



Laurel Times



Hello from the team at Laurel House and Laurel Place!

Welcome to the first edition of our newsletter for 2015! You will find over the next few pages a little snapshot of some of the wonderful activities and events that we participated in during 2014, our appreciation to those who have supported us and our clients, some words of wisdom, upcoming events and reflections from our staff.



Generosity appreciated

There is a saying *"it is not happy people who are thankful; it is thankful people who are happy"*. If this is true there are a lot of happy people around Laurel House and Laurel Place at the moment!

We would like to say a big THANK YOU to the following community-minded school, clubs and businesses for their generosity over the Christmas period:

- Peachester State School community, who make the gift of giving a part of their Christmas calendar, and present us with gifts for child clients of the service each year at their Christmas Concert;
- Bellflower Fishing and Social Club, who so generously provide an annual donation;
- The Hibiscus Quilters, who provide beautiful hand-made quilts for our clients throughout the year;
- and IGA Marketplace, IGA Bli Bli, IGA Maroochydore and IGA Mapleton - with their support we were able to provide some Christmas cheer for our families. Christmas hampers were prepared by our staff and provided to families identified as most in need.



Coming events...

8th March - International Women's Day

Each year, we mark this global day celebrating the economic, political and social achievements of women past, present and future.

21st March - Harmony Day

2015 marks 15 years of celebrating Australia's cultural diversity. It's about inclusiveness, respect and a sense of belonging for everyone.

26th May - National Sorry Day

National Sorry Day is held each year to acknowledge and recognise members of the Stolen Generations.



Sharing knowledge and wisdom

On Sunday March 8th, communities around the world will celebrate International Women's Day (IWD).

Queensland's theme for 2015 is "Make it Happen" - encouraging effective action for advancing and recognising women all around the world. International Women's Day represents an opportunity to celebrate the achievements of women while calling for greater equality.

This year Laurel House is recognising the strength and wisdom that women bring to women. Traditionally women have always been an important source of encouragement, advice, and support to other women during difficult times, it is our aim at Laurel House to highlight and encourage the sharing of women's knowledge and wisdom.

During Feb and March this year clients at Laurel House will be invited to write messages of support, hope and encouragement to each other, and from these we will create a display in the foyer - we'll have photos for you next issue.

Sexual Violence Awareness Month - October 2014



We ran for freedom...



Laurel Place

NEWS from Gympie & Murgon...

We would like to begin the year by voicing our appreciation to the communities we serve along with the community and partner agencies with whom we work for all their support throughout 2014. We would also like to add a special Laurel Place thank you to the Hibiscus Quilters' Club for their thoughtfulness and support of our Service Users each and every month and to Peachester School for their Christmas generosity to our young Service Users

Drawing to a close in a whirlwind of activity, 2014 saw the counselling programs at both offices operating at full capacity with the demand for the Gympie Adult Program showing a considerable increase. As well, the Gympie DBT group, 'Living Skillfully' completed one full cycle in 2014 which consisted of approximately 30 weeks of group participation. A new cycle of the 'Living Skillfully' group will commence in February 2015 with an expected membership of ten participants.

The Murgon office became increasingly established in the South Burnett communities during 2014 as reflected by the communities' continued utilisation of its services. Whilst the Murgon office farewelled one of its counsellors, Kim Scott, who returned to full time duties in the Maroochydhore office, we recently welcomed a new and well experienced counsellor, Sandy Huston, to the Murgon team.

All in all, the Laurel Place Gympie and Murgon teams have well and truly launched into 2015 and are looking forward to another rewarding and productive year!

Our Commitment....

Last year we received over 550 referrals for children, women and men seeking counselling and support. As a Service we are humbled by the trust our community has placed in us and we feel privileged to walk beside our clients in their healing journey.

In 2015 we re-affirm our Vision- Committed to Communities Free of Sexual Violence; and our Mission- To educate our communities on the prevention and awareness of sexual assault issues, provide interventions to people affected by sexual violence and develop collaborative relationships with individuals, organisations and communities.



**WE CANNOT
stop the waves,
BUT WE CAN
learn to surf.**

The Yarnin' Circle

SCSASV Inc acknowledges the Gubbi Gubbi people as the traditional custodians of the land on which Laurel House and Laurel Place are located in Maroochydore and Gympie, and the Wakka Wakka people as the traditional custodians of the land on which Laurel Place is located in Murgon.



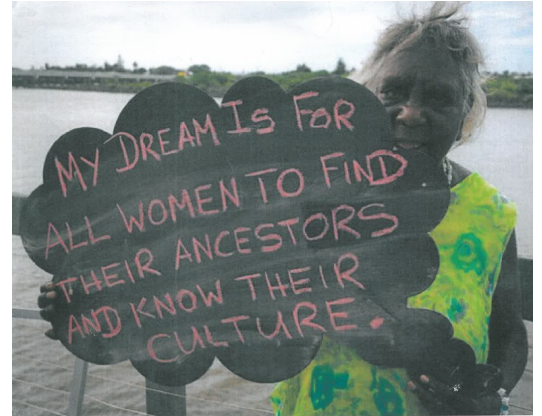
Biddy Adams.
Liaison & Support Worker -
Indigenous Program

I find the most rewarding part of my job is working with the clients I support. I am constantly inspired by their resilience, their courage, their honesty, but most of all, their willingness to place their trust in us to share in their healing journey.

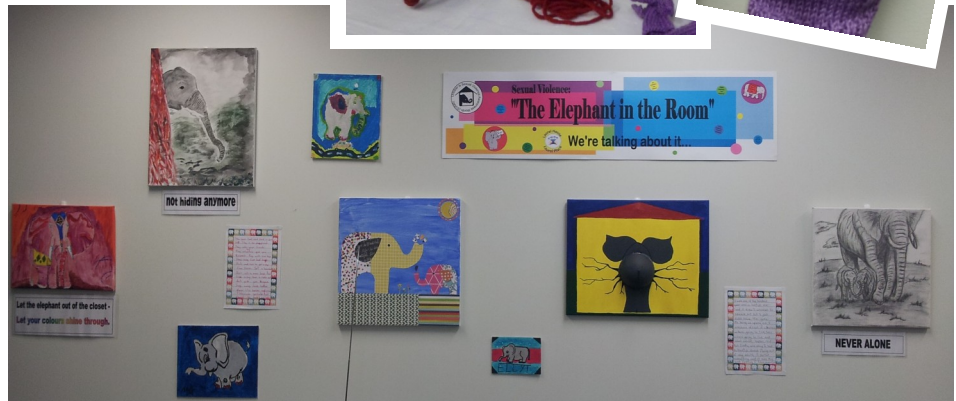
It's always a privilege when the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people I work with share aspects of their life and their culture. From time to time, a story I am told or a keepsake I am given really touches me. This picture, which was given to me by a strong, young, Aboriginal woman whose family I had the pleasure of working with, is an example of that. I feel it captures a concept so simple and yet so complex.

I have it posted on the wall near my desk

and whenever I look at it, I'm reminded, first and foremost, of this woman's generosity of spirit, and secondly, of the strength that she and many other women like her have shown to reclaim a life true to their cultural and spiritual values.



...and we talked about it!



Welcome to the first newsletter for the New Year. The Board hopes everyone enjoyed the festive season and welcomes back everyone for the challenges of the new year.

The recent elections have seen a change in government and it will be interesting to see how this affects the Child and Family Reforms and policy decisions across the sector. With the change of government the Hon Ms Shannon Fentiman has been appointed as Minister for Communities, Women and Youth, Minister for Child Safety and Minister for Multicultural Affairs. It was interesting to see that prior to being elected, Ms Fentiman was a board member of the Logan Women's Health and Wellbeing Centre and Secretary of the Centre Against Sexual Violence in Logan. Her

government profile indicates she is committed to social justice and passionate about fighting discrimination. We wish her the best in this new role and the opportunity this brings to do some good for the community.



In January we saw the launch of Family and Child Connect which operates a Community Based Referral Service that will provide a valuable resource to the community, and they are conveniently located in office space downstairs at Laurel House. We welcome them on board and being co-located with our service will afford an opportunity to build a strong working relationship.

On behalf of the board I'd again like to send my thanks to the ongoing efforts from all of our staff, let's keep making a difference.

The Country Way



With not a traffic light in sight, where country drivers still greet passing motorists with just a lift of their finger from the steering wheel - what a contrast the drive to our Murgon office is from the hustle and bustle of travelling to work on the coast.

Notwithstanding, of course, the occasional day when traffic is forced to a halt as a farmer, with the aid of his fearless kelpies, drives a mob of cattle across the road to greener pastures.

The rural vista offers up an ever-

changing array of landscapes depending on the season, the time of day and of course the weather. With the recent rains we watch the levels of the dry dams rise and paddocks that were once scorched and bare are now lush and green.

Just after Kilkivan, the sight of several magnificent Clydesdales grazing along the fence line evokes an appreciation for the size and strength of these gentle giants. We pass farms where horses, cattle, deer and llamas forage lazily, and there's even a herd of camels that lope casually along in their paddock.

Encounters with native wildlife are really special. One time we rescued a turtle with a cracked shell, and another when a sick tawny frog-mouth was

found beside the busy highway and delivered into the care of a Gympie vet. We've seen dingoes and kangaroos, snakes and lizards, and even a sleepy but curious koala, looking down at us from the fork of a gum tree on the roadside. On one memorable occasion we witnessed nature at its harshest yet most spectacular, when a majestic wedge-tailed eagle swooped down, with wings outstretched and talons extended, to carry a small animal away into the sky, not 20metres in front of our car.

It seems on these work-commutes that we're just a little more closely connected to nature, and how nice it is to have that time to appreciate the beauty of the world around us.



Sunshine Cooloola Services Against Sexual Violence Inc



www.laurelhouse.com.au

Visit our website for information on becoming a member

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