

27th March 2022

Burns Support group Management Team

Kiaora.

My name is Ronni Robinson. I'd like to share a little bit of my story to begin with. On 26th November 1976, I was 18 months old and playing in the bathtub, I pulled the plug out, my toys and flannel blocked the drain, I turned the hot water tap on which was connected to gas, this resulted in both my feet severely suffering deep dermal burns which then required 9 of my toes having to be amputated

I have large calluses and corns which grow on the bottoms of my feet due to weight bearing. Trying to navigate walking can be very difficult and I am constantly in pain. This has then gone on to affect the rest of my body, knees, hips and so on.

I was teased as a child so I learnt to hide my injury as often as I could which then restricted what I choose to participate in. My self worth was very low as I believed my burns determined who I was and how others viewed me. This was very detrimental as it affected me physically, mentally and spiritually.

When I attended my first retreat I was very overwhelmed with emotions. I had never seen any other person with burns so to be amongst so many women who spoke of how they felt living with scars and impairments, the words coming out one after the other each of them resonated with me. I was able to release the grief which I definitely did as I cried from the time I arrived to the time I left, Finally being able to let go of these inner emotions that I carried within me for so long. I was surrounded by others who truly understood the thoughts, feelings, even if we were at different stages.

I have just returned home from attending my 3rd retreat and I would like to express my gratitude to all who are involved Delwyn Kerry and to the board members of the Burns Support Group for all that you do so that myself and others are able to have experiences that I never thought were possible or even available. Since finding the group I have been able to replace the feeling of being alone with some amazing friendships with other burn survivors that are growing more and more as I spend time with them.

Also a huge thank you to all the sponsors and all others who donate the gifts, makeup, robes, kimonos, Financial donations. It's unreal being able to be staying in most amazing place with the view that is to die for the open sea. Meals provided, we want for nothing and get treated from the time we arrive to the time we leave.

Michele I wanted to acknowledge you personally here for the amazing job you do. I can only imagine how much goes into creating these events making sure that each and everyone of us feel like we are all individually and collectively thought of in the planning. Taking into account all of our impairments and how this impacts on what

we are able to do or even where we are mentally in our journey as to not cause any stress.

So much planning, organising that must be prepared months in advance.

You are invested from the get go, giving us plenty of notice to register how we are getting to Castaways. which house we are placed in and who our roommates are, all which need careful consideration along the way.

You would need to maintain connections with organisations, businesses and people collecting goodies along the way which then we are gifted with upon arrival and throughout our stay. while also being on the lookout for more undiscovered opportunities to share with us.

Organising guest speakers who come with so much informative knowledge some with medical others with life hacks some who do Massages and others who are make-up artists who make us all feel very special and knowing they are doing this out of this kindness of their hearts to give their time and also some being so kind they come bearing various gifts for us to take home..

While these are taking place you are scanning the room making sure each of us are comfortable and feeling safe and secure with the experience, ready to step in with a supportive word, tissues, a hug or even a smart comment and laugh.

This is something I definitely love is being able to LAUGH there us nothing more satisfying to my soul than laughter !! Actually music is up there with laughter.

Thanks for all that you do for not only the Women's group but all the others that burn survivors are able to receive.

Thank you all for giving me experiences that are helping me to see my self worth by offering me so much love, care and attention, i am able to return home talking non stop and sharing everything with My partner, family and friends.

I am looking forward to what adventure is coming up with the group and being apart of it :)

Nga mihi mahana kia koutou

Ronni