

THE SEAHORSE SOCIETY OF N.S.W. INC.
March 21, 2009

RITE OF PASSAGE NO 6.

This presentation is to follow on from the last “Rite of Passage” no 5 and also follows the launch release by the Federal Human Rights Commissioner or their Sex and Gender Diversity Project in Canberra.

I am now assuming that people from the major trans-community, representing the Societies, Social clubs, and Support organisations have now replied to the request by the Human Rights to contact and register their organisation with the Human Rights Commission, and to submitted a description of their aims and programs of support.

What was discussed was to put this information into a type of directory. See no.5 for a more detailed explanation. The advantage, of taking this direction, was that all groups could now communicate with each other, participate in discussions, learn about each other’s operations, and also share our information resources and our information networks. So far, this has only been attempted on a “chance meeting at conferences” type of situation, where delegates exchange business cards, phone numbers and email addresses.

So once this Federal Directory is in place, what is the next step? How could this to be used to facilitate the movement forward direction?

The Directory would a short-cut reference point for all our communication needs between all communities, giving all of us a basic description of each other’s organisation, contact points etc. It would also combine organisations into a position of where people, seeking support for any diversity of gender or sex or both, would have access directly to the organisation that they feel at that time they need or are identifying in.

Using one our own Seahorse Society Support systems as an example, and this, for us, is a typical weekly approach and cry for help. An individual approaches us by email/phone or on our website, expressing experiencing a personal difficulty with (gender

/sexual) and is now in emotion turmoil or having relationship difficulties etc.

I explain that we are a Society for cross-dressers and present some basic descriptions of this phenomena. However, then this person explains that they are not sure if they are “gay” and that they are actually living in Adelaide, and emphasizes they require their needs to be met yesterday! They want to meet and speak with someone: whether it is a counsellor or a member of any organisation who can give them some answers and direction.

Because we have our own small directory which we have put together over last year, we are able to assist this person immediately by giving them the names of the main groups in South Australia, as well as the names and phone numbers of 2 counsellors who are up on the latest gender and sexual issues, who have their professional accredited practices in SA.

This resource of ours is very basic and simple, but it has grown from the communications between the committee personnel of our Society in N.S.W. and the counterpart personnel of other organisations throughout Australia and New Zealand.

Having said that, I recognize that I still have only basic contacts with some groups and that there are a lot more support groups and organisations out there, in all states. What contacts I do have are just the tip of the iceberg to coin a phrase. At the moment I have 57 contacts and still growing. This is why I keep asking for everyone who identifies as trans-community to join in being part of this movement, and to help me with this compiling and construction of this National Directory.

One point I will make again, and I have often made this point before, is even though we are communicating with each other, sharing ideas and recourses, and simply learning what we are all about as individual groups, we must maintain our own individuality of existence and structure. I am not advocating that we must all unite under one banner having only one answer, one structure, one leading committee, etc., but we do need to come together as a trans-community for the one purpose, to make the most of this opportunity presented to us by the Human Rights Commission – to learn about each other – to help others in the general public

understand and tolerate our diversity, and then to integrate with the rest of the Australian Society. With Laws and protocols being put forward already –to assist us – surely we will all benefit from this experience.

I also realize that there are many issues being presented –and these are as wide in their differences as exists a wide diversity of gender and sexual issues and practices. But there also exists a lot of common areas that we all have experienced – whether they are problems of relationships or social behaviour, the legal and medical fall out and confusion, to lack of social recognition and experiencing intolerance, and adverse attitudes from others. We now have the opportunity to correct a lot of these problem areas.

In conclusion. The Human Rights Commission has begun this year’s developments with a very concise outline – and may I encourage all that read this paper to continue to send in ideas and descriptions of problems that we are all facing within our own organisations and Australian States to the Federal Human Rights .If we don’t support this venture –and be a part of this growth –how can we expect any change.

I also, with respect, ask any of you that I contact to please (and I apologize for my simplicity of expression) continue to spread the word – and if you find even in your own Australian State – (and this includes New Zealand) an organisation, club or Society that identifies as trans–community etc please when you communicate with me –include a foot note, contact email address –phone etc – so that I can keep adding to the Directory that I am attempting to put together. This also includes counsellor organisations, practices – which identify as supporting the trans–community. Again please feel free to use any part of the material that I send out in these documents – if you feel it will assist us.

To present a point of interest – The UK has just announced that they also are on a similar path of registration of their own trans organisations, with the end result to become a Directory of Support Contacts. They are also looking at the use of ID cards – as part of their identity recognition program. Sounds familiar>

May I again thank everyone who communicates with me and shares their journey and progress? This has helped me, as well as my

organisation, to understand some of the complexities of sex and gender that are presented, and that we all experience, as we journey through this diverse world of ours.

With regards, Phil/Julia (President of the Seahorse Society of N.S.W. INC.