

STAR NEWSLETTER

National Disability Insurance Scheme

The Federal Government recently announced that it will start work immediately with the States and Territories on measures to build the foundations for a National Disability Insurance Scheme, following the release of the Productivity Commission's final report which recommended that a National Disability Insurance Scheme be created to provide all Australians with insurance for the costs of support if they or a family member have or acquire a disability

Both the Government and the Opposition Parties have recognised that the current system is not delivering the kind of care and support that people with a disability are entitled to. - care and support that is based on a person's needs, over the course of their lifetime, 'not a lottery of what kind of disability they have, how they acquired it or where they live.'

In line with the Productivity Commission's recommendations, the Government, with the States and Territories, has already started work on building the foundations for reform. by

- committing an immediate \$10 million, to support this technical policy work.
- establishing a COAG Select Council of Ministers from the Commonwealth, States and Territories to lead the reform- this was agreed to at the Co-meeting in August
- establishing an Advisory Group to the Select Council, to provide expert advice on delivering these reforms

The Victorian Government has established a Taskforce to inform the Government's consideration of an NDIS, including:

- responding to the Productivity Commission's report and recommendations;
- an assessment of NDIS's impact on people with a disability and their families, the Victorian community and economy; and
- options for implementing an NDIS, including developing a broad community consensus on the case for an NDIS.

The scheme could cover all kinds of services, from respite care, domestic help or community activities to accommodation support, therapies and aids, such as prosthetics or vehicle modifications. The Productivity Commission's report finds that it would take at least seven years to transform disability services.

Whilst this is indeed something to celebrate there is still a long way to go - work that needs to be done to make the NDIS a reality.

For regular updates and also to join the and continue the campaign to ensure that our politicians both Federal and State deliver on their commitment to deliver the NDIS go to <http://everyaustraliancounts.com.au> If you don't have access to the internet and would like to be kept informed about progress on the NDIS contact the STAR office.

Enclosed with this newsletter is a bumper sticker to help spread the word and keep the momentum going.

If you would like more bumper stickers for family and friends the Victorian contact is James O'Brien on 0386411436.

Do you have a purple spot on your Newsletter?

If so, then you belong to a small group of individuals or organisations who have not yet renewed either their membership or newsletter subscription to STAR for 2011- 2012

Please note – you can now pay by direct deposit if you prefer. Please refer to the information on the forms.



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Meet some more Board members

Phillip Graves

Philip is a paediatrician who has spent most of his working life caring for children with disabilities. He began working in this field with what was then the “Mental Hygiene Department”, now Disability Client Services. Over the years he has worked at Monash Medical Centre, Monash University Department of Paediatrics, the Royal Victorian Institute for the Blind, the Royal Children’s Hospital and the Guardianship List at VCAT. He currently heads the Developmental Disabilities Unit at Monash Children’s, Southern Health, has a private practice in developmental medicine and is a member of the Guardianship List. Philip’s previous committee experience includes Noah’s Ark Toy Library and the Victorian Branch of the Australian Society for Intellectual Disability. He is married with 3 children and 8 grandchildren, all of them delightfully different and 2 sufficiently so to be termed disabled. Philip’s life goals start with: making the world a better place for people with disabilities. Philip first met Ethel Temby when STAR operated out of an office behind the Uniting Church in Lonsdale Street in 1976, has been a member for many years and has joined the Star Board with the general aim of making a contribution to the work of STAR, particularly, but not exclusively in the area of Inclusive Education.

Loretta Krelle

Through my career as a secondary school teacher and as a parent of a now young adult son with a disability, I have a long-standing and keen interest in both broad-ranging and specific issues which affect the lives of people with a disability and their families. To further increase my understanding of how to best assist students with a disability, I completed a Graduate Diploma in Special Education and a Master of Education (Integration). More recently, I have undertaken specialist study in the area of Criminology and Forensic Disability because of my specific interest in the issues facing people with a disability who may have interaction with the police and justice system. While I have been a member of STAR since the mid 1990’s, I have only been a Board member

since the later part of 2010. Even in this short time I am becoming increasingly aware of the important role the organization plays in promoting the rights of people with a intellectual disability and in supporting their families. I hope to contribute, wherever possible, to achieving better outcomes for people with a disability and their families.

Cynthia Pilli

I have been a member of STAR for over 30 years and first joined the Board of STAR in the 1980’s. Over the years I have had several breaks but have re-nominated when the opportunity presented itself.

My early association with STAR began when our eldest son was attending a segregated school, and we were hungry for information to address both our concerns and aspirations for him. We attended a forum advertised in the school newsletter and found out about STAR, through founding member, Ethel Temby. I soon found that when there were public meetings, forums etc that had anything to do with disability (in particular, intellectual disability) someone from STAR would attend to provide information and support. This was at a time when disability hardly figured in the minds of non-disabled members of the general public.

This was the start of my enlightenment- at last there was somewhere to go for informed opinion -and the realisation that

- information is empowering
- other parents’ experiences are invaluable as they had often already resolved much of what we were dealing with
- attitude change is necessary in the community before governments will act - develop –services development and provision doesn’t just happen – it happens because of the social activism of individuals, advocacy organisations like STAR and sheer hard, rewarding and satisfying work.

STAR 2011 AGM
Wednesday November 23rd
Put the date in your diary now
more information to follow in
October

Transition Time

This information includes general tips that may help at the various stages of transition – from home to pre-school, pre-school to school and school and beyond and it seems timely to include it now. It is taken from STAR's Supporting Inclusive Schooling Resources available from the STAR office.

Transition is more than just choosing a pre-school, school or post-school option. And it will run more smoothly and give the child/young person a "head start" if there are good planning processes and support are in place.

Plan Well in Advance

- start preparing for each stage early –preferably one to two years in advance
- make the final decision at least six months before the start of the next stage (earlier if possible) to begin work on the move

Gather Information

- remember that the "best" decision is made by being as informed as possible
- talk to other parents, especially with parents of students with disability in mainstream schools especially about attitudes to disability and difference.

be ready to challenge the barriers or excuses

- as your child progresses through school set up ongoing files with examples of their work, individual Program Plans etc .

Good documentation can help in negotiating each new stage

Visit Likely Options

- visit all neighbourhood options/schools - do not just go at specific times such as 'Open Days'
- take someone for "moral support" and to help debrief and evaluate - often others see/hear different things that you may not
- include the child/young person increasingly in the process as appropriate Both their response to the setting and the reaction of the staff to them are critical to observe. Discuss the child's reactions and listen to what they have to say
- consider re-visiting the preferred setting/s to test first impressions
- observe other children in action in each setting -at work, at play, with staff and fellow students
- look at the outcomes for all students

Ask questions about where students go to when they leave

Note. A check list, can be a useful tool to your decision making (STAR has several examples that you might like to use or adapt for your own situation.

Planning for the Actual Move

Advise the pre-school or school of your decision and begin the planning process which should include

- developing a transition program with all directly concerned with the child. The Student Support Group in the new school a key place for this. Staff from the current setting and other professionals may be useful to include if they are supportive of your family's goals. The support of an advocate may be valuable.
- identifying aspects of the pre-school, school or post-school option, where there is a need for extra support prior to and during the move and develop strategies to support these. e.g. visiting the new setting in the months prior to the move will help the child become familiar with the surrounds
- identifying any support strategies for the child and staff, at the start of a new move to help the child settle and staff become more confident

"Letting Go"!

- "Letting go" of children can be very difficult for some parents, but usually more so for parents of children with a disability- it will require a lot of preparation beforehand and need to be ongoing to ensure the child is best "setup" for success.
- provide opportunities for the child/young person to experiment, to make mistakes, to learn how to do things by themselves, without constant adult supervision This may involve doing thing in small stages, gradual familiarisation and practice and providing safeguards to ensure risks are reasonable in terms of security and safety

Note:

For those parents enrolling their children in either Primary or Secondary school for the first time the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development provides guidelines for schools and families for the Student Support Group covering its aims, responsibilities, membership and operation including the planning of the student's Individual Learning Plan. If you have not been given one already ask your Principal to provide you with a copy. If this does not happen and it should you can download a copy from the Departments website (<http://www.education.vic.gov.au/healthwellbeing/wellbeing/disability/handbook/default.htm>) or contact the STAR office and we will provide you with one.

AMIDA AGM – 13th September, 2011

Guest Speaker Colleen Pearce – Public Advocate

10am – 1pm Hayden Raysmith Room 4th Floor, Ross House

If you need any assistance to attend the meeting and to RSVP please call AMIDA on 96502722 or email amida@amida.org.au

Strengthening Disability Advocacy Conference 2012

Disability Advocacy and the Legal System – hosted by DARU, SARU & VDAN

Monday and Tuesday 26th & 27th March at the Melbourne & Olympic Park Conference Centre. To download a copy of the Expression of Interest form visit

<http://www.daru.org.au/conference/items/2011/08/376013-upload-00001.docx>

For more information contact the STAR office.

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The brand new 2011/12 Entertainment Books are now available **\$65 inc. GST** (plus postage \$7.50).

The Entertainment Book will help you find the best restaurants, hotel accommodation, attractions, sports and leisure activities all with the 2-for-1 or 25-50% offers valid until June 1st 2012.

STAR keeps \$13 for each book sold so please ask your friends and family if they would like a book.

**Order your Entertainment Book from the STAR office
9650 2730**