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Abstract

The late 20th century was a golden era for Australian gay print media: more than five million copies annually of gay and lesbian publications were printed at its peak, with revenues of nearly eight million dollars a year. Yet there was not even a leaflet before 1969 because homosexuals then did not dare to publish in the climate of active oppression. Growing liberal attitudes within sections of broader society, and, at a practical level, reform of censorship laws made gay publishing possible. The remarkable growth of this industry stands as testimony to the dramatic change in mainstream society’s attitudes towards homosexuality, and changes within the gay community itself, during the final decades of last century. From 1970 to 2000 nearly 100 significant magazines and newspapers were produced around the country.

Publishers used print media to advance gay movement aims, despite pursuing a variety of visions and goals for how they saw a better world for gay and lesbian people. Their publications allowed discussion of what it meant to be gay or lesbian in Australia; provided an arena to present positive viewpoints regarding homosexuality that countered dominant mainstream attitudes; and brought people together through personal classifieds and information about bars and other community activities.

In order to sustain their businesses, publishers took commercial opportunities presented to them. And they needed to expand their operation to attract readers and advertisers. This offered economic viability to the publications, and allowed publishers to sustain a reliable workforce and improve their product. All publishers were forced to deal with the business side of their operation, which often caused tension between their initial goals for a better world and the need to run the business. A key resolution of this tension came through adopting the promotion and defence of community as a primary political project. This allowed publishers to freely develop synergies with advertisers that helped build and develop community infrastructure, such as venues, festivals, and small businesses.

Expansion of the sector magnified the impact of this synergy on the community’s growth. It allowed movement ideas and information on community activities to reach and influence a much wider audience, and the day-to-day pursuit of business activity, in particular advertising revenue and distribution outlets led to a myriad of direct
relationships with mainstream society that challenged prejudice and helped normalise homosexuality.
DECLARATION

This thesis contains only my original work towards the Doctor of Philosophy (History).

Due acknowledgement has been made in the text to all other material used.

This thesis is fewer than the maximum word limit in length, exclusive of bibliographies and appendices.

signed

William (Bill) Francis Calder
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Introduction

Gay print media’s golden era

She carefully slides a fresh page of thick waxed paper from the box and turns it over, the attached flimsy tissue facing away. She feeds it between the typewriter rollers, shuffles through a pile of hand-written notes and starts to type. Her fingers click back and forth across the keys, bringing to life discussions for political action and dates for future events. She pauses to smear a dab of liquid white-out on a typo and blows to speed its drying. When she finishes her friend carefully peels the tissue page and drapes it around the gestetner machine’s ink drum. Slowly turning the handle, she feeds sheets of paper one at a time, and after 100 copies takes them to the bench to collate with other pages printed earlier.¹

Tensions drive enterprise and growth

The late 20th century was a golden era for Australian gay print media: more than five million copies of gay and lesbian publications were printed annually at its peak,² with revenues of nearly eight million dollars a year.³ Yet there was not even a leaflet before 1969 because homosexuals did not dare to publish in the climate of active oppression. The first known gay or lesbian identified publications produced in Australia were internal newsletters from 1969. The lesbian group Daughters of Bilitis’ newsletter contained a social calendar, discussion of organisational matters and snippets of writings about life not necessarily connected to being a lesbian.⁴ Sydney’s Chameleons Social Club in 1969 also produced a six-page typed newsletter with information about upcoming events.⁵ The first magazine distributed for sale was Camp Ink, published in 1970 by gay activists from the left campaigning against gay

¹ Inspired by description of Lesbian Newsletter production from author interview with Liz Ross 2011.
² See Appendix B.
³ See Appendix C.
⁵ The Chameleons Social Club Ltd No. 1, January 1969. In ALGA Box 379, Papers of Denis Fuller, Box 1 of 2. Other unconfirmed publications may also have been produced in the late 1960s such as a small 1968 magazine called Camp that was mentioned in Craig Johnston, "Politicization and Community Formation among Male Homosexuals: The Case of Sydney in the 1970s (notes from incompleasted Phd thesis, held at ALGA)," (2003), p. 4.
oppression, and 500 copies were printed to be “a voice to the outside world”, as its key instigator John Ware later said.\(^6\)

Growing liberal attitudes within sections of broader society and, at a practical level, reform of censorship laws, made gay publishing possible, and this remarkable growth of an industry stands as testimony to the dramatic change in mainstream society’s attitudes towards homosexuality, and changes within the gay community itself, during the final decades of last century. Written histories exist to document this and the influence of public activism from the gay movement that brought it to bear.\(^7\) This historiography will be elaborated on shortly. Suffice to say now the gay movement relied on a wide range of actions to achieve change, and a key instrument it used was media, particularly print. The diversity of publications produced by it, each with a lively history on its own, and the goals and actions taken by different publishers provides a prism through which to study how change played out across 30 years, both in mainstream society and within the gay community itself. As gay community infrastructure grew and mainstream society’s attitudes towards homosexuality became more liberal, gay media was able increasingly to operate on a commercial basis with a growing sophistication, professionalism and financial viability. This suggests, on the surface, a story of transformation from activist media to vehicle for niche marketing,\(^8\) yet such an interpretation sells the story short. I intend to demonstrate how financial expansion of this sector played a critical role in advancing gay movement goals. In order to sustain the business, publishers needed to expand distribution and advertising revenue. This led to the development of synergies with advertisers that helped build

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\(^6\) Robert French and Ken Davis, “20 Years Out,” OutRage, March 1990; also drawing on unpublished material from original interview, held in Robert French’s private collection.


and develop community venues, events, and businesses. It led to increased readership reach for the movement’s ideas, and a myriad of direct relationships with mainstream society that challenged prejudice and normalised homosexuality.

Few publishers started newspapers or magazines to make money: they were usually activists, commercial venue promoters, or simply participants in the social scene. The publications they produced, in part reflected the changes occurring within society and the gay community, but in key ways the actions of publishers through their magazines created a dynamic force in its own right to magnify and initiate change. This account explores publishers’ attempts, through the use of the printed word, to achieve a variety of visions and goals for what they saw as a better world for gay and lesbian people.

From 1969 until the internet’s takeover in the new millennium, gay magazines and newspapers were the dominant community voices providing ideas alternate to mainstream media that allowed discussion on what it meant to be gay or lesbian in Australia, with debates on all manner of topics including promiscuity, relationships, sadomasochism, drag, sexually-transmitted diseases and gay pride. They provided an arena to present positive viewpoints regarding homosexuality that countered dominant mainstream attitudes, to discuss political demands for change, to develop strategies and to promote reader involvement. They presented to readers living in the closet a world where their sexuality could be expressed, and brought people together through personal classifieds and information about bars and other community activities.

In the 20th century’s final three decades nearly 100 significant magazines and newspapers around the country were published with aims influenced by their publishers’ differing views of what would make a better world. Some wanted a more vibrant social world, others to fight the political battle. In the 1970s, liberationist publishers demanded gay rights, often as part of a broader platform to radically restructure society, and challenged legal, medical and religious oppression. Other publishers produced magazines that featured male nudes to entertain readers and affirm the legitimacy of gay sex. Lesbian publishers with different, more feminist influenced attitudes towards sex established separate publications.

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9 See list of all publications in Appendix A.
As society’s views towards homosexuality grew more liberal and the gay community itself changed with an expanding venue sector from the end of the 1970s, new publishers appeared with magazines that publicised a gay lifestyle built around the social scene. There were ebbs and flows in publishing activity with a slowdown post-1975 in a more conservative political environment and a temporary setback for venues and lifestyle publications with the arrival of AIDS from 1983. Overall though, the gay community steadily expanded, along with the businesses servicing it and providing advertising revenues for the publications.

Priorities shifted with time for both gay male and lesbian publishers away from liberationist calls to radically restructure society, towards building and defending the infrastructure of their communities and the rights of their members. The language and content in publications changed from anger and militancy, to information, news and commentary. By the 1990s free city-based newspapers, which appealed to a broad cross-section of gay and lesbian readers, were established throughout much of Australia and rapidly expanded their readership reach. At close to the sector’s distributional peak in 1999 a publicly listed company acquired most major gay publications but due to internal issues was bankrupt the following year. New publications filled the void, yet expansion for print at the start of the new millennium plateaued and its golden era reached the end, as the Internet displaced it.

All publishers were forced to deal with the business side of their operation and the tension of not having enough money. The publishing business was more than just the endeavours to produce the content and publication seen by readers. It also entailed the need to set up systems for the other two key elements of the operation: sales and distribution, as well as an overarching system of administration. Without enough money, print runs remained small and publishers relied on volunteers, often themselves, who frequently suffered burnout. The growing gay community infrastructure, and more liberal attitudes from mainstream business saw gay movement goals change, and provided opportunities for publishers to increase distribution and advertising revenue which influenced the decisions publishers made. At times there was a direct tension between publishers’ initial aspirations to create a better world and the needs of the business that could only be solved through difficult compromise. Yet there was also innovative refashioning of goals to create synergies.

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10 Reflected in publication activity graphs in Appendix A.
with revenue sources, such as building and supporting community infrastructure, venues and events, and government funded safe sex campaigns, that helped create a better world for gay people and eased publishers’ financial concerns. Business expansion itself often improved publishers’ financial position and provided greater distributional reach for publications to advance movement goals. This exploration of publisher aims and actions, often in tension, underpins this thesis and I focus on their efforts to bring about change in mainstream society’s attitudes and laws, their efforts to build and support gay community, and their efforts to define a gay lifestyle to their readers, while at the same time running the business. The interplay of these tensions, and how publishers dealt with them, drove the development and growth of this media sector, to reach more readers, find more advertisers, and even at times allow publishers to dream of building a media empire.

Theoretical Framework

I have chosen to broadly position all gay and lesbian media as instruments of the gay and lesbian rights movement, including aspects of it often not focused on by scholars in the field. Political scientist Verity Bergmann describes the new social movements, including gay rights, as having an “overwhelmingly middle-class support base [in particular] those employed in the public sector, as teachers and academics, social workers, and public servants generally; or else those deployed as students, awaiting entry to these professions”, and from this group largely came the “rational participating forces in the political process”. Certainly this politically engaged middle-class articulated specific demands and consciously developed strategies. Historian Graham Willett in his book Living Out Loud focused on this publicly staged political activism, but acknowledged activism “can—indeed needs to be—understood fairly broadly” and that private activity and cultural happenings also “mattered greatly”. Social theorist Alberto Melucci presents the idea of movements drawing on a network of people and individuals, often “submerged in everyday life” and despite an apparent invisibility to the movement’s public activities, these networks act

13 Willett, Living Out Loud, pp. xi-xii.
as “cultural laboratories” for evolving ideas and actions. I include among these ‘invisible’ cultural laboratories everyday activities such as socialising in commercial venues to create a gay space within them, engaging in illegal sexual activity, and even the often private action of rejecting guilt and established morality, as part of this broad view of what constituted the gay and lesbian rights movement. Adoption of this broad framework allows me to consider all the publications – including those solely produced to promote venues, or to provide sexual titillation – as instruments of the gay rights movement. The drift of gay and lesbian publications to commercial entities, and the coinciding drift of liberationist politics to building community does not contradict this approach. As political sociologists Donatella della Porta and Mario Diani discuss, the evolution of social movement organisations is not “unidirectional” and some sections potentially involve themselves in the market.

Media was an important tool used by this broadly defined gay and lesbian rights movement and a key component of this thesis is the exploration of the ways different publishers used and developed their magazines and newspapers to further its goals in three important areas: agitating to change social attitudes; defining the gay and lesbian lifestyle to readers; and helping build community. I argue that publishers were generally motivated to change the world in some way for good as they saw it, though their views varied on what actions were a priority, and were influenced by evolving political, social and financial circumstance across time.

**Agitating for change**

Media scholars who discuss the role of radical alternative media include Mitzi Waltz who argues its function is to “provide a counter-narrative to that put forward by mainstream media”, and John Downing who argues more forcefully that its role is to challenge “hegemonic codes that appear natural and sensible”, in this case strongly held views that condemn homosexuality. He discusses how alternative media

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“typically first articulate and diffuse the issues, the analyses, and the challenges of the 
movements”, and try “to disrupt the silence, to counter the lies, to provide the truth 
[when] mainstream media misrepresent social and political realities”. Gay and 
lesbian media often performed such a role as it presented the case for the psychiatry 
profession to remove homosexuality from its list of illnesses, religion to cease moral 
condemnation, or governments to decriminalise homosexual acts. Social theorist 
Nancy Fraser offers a broader perspective on the role of gay media by positioning it 
as one part of what she terms the “counterpublic” arena that provides a space for the 
discussion of ideas otherwise discouraged, moderated, even banned by society’s 
dominant groups that control the public domain of debate. She sees the development 
of gay and lesbian counterpublics as being similar to the late twentieth century 
feminist movement with its “variegated array of journals, bookstores, publishing 
companies, film and video distribution networks, lecture series, research centres, 
academic programs, conferences, conventions, festivals, and local meeting places”. These counterpublic spaces, of which gay media is one, along with meetings, books and even casual discussions in bars, provided gay people with “arenas for deliberation 
among themselves about their needs, objectives, and strategies” and allowed them “to 
articulate and defend their interests in the comprehensive public sphere”. Michael 
Warner built on Fraser’s ideas to highlight how a counterpublic contravened the rules 
of the world at large to hold different assumptions about “what can be said or what 
goes without saying”.

While a conduit for discussion of new ideas, gay media was also a direct player 
influencing governments, business and mainstream media. Early gay magazine 
publishers faced legal battles with government censors. Later publishers directly 
agitated and used their media as historian Shirleene Robinson says to become “a 
central component of Australia’s successful response to HIV/AIDS”. By the 1990s 
politicians courted publishers and editors in an effort to win the gay vote at election 
time. Publishers routinely faced homophobia as they went about their daily business.

22 Ibid, p. 123.
23 Ibid, p. 123.
They dealt with commercial suppliers and confronted instances of refusal by printers to print, and mainstream media to accept promotional advertisements. They challenged prejudice in businesses and government through their approaches for advertising and distribution of publications. This public distribution of magazines and newspapers reached, in part, a broad readership, and provided story leads for mainstream media who frequently sought comment from publishers and editors.

**Defining lifestyle**

Gay media was not only a counter-public arena that challenged dominant ideas within society but it also provided a space for individual gay and lesbian readers to rethink their socially conditioned attitudes, often internalised self-hatred. Fraser talks of counterpublic spaces as providing “parallel discursive arenas where members of subordinated social groups invent and circulate counter-discourses to formulate oppositional interpretations of their identities, interests, and needs”.26 Reinforcing this idea, media scholar Clemencia Rodriguez describes it as a process to create “one’s own images of self … to recodify one’s own identity”.27 She refers to this process as producing a transformative effect “activat[ing] subtle processes of fracture in the social, cultural and power spheres of everyday life”.28 This theme is taken up by journalism scholar Dominic O’Grady in his study of the early 1980s gay newspaper *Sydney Star* where he says: “through its articulation and amplification of gay activities, behaviours, language and style, and through its assumption of things that ‘go without saying’ (such as the ‘naturalness’ of same-sex desire), [it] offered its readers and writers multiple entry and exit points into Sydney’s gay world [and in doing so] acknowledged the fissures and fractures that pervade the social, sexual, political and cultural spheres of everyday life [allowing] participants to reformulate and strengthen a new worldview”.29 Cultural studies scholar Rob Cover argues this rethinking of individual gay people’s lives and place in the world is a necessary precursor for them to come out and live openly. He says gay print media played an important role in providing gay identity for those new to the scene, in part because

26 Fraser, "Rethinking the Public Sphere: A Contribution to the Critique of Actually Existing Democracy," p. 123.
29 John Dominic O’Grady, "Preaching to the Perverted: Michael Glynn and the Sydney Star" (University of Sydney, 2012), pp. 22-3.
there were so few sources of information that resonated truly.\textsuperscript{30} He argues that gay identity and behaviours are constructed with individuals strategically choosing particular images, styles and ways of behaving as depicted in gay media to reinterpret their own pasts, to create a sense of self and belonging.\textsuperscript{31} Given this shortage of role models, Fred Fejes argues that gay male pornography, common in print form during the 1970s, also “was an important source for the definition of desire and identity”.\textsuperscript{32}

All gay media, including male nude magazines that legitimised the very act of gay male sex, actively promoted being gay or lesbian as a positive way of life, and this helped individuals to come out publicly. Regular photographic coverage by many publications of gay venues and events normalised seeing ‘average’ members of the gay and lesbian community, and the commercialisation of gay media provided job security for openly gay role models and public spokespeople. All publications reflected and magnified the debates and trends over what a gay or lesbian lifestyle meant and how it should be expressed. This included sexual practices from questioning the adoption of monogamy, the use of condoms, to sadomasochism. It included discussion around adoption of certain physical styles to reflect a political understanding, from ‘Butch/fem dykes’, to masculine gay male ‘clones’, to ‘lipstick’ lesbians. And it included direct political debate from a broad left-wing analysis of society, to eschewing this politics in favour of lifestyle promotion. Individual publishers often pioneered significant new expression, such as Michael Glynn who used his \textit{Sydney Star} to promote a masculine gay male image and Francine Laybutt who published \textit{Wicked Women} to encourage lesbian sexual experimentation. Who should belong and be included in gay publications was debated, with lesbians, bisexuals, drag or transgendered effectively excluded from some publications, with others that focused solely on women.

\textbf{Building community}

Social theorist Benedict Anderson’s seminal ideas on the creation of the nation state outlines the critical role of print media to make it possible for people “to think about


themselves, and to relate themselves to others, in profoundly new ways”.

This can similarly be applied to individual gay men and lesbians reading gay media to develop a new understanding of themselves and attachment to gay community. Cultural historian Roger Streitmatter makes the point, as do others, that gay media in the United States performed this function by allowing individuals to create their own sense of being gay and part of a community where they could belong. At a more immediate level, historian Martin Meeker talks about the need for gay people to “connect” in order to overcome their sense of isolation. Gay media played a crucial role in this. Meeker develops the argument that there was an overarching need for communication before individual homosexuals could “coalesce around an identity and gather … into communities”.

Gay media presented the idea of community through written and pictorial spreads of the expanding commercial venue scene, as well as sporting, social and community service group activities, and festivals such as Sydney’s annual Mardi Gras. It helped define and reinforce a community with legitimate political concerns through its coverage of a range of issues such as police raids on venues, anti-gay street violence, law reform developments and the AIDS epidemic. At a practical level gay magazines and newspapers provided information on ways to meet other gay or lesbian people through promotion of group activities, personal classifieds, venue guides and what’s on listings. Historians Clive Moore and Yorick Smaal touch on the role of personal advertisements for people to meet each other, and Moore talks about gay papers linking people to social groups and being a space for small gay businesses to promote themselves through advertising.

Publishers commit time and money to business

Most publishers played a direct operational role in their publications, and personally committed a great deal of time, money or both to the venture, so their visions for a better world and approaches to running the finances were crucial. Gay publishers at times took the role of “old-fashioned proprietor” in a similar way to description journalist Mark Day provided of mainstream proprietor and founder of *The Australian* newspaper Rupert Murdoch at its 50th anniversary. Day says Murdoch displayed “vision, enterprise, tenacity and, at times, cussedness [and was] not afraid to take risks, and not afraid to fail”.38 At other times gay media proprietors had more of an “intimate entanglement” with their readers in a similar fashion to the way historian Sylvia Lawson writes of the founder of late 19th century current affairs magazine *The Bulletin*. She talks of editorial choices that at times reflected “the prejudices of readerships” and at times reflected the publisher’s view.39

Apart from their desires to make the world a better place, publishers had financial aims associated with running the business side of their magazines and newspapers, most commonly survival. Some publishers aimed to build a profitable business venture, though financial success was rare. Some also had personal goals, perhaps they enjoyed the celebrity of publication ownership and the free access it offered to venues, entertainment and products; or they dreamed of owning a business empire based on servicing the gay market niche. Much thought and effort was devoted to trying to increase subscribers, organise fund-raising, seek institutional support, or – depending on the type of publication – sell more copies and advertising. But the universal concern for all was finding a reliable stream of income, otherwise they relied on volunteer or poorly paid workers, and struggled to pay the bills. Many publications closed due to financial difficulties and worker burn-out. Such burn-out was a frequent problem that affected social movements generally, and social researchers Sarah Maddison and Sean Scalmer point out how failures and arguments over strategies can turn hope into despair.40

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In the process of dealing with financial tensions, original aims were at times compromised, even jettisoned, by a narrowing of focus to the more lucrative gay male market, or tailoring content decisions to appease advertisers. Publishers also found creative solutions to the tension between earning money and advancing community interest. Synergies were found, as mentioned earlier, and one of the most profound was expansion itself that often resulted in improved revenues while achieving greater reach for movement ideas. Close relationships were developed to promote commercial venues and community activities, as well as businesses that provided services to the community, and government agencies that promoted a safer sex message.

Expansion was frequently seen as a solution, either by changing the magazine’s appeal to reach a broader range of readers, or by broadening the magazine’s geographical reach into other areas in Australia. To win more readers required a new format and content formula that appealed to a broader readership, who often wanted only to be entertained, or to find sexual partners. For publications reliant on advertising, increased readership was not enough, they also needed to increase advertiser support, and creative content solutions were at times adopted to encourage this support.

To expand a publication’s operation into another state often meant bumping up against an existing publication which usually led to hostile competition and forced publishers to deal with an extra layer of tensions. This battle for readers and advertisers also occurred as new players entered the market to challenge established publications, particularly gay lifestyle or free newspapers. The Sydney market was often seen as the most prized, though competition also took place in Melbourne and Brisbane. At times these new publishers entered the market following a clash of personality with an existing publisher, and at times due to differing ideas on what was needed.

**The need for research**

No detailed history has been written of this Australian media sector and the mapping of its key features, people and events is original research. Understanding the development and growth of these publications offers insights into, and in part reflects, the changing nature of both the gay and lesbian community and broader Australian
society, and the way media was used by this group. The discussion here of gay media’s influence on Australian society, particularly governments, businesses and mainstream media, is also original research; as too is the research into its influence on its readers’ attitudes towards their sexuality, and its influence on the building of gay community.

In America the situation is different, with Roger Streitmatter providing a detailed and structured narrative of US publications along with an exploration of themes that resonate with my own three themes of agitating for change, defining lifestyle and building community. While comparative analysis between countries is not part of this thesis, Streitmatter outlines three reasons for gay media’s significance that align with my own areas of key attention: giving a ‘powerful voice’, legitimising and affirming gay values, and helping galvanise a diverse readership into a cohesive force. In addition to this landmark book, Streitmatter has written prolifically on US gay media, discussing its role as an agitator for change. Yet he writes more broadly too on the general media, notably on the way that it uses sex to sell, and in the process actually changes social attitudes towards sex. In his book Perverts to Fab Five, he traces the changing US mainstream media’s attitudes towards homosexuality across the period of my own research.

Specific discussion of Australian gay publications and their role is largely limited to their support role within the context of gay movement politics. Graham Willett discusses gay media’s role in consolidating community and the differing attitudes of editors towards political activism. Garry Wotherspoon provides a brief overview of Sydney’s gay media in the 1970s, and more recently a historical overview of key publications and their role to provide news and information, validate sexualities, and help “foster highly politicised communities that were willing and able to very openly fight for their civil rights”. Robert Reynolds discusses the role of the early group

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41 Streitmatter, Unspeakable, pp. 456-7.
42 Willett, Living Out Loud, pp. 207-218.
43 Wotherspoon, “City of the Plain”, p. 201.
CAMP and its magazine *Camp Ink* in countering the anti-homosexual narrative and its role in defining new notions of homosexuality and lifestyle.  

Some specific aspects of Australia’s gay media have been discussed, notably historian Shirleene Robinson’s outline of the history of Australian print media’s response to AIDS and its role in taking action against homophobia. Marcus O’Donnell provides a useful outline of key people, events and changing editorial policy across the life of the long running newspaper *Sydney Star Observer*, and Dominic O’Grady’s PhD thesis provides valuable insight into the founder of this newspaper. Yorick Smaal has tracked the changing nature of the men’s lifestyle magazine *OutRage* during the 1990s and its drift away from politics to promotion of the body beautiful. Through analysing articles, advertisements and personals he discusses the way the magazine “reflects and constructs gay male identity [to tell] 1990s gay men in no uncertain terms what ‘gay’ means”. The term “Template Man” was succinctly described by queer theorist Dean Kiley who he said needed to be “young, attractive, short-haired, smooth-bodied, defined, muscular … white.”

Historian Liz Ross talks of the significance of lesbian newsletters in the 1970s as a forum to debate issues and express sexual yearnings. Moore and Smaal touch on the role of personal classifieds for people to meet each other and Moore talks about gay papers linking people to social groups and being a space for small gay businesses to promote themselves through advertising. Researcher Felicity Grace discusses the commercialising effect on editorial content in Queensland gay newspapers, and my own honours thesis explores early 1970s publications and how they varyingly tapped into readers’ desire for justice, sex and social community. Hints exist in the literature of the media’s role in bringing small pockets together into a larger sense of

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48 O’Grady, “Preaching to the Perverted.”
49 Smaal, “Body Politic to Body Beautiful,” pp. 8, 44. Also Smaal, "Body Politic or Body Beautiful?"
51 Ross, "We Were Catalysts for Change," p. 447.
community: Willett talks of how dealing with the early press drew activists and the commercial gay subculture closer;\textsuperscript{57} Moore notes the role of the Queensland state newspaper through its coverage of northern towns, to help create statewide links;\textsuperscript{58} and Clive Faro talks about the early Sydney based publications promoting knowledge of the Oxford Street gay precinct through their national circulation.\textsuperscript{59}

This thesis analyses gay and lesbian media in a comprehensive manner across the time frame. It provides new knowledge by approaching the material from the perspective of publishers’ commercial tensions and attempts at resolution, rather than simply analysis of content. It offers a deeper understanding of publisher decisions that at times faced criticism. In doing so it helps balance the picture.

**Methodology**

While careful attention has been given to the stories and advertising of the magazines, this thesis goes beyond looking at content, as other researchers have previously done, and investigates the complexity of factors that influenced these content decisions. Biographical details of key participants – based on oral history interviews, published accounts from the time, and other participant witness accounts – are included to better understand the attitudes of individual players who were central to the decisions made. Consideration is given to the historical context and, in particular, the tensions that publishers faced between goals to bring about social and political change, and the need to fund their media venture.

**Creating an historical map**

The first stage in the research was to compile a detailed map of the gay and lesbian media landscape from 1969 to 2000 – based on archival sources, a study of nearly 100 publications, and oral history interviews – as no such comprehensive history previously existed. This systematic study of the publications included plotting the publications’ credit boxes which provide information on ownership, staffing and office location; news reports on themselves and other gay media; and commemorative articles. The changing nature of the business in terms of format, content, distribution and financial viability was documented, along with key events and personnel, as well

\textsuperscript{57} Willett, *Living Out Loud*, p. 132.  
\textsuperscript{58} Moore, *Sunshine and Rainbows*, p. 214.  
as circulation and financial information. This was supplemented by more than 20 oral history interviews conducted with most major publishers, some of whom published more than one publication, though others could not be found or had died. A further dozen oral history interviews were conducted with selected editors and gay media participants. Motivations for publishing were explored during the interviews, along with mining of memories to add further to the detailed history of the industry. Across this 30 year period, despite a significant level of overlap, six key publishing trends were identified that comprise the six substantive chapters of this thesis, as discussed shortly.

**Use of Oral Histories**

Oral history interviews were a substantive part of this research. In conducting my analysis of life stories I was guided by techniques learnt at the 2010 Oral History Association of Australia workshop, use of established methodologies for interpreting life narratives, and from studying the post-graduate subject History and Memory at Monash University. The interview technique employed was the semi-structured standard oral history initially, allowing the interviewee to tell their story uninterrupted with question prompts only as required. At the end of this stage in the interview specific questions were posed to clarify factual statements or interviewee’s thoughts, and to gather further historical data. Field notes were recorded as soon as possible after an interview, noting important comments made off-tape, and any pertinent comments about the interview and demeanor of the interviewee.

Each interview was summarised with some sections fully transcribed. Recordings were also listened to ‘beyond the words’ to interpret pauses, uncertainty, speed of answering and emotion. The warnings of memory scholars were heeded. Ian Hodder argues that words are used for their “practical and social impact” as well as to communicate truth. Geoffrey Cubitt discusses memory in depth and how memories

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are constantly reinterpreted to give meaning and coherence in a person’s life, and that this may at times contradict the evidence. Rather than dismissing these ‘untruths’ I viewed them as offering, as Valerie Yow argues, “a different kind of truth, perhaps a psychological truth for the narrator”. In assessing publisher priorities I refer back to their comments and actions in the past, as well as their recollections today. In order, generally, to “obtain a better, more substantive picture of reality” I used triangulation in my research wherever possible, to compare oral history interviews with published accounts from the time, other participant witness accounts and through quantitative methods. The oral history and personal stories gathered for this thesis vary in detail due to circumstance: for some individuals we have considerable information, while for others only fragments, and allowance is made where possible to avoid this causing unduly skewed impressions.

**Qualitative Narrative Analysis**

Much of the research involved qualitative narrative analysis of materials, in particular publications’ content and production, and oral history transcripts. The relatively low sample size of less than 100 publications available for this research lent itself to this approach. As Berg and Lune advocate, it was “a careful, detailed, systematic examination and interpretation of [publications and transcripts] to identify patterns, themes, biases, and meaning”. Hodder’s advice that the meaning of written words depends on context and is “always socially embedded” was followed. As Flick recommends, a “continually updated research diar[y]” was kept during this process which allowed key themes to be identified where publications impacted social and political change. This, in turn, contributed to the development of my theoretical framework, though further detailed analysis of the materials, as Flick suggests, forced

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65 Ibid, p. 15.
66 Ibid, p. 349.
67 Hodder, "The Interpretation of Documents and Material Culture," p. 156.
modifications to this theory. In conclusion, close analysis of content revealed that change across this 30 year period was reflected and played out in detail within this industry’s publications: society’s changing attitude towards homosexuality and the ongoing push for full equality; the evolution of ideas on what it meant to be gay or lesbian; the growth of gay community; and its subsequent targeting as a niche consumer group.

**Quantitative Narrative Analysis**

I used quantitative analysis to establish the growth of the sector and relied on three measurable means: the number of pages laid out and sent to the printer each year; total circulation figures; and annual revenue income. The physical evidence for the number of pages sent to the printer exists in the archive, and is the most accurately plotted of the three. The magazines and newspapers counted for this were selected from the Australian Lesbian and Gay Archives periodicals list that records the number of editions for individual publications produced each year. This was multiplied by the number of pages for a sample edition to get each publication’s annual number of pages published. The data obtained for revenue income and circulation figures is less precise as it varies from very accurate annual reports and audited circulation figures, to publisher claims and estimates, as outlined in the relevant appendices.

Front cover images were counted in select cases to resolve, as Bauer suggests, unanswered questions that arose from qualitative analysis findings. In particular, the extent sexually attractive ‘Template Man’ cover models were used to target specific reader demographies.

**Thesis Structure**

Although the gay community produced a diversity of media forms, at different stages in the progress of the gay movement and its community particular media forms became ascendant, and by highlighting key aspects in the development of the gay media sector, important trends are illuminated. These changing forms of media

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70 Flick, *An Introduction to Qualitative Research*, p. 312.
71 See Appendix A.
72 See Appendices B and C.
reflected developments in the gay movement and the way it used media, and reflected broader changes in society, including changing technology, and the gay community. Each of the six chapters that follow represents an aspect in gay media’s development, looked at primarily from the publishers’ perspective. While they suggest some chronological flow, these were never discrete stages and a significant level of overlap existed between them.\textsuperscript{75}

Each chapter includes a short cameo description to set the tone, with subsequent discussion and further review of relevant literature into the broad political and social context that surrounded this stage, and an outline of the role media played here. A summary of key events is outlined and in each of the first five chapters, case studies are included that highlight particular publishers’ aims and actions in the face of change and challenge using detailed analysis of content and development of selected publications. The variety of case studies highlights a diversity of aims and the importance of publisher motive and decision. The final chapter differs slightly in that it analyses a long-running and diverse gay publishing organisation rather than specific publications. Of the 14 case studies in all, eight are from Sydney, the city with Australia’s largest gay community, five from Melbourne, the second largest and with a strong media presence, and one from the smaller regional city of Brisbane. The publications and organisation studied in depth were all started by gay publishers though some were later owned, at least in part, by straight publishers. Following the concluding chapter are three appendices that demonstrate the relative dominance of each media type across the time period, and the overall growth of the sector.

\textbf{Chapter One – Gay liberationists: demanding change}

Influenced by other late sixties political movements, the trigger for Australia’s gay liberation movement was a riot in response to a police raid on the American gay bar Stonewall. One of the first actions of the new movement was to launch the liberationist magazine \textit{Camp Ink}. It became the official journal for the activist group Campaign Against Moral Persecution (CAMP) and offered a free flow of ideas presenting homosexuality in a positive light, with debates on topics from promiscuity, male prostitution and religion, to discussion about law reform, transvestites and the role of beats. Other liberationist publications followed, but a reluctance to engage

\textsuperscript{75} The graphs in Appendices A and B provide a visual representation of this.
with the growing commercial venue scene restricted their readership reach and from the early 1980s they continued usually as newsletters around specific political actions, or their ideas were absorbed into broader community newspapers. Numbers alone cannot measure liberationist media’s impact, as it presented radical new ideas that challenged the thinking of mainstream society and individual readers. The chapter starts with a cameo that describes the 1969 Stonewall riot in New York, followed by discussion of gay persecution in Australia and the challenge taken up by liberationist publications to combat it.

**Chapter Two – Male nude magazines: entertaining sexual desire**

With changing, more liberal social attitudes towards censorship, erotic depiction of male nudes became possible. Profit seeking, privately owned publications appealed to readers’ sexual desire, and were among the first elements of the emerging gay economy. In doing so they affirmed the act of gay sex and helped lay foundations for a community by linking gay men through personal classifieds. In the early 1970s publishers of these magazines still faced difficulties as censorship laws gradually changed that helped politicise them, and their magazine content. Once censorship law reform stabilised, a successful commercial formula was adopted. This continued until the media form was challenged from the late 1980s by video’s more dynamic presentation of sexual scenes, and from the late 1990s the convenience of free pornography via the internet. This chapter starts with a cameo about Sydney’s libertarian sex entertainment capital Kings Cross, followed by discussion of changing censorship laws and the role played by male nude magazines through positive presentation of gay sex.

**Chapter Three – Gay lifestyle publications: building the scene**

Mainly directed at gay men, the lifestyle publications focused more on entertainment than politics, toned down the sexual imagery, and flourished from the late 1970s into the 1980s. They expanded alongside the rapid growth of a commercial venue scene – fueled by the movement of gay men in particular, from rural, suburban and even interstate areas to the anonymity and relative safety of inner city living, particularly Sydney, where the thriving Oxford Street precinct developed. This was accompanied by the growth of gay sporting, social and community service groups, and a similar, though smaller, trend occurred in other cities. The politics that lifestyle publishers did
engage with were issues central to the community and their readers, such as law reform, stopping anti-gay violence and the AIDS epidemic, and this attitude influenced the gay movement’s switch in focus towards building and defending community – of which venues were a major component – as a central part of the political project. Lifestyle publications achieved commercial benefit from the synergy that existed between promoting the commercial scene, and its provision of stories, advertising revenue, and distribution outlets. The range of publications included two long running national glossies Campaign and OutRage each selling more than 10,000 copies a month, to a plethora of smaller ‘bar rags’ in Sydney, and later Melbourne. This chapter starts with a cameo about Sydney’s Oxford Street, followed by discussion of the development of the commercial scene in Australia and the role lifestyle publications played to promote it.

Chapter Four – Lesbian magazines: finding a space

Gay men dominated many aspects of the gay world. They out-numbered and out-shouted lesbians in political discussions, and out-spent them in commercial venues. Not always welcome in the women’s movement, many lesbians turned to separatism, or at least clearly defined lesbian space, with publications to explore these themes and promote activities of importance to their readers. At first these publications were small in circulation, collectively published newsletters strongly influenced by feminist ideas. With time private publishers established commercial enterprises that focused more on the sexual and social aspects of a lesbian lifestyle, at times a direct challenge to established feminist thinking, notably the magazine Wicked Women’s promotion of sadomasochistic lesbian sex. By the 1990s Sydney and Melbourne sustained commercial lesbian magazines, publishing 10,000 and 2000 each month respectively, with the smaller cities relying on the big city publications or volunteer based newsletters. This chapter starts with a cameo of separatist life in Melbourne, followed by discussion of the influence of feminist ideas on the lesbian community and the role played by lesbian publications to develop the lesbian voice.

Chapter Five – Free city-based newspapers: reflecting diversity

By the 1990s a key shift had occurred in gay publishing with the dramatic expansion of free city-based newspapers. Their origins were the cheaply produced ‘bar rags’ of the 1980s, the first in fact Glynn’s Sydney Star, later renamed Sydney Star Observer.
Their growth into the dominant media form was driven by the fact they were free and easily available, and their quicker turnaround provided up-to-date news, venue gig guides and personal dating classifieds. Increased numbers of readers attracted advertisers, who were mostly local, and the imperative as a free paper to attract advertisers drove the search for even more readers. This led to a broadening of content that appealed to more sections of the community beyond gay men in bars, and the market grew in the three main east coast cities to sustain competing newspapers. At the end of the 1990s, free newspapers made up 90 percent of the five million copies of publications printed annually across the country. This chapter starts with a cameo of Sydney’s annual Gay and Lesbian Mardi Gras parade, followed by discussion of the growth and diversity of community, particularly in the 1990s, and the relationship between it and the free city-based newspapers that promoted its interests and were in turn sustained by it.

Chapter Six – Pink dollars: flirting with corporations

Other than liberationist and early lesbian feminist publications, gay media’s constant search for advertising revenue saw it play a leading role to develop the idea of the affluent gay consumer and draw business attention to it. Only gay connected businesses responded initially, apart from a few mainstream enterprises such as sex industry and alcohol businesses prepared to take the risk. In the 1990s mainstream business started to shed its fear of association with a vilified minority and saw instead potential gain from marketing to a dynamic new niche group. The growth of advertising revenues fueled the expansion of the gay media sector and this chapter starts with a cameo of the Telstra advertising campaign that featured a popular Melbourne drag performer. This is followed by discussion of how ideas developed around marketing to the pink dollar niche, and the impact of gay media to facilitate this process.

Conclusion – New media for a new millennium: the Internet age

This concluding chapter briefly outlines the events that occurred post-2000, including the rise of the Internet. It reiterates the primary argument that as publishers attempted to resolve tensions between political and commercial goals, the gay print media sector expanded during its golden age late last century with an accompanying increase in influence to achieve gay and lesbian movement goals.
Only part of the story

The magazines and newspapers studied in this thesis from 1969 to 2000 were only part, albeit a dominant part, of the overall gay media landscape. Media historian John Arnold defines newsletters as “something between a magazine and a circular letter to members” and these are included when they verge more closely towards the role of a magazine.76 The Internet is briefly discussed at the end for the reason it took over much of the space previously occupied by print, and has similar characteristics of being affordable and relatively unrestricted for publishers to establish. Books, leaflets, social group newsletters, films, overseas gay media distributed in Australia, and academic publications are generally not included in this study.77

Radio and television played similar, though smaller roles to newspapers and magazines, limited by the need for expensive equipment and difficult to obtain government licences, and are not included. The first Australian gay radio program, Gay Liberation, went to air in 1976 broadcasting a weekly gay and lesbian program under the auspice of Melbourne’s community radio station 3CR,78 and continued for many years in one form or another.79 Other programs were similarly hosted such as Sydney’s Gay Waves program from 1979 on 2SER,80 and a broadcast on Cairns 4CCR.81 Not until Melbourne’s JOY FM from 1993 was there a gay community run radio station,82 and two stations in Sydney, Out FM and Free FM broadcast on test licences during the 1990s.83 Gay and lesbian television started in Australia with a test broadcast in 1988 on Sydney community television station Channel 31,84 with similar programming later developed in other cities.

The interviews, archival material and publications sourced for this thesis provide a rich vein of material that lends itself to research beyond the primary focus of this thesis, which is deliberately restricted to discussion of gay media’s growth and the

way publishers negotiated the changing tensions between goals for a better world and running the business. The impact of technological change on publishing as it moved from low quality, labour intensive publications cranked out from gestetner machines through various stages until the arrival of the Internet from the mid-1990s is only mentioned in passing. Detailed study waits on how gay communities and publications from other countries contributed to the development of Australia’s media, such as the United States that provided Australia’s gay movement with the symbolic trigger event, the Stonewall riots in 1969, and due to its more advanced commercial and activist scene supplied a number of influential ex-pat editors from the mid-1970s to the mid-1980s. Detailed study also waits on comparative studies of gay media from different countries and even different cities within Australia. Such studies could look at cultural difference, race and ethnicity, as well as illuminating aspects of social movement dynamics through studying the networks that existed, the personnel flow between publications, and burn-out among participants. This thesis is also not a comparative study with other protest or niche media during the late 20th century, or mainstream media’s changing coverage of gay issues and increased use of gay media as the source for stories. These and other research treatments await further work.

Define meanings and definitions

The term ‘gay media’ is often used in this thesis for purposes of simplicity. Media is a broad term and I use it despite only studying magazines, newspapers, and some newsletters. In contrast I use the word ‘gay’ to imply a broader spectrum than just men, notably also lesbian, and I intersperse the phrases ‘gay and lesbian’ or ‘lesbian and gay’ to reinforce this broader range of meaning. Both words were in common usage during the period under discussion. The word homosexual was used early in this period and its use continued in legal and medical discussions, so where appropriate I also use this word. Towards the end of the period studied the phrase ‘gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender’ (GLBT) and later ‘intersex and queer’ (GLBTIQ) started to be introduced. In keeping with the bulk of the time period, I don’t use either of these phrases.

Insider knowledge

85 For a detailed historic study of gay media in the United States read Streitmatter, Unspokenable.
86 A list covering part of this time exists in Robert French, Gays between the Broadsheets: Australian Media References to Homosexuality, 1948-1980 (Sydney: Gay History Project, 1986).
I draw on my insider knowledge of the industry, having known participants or worked myself in it since 1980 when I first assisted in organising fund raising dances for the Melbourne based liberationist magazine *Gay Community News.*[87] I was a founding collective member in 1984 of *Gayzette*, the liberationist newsletter that started after *Gay Community News* transformed into the gay lifestyle magazine *OutRage* and worked as a mainstream media journalist for five years in the late 1980s. I later became news editor for *OutRage* in 1989-90 and in 1991 editor of its stable-mate, the free city-based newspaper *Melbourne Star Observer*. I left in 1992 to start *Brother Sister* in competition with *Melbourne Star Observer* and sold this newspaper to the Satellite Group in 1999. After the collapse of this group I started the free city-based newspaper *Bnews* before selling once more in 2005.

As educator Pat Drake says “authorial voice is constructed” based on the researcher’s perspective with regard the data,[88] and clearly mine is influenced by previously being an insider in gay media. Psychologist Patricia Greenfield suggests bias, whether as an insider or outsider, is impossible to escape as all knowledge created in social science research bears the markers of culture-specific theorising.[89] The crucial response, according to cultural researcher Val Colic-Peisker is to apply processes of self-awareness and continuous reflexive self-evaluation,[90] and as Elena Maydell recommends, to maintain strong “theoretical and methodological frameworks”. [91] She says the advantage of insider research is the potential to understand participants’ “deep feelings and motivations”. [92] My insider status in this research is clear, and some understanding of my positioning can be gleaned from the detailed discussion of my newspaper *Brother Sister* in Chapter Five that is deliberately written in the first person, to further signpost to the reader the nature of any potential bias.

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[92] Ibid.
Chapter One

**Gay Liberationists**

**Demanding change**

It’s a hot night on June 28, 1969 and the dozen cops come later than usual to raid the Stonewall Inn. The mafia-run gay bar has no license to sell alcohol. It operates from a rundown building with overflowing toilets and no fire exits in a rough part of New York, but because it has two dance floors the Christopher Street venue is very popular. The money flows and corrupt cops are paid to turn a blind eye, or conduct token raids early before the crowd arrives. This raid takes place late when many patrons have turned up mourning the recent death of the gay icon, actress-singer Judy Garland. The police order most patrons to leave the venue but many mill around outside watching as others are arrested and dragged away. Some ring friends from pay phones or run through the streets shouting that the Stonewall is being busted. Before long a crowd of several thousand people has gathered outside the venue. They watch as a police officer clubs a drag queen; they see a solitary lesbian who curses and kicks as police drag her away; they boo and grow angry. Teenage boys start to throw empty bottles and coins as sarcastic payoff money to the police. Cobblestones are pulled from the street and used as missiles. The police retreat into the Stonewall, giving control of the street to a mob in full fury. A police car is trashed, attempts made to burn down the building and a parking meter ripped out and used as a battering ram against the front door. More police eventually arrive to free those trapped inside and the protesters melt away into the streets, only to gather again the next day outside the Stonewall. Organised protests take place throughout the following week as news spreads of what has happened.¹

The Stonewall riot inspired the birth of the gay liberation movement in Australia. This chapter discusses how liberationists used magazines and newsletters to challenge both society’s entrenched hostile views, and the way individual homosexuals thought about themselves. These magazines presented new ways for readers to live, and helped

coordinate activist campaigns, but their publishers faced financial tensions as they struggled to fund the venture. The chapter’s introductory discussion outlines the persecution of homosexuals in Australia from the 1950s by the state, the church and the medical profession, accompanied by mainstream media vilification or more often silence. An outline is painted of the secret gay world that did exist and the increasingly liberal attitudes that developed towards homosexuality. This along with the influence of feminist and left wing ideas shaped the gay liberation movement’s early development.

A summary of key elements in the history of liberationist publishing is included and the two most ambitious liberationist publishing ventures are discussed in detail, Camp Ink that started at the beginning of the 1970s, and Gay Community News that started at the end of that decade. Neither was privately owned and both were published on a monthly cycle for several years with a consciously activist focus, until individual energies and finances faltered. The two magazines took different trajectories that reflect the changing attitudes within society and developments within the gay community: the publishers of Camp Ink largely retained a direct political focus for their magazine, and faced eventual demise; whereas the publishers of Gay Community News chose to transition into a commercial business that adopted more popular content and the catchy new name OutRage, which allowed it to continue, albeit in a very different form.2

**Ending the secret shame**

The Stonewall riot triggered a wave of gay liberation protest across the United States and ripples reached Australian shores where homosexuals, by and large, lived secret lives. In 1950s Australia, homosexuals were “persecuted” historian Graham Willett says.3 There was active discrimination by state institutions in terms of employment and other rights, an increase in psychotherapies and criminal convictions, accompanied by the isolating effect for individual gay people of either media silence or vilification. Historian Dino Hodge documents the systematic approach that police enforcement agencies undertook to curtail homosexual activities, through methods of entrapment, raids on private homes and physical assault.4 Successful convictions

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2 See Chapter Six, Pink Dollars for details on this transition.
3 Willett, Living Out Loud, p. ix.
4 Dino Hodge, Don Dunstan: Intimacy and Liberty (South Australia: Wakefield Press, 2014), pp.76-106
often resulted in imprisonment. Books and publications with even “hints of homosexuality” were zealously banned under strict government censorship laws, both federal and state. Many gay men and lesbians got married and lived closeted lives fearful of oppression on many fronts.

Under these circumstances there was no Australian gay or lesbian identified media. American cities and their gay sub-cultures, historians John D’Emilio and Estelle Freedman point out, had a fledgling public structure from as early as 1940s due to a stronger culture of marketing sexual images, free choice, and the pursuit of “personal happiness as a primary goal of sexual relations”. Some American gay magazines entered Australia via mail order or perhaps when visitors travelled between the two countries. Overwhelmingly though gay people in Australia were dependent on mainstream media for information. Some of these outlets delighted in running stories that outlined sordid details of tragic or criminal homosexual activity which often led to social vilification for the individuals involved and loss of employment. Others refused to mention homosexuality. Writer academic Dennis Altman in the early 1970s described this “omission … neither distortion nor misrepresentation” as the harshest response, as it precluded all discussion. Even the tolerant approach that came from some media, usually saw homosexuals as victims at best, afflicted by a disability.

The few gay sympathetic media spaces came from small circulation, politically liberal publications and student newspapers, joined from the early 1970s by a feminist press that discussed lesbian issues.

Despite this persecution a gay world did exist in Australia, hidden from public gaze through friendship networks or private clubs, in public parks or discreet corners of

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6 As an example, Kevin Randall stood as a Liberal Party candidate in 1969 and was told he “needed wife and kiddies”, according to author interview with Kevin Randall 2010. He later wrote and edited gay magazines under the name Jay Watchorn. A further account on the pressure to marry is Norm Lawrence, ”Married Homosexuals: Should They Be Honest in Marriage or Not?” *Camp Ink* March 1977.
8 Reference made to subscribing to American publication *The Ladder* in: Willett and Ross, ”The Daughters of Bilitis.” Articles in early editions of *Camp Ink* were also taken from American publications.
9 Dennis Altman, ”Guys Abandoned,” *New Journalist* No. 8 (June 1973), p. 6.
10 Wotherspoon, ”City of the Plain”, pp. 174-5.
restaurants, and in coffee shops and bars, that often operated at the edge of the law. The mainstream world was changing and the development of Australia’s local gay rights movement and its media from 1970 was strongly linked to events in other countries, as well as support from heterosexual liberal voices. Discussion on the topic of homosexuality was influenced by two key inquiries: the 1948 Kinsey Report from the US into human sexual behaviour, and from England the 1957 Wolfenden Committee’s report calling for decriminalisation of homosexuality, which occurred in England in 1967. During the 1960s a range of movements – predominantly of young people – appeared, expressing opposition to the Vietnam war, revolutionary calls by New Left groups, environmental concerns, counter-cultural ideas and second wave feminism. Each challenged the dominant values of western society and helped lay the foundations for the gay rights movement.

Altman says the “early gay liberation movement defined itself as anti-capitalist, arguing that only with the overthrow of capitalism could we find genuine sexual liberation”. Many liberationists believed the nature and functioning of capitalism caused gay oppression and liberation could only be achieved through radical change in social structures. This included challenging the construct of the heterosexual family and its promotion as a source of social stability. Activist academic Lex Watson says gay activism “grew essentially out of the political left” and its participants often had little contact with the fledgling commercial gay scene. Gay bars were seen as part of the problem, as were businesses and practices that objectified people’s bodies and turned them into commodities, such as pornography, prostitution and youth adulation. Activist Craig Johnston says “in the early 1970s anyone who imagined that businesses might play a progressive part in social change would have been thought of as very odd. Then the idea that homosexuality was a threat to present day capitalist society “wasn’t just a fantasy invented by a few, it actually seemed to be the case”. Social historian Alan Petersen in his study of Camp Ink identifies several reasons why many

13 Wotherspoon, “City of the Plain”, pp. 57-69, 134-8. Also Willett, Living Out Loud, pp. 4-8.
16 Altman, The Homosexualization of America, p. 218.
activists found commercial venues “politically objectionable”.\textsuperscript{19} These ranged from them being a closeted world, emotionally damaging for patrons, and places of economic exploitation through price mark-ups.

In 1970 the organisation Campaign Against Moral Persecution, or CAMP, formed. It published the liberationist magazine \textit{Camp Ink} and within a year had 1500 members with branches across Australia.\textsuperscript{20} It presented views to mainstream society and its own members that challenged the church’s moral condemnation, psychiatry’s definition of deviance and government laws criminalising gay sex. The group organised public demonstrations and social events as an alternative to commercially run bars. As the organisation expanded across the country state branches increasingly operated independently of each other and a further challenge to the parent group’s central control occurred in 1972 with the formation of a breakaway group, Gay Liberation. Many of the new group’s leading members had been part of Sydney CAMP and pushed a strategy of greater “consciousness-raising” among members.\textsuperscript{21} The trigger for the split was a dispute over allocation of money from a fundraising dance. Once established in Sydney, Gay Liberation soon formed around the country.\textsuperscript{22} By the mid-1970s other organisations formed that were separate from CAMP such as the Gay Teachers and Students Group in Melbourne and campus based Gaysocs. Gay Christian groups formed, Acceptance for Catholics and the broadly inclusive Metropolitan Community Church. When Australia’s political climate swung broadly to the right in the mid-1970s this paralleled a decline in gay activism generally. Campaigns were subsequently built around national homosexual conferences, the first one in 1975 sponsored by the Australian Union of Students, and these continued until 1986.\textsuperscript{23} To express their ideas and communicate with members the various liberationist groups relied on print media.

\textbf{Role of liberationist publications}

Liberationist publishers wanted to change the way the world thought about homosexuality and to change the way individual homosexuals thought about

\textsuperscript{20} For a history of CAMP read Willett, \textit{Living Out Loud}, pp. 33-52.
\textsuperscript{21} Wotherspoon, "\textit{City of the Plain}”, p. 176.
\textsuperscript{22} Willett, \textit{Living Out Loud}, pp. 60-1.
\textsuperscript{23} Ibid, p.124.
themselves. Their publications were not privately owned nor produced for profit, and frequently appeared as quick and affordable newsletters, though in the early period from 1970 to 1982 sophisticated liberationist magazines made up a substantial part of Australia’s gay media landscape. Commentator Adam Carr says 1970s liberationist magazines reflected “the radical nature of gay politics at the time” with a broadly left wing and feminist perspective. They provided through their magazines and newsletters a counter-public arena to disrupt the silence and counter the lies that informed mainstream society views of homosexuality. Historian Robert Reynolds says of the early liberationist magazine *Camp Ink* that it succeeded in “challenging dominant knowledge about homosexuality”. Liberationist magazines provided a forum to debate issues of concern and prioritise political action, and were a means to coordinate activist campaigns. Historian Graham Willett summarised *Camp Ink*’s two key functions as being to circulate ideas among “opinion-makers in the community (journalists, MPs and so on)”, and to encourage the membership of the organisation “to be politically active”.

Change in society, for the liberationists, included change within the gay community and the lives of individual gay and lesbian people, with a particular emphasis on urging them to come out and live openly. Activist publications were keenly involved in discussions around how gay and lesbian people lived their lives and provided “safe spaces in which homosexuality could be rethought [and presented] in a new and positive light”. A unique feature of the homosexual movement was the need for individuals to reflect internally and combat internalised homophobia, which meant each reader faced an individual journey to rethink their lives and how to live.

Liberationist publications though struggled to sustain readership and the British research group, Comedia’s investigation in 1984 of alternative media found most such publications survived on free labour and some form of political subsidy, as was the case largely for gay liberationist publications. Most people involved in this publishing tended to have “a strong reaction against the techniques and skills of the capitalist publishing industry” including the rejection of hierarchies of authority and complex

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26 Willett, *Living Out Loud*, p. 79.
27 Reynolds, *From Camp to Queer*, p.38.
division of labour. It also found that most alternative media publishers had “blind-spots [regarding the] importance of skills such as financial planning, budgeting, credit control, accountancy, entrepreneurship and management”. Both the two major 1970s liberationist magazines Camp Ink and Gay Community News faced financial difficulties – in part due to a reluctance to promote the fledgling commercial scene, and appeal to a broader readership – which ultimately contributed to their closure. Liberationists were then left to rely on cheaply produced newsletters or attempt to influence the content of commercially produced gay magazines.

**Newsletters helped co-ordinate campaigns**

*Camp Ink* in 1970 was the first liberationist magazine published in Australia and at its peak was distributed nationally with a monthly publishing cycle. It was a forum for discussion of ideas and the means to present a homosexual viewpoint both for mainstream society and individual homosexuals. In 1973 the publishing frequency of *Camp Ink* declined and at one point stopped entirely for 12 months. A detailed discussion of this magazine follows later in the chapter.

As CAMP expanded across Australia and new groups formed, the shortcomings of its magazine *Camp Ink* as a vehicle to organise campaign actions in the different states became apparent. Activists increasingly relied on cheap, low circulation newsletters and local CAMP branches from 1972 started to produce their own small circulation newsletters to communicate local information about meetings, events and political actions. For example, the South Australian branch of CAMP published the small magazine *Canary* from 1972 until 1974. Initially titled *Campcites*, it was renamed following the drowning of Dr George Duncan in May 1972. Its title drawn from Canary Cottage the name given by the local gay community to the toilet block located on the Torrens Lake near where Duncan’s body was found. *Canary* included many of the debates and activities that led to South Australia becoming the first Australian state to legalise homosexual acts between consenting males in September 1975. In 1973 the NSW branch started its own local newsletter.

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30 Detailed account of Duncan’s death and South Australian law reform in Hodge, *Don Dunstan*, pp. 76-106, 132-196.
In addition, groups breaking away from CAMP started newsletters. Gay Liberation’s Sydney branch produced an irregular newsletter until 1974 and Melbourne Gay Liberation produced one issue of *Gay Rays* in December 1972.\(^{31}\) The Sydney newsletter was replaced in June 1974 with the magazine *Gay Liberation Press*. Initially a bimonthly that sold for 20 cents, it developed into a quarterly magazine selling for $1, but lasted only eight issues. It included polemical articles, and activist what’s on and contact information. The Adelaide Homosexual Alliance in August 1977 published a roneoed 12 page monthly magazine *Gay Changes* and sold it for 20 cents. Two years later it was a 40 page quarterly for 80 cents, but needed “considerable financial support” and ceased soon after.\(^{32}\) In Sydney, the Gay Solidarity Group commemorated the ninth anniversary of the 1969 New York Stonewall Riots with Sydney’s first Lesbian and Gay Mardi Gras that ended in the brutal arrest by police of 53 participants. The group subsequently published *Gay Solidarity Newsletter* from April 1979 “to spread its aims and tell of its successes”.\(^{33}\)

Specialist workplace groups such as the *Gay Teachers and Students Group Newsletter* in Melbourne, library workers, gay trade unionists, and campus based Gaysocs also produced newsletters. Specific law reform action groups formed with newsletters, agitating for law change around decriminalisation, anti-discrimination or partner immigration rights. Support groups to promote their services on offer produced other newsletters.\(^{34}\) *Acceptance Newsletter*, for gay Catholics, from the mid 1970s contained editorial on the need for a weekly gay community mass and promoted contact details and social events. The Gay and Married Men’s Association formed as a support group for those who “feel that they are strangers in the ‘straight’ life but are unwelcome or resented in the gay scene”.\(^{35}\) Metropolitan Community Church produced a free eight-page A5 newsletter *The Melbourne Grapevine* from late 1978 until early 1979 with opinion articles and what’s on listings.

A more ambitious attempt at liberationist publishing occurred with the launch in 1979 of *Gay Community News*. It was published monthly, distributed nationally, and a detailed discussion of this magazine also follows later in the chapter. It lasted three

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\(^{32}\) “Treasurer's Report,” *Adelaide Homosexual Alliance Newsletter* No 4, August 1978.


\(^{34}\) Comprehensive list in Graham Carbery, "Periodicals List," Australian Lesbian and Gay Archives (2010 – ver 1).\(^{35}\) *Married Homosexuals Group Newsletter* No. 1, Vol. 1, June 1977, GAMMA Folder, Loose Periodicals, ALGA. The group changed its name to Gay and Married Men’s Association (GAMMA) the following year.
years before it transformed from a liberationist to a gay men’s lifestyle magazine, taking the new name OutRage. Gay Community News collective members who opposed the transition to OutRage launched Gayzette newsletter in 1984, with a collective of six people, to promote “mixed gay movement” activities in Victoria. It promised “not to expand beyond its economic means” and to concentrate on “content rather than flashy production”. It remained a simple typed newsletter throughout its life, produced monthly except January, and sold no more than 200 copies, mostly through subscription. In 1996 it ended when the publishing collective shrunk to just two members and “rather than let Gayzette die a slow death”, the collective decided to stop publishing.

On a grander scale, publisher Michael Glynn who owned the gay lifestyle newspaper Sydney Star branched out in 1983 to publish a second newspaper Green Park Observer, its name a pun on a popular Sydney cruising area. It was a monthly newspaper, with serious news and long features, selling for $1.50 but it ran out of money after four issues. He later tried again with Harbour City Times in 1991, a 20-page tabloid for $2 that aimed to encourage a “healthy gay identity” and promote alternative therapies for combating AIDS. The final issue of just six was given away in March 1992. Artist Cath Phillips left her job at Sydney free city-based gay newspaper Capital Q to start Burn in 1993, a 76 page A4 monthly magazine for $5.95, with the aim to include a “broad arts and political analysis”, without reliance on “selling sex and sex-related advertising”. Her staff would commute from Sydney by train and ferry to Dangar Island in northern New South Wales where she lived with her lover, but the project “ran out of money” in March 1994 and shut down. The AIDS Council of New South Wales in 1997 started the local Newcastle magazine Out Now as a community building and health outreach exercise. It continued until 2008.

Throughout the rise and fall of these different liberationist magazines, activists on the ground who pushed broad social change or specific outcomes – be it law reform, AIDS treatments or gay marriage – used newsletters to communicate events, ideas

37 “Gayzette Subscription Report” 24 March 1990, Gayzette Financials Box, ALGA.
38 “Two Green Bottles ... The End of an Era,” Gayzette July 1996.
42 Author interview with Cath Phillips 2010
and actions to supporters. The many hundreds of different social and service groups that existed organised around ethnicity, age, sports interest, religion, business association, geography, or specific sexual desire also used newsletters. Small circulation lesbian newsletters primarily of a social nature were common. From the 1980s a range of AIDS focused newsletters appeared, often produced by state AIDS Councils.

Liberationist newsletters and magazines were used by the gay movement to provide a counter-public arena for discussion around issues of gay and lesbian sexuality, to encourage gay pride, and organise political activism for change. They were used to link people together for political campaigns and non-commercial activities. Never established as commercial businesses, they relied on the voluntary energy of activists, and when this waned these publications soon faltered. The two detailed case studies that follow highlight this.

**Case study: starting the resistance**

Thirty-two-year-old university student John Ware and his neighbour in a North Sydney block of flats, Christabel Poll, read mainstream media reports of the 1970 New York gay liberation march that commemorated the previous year’s riots after the police raid on Stonewall. Drinking a bottle of whisky together one night they decided to launch their own protest, and in doing so, sparked the start of Australia’s gay liberation movement. They established the organisation Campaign Against Moral Persecution with its “playful acronym CAMP”, a term used at the time by gay people to describe themselves. The group’s aims were initially modest, but this soon changed. Ware originally envisaged it to be “a society of half a dozen people who would meet once a month or so [like] a sort of book club” to read mainstream media accounts and send letters to the press challenging statements that were being made. Within a year though CAMP had 1500 members nationally, and many of those joining the organisation were influenced by the ideas for political change of the time. With such a rich vein of ideas pouring into the new organisation the initial thought

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45 Carbery, "Periodicals List."
47 Willett, Living Out Loud, p. 34.
48 Davis, "20 Years Out."
49 Willett, Living Out Loud, p. 33.
that CAMP would simply be a book club soon gave way to more enthusiastic plans for “a complete restructuring of the homosexual’s place in modern society”. 50

A crucial strategy Ware adopted at the start was to come out openly as gay by signing his name to the letters sent to mainstream newspapers, and this inspired journalist Janet Hawley to come seeking an interview for the first time with real and identifiable homosexuals. In September 1970, the Australian published her major feature article, titled “Couples”, based on an interview with Ware and his boyfriend Michael Cass, as well as Poll, though not her partner who was not out at work, so would not risk being interviewed. 51 It included contact details for the newly formed organisation and a flood of letters and a well attended public meeting soon followed. Yet before CAMP’s first public meeting in February 1971, and before CAMP had any significant membership, Ware and Poll published Camp Ink, in November 1970 to be, as Ware later said, “a voice to the outside world”. 52 The first edition of Camp Ink was sixteen A4 pages, had 500 copies printed, and sold for twenty cents. From issue two it became the official journal of CAMP, and by the end of its first year 5000 copies of the monthly magazine were printed. 53

Ware was the key instigator of the magazine, with Poll listed as co-editor despite ceasing active involvement after the first year. 54 Ware was born in 1938 in the north Queensland city of Townsville, left school early to work as a carpenter on the railways, 55 and in the early 1960s moved to Sydney where he found a job in an office and met his long-term boyfriend Cass in a bar. In the late 1960s he returned to study psychology at university where he announced he was gay in an exam paper, and clashed with his lecturers over their teaching that his sexuality was deviant. 56 He continued this battle from the first issue of the magazine, writing a long article campaigning against psychology’s use of such treatments to “mentally castrate”

50 Wotherspoon, "City of the Plain", p. 169.
51 Hawley, "Couples."
52 Davis, "20 Years Out." Also unpublished material from original interview held by Robert French.
54 She remained listed as editor until the end of 1973, though from 1972 her name is consistently misspelt in the Camp Ink credits box, presumably reflecting “a lack of involvement on her part”, as noted by Willett, Living Out Loud, p. 272, footnote 48.
56 John Ware, “Twelve Months Past”, Camp Ink, September 1971.
homosexuals,\(^{57}\) accompanied by a black and white front cover illustration that suggested aversion therapy was akin to sawing off a man’s penis.

Ware saw *Camp Ink* as a forum for ideas from a gay perspective “to counter public ignorance about homosexuality”, particularly by correcting mainstream media misrepresentation,\(^{58}\) firmly positioning it as a counter-public arena to discuss what it meant to be gay and for the gay movement to express its arguments for greater tolerance. Ware was strongly focused on agitating for social change which shaped his strategy for the role of the magazine. In his view it was “our propaganda” sent to key decision makers, both in the government and media, and it gained regular coverage from sympathetic journalists such as *The Australian*’s Phillip Adams.\(^{59}\) Ware saw the publishing of *Camp Ink* as part of a range of strategies that would include brochures, debates, lectures, and discussion groups, to provide “accurate knowledge of homosexuality” to all sections of society.\(^{60}\) CAMP members were urged to contribute to these aims by taking out gift subscriptions of the magazine “as a Christmas present to your doctor, lawyer, minister, friends or relatives to help further their understanding”.\(^{61}\)

Articles in *Camp Ink*, often reprinted from American publications, highlighted social injustices suffered by homosexuals, and included articles on oppression: from laws, to the medical practice of aversion therapy, to street bashings and religious dogma. A man being hung in reference to harsh criminal punishment of homosexuals featured on one early cover,\(^{62}\) as did a cartoon that depicted a motley collection of ‘poofter bashing’ street thugs.\(^{63}\) One writer argued that “Jesus may well have been a homosexual”,\(^{64}\) and others that he “recognises the human need for mortal love and its physical fulfillment”,\(^{65}\) and there was “no contradiction between Christianity and homosexuality”.\(^{66}\) The “romantic dream family” was lampooned in a cover story that featured Ware and fellow activist David Widdup photographed holding pet dogs in a traditional Victorian family pose, and the accompanying article said the “threat of

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\(^{57}\) John Ware, "Rat-Psychology and the Homosexual," *Camp Ink* November 1970.

\(^{58}\) “W(h)ither Camp Inc?”, *Camp Ink* November 1970.

\(^{59}\) John Ware interviewed by Sara Dowse.

\(^{60}\) Hawley, "Couples."


\(^{62}\) *Camp Ink*, December 1970.

\(^{63}\) *Camp Ink*, February 1971.

\(^{64}\) Laud Humphreys, "Jesus Christ – a Sexual Person " *Camp Ink* February 1971.


social ostracism [ensures the] homosexual pair, in conventional language, does not exist. 67

Initially neither CAMP nor its magazine presented a clear program for change, instead Camp Ink highlighted the existence of oppression, challenged misinformation and explored ideas around living a gay life. This changed with time as the publishers grew in confidence, no doubt inspired by the process of publishing and gaining support for their endeavours. After highlighting the social oppression of homosexuality on its first few front covers, Camp Ink switched to a more defiant message, featuring gay rights demonstrations – initially from America – and same-sex couples walking proudly arm-in-arm. When Sydney’s largest circulation daily newspapers such as Sydney Morning Herald and the Daily Telegraph refused to accept a paid advertisement that promoted the group’s activities, the editors counter-attacked with a cover story and inclusion of the rejected advertisement.68 When a member of CAMP was sacked from his job at the local church for coming out as gay, the editors gave extensive coverage to the subsequent protests.69 This shift from the general to the specific reflected the fledgling movement’s growing assertiveness and willingness to be involved directly in gay rights actions.

Camp Ink was sent to the growing number of CAMP members as part of their membership fee. Ware wanted these readers to question their own attitudes towards homosexuality and redefine what it meant to be gay or lesbian. He believed there was a conspiracy of silence which had led to stereotyping the homosexual as the “dirty pervert” or “the hand-flapping, tinsel and tat gay young queen”,70 and argued that by talking freely about homosexuality “the public will eventually get rid of their misconceptions and … homosexuality will be accepted like red hair and freckles”.71 This in turn would end, he believed, “the pathetic figure of the aging queen, the lonely guilt ridden sad misfit”,72 as society increasingly accepted gay relationships. Book reviews and feature articles were written, or reprinted from gay publications in the United States, presenting homosexuality in a positive light.

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68 Cover of Camp Ink April 1971 with subsequent discussion that only smaller circulation newspapers such The Australian, Nation Review or Bulletin would run the advertisement in Ware, “Twelve Months Past”, Camp Ink, September 1971.
70 Hawley, "Couples."
71 Ibid.
72 Ibid.
The editors championed the notion that their readers should come out openly as gay, to “loudly demand our rights [and not accept] a shadowy existence”. They argued that “silence is submissive and destructive to ourselves and others who may be gay”. A regular program was undertaken to sell the magazine in suburban shopping strips that provided one way, quite deliberately, for members of CAMP to come out. While not many copies were actually sold, Ware says the action confronted members of the general public with the issue of homosexuality and transformed many previously “up-tight” guilt-ridden members into proud gay sellers of Camp Ink on street corners. Coming out covers were introduced in late 1971, the first a photograph of four CAMP members above the caption “Come Out”, followed the next issue with thirty-five members photographed under the caption “We’ve come out of our closets to wish you a Merry Christmas”. Angus & Robertson bookshop displayed this issue for sale in its shop window, and one of those who had been photographed worked in the next building. The cover was seen by his office colleagues, which resulted in his coming out at work. These actions aligned very strongly to Ware’s belief that social change would occur as the general public recognised the ordinariness of individual homosexuals.

In addition to wanting to replace internalised homophobia with gay pride, articles in Camp Ink urged lesbians and gay men to think about how they lived their lives. This question of what it meant to be gay led to discussion in Camp Ink on a range of topics and a free flow of ideas on all manner of topics that included monogamy, gender expectations, sex roles, sadomasochistic sexual practices, pornography and drag. Ware considered the development of new ideas via the letters page “terribly important” and if not enough letters were received, the editors, to encourage others, would write them. They devoted a full page for letters each issue, later expanded to two or more pages. One letter writer said he realised for the first time in his life after reading Camp Ink that he was “not by any means alone”. Another wrote about the “advantages” of a homosexual lifestyle without the expenses and responsibilities of

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76 Davis, “20 Years Out.”  
77 Camp Ink November 1971  
78 Camp Ink December 1971/January 1972  
79 Davis, “20 Years Out.”  
80 Ibid.  
family. The articles and letters in *Camp Ink* provided an important counter-public arena for Australia’s gay community to discuss how to live as a gay person and challenged pre-conceived ideas.

The editors took a generally inclusive attitude towards gay lifestyle differences in many regards. Transgendered people were included with a cover story condemning the “absurdity” of discrimination against transvestites by other gay people: “If we are demanding our rights, we are demanding all of our rights”. This was followed by a cover story into male prostitutes that said “the boys who take to male prostitution … left unhappy homes [and] see selling themselves or hiring themselves out for a time as a [means] of supplementing their meager income”. Sexual diseases were given a tolerant discussion. The use of condoms was recommended to prevent transmission of gonorrhoea as was washing immediately after sexual activity. *Camp Ink* reprinted an article from the US by activist Carl Wittman who urged readers to “shed” imposed gender roles and “purge male chauvinism”. Effort was made to include lesbian articles, though the editors received “very few contributions of interest to lesbians” and called for more submissions from CAMP’s lesbian members. Ware supported gay men and lesbians working together, and opposed lesbian separatism. Following its endorsement at the Sorrento Radicalesbian Conference in 1973, he published a cover image turning the women’s symbol upside down and enlarged the cross above the circle, with the caption: “Feminism potentially another great secular religion”.

Co-editor Christabel Poll was critical of sexual promiscuity and claimed that only “the raving fringe” was interested in it. The male nude magazine *William & John*, that started in 1972, was initially promoted in *Camp Ink* but the only subsequent mention of it was a passing comment by regular columnist David Widdup who said writing an article for them had led to “abuse heaped on my head from the Editors of *Camp Ink*”, and no mention was made when *William & John*’s editors later faced a series of court trials having fallen foul of government censors. The magazine was not promoted or sold in the CAMP clubrooms as this would, one key member said,

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88 Hawley, "Couples."
“tacitly approve of their contents and the whole exploitative commercial scene”. For *Camp Ink*’s publishers the inclusion of sexually explicit material was tempered by their political views, as well as the need to present to mainstream society, as historian Robert Reynolds says, a “respectable, responsible and law-abiding” image of gay people.

The publishers of *Camp Ink* saw an important role for the magazine to link gay people together. From the start they saw *Camp Ink* as “a means of communication between homosexuals”. They promoted non-commercial social events and introduced personal classifieds “to alleviate the desperate sence [sic] of isolation that many of our members have voiced”; and it was the structural link between the different CAMP branches around the country. Yet there were limitations to the ways they wanted gay people to connect. The first issue of *Camp Ink* invited information from gay venues but no editorial listings, a common later feature in gay media, were included. Nor was there any specific mention of Sydney’s fledgling venue scene. Ware was no supporter and described them as places “only a certain type of homosexual will frequent”, but his politics was not rigidly anti-capitalist, more in tune with the counter-cultural movement of the time. Ware refused to adopt titles such as president, and opposed any formal structure for the organisation. At the first public meeting in February 1971 for CAMP, held in a church hall, Ware says they “consciously upset a lot of people” by sitting casually dressed at the front table drinking from a flagon of wine.

Publishing *Camp Ink* required volunteer labour and major ongoing financial support from the organisation, despite attempts to attract advertising and even the appointment of a designated “advertising and business” representative. In fact an estimated $3.84 from each membership fee of just $4.70 went to maintain the magazine. This left little over for other activities such as organising discussion groups, attending conferences and paying the rent on the organisation’s club rooms where Ware and Cass lived free of charge from 1971, after Ware gave up study to

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91 Reynolds, *From Camp to Queer*, p.60.
92 Hawley, “Couples.”
93 “(W)hither Camp Inc?” *Camp Ink* November 1970.
95 Hawley, "Couples."
96 Davis, “20 Years Out.”
97 *Camp Ink* January 1971
99 John Ware interviewed by Sara Dowse.
be a full-time unpaid worker for CAMP. This rejection of the fledgling commercial scene, and a refusal to include sexually titillating content hampered Camp Ink’s chances of broadening its readership so print runs remained small, and it was dependent on the parent organisation CAMP. To raise funds, weekly social events were held in the club rooms, and by the start of 1973 there was a national fund drive to raise $2000, at least in part due to the costs involved in producing Camp Ink.

Ware was under pressure from some in the organisation to provide “more entertaining” editorial content, so to resolve the tension between his goals of changing society’s attitudes and the need to secure ongoing funding for the magazine from May 1971 he introduced coverage of CAMP’s organised social events in Melbourne, Sydney and Brisbane. Music with gay appeal was subsequently covered and poems introduced. Promotion of social events in Camp Ink became entwined with the publication’s need for funding, and Ware said at the time: “Social functions raise money, not very much but at least enough to allow us to pay the rent and excess printing costs”.

In April 1972, following arguments that Ware was actually a “de facto leader surrounded by an informal clique of activist friends”, a structured organisation for CAMP with defined roles for office-bearers was adopted, and an executive elected with co-presidents Sue Wills and Lex Watson. Ware concedes, in retrospect, that his leadership style was “dictatorial disguised as some sort of democracy” and was actually “quite happy to hand it all over to anyone … competent … who’d grab it”.

In response he retreated from direct involvement in the organisation, apart from continuing to edit Camp Ink. However, by the following year production drifted out to a two monthly schedule, and by the end of 1973 – when Ware moved to Canberra with Cass who had a job there – stopped completely for nearly 12 months.

The new structure led to more formalised advocacy for social change, particularly in the area of law reform, and this was reflected in Camp Ink’s coverage. Previously

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101 Ware, “Twelve Months Past”.
102 “Give to the Camp Ink Fund Drive”, Camp Ink Vol 3 No 2.
103 Davis, “20 Years Out.” Also Reynolds, “Camp Inc. And the Creation of the ‘Open’ Homosexual,” p.49.
104 Ware, “Twelve Months Past”.
105 Wills, “Politics of Sexual Liberation”, p. 96.
106 Watson was already an active contributor to Camp Ink writing under the pseudonyms Trevor Hughes and Axel.
107 Davis, “20 Years Out.”
discussion around law reform had largely consisted of general rallying calls that urged people to become actively involved in CAMP “to bring about a situation where homosexuals can enjoy good jobs and security in those jobs, equal treatment under the law, and the right to serve our country without fear of exposure and contempt”,108 and a strategy of “morning tea discussions” with opponents to break “the wall of silence”.109 Local academic Dr Duncan’s death in Adelaide at a gay beat was widely covered in Camp Ink as an example of the lack of legal protection,110 along with issues such as arrests of gay men at beats, lack of police protection from thieves and bashers, and potential consequences of imprisonment, fines, family and work discovery.111

David Widdup, who wrote the regular Minnie Drear humour column in Camp Ink, stood for federal election in 1972 as an openly gay independent candidate in Prime Minister’s Billy McMahon’s electorate under the slogan: “I’ve got my eye on Billy’s seat”.112 Strong coverage was given in Camp Ink to his campaign, including a cover story, on the basis that “[s]ocial issues have rarely interested politicians … but at election time we do have one politically dangerous weapon to wield, the vote”.113 While only gaining 218 votes, the campaign was in the tradition of the political gimmick that “used [theatre] to promote a radical movement”.114 Widdup said the achievement of his campaign was its “homosexual humour”,115 and “acceptance by public and media”.116

A new executive revived Camp Ink in October 1974, saying it was “a vital part of our movement”.117 It was published quarterly, without the bold sweep of feature articles and debate that underpinned Ware’s editorship. It mostly included reports on CAMP’s political activities and small news items, and increasingly it mimicked the CAMP NSW newsletter that had started in 1973. Camp Ink ceased permanently in March 1977 for financial reasons, as each issue cost between $1000-1500,118 and “reaction

114 Sean Scalmer, Dissent Events: Protest, the Media and the Political Gimmick in Australia (University of NSW Press, 2002), p.3
115 “David Widdup the Camp Candidate.”
and feed-back [had become] non-existent”.119 After leaving Camp Ink Ware ceased all involvement in gay politics, instead pursued business interests. Ware and Cass moved to Brisbane in 1975 and later returned to live in Sydney. They stayed together until Cass died of AIDS in 1995, after both had tested positive to HIV in 1985.120 Ware died in May 2011, aged seventy-three.121

As was often the case for a social movement’s liberationist publications, consistency and longevity were not achieved by Camp Ink. This is not necessarily a measure of success or failure, as social movement publications appear in order to promote and organise specific campaigns, often disappearing following victory or defeat, or when publishers succumb to burnout. Camp Ink was a crucial part of the early gay liberationist strategy to provide a counter-public arena and challenge dominant social and politic attitudes that condemned homosexuality. It provided for the first time a significant vehicle to push gay liberationist ideas among society’s opinion makers in the media, church and government. It played a significant role in instilling gay pride among its readers and challenging the secretive nature of homosexual activity. It provided a safe forum for lesbians and gay men to explore their own feelings and attitudes towards their sexuality. Camp Ink had successfully started a process of discussion on how to be gay, and to challenge mainstream assumptions of homosexuality. For the activists in the mid-1970s the tension over financial difficulties led to the end of Camp Ink as its activist group publisher could see no tenable option to resolve this. Increased engagement with the parallel and emerging commercial gay world appeared too great a compromise and the potential for advertising revenue still too small to allow such an embrace to provide financial security.

Case study: new liberationist ambitions

A new attempt at ambitious liberationist publishing occurred at the end of the 1979 National Homosexual Conference, held in Melbourne, when the event’s organisational newsletter was merged with the equally small circulation Gay Teachers and Students Newsletter to form Gay Community News. The new publishing collective received $525 seeding money from conference proceeds with the brief to

119 Ibid.
120 John Ware interviewed by Sara Dowse.
publicise the gay movement’s news and political campaigns. The first edition was fifty-two A4 newsprint pages, dropping back soon after to forty pages, published ten times a year. In its first editorial it announced its aim was to unify gay organisations against “an unholy alliance of rabid fundamentalist Christians and gutless opportunist politicians”.123

Key architect behind Gay Community News was the conference co-convenor, Danny Vadasz,124 who had originally started the newsletter Conference News to help organise and promote the conference. Vadasz was born in Israel on 1 July 1951 to Jewish parents who fled Nazi Europe during World War II. In 1956 his family migrated to Australia and settled in the working class suburb of St Albans. At age seventeen, Vadasz mapped out for himself a political career within the ALP and was soon local party branch secretary. He was one of only two students from his year to go to university and completed a bachelor of science and diploma in education. He worked as a teacher, then education and publishing officer at the politically progressive Western Region Education Centre. In 1978 he attended the Fourth National Homosexual Conference in Sydney and was at a subsequent street protest against police arrests earlier that year during Sydney’s first Lesbian and Gay Mardi Gras. He was “immediately politicised” by the further arrest of 126 people at the second protest and the decision of the mainstream daily Sydney Morning Herald to publish the arrested individuals’ names and occupations, supplied by the police. While avoiding arrest himself, his parents knew others on the list and he was effectively outed. His careful plans for a political career were derailed.125

Vadasz was only one voice in a publishing collective committed to introducing new volunteers to gay activism and raising their skill levels.126 Any lesbian or gay man could join and vote simply by turning up to the meetings, though most collective members came from a strong tradition of homosexual conferences with a developed ideology and cohesive analysis that the political enemies of gay rights were “becoming organised to an unprecedented extent and are fighting us on all fronts”.127

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122 “Minutes of Collective Meeting 1 October 1979” and “Gay Community News Submission to the Fifth National Homosexual Conference Collective”, Gary Jaynes Papers (2), GCN Box, ALGA.
124 Adam Carr, “OutRage@15 or the Rise and Fall of Practically Everyone,” OutRage April 1998.
125 Author interview with Danny Vadasz 2010.
126 As outlined in Gay Community News Submission to the 5th National Homosexual Conference Collective, 17 September 1979, Gary Jaynes private collection.
The collective, while committed to gender parity, consisted mainly of men, because they said “many women doubt the possibility or usefulness of working with a mixed collective for a magazine that tries to appeal to both women and men”. There was a spectrum of views, from small ‘l’ liberals to Marxist revolutionaries, unified by support “for homosexual liberation”. The collective held broadly feminist and gay liberationist political views that led generally to “suspicion of the commercial, … rejection of sexual objectification, and [a] commitment to egalitarian and participatory methods of work”. This politics had expressed itself, as regards gay publishing, two years earlier at the Third National Homosexual Conference in Adelaide in a resolution that accused the national gay lifestyle magazine, Campaign of being “sexist [and] reformist”. That conference had called on Campaign to include “more feminist material [and] articles presenting a socialist perspective”, and to “minimize objectifying … advertising”. The collective in 1980 announced Gay Community News would refuse to publish sexually titillating material, “right-wing” pro-capitalist views or material deemed to contain “racism, sexism, creedism, ageism, classism, and other ‘isms’ [on the grounds that] as an oppressed minority, we cannot afford to collaborate in our own or others’ exploitation”. If the full collective did not agree with an article it would run as a polemic under individual members’ names.

With regards to agitating for social change, in contrast to Camp Ink there was less attention given to the medical profession, other than occasional complaints about negative experiences from individual doctors when testing or treating sexually transmitted diseases, or reports into treatment breakthroughs. The psychiatry profession was no longer seen as an enemy, having by the mid-1970s formally rejected the diagnosis of homosexuality as an illness. Gay Community News though was the first Australian publication to publish an in-depth investigative article written

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132 “Third National Homosexual Conference Motions”, Third National Homosexual Conference Box, ALGA. For more on Campaign see Chapter Three, Gay Lifestyle Publications.
by Gary Jaynes into what was later known as AIDS. Religion was rarely discussed and if so, was usually ridiculed in an accompanying cartoon, and gay Christian writers acknowledged the church “has, and continues to oppress homosexuals”. Key editorial targets were the government and its laws, and the attitudes of public institutions such as schools, mainstream media and the police. Anti-gay attacks and gay rights demonstrations received strong coverage, with news reports divided into local, national and international collected from a range of media sources. The first issue featured a news story on the front page that covered a demonstration against the arrest of two men for kissing outside the gay frequented Woolshed Bar, part of the Australia Hotel in Melbourne’s Collins Street, with six further pages devoted inside. The “significant defeat for the right-wing fundamentalist Christian lobby” was celebrated when an attempt to ban a sex education book in schools failed. They had direct battles of their own when their commercial printer censored the word “fuck” from a cartoon and subsequently refused to print the magazine.

As regards building community, at a practical level the publishing collective’s politics resulted in little promotion for commercial gay venues other than inclusion of basic listings that started some months after the magazine began. Collective members were split on whether gay bars were simply “good clean fun” or oppressive institutions that encouraged “worship” of youth and beauty. Editorial coverage of the gay bar scene initially contained a negative slant: the problems of alcoholism was highlighted in one article, concern was raised over the prevalence of drag performance in the scene and how it could be “offensive [showing a] lack of feeling about the oppression of women”. A boycott of one Melbourne venue over its anti-lesbian door policy was prominently covered, as were suspicious fires burning down gay venues in

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137 Gary Jaynes, "Will We All Die of Gay Cancer?" Gay Community News November 1982.
Sydney. Personal classifieds were never developed in *Gay Community News* due to concerns over the administrative workload for volunteer workers.

In terms of defining lifestyle, non-commercial social groups were promoted strongly with a designated ‘network’ section of the magazine that covered these activities and an upcoming calendar of events. The magazine contained lesbian content, often from a feminist perspective and at times broadened into general women’s rights in an attempt to maintain gender balance. The magazine even promoted commercial lesbian venues contrary to their approach towards gay men’s venues.

Sadomasochism was condemned in one article on the grounds it “confirms role stereotypes, reinforces women’s self-hatred”, and the notion and role of romantic love in lesbian relationships was discussed in another. The history of male impersonation by lesbians was covered, and a tolerant discussion of “butch [and] fem” role playing.

*Gay Community News* sold mainly in Victoria, initially for eighty cents, rising to $1 the following year and $1.50 by the third year. Circulation never rose above 1700.

It was not published during the January holiday period, or September, when most of the activists on the publishing collective were busy attending the annual national homosexual conference. Motions passed at these conferences were published in the October *Gay Community News*. There were three pages of advertising in the first edition – initially selling at $100 for a full page, though rising to $150 three years later – and this never rose above five pages in subsequent issues. Production costs were about $1400 an issue in the first year, and the magazine failed to cover these

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148 Minutes of joint Finance, Advertising, Distribution, Fund-raising meeting 12 May 1980, *Gay Community News* Box 1 of 2 ALGA.
156 “Minutes of the First Meeting of the Gay Community News Collective” 17 September 1979, *Gay Community News* Box 2 of 2, ALGA; and GCN’s “Ministry of Employment and Training Application for Funding – Cooperative Development Program, Appendix VII, 12 October 1982, OutRage Box 197, ALGA.
costs, needing to bridge its revenue shortfall with fundraising events and donations.\textsuperscript{157} No wages or office rental were paid so volunteer collective members had paid jobs or other income, and worked on the publication from home when time allowed.

Paid advertising was only reluctantly accepted with the collective stating that if \textit{Gay Community News} could be produced “without advertising, nothing would please us more”.\textsuperscript{158} Adam Carr, who was a member of the collective, recalls intense “ideological arguments”, particularly over “pictures of naked men” in sauna advertisements.\textsuperscript{159} After one such image appeared it was condemned by a letter writer saying such “sexist adverts, exploiting the human body as a sex object” had no place in the magazine.\textsuperscript{160} The collective agreed, banning such imagery from subsequent issues.

The ongoing financial tension however led the collective to discuss ways to increase advertising revenue, in a way that remained consistent with “the values” of \textit{Gay Community News}.\textsuperscript{161} Attempts were also made to improve circulation: themes were adopted with general interest topics such as parents, sport, and the performing arts; a venue guide was introduced, and a range of new columns appeared that focused on lifestyle, poems and even short stories. In February 1981 Vadasz started to write the regular From Under My Desk column on page four, a tongue-in-cheek commentary on the odd and the terrible snippets in the news. A national push was undertaken at the end of the first year, and for a time, New South Wales and Queensland editions with modified local news pages were published. Commercial distributors Gordon & Gotch were contracted to supply newsagents but they pulled out when sales remained low.\textsuperscript{162} By the end of 1982 there were still only twenty-six outlets nationally that stocked the magazine.\textsuperscript{163}

A year after starting the magazine, in stark contrast to previous generally negative views of the commercial scene, Vadasz wrote a review of a soon to open gay sauna. He described it as “a logical extension of the commercial trend … which has recognised the needs, fantasies and resources of the gay male population [and] is

\textsuperscript{157} “Happy Birthday to Us.”
\textsuperscript{158} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{159} Author interview with Adam Carr 2010.
\textsuperscript{161} “GCN Comes Clean,” \textit{Gay Community News} July 1980.
\textsuperscript{162} Gordon and Gotch letter 9 November 1982, Gordon and Gotch folder, \textit{Gay Community News Box 1 of 2}, ALGA.
\textsuperscript{163} Distribution list published in \textit{Gay Community News} November 1982.
bound for financial success”. His views were clearly changing, setting up a series of internal debates within the collective. In one internal collective document, Vadasz argued, with others, that the magazine’s commitment to “providing coverage of movement events for activists [tended] to distract it from its other obligations”. He urged *Gay Community News* not to preach to the politically faithful, but instead take an “educative role” that took “the interests and sympathies” of a broader readership as its starting point. Vadasz also challenged those in the collective who rejected so-called “traditional patriarchal” decision-making structures and work organisation, bemoaning this “tyranny of structurelessness”, and urged adoption of job descriptions to ensure someone took final responsibility for tasks. The matter came to head in 1981 when “demoralisation and exhaustion” led to a thinned down May edition and no June edition. The collective’s structure was subsequently changed to a fixed membership of twelve people, each with specific, though rotating, job descriptions.

A crucial ideological shift was taking place at this time among gay activists generally, with former Communist Party member Craig Johnston now arguing that gay rights could be accommodated within a capitalist system. Also influencing discussion was the work of gay law reform campaigners such as Jamie Gardiner who criticised the “strong and regrettable tendency among many who style themselves ‘gay activists’ to despise ‘reforms’, and those who pursue them”. Previously the publishing collective, while nominally supporting law reform, said that “what really counts is not so much the letter of the law, but the relative strength of the homosexual movement and its allies as against the organised Right/fundamentalist Christian coalition that opposes us”. Increasingly *Gay Community News* covered law reform developments across the country and electoral politics, particularly the development of openly gay candidates. Further pressure came from activist Phil Carswell who questioned the knee-jerk inclination of those who “pour unwarranted scorn [on the bars] where a lot

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165 Danny Vadasz, Adam Carr, Phil Carswell unpublished paper 6 November 1980 titled “Crisis Time Again”, GCN minutes, 1979-1980 folder GCN Box 1 of 2, ALGA.
166 As outlined in a joint statement by the women of collective members, Sheril Berkovitch (now known as Lillitu Babalu) and Alison Thorne’s consciousness-raising groups, dated 4 February 1983, in Gary Jaynes private collection.
of us receive our introduction and an ongoing interaction with gay life”. 172 He wrote they were not just places to cruise for sex but also “a meeting place, a place to draw support, and … a place of refuge”. 173 Carswell embraced the new masculinist ‘clone’ fashion of “short hair, moustache, lots of denim, check shirts and a leather jacket” for gay men and urged a rethink of the “doctrinaire approach to changing circumstances”, arguing “this new clone image, the disco orientation, provides a new structure from which to view this new definition of maleness and masculinity [and to] dismiss these clones as reactionary assertions of patriarchal hetero-sexual power is too easy, too succinct and too safe”. 174 His views were echoed by a number of leading Sydney gay activists who were arguing now that connecting with the commercial subcultures and helping build community was a key role for gay radicals. 175

The outcome of these debates was a lessening of emphasis on the need for a radical restructure of society and the increasing acceptance of building and defending gay community as the project to push forward political rights. Such a shift allowed media publishers to combine political action with the natural synergy that existed between promoting and building community, and its provision of editorial content, advertising revenue and distribution outlets. Vadasz’s aim became to redesign and repackage Gay Community News to attract advertising from the gay venues that had effectively boycotted the magazine, and to achieve a popular readership. 176 He wanted to put the magazine on a business footing “running itself and paying for itself”, with editorial content that reflected the interests of a larger non-politicised audience instead of “pure political rhetoric”. 177 He arranged for the Gay Community News collective to be restructured into Gay Publications Co-operative, in order to seek short-term funding under the Victorian Government’s Co-operative Development Program. He was encouraged by a previous $75,000 grant won by Gay Community News’ affiliated typesetting co-operative Correct Line Graphics, 178 and successfully applied for a further grant of $59,402 plus a loan of $11,360. 179 This new grant assisted with office costs and three staffing positions, including Vadasz as magazine editor. Approval of

175 Willett, Living Out Loud, pp. 144-5.
176 “Minutes” 14 February 1983, Gay Community News Box 2 of 2, ALGA.
177 Author interview with Danny Vadasz 2010.
this funding triggered not only a change in management structure from collective to co-operative but also a change in editorial direction with the name *Gay Community News* last appearing in December 1982. The ideological debates, content development and dramatic transformation of liberationist *Gay Community News* to gay men’s lifestyle magazine *OutRage* is discussed more fully in Chapter Six.

In the three years before its transformation into a gay men’s lifestyle magazine, *Gay Community News*’s publishing collective used the publication to play a crucial role in unifying the efforts of activists involved in direct campaigns against opponents of gay rights. Articles were written that encouraged involvement in these campaigns, as well as articles which broadly politicised and informed readers. It provided a counter-public arena for discussion of society’s structural hostility towards homosexuality, debates on ways to organise the gay community and for individual gay people to live their lives. *Gay Community News* appeared at a time when the commercial gay world was growing, though its publishers largely held to a left-feminist analysis of gay oppression, and a suspicion of commercial gay venues. The publishers sold copies of their magazine via subscriptions and direct sales, but faced ongoing financial tension and needed additional fund-raising to survive. With time, despite internal angst, its publishers increasingly moved to access the developing streams of advertising revenue from businesses servicing the emerging gay world.

**Conclusion**

Left-wing ideas advocating broad structural change in society were strongly held in the early 1970s, as was the belief that achieving such a new society was both possible and necessary. Liberationist publications provided a powerful and direct counter-public arena for discussion on the nature of society’s oppression of homosexuality and ways that individual gay people could participate in efforts to challenge anti-gay elements and attitudes. These publications engaged in debates about how the gay community should be organised and how gay people could live their lives. These discussions challenged existing beliefs and expectations, and provided a guide to new ways of living. While often hostile to the commercial venue scene, liberationist publications actively promoted non-commercial community groups and events that provided options for individual gay people to connect with each other.
A key difference in the trajectory of Camp Ink and Gay Community News was that the publishers of Camp Ink accepted the seeming inevitability of their magazine’s demise. With the decline in the 1970s of the Left and optimism for change, it is easy to imagine the despair of Camp Ink’s publishers. For them, options other than closing would not have been apparent. By the mid-1970s, liberationists had not rethought their opposition to the growing commercial gay world, and it in turn, still offered little financial incentive with advertising revenue. At the slightly later era, in which Gay Community News found itself, there was a more developed gay commercial world and a changed thinking that allowed the publishers of Gay Community News to more readily embrace it. Its publishers – after loss of key members – embarked on dramatic actions to reposition their magazine so it could survive. This no doubt reflected the attitudes and energy of key individuals involved, but it also reflected the significantly changed environment within the gay community from the start of the 1970s and the end of that decade. Liberationist ideas did not end with Gay Community News, but activists subsequently were forced to rely on cheaply produced newsletters to help forward their campaigns, or attempts to influence the content of commercially run gay magazines and newspapers.
Chapter Two

Male nude magazines

Entertaining sexual desire

On leave from the Vietnam War a small band of American G.I.s dressed in civvies make their way up the William Street hill to the heart of Sydney’s Kings Cross. Prostitutes lean in doorways and ask if they want a lady. Some are trannies and others woman-born, their faces lit in the shadows by the red, blue and green colours buzzing from neon signs that advertise the strip shows and brothels that surround them. Alluring names such as Love Machine, Pink Pussycat and Showgirls flash a beacon. Pimps and drug dealers nod and wink as they pass by. In a side street bar the legendary Les Girls, tucked and plucked, in gold and red feathers, and sequinned finery begin a performance of their long running drag show. Around the corner in a dark laneway a gaunt young man pokes his arm with a needle. This is the place soldiers, tourists and locals have come for decades to seek forbidden pleasures and Kings Cross has an eclectic and permissive past. It is a history that stretches back to 1796 when navy personnel, based at nearby Garden Island rushed ashore during recreation leave looking for sex, booze and gambling. They found it here, often provided by criminal gangs which set the tone for 200 years of prostitution, illegal gambling, twenty-four-hour drinking and drug trafficking that flourished in an environment of police corruption, unofficial tolerance and the occasional crackdown.1 Gay sexual activity found a place in Kings Cross, in contrast generally to 1960s Australia that certainly did not tolerate depiction of such activity in printed material. This chapter discusses the changing attitude in Australian society towards censorship, influenced by liberal principles of free speech, the shock tactics of libertarians, and the growth of a commercial publishing sector. Obscenity laws were progressively eased and the changed environment made it possible for male nude magazines to be published from the 1970s. These publications provided an important counter-public

1 Description of Kings Cross influenced by Wotherspoon, "City of the Plain"; Elizabeth Butel and Tom Thompson, Kings Cross Album: Pictorial Memories of Kings Cross, Darlinghurst, Woolloomooloo & Rushcutters Bay (Sydney: Atrand Pty Ltd, 1984); Louis Nowra, Kings Cross: A Biography (Sydney: NewSouth, 2013); People of the Cross: True Stories from People Who Live and Work in Kings Cross, ed., Gina Lennox and Frances Rush (East Roseville: Simon & Schuster, 1993; James Cockington, Carlotta: He Did It Her Way (Chippendale: Pan Macmillan, 1994); When the Man in the Gold Mustang Met the Girl from the Pink Pussycat (Sydney: Random House, 1997); Billy Munro, Let It All Hang Out (Hartwell, Victoria: Sid Harta, 2008).
arena that contributed to the gay movement by affirming readers’ sexual desires. They helped lay foundations for a community with personal classifieds that provided a means for gay men to meet each other and these magazines were among the first elements of the emerging gay economy. Joining the front line in the battle against obscenity laws the publishers of these magazines pushed back against legal sanctions thereby contributing to further liberal change.

A summary of key elements in the history of male nude publishing is included, and two of the significant 1970s magazines are discussed in detail. *William & John* started in the early 1970s but folded after less than a year due to ongoing legal battles against still existing anti-obscenity laws, as well as personal stress faced by its publisher. The second magazine *Gay* started soon after and following a change of owner, change of name (originally called *Butch*) and further liberalising of censorship laws, settled on a commercially successful content formula that continued until 1991.

**The obscenity wars**

Censorship of published material on the grounds of obscenity began in the latter part of the nineteenth century, according to historian Peter Coleman, in response to “the new journalism based on scandal, the new morality based on birth control, and the new literature based on realism”.² To control these forces, each state between 1876 in Victoria and 1902 in Western Australia, passed obscenity acts modelled on an earlier British Act of 1857. Most Australian states in the 1950s enacted further laws to restrict distribution of printed material considered obscene.³ As part of this, the official definition for what constituted obscenity was widened such that there emerged “an explicit priority [to remove] expression of same-sex desire [and] homosexual meaning from as many public forums and discourses as possible”.⁴ There was increased prosecution of distributors and publishers of “comics, popular magazines and hard-core pornographic publications as well as novels, which claimed artistic merit”.⁵

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⁵ Sullivan, *The Politics of Sex*, p. 84.
Such repression curtailed imports of explicitly gay magazines and stopped any plans, had they existed, to publish locally. During this censorship regime, body-physique magazines provided a quasi-legitimate option for gay men seeking visual stimulation. These magazines were associated with the sport of bodybuilding and this legitimacy allowed the representation of ‘manliness’ that featured handsome, athletic men, usually with little or no clothing. Accompanying the photos were “real or bogus” details about the models’ personality that allowed some models to develop a hero status. Much of this material originated in America, reaching its zenith during the 1950s with titles such as *Muscleman*, *Physique Artistry*, *Mr Universe* and *Man’s World* finding their way to Australia, though at least one local title, *Muscle Builder* was also published. While there were no laws against publishing these magazines, it did not stop suspicion being cast on its readers, a point sharply highlighted as early as 1941 when mainstream newspapers exposed the existence of “a sensational vice ring … threatening the entire Commonwealth”. It turns out it was a small direct mail business for body-physique magazines.

The harsh 1950s regime of censorship was in retreat the following decade. The ire of liberal campaigners against censorship was first roused by the censorship of novels with artistic merit, such as D.H. Lawrence’s *Lady Chatterley’s Lover* and James Joyce’s *Ulysses*. Debate and popular opposition to censorship steadily increased, fuelled by public interest in cases such as the 1964 *Oz Magazine* trial that saw its publisher sentenced to six months jail under NSW obscenity laws and the trial of Wendy Bacon in 1971 for publishing her poem ‘Cunt is a Christian Word’, that resulted in her receiving a fine, eight days in jail and a two year good behaviour bond.

Dennis Altman points out that almost all Western countries saw “the virtual collapse of censorship” as occurred in Australia progressively from the mid-1960s until the mid-1970s. This was an essential precursor making it possible to publish sexually suggestive male nude magazines. The first significant response from the Australian government to growing liberal attitudes in society was in 1967 when the National

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6 Alasdair Foster, "Getting Physical," *OutRage*, October 1988. An almost identical article by the same author was earlier published in *Campaign* November 1987, itself reprinted according to a footnote, courtesy of *Gay Scotland* magazine.
8 Peter Coleman, *Obscenity, Blasphemy, Sedition: 100 Years of Censorship in Australia* (Sydney: Angus and Robertson, 1974), pp. 45-6, 63-4.
Literature Board of Review was established. It was an attempt to provide uniform censorship of literature across the country. More dramatic moves followed with the appointment of Don Chipp as Minister for Customs and Excise. Chipp argued that a “complete overhaul of censorship policy and practice was necessary”. During 1970-71 he proceeded to reverse bans on a large number of novels. By this stage the debate to liberalise censorship laws had moved beyond simply allowing distribution of novels with artistic merit to the point where “some parliamentarians were claiming that citizens had the right to read and view whatever they wished, even if that was pornography”. The new Whitlam Government, elected in 1972, with Senator Lionel Murphy as the Minister for Customs, went further in 1973 and stopped all prosecutions against importation of publications.

These changes were the latest in a series of events that impacted Kings Cross. Since the 1930s and 1940s the Cross had attracted artists and intellectuals drawn to its bohemian atmosphere and cheap flats built in the 1920s. When six o’clock hotel closing laws were removed in New South Wales in 1955, more than a decade ahead of other eastern mainland states, the entertainment district lost some of its illegitimacy. As social attitudes towards sexual expression also changed over the 1960s, the Cross became a symbol for more permissive social attitudes. Many gay people from around Australia moved to the area, and venues such as The Jewel Box and The Purple Onion catered for a gay clientele. The centrally located El Alamein Fountain and nearby Wall in Darlinghurst Road emerged as gathering places for male prostitutes. With the easing of attitudes towards publishing obscenity, the Cross became a key distribution hub for local Australian straight magazines with sexual content. It famously spawned its own “[b]awdy, comic, scurrilous, irreverent” *Kings Cross Whisper* which first appeared in 1965 and at one stage had its publisher thrown in jail for showing “pictures of bare bosomed ladies”. Other small, inner-Sydney magazines with sexual content included *Ribald, Obscenity* and *Censor*, and more broadly *Pix, Man, Dare* and *Gentlemen’s Choice*. The first gay male nude magazines

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11 Ibid, p. 70.
15 Wotherspoon, “*City of the Plain*”, p. 155.
distributed in Australia were imported from the United States, but in 1972 small 
Sydney-based entrepreneurs started to publish and distribute nationally, often in 
association with the girlie magazine publishers.

Despite the easing of Federal censorship laws in the early 1970s, state government 
obscenity laws remained in existence and conservative state legislatures, particularly 
those led by Henry Bolte in Victoria and Robert Askin in New South Wales, 
continued arbitrarily to ban local and imported male nude magazines, as well as 
similarly ‘obscene’ heterosexual magazines. A national classification system was 
progressively introduced between 1973 and 1975 that allowed the sale of pornography 
to adults while restricting its public display. At one stage in New South Wales such 
restricted publications could be sold in sealed plain bags but only if the customer 
knew specifically what to request, with no advice allowed from the shopkeeper. 
Customers often did not know which title to ask for, as they came and went rapidly, 
so to get around the problem a copy of the NSW Government Gazette listing 
restricted publications would be put up in adult bookshop windows.

**Role of male nude magazines**

These magazines by definition included nude male photographs that were a strong 
selling point to attract readers to buy the magazines. They also usually featured a 
personal classified listing service for gay men to meet each other, as well as sexually 
titillating fiction. Some followed the mainstream *Playboy* magazine style with news, 
information about gay venues and even liberationist features. Although strongly 
focused on commercial success, the publishers of male nude magazines forwarded the 
gay movement’s aims in a number of important ways.

Sexually stimulating content had a positive, gay sex affirming impact on readers. The 
mere act of seeing their sexual imaginings in print provided a counter-public arena 
that challenged the idea only sex between a man and woman was acceptable and told 
them their sexual desire was, to some extent at least, legitimate. This helped build the 
confidence of individuals to become less secret and ashamed of their sexuality, and

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alone, not joining the national regulatory system, and at times, as late even as the 1990s, states took an 
independent view of the system such as when Western Australia forced gay lifestyle magazine *OutRage* to be 
wrapped in black plastic after it showed two men touching on its cover, as reported in “OutRage Banned in WA,” 

19 Lex Watson spoke of this strategy during an informal discussion with the author, December 2010.
more prepared to be open about it. Filmmaker Tony Ayres recalls his purchase as a
14-year-old of the magazine *Australian Guys* to “sate my lust [and imagine] this
exciting new world”.20 The importance of male nude magazines was, in part, due to a
shortage of gay role models. As media scholar Fred Fejes puts it, they were “an
important source for the definition of desire and identity”.21 Historian Michael
Bronski argues that such sexual imagery brings desire “out of the mind and into the
reality of the material world” to reinforce the viewer’s sexual identity.22 Historian Joe
Thomas suggests reading pornography in the 1970s was more prevalent among gay
men than straight men, and points to a 1979 US survey that found more than 50 per
cent of gay men sometimes used it for sexual stimulation.23
As a strongly accessed source of information by gay men, the male nude magazines
had a significant impact on their readers’ ideas and the sexual activity unambiguously
depicted represented “the basic difference that creates the homosexual identity”.24
Media scholar Rodger Streitmatter says such material helped liberate people from
guilt by demonstrating they “had no reason to feel ashamed of displaying their
bodies”,25 a point emphasised by Australian cultural studies scholars Katherine
Albury, Catharine Lumby and Alan McKee who found pornography offered
“reassurance for marginalised sexual groups such as gay men”.26 Crucially too, as
commentator Alistair Foster says, the male nude magazines directed themselves
openly to gay men – a form of coming out, if you like – in contrast to the physique
magazines that “kept the individual in isolation, doing nothing to indicate the
existence of other gay men or promote a sense of community”.27 The production of
male nude magazines also had an impact on the individuals involved, from
politicising publishers (discussed shortly) to the models themselves having to
confront their own attitudes towards sexuality.28

23 Joe Thomas, "Gay Male Pornography Since Stonewall," in *Sex for Sale: Prostitution, Pornography and the Sex
24 Ibid, p. 68.
26 Alan McKee, Katherine Albury, and Catharine Lumby, ed., *The Porn Report* (Carlton: Melbourne University
27 Foster, “Getting Physical.”
28 One model spontaneously orgasmed during a photographic session for *William & John*, its publisher John Baker
told the author off-tape in 2013, and ‘Jack’ (not his real name) who was not gay earned $80 as an 18-year-old for
an *Australian Golden Boys* photo-shoot in 1974 but subsequently feared discovery by his friends. Thirty-four years
Male nude magazines helped lay foundations for building community by linking individuals through personal classifieds, which, as historian Martin Meeker points out, provided a means for gay men to connect with each another. The inclusion of information that publicised gay friendly venues, further helped draw people together into a sense of physical community, and by developing a commercial product marketed specifically to a gay clientele, male nude magazines were one of the first steps in the commodification of a gay lifestyle, an international development outlined by sociologist Jeffrey Weeks.

The early publishers of male nude magazines directly faced the wrath of censors, quite differently from the liberationist publishers discussed in the previous chapter who were never systematically targeted under obscenity laws. Some publishers, and the editors they employed, were politicised by these direct battles with government censors. Making connections with their own lives in a still oppressive 1970s world, they at times used their magazines to speak out for change, with news reports and even politically strident articles that allowed movement ideas to find a readership beyond the reach of liberationist publications. Approached by mainstream media outlets for comment they contributed in a way similar to the “epic role” Streitmatter assigns to Playboy magazine during the 1960s in moving American media away from “sexual repression”.

Commercial pragmatism wins out

The gradual easing in attitudes towards obscenity, along with significant cost reductions in printing technology through multilith printing and photocopying machines, meant sexually explicit publications, both gay and straight, could increasingly be commercially viable enterprises. In contrast to the gay liberationist publications, which were produced by volunteers and had small circulation, male nude magazines were privately owned and distributed to individual consumers via mail order, or direct purchase from sex shops and newsagents, usually within the ‘gay

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29 Meeker, Contacts Desired: Gay and Lesbian Communications and Community, 1940s-1970s, p. 2.
30 Weeks, The World We Have Won, pp. 13, 104.
31 Rodger Streitmatter, Sex Sells! The Media’s Journey from Repression to Obsession (Cambridge: Westview Press, 2004). p.27. Note though he also says it then kept moving towards “sexual obsession”.
ghetto’. This style of gay magazine attracted straight business operators, who in the changing climate were pioneering a range of sex industry businesses, such as nude girlie magazines and sex shops. At times these straight publishers directly owned gay male nude magazines, and at times they provided commercial services to gay publishers through office space, typesetting, distribution and printing.

John Baker first published *William & John* in January 1972. The 21-year-old Sydney gay man wanted to amuse his gay party set friends, but soon faced more than he anticipated with court appearances and a nervous breakdown. The next attempt was *Butch* magazine that also struggled and was taken over by a straight publisher who gave it the new name *Gay*, repackaged it to comply with changing laws for restricted publications and successfully published until 1991. Both these magazines are discussed in greater detail later in this chapter.

Straight-owned Herd Publishing joined the male nude magazine market with *Stallion* in April 1973. Ian Hartley worked for Herd in 1974 and says it was part of a larger business that included sex shops in Sydney and a series of sexually explicit straight magazines. The owners of Herd Publishing were husband and wife team Gus and Josie Herstik and according to Hartley, they would regularly face police raids on their sex shops with footage appearing on television current affairs programs. *Stallion* was first published as a 12-page monthly tabloid newspaper, on sale for 30 cents. It contained a male nude centrefold, advertisements for the affiliated sex shop businesses, and a range of text heavy lifestyle and entertainment features, that included an interview with Les Girls performer, Carlotta. More nude male photographs were included in the second issue, though most did not show genitals. Presumably under censorship pressure, the publishers reduced and eventually stopped including nudes, and by issue nine, at the start of 1974, changed format to an A4 magazine size with new editor Martin Smith focussed more on lifestyle. Smith had been a member of Gay Liberation and later started the Jewish gay group, Chutzpah at the end of 1974. Journalist Jay Watchorn, who wrote for *Stallion*, described him as thin with “big, horn-rimmed glasses” that made him look like “a preacher”. Born in 1932 he had previously worked as a mainstream journalist, publicity director for a

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33 Wotherspoon, "City of the Plain", p. 201.
34 Author interview with Ian Hartley 2011.
35 Author interview with Kevin Randall 2010. Jay Watchorn was in fact the secret pen name used by moonlighting Kevin Randall, who worked then as media liaison officer for the Deputy Leader of the Liberal Party, Phillip Lynch.
Liberal Party candidate, and even stood in one election as an independent candidate.\(^{36}\) Despite the changes to *Stallion’s* content it was classified as a restricted publication in the *Victoria Government Gazette*,\(^{37}\) and in September 1974 was renamed *Gayzette*, but this also became a regularly listed restricted publication, and at the start of 1975 stopped with no explanation in the final edition. Ironically the name *Gayzette* lived on as a column written by Smith in the mid 1970s for the independent straight weekly newspaper *Nation Review*.\(^{38}\) Smith died from a heart attack in 1990, aged 58.\(^{39}\)

Herd published a second affiliated gay magazine *Apollo* that did not seek to avoid restricted classification. It featured full frontal nude photographs, including erections, titillating fictional stories, mail order sales, personal classifieds and venues guides. *Apollo* lasted just five issues due to financial difficulties, according to Hartley, faced by the parent publishing company.

With the acceptance by most state governments from 1975 of gay pornography on a restricted basis, male nude magazines subsequently adopted a content formula largely of sexual titillation through pictures, stories, personal classifieds and the sale of sex products, with increasingly explicit material. *Australian Golden Boys* was published for two years from 1973 and reflects this change: the dialogue in the magazine’s early stories was not sexually graphic and focussed on the pick-up scene, but such reluctance was discarded by 1974 in favour of explicit language such as the description of “the first burst of sperm as it came hurtling up the shaft and spewed out the head of the cock and into Mark’s throat”.\(^{40}\) *Australian Guys* came out weekly from mid 1974 until 1976 with a cover price between $1 and $1.50 and maintained this more explicit dialogue, with descriptions such as Glen emptying “his monumental cum load into Barry’s waiting mouth”,\(^{41}\) and photographs now commonly featured erect penises and scenes of anal sex. Other gay male nude publications produced in the 1970s included *Male Maze* and *Tramp*.

As paper quality and printing economies improved, the basic formula of pictures, stories, classifieds and sex product advertising was enhanced through inclusion of more colour photographs. The two most enduring male nude magazines were *Gay*.


\(^{38}\) Wotherspoon, “*City of the Plain*”, p. 188.

\(^{39}\) Stewart Lawlor “The Strange World of Martin Smith” *Campaign* December 1990.


\(^{41}\) “He Took Glen’s 9 Inches in His Mouth,” *Australian Guys* No.104, 1976.

Increasingly advertisements for sex on site premises were included as such businesses became legal operations in the 1980s, along with advertisements for pornographic videos that became very popular during the AIDS epidemic. There was also an increase in advertisements for sexual health services.

The increasing availability of pornographic videos in the 1980s, with more detailed portrayal of sexual activity foreshadowed a decline for male nude magazines, in much the same way these videos would in turn be replaced by more conveniently available internet pornography a decade or so later. Two case studies follow of male nude magazines: an early attempt that failed to find a consistent formula, in contrast with a later long running commercially successful magazine.

Case study: a magazine to amuse and entertain

Twenty-one year old John Baker’s original plan for William & John was to produce a cheap newsletter to amuse his “conservative gays” party set friends with “information and entertainment [that included] male nudes”. He named it after himself and his 25-year-old lover William Easton, a grammar school science teacher. They lived together in Sydney’s northern suburbs and Easton worked on the magazine as its photographer. Baker’s ambitions changed though when he teamed up with Bill Horne, the publisher of nude girlie magazine Ribald, who convinced him to produce a high quality commercial publication.

Born in 1950 Baker had a conservative Presbyterian upbringing in the New South Wales coastal town of Murwillumbah, until his police father retired and the family moved to run a business in the tiny western plains town of Bundarra. Baker left school at year nine to be an apprentice at Wollongong steelworks, and met Larry – a “petrol pump jockey” (later Loretta at Les Girls in Kings Cross) – at the local public toilet beat. Larry taught him the ways of beats in Wollongong and Sydney, and Baker left his apprenticeship to move to Sydney, working firstly as an advertising

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42 Author interview with John Baker 2012.
43 Ibid.
assistant, and then copyboy for the firm Modern Magazines. He learnt how magazines were produced, and made contacts in the industry, one of whom was the company’s typesetter and soon to be girlie magazine publisher Bill Horne.

The first issue of William & John in January 1972 was a 40 page A4 monthly for $1, with colour cover and centre spread. The cover image was the back view of a naked man, gazing across the ocean while standing on a rock ledge. More photographs of the naked man appeared inside, lying on the beach with a semi-erect penis. The key selling point was the stories that featured attractive men and the naked pictures, with such images prominent throughout. In contrast to the largely negative presentation of homosexuality from mainstream society at the time, such imagery played an important role to define a positive gay perspective. There were articles on good-looking celebrities such as ballet dancer Kelvin Coe, and the “incredibly sexy” motorcycle racer Giacomo Agostini. Yet signs of other aims for the magazine were there. In their first editorial Baker and Easton said they were “homosexual and proud” and apart from providing “entertainment and information [alongside] great pictures” intended to campaign for the rights of homosexuals and provide “a voice and communication for the camp community”. The key feature was a four page factual article about venereal disease by ‘Dr Twinkle’. There was a gossipy advice column by ‘Griselda’ and a tolerant article by Reverend Colin James Leane of the Presbyterian Church saying a homosexual should have “the right to be himself”. Books with sexuality themes were reviewed, along with general interest entertainment, pet advice, a collectors column, a cooking column, and a theatre what’s on listing. There was no paid advertising simply because they were not yet organised to do it, but some advertising artwork was “lifted” to make the magazine “look better”, such as a commercial waterbed that featured a naked man with the claim: “You’ve never had an erotic experience … until you’ve made love on a Sonnerdale Waterbed”. In a somewhat prophetic move, given the later strong promotional use of gay magazines by alcohol companies, they also lifted advertisements for expensive imported liquor.

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48 Author interview with John Baker 2012.
Horne provided office space, did the typesetting for *William & John*, arranged the printing of 20,000 copies, and distribution to newsagents and adult bookshops around Australia. Baker looked after the editorial and general administration, and placed an advertisement offering half price pre-sale subscriptions in the *Nation Review*, the only mainstream newspaper at the time prepared to accept gay personal advertisements. In the first week 2000 subscribers each sent in $6, with thousands more in the weeks that followed. With the flood of money pouring in Baker started to imagine his venture as more than a magazine of entertainment and sexual amusement for friends, and saw himself becoming the owner of “a building in the city, with a sauna in the basement, a bookshop on the ground floor, or restaurant, and a helipad on the top”. Baker established an affiliated mail order business that sold copies of *William & John* photographs, novelty sex greeting cards, playing cards and posters. Easton ran the dark room to produce prints as required. Both took a wage, and Baker paid journalist award rates for commissioned articles, and employed three extra staff to answer phones and mail, as well as “an artist” who apparently didn’t do much.

Problems started to surface immediately after the first issue was produced. Baker, Horne and Easton appeared on the national television program *The Mike Willesee Show*, and as a consequence Easton was sacked from his teaching job. Gay liberationists who had previously promoted the new venture in *Camp Ink*, on seeing the published product, refused to sell *William & John* in CAMP’s club room. In stark contrast to activist schoolteacher Mike Clohesy’s sacking in 1975 that triggered a sustained campaign of protest, Easton gained no support from the liberationists. Quite separately from these dramas, Baker broke up with Easton and started a new relationship, though despite this, Easton continued to do the photography for the magazine.

Baker’s new partner was Michael Delaney who had previously been, briefly, an assistant editor on the liberationist magazine *Camp Ink*. A photograph of Delaney, standing naked with his back to the camera and a $12 price tag attached to his ankle, superimposed on the popular Kings Cross male prostitute pick-up point El Alamein

50 Author interview with John Baker 2012.
51 Ibid.
52 Ibid.
53 Ibid.
fountain, had featured on the August 1971 *Camp Ink* cover. Baker was at a private party when “Michael turned up with about three or four other people and they were dressed very strangely”. One had a shoulder bag in the shape and colours of a penguin, and another, a big floppy hat with a flower in it. They wore John Lennon style glasses, baggy pants and tie-dyed shirts. Baker’s friends were alarmed when the group “sat around in a circle and started to smoke marijuana”. They feared a police raid, though Baker was intrigued. He struck up a friendship with Delaney that rapidly became a live together relationship in a large share house in the northern Sydney suburb of Fairlight, and despite no previous experience with drugs was soon regularly taking “a fair bit of LSD” as well as marijuana, hash, heroin, and mandies.

Delaney joined the *William & John* team as a key editorial writer, and had an immediate impact on the magazine. Photographs of nude men continued to be prominent in the second issue, though the number of pages devoted to them was reduced, and none now showed erect or semi-erect penises. This presumably was due to a combination of censorship fears and experimenting with more lifestyle content. Delaney was interested in popular culture and oversaw an expansion of mainstream entertainment coverage. He wrote a five page feature on the performer Alice Cooper, as part of a drag theme that included a two page history of drag, a two page photo-spread of Les Girls drag artists and a detailed outline of the different groups within the drag scene. Other serious articles appeared including one debunking the belief that masturbation caused harm, and an article by a psychiatrist who supported aversion therapy, with an editorial disclaimer that “many of our readers will be disturbed by his analysis [which will] be analysed in the next edition”.

News appeared with a report of a man arrested at a beat, along with the previous regular lifestyle columns. In the third issue, there was an article by Dennis Altman on the gay liberation movement and further expansion of popular mainstream entertainment, with a series of features to explore the drug culture. Personal classifieds were also introduced.

Baker focused on expanding the business and used the magazine to promote this growth. He broke with Horne, unhappy with their informal business relationship where Baker received money from subscriptions, but Horne controlled the money.

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55 El Alamein fountain story from author’s informal discussion in 2010 with Lex Watson.
56 Author interview with John Baker 2012.
57 Ibid.
58 Dr Inderhaus, "Masturbate – It Won’t Fall Off," *William & John* Vol 1, No 2.
from newsagencies. He published initially from his Fairlight home until an office was found and purchased an expensive accounting machine that produced invoices to assist with organising distribution. He sold nude photographs and playing cards that featured the models in his magazines, and a range of imported gay books and nudist magazines. He diversified his magazine range and published a second nude male pictorial magazine *Mankind*. Under Delaney’s influence *William & John* moved towards more lifestyle content while *Mankind* remained strongly focused on sexual titillation. Three editions of *Mankind* appeared from the middle of 1972, with 10,000 copies printed.

Both of Baker’s magazines *William & John* and *Mankind* came to the attention of government censors, and Baker announced in issue three that they had been forced to publish a special edition for Victoria “censoring our full frontal nudes”. Yet the precise reasons behind a magazine being deemed obscene were not explained and this act of self-censorship did not stop them being subsequently summoned to court on obscenity charges. Somewhat perplexed, Baker and Delaney then concluded the Chief Secretary’s Department must consider the personal classifieds in the magazine as “obscene and indecent”, even ones that got no more raunchy than a young man seeking “broadminded and well endowed males for sincere friendship”. The actions of the censors triggered an impassioned plea by Baker and Delaney that the inclusion of classifieds was “not ‘promoting’ bizarre sexual practices [but] in fact a simple case of helping people who are kept in isolation by the social and legal situation to find one another and perhaps bring love into their lives”.

The basis for *William & John*’s obscenity ruling became clearer in August 1972 when they were charged in Sydney’s Central Court of Petty Sessions with “publishing indecent printed material”, released on $50 bail and committed to trial on November

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60 Author interview with John Baker 2012.
61 “Publishers”, *Mankind*, No 3, undated but after 25 February 1973, which was the release date for *Mankind* No. 2 according to *Mate* magazine, p. 112. Most likely it appeared at the end of March, as it was claiming to now be monthly.
64 “Classifieds”, *William & John* Vol. 1 No. 4.
The *Sydney Morning Herald* published Baker and Easton’s names along with their age and address, and it summarised committal judge Mr K Anderson’s ruling that some articles “and an ad for nude art posters as well as photographs of nude males in various poses and a page of classified advertisements [sic] would offend the average man or woman”. Baker and Easton, the legally nominated publishers, faced a total of 56 obscenity charges in both NSW and Victoria, relating to printing and publishing obscene material. Baker launched a third magazine *Mate* to publish personal classifieds, but it lasted just one issue, and the written editorial in that issue accused the Victorian and New South Wales Liberal governments of orchestrating a campaign against *William & John*, part of a broader anti-pornography campaign in both states due to “the close proximity” of elections that year. As each charge against his magazines arrived, Baker glued them to the wall behind his office desk, but initially left matters in the hands of Easton and a group of lawyers who “volunteered a lot of their time” and included *William & John* in their campaign to change censorship laws. At one point Baker decided to make a personal stand and headed to Melbourne to face the charges with the intention of going to jail, but was somewhat deflated when he promptly received a perfunctory $10 fine from a bored judge in an empty courtroom.

Towards the end of his time publishing *William & John*, Baker plunged into depression, describing it as a time when he “disintegrated mentally” as a result of the recreational drugs he was taking. Forty years later Baker reflected that he was in a situation “over [his] head” as a 21-year-old, running the business, with staff and payment difficulties, and dealing with “all these obscenity charges … all too much”. He offered the magazine to Delaney, who he says “didn’t know how to do it … didn’t really want to do it”, though Delaney later ran a magazine for a mainstream publishing house. The final of just eight issues of *William & John* was published in early 1973.

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69 Ibid.
70 Ibid.
71 Ibid.
72 Ibid.
73 Ibid.
In the end Baker simply abandoned the magazine and left the country for three years, to travel and work in London. When he returned he checked the old mail box and the postmaster told him that while he was away hundreds of letters had come to William & John but all had been returned to sender. Baker moved to Adelaide and studied psychology at university; he subsequently became a government statistician. He later moved back to Sydney and recently retired as principal analyst for the Premier’s Department. He believes Easton returned to further university study and later died of AIDS. Delaney recorded a rock music album in 1980 with Christopher Venn and the pair posed together nude as “Mates of the Month” for the women’s magazine Cleo. Delaney continued to write music articles for a range of magazines until his death in a car accident in 1982.

William & John produced erotic male imagery at a time this was still largely banned. The magazine helped advance movement goals by encouraging a positive attitude in readers towards homosexual desire, and the introduction of personal classifieds allowed gay men to connect with each other. The publishers’ battles with the censors were part of a broader campaign to bring about further liberalising of the law and this politicised the magazine team and encourage them to present to their readers ideas of political action. In its brief life it explored a range of magazine content formulas; in many ways it was a hybrid between male nude magazine and the gay lifestyle magazines that followed. William & John was the first attempt at a commercial magazine in Australia and it showed initial promise of financial viability, even profitability. Its publisher though could not settle on a content formula, faced insurmountable personal difficulties, and did not remain in publishing long enough to fulfil this potential.

Case study: finding the right formula

Bill Munro named his magazine Butch to project a masculine image, which he felt, wasn’t being projected in the gay scene. He wanted a gay pictorial “like Pix or People [with] cartoons and lots of pictures of boys and … a few little stories”. Munro told his plans to the people he shared a house with: the “dainty” Dee Neal and her

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74 Ibid.
75 “Christmas Treat - Two Mates of the Month Delaney & Venn,” Cleo December 1980.
77 Author interview with Bill Munro 2012.
muscular former Mr Australia husband who performed a theatrical act together.\textsuperscript{78} Neal offered to do the drawings for \textit{Butch}. There were only two editions of \textit{Butch}, the first in November 1972 and the second a month later, subsequently followed by \textit{Little Butch}, that in turn morphed into the long running male nude magazine \textit{Gay}.

Munro was born in 1937 and grew up in Newcastle where his rarely employed father found a job as a horse trainer. From the age of twelve Munro raced as a jockey and did schooling by correspondence. At fifteen his parents moved to Sydney and he started work in the entertainment industry. He proved to be a good promoter, spruiking suburban shopping centre shows and new release movies. He did voice overs in radio commercials and set his sights on a radio career. His break came in 1963 when he got the DJ job on 2KA Katoomba’s afternoon show, which led to further radio work in Queensland. After three years he started his own rock n roll band, Billy and the Go-Go’s, that played in Queensland venues until 1969 when he returned to promotions work in Sydney, and in 1972, his own publishing venture.\textsuperscript{79}

Munro described \textit{Butch} in the first issue in human terms as “the highest, most fashionable, natural form, the true beauty of the male figure and physique … always sexy, showing him up as the ‘tiger’ of the human species”, one again helping to define a positive gay image.\textsuperscript{80} Photographs in \textit{Butch} included naked men in forest and beach settings, as well as wrestling, shower and dance art scenes. Sexual titillation was the aim though compared to material even a couple of years later the language was mild. One story recounted a man’s adventure meeting a “[s]tripped to the waist” jackhammer wielding road labourer with a “very narrow, well muscled abdomen”.\textsuperscript{81} After getting into bed, the road worker started “breathing heavily [and like] a tiger ready for the kill, he literally pawed my body into his”. Soon after they “reached the pinnacle”, and apparently lived together happily ever after. Apart from titillation \textit{Butch} also included a small section of book, theatre, film and music reviews. There were ideas on gay lifestyle, such as a feature on the etiquette of gay socialising, which suggested readers at a gay dance “be friendly then introduce yourself … then casually offer … a drink”. If matters progressed well the advice on arriving home was “don’t

\textsuperscript{78} Author interview with Bill Munro 2012.
\textsuperscript{79} Ibid. Also Munro, \textit{Let It All Hang Out}.
\textsuperscript{80} William Munro, “Your New Friend … ‘Butch’,” \textit{Butch} Vol 1, No 1, November 1972.
\textsuperscript{81} “Butch in Boots,” \textit{Butch} Vol 1, No 1, November 1972.
hassle your friend off his feet, in a race to the cot [and if he does stay the night] don’t
bundle him out on his ear at daybreak!”

Munro wrote the stories for *Butch* and employed a professional photographer with a
studio near Pyrmont. Some of the models were photographed at sunrise in the sand
dunes at La Perouse in Botany Bay. Munro’s 20-year-old boyfriend Robert Irszak,
who he had met at the gay nightclub Capriccios, was employed as the advertising
manager for the first issue, but made no sales. The 76 page black and white A4
magazine sold for $2 with a claimed circulation of 40,000 copies, though such a
figure was probably an exaggeration given later well established lifestyle magazines
sold less than 20,000 copies. Commercial printers and designers were contracted and
the magazine was distributed by Platypuss adult bookshop that sold it hidden within a
brown paper bag in their shop, and through newsstands in Sydney and Melbourne.

Free advertisements for gay friendly venues in and around Kings Cross and
Darlinghurst were included. There was an article reviewing them, and promotion of
Gay Lib’s Parramatta Road community centre on a map of gay Australia. The venues
though were not always glowingly reviewed with one columnist warning against
going to bars because they were a “breeding ground for alcoholism”. Beats were also
discouraged because of “bashers”, and the magazine recommended using “honest and
to the point” personal advertisements to meet sexual partners.

Political agitation was not the aim, but Munro proudly featured his own name on the
cover as the magazine’s creator. Inside he signed editorials with a flourish as William
H Munro, and published photographs of himself and his staff. He said later he
wanted *Butch* to project a “strong come out attitude [and show] that somebody wasn’t
afraid to come out of the closet”. Munro came up against mainstream homophobia
when he submitted paid advertisements to all four daily Sydney newspapers to
promote sales of *Butch*, but only the *Daily Mirror* was prepared to accept it.

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82 “How to Make It (and Not Mess It)”, *Butch* Vol 1, No 1, November 1972.
85 Author interview with Bill Munro 2012.
88 Author interview with Bill Munro 2012.
89 Ibid.
gained some mainstream support though, with at least one radio interview discussing his magazine and the current political situation for gay men.90

After the first issue, Irszak gave up any pretence of being advertising manager, having convinced Munro to expand into publishing a tabloid called Little Butch. “He loved rock n roll music,” Munro says. “He thought it would be lovely for the young people in the gay scene. And I said, well we’d put out a Little Butch for the young ‘uns”.91 Irszak wrote pop music articles and the new publication included nude pictures and sexual stories, but “a bit more played down” with no genitals shown.92 The titillating story in its first issue was of a man meeting the car cleaning lad who had a “good taut body” and it described how the pair later spent “a couple of hours of enveloping, encompassing entwinement of bodies”.93 Little Butch included cocktail recipes, hangovers recipes, romance advice, Sydney and Melbourne venue reviews, personal classifieds, a large section of mainstream music entertainment, and occasional news report. It sold for 20 cents but couldn’t maintain a weekly schedule and ceased production in April 1973, after just eight issues, an event that coincided with Munro’s break-up with Irszak.94

Munro tried to sell the Butch names to a Melbourne gay businessman but the deal fell through,95 and in June the newspaper reappeared as “formerly Little Butch” but now under the new name Gay, owned by heterosexual publisher of Ribald fame, Bill Horne, who had previously assisted in the establishment of William & John magazine.96 Horne, who Munro describes as tall, good looking, with a small moustache, and black wavy hair cut short at the sides, refused to pay anything for the Butch names.97 Despite that Munro, in the first issue of Gay, thanked the “beautiful big hetro baby” Ribald for helping out.98 After Horne took over with Gay magazine Munro remained its editor for just three editions published spasmodically in the second half of 1973 and a fourth after a publishing gap early in 1974. Meetings to discuss future issues would be held near the office “over a counter lunch and jugs of
ale” at the Bristol Arms hotel. With Horne as publisher, a new style of sensational sex news reports was introduced such as the report of drag queens waiting in laneways “for the first horny hetro [sic] with some money to come along and be persuaded to offer it for sexual pleasure”, and a report of a “stage orgy” by a local rock group. Full frontal male nudes were back with titillating stories, some of which were re-runs of stories previously published in *Butch*. Personal classifieds and venue reviews continued, though less mainstream entertainment coverage.

As Munro disengaged with gay newspapers, he lived and worked in Kings Cross, with a new career as a male stripper earning $20 notes “tucked down into [his] G string” along with offers, that he accepted, of more money in return for sexual services. He later diversified his act to include a ballet routine as Dame Maggot Foreplay, with cameo appearances at Les Girls. He performed the role of Brad in the Barrel Supper Club production of *The Rocky Horror Show* and worked as a rock ‘n roll DJ at nightclubs. Munro started taking drugs and soon “was mixing pills with every kind of booze” and in the early 1980s collapsed and was taken semi-conscious to Sydney’s St Vincent’s Hospital. He recovered, gave up drugs and adopted a healthier lifestyle. He taught himself to draw and published a book of cartoons. When interviewed for this research he lived at Bondi Junction and still occasionally performed in gay venues with his “singing DJ show”, Billy’s Beat.

Twenty-seven year old Barry Lowe took over editing *Gay* from Munro after studying drama at the University of NSW where he had joined the campus gay liberation. Lowe says Horne was in gay publishing because he considered it a profitable market about to “take off”, a sentiment echoed by other commentators who noted his interest was “purely commercial”. Horne briefly expanded his gay publishing activities in the early 1980s, with male nude magazines *Leatherman* and *Hunky*, as well as an unsuccessful foray into gay lifestyle publications. Lowe says Horne nicknamed two of his female staff Randy and Blowjob. He was also apparently

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102 Munro, *Let It All Hang Out*, pp. 45-47.
103 Ibid, pp. 9, 26.
106 Author interview with Barry Lowe 2011.
107 Ibid.
109 See Chapter Three, Gay Lifestyle Publications.
“terrified of police raids”, and used iron bars to block stairway access to his “decrepit” fourth floor Sussex Street office in an old warehouse. Lowe says: “You had to buzz the receptionist for her to press the lift to get you up to the floor”. Despite Horne’s lack of enthusiasm for gay activism, Lowe included serious news from around Australia and the world, “in between nude pictures of men” that were “pinched” from overseas gay magazines, such as *Fag Rag* in America.

Toward the end of 1975 *Gay* changed from newsprint format to A4 magazine style and soon after Lowe left. Following Lowe’s departure news coverage progressively declined and a standard formula of sexual pictures, titillating stories, personal classifieds, and mail order promotion of other sex products was adopted. This coincided with the new national classification system that saw *Gay* given a restricted classification so that it was now allowed to include more explicit sexual photographs that featured erect penises, fellatio and anal intercourse. This content formula continued largely unchanged for another 16 years until the magazine stopped in 1991, for reasons unknown.

In similar ways to other male nude magazines *Butch* and the re-named *Gay* produced erotic male imagery at a time it was still largely banned and encouraged positive attitudes towards homosexual desire. They linked gay men through personal classifieds and in the early days as *Butch*, publicised gay venues. As publisher Munro encouraged discussion of gay issues in mainstream media and for a time the re-named *Gay* included gay news. The primary focus though became commercial success and once obscenity laws had liberalised under the restricted classification system, a content formula and distribution network was implemented through sex shops and newsagencies that sustained the business for more than a decade.

**Conclusion**

Male nude magazines provided a counter-public arena for erotic male imagery now possible in a time of changing censorship laws. The commercial networks of publishers and sex shops connected to Kings Cross aided the earliest attempts, as did heterosexual publishers such as Bill Horne whose motivation was purely profit seeking. The male nude magazines contributed to the gay movement by encouraging a

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110 Author interview with Barry Lowe 2011.
111 For seven years in the 1980s Lowe edited the gay lifestyle magazine *Campaign* (see Chapter Three, Gay Lifestyle Publications) and continued subsequently to review pornographic videos and to write titillating fiction.
positive attitude in readers towards homosexual desire, building pride and encouraging readers to feel more confident about their sexuality. They helped link individual gay people through personal classifieds and with information on gay friendly bars. Early battles with censors were part of a broader campaign to bring about further liberalising of the law. At times this politicised publishers and encouraged them to present to their readers ideas of political action, as well as to confront issues through mainstream media.

Frequently ostracised by liberationists, the early male nude publishers nonetheless contributed to the gay movement with their magazines. They were among the first attempts to develop a gay economy. By targeting the niche-market demand for gay male sexual titillation they opened the possibility of financial viability for gay publishers, even profitability. Financial success occurred later when the obscenity wars were over and state governments adopted the new restricted classification system. This allowed publishers to implement a content formula of nude pictures, titillating stories, personal classifieds and mail order sales of affiliated sexual products, and distribution network through sex shops and newsagencies that sustained their businesses until new technologies supplanted them, in the form firstly of pornographic videos in the 1980s and internet pornography more recently.
Chapter Three

Gay lifestyle publications

Building the scene

Oxford Street is alive with anticipation. Friends gather at restaurants to share a meal, laugh at the week past and the possibilities ahead. Young men in jeans, tight shorts, and leather jackets wander past gay bookshops and fashion boutiques, their faces lit by street lights and pulsing strobes from shops and nightclubs. Red traffic signals provide a pause to catch an eye in the crowd; to dart a quick smile. Muscle boys queue in long lines to get into bars for a night of dancing. A tall drag queen with big hair cuts a swathe through the line, here to sip beer through a straw with friends and entertain the crowd with her mix of lip-synched songs and witty, if cruel, humour. Two party girls turn down a side road to the lesbian bar. In the distance drifts the sound of the Village People’s song *YMCA*, and a solitary man can be seen in Levi jeans, white t-shirt, handlebar moustache, and a handkerchief in his back pocket to broadcast his sexual desire. He enters a private club with alleys created for cruising and cubicles for sex amidst the drifting scent of amyl-nitrate. Late night revelers exhausted from dancing, drinking, talking and having sex, head home alone or in pairs, past mountains of souvlakis and hot chips, and newly minted stacks of newspapers – gay and straight – with all the news of future happenings in this city.¹

Oxford Street in the 1980s joined San Francisco’s Castro district, New York’s Greenwich Village, and Los Angeles’ West Hollywood to become as cultural historian Robert Reynolds says, “one of the great global gay precincts”.²

This chapter discusses the important role that gay lifestyle publications played in promoting Australia’s largely gay male venue scene. It outlines the synergy of this promotion of venues that in turn helped sustain the publications through advertising, distribution outlets and articles. The chapter starts with an outline of the rapid expansion of Australia’s gay venue scene from the late 1970s, most visibly the inner Sydney area of Oxford Street in Darlinghurst. For many activists and publishers, building community – of which the venues were a central component – had become

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¹ Description based, in part, on Faro and Wotherspoon, *Street Seen: A History of Oxford Street*.  
by the 1980s the key political project. Much of the early movement’s liberationist focus shifted from radical restructuring of society to the issues that directly affected community members, such as law reform, police harassment, street violence and the AIDS epidemic. The lifestyle publications became a crucible for the movement’s evolving goals, and especially the emergence of ideas around building community as a political project. Their positive portrayal of gay people enjoying themselves projected an image of the gay world’s legitimacy both among both gay readers and broader society.

This chapter outlines the development of three distinct types of gay lifestyle publication. The first was the cheaply produced ‘bar-rags’ of which more than a dozen sprung up in the 1980s, often to service the Oxford Street social scene. An example Sydney Star which published from 1979 to 1984 is discussed in detail. The second type was a cluster of small circulation magazines strongly aligned to the venues with a content formula of pictures and stories that captured the excitement of the scene. I have selected one of the publications, Melbourne’s venue pictorial City Rhythm published from 1981 to 1989, as an example for close analysis. The third type of publication I will examine is the category of high quality glossies that included substantial feature articles on a broad spectrum of gay life and issues, with the social scene as just one part; here the long running national glossy Campaign (1975 to 2000), serves as a useful case.

Oxford Street: a global gay precinct

During the latter half of the 20th century, the relative anonymity and safety of inner Sydney suburbs became a magnet for gay people fleeing not just rural New South Wales and suburban Sydney, but other cities around Australia. Sydney was the country’s largest city, and as cultural researcher Michael Hurley suggests, the city’s “association with criminality, drugs, police corruption, libertarian tolerance, sex politics and a bohemian cosmopolitanism” may well have been an attraction.3 The removal of Sydney’s six o’clock pub closing laws in 1955, more than a decade ahead of other eastern mainland states, gave Sydney’s bar scene a head start. The 1960s’ “boom in residential towers and smaller blocks of flats” and the moving out of many

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Anglo-Australian families after World War Two paved the way for a more mixed demographic that included gay people.4

A gay subculture existed in Sydney prior to 1970, and to a lesser extent in other Australian cities and towns, but was limited largely to chance encounters and friendship networks. There were no gay bars as such, though Oxford Street was starting to develop as a gay precinct from the 1960s, with some venues attracting a gay clientele, as also happened at this early stage in the CBD and Kings Cross. Oxford Street increasingly became the focus for a number of reasons. It was close to the existing night life of Kings Cross, yet far enough away to avoid the “suburban voyeurs, come to look at the weirdos”.5 Entrepreneurs attracted by “plenty of [cheap] unused building stock available”,6 moved in and bought up the licences of old ‘plonk shop’ wine bars in the street to convert them to smart bars. The increasing affordability of cars, “in effect ‘mobile bedrooms’ for the young [provided] a place for sexual experimentatión”,7 and made it easier for gay people in suburban and country areas to visit the fledgling inner city scene.

The development of gay venues accelerated from the 1970s. The number of “gay spots” in Sydney grew from ten early in the decade,8 many of which were gay only one night a week, or had a quiet section where gay people could gather, to 38 a decade later, many of which were now exclusively gay bars.9 In addition to bars that catered to a gay clientele, bookshops, restaurants and clothing shops opened, as well as ‘sex shops’ selling pornography and sex aids, and usually “a back room for sexual encounters”.10 From the early 1980s Oxford Street’s annual Gay Mardi Gras grew in popularity attracting world-wide interest with crowd estimates of around half a million that lined the street to watch the parade.11 A similar trend occurred in other cities, and by the end of the 1980s Melbourne had 20 bars and sex-on-site premises,12

4 Womerspoon, “City of the Plain”, pp. 149-150.
5 Ibid, p. 190.
6 Ibid, p. 158.
7 Ibid, pp. 147-150.
10 Womerspoon, “City of the Plain”, p. 193.
with eleven throughout Queensland, though mostly in Brisbane, nine in Adelaide, and six in Perth. Some in the gay movement did not cheer the growth of the bar scene, notably liberationists for ideological reasons, as discussed previously. While often critical in print, historian Alan Petersen notes, political activists attended commercial venues, as “there were few other spaces in which gays and lesbians could safely gather”. The bars reflected broader changes in attitude towards homosexuality. Discreet at first, the community of bars and patrons became increasingly more open and dynamic, which corresponded with an assertive new male sub-cultural style known as the ‘macho clone’. The ‘clone’ look often featured moustaches, denim and leather and swept through the commercial scene in the early 1980s. Debate exists whether this was merely fashion, a “variant on the drag queen”, as Robert Reynolds puts it, with “dresses, wigs and heavy make-up [swapped] for a stylised hypermasculinity”. However Craig Johnston, who had been a Communist Party member, argues it “signaled a new … non-closeted … openness [that led to] political mobilisation by Sydney gay men”. Johnston also recognised the “progressive social change” that commerce could play with “new consumers being recognised” despite years of conservative government.

This combination of liberationists rethinking their attitudes towards the bars, and the growing political awareness of venue patrons moved the political agenda of the movement away from radical transformation of capitalist society towards a more specific political focus around largely gay male issues such as achieving law reform. Building community became a key part of the political project. This was a constructive project, but also a defensive one. The burgeoning community was still threatened by police raids and street violence, and the AIDS epidemic emerged after 1983 as another major threat. There were signs of progress. Homosexual acts were decriminalised in South Australia in 1975 and the Australian Capital Territories in 1976. Victoria followed in 1981 and subsequently the Northern Territory in 1983, New South Wales in 1984, Western Australia in 1989, Queensland in 1990 and

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16 Petersen, "Our Heads Know, But Our Hearts Don't Understand."
Tasmania in 1997. Formal liaison committees were set up during the 1980s in many states between the community and police to discuss concerns over police actions and street violence generally.20

The political mobilisation referred to by Johnston was particularly needed to confront the harshest of challenges when the AIDS epidemic arrived in 1983 and the first Australian developed symptoms. This news was greeted with mainstream media reports that bordered on hysteria and headlines such as: “Mystery Gay Disease Hits Here”.21 The following year when four babies in Queensland died after they were transfused with HIV contaminated blood, a headline demanded: “Die, You Deviant”, of the gay man who had unknowingly donated the blood.22 Historian Paul Sendziuk who documented the response to AIDS in Australia noted that in the earliest days there was an increase in anti-gay discrimination from a range of groups including dentists, real estate agents, tradespeople and police. Gangs of gay bashers targeted areas such as Oxford Street, and leading public figures called for the quarantine of infected individuals and the closure of gay saunas.23

Gay AIDS organisations formed spontaneously in response to the crisis and lobbied to be part of policy-making decisions.24 In stark contrast to the situation in the United States where AIDS had hit earlier,25 the Australian response was generally more rational with governments, state and federal, choosing mostly to incorporate representatives of the gay community “into a partnership with government and medical experts”.26 It proved to be effective, and “new HIV infections each year dropped rapidly after 1984”.27 The epidemic did not trigger an erosion of gay rights despite fears of “isolation camps and tattooed foreheads”.28 Instead, the response to it led to increased “political legitimacy of gay life”,29 and “strengthened gay organisations, often with the help of state resources”.30 The National Advisory

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20 Willett, Living Out Loud, p. 246.
21 Truth, 9 April 1983.
22 Midweek Truth 3 December 1984
24 Ibid, p. 3.
26 Sendziuk, Learning to Trust, p. 4.
27 Ibid, pp. 7-8.
Committee on AIDS included gay community representatives and produced the bipartisan AIDS strategy in 1989. There was added impetus to overturn remaining laws that still criminalised homosexuality, as part of a strategy to build self-esteem and promote safer sexual behaviour, and deepened for many gay men their sense of being part of a community, albeit one “under siege”. Funding was given to community based AIDS councils to launch safe sex education campaigns, in particular to promote the use of condoms, and “spending on AIDS was increased with each budget and mini-budget” throughout the 1980s. The AIDS councils became important institutions joining a growing non-commercial gay sector of sporting, religious and social support group.

Role of gay lifestyle publications

Just as gay venues were primarily places of entertainment, so too a key aim of lifestyle publications was to entertain their mainly gay male readership who often picked them up when out on the scene. The publishers and staff who produced them were usually gay men with strong social connections to the readership. The entertaining reading that was published came in a variety of forms but the critical point is that they provided a counter-public arena for information about the venues that was not available in mainstream media. This was not simply a passive transfer of information to readers, but represented a powerful synergy that developed between the publicity needs of bars and the editorial, distribution and revenue needs of the publications, which helped propel the rapid development of both. Commentator Larry Galbraith said the early 1980s newspaper *Sydney Star* and new venues in Oxford Street “needed each other [as the] venues were the distribution points, and the *Star* promoted the venues as places to go.” Lifestyle publications devoted considerable space to the promotion of the gay social scene and helped build iconic status for individual bars, performers and events. They published guides and advertisements, with addresses, phone numbers and opening hours, not just for Sydney venues but

33 In the first few months of 1985 “the Commonwealth gave the Victorian AIDS Council and the AIDS Council of New South Wales starting grants of $56,000 and $74,000 respectively” records Sendzik, *Learning to Trust*, p. 111.
often nationally. This allowed gay people across the country to connect, and learn of venues and events in the different cities. The publications were an indispensable source for those coming out as gay, visiting a new city, or for regulars simply wanting to know about upcoming events and new venue openings. The bars in turn provided the publications with cheap and easily obtained content in the form of social gossip and personality profiles, and an almost endless supply of photographs – often performers dressed spectacularly in drag, or shots of good looking patrons. The venues also provided important distribution outlets for the publications and at times, as high as 50 percent of a publication’s advertising revenue.

There were a range of views from publishers about how to promote the community’s interests, from those who simply chose to provide exciting “froth and bubble” stories, with “fun” news and gossip, to those who saw their publication as one of “the building blocks of a whole community infrastructure”. Nearly all publishers though directly faced the pressure of living openly as gay and saw the oppression faced by their readers. This often led them to confront issues that directly affected the community and their readers and encourage involvement in issues such as law reform, police harassment, street violence and the AIDS epidemic. Commentator Adam Carr suggests what united lifestyle publishers was that they all “broadly supported gay civil rights and gay community consciousness”, and several commentators describe their role as central to Australia’s successful management of HIV/AIDS. Certainly the earliest news stories that reported on AIDS were “carried almost exclusively by the gay press in Australia until 1983-84”. Activist Lex Watson described them as “an important medium through which the hostility and misunderstanding between gay activists and the gay sub-culture became moderated and the protagonists started to communicate and to come to terms with each other”.

Lifestyle magazines by definition portrayed gay lifestyle and presented positive images of gay people enjoying themselves through photographs, feature articles and lifestyle supplements. They thereby lent legitimacy to this lifestyle among both gay and straight readers. Historian Yorick Smaal says of the magazine *OutRage* that it

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37 Author interview with Ken Payne 2013.
38 Author interview with Danny Vadasz 2010.
told gay men “who they should try to be”, with an emphasis on readers adopting a sexually attractive appearance. This telling varied across lifestyle publications at different times, from the masculine clones of the 1980s to the “young, attractive, short-haired, smooth-bodied, defined, muscular” ‘Template Man’ described by queer theorist Dean Kiley.

The synergy that existed between venue promotion and publishing needs did not prevent tension at times, especially when venue owners tried to dictate story content to suit their own needs. A notable example is the loss of advertising and distribution suffered by Sydney Star after it “published suggestions that a fire at a gay bar may not have been accidental”, with even the more compliant publisher Allan Deith talking of “nervousness over [an Oxford Weekender News] front cover depicting [influential venue owner] Dawn O’Donnell as a cave woman”.

The advertising revenue from venues, while crucial, was not enough on its own to finance the publications, and expansion was often seen as the solution to problems of venue dependence. In part this was simply a direct battle to win a greater share of the existing venue revenue from competing publications, but it also saw publications expand their distribution and advertising to include outlets and businesses other than venues. This influenced content, particularly discouraging overt sexual imagery as they sought to expand beyond the scene, but allowed a greater reach of the movement’s pro-community ideas that were part of these publications, and provided more gay people with the knowledge to connect to the community.

Advertising the gay world

The first attempt at a gay lifestyle publication was the short lived Gay Times. It appeared in Sydney for nine fortnightly issues from late 1971 and sold for 25 cents though was distributed free in some of the early gay friendly bars. Apart from its guide to “Sydney’s Gayest Places” that listed three venues, its articles were mostly about mainstream entertainment and sexuality more broadly than just gay. Its personal classifieds were a mixture of gay, straight and ‘swingers’. From 1979 there was a

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43 Smaal, “Body Politic or Body Beautiful?”
44 Kiley, "Coming over All Queer,” p. 76.
flurry of cheaply produced newspapers, known somewhat disparagingly as ‘bar-rags’. These sprang up in Sydney and focused largely on the Oxford Street venue scene. A dozen titles came and went during the 1980s, with shifting allegiances between publishers and editors, who often worked for more than one. Publishers often started their projects anticipating a profitable venture and when that failed to eventuate, some left. Other were strongly connected to the community and driven by additional motivations to promote it. These publishers struggled with the tension of finding a commercially viable formula, and as can be seen in the detailed account that follows a range of print formats and publishing cycles were attempted. The first and most famous was Sydney Star published by Michael Glynn for five years from 1979 and this story is told in greater detail later this chapter.

Glynn’s early monopoly of the Oxford Street market soon ended with the entry of straight entrepreneur Bill Horne, who primarily published nude girlie and some male nude magazines. Horne started Libertine in June 1980 as a 20 page fortnightly tabloid for $1, but after 10 issues changed its format to A4 magazine. Coinciding with its first birthday in June 1981, Libertine changed tack again with a brief foray into weekly production under the somewhat grand subtitle “Australia’s Journal of Gay Affairs”, and then in September announced “Gay Mag Goes Porn”, with monthly production of naked men and a $2.50 cover charge. This also failed and by the end of 1981 the publication folded.

In October 1980, following Libertine’s switch to magazine format, Peter Langford started Cruiser, a fortnightly A5, black & white magazine for $1.95 aimed at gay men in bars and saunas. It featured an attractive man on the cover, with venue news, photos, listings, classifieds and gossip. Erotic fiction was added later. After a few months Langford left to join Libertine that had announced Cruiser was about to fold. It didn’t fold and Rick Petersen, who had until recently published the male nude magazine Sydney Playguy, took control.

By early 1981 Cruiser’s page number reached 72 with a claimed circulation of 7000 copies distributed for free in New South Wales gay venues with a further 10,000 on

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49 See Chapter Two, Male Nude Magazines.
51 Previously editor of the male nude magazine Australian Golden Boys in 1974 and the gay lifestyle magazine Campaign in 1975-76 as discussed later this chapter.
It went weekly in October 1981 and in 1982 switched to A4 with a price hike to $3.95. In late 1981 Langford returned to edit its separate publication After Dark, distinguishing this short lived project from Cruiser and Gay by saying that it would “offer stimulation of another kind”. In 1983 he once again edited Cruiser for the next two years. By the start of 1984 gloss covers were abandoned along with previous national aspirations, and the magazine now referred to itself as the “Sydney After Dark Entertainment guide”. New management took over in 1985 with 46-year-old, Harry Lyle Mitchell in charge. Mitchell also managed gay accommodation premises in Sydney, and had previously sold advertising for Butch in the early 1970s, but Cruiser stopped before the end of 1985.

Mitchell then joined others to produce Oxford Lifestyle Magazine. The free A4 newspaper aimed “to reflect the diversity of gay lifestyles”, with between 32 to 40 pages, and a claimed circulation of between 10,000 and 15,000, but closed in February 1985 after just six months. Curiously the Cruiser title was re-established early in 1988 by John Gray under the modified name Sydney’s Cruiser Magazine. He initially relaunched it as a tabloid newspaper, but soon switched to A4 newsprint offering full-page advertisements for $350 before abandoning his attempt at publishing after six months.

Horne tried again in September 1981 after his Libertine venture failed, with the Ross Crich edited Oxford Weekender News, a free weekly eight page, A4 fold-out guide to “entertainment, dining, buying and selling”. At the start of 1982 it switched to weekly tabloid between 20-32 pages with news and lifestyle articles and a claimed circulation of between 5000-8000. By April it dropped back to fortnightly and the following issue Crich announced the end of Oxford Weekender News, blaming “petty politicking [and] commercial greed” within the gay community. This was Horne’s last foray into gay lifestyle publishing, and he subsequently retreated to his area of

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55 Peter Langford, "Guest Editorial," After Dark Vol 1, No 1, probably August 1981.
57 Further discussion of Butch in Chapter Two, Male Nude Magazines.
60 Sarno, "A Golden Mile of Press Barons."
commercial success, the male nude magazines. Yet after missing just one issue, Oxford Weekender News was back with new contact details and new owners that included venue manager David Beschi and the paper’s advertising manager, Allan Deith. 66

Deith was born in 1956 growing up in the country NSW town or Orange and in north Queensland’s Townsville. As an adult he lived in both Melbourne, where he worked as a tram driver, and in Sydney where he organised gay parties. 67 Under Beschi and Deith’s stewardship the paper became “known for its many colourful front covers [and] devious sense of humour”. 68 For two months in late 1983 the paper returned to a weekly publishing cycle, but soon after disputes within its ownership group led to its closure in April 1984. Deith then published on his own under the name Sydney Gay News, to bypass the legal dispute over masthead ownership, 69 and invested “a large amount of money in new computer type-setting equipment”. 70 But Sydney Gay News lasted just four months and Deith instead contracted out his typesetting services to Sydney Star’s new owners. In February 1984, he published Melbourne’s first gay newspaper, Melbourne Voice printed fortnightly on A4 folded newsprint, with a pictorial cover, to “disseminate information out into the community on a regular basis”. 71 Melbourne Voice lasted just two issues that year, with a second attempt the following year that lasted a further 15 years before it was, similarly to Sydney Star, taken over by Bluestone Media and renamed Melbourne Star Observer. 72

Three months after the closure of Oxford Lifestyle Magazine in 1985, Glenn Wells started Sydney’s Village Voice, a free fortnightly tabloid with messy layout, and a focus on the social “lifestyles of gay men and women in and around the Sydney gay venues”. 73 It ranged from 16 to 24 pages and only added Sydney to its title a few months after starting, perhaps to delineate itself from the more famous New York publication of the same name. Its initial coverage was limited to venue happenings

68 “Vale Allan Deith.”
72 See Chapter Five, Free City-based Newspapers.
but soon broadened to include some news and features. After 12 months, Wells “due to ill health and personal reasons” sold the newspaper to Trevor Reeve, who was friends with Allan Deith. \(^{74}\) Within a few months Reeve and Deith renamed the publication \*Darlinghurst Area Reporter Examiner (D.A.R.E.)* which lasted a year. In January 1987 they also produced the short-lived mainstream newspaper \*Inner City Voice*. These were Deith’s final forays into publishing and he died at Fairfield Hospital in 1992 “after a two-year battle with AIDS”. \(^{75}\)

By May 1987 Wells was back in charge, returning the publication to its earlier name of \*Sydney’s Village Voice*. Yet he was no more settled in the task this time around and almost immediately looked for a new owner, and in the middle of 1988 sold the paper to the new player in town John Gray who had recently re-established \*Cruiser* magazine. Gray’s foray into gay publishing was over though in a matter of months and Christopher Hoye took over \*Sydney’s Village Voice*. Distancing himself from previous owners Hoye renamed it \*The Village Voice Australia*, \(^{76}\) and it continued under his stewardship until it closed in October 1990.

While Sydney’s Oxford Street was the main focus of these early bar rags, there were attempts in other cities, such as with \*Melbourne Voice* mentioned earlier. In Queensland \*Brisbane Szene* (1981-1989) was produced by David Wheatley until he sold it, \(^{77}\) and in its last days consisted of just two folded A4 sheets called ‘The Szene’. \(^{78}\) In Adelaide \*Catch 22* began life in January 1982 as the \*Gay News Service Newsletter* listing gay venues on a single roneoed foolscap page. A few months later it was called \*The Adelaide Gay Directory* and soon after \*The Adelaide Gay Guide*. The name \*Catch 22* was settled on in March 1983. By this stage it was a free 16 page A5 monthly aiming to be “informative and non party political”. \(^{79}\)

A second type of gay lifestyle publication arose in the 1980s, directly aligned to particular venues, with a content formula of pictures, stories and information that captured the excitement of the scene. This type of publication was more common in cities other than Sydney. Brisbane venue owners produced newsletters such as


\(^{77}\) Author interview with Wally Cowin 2010

\(^{78}\) “We Are One,” \*Queensland Pride* February 1992.

\(^{79}\) “Catch 22,” \*Catch 22* No 14, probably March 1983.
Terminus Tattler and Zuloo’s Magazine. In Perth, the Red Lion Tavern published 15 editions of its own monthly news and gossip publication The Lion’s Roar in 1984-5. Particularly successful was City Rhythm published in Melbourne from 1981, by Jan Hillier who owned the Pokey’s venue and Ken Payne who owned Mandate. It continued until 1989, briefly facing competition from the 24 page monthly Shout in 1987 that lasted just four issues, and a subsequent attempt from Image in 1990 that also lasted just four issues. City Rhythm reappeared in 1992, published by Pokey’s fans Leigh Klooger and Alan Mayberry but they changed its name to Focus by the second issue and it continued until 2000. The story of City Rhythm and Focus is discussed in greater detail later in this chapter.

The third type of gay lifestyle magazine was the high quality national glossy pictorial. Examples included OutRage and Campaign that retained a cover charge and initially included substantial feature articles on a broad spectrum of gay life and issues, with the social scene as just one part. These magazines promoted gay interest movies, theatres, books and music; and in their later stages, particularly the 1990s, they increasingly promoted a consumer lifestyle of beauty, travel and fashion. The long running national magazine Campaign was started in 1975 by Sydney venue owner Rod Stringer and continued until 2000. Its story is also discussed in detail later in this chapter. 80

When Campaign briefly went into liquidation at the end of 1979, its Victorian advertising manager for the previous two years, Ivan Polson, feared the worst. To maintain his local network of writers, advertisers and distribution outlets through which he had sold 1000 copies of Campaign each month, he launched Klick. 81 Throughout its three year life, the monthly A4 size Klick! consisted usually of 60 pages. The initial $1 price rose to $1.50 in February 1982. Twenty thousand copies were printed of the first edition with newsagency distributors Gordon & Gotch signed on, but most copies were not sold and subsequent print runs were reduced. Polson had moved to Melbourne in 1964 as a 17-year-old leaving behind “very poor [and] violent” Adelaide origins. He found a job in a factory, got married and had a child. In 1972 he returned to night school and won a scholarship to Monash, where he studied history and politics, came out as gay, completed an honours degree and edited the

80 Detailed discussion of OutRage in Chapter Six, Flirting with Corporations.
81 Author interview with Ivan Polson 2011. Note that the first issue was named Click!
university’s student newspaper *Lot’s Wife* in 1976. *Klick!* focused on social
entertainment which was a decision Polson in retrospect says was to connect the
apolitical “dinner party [and] bar set” to the “intellectual left wing” through some
coverage of political issues, such as law reform attempts. Polson gained financial
backing for *Klick!* from Ray Mann, the owner of gay sex-on-site premise, Caulfield
Sauna, who provided $5000 to establish the magazine. When Mann sold his sauna, his
share in *Klick!* ended up with Melbourne gay club owner Max Poyser who had
opened a new bar in Adelaide, wanted similar expansion for *Klick!* and it soon turned
into a national project, needing additional staff. By 1983 the business relationship
between Polson and Poyser was under strain and after an unsuccessful attempt to sell
*Klick!* the company was liquidated. Polson then started the Collingwood printing
business Complete Print Shop, which he sold in 1998. He has lived in Thailand since
2000.

All three types of lifestyle publication played a crucial role in promoting and building
the commercial venue sector, each in their different way. The national glossies from
the start had ambitions towards high quality and broad readership. Despite only
dedicating a small amount of content to venue promotion they were a crucial source
of information until the bar rags and free community newspapers developed. In
contrast, the local venue glossies remained small circulation and strongly focused on
promoting the scene. They shifted little from a formula of venue pictures and stories.
The bar rags were cheaply produced and started with a strong scene focus, but this
evolved with time. They added additional content such as news, community event
coverage, classifieds and lifestyle articles, and progressively transformed or were
replaced by the more broadly focused free city-based newspapers discussed in a later
chapter. The success of the free city-based newspapers in attracting readers and
advertisers, in turn forced the national glossies to move increasingly to cover high-end
fashion, arts and consumer lifestyle.

Three detailed case studies follow: an early example of the ‘bar-rag’ *Sydney Star* that
later transformed into the free city-based newspaper *Sydney Star Observer*; the
Melbourne-based venue glossy *City Rhythm*; and the long running national glossy
*Campaign*.

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82 Ibid.
84 Chapter Five, Free City-based Newspapers.
Case study: party animal seeks more exciting scene

Michael Glynn was a “lanky American with no shortage of attitude and chutzpah”, who described himself as a “party animal”. In 1979 he needed a job and with just a thousand dollars in the bank started Sydney Star. He had “absolutely no journalism or publishing experience, other than as a student contributor to his high school newspaper”, but when a friend showed him a gay business and entertainment guide picked up in Texas, he immediately saw the idea as a business opportunity that “would work”. He also hoped by encouraging gay people to patronise the city’s gay venues to “make Sydney more interesting [as he considered there] was really nothing much exciting happening”. In July 1979 he printed 200 copies of his first guide, and carried them around to Oxford Street venues in his back-pack. This first issue was a 16 page A5 fortnightly black and white free pocket guide featuring a shirtless man on the cover, with listings inside of gay groups and venues, a what’s on guide, horoscopes, and some arts coverage. He named his guide as a tribute to a friend and former Olympic ski champion, who had committed suicide, taking a mainstream newspaper’s headline description of her as “The Sydney Star”. Over the next five years he rarely took a holiday, becoming an Oxford Street fixture “snapping pictures” of venue patrons, and handing out papers from a small table in the street.

Glynn was born on 7 April 1948 in Chicago, Illinois and spent most of his childhood in Newark, New Jersey. “My early life,” he recalled, “was upset by the breakdown of our family unit when my father broke court orders, grabbed my three older sisters and disappeared”. Glynn’s mother later re-married and raised him with her new husband and his two children. Glynn’s biographer Dominic O’Grady describes him as, “a musical kid with a gift for words”, who became editor of the school newspaper at the Newark School of Fine & Industrial Arts and captain of the school debating team. At twenty-two the “good-looking, six-foot-two psychology student at Boston University

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86 Interview of Michael Glynn in 1995 by Larry Galbraith, held in Pride History Group collection, index card 2006.02.066 MG.
87 O’Grady, “Preaching to the Perverted,” p. 8.
88 Dunne, “The Star Is Born.”
90 O’Grady, “Preaching to the Perverted,” p. 98.
94 O’Grady, “Preaching to the Perverted,” p. 91.
who made ends meet by working odd jobs as a kitchen hand”, reunited with his father, now a showman and “world-famous hypnotist” who performed under the name Shawn Masters. They travelled together to Australia in 1971 to perform in a long-gone nightclub in Coogee.\textsuperscript{96} The brief reunion did not last but Glynn stayed in Australia, taught English and drama at a succession of schools but repeatedly “failed to get along with many of his peers or fit into the schools’ administrative hierarchies”.\textsuperscript{97} He went back to America and worked as a cook before returning to Sydney in 1978,\textsuperscript{98} where he worked as night manager in a restaurant that went broke soon after and left him unemployed.\textsuperscript{99}

Glynn’s initial aim for \textit{Sydney Star} was to promote and encourage development of the gay venue scene, and during the 1980s the bars were a crucial component in building the community. He published photo-spreads of patrons in bars and featured venue entertainers on some of the covers. \textit{Sydney Star} included a guide listing bars and supportive businesses, and most of its paid advertising was from venues. Glynn believed that showing in print what entertainment was available would also highlight the lack of it and inspire the community to undertake what he called: “getting your act together” to improve the scene.\textsuperscript{100} Glynn wanted a community that would provide “a real feeling of support from friends and others … to face the conflicts that rage about us”,\textsuperscript{101} with a colleague saluting Glynn’s “singleminded dedication [saying his] vision and The Star [were] among the greatest influences on the growth of our community”.\textsuperscript{102}

There was a symbiotic relationship between promoting these commercial venues and the needs of \textit{Sydney Star}. The venues provided “an important revenue stream; and gay publishers could use these bars, clubs and bookstores as readymade distribution points”.\textsuperscript{103} This became more apparent when a new style of gay bar began to open, that was focused on friends meeting to socialise rather than just cruising for sex. These bars opened on Saturday afternoons and early evening, rather than just late at night, and provided an important new distribution niche for \textit{Sydney Star}. Patrons at

\textsuperscript{96} Ibid, p. 182.
\textsuperscript{97} Ibid, p. 95.
\textsuperscript{98} Ibid, p. 96.
\textsuperscript{99} Dunne, “The Star Is Born.”
\textsuperscript{100} Michael Glynn, “Upfront,” \textit{Sydney Star} Vol 1, No 1, probably July 1979.
\textsuperscript{101} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{103} O’Grady, “Preaching to the Perverted,” p. 29.
these venues “could read it at the bar while they were waiting for their mate, or they could quite naturally take it home”, and cigarette machines became “prime real estate” for newspapers to sit atop, so much so that Glynn changed the format of *Sydney Star* from a smaller folded style suited to display stands and adopted the more expansive flat tabloid style.

He initially published on his own “out of a tiny office” in Phillip Street Sydney, but after 10 issues expanded his operation. He broadened the *Star*’s content from venue and entertainment listings to include more news, promotion of non-commercial events, letters to the editor and classified advertisements, with the words “Gay Community News” added to the masthead. Glynn increased the print run to 2000, and his publication’s page size, settling eventually on a traditional news tabloid format, half advertising and half editorial. His 21-year-old lover Steven Cribb, and two other staff joined the team, in a new rented terrace office, just off Oxford Street, that doubled as his home.

Glynn was “a maverick publisher and editor” with methods and structures described as “idiosyncratic”, and became increasingly active in the community’s affairs, using his publication to promote the issues he saw as important. His editorials became a personal platform on how the community should develop, somewhat in the tone of “a preacher [delivering] sermons from the mount”. He directly organised a number of social events, particularly in the men’s leather scene and started the Australian Mr Leather contest in 1979. He was a founding member of Australia’s first Gay Business Association and a leading figure in the push to send an Australian team to the first international Gay Games in 1982. He was instrumental in the evolution of Sydney’s Mardi Gras after initially opposing, in his “sometimes abrasive”, even “short-

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105 Ibid, p. 159.
106 *Sydney Star* Vol 1, No 14, probably December 1979.
107 Dunne, “The Star Is Born.” Later publisher claims were made in the credits boxes of 10,000 readers in the 26 February, 1982 edition and 20,000 readers in 22 October 1982. Such claims assumed each copy was read by multiple readers.
108 Age estimate based on Cribb’s death in November 1986, aged 28 years in O’Grady, “Preaching to the Perverted.”
110 O’Grady, ”Preaching to the Perverted,” p. 159.
112 Ibid, p. 183.
tempered … self-righteous” manner, its more left-wing liberationist agenda. With Mardi Gras’ change of direction in 1981 and move to more festive summer scheduling Glynn became an active committee member.

Organising events such as the Australian Mr Leather contest was not just an exercise in community building for Glynn, it was a personal crusade. He saw “himself and his newspaper as champions of leather and the sworn enemy of Sydney’s prevailing homosexual style”, which were then seen as “either longhaired counter-culturalists in silks and satins, or drag-loving opera queens”. Glynn used his paper to define his view of the gay lifestyle and promoted a new “hairy-chested, moustached and sexually aggressive” gay masculinity. Images of such men usually featured on the cover, with more such images inside. “You don’t have to adopt the limp wristed fairy image,” he would say. “You can look like a clone, you can look more like yourself. You can take what you wear at work and go straight into the scene and still look good. You don’t have to put rouge on, dress up and all that stuff”. His crusade though was not without opposition, and a short-lived satirical newspaper called The Sydney Fart appeared briefly on Oxford Street, “lampooning the clone monoculture of the Sydney Star”. Glynn’s focus, overwhelmingly, was on men and it was nearly two years before lesbians were even seen on a front cover. While conceding there was some truth to frequent charges of sexism laid against him he railed against “militant separatist [sic] lesbian/feminists” for preventing the formation of “a united, strong community”, and blamed the lack of lesbian visibility on the failure of lesbians themselves “to contribute in a positive way”. Yet when Sydney Star published a report on a venue billed as “Sydney’s first gay hotel for women”, even a development such as this failed to get the venue photo-spread page that instead went to a men’s event.

116 Ibid, p. 86.
117 Ibid, p. 130.
119 O'Grady, "Preaching to the Perverted," p. 87.
120 Ibid, p. 133.
121 Sydney Star 8 May 1981.
Despite frequent disagreements with gay liberationists Glynn agitated strongly for social change and endorsed the call for gay people to come out and be proud of their sexuality. He saw his paper as a contribution to “the building of the gay movement and the growth of gay consciousness”, and urged his readers “to ‘come out’ and support the human rights that we all so desperately need and want”. Glynn used his newspaper as if “facilitating a gay consciousness-raising group [by publishing] an edited collection of intimate narratives … letters to the editor, news, features, profile pieces, reviews, and social or ‘scene’ photos … about homosexuals who had left the closet and who had embraced a new life as ‘out and proud’ gay men”. An important impact on Glynn’s readers’ thinking about themselves was the Sydney Star’s strong “sex-for-pleasure discourse [that] enabled Star readers to imagine themselves as polymorphous perverse beings entitled to the private pursuit of adult sexual pleasure”. The newspaper included fictional stories of sexual pick-ups, pictures of handsome, sexually available men, and advertisements for sex-on-site venues. Advertisements supported the message, such as The Link sex shop which promoted “a particularly vivid imagining [through its] alphabetical list of the goods it had on offer”. This raising of gay consciousness and endorsement of sex-for-pleasure provided an important foundation for helping to mobilise Sydney Star’s readership to make political demands, among which was the response when police in 1983 raided the sex-on-site Club 80 and detained 150 patrons for several hours, including six taken back to the Darlinghurst Police Station and charged with offences. Rather than call for the closure of sex clubs such as Club 80 as a way to make gays ‘respectable’, the Star was “unequivocal in its condemnation”, and extensively reported the raid and subsequent protests. “We must take every opportunity to show the police that we will not tolerate being treated like dirt,” the newspaper declared. Such criticism of police, and of violence generally against the gay scene and its patrons, was not a completely new theme. Glynn had previously promoted a public meeting to discuss

127 O’Grady, “Preaching to the Perverted,” p. 81.
128 Ibid, p. 69.
129 Ibid, p. 68.
130 News reports in Sydney Star from 11 February 1983 and subsequent issues.
131 O’Grady, “Preaching to the Perverted,” p. 71.
the rise in gay bashings. He had also reported the case of a patron arrested by an off-duty police officer for kissing another man at a gay disco, and another of police dragging two men from the dance floor at an Oxford Street nightclub before allegedly strip-searching and bashing them. He had taken pictures of gay men bashed by police as evidence in prosecution cases. Glynn wrote of the nightclub strip-search incident that it was only one of many, saying the actions of some in the police force was “abhorrent, akin to the treatment of Jews in Germany under the rule of the Nazi overlords [and called on his readers to] fight the battle for our freedom”.

Glynn and the *Sydney Star* were firmly behind the campaign for law reform and published letters to the editor, opinion pieces, and front-page items encouraging readers to participate in protest rallies. Subsequent parliamentary debates, political strategies and government manoeuvring on law reform received “saturation coverage” throughout the early 1980s, and he pioneered election supplements in gay publications that consisted of paid advertising and candidate statements. The *Sydney Star* encouraged readers to donate to fundraisers, attend rallies and lobby political representatives. It published stories about prosecutions of gay men who were charged with offences under the *Crimes Act*, including an interview by Glynn with a man convicted and jailed for 12 months on charges of gross indecency and sodomy after having consensual sex with another adult male. From December 1983 the *Sydney Star* provided a regular column called *Getting Elected* to openly gay candidate Brian McGahen who subsequently won a seat in the 1984 Sydney City Council election, “thanks in no small part to the Star’s support”.

The *Sydney Star*’s endorsement of sex-for-pleasure and its preparedness to challenge authority guided its response to the AIDS epidemic. The *Sydney Star* had run regular sexual health columns from issue three, and in July 1981 published the first report in Australia of a new disease that would become known as AIDS. When the first
Australian case appeared in 1983 Glynn told his readers that “concern” was healthy, but not to “reassume the guilt”. In contrast to the fear and panic that dominated many mainstream media reports in the early 1980s, the Star continued to encourage readers to engage in sexual pleasure while endorsing and promoting ‘safe sex’.

Glynn started his publishing business with what seemed a good idea, hoping probably to make some money, but soon referred to the “illusion … of money to be made in the publishing field”. From the start his business struggled despite doing most of the work himself, from answering phones and writing content, to finding advertisers and delivering papers. While venue advertising was the major source of revenue for Glynn, it also created its own set of tensions. Some venues refused to stock his publication because it contained advertisements for other venues. Other venue owners blacklisted his publication over its editorial content, such as his reporting of a fire that destroyed the independently run bar Midnight Shift that was popular with the ‘clones’, widely believed at the time to have been lit by the competing ‘Syndicate’ which controlled much of the illegal or semi-legal activities in New South Wales, including gay bars. Glynn’s Star took a strong position, “reflecting its social base among clones and leather queens”, and courageously so, given that some bar owners moved their advertising to the opposition newspaper Oxford Weekender News. Glynn soon had “to juggle the books like crazy” with a $5000 deficit.

This is not to say he did not endeavour to make a commercial success of his newspaper. Glynn urged “gay business people” to advertise and support the community in other ways as well, and famously coined the slogan from issue one, “think gay, buy gay” that combined gay consciousness and community advancement with support for the advertisers who were the basis of his business. It was a slogan that if implemented by his readers offered a potential solution to the inherent tension that existed between aims to advance the community and the needs of running a

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149 O’Grady, ”Preaching to the Pervered,” p. 120.
151 “Behind the Lines with Michael Glynn of the Sydney Star.” Financial plight also commented on in ”A Word from the Publisher,” Sydney Star 10 February 1984; Dunne, “The Star Is Born.”
152 Michael Glynn, ”A Word from the Publisher,” The Star 9 March 1984.
business. In the middle of 1982 Glynn tried briefly to broaden his publication’s market reach by rebadging it: “Incorporating The Melbourne Star and The Sydney Star” and enlisted Melbourne writer Jay Watchorn. Glynn had previously pushed distribution into the Melbourne market, but the Melbourne badge was dropped after a year. In 1983 Glynn published a second short-lived newspaper Green Park Observer. From April 1983 Glynn adopted Campaign’s successful formula for running personal classifieds, allowing readers to submit for free, with a charge placed on those replying. Even this strategy, however, did not lead to enough revenue. Commercial success eluded Glynn. By 1984 he declared he was “certainly not in the newspaper game to make money – because it isn’t there”.

Quite separately from the newspaper, Glynn started a private sado-masochism sex club with “other like-minded men”, but problems arose when brought to account over using club funds for personal needs. Tensions were also starting to erupt between Glynn who “ran the newspaper as a personal fiefdom”, and his staff, including the editor Paul Smith who was owed $5000 in wages. Fuelling the showdown was Glynn’s increasingly “emotional and erratic behaviour”, and his staff threatened to leave to start an opposition paper they planned to name The Sydney Moon. To clear his debts, Glynn agreed to sell the Star for $10,000 to a group that included Smith, as well as advertising manager Tony Cooper, features editor Richard Turner and Smith’s lover, Bob Hay, with payment for the purchase to be made in $300 fortnightly installments by their newly formed company Seruse Pty Ltd. However, Glynn only received part of the money as the new owners were also soon “ailing financially”. To avoid their ongoing financial obligation to Glynn, the Seruse directors closed Sydney Star and under a new publishing entity re-launched the paper as Sydney Star Observer. Glynn sought legal redress and obtained judgment against Seruse for breach of contract, but by then it was a company with no money.

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153 Further discussion on the meaning of this slogan in Johnston, A Sydney Gaze.
154 Green Park Observer is discussed in Chapter One, Gay Liberationists.
155 Glynn, “A Word from the Publisher.”
156 O’Grady, “Preaching to the Perverted,” p. 160.
162 Sydney Star Observer discussed in Chapter Five, Free City-based Newspapers.
Glynn and Cribb moved to the Blue Mountains, two hours west of Sydney, but returned to Sydney at the end of 1985 for medical treatment after Cribb was diagnosed with HIV. Cribb died the following year and Glynn subsequently went public about his own HIV positive status. In the early 1990s Glynn moved into a Housing Commission terrace in Glebe and in 1991 started another short-lived newspaper, Harbour City Times. Glynn also became involved with Street Patrol, “an ill-fated response to anti-gay street violence”, where volunteers, including Glynn, wore dark uniforms with pink triangle insignia, carried whistles and patrolled the streets “in a quasi-military operation”. Glynn died in 1996.

Glynn started Sydney Star to give himself a job and to enliven Sydney’s gay scene by actively promoting venues to attract more gay men to them. He particularly promoted the new masculine ‘clone’ scene. He later broadened his paper’s coverage to become a central player in the community’s affairs and political campaigns, encouraging positive attitudes and involvement in gay community from his readers. Initially reliant on venue advertising, Glynn was commercially innovative and broadened his advertising base to lay the foundation for the free city-based newspapers of the future. Ultimately though he lost control of his paper as he was unable to resolve the financial tensions he faced as a publisher.

**Case study: the Women’s Weekly of the gay scene**

In Melbourne the strongly venue-based free magazine City Rhythm started in November 1981, printed on high quality paper. Venue owners, Jan Hillier and Ken Payne, who separately ran gay nightclubs Pokey’s and Mandate, started the scene promotional magazine and they stuck to a formula of pictures and stories that captured its excitement. The 28 page, A4, black and white glossy was a guide and pictorial record of Melbourne’s “wide and varied” gay social scene, designed to be, Payne reflects, a “little glossy mag on the coffee table”. Just under half of its content was paid advertising. The editorial was a mix of gossip, promotional profiles, horoscopes, latest dance music lists and pictures of people enjoying a night out on the

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163 O’Grady, “Preaching to the Perverted,” p. 162.
164 Ibid, p. 165.
166 Harbour City Times is discussed in Chapter One, Gay Liberationists.
170 Author interview with Ken Payne 2013.
scene. The editors were soon printing several thousand copies of each issue, perhaps as many as 6000.\textsuperscript{171} Payne says the two venue owners started \emph{City Rhythm} because they wanted to shift their advertising spend from the more serious gay publications to a magazine with “fun news … gossip [and stories about] the venues”,\textsuperscript{172} the sort of magazine Hillier called “the \emph{Women’s Weekly} of the gay scene”.\textsuperscript{173}

Hillier was born 23 July 1936 in Adelaide and spent “her wild youth … fanging around on her Norton motorbike”.\textsuperscript{174} A close friend endearingly described her as “loud, opinionated and … she gambled on the horses, roulette and almost anything that moved”.\textsuperscript{175} Hillier moved to Melbourne where she delivered bread for more than 10 years. For her 28\textsuperscript{th} birthday she hired a hall in Richmond. Four hundred people turned up. This suggested an opportunity especially as hotels were still forced to close at 6pm. So Hillier started regularly organising similar events, now charging entry to Friday night “Jan’s Dance … held at glamour addresses like 9 Darling Street, South Yarra”.\textsuperscript{176} It was bring your own drinks, with big name entertainers booked, among them John Farnham, Marcia Hines and Skyhooks.

In 1977 she opened Pokey’s at The Prince of Wales hotel in St Kilda with drag performer Doug Lucas and in the 1980s opened Penny’s there “for the girls”.\textsuperscript{177} Pokey’s glamorous Sunday night drag shows became a feature on the gay social calendar with some shows costing more than $50,000 to stage”. They starred Lucas, plus from the background microphone, Hillier’s “voice that boomed out every Sunday night like a church bell”.\textsuperscript{178}

Payne was born 14 September 1944 and describes his childhood as “pretty brutal”,\textsuperscript{179} on a struggling farm with his single mother and three siblings after his father “decided to disappear”.\textsuperscript{180} He left school at 15 and worked locally as a linesman for the telecommunications utility PMG before gaining a transfer a couple of years later to the South Yarra branch, which he says was “Nirvana as far as I was concerned,
because that was where it was all happening … Toorak Road was ‘the Beat’”. He says it was an exciting time but also “repressive and hideous [with enormous dangers] of having your career blown away if you were ‘discovered’”. Payne went to night school for eight years, eventually graduating with a public relations diploma and a new career that led him to work with Michael Edgley’s promotions company, and eight years in London and Amsterdam theatres. He returned in 1977 to start a gourmet food business in East Melbourne. In 1979 he opened Melbourne’s first seven nights a week gay men’s venue, the leather and cowboy fantasy-style bar Mandate in St Kilda, initially called Sweethearts. In 1984 he bought the Market Hotel in Commercial Road South Yarra. Both Hillier and Payne were founding members of ALSO Foundation and Gay Day celebrations in 1981.

City Rhythm’s first editor Peter Aiken had previously edited Klick! magazine for several months and the first issue of City Rhythm was “put together with scissors and paste on [his] loungeroom table”. He stayed only four issues due to the editorial tasks causing “strains in his personal life”, though later helped with layout, writing a horoscope column and even selling advertising. Volunteer editor Jay Watchorn, who had previously contributed articles regularly to Sydney gay magazines, replaced Aiken. Apart from the venues, the magazine attracted advertising and distribution outlets from a range of small local retail businesses such as pharmacists, restaurants, bookshops, florists, galleries and clothes shops.

City Rhythm helped build community. Its primary purpose was to promote the gay social scene, and the publishers’ own venues featured prominently in editorial and advertising, with new editions handed to patrons as they left. “It never made us any money”, Payne says. “It cost us all the time. But since it cost us we figured we can put in our full page ads”. Sensitive to charges of bias, the magazine committed to report widely on Melbourne social events, both with coverage of other gay venues and non-commercial community events, and tried to minimise the need to underwrite it by selling advertising to other venues and businesses. It listed all venues, community centres and advertisers, and their gay guide and map that listed 64 groups.

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182 “After Eight Years of Mandate, It’s Time for the Last Waltz,” City Rhythm February 1989.
184 Watchorn, “Froth on the Glass at 50”.
185 Author interview with Kevin Randall 2010, who edited under the pseudonym Jay Watchorn.
186 Author interview with Ken Payne 2013.
supportive businesses and venues attracted coverage in the mainstream *Truth* newspaper in 1982. Venue listings were grouped as ‘Mixed Nights’, ‘For Ladies Only’, and ‘Where the Guys Go’, each on its own page, and a large part of the editorial was photographs of people socialising in venues, under headings such as “Everyone’s a Star at Night” and “A Bubbly Time Around the Scene”. Pictures of performers or participants at events regularly featured on the covers, while advertisements and gossip columns promoted the happenings at different venues.

The social scene was presented as an enjoyable place, and the publishers of *City Rhythm* pushed its distribution into a circulation network of gay and mainstream businesses that helped inform and inspire readers, including non-gay ones, to join the excitement. This helped to define the gay lifestyle. The magazine presented to its readers a glamorous entertaining world for gay people in contrast to the guilt and fear many experienced in their everyday world. Drag spectacular, central particularly to Pokey’s stage shows, often featured on the covers or in photo-spreads, alongside positive images of disco dancing boys, or masculine clones. While the men’s scene dominated the advertising and editorial coverage, *City Rhythm* always included lesbian events, and from the second issue introduced columnist Barbie Cassidy to give her round-up of “wonderful” times out socialising in the venues. Payne says “the serious media [failed to reflect] the simple joys and failures and happiness and whatever of the gay scene and how we lived and how we partied and how we did all kinds of things. *City Rhythm* was pretty good for all that”.

The publication – more single-mindedly than either the national glossies or the Sydney bar rags – avoided political news, arts features, or classifieds. Hillier steadfastly refused to have *City Rhythm* drawn into coverage of news, even during AIDS backlash events in 1984, that included graffiti splashed across the wall of Payne’s venue Mandate, that housed *City Rhythm*: “Kill a Queen, Save the Virus”. Hillier railed against other gay press for containing “nothing else but politics”, and wanted “froth and bubble ... something light and full of gossip. The things queens

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189 *City Rhythm* December 1982 and February 1983.
191 Author interview with Ken Payne 2013.
192 Ibid.
193 Ibid.
really do love, lots of piccies, and who’s doing what to whom”.\textsuperscript{194} She “insisted that it not deal with the nasty aspects of gay life”,\textsuperscript{195} and largely managed to maintain this. Such a response was probably a reflection on Hillier’s desire for both her venue and magazine to be happy places, and escapes from reality. Payne defends this approach, suggesting \textit{City Rhythm} provided a form of soft diplomacy by presenting the impression that “these guys and girls are fun, they’re not threatening, they’re not going to cause a revolution here, they’re not going to try to close down the place and make everyone gay. They’re just saying we live out there pretty much the same as you. We have parties, throw special events”.\textsuperscript{196}

\textit{City Rhythm} never quite maintained its monthly publishing schedule and in 1984 officially switched to bimonthly, which drifted out to quarterly. It ended in 1989 as Hillier and Payne moved away from running venues, Payne having sold Mandate and the Market, and in 1992 Pokey’s closed.\textsuperscript{197} Hillier received the first Rainbow Lifetime Achievement Award in 1993, with Payne awarded one the following year. Soon after selling his venues, Payne reacquired them and the Market was renamed 3 Faces in 1990.\textsuperscript{198} In 1996 he launched the ill fated Precinct 3182 venture at the corner of St Kilda Road and Martin Street, a massive multi-venue project that included a hotel, sauna, cruise bar and fully licensed cinema, but was unable to attract enough patrons. It was a financial disaster for Payne.\textsuperscript{199} He sold most of his assets, including 3 Faces in 1999 and went to Brisbane to develop property.\textsuperscript{200} He now lives in the Victorian country town of Malmsbury, and Bali during winter. Hillier died in a house fire in 2001 “trying to rescue her beloved dogs from the flames”.\textsuperscript{201} In 2003 the Jan Hillier Drag Excellence Rainbow award was introduced in her memory.

With financial backing from his father in 1992, Leigh Klooger re-started \textit{City Rhythm} in a salute to Hillier, and she was listed as part of the editorial team. Initially 24 pages with 3000 copies printed the free A4 gloss monthly covered social scene news, pictures and gossip. The pictorial covers regularly featured gay venue ‘stars’, often drag performers. The magazine’s aims were “to provide a visual account of life on the

\textsuperscript{194} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{195} Author interview with Kevin Randall 2010.
\textsuperscript{196} Author interview with Ken Payne 2013.
\textsuperscript{198} “Ken Payne Reaches Milestone,” \textit{Focus} September 1994.
\textsuperscript{200} Author interview with Ken Payne 2013.
\textsuperscript{201} Calder, ”Farewell to an Icon,” quoting Ken Payne.
gay scene … social rather than political”.

Klooger took the photographs and sold advertising, his father managed the books and helped with distribution, and Alan Mayberry was the volunteer editor. Klooger and Mayberry shared a love and delight for the gay scene and its entertainers, inspired initially by Hillier’s Pokey’s venue. The magazine changed name to Focus for issue two due to a negative reaction by advertisers to City Rhythm’s past attachment to specific venues, and subsequently the pair had free access back stage to all venue shows, at times assisting with promotional photographs. In 1997 Focus introduced colour covers and increasingly more colour internally. In 2000, after 38 issues Klooger stopped publishing as “Dad was getting older”, and they faced printer price rises due to the recently introduced GST, that advertisers were resistant to cover.

Focus and City Rhythm’s primary reason for publishing was to promote the excitement and fun of the bars and their shows, usually drag, and they steadfastly avoided ‘political’ issues. By focusing only on the positive aspects of gay life they generated a feel-good factor that delivered to both gay and straight readers a form of soft diplomacy. Yet at a broader level they had little active involvement in the political campaigns for gay and lesbian rights.

Case study: the journey to national glossy

Before Oxford Street became the undisputed centre of Sydney’s gay life in the 1980s, Kings Cross gay bar owner Rod Stringer launched Australia’s longest running gay lifestyle magazine Campaign. Inspired on a trip to America after meeting staff of the high circulation Los Angeles Advocate he started a modest sixteen page monthly newspaper in 1975, selling for $1. Stringer deliberately avoided overt sexual imagery, in order to achieve “respectability” in the belief his readers would “respect us more and trust us as their newspaper if we treat them as real people”.

With the help of two partners, one a financial backer and the other the magazine’s first editor, Stringer’s magazine focused mainly on gay men’s entertainment and lifestyle. This included not just the venues but articles on gay themed and gay interest

202 “From the Editor's Desk,” Focus July 1993.
204 Author interview with Leigh Klooger and Alan Mayberry 2010.
205 Alan Mayberry recollections 2010, via email to Bill Calder.
206 Author interview with Leigh Klooger and Alan Mayberry 2010.
movies, theatre and music, as well as books, profiles of entertainers of interest to a gay readers – sometimes just for their good looks – fiction, gossip, travel and classifieds. Yet Stringer also picked the magazine’s title deliberately as he had aims beyond just entertainment. The first cover ran a news story on law reform, and the magazine subsequently campaigned regularly on the issue.

Stringer was born in 1941, grew up in the Sydney suburb of St George and traveled into the city to attend St Mary’s Cathedral College, which he describes as a good “introduction” to learning his way around the city. Initially drawn to politics he was elected an ALP youth council delegate, before he switched attention to his accountancy studies. In his twenties he was lured into the “exciting” world of money market trading but became a casualty of the infamous collapse of Mineral Securities Australia (Minsec) in 1971 and found himself out of a job. He went into business for himself, firstly organising finance for touring rock bands. He started to run gay bars after friends told him of an illegal casino in Kings Cross that was closed down by the police. In 1972 he opened the gay bar Castello’s there, but a few months later was forced to move the disco to Kellett Street after the landlord did “a deal” on reopening the casino. Thuggish threats convinced him to give up the lease and move to a venue with no liquor licence, forced to rely on corrupt police officers to stay open. Stringer ran Castello’s in Kellett Street until 1976 when he opened the “legit” Patchs Disco in Oxford Street.

*Campaign*’s first editor Peter Langford had previously edited the male nude magazine *Australian Golden Boys.* He wrote most of the articles in *Campaign*, with help from one paid assistant in an office above Castello’s nightclub, and contributors who were paid two cents a word. Layout was done using letraset and bromides, typesetting on an old IBM Selectric and the magazine artwork pasted up on a 20-foot long table. *Campaign* modernised its layout with pictorial covers from issue five, and appointed American Clinton Kramer as its graphic designer. When Stringer moved his nightclub from Castello’s to Patchs in Oxford Street, soon after launching *Campaign*, the magazine’s office moved briefly into the short-lived *Campaign*

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209 Author interview with Rod Stringer 2010.  
210 Author interview with Rod Stringer 2010.  
211 See Chapter Two, Male Nude Magazines.  
215 Author interview with Clinton Kramer 2011.
bookshop on the second floor next to a gay coffee lounge at 382B Pitt Street. In March 1976 the magazine settled in a third floor office at 620 Harris Street Ultimo, a kilometre from Oxford Street. Distribution steadily increased from just 700 sold of the 5000 first issue print-run, and peaked at nearly 11,000 sold each month in 1978. These were sold nationally through newsagents, sex shops or subscriptions mailed around Australia in plain brown envelopes.

Campaign’s development mirrored the growth of gay venues in Sydney and other cities, and national coverage of venue news steadily increased. One reader in 1975 expressed surprise to see an article on the Melbourne scene that they had not known existed, writing in a letter that it was “good to know and read of the different places to go to, if you feel like it”. There was demand expressed by readers for more “information on gay organisations and gatherings, meeting places and happenings”.

This was an important role played by Campaign, highlighted in an interview by sociologist Gary Dowsett of ‘Dennis’ who stumbled across a copy of the magazine. He “read about the bars, venues, and events in the Oxford Street precinct [and] made his first furtive trip” to the street.

From the first issue Campaign included a personal classified service where individual gay people could describe themselves, preferred partner and type of relationship in about thirty words and another reader could, for a fee, send a letter of introduction to be passed on by the magazine. For then 15-year-old Philip Burt living in the outer Melbourne suburb of Airport West finding a copy of Campaign at his local newsagent was his first introduction to classified advertisements of men seeking sex and the fact a gay world existed. For the first time in February 1976, photographs of people at gay venues were included. This development was announced cautiously in an editorial, and Langford outlined the magazine’s policy of asking first if someone was willing to be photographed, stressing that such photographs did not necessarily mean a person was gay. It was an editorial success with a substantial photo-spread of the

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216 Audit Bureau of Circulations figures show maximum average monthly circulation of 10,786 in September 1978. For the following 10 years, circulation was between 8-10,000 copies per month.
220 N.H., Campaign May 1976.
221 Dowsett, Practicing Desire, p. 240.
222 Author conversation with Philip Burt 2013.
venue Patchs’ opening night three months later.\textsuperscript{224} Such ‘happy snap’ spreads of people enjoying a night out at the bars became a regular feature with individual city guides and venue photo-spreads.\textsuperscript{225} Even the less visible backroom sex bars received occasional promotion such as one story that described experiences readers may have thought “only existed in porn”.\textsuperscript{226}

After 10 months with \textit{Campaign}, Langford resigned, partly due to “a difference of opinion” over the paper becoming less “campaigning” than he wanted, and partly due to “nervous exhaustion” from the pressures and long hours of editorship.\textsuperscript{227} He subsequently published \textit{Sydney Advocate} in 1978 (it lasted two or three issues),\textsuperscript{228} edited \textit{Cruiser} magazine in the early 1980s, started the Oxford Street club Pete’s Bar, and in 1988 published three issues of the unsuccessful gay newspaper \textit{Adelaide Gaze}.\textsuperscript{229} It is believed he died in the 1990s.\textsuperscript{230}

Kramer took over as editor of \textit{Campaign}, and under his guidance developed a magazine predominantly for gay men with bright pictorial covers introduced that usually featured a good looking man. He expanded mainstream entertainment coverage with theatre, music and book reviews that attracted mainstream advertisers. After 18 months he returned to the United States and settled in San Francisco, though he continued to send monthly parcels of American gay news clippings and magazines. He was replaced in 1978 by co-editors: John Cousins, a veteran of television production in Australia and Britain;\textsuperscript{231} and Frank Wells, who was born in America and employed there as a journalist. Wells came to Sydney, via a work stint in Athens, as a 31-year-old with his wife-to-be. He later divorced, living subsequently as an openly gay man. Wells edited \textit{Campaign} under the pseudonym Lee Franklyn and wrote a gossip column using the name Dale Carson. He covered the demonstrations and arrests during the first Mardi Gras in 1978, but was “burning out” during 1979 and quit.\textsuperscript{232}

\textsuperscript{224} “Patchs Opening Night,” \textit{Campaign} May 1976.
\textsuperscript{228} O’Grady, “Preaching to the Perverted,” p. 132.
\textsuperscript{229} “Gaze Folds”, \textit{Catch} 22, October 1988.
\textsuperscript{230} Based on a suggestion in an email by \textit{Stallion} publisher Gus Herstik dated 30 September 2011.
\textsuperscript{232} Email correspondence with Frank Wells 2011.
Despite its primary focus on entertainment, Campaign’s publishers used the magazine to agitate for a change in attitudes within society. In July 1976, the women’s magazine Cleo featured an article on Campaign and shortly afterwards, Langford, Stringer and Kramer appeared on the 0-10 network midday TV program, The Mike Walsh Show.233 There was a subsequent appearance on the show by columnist Martin Smith in a debate with gay rights opponent Fred Nile over the contents of a gay history series Smith had written.234

In the first issue of Campaign Langford called for the repeal of anti-gay laws,235 and moves to decriminalise sexual activity were jubilantly reported, particularly law reform in South Australia and Australian Capital Territory,236 and developments in other states routinely followed.237 In September 1976 Campaign ran an interview with South Australia’s premier, Don Dunstan to mark the anniversary of homosexual decriminalisation in the state. Key news themes were law reform, police harassment, street violence and from 1983 the AIDS epidemic, with international news initially provided by Kramer using a prototype modem device to receive photographs from contacts in America.238

Campaign highlighted and challenged police activities against gay people both locally and abroad.239 It criticised the amount of time New South Wales police spent “chasing gay men” for their sexual activity,240 and Victorian police entrapment activities at a popular Melbourne beat.241 The magazine ran extensive coverage of the first Mardi Gras in 1978 that resulted in 53 police arrests,242 and the raids five years later on sex-on-site premise Club 80 where 17 patrons were arrested.243 Campaign criticised the Federal Government’s Grim Reaper AIDS campaign for intensifying “the murky halo

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238 Author interview with Clinton Kramer 2011.
240 Lex Watson, "Wran’s Our Man?" Campaign December 1979.
of pessimism [and increasing] stigmatisation of persons already diagnosed or at-risk”. 244 It preferred to focus on “the changing sexual patterns of gay men”, 245 the “coming together of Sydney’s and Australia’s gay communities” in response to AIDS, 246 and when guidelines were established, published articles to encourage safer sex. 247

During the first four years of publishing Campaign, Stringer’s other businesses contributed $50,000 to keep the magazine afloat, 248 despite optimistic aims by Stringer for the magazine to “become a ‘commercial’ success”, 249 and even predictions of “making a profit [which] will make our shareholders happy”. 250 Financial difficulties were there from the start though, with Stringer receiving only 50 percent of first issue sales income after distributor costs which amounted to just $350. He had only one $30 paid ad, for Stuart Blundell hairpieces. 251 This was not enough to cover staff or printing costs. Editors were often paid in “crumpled $1 notes collected from the classified replies”. 252 Kramer talks of having worked 24-hour stretches to meet deadline, even sleeping in the office, 253 becoming “mentally and physically and spiritually exhausted”. 254 The first full colour cover occurred in August 1977 only because the print bill was paid by featured singer Marcia Hines’ publicity agency.

To assist the finances Stringer established a mail order book club, and one profitable line was buying remainder copies of the New York male nude magazine Mandate for $1 to on-sell at $3.50, 255 but advertising the book club fell foul of New South Wales censors. While Campaign could now be sold as an ‘unrestricted’ publication following implementation of state law changes in 1975, it had to drop advertising for ‘restricted’ books. This prompted the production in 1976 of a separate NSW edition with the advertising removed. Other attempts to make Campaign self-sufficient also

255 Author interview with Rod Stringer 2010.
failed, such as in 1976 and 1977 a $3 local Gay Guide which was a mix of listings and nude pictures, and $5 annual memberships to the Campaign Club offering a newsletter and gay venue discounts. Distribution grew to 10,000 copies a month and advertising revenue reached $10,000 an issue, but this was still not enough to sustain the publication.

In 1979 business problems at his Oxford Street nightclub Patchs forced Stringer to sell his bar to rival nightclub owner Dawn O’Donnell, meaning financial support for Campaign dried up.256 During this turbulent and financially difficult period a series of editors sat in the chair for the remainder of 1979. In a last ditch effort the magazine increased its cover price in September 1979 to $1.50 but it was not enough to save it and in December Campaign went into liquidation.

An old friend of Stringer’s, Rod Needham saved Campaign from closure. Needham had worked initially with Stringer when he opened Castello’s nightclub, but the not-quite-legal nature of the business, and threats from business associates unnerved Needham. He sold his share to wealthy bookmaker Bill McKelvie, who also financially backed both Patchs and the establishment of Campaign. Needham had rejoined Stringer as Campaign’s national advertising manager in 1978,257 and was able to negotiate a deal with the administrator that led to Campaign being acquired by the heterosexual owners of the Platterpuss sex shop chain, Gary Beauchamp and Tony Davidson. They saw promotional value in it for their businesses, and even sublet part of the Campaign office to Rick Peterson who published the male nude magazine Sydney Playguy.

Stringer says in retrospect he was happy to “put some of [the night-club] money back in” to building the community with Campaign. He subsequently moved to a farm near the southern New South Wales town of Berry where he established the gay resort Tara in the late 1980s before moving to Queensland’s Sunshine Coast and establishing the gay resort Horizons at Peregine.258 In 1996 he was called as a witness before the Wood Police Royal Commission in relation to the running of Castello’s and Patchs nightclub,259 and in 2009, after 50 years in the ALP, received life

258 Author interview with Rod Stringer 2010.
membership from the Party. Bill McKelvie’s life ended in tragedy in 1983 when he died in a car accident.\textsuperscript{260} The book-maker owned a string of properties in the eastern suburbs and a luxury Sydney Harbour boat, and lived in Coogee with his wife and family, but also secretly lived in a Centennial Park apartment with a boyfriend who was told by the family to vacate after McKelvie’s death.

On acquiring \textit{Campaign}, Beauchamp and Davidson immediately dumped full colour covers, presumably for budget reasons, and did not reinstate them for 18 months. They also initially wound back the national focus to just Sydney,\textsuperscript{261} although this was soon broadened once more, to include a national listings of community groups.\textsuperscript{262} Wayne Harrison, who later became artistic director of Sydney Theatre Company, edited \textit{Campaign} for a year followed by Sydney-born playwright Barry Lowe who stayed for six years until 1987. As a 19-year-old in 1966 Lowe had been thrown out of Sydney Teachers College for being gay and became a psychiatric nurse at Gladville Hospital. After a series of jobs he ended up in magazine production and for two years in the mid-1970s edited \textit{Gay} magazine.\textsuperscript{263}

Lowe says Beauchamp’s American girlfriend Mary Richards helped run the magazine until her relationship with Beauchamp ended in 1983 and she returned home. In 1986, Lowe oversaw the transition to the modern A4 gloss magazine style with an accompanying price rise to $2, and the introduction briefly of nude centerfolds. When Beauchamp purchased the Darlinghurst guesthouse, Edward Manor, \textit{Campaign}’s office moved to small rooms at the rear of the building, along with its typesetting machine, “a huge groaning beast which spoke a language incomprehensible to all (and galleys were) churned out … by another huge rumbling monster which smelt vile from the chemicals used and … was always breaking down”.\textsuperscript{264} Lowe did not get along with Beauchamp’s new partner, and soon wife, Zsuzsanna with whom he had a series of personal disagreements. He resigned at the start of 1987 and returned to work at \textit{Gay} magazine.\textsuperscript{265} For several years until 2014 he wrote a fictional sex adventure column for the free Sydney newspaper \textit{SX}.

\textsuperscript{260} Author interview with Rod Stringer 2010.
\textsuperscript{262} For example “Fine Print Directory,” \textit{Campaign} December 1983.
\textsuperscript{263} See Chapter Two, Male Nude Magazines.
As free city-based newspapers with their quicker production schedules took over the role of providing news and coverage of social activities, \textsuperscript{266} \textit{Campaign} from the late 1980s increased its content on matters of fine living, travel, fashion, and ways its primarily gay male readers could improve their sexual attractiveness. This new focus was enhanced by cover images of handsome men apparently projecting the right style and advertisers promoting their products, also using images of good looking men in their advertisements. The type of articles published included a casual promotion of dancing on drugs as the “stimulants begin to take effect and the lights take on a bright clarity”. \textsuperscript{267} There were interviews with the bodybuilder who “immediately stirs interest from almost everybody” when he steps on the dancefloor, \textsuperscript{268} and the personal trainer with “the kind of body the average gay man would kill for: a sculptured abdomen, a V-shaped torso, biceps the size of grape-fruit and strong shapely legs”. \textsuperscript{269} Waxing was recommended as “having a hairy back went out with canvas safari suits”, \textsuperscript{270} though tolerance was occasionally expressed for diversity such as bears where “fat is cuddly, age is experience and hairy shoulders a turn-on”. \textsuperscript{271} By the start of 1988 \textit{Campaign} was facing new difficulties, highlighted by staff resignations, and when put on the market a new owner – again straight – was found. Leo Cameron, through his company Worlandar Pty Ltd, \textsuperscript{272} vowed to take an “arms length” approach to running the magazine. \textsuperscript{273} The first editor under the new owner was the magazine’s news journalist Larry Galbraith, who also worked as electorate secretary to pro-gay NSW Independent MP, Clover Moore, \textsuperscript{274} but he soon went back to just writing news. After a series of short-lived editors, Andrew Creagh took the reins for two years from May 1990 with the intention of reducing news coverage and encouraging arts writing. \textsuperscript{275} This trend towards a consumer lifestyle-focused magazine continued under subsequent editors Greg Callaghan and Kerry Bashford until August 1996, when the magazine entered another period of turmoil. Seven editors in two years ended with \textit{Campaign} back on the market and in 1998 it changed hands again, though still not gay owned. Twenty-six-year-old Indrani Bandyopadhyay

\textsuperscript{266} See Chapter Five, Free City-based Newspapers.
\textsuperscript{268} Garry Bennett, "Bodybuilding and the Desire to Be Masculine," \textit{Campaign} September 1985.
\textsuperscript{269} "Let’s Get Physical"," \textit{Campaign} September 1992.
\textsuperscript{270} “Waxing,” \textit{Campaign} November 1990.
\textsuperscript{274} "New Editor for Campaign," \textit{Campaign} November 1988.
\textsuperscript{275} "New Editor for Campaign," \textit{Sydney Star Observer} 23 March 1990.
for the next two years owned and edited the magazine taking it in a slightly odd, abstract direction with plummeting advertiser support. In 2000 she unsuccessfully put it on the market asking $70,000 and then closed it down.276

*Campaign* presented a broad range of ideas around gay lifestyle, with the venues just one part. This expanded the vision of gay community and the publication in its early years advocated strongly on issues of concern to this community. Its unsettled ownership, with four different publishing groups during its life, most of whom were straight, led to a business often dependent on its publisher’s other ventures.

**Conclusion**

The increasingly popular gay lifestyle publications in the 1980s played a crucial role in the development of Australia’s gay community. They publicised and promoted the gay scene. They drew individual gay people together through classified advertising, but also through other means. In playing this role, lifestyle publishers benefited from the symbiosis that existed between their publications and the commercial scene. The venues, in particular, provided advertising revenue, distribution outlets and stories that helped resolve their financial difficulties and allowed expansion. The magazines promoted businesses and encouraged the physical network of gay venues. Each helped the other grow.

By mostly avoiding overt sexual imagery, and abandoning early liberationist politics, these magazines often had a more discreet political influence, in the form of soft diplomacy. They presented a positive image of people enjoying the venues and other events, which helped legitimate the gay community in the minds of readers, and encourage participation in it. Publishers used their magazines to present ways their primarily gay male readers were encouraged to behave, with the focus usually on men who were active participants in the scene.

Many editors and publishers saw building and defending community – of which venues in the 1980s were the most visible – as a central part of the gay movement’s political program. The growing support and acceptance of gay venues and other community events that the lifestyle magazines helped build, made it easier to defend even sex-on-site premises, in the face of police crack-downs and the backlash that accompanied the AIDS epidemic. The venues became more than just a place to drink

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and cruise. They played a crucial role in developing a sense of gay male community and patrons were increasingly motivated to engage in the political issues important to them, such as law reform, stopping anti-gay violence and the AIDS epidemic.
Chapter Four

Lesbian Magazines

Finding a space

The two lovers huddle together on the pavement against Melbourne’s drizzly 1980 winter weather. A brown paper bag dances in the wind behind them. They wear jungle greens; their hair cut short, and faces unadorned with make-up. The taller has a line of badges down her jacket lapel, one of which says in emblazoned letters, ‘Super Dyke’. Their knock on a Fitzroy terrace door is answered with a cheery: “Come in sisters, out of the rain”. They walk down the darkened hall to join half-a-dozen women in the lounge at the back. Some drink coffee, others beer from cans, and the waft of cigarette smoke hangs heavy. The CR group meeting discusses the women’s lives in a world of rigid structures. It has no set end but a guitar appears and they sing along to folksy melodies that grow steadily more strident. Upstairs a child cries out, startling his mother who stands to listen, before settling again on the sunken couch. The two lovers leave for a graffiti zap to paint the words “Lesbians Are Lovely” on a nearby building, while the beer drinkers head the other way to meet friends for a game of pool at Melbourne’s only dyke bar.¹

As the previous three chapters have indicated, gay men were the dominant voices in early homosexual print media, and this encouraged a separate strand of lesbian media to also emerge. This chapter outlines the development of lesbian publications across the 30 year period to the end of the 20th century, a journey that both mirrored and influenced change within Australia’s lesbian communities, as well as their relationships with the broader gay community. The chapter starts with a discussion of the early involvement of lesbians in both the gay liberationist movement and women’s liberation. It looks at how a separate lesbian world developed that was strongly influenced initially by feminist ideas, until challenged by changing social, sexual and commercial expectations. Lesbian publications helped define this separate world and were a key counter-public arena for debate to occur. They reflected the range of views and changes occurring in lesbian world. At first these publications

were small circulation collectively published newsletters strongly influenced by feminist ideas. With time private publishers established commercial enterprises that focused more on the sexual and social aspects of a lesbian lifestyle, at times directly challenging established feminist thinking. The publishers of all lesbian magazines shared a broad general motivation, which was to make lesbians, or at least some aspect of the lifestyle, more visible.

Three significantly different types of lesbian magazine are discussed with a detailed example of each. The first type were published by collectives similar to the gay liberationist magazines of the 1970s and disinclined to adopt commercial publishing methods. Strongly influenced by feminist practices in their modes of organisation and advocacy, this style dominated lesbian publishing throughout the 1970s and 1980s. Examples include the long running Lesbian Newsletter in Melbourne (later renamed Lesbian News), and Lesbian Network in Sydney. The second type represented a strand of sexual libertarianism. The publishers proclaimed themselves ‘sex radicals’ with the aim to graphically present lesbian sexual practices of all kinds, including those condemned by many lesbian feminists for mimicking ‘male’ exploitative ways, such as sadomasochism and the use of dildos. The most significant magazine of this type was Wicked Women, first published in 1988, and it triggered what became known as the ‘Lesbian Sex Wars’. The third type came to dominance in the 1990s, produced by private publishers who aimed to build the lesbian community in all its diversity. It was marked by the abandonment of collective publishing in favour of private enterprise and commercial publishing practices and did not adhere to any strict feminist or lesbian separatist agenda. Examples were Lesbians on the Loose in Sydney and Lesbiana in Melbourne.

These phases represent the establishment of lesbian visibility. Initially its political significance was emphasised but this later became increasingly around lifestyle.

**Developing a whole new culture**

Lesbians shared the same “suffering and oppression” as gay men, sociologist Gisela Kaplan says. They were active in gay liberationist campaigns to “tear down the veil of ignorance and silence”. Lesbian sex was not criminalised but many situations in

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1970s affected male and female homosexuality equally, such as psychiatry’s view it was a sickness, the lack of job protection if discovered, and lack of partnership recognition that affected “a host of areas, from taxation and superannuation to hospitalisation and death”. Yet the alliance between gay men and lesbians was often an uneasy one, due in part to overt sexism by the men, but also, as activist Jill Mathews says, simmering ideological conflict between sexual libertine thinking wanting to free sexuality’s “instinctual, libidinal power” and feminist thinking that saw this power associated with “male domination of women through sexual subordination”. This fundamental difference of viewpoint, usually along gender lines, affected discussions of many issues including casual sex, pornography, prostitution and the age of consent. For many lesbians their oppression as women was felt equally or greater than their oppression for same-sex attraction, so consequently they devoted their primary energies to tackling sexism.

In the late 1960s there was a resurgence of the women’s movement, known as ‘second wave’ feminism. Key factors driving this resurgence included an increased demand for female labour, greater opportunities for tertiary education, increased availability of the contraceptive pill and the sexism of left-wing organisations. In 1970 Germaine Greer wrote her inspirational book The Female Eunuch and the first Australian women’s liberation groups formed. Buildings were rented in major cities for women to meet and organise political action, and there was a proliferation of women’s movement publishing, from newsletters to journals. Many women left unhappy marriages to begin new lives. Attention was given to consciousness-raising with networks of groups of about a dozen women meeting to share ideas and feelings, including attitudes towards sexual activity. The consequences of male sexual desire led some to consider “sex indulgence [as] always harmful for women”. Connections were often made between a male desire that objectified women’s bodies in advertising, beauty contests, and pornography; and the maintenance of power regimes

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7 Ibid, p. 99.
8 Ibid, p. 111.
10 Burgmann, Power, Profit and Protest, p. 111.
11 Lake, Getting Equal, p. 199.
that oppressed women, often violently.\textsuperscript{12} Attempts to claim “sexual pleasure [as a] women’s right”,\textsuperscript{13} including “exploration of lesbian desire”,\textsuperscript{14} resulted in “a general emphasis on ideal sex as equal, tender and non-penetrative”,\textsuperscript{15} so as not to mimic “the abuses of masculine power”.\textsuperscript{16}

At times during the 1970s lesbians and straight women in the movement had an uneasy relationship. There was general support for lesbian rights underlined by the Women’s Electoral Lobby’s call in 1974 for repeal of anti-gay laws, a review of government hiring and firing practices, broader sex education in schools, and equal rights to child custody.\textsuperscript{17} Yet the reality of “up to 60 lesbians” in Melbourne attending women’s liberation meetings during the mid-1970s led to “tension between the young radical lesbian activists and the older left-wing orientated womyn”.\textsuperscript{18} Founding women’s liberation mother, Zelda D’Aprano ruminated at the time that lesbians attending meetings “found it necessary to continually wear mens [sic] clothing [and] almost constantly displayed their affections towards their partners”.\textsuperscript{19} The Hobart Women’s Action Group had earlier pointed out anti-lesbian attitudes within the women’s movement. The group listed a catalogue of negative experiences by lesbians at the hands of ‘straight’ feminists, which included being called “a bull dyke”, “told you’re simply a media problem”, and that “lesbianism is a ‘passing phase’”.\textsuperscript{20}

Out-shouted and out-numbered in gay activist circles and seen at times in the women’s movement as tarnishing that movement’s reputation, some lesbians chose a separatist lifestyle and cut all ties with both the women’s and gay male movements. For some separatists this meant establishing communal households and exploring new ways of domestic relationships. Notable was the establishment in 1974 of communally owned women’s land in northern New South Wales, called Amazon

\begin{enumerate}
\item Lake, \textit{Getting Equal}, p.242.
\item Kaplan, \textit{The Meagre Harvest}, pp. 99-100.
\item Taylor, \textit{Brazen Hussies}, quoting Chris Sitka, p. 211.
\item Hobart Women’s Action Group, "Sexism and the Women’s Movement: Why Do Straight Sisters Sometimes Cry When They Are Called Lesbians?,” \textit{Refractory Girl} Summer, 1974.
\end{enumerate}
Acres, which expanded by 1995 to more than 1000 hectares,\textsuperscript{21} despite “recurring splits among the Amazon Acres women”.\textsuperscript{22} A tradition of annual lesbian conferences started in 1989 that were known as Lesfests, that included politic discussion but increasingly developed into “camp-type gathering[s] with an emphasis on wholesome food, relaxation, fun, informal talking circles and home-grown entertainment”\textsuperscript{23}

Others rejected this strict separatism and chose instead separate lesbian organising as part of a broader political commitment. The first formal move of this kind was in 1973 when activist Jenny Pausacker and her friends returned from London inspired by the radical feminist critique to organise separately.\textsuperscript{24} Breaking from the gay liberationists, they formed the group Radicalesbians with links to the women’s movement and published their ideas in the \textit{Melbourne Radical Feminist Collection}. They held a conference in Sorrento Victoria and Australia’s first women only dance.\textsuperscript{25} Activist Chris Sitka says the Sorrento conference allowed 60 lesbian feminists to get together for the first time “to define what a lesbian is, what she could be and what we could do about it. We were grounding a whole new culture”.\textsuperscript{26} A second national conference in 1976, “resulted in a hive of activities”,\textsuperscript{27} including the formation of political action groups such as the Lesbian Action Group in Melbourne that “instead of staying closed and secret … became visible”.\textsuperscript{28} The group published the \textit{Lesbian Resources Directory} and organised “a full calendar of social and political activities”.\textsuperscript{29} It was based at the Women’s Cultural Palace in Moore Street, Fitzroy,\textsuperscript{30} “an alternative to the old idea of a Women’s Centre”,\textsuperscript{31} with rooms for groups to rent and two large halls for events.\textsuperscript{32} In 1980 the women’s disco, La Donna, was held there on Friday nights,\textsuperscript{33} and a similar centre of activity formed around the Leichhardt Women’s Health Centre in Sydney.\textsuperscript{34}

\textsuperscript{22}Willet, \textit{Living Out Loud}, p. 200.
\textsuperscript{27}Kaplan, \textit{The Meagre Harvest}, pp. 93-4.
\textsuperscript{28}Ibid, p. 111.
\textsuperscript{29}Taylor, \textit{Brazen Hussies}, p. 596.
\textsuperscript{30}Jenny Pausacker, "Ghettos or Communities?," \textit{Lesbian News} September-October 1983.
\textsuperscript{33}Taylor, \textit{Brazen Hussies}, p. 607.
Challenges to the lesbian feminist vision of a new culture came from several fronts, including those lesbians looking for social rather than political engagement. The first formal lesbian group in Australia started in 1969 quite separately from the lesbian feminists. This was a Melbourne chapter of the American group, Daughters of Bilitis. In 1970 it was renamed the Australasian Lesbian Movement. Liz Ross says it initially aimed for “public” engagement with society to break down prejudice, but its growing membership wanted a more social group. In 1972 it evolved into Claudia’s Group, then Lynx in the mid-1970s; it continued under this name until 2007.

A further challenge came from self-named sex radicals in the 1980s. This grouping turned against the limitations of equal, tender and non-penetrative sex, on the grounds that it “took the fun out of sexuality and being a dyke”. In 1983 a lesbian wet T-shirt competition was held at a Sydney lesbian bar, and in 1984 the group Sexually Outrageous Women formed. There was a flourishing of ‘genderfuck’ performers “characterised by strap-on dildoes, false gay male clone-style moustaches and jock straps bulging with socks”. There was a ‘grrrl power’ rebellion, characterised by “bad girls” who drank, smoked, acted like men and were deliberately “in your face [and] ideologically unsound”. The sharpest battle-line though in what were termed the ‘Lesbian Sex Wars’ was over the practice of lesbian sadomasochistic sex. Sheila Jeffreys alleged that this practice attacked “a fundamental value of lesbian feminism: the importance of “equality” and the “fight against power in any form”. Debate raged over whether sadomasochistic sex, along with sex toys, penetration and promiscuity, were “hetero-mimicking and patriarchal” or rather an “unproblematic expression” of complex and varied desires.

Such debate reflected an increased confidence among individual lesbians that paralleled the expanding gay male culture. The end result was a more “sexualised” and “commercially oriented” lesbianism. From the late 1980s there was a growth in

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35 Ross, "We Were Catalysts for Change."
38 O'Sullivan, "Dangerous Desire: Lesbianism as Sex or Politics," p. 120.
40 Taylor, Stroppy Dykes, pp. 644-7, quoting Billi Clarke.
42 Willett, Living Out Loud, p.200.
small businesses and services run by lesbians, itself a challenge to the previously “highly valued principal of collectivity” among lesbian feminists. The Melbourne lesbian magazine Labrys privatised itself in 1992 due to the “difficulties with the enormous and continuing workload encompassed with an open and transient collective”, and vowed to “combine lesbian ethics with business ethics”.

Increasingly through the 1990s a small business sector developed that targeted the lesbian market, though on a smaller scale than the gay male market. By the start of the 1990s there were four commercially run lesbian venues in Melbourne, eight in Sydney, two in Adelaide, and two in Brisbane. During the 1990s mainstream media promoted a new lesbian chic that featured a stylish androgynous look and women wearing lipstick, centred around high-profile lesbian celebrities, or ‘dykons’ “striding out of the closet”, such as tennis player Martina Navratilova; and entertainers kd lang, Melissa Etheridge and Ellen DeGeneres.

Each phase in the development of the lesbian community was reflected in its separate lesbian media, as will be outlined next.

Role of lesbian magazines

Several factors drove the establishment of a separate lesbian press from the 1970s including differences in political perspective between gay men and women. These differences often reflected a more sexually libertine approach by men, most obviously expressed with the early publication of male nude magazines. There were attempts at mixed sex publications, notably from the liberationists but these also struggled with this difference in attitude. For example, Camp Ink’s lesbian co-editor Christabel Poll was critical of sexual promiscuity and claimed only “the raving fringe” was interested in. And Gay Community News’ male editor Danny Vadasz during that magazine’s transition to gay lifestyle magazine OutRage describes editorial decisions as an impossible juggle trying to accommodate the different views between the dominant

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50 Lumbly, Bad Girls, p. 85.
53 Hawley, "Couples."
sex-critical attitudes of lesbians at this time and the more enthusiastic embrace of gay men towards sex.\textsuperscript{54}

Perceptions of gay male sexism and the desire for lesbian self-reliance played an important role in the development of lesbian publishing separately from the broader gay publishing. One early lesbian publication condemned the gay lifestyle magazine \textit{Campaign} as “sexist because it either ignores women or puts them down”.\textsuperscript{55}

Publications such as \textit{Sydney Star} while promoting the gay scene generally, had an overwhelming focus on gay men and even the establishment of “Sydney’s first gay hotel for women”,\textsuperscript{56} failed to gain any significant promotion. Highlighting the desire for self-reliance, \textit{Lesbian Newsletter}, despite severe financial difficulties rejected a merger overture from \textit{Gay Community News} due to the risk of being “absorbed [into] a predominantly gay male publication”.\textsuperscript{57}

The gay business sector’s growth from the late 1970s encouraged the development of gay lifestyle publications often closely connected to the venues. Most of these businesses and the associated lifestyle publications were aimed at gay men who had a higher disposable income and were numerically more active participants. Vadasz says editions of \textit{OutRage} that featured a man on the cover sold better.\textsuperscript{58} As a consequence financial priorities encouraged the development of content that appealed to the more numerous and wealthier gay male readers, as well as symbiotic relationships with businesses largely servicing gay men. Often left behind, lesbians were further encouraged to publish separately.

The first lesbian publications were cheaply produced low circulation newsletters with little or no paid advertising, reliant on volunteer labour from often changing collective members, and fund-raising. This format dominated well into the 1980s, replaced gradually by larger circulation magazines in the 1990s. Each style provided a counter-public forum for the lesbian movement to debate ideas around living a lesbian lifestyle, not freely available in either mainstream media or male dominated gay media. The publishing of poetry and fiction was frequently used and seen as “often the expression of the first stirrings of self-awareness and certainly of sexual

\textsuperscript{54} Author interview with Danny Vadasz 2010.
\textsuperscript{56} “Women's Hotel Now Open,” \textit{Sydney Star} 12 August 1983.
\textsuperscript{57} “Lesbian News 10 Years On.”
\textsuperscript{58} Author interview with Danny Vadasz 2010.
To some extent the content across the various lesbian publications echoed themes discussed in the previous three chapters, with those that reflected the voices of politically active liberationists as well as those more focused on exploring the social and sexual aspects of a lesbian life. A key difference though was the stronger impact of feminist ideas that infused the debate. These influenced the content and imagery used in all lesbian publications.

Most 1970s and early 1980s publishers were lesbian feminists and the newsletters they produced emphasised the political nature of sexuality and need for radical change in society. They saw reform of patriarchal ways of behavior and improvement in conditions for women generally as crucial to improve the status of lesbians in society. They discussed new ways to conduct relationships and sexual behaviour, and challenged individual lesbians to live their relationships in new ways not formed by patriarchal conditioning, such as sexual objectification and oppressive ‘male’ power dynamics in sex. New publishers in the 1980s and 90s reflected the challenges to lesbian feminist ideas, notably the privately owned magazine *Wicked Women* whose publishers were not committed to earlier feminist tradition. Their overtly sexual magazine, supportive of sexual pleasure in all its forms including sadomasochistic sex, was an impetus to rethinking sexual expression for many lesbian readers.

Increasingly, collective publishing structures were replaced with private ownership that encouraged new goals for commercial stability, linked to promotion of the fledgling lesbian business sector and commercial venues. Privately owned lesbian magazines introduced personal classifieds and placed greater emphasis on gaining readership through coverage of social events and other entertaining content to achieve a sustainable enterprise.

The detailed plotting of the publications across the 30-year period that follows is included to provide a clear picture of the changes in lesbian media.

**A communication link between lesbians**

In 1976 *Lesbian Newsletter* started life as an insert in Melbourne’s *Women’s Liberation Newsletter* to encourage discussion of lesbian issues in the women’s movement. It evolved into the stand-alone magazine *Lesbian News* by 1983 and

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59. Ross, "We Were Catalysts for Change."
continued until 1990. It is discussed in detail later this chapter. Similar collectively-run publications were produced in cities and regions across Australia. In Perth there was Lesbianon from 1974 to 1975 that aimed “to form some sort of communication link between lesbians”. The separatist quarterly Lesbian Network insisted only wimmin were allowed to read it so this thesis does not draw on its content. It was conceived at the Women and Labour Conference’s lesbian workshop in Brisbane in July 1984, and published until 2006 from the inner west Sydney suburb of Rozelle, though aimed for a national readership. From 1989 for two years SAGE was published in New South Wales to promote ideas of lesbian separatism, and the Blue Mountains newsletter, Mountain Lesbian News was published from 1990 until 2004. In Darwin, Letters From Lesbos started in 1990, changed its name to Lesbian Territory in 1993, and stopped in September 1994 when the two remaining collective members “reached the stage of burnout”. In Adelaide, Lesbian Times was published from 1992 until 1994 with the aim to “make visible and strengthen lesbian culture”. Launceston had Lilac from 1993 until in 1996 the women producing it admitted to “no longer have the energy (or finances) to keep Lilac in production”. Finally, the lesbian feminist arts journal, OutLoud was published quarterly in Melbourne from 1992 until 1994.

In Melbourne the $4.50 privately owned monthly lifestyle magazine “for the girls” Australian Lesbian Diary lasted five issues from late 1987. With the closure of Lesbian News in 1990, Labrys magazine started and the following year embarked on a somewhat torturous path from collective to private publishing under the company name B.A.D. Press Pty Ltd. They hoped to achieve “a balance between patriarchal business practices and those that do not compromise us politically or personally”, but soon after closed due to internal disputes that included its privatisation. Lesbian venue owner Pat Longmore made plans for a new lesbian magazine in Melbourne. Born 1931 in New York, Longmore moved to Australia in the 1960s and taught at Corowa Girls School. In 1980 she bought the Kingston Hotel in Richmond and ran it as a women’s hotel for six years. In 1991 she co-directed Melbourne’s first Lesbian and Gay Film Festival and later that same year produced her own lesbian film Dykes

63 Taylor, Stroppy Dykes, p. 415.
64 “From the Collective,” Lesbian Territory March 1993.
65 “Do We Need Lesbian Territory,” Lesbian Territory September 1994.
of Our Restless Age.\textsuperscript{70} She paid $75 to register the name \textit{Lesbiana}, and convinced activist cum new age bookshop owner Sheril Berkovitch, who later changed her name to Lillitu Babalu, to join her new project.\textsuperscript{71} Babalu was born in London in 1956 and married a man when she was 21-years-old. They divorced soon after and in 1981 she moved to Australia. Previously involved in gay politics in London, Babalu soon gravitated to the annual gay and lesbian conferences and become involved in women’s liberation radio on community station 3CR and the magazine \textit{Gay Community News}.\textsuperscript{72} She opened her new age bookshop in Collingwood as “a way to make a living without a job”.\textsuperscript{73}

\textit{Lesbiana}, “by and for lesbians” was launched in March 1992,\textsuperscript{74} a 20 page A4 monthly for $2, with a pictorial cover, feature articles, what’s on information, arts reviews and some news. Being privately owned, Babalu says, meant it was “easier to not have arguments and just get on and do it”.\textsuperscript{75} Unknown to Babalu was the fact that Longmore was battling cancer and just four months after \textit{Lesbiana} started she died in Great Britain, after visiting her daughter in Paris.\textsuperscript{76} Babalu “carried it on” after Longmore’s death, publishing on her own.\textsuperscript{77} She sold the advertisements, gathered articles or wrote them herself and did the layout, suffering from “mad panic for a few days getting to the printer on time.” Less than 1000 copies were printed and distributed through bookshops and subscriptions. At the end of 1992 it declared a $500 profit, with income from subscriptions, sales and advertising; employing one staff member “for two hours each month to do the distribution”.\textsuperscript{78} In 1995 Babalu sold \textit{Lesbiana} for $1500 to Jan Campbell, who worked as co-ordinator of Gay and Lesbian Switchboard and owned the tour company Wandering Women.\textsuperscript{79} Campbell expanded the magazine to 40 pages with a series of cover price rises, to $2.50 in February 1996, $3 in June 1996 and $4 in January 1997. Coinciding with the first price rise was the introduction of a colour gloss cover. In 1999, after nearly five years Campbell

“need[ed] to do and be something else”; and sold to Jude Dennis, who published until March 2004 when the publication stopped without explanation.

A challenge to established lesbian publishing ways more dramatic than private ownership came when Sydney publishers from 1988 produced the sexually explorative magazine *Wicked Women* which encouraged sadomasochistic sexual practice. The magazine and its publishers were soon at the centre of the ‘Lesbian Sex Wars’ and this magazine is also discussed in greater detail later this chapter. Facing similar controversy in Perth, the *Laughing Medusa* was produced bimonthly from 1991 named after the Greek “goddess of female wisdom” with ‘Laughing’ added to challenge “the standard stereotype of lesbians … as humourless”. It too confronted accusations of being “a profit-making S/M business”. It contained news, what’s on and lesbian lifestyle articles; 150 copies were printed. In 1993 having “run out of money and creative energy”, it was closed.

The first lesbian magazine that was fully free of cover charge and reliant on advertising was the monthly *Lesbians On The Loose*. Started in 1990 by two ‘party girls’ its initial aim was to let their readers know about lesbian social events and new venues opening. It grew into a broad based news magazine that continues to be published as a commercial enterprise, and is also discussed in greater detail later this chapter. It faced a direct challenge from gay lifestyle publisher Bluestone Media who launched *Lip* in 1997, an incursion that lasted only eight issues.

The evolution of Australia’s lesbian press, both reflected and magnified changes occurring in the lesbian world. Its strongly feminist beginnings and commitment to collective publishing came under challenge from new publishers, who challenged ideas around lesbian sexuality, and were able to create a commercial enterprise. This occurred in a changing environment that included the emergence of a lesbian business sector, a growing readership community, and adoption of commercial publishing techniques to expand distribution and advertising revenue.

86 Discussion of Bluestone Media in Chapter Six, Flirting with Corporations.
Three case studies follow that are examples of key phases in lesbian media across the 30 year period: the first is the collectively published and feminist aligned *Lesbian Newsletter*, that despite its name was not a group newsletter but functioned more broadly as a magazine. The second is *Wicked Women*, published by sex radicals keen to promote lesbian sexual experimentation. The third, *Lesbians On The Loose*, was produced using commercial publishing methods and aimed for broad appeal, covering lesbian news and lifestyle.

**Case study: feminist collective publishing**

The first issue of *Lesbian Newsletter* in March 1976 featured a group of women on its cover, each standing with one arm raised and a fist clenched, under the headline: “Lesbians demand”, among which were demands for an end to heterosexism, the right to live openly as lesbians without discrimination at work or as mothers, the end to treatment of lesbians as sexual deviants and the right to accurate information.\(^87\) The four gestetner page insert was produced by a collective of “just three”,\(^88\) and mailed out with Melbourne’s *Women’s Liberation Newsletter* to provide information for lesbian readers. It included reports on lesbian activist groups and a short music review.\(^89\) It took more than a year for the second insert to appear and when it did it was just a single page, almost blank, produced as “a tribute to the lack of contributions” in the past year to lesbian politics.\(^90\) It had the desired effect though and more substantial issues of *Lesbian Newsletter* followed.

Sydney born Liz Ross was a key member of that small collective. Her father had been in the army and she moved home regularly as a child before her parents settled long enough in Canberra for her to complete school. She went on to study at Australian National University, and undertook further study for a library diploma, before working at the national library. Continuing her studies in 1972 she attended a course titled ‘Women and Society’ at the Council for Adult Education, where she met members of Women’s Liberation who inspired her to join. She became a volunteer and helped produce the organisation’s newsletter until moving to Melbourne in 1975.\(^91\)

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\(^87\) *Lesbian Newsletter* March 1976.
Ross arranged for inclusion of *Lesbian Newsletter* as an insert and its aim was to agitate for change. This was a deliberate challenge for Women’s Liberation to provide “more information about [lesbian] issues” than it covered in its current newsletter, as the collective put it, “[b]ecause lesbianism as a political issue has been ignored [and] we hope to bring the ‘word’ out in the open again”. Such a move though provoked criticism from one of women’s liberation’s founding mothers, Zelda D’Aprano, who reflected the attitudes of some within the movement and argued its inclusion of lesbian content would shock potential new members and turn them off joining Women’s Liberation. The uneasy publishing relationship ended at the start of 1978, with *Lesbian Newsletter* subsequently produced as a stand-alone bimonthly publication. This was a decoupling, Ross says, that let Women’s Liberation “off the hook a bit” in terms of providing more lesbian coverage. Such a move also reflected, Ross explains, a broader “push to have lesbian only organisations”, not just because of difficulties with the women’s movement but also “anger with sexism amongst gay men”. An example of this anger was expressed in a four page critique of the gay lifestyle magazine *Campaign* that was condemned as “sexist because it either ignores women or puts them down”, and for its “disgusting” use of nude men in advertisements. Politically active gay liberationists also came under fire for having frequently “shoved aside” lesbian issues.

*Lesbian Newsletter* played an important role in defining a lesbian lifestyle. Having a separate voice allowed contributors and readers “to learn from one another”, and more freely explore personal thoughts around living a lesbian life, including discussion around living a lesbian separatist lifestyle. Poetry submissions were popular with one writer discussing “a fire in myself I’m told I shouldn’t have”, and stories of feeling “so wonderful and so terrible … after I first kissed a woman”. One writer contended that lesbian love “needs no ‘practice’ in its sexual aspects,
coming naturally and spontaneously”. In the first issue, the front cover featured the slogan: “Lesbian is a political definition not just a sexual one”, and this view influenced discussion along the lines that lesbians had been socially conditioned by the surrounding “heterosexist world … [to be] victims, vulnerable, passive [and there was a need to develop] our consciousness”. The writer of one article condemned penetrative sex for “mimicking [sic] heterosexual intercourse” and advocated “non-violent sex” instead. The writers of another article condemned sadomasochistic sex because it “reinforces Patriarchal concepts, confirms role stereotypes, reinforces women’s self-hatred and fails to reflect the vision we have of a feminist future world”. Each of these articles triggered debate, the second rebutted for its “[s]implistic and utopian … rigidity” of view, failing to bring into debate “the ways in which we live and interact”.

Disputes with gay and women’s liberation notwithstanding, the publishers of Lesbian Newsletter consistently offered an activist voice for both women’s and gay rights. The March 1978 cover was devoted to promoting International Women’s Day with a focus on key lesbian issues “such as custody rights for lesbian mothers” and the vulnerability of lesbians facing dismissal in the workplace. Articles on aversion therapy and gay law reform were published. Extensive coverage was given to the first 1978 Mardi Gras in Sydney with the police arrests described as “totally responsible for transforming a happy and peace-loving crowd into an angry and defiant one”. In 1981 a stronger emphasis was placed on direct political action when the collective took an official stand against publishing any type of fiction unless it “makes a political statement [or] sums up an event”. This position was reinforced the following year with a statement saying the newsletter was “a lesbian/feminist publication [and not] an anthology of women’s writing”. This stand reflected and helped reinforce a more politically militant approach to political issues at the time, rather than introspection, among sections of the lesbian community.

Ross left the *Lesbian Newsletter* collective in 1979 and from 1980 new elements were added to it such as international news, the popular comic strip, *The Adventures of Superdyke*, and a four page what’s on supplement, *Lesbian News-sheet*, published in alternate months.\(^{113}\) In September 1983 *Lesbian Newsletter* changed its name to *Lesbian News* and was initially 24 typed A4 pages with a spot colour pictorial cover. It was produced bimonthly by a clearly defined lesbian feminist collective with four members and refused to accept commercial advertisements.\(^{114}\) During the 12 months following the re-launch the size of *Lesbian News* increased to 40 pages, and circulation increased to nearly 400, half of which were subscribers and the remainder sold through Melbourne bookshops and women’s centres.\(^{115}\)

While its primary focus was activism, *Lesbian Newsletter* contributed to building community by providing “clear communication between lesbians in the movement”.\(^{116}\) The first issue included news of lesbian group actions and later issues promoted the national homosexual conferences, discussion meetings on homosexuality, and the start of new lesbian activist groups.\(^{117}\) The newsletter gave prominent coverage to non-commercial social activities, such as the lesbian social group Lynx,\(^{118}\) the supper group Salon-A-Muse, and the Radcliffe Runners softball group, with a group directory and what’s on featured from the start. *Lesbian Newsletter* presented the ideal lesbian community as a collective experience, in contrast to the commercialised gay male focus on “individualism”.\(^{119}\) One article questioned the ethics of each woman having “her own room, her own income, her own car, her own dope” and urged lesbians to develop “alternative economics”.\(^{120}\)

There were differing opinions over whether or not to promote the commercial bar scene, with the newsletter initially defining its brief to include “news of bars”,\(^{121}\) and it included early promotion of “one pub [in Prahran that had] a women’s night on Mondays and on Thursdays”.\(^{122}\) A policy to not publicise bars was introduced in 1979 on the basis they were run by “rip off” heterosexual owners, and because “bar scene

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relationships were perhaps one of heterosexual socialization”. The formal anti-bar policy lasted until 1981 when after “getting lots of notices” about new venues they “decided to visit some” and let their readers know what they found. A regular venue guide was subsequently introduced.

For the collective publishers of Lesbian Newsletter paying the bills was a continual difficulty. The venture started with no money and an additional reason for it being an insert in Women’s Liberation News was to avoid postage costs. The newsletter initially generated no income as it did not include commercial advertising and was given away for free. It was produced with volunteer labour using manual typewriters and hand-cranked gestetner machines, on foolscap sized paper, with only underlining and capitals possible, and few other graphic options. Paid subscriptions were introduced in October 1977 and by the following year Lesbian Newsletter had just over 100 subscribers, though to cover costs really needed at least 200.

The publishers’ constant shortage of money and rejection of commercial business practices restricted circulation growth and forced reliance on fundraisers such as an auction of donated goods, a jumble sale, a dance, a “Separatist Red” wine bottling and a swimming night at the Collingwood pool. Costs in 1979 were $120 each issue to print, 12 cents postage per copy, with office space rented at the Women’s Cultural Palace. Annual subscriptions were raised from $6 to $8 but ongoing financial difficulties and having no home following closure of the Cultural Palace, forced the publishers to consider a merger in 1980 with the liberationist magazine Gay Community News. This was eventually rejected due to concerns Lesbian Newsletter risked being “absorbed [into] a predominantly gay male publication”, and “contributors might feel more restrained about writing [and readers] less inclined to subscribe”. It continued as a stand-alone publication only because its feminist printer Sybylla Press agreed to carry debts of up to $700 and provide the publishers with office space.

129 “Lesbian News 10 Years On.”
131 “Lesbian News 10 Years On.”
In 1983 the newsletter was repackaged as *Lesbian News* magazine and a fund-raising drive cleared the old debts, but despite continuing volunteer labour from collective members the $500 printing and postage costs each issue still outweighed sales revenue. In 1985 the collective decided to accept advertisements under strict guidelines which “comply with our feminist philosophy [and do not] exploit women and/or lesbians”. A full-page advertisement was $50 but resulted in few placements. The debt owed to Sybilla grew to $1500 by 1987, and was only cleared by returning to a cheaper format and cutting the print run to just subscribers. At the end of 1988 a new collective based in the Victorian town of Daylesford took over production until October-November 1990, when it membership declined to two. They decided to “hand over” the magazine’s subscriber list to a Melbourne based collective that had plans for a new lesbian magazine called *Labrys*.

Despite its small distributional reach, *Lesbian Newsletter* was a crucial forum that allowed lesbian voices to engage in sexual discussion, what it meant to be a lesbian and how to live the lifestyle. It challenged anti-lesbian attitudes in the women’s movement and sexism in the gay movement, was a rallying point for political activism, and publicised lesbian events. Its continual lack of finance made it dependent on collective publisher energies and restricted its growth.

**Case study: sex radicals brandish the whip**

Inspired by the American lesbian sex fetish magazine *On Our Backs* – its title a deliberate riposte to the feminist magazine *Off Our Backs* – Francine Laybutt and Lisa Salmon published *Wicked Women* in Sydney at the start of 1988 to fill, as they put it, the “gaping hole” in women’s erotica, and promised “a forum for erotic ideas and … hot, one-handed reading”. They aimed to bring into the open lesbian sexual practices such as sadomasochism for those who silently fantasised about such activities and let their readers see there were other similarly minded women they might meet. From the start, the magazine triggered debate within the lesbian

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community, and Laybutt says they were “surprised and unprepared for the degree of hostility” directed against them.\textsuperscript{139} Sadomasochism, bondage, and even dildos were seen at the time “by the lesbian feminist paradigm … as violent patriarchal constructs”.\textsuperscript{140} The pair would get thrown out of dyke clubs for wearing fetish gear and Salmon “who didn’t usually wear much at all would have drinks thrown on her … cigarettes surreptitiously put out on her [and] spat on sometimes”.\textsuperscript{141}

Born at the start of the 1960s,\textsuperscript{142} Laybutt grew up in the city of Newcastle and watched drag shows at the town’s one gay pub, but soon moved to Sydney where the gay scene was bigger.\textsuperscript{143} She worked as an art teacher but “didn’t like teaching unruly teenagers”, and switched to computer design work with a North Shore communications company. Laybutt found her “true vocation” as Dominatrix Natasha in the sex industry,\textsuperscript{144} and shared a flat with fellow former Catholic school girl Lisa Salmon,\textsuperscript{145} who in her early 20s worked as a performance artist and stripper.\textsuperscript{146} The pair started a relationship and decided it would be as a “fetish couple”.\textsuperscript{147}

The first issue of \textit{Wicked Women} was a 28 page A4 black and white with a pictorial cover selling for $4. It included poetry, personal classifieds and features exploring lesbian sexual fetish in an attempt to broaden individual lesbians’ definition of their lifestyle. To produce \textit{Wicked Women} they bought an old electric typewriter that ironically would not print the letter ‘w’, so they “had to manually push the letter against the page” and the pair wrote most of the articles “under a variety of pseudonyms to make it appear as though they had lots of contributors”.\textsuperscript{148} Laybutt’s “very open-minded” boss let them use the work photocopier on the weekend to print 90 copies of the first issue. Subsequent issues grew in size and cover price, peaking at 60 pages for $8, with up to 1000 copies printed.\textsuperscript{149} The aim was six issues a year, though usually fewer were published.

\textsuperscript{139} Kimberly O'Sullivan, "Five Years of Infamy," \textit{Wicked Women} January 1993.
\textsuperscript{140} Author interview with Jasper Laybutt 2013.
\textsuperscript{141} Author interview with Jasper Laybutt 2013.
\textsuperscript{143} Author interview with Jasper Laybutt 2013.
\textsuperscript{144} "Jasper Laybutt."
\textsuperscript{145} Julie Catt, "What Wicked Did for Women," \textit{Sydney Star Observer} 1 August, 1996.
\textsuperscript{146} Lumby, \textit{Bad Girls}, p. 88, quoting Lisa Salmon.
\textsuperscript{147} Author interview with Jasper Laybutt 2013.
\textsuperscript{148} O'Sullivan, "Five Years of Infamy." Also Graeme Hindmarch, "Ever More Wicked," \textit{Capital Q} 1 October 1993.
\textsuperscript{149} Author interview with Jasper Laybutt 2013.
The magazine that Laybutt and Salmon created “reflected” the sadomasochistic sexual activity they were doing,\(^{150}\) and they hoped it would let them meet other women “sharing the same experience”.\(^{151}\) Salmon says “the seventies feminist thing just ended up being girls telling each other what to do. It became really dogmatic and it took the fun out of sexuality and being a dyke”.\(^{152}\) Commentator Julie Catt says *Wicked Women* triggered a “lesbian sexual revolution”,\(^ {153}\) and others say it added “many new words to the lesbian sexual vocabulary – sadomasochism, fetishism, gender fuck – to name but a few”.\(^ {154}\) *Wicked Women* ran stories about a woman who was “horny for weeks, and masturbated ferociously”,\(^ {155}\) one from a woman who described how she was “blindfolded and placed in standing bondage [while fingers pinch my skin, pull at my hairs, slap my behind, teasing]”,\(^ {156}\) and the dominatrix who wrote how her submissive “moaned, groaned, pleaded, yelled, screamed [and] begged me to stop but the juice was flowing freely down her inner thighs. Her cunt was writhing in frustration [wanting] me to fuck her to the point of exhaustion”.\(^ {157}\)

The first cover had the words: “Erotica Poetry Graphics SM Classifieds Decadence” above a graphic of a naked woman with a dog collar around her neck. Photographs of usually one or two women models soon replaced graphics on the cover. The magazine though was not simply pornography for lesbians. It explored sexual themes and often used playful images. There was a blurred photo of a naked cropped hair woman wearing a dog collar and seated cross-legged on bed,\(^ {158}\) a photo of a sultry woman in full leather jacket and cap looking piercingly into the camera,\(^ {159}\) and a party girl staring at the camera while pulling open her jacket to expose her breasts.\(^ {160}\) Inside were photo-spreads of women in leather or at sexual fetish events, and in one issue a photo-essay of open vaginas being fist-fucked.\(^ {161}\)

Quite apart from the publisher’s open promotion of sadomasochism there were a series of publishing events that triggered condemnation. In an early edition Linda

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\(^{150}\) O’Sullivan, “Five Years of Infamy,” quoting Laybutt.

\(^{151}\) Catt, “What Wicked Did for Women.”

\(^{152}\) Lumby, *Bad Girls*, p. 88, quoting Lisa Salmon.

\(^{153}\) Catt, “What Wicked Did for Women.”

\(^{154}\) O’Sullivan, “Five Years of Infamy.”


\(^{159}\) *Wicked Women* Vol 1, No 5, 1988.

\(^{160}\) *Wicked Women* Vol 1, No 11, 1990.

Dement’s photograph of a woman holding a skinned rabbit against her vagina caused an uproar, and the magazine was subsequently banned from at least one Melbourne feminist bookstore. Laybutt defends the photograph as “art … a strong image, but not an anti-woman one. It was widely misunderstood”. A year later the inclusion of a gay male pedophile group press release led to “a ‘girlcott’ … sold very badly and lost some readership”, followed the next issue when “all hell broke loose”, after publishing an article written by a self-confessed “misogynist” gay leather man. The final major controversy to confront the publishers of Wicked Women was Laybutt undergoing medical procedures to become a transman. “I was a tomboy” growing up, he says, and in 1991 adopted the name Jasper, instead of Francine.

Supporters of Wicked Women wrote letters to say “it’s wonderful to know there are other dykes out there into ‘unsound’ sex and games”. Another said it was “important that women have a space where they can be upfront and honest about who they are and what they like”, and one declared “I now, most times when going out to nightclubs and such, dress in leather”. Some feminists engaged directly with the sexual desire implicit in Wicked Women’s content. One supported “expressions of lesbian sexuality which are exciting, dangerous and diverse” yet maintained the utopian goals of lesbian feminism “to rethink the relationship already in play between the phallus/cock/gun and power” concluding: “we wait with quivering clits for the day a woman submits her fiction in a non-male constructed language”. With time this occurred as Laybutt and Salmon invited contributions from readers who submitted articles other than ones with sadomasochistic themes but “often vanilla or romantic sex flavoured and relatively sexually ‘safe’” articles.

Less obvious than its challenge to existing ideas around lesbian sexual practices, was the role Wicked Women played in building lesbian community. Its classified personals

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165 O'Sullivan, “Five Years of Infamy.”
166 Ibid.
168 Author interview with Jasper Laybutt 2013.
174 O’Sullivan, “Five Years of Infamy.”
included the expected: “23 Year Old into leather, looking for experienced S/M dyke to worship”, but were also used by a range of lesbians to seek partners, such as “slim 22 yr old, strawberry blonde, desperately searching for my dark earth mother”. The magazine ran contact details for local lesbian social groups, and advertisements for Sydney’s Gay and Lesbian Mardi Gras. Wicked Women organised what became a popular annual event, the Ms Wicked competition “in which lesbians stripped and performed sexual acts for enthusiastic all-female audiences”. More than 500 attended a Melbourne heat in 1991. Wicked Women organised a Mardi Gras dance party Be Wicked that was raided in the early hours by police with the patrons “herded out”, and Girl Beat at the gay male sex-on-site venue The Den.

The magazine’s editor from 1994, Kimberly O’Sullivan said the “events proved to be enormously popular and [mainstream lesbians] saw we had a role in the lesbian community. It demystified us for them”. The activities of Wicked Women’s publishers also helped draw together the lesbian and gay male communities that in the 1980s lived largely separately from each other. Laybutt had always found the gay male scene “infinitely more interesting” to explore. She was a member of two gay male motorcycle clubs, and even attended male only fetish events, passing as a young guy. Early support for the magazine came largely from the gay male community and the emergence of Wicked Women provided a vehicle to “bridge the gap” at least between the gay male and lesbian fetish communities. In 1993 Wicked Women organised a Mr Wicked competition.

The controversial nature of Wicked Women attracted attention but its generally uncompromising stance on content alienated both potential buyers and advertisers and caused significant problems for the venture as a business. While the primary aim was to present sex radical ideas, the bills still needed to be paid and its 1993 editor, Kimberly O’Sullivan said they started “to think more seriously about the risks [of accepting] an article which will alienate half of your readership”.

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176 Lumby, Bad Girl, p. 88, quoting Lisa Salmon.
179 O’Sullivan, “Five Years of Infamy.”
180 Ibid.
181 Author interview with Jasper Laybut 2013.
182 Author interview with Jasper Laybut 2013.
183 O’Sullivan, “Five Years of Infamy.”
after they ran a photograph of a women stroking her vagina with a statue of the Virgin Mary. Lesbian hotels initially refused to stock the magazine, and the women’s bookshops that did stock it “kept the magazine hidden under Lesbian Network so no-one ever saw it”. At first only gay male leather, and sex shops stocked Wicked Women and it was distributed by subscription to mainly Sydney women, though also to other areas around the country and overseas, and some men. The only advertising support the magazine attracted initially was from leather fetish and sex product shops run by gay men as “lesbian businesses … would not touch them”. Each ‘girlcott’ and refusal to display the magazine reduced sales and increased reliance on organising fund-raising events.

Apart from publishing Wicked Women, Laybutt in 1990 was involved in editing the mixed gay and lesbian alternative journal of arts, culture and sexuality, Hell Bent, and in 1991 Pink Ink: An anthology of Australian lesbian and gay writers. By 1994, both Laybutt and Salmon had stepped back from the front line of editing, handing responsibility to O’Sullivan, who later described her job as “administrator, book-keeper, accountant, publicity officer, advertising manager and delivery driver – in short, doing every single thing on the magazine from beginning to end”. Two years later she resigned due to the work pressure that came on top of the need to work a second full-time paid job, bemoaning that she “had almost no social life (and felt) burnt out”. When Salmon stopped organising fund-raising events the magazine became financially unsustainable. O’Sullivan was not replaced as editor with Laybutt declaring “I feel that having become a man, I’ve moved on to different things” and Wicked Women ceased publication in 1996 after 28 issues. Laybutt returned to live in Newcastle and became involved in publishing New Age ideas.

The publishers of Wicked Women successfully appealed to the sexually libertarian section of the lesbian community, and in doing so challenged established feminist attitudes towards sexuality. They found a market niche and expanded, creating new social infrastructure and profoundly changed broader lesbian community attitudes. 

186 O’Sullivan, "Five Years of Infamy."
187 Author interview with Jasper Laybutt 2013.
188 O’Sullivan, "Five Years of Infamy."
190 Wicked Women No 28 1996.
192 Author interview with Jasper Laybutt 2013.
towards sexuality. Ultimately though the publishing venture failed to become financially self-sustaining and closed when individual publisher energies waned.

Case study: time to party

Two Sydney party girls, Frances Rand and Jackie Scherer called their friendship group ‘lesbians on the loose’ and it “seemed a shame not to use” the name for some higher purpose. They started the magazine *Lesbians On The Loose* in January 1990 with the initial aim simply to provide “a regular source of information” about upcoming lesbian events, activities and new venues. Most lesbians they knew at the time relied on “word of mouth” to hear about social events or new venues. The “boy dominated” gay press was not adequate, nor was the quarterly *Lesbian Network* magazine that was too infrequent, and often not read by young lesbians. The key aims for the magazine were “putting lesbians first … being out, and … having fun”.

Rand was born in 1960 to a large Sydney north-shore family, which included her lesbian sister. As a 13-year-old attending the local convent school Rand knew she was herself a lesbian, and as soon as she turned 18 started partying at lesbian bars. She attracted a procession of different girl-friends, and in her late twenties volunteered on the phones at the Gay and Lesbian Counselling Service. Her career ambition was to be a journalist and she had tried to start a school newspaper but “wasn’t allowed” by the nuns. She studied communications at Macquarie University and from 1984 worked for most of the major television stations, employed as assistant producer of news with the ABC – where Scherer also worked – when she started her own magazine.

*Lesbians On The Loose* began as a free, monthly eight page black & white A4 newsletter with 1000 copies printed. It would have been only half that number of

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193 Author interview with Frances Rand 2010.
196 Author interview with Frances Rand 2010.
197 Price, "Franc Exposure ".
199 Price, "Franc Exposure ".
201 Callaghan, "A Lesbian on the Loose."
202 Author interview with Frances Rand 2010.
pages except Sydney’s Gay and Lesbian Mardi Gras offered to share the print bill in return for a full-page advertisement. Rand and Scherer wrote the articles, took the photographs and did the paste-up by hand, with some help from friends. They both still worked at the ABC and during quiet periods worked on the magazine there or after business hours at Rand’s Darlinghurst home. Initially no one was paid except the small lesbian business Amazon Publishing that did the typesetting and printing. Rand and Scherer hand-delivered *Lesbians On The Loose* to feminist bookshops and bars in Oxford Street and Newtown, though with time it expanded to have a national distribution. After six months, Scherer, now known as Jaz Ishtar, left for overseas which “devastated” Rand. However a team of ‘cub reporters’ Debbie Zwolsman, Stevie, Julie Price and Julia Hancock joined her, and editorial content broadened with the addition of news, features and classifieds.

*Lesbians On The Loose* included listings of groups and services, a venue guide and a what’s on calendar of upcoming social events that helped build community. There were venue and event advertisements, and prominent articles promoting group events, such as the 1991 lesbian conference, Sydney Asian Lesbians, Lesbians in the Blue Mountains, and the Dykes on Bikes Motorcycle Club. Front page coverage was regularly given to venue events, and the opening of new lesbian bars, as well as prominent features on lesbian services. *Lesbians On The Loose* provided a personal classifieds section that allowed individual lesbians to meet each other, and attracted a growing smattering of advertisements from small lesbian businesses, at first “a handful” that grew to over 100 when she sold it eight years later. Rand points to the success of *Lesbians On The Loose* in that it “brought a community together [and allowed] lesbian businesses to develop”.

The magazine nearly didn’t get past its second anniversary as Rand faced a series of personal tragedies. Late in 1991 her 20-year-old medical student brother Mick

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204 Author interview with Frances Rand 2010.
205 Price, “Franc Exposure”.
206 Ibid.
213 Author interview with Frances Rand 2010.
214 Author interview with Frances Rand 2010.
suicided, followed in the middle of 1992 “by the break-up of her relationship of 18 months”.\textsuperscript{215} Yet \textit{Lesbians On The Loose} survived, now regularly 32 commercially printed pages,\textsuperscript{216} and from 1993 flourished when Rand – publishing from her home in Darlinghurst – devoted herself to it full-time, with the aim to draw a wage. Gloss covers were introduced and Rand’s new girlfriend, professional journalist Barbara Farrelly, who was “passionately in love” with Rand joined \textit{Lesbians On The Loose}, strengthening news and arts coverage.\textsuperscript{217}

Farrelly was born 1957 in a New Zealand town and considered herself to be a “lapsed separatist”.\textsuperscript{218} She went into journalism after leaving school at 14 and was news editor of a provincial paper by 19. She moved to Adelaide as an “angry young woman” with a job at \textit{The Advertiser} but was sacked for pushing an investigative piece on uranium and moved to Sydney.\textsuperscript{219} In July 1993, after “15 years experience as a journalist including work on mainstream daily newspapers and electronic media, and as a screenwriter and playwright” she became the first lesbian editor of the gay newspaper \textit{Sydney Star Observer}.\textsuperscript{220} It was an editorship marked by run-ins with community leaders as she turned her strong investigative news sense towards gay community institutions.\textsuperscript{221} \textit{Lesbians On The Loose} peaked at 64 pages by the end of the decade, with a CAB audited figure in 2005 of 16,791.\textsuperscript{222}

Both founding publishers and subsequent editor Barbara Farrelly came from professional journalist backgrounds. As the magazine developed they aimed for it to be the lesbian community’s “journal of record”,\textsuperscript{223} with professionally written and presented news coverage. While pro-lesbian, the magazine did not consciously seek to politicise or change readers’ attitudes. They printed a front page announcement saying that “Dreams became reality” when the Lesbian Space Project reached its financial target,\textsuperscript{224} and highlighted the ways new anti-discrimination laws made it illegal to

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\item \textsuperscript{215} Farrelly, "Kiss and Tell Scoop Pix."
\item \textsuperscript{216} Author interview with Frances Rand 2010.
\item \textsuperscript{217} Author interview with Barbara Farrelly 2010. Also "Star Editor Resigns," \textit{Sydney Star Observer} 25 March 1994.
\item \textsuperscript{218} “Star's First Dyke Editor,” \textit{Lesbians On The Loose} July 1993.
\item \textsuperscript{219} Author interview with Barbara Farrelly 2010.
\item \textsuperscript{220} Kelly Gardiner, "Sydney's Star Editor," \textit{Melbourne Star Observer} 9 July 1993.
\item \textsuperscript{221} Barbara Farrelly, "Memoirs of a Survivor," \textit{Sydney Star Observer} 15 July 1994. Also Author interview with Barbara Farrelly 2010.
\item \textsuperscript{222} Circulations Audit Board figures in credit box from May 2005.
\item \textsuperscript{223} Author interview with Frances Rand 2010.
\item \textsuperscript{224} Frances Rand, "Act of Faith," \textit{Lesbians On The Loose} January 1994.
\end{itemize}
\end{footnotesize}
discriminate against lesbians. They promoted surveys “to find out the types of violence inflicted upon lesbians”, and gave front page coverage to Susan Harben “the first out lesbian to run for a seat in any parliament in Australia”. Farrelly’s skills as an investigative journalist soon saw mainstream media follow her stories. On controversial issues within the lesbian community they deliberately tended towards “a neutral stance” such as on debates around sadomasochism, and the ongoing row over whether to let transgendered women attend Lesfests.

The publishers of Lesbian On The Loose chose to produce a free publication in order to simplify distribution, which meant they relied on advertising to fund the venture. There was a steady increase in advertising from small businesses that targeted the lesbian market, and some larger venue advertisements. By 1998 there were enough advertisements to group them into lifestyle sections, such as travel, health and entertainment, and even a page of lesbian sex advertisements. Until Rand made the move in 1993 to work full time on it from her home office in Darlinghurst, no one was paid for writing articles, selling advertising or distributing the magazine, and all volunteers worked on the magazine in their spare time.

In 1998 Lesbians On The Loose was redesigned with full colour covers, more prominent arts, lifestyle, and venue sections, with a blend of news and lighter stories. Examples include features on celebrity couple Kerryn Phelps and Jacqui Stricker, and a lesbian couple who “live in a sprawling timber house in Leichhardt”. At the end of 1998 Rand sold Lesbians On The Loose to Sydney social worker-turned-businesswoman Silke Bader who had emigrated from Germany in 1990, and opened a women’s travel service in 1994. Rand and Farrelly moved to the country, partly to ease Farrelly’s breathing difficulties from a rare genetic lung disease. Rand volunteered with meals on wheels and the fire brigade in the local town before getting

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228 Callaghan, “A Lesbian on the Loose.”
229 Price, “Franc Exposure “.
231 Author interview with Frances Rand 2010.
232 Author interview with Frances Rand 2010.
233 Price, ”Franc Exposure “.
a job as a journalist on the local paper. Bader published *Lesbians On The Loose* until the start of 2015 when she handed the venture to a non-profit company L Media.

The publishers of *Lesbians On The Loose* started their magazine to promote fun and lesbian social activities. The magazine they produced also reflected their professional media backgrounds, and they freely adopted the commercial publishing model. The growth in lesbian businesses and the community of readers allowed *Lesbians On The Loose* to achieve longevity and be published on a commercially successful basis. Aided by this parallel growth in lesbian businesses, the magazine expanded both its distribution and advertising revenues. By offering a forum to promote these new lesbian businesses and venues, the magazine helped to build the community. The publishers in seeking a broad readership, and seeking to build links with the gay male community and mainstream society, adopted a neutral position on some issues, allowing broad appeal and a more sustainable business.

**Conclusion**

The three broad phases of lesbian publishing described here echo to some degree the first three chapters of this thesis: liberationist, sex radical and building community. Yet differences between the political outlook of gay men and lesbians, as well as commercial factors encouraged the development of this separate strand of lesbian publishing. There were significant aspects unique to the developing lesbian world, most importantly the overlay of feminist thinking and goals. Most lesbian media during the 1970s and 1980s was strongly influenced by feminist ideals and, as part of putting those ideas into practice, was collectively published. Primarily newsletters, these publications provided a separate space away from both the women’s liberation and the gay movements to express the specific political aspirations of lesbians; a forum to discuss living a lesbian lifestyle; and the information needed to connect with this community. The sex radical publishers challenged the orthodox feminist views towards lesbian sexual expression that had evolved. Their magazines were not just titillation but involved a deeper exploration of sexual desire, and remained influenced by both feminist opposition and at times engagement. The challenge they presented to the feminist collective publishers was more than just ideological, but they were able

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237 Author interview with Frances Rand 2010.  
to find a market niche and attempt expansion using commercial business practices, rather than relying solely on volunteer energy. While ultimately unsuccessful as a business, the next wave of broad interest, socially based lesbian publishers who promoted community rather than ideology did succeed commercially. Able to draw on the growing number of lesbian businesses and community of readers, the privately owned commercial publishing ventures began to dominate. Their appeal to a wider readership ushered in the change for lesbian magazines, as Barbara Farrelly puts it, “from grassroots to glossy”.239

239 Author interview with Barbara Farrelly 2010.
Chapter Five

**Free city-based newspapers**

Reflecting diversity

The motorcycle lights are switched to high beam as dusk arrives. Their engines roar full throttle, growling at the half million strong crowd that in the late 1990s lines the parade route. Dykes on Bikes are on the move signaling the start of the annual Sydney Gay and Lesbian Mardi Gras. Dozens of two- and three-wheelers surge along Oxford Street, stopping every fifty metres to allow their riders to wave at the cheering throng. Two women ride each bike, some dressed in leather, a few proudly topless. One butch with heavily tattooed arms has her fem riding in a sidecar. The drag queens follow, waving regally, dressed in big hair and beautiful gowns that took months to create. The gay male nuns, carry a large papier-mâché head of anti-gay crusader Fred Nile on a plate. A hundred marching boys appear, wearing nothing but tight shorts and beaming smiles. They stride and twirl in formation until one breaks rank, running across to kiss a stranger and wish him happy Mardi Gras. Suddenly, a great rumbling noise surges through the crowd as a cohort of police march past in crisp well-ironed blue uniforms. They are an invited part of the parade and the crowd roars its approval.

This chapter discusses the rise of free city-based newspapers that were able to access advertising revenue that accompanied the growth, particularly in the 1990s, of gay community beyond just venues. There was a flourishing of community groups, service institutions, small businesses and organised festivals. This vibrant diverse community was increasingly accepted by mainstream society and recognised as a voting group by governments. The free city-based newspapers developed new advertising synergies not just with bars, but other community businesses and events that reduced dependence on any one sector. To satisfy advertisers the free city-based newspapers needed more readers and these were gained through expansion and by appealing to a diverse readership. Representing the aspirations of a more diverse

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242 A compilation of memories, based on author’s personal attendances from the mid 1980s to 2000.
community became the political project for newspaper publishers, and their increased readership and expansion into mainstream society led to increased impact to further gay movement goals. These goals though were modified in part to achieve the aim of community building along with its accompanying commercialisation.

A summary of the free city-based newspapers around the country is included below; three newspapers will be discussed in detail. The long running *Sydney Star Observer*, published in the city with Australia’s largest gay community, was community owned and reinvested its profits to develop the venture. The privately owned and proudly local *Queensland Pride* was published in a smaller, more conservative region of Australia, and saw part of its role to promote a changing, more accepting Queensland, particularly as a gay travel destination. *Brother Sister*, initially published in Victoria though later with a second edition in Queensland, was also privately owned with ambitions for a national network of newspapers.

**Growth of institutions and diversity**

Sydney’s annual Gay and Lesbian Mardi Gras parade began life as a protest march in 1978. A few hundred activists staged a gay rights demonstration as part of an International Day of Gay Solidarity to commemorate the ninth anniversary of the 1969 Stonewall riot in New York. The organisers had a permit to march through the heart of the emerging gay venue district Oxford Street, but at the last moment police denied the marchers access to nearby Hyde Park and seized the group’s sound system. In response, the demonstrators headed to the neighbouring suburb of Kings Cross, gathering support en-route, with numbers swelling to 2000. In subsequent scuffles, 53 marchers were arrested and many were badly beaten inside police cells, events that triggered further protests the following day, and again two months later.  

At the start of the 1980s Mardi Gras retained its liberationist focus, but soon evolved into a spectacular celebration more than a protest. In 1981 the event no longer aligned its date to the June 1969 Stonewall riots, but moved to the warmer month of March and attracted a crowd of 5000 onlookers. The re-styled event rapidly gained broad support across the gay and lesbian community. It became the recognisable face of gayness for mainstream society and a financial boon with an economic impact.

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244 Willett, *Living Out Loud*, p. 203.
estimated in 1993 at $38 million, growing to $99 million by the end of the century. The organising committee’s budget of $570,000 in 1990 increased tenfold to nearly $6 million by 2000, and a major source of income was from two annual dance parties, Sleaze Ball and Mardi Gras Party, that each attracted up to 20,000 people. By 1991 the crowd of onlookers had increased to 230,000, two years later an estimated 500,000 people lined the streets, and the parade was broadcast live on ABC national television in 1994.

Annual festivals sprung up around the country in other cities. Melbourne started its Midsumma Festival in 1989 with a Pride March added from 1996. Brisbane and Perth had Pride Festivals from the start of the 1990s. Adelaide started Feast in 1997. Even smaller cities and towns staged festivals, such as Daylesford with Chill Out from 1997, as well as Canberra and Darwin from 1999. Accompanying this growth of community festivals was a burgeoning of health, sporting and social groups during the 1990s. The number of these increased, and the variety ranged from vintage men and women’s football, to country AIDS networks and Christian fellowship. Service institutions and AIDS councils grew to employ hundreds of people across the country, managing millions of dollars, and there was “a steady expansion in the gay business sector”. Community directories listed 196 groups in Sydney and surrounding areas, 178 around Melbourne, 44 around Brisbane, 75 for Adelaide, and 97 for Perth, with 200 businesses listed in Sydney and 300 in Melbourne. The diversity of the gay community became more apparent, beyond just a commercial bar scene. This community increasingly referred to itself as ‘gay

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257 The ALSO Foundation 1998 Directory.
and lesbian’ with the separatism that marked the 1980s giving way to a new mood of coalitionism.\textsuperscript{262}

By the 1990s the community had developed into an electoral force with a definable pink vote to be courted by candidates. Two decades earlier electoral politics had attracted little interest from gay activists whose votes were also rarely a consideration for politicians. At best, elections were seen then as an opportunity for a stunt, rather than trying to influence outcomes. In 1972 openly gay man David Widdup ran against the sitting Prime Minister Billy McMahon in the Federal New South Wales seat of Lowe with the cheeky slogan “I’ve got my eyes on Billy’s seat”.\textsuperscript{263} Others followed, including Peter Blazey in 1978 for the New South Wales Earlwood by-election under the slogan “Put a Poofter in Parliament” an appeal which apparently “caught the attention of the media”.\textsuperscript{264} In 1989 “Brisbane’s best known drag personality” Toye de Wylde ran for election.\textsuperscript{265} The emphasis though changed from conducting stunts to influencing outcomes.

Notable law reform campaigners Lex Watson in New South Wales and Jamie Gardiner in Victoria encouraged long term activist attention towards elections and mainstream candidates started to adopt pro-gay policies in return for endorsement.\textsuperscript{266} Gay candidates started to make serious attempts to win elections, with Ralph MacLean in 1982 – who later became Mayor – and Warren Talbot, winning at local Fitzroy Council level, Max Pearce at Woollahra Council in 1983, and Craig Johnston, Brian McGahen and Bill Hunt at Sydney City Council in 1984.\textsuperscript{267} Openly gay since 1974,\textsuperscript{268} Tasmanian independent and later national Green’s leader, Bob Brown was elected at state level in 1983 followed by New South Wales ALP parliamentarian Paul O’Grady who came out as gay in 1990,\textsuperscript{269} and Western Australian Green MLC Giz Watson in 1997. Brown was the first elected at federal level in 1996,\textsuperscript{270} followed by the Australian Democrats’ Brian Greig in 1998.\textsuperscript{271}

\textsuperscript{262} Willett, Living Out Loud, p. 199.
\textsuperscript{264} Dale Carson, “The Candidate, the Cause, the Outcome,” Campaign August 1978.
\textsuperscript{267} Larry Galbraith, “Campaign and a Decade of Change,” Campaign September 1985.
\textsuperscript{268} Danny Vadasz, “Franklin My Dear I Don’t Want a Dam,” OutRage April 1983.
\textsuperscript{269} “Positive Reaction to Gay MLC,” Sydney Star Observer 15 June 1990.
Central to promoting the growth of this gay and lesbian community, its activities and political campaigns was its media. During the 1990s there was massive expansion of free city-based newspapers and they became the community’s dominant media style. How this unfolded is explained next.

Role of free city-based newspapers

The origins of the free city-based newspapers were the cheaply produced ‘bar rags’ of the 1980s, notably *Sydney Star*, that experimented with a range of formats, at times free, though at times still reliant on a cover charge to supplement “the same small advertising market”. Rather than pay for a magazine, readers were understandably more inclined to pick up a free newspaper if it had the information they sought, but free newspapers required a sufficiently large base of advertisers to thrive. Most of the advertisers in free city-based newspapers were local endeavours not necessarily seeking national reader reach. These advertiser requirements and the “why do you need a magazine that tells you how to get laid in Alice Springs when you live in Launceston” phenomenon, fuelled the development of free city-based newspapers in each city.

Such publications were usually newsprint tabloids with regular publishing cycles based on the level of available advertising – monthly, fortnightly or weekly – and content that broadly covered news, venue happenings, lifestyle ideas and personal classifieds. Some printing innovations were adopted as they became more affordable during the 1990s, such as increased use of colour and page stapling.

These newspapers were entirely dependent on advertising to fund the project and this propelled a business model based on seeking more readers in order to attract more advertisers. Not needing to target a specific prepared-to-pay readership, such as the dominant white middle-class gay male group, these free newspapers diversified content and imagery to win a broader readership prepared to pick them up for just one or two sections, or an occasional article of interest. They successfully appealed to both gay men and lesbians with surveys consistently finding around one-third of the readership were women, and their ‘gay and lesbian’ readership was often acknowledged in their mastheads, later broadened further to include bisexual,

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272 See Chapter Three, Gay Lifestyle Publications.
274 Author interview with Danny Vadasz 2010.
transgender, and even queer. A survey of cover images used by free newspapers show less than a quarter were the young, attractive, white, masculine ‘Template Man’ look overwhelmingly used on the covers of the national gay lifestyle magazines. Instead a broad range of images were used that included lesbians, drag queens, older men and women, community events and political actions.

A second key strategy for more readers was simply to have more outlets, and there was a distributional push beyond venues and community spaces to sympathetic cafes, bookshops and other outlets. Systematic strategies were adopted to encourage new advertisers to stock the paper, and retail areas were regularly surveyed to seek further outlets. In Victoria for example, the number of outlets stocking free gay newspapers rose from 70 in 1992 to nearly 500 a decade later.

The free newspapers inherited the synergy that existed with the bars through venue promotion and in return drew on them as a rich source of stories, advertising revenue and distribution outlets. But they also developed similar additional relationships with other agencies, now possible due to the growth of a broader gay business sector, institutions and community festivals. These additional synergies helped fuel the growth of both the media and its community. Apart from regular sections that promoted the venues, other sections developed to promote endeavours that serviced the gay community, notably erotica, but also travel, health and other areas. Seasonal features, wraparounds and liftouts were devoted to community events, from major annual festivals such as Mardi Gras to smaller group events such as leather festivals or the Gay Games. These lifestyle sections and special features were used as a platform to approach businesses for advertising, both those that provided services

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275 Based on author interview with Ray Mackereth 2010 who said reader surveys showed a “75/25 to 60/40 bias to gay men. Also "Readers Back Newspaper," Brother Sister Victoria 27 August 1993 reported a 70/30 male to female divide; and Bnews and Melbourne Star Readership Survey 2002 by Significant Others Consulting in author’s private collection found a 31% of readers were women.

276 Based on author’s count of front cover images used by Sydney Star Observer, Queensland Pride and Brother Sister Victoria during 1995. ‘Template Man’ was the primary image on seven of 32 Sydney Star Observer covers, two of 12 Queensland Pride covers, and six of 26 Brother Sister Victoria covers. The term Template Man was discussed in Chapter Three, Gay Lifestyle Publications as developed in Kiley, "Coming over All Queer: Theory, Ageing and Embodied Problematics." In contrast to the free city-based newspapers, gay lifestyle magazines City Rhythm that rarely used Template Man covers. This magazine was also the only such magazine co-owned by a lesbian.

277 Based on author’s personal knowledge.

specifically to the gay community, as well as mainstream businesses, that were welcomed as community supporters.

As the newspapers broadened their revenue base they were in a stronger position to act as watchdogs of the community’s institutional behaviours, having previously been dependent particularly on the venue sector or the few large institutional advertisers. This is reflected by the evolution of Melbourne Star Observer’s policy in 1991 that gave gay businesses that were criticised in letters to the editor “the right of reply in the same issue as the criticism appears”.279 A common criticism in such letters was over venues’ gender discriminatory door policies against lesbians. The newspaper was in a much stronger position of independence by the end of the decade, according to Melbourne Star Observer’s 1999 editor Kelly Gardiner, able to resist the “bare knuckle tactics [from venues] to bully the paper” as well as “a few exposes” of political organisations who had always relied on their politics being “sanitised”.280

The political project for the free newspaper publishers was, similarly to the lifestyle publishers, to represent the needs and interests of the community, though now one that was visibly more diverse. Free newspapers advocated the community’s issues of political importance, at times with the fury expressed in the 1970s and 1980s publications. Increasingly though they reflected a tone of reconciliation that was underway between the community and mainstream society, that saw law changes debated and progressively implemented, and oppressive actions by police and other instrumentalities in decline. With their increasing readerships they became an important conduit between government and individual community members. The first substantial example of this was the government funded safe sex campaigns that broadened from the late 1980s to include high levels of gay print advertising. Increasingly candidates during election campaigns would engage with the newspapers, buy advertising,281 and be surveyed on their gay relevant policies. The business imperative to expand readership led to greater knowledge of the community’s activities and its political goals among both gay and straight readers, and this in turn helped advance the gay movement’s goals.

281 A notable forerunner to these regular election features was Sydney Star’s coverage of the 1981 and 1984 New South Wales elections that included paid advertising. Such pioneering features subsequently declined in prominence until reappearing in the early 1990s.
Commentator Adam Carr in 1987 predicted that free newspapers would gain “an unprecedentedly powerful position in the gay community’s commercial and social life”. He was right. They increasingly became a source for mainstream media stories and increasingly became viable businesses able to employ professional managers, designers, editors, and advertising salespeople. This allowed a systematic push to contact potential new advertisers and distribution points that reached into mainstream society on a regular basis. This confronted and eased, on a day-to-day basis, individual business prejudice. It triggered internal discussion within organisations, such as Telstra’s decision to advertise in gay media that “shocked” many of the staff and managers when first proposed in 1995, or Catholic charity Good Shepherd’s advertisements for foster carers in 2000 that were soon after banned by church hierarchy, an action by church leadership that triggered considerable debate within the foster care sector between those for and against the recruitment of gay couples.

By the early 1990s free newspapers were established in all major cities and an overview of this development will be presented shortly. Rival publishers competed for readers and advertisers in the three eastern state capitals of Sydney, Melbourne and Brisbane, with single newspapers in Adelaide, Perth and Canberra. By the end of the decade 4.5 million individual copies of free newspapers were being published across the country each year, compared to around 300,000 copies of gay lifestyle publications, principally the two long-running national lifestyle magazines, OutRage and Campaign. Free city-based newspapers became the dominant form of gay media with high print runs and fast publishing turnaround that pushed these national glossies out of news and event promotion into a new niche of high fashion and lifestyle.

Local newspapers around the country

From the mid 1980s Sydney Star Observer and Melbourne Star Observer were published fortnightly. Their origins were the bar rags Sydney Star and Melbourne

284 Author conversation with then manager at Good Shepherd Janet Elefsiniotis. The advertisement “Care to Share? Become a Foster Carer,” Bnews 1 February 2000 appeared in Bnews, the newspaper that in 2000 replaced Brother Sister Victoria.
285 See Appendix B.
286 Author interview with Danny Vadasz 2010.
Voice. In 1990 *Queensland Pride* started in Australia’s third largest city Brisbane, and from the early 1990s all three faced competition with *Capital Q* starting in Sydney, *Brother Sister Victoria* in Melbourne, and *Brother Sister Queensland* in Brisbane. *Sydney Star Observer, Queensland Pride* and *Brother Sister Victoria* are discussed in greater detail later in this chapter, and *Melbourne Star Observer* and *Capital Q*, that were owned by the publishing company Bluestone Media are included next chapter as part of pink dollar discussions.

Other cities also had free newspapers by the 1990s. In 1989 Adelaide’s collectively run *Catch 22* was taken over by Rodney Ellis, and renamed *The Galah* because such birds are “gregarious, garrulous, sometimes annoying, common yet beautiful”. Ellis was born in Mudgee NSW where he lived with parents and a younger sister until his parents divorced when he was 11. He stayed with his mother in various NSW and South Australian towns until settling long enough in Adelaide to finish high school and start a fine arts course. At 18 he joined the gay youth group in Adelaide and later the *Catch 22* publishing collective. He attempted national expansion for the 24 page *Galah*, achieving a claimed circulation in 1990 of 12,000. The same year he switched to a 60 page A4 gloss format for $2.50 that only lasted until June and the newspaper closed. Ellis subsequently owned gay businesses in Melbourne including Pink Link telephone classifieds, Trade Bar and briefly, The Glasshouse lesbian bar. After *Galah* closed, Adelaide’s Lesbian and Gay Community Action collective published the short-lived free 24 page A4 publication *GL* at the end of 1990 and start of 1991.

After more than a year with no gay newspaper in Adelaide, in May 1992 Ray Mackereth started in the garage of his rented house the free, 24 page monthly tabloid *Adelaide GT*, short for Gay Times. Launched by the ex-premier of South Australia Don Dunstan, 5000 copies were printed and distributed throughout South Australia and Northern Territory. Subsequent print numbers depended on the paper’s financial capacity, something that Mackereth described as “difficult [with] economic

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287 See Chapter Three, Gay Lifestyle Publications.
288 See Chapter Six, Flirting with Corporations.
291 Claim in credit box *Galah* February 1990.
growth in the state stunted”. Mackereth was born 13 October 1958 in Adelaide with parents who both worked to pay off the family home in a migrant suburb. His family was committed to charity work, in both the local neighbourhood and in remote Aboriginal communities. Mackereth left school at 16 and spent the next 12 years mostly away from Adelaide, motor-bike riding his way around Australia; working in hospitality or bus driving jobs. He returned to Adelaide in the late 1980s.

Mackereth aimed for his newspaper to both highlight discrimination by police, government and broader society, and to focus on “leisure and recreational pursuits”. A spot colour was added to the black and white printing on the cover from issue two and soon after, long serving editor Scott McGuinness joined the paper. After 12 months the paper moved out of Mackereth’s garage into a council building awaiting demolition and the paper adopted a fortnightly publishing cycle with between 24 and 32 pages. In 1997 pictorial covers replaced news on the front page.

The first publication in Perth was called Purple Press, started probably in 1972. Its publisher referred to himself only as Ray and he lived rent-free with his grandmother. Ray initially produced only a handful of the partly typed, partly handwritten eight page A5 magazines that he mailed for free to anyone who requested it. This grew to 100 copies and in 1975 Ray turned his venture into a business, solicited advertising and charged $4 for 10 issues. The publication stopped soon after, with a final much later issue in 1977 explaining that the absence was due to his grandmother’s ill health. From 1982 to mid 1983 the free A4 Western Gay was published by an “independent editorial collective” that used the Guild of Undergraduates at the University of Western Australia as its contact. It grew from eight to 20 pages, with news, features, social photographs and lifestyle articles. Two thousand copies were printed. It relied on advertising but introduced a 40-cent charge for its last issue.

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294 Author interview with Ray Mackereth 2010.
295 Author interview with Ray Mackereth 2010.
296 Author interview with Ray Mackereth 2010.
299 Ibid.
301 Douglas Hill, Western Gay March 1983.
Gavin McGuren started Perth’s 32 page A5 monthly *Westside Observer* in August 1987 after the failure of a Private Members Bill to decriminalise sex between men. With a black and white pictorial cover it included group news, social pictures, guides, lifestyle columns, but no classified advertisements until 1990. It sold for $1, with a percentage donated to gay charity. Only a few hundred were initially printed and hand collated until the print run reached 700, and this “became too much” to continue hand collating. By the end of 1990 they were printing 2000. The initial aim of the paper was to educate the general public “about our likes, dislikes and what we hope to achieve [and to] voice our opinions”. In 1989 *Westside Observer*’s size increased to A4, and in 1991 switched emphasis to be primarily a source of information for gay men. The following year, on its fifth birthday, it changed again, seeking to move “away from the gossip rag, bar rag mentality”. It subsequently included more news and adopted a free tabloid format. In 1995 production increased to a fortnightly cycle due to “the growth of the Perth gay and lesbian community”.

In 1992 Kerin O’Brien first printed 250 copies of Canberra’s 12 page monthly tabloid *PanDa* – short for Poofs and Dykes Advocate – in response to negative stories in *The Canberra Times* about a safe sex campaign. Joining him in the venture were local activists cum AIDS educators Kim Ware, Lyn O’Brien, Jackie Easter and Mark Boyd; a group known as “The Fabulous Five”. Assisted by subsidies from the AIDS council as part of its “happy healthy and gay” program, *PanDa* included local news and stories lifted from *Sydney Star Observer*, as well as photographs from the local gay venues, as well as lifestyle articles, classifieds and what’s on. Some advertising revenue was generated to reimburse the AIDS Council.

O’Brien was born in 1953 and grew up in country New South Wales towns before attending a Catholic boarding school in Sydney. He met fellow Fabulous Five member Kim Ware at a Sydney party when he was 20. In the 1970s O’Brien owned an all night gay coffee shop for 12 months before working as a nurse at St Vincent Hospital in Darlinghurst. After a serious car accident he left to recuperate with his
mother in Townsville where he got a job with Queensland AIDS Council that led in 1987 to a job with Australian Federation of AIDS Organisations (AFAO) in Canberra. In 1992 the circulation of PanDa grew to 1500, and the page count to 20, but The Fabulous Five started to fall apart when firstly Mark Boyd in 1993 left the “transient, public service town” Canberra, followed by Jacki Easter and two key contributors in 1994. That year ACT Queer Ink, became the publisher and switched format to A4 magazine until it ceased in 1996. A “burnt-out” O’Brien moved to the Gold Coast and later retrained in psychiatric nursing.

In the big cities, newspaper publishers could generate enough advertising from the community and its supporters to sustain competing publications, on usually fortnightly or even weekly publishing cycles. Growth in the smaller cities was slower, yet all provided the means to communicate information about the diversity of community events, venues and political campaigns.

Case study: the community’s biggest paper

The 24 page fortnightly tabloid, Sydney Star Observer replaced Michael’s Glynn’s Oxford Street venue focused Sydney Star in 1985. It provided a mix of news, letters, arts, venue happenings, personal classifieds and from 1989 the long running cartoon series ‘Living With Adam’. Its first publisher was the Melbourne group Bluestone Media until it changed hands at the start of 1988 at no cost to the specially formed company Sydney Gay Community Publishing with shareholders from “a broad cross-section of the Sydney gay community”. It became Australia’s highest ever circulating gay periodical peaking in 2001 at 30,959 copies each week.

Two hundred shares were issued for sale in the new publishing company at the end of 1987 at $200 each with ownership restricted to Sydney residents and a maximum of 10 shares per person. The shareholders elected board members, many of whom

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313 Author interview with Kerin O’Brien 2010.
315 Author interview with Kerin O’Brien 2010.
316 See Chapter Three, Gay Lifestyle Publications.
317 “Star Observer to Change Hands,” Sydney Star Observer 13 November 1987. For more on Bluestone Media’s ownership period see Chapter Six, Flirting with Corporations.
were actively involved with other community institutions such as Mardi Gras, and a chair each year. The first chair was Jim Jenkins, who had negotiated transfer of the newspaper from Bluestone Media.\footnote{O’Donnell, “Star Wars,” p.27.}

The first editor under community ownership was former academic Tim Carrigan who oversaw a “commitment to quality writing … rather than any major innovation in news coverage”.\footnote{“When the Music Stops, Everyone Changes Jobs,” Campaign April 1990.} He was followed in 1989 for one year by professional journalist Martyn Goddard who sharpened the paper’s news edge. In 1990 Larry Galbraith – who had previously edited \textit{Sydney Star Observer} before community ownership – returned after working at the gay lifestyle magazine \textit{Campaign}.\footnote{Will Harris, “Galbraith to Resign as Editor,” Sydney Star Observer 6 March 1992.} He resigned in 1992 to work on the gay men’s pictorial \textit{Classified} magazine, which he part owned,\footnote{“Daumvirate to Take over SSO Reins,” Sydney Star Observer 17 April 1992.} and was replaced by “the baby editors” team of Campion Decent and Will Harris.\footnote{“The Star Moves House!,” Sydney Star Observer 30 October 1992.}

The same year the publication moved from its office in Crown Street Darlinghurst, around the corner into Oxford Street.\footnote{“The New Star Observer,” Sydney Star Observer 22 July 1988.}

\textit{Sydney Star Observer} played a strong role in building community by promoting community groups and events. From the start the new publishers called on gay groups to keep them informed about their activities.\footnote{“Bumper Winter Bikefest,” Sydney Star Observer 9 July 1993.} The newspaper ran articles detailing a gay cyclist group’s schedule of rides,\footnote{Phillipe Cahill, “The Choir’s Second Coming – Third,” Sydney Star Observer 3 September 1993.} and the gay and lesbian choir at a national championship.\footnote{“Sweaty Bits,” Sydney Star Observer 9 July 1993.} There was a regular sports page with 23 sports groups listed in 1993,\footnote{“Contacts,” Sydney Star Observer 16 May 1996.} and a general groups and services page that listed more than 250 groups in 1996.\footnote{“Mardi Gras Winter Party,” Sydney Star Observer 8 July 1988.} Considerable news coverage was given to the affairs of community organisations, with a particular interest in Mardi Gras such as announcements of “a new annual winter party” in 1988,\footnote{“Excitement Builds for Mardi Gras,” Sydney Star Observer 13 January 1989.} to the large number of inquiries the NSW Tourist Bureau received about the event in 1989.\footnote{“Mardi Gras Winter Party,” Sydney Star Observer 8 July 1988.} In the single year 1993 Mardi Gras was featured in at least one early news story for all seven issues prior to the
event. In 1998 there was a six-page election supplement for the board. Mardi Gras rightfully held premier status due to its size and influence, but it also provided significant opportunities for the newspaper in regards not only editorial, but advertising and distribution. For several weeks each year leading up to and following the event, Sydney Star Observer would expand, reaching 84 pages by the mid 1990s as a result of advertising from businesses – both gay and mainstream – that wanted to be associated with the event. Apart from the parade, Mardi Gras held events across a three week time period, such as Fair Day, that attracted large crowds and provided opportunities to distribute the newspaper.

At times there were disputes between the board and employed editors over whether to always defend the community or make it stronger by scrutinising community institutions. In 1990 editor Goddard wrote about drug use at a Mardi Gras event and came under criticism from board members involved in the festival, which led to his resignation. Belatedly the Board adopted an editorial policy giving editors the “right to publish news” about any community group regardless of their “consent”, but flare-ups intermittently continued. In 1992 the editor Will Harris accidently faxed a copy of a confidential letter to the Sydney Morning Herald that compromised Mardi Gras parties at the Showgrounds and had to resign. In 1993 the editor Campion Decent also resigned, sending a hard-hitting letter that attacked the board, in part over “conflicts of interest”, which prompted further refinement of the editorial policy. Increasingly the publishing board allowed investigative journalism into community organisations such as scrutiny in 1993 of Queer Screen festival that “posted a greater than projected loss”, and in 1996 an article on the popular lesbian mountain retreat whose future “hangs in jeopardy after an acrimonious rift between partners”.

Reflecting broader moves towards a new coalitionism between lesbians and gay men, from the early 1990s there was a push within the Board to include more lesbians. At the end of 1992 Carole Ruthchild was elected unopposed, the first lesbian chair.

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338 “Landmark Appointment to Editor’s Chair,” Sydney Star Observer 11 June 1993.
replacing Murray McLachlan. The following year, director Richard Cobden put forward a plan to split each existing single share into four with the aim of encouraging “a big increase in community ownership [particularly] a dramatic increase in the number of women shareholders”. There was a further “affirmative action plan to increase the number of lesbian shareholders in the company” the following year. Lesbian representation on the board increased in 1994 when Cath Phillips, Julie Price and Rebecca Simmonds were appointed to it, and the publishing company’s name was changed to Sydney Gay and Lesbian Community Publishing Ltd in a “spirit of coalitionism”. The newspaper’s content started to reflect this endeavour and presented an increasingly diverse picture of community. A regular lesbian gossip column Catwoman was introduced in 1991 followed by active canvassing for lesbian contributors “to increase lesbian content and participation in the paper”. Barbara Farrelly was employed at the end of 1992, initially as a part-time staff journalist, but “became the first ever lesbian editor” the following year. That year the in masthead changed to signify Sydney Star Observer as “The Gay & Lesbian Communities’ Newspaper” rather than just gay. Farrelly edited Sydney Star Observer for 12 months, followed by Kevin Hume for just three months. In 1994 the paper employed its second lesbian editor Bernie Sheehan, who stayed for two years. She oversaw the paper’s switch in 1995 from fortnightly publishing to a weekly cycle. More lesbian focused news appeared in the newspaper, such as a front page story in 1993 that outlined plans for the “world’s first lesbian-owned and run centre” in Sydney. Other examples of articles include the first known lesbian couple to adopt a child, lesbian literary magazine anniversaries, and lesbian breast cancer risks.

348 “Landmark Appointment to Editor's Chair.”
In the latter part of the 1990s there was an increase in coverage of transgender issues, such as moves to make gender change drugs more easily available, and coverage of discrimination against a transvestite teacher. At the end of 1998 Sydney Star Observer further broadened its masthead to include transgender, bisexual and queer readers. Coverage of the community’s ethnic diversity in 1990 included an article on the formation of a new Asian group, with more frequent coverage by the end of the 1990s, such as a front page picture pointer to gay Asian celebrations during Chinese New Year, an upcoming Aboriginal Ball, and an Aboriginal lesbian activist’s call for the gay community to play a role in Reconciliation (a movement committed to building unity and respect between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders and non-Indigenous Australians).

With the decriminalisation of homosexual activity in New South Wales achieved in the 1984, the newspaper’s agitation for law reform focused on a raft of other issues from moves to adopt anti-homosexual vilification legislation, and the rights of gay and lesbian couples to adopt, to recognising same-sex relationships. Countering street violence against lesbians and gays remained an important focus with an ongoing campaign under Martyn Goddard’s editorship during 1990 that included photographs of bashed individuals on the front cover. Breakthroughs and setbacks in AIDS treatments were covered with Australia’s stringent new drugs approval procedures highlighted, the need to speed up AIDS treatment trials, and community actions such as the AIDS candlelight rally “to remember the dead, support the sick, and inspire the will to conquer AIDS”.

News coverage in the 1990s took an increasingly ‘objective’ tone with reports into the set-backs, progress and negotiations between government instrumentalities in response to a community now seen to have legitimate concerns. There were reports of

state government funding for the People With AIDS day centre”, state funding to tackle anti-gay violence, and permission for a Catholic gay group to worship on church premises. These community concerns were pushed actively during state and federal election campaigns with substantial supplements that included candidate policies, advertisements and how to vote recommendations. The 1991 state election attracted more than five pages of advertisements from candidates in the two issues leading to the May election and this increased at the 1999 state election to 10 pages of advertising leading to the March election. By the end of the 1990s the gay community was firmly entrenched in the electoral process with “at least 11 gay men and lesbians standing” for the March 1999 state election, and front page coverage given to the two openly gay federal senators elected in 1998. Mainstream political figures actively courted the pink vote, for example the state Minister for Tourism in 1996 who launched a gay lifestyle expo.

This changed perspective and increased professionalism led the newspaper to become a source for mainstream media for stories about gay and lesbian issues. A decade earlier as Sydney Star the newspaper had been “a strident critic of the mainstream press”. In the 1990s Sydney Star Observer became “a continual point of referral and contact for mainstream and other journalists regarding community issues [and the editor was] continually sought for comment on a wide variety of issues”. Staff journalists soon provided a regular news-spot on mainstream radio. A number of editors moved into mainstream careers, such as Bernie Sheehan who started Ninemsn’s internet portal, Ben Widdicombe who joined New York Daily News and Ruth Pollard who joined Sydney Morning Herald. In 1996 Dominic O’Grady became editor for two-and-a-half years and later wrote his PhD on the early Star newspaper. He was replaced by Marcus O’Donnell, who had previously edited OutRage magazine, and remained editor until 2006 when he became a lecturer in

373 Multiple page election supplements ran in the three issues preceding the Federal election held on 3 October 1998.
journalism at the University of Wollongong.\footnote{382}

The board’s view on running the newspaper business varied with the frequent turnover of members, many of whom were strongly committed to specific gay community organisations. Each year the publishing company’s shareholders elected a new board. Nearly three quarters of the initial 200 shares were sold in 1988, raising about $29,000 in working capital,\footnote{383} and the question of whether to pay shareholders a dividend was an area for debate. At the start of 1989 having still not sold all of the 200 original shares the board proudly announced “an excellent 29.4% return” on investment.\footnote{384} It did not though pay out the dividend, instead re-investing it to develop the newspaper’s graphic design capability. Some held the view all profit should be re-invested either in the newspaper or the broader gay and lesbian community, and a motion was put to the 1994 Annual General Meeting to formalise such a position.\footnote{385} When it was defeated the chair Bill Whittaker resigned in protest, though despite this failure to formalise such a position, it was achieved in reality since the company never did pay a dividend. In practice recorded profits remained small, with even an occasional loss, due to this commitment to improve facilities and wages. The editor’s salary steadily increased, reaching more than $40,000 by 1994.\footnote{386}

Under the direction of the community board, \textit{Sydney Star Observer}’s circulation increased steadily. After 12 months of community ownership circulation had increased to 10,000, with 60 distribution outlets,\footnote{387} and at the end of 1989 was broadened to include newsagencies throughout NSW and ACT for a $1 cover price, though it remained free at all other outlets.\footnote{388} From 1990 circulation figures were audited.\footnote{389} In 1995 \textit{Sydney Star Observer}’s publishing cycle increased from fortnightly to weekly and by the end of the decade was printing more than 30,000 copies each week.

While loosely adopting a position of not-for-profit, annual revenues increased strongly, rising six-fold from $259,000 in 1989 to $1.6 million in 2000,\footnote{390} unhindered
by the arrival of competition in 1992 in the form of \textit{Capital Q}. In 1990 most advertising revenue still came from the venues and social events, as well as erotica services and AIDS associated advertising that had expanded from two small AIDS related advertisements in a December 1988 edition to regularly two dozen advertisements by December 1990. Some were full page advertisements, and they came from a range of sources from safe sex promotion and AIDS organisation recruitment to obituaries, doctors and funeral directors.

The number of pages increased by the late 1990s to regularly between 40-60, with a separate Mardi Gras supplement in February. Corporate advertisers started to appear, such as Jim Beam Whiskey. Throughout the 1990s the number of businesses advertised in the newspaper increased with more than 100 in 1996 listed on a directory page. This advertising increasingly diversified with a restaurant section, and lift-out supplements promoting such things as travel, and pets. There was even a lift-out supplement on the traditional working class area of western Sydney, an initiative that both generated revenue and helped expand distribution by appealing to the community’s diverse elements.

From the start of the community ownership era in 1988 \textit{Sydney Star Observer} remained strongly committed to the promotion and development of gay community. It increasingly represented the community’s diversity and reported on the political issues of importance to it, at times leading the way with campaigns such as its 1990 anti-violence campaign. Each editor left their mark and reflected the changing nature of the paper as it moved from the combative style with government instrumentalities to the newspaper of a recognised and legitimate community. This changing style is described by observer Craig Johnston as a move from 1980s “advocate” to “chronicler” by the 1990s. In the relatively fortunate position of servicing Australia’s largest gay community \textit{Sydney Star Observer} was sustained largely through advertising revenues from the growth of venues, erotica services and AIDS affiliated messages. It faced less urgency than newspapers in smaller cities to develop innovative packages to achieve commercial viability though freely harnessed the

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391 Further discussion in Chapter Six, Flirting With Corporations.
synergy of promoting Mardi Gras and community events that paralleled the publishers’ desires to promote community and furthered its potential goals. Through this it was able to resolve many of the tensions between financial needs and its publishers’ goals to promote community, establishing itself as the most successful free city-based newspaper that continues to be published in 2015.

Case study: perfect one day, legal the next

Queensland was one of the last states in Australia to decriminalise gay sex due to the “ever more conservative stance” adopted by the Joh Bjelke-Petersen led National Party government in the 1980s. After 32 years in the political wilderness, a Wayne Goss led ALP finally won office in 1989 and as part of its policy decriminalised homosexuality within its first year of government. Wally Cowin published *Queensland Pride* initially as “a one-off” publication in January 1991 to “commemorate” this law reform, but following support from advertisers and readers decided to continue and offer “a lesbian/gay perspective on contemporary events, politics, arts and entertainment”.

*Queensland Pride* was initially published every second month as a free 20 page tabloid, printing 5000 copies, with local activist Michael Tuma writing news stories. Cut and paste layout for the first seven years was done in the garage of Cowin’s mother’s house in Mt Gravatt and Cowin delivered the artwork to the printer at Gympie Times. Due to the regional make-up of Queensland, *Queensland Pride* adopted a state wide focus rather than just Brisbane, with regional writers and advertising representatives. After five issues production was increased to a monthly schedule.

Cowin was born in the country town of Tenterfield, just over the border in northern New South Wales. His family moved to Brisbane in the late 1950s for his education, settling in the new estate suburb of Mt Gravatt. Cowin left home in 1965 to join the navy and was a chef in Vietnam until 1969 on the troop carrier HMAS Sydney. After the war he lived in Sydney but a work contract at the Brisbane World Expo ‘88 saw him return to Mt Gravatt. He began a relationship with Tuma and the pair became

400 Additional comment from Wally Cowin following author interview 2010
Queensland representatives for the Sydney gay newspaper *Village Voice* that, along with *Sydney Star Observer*, distributed copies in Queensland. Tuma wrote stories and Cowin sold advertising on commission.

From the start Cowin, through his newspaper, helped build community. He included a regular listing of group activities, personal classifieds and an innovative cut out form that readers could send to different groups seeking more information. Cowin said the high number of classifieds and cut-out forms sent in convinced him the venture was a “success” and further encouraged him to continue. Cowin wrote positive stories about the growth of gay community with groups and events promoted such as the gay radio show, the annual gay and lesbian film festival, the Pride Festival and Queensland AIDS Council’s 10-year celebrations. *Queensland Pride* consistently included guides to the venues, and would run major front page stories about the opening of new bars. There was a strong commitment to report developments in the smaller regional towns, such as Cains, Townsville and Surfers Paradise, including the “great shows and atmosphere” of venues, and the “swinging” times to be had.

As with other newspapers this promotion of community events and bars provided opportunity for stories, advertising and distribution. The inclusion of social photographs serving a further purpose in the conservative northern state in that it confronted many patrons with coming out, and Cowin says fears surrounding this receded over time.

One particular business Cowin attempted to promote was Queensland’s gay tourist sector, located in the south east corner of the state around Brisbane, and the coastal regions to the north. A prominent travel section featured immediately after the news section with articles that promoted Queensland’s gay resorts, cruise ship events, and travel expos. Apart from stories, these businesses provided advertising revenue and distribution outlets for Cowin’s paper. Newspapers were mailed or couriered with

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402 Author interview with Wally Cowin 2010.
408 “March Mayhem at the Meeting Place,” *Queensland Pride* March 1993.
410 Author interview with Wally Cowin 2010.
Queensland Rail throughout the state to these and other outlets. As part of Cowin’s commitment to present Queensland as an increasingly attractive gay destination, he also distributed *Queensland Pride* in the southern states to showcase Queensland’s changing political environment, particularly its attraction as a gay tourist destination. From the start *Queensland Pride* defined its community of readers as more diverse than just gay men. It was proudly “a coalitionist publication, with women editors and regular lesbian contributors”. A readership survey in 1993 reinforced this with 34.6 percent identifying as women and 63.6 percent as men, similarly to free newspapers in the south. From 1992 the words “gay and lesbian” were included in the newspaper’s masthead. The paper’s commitment to gay tourism in Queensland, and regular sections devoted to towns such as Cairns, Townville and the Gold Coast, reinforced the presentation of the gay community’s regional diversity in the state.

Willett says “activism [in Queensland] was a long time coming”. *Queensland Pride* to some extent filled the activism shortfall. It included articles such as the “serious assault of a young man at Spring Hill, near a popular venue”. It also criticised an attack by Brisbane’s major daily newspaper, the *Courier Mail*, on a community safe sex initiative, and a poster addressing the issue of lesbians and AIDS that was “excluded” from a political posters exhibition at the Brisbane City Hall Art Gallery. Issues around the AIDS epidemic were prominently covered with regular promotion of World AIDS Day events, and candlelight vigils, as well as a state government ban on “bleach and condoms” in prisons. As well as local issues *Queensland Pride* regularly covered national developments, such as the ongoing ban on homosexuals serving in the defence forces, developments to ban discrimination against HIV positive people, Sydney hosting the Australian Gaymes, and national lesbian celebrity marriages.

417 “Serious Assault of Gay Man,” *Queensland Pride* April 1993.
The rapid decriminalisation of gay sex by the new Goss Government was likely influenced by broader liberalisation of the electorate and ALP base, as well as national AIDS policy. While widely welcomed, there was initially little further engagement by state government with the gay community. In the early years of the 1990s Queensland Pride reported outrages against the gay community with little sign of response from government, which was in notable contrast to the larger southern newspapers that during this time reported an increasingly co-operative approach to issues with government and mainstream institutions. It was only in the latter part of the 1990s that government instrumentalities appeared to actively recognise Queensland’s gay and lesbian communities as a legitimate constituency. In 1995 Queensland Pride gave strong coverage to a campaign by local activists for upcoming state and federal elections to “Vote Pride 95”, followed by attempts “to encourage more openly gay and lesbian people to forge an active role in the electoral process”. This coincided with more activity from governments to address the concerns of the gay community, such as a show of support in 1995 from the lord mayor of Brisbane who spoke at a public meeting to oppose violence against gay people. In 1997 the state government appointed police-gay liaison officers, and in 1999 the premier Peter Beattie attended a community group anniversary dinner.

Throughout the 1990s Cowin remained the only full-time worker, in charge of editorial and advertising sales. He published on a monthly cycle with circulation increased in 1993 to 8000, rising to 15,000 in 1998. Without the usual costs of rent and staff faced by a more commercially focused business, he needed to sell only enough advertising to pay himself a wage, plus the print and other bills. Advertising revenue came from a diverse spread of primarily small advertisers. Following closure of Brother Sister Queensland at the end of 2000, Cowin moved Queensland Pride to a fortnightly publishing cycle and employed an editor, Iain Clacher, who had previously assisted as news editor for five years. Clacher immediately introduced a new, cleaner layout and from 2003 distribution was audited at 17,840 copies. This expansion of the business though led to problems following a spate of advertising bad

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427 “Pink Vote to Be Canvassed,” Queensland Pride May 1995.
434 In credit box Queensland Pride February 2004
debts that forced Cowin to default on print and taxation debts. He handed the paper to members of his staff in November 2003 and declared himself bankrupt. Six months later the new owners moved from tabloid to magazine format and pushed production back to a monthly schedule. They sold the paper in May 2007 to Sydney gay publishers Evolution Publishing who had produced SX since 2001. Claicher remained its editor until his sudden death from a heart attack in 2009, aged 44. After leaving Queensland Pride Cowin completed a tourism diploma, continued his interest in Queensland gay tourism, and in 2010 wrote a travel column in Qnews called Where’s Wally. His mother died in 2008 leaving him the Mt Gravatt house.

Queensland Pride was born at the end of a hostile era towards homosexuals in its state and its publisher clearly felt impelled to nurture and promote the community’s growth and highlight its political concerns. Throughout the 1990s Queensland Pride remained largely a one-person operation that, in part, reflected the smaller size of the community in that state. Queensland Pride also reflected Cowin’s interest to promote the state as a gay tourist destination. While most Australian gay newspapers in the 1990s increasingly adopted a professional media model with commercial offices and increased staff, Cowin resisted such a transition until the end of the decade. He unsuccessfully adjusted to the new business model and was forced to give up his paper.

Case study: the desire to expand

The newspaper Brother Sister started in May 1992 and I was one of its founders, as previously discussed in the introduction to this thesis. Prior to starting Brother Sister I edited Melbourne’s then sole gay newspaper Melbourne Star Observer, published by the gay publishing group, Bluestone Media. I established Brother Sister in direct competition with Melbourne Star Observer due to my frustration over what I saw as the publishers’ inaction to expand the newspaper and develop its advertising revenues and distribution. I was born in 1959, grew up in the Melbourne suburb of Canterbury and completed a science degree at Melbourne University. In 1979 I joined the youth group Young Gays and in 1983 the Stonewall Collective, that organised a week of events each year to commemorate the 1969 New York riots. These involvements

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435 Author interview with Wally Cowin 2010.
436 Peter Hackney, "Farewell Iain Clacher," Queensland Pride February 2009.
438 See Chapter Six, Flirting with Corporations.
triggered an interest in gay politics and subsequently led me to pursue a career in journalism, which included three years with the mainstream inner city newspaper *The Melbourne Times* and in 1991 the editorship of *Melbourne Star Observer*.

Community activist Jeffrey Grad provided the catalyst to start *Brother Sister* and saw it as the means to promote the issues he was involved with, such as the AIDS activist group ACTUP and Midsumma Festival. He was also motivated, as he puts it, by wanting “revenge” against the publishers of *Melbourne Star Observer* for what he saw as their ruthless debt collection policy two years earlier over advertising placed by the financially struggling Midsumma.\(^{439}\) I joined the *Brother Sister* venture as 50 per cent owner and news editor, as did Grad’s friend Geoffrey Williams who bought a 25 per cent stake and became the arts editor, with Grad as the creative designer retaining the remaining 25 per cent.

Grad was born in 1967 and grew up in Melbourne’s eastern suburb of Burwood. He attended the local primary school, then Jordonville Technical School where, as he puts it, he was a “gay effete little thing with long blonde hair [at] trade school with these huge brutes”.\(^{440}\) He soon moved to Box Hill Technical College to study drama and film. Grad worked as an actor for two years until he “fell in love” with an Apple Mac computer at the end of the 1980s, took out a $4000 loan and bought it. Seeking projects to use his new computer led to gay community work and he was employed to design the ALSO Directory in 1990 and 1991. Mostly though he volunteered to produce publicity materials for groups such as ACT UP and Midsumma, and was Midsumma president in 1991.

The first edition of *Brother Sister* was a 24 page tabloid with full colour covers, covering news, venues, arts, and classifieds, with “a clean visual” layout style,\(^{441}\) and 10,000 copies were printed. It was produced from the then run-down city building Majorca House in Flinders Lane where Grad operated his graphic design business.

From its third issue *Brother Sister* adopted a full pictorial cover and these reflected and helped build community diversity: an eclectic mix of popular mainstream entertainers or community activities, such as Midsumma Festival, gay venue

\(^{439}\) Author interview with Jeffrey Grad 2014.
\(^{440}\) Author interview with Jeffrey Grad 2014.
events, or the International Gay Games. With time, the first four front covers each year in January and February were designated to successively feature Midsumma events such as the dance party Red Raw and Pride March, followed by Sydney’s Mardi Gras. This progressed to wraparound features, a mix of information and advertising accompanied by an offer to advertisers to be in all four for the price of three. Later in the year similar special features would run that focussed on established or developing gay areas, such as South Yarra or Yarraville, venue events around long weekends, or events such as Lesfest.

Within Brother Sister’s news section pictorial stories were frequently included to promote events such as the start of a gay volleyball league, or the start of “Australia’s first gay and lesbian radio station, JOY Melbourne”. This commitment to front cover imagery and pictorial stories was at times due to Brother Sister’s direct sponsorship of these community events through stories and free or subsidised advertising. In 1998 sponsorships included Bent TV, JOY FM, Style Aid, Melbourne Marching Boys, Queer Film Festival, and the Great Aussie Pool Comp that occurred across a range of gay venues.

Similarly to other free newspapers Brother Sister not only promoted community events but also scrutinised its institutions. The internal rows at the community fund-raising organisation the ALSO Foundation were covered in detail from the sacking of its dance party organiser, to disputes with other community groups. Attention focussed on developments within the Victorian AIDS Council, from its purchase of a building “for more than $700,000”, to battles for control of the board. Even small groups were scrutinised such as a “split over the public brawling” within a country town gay youth group.

The newspaper’s name was chosen, in part, to consciously include lesbians, and Grad chose the name for its “obvious but not too obvious” gay and lesbian focus. The

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453 Author interview with Jeffrey Grad 2014.
newspaper adopted a general policy that gender imagery on the covers should reflect the readership over time.\(^{454}\) Of the 154 covers from 1993 to 1998 there were 69 with male, AIDS or drag themed images, 35 with female themed images, 23 had both and 27 used a non-gendered image. These ratios approximately corresponded to the findings from a readership survey in 1993 that showed a 30 per cent female readership. *Brother Sister* also reflected community diversity with a cover story devoted to a series of multicultural interviews,\(^{455}\) others that promoted Aboriginal lesbian performers,\(^{456}\) and a profile of wheelchair bound activist Greg Axton.\(^{457}\) The newspaper sponsored events such as the Asian beauty pageants,\(^{458}\) the festival for hirsute gay men, Southern HiBearnation,\(^{459}\) and a leather festival.\(^{460}\) Front covers were often part of these sponsorships and the newspaper might sell advertising into a festival feature.\(^{461}\) In 1998 *Brother Sister* broadened its masthead from ‘lesbian and gay’ to include ‘bi’ and later the same year featured a photographic display of transgendered activist Julie Peters that “illustrated her personal identity search from being man to becoming woman”.\(^{462}\)

*Brother Sister* agitated around the issues of political concern for the gay community during an era of progressive change with positive developments applauded and negative events condemned. There was a strong focus on law reform in areas as wide ranging as moves to outlaw vilification,\(^{463}\) legal rulings that deemed “public sex in a secluded location was not offensive behaviour”,\(^{464}\) and recognition of same-sex relationships.\(^{465}\) Issues around police were scrutinised and this included positive developments such as a “trial series of seminars addressing gay issues” for police cadets,\(^{466}\) as well as concerns such as sustained coverage of a police raid in 1994 on the “queer city night club Tasty” when police strip searched 463 patrons looking for drugs.\(^{467}\) It was an action later slammed by the state ombudsman as “discriminatory

\(^{454}\) Based on author’s direct knowledge.


\(^{458}\) "Miss Gay Asia Pacific Quest," *Brother Sister Victoria* 19 October 1995.


\(^{461}\) Such as the eight page feature “Spring Into Leather” *Brother Sister Victoria* 3 September 1998


and unreasonable”, and even the conservative state premier of the day Jeff Kennett called the raids “extreme” and “disturbing”. The then newspaper editor Andrew Mast was present at the venue when the raid took place. Issues such as lifting the ban on gays in the military were covered, plans by the Australian Bureau of Statistics to include gay relationships in its surveys, and corporations “starting to take discrimination in the workplace seriously”. AIDS issues were covered with front page promotion of World AIDS Day and Candlelight Vigils as well as research breakthroughs, concern over “an increase in unsafe casual sex”, and bans placed on an HIV positive footballer.

The constant scrutiny of government action by gay media, helped build pressure on political parties and individuals to make pro-gay election pledges and to deliver reform. Some smaller parties offered strong pro-gay policies and put considerable energy into winning the gay vote, such as the Australian Democrats in the 1993 election who “set up a national body to liaise with the gay and lesbian community”. Apart from fortnightly coverage the newspaper was an active voice at election time and a strong backer notably of the drag performer Barbra Quicksand in her 1992 campaign for the state seat of Albert Park. Sustained coverage included a front cover of Quicksand with the ALP candidate John Thwaites who eventually won the seat and the Liberal’s Wendy Smith. Clearly the major party candidates in Albert Park were aware of the importance of the gay vote and the value of being seen in the gay newspaper. In the three issues prior to the 1992 election Brother Sister ran extensive coverage with pictorial covers, lead news items, candidate surveys and how-to-vote editorials. Candidates, whether independent, Labor, Liberal or Australian Democrat took paid advertising. Thwaites subsequently made himself regularly available for interviews, and launched a guide published by Brother Sister in 1994. A similar trend of candidate scrutiny and paid advertising continued at subsequent state and

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469 Tammy Mills and Cameron Houston, “Police Apologise for Tasty Club Raid,” The Age 6 August 2014.
federal elections with more than three pages in the issues leading to the March 1993 federal election,\textsuperscript{480} and a total of six pages of paid advertising in the two issues leading into the 1998 federal election.\textsuperscript{481}

The venture initially struggled financially having exhausted its capital after just four issues, so to save money shares were issued in lieu of wages to advertising and distribution managers Brendon Wickham and Tom Lane. When the landlord evicted Grad’s design business from its city premise over unpaid rent in September 1992,\textsuperscript{480} \textit{Brother Sister} moved to a small rented house in Albert Park. At the end of 1992 \textit{Brother Sister} switched publishing cycle to the alternative Friday, rather than the previous head-to-head against \textit{Melbourne Star Observer}, with the announcement it would provide “weekly news coverage” for the community,\textsuperscript{482} though it was inspired more in the hope of picking up a few extra time-specific advertisements.\textsuperscript{483} Grad was “burnt out” having “financially … hit the bottom”, drew back from community involvement and left to find work in corporate design.\textsuperscript{484} A little over a year into the venture only two \textit{Brother Sister} shareholders remained, myself now owning 72 per cent and Lane owning 28 per cent.\textsuperscript{485}

The early issues of \textit{Brother Sister} produced an income less than $4000 with costs running at $7000,\textsuperscript{486} and, while this stabilised, the venture remained in debt for several years. In September 1993, just 15 months after launching \textit{Brother Sister}, the company embarked on an ambitious expansion in the hope to improve finances with the launch of a Queensland edition, and with plans for a Sydney edition should opportunity arise. The principle was to develop economies through shared resources, one of the reasons behind moves in 1992 to form the Independent Lesbian and Gay Press Association with gay newspapers in different states.\textsuperscript{487}

In 1993 Lane moved to Brisbane to oversee the new paper, and Bridget Haire, who had been assisting in sales, took over both advertising and arts editorship in Melbourne. We were banking on the “emergence of the gay and lesbian communities

\textsuperscript{480} \textit{Brother Sister Victoria} 4 September; 12 February; 26 February; 12 March 1993.
\textsuperscript{481} \textit{Brother Sister Victoria} 17 September; 1 October 1998.
\textsuperscript{483} Author’s personal knowledge.
\textsuperscript{484} Author interview with Jeffrey Grad 2014.
\textsuperscript{485} Shareholdings confirmed in Memorandum from accountant Clements, Dunne & Bell dated 15 November 1993, in author’s private collection.
\textsuperscript{486} Based on analysis of company accounts in author’s private collection.
\textsuperscript{487} Further discussion in Chapter Six, Flirting With Corporations.
in Queensland following law reform”, that we hoped would mean the state would become a growth area for the gay community, then serviced only by the monthly cycle Queensland Pride. Production for Brother Sister Queensland was done in Melbourne by reworking the Victorian edition and couriering artwork via plane to Brisbane to add local stories and advertising artwork. A combined home office was rented in Spring Hill for Lane, and Brother Sister Queensland grew to a regular 28 pages, peaking at 40 pages. Circulation grew to just over 12,000 each fortnight. Brother Sister Queensland did not prove to be a financial panacea. Following a series of crisis meetings over whether to continue in Queensland it was decided to split the business in 1997 with Lane gaining 90 per cent of Brother Sister Queensland and the remaining 10 per cent plus all of Brother Sister Victoria going to me. At the end of 1998, Lane suffered chronic fatigue. The Queensland paper was spiraling into debt, and he handed it over to me to seek a buyer for it.

Haire left the Melbourne paper at the end of 1993 replaced by experienced salesperson Rosemaree McGuinness and in 1994 Andrew Mast took over as editor a development that allowed me to focus on the newspaper business. In 1994 the Albert Park house was sold and Brother Sister Victoria moved to larger office premises in Bridge Road Richmond above the Coles supermarket. Throughout the 1990s key advertising revenue came from general news placement, venues and erotica, with additional regular lifestyle sections developed such as restaurants, travel, cars, health, real estate, fashion and home, and a schedule of special advertising features introduced. By the time McGuinness left in 1997 she had seen the sales department grow to a team of three, with Toula Elefsiniotis, Shane Bridges and Mark Whearem as the nucleus until the end of the decade. In the 1999 financial year Brother Sister Victoria’s annual revenue was $687,000. Brother Sister Victoria steadily grew to a regular 48 pages, peaking at 68. Circulation was audited from 1997 and peaked in 1999 at nearly 20,000 copies each fortnight.

Brother Sister started due to individual motives to produce a better newspaper, which largely meant one with broader reach and stronger revenues, in order to sustain it. The

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489 More discussion of competition in Chapter Six, Flirting with Corporations.
490 Letter in author’s private collection. Both Brother Sister Victoria and Brother Sister Queensland were sold 12 months later to the Satellite Group, discussed in Chapter Six, Flirting with Corporations.
492 From company accounts in author’s private collection.
rationale was that expansion was needed in order that the newspaper could survive and continue to promote the lesbian and gay community in all its diversity, and to represent its issues of political concern. This continual struggle for survival led to a range of innovations, most dramatically the expansion into Queensland, but also the development of a series of synergies to raise money while promoting community groups, events and businesses. It led to a strong increase in distribution that presented the community and its aspiration to a wide range of readers.

Conclusion

The free city-based newspapers coincided with the spectacular growth of the gay and lesbian community during the 1990s. These newspapers were able to access advertising revenue from the flourishing of community events, festivals, groups and businesses in all their variety. They rapidly expanded readership and in doing so diversified content and broadened the range of synergies between content, advertising and distribution to promote community events, organisations and businesses. Their commercial viability, allowed them to sustain a reliable workforce and improve their product. They became less dependent on any particular sector of the community, allowing them more freely to act as watchdog on community itself. With more advertising revenue, wages could be offered to attract staff with industry experience, rather than relying on self-taught and semi-voluntary community activists. Resources could also be spent on improved publication quality, size and distribution. All publishers, depending on their individual priorities for community development, harnessed synergies that both raised revenues and forwarded goals to promote the community and its political aspirations. Each did this in different ways: *Sydney Star Observer* through its strong alignment with Mardi Gras, *Queensland Pride* through gay tourism and *Brother Sister Victoria* through a structured schedule of event and business features. Seeking further revenues and distributional outlets newspaper publishers built a myriad of relationships with mainstream society. The newspapers growing readership and impact on mainstream society increased the effectiveness of their advocacy for the community’s political aspirations.

Chapter Six

**Pink dollars**

Flirting with corporations

A six-foot tall drag queen stands centre stage on the film set, ready and preened. The star of an advertising campaign for Australia’s largest phone company, she presses her lips to smooth thick rouge, flutters her eye-lashes and turns to face the camera. The assistant director rushes forward to place a large plastic fish spilling from her mouth, and with the whirr of clicking cameras a new marketing image is born. Miss Candee, was “discovered” selling cakes for a gay fund-raiser, dressed in a “1950s very Lucille Ball kind of dress” in a side street bar. As the 1998 face of Telstra to the gay community her image appears on inner suburban billboards, bus shelters, and the back of taxis. Festivals are populated with Telstra workers dressed in pink t-shirts emblazoned with her face, as they hand out Candee signature phone cards. With her big lips, big hair, and big eye-lashes, she is the toast of Telstra sponsored dinner parties and boat cruises across the country.

Crucially underpinning the expansion of gay media was the increase in advertising, and this chapter focuses on how publishers encouraged the growing mainstream recognition of a gay niche market. Discussion of the disposable income of gay men in particular took place in mainstream media from the late 1970s, though companies’ internal prejudices and timidity over potential conservative backlash prevented most from acting on the knowledge until the 1990s. Publishers of gay magazines and newspapers played an important role in attracting the embrace of both small businesses and mainstream corporations, motivated obviously by the potential for advertising revenue. They frequently highlighted the financial power of the pink dollar, funded surveys to demonstrate its size and redesigned their publications to attract advertisers.

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2 Author interview with Ron Walker (aka Miss Candee) 2014.
This chapter includes an extended case study into one gay media group’s evolution, Bluestone Media, a business that emerged from the repositioning of the gay liberationist magazine *Gay Community News*. It was a process principally directed by publisher Danny Vadasz from the late 1970s until the end of the century. The development of a stable of products by this single publishing house reflected the changing nature of gay media as described in preceding chapters, and Bluestone played a crucial role in developing mainstream business involvement. The path Bluestone took highlights within one extended story the interplay of tensions between political goals to advance the social position of gay men and lesbians, and the need to deal with commercial realities, both to gain revenue and to defend against competition. Dealing with these tensions led to expansion of its magazines and newspapers that in significant ways forwarded gay movement goals, though at times, in the pursuit of commercial goals, excluded some sections of the community.

**Lucrative niche market with no kids**

Australia’s mainstream media in the 1970s started to discuss the potential for companies to target the newly identified ‘pink dollar’, initially focused primarily on gay men. It was a discussion based on the premise that gay men, on average, had higher levels of income and education than many other sections of Australian society, and that the absence of children expanded their discretionary income further. The first media articles focused on the situation in America, such as an *Australian Financial Review* article in 1977 that presented statistics on its front page into the high levels of education and disposable income among San Francisco’s gay male community. This was followed by a series of articles on the Australian situation, with one report that said gays without spouses and children were “one of the biggest untapped markets in the world” with high disposable income that they spent on clothes, entertainment, decorating their homes and new technology. In 1981 *Australian Playboy* discussed

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3 I have adopted the later used umbrella name Bluestone Media to refer to the series of companies and businesses, grouped together under the primary direction of Danny Vadasz. These grew out of the collectively published *Gay Community News* and included at various times Gay Publications Co-operative, Designer Publications Pty Ltd, Oz Media Pty Ltd, and Capital Q Pty Ltd.

4 See Chapter One, Gay Liberationists.


6 "Gay Dollars Go On Tour," *Sunday Press* 26 September 1982. One of eight mainstream newspaper articles in a six month period that year referred to in a Ministry of Employment and Training application by *Gay Community News* for funding under the Co-operative Development Program, in Folder 1 (1982-1983) *OutRage Records Box 195, ALGA*
“a combined purse totalling $60 million a week” and in 1983 Business Review Weekly carried a major feature titled: “Business swings to the gay dollar”. Yet throughout the 1980s, few mainstream businesses responded, and attempts to appeal to gay consumers were restricted generally to arts companies, travel and alcohol businesses, due to fear of “mainstream backlash they believed would result from advertising to gay and lesbian consumers”.

The acronym DINKS (dual income no kids) was subsequently coined to include the “lucrative niche market” of gay couples, and the “affluent, highly-educated, savvy, well-travelled” gay niche was given further encouragement by the assertion that lesbians and gay men were loyal to brands that showed support to the gay community. In the 1990s many mainstream businesses changed their attitudes towards the gay niche, and companies ranging from Toyota and McDonalds to ANZ and Qantas, became regular advertisers in Australia’s gay media. This change was brought about by a number of factors that included increased social acceptance of homosexuality, and growing interest in events such as Sydney’s Gay and Lesbian Mardi Gras. A recession in the early 1990s also encouraged businesses to become more innovative in their marketing strategies and less likely to reject targeting the gay niche due to “so-called issues of morality”. Some researchers critically scrutinised the claimed level of gay earnings, such as social researcher Bob Birrell’s study of the 1996 census that showed gay men only marginally better paid than their straight workmates. But even before this study new interpretations of the niche’s value were put forward to claim gays as early adopters and “trendsetters” for new products and services.

Some of this corporate advertising flowed across to lesbian publications by the late 1990s, according to Lesbians On The Loose publisher Frances Rand, enough even for

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8 Sally Rawlings, "Luring the Big Boys," B & T 12 Feb 1993.
10 Rawlings, "Luring the Big Boys."
12 Rawlings, "Luring the Big Boys."
14 Rawlings, "Luring the Big Boys."
15 Bizierek, "'Priscilla' and the Pink Dollar."
18 Galbraith, "How Loud Does Our Money Talk."
a rival lesbian magazine *Lip* to start. However the mainstay for the lesbian press remained small business advertising, with the number of advertisers increasing noticeably, up from 16 placements in a typical Melbourne issue at the start of the 1990s, to 59 at the end, and in Sydney up from 43 to 150.

The specialist Australian gay market research company Significant Others was formed in 1992 “to proactively bridge the chasm between the corporate mainstream and the homosexual community”. Its director Ian Johnson argued that for many companies “the potential loss of market share [was now considered] a greater commercial risk than any possible conservative backlash”. His research estimated the Australian gay and lesbian market to be worth more than $36 billion. Advertisers who used gay media naturally wanted evidence their money was well spent and Significant Others conducted readership surveys across much of the gay press including *Lesbians On The Loose, Campaign, Sydney Star Observer* and *Brother Sister*. These surveys, Johnson said, revealed “a picture of gay and lesbian consumers that is understandably attractive to Australian companies”. Quite detailed information was uncovered such as 32 per cent of readers on holiday chose to stay at identifiable gay friendly accommodation and 70 per cent spent more than $2500 on holidays in the previous six months.

Some commentators point to the downside of encouraging corporate advertising. Shirleene Robinson in a study of Queensland newspapers suggests it tended to be directed at the richer, more visible gay male demographic that she suspects “encourages a content bias towards gay men and the urban gay scene”. Activist Rodney Croome in stronger language slammed the “tragic myth” of the gay dollar, which he said fuelled anti-gay resentment and undermined gay and lesbian applications for government funding. Historian Yorick Smaal in a detailed content

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19 Discussed later in this chapter.
21 Labrys March 2000.
22 *Lesbians On The Loose* October 1990.
24 Bizorek, “‘Priscilla’ and the Pink Dollar.” In 2001 Significant Others moved its base to Europe and operated under the name Out Now Global.
25 Johnson, "Mauve Marketing: Your Money or Your Lifestyle.”
26 Lloyd, "Gay Marketing Grows Up.”
27 Johnson, "Mauve Marketing: Your Money or Your Lifestyle.”
29 Robinson, "Queensland’s Queer Press.”
study of one high-end gay magazine OutRage during the 1990s argues it represented a trend where “consumerism increasingly replaced traditional forms of activism in gay life, encouraging practices that privileged muscularity, grooming and beauty”. The imagery and content in the magazine by the end of the twentieth century, he found, presented “gay male identity centred on the groomed and muscled body [where young, white, attractive men prevailed]”, with a decline in the number of activist articles. Community AIDS lobbyist Tony Keenan in 1993 questioned the effect of the magazine’s growing obsession with beautiful bodies on readers’ self-esteem, particularly the elderly and HIV-positive.

Despite the possibility of a negative impact from accepting advertising, the revenue it provided was crucial to the expansion of a commercial gay press and keenly sought by private publishers.

Media’s role in attracting business interest

Gay media publishers regularly took opportunities to run articles that highlighted discussion of the pink dollar, such as Campaign’s 1977 report of the previously mentioned Australian Financial Review article on America’s emerging gay economy. Campaign’s support of this development was obvious with its comment that “in capitalist countries like ours [consumer dollars] means real poofter power”. Similar enthusiastic articles continued to regularly appear in gay media, such as a 1982 article in Campaign that listed a range of reports in US, Britain and Australian mainstream media on the growing economic power of the gay community. There was a 1995 report in Melbourne Star Observer that found the advertising spend during the previous year in American gay and lesbian publications had increased by 16.2 percent, and frequent reports of positive gay consumer niche findings from Significant Others’ readership surveys.

31 Smaal, "Body Politic or Body Beautiful?" p. 112.
32 Ibid, p. 123.
33 Ibid, p. 112.
Most publishers relied, at least in part, on advertising and engaged a variety of strategies to gain it. Some commissioned audited circulation figures to enhance credibility and took actions to increase circulation such as seeking out new, often mainstream, distribution outlets. They commissioned the readership surveys discussed earlier to gain detailed information on spending habits to present to prospective advertisers. They sought mainstream clients through cold calling from sales representatives. They adopted strategies such as Campaign in 1978 running an advertisement in The Weekend Australian that urged businesses to “Reach the Man With Money to Spare” and the claim gay people responded best when appealed to through gay media.\(^{39}\) Two years later the same publication challenged advertising agencies to be “game enough” to use gay publications.\(^{40}\) In the 1980s Michael Glynn’s Sydney Star launched an appeal directly to gay people in business to advertise as a gesture of support for the community,\(^{41}\) backed up by his encouragement to readers to “think gay, buy gay”. In the mid-1990s Sydney Star Observer’s advertising manager David Wilkins, told an advertising industry magazine that “gay men trust gay media”.\(^{42}\)

This continual search for advertising by publication sales departments had a two way impact and the eventual growth of corporate advertising in the 1990s helped shape the gay media sector. Publishers of free newspapers introduced new lifestyle sections in the 1990s with supportive articles. Beyond just promotion of venues, arts and erotica, these diversified to include travel, health, fashion and even real estate among others, in order to attract advertising. A more substantial repositioning occurred in high-end magazines such as OutRage and Campaign that by the late 1990s moved to higher production quality and a predominant focus on consumer culture. The process of soliciting advertising also exposed many thousands of businesses, their employees and management to the question of homosexuality,\(^{43}\) subtly challenging prejudice against homosexuals within mainstream business. When successful in courting a corporate advertiser, the impact on the readership could be significant, giving many

\(^{39}\) “Reach the Man with Money to Spare … You’ll Find Him in Campaign,” The Weekend Australian 4-5 March 1978.


\(^{42}\) Biziorek, “Priscilla” and the Pink Dollar.”

\(^{43}\) Brother Sister Victoria’s Toula Elefsiniotis, one of three sales managers on the paper in the 1990s, estimates in personal communication that she contacted via phone or email about 3000 mainstream businesses each year.
readers a “profound sense of social validation and legitimation”, \textsuperscript{44} and a new consumer power to return support to these validating companies. \textsuperscript{45}

**Gay media’s market leader**

No publishing house more completely reflected the changing phases of gay media in Australia than Bluestone Media. It evolved from the liberationist magazine *Gay Community News*, to publish at different times the gay lifestyle magazine *OutRage*, the nude pictorial *OutRage’s Men*, the short-lived lesbian magazine *Lip*, free city-based newspapers such as *Sydney Star Observer, Melbourne Star Observer* and *Capital Q*, as well a range of smaller publishing products. Vadasz, its primary architect, personified this change. He started active community involvement as a protester against police brutality during Sydney’s first Gay Mardi Gras in 1978, \textsuperscript{46} and by the 1990s had become Bluestone’s key liaison with corporations chasing the pink dollar. The actions and changing ideological position he adopted across this period starkly highlight the tensions he faced as a publisher, between changing goals to bring about social change and the needs of running a publishing business.

The legacy of Vadasz’s publishing work with Bluestone Media is impressive, not simply due to the number of publications it started. Bluestone pioneered innovations such as audited circulation figures for newspapers and weekly print cycles, and its competitive zeal pushed the sector to improve print, design and editorial standards. Vadasz played a crucial role in building community, both directly through establishing media institutions, and through promoting and helping to establish other community organisations. Bluestone challenged mainstream society’s response towards the gay community, taking up issues of concern, notably playing a lead role in the community response to the AIDS epidemic during the 1980s, and drawing corporate funding to the community during the 1990s.

Vadasz was the key member of the collective that published the liberationist *Gay Community News* from 1979 until 1982, and was generally supportive initially of its left-feminist analysis of gay oppression. He increasingly though wanted the magazine to reach a larger readership, to become less ideological and more populist, and to

\begin{footnotes}
\item [44] Lisa Peñaloza, "We're Here, We're Queer, and We're Going Shopping!" *Journal of Homosexuality* 31, no. 1-2 (1996). p.15
\item [45] Johnson, "Mauve Marketing: Your Money or Your Lifestyle."
\item [46] Author interview with Danny Vadasz 2010.
\end{footnotes}
embrace the gay venue and business sector as an integral part of gay community.\textsuperscript{47} The monthly \textit{Gay Community News} never sold more than 1700 copies and Vadasz says for three years it was “done by people on their own time and making no money [due to] the naked purity” of the publishing collective’s political theories.\textsuperscript{48} By the 1990s he had rejected many of those theories and referred to his early publishing endeavour, \textit{Gay Community News}, as being “caught up with the ’70s and ’80s notions of a participatory democracy and all that claptrap”.\textsuperscript{49} His political objectives shifted to see the fight for “gay social reform” as something tangible and achievable rather than “trying to overcome the capitalist/patriarchal system at the same time”.\textsuperscript{50}

As his contribution to achieving this reform, Vadasz committed to building community infrastructure. While he directly helped establish a range of community organisations, such as the Victorian AIDS Council and Midsumma Festival,\textsuperscript{51} his principle focus was media. He saw producing publications as “the first step [in] developing a gay community infrastructure … to connect with people [and provide] a voice”.\textsuperscript{52} He further wanted commercially viable organisations that were able to employ staff and provide “a safe haven for people who can be overtly gay, not just a part-time thing or a secretive thing”.\textsuperscript{53} To contribute to this Vadasz in 1982 decided \textit{Gay Community News} needed to change in order to achieve a popular readership,\textsuperscript{54} and attract advertising from the gay venues and businesses that had effectively boycotted it. Most importantly he wanted his media organisation to employ staff, which over the years that followed, he says, reached “a couple of hundred people [who were able] to move into a public spotlight position”.\textsuperscript{55}

The list of commercial ventures started by the media house across two decades demonstrates a remarkable entrepreneurial spirit that catapulted Bluestone into the position of gay media market leader from the mid-1980s until its demise at the end of the century. Yet the organisation was never profitable, kept afloat in the end by loans from key shareholder Jamie Gardiner that totaled half-a-million dollars and were

\textsuperscript{47} As previously discussed in Chapter One, Gay Liberationists.
\textsuperscript{48} Trioli, “Maintaining OutRage.”
\textsuperscript{49} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{50} Author interview with Danny Vadasz 2010.
\textsuperscript{51} He was a founding committee member in 1983 of the Victorian AIDS Action Committee that later became Victorian AIDS Council, founding committee member in 1988 to establish Midsumma Festival, board member 1992-8 at ALSO Foundation and president of the Gay Business Association.
\textsuperscript{52} Author interview with Danny Vadasz 2010.
\textsuperscript{53} Author interview with Danny Vadasz 2010.
\textsuperscript{54} “Minutes” 14 February 1983, \textit{Gay Community News} Box 2 of 2, ALGA
\textsuperscript{55} Author interview with Vadasz 2010.
never repaid. A lack of genuine business acumen explains this in part, as does the spirited competition nearly all Bluestone’s major publishing ventures faced as a consequence of the organisation’s expansionary ambition against existing publishers, or from breakaway publishers who had previously worked with them. This competition was a key factor that drove Bluestone to lead the way in publishing innovation, but at a cost.

Crucial role played in AIDS message

The reality for *Gay Community News* in 1982 was it had no money to employ staff. Vadasz took action to change this with an innovative solution that both provided funds and maintained an activist stance in that it directly posed a challenge to the attitudes of government funding agencies. Not prepared to rely on market-forces, Vadasz pragmatically arranged for the *Gay Community News* collective to be restructured into Gay Publications Co-operative, in order to seek short-term funding under the Victorian Government’s Co-operative Development Program, with respected gay law reform activist Jamie Gardiner as its chair. Having previously gained a $75,000 grant for *Gay Community News*’ affiliated typesetting co-operative Correct Line Graphics, Vadasz successfully applied for a further direct grant to the magazine of $59,402 plus a loan of $11,360, that would assist with office costs and three staffing positions, with himself as magazine editor. The funding body accepted the application and Bluestone received its money, but the scheme was later attacked in Parliament for funding homosexuals and in the fall-out was abolished in 1985. Such funding was designed to be a short-term measure and Vadasz argued a fresh image with the catchy new name *OutRage* was needed to attract venue advertising in particular, and to reach, as the new board – still holding to original liberationist goals – put it, “in order of one million homosexual women and men in Australia, who are in crying need of … an understandable and relevant … gay liberation publication”.

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58 “Minutes” 4 February 1983, *Gay Community News* Box 2 of 2, ALGA.
60 Danny Vadasz, Minutes of Meeting of GCN Collective Members, 4 February 1983, GCN Box 2 of 2, ALGA.
61 Attachment in “Minutes” adopted by the *OutRage* Editorial Board 13 April, 83, *OutRage* 1983-84 folder, *OutRage* Box. ALGA
OutRage in April 1983. The new magazine – that claimed copyright ownership of Gay Community News and offered to honour all outstanding subscriptions⁶² – was launched amidst much fanfare at a party in Ryders gay disco in Smith Street Fitzroy. Its publishers introduced a new design, adopted streamlined job descriptions and now accepted sexually explicit advertising, notably sex-on-premises gay saunas.

In its first year OutRage continued much of the political focus of Gay Community News and aimed for a mixed readership, with the masthead tagline “A Magazine for Lesbians and Gay Men”. It ran local and international news, initially strongly Melbourne focused but with the intent “to cover fully the national gay scene”.⁶³ Letters were included, coverage of community events such as Sydney’s Mardi Gras and Melbourne’s Gayday,⁶⁴ and news profiles of activists,⁶⁵ as well as fiction, arts and venue happenings. To help fulfill the publishers’ still existing commitment to gender parity, male and female imaged front covers were alternated. Lesbians with media skills were recruited onto the co-operative’s board of directors, such as Fran Kelly, who was also employed as promotions manager cum assistant editor, and later became breakfast host for Radio National.⁶⁶ Articles aimed at a lesbian readership included coverage of performer Margret Roadknight,⁶⁷ International Women’s Day activities,⁶⁸ and women’s historic achievements.⁶⁹

By the end of its first year though OutRage had failed to generate the sales it envisaged and was still dependent on the uncertain continuation of government co-operative grants. The scene was set for the next split, one even more fundamental in shaping the magazine’s future direction. Vadasz says editions that featured a man on the cover sold better, and editorial decisions were an impossible juggle trying to accommodate the different views between the dominant sex-critical attitudes of lesbians at this time and the more enthusiastic embrace of gay men towards sex.⁷⁰ A series of “acrimonious” meetings failed to find a solution that both balanced the budget and appeased everyone’s political beliefs. The board agreed to close the

⁶³Ibid.
⁶⁵Examples include: Adam Carr, “Peter Tatchell Would Do It All Again,” OutRage April 1983. Also Danny Vadasz, "Franklin My Dear I Don’t Want a Dam," OutRage April 1983.
⁶⁶Interview with Alison Thorne 2010.
⁶⁹“Memories of the 20s,” OutRage April 1983.
⁷⁰Author interview with Danny Vadasz 2010.
magazine unless a group stepped forward with a plan to take it over. The “coup” as Vadasz later described it, was completed at the 21 December 1983 board meeting when the only proposal presented was to turn OutRage into a gay men’s magazine. Despite women being in the majority, it was accepted six votes to one, followed by the immediate resignation of all four women board members who declared “the future of OutRage as a viable concern [had] looked bleak [but now it was] teetering towards the political oblivion of yet another cocks and bums extravaganza”.

Participant and key writer Adam Carr, explained the need for change on the basis that “all forms of media, are market driven: those who try to defy the market rapidly go out of business”. He later said “the iron laws of capitalism were that unless we could get more men to buy the publication with things most gay men wanted to read about then it was never going to be commercially viable”. The new masthead tagline from 1984 became “Australia’s Gay News Magazine” with subsequent cover images almost always attractive men, frequently wearing few clothes. Lifestyle sections such as restaurants and travel were introduced, with more overtly sexual features such as the “excitement and pleasure” of seeking sex at public beats, and “frolicking around au naturel”.

During this year of turmoil, a larger drama was unfolding with the arrival of the AIDS epidemic in Australia, a move that by chance corresponded with a change in government federally from a Fraser-led Liberal government to a Hawke-led Labor one. Both the transformation of the magazine and the change of government had a significant influence on Australia’s response to the AIDS epidemic. The broad popular reach of the new look magazine, combined with its publishers’ developed political commitment and willingness to engage directly with government, positioned OutRage to be in the early days, as research Shirleene Robinson notes of gay print

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72 Author interview with Danny Vadasz 2010.
76 Author interview with Adam Carr 2010.
79 Its circulation increased five-fold in its first five years, according to Adam Carr, "Still Outraging," OutRage April 1988.
media, “a central component of Australia’s successful response to HIV/AIDS”. They new Labor government, after some debate, adopted a co-operative approach with the gay community to manage the disease through a range of measures such as promotion of ‘safe sex’ practices. 

In May 1983, some months before the lesbian split, OutRage decided someone had to become the magazine’s in-house expert on the disease. Gary Jaynes who previously wrote on the disease for Gay Community News had left so the task fell to Carr. For the next decade he wrote a succession of articles on AIDS and at this early stage arguably knew more than anyone in Australia about the disease. Carr later wrote of his initial investigations: “My principal overseas sources were the Melbourne University medical library, a book called Immunology Made Easy and The New York Native – a sensationalist but (at the time) generally reliable gay weekly from the epicentre of AIDS. All this made literally nightmarish reading and inspired a sense of missionary zeal”. In June 1983 Carr wrote a substantial five-page feature outlining what was known about the emerging AIDS epidemic. Its appearance in OutRage coincided with a public meeting in Melbourne that resulted in the formation of the Victorian AIDS Action Committee (the forerunner to the Victorian AIDS Council), and five of the 12 founding management committee members were also involved with OutRage, including Vadasz, Carr and Gardiner. In 1984-86 Carr was vice-president of the AIDS Council, in 1986-87 its president, and in 1989-92 a member of the Victorian Ministerial Advisory Committee on AIDS.

OutRage increasingly reached “many people in government, the media and the AIDS industry [who] now have an interest in reading the gay press”. Information about AIDS and the political issues surrounding it was a major focus of the magazine’s content throughout the 1980s comprising “around 16% of feature articles in 1990”, with readers in a survey that year saying it should remain its top priority. Carr says AIDS coverage in OutRage “built a new readership, particularly in Sydney (where Gay Community News had always been weak) among gay men who had no previous

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80 Robinson, "HIV/AIDS and Gay Community Print News Media in 1980s Australia." Also Sendziuk, Learning to Trust.
81 Sendziuk, Learning to Trust, pp. 4-7.
82 Adam Carr, "OutRage@15 or the Rise and Fall of Practically Everyone," OutRage April 1998.
85 Smaal, "Body Politic or Body Beautiful?"
political interests but who were concerned to inform themselves about this new menace and its consequences.”

The dramatic shift – in two stages – from feminist and liberationist *Gay Community News* to gay men’s lifestyle magazine *OutRage* was driven by Vadasz’s frustration with low readership and the inability to employ staff. Obtaining government funding, at least initially, resolved these financial tensions and allowed him to pursue his goal of building community infrastructure that could employ people to be community spokespeople. As a positive consequence of its push for commercial viability and a broader readership, the groundbreaking AIDS news and information in *OutRage* became a crucial source to inform the community – albeit one that now excluded lesbians – and wider mainstream society in the early years of the epidemic. Vadasz says this “response and leadership was the most significant thing [*OutRage*] did”.

**Becoming a gay publishing tsar**

In its early years *OutRage* was perceived as a Melbourne publication and many gay men in the largest marketplace of Sydney continued to buy *Campaign* magazine. In an attempt to overcome this commercial weakness, when the opportunity arose in 1985 to acquire the local gay newspaper, *Sydney Star*, Vadasz seized on it to provide a base for *OutRage*. Michael Glynn had started *Sydney Star* in 1979, and sold it in 1984 under repayment terms to members of his staff who formed the publishing company Seruse. The new company was almost immediately in financial difficulty, unable to meet the payments owed to Glynn and before a year had passed entered into negotiations with Bluestone. The two groups agreed to stop publishing the paper to avoid further repayments to Glynn, who had rejected a discounted buy out offer of $3000 from Bluestone. They reopened the following fortnight under the new name *Sydney Star Observer*, using the same office, printers, most of the same staff, and with Seruse shareholders as minor shareholders in Bluestone.

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88 Author interview with Danny Vadasz 2010.
89 See Chapter Three, Gay Lifestyle Publications for more on *Campaign*.
90 Author interview with Danny Vadasz 2010.
91 See Chapter Three, Gay Lifestyle Publications for more detail on *Sydney Star*.
92 “Interview: Michael Glynn, He Ain't Heavy - He's My Brother." Also ; Author interview with Danny Vadasz 2010.
In the same year following this takeover of *Sydney Star*, Vadasz initiated a similar move in Melbourne. Publisher Alan Deith in 1984 had expanded his struggling Sydney newspaper business that consisted of *Sydney Gay News* to launch *Melbourne Voice*. The venture lasted just two issues, but he tried again the following year with community activist Chris Carter as his editor. In September 1985, Vadasz “coaxed” Carter to abandon Deith and join him to start *Melbourne Star Observer*. Concerned about “the uncertainty of [*Melbourne Voice*]’s continued viability, and the necessity to find some way of cutting down the eighteen hour days” Carter agreed to join the new publication as its founding editor. He stayed for 12 months.

In 1986 the co-operative structure Vadasz had been using as the legal publishing entity since 1983 was privatised. Gay Publications, a division of Australian Media Co-operative Enterprises Ltd subsequently published the newspapers and magazines, with the major shareholders becoming Vadasz, Gardiner and marketing manager Sinon Hassett. Vadasz announced his company now employed 17 staff. It was probably a time, he later reflected, when he had “become a megalomaniac and had illusions of grandeur about becoming some sort of gay publishing tsar”.

Embracing its new role as a newspaper publisher, Bluestone promised to focus on “developing and improving the standards of gay journalism”. According to *Sydney Star Observer*’s editor from the late 1990s, now media researcher, Marcus O’Donnell, they did achieve “some improvements in journalistic standards [with the Sydney paper but it] retained the feel of a larrikin student paper”. Content in both *Observers* was a mix of news, venue happenings, arts coverage and personal classifieds published fortnightly as tabloids. *Sydney Star*’s editor Paul Smith did not stay and was replaced as editor in quick succession by Richard Turner, John Wishart and Larry Galbraith, each for about 12 months. *Melbourne Star Observer* in its early years had 5000 copies printed, rarely reaching more than 20 pages. Following

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95 See Chapter Three, Gay Lifestyle Publications for more details on Deith.
97 Bell, “MSO Is 500!” Also author interview with Danny Vadasz 2010.
100 Author interview with Danny Vadasz 2010.
102 O’Donnell, "Star Wars."
Carter’s departure as editor he was replaced by Chris Dobney then a series of short-lived editors until Chris Gill edited it from 1988 for the next two-and-a-half years.

As a newspaper publisher, Bluestone struggled financially with its Sydney operation, losing $30,000 in three years. It also faced “substantial logistical problems” between the two offices. These developed into “a very nasty power struggle”. Editorial was done in Sydney and production in Melbourne with “notorious production blunders” such as when a major story ended halfway through its intended course, “in inexplicable white space”. This led to its Sydney editor resigning in protest. In 1987, Bluestone put Sydney Star Observer on the market, but in the end, hoping to maintain friendly links in Sydney for the sake of OutRage, gave it away for nothing at the start of 1988 to a newly formed community based publishing group that in 2015 was still publishing it.

In 1987 Bluestone also sold most of its stake in Melbourne Star Observer, with local community figures John Cummings buying 50 per cent for $10,000, and Richard Martin buying 25 per cent for $5000. This arrangement broke down a year later when Cummings unsuccessfully advertised to sell his half share, then simply took what he deemed his $10,000 from Melbourne Star Observer’s bank account and left. Martin sought a similar exit and was given $1000 at first but none further after $6000 in group tax was discovered owing. As no formal share registration had been lodged in 1987, ownership of Melbourne Star Observer reverted to Bluestone who looked for a new buyer. Gill continued as editor through these uncertainties until mid 1990 when the first female editor for the newspaper, Jacqui Lynch, took over until the end of the year, replaced by Bill Calder who left in 1992 to start the newspaper Brother Sister Victoria in competition.

Bluestone re-engaged more strongly with newspaper publishing in 1992. Free city-based newspapers around the country started their rapid expansion during the 1990s, with major cities able to sustain competing titles. Bluestone launched the fortnightly

108 Author interview with Danny Vadasz 2010. For more on Sydney Star Observer see Chapter Five, Free City-based Newspapers.
110 From author’s informal conversation with Jamie Gardiner.
112 See Chapter Five, Free City-based Newspapers.
tabloid *Capital Q* in Sydney with a print-run of 10,000. They now directly competed with their previously owned, *Sydney Star Observer*, having watched it “climb almost immediately into the black [with the] lucrative monopoly of the growing Sydney gay market”.

Bluestone was now also in direct competition in Melbourne against *Brother Sister Victoria* and in response redesigned *Melbourne Star Observer* under editor Steven Lawsen, briefly, then for a longer period, Crusader Hillis with more staff numbers and increased distribution. Hillis also insisted he be allowed to increase lesbian content and pay women writers.

*OutRage* editor Chris Dobney moved to Sydney as *Capital Q’s* general manager, and recent Mardi Gras general manager Cath Phillips was employed as editor. The paper initially ran at a loss, facing high costs for commissioned writers and photographers but earning less than $4000 advertising revenue each issue. Under pressure Phillips resigned after just nine months and started her own gay arts magazine *Burn*.

Bluestone in 1993 reorganised *Capital Q* as a weekly and appointed Dobney its editor “with a predominantly gay male orientation”. The following year the paper’s circulation was audited at 14,197 copies each week and this grew to 21,741 in 2000. Bluestone sought investors in the business, and delicatessen owner Greg Gahl in 1993 bought nearly half the newspaper for $30,000. He took on the role as executive director in charge of sales. Gahl lifted annual revenue to $1.5 million by the end of the decade, with one issue in February 1999 reaching 156 pages. Vadasz says Gahl “had financial and managerial skills [but] soon was plotting to get rid of us,” and controlled the finances through the company Capital Q Pty Ltd. Dobney remained editor until September 1997 when assistant Paul Hayes took over.

Bluestone also audited the circulation of *Melbourne Star Observer* in 1994 and the Melbourne paper reached 17,884 in 1999. In 1994 Kelly Gardiner replaced Hillis as editor and oversaw the transition from a fortnightly to a regularly 32 page weekly

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114 Goddard, “Paper Tigers.”
115 Author interview with Crusader Hillis 2014.
116 Author interview with Danny Vadasz 2010.
117 See Chapter One, Gay Liberationists.
120 From author’s informal conversation with Jamie Gardiner.
121 The Satellite Group Prospectus, 13 August 1999.
122 Author interview with Danny Vadasz 2010.
newspaper in 1995.\(^{123}\) She resigned in 1997, replaced firstly by Mathew Jones, then Max McLean and Andy Murdoch, who was editor when the paper closed in 2000. Ongoing financial difficulties, Vadasz’s self-acknowledged “megalomania”, and recognition of the growing dominance of free city based newspapers, particularly in the 1990s, led Bluestone into publishing this new genre. Through its involvement with newspapers Bluestone played a crucial role introducing key innovations to the genre, such as audited circulation and weekly publishing cycles. The organisation expanded with increased revenues and influence, but not without new tensions, both from internal partners and external competitors. And its increased revenue was matched by increased expenditure causing Vadasz to continue to search for new sources of funding.

**Crusading for the corporate dollar**

Vadasz’s long term assistant, journalist and activist Adam Carr reflected that “many imaginative (if often slightly cracked) schemes … sprung from the fertile mind of Danny Vadasz”.\(^{124}\) Recurring financial necessity underpinned many of these decisions. Unable to make gay publishing financially viable, Vadasz says the plan was to become “bigger than publishing in order to survive”.\(^{125}\) Bluestone used its publications to start a range of affiliated businesses – a book readers’ club, a travel club, direct selling of pornography videos and its own fashion line. It published books including the annual travel book, *The G’day Guide*, a pornography magazine *OutRage’s Men*, annual gay directories *MSO Trader* in Melbourne and *Q?&A!* in Sydney, Mardi Gras and Midsumma Festival guides, a body fitness magazine, SBS Television’s magazine *Aerial*,\(^{126}\) and even the lesbian magazine *Lip*. For a time it managed the Melbourne gay sauna Steamworks.

His endeavour to develop corporate interest in the pink dollar was a further extension of this. The seeds for this enthusiasm lay in his 1982 prediction that there would soon be “an explosion in the resources being channeled into gay media by middle level and large commercial interests”,\(^{127}\) though this did not immediately come to fruition. “We


\(^{124}\) Carr, “Still OutRaging.”

\(^{125}\) Author interview with Danny Vadasz 2010.


\(^{127}\) Danny Vadasz, “Preliminary Submission for Gay Community News,” 16 September 1982, *GCN* minutes folder *GCN* Box 1 of 2, ALGA.
had to create a market; we didn’t just go out and fill it”, he said, and it became “a crusade” for him, according to Carr. Vadasz increasingly developed the view that the “world of the ‘80s and ‘90s is one where power equates with economic leverage”. Vadasz’s breakthrough success came in 1991 when car manufacturer, Toyota, placed a glossy colour three-page spread in the September issue of OutRage under the title: “One car dealer understands”. It was the start of ‘The Family Car’ advertising campaign developed by Bluestone for Toyota that famously featured two men, a pair of Dalmatians and a picnic basket. Following a conference held in 1994 for mainstream companies titled ‘Chasing the Pink Dollar’ an understandably more confident Vadasz declared “the penny has finally dropped” and attitudes towards gay marketing had changed. Vadasz’s success with Toyota was followed in 1995 with Telstra. The photograph produced of Miss Candee and the fish was used to promote the telco’s website bigpond.com accompanied by the tag: “You never know what you’ll net”. The Telstra campaign included a series of gay specific images produced for full-page advertising across a range of gay publications, sponsorship of community organisations, and in 1998 won the Public Relations Institute of Australia NSW Award for Excellence.

Corporate advertising was of particular benefit to OutRage which increasingly became a feature-based magazine with glossier paper and more colour. In 1991 Bluestone ran an advertisement promoting the magazine on national television. Its circulation grew steadily to an audited peak of 11,216 in 1995, still relatively low for a national publication in comparison to single city newspapers in Sydney that had audited circulations around 30,000 copies. The number of pages in OutRage reached 116 for an issue that year, and a cover price up from $1.50 in 1983 to $6.50. With production schedules of up to six weeks, OutRage in the 1990s “got out of the business of providing news”, unable to compete against the rise of the free city based newspapers. Vadasz said there was a need “to differentiate [and] news, which

128 Trioli, "Maintaining Outrage."
129 Carr, "Outrage@15 or the Rise and Fall of Practically Everyone."
133 Gibbs, "Treat Me Differently, but Treat Me the Same." Also "Cruising with Telstra," OutRage August 1995.
135 Goddard, 'We're Ten: OutRage's Own Story.'
137 Goddard, "Paper Tigers."
was time-driven, became less of a priority”. OutRage was also “under siege” from overseas gay glossies “flooding into Australia” and mainstream fashion and lifestyle magazines “getting ‘gayer’ as the lure of the gay dollar increased”. The new editor in 1992, Steven Carter “shifted OutRage towards a focus on quality writing about the arts, more fiction, and a greater focus on personalities, gay lifestyles and relationships”. This shift was a stop-start affair, with Carter replaced after one year in quick succession by more traditional news feature editors Martyn Goddard, then Adam Carr.

Bluestone increasingly relied on high quality visuals for OutRage that promoted fashion and an upmarket lifestyle. An example was its “special beauty issue” much of which consisted of page after page of undressed attractive men modeling anything from skincare techniques to leather underwear. AIDS feature articles during the decade dropped from 16.2 percent to 2.3 percent by 1999. Marcus O’Donnell became editor in 1995 and remained until 1999 when he resigned to take over the editorship of Sydney Star Observer. In 1995 OutRage’s erotica section, Meet Market became a separate magazine, still usually sold with the main magazine, but able to be removed, presumably to appease conservative advertisers and distribution outlets. The new direction, has been variously described as a “kind of Cleo for gay men” by historian Graham Willett; a “mix of high culture and cheap trash”, by past editor Carr; and a “shift from the ‘body politic’ to the ‘body beautiful’” by historian Yorick Smaal.

Despite rapidly expanding his media business, Vadasz energetically pursued business opportunities on a number of fronts, in large part due to the ever present financial tensions. This led to his success in drawing corporate interest to the pink dollar, as well as the emergence of many affiliated publishing projects that provided useful services to the community in their own right.

139 Carr, “OutRage@15 or the Rise and Fall of Practically Everyone.”
140 Ibid.
141 OutRage March 1999.
142 Smaal, “Body Politic to Body Beautiful,” p. 34.
145 Carr, “OutRage@15 or the Rise and Fall of Practically Everyone.”
Commercial battles drive innovation, but at a cost

During the 1990s Bluestone Media grew into a multi-million dollar business.\textsuperscript{147} OutRage and its peel-off Meet Market, generated $1.1 million annually, Melbourne Star Observer $809,000,\textsuperscript{148} and Capital Q $1.5 million.\textsuperscript{149} Yet despite this sizable turnover the organisation remained in permanent financial difficulty, with Carr pointing out in 1987 that, despite the transformation of OutRage to specifically solve such difficulties, costs rose “at such a rate that the paper was always financially on a knife’s edge”.\textsuperscript{150} Some of these costs were due to staff employment with editors during the 1980s paid around $25,000 per year.\textsuperscript{151} In its first 10 years to 1993 $500,000 was spent on OutRage commissioning work from gay writers, photographers and artists.\textsuperscript{152} Goddard in 1993 wrote that despite business growth Bluestone never paid its shareholders a dividend.\textsuperscript{153} In June 1998 the group’s main trading company reported accumulated losses of nearly $1.3 million.\textsuperscript{154} The organisation had only continued to trade due to loans from key shareholder Gardiner that totaled $474,000.\textsuperscript{155} Motivated by his long-standing commitment to gay rights, and financial independence due to inherited wealth, Gardiner provided personal guarantees for bank loans, such as his house as security for an $80,000 loan to launch Capital Q in 1992.\textsuperscript{156} He says, while trying hard to succeed as a business, Bluestone’s “primary focus” as a publisher was “for political, community-building reasons, not as a profit-making venture”.\textsuperscript{157}

Bluestone’s position was not helped by the fact, that many of its publishing moves faced opposition. In its early days, the transformation of Gay Community News to OutRage Vadasz says was “incredibly fractious, contentious” [with wounds that] have never healed”.\textsuperscript{158} Some on the original publishing collective considered the new title

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\textsuperscript{147} Trioli, "Maintaining OutRage."
\textsuperscript{148} It first reached $4 million in 1993 according to Trioli, "Maintaining OutRage" before growing to $4.7m based on undated document, probably late 1998, “Designer Publications P/L Overview”, 1997/98 Designer Publications P/L profit & loss report (both held in Jamie Gardiner’s private collection).
\textsuperscript{149} The Satellite Group Prospectus, 13 August 1999.
\textsuperscript{150} Carr, "How OutRage Survived Four Years."
\textsuperscript{152} Goddard, "We're Ten: OutRage's Own Story."
\textsuperscript{153} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{154} Designer Publication P/L Directors’ Report for the year ended 30 June 1998, in Gardiner’s private collection.
\textsuperscript{155} Based on letter dated 2 July 1999 pursuing repayment from Gardiner’s solicitor Frederick Owen and Associates to Jonathon Broster, Secretary Designer Publications P/L, in Gardiner’s private collection.
\textsuperscript{156} From author’s informal conversation with Jamie Gardiner.
\textsuperscript{157} Comment by Jamie Gardiner in email to author, dated 30 October 2014.
\textsuperscript{158} Author interview with Danny Vadasz 2010.
\end{flushright}
“a closet name”,\textsuperscript{159} and the changing business structure “appropriating as private property something that was in the public domain”.\textsuperscript{160} Two key self-described small ‘l’ liberal members, Gary Jaynes and Helen Pausacker, left the publishing team in protest over the changes and launched a small circulation, plain typed newsletter \textit{Gayzette} that until 1996 promoted “mixed gay movement” activities in Victoria.\textsuperscript{161} In addition to losing the support of sections of the activist and lesbian community, the transformation of \textit{OutRage} to a gay lifestyle magazine meant it faced direct competition with similar magazines in Sydney and Melbourne, particularly \textit{Campaign}.\textsuperscript{162}

Bluestone’s moves into newspaper publishing were met with resistance. The 1985 launch of both \textit{Sydney Star Observer} and \textit{Melbourne Star Observer} involved the recruitment of staff from existing papers. It resulted in long lasting anger from \textit{Sydney Star} founder Michael Glynn who mounted legal action, as we have seen. In February 1986 at the opening of Mardi Gras Festival, Glynn distributed a pamphlet attacking those “without honour or compassion” who he believed were part of the “immoral legal manoeuvring” to take his newspaper, calling them “Thieves, Liars, Scoundrels”.\textsuperscript{163} Bluestone’s re-engagement with newspaper publishing in 1992, particularly the launch of \textit{Capital Q} against its previously owned \textit{Sydney Star Observer} triggered long-lasting enmity with “bitchy stories and editorials” in both,\textsuperscript{164} and on one occasion “fisticuffs at a community function”.\textsuperscript{165} The launch of \textit{Brother Sister} against \textit{Melbourne Star Observer} resulted in legal action for libel by Calder and counter action for breach of contract. Commentator Martyn Goddard expected both the Sydney and Melbourne newspaper battles would be “a fight to the death”.\textsuperscript{166}

\textit{Sydney Star Observer} and \textit{Brother Sister} joined forces against Bluestone to form the Independent Lesbian and Gay Press Association, an organisation Vadasz attacked as a “cartel”.\textsuperscript{167} The Association’s members exchanged stories and advertising leads with additional members \textit{Queensland Pride}, \textit{Westside Observer} and \textit{Adelaide GT} at

\textsuperscript{159} Gary Jaynes and Helen Pausacker, in a letter “To the Collective” undated early 1983, Held in ALGA restricted collection.

\textsuperscript{160} Danny Vadasz quoted in Goddard, "We're Ten: OutRage's Own Story."


\textsuperscript{162} See Chapter Three, Gay Lifestyle Publications.


\textsuperscript{164} Goddard, “Paper Tigers.”

\textsuperscript{165} Goddard, “Bar Rags Make Good.”

\textsuperscript{166} Goddard, “Paper Tigers.”

various times. Bluestone responded by using its audited circulation figures to cast aspersions on its competitors’ circulation claims, and used its introduction of weekly publishing to make the claim that a “fortnightly serve makes for a very stale meal”.

The commercial struggles and competitive battles that Bluestone faced sharpened the tension between goals to achieve community good and the needs of the business. In some of Bluestone’s publishing endeavours the needs of business appear to have dominated. Bluestone launched a range of publications against existing players, such as the launch in 1989 of the gay travel G’day Guide in competition with Sydney & Beyond, that the publishers of Sydney Star Observer had started two years previously, and the launch in 1995 of the annual community directory MSO Trader, in competition with the community charity ALSO Foundation’s ALSO Directory. Rather than work with the gay marketing firm Significant Others, Bluestone established its own internal corporate marketing division.

In 1997 Bluestone entered the lesbian magazine market with Lip “to cash in on the lesbian dollar”, according to rival publisher Francine Rand from the established Lesbians On The Loose magazine. Lesbians On The Loose’s editor at the time, Barbara Farrelly, says Lip received a larger slice of the Telstra marketing budget because Bluestone was its campaign agent. “We had a big chunk of the readership [but] were cut out of that [despite having] been part of designing the lesbian part of the campaign.

Previously Melbourne Star Observer editor, Kelly Gardiner oversaw the 32 page free colour gloss A4 monthly Lip, with features and lifestyle articles. A self-described “5 ft, 2 inch butch”, Gardiner grew up in the outer eastern Melbourne suburb of Mitcham “into a family of unionists” with liberal political views and a strong interest in sport (her father had represented Australia at successive Olympic games). She was president of the Prahran TAFE student union and for a year the women’s officer for the national student union. After three issues she left, replaced by Bridget Haire, but Lip closed after just eight issues.

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168 For more on these newspapers see Chapter Five, Free City-based Newspapers.
169 Dunne, Our Own Book Shelf. p. 308.
172 See Chapter Four, Lesbian Magazines.
173 Author interview with Barbara Farrelly 2010.
Vadasz’s ambition to become a “gay publishing tsar” led to conflict and competition and an acceleration of costs to produce better publications than his competitors. While this ultimately contributed to Bluestone’s financial failings, it drove innovation across the sector towards higher print-quality techniques, audited circulation and weekly newspaper cycles, and helped raise the intensity of efforts to win readers and advertisers.

Pink media float soon sinks

The parlous state of the finances due to the cost of maintaining Bluestone as the dominant media player led to friction between its two key owners in the late 1990s. Gardiner decided to sell his share, and in October 1998 put OutRage, Melbourne Star Observer and Bluestone’s 56 per cent share of Capital Q on the market, asking $1.4 million. Vadasz approached Sydney property developer Greg Fisher – who he knew through previous discussions in 1998 in an attempt to establish a gay resort on North Queensland’s Double Island – to see if he was interested to purchase. Fisher obliged in March 1999 giving Gardiner $25,000 for his shares and a promise to repay the $475,000 loan. The initial plan was that Vadasz would stay as managing director of the publications for at least three years and swap his Bluestone shares for shares in a new media company that Fisher would establish. However this arrangement broke down and in a dramatic move, Vadasz was sacked, with the locks to the Bluestone office changed.

In May 1999 Fisher formed the company, Satellite Media to house Bluestone’s publications. Greg Gahl, who still owned 44 percent of Capital Q joined forces with Fisher and replaced Vadasz as managing director on a three year deal that included a salary, a $276,000 “sign-on bonus”, and 50% of any future Satellite Media profits. Gahl promptly brokered the purchase of both Brother Sister Victoria and Brother Sister Queensland for $300,000, Adelaide GT for $200,000 and early the

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178 Author interview with Danny Vadasz 2010.
179 Author interview with Danny Vadasz 2010.
180 The Satellite Group Prospectus, 13 August 1999.
181 Letter from Greg Fisher to James Gardiner and Danny Vadasz 19 March 1999, in Gardiner’s private collection.
184 The Satellite Group Prospectus, 13 August 1999.
following year *Westside Observer*. Gahl presented the new national grouping of publications as an opportunity to provide economies of scale, product improvements and offer the convenience of “a single media buy” for advertisers who could now contact one office to place advertising in whichever publications they chose across the country.

Fisher was born in 1965 and “made a name for himself in the early 1990s running the property division of Global Funds Management”. In 1996 with business partner Jonathon Broster he started a property development company, the first of many that included the word ‘Satellite’ in their name. Married to Michelle, it was during this period he came out as gay and in 1998 bought the multi-million dollar gay bar, the Beresford Hotel, near Oxford Street. Immediately after buying into gay media in early 1999 he bought a second gay bar, the Beauchamp Hotel, in Oxford Street for $5.2 million. Gahl was born in 1960 and attended Knox Grammar in Sydney. He took over the family’s speciality North Shore delicatessen business while still in his 20s after returning from studying literature at Canberra’s ANU. He had little involvement with the gay community during the 1980s, having “largely withdrawn from exploring” his sexuality after the death of a neighbour from AIDS in 1982. That changed with his purchase of *Capital Q* shares in 1993.

In August 1999 Fisher successfully raised $25 million through a flamboyantly launched ‘pink stock’ share float on the Australian Stock Exchange having moved Satellite Media, the two gay pubs and nine property development companies, into a parent company, The Satellite Group. Openly lesbian president of the Australian Medical Association and Channel 9’s *The Today Show* medical expert, Kerryn Phelps, was appointed the group’s non-executive chairperson. Satellite Media, as a division of the parent company, set about running the print business. In August 1999 *Capital Q*’s editor Paul Hayes took over editing *OutRage* from O’Donnell. Hayes immediately separated the sexual classifieds and services section and published them

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185 Gavin McGuren and Paul Bluett, "Satellite Media Acquires WSO," *Westside Observer* 4 February 2000. Gahl in interview with author 2013 says *Westside Observer* was purchased for a “small amount, five figures, not six”.
188 Valued at $5.5 million in The Satellite Group Prospectus, 13 August 1999.
in a stand-alone magazine *Meet Market* for $2. In October *Capital Q* and the previously Melbourne based *OutRage* moved into Satellite Group’s “newly renovated office” in College Street, Sydney.\(^{192}\) Discounts were introduced for advertising across more than one publication. With $3.5 million from the float allocated to gay media investment, including “electronic publishing and new titles”, \(^{193}\) Gahl undertook a range of actions towards developing the new company’s web presence that he saw as crucial for its future success.\(^{194}\)

Serious problems, though, were brewing within the company. The share price steadily dropped from 50 cents at the August 1999 float to just 15 cents in July 2000. There were a series of legal actions brought against the company. Creditors and mortgage holders alleged off-the-plan apartments were sold more than once and mortgaged multiple times.\(^{195}\) There was increased scrutiny of past business dealings by Fisher and his key business partner Jonathon Broster.\(^{196}\) This led to both police and Australian Securities and Investments Commission investigations.\(^{197}\) As a result Fisher resigned as managing director in July 2000,\(^{198}\) followed soon after by Phelps and other members of the board. In November 2000 the few remaining board members, that still included Gahl, appointed an administrator to the company who announced the entire $25 million in capital raised in the August 1999 float was gone and a further $15 to $20 million unaccounted for.\(^{199}\) The administrator immediately shut all the publications and sacked all staff.\(^{200}\)

Over the next four years a series of legal actions took place. In December 2000 ASIC commenced civil penalty proceedings, and Fisher and Broster were banned from being company directors for lengthy periods.\(^{201}\) Broster had earlier repaid $1 million to the company and further agreed to pay penalties of $200,000 and costs of $50,000. Fisher declared bankruptcy,\(^{202}\) and despite a series of court appearances was found guilty on just one charge, and sentenced in 2005 to two-and-a-half years jail with a

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\(^{192}\) Verrender, "Satellite Going out of Orbit as the Sparks Fly."

\(^{193}\) The Satellite Group Prospectus, 13 August 1999.

\(^{194}\) Author interview with Greg Gahl 2010.


\(^{196}\) Ian Verrender, "Satellite Going out of Orbit as the Sparks Fly," *Sydney Morning Herald* 2 July 2000.


non-parole period of six months. While on parole he was arrested for importing cocaine worth $100,000 and in 2006 sentenced again to jail; not eligible for parole until 2012. Gahl, after legal matters were resolved, worked as CEO of the AIDS Trust of Australia.

Gardiner, despite launching a series of legal actions against Satellite only received $23,000 of the $475,000 owed to him. He says Satellite was “a scam” and the float “essentially fraudulent”. Unceremoniously locked out after 20 years as a central player in gay media, Vadasz started the marketing company, Communication Factory, and later from 2008 worked at the Australian Conservation Foundation. He says Fisher was “a big crook” who conned everyone: “Greg Gahl got taken in, as did Kerryn Phelps, I’m one of the lucky ones”. Just where all $25 million of float money and at least a further $15 million in outstanding debts went remains unknown. A significant amount was allocated in the float to pay down property development debts, and there were high management fees and executive salaries paid. Gahl estimates that Fisher’s personal lifestyle expenses reached at least $3 million in the year following the float. Despite a sustained investigation by the Australian Securities and Investment Commission, a full accounting was never achieved.

Despite the impressive development and growth of gay media in the late 20th century the Satellite experience highlighted its still vulnerable position. This weakness was underlined by the ease of Satellite’s takeover of much of the sector through an injection of capital and promise to build and strengthen the sector, with no check on its ability to deliver.

Conclusion

The story of Gay Community News’s transformation to OutRage reflects the broader shift of the activist agenda that in the 1970s linked gay oppression to capitalism, but

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205 Letter to Jamie from his solicitors Frederick Owen & Associates Pty Ltd dated 3 August 2000, in Gardiner’s private collection.
207 Author interview with Danny Vadasz 2010.
208 The Satellite Group Prospectus, 13 August 1999.
209 Author interview with Greg Gahl 2013.
during the 1980s increasingly sought accommodation within the system through building and defending the gay community, both its commercial and non-commercial elements. The decision to redefine their political objectives towards community building offered the publishers of OutRage a strategy to resolve their financial tension by opening greater access to new advertising revenues and readership. The subsequent decision to narrow the editorial focus and appeal more strongly to just male readers was a further attempt to resolve financial tension. The alternative, as OutRage’s publishers saw it, was closure of the magazine or a limited publishing presence as a small circulation newsletter. Had they taken either of these paths the work of OutRage and its publishers during the AIDS epidemic, would have been diminished.

The free gay newspaper sector expanded rapidly during the 1990s with room for competing publishers, in no small part due to the growing recognition of the pink dollar, and more businesses that promoted services to the gay community. Bluestone’s expansionary tendencies were fuelled by ongoing financial tensions, yet expansion often exacerbated rather than solved these tensions. It frequently encountered competition with other gay publishers and this “fight for the hearts and minds of readers, and the cheque-books of advertisers” as Goddard put it, steadily increased both circulation and advertising revenues, and drove innovation in product type, quality and workplace efficiencies.

The benefits of drawing in corporate advertising are apparent in terms of providing increased economic viability to the publications. While this contributed to OutRage’s increasingly consumerist content and decline in political and overtly erotic content, it had less such impact on free newspapers. With a spread of advertising from small classifieds, to venue and lifestyle promotion, as well as some corporates, they maintained their focus on news, erotica sections and publicising community events. By the end of the 1990s these newspapers dominated the sector with a combined print run of 4.5 million copies printed annually across the country compared to a combined annual circulation of around 300,000 copies nationally, for the lifestyle magazines such as OutRage and its direct competitor Campaign.

Bluestone Media was the leading player in much of the sector’s development, yet the seeds for its ultimate failure lie in a comment made by Goddard, who said in 1993

210 Goddard, "Paper Tigers."
that “the individuals involved in OutRage with backgrounds in teaching, the public service, the arts or computers had to learn business”.\textsuperscript{211} On the evidence available they failed to learn sufficiently.

\textsuperscript{211} Goddard "We're Ten".
Conclusion

New media for a new millennium

The Internet age

He puts the mug of hot chocolate on the desk next to a toasted cheese sandwich and reaches forward to turn on his computer. A friend told him of the new dating website and the pictures of handsome male torsos on its home page suggest it will live up to expectation. He clicks the button to register and fills in details to describe himself, who he wants to meet, and what he wants to do with them. He ticks seeking long term relationship, and also hot sex now, uploads a cheerful face picture for the main page and a picture of his erect penis for the private section. He puts in a search command for the men he likes: tall, over 25, muscular and hairy, and scrolls through more than 100 matches that come back. With the click of a button he sends a wink to the guy flexing his biceps for the camera. To the serious faced man staring into the distance he clicks on send mail and writes: “Hi, like your profile”. He takes a bite of his sandwich and a gulp of hot chocolate, and smiles as he hears the ‘ping’ letting him know he has mail coming in.¹

This concluding chapter summarises this thesis’ primary argument that as publishers attempted to resolve tensions between political and commercial goals, the gay print media sector experienced a golden age late last century. Accompanying this was an increased influence to achieve gay and lesbian movement goals – goals though that changed and did not always include all sections of the community. The chapter ends with a brief outline of the rapid recovery of magazines and newspapers after the Satellite setback and a brief note of the Internet’s impact on print media’s decline.

Achievements of print’s golden age

As this thesis outlines, publishers used their magazines and newspapers to advance gay movement aims, despite having a variety of visions and goals for how they saw a better world for gay and lesbian people. Social theorist Alberto Melucci describes such social movement phenomena as the “outcome of multiple processes” rather than

¹ Based in part on description of the site Manhunt in Michael McGrath, Masculinity and Desire in Cyberspace: An Ethnographic Account of a Gay Online Dating Site (BA Honours, Macquarie University, 2011).
expecting a single goal for the movement. These publications allowed discussion of what it meant to be gay or lesbian in Australia; provided an arena to present positive viewpoints regarding homosexuality that countered dominant mainstream attitudes; and brought people together through personal classifieds and information about bars and other community activities. The style of media produced evolved as circumstances changed across this period from 1969 to 2000, and as publishers sought ways to operate their venture on a commercial basis.

The early 1970s liberationist publishers were the first to provide a powerful and direct counter-public arena to discuss the nature of society’s oppression of homosexuality, and to identify ways individual gay people could challenge anti-gay elements and attitudes. They offered a forum to debate how the gay community should be organised and how gay people could live their lives. Yet there were other early voices such as the male nude magazines that encouraged a positive attitude in readers towards homosexual desire, and encouraged readers to be more confident about their sexuality. Quite separately, lesbian publishers aligned to feminist thinking produced, from the 1970s, publications for the developing lesbian world. The liberationist and early lesbian publishers tended to embrace left-feminist ideas of the time that advocated broad structural change in society as a necessary precursor for gay and lesbian liberation. Collectives usually produced these publications and eschewing commercial business practices, they relied on volunteers and fund-raising. They did not reach a broad readership and struggled financially, and from the early 1980s largely retreated from ambitious magazine ventures to rely instead on small circulation newsletters. The first male nude magazines struggled as they faced battles with censors and personal difficulties in a still hostile environment. However, they were among the first attempts to develop a gay economy, and later male nude publishers achieved financial viability.

The gay lifestyle publications that dominated in the 1980s included more entertaining stories and information about the social scene. They achieved greater readership, printing more than half-a-million copies in 1985. They used their magazines to encourage particular lifestyles, and their political influence was often more discreet as they showed positive images of gay people enjoying the social world, which helped

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3 See Appendix B.
legitimate and encourage participation. They adopted building and defending community as a central part of the gay movement’s political program – though often to the exclusion of lesbians – and were prepared to engage in political issues central to this largely gay male community and their readers, such as law reform, stopping anti-gay violence and the AIDS epidemic. The lifestyle publications gained commercial benefit from the synergy that existed between promoting the commercial scene, and the scene’s provision of stories, advertising revenue and distribution outlets.

From the late 1980s lesbian publishers also started to operate on a more commercial basis, with sex radical publishers who challenged prevailing feminist views towards sexual expression, notably sadomasochism, and others who promoted the lesbian social scene. Abandoning the collective publishing structure, these privately owned ventures sought a readership niche and looked to the emerging small lesbian businesses for advertising support.

The spectacular growth of gay community and its media occurred during the 1990s, and the free city-based newspapers that appealed to a diverse readership were able to access advertising revenue from the flourishing of gay community businesses, events, festivals and groups in all their variety. The free city-based newspapers were the dominant media force by 1999, in an industry that reached a combined annual print run of five million, with annual revenues around $8 million.4

Publishers’ efforts to resolve tensions between their goals for a better world and their business needs helped shape the sector’s evolution. Gay and lesbian publications started largely as activist media, but as the world grew more accepting of homosexuality and the commercial gay community developed, political goals changed for the movement and its publishers. Commercial opportunities appeared that offered economic viability to the publications, which allowed them to sustain a reliable workforce and improve their product. Synergies were developed that both raised revenues and advanced goals to promote the community and its political aspirations. The most significant of these was media’s commercial need to expand in order to attract readers and advertisers, and it was this expansion that allowed movement ideas and information on community activities to reach and influence a much wider audience. By adopting the promotion and defence of community as the primary political project, publishers could freely harness the synergies that existed.

4 See Appendices B and C.
between the promotion and defence of community venues, events and businesses while drawing on them for stories, advertising and distribution. Seeking further revenues and distributional outlets publishers also built a myriad of relationships with mainstream society that exposed many thousands of businesses to the publications and eased individual prejudice within them. It was through publishers attempting to resolve their commercial and political tensions that their publications were able to have an increased impact among readers, and to promote the community and its aspirations.

Post-Satellite recovery

As discussed in the previous chapter, the Satellite Group’s illusory promise of financial security for the gay media sector was laid bare following the company’s collapse in 2000. This resulted in closure for most of the country’s major gay publications. The motives though that drove individuals to publish gay media remained, and these were largely not profit driven. The publishing vacuum was quickly filled, mostly by publishers who had recently sold to Satellite, or now-retrenched employees of Satellite. *Sydney Star Observer*, one of the few publications not sold to Satellite, moved south to fill the “news blackout” in Melbourne for two issues until Bill Calder, who had sold both *Brother Sister* newspapers to Satellite, launched *Bnews*. Ex-Satellite staff, with finance from straight businessman Robert Stevenson, launched *Melbourne Community Voice* in Melbourne and *G* in Sydney. Ray Mackereth, who had sold *Adelaide GT* and moved to Brisbane to run *Brother Sister Queensland* for Satellite, started *Qnews* in Queensland. Gavin McGuren, who had sold *Westside Observer* started *Qwest* in Perth, and *Adelaide GT*’s editor Scott McGuinness started *Blaze* in Adelaide backed by a dozen small investors. The gay lifestyle magazines *Campaign* and Satellite-owned *OutRage* both closed in 2000, replaced that year by new publisher Andrew Creagh’s monthly magazine *DNA*. The Melbourne venue pictorial *Focus* also closed in 2000 and Brett Hayhoe in 2004 started *Q Magazine*.

*G* soon failed in Sydney replaced by a new player, Evolution Publishing, who started *SX* in 2001 and progressively launched other publications or bought established ones.

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such as *Melbourne Community Voice*, Blaze and *Queensland Pride* to establish a new national publishing group. The group faced financial difficulties in 2013 with debts of more than half-a-million dollars, and the company was liquidated with the publications taken over by a company called Evo Media. They were still being published in 2015.\(^9\) *Qwest* was renamed *Shout* in 2001 and then *Out in Perth* in 2002 and was still being published in 2015. Calder launched *Melbourne Star* in 2001, to appear on alternate fortnights to *Bnews* and sold both newspapers in 2005. They closed three years later, replaced by *Sydney Star Observer* aligned *Southern Star* until 2011. In 2014 *Sydney Star Observer*, now called *Star Observer*, retreated further from print media with a switch from weekly to monthly publishing to concentrate on website development.\(^10\) In 2015 *DNA* and *Q Magazine* were both still being published.

**What role for Internet?**

Post-2000 publications were produced in a manner similar to previously described 1990s gay publications, yet they confronted a slowdown in advertising and circulation levels. After rapid growth in the 1990s *Sydney Star Observer*’s revenue plateaued in the new millennium increasing marginally from $1,634,000 in 2000 to $1,767,000 in 2006, with subsequent figures unavailable,\(^11\) and in 2014 the newspaper launched a crowd-funding campaign to clear $75,000 in debts.\(^12\) By 2011 *Sydney Star Observer* was the only gay newspaper to still publicise audited circulation figures and these were down from a peak of 30,959 in 2001 to just 12,239 a decade later, and were subsequently not released publicly. The decline of gay print media’s late 20\(^{th}\) century golden era started with the flight of classified advertising to the rapidly expanding and more convenient dating websites, with readers also increasingly able to access the internet for information about events and venues, pornography, as well as news of

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\(^11\) Based on Sydney Gay and Lesbian Community Publishing Ltd annual reports. A similar slowdown is apparent in Melbourne where, based on financial records in the author’s private collection, the fortnightly newspaper *Brother Sister Victoria* had annual revenues in 1999 of $686,522 from 26 issues, while its replacement, *Bnews* had annual revenues in 2005 of $826,238 that while larger included not only 26 issues of *Bnews* but additionally 25 issues of its off-fortnight publication *Melbourne Star*. In effect double the number of editions but only 20 percent more revenue.

celebrity and current affairs.

The first stirrings of this new internet media occurred in the late 1980s with the arrival of gay bulletin boards Eagle One in Sydney and Big Tedd in Melbourne, that combined to start Aussie GayNet, and published content from OutRage and Sydney Star Observer. Users could communicate directly with each other but while computer ownership remained low, it stayed a novelty. In 1995 the Australian bulletin boards developed into Pinkboard, whose most popular section became readers seeking male-to-male casual sexual contact. The Internet had a particularly strong impact within the gay world. Its confidentiality and convenience made it immediately attractive to gay and lesbian users, as well as those who did not identify themselves with the community. It allowed for exploration of sexuality in new ways, as well as the possibility of meeting people throughout the world. Local Internet sites faced global competition from internationally-based gay dating sites such as gay.com and gaydar.net, with new innovative sites appearing such as ChatRoulette in 2009 that offered users one-on-one webcam-facilitated conversations, and the portable phone based application grindr.com that allowed users to see who was connected nearby.

Gay print media initially benefitted from the new technology and used email from 1995 to receive articles. Some publishers started their own websites, such as Sydney Star Observer in 1996 with sso.rainbow.net.au and Brother Sister in 1998 with brothersister.com.au. By 2014 web-based news had developed substantially, as Sydney Star Observer’s editor Elias Jahshan says, “A news story now is the words, the pictures, YouTube clips, audio, and even embedded tweets”. However, this web connectedness coincided in notable ways with the declining popularity of gay bars. As social researcher Robert Reynolds puts it, the Internet’s growth led to “the demise of established forms of gay social life”, notably Sydney’s Oxford Street that “declined

---

16 Moore, “From Beats to Cybersex.”
21 Reynolds, “Imagining Gay Life in the Internet Age or Why I Don’t Internet Date.”
as a gay precinct”.\textsuperscript{22} There was a rapid increase in use of the Internet, particularly by gay men, “as a forum for dating and arranging casual sex”,\textsuperscript{23} and a similar phenomenon occurred in western cities around the world.\textsuperscript{24} The new media increasingly replaced print media as a more efficient, convenient, safe and immediate means to meet partners, which led to a decline in the use of print media personal classifieds, and attendance at gay bars. This, in turn, directly affected two sources of revenue for the publications. It further impacted on their viability through reduced pick-up rates by readers previously browsing them at the bars or while using their classified services.

The investigation required of the Internet is to determine what role it will play to fulfil the still existing needs that inspired gay print media’s emergence from 1969. Individuals making tentative steps to explore their sexuality continue to need help in the search for self-discovery, companionship and sex. There are still battles in Australia to achieve equality, notably in the area of same sex marriage rights, and severe injustices continue against gay people in many parts of the world. While the Internet has demonstrated its value as a quicker, more efficient way to communicate information, it cannot be seen simply as a paperless newspaper. The nature of the way it communicates information, with increased privacy direct to a reader’s home computer, changes the impact of this information in ways that need further exploration. The convenience of internet dating and online cruising has fractured past models of community that were centred around meeting partners and friends in bars and it remains unclear what new models of community it may nurture.\textsuperscript{25} Gay visibility may once more decline and the romantic activities of gay people become private and secret matters. Although legitimate now, an increasingly fragmented community may become defenceless against any rise of hostile forces. Or, as media academic Marcus O’Donnell optimistically predicts, the Internet may in fact provide “new opportunities

\textsuperscript{22} Reynolds, “Endangered Territory, Endangered Identity.”
\textsuperscript{23} Reynolds, “Imagining Gay Life in the Internet Age or Why I Don’t Internet Date.”
\textsuperscript{24} Simon Rossera, William West, and Richard Weinmeyer, “Are Gay Communities Dying or Just in Transition? Results from an International Consultation Examining Possible Structural Change in Gay Communities,” \textit{AIDS Care} 20, no. 5 (May 2008).
\textsuperscript{25} For instance, quite differently to Australia the Internet in Thailand helped drive expansion of commercial gay venues as described in Peter A Jackson, "Bangkok’s Early Twenty-First-Century Queer Boom," in \textit{In Queer Bangkok 21st Century Markets, Media, and Rights}, ed., Peter A Jackson (Hong Kong University Press, 2011), p. 31.
for interaction and participation [as previously when] newspapers were an integral part of an activist community and a network of vocal agitators for change”.  

Researching this new media presents the obvious challenge that much of it is not retained in the archive, despite its recent life. Oral history interviews with key participants will be required, and such interviews will allow similar themes to be drawn out, exploring the tension between goals to achieve social good and the needs of running the venture. There is a need for this research. It will demonstrate the particular differences between print and social media, and their relative impact on society across different periods of time.

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Appendix A

**Number of pages published annually**

Counting pages reflects the activity undertaken by publishers and, while it does not directly measure the number of readers, it can be assumed to be indicative. With few readers, publishers are unlikely to maintain a high level of activity: they will be discouraged, and at a practical level will struggle to fund their publishing ventures. The advantage of this method of assessment is that a nearly complete collection of publications exists in the Australian Lesbian and Gay Archives, whereas only fragments of data exist to reflect growth through print numbers and revenues.

The method adopted was to multiply the number of issues produced each year, for each publication from 1970 to 2000, by its average number of pages. The February issue for monthly periodicals was taken as the average number of pages. For publications more frequent than monthly, the first issue in February was taken as the average, and for publications less frequent than monthly the issue closest to February.

Each publication was classified, based on its primary role, under one of five categories: Gay Liberationists (Lib), Male Nude Magazines (Nude), Gay Lifestyle Publications (Life), Lesbian Magazines (Lez), and Free City-based Newspapers (Free). Each publication was allocated a city of primary activity, including those with a national focus.

Issues presumed missing from the collection were included in the count, and those with unclear publishing dates had issue numbers divided across estimated time spans. Single print editions, newsletters generally, gay literary magazines, academic journals, AIDS publications and directories were not included.

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1 The number of issues produced was taken from version 2 of the twelfth edition of the periodicals list of the Australian Lesbian and Gay Archives, and includes all periodicals held in the collection at 29 September 2013.

2 February was chosen because it was close to year start, but not affected by potential publishing slow-downs due to Christmas/New Year.
Key findings

- The sector grew substantially across the time period 1970 to 2000.
- Different media types were more prevalent at certain times across the period.
- Sydney was the dominant publishing city, and to a lesser extent, Melbourne.
- Sydney was particularly dominant in publishing male nude magazines.
- The figures suggest a slowdown in activity mid-1970s that corresponds with a waning of early gay movement optimism for change.
- The figures reflect the turbulence during the late-1980s caused by the impact of AIDS.
- The figures reflect the turbulence of The Satellite Group’s takeover of much of the sector at the end of the 1990s.
### The data

#### 1970

**Sydney**

- **Camp Ink**
  - Type: Lib
  - No. of issues: 2
  - Av no. of pages: 16
  - Year total: 32
  - Sydney total: Lib 32
  - National total: Lib 32

#### 1971

**Sydney**

- **Camp Ink**
  - Lib: 13
  - Life: 8
  - Year total: 208
  - Sydney total: Lib 208
  - National total: Lib 272

- **Gay Times**
  - Life: 8
  - Year total: 64
  - Sydney total: Life 64
  - National total: Life 272
### 1972

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**Sydney total**
- Lib 162
- Nude 428
- Life 72

**Other total**
- Lib 56

**National total**
- Lib 218
- Nude 428
- Life 72

### 1973

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**Sydney total**
- Lib 112
- Nude 888

**Other total**
- Lib 84

**National total**
- Lib 196
- Nude 888

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**Sydney total**
- Lib 168
- Nude 1040

**Other total**
- Lib 4

**National total**
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### 1978

**Sydney**
- Campaign: Life 12, Nude 3, Gay: Nude 10, Playguy: Nude 5

**Melbourne**
- Lesbian News/letter: Lez 7

**Adelaide**
- Gay Changes: Lib 5

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### 1979

**Sydney**
- Klick: Life 3

**Melbourne**
- Gay Community News: Lib 2
- Lesbian News/letter: Lez 7

**Adelaide**
- Gay Changes: Lib 2

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- Campaign: Life 11, 44, 484
- Cruiser: Life 15, 40, 600
- Gay: Nude 10, 48, 480
- Leatherman: Nude 3, 48, 144
- Libertine: Life 14, 20, 280
- Playguy: Nude 4, 64, 256
- The Star: Life 25, 12, 300
- Tramp: Nude 4, 52, 208

**Melbourne**
- Gay Community News: Lib 10, 40, 400
- Klick: Life 11, 60, 660
- Lesbian News/letter: Lez 6, 20, 120

**Sydney total**
- Nude 1088
- Life 1664

**Melbourne total**
- Lib 400
- Life 660
- Lez 120

**National total**
- Lib 400
- Nude 1088
- Life 2324
- Lez 120

### 1981

**Sydney**
- Campaign: Life 12, 48, 576
- Cruiser: Life 8, 48, 384
- Gay: Nude 10, 48, 480
- Hunky: Nude 7, 36, 252
- Libertine: Life 22, 52, 1144
- Male Call: Nude 12, 48, 576
- Oxford Weekender News: Life 17, 8, 136
- The Star: Life 25, 16, 400
- Tramp: Nude 4, 40, 160

**Melbourne**
- City Rhythm: Life 2, 28, 56
- Gay Community News: Lib 10, 40, 400
- Klick: Life 12, 60, 720
- Lesbian News/letter: Lez 6, 24, 144

**Brisbane**
- The Scene: Life 5, 16, 80

**Sydney total**
- Nude 1468
- Life 2640

**Melbourne total**
- Lib 400
- Life 776
- Lez 144

**Other total**
- Life 80

**National total**
- Lib 400
- Nude 1468
- Life 3496
- Lez 144
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### 1984

#### Sydney
- **9PM**
  - Life: 12
  - 80
  - 960
- **Campaign**
  - Life: 12
  - 56
  - 672
- **Cruiser**
  - Life: 19
  - 40
  - 760
- **Gay**
  - Nude: 10
  - 64
  - 640
- **Lesbian Network**
  - Lez: 2
  - 32
  - 64
- **Male Call**
  - Nude: 12
  - 64
  - 768
- **Oxford Lifestyle Magazine**
  - Life: 9
  - 40
  - 360
- **Oxford Weekender News**
  - Life: 8
  - 24
  - 192
- **The Star**
  - Life: 25
  - 24
  - 600
- **Sydney Gay News**
  - Life: 8
  - 24
  - 192

#### Melbourne
- **City Rhythm**
  - Life: 8
  - 28
  - 224
- **Lesbian News/letter**
  - Lez: 5
  - 40
  - 200
- **Melbourne Voice**
  - Life: 2
  - 24
  - 48
- **Now**
  - Life: 12
  - 116
  - 1392
- **OutRage**
  - Life: 11
  - 52
  - 572

#### Brisbane
- **The Scene**
  - Life: 1
  - 16
  - 16

#### Adelaide
- **Catch 22**
  - Life: 11
  - 28
  - 308

#### Perth
- **Lion’s Roar**
  - Life: 12
  - 24
  - 288

### Totals
- **Sydney total**
  - Nude: 1408
  - Life: 3736
  - Lez: 64
  - 5208
- **Melbourne total**
  - Life: 2236
  - Lez: 200
  - 2436
- **Other total**
  - Life: 612
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- **National total**
  - Nude: 1408
  - Life: 6584
  - Lez: 264
  - 8256
### 1985

#### Sydney
- **9PM**: Life, 11, 80, 880
- **Bar Trade**: Life, 3, 8, 24
- **Campaign**: Life, 12, 56, 672
- **Gay**: Nude, 10, 64, 640
- **Lesbian Network**: Lez, 4, 46, 184
- **Male Call**: Nude, 12, 64, 768
- **Oxford Lifestyle Magazine**: Life, 5, 32, 160
- **The Star**: Life, 9, 28, 252
- **Sydney Star Observer**: Free, 18, 20, 360
- **Sydney’s Village Voice**: Life, 17, 16, 272

#### Melbourne
- **City Rhythm**: Life, 7, 28, 196
- **Lesbian News/letter**: Lez, 6, 24, 144
- **Melbourne Star Observer**: Free, 7, 24, 168
- **Melbourne Voice**: Life, 17, 32, 544
- **Now**: Life, 11, 164, 1804
- **OutRage**: Life, 11, 48, 528

#### Adelaide
- **Catch 22**: Life, 11, 32, 352

#### Perth
- **Lion’s Roar**: Life, 3, 20, 60

#### Sydney total
- **Nude**: 1408
- **Life**: 2260
- **Lez**: 184
- **Free**: 360

#### National total
- **Nude**: 1408
- **Life**: 5744
- **Lez**: 328
- **Free**: 528

### 1986

#### Sydney
- **Campaign**: Life, 12, 52, 624
- **DARE**: Life, 1, 12, 12
- **Gay**: Nude, 10, 64, 640
- **Lesbian Network**: Lez, 4, 50, 200
- **Male Call**: Nude, 12, 64, 768
- **Now 9PM**: Life, 6, 132, 792
- **Sydney Star Observer**: Free, 26, 24, 624
- **Sydney’s Village Voice**: Life, 21, 16, 336

#### Melbourne
- **City Rhythm**: Life, 6, 28, 168
- **Lesbian News/letter**: Lez, 6, 34, 204
- **Melbourne Star Observer**: Free, 26, 20, 520
- **Now**: Life, 1, 164, 164
- **OutRage**: Life, 12, 48, 576

#### Brisbane
- **The Scene**: Life, 2, 4, 8

#### Adelaide
- **Catch 22**: Life, 10, 32, 320

#### Sydney total
- **Nude**: 1408
- **Life**: 1764
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1988

**Sydney**
- **Campaign**
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  - Nude: 10
  - Lez: 4
  - Free: 26
- **Cruiser**
  - Life: 7
  - Nude: 12
- **Gay**
  - Life: 80
  - Nude: 64
  - Lez: 40
  - Free: 20
- **Lesbian Network**
  - Life: 8
  - Nude: 16
  - Lez: 8
  - Free: 2
- **Male Call**
  - Life: 80
  - Nude: 64
  - Lez: 40
  - Free: 20
- **Sydney Star Observer**
  - Life: 8
  - Nude: 16
  - Lez: 8
  - Free: 2
- **Village Voice**
  - Life: 8
  - Nude: 16
  - Lez: 8
  - Free: 2
- **Village Voice Australia**
  - Life: 8
  - Nude: 16
  - Lez: 8
  - Free: 2

**Melbourne**
- **City Rhythm**
  - Life: 4
  - Nude: 32
  - Lez: 24
  - Free: 16
- **Lesbian News/letter**
  - Life: 6
  - Nude: 24
  - Lez: 14
  - Free: 8
- **Melbourne Star Observer**
  - Life: 12
  - Nude: 768
  - Lez: 144
  - Free: 416
- **OutRage**
  - Life: 12
  - Nude: 768
  - Lez: 144
  - Free: 416
- **Shout**
  - Life: 2
  - Nude: 28
  - Lez: 14
  - Free: 8

**Brisbane**
- **The Scene**
  - Life: 19
  - Nude: 152
  - Lez: 76
  - Free: 38

**Adelaide**
- **Adelaide Gaze**
  - Life: 2
  - Nude: 56
  - Lez: 28
  - Free: 14
- **Catch 22**
  - Life: 9
  - Nude: 216
  - Lez: 88
  - Free: 44

**Perth**
- **Westside Observer**
  - Life: 11
  - Nude: 528
  - Lez: 144
  - Free: 416

**Sydney total**
- **Nude**: 1408
- **Life**: 1208
- **Lez**: 288
- **Free**: 520

**Melbourne total**
- **Nude**: 1144
- **Life**: 1144
- **Lez**: 144
- **Free**: 416

**Brisbane total**
- **Life**: 152

**Adelaide total**
- **Nude**: 56

**Perth total**
- **Nude**: 528

**Other total**
- **Life**: 952

**National total**
- **Nude**: 1408
- **Life**: 3304
- **Lez**: 432
- **Free**: 936

1989

**Sydney**
- **Campaign**
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  - Nude: 10
  - Lez: 4
  - Free: 26
- **Gay**
  - Life: 88
  - Nude: 64
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- **Male Call**
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- **Village Voice Australia**
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- **Wicked Women**
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**Melbourne**
- **City Rhythm**
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  - Free: 8
- **Lesbian News/letter**
  - Life: 5
  - Nude: 36
  - Lez: 18
  - Free: 9
- **Melbourne Star Observer**
  - Life: 12
  - Nude: 728
  - Lez: 1104
  - Free: 572
- **OutRage**
  - Life: 12
  - Nude: 728
  - Lez: 1104
  - Free: 572

**Brisbane**
- **The Scene**
  - Life: 11
  - Nude: 88

**Adelaide**
- **Catch 22**
  - Life: 4
  - Nude: 16
  - Lez: 8
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**Perth**
- **Westside Observer**
  - Life: 11
  - Nude: 528
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### 1990

#### Sydney
- **Australian Leather Men**: Life 3, Nude 10, Lez 12, Free 12
- **Campaign**: Life 12, Nude 104, Lez 10, Free 640
- **Gay**: Nude 62, Lez 10, Free 248
- **Lesbian Network**: Life 12, Nude 10, Lez 4, Free 120
- **Lesbians On The Loose**: Life 8, Nude 12, Lez 104, Free 1248
- **Male Call**: Life 1, Nude 36, Lez 32, Free 108
- **Sydney Star Observer**: Life 26, Nude 24, Lez 26, Free 832
- **Village Voice Australia**: Life 8, Nude 12, Lez 104, Free 1248
- **Wicked Women**: Lez 3, Life 12, Nude 24, Free 108

#### Melbourne
- **Image**: Life 1, Nude 24, Lez 24, Free 24
- **Labrys**: Life 2, Nude 16, Lez 32, Free 32
- **Lesbian News/newsletter**: Life 5, Nude 38, Lez 190, Free 190
- **Melbourne Star Observer**: Life 12, Nude 92, Lez 416, Free 1104
- **OutRage**: Life 6, Nude 44, Lez 528, Free 528

#### Brisbane
- **Toehold Times**: Life 6, Nude 6, Lez 6, Free 6

#### Adelaide
- **Galah**: Life 6, Nude 24, Lez 24, Free 144
- **GL**: Life 2, Nude 28, Lez 56, Free 56

#### Perth
- **Westside Observer**: Life 12, Nude 44, Lez 528, Free 528

### Total
- **Sydney total**: Nude 1408, Life 1536, Lez 476, Free 832, Total 4252
- **Melbourne total**: Nude 1128, Life 1128, Lez 222, Free 416, Total 1766
- **Other total**: Life 608, Free 752
- **National total**: Nude 1408, Life 3272, Lez 698, Free 1392, Total 6770
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**Sydney total**
- Lib: 80
- Nude: 1168
- Life: 1284
- Lez: 756
- Free: 1624

**Melbourne total**
- Nude: 396
- Life: 1272
- Lez: 356
- Free: 952

**Other total**
- Nude: 240
- Lez: 512
- Free: 1292

**National total**
- Lib: 80
- Nude: 1804
- Life: 2556
- Lez: 1624
- Free: 3868

**1993**

**Sydney**
- **Australian Leather Men**: Life 4 (176)
- **Burn**: Lib 12 (912)
- **Campaign**: Life 12 (1104)
- **Capital Q**: Free 48 (960)
- **Lesbian Network**: Lez 4 (296)
- **Lesbians On The Loose**: Lez 12 (384)
- **Male Call**: Nude 12 (768)
- **Sydney Star Observer**: Free 26 (1352)
- **Wicked Women**: Lez 2 (96)

**Melbourne**
- **Brother Sister Vic**: Free 26 (728)
- **Focus**: Life 4 (96)
- **Lesbiana**: Lez 11 (220)
- **Melbourne Star Observer**: Free 26 (728)
- **Outlout**: Lez 3 (120)

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3 During 1992 *Westside Observer* introduced a range of changes including a new free tabloid form and commitment to content beyond just bar coverage. For these reasons its type classification was subsequently changed from Life to Free.
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**Sydney total**  
- **Life**: 1344  
- **Lez**: 900  
- **Free**: 5164  

**Melbourne total**  
- **Life**: 2380  
- **Lez**: 440  
- **Free**: 2816  

**Other total**  
- **Life**: 204  
- **Lez**: 360  
- **Free**: 2388  

**National total**  
- **Life**: 3932  
- **Lez**: 1700  
- **Free**: 10,368  

**Total**: 15,996
Appendix B

Number of copies distributed annually

Data for the number of copies printed for each edition is generally sparse, apart from audited circulation figures for some publications in the latter part of this era. As the footnotes indicate, figures used are often estimates based on publisher claims and estimates across each five-year period plotted.

Key findings

• Demonstrate a clear and strong trend in growth, particularly with the expansion of free city-based newspapers in the 1990s.

• Different media types were more prevalent at certain times across the period.
• Sydney was the dominant publishing city, and to a lesser extent, Melbourne.

• Sydney was particularly dominant in publishing male nude magazines.
The data

1970
Sydney

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1975
Sydney

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\(^1\) Paul Lucas, "Editorial," *Camp Ink* November 1971 claiming increase to 5000 by the following year.

\(^2\) The first issue only sold 700 from 5000 printed, according to publisher Rod Stringer in author interview 2010, with subsequent early issues stabilising at around 1000 says Rodney J Stringer, "And Now: A Message from Our Sponsor," *Campaign* September 1977.
During the 1980s a range of publications appeared in Sydney and Melbourne. Occasionally they published print claims, possibly exaggerated due to the pressure of competition. If no other evidence exists I have adopted a print figure of 5000 for each of them, as well as the male nude publications during the 1970s and 1980s. Examples of print claims include: “over 5000”, in Crich, “What Is the Oxford Weekender” ; “over 10,000 Sydney readers” in "The Sydney Star," The Star 26 February 1982; 6000 claimed in Allan Deith, "A Letter from the Publisher," Melbourne Voice 15 February 1985; a claim of 6000 in “Southern Australian Gay Magazine," Klick Issue 7, probably April 1980.

\[7^*\] Short lived publication unlikely to have built a strong readership.

\[8^*\] Based on Audit Bureau of Circulation (ABC) or Circulation Audit Board (CAB) figures.

\[9^*\] Small speciality publication unlikely to reach large readership.

\[10^*\] Collective meeting minutes dated 9 October 1980, in Helen Pausacker’s minutes folder, Box 1 of 2 Gay Community News, ALGA.


\[12^*\] Expect similar to Lesbian Newsletter.
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<td></td>
<td>Life</td>
<td>331,296</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Lez</td>
<td>1520</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
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<td>Free</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Other total</td>
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<td>3800</td>
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<td></td>
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### 1990

#### Sydney

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<tr>
<th>Australian Leather Men</th>
<th>Life</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>1000&lt;sup&gt;10&lt;/sup&gt;</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Campaign</td>
<td>Life</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>8,956&lt;sup&gt;11&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>107,472</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gay</td>
<td>Nude</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>5000</td>
<td>50,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lesbian Network</td>
<td>Lez</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>800&lt;sup&gt;12&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>3200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lesbians On The Loose</td>
<td>Lez</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>1000&lt;sup&gt;13&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>12,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male Call</td>
<td>Nude</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>5000</td>
<td>60,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sydney Star Observer</td>
<td>Free</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>9427&lt;sup&gt;14&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>245,102</td>
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<tr>
<td>Village Voice Australia</td>
<td>Life</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>5000&lt;sup&gt;5&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>40,000</td>
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<td>Wicked Women</td>
<td>Lez</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>800&lt;sup&gt;15&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>2400</td>
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#### Melbourne

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Image</th>
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<th>5000&lt;sup&gt;5&lt;/sup&gt;</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Labrys</td>
<td>Lez</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1500&lt;sup&gt;12&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>3000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lesbian News/letter</td>
<td>Lez</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>800&lt;sup&gt;13&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>4000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Melbourne Star Observer</td>
<td>Free</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>5000&lt;sup&gt;14&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>130,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OutRage</td>
<td>Life</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>9000&lt;sup&gt;15&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>108,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Brisbane

| Toehold Times          | Life  | 6   | 200<sup>16</sup>  | 1200   |

#### Adelaide

| Galah                  | Free  | 6   | 5,000<sup>16</sup> | 30,000 |

---

<sup>5</sup> Smaller city paper expected to have proportionally smaller circulation than Sydney and Melbourne papers.


<sup>7</sup> Estimated growth between previous circulation of the magazine’s forerunner Gay Community News and OutRage’s later audited figure.

<sup>8</sup> 1987 ABC audit (not audited subsequently).

<sup>9</sup> Some growth anticipated.


<sup>11</sup> Print numbers of 1993 according to Kimberly O'Sullivan, "Five Years of Infamy," Wicked Women No 28, 1996.


<sup>13</sup> Some growth anticipated.


<sup>15</sup> Reduced estimate, based on 1993 ABC audit figure of 10,419.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>GL</th>
<th>Life</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>2000&lt;sup&gt;17&lt;/sup&gt;</th>
<th>4000</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Perth</td>
<td>Free</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>2000&lt;sup&gt;17&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>24,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Sydney total**
- **Nude**: 110,000
- **Life**: 150,472
- **Lez**: 17,600
- **Free**: 245,102

**Melbourne total**
- **Life**: 111,000
- **Lez**: 7000
- **Free**: 130,000

**Other total**
- **Life**: 5200
- **Free**: 54,000

**National total**
- **Nude**: 110,000
- **Life**: 266,672
- **Lez**: 24,600
- **Free**: 429,102

### 1995

**Sydney**
- **Campaign**: Life 12, 8000<sup>18</sup>
- **Capital Q**: Free 51, 15,820<sup>18</sup>
- **Lesbian Network**: Lez 4, 1000<sup>19</sup>
- **Lesbians On The Loose**: Lez 12, 10,000<sup>20</sup>
- **Male Call**: Nude 12, 5000
- **Sydney Star Observer**: Free 32, 25,707<sup>18</sup>
- **Wicked Women**: Lez 3, 1000<sup>21</sup>

**Melbourne**
- **Bliss**: Life 20, 5000<sup>22</sup>
- **Brother Sister Vic**: Free 26, 15,102
- **Chaos**: Life 2, 5000<sup>22</sup>
- **Focus**: Life 4, 5000<sup>22</sup>
- **Lesbian**: Lez 10, 1000<sup>22</sup>
- **Melbourne Star Observer**: Free 52, 11,427<sup>18</sup>
- **OutRage**: Life 12, 9518<sup>23</sup>

**Brisbane**
- **Australian Gay**: Nude 2, 5000<sup>24</sup>
- **Brother Sister Qld**: Free 26, 10,167<sup>24</sup>
- **Dykewise**: Lez 1, 1000<sup>25</sup>
- **Queensland Pride**: Free 12, 8000<sup>26</sup>

**Adelaide**
- **Adelaide GT**: Free 25, 5000<sup>27</sup>

**Perth**
- **Westside Observer**: Free 22, 2000<sup>28</sup>

---

<sup>16</sup> A claim of 12,000 in "Galah Distribution," *Galah* February 1990. Despite a bold national distribution push, such a claim for an Adelaide based paper seems high and has been discounted. If such high numbers were actually printed, it’s unlikely they achieved full pick-up given the paper’s lack of ongoing survival.

<sup>17</sup> "Westside Observer," *Campaign* December 1990.

<sup>18</sup> Numbers likely to have plateaued or declined since stopping audit.

<sup>19</sup> Expected circulation similar to *Lesbiana*.

<sup>20</sup> "LOTL for Sale."

<sup>21</sup> Author interview with publisher Jasper Laybult 2013.

<sup>22</sup> Publisher Lillitu Babalu in author interview 2010 recalls printing hundreds, rather than thousands.

<sup>23</sup> 1994 Audit Bureau of Circulations.

<sup>24</sup> *Brother Sister* figures, pre-audit, are based on masthead claims that corresponded with print-run figures on printer bills, according to author’s knowledge.

<sup>25</sup> Expected circulation similar to *Lesbiana*.

<sup>26</sup> Comment via email by publisher Wally Cowin after interview with author 2010.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Nude</th>
<th>Life</th>
<th>Lez</th>
<th>Free</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Canberra</strong></td>
<td>6</td>
<td>900</td>
<td>900</td>
<td>5400</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Sydney total</strong></td>
<td>60,000</td>
<td>96,000</td>
<td>127,000</td>
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<td><strong>Melbourne total</strong></td>
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<td>10,000</td>
<td>986,856</td>
<td>1,241,072</td>
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<td><strong>Other total</strong></td>
<td>10,000</td>
<td>1000</td>
<td>534,742</td>
<td>545,742</td>
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<td><strong>National total</strong></td>
<td>70,000</td>
<td>340,216</td>
<td>138,000</td>
<td>3,151,042</td>
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<tr>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Campaign</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>8000</td>
<td>21,741</td>
<td>40,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>Capital Q</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>21,741</td>
<td>1,000,086</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DNA</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>8000</td>
<td>88,000</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
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<td>G</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>21,741</td>
<td>86,964</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
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<td>2000</td>
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<td>12</td>
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<td>240,000</td>
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<td>1,469,514</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bnews</td>
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<td>19,863</td>
<td>39,726</td>
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<td>Brother Sister Vic</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>19,863</td>
<td>476,712</td>
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<tr>
<td>Focus</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5000</td>
<td>10,000</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Lesbian</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>2000</td>
<td>22,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>MCV</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>17,884</td>
<td>71,536</td>
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<td>840,548</td>
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<td>5000</td>
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<td>OutRage</td>
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<td><strong>Brisbane</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Brother Sister Qld</td>
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<td>12,263</td>
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<td>115,000</td>
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<td><strong>Perth</strong></td>
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<td>Qwest</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2000</td>
<td>4000</td>
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<td>Westside Observer</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>2000</td>
<td>46,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>Women Out West</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>1000</td>
<td>10,000</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
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1 Assumes same circulation figures as the publication it replaced following collapse of Satellite Group towards end of 2000.
28 Assume similar slow growth to Adelaide GT.
29 Publisher Kerin O’Brien in author interview 2010.
30 Numbers likely to have plateaued or declined since stopping audit
31 Assume similar to OutRage and Campaign.
32 For Lesbiania and Lesbian Network, assume similar growth rate to Lesbians On The Loose.
33 Author interview with Francine Rand 2010.
34 1994 Audit Bureau of Circulations
35 Comment via email by publisher Wally Cowin after interview with author 2010.
37 Assume similar slow growth to Adelaide GT.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Life</th>
<th>1000</th>
<th>3000</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Darwin</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1000</td>
<td>3000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Newcastle</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1000</td>
<td>6000</td>
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</table>

**Newcastle**

Out Now Newcastle

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Life</th>
<th>1000</th>
<th>6000</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sydney total</td>
<td>Life</td>
<td>128,000</td>
<td>2,930,564</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Lez</td>
<td>246,000</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Free</td>
<td>2,556,564</td>
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<td>Melbourne total</td>
<td>Life</td>
<td>184,698</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Lez</td>
<td>22,000</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>1,428,522</td>
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<td>Life</td>
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<td>Lez</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>4,588,924</td>
<td>5,188,622</td>
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</table>

38 Smaller circulation assumed for regional papers such as *Women Out West*, *GayNT* and *Out Now Newcastle*.
Appendix C

Revenues at end of 1990s

Revenue estimates are based on a full year of activity for the major publications in existence towards the end of the 1990s. Many of these were replaced by new titles during 2000 due to the collapse of The Satellite Group, and independent of this event Campaign was also replaced by a new title in 2000.

**Sydney**

- **Campaign**: 936,000
- **Capital Q**: 1,500,000
- **Lesbians On The Loose**: 276,000
- **Sydney Star Observer**: 1,634,000

**Melbourne**

- **Brother Sister Vic**: 687,000
- **Focus**: 11,500
- **Lesbian**: 25,300
- **Melbourne Star Observer**: 809,000
- **OutRage**: 1,108,000

**Brisbane**

- **Brother Sister Qld**: 357,978
- **Queensland Pride**: 138,000

**Adelaide**

- **Adelaide GT**: 132,250

**Perth**

- **Westside Observer**: 52,900

**TOTAL**: $7,667,928

---

1 Using average circulation to revenue ratio of 1.15. See calculation of ratio on next page.
2 Based on assumed similar earnings to OutRage, proportionate to estimated distribution figures.
5 Figures for Melbourne Star Observer and OutRage from Bluestone Media 1997/98 Profit & Loss Statement, held in author’s private collection.
6 Based on Powerline Corporation Pty Ltd 1999 and 2000 Profit & Loss Statement, held in author’s private collection. Powerline owned the newspaper for 24 issues across these two financial years with revenue of $330,441. This has been divided by 24 for average issue earnings and multiplied by 26, the usual number of issues per year.
Key findings

- Sector revenues increased from zero in 1970 to nearly $8 million at the end of the century. This excludes other publishing activities such as annual guides and directories.

Calculation of average circulation to revenue ratio

The average circulation to revenue ratio was determined by calculating the annual circulation to revenue ratio of five newspapers where reliable data exists: Capital Q, Sydney Star Observer, Brother Sister Victoria, Melbourne Star Observer and Brother Sister Queensland. The average for these five publications was used for the free city-based newspapers where reliable financial data does not exist.

<table>
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<th>with allowance</th>
<th>revenues ($)</th>
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<td>Cap Q</td>
<td>1,000,086</td>
<td>1,108,791</td>
<td>1,500,000</td>
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<td>SSO</td>
<td>1,469,514</td>
<td>1,469,514</td>
<td>1,634,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>BSV</td>
<td>476,712</td>
<td>516,438</td>
<td>687,000</td>
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<td>MSO</td>
<td>840,548</td>
<td>929,968</td>
<td>809,000</td>
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<td>BSQ</td>
<td>294,312</td>
<td>318,838</td>
<td>357,978</td>
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<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>4,343,549</td>
<td>4,987,978</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Circulation to revenue ratio: 4,987,978 / 4,343,549 = 1.15

---

7 Based on full year assuming Satellite Group collapse had not occurred.
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Gahl, Greg 2013

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Grad, Jeffrey 2014

Hartley, Ian 2011

Hillis, Crusader 2014

Johnson, Ian 2013

Klooger, Leigh 2010

Kramer, Clinton 2011

Laybutt, Jasper (previously Francine Laybutt) 2013

Lowe, Barry 2011

Maaten, Frits 2012

Mackereth, Ray 2010

Mayberry, Alan 2010
Munro, Bill 2012
O’Brien, Kerin 2010
Payne, Ken 2013
Phillips, Cath 2010
Polson, Ivan 2011
Rand, Frances 2010
Randall, Kevin (aka Jay Watchorn) 2010
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Ephemera

Australian Gay and Lesbian Magazines, Newspapers and Directories Consulted

(See ALGA Periodicals List 2014 - Ver 1 for more details)

9 PM
Acceptance National Newsletter
Adelaide Gay Directory
Adelaide Gaze
Adelaide GT
ALSO Directory
Apollo
Australia And Beyond
Australian Gay, The
Australian Golden Boys
Australian Guys
Australian Leather Men
Australian Lesbian Diary
Bnews
Bar Trade
Blaze
Bliss
Blue
Brother Sister, Queensland
Brother Sister, Victoria
Lesbian Territory
Lesbian Times
Lesbiana
Lesbianon
Lesbians On The Loose
Letters From Lesbos
Libertine, The
Lilac
Lion’s Roar, The
Lip
Little Butch
Male Call
Male Maze
Mankind
Mate
Melbourne Community Voice
Meetmarket
Melbourne Star
Melbourne Star Observer
Melbourne Voice
Midsumma Festival Guide
Mountain Lesbian News
Muscle Builder
Now In Melbourne
Now 9 Pm
Out Magazine
Out Now Newcastle
OutRage
OutRage’s Men
Oxford Lifestyle Magazine, The
Oxford Weekender, The
PanDa
Purple Press
Q?&A!
Q Magazine
Q News
Q West
Queensland Pride
Sage
Scene, The
Shout (Vic)
Shout Magazine (WA)
Southern Star Observer
Stallion
Star, The
SX
Sydney Advocate
Sydney & Beyond
Sydney Fart, The
Sydney Gay & Lesbian Mardi Gras Guide
Sydney Gay News
Sydney Playguy
Sydney Star Observer
Sydney’s Village Voice
Toehold Times
Tramp
Village Voice Australia, The
Western Gay
Westside Observer
Wicked Women
William And John
Women Out West
Word Is Out
Zuloo’s News

Non-gay Magazines, Newspapers and Directories Consulted
Age, The
Australian, The
Australian Financial Review, The
B & T
Business Review Weekly
Cleo
Forum
Melbourne Women’s Liberation Newsletter
Refractory Girl
Sunday Age, The
Sunday Press
Sydney Morning Herald
Truth, The
Weekend Australian, The
Vashti’s Voice

Press articles
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“At the Editor’s Desk.” *Sydney Star Observer*, 3 June 1994.


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“Contacts.” Sydney Star Observer, 16 May 1996.
Dennison, Gary. “Sellamagseentamum.” Camp Ink, March 72.


“From the Editor’s Desk.” Focus, July 1993.


“In the Beginning.” *City Rhythm*, November 1982.


“Landmark Appointment to Editor’s Chair.” *Sydney Star Observer*, 11 June 1993.


Lawrence, Norm. “Married Homosexuals: Should They Be Honest in Marriage or Not?” *Camp Ink*, March 1977.


“Let’s Get Physical “. *Campaign*, September 1992


“March Mayhem at the Meeting Place.” *Queensland Pride*, March 1993.


“Melbourne Lets the Good Times Rrroll.” Campaign, April 1982.
“Memories of the 20s.” OutRage, April 1983.
“Miss Gay Asia Pacific Quest.” Brother Sister Victoria, 19 October 1995.


“PanDa Farewells Foundation Editor.” PanDa, June/July 1993.
Pausacker, Jenny. “Ghettos or Communities?” Lesbian News, September-October 1983.
“Pink Dollar Hot Again.” Brother Sister Victoria, 26 December 1996.
“Reach the Man with Money to Spare … You’ll Find Him in Campaign.” *The Weekend Australian*, 4-5 March 1978.
Savage, Jason. “She’s Still the One.” *Klick!*, December 1980.
“Two Green Bottles ... The End of an Era.” *Gayzette*, July 1996.
“Two Sent for Trial over Magazine.” Sydney Morning Herald, probably August 1972.


“VAC to Move South.” Brother Sister Victoria, 8 October 1993.


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