



The Dr Edward Koch Foundation

Newsletter ♦ December 2020 ♦ Issue 50



Dulcie Bird, CEO

Message from the CEO

Well, what a year 2020 has been!! I am sure that most of us are looking forward to a happy and healthy Christmas with family and loved ones. I offer condolences to those who have lost loved ones this year and my thoughts also go to those who are not travelling well with their health, and other issues through COVID or otherwise.

2020 has certainly been a year we will never forget. It has been challenging with the restrictions caused by the COVID-19 Pandemic. However, the Foundation continued its campaign of community awareness because of the importance of good mental health and suicide prevention, albeit in a slightly different way for some activities. My learning curve has been steep with the frequent use of digital technology and social media.

We suspended our MHFA Courses for a few months but recommenced their delivery in July. Now, more than ever, these courses are extremely important and I am pleased that they were very well attended once they resumed. Our first 2021 MHFA Course will be in February and registrations are already coming in.

I look forward to a productive 2021. Several new programs are in development and planning for FNQ Suicide Prevention Week will commence as soon as the new year begins.

The work of the Foundation is not possible without our volunteers and I sincerely thank them and acknowledge all of their hard work. Thank you also to our sponsors and donors for their generosity, especially in these difficult times. Wishing you all a very Merry Christmas and a happy and healthy New Year. Stay safe and stay well.

Dulcie



Mental Health First Aid Courses

MHFA Courses with spatial distancing, non-contact activities and limited numbers are now the order of the day at the Foundation. As part of the Foundation's community service, many free registrations were offered to individuals throughout the year. Our last 2020 course was held in November for the Rotary Club of Cairns Trinity. The next MHFA course, open to all, will be on 17 & 18 February 2021.

The Foundation welcomes both group and individual bookings. Several group bookings are already in the pipeline for the beginning of 2021. Please contact Dulcie on 0409 765 305 or dulcie.bird@kochfoundation.org.au for further information regarding group bookings for your organisation.



Backyard Makeover Program — Project 1

The major Backyard Makeover for December was carried out for a very deserving lady who has worked tirelessly throughout her life doing wonderful community service. Sadly, her story in recent years has not been so great. Her very sick husband, for whom she had cared for the previous four years, passed away in March. She is also a stroke survivor and was recently diagnosed with two types of cancer. We hope that her newly renovated garden gives her peace, tranquillity and enjoyment as she recuperates from her illnesses. The work carried out involved planting new shrubs, fencing, paving, fixing drainage issues and a very large tidy-up of her garden and yard. Rotarians, SES members, QCB staff and others in the community worked hard to ensure that all is in readiness for her to welcome Christmas in style in her Backyard Makeover.

Many thanks to our generous sponsors and volunteers!



Backyard Makeover Program—Project 2

The Rotary Club of Cairns Trinity entered the spirit of the Backyard Makeover Program by carrying out one of the selected makeovers of the Program. The successful applicant was a single mother with a debilitating genetic disease who needed urgent help with drainage and termite problems.

A willing band of workers assembled and worked through three days of heat, over two weekends, to implement the drainage solution which would minimise dampness and discourage the termites.



Thank you sponsors and volunteers!

Backyard Makeover Program — Project 3

The Rotary Club of Cairns Sunrise was happy to be able to assist the Dr Edward Koch Foundation by conducting a Backyard Makeover for an elderly couple.

Throughout 2020 and the COVID pandemic, their garden got a little out of control and with a number of health issues hindering their attempts, we were happy to be able to step in and get it looking good. The Club is an ongoing supporter of the Foundation, but it was great to be able to help out in a more hands-on way.




Every Monday evening:

- 7- 8pm: Beginners class
- 8- 8.30pm: Cuppa or practice
- 8- 9pm: Intermediate class

Price: \$10 per class/person, \$15 for both classes

Venue: The Ballroom, 4 Melaleuca Street, Manunda

Bookings/more information: 0409 765 305

There are many benefits of dance supported by research. Dance improves your heart health, overall muscle strength, balance and coordination, and reduces depression. These benefits have been seen across a variety of ages and demographics. *Mindwise Innovations*

Most of us are familiar with the great feeling obtained by spending time out on the dance floor.

As part of your New Year Resolution, join us at the Simply Ballroom Dance Studio for fun and good health!

Christmas Dance

The Simply Ballroom Dance School finished the year with their annual Christmas dance on Fri 11 Dec 2020. The year commenced with a wonderfully large beginners class however, due to COVID-10 restrictions, the school was closed for many months so it was lovely to see the dance school students and instructors come together to enjoy the Christmas festivities and catch up with friends.



Hemingway's Lager Legends

Rob Clarkson from Jade Creations did a sterling job of designing and helping create the Backyard Makeover for the Couch Wellness Centre in September this year. Consequently, Marty and Dulcie (Project Managers) nominated him for the Hemingway's Lager Legends Award. We are happy to announce that he was a winner and for his great effort was given some excellent Hemingway's beer. Thank you to Hemingway's for their contribution and a big thank you to Rob for his help with the Makeover.

FNQ Suicide Prevention Taskforce Christmas event

The FNQ Suicide Prevention Taskforce held their last meeting of the year on 9 December 2020. The meeting combined with some festive cheer to mark the start of the holiday season. It was an informal meeting with our many new members enjoying the opportunity to meet others in a friendly, relaxed environment.

The Taskforce has had a great year with a highly successful FNQ Suicide Prevention Week 2020. Creativity ensured many safely-held activities despite the restrictions of COVID-19 safety measures. They also commenced the Backyard Makeover Program in July for a trial period of one year.



Happy Heads Project

The Happy Heads Project was a series of interviews with those who have lived experience of mental health issues, and with staff from agencies working in this field. The Foundation was proud to have been able to contribute to this project with thoughts, words and insights. The project was launched from the Rotary Club of Cairns Trinity Facebook page for Queensland Mental Health Week.

Stay Safe Over Christmas

Christmas can be a very hard time for families who have lost a loved one. It reminds them that their family member or friend is missing throughout all of the Christmas cheer and some very unpleasant emotions may be triggered. Here is some advice on how you can stay safe over Christmas.

- ✓ Do something different on Christmas day if you feel like it. Don't be afraid to change your routine. You can always change it back.
- ✓ Be aware that the Christmas period is going to be hard and give yourself permission to feel your grief.
- ✓ Do not try to block the bad moments. Let the hurting moments come, but also let them go.
- ✓ Do not listen to television and radio as much if the talk directed to Christmas enjoyment upsets you.
- ✓ In the days leading up to Christmas, keep your routine normal but allow some time for yourself and for some enjoyable and relaxing activities.
- ✓ During the Christmas period there is a lot of food and alcohol around. Enjoy a good meal with your family but still try to eat healthily and don't drink too much.
- ✓ Keep yourself COVID-safe this Christmas: keep using hand sanitiser, wash your hands frequently, maintain spatial distance and minimise time spent in crowds and crowded areas.

DONATIONS

Piccones Super IGA aids the Foundation, with a percentage of **your dollar purchase** being donated to us monthly.

Thank you, Piccones, for your great community spirit!

REMEMBER: THE NEXT TIME YOU SHOP AT PEASE ST OR EDMONTON SUPA IGA STORES, SUPPORT THE FOUNDATION BY NOMINATING US. THE FOUNDATION'S NUMBER IS #5029.