



AMBASSADORS &
BRIDGE BUILDERS
INTERNATIONAL

July 2015
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CEO ANNUAL REPORT

Ambassadors & Bridge Builders International (ABBI) has continued its growth to be a significant voice in the LGBTI/faith and religion space within Australia and beyond.

There is no more volatile space than the interaction of sexuality and faith and the damage done to individuals' lives is immeasurable.

ABBI's mission and commitment is now more relevant than ever.

Ambassadors & Bridge Builders International (ABBI) is committed to ending unnecessary suffering caused by ignorance and misinformation about sexual orientation and gender identity. ABBI's mission is to create understanding and acceptance for LGBTI (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex) people, empower community members and build bridges with churches, religious organisations and leaders.

Highlights

Website

The beginning of 2015 saw the launch of our website www.abbi.org.au. All of the CEO's previous work from several blogs has been transferred over to the website. This central position on the internet has proved extremely helpful as anyone searching for information, articles and resources can locate them in the one place. We are particularly grateful to Tim Daly from [Oculuma](#) for the many hours he has given to make this a reality. It continues to be a dynamic site with regular [blog articles](#) being posted and [resources](#) added. The most recent resources have been [audio](#). More will be added as time and finance permits.

A Life of Unlearning 3rd edition launched



Since *A Life of Unlearning of learning* was first published in 2004, it has impacted the lives of literally 1,000's of people around the world. Many of those have been like the author, people from faith backgrounds who have struggled to come to terms with their sexual orientation in a church culture that has labelled gay people abominations, evil and perverts. The journey from gay shame to gay pride can be a long and torturous one.

A Life of Unlearning 2nd edition sold out some years ago and people were being charged outrageous amounts for second hand copies.

With the new technologies of Print on Demand and also eBooks this revised and updated edition will never sell out and continue to bring [healing](#) to LGBTI people from faith backgrounds and be a source of information and inspiration for our [straight](#) friends and family. The [launch in 2015](#) was an amazing success with over 200 attending ([Photo gallery here](#)).

YMCA International



Many Christian organisations have been challenged by the growing acceptance of LGBTI. Not all have handled this well. The YMCA is a well-known and long-standing organisation that does so much good in the world. I had the privilege of working with a microcosm of the organisation (12 representatives from parts of Africa, Asia, Europe, South America, USA, Canada) for several days in the Czech Republic. During that time, we developed 'safe space' principles to help move them along the journey to greater understanding and acceptance. It was a genuine honour to work with each of the individuals and assist them on the beginning of the journey. You can read Johan Vilhelm Eltvik, the Secretary General's, report on [his blog](#). Johan also wrote a glowing [endorsement](#) of *A Life of Unlearning*.

ACON Honour Awards 2015



Every year ACON hosts the [Honour Awards](#). The Honour Awards provides NSW's LGBTI community with an important opportunity to recognise excellence, and celebrate achievement within our community, as well as the difference that particular community members make in our lives.

Last year it was wonderful to not only be one of the four nominees but to actually win the Health and Wellbeing Award for over 20 years of providing leadership and support for LGBTI people of faith and for working to bring ex-gay/reparative/conversion therapy practices and organisations to an end in Australia. You can read more about the wonderful evening [here](#).

The above are just some highlights. Other activities too numerous to detail are:

- Radio and print media interviews
- Articles written for the gay press
- Speaking engagements at conferences and seminars
- Reaching out to commence dialogue with, religious organisations and church leaders including mega-church pastors and ongoing conversations with other church leaders. Because of its controversial nature, much of the dialogue work that ABBI does is behind the scenes and confidential. The evidence however is seen in changes in attitudes and beliefs.
- We continue to work towards the end of ex-gay/reparative/conversion organisations and practices in Australia.
- Responding to the many email inquiries for help and information
- Working one on one with individuals experiencing faith/sexuality conflict.

Social media

Social media continues to be an effective way of getting information out. Our philosophy is:

"The enemy is not individuals, churches, 'ex-gay' organisations or political parties; the enemy is ignorance. Change is created by focusing our energies on overcoming the latter instead of attacking the former."

Our social media profile has grown and is used regularly to distribute up to date and relevant information.

YouTube Channel	150 subscribers 137,125 views
ABBI Facebook page	1249 page likes
A Life of Unlearning Facebook page	1632 page likes
Twitter	1445 follower

LinkedIn	1574 connections
ABBI newsletter	1457 subscribers

Financial support

In the last twelve months ABBI has been granted [DGR status from the Australian Taxation Office](#), something not all Not for Profits are able to achieve. This means that all donations are now tax deductible. Our regular monthly supporters have remained at 25 individuals. Some have gone others joined. We are grateful for every single one who gives generously and sacrificially to this important and sometimes life-saving work. We have seen an increase in one off donations this year which has been wonderful. If all the people we have helped in some way gave \$1 a day we would be able to expand our work in a significant way and focus completely on the job at hand instead of diverting time and energies to fundraising. If you'd like to join us on this journey, then you can organise that on [this link](#). Maybe you'd like to consider being an ambassador for ABBI and helping with fundraising in some way. This would be wonderful. If this is of interest to you then please email us at info@abbi.org.au

A full auditors financial report is available. Once again just email us. Thank you to Martin Coxell who gave his time to complete the audit.

Finally, I must thank the [board](#) of ABBI. Our president, Ian Green, who was recently appointed the CEO of the Terrence Higgins Trust, Secretary Tim Daly who efficiently keeps our records in order, Treasurer Bill Wang from [Billyward Accounting](#), Hannah Baral, Anthony Barbara, Byron Barnes and Marguerite Foxon. I am so grateful for each and every board member for their encouragement, support, feedback, expertise and wisdom. They are a great team to work with.

We look forward to serving you, the LGBTI community and the faith community for another twelve months and into the future.



Anthony Venn-Brown

Founder and CEO

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