

Archive No. 45

Lesbian Action Group (LAG)

The first meeting of the Lesbian Action Group was held on 17 October 1978, at the Union Building at Melbourne Uni. LAG was started in order to provide a place for lesbians to meet regularly, to work politically around lesbian-specific issues and to organise social events for lesbians.

LAG met weekly every Tuesday evening and from February 1979 met at the Women's Cultural Palace. Discussions at these meetings ranged across a wide range of topics including legal status, wills, visiting rights in hospital, coming out, political actions, protests and demonstrations, prostitution and sex workers, health issues and lesbophobia.

Several working groups were formed including the Lesbian Health Group, the Speakers Group where lesbians were available to go to schools, community groups and organizations to talk about lesbianism, Lesbian Open House and the setting up of a telephone support and contact service for lesbians.

Social activities included Cricket and Tennis Days, Pool and Snooker Nights, discos and dances, including a Fifties Dance, Camping Trips, Boating Picnics, a Car Rally, the formation of a softball team the Radclyffe Runners and lots of parties.

LAG published the first Lesbian Resources Directory in 1979. And LAG's first birthday picnic in the Fitzroy Gardens on 21 October 1979, (which was featured in a negative article by Barbara Hooks in *The Age*) was a fun event with over 200 lesbians in attendance (even if some had to wear bags over their heads for fear of losing their jobs if they were identified).

As many members of LAG were politically aligned with the activities and actions of the WLM they were also members of other feminist action groups including WLS, WLN and WAAC, which meant that LAG and the WLM were closely associated. There were however many debates in LAG about the political or otherwise nature of LAG as a whole.

Even so, LAG was an extremely successful and supportive group for lesbians for the two years it was active and before it folded at a meeting on 11 November 1980.

A LAG sub-group, Lesbian Open House, that had been meeting on Thursday evenings as an introductory group for lesbians who were new to LAG, continued to meet as an autonomous

lesbian discussion group from February 1981 at the Women's Cultural Palace and later the WL Buildings. (reference Lesbian Open House 42).