



FACT SHEET 1 - FSGA STATEMENT

FSGA is a not-for-profit community-organisation, which works in partnership with people with a disability, people with a mental illness, people who are frail and aged and their carers to provide services that make a difference in their lives.

We started as a one-program organisation in 1979 and were known then as The Gold Coast Family Support Group. We have steadily progressed through good reputation and quality practice to a service employing over 300 staff, have changed our name to FSG Australia and now operate from a head office in Southport with regional offices operating in Labrador, Palm Beach, Beenleigh and Brisbane South.

We are Queensland Government- and Commonwealth Government-funded. All programs are administered centrally in Southport. Community programs are delivered from regional offices in areas where unmet need has driven application for funding. Regional offices develop and deliver projects, which have been identified as being responsive to community need.

Our vision and mission commit us to ensuring that the programs are well-resourced and supported, and also share the same core values and principles. Our further commitment is to ensure that all programs are delivering their services responsive to intensive collaboration with those who require these services. In this way we are all working together towards strengthening the capacity of people to live their chosen lives.

FSG Australia is an organisation that works from the needs of the community up. Our purpose is to assist people to move forward, to link them to their wider community and to ensure that they live the life of their choice.

We are known as an organisation, which is willing and able to *step up* when required and make a difference in the lives of those who require some extra assistance to live their chosen lives. We work in partnership with the people who access our service, helping and advising, listening to and at all times valuing their *story*. We are not here to give solutions but rather we are here to facilitate the moves ahead.

At the heart of FSG Australia is the understanding that it is the responsibility of everyone who has any input into the lives of others to ensure that all decisions are coherent with the needs, wishes and dreams of the people who access our service.

We are about community access and the right to belong. Social acceptance and inclusion do not come via agency effort but by the willingness and commitment of ordinary people. We need to continually seek staff who demonstrate a willingness to *walk beside* people with disability and a commitment to being the best advocate and community linker that they can.

What do we truly do at FGSA? Are we truly walking alongside those we work with to facilitate the best possible outcomes? Does everything we do have an outcome of assisting people to access the best possible life they can? Do we work toward social participation or are we replacing the community with programs of our own? Every day, every one of us should ponder these questions and ensure that we can answer 'yes'!

At FSG Australia we do not wish to offer programs that lock people into a dependency on us, which result in them feeling comfortable in disability or aged groups only. Are we absolutely sure that the community will not welcome people who have extra needs?

We do not want to give up on community. The community is more welcoming than we give them credit for. It just takes a bit of hard work to find out who really is willing to include, learn and accept.

Community access is not accessing the local shopping mall or the local bowling alley. Community is not a public place but a social place. Community is a place, where people go to share an interest or belief.

In order to *be there* to help people with a disability to attain full social participation we must:

- believe that all people with a disability or those frail with age have a place in the community and the capacity to contribute
- believe that the community wants to include people with a disability or those frail with age
- let go of all past negative experiences and beliefs
- be prepared to walk alongside people and encourage everyone we meet, to be prepared to include and welcome people with a disability or those frail with age into their circles.

No more disability or aged care programs – inclusion into what the community already offers, wherever possible.

It is the people of FSG Australia that make the difference. If FSG Australia is respected by those who access it, respected by funding bodies and respected by the general community, then we will be given the opportunity to provide services that other people value.

It is vital that we are all working with the same values and goals in mind; that we believe in what we do, and we work with a sense of purpose and commitment. Without a passion for making a difference in people's lives it would be very difficult indeed to advocate for the rights of others and to have a true understanding of our responsibilities around the upholding of those rights.

At FSG Australia we recruit staff on values and passion first and then through our human resource department and our training department (which has registered training organisation status) we ensure that our staff have all of the necessary skills and qualifications to do the very best job possible

Staff are proud to work at FSG Australia and help those who access our service to be proud to be associated with us.