

# President's report

*Dr Angus Buchanan*



As often occurs, I am writing the Presidents column while in transit from one place to another. At the moment, I am sitting on a ferry about to head to Rottnest Island, 18 km off Perth for a week's holiday with my family. I am currently enjoying a very smooth harbour scenario with misty rain (sun promised for tomorrow). I am topped up with Travel Calm as the weather reports about the sea are not quite as positive as the harbour view. There are people on the boat who are excited and looking forward to what is ahead and some like me who are dreading the experience ahead for the next hour. I think however we are all looking forward to the destination and the experiences that such a great holiday environment offers.

Today there are many people with intellectual disabilities and their families who are on a journey with an aim to have positive experiences. There is little doubt that the environment at present is rough and presenting many challenges. For people in Australia, the NDIS continues to be a journey as it rolls out across the country. Some recent discussion with families have highlighted that the outcomes being experienced are highly variable with many tangible enablers and barriers being identified. It is evident that some of the critical issues that are being expressed include having genuine relationships with services and providers, participating authentic planning processes, having flexibility around individual needs and being an active and welcomed part of the community. It is critical, now more than ever, that researchers connect with people who are on the journey and who are experiencing the ups and downs of the ever changing environment (I am now on the high seas and the weather forecast was right, and my environment has dramatically changed!). The ASID community given its diversity has a wonderful opportunity to engage in discussions about the important research questions that need to be addressed. How can we be confident that the current journey is working for people. How to ensure that it is leading to a fulfilling destination?

The annual Board conference presents a perfect opportunity to hear about the latest research and explore



new ideas. It is also a perfect opportunity to be able to network with researchers, service providers, families and people with disabilities. The next ASID Conference will be held in Tasmania in November 2017. The program is shaping up well around the theme Pushing the Boundaries. The conference will be engaging and informative with various opportunities to network and exchange ideas. Information about some of the excellent keynote speakers has been included in this edition, with more announcements to come. Also you still have the opportunity to submit a paper or poster so go to <http://www.asid2017.com.au>.

The boat has just arrived. My turbulent journey (it was not fun) has just ended and I am now looking forward with expectation to the next week with my family. I sincerely hope that what emerges from the current turbulence is a reality of positive outcomes that hopefully matches the expectations of people with disabilities and their families. ●

