

Families of drowning victims need support

Give to charity this Christmas



Peter FOLEY

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IT'S a club no one would ever want to join but sadly its membership is increasing all the time.

When Andrew and Katherine Plint's daughter Hannah drowned in the family pool at Laidley last October, they vowed her death would not be in vain.

They started Hannah's Foundation to raise water safety awareness and to provide support and counselling for drowning victims' families.

Mr Plint said the past two weeks had been very difficult for members, particularly his wife Katherine.

"It's been a really tough fortnight for us. There's been 10 drownings in the last fortnight," Mr Plint said yesterday.

"Katherine's been in Blackwater comforting the family of young Nelani Koefer and comes back Wednesday morning and



SURVIVING LOSS: The Plints are helping drowning victims' families after their young girl Hannah drowned last year.

Photo: Supplied

goes straight down to Coffs Harbour to help the family out down there."

Despite the anguish of more drowning deaths, Mr Plint said he was determined to keep getting the message across and he was buoyed by increasing community support.

"It's something that's not going to change overnight but if people

see our story they might do things like move garden furniture away from pools," he said.

"We've got a lot of people saying they're going to donate to us instead of giving Christmas presents this year and that's very good. We're also saying to people, if you don't want to donate to a charity, buy someone a first aid course. The life they save could be

yours.

"No one's immune to drowning."

Donations to Hannah's Foundation provide assistance for funeral costs, counselling services and other support. Donations: BSB: 704-052 Account Number: 1035885 Account Name: Hannahs Foundation. Go to hannahsfoundation.org.au.

Chickens rescued from Aratula farm gas leak

ABOUT 100,000 chickens were rescued from what seemed like an imminent death when a gas cylinder ruptured at an Aratula farm on Sunday.

Queensland Fire and Rescue Service officers were alerted to the gas leak about 6pm when they received a concerned call from employees at the Ingham's chicken farm on Sawmill Road, saying they could hear the sound

of gas escaping under pressure.

Kalbar Auxiliary Captain Corey Bock said one truck from Kalbar and two trucks from the Boonah Auxiliary went to the scene, where they found a five tonne LPJ gas cylinder had ruptured.

"The cylinder had ruptured through a fitting and because of where the rupture had occurred we had no option but to de-cant

(the gas) into a truck," Mr Bock said.

Fire crews spent 12 hours at the scene trying to decant the cylinder, receiving scientific support over the phone.

Relief crews from Bundamba and Ipswich also attended the scene about 2.30am yesterday and finished the job about 6am yesterday.

Mr Bock said seven adults and

one child were evacuated from houses on the property.

"There were also five sheds containing 20,000 chooks each, so about 100,000 chickens were on site ready to be delivered, which would have been a massive loss to the landowner if they were affected," he said.

No chickens were affected by the gas leak.

— Melanie Maesele

IN BRIEF

TV presenters promote simulcast in Ipswich

CHANNEL Nine's Heather Foord, Bruce Paige and Melissa Downes were in Ipswich yesterday for a delicious buffet breakfast and to promote the Channel Nine/ River 94.9 News Simulcast.

Foord announced last month she would leave the Channel Nine news team after 21 years and discussed it on air with familiar face Paige.

Ipswich Mayor Paul Pisasale attended the simulcast yesterday to hand over the keys to the city to Paige, Foord and Downes.

River will simulcast Channel Nine news from 6pm weeknights.

Man's bid to pinch Jagermeister bombs

A 45-YEAR-OLD man's feeble attempt to steal a bottle of Jagermeister was bombed by staff at the One Mile Hotel, who made him return the bottle to the shelf and wait for police to arrive.

Ipswich Magistrates Court heard Allan Ray Furlong had been battling alcoholism for years when he tried to sneak the bottle of booze out the hotel's bottle shop on November 2.

Defence lawyer Erin Beer said Furlong had completed a detox program recently, and had not committed another offence in the nine years before his latest lapse in judgement.

Furlong was fined \$100.

Support group plans Christmas lunch

THE Diabetes Support Group will have Christmas lunch at the Trades Hall on Thursday at 11am.

The group will not meet on December 11.

For inquiries about the lunch call 3817 2369.

Santa will deliver magic at Booval Fair

SANTA is winging his way to Booval Fair shopping centre this Saturday.

Celebrations will start with Santa's Arrival Parade at 9:30am, with Santa also available to hear Christmas wishes. There will be free face painting between 10am and noon outside Woolworths.

Collect 3 to enter

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