

Name the carol: 5 p.m. to 6 a.m.
without noise.



FOCAL VIEWS

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It's Christmas time again!

Christmas is always an exciting time, and a time when we look at our lives and wonder where the year has gone. This reminds me of a quote I saw a little while ago "I've learned....that life is like a roll of toilet paper. The closer it gets to the end, the faster it goes." How true is that?

2005 has been an exciting year! Our clients have achieved many new goals and learnt many new skills and it has been wonderful to see the progress that they have made. Of course, as we make progress, it means that Focal must keep building on the programmes and services that we offer.



As we celebrate Christmas, let us remember that our families are the most important people in our lives and we hope you enjoy the time you spend with your family at this time.

On behalf of the Committee, staff and volunteers we wish you and your families a very Merry Christmas, and a happy, safe New Year.

***May you have the gladness of Christmas which is hope;
The spirit of Christmas which is peace;
The heart of Christmas which is love.***

Ada V. Hendricks



Christmas and New Year Closure

The office will be closed from 4.00pm Thursday 22nd December 2005. We will be reopening on Tuesday 3rd January 2006. Service provision will be curtailed during this time and families will be notified of changes to service hours. Support staff are reminded to check with Deirdre for changes to work schedules.

The Committee and Staff wish all our members, clients and families a very merry Christmas and a safe and prosperous New Year. See you all in 2006 ready for another exciting and busy year.



"I expect to pass through this world but once; any good thing therefore that I can do, or any kindness that I can show to any fellow creature, let me do it now; let me not defer or neglect it, for I shall not pass this way again." Stephan Grellet

Come shopping with Focal

Focal is raising funds to purchase some badly needed equipment for our clients. We all know how much you like shopping, so, Focal is going on a Factory Outlet Shopping trip, with no parking worries, no getting lost, just lots and lots of shopping.

The Direct Factory Outlet Trip will be held on Saturday December 3rd from 8.00am until 5.00pm approximately.

Adults \$20 Children \$15

Finish off your Christmas shopping, earn Focal a few dollars for much needed equipment, and join in the fun. Places are limited but laughter is not. Phone Dianne on 3812 2014 to register.

What you'll find:

**Children's clothing, fun, Homewares
Raffles, ladies fashion, bags, manchester, brand names by the dozen, shoes, jewellery, toys,**

Name the carol: Befell during the transparent bewitching hour



Name the carol: Adorn the vestibule

Mom. I'm bored!!!

Well...it's getting to be that time of year again. "Mom, I'm bored"...."there's nothing to do around here"....."are we there yet??" You know how it goes!

Luckily, the Focal Vacation Care Programme is just around the corner too. The dates for the programme are **December 14, 15, 16, 20, 21, 22 and January 3, 4, 5, 6, 10, 11, 12, 13, 18.**

Enrolment forms will be sent out as soon as the planning is finished, and it will be important to return the forms quickly as numbers are very limited and places fill quickly.



Annual General Meeting Report

The 32nd Annual General Meeting of Focal was held on October 10th 2005 at the Ipswich special School. The evening was attended by Focal Patron, Sir Llew Edwards, Member for Ipswich Rachel Nolan MP, Mayor Paul Pisasale and Councillor Andrew Antonioli, as well as 26 other members. We also received a number of apologies and proxies for the meeting.

Betty highlighted the following areas in her report on 2004/2005:

- ◆ the work the Committee did with Peter Holdsworth of Pathways Australia to review the organisations structure.
- ◆ the appointment of Tanya Miller as Executive Officer in December 2004.
- ◆ the significant progress in adopting the Queensland Disability Service Standards.
- ◆ the progress in introducing our governance policies and procedures.
- ◆ the change in accounting process to an accrual method to more accurately reflect our financial position
- ◆ the release of the On-Track DVD "AccessAble

- ◆ the installation of the Liberty Swing in Queen's Park
- ◆ the on-going success of the Vacation Care Programme

Betty said that after 32 years with Focal she had seen many changes in the disability community. Two outstanding things were the granting of pensions to all disabled people, and, changing Queensland laws to change terms such as "idiot" and "imbecile".

Another change has been the sale of the three houses previously owned by Focal. These have served many people over the years, and Betty acknowledged that these houses were the legacy of Jim Cummings.

As Betty stands down as President, she felt that Focal was now in a very professional condition, and noted the small amount of recurring funding received by Focal, and how those funds had been expended prudently by staff. Betty went on to thank the Committee for their work and assistance, and also Owen Wridler and Carol Beml from DSQ for their advice and support.

New Committee Elected

President – Brian Ward
 Vice-President – Vacant
 Secretary – Tania Sheppard
 Treasurer – Denis Ward

The new committee members for 2005 –2006 are:

Committee members:
 Peter Davis
 Carmel Brown
 Norma Koplick,

We congratulate the committee on their elections, and hope they will enjoy their year ahead with Focal.



Left: A close-up of the award presented to Tom and Betty.

Right: Tom and Betty with the woodwork group who made the award.



Name the carol: **Fantasies of a colourless December 25th**



Name the carol: **Assemble, everyone who believes**

President's Report – Brian Ward

Congratulations to Tom and Betty who, since day one have given their all to FOCAL, have decided to stand aside and have a rest by touring the nation. At present they are in Tasmania for 7 days playing tourist. Have a safe journey, and maybe they can give us an item in a future newsletter. By the time you will be reading this they will be back in the fold enjoying the pleasures of extolling the experiences in the apple isle.

At the recent AGM, I was elected President of FOCAL. It gave me great pleasure to present Tom and Betty with a token of thanks from FOCAL for the many years that they have given. It was a sad moment but that was soon forgotten as their new pastime is travel. You guys have certainly earned a well deserved rest.

My first official representation of FOCAL was to the Mitchelton Slimmers Club Graduation function. The theme was Mobsters and Molls. Denis Ward and his daughter, Rebecca, my wife Sue and I went along dressed for the theme and had a wonderful time that evening. They certainly know how to enjoy life, especially the floor show after the graduation presentations. As is the custom over the many years, we were presented with a donation. Thank you Michy Slimmers for a wonderful night and the kind donation raised by your members.

“Thank you Michy Slimmers for a wonderful night and the kind donation raised by your members.”

From that night, it was discussed to raising our own sub-committee to organise social events. The first meeting of Members and Friends of Focal has been held and the enthusiasm is overwhelming. More on this subject elsewhere in this edition.

If there is an issue that you feel needs to be attended to, please do not hesitate to contact the office for assistance. We are here to assist in any way we can for our Members and Friends of Focal. Join in the fun that will be on offer so that we can all get together and enjoy the fellowship. We still maintain the ‘open door’ policy at Focal. And the office staff is only too happy if you drop in for a chat and a cuppa.

We have had to change some of the ways that things were done in the past because of Government legislation and rules. We, along with like organisations, have to be more accountable for the practices within the workplace, etc. I will endeavour to maintain the ‘roots’ of FOCAL but let the Friends of Focal and its Members plan outings and gatherings together.

Presentation to Tom and Betty

At the conclusion of the formal procedures, a special award presentation was made by Sir Llew Edwards to Tom and Betty to recognise their commitment to Focal over 32 years. Sir Llew mentioned that he began his association with the Challinor Centre in 1972 when he tried to have people who were intellectually handicapped moved away from psychiatric services. He went on to say that it was his great pleasure to present this Award to Betty and Tom for their outstanding service and commitment to people with disabilities from 1974-2005.

Later in the meeting, Brian presented Tom and Betty with a travel voucher and badges bestowing the title of ‘Committee Member Emeritus’.

Tom spoke on behalf himself and Betty to thank everyone for the award, and to wish Focal the best for the future.



*The plaque on the front of the award reads:
“Presented to Betty and Tom McCrindle for
outstanding service and commitment to Focal
Extended Inc 1974 - 2005”*

Families Quality Forum

In 2004, DSQ initiated the Queensland Disability Service Standards. These standards form the basis of compliance for all organisations receiving funding from Disability Services Queensland. Compliance to these standards is a condition of the General Service Agreement that each organisation has with DSQ.

We have established a programme that will offer each of our represented stakeholders a chance throughout the next year to provide feedback in a variety of ways. This can be by newsletters, questionnaires, surveys, interviews, service reviews, forums and so on.

In identifying all the stakeholders of Focal, that is, all the people that we influence in some way, we have identified a direct community footprint of 368 individuals, families and community organisations.

As part of this quality process, we recently conducted a forum for families of funded clients, a small number of independent clients and family respite recipients. This first forum was held at Brother's Leagues Club on October 27, 2005. The forum was facilitated by Faith Lanson from ACROD, who have been contracted by DSQ to assist in the implementation of the quality system. Faith facilitated this forum as an independent person so that there could be free discussion about issues. No Focal staff or volunteers were present during the forum for the same reason.

There were ten people in attendance and comprised of parents, grand-parents and clients. The forum discussed the first 3 standards and part of the fourth. These standards are: 1) Service access, 2) Individual needs, 3) Decision-making and choice, and, 4) Privacy, dignity and confidentiality.

Three major points came out of the discussions at the forum were concerns about the entry process, staff unavailability and individual support plans.

Another forum being held on November 23rd at Brothers. Tanya will provide some initial feedback on points raised so far before the group continues with the other standards.

If you have any issues you may like to discuss, you can contact us at any time to raise your concerns. You do not have to wait until a forum or some other opportunity is offered.

Dear Santa,

I've been a good mom all year. I've fed, cleaned, and cuddled my two children on demand, visited the doctor's office more than my doctor, sold 62 cases of chocolate to raise money to plant a shade tree on the school playground, and figured out how to attach nine patches onto my daughter's Girl Scout sash with staples and a glue gun. I was hoping you could spread my list out over several Christmases, since I had to write this letter with my son's red crayon on the back of a receipt in the laundry room between cycles, and who knows when I'll find anymore free time in the next 18 years.

Here are my Christmas wishes:

I'd like a pair of legs that don't ache after a day of chasing kids (in any colour, except purple, which I already have) and arms that don't flap in the breeze, but are strong enough to carry a screaming toddler out of the lolly aisle in the grocery shop. I'd also like a waist, since I lost mine somewhere in the seventh month of my last pregnancy.

If you're hauling big ticket items this year, I'd like a car with fingerprint resistant windows and a radio that only plays adult music; a television that doesn't broadcast any programmes containing talking animals; and a fridge with a secret compartment behind the crisper where I can hide to talk on the phone.

On the practical side, I could use a talking daughter doll that says, "Yes, Mommy" to boost my parental confidence, along with one potty-trained toddler, two kids who don't fight, and three pairs of jeans that will zip all the way up without the use of power tools.

I could also use a recording of Tibetan monks chanting, "Don't eat in the living room" and "Take your hands off your brother," because my voice seems to be just out of my children's hearing range and can only be heard by the dog.

And please don't forget the Play-doh Travel Pack, the stocking stuffer this year for mothers of preschoolers. It comes in three fluorescent colours and is guaranteed to crumble on any carpet making the In-laws' house seem just like mine.

If it's too late to find any of these products, I'd settle for enough time to brush my teeth and comb my hair in the same morning, or the luxury of eating food warmer than room temperature without it being served in a Styrofoam container.

If you don't mind, I could also use a few Christmas miracles to brighten the holiday season. Would it be too much trouble to declare tomato sauce a vegetable? It will clear my conscience immensely. It would be helpful if you could coerce my children to help around the house without demanding payment as if they were the bosses of an organised crime family; or if my toddler didn't look so cute sneaking downstairs to eat contraband ice cream in his pyjamas at midnight.

Well, Santa, the buzzer on the drier is ringing and my son saw my feet under the laundry room door. I think he wants his crayon back. Have a safe trip and remember to leave your wet boots by the chimney and come in and dry off by the fire so you don't catch cold.

Help yourself to cookies on the table, but don't eat too many or leave crumbs on the carpet.

Yours Always,
Mom

(C: Beth Quick-Andrews)

Friends of Focal Social Committee

The newly formed Friends of Focal Social Committee comprises representatives from staff, volunteers, service users and committee members. This committee is a new focus for Focal and gives service users representation and empowers equal responsibilities of the Friends of Focal Social Committee function to all within Focal.

Chairperson is Tania Salmon with supervising Chairperson Norma Koplick representing the Management Committee. Over the weeks leading up to the event, craft workshops and a committee meeting will be held so all involved will be working to providing a luncheon and fancy dress function which has been coordinated by all at Focal.

Events will be directed as family events for all Focal families and friends and will endeavour to be low cost and themed so everyone can take part in the dress up and have fun while the weeks between the events will be spent planning, costing and preparing decorations for the event. At the end of each event the people working on the Friends of Focal Social Committee will be given a 'Certificate of Participation' which will indicate any important tasks they have participated in over the lead up time.

The Friends of Focal Social Committee gives service users experience in being part of a committee structure and also identifies some tasks which individuals will be performing leading up to and including the event day.

It is hoped to have at least 4 events per year planned under this format and all members of Focal are encouraged to be part of the fun and learning experience.

To those who have family members supported by Focal, this is a new venture and direction and if the last meeting on Friday 11th November, is any indication of participation then the Friends of Focal Social Committee and functions will be in good hands.

The Friends of Focal Social Committee will be working within the policies and procedures of Focal Extended Inc and will also meet the Queensland Disability Services Standards.

The Friends of Focal Social Committee meets on the 2nd Friday of each month at Focal Extended Inc, 14 Warrawong St, Eastern Heights from 10.30am, lunch is provided for all members attending.

Craft mornings every other Friday from 10.30 and to 2.30 pm and cost of lunch gold coin donation.

Friends of Focal Social Group

Chairpersons: Tania Salmon and Norma Koplick

Minute Secretary: Sue Ward

Treasurers: Leisha Haim and Denis Ward

Craft Supervisor: Leeanne Black and Mark Morgan

Catering Officer: Jenny Bailey

Caterer for meetings: Brian Ward

Desktop Publishing: Tania Salmon and Sue Ward

Woodwork Advisor: Aaron King and Trevor Hicks

Risk Management: Christine Robinson and Julie Ott

Music Directors: Matt Briggs, Josh Cullen, Debbie King

Planning for Christmas Luncheon

The Theme for the first event is Christmas and there will be prizes for fancy dress in the spirit of Christmas

⇒ Most original dressed Female

⇒ Most original dressed Male

⇒ Most original dressed family

⇒ Trophy encouragement award

Raffles:

Tickets will be available for everyone to sell at \$1.00 per ticket. All prizes will be donated by local business and all funds raised from the raffle will be used by the Group for future events and event planning.

Catering for event:

The first event will be a cold smorgasbord which will include ham, pork and salads.

Gifts:

The group elected to provide a small uni-sex gift to the value \$2.00 to be put under the Christmas Tree.

Decorations:

The group will be making some types of decorations to be on display on the day. There will also be a scene with a cutout for your face so photographs can be taken. Prints will be available for purchase in the New Year.

Transport:

The group has tentatively booked the CODI bus and charges would be \$5.00 return per person. **[Bookings are essential]**

Encouragement:

Your attendance to critique the outcomes of the Friends of Focal Social Group is an important part of the learning process the service users are undertaking.