

IDA

Intellectual Disability Australasia



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front cover

Talking heads from ASID Conference 2015

photos by Hilary and Alice



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editorial



Welcome to the first edition of IDA for 2016,

We have a bumper edition this time as unfortunately due to forces beyond my control I was unable to get the December 2015 edition out at the end of last year. Apologies for those dedicated readers who missed your quarterly information on ASID. We are off to a great start to the year with some great articles, photos and inspirational stories to read. Thank you to those people who have contributed material for this edition.

Once again the annual conference which was held in Melbourne in November 2015 is an important inclusion in IDA. We at ASID are very proud of the way the ASID Board conference comes together so well and grows and evolves from strength to strength every year. There was a lot to see and do both at the conference and in your own time. The conference committee did an absolutely fabulous job with Alice Nicholas and Hilary Johnson in the lead.

Please take your time to read Alice's conference review and drop us a line to let us know if you would like something specific or different at our next conference which is in Tasmania in 2017.

I am sure that you are all aware that ASID will not be holding their annual conference this year as usual? Instead you will notice that IASSIDD is coming to town with the 15th World Congress to be held in Melbourne.

The ASID Board will be tapping into some of the presenters and running a number of exciting presentations across Australasia. See back page for the flyer and Judy Garriocks, Road Show Conference Convenor teaser information on page 23.

As well as the above we also have our usual president and regionals reports for your information.

If you would like to let us know about an event coming up that we can add to our events calendar please send me an email

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ASID 50th Conference

Melbourne, Victoria

report & photos



Making it
real together

ASID Conference Melbourne
11-13 November 2015

The Annual ASID conference is over for another year, well in 2015 that is. The 50th Annual ASID conference ran from 11th – 13th November 2015 at the Crown Promenade Hotel in Melbourne, Victoria, Australia.

The Victorian conference was the first conference to be jointly coordinated through a local committee and the ASID secretariat. There have been many lessons that have been learnt from having organised a conference at a committee level.

The conference has been very well received, in particular the specific initiatives established by the participation sub committee, which assisted with the participation and inclusion of people with a disability in the conference.

These initiatives included

- Participation of 8 people with disabilities through Person Centred Active Support, funded by the Victorian Disability Services Commissioner.
- Live stream captioning for Keynote presentations



continued page 4

editorial

continued

and I can add it to the next IDA or on our Facebook page.

Once again please feel free to drop us a note to let us know your thoughts on how ASID can better serve you

and our membership.

Until next time,
Darryleen Wiggins

Conference report & photos

continued

- Continuous Plain English stream throughout the conference program
- Personal stories and videos that were submitted prior to the conference and played throughout the conference.
- A lounge space for all delegates and a place to engage with self advocates.
- Subsidised registration for people with a disability and free entry for support workers.

As a result, 16% of conference delegates were people with a disability or having lived experience of disability. This is our best outcome yet for participation of people with disabilities at an ASID Conference! We would like to thank Annecto, Golden City Support Services and Self Advocacy Resource Unit for being heavily involved in the development and implementation of the participation initiatives and making the conference such a great success.

The 50th Annual Conference focused on the United Nations Conventions on the Rights of persons with disabilities. The program was comprehensive with streams encompassing advocacy, justice, effective service delivery, freedom exploitation and abuse, education, employment,

families and relationships, access and equity, health, living independently, sport & recreation and participation community life.

The keynotes included Mr Bruce Bonyhady AM, Chairman Board of the National Disability Insurance Agency, Dr Jennifer Clegg, Associate Professor, University of Nottingham, David Behan, Care Quality Commission's new Chief Executive, UK, Prof. Chris Oliver, Cerebra Centre for Neurodevelopmental Disorders, School of Psychology, University of Birmingham and Aine Healy, Executive Director Advocacy and Michael Sullivan, Chairperson, NSW Council for Intellectual Disability

The social program represented the milestone year for ASID. First, the opening of the conference with the 2Hot2Handle hip hop dance crew from Wild at Heart. Never did we think we would see so many researchers and policy makers pulling those sweet moves! It did not stop there with the celebration of the 50th Anniversary with a cake at the Cocktail party. *continued page 6*





Conference report & photos

continued

To further spice things up, delegates were able to taste the famous food culture of Melbourne with the tailor made 'restaurant night' on the second day. Not only were delegates given the opportunity to experience Melbourne's food, but also were provided with an opportunity to dine with a key-note, where significant conversations were had.

We would like to take this opportunity to thank the sponsors of the conference, in particular, Office of Professional Practice - Department of Health & Human

Services, LaTrobe University, Disability Services Commission, Able Australia, Bendigo Kangan Institute and Scope (Vic) Ltd. In addition to the this we would also like to thank the exhibitors for participating in the conference, Care Choice, Clubmates, Deakin University, Disability Services Commissioner WA, Family Panning Victoria, Flinders University, HACSU, ONCALL Personal & Training, Pathways to care, Victorian Electoral Commission, IASSID, Skills training

I would just like to take this oppor-

continued page 8





Conference report & photos

continued

tunity to thank all of the conference committee members, and volunteers that helped make the 2015, 50th annual ASID conference such a success. “making it real together” was the conference motto, and it really spoke true to the team work and effort that went in by all to make such a wonderful event such a success.

If you feel that you would like to relive your conference experience, go to https://www.asid.asn.au/conferences/50th_annual_melbourne_2015 for the conference videos, daily recaps and presentations.

Thanks again to everyone and we look forward to seeing you in Tasmania in 2017! ●

Alice Nicholas





**After the conference
Prof Chris Bigby spoke
with Hilary Harper
from Vic ABC Radio
Saturday program
[click here to listen](#)**



Conference Volunteers and Support Services



Everybody wants to be valued for what they contribute, for how they make a difference. It's important that support is provided that enables individuals to be active in their community and do things that give them recognition for their abilities.

Cherie (pictured) and Robert are two of a number of people that Golden City Support Services from Bendigo supported to volunteer at the ASID national conference in Melbourne recently.

Held at the Crown Conference Centre, it hosted practitioners, academics and people with the lived experience of disability in an important gathering that aims to improve the lives of people with intellectual disability.

Cherie and Robert were keen to be a part of the conference. Cherie worked on the registration desk greeting delegates and handing out conference satchels while Robert helped set up for the cocktail party. Robert also attended the cocktail event and gave out prizes. Completing a job that was valued by the organisers was just one aspect of being part of the conference, Cherie and Robert also met people and had conversations. Their contribution made the conference more relevant to the people it aims to assist.

Golden City Support Services was also involved in developing and providing a number of ways that made the conference more inclusive and more engaging for everyone. People who could not attend the conference were assisted

to make short video stories talking about things that were important to them. These

were available to view on the conference website and were screened during the conference proceedings. New interactive information & communication technology was also used to see how these may be more relevant to people with disability.

Golden City Support Services learned a great deal from the experience of supporting people to be involved in this conference. It is experience that they plan to put into practice in their day to day work. If you would like more information about their support services contact them on (03) 5434 2777 ●.

ADVERTISEMENT

ARE YOU A PARENT/GUARDIAN OF SOMEONE WITH AN INTELLECTUAL DISABILITY?



**• What are your experiences with services addressing your adult child's mental health/challenging behaviour?
• How helpful have these services been?**

You are invited to participate in an online survey to have your say. You must have accessed adult services for challenging behaviours or mental health concerns via hospital or community health settings, government or non-government disability services within the past two years. Information gathered will assist in the evaluation of current mainstream services. Participants will also go in the draw to **win 1 of 3 \$50 gift vouchers.**

This study has been approved by the Macquarie University human ethics committee.

Please contact Joyce Man at joyce.man@students.mq.edu.au for more information.

NB Closes 31 August 2016

review

Shaken But Not Stirred

*A Movie by the Christchurch Reflection Group
of Seven Self Advocates*

by Olive J Webb

Clinical Psychologist, Health and Disability Consultant, New Zealand



Following the major earthquakes in Canterbury New Zealand, a group of seven self-advocates with intellectual disabilities, supported by Advocacy IHC, recognised a gap in support during natural disasters for people with intellectual disabilities, established the 'Christchurch Reflection Group' and made a Movie 'Shaken But Not Stirred' which is available on Youtube at <https://youtu.be/PzJdpmJw0fg>

This reviews that movie and urges people to take the time to view it.

Background:

For five years from 4th September 2010, 4341 earthquakes occurred in Canterbury, New Zealand. They included earthquakes of Richter magnitude 7.4 (4/9/2010), 6.3 (22/2/2011), 5.6 and 6.3 (13/6/2011), 5.8, 5.3, and 6.0 (23/12/2011). All the earthquakes were shallow and violent. Destruction to property and infrastructure was huge. In February 2011, 185 people died.

Self-Advocates' Response:

In March 2015, a group of people with intellectual disabilities took it upon themselves to respond to their perception of a gap in supports and preparedness for these events for people with intellectual disabilities. Their work has contributed to the Earthquake-related workshops run by People First and the Easy Read Living resource created by People First (2014) as well as to the wider community of people with disabilities.

Their medium for communication was video and they have recorded their experiences and their advice to people with disabilities, service providers and newly formed bureaucracies such as the Canterbury Earthquake Recovery Authority (CERA).

They discuss their experiences, phenomena such as the Christchurch 'redzone' where the worst damage occurred, their shock and fatigue, their lack of knowledge about what was happening and their lack of any power or influence

continued page 12

review **Shaken But Not Stirred**

continued

about what was happening to them during the immediate state of emergency. They discuss the trauma of being powerless and out of control, of forced relocation and the effect of the earthquakes



on their lives – their homes and work, relationships and emotional well-being.

They complete the exercise with simple advice – a list of what we should have in preparation for natural disasters, including the importance of knowing our neighbours so we are not alone.

Outcome:

This short movie is thorough, heartfelt and practical, and highlights the increased vulnerability of people with intellectual disabilities during natural disasters and also highlights the important contribution these same people can make to prepare all of us for frightening times.

Please take the time to watch this movie.

References:

- Christchurch City Libraries, Christchurch and Canterbury Earthquakes, <http://my.christchurchcitylibraries.com/christchurch-and-canterbury-earthquakes/>
- Christchurch IHC Earthquake Reflections Group, March 2015, Shaken But Not Stirred, Youtube: <https://youtu.be/PzJdpmJw0fg>
- People First, 2014, Surviving the Canterbury Earthquakes People First Workshops and Hui, Easy Read Living Information <http://www.peoplefirst.org.nz/news-and-resources/easy-read-resources/> ●



Thanks to the Christchurch Earthquake Reflection Group:

Michael Krammer
Gary Buchanan
Andrew Dever
Chris Farrow
Andrew Oswin
Roseanne Parrish
Kerry Horsham

and Cam Scott

Material sourced from:
Ministry of Civil Defence and Emergency Management
Unshakencity
nzraw.co.nz
Sharon Davis
NZ Defence Force
Geof Wilson
music by DanoSongs.com

President's report

Dr Angus Buchanan



At the 2015 ASID Conference in Melbourne, Bruce Bonahady, NDIA chair delivered an excellent key note address to open the event. Amongst the many things that he addressed one reported fact stood out above all others. This was that 70% of the people who had registered for the NDIS have an intellectual disability. I still can't work out if this should be a surprise or something that we already knew. It certainly generated some interesting conversations amongst delegates. As the scheme develops I am sure we will get a deeper understanding of the people who are using the NDIS with an expectation that the scheme will respond to the needs of the users. It does however highlight the growing importance of a body like ASID who can provide an independent voice.

The Melbourne Conference was a celebration of 50 years of ASID. It was very appropriate that the conference was held in Melbourne where the first conference of the Australian Group for the Scientific Study of Mental Deficiency (AGSOMD) was held in 1965. At the Conference I was delighted to be able to acknowledge Dr Helen Beange who has been a member of ASID since 1966.

In my presidential address I made the following comments with consideration to the 50 years of ASID history:

"Fifty years ago people were asking brave questions which challenged societal views about disability. The questions people have asked over the past 50 years have shaped what happens today. What are the hard questions we should be asking today? I recently was listening to a futurist. Interestingly enough she said we can't predict the future but we can challenge the assumptions that are creating the future. It is about challenging the ideas and notions that drives what happened or should be happening.

Now is not the time for complacency. It still needs to

be an era of provocation. It is still the time for the 'what if' question, the 'why not' question and 'how can it be better' question... which are often still brave questions to ask. So what are our provocations of today, what boundaries still need to be stretched so people with intellectual disabilities have the best quality of life possible? The theme of the conference captures the very essence of these questions – "Making it Real Together." This speaks to the authenticity of how we work together to achieve the outcome people with disabilities and their families aspire to. It is about saying what we mean and doing it. It is about being in the real world and not a parallel existence. The futurist stated that the best way to predict the future is to create it!

We are at a time when we are still awakening possibilities. We are at a time when the conversations should be about 'Yes and...' rather than 'yes but..' We are at a time when we should be embracing big ideas. It is worth remembering that you can tame a wild idea but it is hard to make boring ideas interesting.

In partnership with people with intellectual disability, we need to be today's futurists. We as a research and practice community need to create and use evidence to challenge assumptions and notions. We need to make sure that the current evidence is used and new evidence is developed.

What is our vision 50 years from today? While we can stand proud of the many achievements over the past 50 years we must look forward with serious concern at what still needs to be achieved and be open to the possibilities that we still have not yet even imagined. We need to make it real together. As a country we have the opportunity to make a generational difference to the lives of people with disabilities and their families and set the foundation towards the next 50 years.

ASID is about research to practice – fundamentally about understanding what

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Western Australia

by Justin O'Meara Smith

The Western Australian division has spent the last few months planning an inaugural and annual event to enhance research and research outcomes in areas affecting the lives of people with intellectual disability. On the 15th of April the division hosts a research sundowner - Win, Win, Win: Forging research relationships. The sundowner will provide a forum for service provider organisations, individuals and families, University-based researchers, and prospective students to connect and share their perspective, areas of interest and emerging research opportunities.

Attendees will:

- * Learn about the research process, share concerns and ideas, discuss collaborations and partnerships.
- * Hear from people, both individual and organisation, about what it means to join in research.
- * Find out about recent and current research, and identify areas of future research interest.

The research sundowner is a great opportunity to highlight recent research that has been undertaken and ensure the learning and outcomes are disseminated to the people who can use it most. ASID WA strives to create an environment that will bring diverse stake-

holders together to create a productive partnership that focuses grassroots connections, emerging needs, solid evidence and research into practice.

The sundowner recognises the National Disability Insurance Scheme represents the largest social and economic reform since Medicare. It is a \$22.2 billion dollar investment that will help more than 460,000 people across Australia live better lives. It is recognised that people with intellectual disability have experienced challenges accessing this scheme, articulating their goals, and accessing the supports that will help them exercise true choice and control. How can collaboration, research and evidence based practice improve their access to the scheme, help them achieve the promise of choice and control and live better lives?

Victoria

by Hilary Johnson

We have been busy with the ASID board conference in November (see conference report). Since then we have compiled a report and budget for the board, which demonstrated a successful conference. Conference attendees reported that the conference was inclusive with 16% of those in attendance were people with a lived experience of disability. Thanks so much to the inclusion committee led by Chris Fyffe and includ-

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President's report

continued

we do makes a real difference in the lives of people with intellectual disabilities. The voice of ASID is about articulating what is making an authentic difference to people's lives and what does not. ASID

is an organisation that includes researchers, service provider's, people with intellectual disabilities and their families. ASID needs to have strong voice. ●



ing members from the Self Advocacy Resource Unit, Annecto, Golden City Support Services and Disability Services Commission. We were delighted with the positive feedback from the conference and hope to hold a few events in Victoria to follow-up on the interest expressed. We are also interested in co-badging events and encourage ideas/speakers for Victorian events. We have active members in rural areas of Victoria so if you are not Melbourne based do not feel constrained in putting forward ideas. Our first event will be in May and focussed on inclusive conferences, what to consider and the support needed, to ensure people with an intellectual disability are included in a meaningful way.

We have 14 committee members - Chris Bigby, Mark DiMarco, Coral Farr, Brent Hayward, Nick Hagiliassis, Mark Heeney, Rebecca Hoge, Hilary Johnson, Anne Marie Mumford, Alice Nicholas, Claire Quilliam, Loretta Sheppard, Sophia Tipping and Sean Wilson. Hilary chairs the committee Mark DiMarco is deputy chair and Sean is our secretary. Three members of the committee are directors on the Australasian Board, Hilary Johnson, Claire Quilliam and Mark DiMarco. All members are active in research and/or practice in intellectual disability and committee meetings are designed to encourage networking. We can offer teleconferencing into meetings and are considering a multitude of ways to exchange information.

We are encouraging members to share information of their conference experiences. Following on from our November conference with the theme "Making it Real Together", Brent Hayward- one of our committee members, volunteered in February at the "Having a Say" conference in February at Deakin University's Waterfront Campus in Geelong, the 17th year of the conference by the Victorian Advocacy League for Individuals with Disability (VALID). The theme for this conference was "ready, set, connect" - connecting with others to be part of the community. The conference aims to empower people with intellectual disabilities through the opportunity to 'have a say' about issues that affect their lives, opportunities to celebrate ability

and achievement, participate in planning and running of the conference, opportunities to be heard by politicians, government departments and service providers and the opportunity to participate and meet with other people from all over Australia and overseas.

The conference program was substantial, with multiple concurrent sessions offering presentations, workshops, 'come and try' activities and dedicated advocacy and peer support streams. There was also a talent show fondly titled "Red Faces", an art competition and the ever-popular conference dinner disco, this year attended by the Victorian Disability Minister Martin Foley MP. The conference also offered the Our Choice Expo - an opportunity for service providers to showcase their services for people with intellectual disabilities. The conference attracts over 1000 attendees and was a positive experience with everyone excited to be there. If you're interested in supporting people with disabilities to attend as delegates, to present, exhibit your services or volunteer, check the website: www.valid.org.au for next year's event.

The Australasian Board has a number of sub-committees and is encouraging engagement from all members. Alice Nicholas is on the membership committee and you will be hearing more from her. Organisations with bronze, silver or gold membership will personally be receiving certificates and we hope you enjoy your additional benefits. Lisa Hamilton from Bendigo has been providing valued input to the inclusion committee and Claire Quilliam from Shepparton has been leading the marketing committee. We are meeting regularly on the last Thursday of each month and welcome member participation

New Zealand

by Fran Hartnett

ASID New Zealand continues to be in good heart thanks to strong leadership from Adrian Higgins who was re-elected unopposed towards the end of 2015 as Chairperson and a committed group of divisional committee members who col-

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laborate well and share responsibilities. A highlight of the year is always our annual conference and 2015 was no exception.

ASID New Zealand held its annual conference at Forsyth Barr Stadium, Dunedin in September 2015. The conference was convened by Dr Brigit Mirfin-Veitch with assistance from Dr Jenny Conder and the ASIDNZ Committee. 136 delegates attended the conference which was described by all delegates as very successful. Conference evaluations confirmed that all the delegates rated the programme as being either excellent or very good.

Professor Robin Kearns, Dr Nathan Wilson, Professor Kelley Johnson and Mr David Bathgate were keynote speakers at the conference. Delegates were positive about the quality of the keynotes, and most saw the overall programme as offering presentations of value to them. Feedback suggested that presentations with a focus on lived experience were highly valued, along with those that showed how research findings could have practical relevance and utility. The feedback confirmed that ASID NZ's constituency remains supportive of the current model of multi-day conferences, hosted in the main centres.

Divisional committee members continue to meet regularly by teleconference. A face to face meeting is planned for early in 2016 to formalise the winding up of the previous Council and to plan for other events to promote ASID and research and knowledge in the field. The Committee is currently negotiating with an international respected professional in this regard.

We are pleased to announce that the date for the next ASID NZ Divisional Conference has been confirmed. This will take place on Thursday November 3 and Friday November 4 2016 at the Brentwood Hotel in Wellington. We would like to encourage everyone to attend this conference and extend a particularly strong invitation to our colleagues in Australia to attend as Wellington is a vibrant city to visit with lots to see and do and a stimulating and informative conference is guaranteed.

NSW & ACT

by Angela Dew

On the 10th February 2016, the ASID NSW division met for their yearly Operational Planning Meeting. Facilitated by Michele Wiese, the committee spent a productive day working through ASID's Strategic Plan (2011-2020), reviewing achievements from the previous year's Operational Plan, and then creating a plan for the next year. It was a successful day with many ideas shared; the committee broke in to groups and worked through the five Strategic Goals for ASID Australasia. With this many ideas were generated from these goals, and everyone went away with actions to work towards for the next meeting in March.

ASID Australasian Strategic Goals (2011-2020)

1. To be an independent authority on intellectual disability issues across Australasia
2. To forge interaction between intellectual disability research, policy and practice
3. To lead the development of strategic partnerships
4. To engage and strengthen membership
5. To ensure sound governance

To kick off the New Year, ASID NSW is in the process of booking in two very exciting events in August as part of the 2016 ASID Road Show Event. The first will be a roundtable focused on Ageing and Disability bringing together local and international experts in the field. The second event will be focused on Individualised Funding and Self Determination. Keep an eye on your emails, ASID Facebook and the ASID website for more information shortly, including dates, venues and registration information.

The committee is excited to welcome new ASID member, Ee-Lin Chang from Family Planning NSW, who was our guest speaker at the September evening networking cocktail event. Ee-Lin must have enjoyed the event as she attended our next meeting! She will fill a temporary vacancy on the ASID NSW Committee for the next 12 months.

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ASID NSW Division

leaver to access funding which they can use to pay a service to get them a job. The aims of the funding are to improve employment rates for young people with a disability, and to raise the value of employment for participants and their family or support network. The funding is not available for those who are eligible for those who are able to access the Disability Employment Services (DES) system.

In 2016, about 50 young Tasmanians are accessing the funding.

Committee member, Helen Amos, was pleased to complete her honours research in late 2015; Parents with Intellectual Disability and the Child Protection Process: Accounts of Support Workers. This research examined the accounts of support workers from non-government organisations in Western Sydney who support parents with intellectual disability through the child protection process. By using a qualitative framework with semi-structured, in-depth interviews, it identified oppressive systems that parents with intellectual disability face when experiencing the child protection system. Practices used by Family and Community Services were critically analysed through the Social Model of Disability and the notion of de-professionalisation. Helen is relieved to be graduating in April 2016.

Tasmania

by Ben Crothers

The Tasmanian launch for the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) is now over two years old and the process of finding solutions to some of the teething problems has commenced. One of the initiatives offered by the National Disability Insurance Agency (NDIA) is the School Leaver Employment Supports (SLES) funding stream. SLES funding allows a school-

The Tasmanian division has started planning an event as part of the series of events being hosted across Australia and New Zealand instead of ASID's annual conference this year. We are hoping to secure a high-quality presenter to bring down to Tasmania and we will provide more details as soon as possible.

The 2017 ASID annual conference, to be held in Hobart, is also beginning to be planned. The Tasmanian Divisional committee is recruiting for a local organising committee to fulfil a number of roles leading up to the conference as well as on-the-ground workers for when the conference is on. Please get in touch with us on asidtasmania@gmail.com if you are interested in getting involved.

Queensland

by Morrie O'Connor

Queensland Division Committee is collaborating with Queenslanders with a Disability Network, Olders Persons Advocacy, WWILD-SVP (Women with Intellectual Disability-Sexual Violence Prevention Service) and Community

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Living Association in planning a Roundtable which will look at the issue of representation and voice of people with intellectual disability in QLD.

Divisional member Joanne Richards is liaising with National ASID regarding organising Roadshow of presenters post International Intellectual Disability Conference in Melbourne.

The QLD Division committee has elected its first member with an intellectual disability.

Recently the local Brisbane city daily (The Courier Mail) published an article about a teenage arsonist whose criminal history stretched to 15 pages. In the article she was described as having 'very low intelligence', being in the bottom 2% of the population and having a mild impairment.

The QLD Division has written to the Courier Mail pointing out that if someone is in the bottom 2% of the population, it is likely they have an intellectual disability. We also queried the misuse of the term 'mild impairment' and queried why the young woman was not receiving Disability supports.

This newspaper article points to a larger issue which is the fundamental lack of understanding of intellectual disability in large segments of our society.

South Australia

(Update not available at time of publication)



Why Join ASID?

There are many benefits for members of ASID including:

- Membership of a strong and active association comprising people working or studying in the area of intellectual disability, people with an intellectual disability and their families or carers.
- Membership of a regional association which meets on a regular basis to pursue issues of local, national or international relevance.
- Annual conferences hosted by each regional association featuring keynote addresses from leading international speakers.
- Locally organised regional conferences, seminars, workshops and social gatherings.
- Opportunities to hear touring international and national experts sponsored by the Society.
- Opportunities to meet and exchange ideas with people having similar interests in other parts of your region and the country and, through a united society, to influence developments in the area of intellectual disability.
- Quarterly issues of the Journal of Intellectual and Developmental Disability which has an international readership and contributorship.
- Quarterly issues of the society's magazine, Intellectual Disability Australasia, which includes articles of general interest and contributions from regional associations.
- Access to a new journal Research and Practice in Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities issued twice per year.

review

by **Dr. David Treanor**

National Leader of L'Arche Australia

A Flower Between the Cracks

by **Helen Sage**

Melbourne: Affirm Press, 2013

A Flower Between the Cracks is a great read and I imagine most parents and friends who have journeyed with someone who has acquired a severe disability will identify with the narrative. It is a fascinating and detailed account of a mother's (Helen Sage) reaction and life following Jayne, her daughter's car accident.

Sage's opens the biography on the evening of the accident and we journey through the grief, pain and questions associated with such accidents.

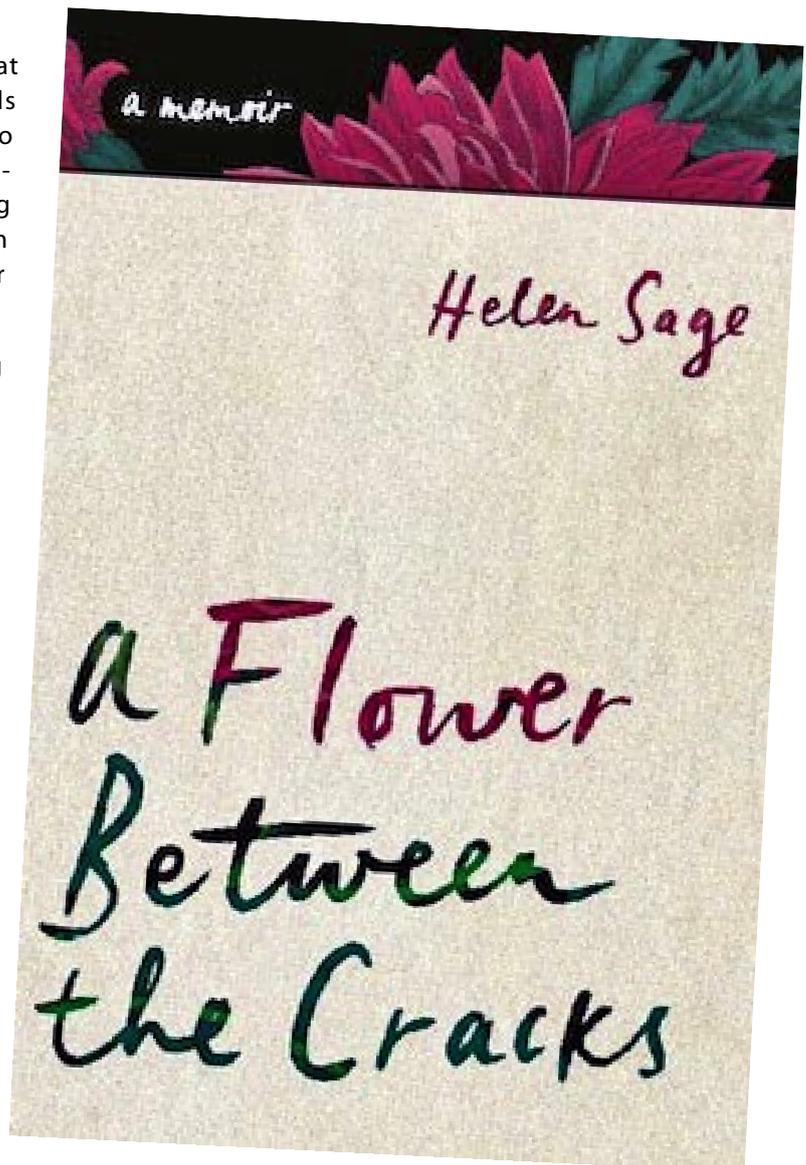
The family commitment to Jayne is unquestionable and how they re-orientate their life to surround her with care, love and support is inspirational.

The book offers health and social personnel many pertinent reflections on how to improve their own personal practice. For example, I think there is a great lesson for everyone who is part of a person with a disability life that Sage's epitomizes: 'It's about others [service professionals] not 'knowing' the Jayne we know' (p. 125) – we need to act, know, respect and understand in a way that we would want the people we love to be interacted with.

Helen's story is comprehensive however it is a journey into an unimagined world for many people and yet it is a story of perseverance, hope and love.

Sage is able to transcend the difficulties she encountered on the journey and share her and her family's experience of discovering new ways to be together and ultimately to love and be loved.

It is a timely in light of recent inquiry into Young People in Nursing Homes the role out of the National



Disability Insurance Scheme and I think an essential read for anyone who is part of a person with an acquired disability life. ●



The Endeavour Foundation Endowment Challenge Fund aims to benefit Australians with a disability, especially people with an intellectual disability, by encouraging innovation in the disability services sector and wider community sector.

Grants are available for researchers and students undertaking research into key issues within the Australian disability sector. Grants are also available for non-profit organisations who wish to expand their current activities to include people with a disability, or deliver projects that enhance community inclusion for people with a disability.

Qart grants are available to researchers, students and non-profit organisations to undertake projects focussing on artistic expression for people with an intellectual disability.

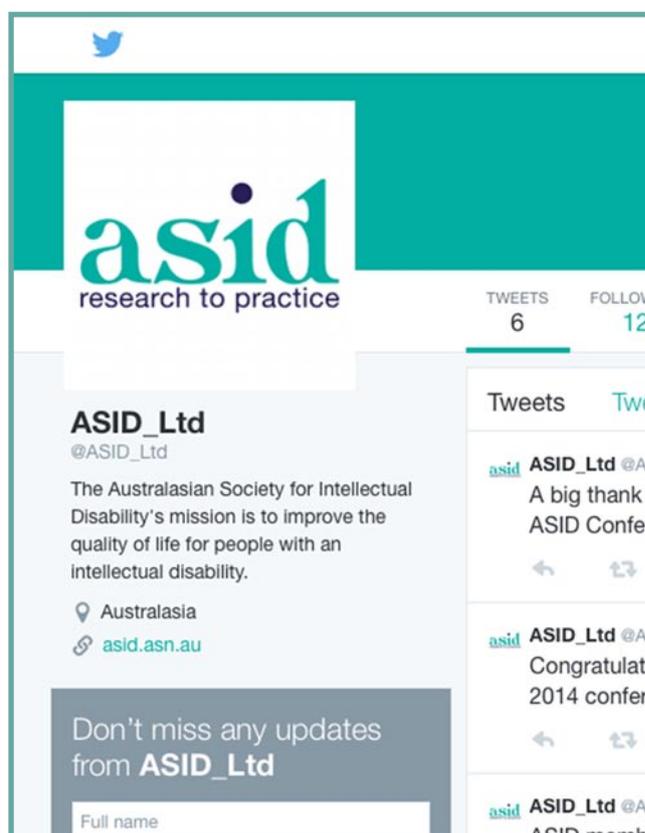
The 2016 Grants Round opens on 14 March 2015. Applications across three award categories are invited:

1. RESEARCH AWARD: \$40,000 (for research conducted by appropriately qualified researchers)
2. STUDENT AWARD: two awards of \$5,000 each (for research conducted by higher degree students)
3. NON-PROFIT ORGANISATION AWARD: total grant pool of \$20,000 (for non-profit organisations located in Queensland, New South Wales or Victoria only)
4. QART RESEARCH AWARD: \$13,000 (for research conducted by appropriately qualified researchers)
5. QART STUDENT AWARD: one awards of \$3,000 (for research conducted by higher degree students)

6. QART NON-PROFIT ORGANISATION AWARD: total grant pool of \$6,500 (for projects developed and delivered by non-profit organisations across Australia).

Visit the Endowment Challenge Fund Website (www.endowmentchallengefund.com.au) for more information about application guidelines, the assessment process, past award winners, and to download application forms.

All applications must be emailed to: endowment@endeavour.com.au by 22 April 2016, 5pm (EST). ●



The Road to Employment Success

– often under construction or filled with potholes

by Jerry Ford

It has been over thirty years since the Supported Employment Initiative (known as Open Employment in Australia) emerged amid a growing concern with the high levels of unemployment, disenfranchisement and segregation experienced by far too many citizens with significant disabilities. Concurrent with this initiative was a growing body of empirical studies demonstrating the vocational capabilities of people who were previously considered incapable of being productive and/or engaging in meaningful vocational and community activities. These demonstrations of vocational competence served, in part, to demystify disability and illustrate that the paucity of vocational success historically experienced by many people with significant disabilities could not solely be attributed to their level of disability, and that productivity does not vary directly with the severity of one's disability.

Over the past three decades we have also witnessed legislative and policy changes and dramatic improvements in service configurations and implementation practices that have further advanced access to more inclusive vocational opportunities for many people with significant disabilities. For example, the use of person-centred planning, assistive technologies, natural support networks, community alliances and business partnerships, active support practices, collaborative interagency teams, systematic transition planning, job restructuring and job creation strategies, have all extended the boundaries of our expectations.

Despite these remarkable innovations and advances, and the efforts of many dedicated, highly skilled, and committed individuals, there remains a very troubling shadow between the “ideal and the real” – between what we know is possible and what in effect is occurring in the lives of far too many people with significant disabilities. Expectations may have been raised, but not always fulfilled. Access to socially inclusive, meaningful,

integrated, nontrivial community-based employment options is, in far too many instances, severely limited or non-existent, the quality of outcomes being achieved in many programs is increasingly being questioned (e.g., wages, skill development, job tenure, social relationships, career flexibility and advancement), and investment by policy makers in non-segregated, meaningful, skill-enhancing community employment options appears to be stagnating, if not actually dwindling.

Pervasive and staggering levels of unemployment and underemployment, high levels of financial insecurity, social isolation and limited social networks continue to be reported in many evaluation and research studies.

The poor employment outcomes experienced by many people with significant disabilities have prompted a critical examination of our vocational training and

the quality of outcomes being achieved in many programs is increasingly being questioned

employment service systems. This examination has included reflection on the purposes and efficiency of existing training programs and training practices, the meaning of work and community inclusion, the efficiency of current data collection and accountability measures, and the roles and responsibilities of

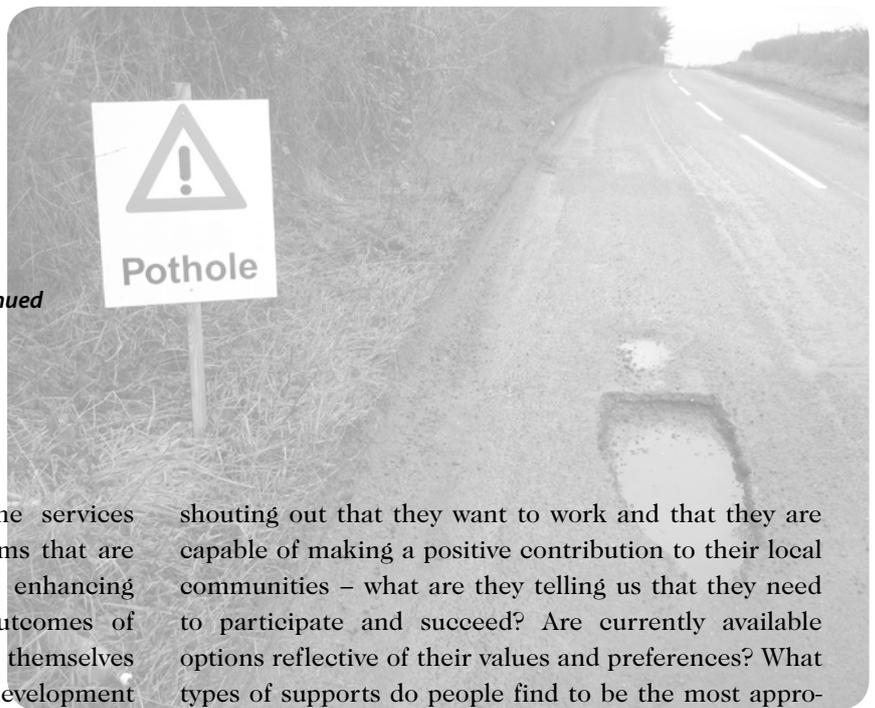
service providers, policy makers, and people with disabilities and their families in the planning, delivery, and evaluation of vocational and employment services. It is interesting to note that many of the issues being discussed in the disability sector are also receiving attention from the general business community (e.g., professional training and certification, community-based learning, flexible work schedules, work relevant experience). These shared concerns highlight the need for both specialist and community fields to work together toward common goals and reform efforts that are dynamic enough to ensure that individuals with significant needs enter into the social and economic fabric of their local communities with a sense of destiny.

Across Australia, many organisations are striving to provide improved employment

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The Road to Employment Success

continued



services to people with disabilities. Some services have developed exciting, innovative programs that are efficient, evidence-based and effective in enhancing the workplace skills and employment outcomes of their employees. These services challenge themselves in extending the employment and career development opportunities for the people they serve. Their staff possess the attitudes, skills and behaviours necessary to effectively meet the mutual needs of people with significant disabilities and local employers.

At the same time, other organisations are struggling to develop the technical capacity to provide opportunities that reflect people's vocational needs, talents and aspirations. While gains have been made, and concerns expressed about the adequacy and relevancy of many training and employment services, little systemic data is available to comprehensively document the extent to which existing policies, practices, and procedures facilitate or impede the realization of significant positive employment outcomes for the people served. There is also a dearth of empirical data available concerning the interaction of personal and environmental factors that may contribute to successful participation in valued, inclusive, community-based employment. Moreover, little information is available regarding the nature of participation and the richness of opportunity for people with significant disabilities to become equal and valued participants within the workplace and community.

If meaningful community-based employment options are to expand and improve to meet demand, then professional organisations, agency leaders, service providers, and government and local communities alike must systematically analyse both successes and challenges associated with their efforts. Moreover, this analysis must consider the views of people with disabilities and employers. After all, these are the people who experience most of the consequences of programmatic and policy initiatives. People with disabilities are

shouting out that they want to work and that they are capable of making a positive contribution to their local communities – what are they telling us that they need to participate and succeed? Are currently available options reflective of their values and preferences? What types of supports do people find to be the most appropriate and effective? What works and doesn't work for them as individuals? What are their views regarding the services and supports they receive, the costs of those services and supports, and the manner in which they are delivered? How would they like to be involved in the planning, delivery, and evaluation of employment services? What impact has competitive employment had on their quality of life?

The implementation and philosophical challenges of creating meaningful employment for people with significant disabilities are no less important today than they were when the inclusive employment initiative began. In fact, these challenges are probably greater now because of increased demand. Clearly, open employment outcomes have proved superior to those of a more segregated nature. However, these outcomes have had differential effects for different groups of people - with those experiencing the most significant disabilities (for whom the initiative was originally designed) being significantly underserved. Furthermore, the employment and lifestyle changes that were promised have not always been realized and unfortunately do not compare favourably with the employment expectations of the broader community.

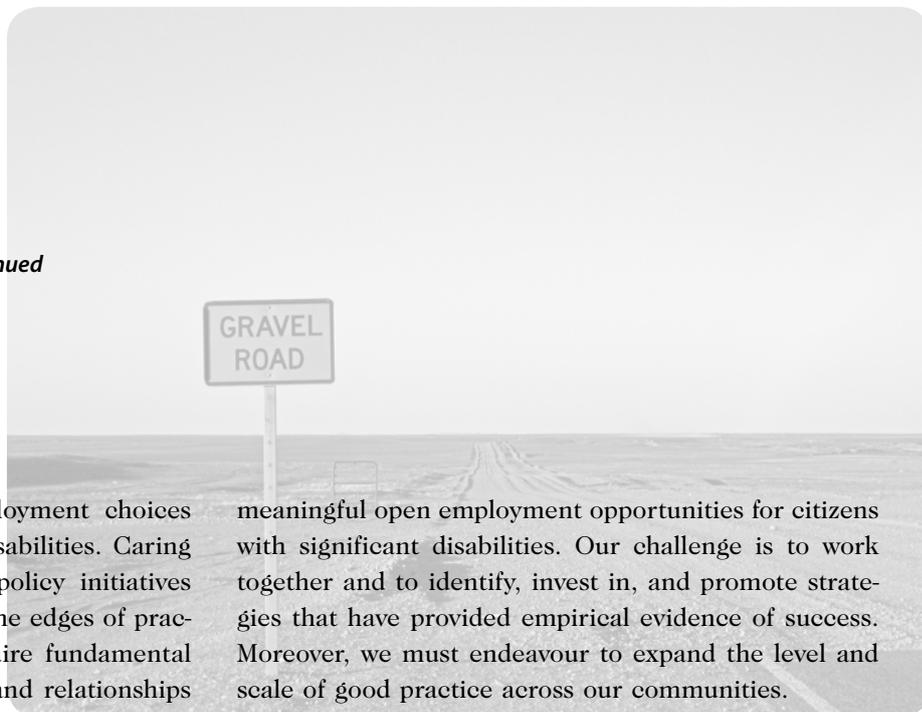
There is great diversity and talent within our local communities, and we all need each other to feel connected, competent, valued and secure. The future success of our endeavours ultimately depends upon community planning partners who work together to overcome identified implementation challenges and philosophical differences and commit to developing a shared vision of a preferred future that

people with disabilities are shouting out that they want to work

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The Road to Employment Success

continued



expands the range of inclusive employment choices available to people with significant disabilities. Caring will not be enough, legislation and policy initiatives will not be enough, tinkering around the edges of practice will not be enough. We will require fundamental changes in the roles, responsibilities and relationships that influence our work and interactions. Access to accurate information, research data, relevant training and technical assistance, will be necessary to support our endeavours. As advocates and practitioners we will need to rethink our goals, our values, our practices, our resolve, and restructure our training and support systems to work more effectively and efficiently toward employment outcomes of significance.

Much has been accomplished. Many of the accomplishments have been extraordinary and have enabled us to create a vision of what we can achieve in terms of

meaningful open employment opportunities for citizens with significant disabilities. Our challenge is to work together and to identify, invest in, and promote strategies that have provided empirical evidence of success. Moreover, we must endeavour to expand the level and scale of good practice across our communities.

Many people with significant disabilities, and their families, have been very patient with the professionals and community members who serve them. After more than thirty years isn't it time to stop testing the limits of their patience

After more than thirty years
isn't it time . . .

and to finally complete that promised road to inclusive community-based employment? ●

Jerry has been a long time member of ASID and is also currently an editorial consultant for the Journal of Intellectual and Developmental Disability and holds an academic adjunct position at Flinders University. jerry.ford@flinders.edu.au.



COMING SOON - 2016 ASID Road Show

The IASSID conference is being held in Melbourne in August 2016 and renowned international speakers are coming in droves to our beautiful little piece of the Earth.

This offers ASID Australasia a unique opportunity of inviting these speakers to expand their visit to experience the amazing scenery and flavours of our part of the world more fully, whilst extending the reach of their presentations and research and expanding their professional networks through workshops, seminars and round table discussions in each of the ASID regions - Western Australia, Northern Territories, South Australia, Queensland, New South Wales, Victoria, Tasmania and New Zealand.

More updates to come as the regional events are finalised

Judy Garriock, ASID Australasia 2016 Conference Convenor

Disclaimer: This initiative is not part of the 2016 IASSID program. ASID Australasia and IASSID are two independent entities and are not to be mistaken as partners in this initiative.

upcoming events

11 - 13 Apr 2016	9th World Assembly of Disabled People's International New Delhi, India
19 Apr 2016	ASID WA Sundowner Disability Services Commission asid.asn.au/events/33_asid_wa_sundowner
25 - 26 Apr 2016	Pacific Rim International Conference on Disability and Diversity Hawai'i, USA
17 May 2016 9am - 5pm	Australian Network on Disability Conference Dockside Conference Centre, Cockle Bay Wharf, Sydney www.and.org.au/pages/and-conference-2016.html
18 - 20 May 2016	Third International Conference on Child Disability Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan
22 - 28 May 2016	Macular Degeneration Awareness Week www.mdfoundation.com.au
10 - 11 Aug 2016	Disability Employment Conference 2016 Crown Promenade, Melbourne disabilityemployment.org.au/events-and-training/conference/
14 - 19 Aug 2016	IASSIDD 15th World Congress Convention and Exhibition Centre, Melbourne www.iasidd.org/conference/index.php/HPC/IWC/index
15 - 16 Sep 2016	NSW Council for Intellectual Disability Annual Conference. Doltone House, Pymont Sydney. www.nswcid.org.au/blog/save-the-date-cid-conference-2016.html
3 - 4 Nov 2016	ASID NZ 2016 Conference Brentwood Hotel, Wellington asid.asn.au/events/32_asid_nz_2016_conference
8 - 10 Nov 2017	Australasian Society for Intellectual Disability Annual Board Conference The Grand Chancellor Hotel, Hobart www.asid.asn.au

If you want to advertise in IDA's upcoming events section, please e-mail: darryleen.wiggins@startas.org



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ASID is travelling the country and coming to a town near you!
Details coming soon!

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2017 ASID Conference Pushing Boundaries

The Grand Chancellor Hotel
Hobart, Tasmania.

8th – 10th November 2017

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