

# PARENTS BEYOND BREAKUP

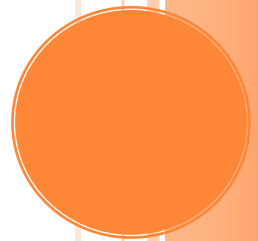
ANNUAL REPORT 2015-16



**ParentsBeyondBreakup**

Empowering families – Creating futures

PO Box 2333  
Coffs Harbour NSW 2450  
02 6652 8113  
enquiries@parentsbeyondbreakup.com.au  
[www.parentsbeyondbreakup.com.au](http://www.parentsbeyondbreakup.com.au)  
acn 606 982 343



## Testimonials' from clients and supporters

For many displaced and separated parents, dealing with the painful transitions after a breakup can be deeply traumatic.

Restoring the ability to deal with financial, legal, relational and social change is often beyond the scope of traditional sources of help.

Our core development programs, peer support groups and experienced volunteers in the field can intervene when it matters most. This page contains testimonials' that have been made by clients and supporters over the past year.

*They helped me get through a very dark chapter in my life. I was feeling hopeless and paranoid. Without them, I may not have had the courage to go through the family court for years, which resulted in custody of my children. I can never thank Mark and the lads enough.*

*Acknowledgment of my situation by other men with similar experiences.*

*It's the only service available to men. They even rang back the next day to*



*They gave me an education about the court system that we have to go through. It takes away the mystery and builds confidence that enables one to form strategy and plans. It also educates on how to communicate with the mothers of our children. Helps focus us on our relationships with our children for the longer term.*

*Within our family services, we often have cause to refer distressed, separated fathers to DIDs for crucial peer support, which we do not provide. This peer support is a critical intervention which provides unique engagement and support capacities for highly vulnerable groups. When integrated with other services, it contributes to meeting the significant information and support needs of this group, towards family mental health and wellbeing and safe and effective parenting.*

## Executive Summary

Parents Beyond Breakup (PBB) has now completed its first year of operation. The primary reason for the formation of PBB is to gain the ability to diversify from an organisation that specialised in supporting distressed dads to supporting both males and females suffering from issues related to relationship breakdowns.

Parents Beyond Breakup is part of a Human Service Agency Network that includes hundreds of organisations that help families or individuals in distress. PBB has been endorsed by more than fifty support groups or human service agencies as a leader in peer support practices for parents suffering from issues related to relationship break ups.

Due to the dedication of organisation supporters we have yielded success in the last 12 months:

- Opened four new groups in four different states
- Developed the online resource: 'Roadmap – Pathways to Separation' and online forum
- Conducted 5 facilitator induction weekends, accrediting 55 volunteers from 18 new and future groups in five states
- Launched a new Mums in Distress group in the Sydney Northern Beaches
- Fulfilled requirements to comply with the Government funding reporting. This involved intensive labour resources from staff and volunteers inputting client details and outcomes into the Data Exchange system (DEX)
- Surveyed over 500 Helpline callers and Group attendees
- Surveyed over 300 clients about their suicide and domestic violence experiences, and how PBB / DIDs / MIDs have helped them
- Continued support from the Department of Social Services until June 2017
- Completed an Audit of our Volunteer Management compared with the Australian Industry standards, with pleasing results
- Fulfilled requirements to comply with the Government funding requirement. This involved intensive labour resources from staff and volunteers inputting client details and outcomes into the Data Exchange System (DEX)

As the new 'Parent' of the Dads in Distress organisation, it has inherited issues related to understaffing and keeping its volunteers appropriately qualified as well as new challenges.

The challenges for us during the next 12 months are related to sourcing a continuous stream of funding, gaining the ongoing support of men and woman's support networks, and expanding our Dads in Distress program.

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## Meet the Directors

Our National Board of Management is a dedicated team of volunteers who meet monthly, and who also participate in various working party and other development activities. Attendance at the 12 Board meetings since the 2015 AGM: Terry Valentine (Chairman) 12, Andrew King (Secretary) 4, Peter Nicholls 11, Terry Underwood (Treasurer) 11, Michael Holland 4, Marty Leishman 6, John Herron (Secretary) 3.

### Terry Valentine – Chairman



Terry has a diverse background in project management along with some marketing and general management of construction, traffic systems and telecoms. Terry has a degree in Engineering, Masters of Business Administration and finance qualifications along with 10 years' deployment of software applications and IT hardware.

Terry has been involved in community organisations from committee member of a local youth club (in his teens), SES (founding member for a new town), Rotary (held the position of President of a Victorian Club 2014-15) and now PBB / DIDs. Terry first became involved with DIDs in 2010 with his own relationship breakdown (which saw it go through to the High Court in another country along with many Australian decisions).

Terry facilitates at DIDs meetings when required (Melbourne South East) and sees his involvement in several areas.

On the Board since October 2013 and Chairman since 2014. Founding PBB board member since July 2015.

### Peter Nicholls



Pete has spent the last 14 years working in family law and is an avid campaigner for reform for parents unfairly separated from their children.

Pete's background includes leadership roles across the US, Europe and Australia in business development and as a leading consultant in organisational psychology.



### Terry Underwood

Terry has a background in Commerce, Banking, Gas & Oil, Education and Transport. Terry has a Bachelor of Commerce (Deakin University), Diploma of Education, PRINCE2 certification, is a chartered accountant. Terry is interested in supporting the group by fundraising and trying to grow its corporate structure.



### John Herron

John is a highly skilled project executive and a qualified lawyer admitted to practice in the Supreme Court of Victoria. John is passionate about community service, providing pro bono legal services to the Salvation Army. John first became involved with the organisation a decade ago as a volunteer facilitator. He has a strong interest in family law.



### Marty Leishman

Marty has spent the last 20 years working in various Queensland law firms, and in more recent years, working in the petroleum industry. Marty studied law at the University of Southern. His directorship interests are focused on equality in the legal system for disadvantaged fathers.

## Meet the Staff

### CEO - Barry Guidera



As the CEO of Dads in Distress since 2009 and now PBB, Barry has overseen many positive outcomes from internal and external challenges over the past 7 years. The professionalism and implementation of an effective structure has seen DIDs consolidate its position as Australia's leading provider of services to separated parents.

Every year sees greater numbers of parents in distress engage with the organisation and given the limited resources available, this is a significant achievement. Comfortable working with staff, volunteers, and clients at the grass roots level or meeting with MP's in Parliament House, Barry provides the stability the organisation needs to advance.

### State Services Coordinators



#### NSW – Dr Des Perry

Dr. Perry has worked for over 15 years with the Veterans and Families Counselling services as both a clinical supervisor and as the officer responsible for outcome measure, research and Quality Improvement.



#### Victoria – Ron Macris

Ron is a former DIDs Board member and phone counsellor with roles that have included direct counselling roles, policy development positions and senior management responsibilities with NFP agencies and the Victorian Government.

### Helpline Operators



Jeff Lindsay



Shane McDaniel



Alan Valja

## Introducing Parents Beyond Breakup



### Vision

Become a leader in providing peer support to parents at risk of crisis and trauma that impacts upon family safety and wellbeing.

### Mission

Provide the resources and support, either directly or in collaboration, that empowers individuals to manage challenges that place them at risk.

### Our Values

**Make a difference** – to parents (particularly in the high conflict space) for the benefit of children and families by focusing on the individual and their specific circumstances and needs.

**Accountability** – commitment to operate transparently in communication, decision making and information provision.

**Inclusiveness** – open to all parents who need support to manage and overcome the challenges that have placed them at risk

**Diversity** – we welcome individuals from all backgrounds and cultures and collaborate with other organisations to maximise the benefits for our clients.

**Respectfulness** - we provide a non-judgemental, supportive and safe environment.

### Our Services

- Telephone helpline
- Website
- Referral networks
- Support groups
- One on one support
- Online roadmap and forum







## Chairman's Message

This year has been amazing with so much activity within our organisation we can all take pride in, for the longer term.

You, the members voted overwhelmingly (87%) to change from an incorporated association to a company limited by guarantee with the business name of Parents Beyond Breakup. This was the culmination of work that started in January 2014 and resulted in branding experts assessing the situation from the membership, sector and donor prospective, presenting at DIDs workshops, and considering feedback from NSW and Victorian volunteer

workshops, along with notification of proposed changes in the 2015 Annual Report. The major concern was that we could be moving away from helping Dads. Dads in Distress will remain the mainstay of the organisation and the leading program upon which we will develop and expand. Should women come to us (and they make up around 15% of our contacts) then they will not be turned away and it is likely that the MIDs organisation will double in size with a new group that opened in September 2016. While professionals will always be needed, the existing model of volunteers encouraging our participants where appropriate, to see professionals such as psychologists and lawyers will remain, as will the principle of mates helping mates. The issues we deal with are a community issue and driving of these issues back into the community is something we do well - and is desperately needed.

The year also saw us make a submission into the Victorian Royal Commission into Family Violence, and while the commission was focussed on women's experiences (which were documented through the plethora of Women's services and refuges) the various groups advocating for men and common sense resulted in the acknowledgement by the Royal Commission: "men make up around one quarter of victims of violence by intimate partners within heterosexual relationships". This is a great step forward, as domestic violence cannot be addressed without getting to the root causes - which for many years some have been ignored.

With the name change and registration as a National organisation, new opportunities have emerged - which was always the primary reason for the branding exercise. We have been able to approach the Victorian state government and those negotiations are progressing, underpinned by the client surveys that many of you completed. The evidence is clear that the DIDs facilitators and methodologies work and are exceptionally cost effective. We also attract people that would often not seek help from professionals such as doctors, psychologists or other service providers, and many of our clients have historically been regarded as therapy resistant. That is, we are catching people that are at high risk and would not be caught otherwise. This is something that every volunteer and supporter can be proud of. You make a difference.

2016/17 is expected to be a bigger year than ever. We do expect funding through other streams which will mitigate the risks we faced like the 2014/2015 Community Grants issues

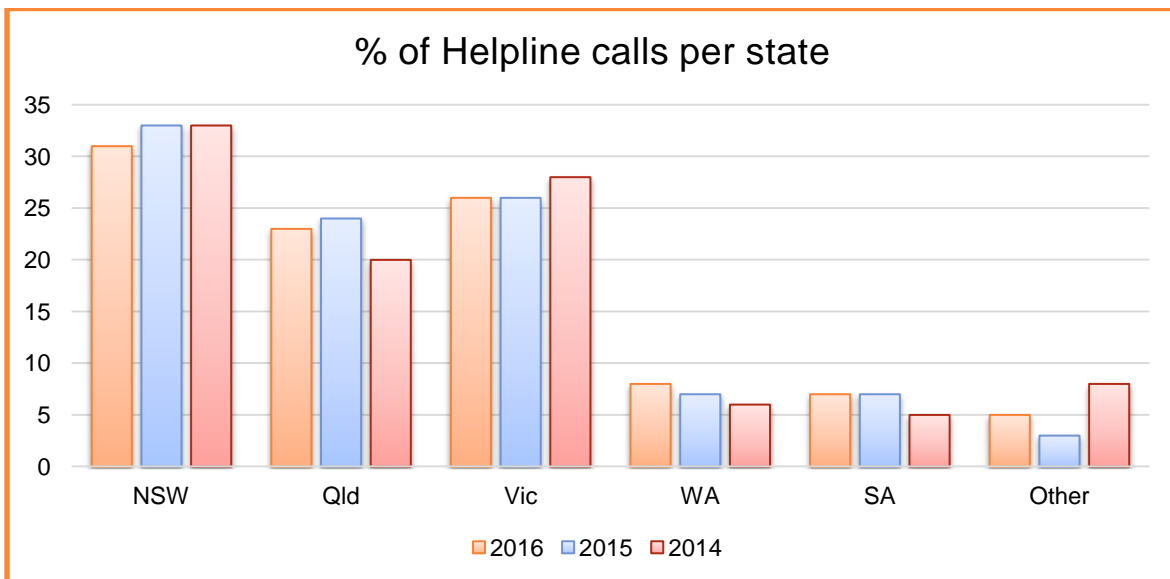
where the Federal Government slashed funding to over 4,000 organisations (including ours). This would have had dire consequences should the campaign to reinstate the funding not been successful, and we would have effectively closed or returned to groups without training and no coordination, and probably no insurance, placing any facilitator at enormous risk.

This funding will allow us to expand with better Helpline staffing; which has been stretched past the limit, other back office functions such as recording of statistics that are mandatory for our funding, and to be able to support the volunteer network and provide the essential training. Both the back office and front office (you the volunteers) are essential to our future and we have again seen the problems when there are insufficient volunteers for a given group, and where one person suffers along with the group from trying to run a group solo.

I wish everyone well for the upcoming year and hope that the many issues we have personally faced will be brought to a satisfactory conclusion, and as a community, we see government policy finally address the issues we witness on a regular basis - that could easily be improved.

Most importantly I need to thank the staff and all the volunteers that are responsible for achieving our organisations results.

To any Member or Senator of the state or federal parliament that reads this annual report please accept this as an open invitation to contact our head office to find out what we do and how we do it, we can arrange a visit to a group and you can see and understand why we are successful, and what you can do to help the community you represent.





## CEO's Message

2015/16 was productive in numerous ways. The establishment of Parents Beyond Breakup provides the opportunity to write the next chapter in our story, and to establish our credentials and position in the industry and community. The rebranding has developed a strong internal sense of core purpose, identity and market position.

Training and development of our volunteer facilitators continues, with impressive numbers participating – 40 within a two-month period typifies how much people want to give back to the DIDs and MIDs programs. Receipt of federal government volunteer grants in

four states allowed us to bring volunteers to the Sydney and Melbourne induction weekends from five states, representing eighteen different groups. We have opened four new weekly DID support groups this year with two more in the making, along with three Mums in Distress groups.

The demand for our services continues to grow with more calls to the Helpline and higher group attendance numbers recorded each year we progress. We have recently surveyed over 500 Helpline callers and group attendees, and the results show (again) that our services are incredibly effective. In addition, we have been able to conduct suicide prevention and DV research with 350 clients that has provided much needed evidence that our services save and improve lives every day.

It is not possible to facilitate the groups without the help of the many men and women who volunteer their time to open the doors every week to support other parents dealing with relationship breakdown. Their efforts should not to be underestimated, and the organisation will always be grateful for the work our volunteers do.

The employment of Dr Des Perry in Sydney and Ron Macris in Melbourne has injected an enormous amount of wisdom and experience to PBB operations. The dedicated Helpline staff continue their great work – Alan, Jeff and Shane are to be commended for their dedication and impact they have on thousands of lives every year. A massive thank you to Tracey for her voluntary admin work, we would be under greater pressure without it!

We have undertaken the process of having our program validated with subsequent inclusion in the online guide for evidence based programs – which is an important step towards better ensuring future funding opportunities with government and non-government bodies.

I would like to thank the board for the last 12 months that has seen the development of a strong organisation able to maintain a solid structure and provide the required support to the staff and volunteers.

## The Organisation

**PBB exists because family relationships breakdown.** This specific trauma for men, women and children often leads to social isolation, mental health issues, domestic violence and suicide. The consequences of these outcomes can be devastating and have lasting impacts on the wellbeing of individuals, families and communities.

We believe that every child deserves the best possible start in life, and as good a relationship as possible with both of their parents. PBB provides a range of support services to enable this and to work through their hurt and issues in a way that will cause minimal trauma for all involved.

PBB aims to help those parents that either do not recognise when they need help or they resist conventional methods of available support for the following issues:

1. social isolation, mental health, domestic violence and suicide
2. harmful residual effects on families, communities, economic participation and wellbeing

Peer support works effectively to help reduce trauma, family violence and the negative impacts on children.

## Who we are and how we operate

PBB is a national, serviced based volunteer organisation that prevents the distress of separation spiralling into trauma, or at times tragedy.

PBB works by using a successful peer support system delivered at a grass roots level by trained community volunteers in non-threatening spaces. Parents are empowered to find their own transition methods and through our volunteers and staff we model personal responsibility, normalised feelings, empathy and positively influence dangerous or harmful behaviours.

Our program is designed to reduce trauma amongst participants by helping them to better understand their situation, and reconnect with their community and work.

Because our services are accessible to all and are low cost, many displaced or separated parents that are dealing with the painful transitions can get the help they need in restoring their ability to deal with financial, legal, relational and social change – this is often beyond the scope of the traditional sources of help.



PBB not only aims to support individuals through traumatic relationship breakdowns and to protect those involved from harm, but also advocate for parent's rights.

Currently the organisation is funded by the Department of Social Services through its Children and Families Support program activities. This is not an on-going funding stream, which means that every year a large portion of the organisations time and staff resources is spent sourcing, applying and negotiating with government human service agencies and advocates, such as Members of Parliament, for recognition and support.

### Future goals

PBBs vision is to become a leading organisation that plays an integral role in supporting, assessing and referring individuals that are traumatised or struggling with issues associated to their relationship breakdowns or custody issues with their children.

In order to achieve our vision PBB has identified areas of the existing program that need to be expanded and other areas for improvement. In order to undertake these activities a funding source needs to be identified and secured for the next 5 years. It is hoped that over the 5 years PBB will become a sustainable community service.



## The Programs

### Peer Support Group Program

The group support program used by PBB has been endorsed by the Institute of Group Leaders (IGL), consisting of an expert working group of specialists in the field of group leadership. It is an organisation that aims to increase the skills of group leaders that operate in a range of settings.

The IGL endorsement empowers us to train and accredit our group facilitators at a consistent and nationally recognised level.

There are state services coordinators available within NSW and VIC, in addition there are around 100 volunteers nationally.



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*It's a safe meeting place with like-minded people who give you the opportunity to express your feelings and your situation without being judged. Has a number of experienced members who are all willing to help and guide you along the way – DIDs meeting participant*

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Regardless of our clients being male or female there can be a risk of violence, self-harm and possible suicide. The peer support model used has been incredibly successful to ensure the best outcomes not only for the client and their former partner, but more importantly, for the children.

Weekly support groups also provide a referral network for parents experiencing trauma associated with family breakdown and divorce.



**Australian Government**  
**Department of Social Services**

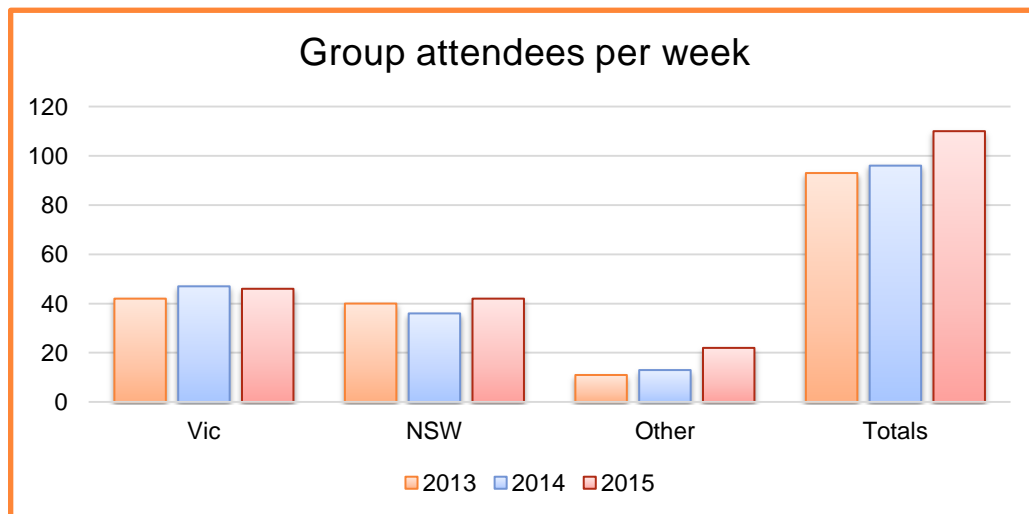
We aim to provide consistent formats for all meetings and support offered nationally. Evaluation of this program has demonstrated that this process produces positive outcomes for the participants.

PBB hosted 15 peer support meetings during 2015-16, led by accredited volunteer facilitators that provide help and hope for separated parents and their families. Peer support means being able to talk to others that they can relate to.



*Someone listened to me and provided guidance at an extremely vulnerable and emotional time. The support put me on the right track to seek help specific to my needs –  
New PBB Client*

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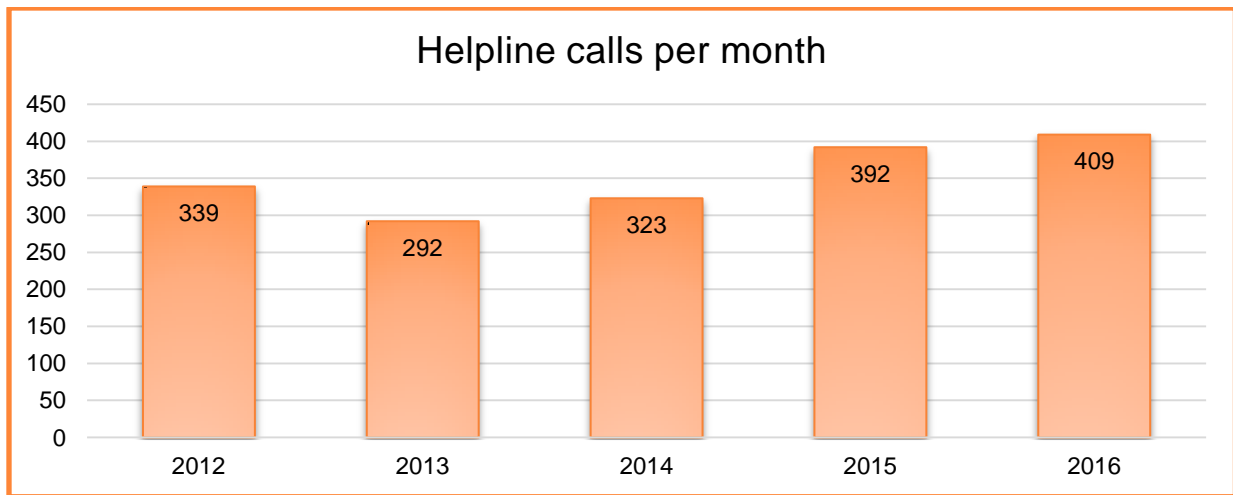
## Helpline

Three part-time staff currently man the national **Helpline** during normal office hours. This is the gateway of support for separated parents around the country. If located near one of our groups, the priority is to have them attend the weekly meeting. Alternately we provide a safe and confidential place for parents to talk through their issues, and where relevant, we refer them to services within their reach. For many callers simply providing an opportunity to be listened to without judgement can be all they need.

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*Hugely helpful-the person I speak to understands my issues.  
I still touch base regularly!*

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All of our services abide by duty of care to only breach confidentiality if there appears to be a serious risk to the life of any person.

Demand for this service continues to increase, with 2015/16 recording 22% more calls than the previous financial year. So far this calendar year we are 10% above 2015, with most months recording the largest number of calls ever for that month, which can be attributed to a growth and awareness of the organisation around Australia.



## Self-assessment

During 2016, PBB undertook research into the efficiency of the organisations program's. The research was undertaken by using a survey open to all clients, male and female, that have used the service. There were over 300 respondents, most of which (297) being males that are biological fathers.

67% said this was the best support they had found.

83% say that PBB has helped them and that they would recommend us to others.

78% said that their emotional/psychological state had improved.

100% of those with suicidal feelings report these being reduced by attending the groups.

24% say suicidal thoughts have significantly reduced since attending the groups.

6% report not suiciding specifically as a result of PBB interaction.

24% said it had significantly improved the relationship with their children.

79% report false allegations used against them in their legal case.

26% report being the victim of significant or extreme physical domestic violence.

83% report contact with their child used as a bargaining chip.

Ongoing assessment of our Group and Helpline services show that:

**83%** of support group attendees and **71%** of helpline callers are **better able to deal with the issues** that they sought help for.

Clients report high levels of recommending the service to others, and feeling:

- **Less isolated** and alone.
- Being respected.
- Satisfied with the service they received.

Of the approximate **5,000 callers** to the helpline per year:

- 87% are male
- 13% are calling as a third party concerned for someone else
- 75% do not live near a support group
- 60% are seeking to address stress, anxiety or anger issues.

Social media and on-line presence:

- **7,000** followers - 68% male, 32% female, regular reach exceeds 20,000 per post
- Website database has **6,100 members** and **1,500** supporters.

## Principle activities of PBB

**Promotion** of the prevention & control of behavior that is harmful or abusive, specifically in suicide and self-harm as a result of family breakdown.

**Establishment** of a public fund for the promotion, prevention and control of behavior that is harmful or abusive.

**Raise** awareness of suicide related to divorce or separation.

**Relieving** the harmful pressures on family through relationship breakdowns.

## Financial Statement

### Income and Expenditure Statement for the year ended 30 June 2016

Item	2014 - 2015	2015 - 16
<b>Income</b>		
Project Funding	413,652	365,389
Fund-raising and donations	22,287	20,459
Other	79,525	20,967
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>515,464</b>	<b>406,815</b>
<b>Expenditure</b>		
Wages and related expenses	368,231	294,914
Consultants	12,809	27,472
Volunteer development	41,286	38,118
Telephone	14,260	11,448
Advertising	1,417	196
Web-site	8,908	5,698
Other	45,479	48,314
<b>Total Expenditure</b>	<b>492,390</b>	<b>426,160</b>
<b>Surplus/(Deficit)</b>	<b>23,074</b>	<b>(19,345)</b>

### Assets and Liabilities Statement for the year ended 30 June 2016

Item	2014 - 2015	2015 - 2016
<b>Member Funds</b>		
Retained Earnings	23,074	(19,345)
<b>Total Members Funds</b>	<b>70,862</b>	<b>51,517</b>
<b>Current Assets</b>		
Cash	122,086	84,854
Debtors	0	0
<b>Total Current Assets</b>	<b>122,086</b>	<b>84,854</b>
<b>Non-Current Assets</b>		
Plant & Equipment	4,466	4,845
<b>Total Assets</b>	<b>126,552</b>	<b>89,699</b>
<b>Current Liabilities</b>		
Creditors	12,581	7,474
Provision for Annual Leave	18,617	10,356
Income in Advance	0	0
<b>Total Current Liabilities</b>	<b>31,198</b>	<b>17,830</b>
<b>Non-Current Liabilities</b>		
Provision for Long Service Leave	24,492	20,352
<b>Total Liabilities</b>	<b>55,690</b>	<b>38,182</b>
<b>Net Assets</b>	<b>70,862</b>	<b>51,517</b>

## Becoming a sustainable organisation

Going forward, the focus is for PBB to secure financial support and commitment for the next five-year period. With the intent of becoming as financially sustainable as possible, and that the funding be used to underpin activities such as:

- The current Dads in Distress program be expanded to include Mothers in Distress. The Federal Government funds the DIDs program in three locations nationally and the funding covers the administrative and management support provided by the CEO, based in Coffs Harbour, and 2 part-time Service Coordinators, one in Sydney and one in Melbourne.
- Full time Service Coordinators are required in the following locations; Brisbane, Gold Coast, Far North Queensland, Adelaide, Perth, Darwin, ACT, Hunter Valley, as well as more in NSW and Victoria metro areas.
- Such an expansion would require support staff with experience in Human Resources, Marketing, Public Relations and Research. Staff roles would transition from operational and administrative as currently needed, to strategic development ones requiring administration support. Currently the organisations administrative tasks are undertaken mainly by the CEO and volunteers.
- The helpline is currently operated by three-part time staff members. Monitoring the number of calls taken this financial year, clearly shows the need for the current hours to be increased from a Mon-Fri, 9am-5pm service to a seven days a week, 8.30am-10.00pm service.

Some improvements PBB require are related to infrastructure, media & communications, equipment and training and development of staff and volunteers.

## Acknowledgements

In our established regions our dedicated staff and volunteers have developed links in the community with other services to identify vulnerable families, and then establish referral pathways for parents with professionals and services as appropriate. Some of the service providers utilised include:

- Mensline Australia
- Lifeline
- Relationships Australia, Family Life, Interrelate, Anglicare and Catholic Care
- Family Relationship Centres in all funded regions
- Family Law Pathway Networks
- Community Health Services
- Men's Health and Wellbeing Alliances and Peak bodies
- Federal Departments of Human and Social Services, comprising the Child Support Agency and Centrelink
- Commonwealth Ombudsman
- State Police (including the Support Link services)
- State Health Departments
- Australian Federal Police
- Charities such as the Salvation Army
- Family and Federal Circuit Courts
- Local Magistrates Court

The Management Team collaborate with key service provider managers, program/project workers and coordinators. There were discussions held with groups of service providers, and it is recognised that our existing partnership models has been successful in engaging and collaborating with many significant service stakeholders with regard to working with parents across the funded regions.

In addition, this year we have received significant contributions from the following organisations:



The following organisations provide a venue (mainly at no cost) for our weekly group meetings – for which we are extremely grateful;

**New South Wales:**

Freshwater Amateur Swimming Clubhouse – Northern Beaches

Zinc Group - Sydney

St Luke's Anglican Church - Liverpool

Tighes Hill Public School – Newcastle

**Victoria:**

Glen Park Community Centre – Bayswater

Orwill Street Community Centre – Frankston

Barwon – Geelong

Westvale Community Centre – St Albans

Alma Road Community House – St Kilda

**South Australia:**

Disability Recreation and Sports SA – Richmond / Adelaide

Trott Park Community Centre – Trott Park

**Queensland:**

The Family Place – Logan

Fight Like a Pro Gym – Gold Coast

**Western Australia:**

St Bartholomew's House - Perth



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