

## ANNUAL REPORT 2013-2014

### CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

This year has seen some positive growth within the regional economy. Whilst this is encouraging news we still need to be vigilant and ensure that we continue to monitor current trends both domestically and internationally. Sadly, at the time of writing this report I had news of two young people within our community who ended their lives suddenly which shows that we have still a long way to go with our work. However, the Dr Edward Koch Foundation continues to provide outstanding resources and programs that have proven to be beneficial within the community. It is the continued support of the Cairns Community that has enabled the Foundation to do what it does. With the help of our partnership services providers and our strong body of volunteers, we are able to reduce the amount of funds that are needed to contribute to such a valuable resource.

The volunteers, who help each and every day in the office, work tirelessly to ensure that the community's needs are met, be it through community presence to a publication that highlights events that the Foundation has been involved with. I have, on good authority, that the Suicide and Self-harm Prevention Conference is shaping up to be an outstanding event, one not to be missed on next year's calendar.

I look forward to another year of growth for the Foundation and acknowledge the dedication that Dulcie and her team provide to our local community.

Graham Koch  
Chairman

### CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER'S REPORT

This has been a busy year for the Dr Edward Koch Foundation. Highlights include the release of our updated Suicide Awareness and Support Handbook, now in its 5<sup>th</sup> edition. There has been great demand for the revised handbook since the new edition was released. Another project commenced this year was the Life Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Suicide Bereavement Support Group which is a new inclusion in the Foundation's Life Program Indigenous Suicide Prevention Community Plans. The initiative focuses on providing a culturally appropriate service and resources for assisting with grief and loss following a suicide and appears to be the only existing support group of its kind in Australia. Life Suicide Awareness and Prevention Workshops continue to be held on a needs basis, with several organised for the Cairns and Tablelands region.





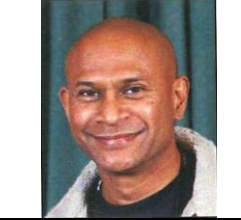


In partnership with the FNQ Suicide Prevention Taskforce and Suicide Prevention Australia, the Foundation held the FNQ Suicide Issues Community Forum in November. The aim of the forum was to gather together the community, government, non-government and business and industry stakeholders to collectively identify the needs of the region in relation to suicide prevention, intervention and postvention.

Fundraising activities continued, with the Rotary Corporate Duck Race held in September. We are very grateful for the ongoing support of Rotary. Another major fundraiser this year was the Cairns Corporate Challenge Kokoda Trek, which raised a significant sum of \$78,410.57. As we have not yet managed to secure any government funding we are extremely appreciative of the support of the community for our fundraising endeavours which help us to continue our work to reduce suicides in our region.

The work of the Foundation has been made possible because of many people – the dedicated team of staff and volunteers, members of the Taskforce, Tanya Snelling from Strategic PR for her voluntary work as our publicity consultant, and of course all of our funding sponsors.

Dulcie Bird  
Chief Executive Officer

## DIRECTORS

	<p><b>Mr. Graham Koch (Chairman)</b></p> <p>Graham Koch DipFP C.Dec – Graham was appointed a director in March, 1997 and became chairman in 2001. Graham has been involved in the financial services industry for nearly 40 years. With his wife, Janet, Graham formed his own local business in 1992, which has developed into the KIB Group of companies. Graham holds an advanced diploma in financial services (financial planning) and is a member of the Association of Financial Advisers and The Australian Institute of Company Directors. Graham also serves the community as a Commissioner for Declarations and through his involvement in Rotary International where he has been elected to serve as district governor in 2011-12 for District 9550 covering Northern Australia and East Timor. Dr Edward Koch was Graham’s great-grandfather.</p>
	<p><b>Mrs. Dulcie Bird (Executive Officer)</b></p> <p>Dulcie was born in Cairns. As a local, she is well aware of many of the problems which are relevant to living in Far North Qld. Dulcie has always involved herself in community work, and is well regarded for her help with children with disabilities and her work in suicide prevention. Dulcie has a Bachelor of Social Science (with a major in Sociology and French), from James Cook University. She has been honoured with an Australia Day Award for services both to art and the Dr Edward Koch Foundation.</p>
	<p><b>Mr. Neil Parsons</b></p> <p>Neil Parsons, although born in Sydney, has spent his entire life in Cairns. His family has a long history with North Queensland stretching back six generations. Growing up in the north has broadened his awareness of unique public health issues that many face in the tropics because of isolation, environment and climate. He is currently Branch Manager of an international freight company having worked in the freight forwarding industry for the past 26 years. Neil is also a Commissioner for Declarations. His love of art has made him a strong supporter of the Art on Aplin Gallery.</p>
	<p><b>Assoc Prof. Dr Komla Tsey</b></p> <p>Komla Tsey is Tropical Leader/Research Professor of education for social sustainability at The Cairns Institute, James Cook University, Australia. Komla comes from Ghana. He studied at the University of Ghana and the University of Glasgow in Scotland. Komla lives in Australia, researching and learning about Aboriginal development, health, education and wellbeing. He continues to undertake long term development research in his native rural Ghana. Komla has written over 100 peer reviewed journal articles on a wide range of development and wellbeing related topics. He is the author of <i>Re-thinking Development in Africa</i>, published by Langaa Publishing (Mankon, Cameroon) in 2011. His forthcoming book, <i>From Headloading to the Iron Horse</i> (Langaa 2012) examines British railway building in colonial Ghana and the origins of present day international development especially regarding the tropical regions of the world.</p>
	<p><b>Dr Mark Wenitong</b></p> <p>Dr Mark Wenitong is of Kabi Kabi Aboriginal decent. He is the senior medical officer for Apunipima Cape York Health Council. He is also the immediate past president and founding member of the Australian Indigenous Doctors Association. He speaks regularly at national events and conferences on Indigenous health, education, workforce leadership and cultural issues. He has a particular interest in Indigenous men’s health.</p>
	<p><b>Mr Phil Dempster</b></p> <p>Phil retired at the start of 2011 after over 40 years in the printing and copying industry. He is currently Chairman of Rotarians Against Malaria .Phil is on the Executive of Northern Region Rotary Australia World Community Service, Secretary of the Rotary Club of Cairns Southside, Past District Governor of Rotary District 9550 and member of Rotary District 9550 College of Governors.</p>
	<p><b>Ms Shane Devenish</b></p> <p>Shane Devenish is an Associate at Devenish Law, Cairns and practises in property and commercial law. Originally from Goondiwindi, Queensland, Shane has an appreciation of the issues faced by young people living in regional and remote areas. Following her graduation from James Cook University, Cairns in 2006 Shane tutored indigenous law students. Shane is a volunteer with Rosies Friends on the Street and is a registered mentor with the Department of Employment, Economic Development and Innovation Mentoring for Growth Program (Qld Govt).</p>

## PROJECTS

### LIFE PROGRAM

The Life Program incorporates the FNQ Suicide Prevention Taskforce, the Life Workshops, the Life Bereavement Support Service, the Life Community Plans and the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Life Suicide Bereavement Support Group. All facets of the program are strongly utilised by the community and all of our suicide prevention projects are carried out within the Life Program framework.

#### **Survivors of Suicide Bereavement Support Association**

The Cairns Survivors of Suicide Bereavement Support Association Inc. (SOSBSA) held a memorial Evening in December. The evening was an opportunity for those who have lost a loved one through suicide to share a quiet time, in a supportive environment, with others who have had similar experiences. The Koch Foundation was proud to co-sponsor the evening with the Scope Club of Cairns.

#### **Cairns Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Suicide Bereavement Support Group**

A new initiative of the Foundation is the Life Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Suicide Bereavement Support Group which offers the opportunity to talk about the loss of a loved one and also provides community members with basic coping strategies and other information that they can access and use if they are supporting someone who is at risk of suicide. The Group is facilitated by trained counsellors including an Aboriginal person well known and accepted throughout Far North Queensland. The Group meets on a regular basis and is free to attend.

#### **Life Suicide Prevention Youth Workshops**

One of the Foundation's principal projects this year was the development of our Life Suicide Prevention Youth Workshop. This school-based project aims to address the abnormally high incidences of self-harm and suicide among Queensland youth. Young people are provided with information on what they should do when they become aware that a friend, family member or fellow student is at possible risk of suicide. The workshops provide a safe environment to facilitate discussion and learning on issues related to suicide. Funding is currently being sought to trial the workshop in schools.

#### **Rare Disease Day Fun Run & Walk**

On 23 February 2014, the Foundation held its sixth annual event on the Cairns Esplanade to recognise International Rare Disease Day. Through this event, we hope to draw attention to rare diseases and the impacts they have on the millions of people who suffer from them. It was a fun-filled day, starting with a short run or walk down the Esplanade, followed by a BBQ and icy poles, lucky draw prizes and a jumping castle for the kids. This was a family-friendly event, with many ages and fitness levels attending. All funds raised go towards the Foundation's *Rare Diseases Awareness Program in the Far North*, to help those in the FNQ region who are affected by a rare condition.

#### **The Recovery Room**

This new initiative, The Recovery Room Project aims to reduce the stigma of mental health or illness, and increase wellness - helping us learn how to cope with life's great challenges, recover and regain hope. The Cairns Post is publishing in its Saturday supplement - the Cairns Eye - a variety of articles that seek to improve the general well-being of our community, inform about services and ways to help ourselves, our mates and loved ones. Professionals working in many helping fields are contributing these articles, and the topics covered demonstrate that *anyone* may need help with their mental health, just as they may with a physical illness. The articles also offer information about services both locally and online.

#### **FNQ Suicide Prevention Taskforce**

Of significance for the Taskforce was the revision and reprinting of the "Prevention Suicide – An Awareness and Support Handbook". The 5<sup>th</sup> edition was launched by the Member for Barron River, Michael Trout, during a special ceremony at Cairns Regional Council in September. Developed by the Far North Queensland Suicide Prevention Taskforce, the handbook was written in response to an urgent need in the health and community service sector for a community-focused suicide prevention resource. The handbook is a valuable education resource and guide for all those in contact with people at risk of suicide, including health professionals, carers, family members and friends. There has been great demand for the revised handbook since the new edition was released.

#### **The Far North Queensland Suicide Issues Community Forum**

More than 120 participants attended a special community forum in November 2013 at the Cairns convention Centre. The FNQ Suicide Issues Community Forum, hosted by the Foundation, was held to address suicide prevention in the local community. The aim of the Forum was to gather together people from all walks of life in our community, along

with government, non-government and business and industry stakeholders, to collectively identify the needs of the FNQ region in relation to suicide prevention, intervention and postvention.

After an opening message from Michael Trout, State Member for Barron River, the Forum was addressed by a panel of guests – experts in their respective fields – who spoke on a variety of topics and stimulated ideas for discussion. The Forum provided attendees with a chance to raise their concerns about unmet needs in our community, to say what is being done well and what helps or hinders persons at risk of suicide or bereaved by suicide.

The Forum was a success and will greatly benefit our community into the future. The outcome of the forum's discussions will help guide the Foundation and other service providers in future planning for community targeted projects.

Guest speakers for the Forum were: Ian Maynard, Director General of Queensland Health; Patrick Cooke, Indigenous Employment, Training and Business Development Manager of Crocksolid; Marie O'Dea, Manager of headspace Cairns; Michael Oates, Engagement and Development Officer of headspace School Support; Susan Murray, CEO Suicide Prevention Australia; Professor Diego De Le, Director of the Australian Institute for Suicide Research and Prevention at Griffith University; and Dr Siobhan O'Dwyer, Research Fellow at the Australian Institute for Suicide Research and Prevention at Griffith University.

Sponsor for the event were Suicide Prevention Australia (major sponsor), the FNQ Suicide Prevention Taskforce and the Cairns Convention Centre. The Foundation is appreciative of the sponsorships and all of the Forum participants for their involvement in the event.

## **PARTNERSHIP PROJECTS**

### **World Suicide Prevention Day 2013**

Thursday, 10 September 2013 was World Suicide Prevention Day, a day to raise global awareness of the problems of suicide and suicidal behaviour, and ways these can be prevented. To mark this day the Australian Institute for Suicide Research and Prevention (AISRAP) hosted a forum at the Christie Conference Centre in Brisbane. A number of keynote speakers, including Dulcie Bird, attended the conference to speak on the theme of stigma, a major barrier to suicide prevention, and how this issue can be addressed.

### **Mental Health Workshops and Forums**

The CEO was invited to attend the Cairns & Hinterland Hospital and Health Services Mental Health Workshop on 12 September 2013. Dulcie welcomed the opportunity to discuss issues in FNQ with other community members and the Queensland Mental Health Commissioner, Dr Lesley van Schoubroeck.

On 24 September 2013, the Qld Mental Health Commission hosted a regional forum in Cairns. The forum was attended by the CEO, who joined others in sharing their views and thoughts on how to develop a whole-of-government strategic plan for mental illness in Queensland. These collaborations are a positive first step toward systemic reform of the mental health system in Queensland.

Member for Cairns, Gavin King, hosted a forum for members of the community with the Hon. Campbell Newman MP, Premier of Queensland on Tuesday, 22 October 2013. The CEO of the Foundation attended and had the opportunity to speak to the Premier about our planned Youth Suicide Prevention Workshop in schools.

## **APPEALS**

**The Foundation continues to support** public appeals for individuals needing expensive medical treatment and operate the Koch Foundation Community Fund. The Koch Foundation Community Fund facilitates donations to those individuals who find themselves in difficult life threatening situations and are in need of support. Appeals that are currently seeking funding are the Alegria Havini Appeal, the Stuart Hardy Appeal, the Rare Diseases Appeal and the Luke Westaway Appeal.

## OTHER FUNDRAISING

### Talking Survival Lunch for the Declan Crouch Fund

In August 2013, more than 170 people attended a special fundraising lunch at the Pullman Cairns International. Organised by the Cairns Corporate Challenge team, the luncheon raised more than \$18,000 for the Declan Crouch Fund, which will be put towards the Foundation's specific youth suicide prevention program. Special guests included wife of the Queensland Premier, Lisa Newman, and Cairns' own 'The Bush Tucker Man', Les Hiddens.

The Foundation would like to extend its congratulations and thanks to the 29 trekkers who participated in the CCC Kokoda Trek. Their efforts raised significant awareness and funds (\$78,410.57) for the Declan Crouch Fund.

### Corporate Duck Race 2013

The 2013 Corporate Duck Race, held in partnership with the Rotary Club of Cairns Mulgrave, took place at the Esplanade Lagoon in September. Favoured with perfect weather, a large crowd gathered to watch sponsored 'Corporate Ducks' race in support of the Foundation.

Thank you to The Cairns Post, Cairns Hardware Co, Rijicon Constructions, Big Cat Green Island Reef Cruises, and Cairns Harbour Cruises for donating prizes for the event.

All proceeds raised from the event support the Foundation's Every Life Matters Program. The Foundation would like to extend its thanks to our duck sponsors, as well as the many dedicated volunteers, especially Rotarians, who worked hard to make the day such a success.

### Simply Ballroom Dance School

The Simply Ballroom Dance School continues to operate as a fundraiser for the Foundation. At Christmas, forty students and guests gathered in the ballroom on 8 December 2013 to dance the night away at the Dance School's end of year social event. Revellers were provided with a light supper, before taking to the dance floor to show off their moves. The event was a joyous and spirited occasion, and definitely finished off the year in style.

## DONATIONS

Donations have been extensive this year, as support grows for our suicide prevention activities and our appeals for help for those who require substantial financial assistance because of ill health. The Foundation is extremely appreciative of all donations, no matter how small.

## GRANTS/RESEARCH FUNDS

Gambling Community Benefit Fund	\$27,272.73
ANZ Trustees	\$ 5000.00

## SPONSORSHIPS

Suicide Prevention Australia	\$4,000.00
Centacare Cairns	\$2500.00

## CONSULTANCIES

Cocky Smart Pty Ltd  
Qld Health, Communicable Diseases Unit  
Act for Kids  
New Mountain Merchants Pty Ltd

## GENERAL

### 2013 Australian Institute of Management Excellence Awards

Dr Edward Koch Foundation CEO Dulcie Bird was shortlisted for the 2013 Australian Institute of Management (AIM) Excellence Awards, gaining further recognition for her work. Dulcie was selected as a Regional Finalist for Not for Profit Manager of the Year for the Cairns region. The AIM Excellence Awards were announced at a dinner on 31 August 2013 at the Cairns Convention Centre. Dulcie's continued personal recognition at award ceremonies in recent years helps promote the Foundation and its important role in promoting the health and wellbeing of North Queenslanders.

### Volunteer Profile – Bernie Dimla

In October 2013, the Koch Foundation extended a warm welcome to Bernie Dimla, who commenced a 16 week placement with the Foundation. Bernie was in her final year of a Bachelor of Social Work with Central Queensland University. This was her last placement before earning her degree. The project that she worked on with the Koch Foundation was about preventing suicide in older people.

## THE FUTURE

The Foundation has many projects planned for the coming years, inspired by the community's great desire to reduce our suicide rates in North Queensland. Of big significance is the Suicide & Self-harm Prevention Conference 2015 which the Foundation will be hosting in June. Fabulous keynote speakers have been engaged and the program promises to be a vast educational experience for attendees.

The Foundation also will continue to have their proposed trial project – Life Youth Suicide Prevention Projects within Schools - implemented next year.

Next year marks the 20<sup>th</sup> year of the Foundation. It promises to be a big year and we are all looking forward to the celebrations.

