It is hard to believe that 2015 is nearly at an end. We have had another very busy year which has seen Flourish consolidate its strengths and focus and take some initial steps into new strategic directions.

2015 has seen general membership of Flourish introduced as well as the introduction of two new Board Committees, the Marketing and Communication Committee and the Membership Committee. These will add to the existing Policy, Human Resources and Finance Audit and Risk Committees.

In addition to the activities during Mental Health Week in October which had a strong regional involvement for Flourish RAGS, there was the Launch of Flourish’s ABC of Mental Health in the North in June and our first fundraising event ‘On Our Selection’ in the South in August.

Thank you Danny

2016 will be a time for change as a new Chair of the Board will lead Flourish during the next ‘development’ stage. Flourish has been expertly led and governed by Danny Sutton who has taken Flourish from the ‘set up and establishment’ phase, overseen by original Chair Dennis Betts to the ‘consolidate and development’ phase of Flourish’s growth.

I would like to thank Danny for his friendly, professional and considered Chairing of the Flourish Board.

Thank you readers

On behalf of the Board and staff of Flourish I would like to thank you for your support and involvement over the past twelve months and we look forward to continue to work together to make a positive difference to mental health consumers in Tasmania.

The Flourish office will be closed from 5pm on Wednesday 16 December and will be reopening on Tuesday 12th January 2016.

Seasons greetings,

Miranda
I am bitter yet I am your sweet... I am the mayhem that circles you
I am both your dream and your nightmare... I am your reality and I am alt surreal
I am the one that leaves you feeling unaffected and delightfully detached
I will impair your judgement and make your choices
I will cloud your ability to focus and steal your memories
I will isolate you from the rest of the world and make you forget how to interact
I will fill you with such anger and rage, yet take every ounce of strength you have
You will shoulder responsibilities at your weakest point and I will leave you all alone
I will immerse you deeper and lower into my void of nothingness
And you will concede to become the compulsion itself
I will consume your energy thought and like a magnet...
Drawn in by my poisonous allure, you are trapped in this... my delusion is now our delusion
I'll fill your days with restlessness and agitation and I offer no reprieve
I will present you with urges you cannot resist and then sit back as u endure the consequences
You are tireless and tiresome but there is no rest for you here
I am still in control and I can take you as high or as low as I please
From one extreme to another... you are a beautiful wreck
Oh you are a catastrophe, desperately grasping for anything you hope may be real
But you are nameless to me and u are neither asleep nor fully awake
Under my hypnosis, you are merely existing
Psychosis, magnificent, tragic, psychosis
You are a curious aberration of society. U are a case study

I can make you fascinating or I can make you fall.
For while I reign, you are but dreaming and you will be terrified and tortured by your vacant truth
Like a natural disaster, feel my wrath. I will leave nothing but destruction in my wake
Your loved ones will suffer while you remain empty and unresponsive
Only after I have stripped you of your empathy and leave you cold and lifeless...
Only then will you understand my true power, for you will feel nothing and nothing can change that

I AM THE CHAOS THAT MAKES YOU SUCH A SEDUCTIVE DISASTER

I AM MANIA

Poem by Eboni Gadd

This poem recently came third in the national Schizophrenia Fellowship competition
The following article is from http://www.mindhealthconnect.org.au/beating-christmas-stress-and-anxiety

The Christmas season is meant to be a time of joy, but for many people it can be a time of stress, anxiety, disappointment or loneliness. Christmas comes with high expectations of perfect, happy families enjoying luxurious celebrations and gifts, but not all of us are able to live up to these ideals. For those who have recently lost a loved one, Christmas can intensify feelings of grief and sadness. Some people experience feelings of isolation, financial pressures or increased family conflict that can make this a very stressful time of year.

However, there are some steps you can take to help manage stress and anxiety during the festive period.

**TAKING CARE OF MONEY WORRIES**

Is the festive season a burden on your wallet? Here are some tips for managing your Christmas finances and reducing your silly season stress:

- **Identify what’s causing you financial stress.** Buying gifts and attending social get together can be expensive. Plan ways to reduce spending. For example, you could suggest to your family and friends that you only buy gifts for the kids, or organise a ‘Secret Santa’ among the adults. Set a budget and stick to it.

- **Find low cost ways to have fun.** Don’t let money cut you off from your family and friends. If you can’t afford expensive restaurant meals or cocktail catch-ups, organise a BBQ in the park or a party at home where everyone brings a plate of food.

**DEALING WITH FAMILY TENSION**

Just because you’re related doesn’t mean your family members will all get along. Split families and unresolved conflicts may contribute to Christmas anxiety. Family and relationship problems can be a trigger for anxiety.

Here are some ideas for getting through:

- **Set realistic expectations.** Christmas might not be the fabulous family reunion you hoped for. Plan how you will manage any feelings of anxiety or depression that may arise.

- **Put the kids first.** If you have children, consider putting aside ongoing adult conflicts in their interest. Think about Christmas as a day for the kids and focus on enabling their happiness.

- **Drink in moderation.** It may be tempting to drink too much during the festive period, but alcohol can contribute to stress, anxiety and depression. Alcohol may be a problem if you’re drinking to cope.

**AVOID KNOWN TRIGGERS. IF YOUR FAMILY HAS A HISTORY OF ARGUING OVER A CERTAIN TOPIC, DON’T BRING IT UP.**
CONTINUED FROM PAGE 3

MANAGING LONELINESS

There are ways to overcome loneliness if you find yourself isolated or grieving a loved one over the Christmas period.

- **Connect with friends and family.** Even if you’re separated by distance, you can stay in touch with loved ones online or by phone.
- **Volunteer.** Why not lend a hand to a local shelter over Christmas? There are lots of charities who need help. You’ll connect with people and feel good about making a positive contribution.
- **Attend community events.** Find out what’s on locally and get involved. Whether it’s Christmas carols or local markets, getting out and about can help relieve loneliness.

Make plans for Christmas Day. Develop a plan in advance to avoid feeling depressed or stressed on the day. Perhaps make yourself a special breakfast, buy yourself a gift in advance so that you can enjoy it on the day, attend a local church service or take a stroll through the local park where you can watch families enjoying their Christmas presents.

STAY HEALTHY TO AVOID CHRISTMAS ANXIETY

Recognising and changing behaviours that contribute to your stress will help you get through the Christmas period. **Remember to stay healthy** - eating well, exercising and getting enough sleep can help you cope with Christmas stress.

If holiday season stress is getting too much for you and you need support call beyondblue, 1300 22 4636, or lifeline, 13 11 14, to talk things through. If you or someone you know, is at risk of hurting themselves or someone else, call triple zero (000).

This article is from: http://www.mindhealthconnect.org.au/beating-christmas-stress-and-anxiety

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The Royal Derwent Hospital
Remembering the Children

December 2015 marks the 15th anniversary of the closure of the Royal Derwent (Psychiatric) Hospital. During its lifetime the institution housed not just people with mental illness, but also those with intellectual disabilities, and society’s rejects. The hospital also housed children.

No child should be in an asylum, yet the Royal Derwent held hundreds of children during its lifetime, including babies. Many had intellectual and physical disabilities, others had mental health issues, and then there were the ‘troublesome’ children whom society preferred locked away out of sight. A government moratorium on patient files makes it difficult to determine exactly how many children were in the Royal Derwent at any given time, but we do know the number was substantial. Like other institutions across the country the Royal Derwent was notorious for human rights violations and the children were not exempt. In many ways the children suffered more than others, because society and those chosen to care for them had betrayed them and their trust in humanity. Nelson Mandela once said, “The true character of a society is revealed in how it treats its children.”

Well, we as a society have failed miserably to protect our most vulnerable children, and that is a shame that we, as a society, will have to live with. So the 15th anniversary of the Royal Derwent is an appropriate time to reaffirm our commitment to ending violence, abuse and neglect against people with disabilities, including children. It is a time to remember the forgotten children of the Royal Derwent.

Dannii Lane:
Human Rights Advocate
Southern Regional Advisory Group (SRAG) report.

I have many exciting new developments to report from our SRAG monthly meetings. Our meetings have seen attendance rise this year as we provide a venue for consumers to raise issues on a regular basis. Our RAG has developed a culture where members of Flourish provide an empowering environment for consumers. Members have their issues raised to advocate for change in meetings run by consumers for consumers.

Over the past few meetings we have had a guest speaker at almost every meeting. Including; Helen Hortle who gave a presentation from the ‘Human library’. Its function is similar to other libraries except that in a human library, people—rather than books—are available for checkout. Those who volunteer to be “human books” are “people with a particular personal experience or perspective on life”. For more information visit www.afairerworld.org

Members also met with the then newly appointed CEO of the Mental Health Council of Tasmania Connie Digolis. We invited Connie as SRAG considers this relationship with the MHCT to be an important partnership.

Members of our SRAG spoke with another invited guest Narelle Butt, A/General Manager Mental Health, Alcohol and Drug Directorate. We discussed the progress of the mental health ‘Rethink’ project and raised other current issues in the southern region. Also this year we invited Dr Jim Blacket, Clinical Director Mental Health and Statewide Services Tasmanian Health Organisation – South the to hear our concerns. This was important to be able to give a grass roots perspective of the current issues facing consumers.

SRAG has set a plan in motion to establish a memorial dedicated to all those who lived through the many decades of institutionalisation in Tasmania. Dannii Lane has for many years campaigned for the ‘forgotten people’ at the Royal Derwent site in New Norfolk. Now Flourish has a sub committee to the Board working on the memorial project. The committee will speak at the next Derwent Valley city council meeting. Our intent is to gain support for this most important project to have a permanent memorial for the ‘forgotten people’, who we will not forget.

Members of the SRAG attended the successful Flourish mental health week event in Campbell Town and helped make community connections. We also had a fabulous stall at the ‘Roads to Recovery’ Walk. On a bright sunny day in Hobart members and Flourish staff were active on our stall. We managed to sign up many new people to our newsletter and increased membership as well. We were all motivated to focus on having an inviting stall for Flourish to help us grow in our community.

As always, Cheers.
Darren Jiggins
**North West Regional Advisory Group report.**

In the North-West, we have been spending time promoting Flourish, which has been our focus for the latter part of 2015. In October, for Mental Health Week, we attended the Family Fun Day at Oakleigh Park. While it was not as busy as we had hoped, we still made sure to engage with the people who visited our stall. While we were there, we got to know a few of the service providers in the region and made some wonderful connections with people from the various mental health organisations. We believe that it is through these associations that we can build a strong link of reciprocal support, which will benefit consumers in our region.

Several of our RAG members attended the media training day in Campbell Town and this was a great chance for us to learn how to work in front of a camera. For many of us, it was a first time experience and it has given us all more confidence to be able to speak and represent Flourish in the event that we have the opportunity to talk with the media. In fact, it gave us more confidence in general, and this can be applied to all situations, including our roles as members of the Regional Advisory Group.

We would like to welcome to our RAG, Tracy-Jean Morse, who chaired her first meeting on her very first day! Also, congratulations to RAG member, Paris Shacklock, who has been appointed to the Board of Flourish.

We attended the TAFE Mental Health and Well-Being Expo held at the Don Gateway Church on Saturday the 21st of November. There were a couple of hundred people through, and Patty made sure that Flourish was the first thing people saw when they walked in the door. Joshua and Jaisen attended the event and won a door prize each. Kudos to Patty Howard who helped to put the event together with her TAFE class. It was a successful day, with two people showing interest in joining our North West Regional Advisory Group!

Looking forward to 2016; we are expecting more visits to Spencer Clinic; and we will be looking at ways of increasing our membership in our region. We are passionate about Flourish in the North-West, and are hoping to continue to work closely with Sue Wyeth from the Tasmanian Health Services for more forums with the public. The appointment of two Consumer Representatives to the Mental Health Services Executive Committee means that consumers will have a voice at a systemic level in the North-West region. As always, we will be looking for opportunities to promote good mental health and reduce stigma in the community and to get the word out about what Flourish is and what we do.

Jaisen Mahne.
Northern Regional Advisory Group report.

The Northern RAG, like the other Regional Advisory Groups, has a core group of regular attendees. Presently we are working to hold another forum in partnership with Partners in Recovery. This Forum will focus on the importance of looking after our physical health as well as our mental health, and recognizing that recovery must be a holistic approach.

We held another conversation with the Mental Health Service in the North so that consumers and staff can share ideas, thoughts and opinions as well as ask questions of each other.

The group is constantly talking about the issues affecting mental health consumers in the North, and trying to think of ways we can impact change in those areas.

It is amazing to see members of the group grow, and a special congratulations is to be awarded to Rachel, a member of our group who recently sold one of her paintings to a state ministerial politician! A great achievement for Rachel and I know I speak for all the group when I say that her art work is incredible! Great work Rachel!

Miranda and Zac have been visiting Northside regularly to talk with patients about Flourish and what it is that we do. We’ve met many wonderful people, heard many great ideas and suggestions as well as having the pleasure of taking some feedback back, when necessary, to our group to work on as systemic advocacy.

The Northern Regional Advisory Group is only small, but even as we look for more members, our current members are working well as a team, striving to achieve common goals!

Zac Lockhart,
Northern Regional Advisory Group

FLOURISH
BOARD FOR

2016
Catherine Delpero
Celeste Miller
David Perez
Paris Shacklock
Amanda Street
Catherine Viney
Jan West
Harry Wilson

At the Annual General Meeting the above people have been confirmed as board members.
Dashing through the bush
In a rusty Holden Ute
Kicking up the dust
Esky in the boot
Kelpie by my side
Singing Christmas songs
It’s summer time and I am in
My singlet, shorts and thongs

OH, JINGLE BELLS, JINGLE BELLS
JINGLE ALL THE WAY
CHRISTMAS IN AUSTRALIA
ON A SCHORCHING SUMMER’S DAY
JINGLE BELLS, JINGLE BELLS
CHRISTMAS TIME IS BEAUT
OH WHAT FUN IT IS TO RIDE
IN A RUSTY HOLDEN UTE

Engine’s getting hot
Dodge the kangaroos
Swaggy climbs aboard
He is welcome too
All the family is there
Sitting by the pool
Christmas day, the Aussie way
By the Barbecue
OH, JINGLE BELLS, JINGLE BELLS
JINGLE ALL THE WAY
CHRISTMAS IN AUSTRALIA
ON A SCHORCHING SUMMER’S DAY
JINGLE BELLS, JINGLE BELLS
CHRISTMAS TIME IS BEAUT
OH WHAT FUN IT IS TO RIDE
IN A RUSTY HOLDEN UTE
IN A RUSTY HOLDEN UTE

Come the afternoon
Grandpa has a doze
The kids and uncle Bruce
Are swimming in their clothes
The time comes round to go
We take a family snap
Then pack the car and all shoot through
Before the washing up

OH, JINGLE BELLS, JINGLE BELLS
JINGLE ALL THE WAY
CHRISTMAS IN AUSTRALIA
ON A SCHORCHING SUMMER’S DAY
JINGLE BELLS, JINGLE BELLS
CHRISTMAS TIME IS BEAUT
OH WHAT FUN IT IS TO RIDE
IN A RUSTY HOLDEN UTE

*lyrics by Bucko and Champs*
We invite you to provide comment / feedback. This can be done via e-mail, telephone or you can send a letter. Contact details as above.

Please contact Flourish if you would like to be added the mailing list, have articles you want to put in, or have any questions regarding the information contained in this newsletter.

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The next edition is due out March 2016. Articles, stories, artwork and photos are welcome. The deadline for contributions is 15 March 2016. Below are some guidelines regarding the submission of articles for the newsletter.

- Neatly written or typed.
- Maximum of 500 words
- One article from each contributor per edition preferred.
- Photographs to relate to the article and have individual’s permission for publication.
- Flourish reserves the right to edit articles if needed. This will be done in consultation with the author.
- Authors may be anonymous, use only first name or entire name published.
- If reporting on project / policy committee involvement, it is the responsibility of the author to check with the relevant department / organisation to ensure that they are not breaching any confidentiality provisions prior to submitting the article to Flourish.
- The contribution must be the work of the author / person submitting the article, with references included where necessary.