



Welcome

I thought once the conference was over, sanity would return to my life - but surprisingly this as yet is still to happen. I have been hearing very positive comments about the conference, even from those in the gay community here in Brisbane who didn't attend which is very nice.

Another positive is that those who were unable to attend, are taking advantage of the PFLAG website (www.pflagbrisbane.org.au) and listening to conference recordings - with most speeches being downloaded about 50 times (each) since being posted online.

PS: Check out the last page for a group photo!



- Shelley
(Convener, PFLAG Brisbane)

Next Meeting

PFLAG Brisbane's next meeting will be on **8th of September, 2007**. Our guest speaker will be psychologist Paul Martin (one of our conference speakers) - he was very entertaining and helpful.

This is a prime opportunity for parents to come along and get many of your questions answered... e.g. *"I have a gay son or lesbian daughter, HELP!!"*. We look forward to seeing you there.

Time: 1.30pm

Place: 30 Helen Street, Newstead

Last meeting

Many thanks to Catholic priest Father John, who came along to talk to us; if only all men and women of religion had his beliefs.

His message to the group was to accept and support our sons and daughters regardless of sexual orientation. He believes God doesn't make mistakes and encouraged parents to read just the "new" testament. He said for those torn between religious beliefs and supporting and accepting your child; choose your child.

For parents who were unable to attend the meeting but would like to talk to Father John please let Shelley know and she will gladly put you into contact with him. He is very approachable, non judgmental and very easy to talk to.

Sad loss

On behalf of all PFLAG parents we would like to send our condolences to Neville and Rosemary Kajewski regarding the loss of their son Steven who passed away on the 1st July.

Rosemary and Neville are the Convenors of PFLAG Rockhampton.

PFLAG Family Advertisement

Many thanks to all of the families who donated money for the advertisement placed in *The Australian* newspaper, on Monday 13th August. This day was chosen because parliament will be sitting and it marks the 3rd anniversary of the term "man and woman" being compulsory in wedding ceremonies.

Sadly, this terminology means a marriage celebrant can be fined or even jailed if he/she does a "commitment ceremony" between same sex couples which isn't even considered a legal ceremony.

New brochure

PFLAG Brisbane is in the process of developing a new brochure. PFLAG Rockhampton had the idea of a brochure that gives tips and possible questions parents can ask their LGBT sons and daughters to understand sexual diversity and what is happening in their lives.

The brochure is designed especially for parents who are new to the knowledge of their child being lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender, but we are sure it will still assist others who have been uncertain about questions to ask.

Lobbying in Canberra

On the 12th and 13th of July, Shelley went to Canberra with Rodney Croome (Tasmanian Gay Activist) and Mark Morein (of the Queensland Association of Healthy Communities) to meet with James Fox, Mr. Howard's legal adviser and Phillip Ruddock, Attorney General. Both meetings went for approximately 90 minutes each.

Very briefly, Mr. Fox stated that he will put our point of view to the Prime Minister, but of course doesn't know if Mr. Howard will act. He was friendly and listened to what we had to say. We believe that he took many of our concerns on board.

Mr. Ruddock stated that there is a submission to be presented to parliament. He wouldn't say when and he wouldn't say what would be in the submission. When Shelley mentioned economic discrimination, he stated they do benefit from the taxes they paid, because they too drove on the roads.

As Rodney Croome says, we just need to keep "chipping" away. Each time a group meets with these people it makes it easier for the next group and if it happens enough government will learn we are serious about equality and changes will happen.

Cairns trip

In late June, Shelley visited John Tomkins (a new PFLAG contact) in Cairns, and also took the opportunity to celebrate her son's 30th birthday (and her son-and-his-partners' 8th anniversary).

While there, Shelley was interviewed on 'ABC Radio - Far North' and discussed the HREOC findings and the silence of the government.

Shelley was also invited to give a talk to the Sexual Health Workers at the Cairns Hospital about parents reactions and young people's concerns about "coming out".

The emotion of Denial

Please be aware that this emotion can be a very dangerous and can be a real trigger for depression. I feel I should make mention that especially when young people inform family they are lesbian or gay many parents are hopeful that this is just a phase, or he/she is young and confused or for others it is just easier to put the whole issue to the back of your mind and not deal with the news properly.

So often parents move through a grieving period and can't cope with the thought their son/daughter is gay or lesbian and move into denial.

The problem with this is when the young person either gets a partner, or starts going to night clubs and bringing home gay friends, parents have to deal with the whole issue for the second time. This means the process can be twice as painful.

Sometimes it causes confusion - the young person thinks you have dealt with their sexual orientation and starts bringing friends home and can't understand why he/she is getting a bad reaction. The best solution, I have found is when your loved one "comes out" to you believe them even though it's difficult at the time.

Seek assistance and seek information to gain understanding. Don't assume they are too young or confused. And, don't look for reasons to apply the "head in the sand" solution to an issue that won't go away.

Remember PFLAG is here to be supportive and we have all walked in similar shoes.

- Shelley
(Convener, PFLAG Brisbane)

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PFLAG is totally voluntary & organised by parents.
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Thank you!

PFLAG Brisbane - 2007 Conference (Group Photo)

