

# Reflections

by James, an HIV+ worker

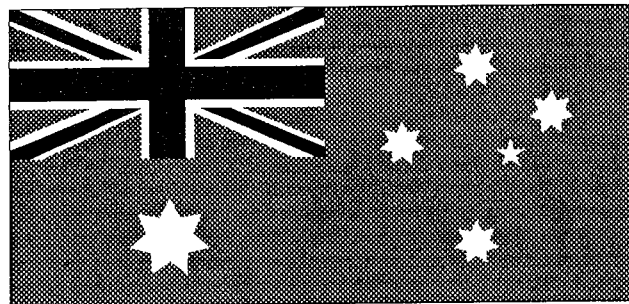
I found out that I was HIV+ in January 1988 at the tender age of 17. I was already equipped with an innate survival instinct after being forced out of home at 16 and not having anyone to confide in, not even friends. I was fortunate to find the services of a free psychologist at the W.A. AIDS Council, without whom I probably would have fallen apart.

Having moved to Sydney, without a job and no money, I found myself at Bretts Boys where I began my career. Eventually I was to drop off the roster and I suspect it was because I was sprung being under age and with false I.D. Following this I spent the next year and a half working at Thoroughbreds with my flatmates but after having a falling out with them I left.

Next stop was Buddies where I began to save money to set myself up successfully as a Private Escort. What a relief to get away from the drama of agency life.

I feel that HIV+ workers should have the right to work without being hassled. I tried to stop working last year for a while, studied remedial massage and aimed to set up a business as a masseur. I didn't bother going on the dole or looking for a job so I suppose I was still secretly relying on the luck of sexwork finding me.

I am currently taking care of my health with AZT, vitamins, exercise and meditation, but I believe the support of non judgemental friends and other workers is helping me the most. Taking the first step in opening up to others is always the hardest, but once you do it makes the world of difference.



## Parents FLAG

Hassles with Parents or Family?

"Parents FLAG" is a group of parents of gays and lesbians who want to help other parents understand their gay kids. "We are parents and friends of lesbians and gays. We are committed to help other parents learn what we have learned, to help change attitudes and create an environment of understanding so that all gay people can live with dignity and respect", says founder Heather Horntvedt.

"Parents of gays and lesbians are encouraged to call us to talk, ask questions and especially to attend our rap sessions and meetings, which are confidential, warm and supportive."

"Parents FLAG" offers a wonderful opportunity for families, friends and gay people to learn and grow together. If you are gay and your parents can't hack it and you still haven't given up on them, or you just want to talk or get more info, give "Parents FLAG" a go.

All you have to do is phone

Heather 899 1101  
Marie 360 3250

### By Day



### By Night

