

Your Voice, Your Choice.



THE DISABILITY
TRUST

FEBRUARY 2012

Our Children Deserve Better



Supported
Living Fund

Community Service
Workers set for
Pay increase

*Every Australian
Counts campaign
going strong*



...creating an inclusive world

Welcome to Your Choice, Your Voice

Hi, and welcome to the new look Newsletter from the Disability Trust. You will have noticed we have a brighter, more colourful front page and a new name - "Your Voice, Your Choice". We also have a wider coverage of news, events and information, covering local, State and National topics. As we move to the National Insurance Disability Scheme, and the massive change it will bring for people with a disability in Australia, "Your Voice, Your Choice" will aim to provide the questions, and hopefully most of the answers, that will keep you informed and able

to use your voice to achieve your choice.

If there is a topic, issue, program, funding, article, event, or anything, that you think that other people should know about, then contact us at info@disabilitytrust.org.au.

This month our main article is about a mums reaction to comments about people with a disability in the media, we cover the pay rise for workers in the Social and Community sector, we check in with the Every Australian Counts campaign to get the NDIS up and running, and we look over the Supported Living fund and the upcoming seminars on how to access the funding.

Disability Information Assistance Line (DIAL)

Illawarra and Shellharbour

Providing information for people with disabilities, carers, families, service providers we are a central point of contact for information provision about disability services including:

- Programs, aids and equipment
- Referral to appropriate services
- Self advocacy and support groups
- Forums and Workshops
- Illawarra and Shoalhaven Disability News - free monthly newsletter

Phone 4255 8000 or email

info@disabilitytrust.org.au.



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Shoalhaven Information and Advocacy (SIA)

Kiama and Shoalhaven

Providing information and individual advocacy for people with disabilities, carers, families, service providers we are a central point of contact for information provision about disability services including:

Our services include:

- Forums and workshops
- Individual advocacy and support
- Referral to appropriate services
- Counselling - short term access to local counselling services

Phone 4428 9002 or email

info@disabilitytrust.org.au.



Human Services

Ageing, Disability & Home Care

Would you like to receive this newsletter in printed form or by email?



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Contact: The Disability Trust on info@disabilitytrust.org.au

100-102 Jardine Street Fairy Meadow NSW 2519

Postal: PO Box 395 Fairy Meadow NSW 2519

Phone: 4255 8000 or Fax: 4255 8088 Website:

www.disabilitytrust.org.au

The newsletter is prepared by the Information and Advocacy Service aimed at covering a wide variety of services and issues across the disability sector. The views expressed in this newsletter are not necessarily those of The Disability Trust. Should you have a story or information that you would like included in the newsletter please contact the Information and Advocacy Service.

Our Children Deserve Better



*Two mums are using rock music to get their message out loud and clear, writes freelance writer and It's No Joke supporter **Jane Dillon**.*

When Larissa Ianni and Livian Jones turned on their televisions 12 months ago and saw a commentator on a commercial channel making blatant remarks about “retards”, they saw red.

As the mothers of seven-year-olds, including Anthony, who is diagnosed with global developmental delay, and Caleb, who is diagnosed with autism spectrum disorder, the women have spent their lives protecting their children from the ignorance of strangers.

(During a debate about education for children with disabilities on Seven's *Weekend Sunrise*, social commentator Prue MacSween said that such children should be put somewhere they can be properly trained – away from kids without special needs – that inclusive education holds back “normal” children, and that schools should be gender-segregated because “boys are so retarded”. It triggered a Facebook backlash and the show consequently held a follow-up segment, involving mums Ianni and Jones and SA politician Kelly Vincent.

Ianni says: “Anthony is just a little boy; an absolute joy with a loving and playful nature. So I naturally rile [up] when I see people visibly pointing at him in public. Fortunately, he's too young to understand at the moment, but if the public sees from the media that it's okay to make people with disabilities the butt of tasteless jokes, it's only a matter of time before he will be ridiculed for something utterly beyond his control. Livian and I started working together to bring to the attention of policy-makers the need for changes to the Disability Discrimination Act (1992).”

Jones weighs in, saying it's “outrageous in this day and age that people think publicly

ridiculing someone with special needs is amusing”.

Central to their lobbying, and reflective of Ianni's musical roots (her husband is bass guitarist in Sydney band Odyssey and her grandfather was 60s and 70s promoter and Sunshine Records head Ivan Dayman), are public gigs to raise awareness about disability vilification.

In March, Angry Anderson, Peter Northcote and Odyssey headlined the first Rockin' for Rights gig in Sydney, playing to a packed crowd. The success of the event saw members of the public demand an encore performance, which will be held in October.

Angry Anderson will once again headline the event.



“The introduction of the Disability Discrimination Act in 1992 was a ground-breaking moment in Australia's history.

However, it is missing a vital provision to protect people with disabilities from disability vilification” Ianni says. “Nearly 20 per cent of Australians have a disability of some kind and it is currently legal for them to be subjected to public ridicule, bigotry and general ignorance, which is unacceptable. People are protected from vilification about race, religion, gender and sexuality, yet people with disabilities have no such protections other than in Tasmania.”

Jones adds: “Australia is a socially and culturally tolerant country in many respects, yet our attitudes to people with disabilities are often very out-dated. As a parent of a child with special needs, I want to ensure my child grows up in a country where he is treated with the same respect we afford everyone else.”

Jones says the legislative gap in outlawing vilification of people with disabilities is contrary to Article 16 of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, which is designed to protect people with disabilities from abuse. “No mother would ever want their child exposed to bullying, harassment or ridicule and if we are not socially mature

enough to self-regulate offensive comments, then our legislation needs to be amended.”

Source - Link Disability Magazine Dec 2011. Article by Jane Dillon. Subscriptions to Link can be done at www.linkonline.com.au or by phoning (08) 8210 3223.

Supported Living Fund for People with a disability

The NSW Government has announced that Family Advocacy will run a series of information sessions about supported living for people with a disability, their families and carers.

Minister for Disability Services Andrew Constance said Family Advocacy, in partnership with the NSW Council for Intellectual Disability, will assist people with a disability, their families and carers to build person-centred and sustainable living arrangements which are flexible and individualised.

“We have committed \$60 million to the Supported Living Fund over the next five years, as part of Stronger Together 2, to provide support for 300 individuals,” Mr Constance said.

Around 30 consultation sessions about were held throughout the state last year which were attended by 270 people. A web survey was also conducted with more than 100 responses received.

Expressions of interest were then called earlier this month for the first 100 Supported Living Fund places. People who are interested in supported living are now being invited to attend family information sessions over the next two months. A further round of expressions of interest will be conducted later this year for the second year intake of 100 places.

For information session details call Family Advocacy on 1800 620 588, and for more information about the Supported Living Fund go to [www.adhc.nsw.gov.au/individuals/support/somewhere to live/slfregistrations](http://www.adhc.nsw.gov.au/individuals/support/somewhere%20to%20live/slfregistrations).



Human Services
Ageing, Disability & Home Care

ADHC 2010-11 Achievements Report now available

The report highlights ADHC achievements for 2010-11 and provides useful and meaningful stories to help people understand how important ADHC services and programs are in the lives of so many individuals and families in the community. Download the Achievements Report at [www.adhc.nsw.gov.au\data/assets/file/00112513991136 ADHC Annual Report EXT WEB.pdf](http://www.adhc.nsw.gov.au/data/assets/file/00112513991136_ADHC_Annual_Report_EXT_WEB.pdf).

Happy Birthday Every Australian Counts campaign



The Every Australian Counts campaign for the National Disability Insurance Scheme celebrated its 1st Birthday on the Australia Day. On the first birthday they are 100,000 supporters strong, have held ground-breaking national events and have built a case for the creation of the NDIS in every corner of the nation.

In 2012 they want to build their supporter numbers to 200,000, see the National Disability Insurance Agency legislated, and launch sites announced. To make this happen, they need to build on their political support. So far 84 of our Federal MPs have said "I count" and appeared in a campaign "I Count" photo. However there are 66, more than one-third, who are yet to appear. Find out if your MP needs to have a photo taken www.everyaustraliancounts.com.au. If they are yet to show their support, you can find out how to help at www.everyaustraliancounts.com.au/mp_action. While you're checking on your MP, take a minute to ask a friend to join the campaign at [www.everyaustraliancounts.com.au/send to a friend](http://www.everyaustraliancounts.com.au/send_to_a_friend).

For more information go to www.everyaustraliancounts.com.au. They have a wide range of posters, stickers, postcards and other campaign material, comprehensive information on the NDIS and excellent videos of people with disabilities and how they will benefit from the NDIS.

Illawarra Crossroads



Crossroads is an interdenominational Christian Fellowship for people with disabilities.

Crossroads is open to all people with a disability aged 18+, their carers and family members. Activities include games, craft, dancing, singing, devotions and supper.

Wollongong Crossroads

Held the first Friday of every month, from 7.00pm to 9.00pm at the Congregational Church Hall, corner of Market and Coombs St, Wollongong.

Cost is free. Contact Colin and Roberta Vauvert on 0421 808 618 or 0418 418 361 for more information.

Shoalhaven Crossroads

From 7.15pm to 9.15pm on the second Friday of each month (Feb to Nov) at the Nowra Baptist Church, Old Southern Road, South Nowra.

Cost is \$10 for the whole year or \$2 per meeting. Transport can be arranged. Call Tony Bate on 4423 2525 or Beth Dodd 4421 8137.

Shellharbour Crossroads

Held the second Saturday, 6.30pm to 9pm at the Salvation Army Hall, corner of Leawarra and Ulster Ave, Shellharbour. Transport can be arranged if you live between Dapto and Shellharbour and need transport.

Cost is \$25 for the year or \$5 on the night. For enquiries contact Lynda Dean on 0432 201 897.

Bethzatha Disco

Bethzatha Fellowship with the Disabled hold a monthly disco for people with a disability on the second Friday of the month at St John Vianney's School Hall, Fairy Meadow. However due to building being in progress the disco will be moved to St Brigid's School Hall, Gwynneville, with access from Vickery Street for the months of February and March and possibly April.

The night consists of dancing, supper and Lucky Door Prizes

No flashing lights and low level music. Everyone is welcome. The cost is \$2.

Dates - 10th Feb, 9th March, 13th April, 11th May, 8th June, 13th July, 10th August, 14th Sept, 12th Oct, 9th Nov

Contact Margaret Chadwick on 4283 3135 for more information.

Trithegong Triathlon and Kids Fund

The Disability Trust is the community partner again this year for the upcoming RMB Trithegong Triathlon Festival on Saturday and Sunday 10 & 11 March 2012 at the Wollongong Harbour precinct.

If you would like to support the event as a volunteer please contact kidsfund@disabilitytrust.org.au or call Matthew Martin on 4255 8034.

For more information on the fundraising efforts of the Trithegong Triathlon go to <http://www.everydayhero.com.au/trithegong>. They are encouraging people to join our team and fundraise for Kids Fund or anyone can just donate now by choosing a person in the team and making an instant donation.

The Disability Trust is proud to be the community partner and is fundraising for Kids Fund. Kids Fund has been providing assistance to families of children with disabilities since 1998 with the purchase of essential aids and equipment to children with a disability in the Illawarra.

The fund is generated entirely through community and corporate donations and is managed by The Disability Trust. Information and application forms can be found on www.kidsfund.org.au or by calling 4255 8000.



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Equipment for our children with disabilities

Carers NSW Basic Computer Courses

IDEAS and Carers NSW are hosting free computer workshops.

When - Monday 5th March at Wollongong Library, Tom Thumb Room or

Tuesday 6th March Sassafras Room, Ribbonwood Centre, 93 - 109 Princes Highway, Dapto

Time - 10am - 2pm with a break for a free lunch

Each group will have a maximum of 10 people. You will learn:

- How to use basic computer equipment
- How to use the internet
- How to set up an email account and how to communicate by email

Contact Rachel Spencer to reserve your place phone 4226 1597 or 1800 029 904.

Workshops for Women

Partners in Depression - A workshop for women supporting a friend, family member or partner with depression. This is a 6 week course at Illawarra Women's Health Centre. RSVP essential, call Monique Ferguson on 42561928.

When - Friday 10 Feb - Fri 16 March, 10 - 12.30pm

Making Money Count - Taking control of your finances. This is a 4 week course.

When - Tues 14 Feb - Tues 6 March, 10am-12pm

Both workshops are free. To RSVP for any of the special events above or for further information please call 4255 6800.

Next of Kin Register



NSW Police Force

The Next of Kin Register is FREE, and enables persons living alone to record their details at the local police station. The register holds information of your

nominated Next of Kin, doctors and dentist details and any medical alerts. This information may assist the ambulance and police in an emergency situation, to contact a relative or other nominated person to inform of your situation.

You will be provided with a key ring and a sticker that is to be placed on your home phone to alert emergency services that you are registered with the Next of Kin Program.

To register, attend your local Police Station and ask to speak with the Crime Prevention Officer about the Next of Kin Program.

Are you caring for a relative or friend?



If you provide physical, emotional or financial care for someone with a chronic health issue/disability or an older person, this 3 day Carer Course is for you.

Where - Committee Meeting Room, Showground Pavilion, Scenic Drive, Nowra

When - Tues 14th, 21st and 28th Feb, 10am until 3.00pm

(Morning tea & Lunch provided)

Topics include: Services available for support, Looking after yourself, Stress Management and Relaxation, Practical Caring Tips, Legal and Financial issues

Bookings - Anglicare Shoalhaven Community Care 4423 1018

For Program information call Naomi Spencer, Carer Counsellor, Kiama Hospital, Monday or Tuesday ph 4232 0153 or Jenny Wightman, Carer Counsellor, 'Your Time' program, Monday, Tuesday, Thursday 4423 1018.

If you need additional help/respite to be able to attend call the Carer Respite Centre 1800 052 222.

A project of NSW Health Carer Program and 'Your Time' Carer Counselling, Support & Advocacy Program.

From Outlaws Towards Inclusion



A conference on 10 years of challenges and progress in rights and human services for people with intellectual disability in contact with the criminal justice system. The Conference marks 10 years since the release of The Framework Report.

This was a study of the human service needs of offenders with intellectual disability and those at risk of offending. The Framework Report was written by NSW CID & IDRS.

When - February 17, 2012. 9am to 5pm with drinks to follow

Where - at the University of NSW, Kensington

Guest Speakers include:

- Greg Smith - Attorney General and Minister for Justice
- Matt Frize and Natalie Marmone - ADHC Community Justice Program
- John Basson - forensic psychiatrist
- Professor Eileen Baldry – UNSW

Plus representatives from IDRS, NSW CID, Corrective Services NSW and more.

For all enquiries please contact IDRS.

Phone - 9318 0144

Email - rego@idrs.org.au

Program updates and venue maps available at www.idrs.org.au from Jan 2012.

Independent Living Support Initiative

House
with No
Steps



If you are a person with a disability with low to moderate support needs who wishes to live more independently,

and you live with ageing parents or carers,

then the “Independent Living Support Initiative” could be for you.

House With No Steps will provide up to 35hours/week support to assist you to move from family-based living arrangements to more independent living arrangements through person centred planning, intensive living skills development and the development of effective support networks, including a circle of support.

How do I get the information and applications and find out more about the service?

Contact Mark de Jong – 0478 493 899 or mdejong@hwns.com.au.

Lift

A Therapeutic Group for men and women experiencing anxiety and/or depression.

- Presents principles from both Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT) and Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT).
- Learn about what keeps anxiety and depression going and how to reverse the cycle.
- Discover how to improve relationships and build your support network

When: Fri 3rd, 10th, 17th, 24th Feb and 2nd March, 10:00am - 12:30pm

Venue: CatholicCare, 25 - 27 Auburn St, Wollongong

Cost: \$20 per session

Bookings essential, phone 4254 9316.

Grassroots Parenting

Parenting Program sessions give parents an understanding of children's behaviour, provide strategies for developing effective discipline, encourage positive behaviours and build resilience and self esteem in families.

Where: CatholicCare Nowra, Worrigeer St, Nowra Tuesday Mornings from 10am-12:30pm

When: Term 1 - 7th Feb to 20th March 2012

For bookings or information call 4421 8248.



Me and My Kids

A group for parents who have had their children removed from their care. This program takes place in a secure and safe environment and assist participants to identify their parenting skills, strengths and resources and to develop more of these skills.

The workshop explores:

- grief and loss – understand the impact of grief and loss on their lives and their children's
- understanding emotions for a healthy relationship
- child development
- how to communicate effectively for a healthy relationship
- conflict resolution for a healthy relationship
- understanding discipline for a healthy relationship
- understanding your parenting style for a healthy relationship
- boundaries for a healthy relationship

When - 10am to 12.30pm - Thurs 2nd, 9th, 16th, 23rd Feb, 1st, 8th March.

Where - CatholicCare, 55 Worrigea St, Nowra

Bookings essential, phone 4421 8248.

Michael Pursues his Passion

Few people at The Telstra 500 Super V8s Sydney Olympic Park event would have enjoyed themselves more than Michael Reid. He attended the Supercars Grand final Event with the support of his Disability Trust Client Care Facilitator, Irene Atley.



Michael has had more than his share of challenges; being diagnosed with Duchene Muscular Dystrophy as a child. He is now embarking upon

a Transition to Work Program with Greenacres.

Irene surprised Michael and organised to fulfil

his long held dream; to meet his favourite team, Fords Stone Brother's Racing Team. Stone Brothers accommodated Michael with his own host Chief Mechanic to the Stone Brothers - Scott Ruddock.

Scott gave Michael a 40 minute guided tour of the Pits, showed him all the cars and answered all his questions. Michael met all the drivers and mechanics; Jaimie Wincup being his favourite. He had posters autographed by all the drivers and the photos taken of Michael and the Grid girls was a highlight of the trip.

Michael says he is planning the same trip next year!



PRA's New Outlook



PRA (Psychiatric Rehabilitation Australia) is a non-government social enterprise which aims to enable people to become

empowered to improve their level of mental health and wellbeing in the community. PRA services include employment, community support, structured activities, advocacy and respite.

They are happy to announce the new "New Outlook Activity Program". The program commences January 9th and will conclude at the end of March 2012. People wishing to become members are welcome to visit New Outlook at any time during our opening hours. However, if you wish to speak with staff and discuss membership it is advisable to make an appointment.

Contact 1300 779 270 or there is more information at www.pra.org.au. They are located at 3 Station St, Wollongong.

King v Jetstar: Up in the air without a flight plan

Disability Discrimination Commissioner Graeme Innes explains the case that got everyone talking, and seeks your help with the next step.

As you've no doubt heard, Jetstar's "two wheelchair" policy - they will only carry two travellers who use a wheelchair on their narrow-bodied aircraft - was the subject of a recent court decision, and much media and online discussion.

Sheila King lodged a Disability Discrimination Act complaint against Jetstar when she was refused carriage on a flight between Adelaide and Brisbane in 2008. The basis for Jetstar's refusal of service was that there were already two people using wheelchairs travelling on that flight.

Sheila was offered carriage on a later flight, but this did not suit her other travel arrangements, and she had to travel with another airline at an increased cost.

There was bitter disappointment among many Australians with disability, and their family and friends, when the decision went against Sheila. I share that disappointment. There is an appeal planned from the decision.

While Jetstar's "two wheelchair" policy is also practised by Virgin Blue, and by Tiger, Jetstar's parent airline Qantas, do not have this policy. Nor do Virgin internationally. I know of no other airline in the world flying big jets which does.

For the rest of the article and Graeme's call for support go to www.abc.net.au/rampup/articles/2012/01/30/3418828.htm.

Graeme Innes is Australia's Disability Discrimination Commissioner. Follow him on Twitter [@graemeinnes](https://twitter.com/graemeinnes).

Board Development Training Opportunity

NDS is inviting current board members of not-for-profit organisations, funded by ADHC in the disability sector, to attend a customised Australian Institute of Company Directors

Foundations of Directorship three day course at no cost to participants. Travel assistance is available to eligible participants. Applications close on 17 February 2012. For more information contact Megan Sandford, NDS NSW on 9256 3103 or by email megan.sandford@nds.org.au.

Information for people dealing with young carers

A straightforward and easy-to-read booklet for anyone dealing with young carers has recently been released by ADHC.

Identifying and supporting young carers: A guide for service providers is a useful resource for those needing to know more about young carers in NSW. The booklet defines young carers and the tasks they carry out and covers issues to be mindful of with young carers and support services.

To download a copy of *Identifying and supporting young carers*, go to http://www.sprc.unsw.edu.au/media/File/Young_Carers_Report_Final_2011.pdf.

There are a number of other extremely useful publications from ADHC such as fliers for Supported Living Fund seminars and the At Home with Dementia manual at www.adhc.nsw.gov.au/publications/documents. All the publications can be searched by name and topic.

New ABC website—Technology Explained

New technologies have had a profound effect on the way we live, communicate and do business globally - particularly in the last 10 years. We may be living through a Digital Revolution, but trying to understand many of the new technologies available can be daunting. The ABC *Technology Explained* initiative aims to dispel the myths around new technologies and devices, and explore the kinds of journeys and possibilities they can and will take us on in an ever-changing, technology driven world. Whether you simply want to try Twitter or Facebook, or subscribe to your favourite radio program podcast go to www.abc.net.au/technology/techexplained/.

Landmark decision on equal pay for the Social and Community Services Sector



The Full Bench of Fair Work Australia (FWA) handed down a landmark decision on Wednesday 1st February that provides wage increases aimed

at ensuring pay equity for non-government Social and Community Services workers across the country.

The wage increases announced in today's decision should help relieve the workforce shortages experienced in the disability sector. The demand for workers will increase significantly when the proposed National Disability Insurance Scheme is established.

Today's decision grants wage increases similar to those sought by the Commonwealth and the Unions in their joint submission last year, with the rates of increase for the various grades of workers from the Modernised SACS Award: Social and Community Services/Crisis Accommodation Workers, who were covered by the Case, ranging from a 19% increase for Grade 2 to a 41% increase for Grade 8.

FWA has, however, extended the period of implementation of the increase from the six years proposed in the joint submission to eight years, commencing 1 December 2012 and ending 1 December 2020. The Full Bench made this decision "... in recognition of the potential effects of the Equal Remuneration Order (ERO) on employment and service provision and on state finances".

The additional cumulative annual loadings of 1% over four years (in recognition of sector bargaining impediments and to ensure consistency with the Queensland ERO) sought in the joint submission have instead been granted as a 4% increase paid in nine equal instalments over the same period as the ERO.

Finally the ERO will stand alone, meaning that it sits outside the Award. This provision will ensure that the ERO increases remain separate from the annual wage case

adjustments to Award rates.

Source: NDS News Update 1 February 2012

New Director General for the Department of Family and Community Services

In December Mr Jim Moore was appointed to the position of Director General of Family and Community Services (FACS).

"In NSW Mr Moore has been pivotal in changing the way disability services are delivered, particularly a greater reliance on non-government organisations" said Minister for Family and Community Services Pru Goward. Minister for Disability Services and Minister for Ageing Andrew Constance also welcomed the appointment.

New website for IDRS



The IDRS website was re-vamped and completely changed in 2011. It is now online with details of IDRS, services they offer, and access to

many resources they have produced over the years.

The Intellectual Disability Rights Service (IDRS) is a specialist legal advocacy service for people with intellectual disability in New South Wales. We work with and for people with intellectual disability to exercise and advance their rights. The new website is at www.idrs.org.au.

Board Development Training Opportunity

NDS is inviting current board members of not-for-profit organisations, funded by ADHC in the disability sector, to attend a customised Australian Institute of Company Directors Foundations of Directorship three day course at no cost to participants. Travel assistance is available to eligible participants. Applications close on 17 February 2012. For more information contact Megan Sandford, NDS NSW on 9256 3103 or by email megan.sandford@nds.org.au.

The Financial Implications of Individualised Funding

The Industry Development Fund is hosting regional forums to discuss the implications of individualised funding within not for profit disability providers. Previously a focus group in Sydney that received an overwhelming response was held and as such it was agreed to run similar session within regions for people to attend. The session in Wollongong is on Tuesday 6 March 2012. There are no sessions south of Wollongong.

To register go to <https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/HJRXQL3>, to download. The sessions are open to all organisations funded by Ageing, Disability and Home Care. For more information contact Pauline Stanley, NDS NSW on 9256 3102 or at pauline.stanley@nds.org.au.

Update on the Mental Health Commission for NSW

The Mental Health Commission Bill 2011 was introduced to Parliament on 24 November. The Bill sets out the internal structures, principles, functions and powers that will govern the work of the Mental Health Commission. It also sets out responsibilities that will apply to the range of government agencies providing services that people with mental illness, their families and carers want to use. Importantly, the Mental Health Commission includes in its leadership someone who has or has had mental illness.

Following the Bill's passage through Parliament, the Government is planning to ensure that the Mental Health Commission is fully operational from 1 July 2012. Further information is available at www.health.nsw.gov.au/mhdao.

National Disability Research and Development Steering Committee

Disability Services Ministers have endorsed the National Disability Research and Development Agenda.

The Research Agenda aims to increase the focus in research on issues facing people with disability and seeks to provide sound evidence for future policy and practice decisions that will ultimately lead to improved outcomes for Australians with disability.

The Australian, State and Territory governments have committed funding for disability research and development. This funding supports the delivery of the objectives and reform priorities of the National Disability Agreement and the National Disability Strategy. Priority will be given to funding research, projects and initiatives that seek to adopt partnerships and collaborations with the disability sector, with people with disability or with other relevant sectors and disciplines.

Information on how to apply for funding, details of commissioned research and the outcomes of research undertaken is at the Disability Policy and Research Working Group website www.dprwg.gov.au/research-development.

For more information relating to the Agenda, contact Ms Mary Osborn, Senior Policy Officer, DPRWG Secretariat by email at mary.osborn@facs.nsw.gov.au.

TTW Service Provider Workshops

Following the success of the previous 'Engaging and Supporting Employer Partnerships' workshops, the Australian Network on Disability (AND) will deliver 14 workshops for Transition to Work (TTW) service providers in metropolitan and regional NSW in March 2012. Further information on AND can be found at their website www.and.org.au.

The Workshops have also been designed to fit within the broader policy environment (state and commonwealth) with regards to increasing employment outcomes for people with a disability.

For further information please contact Laurence Kerr, Project Officer ADHC on 8270 2120 or laurence.kerr@facs.nsw.gov.au. ADHC strongly encourages organisations to be represented at these workshops.

For Your Calendar...

VALID Having A Say Conference - 8th to 10th Feb

A Self Advocacy conference at Deakin University, VIC. For more information call 03 9416 4003 or go to www.valid.org.au

NDS Annual State Conference – 13th to 14th Feb

At Swissotel, Sydney. We've asked Government to make NSW NDIS ready by 2014 and to support NGO services to be the provider of choice for people with disability and carers. Contact Miriam on 9256 3133.

International Duchenne Awareness Week - 12th to 18th Feb

Duchenne Muscular Dystrophy is the number one life limiting disorder of childhood globally. Each year around the world, nearly 20,000 children, mostly boys, are born with the disorder. - Contact: Email: info@parentproject.org.au Website: www.parentproject.org.au/html

International Asperger Day - 18th Feb

International Asperger's Day is an opportunity to celebrate the achievements of people with Asperger's Syndrome. Contact Asperger Services Australia on (07) 3865 2911, Website: www.asperger.asn.au

National Sunnies for Sight Day - 24th Feb

International Centre for Eyecare Education- 185 million people are blind or vision impaired simply because they don't have glasses! Register to participate in National Sunnies for Sight Day today and you will help give sight to people in the developing world. All donations go towards supporting the work of ICEE in Australia and around the world - Contact: 1300 664 233 Website: www.sunniesforsight.org

National Epilepsy Month - 1st - 31st March

Epilepsy Australia - March is National Epilepsy Awareness Month, which includes a range of events, community activities and media campaigns around Australia to raise awareness of epilepsy. Events will culminate in Purple Daisy Day for epilepsy awareness on March 26th when everyone is encouraged to

wear purple for epilepsy. Contact 9674 9966
Email: epilepsy@epilepsyaustralia.net,
Website: www.epilepsyaustralia.net

Clean Up Australia Day - 4th March

Clean Up Australia Day encourages thousands of Australians to take to their local parks, beach, bushland, street and really help make a difference to their local environment. So do your bit for the environment and get involved in the nation's largest community event - Contact 1800 282 329 Email: cleanup@cleanup.com.au, Website: www.cleanupaustraliaday.org.au

World Glaucoma Week - 11th – 17th March

This week seeks to raise awareness of this "silent" eye condition. In Australia, Glaucoma is a major cause of sight lose in adults over the age of 40. Australians are encouraged during this week to undertake an eye check as early diagnosis and appropriate treatment are paramount. Contact: 1800 500 880 Email: glaucoma@glaucoma.org.au, Website: www.glaucoma.org.au

International Women's Day - 8th March

This day is celebrated in many countries around the world. It is an occasion for looking back on past struggles and accomplishments and more importantly, for looking ahead to the untapped potential and opportunities that await future generations of women - Contact www.internationalwomensday.org.au phone 6225 5810.

World's Greatest Shave 15 - 17th March

The World's Greatest Shave encourages companies, individuals and groups to shave or colour their hair to show their support for leukaemia patients and to raise money to help continue supporting patients and families living with leukaemia and related blood disorders. Contact www.worldsgreatestshave.com or The Leukaemia Foundation on 1800 500 088.

Harmony Day - 21st March

Department of Immigration and Citizenship - A day when all Australians celebrate our cultural diversity. The day is also The United Nations' International Day of Elimination of Racial discrimination. Contact www.harmony.gov.au.