

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

panorama

Quarterly Issue #67 March 2018

- From a mental health diagnosis to Mental Health Nurse of the Year
- Confidence is something you learn to DO
- The story of Gladesville Hospital Cemetery
- “To help others as I have been helped”

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Where mental wellbeing thrives



Where mental wellbeing thrives

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

Contact Flourish Australia!
1300 779 270
flourishaustralia.org.au

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.

General Manager, Inclusion: Fay Jackson
Publications Officer: Warren Heggarty
Assistant Publications Officer: Grant J Everett

Subscriptions

Warren: (02) 9393 9021
Grant: (02) 9393 9022
Address: Publications Officer, 5 Figtree Drive, Sydney Olympic Park, NSW 2127
E-mail
Warren.Heggarty@flourishaustralia.org.au
OR Grant.Everett@flourishaustralia.org.au

Disclaimer

Panorama's content is not intended as a substitute for the advice of any specialised or qualified professional. The views expressed herein are those of the authors, not necessarily of Flourish Australia, or any associated enterprises, their staff, management, employees, or service recipients.

CONTENTS

Cover: Emeritus Community Advisory Council member Michael Wren

3 Meet Mark Orr
3 A Snapshot of Flourish Australia
4 Flick Grey: Globe Trotting Mad Studies Academic
5 Michael's Road to Recovery
6 Expressing Creative Minds
7 Ariel: The Value of Writing
8-9 Going from a Mental Health Diagnosis to Mental Health Nurse of the Year
10-11 Unmarked graves in Gladesville Psychiatric Hospital's Cemetery
13 Sarah: 'To help others as I have been helped'
14 Confidence is something you learn to DO
15 Kerala, Kochi & Coconuts: Pano rama TRAVEL with Edwina Keelan
16 Can\$ for Ca\$h
17 Au revoir, Pam
18 Janet Meagher AM: Honoured
19 Shane's story: Repairing and Rebooting his Life
Four Page ACTION recovery conversatoin's detachable supplement
21 ACTION: Anybody can change a tap washer
22 ACTION: Dressing to Feel Good
23 ACTION: The Social Age
24 ACTION: Moderation at Mealtime
25 "Your Voice Matters" with Dr Dan Fisher
26 Life and Fashion - Part two
27 Steve the Worker Bee
28 More Than Being Medicated: The Hierarchy of Need
29 Treasure Hunt 2017
30 ConnectFest 2017
31 AGM 2017
32 "Bling a Bra"
33 Queanbeyan Mindfulness Group
34 What is Mindfulness?
35 Patricia Goes on a Retreat
36 Sleep Well for Recovery
37 Is Obesity a Disease?
38 Our lower life expectancy "driven by neglect"
40-41 Climbing the Ladder
42 Working to Live
43 Get it Through the Grapevine

Contributors and acknowledgements

Kathy Te Nuku is a Peer Worker at Prestige Packing Harris Park
Stephen Prior is a Supervisor at Prestige Packing Harris Park
Steven Fitzgerald is a factory hand at Prestige Packing Harris Park
Shane attends our Day2Day Living Centre at Nowra
Edwina Keelan is a supported employee at Prestige Packing Marrickville
Ariel Riveros runs the Expressive and Creative Writing Workshop at Buckingham House, Surry Hills
Michael Wren accesses our Bathurst Service and is a member of the Community Advisory Council
Karina Lindsey Senior Mental Health Worker at Nowra Day2Day Living Centre
James Herbertson is Senior Manager of our community businesses
Kara Lyons is our ADE/NDIS Transition Coordinator
Clare Evans is our Capacity and Marketing Manager
Matthew Ball was recognised as the best mental health nurse in the country in 2017
Dr Daniel Fisher is an American psychiatrist who has a mental health diagnosis
Katherine Maxwell is from Prestige Packing Marrickville
Flick Grey is a Mad Studies Academic bringing Open Dialogue to Australia
Dan runs a weekly Mindfulness workshop at Queanbeyan
Fay Jackson is our General Manager Inclusion
Peter Farrugia is our Peer Workforce Program Manager
Patricia D is a Peer Worker at Warwick Farm Enterpraise
Charles Tabone is the Manager at our Seven Hills service
Warren Heggarty is the Publications Officer at Panorama magazine
Grant J Everett is the Assistant Publications Officer at Panorama magazine
And thanks to all the other people who assisted us with this issue of Panorama!
If you would like to make a contribution, please email Panorama
Panorama@flourishaustralia.org.au

Flourish Australia's New CEO

Meet Mark

Before working at Flourish Australia what was the most unusual or interesting job you've ever had?

I worked at the NSW Office of the Protective Commissioner and Public Guardian providing substitute decisions about people's personal, legal and financial affairs.

What are three career lessons you've learned thus far?

Be open to new experiences. Take as many opportunities you can to develop new skills and networks. Your boss wants you to succeed. Communicate regularly and genuinely with them. Be generous in sharing your time, knowledge and connections. Strengthening the ties we have with others helps everyone achieve more and feel supported.

What advice would you give to recent new hires?

Keep your focus always on authentic engagement with people and supporting them to live the life they hope for. Bring your whole self to work. Celebrate diversity, understand life's complexities and reach out if you need flexibility or additional support. Be committed to life-long learning.

What's the last book you read?

Fantasy Land: How America Went Haywire. A 500 year history

If you could meet anyone in the world dead or alive who would it be and why?

Nelson Mandela. Whilst not perfect, he was a values driven leader; a man of great conviction and resilience who united a country after so many years of division and pain.



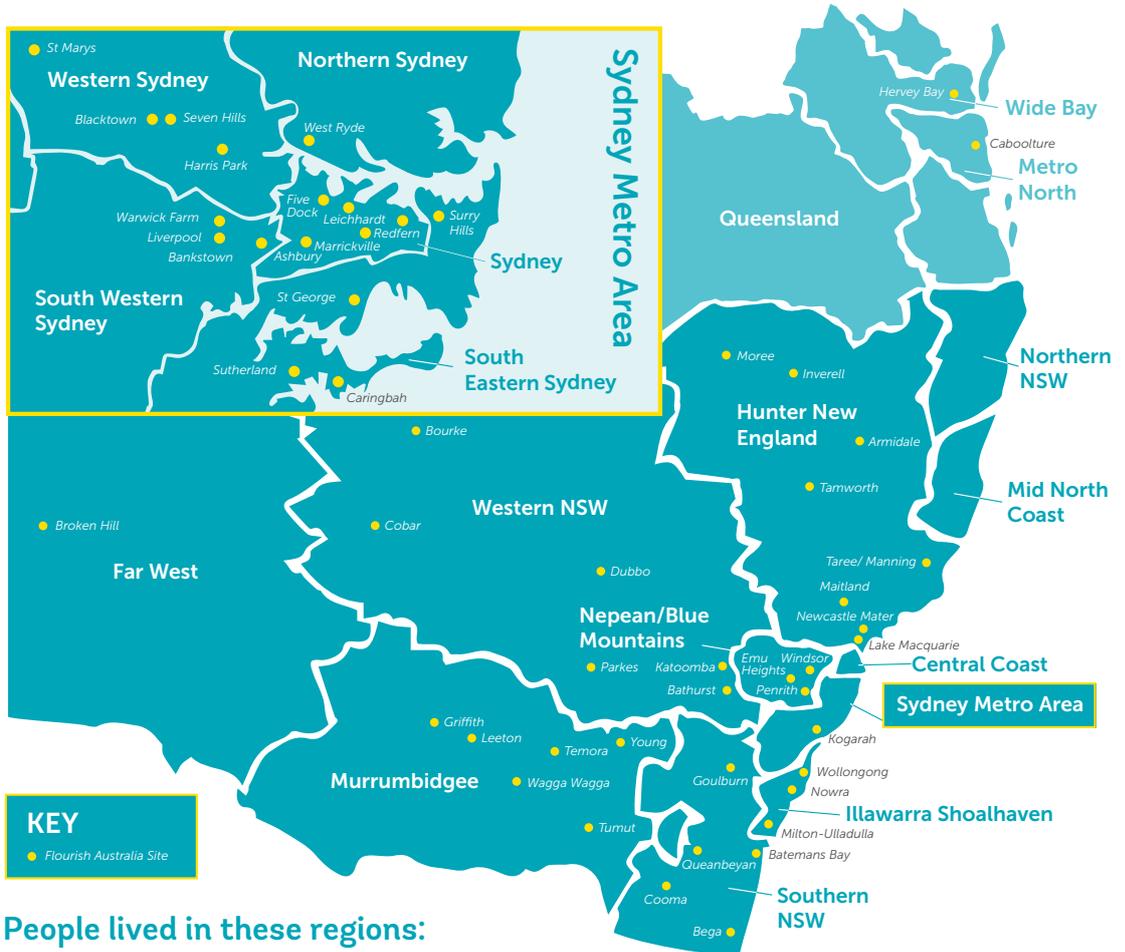
A Snapshot of Flourish Australia

This map shows the various services run by Flourish Australia throughout New South Wales and South Eastern Queensland.

The inset shows services within the Sydney Metropolitan area. Yellow dots show the towns and suburbs in which we have service operating.

Articles in Panorama often contain an 'address label' which refers to one of these geographical locations.

Further information about Flourish Australia and the types of services we provide can be found on our web site <https://www.flourishaustralia.org.au/>



People lived in these regions:

Hunter New England LHD1169	Sydney LHD485	Metro North HHS.....47	Far West LHD22
South Western Sydney LHD.....837	Illawarra Shoalhaven LHD.....372	Wide Bay HHS.....176	Northern Sydney LHD4
Nepean Blue Mountains LHD553	South Eastern Sydney LHD367	Murrumbidgee LHD139	
Western Sydney LHD570	Southern NSW LHD.....224	Western NSW LHD.....59	



Flick Grey: Globe-Trotting Mad Studies Academic

Flick Grey received a rare standing ovation at TheMHS (The Mental Health Services) Conference when she spoke about her experiences with the mental health system, her globe-trotting research trips and the contribution she is making to the flourishing field of Mad Studies. Flick was kind enough to take a break from her hectic schedule to give us an overview on how she's doing her part to revolutionise the way we view and treat mental and emotional distress...

FLICK: I believe that a great deal of harm is being done in the mental health system in the name of "helping people". Our experiences aren't being listened to, and there isn't enough value placed on what they mean to us, both individually and collectively. This has led me to embrace three complementary fields: Mad Studies, Intentional Peer Support (IPS), and Open Dialogue.

I have a personal connection to all of this. Since 2005, I've been given nine different diagnoses, with three new ones in early 2017 alone. I've also been in hospital a few times, but hospitalisation only made me feel more distressed. To be honest, I haven't found any of my diagnoses useful, even the one that I believe to be the most accurate: Complex Post

Traumatic Stress Disorder. The problem is that having a diagnosis makes it sound like there's something wrong with me, whereas I believe that my experiences make sense in the context of the painful things I've gone through. Rather than being reduced to a diagnosis, I see my experiences as rich with meaning. I believe that people with a lived experience (or whatever term you prefer) need to be the ones who lead the way forward in mental health.

Before getting caught up in the mental health system I was an academic who studied Linguistics. I also had an interest in Political Sciences and Sociology, and even studied Law for a while. I've worked in numerous academic roles such as research assistant, casual lecturer, tutor and even as an Executive Officer for a research unit. While my experiences with the mental health system haven't changed the fact that I'm an academic, my field has definitely shifted. I've been doing my PhD for some time now, and the reason it's taken such a long time to finish is because the discipline I wanted to be based in is only just coming to exist: Mad Studies. At its core, Mad Studies explores the meaning and context of our experiences, rather than labelling it as mental illness and calling it a day. Mad Studies puts the voices of people who are in distress at the very centre of their treatment, and I hope to be a key part of building Mad Studies in an Australian university context.

I'm also committed to Intentional Peer Support, which I first came across while I was on sickness benefits. I started down the IPS path when Merinda Epstein rang me up in 2008. Merinda told me that someone had dropped out of a training seminar that was due to run in a week, so there was a free place available if I was interested. I had no idea what I was getting into, but I eagerly accepted the offer. The rest is history! I've received further training in this field from Shery Mead and Chris Hansen, and over the years I've become increasingly involved with IPS. I couldn't recommend it more highly!

In 2014 I discovered the field of Open Dialogue, and I decided to study it for three years in London. The course had three places designated specifically for peer workers (which was, at the time, highly unusual) and it was being taught by the most experienced Open Dialogue practitioners in the world, including Jaakko Seikkula, Mary Olsen, Kari Valta-

nen, John Shotter, and Jorma Ahonen. It was the first time this course was being offered in English, and I was excited to learn alongside people from many different countries who all shared a passion for creating a more humane, respectful approach to supporting people in emotional crisis. Open Dialogue involves having a practitioner holding crisis talks where a person's entire support network can discuss what needs to be discussed. Open Dialogue really inspires me because, for one, it can support the public mental health system to respond more effectively to people, while also offering an alternative outside of the system. I believe these things are desperately needed.

In 2015 I was awarded a SANE Hocking Fellowship to travel across Europe, the UK and the USA to visit places that were bringing Open Dialogue and peer work together. I learned a great deal about the ways people are approaching this work, and some of the challenges they've faced. While there were a lot of complex ideas, I found the best way to combine Open Dialogue and peer work is through a culture of respect where you take time to develop trust. I'm currently finishing my Open Dialogue thesis on this topic, and I hope to publish my findings soon.

One of my current projects is organising a one-year training seminar in Open Dialogue in Melbourne and New Zealand. This will be led by peer workers, and everyone who gets involved will also be trained in Intentional Peer Support. If you are interested in understanding more about Open Dialogue, I've created a free website full of resources and links here:

www.opendialogue.org.au

I'm still a casual academic, so sometimes I participate in research and give guest lectures. I also work as a consultant, trainer, supervisor, freelance peer support worker and Open Dialogue practitioner. I offer peer support privately, and I also train and supervise peer workers in Victoria as part of a project that supports people after they are discharged from public hospitals.

I hope that what I've written resonates with what readers are thinking, or challenges you in useful ways, or encourages you to step up into your passions with more zest.

www.intentionalpeersupport.org

Michael's Road to Recovery

FLOURISH AUSTRALIA
84 Piper Street, Bathurst
NSW 2795
(02) 9393 9550

MICHAEL WREN accesses our Bathurst Service, and is an emeritus member of the Community Advisory Council. In December he visited Flourish Australia's head office as part of a Think Tank. Here, he shares some of his story with us...

I am going to see an NDIS planner. It is best to sort out your NDIS plan up front face to face. So far I have found the NDIS has been a pain to deal with. It seems to be OK where disabilities are concerned, but not so much with mental health issues. One person I spoke to by phone basically said that I was not sick enough to get an NDIS package. It's hard to assess someone based on pieces of paper.

Recently, Lisa Harrison (Manager of Flourish Australia's Bathurst branch) rang me up on a Sunday night to see how I was going. That's pretty good service! She needs to be praised for everything she does.

Community Advisory Council

I joined the Flourish Australia CAC when it got off the ground in May 2016. One of the things I did was to start a local committee to put forward ideas and activities at Bathurst. We also organised a meeting there about helping people who might be struggling with the NDIS.

Nobody should be left behind or forgotten by the NDIS, but this currently isn't the case.

I found the CAC really good. Fay (Jackson), Kim (Jones), (former administrative support person) Michelle (Cullen) and everyone at Head Office made you feel really welcome. I saw lots of positive things happening. Our ideas got heard. Mark (Orr) and Pam (Rutledge) are awesome. People in Flourish Australia care about what they do, and it's 99% awesome.

Driving lessons

I was recently able to get my driver's licence. I didn't think I'd get it, but John, Gay and Amanda from Bathurst all encouraged me to go for my Learner's Test. I did a trial Road Knowledge Test online using the App every chance I got. After doing lessons with Scott Vickery I got my Ls, and now I've earned my red Ps. I found that the Service NSW staff were great, too.

The first few driving lessons were difficult, but Scott was able to teach me in a way that eventually made it easier. When I did the exam, I just treated it like another session with the driving instructor, and this helped me overcome any nerves. The tricky things are hill starts,

reverse parking and three point turns.

Duke of Edinburgh

I participated in the Duke of Edinburgh Awards when I was at school. It's good because it's competitive, but you compete against yourself. There was camping for four days, a bike ride, volunteer community service (which I did in a retirement village) and also acquiring a new skill. You get to progress up through various levels, Bronze, Silver and Gold. At the end of it I got to meet the Governor to get a certificate!

For about three years, from 2013 to 2016, I almost never left the house because of my mental health issues. I used to have a friend who would do my shopping, for example. Two things that are very difficult to do if you are in a situation like I was in are to visit the doctor and attend Centrelink appointments.

I was first referred to Flourish Australia from Mission Australia. Workers from Flourish Australia visited me at home to begin, with and encouraged me to start getting out more. Things have certainly improved since then.

A while back I went to TAFE and did a Certificate III in Information Technology. Later, I hope to do a Certificate IV in Peer Work.

As told to Warren Heggarty

"You can't let everything in your past control your future."

-Tane Paki, a senior pastor in Michael's Church



Expressing Creative Minds

ROBERT runs an art group called “Creative Minds” twice a month at Flourish Australia’s Queanbeyan day-to-day living centre. He took his time out from helping budding artist to create masterpieces to discuss the details of his class.

PANORAMA: Were you the one who started this art group, Robert?

ROBERT: When it comes to new groups and programs we do things democratically. The staff will ask around to see what we want to do. These ideas then go to a general vote. If enough people vote yes, we can create a new group.

P: Do you have a lot of history with art?

ROBERT: Art was always among my favourite things. My age and health issues have narrowed down how often I do it, unfortunately.

P: What makes art special for you? What does it offer you?

ROBERT: I think it’s an activity my mind is suited to, as my brain has a visual orientation. Whether serious or not, doing art is compatible with the way my brain works. Flourish has also introduced me to the local art population in Queanbeyan.

P: What do you like to create, Robert?

ROBERT: I’m creating things on the

computer at the moment. I do funny paintings and drawings, and I also take photos. All art is good.

P: What kinds of art are on offer in your group? Painting, drawing, sculpture, crafts?

ROBERT: We do painting and pencil things, as well as craft, such as snipping paper with scissors. I also like to run group discussions about art and inspiration and all that sort of stuff.

P: Do you have a dedicated art room? Or is it a shared area?

ROBERT: Our art room is a multi-purpose area. We also host the Mindfulness group and official meetings in the same space.

P: Does Flourish provide you with all the equipment you need?

ROBERT: Flourish provides us with all of our materials. Sometimes, the artists will bring things in to share.

P: Do many people attend your art group? Are there regulars who have

been coming for years?

ROBERT: There are certainly regulars. A couple of familiar faces have been coming most of the time since the group was created. I prompt involvement in the class so people know when it is on.

P: What do your artists get out of attending the Creative Minds group? For instance, expressing themselves, being creative, encouraging each other with their creations?

ROBERT: I prompt involvement in the class. Some are quite like to listen and are happy to do so. Community settings are opportunities to show and tell.

P: Are your artists able to display their work? At Flourish Australia art exhibitions, for instance?

ROBERT: We have! We were included in one of the Flourish exhibitions a few years ago. Honestly, I’m not sure when we’ll do that again. Might be worth looking into.

P: Do you know Jane Miller, our Community Arts Coordinator? If so, has she been of any help?

ROBERT: Jane Miller turns up once in a while, and it’s a bit of an occasion. Jane Miller is well thought of.

Flourish Australia
Queanbeyan
Level 1, Suite 5, 7-9 Morisset
Street,
QUEANBEYAN NSW 2620
1300 779 270
Open 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.





Ariel: The Value of Writing

ARIEL RIVEROS runs the Expressive and Creative Writing Workshop at Buckingham House. Although he had dabbled in writing for many years, Ariel started to take his craft very seriously around 2010. His poetry and short stories have been published both locally and abroad the better part of sixty times, and his lived experience puts him in a good position to show the ropes to classes of would-be authors with similar life factors.

Over the years, Ariel has had experience with many facets of the literary world.

For starters, he was the Founding Editor of the Australian Latino Press, and his vision was to discover a great reservoir of hybrid Australian-Latino writers. Ariel had help with this from author C Derick Varn (who penned a novel called *Unlikely Stories of the Third Kind*). Ariel has also modelled a peer-run arts health group called "moodcreative" that he hopes to launch one day when the time is right.

Genre of choice

So what does Ariel pen, exactly? Is his writing a sprint, or more like a cross-country?

'I write mainly free verse poetry (which means it doesn't have to rhyme) so its length is nominal, but I haven't written any poetry in an epic form. While poetry is my main practice, some of my short stories have been accepted by magazines, too.'

'The discipline of expressive writing as a teachable therapeutic model is established in the UK. It'd be nice to formalise my work into such a qualification over here.'

- Ariel

When it comes to longer works, Ariel has published a chapbook of short stories called "Self Imposed House Arrest" through Blank Rune Press in Melbourne. He's also written a 40,000 word memoir, but has decided against submitting it for the moment.

Like most writers waiting for their big break, Ariel has other irons in the fire. After all, being a starving artist might appear romantic on the surface, but living on Maggi noodles is no fun at all!

"I have been studying a Masters of Political Economy at Sydney University. Perhaps I'm on the cusp of longer term work in that field."

The value of hardship

Writing has been great for Ariel's well-being and recovery. While he's lived

through some hard situations, it turns out that the work Ariel does during such tough times usually ends up being the most critically respected. Ariel had some relevant advice for all the writers out there who are struggling:

"Follow your passion, and take the journey. If things are tough, there is recuperative power in expressive writing. If you can articulate tough times in a concise form that is generous to yourself and to readers, you may find friendship, respect and love. You might look back and amaze yourself. You might even think, 'I'll never be able to write like that again!' But that fear is okay, because you're writing a new wonder...even if it's just for your own personal reflection."

Ariel won the Schizophrenia Fellowship of NSW 2016 poetry prize.

While all writers dream of their work elevating them to superstardom, Ariel's writing provides other, more immediate benefits, too.

"In terms of recovery and wellbeing, I have explicit trust in the creative journey, no matter if the voyage is rocky."

Finally, we asked the million dollar question: why do you write poetry, Ariel?

"Why do I write? I think Bukowski put it best: 'Poetry is what you do when you have nothing,' or something like that. I'll allow the reader to interpret that as they will..."

ARP - the poetic works of Ariel Riveros Pavez

arielriverospavez.blogspot.com.au

Want to find out more about Ariel?

www.arielriveros.net/

Here's a list of where Ariel has been published:

www.arielriveros.net/publications.html

And Ariel has things for sale here:

www.arielriveros.net/buy.html

Buck House, 43-45 Buckingham Street, Surry Hills, NSW 2010

(02) 9393 9240



Going from a Mental Health Diagnosis to Mental Health Nurse of the Year

After being diagnosed with psychosis in the 90s, Matthew Ball was hospitalised and treated with medication and electroshock therapy. In 2017, Matthew was recognised by the Australian College of Mental Health Nurses as the best mental health nurse in the country. Quite a jump! In addition to being a qualified nurse, Matthew is also a psychotherapist, counsellor, educator and consultant, and he's dedicated his life to encouraging people to realise that they are the key to their own recovery. Matthew was happy to tell us all about his journey...

Qualifying

I became an accredited mental health nurse in 2009 and completed my Master's in Nursing in 2017. I also studied counselling and psychotherapy between 2001 and 2006. Like most students, I faced the challenge of finding a balance between work, study and family. When I enrolled at Uni in the UK, however, there was a small speedbump when I ticked a box on my form confirming that I'd experienced mental health issues in the past. Even though it had been 6 years since I'd seen a psychiatrist, the Uni wanted me to make an appointment to see one before the start of the term. I refused, and thankfully nobody both-

ered to follow this up. Another time, my class was doing a study about suicide, and the lecturer said to me, in front of the *whole class*, "Matt, if this is difficult for you, please say so, as I know you've had suicide attempts." It wasn't the most helpful thing to say!

Unhelpful help

When I was an in-patient, I didn't find the medical model treatments all that effective. The psychotropic medication may have been of some value, but it did NOT get rid of the psychosis (voices, visions, beliefs). The ECT wasn't helpful, either. While I enjoyed the tea and toast they give you afterwards, I take the view that ECT is being administered without a reasonable understanding of how it works, and that means it can be very harmful. It's also spoken about in terms that leave you feeling powerless (used as "a last resort treatment", that sort of thing).

You do NOT have to be rid of all symptoms in order to achieve your goals. If we decided to see symptoms as meaningful results from our life events, or as a part of a person's journey, perhaps we'd be able to better understand what these experiences represent. For instance, a symptom could just be your body's survival mechanisms (say, a trauma informed approach) kicking in. "Total remission" is the language of the biomedical model, and for many of us such a term can actually disempower. The biggest hurdle facing people with a lived experience is how the established medical model of illness and diagnosis tells us that we absolutely require an outside clinician if we want to have any chance at recovery. This focus can damage how we see our own powers of resilience and self-betterment. Not being the arbiter of our own recovery journey is very disheartening and can hold people in "the illness trap".

I don't think that a mental health diagnosis on its own is a positive thing. Having a "straight answer" by being diagnosed won't help, because it's not actually a straight answer. I think that for some people a diagnosis can be useful at times, but after its limited value has been spent we can find ourselves disempowered and confused as to what else we are allowed to explore with forced treatment based on a largely hypothetical diagnostic process. The chemical imbalance stuff is nonsense,

and our journeys are complex things that evolve and change as we work through them. As the clinical path is enforced as through it was evidence-based, this makes it a real problem. But if a person finds value in giving what they're experiencing a clinical name, then that's good, because value and meaning can come in many different forms. But do I think diagnosis is crucial to recovery? No.

We should try to make sense of - and find meaning in - people's psychosis and voice-hearing. It's not difficult if the attitude of both parties is right and we are able to put aside the majority of the medical model. It's about listening and being with a person to understand their personal journey, rather than labelling, oppressing and directing. It works in supporting a person to make autonomous paths in their life instead of having professionals leading the way. Of course, a person has to work hard to find their path, but this is true of all lives, I guess.

The alternative is to listen to people and value their perspective. Labels are only required because public services and non-government organisations operate on targets. They're about processing human beings like numbers. I'm not against a label if someone values it and they are supported to know the alternatives so they have genuine choice. The diagnostic system is not about individuals making a choice.

Takes one to know one?

I believe there is a power dynamic that often exists between mental health professionals and the individuals who access the system that they run. My history may have given me a natural empathy, though I don't believe that a lived experience is an essential requisite if somebody wants to gain this level of understanding. Due to my history, most days I take some time to reflect on the limited differences between people who have been labelled with a "mental illness" and myself. If you work in the mental health system and you've had a lived experience, this can give you an insight that the average mental health professional doesn't have, but I think there's a lot more lived experience among nurses and other clinical staff than is talked about. If we decided to accept that a lived experience can be a positive attribute in this line of work, we might encourage these staff members to step forward and own it. I also think this

is true of other professions.

If you want to help somebody who is unwell, start by walking beside them and accepting that they perceive reality in a way that may be very different to the way you see it. Do NOT try to prove they are in need of this-or-that style of treatment, or get into arguments about why they are wrong. It is, of course, legitimate to hold a different view, but accepting that they see reality in their own way is vital. This can nurture future opportunities to support them on their recovery journey, and this has the potential to be life changing.

We should be discussing how mental distress can be an opportunity to learn. Listening to a person without discounting their reality can have a powerful impact. This doesn't necessarily have to be the traditional staff/client relationship. Working towards understanding our experiences can make mental distress a part of our journey towards a good life, rather than a dreadful ordeal.

As these kinds of experiences can be isolating, we all need to be provided with the space, freedom and respect to find and construct our own support networks. All of our support people need to accept that whoever we decide to bring into our network is up to us. This is at the heart of all genuine person-centred recovery approaches. My goal is to encourage conversations about recovery and empowering entire networks.

Resistance

My biggest professional struggle is that if I genuinely want to put the person (and their supporters) at the centre of their journey, I'll potentially face opposition. Many professionals and peer workers within the system still use the age-old diagnostic model rather than listening to the broader experiences of the individual. By challenging this, I am sometimes labelled as "anti" or dangerous. I've had a psychiatrist write defamatory (and inaccurate) statements about me to their colleagues because I took a person-centred and humane position on the way somebody in distress perceived things. This is a prime example of the vulnerability of the dominant biomedical discourse, as it is based in an often well-intentioned - but misguided - power imbalance, rather than on good evidence. Many of my opponents tend to focus more on defending a professional position than on a person's lived reality

of mental distress.

Although I won Mental Health Nurse of the Year through the Australian College of Mental Health Nurses, I still found it a little embarrassing when an ABC News article described me as the "best"!

I had to meet certain criteria to win, such as demonstrating that I'd gone beyond what is required in my role as a nurse and truly value the impact I have in the lives of others. I think that I was awarded this honour for the breadth of the work I do, but particularly for bringing the "Hearing Voices" approach into the public mental health system. To date, I've delivered this training to 120 mental health professionals, including peer workers, support workers, mental health nurses, social workers, occupational therapists, psychologists and even psychiatrists. To date, we've shared an alternative understanding (and approach) of dealing with realities that would normally be labelled as psychosis to over 250 individuals and families. The Australian College of Mental Health Nurses also recognised the work I've been fortunate to facilitate in the Aboriginal clinic, which was a great opportunity to gain a cultural understanding of mental health in the Indigenous community.

I was nominated for the award by three people: Dr Christine Palmer, who is a wonderful nurse, Suze Hutchison, a peer consultant in SA, and Dr Kath Moores, an outstanding psychologist. The decision to make me Mental Health Nurse of the Year was made by the President of the ACMHN, a lived experience rep, an Australian College of Nursing rep and one other person.

I feel very grateful for what I've learned from my trip through the system, and it is very important for me to remember the beautiful people I've met along the way. I have a strong hope that there will be a widespread shift towards more humane ways of being, as well as being in relationships with people in distress.

Sources:

www.abc.net.au/news/2017-10-27/mental-health-patient-now-australias-best-mental-health-nurse/9091984

"Mental health patient becomes Australia's best mental health nurse," Brett Williamson, ABC Radio Adelaide

www.humaneclinic.com.au

www.facebook.com/humaneclinic

PSYCHOSIS 365 PROJECT

Matthew and Stephanie from The HUMANE Clinic in South Australia have been developing a project called "Voices, Visions and Other realities: Psychosis 365", or just "Psychosis 365" for short.

The goal of Psychosis 365 is to stockpile a collection of short (1 minute) videos about how people from all walks of life view voices, visions and other realities. These short videos will then be published online, one per day, for a whole year. They will remain as a free public resource from then on.

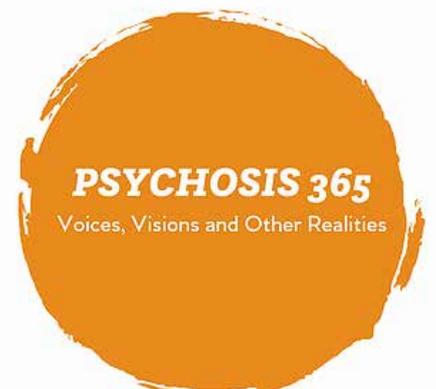
The HUMANE Clinic is extending an open invitation to everybody who has an interest in raising community awareness about the realities of what it's like to experience voices, visions and other realities.

You can more about read about it at:

www.humaneclinic.com.au/psychosis365

The HUMANE Clinic stands for...

Hope, Understanding, Meaning, Acceptance, Noos (human spirit) and Empowerment.



Only five of 1229 graves are marked in Gladesville Psychiatric Hospital's Cemetery

"This site is a poignant reminder that we must never again allow vulnerable people to be abandoned, devalued and hidden away."

Story and photos by Warren Heggarty

The NSW Government recently closed a road through the former Gladesville Psychiatric Hospital because it is actually a cemetery. It is the final resting place for 1,229 people. These people had been admitted to the hospital with mental health issues and subsequently died there.

We have details of names, dates of admission and dates of death for 923 of the burials. The exact fate of the remains of the hospital's 306 earlier deceased, from the 31 year period between 1838 and 1869, is not known.

Another 149 years went by before recognition was given to mark respect for this place in the form of signage and a road closure. Pedestrians only can enter the site, since No Entry signs were posted to prevent vehicular access.

Sydney's 'Shameful Asylums'

Ben Pike writing in the Daily Telegraph on March 2, 2015 did not mince words in his article 'Sydney's shameful asylums: The silent houses of pain where inmates were chained and sadists reigned.'

'Any place built on top of more than 1,000 anonymous corpses would send a shiver up anyone's spine' the article commenced. 'It was hoped the asylum doctors would befriend their patients, not chain them up, and help them

become normal citizens once more.'

That's not quite how it turned out. Pike cites a number of sexual assaults and violent deaths not only of patients but staff.

The horrors were not just confined to the 1800s. For example, a 1954 report 'accused staff of burning the head of one female patient after zapping her with too many electric shock treatments.'

'Families refused to pick up their relatives' bodies when they died, forcing the institution to create mass graves... many patients having no relatives or friends to speak of.'

Overcrowding

The Hospital, opened in 1838, was originally called the Tarban Creek Lunatic Asylum and it is clear that overcrowding and human rights violations were routine there. Janet Meagher AM, recent recipient of a lifetime achievement award for her work in mental health advocacy told Panorama that, sadly, institutional settings often provide opportunities for abusive and predatory people to operate.

Gladesville hospital was closed in 1993 and the site currently houses offices for a number of government and non-government organisations. Two large signs have been erected at either end of the now-closed roadway

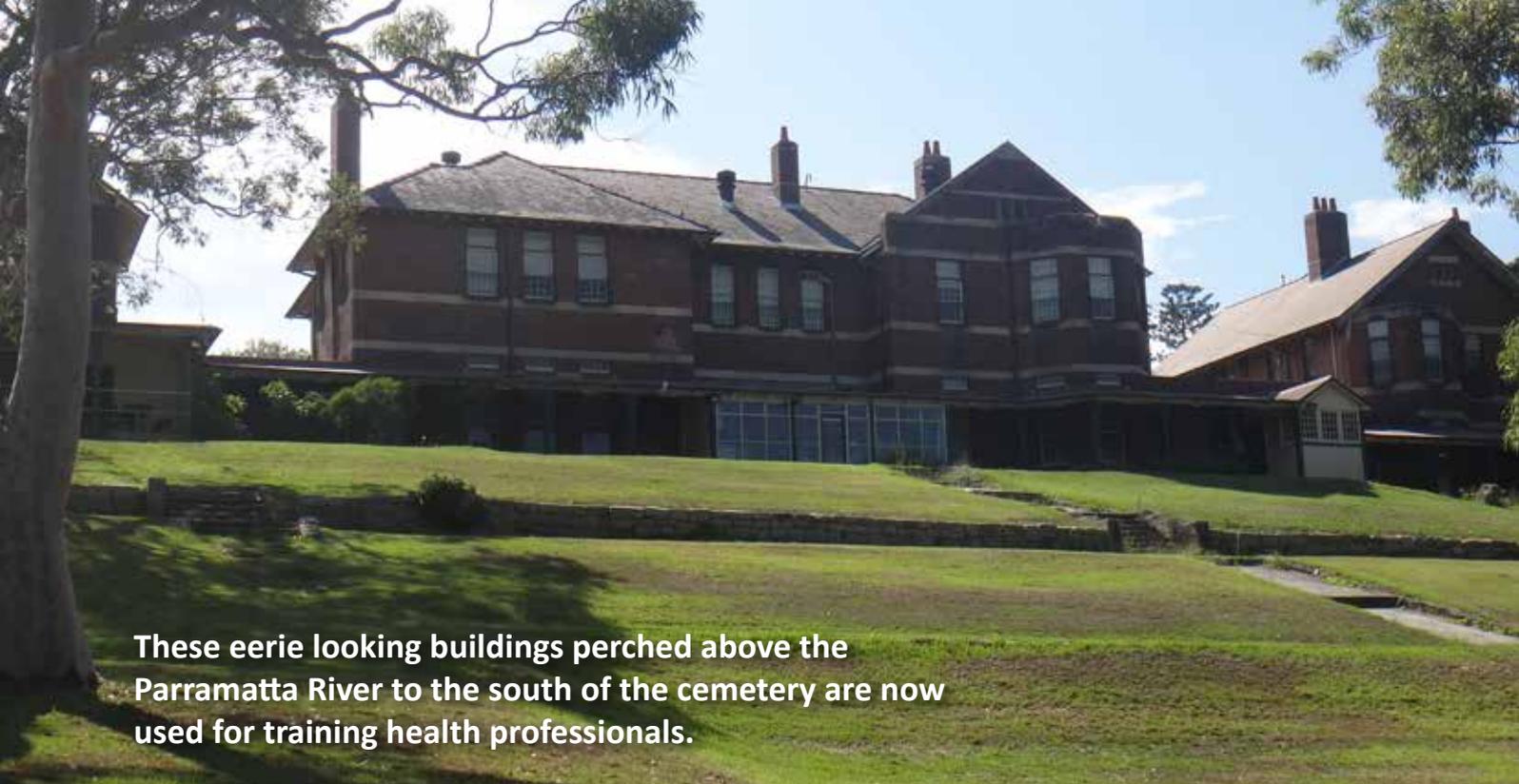
which runs between Norton Manning Drive and Crown Close, parallel with Victoria Road at Henley. The signs say in part 'This site is a poignant reminder that we must never again allow vulnerable people to be abandoned, devalued and hidden away.'

Superintendents

As there were no suitably qualified locals, NSW Governor Bourke had to recruit a married couple from England, Mr and Mrs Digby, to run the asylum from its opening. It was not until 1848 that a medical doctor was appointed as superintendent.

The graves of two subsequent medical superintendents can be found here among a set of only five marked graves. Two large stone crosses commemorate Dr Frederic Norton Manning and Eric Sinclair MD. Interestingly, Dr Sinclair had been employed at the hospital for only one year at the time he was made medical superintendent in 1883, at the age of 23! Fifteen years later, he became Inspector General of Mental Hospitals in NSW.

Next to these large crosses are two smaller stones. One of the plaques appears to have fallen off, but the other commemorates Philip Shepherd (1929-1984) 'an honoured friend who inspired and gave so much to this hospital through his art.'



These eerie looking buildings perched above the Parramatta River to the south of the cemetery are now used for training health professionals.

Four of these stones can be found just inside the entrance off Norton Manning Road, and there is an obelisk nearby, but the rest of the cemetery precinct shows no indication of the 1200 people who lay beneath.

There was even a road built through the middle, although No Entry signs have now been posted.

The Cemetery Project

In 1960, the government passed the Gladesville Mental Hospital Cemetery Act to 'authorise the use of a certain cemetery within the Mental Hospital at Gladesville for purposes other than a cemetery...' The act gave the government the power to remove any remains or surface structures from the site. This act was repealed in 2011.

After the Richmond Report in 1983, Psychiatric Hospitals began to be phased out and their functions replaced by community based services and mental

health units in local hospitals.

From 1993, Gladesville and Macquarie (North Ryde) Hospitals were amalgamated and by 1997, all inpatient services were run from Macquarie Hospital. The Gladesville site has since been used to house various organisations such as the NSW Mental Health Commission, One Door, The Mental Health Sports Network, The Mental Health Tribunal, Kids Mental Health, Cochlear and formerly the Mental Health Association.

In 2014, The NSW Ministry of Health and the NSW Mental Health Commission began collaborating on the Gladesville Hospital Cemetery Project. In 2017, the road that goes through the cemetery was closed to vehicles. The Commission and Ministry will be engaging with the media and wider public so that people know about the cemetery and its history.

Janet Meagher AM, Dr Kate Gill and Kris Havron have been three people

advocating recognition for this cemetery. 'I've been passionate about this issue for a long time' said Janet, who was a former patient at Gladesville Hospital.

A spokeswoman for the NSW Mental Health Commission said 'we are working with the Department of Health to properly memorialise the site before the end of this financial year. The signs are a temporary measure, and we hope that the final design will provide an opportunity for visitors to respectfully learn. There will also be a ceremony at that time to acknowledge the lives and worth of those buried on the site.'

Further Reading

Pike, Ben, "Sydney's Shameful asylums," Daily Telegraph, 2nd of March 2015

Research Data Australia researchdata.ands.org.au/tarban-creek-lunatic-1915-93

Gladesville Mental Hospital Cemetery Act 1960 No 45



Memorials to (L-R) Eric Sinclair MD, Dr Frederick Norton Manning, anonymous, and Philip Shepherd can be found just inside the Western entrance. The obelisk just to the North of these is the only other marked memorial.



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Sarah: "To help others as I have been helped."

By Sarah* from Bega

I have been accessing Flourish Australia's Bega service for about a year. The team works well together to give people first class service. They assess a person's needs, strengths and weaknesses.

I have had the privilege to work with Kaylene David J, David S, Jane, Tala, Ben, Lauren, Ian, Hayley and Rachel.

I feel a bond with them. I have my bad days and good days and they guide me through all of that.

I have worked one on one first with Kaylene then with Hayley. I couldn't gel with them straight away but in time, I formed a good bond. They all love working with me because I love a good chat and I am so easy going.

Hayley is such a gentle and kind person who knows how to assess the situation then goes on from there. She has helped me leave a domestic violence situation.

I am now enrolled in a community services course. I thought I was too old. I was used to my routine. Hayley and Rachel suggested that I do the course. It is a one-year Certificate III course individual support at TAFE, so I can work in the disability field myself. The reason for doing community services is to give back to the community, to help others as I have been helped. I give to charities e.g. Salvos, Vinnies and this is an extension of that.

Hayley and Ben also helped me move from a small two bedroom flat into a beautiful three-bedroom house with a lovely yard.

I can't say thank you enough.

I feel stronger with the team behind me. I can do this community services course. I can do anything. Because they believe in me.

I am now a single mum of two boys

(men). Robert* is a twenty two year old university graduate (Bachelor of Business) who is enrolled in a Bachelor of Computer Science starting in 2018. David* is an 18 year old who wants to give me grey hair and ride a bike around Australia and bring awareness to many issues! Issues like domestic violence, the environment and alcoholism.

I have my issues, but they believe in me as a person and don't make people feel as though we have a 'mental illness.'

Hayley, Kaylene and the team have helped me to believe in 'me,' that I am good enough that I can take on the world.

**Names have been changed by the Editor to protect privacy*

Flourish Australia
2/98 Carp Street
BEGA NSW 2550
02 9393 9115
1300 779 270

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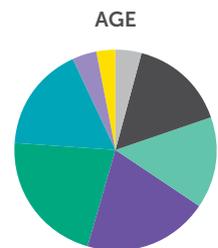
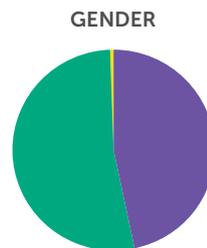
SNAPSHOT

Statistics refer to the 2016 to 2017 financial year and Annual Report

4905 people accessed our services*

INDIGENOUS
10%

CALD
19%



IDENTIFY AS:
 Female: 2264
 Male: 2566
 In another way: 15

* This includes people supported by us in Partners in Recovery areas lead by other organisations.

They asked for support in:



Helping people to make friends, get involved and learn new things



Supporting people where they live



Working with people to find a job



Headspace



NDIS



Where mental wellbeing thrives

Flourish Australia



Confidence is something you learn to DO

By Warren Heggarty

"Low self-confidence isn't a life sentence. Self-confidence can be learned, practiced, and mastered—just like any other skill. Once you master it, everything in your life will change for the better." --Barrie Davenport (Economy, 2014)

Action is the key to developing self-confidence. Merely learning to think positive won't help you unless you put those thoughts into action and do positive things. That way 'you change yourself, one action at a time. You are what you do, and so if you change what you do, you change what you are.'

(Babauta, 2007)

So too, social anxiety is something we DO rather than just something we think. Social anxiety leads people to adopting 'safety behaviours' for when they DO eventually socialise. For example:

- Only talking to people you already know
- Avoiding eye contact, folding your arms, hiding in the corner
- Limiting the amount of interactions you have to avoid some imagined social 'catastrophe'

Catherine Madigan clinical psychologist says 'doing these safety behaviours sort of maintains the social phobia... So we try to get them to think differently, to not be so focused on what might go wrong and their own status. We urge them to think *can I do something that might make somebody happy?* Like how about if I go speak to the shy-looking person.' (Pirani, 2017) Note the use of the verbs 'can,' 'do,' 'make,' 'go' and 'speak.' Confidence is a thing you do.

Justine Armstrong psychologist, founder of *Fearless Speaking* says: 'What helped me overcome my shyness was firstly a decision to be happier. I felt dissatisfied and wanted something more for myself than feeling restricted so often...' (Pirani, 2017)

Doing is believing

There are some small and simple things you can do that will make a difference. Pulling your shoulders back gives others the impression that you are a confident person. 'Smiling will not only make you feel better, but will make others feel more comfortable around you. Imagine a person with good posture and a smile and you'll be envisioning someone who is self-confident.' (Economy, 2014)

Leo Babauta reminds us that wise generals get to know their enemies well before doing battle. If you are trying to defeat a negative self-image you need to get to know yourself well. Start listening to your thoughts. Write down the thoughts you have about yourself. 'Why do you have such negative thoughts?'

Think about the good things about yourself, the things you can do well, the things you like. If you think you have limitations, ask whether they're real limitations or just ones you've allowed to be placed there, artificially.' (Babauta, 2007)

Here are some tips for developing confidence, adapted somewhat from "Helping children overcome shyness" by John Malouff, University of New England.

- Recognise the benefits of being outgoing
- Set goals for more outgoing behaviour
- Adopt models for outgoing behaviour (i.e., find someone who is outgoing and think about adopting their methods).
- Expose yourself to unfamiliar settings and people
- Interact more with others
- Reward yourself for outgoing behaviour (Pirani, 2017)

Further Reading

Babauta, L. (2007, December 9). 25 Killer Actions to Boost Your Self Confidence. Retrieved from Zen Habits: zenhabits.net/25-killer-actions-to-boost-your-self-confidence/

Economy, P. (2014, October 14). 5 Powerful ways to boost your confidence. Retrieved from Inc.: www.inc.com/peter-economy/5-powerful-ways-to-boost-your-confidence.html

Pirani, C. (2017, December 18). "Life's too short to be shy," The Australian newspaper.



Kerala, Kochi & Coconuts

Panorama TRAVEL with Edwina Keelan

or open-air workshops, canoes dug out of coconut trees, and coconuts are made into cosmetics for skin and hair ; the list goes on.

On day two I got up 3AM ready for my 5AM canoe ride to see how people really live. I saw people washing their clothes, brushing their teeth, children up and ready for school. They are a really quiet people.

On day three I moved onwards to Varkala Beach on the Arabian Sea. I saw people enjoying the sunset, people chanting on the beach, meditating and doing yoga and eating ice cream. I found it a bit too touristy.

There were lots of shops selling silk and cotton clothing.

The highlight of the trip was fish and chips and fresh fish with clear, glowing eyes on ice from the Arabian Sea for public view.

I ate fish and chips for lunch and dinner at an open-air restaurant three nights straight with the sunset of the Arabian Sea in front of me. Finally, I found some peace. I was happy.

On day six I headed to Fort Cochin, a Port City with big floating container ships out to sea heading for Saudi Arabia.

This city terrified me as a roof collapsed in a pop up gallery in the Old Dutch Quarter of the city. I was almost killed. But despite this, I enjoyed a half day trip to see a school, church, and where the governor lives.

I have never seen so many so many bananas everywhere as when I stayed in Cochin. They were even in dirt alleyways and polluted waterways.

But you can feel the presence of terrorism. In shopping centres, Malls Supermarkets, Cinemas, all are like airports on high security. Guards look for cigarettes, lighters, and water bottles, and they security-check receipts when leaving the supermarket.

On my flight back, an hour before arriving back in Sydney I realised how grateful I am for a lot of things, like being alive and how lucky I have it in Oz!

The British supermodel Naomi Campbell visited Kerala State in India, and as she is an idol of mine, I followed in her footsteps when I needed to get away from it all.

Arriving in Kochi (also spelt Cochin) I collected my Indian Rupee ready for a six hour taxi ride south to Munroe Island.

No word of a lie, it really was idyllic. Beautiful flora and fauna with open waterways and lush golden green coconut trees as far as you could see. It was incredible!

...fresh fish with clear, glowing eyes on ice from the Arabian Sea

My taste buds were wowed by fresh fish caught from the waterways of the Arabian Sea, with accompaniments such as sauces, chutneys, creams laced with coconut and served with coconut crepes. I fell in love with fish served on coconut leaves. No need for refrigeration here as the fish was dried.

Keralan people I found very friendly indeed. This place Munroe Island was off the beaten track and was far from touristy.

The weather was fine and warm in January and February. People from Australia, New Zealand, Holland, Germany and England were all here on Munroe Island. I shared fruit with a lovely young Dutch couple.

Keralan people are resourceful. Coconuts are made into rope, thatching for homes



PHOTOS BY EDWINA KEELAN

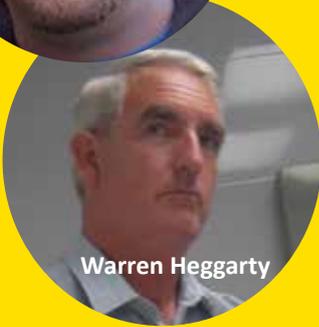
Everyone loves a travel tale: so tell us yours. Contact Panorama here: Warren.Heggarty@flourishaustralia.org.au

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Grant J Everett



Warren Heggarty

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CAN\$ FOR CA\$H

Katherine Maxwell (pictured above) from Prestige Packing Marrickville talks to Edwina Keelan and Ariel Riveros about recycling...

Hi, I am Katherine Maxwell and I recycle cans and bottles for the NSW Return and Earn scheme.

I source my cans from the road and at work, sometimes people give them to me, and sometimes I get them from the bin.

I drop them off at the official collection point near Decolatta next to the chemist in Marrickville Road, or there's one in Illawarra Road not far from Digitech not far from the medical centre in Marrickville. I do it all on my own.

The cans are turned into more products containing aluminium, like car body parts and pots and pans, and the plastic ones become new plastic bottles.

I help the environment by keeping our suburb nice and clean instead of the mess I have seen it in lately.

From recycling cans, I have almost made approximately \$20 and its for my holiday to Perth.

In Australia, Queensland, South Australia, and the Northern Territories run similar programs.

In my recovery it helps me by getting me out and about and lowering my blood pressure by exercising when I collect the cans.

The community can get involved by bringing their own cans and bottles to the collection depots located in their suburb, or look on the internet and find out where they are.

They do recycling in other countries like in south-east Asia. The United States runs recycling depots, too. New Zealand used to but Recycle Co NZ says that Kiwis rely too much on landfill and need to do a lot more recycling.

**Flourish Australia
Prestige Packing Co.
6a Rich Street
MARRICKVILLE NSW 2204
(02) 9393 9180**



Au revoir, Pam

As most of our readers will know, our former CEO Pam Rutledge handed over the leadership baton to Mark Orr from the beginning of 2018.

Flourish Australia Chair Prof Elizabeth Moore said it is difficult to see it as a retirement or even a farewell because Pam will continue her work with the Mental Health Tribunal as well as projects for Flourish Australia.

We marked the occasion of this *transition* on the 21st of December at Figtree Conference Centre. This included some live speeches, some videotaped speeches, some gift presentations and the usual high standard of catering by the Figtree Conference Centre staff.

From Richmond to Richmond

Pam has had a long career as a social worker and a leader in both government and non-government sectors. We won't reveal exactly HOW long, but Mark mentioned that in 1983 she was Executive Officer of the "Richmond" Report which spurred revolutionary changes in the way we deal with mental health issues as a society. The report's actual title was "Inquiry into Health Services for the Psychiatrically Ill and Developmentally Disabled." Things have changed so

much since then that the title is almost unspeakable today!

Later, Pam succeeded Fred Kong as CEO of Richmond Fellowship of NSW. Incidentally, that organisation's name came from the town of Richmond UK where the first of many "Richmond Fellowships" started, and is not related to the Richmond Report. From 2012 Pam worked with PRA CEO Phil Nadin to bring us the merger of RichmondPRA, now known as Flourish Australia.

Tulips

We noticed there was an unmistakable TULIP theme to the event, and a marked preference for the colours orange and purple (Pam's favourites).

Pictured above is Pam receiving one of several gifts of artworks. Gerry Connolly from Prestige Packing Co, Harris Park presented it to her, while community art coordinator Jane Miller looks on. Gerry contributed one of his own artworks as well.

Jane said that many artists from Wollongong, Blacktown, Harris Park, Richmond, Parkes and Head Office created the tulips. The picture also includes text: "People were asked for a word to describe our CEO."

The tulips have been individually cut out to create a collage. "It took 2 days to put all of the elements together in a way that was going to make every person's contribution valued and important to the whole artwork," Jane added.

Leadership

Pam's own speech was unusually subdued as she confessed that it is going to be a bit strange for her to be able to do whatever she wants on most days! This is probably because that over the years what she has actually wanted to do has been to come in to work at Flourish Australia!

What impressed us most about Pam was that her farewell speech emphasised how much she had learned from everyone else. Elizabeth drew attention to this quality in Pam: she is always able to spur other people on to do their best. What more could an organisation want from a leader?

Incoming CEO Mark Orr need not be so nervous about the big shoes to fill (metaphorically speaking). After all, he has been mentored by Pam and some of the magic is bound to have rubbed off! We notice that he has even picked up that infectious laughter of Pam's that was often heard echoing round the place.

Warren Heggarty



Janet Meagher AM honoured as joint Recipient of the 2017 Australian Mental Health Prize

By Warren Heggarty

In November 2017 Flourish Australia's former General Manager, Inclusion Janet Meagher received a well deserved award along with Professor Alan Fels AO- the 2017 Australian Mental Health Prize. Both have been part of the National Mental Health Commission.

Janet has often told the story of how she was 'locked up' in Gladesville Hospital with a diagnosis of Paranoid Schizophrenia. In those days there seemed to be no hope of her leaving the hospital let alone taking her human rights message to the highest places.

This was in the days before the Richmond Report in 1983 which led to major de-institutionalisation. Janet was eventually discharged from Hospital, became a Churchill Fellow, founded and led a mental health advocacy company (which is now known as BEING) and was a Secretary of the World Federation for Mental Health.

Janet joined PRA (a forerunner of Flourish Australia) as Director of Employment where one of her many roles was to take this magazine from a humble workplace newsletter to the magazine it is today. 'Before my time, it was a small irregular newsletter for employees at the old PRA Redfern factory. Mohammed Alkhub and the then "Welfare Officer" Stephen Correy had produced three or four issues over a number of years. When I came onto the scene I took it over and revamped, redesigned and restored it, offering it as a quality magazine with informative, attractive format and aspirational content for the entire organization,

Left: L-R Ita Buttrose, Janet Meagher AM, Prof Allan Fels AO, Tanya Davies MP, Prof Phil Mitchell

reflecting all sites and activities undertaken by PRA. We even began a subscriptions list - resulting in a wide circulation.'

Janet also authored a book (later translated into Japanese) called Partnership or Pretence which outlined the difference between real progress in the mental health service consumer movement and mere tokenism.

**"...not only have you managed your own voices, but you have advocated for people who are voiceless."
-Jessica Rowe**

Later, her title became General Manager, Inclusion until her retirement in 2013. She was also at that time one of the National Mental Health Commissioners. In 2013 the NMHC released a 'report card' on mental health in our society called 'A Contributing Life.' Janet often spoke about the importance of a contributing life for all people.

After receiving the award, Janet joined a panel on the STUDIO 10 TV program. (Meagher, 2017) She spoke about how she dealt with the experience of hearing and speaking to voices. Panellist Jessica Rowe observed that 'not only have you managed your own voices but you have advocated for people who are voiceless.'

Janet described the difficulties with

basic living that face people with serious mental health issues. 'Who would give them a job? Who would give them an opportunity to marry their son or daughter?'

One of the causes that Janet has championed is physical health. She pointed out that people with a diagnosis of serious mental health issues also have debilitating physical health problems, not just because of their issues, but often because of medication.

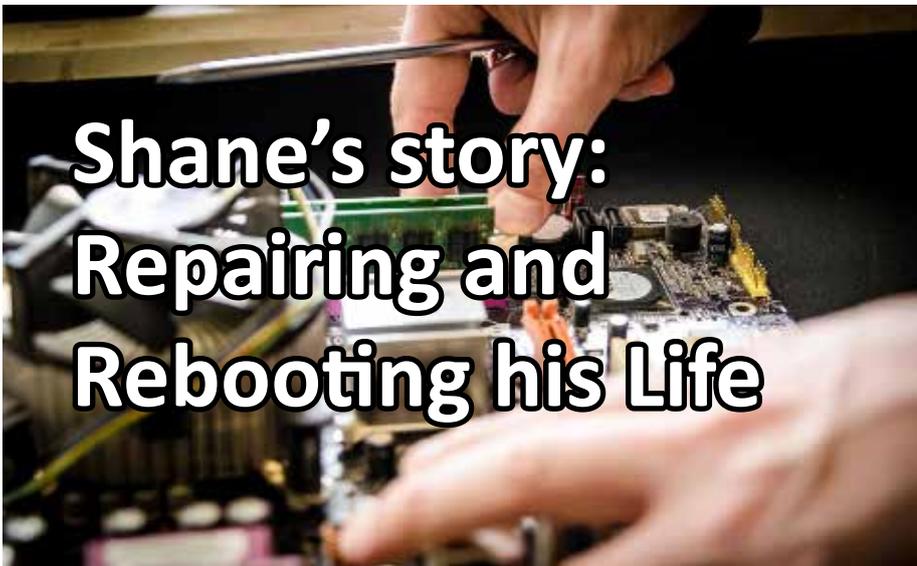
While with PRA she convened an important forum on iatrogenic health problems (that is, health problems caused by medicine) among people with mental health issues. Speakers covered all manner of topics from Constipation to Alcohol and Other Drugs to General Practice to the need for a 'no wrong door policy' in health systems. ccCHIP at Concord Hospital is an example of a health service that takes this badly needed approach to the physical health of people with mental health issues. Homelessness was another issue covered. PRA/Flourish Australia established the Back On Track Health Program in recognition of the importance of dealing with 'metabolic syndrome,' illnesses like obesity and diabetes.

Those who Know Janet realise that for all her work trying to fix the system, her greatest influence has been upon the many individuals whose lives she has touched and changed forever. Those people form a giant grapevine along which the message of hope spreads. They have a voice.

On Studio 10, although Janet mentioned shock treatments and medications that 'turn your brain to pulp', she actually credited the beginning of her own recovery journey to 'a most excellent psychiatrist.' He spoke to her strengths, which enabled her to create a future for herself, a reason to recover.

She told the STUDIO 10 panel that one of the best things that could happen is if employers took on an employee with a serious mental health issue and encouraged them. That would give people 'a reason to get better.' Once you have that reason the road to recovery opens up.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_DIZfC-kSrM



Shane's story: Repairing and Rebooting his Life

Shane has been a regular at Flourish Australia's Day2Day Living Centre in Nowra for a while now. After enduring a traumatic time in school and being repeatedly put through the gauntlet of our public mental health system, Shane is finally learning to take control of his life (with a little help). Now, he's getting closer to his goals with each new day...

SHANE: I want to take a couple of minutes of your time so I can share my story with you and, hopefully, inspire you. Most of all, I want to remind you that recovering from mental health issues is possible.

When I was in school, all the way from Kindergarten to Year 12, I was constantly bullied every day. No matter what I did, I just couldn't seem to fit in. This might have played a part in why I was diagnosed with depression and clinical anxiety at 10 years of age. As I grew older, I also began to have outbursts. Due to the bullying and other hardships, by the time I reached the age of 17 I was a mental and emotional mess, and I secretly began to cut myself. My self-harm issues have been a problem ever since.

I moved out of home when I turned 26 so I could start up and manage my own computer repair business over at Huskisson. This went fine for a year or so, but the stress of working so hard eventually got on top of me. In addition to my mental health issues my shop wasn't making enough money to stay open, and so I had to close it down for good. This was a particularly low point in my life, and after I told a GP how I was feeling they thought it was best if I spent a little time in a mental health facility. My first

admission was in the Mirrabook Unit at Shellharbour Hospital as a voluntarily patient. I was a bit scared to begin with, as I'd never even *heard* of this place, and I had no idea what to expect. I was put onto medication during my stay, and I got a little better. Unfortunately, after being discharged it was only a short period before I became unwell again, and I was hospitalised a second time. This cycle added up to 20 admissions over a four-year period. I remember that at one point not only was I hearing voices, but I was also hallucinating that the Mafia and the Police were following me around and pointing guns at me. You could only imagine how terrifying that would be.

By the time I was referred to the Day2Day Living Centre at the Nowra branch of Flourish Australia, I had pretty much given up on going anywhere in life. I felt very damaged, I didn't know how to accept help, and I was at the end of my tether. Thankfully, Flourish helped me to turn things around by providing me with a lot of support, like having one of their workers accompany me when I had to see mental health clinicians. They also assisted with my practical needs, and the Day2Day Living Centre was a good place to meet new friends who had similar life experiences to my own. Flourish provided me with these things through a "HASI High" package, and I'd say that this was the point where I truly began my recovery journey. My HASI High package gives me up to 35 hours of support per week, and I can use their assistance for anything that I find challenging or that I don't feel confident to do on my own. They do encourage me to be as independent as I can, though.

It hasn't all been smooth sailing. I've been hospitalised 2 or 3 times since

receiving my HASI package, but this was because I'm still trying to learn how to stop being reliant on the mental health system. Change can be hard! But with a lot of help from Flourish I've been able to stay out of hospital recently, and my dependence on being admitted is going away with time. As I write this, today marks 15 months without an admission. I'm also in the process of learning how to give up self-harm. Some of the techniques I use include setting specific goals of not cutting, using distraction methods, and talking to my support people.

I'm 30 years old now, and life still isn't easy. I have maybe 3 good days each week, but this is slowly getting better. On a bad day my mood will be so down that I'm barely able to leave bed. It's often a challenge to get up before 11am, but things are improving. A good technique I use to get motivated is to set specific goals that I want to achieve each day. My bird, James, helps out by waking me up at 6:30am every morning. He won't stop making noise until I go out to the lounge room to see him!

I don't think that I could have recovered to where I am now if it wasn't for the support I've had. In addition to Flourish Australia, I've also had a lot of help from my Mum and my family members, and even my friends have pitched in to help me to succeed at my goals. All of these people have encouraged me become stronger just by being there for me and supporting me emotionally.

I'm currently doing a Certificate IV in Mental Health, and I'm planning to work in the field one day.

The moral of this story is that there is hope for all of us. My advice is to accept all the assistance you can, try really hard to stay optimistic, and never give up.

Thanks to Karina Lindsay, the Senior Mental Health Worker at Nowra, who put us in contact with Shane.

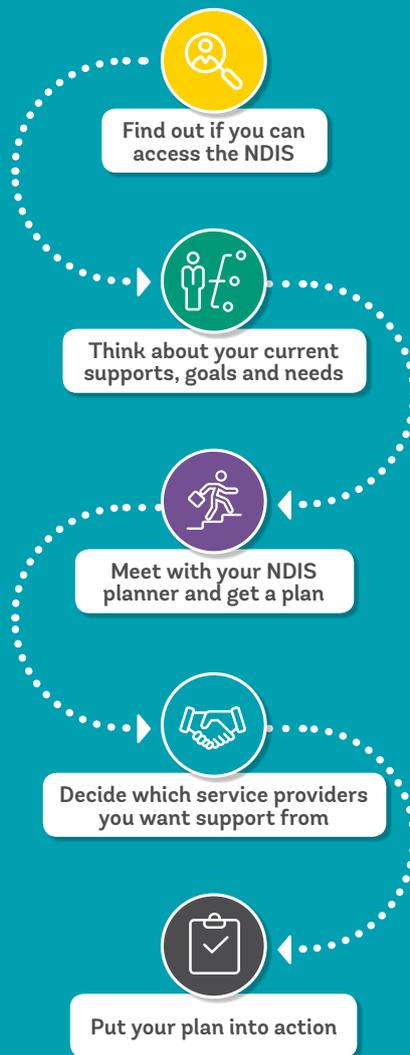
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Save Money!
Save Time!
Save on your water bills!

Anybody can change a tap washer

Even Warren Heggarty (who wrote this from his own experience)

You can save a couple of hundred dollars by learning how to change a tap washer. It is not hard to do, and does not require any unusual tools. It helps if you have someone to show you, or if you can watch one of the many you tube instruction videos (see below).

Taps usually leak because the tap washer becomes worn, squashed or split, allowing water to force its way through. This will eventually cost you big money by adding to your water bill. You could get a plumber, but that will cost at least \$100 for a ten minute job.

To change a tap washer you will need to buy some new washers. They cost a couple of dollars each, from a hardware, from Bunnings, or even from a \$2 shop. Indoor taps are usually 12mm, outdoor taps are larger, often 15 or 19mm. Make

sure you get the right size.

To see how it is done, you can watch you tube videos. It is best to watch an Australian video, because there are subtle differences between countries.

This short video shows a tap that comes horizontally out of the wall.

www.youtube.com/watch?v=kYHq-4Jh2-3Q

This video shows a tap which sits vertically in a basin. It also goes more in depth, looking at all the different parts of the tap and all the different problems that can develop.

www.youtube.com/watch?v=13Sbh-jVR71M

You will need an adjustable wrench, so handy for many jobs about the home. The wrench is most useful for undoing the hexagonal nut that holds the tap spindle in place. The tap washer fits into the bottom of the spindle unit (or the back of it if it is horizontal). Also, a screwdriver will come in handy if you need to prize off the tap lock button. There are so many different designs of taps and tap fittings you may feel daunted by the prospect of pulling it apart, but rest assured that most taps, deep down are just the same old standard spindle unit with different casing.

The spindle unit has three types of wash-

er. At the bottom is the tap washer itself. It looks like a flat (or domed) circle with a short stick in the centre, known as a jumper. Technically, only the soft rubber or plastic part is a washer, but let's not get too technical. (See six tap washers in the picture far, left).

Further up we have the fibre washer (usually red) which are illustrated third from left, and there are usually two O-rings (usually black). Six of them are shown in the picture, second from left.

A screwdriver, and/or pointy nose pliers will also come in handy if you need to prize off or screw open a tap lock. This is necessary if you have a decorative handle. Pointy nose pliers are useful for picking the old washer out of the seat of the tap. Sometimes they get stuck.

Some tips for changing washers include:

- Turn the water off at the mains first
- Take your time and don't panic
- Once the mains tap is off, make sure you turn the tap on full before unscrewing it, so the remaining water can drain out.
- Put a plug in the sink so you don't drop anything down the plug hole
- If the parts look grotty, give them a wipe with steel wool.
- Give moving parts a rub with special tap lubricant that you can buy in tap fixing kits such as the one in the yellow sachet in the picture.
- Learn the names for the parts of a tap: e.g.. tap lock, spindle, flange or bonnet... not all taps have all the parts and it helps to know the words when you go shopping.

Big hardware stores like Bunnings have lots of helpful hints on their web sites. Plus you can also ask the staff who will be only too happy to help you if there's a sale in it!

If all else fails, **get a plumber**. It will cost you though, so get your money's worth by observing carefully what the plumber does and by asking lots of questions.



Dressing to feel good

By members of the Flourish Australia Physical Health and Wellbeing Community of Practice: Hannah Morris, Jade Ryall, Sue Taylor and Warren Heggarty

It is well worth the effort to take some time to think about what we wear and how we look after ourselves because it all has a big impact on how we feel! Having your hair done, wearing something nice, or even buying something nice can be uplifting.

We all feel better when we are in control of our own wardrobe choices and none of us like to be told by others what we should or should not wear! Taking time out to think about our presentation will make us more confident.

Tamworth Clothing Design group
At Flourish Australia's Tamworth service, they have been promoting personal hygiene and self-care topics using a different approach to raise awareness and hold recovery conversations around this topic.

They have achieved this through a clothing design group where people are able to create and sew clothes whilst discussing how it looks and how it makes them feel. This includes how they feel if they are wearing clothing that does not fit properly.

They found that having a picture next to the mirror of what a person would like to look and feel like was a helpful prompt and motivator.

The focus and objective of the group is to support one another in choosing clothing that fits them well and makes them feel good. Participants learn how to exercise their own judgement in deciding what looks good or not good.

Some questions to ask yourself

- Do I feel comfortable in the clothes I wear?
- Do I find that my clothes don't fit me as well as they used to?
- When was the last time I bought myself a new shirt or skirt?
- Do I like this colour, this style? Does it make me look my best?
- Are the clothes that I am wearing suitable for what I plan to do today?

"...there is already so much stigma that people face...but having to deal with the weight gain from medication as well is a lot for a person to deal with. I am a person with a lived experience and I have felt the shame, not of the bipolar but the weight gain, its bad enough to struggle some days with my head let alone clothes actually fitting me!" –

Hannah Morris

Helpful hair and wardrobe tips

- Do you use a mirror to check your appearance before leaving the home?
- TAFE student haircuts are a great way to get a free haircut and help the future of hairdressing by being a model for students.
- Some hairdressers offer discounted cuts and colours on particular days of the week too!
- Sewing on buttons or investing in a new belt could also help achieve the perfect fit in the clothes you already have.
- Clothes swaps are a fun and social way of swapping your clothes that no longer fit with someone else. Everyone brings in a bag and lays them out for others to select from.

Hair, beauty and feeling good

Do you need proof that making yourself look nice is uplifting? One of the reasons that some people like to work in the hair and beauty field is that they like to do something that makes customers feel good. We found an article called 'The Dirty Truth' which lists all the unpleasant aspects of working in that industry, but this is how it ends:

"So why do we do it? It's that surprised and happy look on your face when you see your new cut or color for the first time. It's seeing the confidence boost in the shy teenage girl thanks to a swipe of mascara. It's feeling your muscles and mind relax. It's seeing you walk out of the facial room as if you've had a couple of cocktails... I can go home... exhausted, and covered in pieces of clay mask, knowing that I've improved your self esteem and quality of life." (Shea, 2014)

If it can have that effect on the workers, imagine the effect it can have on YOU!

References

Shea, L. (2014, November 17). *The dirty truth of working in a salon or spa revealed*. Retrieved from *Ethereal Aura Spa Blog*: <http://www.etherealauraspa.com/blog/working-in-a-salon-or-spa>

The Social Media Age

By Grant J Everett

The different epochs of human history are named according to what makes them notable, such as The Bronze Age, The Industrial Revolution and (more recently) The Information Age. Considering that the last decade has probably best been defined by the meteoric worldwide rise of social media, are we already wading knee-deep in The Social Age? And why should you care?

Social media, by its definition, is primarily about connecting people together, about bridging geographical gaps so we can instantaneously communicate via devices such as computers and mobile phones. This isn't a new idea by any means, as email, chat rooms and other precursors to the social media phenomenon appeared decades ago. However, social media applications such as Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn have totally redefined how we communicate and share as a society.

Knowing how to use social media has become almost essential in today's world, whether you use it for business purposes, to chat with friends, to keep your extended family connected, or just to check out what's happening with your favourite cat memes, social media is here to stay.

Flavours

Even though it makes sense to think that all the different social media choices out there would be in fierce competition with each other, most of them have their own specialities and are able to coexist. It's not like the whole VHS versus Betamax war in the 1980s, or the HD-DVD

versus Blu-Ray thing a few years ago: these different flavours of social media all have their place and there's no need for one to simply "win" against the others. Here's the basics of how they differ.

Facebook is the big daddy of the social network scene. By far the largest and most well recognised of the bunch, Facebook has rewritten the way we interact as a society, and at the end of 2015 it had 1.59 billion active users (according to www.statista.com). If you want to find old school friends, keep in touch with everyone you know or connect up with people who have similar interests, Facebook is ideal.

Twitter is all about short, rapid comments. The maximum you can "tweet" in a single message is 144 characters, so tweeting is more useful for quick zingers than short novels. Although nowhere near the size and scope of Facebook, Twitter is a serious industry and has become entrenched in popular culture.

YouTube may initially seem like nothing more than a repository of cat memes and idiots eating ghost chillies, but it's still a form of social media, and is huge, huge business in every way. A little known fact is that you can Friend people on YouTube, just like on Facebook.

LinkedIn is focussed on the world of business, employment and all the stuff that it envelops, like databases of resumes, professional contacts, potential jobs and other stuff like that. Social media has become a big part of the recruitment process for many major businesses, and is probably social media at its most constructive and positive.

Don't write about your colleagues on social media. Slander is still a thing, and you'll need to face your new enemies on Monday!

If you post something and people see it, you can't make them UNsee it. Just ask the kindergarten teacher who posted sexy pictures of herself back when she was still in high school, and had the parents of her students discover them. Ouch.

Use common sense when sending Friend

requests to colleagues. Those pictures of your vodka-fuelled nude run through a Mormon church last Saturday night may not be to everyone's tastes.

Try not to give away too much info. Your full name, date of birth, mother's maiden name and other seemingly harmless things can result in someone hacking your account or worse. Scammers don't need much info to steal your identity.

Don't broadcast sensitive information. Guess what happens when somebody announces they'll be away from home for a week? I hope they didn't want all their stuff to still be in the house when they get back, if you know what I mean...

Source:

www.theaustralian.com.au/business/the-deal-magazine/getting-social-wisdom/story-e6fgrgabx-1226989945772

Numbers

A report by American firm Jobvite found that:

- 94% of US recruitment companies are planning to use social media to search for staff
- A full third of employers have rejected an applicant due to something in their social media profile
- On the subject, 78% of employers disapprove of references to drug use in social media posts, and 67% reacted negatively to posts of sexual nature
- 14.4 million Americans have used social media to search for a job, including (naughty naughty) while they're at work at their current one

A Clarius study of more than 1000 workers last year found that social media use was one of the biggest inhibitors to workplace productivity, with almost half of those surveyed using social media at work, and one in six using it up to 10 times a day

Moderation at Mealtime

By Meredith

One day when I first started taking my medication, I happened to look down and suddenly saw this huge lump of belly flab protruding from where I once could see my belly button. "I'm sure that wasn't there before" I thought feeling puzzled.



Not long afterwards, I discovered the daunting fact that my medication was making me put on weight more easily. From then on I realised I had to be more vigilant about what I put into

my mouth". It wasn't easy at first. Being "vertically challenged" also seemed to make it more crucial for me.

I will attempt to share some things that I tried and learnt along the way. There is no "one-size-fits-all" when it comes to healthy eating. Each person's body responds differently to different foods. However there may be one or two things here which may be helpful to you if you try them.

Some of these tips I picked up from a health and fitness program I attended called "New Moves". This is a 16 week course on health and fitness especially designed for those who have a mental health condition.

1. Avoid or minimise pastry foods like pies and sausage rolls.
2. Limit fruit to two pieces per day -it contains sugar! The same goes for juice and honey.
3. Try snacking on vegetables which are the healthiest of foods you can ever eat

e.g.. a raw carrot or a couple of celery sticks.

4. Some red meat is good for the diet since it helps to build muscle mass. Kangaroo meat is leaner and cheaper!

5. Reading food labels, look at the "Quantity per 100g" column. Choose foods that have : Total Fat – Total < 10g; Saturated < 3g; Sugars < 15g; Sodium – Low < 120 g, High < 500g.

6. Avocado and low fat Philadelphia cheese can be a tasty substitute for butter.

7. Drink plenty of water which is essential for good digestion.

8. Pre-plan your food intake each day. For less active days eat smaller meal portions, than if you are busy or out and about.

9. I have found personally that Tofu is a good variation for protein. It is much cheaper and absorbs the flavours that you add while cooking.



10. Limit sugary foods or drinks, like cakes, biscuits and soft drinks.

11. For chocoholics try having some plain cocoa powder 3 cm of milk, then fill your cup with boiling water.

12. Switch to light or skim milk rather than full cream to reduce fat intake.

13. Try separating your lounge or leisure room from the kitchen (the area of temptation).

14. Instead of ice-cream (which is full of sugar) try wild berry frozen yoghurt instead.

15. If drinking plain water is too bland for you, add the juice of a lemon wedge and pop it into your cup.

16. Try to eat some green leafy vegetables daily. This serves as "roughage" and helps to clear out toxins and waste in your intestines to keep your system "clean".



17. If you crave something sweet, try snacking on some sultanas instead of chocolate. A piece of raisin bread also has much less sugar than a fully-fledged cake or muffin.

18. When eating out, Japanese or Vietnamese restaurants can be healthy alternatives since they tend to use less oil and fat in many of their dishes.

19. Limit your intake of carbohydrates like bread, rice and pasta if you're not very active. Overeating on "carbs" can also be a major cause of weight gain.

20. It can be futile cutting out your favourite treats altogether. Just remember to limit the intake of these items or if possible treat them as "sometimes" foods.

21. Normal flavoured yoghurt can be high in sugar. Natural yoghurt is much healthier but can be too sour for some people. Try adding a tablespoon of sweetened yoghurt to a serving of your natural yoghurt. This can be just enough to enable the natural yoghurt to be edible for your taste buds.

22. Avoid fast food which is usually laden with excessive fat, salt and sugar. E.g.. Burger buns from McDonalds have enough sugar in them to be considered as "cakes".

That's all from me for now. Hope you find something here that works for you. Remember just to do your best and that we are all on a similar journey. Wishing you all Happy and Healthy Eating!

“Your Voice Matters”

Dr Daniel Fisher wants us to know that the “experts” aren’t always right

By Grant J Everett

A couple of decades ago, Daniel Fisher was diagnosed with schizophrenia, placed in a mental health unit against his will and told in no uncertain terms that he had zero chance of recovery. Thankfully, he proved the experts wrong. What Dan experienced during that time stayed with him in a big way, and he decided to do something about the system by becoming a psychiatrist.

Dan has spent his entire career changing the mental health system from within by altering the way our world views psychiatric conditions. His most passionate belief is that not only is recovery possible for people with a diagnosis, but it’s on offer to all of us. His mission hasn’t been completed yet, as a large section of psychiatrists still see schizophrenia as permanent and will dismiss any reports to the contrary as a “misdiagnosis.”

Dan spoke with us while he was in Australia running the Finding Our Voice workshop, where he is encouraging people with a lived experience to make their own impact on the system in whatever way they can.

PANORAMA: Was there any particular reason you ran the Finding Our Voice workshop here in Sydney?

DR DANIEL FISHER: When it comes to starting something big, I think you have an advantage here in Sydney. It’s probably not accidental that the United States survivor movement began in the high population areas, because you need a certain “critical mass” of people to really form a movement, and that’s my hope for you all: that you’ll be able to form a movement. You had a fledgling movement in the 90s and the early 2000s, but it sort of floundered. After seeing that group tonight, I was very encouraged by how people were finding their voice. As you saw, it’s about people helping each other.

P: So you came here to plant the seed,

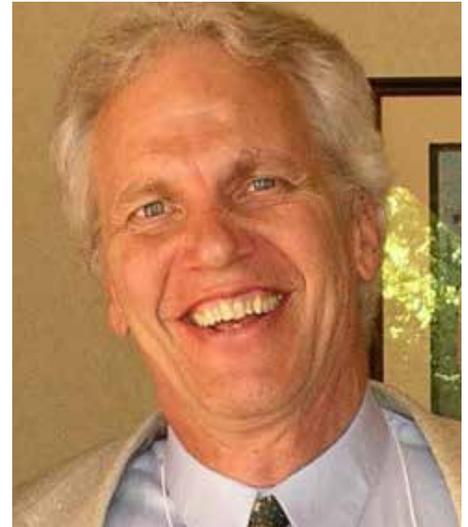
but we need to choose to nurture it.

DAN: Absolutely. But while I have a part to play, at the beginning of the group I’m sure to tell everyone that their voice counts, their voice matters, it’s essential to their recovery, and it has been for me, too. I usually ask groups what they think about this, and the conversation will usually just take off. I was very impressed with the group tonight, by the way. Like I said, you have an advantage in Sydney, and the same goes for Melbourne. It’s harder to start something like this in a low population area.

P: In my time with Panorama Magazine I’ve known some impressive people. Two that come to mind are Janet Meagher and Fay Jackson. Both of them have something in common: at one point or another, Janet and Fay were told by their psychiatrists that they’d never recover and never amount to anything. Janet now has the Order of Australia, and Fay works with the National Mental Health Commission as a tireless advocate. So they’ve massively proved those psychiatrists wrong.

DAN: Maybe those psychiatrists did them a favour! (laughs) I don’t advocate that as a way to motivate people. Let me just comment on that: this is one of the greatest failings of the mental health profession. When people are desperate and have lost meaning in their life, they’ve lost love in their life, and they’ve been through trauma (or even a series of traumas), what does the mental health system tell them? In many cases, they’re telling them “you’re not going to recover,” just like Janet and Fay were told. That should be considered malpractice, as an essential part of recovery is having hope.

That reminds me of when I was in Japan, and a nursing professor came to a talk I was giving, and I asked her what had brought her here. She’d travelled a long distance and she told me, “I have only read and only been taught that people never recover from schizophrenia and other severe psychiatric conditions, but then I read your story. I read that you recovered from schizophrenia. I want to absorb hope from you, bring it into my heart, and carry it back to all the students who I teach.” To me, that is the essence of what I try to do, to be a carrier of hope, which is why I titled my book *Heartbeats Of Hope*. How did I come up



with that title? In Poland, there was a translator who was assisting me, and she had her own lived experience. And she said that by translating and listening to the talks that I gave, she felt like some of the heartbeats she’d been missing had been restored. It restored missing heartbeats! And that’s the best that we can do for another human being who is in distress: to be with them, resonate with them, feel together with them in such a fashion that they can feel that they have more life. You can actually be with someone in such a fashion that they can experience their own power. And how does that happen? By entering into the relationship in a very humble, very non-expert driven way.

I’ll actually say to people – and I always mean it very much – that you might not know the answer to your problem yet, but together we can explore the unknown. That’s Emotional CPR.

Dr Fisher is the Executive Director of the National Empowerment Centre, a peer-run organisation that brings hope and ideas about recovery and peer support both nationally and internationally. He’s also a professor of psychiatry at UMS Medical Centre, practised in a community mental health centre for over 20 years, and worked at in-patient units. A major highlight of Dan’s career was being one of fifteen Commissioners on The White House Commission for Mental Health, which was an opportunity to attack the roots of the deeply ingrown belief that mental illness is permanent.

Dr Dan Fisher’s book, *Heartbeats Of Hope*, is available from Amazon, or the National Empowerment Centre website, here:

power2u.org



Life and Fashion -Part Two

By Edwina Keelan

When we ran Part One of Edwina's story in Panorama 66, we learned about her interest in Fashion. This time we'll take a closer look at the serious issues faced by the Transgender community, as well as some other aspects of Edwina's life.

Transgender people and human rights

EDWINA: Transgender people go through a lot of dramas. One major fear for Transgender women is the worry that they won't pass as female, that "she looks or sounds like a bloke". Many of us carry a heavy weight of unhappiness on our shoulders, and need a lot of help to get by. My mum tells me I'm one of the ones who needs help!

The human rights of Transgender people are still not respected in many places around the world. There is often real hatred directed towards us. We are harassed, assaulted, arrested and jailed. Many employers will not give Transgender people a fair go, so we often cannot get a job. Sometimes we are even denied access to medical care, public services or education. This still happens despite the fact that countries like the USA have made it illegal to discriminate against Transgender people in such ways. We are still not making enough progress with having

our rights upheld. Each year I mark the Transgender Day of Remembrance on November 20. This memorialises the Transgender lives that have been lost to violence, including deaths in custody. Transgender men and women are still being murdered in high numbers.

About Edwina

Like most Transgender women, I always wanted to be a girl from an early age, about 5 years old. I began transitioning in 2004 by taking female hormones, which caused my breasts to grow and made me look more feminine. I also pluck all of my facial hair, as the other hair removal methods I've tried over the years failed to work.

Some of my treasured milestones include my first kiss. This was when I was about 14, and I kissed some guy on a train from Wellington to Tuamaruunui in New Zealand.

I never went to the High School Ball or dated in the 80s because my family was so poor. However, I managed to win First Place at a Blue Light Disco/Radio Launch dance competition, scoring a T-shirt and a music cassette tape.

My favourite films include The Bodyguard, Priscilla: Queen of the Desert, The Reigning Queens, Chicago 10, Once Were Warriors, and Wonder Woman. My favourite colour is purple and my prized possessions are my hats, notebooks, diaries, fashion illustrations and DVD collection. My ideal wedding dress would be from the Op Shop, and my ideal man would be loyal and hard-working like me. My proudest moment was seeing Whitney Houston live in concert. When I pass on, I want to be cremated, and I want Whitney Houston played at my funeral. Instead of buying flowers, I want people to donate money to charity.

When I came to Australia I was a sex worker for a time. I always wanted to look pretty and have nice things. When I started out, I was (usually) a non-smoker and I didn't do drugs or anything like that.

While I wasn't diagnosed with Bipolar until 1999, I knew I was not well. I was living in a shelter and it was a lonely period.

Family

My mother and father were distant cousins in New Zealand. Dad was born in Waipiro Bay 1952, and mum was born there one year later. My father was the eldest of four siblings, and very well educated, becoming Dux of Ngata College. I don't recall much about him, and I only have a few photos to remember him by. Like my dad, I am the eldest child of four. I have two half-brothers and a half-sister, and they all have their own children. When mum immigrated to Brisbane in 2000 she worked as a tea lady, milked cows, did process work, mowed lawns, did maintenance work, and also did industrial and commercial cleaning. She also looked after my stepfather right up until he passed away.

Friendships can be forever

There are four important people in my life, though one of them has passed on. Her name was Carmen, and she used to perform with Les Girls, a famous cabaret show in Kings Cross compèred by Carlotta. There is still a theatre restaurant operating under that name. I learned about HIV/AIDS awareness from Carmen, about human rights, about building a community and how friendships can be forever. I also learned about wearing outrageous colourful clothes and being "out there." I first met Carmen at Mardi Gras, and we both marched in the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island Project ACON float.

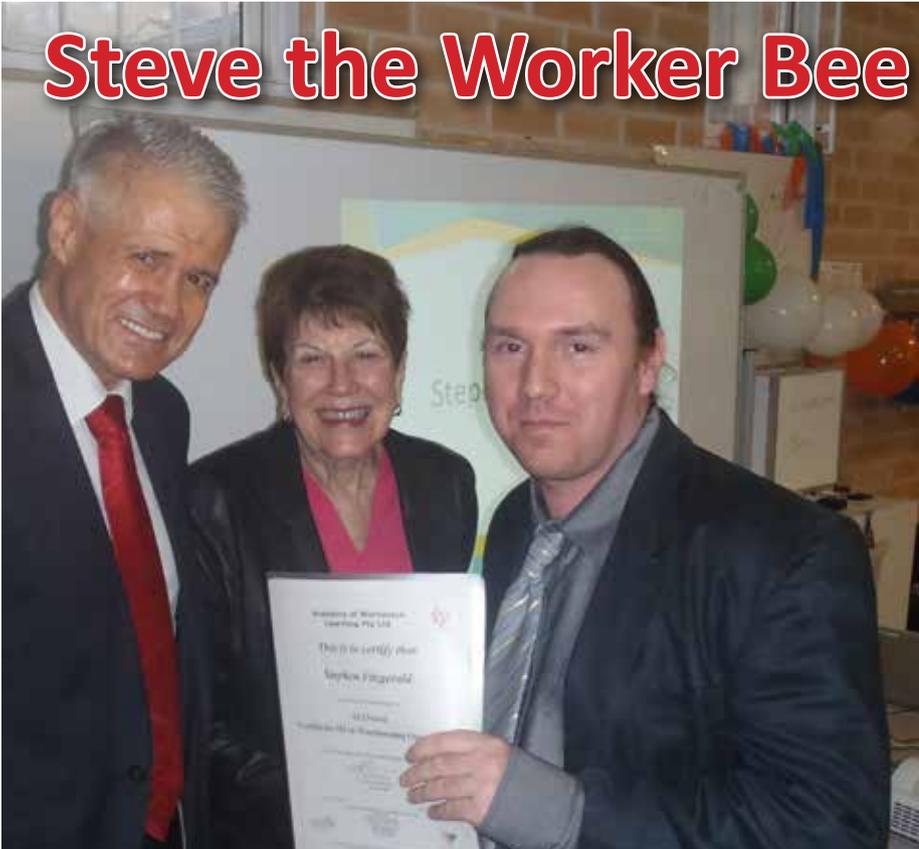
My message to you

I want you to know something: people don't have to like you. Just be you. My recovery is all about being a team player, enjoying the company of my colleagues, and being on time. I only wish there were more hours in a day. Give it 150% at all times. Try something new. Take small steps, then reward yourself. Look after yourself. Reach out to somebody when things get on top of you. Or go back to church. Maybe there is a God after all?

Taking a trip anywhere is better than going nowhere at all.

Finally: we all have challenges, but that doesn't afford us any special privileges.

Steve the Worker Bee



Steve (right) with Pam Rutledge (middle) and teacher Wayne Petersen (left)

By Grant J Everett

Steven Fitzgerald is one of the employees at Prestige Packing Co Harris Park. Flourish Australia runs the Prestige Packing factory as one its community businesses, and it primarily employs people with a mental health issue who have either been out of work for a long time or never worked at all. Steve was happy to discuss his work role...

PANORAMA: Hi Steve, thanks for speaking with us. What do you do here?

STEVE: I'm a worker bee!

P: A worker bee?

STEVE: Yes, from the worker caste. It's my job to make sure the manual labour gets done.

P: So what kind of tasks do you do?

STEVE: Well, we mostly take things out of big boxes and place them into smaller boxes...

P: And how long have you been working here?

STEVE: About four or five years now.

P: That's quite a while. How did you initially connect up with Prestige Packing?

STEVE: I had a social worker while I

was living in the CHIPS cottages (at Cumberland Hospital). She arranged for me to have a job interview, and I've been here ever since.

P: So do you get much out of being here? Does it give you a sense of satisfaction?

STEVE: I do, yes. After a shift I feel like I've accomplished something. I'm telling you, I've had periods in my life where I've just sat in the house and done nothing. It's extremely boring. It's good to have something to do with your life. I think it's important to have a job.

P: Certainly. And you've also been building towards your future, haven't you? I understand you've recently completed a Certificate III in Warehousing Operations.

STEVE: That's correct. I hope it opens up some job opportunities in the future.

P: So, at present, are you interested in moving towards a better role? A job in open employment, perhaps?

STEVE: Perhaps. Yeah. I'll consider all my options, and see what comes up for me.

P: Are you connected up with any jobseeker programs?

STEVE: Not as yet, but it's certainly

something I'll look into.

P: Seeing as though you've earned a Cert III in Warehousing, is this the only field you'd consider working in? Or would you think about working in other fields?

STEVE: I'd keep my options open. If it was a job that holds some kind of interest for me, then yeah. I'd at least consider plenty of things.

P: It's good to have an open mind like that. You never know what will suit you best unless you try it.

STEVE: There's a whole world of opportunities out there.

P: Do you have any goals or dreams? Is there anything you want to experience or accomplish?

STEVE: Hmm...goals and dreams...well, I'd like to get married and settle down at some point. It's a box I certainly haven't ticked off yet. But I'm still hoping!

P: We were talking just before about the upcoming Flourish Australia Radio project. Funnily enough, it turns out that you were studying radio broadcasting at University at one point.

STEVE: Yes, that's correct, I studied Radio Production and Television Production back in the day.

P: And what did that involve?

STEVE: Well, we'd broadcast live on the student radio program. We could play whatever songs we wanted the listeners to hear. Basically, it was a chance to dip your toe into the entire radio industry.

P: Your whole life shouldn't be work. What do you get up to for fun?

STEVE: I love to go to the movies. I prefer the action/comic book type stuff. It holds my interest better than the other genres out there.

P: I take my wife to those sorts of movies all the time. I think I currently owe her about forty chick flicks...

Well, thanks for speaking with us, Steve, and we hope to hear all the good news when you move onto a new career.

**Prestige Packing Co.,
23-25 Station Street West,
Harris Park, NSW 2150
(02) 9393 9170**

More than being medicated: The Hierarchy of Need

By Grant J Everett

Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs was a tool created by psychologist Abraham Maslow in 1943. His theory was first published as a paper called "A Theory of Human Motivation" in Psychological Review magazine, and the Hierarchy has remained a popular framework in sociology, management training and psychology instruction to this day. It has undergone many versions and revisions over the years.

The Hierarchy is expressed as a pyramid with our most fundamental needs at the bottom and our most advanced needs at the top. The key idea to keep in mind is that it's difficult to attain a level without being able to "support" it with all the previous levels. The first four layers of the pyramid are, in order: physical needs, safety and security, love and belonging, esteem and self-actualisation. For instance, if you don't have your physical needs and safety needs met, this will affect your relationships and self-esteem.

You may have heard people use the word "holistic" when they talk about modern definitions of mental health recovery. Holistic basically means addressing ALL the needs of a person, rather than relying on brain pills to fix everything. While we know that medication can be an effective part of a recovery journey, it's not a magic solution on its own. Instead of attempting to medicate away our symptoms and calling it a day, holistic treatments address all of the things that humans need to be happy and fulfilled: a social life, intimate relationships (sexual or otherwise), living somewhere safe and appropriate, doing fun and worthwhile things, playing a non-tokenistic role in our own recovery, and having a choice when it comes to therapy and medications are all part-and-parcel of holistic recovery.

While we now know that recovery is possible - a concept very few people believed just a handful of decades ago - sadly, the process of professional treatment can deprive us of many essential components of our lives. For example, spending time in a mental health unit

will greatly reduce our ability to choose how we structure our day, our freedom to come and go as we want, who we can see and when, and it will often play havoc with our self-esteem. Merely being diagnosed with a mental health issue can change the way we see ourselves, making us feel powerless, broken, negative, and without hope, but there is always hope.

The Australian mental health system is still very much a medical model system. While medical model experts may be open to modern treatments, some old style elements of treatment that come as standard. There are a lot of components to recovery, and believing that you're nothing more than a diagnosis is unhelpful at best.

LEVEL ONE: PHYSICAL NEEDS are the bedrock of human survival. If these are not met, your body will fail. Things like breath, warmth, sleep, food and fluids are non-negotiable. **LEVEL TWO: SAFETY AND SECURITY** are your next concern once your physical needs are satisfied. This goes beyond clothing and shelter to include financial security, health and mental well-being, protection from abuse and harm, and having our rights respected. **LEVEL THREE: LOVE AND BELONGING** comes next. Being neglected or ostracised by our peers can adversely affect our ability to form and maintain emotionally significant relationships. This can make us susceptible

to loneliness, social anxiety, and clinical depression. The need to belong can be so strong, in fact, that if we are alone it can feel more essential than our physical and security needs (and not in a healthy way). Having people we can talk to, feeling part of the community, feeling loved by others, and physical intimacy can make the difference between misery and contentment. **LEVEL FOUR: ESTEEM** includes our status in society, the recognition we get from others, and the respect we have for ourselves. All humans need to feel accepted and valued, and being deprived of these things can be crippling in our careers, relationships and general self-worth. Low self-esteem can fill us with the need to seek respect from others, but it's healthier to learn how to accept ourselves for who we are, gain an understanding of our strengths and weaknesses, and not put unrealistic expectations on ourselves. Feeling as though you are contributing to society is great for your self-esteem, too. **LEVEL FIVE: SELF-ACTUALISATION** is the desire and drive to accomplish everything that you want. Maslow believed that the only way we could reach this level was to not only achieve all the previous needs, but to master them. Self-actualisation means having our own thoughts, opinions, values and beliefs, learning through study or life experience, making our own decisions, feeling fulfilled by our lives, and contributing to the wellbeing of other people.



Treasure Hunt 2017



By Charles Tabone

The Western Sydney Mental Health Month treasure hunt adventure was combined with a BBQ and a touch of sports for 2017!

All services in the region were invited to promote this years theme of "Sharing The Journey". The weather held out and people went hunting for items of treasure which were turned into points.

Two lucky people won a \$50 Woolworths shopping voucher each for accumulating the most points. A handful of consolation show bags were made up, too.

Though not everyone could win a prize, everyone had a good time searching for treasure across Nurragingy Reserve.

Whilst the prizes were being drawn and announced, a cooking crew had snags going on the barbie.

After lunch, a game of cricket ensued. The game was casual and fun and the wickets were a huge tree trunk and nicely made tree branches put together in the ground. There was some nice bowling and some big hits that the

fielders couldn't quite catch.

The crowd under the marquee corralled the hits that couldn't be fielded and quipped that they hadn't seen so many white cars in one carpark before.

By the end of the day there were smiles all around as you can see from our photos of (in alphabetical order) Anne Marie, Bernard, Bulou, Grace, Emma, Eveline, Katherine, Kirsty, Shagufta, Sherri and Suzanne.





ConnectFest 2017

By Peter Farrugia

In October, Flourish Australia partnered with mega-conglomerate Mirvac to present ConnectFest, a one-day, fun-filled event to celebrate wellbeing. The event was part of Mirvac's National Community Day, a celebration where Mirvac employees connect with their local community to build ties of friendship and enhance health and wellbeing.

Flourish Australia was selected as a partner because of our standing in the community and the tireless work we do to support strong communities.

ConnectFest was held at the Bicentennial Parklands at Sydney Olympic Park. A team of 30 people from Mirvac volunteered their day and assisted with the planning, logistics and set up of the event, which had a young peoples focus and involved music, games, activities, bike riding, photo booth, silent disco, 3D movie experience, sports and a barbecue lunch.

Throughout the day, staff from Mirvac and people who access Flourish Australia services spent time getting to know one another, sharing aspects of their life and discovering each others passions, hobbies and interests.

Alison Perizi, Flourish Australia's Fundraising and Partnerships Manager, was

a leading contributor in developing the event. "ConnectFest is a terrific opportunity for Flourish Australia to build a co-operative and friendly partnership with Mirvac, one of Australia's leading property groups," she said. "It is important that we capitalise on opportunities that strengthen Flourish Australia's position as a leader of mental health services and supports. Partnering with Mirvac enables us to lead key recovery messages that support good mental health amongst people."

One of the outcomes of the joint celebration was to enjoy recreation in the great outdoors. The quintessential Australian way of life, the Aussie barbeque, was a key feature of the event. Mirvac representative, Lachlan, was in charge of catering. "There's nothing better than a sausage sanga at a picnic," said Lachlan as we all enjoyed a freshly cooked lunch.

As we know, a balanced diet is an important part of maintaining our physical and mental wellbeing. Jade Ryall, Flourish Australia's **Back On Track Health** Manager, endured greens were on offer to ConnectFest's guests.

"Fresh, colourful salads are a quick and healthy way to add some variety to our meals, increasing the nutritional value and helping meet recommended daily serves of vegetables," said Jade.

All in all, everyone enjoyed the day. The feedback was positive with comments highlighting people's most favourite activities. "It was good to acknowledge mental health, meet others from similar sites and participate in activities that support recovery," said one participant.

Another participant said, "It supported my recovery by coming together, having fun and connecting with new people."

"It made me forget about my mental health issues for a moment!" said another.

The sentiment of ConnectFest was captured in a comment from a young person. "It was a magical day. It made me happy. I hope we do it every year!"

The final word came from Alison. "What a wonderful way to celebrate life, share with friends old and new, and enjoy the fruits that come from connections of friendship," she said with a smile.

From Flourish Australia, thank you to all those who contributed to ensuring the success of ConnectFest.

See more on our Facebook page!

www.facebook.com/FlourishAus

AGM 2017

by Grant J Everett

Over a hundred visitors from across the span of NSW and south-eastern Queensland attended our Annual General Meeting at Figtree Conference Centre. They included people who access our services, members of the Community Advisory Council, members of the Employee Advisory Committee, board members, staff, and assorted special guests.

After Uncle Ray Davison gave the Welcome to Country, Board member Paula Hanlon reminded us of the many people who have given their all to help with our struggle towards self determination, especially those who are no longer with us. Like much of the crowd, Paula became a little emotional when she reminded the crowd that this would be the last AGM that Pamela Rutledge would attend as our CEO before her retirement. Mark Orr, formerly our Chief Information Officer, took the reins of CEO in January 2018. Retired or not, Pam still has many more lives to change, and we wish her well on the next chapter of her life: being a part of the Mental Health Review Tribunal.

The Chair of the Board, Professor Elizabeth Moore, applauded the fact that the number of people with a lived experience we employ across the entire organisation has risen to over 52%. This peer focus is one of the major reasons why Flourish Australia has been recognised both nationally and internationally as a leader in person-centred approaches.

Dr Cassandra Goldie, CEO of the Australian Council of Social Services (ACOSS) was our keynote speaker. She spoke about the “steely determination” that has been needed to oppose certain directions taken by the government since the 2014 budget. Dr Goldie said that organisations like her own have successfully resisted a lot of policies that would have badly affected the least powerful people in the country. A recent example was the government’s drive to introduce drug tests for welfare recipients. Dr Goldie described this as “stigmatising” and suggested that it would prevent

Past and present CEOs (from left): Pam Rutledge (recently retired), Phil Nadin (CEO of PRA until the merger in 2012) and Mark Orr (current CEO since 1 January 2018).



people with substance issues from receiving the DSP. Despite the fact there have been teething problems relating to funding, she praised the creation of the NDIS. Dr Goldie also mentioned a major decline in the number of people with a lived experience of disability being employed by the Federal Government.

Board member Jeremy Thorpe is our new company Treasurer. Taking over from Stan Brogan after nineteen years of service, Jeremy announced a budget surplus, mentioned the progress of our affordable housing project in Guildford, and spoke of our entry into the world of “social impact bonds” with the Resolve program (See the full story in the December 2017 issue of Panorama, #66).

One of the highlights of every AGM is hearing from people who have successfully accessed our services. This year, Brayden, Jo, Kim, Mark and Shae-Lee shared their journeys with Flourish Australia, their accomplishments, and of the pride and new confidence they feel as a result of the recovery process. Some of the things they spoke about included gaining qualifications and open

employment, becoming peer workers, volunteering to help the less fortunate, completing parenting courses, reclaiming the right to care for their own children, getting out of their homes and into the community, making new friends, and travelling. One of the most touching stories of hope was from Jo, who told us about how she managed to recover to the point where she reclaimed one of her children from care, and how her other child could be back with her soon. An audience member told me afterwards that she’d choked up a bit when Jo shared this intimate story. Finally, Dale O’Connell – a person who accesses our services and has previously featured in Panorama - playing two songs he’d written himself. You can see him in action on the front cover of this issue of Panorama. What a lovely singing voice, too!

Every detail about our organisation between 2016 and 2017 is covered in the Flourish Australia Annual Report 2017

"Bling a Bra"



By Karina Lindsay

Before you know it, it will be October again and that means Mental Health Month. Why not start thinking NOW about different ways you can promote mental -and physical- wellbeing throughout the year!

How about holding a Bling-a-Bra event at your local service? That's what the Nowra office of Flourish Australia did last time. It was an offer to carers and families as well as the people who access our service. To "bling", of course, means to decorate, as you can see from the photos of blinged-up bras and ties.

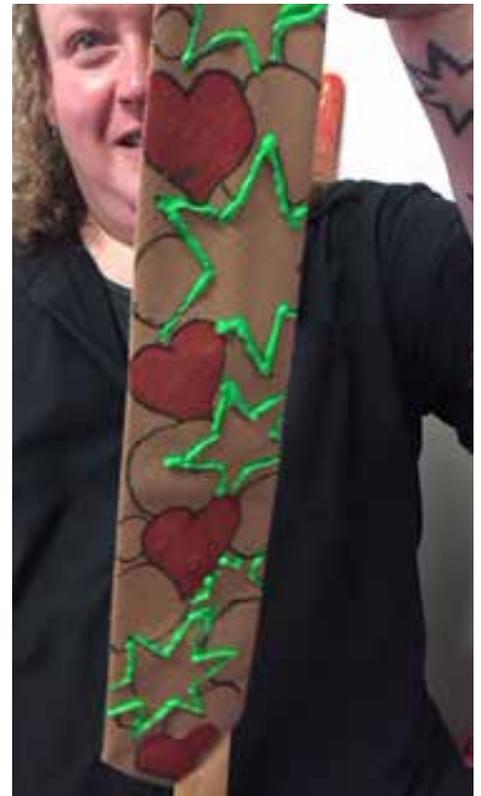
The idea of the day was for people to Bling-a-Bra or Bling-a-Tie to raise awareness about breast cancer. We want everyone to understand the importance of having regular mammography screenings. After all, they are an essential tool in early detection, and early detection saves lives. The Bling-a-Bra concept is supported by South Eastern Sydney Illawarra BreastScreen, and it was meant to make a serious subject both and fun and informative.

In addition to all this blinging, we supplied information to both male and female participants. It's good that we focussed on both genders, as a lot of people on the day seemed surprised that breast cancer is actually a serious health issue in men, too! It is so important to make people aware that early detection is vital.

For our Open Day at Nowra, last time we got in a little earlier than most other

people, to avoid the major rush of events in October. Over 50 people from the community visited our office to attend. Throughout the day we held mini workshops with Art, Rhythm 2 Recovery Drumming and Recovery Conversations.

Our Nowra Centre was opened by the Shoalhaven Assistant Deputy Mayor, Clr Mitchell Pakes. Shane also presented his inspiring recovery story to the attendees which you can read about in this issue of Panorama on page 19.



**Flourish Australia
47 Worrige Street
NOWRA, NSW, 2541
1300 779 270
(02) 9393 9535**



Left 'We Cannot solve our problems with the same thinking we used when we created them.' PHOTO BY PATRICIA

Queanbeyan Mindfulness Group



By Grant J Everett

Dan accesses Flourish Australia's Day-2Day Living Centre at Queanbeyan, and each week he runs a mindfulness group for the other participants. The class alternates between two ways of approaching mindfulness: Mindfulness Walks, and Mindfulness in the Office. In other words, an on-the-go class, and one that's stationary. This helps the people who take part to learn how to use mindfulness in a range of settings. Ideally, Dan's class equips the people who take part with the knowledge they need to use mindfulness anytime they need it.

This group has been running for 2 years so far, and Dan has had a core group of 14 or so regulars who always look forward to their weekly anti-stress top-up. Although Dan didn't start the group, he has formal qualifications in running mindfulness exercises, read quite a few books on the subject and also had plenty of practical hands-on experience. He's a major believer in the power of mindfulness.

"If somebody is recovering from a mental health issue, a mindfulness walk can cut their stress levels and bring happiness and peace of mind," Dan explained. "It's a very good solution for stress."

So what does mindfulness actually involve?

"To start with, we get out into nature and listen to music," Dan told us. "While we focus on our five senses - sight,

smell, hearing, taste and touch - we also pay attention to our surroundings. One of these sessions will take between 40 minutes to an hour, and besides having somewhere quiet to walk or sit, all you need is a phone or an iPad so you can listen to music, and the desire to have a calm mind."

And the benefits?

"This process helps you to relax. It gives you strength, heals the mind, and puts you at peace with yourself."

All the input that Dan's had from the class has been glowing.

"I've only had positive feedback. People find these mindfulness walks very relaxing, and they enjoy having the opportunity to connect with nature."

Dan benefits from the mindfulness process, too. These weekly top-ups have worked wonders for many different aspects of his recovery.

"It's given me strength, and calmed me down," Dan said. "Mindfulness gives me an option for what to do with my stress if other techniques don't work. It's been a very positive experience."

But does mindfulness only provide benefits for people with a lived experience of mental health issues? Dan has a firm view on this.

"I think that mindfulness isn't just for the unwell. I think it's good for everybody. If

you are interested in giving mindfulness a try, I highly recommend it. I think a lot of people would benefit if they gave it a shot."

It's important to note that Dan's group don't practise mindfulness solely during their formal weekly gathering: they are all encouraged to take time out of their daily routines to quietly take stock of the world around them and allow their minds to dial things back a few notches.

While doing a mindfulness activity on your own might sound daunting if you haven't tried it before, the basics aren't hard to grasp. In fact, learning how to be mindful when you need it in the real world is the whole point!

"Firstly, look at your surroundings and concentrate on them." Dan recommends. "Stay in the present moment."

The Mindfulness group...

- **Runs every week at Queanbeyan**
- **Alternates between mindfulness walks (active) and mindfulness in the office (stationary)**
- **Teaches the participants how to apply mindfulness in different settings**
- **Is a great way to relax**
- **Only takes 40 minutes**
- **Is good for your mental health, stress levels and focus**

**Flourish Australia
Queanbeyan
Level 1, Suite 5, 7-9
Morisset Street
QUEANBEYAN
NSW, 2620
1300 779 270**

What is Mindfulness?

By Grant J Everett

Mindfulness (also known as meditation or relaxation) is the art of clearing your mind of all distractions and anxiety by paying attention to your five senses. It means being physically present in the moment rather than living inside your own head. When done right, mindfulness can quickly help you to feel calm, grounded and in control. According to www.mindful.org, mindfulness reduces stress, enhances your work performance, and it can boost your awareness of how your mental processes work. When done right, mindfulness can be transformative.

On the surface, focussing on your senses might seem like a pretty ordinary thing to do. After all, just being conscious means that we are using at least two or three senses at any given time. However, the reason that mindfulness can be so valuable is because we humans tend to spend far too much time being distracted by unhelpful and unproductive thoughts. "Will I get a seat on the bus? Will my boss be demanding today? Are my friends avoiding me? Why is that guy looking at me funny? Does this outfit make me look like a butternut pumpkin? What if my phone credit runs out when I really need to make a call?" If you don't have a way to fight free of this sort of mental molasses and bring yourself back to the now, it's easy to feel overwhelmed. So rather than doing useless laps in your brain, mindfulness empowers you to be fully present in the moment. It's about being aware of where you are and what you're doing, as opposed to feeling crushed by your own thoughts. No matter how challenging the situation might be, mindfulness can be useful to help you sort things out.

While a universal definition of mindfulness can be hard to nail down (there are many, many variations on what it means depending on what books you read or what websites you surf), one point that all mindfulness experts agree on is that this is a skill that every human being already possesses, rather than something you have to learn from scratch. Anyone can cultivate mindfulness, and you can



practise it seated, standing or walking. You can even do a bit of mindfulness lying down, but there's always the risk of falling asleep (plus going horizontal in public isn't generally something you do in public, either). You can easily merge mindfulness exercises with any of your daily activities, such as housework, travelling, grocery shopping or your mid-afternoon coffee break.

A basic mindfulness exercise

Now you've heard all about mindfulness, here's a quick exercise you can test out if you need to stabilise yourself a bit before getting back into life.

- 1) Take a seat somewhere stable.
- 2) Notice what your legs are doing. Really pay attention to them. It's good if the bottoms of your feet are touching the floor.
- 3) Straighten—but don't stiffen— your upper body. Your spine has natural curvature, so don't try to bend it into a really straight line.
- 4) Let your arms hang naturally at your sides and allow your hands drop into your lap. This will create a pose that isn't too tight or too loose.
- 5) Drop your chin a little. You can lower or close your eyelids if you want, but it isn't necessary
- 6) Relax for a few moments. Pay attention to your breath going in and out,

the sensations in your body, and your heartbeat. You can slowly flex each part of your body, one bit at a time, from toes to scalp.

7) Expect your attention to wander. That's normal. Don't concern yourself over the content of your thoughts. Just gently return your attention to your breath.

That's it! Simple to learn, but not necessarily easy to master. Just keep doing it and the results will follow.

Mindfulness at a glance

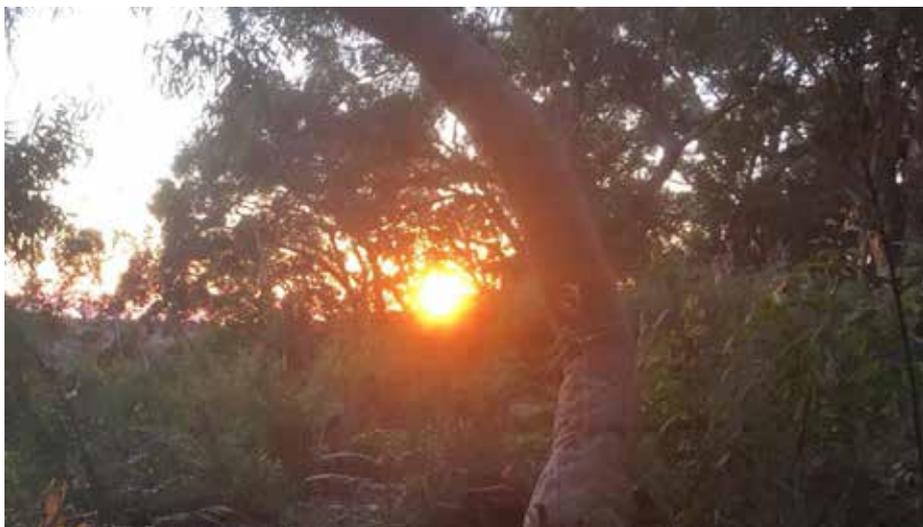
- Mindfulness is not New Age hocus pocus. It is a practical way to relax and restore focus.
- Anyone can do it! Mindfulness is a technique we can all practice anytime and anywhere.
- Mindfulness doesn't change who you are. Mindfulness is about recognising who you are.
- Mindfulness has positive benefits for our health, happiness, work performance and relationships.

You can learn more about mindfulness from...

www.mindful.org

Source:

www.mindful.org/what-is-mindfulness/



Patricia Goes on a Retreat

Patricia tells Warren what exactly happens on a "retreat" and describes two different types of mindfulness.

Warren: Patricia, you recently went on a weekend retreat. What gave you the idea?

Patricia: I wanted to indulge in a holistic spiritual experience. I wanted to encounter happiness, freedom and inner peace all in a couple of days. And I did!

What sort of activities (or INACTIVITIES) did you engage in?

P: I encountered the "yoga experience", a creative drumming circle, swimming and mindfulness all in the one activity, a mindfulness hike and a free flowing activity during a unique meditation talk. Getting up at 4:30am to watch the sunrise on the last day was a highlight for me. Laughter was welcome at this retreat.

Where was it set?

P: A safe, authentic bushland setting. I went to the retreat solo and shared a room with a complete stranger who happened to be a lovely person.

What sort of food was provided?

P: Super healthy vegetarian food. There were vegan options as well. Our friendly

chef also catered for food intolerances and allergies.

What was your daily routine?

P: Opening my eyes to peace and tranquility early in the morning for a 7am yoga class. Breakfast, lunch and dinner provided an opportunity for sharing in conversation with fellow retreaters and friendly staff. After undertaking all of the activities I've already mentioned, I'd go to bed around 10:30pm, feeling rejuvenated.

Spontaneous or Intentional Mindfulness?

Have you practiced mindfulness?

P: Yes. I have been fortunate enough to have experienced the benefits of mindfulness. Sometimes I practice intentional mindfulness, and sometimes spontaneous mindfulness.

What's the difference between those two types of mindfulness, and how do you do them?

P: With spontaneous mindfulness I will focus on certain senses for a few moments at a time. For example, if I am traveling on a train then I'll focus on the varying shades of light coming through the window, then close my eyes and listen to the sounds around me. I'll feel the soles of my feet on the floor, or feel my abdomen rising and falling, and focus on my breath. If I include taste and smell into my practice I can then indulge in an all-five-senses mindfulness exercise. I particularly love practicing mindfulness

during a thunderstorm in a safe place, preferably indoors or under shelter.

P: With intentional mindfulness I will sit still with my eyes closed for up to 20 minutes at a time and focus on my breathing, then listen to the sounds around me.

What benefits does mindfulness bring?

P: Sometimes it brings on episodic feelings of serenity (experienced intermittently throughout the day) if practiced daily for up to 20 minutes.

Dan at Queanbeyan says he uses music. Did you use music on retreat? It sounds to me like something that would be very distracting. What do you think?

P: We did have music playing during retreat activities and it provided a point of focus for me. Everyone's mindfulness experience is unique so it's okay to experiment with a variety of mindfulness practices.

I did a mindfulness exercise called "Leaves On A Stream" and found that my mind was full of extremely disturbing ideas that I could not easily let go of. Do you think it is something that requires practice?

P: I know what you mean. We can remain focused on a persistent thought, idea or image during a mindfulness exercise. Allowing our minds to wander is part of the practice. Imagine your thoughts as breezes, or gusts of wind. Sometimes there is that gentle breeze that drifts by, or occasionally a cold gust of wind gets our attention and distracts us. It's okay to have reoccurring thoughts and images appear while practicing mindfulness. With regular practice these thoughts and images may feel like just another cold gust of wind.

It sounds as though Dan from Queanbeyan (see page 28) has incorporated inclusive mindfulness practices in his group, as well as in day to day life. What a great way to promote wellbeing!

P: Focusing on the heartbeat as suggested in Dan's article (a couple of pages back) is something I haven't yet included in my practice. It provides a valuable insight and will be very helpful for those who haven't yet experienced the practice of mindfulness before.

Your Physical Health and Wellbeing

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



Sleep Well For Recovery

Sleep is better than sex...apparently...

By Warren Heggarty

A survey done in Britain shows that sleeping well can increase your wellbeing far more than money or sex. One wonders whether they would make the same finding in OTHER countries, but the point is it is worth working on your sleep situation. (Oxford Economics, 2017)

'Better sleep is the biggest single contributor to better living.' The report says. The research, a survey of 8,250 British adults by the National Centre for Social Research, found that people who felt rested had a higher sense of self-worth and were less likely to be anxious. (Hurst, 2017)

The following problems arise from not enough sleep

- Thinking and memory problems
- Difficulty making decisions
- Depression and anxiety

- Weight gain (ccCHIP, 2017)
- Children who don't get enough sleep can become hyperactive, inattentive and impulsive (Sparacino, 2013)

Here are some more benefits of getting enough sleep:

- Good for your memory
- Lower levels of inflammatory chemicals in blood.
- Spurs creativity
- Increases athletic performance
- Helps you get better marks at TAFE/Uni
- People with treated for sleep apnoea and insomnia often have improved blood pressure.
- Helps you avoid accidents. (Sparacino, 2013) You've probably seen the ads on TV about the dangers of 'microsleeps' at the wheel and driver fatigue.

Now try these at home!

Here are some better sleep tips from ccCHIP (Collaborative Centre for Cardiometabolic Health in Psychosis)

Above: Investing in a decent bed is well worth it once you realise how important sleep is to wellbeing.

- Wake up at the same time every day
- Keep the bed for sleeping, not eating or computing or watching TV
- Only go to bed when you are tired
- If you can't sleep, get up and do something quiet and boring
- Don't drink caffeine within 6 hours of bedtime
- Don't nap during the day
- Do something relaxing before bedtime, that doesn't involve bright lights or computers or TV.
- Keep active during the day, but avoid vigorous exercise just before bed time. (ccCHIP, 2017)

Further Reading

ccCHIP. (2017). Sleep Hygiene Information Booklet. Concord: Collaborative Centre for Cardiometabolic Health in Psychosis.
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Your Physical Health and Wellbeing

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

Is Obesity a Disease?



By Warren Heggarty

Brian Oldfield, a researcher from Monash University who is President of the Australia and New Zealand Obesity Society, recently published an article in *The Australian* newspaper claiming that obesity is a disease and not a matter of choice. Oldfield said that declaring obesity a disease will facilitate greater investment in research and medical remedies. He also said that treating obesity as a lifestyle choice has not worked. In fact, Oldfield claims that it is actually dangerous to assume obesity is a lifestyle choice or a lack of will. He calls it a “chronic, relapsing disease process... as much a consequence of biology and genetics as are cancer and arthritis.”

Oldfield reminds us that we don't tell people with arthritis to “simply move more and look beyond the pain”, so why do we take that approach with obesity: “Stop eating so much and do some exercise?” Oldfield says that not only does this attitude not work, but it causes damage.

Speaking against Oldfield's article, one correspondent said, “labelling the condition a disease will result in individuals absolving themselves of responsibility. Medical involvement will develop an expensive industry and result in more pills and surgery; it will be catch up medicine rather than prevention.” In other words, treating obesity as a disease might potentially lead to

dis-empowerment. It instils a victim mentality and a sense of helplessness, or at least that it is “not my problem” but a problem for clinicians.

One point in Oldfield's favour is the fact that so many of us find it very difficult to motivate ourselves (and each other) to eat better and increase our physical activity. But just because it is difficult to tackle obesity properly does not make it wise to give up and rely on pharmaceuticals. In addition to everything else, using meds for such a purpose may introduce side effects into the picture.

Oldfield is far from alone in his views, though. There are more than 30 organisations now calling for a national strategy to tackle obesity. One of their proposed tactics is a health levy on sugary drinks. Public health campaigns notoriously do not reach the lower socioeconomic groups, however. One critic of Oldfield asks, “Why [is] this obesity gene is so prolific in the Western suburbs and...less prevalent in the more affluent areas of Sydney?”

The people least able to pay the tobacco tax are the ones who pay the tobacco tax. They will also pay the sugar tax if it comes in. Will that lead to a net benefit either for them or for society? Or will this just be another stream of revenue raising?

Poem

Hunger after being sick

I over-compensated after I was ill
 By eating a side of a house
 And kept going
 Because I was alone
 It's still there
 Grabbing at my brain
 And not letting go.
 There is a remote controlled
 Car crashing into everything
 because
 The controller is having a bad day
 I am as big as a house now
 And the need for security
 Has not diminished.

by Ralph Mahe

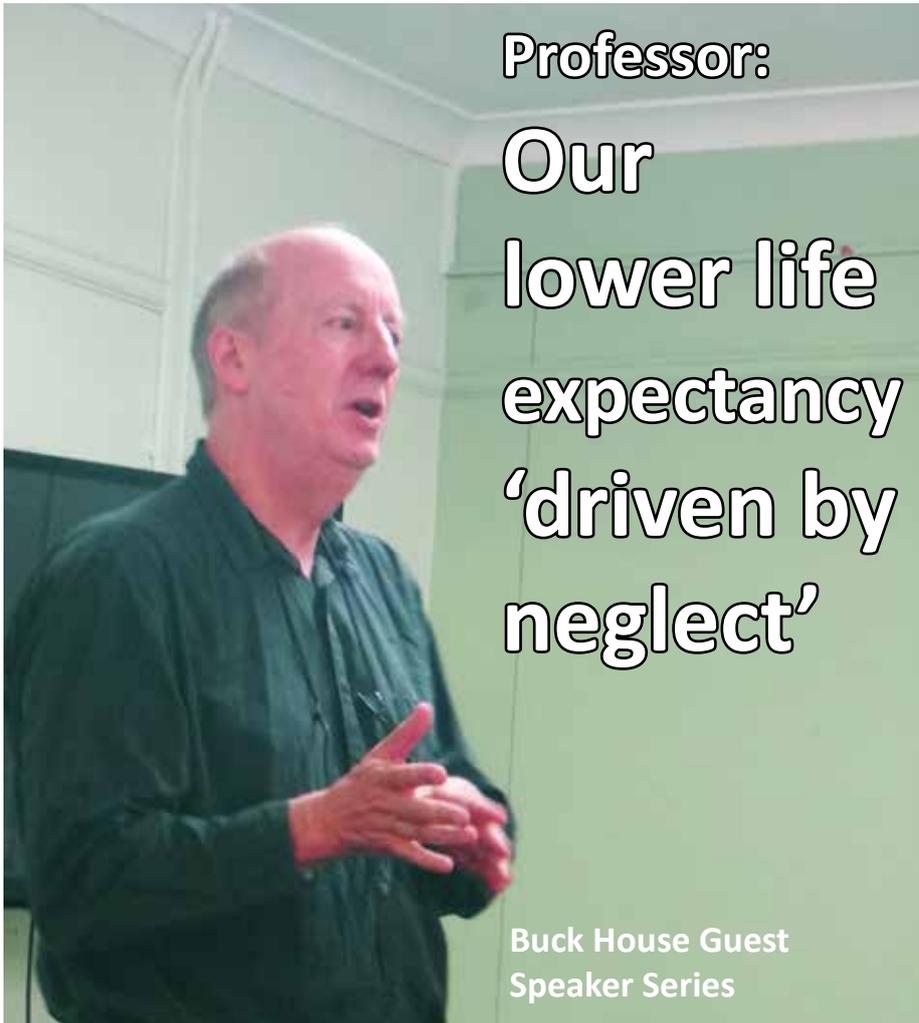
BACK ON TRACK HEALTH

Recommended health screening tests- talk to your GP

- Self-checking (skin, teeth, breasts)
- Skin exams
- Dental check-ups
- 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)

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'

Buck House Guest
Speaker Series

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 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?

That People with a diagnosis of Schizophrenia, Bipolar and Major Depressive disorder die younger from heart disease is 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 is located in the Clinical Sciences Building at Concord Hospital, Hospital Road Concord NSW 2039, Telephone (02) 9697 6027



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Climbing the Ladder

By Kathy Te Nuku and
Stephen Prior

As told to Grant J Everett

Kathy Te Nuku and Stephen Prior are two staff members of Flourish Australia who began as people accessing our services. Today, they both work at Prestige Packing Co, Harris Park. Kathy and Stephen tell us about how they “climbed the ladder”, and how their roles add value to Flourish Australia’s business services.

KATHY: I’m a Peer Support Worker, so I’m able to provide the employees with a few different services. I help write up employment assistance plans, I deal with NDIS (National Disability Insurance Scheme) paperwork, and I conduct CANSAS Conversations. I also encourage the employees to come and see me if they require any assistance from outside of Flourish Australia, as I can write up referrals for them if they want me to. I also help to hire new employees. We currently have a total of 140 workers at Harris Park, and we are still accepting new intakes.

Learning on the job

STEPHEN: I’m a Supervisor, also known as Team Leader. A major part of my job is encouraging the workers in their assigned tasks, but I also teach them new skills. I can train the employees to use equipment like the electric forklift, pallet jacks, hand trolleys, shrink wrapper machines, that sort of thing. When new people first start, often they’ll think that learning these machines will be too hard. But within a week, not only are they completing these tasks, they’re even teaching other people!

KATHY: I’ve had my current role for two years, but I’ve been with the organisation for six years all up. Before I was offered this current job by Fay Jackson (General Manager Inclusion), I was a Vocational Support Worker at PreEmploy. Before that, I went through the PreEmploy work preparation program as a participant.

Recovery Story

STEPHEN: I've been in a team leader role somewhere between seven and eight years. I started off at Prestige Packing at West Ryde as a factory hand, and after five years I was promoted. I've maintained my role since.

Big names

STEPHEN: We deal with a lot of major brands at Prestige Packing. We've done a lot of packing for Shiseido Cosmetics and Colgate over the years, and at one point we packed Moshi Monster magazines. At the moment we have pallets and pallets of 3M stock, and we've been shrink-wrapping pallets of Steric Lemon Juice.

It's common that most new employees who come to work at Prestige Packing haven't been in paid employment for a long time. A lot of our new intakes have never actually been in a workplace environment before, and we get others who have been two, three, five years out of work. We treat everybody the same, though, and provide all of them with the same training and encouragement.

When people turn up on their first day, they're usually a bit nervous and lost, and when we demonstrate the tasks for them they'll often get a bit intimidated and not feel all that confident. But before you know it, they're doing the job just fine. All you have to do is go step-by-step with people. I really enjoy teaching these new skills.

Transferable skills

STEPHEN: We encourage people to pursue open employment when they're ready. We teach them transferable skills, too, so our workers will go from not knowing a thing about warehousing to knowing a lot. It's kind of like the Master teaching the Apprentice. So in addition to being a supported employment workplace that encourages employees to reconnect with work, people are also able to learn abilities that could help them in the search for open employment.

On the subject of skills: Wayne Petersen and his wife Lorraine ran a TAFE-certified Warehousing course on-site at Prestige Packing. The classes went for around two years in total, and I think 24 people took part. There were a couple who didn't go all the way to the end, but all of the ones who stuck with it managed to graduate

the course in 2017. In addition to getting Certificate III accreditation, they also learned new skills.

(You can read the full story of the Cert III in Warehousing in Panorama #67, the September 2017 issue - Ed.)

Future climbing?

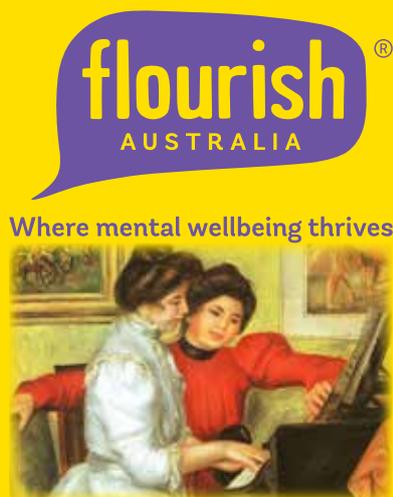
KATHY: I get a lot out of providing support to employees of Prestige Packing. By working in a disability organisation, there are new things I learn every single day. Even though I've been working for Flourish for six years, I'm still picking up more skills and experiences.

STEPHEN: As for my own goals for the future, for now I'm happy with the job I'm doing. The company has looked after me very well. So at the moment I'm quite content to stay and continue my work. I come to the factory every morning with a great attitude, and it rubs off on the people I work with here. They always seem happy to see me.

KATHY: Working for a disability company, it's all recovery-based, and in being a Peer Worker I've learned so much. I'm still enjoying the role that I'm doing. So to somebody who is interested in entering the peer workforce, I would say go for it!

'When new people first start, often they'll think that learning these machines will be too hard. But within a week, not only are they completing these tasks, they're even teaching other people!'

-Stephen Prior



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Communities of Practice share an interest or passion for something they do and want to learn how to do it better as they interact regularly with each other. For information on how to start a new community of practice, contact

**Janet Ford, Professional Practice Manager,
02 9393 9003, janet.ford@flourishaustralia.org.au**

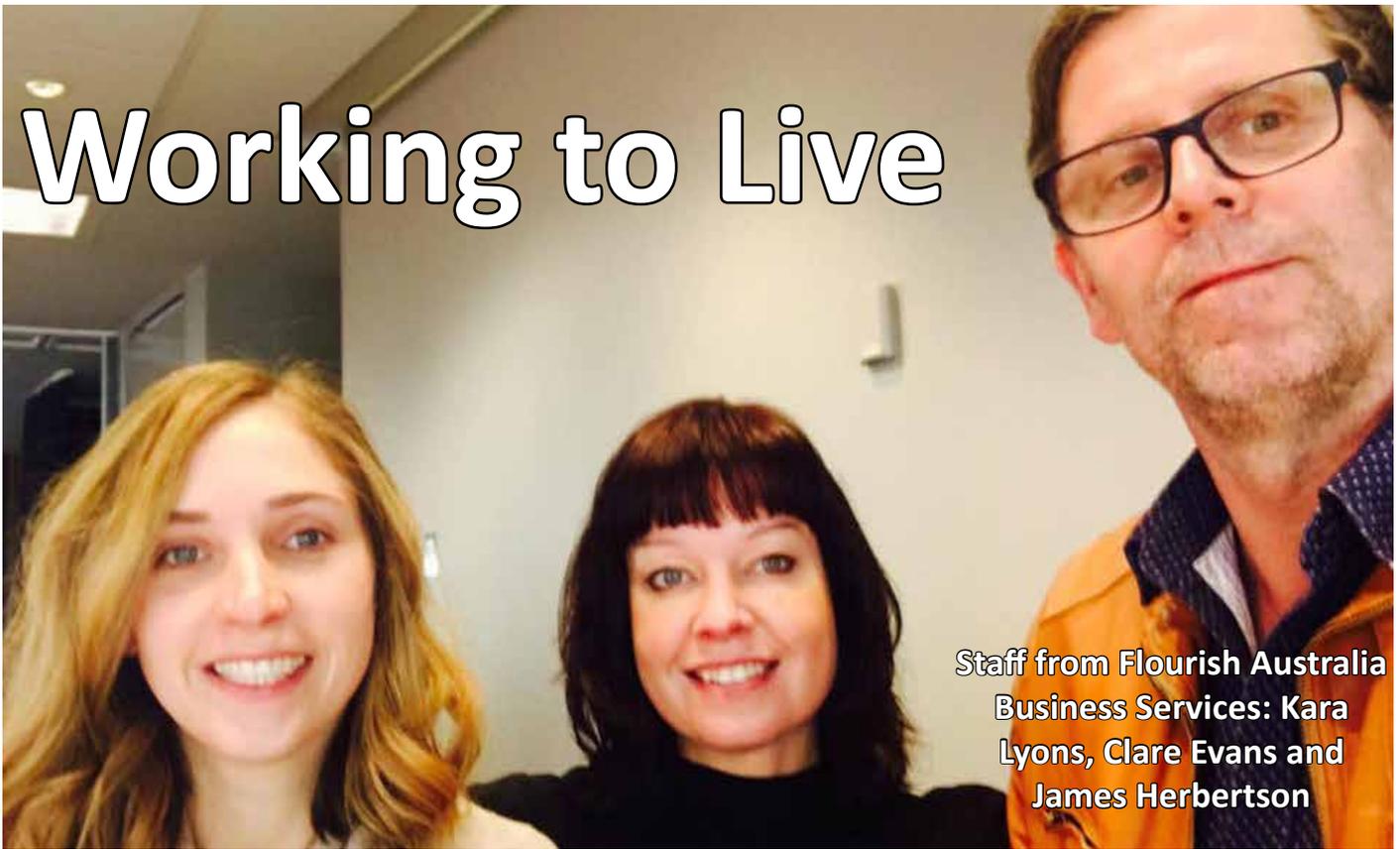
Communities of Practice currently operating within Flourish Australia

Physical Health and Wellbeing: contact Jade Ryall at Olympic Park on 02 9393 9009, email: Jade.Ryall@richmondpra.org.au

Peer Workforce: contact Shay Gilbert at Buckingham House on 02 9393 9240, email: Shay.Gilbert@richmondpra.org.au

Supporting Aboriginal And Torres Strait Islander People and Communities: contact Jade Ryall at Olympic Park on 02 9393 9009, email: Jade.Ryall@richmondpra.org.au

Working to Live



Staff from Flourish Australia Business Services: Kara Lyons, Clare Evans and James Herbertson

By James Herbertson, Senior Manager of Flourish Australia's community businesses.

JAMES: Flourish Australia runs community business operations at four Sydney metropolitan sites: Marrickville, Harris Park, Warrick Farm and St Marys. We also operate a number of outreach businesses that go out to places like Menangle, south of Campbelltown, and in the last year we've expanded with new sites in Wagga Wagga and Leeton. Our packing plants perform a number of warehousing and factory jobs from packing and processing to shrinkwrapping and shipping. We've packed for some of our larger clients on a regular basis for many, many years. We have also developed a courier business that operates out of these plants, transporting paperwork for the Department of Family and Community Services. In addition to that, our lawn mowing crews have a few big contracts, including as the catchment dams south of Sydney for Water NSW, but they are also happy to come and mow your front lawn. Our cleaning services travel a fair way out on a regular basis, too.

Potential employees need to have NDIS employment funding, but if somebody *hasn't* received an NDIS package yet then we can support them in getting the right one. You also need to have a lived experience of mental health issues, and have "getting back to work" as one of

your goals.

New employees are taught everything they need to know, and there's certainly room for advancement. A survey found that 50% of our supervisors started off in a supported employment role. We are also offering more advanced training programs: 33 people from our packaging plants recently graduated from a Certificate III in Warehousing (the full story is in Panorama 65 September 2017 - Ed). We also provide a Certificate III in Horticulture. Beyond that, we run recovery groups at our sites once per week where participants hold discussions about topics such as gaining non-specific "soft skills" that are useful in many fields (like learning how to be organised, how to deal with social situations, how to manage your finances, and so on). This means we can help people develop more than just their employment goals.

I see our workplaces as "transitional employment", so the ultimate goal is to support people further into community participation. If somebody says that staying with a community business is a good support for them and they're enjoying it, that's fine. But we would like to support as many people back into the community and into open employment as possible.

Overall, people who engage in supported employment while they're on the DSP will end up better off financially. If some-

one wants to get off the DSP (a great goal to have), we can support them in that. It can be an achievable goal.

While we get some assistance from the government to help us support our workers, the businesses *are* businesses: that means they need to provide clients with what they paid for and make a profit while doing so. We've taken steps to ensure our long-term viability, and it looks like we're in a stable position. Our long-term strategies will provide more opportunity for our workers.

Meaningful activities (like employment) have great benefits. Getting out of the house, seeing new people and just being in a different environment are all beneficial. We've found that people are happier when they're busy, and working will add extra levels to your life. Having some extra money is always nice, too.

As told to Grant J Everett

Want to know more?

Clare Evans

(02) 9393 9035

clare.evans@

richmondpra.org.au

Get it Through the Grapevine



Acquire interpersonal skills and stop the robots taking your job

By Warren Heggarty

'If you have good interpersonal skills', social analyst David Chalke told the *Sunday Telegraph*, 'there will always be a job for you' (Burgess, 2017). Which leads to the obvious question: 'what if I don't have good interpersonal skills?'

There are two ways of approaching this. Firstly, try to find a job which doesn't require good interpersonal skills. Secondly, LEARN to have good interpersonal skills.

The first approach sounds easier, but the robots are coming. Robots, not noted for their good interpersonal skills, are going to take over jobs where interpersonal skills are not so important.

People who hire people tend to hire people they know. When a vacancy comes up, you would like those people to be thinking of you.

STEM jobs (science, technology, engineering and mathematics) are often spoken of as jobs for future expansion. However, according to Andrew Norton at the Grattan Institute, 'there is a significant oversupply of science graduates, and as a result they are not finding work that uses their knowledge and skills.' (Creighton & Ritchie, 2017)

The job areas that ARE expanding

include nursing, aged care and disability care. Sales assistants, waiters and baristas are also expanding. Personal care, training and fitness are a growth areas, too. This brings us back to the second approach: acquire the interpersonal skills. (Creighton & Ritchie, 2017)

How do you learn to have good interpersonal skills. Inventor Nigel Dalton says that although robots will take over some jobs, people could make sure they didn't become 'irrelevant' in the workplace by means of continual learning. Education 'is the key to being relevant in the future.' (Burgess, 2017)

Life long learning. They've been saying that for years... People have never been so well educated,

but jobs have never been so hard to find. So is there a THIRD approach that doesn't involve 'continual learning?'

The old saying is 'it's not WHAT you know (skills) it's WHO you know (connections). Can developing connections save you from the robots? After all, robots are not likely to be part of a network of people helping one another out. Are they? Are they?

Above: Secure employment. People will always eat. The food service unit at Flourish Australia, Newcastle

Acquiring job skills alone will not swing it for you. You have to put your message out on the 'grapevine' that you are looking for a particular type of work. 'Networking' is a scary word, made scarier by its use in business management writing, but it might be time to start building your own network. Or getting on the trellis and using the grapevine.

People who hire people tend to hire people they know. (Kobara & Smith, 2017) When a vacancy comes up, you would like those people to be thinking of you!

By the way, according to an analysis by PwC for The Australian newspaper, the occupations that have suffered the biggest contractions since 2012 are secretaries, florists, metal and wood trades and electrical engineers. (Creighton & Ritchie, 2017)

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 Creighton, A., & Ritchie, E. (2017, June 6). "New jobs: it's more about bodies than brains," *The Australian newspaper*.
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EMPLOYMENT & YOU...

Are you living with a mental health issue?

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

***Flourish Australia is a registered
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To find out more or to APPLY: Phone: 02 9393 9000 Email: clare.evans@flourishaustralia.org.au

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