



Disability Services Australia Solutions

ISSUE 21



When you work at DSA, you have much more than just a job.

INSIDE

- **NDIS information sessions**
- **Learning skills for life**
- **DSA celebrates IDPwD**
- **Living your life your way**

Find and follow us on facebook, twitter, Google +, LinkedIn and YouTube



**NDIS
INFORMATION
SESSIONS**

From the CEO



DSA celebrated International Day of People with Disability in Blacktown

Welcome to the first Solutions magazine for 2016.

The big news for this year is that the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) will finally become a reality for many of our current customers. Under the roll-out plan the majority of DSA's current customers will have access to the new scheme progressively from 1 July and we detail the local government areas that will transition from 1 July on page 3.

This is great news for our customers and we'll once again be hosting information sessions with a focus on NDIS pre-planning in the lead up to the transition.

What is clear from the NDIS trial sites is that knowing what you want, your goals and what is important to you before meeting with an NDIS planner is very important. I encourage all our customers, their parents and carers to come along to one of the Customer and Carer Information Sessions if possible. A number of the sessions will focus on our Business Services employees and you'll find a calendar of upcoming events on the following page.

A key element of the NDIS is its emphasis on pursuing employment outcomes and the success of the NDIS

hinges to an extent on the economic contribution that comes from achieving those outcomes not only for people with a disability but also for their family members.

In this edition we celebrate the achievements of our recent Transition to Work graduates who are learning new skills and gaining qualifications that will help them take that next step in life. As an organisation we have immense pride when we see young jobseekers grow in skills and confidence as they follow their own unique path to employment.

We also share the stories of some of our recent Supported Learning Hub graduates who have shown great commitment and determination to complete their Certificate II in Business. The Hubs are a great concept which offer people the opportunity to be supported by qualified staff to complete both accredited and foundation skill courses.

At DSA we are committed to enabling opportunities for people to experience choice, inclusion and achievement and a champion of this commitment is Taniela (Nela) Afu, an Employment Consultant with our Transition to Work team who was recently awarded Outstanding Youth Leader at the 2016 Zest Community Sector Awards for the work he is doing with young people in Western Sydney. Congratulations Nela.

Thank you to all our supporters who donated to DSA's Christmas Appeal or who have supported us through local community fundraising. Your generosity helps us to provide more opportunities for people to live their lives their way at home, in the community, through training and education and through employment.

In this edition of Solutions I hope you enjoy reading about some wonderful examples of our mission in action. As always, I welcome any comments, suggestions or feedback.

Mark Spurr - March 2016



Sadly we have started this year with the loss of another of our valued Life Members, Helen Cruikshank. Our sincere condolences go out to Helen's family and friends.

SOLUTIONS – HAVE YOUR SAY

We would like to invite you, our readers, to let us know what you think of Solutions. In particular we are interested in hearing why or why not Solutions meets your expectations. Does it include items of interest to you? Is there something you would like to see more or less of? Please send any constructive feedback, including suggestions for improvement, to community@dsa.org.au

We are with you every step of the way

Transition to the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) for many people accessing DSA services will commence from 1 July this year. This is great news for our customers, their families and carers. Knowing what you want, your goals and what is important to you before meeting with an NDIS planner is very important.



How can DSA help you to be ready for the NDIS?

- by encouraging you and your family or carer to dream big and think about how you want to live your life, be creative and think outside the box
- by being a source of information to support you
- by supporting you for the NDIS planning meeting including support to:
 - complete the NDIS Planning workbook
 - complete the participant statement
 - know the details of your current State-funded supports
 - have evidence of your support needs

DSA is again hosting a series of NDIS Pre-planning Workshops which will assist you to prepare for your NDIS planning conversation.

DSA customers who live in the following local government areas will start the transition into the scheme from 1 July 2016:

- Auburn
- Bankstown
- Blacktown
- Camden
- Campbelltown
- Fairfield
- Holroyd
- Goulburn
- Liverpool
- Parramatta
- Penrith
- Port Stephens
- Queanbeyan
- The Hills
- Wingecarribee
- Wollondilly

Customers who live in the Illawarra, Shoalhaven, Sutherland, Inner Sydney and East and Canterbury areas will transition into the scheme from 1 July 2017.

To check your eligibility use the My Access Checker tool at www.ndis.gov.au or call 1800 800 110. For more information on the rollout of the NDIS in New South Wales visit www.ndis.nsw.gov.au

Save the date...

To explore how DSA can best support you call the Community Connections team on 1300 372 121 or email communityconnections@dsa.org.au and book yourself in for one or more of the following sessions.

DATE	TIME	SESSION	LOCATION
------	------	---------	----------

MARCH 2016

Wed 16th	10am - 12pm	NDIS Preplanning	DSA Seven Hills Unit 2A, 183 Prospect Hwy Seven Hills
Wed 16th	6:30pm - 8:30pm	NDIS Preplanning	Roos Club Cnr Stuart & Richard Ave Queanbeyan
Wed 16th	6:30pm - 8:30pm	NDIS Preplanning	DSA Blacktown DO 9 Second Avenue Blacktown
Wed 23rd	10am - 12pm	Business Services	DSA Seven Hills Unit 2A, 183 Prospect Hwy Seven Hills
Wed 23rd	2pm - 4pm	Business Services	DSA Seven Hills Unit 2A, 183 Prospect Hwy Seven Hills
Thur 24th	10am - 12pm 6:30pm - 8:30pm	NDIS Preplanning	West's Leagues 10 Old Leumeah Rd Leumeah
Wed 30th	10am - 12pm	NDIS Preplanning	Tradies Club 57 Manchester Rd Gympie
Thur 31st	6:30pm - 8:30pm	NDIS Preplanning	Revesby Workers Club 2b Brett Street Revesby

APRIL 2016

Sat 2nd	10:30am - 12:30pm	Carers' Pampering Session	DSA Picton Day Options 103 Menangle Street Picton
Mon 4th	10am - 12pm	NDIS Preplanning	Revesby Workers Club 2b Brett Street Revesby
Thur 7th	9:30am - 11:30am 1pm - 3:00pm	Business Services	DSA Braemar 19 Drapers Rd Braemar
Sat 16th	10am - 12pm	NDIS Preplanning	DSA Picton Day Options 103 Menangle Street Picton
Fri 29th	10am - 12pm	NDIS Preplanning	DSA Moss Vale 21 Kirkham Street Moss Vale

MAY 2016

Sat 7th	10am - 12pm	NDIS Preplanning	DSA Blacktown DO 9 Second Avenue Blacktown
Wed 11th	10am - 12pm	NDIS Preplanning	Goulburn Workers Club 1 McKell Place Goulburn
Sat 21st	10am - 12pm	NDIS Preplanning	DSA Macarthur DO 28 Warby Street Campbelltown
Mon 23rd	10am - 12pm 6:30pm - 8:30pm	NDIS Preplanning	DSA Redfern Office 199 Regent Street Redfern
Wed 25th	10am - 12pm	NDIS Preplanning	Roos Club Cnr Stuart & Richard Ave Queanbeyan

Learning skills for life

Supported Learning Hubs

We have some exciting new courses coming up this year and are just putting the final details together so keep an eye out on our website and facebook page for details.

This year we'll be offering a mix of Certificate Courses and also partial qualifications so there should be options available to meet everyone's learning needs.

Our first Certificate II in Business for 2016 kicks off shortly and will be available in Bankstown, Campbelltown and Redfern. This is an exciting course which gives you the skills, knowledge and confidence to carry out a range of tasks in a business setting. There are nine core units to be completed and three elective units of your choice from either Retail, Business or Warehousing.



Pictured above are our latest group of graduates who are proudly holding their Certificate II in Business qualification. With a 90% completion rate, DSA's Supported Learning Hubs are way ahead of the industry average completion rate which sees just 30% of the people who start a course actually finish.

Supported Learning Manager Wendy Adams (far left) is very proud of the achievements of each person in the group and shared some wonderful stories of personal growth and increased confidence.

Susan is one of our Business Services employees. When Susan first signed up she had a lot of self-doubt and high levels of anxiety around learning using the computer but with encouragement and support she has completed her studies, attained her qualification and now uses a computer at home with confidence.



Andrew is a customer in our Community Justice Program who is motivated to learn and determined to turn his life around. Andrew is very proud of his accomplishment and is looking forward to more study and eventually a job.

Mereana is a Transition to Work jobseeker who has a real thirst for knowledge. She has already signed up to complete her Certificate III at TAFE and is planning to complete more qualifications through the Learning Hubs this year.



Olympia is also a Business Services employee. She had a lot of self-doubt at times but her classmates rallied around and convinced her that she could do it! With their encouragement and support from her trainers Olympia persevered and completed her studies.

Bankstown Universal Access Awards 2015

Last year the team from DSA's Transition to Work (TTW) program were invited to talk to the Bankstown Council Access Committee about the work readiness support and services we offer and how we work to ensure that everyone has access to the support they require.

I'd like to thank the TTW team for always providing great access to those in our community and being recognised for their amazing customer service. Knowing that DSA is committed to delighting our customers it is wonderful to be recognised with a Commendation from Bankstown City Council for doing exactly that.

by Naomi Barber



TTW Graduations

With such a large group of jobseekers graduating at the end of 2015 we held two graduation ceremonies. The first took place at the Goulburn Workers Club for jobseekers from Moss Vale, Goulburn and Queanbeyan. Former alumni Brad Price and his mum Helen were special guests. Brad presented the jobseekers' certificates and shared his post-TTW experience working in hospitality at the Workers Club. It was a very proud moment to see Brad return to address the group as a successful worker 3 years after his own graduation. Helen spoke of her pride for her son's achievements and encouraged the jobseekers to make the most of the opportunities to sample lots of different jobs, do work experience and then work hard to achieve their dreams.



The day of the Sydney Metro TTW graduation was an exciting one at DSA Head Office in Condell Park. CEO Mark Spurr addressed the group and spoke about how important first jobs are and the immense pride we have as an organisation in watching our jobseekers grow and develop. The room was bursting with excitement as the graduates came up one at a time to receive their certificates. After the formal presentations were done several jobseekers asked to address the group. This was the most emotional and rewarding part of the day, particularly for the TTW staff.



"I'd just like to say 'Thank you' for showing me that there are people who care... like, we know it's never going to get easy, but knowing that there are people who think we matter makes a big difference." - Michael

"In two years in TTW I learned a lot of stuff about budgeting, saving money and how to have a job and do a TAFE course at the same time and making new friends as I go... I will miss you all and I hope in future everyone in your TTW programs will have a job and thank you to all the staff in DSA for helping me and the memories I have will be treasured forever." - Daniel

2016 ZEST Community Sector Awards



Congratulations to both Taniela (Nela) and Nicole from our Transition to Work (TTW) team for their nominations for the 2016 ZEST Community Sector Awards which were held recently at ANZ Stadium.

Nicole represented the Bankstown TTW team in the **Exceptional Community Business Partnership** category for the relationship she has fostered with Healthy Life Group which is providing training and employment opportunities for TTW jobseekers. Although Nicole did not take out the top award we congratulate her on her nomination and the outstanding outcomes she is achieving for jobseekers through the Work Life Project.



Nicole



Nela

We are thrilled that Nela from our Employment Services team was nominated, and won in the Outstanding Youth Leader category.

Nela is an admirable young man who works to assist youth to access accommodation, employment, crisis management and develop strategies to overcome homelessness.

Working in our Employment Services Team across Bankstown, Mt Druitt and Blacktown region, Nela is making huge inroads with young people with disability in the Mt Druitt region through his innovative approach to disability and youth support.

Nela gave a passionate acceptance speech to the packed room congratulating all the attendees for their work in Western Sydney and reaffirming his and DSA's commitment to providing the support young people need to be proud of their Western Sydney roots and to not just survive but to thrive!

You can read more about these great projects on our website and facebook page.

DSA Celebrates International Day of People with Disability

There were lots of opportunities in December to get involved in celebrating the International Day of People with Disability. Our awesome community sponsors helped to make the day one to remember and we thank them sincerely for their support. For details of the events and our community sponsors visit dsa.org.au



Living life your way

Everyone's an individual and here at DSA we mean it when we say it's your life, your future, your choice – we're here to support you to get out there and live your life the way you choose.

The Men's Group at Taren Point Day Options are always keen to visit The Ridge driving range and over the past 5 years while they've been developing skills they have made a wonderful connection with resident Golf Pro Kurt Stegbauer.

Recently, Kurt arranged for the Men's Group to go and watch the Australian Open Golf Pro-Am Day at the Royal Sydney Golf Club in Roseberry.

Kurt organised tickets for all the guys, including the staff and met the group out at the course. Andre, Dom, Chris and Dylan, supported by Morgan and Glenn, watched the professional and amateur golfers play and also had the opportunity to meet and get autographs from the golfers and other sporting stars including Jeff Ogilvy and Adam Scott, Laurie Daley and Shane Warne.

Dylan was so excited to have Adam Scott sign his hat and Chris was pretty chuffed he got to meet Shane Warne!

Everyone was absolutely delighted to have such a wonderful experience and we thank Kurt and the whole team at The Ridge for their fantastic support. - **Laura and the team from Taren Point Day Options**



A dream day out on the harbour



Johl is proud to have achieved one of his goals. Johl is a customer in DSA's CJP Drop-In Support Program and he has always wanted to go on a boat and see Sydney Harbour. Recently, he was able to fulfil his dream when he and mentors Saiah and Charlotte went on an all-you-can-eat seafood harbour cruise.

It was a great experience for both Johl and his mentors. Johl enjoyed a great meal and refreshments, mingled with others on the boat, including meeting someone from Brazil, and finally saw the Sydney Harbour Bridge from the water. His mentors had the satisfaction of knowing they had enabled Johl's experience of choice, inclusion and achievement on the Harbour! - **Elle and the team from CJP**

Would you like to make a difference in the lives of people with a disability?

Whether you are retired, looking for work or just keen to commit some of your time out and about in the community – we would love to hear from you!

We have volunteering opportunities at our Australian Disability Enterprise sites in Mascot, Seven Hills, Condell Park and Braemar.



We are looking for enthusiastic people who can commit some time to work alongside our employees and assist with daily production requirements.

If you would like to experience the rewards of volunteering and make a positive difference in the lives of people with a disability,

register your interest by contacting our Community Connections team on team on **1300 372 121** or email volunteers@dsa.org.au

More than just a job



Clattering in through the door after work, Matthew could be any 22 year old. When his mum Sue says hello and asks him how his day was, he tells her "Full on! Hot!" before heading straight to the kitchen to grab a snack.

Matthew was a longed for addition to his family. His mum endured 13

medical procedures to have a baby after she'd suffered cancer, then amazingly she fell pregnant naturally. As you can imagine, she and Matthew's dad, Jim, were over the moon to welcome their little man.'

He was a few months old when Sue began noticing differences between their boy and other babies. His tiny fists didn't clench when he cried, and he was "floppy". When tests showed he had a genetic disorder, Sue says "I remember going through a grieving process, asking God why?" Not till he was seven was it revealed that not just Matthew but his big brother and two of his uncles all had ARX syndrome.

The greatest effects on Matthew are that he has an intellectual disability, low muscle tone that makes moving more difficult, and he struggles with remembering things. But as part of a large and close extended family, that's never stopped him from being a people person who is happiest when he's with others.

He was ecstatic to find a job in a restaurant when he finished school. "He is very sociable and he just loved it," says his mum. Unfortunately it wasn't too long before Matthew's employer told his parents he was being let go.

Normally cheerful, "He was despondent, he was saying, "What's happening, nobody wants me," remembers Sue, whose heart was breaking to see him so down.

Last May, he was offered a job as a process worker at our Seven Hills site and the wide grin his family and friends know and love is back. You wouldn't believe how much Matthew's confidence has grown! "He has something he can look forward to every day, says his mum, and his dad and I are just so proud of what he's been able to achieve."

Each Tuesday, Thursday and Friday he eagerly heads off to work, where he is a valued member of a busy and enthusiastic packing and labelling team.

Asked what he enjoys most, he says: "It's the people and then getting to know how to do stuff at work, learning the new skills."

Matthew was excited to have a chance to extend his people skills recently, manning the reception desk. Although he found it a stretch, he put his all into understanding the steps involved in this new task.

"He's dedicated, he's genuine, he's very open," says our Employment Consultant Jeff Conn, who has had the pleasure of watching Matthew's development over the months. "He is very precise and his quality has been fantastic."

He's also a team-player who Jeff says "is always asking people if they need help with their work or to finish off what's on their table."

Working in DSA's Seven Hills Australian Disability Enterprise, Matthew has the opportunity to experience the satisfaction of working and contributing that everyone deserves and he has realised that when you work at DSA, you have much more than just a job.



Name: _____

Address: _____

Postcode: _____

Email: _____ Telephone: _____

I enclose my cheque/money order for \$

OR please charge that amount to my Visa Mastercard Amex

Card Number: _____

Signature: _____ Exp date: _____

Name on card: _____

I would prefer to receive future Solutions Newsletters by email. My email address is:
..... @.....

Please send me, at no obligation, information on how I can include Disability Services Australia in my will.



Donations are tax deductible.

Please detach and mail to:

Disability Services Australia Ltd
Reply Paid 287 Condell Park NSW 2200

You can donate over the phone by calling
1300 372 782 or online at www.dsa.org.au

AUTUMN 2016