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Supported by



**Tony Ireland Townsville**



## Christmas A Time of Giving;

### A Time of Saying Thank You!

At Cootharinga we are so thankful to our wonderful staff we show our appreciation of this contribution with our monthly morning teas.

At a recent Morning Tea we had a visit from Peter Hodgson, whose sister we support.

Peter, who with his Leo's Club members organised a fundraising sail between Townsville and Cairns, raising money into research and a cure for Cerebral Palsy, came to tell those gathered how thankful both he and his family are to Cootharinga for the support his sister receives.

He went on to say: "Last night I was reading the book: The Monk Who Sold His Ferrari by Robin Sharma. In the book the author expressed the idea: "the quality of our life comes down to the quality of our contribution".

"And I truly think the carers (Cootharinga Support Staff) do an exceptional job, their contributions are hard to put into words. I hope they are aware of how much those in the community appreciate their work". Mr Hodgson said.

To celebrate Christmas and to say thank you to our many supporters, during December, Cootharinga organised a wonderful morning tea.

Many honoured guests attended the event.



*Brendan Walsh CEO receiving a \$5K cheque from Avril Plath – Xstrata Copper.*

An overwhelming surprise at the event was the extremely generous donation of a cheque for \$5,000 from Xstrata Copper for our Children's Allied Health Services. We were thrilled and very appreciative!

We would like to wish all our staff, families, volunteers, people we support and all our loyal and generous community supporters over the year a safe and Merry Christmas!

*Life Member Mr. Harry Newman and Winifred (Winnie) David, whom we support: "Both enjoy attending Cootharinga morning teas at the Activity & Respite" Centre*



**Our vision:**  
Building a better world  
with people of all abilities

From the Editor

# I Am Sailing

Have you ever had a strong dream that you would love to have happen, but never believed it would?

My family on my paternal (father's) side has been around boats for as long as anyone can remember. This heritage has given me what I can only describe as a LOVE of sailing. And when I write sailing, I don't mean using motors to get from A to B. I mean full blown, stretched canvas, billowing sailing.

Growing up with a physical disability I would day dream that I was sailing on a Tall Ship, way back in the days of yore, never believing that I would ever get the opportunity.

Then in the mid 90s I got the opportunity to be a guide on the Endeavour Replica when it first circumnavigated Australia and spent time in Townsville. That led me to want to visit relations in Canonvale in the Whitsundays, where I could be a guide there as well.

After a few days Captain Chris Blake asked if I wanted to leave with them and sail down to their next port, Gladstone.

That question lead to a life changing experience. With less than a day to decide what to do, I started on a journey of self discovery.

When asked the question, by Captain Blake I did not realize the Endeavour was NOT a cruise ship that gave you the OCCASIONAL opportunity to help sail the vessel from port to port. Oh, NO! It was a working ship, and those who came on board where expected to put their back into and help sail the ship.

As we left Shute Harbour I looked up at the rigging, and do you know what: it was déjà vu. I felt very strange; because what I was physically looking at was the same image as that my mind - with its daydream images - had created. I could see each and every rope and felt like I knew exactly its purpose. This despite the fact I'd never been taught to sail.

We were divided into groups, with different parts of the ship our responsibility. I was with a group responsible for the Mainsail and Main Mast, which is located in the centre of the vessel.

Over the next few days I did most watches, however I wasn't able to do one watch, not because I was lazy, nor because by doing so would have been

damaging i.e. climbing the rigging with my 2.5kg surgical boots. Nor was it due to seasickness. I don't get seasick. No, my problems arose when, after spending several days 'riding' each wave because we were travelling in a SE direction with the wind coming at us at 35 knots. That meant you're going UP then DOWN in quick succession then UP... you get the picture.

My body was so worn out from the workout it was receiving that it went into a form of shock, with me looking as white as a sheet.

I learned from that trip that "I don't ever want to see that boat again (no not really)". I learned that I was given a great opportunity to be grateful that I was one of those unique individuals, sailors on the Endeavour Replica.

I'm thankful that one person, Captain Chris Blake, gave me the opportunity of a lifetime to live a dream that I never thought would happen.

Because it's a working ship and those on board are expected to do their allocated jobs I am grateful that I was given the opportunity to stretch myself. This would become very helpful a few years later when I started to study at university. I realised that if I could do something as challenging and as physically draining as sailing on the Replica, than surely I could attempt a university degree.

I'm also thankful that I wasn't treated any differently from the others on board. As I've said before, I didn't climb the rigging because they didn't want me to damage the wood that made up the mast with my very heavy boots. I was also unable to do galley duty during my time onboard. The reason for not taking my turn has nothing to do with being on a ship at sea with large pots of hot water. It has to do with the fact that my galley duty was to be one of the last things I did before we arrived at Gladstone, and that was the same time my body shut down for half the day. After 12 hours or so I was ok and able to spend several hours 'on watch' looking out for any foreign objects, including whales, that we needed to avoid.

Well, bon voyage and see you in the New Year.

**Ross Williams**  
Editor



From the CEO

# On being thankful ...

The comedian Woody Allen is quoted as saying "I am thankful for laughter, except when milk comes out my nose!"

As we approach the Christmas season, it is a time when many people take the opportunity to review the year that is rapidly passing, and some even set plans for the year to come. While Woody Allen is entertaining us with his quote, nevertheless he is also urging us to look to the positive events that are happening in our lives. Despite the challenges in each of our lives, many of us are blessed by the generosity of family and friends, and the things they do for us.

It is a privilege to assist the people we do and this was recently brought home to me. Cootharinga received a charming letter from two sisters of a chap we have recently begun supporting. They were impressed with the way their brother had grown in his sense of independence. They also commented that he had enhanced his skills and is developing a positive attitude to life since he moved into his own place, with ongoing assistance from us. They were thrilled to see him developing, and greatly looked forward to the changes they saw

would continue for him.

As the year draws to a close, it is only fitting that we gratefully acknowledge all of the people, community organisations and government funding bodies who have worked with us over this last year. You are truly our partners, and we appreciate your efforts in helping achieve our vision of "Building a better world with people of all abilities". So many people are doing extraordinary things to enhance the quality of life for the people we assist.

I will finish with a short message of thanks to all of our staff, our volunteers, the people and families we assist, and finally our business and community supporters. The words of the English poet, William Wordsworth are more elegant than those of Woody Allen and very appropriate for this time of year. Wordsworth wrote: "Rest and be thankful"

**Brendan Walsh**  
CEO



# RACE DAY

**Powerful Cause!  
Precious Car!  
Priceless Caviar!**



Cootharinga Annual Charity Race Day 2011  
at the Townsville Turf Club  
Photo Courtesy Wizpics



Marketing and General Manager PR Mandy MacDonald  
joins CEO Brendan Walsh to admire "Longford"  
Photo Courtesy Wizpics

Featuring the spirited Bonanza Tipping Competition and Black Caviars history making race, Cootharinga's Charity Race Day was an event thoroughly enjoyed by guests!

The luncheon was catered by Barrier Reef TAFE's students, teachers and friends and accompanied by Samuel Smith, Bacardi Lion and Lion premium beverages, which were delicious!

Waiter Service provided by Cootharinga staff, family and friends, Townsville Grammar & JCU students were first class. Meanwhile Wayde Chiesa was our fantastic MC, and held the day together brilliantly!

Congratulations to Davey Constructions and Australian Industrial Rental, who won the major prize of a car, which was generously donated by Parry Nissan and Townsville RSL.

Also congratulations goes to Charles Fisher from Bank of Queensland who won the Black Caviar auction, taking home a lithograph, including a miniature of Black Caviar silks, and a fabulous dinner with two of Black Caviars' owners, to look

forward to at The Salt Cellar Restaurant, sometime in the future. A huge thank you to Col and Jannene Madden, two of the owners of Black Caviar, who supported the team event.

A very special feature at the event was the amazing sculpture of "Longford" the horse, which was created by two of our wonderful guests Tom Greer and Sue Tilley. Tom became a quadriplegic following injuries sustained in a road accident several years ago. What an amazing effort.

Enormous thanks must go to our entire major and in-kind sponsors, our team sponsors and Individual Horse Race Naming Right sponsors! Without all of this incredible community support, we wouldn't be able to put on such an exciting event and continue to raise money and further our vision of "building a better world with people of all abilities".

**Mandy MacDonald**  
General Manager, Marketing and Public Relations

## Thanks to our Major Sponsors



Wayde Chiesa  
Our MC for the day  
Photo Courtesy Wizpics

# Being Thankful

## For All Our Abilities!

Often when people think about those in the community who live with a disability, they think of someone confined to a room in a helpless state.

Duncan Clauson and Allana McNichol share a home, where we provide support, and are like many busy people in a 24/7 world; their days are full of activities. For Duncan he has commitments 5 days a week, meanwhile for Allana she's goes to a local pottery group on the weekend, so only has one day of rest during the week.

Duncan has become Cootharinga's unofficial greeter whenever we have a function. He meets everyone who arrives, with an outstretched arm, saying to each person.

"Hello, I'm Duncan....welcome."

The enthusiasm displayed would put many a concierge to shame.

This young man has also taken on the role of collecting broken and dead branches from the yard and watering the garden. When he speaks about these activities you get the sense this person is talking about something that he's passionate about, and has a great sense of responsibility to do a good job.

He also assists staff at Cootharinga's Activity and Respite Centre once a week. Allana McNichol loves her pottery, the various pieces of pottery and artwork hanging off the walls in the suburban home she shares with Duncan and three others is testament to this.

Both Duncan and Allana are members of the very popular Townsville dance group: HAPPY FEAT. It is a troupe made up of people living with a disability.



Artistic Allana

Doorman Duncan

Like a well trained cowboy, Duncan has taken on the roll of mustering the performers to exactly where they need to be. The arm movement he uses to describe this activity reminds one of a jackaroo (Australian cowboy) herding the group together.

So, if you see someone when you're out shopping who looks like they have a disability, please don't think "I'm thankful that I'm not in their shoes." Rather, stop for a second and wonder how busy they just might be, and that they appreciate all of their abilities!



DJing



No Bias when it comes to ability



Out walking the dog

# Dreams Do Come True

Rick Stoddart has been supported by Cootharinga North Queensland for three decades, and living on his own for the past 20 years. Rick has been thinking about what he would like to do to celebrate this two decade milestone for a while. He made the decision that a dinner would be the best way.

This milestone was a huge one for Rick, especially as a number of people, including some family members who had told him 20 years ago: he would only last a few weeks living independently! That belief was something he saw as a bit of a challenge. Meanwhile, the weeks have turned into years, the years into decades.

"I believe those people had to eat their words!" he said.

Rick hired a private function room adjacent to the Aqua Restaurant at Jupiters Townsville and invited a small group of friends, including current and former Cootharinga staff, to celebrate the occasion with him.

The dinner was lovely and Rick had a nice

surprise during the evening when Adeline, a former support worker whom he had not seen for at least 12 years came over to say hello. Rick had a quick catch up chat with Adeline and her husband and they all promised to keep in touch. It was fitting Rick saw her on the day he celebrated 20 years of independent living.

Rick's transition from an institutional model of support to independent living has been one of Cootharinga's success stories. He has lectured at JCU, Townsville – speaking on a regular basis to Allied Health Professionals, reflecting an incredible personal achievement.

Is there any wonder he celebrated 20 years of independent living!

And just like a fairy tale ending to a wonderful day, Rick said goodbye to everyone and headed home around midnight. He was very tired by days end, but says he had enjoyed the evening and was happy to have had such a memorable celebration.



Rick Stoddard

Photo Courtesy Townsville Bulletin

## YES! I WANT TO CONTRIBUTE TO COOTHARINGA NORTH QUEENSLAND

### Here's my gift!

\$50       \$25       \$100   
 \$500       or \$ \_\_\_\_\_

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Telephone: ( \_\_\_\_\_ ) \_\_\_\_\_

Cheques payable to: Cootharinga North Queensland, PO Box 792 Castletown, Hyde Park QLD 4812

Cardholder's Name: \_\_\_\_\_

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