

ISSUE 8

Newsletter



August 2011

Seeking interested people

Would you consider joining our dedicated team on the Management Committee? Please contact the office.

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Message from the Service Manager

Dear Readers

You may recall that Leisure Connections went through its recertification audit back in March 2011. Having our audit at this time of the year ('the wet') has resulted in it being postponed on a number of occasions over the past few years due to floods and cyclones. We have moved our next audit to November the 28th & 29th of this year to avoid the disruptions the wet brings.

As part of the quality audit process it is a requirement for DS funded services to give Service Users the opportunity to provide feedback on the services they receive. Due to the rescheduling of the audit Service Users/families/advocates will have received their 'second' ☺ Service User Satisfaction Surveys to complete for this year. We acknowledge that completing this survey can be time consuming and sometimes tedious so I would like to thank all those who have taken the time to complete and return their surveys. If you have yet to complete the survey we would greatly appreciate it if you could take the time to complete it and forward it into us before August the 31st. If you have miss placed your survey, please contact the office and we will send you another. Your feedback is important to us.

Service Users and Support Staff will also be given the opportunity to participate in the upcoming audit and you will be receiving a letter seeking your consent to participate shortly. Agreeing to participate, shows that you are interested in sharing your experiences relating to Leisure Connections therefore providing us with the opportunity to improve, or as reassurance that we are providing a quality service.

Leo Brunker

Service manager



COMMITTEE MEMBER PROFILE

Bill Butler

Until January, 1992 I had worked in Public Trust Office in various positions in Brisbane, Toowoomba and Cairns.

After my son Lindsay left school in 1992 there was a big void in his life and he spent most of his time listening to music. In 1993 Colleen contacted me about becoming a member of the management committee of Leisure Connections. I felt this was a service which would give Lindsay other interests and help him connect with the outside world. I made the right decision by joining the committee but my life took a new direction.

I had a vision of spending my time working on and developing the farm that Elsie and I own. My time then became divided between working on the farm and defending the rights of people with disabilities. I will continue to do so while I have the capabilities.

In about 1996 I accepted nomination for the position of Treasurer. A position I still hold.

My interest in defending the rights of people with disabilities has not only kept me on the committee of Leisure Connections but I also became a member of QPPD (Queensland Parents for People with a Disability Inc). I also have served on its committee for 5 years.

I was reared on a dairy farm until I was about 10 years old when my parents moved to Brisbane. For the first few years of my life I attended a 1 teacher school. A bit of history here--the teacher taught all grades to scholarship (year 7). In that era most children sat the scholarship examination at age 14 years and then left school. I consider that the teacher was very multi-skilled in the days before being multi-skilled became a buzz word.

Apart from my interest in defending the rights of people with disabilities my interests include my family. Elsie and I have 5 children and 15 grand-children. Twice a week I swim in a squad at the Tobruk pool.

Another interest is working on the farm. I also enjoy investing in the share market and I have made a study of this industry over many years.

My Story with Leisure Connections



Hi my name is Carmel and I am 27yrs old. I have been receiving support from Leisure Connections for the last 2 years. I have tried a variety of activities as I was trying to find the activity that best suited my needs. I have tried Tae Kwon Do, Water Aerobics, Movies and going for a coffee and walk. I currently receive support to go to Zumba on the Esplanade and I love it. The instructors are very good and supportive. My support worker helps me with my confidence and continues to encourage me towards my independence. I enjoy Zumba and it has helped me boost my energy levels, improve my motivation and has helped me to increase my self esteem. All this is thanks to the support I receive from Leisure Connections.

If you would like to tell your story please contact the Service Manager or Coordinator



NDIS | revolutionising disability services

Every Australian Counts is the campaign for the introduction of a National Disability Insurance Scheme. The NDIS will be a new support system for people with a disability, their families and carers. It will transform the way services are funded and delivered, ensuring people are better supported and enabling them to have **greater choice and control**.

We need every Australian to say that people with a disability, their families and carers are Australians too. That they are part of our community, and that they count. We need to show the government that there is widespread community support for change – and that the time for action has come.

On the Every Australian Counts website you can find out how the NDIS will help people with disabilities at home and at work, and the ways it will help children, families and students.

www.everyaustraliancounts.com.au

COMMITTEE COMMENTS



HURRAH!!! LET'S CELEBRATE



National Disability Insurance Scheme

The final recommendations from the Productivity Commission were handed to the federal government on Monday the 1st August. On Wednesday the 3rd August the Gillard government announced that it supported the concept of a National Disability Insurance Scheme and would work with the States and Territories to begin the process. Victoria has reportedly been chosen to trial the proposed National Disability Insurance Scheme. This trial should start in 2014 and go national the following year. The New South Wales Minister for Disability has also written to the commonwealth government stating that "NSW was ready, willing and able" to be part of the biggest social reform since the introduction of Medicare. He has proposed that the Hunter region of NSW be included in this trial. Tasmania has expressed its desire to be part of the initial roll out of the scheme. QLD has expressed in principle support but wish to carefully consider the final report before offering unconditional support. South Australia has the same stance as Queensland. Western Australia welcomes national reform but are reluctant to hand over "responsibility for disability services or funding to a national bureaucracy". ACT are supportive and Northern Territory have not released their reaction. All this is a long way off but it does look like there is quite a lot of support.

Interesting times ahead!

Queensland Disability Conference 2011

This biennial conference is being held in Cairns on the 22nd and 23rd September. This conference is open to anyone with an interest in disability, including people with a disability, their families, service providers and government and corporate partners. There will also be a conference dinner on Thursday 22nd September with the presentation of the Disability Action Week Awards. This conference provides an opportunity for people throughout the disability sector and the wider community to share information and ideas, create new connections and encourage innovation to make a difference for people with a disability. The fee for people with a disability or family members is \$50 which includes the dinner. A carer accompanying a person with a disability is Free. More information on the conference is included with this mail out. Please feel free to contact the office should you need an application form.

Annual General Meeting

It's that time of year again! We are sending out invitations soon for our AGM which is scheduled for 12th October. Currently we have seven members on the Management Committee and it would be wonderful if we could recruit five others. Two on the Committee are on the wrong side of 70 so recruitment of new members is becoming urgent. As an incorporated association we must have a Management Committee to continue to operate. As a family driven service the majority of committee members must be family members. I urge anyone who has a couple of hours to give for 11 months of the year to please contact Leo, our Service Manager. Although we do have to manage the service we also have a bit of fun at our meetings and you will find us welcoming and friendly. It is also satisfying to know that you are contributing to community.

Colleen Dolan
Hon. President – Management Committee

Useful Contact Numbers

Disability Services: Complaints: 0732247179 Enquiries: 1800177120(Toll Free) 40489 900(Cairns)
Disability Discrimination Legal Service: 1300 882 872
Direct Employment Services: 40 314 816
Rights in Action: 40 317 377

Sarah currently receives support from Leisure Connections. Sarah's support person Elsa has been helping Sarah to gain fitness for a fundraising Charity Ride. Sarah has asked for Leisure Connections support by printing her story in the newsletter. Please take the time to read her message.



My name is Sarah Skelton I am 33 years old, I have many dreams and aspirations for my life. I am a mother, a wife, a great friend and part of the community; some of you will know me from Bumble Bee Tree Lopping Services. I am affected by a rare degenerative neurological condition called Friedreich Ataxia (FA) which to date has no effective treatment or cure.

FA is a rare inherited disease that causes progressive damage to the nervous system resulting in the degeneration of nerve tissue in the spinal cord and nerves that control muscle movement in the arms and legs. Other features of this condition besides the gradual loss of strength and sensation in the arms and legs are muscle stiffness (spasticity), impaired speech; some can also develop diabetes, impaired vision, hearing loss, or an abnormal curvature of the spine (scoliosis) and most individuals often have a form of heart disease called hypertrophic cardiomyopathy (that enlarges and weakens the heart muscle).

On the 25th September which is International Ataxia Awareness Day I will be riding 30km on my hand cycle to fundraise money for FARA (Friedreich's Ataxia Research Association) to continue researching for a treatment & ultimately a cure for FA. The organisation is self funded through the support of many individuals who donate money to this cause. They receive no Government funding for the clinics, drug trials and stem cell research projects. The team of FARA are driven to find a cure or treatment for this disease as most of them have a family member that have FA.

There are 150 families in Australia living with this debilitating condition and for the last 8 years they have been able to support these families through funding of 2 clinics in Melbourne and Brisbane. This includes physiotherapists and speech pathologists which come at no cost to the family who use these clinics but in recent times they are now struggling to continue.

For me the handcycle ride will be one of the greatest personal challenges, not just mentally but physically as my condition has progressed to the stage where I am wheelchair bound. With the support of my family and close friends I have been training hard for this event. I am an extremely proud person who continues to try to live my daily life without help but I am now asking everyone to get behind me to help raise money for this worthy cause. You can help by donating money at www.everydayhero.com.au/sarah4fara.

Thank you for giving me your time and the opportunity to share my story with you.

Sarah Skelton

There will be a Gold Coin Donation BBQ on the 25th September at 12pm on the Esplanade (The BBQ area between Muddies and the Skate Park) after Sarah completes her ride. If you will be attending please RSVP to sarah4fara@hotmail.com



It's amazing the healing and empowering role that the community can bring to our lives. The sense of belonging we feel when we have an active role in our communities can give us a deeper sense of meaning and purpose.

It's Cairns Festival Time

August 19th – September 4th

Free Festival Events

Raku Firing Experience

Cairns Potters Clubhouse
28th August 3-9pm

Festival Icons of the Far North Concert

Fogarty Park Festival Stage
2nd September 7-9pm

Cairns Regional Gallery Family Fun Day

Cairns Regional Gallery
3rd September 10am-5pm

Carnival on Collins

Collins Avenue
4th September 9am-3pm

Fireworks Finale

Esplanade 4th September 8:30pm

Paid Festival Events

Circus Oz – Steam Powered

Cairns Civic Theatre 26th-31st August
1:30/7:30pm start

Cairns Big Band Spectacular

Brothers 28th August 6:30-9:30pm

Jazz Under the Stars

Cairns Botanical Gardens 3rd September
6-9:30pm

Tripod

Tanks Art Centre
1st September 7:30-10:30pm

Cairns Indigenous Art Fair Exhibition

Cairns Regional Gallery 29th Aug-18th Sep
10am-5pm

For More Information on the
events occurring at the Cairns
Festival 2011 go to
www.cairnsfest.com.au

CONTACT DETAILS

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