



Welcome

What a year 2006 has been! I am hopeful that by the end of November "sanity will reign" again in PFLAG Brisbane and things will calm down; or at least for a little while.

The next meeting will be the last for 2006 so I hope as many as possible will come along to help us celebrate what has been a very successful year. I just hope that next year will be just as exciting.

Let's hope that in 2007 we see an improvement in rights for our lesbian daughters and gay sons. I just live for the day there will be no need for a PFLAG group anywhere.

- Shelley

(Convener, PFLAG Brisbane)

Next Meeting

Our *final meeting for 2006* will be on the 25th of November 2006 at 1:30pm, 30 Helen Street, Newstead. Please bring afternoon tea. Thank you.

Guest Speakers

Many thanks, to David and Chris, who were our guest speakers for the October meeting. They are two young men from University of Southern Queensland in Toowoomba who are doing research for a play on LGBT issues and family reactions.

I was a little concerned that some parents may find it a little confronting, but all was well and as it turned out we had an amazing number of families from that region at the meeting, so it was all very comfortable and friendly.

Plus, they got enough families who were very happy to tell their stories making their task easier. Their plan is to

have the play shown at next years Pride Festival in Brisbane. We wish them well.

L.R.F.O.R - Information Packs

Long Reach for Out Reach is now a reality. Many thanks to the army of volunteers who gave their time to help collate 40,000 pieces of information into 5,000 packs.

There was lots of chatter and laughter along the assembly line that was a sea of booklets, posters being packed and covers being constantly folded. We all went home tired and with aching backs after each packing session but it's all been worth it.

Packs have now been sent to the PFLAG groups around Australia, police, health nurses and educators with more still to be distributed. The website is now up and running so please check it out www.longreachforoutreach.org.

I would like to thank everyone at QAHC for their patience with the chaos and their assistance and expertise to help us achieve this goal.

L.R.F.O.R - Official Launch

The official launch of "Long Reach for Out Reach" will be...

Date: 29th November

Time 11am

Place: QAHC office, 30 Helen Street, Newstead

Please RSVP by 21st November.

David Graham from Big Brother will be attending to help celebrate our achievement. A big thank you to everyone who helped at our packing bees. We look forward to seeing you there to celebrate!

Conference - June 9th & 10th, 2007

Please put the 9th and 10th June in your calendar. It's our intention if possible to subsidise those who have traveled a long distance to make it more affordable.

It's also our intention to have a choice of accommodation close to the convention centre which will also assist with costs.

Shelley's Day in the Sunshine

A couple of months ago Shelley was approached to speak at a meeting about the need for Australia to have a Bill of Rights, which she did.

From this Shelley was then asked to write a chapter for a book they're putting together with a collection of stories from 25 people about the varied inequalities affecting different sections of our society.

Shelley has now completed her chapter, and has also been interviewed for extra information. The plan is to have the book launching on December 10th which is Human Rights Day and for the books to be sold in mainstream book shops. We will see how this progresses.

'Parents for Equality' Advertisement

I have had recent contact with Rodney Croome, the man who initiated this campaign. It has been decided to hold the advert until it will have the most impact which the present thinking is will be when Warren Entsch presents his Private Members Bill into parliament later this year.

So don't fear that the money hasn't disappeared or been used elsewhere. Another concern is that they didn't get the number of parents hoped for, so they plan to run the advertisement when it will have the most impact.

Constitution

Our constitution is now completed so thank you to Victoria for permitting us to modify theirs to our needs.

It always makes things so much easier for all concerned when we can support and assist another group.

So if anyone would like to see the constitution please call the office on 07 3017 1739 and we will gladly send you a copy.

Helpline

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

Many thanks to Grainne & Lynne 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).

Country Tour

Shelley has been fortunate enough to make another trip to rural Queensland. This time, she has travelled with staff from Queensland Association Healthy Communities (QAHC) - formerly (QUAC), to Roma, Charleville, Cunnamulla and St. George.

Shelley spoke on radio where possible and sent media releases to the local papers so families could make contact and to be involved in the community consultations planned by QAHC if they chose.

(HREOC) Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission: National Inquiry into Discrimination against People in Same Sex Relationships: Financial and Work Related Entitlements and Benefits

On the 10th of October, a public forum was held at the QAHC building. Fifty three people attended, which we're told is the largest gathering in any one city for this event. So congratulations to the gay community of Queensland, for standing up and being counted.

The formal hearing was on the 11th October and PFLAG were invited to participate. Fortunately, it was very non-

threatening but as always eye opening to hear other peoples stories and valid concerns.

Shelley came away from this event particularly aware of the struggle that many young people incur when forced to leave home and then have to struggle to support themselves. Because of red tape and lack of understanding or caring by the government bodies, are forced into difficult and sometimes life threatening situations to survive.

We feel sure that if a couple of high ranking officials, of this country, had an LGBT child in a similar situation, legislation would change and be more accommodating to their needs.

The findings of this hearing will be handed to federal government early next year with recommendations for change and improvements so we'll just wait and see what eventuates.

The second phase of this process will have begun by the time this newsletter is distributed. This phase will be involving children, adoption and parenting so more about this later.

Congratulations Shelley!

Congratulations to Shelley, who recently received media coverage locally and overseas for her verbal submission to a HREOC forum. For a summary of the story, please see www.australianmarriageequality.com/news/20061011.htm

...and continuing with the topic of apartheid, here is a cartoon which recently appeared in a South African newspaper.

South Africa is set to become the next country to provide equal marriage rights. The South African Constitutional Court ruled unanimously on 1 December 2005 that it was unconstitutional to prevent same-sex couples marrying when marriage was permitted for people of the opposite sex.

The court gave South Africa's parliament one year to amend laws defining marriage as a "union between a man and a woman" to a "union between two persons". If not done in time, the relevant sections of the Marriage Act would automatically be read so as to take away the legal requirement that a marriage be between two persons of the opposite gender.

Among those publicly backing the ruling were Anglican Archbishop emeritus Desmond Tutu.

The South African constitution specifically outlaws discrimination on the grounds of sexuality.



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