personnel is always appreciated. Helen took the opportunity to thank Gordon for taking the initiative in convening the research symposium on gay and lesbian issues. Following drinks was the annual dinner. So come along next year and join in the fun. Also, if you have some research or reflections on your professional practice in relation to GLBTI issues, please contact Gordon Walker about presenting a paper as part of a symposium at the 2003 APS conference in Perth.

**Dr Daryl Higgins**

Lecturer in the School of Psychology,  
Deakin University

### Editorial Policy

#### Aims and Objectives

The Newsletter of the APS Gay and Lesbian Issues and Psychology Interest Group is produced by the National Executive, in collaboration with State Branch Committees. Its target audience is GLIP Interest Group members. It serves as a means of communication among Interest Group members. The Newsletter also promotes the work of Interest Group members, acts as a forum for discussion and keeps members aware of forthcoming events and professional development activities.

#### Contents

The contents will vary from issue to issue, but will attempt to include an editorial comment, a National Convenor's report, State Branch reports, national news, promotion of training and professional development activities, brief notices and, assorted reviews and news from members.

#### Solicited articles

The Editor may approach suitable authors to write on relevant issues.

#### Unsolicited articles

The editor encourages GLIP members to contribute unsolicited articles to the Newsletter. Publication of unsolicited articles cannot be guaranteed. The Editor in consultation with regional representatives has the final decision for inclusion of material and the form that it takes. Unsolicited articles should not exceed 500 words, except with prior arrangement.

#### Advertising

Placement of an advertisement in the Newsletter is not necessarily an endorsement of the advertiser by GLIP. Approval of advertisements rests with the Editor who may consult with the National Executive. Advertising is at present free of charge, which may be reviewed at a later date.

#### Submission of material

Material should be submitted to the Editor by the relevant deadline. Submissions are to be in electronic format only via email to graeme.kane@iechs.org.au. Documents are to be in Microsoft Word 97, or earlier, or text only format.