

MELBOURNE SCENE

Two important meetings took place in Melbourne during July. One discussed the formation of a Homosexual Law Reform Society. The other was a general meeting of Campaign Against Moral Persecution which considered a formal constitution, the election of officers and the question of regular general meetings. As the deadline for this edition of CAMP INK had closed before the meeting, a report will be included in the September issue.

HOMOSEXUAL LAW REFORM SOCIETY

As a result of discussions initiated in March by the Victorian Humanist Society and the Socio-Legal Studies Society; a general meeting was held on July 12 to form a Homosexual Law Reform Society. About seventy people met at the Guild Theatre, Melbourne University, to elect a 'protem committee' which is to draw up a constitution, approach interested bodies and convene a general meeting in two or three months' time.

At the time of writing this committee hadn't advised us of its postal address or membership fee. Until a box number is announced we will forward on any enquiries to H.L.R.S. In a handout distributed at the meeting the convenors explained the need for a law reform organisation thus:-

Public attitudes towards homosexual conduct have become more tolerant over the past few

years. Nevertheless, recent surveys show that at least two-thirds of the population still strongly oppose any changes in the existing laws. By comparison, proposals to liberalise the laws regarding censorship or abortion have received a more favourable response. Why this resistance to change? It may be that many of the opinions held about homosexuality are based on misinformation, fear and prejudice, and yet it is just these opinions which collectively ensure that the law remains as it is.

If any attempt is to be made to alter these opinions so that a more rational approach to the whole topic is possible, then it is obvious that the public must have access to far more information about homosexuality than it can now obtain. Reasoned arguments, both for and against any proposed legal changes must be given a full public airing.

One cannot expect the legislative to repeal a law unless it has a reasonable mandate from the people. This may take time but it seems to be the only fair way of achieving these aims. Without some organisation working towards this end, all indications are that things will remain very much as at present.

Our man Alan Beggs represents us on the interim committee. Other organisations represented include the Council of Civil Liberties, and the Australian Lesbian Movement.