

STEPS NEWSLETTER

From the Manager....

- What a jam-packed edition this is.... Firstly, the STEPS program, represented by me, won a prestigious award for Workforce Innovation from the Health and Community Services Workforce Council. One of our peer leaders from Logan, Milissa Valentine, also co-presented a paper with me at the conference associated with the awards. Read her reflections below.
- Secondly, several STEPS Program members from Brisbane enjoyed a sailing trip on the Young Endeavour— see page 5
- Thirdly, we were again able to celebrate and acknowledge the contributions of our exceptional volunteer leaders around Queensland- see page 7.
- Plus all of our usual STEPS Program site information from around Queensland!

Areti

STEPS Program workforce model shines...

- On Thursday 19 May, Areti Kennedy and I presented at the Workforce Innovation Conference, at The Sebel & Citigate Hotel in Brisbane, very posh. I was slightly intimidated by the thought of fellow conference delegates – picturing women in power suits & men with a Bluetooth ear piece connected to their head. I arrived by myself and sat, alone, in a tastefully designed chair, looking at an impressive view of Brisbane's architecture.
- Soon I was joined by some people who decided to “beat the queue” for lunch and persuaded me to do so too. A delicious spread of food lay before me- it all looked so appetising! But, being nervous, I refrained from piling up my plate. I met Areti who commented “see, they are normal people!” She was right; I didn't see a Bluetooth ear piece all day.
- The presentation itself was a breeze- **“Merging the power of lived experience with the expertise of professional practice: a winning combination for health service delivery in communities throughout Queensland”**. We had prepared it prior to the conference. From my perspective, we gave an enjoyable and informative speech. Once that was over, time to concentrate on the Awards dinner!
- Areti was a finalist for an award, commending all her work in developing the STEPS Program. The food was good, the service great and the dessert even better!! Throughout the night Areti was convincing herself she wouldn't win. She even left her acceptance speech at home (“a bad omen”, I teased) and pointed out that they would have asked her how to pronounce her name if she was the winner. I'll also add that Ray and I chickened out of going on stage with her when the winner was announced. I was hanging onto my seat when they announced “The winner is Areti Kennedy!” Applause and photos followed and coffee and music signed the end of the evening.



From Left to right: Milissa Valentine, Ben Turner (STEPS Program Coordinator), Areti Kennedy, Ray Quinn (ABIOS Manager)

I am so glad Areti gave me the opportunity to speak with her at the conference, it was really quite an honour. It's great to her dedication to her work and team mates formally recognized. Well done Areti!!!

—Milissa Valentine, STEPS Program Peer Leader

Editors' Note: for more info about the conference and awards, go to

<http://www.workforce.org.au/workforce-innovation/workforce-innovation-conference-awards.aspx>

STEPS

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Special Points of Interest:

- ① STEPS Program workforce model shines...
- ② STEPS Ipswich in local paper
- ③ Young Endeavour Sailing Trip
- ④ Volunteer Morning Tea

Inside this issue:

STEPS Program 1
workforce
model shines..

STEPS Skills 2
Program Map

STEPS Skills 2
Program
Reports

- Logan
- Bundaberg
- Edmonton
- Ipswich
- Forest Lake
- Capalaba

STEPS Net- 4
work Groups

- Brisbane Central
- Ipswich
- Young En-deavour Sail-ing Trip

Open Network 6
Groups

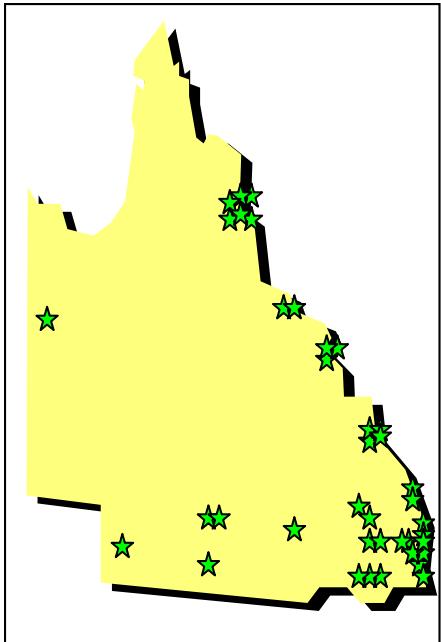
STEPS Leader 7
Network

Spotlight On.. 7
Townsville

STEPS Leader 8
Training

Date claimer— 8
STEPS Program
Leader Train-
ing Forum

• STEPS Skills Programs in QLD Map



- 2006 - Maroochydore, Caloundra, Buranda, Cleveland, Gold Coast, Mackay, Bundaberg, Capalaba, Annerley
- 2007 - Gold Coast, Bracken Ridge (2), Rockhampton (2), Bundaberg, Charleville (2), Innisfail, Kingston, Wooloowin, Roma, Cairns (2), Mitchelton, Carina
- 2008 – Logan central, Chermside, Bracken Ridge, Rockhampton, Far South West Qld (telegroup), Cunnamulla, New Farm, Warwick, Maroochydore
- 2009 - Logan north(x3), Pine Rivers, Red Hill, Townsville, Mt Gravatt, Warwick, Stratford (Cairns), Rockhampton, Gordonvale, Riverview, Buranda, Nundah, Redcliffe, Cleveland, Mackay, Hillcrest, Acacia Ridge
- 2010 – Warwick, Buranda, Rockhampton, Brinsmead (Cairns), Mt Gravatt (2), Ipswich, New Farm, Logan north(2), Beaudesert, Pine Rivers, Mackay, Bulimba, Arundel (Gold Coast), Smithfield (Cairns), Toowoomba (2), Townsville, Kingaroy, Yarraman, Elanora (Gold Coast), Wynnum, Ipswich, Zillmere, Mt Isa, Stafford
- 2011- Logan north(2), Bundaberg, Ipswich, Elanora, Forest Lake, Capalaba, Edmonton (Cairns), Townsville

• STEPS Skills Program Reports

STEPS Logan

Logan continues to be an area of high activity for the STEPS Program with two STEPS Skills Program run already in 2011. The first group started on the 2nd of March and was led by John Enright and Jon Giessler. The second group started on the 10th May and was led by John Enright and Milissa Valentine. Both groups were run at the Logan North Library (Underwood). The Logan STEP Leaders have led many groups in the area over the

past 2-3 years, but each time a new group starts, they continue to comment on impact of the program for participants and the friendships



that are made within the group. There is always plenty of humour in the groups, along with a few tears along the way. The friendships that are formed continue as participants join with the Logan STEPS Network Group, which meets twice monthly. As John Enright has commented – “it’s all about having fun and supporting each other.”



STEPS Bundaberg

The Bundaberg STEPS Skills Program commenced at the Kenalwyn Neighbourhood Centre on a bright Wednesday morning, March 9th 2011. Newly trained STEPS program leaders Carol Alaka, Karen Bailey, Gabby Walker and Jennie Whitley welcomed a crowd on the first week. Gabby and Jennie continued with the group for the next 4 weeks, enjoying a cuppa

and biccies during morning tea and being spoilt during week 4 when one of the participants brought in some delicious hot cross buns. Despite numbers dropping after the first week, our little group shared some amazing experiences and enthusiastically prepared for the week 6 activity. The week 6 activity was held at Alexander Park and our group size swelled as friends and family were invited along to share in the morning. We feasted

on chicken, sandwiches, fruit, biscuits and cake and met Leanne Curtis, who runs the Brain Injury Friends group in Bundaberg. She handed out information regarding Aprils meeting and invited all STEPS participants to continue the friendships they had developed over the 6 weeks and come along to the networking group.

- Jennie Whitley and Gabby Walker

STEPS Edmonton

Recently STEPS hosted an afternoon program for Southside Cairns residents through the Edmonton Community Health Centre. We had a wonderful mix of people sharing their brain injury experiences with us and the presence of dedicated carers from varying walks of life added extra value. An exciting visit from Jenny our local support network

co-ordinator towards the end of the program gave people further opportunity to consider individual future directions.

therapists volunteering their time for a relaxing neck and body massage. And for some further indulgence we enjoyed a drumming circle with a music therapist – a fitting Grand Finale for the program!

Gail Rogers
Ancilla Fasiolo



STEPS Ipswich

The Ipswich STEPS Skills Program started on the 15th of March and was co-led by Doug Stubbs and Megan Turner (peer leaders). Both Doug and Megan commented that those in the group were very willing to discuss their journey of life after brain injury. The group has joined with the Ipswich STEPS Network Group. The following article which appeared in the Ipswich Advertiser Newspaper highlights the success of group! Thanks to Doug and Megan



NEW SKILLS: Steps graduates meet for lunch at the Ipswich RSL to celebrate completing the program.
Photo: David Nielsen IPS190411BRAI27B

Taking steps to live with injury

TEN people with acquired brain injuries have graduated from a program that teaches sufferers to learn how to live again.

The program, called Steps Skills Program, was launched in Ipswich two months ago and delivers its message through group-work sessions on issues that will positively influence health and well-being now and into the future.

Ipswich group leader Megan Turner said the Steps participants learnt a host of new skills to help them in everyday living.

"Steps is designed for people in the group to share and learn from each other's experiences," Ms Turner said.

"Often the people who we can learn the most from are people who are experiencing, or have been through, similar issues to ourselves.

"One of the most valuable aspects of the program is linking with others

in the community to support people with brain injury and stroke.

"We also looked at ways to look after yourself, learning ways to get the support you need, enhancing relationships with family, friends and others in your life, and sharing everyday life experiences with others in your community."

Steps program co-ordinator Ben Turner said the support received within the group was vital for improving the quality of life of those living with acquired brain injuries.

"We are very happy with the great difference Megan and her fellow co-leader Doug have made in the lives of those who recently completed the Steps program with them," he said.

■ **For more information and for details about upcoming groups phone 3406 2311 or visit www.health.qld.gov.au/abios/steps**

• STEPS Forest Lake

The first ever STEPS Skills Program in Forest Lake commenced on the 10th of May, after a slight delay of 1 week. Scott McDonald and Elaine Trotman (peer leaders) were the leaders for the group. While the group was small in numbers (6 participants + the leaders), it was never short of conversation. The group found it very re-assuring to be able to openly and honestly

discuss their journey after brain injury – it was amazing how many similarities there were! The morning tea each week was always well catering and Scott's homely touches created an inviting atmosphere for the group to share. The group finished with lunch at the Forest Lake Tavern. At this stage, the group plans to meet on the last Tuesday of each month at the Coffee Club in Forest Lake.



• STEPS Capalaba

Just a few words about the Capalaba STEPS Skills Program which celebrated its completion on 7th June 2011: This group was the 3rd group that I have co-facilitated and as with the first two it was a delight. If the participants got as much out of attending the group as I got out of helping to present the workbook and its contents to them, then they surely would be very pleased with themselves. It does not matter how many times I assist

with the groups, I always gain from the experience that I get from the groups and the people who make up the groups. There is always something new to learn and it is wonderful how everyone contributes and shares their

experiences and how each member of the group feels a sense of belonging. The Capalaba STEPS Skills Program participants have been invited to join the existing Bayside STEPS Network Group. The group also plans to meet for coffee on the 23rd of June as a transition to the Network Group.

Denice Rundle – Denice co-lead the Capalaba STEPS Skills Program with Lynne Everett.



• STEPS Network Groups

• STEPS Brisbane central

The Brisbane Central STEPS Network Group has continued to meet on a monthly basis throughout 2011. The venue for meetings



usually alternates between the ABIOS Offices and Roma St Parklands. In April, the group was treated to a musical ensemble by one of the group members, Shannon, and some of her friends from the Queensland Conservatorium of Music. Shannon sustained a traumatic brain injury from a motor vehicle accident several years ago. At the time of her injury, Shannon had just started a Bachelor of Music degree at the Conservatorium. After a lengthy period of rehabilitation in hospital etc, Shannon returned to complete

her degree. She started gradually, but after many years of hard work, she graduated with a Bachelor of Music degree last year – what an amazing achievement! The music ensemble was a great way for the Brisbane Central STEPS Network Group to celebrate Shannon's achievement – we were very much inspired by her talents! Shannon and her friends even managed to pull a crowd of on-lookers at the Parklands. All in all, it was a fabulous (and very relaxing) morning – thanks to Shannon and her friends.

• STEPS Ipswich

The Ipswich STEPS Network Group has continued with its adventurous spirit throughout 2011. In April, the group decided to have a go at aqua aerobics. Everyone met at the Goodna Aquatic Centre for a

cool start to the morning – luckily the pool was heated though. While everyone was a little apprehensive about trying something new – mostly everyone got in the water and had a go. We were all surprised at how

much of a workout the session was! The general consensus was we'd be happy to do it again – but we might wait until Spring or Summer thought as the weather can get a little chilly in Ipswich at this time of year.

STEPS Young Endeavour Sailing Trip

Wednesday 23 March: Hoist the sails! The sun was shining brightly and we needed some shade aboard the Young Endeavour ship, sailing on our way up the Brisbane river. Several STEPS Program members from around Brisbane and some ABIOS clients and staff had earlier

gathered to board the ship for a half-day sail. Once aboard, we had the opportunity to take part in all the action of a sailing ship- pulling ropes, hoisting sails, tying off, etc, all ably supervised by the ship's crew, young volunteers learning the ropes themselves aboard the Young

Endeavour. We enjoyed tacking to port and starboard, wandered from bow to stern, and then all disembarked back at the Bulimba Barracks after a wonderful morning of sailing.

-Ty, Elaine, John, Don- Mt Gravatt
STEPS Network Group



Open Network Groups

Here is the list of Network Groups are open to new members, places where they meet and the contact person for each of the groups.

- **Acacia Ridge– David Firth:** Ph 0411 501 641
Weekly meetings, Mondays 10am-12pm, Acacia Ridge Community Centre, Hanify St, Acacia Ridge
- **Bayside– Denice Rundle:** Ph 3823 4851 & **Ben Turner:** Ph 3406 2311
Monthly meetings, 2nd Thursday of each month at various local venues
- **Beaudesert– Tina Jarvis, Denise Kelly & Annie Kydd:** Ph 5541 1653
3rd Wednesday of month 10am-12pm at St Mary's Community Services, 6-12 Petersen St, Beaudesert
- **Brisbane Central– Ben Turner:** Ph 3406 2311
Monthly meetings, 1st Wednesday of month, 10am-12pm- venue alternates between ABIOS & a community setting.
- **Bundaberg– Leanne Curtis:** Ph 4155 2303
Monthly meetings, 4th Wednesday of month, 10am– 12pm at various community locations.
- **Cairns– Jenny Sweeney:** Ph 4055 0015
Monthly meetings, 1st Thursday of month 10am-12pm at McCafe, Smithfield McDonalds, Milman Dve, Smithfield
- **Gold Coast– Ben Turner:** 3406 2311
Monthly meetings, last Saturday of month (daytime), various community locations
- **Innisfail– Raylene McSwan:** Ph 4063 3742 & **Stephen Wilkie:** Ph 4068 0638
Monthly meetings, 1st Thursday of month 10am– 12pm at Healthier Great Green Way, 180 Edith St
- **Ipswich– Ben Turner:** Ph 3406 2311
Monthly meetings, 2nd Tuesday of month, 10am-12pm at various community locations
- **Kingaroy– Bobbie D'Arcy:** Ph 4162 9220
Monthly meetings– exact details TBA
- **Logan Coffee and Chat Group– John Enright:** Ph 3342 5820
3rd Wednesday of month 10am-12pm at Logan Diggers RSL Club, 42-48 Blackwood road, Logan Central
- **Logan North– John Enright:** Ph 3342 5820
Monthly meetings, 1st Monday of month, at various community locations
- **Mackay– Anne Jennings:** Ph 4968 3823
2-monthly meetings at various local venues
- **Mt Gravatt– Ty Hill:** Ph 3841 2842 & **Areti Kennedy:** Ph 3406 2311
Fortnightly meetings, Wednesdays, 10am -12pm at Perks Café, Town Square Garden City shopping centre; alternating with community social outings at various locations
- **Pine Rivers– Sue Wright:** Ph 3406 2311
Monthly meetings, 3rd Wednesday of month, 10am-12pm at Pine Rivers Neighbourhood Centre
- **Redcliffe– Cherie Carter:** Ph 3284 6839
Monthly meetings, 2nd Wednesday of month, 10am-12pm at Redcliffe Leagues Club, cnr Klingner and Ashmore Rds, Redcliffe, or various community locations
- **Sandgate– Areti Kennedy:** Ph 3406 2311
2—monthly meetings, 1st Thursday of every second month (daytime), various community locations.

Toowoomba– Mary-Ann Garrahy: Ph 4630 1709

Fortnightly meetings, 1st Monday of month at various community locations; 3rd Monday of month at Sunset Superbowl, Green Wattle St, 10am-12pm

Yarraman– Peter McLean: Ph 4163 8780

Monthly meetings– exact details TBA

STEPS Leader Network

"Those who can, do
Those who can do more, volunteer" Anon

Our own STEPS Program Volunteer Leaders were again the focus of our attention during National Volunteer Week (9-15 May 2011). We sent certificates of appreciation to all of our active volunteer leaders throughout Queensland, and encouraged them to sit back with a cuppa and pat themselves on the back at the same time as some of our Brisbane volunteer leaders were gathering for our Morning Tea of Appreciation on Friday 13 May.

National Volunteer Week is the largest celebration of volunteers and volunteerism in Australia, and provides an opportunity to highlight the role of volunteers in our communities. The theme for this year was "Inspiring the Volunteer in You".

The STEPS Program acknowledges the significant contribution of our volunteer leaders, who inspire many in their journey towards recovery following brain injury.

In the fitting words of William Shakespeare, "I can no other answer make, but thanks and thanks"



Spotlight on.. Townsville

The history of Townsville goes back to 1770 when the city was first visited by the Europeans. Captain James Cook described the region on his first voyage around Australia and named it Cleveland Bay.

A number of maritime explorers stopped at Cleveland Bay after that. During the 1860s, a sea captain, Robert Towns asked John Melton Black to build a dock on the Cleveland Bay in the north Queensland coast. The settlement was named Townsville after him.

With the growing of sugar, the discovery of gold, the establishment of meat-works and the growth of pastoral industries in the hinterland the port of Townsville saw a booming

growth.

In World War II Townsville became a major military base, accommodating up to 90,000 Australian, American and other allied service personnel. The City was bombed on three occasions by the Japanese, and was used as a major offensive launching base during the battle of the Coral Sea.

Eleven years later Queen Elizabeth II and Prince Philip visited the city as part of a Royal tour and the first Magnetic Island to Townsville swim



was staged. A huge success, it has become an annual event.

These days popular attractions of Townsville are the 'The Strand', a long tropical beach and garden strip; Riverway, a riverfront parkland attraction located on the banks of Ross River; Reef HQ, a large tropical aquarium holding many of the Great Barrier Reef's native flora and fauna; the Museum of Tropical Queensland, built around a display of relics from the sunken British warship HMS Pandora; and Magnetic Island, a large neighbouring island, the vast majority of which is national park.

Townsville today is a city of great appeal and trend with benignant and sophisticated buildings and old pubs. It is an escape to a golden land which is warm with its culture and climate.

• STEPS Leader Training

- It has been a busy time for Ben and Areti, with leader training in Townsville, Gold Coast, Brisbane, Sunshine Coast and Rockhampton in the past few months. They are now working with newly-trained leaders to offer the STEPS Skills program in these communities later in 2011. Upcoming leader training for 2011 is scheduled for Brisbane on 9/10 August and 29/30 November. If you are interested in attending this training, contact us to send you a flyer and a leader application form.
- If you would like the STEPS Program to work with your community to develop the STEPS Program there, contact Ben or Areti at STEPS.

• Date Claimer: STEPS Program Leader Training Forum

- **Save the date!** We are very excited to announce the STEPS Program Leader Network Training Forum will be held on Tuesday 18 and Wednesday 19 October at Diana Plaza hotel in Woolloongabba, Brisbane. The program will be offered from 9am-4pm both days. Content will include: training to assist leaders with their leader role- group facilitation, advanced brain injury education; interactive leader networking opportunities; guest speaker presentations from experts in the field of community rehabilitation and brain injury; and future planning workshops for ongoing leader learning and development.
- Active STEPS program leaders will be invited to attend this free forum, as a great leader learning, development and networking opportunity. Some support for travel and accommodation requirements for leaders residing outside the greater Brisbane area will be available – this will be discussed directly with individual leaders over the coming months.
- To coincide with the STEPS Program Leader Network Training Forum, we will also be conducting a research project to further explore the training and support needs of the peer-professional workforce of the STEPS Program. The aim of the research is to better inform the future practices that are employed to support STEPS Program Leaders in performing their role. Ben Turner has been successful in obtaining a grant to conduct the research project. Participation in the research component of the training forum will be voluntary. If leaders prefer not to participate in the research component, they will still be eligible to attend the training forum. However, participation in the research project will simply involve some leaders completing telephone interviews along with a formal evaluation of the training forum. All leaders who express an interest in attending the training forum will be invited to participate in the research project. Further details about the research project, including detail information sheets will be provided to all leaders in the coming months.
- We look forward to hosting the STEPS Program Leader Network Training Forum – it is something that we have wanted to do for a couple of years now and we're very excited that the opportunity has come up again. We hope that many of our leaders will be able to attend. Invitations will be sent to active STEPS Program Leaders shortly.



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