



Welcome

PFLAG Brisbane has had a most amazing year so far. We seem to have achieved a lot, and with the willing parents that are involved I hope our efforts continue to make a difference.

Sometimes it's easy to get disheartened but I believe if we all work together, even though sometimes at different strengths, we will make positive changes for our LGBT sons and daughters. I just keep pushing the line "Our children don't want special rights they just want equal rights".

- Shelley

(Convener, PFLAG Brisbane)

Guest Speaker

Many thanks to Ann Stewart the Director of Equity at University of Queensland (UQ) for coming along to talk to us about the Ally Program that is happening at UQ.

This program is designed to support not only the students who identify as LGBT, but also any staff who need support from time to time.

Many of us believe that when our children leave school the problems with homophobia disappear in their world of education, but apparently for some it's still alive and well.

However, after listening to Ann speak at our most recent meeting, we should know that there is help for those affected by homophobic beliefs and actions in the tertiary system. If reported, complaints can be corrected in a helpful manner - making university life the positive experience we want for our sons and daughters.

So if your child is experiencing difficulties, encourage them to approach a "UQ Ally" for assistance.

Next Meeting

Our next meeting will be held on the 7th of October, 2006. Please remember that we're now at 30 Helen Street, Newstead.

Thank you David!

What a wonderful windfall PFLAG Brisbane received, thanks to David Graham from Channel 10's *Big Brother!*

While only just missing the top prize in *Big Brother*, David won Channel 10's *Australia's Brainiest Housemate* show, and had selected PFLAG Brisbane as his "Charity of Choice". Some years ago, we assisted his mother through the very difficult period for her when David was in the process of "coming out"... hence David's selection of charity.



This wonderful windfall is part of a "what goes around, comes around"-style story. David's mother's told of her concern about suicide in rural areas - a story which has stayed with Shelley for many years, and has motivated us all to expand into the rural areas... such as our trip to Charleville in April and another to Cairns in November, 2005.

Her story is also the inspiration behind PFLAG

Brisbane's "Longreach for Outreach" information pack that is to be distributed later this year in rural and regional areas. All of which was unbeknown to David and his Mother.

It is our intention to take time to consider how and where to spend this great gift. Shelley has also had the chance to thank David for his generosity... and you'll be pleased to know that he's just as nice off television as he is on.

Conference - June 9th & 10th, 2007

Great news! The 3rd PFLAG National Conference is now official, and will be held in Brisbane on the Queen's Birthday weekend in 2007 (at the Brisbane Convention & Exhibition Centre, Southbank)

Currently, Rodney Croome (Tasmanian gay activist) and David Graham of Big Brother (*refer to previous story for further information*) have indicated they are happy to be guest speakers.

It's our intention to have speakers talking on a very general nature - so that the information is relevant to all, regardless of whether you are travelling to the conference from North Queensland or Western Australia. We also plan to have plenty of participation from attendees at the conference.

For those travelling large distances, we hope to be able to subsidise some costs to allow them to attend. We also plan to provide attendees with a selection of costs regarding accommodation.

The Sydney conference in 2004 was great, and it helped to bring us all together and discuss our concerns, as well as swap ideas on how to become more active in the community. We hope to continue this process with our Brisbane conference.

With plenty of notice, we trust this is an event you can mark in your calendar, and look forward to seeing you there.

PFLAG & Open Doors Project

Open Doors is a Brisbane organization for young people (aged between 12 and 18 years) who are questioning their sexuality.

PFLAG was recently asked to join them in assisting parents with the understanding and acceptance of their child's diverse sexuality.

The plan is that after the sessions with Open Doors, parents can then access the general meetings held by PFLAG Brisbane, in order to continue their path to acceptance.

Rodney Croome's Advertising Campaign

Many thanks to the families who donated \$55 to the advertising campaign (for a large ad. in *The Australian*) Rodney Croome and the Tasmanian Gay & Lesbian Rights Group (TGLRG) are in the process of organising.

It is important that we stand up and be counted when it comes to recognition of rights for our LGBT sons and daughters.

Our money, names and consent forms are now safely in their hands. Many thanks to our Treasurer Maxine for co-ordinating this project in record time. More information as it comes to hand.

"Longreach for Outreach" project

All documentation for the '*Longreach for Outreach*' Information Pack project is now complete and is in the hands of our graphic designers.

We believe everything will be printed and ready for distribution by the end of October. Naturally, we are very happy to share these with other PFLAG groups if possible.

We will need a large number of volunteers to help pack and collate the 5000 packs that are being printed. This will be a huge task!

If you would like to volunteer for one (or all) of our planned 'packing days' (see overleaf for the dates),

please call Grainne on 0412 659 969.

Sunday 1st Oct. 10am - 5pm

Thursday 5th Oct 9am - 3pm

Sunday 8th Oct. 10am - 5pm

Please bring your own lunch. Morning and afternoon tea will gladly be provided.

Thank you.

Website Update

The PFLAG Brisbane website received 12,033 and 14,634 hits in the months of July & August respectively, taking our total hits to just over 128,000 for the year.

These figures are made up of 449 and 463 unique computers for the same periods, respectively. 4pm was the most popular hour of the day to visit our website in July, and this changed to 9am in August.

386 users read our July newsletter online during the past two months. Yet again, Shelley's booklet "Sexuality is not a choice" is by far the most popular document on our website with 811 views in August alone. Shelley's booklet has been read online more than 3500 times in the past year!

For both the July & August periods, most website visitors surfed from Australia, followed by the USA, and then interestingly, the United Arab Emirates

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).

Car Parade - National Day of Action

The 13th of August 2006 marked the second anniversary of John Howard making "husband and wife" or "man and woman" a compulsory element in a marriage ceremony. Therefore, an Australia-wide 'day of action' was called by the *Australia Marriage Equality* group.

While some states had protests, Brisbane's *Australia Marriage Equality* members along with PFLAG members Meryl, Andy and Shelley took part in a car parade around Brisbane.

We believed this was maximum effect with minimum numbers of people and effort. There were only eight cars, but all were highly decorated with rainbow flags, ribbons and messages drawing much attention from bystanders on footpaths and other drivers on the road.

We drove around the city and coffee-shop style areas (Bulimba, West End, etc) for about two hours, which was lots of fun! Following the parade, we had a picnic / barbecue at New Farm Park, which saw a few extra's come along to be supportive.

There were no negative reactions during the car parade - we received waves, motorists honked car horns and bystanders were cheering.

It would appear that the Federal government is a little out of step with what people want regarding relationship recognition and equality issues for the lesbian and gay community.

We received no indication from anyone that they were unhappy with our Sunday drive.

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pflag

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PFLAG is totally voluntary & organised by parents. Please support us.
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