

# **STIR IT UP**

## **Illawarra Lesbian Speakers Series**

### **Background**

- Lesbians Speak Out – A Needs Assessment of Lesbians Living and Working in the Illawarra

### **Report launched in 2000**

- Violence against Lesbians in the Illawarra  
- “Being out in this town, I don’t feel safe”

### **Lesbians Speak Out – A Needs Assessment of Lesbians Living and Working in the Illawarra**

- Domestic Violence also occurs in Lesbian relationships
- When lesbians are faced with a DV experience their issues in regards to access to services, social isolation, level of fear and need to find safety are distinctly different from heterosexual women

### **Stir it up**

- Stir it up - Illawarra Lesbian Speakers Series modelled on Lesbian Health Speakers Series. The project “Stir it Up has been run on 4 occasions in Sydney.
- Partnership between Lesbian Interagency, Violence Against Women Illawarra, ACON Illawarra, Illawarra Women’s Community Health Centre, Illawarra Legal Centre, Students Association of Wollongong University and Wollongong City Council
- Directed at women who have sex with women, women who are questioning their own sexuality and their women friends living in or visiting the Illawarra.

### **Project Aims**

- Share experiences, knowledge and information
- Identify issues of concern
- Develop supportive community relationships
- Formulate appropriate local responses to violence, discrimination and equal access to services

- How?
- Six events
- Speakers and MC's
- Café setting
- Drinks provided
- Discussion time

- Outcomes
  - Average 50 participants/café

Conclusions:

- Possible to mobilise people to talk about serious matters
  - Community development
  - Experience both for speaker and participants
- Space
  - Discussion of important matters