



Welcome

PFLAG Brisbane had its first general meeting at the new premises this month. I must say I was quite nervous, because every time we have the first meeting at new premises something goes wrong.

Our very first official meeting in 1999 at Allen Street, was memorable because I was given the wrong key to the door, which meant we had the meeting under a tree in the back yard. It also meant there were no coffee or toilet facilities.

Two years ago when we had our first meeting at Melbourne street premises, the "Powers that Be" forgot to include my code into the alarm system. So that was a very loud entrance into the building and it cleared the area of any homeless enjoying the quiet of a Saturday afternoon in the shade.

This time was very easy - we only blew a fuse for the hot water urn, and with some scouting around found the fuse box and quickly rectified the problem. I am told we won't be moving anymore and as you can imagine, I am very pleased.

- Shelley

(Convener, PFLAG Brisbane)

The Meeting

The meeting was quite large with several new faces. As usual everyone was supportive of each other.

Many thanks, to Craig Lewis the Education Officer for Queensland Assoc. Healthy Communities who came along to talk about HIV. He was very informative and the parents were very interested in what he had to say.

People who don't come to meetings but are still struggling don't realise what a difference a few meetings can do to their levels of understanding and

acceptance. Yes, the first meeting can be hard, because you don't know what to expect. But they really do assist with understanding and acceptance.

Next Meeting

Our next meeting will be held on Saturday 26th August, at 1:30pm. Remember - we are now at 30 Helen Street, Newstead.

If you have a problem finding the building please call Shelley on 0409 363 335. Our guest speaker at the meeting will be Ann Stewart - the Director of Equity at the University of Queensland. We look forward to seeing you there!

2006 Major Project

"Long Reach for Out Reach"

We are always looking for ways to educate the local community and thanks to the Gaming Community Benefit Fund we are able to include all of Queensland with our major project for the year "Long Reach for Out Reach". We have devised a pack with information, tips and referrals for professionals working with young people.

Also, included in the pack is information and resources for families and young people in regional and rural areas. The generosity of the Gaming Community Benefit Fund means we can distribute 5000 packs to high schools, medical and health practitioners, community workers and police stations around Queensland.

It's our hope that the printing will be completed by the end of September and then the huge task of packing and distributing will begin. I would like to thank Queensland Association for Healthy Communities (QAHC) formerly Queensland AIDS Council (QUAC) and Open Doors for their input and support with this project.

Just Rights Forum

The second anniversary is coming up of the Federal Government's banning of same sex marriages and celebrants being forced by law to use the term "husband and wife" when marrying couples.

The Just Rights forums are held to raise awareness of specific human rights issues and to gain momentum with the campaign for a bill of rights.

Rodney Goodbun from (QAHC), Sharon Dane from Marriage Equality Australia and Shelley Argent will be the guest speakers

*6:30pm, on Wednesday 9th August 2006
St. Mary's Catholic Church
Peel Street, South Brisbane*

Pride DVD

The 2006 Brisbane Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender & Intersex pride festival was a huge success!

A professional independent DVD featuring the march (from King George Square to Musgrave Park), and a number of interviews (including Shelley & Meryl from PFLAG, Vicki from the QLD Dykes on Bikes & Nerida from Open Doors) has been created, and is available for secure online purchase at www.pridedvd.tv.

Copies will also be for sale at the next PFLAG meeting. The DVD is \$25, with \$5 of every copy sold being donated directly to PFLAG Brisbane by the production company.

Electronic petition

Warren Entsch is proposing a private member's bill to extend the principles of anti-discrimination to abolish the inequalities of federal government against those in interdependent and same sex relationships...

www.warrenentsch.com.au/interdependency.htm

Please sign this petition and pass it on to those willing to support this initiative!

Constitution

Since becoming incorporated in Nov. 2005, PFLAG have been in need of a Constitution. It has taken the committee a while to get the extra time to work through another PFLAG constitution to develop our own, but now the task is complete.

Grainne the PFLAG secretary has been set the task to retype this document with the changes and once completed it will be available for anyone to read and make comment.

Conference:

We are presently planning a national conference for PFLAG members and interested parties, to be held at the Brisbane Convention & Exhibition Centre from the 9th to the 11th of June 2007 (the Queens Birthday weekend). It is our intention to keep costs to a minimum so that the maximum number of people can attend.

We feel it's important to keep contact - for support, to swap ideas, to help to break the isolation of country groups, and to keep the motivation going - which will ultimately make life better for our sons and daughters and the gay community in general.

As we are presently still in the process of approaching interesting speakers, we welcome any thoughts about topics of interest, possible outcomes of the conference or people you would like approached as speakers. Furthermore, if you would like to be involved with organising the conference we would love to hear from you.

Please keep this date in mind for a trip to Brisbane (if you are based interstate) to be part of the PFLAG family. Maxine and Shelley attended the 2004 Sydney conference, and found that it broke the feeling of 'isolation' that some groups may experience, and gave them a better insight and appreciation of how other groups operated.

Petition to State Parliament:

A petition to the State Government for an urgent review into the effectiveness of sexuality education in high

schools due to the alarming level of homophobia in the Queensland community as evidenced in recent research from Latrobe University and reports in the local media. This petition was drawn up by PFLAG Brisbane member, Kieran Walsh.

So, thanks to Kieran and the volunteers for collecting almost 500 names on Pride Fair Day.

It is proposed that Kieran will seek support from his State member to present this to parliament.

Justice Michael Kirby

I was very honoured a few weeks ago for Pride Festival Month to be asked to speak at a forum initiated by Freedom2B and the Metropolitan Community Church (MCC) with Justice Michael Kirby as the main guest speaker.

It was quite humbling to listen to a man who has accomplished so much speak about the hardships he's encountered in his life. He was awarded the honour of NSW Australian of the Year in 2006.

Justice Kirby is a tireless worker and has been awarded several other humanitarian awards in his life and is presently one of Australia's longest serving Senior High Court Judges. He also has been in a same sex relationship for 37 years but is still denied equal rights in his home country.

Where is the justice?

Website Update

The PFLAG Brisbane website received 15,237 hits in June, taking our total hits to just over 111,000 since the website launched in September 2005. This is made up of 559 unique computers (visitors) for the aforementioned period - 173 more than last month.

3pm was the most popular hour of the day to visit our website in June. For the same period, 130 people read our July newsletter directly from the website (note: newsletters are released in advance of the period which they are titled).

Shelley's booklet, "Sexuality is not a choice", was viewed a staggering 877 times for this period, bringing the total number of views to just under 2400 since it was posted in September 2005.

Other than the homepage, the most popular pages were our worldwide PFLAG links, followed by our Publications page, then our Contact Us & Coming Out pages.

For the June period, most visitors came to our website using Australia computers, followed by (in order) users in the United States, New Zealand, Singapore, Thailand, India and Poland.

Our website address is www.pflagbrisbane.org.au.

Please note that our website statistics software does not collect or contain any personal or identifiable information about site users.

Helpline

Just a reminder that you can reach the PFLAG Brisbane helpline on 0400 767 832.

Many thanks to Grainne, Lynne and Meryl who have volunteered to take on this very important role for PFLAG.

If you wish to volunteer to help us out, please contact Shelley Argent (please see the back of this newsletter, or www.pflagbrisbane.org.au for contact details).

PFLAG Annual Membership

Thank you to those that have paid their annual PFLAG membership, and to those that have made online payments through our website.

Remember, it's never too late to become a member or to make a donation - all of which can be done by contacting PFLAG using the contact details at the back of this newsletter, or by visiting www.pflagbrisbane.org.au and paying online using your credit card.

Thanks again for your support!

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