

**Submission
No 31**

**INQUIRY INTO GAY AND TRANSGENDER HATE CRIMES
BETWEEN 1970 AND 2010 - 57TH PARLIAMENT**

Name: Stewart South
Date Received: 25 February 2020

My name is Stewart South.

I am a 69 year old gay man.

I live at

I have been retired from employment since approx. 1998 due to Post Traumatic Stress Disorder, agoraphobia and depression as well as a significant loss of memory.

These have been brought on by a number of bashings, verbal abuse and vilification by a number of persons.

As a school boy I always knew I was gay, in fact, I knew I was different from other boys from the age of 4, but of course kept it hidden from all. Even so, I was bullied at school by not only fellow students but also some teachers.

The later happened at Hunters Hill High School when the sports master singled me out at assembly & called me names. This was despite the fact that I was a school champion swimmer.

He was a former rugby league player and I still remember his name. It still makes me upset & angry.

The first of many bashings occurred at St Leonards Park in North Sydney, where 3 men of approx. 25 years of age, attacked me with some pieces of wood having crept up on me as I was sitting on a bench enjoying the summer night air. They were shouting homophobic slurs at me. The wood had been cut & sized to exactly the right size to inflict maximum damage. I was able to escape, having knocked the wood out of one of the guys hands & starting to fight back.

Amazingly they then rang far enough away for me to get away & go home.

I did not report this to the Police as I knew what their reaction would be & I had not sustained any real damage. This was about 1978/79.

I started to go to the various gay venues in Oxford Street after this as I figured that it would be safer, how wrong I was.

On the 5th of March 1983, I was walking along Oxford Street between Crown & Palmer Street Darlinghurst. I was intending to go to a venue further up the street, I think it was called The Traffic Light Bar.

It was about 10.30 pm when suddenly a man of about 30 years of age started shouting at me to get out of the way and "Go to Hell You Faggot Poofter" with that he punched me in the face. Blood was coming from my right temple & I was somewhat dazed & very shocked.

Someone, who had witnessed the attack put me in a taxi & sent me to St Vincent's Hospital in Darlinghurst.

It was ascertained, after having some x rays, that I had suffered a fracture to the right cheek bones, a burst right eye socket and several broken teeth.

The Police from Darlinghurst station were called & I was asked a couple of questions, giving them my personal details. I am still waiting to hear back from them.

That night I was sent home to my parents home, which must have been harrowing for them, & in hindsight, possibly dangerous as far as a bleed on the brain was concerned.

I received no counselling or sympathy from anyone except my parents.

The attitude of the police was, "Well what do you expect? A gay man out in Oxford Street. Fair Game I reckon"

From then on my memory for names, especially of movie and Opera stars was greatly diminished. This is especially upsetting as I worked in the classical record industry & then in video movie sales. My capacity to talk to customers about these things, which are a passion of mine, had been greatly diminished.

In 1995, I was still living at unit 12 / 52 High Street North Sydney, when at about 10.30 pm, I was taking my rescue cat "Lui" out for a walk around the gardens of the building, when 3 males

came out of the back door of my building. They started to chase my cat, shouting "Lets kill the Poofers cat & then start on him" "Bloody faggot!"

With that they punched me in the head.

The next thing I remember is regaining consciousness, lying in a pool of blood amongst the garbage bins near the back door of the building.

I somehow got myself back into the building & went up to a lady friends apartment & knocked on the door.

I could not remember what had happened & kept saying " I can't remember, I can't remember".

The got another friend to take me to Royal North Shore Hospital.

I do not recall having any scans done at the time, & they sent me home about an hour later.

Miraculously, my cat had found her way up onto my balcony via a walkway which adjoined my apartment. She was totally unscathed, for which I am eternally grateful.

The next day my father took me to North Sydney Police Station, where we spoke with the Desk Sergeant. He seemed totally disinterested. My father asked what the Police could do. The Desk Sergeant said "What can we do, we don't know who these people are?" My Father asked him "What would you do if Stewart had been killed?"

The Sergeant simply shrugged his shoulders and walked away into a back office, leaving us standing at the desk.

As my memory slowly came back, I recalled that I had seen these men visiting one of the apartments on the top floor of our building, strangely the man who lived there moved out just a couple of days later. I knew that he worked at a Dry Cleaners in Artarmon, so I took myself up there & when he saw me he said" If you come here again, you'll get more of the same you FUCKING DIRTY POOFER, I hope you die of AIDS!"

In approx. 2002, I was again attacked in my own building in North Sydney.

This time I had seen someone come into the garbage area. I had seen him in the reflection of the convex mirror in the car park. He was looking behind the bins & inside the defunct incinerator and around my new motor scooter.

I knew that we had a known drug dealer living on the first floor of the building, so I assumed that this was what this person was looking for.

I went down and as I approached my scooter he lashed out at me, punching my on the right side of my face, shouting homophobic rants at me.

I picked up a stick & started to chase him calling out to some passers by, to call the cops.

They apprehended the person & kept him until the police had arrived. The police took him away.

I then went to investigate what he was looking for, but I didn't find anything until a couple of days later, when I found a bag of what I can only surmise was marihuana as it was green & herb like. I disposed of the bag with the next garbage collection.

I called the police station telling them this, to be told that they wanted to charge me for assault, whilst I was defending myself.

A couple of days later, I was told that the drug dealer who lived in unit 2 on the 1st floor was out on parole from Long Bay Prison.

I took myself up to Chatswood, to speak to the Parole officer , telling her what had transpired.

This of course was whilst I still had a badly bruised face.

The very next day he was gone from the apartment.

I have lived with this depression, PTSD agoraphobia, etc. and it has totally ruined my life.

I cannot go out alone to unknown places, even during the day. I haven't been to the Opera, or Theatre or Cinema by myself since 1995. These were all things I loved to do.

Because of this, I have not been able to find a partner.

Because I had to leave work long before retirement age, I missed out on a decent superannuation and it is only since I received an inheritance from my parents, that I have been able to have my own apartment in Rosebery.

I have missed so much in my life all because of societies hatred of gay men & women.

I am a Christian & I believe God made me this way, I just wish he or she would tell me why. Maybe they will when I meet them.

I think we need to have a task force, the same as we do for violence against women.

I believe that we should be given an apology from the Police for their lack of care & understanding and for the lack of enquiries into the death by violence of so many of our brothers and sisters.

Stewart South