



Focal Views...

VOLUME 4 EDITION 2

AUGUST 2007

**UPDATE
YOUR
RECORDS..**

**FOCAL IS
NOW
LOCATED AT**

**6 CANNING
STREET**

**NORTH
IPSWICH**

**OUR PHONE
NUMBER
REMAINS
THE SAME**

38122014

**COME AND
VISIT US TO
LOOK OVER
THE NEW
SITE.**

Big Moves, Big Ideas

Since April, when we sent out our last newsletter, we have been very busy and moving forward with a number of projects. We welcome Brian McKeown as the new coordinator for the Independent Pathways Programme which begins service on September. Brian comes to us all the way from Scotland and brings many years of experience working in the community services sector and day activity centres. Mary Cleaver, who has been a support worker with Focal for several years has now joined Brian as a full-time support worker on the Independent Pathways Programme.

→ *More information about the programme is on page 4.*

The other huge news is that we have moved into Canning Street. The inside works have been completed and the move was made over two days last week. As with any move there were some last minute hiccups that have kept everyone busy, but we all got settled and hopefully we can still find everything we need. Some of our activities such as the handyman group and cooking group will continue at Warrawong Street for a while until all our kitchen appliances are installed and our fabulous shed is set up for the handyman group. There is still work that needs to be done and we will be looking for your help in doing this.

Quality Audit and Accreditation

As you will know from previous newsletters, Focal has been preparing for our audit of our policies and procedures. On September 26th and 27th, IHCA will be coming to perform the audit and to examine our processes. While it is important for them to look at what we do, and how we do it, it is

also essential for them to get some idea of how our families and clients view the service we offer. This is an ideal way to check if our procedures meet the needs of clients and families. With your permission, IHCA will be contacting some of you to seek your feedback and ideas. This helps us provide a service that

benefits you and your needs. By attaining our quality accreditation, Focal will remain eligible to provide services to people with a disability, and to receive funding for our many programmes. If you are contacted, please give your honest opinions and views because this can only improve our service.

Administration Staff Changes

Dianne Whitehead was farewelled last month at a special dinner held at the Viva Italia Restaurant in Ipswich. Staff, committee and friends enjoyed a great meal and were able to wish Dianne and her husband Rick every success in running Ipswich SuperCycles.

The voice you will hear on the phones now is that of Patty Kavanagh. Patty came to us from RT Edwards and is a welcome addition to our team. In her spare time, Patty is busy preparing for her wedding next year as well as being an accomplished singer who recently performed in 'Strudlefest' with the Ipswich Orpheus

Chorale. She also teaches singing and has recently prepared students for singing examinations. Patty is assisted in our reception and administration area by Jeannette Kitching who is also our Vacation Care Coordinator and David Parry our Project Officer.

"The kit will contain tips sheets and information pages on a wide variety of subjects including suggestions for supporting people experiencing domestic violence, drug and alcohol addictions and mental health issues, just to name a few."

Complex Needs Collaborative Action Project

The Complex Needs Collaborative Action Project has been progressing with the development of the information kit and service directory database.

A dedicated working party from several organisations have contributed to the information being prepared for use by community groups throughout Ipswich.

As a tool for staff, the kit will contain tip sheets and information pages on a wide variety of subjects. These include suggestions for supporting people experiencing domestic violence, drug and alcohol addictions and mental health issues as well as useful guides for case conferencing and common abbreviations, just to name a few. It will also contain a list of

useful websites and other resources that will be useful to staff of community organisations.

Alex Tyson has done a wonderful job as the project coordinator. She has kept it to a tight timeline and the kit should be finalised by October 2007. It will be available to services in written and electronic form.

Some Photos of Canning Street



Patty and Jeannette in Reception



Main Activity Area



New Deck Area

Celebrating Staff—The Life of Brian *and* Kim

Brian McKeown joined us in May this year in the position of Independent Pathways Coordinator. Brian was born in Glasgow and lived in Scotland until 2006 when he came to Australia to get married. He has worked in the health care sector in Scotland and in Day Services Centres for 15 years. Brian is presently renovating a house—good luck to him!

Kim Brunjes has been with Focal since 2002 and has provided community access support to many of our clients. Her background includes working with children and people with disabilities. Kim's brother has a disability and this experience gives her understanding in supporting our clients. Kim is such a good worker, that in June she awarded herself the "Staff Member of the Month" award. On ya Kim!



NEWSBOARD

WORKING BEE - SATURDAY SEPTEMBER 22nd 9.00am-12.00pm

Please come and help with finishing touches and getting our grounds looking good. Bring garden tools and any concreting skills and we will provide the BBQ. All family members welcome.

*"Our three new committee members are: **Tony Swords, Amy Stockwell and Roy Henderson**"*

VACATION CARE: SEPTEMBER PROGRAMME

A bit of advance notice to all those families with school aged children.

This year we have received extra funding to run a holiday programme for the first week of the September holidays.

We will promote it through the schools when we have a finalised activity programme.

**For info contact:
Jeanette Kitching
on 3812 2014**

New Committee Members

Recently, due to other commitments we have had to say goodbye to management committee members - Norma Koplick, Kath Corcoran and Tim Jordan. We thank them for their contribution.

Fortunately we have also had three new members step forward willing to offer their time and expertise to our vibrant organisation.

*Our three new committee members are: **Tony Swords, Amy Stockwell and Roy Henderson.***

MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL

Our Annual General Meeting will be upon us in **October** and it is important that your membership is renewed prior to this. This ensures that we have your correct details and that you can participate.

Reminder letters and renewal forms will be sent out shortly.

If you know of anyone else who would benefit from being a member please pass on our newsletter and contact details.

Independent Pathways Programme

Pathways to a more independent life

Are you someone with a disability or do you know someone with a disability who would benefit from an up to 2 year programme to assist them to become more independent?

Focal Extended is running a new programme that is aimed at people with a disability in the 18 to 35's age group who do not currently receive a service. The programme is funded by Disability Services Queensland.

The programme will allow participants to maintain existing skills, develop new skills, build self esteem, develop confidence, communications, relationship skills, self-advocacy and decision making.

These skills will be developed in various ways including participating in group work, individual work, and social involvement.

Each participant will be encouraged to make decisions on the best way forward for them. Regular reviews of the service provided will assist staff to develop a tailor made programme with clear goals and future development being our main priority.

The programme will be developed in line with the 39099QLD Course in skills for the future and will run from our new premises at Canning St, North Ipswich as well as within the local community.

The programme will begin in early September 2007 and closing dates for applications is late August 2007.

This is our new programme that will support people with a permanent disability to maintain and develop independent living skills.

For more information, please contact Brian McKeown on 3812 2014.

Vacation Care Programme Report—June/July Holidays

It was great to see that we welcomed six new families into our program with a total of nine children.

Our average daily attendance on the first week was 35 per day, as our venue for the second week was run from Focal (due to the unavailability of Ipswich Special School) we had to limit our numbers with an average of 24 per day. It can be noted that 80% of the children that attended had a disability with the other 20% being siblings.

An invitation was put to us by the Ipswich Community Youth Service (who ran their inaugural Vacation Care Program), to enroll a child each day in their program. We accepted their invitation and chose a different child for

each day, whom we thought would benefit from this group. A carer from Focal (VCP) was sent along with the child and from feedback it was a great success.

Outings included Ten Pin and Lawn Bowling, Movies, train trip to Toowong, Ipswich Library, lunch at the Riverlink walkway, Ipswich Art Gallery, Browns Park and Kholo Gardens, fishing and BBQ lunch at Colleges Crossing. A visit from two police officers from the District Crime Prevention to show a video and give a talk on "Take Care out There" was a great hit with the children.

Our on site activities included, Art & Craft, Ballgames, Board Games and a Disco.

Jeannette