



Newsletter

September Quarter

Issue 3. 2011



Self Help Queensland Inc, Sunnybank Community Hall, 121 Lister Street

(PO Box 353) SUNNYBANK 4109

Ph/Fax 07 3344 6919 Email: selfhelp@gil.com.au www.selfhelpqld.org.au

Self Help Queensland Inc is a network of self help organisations and groups in Queensland. The network was formed by self help organisations to share resources, support each other, assist in the development of new groups, raise community awareness of the importance of self help and provide a strong united voice on issues which affect our members.

From the President

Hello everyone

You might have heard (or chosen to ignore) news that the National Health Reform Agenda has hit Queensland Health. Reports are that everything has to be done "now" to position that Department so that it controls the 'transformational agenda'. This Agenda is that health services will be 'regionalised' around 'Local Health and Hospitals' (LHHs), or provided by those with a Medicare number, such as GPs, Psychologists, Physiotherapists, etc. and will be known as 'Medicare Locals'. These professionals will tender their services to a Governing Board and will be awarded the work depending on their costings and community connections.



Thea Biesheuvel

You might think that this does not affect your group. It affects those who are funded by Queensland Health, however, as the terms the Department uses is that they 'purchase a service' from us by funding us.

In the wide spectrum of issues with which 'our' groups engage, hardly any of the groups will be able to 'tender' their services (do a costing and ask for that much funding) or be seen as 'treatment' worthy of a Medicare Rebate. It is also difficult to see how groups that are spread over a variety of localities would be able to engage in this process for each LHH or Medicare Local.

That is the reason the Queensland Council of Social Services, (QCROSS), convened a 'Community Health Services Network (CHSN) for the past six months and that is also the reason we, at Self Help Queensland have had a seat around the table. We (CHSN) are convening a workshop with Qld Health on **17th October**, at Qld Health (Charlotte St), so that the groups funded by Qld Health can inform the Department of their work and their concerns. It appears that their 'engagement framework' suggests widespread consultation, a much used word of late.

In my dictionary 'to consult' means 'to seek counsel and advice or information from ...' This definition does not cover the publication of frameworks or other information from the Department to various agencies. It also seems that the Department's preferred method is to concentrate on the hospitals and Medicare providers. (Continued Page 4)

Self Help Queensland Management Committee Members

President Thea Biesheuvel
Secretary Joe Soda
Treasurer Chris Spriggs
Members Casey Barber
 Cathy Wu
 Clemencia Naranjo

Committee Meetings

If you would like to attend our meetings, please contact us for dates and times. Everyone is welcome to attend.

SHQ Staff

Co-ordinator

Trish Fallon

Project Officer - Mental Health

Gina Jacobsen

Project Officer - General

Mosmin Marediya

Administration Officer

Janette Evans

BOCD SG Co-ordinator

Pat Minnaar

Office

The office is attended Monday to Friday, 9am to 4.30pm. However, staff are sometimes required to liaise with groups or attend meetings away from the office.

If you wish to call in to use the office facilities or talk to the project officer, please phone first to ensure that someone will be available to meet with you.

Office Location:

Sunnybank Community Hall
121 Lister Street (Cnr Gager Street)
Sunnybank 4109

Postal Address

P.O. Box 353, Sunnybank QLD 4109

Phone/Fax: (07) 3344 6919

Email: selfhelp@gil.com.au

URL: www.selfhelpqld.org.au

Thanks to Queensland Health for providing funding to Self Help Queensland to help carry out its activities, and for supporting the publication of this quarterly Newsletter.



Disclaimer

The views expressed in this publication are those of the individual authors and not necessarily those of Self Help Qld

The material supplied is for information purposes only, and is not to be used for diagnosis/treatment, or as legal, tax, accounting or any other type of advice. The SHQ newsletter editor reserves the right to edit contributed articles.

SHQ Undergoing Significant Organisational Change

SHQ is currently working towards achieving the Standards for Community Services.

A contractor has been employed to help us with this process, and we have been working together since April 2011.

It is a lengthy, sometimes difficult and often dry experience, but it will be well worth it in the long run. SHQ is aiming for continuous improvement, and this is part of our strategy.

We have been building a comprehensive Policies and Procedures Manual, and all staff and management will undergo training.

The first draft has been completed and is now undergoing critical review. Once this process is complete, the manual will be available for viewing in the SHQ office, and consumer policies uploaded to our website.

www.selfhelpqld.org.au

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Thank you to all our current funding bodies - Qld Health, Dept Communities (Mental Health Branch), Brisbane City Council.

8TH SEPTEMBER 2011

YOU ARE INVITED

**SELF HELP QUEENSLAND WELCOMES YOU TO
COME AND TAKE PART IN CELEBRATING**

**National Self Help and Support
Groups Awareness Day**

8:30am-2:30pm

OFFICIAL OPENING AT 10:15am

REDDACLIFF PLACE,

TOP OF THE QUEEN ST MALL

**80 SELF
HELP &**

**AN
AUSTRALIAN
FIRST**

**SUPPORT
GROUPS**

in the one place

Official Opening by

THE RIGHT HONOURABLE, THE LORD MAYOR OF BRISBANE,

COUNCILLOR GRAHAM QUIRK

at the one time

*All members of the community, media, health and disability workers,
professionals, students and government are warmly invited to meet and speak
with those who have faced health conditions and wellbeing issues, gather
information and learn how people can help each other.*

Showcasing an array of multicultural entertainment!

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION, PLEASE CONTACT TRISH
AT SELF HELP QUEENSLAND 07 3344 6919
OR EMAIL selfhelp@gil.com.au**



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Has your group been consulted? Chances are that you've received some information and the new framework for evaluating your 'service', (and your funding arrangements), but very little else.

The health reform Agenda also affects the Department of Communities, which has its own groups of workers dealing with community health and well-being concerns, especially those with mental health issues or from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds (CALD). That Department is also concerned about 'Indicators of success and progress' for its funded bodies. We (CHSN) are convening a meeting with the Departmental representatives to discuss the process underpinning these 'suggested' indicators with them on 8th September.

An important question for us to ask ourselves is 'what type of leadership is needed to support change and transformation?'

Change requires a re-think of the values we bring to our work, the attitudes we have to our colleagues and clients, the relationships we have within the community sector as well as with those in local government, state departments and federal agencies. Change also demands that we change our work practices to reflect those changes.

Work practices that have 'done alright for the past ten years' will not keep pace with these changes. Ever changing personnel in statutory authorities does not help build relationships in the same way this has been done in the past. Many organisations in the community sector now also vie with each other for scarce resources and are forced to delineate their services. Some construct 'business plans' and others disappear from view.

The following snippet of news appeared in my local "News":



You will see that this is your chance (and ours) to get to discuss what services are needed 'on the ground'.

We hope to see your group well represented at the local and regional level in future. We will continue to press the point that groups must be represented, both as Self Help Queensland and as a member of the Community Health Services Network.

Regards
Thea

Please Tell Us!

Self Help Queensland welcomes feedback on aspect of our services. We invite you to tell us if you have identified any areas for improvement. Constructive criticism is essential for our continuous improvement.

Of course we'd also like to know if there is something you think we are doing right!

Genetic Matters

Kim Summers PhD

Life in the Public Eye

What factors make a difference to health and disease as we grow and get older? Most studies of human diseases start too late, when the condition is already established, and when the factors that caused it may be long gone but the damage is done. In particular, we would like to know the relative contributions of genes (nature) and the environment (nurture) to the disease (or susceptibility to the disease). In animals, we can try to recreate the processes that led to the disease and follow its progression, but it's hard to do this in humans.

Over the years there have been a number of research projects which have attempted to overcome this problem by following the same people for many years. The most visible of these are two high profile documentary series which attempt to look at the effects of nature and nurture. There are the *Up* series and *Child of our Time*.

The *Up* series (see http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Up_Series) followed the lives of 14 children in the UK, starting when they were 7 years old in 1964 (*7 Up*). The documentaries of their lives have been made every 7 years since then, with *56 Up* planned in the next 12 months. The participants were chosen to represent a range of social classes, and the original hypothesis was that the children's lives would be predetermined by their social class at birth. This has largely been supported by the positions the subjects occupy in their adult lives. Because the data are presented through edited documentaries, the series has been criticised as being manipulated to create associations between the past and the present which may not really exist. Since there are only 14 children, the numbers are not large enough to provide statistical significance to any findings. Nonetheless, the series has won a number of awards and attracts a great deal of interest as each new documentary is released.

Child of our Time (see http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Child_of_Our_Time) is presented by Professor Robert Winston and follows 25 children (in 22 families) who were born early in 2000. The children come from very different families, and include identical twins, non-identical triplets, children in single parent families, children with disadvantaged or disabled parents, children with no siblings and those with several siblings. Geographically, they come from all parts of the UK, including Northern Ireland, Scotland, Wales and many areas in England. They will be visited each year until they are 20, in 2020. The children are given a series of tests, aiming to show the relative roles of genes and environment on various aspects of human development, performance and behaviour. Because of the very diverse backgrounds and the small number of children, this study, too, cannot be analysed statistically. However, it will provide interesting ideas which can be followed up in larger studies which are specifically designed to look at particular aspects of the gene/environment question.

Although *Child of our Time* and the *Up* series are endlessly fascinating to TV viewers, and provide interesting insights into changing social structures, they are limited in the analysis and facts that they can reveal because of the small numbers and non-random nature of the subjects. Larger studies, conducted away from the television cameras and the need to make an interesting program, have yielded significant improvements to human health.

The first of these was the Framingham Study. The study commenced in 1948 with a group of over 5000 men and women aged between 30 and 62, (Continued on Page 6)

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who had no signs of cardiovascular disease. Every two years the subjects returned for extensive medical tests and lifestyle analysis.

Over the years this detailed accumulation of data allowed researchers to identify major risk factors for cardiovascular disease, such as high blood pressure, high blood cholesterol, smoking, obesity, diabetes, and physical inactivity - as well as a great deal of valuable information on the effects of related factors such as blood triglyceride and HDL cholesterol levels, age, gender, and psychosocial issues.

Results from the Framingham study led to the development of effective treatment and preventative strategies in clinical practice. The study has therefore contributed to the health of all people, by keeping detailed accurate records of this group of individuals for more than 60 years. It has now extended to their children, which should allow the researchers to look at genetic factors as well as the "ghost in the genes" that passes a memory of environmental changes from parent to offspring.

Children of the 90s (<http://www.bristol.ac.uk/alspac/>) is a study of children born in 1991 and 1992 in the Bristol area. Over 14,000 mothers agreed to be part of the study which followed the health and development of their children from pregnancy to the present day.

By following these children and their parents for more than 18 years, *Children of the 90s* has made a number of important health discoveries. For example one part of the study looked at lead levels in the blood of children at 2½ years of age, and then reviewed academic test results for the same children at age seven years. There was a clear link between high levels of lead in the blood and poorer performance on school testing at age 7.

In another analysis of *Children of the 90s* participants, researchers asked parents about their child's history of asthma and TV viewing habits from 3½ years of age. The results showed that children who watched more than two hours a day of TV were almost twice as likely to have been diagnosed with asthma by 11½ years as those who watched less. TV viewing was seen as an indication of activity levels, with the longer viewing time correlating with less activity, so less active children had more asthma diagnoses, perhaps because of the different breathing patterns associated with sitting and engaging in physical activity.

Children of the 90s has also looked at the effect of diet on school performance. Surprisingly the study found that children who do poorly at school are affected by the food they ate many years earlier, as 3 year olds. Because of the size of the study, researchers were able to allow for other factors which might influence school performance, such as income and housing. Even when these factors were taken into account, diet in the preschool years appeared to influence school performance much later.

We are now beginning to see the benefits of these large, long term studies. With enough people involved, many of the rarer conditions will be experienced as well as the more common diseases, and the factors influencing susceptibility and resistance can be untangled. Subjects may feel that their lives are under the microscope, but the information they provide will be invaluable to future generations.

Kim is a professor at the Roslin Institute, University of Edinburgh and a member of the School of Medicine at UQ.

Editor's Note: Self Help Queensland is very thankful to Kim for her continuous contribution, over many years, of quality professional articles that have a popular following among our readers.



Mercury Rising Project Update

Explorer Grants Program

*By Gina Jacobsen
SHQ Mental Health Project Worker*

Small grants program finished:

We have had a busy few months developing the Mercury Rising Project (MRP) Explorer Small Grants Program and supporting groups through the application process. We are thrilled to have approved a total of 100 small grants to mental health self help support groups around Queensland. This project has had a strong focus on supporting Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Groups (CALD) emotional wellbeing groups and we are very grateful to QPASST, A.C.C.E.S. Services Inc. CAMS Logan and Multilink for assisting many of these groups with completing their applications forms.

The MRP Explorer Small Grants Program aimed to **explore** groups by learning about what they do when they meet and **discover** why people attend their group, what they are proud of achieving and how they sustain themselves. It also aimed to discover how groups intend to build their capacity through their small grant. This learning has allowed the MRP and SHQ to **appreciate** these group's unique values and strengths and identify commonalities and differences between them.

New groups identified:

Many new groups have been identified through this project around Brisbane, Gold Coast, Toowoomba, Sunshine Coast, Townsville and Wide Bay and new networking groups have also been identified and established. New groups data base details will be available soon or please contact Gina for details about one's in their areas.

Brisbane 'Meet and Greet':

MRP and SHQ recently held an informal 'Meet and Greet' morning at Sunnybank to meet new mental health support groups and to create a space for local Brisbane groups to network. Wonderful stories were shared by these groups and it was a privilege to hear amazing stories of hope and resilience directly from the group members. Some of these stories were captured on video and will be available on our website once authorised by participants.

At the Meet and Greet we asked participants to share their groups 'best secrets' which makes their group successful and write them on a board. Here they are:

"Create a Safe Welcoming Environment", "Understanding", "Fun Learning", "Love, kindness & togetherness", "Support & sharing", "Honesty", "Happy to have a chat", "Non-judgemental, welcoming all groups to BOCDG events, life-long friendship & support, networking", "Understanding and accepting each other", "Sharing information & listening", "Networking local & international", "Culture & language", "I share my personal testimonies which helps my group & I have people ringing me back who have been suicidal and they are still ringing", "Beautiful singing & serving & helping each other, not forgetting the food", "Changed lives through the power of God's love", "Experiential learning approach -making it mutually inclusive".

Please email me YOUR group's best tips so we can add them to the next newsletter. Please email Gina with a subject header: 'Groups best secrets' to self-helpmh@gil.com.au

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Awareness Day:

26 Brisbane mental health and CALD support groups will be participating in SHQ National Awareness Day on the 8th of September. Several groups who benefited from the small grant will be performing for us on the day. This includes 2 performances from the 'Voice of Samoa': 1. "Team Xtreme" will be bending iron bars and phone book ripping....Is that even humanly possible? Lamalu the President of Voice of Samoa says that "it might sound extreme but they use their strength and techniques to deliver a positive message for young people towards positive thinking and respect". Their "Pacific Dreams" team will be performing traditional Samoan songs and dances.

We also look forward to a performance from the Matu community who will be dancing the 'RUKTUH (harvesting) dance' and 'DI DE (warrior) dance' and Frances from the Encourager group will be performing 'You light up my life'. Frances tells us that the special meaning to this song is that "during one's darkest moment, there is a desire for comfort and restoration". If you want your group to perform at our Awareness Day, please contact Trish asap. If you are not having a stall at the Awareness Day, please come along and look at the 80+ different support groups, there will sure to be other groups you can relate to.

Gina Jacobsen
SHQ Mental Health Project Worker

**Mercury Rising Project funded by Community Mental Health Branch,
Department of Communities.**



NOTICE OF ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Monday 26th September 9.30am

**All members and friends of Self Help Queensland
are warmly invited to attend**

Sunnybank Community Hall
121 Lister Street (Cnr Gager Street), Sunnybank
9.30am followed by a light lunch

Agenda

- Opening of meeting and welcome to guests
- Apologies
- Minutes of 2010 AGM
- Business arising from the minutes
- Correspondence
- President's Report
- Treasurer's Report and presentation of audited financial statement
- Election of Office Bearers
- Appointment of Auditor
- General Business
- Close of Meeting

Light lunch and networking opportunity

RSVP Friday September 2011 Ph: SHQ 3344 6919 or email: selfhelp@gil.com.au
Nominations for Management Committee welcome - forms available via SHQ office or www.selfhelpqld.org.au - all enquiries to SHQ office.

PLEASE TELL OTHERS ABOUT AWARENESS DAY



National Self Help and Support Groups Awareness Day

- helping each other to help ourselves

Thursday 8th September 2011 from 8.30am to 2.30 pm

Reddacliff Place, 266 George Street, Brisbane (Opposite Jupiters Casino)

For the second year, SHQ and our sister organisations in other States will be undertaking activities aimed at raising awareness of the value of self help and support groups.

All groups will have their own under cover booth at Reddacliff Place, Top of the Queen Street Mall. They will have displays, hand out resources and be available to speak with you.

- Learn what Self Help and Support Groups are really about
- Meet and Speak with People with the "Lived Experience"
- Professionals and Service Providers - meet the groups to whom you make referrals
- Discover completely new or previously unknown groups
- Have a conversation and meet some of our newest arrivals
- Dispel the myths
- Celebrate the contribution of Self Help and Support Groups to the community
- Great Networking opportunity!

We Need Your Help to Raise Awareness

Please help us tell the community that your group exists & what it does
by

Spreading the word throughout your networks

Informing the media if you have any contacts in that area

Placing notices on websites, in newsletters, social media

Ringling "Talk Back Radio" programs

Writing letters to the editors of newspapers

Notifying Government, service providers, sector workers

Bringing others to meet the groups at Reddacliff Place

This day is in recognition and appreciation of the role Self Help and Support Groups play in the life of our communities

Current List of participating groups on page 8

National Self Help and Support Groups Awareness Day

Groups You can Meet and Speak With on Thursday 8th September

African Women Friendship Group	Neurofibromatosis Association of Australia
Albinism Fellowship of Australia	Older Women's Network
Alzheimer 's Association of Queensland	Parkinson's Queensland
Amputees and Families Support Group	Peach Tree Perinatal Wellness
Androgen Insensitivity Syndrome SG	People Surviving Psychiatry
ARAFMI Queensland	PFlag
Asperger Services Australia	Polycystic Ovary Association of Australia
AusCongo Network	Queensland African Communities Council
Australian Leukodystrophy Support Group	Qld Asbestos Related Disease Society
Australian Oromo Community Association	Qld Homicide Victims Support Group
Australian Pain Management Assoc	Queensland Positive Speakers Bureau
Australian Pituitary Foundation (Qld)	Queensland Positive People
Australian Tinnitus Association	Queensland Stroke Supporters
Bayside Diabetes Support Group	Rebuild
Better Hearing Australia Brisbane	Retina Australia (Qld) Inc
Brisbane Bowel Cancer Support Group	Scleroderma Association Queensland
Brisbane Obsessive Compulsive Disorder	Self Help Queensland
Cardiomyopathy Association of Australia	Sleep Disorders Australia
Caring for African's Hope	SOLACE
Coeliac Queensland	Somali Community Association of Logan Inc
Crohn's and Colitis Australia (Qld)	SOSBSA
Down Syndrome Association	Southside Anxiety Disorders Support Group
Dying with Dignity Queensland Inc	Southside Social Services Inc
Epilepsy Queensland	Springfield Mental Health Support
GROW	Stroke Association of Queensland Inc
Haemochromatosis Society Australia	Suicide Bereavement Support Group
Healthy Communities	Synapse Carers Group
Heart Support Australia	The Australian Lung Foundation
Irritable Bowel Information and Support	The Brook Red Centre
Karenni New Hope Group	The Compassionate Friends Qld Inc
Kidney Support Network	The Panic Anxiety Disorder Assoc QLD Inc
Ladypause Peer Support Group	Thyroid Australia
Lymphoedema Association Queensland	Tourette Syndrome Association of Australia
Lupus Australia Qld Inc	Voice of Samoan People
Marfan Association Qld Inc	Wanwood Association
Maternal Warriors Association	Women in Tune
Matu Community of Queensland Inc	Groups represented by Griffith University Genetic Counselling Students
Metro North Breast Cancer Support Group	Angelman Syndrome
Morrow Women Group	Chromosome 18 Registry & Research Soc
Motor Neurone Disease Assoc of Qld	Rubinstein Taybi Support Group
Myasthenia Gravis Association	Spina Bifida & Hydrocephalus Association



LADYPAUSE Peer Support Network

LADYPAUSE Peer Support Network

<http://www.yourthyroidandyou.org/ladypause>

Ladypause Peer Support Network is a group offering women of middle years an opportunity to join together on the 3rd or 4th Monday of each month from 10am - 12noon where they enjoy informed information on varying health topics from a number of speakers from our community, at our current venue at the Brisbane Square Library 266 George Street the city; in the ground floor community meeting room.

Our group offers friendship and information, enjoying a chat with others over morning tea before the session begins; there are no joining fees, just a gold coin donation for the refreshments. While we are a mainly a women's group our title being Women Wise in Middle Years, men are most welcome at all our sessions. Then afterwards some of the ladies often have lunch together. Ladypause is now in its twelfth year of existence bringing women of middle years together. Three years ago we joined forces with the Older Women's Network which has worked in well with our aims.

Ladypause came to be when several like-minded women came together seeking information regarding their own health issues some 12 years ago in 1999. We not only found many answers to our own questions, but friendships were forged along the way. Our commitment to helping other women with similar problems became very clear and under the watchful eye of Jan Roberts from Community Health Services at RBWH as it's now known. We undertook the running of our small group called SIMS (Surgical induced Menopause) Jan gave us all the support and encouragement we needed to plan our own events each month.

This led Jan to offer us the chance to run her old group at the Patient Education Centre at the Royal called WWIMY (Women Wise in Middle Years) which is still in existence today. Jan was moving onto other projects within Community Health, we felt very honoured by this support from her. We undertook a short course at RBWH to understand and meet the needs of other women, offering them support in the way of peer support for women's health issues. SIMS became Women's Health info Evening to broaden the topics we would cover at our monthly meetings, and with Jan's many years of experience in community health we started our venture with her guidance running both groups. WWIMY moved to a new venue at the City Hall Library as the Royal underwent major rebuilding on campus to what we have today.

We also became involved with the monthly newsletter called Women's News which covered varying topics and diary dates, this also included staff from Community Health Centre's in Brisbane North and Pine Rivers. The newsletter sourced venues and information where women could find varying topics relating to women's health issues. A survey done at RWH outpatients also showed there was a lack of support for people who wished to talk over their worries. The first issue of Women's News was launched in July 2000 with Jan as the editor.

In 2004 we underwent a further name change to coincide with the new Hospital Helpers Program; we decided on Ladypause as we felt this name reflected our work. So we became Ladypause Peer Support Network under the hospital's umbrella. We continued to work alongside Jan until her retirement mid-2006, we were all very sad to lose such a wonderful person and a very good friend.

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We continued on under Pauline Bonnici for a further 18 months, and then sadly funding was no longer available to be channeled into community health at RBWH. Our quest to continue with the work we loved as volunteers led us to join forces with the Older Women's Network in 2008.

Ladypause also thanks Rick Maynard from **Thyroid Australia Brisbane Branch**; for his ongoing support to our group. 2 years ago Rick offered to share his Web site with Ladypause giving us our own Ladypause link from his home page. It is a wonderful opportunity to combine our efforts to bring community health awareness to people, and the opportunity to work together for the good of the wider community.

Ladypause is also supported by the **Brisbane City Council**, advertising our seminars in their What's On brochures at all local libraries, and online at their What's On web page. Our topics are also found in the **Older Women's Network's** quarterly Newsletter.

To contact Ladypause: Ph: Jacqui 0400 300 790 Email: jacqui_ladypause@bigpond.com

Queensland Vision Initiative



The Queensland Vision Initiative (QVI) is an alliance of 24 vision-related organisations (including optometrists, ophthalmologists, GPs, orthoptists, ophthalmic nurses, diabetes educators, pharmacists, support groups and low vision service providers) who are working together with the aim of reducing the incidence of avoidable vision impairment and blindness within the Queensland population.

As part of a federally funded National Eye Health Initiative grant, QVI has now established a website: www.qvi.org.au to provide information on eye conditions, eye health and low vision services, and peer support agencies across the State. This is because approximately, 100,000 Queenslanders over 40 years of age have significant vision loss, and 10,000 are legally blind; despite the fact that 75% of this vision impairment could have been prevented or treated if detected early enough. In addition, those with vision loss, which cannot be corrected with glasses or contact lenses, need access to: low vision services, rehabilitation agencies and support groups for advice, support and guidance on how to maintain their independence. This is particularly important as vision loss has been associated with an increased risk of falls, hip fractures, motor vehicle accidents, earlier admittance into a nursing home, and depression.

So if you have, or know someone, with vision loss, visit the QVI website today for information about your local eye health services. And if you do not find the information you are looking for send a query for the team to jane.fleming@visionaustralia.org

QVI is a member of Vision 2020 Australia, a national body working in partnership with many agencies to prevent avoidable blindness and improve vision care.



Women's Health Queensland Wide providing support for Queensland women living with PCOS

Women's Health Queensland Wide Inc (Women's Health) is providing information and support to sufferers of Polycystic Ovary Syndrome (PCOS) following its appointment as the Queensland state delegate for the Polycystic Ovary Syndrome Association of Australia Inc (POSAA).

The role involves the provision of education and information to women and health professionals about PCOS, which is estimated to affect 10% of women of reproductive age.

"Our vision is that women in Queensland experience better health and wellbeing through health promotion and access to quality health information and education," Bronwyn Buckley, health promotion officer at Women's Health, said.

"Our work with POSAA will see women in Queensland living with PCOS having more support than ever before."

"Our focus on health issues that affect women and the existing services we provide including the Health Information Line, fact sheets and health education programs, mean that we are perfectly positioned to supplement the already fantastic work that POSAA is undertaking in Queensland."

PCOS is a complex condition that disrupts ovulation, making it difficult for sufferers to fall pregnant. Its symptoms can be embarrassing and distressing for women and include irregular periods, weight gain, excess body hair, acne and baldness. PCOS also places women at increased risk of complications including heart disease, diabetes, high blood pressure and endometrial cancer.

POSAA was formed in 1998 as the national support and advocacy group for PCOS. The organisation offers women, their partners and families with information and support through their website at www.posaa.asn.au as well as the opportunity to meet up with fellow 'cysters' at organised events.

Women in Queensland seeking further information on PCOS can visit POSAA's website at www.posaa.asn.au or speak with a nurse on the Health Information Line on 3839 9988 (Brisbane) or 1800 017 676 (outside Brisbane). Women can also Ask a Health Question via the Women's Health website at www.womhealth.org.au.

Staying Healthy at Midlife

A Health Information Seminar for Women

Women's health experts from the Jean Hailes Foundation for Women's Health will talk about midlife health, menopause, osteoporosis and bone health.

Sunday 11th September 2011 2.30pm to 4.30pm

Cost: Free Venue: Brisbane Exhibition and Convention Centre

Bookings essential: 1800 532 642 or Online: www.jeanhailes.org.au/events



Community Capacity Building Project

By Mosmin Marediya

SHQ Community Capacity Building Project Worker

The Community Capacity Building Project which was commenced on 25 January 2011 to build the capacity of self-help/support groups across the wider Brisbane area was completed on 22 August 2011.

I am grateful for the support, inspiration and effort that have made this Community Capacity Building Project possible. I wish to thank Self Help Queensland Inc. who have given me the opportunity to work on this Project and for the support received throughout to achieve the outcomes of project. Special thanks to Brisbane City Council for sponsoring this project for self-help/support groups across Brisbane with an aim to build their capacity.

For all the self-help/support groups who have responded and supported throughout the project, the needs identification survey, the training day, I thank you all for your participation to make this project possible.

The Project was managed in accordance with a detailed Project Plan. The Purpose of the project was to build the capacity of self-help/support groups across wider Brisbane area to make them more stable and sustainable through range of different activities. Priorities of project were defined as:

1. Needs Identification
2. Training/Support
3. Networking
4. Group sustainability

Overall, the project provided:

- Information about existing groups, closed groups and the groups with updated contact details from the SHQ's database
- Information about new identified groups within Brisbane other than SHQ's database – Total 109 new groups.
- Valuable information on needs of self-help/support groups within the Brisbane to address them to the Government and for the funding submissions.

Below are the common needs identified from the groups for future attention. Groups provided detailed descriptions of their needs, and from these a summary of common needs was compiled.

- Funding
- Community awareness, exposure publicity & recognition
- Training
- Volunteers
- Networking
- Group member's commitment, contribution, effective communication and better participation
- Trained & Reliable Facilitators & Facilitation Expertise
- Professional Advice

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From the needs identification survey filled out by groups, the following are the 5 most prioritised needs that would assist groups sustainability.

1	Funding	67%
2	Community awareness,exposure,publicity & recognition	63%
3	Volunteers	44%
4	Training	41%
5.1	Networking	30%
5.2	Group member’s commitment, contribution, effective communication and better participation	30%



Fig 1



Fig 2

Figures 1 and 2

Training day for self-help and support groups in response to identified training needs.

The day helped strengthen relationships between SHQ and Groups, and also between different groups of varied health conditions.



Sincere Thanks go to Families and Community services, Community Grants Unit, Brisbane City Council (BCC) for sponsoring the Community Capacity Building Project.

Report by: Mosmin Mareidiya, Community Capacity Building Project Worker

Please let us know about your Conferences, Information Days, Seminars, Workshops, Celebrations etc and we'll do our best to let others know about them too!

Contact Trish at SHQ Ph: 3344 6919 Email: selfhelp@gil.com.au

Go Green - Read the Screen!

Are you willing to receive this newsletter by email rather than post? It would be a big cost saving to SHQ as well as the environment.

We are still happy to send it by post to small groups or individuals who do not have their own computer. Please let us know at 07 3344 6919 or email selfhelp@gil.com.au If you no longer wish to receive the newsletter we would appreciate hearing from you also.

September a Time for Appreciating Self Help and Support Groups

That's why this Newsletter is a Little Different

The newsletter is shorter and there are no diary dates in this issue. That is because we are dedicating this month to raising awareness and promoting the valuable contribution that self help and support groups make to the wider community.

Self Help Queensland was formed to give groups a voice. There is no other organisation in Queensland to do that on behalf of self help and support groups; especially the smaller, unfunded groups. It is important more now than ever that Sector's voice is heard while health reform is very much on the Government's agenda.

It's been a hectic time at SHQ lately, with Management's attention to forward planning, consulting with Government and other Peak Organisations to make sure the interests of the Self Help Sector are well represented in future decision making.

Project Work has been highly concentrated, with the successful Mercury Rising Explorer Grant Program and the Community Capacity Building Project giving rise to an awareness of many groups previously unknown to us - amazing groups doing amazing things to help themselves their members and others in the wider community.

Management is very keen to collect data to take to Government. Therefore, we hope you will understand the need to contact groups at various times to canvas their views. We will try to keep surveys short, and simple, so that you are not too inconvenienced. We are fully aware that not for profit groups are surveyed till the cows come home, and very rarely advised of the results. We will undertake to keep you informed.

Here is Proof of Short and Simple!

Question 1 How do new members find out about you?

Question 2 Has this changed in the last two years?

Name of group/organisation/association: _____

Suburb or Town: _____

Please let us know by email, or post. Separate short form attached to this newsletter.

Self Help Queensland, PO Box 353, SUNNYBANK 4109

Email: self help@gil.com.au Ph/Fax: 07 3344 6919

Thank You!

Do you Have Any Contacts/Friends in the Media?

Can You Help Publicise Awareness Day at Reddacliff Place?

If we are to take make this an annual event we really need to ensure it's success by attracting a large number of people to the Central Brisbane site. It may take a few years, but our aim is to take this event to regional and rural areas where many wonderful groups struggle alone, manage to survive and achieve outstanding results.

Please contact Trish at SHQ if you can assist in any way. Ph 07 3344 6919