

Martin Luther King said:

“Life’s most persistent and urgent question is “what are you doing for others”.

As this is the AGM of a long standing not-for-profit organisation the room is filled with people who are active stakeholders in our community – people we recognise as givers of their time, support and money, not only to Little Haven but to many valuable community groups in our area.

Gympie is a great town to live in – and also to die in.

I took over the role of President again this year in January, and it has been quite a year for the Management Committee. We are required to provide guidance, advice, governance, and hands- on help - all of which are important to the ongoing sustainability of Little Haven. But this year has also been a year that has required a little more from our committee.

I would like to formally acknowledge the contributions of outgoing committee members who have between them a combined service of over 30 years to Little Haven. Jill Dinneen, Helen Hall, Annette Geurts, Wally Bennett and also Craig Lena (as treasurer for over 7 years).

We have in turn welcomed new faces and look forward to their ongoing representation on the management committee.

As many of you know, Sue Manton lost her mum, Pam earlier this year. We are thankful that Sue was still able to continue her work with Little Haven during this time – still playing a pivotal role in the areas of management, fund raising, grant writing and advocacy for Little Haven. I am sure Mrs Drysdale and her family were grateful for Sue’s commitment to her care during this time.

Early in 2017 one of the first jobs of the management committee was a strategic planning meeting during which we addressed concerns regarding the future viability of the organisation and sought to identify paths for taking the organisation forward in a more sustainable manner.

Our service is ‘gold standard’. Our model of community based palliative care is soon to be recognised in the “Productivity Commission’s Human Services Report on End of Life Care” in shaping government policy. Imagine how much further we could go if our valued, highly skilled and passionate Little Haven staff could focus entirely on the provision of care instead of finding the funds to help the next 200 families we expect to care for in the coming year.

We need a funding fairy. Or a generous genie? Could we even settle for a community - minded sugardaddy? Or perhaps just an *equitable* and *sustained* funding stream from our State and Federal Governments.

This year much of our focus as an organisation has been on raising the awareness of the need for greater funding of Little Haven. The passion of our Business Manager, Sue Manton, our team of nursing and administration staff and our army of tireless volunteers deserves some recognition – and even a little bit of respite from the ongoing pressure of raising funds. Thank goodness for the generous community of Gympie and Cooloola – out to Kilkivan and down as far as Pomona. It is for this reason that we will not be closing our books or limiting access to our service in any way.

At this time I would also thank the many people – patients, their families, our local doctors, our councillors, state and federal representatives for their letters of support and actions which have helped us to gain some traction in the quest for more funding.

In 2017, Little Haven also showed Gympie that we could dress up and party a little...

Our Glitz and Glamour event was a spectacular success and we look forward (!?) to doing it all again in a couple of years. Maybe ten years...

While every fundraiser brings a huge increase in workload for everyone at Little Haven it is also a great way to demonstrate to you the wonderful work of our volunteers. At any given event you will find Little Haven volunteers cooking, cleaning, serving, decorating, moving furniture, selling tickets, behind the bar, putting out tables and chairs, packing away tables and chairs... the list goes on.

Then of course we have a team of volunteers who run our very successful social enterprises - the Pop-up shops and the Shed sales, Raffles and Hand craft shops. These volunteers provide Little Haven with such a valuable income stream and they do a wonderful job of raising awareness while engaging with the people of our town.

Finally, there are also the people who are officially employed by Little Haven to provide the quality end of life care - the reason why we are all here tonight. We need to acknowledge the skills, passion and practice wisdom of our nurses, bereavement staff, support staff and administration. We also need to acknowledge the many hours all of these 'paid' people give willingly of their own time and energy to support Little Haven in a volunteer capacity.

I believe the 2017-18 is going to be a year of great growth for Little Haven. Of course we know the list of patients we care for will most likely increase – that's what we're here for. But I also believe that the broader appreciation for the value of our service will also grow, bringing with it the much needed increased external funding that will help ensure the sustainability of Little Haven.

Thank you

Brandy Murley.

President