

Mark & Gayle Forbes

**Co-founders of mental health charity, endED,
whose daughters have both lived with an eating disorder, *SUNSHINE COAST***

Mark and Gayle Forbes are co-founders of the mental health charity, 'endED', which they formed in 2015, to provide peer support, coaching and mentoring to those living with eating disorders.

Mark and Gayle were inspired to create endED – a sanctuary where nature meets nurture – as a result of caring for two of their daughters who have both lived with an eating disorder for an extended length of time.

After spending a substantial amount of time, money and resources trying to find some answers and treatment for their daughters, the couple recognised the lack of adequate facilities for those experiencing an eating disorder.

Taking matters into their own hands, they founded endED to help other families in similar situations.

Initially, the couple held support groups in their home for parents working to navigate their way around their children's eating disorders. As the meetings continued to grow however, so too did Mark and Gayle's vision.

With the help of their local community, the Sunshine Coast Council, the Federal Government and 40 local businesses, Mark and Gayle, in partnership with the Butterfly Foundation, built [Wandi Nerida](#) – Australia's first, national, residential treatment facility for those living with eating disorders, comprising 13 beds, located in Mooloolah Valley, Sunshine Coast, Queensland.

Since then, Mark and Gayle have established the endED [House of Hope](#), a nine-bedroom house in Woombye. Surrounded by 2.7 acres of rock streams, bridges, yoga decks and veggie gardens, the House of Hope supports those who have completed their residential stay at Wandi Nerida in need of support to transition back to the community, and for those who simply need assistance in their journey. The house employs eight qualified psychologists, counsellors, recovery coaches and dietitians, all of whom have lived experience of eating disorders. Allied health services also support the house for those with drug and alcohol addiction, as well as other mental health services.

Mark and Gayle have further purchased a 10-acre site directly next to House of Hope, with the aim of setting up a short-term accommodation village of nine tiny homes, a communal BBQ area, laundry and children's playground, for those seeking support from the House of Hope, and others escaping domestic violence situations.

Mark has won a wealth of awards over the last few years, recognising his hard work as an advocate for treatment and support of those with eating disorders, including Sunshine Coast Biosphere Community Award 2024; Sunshine Coast Lifetime Achievement Award 2024; and Queensland Community Leadership Award 2024.



Due to their daughters' first-hand experience with eating disorders, Mark and Gayle are advocates for the Eating Disorders Genetic Initiative (EDGI) 2 – the world's largest genetic investigation of eating disorders ever performed, that aims to identify the hundreds of genes that influence a person's risk of developing the complex, devastating illnesses of anorexia nervosa, bulimia nervosa, binge-eating disorder and Avoidant Restrictive Food Intake Disorder (ARFID), to improve treatment, and ultimately, save lives.

EDGI2 follows the ground-breaking advances made in the initial EDGI investigation and collaborative Anorexia Nervosa Genetics Initiative (ANGI), in which researchers, including Prof Martin and his EDGI team, identified the first eight genes for anorexia nervosa that implicate both psychiatric and metabolic causes for the condition.

To volunteer for, or learn more about EDGI2, head to edgi2.org.au or email edgi2@qimrb.edu.au. Should you suspect you, or a loved one may be living with an eating disorder, speak to your local healthcare practitioner without delay, or head to insideoutinstitute.org.au to complete their online screener and assessment and to access more information and links to professional support.

Australian patient support services offering 24/7 helpline services include:

- **Butterfly National Helpline: 1800 334 673**
- **Beyond Blue: 1300 224 636**
- **LifeLine: 13 11 14**
- **Men's Line Australia: 1300 78 99 78**
- **Kid's Help Line: 1800 55 1800**

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