QUEENSLAND
COMMUNITY ALLIANCE

2014 Annual Report

Welcome to our first Annual Report

It's been a year of getting out of our own organisation's spaces and venturing into the values, motivations, passions of other people and their organisations. Some of us have been a bit tentative; "Do we want to be seen with Unions?" "Do we want to be seen with Churches?" The community groups have been seen to be pretty safe places! But we've discovered we have a lot in common; we've discovered decent people, motivated by strong values and a belief in building a better society for all.

We've learned the basics of the art of community organising; we've discovered pathways to empowering and strengthening our members through learning and practising relational organising. Within our Alliance, we are building trust and commitment between individual members and between organisations through relational meetings and training. The belief that together we can build power to make real change for the better in our communities is growing.

And it's been fun.

We're on a roll, now. Over 20 partner organisations; lots of folk gone through two day training; a good number through six day training. We've begun a listening campaign in Logan and are planning more. We've had two wonderful Assemblies that have given us a boost.

Let's keep the ball rolling so that we can make a difference together in our communities.

Dave Baker.

Rev Dave Baker
Co-Chair of the Queensland Community Alliance
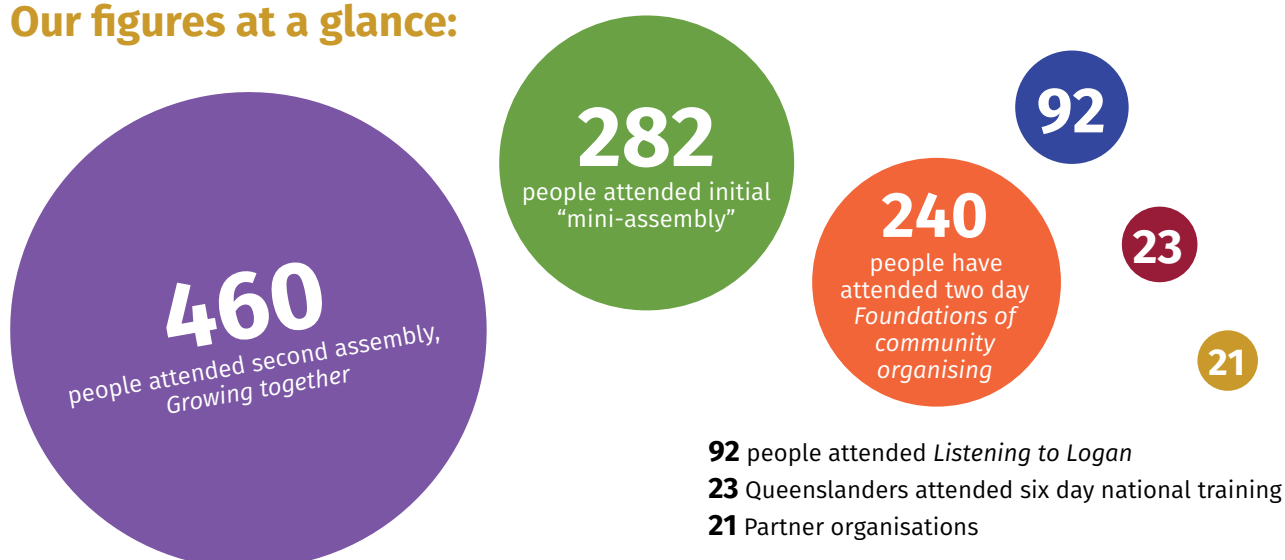
What is the
Queensland Community Alliance?

We are an alliance of churches, mosques and other faith groups coming together with charities, unions, community organisations and ethnic associations to work together for the common good.

This alliance is founded on the personal relations we will build across organisations in our local area. We are identifying and training people to become leaders in community organising, and will decide our priorities for action together, through a process of listening to stories of pressures that our members face and witness.

Our alliance draws on the community organising tradition of the United States, and is linked with the Sydney Alliance. The core elements of our alliance will be:

- Non-partisan. Holding politicians of all parties to their responsibility to serve the community.

- Adhering to the rule **never to do for other what they can do for themselves**. We will work in partnership to together solve the problems we face.

- A commitment to listening to the voice of the excluded and partnership with the most vulnerable in our community.

- Self-funding—this alliance will be funded out of the dues of member organisations, contributing according to their size and capacity.

- Working only on issues that make our alliance stronger. This alliance will not work on issues which bring core values of our partners into tension. Instead, we seek to address the tension that exists between our shared values, and what we witness in the world.

Our figures at a glance:

460 people attended second assembly, *Growing together*

282 people attended initial "mini-assembly"

240 people have attended two day *Foundations of community organising*

92

23

21

92 people attended *Listening to Logan*
23 Queenslanders attended six day national training
21 Partner organisations

Our organisations

Uniting Church Bremer Presbytery

Catholic Archdiocese of Brisbane

Together, the union

Rail, Tram and Bus Union

Micah Projects

United Voice

MDA Ltd

Ethiopian Community Association
of Queensland

Queensland Nurses Union

Queensland Teachers Union

Uniting Church South Moreton Presbytery

Independent Education Union Q&NT

Transport Workers Union

Uniting Church Moreton Rivers Presbytery

The Services Union

Queensland Council of Unions

FSG Australia

Amnesty International Australia
Qld/Nrthn NSW Branch

Churches of Christ in Queensland

Sherwood Uniting Church

Glebe Rd Uniting Church

Our people

Our board

Co-chair	Kerrin Benson, CEO of MDA Ltd (stepped down August 2014 due to placement in Queensland Government)
Co-chair	Rev Dave Baker, Moderator of the Queensland Synod of the Uniting Church of Australia.
Secretary	Vivienne Doogan, President Together
Treasurer	Gary Bullock, Secretary United Voice
Board Member	Seblework Tadese, Secretary of Ethiopian Community Association of Queensland.
Board Member	Fr David Pascoe, Dean of St Stephens Cathedral, Catholic Archdiocese of Brisbane

Board meetings

18 December 2013

Attendance   David Baker, Kerrin Benson, Gary Bullock, David Copeman, Vivienne Doogan, David Pascoe, Seblework Tadese

4 March 2014

Attendance   David Baker, Kerrin Benson, Gary Bullock, David Copeman, Vivienne Doogan, David Pascoe, Seblework Tadese.

3 June 2014

Attendance   David Baker (Co-Chair), Gary Bullock, David Copeman, Vivienne Doogan, David Pascoe, Kerrie Woodrow for Kerrin Benson

9 September 2014

Attendance   David Baker, Gary Bullock, David Copeman, Vivienne Doogan, Seblework Tadese Apologies: David Pascoe

Our staff

Dave Copeman

Dave Copeman is the Lead Organiser of the Queensland Community Alliance. He has previously worked as a human rights campaigner for Amnesty International in Queensland and East Africa, and was first inspired to work on human rights after volunteering with the Movement for Democratic Change, the political opposition in Zimbabwe, in 2002-2004. He's also dabbled in trade union campaigning and working for the Queensland government, an experience that only reinforced his belief that communities need to organise around their common interests through mechanism other that just electoral politics.

PJ Humphreys

PJ Humphreys is an Organiser with Queensland Community Alliance and has come to community organising work after thirteen years in the community sector with disability organisations and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. PJ has undertaken management roles in complaints resolution and community development within these sectors. PJ is passionate about social justice and has been involved in various volunteer capacities with young people and asylum seekers as well as volunteering overseas in rural Kenya which combines her love of travel. Being an active citizen is important to PJ as she contributes to her community through a local group focussing on building community connectedness.

Jason MacLeod (Resigned 7 November 2014)

Jason MacLeod is an organiser, educator and researcher who has worked as an Organiser from May until November 2014 with the Queensland Community Alliance. He has been a lecturer and teacher at the School of Politics and International Studies and the School of Social Work in the fields of resistance studies community development and popular education, and has been a
Co-Director at the Change Agency, an independent social movement education initiative. Jason has been a committed partner to West Papuan self-determination and human rights organisations for more than 15 years. Jason resigned in November to ensure the success of a significant expansion of this work with West Papua.

Our interns

Our interns

In 2014 the Queensland Community Alliance offered a successful 17 week internship program to three social work students Beccy, Michael and Julie-Anne from the University of Queensland.

The students participated in 2 day foundational community organising training and later went on to become small group leaders in the same training. They helped to organise and participated in a community listening event in Logan, heard powerful stories about the pressures people face and learnt discernment and research processes.

Beccy, Michael and Julie-Anne contributed commitment and passion to the internship program. They each brought their life experiences and skills to their roles. The students are committed to staying connected with the work of the Queensland Community Alliance through their future work with communities and look forward to an ongoing involvement in the work of building a strong civil society.

Our affiliations

The Queensland Community Alliance is inspired by the Sydney Alliance, and together with the Sydney Alliance is affiliated with the Industrial Areas Foundation (IAF).

Joe Chrastil and Sr Maribeth Larkin from the IAF have played a prominent role in supporting the Queensland Community Alliance through their mentoring and support. Thanks also to Rev Terry Moe from Salt & Light Lutheran Church in Portland, Oregon and the IAF.

Jennifer Acklin, Amanda Tattersall and the other organisers and leaders of the Sydney Alliance have played a similar role in sharing the experience and learnings from adapting this work to an Australian context.

Our activities

Inaugural "mini-assembly"

On the Wednesday 10 October 2013, more than 280 people from our 17 partner organisations came together for our first Assembly, at Mary-Mac Community Centre in Annerley.

There, the Co-chairs Vivienne Doogan, Rev Dave Baker and Peter Forday welcomed us, and Uncle Bob Anderson acknowledged the traditional owners. We heard stories of pressures facing Paula White, a cleaner from Goodna, and difficulty that the Ethiopian Community faces caring for elderly members of their community. We heard a testimony from Rev Hohaia Matthews of overcoming prejudice of low expectations. The 280+ people present shared their stories, speaking one on one across organisations. They witnesses the pledges of their leaders to build the Alliance, and then made their own commitments to undertake training and speak to others in their organisation. And we left that night we a newfound enthusiasm and confidence that we could make this community organising work in Queensland.

Listening to Logan

On Wednesday 10 September, 92 community leaders from churches, mosques, schools, unions, neighbourhood centres and community organisations came together at Logan East Community Neighbourhood Centre. We talked about the pressures we faced. We practised an 80 year old tradition of building relationships, by sharing stories about our lives. Stories of unsafe streets, threats against asylum seekers, struggles with transport, and difficulties finding work.

All of us were from institutions committed to the common good. We came together in way that's never been done before Queensland. We came together to listen to pressures on Logan families—to hear and be inspired to act. One week later, these leaders gathered once more, and decided what we achieve together. Voting with our time, and our passion, we chose to work on the issue of safety in Logan. This issue was most deeply and widely felt, and we believed local action will lead to results, and bring our values to life in the community.

Our activities

Growing together assembly

On Wednesday the 29th of October the Queensland Community Alliance hosted our 2014 Assembly. Over 460 people from union, faith and community organisations gathered in Inala at St Mark's Catholic Primary School to share stories and strengthen our commitments to work for the common good.

The atmosphere was electric as people streamed through the doors of the hall with bellies full of sausages, dhal, butter chicken and rice. The sounds of MDA's Ensemble Diaspora accompanied people to their seats before the three co-chairs representing faith, union and community kicked off the night by paying respect to the traditional owners of the land with Uncle Bill Bonner. This set the tone for the evening as we recognised the importance of strength in the face of adversity.

As the evening went on, we heard stories of discrimination, which reminded us of the challenges we face because of decisions to live up to our values. We shared stories of our experiences of hope through action, motivating us to embrace the way our actions inspire us and other people.

We took time to celebrate every one of our partner organisations and recognised the new organisations who share our drive to rebuild civil societies and work for the common good.

This inspired us to take the next step, as we launched the 2015 *Listening Campaign!* Commitments were made to host 425 table talks across Brisbane, Ipswich and Logan between April-June next year!

Our training

Foundations of community organising training

The two day *Foundations of community organising* training is one of the key activities of our Alliance in our period of formation. Since August 2013, 240 people have completed this training over 11 separate trainings.

Each training has involved 20-40 leaders (ideally) from a mix of our partner organisations. Individuals from these organisation also play a key role in delivering the training, as trainers and small group leaders.

Attendees learn why we believe we need a broad-based community organising alliance in Queensland, and how they can use the practical tools of relational organising, including one-on-one and table talks to strengthen their organisations and bring the values of their organisation into the world.

Two day trainings:

Date	Location	No. of attendees
15-16 August 2013	Uniting Church Synod office	29
22-23 September 2013	Indooroopilly Uniting Church	37
18-19 November 2013	Mercy Place, Bardon	20
30 November, 7 December 2013	Queensland Nurses Union	17
11-12 March 2014	Uniting Church Synod office	20
31 March, 1 April 2014	St Marks Anglican Church, Logan	22
6-7 May 2014	Eastern Height Catholic Church, Ipswich	18
14 and 21 June 2014	Glebe Rd Uniting Church, Booval	13
19 and 26 July 2014	Beenleigh Uniting Church, Beenleigh	14
20-21 August 2014	Logan Multicultural Uniting Church, Logan Central	22
7-9 September 2014	West End Uniting Church, West End	28

Our training

National six day training

The Queensland Community Alliance has sent leaders to Sydney to attend National training in October 2013 and May 2014. In October this year, we hosted National Training for the first time at Mercy Place in Bardon.

The 6 Day National Training is a program for people committed to understanding the craft of community organising—who want to play a key role in leading the activities of the Alliance inside their organisation and acting as a bridge between our member organisations.

The residential course builds a close community of leaders across participating civil society organisations that represent the diversity our communities in Sydney and Queensland.

Leaders are equipped with the tools they need to be more strategic and effective and to build and strengthen their organisations in the process. The course focuses on power, organisations, relationships and leadership.

National Training is led by a Lead trainer from the UK or US, generally an organiser of 20+ years' experience in community organising.

Attendees from Queensland have included Catholic clergy and religious, Uniting Church ministers, Union leaders and delegates, senior community organisation leaders and community organising staff and interns.

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