

**Supported Options
in Lifestyle and
Access Services Inc.**

Mental Health Recovery in our Community

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SOLAS Scoop...

November 2010, Vol. 14 Issue 11

SOLAS Board of Management 2010 - 2011

PRESIDENT Tom Ryan
SECRETARY Marianne Bonassi
TREASURER Elizabeth Siebel

CONSUMER REPRESENTATIVE: Deborah Ross
BOARD MEMBERS: Christopher Henaway
Cathy Griffin

SOLAS underwent a Workplace Health & Safety inspection audit in August to review the organisations workplace, health and safety systems. We received a glowing report and the Auditor stated that "SOLAS has the best health & safety processes out all the businesses in Townsville that he had visited".

Well done everyone.

Jan P WHSO

Season Cleanup

Cyclone Season is approaching so being prepared can save a lot of heartache and stress. Now is the time to get your Emergency Cyclone Kit together, clean out your gutters and clear your yard of loose material. The radio is your lifeline leading up to, during and after a tropical cyclone has hit your area so a portable radio and spare batteries are an essential part of your Cyclone Kit. Be prepared and be safe. Ask your SOLAS Support Worker to help you prepare for the Cyclone Season.

Important telephone numbers:

SES 13 25 00

Ergon Energy loss of supply 13 22 96

Water/sewage problems 4727 9000

Telstra faults 13 22 03

Disaster Management Group 4727 9000

Prepare for Dengue Season

Cleaning up your yard will prevent the Dengue mosquito breeding. The Council aims to inspect 50 homes a day until Christmas and so far 1 in 5 homes inspected have had the Dengue mozzie breeding. Look out for breeding sites in and around your yard. Tip out containers or items that have water collecting in them.

From the CEO.....



SOLAS is currently undertaking an organisational review to develop an organisational structure that will enable the effective management of the organisation for the next 5 to 10 year period. This review is being undertaken by the Community Business Bureau (CBB) which provides specialized consulting services to the Community sector. The review has included: documentation review; personal and group interviews; culture survey; and a skills audit, which will inform the development of an organisational structure, develop role definitions; identify skill gaps and provide a baseline for future workforce planning strategies.

The SOLAS Board of Management will also be engaged in the annual Strategic Planning Day on Monday 29th November which will include information gained through the Strategic Planning survey which has been widely distributed. This will lead to the development of a new Business Plan that will identify the strategic direction of the organisation for the next 5 years.

Our sincere appreciation goes to all of our supporters in the community – you have contributed to great outcomes for people during 2010.

Our best wishes for a safe and joyful festive season.

Kind Regards,
Rhonda Clark

WELCOME TO NEW WORKERS AND FAREWELL TO OTHERS

All the best to Project Officer: Francis D;
Program Coordinator: Barbara G
Lifestyle Support Workers: Iris H

A warm welcome to: Lifestyle Support Workers
Tyson C, Carla M, Kelly H, Jane J and Jenni B-J



SOLAS Inc. Annual General Meeting 2010

This years AGM was held at the Mercure Inn on the 21st September 2010. The evening was opened by our President, Tom Ryan, who warmly welcomed guests, consumers and staff. The traditional owners of the land were acknowledged and this was followed by a local singing group 'The Deadly Aunties' who had the audience clapping and joining in. The official part of the meeting followed, with reports presented and the election of the office bearers held.

President:
Tom Ryan



Consumer Representative
Deborah Ross



Secretary
Marianne Bonassi



Board Members
Cathy Griffin



Treasurer
Maggie Siebel



Christopher Henaway



Flowers, wine and chocolates were presented to the board members for all their hard work and dedication over the past year. A special mention went to **Mike Cartmill** who was retiring after serving 15 years on the board. Appreciation for dedicating his time and valuable experiences to SOLAS as we have grown and moved forward from a small local organisation in Townsville to a leader in delivering specialist mental health services into the regions.



Staff that have been with the organisation for 5 years were shown appreciation by being presented with certificates and Life Membership was awarded to our CEO Rhonda Clark.

Pictured right:

President Tom Ryan presenting CEO Rhonda Clark with her Life Membership



A power point was then shown in conjunction with the presentation of certificates to consumers acknowledging their achievements throughout the year. Refreshments followed, with all attending enjoying the evening immensely.Jane

Juanita congratulating CEO Rhonda Clark on her well deserved award.



Service Manager Penny Cotter in the background



Kristopher Johnson pictured above presenting his work of art to SOLAS Staff from L to R: Denise, Kylie, Ashley, Barbara, Lisa and Rhonda.

Presentation of certificates

Pictured Right: Derek



Pictured Above: Kylie, Barbara, Juanita, Denise & Lisa



Pictured Right: Lisa and Denise with a very proud and distinguished Rodney Kenny



CRUISING THE OPEN SEAS

Burdekin Flexi Group organised a 7 day cruise in August of this year and this is an overview of the cruise by Flexi-Crew volunteer - Brendan:

Ben, Cameron, Shane and I really did have one of those once in a lifetime experiences travelling on the P&O Cruise liner PACIFIC DAWN.

After one week spent cruising on the open seas travelling to the South Pacific Islands our first stop was the City of Noumea, New Caledonia.



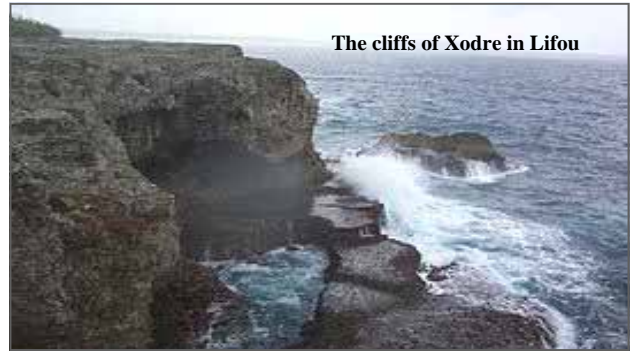
Nouméa is the capital city of the French territory of New Caledonia. It is situated on a peninsula in the south of New Caledonia's main island, Grande Terre, and is home to the majority of the island's European, Polynesian (Wallisians, Futunians, Tahitians), Indonesian, and Vietnamese populations, as well as many Melanesians, Ni-Vanuatu and Kanaks that work in one of the South Pacific's most industrialised cities. The city lies on a protected deepwater harbor which serves as the chief port for New Caledonia. Even though we only spent a few hours at Noumea where the boys went on a site seeing tour, we got to experience all the history of Noumea.

Our second Stop was the Island of Lifou which is very picturesque with clear Blue Ocean and many friendly locals. The visit to Lifou was by far the most picturesque and most enjoyed stop by us all. The boys looked around the market's buying some souvenirs of their trip and then walked around the island taking in all of the sites.

The picture on the right is people from our cruise experiencing the clear waters and beautiful coral first hand.



Lifou is made up of Lifou Island, the largest and most heavily populated of the Loyalty Islands, its smaller neighbour Tiga Island, and several uninhabited islets in between these two. All these islands lie among the Loyalty Islands, 190 km to the northeast of New Caledonia's mainland. Lifou is noted as ancient lagoon, slowly raised by geological processes. It consists of a wide, flat center surrounded by cliffs which correspond to the ancient recifal cliffs.



The cliffs of Xodre in Lifou

At 1,146 km², Lifou Island is said to be the largest atoll in the world. Being made of fossil coral/coral rock it exhibits high porosity and neither Lifou nor any of the other Loyalty Islands have surface water. It does, however, have a large freshwater reservoir which can be accessed through caves. These caves were used in the past when searching for fresh water, and are very important to the island's mythology. The first Europeans noted to have contact with Lifouans were whalers and they had very limited and not so friendly communication with them. Sandalwood traders then came to New Caledonia around 1841.

Our Third Stop was Port Vila, Vanuatu. The hustle and bustle of this city was very full on! We looked at many shops and did lots of shopping and picked up some really good buys.

Port Vila is the capital and largest city of Vanuatu. Situated on the south coast of the island of Efate, in Shefa Province, it is the economic and commercial centre of Vanuatu.

Overall, everyone had a great time and really enjoyed the trip.



Brendan





PHantastic PHaMs

Between the 5-11th of October events around the country were held to increase awareness and knowledge about mental health issues and to encourage engagement in life enriching activities. This was done in honour of Mental Health Week, a national campaign to raise awareness and knowledge of mental health issues and the help that is available Australia wide.

The PHaMs program (Personal Helpers and Mentors Program) held a number of information stalls in the surrounding regions of Townsville, including Alligator Creek and Rollingstone to promote the service. The PHaMs program is a federally funded program run through SOLAS.

SOLAS PHaMs Program Coordinator Lisa Schofield and Peer Support Worker Denise Parr were kind enough to talk about their experiences of mental health week and explain the benefits of the PHaMs program.

Lisa said of the workshops “It is important for members of the community to be aware that services such as ours are available.” “Too often the topic of mental health is viewed as taboo but by reaching out to the community in this very personal way, barriers are broken down and genuine progress can be made towards an inclusive and healthy society.” “At first people seemed a little apprehensive to speak with us but as time progressed more and more people came up to our information stall to talk about genuine concerns and questions they had. We hope to have new consumers in the PHaMs program as an outcome of these information stalls. Additionally many more families are now aware of services available to them which they had no knowledge of previously”.

Denise Parr shared her passion for the program that she works in.

“The PHaMs Program is fantastic. It is unlike many others that I am aware of. We support people who are experiencing mental health issues, however they do not have to have a formal diagnosis. Unlike many other programs we assist individuals from the age 16 and up and there is no upper age limit. Our program has really been designed to reach out to individuals who otherwise commonly fall through the cracks of the mental health system.”



Denise Parr at the Alligator Creek Information Stall



In addition to the above, SOLAS PHaMs staff have undertaken a number of promotional visits to community agencies and General Practitioners to share information and raise awareness of the program as well as to help facilitate referrals to the program.

For more information on the PHAMS program contact Lisa Schofield at SOLAS.

*Article written by Carla Miller,
PHaMs Lifestyle Support Worker
Pictured below.*



SOLAS REGIONAL ROUNDUP

THE BURDEKIN



Hi everyone, I am Rebecca and as of Friday the 12th of November 2010 I will have commenced in my new position as a Client Services Officer at Burdekin Flexible Support Service Inc (BFSS). Along with this position I will also assume the role of Team Leader for Burdekin Flexible Support Service Inc (BFSS) Mental Health Team, which is funded by the Burdekin Mental Health Carer Respite Program (BMHCRP).

My duties as a Client Services Officer are quite broad and include the following: completing Individual Support Plans for our service users, rostering for all staff, Human Resources and training, providing peer support, intake and assessment of new clients to BFSS, general liaising and trouble-shooting with service users, their families and carers, as well as other day-to-day tasks and general administration. I am sure to be kept busy.

I have been involved with the BMHCRP since February 2010 as Team Leader of the BFSS Mental Health Team. In this role I gained valuable experience and have also attended a number of BMHCRP meetings so I am not entirely new to the area or to Mental Health.

I am currently completing a Mental Health Cert IV with TAFE and I am extremely excited to be taking up this position and look forward to being part of the fantastic dynamics around Mental Health Recovery.

I look forward to getting to know everyone.

.....*Rebecca Aldridge*



**Burdekin
Flexible Support
Service ~Inc~**

REGIONAL NEWS

We are pleased to announce the appointment of Ashley McLachlan to the position of Acting Program Co-ordinator for the SOLAS Regional Program commencing on the 25th November until the end of June 2011.



Ashley has been engaged with SOLAS as a Program Coordinator for the SCIP (Transition from Corrections Initiative) since May 2009. Ashley has already connected with many of the regional staff and stakeholders through his role as a Facilitator in the SOLAS staff induction

program, toolbox and regional professional development training programs. Ashley will be travelling out to the regions to meet with partner organisations and will be facilitating the final Regional Managers Network meeting for 2010.

Welcome to Katherine Reynolds who has joined the Charters Towers Neighborhood Centre as the Senior Program Manager for the PHaMs and Mental Health Carer Respite Program. Katherine is keen to commence her position within the mental health programs and to further develop her skills and knowledge in the community mental health sector.



SERVICE DELIVERY UPDATE

This has been an exciting year for the regions and communities that have developed services to provide local community based options for people experiencing mental illness and valuable carer respite option for their families or carers. Through the FaHCSIA Targeted Mental Health Programs (PHaMs and Mental Health Carer Respite) over fifty (50) consumers have been supported within the 2010 period in the non-metropolitan, regional and rural areas. This has meant a significant increase in access to specialist mental health support services, particularly in the smaller communities such as Hughenden and Palm Island. Congratulations and well done to all, we look forward to 2011.

Penny Cotter



Queensland Mental Health Week Awards 2010

In partnership with Open Minds, Queensland Health, through the Mental Health Directorate, proudly hosted the third Annual Mental Health Week Achievement Awards. The Ceremony was held at the Hillstone Centre St Lucia Golf Links on the 15th October 2010.

I am told the setting for this time of the year with all of the Jacaranda trees in flower and looking out over the golf greens was just stunning! The event was also superb.

Supported Options in Lifestyle and Access Services Inc (SOLAS) was announced as a FINALIST for the 2010 Queensland Mental Health Week Awards for the NGO/Community Organisation category. This nomination was for the SOLAS REGIONAL MENTAL HEALTH PROGRAM that has effectively:-

- Developed, documented and implemented an innovative and creative service model that builds the capacity of rural and remote North Queensland communities to respond to the community sector support needs of people with mental health conditions.
- Developed a service model that delivers support services at a local level by locally managed service providers
- Implemented a service model that uses community development, capacity building, collaborative partnerships and quality service delivery processes that increase service access for people with mental health conditions who live in rural and remote North Queensland communities.



COMMUNITY RESOURCE:

MENTAL HEALTH RECOVERY IN LOCAL COMMUNITIES

Ms Susan Hunt has been undertaking a project with SOLAS which is aimed at evaluating and documenting the service model being delivered through the SOLAS Regional Mental Health Program.

The Resource is almost complete and is due to be released in early December 2010. Extracts from the resource follow:

“SOLAS sub-contracted with five service partners to deliver mental health services (even though they had never delivered mental health services) including: Ingham Parents Support Group Inc., Charters Towers Neighbourhood Centre Inc., Burdekin Flexible Support Service Inc., Flinders Shire Council and, New Way Agencies Pty Ltd. Listening to rural and remote community service providers fits with the SOLAS philosophy of community development and community capacity building and the subcontracting of services avoided community organisational competitiveness and a ‘top down’ approach to service delivery.

SOLAS Values and Community Capacity Building

Consistent with SOLAS’ core values inherent in the SOLAS Model, SOLAS provided service partners with a range of unlimited and ongoing supports and resources to ensure the success of rural and remote community sector mental health service delivery including: mental health orientation training and mentoring; a professional development program; development of regional forms and brochures; policies and procedures; a regional managers network; and, a Regional Mental Health Community Development Forum.

Despite the challenges, high levels of satisfaction are reported by SOLAS’ service partners, stakeholders and in particular, consumers and carers in regards to SOLAS as the lead/ support



Susan Hunt and Rhonda Clark

organisation, the SOLAS Model, and the implementation of the SOLAS Model in rural and remote communities.”

Mental Health Week Community Fun Day



As part of Mental Health Week, SOLAS participated in the *Mental Health Week Community Fun Day* which was held at Riverway on 15 October. The day brought together representatives from various agencies and organisations from the private, government and community sectors to promote awareness of mental health and the services available within the community. Those who visited the fun day were able to enjoy performances from musicians, dancers, and guest speakers throughout the day and some were even lucky enough to get into the groove by participating in a drumming circle.

It was great to see a number of consumers and staff from SOLAS enjoying the activities at different times throughout the day. There was a fair amount of interest in SOLAS' stall, and we were kept busy answering questions, sharing leaflets and brochures and handing out the colourful *Mental Health Week* promotional materials like stress balls, balloons and carry bags.



Jenny and Janine- "In the Groove"



Sarah & Ashley at the SOLAS display

Special thanks go to our two OT students, who were at Riverway very early on the day to help set up, and were some of the last to leave when everything was packed up at the end of the day.

.....Ashley

National Carers Week 17-23 October

As a part of National Carers week, Carers Queensland hosted a Carers Celebration Day at the Ryan Community Centre in Kirwan on the 19th October. The event included a Lifestyle Expo, recreational activities, awards ceremony and a general coming together of the many service organisations that provide support and assistance to a family member or friends who have a disability chronic physical or mental illness, or are frail, aged and require assistance and support in the community.

SOLAS participated in the celebrations by having a display together with many of Townsville's support agencies. The event was aimed at raising awareness to people in the community who are in a caring role and to raise the profile of support organisations throughout Townsville. The celebration was a valuable opportunity to provide information to consumers, their families and friends.



Pictured above: Greg Latham at the SOLAS display

SOLAS CONNECTIONS LIFESKILLS PROGRAM

Over the past few weeks, Sarah and Kristy (JCU Occupational Therapy students), have been working hard to develop a module for the SOLAS Connections Lifeskills Program called “**Healthy Food, Healthy Life**”. Wednesday November 3rd marked the official beginning of the “Healthy Food, Healthy Life” program which of two sessions which were held a week apart. An excited group of consumers began their journey to a healthier lifestyle.

Week one saw us tackling the hidden nasties: saturated fats and sugars! This involved a trip to the Fairfield Shopping Centre supermarket to learn how to read the nutrition information panels on food packaging. Once we had this under our belt we embarked on the “healthiest masterchef challenge” to try to find the healthiest brands of six commonly bought food items. Everyone was armed with a healthy eating wallet card (which lists ideal amounts of fats, sugars and salts) and were able to discover healthier ways of buying their groceries.

We then took the group from being masterchefs in the supermarket in the first week, to being masterchefs in the kitchen the following week. Six group members joined us at Dan Gleeson park to take part in a hands on cooking group. The group learnt about the healthy living pyramid, and applied this knowledge to create a delicious picnic lunch. Everybody worked together to prepare a lovely meal, even braving it out in the rain! We didn't let anyone walk away empty handed; with everybody receiving a certificate of participation, an information booklet on healthy eating and a recipe book of 10 healthy recipes to cook on a budget.



We would like to say a big thank you to each and every person who participated in the group.

We hope that you enjoyed it as much as we did.

Sarah and Kristy JCU 3rd Year OT Students



SOLAS is proud to be an Accredited Service Provider in the community mental health sector through the Queensland Disability Service Standard Quality Accreditation System.

Consumer Corner

TEN PIN BOWLING: During the weekend of 22nd, 23rd and 24th October, Suzan participated in the Intercentre Bowling championship between Rockhampton, Mackay and Townsville. These championships were held at the Kirwan Bowling Centre on Bamford Lane. Suzan bowled several games during the competition and achieved her personal best scores. She placed 1st in doubles and 2nd and 3rd in the teams events. Suzan made this a very enjoyable event by inviting her friends along to watch and support her and her team throughout the weekend. Suzan now has her sights set on attending the next competition to be held in Rockhampton in March 2011.



.....Tanya



Congratulations to Susan Marron for completing a Beginners computer course at the TWCC – Townsville West Community Centre, Garbutt - and receiving her certificate. Susan now enjoys using her new email skills to stay in contact with family and friends who live interstate. Her next goal is to learn to Skype and to save up for her own laptop so she can log on 24/7. A big thankyou to the staff at TWCC for their great programs.

SOLAS STAFF - GONE BOATING!



Some 30 odd, Solas staff, recently hopped on board the opportunity offered by our social organisers to go for a sunset cruise on board the MV

Kathleen Mary on Lake Ross-Commonly known to most of us as the Ross River Dam and River system.

Following due instructions we assembled at the amenities block /carpark at the foot of the dam. Some of us joked as we drove toward the dam about an old school bus on the side of the road, “wouldn’t it be funny if that was the bus we are going on”! Well we were soon met by Pop and Heather Sullivan in their quite old (but they assured me it was roadworthy) ex school bus. We had a bit of a delay to see if a couple who hadn’t yet arrived were in fact going to make it and this gave us time to get used to Pop’s humour. The air conditioning (all windows, doors and hatches open) left a bit to be desired and Pops answer was “if you are hot-get off now” No one did as it really wasn’t too bad and wasn’t going to be for long. We soon headed off across the river and with the bus groaning up the slopes it wasn’t long before we were at the boat ramp.



Supplies were already on board and after a few ropes were sorted so were we. The weather was partly cloudy though seemed quite warm and fairly still. Before long we were advised of our safety requirements, the rules to keep the water pristine, no one and absolutely nothing must go into the water and then we were well under way. We were the only vessel and only people on the lake and the breeze was divine.

The birdlife is quite amazing and some say the scenery equal to some of the other amazing places like Kadadu and other famous places around the world. In keeping our water safe, very few people hold permits to access the area and in discussion with Pop Sullivan he explained to me that the bouys that we were passing are actually eel traps. The eels are caught and live exported out of Australia.



In one of the particular areas, -as shown above- where dead trees were along side us with about 5 metres showing above the water line, I asked Pop how much water was below us and he checked the depth sounder and it was approx 10 metres so those trees are pretty big and make such a picturesque backdrop to the sunset.



As you can see from the photos, the birdlife is abundant and the landscapes just spectacular. We were entertained through sunset with music and

vocals from Pop and some of the staff joining in.

There are a few different tours available on the lake, all are different in the areas they cover as well as the time of day that they go. I for one will be getting out there again and taking in all of the serenity, wonderful birdlife, entertainment and humor from Pop and his “Deckie” (his wife Heather) as he lovingly referred to her, as well as learning about the area and the history of it all.

Special thanks to those who organised this pleasurable event and to Jouni for his excellent photography and for sharing them with us all. All in all it was a very enjoyable outing!



.....Julie Mulder

Occupational Therapy Student Placement

SOLAS farewells our latest JCU Occupational Therapy placement students

Goodbye and thank you from Sarah and Kristy.

We have been at SOLAS since late September and during this time we have been involved in a number of projects. These include the Yellow Envelope project, an individual Domestic and Community Skills Assessment (DACSA), and the “healthy foods healthy life group”.

The yellow envelope project was commenced by the previous students Kate and Rebecca. The project aims to improve the quality of health care by improving communication lines between community health teams and hospitals. For those consumers who were interested in the program, we have created yellow envelopes and hope to have these in place before we leave mid November. We could not have completed this without all the lifestyle support workers and Key-Workers who helped us to gather information and promote the program; and for this we thank you.

The DACSA assessments have given us the chance to become familiar with the assessment tool and develop our skills in interviewing, observation and report writing. The process itself helps the consumer identify goals for the future to further their skills in living independently. This may help consumers identify new ISSP goals as well. We would like to particularly thank the two consumers for their involvement in this project, from whom we have learnt so much. We wish them both all the best with their future goals.

The Healthy Foods Healthy Life group: at the time of writing this, we are busy getting ready for the first group session for this project. We hope that the group will address the needs and wants of consumers with an interest in learning about healthy eating and with developing cooking skills.

Each project has given us some fantastic opportunities to develop our skills as Occupational Therapists. We have worked closely with the SOLAS team and met many wonderful people as we go out and meet with consumers. We have found the whole process to be very rewarding both professionally and personally. We would like to say a big thank you to our supervisors Penny Cotter (SOLAS Service Manager) Glenne Aumend (Offsite supervisor) as well as all of the team at SOLAS for their support, guidance and encouragement. The skills we have learnt here have really helped us develop as students, future occupational therapists and team members.

Thank you and good bye.

Sarah H and Kristy A

Other SOLAS changes:



Barbara Guy at her farewell,
pictured with Joanne

Hello, my name is Joanne, and I have recently stepped into Barbara’s shoes as Program Coordinator for the Recovery, P300, Post School, Family Support and Contract Programs. Barbara has been a valued member of the SOLAS workforce for a number of years, and she will be greatly missed. We all wish her well in her position.

Having worked for SOLAS for around two years, I am delighted to be able to take up the opportunity to widen my horizons and meet the different challenges that are presented to me in my new role.

I have had the great pleasure of meeting quite a few of you, and I look forward to the occasions when I can escape the office and head out into the suburbs to either catch up, or get to know those new faces.

I am usually available at the end of the phone line, so please ring to speak to me, or if you would like to introduce yourself.

.....Jo (anne)

Staff Training and Development—2010 Coming to an End

As the year draws to a close, a considerable amount of training has been undertaken by our staff throughout the year. The main focus was on quite a number of our staff enrolling in and completing the Certificate IV in Mental Health.

Ten staff members across the organisation have successfully completed the Community Services Leadership Skill Set that was coordinated by the Health and Community Services Workforce Council.

Two staff members have completed a Certificate IV in Training and Assessment through various training organisations. SOLAS had four staff members in the Community Services Indigenous Mentoring Program which was conducted over a six month period. Participants consisted of two Mentors and two Mentees who will be accredited a unit qualification as the program is completed. Other training has included regional employees attending orientation at SOLAS while our Mental Health First Aid Facilitators have been delivering training out in the regions to build capacity in those areas. Mental Health First Aid training has also been delivered in-house throughout the year with a stronger focus to be on the Mental Health First Aid Program in 2011.

Congratulations everyone on our achievements throughout 2010.

Greg Latham

Lifestyle Support Worker Training

toolbox



Art Therapy

Having a passion for art, a positive outlook on life, and a desire to help others, has led to my developing a growing interest in art therapy. Having undertaken some training in this area, I presented a workshop at SOLAS, delivering a brief overview of the history, purpose, definition and how it works.



*Presenter
Jo Bingham*

Scattered amongst the information were many tasks for the participants to engage in, including techniques to encourage them to look beyond tomorrow, to identify where they would like to be, and how to get there. It gives people a safe place to imagine what life would be like without the problems that experience every day, and how it would feel to be without pain or trauma.

Art therapy can also be great fun, and is very social, gathering people together towards a common goal. Being creative helps you to relax, and de-stress, and through its therapeutic qualities, leads you towards increased emotional and spiritual well being.



Nick participating in an activity



*Denise & Megan
at the workshop*

THE PRICKLY PEAR TREE

A long time ago on a property, "Biala",
Something happened I can tell ya ~
Two most beautiful children,
Asked a question.
"Mum, can we go for a walk please?"
It was quite cool: a southerly breeze.
I said, "Well yes O.K, but there is a snare,"
"You must not go near the prickly pear."
Time passed, and then I heard a noise,
On the veranda, the two were poised.
Prickly pear spikes on their clothes
Mother needed to sooth ~
They could have been in pain, excruciating agony.
I was selfish, thinking of me
I yelled and I screamed "didn't I tell you"
The poor little infants were turning blue
"Take off your clothes, come on in
Jump into the laundry tub, I'm being mean"
Oh how I wished I'd calm and mild,
Given them big hugs and a loving smile ~
Many years later I bought a little plant
Took it home and sat it in the kitchen with
The shopping. I was picking up crumbs and putting
Them in my mouth, when I realised they
Were spikes off a tiny prickly pear plant ~
I had prickles in my throat and on my tongue
It didn't take long ~ to remember my children's plight ~
With the prickly pear fruit

Written by: Pamela J Vaughan
25th of August 2010

SLAM THOSE PHOME SCAMMERS — The Australian Competition and Consumer Commission (ACCC) and the Australian Communications and Media Authority (ACMA) are loudly calling for all Australians to immediately hang up the phone if scammers call and to stay alert to this growing threat that can deceive people into providing personal details. 'Consumers can stop themselves being scammed by **never disclosing any personal or financial details to these callers,**' added ACCC Chairman, Graeme Samuel. '**Cutting off the lifeline is the best way to disrupt scammers.**'

There are many scams circulating and we are advised to be particularly aware of the following calls:
Callers advising that the person's computer is infected with a virus and requesting credit card details to fix the problem:
Callers offering products, services or cash under fake government grants: Callers seeking bank details in order to process a bank fee refund or tax refund: Callers offering to place the person's number on the 'Do Not Call Register' for a fee: A recorded messages asking consumers to "dial 9" for a 'free' holiday. If it looks too good to be true—it probably is; remember there are no get-rich-quick schemes: the only people who make money are the scammers.

-Contact your bank immediately if you think you have provided your details to a scammer.

To report a scam, call SCAMwatch on 1300 795 995





Supported Options
in Lifestyle and
Access Services Inc.

Mental Health Recovery in our Community

SOLAS Scoop...



Please Note:

The SOLAS OFFICE will be closed on the following times over the Christmas and New Year Period.

- Monday 27th December 2010*
- Tuesday 28th December 2010*
- Monday 03rd January 2011*

Whilst the office will be open from 29th December to 31st December limited staff members will be in attendance.

Notable Diary Dates 2010:...

Monday 29th November - SOLAS Strategic Planning Day

Friday, December 10 to Sunday, February 13, 2011 Barrier Reef Institute of TAFE Aboriginal and Torres strait Islander Cultural Arts Annual Exhibition @ Perc Tucker Regional Gallery, Townsville Mall. Cost—Free

Monday 12th December - Carols by Candlelight

Wednesday 15th December SOLAS Christmas Party @ Wulguru Community Centre between 12.00pm and 2.00pm

19th –23rd December - Stable on the Strand 5.30 - 9.30 Nightly at Strand Park Townsville

25 December - Father Christmas Arrives

Friday 31st December - New Years Eve Fireworks - Celebrate the New Year from 8.00 pm to 12.00 am at the Strand Park, Townsville

