

Executive Director's message

Dear colleagues

Thank you to everyone who participated in the Staff Engagement Survey in October.

The results give us an opportunity to listen to your views and plan future activities. The strong response rate, 75%, has provided the Executive Team with a good insight into your opinions and key concerns.

Your commitment to providing feedback on the organisation's performance has placed us in a strong position to identify areas for improvement and, with your continued support, facilitate successful change.

Overall, your feedback has told us that we are comparative to other Australian employees in many areas and exceed in the areas of engagement, well-being & workload.

Your feedback has also highlighted a number of areas that would benefit from increased attention. There are opportunities to improve performance feedback and staff recognition.

Where to from here?

Over the coming weeks, the Executive Team will identify the top organisational issues and develop strategies to address them. Your manager will be responsible for involving you in creating an action plan for local issues. Action plans will be circulated to all staff through this newsletter and the intranet. Regular progress reports will also be shared throughout the year.

I encourage you to contribute your thoughts and suggestions for improvement in your work area. Use this opportunity to share your ideas on the issues that you have identified as being the most important.

View Survey Results:

The results of the Staff Engagement Survey are available for you to look at. Please take the time to review the detail of the Brotherhood overall results in this newsletter.

Kind regards



Tony Nicholson

Hot topics

This month some of the topics discussed by the Executive have included:

Indigenous Strategy

The Executive Team is in the process of re-drafting our Indigenous Strategy to ensure that we focus our work with Indigenous people and communities in areas where we can make a unique contribution and add value in areas not currently being addressed by other organisations.

To date we have held two workshops with staff working with or who have experience working with Indigenous communities and senior managers to consider what we have achieved since the last strategy was developed, reflect on the external environment and think about what we might focus on going forward. These workshops have highlighted that we need to educate ourselves, as white people, as a starting point and that our work with Indigenous people and communities needs to have a long term focus and be based on a collaborative and partnership approach with communities.

A first draft of our key directions will be discussed at the Brotherhood Board meeting in November. This will be followed by consultations with Indigenous and non-Indigenous external stakeholders plus follow up work early in the new year in order to develop an Action Plan for our work going forward. A key element of this will be to re-instate cultural awareness training for all staff early in 2011.

If you would like to discuss the development of the strategy, please contact Caterina Wooden, Chief Financial Officer - Strategy or Jenny Grayling, General Manager, Organisational Services.

Staff Engagement Survey

The Staff Engagement Survey results are now available for distribution. The overall results for the organisation are available on the intranet or contact spower@bsl.org.au. Divisional and departmental results are available upon discussion with your manager.

The results on the summary graph reveal the difference between Brotherhood scores compared to the Australian National Norm (ANN). The ANN is comprised of a weighted average of employee survey results from a cross-section of industry located in Australia. It includes more than 140 organisations and 152,930 employees. The data are derived from recent client studies conducted by Towers Watson and the norm is updated annually. Statistically significant differences are coloured green or red.

The results reveal that we are significantly more favourable in two categories, **engagement and well-being and workload**, about the same in thirteen categories and significantly down in two categories, **performance management and organisational change**.

Fr. Jeff reflects

Have you ever looked back at yourself and got a fright, or laughed out loud? Or even been surprised at how you see yourself interacting in the midst of an activity or just life itself?

Some children from Sacred Heart Primary School in Fitzroy made a DVD sound clip with our 'Ambassador' Jonathan Welsh, offering a Christmas message of Hope and Peace. Some of us saw the finished product, as it was launched last Thursday at Sacred Heart in front of the children who participated in it. It is moving, and because largely it's being performed by and about the children, there is a sense of hope and joy in it, and it is very spontaneous.



The children were gathered for the launch sitting expectantly in front of a large TV screen. Jonathan Welsh, and Steven Blackburn the amazing musician, the photographer, members of BSL and Sacred Heart staff, some parents and others ready for the screening; it begins, a simple song.... 'This little light of mine', which becomes 'Ode to Joy'. Words, music, movement, dance, children being themselves; spontaneous. The footage begins and nothing could have prepared us for what follows.

The children began to scream with laughter, pointing at the screen, finding themselves and each other in the vision, throwing their hands in the air. You could see the image, but with all the noise in the room, you couldn't hear much of what was being sung. We turned it up, we played it again, and then once more and there was much the same reaction each time, particularly now the children identifying not only themselves, but the actions of each other, became a greater focus of the moment as the footage itself.

But there was a message in the moment. The footage is amazing. There is in the clip, as there was in the room in that moment, an overwhelming sense of happiness and therefore hope. The children were surprised to see themselves, performing, in their familiar territory, the 'Atherton Gardens' flats, graffitied walls as a backdrop, their own energies and movements creating a message for an unsuspecting audience. Peace, Hope, Joy - these three. The children invite and remind us of the basic message of human desire and right. In the context of their community, largely disadvantaged, but for them and their families; refugees, a home, a refuge from all they have experienced in their long journeys; that these children deserve such happiness and our support.

There is a certain power in the simplicity of the message, made powerful by the most vulnerable and the most precious in our society and care, but for the reminder that came from their reaction in the moment of viewing; we are alright, but we need you to give us the opportunities to shine. For a moment in this journey, our job is to nurture, to hold the hand of the child and in the beginning lead and for us to learn from them and this encounter. There is a moment if our nurturing is right, our children will find the confidence to do and to be and to lead, learning for

themselves in the moment. It struck me, what we were watching was of the child. It was real and no amount of coaching could have produced the result we enjoyed. They made us laugh too, because we were caught up in their moment - authentic and happy.

Sometimes, we need to look back at ourselves, and find something of the child within, to laugh and to see something we might not have expected, or something of our truth. Whilst we realise the seriousness of the work we are involved in and how it influences the lives of others, we need to also find the space to laugh out loud and to find even in the seriousness of what we do, there is joy.

Blessings
Chaplaincy team.

Keeping cool in summer - insulation for sale

Brotherhood Green has a stockpile of insulation for sale.

Rated at R3.5, Fibreglass batts are \$36 a bag, each bag will cover approximately 8m². Polyester batts are \$29 a bag, each bag will cover approximately 3m².



If interested, please contact Rebecca Chanock on 9380 7848 or email rchanock@bsl.org.au. She will arrange a quote based on the number of bags required.

Payment upon pick up required. Cash preferred, credit cards charged a surcharge of 3% (Master & Visa Card only accepted).

Pick up only from the Brotherhood warehouse at 44 Barkly Street, Brunswick East. Delivery may be available on a case by case basis. Contact rchanock@bsl.org.au for a quote.

Brotherhood Green can also assist with installation. Contact Rebecca for a quote. Clear access to the roofing cavity required, e.g. manhole access.

New Research Proposals: guidelines, forms and approvals

The Brotherhood's Ethics Committee reminds everyone that when planning new research you are required to submit a hard copy & e-copy of the **new research proposal and ethics checklist forms, and a project cost sheet** via the Office Manager & PA to the General Manager, Research & Policy Centre for consideration and approval by the General Manager, **prior to commencement of research projects.**

This is designed to:

- Ensure each project fits with the BSL strategic plan
- Maximise the integration of research and services
- Facilitate partnerships with others doing similar work as may be appropriate
- Ensure that all research conducted by the Brotherhood is:
 - ✓ high quality and well planned
 - ✓ meets our ethical standards
 - ✓ is considered within the context of the overall RPC budget, and
 - ✓ that all project funding sources have been considered, and a full costing has been submitted.

Please refer to the RPC intranet page links & flow chart for guidelines and forms.
We appreciate your cooperation in this matter and if you have any questions please contact 9483 1364.

STEP 1 - Read the BSL [Research Proposal Procedures](#) guidelines

STEP 2 - Complete a BSL [Research Proposal form](#). **You must include** a completed [Ethics Checklist](#) & [budget costing](#) with each proposal to be considered for approval.

STEP 3 - If you have any questions about the completing the proposal forms, please contact the Helen Kimberley, Ethics Coordinator, Research & Policy Centre via email hkimberley@bsl.org.au or telephone on 9483 1306

STEP 4 - Forward your completed BSL Research Proposal form, ethics checklist & budget costing sheet to:

Office Manager & PA to the General Manager
Research & Policy Centre
Brotherhood of St Laurence
67 Brunswick Street, Fitzroy 3065
or email: kphilipp@bsl.org.au

STEP 5 - The General Manager, Research & Policy Centre will consider all new Research proposals **prior to commencement of the project** at anytime and refer all Research proposals

to the next R&PC Leadership team for endorsement at fortnightly meetings held on Tuesdays. Approved research proposals and ethics applications will be signed-off by the GM, RPC as Chair of the BSL Research Ethics Committee.

STEP 6 - If your Research Proposal is APPROVED you will be notified in writing by email via the PA to GM. The approved research proposal will be referred to the next Ethics committee meeting, an advisory group meeting biannually (mid-year and at end of year) via the Ethics Coordinator.

If your Research Proposal and/or ethics application is NOT APPROVED, the GM RPC via the Ethics Coordinator and advisory committee will provide feedback in writing to you requesting either further details or amendments to be resubmitted, or provide a recommendation that the research does not proceed.

Dates for your diaries

80 Years of the Brotherhood service

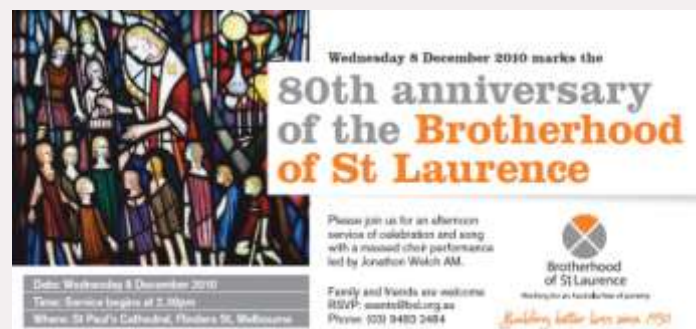
8th December 2.00pm, St Paul's Cathedral
Contact: Communications team on 9483 2484

General staff meeting

13th December 10.00am – 1.30pm
Reading Room, Fitzroy Town Hall
Contact: Simone Power, Internal Communications, 9483 1173

Brotherhood Staff Christmas Party 2010

Friday 17 December, 12.30 – 3.30pm
Pumphouse Hotel, 128 Nicholson Street, Fitzroy RSVP essential – contact Michelle Harvey 9483 1183 or mharvey@bsl.org.au no later than Friday 10 December



2010 HIPPY Graduation

A great number of proud and excited HIPPY children, their parents, siblings and friends gathered at the Atherton Gardens Community Hall on November 12 for the 2010 HIPPY Fitzroy Graduation. Dressed in their HIPPY t-shirts, the children played about making oversized bubbles with nifty bubble making gadgets. During the graduation HIPPY families were presented with a certificate to acknowledge the commitment and hard work undertaken to complete the two-year program.

Nesrin, a HIPPY Fitzroy mother, shared a few words on stage during the ceremony stating that HIPPY has helped to develop the skills and the confidence of her young child and it has been a great program for her family. These sentiments were echoed amongst other HIPPY parents and friends. It was a fun event that captured the essence of HIPPY and lives of many families in the Fitzroy community.



Thank you to Brotherhood staff, AXA volunteers, Readings Foundation, the Smith Family and all of our partner organisations and individuals who have supported us throughout the year and made this event an enjoyable time spent together.

Waist not, want not: Inspiring designers give old threads a new lease of life



When it comes to fashion, everything old is new again, and this is particularly true for the gifted young designers at The Social Studio.

Last fortnight's Remixed Design Street Fashion Show, and street party to showcased the one-off garments made from recycled clothes and excess materials.

The Brotherhood's Hunter Gatherer supported the event by contributing donated garments, which The Social Studio's 'up-cycled'. The garments were re-worked into new and unique pieces.

The Social Studio plays host to many young and upcoming design students from Melbourne's refugee community, providing an environment in which they can hone their creative talents. Nicole, originally from Sudan, has completed her Certificate II in clothing production and is working towards a Certificate III, "...working at The Social Studio has given me so much confidence. I love mixing with people from many different cultures and have learned so much there."

The designs featured in the parade are available for sale at Hunter Gatherer.

Staff profile

Get to know your colleagues. What makes them tick? This month we interview Eve Bodsworth, Senior Research Officer, Financial Inclusion.

My role involves research regarding the lives of low income Australians. I am currently a Senior Research Officer in the Financial Inclusion Department and am working on a study examining the social context of the lives of 20 participants in the Saver Plus program.



A typical work day for me involves travelling to people's home to chat to them (interview them) about their lives including how they manage their finances on a tight budget and very low income. On other days I am reading books and journal articles about savings and poverty, reading through and analyzing transcripts of interviews I have conducted, and writing up my own research findings. I also drink many cups of tea and spend time discussing research and policy issues with my colleagues (and chatting about what happened on the weekend or what we watched on TV last night...).

The thing I enjoy most about my work is definitely the opportunity to meet with and speak to people from diverse backgrounds about their lives and issues that are important to them. I particularly enjoy having the opportunity to conduct research which allows for the complexity of individuals' lives, their resilience and resourcefulness to be highlighted. I hope that this research plays a role in countering broader stereotypes which exist about people who rely upon income support and in advocating for better policy outcomes.

My proudest achievement at the Brotherhood is completing an earlier research project called 'Making Work Pay'. The report drew upon interviews with 44 single mothers and unemployed Newstart recipients and highlighted some of the inadequacies of the current income support system. It also generated some media coverage around these issues.

My biggest challenge at the Brotherhood has been trying to finish my PhD thesis (looking at single mothers' experiences of welfare-to-work reforms). I initially came to the Research and Policy Centre three and a half years ago when I started a PhD linked to a broader research project in which the BSL is a partner. The Brotherhood has been kind in giving me a space to work on my own research, as well as employing me from time to time! I am (really) nearing the end of my thesis (fingers crossed) – and no, I won't cry if you ask me about how it's going!



I have been working at the Brotherhood for around 31/2 years (in various capacities – see above).

If I wasn't working at the Brotherhood I would be in the kitchen practicing for the next round of Masterchef.

In my spare time, I like to cook for friends and family, read fiction and knit.

I relax by watching trashy television... I mean doing social and cultural research on the representation of Australian life in Neighbours and Home and Away.