



ASSID (SA) 2008 -2009 PRESIDENTS REPORT

This year we saw a revitalization of the ASSID (SA) committee that I attribute to the energy and enthusiasm of several new SA committee members. This resulted in some very successful events addressing some of the most pressing issues of concern for people with a disability in South Australia. I am hoping that this momentum will continue as there remains a whole host of issue that ASSID has a potentially vital role in addressing.

As our membership application notes, the goals of ASSID are to:

- Promote the research and understanding of intellectual disability
- Bring together people who work in the field of intellectual disability and to
- Promote high standards of work practice in the field of intellectual disability.

ASSID seeks to achieve this by promoting communication in the area of intellectual disability. We seek to promote research, scholarship and the dissemination of information about intellectual disability through (for example) publications such as the quarterly published magazine *IDA (Intellectual Disability Australasia)* and the internationally recognized peer reviewed publication: the *Journal of Intellectual and Developmental Disability*.

In SA we utilize another strategy to communicate ideas about important issues. When ASSID SA have held a forum or event where issues have been seriously discussed, we have on occasion, documented the proceedings and forwarded these to the participants in the event as well as sent copies to key decision makers and people of influence. Such communiqués typically end up published in the Australasian magazine (IDA) and posted on our website (www.aasid.org.au).

The ASSID (SA) committee is comprised of a small number of people who, in seeking to fulfill ASSID's mission, provide professional development and networking opportunities, forums for discussion and a platform for raising issues for people who are interested in the area of intellectual disability. ASSID's strength is that it brings together a broad range of people who are involved in the area including researchers, parents, people with a disability, advocates, private practicing professionals and staff employed both the public sector and non-government agencies.

A summary follows of what the ASSID (SA) committee has been doing this year:

2008 AGM and Lynn Young presentation

Last year's AGM was held on 12 November. As noted, a number of members put up their hands to take on executive roles within the SA state committee. As well as conducting

the necessary business of the AGM we had an invited speaker: - the Executive Director of Disability SA: Lynn Young. Disability SA is the public sector agency in SA that has the role of organising supports for people with a disability, aiming to ensure that all people with a disability can access services and live independently in the community. Lynn presented demographic data, and described the range of programmes that constitute Disability SA. The strong themes apparent throughout the presentation were the importance of listening to the voice of people with a disability and how services needed to work to promote citizenship and the participation of people with a disability in our community. The event was well attended by approximately 60 people.

Restrictive Practices Conference and related activity

On May 20, 2009 ASSID SA held a conference addressing the question : “Restrictive Practice - Where to From Here?” This event was held in conjunction with the South Australian Council for Intellectual Disability (SACID) and students of the Flinders University postgraduate Disability Leadership program. The conference commenced with an introductory presentation by Dell Stagg – mother of a woman with an intellectual disability and president of SACID, followed by a key note address by Dr Jeffrey Chan - Victoria’s Senior Practitioner – who described Victorian legislation and the function of the Office of the Senior Practitioner with respect to restrictive interventions. Dr Chan, by citing the various pertinent United Nations conventions, provided a compelling conceptualization of restrictive practices as a human rights issue (rather than ‘just’ a disability issue). Dr Chan also provided a range of suggestions as to how to effectively identify the prevalence of, and reduce the usage of, restrictive practices. Following on from Dr Chan, the South Australian Public Advocate, Dr John Brayley, gave details of the South Australian context and outlined an agenda for change. The participants at the conference were then given the opportunity to contribute their thoughts in a facilitated discussion. Participants were also asked to provide written feedback either on the day (feedback forms were made available) or via email A communiqué was produced documenting the proceedings of the day which was sent to the conference participants and to key decision makers setting out an agenda for change for SA .to address the ongoing issues identified including the need for South Australia to review its current Disability Services Act. It was a successful event with over 120 people in attendance. A number of participants took the opportunity to engage in passionate informed discussion.

In addition to the Restrictive Practices conference, ASSID SA sent a letter earlier in the year to the Executive Director of the Office of Disability and Client Services, co-signed by the ASSID(SA) president, the chair person of the Disability Alliance and the chief executive of the Julia Farr Association seeking review and reform of SA’s existing legislation (Disability Services Act 1993) in order to address concerns about how imprecise and weak the existing the act is in reference to restrictive practices.

We await a response.

Launch of ASSID Direct Support Professionals Code of Ethics

On 27 May 2009 we held a successful event in collaboration with DARPA (Disability and Rehabilitation Professional Association) - launching ASSID's Code of Ethics for Direct Support Professionals with over 50 people in attendance. Dr Keith McVilly presented the code, giving an account of its development and facilitated a workshop where the participants had the opportunity to consider how to put code into practice. A copy of the code of ethics was made available to all those who attended the launch. A number of service provider organisations have subsequently placed large orders for copies of the code.

Self Managed Funding event

On 8 October ASSID SA held a joint forum with In Control (a group whose purpose is to advocate for and promote the adoption of self managed funding). The forum was entitled: "For the Application of Individualised Funding to Individuals with an Intellectual /cognitive disability". Approximately 20 people were in attendance, representing a range of non government service providers, self advocates and parents. The forum considered: the recent history and experience of other countries and Australian states in implementing individualised funding; examples of individualised funding arrangements in the south Australian context; a review of the research and evidence; an update from the state government's Office of Disability and Client Services on its plans for rolling out self managed funding from by Strategic Policy staff; and presentation of range of assessment methods and tools. The forum concluded with question and discussions and light refreshments.

OTHER ACTIVITIES

Northern Territory engagement

As per ASSID's strategic plan and ASSID SA's role commencing the process of engagement with some of the most disadvantaged communities in this country, ASSID SA has been in communication with ASSIS members and various agencies and individuals in the Northern Territory in both Alice Springs and in Darwin. At the end of June, representatives of ASSID's Australasian executive and ASSID (SA) met with a number of key stakeholders in Darwin to progress ASSID's engagement with those agencies and individuals who have a role in supporting people with an intellectual disability in the Northern Territory. ASSID was able to meet with government representatives, senior staff from the Department of Health and Families who have executive responsibilities in the Aged and Disability program, as well as representatives of some of the significant non-government service providers in 'Top End'. After discussing the nature of ASSID as an organization, its mission and purpose, outcomes of these meetings were: plans for a round table discussion with key stakeholders in September 2009 (when key ASSID people will be in Darwin as a result of their participation in the Darwin based APS conference at that time); notional agreement to organise and run, (on a cost recovery basis in collaboration with local agencies) a couple

of events based in Darwin, over the next year targeted at direct support professionals on topics of pressing concern to staff working in this area; and the intention, through an ongoing process of consultation and local involvement, to establish a 'community action grant' that looks at how to support innovative and effective ways of supporting people with an intellectual disability from disadvantaged and isolated communities (initially targeting 'The Lands'). The people ASSID met in Darwin were welcoming, generous with their time, and very positive about the potential role that ASSID could take in the Northern Territory. All in all, a significant step in the right direction.

Roy Brown text

We continue to process a slow stream of requests from all over the country for the Roy Brown text we published: *Disability & Society – Challenges in the 21st Century*. This text is available for sale directly from ASSID (SA) or alternatively order forms can be found on the ASSID website.

Know Your Rights

There has ongoing work being done in the area of how to establish a training strategy aimed at supporting people with an intellectual disability regarding their rights and responsibilities: "What's OK and what's not OK". Representatives of ASSID SA have been in contact with Minda who have developed a training package that addresses these issues. I am informed that is designed to teach staff the concepts and skills they require to enable them to assist clients to develop the skills they need to deal with these matters. There is more work to be done in this area, with the recognition that we don't need to re-invent the wheel different agencies have already made some headway in developing such resources. Eg Aside from that which Minda has developed, there is a apparently a training package that has been developed in NSW that we need to have a look at.

UPCOMING EVENTS & ISSUES FOR CONSIDERATION IN 2010

2011 Australasian conference

SA last hosted the Australasian conference in 2004 which was held at the Hilton. It was a success on a number of different levels, from the quality of the keynote speakers, the level of participation from the whole disability sector in SA sector, the participation of people with an intellectual disability, service providers and academics and to the fact that the fact that it generated a modest surplus. We managed to run a 4 star conference in a shoestring budget. In 2011 we will once again be hosting the Australasian conference. We begin the process of consultation and planning as soon as possible. It is our conference - it is your conference. To make it a success will need require your support. We will be coming to speak to you soon about what you want for your conference in 2011.

Ongoing engagement with Northern Territory

We anticipate continuing the work that commenced this year. After consulting with ASSID members in the territory, planning has begun to run a forum, in the earlier part of 2010, in Alice Springs on Foetal Alcohol syndrome. Using the Australasian board as a resource ASSID also plans to run a couple of workshops in Darwin on a cost recovery basis. This will hopefully position ASSID such that we can address one of the most significant challenges we face - how to connect with service providers and aboriginal people with an intellectual disability in the lands and work with them to make a difference.

Engagement with universities:

One of the things that ASSID aims to do is to bridge the gap between theories and practice. This is about the practical needs of people with an intellectual disability, their families and carers, as well as the needs of service providers who support them, informing the research agenda. (The work that Adelaide University's disability research Unit is doing on the D-START is an example of such a project) it also about current research and that reset informing practice. One of the ways in which this can be facilitated is by holding research showcases at the institutions that conduct such research. ASSID SA has in years past held successful research showcase events at Flinders University and the University of Adelaide. We have been thinking of a future event that provide each of the three universities in Adelaide an opportunity to simultaneously showcase research they are doing – perhaps a one day conference that invite the researchers to engage directly with people with a disability, their families and service providers?

As always we invite you to provide any ideas or feedback for the types of events/ /seminars/forums that you would like to see us organize in the future.

Richard O'Loughlin
ASSID (SA) President
November 2009