

Pride History Group Oral History Interview with Geoff Harrison

Interviewer: Shirleene Robinson

Focus of interview: Life of Geoff Harrison and involvement in HIV/AIDS politics

Date of interview: 24/09/2012

Place of interview: Wiangaree, NSW

Conditions: N/A



Tape	Summary	Keywords
00:30	Born Melbourne	
00:50	Hotel Management in Sydney at 20 yrs old, always aware of sexuality	
01:13	1974 Sydney	
01:18	Noah's North Side Hotel	
01:43	Moved back to Fitzroy/Collingwood for final year of degree then moved straight back to Sydney, and then again back to Fitzroy	
01:50	Performing Arts – Management of contemporary theatre - Comedy festival, Fringe festival, Midsummer festival	
02:05	Tours of shows – Edinburgh festival, London Festival Picketeer(?) fringe, New York	
02:33	Gay life Sydney 1974 – Oxford St and Kings Cross. Dance clubs and bars.	
03:10	Gay life in Melbourne – mixing of gay and performing arts crowd	
03:48	Got ill in 1988. Fairfield hospital – HIV/AIDS	HIV/AIDS
04:22	Safe sex with partner – awareness of virus.	
04:40	Media campaign (refers to photo of Geoff and partner Kevin) – in an AFAO safe sex ad – distributed by ACON and other AIDS councils (1997)	AFAO, ACON
05:38	Community organisation involvement in HIV sector – after ACTUP	
05:50	ACTUP involvement through friend Andrew – knew some people at meetings – Melbourne (1989-90)	ACTUP
06:50	ACTUP – active in knowing treatments. AZT access. Main reason for ACTUP success. Also, fighting against discrimination and ignorance.	AZT
08:05	DDC. Bringing in from overseas. Tony VIC AIDS Council imported medications from overseas. Trial versions from USA.	DDC, VIC AIDS Council
09:10	USA connections – Bill Hathaway and Charles – ACTUP members and two other Americans.	
10:00	Volunteer - VIC AIDS Council education convenor for 3 years with Bill Hathaway.	VIC AIDS Council
10:45	ACTUP motivation - anger, needs such as service and treatment access	
11:50	Inclusivity in VIC AIDS Council – needs of positive people, difficulties to communicate to broader VIC AIDS. Not just prevention but also people living with the virus.	
13:50	ACTUP campaigns: Silence = Death poster, shed the underworld, love in “your right to fuck” Prostitutes Collective Victoria demonstrations.	ACTUP campaigns
14:40	20-30 people at ACTUP meetings each week	
14:55	Early 90s demonstration at Flinders Street Station	
15:40	Street posters, billboards, working groups, media, actions on streets, demonstrations in politicians offices	
16:25	Differences between ACTUP and VIC AIDS Council –staff associated with meetings or demonstrations.	
17:25	Die ins – reaction of passersby – Flinders St station	Die ins

18:40	ACTUP declined in Australia – ACTUP USA still active in the USA still has a place because health care is too expensive for access to HIV/AIDS medication – mentioned on Facebook	
21:10	Baume report – 1990, ACTUP doing street actions at that time	Baume Report
21:45	Canberra demonstration day due to Baume report – unorganised, people travelled to Canberra, 40 members met night before action to plan, interrupted parliament, 2 or 3 jumped from public gallery, uplifting event, media coverage in Australia and overseas	Canberra demonstration
24:00	International connections – Eric Sawyer works for UNAIDS in NY, member of ACTUP, met in Berlin	
24:00	NAPWA conference – convenor (has good media skills that put to use in liaising with the media)	NAPWA
26:30	Homophobia in the press – usage of word “sufferers”, evidence of language change	
28:00	Early 1980s HIV/AIDS medicine, development of new drugs, trying to get gvt support	HIV/AIDS
30:00	HIV/AIDS deaths, transitioning into a semi-manageable disease	
30:45	HIV/AIDS trauma	
31:00	Anger as motivation in ACTUP	
34:00	National Association of People With HIV (91-92 became president)	President of NAPWA
35:30	Support from family regarding sexuality and HIV/AIDS and care from partner when returned from hospital and support from doctor.	
38:00	Sat on executive committee of AFAO	AFAO
40:00	Moved to Cairns (2000) – joined QPP – Queensland Positive People – co/Convenor	QPP
40:15	Position at Cairns office - Men’s Health Officer for Queensland AIDS Council, lived there for 12 years	Queensland AIDS Council
40:30	Positive people – approximately 200 People Living With HIV/AIDS	
42:20	Large event nights run by QAC in Cairns, 200 people – Vanessa Wagner performed	
43:00	Kookaburras! Moved to Wiangaree, NSW	
44:00	Facebook connections from the past	
45:00	Disability support work	
47:00	Contemporary cuts to LGBT or HIV/AIDS funding	
48:30	Reflections on contemporary activism	
50:00	ACTUP – friend network, Charles president of NAPWA lives in Darwin now but met up 24 years since they both met. Both positive – great to have network with other positive people who are still alive after 25 years.	
51:30	Being open about status in the media	
52:00	Launch of disability discrimination act (article)	
52:40	Pos/Neg sex discrimination	
53:50	*Clipping – Fairfield hospital World AIDS day sun Dec 1 st – rally and anger about safe Fairfield.	Activism
56:50	Design of ACTUP materials – “We won’t wait”, “Kissing won’t kill”	
59:00	Die ins – Flinders Street and Canberra	
59:50	Visit of US President and ACTUP did demonstrations – North Melbourne – First Lady demonstrations	

1:01:00	International travel as positive person	
1:03:00	Bill Hathaway and interviewee set up radio station on community radio in Melbourne and also set up column in Gay press under a pen name.	
1:04:00	Global conference Cape Town, South Africa – Positive people.	
1:06:55	Smith St, Collingwood Party – Fundraising	
1:10:00	ACTUP working with the media	ACTUP
1:11:00	Decline of ACTUP – medication available AZT, DDC, combinations. Fear declining because medications working and attitudes changing.	
1:14:00	Medical advice - Ross Duffin, Martin Goddard	
1:15:00	Medical profession – refused treatment at Collins Street dentist (1990)	
1:24:00	Queensland Positive People – 5 people employed, 2 Indigenous staff.	
1:27:00	Police Liaison Officers	

*Records discussed in this interview are available from the Noel Butlin Archive at the Australian National University in Canberra