



 **Issue** September 2009

Parents and friends of Lesbians and Gays

 **Next meeting** 19th September @ 1:30pm

Shelley's Welcome

Here we are - into the second half of the year and we still have plenty of things happening. We are seeing changes in people's attitudes as the polls show, which is very positive and can only be good for our sons and daughters.

I really believe the more visible we are as either parents or friends of LGBT the sooner change will come.

- Shelley Argent
Convener, PFLAG Brisbane

Next Meeting

PFLAG Brisbane's next meeting will be on **Saturday 19th September, 2009**.

Time: 1.30pm

Place: 30 Helen Street, Newstead

Previous Meeting

Many thanks to Monica O'Mara, who came along to our last meeting and discussed policing issues regarding our sons and daughters.

We are very thankful to have Monica as the new State Coordinator for LGBTI Police Liaison Officers.

Straight for Equality

This is a project that was originally done in the United States and we have been given permission to adapt it to suit the Australian community. We hope to have this completed by the end of the year.

The project is about giving the straight community information on how they can assist the gay community

to gain the equality that the majority of Australians believe they should have; unfortunately the government just isn't listening. We will provide more information about this later as the project progresses.

Galaxy Poll - Marriage

In May, PFLAG Brisbane funded a national Galaxy Poll asking the Australian population if they believed same sex couples should be allowed to marry.

The response was 60% are in favour, which is a very positive sign for our sons and daughters. We just need to get our politicians to listen.

Galaxy Poll - Age of Consent

We are also funding a Galaxy Poll in Queensland regarding equality and the age of consent. As most would know, 16 years is the age of consent for heterosexuals but 18 for gay males.

There is no research to show that there is any advantage to this. Additionally, our gay youth are no more at risk of predators than our straight youth. Furthermore, a main concern is that if young gay males should get an STI, they are reluctant to seek assistance because of the fear of possible repercussions. Some health workers are reluctant to offer safe sex advice to gay males because of them being underage.

The Queensland government is aware of the gay community's concerns but just refuses to discuss this issue when in every other state the age of consent for gay youth is 16 years of age.

At a meeting some weeks ago, Shelley asked Attorney General Cameron Dick about this topic, but he was unable to provide an answer as to why it's different here. Anna Bligh just says "Queenslanders aren't ready."

Great Bake Off

PFLAG Brisbane, along with Open Doors, were again selected to receive half of the funds raised from the Sportsman Hotel's bake off. We plan to use the funds raised to put towards the funding of the Straight for Equality project.

The event was a great success and PFLAG Brisbane thanks The Sportsman's Hotel for their support.

Advertising

We will begin advertising in Saturday's Courier Mail on a weekly basis until Christmas. This will make it easier for parents looking for assistance to make contact. Or, if they prefer, to confidentially obtain information from our website.

Pride Fair Day

Pride 2009 was another successful day, with some great weather and plenty of people attending the fair and marching to show they are out and proud. Many thanks to Eddie for organizing the day and all of the other parents who helped to hand out our resources and information.

It was also great to see Kieran, a PFLAG dad who now lives on the Gold Coast and travelled to Brisbane to be part of the day and generally help out.

Sexuality is not a Choice

As many of you would be aware, last year we had a summary of our *Sexuality is not a Choice* booklet translated into 17 different languages and uploaded onto our website.

A number of weeks ago, we were approached by the Australian LGBTIQ Multicultural Council (AGMC) which is part of the Federation of Ethnic Community Council of Australia (FECCA). This information will now be available to more people to help with their understanding of their sons and daughters.

Proposed forum for parents

A proposed counseling / support group for parents has been setup. Entitled "Keeping Families United", the support group will provide a safe and confidential space for people to overcome the road blocks in dealing with their response to having a gay, lesbian or transgender son or daughter.

The sessions will be facilitated by Paul Martin who has spoken at numerous PFLAG group meetings, conferences and has written articles for the PFLAFG Brisbane website.

The cost will be \$45 per session and there will be 6 sessions (to be paid up front). Parents can access the Medicare rebate of \$20 (per session) if they reach the criteria for a Mental Health Plan from their GP.

Please contact (08) 3211 1117 for further information or email: info@centreforhumanpotential.com.au

So Gay is So Yesterday

Twenty-five thousand posters for our "*It's so gay*", *is so yesterday* campaign have been printed and will be soon be sent off to schools and community organizations around Queensland.

This was an initiative of PFLAG Canada who has graciously allowed us to use their idea.

PFLAG Brisbane Annual General Meeting

Our AGM, to be held on the 28th of November, will bring some changes. Our treasurer Maxine will be retiring, as family commitments are making it difficult for her to continue.

We would appreciate anyone with some accounting skills stepping forward to take on this position.

The position of President will also become available. Shelley has filled this role for 11 years and while she will still be involved, feels that it's time for someone with new ideas & energy to take up the mantle.

Shelley says that she has thoroughly enjoyed her time, but sees new adventures on the horizon.

(...continued overleaf)

Shelley would like to stay on as the National Spokesperson for PFLAG, and still plans to stay involved to continue lobbying the government regarding equality issues for our sons and daughters.

Our AGM will be held prior to our regular meeting, on the 28th of November 2009.

For more details, please visit our website at www.pflagbrisbane.org.au.



Talking to Someone Who Really Understands Makes it So Much Easier

Working through some of the deeper emotional issues with having a gay or lesbian son or daughter can be one of the most painful and stressful experiences of your life.

Counselling is a highly effective way of feeling better and also can assist in keeping your family together. Centre for Human Potential have been working with parents of gays, lesbians and transgender for over 15 years.

Contact one of our friendly psychologists to explore whether counselling could be of real benefit to you and your family, or simply call and book a time with one of us.

If you are not familiar with how to access the Medicare rebate, one of our receptionists would be more than happy to speak to you about this.

**Phone 3211 1117 or you can email us on
info@centreforhumanpotential.com.au**



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www.bigbuddaboom.com.au or info@bigbuddaboom.com.au
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pflag

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Contact Shelley on 3017 1739