COMMUNITY SAFETY

PREVENTING HOMOPHOBIC CRIME

The New South Wales Police Force (NSWPF) takes the issue of homophobic prejudice motivated crime seriously and encourages the reporting of all incidents.

A prejudice motivated crime is a criminal act which is motivated, at least in part, because of someone’s bias or hatred of a person’s or group’s perceived race, religion, ethnicity, sexual orientation or gender identity.

Harm to the victim and the community

Prejudice motivated crimes not only harm the victim, they harm the victim’s group, and society as a whole. For victims of crimes motivated by prejudice, for example homophobia or transphobia, it can be one of the most traumatic experiences of their life. They find themselves victimised for characteristics which are intrinsic and unchangeable, and the repercussions of the crime can be felt throughout the entire community.

Personal Safety

Prejudice related violence can be random. You can reduce the chances of being attacked or harassed by following some general safety tips.

Stay Alert

- Awareness is your best defence
- Remove yourself from a situation if you think, or feel, something is wrong with it. Listen to your instincts.

Project Confidence

- Walk near the curb and avoid parked cars, side streets and alleys
- Be aware of who is in front of, and behind you
- Cross the street if you feel threatened
- Be aware of who gets off public transport with you
- Have your keys in your hand before you reach your car or your home.

Plan Your Night

- If you are going out and “frocking up” for the night (for example, in ‘drag’ or something revealing) wear something over your outfit, such as a jacket or overcoat, or consider changing at your destination
- Catch a taxi to and from your destination
- Arrange to meet people and walk there together.

What To Do If You Are Attacked

Verbal harassment may be a prelude to an attack. It can be upsetting and embarrassing to be called offensive names, and it can also be a reflexive response to return the insult. Try to avoid this.
If you are a victim of assault you should:
- Be assertive, but not aggressive
- Remain calm
- If trouble starts, yell to draw attention to your situation
- Create distance between yourself and danger by running to safety.

**Do Not Be A Silent Witness**

- Call the police on Triple Zero (000)
- Avoid physical intervention, but try to scare off the attacker/s
- Intervene safely – gather people to the scene, blow a whistle if you have one or yell to attract attention. Offenders are rarely proud enough of their actions that they will continue with an audience
- If you see or hear someone being attacked, DO SOMETHING, do not ignore it.

**Reporting The Crime**

- It is not uncommon for victims of this type of crime not to report the matter to police. This can be for a variety of reasons and may include:
  - Fear of reprisals,
  - Mistrust of police,
  - Fear of being "outed" as a result of participating in the court process, and/or
  - The perception that the incident is not serious enough to report to police.

To assist all officers to understand the challenges and expectations of the GLBT communities the NSWPF has a network of Gay and Lesbian Liaison Officers (GLLOs) across the state. GLLOs are also active in their local communities to ensure open communication and exchange of information for the benefit of the local community. Over time these relationships should lead to improved confidence by the GLBT communities in the police. This in turn should lead to improved rates of reporting of crime and violence.

The GLLO program was developed to support the reporting of homophobic crimes and the further education of all police. If a person feels unable or unwilling to officially report an incident, we encourage them to at least seek advice from a GLLO or the Lesbian and Gay Anti-Violence Project (AVP), a community based service aimed at supporting victims of homophobic violence.

Homophobic violence affects everyone in the community. If you see something, say something – make sure you report the incident to police.

Further information about the role of GLLOs and the GLLO program can be found at: