

# DISABILITY ACT

## MEET THE DIRECTOR

### Meeting Report

9 December 2009

**T**his report is a summary of the major issues that were discussed at the last quarterly *Meet the Director* meeting which was held on 9 December 2008.

#### **Staffing Arrangements over Christmas and in January 2009**

DEB STRATFORD, SCHEDULING OFFICE  
COORDINATOR

The Christmas period and school holidays are traditionally periods of high leave demand. Disability ACT balances the leave requests of staff with the support needs of clients. Every year we plan leave and roster staff to backfill vacant shifts. This year planning commenced 14 October 2008.

All leave and client requirements were due to Scheduling by 17 November 2008.

Initially all vacant shifts were offered to permanent part time staff members and agencies were offered remaining vacant shifts. There are not expected to be any significant staffing issues during this period.

#### **Bushfire Preparations**

KATE STARICK, SENIOR MANAGER,  
ACCOMMODATION SUPPORT SERVICES

With the bushfire season and the warmer summer weather approaching, preparations have been made to minimise

the risks of harm to clients from summer related issues. All supported accommodation and respite units managed by Disability ACT are required to ensure their readiness in the event of a bushfire or emergency evacuation and to minimise the risks of fire in the residence.

Each year we do the following:

- quarterly review of Evacuation Packs and emergency procedures,
- checking / maintenance of fire extinguishers, blankets and smoke detectors
- monthly fire drills and follow ups at team meetings.

To assist in the event of an emergency evacuation all houses have the following:

- Emergency Floor Plan, Emergency Evacuation Procedures and Evacuation packs
- Arrangements are in place for emergency supplies for client with high and complex needs
- Emergency Flipcharts
- Periodic reviews of emergency preparations

With temperature increasing and people with disability reliant on support staff for assistance, guidance and support was given to DSO staff on strategies to minimise the effects of heat to the clients they support. A minute detailing methods of minimising the effects of summer on clients and a 'Heat Emergencies' safety information sheet is sent out to all staff.

## **MY-CARD Trial**

KATE STARICK, SENIOR MANAGER,  
ACCOMMODATION SUPPORT SERVICES

An innovative resource has been developed by a University of Canberra student completing their Community Development Degree called the “my-card”. The “my-card” is a folded business card that belongs to a person with a disability and contains the personal information important to that individual. It is designed to increase the opportunities of people with a disability to engage and interact with others as well as building relationships whilst improving the confidence of unfamiliar support workers.

There will be twenty five individual trial placements available for people with a disability within Disability ACT Individual Support Services. If more individuals express interest, participants will be selected at random.

A meeting will be held for Disability ACT staff involved in the “my-card” trial at the beginning of 2009.

For more information on the “my-card”, please contact: Kate Starick (02) 6207 6381

## **Family Governance Project**

IAN ROSS, PROJECT OFFICER, DISABILITY ACT

Ian Ross provided an update on the progress of Disability ACT's Individual and Family Governance project. This project offers families the opportunity to work with Disability ACT to develop new support arrangements that will better meet the needs and lifestyle of their son/daughter. Families will also be able to control different elements of their service in order to make sure that it is focused on the things that are most important to the individual.

The project commenced in September and 4 families are now involved in the project.

Disability ACT will be holding a further presentation for families on Individual and Family Governance at Pilgrim House (cnr of Rudd Street and Northbourne Ave, Civic) on the 11<sup>th</sup> of February 2009.

Ian also advised that Disability ACT are developing a workshop which will be held in early 2009 (probably in April) which will provide more information on family governed services. Details of these events will be sent out to families in February.

For more information please contact: Ian Ross (02) 6205 2123 or [ian.ross@act.gov.au](mailto:ian.ross@act.gov.au).

## **Training for Disability ACT staff**

NADINE STEPHEN, TEAM LEADER, WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT.

Nadine Stephen provided information on the training delivered in 2008 by Disability ACT for its staff. This included 164 courses across 47 different which totalled 1,115 hours of training with the number of times a staff member attended a course at 2,505.

In 2009 the focus for training will be to:

- Continue to deliver quantity and quality
- Investigate more options for on-line learning
- More formal and informal information and networking opportunities
- Investigate ASBAs (Australian School Based Apprenticeships).

## **Meeting Dates in 2009**

10 March 2009      9 June 2009  
8 September 2009    8 December 2009

Meetings are held at NDS House, 33 Thesiger Circuit, Deakin, 4.30pm to 6.30pm.

## **Seasons Greetings**

*On behalf of all staff at Disability ACT I would like to wish families and guardians a safe and happy Christmas and New Year.*

*Andrew Whale  
Director, Disability ACT*