



# FOCAL Community Living Inc

## Members Issue: Christmas Edition

### Lets Talk FOCAL...

Leading into the festive season I would like to reflect and acknowledge all FOCAL employees and volunteers for their strength and willingness to achieve great things this year! I have been in this role for six months now and can vouch for the effort FOCAL's employees and volunteers have deployed to ensure the organisation is ready for the NDIS and that high quality service standards are being met, while catering to our customer's individual needs.

As a newcomer to the organisation, it is difficult for me to comment on this past year and I commend the staff and volunteers for their ability to cope with change and the tremendous amount of work which has been done to prepare the organisation for NDIS. My arrival coincides with a turning point for FOCAL which will see the pace of change further accelerating to cater for our customers.

To provide clarity, my strategy going forward is simple and can be summarised as follows:

FOCAL intends to create meaningful relationships, a strong connection with the community, places to call home and overall facilitating choice and control over the lives of our customers, their families and the community.

This can be further defined in four points:

- Reinforcing the delivery of **Individualised Services** and ensuring these services address existing and unmet needs. This will be achieved by continuously consulting with the community, customers, parents, carers and loved ones, to understand how FOCAL can better support them. This will certainly lead to the redesign of our current services, creation of new ones and further pilot projects.
- Development of FOCAL's **In Home Services**. You already know FOCAL provides support in your house, at work or where you need it the most. The NDIS will certainly empower customers to choose when and where they receive individual services which make a difference to them.
- **Supported Accommodation**. Through our recent community consultation, FOCAL has discovered that one in three of FOCAL service users identify accommodation as an acute need. FOCAL will certainly support you by providing options and opportunities for you to live independently. This could be done at your current place of residence, living with a loved one, in a shared accommodation setting, or anywhere you call home. To this end, FOCAL is currently proceeding with the purchase of another property to pilot future services.
- **Plan Management**. FOCAL is in the process of registering with the NDIS to become a Plan Manager. This will give you the opportunity to have FOCAL, rather than NDIA, managing your future funding which will in essence provide you with more control over how your funds are spent in an easy going environment. Furthermore, FOCAL will support you if you want to partially manage your funding. Additionally, FOCAL will continue to provide the very popular "Your Life Your Choice" initiative as a pre-cursor to NDIS, allowing qualifying persons to gain access to individualised funding.

With all these developments to FOCAL, 2017 is shaping up to be an exciting year ahead!

*Mickael Blanc CEO*



## In This Issue

Let's Talk FOCAL.....	1
FOCAL Board Member Update.....	3
Resignation of Board Members.....	4
FOCAL in 2017.....	4
Joshua Brass Article.....	5
Raising Funds for FOCAL.....	6
Important Dates.....	7
FOCAL Community Christmas Celebrations.....	8
FOCAL Community Transportation.....	9
Ipswich Christmas Parade.....	9
After School Hours Care Bus Trip.....	9
FOCAL Arts Class.....	10
Volunteering with FOCAL.....	10
Nominations for Staff and Volunteer Excellence Awards.....	11
Ipswich Siblings' Network.....	12
MYTIME Mens Group Flyer.....	13
Happy Paws Happy Hearts Flyer.....	14



# 2017 FOCAL BOARD MEMBERS

Interim Chair .....Roy Henderson  
Treasurer.....Russell Swinton  
Secretary.....Janine Richardson  
Member.....Chris Hannah  
Member.....Deborah Robertson



## Meet Our New Board Member...



**Russell Swinton** is our new Treasurer on the FOCAL Board.

Russell has been working with FOCAL as a volunteer in administration since January 2011. He has seen FOCAL grow and change, and is committed to ensuring FOCAL has every success leading into the NDIS. Russell's loyalty, skills, client focus and friendly personality are assets leading us into 2017.

## Volunteering with FOCAL

With 2017 fast approaching we are looking for interested members of the community to be involved in working with FOCAL as volunteers.

FOCAL is a wonderful organisation with friendly staff and clients.

We are seeking volunteers to assist with our client programs, administration and the many events we have throughout the year. It is a great opportunity to gain new skills and make new friends. If you are interested please contact our office on 07 3812 2014.

### Have you changed your contact details?



Please call 07 3812 2014 and talk to our friendly administration team between the hours of 9:00am - 4:00pm to advise of any changes or to check current details. If you could let us know your email address it would be greatly appreciated as we are trying to encourage a paperless system to help the environment.

# Thank You for your loyal service

We would like to acknowledge Denis Ward and Tony Swords who have been active members of the FOCAL Board for many years.

Denis and Tony have decided it is time for a change and have stepped down from being Board Members. They will both continue to be FOCAL Members and a part of our community. We would like to express our deepest gratitude for the many years of voluntary service to the organisation and share our appreciation for the many changes that have taken place during their time as Treasurer and Vice Chair. In recognition of their services and continuous involvement both were inducted as life members at the 2016 Annual General Meeting.



## FOCAL in 2017...

2017 is going to be a year of many changes. In 2017 the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) will be starting in this region and FOCAL will be expanding the range of options available to people. FOCAL services will become available throughout South East Queensland with the headquarters remaining in Ipswich. A broad range of flexible delivery options will be available at home or in the community, individually or in group settings for people of all ages. All FOCAL services will continue to be individualized and adapted to each person's situation and goals. The main options available to people will include:

- Supported Accommodation
- Individualised Support including building meaningful connections with community and economic participation
- In Home Services; and
- Plan Management

As services expand and evolve we will keep you up to date with developments. If you have ideas to offer or any questions please let us know.



# Joshua Brass

## AKA - Super Kid



On the 28<sup>th</sup> September 2016, the children and staff of the Senior Vacation Care program had the privilege of a visit from Joshua Brass and his mother Abbi. Joshua (who was only 6 years old at the time of his visit) bravely shared his story with the group. We think he did a great job and we couldn't even tell it was his first go at talking in front of a group. Well done and thank you Joshua.

Joshua was born without knee caps, a tail bone and some bones in his back. He also has only one kidney. Despite all this and the many operations he has had, Joshua (with the full support of his parents and friends) is an active member of the community. He has been doing WCMC - Wheelchair Motor Cross from a very young age and even went to the US in 2015 - 2016 for WCMC. Joshua has also been involved in Spartan competitions, competing alongside many able bodied people. Josh has tried tennis and hand cycling, he plays the keyboard and has competed in several triathlons as well.

*Weekly training and activity programs look like for Joshua:* singing, swimming, drama lessons (to build his confidence), personal training sessions, and sailing.

Wow...I'm exhausted just thinking about all of that... Considering the doctors said he would not ever be able to walk, he shows amazing strength and resilience to meet challenges and pursue activities head on.

On Joshua's list of latest achievements, he can add "Ambassador" for the "I Can I Will" charity.

His latest event was the JellyRun on the 13<sup>th</sup> November 2016, Jumping around in the jumping castle full of Jelly. The JellyRun is an initiative of the "I Can I Will" campaign to raise awareness about bridging the social gap for children with special needs and creating a society in which they feel they can truly fit it into.

We thank Joshua and his Mum Abbi. Joshua is truly an inspiration. The vacation care children loved meeting Joshua and they can't wait to see him again.

Written by:

Janelle Lind

Vacation Care Team Leader

Inspirational Quotes Josh lives by

**Dream  
big**

**You are  
Amazing**

**live each day  
as if it was  
your last**

**If you are given  
an opportunity  
take it!**

**Push past  
your  
comfort zone**

**You can  
do anything  
you want  
to do**



# EXCITING *Moments* AT FOCAL

## Raising *Funds* for FOCAL

### 'Cacti and Succulent' Facebook group FOCAL Raffle

As many of you are aware, the 'Cacti and Succulent' Facebook group recently undertook a fundraising activity in the form of a raffle to donate to one of FOCAL's many services, being complex and high needs support. Although the aim was to raise \$500.00, they exceeded all expectations and raised a total of \$1,008.00!!!

FOCAL would like to acknowledge this group and in particular Kerry and Jacki who contributed time, effort and resources to enable this to take place.

Your constant support of our organisation is nothing short of incredible and we are so thankful to have people like you involved with FOCAL.



### Bunnings Fundraising BBQ

On Saturday 3rd December 2016 staff and volunteers gathered together to raise funds with a sausage sizzle at Bunnings West Ipswich. Our volunteers enjoyed cooking the snags and socialising with the Ipswich community. Volunteer involvement from this activity was extremely positive.

FOCAL would like to acknowledge Cheryl Bromage for the donation of funds to support this event and Bunnings West Ipswich for providing us the opportunity to raise funds. We would also like to thank the staff, volunteers and family members who volunteered their time to make this event such a success. FOCAL raised over \$2,000.00 from this venture which will be put towards FOCAL activities.



# Important Diary Dates



8th December	MyTime Mens Group Christmas Dinner at Dusty's Bar and BBQ (See flyer for details)
9th December	Staff and Volunteer Excellence Award nominations close
14th December	Siblings Christmas Celebrations at 33 Salisbury Road, Ipswich (see flyer for details)
12th - 16th December	Junior and Senior Vacation Care Program Ipswich Special School, Milford Street, Ipswich
19th - 23rd December	Senior Vacation Care Program Ipswich Special School, Milford Street, Ipswich
16th December - 9th January	Horizons program and Stepping Out group will be closed.
23rd December - 3rd January	Independent Pathways program will be closed.
23rd December - 3rd January	FOCAL office will be closed. During this closure period individuals shifts are still provided and On Call will continue.
9th - 13th January	Junior and Senior Vacation Care Program Ipswich Special School, Milford Street, Ipswich





**Thank-You  
for Attending  
our**

**North Ipswich  
COMMUNITY  
CHRISTMAS  
CELEBRATION**



On the 1st December 2016 FOCAL celebrated our Community Christmas event in the park.

This was an enjoyable event with the activities available to participate in, such as face painting, craft led by FOCAL staff and customers, and games by Life Be In It. We were wowed with entertainment by the Axe Grinders, Neil Duddy, the FOCAL Choir and Patty Hitchenor's Just Singing.

A free sausage sizzle was provided by FOCAL and Bunnings at West Ipswich supplied their staff and free popcorn for the event.

FOCAL took the opportunity to donate a variety of toys to the Ulysses's Bike Club's Annual Christmas Toy Run to be held on the 11th December 2016.

We would like to thank Ipswich City Council for sponsoring the event and acknowledge everyone that donated their time to making it such an enjoyable and successful afternoon.

Our Annual Christmas Party continues to become bigger and better every year and FOCAL are very proud of the community in which we are a part of.





## FOCAL Community Transport

The Queensland Government recently awarded FOCAL a Small Assets Grant to purchase buses to transport our customers. This grant will make a significant difference for people in the region. We have purchased one bus with these funds already and are looking to purchase a second.

These buses will be available for not only FOCAL to use, but other organisations in the community that are in need of transportation. If you are interested in utilizing our FOCAL buses please contact the office on (07) 3812 2014 to discuss.

## Ipswich Christmas Parade

On the 2nd December 2016 FOCAL continued the tradition of participating in the Ipswich Christmas Parade. This was a grand event with FOCAL clients and Staff dressing up and joining in the Christmas Spirit. The FOCAL bus was used to transport clients down the main street with onlookers enjoying the decorations and smiles on our clients faces. It was very exciting and everyone had a wonderful time.



## After School Hours Care *Bus trip*

Our After School Care group went on their first ever bus trip recently to MacDonald's. We were celebrating the end of the year approaching with a special treat and at the same time we are preparing to say farewell to 2 young people, McCoy and Chenoa who will be graduating school this week and they have been attending our ASHC and VC programs for many years, however, it's not a complete farewell as they will both be attending FOCAL programs next year.

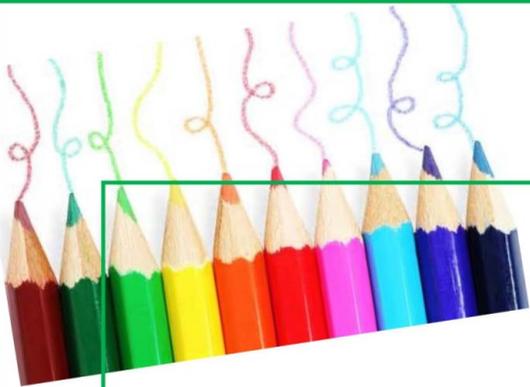


This trip was made possible due to the great work of the ASHC staff and especially TL Elise (for planning and organising the event) and the children who were all so well behaved and also the

wonderful Stepping Out group who were so flexible and allowed us a bus for the afternoon, a big thank you to Stepping Out group!

As you can see by the photos, they had a great time!!! So much so, that we are aiming to incorporate at least two different outings next year (at the end of a term).





Come and Enjoy  
**FOCAL's Art Class**  
experience 2 hours of  
creative, expressive fun



Classes facilitated by experienced Art Teacher  
Each Monday, Tuesday and  
Wednesday morning  
6 Canning Street  
NORTH IPSWICH QLD 4305



You have  
the potential  
to make  
beautiful  
things.

Yes, you.

Please phone (07) 3812 2014 and speak to Heidi  
or Dee to book

# FOCAL Community Living Inc



## Volunteer With Us And Share Your Passions

FOCAL is a growing not for profit organisation in the Ipswich region and we are always looking for people who can volunteer and make a real difference in the lives of others.

If you

- Are passionate about being an active part of your community
- Are you interested in volunteering with people with a disability
- Have a skill or interest to share e.g. fishing, gardening, making movies, going to gigs, cooking, bush walking
- Want to be part of the Vacation Care and After School Hours Care programs
- Can share your fundraising know how
- Can support the administration team by answering the phone, filing etc.
- Want to joining the FOCAL Board to provide strategic direction for the organisation and support FOCAL to evolve
- Have the right values, attitude and experiences
- Can spare a few hours on a regular basis or from time to time
- Are ready to join a great team, develop new skills and be rewarded

*then FOCAL is be the place for you*



To make your volunteering a success ongoing training and support is also provided.

*For more information about joining our team visit  
[www.focal.org.au](http://www.focal.org.au) and call FOCAL on 3812 2014*





## Nominations are now open for the FOCAL Staff and Volunteer Excellence Awards

For the last 4 years people have had the opportunity to nominate individuals for awards. This is a way of saying “thank-you” for being innovative, creative and providing the type of quality services and supports people want.

This year the 3 types of awards will be:

**Client and Parents Award**

**Peer Award**

**Management Team Award**

If you believe a FOCAL worker or volunteer deserves to receive an “Excellence Award” for providing a quality service or support you are asked to complete the nomination form below and return it to **FOCAL office by Monday 5<sup>th</sup> December.**

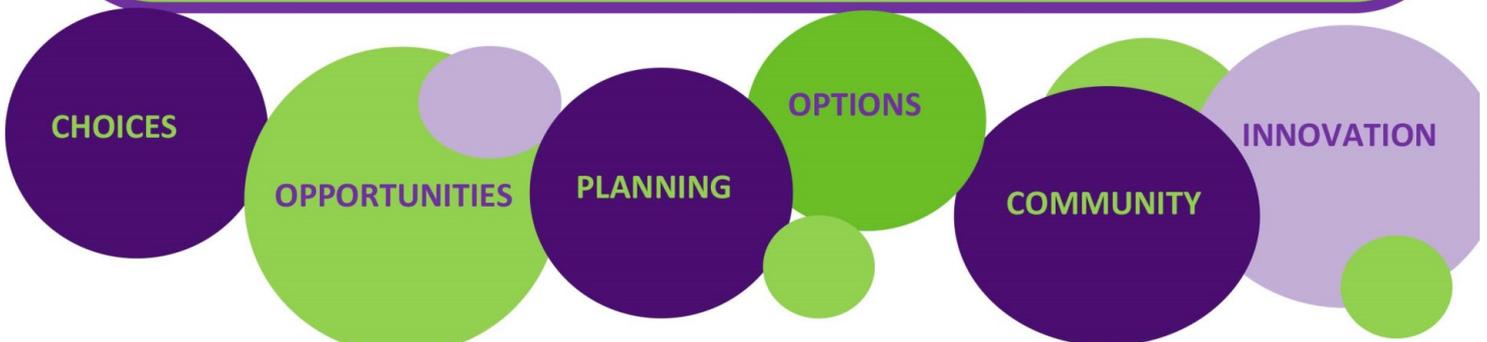
Your comments will be collated and awards presented to individuals at the Excellence Awards Event in December. If you have any questions, would like more copies of the form or assistance with completing this please speak with your Support Worker or Team Leader or Manager.

I nominate (insert name of staff /volunteer): \_\_\_\_\_  
for an Excellence Award.

I believe they deserve this award because:

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

I am a  client or parent/carer  staff member or volunteer



# **IPSWICH SIBLINGS' NETWORK**

## **Christmas baking, games and craft afternoon**

**WHEN: Wednesday 14th December**

**COST: \$10 each or \$25 a family**

**AGE: 6 years and over**

**TIME: 2.30pm—5.30pm**

**VENUE: ALARA Lukes Place**

**33 Salisbury Road Ipswich**

**Pizza Dinner Included**

**Please RSVP to FOCAL by Friday 2 Dec**

**You can book a place by:**

- **calling Alex Tyson at FOCAL on 3812 2014 or**
- **returning the registration and consent form to Alex at 7 Canning St North Ipswich or via email to [alexty@focal.org.au](mailto:alexty@focal.org.au)**



# My Time Ipswich Men's Group

You are invited to join the

## My Time Ipswich Men's Group

### Dusty's Bar & B.B.Q.



This event is an opportunity for men who are dads, granddads, uncles, male adult siblings or male friends of a young person with a disability to meet up.

The group meets regularly during school terms and gives men a chance to chat, go on outings, go to dinner and have information sessions about topics of interest.

***We hope you will be able to join us at our last event for the year or another in the future as new members are always welcome.***

*The event is just for carers. To assist you to join the group we are able to provide a qualified worker on the day to support member's sons or daughters. If this would*

**Christmas Dinner and final event of the year.**

**Date:** Thurs 8th Dec 2016

**Venue:** Dusty's Bar and B.B.Q.

215 Brisbane Road, Ipswich

**Time:** 6pm to 9pm

**To RSVP for all events contact:**

Ben Harrison on 0414 470 278

or email [benh@focal.org.au](mailto:benh@focal.org.au)

**We look forward to seeing you at our first event of 2017!**

**Quiz Night @ Jets Leagues Club**

Monday 30th January 2017



*Proudly presented by  
FOCAL Community Living Inc*



*With funding through My Time and support from CPL*



## Paws in need

Each year, tens of thousands of RSPCA animals spend time waiting to be adopted from a centre. They are provided with essential veterinary care but they need as much hands-on time as possible so they can feel safe and secure.



## Hearts to support

We know many individuals who love animals and want to learn more about how to work with them. Our service helps give people an increased sense of purpose as they benefit by interacting with animals.



happy paws  
happy hearts

## Group Course



Our caring staff and volunteers open the doors to the RSPCA and facilitate a unique approach to animal therapy which creates an added sense of purpose.

Through this course, organisations can book sessions for a group to visit and receive hands-on time with rescue animals. Those participating will learn to interact with a variety of animals waiting to be adopted. We assist you to track the progress of your group and show outcomes of participating in sessions.

Your group will work as a team, form stronger friendships and spend valuable hours caring for puppies, dogs, cats, kittens and our special wildlife visitors!

### Course benefits:

- Social skills and interactions – this course offers an opportunity for participants to come together and develop natural friendships with other peers who enjoy spending time with animals
- Fine and gross motor skills – participants learn how to handle and tend to animals using a caring and nurturing approach
- Everyday life skills – participants learn and practice paying attention, following instructions and modelling tasks
- Communication and language – there are practical communication opportunities and everyone is encouraged to expand existing methods of communication to those demands in everyday life
- Responsibility and good citizenship – this course is about contributing to a community by caring for animals in need, being part of a team and supporting community activities.