



Welcome

It's that time of year again - Christmas is almost upon us (the shops already have the decorations up!) and this December newsletter marks our last one for the year.

Welcome also to the new parents who may be reading our newsletter for the first time. For some to actually attend a PFLAG meeting can be considered too large a step. But for those who make the effort it can help to alleviate concerns and the isolation many experience before we as parents come to terms with our lesbian or gay child.

At our last meeting we welcomed as usual some new people to the group. One new attendee was a gay male who has struggled with his sexuality for many years. He finally came out to his parents earlier this year and still shows great concern about informing friends and other family members. After listening to his story everyone was moved by his honesty and personal anguish over his sexual orientation.

Furthermore, anyone who holds the belief that homosexuality is a choice or easier lifestyle would have soon realized that no one would put themselves through the pain and anguish like this lovely caring man did on a whim. Many don't realize that regardless of age children want and need parental acceptance. Additionally, he didn't want to disappoint or concern the family he loved.

The positive part of this story is that when he informed his parents he realized their love for him was unconditional and now he can be sharing and honest with them. His next step is to begin to tell friends when he feels strong enough. We all wish him well.

To close, I would like to thank everyone who has supported us this year. See you all again in 2006!!

- Shelley

Next Meeting

Our next meeting (the last one for 2005) will be held on Saturday the 3rd of December, at 1:30pm.

To bring the year to a close and celebrate the onset of the festive season, please bring a plate of nibbles to share.

Our meetings are located in the QuAC building - located at 187 Melbourne Street, West End (cnr. Edmonstone & Melbourne Streets).

Parking and entrance located at rear of building (off Edmonstone Street). Parking is also available in the Melbourne Hotel car park and walk down to the meeting.

While we check main front door to the building before the meeting begins, the conference room is around the back and we won't be able to hear anyone knocking on the front door. Please enter via the rear glass door next to the car park.

2006 Meetings

The first meeting for 2006 will be our Annual General Meeting, & will be held on Saturday the 28th of January.

Incorporation

PFLAG Brisbane is becoming incorporated!! We are all very excited at this next step in the life of our group. Our plan is to become known as "PFLAG Brisbane Inc" before 2006 begins. The special Incorporation Meeting went very smoothly, everyone was in agreement, and eager to be part of the forward move.

Office Bearers are Grainne Ridd who has taken on the role of Secretary, Maxine Humphrey gladly volunteered to be Treasurer, Lyn Walsh is happy to be Vice President and I was elected President. Committee members are Shane and John Thompson, Maggie Jewel, Gail Dalton, Christa and Andy Pudmenzky and Kieran Walsh.

PFLAG would also like to thank Caitlin from the Caxton Street Legal Service for her assistance with guiding us through the legal process. We believe incorporation for us as a group can only be positive and now is the right time to work towards our independence.

Many other PFLAG groups in other states around Australia are also incorporated, and I believe the next step should be an amalgamation of all states - which could make PFLAG a force to be reckoned with regarding equality issues and acceptance of our LGBT children!

- Shelley

Families Week at Turtle Cove

As mentioned in our last newsletters, PFLAG Brisbane has been asked to speak at Families Week 2005 - held from the 9th -16th of November at Turtle Cove, a predominantly gay resort between Cairns and Port Douglas.

Plans are still moving forward with this project, which should be great fun in a lovely setting. Meryl has volunteered to assist Shelley with this special week. Everyone who knows her will agree that Meryl will be a great off-sider!

Meryl's personal story is one that gives young people hope and inspires parents of all ages to keep moving towards acceptance and understanding of their Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual or Transgender sons and daughters.

Families Week was organized to encourage parents at all stages of acceptance to come along and have fun while becoming a little more informed about their lesbian and gay children. For more information, please visit the Turtle Cove website at www.turtlecove.com.

Military's recognition of Gay partnerships

Tasmanian Gay & Lesbian Rights Group - Media Release (dated Friday 21st October, 2005).

APPLAUSE FOR MILITARY'S RECOGNITION OF GAY PARTNERSHIPS

Gay activists have hailed a decision today by the Australian Defence Force (ADF) to give same-sex couples the same benefits as heterosexual partners in areas like housing and education assistance, relocation and compensation upon death or injury.

Tasmanian Gay and Lesbian Rights Group spokesperson, Rodney Croome, said the new policy will boost ADF staff retention and recruitment rates by making a military career a more attractive option for gay and lesbian Australians.

"This is a victory for common sense and for equality, but most of all it is a victory for the military because it makes the ADF a fairer, happier and more effective workplace for troops in same-sex relationships. The least this country can do for its service men and women is to treat them and their families equally regardless of sexual orientation."

The defence bulletin (or "signal") announcing the new policy was released today and declares that "Defence places great emphasis on ensuring its people work in an environment that is fair and inclusive, recognising that this enhances operational capability and effectiveness".

It creates a new category of "interdependent relationship" which will include all same-sex and de facto different sex couples.

To qualify a couple must show they have a close relationship and provide each other with financial and domestic support. The ban on gay and lesbian personnel was lifted 13 years ago.

Most western countries, including Australia's traditional military allies like Britain, Canada and New Zealand already recognise same-sex relationships in the military.

PFLAG Website

If you haven't already done so, please feel free to check out the PFLAG Brisbane website.

The site includes a large amount of information with regards to dealing with bullies, 'coming out', and also contains contact details for the Brisbane (and other) branches of PFLAG around Queensland, Australia and the world.

Shelley's booklet, Sexuality is not a Choice, is also available in PDF format. Current & previous PFLAG newsletters will be added to the website in the coming months.



You can find us online, at www.pflagbrisbane.org.au. From all the team at PFLAG Brisbane, have a safe & merry festive season!

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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.

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The PFLAG Brisbane newsletter is designed & compiled by Andy Pudmenzky of Big Budda Boom

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