

STEPS Program Newsletter

S **KILLS** **T** **O** **E** **NABLE** **P** **EOPLE & COMMUNITIES** **S**

From the Manager,

No room for any words from me this edition— enjoy reading about what we have been up to around Queensland.... Areti



Queensland
Government

Princess Alexandra Hospital
Metro South Health

Brain Injury Awareness Week

This year, Brain Injury Awareness Week (BIAW) ran from Monday 17 to Saturday 23 August and the STEPS Program got behind it in the following ways:

Supporting our Network Groups around Qld with local celebrations, fundraising and awareness-raising activities

Activities included sausage sizzles, market stalls, stands in shopping centres, and joint meetings between groups (see some pictures on page 6). From Cairns in the north to the Gold Coast in the south, to Emerald in the west, it is an exciting time to be part of the STEPS Program in Queensland. Our groups are local, vibrant, important sources of connection during this particular week, but more importantly, for the other 51 weeks of the year too.

Some of the BIAW events fundraised too for the Potential Unlimited program 2015, in partnership with the PA Research Foundation. Thanks to the extraordinary efforts of many Network Groups around Queensland who, in combination with other fundraising efforts, have helped us reach our target of \$ 10 000. For more information see page 8.

Scheduling our Brisbane STEPS Program Leader Training during the week

We again trained great new STEPS Program leaders on 18/19 August and are excited that they will join our other leaders who, through their local commitment and hard work throughout Queensland, have improved community participation for hundreds of people with ABI around the state.

Virtual connections around Qld

In addition to all of these face-to-face events, we had a virtual launch on our Facebook page of an idea to help build connections amongst members of our STEPS Program community. HINT: It involved memory, organisation, planning and maybe just a bit of baking! But as they say, the proof of the pudding is in the eating! Turn to page 6 for details about this fun activity- BIAW may be officially over, but it's not too late to start.



September 2015

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STEPS PROGRAM STAFF news

There is more STEPS Program baby news: we congratulate Ben Turner, whose fourth child, a girl who has been named Evelyn, has arrived safely to join her sister Emily and big brothers James and Lachlan. Well done mum and dad!

It's also not long now until we welcome back Kelsey, our administrator from maternity leave after the birth of baby Brynn. We have had a succession of temporary staff filling Kelsey's

position. We now welcome Lorelle Reichstein to this position until November. She is learning the ropes pretty quickly. One of her first big jobs has been putting this newsletter together. Thanks Lorelle!

STEPS Skills Program Reports

CAIRNS North by Anne Kavanagh

The fabulous STEPS Skills Program was once again lead by Andrew Ryan, and me at Cairns North Community Health Facility. We had one of our biggest groups ever with 13 participants coming together every week to discuss the challenges and successes of living well in the community following ABI. A novel part of Session 5 was having Areti join us via videoconferencing from Brisbane to discuss the STEPS Network Group and plan our group future in Cairns. This link went very well. We had a few creative people in our group, so we had the break-up activity in the gorgeous

botanical gardens where we listened to some original and live music from some of them. The food we brought to share was pretty good too! The future of our Cairns STEPS Network Group looks bright with a keen peer leader ready to take up the mantle of organising more fun together.



HELENSVALE by Annette Prentice



Paul and I were co-leaders for the very first Helensvale STEPS Skills Program, held at the new local library- a great venue. This was Paul's first time leading since his leader training earlier in the year, and I am sure we would

all agree, he did well and enriched the group by contributing his personal experience. Paul and I both enjoyed seeing our group bond together, sharing information and contacts, and everyone was so positive! It doesn't mean things have been easy for any of them, but on the road to recovery a positive approach certainly helps. Ongoing support is so important if you are struggling or feeling alone, so we welcome these latest STEPS Program participants to join our monthly Gold Coast Network Group: there is nothing like being with people who know what you are going through because they've experienced it themselves.

BUNDABERG by Shane Isles, peer co-leader



The Bundaberg STEPS Skills Program for 2015 commenced in May. After week one, it was evident that this group of seven participants was interested in

understanding more about each other, and how brain injury had affected their life, either directly or indirectly. For our group breakup, we had a sausage sizzle at Alexandra Park. We had to have our lunch under cover as we had a rather heavy downpour during our BBQ. Once the rain eased, we walked through the zoo, and its new facilities to see some of the animals. Everyone loved the cotton top tamarinds

and having a pat of the dingoes. We then made our program official by presenting certificates, and inviting everyone to join our local Network Group (Brain Injury Friends) before saying our goodbyes: a great way to wind up!



BRISBANE NORTH Young ABI



For the very first time, the STEPS Skills Program was specifically offered to “young” people with Brain injury—i.e. people aged be-

tween 18-35 years-on Brisbane’s northside. We have offered such a program already on the southside with great success. The program was co-led by 2 peer leaders: Grant, an experienced peer leader, and Nick, who was new. They quickly established a great working rapport, and created an atmosphere in which people felt comfortable

to ask questions, put forward ideas and have discussions together. The group is continuing as an ongoing Network Group, and had its first meeting earlier in September. They welcome other younger people with brain injury who have previously completed a STEPS Skills Program. The next meeting is on Monday 12 October (2nd Monday of month) from 10-12 at Chermside Kedron Community Church, cnr Rode Rd & Gympie Rd, next to Aldi. New members are welcome to come along!

STEPS NETWORK GROUP REPORTS

TOWNSVILLE

Townsville has welcomed some new members recently and was also busy in August, hosting a stand at Stockland Townsville to raise awareness of ABI, and fundraise for the Potential unlimited 2015 trip. Two of our members, Stephen and Sharlene, are going on the trip and we are all excited for them. It was a busy, tiring day. Here we are all relaxing a couple of weeks after that, at our ‘home base’, Coffee Club Willows.



STEPS NETWORK GROUP REPORTS

CAIRNS by Gretel Burgess

Up here in Cairns we certainly started our new phase for the Cairns STEPS Network Group with a bang. Over ten of us came together from over three different STEPS programs, including participants from the last STEPS program in Cairns North and previous programs from Edmonton in Cairns South. We met on Thursday 27 August at local Chinese Jade Plus

restaurant for lunch. It was wonderful to see familiar faces from the last program and to meet others that had done the program previously. As we all dined on noodles, laksas and fried rice it was great to see how everybody was travelling and what news people had to share. We even got a tour of Roy's new van he has fixed up to live out of, as he is about to embark on a

long solo journey travelling from Cairns across to Perth. We started planning for future group activities, including movies and pizza. Hmmm I'm starting to think our group likes their food...a lot. Anyway, I'm so enthusiastic to share what Cairns is doing and I will make sure I take plenty of photos next time. I look forward to sharing our adventures with you all. Take care from us here up in crazy Cairns!

MACKAY by Judith Nance

I was very happy to be able to attend a meeting of the Mackay STEPS Network Group on my flying visit in July— it was great to be able to put names to faces! We had quite a roll-up at the meeting, where I passed on some information about the National Disability Insurance Scheme and then enjoyed some delicious morning tea. We were so busy chatting

that we forgot to take a photo until most people had left. We remembered just in time to take this snap of me with Peya and Sue, who were the leaders of the most recent Mackay STEPS Skills Program in April this year. John from this group is amongst the lucky ones off on the Potential Unlimited trip in October. We know he'll have a great time.



TOOWOOMBA by Mary-Ann Garrahy

The Toowoomba Network Group had a wonderful day for our July meeting making our own pizzas for lunch. We made our own bases and designed our pizzas from a large variety of ingredients then cooked and ate them for lunch. We even made a banana crumble and an apple crumble pizza which we had with custard and cream for dessert. We all had a wonderful time- a great activity for a cool winter's day.



REDCLIFFE/NORTHLAKES/CABOOLTURE

When the Caboolture Network Group decided to venture further afield to the Redcliffe beachfront in July, it was a great opportunity to have a combined gathering with the Redcliffe-North Lakes group. The group enjoyed fish and chips by the seaside, and enjoyed meeting new people from the STEPS Program 'family'. In August, the groups had a joint meeting again, this time at North Lakes, in a café beside the picturesque lake there. Because it was overcast and blustery, there were a few close calls with people's food being blown off the table, but we managed to save everyone's plates with some careful attention



BURANDA

The Buranda STEPS Network Group got behind Brain Injury Awareness Week 2015 with a stand in front of Woolworths Buranda, raising funds for Potential Unlimited via a sausage sizzle BBQ, and raising awareness about brain injury in general. One Buranda STEPS Network Group member, Dave, will be going on the Potential Unlimited trip this year, so it was great to see the

group contributing towards the fundraising target.

We look forward to hearing from Dave when he gets back, with his potential fully unlocked!! Here we can see Shannan and Cam cooking up a storm....and is that a Bang on a Beanie I spy on Shannan's head?



BUNDABERG



The Bundaberg Brain Injury Friends group is one of the oldest STEPS Network Groups. While in town for some STEPS Program leader training earlier this year, Areti joined the group for morning tea at a new café in town.

Since then, the group has enjoyed visiting various places around Bundaberg, including the unique zoo in Alexandra Park on the banks of the Burnett River. Read more about this popular local attraction in the STEPS Skills Program report on page 3.



Brain Injury Awareness Week

HERMAN THE GERMAN FRIENDSHIP CAKE CHALLENGE

Herman is a sourdough cake made from a 'starter'. Once you have made, or been given a starter, there is a ten day process:

1. stir and feed Herman to keep him bubbling and rising at room temperature.
2. divide Herman into four portions, use one to make the cake and give the other three (with instructions) to friends, who start

the cycle again. We thought it was a great idea to mark Brain Injury Awareness Week, as the whole process supports friendships while challenging your brain: remembering to stir and feed Herman, getting organised with ingredients, following a recipe and so on. Then, when you have made your cake, invite three friends over for a cuppa and a slice, and send them

home with their very own starter. See Herman's own website with full instructions: <http://www.hermanthegermanfriendshipcake.com/how-to-make-your-own-sourdough-starter-for-a-herman-the-german-friendship-cake/> If you don't use a computer, just give us a call and we'll post you the instructions.



STATEWIDE BIAW ROUND-UP



STEPS Program Leader Training

We provided STEPS Program Leader training program in Nambour on 22 September to workers in our new service partner, SCILS (Sunshine Coast Independent living Service) . Earlier this month, training was offered in Townsville. If you are interested in STEPS Program leader training for your local community, please contact us.

reader contributions

STEPS SPRING SPLENDOUR

Poem by John Enright, Logan STEPS
Network Group peer co-leader

The frosts have gone and the grass is green
This could be one of the best months you have
ever seen
Throw away your sweaters and put your feet in
thongs
Get outdoors and listen to the happy bird songs
And here is something else you should do
Just read below to find a clue
On Monday the seventh day of month number
nine
To the Rec Club us STEPIES adjourn to dine
The boys (and the girls) from the bush will be
there

And as usual they will make the most of the
delicious fare

So come along all you city slickers
Spring is here so no need for woolly knickers
Twelve midday is a good time to start
Oops the end can't think of a word to rhyme with
start.



SPOTLIGHT ON... Mackay

Mackay is a city on the eastern coast of Queensland, about 970 kms north of Brisbane, on the Pioneer River. With a population of around 125,000, it is nicknamed the 'Sugar Capital of Australia' because it's region produces more than a third of Australia's cane sugar. However, in recent years, the mining industry has become the mainstay of the local economy.

The city was named after John Mackay who in 1860, was the leader of an expedition into the Pioneer Valley. Initially the township was to be called Alexandra and the river named after Mackay, but later the river was renamed the Pioneer River, with the township name changing to Mackay.

There has always been much contention over the pronunciation of the town's name. Correspondence received by Mackay City Library in 2007, from descendants of John Mackay, confirms that the correct pronunciation is Mack-eye, not Mack-eh.

The City Centre is noted for its art-deco inspired architecture, with many buildings throughout the main streets of the central business district featuring distinctive designs from the early 20th century.

There is a STEPS Program connection in Mackay too! The sculpture at the entrance to the Mackay Botanical Gardens (pictured) was created by Christopher Trotter who is the cousin of our current Acting STEPS Program Coordinator, Judith Nance.





steps CHRISTMAS PARTY DATE CLAIMER



Wednesday 2 December



Remember this date! Enter it into your phone or write it in your diary. This is the date for the STEPS Program Greater Brisbane Christmas Party 2015!

But I don't live in/ near Brisbane.. What about me?

We value you! Lock in the date, wherever you are! If you want to travel to Brisbane for the party you are most welcome to attend (unfortunately we can't fund any of your travel costs).

Otherwise, it would be wonderful if STEPS Program Network Groups around Queensland could all be celebrating the end of the year in their local communities at the same time. You might meet in a park or a café, or have some fun at your usual meeting place with some Christmas activities... it is up to you!

If you let us know before the day, we can share your event news with everyone at the party in Brisbane— we'll be connected through the power of communication and shared participation.

When: Wednesday 2 December

Time: 10:00am– 12noon for morning tea

Where: Frangipani Court, Roma St Parkland, Brisbane

Getting There: Train or car are the best options. It is a flat, 200m walk from Roma St train station.

Parking: Free for disability parking permit holders; regular parking is \$4.20 per hour

Catering: Sausage sizzle, morning tea and cold drinks will be provided by STEPS Program

Wet Weather Plans: If we have to relocate the event due to rain, it will be held at an indoor venue close to ABIOS office at Buranda. Exact details TBA closer to the date.



Potential Unlimited 2015 update

Plans are progressing well for the Potential Unlimited Program 2015. A group of 11 STEPS Program peer leaders/participants will travel to Canberra from 21 – 27 October to complete the challenging course. The participants, mostly from regional and rural Qld, have been involved in monthly planning teleconference meetings to ensure that everyone is ready for the trip. A key focus has been raising the funds needed for the trip. As you can see from the 'fundometer', we have exceeded our target of \$10,000, a fantastic achievement! For more information about the fundraising effort, please see our 'go fundraise' webpage - <http://makingadifference.gofundraise.com.au/page/steps2015>

Many STEPS Network Groups have hosted fundraising events throughout the year, including groups who don't even have a local group member going on the

Those going have now turned their focus to finalising travel plans, ensuring they have the necessary equipment, and generally keeping fit and healthy for the challenges that lie ahead in Canberra. While the program will be challenging, it will be a lot of fun too! Watch out for a report about some of their experiences in the December edition of the STEPS Program newsletter.



THE STEPS PROGRAM

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