

People share their stories of mental health recovery in work and life

# panorama

Monthly Issue January 2023 #88A

## Disability Rights in Taiwan



**Independence  
One Goal  
at a Time**

**Ellen Fanning:  
Media and  
Mental Health**

**flourish**<sup>®</sup>  
AUSTRALIA

Where mental wellbeing thrives

**NDIS PROVIDER**  
— SINCE 2013 —



Where mental wellbeing thrives

### About us

Flourish Australia is committed to walking beside people with a lived experience of mental health issues as they progress along their recovery journeys. We passionately believe in mental health recovery, and are committed to providing the best possible support and encouragement to people so they can achieve their recovery goals. We offer this help across all 70+ of our services in New South Wales, Southern Queensland, Australian Capital Territory and Victoria.

### Contact Flourish Australia!

1300 779 270 or  
flourishaustralia.org.au

Chair: Prof Elizabeth More AM  
Chief Executive Officer: Mark Orr AM  
Chief Development Officer: Peter Neilson

### About Panorama

Founded in 1996 in one of Flourish Australia's predecessor organisations (PRA), Panorama has grown to become a lifestyle magazine dedicated to informing and encouraging the recovery journey of readers. Panorama is written, designed and produced almost entirely by people with a lived experience of mental health issues.

### The faces behind Panorama...



Warren Heggarty



Grant Everett

### Subscriptions, questions, feedback, praise, curses?

You can ALWAYS email us at...

panorama@flourishaustralia.org.au  
Warren.Heggarty@flourishaustralia.org.au  
Grant.Everett@flourishaustralia.org.au

Prefer snail mail?

Publications Officers, Quad 3, Level 3,  
Suite 3.01, 102 Bennelong Parkway, Sydney  
Olympic Park NSW 2127

### Disclaimer

Panorama's content is not intended as a substitute for the advice of any specialised or qualified professional. The views expressed herein are those of the authors, not necessarily of Flourish Australia, or any associated enterprises, their staff, management, employees, or service recipients

## Contents

**COVER PHOTO: Janet Meagher AM (left) and Leanne Craze AM (right) monitoring disability rights in Taiwan. Read more about International Affairs on pages 16-17 (PHOTO COURTESY OF JANET MEAGHER AM)**

- 4 Moving Towards Independence One Goal at a Time
- 6 Lunch and Learn with Ellen Fanning, Mental Health and The Media
- 7 Mental Health Days: Are They Good or Bad For You?
- 8 Poetry and Painting at Penrith
- 10 A Theme for TheMHS: You Can Make a Presentation #2
- 11 Are You Stuck?
- 11 Frustration is a Training Opportunity
- 12 Raking it In From Vaping
- 12 Cold Dip Health Tip
- 13 Low Energy Epidemic: Why is Everybody So Tired?
- 14 Preventing Domestic Violence Will Save On Mental Health
- 16 Reviewing Disability Rights In Taiwan
- 17 Council Briefs
- 18 World Social Justice Day

## Contributors

**Matthew Potter** accesses Flourish Australia's Nowra Service

**Janet Meagher AM** is a 'retired' International Mental Health Rights Campaigner, National MH Commissioner, former Senior Executive with PRA and Flourish Australia, and founder of Being in 1992, now celebrating 30 years!

**Kim Jones** Project Officer Inclusion

**John Maraz** Senior Training and Development Officer

**Peter Farrugia** Peer Workforce Manager and roving ambassador for Panorama

### Publications People

**Grant J Everett** writer

**Kylie Bolton** graphic design

**Tina Irving** story editor

**Warren Heggarty** writer

**Fay Jackson** General Manager, Inclusion

**Jasmin Moradides** Development Projects Manager

**COMING IN FEBRUARY 2023 PANORAMA...**

**TAFE'S 'LIVING LIBRARY OF HUMAN BOOKS'**

We 'borrowed' one and discovered that she has plenty of recovery tips to share with Panorama readers!

Plus more recovery stories!





## ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

*Flourish Australia acknowledges the traditional custodians of the land, sea and waterways upon which we live and work.*

*We pay our respects to their Elders past and present, and recognise their strong and continuing connection to land, culture and spirit.*

*Panorama magazine would like to acknowledge all people who live with a mental health issue, as well as those who encourage and support loved ones. Our universal right to lead full and inclusive lives is the driving force behind why Panorama exists. We also acknowledge the strength it can take to share our stories. The impact of reading about people's journeys cannot be overstated. Sharing our experiences has the potential to change lives and we hope by reading true recovery stories, it gives hope, optimism and support to our readers, especially those on their mental health recovery journey.*



## FAMILY & CARERS

At Flourish Australia, we understand the important role many families and carers play in supporting someone with a lived experience of a mental health issue to stay well and part of their local community.

When someone comes to us and asks for support we discuss with them the involvement of their family and other important people in their lives, and what supports they provide. If we are able to obtain that information we will record it so our staff know who is important to the person and their recovery. We will also make contact with you to check what supports you may need to undertake your important role and discuss your involvement and communication preferences.

### Other Organisations

Sometimes families and carers want more information and other contacts. There are a range of organisations that provide specialist supports and information for carers. A list with contact details can be found on our website at: [www.flourishaustralia.org.au/family-and-carers](http://www.flourishaustralia.org.au/family-and-carers)

*Mental Health Carers NSW Ph: 1300 554 660*

*Arafmi Queensland Ph: (07) 3254 1881*

*Private Mental Health Consumer Carer Network Ph: 1300 620 042*

*Mental Health Carers Australia Ph: 1300 554 660*

*Kids Helpline Ph: 1800 551 800*

*COPMI – Children of Parents with Mental Illness: [www.copmi.net.au](http://www.copmi.net.au)*







# Moving Towards **INDEPENDENCE** One Goal at a Time

By Matthew Potter (as told to Grant J Everett)

**After living at a supported property called Jim da Silva Farm for three years, at the beginning of January I finally moved into a house in Bomaderry where I now live independently.**

Being a resident at the farm meant I had chores to do like raking up leaves, feeding the chickens, looking after the dogs, washing up, taking turns cooking for everyone, that sort of thing. Most of the other residents had a lived experience of a mental health issue, and I found living there to be a good experience, even though it was located a bit out of the way. In return, the staff at Jim da Silva Farm supported me with my medication routine, drove me to my appointments, and generally helped me with all those day-to-day things. They still support me to this day if I ever need it.

As much as I liked living on the farm, I'm in a really good place now. Bomaderry is a lovely area and I LOVE being close to the local beach, where I often go bodyboarding. I have shops just down the road and I live so close to work that I can ride my bike there, but the biggest upside to having my own place is that I'm always the one who decides what music gets played!

I also have a good gaming laptop at home, and I enjoy getting back from work to play it.

## Doing My Part

I've had a pretty varied career. In addition to being a farmhand, I've done labouring, cleaned KFC stores, completed a few traineeships, all kinds of things.

I'm currently a head cleaner at the Harvey Norman Commercial at South Nowra. They stock construction supplies and products for plumbers, builders, architects,

those sorts of customers. It's a really big shop, and I vacuum, mop, scrub the windows, and shine the chrome. I do a couple of five hour shifts a week, and this really works for me at the moment.

I originally got this cleaning job through Ostara Nowra, a disability employment service, over a year ago. I feel very lucky to have this job, and I get a lot of encouragement and practical guidance from my bosses, which I really appreciate.

## Closer To Independence

A major goal of mine is getting my license, and I'd like to achieve that as quickly as possible. I've been reading the rule book over and over, and I also use my gaming laptop to practise the knowledge test online. The Flourish Australia staff at Nowra have been going through the book with me to make sure I understand it all, and so have Ashley and Renee from the Ostara disability employment service.



### Flourish Australia

I spend a bit of my time at the Flourish Australia service at Nowra, where I hang out with the other people who visit to take part in groups and activities. I used to enjoy the Hearing Voices group, but I work on that day now.

The Flourish Australia staff will support me to get to my appointments, like my injections and doctor's visits, and if I'm struggling or if I urgently need a lift somewhere, I can give Flourish Australia a call and they'll help sort something out for me. I've become much more independent over the last few years, but I still ask for Flourish Australia's support from time to time.

One thing I'd like Flourish Australia to support me with is when I go back to my studies. I'd like to learn Information Technology at TAFE, and I think Flourish Australia would be able to support me with this.

I'd also love to learn how to play guitar one day.

**My NDIS funding covers the support from Ostara Employment and Flourish Australia as well as Jim da Silva Farm. I'm very happy with my NDIS package.**

### Support

I don't have heaps in the way of family support, but I keep in touch with my Mum over the phone. I have a few friends who I met at Jim da Silva Farm, and my best mate Troy lives right next door, which makes life easier. Funnily enough, Troy also attends the local Flourish Australia service.

I'm always up for making new friends, though I can get really anxious and feel as though I'm talking too much, and I need to deliberately manage these emotions so they don't get in the way.

### Wellness

I have experienced panic attacks for many years, and they make everything in life more difficult. Thankfully, my mental health has been going really well for ages, and I haven't had a hospital admission in more than two years. I haven't experienced much in the way of panic attacks over this time, and my feelings of anxiety are mostly under control. I've been taking medication to help with this, and while the panic attacks have almost stopped, I've accepted that I will experience them from time to time, and I just have to deal with them as they happen.

### Staying Dry

I used to have a serious dependence on alcohol, and I was always very down on myself for that. I know it's really unhealthy to drink excessively, and I want to remain free from this addiction. Going to something like Alcoholics Anonymous can be a

good option for people who want to stop drinking, but I've been seeing a psychologist, Dr Tony Weaver, for support with staying sober. Dr Weaver has supported me in not falling back onto the wrong path so far, and that means I'm not wasting my money or harming my health.

But my biggest goal is the great Australian dream: to own my own home. Of course, that's a very long-term thing to accomplish, and I'm gradually working my way towards it.

**Flourish Australia  
Nowra**  
67 Bridge Road  
Nowra NSW 2541  
8AM – 6PM, 7 Days  
(02) 9393 9535





LEFT: Ellen Fanning.  
IMAGE: OVATION SPEAKERS BUREAU

## Banksia Hill Story

Ellen is actively challenging how mental health issues are portrayed by the Australian media. The story around The Banksia Hill Youth Detention Centre in Canning Vale Western Australia is a prime example.

Banksia Hill holds 100 youth, some as young as ten. The majority have complex mental health issues and fetal alcohol syndrome, and almost all of their offenses are non-violent property crimes such as stealing cars or breaking into houses. Those on remand have no access to proper mental health services or education.

In recent coverage by The Drum it was reported that due to staff shortages, many of the kids in Banksia Hill were being held in isolation for up to 23 hours a day. A lot of these isolated children were regularly self-harming, and a number had attempted suicide.

However, before The Drum's report, the media's focus on Banksia Hill was entirely about the damage these kids had done to their cells, rather than on the inhumane treatment.

"How is damaged property the story," Ellen asks, "when kids are being kept in solitary confinement?"

It took until a Supreme Court case in 2022 to ban excessive solitary confinement for minors. However, according to reports in Al Jazeera and the Guardian, when Aisha Mohammed, United Nations investigator into torture, came to check the situation out, she was denied entry into the detention centre.

"The problem is that the Media can be afraid of appearing naive or soft on crime," Ellen said. "We'll do a lot on RUOK? Day, but not continue on with this when we come across it in day to day life. The community reflect media attitudes, and the media reflects the community's attitudes."

# Mental Health and The Media

## Lunch and Learn with Ellen Fanning

By Grant J Everett

Every year during Mental Health Month, Flourish Australia welcomes a prominent keynote speaker to present about their connection with mental health issues. In past years we've hosted multiple World Champion surfer Lane Beachley, author Sam Bloom and Former Leader of the Opposition in the New South Wales Legislative Assembly John Brogden.

This year's "Let's Do Lunch!" virtual webinar was a panel featuring award-winning media identity Ellen Fanning, in conversation with Flourish Australia's General Manager (Inclusion) Fay Jackson and CEO Mark Orr AM. A veteran reporter from Sixty Minutes, The 7:30 Report, and The Drum, to name a handful, Ellen has interviewed every living Australian Prime Minister, and her reporting has taken her as far as the North Pole.

Ellen presented on "Mental Health in the Media," and there was an open invitation to everyone who wanted to join in.



## Language is a Double-Edged Sword

"For the media to break down and discard outdated stereotypes of mental health issues, they need to use the right language, and to not try to edit or censor what's happening," Ellen said. "The media can certainly have a positive or negative impact on the way people with a mental health issue are presented, but Journalists are people too, and they aren't infallible."

Alleging that a competitor or colleague has a mental health issue is an easy way to besmirch their name, inferring they are in some

way less capable at their jobs. Just being referred to as "looking a bit stressed" can lead to people thinking that you aren't coping, and this is a prime way to effectively undermine somebody in a position of power. Being called "unstable" can have an even greater impact.

Because labels can be weaponised, many people can be afraid to openly share that they are living with a mental health issue. The stigma is still there, and people with a lived experience can be seen as dangerous, unpredictable or unreliable. It's important to stick to the facts. For example, people with a mental health issue are four times more likely to experience violence than

to be violent towards someone. A diagnosis can even affect what car insurance you can get, with some insurers refusing people with certain mental health issues.

But we can own our labels and not make a big deal out of them, as everybody out there has something going on with their health or wellbeing. For instance, Ellen didn't have any issue with publicly sharing that she took antidepressants, and she couldn't understand why people kept calling her "brave" for doing it.

"I just see it as a normal thing to do: taking a pill to treat a condition. Everyone does this in some way. I'm also on a blood pressure pill. Does that make me brave, too?"

## Mental Health Days Are they good or bad for you?



**We often hear of people taking "mental health days." These are normal work days that we take off supposedly to bolster our mental health. Mental health days are ever so trendy at the moment and are often portrayed as an indisputably good idea, but are they really?**

If your idea of a mental health day is to take a day off work to give you time to deal constructively with a problem that has been causing you stress, then yes, taking a 'mental health day' sounds like a good idea! You are getting something done!

However, according to the Forbes business magazine article 'The futility of mental health days' these days off are often just a way of avoiding rather than addressing the causes of stress. Stressors like burnout, poor management, lack of recognition, poor pay, low social support and job strain are not improved or removed by having time off.

Look at some of the reasons people have cited as giving cause for a 'mental health day:' Exhaustion, inability to focus, being depressed, sleep disturbance... These things will

not be addressed by lying in bed watching Netflix and munching Cheezles.

An exception might be if you were called upon to work a marathon shift as a one off – OK you deserve to catch up on rest – have a few Cheezles and some chicken flavoured Twisties, too. But if you find you are ALWAYS working overly long shifts the problem is not your mental health but the length of the shifts!

Often, we can set off a kind of 'domino' effect if we don't deal directly with the main issue. It's just like taking sleeping pills to get to sleep, then finding we can't wake up until lunch time.

If we have too much on our plate at work, we need to speak to our boss, develop ideas for reducing workload, increasing efficiencies or maybe even just asking for a fair go! If we get into a cycle of marathon shifts followed by 'sickies' then that will reflect poorly on our attendance and that will impact on our reputation. 'Hmmm,' the boss thinks, 'they take a lot of sickies!' The boss needs to know that the problem is your excessive workload, not your laziness or even your 'mental health.' WH

IMAGE: SARAH TEOH FROM PIXABAY

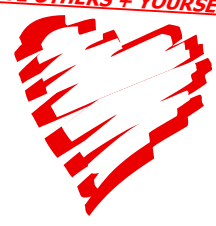
# Poetry & Painting AT PENRITH



## **FOREVER**

*It's easy to lose sight of what life's about  
Constantly filling our head with self-doubt  
Especially when things do get tough...  
We'll give-in, saying enough is enough!  
Too often our focus is purely money & possessions  
Or we're so wrapped up in our professions  
Must remember about family & friends  
Try to stick together till the very end  
There's strength in numbers, less when apart  
Even more can be achieved if you open your heart  
So don't be afraid to love or be loved,  
Perhaps ask for help from the Lord above.  
Keep in mind, what you put out is what you'll get back  
Aim to be kind & caring, not angry or on the attack  
With love it's surprising just what can be achieved  
Indeed, it can truly be beyond belief.  
Never run away or fight on your own  
Help one another & trust will grow  
Offer love to family + friends & do it together  
You'll be amazed...happiness is possible FOREVER!*

'LOVE OTHERS + YOURSELF'



**FOREVER**

*Ray Kleyn*

**Three Penrith People have been doing their bit for the arts in the 'Fringe' that is: The outer Western Sydney and Blue Mountains area !**

Ray Kleyn (pictured above), accesses Flourish Australia's Penrith Service, and he wanted to share this great poem of his with Panorama readers. There is a lot in common between Ray's philosophy and that of Flourish Australia. The most important things are people, people and people. Thanks Ray! And thanks Ruby Golding for sending the photo.

Abdul El Youghon, (see next page) who also accesses Penrith service and who did the great Einstein painting on a previous Panorama cover, has recently exhibited at

the Blue Fringe Art Festival at Wentworth Falls. We just love his painting of Aussie icon Steve Irwin! See more and read Youghon's fascinating story in December 2021 Panorama online.

The Blue Fringe Festival was held at Wentworth Falls College of TAFE during October 2022. Marc Wilson tells us that one of the judges also accesses our Penrith service. Here is the link to the festival. Why not take a look?

<https://www.bluefringe.org.au/virtual-gallery-2022-adult>

The Blue Fringe Arts Awards originated as the Adrienne Brown Awards in 1992. It recognises the valuable role that artistic expression plays in the lives and recovery of

people with mental health issues, like Adrienne herself.

The Blue Fringe Art & Literature Festival, now in its 30th year.

Through its life Blue Fringe has showcased the talents of thousands of poets, artists and story tellers. People from Flourish Australia's local services have often been represented here as we have mentioned in Panorama.

Abdul Youghan is an experienced artist but for many it is the first time they have shared their work publicly. For some the experience is life changing... WH

**ABOVE: Flourish Australia's Service at Derby Street Penrith is handy to all conveniences! As demonstrated. PHOTO by WARREN HEGGARTY**





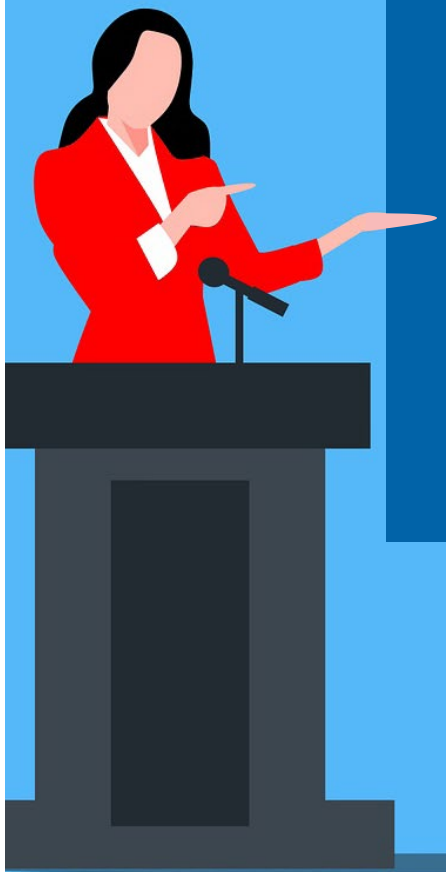
**RIGHT:** Abdul Youghon's painting of Steve Irwin.  
**LEFT** The artist in his studio with Sydney Harbour and Cockatoos! WH



# Inspire YOUR Community WITH YOUR STORY

You don't need to be a writer to share your story with Panorama's readers: we can help you to write your story. We especially like recovery stories from people with a lived experience of mental health issues.

Email us at: [panorama@flourishaustralia.org.au](mailto:panorama@flourishaustralia.org.au)



# A Theme for Your TheMHS You CAN Present at Conferences!

## #2

By Warren Heggarty

## 2022 TheMHS Topics of Presentations Sponsored by Flourish Australia

**"Strength in Vulnerability"**  
(Fay Jackson-Tina McGlenn)

**"Co-Supervision & Lived  
Experience"**  
(Fay Jackson)

**"As Clear as Mud"  
(stories about the floods)**  
(Fay Jackson-Heidi Keevers)

**"Supporting Staff Morale"**  
(Fay Jackson - Andre Maddocks  
- James Pollack)

**"Integrated Services"**  
(Kate Thynne - Helen Fenner)

**"They EXPECTED Me To  
Contribute!"**  
(Fay Jackson, Scott Gourlay -  
Simon Swinton - Luke Wriggson)

**"Authentic Peer Supervision"**  
(Fay Jackson - Chris Grumley)

**"The Power of Hope: Growing  
up in the Forensic System"**  
(Grant J Everett)

**"Social Citizenship"**  
(Fay Jackson - Megan Paull -  
Penny Bartholomew)

**WATCH FOR THESE TOPICS  
IN FUTURE PANORAMAS!**

In December we suggested that YOU can develop a conference presentation (for TheMHS, for example) and maybe even change the world. We promised that in January we'd look at how to find ideas.

You want your presentation actually to help people in their recovery journeys, or help mental health and peer workers do their jobs better. So there will be very little time for venting about problems in 'the system.' You are the one with a solution.

Your audience will already know the problems anyway. They've heard the horror stories, maybe they even participated in them. So they are hungry for something to energise and uplift them. Thinking about your own recovery journey, what is it that energised and uplifted YOU. One thing might be finding someone who accepted you rather than trying to 'fix' you. What quality did that person bring that gave you a lift.

Perhaps they believed that you could over-come challenges. Perhaps they saw your strengths. Perhaps instead of making you feel like you were not capable of things, they instead had high expectations for you. This might be your basic message, the thing you want your audience to 'take away' with them.

So your idea for a presentation might be 'How to set high expectations,' or 'how to see your strengths' or 'how to see the strengths in other people.'

It is sometimes hard to work out exactly HOW something is done especially when it is done through developing a professional relationship with someone. Even harder when it is a friend or relative who has supported you. You need

to ask some questions and describe your experience.

"How did Aunty Janet treat me? She sometimes said things I disagreed with. But I got the feeling she wanted the best for me! It is the best feeling when you know someone wants the best for you. She shared her own experience. She backed me up when I was in trouble, but she also told me to lift my game!"

Jot things down like this and you may see your presentation start to materialise! Next month we will look at how you can get other people to help you put your presentation together. WH

**ABOVE: You can start thinking NOW about what message you would like to put out THERE about recovery and mental health issues. People need to know, you know! IMAGE BY SARAH TEOH FROM PIXABAY**





# Are you STUCK?

## How to Get Unstuck and Get Going

By Warren Heggarty

**Anyone can get stuck, that situation where you can't go forward, can't go back and can't stay where you are.**

Psychologist Seerut K. Chawla says 'Something I've observed in most people who get "stuck" is that they're perfectionists. They're scared to take a step if it's going to be less than perfect. But messy & done is better than never starting.

German procrastination expert Petr Ludwig says that being stuck can be the result of 'decision paralysis.' In his book, 'The End Of Procrastination' he refers to today as the 'age of decision paralysis.' There has never been so much CHOICE! No wonder people get stuck.

But surely unlimited choice is a good thing. Not necessarily, according to Musician Steve Kilbey, in an interview with Australian Musician Editor Greg Philips. Kilbey, who has been creating new music continually for over 40 years said of new music software that 'I find all the many possibilities LIMITING.' This echoes the sentiment of Australian Composer Peter Sculthorpe who said on occasions that having restrictions in choice can really aid creativity.

If you get stuck by confusion, mental paralysis, indecisiveness or a sudden attack of ennui, how do you get unstuck?

Chawla thinks the longer you let the paralysis stay the harder it feels to get moving again. 'Make a decision. Any decision. And break the immobilisation. You can change your mind later.'

Keep your decision 'low stakes' because you may well make a less than ideal decision, but motion creates momentum and that means you can keep moving with less effort. You will 'warm up' and soon, things will become clearer. Here is a summary for getting unstuck:

1. Make a decision
2. Keep it low stakes
3. Let the outcome be messy
4. Make it small enough that it's doable
5. Repeat over & over & over again. – WH

**ABOVE:** Warren spent many hours wondering what illustration he could use for this article. In the end he said 'Let it be a duck, at least that rhymes.' **Who knows:** the readers might even get a laugh out of it! IMAGE Birgl/Pixabay

## Frustration It's a Training Opportunity!

Leif Babin, who is a professional leadership development trainer says that every single frustration you encounter in life is a FREE training opportunity! Because frustrations are a never-ending supply of opportunities to practice in real life one of the most powerful skills there are: emotional regulation.

That self-control is powerful is an old concept. 3,000 years ago King Solomon of Israel is reputed to have written in the Bible: He who is slow to anger is better than the mighty, And he who rules his spirit [is better] than he who [conquers] a city. – Proverbs 16:32

Most of us lose control some of the time. Some more cynical people even use angry outbursts deliberately to scare others into giving them what they want. Either way, sometimes it works, but overall it is a bad strategy. This is because when you lose your temper it weakens your credibility and respectability. People value the fact that you can keep a lid on your anger because **NOBODY LIKES BEING YELLED AT.**

Podcaster Babin says that when you encounter frustration or feel anger welling up, you should practice containing it. First, detach yourself from the anger-producing situation. That will cool you down and help your brain's **GREY MATTER** think up a reasonable solution or response. Your brain's **WHITE MATTER** is for feelings, not for problem solving. (Babin, 2022) –WH

Bibliography Babin, L. (2022, August 2). Why losing your cool is weakness. Retrieved from the Extreme Ownership Rundown: <https://podcasts.apple.com/au/podcast/why-losing-your-cool-is-weakness/id1609468865?i=1000574678351>



## Raking It in From Vaping

By Warren Heggarty

**A report by Llewellyn Consulting and commissioned by British and American Tobacco, claims that allowing the black market to take over the vaping industry means a loss to the treasury of \$800m in GST alone!**

That the tobacco industry would be so concerned about the government losing revenue, sounds a little curious, but it seems regulation is better for them than a black market.

Vaping, or e-cigarettes, is what marketers call a "delivery system" for nicotine. We know that tobacco use is addictive and causes untold health damage. The tobacco industry has repackaged the active ingredient 'nicotine' in a way that is supposed to avoid health problems. However, the idea of people using a 'delivery system' to ingest nicotine, a highly addictive drug that people don't actually need, still sounds a bit suss.

For years now, tobacco tax has been a good little earner for Governments. Taxing nicotine is attractive, because it is addictive and once addicted, people find it difficult to stop. Therefore the revenue keeps pouring into government coffers.

The new Albanese government through Health Minister Mark Butler has noticed that the previous government did not take full advantage of regulating the vaping market and intends to change this.

'The rate of young Australians aged 18-24 who reported using e-cigarettes, nearly doubled from 2.8 per cent in 2016 to 5.3 per cent in 2019,' the Minister said.

The new budget imposes additional taxes (excises and licensing) which will see an additional 200m revenue generated for the government each year above what GST will bring in.

According to Jess Malcolm and Geoff Chambers writing in the Australian Newspaper, under current rules, you can get a prescription from a doctor that will allow you to import vaping products legally. The idea behind this seems to be that people who have struggled with quitting nicotine can trade their cigarettes for e-cigarettes. They still get the nicotine but not the cancer causing extras.

Good idea, however most people, especially young people, generally ignore this option and go for the black market. Around 1.1 million Australians vape and this is on the increase.



## Cold Dip Health Tip

**It seems that medical science supports the practice as a way of reducing any excess body fat you might have.**

According to a report in the Australian Newspaper, The World Obesity Conference in Melbourne was addressed by Associate Professor Camilla Scheele from the University of Copenhagen. Scheele said her research has found a 'compelling link between the practice of winter swimming and better health.'

Winter swimming has been in Scandinavian culture for decades. It was emulated in Australia by the Bondi Icebergs swimming club and later the Coogee Penguins. Our own Senior Training Coordinator John Maraz frequents the Mahon Pool at Maroubra.

As an expert on adipose tissue (fat) Professor Scheele reckons cold water swimming plays a role in making the fat consume itself. I had a go last winter in 17C water and I must say it was invigorating. After 200m, I climbed out of the pool secure in the knowledge that nothing in the day ahead could be any more uncomfortable than that! Like all exercise, check with your doctor if you have safety concerns. WH

TOP LEFT: Repackage this! IMAGE BY VICKY GHARAT FROM PIXABAY. TOP RIGHT: Winter Swimming at Maroubra NSW PHOTO COURTESY JOHN MARAZ.



IMAGE: Could your feelings of exhaustion be related to lacking a sense of meaning and purpose in life? Time to write to Aunty Clara! IMAGE ADINA VOICU FROM PIXABAY



# Low Energy Epidemic

## We're just... so... tired...

By Warren Heggarty

**Burnout. Exhaustion. Tiredness. Fatigue. Even the people who are not mentally unwell are starting to notice it. Low energy is on the increase. What can we do to stop it?**

'It's easy to blame the pandemic for this collective lethargy,' says Elle Halliwell in a recent article, 'but the era of exhaustion was already upon us well before this virus wreaked its havoc.' (Halliwell, 2022) Halliwell says that even before the COVID outbreak, the World Health Organisation had added 'burnout' to its International Classification of Diseases. The signs of burnout include

1. feelings of energy depletion or exhaustion
2. reduced personal efficacy (ie, unable to get stuff done)
3. feelings of negativity or cynicism

So why is this universal burnout happening?

### Root Causes?

Halliwell argues that these symptoms must have a root cause and she mentions some usual suspects such as depression, chronic fatigue syndrome, working long hours, insufficient sleep, popping too many pills (wake up pills to wake up, sleeping pills to sleep), being constantly agitated by the media, worrying about war... She says it is just a matter of

investigating and we will get to the bottom of it. But these are the usual rag-tag and bobtail mob that we used to blame it on before COVID.

Halliwell dug deeper and asked her mother. Good move. As suspected, her mother had never experienced this inexplicable, constant tiredness that so many people feel these days. Her sleep was disrupted for a while after becoming a mother, but that is hardly mysterious. It seems that there is something happening in our world lately that is making us all feel drained, especially younger generations. This is despite the fact that, materially speaking, right now is the best time to be alive for the majority of people, at least compared to the 'poor, nasty, brutish and short' lives of our forebears, to quote philosopher Thomas Hobbes.

Perhaps there is a lack of meaningfulness or purpose.

### Contradict Cynicism

Negativity and cynicism, no matter how warranted these feelings may seem, actually stop us from finding purpose and keep us trapped in burnout. They act as a kind of prejudice: 'Why bother helping

my old neighbour mow the lawn, they probably won't appreciate it, besides, why should I?' This sort of thinking may be based on previous encounters with nasty neighbours, but it is still a prejudice that is shutting the door that might lead to your heroic ESCAPE FROM BURNOUT.

Take this random exercise. Write a letter or email to someone you have not seen in a long while. I wrote a letter to an old school friend interstate after randomly bumping into his brother. It had been 40 years and I wasn't sure he even really liked me. He had been a very senior person in government and seemed to move in elite circles. But I did it. When his reply came back, I was shocked. He said he was happy beyond words to hear from me after all that time and invited me to come and stay if I was ever in his neighbourhood. Cynicism takes courage to defeat, but can be defeated. It may be the key victory in your battle with burnout. (Yawn) Oh well, off to bed. Good night!

### WORKS CITED

Halliwell, E. (2022, October 26). Why are we all so tired? The Australian.

# Preventing Domestic Violence Will Reduce the Cost of Mental Health

By Warren Heggarty



**The 2022 budget provided a chance for the Government to help improve women's physical safety and financial security. The Albanese Government has actually produced a 'Women's Budget Statement' which 'provides record spending of \$1.7bn over six years to end violence against women and children.'**

When we look at the issue of Domestic Violence and some of its underlying causes, we can see that it is a problem that even the most generous spending alone will be hard pressed to stop. Nevertheless here are some of the measures that one hopes will make a difference (Bitá, 2022):

## Services aimed at victims

1. Continuation of the Escaping Violence Program providing cash, clothing and furniture to women fleeing violent homes. \$240m.
2. Amending the Fair Work Act to provide all workers with access to 10 days of paid family and domestic violence leave.
3. 500 new DV workers. \$169m
4. Specialised grants, safe phones, security and surveillance to protect woman in their homes.
5. Lifeline to be funded to give training to doctors nurses and frontline workers to help victims of DV.

## Perpetrators and potential perpetrators

1. \$10.8m for a referral service for perpetrators aimed at helping change their behaviour.
2. \$25m Electronic monitoring of perpetrators
3. \$35m early intervention among young people to help break the cycle.

## DV and mental health

In some households, violence or the threat of it is a daily occurrence. Even one isolated episode of violence has the potential to ruin a home, but where it is repeated over time, it can lead to people (including partners, and children of the perpetrators) developing serious and debilitating mental health issues. Among them are (Complex) Post Traumatic Stress Disorder and Borderline Personality Disorder. If it were possible to prevent domestic violence, this would likely reduce the incidence and severity of mental health issues. The question is How do we do it?



This is a large and very complex issue, so we are going to have to narrow the scope to what may be considered the major cause of domestic violence: the environments that give rise to perpetrators of domestic violence. Why do people beat their intimate partners?

### How to break the cycle

The United States Centers for Disease Control and Prevention publishes a list of strategies and approaches for preventing intimate partner violence. Curiously, perpetrators are not mentioned directly! They are merely hinted at under the strategy of 'Disrupting the developmental pathways toward partner violence.'

The oddly named Disruption strategy is all about recognising the signs that a young person may later become violent towards a partner. The signs can be present even before puberty:

- Poor behaviour control
- Social problem-solving deficits
- Early use of drugs and alcohol
- Arrest prior to age 13
- Involvement with antisocial peers
- Committing crime and violence as a child
- Problems with schoolwork

The parents or guardians of the children might contribute a few factors of their own.

- Abuse and neglect of children
- Behaving with violence in front of children
- Poor parenting, especially lack of communication
- Inconsistent and harsh discipline
- Poor parental supervision
- Lack of structure in daily life (ie, lack of positive routine and discipline).
- Creating a stressful, disruptive environment.

So, in theory at least if we can assist a young person to deal better with some or all of the above challenges, we may have some success in reducing that young person's propensity towards violence later. Social Workers, Teachers and others may use various approaches to try to 'disrupt' the child developing into a perpetrator. These challenges

are very idealistic and much easier said than done, but they need to be addressed:

Parents need to provide a stable, consistent, structured home life in which children are supported. It is also important that parents behave respectfully towards one another, even if they are separated/divorced.

Within such an environment, children will find it easier to develop emotional regulation, a sense of personal responsibility. Predictability and consistency means that the child will know where they stand. If the child's parents respect one another it will model respectful behaviour to the child.

Parents need to be engaged in their children's education. They need to show an interest and develop constructive relationships with the children's school and teacher.

In the above, it is clear that parents are key people in preventing domestic violence, and in the long run, the mental health issues that can result from it.

Looking back at details of the Budget that we opened with, we will see that most of the money being spent is aimed at trying to repair the damage caused by the perpetrators. The amount of money budgeted towards preventing young people becoming perpetrators is a mere \$35 million out of the total \$1.7 billion.

The taxpayer and victims are saddled with the cost of domestic violence that has already occurred. Trying to stop the cycle of 'violence begetting violence' (usually violent men of today providing poor role models for violent men of tomorrow) is necessary, but would people support greater spending on it? Is it really something that government alone can achieve?

**LEFT: The way we raise our children, particularly our sons, can help to reduce the future incidence of Domestic Violence**  
IMAGE BY KRIS FROM PIXABAY.

**BELOW: We need to value parenting. Better parenting helps produce better parents.**  
IMAGE BY FREESTOCKS PHOTOS FROM PIXABAY





2022  
1-3 August

## 身心障礙者權利公約

第二次國家報告國際審查會議

Review Meeting of the ROC's Second Report  
under the Convention on the Rights of  
Persons with Disabilities

# Reviewing Disability Rights in Taiwan

By Janet Meagher AM

The United Nations has a Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities, but as Taiwan is not a member of the UN it relies on an International Review Committee. Janet Meagher AM, who was a Senior Executive with Flourish Australia's predecessor company was chosen to be on the committee, assisted by another familiar champion of mental health rights Dr Leanne Craze. We think readers will be fascinated by Janet's description of the process!

Recently, Janet Meagher AM with the able assistance of Dr Leanne Craze AM served on the International Review Committee ("IRC") established by the Government of Taiwan to monitor the implementation of the United Nations ("UN") Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities ("CRPD") in Taiwan.

As Taiwan is not a UN member state it is unable to report to UN treaty monitoring bodies. Instead, the government has established some

impressive democratic mechanisms to periodically monitor the implementation of UN human rights treaties in the Republic of China (ROC Taiwan)

Selected as one of five international experts to serve on the IRC, Janet and the other four experts (from Japan, Korea, United Kingdom and Canada) had to read and note issues from a number of state reports and many parallel reports by civil society over many months leading up to the Review.

Following the Opening Ceremony by the Premier of Taiwan, Mr Su Tsang-Chang and a warm welcome from the Executive Yuan, the impressive democratic process began. During the week of the IRC Review in Taipei, they participated in hearings where presentations regarding issues were heard from up to sixty community organisations and a number of government responses for each of the three days of constructive dialogue. There were well over 200 Taiwanese government officials, representatives of the National Human Rights Commission and NGOs.

At a press conference on Saturday 6 August 2022, the IRC presented its "Concluding Observations", an outcome document setting out its concerns and recommendations. The English version of the press conference is on YouTube. The IRC's



**It was an honour to work alongside such an eminent group of reviewers and with the expert advice and executive support of Dr Leanne Craze.**

---

Concluding Observations detailed concerns and recommendations to the State across an array of CRPD areas, including:

- Lack of an equality and non-discrimination law that prohibits denial of reasonable accommodation to persons with disabilities;
- Insufficient inclusive education that results in learners with disabilities being excluded from regular schools at all levels;
- A focus on institutional coercion and restrictive practices in mental health settings, and a lack of investment in community mental health services;
- The development of new forms of congregate care rather than of shifting people from institutions to independent living in the community with support services that meet people's needs;
- Lack of prevention, identification and redress of domestic violence, intimate partner and sexual violence concerning persons with disabilities, and abuse of children with disabilities
- Insufficient awareness among the judiciary in providing access to justice for persons with disabilities;
- Application of the death penalty to persons with intellectual or psychosocial disabilities; and
- Discriminatory immigration rules that deny entry to Taiwan of persons who have a "mental disease".

It was an honour to work alongside such an eminent group of reviewers and with the expert advice and executive support of Dr Leanne Craze to document our findings meant that the work-load was efficiently managed and the Concluding Observations were strong. We were most concerned to ensure that they had the potential to bring about improved legislative and



---

**ABOVE: Taipei 101 Tower in the capitol of Taiwan. PHOTO COURTESY OF JANET MEAGHER AM**

**TOP LEFT: The International Review Committee. Janet is in the middle, Leanne on the right. PHOTO COURTESY OF JANET MEAGHER AM**

---

practical responses to protect and actions to further implement the rights of people with disabilities.

The official duties of the IRC were supplemented by a number of formal meetings (with Taiwan Association for Disability Rights, League of Persons with Disabilities and Covenants Watch) a symposium and working lunch with the National Human Rights Commission and Leanne and Janet were Plenary Speakers at a Conference on Employment and Psychosocial Disabilities.

## Community Advisory Council Briefs

### 26 October 2022

During the pandemic, we all had to adapt to doing things on-line. **Face to Face group activities** are back, but the Council heard that numbers are down. Council discussed ways of boosting numbers with Senior Leadership.

Luke Wrightson (Chair), Penny Bartholomew (Co-Chair) and JA Menzies recently **interviewed** six people who had expressed interest in joining the Council in the hope of increasing its number from 16 to 22.

The recently produced 8-minute Council **Membership Promotional video** was viewed. Flourish Australia chair Prof. Elizabeth More and Council members said they were very impressed with the video and with the personal council experiences the members had shared. It was agreed the video would be a great promotional tool encouraging people accessing services to apply to the Council.

The December 2022 meeting will be brought forward to 14th, to avoid falling in the holiday period. Since the Council changed to online meetings with the pandemic, it was agreed that at least one meeting per year would be face to face. The next face to face council will be held across two days **Tuesday 21st and Wednesday 22nd February** which is the first meeting for 2023. The next Community Advisory Council Meeting will be on 30 November 2022.

KJ/WH

# World Day of Social Justice 2023:

## SPEAK UP!

By Grant J Everett

**The United Nations World Day of Social Justice is observed on the 20th of February to identify and address issues that prohibit millions of individuals around the globe from living a fair life.**

Social justice is the view that all people, regardless of age, race, gender, religion, culture and sexual orientation, should have access to economic, political and social rights and opportunities. The General Assembly of the United Nations recognises that social development and social justice are imperative for achieving peace and security within and among nations.

We can all help to create a world where people's human rights are upheld and every individual can live their lives with dignity. By focusing a spotlight on important issues and starting conversations about them, we can do our bit to bring about change that provides a better world for many.

Unlike much of Australia, a large portion of the planet's population

do not have their basic needs being met, such as a safe place to live, gainful employment, or adequate healthcare or education, and many people suffer as a result of slavery, human trafficking, child marriage and the horrors of war.

As Martin Luther King Jr said: "Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere."

### How to take part

The best way to observe World Day Of Social Justice is by advocating for a particular social cause. Doing some research and starting a conversation with likeminded people is how every social movement begins.

So ask yourself: what social justice issue can I support?

One of the biggest issues today is how more than 2 billion women, men and youth across the globe - literally 60% of all workers - earn their livelihoods in "informal employment" that usually lacks any form of social protection or employment benefits. Informal

workers are twice as likely to be living in poverty than those in formal employment. On top of that, a report by the World Bank showed that only six countries out of 187 give women and men equal legal work rights.

Regardless of what you want to raise awareness about, you could host a morning tea (virtual or otherwise) with your friends, colleagues and loved ones, arrange a walk to raise funds, or use social media to get the word out.

But one of the very best ways the average Australian can make a difference is to sponsor a child in a developing country to ensure they have access to the kinds of opportunities that can break the cycle of poverty and uphold their human rights.

Teachers and parents can use the World Day of Social Justice to teach young children about the ideologies of social injustice and why it is important, so that the world they create as adults is closer to the ideal of equality and justice.



## Sounding A Call To Action

One huge example of people coming together and making their voices heard was back in 2020 when an estimated 26 million Americans participated in Black Lives Matter protests in the United States. This was one of the largest movements in that country's history. Their protest made demands centred around racial equality, and was also about criminal justice reform for all.

Another example is when Greta Thunberg made headlines around the world with her scathing speech at the United Nations General Assembly a few years back. Regardless of your personal view of Greta, it cannot be denied that her voice is being heard and that she is highly influential on the world stage.

## The United Nations

The UN has an ongoing global mission to promote social development and human dignity for all. They have defined five different essential components of social justice:

Upholding the dignity of the human being

Primacy of the common good

Reciprocal rights and responsibilities

The dignity of workers and rights for workers

And fundamental options for the poor and the vulnerable

According to the former United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon: "The gap between the poorest and the wealthiest around the world is wide and growing. This situation is not only between countries but within them, including many of the most prosperous. The World Day of Social Justice is observed to highlight the power of global solidarity to advance opportunity for all."

<https://www.un.org/en/observances/social-justice-day>

<https://www.baker.edu/about/get-to-know-us/blog/what-is-the-world-day-of-social-justice/>

**TOP LEFT: Three people viewing a gallery of diversity PHOTO BY GERD ALTMANN (GERALT) FROM PIXABAY**



# Let's Use Strengths-Based Language!

The first of Flourish Australia's THREE VITAL BEHAVIOURS is to use strengths-based language. Strengths-based language encourages us to recognise our existing skills and abilities and to build upon them to get to where we want to go and to become who we want to be. We believe it is crucial to look at what each person CAN do, rather than at their perceived disabilities.

But what does strengths-based language look like in action?

One key element is to use person-led phrasing. For example, instead of saying "a homeless person," you would say "a person who is homeless."

Secondly, as the majority of people who work for Flourish Australia are on a mental health recovery journey, we know how vital it is to not reduce anybody to an illness or a diagnosis. So instead of saying "a mentally ill person" or "a schizophrenic," we would say "a person who experiences a mental health issue." A diagnosis can provide a starting point for a recovery journey, sure, but it should not be used to define who somebody is or what they're capable of.

A third point following on from this is that we refer to "people who access our services" in preference to terms like clients, or consumers, or patients.

So have you tried applying strengths-based language to your recovery journey? It might just change your life.

# YOUR JOURNEY TO EMPLOYMENT

Every year 1 in 5 Australians will experience some form of mental health issue.

Flourish Australia provides mental health specialised disability employment services (DES) supporting people living with a mental health issue to access sustainable employment.

## Flourish Australia DES locations:

Bankstown	Hornsby
Broken Hill	Liverpool
Caringbah	Maitland
Cessnock	Penrith
Harris Park	Seven Hills

To see if you qualify for our free service, please call us for a confidential discussion or visit our website for more information.

