

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

panorama

Quarterly Issue #68 June 2018

Aboriginal
well-being
conference

Keeping
people out
of hospital
is **Resolve** in
ACTION

Constipation:
Foods for that
get up and go
feeling!

FAST ED!



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pets, and
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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.

Chair: [Prof Elizabeth More AM](#)
CEO: [Mark Orr](#)

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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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Aboriginal Well Being Conference at Tweed Heads

Innovative Approaches to Service Provision



Adelle Salter (Flourish Australia, Brumby House, Emu Plains) and Jade Ryall (Program Manager, Back On Track Health) are seen here straddling the border between Queensland and NSW. They were delegates at the 2018 National Aboriginal Wellbeing Conference at the border town of Tweed Heads NSW in late March. This event is Aboriginal owned and hosted. Check their web site <https://www.aboriginalwellbeingconference.com/2018> First, we give an overview of the conference and then Adelle will fill you in on details.

Recovery through reconnecting

By Warren Heggarty

Jade Ryall, who is a Wiradjuri woman, told Panorama that the two day training experience at the Aboriginal Well Being Conference was 'fantastic... the overall theme of the conference was around employment, and housing and other aspects of day to day living that are very much in line with CANSAS domains.' These are the 22 recovery conversation topics found in Panorama's ACTION supplement. 'There was a strong focus on young people, too.' She said.

'It was different to any other conference I have ever been to. It was not so much

about Professors giving academic talks, it was more about hearing from people who are actually working in the community. The sort of people who can tell you the answers to questions like "How DO you get in touch with Elders" and practical guidance like that.

'A man called Paul Callahan provided cultural training called "The Dreaming Tree." It wasn't just about what was culturally appropriate. It went deeper than that. I took away from it a sense of cultural responsiveness and a feeling of the importance of cultural preservation.'

'For example it talked about how a person might deal with social and emotional health problems by reconnecting with the community, walking on country, going fishing, having a yarn and so forth. These are all ways of healing. Paul himself experienced severe ongoing depression and it was reconnecting with his Aboriginal community that helped him on his recovery journey more than anything else.'

According to the conference web site, 99% of delegates stated that they improved their knowledge after attending the conference in 2018. For feedback and PowerPoints, contact the 2018 conference web site: <https://www.aboriginalwellbeingconference.com/2018>

Next year, the 2019 4th National Aboriginal Wellbeing Conference will be themed 'The future of our dreaming'. Expressions of interest will be opening in September 2018. More information is available at NAWC: <https://www.aboriginalwellbeingconference.com/> Or you can contact Flourish Australia's Jade Ryall on 02 9393 9009 for more information. She chairs Flourish Australia's "Supporting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Communities" Community of Practice on the first Friday of each month.

In September, we'll meet Naricah Smith, trainee Aboriginal social and emotional wellbeing officer at Moree.

Working side by side with aboriginal people

Story and Pics by Adelle Salter

My favourite parts of the conference included being around culture. That includes bringing cultures together and working side by side with the Aboriginal people.

It makes you feel included, a part of something bigger than yourself, to learn more about our Aboriginal Culture and to be welcomed into an environment as someone who does not identify as being Aboriginal.

I also learned how to best connect with young Aboriginal people and their families: trust and being yourself gains respect. Everyone's story is important and we all have one.

Paul Callahan is an amazing speaker who grasps your attention right away. He has everyone involved and working together as a part of his talk on the dreaming tree. I purchased his book because I was so interested in learning more about him.

Paul also spoke of his own story where he burnt out working in this type of field and lived with depression. Because my work is in the same field of social and emotional wellbeing, this helped me to feel as if it happens to more people than I realized. It showed me how important self-care is, and that it's ok to talk about it among ourselves and to listen to others. Sometimes you can see signs of burn out in others before they see notice it in themselves.

I saw other presenters including;

- Janine Cattanach Founder of The Cultural Consultancy Group. She spoke about Strong Connection, Strong Spirit, Strong Culture which is understanding the emotional development across a person's life span, the impact of trauma, and ways of healing from an Aboriginal perspective. She further covered Broken Spirit to Strong Spirit which talked

further about trauma symptoms.

- Mel Brown Director of Spirit Dreaming spoke about Family Group Conferencing – Empowering the Family. My understanding is that Aboriginal families are participating in decision making that affect them, though it appears that the Department of Families and Community Services still has a lot of power. She also spoke about maintaining your well-being around work related stress.

- Nyssa Murray, Project Manager, Lead My Learning, University of Sydney spoke about Educational Promotion Strategies for parents with young children. It was created through a partnership between child and family service and university researchers; Barnados Australia – South Coast NSW and an Australian Research Council Future Fellowship project. Their lead My Learning campaign rolled out to support parents in teaching them how to teach their kids in everyday tasks to help them grow; the importance of relationships between an educator, parents and children; and how supported playgroups facilitate innovative ways to connect parents with education.

- Marc Daley Facilitator – FGC gave us some useful tools for group facilitation/ Engaging Aboriginal Communities including making paper aeroplanes with an embarrassing story and a paper fire allowing each person to talk about what's written on their

piece of paper when they're ready. He was a great speaker who believed in working together both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people in our wider community. He also openly spoke about burning out twice before and how he made it through those times.

- Sunrise Aboriginal Health Corporation – Ngukurr, Northern Territory was an amazing, remote service. It had been training two local women conference attendees as health workers who will continue the work once they leave. Absolutely fantastic presentation.

- Sarah Decrea spoke about New Way? Let us Reclaim 'Old Way' which looked at what it looks like growing up traditionally with secure attachment, love and wellbeing, growing up healthy and safe. We went over the effects of invasion on Aboriginal and Torres Strait families and the loss of culture and connection to family. Healthy spirit: Strong mind.

The most important message from all this which I'd like to share is; "Be who you are, understand that we all come from different cultures and we are better when we are working together. Take the time to get to know someone. If that means taking off your shoes and sitting under a tree; connection is what is important and what makes the world go around."

Below: Double selfie! Jade (left) and Adelle (Right)





Resolve Program Launch

“A wonderful example of the innovation we can come up with if we focus on solutions.”

Prof Elizabeth Moore AM, Chair, Flourish Australia

Led by people with lived experience of mental health issues, and financed by private investors, the Resolve Program has a mission:

to reduce the amount of time people spend in hospital while saving money for the taxpayer.

The launch of the Resolve Program was held on 19 March 2018 at Flourish Australia's Figtree Conference Centre, Sydney Olympic Park. The Hon Tanya Davies, MP, NSW Minister for Mental Health, Minister for Women and Minister for Ageing, conducted the launch, hosted by our new CEO Mark Orr. There was a welcome to country by Uncle Greg Simms and an acknowledgement of people with lived experience by Fay Jackson.

The program is partnership between Flourish Australia, Social Ventures Australia and the NSW Government. We are delivering it from two sites in Orange and Cranebrook. There are a total of nine peer workers across both sites, pictured above with manager Ash Kumar. Not pictured is Program Manager Christine Miniawy (see the December 2017 issue of Panorama).

The project is one of the legacies of former Flourish Australia Chief Executive

Above: Resolve program workers, Left to Right, Ruth Getachew Peer Worker (Cranebrook) Ben Wilshire PW (Orange) Eric Salomon Shane Morrow PW (Cranebrook) Rishani Laffy, Jolyon Briggs, Asheeta Kumar, manager (Cranebrook) Gavin Kelly PW (Cranebrook) Debra Stein PW (Orange) Rebekah Porter (Orange), Bonnie Wallace PW (Orange) Timothy Morandini PW (Cranebrook) Samuel Sutton PW (Orange)

Officer, Pam Rutledge who was at the launch. Also present was General Manager, Operations Andrew O'Brien who worked with Social Ventures Australia from the early stages of the 'brave' project.

The Chair of Flourish Australia, Professor Elizabeth Moore AM said that the success of the program was the result of 'very very strong partnership' and positive collaboration between government, non-government organisations and investors. Minister Tanya Davies echoed this by emphasising

that collaboration and communication are 'so, so critically important.'

'This is the time'

Elizabeth Moore mentioned Steven Pinker's book 'Enlightenment Now' which points out that despite the shortcomings of the world we live in, this is nevertheless the best time to be alive. Pinker puts this down largely to the fact that we employ reason to solve many problems. Elizabeth said that the Resolve project is a 'terrific example of how if we use our nous' we can overcome our

Resolve

For Everyone's Mental Wellbeing

‘... There is something we can do to be proactive, so that people are not just waiting for their next hospital admission’

-Christine Miniawy, Manager, Resolve Program in Panorama #66, December 2017

problems. It is ‘a wonderful example of the innovation we can come up with if we focus on solutions.’

‘Like a blue whale’

Elyse Sainty, Director, Impact Investment at Social Ventures Australia said that mental health is something that resonated very much with private investors so that they very much wanted to get on board with the project. Nevertheless, she described social impact ventures as being like blue whales because ‘they are rare, they are big, and they have a long gestation period.’ She said that you also need to be brave as less than ten such projects exist in Australia at the moment.

Positive outcomes

Minister Tanya Davies reminded us that Resolve is ‘Australia’s first social impact

investment for mental health... I do hope that it will not be the only one.’ Formal feedback from the people who access the service show that it is meeting their needs. Approximately 80 people have participated so far. The important focus, she said, was not on outputs, but on outcomes – the positive result that the program has for the person, enabling them to have the best possible life in the environment of their choosing. ‘Hospital admissions can dislocate people’ from their roles in life, the Minister said, ‘with long term repercussions.’ Resolve aims at keeping people out of hospital.

Social impact investment

Flourish Australia’s move into social impact investment comes as charities face a greater need to ‘diversify their income streams.’ According to David Crosbie, Chief Executive of the Community Council for Australia (CCA), the growing investment pool looking for impact investing opportunities means the time is ripe for charities eager to

‘Social impact ventures [are like] blue whales: ‘they are rare, they are big, and they have a long gestation period.’

Elyse Sainty, Social Ventures Australia

increase their capacity.

David Crosbie says there is an enormous –but mostly unrealised –potential for growth in the investment pool. ‘There are literally trillions of dollars held in superannuation and other funds looking for investments,’ he said in an article in Pro Bono magazine. ‘It is estimated that the impact investment market in Australia will be well over \$35 billion within the next five years. This is at least double how much money is donated to charities every year.’ (Crosbie, 2018)

References

Crosbie, D. (2018, March 1). Diversifying income: but not alone. Pro Bono.

Below: At the Resolve Program launch L-R Andrew O’Brien, General Manager Operations; Michelle Maxwell, Acting Director Strategic Policy Unit, Health System Planning & Investment, NSW Ministry of Health; Jason Crisp, Director Mental Health and Alcohol & Drugs, Western NSW Local Health District; Elyse Sainty, Social Ventures Australia; Prof Elizabeth Moore AM, Chair; Hon Tanya Davies MP, Minister; Mark Orr, CEO; Uncle Greg Simms; Pamela Rutledge, CEO Emeritus; Bethany Pade, Manager Community & Partnerships, Mental Health, Nepean Blue Mountains Local Health District.





Keeping people out of hospital is Resolve in Action

by Warren Heggarty

Panorama visited the Resolve centre at Cranebrook, NSW to learn how this Flourish Australia social investment venture helps keep people out of hospital while saving the taxpayer money and turning a profit for investors.

‘It’s a nice, safe place to be’ says Maria from the kitchen counter, to the agreement of everyone round the dining table. ‘You get respect here’ she adds.

Sometimes, in hospital, it can feel as though you are not getting that respect. The obvious distinction between patients and nurses which you find in a hospital is not replicated here. Some of the people are staff and some are people accessing the Resolve program, but all of them are working towards the same goal.

It is an ordinary suburban house with an extraordinary purpose: to foster the social and emotional well being of people who have recently spent a lot of time in hospital recently.

By a ‘lot of time’ we mean between 40 and 270 days in the previous calendar year. This is the criterion set by the New South Wales Ministry of Health which manages the waiting list for the program. Cranebrook participants are referred from the Nepean Blue

Mountains Local Health District.

The idea is to enable people to continue their recovery journey as far as possible outside of hospital.

To achieve this aim, Resolve employs a team of people, predominantly peer workers, to walk alongside the participants in that journey.

Eric, Mark, Petrina, Tim and Luke are in the dining room. Maria and Ash are nearby in the kitchen. Rishani is stuck in the office doing ‘paperwork.’ The sound of Greig’s Piano Concerto in A minor is coming from a computer.

Luke, sitting at the dining table waiting for the afternoon’s scrabble match to begin, says that lately he has developed a liking for classical music.

‘I play stringed instruments. Not violin, but guitar, bass; and piano too...’ he says.

‘He has some very nice guitars’ says Tim

‘I wanted to be in a band’ Luke continues, ‘but it hasn’t worked out yet. I love working on projects, I love working with people’

‘We could start our own band up’ says Ash.

Petrina, it turns out plays drums and one by one others in the room admit that they too are musical!

Above: Resolve, Cranebrook is set in an ordinary house in an ordinary suburban neighbourhood. PHOTO WARREN HEGGARTY

Music has a lot of practical uses, not just for entertainment and socialising, but even for meditation. Petrina and Maria both say that they like meditating to music. Everyone agrees that it can relax you and distract you from problems. Especially nature sounds. Then there is guided meditation where you have a person’s voice helping you to ‘let go’ of thoughts.

From the point of view of a patient, Hospitalisation for mental health issues can be extremely distressing, especially if it is involuntary. ‘Hospital can feel like being in Prison’ Maria says.

‘I feel more comfortable here’ says Luke in an exchange with Maria and the others, ‘I feel more safe.’ ‘You don’t have to deal with the problems of all the other patients,’ ‘It’s not as noisy,’ ‘It’s not as crowded’ ‘It’s more intimate.’

The general consensus is that Resolve beats hospital.

From the point of view of the taxpayer, Hospital is extremely expensive. Given that hospital is sometimes not even the ideal environment for dealing with mental health issues, there must be a



Above: 'We could really form our own band!' Some of the people living, working and visiting at Resolve, Cranebrook. From left to right, Maria, Tim, Petrina, Rishani, Luke, Mark, Eric and Ash. PHOTO WARREN HEGGARTY

better way. Resolve aims at the middle ground where people who may need more intensive support than is generally available in the community are able to avoid hospital.

As explained in our previous articles on Resolve, the success of this program is expected to yield millions of dollars of savings to the taxpayer over the next seven years. The social impact investment method used to fund this venture means that the people who have provided the funds will eventually receive part of that taxpayer saving in the form of a profit.

The Cranebrook Resolve service is a four bedroom house. It is located about three kilometres North of the major centre of Penrith in area at the base of the Blue Mountains that has numerous lakes.

Each of the bedrooms has an ensuite WC. It certainly doesn't look like a hospital environment (see picture opposite), except perhaps for the lockable cabinet for medications that each room has. There is a sitting room and bathroom upstairs, a lounge room downstairs and small office.

As a program, Resolve has three main components; Warmline which is a non crisis telephone line, outreach services

and the residential component. On the day Panorama visited, there were two residents with another two expected to move in within a day. Outreach services involve peer workers traveling to the homes of participants, assisting them with day to day activities, sometimes bringing them into the Cranebrook house for group activities.

Maria already has some long term plans.

'I would like to be a chaplain' she says, 'in mental health. I know there are a few hurdles to get over on the way there, but I want to start studying.'

It would be interesting to see how participants do fare in the future. Maybe the will get a band together as Ash suggested!



57 Years in Hospital Gwen Huelin reveals the answer to the unknown gravestone.

I read the report of the Gladesville Hospital cemetery with interest (see Panorama #67 March 2018). My sister was a patient in Gladesville and they did a lot for her there, finally getting her into a unit in the community where

she lived with other former patients for 30 years. She is now in an aged care hostel run by Uniting Care, and is very happy there. She is now 82.

Several years ago I took many pictures of the hospital including the crosses and plaques in the cemetery. The second plaque (which was missing when Panorama visited to photograph the site) is that of a Keith Mackenzie who was a patient at Gladesville for many years. My mother and sister knew him quite well. The Plaque reads :

KEITH RAMSAY MacKENZIE
DIED 11.1.93
AGED 89 YEARS
A PATIENT AT GLADESVILLE HOSPITAL
57 YEARS.
"A LEARNED AND RESPECTED
GENTLEMAN"

A taste of harmony

Fast Ed at Figtree "Great food, made easy!"

By Grant J Everett

"Fast Ed" Halmagyi, one of Australia's best-loved TV chefs and food authors, dropped into Flourish Australia's Figtree Conference Centre on the 5th of June to cook up a storm. He has cooked for some of the biggest celebrities on the planet, and now he was going to whip up something special for our conference centre assistants: a banquet of traditional dishes from his ancestral homeland of Hungary. Those of us who knew about Fast Ed's upcoming visit in advance had to keep things under wraps for several months, which wasn't always easy! On top of serving an awesome feast, Fast Ed was happy to share some of the tips that have helped him become one of the most successful chefs in Australia. It isn't every day that you get expert-level advice just handed to you, is it?

Fast Ed's style is all about showing the average home cook how to create restaurant-style cuisine in their own kitchen. He has a passion for encouraging people to be more adventurous with their recipes, and to have a passion for flavour. It's in Ed's passion for bakery that you'll find his philosophy of food: cookery is a process of transformation where simple yet perfect flavours become unforgettable meals.

Fast Ed's visit was actually a prize that

Figtree had won in a competition called "A Taste of Harmony", an initiative that has been encouraging workplaces across the country to celebrate cultural diversity and form closer bonds through the medium of sharing food. We are no strangers to inclusion: one of the key precepts of Flourish Australia is promoting diversity in the workplace in all its forms. Ed also serves as the Ambassador of A Taste of Harmony, so he's enthusiastic about their work.

"Food brings people together and gives us a chance to open up and connect," Ed commented. "As an ambassador for A Taste of Harmony, which is about sitting down with workmates to share a meal and talk about our cultural backgrounds, I've learnt that everyone has a story."

"This was a tremendous morale boost for everyone involved with the Figtree Conference Centre," said Manager Sue O'Rourke. "Figtree Conference Centre is an amazing venue for meetings and events. But our social purpose is to provide employment and training to people with lived experience of mental health issues, people who might struggle to get a foothold in the open employment market. You can't put a value on the significance of someone as recognised and respected as Fast Ed coming in and teaching us so much."

Like all of the conference centre assistants, Liza Henry felt inspired.

"It was such a buzz having Ed in our own kitchen and showing us his tricks," Liz said. "He was so encouraging and interested in what we do, not just on the catering front but also the social diversity and inclusion front, which is what we're all about. We learnt so much in the time that Ed was here and have all gained so much from the experience."

And it seemed that Ed got a lot out of the event, too.

"I was really humbled to spend time with staff at the Figtree Conference Centre and hear some of the inspiring stories about the important work they do. What a passionate group of people!"

Ed's visit also happened to fall on Figtree Conference Centre's 5th birthday, so being able to celebrate how this business has grown and thrived at the same time was a real bonus.

Fast Ed, from all of us at Flourish Australia and the Figtree Conference Centre, thank you so much for coming out to share your passion for food with us. We found your visit truly inspiring, and were excited to have an opportunity for autographs and celebrity snaps! Thanks Fast Ed for your tips, tricks and Hungarian banquet, and a huge thank you to A Taste of Harmony for making such a great experience possible.

'mise en place pour Fast Ed!'

Panorama magazine spoke to LINDA EVERETT, one of Figtree's Conference Centre Assistants, about how she found Fast Ed's visit.

PANORAMA: Hey Linda. Just wanted to ask you about when Fast Ed came to cook for you guys at Figtree. What did Fast Ed do on the day, exactly?

LINDA: He came to Figtree to cook a lunch for us, from his homeland in Hungary. He showed us how to cook it, and he also asked us questions about hospitality, and shared some of his wisdom about cooking. We could even take home a few doggy bags of what he cooked!

And I understand that you were able to answer a few of Fast Ed's own questions. Can you tell us about that?

He asked what is the special French name for having everything ready, and I said "mise en place", and he asked me what it translated to, and I said "everything in its place".

And why was Ed at Figtree?

Figtree won a competition through Harmony Day competition called "A Taste of Harmony" to have Fast Ed visit our kitchen.

And I understand Ed pulled up in his own van and carried his own equipment and ingredients in.

He did. Flourish Australia provided a photographer, a video camera operator

to record it.

And what was Ed like? Was he down to earth, was he friendly?

It was quite surreal. He was charismatic and caught our attention easily, and it was really awesome having him there. Ed was a real character. He was positive, enthusiastic, friendly, down-to-earth and professional.

Did he tell any stories that stayed with you?

He told us how he writes books, and he's written about eight books so far, and that was pretty cool.

You've always been a fan of Fast Ed, haven't you?

I have! Fast Ed was in my Certificate III TAFE course as a part of the theory work. He was the one who ran the theory work on the computer when we went online to do our theory work.

So in a way, Fast Ed was one of your TAFE teachers...

Yes, in a way...

Do you think all the Figtree workers had a good time when Ed came in?

Oh, definitely. People got one-on-one photos with him, we took lots of pictures. And afterwards he sent us a letter saying "to all the staff at Figtree, cook with passion and eat with love – Fast Ed".

About Fast Ed

While Fast Ed is probably best known for teaching Australians about achievable, time-conscious, family-friendly cooking on the Logie-winning *Better Homes And Gardens*, he has also hosted the *Discover Tasmania* travel show for the last three years, is the star of his own afternoon cooking show called *Fast Ed's Fast Food*, and has appeared on numerous other television shows. He's no stranger to the airways, either, regularly guest-starring on ABC Radio 702 and *Better Homes And Gardens* Radio.

Fast Ed is a prolific food author, sharing his best tips and tricks for creating great meals in his best-selling books, his most recent one being *Kitchen 52: Delicious Reasons to Cook Every Week of the Year*. They are all available in book stores and online. Fast Ed also writes an entertaining, easy-to-read weekly syndicated column for the News Local network of newspapers, and contributes to a variety of other magazines and newspapers both in Australia and beyond.

His motto is simple: "When you do less, the ingredients can do more!"

Beginning his culinary career at 15 as a kitchenhand while he was still at school, then becoming an assistant chef, over the following twenty years, Ed has had experience cooking in some of the world's best restaurants. As a chef and pastry chef, Ed's resume includes the iconic Rockpool and Bennelong in Sydney. His favourite job was working at the Wickaninnish Inn in Tofino, Canada.

Ed has also found the time to do a Bachelor of Arts/Law, started a Bachelor of Business degree, and even qualified as a beekeeper. Ed is a successful commercial photographer, running a food and product media business in Sydney called Roughcut Studio, and continues to play competitively as a member of the Pittwater Phantoms AFL team.

Sources:

"Figtree Conference Centre celebrates 5 years", June 6, 2018, <https://getsydney.com.au/2018/06/06/figtree-conference-centre-celebrates-5-years/>





Kylie and Shane's Long Distance Love Story

By Grant J Everett

My wife Linda and I have known Kylie (often known as Smiley Kylie to her friends) for six years. In that time she has come leaps and bounds, learning all kinds of practical skills, building her social network and moving one goal at a time towards the life she wants. She was a friend we saw several times every week, and she came to mean a lot to our entire circle.

Even though we live in the era of eHarmony, speed dating and other exotic ways to connect, Kylie met her husband Shane in one of the time-honoured old-fashioned ways: they were introduced by friends. They clicked instantly, and only got closer over time. Soon, they were finishing their long phone conversations with "I love you". But while Kylie and Shane were growing closer in many ways, they weren't getting any closer in a geographical sense: Kylie lived in Western Sydney and Shane was located in a little town in rural Victoria. Relationships can be

hard when you are separated by 900 kilometres and a state line, true, but they found ways to make it work. They enjoyed taking turns visiting each other for a while, but having to say goodbye for months at a time would be painful for anybody. For things to go to the next level, Kylie and Shane both knew that one of them would have to leave everything behind and close the distance for good. The time to make this decision came when Shane got down on one knee and proposed.

After long discussions, it was decided that Kylie would move down to Shane's hometown, a tiny green gem tucked away in rural Victoria called Timboon. Primarily a dairy farming area, Timboon is known for its whiskey distillery, gourmet ice creamery and cheesery. It's the sort of place where nobody is a stranger, where you're on a first-name basis with everyone at the supermarket. Shane grew up on his family's dairy farm and has been man of the house since his father passed away. He has an encyclopaedic knowledge of cows and dairy farming in general, and he didn't

even pause when I asked him how much milk you can get out of a cow (anywhere from 15 to 35 litres per milking). As you'd expect from born-and-bred salt-of-the-earth types, Shane and the other locals get up so early that they make the dawn look lazy. Doesn't sound much like Sydney, does it?

While we were initially worried that Kylie might run the risk of getting isolated, we had no reason to be concerned. In fact, the exact opposite happened! As the love of her life knew everybody in town, the entire Timboon community immediately welcomed Kylie into the fold. If she was good enough for Shane, she was good enough for them. It's worth noting that while it's common for kids who grow up in rural areas to head for the big smoke once they're ready to strike out on their own, having a city girl move to a remote area is much rarer, so I'm sure Timboon is always happy to take in some new blood. A great example of Kylie's popularity was how half of the local shops closed down on Kylie's wedding day so their owners could attend! Kylie doesn't just have a new address: she has a new family.

Before moving south, Kylie had built a considerable support network of friends and support people in New South Wales, and she's stayed in regular contact with some of them. My wife Linda, in particular, has been speaking to Kylie on the phone every week. The two of them were always close, but it was still a surprise when Kylie asked Linda to be her matron of honour on the big day. Linda was proud to accept. A handful of other friends from New South Wales were able to make it, too, including Chaplain Sue, her husband Doug and their daughter Rebecca, among others. Sue, in particular, had gone above and beyond in supporting Kylie over the years, playing a big role in building Kylie's living skills and providing emotional support. Sue also helped Kylie to travel down to Timboon during the time Kylie and Shane were still dating.

Kylie and Shane's wedding ceremony was held in a beautiful outdoor chapel nestled deep in the Timboon bush towards the end of summer. Thankfully, the weather on the day was perfect. Just like the bride and groom, the reception was down-to-earth: rather than relying on fancy canapes and exotic main courses, there was an assortment of the best locally-made cheeses and

a perfectly prepared lunch of roast chicken, lamb, and pork with all the trimmings. Sue had used her baking skills to make a two-tier wedding cake decorated with fondant hearts and flowers, one layer a moist chocolate mudcake and the other a fruitcake. Kylie was sure to save a slice for her first wedding anniversary, as is tradition. It was an honour to be there for Kylie and Shane on their big day, and seeing somebody attain their dreams is a wonderful thing to witness.

Final thought

Recovery is about more than wellness: it means building the life you want. There is no such thing as a “standard” recovery, no set template. A major part of recovery is figuring out what it actually means to you, as hitting a target is always easier if you can see it. Simply saying you want to recover isn’t enough: you need to be able to define it.



The National Folk Festival

Exhibition Park in Canberra

by Kathleen Russell

Janelle and Kate enjoyed a lovely day out at The National Folk Festival held at Exhibition Park Canberra over the Easter long weekend. As the name suggests the festival celebrates all that is Folk. Janelle and Kate spent the day walking through imaginative art displays and looking through the countless stalls for the perfect purchase.

There was music on every corner included buskers young and not so young, talented solo guitarists, drumming workshops, banjo’s and fiddles to get the toes tapping and so much more.

The weather was perfect as large crowds swarmed through the gates ready to join in the fun. For food lovers there was an assortment of Food trucks of every description serving delicious morsels to hungry festival goers. Circus performers presenting amazing feats wowed the masses.

Children’s performers had the kids and adults alike in stitches. Janelle bagged herself a bargain at the vintage clothing store and pick up a lovely winter scarf. Janelle and Kate enjoyed a delicious vegan ice-cream and enjoyed walking through the community art displays.

When asked what she enjoyed the most Janelle states that she loved the Folk dancing. The pair watched The Dividing Range Dancers in their beautifully designed outfits perform colonial Victorian and Tasmanian Dance’s such as Strip the Willow.

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What is Open Dialogue

and how can it help you?

by Grant J Everett

We each see the world through a unique lens. The language we use, and the thoughts we associate with that language, is something that continues to shape our lens for our entire lives. When you discuss the Open Dialogue approach to recovery, the first thing you need to know is that it goes far beyond the old “talking with a therapist” routine so many of us are used to. It’s an entirely different path to wellness, and many experts consider it to be the future of mental health recovery. FLICK GREY, for instance, has travelled the world in order to research the potential of Open Dialogue (see story on her in March Panorama).

What is Open Dialogue?

When somebody in crisis makes contact with an Open Dialogue service, one of the first things they’ll be asked to do is put together a list of people they know who might want to contribute to an Open Dialogue conversation. This could include friends, family, care providers, workmates, neighbours, and whoever else might have a useful perspective on your situation. Your entire network is then invited to participate in a series of meetings in a space of respect and validation for all voices (something that’s technically known as “polyphony”).

The emphasis in Open Dialogue is on communicating, rather than directly promoting change. The basic idea behind this process is to allow the members of your network to pool their psychological resources to deal with the problem as a team. By generating a shared understanding, the meaning and nature of a person’s symptoms can be explored by the network. This process - rather than the eventual content - is the most important part. But the conversation is meant to be organic and natural, rather than planned in detail. In some circumstances, the clinicians don’t necessarily need to talk at all. They do need to be mindful of what is being said, both verbally and non-verbally, and to keep track of everything that’s being voiced by the group. The responsibility isn’t solely on the doctor’s shoulders, as the whole network shares this burden equally. Ideally, the entire group should come to the realisation that your situation can be endured.

In Open Dialogue, every crisis is assumed to be unique. There’s no one-size-fits-all solution on offer. Quick decisions are to be avoided, as gaining a deep understanding is a gradual, organic process. It’s possible that there won’t be any important decisions made for the first two or three meetings, even when the distress is severe. This doesn’t mean that medication and hospital admissions

are taken off the table entirely, but some effort needs to be made in gaining an understanding by using clear language.

Transparency

A key concept in Open Dialogue is TRANSPARENCY. The person in crisis will be kept in the loop at all times, and no decisions are to be made about their treatment unless they are present. This fosters a true “human-human” relationship rather than the old “doctor-patient” dynamic. This principle of speaking about the network only while they are all present can have a huge impact on boosting trust levels. This can be clearly expressed by one of the most popular mottos of the peer movement: “Nothing about us without us!”

Providing a timely response when somebody hits a crisis is important, too, and being able to offer flexibility in how and when the network meets is paramount. This might mean that the network may need to meet via Skype if they are geographically separated, or at a person’s home if they are unable to meet elsewhere for whatever reason. Early on, meetings may be very frequent. This can create a sense of safety. Over time, the network will learn how to express experiences as it builds up its inherent resources. With time, the crisis can become an opportunity for positive change: a chance to retell

stories, reshape identities, and rebuild the relationships that tie the self to the world it inhabits.

There should be a true attempt at consistency with clinicians, too. The same Open Dialogue practitioners you start with are meant to remain involved for the entire span. Being passed back and forth between doctors can be very disruptive and will only serve to slow progress. Depending on the level of distress being experienced, additional help may need to be brought in (if it is merited).

The “clinical” part of an Open Dialogue team will listen to what is said and encourage the flow, but the clinical staff should resist making interpretations and allow the network to simply talk. Everyone who speaks needs to be acknowledged as having value, what they say needs to be accepted, and the people taking part in the conversation need to see that their words are being taken on board. Open Dialogue practitioners will support networks to gradually develop an understanding of the person at the centre of it all, rather than reacting prematurely to contain the crisis. It’s hoped that the network’s collective wisdom will take shape through dialogue. In practice, this often results in people in crisis being able to remain in the community rather than at a hospital, and the use of psychotropic medication tends to be more conservative and carefully considered.

Peer-Supported Open Dialogue

Peer workers weren’t originally involved in the creation of Open Dialogue. However, many of the people who helped to develop it since the 1980s recognised the value of peer workers and have respected their power in supporting people in distress, and over time the international peer movement has embraced Open Dialogue in return. This hybrid, known as Peer-Supported Open Dialogue (PSOD), is a new and exciting offshoot. With time, it’s hoped that this combination will create something even greater than the sum of its parts. As the name spells out, Peer-Supported Open Dialogue offers Open Dialogue with support from peer workers. Some Open Dialogue practitioners are both prominent members of the international peer movement as well as trained therapists.

Open Dialogue was developed in Finland in the 1980s, and at the beginning it basically meant getting a person’s family and extended social network involved in their care. It was designed with acute mental health issues in mind, particularly psychosis. It’s undergone many changes over the years and its definition has become far more complicated, as it has been in a constant state of adjustment since it went global. Open Dialogue has spread across much of Scandinavia and Europe, including Denmark, Sweden, Germany, Poland, Italy and the UK. It’s even hopped the pond to the USA in the form of New York City’s Parachute Project, which was founded on Open Dialogue principles and is run by peer workers.

The promise of Open Dialogue

According to its advocates, hands-on research shows that Open Dialogue is superior to the normal treatments used to deal with acute mental health issues. In the article “Open Dialogue: A New Approach to Mental Healthcare” by Dr Tom Stockmann in Psychology Today, July 12, 2015, Dr Stockman encountered some figures that were very encouraging for open dialog proponents. After using Open Dialogue therapy for 5 years between 1992 and 1997, 81% of participants reported having no ‘psychotic symptoms’ and were able to return to full employment, and only 35% of participants needed to use antipsychotic drugs. Similar results emerged from a clinical trial in Tornio, Finland between 2003 and 2005. In the UK, psychiatrists expect only 20% of people who are diagnosed with ‘psychosis’ to be symptom-free after five years, with close to 100% of people with receiving antipsychotic medication. The link to Dr Stockmann’s paper is at the end of this article.

The construction of psychosis

Due to its inherently medical structure, psychiatry means reducing the symptoms of mental health issues to something clinical, something wrong that needs to be fixed. Psychiatrists don’t seek the meaning behind our symptoms, and simply seek to eliminate them. Being classed as “sick” can be demoralising, and make us feel as though we are nothing but an illness to

treat. This only makes people feel more alienated and distressed.

Some people consider that the experiences which doctors label ‘psychotic’ aren’t necessarily the symptom of an illness, but a way that people survive trauma. A “sane reaction to insane circumstances”, so to speak. So does this mean that psychosis is a natural human survival technique? Well, the sort of experiences called ‘psychotic’ are far more common than most people would imagine. Studies of young people reveal that over 25% have had such an experience. How can experiences so prevalent be simply dismissed as abnormalities?

Rethinking psychosis

With Open Dialogue, the aim is to use language to define how we feel so that our social network can share our understanding. If somebody understands what you’re talking about, then it will be a lot easier for them to discuss (and help with) your stressors and struggles. However, our emotional traumas can be beyond verbal description. It may be impossible to put strong feelings into clear words right now, and that means that not only will we have difficulty understanding ourselves, but it will be even harder to be understood by others. Being incomprehensible is a common symptom of mental health issues, and it tends to be something that is very obvious if you talk to somebody for five minutes. On the other hand, being able to adequately describe the emotions you are feeling is the first step in taking back control from confusion and distress, and it will make your feelings more manageable as a result.

Tolerating uncertainty

Open Dialogue therapists have decided to free themselves from a futile search for truth and embraced uncertainty. Using “one-size-fits-all” techniques are old hat, and have made way for a more collaborative conversation. This idea has been transferred to Open Dialogue. There is no seeking after a particular truth, merely an attempt to hear multiple voices, each with its own truth. Healing occurs over time as the speaker is heard and understood.

Sources:
opendialogue.org.au, opendialogue.org.au/principles/,
opendialogue.org.au/about/
Dr Tom Stockmann, 12th of July 2015
www.psychologytoday.com/blog/hide-and-seek/201507/open-dialogue-new-approach-mental-healthcare



Tricia Hooi-Crispe spoke to Warren Heggarty about how music and volunteering helps her recovery

Tricia brings joy to elderly people through Music

Did you know that a recent survey found that 40% of nursing home residents have not had a single visitor in the past year. That is why volunteers like Tricia are so important.

Tricia has known hardship of her own and she finds that in helping others she helps herself.

She uses her piano skills to keep residents of a Berala nursing home entertained every Thursday.

Tricia was recently presented an award by IRT Group which runs the nursing home. The award recognises the important role that volunteer workers

play in aged care facilities. IRT has about 800 volunteers all up. Tricia won IRT volunteer of the year for the Sydney Metropolitan area.

Some old people who speak English as a second language may lose the ability to speak it if they experience dementia. This is why it is important that multilingual volunteers like Tricia come visiting each week. It really brightens their day!

Many languages

Tricia can converse with the residents in Cantonese, to keep them culturally connected and help them feel less lonely. She also speaks Malay and Mandarin though her German is a little rusty!

Tricia started out helping with sing-alongs in 2016 but nowadays runs Tricia's Music Appreciation Activity at Berala on the Park.

'I like volunteering because the residents are so appreciative especially in the high care facility. I know that at least I have given them joy. They clap and wave their hands and have so much joy. That's why I keep going.'

'We sing old popular songs like ones by

Frank Sinatra, plus songs like Moon River and even Walzing Matilda! I do requests as well. I play them all without music, but I bring my Mum along and when I forget things she will hum a few bars to remind me!'

Many instruments

Tricia is a classically trained pianist who can play contemporary and old time music.

'I also play Clarinet, Saxophone and Flute,' says Tricia, 'however, unfortunately the medication I am on interferes with my embouchure so that I find it hard to play these instruments as well as I did before, but I still want to keep on playing.'

Tricia is highly qualified at music, having attained Fellowship Level with Piano, Bachelor of Music in Clarinet, Licentiate level in Saxophone and Grade 6 in Flute.

'I started learning piano at seven and I really hated it. I wanted to go and ride my bike. Later, my brother had some success with music and that spurred me on to take it up again when I was eight!'

Tricia likes Beethoven, Chopin and Mozart. She plays Beethoven piano sonatas (like 'Waldstein,' 'Pastoral' and 'Moonlight') and has also played Mozart's famous Clarinet concerto. As recently as 2013 she played at a United Nations Buddhist Celebration held at Sydney Town Hall.

Working in the bush

After Graduating from the Sydney Conservatorium of Music in 1995, Tricia went to work in the bush at Charles Sturt University.

'I took up saxophone and Flute while I was working in the bush, in Forbes, Parkes and Grenfell. I had a lot of spare time.'

Several years ago, after teaching music at a private school for 13 years, Tricia became very unwell and felt she could not continue in that role.

She was facing great difficulties in her life at the time and was in and out of hospital. 'It was really terrible. I was housebound, unable to go out of the house for four months at one stage. We all have dark places' she says, 'and it takes time to get out of them.'

'I was completely isolated. I felt totally, totally broken' she says. 'I had a heavy workload as course coordinator, teaching, being the piano accompanist for students, organising concert programs.'

Learning about recovery

'Fortunately I have learned a lot about recovery in the past few years.'

'I still learn new pieces. I would like to go back to playing on stage in an ensemble. One day I would like to go back to teaching if possible.'

One of the things Tricia says is important for her recovery is the spiritual side.

'I helped out at the Buddhist Temple, with cooking, embroidery, music, washing up and teaching at Saturday School, teaching people how to sing Temple songs.'

'I have also attended Bible Study for four years with my friends.'

In 2015, for Mental Health Month, Tricia exhibited a painting at the fifth Annual Recovery in Art Exhibition held at The Muse, Sydney TAFE, Ultimo. It was attended by NSW Governor David Hurley and NSW Mental Health Commissioner John Feneley. Tricia even gave an impromptu piano performance to entertain the audience.

Working again

'I heard about Flourish Australia by word of mouth. A friend recommended I contact Clare Evans who coordinates employment service programs. Currently I am working part time At Flourish Australia head office doing administration work.

'Plus since 2017 I have been doing admin work at the National Breast Cancer Foundation. I really enjoy working. People really look after me! I would like to increase my skills and my work load.

'One of my favourite classical works is Beethoven's symphony number five. You know the one, da-da-da daaa! The sound of fate knocking on the door. When I was very unwell it used to make me feel bad, but now that I am on the recovery road I have started to like it again!'

Volunteering in Aged Care

The main reason for volunteering in a nursing home, aged care facility or retirement home is that you really will make a difference to people's lives.

In other words, it is meaningful. A lot of volunteers say that the best thing is not so much the activities, but having the chance to sit down and talk to people (in whatever languages you speak!), people who often have no other visitors! They really look forward to your visits.

Some other reasons cited by volunteers include:

- It is a stepping stone to a future career: volunteering is a great way to get real life industry experience.
- It puts your own problems into perspective.
- Some people are spooked by the idea of death. In a nursing home, it won't seem so scary after a while, but rather a natural and expected passage.
- If you are feeling lonely, a nursing home is like a small town. It

won't be long before everyone is happy to see you and greets you by name.

Plus, you get a chance to use your skills and talents in activities like these:

- Gardening
- Cooking
- Quilting
- Knitting
- Sport – Share a passion for your favourite sports with residents
- Music – like Tricia!
- Animals – assist with pets as therapy programs
- Arts and crafts

It is not for everybody, but volunteering in aged care is becoming more and more important and valuable than ever before.

Here are some web sites with information about volunteering in aged care. You will find many others. Or you could enquire at your local nursing home.

Bupa aged care

<https://www.bupaagedcare.com.au/careers/volunteer-opportunities>

<https://theblueroom.bupa.com.au/caring/keep-connected/the-gift-of-time>

Hammond Care

<http://www.hammond.com.au/about/volunteer>

Salvos Aged Care Plus

<https://agedcareplus.salvos.org.au/volunteer/>



This is YOUR Community Advisory Council

By Grant J Everett



The Community Advisory Council was set up in 2015 to provide a representative voice for the people who access Flourish Australia's services. Following recent elections, the new Community Advisory Council met at Olympic Park in May 2018.

What is the CAC?

The Community Advisory Committee (CAC) is composed of two dozen representatives who access Flourish Australia's services across New South Wales and south-eastern Queensland.

All of Flourish Australia's service locations are represented on the Community Advisory Council, including community businesses like Prestige Packing, Figtree Conference Centre, and KwikKopy. CAC members serve as representatives of people who access our services.

Bringing your concerns, requests, complaints and ideas to a forum where they can be acted on is one of the core purposes of their job.

Past CACs have brought about significant change. Flourish Australia's Board and Senior Leadership Team take everything raised in CAC meetings very seriously, and use this feedback in order to co-design better services.

Upper management have acted on CAC requests on many occasions, such as when the CAC decided it was necessary for the Council to meet more often. A survey was issued to all the reps to determine just how many times they wanted to meet per annum, and their feedback doubled these meetings from one day twice a year to two days twice a year.

Your voice matters, so see your local rep if you have any ideas!

From all over NSW and South East Qld

Our new Community Advisory Council met for their first two-day forum on the 16th and 17th of May. As our reps are separated by vast geographical distances, the biggest issue with holding these meetings is logistics. To show just how much Flourish Australia values and believes in the CAC, the

organisation flies in the reps from all across New South Wales and South East Queensland, puts them up in hotels near Figtree Conference Centre in Sydney Olympic Park, and also covers the representative's meals and local transport fares. During the meeting days, Figtree Conference Centre staff provide meals, coffee, snacks and practical needs for all of the reps.

Electing the new Chair and Deputy Chair

One of the major orders of business for our new CAC was to decide out who would serve as their Chair and Deputy Chair (the highest officers of the CAC) for the next two years. These two officers will ensure that meetings are conducted in an orderly fashion, and they also serve as the CAC's spokespeople outside of meetings.

After each of the reps had openly nominated their one choice, a secret ballot decided that Maurice "Mozzy" Wilkinson from Parkes was to be elected Chair and Scott Gourlay from Taree would be Deputy Chair. Other nominees included Graham Seaman from

Armidale, Deonny Zaroual of Figtree Conference Centre, Phil O'Laughlin from Moree, Nathan Davis of Tumut, Shane Bentley from Nowra and Karen Prestwidge from Penrith. Fay Jackson, our General Manager Inclusion and Kim Jones, Project Officer Inclusion, facilitated the election.

"How advocacy works"

There were many other topics of conversation and presentations over those two days. For instance, Annie Sykes - the Senior Independent Advocate - gave a talk about her job role. She explained how advocacy works, provided an overview of our rights and responsibilities, and described how the complaints procedures worked.

She spelled out how having access to an impartial Advocate helps the people who access our services to feel empowered, and it prevents them from falling

[Continued overleaf](#)

Below: Annie Sykes, Senior Independent Advocate explained how advocacy works and provided an overview of our rights and responsibilities



PHOTO BY WARREN HEGGARTY

CAC continued from previous page

through the cracks or being left behind. Annie's take-home message was that anyone who has a problem with Flourish Australia can receive her support without fear of negative repercussions.

Got a mental health issue? How about a career in politics?

Two years is a general term of standing for any council, and so every twenty-four months our CAC reps are democratically replaced. Regularly rotating the CAC allows us to involve more people who access our services, which is a great way to keep the ideas and perspectives fresh.

An added bonus is that this turnover enables more people to experience being on a Council, which is beneficial in two ways: it will teach you a new skill set, and will look nice on your resume.

But how does somebody become a part of the CAC?

Firstly, just like the people they represent, CAC reps have to be on a mental health recovery journey. Whether you were diagnosed for the first time a month ago or have had eighty hospital admissions over the span of half a century, all CAC reps must be veterans of the mental health system.

The second qualification you need to join the CAC is that you have to be accessing one of Flourish Australia's many services. This could be a day-to-day living centre, a community business, a work preparation program, or you might be receiving one-on-one support with one of our peer workers, mental health workers or NDIS workers.

If you can define what wellness means to you, know what factors make your journey easier or more difficult, and are able to learn from the occasional stumble or toe-stub, then you might be a perfect candidate!

Nothing about us without us

CAC reps can only operate at their best if the people they represent actually talk to them (even if it's just a whisper). If you require some sort of support or service in order to go further in life, tell



your rep. If you've had a bad experience with Flourish Australia in some way, be sure to tell your rep. If you have a brilliant idea that you think will change lives if it's given a chance, tell your rep. For instance, Deputy Chair Scott Gourlay's dreams is for the organisation to start up a Taree-based day-to-day living centre like The Centre at Hunter Street, Newcastle.

If you wish to raise something with your local rep for their next meeting, you can easily find out who they are by asking your peer worker, mental health worker or manager.

An honest day's pay

Flourish Australia pays Community Advisory Council representatives an honest day's wage for the services they provide. CAC reps earn \$25 an hour, so attending two straight days of meetings twice a year will net them \$880 in total per annum.

CAC reps may also be invited to take part in other paid meetings and functions, such as attending focus groups. You never know: being a part of the CAC may be the beginnings of something big.

CAC or EAC?

Flourish Australia has two Councils: the Community Advisory Council (CAC) and the Employee Advisory Council (EAC). As they both function in very similar ways, it can be easy to get them mixed up. However, these Councils are separate entities with some core differences.

COMMUNITY ADVISORY COUNCIL: Anybody who accesses one of Flourish Australia's services - including our community businesses and supported employment workplaces - can be a representative of the Community Advisory Council. The CAC is able to address any issue that has a connection to how our organisation operates. Please note that CAC reps cannot be Flourish Australia staff.

EMPLOYEE ADVISORY COUNCIL: Representatives for the EAC must be employees at one of our community businesses (like Prestige Packing, KwikKopy, Enterpraise, Figtree Conference Centre and so on). EAC meetings only focus on issues that directly relate to Flourish Australia employment services.

Coming up in September

Panorama



Naricah tells 'My role as a trainee Aboriginal Social And Emotional Wellbeing Officer'



**Recovery at Harris Park.
Keeping busy at Prestige
Packing Co.**



**Joanne went from 112kg
to 80kg in 10 months and
you could do it too!**

International Food Day at Harris Park



Maybe we should think of renaming the company 'Flourish International,' given the international flavour of so many of our events. Here we find the people at Prestige Packing Co, Harris Park, about to tuck into another feast of international flavours! Pictured are Michael Virina; Theodore Grace; Andrew Simpson; Aman Pablo and Candida (Candi) Nasciemento. *Thanks to Kathy Te Nuku* Read More in September ACTION.

Poetry

by Jeanette
Moree

'BABY'S THREE'

A thousand times
My heart does
Drum
Mum Mum where
Are you mum
I can't find you
Can you hum
Then I can hear
You're happy some
You used to
Wear red gloss
And sometimes dance
Now you're in a
Sad like
Trance
Mum mum where
Are you mum
Where baby's three
And sucking
Thumb





Scott (Right) with Mozzie Wilkinson (left)

Get involved and don't let mental health issues dictate your life to you

By Scott Gourlay

The manager of the Taree office, Chris Cassar, asked me to get involved in the CAC. Chris knows I have the confidence to share my ideas and opinions and that I'll speak up if I'm not happy about something. I've also had lots of discussions with Chris regarding recovery, living with mental health issues, and how we can help people to take control of their own lives rather than being controlled by illness.

I previously worked on a committee that organised a public mental health forum at Taree, and I've also been a part of the Hunter Partners in Recovery (PIR) Lived Experience Advisory Group in Newcastle. The PIR group also included carers, which added a new dimension to our discussions. I've noticed people with mental health issues tend to focus on independence, personal empowerment and dignity of risk, while carers are more focused on safety and being kept informed. Sometimes we needed to search really hard for a point of compromise! I also tried to start a local peer organisation a while back, but sadly that didn't work out.

Dignity of Risk

Dignity of risk means being able to make your own decisions. This is an important topic, as living with a mental illness can automatically mean that we are viewed as incapable of making choices for ourselves. Early in my journey I was involved with a consumer group that met at a local club, but the powers-that-be tried to shut it down purely because they didn't think that people with a mental illness should be around alcohol. Thankfully, this kind of backwards

[Scott Gourlay accesses Flourish Australia's services at Taree. With quite an impressive and varied experience behind him, recently became the Community Advisory Council representative for that region. This places him in an excellent position to bring about change. The first time Scott flew to Head Office to take part in the CAC's two-day biannual forum, the positions of Chair and Deputy Chair for the next two years were elected. To Scott's surprise, he became Deputy Chair, with "Mozzy" Wilkinson becoming Chair- Editor]

attitude is changing.

During my time with the CAC, I want to have a positive impact on how Flourish supports my peers by asking for new services. Taree doesn't have a day-to-day living centre, or day programs, or groups, or service user meetings. We are very isolated and have no dedicated safe places to socialise and build mutually supportive relationships. I'm hoping to get something similar to The Centre in Newcastle set up in Taree. I know Chris Cassar is looking into getting some day programs going, and I also hope to bring home some other good ideas.

Stretch my boundaries

Being a CAC rep means long-distance travel and that always plays into my anxieties. Managing my nerves in large crowds is one of my biggest challenges. That said, the CAC has given me an opportunity to stretch my boundaries, practise my coping strategies, and overcome my fears.

Information Technology has always been my big work interest and skill. In the past, I worked my way up from a job at the Commonwealth Bank when I left school in year 11, to recruitment consultant and managerial positions. I even had a stint in the army.

Being diagnosed with a mental health issue affected my life in a major way. With my very first hospitalisation I lost my friends, my job as a manager and my house. As the cycle of unemployment, hospitalisation, homelessness and losing friends continued, I became more isolated and withdrawn. I stopped trying to form friendships, as I was certain

My definition of recovery is living a full life despite symptoms. I believe I'll always have some level of symptoms present, be they voices, paranoia, or some persistent thoughts that may not be based on reality. Living and operating to the best of my ability is my idea of recovery.

they'd just fail again.

In a way, my recovery started from my first admission, because that was when I began to learn all I could about mental health issues and how to manage my symptoms. However, I don't think my recovery really began until about 12 years ago when I became more involved with consumer organisations and started trying to live a fuller life.

My definition of recovery is living a full life despite symptoms. I believe I'll always have some level of symptoms present, be they voices, paranoia, or some persistent thoughts that may not be based on reality. Living and operating to the best of my ability is my idea of recovery.

I'm in private rental with a flatmate at Taree. My flatmate rarely leaves his room, so it's not exactly a supportive arrangement. We can go a whole week and barely share a word. As I find it easy and comfortable to isolate myself, to avoid the things that make me uncomfortable – such as people – I'm glad that the one-on-one support I receive from Flourish minimises how much I am alone.

Social Network

When I first moved to Taree I met some locals through my friend, but they've all moved away to work in the mines or in The City. I have a very poor social network at the moment, and the lack of public transport leaves me geographically isolated. I'm sure there are a lot of locals who feel the same way, which is why I think we need a day-to-day living centre in Taree. I'd definitely like more opportunities for social interaction and groups, though they

don't necessarily have to revolve around mental illness. Getting away from the crowds and noise of Sydney has been great.

Don't blame yourself for your illness: it's not a moral, intellectual or personal failing. Ask your treating team questions, and don't just let them dictate your life to you. If you need to challenge them on something, do it! It's your life at stake, not theirs. Find supportive people who will recognise your strengths and encourage you to be more than you ever believed you could be. I think it's important to try lots of things, keep those that help, and ditch whatever doesn't.

I have mixed views on medication. If they work, great, keep taking them. If not, talk to your treating team about trying something else. Morally, I think people should always have a choice to make informed decisions. That said, I think some people need to take medication, at least until they are capable of making rational decisions for themselves. Taking medication needs to be YOUR decision.

What works for one person might not work for another. For example, while Cognitive Behavioural Therapy can be effective for a lot of people, in my case constantly challenging my negative thinking and voices just becomes exhausting. As far as what works for me, mindfulness and meditation are both essential, and I've had a lot of success working with a psychologist. I also find support groups, social activities and DBT (Dialectical behaviour therapy) really helpful. How effective these things are tends to vary from day to day, though.

Scott spoke with Grant J Everett.

I've noticed people with mental health issues tend to focus on independence, personal empowerment and dignity of risk, while carers are more focused on safety and being kept informed. Sometimes we needed to search really hard for a point of compromise!

Flourish Australia

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Social
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Family & Carers

At Flourish Australia, we understand the important role many families and carers play in supporting someone with a lived experience of a mental health issue to stay well and part of their local community.

When someone comes to us and asks for support we discuss with them the involvement of their family and other important people in their lives, and what supports they provide. If we are able to obtain that information we will record it so our staff know who is important to the person and their recovery. We will also make contact with you to check what supports you may need to undertake your important role and discuss your involvement and communication preferences.

OTHER ORGANISATIONS

Sometimes families and carers want more information and other contacts. There are a range of organisations that provide specialist supports and information for carers. A list with contact details can be found on our website at: <https://www.flourishaustralia.org.au/family-and-carers>

Mental Health Carers NSW
Ph: 1300 554 660

Arafmi Queensland
Ph: (07) 3254 1881

**Private Mental Health
Consumer Carer Network**
Ph: 1300 620 042

Mental Health Carers Australia
Ph: 1300 554 660

Kids Helpline
Ph: 1800 551 800

**COPMI – Children of Parents
with Mental Illness**
www.copmi.net.au



Intimacy. Where Trust meets Vulnerability

by Warren Heggarty

What do we mean by intimacy? Intimacy is about being emotionally close to your partner, about being able to let your guard down, and let him or her know how you really feel. Intimacy is also about being able to accept and share in your partner's feelings, about being there when he/she wants to let their defences down. (Relationships Australia)

There is also physical intimacy (see the next ACTION topic). In fact The Good Men Project web site says there is a whole plethora of different types of intimacies. See for yourself: <https://goodmenproject.com/featured-content/sexual-vs-emotional-intimacy-do-you-know-the-difference-dg/>

According to Psychology Today, deep intimacy requires a high level of transparency, openness and indeed trust. This involves a degree of vulnerability that can feel uncomfortable or anxiety-producing to many of us. These feelings do, however, tend to diminish and even dissolve over time and with practice. (Bloom & Bloom, 2013)

How to build intimacy

Shana Schutte says that 'intimacy is spelt a-c-c-e-p-t-a-n-c-e.' 'Because intimacy

means that we allow another person to "see into" us and they allow us to "see into" them, the Key of Acceptance must be used. After all, no one wants to allow someone to "see into" their heart who is controlling, judgmental, critical, sarcastic, unforgiving, abusive, selfish or just plain nasty.

'...if you want others to open their heart to you, you've got to give them a safe place to do so... Because the truth is that ...most of us ... [are] fragile and generally fearful of relational pain. For hearts to thrive in intimacy, they've got to feel safe and accepted.' (Schutte, 2009)

Intimacy does not happen automatically but must be built up over time. Often, the harder you work at it, the more valuable and rewarding it becomes. Let the other person know what you value about them and your relationship. Try to put it into words as you can't assume they already know. In any case, everybody likes to be told that they are appreciated and loved.

Create opportunities for intimacy. Try to plan a regular evening, day or weekend for the two of you to be alone. Practise making "I" statements about how you feel. . For example "I feel hurt you didn't ask me before you decided"

instead of "Why didn't you ask me first?" This avoids putting your partner on the spot, and may help them do the same. (Relationships Australia)

Relationships Counsellor Paul Dunion considers that we need to develop a degree of knowledge of our OWN emotional needs- a level of emotional maturity- in order successfully to establish intimacy with a partner. 'I was once asked in a television interview, "What's the one thing you would recommend to men in order for them to be better equipped to be emotionally intimate with the women in their lives?" My response was: "Men need to come to know and accept their emotional needs and develop strong emotional support with other men." The interviewer looked dumbfounded. I went on to explain that if men come into their emotional needs with no other support but the significant females in their lives, they run a high risk of maternalizing their relationships, becoming sons of these women... (Dunion, 2014)

Resources and references

Relationships Australia has a number of services available for issues relating to family, children and relationships. For couples: Consider face to face counselling or doing a course or workshop for couples. There is even online counselling available for couples: <http://www.relationshipsnsw.org.au/support-services/online-counselling/>

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Fear of rejection in a hypersexual world

by Warren Heggarty

A recent study at University College London's Institute of Education seems to show that lack of sexual experience is on the increase. According to a report in the Sunday Times 'one in eight 26-year olds in Britain told researchers they were virgins, a sharp rise from previous generations for whom one in 20 was the norm.' (SundayTimes, 2018)

Why is it so? Men's Health Magazine ventured that overexposure to sexually explicit material might be to blame. Porn and social media have created unrealistic expectations. (Adams, 2018)

Susanna Abse, a psychotherapist, told the Times that 'Millennials have been brought up in a culture of hypersexuality which has bred a fear of intimacy.'

Apparently seeing all those glimmers on TV and in Movies has instilled a sense of inadequacy and fear of humiliation in them.

Another psychotherapist, Krystal Woodbridge said 'We have young people coming here who do not know how to connect with other people as a romantic or sexual partner and they are terrified of rejection.'

What do you do if you are not connecting sexually with your partner?

by Warren Heggarty

Poor body image and a lack of previous experience are two things that can cause anxiety about sexual expression, and not just for Millennials, but everyone. So too can having a broken heart, a feeling of being 'over it all' or a lack of trust. (La Ricca) This is where trust comes in (see our previous ACTION article on intimacy).

Human beings generally can't read people's minds so it is very important not to make assumptions about what your partner wants, or when they want it, or how. You may have to try communicating verbally. Many of the more deep seated problems are difficult to talk about and some people may benefit from professional counselling.

One such counsellor, Dr Srin Pillay describes a fear of being unable to satisfy. 'Some partners are so afraid of losing their loved ones that all they do is focus on satisfying them without any interest in being satisfied themselves.' This often does not end well. He says that a 'fear of not being up to the job' can boil down to deciding not to even bother.

Pillay says that fear of emotional intimacy can flare up when physical intimacy is on the table, so to speak. He has often seen cases where a person's fear of physical intimacy 'masquerades' as their actual preference. However, he says 'by ignoring your fear with the most emotionally intimate person in your life you may be giving up one of the most fulfilling experiences you could ever have.' (Pillay, 2010)

Melissa La Ricca warns against pathologising a person's lack of sexual interest (in YOU at least!) 'Don't misinterpret [their] lack of [sexual] interest in you for a fear of intimacy; [they] may just not like you in that way.' (La Ricca)

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Note: Due to the reorganisation of ACTION Recovery Conversations into six monthly cycles, The next issue will be Cansas Theme #1 on Housing, in July



Where mental wellbeing thrives

Seven Quick Questions About Panorama

If you regularly attend a Flourish Australia Service, please name it in the box at right:
Eg, Moree, Harris Park, Buck House...

We would like to ask you a few questions so that we can improve the quality of Panorama

Q. 1 Firstly, how often would you say you read Panorama? PLEASE TICK ONE BOX ONLY, AS APPROPRIATE

☐

Always

☐

Most of the time

☐

Occasionally

☐

Rarely

☐

Never If you ticked 'Never', PLEASE GO STRAIGHT TO QUESTION 4

Q.2 When you are reading Panorama, do you usually... PLEASE TICK ONE BOX ONLY, AS APPROPRIATE.

☐

... read all of it, cover to cover

☐

read most of it

☐

read some of it

☐

Just skip through it/ look at the pictures etc.

What do you like about Panorama?

Q.3 In terms of the topics covered in Panorama, which of the following do you enjoy reading about?
PLEASE TICK AS MANY BOXES AS APPLY.

☐

People's recovery stories

☐

Physical health, sport, fitness, nutrition

☐

Cooking, food

☐

Employment, job hunting, career

☐

Money, savings, finance

☐

Current Affairs

☐

Youth

☐

NDIS

☐

Aging, Retirement

☐

Cultural and Linguistic Diversity/Multicultural issues.

☐

Indigenous issues

☐

LGBT*IQa issues

☐

Physical disability

☐

Literacy

☐

Numeracy

☐

Others (please write in)

Q.4 And in terms of the topics covered in Panorama, which of the following would you say are MOST IMPORTANT to you? PLEASE TICK YOUR TOP THREE CHOICES

<input type="checkbox"/> People's recovery stories	<input type="checkbox"/> Cultural and Linguistic Diversity/Multicultural issues.
<input type="checkbox"/> Physical health, sport, fitness, nutrition	<input type="checkbox"/> Indigenous issues
<input type="checkbox"/> Cooking, food	<input type="checkbox"/> LGBT*IQ issues
<input type="checkbox"/> Employment, job hunting, career	<input type="checkbox"/> Physical disability
<input type="checkbox"/> Money, savings, finance	<input type="checkbox"/> Literacy
<input type="checkbox"/> Current Affairs	<input type="checkbox"/> Numeracy
<input type="checkbox"/> Youth	<input type="checkbox"/> Others (please write in)
<input type="checkbox"/> NDIS	
<input type="checkbox"/> Aging, Retirement	

And finally, could you tell us a little about yourself

Q.5 Are you... PLEASE TICK BOX, AS APPROPRIATE

☐ Male

☐ Female

☐ Trans* person

☐ Don't want to say

OR WRITE IN YOUR ANSWER HERE

Q.6 Are you.. PLEASE TICK BOX AS APPROPRIATE

☐ A person who accesses Flourish Australia services?

☐ A person who works for Flourish Australia?

☐ A carer

☐ Don't want to say

OR WRITE IN YOUR ANSWER HERE

Q.7 to which of the following age groups do you belong? PLEASE TICK BOX, AS APPROPRIATE

<input type="checkbox"/> Under 18 years	<input type="checkbox"/> 46-55 years
<input type="checkbox"/> 18-25 years	<input type="checkbox"/> 56-65 years
<input type="checkbox"/> 26-35 years	<input type="checkbox"/> over 65 years
<input type="checkbox"/> 36-45 years	<input type="checkbox"/> Don't want to say

THANK YOU FOR ANSWERING SEVEN QUICK QUESTIONS ABOUT PANORAMA!

Subscribers, please use the Business Reply Envelope to return this to Flourish Australia 5 Figtree Drive Sydney Olympic Park NSW 2127. Or you can hand it in to your local service manager or group facilitator.

Carer Questions

The importance of partnership with family and carers

By Warren Heggarty

It is important for people providing services to understand how family members and carers are affected by a person's mental health issues. People caring for a person with a mental health issues are moving through uncharted waters, especially in the early stages and especially where a person has become an involuntary patient. Sue's carers and family might be asking questions like:

- What is going to happen to Sue?
- I'm confused, I don't know what to do!
- How will I cope with this?
- What caused this mental health issue?
- Why has this happened to Sue?
- What will other people think about Sue?
- What will happen to our family?
- Nobody ever tells me anything!
- I'm always the last to know!
- How can they lock Sue up like this? She's done nothing wrong!
- Sue must have SOME legal rights? Isn't she entitled to a lawyer?

Mind Australia and Helping Minds produced a book called 'A Practical Guide for Working With Carers of People With a Mental Illness' in 2016. (Mind Australia, 2016) It suggests that we try

to put ourselves in the other person's shoes. For example, the mental health worker needs to appreciate the effect that Sue's mental health issues are having upon her carers. It may well turn out that working in partnership with her carers will have great benefit towards Sue's recovery.

Yet sometimes the further things progress, the more the questions mount up.

- Where will Sue live when she is discharged from hospital?
- Who will support her if I can't?
- Will I have to give up work?
- I don't know anything about medications and side effects!
- What if something goes wrong?
- What if Sue never gets better?
- Who can I turn to?
- Is there any support available for me as the carer?
- Who are these people? Are they psychiatrists, nurses, security guards?
- This medicine seems to be making Sue WORSE not better!
- No one seems to know anything. It's like a secret service.
- Can they legally force Sue to take this medication?

The Guide describes the traditional way which staff have been trained to deal with carers and consumers as an 'individual treatment model.' The

consumer is at the centre and may well be communicating with the service provider on the one hand and their carer on the other. But the carer and provider never directly communicate. (p. 8)

Confidentiality is often cited as the reason this direct communication doesn't happen. However, engaging in partnership between consumer, carer and provider does not have to breach anyone's confidentiality if it is handled correctly. The model used in the United Kingdom is the 'triangle of care' in which –ideally– the three parties collaborate with one another (p. 9). Such an approach can clear up a lot of the doubt and uncertainty expressed in the Carer Questions listed above.

The Guide goes into further details about the benefits of working in partnership, but a chief benefit is that often, each individual only knows PART of the picture. To get the full picture and to facilitate the recovery journey, it is best to get the WHOLE picture. (p. 10) The Guide suggests four Partnership Standards:

1. Carers and the essential role they play are identified at first contact, or as soon as possible thereafter. (p. 13) Importantly, carers don't often see themselves as carers, and consumers don't often describe their carers as such either. The Guide therefore recommends staff use questions like 'Who do you rely on?' Or 'Who worries about you the most?' or 'Who helps you the most' and so forth.
2. Staff are carer aware and trained in carer engagement strategies. (p. 17)
3. There are protocols about confidentiality and the sharing of information. (p. 19)
4. People with experience as carers are engaged in all services. (p. 23)

Further information

Working with Families and Carers online library: <http://www.workingwithfamiliesandcarers.com.au/>

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The Royal Road of the Receptionist Or the Secretarial superhighway

By Warren Heggarty

With all the kerfuffle around the Royal Wedding between Prince Harry and Meghan Markle, I nearly overlooked an advertisement for a vacancy at Buckingham House. The job of Private Secretary to HRH The Princess Royal has become vacant.

This led me to wonder what sort of a person would or could do such a job. Such a role would be top in its field, so surely there are some important lessons our readers could learn to help them over the bar for secretarial roles a little closer to home.

The job is responsible for managing The Princess Royal's official engagements, and she is one of the busiest Royals of all. The advertisement stipulates that the successful applicant will 'work to high standards with great attention to detail.' That is something that we can all aspire to do.

I asked Flourish Australia's front desk receptionist June Harrison (above) what it was about Secretarial or Receptionist work that she liked.

"I like that I have the opportunity to greet, guide and assist people; and it's nice doing things that actually come natural to me," says June who has been in the job for almost ten years. "There's a sense of being needed, I like that what I am required to do. It comes naturally to me, I find it very rewarding. I also like the banter I have with my colleagues at Figtree/Head Office.

Kim Jones, a project officer with Flourish Australia who formerly managed a medical office echoes this. 'Sometimes people don't fully appreciate the things that get done behind the scenes.'

June says, "I mainly like that I'm trusted to be the public face of Flourish Australia, (so to speak.) I also like that my personality matches this kind of public contact, as some bubblyness is always helpful in this role."



Conference Centre assistant Matt Stonier, (left) who does relief duties on the front desk says that one of the best things about the

role is that you get to know everyone and interact with them. 'I've always wanted to know how an organisation like Flourish Australia operates and being on the front desk has allowed me to learn about that.'

'Sometimes on the switchboard' says Matt, 'people launch straight into their story without realising that it is my job to connect them with the appropriate person rather than solving the problem myself. At times phone calls can be few and far between, but there are other times when several come at once and you end up having to put people on hold.'

One of the chief challenges of a front desk role is 'multitasking' a term which you often hear bandied around as if it were some basic skill that everyone should have. In reality, a person can only ever do one thing at a time.

Kim says 'you have to prioritise, pick, choose and juggle. You have to set time aside to do this. You have to see whether there are tasks you can delegate to others or whether you need to get help from other people.'

When you are on the front desk like June, people often ask for assistance with various things. For June, the answer to the multitasking dilemma can be found in prioritising. And most importantly, you must be respectful at all times."

"When the phone rings; which is also attached to the boom gate - people have questions about signing in/out of the attendance book - others may even just want to say something to me. When this is all happening, it can be challenging as everything can't be done at once. I find my organisational skills are helpful here, by writing things down that have been said to me."

"Everyone needs to feel important, they don't want to be fobbed off, or be put through to just anyone, it's a must to reassure callers in a friendly manner that you will do your best to get them to the appropriate area as soon as you can.

Kim says 'you need to be confident and to speak up and ask for help when you need it. It also helps to be a people person, because sometimes it is not just work but personalities you have to juggle!'

As the advertisement for Princess Anne's private secretary says 'as well as strong cultural sensitivity and diplomacy, excellent judgement will be the key to this role, along with exceptional interpersonal and communication skills.'

So, secretaries, receptionists and administrative people do much more than paper shuffling! If you develop the skills relating to reception work to a high level, who knows, you might find yourself attending on royalty one day!

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Pictured Left (From left to right) : An-nique Edge (Administration), Erin Jones (Practice Manager, and who accepted the award on behalf of headspace), Tom Traae (Clinical and Operations Manager) and Fardowsa Ali (Senior Youth Access Clinician)

AGPAL, this award places headspace Bankstown as the second highest-rated small general practice in Australia. AGPAL awards aren't just handed out to anybody. Winners have to really wow the judges with their teamwork, innovation, and ongoing quality improvement initiatives to stand a chance in walking away with a trophy. The award-winning teams also have to demonstrate their dedication to care and exercise a clear understanding of all relevant industry standards.

Erin Jones, who is both the Practice Manager of headspace Bankstown and the one who nominated this service for the AGPAL award, was there in person to receive the trophy.

Two awards for Bankstown headspace!

By Grant J Everett

While we already knew that headspace Bankstown does great work in supporting young people, this year they've already earned two prestigious awards to prove it!

On the 26th of January 2018, Canterbury-Bankstown City Council named headspace Bankstown as their Community Organisation of the Year as part of their Australia Day celebrations. That is a great achievement for a service that has only been in operation since 2015, and a real credit to an amazing team who have already thoroughly embedded themselves into the local community. To become one of Canterbury-Bankstown's top mental health service providers in just three short years is a serious achievement.

"We are very humbled to receive this recognition on the back of being named the Community Organisation of the Year for the Canterbury-Bankstown Council earlier in January 2018," the Clinical

and Operations Manager of headspace Bankstown Tom Traae told us.

Fast forward to the 18th of May, and the same headspace branch has received another major accolade: The AGPAL "Highly Commended" Excellence Award for Small General Practice of the Year. This award recognised headspace Bankstown's contribution to the mental health and well being of The City's youth. All of this year's winners (including headspace Bankstown) were announced at a Gala Dinner held at the Grand Hyatt, Melbourne. According to the Royal Australian College of GPs and

AGPAL is a leading not-for-profit accreditation organisation that ensures general practices deliver high-quality care. The annual AGPAL Excellence Awards recognise the most exceptional of organisations that consistently go above and beyond what they offer.

References

"Canterbury-Bankstown's 2018 award winners announced", Canterbury-Bankstown Express, January 26th 2018
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www.agpal.com.au/2018-winners/





Under 30s groups at Buckingham House

By Donna Shrubsole and the team at Buckingham House

It is important that young people have access to social activities that support them in dealing with mental health issues. Flourish Australia's Buckingham House service has introduced new groups aimed at young adults on Fridays and Saturdays.

The Saturday group is a recent innovation. Members meet at Buck House at 10AM and then partake of a variety of different outings every week. These outings are currently programmed to end about 3PM.

For the more established Friday young adults group, Buck House has been promoting activities and potential activities such as Hip Hop Exercise, Cultural Cooking lunches, Amy's Art Attack, and even Hearing Voices meetings.

Young adults need their own space. There was also a need to normalise outings, without having so much distinction between staff and members. So Peer Worker Ciaran first started taking these as he is both a peer and of the same age group. When Ciaran left to work with HASI, Shay took this on for a while, but he is out of the young adults age range, so then we took on a younger

worker, Shana, and we have had her facilitating them on Fridays.

The participants have been to The Zoo, Luna Park, Mini Golf, Manly, Wet and Wild, Rock Climbing, Kayaking... there are so many different places and different things to do around Sydney.

there are probably a lot of people out there, especially young adults, who would be interested in taking part in some of the activities we are getting together.

They all get public transport, buy their own lunch and pay their own way.

Shay has been instrumental in getting discounts on charges but as long as this doesn't detract from the fact that it is a normal activity (like having to get all members to show their disability cards etc) we're okay with that. Shay has also been very passionate about this and has been following up with Head Space, Youth Interagencies and City of Sydney. The Young Adults Space on a Friday was

also something we have been wanting to do for a long time - so while the downstairs area used by Employment Services has been temporarily free we thought we could make good use of it. We are in discussions about more permanent arrangements.

Another exciting thing happening is we have been given a donation to set up a gym! We negotiated with RECLINK to set up a Hip Hop group and Shay has been following up with youth agencies to try to get more people interested in coming.

I guess "Amy's Art Attack" is an arresting name for an art group! It came about when I approached Amy and suggested that she might like to facilitate this group. She is a member at Buck House who is also doing fine arts and she is like our resident artist. She has done some great work here.

Cultural Cooking is a group that we have always run on Fridays for a long while now. See the stories on this in previous issues, such as Panorama #65, September 2017.

We wanted to start up a Hearing Voices Group, based on Intervoise Philosophy. Some Panorama Readers might have read about this on the grapevine or on social media through places like the Melissa Roberts foundation or people like Peter Bullimore. So far we have not had enough takers to get it off the ground here.

I know that there are probably a lot of people out there, especially young adults, who would be interested in taking part in some of the activities we are getting together. The problem is getting the message out. I guess many of the people who would benefit are not as connected in terms of social media etc. as most people. We need to find away around that. Perhaps Panorama readers will show some interest and contact us (Hint! Hint!- Editor)

For more on Youth issues, See also 'YPOP hits the target' and '3 Years after YPOP: a different person' in Panorama #66, December 2017

Buckingham House
41-43 Buckingham Street
Surry Hills NSW 2010
1300 779 270
(02) 9393 9240

Amy's Surrealistic Art Attack

Part of YOUNG
ADULTS GROUPS AT
BUCK HOUSE on
Fridays



Different members
Different media
Different methods

Some art you do on your own but other art is better in a group. Today, Amy (above left), Shana (above right), Tabara and Warren found out how.

Firstly we played a game of *Surrealist Exquisite Corpse!*

Each one folds a sheet of paper into three. Then every person draws the top, middle and bottom of three different animals. There's no peeking until the end when you unfold your very own menagerie of FABULOUS ANIMALS.

Next, we did Mix and Match Faces
Amy showed us all how to draw an eye using charcoal. Just an eye. Then, putting our different eyes together, we added nose and mouth to form faces.

It is interesting to see what strange combinations you can come up with!

And we were learning to draw at the same time. See for yourself in the illustrations. We've also included a few pictures done by previous groups.



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Seeing things better

While Amy, Shana, Tabara and Warren were creating their art works, they began chatting about art, the young adult's groups and even Bob Ross!

Amy is a member of Buck House who facilitates Amy's Art Attack on Fridays. This is one of the groups aimed towards young adults which are held on Fridays and Saturdays.

Peer Worker Shana also facilitates young adults groups. For example, there is a hip hop group featuring a professional Hop

Youth

Hop dancer, Karen which explores new routines every week. Amy has sat in on that group and thought it was really fun, but hasn't actually started dancing yet.

'I first started coming to Buck House because of the Hearing Voices Group which I attended a couple of times. But then I heard about the Art Group and as I was an art student myself (at the National Art School) I thought "why not?" Now I am a facilitator of Amy's Art Attack.'

Amy has just graduated with a three year Bachelor of Fine Art and Sculpture at NAS.

Amy's tips for hearing voices

'Sometimes when I hear voices and get very stressed I find that iced water on my face helps. It's like diving or a cold shower. It seems to slow my heart rate and shock me back into my body! It helps me physically and emotionally.'

Shana also has a tip for stress: Progressive muscle relaxation, or PMR is so good because you feel really relaxed afterwards.

Another technique is ASMR (Autonomic System Meridian Response). "It causes a tingling sensation, it is a calming thing that works for some people."

Shana says 'I heard about this through Bob Ross YouTubes. Bob Ross (pictured in the next column) was a painter who

has a series called 'The Joy of Painting.' A story about the link between Bob Ross and ASMR is found here <http://discoverasmr.com/what-is-asmr/bob-ross-asmr/> In short, many people find that watching him paint landscapes and listening to him talk is a very good way to relax!



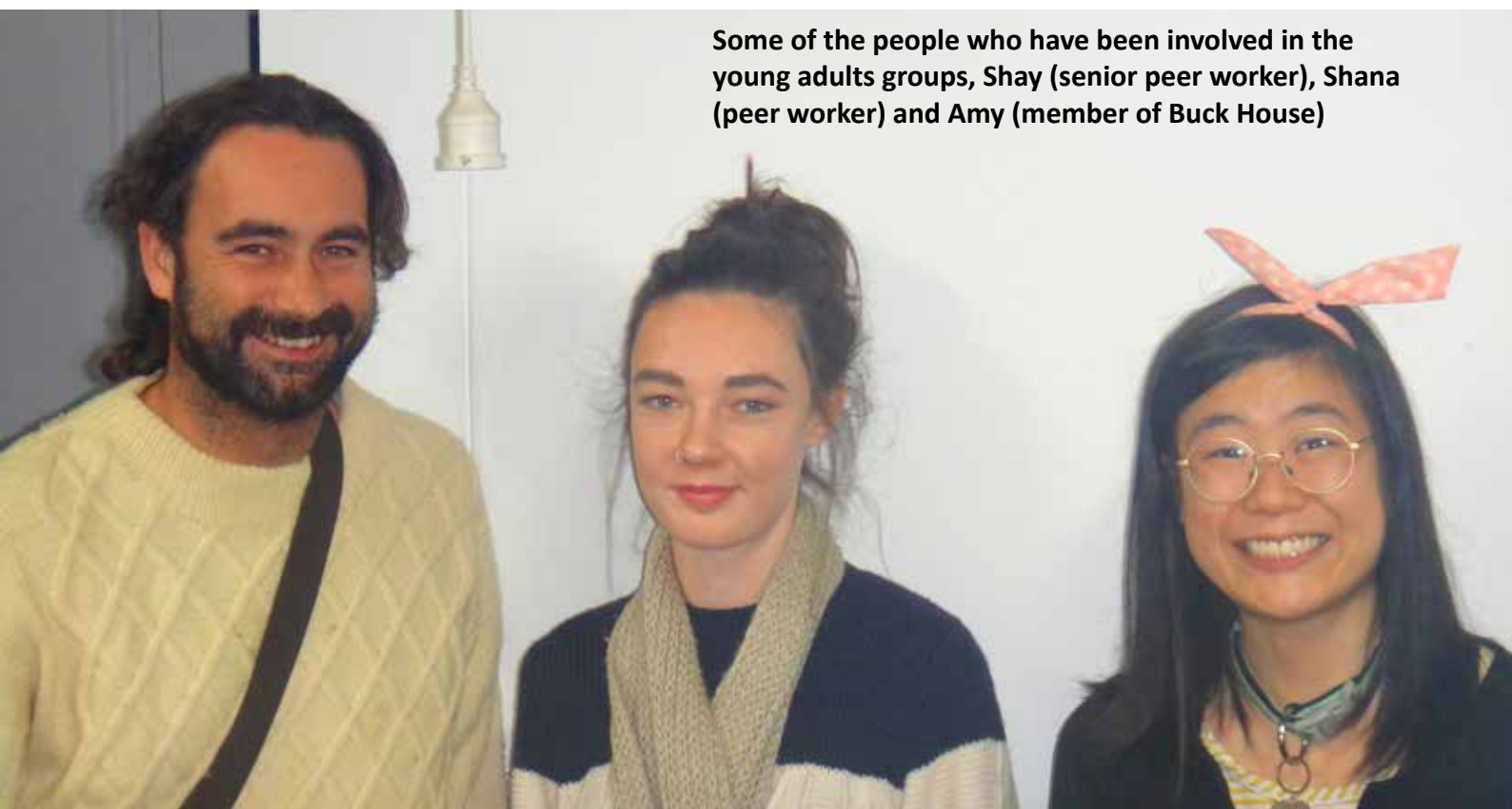
The every day art of seeing

'I draw every day' says Amy 'to help me see things better. I admire the sculpture of Rodin. Sculpture is a more physical thing of course.

'I do clay self portrait sculptures. There is one on the balcony at Buck House. It is a sculpture of my face as a pot, with plants growing out of the top. It shows how you can grow good thoughts in your head.'

'It would be awesome to have an exhibition of my works one day. I have a friend who also wants to exhibit. I am applying to Tom Bass Sculpture Studio school for an accessibility scholarship.'

Some of the people who have been involved in the young adults groups, Shay (senior peer worker), Shana (peer worker) and Amy (member of Buck House)





The Guildford Project

An opportunity for Growth and Diversity

Story and photos by Warren Heggarty

Flourish Australia's new housing development will provide affordable housing for people on low incomes.

With the advent of the National Disability Insurance Scheme comes opportunities for growth, but it is wise not to have all of your eggs in the one basket. It is good to have a diverse range of income sources.

The Resolve Program, which is based on Social Impact Bonds is an example of Flourish Australia's financial innovation. (Panorama 66, 2017, pp. 26-27)

Another is the Guildford affordable housing project (Panorama 63, 2017,

p. 12). As new company treasurer Jeremy Thorpe said at last year's Annual General Meeting 'we are now property developers.'

Flourish Australia has developed from scratch a new block of 41 home units in Guildford, NSW. The project was coordinated by General Manager, Business Excellence Mohammed Alkhub and former Chief Finance Officer Mike Smallsman.

Selling points

The unit block is in a quiet street on the quiet side of Guildford Railway Station, a couple of minutes walk from trains and buses. Trains go direct to both Parramatta and the City, Fairfield and Liverpool. The units are nearly opposite Warnock Park playground and childcare centre. It is also close to the Guildford Youth and Community Centre.

CEO Mark Orr said there were two basic reasons behind the Guildford Project. Firstly it is part of the National Rental Affordability Scheme which is aimed at assisting people on low incomes.

Secondly, it will provide a new income stream for Flourish Australia. 'We will sell 20 units, in fact, some have already been sold,' said Mark, 'and we will

lease a further 21. Community Housing Limited will be managing the rentals for us.'

Income stream

Having this alternative income stream means that Flourish Australia will not be totally dependent upon the National Disability Insurance Scheme.

'The National Rental Affordability Scheme... which commenced in 2008, aims to increase the supply of new and affordable rental dwellings by providing an annual financial incentive for up to ten years. This incentive is issued to housing providers [such as Flourish Australia] to provide affordable rental dwellings at least 20 per cent below market rates.' (NRAS, 2018)

133 housing providers, including property developers, not-for-profit organisations and community housing providers, will be providing up to 38,000 new homes in total. (NRAS, 2018)

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Downtown Guildford





by Grant J Everett

NOTE: This article is based on information researched from the CHOICE website. We have provided the link to this material at the end.

For most of us, renting a home is the only real option we have when it comes to accommodation, but a combination of high prices, a shortage of properties and the very real possibility of being regularly displaced every twelve months makes this a stressful and uncertain process. The stress doesn't necessarily end once you sign the lease and move in, either. A lot of tenants are so scared of upsetting their landlords that they won't exercise their most basic rights - such as asking for urgent repairs, or disputing unreasonable rent increases - for fear of ending up homeless and blacklisted. A survey by the Tenants' Union of NSW back in 2014 found that a huge 77% of tenants have put up with maintenance problems because they were worried about the negative consequences if they asked to get them fixed.

Many renters don't know their fundamental rights. For instance, what sort of urgent repairs are you entitled to get done ASAP? What can get you placed on an undesirable tenant database? What can lead to your landlord keeping your bond? Where do you stand as a renter, and just how safe are you from summarily getting the boot?

Retaliatory evictions

First off, there are two types of leases: a fixed-term tenancy, which has a specific commencement date and expiry date, and a periodic tenancy agreement, which only has a commencement date. If you're on a fixed-term agreement, your landlord can't just kick you out for no reason. However, for renters on a periodic lease, this is a different story: provided they give you the legal notice period, a tenant on a periodic lease can be given a "no grounds" eviction at any time. The Tenants' Union of Queensland found that "no-grounds" evictions were the most common kind that they dealt with, and in many cases the ex-tenant felt as though the eviction was being used against them as a means of retaliation. NSW provides legal protection against retaliatory evictions, and there have certainly been cases where eviction notices have been overturned specifically for being retaliatory.

We need to stress that you cannot be evicted or blacklisted just because you exercise your rights as a tenant. And even if your landlord wants to kick you out and get you blacklisted for a valid reason, they are required by law to give you enough time to either fix the issue in question or to dispute it with a tribunal.

Rental increases

While there is no legal limit to how often your rent can be increased and by how much, you are always entitled to a notice period of 60 days before a new increase goes into effect. By law, however, landlords cannot increase your rent "excessively". So how can you tell if an increase falls into this category?

While there's no specific mathematical formula we can quote to define what "excessively" is in this context, if you believe that a proposed rental jump is unfair then you can dispute it through a civil administrative tribunal. If the tribunal agrees with you, they can prevent this rise from being put into effect for a set time. While it isn't an exact science, you might want to compare what you are paying to the rates of similar properties in your area. The preexisting condition of your home and the amount of repairs your landlord has paid for will make a difference, too.

Repairs

The amount of maintenance your house is entitled to depends on many factors: the condition of the property when you moved in, its age, and how much rent you are paying. There's a difference between emergency repairs and non-urgent repairs, though. Emergency repairs must pose a danger or cause serious inconvenience, such as electrical faults, a gas issue, a busted toilet, or your sink turning into a geyser. Non-urgent repairs are things like a dripping tap, a blown light bulb, peeling paint, or anything that's purely cosmetic. If you've ever had the experience of trying to get non-urgent repairs done quickly, it's likely that your landlord didn't exactly leap out of their chair to come do them. Like with protesting rental increases, a civil administrative tribunal can force your landlord to get emergency repairs done if they refuse to do so.

Blacklisted

Australian tenancy databases collect detailed lists of bad tenants, and real estate agents and landlords will access this information as standard whenever they conduct a history check on a renter-to-be. If you have been placed on such a list, real estate agents or landlords will certainly find out. However, if they find a negative listing during a background check, they must tell you. They are under no obligation to take you on as a tenant, though, so being flagged on a database can be the difference between getting your dream home and getting knocked back.

There are only two things you can do that will get you blacklisted: one is owing more rental arrears than the value of your bond at the end of your tenancy and refusing to pay it up to date, and the second is breaching your tenancy agreement in some major way. You won't get blacklisted just because your landlord don't like you! Negative listings are removed after three years, but that can be a very, very long time if you're trying to keep a roof over your head.

Source:

"Rental rights you didn't know you had," Gemma Castle, 30 January 2017

www.choice.com.au/money/property/renting/articles/rental-rights-you-didnt-know-you-had

Out and about

HARMONY DAY 2018 at Flourish Australia



By Alex Avenarius

The Leichhardt residents and Supported Accommodation Team celebrated Harmony Day 2018 with a lavish feast of dishes from around the world. The team features staff and residents from backgrounds including Britain, Ireland, Italy, Turkey, Greece, India, China, Vietnam, Germany, Russia and France. A good time was had by all in a spirit of harmony and cultural diversity.

The people in the photo are, left to right **STANDING:** Guy Barthlomew (resident), Alex Avenarius (manager – Russian flag), Carol Bernhard (red beret - team leader – French flag), Duc Trinh (resident – red flag with yellow star – flag of Vietnam), Greg De Saxe (resident – Irish flag), Mitch Webb – peer worker – LGBT flag)

Left to right **SITTING:** Anthony Macadam (resident – Australian flag), Yvette Quinn (peer worker – German flag), Susan Benz (mental health worker – German flag)

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Greg Leeson Retires

By Kathy Te Nuku

In April, Greg Leeson decided to retire as a long term employee of Prestige Packing Company at Harris Park, one of Flourish Australia's community businesses.

A lot has changed over the 32 years Greg has worked with us. Take the name of the company. It started out as PRA, which later became RichmondPRA and is now known as Flourish Australia. I'm happy to report that Greg has been known as Greg the whole time!

A BBQ was held at Prestige Packing Company Harris Park on 12th April 2018. There were farewell speeches given by the other employees and Staff.

The following day, Friday 13th April 2018 was actually Greg's 66th Birthday. Greg was given a card signed by everyone at Harris Park.

Prestige Packing Co.
23-25 Station Street West
HARRIS PARK NSW 2150
1300 779 270
(02) 9393 9170



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Your pet's wellbeing

By Annie Sykes

Just because you might be unwell doesn't mean your furry friends have to be neglected

For Pet owners who cannot afford vet costs, on low incomes are not physically or mentally able do not have transport and care dearly about their pets there is PetCure.Dr Donna Schofield. Mobile/House call Vet. 0414 372 281.

They will come to your home to treat your pet/s there, or if Hospital is required, they will take your pet and then bring them home. Cost for treatment is minimal. The focus is your

Prestige Pets

pets' wellbeing NOT whether you can afford.

They support all diversities within the communities. Even in a crisis, you can ring and arrangements will be made to attend. If Hospital admission is required pets are admitted over at Fairfield vet clinic where Dr Donna is located. If she doesn't attend herself her mobile team will.

You get the absolute highest professional care and regard and respect for you and your pet at a minimum cost. My furries (there are nine of them) are my whole family and their well-being and health matters as much to me as my own.

I have been able to manage this through Dr Donna and her team's caring sensible and practical guidance when attending to your pet's care... even though I nearly fainted one time when I assisted Dr Donna to take bloods from one of my furries, casual as you like, on my couch!



Reg

Reg's Mum took him home from Pet Rescue in Blacktown a few months ago, and as he is so cute she bought him a little playmate. Yet the call of the wild is strong and before the day was out, Reg's little pet pig had become shredded pork. But why the guilty expression, Reg?

PHOTOS BY CARMEN ROBINSON



PetRescue.com.au



Unlike a lot of council pounds, many pet organisations follow a 'no kill' policy. Pet Rescue is an umbrella web site for such organisations. The fact that these organisations go out of their way to 'rehome' pets whose owners can no longer care for them, or to rescue pets from abusive situations is very attractive to a lot of committed pet lovers.

For example, Carmen took the trip out to Blacktown from her home in the Eastern Suburbs to adopt Reg (see pictures at right) around Christmas last year. She was able to prepare for her adoption visit by looking up the Pet Rescue web

site which contains pictures and detailed descriptions of the various pooches, pussycats and other furries looking for new homes.

'Rehoming' usually means that the pet has been looked after but that the previous human carer has become unable to continue in that role due to old age or illness. 'Rescue' often implies that the animal has had a rough time, either from an abusive owner, or having been rescued from 'death row' at a council pound.

These pre-owned pets often have their share of issues, such as old age, illnesses or mental health issues. The Pet Rescue web site is up front about that. One of the consequences is that pet insurance may not be available because it generally cuts out after age 8. This means you may be up for the full cost of vet services.

Clare found her little poodle Spiky at Woof Dog rescue, Blacktown (see picture at left). 'Blacktown has a massive pet culture' she told Panorama, 'so it's a great place for pets. And you don't have to go to breeders to get a pure bred' the avid poodle lover added.

'Spiky had a traumatic background with a breeder and really needed the company of my other poodle Pippin, who was rehomed. He used to bite me all the time, but finally he began to allow

me to pat him. I must admit that if I had known in advance just how challenging it would be taking in an abused pet, I might have thought twice about it!

'Some dogs are better off as an "only dog," others need people company, others need dog company. Some dogs need a big back yard. A kelpie needs lots of space to run round in, but some other dogs don't. It helps to check this out when you are adopting.'

The key is commitment. There is no point adopting a pet unless you are really willing to devote the necessary amount of time and resources.

Pet Rescue's site is great because it gives you the animal's background and describes its special needs.

Holiday in Hanoi Vietnam

with EDWINA KEELAN

Locals in Hanoi love Aussies and Kiwis. It was the capital of the North side in the Vietnam war which ended in the 1970s. Our involvement was supporting the South side, but the locals show their forgiveness.

One rickshaw driver showed me the sights and sounds of Hanoi city. The rickshaw driver was so friendly and charged me \$10 US dollars for a 1-hour ride.

The biggest drawcard in Hanoi was Halong Bay on the way to China. It is not for the person who gets teary eyed. Plus, lonely as the isolation in this place was, it is terribly haunting. You can feel it. It is a strange weird feeling being out there on a boat in the water. There are Pirates.

The lake stuck out in my mind. America bombed the lake in Hanoi you wouldn't think it now.

It is so peaceful and tranquil, there were no people in the grounds that day. Wow the most stunning piece of architecture was a stone Catholic Church. Here is a picture of me standing outside in my 'fav' purple dress from Kerala State but that's another travel story.

Then there were other places like the gorgeous luxuriant French quarter in all its glory, with tree lined flora and fauna of mature greens, very statuesque and tall, very impressive I must say. What a wonderful feeling I had there. I felt fabulous.

The worst sight and smell was the meat market Dog, Monkey, Cat, you name it "Vietnamese people eat everything."

One of the big reasons I went to Vietnam was for the food. The Glutton I am. Call me ungrateful, but Vietnamese Cuisine in Vietnam did not compare to the local Vietnam cuisine you get here in Oz.



Puppets, Rickshaws & sun-smart women

Hanoi Vietnam was lacking freshness and quality. Overall, this part of the trip to Vietnam was a bit disappointing in some ways.

Then there was the Hanoi Palace, An Army Museum, A Military Museum, A statue of Lenin: all in a day's work for a rickshaw driver.

Before leaving Australia, I registered with smart traveller and planned all my accommodation weeks in advance. I stayed in Hanoi for nine nights.

I stayed no more than 3 nights in each other place because it is less than \$40 US for three nights.

What made my stay enjoyable was a singing bird in a small cage outside one hotel I stayed at.

But really what I enjoyed was the puppet show in a pool of water with a chorus,

lighting, singers, in traditional costume.

The puppet shows featured animals and insects and people lapping out of the water including frogs and fish. Very entertaining and creative and imaginative.

During my stay in Hanoi I learnt it was not uncommon for there to be as many as 20 people living in one household!

I could not get over just how youthful and agile the women look, and they are so sun smart with hats, pants and long sleeves. My dermatologist would be pleased.

Travelling opens a whole new world journeying places you just don't realise how far you have come as for me I don't let my disability find fault with me I give myself space by travelling.



GRANT AND LINDA'S FIRST HOLIDAY

by Grant J Everett

Setting goals is an essential component of recovery. One of the many goals my wife and I shared was to go on an out-of-state holiday together. Although our wedding was back in September 2016, life has kept us in New South Wales... until now.

A perfect opportunity to get away presented itself when we found out our good friend Kylie was getting married in Victoria in the first quarter of 2018 (be sure to see the "Kylie and Shane's Long Distance Love Story on p.12"). The big day would happen in a lovely little rural town called Timboon. Better yet, Linda was asked to be the matron of honour. What a great reason to get out the luggage!

It took a lot of planning to figure out how we'd get to the wedding and where we'd stay, but it wasn't insurmountable. We just focussed on one part of the plan at a time: booking the flight, researching what buses and trains we'd have to catch in Victoria to reach Kylie's house, how Victorian public transport worked, where we'd be staying...the list went on. Thankfully, as we literally had months to figure all this stuff out, rather than dealing with everything in one hit we just kept nibbling away a bit at a time until we were confident our itinerary ticked every box. We soon

had our basic game plan: we'd fly down and stay at Kylie and Shane's home for all but one night of our trip. This second factor kept our trip very affordable.

The journey itself was definitely the biggest hurdle when it came to nutting out the details. With a lot of help from two websites - New South Wales Tripplanner and Public Transport Victoria's Journey Planner - we figured out our trek would involve two trains, a plane, a bus, two more trains and a 45-minute drive. By the time we got to Kylie and Shane's home in Timboon it would be 11pm.

In addition to booking plane tickets and sorting out accommodation, we had other preparations to make. We were encouraged to contact a mental health service in rural Victoria we could access if required, and we had to carry enough medication to last from Thursday afternoon to when we got back on Monday night.

We were sure to keep our trip affordable wherever possible. For instance, our 870km flight to Melbourne's Tullamarine Airport would take a little over an hour, so we didn't feel the need to get fancy with our seats. Qantas Economy

suited us fine. And while this meant we were only allowed to take one carry-on bag each, as we'd be away less than a week we didn't want to drag around too much stuff anyway. Yes, it can be tempting to pack for every eventuality, but travelling light is best. Besides what I was wearing or had in my pockets, I took the exact changes of clothes required for the trip, some basic toiletries, my formal suit and shoes for the wedding, my phone charger and a book. All up, my bag weighed less than 5 kilograms. Thankfully, some friends generously lent us their carry-on luggage. We are planning on getting our own before next time, though.

Considering we were exploring new territory, it all went smoothly enough for us. Expecting every detail to go according to plan is unrealistic, so it wasn't a surprise when we encountered a few bumps along the way. For instance, there's no chance we'll ever try to get onto a plane at the last minute without boarding passes again (that's a minute of total and utter panic we'll never forget).

If you exceed your baggage limit, you will be sluggish with a surcharge. Be sure to do your homework, or you may encounter unwelcome surprises.

All up, our hard work was totally worth it. Walking around and seeing the sights in a different state was amazing, and both Linda and I felt totally different to how we do in our home state. True, every now and again I forgot that I wasn't in Sydney anymore, but then I'd notice how the signs and traffic lights were odd colours and shapes, or how different the trains and buses looked to the ones I usually caught. One of the biggest reminders we were in Victoria is how strangers would happily start a conversation with us, especially if they had something to add to what I was discussing with Linda. My Sydney instincts were to avoid eye contact and increase how fast I was walking, but it was nice to visit such a friendly place. All up, our holiday came in well under budget at around \$1500 for 5 days, including transport, food and one night in a nice hotel overlooking the runway at Tullamarine airport.

We are already planning our next adventure. Linda's family has a holiday home near Sussex Inlet, so we're counting down the months until we can pack our bags again...



PHOTO JUERGEN LEHLE

Travel Tips

by Grant J Fitter

If you are new to traveling, or haven't been involved with the planning stage in the past, here are a lot of great tips you might find helpful.

- Get to the airport early by AT LEAST two hours. You want to be sure that your luggage arrangements are sorted, you have your boarding pass and there aren't any dramas.

- Unless you have children, try not to take a vacation during school holidays. Theme parks, beaches and other popular destinations are swamped by millions of kids during these times, and it's a sure-fire recipe for frustration.

- Social media has become a very useful tool for criminals, so resist the urge to tell all of Facebook that you'll be leaving your home totally vacant for a fortnight. You don't want to come back to a bare house.

- Don't go on trips alone. It's cheaper for two or more friends or family members to go somewhere together than separately, and it's more fun to share your vacation with somebody. Better yet, go on holidays with a bunch of people. A lot of places offer group rates that will slash your bills.

- It's good to apply for annual leave as far in advance as possible. Don't leave it to the last minute, or you'll annoy your boss.

- Hotels and motels aren't your only option. Backpacker organisations such as Youth Hostel Accommodation have beds for as little as \$27 a night. Be sure to explore what's on offer.

- Make the most of your trip, as most places are known for something.

If you exceed your baggage limit, there will be a surcharge. Be sure to do your homework, or you may encounter unwelcome surprises.

Katoomba is about the Three Sisters and the Scenic Railway, while the Gold Coast is about beaches, theme parks and sweltering heat. If you choose a time of year when the most popular drawcards of a place aren't as appealing, prices will plunge. For instance,

beach resorts are cheaper during the colder months. Obviously there are drawbacks to going somewhere off-peak, but the savings can be colossal. If you're paying to stay at a hotel, motel, bed-and-breakfast or a hostel, there should be plenty of information about what there is to do and see in the local area. If not, just ask a staff member.

- You'll be more likely to splash out on luxuries when you're on vacation, especially with food. As a result, eating out can easily become one of your biggest expenses. To keep costs down, enjoy home-cooked meals as much as you can. As my wife and I are major foodies, it was difficult for us not to overdo it with Melbourne's famous coffee and cuisine. Don't beat yourself

up if you crack!

- Convenient flights are tempting, but flying very early in the morning or late at night can save you a lot of money on your tickets. It's up to you to decide if it's not having to get up in the middle of the night to catch a plane is worth it.

- Driving isn't essential. A car would make getting around easier, obviously, but as long as you have Trip Planner and an Opal card (or the local equivalent in whatever state or territory you are in) you shouldn't have too many dramas getting around.

- Unless you want to be throwing out fifteen kilos of mouldy produce and rotten meat, sort out your fridge and cupboards before going on vacation.

- Be sure to take out your garbage before leaving the state. Trust me on this one!

Final thought

Does a trip like ours sound overwhelming? Reaching for your dreams can be stressful, so that's a normal feeling to have. A good way to lower your stress levels is to prepare as much as you can. Consult Trip Planner when you are creating an itinerary and discuss what you would do if you missed any of your trains or buses. Gradually chip away until you've got an airtight plan.

Panorama would love to hear about your adventures. Be sure to let us know about your holiday experiences by contacting us at...

panorama@flourishaustralia.org.au

Your Physical Health and Wellbeing

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

Hypertensive emergency

I nearly had a stroke!

By Warren Heggarty

My doctor first diagnosed high blood pressure when I was 27. I had all the risk factors for heart attack back then, heavy smoking, heavy drinking, poor diet, no exercise, high cholesterol and constant anxiety.

I was put on medication which caused such awful constipation that I couldn't stand it, so after three or four years, I stopped taking it. Over the years, doctors kept pestering me about blood pressure but it was not my priority.

With OCD I was more anxious about the strange thoughts entering my head than the actual illness in my body!

When I was 53 I was told that my blood pressure was well over the danger level and I could have a stroke. I dismissed it as usual but the doctor said she was thinking of putting me in hospital. Only then did I agree to restart medication, this time on a drug that did not cause bad constipation. My blood pressure returned to normal within a week.

Some months later, I realised that I had not had any bad headaches for quite a while. Although high blood pressure normally has no symptoms, hypertensive emergency can be accompanied by bad headaches and can be a precursor to stroke or heart attack. As in my case, it is often very easy to fix.

'Hypertensive emergency'
<http://www.heart.org/HEARTORG/Conditions/HighBloodPressure/GetTheFactsAboutHighBloodPressure/Hypertensive-Crisis>

What is blood pressure?

The heart is a pump. Blood pressure measures the force of the heart pumping blood through your blood vessels. Two measurements are taken. The higher number, the systolic, shows the pressure when your heart muscle contracts. The lower number, the diastolic, is the pressure when your heart muscle relaxes.

Blood pressure is always changing and there is no one 'right' score. Your doctor will be able to see if your score is within a healthy range. Very high readings can be signs of danger. Very low readings can be signs of trouble, too.

What causes high blood pressure (Hypertension)?

Being overweight, eating too much salt, not getting enough exercise, too much alcohol, smoking, kidney disease, high cholesterol, heredity.

What can untreated high blood pressure do to you?

According to the ccCCHiP Blood Pressure Information Booklet, 'Over time, high blood pressure can kill you.' It can cause heart attack, heart failure, strokes and kidney failure.

What does it feel like having high blood pressure?

'The problem is that you can't feel high blood pressure. So many people don't know they are sick until they get their blood pressure checked.' Doctors and nurses measure your blood pressure



Above, an electronic Sphygmomanometer for reading blood pressure. Photo by Jacek Halicki creative commons.

using a sphygmomanometer, which is an inflatable band that is put around your arm and pumped up for a few seconds.

What can you do to lower your blood pressure naturally?

Avoid eating too much salt, lose weight if you are overweight, stop smoking, drink less alcohol, do plenty of exercise. Sometimes you can do all of these things and STILL have high blood pressure. In this case your doctor can prescribe medication. (ccCHiP)

What about low blood pressure (Hypotension)?

Sometimes you can have too much of a good thing. Where persistently low blood pressure is accompanied by other signs of trouble such as dizziness and fainting, your doctor will need to investigate. Pregnancy, prolonged bed rest, serious infection and injury can be causes. (American Heart Association, 2016)

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Your Physical Health and Wellbeing

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

Professor: Our lower life expectancy 'driven by neglect'

By Warren Heggarty

Heart attack and stroke are the major causes of early death for people with serious mental health issues. The lower life expectancy 'driven by neglect' according to Professor Tim Lambert (Pictured at top right) of ccCHIP.

Professor Lambert was Guest Speaker at Buckingham House on 23 October 2017 and he started off by warning those present that what he had to say may be upsetting.

While the rest of the population has enjoyed a 2.5 year increase in life expectancy in every recent decade, people with serious mental health issues have been going backwards if anything. While there are many factors, the one that stands out for Professor Lambert is early death from heart attack and strokes.

It may be so that 90% of people with serious mental health issues are overweight, but the whole of society is plagued by things like obesity. What is it that makes it different for us?

People with a diagnosis of Schizophrenia, Bipolar and Major Depressive disorder die younger from heart disease, not so much because we have more cardiovascular illness than anyone else. It is because when it occurs in someone with

a serious mental illness, it doesn't get treated properly. Our lower life expectancy, says Professor Lambert is 'driven by neglect.'

Sometimes we neglect our own health. Some GPs don't have enough time or specialised knowledge (particularly of medicines). Some Psychiatrists seem to avoid dealing with non-psychiatric elements of our health even though they are trained doctors!

Another problem is the sheer complexity of the health system, where we might find ourselves having to make appointment after appointment with different specialists months apart – and it is so

easy to lose track of it all, or even give up.

The side effects of many of the medications we take are notorious for weight gain –and the effect they have on our cardiovascular system. But even without factoring in the side effects of these drugs, Professor Lambert says that there is a lot that we can and should be doing but are not.

Professor Lambert had a dig at some of the nutritional advice he has heard which is not suitable for people on low incomes. 'It's not about eating mung



beans or going to the gym.'

ccCHIP (Collaborative Centre for Cardiometabolic Health in Psychosis) is one way of addressing all of this and Professor Lambert is surprised it hasn't taken off more.

It is a 'one stop shop' where we can see all of the different specialists we need to see in one session. So we can see in say two hours all of the specialists we might ordinarily take two years to see.

The ccCHIP website has some great resources, such as information booklets on Blood Pressure, Diabetes, Nutrition, Physical Activity, Constipation and Cholesterol. Go to ccchip.clinic

ccCHIP, pictured below, is located in the Clinical Sciences Building at Concord Hospital, Hospital Road Concord NSW 2039, Telephone **(02) 9767 6027**

**Our Story about ccCHIP
from March Panorama is
reprinted due to public
demand.**

**Correction:
We apologise for the
misprinted phone
number in March. The
correct number for
ccCHIP is (02) 9767 6027
Thanks to our eagle-eyed reader
Bronwyn for picking that up.**



ccCHIP building in Concord



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BACK ON TRACK HEALTH Your Physical Health and Wellbeing

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Constipation

Foods for that get up and GO feeling

By Grant J Everett

While constipation isn't a glamorous topic, it's an extremely common affliction that can affect anybody.

Most experts agree that three or fewer bowel movements per week could indicate a problem.

The majority of cases are caused by our lifestyles, especially diet. Very few of us get enough fibre each day, and most of us don't drink enough water.

Sometimes, ongoing constipation can be a sign of a medical problem, or be caused by certain medications, in which case, see a doctor.

Here is a list of some things that may help.

Water

Water, fibre and regular exercise are the holy trinity of relieving constipation. Just being a bit dehydrated will make toilet time more difficult. Drink 8 to 10 glasses a day, and eat plenty of foods with a high water content.

Prunes

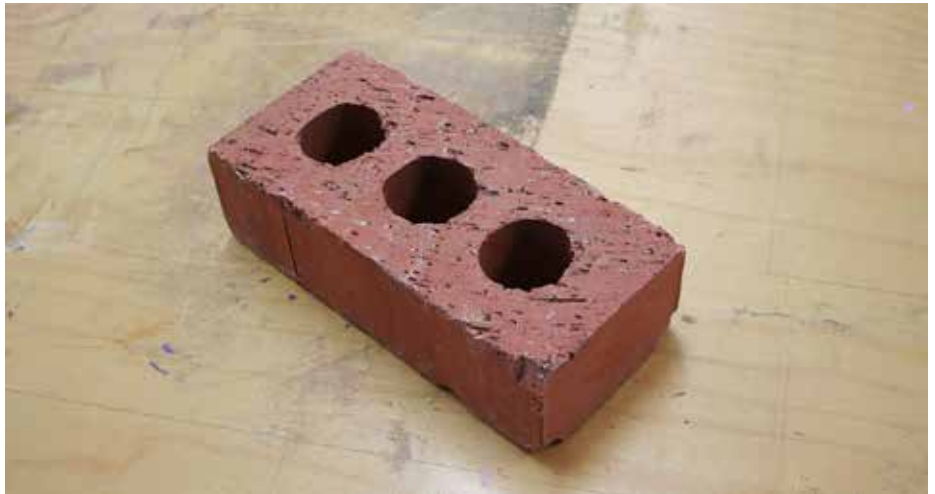
Prunes are practically synonymous with treating constipation. They're very rich in fibre at about 1 gram of fibre per prune (the average person should have 25 grams of fibre a day). Prunes also contain other substances that have a laxative effect.

Beans

Beans contain a type of fibre-like starch that has a lot of benefits to offer your digestive system. Yes, beans may cause gas and bloating, so it's up to you if the pluses outweigh the negatives.

Kiwi fruit

Fruit that's high in fibre and low in fructose is worth its weight in gold. One cup of kiwi fruit contains 5 grams of fibre, plus lots of other nutrients (like more than double your daily dose of vitamin C).



Oranges

When you juice an orange you lose all the fibre and end up with little more than sugar water, so you are much better off with an actual orange. One large orange offers 4 grams of fibre at just 86 calories. Like prunes, citrus fruits also contain other natural laxatives.

Porridge

Half a cup of oats offers 2 grams of insoluble fibre and 2 grams of soluble fibre. Without getting too technical, these two types compliment each other and are more than the sum of their parts.

Rice

In a Japanese study it was found that people who ate the most rice were 41% less likely to suffer from constipation. If you want to eat rice for the fibre content, brown rice offers 4 times as much fibre as the white kind.

Spinach

One cup of cooked spinach contains 4 grams of fibre and is an excellent source of magnesium. As there's a whole range of laxatives based on magnesium, adding more of it to your diet can help.

Green beans

If traditional beans gas you up too much, try green beans. While much lower in protein and carbs, green beans still contain 4 grams of fibre per cup. They shouldn't come with the gassy side effect of regular beans, either.

Yogurt

Many yogurts contain bacterial cultures that replenish the good bacteria in your gut. This helps with the entire digestive system. Try to avoid the yoghurts that are high in sugar and fat, as they can be as unhealthy as ice cream.

Breakfast

Eating breakfast starts all of your bodily functions, and choosing fibre-rich foods for your morning meal (like the aforementioned porridge, yoghurt, flaxseeds and oranges) will further prompt your natural urge to go.

Source:

www.health.com/health/gallery/0,,20920856,00.html

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)



The Healing Garden

By Russell O'Brien

*(Russell is an employee at Flourish Australia's
Prestige Packing Co, Marrickville)*



Starting a healing garden is great for your health.

No one wants to be sick and Mother Nature is the best medicine. You can grow healing herbs in pots and tubs that can help your brain and body heal. Of course, the more love you put in your garden the more it will give YOU!

A healing garden is uplifting, too, with attractive scents and delicate flavours and it comes from God.

Here is the way you could start a healing garden.

- Find/collect some old pots.
- Clean them and buy some good potting mix.
- Mix the potting mix with fertilizer (it is better if it is organic) and leaves, grass clippings or chopped up vegetable scraps. Mix right through.
- You must keep the soil moist.
- Go to a GOOD nursery.
- Buy cottage herb starters or packets of seeds.
- Plant them very gently.
- Water and keep in a sunny spot away from wind.

Fresh herbs are exciting to have around the home as they are all so different and have different uses. Some are perennial (live forever) or annual (one season). The Annual ones you change for something else when no longer productive.

Enjoy the benefits and pleasures of your herb garden!

Do you know that everything that you put in your mouth affects your mental and physical health?! You cannot escape it.

Some of the wonderful herbs you can grow include these:

- **Lavender**, with its relaxing smell is good for stress and insomnia. You can put a sprig on a fabric envelope and put it under your pillow.
- **Rosemary** is good for Roast Lamb, for concentration and good to get rid of germs. You can make essential oil and burn it in the candle burner aromatherapy in your office/ work place or at home.
- **Goto Kola** is good for brain health, arthritis and longevity. Pick a few leaves and chew it. Simple, it's nice, tastes like sweet spinach.
- Fresh **parsley**, some say, is good for cancer and energy. Just added to your salad or meal. Great for dish decoration too.
- **Mint** keeps your body clean and smells nice.
- **Basil**, a part of Mediterranean diets, is anti-germ and smells good.
- **Brahmi**, excellent for physical and mental exhaustion, it improves brain function. If you take this for six months, every day, it can improve brain function by regenerating the brain cells. Something from nature can do much for you, it's wonderful. Is a very good herb for those who are under breakdown. It's also anti-inflammatory, it helps with all muscles aches and pains. I recommend people to have a sprig (a little piece of it) each day, you can chew it, put it in a salad (is a bit bitter) or even infuse it in tea.

The list of herbs is enormous.

Thanks to Konnie Magalhaes for assisting with the design.



Supported Employment in Kazakhstan

By Warren Heggarty

In Kazakhstan, only three per cent of people with a disability are engaged in employment. People with disabilities, including serious mental health issues, tend to live in segregated institutions. This is not an ideal environment for a supported employment program, but this didn't stop the founders of the Training Café in Almaty.

The Training Café opened in 2015 with 40 employees, people with both physical and psychosocial disabilities. A year later, two employees had left the institution to live in the community. Another hopes to



Employees and staff at the Training Cafe, Almaty, Kazakhstan. PHOTO FROM THEIR FACEBOOK PAGE

get open employment, move in with his girlfriend and start a family. One of the biggest obstacles the founders had to face was trying to convince the people who ran the institutions that it was a good idea to equip their residents (or patients as they are called) with the skills to live and work in the community. According to Ainur Shakenova, a local disability rights

advocate, the Training Café has been a positive step towards social inclusion for Kazakhstan's 10,000 residents of institutions. (Shakenova, 2016) So things are getting off the ground in Kazakhstan, but what is the situation in other parts of the globe.

Meanwhile in Africa

What would happen if companies were actually required by law to give jobs to people with disabilities?

In South Africa, according to an article in Africa Business, they actually have a QUOTA requiring that 2% of employees in certain companies have a disability. This is quite modest because the actual number of people with a disability is 7.6% of the population. To make matters worse, businesses often do not comply. A similar situation exists in Kenya and Nigeria. (Toesland, 2017)

Just like in Australia, there are two stumbling blocks which are relatively easy to surmount.

Firstly employers are often under the mistaken impression that it will cost them and secondly the employers lack the knowledge and confidence to be able to put affirmative action policies into practice. (Toesland, 2017)

This is a major reason why it is a good idea to have forums where employers and potential employees with disabilities can meet and greet and get to know each other.

References

Shakenova, A. (2016, April 26). Kazakhstans Training Cafe serves up inclusion. Retrieved from Open Society Foundations: <https://www.opensocietyfoundations.org/voices/kazakhstan>
Toesland, F. (2017, February 20). Embracing the disabled workforce in Africa. Retrieved from African Business Magazine: <http://africanbusinessmagazine.com/sectors/development/embracing-disabled-workforce-africa/>

Thanks to Janet Meagher AM for suggesting this.

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Lived Experience has come a long way

Peer work in Australia workshop

By Warren Heggarty

Drawing upon your own lived experience of mental health issues in order to walking alongside another person in their recovery journey has been a game changer.

Peer work has come a long way in the two or three decades since it began to break down barriers in the mental health field. It is a good time to see just how far we have come, where we stand today and where we will take it in the future.

Trail blazing

Professor Larry Davidson, who is Director, Program for Recovery and Community Health at Yale University School of Medicine, opened an important Peer Workshop held at Figtree Conference Centre, Sydney Olympic Park on 23 March 2018.

Speaking by video link from his office in New Haven, Connecticut, USA, Prof Davidson described peer work and lived experience as 'a movement that has taken over every continent' and a movement in which 'Australia is trail blazing.'

Lived experience has proved to be the most transformative aspect of recovery. He said with brutal frankness that it is a method by which you can 'turn your pain and suffering into constructive change.'

Professor Davidson is an Academic

Above: Lived experience workers Gwen, Jemima, Alana, Janet, Sage, Warren and Darcy set to work brainstorming about just what makes peer work work.

who along with many others has done extensive research which demonstrates the positive outcomes of lived experience in the recovery process.

However, he told the workshop that knowing the outcomes is not enough. To take peer work further and to make it even more effective, we need now to reflect on exactly how it works. Peer workers are best placed to examine how it is that we achieve those positive outcomes.

In the United States, there is a growing focus on Peer workers helping people to navigate the medical side of things: the physical health issues that almost inevitably accompany mental health issues. He reiterated the fact that people with serious mental health issues live 20 to 25 years less than the general population. This is a major challenge that peer workers are now grappling with.

Legends and hope

At the root of peer work, though is hope. Lilly Wu, who has been a peer worker for many years, referred to the early peer workers as 'Legends.' A number of them were in the workshop, though it is doubtful they would have felt comfortable with the title 'legend'! People like Janet Meagher AM, Fay Jackson and Peter Schaecken among other pioneers had to introduce a sense of hope into an environment that was

often largely hostile. Whenever big changes happen, it is natural for people to resist and affirm the status quo. When you consider that these early peer workers had to face this daunting resistance on top of their own mental health issues, you realise that the term 'legends' is quite appropriate.

One of the Legends, Gwen Scotman-Challenger told the workshop that the main ingredient is 'sharing hope.' In peer work, hope works reciprocally. It comes back to you, which may be why peer workers find their jobs so rewarding despite the inevitable stresses and frustrations.

The workshop, facilitated by Dr Leanne Craze and David Plant is part of a project examining the development of peer work in Australia. Janet Meagher AM, Dr Gerry Naughtin AM have been working on 'a synthesis of peer work literature and evidence.'

Four experts in peer work policy, research and implementation (Fay Jackson and Tim Fong from Flourish Australia, along with Erandathie Jayakoda and Anthony Stafford from Mind Australia) together with Janet Meagher have sponsored and commissioned a number of authors to contribute papers on the development of peer work, with a view to eventual publication.

The Workshop itself, it is hoped, will produce a collective guide to where we might take it from here. Produced by peer workers for the benefit of peer workers and the people we walk alongside in the recovery process.

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