



PFLAG Newsletter

February
March
2015

[HTTP://WWW.PFLAGBRISBANE.ORG.AU/](http://www.pflagbrisbane.org.au)

Welcome

We have had a great start to 2015 with enthusiasm from the committee with ideas about where to from here and how we can keep improving PFLAG for you and future members.

We also had a great roll up for the first meeting of the year with new parents and regulars who are always ready to be supportive. We should never forget the stresses and concerns many of us had when first learning our children are LGBTI.

February's Guest Speaker

Many thanks, to **Faith** who travelled from the Gold Coast to be our first Speaker for the year. Faith is a Counsellor and discussed how our young ones feel when first "coming out" to us and the ongoing emotions that many experience due to their own internalised homophobia and for those who don't have the support of their family and loved ones.

Faith spoke in a very easy free style explaining in a sometimes funny, sometimes serious manner about the difficulties we as heterosexuals and parents have understanding the emotional issues our young people have and how we may never be able to truly comprehend the depth they can go, no matter how much we are supportive of our children.

Thank you so much Faith.

If you live on the Gold Coast and need to speak to a Counsellor or Psychologist I would highly recommend Ocean Psychology.

Phone **5520 7718**

Email oceanpsychology@bigpond.com
www.oceanpsychology.com.au

Big Gay Day 2015!

This is an event held every year by the Wickham Hotel in Brunswick Street, in the Valley. This is one main annual fundraising day for Brisbane LGBTI groups organised by the Wickham Hotel.



If you would like to be a volunteer, have fun and meet other PFLAG parents please contact Beth. **Beth** is co-ordinating the volunteers and her mob is **0414 484 857**.

If you would like to help set up, this starts about 8am on the Sunday and the event officially begins at noon.

Generally, we put wrist bands on those entering once they have paid their entry fee. It is a fun day and a great way to show our sons and daughters we are supportive which help to break down barriers.

So please set aside Sunday, 15th March to support your child and PFLAG.

Election

Now that the election is over and Labor has won we now have hope that our sons and daughters will be able to have a State sanctioned Civil Partnership once again. The Panic Defence abolished and homosexuality as a crime for those convicted pre 1990 to be erased.

Couples will again feel safe with the surrogacy legislation. Furthermore, a committee is to be set up to discuss the "age of consent" issue in this State. Queensland is one of the last States to have age of consent still at 18 for our sons. It is my belief for lesbians there is no age consent and for straight couples it is 16 years of age.

Funding will also be returned to QLD AIDS Council. Unfortunately, for the last 2 ½ years they have been operating without government funding which has seriously curbed what they have been able to achieve.



A group of parents are travelling to Sydney to march with other PFLAG parents from around the country. Personally, I love Mardi Gras this is my fifth march and I hope to march many more times.

Quite often I hear people make negative comments about Mardi Gras, but to me when you are there it is entirely different to what is portrayed on the TV. Furthermore, I think we all need to keep in mind that the first Mardi Gras in 1978 was a demonstration not a celebration. 300 people marched and 100 arrested within 100 metres of beginning the march. The 100 people had their names printed in the newspapers they lost their jobs, they were evicted from their rental homes and many rejected by family.

Now, numbers are capped at permitting 10,000 people to march with over 80 floats making up the procession. It is the largest night time parade in the world with up to 500,000 people lining the streets to watch. It is a huge economic boost for Sydney and better still the police are now part of the celebration (not the demonstration) because they now march in the parade as well.

And, finally Mardi Gras highlight some of the issues that affect the LGBTIQ which many of the mainstream population would otherwise not be aware.



Resources

We are now organising to send out resources to schools and libraries. So this will be a way of promoting and getting the message out for new parents that PFLAG is here, not only to provide resources but support and referrals if necessary.

We would like to know...

➔ **What topics you would like addressed** at the general meetings. We aim to have speakers that help to provide more understanding of the LGBTIQ community and support for you, the parents.

➔ **How we can improve meetings** to assist parents to get the most benefit from the group

Contact **Shelley** – pflagbris@bigpond.com if you have any ideas.

PFLAG Contact Number

Just a small reminder that we have made our mobile number the main contact number for PFLAG as the landline was not receiving calls and having the mobile line as our main contact made it easier for our volunteers to take calls anytime without necessarily having to be in the office. **The PFLAG contact number is 0400 767 832.**



Myth:

Coming Out Is A One Time Process

The Truth:

For most gay people, coming out is a lifetime process. In any new situation or relationship, the gay person must decide how out to be. These situations can include simple activities (i.e. shopping, opening a joint checking account, picking out furniture, buying jewelry, taking your child to the doctor, attending parent night at school, or having company over to your home).

<https://www.creighton.edu/chc/counselingservices/studentpage/sexualorientationissues>

Tell your story...

Do you have a son or daughter under twenty years of age? And would they like to add their story to the website to help other young people in the process of “coming out” or transitioning.

As many know “coming out” can be very stressful. The intention is to make other young people feel they are not alone by reading other stories and by making contact with PFLAG there is hope and support for them to help them through the process.

There will be no names printed. We want to keep the stories anonymous and don't need to be very long.

Please make contact with me if you would like more information via email pflagbris@bigpond.com

Or mobile **0400 767 832**

MARRIAGE EQUALITY CAMPAIGN

Here is your opportunity to call your Member of Parliament and make a statement about how you support marriage equality.

A campaign with the support of Wendy Harmer is being organised by Australian Marriage Equality to remind our federal government about the need for a conscience vote.



If you would like ideas please go to our website and check out the booklet Marriage Equality from a Parent's Perspective.

Then all you need to do is dial **1300 663 679**, know who your Federal MP is and then leave your message. Very Simple!

PFLAG Brisbane Website

Our new look website is continually being updated with new resources and we have also updated many of our links and contacts.

Follow this link to check it out -

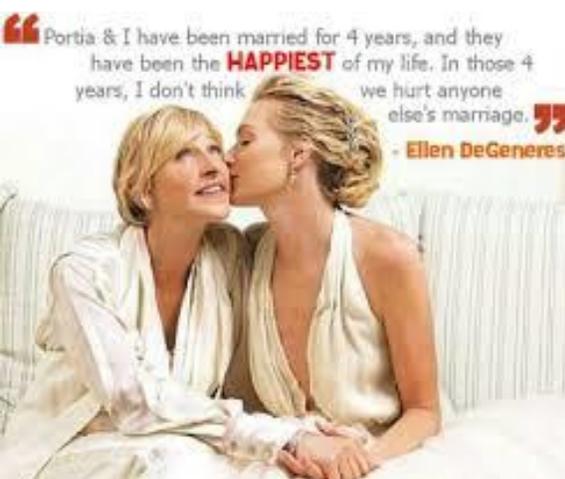
<http://www.pflagbrisbane.org.au/>



QUOTE OF THE MONTH

“New Rule: Gay marriage won’t lead to dog marriage. It is not a slippery slope to rampant inter-species coupling. When women got the right to vote, it didn’t lead to hamsters voting. No court has extended the equal protection clause to salmon. And for the record, all marriages are “same sex” marriages. You get married, and every night, it’s the same sex.”

~ Bill Maher, from *New Rules: Polite Musings from a Timid Observer*.



SUNSHINE COAST OUTREACH

The Sunshine Coast PFLAG Chapter hosted a successful event on Saturday, 6th December, with our PFLAG representatives there presenting to a group of 15 people from the local community who are all involved with local churches and who all have an interest in, or connection with, the LGBTIQ community.

The afternoon gathering was hosted at the home of Darryl and Laura Paine of PFLAG Sunshine Coast, with Chris Cooper also of PFLAG Sunshine Coast, as the key-note speaker.

Laura holds a Master of Counselling degree with a special interest in LGBT counselling, while Chris has been working with PFLAG and other gay support groups for over 15 years with a special interest and skill in outreach to individuals of faith and their faith communities.

"It was such an enjoyable afternoon with such beautiful people who were genuinely sincere in their determination to better understand and support the gay community, especially within the context of their faiths. What was intended to be a 20 minute informal presentation ended up being a two-hour discussion with great exchanges about what might be possible for all to do to be better gay allies. Part of the success of the day was the fact that Darryl and Laura opened their home and provided snacks and drinks and were so warm and accommodating, and had done so much in advance to build great relationships of trust with these people who came with great anticipation to learn and share concerning this topic," says Chris.

Two of the key resources used as reference were publications produced by PFLAG including "PFLAG Faith Field Guide: Chapter Structure, Program and Activity Ideas for Outreach to Faith Communities," and "Be Not Afraid, Help is on the Way! – Straight for Equality in Faith Communities".

PFLAG Sunshine Coast has been active in helping to organise the annual Sunshine Coast Pride Fair held there every year, with PFLAG's Shelley Argent being the recipient of the Festival's, "Lifetime Pride Award" back in February this year.

Chris Cooper 0404 797595
Christocooper@hotmail.com



Image of Russian gay couple wins World Press Photo

This image of a Russian gay couple locked in a tender embrace has won the prestigious World Press Photo award this February in Amsterdam, The Netherlands.

Taken by Danish photographer Mads Nissen, the picture of, "Jon and Alex" was taken in a bare room in Saint Petersburg, with only a dark brown curtain as a backdrop. One of the men lies with his eyes closed, while the other tenderly looks at him, their hands locked together.

Nissen describes his picture as, "a modern-day Romeo and Juliet story" about two people in love but facing outside forces who want to deny them their feelings. His winning picture is part of his larger project called "Homophobia in Russia" and also won first prize in the Contemporary Issues category.

"**This photo is aesthetically powerful, and it has humanity**" said Michelle McNally, the New York Times' director of photography and assistant managing editor. McNally's succinct observation has not only summed up the visual value of this moving portrait but, has also reminded us of the plight of sexual minorities in Russia.

In 2013, Putin signed a law banning the so-called "propaganda" of gay relationships to minors, despite wide condemnation from rights groups, Western governments and celebrities. Even more worrying, the Russian government recently passed a controversial new law banning transvestites and transsexuals from driving.

Like most powerful photography Nissen's award winning picture will evoke from the viewer strong emotion but, unlike most pictures this portrait will record, "...a historic time for the image" and has the potential to become an icon of the era, said McNally who was also one of the judges. Thus, set in shadowy menacing tones this hauntingly beautiful picture will endure for centuries and, long after it was taken record the bleak hopelessness faced by many thousands under Vladimir Putin's rule - His malevolent and oppressive legacy to his people. Yet, I'm sure Mr Putin has something else completely different in mind when he thinks about what he will be remembered for, but **fortunately for us, history is never kind to those who take away our freedoms in contrast to those who fought so hard to give us those freedoms.**

PFLAG MEMBERSHIP FORM

First Name: _____ Last Name: _____

Address: _____

_____ Postcode: _____

Phone/Mobile Contact: _____

Email: _____

Do you want to receive our bimonthly newsletter? Yes No

Are you interested in helping out on our PFLAG Committee? Yes No

Membership Type: Single 1 year \$25 Family 1 year \$50 Membership & Advertising \$100

The easiest way to pay your membership fees is via bank transfer into our account **Pflag Brisbane Inc.**

BSB: **124 011** Account: **2023 8607** Reference: **Your name in full**

Questions about membership? Please email pflagbris@bigpond.com or call **0400 767 832**

Please email your completed membership form to pflagsecretary@gmail.com. You can also request the membership form in Word format.

FUTURE PFLAG BRISBANE MEETING DATES

Saturday, March 28th

Saturday, May 30th

Saturday, July 18th

Saturday, September 26th

Saturday, November 28th

Time: 1.30pm

Venue: 30 Helen Street, Teneriffe

Our next guest speaker is
Grace Grace, who will discuss
the process of the legislative
changes affecting LGBT now
that Labor are in power.

NEXT MEETING: Saturday
28/3 at 1.30pm sharp 😊