

- **Thankyou Barbara &Carolyn. With many similar hopes and aspirations, I am most excited and honoured to be here to night at the launch of your innovative work, and to represent the Bridges & Pathways Institute as a recipient.**
- **We can learn a great deal from understandings on the experiences of life, including the history of healthcare.**
- **The prominent medical scientist and clinician J M CHARCOT around a century ago quoted that "*Disease is very old and nothing about it has changed. It is we who change as we learn to recognize what was formerly imperceptible.*"**
- **Using his professional skills, observation, and dialogue with the sufferers, (predominantly women and often in institutionalized care) Charcot began unraveling the mystifying symptoms labeled as 'hysterical paralysis'. As a result of his meticulous work, the condition became better understood, as multiple sclerosis. Even today although the cause and a cure is not known, sufferers are likely supported by care and services that are best practice and evidence based, to assist them maximize their quality of life.**
- **Similar stories can be told for other well known conditions (for example epilepsy, and hyperthyroidism),**
- **When in my early thirties, a busy wife, mother, and business proprietor, following a series of severe infections, I became suddenly subject to overwhelming pain and 'bizzare' immune problems, making performing everyday activities nearly impossible. The factors making up my seemingly invisible illness, were poorly understood, and so I was afforded little personal and service support. I was unable to care for myself and my 4 small children; and so we were separated for many months interstate. I felt frightened, stripped of**

my former identity, and isolated in my experience. Despite desperate to fight the 'monster in lurking in the shadows' and so I worked with the hope of finding others having similar experiences; to help make some sense of our lives, and to change things for the better. After many years I have been diagnosed as having overlapping autoimmune/ connective tissue conditions.

- In 2000, I met multi talented Cathie Powell, a sufferer, public health researcher, health services manager, and EO of B&P whilst working to co -convene an International conference in Sydney. I then decided to focus my efforts on B&P projects. I have been a Project Coordinator for Victoria and a member of the Executive Committee since.**
- Established in (1999) initially by Cathie Powell & Glenn Ash a committed carer of Tracey (since sadly passed away),**
- Bridges & Pathways Institute Inc is an Australian not for profit charity that is working collaboratively to provide equal access to services for people with poorly understood complex chronic illnesses.**
- B&P has connections and partners both throughout Australia, and internationally. Including links with consumers, professionals, professional bodies, the govt., and service agencies. It also is involved in academic activities at universities such as Flinders, Adelaide, Melbourne; and internationally - in Canada and the US -Stanford.**
- Our services, research and activities are based on proactive modern understandings of health and health management – aimed at being holistic, inclusive, appropriate, quality based, and outcome focused.**

We believe that people should have access to the best care available today (Current Best Practice Care) and that might lead to evidence based care tomorrow.

- **Our goal at B&P is to reduce the burden of chronic illness to limit the multiple losses associated with ill health, disability, and improve quality of life.**

Our priority is for timely and appropriate services and up-to-date information to meet the challenges of living daily with a chronic illness.

Since 2001 we have provided services for over 6000 Australians who fall through the gaps of current Australian programs and services).

- **(Post Infection Syndromes**
- **Myalgic Encephalomyelitis**
- **Chronic Fatigue Syndromes**
- **Multiple Chemical Sensitivities (MCS)**
- **Post Stress Syndromes**
- **persistent pain syndromes**
- **other associated or overlapping functional syndrome disorders**
- **other clients)**
- **The work of B&P has been recently recognized in state parliament and by the Commonwealth government.**
- **Emphasising an area of special interest for 2008, 'Women & pain', the work of B&P particularly recognizes chronic pain complaints, and the need to understand and provide effective services for people with these conditions.**
- **20% of the Australian population experience chronic pain, and one quarter of these the severity of pain results in high-level disability.**
- **Around 4% of the population, mostly women (7:1) have ACR defined FMS, a poorly understood chronic widespread pain condition, whose level of disability is similar to rheumatoid arthritis. FMS often overlaps with other conditions.**

Some Bridges & Pathways FM Service Activities include:

- **Providing professional reference material**
 - **Trialling a multidisciplinary service care planning model**
 - **Distributing the Canadian Fibromyalgia Clinical Practice Guidelines for Australian Doctors (collaboration RACGP)**
 - **Identifying standardised FMS evaluation and monitoring tools**
 - **Development and provision of service interventions and education modules (professional & consumer)**
 - **Provision of risk management reports**
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- **With the help of people like Barbara, organisations such as Gumboots Press, and your help, we at B&P can keep our focus on the achieving lasting changes to assist people who have until now fallen through the gaps.**

Please feel free to take home some of our project pamphlets and talk to me later. and

Contact the Bridges and Pathways Institute on 8358 6086

or visit our website for links and to donate

<http://www.ourcommunity.com.au/bridgesandpathways>

Thank you

Background:

Current Projects

ME/CFS, Chronic Fatigue Syndrome Fundraising Appeal:

**South Australian Fibromyalgia Syndrome (chronic pain)
Support Information and Knowledge Fund:**

<http://www.ourcommunity.com.au/bridgesandpathways2>

The Tracey Ash Memorial Fund:

<http://www.ourcommunity.com.au/bridgesandpathways3>

Southern Chronic Illness Links Network Caring Fund:

<http://www.ourcommunity.com.au/bridgesandpathways4>

**Australian Fibromyalgia Syndrome General Practice
Guidelines:**

<http://www.ourcommunity.com.au/bridgesandpathways5>

Southern Chronic Illness Links Network

**Complex Chronic Conditions (FMS/ME/CFS) Primary Care
Best Practice**

Research and Evaluation Project

**Complex Chronic Illness Best Practice Action Research
Project**

**National Partnerships for Fibromyalgia, Chronic Fatigue
Syndromes Australia.**

**South Australian Fibromyalgia, Chronic Fatigue Syndromes
Education and Information Steering Group**

**Australian Collaboration for ME/CFS/FMS Educational
Programs**

**Australian Collaboration for the Campbell
CFS/Fibromyalgia Self-Management Program.**

**Complex Chronic Illness Enhanced Primary Care Working
Group.**

**Social Work Enhanced Primary Care/Medicare Eligibility
Project**

**For further information or if you would like to volunteer to
help in any of these projects please contact
bpprojects@telstra.com**

**The City of Onkaparinga, The City of Onkaparinga Seaford
Community Grant, The City of Marion and The City of
Mitcham and Private Donors
generously Fund our Educational Wellness Programs.**