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ANNUAL REPORT  
1985 - 1986

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he stated aims of the AIDS Council of New South Wales are :

The Council will coordinate the work of the Gay Community about AIDS and liaise with other AIDS related groups and services as appropriate.

The Council will conduct and facilitate such educational and self-help projects to reduce the incidence of AIDS in the gay communities of New South Wales.

The Council will liaise with governments to ensure that the necessary services and resources for people with AIDS and related conditions, together with the educational and informational work, are provided.

The Council will seek to fight discrimination against gay people resulting from the AIDS scare and to ensure that repressive legislation and government action does not occur.

The Council will seek to ensure that the general public and the media are correctly informed about AIDS, and will seek to correct false, misleading or damaging statements and information about AIDS in the public domain.

The Council will have the power to conduct a resource Centre, and other premises as appropriate.

The Council will conduct other activities as appropriate to dealing with AIDS in all its aspects, especially as they concern the gay community.

Executive	President	Lex Watson to March 3rd Greg Tillett from March 3rd
	Secretary	John Pattinson
	Treasurer	Jim Armstrong to July 25th David Lowe from July 25th
Committee		Steve Auburn from March 3rd
		Don Baxter
		Gary Cox to December 4th
		Terry Dowd
		Ross Duffin
		Adam Marriott
		Peter McCarthy
Affiliate Representatives		Terry Patterson
		Gary Pye
		Lex Watson from March 3rd
		John Clare — C.S.N. to January 3rd
		Don Carter — C.S.N. from January 3rd
		Ken Smith — B.G.F.
		Lou McCallum — ANKALI
A.C.O.N. Staff		John Greenway — G.L.C.S.
		Terry Divola — T-Cell Group to June 5th
		Peter Connolly — S.G.Y.G.
		John Pearce
		Graeme Head
		Norman Boyle
		Peter McCarthy
		Julie Wurm
		Geoff England

## PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Its first year has been a time of challenge for ACON. It has been required not only to lay the administrative foundations for its work, but also to address the wide range of increasingly complex problems produced by AIDS. A brief survey of the past year reveals just what has been achieved.

ACON had its origins in a meeting of concerned gay groups and individuals held on February 7, 1985. From this meeting an interim committee was chosen for what was proposed to be known as the AIDS and Related Conditions Council of New South Wales, and Lex Watson was elected Chairperson. In the months that followed, approaches were made to government to obtain funding, and a constitution was drafted. At two well-attended public meetings held on June 25 and July 23 community support for the proposed Council was obtained, a Constitution adopted, and office bearers and a committee elected. Lex Watson was elected as the first President of what became the AIDS Council of New South Wales (ACON).

ACON was established to be both a federation of existing organizations, and a membership based organization. Its first affiliates included the Bobby Goldsmith Foundation, the Community Support Network, the Gay Counselling Service, and Ankali.

Initial funding of \$74,000 was obtained from the federal government, and an Office Coordinator, John Pearce, was appointed on June 3.

The first major public activity of the Council was a conference on AIDS jointly sponsored with the NSW Nurses Association, and held at Westmead Hospital on June 29.

ACON's first offices were established at 418 Crown Street, Surry Hills in July, 1985, and over the following six months additional staff were employed: Graeme Head (Education Officer), Norman Boyle (Receptionist/Clerical Assistant) and Peter McCarthy (Community Care Trainer).

Government funding for AIDS in the 1985-6 financial year included \$200,000 for ACON, provided jointly by the State and Federal governments.

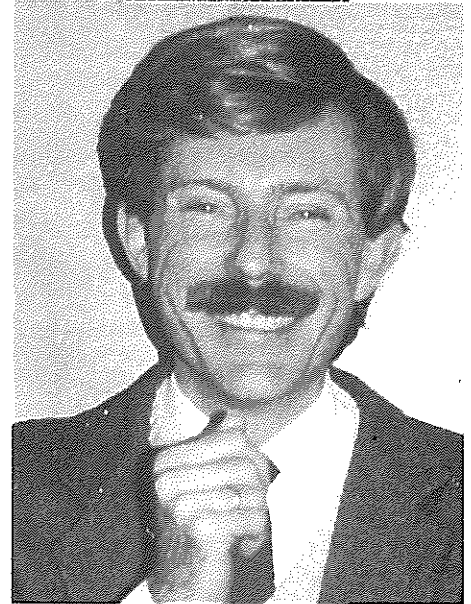
In September, 1985, ACON was instrumental in organizing opposition to the Public Health (Proclaimed Diseases) Bill, and joined with the NSW Nurses Association, the Prostitutes Collective, the Albion Street Clinic and the Venereology Society of NSW in voicing objections to many of the bill's proposed requirements.

In October, 1985, concern for the housing needs of people with AIDS led to the establishment of Foundation Housing Project, a joint activity of ACON and the Bobby Goldsmith Foundation.

At the 1985 Sleaze Ball in October, ACON operated an AIDS information stall, and distributed several thousand condoms.

The first National AIDS Conference held in Melbourne on November 15 and 16, 1985, gave an opportunity to a number of ACON members to participate in discussions with colleagues from interstate, as well as with representatives of a wide range of government and non-government organizations.

Following the National Conference, a meeting of representatives of AIDS organizations throughout Australia resulted in the establishment



Greg Tillett

of the Australian Federation of AIDS Organizations (AFAO), to which Don Baxter and David Lowe were elected as ACON delegates. AFAO was given a federal government grant of \$40,000. Two representatives of AFAO, Don Baxter and Phil Carswell, were appointed to the National Advisory Committee on AIDS (NACAIDS).

The federal government in 1985 approved a research proposal submitted by Professor Bob Connell and Dr Sue Kippax of Macquarie University, in conjunction with Lex Watson and Don Baxter of ACON, for a joint Macquarie-ACON project, "Social Aspects of the Prevention of AIDS". The project includes two parts: the first, with a federal grant of \$44,000, will survey gay men's sexuality. The second, funded by a grant of \$168,000 from the State government, will further this research in greater detail looking at how gay men are changing their sexual behaviour and why.

Probably the most important step for 1985 was the location of suitable accommodation for ACON. After a seemingly endless quest, a property at 68 Sophia Street, Surry Hills, was found. The building was suitable for re-development and was taken on a three-year lease with a three-year option; it will meet ACON's needs for the next six years at least.

The Gay Mardi Gras procession on February 22, 1986, included an ACON float promoting safe sex, and 7,000 condoms were distributed at the parade and the party which followed it.

At a Special General Meeting on March 4, Greg Tillett was elected President following the resignation of Lex Watson, who remained on the ACON committee as a coopted member.

March 14 saw the publication of the first issue of *Frontline*, a gay health news sheet which has been published fortnightly ever since; five thousand copies of each issue are distributed, with requests for copies coming from throughout Australia, and even from overseas AIDS organizations.

ACON was well represented at the 11th National Conference of Lesbians and Gay Men held at the University of New South Wales from April 25 to 26. The conference included a number of workshops on AIDS and related subjects, and a national AIDS seminar was held on June 28 in which representatives of AIDS organizations from throughout Australia participated.

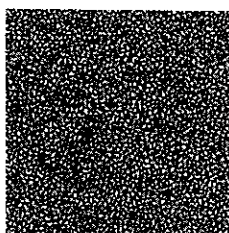
ACON's major safe sex education program, the Stop AIDS project, ran its first pilot groups in May, 1986. It had been carefully planned over the previous six months, with the American Stop AIDS project being adapted to meet Australian needs. The first training course for facilitators was run in March.

ACON's staff increased (at least temporarily) in June, 1986, with the appointment of two CEP employees: Geoffrey England, as information officer, and Julie Wurm, as clerical assistant/typist.

On June 5, Greg Tillett joined the President of the Victorian AIDS Council (Phil Carswell), the President of the Queensland AIDS Committee (Bill Rutkin) and the Secretary of the Australian Federation of AIDS Organizations (Peter Loddon) in a meeting with the federal Minister for Health, Dr Neal Blewett to discuss needs and priorities. Later that day they met with the federal Ministers for Housing (Stewart West), Social Security (Brian Howe) and Community Services (Senator Don Grimes).

At a Special General Meeting on June 23, ACON adopted policies on testing for antibodies to the AIDS virus, and on venues in which sex may occur.

On June 24, Greg Tillett and David Lowe, met with the then NSW Minister for Health, Barry Unsworth, to discuss ACON's budget



submission and priorities in AIDS for the coming year.

As the 1985-6 year ends, the re-development of the new Resource Centre in Sophia Street is moving towards completion, and it is expected that the building will be in use by the first week in August.

ACON's major community activities over the past year have been divided between administration, education and community support. Administration lacks the obvious appeal of education or community support, but has included such essential work as the establishment of an office, the employment of staff, and the development of the new Resource Centre.

Education has included not only addressing a wide and diverse range of groups (from parents and teachers, to health administrators and trade unionists), participation in numerous conferences, seminars, and workshops, and responding to numerous enquiries for information, but also the production and distribution of literature. More than fifty thousand pieces of literature have been distributed over the past year, including ten thousand copies of the "You'll Never Forget the Feeling" pamphlet and one thousand copies of the related poster, ten thousand copies of the Brad and Steve pamphlet, and five thousand copies of "When a Friend Has AIDS". ACON's promotion of condoms as a part of safe sex resulted in the distribution of twelve thousand printed covers containing condoms.

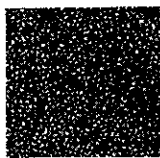
The support provided for people with AIDS and related conditions is less visible than ACON's educational work, but no less effective. Over the past year more than ten thousand direct hours of service have been provided to fifty clients by one hundred and fifty trained volunteers. Training programs throughout the year produced one hundred and sixty-five graduates.

It would be impossible to acknowledge all those whose contribution has made the work of ACON possible. They include the many dedicated volunteers who work hard, but who are rarely seen. However, some special acknowledgements must be made. Jim Armstrong served ACON as treasurer from the organization's inception as an idea, to its establishment as a reality. His death on July 24, 1985, deprived ACON and the gay community of a committed and caring supporter. Terry Divola was known in many roles; his work for people with AIDS involved not only the spectacular success of the Boys' Own Bakeoff, but also convening the T-Cell Group, whose representative he was on ACON's committee. Terry died on May 30, 1986.

ACON receives financial support from many sources. Its primary income is from grants from State and federal governments, both of which have recognized the important role the organization plays and have given it generous support. But there are numerous other sources of financial support, including gay venues and organizations, and generous individuals. The Gay Mardi Gras Committee this year donated \$14,500 for the development of the Resource Centre. The well-known rock group, Bronski Beat, generously donated their synthesizer for use in fund-raising.

In the coming year ACON will face a number of challenges. An increasing number of cases of AIDS will place greatly increased demands on the support network and its volunteers. This, together with the need to expand the educational program, will require not just more volunteers, but better organization and more supports for volunteers. Increasingly complex legal, social, psychological and political issues will require the development of new skills, the involvement of a wider range of people in the organization, and the upgrading of ACON's administration.

The demands of the coming year will be considerable. We have to ensure that we can meet them.



G. Tulett

## SECRETARY'S REPORT



John Pattinson

The outgoing Committee of the Council was elected on July 23rd 1985. Since that time the Committee has met 27 times, with attendance by the members, for the most part, showing a high degree of commitment to the Council and its work. Likewise the representation from the major affiliate organisations has also shown this same commitment. There have also been five special membership meetings during the year. Apart from representation on the committee, it must be noted that the majority of members also work on at least one, and in many cases more than one, working group or subcommittee, as well as filling full-time jobs.

The formative years of an organisation are never easy, and one with the size and scope of ACON's has certainly been no exception. Paramount amongst these difficulties has been the acquisition of appropriate office space. The present space at Crown Street was taken as a temporary measure over one year ago. The search for permanent office space has at last been resolved, after many hard hours of searching, with the signing of the lease on Sophia Street, Surry Hills. This is a situation which is long overdue, and the Committee and the membership cannot but admire the fortitude shown by the staff members during this time. The hard and productive work undertaken in a difficult and extremely cramped workspace, and the exceptionally diverse membership they have to deal with demonstrate the dedication they have to the ideals and work of ACON. Thanks should be given to John Pearce, Graeme Head, Norman Boyle, Peter McCarthy, and lately, Julie Wurm and Geoff England. They present examples that could well be emulated by that section of the membership who are very vocal with criticism, but whose productive contribution is zero.

The structural and managerial sides of the council have had their birth pangs, as was to be expected. These pangs have not been made any easier by those same vocal critics who complain 'ad nauseum' that ACON is too bureaucratic. ACON is dealing continually with government bodies and must have a certain amount of structure in order to show those same government bodies it is capable of administering the programs and funds entrusted to it. The Committee has tried to keep the bureaucracy to a minimum without losing the confidence of the funding source.

It is hoped that the incoming committee will continue to build on the foundations laid by the Interim Committee and the first committee of the Council. It is also hoped that they will realise the invaluable contribution of the present staff and give them all the possible support and encouragement they deserve. In this way ACON will continue to grow and become the necessary force in the community that it should be.

An audited financial report from the Treasurer will be distributed at the Annual General Meeting on August 12, 1986.

*John G. Pattinson*

## EDUCATION OFFICER'S REPORT

I was appointed as the ACON Education Officer at the beginning of December last year, and took up my appointment on December 16th. Since that time I have been working to develop a range of preventive education projects, and complementary resource material.

During the first few weeks of my employment I spent considerable time establishing links with other health educators working in the AIDS area. ACON now has a strong relationship with people working around the entire spectrum of AIDS education, and we are frequently called upon to participate with other organisations in the presentation of seminars and workshops for healthworkers, welfare workers, drug and alcohol workers, and community groups interested in information on AIDS.

Whilst establishing links with others working in the area has been important, the main focus of my work has been to develop projects to be run within the gay community. One such project is STOP AIDS.

The STOP AIDS PROJECT has been developed as a result of looking at overseas experience with AIDS education, and rests on the central idea that information by itself is not sufficient to change people's sexual practice from high-risk to low risk for AIDS transmission. STOP AIDS uses a peer education format, where gay men learn from each others' attitudes and experiences in dealing with the issue of safe sex.

The project was developed with the assistance of the Health, Media and Education Centre of the NSW Health Department, and to date has trained twelve gay men to act as small-group facilitators and begun to pilot STOP AIDS groups. With the move to our new premises the project will be enabled to expand to involve a large number of participants over the next twelve months.

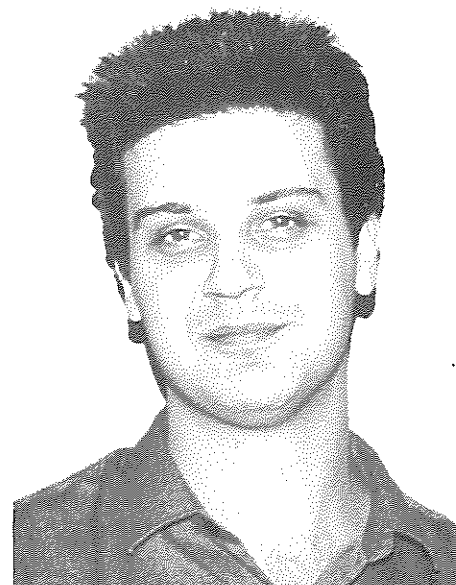
In addition to STOP AIDS we are planning to run information seminars on a regular basis at our new resource centre. The seminars will be for people who need basic information on AIDS and its transmission. All gay community organisations will be invited to attend these seminars, and we hope that in addition to providing people with information, that the seminars will encourage people to use the ACON resource centre.

Production of printed material about AIDS will remain a priority in the future. To date we have produced a reprint of the Victorian "You'll Never Forget the Feeling of Safe Sex" pamphlet and poster as well as our own highly successful "Brad and Steve" pamphlet. Our condom promotion at gay Mardi Gras was a huge success, with over seven thousand condoms being distributed during the evening's festivities. In the near future we will be producing pamphlets on antibody testing and healthy lifestyle information, as well as launching a large-scale condom promotion campaign.

In working on the above projects I have had a high level of involvement in the Safe Sex Working Group and the Education Coordination Group (recently amalgamated to form the Education Working Group).

In March this year I was appointed to the National Advisory Committee on AIDS Education Communication Subcommittee and have been working with the rest of the committee on the development of a national education program.

With the move to our new premises I anticipate being able to work on expanding the projects I have outlined, in addition to developing new projects as needs in the area of education change.



Graeme Head



## COORDINATOR'S REPORT



John Pearce



Norman Boyle

*John R. Pearce*

The lack of an adequate Office/Resource Centre has posed great problems for the AIDS Council's (ACON) growth as an organization. With my employment as Coordinator in June 1985 the task of finding suitable premises for ACON became imperative. Working initially from Albion Street Centre and St Vincents Community Health Centre, and after many aborted attempts to procure premises ACON eventually took temporary office space at 418 Crown Street, Surry Hills. During this period the work of volunteers was invaluable in setting up the structural base upon which ACON has been organized. With the employment of a Clerical Assistant, Community Care Trainer and an Education Officer, the existing space was too restricted to allow the continued use of volunteers.

Suitable premises were eventually found at 68 Sophia Street, Surry Hills, but due to zoning problems we will be unable to utilise the building until August, 1986. Many projects, including CSN training, Stop AIDS Project, utilization of volunteers and meetings of the various groups who use the office have had to be suspended or redirected pending our move to Sophia Street. I would like to thank the many people who cooperated during this difficult period and extend to them a welcome to use the resources of Sophia Street when it is available. The involvement and utilization of volunteers is important to ACON. It is hoped with the move to new premises that volunteers can be more effectively utilized to face the many problems which the AIDS crisis poses. However, unrealistic demands on volunteer involvement and performance will lead to widespread burn-out with the consequent failure of projects in which they are involved. Volunteers are essential to ACON's work, and their interests must also be protected.

As the AIDS crisis widens and our meagre resources become more dispersed, the efficient use of those resources should be given high priority. It is essential that all consideration and discussion occur efficiently within the framework of established Committees and members of ACON work cooperatively to deal with the crisis.

Finally, I would conclude with some remarks regarding the relationship with the employees of ACON. Employees are selected as the best people for the job. Duties are strictly delineated by job description. ACON's employees are employed by ACON to fulfil a role, not perform miracles. It is the responsibility of the ACON committee to ACON's members to ensure that conditions and salaries are abided by. The hazard in this respect is not AIDS but RSI, burnout and the attendant consequences of stress. We look forward to a higher level of professionalism within ACON and particularly a higher level of involvement from the ACON Committee to ensure that our response to the AIDS crisis is the most unified and compassionate possible.



## COMMUNITY CARE TRAINER

Since commencing employment with ACON my duties have included the following:

I have run four training groups, including one in Newcastle. Several volunteer teachers also worked with these groups. Sixty-five carers graduated at a very moving ceremony at the Midnight Shift.

A further training group is in progress with twenty volunteers.

Ongoing liaison with the Coordinators at St Vincent's Hospital and the Prince Henry Hospital, regarding the intake of clients, assessment, supply of equipment needed to care for people in their homes, and other needs.

Liaison with Social Workers, Senior Community Nurses, and Community Nurses regarding client care.

I have attended meetings of the Welfare Working Group and The Foundation Housing Project.

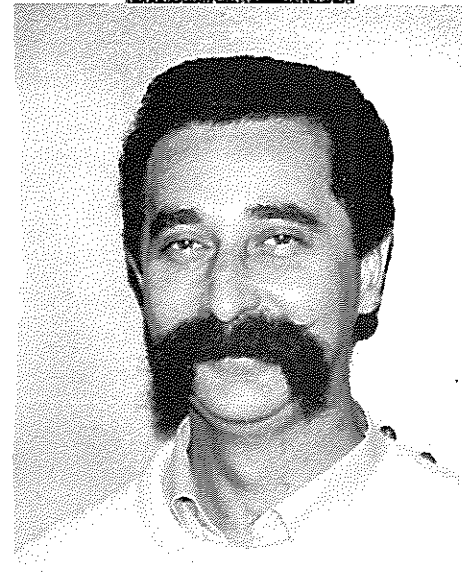
On-call backup, with other registered nurses, for client and carer support.

Attendance at case conferences, to discuss client needs and care.

Lectures on AIDS at The New South Wales College of Nursing, and Cumberland College of Health Sciences.

Attendance at specialist seminars in grief and bereavement.

Preparation of The AIDS Council's (ACON) Community Care Programme.



Peter McCarthy

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'Peter McCarthy'. The signature is stylized and fluid.

## GAYS AND LESBIAN COUNSELLING SERVICE

The major item of importance for GLCS has been the move from the Holt Street Centre to new premises at 33 Wellington Street, Chippendale.

We are again sharing with the Fitness Exchange — unfortunately because of space limitations, we have lost the company of Acceptance, the gay Catholic group. Major alterations and cleaning have been carried out by volunteers from both groups, and we hope to open a coffee shop again soon.

In the context of ACON, there are a number of significant items to report:

**BGF.** Initially, the Bobby Goldsmith Foundation sought to be included under the GCS umbrella, both for supervision, and to be able to take advantage of our Registered Charity status. This operated satisfactorily for a period, after which the nexus was terminated by mutual consent when BGF became a tax deductible Trust.

**ANKALI.** Ankali grew out of the AIDS Counselling Service, a specific task entrusted to GCS by a public meeting in May 1983. It started under the auspices of GCS and a large percentage of Ankali volunteers have come from the ranks of the GCS staff. However, as the trust of Ankali is more in line with the objectives of ACON, it is more logical that Ankali be directly associated with ACON, and therefore affiliation has been sought and granted. The original ties with GCS have, with mutual consent, been severed.

**Public Education:** GLCS, as the senior service in NSW, continues to take a major part in AIDS Education. In September a Workshop was held — “Counselling Aspects of AIDS” — which attracted eighty participants from a wide cross section of mostly straight health and welfare workers. The proceedings of the workshop are in the final stage of preparation. As a direct result, we organised a Counselling Skills Workshop in December, attended by 14 counsellors and health workers. A continuing group, the “AIDS Workers Information Group”, initiated by GLCS as a response to the workshop, meets regularly to keep workers abreast of developments and trends in the AIDS counselling and nursing fields.

GLCS participated in various AIDS Workshops such as the one for Pallister House; and contributed to the AIDS Update Day at Macquarie University.

A recent Regional Workshop for AIDS Educators in Wollongong, sponsored by the Dept. of Health was contributed to by GLCS when ACON was unable to provide the requested personnel.

GLCS is frequently invited to address various groups on aspects of AIDS, such as the Migrant Interpreter Service. We recently assembled a panel of counsellors of non-Australian background to participate in a workshop for Ethnic Health Workers and Interpreters plus we are regular contributors to Ethnic Lifeline Counsellor training. The many talks which we are invited to present to groups — nurses, medical students, social work students, high schools — all include specific items of information on AIDS.

A forthcoming NZ National Conference on AIDS, organised by the NZ Dept. of Health has invited the GLCS Executive Director to address them on “Social Aspects of HTLV-III Testing”. The only other overseas speaker will be Sam Puckett of the San Francisco Stop AIDS Project.

**Lesbian and Gayline** continues to receive a high percentage (20-30%) of AIDS-related calls. Specific medical, legal or discrimination matters are referred to appropriate agencies, but support, general information and Safe Sex information are dealt with by the Counsellors.

New intakes of trainee counsellors are made regularly, and currently about 85 staff are attending the two lines on a 4pm-to-midnight roster. This is a reduction on our usual one hundred to one hundred and twenty staff, covering all our services. The reduction has been caused by a loss of volunteers to the various AIDS services.

John Greenway

## BOBBY GOLDSMITH FOUNDATION

The Bobby Goldsmith Foundation is a Public Benevolent Institution and a Registered Charity, as well as an Incorporated Association. The Foundation is governed by the rules of several government departments, and is accountable to those departments and to its membership and the community at large. Amongst the various regulations is the requirement to publish details of the activities and finances of the organisation.

The BGF's Annual Report is due to appear in late August/early September, giving detailed financial statements and activities.

John Pattinson

## COMMUNITY SUPPORT NETWORK

Since the first training group in September, 1984, over one hundred and eighty people have completed the Community Support Network training course! At present, there are twenty people in training, with another four training groups planned for 1986. Thus, Community Support Network seems to be one of the largest direct service providing organisations in the gay community.

An inaugural general meeting was held in September, 1984, a constitution was adopted, and a management committee was elected. As well as being active in caring for our clients, the elected committee spends considerable time in running the organisation.

Many things have happened during the growth of CSN, including several of our carers being diagnosed with Category "A" AIDS. The impact of this on the organisation has been the strengthening of the support and caring that we give to one another. A small group system has been structured to enable better communication between carers, to give carers a peer group with whom they can talk about the feelings they have when working with a client, and how they feel when a client dies. Regular debriefing occurs after the death of a client to facilitate expression of grief. Specialist workshops are conducted regularly in grief and bereavement, for carers' education. The small group meeting can also be used for on-going education, refresher courses, and to ascertain carers' availability.

The Community Support Network has had fifty clients to date, involving over ten thousand hours of direct service. These, however, are the visible hours. It takes a considerable amount of time to roster out volunteers, and rostering involves up to three people on the phone for more than thirty hours per week.

The commitment and caring of the CSN volunteers is very gratifying, and the management committee would like to take this opportunity to thank all of our carers very much for their support. Without all of you, life for our clients, people with AIDS and AIDS-related conditions would be very different from the quality of life they have now.

We would also like to thank the Trustees of The Bobby Goldsmith Foundation Inc., for the support, both financial and advisory, which has been given to the members and clients of the Community Support Network since its inception.

Andrew Carter

## ANKALI

ANKALI became an affiliate of the AIDS Council in January 1986. Ankali Project provides emotional support to people with AIDS, their lovers, friends and families and is modelled on the Shanti Project in San Francisco. Volunteers are trained in providing emotional support and then assigned to a client working on a one-to-one basis. Volunteers are required to attend support group meetings on a regular basis to ensure that they are also well cared for.

Ankali was established in May 1985 and has trained sixty volunteers since then. Volunteers have provided direct services to fifty clients and are at present working with twenty-five people with AIDS. Ankali also conducts a support group for people with AIDS, another group for partners and provides counselling and information for professionals working in the area of AIDS. As the number of people diagnosed increases, and the services provided by Ankali become more well known, the need for more volunteers increases and Ankali plans to train another sixty volunteers before the end of the year.

Ankali is funded by the Albion Street Centre. The Project is coordinated by Jim Dykes, Jenny Watts and Lou McCallum and is represented on the AIDS Council by Lou McCallum. Ankali, because of the nature of its work, necessarily has become involved in advocacy for people with AIDS, and its coordinators are actively involved in planning of services at all levels.

Lou McCallum

## SYDNEY GAY YOUTH GROUP

The Sydney Gay Youth Group was granted affiliate status in June 1986. The Group provides a supportive non-scene environment for young lesbians and gay men, many of whom are in the process of coming out. It was formed in 1985 as a result of a public forum for young gay people held during International Youth Year which over one hundred people attended.

The Sydney Youth Group had a really busy year! Some of the activities it organised include: regular weekly meetings, a SGYG float in Mardi Gras, bussing a load of young poofers and dykes to the first national young gays conference held in Melbourne, peace march, camping trips (of course) and bush walks, establishing a resource library for young gay people with funds provided by the NSW Government, picnics, producing a regular (well, semi-regular) newsletter, participating in the organisation of a youth stream at national conference, regular articles in the gay press, and a guest speaker program from a wide range of gay organisations. Apart from all this, the group has also had a lot of fun!

For young gay people coming out is difficult at the best of times, but in the post-AIDS environment, it is particularly difficult. Like many of our older gay brothers, many young gay men now fear expressing their sexuality while others simply do not have access to information on safe sex practices. Younger people may also feel some resentment that the "golden age" of the sexual liberation of the 1960s and 70s has passed them by. There are particular issues which relate to young people and AIDS, and it is hoped that through participating in ACON, the Sydney Gay Youth Group can work as part of the broader gay community in stopping the spread of the virus which is placing limitations on all of our lives.

Peter Connolly

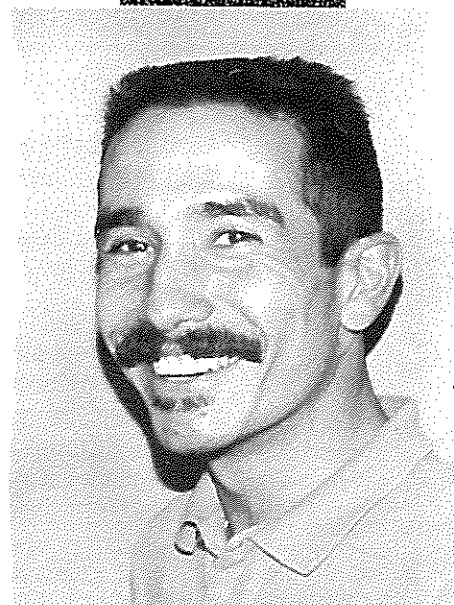
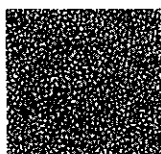
# ACON CEP PROJECT

ACON received funding last year under the Commonwealth Employment Program (CEP) to develop an AIDS Information and Education Project. The project employs two staff, an Information Officer, and a Clerical Assistant, who work in conjunction with the ACON Education Officer to produce resource material for our education projects.

Geoff England (Information Officer) and Julie Wurm (Clerical Assistant) were appointed to the positions and became welcome additions to the ACON team on June 2nd this year.

The project is valuable on two levels. Firstly it provides us with an opportunity to foster job skills from within a gay community organisation, and secondly our two CEP staff make a valuable contribution to the output of ACON.

The project will run for twenty-six weeks, and will be invaluable in helping us rapidly develop the resources we will require with the expansion of our education programs that we expect with the move to Sophia Street.



*Geoff England*



*Julie Wurm*

# RESEARCH PROJECT



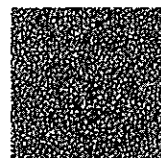
Rigmor Berg

## ACON — MACQUARIE UNIVERSITY RESEARCH PROJECT (SOCIAL ASPECTS OF THE PREVENTION OF AIDS)

In conjunction with Professor Bob Connell and Dr Sue Kippax of the Behavioural Sciences School at Macquarie University, ACON was granted \$44,000 of Federal funds, and \$168,000 of State funds to finance the largest psycho-social study of the impact of AIDS on the gay community undertaken in Australia to date. A steering committee comprising Bob Connell and Sue Kippax from Macquarie University and Don Baxter and Lex Watson from ACON administer the project.

Rigmor Berg was employed to coordinate Stage I of the study, in which eight hundred gay men will be interviewed about their sexual identity, connections with the gay community, sources of information about AIDS and safe sex, as well as their sexual practices. With the kind assistance of many gay men, a first draft of the interview schedule has been completed, and the selection of interviewers from a large field of applicants is underway.

Gary Dowsett has been employed to coordinate Stage II, which will investigate psycho-social aspects of the prevention of AIDS in greater depth over a three-year period.



# NACAIDS

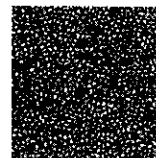
The National Advisory Committee on AIDS (NACAIDS) is a committee of experts established to advise the Federal Minister for Health on appropriate policy in all non-medical issues relating to AIDS. Through 1985 Lex Watson was a member of the committee and from early 1986, after a restructuring of NACAIDS, I was elected as one of the two representatives of the Australian Federation of AIDS Organizations along with Phil Carswell from the Victorian AIDS Council.

As the year passed the relative importance of NACAIDS had become clearer. It is only an advisory committee: all executive and budgetary decisions are made by the Minister and his Department. The relatively restricted influence of NACAIDS has meant that even though the gay community has two representatives on this body, the community's impact on basic decision-making has been less through this committee than might be expected. Continued representation is highly desirable — the gay community representatives provided significant input to virtually every major recommendation of NACAIDS — but expectations of what influence the committee will actually have, need to be lowered.

In late 1985 NACAIDS was expanded to include three sub-committees: Services Legal and Social, Communication and Education. This arrangement proved highly unsatisfactory. ACON had no direct representation on the Services or the Legal and Social sub-committees, and Education Officer Graeme Head was a belated addition to the Communication and Education sub-committee. Moreover the bureaucratic structure which evolved proved unworkable with little or no effective work being done — as opposed to barrow-pushing by two of the sub-committees, and by June 1986 a stream-lining of NACAIDS appeared likely.

Don Baxter

REPORT FROM THE NACAIDS REPRESENTATIVE





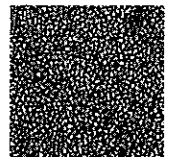
# STATE AIDS EDUCATION COMMITTEE

Drawing representatives from the major branches of the State Health Department involved in AIDS Education and from some community groups, this committee is intended to coordinate AIDS Education work in N.S.W., and to provide advice on policy to the state Minister for Health. ACON was represented at its monthly meetings by Peter Trebilco until October 1985, and since then by myself.

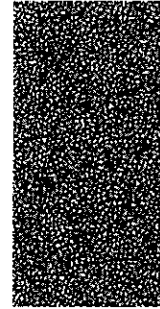
The committee does not have executive authority or a budget of its own, limiting its influence in allocation of resources. Moreover, its operations have been hampered by differences of opinion among the various branches of the Health Department. Nevertheless it does provide a valuable role in discussing and coordinating education projects, and has some influence on deciding priorities. The ACON representatives have had considerable input on virtually every issue discussed.

Following an ACON submission to the Committee in June 1986 the Health Department allocated a further \$12,500 to ACON for a higher-risk community education project in addition to the Education component of our recurrent dollar-for-dollar grant.

Don Baxter  
N.S.W STATE AIDS EDUCATION COMMITTEE REPRESENTATIVE



# SAFE SEX *Working Group*

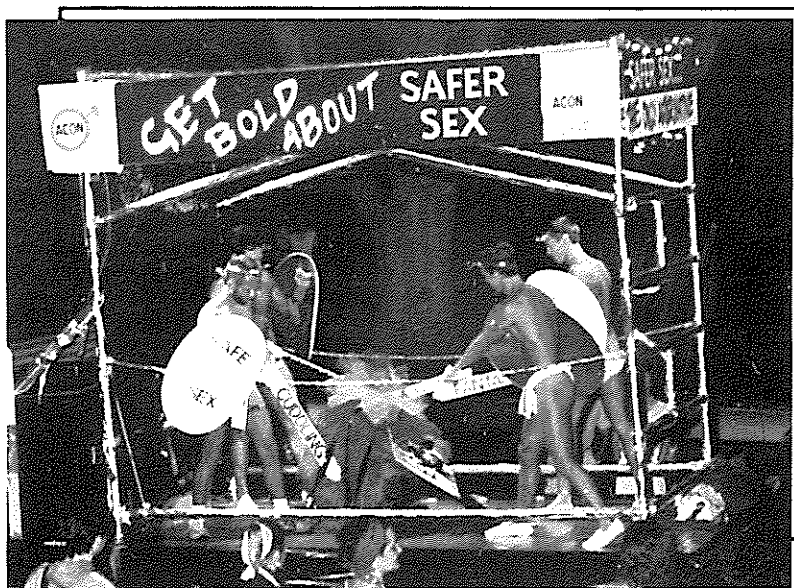


The Safe Sex Working Group completed three major projects through the year, whilst also providing an ongoing forum for the discussion of safe sex issues and promotion.

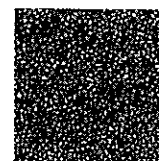
'Do the Right Thing', the 15 minute video produced through the group, has proved a valuable discussion trigger for information sessions about safe sex. It's production, involving over 60 volunteers, was remarkable for its competence, educational issues clarification, good spirits, high-quality output and low cost. As the only sexually-explicit — rated R by the Commonwealth Censor — safe sex video it reflects great credit on those involved in its production. Copies are available for hire from the ACON Office.

Major condom and safe sex promotions were organised for the largest gay events of the year — the Sleaze Ball and the Mardi Gras. Over ten thousand condoms have been distributed at these events, all enclosed in match covers with subtle safe sex messages and condom use advice. The Group also entered a simple but spectacular float in the Mardi Gras Parade on a Safe Sex Warriors Vanquishing the Aids Demon theme: crowd reaction was extremely positive, and the float played a significant role in reversing perceptions in the community of safe sex being necessarily dull and boring.

The third major project was the development of suitable proposals for an ACON policy on sex venues. Lengthy discussions finally led to the adoption of a revised policy at an ACON special general meeting in June. Implementation of the policy will proceed over the next six months.



ACON Mardi Gras float: "Safe Sex Warriors Vanquishing the AIDS Demon"



Don Baxter  
Convenor

# TRADE UNION *Party* *Working*

The Trade Union Working Party (TUWP) is open to those active in the trade union movement, whether members or not of ACON, the desire being to provide as diverse a range of skills, information and contacts as is possible. The working party meets monthly at the Teachers' Federation. The existence of TUWP is recognition of the important role trade unions can play in addressing issues related to AIDS — notably education, discrimination, and the provision of a safe healthy working environment.

The working party specifically aims to address these issues in relation to AIDS and workers through:  
Trade Unions and the trade union movement;  
and  
Employers, Commonwealth and State Public Service Boards, Government Departments, and Statutory Authorities.

Activities by members of the TUWP have led to:

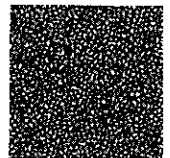
- TUTA (Trade Union Training Authority) and union seminars on AIDS to develop union strategies to address the real issues of AIDS rather than those more often portrayed;
- comprehensive policies on AIDS being adopted by some trade unions as well as the NSW Labor Council;
- ongoing discussions on the questions of discrimination, antibody testing and notification with a range of departments and authorities.

The ongoing functions of TUWP are best described in item six of the TUWP charter:

"[The TUWP] shall provide a forum for cooperation, coordination, discussion, and information sharing between concerned unionists."

In this respect the TUWP's meetings have become an important clearing house for a wide range of information relating to AIDS, worker's rights, patients' rights, and the activities of various groups and bodies that have considerable influence over these matters. It has also become an important forum for discussing union strategies for dealing with emerging issues. The working party also has a coordinating role. The success of this function is evidenced by NSW Labor Council adopting a progressive policy on AIDS. The NSW Labor Council is not noted for its progressive stance on a range of social issues.

Whilst a considerable amount has already been done, these functions are emerging as the most valuable outcomes of TUWP, thanks to the dedication and continued support it has enjoyed from members over the last year.



Gray Sattler  
Convenor

# PUBLICATIONS

## *Working Group*

The Publications Working Group was set up in February this year to produce publications and advertising for the AIDS Council of NSW.

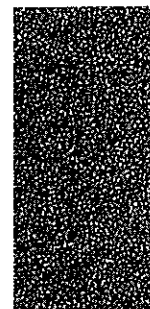
Since that time it has become one of the most successful, productive and enjoyable working groups of the Council.

Its main achievement has been the production of the fortnightly bar flyer "FRONTLINE" which has achieved a high profile in the NSW gay community and throughout Australia. Some five thousand copies of "FRONTLINE" are produced every fortnight and distributed in gay venues, to gay organisations, to ACON members and to AIDS related organisations. "FRONTLINE" has become the visible face of the AIDS Council of NSW. The other activities that the publications working group is expanding into is the production of regular advertising promoting safe sex, promoting activities and meetings of the Council and greater volunteer involvement. The publications group welcomes and solicits input and feedback from everyone to make "FRONTLINE" and other publications useful and informative. Above all, we try to make working in the gay community's response to AIDS enjoyable and educational. We meet every second Tuesday evening. For further information call Norman Boyle at the ACON office.

Ross Duffin  
Convenor

# WELFARE

## *Working Group*



The Welfare Working Group was convened by Terry Batterham in March 1986 with representatives from St Vincents Hospital, Prince Henry Hospital, Albion Street Centre, Ankali Project, Department of Social Security, Community Support Network and the Sydney City Council.

The Group set out to act as a resource for welfare organisations working in the area of AIDS, as an advocate group for people with AIDS and as a peer support group for AIDS welfare workers.

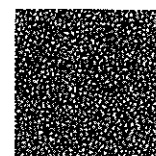
The Group has met on a fortnightly basis since its inception, becoming involved in areas such as provision of home care for people with AIDS, accommodation services, services of the Coroner's Office, funeral services and other areas of service provision.

The Group also provides an opportunity for improved communication between the groups providing services for people with AIDS and gives groups the time to critically evaluate the services they provide.

A representative of the Group was invited onto a committee with other welfare workers to make recommendations to the Coroner regarding provision of services at the City Morgue. Another member of the Group has been instrumental in the development of an AIDS policy by Home Care Service in the inner City and Home Care will begin providing services for people with AIDS in September this year.

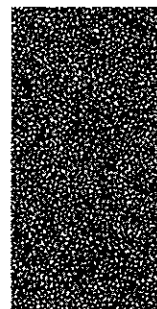
The Welfare Working Group has been involved in negotiations with the Health Department for Hospice Accommodation for people with AIDS.

The Group will continue to foster better communication between the groups providing services for people with AIDS and to act as an advocate group for the clients of these services.



Terry Batterham  
Convenor

# LEGAL *Group* *Working*



The ACON Legal Working Group was formally constituted in March 1986. Its objects are:

- (a) to prepare for distribution information on AIDS-related legal questions for people with AIDS and related conditions, their friends, lovers and for general information;
- (b) to provide to ACON advice on any AIDS-related legal issue such as proposed legislation, and the policies and practices of government and other bodies where there are legal ramifications;
- (c) to provide a legal referral service for people with AIDS-related problems; and
- (d) to advise ACON on any other AIDS-related legal matters as appropriate. The group has prepared statements on a number of legal matters. These are and will be published in the gay press, and sets of them will be compiled and made available to people with AIDS and other interested persons as part of an advice manual.

Topics covered include —

- Making a will;
- Powers of Attorney;
- Discrimination Laws and AIDS;
- Privacy Rights and AIDS;
- Public Health (Proclaimed Diseases) Amendment Act and Regulations, 1985-6.

Topics under consideration include:

- Next of Kin rights;
- Executors;
- Insurance laws.

Because in many cases further specific legal advice is required or desirable, a legal referral list has been prepared containing lawyers with particular expertise and interest in areas related to AIDS. The list is held at the ACON office.

The group has given ACON advice on the legality of safe sex promotions, including the safe sex video and safe sex events. It has also advised CSN on its Client Consent Agreement.

Later in the year the group plans to hold a couple of Legal Drop-Ins, based on the community legal centre model. Subject to demand and resources, these may become regular events.

A major area of investigation and concern in the immediate future is insurance and related issues. The group is arranging to organise a round-table of all relevant parties to explore these problems.

Work in some areas to date has been hampered by the absence of any full time legal worker in AIDS matters anywhere in Australia.

The group meets according to need rather than on a set date basis.

It is open to any interested persons with expertise in the areas.

Requests for general advice and suggestions for matters needing consideration are welcome from members and affiliated organisations. The group is convened by Lex Watson and enquiries can be made through the ACON office.

Lex Watson  
Convenor