


Inner Sydney VOICE

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MAKING THE NDIS WORK FOR EVERYONE

+PLUS

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GUIDE TO NDIS JARGON
NDIS PRE-PLANNING

EARLY CHILDHOOD INTERVENTION
IS NDIS CALD RESPONSIVE?
JUSTICE & COGNITIVE DISABILITY

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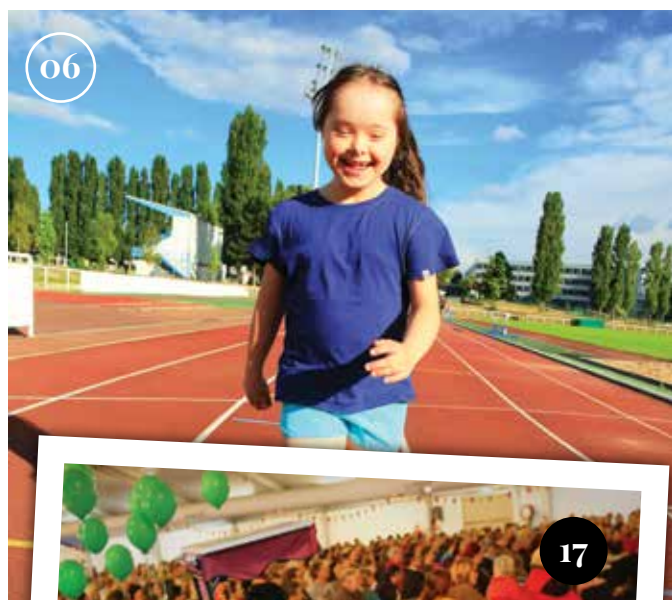
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It continues to be an issue, even as we put together this edition of ISV, so we chose *Challenging Disabling Images* from the Summer 1994 Inner Voice as this issue's From the Vault.





Online community services map

Find community services in the eastern suburbs and inner city.

Check out the link on our website www.innersydneyvoice.org.au
To add or update service listings please email admin@innersydneyvoice.org.au

SURRY HILLS NORTHCOTT COMMUNITY SHED

The Surry Hills Northcott Community Shed (SHNCS) is an incorporated community group established with the assistance of the Surry Hills Neighbourhood Centre to develop a Community (Men's) Shed at the Northcott Public Housing estate in Belvoir St, Surry Hills. SHNCS is a Level 1 member of the Australian Men's Shed Association and their objectives are to address the problem of social isolation within the community, particularly but not exclusively among older men, by establishing and operating a multi-discipline trades and craft workshop.

The NSW Land and Housing Corporation has given the Surry Hills community a rare opportunity to develop the shed through a favourable lease of the shed site. The initial grant

from the NSW Premier and Cabinet Community Development Grant has enabled the structural renovations to the existing building to begin. SHNCS has made additional funding applications and requests for corporate donations to acquire basic equipment and materials.

The Shed will be used for multi-purpose activities complementary to the existing Northcott Community Centre and Community Garden. SHNCS encourages the development and sharing of skills and competence of its members and believes the shed will help promote healthy lifestyles, and involvement in and development of a more vibrant community.

The group is still in the building phase of the work shed. The City of Sydney has granted DA approval for

the use and extension of existing ground floor enclosure as a community shed, including a kitchenette area and four workbenches. SHNCS has the Construction Certificate and Notice of Commencement and should be breaking ground soon.

It is hoped the Community Shed will be up and running by September 2017. In the meantime, SHNCS is looking for interested members and volunteers. Committee Meetings are held monthly, at 3pm on the last Friday of each month at the Northcott Community Centre, next to Ward Park. Any interested people are welcome to join.

For more information, email Graham Brecht on graham006@me.com or leave your details with one of the volunteers in the Northcott Community Centre.



INNER SYDNEY VOICE
regional social development council

ABOUT

Inner Sydney Voice Magazine is the journal of the Inner Sydney Regional Council for Social Development Inc trading as Inner Sydney Voice. We are a non-profit organisation committed to the idea of information as a tool for community development. The organisation defines Inner Sydney as being the local government areas of Botany Bay, Leichhardt, Randwick, City of Sydney, Waverley and Woollahra.

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We acknowledge and pay our respects to the traditional custodians of the lands across the areas we service, particularly the Gadigal people of the Eora Nation, traditional custodians of the land on which our office is located. We pay our respects to Elders, past and present.

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Editorial

In mid-2017 the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) rolls out in inner Sydney, so in this ISV we focus on disability issues and the NDIS. One of the key messages for those who qualify is to be prepared, think about what you want and pre-plan before you meet an NDIS Planner!

The NDIS is a once in a generational change, for those with a disability, as important as Medicare when it was introduced. The massive government investment is also a social reform that gives people with disability an opportunity to plan and set their goals. In other words, to live the kind of life each person yearns to live.

The Government has recently announced changes to the composition of the NDIS board along with a review of the Scheme by the Productivity Commission. A discussion paper is expected in May 2017. We will keep our network up to date with the latest news and opportunities for you to provide input into the review.

The NDIS focus in this issue starts with an *Introduction to the NDIS* (page 6) which looks at what it is and from where it has come. We also include a guide to the NDIS language in *Understanding NDIS terms* (page 9). Enis Jusufspahic, ISV's Aged and Disability Sector Support and Development Officer has prepared both.

It's your NDIS (page 17) looks at the role played by *Every Australian Counts* in campaigning for the NDIS and in making it the best it can be. *A view from the back of the bus: a reflection on the need for a culturally responsive NDIS* (page 18) explores the low level of engagement from CALD communities in existing disability services and questions how to improve CALD involvement in the NDIS.

We also look at what some of the organisations and services are doing including *My Choice Matters – training opens doors* (page 12) and *Ability Links – building inclusive communities* (page 14). The importance of pre-planning comes out in a number of articles especially in *The importance of pre-planning* (page 20) and in the need for reliable information such as *Tailored Information and advocacy services for people with a disability* (page 22). We also include a *Local service profile: Holdsworth Community* (page 23) to show what some of the changes mean for a local service.

One from the Vault this issue looks at Challenging disabling images (page 31) from Summer 1994 and reflects on the problem of using images which we encountered in this current issue.

The road to the disability policy reforms is one of both changing people's perceptions of disability and of what it means to be human. As important as the NDIS is, many other areas of the social policy need to be addressed separately. We have looked at just two areas of a long list this edition. *Cognitive disability and the justice system* (page 24) and social inclusion for children in *Inclusion: children with developmental delay or disability* (page 10) and *Starting school for children with disabilities* (page 11).

Finally, we also look at how to choose a consultant in *So, you want to employ a consultant?* (page 28), look for people interested in a *Surry Hills Northcott community shed* (page 4) and *Vale Ross Smith: A life spent in service to the community* (page 30).

Charmaine Jones and Geoffrey Turnbull (co-editors) and Enis Jusufspahic (guest editor)

The road to the disability policy reforms is one of both changing people's perceptions of disability and of what it means to be human

AN INTRODUCTION TO THE NDIS

THE NATIONAL DISABILITY INSURANCE SCHEME HERALDS A FLEXIBLE APPROACH TO SUPPORTING PEOPLE WITH DISABILITY IN THE COMMUNITY. **ENIS JUSUFSPAHIĆ** EXPLAINS WHERE THE SCHEME CAME FROM AND HOW IT OPERATES.

The National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS or the Scheme) is federally administered by the National Disability Insurance Agency (NDIA of the Agency). It is funded by the states and the commonwealth.

The new approach recognises that every person is an individual, but also a member of the community, by allowing funding for individuals to access the community and to build communities that are more inclusive. As such, it is built on the underlying principle of enabling people with disability to live a good life, as each person understands it.

The Scheme developed in response to the issues in the historic Disability Support System. It is important to unpack the history so we can better understand how the Scheme functions.

HISTORIC DISABILITY SUPPORT SYSTEM

The existing Disability Support System was funded by the states and the commonwealth and administered by state on a regional basis. Each state offered comparable core programs and a suite of individualised funding packaged targeting different groups of people with disability. Over time, this resulted in significant fragmentation and policy differences between states.

By and large, funding was allocated to service providers which were responsible for assessing client needs and managing and delivering services. Due to high demand and limited funding few service providers were able to offer true flexibility of service provision.

ROAD TO THE NDIS

In 2007, Australia ratified and adopted the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities; Article 19



... “Persons with disability ‘must have access to a range of in-home, residential and other community support services to support their living and inclusion in the community, and to prevent their isolation or segregation from the community.’”

of which established that persons with disability “must have access to a range of in-home, residential and other community support services to support their living and inclusion in the community, and to prevent their isolation or segregation from the community.”

In 2008, the commonwealth released a discussion paper asking the community about their experience of disability in order to inform strategic directions for the National Disability Strategy. Government received 750 written submissions and some 2,500 people attended the consultations. *SHUT OUT: The Experience of People with Disabilities and their Families in Australia* (Shut Out) reported on these consultations where people with disability spoke about:

- “Social exclusion and discrimination – 56 per cent of people surveyed identified exclusion and negative social attitudes as critical issues.
- Discrimination and human rights – 39 per cent of submissions identified discrimination and rights as a vital issue.
- Many called for an end to segregated services and options for people with disabilities, and their families, friends and carers, which people believed only reinforced and exacerbated prevailing attitudes. They sought a more integrated approach to support and greater availability of choice”.

PRODUCTIVITY COMMISSION – INSURANCE SCHEME APPROACH

In 2011, the government tasked the Productivity Commission to answer the call of people with disability detailed in the Shut Out report. The Shut Out report recommended systemic reform and greater resourcing to move away from the welfare model of service provision to a person-centred approach that sees services not as charity but as social investment in realising the potential of people with disabilities.

The NDIS is hence expected to minimise the long-term costs of supporting people with disabilities and their carers while maximising the economic and social benefits by using actuarial modelling to estimate and manage the costs of care and support across the life-course of individuals.

NDIS SYSTEM DESIGN – THREE TIERS

In 2011, the Productivity Commission published the *Disability Care and Support* Report recommending that the NDIS have three tiers.

Tier one – the insurance safety net

The lowest tier focuses on social participation, creating general community awareness about the issues faced by people with disability and promotes inclusion and opportunities.

Tier two – Information Linkages and capacity building (ILC)

The second tier, ILC, is designed to support a social model of disability support and reduce reliance on disability-funded support in the future. This includes things such as:

- information, linkages and referrals to connect people to the right support
- building the capacity of mainstream services to engage with people with disability
- improving community awareness, inclusion and accessibility
- building individual capacity
- local area coordination

Tier three – funded support packages

The highest tier provides individual funding packages to people with disability for the individual’s unique disability support needs as opposed to the current system, which allocated block funding to service providers.

NDIS ACCESS REQUIREMENTS

In order to access a funded support package (Tier Three), a person must be:

- under 65 years of age at the time of lodging their application provided that the NDIS has rolled out in their region.
- meet the residency requirements

The person also needs to have a disability that:

- is attributable to an intellectual, cognitive, neurological, psychiatric, sensory or physical impairment;
- is permanent or likely to be permanent, whether or not of a chronic episodic nature; and
- results in a significant reduction in a person's functional capacity in one or more areas of major life activity including: communication; social interaction; learning; mobility; self-care; and / or self-management.

Additionally, a person with disability who does not meet the significant disability requirement may provide evidence under the Early Intervention Requirement that provision of timely supports is likely to benefit the person by reducing future needs.

WHAT DOES THE NDIS FUND?

The NDIS funds reasonable and necessary supports that help a participant to reach their goals, objectives and aspirations and to undertake activities to enable the person's social and economic participation.

An individual's reasonable and necessary supports take into account any informal supports already available to the individual (informal arrangements that are part of family life or connections with friends and community supports) as well as other formal supports, such as health and education.

Individual support services are funded across a range of areas including: education, employment, social participation, independence, living arrangements and health and wellbeing.

NDIS AND MAINSTREAM SERVICES

The Scheme is not intended to replace other mainstream supports. If another system is responsible for support, the

Scheme cannot fund that support, even if the system responsible does not provide it. For example, the NDIS will not fund a support person to attend school with a child with intellectual disability because education is the Education Department's responsibility but it will fund therapeutic activities at home.

NDIS PRINCIPLES

People with disability having voice, choice and control over their supports are core principles of the NDIS.

Each person is to have an individual plan, which is to be confirmed by the Agency in accordance with the Scheme's rules, most of which we have addressed in this article.

Flexibility of service provision in terms of when and who delivers your support services. This means not being tied to one service provider if you do not like their services.

Ability to amend your plan and appeal decisions by the Agency to do with your plan that you do not agree with.

MANAGING AND PAYING FOR SUPPORTS

In line with the self-determination principle, a person with disability may choose to take on the responsibility to manage their own package in whatever aspect they choose, have the NDIA manage it or nominate a funded plan manager.

PRE-PLANNING OR GETTING READY FOR AN INDIVIDUAL PLAN

The NDIS gives people with disabilities opportunities to set and meet their goals. The difficulty is that many find this process of planning for the future and goal setting rather complicated and time consuming. NSW Government has funded a number of services that assist people with disability with planning (see articles in this issue on *The Importance of pre-planning* and *My Choice Matters*).

IMPLEMENTING A FUNDED SUPPORT PLAN

Once a person with disability has their funded support plan they can start contacting service providers to provide the services that have been

approved on their plan. When the service has been delivered the service providers puts in an invoice with the fund manager using the online portal www.myplace.ndis.gov.au

If the person with disability would like some assistance with implementing their plan, they can get some assistance from a Local Area Coordinator, or if they need more intensive support to put their plan in place, a Support Coordinator.

SCHEME ROLL-OUT

The Scheme is rolling out in two phases. The first phase commenced in 1 July 2016 for the following areas: Central Coast; Hunter New England; Nepean Blue Mountains; Northern Sydney; South Western Sydney; Southern NSW; and Western Sydney.

The second phase of the rollout commences on 1 July 2017 for: Illawarra Shoalhaven; Mid North Coast; Murrumbidgee; Northern NSW; South Eastern Sydney; Sydney; Western NSW; and Far West.

People with disability who use NSW Government disability services are automatically deemed eligible for the NDIS. All apart from Community Care clients will need to put in an Access Request as in the initial trial there were a number of Community Care clients who were found not to be eligible for the NDIS.

People with the most significant support needs are transitioning to the Scheme first, including those people accessing the following state disability programs: Large Residential Centres; Group Homes; Community High; Community Access; Community Support; and Respite.

Once the Scheme is fully rolled out, there will be capacity to accept applications from people who do not use state based disability services. You can apply as soon as the Scheme rolls-out in your region but priority will be with those who are transitioning from the State based system. You can use an online tool to check whether you are eligible at www.ndis.gov.au/my-access-checker

Enis Jusufspahic is the Sector Support & Development Officer for Eastern Sydney located at Inner Sydney Voice.



UNDERSTANDING NDIS TERMS

THE NDIS COMES WITH ITS OWN TERMINOLOGY. ENIS
JUSUFSPAHC PROVIDES A GUIDE TO COMMON TERMS.

National Disability Insurance Agency (NDIA) is an Australian Government body that administers the NDIS.

National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) introduces a new approach to providing supports to people with disability by funding individuals based on what is reasonable and necessary to reach their personal goals as well as funding community services to enable people with disability to fully participate in their local community.

NDIS plan is an individual's funded support package which includes details of the person's daily routine, their goals and funded support services that assist them reach these goals. Sometimes this is also called tier three.

Reasonable and necessary supports for people with disability should: (a) support people with disability to pursue their goals and maximise their independence; and (b) support people with disability to live independently and to be included in the community as fully participating citizens; and (c) develop and support the capacity of people with disability to undertake activities that enable them to participate in the community and in employment.

An **NDIS Participant** – a person with disability in receipt of a funded individual support package (NDIS plan) or anyone who access Information Linkages and Capacity building (ILC) funded activities.

Pre-planning is the informal process where the person with disability meets with a community based planner to discuss their goals and how to reach those goals using reasonable and necessary supports.

NDIA Planners are skilled workers who meet with the person with disability and their representatives to develop an individual's plan which includes a budget for reasonable and necessary services and activities.

NDIS Provider is the same as a Registered Provider of Supports. All NDIS service providers are required to meet the relevant state based disability standards until the national standards come into force. This means that in NSW all service providers

are required to meet the NSW Disability Services Standards in order to register as provider of supports in NSW.

NDIS Portal is a sophisticated website for both people with disability and service providers. People with disability are able to view their plan's details and schedule services. Service providers are able to claim payments and make bookings.

Local Area Coordinators (LAC). In the transition phase LACs support people with disability to implement their NDIS plan and after the transition it is envisioned the LACs will undertake most of the pre-planning with people with disability.

Support Co-ordinators provide more intensive longer term support to people with disability to implement their NDIS plan and to build skills to be able to manage their own supports.

Early Childhood Early Intervention Partners are specialised service providers who work exclusively with children with developmental delay under age of 6.

Sector Support & Development Officer (SSDO) works with ageing and disability service providers in order to achieve positive outcomes for clients and the sector.

NDIS Information Linkages and Capacity building (ILC) is designed to support a social model of disability support and reduce reliance on disability-funded support in the future. This includes things such as information, linkages and referrals, to connect people to the right support; building the capacity of mainstream services to engage with people with disability; improving community awareness, inclusion and accessibility; building individual capacity; and local area coordination. Sometimes this is also called tier two.

NSW Department of Family and Community Services Ageing, Disability and Home Care (ADHC) is the NSW state department that currently administers the NSW disability support system.

NDIS transition is the process of transferring current state based disability supports clients to an individualised support package under the NDIS.

INCLUSION OF CHILDREN WITH DEVELOPMENTAL DELAY OR DISABILITY

INCLUSION OF CHILDREN WITH A DEVELOPMENTAL DELAY AND/OR DISABILITY IS NOT AN OPTIONAL EXTRA - INCLUSION IS A HUMAN RIGHT. **EMMA PIERCE** EXPLAINS INCLUSION IS MUCH MORE THAN JUST BEING PHYSICALLY IN THE SAME PLACE ALONGSIDE OTHER PEOPLE.



Inclusion should not be tokenistic, but rather should involve looking at how a young child can most meaningfully participate in experiences like their peers of the same age. Keys to true inclusion are around providing adequate support and ensuring experiences are accessible to all children regardless of their abilities. Sometimes inclusive practice may require relatively minor adjustments to the universal design of programs, at other times early childhood professionals may need to seek training to develop skills such as around communication strategies or how to position a child who has a physical disability. Working in partnership with families and early childhood intervention practitioners in a child's team is crucial to successful early childhood inclusion.

WHY IS INCLUSION SO IMPORTANT?

Children, with and without disability and/or developmental delay, learn from the everyday environments they spend most time in and from the relationships with those they spend time with. In the first years of life, children spend most time with their family, early childhood educators and adults and children in their community. Learning is only useful and only promotes further development if it can actually be used in a natural context with other people. Inclusion, therefore is essential to learning and quality of life for children and families.

INCLUSION IS BENEFICIAL FOR ALL CHILDREN.

The earlier children experience differences in ability and are supported

to understand these differences, the more inclusive they tend to be. Evidence suggests that the benefits for children with developmental disability exist across a range of developmental domains. There are benefits in terms of emotional, social and academic outcomes for typically developing children who attend early childhood and school settings with children who have diverse abilities.

WHAT DOES SUCCESSFUL INCLUSION LOOK LIKE IN EARLY CHILDHOOD?

Inclusion works best when all involved in a child's life work together in a coordinated way.

- Children with developmental delay and/or disability should be given just enough support to engage with their peers and access learning experiences.
- Early childhood educators can observe young children's play and learning in a social context and can provide learning experiences, which promote their participation.
- Families share their knowledge of their child and their priorities for their child's participation in the early childhood setting.
- Early childhood intervention practitioners can share understanding of a child's strengths and needs and any specific strategies, which may support a child to access learning experiences in an early childhood setting.
- All professionals monitor, reflect on and review progress towards goals, and provide regular feedback to the family.

TIPS FOR INCLUSION IN EARLY CHILDHOOD:

- Find out important information about a child's interests, strengths and needs.
- Reflect on how inclusive your philosophy and practices are as part of quality improvement.
- Aim to adapt general programs to be more accessible to all children wherever possible.
- Ask families about what their priorities are for their child's participation in your environment.
- Support children to practice functional skills in real life situations with peers.

The quote below from Caitlin Townsend, an early childhood teacher at Jamberoo Preschool, shares an example of how one early childhood setting has worked in partnership with early childhood intervention practitioners to promote inclusion:

"We recently worked with the support of a physiotherapist and occupational therapist to research purpose built, height adjustable tables to increase participation for children with varying support needs including those developing core strength to assist them with sitting on a chair at a table. Our biggest strength is how we naturally embed inclusion and how we do not draw attention to modifications being made to our environment ensuring all resources are used with every child during our every day routine."

For more information, see ECIA NSW/ACT's Inclusion Tool at www.ecia-nsw.org.au

STARTING SCHOOL FOR CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES

WHEN A CHILD HAS A DISABILITY AND/OR DEVELOPMENTAL DELAY, **EMMA PIERCE** EXPLAINS THAT TRANSITION TO SCHOOL REQUIRES ADDITIONAL TIME, PLANNING AND COLLABORATION FROM ALL INVOLVED IN THE CHILD'S LIFE.

It is that time of year, when many young children are preparing for their first day at school. Starting school is a major milestone for all children but what is needed to make transition to school successful for those children with disabilities?

According to research in 2006, the most supportive and smooth transition to school process happens when a community-wide or ecological approach is used, rather than focussing solely on the child's "readiness". The school readiness equation shown below, from the United States National School Readiness Indicators Initiative, emphasises the need for all involved in a child's life to work in partnership.

The example of Jae (see box at right) highlights inclusive practices, which support all children's participation in an early childhood setting. By support-

ing smaller transitions within the children's day using visual supports, this can help increase confidence and decrease anxiety for children and their families. Building on this success, these same strategies could be shared with the new school and adapted to support the transition to that school. Smoother transitions happen when the school is prepared and welcoming to the child and family. There is a need to share priorities, goals and progress, and to ensure that families can access the information they want and need about their child's learning and development in their early childhood setting in order to support families with their goals for their child as they approach school starting age.

Emma Pierce is the Inclusion and Transition to School Coordinator, Early Childhood Intervention Australia (NSW/ACT). References and useful links are available in the online version of this article.

THIS RESOURCE PROVIDES A COMMUNITY-WIDE APPROACH TO THE TRANSITION TO SCHOOL



PLANNING FOR INCLUSION

Jae has always arrived at day care seeking lots of emotional support and comfort. He seemed anxious about what was happening next and would often stand at the gate watching for his dad. Staff worked with Jae's family and the early childhood intervention practitioner to determine what might help make this transition smoother for Jae. The centre have now set up a photo board to show the main routine events in a day at the centre. Some kids call this the "day clock" and many children refer to it at various times throughout the day.

COMING SOON:

A new Working Together Agreement package will be released in early 2017, which aims to support collaboration between early childhood intervention workers, early childhood education and care workers and families. The Working Together Agreement package will be available to download free from mid-February on the Early Childhood Intervention Australia (ECIA) NSW/ACT website: www.ecia-nsw.org.au

TRANSITION TO SCHOOL

Early Childhood Intervention Australia's (NSW/ACT) Transition To School resource website www.transitiontoschoolresource.org.au provides practical information and video clips about transition to school for children with disabilities designed for families and professionals. A specific "ready services" section of the resource is linked with the Early Years Learning Framework (EYLF) and National Quality Standard to support Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC) services in their roles. The "ready communities" section of the website provides strategies and information relevant to Out of School Hours Care professionals. The Transition to School Resource has been developed in response to a literature review, and extensive consultation with families, service providers and school staff across NSW. This project was funded by Ageing, Disability and Home Care (ADHC) in the NSW Department of Family and Community Services.



MY CHOICE MATTERS - TRAINING OPENS DOORS

MY CHOICE MATTERS OFFERS A RANGE OF TRAINING PROGRAMS FOR PEOPLE WITH A DISABILITY. WHAT BETTER WAY TO TALK ABOUT IT THAN **ALANNA JULIAN** TELLING HER STORY ABOUT HOW THIS TRAINING HELPED HER GET A JOB WITH MY CHOICE MATTERS.

When people hear the words National Disability Insurance Scheme they may think of personalised individual funding, but for me I think it's about opening lots of doors to opportunities for people with disabilities.

When I was around 18 months old my parents noticed that milestones were delayed and I still had no speech at 2 years old. By the time I had started kindergarten it had become obvious I wasn't going to keep up with the other kids in the classroom. I was then diagnosed with an intellectual disability. Earlier this year I was also diagnosed with Adult Attention Deficit Disorder.

In 2014, I was contacted by an organisation called My Choice Matters who had heard about me through an FACS Ageing, Disability and Home Care program called 'Living Life My Way'. My Choice Matters had designed a program called 'Become A Leader'. This program was for people with disabilities and their family members

to gain skills in leadership for use in both their own lives and within their community. The program sounded very appealing to me, so I signed up for it. It was an eight-month course and I learnt so much about myself including about my strengths, what I needed to work on, how to pitch ideas, how to best connect with my community and how to work with others in a team.

After graduating, I went on to the 'Become A Leader' graduate program. This involved writing blogs to inspire other leaders and guest speaking roles at workshops called 'Get More Skills'. 'Get More Skills' is another workshop program My Choice Matters runs to get people ready for the NDIS. It helps people with disabilities find a voice, choice and control in their lives. Through this, I gained the confidence to speak out in the community about people with disabilities and get people thinking and preparing for the NDIS.

When My Choice Matters were in my area for an expo, they asked me to help

out at their information stall which I very much enjoyed doing. This gave me a great opportunity to help people within my community to gain information about My Choice Matters and help people access services and share information about the NDIS. Earlier this year I started another 'Become A Leader' program designed for people who had completed the 'Living Life My Way' program. Over the eight months of that course, I developed my confidence to the point of thinking that with all my experience and the skills I have gained, that I should apply for a job at My Choice Matters. I went for an interview and I was offered a position as facilitator and community engagement officer.

With my involvement in My Choice Matters over the years I am pleased to say how hard they work to get their message out, and how useful and relevant their programs are for myself and other people with disabilities. I have witnessed the many ways they are

building capacity for people with disabilities by giving them the tools and support to get them ready for the NDIS.

At the 'Get More Skills' workshops people are empowered to think about their dreams, skills, goals, what care supports they may need – what it means to have a 'good life.' As well, there is a chance to discuss ideas with others, ask questions and to gain information. The workshops can also look at the challenges people may face with accessing the NDIS.

Participants have told me after attending the workshops what they got from it and how they are feeling about things. Some say they feel more confident in their planning, gained knowledge and understanding of the NDIS. They also formed friendships by way of peer mentoring in supporting each other through the NDIS journey. People also identify their strengths, abilities and needs they never thought they had. They also realise what a great platform for general networking the workshops are. As well, they feel inspired to get their plans together after hearing from a guest speaker talking about their lived experience of a disability.

Facilitators are trained to make workshops very accessible and meet the needs of their audience. They do this by using "easy read", AUSLAN, writing things up on a whiteboard or a large piece of paper, using pictures and also using PowerPoint presentations at the same time so that people can write things down. Evaluation forms are also provided and these are continually referred to, to see what worked and what didn't.

If people cannot attend 'Get More Skills' workshops, or prefer to use technology as a source of information, My Choice Matters also has the workbook resources online. Workbooks are readily available for people to take home to work on, or to share the material covered in the 'Get More Skills' workshops with others. The workbooks can also be accessed in "easy read".

Personally, I have given out workbooks to friends preparing for their NDIS meeting and they found it very useful to work through it with someone they trust, whether it is a family member, their disability service provider or another trusted person.

Another My Choice Matters online program is 'My Learning Matters', which I have also completed myself. It is an online learning tool to help you get the most out of the changes ahead with the disability support system. In total it has 60 resources, with topics such as 'Having A Good Life With Funding', 'A Good Life And Feeling Valued', and 'Choosing Service Providers and Staff'. The fun part of it is you actually receive an email certificate as you complete each topic in the workbook.

Going through the different topics you not only learn, but you can add what you may need or want by using pictures or writing in the boxes. The topics can help you prepare an online NDIS plan for your first consultation with your

"I have witnessed the many ways My Choice Matters are building capacity for people with disabilities by giving them the tools and support to get them ready for the NDIS"

assigned Local Area Coordinator. This is a good idea if say, there are communication barriers, or you are a bit stuck on what to talk about. You could certainly go through this online individual plan with your Local Area Coordinator and whoever else you choose to be at the meeting.

It has been a journey for me. I realised that sitting at home wasn't getting me anywhere. For me it was a matter of taking that first step and starting to build my capacity through all the programs offered by My Choice Matters. This has given me the confidence to identify my strengths and abilities so that I can contribute to my community and start my career journey off on the right track. I also know that My Choice Matters can be in my NDIS individualised plan as one of my supports.

My Choice Matters is a great initiative of the NSW government to get people ready for the NDIS and a great starting point for building capacity. I have gained many benefits from being involved with this organisation and I am sure others will too.

Alanna Julian is a facilitator and community engagement officer at My Choice Matters

Become a Leader is all about unlocking your potential and driving social change.



ABILITY LINKS

BUILDING INCLUSIVE COMMUNITIES

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Ability Links NSW is a statewide initiative that is all about building inclusive communities. They do this in two ways: working with individuals on their personal goals to connect them with their community in a way that's meaningful for them; and working alongside community groups and businesses to support them to become more welcoming and accessible. The stories in this article illustrate how this works in practice.

SUPPORTING INDIVIDUALS TO ACHIEVE THEIR GOALS

When was the last time you thought about your skills, talents and dreams and where they could take you? These are the questions that Ability Links NSW staff, known as Linkers, are raising with people with disability, mental illness, and their families and carers across New South Wales every day.

Linkers support people to identify

> continued page 16

ERIC'S STORY

Eric is a 16-year-old boy living with autism who was looking for something to do after school. After some conversations about his talents and strengths, Eric shared that he is a chess lover and would be interested in sharing his skills with others who would like to learn the game.

A Linker introduced Eric and his family to their local library, and proposed to staff that Eric could help start and teach a chess club. The library was extremely keen to help get this idea off the ground and offer chess tutorials to members of the community.

The Linker assisted Eric to develop a poster to promote the new chess club throughout the local community. Within the first month the chess club had 10 attendees from local primary schools.

Eric loves teaching people and has very few opportunities to do this at high school. John, Eric's father, says he loves that everyone who comes to the chess club wants to be there. "The people Eric helps are very cooperative and thankful for his input and support, and he's just so happy in his afternoon role," John says.



DEVELOPING LEADERS IN DISABILITY AWARENESS – GRATIA CAFÉ SURRY HILLS

The Sydney City team has worked with local café Gratia to become a leader in this space. A Linker introduced café staff to local community members with disability. Over a meal, staff learnt about how to provide a positive experience for people with a disability in their café.

"It's been extraordinary," says Gratia's Troy Byrnes. "It gives us a perspective that we often don't see, and gives us a greater understanding of living with a disability. It also has reshaped how we engage with customers with differing needs."

"We want to engage with our diverse community and cultivate a socially conscious space that respects and encourages difference. Perceived difference is often something that arbitrarily divides people and can often make people with a disability feel unwelcome, and even unsafe," Mr Byrnes says. "We want to see that people with a disability are respected and given opportunities to reach their full potential. It expands our community, cultivates safe and welcoming spaces and contributes to a greater social cohesion."



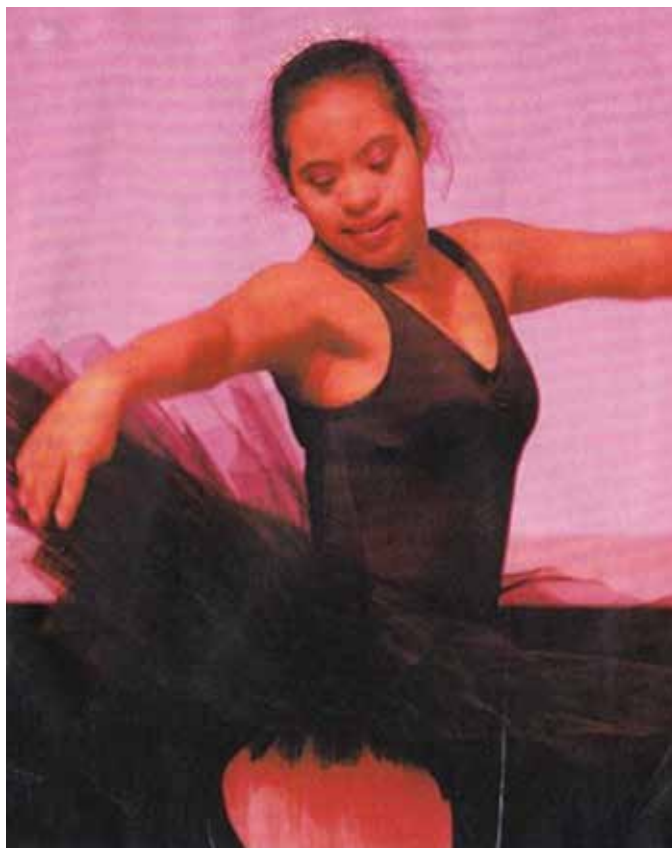
RUBY'S STORY

Ruby is a bubbly and creative 21-year-old with a passion for dance and floristry. Ruby and her mother met with a Linker with the hope of finding a dance class for Ruby as well as a course in floristry at TAFE.

Ruby's Linker supported her to connect with the local university's dance society which is run by students. They were happy to include Ruby and were excited by her skills as a dancer. They offered her a place in the annual revue immediately! Ruby and her Linker then put together a "One Page Profile" to help the students in the society to understand a bit more about Ruby's strengths and how to support her. They included things like someone meeting her at the same spot each week and helpful communication strategies for when she is stressed.

At the same time as re-engaging with her love of dance, Ruby was interested in gaining some work skills by undertaking a Certificate III in Floristry at TAFE. Through some negotiation and self-advocacy, together Ruby and her Linker were able to secure her a place within the course and ensure that adequate in-class supports were available for helping with some of the theory content. Ruby finished the semester with some fantastic results.

Ruby has now started work experience at a local well-known cake-making and floristry shop where she assists with preparing flowers and icing decorations for large weddings.



> continued from page 15

their goals and interests, and build their connections in their local community. Ability Links NSW supports people to pursue a wide range of personal goals, whether it's to join an interest group or club, secure paid or volunteer work, or learn new skills by joining a class. Linkers are hands-on workers who support people to achieve their goals and connect with their community.

MAKING OUR COMMUNITIES MORE ACCESSIBLE

As well as working with individuals, Ability Links NSW has a focus on making our communities more inclusive and accessible. This could be through providing disability awareness training, improving physical accessibility or facilitating community discussions about inclusion. Every Body at the Beach and Developing Leaders in Disability Awareness are some stories of how Ability Links has improved accessibility in different areas of our community.

If you have noticed any barriers to access, or anything that could be improved to make our communities more inclusive, contact Ability Links NSW and let us know.

COULD YOU, OR SOMEONE YOU KNOW, BENEFIT FROM BEING BETTER LINKED WITH YOUR COMMUNITY?

Anyone aged between 9 to 64 years who identifies as living with a disability, or their families and carers can contact Ability Links NSW to begin working with a Linker. You can tell us if you have any preferences for the Linker you would like to work with, for example their gender, cultural background, age or personality type. Linkers can meet you in your home or somewhere else in your community such as a café, park or library to talk about what you might like to do or explore.

You can begin working with Ability Links NSW by making contact with us via phone, email or by dropping into one of our offices. For more information and stories, check out the Ability Links NSW website or give us a call.

You can find out more about Ability Links NSW on their website at www.abilitylinksnsw.org.au or by phone 8622 0456 or email ability.links@vinnies.org.au

EVERY BODY AT THE BEACH - DISABILITY AWARENESS TRAINING FOR LIFEGUARDS

Through conversations, Linkers learnt that lifeguards on the eastern beaches did not feel confident to support people to use the beach wheelchairs. In response, the East Sydney team partnered with Royal Rehab to develop lifeguard training that would cover not only the use of beach wheelchairs, but also a general look at disability awareness and how lifeguards can support people with any disability on the beach.

In the development of the training, the Ability Links team developed a video that captured the experiences and advice from people with a range of disabilities.

We interviewed five people who love going to the beach and they explained the barriers and challenges they face, and how lifeguards can make the beach a more accessible and inclusive space.

The training was rolled out in September this year to lifeguards through the Northern Beaches of NSW and Gold Coast councils. It is now being delivered across Australia by Royal Rehab and includes theory and practical elements, including simulation activities that provide lifeguards with an insight into what it's like to live with a disability.

You can watch the video on the Ability Links website: <http://www.abilitylinksnsw.org.au/story/DisabilityAwareness>





IT'S YOUR NDIS

OVER SIX YEARS, AND WITH MORE THAN 163,000 SUPPORTERS, *EVERY AUSTRALIAN COUNTS* HAS LOBBIED, CAMPAIGNED AND ADVOCATED FOR THE NDIS. **ANDREW GIBSON** EXPLAINS THAT NOW THE NDIS HAS STARTED *EVERY AUSTRALIAN COUNTS* CONTINUES TO PUSH TO MAKE THE NDIS THE BEST IT CAN BE

The National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) has been a long time coming. For decades Australians with disability, their families and carers have relied on inadequate and inflexible systems, services and supports that do not meet their needs. Throughout, the disability community has been agitating for change without large-scale success.

Finally, in 2011 the environment was right to fight for the desperately needed NDIS. Every Australian Counts is an alliance of National Disability Services (NDS), Carers Australia and the Australian Federation of Disability Organisations (AFDO), representing the disability community with one voice. The campaign began with the goal of seeing the NDIS supported, legislated and rolled out to all eligible Australians.

We have enjoyed great success and with early political and community

support, the NDIS legislation was secured in 2013 and trials began in July that same year.

Now that the NDIS is a reality, Every Australian Counts informs and educates the sector about the NDIS while continuing to lobby for change to make the NDIS the best it can be. This means people with disability, their families and carers, advocates, service providers and governments sharing and learning together.

The core mission of the NDIS is long-term improved outcomes for people with disability, their families and carers. There is no question it will change people's lives and change the communities we live in. That is already happening for participants in trial sites across Australia.

It is your life! Because the NDIS is about the participant, it will support you to live the way you want. Rather than being told what disability services

and supports might possibly be available, you will be able to decide what you need and want, when you are supported and who supports you. So think about how the NDIS can help you.

The NDIS will give you the flexibility to design a plan for all your support needs and goals. Not just what is now available, or what you can currently get, but the opportunity to design individualised support plans to meet long-term goals and outcomes.

The full roll out of the NDIS began in many areas around the country from July 2016 and the inner Sydney region starts transitioning from July 2017. There is still a road to travel until the NDIS is here for all eligible Australians. As Every Australian Counts Campaign Director, John Della Bosca, said: "The first challenge was to get the NDIS, the next challenge is to deliver it together."

Social change at this scale takes time. We know that. We also know this is the right future for Australia and we will continue to campaign until the scheme is a reality for all.

Andrew Gibson is the Campaign Community Educator for Every Australian Counts

A VIEW FROM THE BACK OF THE BUS:

A REFLECTION ON THE NEED FOR A CULTURALLY RESPONSIVE NDIS

PEOPLE WITH DISABILITY FROM CULTURALLY AND LINGUISTICALLY DIVERSE (CALD) BACKGROUNDS MAKE UP ONLY A SMALL PROPORTION OF PEOPLE WHO ARE CURRENTLY DISABILITY SERVICE RECIPIENTS. **DIANA QIAN** ARGUES GREATER RESOURCES ARE NEEDED TO ENSURE PEOPLE FROM CALD BACKGROUNDS HAVE EQUAL ACCESS TO THE NATIONAL DISABILITY INSURANCE SCHEME (NDIS).

I came to Australia in 1988 when I was thirteen. I missed the introduction of Medicare but was not too late to witness another equally significant social reform unfold; the implementation of the NDIS. It is hardly possible to be a passive bystander when I know something really positive is about to happen. Many lives will change for the better and Australia will be a fairer place to live for everyone. The NDIS is so close to home not just because I'm a person with disability but also because I believe in equal rights regardless of gender, ethnicity, disability or sexual orientation.

The United Nation's Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, to which Australia is a signatory, came into effect in 2008 affirming that people with disability should enjoy the same rights and opportunities as their abled-bodied counterparts to social, economic and political participation. The Convention tells me that as a human being, I'm no less of a person than the person sitting next to me and I'm entitled to supports that allows me to do something with my life and be a contributing member of my community. However, words are just words without practical implementation.

The NDIS is a critical aspect of the Government's commitment to meeting its obligations under the Convention. The \$22 billion Scheme will revolutionise the way people with disability access the support we need to lead ordinary lives and be visible members of the community. We will no longer be passive recipients of an inflexible service system that at worst kept us segregated from society and at best gave us a choice of going bowling or going bowling. With the promise of gaining more choice and control in our lives under the NDIS the 'beggars' can now finally be 'choosers'.

But how do we choose and how do we take control? It's a steep learning curve for us when many people with disability have had very little opportunity to make decisions for ourselves. More often than not, we get told what's best for us by professionals. Recognising the need for capacity building and motivated by a vision of an inclusive society, a group of likeminded people (including myself) came together and

formed Diversity and Disability Alliance (DDAlliance). It's a disability support organisation run by and for people with disability from culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) backgrounds with the support of families and allies.

DDAlliance's definition of CALD refers to people who are born in a non-English speaking country or have at least one of their parents born in a non-English speaking country or speak a language other than English at home.

We believe in diversity, full inclusion and the power of a collective voice. We want to support people to live the lives they choose by developing their knowledge, skills and capacity. We also want to build the capacity of all communities to include people with disability.

For two years, since DDAlliance's inception, we've been an active contributor to NDIS policy and implementation in the hope that it will be an equitable system for people with disability from CALD backgrounds. Nationally, people with disability from CALD backgrounds make up 25% of the disability population. This percentage is even higher in NSW. Yet only 6% of the people currently accessing funded disability services are from CALD backgrounds. This means three in four miss out on receiving disability support because of their language and culture. Lack of access to information in community languages and interpreters is just the tip of the





iceberg when it comes to the range of linguistic, cultural and religious barriers people experience.

Since the Productivity Commission's report in 2011 on disability care and support which paved the way for the NDIS, it is widely quoted that the disability system is 'broken'. For people with disability from CALD backgrounds the system is also grossly discriminatory.

DDAlliance looks to the NDIS as the once in a lifetime opportunity (just when do you get to design a system from scratch) to undo past wrongs and give people with disability from CALD backgrounds the support we need to play catch up. The national rollout is in full steam and we are really concerned that the institutional racism that permeated the 'broken' old system is being allowed to continue unaddressed.

I think it was Einstein who said: "The definition of insanity is doing the same thing over and over again, but expecting different results". Unless the views and experiences of people from CALD backgrounds have been considered and incorporated in the design of NDIS from the start, we can hardly expect the access rate of people from CALD backgrounds in the NDIS to be anything but disappointing. According to the National Disability Insurance Agency's (NDIA) latest quarterly report the percentage of NDIS participants from CALD backgrounds is only 4%.

To make a bad situation worse, the arrangement for the

full transition to NDIS commenced 1 July 2016, and gave priority to people who are already disability service recipients. Although it's not explicit that new applicants will be pushed to the back of the queue, the sheer volume of work involved in processing current service users will mean exactly that in a practical sense.

Given that the vast majority of people with disability from CALD backgrounds are not in the existing service system we are being disadvantaged yet again in the rush to get onto the bus. Not to mention that many people from CALD backgrounds are not even aware that there is a bus and how to find the bus stop. It hardly seems fair, or sound policy, that the people who are struggling with no support because of the inaccessibility of the old system are being left behind again by the new.

"A person centred and flexible system will greatly benefit the lives of people from CALD backgrounds, their families and communities."

Making certain groups of people sit at the back of the bus is considered to be a thing of the past as societies' consciousness of universal human rights grows. But at times history has the habit of repeating itself if we don't translate words of rights and equity into actions. 25% of the disability population deserves 25% of the implementation efforts. As only 6% of existing service users are from CALD backgrounds we should be able to see 19% of resources directed exclusively to developing culturally responsive policies and workers. There should be accessible information reaching out to CALD communities which is much more than a fact sheet and there should be priority for direct engagement with people with disability in those communities.

It needs to be said that our criticism of the implementation does not reduce our belief in the vision and potential of a NDIS. A person centred and flexible system will greatly benefit the lives of people from CALD backgrounds, their families and communities. We recognise the enormous challenges facing all stakeholders, as change is never easy, especially at such a scale. However, as everyone gets caught up in the 'doing' it's critical that we don't lose sight of the vision and purpose of our actions. A pause amidst the chaos allows us to ask whether the decisions of today will lead to the realisation of a fair and equitable system for everyone.

Diana Qian is President of the Diversity and Disability Alliance, a user led disability support organisation, run by and for people with disability from diverse backgrounds with the support of families and allies. Please refer to their website www.ddalliance.org.au for more information and how you can support their vision.

THE IMPORTANCE OF PRE-PLANNING

A GOOD PRE-PLANNING PROCESS CAN MAKE A BIG DIFFERENCE TO A PERSON'S OUTCOMES IN THE NATIONAL DISABILITY INSURANCE SCHEME (NDIS). **LEANNE FRETTE** EXPLAINS SYLVANVALE'S EXPERIENCE OF WORKING WITH PEOPLE BEFORE THEIR INITIAL MEETING.



The NDIS is the biggest social reform since the introduction of Medicare and, as such, means enormous changes for people with a disability, their families and carers, and for the organisations that support them.

The NDIS recognises that every person's needs and aspirations are unique, so a flexible approach is needed to make supports as accessible as possible. The scheme is rolling out across New South Wales between 1 July 2016 and 30 June 2018.

The NDIS means a significant change in the way that disability supports are funded in Australia. Whereas previously the money to pay for services for people with a disability would go directly to the service provider, under the NDIS the money goes directly to the person. That person can then decide how they want to spend the money.

The NDIS as a positive step towards

equality for people with a disability, as it gives them choice and control over their supports and, most importantly, their own lives.

As positive as it is, the process of transitioning to the new scheme poses many challenges for people with disabilities, their families and organisations. Indeed, our customers have expressed a range of reactions about the National Disability Insurance Scheme, from excitement through to anxiety.

As we moved closer to the commencement of the NDIS, it became clear that many of our customers were feeling overwhelmed by the process and by what they needed to do. We were also hearing stories of people who were losing services because they didn't know what to ask for, or what was required, when they met with the National Disability Insurance Agency (NDIA) Planner.

What became increasingly clear was that we needed to offer our customers a lot of support in helping them transition into the NDIS.

So we set up a Customer Service Team that was focused on helping people through the NDIS planning process. We created a 'pre-planning process', where our customers and their support network meet with us to have a discussion and think through all of the things they have now that they want to keep, what they'd like to do differently, as well as taking into account things like equipment and aids.

Our Customer Service Team then prepares a detailed pre-planning document for the customer to take to their meeting with the NDIA Planner. They are now also helping customers put their NDIS plans into action.

While we strongly support the NDIS, the reality is there is no perfect scheme. The NDIS funds 'reasonable and necessary supports' and there will always be things that are out of scope and not funded.

What's more, funding alone will not solve the challenge of shifting society's attitudes towards people with a disability. There is much work to do in the battle for equal rights for people with a disability and Sylvanvale is committed to creating a shift in attitudes where seeing a person with a disability is no more remarkable than a person wearing glasses.

ABOUT SYLVANVALE

Sylvanvale Foundation (Sylvanvale) was formed in 1947 when a group of parents united to form an organisation that would give their children with a disability a better quality of life through access to education and inclusion. Today it supports over 700 children and adults across Sydney and the Blue Mountains.

Sylvanvale provides a wide range of services and programs including group and independent living, work ready and life skills, children and youth, health and wellbeing, respite, NDIS pre-planning and putting plans into action, as well as social enterprise businesses such as Sylvanvale Catering and our Retail Therapy Vintage & Café shop in Caringbah and Birdcage Café in Engadine.



To date we have assisted well over 100 individuals and their families with their pre-planning. We have received lots of positive feedback and have many stories of how the NDIS has given people access to supports they never had before. Damon's case study in Learning to Fly is one of those stories.

Leanne Fretten is the CEO of Sylvanvale.

In addition to service providers providing their own pre-planning programmes the NDIS has appointed so far two agencies in NSW (Uniting and St Vincent de Paul) to roll out Local Area Coordinators (LAC) for each region across the state. The LACs primary role is to engage with the community around the NDIS by providing information, individual pre-planning and plan implementation once the individual's plan has come into force.

My Choice Matters is also running workshops that cover pre-planning and they produce resources to assist in pre-planning (see My Choice Matters – Training opens Doors page #). The NDIS has also produced a Getting Plan Ready Workbook. Links to resources can be found at the online version of this article.



CASE STUDY: LEARNING TO FLY

How the NDIS and Sylvanvale's pre-planning process helped improve Damon and his family's life

When Damon's family first learnt about the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) they had a feeling of uncertainty.

"While the previous system didn't give us everything we needed, we at least knew what to expect," says Damon's mum Emma. So when Emma heard that Sylvanvale was offering NDIS pre-planning support to help people through the process, she decided to give it a go.

A person-centred approach

Emma was connected with Sylvanvale's Customer Service Planner, Madeleine. Right from the start, she was impressed with Madeleine's person-centred approach. "Madeleine came out to see us on a Saturday morning – driving a couple of hours from her home. She and Sylvanvale's Service Manager for Teen Time then gave up several hours of their time, asking lots of questions and really listening to what we need and how we want our life to look."

"After that, Madeleine went away and prepared a detailed pre-planning document for us to take to our meeting with the NDIS Planner. The document was a compilation of all the support needs we discussed during our meeting and the story that Damon and I put together."

Life-changing results

When it was time for Damon and Emma to meet with the NDIS Planner, they felt well prepared and in control. "We brought our pre-planning document to our NDIS Planning Meeting and had everything we needed – all the work had been done." But the best was yet to come.

"When Damon's NDIS plan arrived a few weeks later we couldn't believe it," says Emma. "It included everything we asked for. Although we weren't asking for anything unreasonable, there were things in there that we never dared hope we'd receive." "As well as giving us a significant increase in services, our NDIS plan gives us carer support so we can take our first-ever family holiday together." "It's also meant that Damon was able to do iFLY (indoor skydiving – ed), which has been a long-held dream of his. Doing it was one of the best days of his life."

Emma's recommendation for other families

"I hope that on reading this, other families will engage with Sylvanvale and access the same wonderful assistance with NDIS planning that I had." "I could not have expected a better outcome, nor be better supported by professionals that actually cared about Damon and our family."



Currently one in five Australians live with some form of disability. The added spectrum of diversity created by individual, socioeconomic, racial and cultural differences, is made even more complex by the unique capabilities and limitations associated with individuals' disability.

There has also been a growth in a 'one size fits all' approach to information provision, not taking into account that the delivery doesn't always suit the individual's specific wants or needs. Worse it can come from a place of not assuming that people living with disabilities are contributing citizens to the communities where they live.

Is it possible for a person with a disability to access the information they require on an individual level?

Information that is independent not only promotes choice, it maximises control and ultimately creates better inclusion. Listening to their needs and tailoring information supports an individual's choice in making decisions that matter to them, at that time and for that particular enquiry.

The introduction of the NDIS has opened up opportunities for disability service providers to compete with

one another, heightening the need for them to connect to people with a disability in a very personal, tailored way. This approach is resource-heavy and could appear to be limiting for businesses, especially when the consumer-centred approach to communications demands multiple channels for interaction.

IDEAS, a specialist information service provider, takes this approach when speaking with their customers. This information service involves a call centre with specially trained Information Officers, a text-to-chat and live chat service, an extensively updated community events calendar, plus their social media channels.

As an independently verified source of information, there is no question about the accuracy of the information that IDEAS disseminates. Individuals

with a disability are guaranteed they are provided the right information, tailored to their personal needs and which will answer their requirements at that time.

IDEAS is of the firm belief that the provision of accessible, quality information will lead to better inclusion for persons with disabilities, enabling them to lead the life that they choose.

Looking for information but unsure where to start? Contact us at IDEAS.

Speak to one of our team on 1800 029 904 or click on the Live Chat button to chat with them. You can also SMS your question to 0458 296 602. It is FREE.

You can also contact us via our social media channels including Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, and Pinterest.

Diana Palmer is the Executive Officer at IDEAS – Information on Disability and Education Awareness Services www.ideas.org.au

OUR TOP THREE TIPS FOR GETTING THE BEST INFORMATION

- 1: Check in with your family and friends as to their trusted sources
- 2: Check in with your best community choices for information. It might be your doctor, or pharmacist or neighbourhood centre or library
- 3: Always ask when receiving the information "Do you have a financial interest in giving me this information". And your supplementary question is, "Is this information INDEPENDENT?"



LOCAL SERVICE PROFILE: HOLDSWORTH COMMUNITY

HOLDSWORTH COMMUNITY HAS A LONG HISTORY OF SUPPORTING PEOPLE LIVING WITH INTELLECTUAL DISABILITIES ACROSS THE EASTERN SUBURBS AND CITY OF SYDNEY. MIGUEL LANE-MULLINS LOOKS AT SOME OF THE SUPPORT CHANGES FOR PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES LIVING IN THE AREA.

Holdsworth Community is not just a supplier of services for people with disabilities, it is also a major local provider of supports for older people, carers and children and families. It is also part of the community with a community café, community space and opportunities for volunteers. It helps people access services such as community transport, home delivered meals and room hire for hosting private events.

Apart from preparing for the rollout of the NDIS (National Disability Insurance Scheme) Holdsworth Community is also committing to the Campaign to End Loneliness.

ENDING LONELINESS

Launched in the United Kingdom in 2011, the Campaign to End Loneliness tackles the health threat of loneliness for older people. Loneliness can exist across any age group or demographic, including a core part of any community: people living with disabilities.

People with disabilities are less likely than the general population to have meaningful employment, to have personal intimate relationships, to raise their own children and to be seen participating in the local community. Holdsworth supports have most often focused on social, recreational and community options for people to build and maintain social networks. A large focus in recent years has also been on building life skills to support growing independence.

The supports provided by Holdsworth have always stemmed from the needs of the local community. For example, the Saturday outings, which have been running for 30 years, began when parents raised the issue that limited social opportunities existed for young adults with intellectual disabilities. The social outings continue to this day and play a pivotal role in keeping people connected to one another.

THE INDEPENDENT GROUP

The Independent Group is a recent initiative that has proved to be successful in supporting connectedness. The Independent Group formed over 18 months ago, and it has nearly reached its goal of being independent of any paid support services like those at Holdsworth Community. The group started with a few pioneers who felt they were able and ready to start going on social outings without paid staff and volunteers.

Now, whenever there is information to share, such as when outings recommence for the year, only one person in the group needs to receive a message and they are able to pass it onto the rest of the participants without the assistance of the office staff. Now that all the participants are well practiced, they can trouble shoot any difficulties they encounter as a group and make effective changes to the outing plan on the run.

THE NDIS

The NDIS will begin to roll out across the eastern suburbs and City of Sydney from 1 July 2017. This will see a shift in the delivery of services from traditional program based supports to individualised supports.

The support team has been busy in offering pre-NDIS meetings to all families and individuals with over 100 sessions conducted so far. The meetings involve future planning for the individual as well as advice on how to prepare for a planning meeting with the National Disability Insurance Agency (NDIA).

Already Holdsworth Community are making changes in their existing programmes in response to people's needs. For example, they are extending the hours of group outings to allow parents to spend more time at work. This way the shift to new supports will not be so drastic once the NDIS is fully operational.

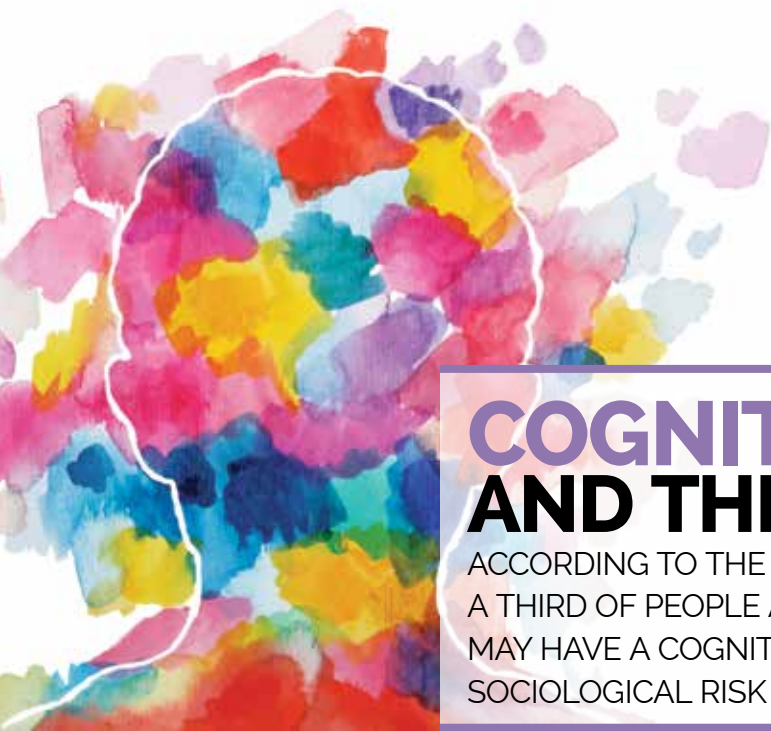
Holdsworth Community will continue being a preferred provider of social, recreational and community opportunities for people living with disabilities, with all current and future supported options including essential life skills building components. So if someone wants to:

- learn how to manage their own money,
- take public transport independently,
- cook for themselves and for others,
- meet friends and possibly a partner, girlfriend or boyfriend, then

Holdsworth Community is interested in exploring these essential life goals.

If you would like to talk to someone about Holdsworth Community supports, please contact 9302 3600.

Miguel Lane-Mullins is the Community Care Assistant Manager at Holdsworth Community



COGNITIVE DISABILITY AND THE JUSTICE SYSTEM

ACCORDING TO THE NSW LAW REFORM COMMISSION MORE THAN A THIRD OF PEOPLE APPEARING BEFORE NSW LOCAL COURTS MAY HAVE A COGNITIVE DISABILITY. **SUSAN BEGGS** EXPLORES THE SOCIOLOGICAL RISK FACTORS THAT HAVE PUT THEM THERE.

As of 2016, there are reportedly around 34,000 people incarcerated in Australia's prisons, with an expenditure of \$3.4 billion per year to operate and increase the capacity for the ever growing prison population. Over the last 20 years the prison population has doubled, even though rates of crime have decreased, raising the question – is our justice system working?

Many people believe that the Justice system exists not only to incarcerate people who have committed offences, but also to assist in preventing them from re-offending. Our statistics are not showing this to be the case, particularly for people with a cognitive disability.

Cognitive disability is a term used to describe a person who has an intellectual disability or brain disorder. Many of us know, or have supported someone who has a cognitive disability, whether through the result of a car accident or stroke; leading to a brain injury, or through being born with an intellectual disability such as autism, or Down Syndrome.

ADULTS WITH A COGNITIVE DISABILITY ARE OVER-REPRESENTED IN THE NEW SOUTH WALES PRISON POPULATION BY A FACTOR OF 4X GREATER THAN THE GENERAL POPULATION

Many readers may be shocked to learn, that people with cognitive disability, many of whom are already marginalised within society, are at a higher risk of having contact with the justice system for petty or minor crimes, and also of being incarcerated as a result. These people are more vulnerable to being victims of crime and are less likely to be effectively represented within their rights, which is in stark contrast to Australia's commitment to adhere to the *United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities*. Article 13(1) states:

"States Parties shall ensure effective access to justice for persons with disabilities on an equal basis with others, including through the provision of procedural and

age-appropriate accommodations, in order to facilitate their effective role as direct and indirect participants, including as witnesses, in all legal proceedings, including at investigative and other preliminary stages."

In Australia, it is reported that there are around 668,100 Australians (2.9% of the population) with an intellectual disability. Overall, the rates of intellectual disability are higher for men (3.3%) than for women (2.6%), with boys in the age range of 0-14 years being twice as likely to have an intellectual disability than girls within this age group.

PEOPLE WITH COGNITIVE DISABILITIES ARE MORE LIKELY TO BE ARRESTED, QUESTIONED AND DETAINED FOR MINOR PUBLIC ORDER OFFENCES.

People with cognitive impairment are often confused with those with a mental disorder and are less recognised as an overrepresented and vulnerable group in prison. Generally, cognitive impairment is often merged in law with mental health impairment; that is, people with cognitive impairment usually have been dealt with under mental health legislation. Many staff in criminal justice agencies are unsure of what cognitive impairment is and there is under recognition of the need for special support for this group.

People with a brain injury also seem to be substantially overrepresented in the prison population. A Victorian study found that 42% of male prisoners and 33% of female prisoners had a brain injury, compared to 2% of the general population of Australia.

Similarly, the Standing Committee on Law and Justice of the NSW Legislative Council noted that people with intellectual disabilities are overrepresented in the criminal justice system.

The Committee saw this as flowing from the interplay of the vulnerability of people with intellectual disabilities and the lack of social support for them. The Committee's chairman, the Hon Ron Dyer, elaborated on this in a journal article. He pointed to the "failure of government agen-

cies to respond to the challenge of supporting people with often difficult behaviour in the community". He saw difficulties in the adequacy of funding, in the support provided to individuals and in coordination between criminal justice and human services agencies, which has become an imperative issue under the National Disability Insurance Scheme.

Often people with a disability are seen as being "problematic" or "non-compliant" which can lead to unhelpful stereotyping and create negative self-images. Understanding that there are sociological risk factors, which increase a person's risk of coming into contact with the justice system, enables society to look deeper into the meaning of what we call "behaviours of distress" and "offending behaviours".

The trajectories to the justice system are often due to a lack of support services, including specialist disability services, drug and alcohol services and general social services such as housing and income support.

It is important to note that

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples are grossly overrepresented in the justice system and in prisons in particular, where they make up 27% of the prison population. They are also 13 times more likely than non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians to be incarcerated.

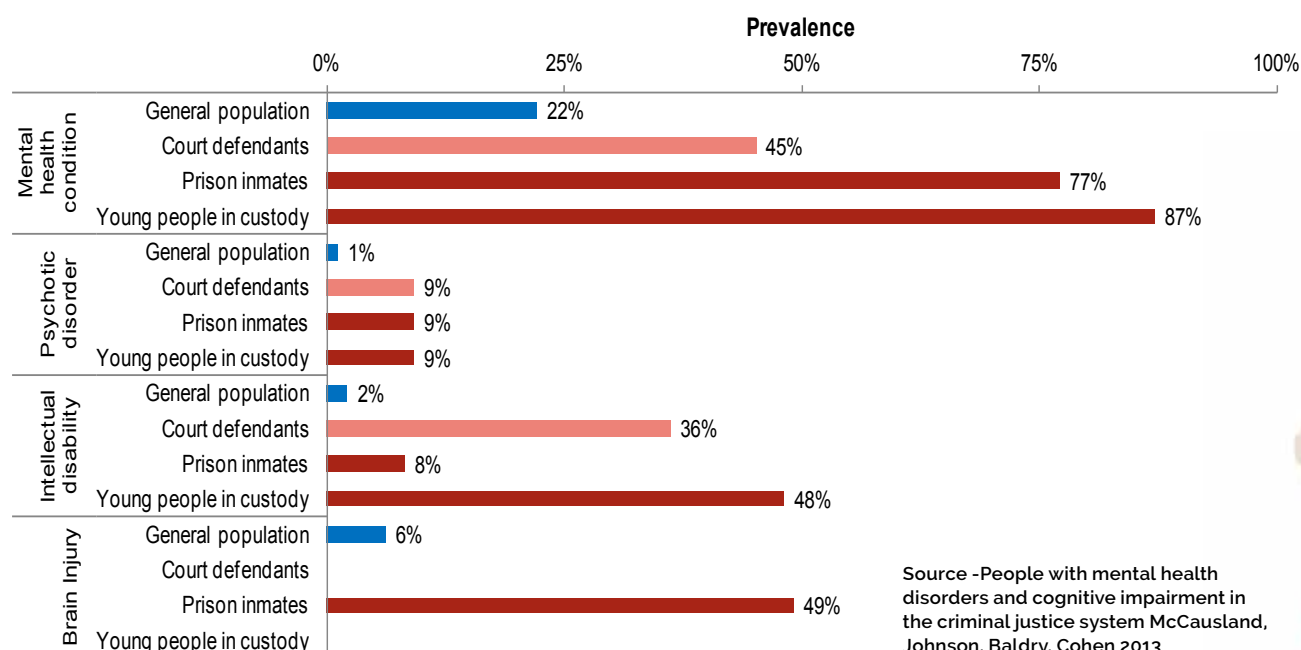
Aboriginal people's first contact with police is 3.4 years younger than non-Aboriginal people. Aboriginal people come into contact with the police at a younger age, and also have higher rates of contact with the justice system than non-Aboriginal people.

Cognitive impairment is also more common amongst Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander populations than other Australians; for example, ABS data indicates that 8% of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians have an intellectual disability compared with 2.9% of the general population. Research indicates that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people with cognitive impairment are more likely to come to the attention of police, more likely to be charged, and are more likely to be imprisoned;

spend longer in custody; have fewer opportunities for program pathways when incarcerated; be less likely to be granted parole; and have substantially fewer options in terms of access to programs and treatments than Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people without cognitive impairment.

Notably a lack of access to appropriate education can increase risk of contact with the justice system. It has been reported that between 60-70% of young people with complex support needs, left school with no qualifications. School education is a vital opportunity for support, intervention and promoting positive outcomes for young people. Many people who come into contact with the justice system are usually not identified as having a cognitive disability until they are already in the Justice system. This highlights the need for assessment of cognitive disabilities within our school aged children and young people, to identify and respond to their support needs in the learning environment, and ultimately promoting their participation at school

PREVALENCE OF MENTAL HEALTH CONDITIONS, PSYCHOTIC DISORDERS, INTELLECTUAL DISABILITY AND BRAIN INJURY IN THE CRIMINAL JUSTICE SYSTEM AND GENERAL NSW POPULATION



to reduce their risk of coming into contact with the justice system.

Children and young people in out-of-home care are significantly more likely than their peers to have earlier police contact, an increased number of police contacts over time and more custodial episodes within their lifetime. Over the past fifteen years the number of children and young people entering and remaining in statutory out-of-home care (including relative/kinship care, foster care and residential care arrangements) has more than doubled.

As of 2016 there were more than 44,000 Australian children in out-of-home care, with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people reportedly being almost ten times more likely to be placed in out-of-home care than their peers. Research examining 111 NSW Children's Court files, found that 34% of young people appearing before NSW courts had been in out-of-home-care, and that children and young people in care are 68 times more likely to appear in Children's Court than other children and young people. With an ever growing number of children and young people in statutory care who will at some stage in the near future be leaving care, this highlights the concern about their

“Justice reinvestment diverts a portion of the funds for imprisonment to local communities to reinvest into services that address the underlying causes of crime in these communities.”

pathway to the justice system, based on previous findings.

People with complex support needs are 6.25 times (even higher for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people) more likely to be homeless than those without disability. Whilst research findings are not conclusive, numerous qualitative studies have reported people experiencing homelessness whilst also being in contact with the justice system. Disability supported appropriate long term housing must be available from early in a person's life to prevent incarceration and provide post-release support.

WHAT DOES THIS MEAN FOR THE FUTURE?

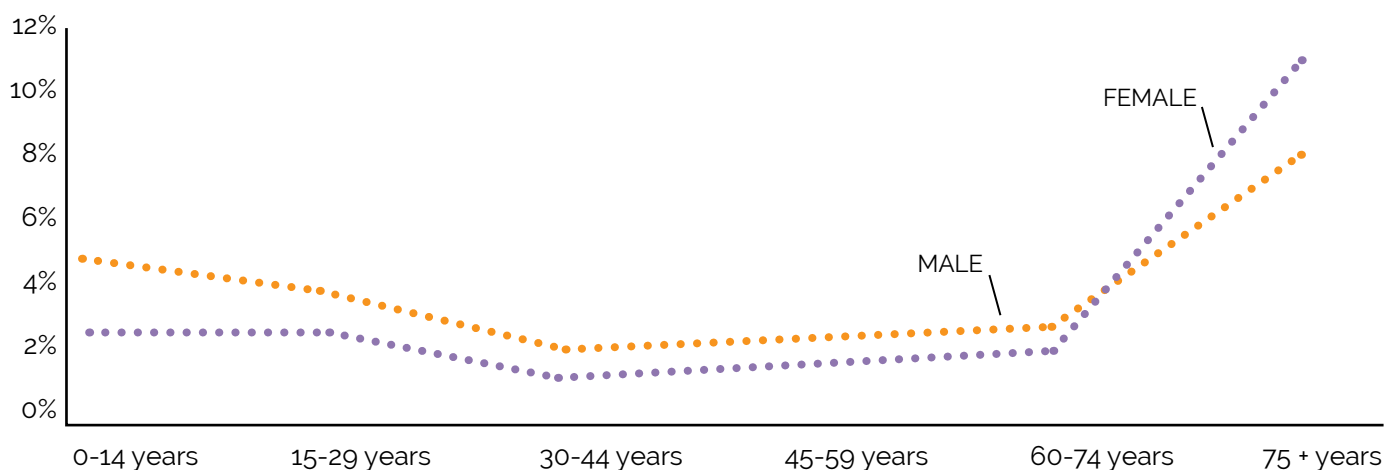
Throughout the country there are passionate people coming together, to address the need for change in our justice system. Innovative approaches to supporting people who have offended are being piloted for effec-

tiveness such as the Justice Reinvest project in Bourke.

According to the Australian Human Rights Commission, justice reinvestment is ‘a powerful crime prevention strategy that can help create safer communities by investing in evidence based prevention and treatment programs’. Justice reinvestment diverts a portion of the funds for imprisonment to local communities to reinvest into services that address the underlying causes of crime in these communities.

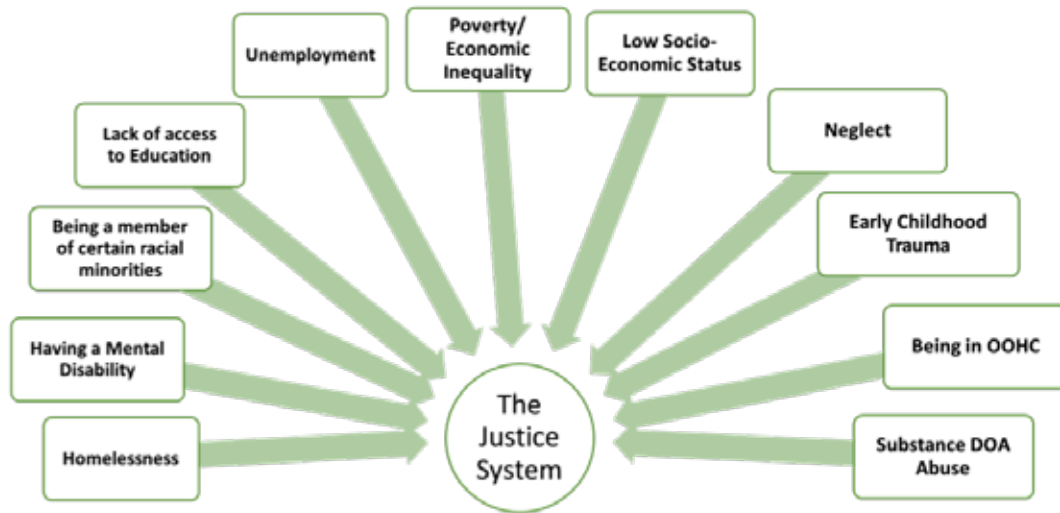
The analysis of justice reinvestment both in Australia and overseas suggests that this approach is more effective than the current approaches to justice. Justice reinvestment invests in people and communities to provide support, treatment and services that address the underlying issues confronting people who commit less serious offences. These issues include homelessness, mental health, deep social exclusion, and poor education

PREVALENCE OF INTELLECTUAL DISABILITY, BY AGE GROUPS AND SEX, 2012



Source: ABS Survey of Disability, Ageing and Carers 2012

FACTORS WHICH INCREASE THE RISK OF CONTACT WITH THE JUSTICE SYSTEM



Sociological risk factors illustration developed from research by Baldry, E., Dowse, L. and Clarence, M. (2011)
People with mental and cognitive disabilities: pathways into prison School of Social Sciences and International Studies, P11

and employment histories. Evidence suggests that it is more efficient and effective to address the causes and thus reduce the need for (and greater cost of) incarceration.

Without reform and acknowledgement that our system is just not supporting vulnerable people in society, who are at greater risk of contact with the justice system, Australia

will continue to require substantial amounts of state and federal funding to operate and manage an increasing prison population, with poor outcomes in assisting people from re-offending.

We need to recognise that a one size fits all approach to justice does not work. People with cognitive disability need the justice system's response to be person-centred, looking at the most

effective ways to divert them from the system, through early identification of cognitive disability, culturally sensitive assessment and intervention.

Susan Beggs is the Project Manager NSW/ACT at Life Without Barriers and is a member of the Disability Justice Project.

The views expressed are those of the author and not LWB.

References and further reading can be found in the on-line version of this article.

WHAT WE CAN DO TO ASSIST...

Know the legislation and ensure that the people we support know their rights, have access to support, and information is communicated for all levels of comprehension which is vital for diversion from the Justice system.

A Section 32 Order pursuant to the Mental Health (Forensic Provisions) Act 1990 NSW ('MHFPA') is a way for the Local Court to divert people with particular conditions who have been charged with a criminal offence out of the justice system. A Magistrate's powers are inquisitorial rather than adversarial in nature and the Magistrate can inform themselves in any way they see fit without requiring the defendant to incriminate him or herself.

Applications for a Section 32 are generally made orally, with Magistrates often only relying on written reports from experts and service providers, meaning there is generally no need for the applicant to give evidence. For further information or support you can contact the Intellectual Disability Rights Service on – Free Call 1800 666 611 or by visiting www.idrs.org.au.

Collaborate through the Disability Justice Project (DJP). The DJP is a two-year capacity building project, funded by ADHC (Ageing, Disability and Home Care). The project is being managed by ACWA (Association of Children's Welfare Agencies) through its training arm CCWT (Centre for Community Welfare Training) in partnership with Life Without Barriers (LWB) and Intellectual Disabilities Rights Service (IDRS).

The project offers a range of free training courses, links to resources and support through 16 Communities of Practice groups for government and non-government service providers across NSW. The aim of the project is to ensure that service users are able to exercise their rights under the law, through professional development of staff within the sector who provide support to people with cognitive disabilities who are at risk of, or in contact with the justice system. To find out more about the FREE training available across NSW, or to participate in one of the 16 Community of Practice groups go to the DJP webpage at www.disabilityjustice.edu.au/.



SO, YOU WANT TO EMPLOY A CONSULTANT?

IT IS COMMON FOR ORGANISATIONS TO REQUIRE THE SERVICES OF AN EXTERNAL CONSULTANT FOR SPECIALIST SERVICES. **SHANE RENDALLS** PROVIDES A GUIDE TO GETTING WHAT YOU WANT

If chosen wisely, the investment in a consultant can offer significant benefits; leveraging external experience, knowledge and technical skills to deliver a cost-effective solution to the problem at hand.

If chosen haphazardly, you can spend a lot of money and time as well as experience frustration to reach an outcome that doesn't meet your needs.

To ensure you always choose wisely, consider these six key steps to make the selection of a consultant easier and achieve value for money.

THINK ABOUT THE PROBLEM

- Prepare a short (100–150 words) background for the project.
- Why are you doing this? Prepare brief dot points describing what you want from the project; such as:
 - Key objectives
 - Scope
 - Who needs to be consulted and how
 - Timeframe
 - Key deliverables and what they should look like
 - Major milestones to monitor progress
 - How you want to be kept informed of progress – regular email updates, progress reports, regular meetings/teleconferences?
- Do you want the engagement to provide learning and development opportunities for your staff?
- Write down what a successful outcome would look like to you. Imagine at the end of the consultancy you are describing the project to a colleague and telling them what worked well.

DISCUSS THE PROJECT WITH A FEW CONSULTANTS

Most consultants will be happy to give you and your team 1–2 hours to discuss and work through the problem you want to address, different approaches and the resources required. Consultants appreciate the opportunity to meet with you, as a well-prepared project brief makes it easier to design an approach and proposal that will meet your needs and budget. It is also an opportunity to develop their profile and keep them attuned to what is happening in the sector.

What you get out of it, a platform to test your ideas before releasing a tender for consultancy services. Remember the more specific you are, the better placed the consultant is to give you what you want. So, do not ask for a whole bunch of nice to haves, as this will expand scope and cost. Keep focussed!

FINALISE YOUR TENDER

Use the information from the preliminary meetings with consultants to finalise your tender or EOI document. The following structure works well:

- **Cover page– Tender summary**
 - Purpose
 - Upper price (if there is an upper limit)
 - Date for commencement of project
 - Date of final deliverable
 - Key contact
 - Deadline for responses
 - Process for submitting responses – email (to whom); hard copy (where/address)
 - Selection criteria (larger tenders)
- **Requirements of the project**
 - Background to the project
 - Objectives and scope
 - Consultation requirements
 - Key deliverables
 - Timeframe for major milestones, draft and final deliverables
- **Pricing and costing**
 - Days and rate of people working on the project, by each key component, inclusive of GST
 - Project costs, by type – on-costs, travel, etc – inclusive of GST
 - Payment schedule – based on deliverables/milestones
- **Examples of other relevant experience**
- **Referees – at least three from relevant projects undertaken by key team members working on this project**
- **Project team and CVs.**

SHORT LISTING POTENTIAL CONSULTANTS

- Check your organisations policy on procurement. For smaller projects, most organisations can send a request for proposal or EOI to several consultants. Larger projects may require an open tender.
- For smaller projects:
 - Who have you worked with previously?
 - Talk to colleagues about consultants they have used and would recommend

- Consider a sector Bulletin Board
- Is there a Panel of Consultants list you can access? For example, state health departments have panels of pre-approved consultants across a range of skillsets.

POSTING YOUR TENDER

- Include a clear timeframe for responses
- Provide a contact for requests for further information
- Indicate if you want consultants to provide an indication of interest
- For fairness, some services will email questions and answers to all consultants who have provided an indication of interest.

SELECTION

- Use a selection criteria:
 - Based on the requirements of the project specified
 - Weighted to reflect relative importance
- Take the time to read through each proposal carefully:
 - Does it flow and tell a story, taking you through each step of what will be delivered and how it contributes to the overall outcome
 - If the proposal doesn't read well or make sense, it is an indicator that the deliverables won't either
- Check that the time allocated against key staff matches the tasks proposed:
 - Look for experts placed on teams to win the work, but who don't have the time allocated to do the work
- Ensure the selection committee separately rate each proposal against the selection criteria
- Beware the mystical black box – unless there is a highly technical component (and even in this case unlikely) the approach and method should be easily understood:
 - Why are they proposing to do this step of the project?
 - What value will it add to the overall project?
 - What are the resources allocated to this step?
- If you don't understand something; speak up:
 - If there are steps that do not add value, or not in scope, ask for these to be removed and for the price to be reduced
 - If there are steps missing these may need to be added
- Have consultants submitting proposals come and present their proposal to answer your questions?
- Ask for a best and final offer.

If you are planning a large and significant piece of work, it may be worth considering the engagement of a consultant to help you prepare your tender and work through the procurement process.

Shane Rendalls is an Associate Lecturer with the St Vincent's Clinical School, Faculty of Medicine, UNSW and a partner of Synergy Health and Business Collaborative and cofounder of BeHeard. You can contact him at shane@synergyhbc.com.au

ROSS SMITH: A LIFE SPENT IN SERVICE TO THE COMMUNITY

THE PUBLIC HOUSING SECTOR MOURNS THE LOSS OF ONE OF ITS MOST COLOURFUL CHARACTERS, LONG-TIME WATERLOO RESIDENT, ADVOCATE AND ACTIVIST.



Ross passed away unexpectedly while on Waterloo Green in the heart of the community he loved so much. He had been running one of the many regular errands his community depended upon and appears to have passed away relatively peacefully.

He was relentless in his pursuit of fair treatment for social housing tenants and worked tirelessly to give meaning to often cynical Tenant Participation processes. Ross' capacity to analyse and risk assess policy on the run and in every detail was formidable. His powers of recall and his intimate knowledge of social housing history were matched by few.

Sometimes abrasive and often misjudged, Ross' commitment to his community was completely selfless and his many acts of compassion in support of the elderly and disadvan-

tagged of his community have been too long overlooked by those who saw only the fierce and uncompromising advocate. Few have given more time and effort to the affordable housing sector and with such passion as Ross and his death is an incalculable loss to grass roots activism.

Ross will be missed by community members, friends, colleagues and adversaries alike, who will draw some solace from the certain knowledge that any issues the residents of the afterlife may be experiencing right now, will be well and truly sorted by the time we arrive.

Plenus annis abiit, plenus honoribus
(He is gone from us, full of years and full of honours)

Garry Mallard is a long time housing activist and friend of Ross Smith

On 18 November 2016 public tenants, bureaucrats, politicians, service providers, housing colleagues and many of his friends and acquaintances packed Alexandria Town Hall to commemorate Ross Smith's contribution to his community and to the housing sector. REDWatch, of which Ross was treasurer, has a memorial page at www.redwatch.org.au/redw/ross where you can see some of the photos, video and a song used at Ross' funeral. You can also read some of Ross in his own words as well as some of the tributes paid to him. Ross was cremated on 21 December 2016. The failure to locate a will or next of kin saw his funeral delayed.

In passing, Ross' final lesson to us all is to make sure people know who your next of kin is, or to have a will so officialdom knows what you want done with your money and possessions. Otherwise, like Ross, the state trustee will handle your estate and any money left over will go to the government rather than something or someone of your choosing.

Raising issues to the end - Vale Ross Smith

Summer
1994

Disability Images

Challenging Disabling Images has been an ongoing issue as this month's *From The Vault* shows. We have struggled with it in preparing the cover for this issue. The usual physical disability images do not represent the range of disabilities – many disabilities are not captured in an image. Images can also be used to stereotype people. Disability is a part of everyday society and the images of people with disabilities doing everyday things are needed to normalise this for all concerned. Images of Paralympic athletes and Stephen Hawking demonstrate achievements with a disability but are not representative of most of those with a disability.

For us it is about where and how we use images so people see the issue or the person rather than the specific disability. It's visually don't dis my ability.

CHALLENGING DISABLING IMAGES

There have been no effective moves by the media and advertising industries, or government, to promote practices aimed at eroding all too common media stereotypes of people with disabilities.

A new national research project, *Disability, Representation and Social Participation*, will look at the effects those images have on people's lives and what we can do to improve media standards.

A new National Research Project has recently been set up to explore the ways in which images of disability are created and used in the mass media. The project will investigate the impact of those images on people with disabilities and explore the strategies that people with disabilities might be able to use to overcome social barriers, to participate more fully in the decisions that influence their lives.

The project, *Disability, Representation and Social Participation*, has just started and will run for three years.

It is hoped the project will have a number of practical outcomes. One may be to work with disability organisations, the media industry and policy makers on drafting **good practice guidelines** for broadcasters, advertising agencies, charities and others in relation to how people with disabilities are presented in the media.

Debate and direct action, over the past few years by organisations around the world of people with disabilities, have raised a number of challenges to the traditional and often stereotypical images of disability used by a wide range of organisations involved in providing services, policy-making or fundraising. Such images are seen by the movement as discriminatory and

disabling, and as having an impact on the participation in economic, cultural and social life desired and required by people with disabilities.

In Australia, no effective moves have yet been made by the media and advertising industries, or by government, to explore, develop and promote good practice aimed at eroding all too common media stereotypes of people with disabilities as, for example, 'heroic', 'tragic victims', 'evil', or 'passive and dependent'.

The project aims, by setting up in-depth discussion groups and interviews with a range of people and organisations, and by analysing everyday images of disability, to assist in the overdue public debate about effective means of challenging this particular aspect of discrimination.

The researchers, Helen Meekosha and Andrew Jakubowicz, believe that changes in the media are closely related to the broader empowerment of people with disabilities. They would welcome comments, ideas, examples of images from the media, and further queries.

Helen Meekosha, School of Social Work, UNSW, PO Box 1, Kensington, NSW 2033. Fax: 662 8991 or Andrew Jakubowicz, Fax: (02) 330 2296.





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INNER SYDNEY VOICE
regional social development council

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