



# Disability Services Australia Solutions

ISSUE 25



*Taren Point band The Weeklies perform for IDPWD*

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DSA TURNS 60

# From the CEO



*Social Saturdays are a great opportunity to catch up with some of our Supported Employment Enterprise employees*

DSA has a long history of adapting to changes in the needs of people accessing our services and to the operating environment. Sixty years in fact. To commemorate this milestone we will be holding a series of events and celebrations commencing with an official launch on 27th April, when a book outlining our history will be unveiled. I look forward to sharing more about our Diamond Jubilee in upcoming editions of Solutions.



Our Mascot supported employment enterprise is moving into new premises to accommodate growth in the business as suppliers to the airline industry continue to outsource work to DSA. The relocation and fitout cost of the new site was substantial and was mostly covered by donations to DSA. These donated funds included a generous contribution from the Cunningham family and a grant from the Federal government.

The new premises will accommodate an exciting development in our Employment Solutions promoting skill-building opportunities and career pathways for young job seekers and existing supported employees. You can read more on page 3 about our exciting new 'DSA Centre' which will incorporate many of our service streams in one location.

Following a comprehensive review we have upgraded our service offerings in the Hunter Region. Growth in demand for our services in the Charlestown area means that we needed to find a bigger space.

We recently relocated our Hunter Regional Office to a new, larger facility in the Landmark Building in Charlestown.

Plan Management partners (PMP), our plan management joint venture trial with McMillan Shakespeare, is progressing well and experiencing growth ahead of expectations. They are now assisting more than 120 customers to source services and providers to help them achieve their plan goals.

The National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) is a world first in terms of coverage and the potential benefits for people with a disability. Given its complexity it is no surprise that there have been issues as the scheme is rolled out.

Across Disability Services Australia (DSA) more than 300 customers have transitioned to the NDIS so far. This represents almost half of the customers eligible to transition in Year 1. Most of our customers have had good outcomes with plans appropriate to their needs and we continue to work with our customers and their families to ensure that they receive the funding in their plans that they need.

There is no doubt that the last six months have been particularly testing at times as we navigate the transition but I'm confident that the ultimate 'prize' of true choice and control for our customers will be worth the effort.

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 support is highly valued and allows us to maximise options for people to live their lives the way they choose.

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

**Mark Spurr**



DSA is proud to display the newly introduced Tick of Charity Registration from the Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission (ACNC). It signifies that a charity is registered, transparent and accountable, giving you peace of mind when you donate to DSA.



# The DSA Centre at Mascot

This month we see our Mascot supported employment enterprise move into new and improved premises in King Street. Not only will the new centre facilitate growth in the business, it will also accommodate an exciting development in our employment solutions.

The DSA Centre at Mascot will promote skill-building opportunities and career pathways for young job seekers and existing supported employees through the co-location of our Employment, Education and Training services.

Relocating a large supported employment facility is a huge undertaking. In addition to refitting the factory, moving and re-installing the factory equipment which is essential to meeting our business customers' needs, staff have also been travel training with our supported employees to ensure a seamless transition. The relocation of more than 250 staff and employees was staged over four days.

Our Transition to Work, Supported Learning Hub and Enhance Health Services previously offered from our Redfern office will bring more than 60 additional staff and customers to the new site.

We are very excited that the vision of a 'DSA Centre' incorporating many of our service streams in one location is becoming a reality.

The substantial fitout and relocation cost of the new site was predominantly covered by donations to DSA. These donated funds included a generous contribution from the Cunningham family, with the balance coming from a grant from the Federal government.

We thank all our supporters who have helped make The DSA Centre at Mascot a reality.



*The entry to the new DSA Centre at Mascot*



*The main reception area*

## 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](mailto:community@dsa.org.au) or call the Customer Connections team on 1300 372 121.

# Making the move to the NDIS



Disability  
Services  
Australia

*your life. your future. your choice.*

ndis Service Provider

The National Disability Insurance Scheme aims to provide support and services that make daily activities easier for people with a disability and their lives more fulfilling.

Choice and control are at the heart of the NDIS and we're here to help you live the life you choose. For some people, transitioning to the NDIS could be overwhelming or confusing but our experienced team are here to work with you to ensure your move to the NDIS goes as smoothly as possible.

We're with you every step of the way and you can get in touch with our friendly Customer Connections team on 1300 372 121

## Some tips to get you started with your planning

The Every Australian Counts website is a great source of information about the experience people across the country have had as they transition to the NDIS. Following are some useful tips and explanations of some of the jargon you may encounter on your own NDIS journey.

### 1. Start today

Your first NDIS planning meeting could be a pivotal moment in your life. It's time to start thinking about how you want to live your life and what you need to achieve your goals.

### 2. Think big

The NDIS will transform disability services and it's for life. It's time to stop worrying about barriers you might have run into in the past and start thinking about the big picture. What do you want to achieve in your life and how do you want to live it?

### 3. Write a list or keep a diary

It's also important to think about your day-to-day reality. What are the barriers you encounter every day that make life harder than it could be? A good way to monitor this is to start documenting them now. You could write a diary, take photos or keep a list. This will provide concrete examples you can use in your first planning meeting to help you get the most out of your NDIS plan.

### 4. Be specific

There's no doubt that the NDIS could be truly transformative – but it's up to you to make sure you take advantage of it. Try to be as specific as you can about what you need and what you want, what your goals are and how you want to live. Write all of these down and take them along to your first meeting.

## GOALS

1. Learn to cook
2. Improve my fitness
3. Make new friends
4. Find and keep a job
5. Get a home of my own



### 5. Learn the language

There's a whole world of NDIS jargon out there and it's a good idea to start getting your head around terms like funded supports, planners, centre-based service and support plan. This will help you to better understand the resources that are available and navigate the process.

### 6. Research, research, research

There's a reason that the NDIS was rolled out in trial sites first, and that's so that we can all learn from the experience of others. Try to get as much information in advance – this way you'll be better prepared to deal with any challenges and also to take full advantage of the opportunities of the NDIS.

### 7. Get the paperwork done early

It's a good idea to fill in your planning workbook well before you go in for your first meeting. It contains important questions about your life and your future and you don't want to have to come up with an answer on the spot!

### 8. Don't sweat the detail

Have you previously felt pressure to list your needs in a priority order or compare the cost of one service or equipment over another? The NDIS changes all of that because it will fund all the reasonable and necessary supports that you need to help reach your goals in life. It's time to stop worrying about the detail and start re-imagining your future.

### 9. Get all your documents ready

Before your first meeting get all the documentation you have together so you can streamline the process with your planner. This will help you to explain who you are and what you need. Try to collate all your medical, education and health documents to have it ready.



### 10. Take someone with you

You don't have to go through this process alone. Take along to your meeting people who know you well. That might be family, friends, support workers or advocates. They'll help you to make sure you aren't forgetting anything important and can assist with explaining your situation to your planner.

## Making sense of all the jargon

### NDIS

Let's start at the beginning. It stands for the National Disability Insurance Scheme and is a new approach to service delivery and funding for people with a disability.

### NDIA

Not to be confused with the NDIS, the NDIA stands for National Disability Insurance Agency. It's the body responsible for running the NDIS.

### NDIS Access

Quite simply, access means qualifying for the NDIS. There is a tool on the NDIS website [ndis.gov.au](http://ndis.gov.au) to help you work out if you qualify

### Planner

Once you have received confirmation that you qualify for the NDIS, your planner is the first person you should speak to on your NDIS journey. Your planner is there to help you access the system, but you can help them to help you by giving them as much information as possible about your situation and your goals.

### Provider

A provider is a person or an organisation that delivers support to someone who has registered for the NDIS. It is the provider's job to deliver the supports you require. DSA is a registered NDIS provider.

### Participant plans

This is the plan for the type of supports and/or funding which you and your planner have designed for you. You don't have to take a back seat and trust your planner to do all the work. You can take a more active role and manage it yourself. That's up to you. There are several options for plan management.

### Reasonable and necessary supports

Anything which is related to your disability is a reasonable and necessary support under the NDIS. If you're not sure what is "necessary and reasonable", ask your planner. The basic rule is that it must be related to your disability, and it can't replicate things that your family or community already helps you with.

For more information on when the NDIS will be available in new areas in NSW and how people with disability, their families and carers can get NDIS Ready, visit [ndis.nsw.gov.au](http://ndis.nsw.gov.au)

Source: [everyaustraliancounts.com.au](http://everyaustraliancounts.com.au)



# International Day

Celebrations for International Day of People with Disability took place under very hot summer skies in December but nothing could dampen the spirits of the hundreds of people who joined in the fun of the day.



## Goulburn rocks!

We'd like to say a huge thank you to everyone who made the Goulburn Christmas party such a successful night.

The Goulburn Workers Club provided an excellent venue and Sweet Mercy Rock band ensured the party was one to remember with their fantastic performance.

We were overwhelmed by the support we received from the community with more than 25 local business donating a wealth of gifts as prizes for our raffles!

A big shout out too to Deanne and her team who were determined to make the night memorable for all who attended.

# 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 safely live your life the way you choose.**

DSA has a growing reputation for the provision of complex supports in a model that enables opportunities for choice, inclusion and achievement.

Region 4 in our Community Support Services division supports young people who have left the care of the Minister at age 18 and also people who are reintegrating into the community after leaving the Criminal Justice System.

Region 4 staff are committed to supporting their customers to live their lives in a safe and inclusive environment which enables them to expand their horizons and explore opportunities to learn new skills, develop social relationships, improve their health and wellbeing and make the choices that will allow them to live the life they choose, safely.

Helping local communities better understand the issues and challenges that some of our customers face is all part of what we do and recently Sarah from our Tamworth site presented to the local Evening VIEW Club. Following is an excerpt from a thank you letter she received:

"On behalf of the members of Tamworth Evening VIEW Club I am writing to thank you, most sincerely, for the wonderful talk you gave at our recent meeting. Your talk of your work, together with the significant challenges facing intellectually disabled people in our society certainly caused us all to reflect on this sobering issue.

Sarah, you have helped expand our knowledge and understanding of the intellectually disabled. We are also much more aware of the vulnerabilities of these people in our society and the paucity of services to support and assist them. It is work such as yours and that of your organisation which is no doubt helping some of the group achieve a better future."

Jennie West, Secretary

## Safe in Love, by Anne-Marie Cooper, Senior Psychologist

In 2016, I delivered some training to mentors on how they could support their customers who are in volatile relationships. In reviewing the literature specific to women with intellectual disability I was alarmed to discover that in 2016 women with Intellectual Disability are 70% more likely to experience domestic violence and are more likely to return to their violent partners.

I became increasingly aware that the use of social media was particularly challenging for some of our young ladies too, that they were at risk of being groomed, bullied and harassed by others. From these two issues, a need to assist our young female customers understand the cycle of violence, how to develop a safety plan and how keep themselves safe in their relationships was identified and "Safe in Love" was visioned.

Last month's 'Safe in Love' day consisted of group discussions about self-care, the cycle of violence, safety planning, how to tell if you're ready for intimacy, online safety and the use of social media. The information delivered was balanced with some fun activities too. The program also aimed to bring young female customers together to network and form friendships.

There was a craft session where the customers each made a Valentines card as well as sessions of karaoke. The craft and karaoke were a great opportunity for customers and staff to share some time out together, there was lots of singing, dancing and chatting. Lunch was made by one of our customers who is polishing up her independent living skills.

Each customer received a Safe in Love show bag which included some fun resources, information about online safety, and a crown to wear for the day and take home as a reminder that they are all "Queens of Their Own Destiny".





# Ronald is opening new doors



The new doors Ronald has opened have provided him with a way to experience things he never dreamed were possible.

But it has taken time. Ten years to be exact. That's when we first met Ronald when he began receiving assistance through our Employment Services, which helps people with a disability to follow their desired career paths. Shortly after he was offered employment at one of our Supported Employment Enterprise sites.

Ronald has a great eye for detail and a knack for IT. He also has Autism and battles severe anxiety so he needs extra help to deal with the social demands of the workplace.

What you might think of as everyday chit-chat is agonisingly difficult for him and had the potential to significantly limit Ronald's chances of ever gaining and maintaining a job. You can imagine the life of frustration, dependence, even poverty, he might well have been locked into without someone caring to empower him to conquer his challenges.

Our Employment Consultant Ted remembers the Ronald of days past as a nice but painfully shy young man. He was extremely sensitive to noise and other people – to the point he struggled to just be on the factory floor at all.

Ted's approach in helping Ronnie develop his many strengths, has been to slowly and quietly draw him onwards ... and to give him space and acceptance, whenever he has felt overwhelmed "I'd walk out with him into the factory until he developed the confidence to go by himself. If he had any issues or wasn't coping, he could have some time out." says Ted, Ronald's Employment Consultant.

"Each 12 months or so I'd sit down with him and talk about his goals. One of them was to interact more and

with different people. So I introduced him to one or two people, where he could sit down and have a chat with them. Now he's totally interactive with them – he's much more comfortable."



"With work, each year we'd just give him a little bit more responsibility. Now he virtually does all our admin and IT. He answers phones, although he's still working on feeling more relaxed in face-to-face conversations."

Another dramatic change Ronald made recently, started with him deciding to eat better after a health warning from his doctor.

He took some cooking lessons and began preparing his own meals. This meant having the courage to break away from his parent's routines whilst he was still living in their home. He has lost an incredible 50 kgs, which has given him energy and revolutionised his view of himself.

It has also been a stepping stone to him fulfilling a dream ... with a little help. He has been able to move out of home and start living the kind of independent life every 30-year-old man wants. Our staff supported him through the process by driving him to inspect rentals when he couldn't get there by himself.



"It was a bit scary at first," Ronald says. "But now I'm pretty much comfortable, I'm actually enjoying independent life."

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