



PFLAG Newsletter December 2016

Dear PFLAG families, below is a condensed version of what we did for most of the PFLAG 2016 year but first; I would like to thank Antoneta who is retiring as Secretary. She has done a very good job for the last 3 years. And thanks to Debra who was a very good, supportive Vice President for 3-4 years. Debra is moving to Melbourne and is going to restart the PFLAG group there – We wish her all the very best and she will be missed!

I would also like to welcome our new Committee members for 2017 - We now have two men on the Committee. Pasi is Treasurer and Jack has taken on the role of Secretary. I feel 2017 will be another positive year with people interested in bringing change and the ongoing improvement of PFLAG for future families.

Christmas Message

This will be our last newsletter for 2016. The holiday period is always a busy time of year - For some it's joyful and for others stressful but, please remember the best gift we can give our children is the gift of acceptance. Acceptance costs zero dollars but can sometimes be the hardest gift to provide. If you can be inclusive, supportive and accepting, you will find you will receive the appreciation from your son or daughter tenfold.

Please stay safe, with just the right amount of good cheer and too much plum pudding.

I hope to see you or hear from you in the New Year!

Marriage Equality Campaign Continues...

We expect 2017 will be just as busy and hopefully Marriage Equality will be a reality by next Christmas.

We do have several campaigns planned. I expect to continue my trips to Canberra on a regular basis visiting MPs and my usual letter writing.

As parents, we cannot become complacent and assume marriage equality will just happen. To stop the Plebiscite cost me personally over \$200,000 and it will cost at least that much again to encourage MPs, Senators and Mr Turnbull that **we will not give up.**

No person expects ministers and priests to be compelled to marry any couple, they can refuse to marry couples now; However, civil celebrants, government employees and those who provide service for money is another issue.

The Government is **now** considering legislation that will permit denial of services in all areas that involve weddings, including the lodging of the wedding certificate if served by a person with strong religious beliefs or otherwise. This is wrong and we need to remain adamant and send a clear message to Canberra that this is discriminatory.

No other minority can be refused these services and neither should our sons and daughters.

So keep an eye out for emails on how to combat denial of services for LGBTI couples wishing to marry - And, please get involved.

2016 in Review...

I had meetings with Ministers of State Government including, Kate Jones regarding the Safe School Coalition which is an ongoing issue.

I also met with Minister Shannon Fentiman about Civil Marriage and adoption and Grace Grace about Panic Defence Legislation.

We have had some great support from the State Government...

- Civil partnerships legislation was reintroduced
- Our sons and daughters can now adopt
- The age of consent is now 16 which is in line with other States
- Expungement of homosexuality as a crime is now being dealt with and Panic Defence is also being worked on at this moment
- We are now on the referral list for Queensland Police Service

I gave talks to...

- Health workers about support of parents of trans people and younger trans children
- St Peters Lutheran Students

- Brisbane Boys College students about history of homosexuality in Queensland
- Mental Fellowship Institute of Queensland about PFLAG
- Debra and I travelled to Kingaroy to talk with parents and LGBTI people
- Open Doors had morning teas for their parents which we attended
- Spoke to the teachers at Albany Creek High School about trans students

We were part of Community events including;

- IDAHOT Day on 15th May
- The Great Bake Off held at the Sportsman's Hotel
- Pride Fair Day held in September

A New Project for 2017

A PFLAG Group for Multi-Cultural Parents - Oscar a Dad on our Committee is Colombian, is keen to begin this group. If you know of anyone who may benefit from such a group, please let me know. We plan to do some research and approach agencies that may have parents as clients in need of support. Any ideas are most welcome.

Additional Support

Always keep in mind if you need extra support or referrals please don't hesitate to call **0400 767 832**.

PFLAG Membership

Please email the Treasurer, Pasi for more information pasi_linnosto@yahoo.com

Our next meeting in 2017

Date: **11th February, 2017**

Time: **1.30pm**

Place: **30 Helen Street, Newstead**