

# GRAI Matters

June 2014



Training in full swing  
CDC - What does it mean for you?  
New Board Members

Who is TED?  
The Apple Tree  
GRAI Out and About



# Letter from the Chair

This quarter has been a very busy period for GRAI as we have set in motion our 'Right to Belong' Training Project for service providers in the Aged Care sector. This project, part of a national initiative through the LGBTI Health Alliance, aims to promote a better understanding of the needs of LGBTI people and improve providers' capacity and confidence to deliver inclusive, best practice services.

The Project Launch, held at the Northbridge Hotel on 6 May, attracted a good crowd of people from the LGBTI community and also management and carers from aged care service providers. Our Guest Speaker, Dr Gavi Ansara from the LGBTI Health Alliance, provided valuable insights particularly into the special needs of older Trans and Intersex people.

The Train-the-Trainers session on 23 and 24 May attracted 14 potential trainers from WA, and we were also joined by 4 people from South Australia who will deliver the training in their home state. The material was delivered by two trainers from ACON (Aids Council of NSW), who led us through this very comprehensive package.

To guide the project, we have also established a Project Management Group (PMG), consisting of 3 GRAI Board members and others with expertise in the Aged Care sector. [see page 7] Project Coordinator, Dr Susan Harwood, is coordinating bookings for the 1-day training sessions, which are funded by the Commonwealth Department of Social Services and therefore incur no cost to recipients. Enquiries about bookings can be made through [training@grai.org.au](mailto:training@grai.org.au)

Our first training session was delivered at the Alexander Library on 12 June. Despite being our 'guinea pigs', the participants (most of whom were from Brightwater Care Group) gave extremely positive feedback regarding their workshop experience, although one found the material quite challenging. However, as service providers now have legal obligations under new Commonwealth legislation, it is important for providers to understand what is entailed to provide safe services to their LGBTI clients.

To promote the Training Project, we have been busy networking with a range of organisations, which has also opened up some interesting opportunities for the future. For example, a meeting with Mayor of Vincent,



John Carey, has led to an offer to hold a seniors' information session at the City of Vincent on 22nd October 2014. Conversations with Alzheimers Australia have led to plans to collaborate on holding a forum for GPs and residential care managers. A meeting with Southcare CEO, Nicky Howe, has also opened the door for potential use of Southcare facilities for GRAI events. (Watch this space for more information on these developments).

### **Expanding horizons**

Another very exciting development in this quarter has been the influx of new talent into the GRAI Board. Expanding in new directions is unwelcome when applied to waistlines, but terrific when applied to GRAI, and we are delighted to welcome 5 new Board members with new energy and skills to help us meet the challenges ahead. We have a number of projects we would like to progress, particularly to promote social inclusion for older LGBTI people. As we move into the role of training provider, this simultaneously spreads

our energies more thinly and also stimulates new opportunities, so a stronger Board is timely and essential! [More about our new recruits on page 9]

### **Jude Comfort**

On the subject of expanding horizons, Jude Comfort, our GRAI colleague (and previous Chair), has been cycle touring around Europe ('reclaiming gap years for people of all ages') and is due to return to Australia at the end of July. Although we can't compete with cycle paths along the Rhine or the mists of the Outer Hebrides, we look forward to welcoming her return, refreshed and ready to participate in the next adventures of GRAI!

Warm welcome too, to new readers of GRAI Matters, we hope you enjoy your journey with us as we work to usher in more positive environments for LGBTI elders.

- June Lowe, GRAI Chair

## **Val's Cafe Update**

Next year we hope our current training project will be complemented by a second training program adapted from the How2 Aged Care Program being conducted by Val's Café at the Australian Research Centre in Sex, Health and Society, at La Trobe University.

As reported in last edition of GRAI Matters, we are auditing the five training sessions delivered by Pauline Cramer and Catherine Barrett of Val's Cafe. The second session on 8 April was attended by GRAI Board members June Lowe and Wendy Bennett, and the third session on 29 May by June Lowe and Dee O'Neill. As 'auditors', we participate the workshops alongside the 40 or so participants from various Victorian aged care agencies and learn from their responses as well as from the workshop materials.

The second session focused on Cultural Safety, which builds on cultural awareness (understanding older LGBTI history and culture) and takes further steps to

understand the role of the individual and power relationships. Participants were given a staff survey to take back to their organisations, which will form the basis of their future planning, identifying their strengths and challenges. They were also asked to work on a Program Logic Model (action plan) identifying resources and activities they will need to undertake to achieve a safe and inclusive service.

The third session worked on Professional Development and considerations for an LGBTI education strategy. Workshop participants were knowledgeable about the potential within their organisations and showed plenty of creativity in thinking of practical ways to implement these strategies.

We look forward to the final two workshops in July and September, which will be attended by June Lowe and Susan Harwood.

# TED Talks



## Who is TED and why is he always talking?

TED is a nonprofit organisation devoted to spreading ideas. They ask passionate, interesting people to give short, powerful talks (usually 18 minutes or less). TED began in 1984 as a conference where Technology, Entertainment and Design converged, and today TED covers almost all topics — from science to business to global issues — in more than 100 languages.

You can listen to these passionate and interesting speakers for free - just visit [www.ted.com](http://www.ted.com) and be prepared to listen and watch awesome individuals to talk about just about anything. We have selected a small sample of topics to start your TED journey.

## Life's third act

Within this generation, an extra 30 years have been added to our life expectancy — and these years aren't just a footnote or a pathology. In this talk, Jane Fonda asks how we can think about this new phase of our lives.

[http://www.ted.com/talks/jane\\_fonda\\_life\\_s\\_third\\_act](http://www.ted.com/talks/jane_fonda_life_s_third_act)

## Older people are happier

In the 20th century we added an unprecedented number of years to our lifespans, but is the quality of life as good? Surprisingly, yes! At TEDxWomen psychologist Laura Carstensen shows research that demonstrates that as people get older they become happier, more content, and have a more positive outlook on the world.

[http://www.ted.com/talks/laura\\_carstensen\\_older\\_people\\_are\\_happier](http://www.ted.com/talks/laura_carstensen_older_people_are_happier)

## How to live to be 100+

To find the path to long life and health, Dan Buettner and team study the world's "Blue Zones," communities whose elders live with vim and vigor to record-setting age. In his talk, he shares the 9 common diet and lifestyle habits that keep them spry past age 100.

[http://www.ted.com/talks/dan\\_buettner\\_how\\_to\\_live\\_to\\_be\\_100](http://www.ted.com/talks/dan_buettner_how_to_live_to_be_100)



# GRAI Out and About

The training project has given added impetus to be out and about promoting the cause of visibility for older LGBTI people.

## **Sex in Residential Care, Advocare**

Interestingly, GRAI are now not the only people to be talking about LGBTI rights in ageing, and on 2nd May, June Lowe attended a forum organised by Advocare, 'Sex in Residential Care', which had a significant LGBTI focus.

The forum was presented by Advocare's Sarah Patterson, although June presented information on law reform and issues around LGBTI aged care.

As Sarah Patterson highlighted, although older people theoretically retain the same human rights as everyone else, in practice these are often violated in aged care. To an audience of mostly residential care providers, she cautioned, 'Remember, they do not live in your workplace, we work in their homes'. Sarah called for respect for privacy and non-judgmental attitudes from staff of residential aged care, and a need to prioritise residents' rights to sexual activity. Although it is not uncommon for a service provider to report sexual relationships to a resident's family, she emphasised that this is unnecessary, and that to do so breaches the resident's rights.

The issue of consent becomes complicated when one party has (decision-making) capacity and the other does not. In that instance, sexual activity is legally defined as an assault. However, defining 'capacity' is a vexed question, and the issue becomes even more complex if neither party is deemed to have capacity.

Many residential aged care facilities provide too few opportunities for privacy and intimacy, so there is much room for improvement. Many facilities also do not have well developed policies on how to cater for

intimacy and sexuality needs, relying on false stereotypes of older people being asexual, despite statistics showing that

♣62% of men in aged care facilities have had sexual intercourse

♣30% of women in aged care facilities have had sexual intercourse

♣29% of men aged over 80 years are sexually active

♣25% of women aged over 80 years are sexually active.

Although intimacy gives great benefits to the individuals concerned, there are many barriers to expressions of sexuality in residential care. Attitudes and values of staff play a major role, as do environmental factors such as practices of care along communal lines, and high levels of surveillance for safety reasons. With greater awareness, better training and sensitive policies, these issues can be mitigated. It is good to hear that some conversations are underway, and attitudes about the 'in/appropriateness' of older age sexuality are being challenged.

## **Community West training video**

Community West has been commissioned by COTA Australia to develop a suite of training tools for community care staff to help them work within the new 'consumer directed care' (CDC) model. A series of training videos are being filmed as part of this production and GRAI was asked to speak on LGBTI elders. A recording of over 30 minutes will be cut down to only 2 or 3 minutes, so it is really just an opportunity to raise the issue rather than a time to unpack problems or solutions. However, we hope that this will attract further interest in the National Training Project.



*Photo from LASA (Leading Age Services Australia) Conference - 17 June 2014 L-R Sarah Patterson, Advocate; June Lowe, GRAI; Amar Varsani, ILC Multicultural Aged Care Services; Jackie Dillon, Second Avenue Aged Care.*

### **Leading Age Services (LASA) Conference**

The inaugural LASA WA conference and exhibition was held 15-17 June at the Esplanade Hotel in Fremantle. Invited to speak at the CALD/LGBTI session, GRAI Chair June Lowe gave a presentation on Caring for LGBTI Residents. Describing 'minority stress' in a heteronormative environment of aged care, June explained the potential negative effects of 'treating everyone the same'. Unless positive signals are sent by the

facility or service, an LGBTI client is unlikely to feel it is a safe place to disclose their identity, and may retreat into the closet to avoid risking disapproval or discrimination. Explicit policies must be developed by the facility to establish practices within the organisation which will protect LGBTI clients and ensure they can feel welcomed and supported.

The session elicited some interesting discussion, with participants keen to explore ways to respond to LGBTI clients. We hope there will be some follow up with some organisations able to undertake GRAI's full day training.

### **All things Queer (RTRFM)**

Among the media work carried out this quarter, June Lowe was interviewed (9 June) by Tim Lanzon and Serika Camillerion of RTRFM's 'All things Queer'. The young DJs, like many younger people, surprised even themselves by admitting the issues of LGBTI ageing had not yet crossed their minds, although Serika revealed she harboured an image of herself as a curmudgeonly old lady, sitting in a corner, cussing out other care home residents! Crossing the intergenerational divide is always fun - love to do some more!

## **What is Consumer-Directed Care (CDC), and what does it mean for older LGBTI Australians?**

You can find out more about CDC and what it will mean for older LGBTI Australians at the National LGBTI Health Alliance from a great article written by Dr Gavi Ansara. Gavi spoke at the Training Program Launch about the affects of CDC on the Aged Care sector and how it will impact on the special needs of trans and intersex elders.

<http://lgbtihealthupdate.com/2014/04/03/what-is-consumer-directed-care-cdc-and-what-does-it-mean-for-older-lgbti-australians/>

# News from around the world...

## UK Channel 4 - Older LGBTI in Care Homes

It's a problem all over the world - Older LGBTI people are frightened about having to head back into the closet after many years of living the life they deserve.

More than anything, they're terrified about the prospect of going into care - they know friends who have been so badly treated by residents and staff, they've gone back into the closet. Part of the problem they claim, is a lack of training.

Opening Doors manager Stacey Halls said: "Many younger LGBT people simply aren't very aware of the immense difficulty that many older LGBT people have and continue to face as a result of decades of discrimination.

<http://www.channel4.com/news/lesbian-gay-bisexual-old-age-care-homes-abuse-video>

For more information on this story visit:

[www.openingdoorslondon.org.uk](http://www.openingdoorslondon.org.uk) and

[www.stonewall.org.uk](http://www.stonewall.org.uk)



*Geoff Davies, June Lowe, Dr Gavi Ansara*

## In Defense of Aging

Why are gay men so afraid of getting older? Ageism is alive and well in the LGBTI community.

<http://www.advocate.com/commentary/2013/08/27/op-ed-defense-aging>

## Transgender Orange is the New Black

"There's not just one trans story. There's not just one trans experience and I think what they need to understand is that not everybody who is born feels that their gender identity is in alignment with what they're assigned at birth, based on their genitalia. If someone needs to express their gender in a way that is different, that is okay, and they should not be denied healthcare. They should not be bullied. They don't deserve to be victims of violence. That's what people need to understand, that it's okay and that if you are uncomfortable with it, then you need to look at yourself."

<http://time.com/132769/transgender-orange-is-the-new-black-laverne-cox-interview/>

## Global Views on Homosexuality

A look across the world on attitudes to homosexuality with breakdowns according to age and gender - Australia looks good, Russia not so much.

<http://www.pewglobal.org/2013/06/04/the-global-divide-on-homosexuality/#gender-and-age-and-views-of-homosexuality>



## **Battling Misconceptions in the LGBTI Community**

Rio Veradonir, a bisexual Oregon man, compares biphobia from within the LGBT community to homophobia from mainstream culture. “Gay men need to look deep into their hearts and remember how it feels when people question their identity,” Veradonir says. “Being gay is not a choice. And neither is being bi. And when certain gay men belittle bisexual men by doubting our sincerity, they are, sadly, doing the same thing to us that some straight people do to them.”

“I don’t think they mean to be hypocrites. But if they really think about it, they will realize that their personal experiences are not universal and that biphobia in the gay community results from ignorance in the same way that homophobia does generally,” Veradonir continues. “In the end, I believe that gay men want the same things I want - fairness and equality for all people regardless of their sexual orientation. By working together, we can achieve that.”

<http://instinctmagazine.com/article/we-exist-bisexual-men-misconceptions-stereotypes-bi-invisibility>

## **Bigotry doesn't increase with age**

Contrary to comments from the UK Independent Party Leader and candidates, most people over 70 are not “uncomfortable with homosexuality”.

[http://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2014/may/13/nigel-farage-bigotry-age-ukip-leader-older-people-anti-gay?CMP=tw\\_t\\_gu](http://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2014/may/13/nigel-farage-bigotry-age-ukip-leader-older-people-anti-gay?CMP=tw_t_gu)

## **National LGBTI Ageing & Aged Care Strategy Implementation**

<http://lgbtihealthupdate.com/2014/04/03/national-lesbian-gay-bisexual-transgender-and-intersex-ageing-aged-care-strategy-implementation/>

## **Aging With Grace in the Gay Community**

[http://www.huffingtonpost.com/william-dameron/aging-with-grace-in-the-gay-community\\_b\\_2403570.html](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/william-dameron/aging-with-grace-in-the-gay-community_b_2403570.html)

# **Right to Belong - Looking after the training program**

A Project Management Group (PMG) has been formed to guide the work to the Training Project and to ensure the project will be a success and meet our contractual obligations with the LGBTI Health Alliance. Project Coordinator, Susan Harwood, will report to the PMG and be assisted by their support.

We would like to sincerely thank the following people for agreeing to give of their valuable time and expertise: Beth Cameron (CEO Leading Age Services - LASA), Ken Marston, (CEO, The Council on the Aged - COTA); Anne Zubrick (Brightwater Board member), and Steve Singer (PMG Chair and community representative). Also 3 GRAI Board members sit on the PMG: Brett Tizard, Dee O'Neill and Leonie Stickland. Everyone involved already has a lot on their plate, so we appreciate the extra commitment. As they say, if you want something done, ask a busy person...



# The Apple Tree - Coming Out is Hard Enough... Imagine Having to Go Back In



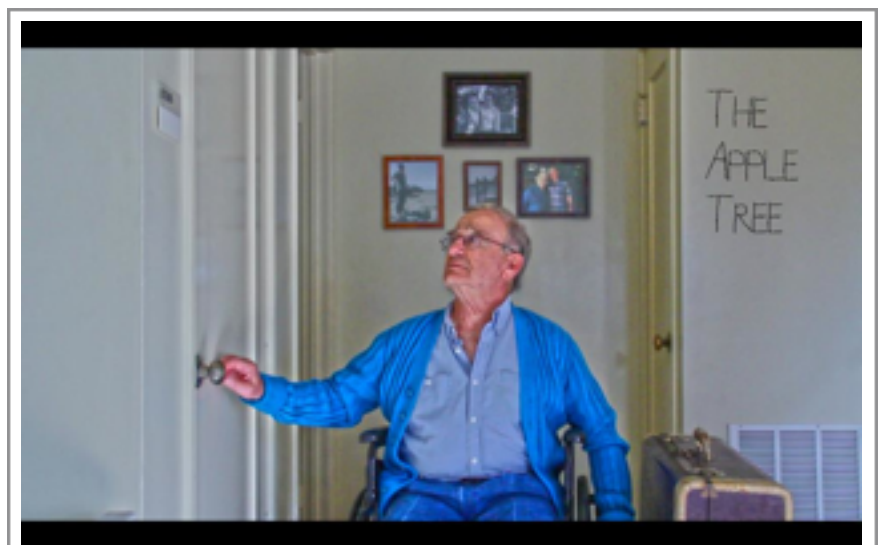
When Gabe and Jonathan fall in love in the 1940s, they decide to spend their lives together in secret.

But when Jonathan unexpectedly passes away years later, Gabe is faced with the fact that many Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender elders face when they move into retirement homes...he must return into the closet.

This award-winning short film from Humanity Pictures is a tearful reminder of why GRAI exists. No one should have to re-live the homophobia of days-gone-by when they move into residential care.

It is available to view online at

<http://vimeo.com/39510775>





# Welcome to the Board

Welcome aboard to our new GRAI Board members, 2 of whom fill casual vacancies (and will be up for election at the AGM) and 3 of whom fill positions as community reps.

The additional energy brought in by these new Board members is invaluable as GRAI moves towards being a larger and more complex organisation. In addition to the current training project for the aged care sector, we have much work to do in the community to break down barriers to social inclusivity for older LGBTI people wherever they are living.

Sincere thanks to our new members for joining us at this important time in LGBTI history: we look forward to productive times ahead!

## **Helen Makeham**

Helen comes to GRAI bringing a wealth of experience of working with the community. Helen works as a Guardian at the Office of the Public Advocate which promotes and protects human rights in WA. She has previously worked in a community legal centre, and established a disability employment centre in Mandurah.

## **Conrad Liveris**

Conrad is an adviser, advocate and researcher on gender and generations. He currently works with organisations assisting them with policy and business development. He is an emerging researcher on government relations, marketing and HR, and sought after for comment on discrimination, inequity and economics.



Conrad currently serves on the policy advice board for the Australian Youth Affairs Coalition, and as the Chair of board of The Cutting Room Floor theatre company.

## **Lisa Rynne**



Lisa has worked with Brightwater Care Group since 2011, and is currently working on the transition processes to Consumer Directed Care to ensure consumers provided with solid and quality information and support. Lisa has previously worked in the mining and finance industry and has extensive knowledge around building new opportunities.



Lisa has a good understanding of the aged care industry and also hopes to assist the GRAI Board to develop a sustainable support network for older LGBTI people.

### **Cettina Raccuia**

Cettina works at the Central Institute of Technology, involved in the operational management of a number of academic areas including Community Services, Aged Care, and Disability Services. She is also in the process of completing her Masters of Business leadership and is engaged in the Young Leaders program, operated by Southcare.

Cettina recently took a 6 month sabbatical travelling across Europe and the United States, and is a firm believer in the inspiration and self-knowledge that can be gained from travelling. She is passionate about social inclusion and community development and has an interest in building capacity and seeing people thrive in society.

### **Dave Nicholson**



Dave is a Business Sales Manager for Sterihealth, and has good connections within the health sector. Wanting to contribute to the LGBTI community in Perth, Dave was introduced to us by an old Board member, and is attracted to GRAI's role as an agent for social change. Originally from New Zealand, Dave has been in Perth for several years and is enthusiastic about fundraising events, networking and community involvement.



*Speakers and guests at the recent launch of the GRAI Aged Care Training program - Right to Belong*  
*Rear L-R: Beth Cameron, Ray Glickman, Terry Pitsikas*  
*Front L-R: Dr Viv Cass, Dr Susan Harwood, Geoff Davies, June Lowe, Dr Gavi Ansara, Graham Lovelock*

# GRAI



## GLBTI Rights in Ageing Inc.

Thanks to Keturah for the front page picture capturing the participants in the first open training session held at the Alexander Library Building.

Do you have some news that we should share with the rest of GRAI? Contact the Editor, Brett Tizard, at the address below.

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GLBTI Rights in Ageing Inc  
PO Box 514  
North Perth WA 6906  
Email: [info@grai.org.au](mailto:info@grai.org.au)  
Web: [www.grai.org.au](http://www.grai.org.au)

GRAI was established in August 2005 to explore the development of retirement and aged care services and facilities for older and ageing people of diverse sexualities and gender identities.

We want a world where older GLBTI will enjoy a rewarding quality of life. We want to create a responsive and inclusive mature age environment that promotes and supports a quality life for older people of diverse sexualities and gender identities.

GRAI is keen to explore opportunities to talk with current providers of retirement and aged care services, government agencies and industry groups to ensure the issues of GLBTI ageing and retirement are being taken seriously.

GRAI continues to work to establish successful partnerships with providers, services and agencies that acknowledge the needs of older GLBTI people and encouraging the GLBTI community to support these organisations when they need to access relevant services.