

People share their stories of mental health recovery in work and life

panorama

Quarterly Issue #66 December 2017

- Life and Fashion
- Recovery is Real
- Aboriginal League Knockout
- Mental Health Month

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AUSTRALIA

About us

Flourish Australia is committed to walking beside people with a lived experience of mental health issues as they progress along their recovery journeys. We passionately believe in mental health recovery, and are committed to providing the best possible support and encouragement to people so they can achieve their recovery goals. We offer this help across all 64 of our services in NSW and Southern Queensland.

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Panorama

Founded in 1996 in one of Flourish Australia's predecessor organisations (PRA), Panorama has grown to become a lifestyle magazine dedicated to informing and encouraging the recovery journey of readers. Panorama is written, designed and produced almost entirely by people with a lived experience of mental health issues.

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Where mental wellbeing thrives

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Recovery Story



NSW Champions: Pairs partner Ron Mowday (right) with Phillip Plackett

Phillip Plackett: a champ at work

Phillip Plackett is currently the Australian and NSW Open Disability Pairs Lawn Bowls Champion. He is also a participant in Flourish Australia's Individual Placement and Support program (IPS). Panorama spoke to him about his achievements.

"I thought I'd play a bit of sport to meet people, build some self esteem and maybe build some muscles, too," says Phillip. He first played lawn bowls for a few months back in 2012, but in October 2016, after a break of four years, he decided to try his luck again. By June 2017 Phillip was in Queensland competing in the Australian Open in the multi-disability pairs event with his bowls partner, Bernie Wolland, from North Queensland. He wasn't expecting

to win, especially as his original pairs partner had cancelled at the last minute, but win Phillip did!

"I got to the quarter-finals in the singles, and we won the pairs narrowly and under a bit of pressure. We were losing 8-0 at one stage, but got there in the end."

"The Australian Championships involved a lot of work and were quite draining, but of course they were also very positive and worthwhile. I even got a letter from NSW Sports Minister Stuart Ayers congratulating me. I had a lot of help and support from the people and companies who sponsored me."

"I used to play snooker, but lawn bowls is really my first sport."

Although Phillip makes it sound a bit like beginners luck, that can't be the case all the time. In August 2017 he won the NSW Open Disability Pairs Championships with his new regular pairs partner Ron Mowday from Ettalong Bowling Club. "Ron was at the Australian Open, and he asked me to be his partner

in the State Championships."

As well as winning the pairs, Phillip did well again in the singles.

"In the semi-finals I lost 21 to 20, then in the play-offs for bronze I lost 21 to 18. I was actually pretty pleased by this because I was up against the best bowlers in the Asia Pacific Region, if not the world. It was pretty surreal!"

"My next step is to go for State selection in 2018, but my biggest goal is the 2022 Commonwealth Games. The Commonwealth games hold a camp where they whittle the numbers down from twenty competitors to three. All up, there are three with physical disability, and three with a vision impairment. At the moment, I'm competitive with the ones who are being selected, so I'm well on-target. But I have to get more experience in the meantime."

Phil lives with inclusion body myositis and late-onset muscular dystrophy. He began accessing Flourish Australia services because of mental health issues that followed the onset of his physical disabilities. His goal is to improve his life by getting open employment.

"My last proper paid job was in December 2005. I also volunteered in disability advocacy between 2013 to 2016 before I came to Flourish Australia. It's been a long slog, and I've found that you have to want something badly enough and be prepared to work for it if you expect to get it. I chose to put in the time and effort. I want a better life. You won't get handed a better life on the pension."

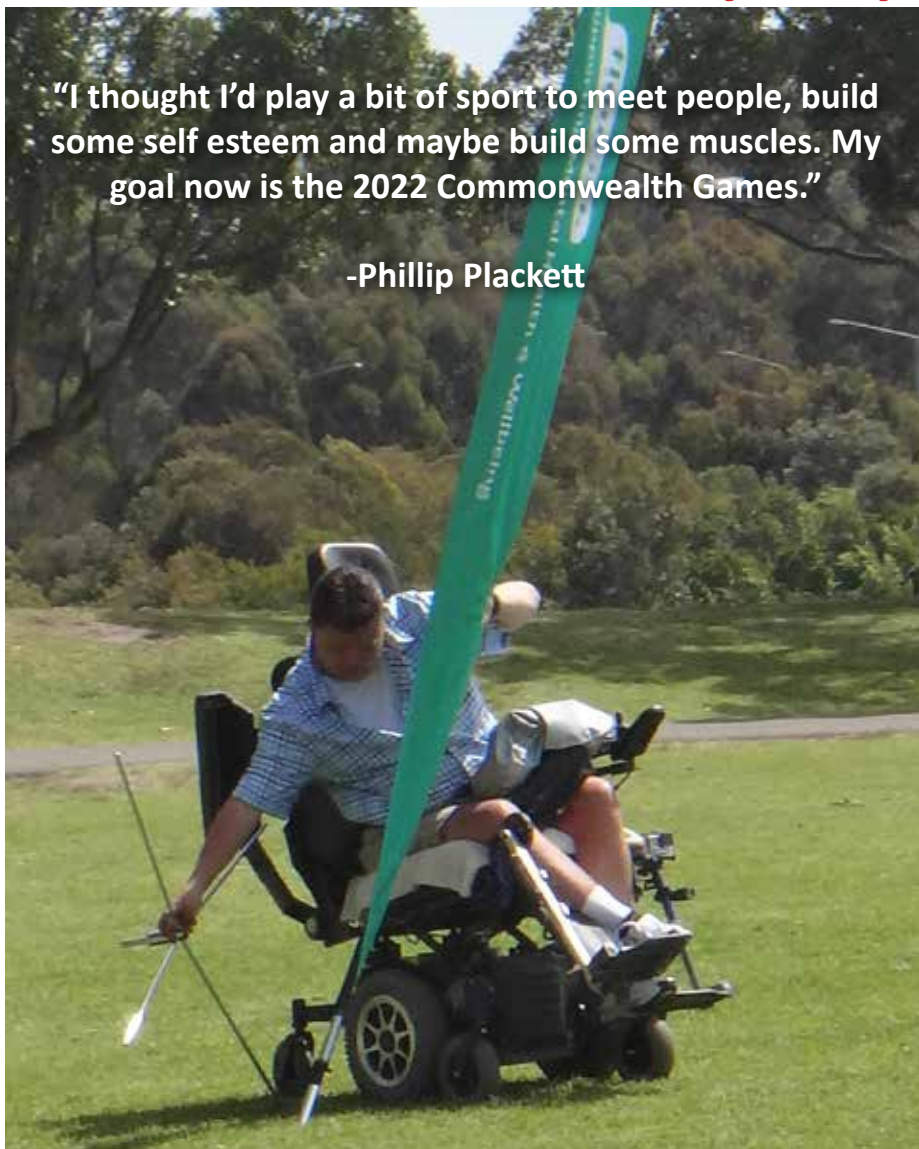
The first program Phillip did with Flourish Australia was PreEmploy Institute. At the time of his graduation in June 2016, Phillip spoke of being able to unlock numerous personal barriers that had prevented him from achieving his vocational goals in the past. He also shared his aspirations of making the best use of his professional and lived experience in open employment. He spoke of gaining work that was "personally rewarding and challenging, as well as inspiring and motivating others to have a go and take control of their own journey of recovery."

Now, Phillip is working in an administration role with the Department of Industry. This is an open employment

Recovery Story

“I thought I’d play a bit of sport to meet people, build some self esteem and maybe build some muscles. My goal now is the 2022 Commonwealth Games.”

-Phillip Plackett



Above: Phillip working at the 2016 Flourish Australia Picnic in Sydney

placement with the added benefit of low-level support from Flourish Australia. One of Phillip’s ongoing challenges is commuting to work, as he needs transport that can accommodate his wheelchair. The way Phillip describes it, it seems as though nobody expects people in wheelchairs to need to travel to work.

“There are only a few accessible buses that run before 9am. They’re often old, so there’s not much room. I have a big wheelchair, too, so sometimes I can’t always fit on the ‘accessible’ buses. Taxis aren’t usually big enough, and community transport doesn’t operate early enough. I need to get an express train to the city, because on an all-stations train my chair is always in people’s way. You often get abused if you block people. Plus, I can’t get on and off at just any station: it has to be one with a suitable lift, and I just have to hope that the lifts aren’t broken down. To

make matters worse, I’ve been forgotten about and left on the train about thirty times to date!”

“On top of that, lots of other things can go wrong. One night, I got a puncture in my wheelchair on the way home so I had to divert to a service station. I left at 3pm and didn’t get home till 10pm.”

Needless to say, one of Phillip’s goals is to get a car. He’s already learned to drive only using his hands, and one of the benefits of open employment is that he is earning enough money to do it.

“It will be good to get a car. It will make life so much easier!”

Because Phillip’s physical disability is degenerative, it’s likely to get worse over time.

“You have to adapt to things as they get more difficult. Sometimes, when

things get difficult or when things don’t go according to plan, I struggle to get motivated. There has been a bit of uncertainty about my work placement, but I remember that anything is possible. You don’t want to burn bridges, or end up biting the hand that feeds you, so to speak. I’m hopeful that I might be able to get something closer to home over the next twelve months.”

“James Herbertson (Senior Manager of Business Services at Flourish Australia) has always looked out for me, and I’ve been grateful for the opportunities he’s provided. When I was working a scanning job with Justyn Warren at Prestige Packing Co in Marrickville, I didn’t just see it as scanning: it involved helping other people out, such as the ones out the back who were involved in document shredding and so forth.”

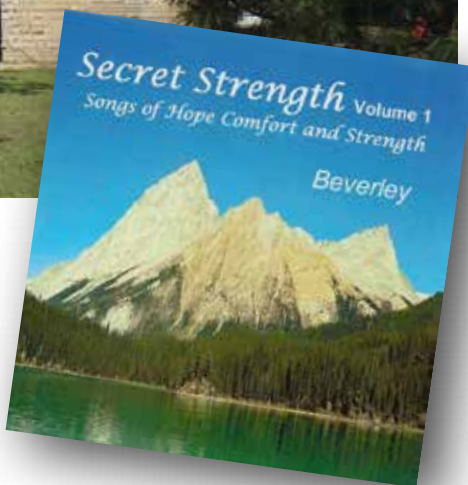
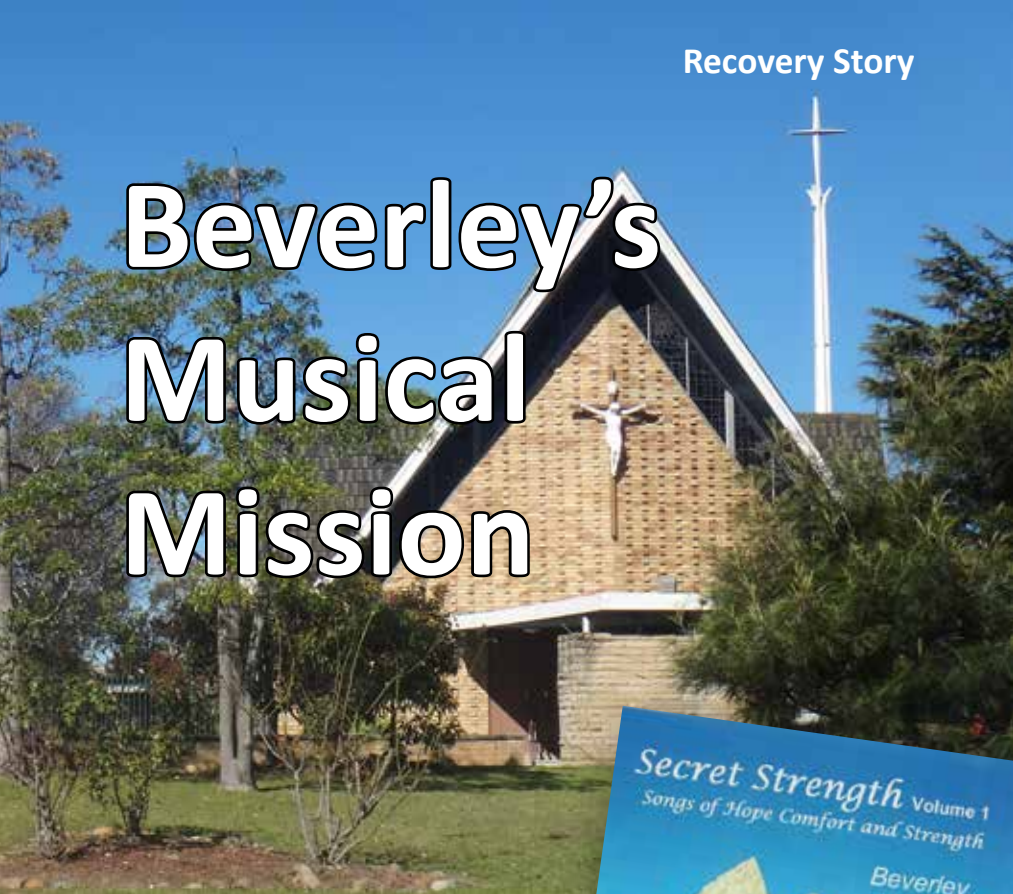
“People who step up to the plate get noticed by others. If you make an impact, they are more likely to think about you when an opportunity comes up. I think you have to look after the people who look after you!”

Thanks to Patricia D and Clare Isabel Evans for their assistance in preparing this article



Australian Champions: Phillip Plackett with Bernie Wolland

Beverley's Musical Mission



Beverley participated in Flourish Australia's PreEmploy Program in 2016. She's also been working behind the scenes with Panorama. Here, Beverley shares something about her recovery journey.

BEVERLEY: It's nearly been a year since I completed my work experience with Flourish Australia as a contributor to Panorama magazine. It was a very fruitful time where I was able to re-discover my love for writing. Creating articles and poems is something I find very relaxing, and this creative outlet allows me to use one of my strengths: journaling. Keeping a journal is something that anyone can start, and it can be very therapeutic for the mind, body and soul. I also enjoy writing because it's a way to share your knowledge and experiences, and it helps others to deal with their own challenges and stresses in life. Writing is a strength because I've found that when I express myself through the written word, people tend to sit up and listen more.

It's good for all of us to practice our strengths as often as possible, as this can help to boost our mental and physical wellbeing.

Writing a Blog

Many years ago I started a blog called "Bev's New World". Here, I wrote articles

about my own life and how my Christian faith has helped me overcome the many challenges and stresses that came my way on a daily basis. I also shared my hobbies and interests, as well as promoting important social justice issues. However, the main goal of my blog was to help increase the quality of life of other people in this modern age.

In re-discovering my love for writing, it's my hope that one day I'll be able to continue writing my blog. Perhaps I might even upload some of the pieces I wrote during my time at PreEmploy. The main challenge with this is that I'm rather "time poor" due to some projects of a musical nature I'm working on (more about that in a moment). Another concern I have is having to deal with a lot of dissenting or hostile messages, even though I write in a diplomatic and non-threatening manner!

Writing Songs

A creative process I've always enjoyed is making pop-rock music. I've had an interest in developing my singing skills for

a long time now. It's always an amazing feeling when you finish a song, creating "something out of nothing". God has given me some musical gifts, but it's still something that I've had to spend a lot of time practicing and developing.

When I was much younger I recorded a professional CD of 12 songs. This was a huge step for me, and I did my best to promote it via live playing. However, this proved to be a very difficult process on my own.

Music Recording Software

This did not deter me from writing songs. Over the years, I have been able to write and record demo CDs for about 8 albums altogether. The only problem is that I don't have the means or funds by which to record them in a professional way for distribution. One day, I talked about this to Peter Tos, our "coach" from PreEmploy. He suggested that I learn how to use music recording software so I could record them myself. This would also allow me to create my own backing arrangements according to how I believe the song should be. This turned out to be a great idea, and for the past few months I've been learning music software tutorials online. I'm now ready to tackle the recording process "hands-on". This has taken a lot of time and brain work, though, which is why I need to work on the recording process full-time. Hence, this leaves little time for writing.

Music Ministry

I have always felt that music is my calling. Since God has given me these musical gifts, I feel responsible to use them to help and benefit others. Music is a powerful communication tool that can really "cut through" and reach into the depths of our hearts. It is my aim to write gospel songs that offer people hope, comfort and strength through whatever trials or struggles they are going through. Even if I can help just one other person, it will all be worthwhile.

If you want a copy of Beverley's CD for \$15 (includes postage) or if you would like to help with troubleshooting when Beverley uses her Cubase Pro 9 music recording software, please email her at:

bevsgospelmusic@gmail.com

Beverley



My
Recovery
Story

“It is good for us to practice our strengths as often as possible which in turn helps to boost our mental & physical well being.”

My strengths

Writing

Writing is my strength because I have found that when expressing myself through the written word, people tend to sit up and listen more.

Music

Over the years I have been able to write and record demo CDs for about 8 albums altogether.

Faith

It is always an amazing feeling when one has finished a song and created “something out of nothing”. God has given me some gifts in these areas but it is still something that I had to spend a lot of time to practice and develop.

My goals

Blog Journalism

Blogging, I would need to deal with a lot of dissenting or hostile messages.

It is my hope that one day I will be able to continue writing for my blog.

Recording

I have always felt music is my “calling”. Since God has given me these musical gifts I feel responsible to use them to help and benefit others.

Music Ministry

It is my aim to write gospel songs to offer people hope, comfort and strength through any sort of trials or struggles they are going through.

My challenges

Mental health issues: phobias, fears, tiredness

Blogging, I would need to deal with a lot of dissenting or hostile messages.

Time poor

I do not have the funds for professional recording or distribution

My supports

People and Programs at



Faith

Peter Tos [formerly of Flourish Australia] ... suggested I learn how to use the music recording software ... [to] create my own backing arrangements ... This turned out to be a great idea.



Life and Fashion

Trans-Tasman Transgender

By Edwina Keelan

PART ONE

I was born as a boy known as Eddie Paranihi Keelan in Te Puia Springs New Zealand in 1975. Since 1999 I have lived full time as a woman called Edwina, or “Weena” for short. My nieces in New Zealand all call me Aunty Weena. The very first person to call me Edwina was another transgender woman, Wanita Hutchison.

A few little facts about me: My favourite colour is purple, and my most prized possessions are my hats, notebooks, diaries, papers, fashion illustrations and my DVD collection. My ideal wedding dress would be from the op shop, and my ideal man would be loyal to me and his career,

Re-COVER-y Story

and be hardworking like I am!

Transgender people face many challenges. In my case, I’ve had a lived experience with childhood trauma, drug addiction, mental health issues and I was also homeless at one point. But I make an effort not to revisit the difficulties of my past, and instead I meditate on The Now. At this point in my life, I have many supports both old and new, such as my NDIS goals, and my religion of All Faiths. I worship at the MCC Church at Petersham, NSW.

Early life

After my dad died in a motorbike accident in 1981, my father’s sisters helped to bring me up. Even at such an early stage, one of my aunts once told me, “You should have been born a girl.” At primary school I was teased and bullied for who I was, and called a “poofter faggot” all the way home.

At high school, my dream was to live in London and become a big fashion designer.

My mum and step-dad moved us around a lot. We never had a permanent address, and every 6 months we would move. My room only had a mattress in it. At that point I loved collecting miniature Smurfs. They cost 30c to 50c at the petrol station, and I always loved adding new ones to my collection. During all those years of moving around, my little brother Nephi was my favourite toy. And while my stepfather was very cruel to me, we eventually reconciled before he passed away 2016.

At high school, my dream was to move to London and become a big fashion designer. One of my fondest memories at high school was “The Spaced Out Variety Show”. I designed a silver costume with a Madonna bra, a high-waisted wrap skirt, full-lengths and platforms. This was the beginning of my life in fashion.

My first job was with The New Zealand Herald as a paperboy. I was 11-years-old, my pay was \$15 per week, and I delivered newspapers around Ruatoria Gisborne, East Cape New Zealand, rain or shine, on my cousin’s Raleigh 20 bike. On payday, my aunt taught me how to layby

board shorts and a watch! I did that for a year between 1986-1987.

I completed some trade certificates as a machinist and in sewing. I also half-completed a BA in Fashion at Wanganui Technical College. When I got a Fashion Honours student scholarship worth \$1,000 I studied really hard because I was young and talented and ambitious, and the attitude from my peers was often reverential.

Fashion and Free Trade

I worked as a Bendon, Pragma and Bamboo Frankton, in the late 90s making clothes. The work that gave me the greatest satisfaction was when I presented a 3-piece collection of fashion designs at Westfield Style Pacifica and was one of the top 8 designers in the country. And I enjoyed making “Madonna bras” and G-strings when I was at Bendon. Another problem with the Fashion industry was the economic crisis that hit New Zealand with the Free Trade Agreements. All the piece-making or garment jobs went to China, Fiji, Vietnam, India and eventually Bangladesh. There was a lot of regional unemployment in New Zealand. Not even the footwear and clothing union of NZ could save their jobs. Many of the ones who held top union positions were staunch, strong women.

Deciding to travel was the best idea I have ever had!

Across the Tasman

When I first came to Australia, I worked a few different jobs. I was a tailor, I sold the Big Issue, and at one point I was a street-based sex worker in Kings Cross.

When an opportunity came up to study Fashion, I found that the environment among students was very competitive. Some students’ end of year collections were over-the-top and extravagant, with students spending loads of cash on their end-of-year shows.

In Part Two, I will tell you something about travel, Transgender issues and a special person I met along the way who inspired me.



Re-COVER-y Story Edwina Keelan



My work background is in fashion. I have done courses in Fashion and Millinery (hat making). I exhibited at Another Door Opens in 2017 (pictured at right with some of my sketches and wearing one of my creations).

My strengths

Team player

I enjoy the company of my work colleagues and like all of them!

Punctual

I am an early bird, and like they say, the early bird catches the worm!

Hardworking

I work hard for all of our clients here at Marrickville Prestige Packing Co.

My first job was 'paper boy' when I was 11 years old!
I made my own school uniform!
I trained in sewing and as a trade machinist.

My goals

Travel to Japan

I can sing in Japanese! In April 2018/19 I would like to see the cherry blossoms

Housing

Keeping it clean and well maintained.

Controlling cravings

... for addictive things like smoking and the net!

Spirituality

Getting close to Jesus, my friends and my family

Appointments!

Seeing doctor regularly for check ups

My challenges

Discrimination

- Because I am a woman of colour and
- Because I am Transgender.

Personal Issues

- Lived experience of childhood trauma
 - Addiction to drugs
 - Mental health issues
 - I was once homeless
- I work hard to make sure I don't revisit these things.

My supports



- People at the Gender Centre
- People at Flourish Australia
- Staff and supervisors at Prestige Packing Co. Marrickville

Fashion sketch by Edwina Keelan



Backyard Breakthrough

Meeting the big recovery challenges at Ashbury

PHOTO BY WARREN HEGGARTY

The people who live at Malleny Street, Flourish Australia's residential service at Ashbury, are dealing with large and complex challenges on their recovery journeys. Most of the residents are making their journey with little or no contact from family members. Because of this, it can be easy to overlook their dreams and their very real achievements.

Just in time for Spring, the long-planned gardening project at Ashbury has come to fruition. It is a miniature herb garden in a bathtub complete with a colourful mural (see photo on opposite page). This program is called **High And Complex Support**. Although it may differ on the surface from, say, our business services, the principles behind it are the same, with the individual participants being at the centre of their own recovery journey.

"We've all come a long way at Ashbury over the last year," says peer worker Dan Hayden. "The residents have made great strides towards gaining greater independence, improving their physical health and emotional wellbeing, and becoming more

involved with the community. We have been working long and hard to improve our service and the lives of the people who access it.

"Once our service had settled on a team the residents knew and trusted, the gardening project was part of an initiative to brighten things up. We encouraged the residents to participate in the project to whatever extent was possible for them. This presented some real challenges. For instance: take a person who is extremely withdrawn and generally doesn't participate in activities. Their dreams and achievements may seem somewhat modest, but they deserve to be celebrated equally. How can that person be encouraged to tap into their

strengths and be the best they can be?

"Two residents experience extreme anxiety, and so they'd decided not to be hands-on with the dirt and paint and so forth. But just because a person declines to be physically involved in the project doesn't mean they can't be involved at all. There are other ways of taking part, such as offering suggestions on where and how to plant each type of crop and which colours to use for the mural.

"Almost everything in the garden will be edible, and it was chosen by the residents," Dan added. "Many of them have either never cooked before or simply forgotten due to prolonged periods of hospitalisation. At the start we asked each resident what herbs or foods would make them the most likely to get back in the kitchen. It sounds small, but I think it has led to a big breakthrough.

"In the last year, the residents at Ashbury have made tremendous strides in their personal lives. One resident rarely went outside. On the rare occasion

Recovery Story



Emma, left, starting back at work at Marrickville, with Christine Colagrossi on the right.

they *did* go out in public, they'd have severe anxiety attacks the second they lost sight of a staff member. Now, this same person confidently navigates his way around our local shopping centre solo, and even catches public transport. Another regular, Emma, is getting back to work at Prestige Packaging after a five year absence (see separate story on page 12).

"A third resident has had a long history of hospitalisations over the years, and had difficulty in expressing their anger in the past. Now they've become a kind of 'house mother' figure at

Malleny Street, making people coffee and plying them with cakes on a daily basis.

"These wonderful people have been through a lot, and deserve to see their achievements celebrated by the community."

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We have all come a long way here at Ashbury over the last year. Residents have made great strides towards gaining greater independence, improving their physical health and emotional wellbeing, and becoming more involved with the community.

**-Dan Hayden,
Peer Worker**



PHOTO BY DAN HAYDEN

Emma goes back to work

By Emma P

Above: Emma was reunited with work-mates she had known for years when she returned to Marrickville.

After a five year break, Emma - who lives in Flourish Australia's residential service at Mallyen St in Ashbury - has made a successful return to supported employment at our packing business, Prestige Packaging Co, in Marrickville.

"Emma recently moved from the lower support Burwood Road Belfield house to the 24 hour Mallyen St residence, and the move has really allowed her to take great strides in her recovery journey," says Alex Avenarius, the Manager of Mallyen Street. "Since moving, Emma has been noticeably happier and settled, and I think it's a great example of just how important the right level of support can be to a person's wellbeing."

Alex congratulated Emma and the support staff for working so hard on the recovery journey. Now let's hear Emma tell her story...

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Prestige Packing Co.
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MARRICKVILLE NSW 2204
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My Story

Emma: I was born in Sri Lanka and studied at the Holy Family Convent before obtaining a Bachelor of Arts from the University of Jafna. I briefly taught Social Studies and Religious Studies in Middle School before coming to Australia when I was twenty-eight.

There are so many relatives and people from my village who are now living in London and Paris, as well as Canberra and Sydney here in Australia. This includes my mother Barbara and many other people (Emma described her family tree in great detail, but space does not permit a full list here – Editor).

I was previously married, and one of my dreams was to have two or three children. I actually have one daughter, Christina, who was born at St George Hospital. She is now 18 years old and going to University. My brothers and sister are looking after her. Another dream which came true was to come to live in Australia.

Reunited

I have lived and worked in so many places, including Hurstville, Belfield, Allawah, Kingsgrove, Mallyen Street and I can name so many people who have supported me in my recovery journey.

Now I am working two days per week at Marrickville. I start at 8am. Previously, I worked at PRA Redfern, which is where

many of the other employees originally came from. So when I came to work here I was reunited with a lot of people I already knew from years back! The sort of work I have been doing includes packing, cleaning, and table hand work. I have also done cleaning and gardening at Flourish Australia Warwick Farm. I like to come to work because it gets me out of the house and gives me something to do.

I also have a community college English Certificate and I have taken part in many groups at Buckingham House and so forth. I did an AMES (Adult Migrant Education Service) course for six months, and also an office skills course.

Some tips

I get along with all types of people: Catholic, Anglican, Christian, Buddhist and Muslim. Sometimes I get angry and might get into an argument. When I am angry I do these things: I pray, I meditate, I read the Bible, and then I go to sleep! I also call my relatives.

Something I like to do on weekends is go shopping. I also go to McDonalds on Saturdays, plus I like to go to the park and swing on the swings. When I was in hospital, I played Tennis and French Cricket. Exercise is good for you.

Thanks to Dan Hayden. More about Mallyen Street, pages 10 and 11.

Recovery Story

Extract from “Maze of Mind”

ELIZABETH WATKINS has written a little book about her experiences of living with mental health issues. We know that Panorama readers will be interested to read about the things that Elizabeth has been able to do to get through the rough patches, and how she's kept well enough to stay out of hospital. Here is an excerpt...

It has been over twelve years now since I have needed to be admitted to a mental health unit or a hospital for bipolar disorder. Overall, apart from these episodes of being unwell, I think that I have lived a happy, healthy and fulfilling life. What I would like to do here is to talk about some of the things that I have done which have helped get me through the periods of depression both nowadays and in the past.

Over the years I have had a huge amount of support from family, friends and medical / psychological professionals and more often than not in patient treatment. However, I realise that sometimes it is so very important to remember that I have been blessed with an inner strength and an exceptionally strong will to live. These are qualities I am lucky to have.

When I am unwell, decision making becomes near impossible. Choosing clothes is a hit and miss affair. Usually the clothes I do choose are drab and boring.

My daily menu consists of identical meals: Cereal for breakfast, a sandwich for lunch and a microwave meal for dinner. I am grateful that my family often are prepared at this stage to help me with dinners of healthy food and comfort me as I cry.

I always aim to stick to some sort of routine, impossible though this seems. It gets hard to get through this daily existence that often I would prefer death even though my strength and slight amount of optimism prevents me from suicide. Often I have to be reminded that there is a light at the end of the tunnel



and soon, yet another episode will pass. Rather than stay at home, where it is easy to isolate yourself I would force myself out the door and to the few places I would allow myself to feel safe. I go to bingo three times a week. Win or lose it doesn't matter; my win was getting there.

I have a caring son to remind me constantly that soon this will pass and the tears will stop flowing.

I watch as many comedy shows on TV as I can. At first I find no humour in them but with lots of perseverance I gradually find myself amused and actually appreciating these shows. At first I can't even concentrate at all. In time I realise my down episode is about to leave me. My return to normalcy is as sudden as its onset

I begin accepting my friends and family again (whom I have tried so hard to shun) back into my life. I start to enjoy the sound of laughter again – surprised when often this laughter is my own. Slowly my joy of living returns – all about me I see Mother Nature.

Some of my coping mechanisms are simple and become regular. I use word puzzles to try to exercise my mind and force myself to keep my mind active. My personal advice to anyone with a mental health issue is always to discuss things fully with your doctor, including your medication.

Always accept support from whomever offers it – be it friends and family. Even if you don't consider you need it. Healthy people are happy to accept support in their average days and so should you. Finally, try to keep up with your important appointments and try to follow as much advice you are given. Stick with routine!

All of the above will speed up your recovery and as you gain knowledge of your particular illness and its symptoms you will be able to trust yourself to have a lot more personal control over a lot of the most debilitating symptoms of your illness.

People should strive to learn as many methods of coping as possible. Some of these (in my case) have taken years of experience and ongoing thirst for knowledge of any help available to me. I hope something amongst my words will help you in some way. If even the smallest part of relating to my journey of a lifetime with my own experiences has helped just one person, I feel as though my goal has been reached.

For a while the mind levels out smoothly. Life is much easier to handle and it feels good to feel like all the people that surround me. Once more, everyday tasks become easy to carry out. Thoughts are clear and decisions are no longer difficult. Everyday functions become simple. Pleasure, suffering and frustrations are all coped with.

So well in fact that it I need to be careful because these good turns may lead into mania and then yet another depression. I have learnt fairly accurately to predict the timing of my own episodes. I try hard not to stay in bed and pull the covers over my head all day.

This is how many in fact cope with depression. Of course this kind of 'self-help therapy' does not actually have a good impact and has the opposite effect.

This is an extract from the story Maze of Mind by Elizabeth Watkins. If you'd like to read the full story, please email Elizabeth at tori@liverpoolinc.org.au for more information.



3 years after YPOP: A different person

by Desley

(as told to Grant J Everett)

Desley discusses how life has changed for her in the time since she completed Flourish Australia's Young People's Outreach Program (YPOP).

I've reached the point where I don't have (or need) support from a professional point of view anymore. I prefer to look after myself. I already get plenty of support from friends and family, even though confiding in family can be...weird. When somebody knows you so well, it can feel really awkward opening up to them.

Now, I'm somebody who provides support to others. For instance, my best friend Talia, who I love and adore to bits, recently returned to her family in Queensland. I encouraged her to do this because she wanted to get back to how she was a couple of years ago. Before Talia moved down to NSW she was doing really well: she was working, she was a vegan, and she was exercising. Once she got to Sydney, though, she began to feel as though she lost her way. She didn't know what she was doing with her life. She was at that point where people are either going to Uni or climbing the ladder at their career, but instead, she was stuck in a loop. She was anxious

about the move back to Queensland, but I reminded her that it's all good.

I have a lot of useful, practical skills that I learned through YPOP. For instance, I now know how to use the SEEK employment website. I used to find it really complicated: the classification system, having to choose such detailed information...I'm an experienced kitchen hand, so why can't I just type that in? The YPOP guys helped me with this and I ended up applying to 32 places. I only heard back from 2, but you win some, you lose some. That was a really good experience.

The result of my job seeking is that I currently work in a salad and wrap place in Eastgardens called LeWrap. I've been there since March 2017, and this has been my longest job to date. Jobs and me, we don't usually go together all that well, but that's because there used to be complications that aren't there anymore. I enjoy LeWrap because it's engaging without being stressful. This is good, because I like a challenge. When we have waves of people it can get pretty hectic, though.

When I was referred to YPOP I was a bit reluctant but a lot of the other people

who went through YPOP felt the same way. We all need a nudge from time to time because it can be hard to step out of your comfort zone without the right support, so I'm glad my then counsellor Hazel gave me that encouragement as before YPOP I'd been slowly getting into a darker and darker place. By putting myself through the program, I've come out the other side a different person, and, well, it's been like a miracle! Looking back two years later, it still feels weird that I've managed to get to from where I began.

I met people from all walks of life, and some of them were really interesting. One girl lives in my area, so I see her constantly. I like having casual friends you can run into at random, as it doesn't feel forced or anything. Over the phone, it's a lot of pressure. What if they don't answer? What happens if they're busy and I'm interrupting? I have one friend who lives around Hurstville, so if I want to hang out I can just call him. He's never busy...unless you consider playing World of Warcraft to be busy! He's great, though. He's one of the people who I really connected with straight away.

When you spend time with people from similar backgrounds with similar life experiences to your own, it's really comforting. For instance, my friend in Hurstville has anxiety, and it was great that I could understand where he was coming from. So while you're learning from the people who run YPOP, you're also learning from the people who are taking part in the program, too.

There was a book I read during my time at YPOP that changed my life. It's called "A Sane New World" by Ruby Wax. She's fantastic! The way she talks about her experiences of mental illness, how she meshes it together with mindfulness exercises, really helped. Three quarters of the way through the book, I felt a change: I felt very grounded and anchored into life. Where I was at that point, the book really did help.

Something else that helped was keeping diaries. I got the idea from that mystery TV show Veronica Mars. While some entries are completely pointless, they link up with other days, and you can eventually see a pattern. Keeping a diary helped me to better understand myself 100%. At the beginning, I made a pact with myself to be honest...and I can always hit backspace if I break this



Recovery Story Desley

“I got a job on my own and I’m proud of that.”



My strengths

- Writing
- I learned how to use online jobseeking sites
- I applied for 32 jobs!
- I got a job with LeWrap in March 2017
- It’s the longest time I have ever held a job

My goals

- I want to write - if only I could avoid going blank and starting a new story before I finish the first one!
- I like to set small, achievable goals
- Become more social
- Eat healthy

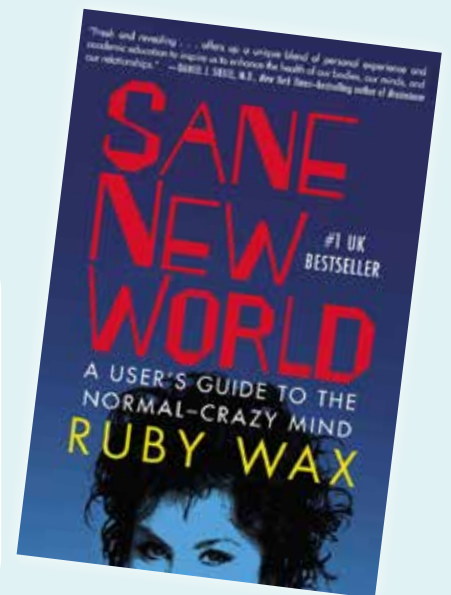
My challenges

- To overcome stress
- To stop procrastinating
- To get motivation
- To stop catastrophising

My supports



- YPOP
- Mindfulness, book ‘Sane New World’ by Ruby Wax
- Keeping Diaries
- Friends and family -though sometimes things get lost in translation!



promise, but you need to be motivated, or it won’t work.

I’ve just turned 20 and I’ve been having an ‘existential crisis’ about where I fit and where I want to be in the grand scheme of things. I want to write. I’m not sure if I’ll be able to make a career out of it, but I want to keep doing it. I’ve done several short stories, though none of them have been completed. I just end up going blank and starting a new one. I’m also very hard on my own writing. I’m constantly going, “Do I like this one? Is this any good?” But one story I really liked creating was called The Game. It’s about me typing four different stories at the same time, and weird things happen. For instance, Morgan Freeman

is the narrator, people were riding giant canaries...it’s strange stuff.

One New Year’s resolution that I actually accomplished was that I decided to start setting smaller goals, and I’ve been doing that ever since. Weird, I know! I’d recommend this to anybody who tries to overachieve. I’ve become more social, I get out of the house more often, and I’ve even been on a diet. The whole diet thing was interesting, as I’ve never done that before. I actually ate healthy! I forced myself to have a pear. And then I started to like pears. Best of all, I did lose a little weight, and it wasn’t heaps hard. So whatever you’re trying to achieve, smaller goals do help.

I had such an amazing time with YPOP that it took me a while to realise that the staff weren’t the ones helping me: I was the one helping me, and they were just there for the journey. They weren’t holding my hand or anything, but they were in the background, supporting and encouraging me, that whole time. By the end, when I was told that it was time to exit the program, they gave me heaps of notice. And even though I didn’t feel like I was ready to leave, when I look back on what I achieved I feel really proud. For instance, I got a job on my own, and I’m proud of that.

See the other stories relating to the Young People’s Outreach Program (YPOP) on page 35 and 42 of this issue.

Below: Employees from Flourish Australia's Figtree Conference Centre showed their versatility by staffing a coffee cart at TheMHS 2017 Conference!



The 2017 TheMHS (pronounced “themes”) Conference was held at the Hilton Sydney between the 29th of August and the 1st September, and Flourish Australia was a proud Gold Sponsor.

TheMHS is an international conference focussed on improving mental health services in Australia and New Zealand, and it serves as an open forum for exchanging research and professional development. This three-day event attracts 1,000 delegates each year, and it consistently challenges what we know about mental health. This year's theme was “Embracing change through innovation and lived experience”, which is at the core of everything we do here at Flourish Australia.

Presenters at TheMHS examine recent obstacles, set out new challenges, and focus on policies, programs and directions for the future. As presenters and delegates can be researchers, policy makers, people with a lived experience, their carers and everybody in between, this is the place to be for networking in the mental health sector. Each year a core topic is chosen as the focus, and any speakers who have a connection to this topic are invited to present at the forum.

TheMHS Awards

We want to say congratulations to Flourish Australia's CEO, Pamela Rutledge, for being recognised at TheMHS Learning Network Awards for

her life-long contribution to advancing the mental health sector. Pam was chosen as the winner by a panel of experts who had been nominated by their peers.

Pam received this award “in recognition of an exceptional contribution to mental health services in Australia... in celebration of a career of visionary leadership spanning decades of mental health reform. For dedication, innovation and brave decisions and notably, for creating opportunities for the employment of people with a lived experience, especially vital peer work roles in mental health.” What an accolade!

Speaking of accolades, Fay Jackson (General Manager, Inclusion) accepted the “Peer Worker Award” on behalf of Flourish Australia. Fay had something important to say to all the people who have been advocating peer work: “We are all in this together. This is about all of us. We all won that award today because we had a victory for peer work. At the beginning of this year, I declared 2017 *Year of the Peer Worker*. And so it is. We have a lot more to do, but we are on our way, and we are all in this together.”

Pre-conference Consumer forum

The pre-conference consumer forum on the 29th of August was themed “Thrive”. In the morning, Flourish Australia's Manager Peer Workforce, Peter Farrugia, presented his ideas on “What recovery means to you, and how you use it in your current work.” As a panellist,

Peter discussed aspects of his personal experiences, as well as how having a lived experience continues to influence his professional life. When quizzed about applying his lived experience in his role as a manager, Peter discussed Flourish Australia's position on reasonable adjustment in the workplace. He informed the audience this policy was not only for peer workers, but for all staff at Flourish Australia.

In the afternoon, Peter facilitated a panel discussion focused on a topic called “Peer Work Utopia: making it happen.” The panel consisted of six senior personalities from the Australian mental health field, and they covered some rather intense aspects of policy, government, systems, structures, funding and politics. It was a robust discussion which included some rather intense audience contribution.

“Managing the dynamics and experiences of the panellists offered many opportunities and challenges,” said Peter. “The breadth of thought made it a very interesting discussion. The audience clearly enjoyed it, as so many people wanted their chance to feedback to the panel following the conversation.” When asked if he would facilitate a panel at TheMHS again, Peter smiled. “Absolutely. And I would encourage all peer workers to consider giving it a go.”

Industry Briefing

Matt Kean MP, Minister for Innovation and Better Regulation, hosted a briefing attended by businesspeople, academics and representatives from non-government organisations. Together, the group looked closely at mental health issues in the workplace. This briefing was part of SafeWork NSW's Work Health and Safety Roadmap for 2022, a six-year plan that aims to reduce work-related serious injuries and illnesses - including mental health issues - by 30 percent. Minister for Mental Health Tanya Davies spoke about how this industry gathering was an important opportunity to hear from those directly affected by mental health in the workplace.

“People will spend up to one third of their lives at work, which means the workplace is a huge opportunity to help support individual's mental health,” said Mr Kean.

Flourish Australia's Presentations

Here's a list of the presentations given by members of our organisation.

"Health and Wellbeing. Feeling Physical. Innovative approaches to physical health and wellbeing." Presenters: Janet Ford and Jade Ryall.

"Stepped care. A need to embrace change with innovative and pragmatic person-led mechanisms." Presenter: Grant MacPhail.

"Leadership. Co-leadership in Mental Health and Wellbeing services and connection to the community." Presenters: Pamela Rutledge and Fay Jackson.

"An innovative funding model of individual capacity building (ICB) trialled in IWSPiR: Proposition of a funding complement to NDIS funding." Presenters: Dr Kate Ball & Sean Fitzgerald.

Next year's TheMHS Conference will be in Adelaide. Be sure to get your tickets early!

Flourish Australia: a proud sponsor

By Peter Neilson

We used our status as a Gold sponsor of TheMHS 2017 to increase the awareness of our brand, as well as to launch our new tagline and message. Our job is "creating and inspiring a world where mental wellbeing flourishes."

Naturally, Flourish Australia also had a booth at the conference, and our staff used it to run a number of give-aways and other exciting happenings. Figtree Conference Centre was on show, serving up café-quality cappuccinos by donation at our coffee cart. As this is the Age of Social Media, we were sure to post everything that happened to Facebook.

The Mental Health Service Awards of Australia and New Zealand were also presented at the conference (see "TheMHS Awards", left). Our organisation had several nominations and two wins. Pretty good!



Pamela Rutledge (left) with former NSW Governor, Professor Dame Marie Bashir



Fay Jackson, General Manager Inclusion



SMILE 4MH: One of the attractions at Flourish Australia's booth at the TheMHS conference was SMILE 4MH. People purporting to partake in paradisaical perambulations got to pose with pretty paraphernalia of their personal preference. The results were stunning (above and below).



What did we say at TheMHS and IMHC?

On pages 16 and 17 we gave an overview of Flourish Australia's extensive involvement as Gold Sponsor at this year's TheMHS Conference. Well, we also had a voice at the International Mental Health Conference just before that. Here's a closer look at what our presenters had to say.

A psychological FitBit?

Presentation: "Stepped Care: a need to embrace change with innovative and pragmatic person-led mechanisms," by Grant MacPhail (Senior Policy and Planning Co-Ordinator, Flourish Australia)

In collaborative environments, such as Partners in Recovery or stepped care programs, we tend to have cooperation between not just different services, but different ways of thinking. In this "co-design" environment all stakeholders get a say (individuals, hospitals, mental health services etc). But how do we prevent and remove power imbalances? Also, how can we generate an evidence base that satisfies all the different approaches, and which also satisfies the government when they decide where to allocate funding? Grant MacPhail's presentation generated some vibrant discussions on the topic.

How do we generate evidence that suits both psychosocial and medical models?

'The medical approach has one strength in that it can easily generate a valid evidence base using quantified research methods,' Grant told Panorama. 'Getting an evidence base to support psychosocial ideas is a challenge.'

So how do we generate evidence that suits both psychosocial and medical models? For example, how do we observe a person with mental health issues *without* hospitalisation?

'There is technology available which can warn people of impending episodes of unwellness,' Grant explained. 'The technology is actually able to analyse itself. There are "wearables" which you could call "psychological fit bits".'

These wearable gadgets can actually monitor a person's signs without needing them to go anywhere near a hospital or laboratory setting. The information gathered by these gadgets can also be corroborated with stories, interviews and diaries. Grant calmed our fears about the potential downsides.

'You might wonder about data security. However, future improvements in technology are likely to address and minimise these concerns. Besides, the benefits are phenomenal! They allow us to help ourselves - it's not just person *centred* approach, but a person *led* approach to wellness.'

An early screening tool?

Presentation: "Second stage development of an early screening tool for the detection of vulnerability to developing schizophrenia or related conditions," by Kate Ball PhD (Senior Evaluation and Research Co-ordinator, Flourish Australia)

Speaking of tools which can warn people of impending problems...

Before Kate Ball attended TheMHS 2017 she presented a paper to the 18th International Mental Health Conference on the Gold Coast. She spoke about an early screening system that entirely avoids the concept of "thought disorder", a diagnosis that is both at the heart of the medical model and conflicts with the person-centred nature of recovery as we know it at Flourish Australia.

'The signs that we look at are everyday innocuous items which are not necessarily associated with mental illness,' Kate explained.

Kate has been working on this screening tool with her PhD supervisor for some time now. Although their research

involved "axons and myelin sheaths" and other neurological phenomena, what makes this tool interesting is its ability to predict future unwellness. Looking at 600 individuals, Kate found 13 enduring traits that could be used to predict whether a person would or would not have a diagnosis of schizophrenia. The tool had an impressive accuracy rate of 85%. None of this research involved any mention of "psychotic symptoms". 'We have re-jigged the research that's already been done so that we can do a longitudinal study of young people,' says Kate. 'That way, we will be able to compare people with or without these 13 traits as they develop over time.'

Individual Capacity Building

Presentation: "An innovative funding model of individual capacity building," by Kate Ball and Sean Fitzgerald

In order to put a human face on her research presentation, Kate was accompanied by Sean Fitzgerald for her talk at TheMHS 2017. Kate spoke about how the way funding is provided often seems to be deficit focused, and the way its funding works means that people - like Sean - can face roadblocks to their recovery if they don't recover in "a straight line". Sean had an opportunity to speak about his recovery experiences and answer questions.

"...an individualised approach that goes beyond the very basic of needs' and allows people to be supported in exploring their hopes and dreams."

'Life is messy and people change their minds,' Kate explained, arguing for more flexibility in service delivery.

Kate and Sean advocated "an individualised approach that goes beyond the most basic of needs", as this would allow people to remain supported while they explore their hopes and dreams. Kate hopes that further research will provide more evidence to support the need for a more flexible funding approach. This would ensure that people in Sean's situation are able to continue accessing essential services.

Warren Heggarty

What about the DSP?

The DSP pays much less than even a beginners level job. If you participate in this program, you will be receiving a wage equivalent to the open job market rate, meaning that your DSP may be affected. However, the idea of moving into open employment is to become free of dependence on the DSP and to earn money closer to what you deserve to be paid for the effort you put in! Remember that if a person with a disability comes off the DSP there is a two year window in which time they may return if necessary. You can check out the details with Centrelink.



Left: Ever dream of open employment? Priya and Catherine did and gained outplacement experience thanks to Australian Disability Enterprise Outplacements.

Would I benefit from ADE Outplacements

Outplacement opportunities are located in other organizations, not Flourish Australia itself.

For each role we are provided with a position description from the hiring organization.

To be considered, applicants need to have the qualifications and experience appropriate to the role.

Examples might include being able to use certain computer applications like email and word processing, or being able to deal with telephone enquiries or customer service.

What will I achieve by participating?

- It will look fabulous on your resume!
- If you are successful in getting a placement, you will be paid a full award wage
- You will be able to experience an open work environment, but still have access to a support worker

How do I participate?

- Talk to your local Flourish Australia support facilitator

ADE Outplacements

There is a way you can receive mental health support from Flourish Australia while working for an external employer in preparation for open employment.

During 2017, Flourish Australia piloted a new scheme to assist people making the transition from supported employment to open employment. It is called "Australian Disability Enterprise (ADE) Outplacements." It enables people to experience an open employment environment with an employer other than Flourish Australia, while receiving a wage equivalent to the open job market and also having access to a mental health support worker.

Currently peer support workers visit participants in the workplace, at a scheduled time. On these visits, the participants can raise any issues

with their support worker. Naturally, participants make phone contact with Flourish Australia when required. However, if you are close to job-ready, you won't need a high level of support!

How it works

Flourish Australia has been submitting tenders for employment opportunities organised through the National Disability Service. Flourish Australia began filling positions in this way doing this around May 2017 when we placed a number of people with a government department, including Priya and Catherine (pictured above).

NOTE: As at the end of 2017 there is a waiting list for outplacement opportunities, however we look forward to be more opportunities becoming available in 2018.

We hope that people participating with ADE Outplacements will use this scheme as a springboard to even better paying jobs.

Travel and Outings



Go to the Snow

By Rachel Sheather

One Friday during the snow season, we went to Corin Forest, ACT, to see the snow and go tobogganing. It was the first time I had seen snow and it was great to be there with friends.

We travelled together in a group in transport provided by Flourish Australia. Travel took two and a half hours, and getting in cost \$22 entry and \$5 for toboggan hire.

There was a shop with a big open fire to sit near. We ate Hot Chips, Dim Sims (really big ones) and coffee. We had big marshmallows to roast on the open fire.

The sun was out in the clear sky, but the air was chilly: only 5 degrees. In my gloves and shoes I had little heat packs that I got from the chemist.

Tobogganing is fun! Going down the big hill, I felt like a little kid. I was free. We all held hands going down and made it to the bottom. Peer Worker Rebecca said she laughed so much her head was hurting.

If it sounds a bit dangerous, there is a safety buffer wall at the end of the hill to stop you, but I ran into Toni at the bottom, ha ha ha!

We hired our toboggans at Corin Forest. I had a red one, as red always goes faster! Slushy snow slows you down, so we moved up to where it was firmer and that made us go faster. It felt like 30kms per hour but was probably more like 20.

We had a snowball fight and made a snow man, and put glasses and scarf on him and a piece of wood for his nose.

On the way home we stopped at Gibraltar Falls. It was fantastic. The waterfall went down a mountain, hitting the rocks and cliff face and falling into a spring. It was noisy, but beautiful and tranquil at the same time. We had to walk down a steep hill and step over rocks. At time we did not think we would make it, but it was worth the effort to get there.

The company was great and we all joined in a sing-along on the way home. We sang 80's songs like "Fernando" by ABBA and "All Cried Out" by Alison

Pics clockwise from top left: Rachel Sheather, Elizabeth Sier and Rebecca Smith beside the falls; Rachel Sheather and Toni Anderson tobogganing; Toni Anderson, Rachel Sheather, and Rebecca Smith.



Moyet.

Would I go again? YES, YES, YES! I would love to go again. It was nice to go somewhere where I hadn't been before. It was great fun! After the snow I went on a recreational camp at Stanwell tops near the beach, so I've gone from the cold to the sun!

Thanks also to Krystal Fitzsimmons for helping with this story.

Flourish Australia
Shop 1, 42-44 Clinton Street
GOULBURN, NSW, 2580
1300 779 270



Corin Forest Mountain Resort/Gibraltar Falls,
1268 Corin Dam Road, Paddys River, ACT 2620

ACTION

Adapting CANSAS to Individuals' Own Needs

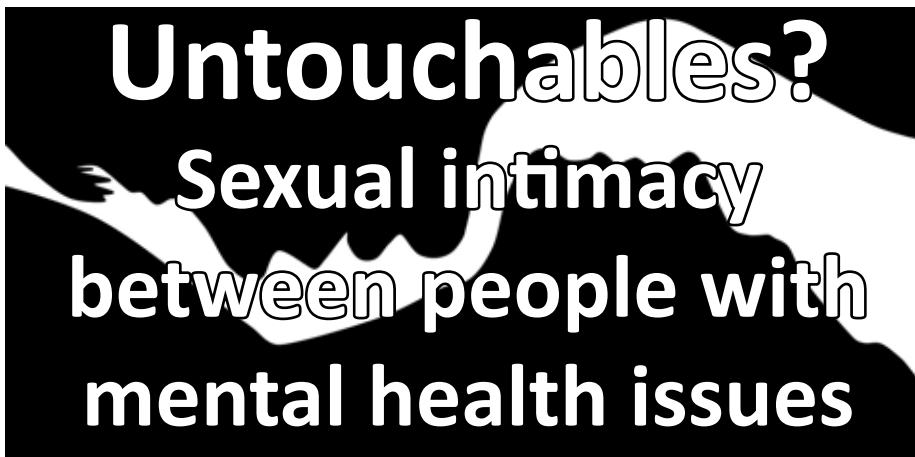
Each Issue covers a new CANSAS theme! This time it is CANSAS domain 16: Sexual Expression



Where mental wellbeing thrives

Sexual Expression December 2017

1. Accommodation. 2. Food. 3. Looking after the home. 4. Self care. 5. Daytime activities. 6. Physical health. 7. Psychotic symptoms. 8. Information about condition and treatment. 9. Psychological distress. 10. Safety to self. 11. Safety to Others (taking personal responsibility). 12. Alcohol. 13. (Street) Drugs. 14. Company. 15. Intimate relationships. 16. Sexual expression. 17. Children. 18. Basic Education. 19. Telephone. 20. Transport. 21. Money. 22. Benefits.



By Grant J Everett

One of the presentations at TheMHS 2017 was about how rare it is for to focus on how satisfied people with mental health issues are with their sex lives.

Called "Warm Human Contact: Let's Get Out There", the presenters included John Downie (PIR Manager of New Horizons), Suzanne Leckie (Head of Service Delivery from SANE), Rhiannon Werner (Project Coordinator from New Horizons) and Ceris Lane, who shared the details of her lived experience of hypersexuality (see story on page 23). Their talks were light-hearted and cheeky, but also very informative and relevant.

First off the bat, JOHN DOWNIE discussed how hospital and community mental health treating teams won't usually view the sexual satisfaction of a person with mental health issues as all that important. "It is rare, he says, for

this topic to be raised by either the therapist or the person undergoing the therapy." Considering the high value many of us place on our sex lives, leaving this subject untouched may seem strange.

If a psychiatrist *does* discuss a patient's sex life, it's likely to have negative connotations: how being unwell can make somebody incapable of giving consent, blanket no-touch rules in hospital wards, how mental health conditions can lower our inhibitions and lead us to do things we regret later, the dangers of Sexually Transmitted Infections (STIs), the statistically heightened risk of giving birth to a child who develops mental health issues, and so on. How much pleasure you get out of it is rarely a consideration.

Admittedly, even for professionals who deal with intimate topics on a daily basis, sexual satisfaction is a very personal subject. After all, if you want to offend somebody, then probing their sex life without an invitation is asking for trouble. So while therapists may discuss your

sex life if there is some kind of direct clinical reason (for instance, if hypersexuality is damaging your relationships, or if you are in marriage counselling), discussing the details of your satisfaction levels may still be considered taboo by many workers in the mental health field.

Whether we talk about it or not, there are many beneficial aspects to being satisfied with our sex lives. Beyond the fact it feels good (duh) it also builds intimacy, it's great for stress relief, it can be a good workout, it provides a natural high, it's fun, and it's just a good way to pass the time. Sex has also been linked to all sorts of health benefits. However, we need to stress that you don't necessarily need to be having sex to be satisfied with your sex life! Some people are deliberately celibate, and that's fine. Some are completely asexual (meaning they have zero interest in sex), and that's valid, too. Being "satisfied" doesn't necessarily mean having a large volume: it means being fine with the volume you choose to have (if any).

A lot can stand in the way of our sexual satisfaction. As many mental health issues can be a quick path to isolation without the right help, being alone logically means that your sex life will suffer. Whether we have sex or not, the fact remains that we all need human contact of some kind. Sadly, people who are locked away in wards will often go a long time without coming into physical contact with other humans, and being deprived of this most basic of requirements is no good for our wellbeing.

ACTION

Adapting CANSAS to Individuals' Own Needs

What to do about sexual problems relating to medication

The solution may not necessarily require more medicine...and the problem might not even be your medication

Many of our readers will be aware that some medications used to treat mental health conditions are also implicated in sexual dysfunction. For instance, it's quite common for people who take antidepressants - medications used to treat depression and anxiety - to report some degree of sexual dysfunction.

There are four basic kinds of sexual problems.

- Problems of DESIRE, when you are not interested in having sex, or have less desire for sex than you used to
- Problems of AROUSAL, where you don't feel a sexual response in your body or cannot stay sexually aroused
- Problems with ORGASM where you can't have an orgasm, or have pain during orgasm
- PAIN associated with sex

Things you can do to help with sexual dysfunction

- If desire is the problem, change your usual routine. Try having sex at a different time of the day, or try a different sexual position
- Some people find that using lubrication or appliances (like vibrators) can help
- Try additional foreplay before intercourse
- Take your time. Some people need a lot of time to "warm up"
- Practice!
- Relationship counselling and addressing patient-specific concerns can be useful
- Therapy with a clinical psychologist

who understands sexual dysfunction

- In consultation with a medical practitioner, consider alternative medications or changing your dosage
- Some doctors may prescribe medication to help with sexual dysfunction in both men and women

What causes sexual dysfunction?

Certain medicines, excessive alcohol use, being depressed or anxious, relationship problems, current or past abuse and many, many other things can cause sexual dysfunction. It's not just prescription medication that can cause problems, either: recreational narcotics like stimulants and hallucinogens can also affect sexual function.

The stresses of everyday life can decrease your ability to have sex, too. Being tired from a busy job or caring for young children will certainly have an impact. You may also be bored by a long-standing sexual routine, so finding other ways to do it may help.

Natural components of reproduction can have an impact. Women may have less sexual desire during pregnancy, right after childbirth, or when breastfeeding. Menopause can have a serious effect, too.

So, sexual dysfunction is not necessarily a medical problem, and the solution to the problem may not necessarily require more medicine, though it is wise to discuss things with a doctor if you are concerned.

Overemphasis

In the field of medicine, Conaglen & Conaglen note, there is a great deal of emphasis on male sexual problems, "with less data available on female or couple problems."

According to their article for the National Prescribing Service, patients AND doctors may not feel comfortable discussing sexual problems.

"People on long-term medications may not be aware that their sexual problems have developed as a result of their treatment. Conversely, some may blame their drugs for sexual problems which are due to relationship difficulties or other stressors." (Conaglen & Conaglen, 2013)

According to Conaglen & Conaglen, up to 70% of people who are depressed have sexual dysfunction: "Reports indicate that 30–80% of women and 45–80% of men with schizophrenia also experience sexual problems." Some people might find it difficult to distinguish between the effects of the (condition) on sexual function, and the effects of the drugs used for treatment.

References:

American Academy of Physicians. (n.d.). Sexual dysfunction (women). Retrieved October 16, 2017, from Family Doctor.org: familydoctor.org/condition/sexual-dysfunction-women/
Conaglen, H., & Conaglen, J. (2013). Drug-induced sexual dysfunction in men and women. *Australian Prescriber*, pp. 36:42-52.

Changes to ACTION

From the first issue of Panorama in 2018, our ACTION section will include four CANSAS themes rather than one. This is to enable us to get through the whole 22 themes in far less time. It will also allow us to revisit and update topics more frequently, allowing us to stay current.



Flying high...into drama

Grant J Everett

CERIS LANE has a lived experience of bipolar disorder, and she attended TheMHS 2017 to discuss an aspect of her condition that some would find taboo: hypersexuality. This basically means that Ceris underwent huge, out-of-character increases to her sex drive. Hypersexuality has a close connection with mania, a state of elation and heightened energy, and just like mania it can lead you to do things that you'll regret later on.

Before Ceris was officially diagnosed with bipolar in her late 30s, there had been major shifts in several areas of her life. For instance, she was easily functioning on four hours of sleep a night, her productivity at work was exceptional (though she would flit back and forth between tasks a lot), her confidence levels were through the roof and she was generally feeling high as a kite.

On the subject of changes, Ceris joked that her husband certainly wasn't complaining about her skyrocketing sex

drive! However, the problem with mania is that it can lead you to make impulsive decisions that lead to drama. After all, you're King of the World! Everything you do is amazing, and life is wonderful!

On the flipside to hypersexuality: It is a lot more common for mental health issues (and the medications used to treat them) to lower your libido, or even eliminate it altogether. Some people are faced with an awful trade off between being mentally well and maintaining the capacity for sexual activity. On the other hand, naturally having no interest in sex is called asexuality. People who are asexual often identify as "aces".

In all seriousness, though, while there were a lot of benefits to the new Ceris, there were also some downsides. For starters, Ceris was making a lot of people uncomfortable with her over-the-top behaviour, and she'd scared away some of her long-term friends with her inappropriate flirting. Although she was already married, Ceris found herself experiencing strong attractions to a lot of different people, including the band members of One Direction and strangers in cafés. Thankfully, despite her skyrocketing libido, Ceris never cheated on her husband, and her marriage survived this trial.

Ceris told us that when she visited her

GP it was immediately obvious that Ceris was in the middle of a full-on manic phase. The GP strongly suggested that Ceris should seek treatment. Thankfully, Ceris responded well to the mood stabiliser meds, and was back at work in no time.

While Ceris does miss the powerful elation that comes with mania, the problem with bipolar is that it's a two-sided coin. When she crashed into the pit of depression, at one point Ceris was so sad that she'd effectively stopped talking to people.

We should note that the *treatment* for bipolar can have downsides, too. The meds have given her kidneys such a pummelling that Ceris has been hospitalised for lithium toxicity on two separate occasions.

But there's a happy ending: Ceris brought her husband along to the conference as moral support, and their relationship is going really well. Their marriage has successfully weathered this storm, and things are back to normal again.

An audience member made a good (if cheeky) point about the diagnosis of hypersexuality: "If a male went around sleeping with a different woman every day of the week, he'd be a player, a stud, or a ladies man. If a woman did the same thing, she'd be diagnosed with hypersexuality."

Food for thought!

Change Of Mind

PROMOTING HEP C TREATMENT FOR PEOPLE WHO EXPERIENCE MENTAL HEALTH CONDITIONS

Some people who experience mental condition also have hep C, but new hep C treatments are an opportunity to change that without making you distressed or depressed.



3 IMPORTANT MESSAGES

- Hep C is more common in people with mental health conditions
- Hep C can now be easily treated, and cured
- Curing hep C can have multiple health benefits, including mental health benefits

Find out why now is an excellent time to be treated and cured of hep C.

WANT TO KNOW MORE?

Call our Hepatitis Infoline 1800 803 990
or look up our website www.hep.org.au



Hepatitis
NSW

Panorama Online is live!

All employees at the publications department (both of us) are proud to bring you Panorama Online Magazine! We've cherry-picked the best consumer recovery stories, watershed events and other seminal articles to live on in digital form. Our clean, easy-to-use, attractive website will keep our finest material in circulation for many years to come, and this is truly a new era for our magazine. The issues we deal with will continue to be hot topics for the foreseeable future, and Panorama Magazine will continue to be there for all the people who access our services tomorrow, just like yesterday. Go to:

From the wide open headspaces of the Far West comes: **Broken Hill headspace**

Flourish Australia is the lead agency in the partnership which now operates the new headspace at 231 Blende Street Broken Hill. From here, we will deliver full headspace services to young people of the Far West in a youth-friendly environment.

'headspace is all about providing easy, seamless and discreet support to young people experiencing mental health issues,' says Flourish Australia CEO Pam Rutledge.

Services will include youth mental health assessments and support, alcohol and drug services, vocation and education services as well as external referrals to other local services to help young people on their mental health recovery journeys.

A Youth Reference Group was formed to provide ideas and guidance on how the service can best assist the region. The group will have 15 members once it is running at full capacity.

Two of the members of the reference group travelled to Sydney in July to attend the Recovery Action Youth Forum. One of them was Sasha Cox, who in April 2017 received the annual NSW State Emergency Services (SES) Cadet of the Year award, presented by the Minister for Emergency Services Troy Grant and NSW SES Commissioner Mark Smethurst. The other was Hannah Evers who we understand has some experience in building robots(!) Looks like the youth of the Far West are definitely on the ball!

Like other headspaces, headspace Broken Hill will be a "one stop shop" operating a "no wrong door policy", Which means that as many services as possible will be offered under the one roof. Anyone who has had to negotiate the maze of different services out there will appreciate that this is a big plus!

Apart from Flourish Australia, the other members of the local consortium include:

- LifeLine Broken Hill
- Far West Local Health District
- NEAMI international
- Mission Australia
- JobLinkPLus
- Maari Ma
- Nachiappan Medical Centre

ACON and other services will also be providing support.

Young people can get information by visiting the new office, by calling on (02) 9393 9515 or by emailing headspace.brokenhill@flourishaustralia.org.au



Hannah, left and Sasha, right, at the youth forum, with Tahlia from Flourish Australia Broken Hill in between them



Social Benefit Bonds

Social Impact Bonds (SIBs) are a different way of meeting the cost of social service programs.

They are designed to raise private capital for intensive support and preventative programs which address areas of pressing social need.

More detailed information about the Resolve Social Benefit Bond is available from the Social Ventures Australia Website:

www.socialventures.com.au/work/resolve-sbb/

The Resolve Program is about reducing the length of time people stay in hospital.

Program Manager Christine Miniawy describes it this way: "On the one hand there are people who are home and well, and on the other hand there are people who are unwell and in hospital. We know that on the recovery journey people don't fall neatly into either category, so in between there is a large gap. The obvious question is: surely there is something we can do to be proactive, so that people are not just waiting for their next hospital admission?"

The Resolve Program is the answer. Christine calls Resolve an "experiment" across seven years which involves a "huge amount of investment into a completely different way of providing mental health services."

One outstanding feature is that the heart and soul of Resolve will be its peer workers. There will be nine altogether, five based at Orange to cover Western NSW, and four based at Cranebrook near Penrith covering the Nepean/Blue Mountains area.

Resolve is really three programs in one: Firstly there is "warm line" which is a telephone service that allows people

to talk through their anxieties before they become crises. Secondly, there is an outreach service, where staff make home visits. Thirdly, there is a residential service.

"This is not a replacement for hospital," says Christine, "but a way that people can hopefully avoid a hospital admission by spending some time away from home."

It is the first Flourish Australia venture to be financed through social impact bonds (see article in June Panorama). In fact, Flourish Australia General Manager (Operations) Andrew O'Brien says, "This new type of partnership with the NSW Government is an Australian (if not international) first, and we're committed to making it a great success."

Resolve is the result of cooperation between Nepean Blue Mountains Local Health District, Western NSW Local Health District, Social Ventures Australia and Flourish Australia and it commenced in October 2017 in Penrith and Orange.

It is estimated that there will be 530 participants over the first five years. On average, it is hoped there will be a 25 per cent reduction in the time they spend in hospital. This will lead to a saving of \$30,000,000, which will include a saving of up to \$15,000,000 to

taxpayers as well as a return to investors. To fund this venture, Social Ventures Australia raised \$7,000,000 in social impact bonds. Sound like a good investment?

To be eligible, participants need to be aged 18 to 65 and have spent between 40 and 270 days in hospital during the preceding 12 months.

"It will be a 24/7 operation and we will work closely with clinicians, but Flourish Australia's track record in recognising the value of peer work is what makes our approach unique."

RESOLVE MENU

1. Reduce the time you spend in hospital AND...
2. Save the taxpayer millions!

News



Above: The Resolve Program Team pictured in Sydney at a training course. Standing from left to right are Gavin Kelly (Penrith), Timothy Morandini (Penrith), Samuel Sutton (Orange), Shane Morrow (Penrith), Debbie Stein (Orange), Ben Wilshire (Orange), Bonnie Wallace (Orange) and Ruth Getachew (Penrith). Crouching in the front are Jolyon Briggs (Orange, on the left) and Evan Fulton, Manager at Flourish Australia's pioneering peer-run service at Hervey Bay, who was the trainer.



Wellness Walk 2017

The Wellness Walk returned for a fifth year of fun, festivity and fundraising for mental health!

Staff, people who access our services and their families and carers joined Team Flourish Australia on Sunday 15th October 2017 for the annual walk across Sydney Harbour Bridge to raise awareness for Mental Health. The walk itself started at 10am, but registration and entertainment commenced from 8:30am at Government House, Sydney.

Everyone who registered to walk for the Flourish Australia Team received a Flourish Australia t-shirt on the day.

There are more pics and stories about Mental Health Month activities on pages 30-31.

-Peter Neilson

Another round with an old adversary

by Ken Hua, The Chairman of Country Cottage



Prologue: Do I LOOK depressed?

MICHELLE the medical centre receptionist: "Good morning, Mr. Chairman, Welcome to Woodville* Medical Centre!"

MR CHAIRMAN: "Good day, Michelle, how was your Father's Day with your husband and the children?"

MICHELLE: "We had a great time. The weather was beautiful and gorgeous yesterday. The family went to Iron Chef Seafood Restaurant at Cabramatta for yum cha and then we drove all the way to Manly, enjoying the sunshine. It was really a fun day for the family. How about you, Mr. Chairman?"

CHAIRMAN: "Our family just had a quiet Father Day's celebration. I am recovering from another bout of unwellness!"

MICHELLE: "May I ask you what kind of unwellness?"

CHAIRMAN: "Can you **guess** what kind of unwellness, just by looking at me?"

MICHELLE: "You look fine, Mr Chairman!"

CHAIRMAN: "Well, Michelle, for a long time now, going back to Junior High School, I have experienced depression many times. I tell the whole story on my website: www.bloghuasungcang.wordpress.com (Ken's Blog). You can read my special article titled **My Life in Blue**. I will be honoured if you and Panorama readers could visit my website to view this article. But it is not just about depression! There are quite a few short humorous stories written throughout the years as well. In 2014 I successfully launched my first two books **The Two Boys and I (book I & II)** which sold out in three months. The profit on the books was donated to charity organizations such as Action Aid and Salvation Army.

MICHELLE: "Mr. Chairman, you are great! You were doing this for a good cause. Congratulations & well done!"

The Chairman of Country Cottage felt like a dead chicken and he thought it was the end of the world for him! But Diamond Boy and Platinum Boy reminded him: He had been through it all before and had come out of it a winner each time.

Disappointment

The Chairman had had a quite bad cough followed by quite severe sore throat. As Diamond Boy says, this is the sort of thing that makes him worry so much that he plunges into depression. Our Chairman was quite severely unwell, feeling depressed, desperate, disappointed and anxious and his mood sometimes only recorded a score of 2/10! Another example came when the Chairman was conducting English classes for the Woodville* Seniors Centre. Could it be that he was using his mind too much? Not really, because when writing his short stories, the Chairman uses ten times more of his mind than when conducting English classes! It was so

disappointing that he felt he had to stop conducting the classes at the time.

As a matter of fact, our Chairman is very active and still likes to go to work part time as a volunteer work although he is now 74 years old. He likes working because working boosts his mood and mind! The Chairman would love to be able to conduct English classes again. Conducting English is fun.

Support

How did the Chairman deal with this latest period of unwellness? Every day the Diamond Boy rang him twice, once at lunchtime and once in the evening, to give him support and encouragement that was really appreciated. At the end of each call, the Diamond Boy would ask our Chairman to sing his special "I will get better" song.

Also, the Platinum Boy who lives in Switzerland called our Chairman every other day: 'Mr. Chairman, cheer up! You have gone down this road so many times and each time you are still a winner! Don't worry, she'll be right and we can see there is light at the end of the tunnel!'

The Chairman is not a patient person to handle his depression however he was able to handle it with the support of his family, psychiatrist and caseworker. Our Chairman told himself that 'from now on, if depression strikes, I must be patient, don't panic, stay calm and relaxed to tackle it.'

Looking forward

Our Chairman is glad to be looking forward to a visit from his family from overseas. Perhaps they might join the cruise to see the natural beauty in Australia.

'Oh, what a wonderful feeling that we will have a family reunion at Country Cottage!'

So Poor old Ken is still alive and that is amazing that he comes back in one piece as Dr Dani promised. May God bless you all! May God help him train him to be a strong-minded person like his three beautiful children and two gorgeous grandchildren!

"Brushes with Life 2017"

Art workshops + exhibition

A celebration of hopes and dreams and good mental health! Throughout the year, the Taree branch of Flourish Australia provides FREE art workshops every month. Materials, instruction and light refreshments are all provided for no cost, and no artistic experience is required!

Artists are also welcome to take part in the **Brushes with Life** exhibition in October, too, for the chance to win acclaim and prizes.

Contact Flourish Australia to book your place in the workshops or the exhibition, or if you need more details.

1300 779 270

Where?

Uniting Church Hall, Main Street, Cundletown

When?

First Thursday of the month, 10am to 2pm

Workshops are held on the 2nd of March, 6th of April, 4th of May, 1st of June, 6th of July, 3rd of August, 7th of September, 2nd of November and 7th of December. As the **Brushes with Life** exhibition is held in October, the workshop does not run that month.

Mental Health Month 2017



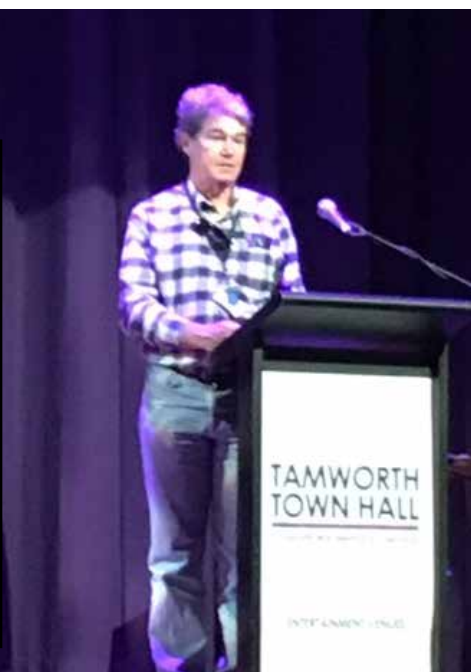
Picnic Day

October 10 was Mental Health Day and Flourish Australia staged its annual picnic day at Bicentennial Park, Homebush NSW. Past Picnic Days have been notable for sunshine, but this year, it was unusually overcast...though the rain held off.

As always we rediscovered the depth of hidden talent among our ranks in the fields of Karaoke, Quoits, Volleyball, Tug of War and Visual Arts *au plein air*. On a fashion note, we wonder if wearing balloons as a hat will become the thing to do in 2018.

Tamworth Town Hall Talk

Mental Health Month is a good opportunity to take or message to the public sphere. Glenn Botfield, Senior Peer Worker at Flourish Australia's Tamworth service is seen here giving a talk at Tamworth Town Hall.



Mental Health Month 2017



Wall of Fame

Flowerdale cottage has a wall which shows famous people who have lived with mental health issues.

These include Princess Diana, Beethoven, Winston Churchill, J.K. Rowling and Olympian Matthew Mitcham (who was special guest at Flourish Australia's launch last year).

Flowerdale Shares the Journey

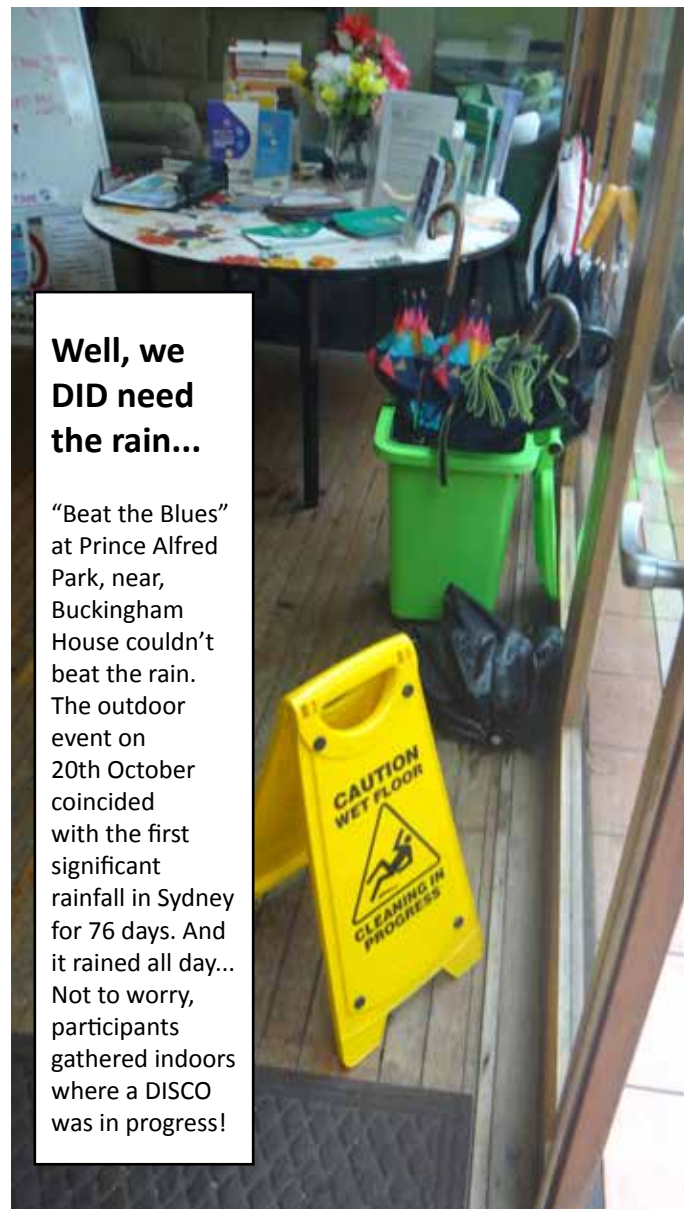
Open Days at Flourish Australia's Flowerdale Cottage, Liverpool always attract people from far and wide and October 17 was no exception.

There were talks from representatives of Flourish Australia Business Services, The Women and Children's Program, St Vincent De Paul's and the Young People's Program at Brumby House, Emu Plains.

To reflect the theme "Share the Journey" school children from Briar Road and Lomandra Schools, Campbelltown attended.



Rosette from the Women and Children's Program was a guest speaker at Flowerdale



Well, we DID need the rain...

"Beat the Blues" at Prince Alfred Park, near, Buckingham House couldn't beat the rain. The outdoor event on 20th October coincided with the first significant rainfall in Sydney for 76 days. And it rained all day... Not to worry, participants gathered indoors where a DISCO was in progress!



Flourish Australia stall at the Aboriginal Rugby League Knockout

By Jade Ryall

Flourish Australia hosted a stall at the 2017 NSW Aboriginal Rugby League Knockout. The Knockout, often described as a “modern day Corroboree”, is a four-day carnival of fiercely contested, tough, world-class Rugby League. Far more than a sporting event, it is an opportunity for families to gather, reunite as a community and barrack for their hometown and mob.

Thank you to all of those who were involved in the proposal, planning and volunteering at the event: it was a great

success! Our stall was at Sportsground number 3 at Leichhardt Oval. We had eight volunteers over the long weekend. Over 35,000 people went to the event over four days between Friday September 29 and Monday October 2.

We had people visit our stall from over 30 towns and cities across NSW. There were visitors who knew our organisation, people who were looking for supports, people who currently work for us, people who have accessed our services across NSW and other workers from the sector. A wonderful highlight was that anyone who accessed our service, knew someone who had or worked with us all said great things about Flourish Australia.

Our stall was a big hit with the kids mostly: some stayed for a couple of hours each day, practising with their yoyos, and they even helped us hand out merchandise! There were some great moments between many Uncles, competing to do the most impressive yoyo tricks, and the kids were loving watching them, too. We gave out thousands of rocket footballs, drink bottles, light up yoyos, mints, lanyards, hats, pens, fidget spinners and brochures.

We also had a way of helping people connect with us after the event by inviting people to complete their details

Left: a view of the action at the Knockout which was won this year by Newcastle, who defeated Griffith. This is good news for Novacastrians who are sure to be out in force in 2018 to cheer their local team on!

Celebrity corner

Below: Anthony Mundine with Adele. Bottom: Greg Inglis with our team and banner. We were so grateful to Greg Inglis for visiting our stall & signing one of our hats! He is such an inspiring person and role model for our young people.



Events



and areas of interest for support so that a person from their local service can get in touch.

Anthony Mundine and Greg Inglis came by our stall to have a photo with us which was so great.

So many opportunities have sprung from our presence there. I'm looking forward to exploring them with our teams and other organisations who got in touch. A post event report is being prepared.

A great effort from everyone involved. Thank you!



Top photo: It is obvious that the Moree Boomerangs were here for the footy!

Middle photos: Adele and Jade (left) with the merchandise (right)

Bottom photo: "‘ello ‘ello, wot do we ‘ave ‘ere then?" said the Constable. 'They are harmless Flourish Australia rocket footballs,' said Jade. 'A likely story,' said the Constable. 'We are going to ‘ave to take these down the station to run some tests...'





Exciting things about Figtree Conference Centre

By Sue O'Rourke

Figtree Conference Centre provides employment for people living with mental health issues. Panorama asked Sue O'Rourke to tell us about how they manage to keep recovery front and centre while remaining competitive and allowing employees to become the best they can be.

SUE: I get so excited about social enterprise because it is a win/win for everyone. From the perspective of the public, when people buy a product or a service, more and more they want a social impact with their purchase.

From the perspective of our employees,

there is nothing like a job to give you an authentic experience of social inclusion and community participation.

When we recruit, we consider everyone who puts their name forward. Our main selection criteria is that working with Figtree will make a real difference to the employee. It will enable them to be the best they can be.

For some employees, it means stepping up to take on a new role in employment that is more challenging than where they are now. For other employees, that means having open employment as their goal. When new employees identify this as their goal, working at Figtree gives them something that is really authentic to put on their resumes!

Recovery is the most important thing we do at Figtree - it is a vehicle, if you like, for allowing people to develop confidence in themselves. It is a strengths based workplace.

I like to give employees the freedom to support one another with their mental health issues, and that is exactly what they do. Even during their breaks, employees will share their own life experience in ways that help their colleagues. That is the basis of all peer work.

Figtree Conference Centre operates slightly differently to other venues behind the scenes. Really, though it really just boils down to an extra investment in staff.

For example, we are able to take into ac-



Figtree conference centre assistants (from left): Nancy, Sandra, Liza, Mark, Deonny

count the individual needs of employees who are living with mental health issues. This can relate to medication, their need to attend appointments, their need for particular shift times, and so forth.

One of the things that has made it easier for me to coordinate is that we have recently taken on Fiona Thistlethwaite, which has been a really good step. Fiona's role is to take care of the day to day supervision, working side by side with our food and beverage attendants, and overseeing their work in the kitchen. Fiona has a background in teaching, which is handy. It means we can have the benefit of more intensive, measurable training, linked to learning outcomes for all the employees.

We are able to make it fair and balanced while allowing for employees to rotate between different aspects of the business. With the support we provide we know we can have high expectations. The continuation of Figtree relies on us being a competitive business. Physically, we have such a versatile space that can accommodate many different types of events, but we all know our service has to be exceptional and that we can't compromise.

Commercially, the sign of success is repeat business, and repeat business is what we get. We already have some big events booked into 2018.

**Flourish Australia
Figtree Conference Centre
5 Figtree Drive SYDNEY
OLYMPIC PARK 2127
(02) 9393 9000**



Flourish Australia

Employment

Becoming a Mental Health Worker From refugee to YPOP manager

By Jimmy Acosta

Like a lot of people who decide to work in Mental health, I have my own lived experience and have witnessed many loved ones be severely affected by their mental health.

I came to Australia very young as a refugee. I was lucky enough to be able to get a lot support for my mental health from a very young age and then later from local youth workers in the Mount Druitt area.

For the past three years, I have been the manager for the Young People's Outreach Program in South Eastern Sydney.

I work alongside our frontline staff and help them support young people aged between 16 to 25 who are living with a mental illness. My role is more of a co-ordinating role and help maintain relationships with local area health. I also meet and complete assessments with the young people who have been referred to YPOP for the very first time.

I originally started as a student in 2011 with HASI Penrith. I was then lucky enough to get a fulltime role with what was the original YPOP team in Penrith. In 2014 I stepped up to the manager's role for the new YPOP team in Kogarah, covering south eastern Sydney.

Career choices

I worked in many other fields prior to deciding to become a mental health worker. I originally studied Economics, I worked in IT and then worked building cars and motor bikes for ten years. I have a diploma in IT and qualifications in welding which are totally unrelated. And that's just to name a few!

It took me a while to find my passion but I realised that I wanted to do something that would allow me to give back to the community for the support I had received in the past and help make a difference in the lives of others.

We go out and visit young people in the community and help them with their day to day goals.

Challenge

I think working with young people can be challenging in different ways. Young people have their own culture and are always quite up to date with pop culture. I like this because I like to think they keep me young.

Probably the biggest bonus when working

with young people is that we get to witness a large number of young people overcome the barriers and reach their goals such as moving into independent living, fulltime jobs, and university.

Sometimes they may even decide to become com-

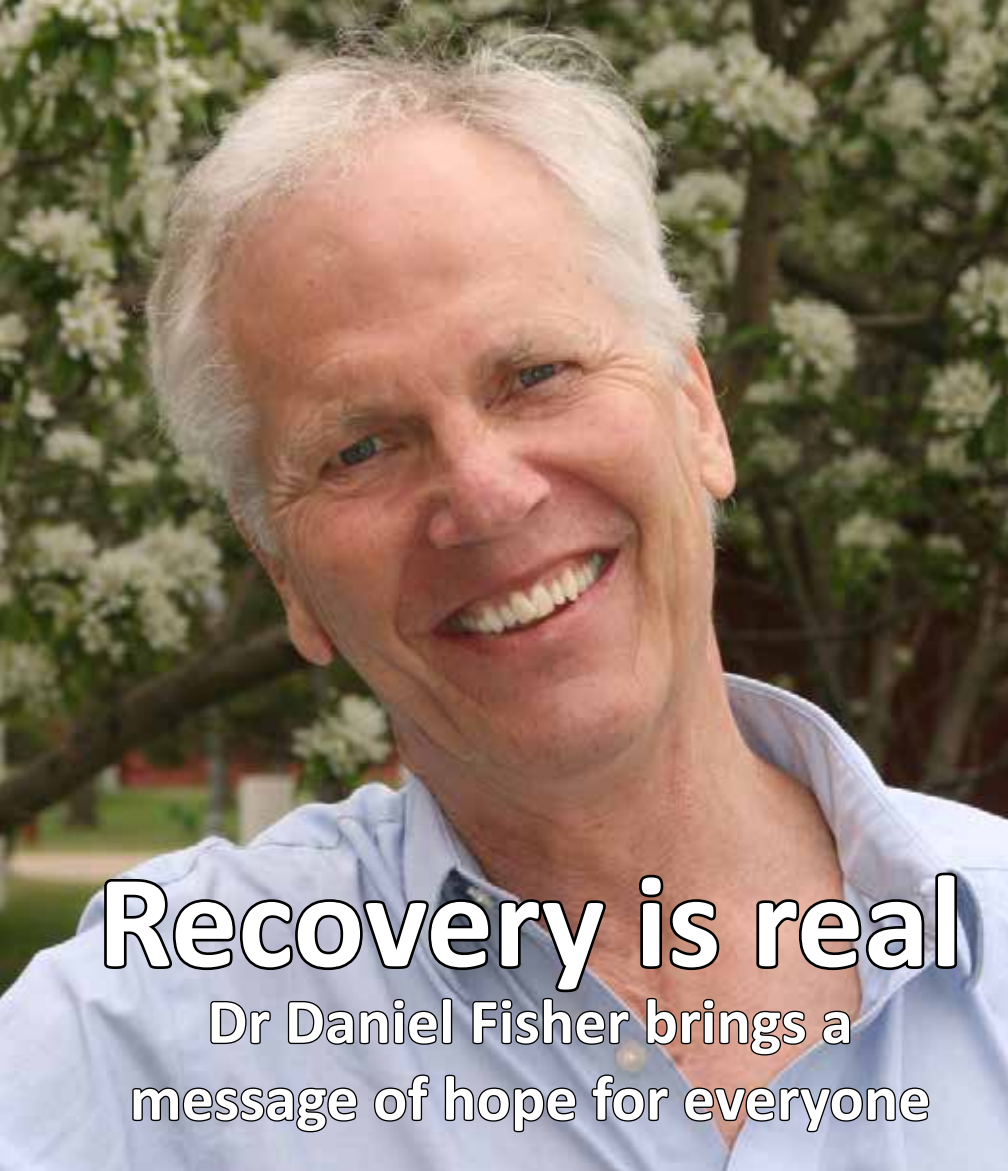
munity workers as well!

As told to Grant J Everett

See other stories relating to the YPOP in this issue on pages 8-9

"I realised that I wanted to do something that would allow me to give back to the community for the support I had received in the past and help make a difference in the lives of others."

**Flourish Australia
Young People's Outreach
Program, KOGARAH, NSW
1300 779 270**



Recovery is real

Dr Daniel Fisher brings a message of hope for everyone

Interviewed by Grant J Everett

Dr Daniel Fisher is a psychiatrist from the United States of America. Perhaps unusually for a psychiatrist, he is open about his lived experience of mental health issues. Many in his profession insist that you don't recover from schizophrenia, but Dan says that recovery is real.

Dan spared some time from his international tour to speak with Panorama Magazine.

Dan's "Emotional CPR" workshop aims to change the way we perceive distress, teach us how to be there for people who are struggling, and to use our lived experiences to steer the future of the mental health system.

"Emotional CPR is a peer-developed, peer-inspired introduction to mental health first aid," Dan told Panorama.

"Mental health first aid appeared about 10 years ago, and while it sounded like a good idea to begin with, teaching the general public how to identify mental

health issues might have actually *increased* stigma and discrimination" he says.

"Emotional CPR, on the other hand, has no mention of diagnosis or symptoms or mental illness or anything clinical, and it focusses on what we can do to help somebody who is in emotional distress.

"Just like how CPR is for cardiac problems, Emotional CPR is for anybody who is upset. Anybody can take part in this workshop, as we all instinctively have the ability to be with people who are in distress. When there are no professionals around, Emotional CPR can potentially make a real difference in helping people through their struggles.

"The main thing we teach about distress is this: don't try to fix it, don't try to explain it, don't try to judge it; just be

there for the person. By simply being with them, you will boost their ability to cope and to heal.

"This workshop is universal. It's for people who have been labelled, as well as people who haven't. Sometimes we call the second group "chronically normal." After all, they seem to be well, and those of us who are labelled are meant to be unwell. In many cases, those who are labelled "unwell" are like the cultural canaries in the coalmine.

"I think we're a little more sensitive or a little more vulnerable to the cultural ills around us. The lack of feeling, the lack of heart...I never thought I'd quote our current President – I'll just call him number forty-five – but he said a fairly significant thing recently. He said, "I never would have imagined that running a government required a heart, because I come from the business world, and there it's better not to have a heart." So we have a heartless world, and some people can live without a heart. I don't know how they do it. Are they the well ones? Are we the well ones?"

"I'll be going to Puerto Rico later in the year (they're very keen on Emotional CPR there). I'll also be visiting Scotland and Wales. So far we've run this course in Japan, Taiwan, Poland...Iceland is very big on it. Because we focus on the emotional dimension, that's a commonality that crosses cultures. But some cultures are more comfortable with emotions than others.

"For instance, we usually do 'practise scenarios' where one person recalls something distressing in their life and the other person assists them through it. But in Japan the participants were particularly concerned about doing this in front of their friends and co-workers, so they repeatedly asked us to do the role-plays for them."

'... they're more issues of a broken heart than a broken brain. Unfortunately, the mental health system has neglected this extremely important dimension.'

-Dr Daniel Fisher

Singaporean participants came up with a challenge that Dan had not anticipated.

"As they are a very orderly society, the Singaporeans wanted scripts," says Dan. "We find that scripts don't work very well because they're not real, so we

had to adapt. Another adaptation is for clinicians. They're a different culture because they're taught not to share their own emotions. But we tell them that it's really helpful to share how you're feeling when you are consoling somebody. Clinicians also prefer more slides and a lecture-type presentation style, while people with a lived experience (and their families, carers, friends and so on) tend to be more comfortable with a conversational approach.

"Something else I emphasise is relationship building, because I believe that the majority of what's described as mental illness is a failure to connect on an emotional level with other people. This interferes with intimacy, love, romance and successful job performance, because in the long run all of our human endeavours depend on human connection," says Dan.

After 20 years working in the field, Dan has come to the conclusion that recovery is possible for all of us, and he wants to spread the message that the true power of a lived experience is far beyond what the average person would assume.

"We've done many studies on people who have recovered, and whenever we asked them about the most important part of their recovery journey, it's ALWAYS about relationships. But until Emotional CPR was developed we hadn't really focussed on what relationship dimensions were most important. So a lot of treatment up until now has been on the verbal level. You know, questions, answers. Telling stories and narratives. They all tend to focus on the cognitive. But these issues, they're more issues of a broken heart than a broken brain. Unfortunately, the mental health system has neglected this extremely important dimension. It sends the message that the primary role of a person who is being treated is to take their medication, rather than learning how to connect. I believe there is an over-reliance on the medical."

Dan wanted to make it clear that he is not against medication. "Whenever I discuss the benefits of non-medical support, this has often been interpreted to mean that I am opposed to medication. I'm not," he says. "I'm a psychiatrist, I'm board certified, and that means I prescribe medicine. But whenever I prescribe medication to somebody, I'll tell them, "This won't solve all your problems: YOU are the person who must solve your problems. You, deep down, are the healing agent.

"Recovery is real. I've been through it. I've seen it happen in others. So it's strange how so many people still refuse to accept that recovery from severe psychiatric problems is real. In my case, they deny it by saying, "Well, you must have been misdiagnosed, because people don't recover from schizophrenia." I've had people listen to one of my talks and then come and tell me, "You made sense. You must never have had schizophrenia." And I get very angry about that, because that's like denying

the possibility of recovery to millions of people.

"Recently, a Professor of Abnormal Psychiatry at Boston University was teaching a class, and he said that "people with schizophrenia don't recover." A friend of mine was in that class for a Master's level course, and she raised her hand and said, 'Actually, friend of mine recovered from schizophrenia.' The Professor dismissed this by saying, 'Then he must have been misdiagnosed.'

"So she called me up," says Dan, "and I told her 'I'm so tired of this. Let's put this to rest right now. Let's go through the DSM IV (this was a few years before the DSM V).' So we went through the criteria for schizophrenia, which haven't changed that much.

"Yes, I had the television talk to me. Yes, I isolated (I didn't talk for a month at one point). Yes, I had some pretty striking positive and negative symptoms. I felt

very discouraged and very unhappy. I wasn't sure I wanted to go on living, and so on. As I definitely met the criteria, she took these findings back to her Professor. His answer was, 'Oh, then we have a case of disabled psychiatrist.' In his mind, since I met the criteria of schizophrenia, I must still have it, because he believed that people never recover. So obviously, I'm a disabled psychiatrist.

"It still makes me mad when I think about it! It's beyond frustrating! It's infuriating.

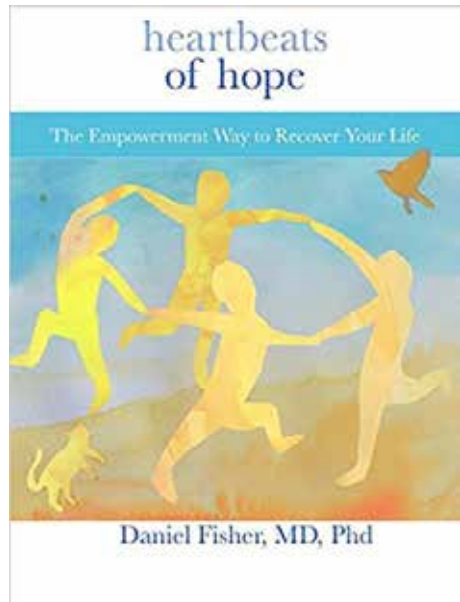
"One of the things I teach in the Finding Our Voice workshop – something that I have to keep teaching myself – is to hold onto that anger, that righteous anger, and transform it into passion. I think of Mahatma Gandhi: he freed 600 million people, but it took him and his compatriots decades. Gandhi was always very patient and thoughtful, and even getting beat up wouldn't discourage him. He said, "I take my anger, I compress it, and it becomes the energy for my force, my change." I try to remember that.

"I also try to remember Nelson Mandela, and Martin Luther King Jr. Martin Luther King Jr. said, "Although we have many setbacks, the arc of history moves towards social justice." It seems hard to believe that at times, but that gives me hope."

In addition to being the Executive Director of the National Empowerment Centre, a professor of psychiatry at UMS Medical Centre.

Dr Daniel Fisher's book, Heartbeats Of Hope, is available from Amazon, or the National Empowerment Centre website at power2u.org

"Quite a few participants have said the group was lifesaving. There was a woman in Singapore who spoke to us following the workshop. She told us that when she started the group she wasn't sure if she wanted to go on living, but afterward she felt like she had purpose and meaning in her life."
-Dr Daniel Fisher



Changes in National Mental Health Commission Co-Chair and Members

Our National and State Governments both have Commissioners appointed to oversee mental health matters. The National Mental Health Commission (NMHC) website describes its role as follows:

“We are Australia’s first National Mental Health Commission, set up in 2012 to provide independent reports and advice to the community and government on what’s working and what’s not.”

Recently, there have been quite a few changes to the Commission line-up. For starters, the new National Mental Health Commission Co-Chair is Mrs Lucinda (“Lucy”) Brogden. Mrs Brogden is an organisational psychologist and businesswoman, and was already serving as a Commissioner at the time of her appointment as Co-Chair. Professor Allan Fels’ term as Chair expires in late 2017, upon which time Mrs Brogden will assume his role.

According to the National Mental Health Commission: “Lucy... has a strong commitment to helping others and building stronger communities.” Her primary areas of focus are “mental health and wellbeing... in the workplace and the community. She takes an evidence based approach to problem solving and social investment.”

Mrs Brogden has worked with Macquarie Group, Ernst & Young and in “trusted advisory roles with some of Australia’s leading CEOs, Managing Partners, Ministers and Chairs in investment banking, finance, law and government.”



National Mental Health Commissioners

- **Mrs Lucy Brogden (above),** psychologist
- Dr Peggy Brown
- **Professor Harvey Whiteford AM,** psychiatrist
- **Professor Ngiare Brown,** Indigenous health and education expert
- **Professor Wendy Cross,** mental health nurse
- **Professor Helen Milroy,** psychiatrist
- **Mr Samuel Hockey**
- **Professor Allan Fels AO** economist, carer
- **Professor Ian Hickie AM,** psychiatrist, has a lived experience
- Ms Jackie Crowe (passed away in October 2017)

www.mentalhealthcommission.gov.au/about-us/our-people/



Catherine Lourey is the newest Mental Health Commissioner of NSW

Catherine Lourey (bottom left) became New South Wales’ newest Mental Health Commissioner on August 18 2017. She has replaced inaugural Commissioner John Feneley, whose five year term had ended.

Ms Lourey has 30 years of experience in the health sector at local, state and national levels. One of her many contributions to Australia’s mental health system was directing the development of the national review of mental health services and programmes back in 2014.

Asked about her motivation, Ms Lourey said: “The lived experience of mental health consumers, and their families and carers, will remain at the heart of all the Commission’s work.” She also thanked outgoing Commissioner John Feneley for his “path-finding stewardship” as well as giving the “excellent Deputy Commissioners” a nod.

The Mental Health Commission of NSW is an independent statutory agency responsible for monitoring, reviewing and improving mental health and wellbeing for people in NSW.

DEPUTY COMMISSIONERS OF THE MENTAL HEALTH COMMISSION OF NSW

- **Ms Karen Burns,** nurse, psychologist
- **Dr Martin Cohen,** psychiatrist
- **Ms Fay Jackson,** advocate and activist
- **Mr Allan Sparkes CV, OAM, VA,** police officer, and also has lived experience
- **Dr Robyn Shields,** psychiatrist, indigenous person

nswmentalhealthcommission.com.au/news/commission-news/new-commissioner-appointed

Poem

My Protector

by Jacinta Pascoe

The small ripples of water amaze me

How they gather

They remind me

Thoughts reminisce

How I see my reflection so young in the water

Holding hands with my sister

My protector

Just walking

Such as simple thing

I look up into her face

She looks soft but strong

I admire her

My protector

I use to ask for her advice

She has wisdom

Life experience

Me I feel small

I know she loves me

My kind caring protector

I feel the strength in her hand

As she holds my hand

I love her

Cherish her

I look back in my reflection in the water

I am me now

Many years have passed

I hold on to the memory

I never have stopped loving her

My protector

Mental Health First Aid goes to Queensland boarding school

Some readers may recall John Marsden's 1988 book "So Much To Tell You". It tells the story of a girl in a boarding school who ceases to speak altogether following a severe psychological trauma. We read about the awkward situations that develop between the girl, Marina, her fellow pupils and the staff. It's even more awkward because they are all together 24 hours a day.

Twenty-nine years later, a residential college in Queensland, Emmanuel College (part of the University of Queensland in Brisbane) has introduced a peer support program for residents in order to "make them more aware of mental health distress among fellow students" (Hare, 2017). Because it is derived from Mental Health First Aid, this program aims to equip students with the skills to deal with such situations when they arise. Mental Health First Aid "is given until appropriate professional help is received, or until the crisis resolves" (see more in the story "Mental Health First Aid training", Panorama #62 December 2016, or on Panorama Online).

Assistant Dean Jenn Jasinski said the idea was not for students to provide diagnosis or therapy, but to "recognise signs and have a conversation that would encourage" seeking qualified help. 44 students have done the training so far, and many of them have expressed gratitude for having learned the skills to deal with difficult situations.

A recent headspace survey reported that 70 percent of students reported high or very high levels of psychological distress.

References

Hare, J. (2017, August 3). Students learn to spot mental health distress. The Australian.

Mark Orr to be our New CEO from 2018

As you may have read in June Panorama, Pamela Rutledge, the CEO of Flourish Australia announced her intention to retire at the end of 2017. Over the following months, the board undertook an extensive recruitment process with the assistance of an independent executive recruitment consultant from Polaris Consulting.

On 15th August, the Chair of the Board, Prof Elizabeth Moore AM was delighted to announce that as a result of the merit recruitment process, the board had appointed Mark Orr as the new Chief Executive of Flourish Australia. Mark will commence this role on January 1, 2018.

Mark is well known to many of you, having been Flourish Australia's Chief Information Officer since the merger in 2012. He even made it onto the cover of Panorama in September 2016!

Mark has a wide and varied career history including working as a psychologist, a Commonwealth Tribunal member and as Deputy Protective Commissioner of NSW. Mark also comes well qualified for the role with tertiary qualifications in psychology, health service management, corporate governance, applied finance and health informatics.

Elizabeth said she was delighted that Mark will be taking over the mantle of Chief Executive from Pamela. Pamela and Mark have worked together for many years and Mark has been a major contributor to the strong focus on recovery and the value of lived experience which is the core of Flourish Australia's culture and strategy.

This appointment will provide for a seamless handover that will ensure Flourish Australia continues to deliver high quality services to people with a lived experience of a mental health issue, their families and carers.

On behalf of the Board, Elizabeth congratulated Mark on his appointment as Chief Executive and said 'we all look forward to working with Mark in leading Flourish Australia in its next stage of development.'



Money — Go — Round

By Meredith

“Money makes the world go around – that clinking clanking sound...” Remember the words of the song? It certainly has a nice ring to it. However for those of us who only have a small amount, it can often be a challenge to make it “go around” a long way. While it is encouraged to pursue our work or career goals, it is still handy to know how to live frugally while we wait for such a day to come.

I am someone who has had to survive on a low income for most of my life. It wasn't always easy, but I found that it can be possible with some creativity and innovation. Here are a few things which I implemented that helped me...

1. Shop at the more humble department stores and shops for lower cost items. Kmart, Target or Best and Less are good for clothes. The Reject Shop is useful for stationery or kitchen items. Kmart is also handy for home-ware and hardware. Aldi is cheaper for groceries, and any items not available here can be bought at one of the bigger supermarkets.
2. Comfortable shoes can be bought at a much lesser price at the larger Chemist Warehouse outlets. I just make sure the soles are thick and firm to help support my heels.
3. I have adapted to buying “home brands” for many items. The quality is often equal to that of the more expensive “advertised” brands.
4. Bring a list when shopping to avoid impulse buying unnecessary things.

5. For holidays, visit and stay at places that are only 1 or 2 hours drive from your own home. E.g., Lake Macquarie is only a one hour drive from Sydney, while Terrigal is one and a half hours away. Both of these places can provide a quiet time of rest and relaxation near the waterside. It's not always necessary to travel overseas to Fiji or Hawaii for the same R&R.

6. Only use a credit card for convenience, not credit (if you have one at all, which is not recommended). Aim to pay off the whole balance at the end of each month so you don't attract any interest.

7. Be on the look out for “specials” for small and big ticket items. There is a feeling of glee when you can score an item you need at half price.

8. Shop around for the best price on certain items. Even though it may be more “leg work” (which can count as exercise), it can pay off in the end.

9. Sometimes we need to change our attitude to buying scenarios. If you are good with a needle and thread, shopping for “vintage clothes” (from the Op Shop) or garage sales can provide interesting results. If you alter it to your size or in a creative way, you could end up with an outfit that is totally unique. I once bought a dress from a garage sale. At a Christmas party a few ladies commented on how nice it looked. (You don't have to tell people exactly where you bought it from too).

10. Ask yourself two questions whenever you buy something: a) Do I really need it? b) Will I ever use it, and if so, when? If you say no to either of these questions, don't buy it. We can probably get by with a lot less than we think. During a time when I had more income, I found myself cluttering up my small place with a lot of unnecessary junk. It is said that a cluttered place can lead to a cluttered mind. Even with clothes, many women could probably attest to the fact that they don't even wear about 80% of their wardrobe most of the time.

11. Even if you're not working, contribute a small amount to a Super Fund e.g., \$50 a month or according to how much you can afford. If you start early, you will have a bit of a nest egg when you retire. The government also matches your contribution each year if you are a low income earner. Choose a “Balanced Fund” so you don't see your savings decrease too much, which can be a bit demoralising if you already have a low income.

12. Stay as healthy as possible by doing regular exercise and eating as healthy as you are able. This can minimise exorbitant doctor fees and hospital bills for major physical illnesses later in life. Medicare will cover certain costs, but not all.

13. Have a certain amount in your bank account as a reserve for emergencies or miscellaneous expenses that arise. I recently had

to spend \$230 to fix my washing machine that was acting funny last month. Having a reserve means you can still buy groceries during this time.

14. Nurture your spirituality and learn to trust in your higher power for your provision. God is well able to provide for our needs if we choose to turn to Him. He can guide us as to what action to take for ourselves.

During a time when I had more income, I found myself cluttering up my small place with a lot of unnecessary junk. It is said that a cluttered place can lead to a cluttered mind.

There is something to be said about living more simply in our modern age. Perhaps when it comes to the crunch, it's not really more “stuff” that makes us happier, but rather things that money can't buy, like meaningful friendships, contentment and peace of mind.

And a final note on the subject of money...

15. Try to cultivate a generous attitude. This may seem contradictory at first. You may ask, “How can I be generous when I may have so little?” But there are always ways we can give. For instance, every year try and give away any clothes, books or household items you no longer use (but are still in good condition). Or put some loose change in the collection bowl on Sunday. Maybe offer your time at a homeless shelter or a soup kitchen, if you are able. There are numerous ways to volunteer which you can find on the internet. Volunteering is also a great way to make new friends and network for jobsearching. When we give of ourselves or our resources (however measure), this is what truly “makes the world go around”. If we all did this, we could become a more benevolent and compassionate society. In time, we will reap the rewards in our own lives too.

It all begins with you and I.



PHOTO BY MICHAEL RIVERA

BACK ON TRACK HEALTH
Your Physical Health and Wellbeing

Contact Jade Ryall, program manager, B.O.T.H. (02) 9393 9009

The Art Behind Eating (A.B.E)



By Jane Miller

“Art Behind Eating” is a unique way of combining art with nutrition and... TABLEWARE MANUFACTURE?

Every day we are bombarded with the same old messages about what we should and shouldn't eat. There are so many conflicting messages that it's hard to know which ones are important for our particular health needs. But what if there was a way that we can send ourselves a message about what WE think we should and should not eat, and how much?

To answer this question, the people who access Flourish Australia's services at Seven Hills and Blacktown have been participating in a pilot project that I have put together as Community Art Coordinator along with Jade Ryall (Manager of the Back On Track Health program). Our aim is to look at food and eating with all five of our senses. We wanted to develop something that was fun and interactive, rather than just repeating the same boring message all the time.

For example, say you want to increase your intake of certain types of food, particularly vegetables, low GI carbohydrates and proteins. With the Art Behind Eating

group, you can take one of our plates and paint the types of food and the portion size you require on it in order to jog your memory. We use chip-resistant Corelle plates from the USA, so they aren't easy to break. Of course, while you can also buy these plates ready-made for about \$17, this would be yet another case of someone else telling you how you should eat. Jade and I want people to make these decisions for themselves.

A big part of this project is education. We start by looking at the colour, feel, smell, taste and even the sound of different types of food, but eventually the idea is for participants to become mindful of food types and portions in a new way. At the end of each session the whole group comes together to make a great, healthy lunch.

We want all participants to be able to create a lovely plate which they can take home with them and use it to portion out and serve colourful and healthy meals.

Jade and I hope that some more ABE groups will be held soon. It could be coming to a site near you, so keep your five senses alert! If you would like to know more, you can give us a call.

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Program Manager,
Back On Track Health
(BOTH)
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Jane Miller
Community Arts
Coordinator
(02) 9393 9008

BACK ON TRACK HEALTH Recommended health screening tests. Talk to your GP!

- Self-checking (skin, teeth, breasts)
- Skin exams
- Dental checkups
- Testicle checks
- Pap tests
- Pregnancy
- Blood pressure
- Blood tests
- Obesity tests
- Electrocardiogram (ECG)
- Diabetes
- Breast cancer
- Prostate cancer
- Bowel cancer
- Eye health
- Bone density
- STIs (if sexually active)

Below: A few YPOP participants enjoying archery



pathways into study and so on. We also provide social outings so that the people who access our services can have positive social experiences with other young people in a safe and supported environment. These outings might be bowling, the movies or even archery. It depends what the young people prefer to do. The Flourish Australia bi-annual Youth Camp has also been a big hit, too.

As a lot of the young people we work with have missed out on many milestones, such as school formals, we've been discussing is running a "formal" similar to what you would have at the end of school. I am also in the middle of organising a workshop that will give the young people the opportunity to do some team building and lifeskills activities alongside some service dogs and horses.

The Goal?

Most young people who access our service will complete their goals with 6 to 12 months, but there are a handful who have been in the program for longer than that. It's always great to see people move into independent living, full-time jobs or enrol in university. Sometimes, they may even decide to become community workers.

The Future?

YPOP will continue to operate as it has for the last three years, but the NDIS funding will allow us to have a bit more freedom in supporting more people than we currently do. Under the NDIS we will be able to offer support to anyone who would like to have Flourish Australia as one of their support providers. Our team is really looking forward to making a difference in more lives. We are told every day by families, young people and clinicians that we are such a unique service, and we wish we could provide our service to more young people.

As told to Grant J Everett

Why YPOP hits the target

By Jimmy Acosta, Manager of the Young People's Outreach Program (YPOP), South-Eastern Sydney

For three years now, YPOP Kogarah has been supporting young people aged between 16 and 25 who are living with mental health issues in the South-Eastern Sydney local health district. The only criteria is that they must be referred through the South-eastern Sydney local mental health community service. If somebody is outside of our geographical range, there are other programs in Western Sydney, the Nepean, Hawkesbury and the Hunter that are quite similar. They are known as Youth Community Living Support Services (YCLSS), and they share a lot of similarities.

What does YPOP do?

We go from Cronulla to Bondi and Hurstville to Maroubra to help the young people with their day to day goals. Our visits are either conducted in their homes or somewhere local where they feel safe and comfortable. Most of the young people we work with live at home with their families, but some have subsidised accommodation through different services. We usually operate Monday to Sunday from 10am, as most of the people who access our service have reported not being morning people!

When we first meet a young person, we allow them to identify exactly where they need support. We don't tell them, "You should do this, or you should do that." I can tell them that the overall goal for anybody who receives help from YPOP is to enable them to live a healthy and independent life, whatever that may mean for them personally. Depending on what their goals are, the nature of our program can look very different from one person to another. If they need something more specialised, something beyond our skill set, we will link them in with another service that can support them.

Our program can look so different from one person to the other depending on what their goals are.

Many people just need a bit of support for their social anxiety so they have the confidence to achieve their personal goals independently. For other people, it may mean having a real conversation for the first time in years, or to simply step outside of their house. We provide the opportunity to develop life skills such as cooking, budgeting, job preparation,

**Flourish Australia Y-POP
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Level 1, 15 Kensington Street
KOGARAH NSW 2217
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The Art of Recycling

Some people thought it was just junk destined for landfill, but then people from Goulburn and Queanbeyan got together and transformed it into ART!

Wall hangings, fridge magnets, mobiles, necklaces and a whole lot more, all made possible with just two ingredients: junk, and your imagination.

In Winter, a group of people who access Flourish Australia's Goulburn service travelled down to Queanbeyan to meet up with people from that service to learn and practice the Art of Recycling.

"I like making things, it's fun!" said one member of the group. And not just things, but *practical* things, like fridge magnets. Remember back in the Nineties when fridge magnets were considered so important that the government used to send them to us? Well, if we'd attended this workshop in Queanbeyan, we could have made our own!

"It's good to make friends," said another, and what better way to make friends than by taking some plastic packaging from a fast food place and making something beautiful out of it?

"Getting out of the house and taking part with other people brightens me up," said a third artist, especially when the idea is to make your own necklaces out of material other people wanted to throw away.

We took a picture of Rachel from Goulburn (who looks quite pleased with some of her creations from the day).



Rachel S

And why stop there? "Relaxing", "Peaceful", "Interesting", and "Fun" were some of the other comments.

It's all based on tradition, of course, as Marcel Duchamp would tell you. The Art of Recycling has had previous moments of glory in art history. The French word *objet trouve* (found object) refers to a movement in twentieth century art in which "art [is] created from undisguised ... objects or products that are not normally considered materials from which art is made because they already have a non-art function." But why stop at one function? Why can't a jar lid become a cameo fridge magnet?

In case you are wondering about the fridge magnets, Jane Miller, Flourish Australia's Community Arts Consultant explains: "You take the lid off a jar, paint a pretty picture inside it, then use one of those narrow peel-off magnets to magnetise it. And there you have it, a fridge magnet that actually looks good because YOU made it."



Mark B



Amy F



Grace F

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Liz S

flourish
AUSTRALIA

Community
Businesses



We
support
the NDIS

EMPLOYMENT & YOU...

Are you living with a mental health issue?

**Would you like to get back to work
but feel unsure about where to start?**

Flourish Australia Community Businesses support people living with a mental health issue to take part in meaningful employment.

Whilst providing employment support in areas of lawn maintenance, packing & business services we meet strict service standards to ensure real employment outcomes.

Employees of the community businesses have access to one-on-one support from our peer workers and the option to attend our onsite recovery groups that cover a range of vocational and life skills topics.

We also offer tertiary qualifications onsite, including:
Cert. 3 in Warehouse Operations and Cert. 3 in Horticulture.

When you feel you are ready to enter the open workforce, we are here to support you with the transition.

***Flourish Australia is a registered
National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) provider.***

OUR CURRENT JOBS AVAILABLE

Prestige Packing Harris Park:

Supported jobs in packing and light assembly.

Marrickville Business:

Supported jobs in packing and light assembly and scanning and document management services.

Flourish Maintenance St Marys:

Supported jobs in lawn mowing, grounds maintenance and professional cleaning services.

Flourish Maintenance Warwick Farm:

Supported jobs in lawn mowing, grounds maintenance and professional cleaning services.

To find out more or to APPLY: Phone: 02 9393 9000 Email: clare.evans@flourishaustralia.org.au

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