

WORLD news

AUSTRALIA

Gay Australian members of Parliament will be able to take their lovers on official overseas trips at government expense under new regulations that the *Herald Sun* newspaper learned about via a Freedom of Information request and reported June 11.

Gay Green MP Bob Brown fought for the change. "I am the only MP in history whose long-term partner has had to pay to accompany the MP on overseas work trips," he said.



Thanks to new regulations in Australia, gay politician Bob Brown will be able to take his partner with him on official overseas trips at government expense

Gay Games registration has closed for some sports that are full, the Adelaide gay newspaper *Blaze* reported June 7.

About 12,400 athletes from 52 countries are expected at the 2002 Games in Sydney. No more participants can register for squash, swimming, sailing, physique, badminton, golf, men's basketball or men's Division B volleyball.

Games officials are unhappy that registrants are 72 percent male. They were hoping for a 50/50 gender split.

FIJI

A total of 30 gay men and lesbians from Fiji have been awarded free air tickets, lodging and registration to attend the Gay Games in Sydney but still might not be able to go because they don't have the money for visa fees and other paperwork, Agence France-Presse reported June 11.

Games organizers handed out the scholarships in hopes of increasing participation by indigenous people. But no one in Fiji is willing to help with the incidental expenses.

"There was absolutely no response from those we approached for assistance," said Luisa Tora, who hopes to attend the Games with her lover, Sangeeta Singh. She said they targeted businesses and other entities that have funded sporting efforts.

SPAIN

Spain has denied entry visas to Third World delegates to the XIV International AIDS Conference scheduled for July 7 to 12 in Barcelona, according to John Tallada, the gathering's local community chair. "It is a whopping contradiction as it is scholarship holders and people from developing countries, many of whom are from nongovernmental organizations or are HIV-positive and whose expenses are paid by the conference thanks to a program that the Spanish government has helped to create," he said.

Delegates who have not received visas hail from Bangladesh, Colombia, India, the Ivory Coast, Kenya, Pakistan, Uganda and elsewhere.

"The International AIDS Conference is not held in the U.S.A. because of this kind of problem," said Shaun Mellors, the event's community coordinator. "When Barcelona was chosen, we were guaranteed that participants would not have any problem."

Tallada called on the Spanish Ministry of Foreign Affairs to intervene immediately and force Spanish consulates around the world to issue the delegates' visas.

NAMIBIA

President Sam Nujoma apparently likes gays more than he used to.

Asked June 7 by the German wire service Deutsche Presse-Agentur about his previous gay-bashing and his relationship with his nation's queers, he said: "Well, certainly that is not our culture.... You can keep your culture, and I keep mine."

But he added: "I think human relationships

must be promoted to respecting each other's culture and way of life. We get along."

That's a far cry from statements Nujoma has made at home, which include: "In Namibia we don't allow lesbianism or homosexuality.... We will combat this with vigor—we will make sure that Namibia will get rid of lesbianism and homosexuality.... Police are ordered to arrest you and deport you and imprison you.... Those who are practicing homosexuality in Namibia are destroying the nation. Homosexuals must be condemned and rejected in our society.... It is the devil at work."

UNITED KINGDOM

All 6,750 firefighters in London will be questioned about their sexual orientation in a new internal census.

The form will ask whether the individual is "an out-at-work lesbian, gay man or bisexual." The London Fire Brigade and Emergency Planning Authority says the answers will help it reflect the community it serves but will not lead to quotas.

CANADA

The Superior Court of Justice in Ontario ordered a print shop June 17 to stop discriminating and pay \$3,250 to the Canadian Lesbian and Gay Archives for refusing to print business cards and letterhead containing the word "gay."



Scott Brockie

The owner of Imaging Excellence claimed accepting the job violated his religious beliefs, but the judges said it was unreasonable to conclude that Scott Brockie's "core...religious belief" could have been affected by producing the documents. The ruling upheld an earlier decision by an Ontario Board of Inquiry.

Representatives from the Anglican diocese of New Westminster, British Columbia, voted 215-129 to offer gay union ceremonies in churches June 15.

The diocese includes Vancouver and other locales in the southwestern part of the province. About 80 parishes were represented in the vote.

According to the Canadian Press wire service, New Westminster is the nation's first Anglican diocese to take such a step. American Anglicans, known as Episcopalians, have rejected similar proposals on a national level, although the Episcopal Diocese of Delaware offers gay union ceremonies.

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