

The Compassionate Friends, Queensland Inc
Annual General Meeting – 17th September 2019

Minutes

- Opening
- Attendance: Patricia Schafer, Lorraine Edgley, Lyn Macklin, Graham Macklin, Marie-Clare De Vere, Roger Grehan, Peter Hobson, Erin Hobson and Kristie McGrath (State Coordinator)
- Apologies: Heather Smith and Tony Vayro
- Minutes of 2018 AGM: (a) Moved: Marie-Clare De Vere
(b) Seconded: Lorraine Edgley
- President's Report:

**The Compassionate Friends Qld Inc
Annual General Meeting 17th September 2019
President's Report**

Good evening all and a warm welcome to our Annual General Meeting for 2019. Peter has generously agreed to take my place at this meeting and to deliver my annual report. For those of you who are not aware, I am working in local government in the Aboriginal community of Finke in the northern Territory. Finke has a couple of claims to fame – it is in the geographic centre of Australia, and it is the half way point for the Finke Desert Race. I currently do not have operational internet in my house and my phone line is shared, so even delivering this report over the phone may have been interrupted!

This past year has been a challenging one for TCFQ. The board has had a number of changes due to resignations. That is how I have come to be interim president! All of our executive positions have interim members. We have only one ongoing board member, Tony Vayro, who will be entering the second year of his term following his election to the board at the last AGM. Though of course, Tony has been on the board for quite a few years now. Thankyou Tony. Thanks must also go to all the interim members who stepped in, keeping us as a viable board, and of course, compliant with regulations. Recognition and sincere thanks must also go to our coordinator, Kristie McGrath, who has been a constant through all the changes.

Despite this, TCFQ has continued to provide its core support services and its secondary education/awareness services. This demonstrates the inbuilt strength of our organization. Following is an overview of the last twelve months.

Services

Our member services are growing. Over this past year, we have opened up support services in regional areas of Stanthorpe, Maryborough, Townsville, Cairns, Mt Tambourine and Gympie. Our support group here in Brisbane continues.

We are now also providing our support into the women's prison here in Brisbane on the invitation of the Minister for Police and Minister for Corrective Services. The project has taken considerable time and effort to get off the ground. It is also extending us culturally as the majority of women in the prison are Aboriginal. Qld is the first TCF in Australia to offer our services into the prison system. The other states are looking as to how we model this type of support so they can do the same.

The QLD Police Service now includes TCFQ on their list of organizations to which they refer people. This is a service where vulnerable bereaved families, with their consent, agree to be contacted by us within a couple of days, usually by phone so we can offer our support and let them know how we can help.

We are now also working to provide help through the Employee Assistance Programme. The EAP, run by the Qld Government, provides free confidential support services to employees and their immediate families for both work and personal problems.

Our annual Walk to Remember was another successful event this year. This event has a twofold purpose. It commemorates our children who have gone before us and is a great support event for parents, grandparents and siblings. The other outcome is raising public awareness for our organization. A large group of people with banners preceded by a piper walking along the river in New Farm Park is hard to miss!

Once again we staged a very strong annual Grief and Loss Seminar. Our range of speakers and presenters and their topics varies from year to year. We are always on the lookout for presenters who are able to demonstrate best practice in the field of child loss. As well as it being an informative day, it also offers opportunities for bereaved families to socialise, and give and receive support amongst each other. Our seminar is open to anyone interested in grief and loss, particularly professionals. We hope to see this area of attendance grow strongly in the future.

Last Christmas, for the first time, in conjunction with Queensland Homicide Victims Support Group we staged a children's Christmas party. This event is in its early stages and more work will be required to make it an ongoing event.

Our annual Candle Lighting Service was, as usual, held in December last year. Some changes were made to the running of this service. Member feedback indicated that we should revert to our customary running of this event, so this year will see a return to the traditional service. Member feedback is extremely important. As an organization we constantly seek to improve what we do but we have learned that there are times when change is not necessary and certainly not without consultation with membership.

Community Awareness

TCFQ participated in the "Dying to Know Day" again this year. "Dying to Know" promotes 'death literacy', ie, it encourages conversations around end of life plans and death. As D2K says, "Too often, we feel ill-equipped to support loved ones who are dying, caring or

grieving.” Once again this is an opportunity for promoting our organization and raising our profile.

The new areas we move into such as regional support services, women’s prison, EAP and police referrals, all contribute to community awareness.

Governance

Early this year Jillian Hamilton of Manage Damage (Jillian was our board secretary at the time) ran a strategic planning workshop specifically for TCFQ. This was followed up by a session with Jillian and Kristie working on the implementation, process and procedure of some of what had been workshopped at the earlier session.

The AGM last year adopted a new constitution with the idea that it would be reviewed over the following year, with any changes necessary being put to this AGM. With the number of board changes we have experienced over this past year, a complete review has not been possible. It will be put to this AGM that the review be extended another year.

One of the inclusions in the constitution is to allow associate membership. This is new for TCFQ. Associate members do not need to be bereaved in accordance with our usual requirements for membership. This allows us a wider scope to bring required expertise to the board, eg, treasurer or secretary. Indeed, we had our secretary, Jillian Hamilton as an associate member in the position of secretary, until her resignation a few months ago. However, to maintain the integrity of our organization, associate members cannot hold the positions of President or Vice President.

Recognition

Queensland Homicide Victims Support Group runs an annual award night and dinner. Some of our TCFQ members are also members of this organization. This year recognition was given to our Coordinator, Kristie McGrath. Kristie received from QHVSG the award of “Compassion in Service”. This is a great demonstration of the strength we are building between our two organizations, thanks in no small part to Kristie. Well done! Can we please join in giving Kristie our acclamation.

Volunteers

Volunteers play a key part in supporting our organization. However, the nature of volunteerism has changed in recent years and this is presenting our organisation with some challenges, particularly with regard to administrative volunteering. Volunteers now tend to offer their help and services for a shorter time or for projects only. As a NFP organization we have to adapt and take a more flexible approach with those who do offer their assistance. May I take this time to sincerely thank all those who have volunteered over the years in any role what so ever. Thankyou so much also to those who have volunteered to run our new regional groups. Our organization would not be what it is today without the help of our volunteers.

TCFQ suffered the unexpected and sudden loss of long time member and volunteer Vera Caltabiano several months ago. Vera gave of her time freely and without expectation of return. For many of our bereaved, Vera was their first contact, some going on to form firm friendships with her. Vera, along with Lorraine ran support groups gatherings here in Brisbane for many years, as well as visiting our regional groups. TCFQ board also benefited

from Vera's time and talent, not only as an ordinary member but also from her holding the executive positions of president and vice president over many years.

Finance

QLD Health has renewed our funding from July this year for a further three years. We express our whole hearted thanks to QLD Health for this. As most members here would be aware, we could not function at our current level without this grant.

For the first time this year, QLD Health also provided us with a \$4826 (gst excl) grant towards the running of our Annual Grief and Loss Seminar.

Roger Grehan, our treasurer will provide a comprehensive report tonight on the details of our financial status.

Fundraising

Our annual Golf day is specifically run as a fundraiser. This year saw us raise \$11413 from the event. Some significant prizes were donated and the day was a great social event.

This fundraising and the monies we generate from jam stalls and sausage sizzles along with donations, supplements the QLD Government grant. The more money we can raise, the more we can build and strengthen TCFQ, because unfortunately, there will never be a time when our services are not required.

Other News

TCFQ is building strong relationships with both the Victorian and New South Wales state chapters of TCF. Overlaying all chapters is TCF Australia. TCFA is undergoing a rebuilding after having gone somewhat quite a few years ago. This change is being driven by TCFV. All states appear to have a more enthusiastic 'buy-in' this time around with strong leadership on the board. A strong TCFA will open opportunities for federal funding that most chapters do not have at present. As well, a strong TCFA will give us more credibility as an organization, therefore making us a more attractive proposition for funding from government and philanthropists.

Economies of scale are achieved through cooperation with TCFV/TCFA. An example is adopting common literature. This project is progressing and literature should be ready late this year for all chapters to use.

Another avenue that can benefit us is back office support. Currently TCFQ and TCFNSW are using finance support, such as BAS submission, provided by TCFV. TCFV has also adopted a Customer Relationship Management system to better manage membership information. We are looking at how this system may better replace our current database that has its limitations. We could 'buy in' to TCFV's system, but retain complete record confidentiality and independent operation. Of course, cost will be an important factor.

Ten Australian representatives are attending the Compassionate Friends 50th Anniversary Gathering in the UK in early November this year. This event is commemorating fifty years since TCF was founded. TCFQ is fortunate to be represented by two volunteers. This is an opportunity to further push our Australian profile and in particular, for us, our TCFQ profile. We look forward to our representatives' report.

In concluding, sincere thanks to those board members and staff who stepped up to provide extra assistance for my position when I was not able to fulfil the role of President to its full extent.

Many thanks to board, staff and volunteers generally. Without us all working together we would not have the strong organization that TCFQ is today. Whilst we have experienced change and instability over this past year, I am in no doubt we have come out stronger for it.

My best wishes to the new President and incoming board. May your contributions continue to strengthen TCFQ, with support for our members always at the forefront.

Heather Smith

President of The Compassionate Friends Queensland Inc.

(a) Moved: Roger Grehan

(b) Seconded: Patricia Schafer

- Treasurer's Report:

Treasurer's Report to the Annual General Meeting of The Compassionate Friends, Qld Inc

It gives me pleasure to present my report on the financial situation of The Compassionate Friends, Qld Inc for the year ended 30 June 2019 to members.

Available for members' inspection are:

- Statement of Financial Performance;
- Statement of Financial Position;
- Statement of Changes in Equity;
- Statement of Cash Flows;
- Notes to the above; and
- The Auditor's Report

Summary

The reported loss for the year was \$18,178. Our Income was down \$9,368 whilst our expenses were up \$9,850. We had cash assets of \$72,731 at year's end.

Significant components of revenue include:

- Operating grants of \$44,111 from Qld Health an increase of \$1,128
- A one off special grant from Qld Health of \$4826, although an unused portion of \$586 will probably have to be returned.
- Golf Day revenue and Donations are down on prior years. A significant amount of the apparent fall is attributable to a change in accounting treatment.
- Seminar revenue has been separately identified.
- A grant of \$10,000 from a philanthropic organisation in 2018 has not been replicated.
- There has been an increase in membership fees paid.

Expenditure:

- Hand, Heart, Pocket up \$3,364 but this is merely spending on specified items from the philanthropic grant
- Other Expenses – Subscriptions, Govt fees and charges, and staff and volunteer

expenses

- Postage doubled
- Salaries and related costs were up almost \$8,000. Much of this is in backpay as award increases and increments had been overlooked for an extended period.

Observations

- Subscriptions income was 3.5% of expenditure last year and 4% this year.
- Qld Health operating grants for the last two years have been \$87,094 which is 80% of aggregate rent, wages and on costs.
- In the last 4 years, we have used 3 different accounting packages. We have had at least 3 different treasurers. Bookkeeping assistance has been provided by a variety of people.
- In 2 years our cash assets have fallen from \$90,248 to \$72,731.

Commentary

Whilst our cash holdings are sufficient that we remain a going concern in the medium term, no organisation can continue to leak funds at the rate of \$9,000 each year.

I believe that it is imperative that the incoming committee adopt a budget and monitor our financial position closely. Decisions should always be made with due regard to the adopted budget.

Roger Grehan

Treasurer

- (a) Moved: Patricia Schafer
- (b) Seconded: Marie-Clare De Vere

- Auditor for 2019/2020 to be appointed: Nominated – James Neumann
 - (a) Moved: Patricia Schafer
 - (b) Seconded: Roger Grehan
- Appointment of Returning Officer: Graham Macklin
- All Board positions declared vacant

Election of Governing Committee:

- President
 - (a) Nominated: Peter Hobson nominated Patricia Schafer
 - (b) Seconded: Lorraine Edgley
 - (c) Accepted: Yes
- Vice President
Hobson
 - (a) Nominated: Marie-Clare De Vere nominated Peter
 - (b) Seconded: Patricia Schafer
 - (c) Accepted: Yes
- Secretary
Vere
 - (a) Nominated: Patricia Schafer nominated Marie-Clare De
 - (b) Seconded: Peter Hobson
 - (c) Accepted: Yes

- Treasurer (a) Nominated: Peter Hobson nominated Roger Grehan as interim Treasurer only
(b) Seconded: Lorraine Edgley
(c) Accepted: Yes

- Election of Ordinary Board Members:

1. (a) Tony Vayro continues for his 2nd year of term
2. (b) Jenny Packard continues for her 2nd year of term

- After all elections of board completed, new President given opportunity to take chair

- General Business

- Annual Membership Fee

Motion: It is the recommendation of the board to the general membership of the AGM to membership fees remain at \$50pa with a discount of \$15 if you receive your newsletter and all communication electronically and a further discount of \$5 if you pay by 1st December 2019

Moved: Marie-Clare De Vere

Seconded: Lyn Macklin

All in Favour: Yes

- Extending Draft Constitution for a further 12months

Motion: It is recommendation of the board that the constitution be reviewed over the next 12 months by subcommittee and brought to the 2020 AGM.

Moved: Peter Hobson

Seconded: Erin Hobson

All in Favour: Yes

- Lorraine Edgley requested that we acknowledge Heather Smith for stepping up into the interim Presidents role at a trying time. It was discussed and we will be sending a certificate of appreciation, a thank you card and a notice in the next Newsletter.

Moved: Erin Hobson

Seconded: Roger Grehan

All in Favour: Yes

- Close: 8.07am
- Next meeting: 23rd September 2019