



Disability Services Australia Solutions

ISSUE 24



Ellie and her handler Virginia from PAWS Pet Therapy recently popped in for one of their very popular visits to the team at our Picton Day Options.

INSIDE

- Learn about NDIS planning from a family who has been through the process
- We launch Enhance Health Services
- Living your life your way – Pet Therapy at Picton



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SEASON'S
GREETINGS

From the CEO



As another busy year draws to a close we can reflect on the opportunities and challenges it has brought for our customers, their families and carers and also for Disability Services Australia (DSA) as we navigate the transition to the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS).

The NDIS is a world first in terms of coverage and the potential benefits it will bring for people with a disability. It is also complex and radically different to the environment we are all used to operating in. So we should not be surprised that there have been transition issues. The last six months have been testing at times but I'm confident that the ultimate 'prize' of true choice and control for our customers is going to be worth the effort.

One family who are seeing the benefits that can come from the NDIS is the Lavender family who we first wrote about in March 2015. At that time Tony and Seanne, parents to Gaby, shared their daughter's experience at our Raymond Terrace Day Program. We revisit the Lavender family in this edition, who spoke with Adrian Wall from our Hunter team about their experience of the NDIS planning process and the positive impact it is now having on Gaby's life, and theirs too.

We have a long history of adapting to change in our operating environment and early next year will mark the

60 year anniversary of the birth of the organisation which has grown to become DSA. Stay tuned in the coming months for details of our celebrations.

Following a comprehensive review over the past year, our Specialist Intervention Services team has relaunched as a multi-clinic psychology and allied health care practice with a new name and a new brand Enhance Health Services, which you can read about on page 6.

In the first half of 2017 our Mascot supported employment enterprise will be moving into new premises to accommodate growth in the business as suppliers to the airline industry continue to outsource work to DSA. The new premises will also accommodate an exciting development in our Employment Solutions promoting skill-building opportunities and career pathways for young job seekers and existing supported employees. We'll have more to share on this initiative in the next edition of Solutions.

As we go to print we are preparing for our Annual General Meeting where members will be updated on the strategies DSA has in place to navigate the next stage of the transition to a full NDIS. We will also acknowledge the long service to the company of 6 employees who have each been with DSA for 15 years: Ros Innes, Kavana Tumunuvao, Joseph Matahau, Wendy Byrne, Nelson Alarcon and Mark Brett. I thank and congratulate each one for their valued service and dedication to our mission.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank all our individual, community and business supporters who share our commitment to enabling opportunities for people to experience choice, inclusion and achievement. Your ongoing support allows us to maximise options for people to live their lives the way they choose.

We look forward with enthusiasm to the New Year and would like to take this opportunity to wish you and your family a very happy and safe festive season.

I hope you enjoy reading this latest edition of Solutions and as always, I welcome any comments, suggestions or feedback.

Mark Spurr

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 or call the Customer Connections team on 1300 372 121.



Disability Services Australia

your life. your future. your choice.

ndis Service Provider

DSA's new Program Choices Guide, which is available from your Customer Relationship Manager or our Customer Connections team, details a wide range of accessible and inclusive group based programs offered both in our centres and in community locations.

Our Community Solutions team can support you to complete skills-based training courses that will allow you to develop your abilities in a whole range of areas of daily life and help you to live life the way you want to.

In this edition of Solutions we're highlighting our Cooking programs which could fit within the following NDIS Support categories:

- Capacity Building: Improved Daily Living Skills or
- Core: Assistance with Daily Life

COOKING - ESSENTIALS

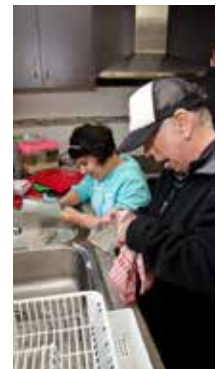
This program aims to develop your skills in planning and preparing a range of simple meals. This would include:

- Learning how to make simple snacks
- Identifying & tasting different foods
- Following a simple recipe including visual formats & technology where possible
- Using equipment correctly & safely
- Cleaning up after a meal

COOKING - ADVANCED

This program aims to develop and further your cooking skills and techniques in planning and preparing a range of delicious and more involved recipes and would include:

- Choosing what meals to cook
- Learning different cooking techniques
- Using equipment correctly & safely
- Tasting & working with different ingredients
- Making a selection of healthy & delicious meals
- Cooking to a budget
- Cleaning up after a meal



Interested in expanding your cooking horizons, or simply want further information? Contact our Customer Connections team on 1300 372 121.

An update on the NDIS

The latest quarterly report from the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) has been released. Between July-September 2016 the Scheme grew by almost 11,000 people, with 7,440 participants receiving an approved NDIS plan.

The three-year transition phase of the NDIS began in July and has seen the number of participants in the Scheme with an approved plan of supports grow by almost 25 per cent in just three months.

Highlights of the report include:

- \$3.3 billion committed for participant support costs
- 37,721 participants in the Scheme (includes latest quarter and three-year trial)
- 3,552 children will be referred through the ECEI gateway in the latest quarter
- Survey of participants – 85% of people's experience either good or very good.
- 3,696 registered service providers
- 72 per cent of committed supports expected to be provided for core supports such as helping with daily activities, community participation and transport

By the end of 2016 the number of people in the Scheme is expected to almost double to 60,000.

In 2011 PricewaterhouseCoopers found that – without the NDIS – government expenditures on disability would increase to two-to-three times the projected costs of the NDIS.

For more information on when the NDIS will be available in new areas in NSW and how people with disability, their families and carers, providers and the community can get NDIS Ready, visit <http://ndis.nsw.gov.au/> Source: NDIA

Hear from a family who have been through the process

Gaby is a young woman from the Hunter Region who has been utilising DSA services since she left high school. Knowing Gaby can spend the day with others her age in a stimulating environment where her complex needs are being considered is a huge comfort – for Gaby herself and also for her parents Seanne and Tony.

We appreciate that everyone's experience will be different but it is good to hear from a family who have definitely had their lives enhanced by the NDIS.

Adrian from our Hunter Services team recently spoke with Tony and Seanne about their NDIS planning experience – the following is a transcript of part of that interview.

Adrian – “Do you feel you were well prepared for your NDIS planning meeting?”

Seanne – “I do think I was well prepared, Tony was away when I actually had the meeting. Janet from DSA gave me a lot of tips, we had a lot of conversations on the phone leading up to the meeting about things that I should think about and consider. I'd spoken to a few other friends who have children with disabilities who'd already been through the planning ... so I'd probably done a lot of my own homework and I spent hours trolling through all of Gaby's data and documents and files in our office just documenting all the equipment that she had or the services that she uses, what sort of services we were using... and then writing down some goals around all of this, about what we were trying to achieve for Gaby so I spent hours and hours and hours doing that.”

Tony – “One of the good things was that I was away, not that that sounds a right thing to say, however; it was nice to be able to sit away and Seanne would send me the details of what she'd been going through, and we'd vet them or add to them or say have we thought about this?”

Seanne – “And with Janet as well so as I was doing it, the wonders of technology was that I'd type it up and then share it, and then get the feedback so Janet would get some, Tony would get some, we'd get it back and I'd mull it through again, have you thought about this? So when I went to the meeting I had probably six or seven A4 pages of stuff ready to go.”

Adrian – “Was the meeting what you expected?”

Seanne – “It was better than I expected, I was as nervous as hell. I really didn’t know what to expect, I’ve heard good and bad from other people’s experiences. I expected that I was going to have to convince this planner of Gaby’s needs and goals and ... I didn’t have to do any of that. So we had a table meeting with house staff from Gaby’s group home, with DSA staff, with staff from the NDIA and myself, we were all on the same page, we all worked together and it went really smoothly and I probably was a bit gobsmacked at the end of it.”

Tony – “It was a bit worrying for me being away because you see on social media, ... there were people (who) weren’t being listened to or you have to re-explain, we’ve been doing this for 20 years with Gabs and we thought this all over again but the preparation was the key and also we had a really good planner, she was all over it and has been since so it’s been really good support from them as well.”

Seanne – “And she raised issues on the day that I still hadn’t thought of which was also helpful.”

Adrian – “How has the NDIS enhanced Gaby’s life?”

Seanne – “Well it’s made her life easier and it’s made our lives easier because the co-ordination of services is now streamlined, what she needs is now funded so from our point of view as parents we don’t have to continually apply, seek and fight for funding and services and wait to try and get it and then be disjointed. Now everybody is on the same page, everybody is talking to each other, she has a wonderful social life, she’s such a social butterfly so her social life has been expanded, she’s out and about 5-6 days a week and she’s as happy as a lark. She really is happy, her therapy services are all on board so her equipment’s all being serviced, things are being replaced that are required to be replaced but above all, things are being serviced that have never been serviced for Gaby before.

Tony – “Except if I did them, you know”

Seanne – “So they’re actually being serviced properly for a better word! So from a parents point of view it’s huge for peace of mind particularly with Gaby living out of home that everything is serviceable, her needs are being met, her therapy is being met, her social life, her personal needs, it’s all being met, everybody is talking to each other about this and there’s funding to actually cover it and we’re not having to sit up night after night wondering how this is all going to be funded and paid for.

Tony – “And paid for, that was the main thing”

Seanne – “To be able to achieve what we we’ve always wanted to achieve for Gabby so her goals can actually be met without our heartache and headache.

You can jump on to our YouTube channel and view the full interview with Tony & Seanne for more insights into the planning process <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=idJuUJ-jm8I>



Introducing Enhance Health Services

DSA's Specialist Intervention Services (SIS) team has been providing a broad range of behaviour intervention and psychological supports for people with a disability and their families for the last 20 years. The team has a wealth of experience and has specialised in providing services for people with complex needs including challenging behaviours, early childhood issues, and speech and swallowing needs.

This year after a comprehensive review we have relaunched SIS as a multi-clinic psychology and allied health care practice with some new faces, a new name and a new brand:



Enhance offers a full range of services, for all age groups. With an experienced team of consultants; psychologists, speech pathologists, behaviour and occupational therapists, Enhance provides clinic-based as well as outreach interventions to individuals and their support networks.

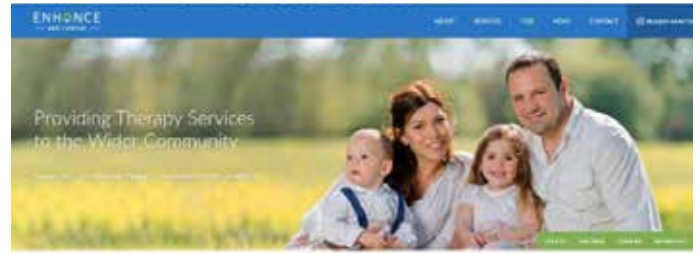
All health care professionals, including our recently recruited nurse, are experienced, qualified and registered with their professional registration board.

The team are highly skilled in delivering individualised services to assist people to learn skills to deal positively with life experiences and situations through psychological support and intervention strategies, resilience programs and incidental crisis support. The team also offers speech therapy and occupational therapy.



Enhance is also expanding beyond the disability sector, providing therapy services to the wider community, from early childhood to aged care (and everything else in-between). Our services can be tailored to meet your individual needs and can change as your needs evolve.

To meet the team and find out more about the services on offer visit www.enhancehealthservices.org.au



Making friends in Fairfield – call for expressions of interest

In the last edition of Solutions we mentioned an exciting new project we are running called 'Making Friends in Fairfield'.

The project aims to engage people with disabilities in the Fairfield local government area (LGA) to develop self-confidence and empower them to interact and form positive relationships with their peers and with the wider community.

- Is being in public a challenge?
Causing you anxiety?
- Is starting a conversation tricky?
How about maintaining the conversation?
- Do you want to widen your social activities?



Enhance will be running workshops, information sessions and social events focusing on building social skills and confidence to participate in activities.

Running from December 2016 until May 2017, Making Friends in Fairfield will help individuals with a disability develop social and other skills.

Fortnightly workshops will focus on developing communications skills, group counselling, health and wellbeing finishing with a fantastic opportunity for participants to put their new skills into practice.

If this sounds like you or someone you know and you live in the Fairfield LGA then contact the Customer Connections team on 1300 372 121 to register your interest.

Your life, your future, your choice

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.

Our roving photographer Scott was at our Picton site recently when Ellie and her handler Virginia from PAWS Pet Therapy popped in for a visit and was able to capture the enjoyment everyone experiences when the PAWS team are around.

Picton Day Program customers make dog biscuits each week so there are plenty in store for Thursday morning when the PAWS team drop by. Our customers really enjoy the interaction with the dogs, the pet therapy program has been running for some time at Picton Day Options and is really loved by all involved.



International Day of People with Disability (IDPwD) is a United Nations sanctioned day that takes place on 3 December each year. The theme for 2016 is 'Achieving 17 Goals for the Future We Want'.

Check out our facebook page (hyperlink <https://www.facebook.com/Disabilityservicesaustralia>) for pictures from all the events that DSA participated in this year including:

- Celebrating IDPwD event in Riverwood on 29th Nov
- Blacktown Celebrates IDPwD on 1st Dec
- DSA Ability Walk in Mittagong on 2nd Dec
- DSA celebrates IDPwD in Nowra on 3rd Dec
- Goulburn IDPwD on 2nd Dec



DSA Goulburn is having a Christmas Party!

The team from Goulburn are hosting a Christmas Party on Saturday 17th December from 6.00pm – 11.00pm at the Goulburn Workers Club.

It is going to be a really special event with loads of great fun, live music, a two course meal and prizes to win on the night.

Tickets are \$35 per person and are available from the Goulburn Team at 448 Auburn Street Goulburn or call our Customer Connections team on 1300 372 121.

Thumbs up from Dylan!

Dylan Lewis from our Taren Point Day Program finally fulfilled a long-held goal in November when he completed a Bridge Climb with support from Customer Relationship Manager Laura Steel and his sister Kathryn. What an awesome achievement!



Footy tipping can be fun. For Kurtis it's been life-changing.

As a little boy Kurtis dreamed of playing professional football.

Kurtis has an intellectual disability and social anxiety so strong it has shaped his life. He has grown up feeling overwhelmed with fear in ordinary social situations like meeting someone new, talking on the phone, going places on his own, or even going outside at all.

We first met Kurtis three years ago when he was an 18-year-old school-leaver. In a work readiness program tailored to his interests, aims and abilities, Kurtis began receiving one-on-one instead of group support, since the challenges he experiences in social interactions meant this would be best for his progress.

It didn't take many sessions with Kurtis, hearing him constantly talk about the latest footy results, for our staff to recognise this was his greatest passion. And to see that footy could be the perfect way for him to learn job skills.

So they encouraged him to start writing up his footy tips to help him improve his written and verbal communication, computer skills, and social skills. It soon evolved into him sharing his tips online with our other job-seekers and staff in the DSA Footy Tipping Competition. His proudest moment was predicting the recent Grand Final victory of his favourite team, the Cronulla Sharks!

"Absolutely he grew his skills, with spelling and the use of the computer, and his self-esteem," says his Employment Consultant, Jasmin Onley.

"First when we started, I was sitting by him 100% of the time prompting his every move. By the end of the second NRL season he was doing them completely independently. His confidence has absolutely skyrocketed. At the beginning he wouldn't like us to take photos of him or talk about him, by the end he was doing NRL wrap-up videos."

Another important skill that Kurtis wanted to learn, took him out from behind a computer to the train station, to master catching the train by himself – something he'd never done before.

"That was a big thing for Kurtis," says Jasmin. "It was small steps, over about three weeks of traveling with him, sitting next to him on the train, then shadowing him – not sitting with him but watching from afar – to then just meeting him at the stops. Now he's catching the train independently, he's a different person."

So much so that Kurtis, who is now 21, has found a job in supported employment, in the packaging team at a factory. His mum is delighted and proud. And Kurtis is slowly beginning to feel more confident in his abilities, and to relish the overall sense of wellbeing that working brings.

"I'm enjoying it," Kurtis says. "I like getting up in the morning and going out there – it gets me good exercise. It will help me be more healthy. I walk 15 minutes to the place and back from the place."

People like Kurtis have a lot to give in the workplace and within our community, if they receive support to achieve everything they're capable of.



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