

SKILLS TO ENABLE PEOPLE & COMMUNITIES

STEPS NEWSLETTER

From the Manager

I am writing this exactly when we had planned to be celebrating another year of the STEPS Program with our greater Brisbane members at the STEPS Christmas Party at Roma St Parkland. Alas, it is pouring rain outside, so the event has been cancelled. However, some of our other sites have managed to have their Christmas celebrations today. In Cairns, members from around far north Qld- Cairns, Gordonvale and Innisfail - are enjoying lunch together at the social sporting club, Cazaly's in Cairns. (It is stinking hot, but dry in Cairns today!) Our Nundah group is also meeting later today.

Other Christmas Parties already held include Bundaberg, Maryborough, Yeppoon, Biloela, Gold Coast, Mackay and Brisbane- Forest Lake, Logan north, Pine Rivers

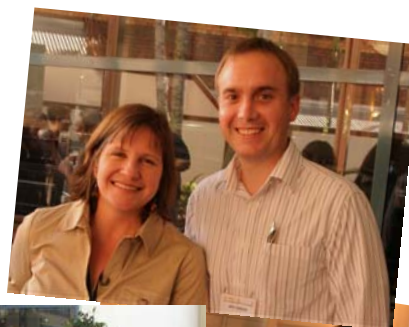
Later this week, Kingaroy and Toowoomba will gather together. Still to come in December are- Innisfail, Ipswich, Maroochydore, Rockhampton, Townsville and Brisbane- Acacia Ridge, Bayside, Redcliffe.

We will have Christmas Party reports and photos in our March 2012 edition but, for now, let's reflect on 2011, and the great year we have had.

Merry Christmas and Happy New Year to you all.

Leader Training Forum

Here are some happy snaps from the STEPS Program Leader Training Forum, held in Brisbane in October. For the full story see page 7.



STEPS

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Special Points of Interest:

© STEPS Program Leader Training Forum

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STEPS Skills Program Reports

STEPS Biloela

The first STEPS Skills Program in Biloela started on the 19th of September at the local Community Resource Centre. Within a couple of weeks, the group moved down the road to complete the course at the local Blue Care offices. Matthew Ernst (Speech Pathologist) and Elizabeth Tate (Physiotherapist) were the leaders for the group. Although Biloela is a small

town, there was a great response to the STEPS Program with about 8-10 people completing the course. Some had quite long distances to travel to attend with people coming from the surrounding areas of Monto and Wowan (between 70-90km away). Given that brain injury support and rehabilitation options are extremely limited in the bush, the group found the STEPS Program a

great opportunity to network and learn strategies to deal with changes/challenges in their lives. The group finished with a BBQ at the Blue Care offices and has gone on to form the Biloela STEPS Network Group. The plan is to meet on a monthly basis and alternate between social gatherings and formal group meetings. All in all, it's been a great outcome for the community.

STEPS Yeppoon

The first ever STEPS Skills Program in Yeppoon kicked off on the 5th of September at the Capricorn Coast Hospital and Community Health Centre. The group was led by Michael Lee (Allied Health Assistant) along with Jenne George and Marilyn Rooks (Community Health Nurses). The team of STEPS Leaders in Yeppoon put together an information board about the STEPS Program and displayed it at the hospital and the local shopping centre to drum up some community support before the group started. Their efforts were rewarded with a group of about 8 participants attending. Those who attended found the

program to be of great benefit and especially important given that services are often limited in small regional/rural locations. The leaders commented that the structure of the program helped everyone stay focussed, but also provided plenty of opportunity for people to share their journey after brain injury. The group met for a BBQ at the beach for the final break-up activity. With such a picturesque location for the backdrop, a great day was had by all. So much so, the group held its

Christmas Party in late November at the same location. The plan for 2012 is to continue with a STEPS Network Group and run another 6-week STEPS Skills Program whenever possible.



STEPS Maroochydore

Starting in August, the first Sunshine Coast program for 2011 was held in Maroochydore. The group was led by Kim, an occupational therapist, and Larry and Andrew, 2 peer leaders. It was the first STEPS Pro-

gram for all 3 co-leaders, so teamwork was important. A local bus strike meant that the start of the group was postponed by one week, as many participants (and 2 of the leaders!) couldn't actually get to the venue. After this, group members settled into the program well. We lost 2 members to the group, as they secured employment again during the

program... but farewelled them with encouragement and good wishes. The group break-up activity was held in Mooloolaba, beside the well-known "Loo with a View", where everyone enjoyed fish and chips by the beach. A Maroochydore Network group has now formed, and will continue to meet monthly in 2012.

Everyone enjoyed fish and chips by the beach

STEPS Open Minds/ Buranda

The Open Minds/Buranda STEPS Skills Program commenced on 7 October, led by two Open Minds Support Workers (Sean and Anne-Maree) and an Open Minds Client (John—Peer Leader). The STEPS Program has worked in partnership with Open Minds for several years now and the success of the most recent Buranda group further demonstrated why the partnership has continued over time. The group was very open in sharing their thoughts and experiences about life after brain injury. The lead-

ers also commented that it was great to see people come together to form friendships over the course of the 6-week program, culminating with a picnic in the park at the Kangaroo Point Cliffs – it was an extremely hot day, but the view of the city and the Story Bridge was fantastic! Participants in this

program have been invited to join the Brisbane Central/Buranda STEPS Network Group.



STEPS Morningside

The Morningside STEPS Skills Program was held at the Balmoral Uniting Community Centre with Lynne Everett and Donna Sanderson as the Leaders. The group started on the 29th of August with a large group that averaged over 12 participants. The Morningside group was Lynne's 3rd and Donna's 1st group as a leader. With many participants attending from Casuarina Lodge (Brain Injury Rehabilitation facility in Wynnum), Donna was a great person to have as a leader for the group given that she had previously been a patient at Casuarina. During the course of the program, the group was also able to view a new DVD

about Identity and Brain Injury that features Donna's story – from all reports, it was a big hit! While there was a few interruptions along the way (unexpected maintenance work at the venue and rain for the scheduled break-up activity in the park), the group were able to come together to learn and share. When the rain cleared, the group enjoyed a fantastic day in the park at Bulimba (including a few games of boche). All group members have been invited to join with the existing Bayside STEPS Network Group, which meets on a monthly basis.



STEPS Browns Plains

The Browns Plains STEPS Skills Program started on the 13th of September as the third program in the Logan area this year. While it wasn't planned, the group turned out to be a bit of a bloke's group with all male participants. That suited the leaders just fine, with John

Enright and Jon Giessler helping the group feel comfortable to discuss their experiences after brain injury. John reported that his afternoon tea expenses increased with an all male group, and both leaders commented that there was plenty of laughter within the group over the course of the

6-weeks. The group completed the course with lunch at the Greenbank RSL. All who attended the program have been invited to join the existing Logan STEPS Network Group, which meets twice monthly at local community venues.

STEPS Skills Program Reports- cont.

STEPS Rockhampton

The second STEPS Skills Program in Rockhampton for 2011 was held at Centacare Rockhampton with Susan Ryan and Jess McSweeney as the leaders. The group started on the 1st of September and due to a number of reasons, the group was only small with just 4 participants. However, the leaders reported that it was a very close group with plenty of discussion throughout each of the sessions. The group really en-

joyed working through the various exercises in the STEPS Workbook and commented that it was a real



learning experience. The group finished the program with a BBQ at Centacare and have determined to work to establish a STEPS Network Group in Rockhampton. Centacare will be hosting a Christmas Party for all current and previous STEPS Participants in Rockhampton in late December 2011, with the aim to develop a STEPS Network Group and run another 6-week STEPS Skills Program early in the New Year.

STEPS Cairns

The second STEPS Skills Program for Cairns in 2011 was held in October, with our leaders Jenny and Anne partnering again. We even managed to allow Jenny to sneak down to Brisbane for the STEPS Program leader Training Forum for a week halfway through the program. We started with a big group of 9, but this whittled down to a group of 5 who completed the 6-week program. We even had 2 members travel down from the Tableland each week- they

were usually the earliest arrivals, even though they had the furthest to travel. The most valuable aspect of the program would surely have to be the sharing amongst participants. The supportive nature of group members really allowed people to open up and share their experiences, both good and bad. Oh, and a wicked sense of humour, also helped us enjoy the program. For

2012, we are planning to start the "Wet STEPS" fishing network group, something we are all looking forward to. Merry Christmas to everyone.

Jenny and Anne



STEPS Townsville

After leader training earlier in 2011, the STEPS Skills Program started in late July in Kirwan, ably co-led by Melissa, a social worker, and 2 peer leaders, Tina and Noel. The group gelled together from the start, even dealing with some room changes during the program, when they had to move rooms

for some of the weeks. Following the group break-up activity, the group have met regularly in the past few months, favouring air-conditioned venues such as the new ten-pin bowling centre to escape the summer tropical heat and sun. Noel seems to have "beginner's luck" with the bowling...so far, anyway!



STEPS Maryborough

Maryborough began its first-ever STEPS Skills Program in August. One leader, Jennie travelled from Bundaberg each week to co-lead the program with Carol. Participants also travelled from around the region to get to the group, some from the Hervey Bay area

and others from hinterland areas. From quiet beginnings, some group members really flourished in this group. People were very motivated to share their ideas with each other and encouraged others too. For the break-up activity, a relaxed lunch together was enjoyed at a local historic

hotel. The group is now meeting regularly on the 2nd Tuesday of the month and has named itself "Step Forward- Fraser Coast Hinterland Brain Injury Support Group" to reflect the various local towns its members come from.

STEPS Network Groups

STEPS Bundaberg

In October, we enjoyed another shared morning tea, relaxing together at one of the Bundaberg Brain Injury Friends' favourite cafes. This was very different to our September meeting, where we were supporting Gary (in the orange shirt) as he ran 40km per day on a treadmill at a local shopping centre to raise money for cancer and brain injury research. Well done Gary!



STEPS Forest Lake



The Forest Lake STEPS Network Group started in July 2011. The group is led by Elaine Trotman and Scott McDonald (Peer Leaders). While the group is only small, group members have enjoyed catching up on a monthly basis for morning tea/lunch at a

range of local venues. As a Christmas celebration, the group met at a local Pizza shop and enjoyed some fantastic Italian Food. The group plans to continue to meet (and grow) in 2012.

STEPS Ipswich

The Ipswich STEPS Network group continues to grow and provides a valuable source of support to people in the Ipswich area. One of the participants in the group, Chris, recently reflected on his experiences with STEPS as follows:

"Steps, steps, steps. 19-6-1979, severe head injury. Survival, years later still tumbling in my mind. Tumbling through the turmoil of life, getting a grip on firm reality but still screaming in my mind. Time

heals. Through recent involvement with a STEPS group, finally I could talk to, relate with and feel for people with acquired brain injuries. All very different people and situations but it was like we all spoke a common language foreign to the world. The simple fact this was so, inspired deep self reflection of where I was at. I am at peace. I am indebted to the STEPS Program; it

has given me freedom and self confidence as I rejoice that I can now see what I have achieved; not stopping, but powering forward in life"



Open Network Groups

Biloela- Ben Turner: Ph 3406 2311

Monthly meetings, dates TBA, various local community venues

Bundaberg (B.I.F (Brian Injury Friends))– Leanne Curtis: Ph 4155 2303 & Gabby Walker: Ph 0437 406 445 (Areti Kennedy)

Monthly meetings, 4th Wednesday of month, 10am– 12pm at various community locations.

Fraser Coast Hinterland Brain Injury Support Group- Jennie Whitley: Ph 4131 4258 (Areti Kennedy)

Monthly meetings, 2nd Tuesday of month, various community locations

Gold Coast– Sumana Lymberry: Ph 0416 172 697 & Ben Turner: 3406 2311

Monthly meetings, last Wednesday of each month, various community venues.

Innisfail– Raylene McSwan: Ph 4063 3742 or 0437 972 587 (Areti Kennedy)

Monthly meetings, 1st Thursday of month at Healthier Great Green Way, 180 Edith St, Innisfail

Ipswich– Ben Turner: Ph 3406 2311

Monthly meetings, 2nd Tuesday of month, 10am-12pm at various community venues

Kingaroy– Bobbie D’Arcy: Ph 4162 9220 (Areti Kennedy)

Monthly meetings, 2nd Friday of month, 10am-12pm, Gloria Jean’s coffee shop, Kingaroy Shopping World

Kirwan (Townsville)- Noel Ball: Ph 0408 151 932, Tina Ferriday: Ph 0407 750 731 (Areti Kennedy)

Monthly meetings, 1st Wednesday of month, various community locations

Mackay– Anne Jennings: Ph 4968 3823 (Ben Turner)

2-monthly meetings at various local venues

Maroochydore- Areti Kennedy: Ph 3406 2311

Monthly meetings, 4th Monday of month, 10am-12pm, various community locations

Rockhampton- Susan Ryan: Ph 1300 523 985 & Ben Turner: Ph 3406 2311

Monthly meetings, dates TBA, Centacare Rockhampton (Bolsover St, Rockhampton)

Toowoomba– Mary-Ann Garrahy: Ph 4030 1709 or 0409 592 863 (Areti Kennedy)

Fortnightly meetings, 2nd Monday of month at Sunset Superbowl, Green Wattle St. 4th Monday of month at various community locations 10:30am- 12:30pm

Yarraman– Peter McLean: Ph 4163 8780 (Areti Kennedy)

Monthly meetings, various community locations, contact coordinator directly for exact details.

Yeppoon- Michael Lee: Ph 4913 3230 (Ben Turner)

Monthly meetings, various community locations, contact coordinator directly for exact details.

Greater Brisbane

Acacia Ridge– David Firth: Ph 0411 501 641 (Areti Kennedy)

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

Brisbane Central– Ben Turner: Ph 3406 2311

Monthly meetings, 1st Wednesday of month, 10am-12pm- venue alternates between ABIOS & a community setting.

Forest Lake- Elaine Trotman: Ph 0438 818 235 & Ben Turner: 3406 2311

Monthly meeting, last Tuesday of the month, 10am- 12pm at various local venues.

Logan Coffee and Chat Group- John Enright: Ph 3388 6056 (Ben Turner)

3rd Wednesday of month, 10am-12pm at Logan Diggers RSL Club, 42-48 Blackwood road, Logan Central

Logan North– John Enright: Ph 3388 6056 (Ben Turner)

Monthly meetings, 1st Monday of month, at various community locations

Nundah- Areti Kennedy: Ph 3406 2311

Monthly meetings, 1st Wednesday of month, various community locations

Mt Gravatt– Ty Hill: Ph 0401 317 643 & 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 (Areti Kennedy)

Monthly meetings, 2nd Wednesday of month, 10am-12noon at Redcliffe Leagues Club, cnr Klingner and Ashmore Rds, Redcliffe, or various community locations

STEPS Leader Network Training Forum

Members of the STEPS Program's unique peer-professional workforce gathered in Brisbane recently for a 2-day Leader Network Training Forum in Brisbane. Over 40 trained STEPS Program leaders- a mix of health and disability professionals, and peer leaders (people with lived experience of acquired brain injury)- from around Queensland enjoyed a rare face-face opportunity to network and learn together. Educational topics included group facilitation, advanced brain injury education, community rehabilitation and a future planning workshop. The aim of this forum was to better understand the ongoing training

and support needs of STEPS Program leaders, so that they in turn can better support their local STEPS Skills Program participants and STEPS Network Group members.

We are grateful to the Health Practitioner Research scheme for funding the research project "Supporting the growth of peer-professional workforces in health care settings:

An investigation of the training and support needs of volunteer leaders of the STEPS Program", which made the event possible. See the gallery of photos on page 1 for a peek into the fun and learning.



Spotlight on.. Noosaville

Noosaville is located on the south shore of Laguna Bay and the mouth of Noosa River, and attracts tourists all year round for its beautiful sun-drenched beaches. Its proximity to sand, sea and nature combined with its outdoor cafes, fine restaurants and stylish shops make Noosa a perfect place to holiday.

At Noosa there is a beach to suit everyone, from crashing ocean surf at Sunshine Beach, to quiet lapping water at Main Beach. The popularity of Noosa comes from the fact that it is one of Australia's few North facing beaches located on the East Coast, hence Noosa Beach is relatively protected from on-shore wind and storms.

The best views of the region can

be enjoyed from Laguna Lookout, behind Hastings Street at the top of Noosa Hill. This scenic hotspot takes in vistas west to the surrounding hinterland and north across the ocean to the famous Coloured Sands.

A little further along the river is Noosaville, a thriving river community dotted with restaurants and holiday accommodation. Fishing boats mingle with houseboats, brightly coloured sailing vessels and early-morning rowers. Cruises depart regularly from this stretch of river for the scenic Everglades. The Noosa River has more than 40

kilometres of navigable waterways and at every turn there is something unique and beautiful to discover

Towards the northern end of the Noosa River the colour of the water changes to a dark reddish-black which reflects images like a mirror. These reflections are due to the river water being naturally stained by the tannin from the roots of Melaleucas, also called 'Ti-trees', because they cause the water to become the colour of tea!



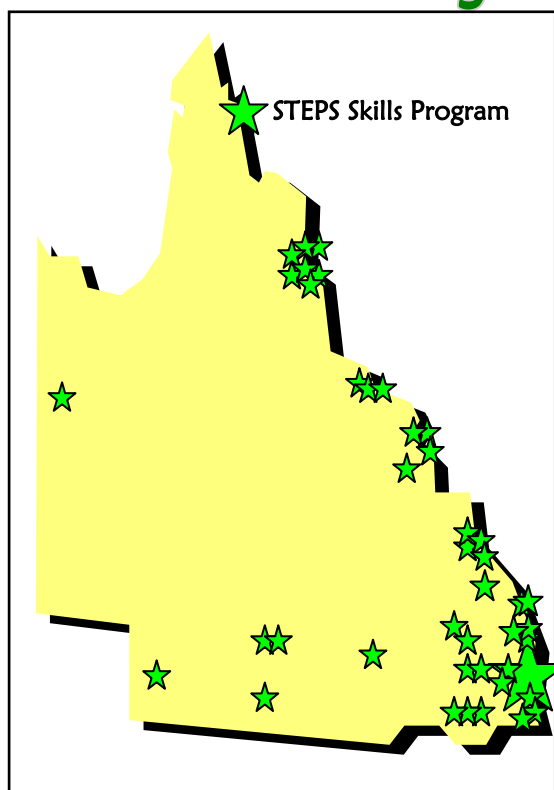
Townsville Bangs on a Beanie

As reported in our September newsletter, many STEPS Program groups supported the national Bang on a Beanie campaign to raise awareness of brain injury. This included Townsville, whose members got into the spirit of beanie-wearing. Some of them even claimed the beanies were needed to keep themselves warm this past winter, as it was a cold one for Townsville.

Here they are trying them on for size. We think they look pretty good!



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, Woolloowin, Roma, Cairns (2), Mitchelton, Carina

2008 - Logan central, Chermside, Bracken Ridge, Rockhampton, Far South West Qld, Cunnamulla, New Farm, Warwick, Maroochydore

2009 - Logan north(x3), Pine Rivers, Red Hill, Townsville, Mt Gravatt, Warwick, Cairns, Rockhampton, Gordonvale, Riverview, Buranda, Nundah, Redcliffe, Cleveland, Mackay, Hillcrest, Acacia Ridge

2010 - Warwick, Buranda, Rockhampton, Cairns (2), Mt Gravatt (2), Ipswich, New Farm, Logan north(2), Beaudesert, Pine Rivers, Mackay, Bulimba, Gold Coast (2), Toowoomba (2), Townsville, Kingaroy, Yarraman, Wynnum, Ipswich, Zillmere, Mt Isa, Stafford

2011 - Biloela, Browns Plains, Bundaberg, Buranda (2), Capalaba, Cairns (2), Gold Coast (2), Forest Lake, Ipswich, Townsville (2), Logan North (2), Maroochydore, Maryborough, Morningside, Nundah, Rockhampton (2), Townsville, Browns Plains, Yeppoon, Biloela, Newstead, Noosaville, Caboolture

Looking towards 2012

Upcoming STEPS Skills Programs. We have already set dates for some early programs for 2012- see table at right. Contact Areti or Ben for further details or to make referrals.

Upcoming STEPS Program Leader Training

Leader Training has been scheduled in Brisbane for 2012 on 17/18 April; 7/8 August and 27/28 November, These will all be held at ABIOS' office in Buranda.

We will also be working towards Leader Training through Community Development in Cairns and Tablelands in far north Queensland.

If you would like us to work with your community to develop the STEPS program locally, just contact us and let us know and we will work with you to make it happen!

Toowoomba	Wed 1 Feb 2012
Tarragindi	Tues 7 Feb 2012
Gladstone	Thurs 9 Feb 2012
Ipswich	Tues 14 Feb 2012
Rockhampton	Tues 21 Feb 2012

STEPS CONTACT DETAILS

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