



Link Family Newsletter

MAY 2009

KRIS IS BACK

Hey "I'm Back" :)

First of all I would like to thank everyone in the office for stepping into my shoes when I unexpectedly fell ill to another prolapsed disk which required surgery prior to Christmas. This was very unexpected and there was no time to prepare anyone to do the job.

Deb, Cozzette, Melva and Julie did a fantastic job to organise and get through the Christmas school holidays. Thank you so much!!

I would also like to thank Meg for "holding the fort" and keep the wheels turning with the Social and Kids Klub activities.

There have been a few changes to my job description. I'm not sure if you are aware of the changes so thought I would let you know (just in case there is any confusion).

Due to the enhanced funding we received for our Teen Holiday and After School Care Programs I have removed my "coordinators hats" for these programs. Deb is now taking over these roles with the assistance of Cozzette. I am sure Deb and Cozzette will be able to take these programs to another dimension as I am unable to coordinate all of these programs.

I will be solely coordinating Social Klub 4 days per week (Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday).

There are several new workers on board and I look forward to meeting you all in the near future. To all the workers that already know me, I look forward to catching up with you soon.

Regards
Kris Plumb
Coordinator

QUEENSLAND COMPANION CARD

Children (and adults) with a disability are now able to apply for a Queensland Companion Card. If your son or daughter is eligible they can then present their card when purchasing tickets at participating businesses who will then issue a second entry ticket at no charge for the person's "companion" (for example, a Support Worker, a friend, etc.)

To be eligible for a Companion Card the person must demonstrate a lifelong need for significant attendant care support in order to participate in community life.

To apply for a card:

Call 13 13 04 or go online to
www.disability.qld.gov.au

DISABILITY TRUSTS

Parents often ask "What will happen when I can no longer provide care?"

"Special Disability Trusts and Planning for the Future - People with Disability" booklets are available and are intended to make things simpler by explaining the options. These booklets deal with planning for the future, taking account of disability issues generally and how families can use trusts to help look after family members with a disability. It also explains how new income support (social security and veterans' entitlement) concessions for Special Disability Trusts can help in providing for family members with a severe disability.

If you would like a copy of this booklet please phone the Link Family office on 5441 6600.

SUPPORT IN SHORT SUPPLY FOR PEOPLE WITH A DISABILITY

Below is an article that recently appeared in the Australian newspaper ---- please, please send in a letter to the Australian to support a National Disability Insurance Scheme - unless they hear from you they will not champion our cause. A National Disability Insurance Scheme is at least a start - the Editor can be emailed at letters@theaustralian.com.au

Bruce Bonyhady - May 07, 2009

Article from: [The Australian](#)

AUSTRALIA'S disability support system is inequitable, fractured, under-resourced and slowly collapsing under the weight of its own inadequacies, while sub-optimally consuming billions of dollars of tax payers' money each year.

Good support is given to the few who receive lifetime care through no-fault accident schemes. A few others receive payouts after years of exhausting litigation. The rest - the majority of people with disabilities - are left to battle through a service system that purports to set priorities based on need but is in fact a lottery driven by crises. Such a system is indefensible.

Support is fragmented across program areas, multiple government departments and jurisdictions. Those seeking support, while grappling with their grief, quickly become exhausted as they fight their way through a maze, consisting of endless inefficient queues and paperwork at every step. There is too little planning as many ageing parent carers live in fear of what will happen to their son or daughter when they die.

In the absence of adequate funding, waiting lists grow and responsibility for caring for people with disabilities is shuffled between commonwealth and state governments. Meanwhile, families, out of love and a sense of responsibility, provide support that Access Economics estimates would cost taxpayers \$30.5 billion a year. Labour force participation among people with disabilities of working age is two-thirds the national average and the unemployment rate twice the national average, while tens of thousands of carers are forced to abandon any thoughts of a career.

Last week the federal parliamentary committee of inquiry into better support for carers issued its long-awaited report.

It is remarkable because it has given voice to thousands of family carers, who are close to breaking point; emotionally, psychologically, physically, socially and financially.

As a nation, we cannot say we have not been warned.

However, in looking for new policy ideas from among the many heartfelt submissions, it is essential to seek sustainable long-term solutions; to distinguish between symptoms and causes of the dysfunction in the present system.

It is therefore disappointing that the latest inquiry has chosen to weight its recommendations towards short-term adjustments and amendments to the existing policy framework.

When Australian governments took the enlightened step of closing the Dickensian institutions in which people with disabilities had been locked away, they failed to design, let alone establish, a modern support system that was sufficiently comprehensive and forward thinking.

Two decades or so later, the replacement of Australia's welfare-based disability support system is long overdue. This opportunity to make a transformational shift is similar to the 1970s, when concerns about the health needs of Australians led to the introduction of the original Medibank scheme, and to the '80s when concerns about an ageing population and adequate retirement incomes led to compulsory superannuation.

Last year a national disability insurance scheme (NDIS), based on the principles of risk, opportunity, insurance and investment, was one of the "big ideas" adopted by the 2020 Summit. An NDIS would remove many of the inefficiencies in the present disability support system. It would be a win-win, automatically aligning the interests of people with disabilities, carers and the community. Early intervention, which reduces long-term costs, would become an investment. Carers would be recognised, supported and sustained in their role because of their importance in managing long-term scheme liabilities. Access to education, training and participation in the workforce and the community, such as in workers' compensation schemes, would receive a high priority.

Since the 2020 Summit, something unprecedented in the disability sphere has begun happening. People with disabilities, carers, disability service providers, academics and advocates have started coming together.

In one increasingly unified voice, they have begun calling for the introduction of a national insurance scheme, funded by some form of compulsory contribution levied across the entire community.

Brendan O'Reilly the recently retired head of the NSW department responsible for disability services, no longer constrained by his duties as a public servant, has added his voice to this proposal, suggesting that the cost "would be less than people might think".

There are also signs of rare bipartisan political agreement emerging. The deputy chairwoman of the carers' inquiry, West Australian Liberal MP Judi Moylan, last week publicly called for a detailed analysis of an NDIS, while the former Labor premier of NSW Morris Iemma has said that an NDIS is the only sustainable way forward. Addressing the National Press Club recently, the federal Parliamentary Secretary for Disabilities, Bill Shorten, described the NDIS proposal as "a simple yet visionary and exciting idea". As he said, a universal, compulsory no-fault insurance scheme that provides individualised, ongoing financial and case management support for anyone disabled at birth or as a result of catastrophic accident or chronic illness "would turn our system of disability services on its head". Privately, others in government are also very supportive.

The NDIS framework would be national. The necessary reforms would be complex involving major changes to existing commonwealth-state arrangements, establishment of new governance structures, determination of eligibility criteria and benefits and examination of the interactions with health care and aged care services. This idea however is too important and far reaching to be left just to governments, people with disabilities, carers and disability organisations. It needs everyone's support. The NDIS would give essential security to all Australians because today, tomorrow or next week, you could suddenly be felled by a stroke, or develop multiple sclerosis or mental illness. Your teenage son could have an accident that leaves him severely brain damaged or quadriplegic. You or your daughter could give birth to a child who has autism, Down syndrome, cerebral palsy or other lifelong disabilities. National insurance is the way forward because it recognises that disability, like anything else we now insure against, is a risk that can affect anyone, but will not affect everyone.

The potential social and economic benefits from a NDIS, which would break down what Shorten has described as "the last practical barrier for civil rights in this country", could be transformational.

The next crucial step is for all Australians to urge the federal Government, together with the states, to commission a detailed feasibility study of the national disability insurance scheme.

Bruce Bonyhady co-authored the submission to the 2020 summit on the NDIS and is chairman of Yooralla, Victoria's largest disability service provider.

National Disability Coordination Officer Program

About The Program

The NDCO role was developed as the Australian Government extended its commitment to assist people with a disability to access post-school education, training and employment.

- ♦ Australia wide program - 31 providers, 5 in Queensland
- ♦ STEPS Disability awarded 2 contracts - cover nearly 70% of Queensland.
- ♦ Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations (DEEWR) funded.
Contracts: Jan 2008 - 30 June 2010

Three main objectives for the NDCO program are:
Improve transitions for people with a disability between school and/or the community and higher education or Vocational Education and Training - Cert III and higher.

Improve participation by people with a disability in higher education and VET, and subsequent employment and

Improved linkages between schools, higher education and VET providers and providers of disability providers and assistance.

Eligibility: The Program aims to assist people (aged between 15-64) with a disability, who may wish to participate in or who are currently enrolled in, post-school education and training. Australian citizen or permanent resident.

Your Local NDCO is Debbie Rooskov
Phone: 5437 2064
Mobile: 0400 721 451
Email: debbie@stepsemployment.com.au
Web: www.ndco.stepscs.net.au

2008 Annual Satisfaction Survey Results

Thank you to all those families who responded to our Annual Satisfaction Survey of 2008. Your feedback is important to us and can assist us in decision making to help take our service 'to the next level'.

COMMONWEALTH CARELINK CENTRE

If you are looking for information about disability support services the Carelink Centre has information about household help; personal nursing and respite care, transport and meal services, disability services, day care and therapy centres, continence assistance, support for carers, allied health care (podiatry, physiotherapy etc.) and support groups. The Commonwealth Carelink Centre information service can be used by people with a disability, their families and carers, general practitioners and other service providers.

FREECALL 1800 052 222 to be connected to your nearest Centre. (The information is free and confidential).

SUNSHINE FAMILIES BOOKLET

Parents often want to know where to find information on organisations that support families on the Sunshine Coast.

"Sunshine Families" is a guide to services which support families living on the Sunshine Coast. The booklet is an initiative of the Healthy Early Years Cluster in response to an identified community need to enhance awareness of, and support access to services for families.

Sunshine Families can help families to obtain information, and access appropriate services as required.

If you would like a copy of this booklet please phone the Link Family Office on 5441 6600 or copies can be downloaded from the CIS website www.sunshinecoastcis.qld.gov.au

GROWING EARLY CHILDHOOD WORKSHOPS

Growing Early Childhood's
Building Resiliency Workshops
for children
4-7years & 7-12 years

Develop your child's confidence, positive thinking ability and social/emotional skills.

10 week courses (School term times)
8 children to two facilitators in each group
2 Parent Information sessions included

Book now for Term 2 workshops
Contact Donna Farman (B Ed)
mob: 0414 67 674

Or email at: donnafarman@aapt.net.au

www.growingearlychildhood.com.au

CERT 3 OR 4 TRAINING FOR SUPPORT STAFF

Would you like to get your Certificate III or IV in Disabilities? This project could help you achieve this goal.

This initiative will provide one-off training assistance grants to new and existing Support Staff in the non-government disability services sector. The grant will support Staff to undertake core competencies under the Community Services Training Package offered by TAFE Queensland (up to 100 places per year over 3 years, for an average of \$100 per competency, maximum of 10 competencies per person).

This grant offers Staff the opportunity to start or complete their Certificate IV in Disability. You can obtain your certificate through flexible learning opportunities as well as RPL (recognition of prior learning).

For more information please contact:

Deb Keenan
Ph. 5441 6600
Mob.0407 374 795
deb_keenan@linkfamily.org.au

MY TIME

Do you care for a child under school age who has a disability or chronic medical condition? Join MyTime at Nambour Community Centre for support.

My Time groups provide local support for mums, dads, grandparents and anyone caring for a child under school age with a disability or chronic medical condition. Parents and carers can meet with people in similar circumstances to share experiences, hear from others and find out about available community support. Parents can socialise and share ideas with others who understand the rewards and intensity of the caring role.

Each member of the group knows the challenges and joys that come with parenting a child with a disability or chronic medical condition. MyTime is a place where parents and carers feel completely accepted and they are often surprised how much difference it makes having a completely supportive space where their child's disability does not make them feel different. Each group has a play helper who can lead children in activities such as singing, drawing and playing with toys, blocks or sand, so parents can spend time focusing on catching up with others. MyTime groups are provided in the community by local organisations. Carers Queensland and Playgroup Queensland are the organisations supporting the establishment of the MyTime group in Nambour. The program is coordinated nationally by the Parenting Research Centre and is funded by the Australian Government Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs.

Parents comments:

"I am looking forward to the great range of topics "

"It was a relaxed and friendly atmosphere"

"A happy and safe environment for children to play"

"Great information sharing activity"

"It was good to network talk to other parents in a similar situation to me"

"Wonderful source of information about resources available "

Groups will be held every second Friday morning during school terms. Please phone your local MyTime Facilitator Robyn Frowd on 0417 792 754 to register your interest. For more information visit the website at www.mytime.net.au

MOUNTAIN CREEK AQUATIC COMPLEX

Special Needs Swimming Program

The Mountain Creek Aquatic Complex Special Needs Program has been up and running for a number of years now. During this time we have given individually specialized lessons to numerous children and teens, and seen some terrific progress! It has been very satisfying for all involved.

Special need or disability impairments may include:

- ◆ Emotional {extreme fear of water, previous bad experience}
- ◆ Behavioural {eg. Autism/ASD/Aspergers syndrome, ADD, ADHD}
- ◆ Sensory { vision or hearing impairment}
- ◆ Physical { eg. Cerebral palsy, spina bifida, paraplegia, amputee, epilepsy }
- ◆ Intellectual { eg. Brain injuries, Down syndrome}

The program is co-ordinated by Karen Pearson, who has Austswim qualifications in Swimming and Water Safety, Disabilities, and Infant Aquatics, and has run the Special Needs lessons since 2005.

Each swimmer has an initial obligation-free assessment with Karen, then an individual program planned, dependent on their abilities and impairments. All lessons start as one teacher with one student. However some older students may be eligible for Teen Squad, after an initial period of private lessons.

Swimming lessons are available Monday and Thursday afternoons, and Tuesday morning if demand exists. Lessons run during State school term, all year round. We currently have some limited vacancies in Term 2, which seldom occurs.

If you require further information, or to book an assessment, please phone Mountain Creek Aquatic Complex on 5457 8399.

Hope to see you soon,
Michael and Genevieve King
MANAGER



WHEELADVENTURES

UNIQUE NEW SERVICE FOR THE DISABLED ON THE SUNSHINE COAST

WheelAdventures is a unique new service operating on the Sunshine Coast providing people with a disability the opportunity to experience Queensland's picturesque Sunshine Coast and Hinterland in a motorcycle sidecar specially designed for wheelchairs and to accommodate people with special needs.

"*WheelAdventures* is the only motorcycle tour business totally dedicated to the disabled, and mobility-challenged people in particular.

"It doesn't matter if you're 16 or 60, *WheelAdventures* can design a safe, fun and exciting riding experience just for you.

"Whether it's a quick run along the Coast's fabulous beaches and tourist strip, whizzing through the countryside or zooming along the Hinterland's amazing arts and crafts trails, the choice is completely yours."

WheelAdventures operates 7 days a week, is fully accredited by Queensland Transport, holds a Queensland Disability Services Positive Notice Card and is fully insured.

If you would like more information, visit www.wheeladventures.com.au or contact James Loughran on 0431 952 516 or email james@wheeladventures.com.au.



MAROOCHY NEIGHBOURHOOD CENTRE FREE COUNSELLING

Counselling is available by fully qualified male and female counsellors at the Neighbourhood Centre each Wednesday from 9.00am to 5.00pm. Appointments are essential and may be made by phoning Pam on 5443 6696

SUNCOAST COMMUNITY CABS

Sunshine Coast Community Cabs offers a weekly door to door shared transport service from \$4 each way for older residents and those with a disability to travel to their nearest major shopping centre. Services are provided on Tuesday, Wednesday or Thursday morning each week.

You can use this service if you:

- ◆ are over 60 years of age and/or mobility impaired;
- ◆ have a disability or medical condition that is either permanent or temporary and are mobility impaired;
- ◆ are a carers of an eligible person and you are accompanying them.

Book on 5451 7565 between 8.00am and 12 noon Monday to Friday. You must book at least 24 hours in advance of travel.

(QLD Taxi Subsidy Scheme Voucher holders are not eligible for this service).

Carer Business Discount Card

The Queensland Government has recently announced a new initiative - the Queensland Carer Business Discount Card. It provides Carers with a discount of up to 10% off retail products and services. To date, 2500 businesses across the state have signed up to make the discount available to carers.

The card is available to Queenslanders who receive the Centrelink Carer Payment or the Carer Allowance.

If you would like to apply for a card go to www.qld.gov.au/carercard or phone 131304.

Businesses interested in registering discounts for carers can contact Card Services on 3224 8747 or online at www.qld.gov.au/carercard.

DISCLAIMER

The inclusion of information contained in this newsletter about services provided by any organisation does not imply a recommendation by Sunshine Coast Link Family Scheme Inc. People who wish to access services and other organisations seeking to secure the services of an organisation must determine for themselves the suitability of such a service.