

PFLAG Newsletter

*Keeping families
together!*

August/ September 2015



Upcoming Events

**Sunday
23rd August** **Sportsman Annual Charity Bake Off!**
A LGBTI family friendly event with all proceeds going to PFLAG Brisbane and ATSAQ.
Doors open at 10am – Entries in by 2pm
Sportsman Hotel, 130 Leichhardt St, Spring Hill

**Sunday
30th August** **Australia has Drag Queens!**
This should be good fun
Sportsman Hotel, 130 Leichhardt St, Spring Hill

**Saturday
19th September** **Brisbane Pride Fair Day**
This is the biggest event of the Brisbane Pride Festival and will be held at **New Farm Park**.
Open from 10:30 am to 5:30 pm. PFLAG will have stall there.

**Saturday
26th September** **Next PFLAG Meeting**
1.30pm, 30 Helen Street, Teneriffe

Welcome!

Welcome to the August/September edition of our PFLAG Newsletter!

As you will read we have had a very productive couple of months and have lots to fill you in on.

At our July meeting it was decided to not have a guest speaker - We thought it might be a good idea to just encourage parents to ask questions about the LGBTIQ community generally or, air any concerns they may have on any of the issues that involve their loved ones. This seemed to be well received by those who attended and a few other meetings will be planned this way.

We welcome our members' feedback and if you have ideas for future speakers or topics you would like covered please drop us a line to pflagsecretary@gmail.com



Have you visited our website yet?

All our resources have been updated and are available to download now. The site also has links to our previous newsletters, community services and other websites families may find helpful
<http://www.pflagbrisbane.org.au>



PFLAG Brisbane has advanced over the years

PFLAG has come so far over the last few years. I would never have imagined we could achieve what we have and how we are generally seen as a positive influence in the LGBTIQ community.

We still receive phone calls on our helpline 0400 767 832 however, many are now from parents with trans* children/adults seeking support and information or organisations seeking referral information or resources.

Most parents, even though they may be confused, want to understand and support their loved one, which is so good. Now it isn't so much about shame, blame or guilt.

Additionally, it seems our website is so good many people are getting their information from the site and

then feel comfortable. We must thank Andy, from Big Buddha Boom for his efforts and generosity with his time over the last ten years for the success and professionalism of our website.

The good thing now is to be LGB is pretty much considered the 'norm' these days and it won't take long for trans* issues to be the same, especially now that the Safe School Anti-bullying Policy is about to be introduced. Janet Berry a PFLAG Mum from Ipswich was on the steering committee, which helped to get this project going in Queensland.

PFLAG is being asked to be on various committees both non-governmental organisations and Government, which shows we are seen as a credible and long-term organisation.

Even politically, both State and Federally, we are seen as advocates for rights for LGBTIQ. So this is why after sixteen years of working with a variety of keen parents I feel pretty proud of how far PFLAG has come; and of course there is always more to do.

By Shelley Argent - PFLAG President

Labor Supports Gay Adoption

The Labor party has pledged to support adoption rights for gay couples at the weekend's National Labor Party Conference.

Former senator Louise Pratt put forward a motion that sought a federal commitment from the party on giving LGBTI couples equal recognition when it comes to access to IVF, adopting children and surrogacy.

The party will also seek to make sure gay, transgender and intersex couples get equal recognition in any current inter-country adoption agreements.

<http://gaynewsnetwork.com.au/news/national/labor-supports-gay-adoption-18414.html>



PFLAG Survey and what it has shown

The committee is very pleased with the response we received and the feedback has been great. I have included the recommendations that people suggested and hopefully addressed their comments. We do thank everyone for their input and for taking the time to let us know how the group is seen by those who come for support and information.



Number 1. Supporting parents, was our main concern and the feedback basically shows people are very satisfied with the service we provide. Our primary goal is to support parents and it seems we have succeeded. This is so important for us to know and thank you.

It is always important to remember that our group, like all PFLAG groups, is 100% voluntary and relies on the enthusiasm of the committee to succeed.

People stated they have always felt welcomed at the meeting and response when they telephone for support is helpful and friendly.

Number 2. The resources we freely provide, we are told are helpful which is great to know. However, someone did suggest they were a little simplistic. It is the committee's belief that people who are looking for more information and research papers can always find plenty of extra information on the internet.

We consider the resources to be the "starting point" for parents and people generally, seeking

information, not the complete answer.

We do aim to provide referrals, information and websites at the back of the booklets for people to access, which provides another step towards understanding.

Number 3. Some thought we could get more involved with schools.

This is an issue that can be very tricky as many know. We do provide information to State high schools about homophobia in schools, how students can be allies for equality and a booklet with information for teachers addressing support needed for LGBTI students and awareness of issues young people have to deal with on a daily basis during their process of "coming out" or transitioning.

And, again we need to be invited into schools to speak and when we do get invites, we most certainly never say "no".

Number 4. One comment was about PFLAG becoming involved with LGBTI and ageing. This is becoming a huge concern because we now have our first generation of LGBTI who are "out and

proud" and ageing. It is good to know there is a community action group, which is working well, and addressing the problems and concerns. Education is happening with aged care facilities and community carers about respect, special needs and the isolation that can occur.



People stated they have always felt welcomed at the meeting and response when they telephone for support is helpful and friendly.

Furthermore, I have at times spoken at conferences about this issue, but we feel this should be mainly left to the experts, however if asked for assistance we are only too glad to comply.

Continued

Number 5. Someone suggested we continue with the coffee mornings that were held at McDonalds or coffee shops. I know these went well, but the committee are too time poor to initiate these anymore. So it was suggested, if anyone would like to organise these, themselves we would be very, very happy to promote them in the newsletter for you.

Number 6. It was also suggested we advocate for the removal of hetero normative advertisements for cruises, restaurants and travel etc. I would suggest that if this is a concern to people they contact the Gay and Lesbian Travel Association (GALTA) they would have much better luck than us, at this task. We really wouldn't know where to begin.

Number 7. It was suggested that we send out reminders to people about the upcoming meeting just a few days beforehand. This is something I generally do, because I understand that people do sometimes need a reminder.

So please, I would be most interested to know if people ARE NOT getting the reminders. And, if

not, I need to work out what is going wrong. And, apologies if you don't receive the reminder and therefore miss the meeting.

Number 8. Most are happy with PFLAG and the advocacy we provide for our children. Presently, marriage equality is the main focus.

My personal belief is LGBTI rights are like women's and Indigenous rights. We have come so far in the last fifteen years, but there is still a way to go. In Qld a few things still to be addressed such as adoption, age of consent, abolishing the panic defence to name a few; But one issue at a time seems to have more success.



By Shelley Argent

Packing Bee and Mail out of PFLAG Resources



A couple of weeks ago about ten volunteers spent a Saturday packing PFLAG resources to be sent to every Medical Centre and State High School in Queensland.

It was a lot of work and quite repetitious but it was a most successful day. We packed 1,100 envelopes for medical centres and 400 for State High Schools.

I was a little concerned about how they would be received but we have had a great response with several doctors asking for more resources.

The high school packs will be sent out after the Safe School Policy is officially introduced into the schools.

Unions and the Qld Police Service will also be given resources which will further promote understanding and support of our LGBTIQ sons and daughters.

PFLAG "Parents for Equality" Bus Trip to Canberra

A bus trip is organised to leave Sydney's Central Station on Sunday 6th September to take about 40 PFLAG parents to Canberra.

The plan is to arrive at Parliament House on the Monday morning at 9am.

Accommodation and the bus

are booked. On Sunday night we will all go and have dinner together in Canberra.

I expect, even though we are there to discuss marriage equality and be a presence in Parliament House should a Free Vote be allowed, we can still have fun along the way.

If a Free Vote isn't allowed by the Coalition I do have a Plan B in mind.





"I imagined a time when being gay is as unquestioned and unjudged as is having blue eyes. Some might call it fantasy or science fiction. I'd like to think it's the future."

- Missouri Vaun,
All Things Rise



The next time someone asks you, 'Hey, how did you get to be a homosexual anyway?' tell them, 'Homosexuals are chosen first on talent, then interview. The swimsuit and evening gown competition pretty much gets rid of the rest of them.'

- Karen Williams

'LABELS ARE GAY': *Alice Hansen's Simple Message Of Love And Acceptance*

Far from her fears of being rejected, Alice Hansen received love and acceptance from family and friends when she came out. She is now sharing her experience in a touching and inspiring book, "Labels Are Gay" - She spoke with Cec Busby.

Children's author Alice Hansen spent years denying her sexuality, hiding the fact she was gay from her nearest and dearest until one day she finally realised she could no longer conceal who she was.

"Here I was, worried what others might think, and all I received were hugs and love and understanding. For me, this meant so much"

At the age of 27, Hansen finally came out. But rather than the rejection she had anticipated, Hansen discovered a world of acceptance from her family and friends. She has drawn on those experiences for her latest work, *Labels Are Gay*.

"Here I was, worried what others might think, and all I received were hugs and love and understanding. For me, this meant so much," she tells SX. "The book was a way of sharing that love and acceptance with a wider audience."

Alice says her reasons for concealing her sexuality were many, starting with her Catholic upbringing.

"I grew up Catholic and although never spoken about, I knew deep down that being gay wasn't seen to be 'a good thing'.

"For me, it was easier to be the Alice that everyone knew on the outside. Little did I know that although this appeared the smooth sailing option, it would create an internal battle and closed any doors to love. No one should live like that!"

When she finally decided to come out, Hansen recalls feeling a sense of elation. "It felt incredible. I literally

wrote a list of some 60 people I wanted to tell in person – a little extreme but I wanted them to hear it from me rather than finding out themselves. Each person responded beautifully and – as it turns out my worst fears weren't realised – I still have all my lovely friends. And my family have been brilliant. My brother smiled and said, 'We'd better find you a girl. We'll start with all the women who rejected me – they must all be gay'. He's a nutter."

She hopes by sharing her journey and others, people's stories in *Labels are Gay*, she will spread a message of love and acceptance.

"Here I was thinking I would shock those around me at 27 by telling them I was gay. But it turned out I was shocked by them.

"The world doesn't stop – you just get to live more fully in it."

No one shunned me, they just pulled me close and said how thrilled they were for me. Some said they knew all along, others raised their eyebrows, then carried on talking about what they did on the weekend. The world doesn't stop – you just get to live more fully in it." Despite the obvious LGBTI themes of her book, Alice says she didn't really consider the impact the work would have on members of the community.

"It wasn't until I began selling it at Salamanca Market in Hobart. I've had such lovely stories come out of this. I had an elderly man in tears, buying it for his son who was getting married in New Zealand. Some have used it as a tool, some have used it in schools, but most of all I think it's a message that everyone can understand whether they are gay, straight, or left handed.

This article is an excerpt from the Gay News Network published 25/7/15
<http://gaynewsnetwork.com.au>

2 MILLION LETTER CAMPAIGN

You will be pleased to know that Shelley Argent successfully delivered 40kg of letters to MP's and Senators in Canberra. We had quite good media coverage, which ensured everyone knew to expect mail in Parliament House that day! *Well done and Thank You, Shelley!*



Some fundraising and social events to keep in mind...

First, we would like to thank Neil McLucas, owner of the Sportsman who has been very supportive of PFLAG for the last 10 years. This year he is planning two fundraising events for us.

The first is **Australia Has Drag Queens!** – Sunday, 30th August at the Sportsman's Hotel. This should be good fun.

The Great Bake Off - Sunday, 23rd August, again at the Sportsman's Hotel. This is a daytime event.

I am asking if you are a cook or decorator, here is a great opportunity to try your luck at being the Champ! *Categories include Death by Chocolate, Pickles, Jams and Preserves, Desserts (Rich and Famous) Breads, Biscuits and Arts and Crafts (You make it we take it!).* Judging starts about 2pm and then the auction begins.

We will update with more information later and ask that you just come along and support PFLAG and the Sportsman's Hotel.



PFLAG MEMBERSHIP FORM

First Name:	
Last name:	
Email:	

Type of membership

Individual / Family \$25

Corporate \$100

Please make checks payable to: PFLAG Brisbane
 Address: **PO Box 1372, Eagle Farm BC QLD 4009**

*Or, you can transfer your membership directly into our bank account **Bank of Queensland***
BSB: 124 011 Account#: 20 238 607

Please reference your transfer as "PFLAG Membership" and your name

Would you like to receive e-newsletter? Yes No

Would you like to receive emails letting you know about upcoming PFLAG events? Yes No