



**13th SEPTEMBER 2023 (FY 2023)
ANNUAL REPORT**

**Fibromyalgia ME/CFS Gold Coast Support Group Inc.
ABN: 12 618 317 229**



Fibromyalgia ME/CFS Gold Coast Support Group Inc. proudly acknowledges the Traditional Custodians of Country throughout Australia. In particular we pay our respects to the people and elders, past, present and future of the Yugambeh lands.



Our mission

Our mission is to bring about sustainable change and acceptance of ME/CFS and Fibromyalgia into the mainstream of Gold Coast community including health care, education, disability and support services, with dignity.

Our vision

Our vision is for the Gold Coast and Queensland communities, health and community services to extend compassion and empathy to people living with fibromyalgia and ME/CFS and provide consumer orientated, accessible, safe and effective quality services.

Our History

The original Fibromyalgia ME/CFS Gold Coast Support Group was established in 1998 by a group of people living with these conditions, on an informal and voluntary basis, with the aim for others with these conditions to create connections in a safe environment - to be able to share experiences of their health journey, learn to manage the conditions and to navigate the health care system.

Demand grew over the years and the volunteers of the group found it difficult to maintain the desired level of support to the almost 600 people reaching out through our various platforms; a private Facebook group; closed email group; Zoom and Skype sessions; telephone calls and in-person.

With sustainability and desire to increase support in mind, a group of our regular volunteer facilitators came together in early 2021. The result being, after many months of work, Fibromyalgia ME/CFS Gold Coast Support Group Inc. is a registered, not-for-profit incorporated association under Queensland law, and is registered with the ACNC as a Health Promotion and Advancing Health Charity with DGR endorsement.

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Welcome to our AGM for Fibromyalgia ME/CFS Gold Coast Support Group Inc.

What a busy and wonderful year it has been for our support group. Wendy has been travelling with her little wagon full of information and membership forms, paper cups, tea and coffee, while I've been wheeling a makeshift plastic container and esky with food, to different community rooms around the coast, for instance Upper Coomera, Mudgeeraba, Helensvale, Labrador and Robina, twice a month to meet up for a morning tea get together!

The rooms have been full of known and new people with lots of shared stories, a few tears and laughter. It's been quite an adventure and we have enjoyed getting to know everyone on the journey. We've had some challenges with some of the venues but we made it and with a great bunch of people we just laughed through the hiccups on the way. A big thanks to the Community Wide Grant from the City of Gold Coast for allowing us to host these events, at no cost to attendees. This was an important factor for us due to the costs of living. We also thank Sam O'Connor MP for allowing us to use his room free of charge at Labrador.

Who could forget our amazing Awareness Day picnic! The weather was perfect for such an event and we had over 60 people join us for the event. We had our beautiful butterfly tree compliments from Stuart Irwin, each purple or blue butterfly representing those who could not be there on the day.

Thank you to Wendy Bennett for organising the event and the wonderful food and exceptional cake. I'm sure that you have all seen the pictures on Facebook and the great outfits that people wore, especially Kerrie our butterfly lady!! A big thanks to Cr Ryan Bayldon-Lumsden for his donation towards the food and for the use of his marquee, also to Sam O'Connor for the use of his marquee, tables, chairs, microphone and speaker system. A big thank you to Kerrie Thomson's husband, Brad, for his help in transporting the equipment to the venue plus Stuart Irwin who helped return the items.

I would also like to thank members of the board and members of the support group for decorating the tables and decorating the butterfly tree, your help was honestly appreciated.

Our new website is so exciting and we hope that you can navigate your way around it easily. We have a digital membership form now and people will be able to donate from the website. So much easier. You will be able to check on the events which will be much easier especially if you don't frequent or belong to Facebook. We will be building more into the website as we continue to expand.

Wendy will talk to you about the grants that we were able to achieve this year which was wonderful but without your membership and donations which is the financial base of our group we wouldn't be where we are today.

Thank you for your encouragement as we move forward to new and exciting adventures next year. We know that we all need more than the health system can provide and we hope that as we learn your needs we can present more in the future.

We have some plans that we are working on that should benefit all of us next year. Each year as we find new friends, we find more needs for our group. Let's continue to work together!!



Carol Baker
President



SECTION 1**AN OVERVIEW OF FIBROMYALGIA ME/CFS
GOLD COAST SUPPORT GROUP INC.****ABOUT US**

We are a Health Promotion Charity whose purpose is to advance health by:-

- promoting activities to help manage suffering or distress and to prevent further ill health and disability;
- facilitate regular support group informative meetings and social lunches;
- provide a safe and supportive environment where people can share their stories and feel validated;
- promote awareness, develop local media campaigns, promotional materials and website information so that more people are aware of and understand the effects of FM, ME/CFS;
- advocate for improved access to care by connecting with GP's, nurses and allied health to promote the importance of early diagnosis;
- support newly diagnosed people navigate the paperwork and requirements for disability claims with Services Australia or through insurance.



Our core objectives as set out in our Constitution are:-

- to provide support for and information to people living with ME/CFS and FM on the Gold Coast;
- to raise awareness of ME/CFS and/or FM in the Gold Coast community;
- to advocate for people living with ME/CFS and/or FM in the Gold Coast community;
- to raise funds to help and support people living with ME/CFS and/or FM who are physically and socially isolated in the Gold Coast community.

OUR PEOPLE

Board members/Trustees

Name	Position	Dates acted (if not for whole year)
Carol Baker	President	21-09-2022 - 13-09-2023
Wendy Bennett	Secretary Treasurer	21-09-2022 - 13-09-2023
Wendy Nicholas	Ordinary Board Member	21-09-2022 - 13-09-2023
Eric Middleton	Ordinary Board Member	21-09-2022 - 13-09-2023
Debbie Flessner	Ordinary Board Member	21-09-2022 - 13-09-2023
Kerrie Thomson	Ordinary Board Member	21-09-2022 - 13-09-2023
Stevie Rae Rackley	Ordinary Board Member	21-09-2022 - 13-09-2023











Employees

Name	Position	Dates acted (if not for whole year)
Nil		

Volunteers

Name	Position	Dates acted (if not for whole year)
All Board Members noted above		

OUR SUPPORTERS

 <p>SAM O'CONNOR Member for Bonney</p>		
Sam O'Connor MP for Bonney	Professor Sonya Marshall Gradisnik	The team at NCNED
 <p><i>Persistent Pain Program</i></p>		 <p>Sisters of Charity Foundation</p>
Joyce McSwan, Persistent Pain Program, GHPHN	Gold Coast Primary Health Network	Sisters of Charity Foundation
<p>Proudly supported by</p>  <p>CITY OF GOLDCOAST™</p>	<p>Proudly supported by</p>  <p>Councillor Ryan Bayldon-Lumsden Division 7</p> 	
Gold Coast City Council	Ryan Bayldon Lumsden	James Frizelle Charitable Foundation

ME/CFS is unrelenting, debilitating fatigue
not relieved by resting.



fibromyalgia me/cfs gold coast support group inc.

Fibromyalgia

the pain is unrelenting



fibromyalgia me/cfs gold coast support group inc.

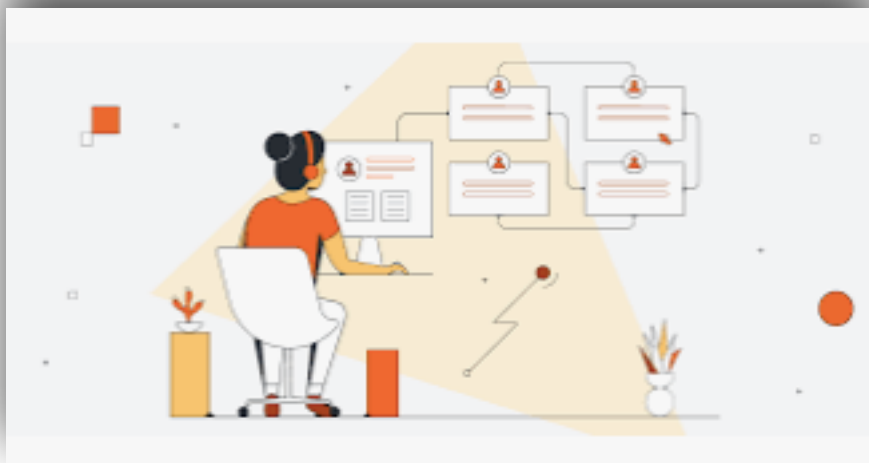
SECTION 2**GOVERNANCE****STRUCTURE & MANAGEMENT**

Fibromyalgia ME/CFS Gold Coast Support Group Inc. is registered with the Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission (ACNC) and as an Incorporated Association with Office of Fair Trading Queensland.

We adopted the Office of Fair Trading model rules as our Constitution, with one additional clause, to satisfy ACNC being a Deductible Gift Recipient Revocation clause.

At this early stage of our Association, our Structure and Management is, simply put, our seven Board Members noted in the previous section. They have been serving as Board Members, as the Operational team and Volunteers. We do not have any employees or paid volunteers.

We have established a Board Manual and numerous Policies & Procedures which set out the processes to be followed.



OUR WORK

Our focus during the 2022-2023 financial year was about providing support to the estimated 25,000 people on the Gold Coast living with fibromyalgia and/or ME/CFS whilst also promoting our Support Group.

We have strengthened our connections with the MP for Bonney, Sam O'Connor and with Cr Ryan Bayldon Lumsden who have provided us with a lot of support.

We were successful with 6 grant applications which has allowed us to:-

- ★ establish our public liability insurance;
- ★ fund social morning teas twice a month utilising the room at Sam O'Connor's office as well as Council Community Centres up and down the Gold Coast
- ★ fund an amazing Awareness Day in the park with decorations, food and an awesome cake, where we had over 60 people in attendance
- ★ help members with the cost of transport to and from meetings
- ★ fund the development of our Website and online presence
- ★ fund the purchase of marketing and promotional materials

With our goal of focusing on support, we have now established our long term plan as well as some smaller stepping stones which will help us to achieve the long term plan. With these goals and plans established we are working on more grant applications to be able to fund them.

We continue to also provide support via our Facebook Page, Facebook private group as well as via telephone and email and now also our Website!



OUR OBJECTIVES AND ACTIVITIES

Last year we stated we wanted to increase our support in the community by holding two meetings a month at a central Gold Coast community centre (subject to funding).

With the aid of a Community Wide Grant from the City of Gold Coast we have achieved this. On the second Wednesday of the month we have held social morning tea meetings at different Community Centres from Upper Coomera to Robina whilst on the fourth Monday of each month we have held the morning tea at Sam O'Connor MP's meeting room in Labrador.

These have been a success with an average attendance of about 15 people on each occasion. They have also allowed us to establish that the majority of people prefer the Labrador location.



OUR OBJECTIVES FOR THE NEXT YEAR

The two social meetings a month have been a big help to combat social isolation and loneliness. We now want to take that further and be able to provide access to appropriate activities, chair exercises, breath work, meditation, etc. We are all too well aware of how difficult it is to access these services, especially ones that have been modified to meet the unique criteria that people living with fibromyalgia and/or ME/CFS have, and how expensive these services can be. 5 Allied Health appointments a year is simply not enough.

Once funding is in place, we will provide these activities free of charge to be followed by light refreshments. Establishing this program will be the first stepping stone to our larger long term goal - to create a Centre specifically for people living with invisible illnesses.

SECTION 3**OUR FINANCES****TREASURER'S REPORT**

As Carol mentioned in her President's Report, it has been a busy year for us financially in that we were successful with 6 grant applications in total. We believe that having Letters of Support from Sam O'Connor MP, Professor Sonya Marshall-Gradisnik (NCNED) and Joyce McSwan, GCPHN Persistent Pain Program made a big difference to our success rate. As noted on page 10 of this report, the funding has enabled us to:-

1. set up our insurances and other set up costs, which was required before we could hold meetings at Community Centres; (Council Discretionary Grant)
2. fund the hiring of Community Centre rooms and providing tea, coffee, cups and refreshments at the meetings twice a month; (Council Community Wide Grant)
3. fund the Awareness Day Event with food, decorations and gluten free, vegan free carrot cake; (Council Event Grant)
4. help members with transport costs to get to and from meetings; (Sisters of Charity Foundation)
5. develop our website and online presence; (James Frizelle Charitable Foundation)
6. purchase our marketing and promotional materials (Qld Government Gambling Fund Grant)

We are waiting for the Council grants to open up for this financial year. They have been delayed due to Council going into elections next year. We are hopeful we will receive ongoing funding from the Council, but unfortunately with the delay it makes it very difficult to plan ahead for the new year.

INCOME & EXPENDITURE

REVENUE	2023	2022
Membership Fees	\$1,050.00	\$520.00
Donations	\$1,452.70	\$1,061.00
Grant funding	\$15,597.14	-
TOTAL	\$18,099.84	\$1,581.00

EXPENDITURE	2023	2022
Bank fees	\$2.85	-
Office of Fair Trading fee	\$58.60	\$22.00
Insurance	\$216.07	-
Meeting costs	\$1,593.96	\$122.00
Transport costs reimbursed	\$246.67	-
Promotional and marketing materials	\$7,530.77	\$694.00
TOTAL	\$9,648.92	\$838.00
NET REVENUE:	\$8,450.92	\$743.00

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION

ASSETS	2023	2022
Bank account	\$9,194.75	\$743.00
TOTAL ASSETS:	\$9,194.75	\$743.00
LIABILITIES		
Unexpended grant funds	\$5,910.39	-
NET ASSETS:	\$3,284.36	\$743.00

The financial information presented in this report is for the financial year 1 July 2022 to 30 June 2023. Due to the size of our Association, we are not required to have our accounts audited. As Treasurer, I have provided a Verification Statement to comply with regulations (see Appendix "A")

INSURANCE

A Broadform Liability Insurance Policy with Guild Insurance for Public Liability in the amount of \$20m commenced on 3 November 2022 and is current until 3 November 2023.



SECTION 4**OUR OTHER IMPORTANT INFORMATION****HOW YOU CAN HELP****Become a member**

Membership is only \$20 per annum. A copy of the Membership Form is attached as Appendix "B".

Volunteer your time

We are actively seeking the help of volunteers to help with either administrative tasks, help with fundraising, or help with the organisation of meetings / social lunches. .

Make a donation

Our account details are:-

CBA

BSB: 064-430

Account: 1161 7201

Name: Fibromyalgia ME/CFS Gold Coast Support Group Inc.

PayPal link:

https://paypal.me/fibromecfsgoldcoast?country.x=AU&locale.x=en_AU

CONTACT US

1/281 Government Road, Labrador, QLD 4215

Ph: 0491 638 185

E: fmmeefs.goldcoast@gmail.com

F: @Fibro.ME.CFS.GoldCoast

W: fibromecfs.org.au

APPENDIX "A"

TREASURERS VERIFICATION STATEMENT



fibromyalgia me/cfs gold coast support group inc.

ABN: 12618317229
1/281 Government Road, Labrador, QLD 4215
e: fmmeefs.goldcoast@gmail.com
ph: 0491 638 185

TREASURER'S VERIFICATION STATEMENT

I, Wendy Ann Bennett, Treasurer of Fibromyalgia ME/CFS Gold Coast Support Group Inc. confirm that I have prepared the Association's Income & Expenditure Statement and Statement of Financial Position which are presented in the 2023 Annual Report.

I have sighted the Association's financial records and the financial records show that the Association has book keeping processes in place to adequately record the Association's income and expenditure and dealings with its assets and liabilities'

Dated: 20 July 2023

Wendy Bennett
Treasurer



APPENDIX "B"

MEMBERSHIP FORM



fibromyalgia me/cfs gold coast support group inc.

ABN: 12618317229
1/281 Government Road, Labrador, QLD 4215
e: fmecfs.goldcoast@gmail.com
ph: 0491 638 185

Membership Application Form

Name: _____

Address: _____

Postcode: _____

Ph Number: _____ Email: _____

Age Group_ (to help us learn about our members)

Under 18 18-24 25-34 35-44 45-54 55-64 65+

Please circle all that apply to you:

Fibromyalgia ME/CFS Carer Other (e.g. family)

The annual subscription is **\$20** and can be paid; in cash; by cheque; by Electronic Bank Transfer; or via a bank branch using the following details:

Bank: Commonwealth Bank of Australia
Account name: Fibromyalgia ME CFS Gold Coast Support Group Inc.
BSB: 064-430
Account No: 1161 7201

To help us with our planning, could you please tell us why you want to become a member of the association and what you hope to get from your membership.

I have read the information provided about the Fibromyalgia ME/CFS Gold Coast Support Group Inc. and I support the objectives of the association.
If you are under 18 years a parent/guardian must sign the application and include their details as well.

Signature: _____ Date: _____

We look forward to welcoming you to the association.

