



community partners in disability

Spring 2006

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Photo: LAC Coordination

Local Area Coordination comes to Canberra

Minister for Disability and Community Services Ms Katy Gallagher launched Local Area Coordination in the ACT on 31 August. The service will improve the coordination of information and services to people with a disability, their families and carers.

Members of the Local Area Coordination team (left to right):
Emily and Angela (Gungahlin Office) and Debbie and Tanya (Phillip Office).

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A message from the Executive Director

Welcome to our spring edition of *Community Partners in Disability*. Spring is traditionally a time of change and new beginnings—something similar is happening in Disability ACT at the moment!

I'm delighted to report that many of our new services and initiatives are starting to come on stream.

Not only is this great news for people with disabilities, the families, carers and friends in terms of what types of support are available—it is very satisfying for the hardworking team at Disability ACT.

Our team is now starting to see the results of many months of planning and collaboration with our partners in the sector—in establishing real innovation and best practice in the way we work.

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Local area coordination

comes to Canberra

Minister for Disability and Community Services Ms Katy Gallagher recently launched a new program—Local Area Coordination—to improve the coordination of information and services to people with a disability, their families and carers.

The pilot program—jointly operated by Belconnen and Woden Community Services—will cover Woden and Gungahlin.

Local Area Coordination promotes self management, personal advocacy, family support and community development.

It follows the introduction of Local Area Coordination in other jurisdictions across Australia.

As well as providing information and advocacy for people with disabilities, program coordinators will work directly in the communities of Woden and Gungahlin to strengthen the capacity of those communities to include people with a disability in community life.

“This program is the successful outcome of Government and non-government organisations working together,” Ms Gallagher said.

“The program coordinators will work with people with a disability, their families and carers in identifying needs

and solutions for support arrangements, and provide solutions.

“This collaborative approach assists people with disabilities to maintain control over options they choose to support their lifestyle choices”.

During the launch, Ms Gallagher acknowledged the contribution of Jo Bowen, Executive Director, Belconnen Community Services and Chris Redmond, Executive Director, Woden Community Services in working together to achieve positive outcomes.

For more information contact the LAC coordinator Mark Ransome on 0417 225 941 or mark@belcomserv.com.au.

Executive Director's message continued from page 1

Inside this edition, you'll see updates on what's happening with the Intensive Treatment and Support (ITAS) program, a pilot of a co-tenanting arrangement, a Family-centred Flexible Intensive Response Model (AFFIRM) and the project for people with Acquired Brain Injury. As well, there's the launch of the government funded Carers ACT Fraser Cottage and the ACT's first Local Area Coordination project.

You'll find a feature on Special Olympics ACT Region—as SO says: so much more than sport. Disability, Housing and Community Services is delighted to have provided financial support to a number of SO ACTR athletes who are heading off to the

National Games at the Gold Coast in October.

We have an update on Disability ACT's review on the role of government as provider of disability services—which will be managed by Lyn LeBlanc.

Many of you may have participated in the recent forum with Minister for Disability, Katy Gallagher to hear her thoughts on this.

I acknowledge that there may be a level of anxiety around the review—but please—we are committed to working with our clients, service providers, advocates, families and carers to achieve the best possible outcomes in terms of service delivery into the future—and to effect positive change in the lives of people with a disability.

Change across the ACT Public Service as a result of the ACT Government restructure is beginning to filter down to Disability, Housing and Community Services and this will impact on all of us as we work towards a sustainable future.

So yes—there's definitely a sense of the next few months bringing us challenges—and as always—opportunities. I know that we have a good, solid base to work from.

If there is anything in this newsletter you would like to know more about, contact information for each article is provided—or you are welcome to contact me.

Lois Ford
lois.ford@act.gov.au

Co tenanting— real life experience

In the previous issue of Community Partners we profiled a number of housing options for people with disabilities. One of these was co-tenanting, where a person with a disability who lives in public or community housing, chooses to share their home with some without a disability.

Broadly, the idea is that a co-tenant complements paid and informal networks, providing assistance and companionship—within agreed arrangements. Co-tenanting allows for increased autonomy and independence, along with broader connections outside of the disability sector.

Over the past 12 months, the team at Community Linking and Needs Assessment Service (CLANAS) has been assisting a former group house resident—David (not his real name)—in trialing a co-tenanting arrangement.

As with much of group house living, lifestyle choices—large and small—have to accommodate the needs and wants of the group—over and above the individual—and in many instances, the needs of the service that provides support.

These are just some of the dilemmas that present in supported

accommodation that typify the current group home model.

For a person with a disability, being able to exercise greater choice and control is one of the main attractions of co-tenanting

For David, being able to share ordinary life experiences with someone without a disability and having control over decisions made about his life was the reason he chose to be involved in co-tenanting.

David has found for the first time that he is a contributing member of a household with the same rights and responsibilities as his housemate. His home life now reflects the person he wants to be.

A co-tenant option for David has enabled him to experience the things many people without a disability take for granted. David now has spontaneity, friendship, choice and control in his life on a daily basis. Having a more positive home environment, David can now identify other areas of his life that can be improved and he is looking at a career change that will complement the life he experiences at home.

David's family have seen the positives that have come from his co-tenanting arrangement, and feel confident that the option will continue to be a success for David long term.

For more information about co-tenanting, contact Louise Cooper-Finch on 6205 2126.

Co-tenanting allows for **increased autonomy and independence, along with broader connections** outside of the disability sector.

Best practice: Project for people with ABI

In September 2005, Disability ACT started work on developing and establishing an accommodation service model for four ACT residents with an acquired brain injury (ABI).

Initially, Disability ACT identified a target group of approximately seven (7) people to take part in trialing the model.

Disability ACT has worked with the participants and key stakeholders to guide the development of the service model based on research into national best practice.

The residents selected Hartley Life Care as their preferred support provider and TAS Housing as their community housing provider.

The service will operate from a purpose built property in Fisher which is currently being modified to suit the specific needs of the residents.

The service is funded by the existing support packages of each individual and is expected to commence in October. Current residents and their families will select a new resident from interested candidates who have access to individualised funding or other personal resources.

For more information on ABI contact Sarah King on 6205 0889

Supporting Canberra's older carers

Fraser cottage opens

ACT Minister for Disability and Community Services, Katy Gallagher launched a new program recognising the important contribution of carers in the Canberra community.

The Mature Carers program—developed by Carers ACT—was celebrated with the opening of Fraser House in June, a cottage specifically for people with disabilities.

Minister Gallagher was joined by Minister for Community Services, John Cobb MP—in opening Fraser Cottage.

“The cottage has been leased to provide a short-term home for people with disabilities, enabling their full time carers (mostly older parents) to have a break,” Ms Gallagher said.

“The cottage adds to a range of existing services managed by Carers ACT to provide respite for older parents, aged over 65.



Minister Katy Gallagher with Ingrid Kirsch and Pam Beckhouse at the opening of Fraser Cottage.

“Many people may not be aware that caring for a person with a disability is a full time job. Carers themselves need to have time out, or may, from time to time, have to deal with health or other issues that take them away from their caring role.

Guest speakers at the launch were two carers—Mrs Pam Beckhouse and Mr Thomas who talked about their experiences of being long-term carers.

The initiative was jointly funded by the ACT and Australian Governments at a cost of \$2 million over four years.

The Mature Carers program supports more than 50 families in the ACT who require additional assistance in caring for family members.

For more information on this new program, please contact Carers ACT on 6290 7407.

ITAS Program: Ready to roll

One of the four strategic themes in Future Directions: A framework for the ACT 2004-08 is “strengthening the capacity of people with disabilities, their families and carers to maximise control over their lives”.

Disability ACT Director, Andrew Whale said, “One of the ways in which Disability ACT— in collaboration with Mental Health Services — is delivering on this strategy is through the Intensive Treatment and Support (ITAS) Program”.

The program is a new and innovative service that is designed

for people in the ACT who have high and complex needs who meet, (or have the potential to meet), the following criteria:

- diagnosis of a dual disability
- high and complex needs
- engage in high risk behaviours that pose a threat to themselves, their carers or the general community
- are aged 17 or older.

I—Day:

Celebrating 25 years in 2006

This year the International Day for People with a DisAbility (I—Day) celebrates its 25th anniversary. In recognition of this, there will be a much extended program of celebrations.

Friday 1 December will see ACT Government host the Chief Minister's Inclusion Awards—the annual premiere event in the calendar for the disability sector.

Small change—Big difference.

These awards recognise the achievements of businesses, organisations and individuals who have demonstrated their commitment to including people with a disability in their workplace, business or community.



ACT Chief Minister Jon Stanhope with winners of the 2005 Excellence in Inclusion Award: Catherine Settle and Naomi Knight from the Women's Centre for Health Matters with Deborah Clark of Rhodium Asset Solutions — major sponsors of last year's awards.

Saturday 2 December puts the focus on a trade show that will showcase a range of e-technology.

Sunday 3 December. The party continues with a huge celebration in Glebe Park.

So, Canberra — get ready to celebrate I—Day in style.

More information from lisa.tanconi@act.gov.au

“The ITAS program will work alongside other supports that may be in place for an individual, said Andrew.

“This could range from some specialist clinically-based input into individual plans, through to more intensive level of support.”

For example, it may involve a person spending a brief period

in the new purpose built Step Up accommodation that will be built on the site of the former Long Gully group home.

The ITAS team, located at Nature Conservation House in Belconnen, is Sue Watson (service manager), Claire Latham (psychologist), Simon Porter (social worker), David

Addison (training officer), Joanne Bradley (administration officer).

The team has recently started work, and are now keenly getting on with the job of implementing the program.

For more information, contact David Addison on 6205 0940 or david.addison@act.gov.au.

Special Olympics—**more than sport**

It's well known that sport can bring glory. But for people who face exclusion in their everyday lives—sport at Special Olympics—creates access to a world where success is measured by more than just medals.

Community Partners talked to Terry Downie, project officer and Kym Hansen, administrator—from Special Olympics ACT Region to find out what SO ACT was all about.

Special Olympics (SO) ACT Region, is part of an international organisation that provides sporting activities, training and competition for people who have an intellectual disability. SO ACTR has been operating since 2002.

Through sport, SO ACTR, provides valued roles for people with intellectual disabilities. This is achieved by the athletes having a true involvement in every aspect of the organisation—from participation in sport, being represented on the committee and working at fundraising events.

“It's not just about the sport. Sure, it's the vehicle—but our philosophy extends beyond gaining physical fitness and winning competitions”, said Terry,

“It comes back to the principles of social valorisation. We see fantastic development of self esteem, self confidence, team participation and social skills.

“SO does offer an elite pathway to national and international level —

and indeed a huge team of athletes is heading north to the Gold Coast for the National Games in October this year — but the key to SO's success is in providing training and competition all year round, to anyone over the age of eight. Put simply, SO is a program, not an event.

“It's really about developing people—and in turn, a richer community—the work of SO is definitely bringing a vision and a philosophy to life. We are working with people with intellectual disabilities, to give them the skills and tools to participate in the wider community.”

“Because of the social stigma associated with intellectual disability, many of our SO members rarely get a chance to be independent or interact in the wider community in everyday activities.

“Through SO, these people can be part of those things that any mainstream athlete experiences—for example the social interaction that comes with travel or using sporting facilities—all those seemingly incidental details. This experience brings a huge boost in confidence and self esteem”, said Kym.

In the ACT, SO has a membership of more than 120 people and offers a choice of seven sports: athletics, aquatics, basketball, bocce, golf, tennis and tenpin bowling.

Participants can learn the basics of the sport—where techniques can be modified—purely for enjoyment, or progress to competition level.

Where possible intellectually disabled athletes participate in mainstream competition, as is the case with swimming and tenpin bowling.

As a not for profit organisation, SO has a huge reliance of volunteers to keep things rolling.

“Our volunteers—like all volunteers—are absolutely priceless, said Terry.

“It's mainly women who keep our organisation going. Many of them are full time carers of a child who has an intellectual disability, and as you can imagine—the commitment for these women in taking on a volunteer role is huge.”

From the obvious roles like coaches, timekeepers, fundraisers, drivers, travel coordinators and caterers—the women are also the motivators, mentors and morale boosters. But the SO members are there too, working hard along with everyone else in the running of the organisation.

A huge step up for SO in Canberra was a successful funding bid through the ACT Government's Community Inclusion Fund in 2004. The grant assisted with the creation of two positions—one full time and the other part time—to focus on the business administration and grow the organisation.

When asked about how this has changed SO, Kym Hansen says,

“What a difference! This funding, extending over three years has transformed us. We have been able to plan a genuine pathway for our organisation.

“We’ve been able to set milestones around increasing membership and the number of coaches, as well as our volunteer base. We will be able to develop a bigger team for national competitions, and the overall running of the organisation can be stronger.

Importantly, the funding has provided tangible evidence of the important role of the organisation, beyond sport. Says Terry, “We know what we’re doing is worthwhile. It’s what we believe in. We’ve developed good relationships with many local and state sporting organisations and within the broader community here.

“We’re still operating on a shoestring, but this funding means that we were able to do things on a more professional level.”

One of these ‘extras’ is the development of a marketing strategy and promotional material, such as posters to increase the organisation’s profile. The posters, featuring local athletes from SO are fantastic (ed’s note: see the back cover of *Community Partners*). A website is coming soon.

“We’re very proud of how the concept for the posters has come together. People might say, ‘oh it’s just a poster’ — but it’s more than that. It’s about making it real — not just for SO ACTR, but for everyone else too”.

For more information on SO ACTR email soactr@optusnet.com.au

Profiles of SO ACTR members

Robert Gordon

20 years old

National Games — competing in swimming.

Robert also participates in tenpin bowling.

“I’m excited to be going to Queensland for the Nationals. Through Special Olympics I’ve met lots more people, from other states and New Zealand, not just the ACT.”

Johana Pino

23 years old

National Games — competing in swimming.

Johana also participates in bocce.

“I like being part of Special Olympics. I’ve made lots of friends. I like swimming and playing bocce. I’m looking forward to going to the Nationals.”

Carmen Carlon

54 years old

National Games — competing in Bocce.

Carmen also participates in athletics and swimming.

“I think Special Olympics has done an excellent job in helping me to get to know people and meeting athletes from other states. I hope to go overseas.”

Sound Circles: freedom in creative expression

Accessible Arts in association with Access Arts Queensland recently launched the award winning creative experience, Sound Circles, in NSW with the support of the Multicultural Disability Advocacy Association and the City of Sydney.

Described by Access Arts Queensland who developed the concept as “...not quite choir, not quite performance but a meeting of hearts and minds, bodies and voices”, Sound Circles is an organic experience of dance, movement and performance for people of all abilities.

I was lucky enough to experience Sound Circles, and take part in a one day intensive facilitator’s training in Sydney recently.

I was inspired by the simplicity and effectiveness of this sound and movement improvisation, which is grounded in a community cultural development model.

The facilitators from Queensland (Emma Benison, Amelia Dowe, Magella Jacobson and Peter Vance) coordinated the day that was attended by people with and without disabilities.

Sound Circles is an appropriate activity for any group, and is a wonderful way to build a sense of community between people.

If you would like more information about Sound Circles, visit www.accessarts.org.au/sound_circles_guide.htm

If you would be interested in initiating a Sound Circles workshop or regular group please contact me

Morgan Jai-Morincome
Phone 6161 1192 or 0400 455 965 or email: enquiry@expressivearts.com.au

Review of disability service delivery begins

As you may be aware, Disability ACT has begun a process of review. Lyn Le Blanc has been engaged by Disability ACT to manage the review process.

The review aims to look at the services provided by government—and those provided by the community sector, and to make recommendations to the Minister for Disability, about the future provision of disability services in the ACT.

It is not about closing group homes, nor is it about reducing the level of services to people who use government services. Current clients receiving supported accommodation in government group homes will continue to do so as long as they choose regardless of the outcomes of the review.

Some of the questions you may have around the review process are listed below.



Lyn LeBlanc has been engaged by Disability ACT to manage the review process.

Commonly asked questions

1. Why is Disability ACT doing this review now?

Future Directions: A Framework for the ACT 2004–08 is the policy framework that has, and will continue to guide the development of the disability sector towards the attainment of the vision and values that are articulated in *Challenge 2010*.

The ACT Government wishes to ensure that services for people with disabilities are efficient and effective; and that resources are equitably allocated between the government and the community sector.

Strategy 4, Objective 4.4 of *Future Directions* specifically identifies reviewing the role of government as provider of disability services as a priority for 2005–08.

The review will identify the roles in relation to service provision within the disability sector. Recommendations (through wide consultation), will be developed for government regarding those disability services that are best suited to be delivered by government, and those best suited to be delivered by the community sector.

The review is not driven by cost.

2. Who will undertake the review?

Disability ACT has engaged a senior manager to coordinate the review and make recommendations to government in relation to the role it should have in service provision vis a vis the role of the community.

Disability ACT will engage independent consultants where appropriate e.g. for focus groups with clients, families and support workers.

3. How will the review be undertaken?

Disability ACT intends to conduct the review in a highly transparent, fully consultative and collaborative manner.

If you are not a participant on one of the consultative committees or focus groups to be established, then you may have input by contacting a person of any of the stakeholder committees or you may contact Lyn Le Blanc who is managing the review—directly, on 6205 4791 lyn.leblanc@act.gov.au or Lois Ford, Executive Director via email lois.ford@act.gov.au

There will also be an opportunity to feed into the final review report that will have a series of questions attached. The information gained from the answers to the questions will inform a series of recommendations to go to government.

4. We are hearing conflicting information about government group homes — what is the current situation?

Government group homes are not closing. Disability ACT will continue to operate current group homes. However there will be no expansion of supported accommodation or respite services pending the completion of the review. The review will look at those disability services that are best suited to be delivered by the government, and those best suited to be delivered by the community sector.

5. What will happen to people already in government-supported accommodation?

Government will continue to support individual clients who choose to remain to remain in government-provided group houses. Individuals may relocate within the service as their needs change or where compatibility issues arise. From time to time there may be a need to move people (within the service), should the support required at a particular house become unviable.

Disability ACT has an established set of guidelines for any relocation in the service. The process is overseen by the Accommodation Support and Review Committee (ASRC), which is independently chaired and includes community and parent/guardian representatives.

6. Will services or quality of services decrease?

Disability ACT has no intention of reducing standards of care or support to people currently in the government group homes.

7. What will happen to staff?

As Disability ACT does not know the outcome of the review, we do not know what implications will be for staff. Staff will be fully consulted throughout the review process. The review will inform the recommendations to the Minister. Any changes that will impact on staff will be made in full consultation with them.

8. What are the choices/services available?

A range of community organisations provide different levels of support, both in and out of home. These services cater for the different needs of people and are primarily funded by the ACT Government.

For information on the choices and services available, please contact:

- Disability Information Service on 6207 1086 disabilityACT@act.gov.au, or
- Community Information and Referral Services of the ACT 6248 7988 www.cirsact.org.au, or
- Disability Coordination Officer 6207 4900 www.disabilitycoordinationoffice.com.au

Disability farewells Jason Hitchick

It is with a mixture of sadness and enthusiasm that we say farewell to Jason. For the last five years, in his role of senior manager for Accommodation Support within Disability ACT, he has guided the service through an ever changing landscape.

Jason has demonstrated absolute commitment to the clients, staff and families of Disability ACT that have come under his leadership — always striving to gain outcomes that would achieve a greater quality of life for the people we serve.

His service was that of the quiet achiever, putting in the many hours demanded of a role where he was on call day and night. Although we will miss him, we wish him all the best in his new position.

Lois Ford

Executive Director Disability ACT

Louise Cooper-Finch and Jason Hitchick.



Notes from the Chair

An emerging focus for the ACT Disability Advisory Council is getting out of the boardroom and into the Canberra community.

As I write this we are planning our second meeting in September, to be held in a community organisation that is providing important services for people with disabilities.

These opportunities are important because they enable us to stay in touch with people with disabilities, volunteers, teachers, employees, service workers, families and other significant people in the lives of people with disabilities.

Our first community meeting in May was held at the Canberra College, with a focus on inclusive educational opportunities. The event included a presentation from the College Independence Programme and the unveiling of a partnership between Council and the Department of Education to pilot Disability Ambassadors in Schools (DAIS).

DAIS is an outcome of the attitudes research commissioned by the Council in 2004, which found that direct personal contacts and experiences of disability were the most powerful ways to build positive long-term change.

A feature of the proposed approach is an emphasis on *embedding* people with disabilities as Ambassadors within a school community, throughout a term. In this way, learnings are shared across that community and the Ambassadors can make a dynamic contribution to the life of the school, its students and their families.

It's been great to work in partnership with the Department of Education and a big thanks to Torrens Primary School, which will be the pilot site for the project.

Council is also pleased to welcome two new members: Justin Ray and Sharon Sobey. Both have made exceptional contributions to their communities and fill important gaps in the knowledge base of Council both through their diverse experiences of disability, and as younger people.

They will help keep us on track as we continue the important task of broadening our reach and understanding across our community.

One of the things I often hear from people with disabilities is that the community is very good at recognising the 'obvious' disabilities but lack understanding when it comes to recognising disabilities that are not so obvious.

These disabilities are just as real but often manifest in different, less visible ways, than say, physical disability.

For that reason, I am pleased that Council is undertaking a desktop research project to build our knowledge about the needs of people with learning disabilities in the workplace.

The project, which is being led by Council member Lily Troupe, is looking at workplace learning disability guidelines—why they are needed, what might be included, and what is being done in other jurisdictions.

We hope that this will inform planning, policy and practice in the ACT public sector as it seeks to become an employer of choice for people with disabilities.

I am pleased that Council's next community meeting is to be hosted by Community Programs Association (CPA). The group provides a service for employment and training opportunities to people with disabilities.

Services such as those provided by CPA and Koomari, and others, make a vital contribution to the lives, skills and employability of people who face significant barriers in the labour market—and from community attitudes—even in a time of skills shortage.

What you may not know is that these business services—which employ people with disabilities, produce a staggering range of quality products and services that can fulfil almost every need—everything from second hand books to the altar bread broken in Church on a Sunday.

You can even do your shopping online with business services on a website called Bizability. It's a great idea that was an initiative of the Australian Government and is worth checking out—www.bizability.com.au

Please note you can also keep up with the work of Council on our webpage at

www.dhcs.act.gov.au/DisabilityACT/AdvisoryCouncil/Council.htm



Craig Wallace
Chair



Cheryl Patrick
Co-chair

AFFIRM: Building family resilience

AFFIRM — which stands for a ‘Family-centred Flexible Intensive Response Model’ is an innovative project that focuses on families with children who have high and complex needs.

Family practitioners work directly with families to support them to identify, and build on their individual strengths. They also assist in developing practical strategies within their home and community to sustain their family relationships and promote resilience.

The model is built on the belief that parents are experts about their families—and that each person has an important role to play.

Disability ACT project officer for the pilot program, Cathy Sciberras says, “In many cases, parents really are the experts about their family needs.

“What they do need however, is some support to develop the skills and strategies that will help them manage challenging behaviours.

“This program is unique because it looks at the family dynamics as a whole—rather than focusing just on an individual”.

A key feature of AFFIRM is the partnership between Disability ACT and a community service provider in relation to referrals, intake, program review and leaving the program.

Disability ACT will also partner with a tertiary institution to develop and

implement an evaluation strategy. Canberra respite care organisation, FaBRIC, has been selected through an open tender process as the provider of this new service. Two family practitioners will be employed to work with families accepted into the program.

The path to the pilot of the project has taken some four years. Gaps in services for families with high and complex needs were identified back in 2004. Funding from the 2005–06 allowed Disability ACT to research and develop AFFIRM to its current pilot stage.

For more information about AFFIRM contact Cathy Sciberras on 6205 1423.

Radiance Dance Troupe broadens performance base

The Radiance Dance Troupe (RDT) began as *The Belly Dance Performance Project* in 2005 funded by Disability ACT through an Innovations Grant. The group is an integrated community dance group open to all women in the ACT with and without disabilities.

In 2006 the focus has broadened beyond belly dance to incorporate other ways of moving into the group’s repertoire. The group focuses mostly on improvisation although a number of pieces have evolved into choreographed dances.

RDT founder Morgan Jai-Morincome said, “Group members are inspired by each others’ creativity. We believe

passionately in encouraging all ways of moving to be both allowed and appreciated.

“This may challenge the public’s perception of what dance is—but we have found this philosophy draws out very honest and moving expressions—driven by people’s instinctive responses to music”.

RDT draws on the diverse abilities of participants and works with the needs and wants of the group to incorporate a range of movement possibilities.

See RDT at upcoming performances:

Thursday 9 November 12–1pm
Belconnen Theatre (bookings essential)

Saturday 11 November
Belconnen Community Festival

Sunday 3 December
National Museum of Australia
(bookings essential)

For more information please contact RDT founder Morgan Jai-Morincome on 6161 1192 or 0400 455 965 or email enquiry@expressivearts.com.au



Hartley Challenge: On our bikes—again!

For the second year running, Disability Housing and Community Services, (DHCS) is involved in the Hartley LifeCare Cycling Challenge.

The challenge is an annual three-day cycling event from Canberra to Mt Kosciusko and back. The event raises awareness of disability—and funds for Hartley LifeCare.

For this year's event from 24–26 November, DHCS will be entering two teams—Team Pedalers and Team Treadlers—made up of clients, staff, family and friends.

For the first time, we will have two participants who have disabilities in our team — as part of Team Pedalers. This is a milestone event for these two riders and we take much pride in having them on our team.

We're delighted to see the return of Oenone Wood, a former Disability ACT staff member. Oenone—who will head up Team Pedalers—is the 2004 and 2005 World Cup Champion, a 2004 Athens Olympic Games representative, the 2004 Australian Road Champion, 2004 and 2005 Australian Time Trial



Starters for the 2006 DHCS team: Glenn Cocking, Duane Toohey and Richard Beaton

Champion—and a professional cyclist for the German team Equipe Nürnberger Versicherung.

Duane Toohey, team captain, said “We’ve had a great response from people who want to be involved this year.

“I think everyone is realising the potential of this event to bring together a lot of diverse skills and abilities—and of course—to experience the freedom of cycling.

“At this stage, we’ve got a lot of training ahead of us. Depending on how this goes, we’ll make a final selection of team members.”

All good teams need behind the scenes support, and DHCS staff and friends have volunteered their help for tasks such as fundraising, promotion and vehicle support—in the lead up to the event.

At the moment we are hard at work fundraising to get together our registration fee of \$6000. A big thanks to DHCS for some sponsorship towards the registration fee—and to everyone who is furiously eating chocolate frogs to boost the coffers. (Yes, we are extending our fundraising strategies beyond the frogs!).

Margie Lambert
margaret.lambert@act.gov.au

bringing together a lot of **diverse skills and abilities**
to experience the freedom of cycling

Disability ACT—**we're moving**

Disability ACT will be moving from 12 Moore Street.

From 30 September, we will be joining the team at Nature Conservation House in Belconnen.

Our email contacts will remain the same. Contact us by phone on 13 34 27.

Co-production by people outside paid employment

This is an edited version of an online paper (June 2006) from the Joseph Rowntree Foundation. The Foundation is a UK based organisation that focuses on social policy research and development.

A growing volume of literature supports the importance of 'social capital' in maintaining public health, tackling crime and other social imperatives.

This need for active engagement by people to make society operate is particularly relevant for the work of public service professionals.

The concept of 'co-production' has emerged as a general description of the process whereby clients work alongside professionals in order to be more effective.

Without engaging the cooperation and confidence of clients or patients, there is a danger both that welfare systems and philanthropic programs affect day-to-day symptoms—rather than underlying causes—and that professionals will create dependency, convincing clients they have nothing worthwhile to offer and undermining what systems of local support do still exist.

“the importance of ‘social capital’ in maintaining public health, tackling crime and other social imperatives”

Co-production redefines clients as 'assets', with experience, the ability to care and many useful skills.

Researchers from the New Economics Foundation (a British independent 'think tank') have looked at co-production—its definition, effects and prospects.

The research examined how public service institutions and government might better recognise the contribution to their neighbourhoods played by people outside paid work and the relationship between such activities and welfare and public services.

The researchers looked at organisations in the public and voluntary sector which are using co-production in various ways, supporting and enabling their clients and beneficiaries to play an active role in their recovery and that of their neighbours.

The research concentrated on various co-production projects in south east London, Gorbals in Glasgow and the Welsh Valleys.

The range of activities included mentoring, advising, befriending, doing repairs for, shopping for and tutoring each other.

These projects are intended to be valuable in their own right, but are also a means to an end: more social cohesion, better recovery and a changed relationship between public service institutions and the communities they serve.

What is 'co-production'?

The term 'co-production' began as a way of describing the critical role that service 'consumers' have in enabling professionals to make a success of their jobs.

It was originally coined in the 1970s by Elinor Ostrom and others, to explain why neighbourhood crime rates went up in Chicago when police stopped walking the beat and lost connection with local community members.

In the 1980s, it was used in the UK by Anna Coote and others at the Institute for Public Policy Research (IPPR), and the King's Fund to describe the reciprocal relationship between professionals and individuals necessary to effect change.

The concept has also been expanded by US civil rights lawyer, Edgar Cahn, who emphasises the involvement of the wider network of families and neighbours.

Cahn defines co-production as depending on the following values:

- **Assets:** Every human being can be a builder and contributor.
- **Redefining work:** To include whatever it takes to raise healthy children, preserve families, make neighbourhoods safe and vibrant, care for frail and vulnerable people, redress injustice, and make democracy work.
- **Reciprocity:** The impulse to give back is universal. Wherever possible, we must replace one-way acts of largesse with two-way transactions both between individuals and between people and institutions.
- **Social networks:** Humans require a social infrastructure; this is as essential as roads or bridges. Social networks require ongoing investments of social capital generated by trust, reciprocity, and civic engagement.

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Co-production by people outside paid employment (*continued*)

What did the researchers find?

The research from the New Economics Foundation found:

- There is an emerging 'co-production' sector—both inside and outside public services—where service users are regarded as assets, involved in mutual support and the delivery of services.
- Co-production, where it has been happening successfully, has generally been outside nationally funded services that are supposed to achieve this, and usually despite—rather than because of—administrative systems inside public services.
- A key characteristic of public and voluntary institutions that successfully involve their users, as well as their families and neighbours, is an understanding that people who have previously been treated as collective burdens on an overstretched system are untapped potential assets.
- Co-production projects can help participants to extend their social networks and friendships and the range of opportunities open to them.
- Some kind of reciprocal relationship between users and organisations can broaden the social reach of the projects: 'time banks' are an effective—though not the only—way of valuing their contribution.
- Co-production project coordinators can be isolated and over-stretched, even those based inside public services: developing staff capacity is as important as developing the capacity of people outside paid work.

Research conclusions

The researchers conclude that:

- Organisations that want to develop co-productive ways of working need to focus not just on clients' problems, but on their abilities.
- The benefits system needs to be able to provide incentives for those outside paid work to get more involved in their neighbourhoods without endangering their basic income.
- To be successful, co-production needs to retain its informal approach. Local intermediary agencies—in particular properly resourced time banks—may be best placed to achieve this.

To read this article in full, visit www.jrf.org.uk/redirect.asp?url=findings/socialpolicy/0356



TJ James: **Workshopping the business**

Disability ACT and the ACT Department of Education and Training recently partnered with well known local singer, songwriter and recording artist, TJ (Tim) James to host a series of workshops on the 'business of music' for college students in Canberra.

TJ, who was born with Cerebral Palsy, believes 'anything's possible'. He is passionate about his music—and about his work with cerebral palsy organisations in Australia and overseas.

Over the past month, students with disabilities—and their friends—had the opportunity to learn from TJ's experience about the music industry.

With the imminent release of his third album 'Another World' (he's already

writing for another album as well), TJ has plenty of experience to draw from.

"This was a really exciting opportunity for me. I have really loved talking to students — with and without disabilities — about the business end of the music world, said TJ.

"It's been a real honour for me to be asked to develop these workshops.

Guidelines enhance hospital support for people with disabilities

Disability Housing and Community Services has been working with ACT Health to develop a procedures manual for hospital treatment that will better support people with disabilities.

The work has been part of a broader strategy to enhance services to people with a disability who may be admitted to hospital.

Initially the manual was developed for the public hospital system, but now the process has been implemented across the ACT public and private hospital sector.

“The manual provides clear and consistent guidelines to both hospital staff and disability support workers in relation to any hospital admission, said Fran Le Pavoux, disability health manager, from Disability ACT.

“The outcome has been the result of a terrific collaboration between Disability ACT, Therapy ACT, The Canberra Hospital, Calvary Hospital, the Community Health LINK team—

and of course, the disability and community sector”.

The procedures are designed to ensure that the special needs of people who use Disability ACT services are coordinated and managed throughout their hospital stay.

The manual incorporates a proactive risk management approach in the pre-planning phase that identifies any potential risk and an agreed action plan for minimising the likelihood of that risk occurring.

“As a disability health manager, I facilitate a pre-hospital admission risk assessment, and liaise directly with the hospital staff to identify what is required to minimise potential problems, said Fran.

“We can also arrange for flexibility around the actual admission and treatment to ensure a better outcome for the person.

“For example, everybody requires a pre admission health check before being admitted for a procedure. This usually takes place in a medical setting.

“One of the biggest risk areas for many people with disabilities is around waiting in a confined clinic environment. In this instance, if our assessment identifies whether it is more appropriate—and would reduce the likelihood of an adverse event occurring—the person can be assessed in their own home, in a known environment.

In recognising the unique needs of some people, occasionally, routine hospital procedures require some reorganisation, and the procedures take this into consideration.

The guidelines have improved professional relationships and reduce the potential for adverse events during hospitalisation. Additionally there has been a reduction in length of hospital stay and improved health outcomes for a vulnerable client group.

Disability ACT is currently implementing the procedures, through a training program delivered by Fran to all direct services staff, including casual and agency staff.

For more information contact Fran Le Pavoux on 6205 0556

of music

“I have enjoyed working with young people to inspire them to believe that anything’s possible.

“During the workshops we have talked about the industry, shared our experiences—and looked at the range of career options that are available”.

The workshops explored subjects from starting a band, sound, stage and lighting and songwriting—through

to legal aspects—and some of the industry’s pitfalls along the way.

TJ also talked about his story, and the careers of inspirational artists with disabilities such as Stevie Wonder and Rick Allen of Def Leppard.

Over the past year, TJ has also been involved with Disability ACT to encourage the involvement of young people with disabilities in the creative arts.

In September 2005, he participated with a number of local performing artists as part of one day workshop with members of the Chinese Disabled Performing Arts Troupe which was in Canberra for a performance of “My Dream”.

For more information contact Gerry McKeon on 6205 0749.



SO,

many inspirational moments!

Special Olympics Australia—ACT Region.

Special Olympics is a not-for-profit organisation that provides year-round sports training and competition for people with an intellectual disability.

We provide opportunities for our athletes to develop fitness, show courage, experience joy and participate in their community. www.specialolympics.com.au



ACT Disability, Housing and Community Services — through Disability ACT and the Office for Children, Youth and Family Support — is proud to support a number of SO ACTR athletes in their participation in the National Games in October 2006.

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