

# Barrier Breakers Inc Annual Report 2007

Inc No A0048721F

ABN 35 677 151 893

## Section 1

### COMMITTEE OF MANAGEMENT

**Chairperson:** Bob Faulkner

**Secretary:** Derek Amos

**Treasurer:** Ian Johnston

**Ordinary Members:** Dr. Darrell Ham

Dr Fred Edwards

Toni Ham

Hilton Gruis

Lyn Douglas

John Musters

Lisa Proctor #

**Returning Officer** Harvey Pynt

# Lisa Proctor resigned from Committee by letter dated 9 November 2007

## CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

### Section 2

Well what a year this has been for the team at Barrier Breakers – and the inaugural team at that!! I am delighted to have the opportunity to present the very first Chairman's Report to you all.

We commenced the year as Gippsland Advocates for Mental Health and whilst we changed our name in line with the popular opinion of our members, we have never wavered at all from our vision of establishing a fully equipped office with a permanent secretary to collect, store and analyse data relating to the application of mental health services in Gippsland. Looking back on the year we achieved a number of foundation items that will carry the organisation forward for many years to come. Some of those items are:

- We engaged with Medical and Mental Health professionals throughout Gippsland.
- We engaged with many mental health consumers.
- We met and established links with numerous Service Providers in and around the mental health profession throughout Gippsland.
- We made a submission to the Senate enquiry into mental health services.
- We met with politicians Gary Blackwood, Peter Ryan, Russell Northe and Senator Lyn Alison and with representatives of Russell Broadbent and Peter McGauran.
- We established our “not for profit” and “charitable” status with the Australian Tax Office.
- We secured an office at the Kath Teychenne centre in Breed Street, Traralgon and held meetings in that complex.
- We furnished our new office with appropriate furnishings and substantial IT items with the capacity to handle all our data and communications requirements.
- We re-organised our meeting structure so that consumers could meet separately with us and discuss issues that they are encountering – similarly we meet separately with mental

health professionals so that they too can discuss issues that affect them and we have another regular meeting whereby the two groups can mix and discuss any common issues they might have.

So now you can see that for Volunteers we have achieved much in our first 12 months. But what of the future – well, we have our eyes on that also. We know that the organisation is doomed without funding. Regular funding is the life blood that allows us to continue our work. We have therefore become acquainted with a number of philanthropic organisations with a similar mission to ours and we have skilled up our secretary Derek to apply for appropriate grants to assist us to continue.

The future will see us employ a permanent secretary to assist us to collect, store and analyse data relating to mental health issues in Gippsland. This will then facilitate us to determine issues of shortfall in service provision and choose an appropriate course of action toward rectifying that shortfall. Much to be done, we have just started.

To get to this point, we have been blessed with some hard working and very skilful people in support and I firstly thank our most popular and hard working secretary, Derek Amos who has been extraordinarily generous with his time and without whom we would not have achieved anything like what we have so far. I know he is trying to retire near the sea, a lifestyle he and his wife Desma richly deserve but we have been blessed to have his skills and application this last 12 months and prior. Thank you Derek you are amazing and I learn from you all the time.

We have been lucky to have Ian Johnson as our treasurer. Ian has not only kept an eye on the books but he has encouraged many donations to boost the coffers. In addition to this Ian has become thoroughly conversant with our constitution and ensured that we are compliant with it and with any associated laws. Thanks to you Ian.

Thank you also to Daryl Ham who is always ready to assist and support with the most helpful advice imaginable.

Thank you to Lyn Douglas who allowed me to persuade her to assist with admin and secretarial work and she did a wonderful job at a time when we needed her help.

To our corporate sponsors who have donated to including Telstra, Chris Humphrey Office National, Latrobe City, Carpet Court, Chris Webster's Furniture, Work Solutions Gippsland, and all other businesses and individuals who have signed up as corporate sponsors for Barrier Breakers, thank you too. We all look forward to a busy time ahead and to dealing with some of the challenges that the existing mental health service structure will place before us.

**Bob Faulkner**  
Chairman – 2007

## **SECRETARY'S REPORT**

### **Section 3**

This past year has been one of establishment, growth and positioning for Barrier Breakers Inc. We commenced our second year of operation as "Gippsland Advocates for Mental Health Inc", working from home and ended the financial year as Barrier Breakers Inc in our new headquarters in the Kath Teychenne Centre in Traralgon with full taxation office endorsement as a charity. It has been quite a year for the association.

In terms of establishment, we have entered into partnership arrangements with the Latrobe City

Council, Gippsland Lifeline, the Gippsland Accommodation and Rehabilitation Support Service (GARRS) and the Victorian Mental Illness Awareness Council (VIMIAC). Our arrangements with Latrobe City has resulted in our office in the Kath Teychenne Centre being offered to us on a peppercorn rental and the council's volunteer program being extended to help service our administrative needs. We acknowledge the support given by the council's volunteers, Kellie Gavin and Lecia Frantz. Additionally, Latrobe City has joined with the other above mentioned organisations in supporting our application for research funding from the Reichstein Foundation. I certainly appreciate the support from all concerned. A copy of Latrobe City's support letter is attached.

We also need to acknowledge the support of our other establishment sponsors. Our special thanks go to Telstra Country Wide for their sponsorship of our telecommunications (telephone, facsimile and broadband connections and operational costs - Chris Humphrey Office National for office equipment and furniture – Chris Webster furniture and Carpet Court Traralgon. Special thanks also to Cr. Doug Caulfield, who, in his other role at the Department of Human Services, has secured the agencies donation of a surplus computer and printer.

During this establishment period the Executive Committee resolved to create a "sponsors program" and already, many local businesses and individuals have made generous contributions to our cause.

As mentioned above, the Committee has made an application to the Reichstein Foundation (a philanthropic trust) for a funding program to enable us to employ a researcher to establish a data bank of information to assist the preparation of our submissions/representations on mental health issues. While we know much needs to be done to improve the extent and delivery of mental health services in the Gippsland region, we need hard, cold facts to improve the quality of the anecdotal evidence. The program will also extend our contact lists throughout the region and provide for a broader awareness of our objects and purposes through liaison and partnerships.

Not-with-standing our current reliance on anecdotal evidence, we took the opportunity during the year to prepare and submit a submission to the Inquiry into Mental Health Services in Australia, by the Senate Community Affairs Committee.

The current Chair of this Inquiry is Senator Lyn Allison, who visited our office and met with the Executive Committee. The Senate Committee will be holding public Hearings throughout the country early in the New Year and we have specifically requested that they conduct at least one of their Hearings in the Gippsland region. This should give many more people the opportunity to participate in the Inquiry than otherwise would be the case.

Other submissions we have made throughout the year include:

- The Office of the Public Advocate – a submission calling for the extension of the Advocates office to provide for the position of an "individual community advocate", who would counsel and assist consumers with their personal advocacy needs.
- The Office of the Chief Psychologist – request for official consent to visit mental health care facilities.
- The Ministers' of Mental Health, Police and the Attorney General – a submission concerning the public release of information relating to consumers records.
- The Minister for Health - requesting information and advice about the process of community orders and consumers rights and appeal avenues.

- Various representations for individual consumers.

The past year has also been one of positioning our association so that we may more effectively have our voice heard. As this is particularly important in the area of our work in presenting submissions/representations to governments' and their agencies, we commenced a program of contact and liaison with our political representatives. To this end, on-going liaison has been established with our two federal MP's, who represent the Gippsland region. We have also met and established good working relationships with most of the 10 state MP's who also represent the region. The newly elected Upper House MLC's and the MLA's for the Bass Coast and East Gippsland electorates will be targeted in the New Year. Already, this approach has borne fruit with a federal government grant being given to us to help with our office fit out and glowing letters of support from our MP's for our funding application to the Reichstein Foundation.

Barrier Breakers also participated in Gippsland's first ever conference on mental health, which was staged recently at the Gippsland campus of Monash University. My thanks go to member, Vic Breadon, for taking my place for the Saturday sessions when I was ill. While the conference was addressed by a number of key note speakers, both Vic and I gained the impression that in planning future such events, a different conference/forum format might prove to be more valuable to all concerned (perhaps something along the lines of the popular ABC forum, "Difference of Opinion").

To this end, I recommend that the committee gives consideration to planning forum a concept for the purpose of Barrier Breakers staging an event in the New Year.

Finally, I thank our Chairman and the Committee for their support and cooperation. This formative year has been full of meetings and last minute changes and I want to acknowledge their patience and understanding. I believe we work extremely well as a team and I look forward to an even more successful year ahead.

**Derek Amos (Secretary 2007)**

## **RETURNING OFFICERS REPORT**

### **Section 5**

Rules 19, 20 and 21 determine the number of office holders of the association, their initial election/appointment as office holders and the process for vacancies.

- **OFFICE HOLDERS**

- The office holders of the GAFMH shall be:

a Chair;

a Secretary;

a Public Officer; and

a Treasurer.

- The office of Secretary, Public Officer and Treasurer shall be held by one Member who

shall be called the Executive Officer.

- APPOINTMENT OF OFFICERS
  - Subject to there being a vacancy for a particular office, the GAFMH by ordinary resolution may appoint a Member to be an office holder on the Committee.
  - Each officer shall hold office until that office becomes vacant and an office will become vacant in accordance with Rule 21.
- Vacancies
  - The office of an officer of the GAFMH becomes vacant if the officer:
    - ceases to be a Member;
    - resigns from office by notice in writing to the Committee;
    - has his or her membership terminated under Rule 7, or,
    - by resolution of the Committee.

As no office holder has resigned and in accordance with the Rules, I declare Bob Faulkner, Derek Amos and Ian Johnston to be confirmed as office holders of the association.

By resolution of the association at its Annual General Meeting of 19 December last, it was resolved to elect five (5) ordinary members to the Committee.

Lyn Douglas, Hilton Gruis, Fred Edwards, Darryl Ham, Toni Ham and Lisa Proctor were duly elected. Lisa Proctor has offered her resignation for the committee and the remaining members are eligible for re-election. I therefore call for nominations for five (5) ordinary members of the committee.

**Harvey Pynt (Returning Officer)**