



### **Welcome:**

Just in case you are wondering what has happened to our lovely newly designed newsletters, I am doing the newsletter this month because Pip is about to leave for her holiday. So, don't worry, Pip will be back next year.

We have now had our last meeting for the year which was well attended. It was great to see some parents who had been unable to attend previous meetings for a variety of reasons be part of the day, plus a couple of new faces and a big welcome to them. I hope the majority of parents who have passed through our doors in the last year feel they have been heard and assisted on their journey of support and acceptance of their loved one.

Please remember as I say every year "the best gift we can give our children for Christmas is the gift of support and acceptance." It costs nothing, but means so much to them. Also this is a great time to be inclusive and see where your son/daughter's partner is spending Christmas, and if he/she is alone include them in your celebrations. Your child will love you more for thinking about him/her.

### **General Information:**

I understand that many parents aren't interested in the political side of equality for our sons and daughters which is absolutely fine. So I would like it to be clearly understood that very little politics or discussion about lobbying is discussed at length in the meetings.

PFLAG's primary goal is to support parents and that is what we aim to do. So please don't feel our

meetings are political. I know the newsletters can be, but it's just to keep everyone informed about what we are doing.

PFLAG's three primary goals are parental support, community education and advocating for equality and as a parent body we have success talking to MPs about the need for equality and we need to continue doing this for as long as necessary.

### **Annual General Meeting:**

The meeting was also our AGM and I would like to say a big "thank you" to the Committee of 2011 for their efforts in helping to keep PFLAG Brisbane moving from strength to strength. Our new Committee has some of the same people - Pip is now our Secretary and Newsletter Editor, Gail has remained as the Vice President, Lynn is still Treasurer, but we now have an Assistant Treasurer, Maryanne as Lynn is unable to attend most of the meetings next year, but Lynn did a great job in 2011 and we don't want to lose her. Committee members are newcomers Janet, Debra and Donna with Erica, Margaret and Una happy to continue, which is great.

### **Office Hours:**

I will continue to go into the office on most Mondays, Margaret on some Tuesdays and Erica is still happy to be the Wednesday person. Our aim is to have the office hours 9.30am-12.30pm. Everyone please be aware that we are volunteers and sometimes life happens and the office remains closed, but please still call and leave a message or

feel free to call my mobile 0409-363-335 if you have queries or need assistance.

**Below is a brief summary of what we have done and achieved this year:**

- The Women's Weekly, January edition ran an article with parents from Brisbane and Sydney telling their stories which was a boost for PFLAG awareness.
- PFLAG were part recipients of the profits of the Big Gay Day in March and Great Bake Off in August which gave us funds of around \$15,000 in total. These were big day for all of those who volunteered but very rewarding.
- Maryanne did a submission to the Gambling Community Benefit Fund for a laptop and printer which we have now received.
- PFLAG mothers have been cooking and freezing meals for youth at risk from Open Doors and earlier this year we had a day where we all brought tinned or dry food that could be added to their pantry.
- We have a new look Newsletter which everyone seems happy with, thanks to Pip.
- The website continues to grow and we are continually being told how professional it looks, thanks to Andy.
- We aren't receiving so many phone calls from parents at the office, but we are becoming more of a source for information for schools, clinics and police. However on saying this, we have still maintained growing support for parents across Queensland with new support groups or contacts in Townsville, Gympie, Roma and Mt Isa, and with my travelling we now have new groups in Newcastle, Forster-Tuncurry and Canberra.
- This has been a huge political year for PFLAG. I have travelled to Canberra at least 10 times and met with approximately half of the MPs and Senators. I aim to have two other parents with me at all times to show it isn't just me who wants equality.
- I have travelled to Perth and Adelaide and to Melbourne and Sydney 3 or 4 times and Hobart and Newcastle twice to do Marriage Equality Workshops.
- I have spoken at all of the Equal Love Rallies in Brisbane.
- We arranged a lunch with Robert McClelland at the Brisbane Club where 28 parents got to talk to the Attorney General about marriage equality and what we want for our children. This was a great opportunity for parents who don't normally get a chance to have a voice.
- I did a submission on behalf of PFLAG for the Civil Partnership Bill introduced into Queensland Parliament a few weeks ago and spoke at the Hearing by teleconference as I was in Sydney at the time. We expect this to be voted on late November. I have also written several letters to State MPs about this issue encouraging them to vote favourably.
- I have written letters of complaint about the continuance of the "Homosexual Panic Defence" in Queensland and I have been invited to be on a committee to air PFLAG views.

**Labor Conference Fringe Event in Sydney on 2 December 2011:**

PFLAG is holding an official Fringe Event at the National Labor Conference. We have printed a

booklet to give to every delegate called “Marriage Equality from a Parent’s Perspective.” I will be

speaking again at the rally in Darling Harbour and will be an observer at the Conference, so this should be interesting. The decision we are hoping for is to make Marriage Equality party policy, but we are expecting that when it is debated, a conscience vote will be what is decided.

### **On a Final Note for 2011**

On behalf of the PFLAG Committee I would like to wish all of the PFLAG family a very merry Christmas and great new year. I know I plan to have a few weeks off. As a family we will be in Fiji during Christmas so I am hoping there won’t be any cyclones and I will be at the tennis in Melbourne at the end of January.

As a Committee we are already planning some new projects and educational resources that we will produce next year which will, of course, be freely distributed.

So have a great holiday break and many thanks to those who have supported PFLAG over the last year.



### **Next Meeting:**

Saturday, 4 February 2012  
QaHC Offices  
30 Helen Street  
Teneriffe  
1:30pm