

May 2014



# The Compass Institute Newsletter

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## Dear Families

As always, the month has been filled with exciting activities including the E & T groups development into powerhouses of creativity in the two Craft/Power weeks. To tell more of the Compass story, we are delighted to introduce **'DJ's 2cents worth'**. As our dynamic (does he sleep?) Development Co-ordinator, DJ McGlynn **keeps track of the 'happenings'**, not only inside Compass but also in the wider community, involving and promoting Compass across Queensland. Over to you DJ.

*Sally Ryhanen*  
Service Manager

### DJ's 2cents worth!

April was a huge month for the Compass Institute. We are starting to gain traction with some very high profile businesses on the Sunshine Coast. We have had a visit from the Lend Lease Corporation, and put forward an excellent case to have a revamp of our Palmwoods site. This site was our launch site way back in 2003 and is in desperate need of a makeover. If the works are approved, it will see a new disability access ramp to the dojo, improved wheelchair access to the training institute, new carpet and paint for downstairs and also an upgrade to the amenities block. These works will significantly enhance the look and feel of the Palmwoods site so we are hoping for the best. Compass was also involved in

the Treehouse Initiative open day at the Brightwater Hotel. This was a great day that acknowledged people living with Autism and all the services and activities available to the support networks. There were close to 400 people attending on the day and Compass was again at the forefront of the stall holders.

We have struck a great initial deal with Cricks Nambour, where for every car that is sold through their Nambour site, they will receive a fantastic Wabi Sabi gift hamper. Rob and his hard working team in Caloundra are building the crates, and Carla and her team are filling the hampers with all the tantalising jams and chutneys. This will have a great flow on effect to showcase the talents of our young people and also to increase foot traffic and repeat customers to Wabi Sabi.

Speaking of Wabi Sabi, April saw our first get together for the year for our volunteers. David had some encouraging words to say about the viability of the retail outlet and also thanked the ladies for their tireless work and giving to the Compass Institute. Thank you once again to all our volunteers and hope you enjoy your time with us.

While on the volunteer scene, we had over 55 Siena Catholic College students give up part of their holidays, for an experiential day at the Compass Farm. The students

worked closely with our young people on projects that will leave a legacy. The idea behind the project was to break down the barriers between the youth of today and their perceived value of young people living with a disability. It was quite interesting and looked similar to a Blue Light disco on the Monday, with the students of one side of the shed and our young people on the other. As the days progressed, the mood and perceptions changed and everyone involved become quite close. It was great to see a lot of our young people interacting with the students and discussing the issues of the world with them (Mainly fashion and sport). This is truly why I love my job; seeing the inclusion and interaction of our young people with the students of Siena, and then seeing them appreciate the abilities of our young people rather than the label given to them. We have also been announced as the beneficiary of the Siena Benefit Ball, which raises money for local charities each year. Once again we thank Siena for their generous contribution to Compass.

#### Other quick mentions:

- Collaboration with the Sunshine Coast Council and the Caloundra Central Park Sports precinct. Great opportunity to have some of our students involved in the local sports clubs in Caloundra.
- **NFP's working together in the community.** A group of high

**profile NFP's joining forces** to work with Council for a better future for all disabled and disadvantaged living on the Sunshine Coast.

- We love free stuff. I have been working hard on the internet building the Compass profile and we have been kindly donated a computer for Caloundra, blinds for the Harvest Kitchen, a TV for Palmwoods, bookshelves for Gympie and a lockable cupboard for Caboolture.

The Farm team have had an extremely busy month with:

- 2500 garlic cloves planted
- 75kgs potatoes planted
- Poly tunnel up
- New passionfruit vines
- Two goats Rusty and Sooty
- Farewelling the Pigs who are heading to a new home

Till next month I wish you all the very best and keep the following dates in May free:

May 9th - Champagne Diamond Gala

May 15th – Caboolture Neighbourhood Centre Open Day

May 17 - Cricks Day at the footy – We will be running a BBQ to raise money for Compass.

May 31 – Siena Benefit Ball

Kind regards  
DJ Mc Glynn  
Development  
Coordinator

# Poly Tunnel

This month has also seen us finish off our poly tunnel . It was an amazing project for all the farm trainees who worked so hard. From levelling out the ground for the base to planting out first tomatoes in it .



## Continuous Improvement Plan

At Compass we are committed to ongoing service improvement. If you have a suggestion about how we can improve our service, please write your suggestion on one of our **Service Improvement Suggestion Forms** available from the office, our centres or our website: [www.compassinc.org.au](http://www.compassinc.org.au) and we will consider every idea.

### AT THE GOING DOWN OF THE SUN.



### WE WILL REMEMBER THEM

**COMPASS CALENDAR**  
Need to check dates for the holidays or a special event?  
Our Annual Planner Calendar is available 24/7 at [www.compassinc.org.au](http://www.compassinc.org.au)

This month has seen a massive effort by all the trainees and staff . we have planted over 2500 cloves of garlic , 75kg of potatoes and have dug 20 veggie .



Introducing our new goats Rusty and Sooty . Both have been hand Raised and fit in to our farm just perfectly.



## Houses

Caloundra Enterprise Unit is very busy making birdhouses and has started making a house for a possum.



## Gardening

Exciting news! The Caloundra Centre is **opening a shop for Mother's Day for the trainees and their families.** The trainees are working on the gardens in front of the shop.



## Safety Audit

Caloundra Training Unit The Training Unit has been working on the safety audit and supply audit for the centre. We are working on the lawn in the back of the centre.



## Tye Dying

Caloundra Education Unit 1 This unit is working on tie dying for **Mother's Day.** The trainees are working very hard and making colourful craft goods.



*Everyone wants to be valued for what they do. Employment for people with moderate levels of disability can be a real challenge... and it's a challenge that Compass has addressed.*

### Advocacy

Remember that you are able to bring along an advocate or support person to any meeting that you have with Compass.  
An advocate is someone who is there to support you or represent you and your interests in circumstances where you feel that this additional support is required.  
Please ask us if you need more information or assistance with organising for an advocate.

Caloundra Education Unit 2

Education Unit 2 has made a loom and is working on a rag rug. It looks beautiful!



Stuart and Jake making gifts



## Looming A rug



## Dear Parents and Friends

A little over 12 months ago I wrote to you in a newsletter about the survey you had completed regards your satisfaction with the service that Compass provides to you and your son or daughter. I said then that even though the results were very good (97% satisfied or very satisfied), we would do our best to improve in any ways we could in the hope of improving those results. Yesterday I saw the outcomes from the recent survey you completed and I'm really pleased to see that – according to you – we are doing a better job again. While the overall satisfaction levels remained stable at 97%, there was an increase in responses of 'very satisfied' of 9%. This is of course testament to the hard work and dedication of the support staff who are there day to day with the young people. That said, behind the scenes in an accredited service provider like Compass there are huge complexities around legislation, workplace health and safety, administration, management and service planning to name a few. The people who do this (less exciting) work also deserve recognition. The key for us, I believe, is the very low turnover in staff experienced at Compass and this comes down to attracting the right people at the outset, then assisting them to upgrade their skills while we retain their loyalty and enthusiasm.

I read last weekend that a recent Australian survey on education revealed that the single most important factor in the success of any student is the quality of the teaching staff. It is their consistency and the depth of the relationship that they can establish with the young person that is most influential in helping the young person achieve their potential. Second in importance was the value placed by the family on learning while a close third was the quality of the resources of the school, college or learning environment.

This is very topical in the emerging environment of the NDIS where many people are beginning to see the future relationship they will have with a service provider as one of 'customer

and supplier'. Talking with several parents of people with disabilities (not Compass parents) at a forum last month, I was told that they thought that this commercial relationship would be better for them as they'd get 'better value for money'. When I asked how that might be, I was told that, under the current system, if the young person was ill, unwilling to attend, took holidays, chose to do something different for some time or similar, the young person essentially still had to pay for those 'lost' hours. They saw this as unfair. I asked whether, if the person attended a private school, would the family be entitled to a refund of fees or extra days of schooling when they did any of the above - and the reply was of course 'no'. We talked about the likely effects if they were allowed to do so. Would the school have had to send staff home that day while fewer students attended?

They agreed that this would be unreasonable because in no time it would undermine the whole profession of teaching. The effect would eventually lead to casualisation of the workforce... putting teachers on call. The alternative might be for the students who attend that day to pay extra to ensure the teachers remain at the school to conduct the classes. Without that the school would have to close as it would no longer be commercially viable. This same principle applies to any co-operative venture. Its success depends on all the members or shareholders making their contribution even if for some reason (beyond the control of the co-operative) they cannot participate for some time.

I'm not talking about pooling funds. I've heard it said that Compass does this... but it does not. Each person's funds are managed separately. I am talking about the principle of a co-operative and how this ensures that the buying power of each member can actually exceed their personal share!

I likened Compass to a co-operative or a private college – a place where the three important aspects of successful learning and personal development

cited above – *quality and consistency of staff; involvement of families who valued learning and the development of quality resources and facilities* – were high on our agenda. There is also a great strength in unity. It's an obvious principle that people working together can achieve more than singly. This principle also applies to co-developing facilities, resources and even luring and retaining quality support staff. I remain very wary of 'commercial arrangements' that encourage people to act singly, breaking up our buying power and undermining the viability of the co-operative.

While the Education & Training service is very much like a further education organisation or college, we also aspire to providing opportunities for fulfillment through supported employment in our social enterprises. We all know that the vast majority of people with a significant intellectual disability will struggle to gain employment in the mainstream. We also know that they can thrive in a work environment that includes trained staff providing appropriate training and support in the background.

We should also know that the government does not provide these types of facilities. We at Compass have assembled these facilities and resources for the use of the young people who enroll here. As shareholders who have helped attract / retain the staff and built these facilities, you should be wary of attempts by people to access these without making their contribution. I also remain wary of politicians and government departments as effective facilitators of social services. The idea of an NDIS is a vital one for our country BUT we have to be very careful about the principles and policies that the government develops in a bid to implement it.

*David*

