



Words of Welcome from our new President

Our AGM has passed for another year and I graciously step into Shelley's shoes. I acknowledge the nomination and thank you for the hands of support. Our newly elected committee retains old faces and welcome to new ones – to your ideas and support. Support being the operative word – PFLAG is a support group wherein our acceptance is broad – all encompassing.

The group welcomes people to share their thoughts and feelings in an atmosphere of comfort, support and confidentiality. Our life journey is different for each of us and the feeling of being 'okay' falls within the basket of readiness and that is different for each too. Through the connection with others, access to our reading material and extension of further resources available, the tools which are best suited to your needs are found.

For some there has been previous phone contact, coffee/chat or simply accessed the venue and time from our website and decided to join us for a meeting.

I came to Pflag a little over nine years ago and I found warmth, friendship and support - a very special group of friends. I too hope that feeling has touched some of you – knowing you are among others who understand – get where you are coming from. It is important. We work towards further change and acceptance of our LGBT community.

May I take this opportunity of extending my best wishes for the festive season and welcome a cheerful and prosperous New Year.

*- Margaret Parkhill
President, PFLAG Brisbane*

Previous Meeting

This was our AGM and it was well attended – thank you

for making the effort to be there.

It is usual for the last meeting of the year to follow a Christmas break-up theme and our array of delightful treats reflected that.

Next Meeting

PFLAG Brisbane's next meeting will be on **Saturday 30th January, 2010.**

Time: 1.30pm

Place: 30 Helen Street, Newstead (down the driveway to the Training Room at the rear of the building)

2009 Presidents Report (by Shelley Argent)

What a year! The year to me has been exhausting and I would like to thank all of the Committee for their efforts this year. As a group we could not have achieved half of what we did, without the team effort that was shown and having everyone step up to the plate when needed.

I often think back to the beginning and marvel at how we have grown and have become a power in the gay community with only QAHC and Open Doors ahead of us. This is quite an achievement for an organization that is not government funded and operates on a 100% voluntary basis.

Lobbying (State)

In February/March it was decided to call attention to the need of Same Sex Parenting and the need for recognition of the non biological parent. This involved several newspaper advertisements, TV ads on Channel 7 and radio ads on 4BC & 4BH.

We decided it was time to bring this issue to the states notice, due to the results of a statewide poll that showed

67% of Queenslanders agreed that same sex parents should have legal rights over children in the relationship. As part of this campaign, we presented every person who attended the Queensland Labor Conference with an open letter explaining the discrimination and need for change.

We also regularly sent letters to every state politician and the media, reminding them of the concerns we, as parents have about the present discrimination here in Queensland. As the face of our campaign, we used a photo of Daniel, with the consent of his parents.

I have also had meetings with a number of politicians and their advisors who are involved with this issue.

Shelley Argent met with...

- Lawrence Springborg (pre election)
- Grace Grace (pre election)
- Cameron Dick (post election) regarding Same Sex Parenting
- Anna Bligh's Policy Advisors Jessica Collins/ Mark Biddulph re Same Sex Parenting (post election)
- Karen Struthers Policy Advisor, Kate Simpson re Same Sex Parenting (post election)
- Also on the 29th October State Parliament had its first official gathering of LGBT community with a BBQ and a meet and greet with the Pollies.

Lobbying (Federally)

PFLAG together with Australian Marriage Equality (AME) lobbied the federal government on the issue of Same Sex Marriage after the National Poll, funded by PFLAG, showed that 60% of Australians agreed with this belief.

PFLAG funded internet advertisements, an advertisement in the Australian Newspaper and TV advertisements on Channel 7 in Brisbane, Sydney and Melbourne. This was done because at the end of September we expected a Senate Inquiry to be held to decide on issue of Same Sex Marriage.

An added bonus was I was interviewed on Sunrise program on Ch. 7 with the advertisement being played

several times over the morning as a lead up to the interview. This was well received by the general audience with 73% approval from those who blogged the segment.

It should be noted that a record number of submissions were provided to government, thanks to the polling on the net. The advertising consisted of a banner that showed every time a person clicked on the Melbourne Age Paper.

PFLAG-funded surveys

- Angela Dwyer from QUT about "How Police and LGBT Youth Interact"
- Sharon Dane from UQ on "Not so Private Lives". This was a huge success with a record number of people providing details.
- "Equality and Age of Consent" - Queensland is presently the only state with the age of consent for gay males being 18.
- National survey on "Same Sex Marriage and Same Sex Parenting and Surrogacy"

Educational Projects for 2009

So gay is so yesterday

This was a poster campaign that was initiated in Canada. They graciously gave permission for us to reproduce the posters. These are to be sent to all schools in Queensland and will be offered to other community organizations in Queensland and interstate. 25,000 have been printed.

Straight for Equality

This is an information pack that provides tips to the heterosexual community about how to be more inclusive and sensitive to their friends and acquaintances identifying as lesbian or gay. This was an initiative of the US that we are adapting to suit the Australian community. This is still in the development stage.

Indigenous PFLAG Pack

This is now a reality and QAHC indigenous workers now have the resources. The pack consists of one very simple fact sheet. A brochure to assist someone to explain the issues of sexuality and a shortened version

of Sexuality is not a Choice, plus post cards showing two indigenous young people.

Fundraising & Donations

Great Bake Off

PFLAG Brisbane, together with Open Doors were fortunate enough again this year, to be chosen as a recipient of the funds raised from this annual event and thank the Sportsman's Hotel for their generosity.

Jak Vaessen from Agapi Wellbeing Centre at Spring Hill was a major donor to PFLAG this year with an offer of ongoing generosity.

We would also like to thank Club Phoenix for their generosity

Support to Parents

Parents Forum

We have proposed a series of forums for parents to be headed by Paul Martin at a cost of \$45 per person or \$60 per couple. These forums will begin when enough parents show interest.

Parents of Transgender Support Group

This year we again began a support group for Parents of Transgender. Those who attended found the meetings helpful, but because numbers haven't altered, so I am happy to pass on contact details so the parents can meet informally or support each other by phone.

Advertising

We resumed advertising in the Courier Mail weekly from June until Christmas. I feel that most people access the web now and have lots of information available there, so are not necessarily ringing the office or the helpline as much as they used to.

I have had stories in several local papers regarding the issues of Same Sex Parenting and Marriage.

Promotional Products

- Thanks to efforts and generosity of Chrissie, we now have PFLAG drink coolers.
- Also thanks to Gail's efforts and her tape measure, we now have PFLAG shirts.

Pride Fair Day

Was another success! Thanks to Eddie for being the caretaker of goods and the organizer of the day and to our other volunteers on the day.

Guest Speakers

- Angela Dwyer - discussed her study with LGBT Youth
- Paul Martin - gave his annual talk to parents
- Monica O'Mara - discussed policing issues
- Katie Allen - discussed health issues in general for both lesbians and gays

Presentations & Forums

- In April I was invited to Tasmania by a group called Working it Out, which seems to be a main LGBT organization in Tasmania. I did some community awareness and talked to community groups about the need for a PFLAG group or contacts, and the need to raise awareness about the needs for LGBT.
- I gave a presentation at the Relationships Australia National Conference on the Gold Coast in April.
- I was asked to be on the Gay and Lesbian Legal Service which was due to begin operating in October. This has been ongoing for quite a few months.
- In August I gave a presentation to Guidance Officers and Counselors at a Conference in Logan on Child and Youth Mental Health Services.
- In September, I gave a talk to young people and their families in Lismore, initiated by ACON Northern NSW.
- In October I gave a presentation to Lifeline

counselors about parents reactions to their sons and daughters coming out

- In October Margaret and I gave a presentation to UQ Ally's at St. Lucia Campus
- In October I attended the first official LGBT meet and greet of politicians at Parl. House in Brisbane with a BBQ later.
- In November, I was asked to be on a panel at a forum for Relationship Australia at Eight Mile Plains.
- In December I was invited to the Premiers Cabinet Christmas party
- In December we held a meeting with some of the Unions to discuss what they could do to further the recognition of same sex parenting rights and surrogacy. There are also plans to advertise further to publicise the issue before the conscience vote is taken.

In Summary...

I really feel, at the pace we are moving and the way we are going, that it's time to split some of the work and have someone oversee the general and administrative tasks. This would free up my time to concentrate of the political lobbying, which I am happy to do for a while longer. I will be very happy to help, but I just cannot keep going at the same pace.

I would like to congratulate the new committee and wish them well. Many thanks, to Margaret Parkhill for willingly taking on the role as President for 2010. Many thanks also to Gail Dalton for being secretary for another year and welcome to Lynn Davies a new mother to PFLAG who has gladly taken the position of Treasurer.

This has freed up time for Maxine who works fulltime but wants to spend more time with her aging Mother. And thank you to Andy who is staying on as our website Guru. I am sure these people will make Margaret's transition to President much easier.

I must say I have thoroughly enjoyed my time as President and feel we have made huge inroads into assisting more families understand sexual diversity and their loved ones. Plus I feel we have assisted in making

governments more aware of the need for equality and recognition of the needs of our sons and daughters.

Additionally, our educational resources on the web and hard copy have gone a long way to assist those seeking information to assist with understanding the issues and concerns we as parents, plus general community education that helps to make the lives of our sons and daughters easier.

But of course there is still a long way to go to achieve full understanding and equality.

Guide to being a Straight Ally:

Keep an eye out for this latest community awareness resource. We have distributed 90,000 post cards nationally through Avant Card. These can be found in movie theatres, restaurants etc. The message is simple with websites people can access additional information to give them greater understanding.

National Day of Action and same sex marriage:

Remember we need to keep applying pressure to Mr. Rudd and his government that it's time for same sex marriage to be recognised here in Australia. Please write letters and call your Federal Member about the rights of your child or children.

Good government isn't just about environment and economy it's also about equality for minority groups. Equality is no less important than any other issue. An election will be coming along sometime in the New Year and this is the time to make our voices heard.

Finally I would like to wish everyone a very Merry Christmas and please remember as we say every year the best gift we can give our sons and daughters is the gift of acceptance.

- Shelley Argent
Convener, PFLAG Brisbane



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connecting your senses

The PFLAG Brisbane newsletter is
Designed & compiled by Big Budda Boom

www.bigbuddaboom.com.au or info@bigbuddaboom.com.au
Video to DVD // Corporate events & Staging // Artwork & Design
Web design & hosting // Audio engineering

pflag

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PFLAG is totally voluntary & organised by parents.
Please support us. You can assist by advertising here.
For more information, please contact Shelley Argent.



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

ADVERTISE HERE!

Contact Shelley on 3017 1739