

Lighthouse

Family News

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‘Make It Work’

A Forum titled ‘Make It Work’, which was held on 11th September at Lighthouse Disability was organized by ‘Every Australian Counts’ in partnership with the NDS (National Disability Services – the peak body for disability providers). The aim of the Forum was to give people with disabilities (or their families) an opportunity to inform politicians what is working re the NDIA and what the challenges are. It is intended that politicians hear the concerns and take the information to Canberra in the expectation that issues are addressed. About 40 people attended and lots of issues were raised along with some suggested solutions. Thanks to families of Lighthouse Disability who attended and contributed to the discussion.

Update on approved plans

We now have 6 houses with approved NDIA plans and 21 people. In many instances, additional funding for staff hours for clients has been requested and approved – which is great as this should contribute to an improvement in the quality of life of clients.

Support Coordinator

In the Family Newsletter dated 8 August, mention was made of Support Coordinator and the process involved.

Recently, we have been informed that some families who applied to be released from the ‘in kind’ arrangement concerning a Support Coordinator have had their request approved. This means that funding for a Support Coordinator will be placed in the plan – and that families can choose who they wish to employ as a Support Coordinator to assist them interpret the plan. Funds can then be accessed and the services that have been funded can be put in place.

Lighthouse Disability has appointed a person to take on the role of Support Coordinator and set up some systems to formalize it as part of our service delivery. Families who choose Lighthouse Disability to provide this service can do so, subject to successfully seeking a release from the ‘in kind’ arrangement. If anyone would like some information and/or assistance with this, please contact me (82569800).

Information for families

A suggestion from the Family Advisory Committee meeting was that when families of clients in a house are advised that the NDIA plans are approved, Lighthouse Disability should organise to meet with you, so that we can explain how the system works.

We are aware that because everything is so new, and in many instances there are delays in being able to access the plans, this could be very helpful.

Therefore, efforts will be made to contact families connected with houses where plans have been approved, with the aim of providing information (and assistance).

Community Visitor Scheme

The Community Visitor Scheme has well trained volunteers who visit our services about once a month. Following each visit, a report is forwarded to us. The most recent visit was for Grantham which resulted in a very positive report about the services provided.

Deaths of three clients

With great sadness we have farewelled three people in recent times Mark Conner and Andrew Wasley (both Mundon) and Dac Chung (Matilda). Dr Jessica Smith has worked with Mark and Andrew over a period of some years, and forwarded the following email;

*I am the GP who has been involved with the clients of Campbelltown (Mundon Avenue), for several years. After the recent passing of 2 clients, I have reflected on the amazing staff that have been involved with their care. The level of care the clients received was truly exceptional. The staff were always dedicated, respectful and a voice for advocacy when needed. I would appreciate if this could in some way, be acknowledged through the organisation as the staff certainly deserve it. Many thanks
Dr. Jessica Smith
Director - MBBS FRACGP*

Family Advisory Committee

A letter from the Family Advisory Committee is attached to invite parents/guardians to participate in the Family Advisory Committee that is held once a month at Lighthouse Disability. There is no obligation to attend every meeting, and it's a great way to get to know other families, and provide feedback about our services.

Staff Updates

Karen Collins

Karen is leaving us at the end of September. We are very glad for her that she has been appointed to a position in Subnet in an area of interest to her which will give her opportunities to further develop her considerable knowledge and skills in IT. We are very appreciative of the work that she has done for us. In particular, she has steered us from a very poor position in relation to IT to now a very sound place – with the capacity to extend services as needed. The same can be said for accreditation.

Appointment of a nurse

The Board has approved in principle, the appointment of a RN3 nurse who will help us with training, oversight of standards of practice, development of systems and policies and be an interface between us and health services etc.

Accreditation

In the middle of August, we were assessed as to whether we have met the standards of accreditation.

There were 93 indicators, and all were met. This is a stunning achievement, and reflects how far we have come since Sept 2015 when we achieved accreditation – but with some caveats about matters that had to be addressed within a specific timeframe. Special thanks is due to Karen Collins (right), who for the second time has provided a framework to assist us to provide the information needed to demonstrate that we can meet the accreditation criteria.



Having said that, we can't afford to be complacent because the NDIA has introduced a new Quality and Safeguarding Commission which has set a different set of standards which we must meet. Some of the standards will overlap with current standards, but it is likely that there will also be some new standards that need to be met.

Annual General Meeting

We are required to have an Annual General meeting each year and this year it is scheduled to be on 26th October, from 7.00 – 9.00 p.m at Sfera's. Unlike other years, clients are not required to sit through the meeting, but are invited to have a fun night. Linda McCartney has been booked to provide entertainment to clients and there will be supper. After the AGM is over participants are invited to join clients for supper.

Students undertaking Masters in Social Work

We welcome two students who are doing their field work placement with us as part of the Masters in Social Work at Flinders University.

Georgina Katis will explore some additional activities that our clients might like to engage in. This means that she will work with front line staff in some houses, and where possible, will communicate with clients – and/or their families to understand what clients currently do, and what else they would like to do if the opportunity is there. The expected outcome of this project is that clients will have a more diverse range of interesting activities that they can access with support from workers and/or volunteers.

Faysal Hafiz will explore how we can communicate more effectively with non-verbal clients. This will provide information for all of us about how we can 'connect' and better understand what non-verbal clients want, like (or don't like). It will also hopefully create opportunities for non-verbal clients to find additional ways to express their views, feelings etc. This may involve the use of assistive technology.



Outings

Many thanks to Diane Ashford (Volunteer Coordinator) who organises a fun activity each fortnight for clients, supported by workers and volunteers. The 'word' is spreading, and at the last event, there were several houses involved which is fantastic.

As part of 'belonging in the community', our clients are encouraged to engage in community activities. We have included some photos below of people who have been 'out and about', and as always, a picture is worth a 1000 words.

Marj Ellis

Marj Ellis
CEO

