



Disability Services Australia Solutions

ISSUE 23



DSA staff at the recent 'Dare to Dream' conference.

INSIDE

- **NDIS – it's here and we have some exciting new program choices**
- **Celebrating the achievements of our amazing employees**
- **Living your life your way**



Join the conversation
@OurDSA



Join the Facebook community
facebook.com/Disabilityservicesaustralia

Find and follow us on Google +, LinkedIn and YouTube



**SAVE THE DATE
3RD DECEMBER
IDPWD**

From the CEO



The Employee Achievement Awards is a great opportunity to meet some of our employees' family members.

The last year has seen a lot of change, development and growth at DSA as we are making the necessary adjustments to our systems and structures to ensure we thrive in the transition to the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS). We had a great finish to the financial year with continuing high levels of customer and staff satisfaction and growth in all areas which bodes well for the year ahead.

Roll-out of the full scheme in New South Wales and most States and Territories of Australia is well underway and we are continuing to learn and adapt as we navigate the new NDIS world.

We were very honoured to have been nominated, and are extremely proud to have won the Organisational Change category of the Australian Psychological Society's 2016 Workplace Excellence Awards. This is a fantastic acknowledgement of the work we are doing as an organisation to ensure we are in a good position to meet the challenges of the changing disability sector.

We have learned a lot over the past few years about who our customers are and what they want from us. It is clear that the relationships we have with people, their families and carers will play a crucial role in their decision to choose DSA to deliver services under their NDIS plans.

One thing that is very clear is that we need a point of difference. We need to stand out from the crowd and be truly innovative. This is a theme that was explored at the DSA 'Dare to Dream' Conference held on the 8th - 9th September.

We recently celebrated our Annual Employee Achievement Awards at the Bankstown Sports Club. The Awards Day is a great opportunity to recognise the important contribution made by people with a disability in the Australian workforce and the many enlightened companies, including this year's award winners Cantarella Bros., Pourshins and Busways, who understand and enjoy the economic and social benefits of supporting the employment of people with a disability. Congratulations to our Employee of the Year award winners Alex McKenzie, Allan Wilks, Andrew Lester, Carolyn McClure and Kate Paviour and Transition to Work Job Seekers of the Year Andrew Oliver-Rutter, Blake Radcliffe and Larry Dela Cruz. Well done also to all the award nominees and long service recipients!

Thank you to all our individual, community and business supporters who share our commitment to enabling opportunities for people to experience choice, inclusion and achievement. Your generosity and support 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

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

The NDIS transition started in earnest on the 1st July. Although there have been some early hiccups with the new payment system, we have been assured that they are now fixed and the Government is committed to ensuring the NDIS is delivered in full right across Australia.

In preparation for the rollout we have developed a new approach to providing our high quality day programs. The change was designed to provide you with more opportunities for choice and control.

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



Over the coming editions of Solutions we'll put the spotlight on some of the different programs on offer. The first is:

Life Skills – Tasks of Daily Living

This program aims to develop your knowledge and skills to undertake daily living activities as independently as possible including:

- Looking after your home
- Paying bills
- Cleaning your home – the basics
- Simple home maintenance
- Washing your clothes
- Keeping a pet
- Shopping
- The basics of budgeting

This program could fit under the NDIS Support category – Capacity Building: Improved Daily Living. The actual program activities will be based on the choices of the people in the group.

An update on the BSWAT back pay notice

The amended Business Services Wage Assessment Tool (BSWAT) payment scheme bill was passed earlier this year. To help you prepare, DSA is hosting information sessions for supported employees and their families and carers about the pay-back process.

You may have received some letters in the mail recently about the BSWAT back pay. It's important that you hold on to these letters – don't throw them away.

We will be holding information sessions with Evolution Research to explain how the BSWAT back pay will be calculated, what you need to do and when you should get your back pay. It is really important that you attend a session and it would be great if a family member or carer could attend as well.

If you have any questions contact your EC or the government on 1800 799 515.

Information Session details:

Braemar Factory 19 Drapers Rd, Braemar	Tues 13 Sept & Wed 14 Sept	Tues: 9am, 11am & 1.30pm Wed: 9am
Condell Park Factory 76 Harley Cres, Condell Park	Mon 26 Sept, Tues 27 Sept & Wed 28 Sept	9am, 11am & 1.30pm daily
Seven Hills Factory A2/183 Prospect Hwy, Seven Hills	Thurs 29 Sept & Fri 30 Sept	9am, 11am & 1.30pm daily
Mascot Factory 2/42 Church Ave, Mascot	Tues 4 Oct, Wed 5 Oct, Thurs 6 Oct & Fri 7 Oct	9am, 11am & 1.30pm daily

To RSVP to one of these sessions please call the Customer Connections team on 1300 372 121.

2016 Achievement Awards

DSA's Annual Employee Achievement Awards were celebrated at the end of July in the Grand Ballroom at the Bankstown Sports Club. We thank the Board and staff of Bankstown Sports Club for the support they have shown DSA over many years and welcomed the Hon John Ajaka MLC, Minister for Disability Services and Mr Kai Cantwell, State Manager NSW & ACT, Department of Social Services (DSS) who joined us in the celebrations.

The Awards Day is about recognising the important contribution made by people with a disability in the Australian workforce and the local, national and international businesses who understand and enjoy the economic and social benefits of either directly or indirectly supporting the employment of people with a disability.

Special surprise guest for the day was The Big Marn, Darryl Brohman who entertained the crowd with an engaging question and answer session sharing insights into his perspective on the importance of teamwork and overcoming obstacles to achieve your goals.

This year's event saw more family and friends attend than ever before, it was the largest held so far with almost 700 people joining in the spirit of the day.

Once the official part of the event was over there was, as always, a chance for everyone to hit the dance floor, and catch up with friends and colleagues they may not have seen for a while.

Employee of the Year

The Employee Achiever Awards recognise the employees at each Business Services facility and also our social enterprise Assetcare who show the most positive attitude and contribution to the goals of our business. The nominees for 2016 were:

Assetcare

- Andrew Lester
- Sozar Yanar
- Clarence Gage

Braemar

- Gregory Chapman
- Kate Paviour
- Plinio Rizzetto
- Matthew Walker

Condell Park

- Rosetta Amaroso
- Anthony Day
- Carolyn McClure
- Kahn Savage
- Carol Slade
- Mohamad Zaatiti

Mascot

- Cebe Atanasovski
- Peter Burkitt
- Nhung Doan
- Luciana Giordano
- Brett McNamara
- David Parry
- Matthew Ryan
- Sharon Shareef
- Allan Wilks

Seven Hills

- Tracy Jones
- Alex McKenzie
- Gheel Madrogaba
- Lisa Phillips



Assetcare's Employee of the Year Winner Andrew Lester (2nd from right) with CEO Mark Spurr, Assetcare Manager Pedro Rodriguez, Employee of the Year Nominee Clarence Gage and special guest Darryl Brohman.



Kate Paviour, Braemar's Employee of the Year.



Alex McKenzie, Seven Hills' Employee of the Year.



Allan Wilks, Mascot's Employee of the Year.



Carolyn McClure, Employee of the Year for Condell Park receiving her award from Darryl with Kai Cantwell and fellow nominees looking on.

Transition to Work Jobseeker of the Year



Our Jobseekers of the Year for 2016 were (L-R) Blake Radcliffe for the Hunter Region, Larry Dela Cruz for the Sydney Metro and Andrew Oliver-Rutter for the Southern Region, pictured here with The Hon John Ajaka MP, Minister for Disability Services.

We had a large pool of talented young people nominated this year and we congratulate the finalists for 2016:

- Blake Radcliffe – Charlestown
- Spencer Kun - Blacktown
- Larry Dela Cruz – Blacktown
- Mitchell Arundell – Campbelltown
- Hayden Clarkson – Redfern
- Andrew Oliver-Rutter – Queanbeyan
- Jimmy O’Boyle – Moss Vale



Celebrating 40 years with DSA were Marilyn Cooke, Trevor Oldfield and Mark Petrocitto.

Darryl Brohman appeared by arrangement with Saxton Speakers Bureau.

Long Service Awards

Our Long Service Awards are always a particularly inspirational part of the day where we recognise those employees in our Australian Disability Enterprise who have reached significant employment milestones of more than 15 years service. Reaching these milestones shows the commitment our employees have to contributing to their community and also that they consider working at DSA is more than just a job – it’s also a great place to make friends.

Celebrating 15 years of service were:

- Virginia Antoun
- Joanne Bennati
- Nicole Casey
- John Churchland
- Rafique Gool
- Fiona Hancock
- Glen Kable
- Lauren Kilroy
- Nhi LeKeim
- Gheel Madrogaba
- Bronwyn Medley
- Patricia Shannon
- Samantha Shelley
- Allan Snape
- Jodie Terry
- Zlata Vidakovic
- Michelle Wood
- Judith Winckle
- Peter Yin



Celebrating 30 years of service was Gregory Hodgetts.

Thank you to our generous sponsors:

We would like to thank a number of our key suppliers who generously supported the day as event sponsors.



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.

This month we'd like to thank a number of our great community supporters who are helping us provide the opportunities that will enable you to live the life you choose.

We recently received funding from Fairfield City Council through their Social Change through Creativity grant program for an exciting new project called 'Making Friends in Fairfield'.

Our 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.

DSA's Enhance Health Services (the new name for our Specialist Intervention Services team) 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.

More awesome support from the community



Some of the team from Taren Point Day Options attended the ClubGrants presentation ceremony at Club Menai.



The Taren Point band – The Weeklies.

DSA also received funding recently from Gynea Tradies Club through the Sutherland ClubGrants Scheme for our Strength and Strummin' project which complements our Music & Movement program funded in the 2015 ClubGrants.

The grant will allow us to purchase musical equipment and resources which will enhance our growing music program, developing the confidence & capability & broadening the skills of our Taren Point Day Options band 'The Weeklies'.

People accessing our day program are now keen to learn the Ukulele with a view to staging a performance for the International Day of People with Disability in December, and also attending the Blue Mountains Ukulele festival in February 2017 where they will be able to join in with players from across Australia and around the world – a truly socially inclusive opportunity. New fitness equipment will increase options for people involved in our health and wellness program and help improve strength & fitness levels.

We'd also like to thank Club Condell Park for their generous grant under the Bankstown ClubGrants scheme which will allow us to improve resources available in our training rooms ... we'll report more on this exciting project in the next edition of Solutions.

Making friends in Fairfield – call for expressions of interest

- 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?
- 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

City2Surf 2016

About 20 members of TeamDSA were out and about early on Sunday August 14th participating in the iconic City2Surf fun run and raised almost \$5,000 in support of projects to provide opportunities for people with a disability to live a healthier, more active life.



Just a few of the members of TeamDSA.

Save the Date:

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'.

Details of DSA celebrations for IDPwD will be posted on our website and social media closer to the date.



Transition to Work Employer of the Year

Larry Dela Cruz came to TTW with a work goal of having a job in the transport industry. He was able to make the most of the opportunities presented by DSA's Supported Learning Hubs where he enrolled in and completed his Certificate II in Business Administration.

Larry made a call in early 2015 to the local bus company. He asked if he would be able to visit their site to see how they operate. Not long after that he started a work placement. Over the next year Larry developed his skills, progressing from the Glendenning depot to the control room at the Penrith depot.

He now has a paid job where he allocates buses to the drivers. Larry's excellent memory recall and passion for the transport industry has made him an asset to Busways.

Larry's direct mentors Andrew, Terry and Denise have been fundamental to his success at Busways. Their patience and ability to teach Larry their workplace policies and procedures and their unique lateral

thinking has meant that Larry felt comfortable growing into the role and developing a real sense of belonging in the workplace.

Rodney has led his team through their initial concerns to a point where they now embrace the unique talent that Larry and his impressive memory and recall bring to the Busways team.



Larry Dela Cruz is pictured here with Rodney Kennedy, Terry Lee and Andrew Robertson from Busways along with his mum and Employment Consultant Lisa Su'A.

Would you like to make a difference through volunteering?

Life presents challenges for us all but we each have much to offer. Whether you are retired, looking for work or would just like to give some of your time – we would love to hear from you!

We have loads of volunteering opportunities at each of our four 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 Customer Connections team on **1300 372 121** or email **volunteers@dsa.org.au**

Tim's Journey

Tim's journey to becoming independent and confident has been very different to that of most other 30-year-olds.

Tim has an intellectual disability and grew up towards the end of the era when children with a disability were often cared for in group homes away from their families.

So Tim's earliest experience of 'home' was in a place where he lived with virtually no personal belongings, not even clothes to call his own. His bedroom was a dormitory where no mum or dad ever tucked him in at night. He had never seen a kitchen and didn't know where food came from.

But thankfully, 18 years ago Tim's family moved him into the children's accommodation that we used to provide. That's also when he met DSA's Joanne Kernot.

She smiles as she thinks back to those days when as a young boy of just 12 years Tim couldn't contain his excitement at getting to try so many new things...

"He came to us with really no skills at all," Joanne remembers. "On one of his first Sunday mornings, they cooked bacon and eggs, and he was so excited at the eggs cracking. We then found out he'd never been in a kitchen. It was the first time he'd had something like a normal life, that he could remember."

Tim's other thrills were getting his own room, catching buses and trains, going to the movies, re-connecting with family and inviting his little brother for sleepovers, and that childhood rite of passage – getting his first bike. But fun was not the only aim behind each new experience.

Then, as now, our focus was seeing each person have every possible opportunity to discover and develop their unique abilities.

For Tim, one key goal was shifting from being isolated from the general community, to joining it. This opened doors to a sense of belonging and wonderful new avenues for his personal growth.

In Tim's teens, a major turning point was when he starting to attend a mainstream high school.

This was an incredible leap for someone who in Year 7 had not been able to write his own name.

It took years of determination and effort.

"Everybody worked really hard with Tim to improve his literacy and numeracy, and he was able to 'get' a lot of those skills," says Joanne.

"Going to mainstream high school was the start of him wanting more independence. He had friends there and he wanted to be like them."

Joanne has been thrilled to watch Tim blossom since then. From completing high school he has been able to live in supported accommodation. He has subsequently moved on to a private rental he shares with friends – making one of his dreams come true.

"I like that very much," says Tim. "I like to have friends over. I'm learning to cook. I like to cook stir fry chicken. I like my barbecues."

Another exciting goal he has met with our help has been finding and keeping a job.

Although he enjoys his work in the packaging team at a local factory, he is now aiming to move out of supported employment and into a job in the open employment market.

"I'd be so happy and celebrate when that happens," he says.

But for Tim to get there will require more support and encouragement – from us and from you.

"Tim can be a go-getter," says Joanne. "But he needs lots of people saying to him 'you can do it!'"

"When we were teaching him how to catch public transport he was just adamant he couldn't do it. It took a long time of staff really encouraging him and going with him, walking behind him and keeping an eye on him, for him to realise he could. Now he'll jump on a train and go all sorts of places on his own."

Tim has even recently been on a cruise holiday with some of his friends!



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

SPRING 2016