

# This is The Pinnacle Foundation newsletter. We have updates.

We have plenty of updates for you in our October Newsletter – it's been a busy few months....

- Pinnacle has high-impact launch in Brisbane, sponsored by PRIDE@NAB
- South Australia first cab off the rank in establishing Pinnacle's first Regional Committee
- Pinnacle's Susan Brooks takes out top accolade at 2012 Community Honour Awards
- The call for more mentors continues as 2013 Scholarship closure date draws near (Oct 15<sup>th</sup>)
- Pinnacle's future priorities defined until 2017
- Where your donations go, a breakdown of what we do with your precious dollars

## Northern lights are up for Pinnacle

The Pinnacle Foundation was launched in Brisbane with great fanfare at an event hosted by Pride@NAB, the LGBT diversity and inclusion initiative of the National Australia Bank, on Thursday September 6.

The launch's star attraction was Pinnacle's Patron Justice Michael Kirby who congratulated NAB on its efforts to engage with sexual minorities, and also called for other companies to follow NAB's example and embrace policies that encourage inclusion and diversity. Our thanks to NAB for being such great hosts on the day.



Photo (L-R) The Hon Michael Kirby AC CMG, Pinnacle Patron; Harriet Horsfall, Qld Pinnacle Scholar; Steve Walker, NSW Pinnacle Scholar; Stephen Barrow, host and sponsor from NAB

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Pinnacle's first Queensland scholar, law student Harriet Horsfall, was introduced to 70 guests from Brisbane's LGBTIQ community and NAB staff. Harriet inspired the attendees with a moving speech about her struggles as a lesbian school student and how she lost the support of her family when she came out. Now, with Pinnacle's support, Harriet has shown the resolve and determination of an out-and-proud young leader of the community.

Sydney Scholar Steve Walker also captivated the audience with his story of being the first member of his family to attend university, realising his dream to study social science and ultimately making a difference in the field of aged care. Michael Kirby congratulated both scholars on their achievements and urged them to use their gifts to "give something back".

Pinnacle will now be establishing a Regional Committee in Brisbane and is calling for volunteers with skills in marketing and communications, fundraising, education, youth support, and networks in the community. If you can help, please call Dave Rorke on 0415 950 205.

## South Australia leads the way – again

South Australia was the first state to grant women the vote and the first to decriminalise homosexuality, so it's not surprising that a group of enthusiastic Pinnacle Foundation supporters got together to form our first Regional Committee. Alan Smith and his partner Daryl Anderson hosted the inaugural meeting the South Australian Branch Committee of the Pinnacle Foundation. In true South Australian fashion, this was cleverly disguised as a dinner party thus setting the tone for the way in which we wish to proceed. Less of a sub-committee and more of the light touch of a group of friends doing what they can, to support the work of Pinnacle. A common purpose was forged over pre-dinner drinks; robust and wide-ranging discussions about the best approach resulted in a clear path forward.



*Partners (L-R) Daryl Anderson and Alan Smith leading the charge in South Australia, at Pinnacle's Adelaide Launch last year*

The Regional Committee consists of people from a wide range and backgrounds with diverse contacts and networks which will prove invaluable in spreading the word – and raising the money – for Pinnacle. They are the Hon Ian Hunter MLC, Dr Susan Magarey, Dr Susan Sheridan, Richard Yates, Dr Tom Turnbull, Prof Michael Kidd, Dr Michael Henningsen and lead by Alan Smith.

Founding leader for SA, Alan Smith said "The outcome of all of this is that we will all be putting together contact list of people from within our own respective circles that we feel may be able to make a contribution to Pinnacle, either financially or as mentors – or both. Rather than doing grand gala events which take enormous effort for often little net return, we are planning a series of intimate dinner parties (quelle supris!) where we can in convivial

surroundings demonstrate the wonderful outcomes achieved by Pinnacle.”

For further information on South Australia’s committee, please contact Sean Linkson on 0414 279 880.

## Top honours for our Susan Brooks!

The Academy Awards for the GLBTI community, aka ACON’s 2012 Honour Award winners were announced in September. These awards acknowledge the greatest contributions in five different categories:

- Community organisation
- Health & Wellbeing
- Media/Arts/Entertainment
- Business
- Community Hero

The room erupted with applause and cheers when Pinnacle volunteer Susan Brooks was announced as winner of the Community Hero award. After decades of selfless service to the LGBTIQ cause, it was a most well-deserved accolade. To describe Susan as a “volunteer” does not do her justice. Susan has been with Pinnacle right from the start and she not only chairs our scholarship Selection Committee, but is actively involved in day-to-day operations including managing mentor registrations and all our legal and regulatory compliance. She also takes on Company Secretarial responsibility and services the needs of the Board. Pinnacle’s Executive Director, Sean Linkson said he was thrilled with Susan’s award and recognition. “Susan is a living treasure and I can say with great confidence that Pinnacle would not be where it is today without her extraordinary input,” he said. “Our NSW scholars were there on the night in support of Susan’s nomination, along with other members of the management team and mentors. We were all so proud and excited when her name was announced as winner.”

“Susan is a rare individual – not only does she genuinely care, but she has this amazing wisdom and capacity to get things done. She’s a real ‘doer’. On behalf of the Pinnacle’s board and management team we congratulate Susan on this wonderful achievement. She is truly deserving.”



*Susan Brooks being presented with her award by ACON President Mark Orr. The Hon Jillian Skinner, NSW Minister for Health stands behind. Photograph: Robert Knapman/SX*

**The future’s so bright, we’ve gotta wear shades**

Pinnacle's leadership team is a small band of volunteers, so at times it can be challenging to remain focused and keep all the balls in the air. So we created a list of the Foundation's priorities, and identified ways to monitor our progress. In a nutshell, our focus for the 2012-2017 period is to:

- Increase community and corporate awareness of Pinnacle's aims and strategy to maintain and grow a strong productive donor and volunteer base;
- Continue to improve overall fiscal responsibility by increasing revenue and maintaining the Foundation's ongoing viability; and
- Expand scholar growth opportunities for professional and career development using a broad range of professional leaders.

For more information on Pinnacle's priority actions and performance measures, please visit our website: [CLICK HERE](#).

## The more mentors, the merrier...

Over the last two years the Pinnacle Foundation has made a concerted effort to ensure we have a great range of registered LGBTIQ mentors so that we can efficiently identify likely matches with our new scholars. It's much easier to match the needs of our scholars when we have a database of people willing to share their time, expertise and experiences rather than using our personal networks to identify possible mentors. We aim to pair scholars and mentors of the same sexual orientation, location and academic/professional interest grounds, so you can appreciate how challenging this task is each year. But with close to 200 registrations now on our books – an increase of 79 per cent over last year – we are well on our way to achieving our 2017 target of 500 registrants.

We are often asked what sort of LGBTIQ person nominates to be a mentor, and how we define a "successful" person. We are primarily looking for members of our community who have career and personal life experiences that indicate they are comfortable with their sexual identity, have well-honed judgement, good communication skills and academic backgrounds that are likely to be of considerable benefit to our scholars. Often, our scholars do not have family support to canvass issues that emerge during their transition from tertiary education to the workplace, so an adult who is willing to share their own experiences in this regard is invaluable.

Our current mentor database profile is as follows:

- While 66 per cent of registrants are gay, representation from other sexual orientation groups is growing;
- NSW domiciled registrants are still the most common group but Victoria's representation is growing quickly;
- The range of occupations and fields of endeavour is very wide with strong representation from the health and education sectors but a shortage in commerce, IT and the arts;
- Nearly all registrants have at least a Bachelor's degree with 24 per cent holding Masters and 12 per cent with a PHD; and
- The average age for all registrants is 45.

One of our registered mentors, Daphne Degotardi, shows that even in retirement she keeps fit. She will make a wonderful mentor and role model for one of our scholars studying counselling or psychology.



*Up in arms... registered Pinnacle mentor, Daphne Degotardi lifts weights during a class held as part of the Strong Seniors program at Leichhardt Aquatic Centre. Photo: Steve Christo*

## Feedback helps us to grow, too

As Pinnacle's process of mentoring arrangements has been established and operating for a couple of years, we have moved to improve accountability and feedback. Twice a year we formally review the relationship between mentors and scholars to make sure it is working well and requires no further intervention by our Scholar/Mentor Liaison Officer, Geoff Annabel. Geoff recently completed his first review and reported that while our matching process worked well and requirements of the arrangement were being met, we could do more to assist both scholars and mentors in better understanding our requirements and their responsibilities.

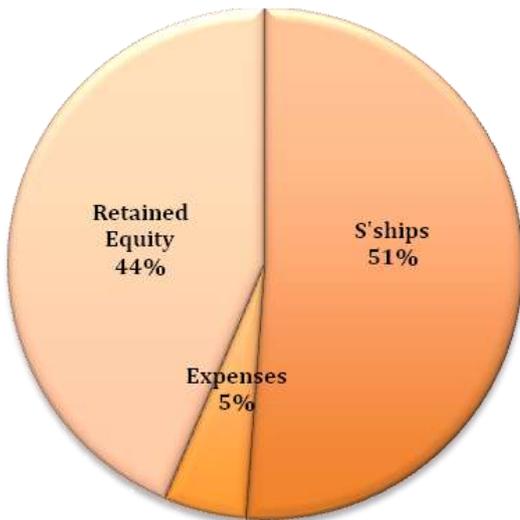
The Management Team lead by Geoff will introduce an Induction Day early in the New Year to bring together scholars and mentors from across Australia, so that all participants can learn from one another and gain more information on how to effectively use what Pinnacle offers. We anticipate further enhancements to our process as we gain feedback from our mentors.

## It's time to apply yourself

The next round of Pinnacle scholarship applications will close on 15 October 2012. After a solid social media campaign beginning in August, through which we reached 160 web-based LGBTIQ organisations, Pinnacle has already received applications and hopes to far exceed the 36 applications received last year. Our sister organisation in the USA, The Point Foundation, has been operating for more than a decade and still experienced a significant increase in applications for assistance this year: 1977 new applications were submitted, a 12 per cent increase, and more than 5000 students reapplied.

Our Selection Committee will begin the selection process in October and finalise its decision by the end of November. Shortlisting is conducted in accordance with our published criterion and, after interviews have occurred, references are checked. After that it is time for the matching process to begin, so please consider registering as a potential mentor by following this [link](#)

## How did we spend your donations in 2011/12?



The appropriation of the funds generously given to Pinnacle is outlined in the charts above. We are proud to say that each year of operation we have managed to increase funding for scholarships while at the same time increase our retained equity. This result demonstrates our ability to sustain our activities through difficult economic conditions that have affected many of our donors.

Our budget this year also assumes greater corporate in-kind support and funding for the establishment of regional committees and our induction program for scholars and mentors. We welcome your donations, no matter how great or small.

## Your continued support is key...

Please continue to support us by liking and following us on Facebook & Twitter! Help spread the work to help us continue to light the spark within.

