

The Courage to Make History and how we can transform the law on abortion

Unplanned pregnancy is an issue that has significant health consequences. The possibility of an unplanned pregnancy is a reality that women face throughout their reproductive years. There is no contraceptive method that is 100% effective. Access to safe and affordable abortion services ensures the rights of women to reproductive self determination, but in Queensland, women encounter many barriers including:

- limited locations of clinical abortion services and travel costs for women in remote areas
- almost non-existent provision of abortion services in Queensland's public hospital system
- affordability of abortion procedure
- taboos, myths, and misinformation surrounding abortion
- criminality of abortion (abortion is the only surgical procedure covered by the Queensland Criminal Code)

On 13 October 2011, following FPQ's AGM, FPQ joined forces with Children by Choice and a host committee of ten dedicated organisations to convene more than 125 people at the Parliamentary Annexe for a presentation by Dr Leslie Cannold and Professor Nicholas Fisk about abortion law reform. Generously hosted by Grace Grace, Member for Brisbane Central, the audience of community members, leaders, and Parliamentarians heard a compelling presentation outlining why abortion law must be reformed in Queensland, and how we can work together to ensure women's access to reproductive choices in the state.



Dr Leslie Cannold speaking at the Parliamentary Annexe

Launched on the night was a postcard campaign, inviting individuals to send postcards to Premier Anna Bligh, Attorney-General Paul Lucas and LNP Leader Campbell Newman urging them to refer abortion law to the Queensland Law Reform Commission, so that it may be clarified for doctors and women alike.

Contact projectsupport@fpq.com.au by 30 November to get your postcard to send to Queensland political leaders in support of referring abortion to the Law Reform Commission.

Special thanks go to the host committee:

Australian Manufacturing Workers Union
 Australian Services Union (Central and Southern Queensland)
 Children by Choice
 Family Planning Queensland
 James Cook University
 Department of Obstetrics and Gynaecology Queensland
 Association for Healthy Communities
 Marie Stopes International
 Australia Pro Choice
 Cairns Public Health Association of Australia
 Women's Health Queensland Wide
 Youth Affairs Network of Queensland
 YWCA Queensland

Family Education evenings going strong after 30 years in Townsville

Townsville Family Education evenings continue to be well received by parents, carers and their families. These interactive sessions for pre-puberty children and young people with a disability discuss puberty changes, fertilisation, pregnancy and birth. We also hold post-puberty (teenage) sessions, incorporating information about safe sex, safe partying, and healthy, happy relationships.

Many of our families are repeat attendees, first attending pre-puberty sessions and returning a few years later for the post-puberty sessions. Many parents report they bring their own children as it was something they attended with their parents ten to twenty years ago themselves.

The sessions are informative and offer informal time over pizza and coffee for families to learn and share with one another and the FPQ educator. Due to ongoing demand, Townsville staff may add sessions for younger children and their families covering private and public body part awareness and protective behaviours. For more information, contact the Townsville education team on tvledu@fpq.com.au or by phone 4723 6597.

From the desk of the CEO



Meet the FPQ Board: Fiona Vaughan

BA, (Distinction) LLB, GDLP (NSW)

At the AGM we welcomed four new Directors to the FPQ Board. They are Scott Kitchener, Helen Moore, Lisa Nissen and Fiona Vaughan. These new Directors bring a wide range of expertise to the Board. You can read more about our Directors in this and coming editions of the eNews. See **Meet the Board** to get to know Fiona Vaughan. Following consultation with community members, staff and Board, FPQ has announced our strategic directions for 2012-2014.

Over the next three years FPQ will work to:

- Create conversations and inclusive responses to sexuality, particularly the healthy sexual development of young people
- Build the capacity of people working in Queensland to respond to sexual and reproductive health needs
- Drive ongoing clinical excellence in sexual and reproductive health
- Be responsive and relevant in developing our services and relationships
- Value and develop our people
- Renew our organisation to ensure a sustainable future

We continue to rely on community partners in the regions in which we work to help us achieve results. We welcome feedback on our strategic directions and invite you to contact us with questions or input on communications@fpq.com.au

Fiona is an Aboriginal woman and descendant from the Kamilaroi peoples in Northern NSW. Ms Vaughan has practiced law in Queensland since 2007, having previously relocated from NSW. Fiona is admitted to practice in Queensland and New South Wales and the High Court of Australia. Fiona has extensive experience working in corporate law, child protection, elder abuse, law reform and community legal education in regional and remote areas of Queensland.

Fiona's area of specific expertise extends to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander issues. Fiona has been a member of the National Pro Bono Committee, the Queensland Council of Social Services (QCOSS) and the Roundtable for amendments to the Queensland Criminal Code on the defence of Battered Wife Syndrome. Fiona has lectured at the University of Wollongong (NSW) and Griffith University on a part time tutor and guest lecturer basis in both law and Aboriginal Studies. Fiona intends to complete her Masters of Laws - Criminology in 2012.

Ms Vaughan was elected to the FPQ Board of Directors at the 2011 AGM. She is also Chairperson of the Governance Committee. When asked why she joined the FPQ Board of Directors, Fiona replied:

"FPQ provides a highly necessary and essential health and education service to all people regardless of social barriers. The service is provided without discrimination or exclusion on the basis of age, gender, ethnicity, social status or sexuality.

There are very few providers left in society that are able to offer full time services of such a high calibre without policies of exclusion on the basis of either age, gender, ethnicity or sexuality and the ability to provide such a vital and important health service free of exclusion is essential to achieving world health standards for a democracy.

This essential underpinning element of the service that FPQ provides is vital to policies of achieving social justice, and this is one of the many reasons I chose to join the Board. The opportunity to sit on the Board has given me the chance to be involved in decisions which will hopefully improve the already high quality of service that FPQ already provides. I have thoroughly enjoyed my first three months on the Board, and look forward to working with the other Board members in continuing to provide high quality health care for those members of society that are often the most in need of free and non-judgmental health care."

FPQ's latest annual report is now available online at www.fpq.com.au/about/annual_reports.php

In a conscious effort to go green, FPQ has produced a limited number of printed annual reports this year.

We hope you enjoy reviewing highlights of FPQ's work across the state, and get inspired to continue to work together to

create the future.



Making noise about sexual assault for Sexual Violence Awareness Month (SVAM)

Sexual Violence Awareness Month was marked by FPQ's Cairns Sexual Assault Service (CSAS) in many ways this October. To kick it off, on 1 October, a Trivia Night was held as a way to raise awareness about sexual assault and commemorate SVAM. Approximately 180 people were in attendance, and participants were challenged by questions about healthy relationships and healthy sexuality – and won great prizes thanks to our prize donors.

Following the Trivia Night, CSAS hosted Reclaim the Night at the Red Arrow Walking Track on 28 October. At Reclaim the Night, people worldwide rally together to protest the ways in which violence against women impacts our lives. Over 100 people turned out in support of the event.

The Red Arrow is a popular exercise venue in Cairns and unfortunately, like many of our public places, is also a place where sexual assaults occur. So how do we take a stand and put a stop to sexual assault?

“Changing our behaviour by avoiding walking after dark or not jogging alone on our favourite exercise tracks will not stop sexual assault,” explains Cairns Sexual Assault Service Coordinator, Clare Oppy. “Women have the right, and ought to be safe enough to make use of our public spaces in the same ways men do.”

She explains, “More recently in Cairns women have been coming forward following sexual assault in very public places. This alerts the community to this problem and



Cairns Sexual Assault Service *Reclaim the Night* team

highlights that something needs to change. There has been widely expressed concern about the number of sexual assaults occurring. Making noise about sexual assault sends the message that it will not be tolerated.” Cairns Sexual Assault Service provided sixty personal alarms to women at Reclaim the Night to promote the theme of making noise about this very important social issue.

“We want all women to feel safe as they go about their business, and it is important that everyone is mindful of their personal security. Raising awareness through these events reinforces that the community will not tolerate any form of violence and encourages people to assist Police to investigate offences and prevent further violent crimes.” Acting Crime Coordinator, Detective Inspector Brad Winks.

Special thanks go to Trivia Night prize donors, and to all the participants and volunteers who helped raise awareness about sexual assault during Sexual Violence Awareness Month.

FPQ is redeveloping the Teacher Resource Centre in 2012

FPQ's online Teacher Resource Centre provides educators with information and resources to prepare for and implement sexuality and relationships education programs. It features short videos showing teachers and students taking part in lessons, along with sample lesson plans.

We'd like your input

We'd like teacher input through our short 8 question survey to ensure the site's redevelopment incorporates features, information and tools you need for the smooth planning and delivery of sexuality and relationships education in your schools.

Kindly visit the survey on www.fpq.com.au/teachers/index.php to share your views on how to improve the Teacher Resource Centre. Your participation in the Teacher Resource Centre survey is appreciated by Monday 5 December.

For more information, please contact Kylie on 3250 0240 or kharris@fpq.com.au



FPQ's Ipswich centre and Community Access and Transition Service Inc partner to provide sexuality and relationships education to adults with a disability

Ipswich has a number of services that support adults with a disability living in the community; one of these services is Community Access and Transition Service Inc (CATS). CATS is a nonprofit service which supports young people with a disability between the ages of 16-25. CATS' mission is 'serving the needs of young adults with disabilities in assisting them to achieve dignity and fulfilment through participation in community life' with a focus on helping young people become independent members of their local community.

In 2009 staff from CATS expressed interest in attending FPQ training, which led to FPQ providing training to all support workers at CATS.

Following this training, and some discussions and reflections, CATS' Service Manager and Client Services Coordinator went to their Board and highlighted the need for a sexuality and relationships module to be part of the CATS program. The Board supported the idea and in 2010 CATS contacted FPQ to look at developing a program for their clients.

FPQ and CATS had several meetings during 2010-2011 to discuss content, resources, client needs and rights, and how to work with parents. This resulted in an eight week program being developed which linked to Disability Standards - Standard 3: Decision-making and choice and Standard 9: Protection of legal and



human rights and freedom from abuse and neglect. This was designed to be a program to meet client needs around relationships, including both social interactions as well as intimate relationships. CATS' Client Services Coordinator summed it up really nicely by saying, "Sexuality is a natural thing. People have the right to information about their bodies, sex and relationships. Services exist to promote service users rights." CATS are keen to continue to work with FPQ as partners to provide information and education for their clients and FPQ looks forward to continuing this partnership.

FPQ's Ipswich centre is moving!

FPQ's last day in the Ipswich Health Plaza is Wednesday 23 November. We will resume services at our new building located at Shop 5, 54 Limestone Street, Ipswich in early December. Check our website

www.fpq.com.au for details of our opening date. Our phone number – 3281 4088 – will remain the same.

Thank you for your ongoing patronage and we look forward to seeing you in our new office.

Meet the FPQ staff: Dr Kay Strom

Over the past 18 years Kay Strom has dedicated her working life to the sexual and reproductive health of those in need. She is the Senior Medical Officer at our



Brisbane clinic, and has worked at FPQ since 1993. Kay's special interests are in contraception and cervical cancer screening. Kay often works well beyond her paid hours to ensure that FPQ clients receive the best possible care. As part of the leadership team of the Brisbane clinic she strives to support her team to demonstrate the use of high quality evidence and guidelines in FPQ daily practice. As medical education coordinator she has responsibilities in FPQ's clinical education, which currently includes the General Practitioner Cervical Screening Skills Update Project. Kay contributed significantly to the development of the *Connections Train the Trainer* package which was developed to assist general practice staff to increase understanding to enable them to work more confidently with young people.

Dr Strom believes firmly in FPQ's vision to promote sexual and reproductive health for all. Her greatest passion in life is for her husband of 20 years, Cameron, and their three remarkable boys – Chris, Adam and William. They keep her grounded and busy with her other jobs that arise from her children's circus and school activities, including costume making, cake baking and volunteer first aid duties.

Pass it on

Thanks for reading the Family Planning Queensland newsletter. If you like what you read, please pass it on. We welcome your feedback or suggestions for future editions. Please contact Janelle Weissman, Director of Communications & Development, at communications@fpq.com.au or on 3250 0222 with your comments.

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