



A Queer Existence

The lives of young gay men in Aotearoa New Zealand

MARK BEEHRE



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GROWING UP GAY IN NEW ZEALAND OVER THE PAST 30 YEARS

Queer Existence is a major documentary project that uses photographic portraiture and oral history to record the life experiences of a group of 27 gay men born since the passing of the Homosexual Law Reform Act in 1986. In New Zealand, discrimination in work was outlawed in 1993, same-sex relationships were granted legal recognition in 2005, and marriage equality followed in 2013. In 2018 Parliament apologised to those whose lives had been blighted by criminal prosecution for expressing their sexuality.

As a result, these men have life experiences very different to earlier generations of gay New Zealand men. Even so, gay men growing up today may continue to feel stigmatised, and for many coming out is still a major hurdle. Candid, powerful and affecting, the first-person narratives of *A Queer Existence* form a valuable and unique insight into how gay men continue to have to step out of the main stream and face their own challenges as they forge their queer identities.

'A Queer Existence will remain a valuable record of a moment in time. Most obviously, it will provide a resource for young men seeking experiences of comparison but it is also a fine historical record of the individual and social attitudes of the early 21st century' — David Herkt, Kete

SALES POINTS

- Beyond the queer community and the families and friends of gay men, this book will appeal to those with an interest in social history
- The first-person style of the interviews makes them accessible to everyone
- Engaging portraits of each of the men
- Foreword by well-known academic Dr Chris Brickell
- Promotes understanding
- Important document of social history
- Valuable for teachers, counsellors, religious leaders, parents, whānau, policy-makers

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Mark Beehre trained as a specialist physician (MB, ChB, FRACP), and has continued to work part-time in medicine while studying and practising photography. He completed an MFA with first-class honours at Auckland University's Elam School of Fine Arts in 2014. His work sits at the intersection of documentary, portraiture and social history and is concerned with questions of identity, belonging and the lifelong quest for intimacy. Mark is the author of *Men Alone — Men Together*, and the artist's book *Returning Home — A Place to Stand*. His work has been exhibited at Photospace Gallery in Wellington, the Centre for Contemporary Photography in Melbourne, and Black Asterisk Gallery in Auckland.