

With mental health disorders on the rise, almost costing \$20 billion annually there is an increasing need for better education and services. Billions of dollars each year are invested towards research, hospitals, training, education & prevention programs however the rate of mental health far exceeds the rate of funding available.

New concepts need to be explored and alternative treatments tested because mental health is costing lives and impacting on our economy. I was delighted when asked to attend a two-day intensive course at Fountainhead as an observer by founder Wayne Parrott and General Manager Carol McLaughlin.

Prior to joining the Senate I had some experience with mental health issues in my role as an Industrial Officer with the Queensland Police Union. Part of my role was representing the decent men and women of the Queensland Police Service at Work cover Assessment Tribunals. Police who were unfortunate to fall victim of mental illness through stressful situations in their dangerous and demanding career.

After spending the weekend at Fountainhead I realized a number of reasons why guests left the retreat after only a few days to weeks with a life-changing attitude.

Fountainhead has a unique philosophy, combining the breathtaking views of Maleny with organic healthy foods and drink, massage, yoga, exercise, facials, mineral pools, one on one & group's discussion, food classes and having particular focus on belief systems. In addition to this it focuses on the way we see life, the way we believe our life should be, unlearning patterns, assumed truths, having choices in life but never having any other choice and so on. The philosophy is about recognizing beliefs and ideals and challenging them, more importantly it is about recognizing your life is worth 100%.

I was truly inspired by the healing and awareness that is being done at Fountainhead, in particular the distances clients travel to receive help – as far away as America. I take this opportunity in thanking Carol, Wayne and the staff at Fountainhead as well as the guests for their honesty and friendship, which was both enjoyable and enlightening during the weekend. Fountainhead is an original concept, which I believe has a lot to offer, I look forward to the retreat going national and being involved with encouraging solutions to mental illness in this country.

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