

Introducing... IPSWICH

52 Brisbane Road, Ipswich - (07) 328132299

From small beginnings in 2007, FSG Australia Ipswich office is now a true community hub for a number of enVision mental health programs.

Lead by Service Manager Tracey Slater the enthusiastic Ipswich team includes:

Sue Fuller, Resident Support Program (RSP) coordinates a program that includes 35 participants and 3 hostels. Over the last 18 months Sue has successfully developed and now coordinates a number of social and community participation groups that support the recovery aims of the program and cater for a broad range of ages and interests.

Karen Hollywood, Brokerage Coordinator manages, in partnership with individuals, the Project 300, HASP (Housing and Support Program) and other packages.

Employed in August 2010 Donna Comerford is the Senior Coordinator for the TIDES Resident Recovery Program (featured in our last newsletter.) It is an exciting time for TIDES as the program is now open for referrals and has recently appointed 3 peer support workers. Work has also begun towards formalising collaborative partnerships with other local mental health/ community services.

Working closely with Donna is Stephen Jenkins, Direct Service Employee (DSE) who also contributes to the whole team and to creating the welcoming culture and relaxed atmosphere.

Nerelle Summerell Office Coordinator completes the team and is recognised by all as a pivotal support person for all the great achievements of the FSGA enVision Ipswich programs.

As the office is located in a community based house, program participants feel comfortable dropping by and are getting to know all the staff. In 2011 it is hoped that regular BBQs at the house will provide even more opportunities for positive social connections to occur.



Photos: The Ipswich Team

FSG AUSTRALIA INFO LINE

Offering assistance with:

- general information about FSG Australia
- enquiries about FSG Australia programs, centres and services
- information about and supported referral to other available services in the region
- information about specific disabilities, access issues etc
- practical advice for carers
- complaints or grievances
- ideas and suggestions for changes or improvements
- passing on positive feedback

If you need any information at all and you think FSG Australia might be able to help, send us an email!

info@fsg.org.au or visit our website www.fsg.org.au

We especially welcome people with a disability, carers and family members, to use helpline. It is also open to anyone in the community who would like to know more about disability, mental health and aged care, and people who may have an interest in employment or volunteering with FSG Australia.



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Would you like to comment on a story? Do you have a story to tell? Please contact alisonm@fsg.org.au

FSG in your community

Always making a positive difference in people's lives

GOLD COAST - BEENLEIGH - BRISBANE SOUTH - IPSWICH - REDLANDS - SUNSHINE COAST

Christmas Message from the CEO

When you reach the end of the year, it's my experience that three things happen: even though you are reeling from a busy year you speed up to get everything in order for the new year, then you tally up your effectiveness over the year and then, all things being fair, you find some time to rest up. The first two are pretty much inevitable, but the third one can sometimes get by on you. Well, I want to remind you that you've earned the right to rest up a little.

Working within a not for profit today is not easy. We ask a lot of everyone - we ask for passion and commitment and for you to go that extra mile and make life better for many people; and we ask you do that on a shoestring. No matter how much you do, you know there will always be more. At the top of everything you do is the belief that we really are making a positive difference and sometimes there is disappointment that we can't please all of the people all of the time.

However, I truly believe that 2010 has been a good one for FSG and those who access us and I hope it has been a good year for those associated with us; and so I want to thank you! I want to thank you for giving your talent, and your dedication, and your passion to the job you do. I know everyone at FSG would join with me to thank everyone who has put their faith in FSG Australia this year and let us work with them to help them move ahead positively in their lives.

It is their support and understanding that helps us put in the long hours and the occasional tough days. Although at times it may appear that we making all the decisions around people's lives, we do truly want those decisions to be

made together and have the best possible outcomes for everyone. It takes a lot of trust for people to truly believe that a service is really interested in personal outcomes. I want to thank the entire FSGA team for continuing to come up with the ideas and innovations that set FSG apart, that ensure that we remain responsive and exciting as a service.

We keep on achieving good results, and the reason for that is no secret - we do what we say we will do. We believe that we make a positive difference and work to ensure that this is consistent.

We believe in and practise under the Charter of Human Rights and everything we do is linked to that charter. If we have the rights of every person at the top of our practise and a willingness to accept all peoples no matter where they come from, what religion they have chosen or were born to, no matter what gender they are or have to chosen to be, no matter their disability or their difference, then we have made a conscious decision to celebrate all the diversity that surrounds us and encompass that diversity as a way of life. There is a long way to go before recognising the worth of all people is a reality but it will be longer if we don't start now.

As a team member at FSG Australia you can be proud of the way we have taken a leadership role around community issues such as diversity, the environment, our stance against forced co-tenancy, against the town planning requirement (in some shires) to put up signage in front of houses being built for people with a disability and for the resolution of unmet need. We are absolutely following the right strategy



and as long as we stay at the cutting edge, there's no reason why we can't be looking forward to bigger and better times ahead.

I look around this team, and I feel proud. I'm proud that you are all so passionate and work so tirelessly in order to provide a good life for so many people. I'm proud that you believe in what you do, are not afraid of taking on extra and are committed to the values of the organisation you have chosen to work with. I'm proud that you work so well as a team, listening to and validating the good work that everyone does.

And what that all adds up to is this: we might not be the biggest of all, but the way we work and the way we succeed means that we have good reason to claim we're the best.

So to those of you who joined us this year: Welcome to FSG Australia! You're joining a team with its own special character, and we're very glad to have you with us.

As long as we keep doing what we are doing, do not become complacent and keep asking people what they need to make that difference in their lives, we can only feel good about the future.

And so I want to thank you all, and wish each and every one of you a very Merry Christmas. I hope that 2011 is a year you feel good about and proud of your part in.

Vicki Batten



FSGA Focus Groups

We're listening...

At FSG Australia we are committed to continuously improving every aspect of our service delivery, and we do so through many internal and external processes such as responding to complaints or grievances about services or FSGA processes, and staff improvement suggestions.

By far the most important feedback we receive to inform us about the quality of services and areas in which we can improve comes from the people we walk along side - our program participants, their families and carers.

One important strategy for receiving this feedback has been our very popular participant focus groups run by David Conn.

Every 4 -6 weeks focus groups are held alternatively in the southern, central and northern areas of the Gold Coast. Groups of 6 -10 people who participate in a range of FSGA programs come together to bringing any concerns they may have as well and great ideas about how our programs can improve. If they wish, participants can also take the opportunity to share any news about experiences and achievements in their own lives with the group.

Good food and laughter are essential ingredients and David, who is well known to many people in his consumer advocate role, makes sure everyone feels comfortable and welcome and has an opportunity to 'have a say.' Minutes are sent out to people who have attended the groups, with information about what was discussed and any action that is to be taken to address concerns and issues raised.

Some of the topics discussed have included: a desire by many people to gain paid employment, need for more suitable transport options so that people using electric wheelchairs can travel to an event together, suggestions for equipment and amenities in some of FSGA's houses, concerns about particular programs (both FSGA and general community) that are no longer operating or have changed, participant's concerns about staff changes, suggestions for trips, community events etc.

After the meetings David follows up about matters raised, connecting with FSGA program staff and the wider community for clarity and solutions. He then makes sure that individuals are contacted and provided with feedback.

Profile: David Conn



David is FSGA's client advocate though many know him as a regular at FSGA's events in the guise of clown, BBQ chef, waiter and disco dancer!

Perhaps because David comes from a very close and loving family himself he has a seemingly innate capacity to connect with others and brings a sense of spontaneous joy to his work with our participants.

David was a Victorian police officer for 16 years (is this why you like dressing up Dave?) before moving to the Gold Coast in the mid 80's.

After studying to become a diversional therapist and working for Rosemary House (dementia service) he finally found his true niche in the disability sector. And fortunately for us he found his way to FSGA!

In his time here he has worked in a number of areas including: MY Home MY Life Program coordination, WPH&S and Quality Assurance. He is also a volunteer with FSGA's Interchange Qld Program.

David's current role involves:

- Visiting individuals across all the MY Home MY Life houses in many communities to ensure that a highly individualised approach to service delivery is maintained.
- Listening to concerns, documenting individual needs, recognising people as the experts in their own lives.
- Providing a vital link between participants, staff and management about grass roots concerns.



Yulu Burri Ba & Commonwealth Respite and Carelink Centre Brisbane South

AN FSGA COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIP UPDATE

Since reporting on the initial activities of this innovative partnership in July 2008, so much more has evolved to support indigenous carers and their family members on North Stradbroke Island.

The original aims of the project; to provide culturally appropriate responses to needs identified by the carers and family members, reduce social isolation and improve social and emotional well-being, continue to be met through innovative approaches. These include:

Men's Shed - Mallara Umphie (men's place) AKA "The Shedders"

Indigenous men working together to support the community e.g. building a shelter for a homeless community member, odd jobs for elders of the community such as painting and minor repairs around the home, restoring mowers and bikes for the community to use, manufacture of raised garden beds to go to community homes and the community garden and to the primary school.



The shedders are 'can do' guys whose esteem has grown in parallel to the fantastic outcomes they achieve. Many report reduction in social isolation, feeling included and able to participate and better physical and mental health through peer support and access to professional health advice. Some of the men have expanded their community focus to include joining the local State Emergency Service and intergenerational work with local schools and youth.



Socialising is a big priority with some of the men embarking on camping trips to Fingal and Moreton Island addressing connection to culture as well as regular fishing trips with access to the Quandamooka Land Council boat 'Kanga' and local beaches. The guys love to access the wide variety of local seafood especially when collected by hand as they would have as kids.

The Shed also hosts the weekly Youth Drug and Alcohol Diversionary Program which is

hoping to expand to incorporate a youth activity offering sailing and music activities.

The Stradbroke group has become a model for setting up other indigenous and non-indigenous men's sheds in SEQ. They have had several visits and interest expressed from a number of other regions and organisations.

Maroomba Milbool Weaving Art and Craft and Women's Sharing Circle

Many of the social and health related benefits of the men's group are also occurring through the Women's Sharing Circle.

- The weavers have received a request from The Minjerriba Moorgumpin Elders In Council to weave baskets for the final resting place of bones returned from The Vienna Natural History Museum and for remains of several other Aboriginal people. Weavers made 12 baskets and the remains were buried "on country" in a special ceremony at Myora cemetery - 31st July 2010. For many Aboriginal people, being able to die or be buried "on country" is extremely important.
- Participated in the Desert Women's weaving exhibition Redland City Council Art Gallery.
- Displayed at the "Red Car" Wooloongabba Art Gallery.
- Delivered a weaving workshop to 70 indigenous grade 7 students at the Quandamooka Jarjums Cultural Camp as well as classes at the Dunwich State School NAIDOC Day event.

Perhaps the most moving and exciting outcome has been the reuniting of sisters for the first time in 26 years! With support and funding from CRCC-BS, Yulu Burri-ba health service took several indigenous carers for an overnight visit to Dalby (as an alternative respite experience) to reconnect with one of the women who was part of their Thursday Art Group. During their visit, one of the participants, while chatting about her own land and people, discovered someone knew her long lost sister; and not only that, she was living in the area. The sisters were overwhelmed with joy when later re-united for the first time in 26 years.

With thanks to those who have facilitated and supported the men's and women's groups to be successful and sustainable:

- Yulu Burri-Ba staff : Jeanie Burns (YBB), Jeanette Robinson (YBB), Terry Coghill - Men's Shed (YBB), Mark Campbell (YBB) & Gordon Langton (YBB)
- Artist & Facilitator: Louise Marne (current artist & facilitator) and previously John Pene-Fonmosa (Indij'n'Arts)

Congratulations... FSGA Award Winners

Paul Teefy, FSGA's Chief Financial Officer was recently named Chief Financial Officer of the Year at the inaugural Financial, Administration and Back Office Awards (FABO). In his dedicated work, firstly as a volunteer and now as an employee, Paul has been instrumental in overseeing the unimaginable growth of FSGA from a service with an annual income of \$600,000 in 1994 to one of the 8th largest regional disability/human service organisations in Queensland with an annual turnover of \$35M. Congratulations Paul!



Each year, the International Volunteer Day Award Celebration rewards and recognises the hard work of volunteers who have dedicated their time and energy to volunteering within the Gold Coast Community. We are pleased to announce that FSG Australia's Interchange Qld Program were winners in the Community Organisation of the Year category! Congratulations Interchange!!