



## From the EO

In this edition you will read about some new initiatives DAIS is involved with. The last few months have been very exciting for us as we have received funding for 2 projects. As a result we have been able to employ 2 new project workers.

The **Department of Justice and Regulation, Victoria** is funding DAIS to employ a coordinator to further develop the Justice Support Service. This funding will enable DAIS to support our pool of volunteers who provide support to people with disability who are attending court as an accused person, victim, or witness.

DAIS has received seed funding from the Melbourne Lord Mayor's Charity Foundation to establish **Employment Circles of Support**. This project involves developing circles of support around young people with autism and/or intellectual disability to help them develop meaningful employment opportunities. Five people have been selected to participate in the trial project.

DAIS is always looking at new ways to improve our service. This year we are setting up a skype outreach service which will provide a more responsive service in smaller towns. People requiring advocacy will be able to go to a designated centre in their town and talk to an advocate over the internet. We believe this will be more interactive than talking to someone over the phone.

Martin Butcher  
Executive Officer

## RACV help to improve access in Benalla and Wangaratta

The Rural Cities of Benalla and Wangaratta were able to develop access plans and print mobility maps thanks to a Good Citizen grant provided by the RACV.

RACV Wodonga Manager, Maria Rosa, said, "The RACV is proud to be part of the North East communities and the RACV is pleased to contribute \$4,000 towards developing the Benalla and Wangaratta Mobility and Access map which will benefit the wider community by identifying locations of accessible parking spots, toilets, baby change rooms and tourist information".

Benalla Mayor Cr. Justin King added, "This is a great initiative for both local residents and a great way to promote accessibility for visitors to the area".

Mobility and Access Maps will be made available on the Council's website and in paper form at key customer service and visitor information locations.

For further information about this project, contact Council's Rural Access Worker, Jane Taylor, on (03) 5760 2600.



## Welcome New Staff ...

### **Paige ~ Advocate**

Paige joined the team at the beginning of the year as Intake Worker. She has now been promoted to the position of Advocate. Paige recently graduated from La Trobe combining a Masters Of Social Work, a Bachelor of Human Services, and a passion for Advocacy.

### **Jason ~ Justice Support Coordinator**

Jason's experience recruiting and managing groups of volunteers, a positive placement with Dept of Justice, as well as his background in Human Rights, made him the ideal candidate for this role. Jason is nearing completion of a Bachelor of Social Work as well. Over the past 3 months Jason has implemented strategies to significantly increase the number of people with disabilities being supported at court.

### **Tanya ~ Employment Circles of Support Project Officer**

Tanya's past experience as a Primary School teacher, Disability Support Worker, Community Liaison Officer and Grant Writer was ideal for this role. Tanya has established Circles of Support for five people with the aim of creating employment opportunities.

### **Welcome back ~ Jane**

Jane has re-joined the DAIS team as the Admin Assistant on Wednesday mornings and Fridays. Jane was previously with us for 5 years before taking on a new challenge but has now taken the opportunity to come back. Jane will be on reception as well as keeping the website and infoTree up to date.

## Other Staff movements ...

### **Dave ~ promoted to Advocate**

In the past year Dave gained the experience and knowledge to take on this responsibility. Dave has already successfully advocated for many clients and is well respected among his clients and peers.

### **Ruth ~ taking on Team Leader duties**

With extensive experience in management and leadership roles, Ruth was the ideal candidate to be Team Leader and mentor of the Advocacy and Access and Support teams.

## ... and farewelled others.

### **Michelle**

At the end of last year Michelle moved on after almost 6 years with DAIS, Michelle has moved on to take up a new, different and exciting challenge closer to home.

Michelle commenced with DAIS as Intake Worker, and eventually gained the skills to be an Advocate. Michelle was passionate about supporting her clients to achieve their human rights as well as assisting other advocates in improving the quality of life of their clients. Michelle also qualified to be our OHS coordinator, and sat on various advisory boards, ensuring people's rights were being upheld.

Michelle's outlook on life was always positive. We know she will embrace any challenges in her new venture.

Over the last 6 months Michelle has been undertaking the Alpine Leadership program developing her skills as a future leader in the local community. We send our thanks and very best wishes for the future.

### **Elissa**

Elissa first joined DAIS as Advocate Assistant at the end of 2010. During this time Elissa saw the importance and power of the Charter of Human Rights to advocate for and with the people with disabilities.

Elissa moved interstate for a year where she commenced a Masters Degree in Human Rights. Elissa's particular interest was to ensure that women with disability had equal access to mainstream services and support, particularly after an incident of domestic violence or abuse. Elissa rejoined DAIS in 2012 as the Intake Advocate delivering successful outcomes for people with very difficult and complicated issues. We wish Elissa well in her new and interesting role.

### **Tammy**

Tammy was with DAIS for the past 18 months as the Admin Assistant. Tammy's bright and sparkly personality brought a positive atmosphere to the office. Tammy was always up for a challenge. She recently set up Mail Chimp to improve the way we send out our electronic newsletters.

### ***Local Mums decide that the current disability service system is just not good enough and Cathy McGowan takes their concerns to Canberra.***

On 5 April Cathy McGowan, Member for Indi, visited a number of disability services in Wodonga, including DAIS. Cathy wanted to gain a greater understanding of the issues facing people with disability in her electorate. In particular she wanted to know about the impact of the NDIS. Cathy made a speech in Parliament about what she found out.

When Cathy came to DAIS she spoke to board members and staff about some of the systemic advocacy issues DAIS is working on.

DAIS is particularly concerned about the impact of the NDIS in the local area. Although the NDIS is due to roll out in Indi in October 2017, there is very little information available to people with disability and their families about the NDIS, and decision making and choice. DAIS and Gateway Health would be able to provide the training but we would need additional resources to do it.

DAIS raised concerns about the impact of the NSW government's decision not to fund disability services, including advocacy, after 2018. NSW is committing all of its disability funding over to the NDIS and "handballing its responsibility over to the Commonwealth". If DAIS loses its funding, it will not be able to provide advocacy to people in Southern NSW.

DAIS presented a number of non identifiable case studies regarding peoples experience with Centrelink and the MyGov shop front in Albury. The case studies highlighted difficulties people are having applying for the disability support pension. In some cases other peoples information, incorrectly being put on someone else's file, resulted in that person being denied the DSP due to this wrong information. DAIS also highlighted the expectation that most of the contact with Centrelink should be online. Most of their customers do not have computers or internet access.

During her speech Cathy read out a heartfelt letter written by Chair of DAIS Board, parent and local disability activist, Jen Tait, stating that, "All people with disabilities should have the opportunity to choose and create a good life in the community, free of control by services and organisations, able to live interdependently, with quality links in community where they are known, seen, valued, and have meaningful relationships with people outside of the service system."

Jen hopes for a world where Segregation in all of its forms, including the hidden forms, is eradicated for good. That people with disabilities are assisted and encouraged to live in a home of their own where supports come and go when appropriate or required. This will be far more cost effective and will foster true interdependence, choice and control .

Jen hopes that with the NDIS, and people like Cathy McGowan, in a position to champion and create an uplifting social environment for people with disabilities, that the future will be brighter, and that people with disabilities can achieve a good life for themselves in the same way that non-disabled people work to achieve a good life.

As a result of Cathy's visit to DAIS and relaying our concerns to Canberra we have now been given the opportunity to meet with the Assistant Minister for Disability Services, Jane Prentice. The Assistant Minister wants to gain a greater understanding of issues facing people with disability in rural areas and the way the government can help meet the challenges. If you have a particular issue you would like taken to the Minister, please contact Martin Butcher at DAIS by 31 May 2016.





## Planning for the NDIS

The National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) promises to bring about a huge shift in how disability supports are provided. People with disability will have a **choice** about their service and **control**.

To get the most from the NDIS you need to have a **plan** that looks at what your support needs are and shows your life goals.

You can make a plan on your own, with your family, with a friend, or with a professional planner.

Unless you have a plan you may not get the most from the NDIS or get what you and your family want.

Although it will still be over a year before the NDIS comes to this area, now is the time to get information and get prepared if you want a full, meaningful and inclusive life. Now is the time to start Planning. There are a number of events coming up to help people with disability and their carers/family to plan for a better life.

### LOOKING FORWARD! PREPARING FOR THE NDIS

#### Wodonga

When: Friday 3<sup>rd</sup> June, 2016  
Time: 9.30 am to 3.30 pm  
Where: Wodonga Golf Club,  
10 Clubhouse Place.

This seminar, will include insights from families in NDIS trial sites, with lived experience of disability and how they have utilised NDIS funding to move towards a good life for their son/daughter. The day will aim to cover:

- An update on the NDIS
- Preparing for the NDIS - when, where and how to start
- Things to consider in your vision and plan and conveying this to the NDIS
- Imagining beyond possibilities you know eg programs

- Inclusion, trying new things and supported decision making
- Putting plans into action
- Ways of managing and self-direction
- Finding your ideal match for support and assistance
- Getting un-stuck, and
- Stories about people who are enjoying lives well connected to the community.

**Cost:** Concession/student \$ 65.00  
Standard \$175.00

Closes 1<sup>st</sup> June, 2016. Registration is on-line and will not be accepted without payment - go to [www.belongingmatters.org](http://www.belongingmatters.org) or phone 03 9739 8333.

## Supported Decision Making Workshop

Albury - 1 June  
Deniliquin - 2 June  
Wagga Wagga - 20 June



**For young people**

**14 to 18**

Carers NSW Inc. will partner with youth organisation Mirri Mirri to present workshops across NSW.

The workshops will focus on building the capacity of adolescents with disability to make supported decisions, providing a framework for building the capacity of families and carers to step away from substitute decision making, towards Supported Decision Making which is a more person centred approach.

The project aims to prepare young people and their families/carers for the implementation of the National Disability Insurance Scheme by providing opportunities for them to develop skills, and participate more confidently in individualised funding arrangements.

If you would like more information or attend a workshop please email [sdm@carersnsw.org.au](mailto:sdm@carersnsw.org.au).

## When being treated equal = Discrimination

By Martin Butcher

In January the Border Mail reported on a man who was asked to leave the Commercial Club in Albury because he was not wearing shoes.

Mr Craig Robbins who uses a wheelchair as he has Multiple Sclerosis (MS), was asked to leave the Club by a staff member after he had eaten lunch as he did not meet the dress code.

Mr Robbins said, "I was sitting enjoying a coffee with my friends and family when an employee came up to me in the middle of the restaurant and asked me to leave. I felt humiliated and embarrassed".

Mr Robbins tried to explain that he was not wearing shoes because the heat causes his feet to swell and to wear shoes will cause him a great deal of pain. A common issue for people with MS.

Mr Robbins said, "I and my friends, who also use wheelchairs, chose the club as it is wheelchair accessible and there was plenty of room to move around".

The reason given for Mr Robbins to be asked to leave was that it was an OHS issue. He found that hard to believe as his feet are on the running plate of the wheelchair and his feet did not touch the ground from the time he left the car.

After the incident Mr Robbins' wife posted a comment on Facebook. As a whole, much of the comments were positive and supportive of Mr Robbins request for better community awareness of issues impacting people with MS.

Some comments however were negative and demonstrated that people were still ignorant of the issues.

Comments like

*"If the club publicises it's dress code at the front door then everyone who enters the club should meet the requirements."*

or

*"People with disability need to take more responsibility and pre plan their activity. They should contact the club in advance and obtain approval from management before entering the club."*

These comments demonstrate that some people do not have a clear understanding of human rights and anti-discrimination law.

The NSW Anti-Discrimination Board have published



Craig Robbins. Photo by James Wiltshire TBM

industry Guidelines for the Hotel and Accommodation Industry which outlines the principles of not discriminating.

The Guidelines give an overview of the Anti-Discrimination Acts which states that:

### **"Indirect discrimination**

**means having a requirement, a rule, policy, practice or procedure that is the same for everyone but which has an effect that is unfair to particular groups. Unless the requirement is reasonable with regards to the circumstances it is likely to be indirect discrimination".**

**"It is unlawful in NSW to discriminate against someone, that is to treat them unfairly compared to others or harass them because of a characteristic" which may include having a disability".**

It is the responsibility of the club management to make rules and policies that are flexible enough to enable the person enforcing the policy, and have some flexibility to enable reasonable adjustments, to meet people's individual needs.

The Guidelines deal with dress rules (or codes). A hotel or club can have a dress code and a person who does not comply can be refused entry.

Management needs to ensure that the dress rules do not lead to indirect discrimination. People with disability who are unable to wear shoes due to their disability is given as an example.

The clubs need to be able to make reasonable **adjustment** to cater for the needs of a person with a disability. The onus should not be on them or their carer to make contact with the manager or security prior to going into the club to "get special permission to go into the club without shoes on".

To have a requirement that a person needs to report to security or management prior to entry would in fact be discriminative practice according to the hotel's guidelines.

If you feel you have been discriminated against, you can ask DAIS to help you to take it to:

- ◆ Anti-Discrimination Board in NSW,
- ◆ Victorian Equal Opportunity and Human Rights Commission, or
- ◆ Australian Human Rights Commission.



My name is Tanya. I have been employed as a Project Officer for a project auspiced by DAIS called Employment - Circles of Support (ECOS). We have 5 participants, all with a disability, participating in the project, and it's working !!



### **What is ECOS?**

ECOS is a family driven project focusing on an individual's unique skills and strengths and how those can be used productively to gain paid employment. The supports, or Circle members, are existing supports in the individual's life that agree to give their time and skills in making their employment goals come to fruition. Minutes are taken at six weekly meetings to reflect on those goals, actions taken to achieve them and to determine what needs to happen next. There is no contract to sign and the aim is to make it an organic, unpaid, naturally occurring circle of support.

To empower families and individuals, to give them choice and control in directing their own supports and creating their own Circle we are going to run **a free ECOS workshop for 5 families.**

This can also assist you in planning for the NDIS! Ignite your vision.

### ***Interested?***

#### ***HOW?***

Fill in an Expression of Interest form which will be available on the DAIS website from 3 June: [www.dais.org.au](http://www.dais.org.au) or pop into our office at 132 Melbourne Road, Wodonga for a copy.

- Applications close 6<sup>th</sup> June.
- Families will be notified by 24<sup>th</sup> June.

#### ***WHEN?***

The workshop will be held in the first weeks of July.

If you have any queries please call me on: (02) 6056 2420.

## **Training Workshop Towards a Better Life Wodonga - 23 & 24 June**

**An exploration of the  
Social Role Valorisation  
framework with regard to people who are  
marginalised**

### **Presented by John Armstrong**

This 2-day event is for anyone who is serious about improving the lives of marginalised and disadvantaged people such as people with a mental illness, people with disabilities and frail aged.

#### **What the workshop will cover**

- Understand social devaluation and its consequences for people who are marginalised;
- Learn about SRV as a means of addressing those experiences of devaluation;
- Strengthen one's motivation to counteract devaluation in the lives of people one knows and supports; and
- Clarify the features of a good life and the essential means of obtaining that good life.

**The Presenter: John Armstrong** has a long involvement in the lives of people with disabilities, in informal advocacy and friendship roles as well as the formal roles of service provider, teacher, adviser and service planner. John is one of three senior Social Role Valorisation trainers in Australia. John is particularly interested in uncovering the reasons behind abuse of vulnerable people and those factors that influence our actions.

#### **Cost:**

- Free to people with disability and family members.
- \$250 for people employed, doing it as part of professional development.

#### **Information and registration**

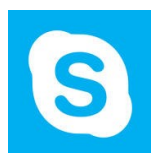
Contact Tanya at DAIS 6056 2420.

### Skype the new way to do outreach

DAIS is committed to providing timely accessible, appropriate and independent advocacy for people with disability of any age, disability, and regardless of where you live throughout North East Victoria and Southern NSW.

For many years outreach was provided by the advocates driving out to towns throughout the region, on a set date in a month. They would set up in a meeting room with the hope that people would drop in to discuss their advocacy issues or request information. The way we did outreach did not keep up with changes made to other parts of our service and use of technology.

Most of our intake appointments are conducted over the phone regardless of where people live. The phone remains the most time efficient and cost effective way to talk with clients.



We understand nothing beats a face to face meeting so you can see the person you are talking to. This is why we are trialling the use of **skype**.

Computers with skype will be set up in locations around the region. We will have a volunteer on hand to set up the computer and assist where needed. The support person will not sit in on the interview so your discussion will be confidential.

If you have a skype account at home you can request to skype us rather than ring.

Advocates will still travel around the region to attend service network meetings and events as this is a way to promote DAIS and find out what services are in each area.

An example is where an advocate recently attended a network meeting in a small town. They found it provided a great opportunity to

deliver brochures and information about DAIS to approximately 30 services.

As a result of attending the meeting, the advocate was asked to meet with the service users of a couple of organisations. We were able to provide information directly to people who would not have known about DAIS.

Skype appointments can be conducted at locations listed below.

If you find it difficult to talk on the phone or use skype, staff will still be able to request a face to face meeting at a time and place that suits you and the staff. This will be quicker than waiting for an advocate to be in town.

<b>Outreach Locations</b>	
<b>Please contact DAIS to make an appointment Phone 1300 886 388</b>	
<b>HOLBROOK</b>	Library Meeting Room, Bowler Street
<b>CORRYONG</b>	Community Neighbourhood House, 39 Hanson Street
<b>MYRTLEFORD</b>	Gateway Community Health, 32 Smith Street
<b>BRIGHT</b>	Library, 14 Ireland Street
<b>MANSFIELD</b>	Library, Collopy Street
<b>COROWA</b>	Corowa Community Hub, Shop 18-20 Corowa Arcade, 113 Sanger Street <b>1:30 - 3:30 pm</b> <b>21 June</b> <b>16 August</b> <b>18 October</b>
<b>FINLEY</b>	<b>4 August and 3 November</b> Intereach Community Hub Shop 1, Central Arcade, Murray Street <b>10:30 am - 12:00 noon</b>
<b>DENILQUIN</b>	Neighborhood Centre, Cnr Trickett & Napier Sts <b>3:00 pm - 4:00 pm</b>
<b>BENALLA</b>	Library, Fawckner Drive
<b>WANGARATTA</b>	15-17 Ely Street





## Contact DAIS

**Phone** (02) 6056 2420

**Toll free** 1300 886 388

**Email** admin@dais.org.au

**Offices** 132 Melbourne Road Wodonga  
15-17 Ely Street Wangaratta

**Mail** PO Box 982 Wodonga VIC 3689

**Web** www.dais.org.au

## Have you looked at our new infoTree yet ! [www.dais.org.au/infotree](http://www.dais.org.au/infotree)

It is continually being updated with new information

■ Events ■ Conferences ■ News ■ HACC ■ Disability  
■ Meetings ■ Activities ■ Training opportunities ■ Transport issues

Alternate formats: This newsletter is available in audio and in electronic format.  
If you would prefer to listen to it or have it emailed to you please contact DAIS.



*If undeliverable return to*

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