

President's report

Dr Angus Buchanan



I have had the privilege to be the President of ASID for nearly five years with my term coming to completion in November 2017. In preparing my final President's Column I have reviewed all of my previous inclusions in to IDA. What I was struck by is how much has happened over the past five years, both within and external to the organisation. There is little doubt since 2013 the disability sector has been turned on its head with the 'once in a generation' change of the NDIS. The expectation of what it can deliver for people with intellectual disability continues to be challenging with both many positive outcomes and significant issues for individuals and families. Over the same time ASID has been an organisation going through change and development to ensure it is best positioned in a contemporary world to meets its strategic goals.

In my first column five years ago I asked the question "do you have moments and happenings in your life where you have had an encounter that leaves you challenged for the better? I shared my experience from the ASID Conference Dinner in 2012, where the guest speaker from Weta Studios (Lord of the Rings fame) explained that when they made props for movies they were real and built with complete authenticity. An example was that all the swords used in the films were made by master craftsmen. It has been something that has stuck with me. When something is important you should built authentic approaches to ensure the outcomes you desire. I would like to think that this is what ASID has been doing over the past five years.

One of the roles of ASID is to be a voice for people with intellectual disabilities through the use of research and evidence to support effective practice. ASID continues to achieve this outcome

through the publication of two excellent journals – The Journal of Intellectual and Developmental Disability (JIDD), and Research and Practice in Developmental Intellectual Disability (RAPIDD). RAPIDD was launched in 2014 and is growing into a respected and successful publication. ASID also has continue to run the successful Annual Conferences that provides an excellent platform for the sharing of research between families, service providers and people with disabilities.

To position itself for the future, the last five years have seen a major development of a contemporary governance model for ASID. In 2014 the decision was made to form one Australasian organisation moving from seven independent regional based incorporated bodies. This was major decision which has seen the formation of a strong, focussed and financially sustainable organisation with seven divisions. Recently the decision was made to reduce the number of Board directors from 21 to 14. It is positive that ASID has had the willingness and the ability to navigate such major governance changes. The building of the new entity has seen a range of major activities that would previously have been impossible. One example is the employment of a new executive officer. Having an EO has enabled the organisation to be more effective and responsive. The benefits of the additional capacity are already being seen in member communication, website development and other improved procedures.

continued page 19

President's report

continued from page 18

As I have said many times before ASID is still primarily a volunteer based membership organisation. ASID's success is directly related to the many hours that are freely given each year by the many individuals to run local Divisions, plan conferences and events, edit journals, produce newsletters, attend board meetings and committees and run various portfolios. As President I have been well supported in my role by a strong and able team of volunteers who I sincerely thank for their dedication and commitment.

As we look to the next five years, ASID has an important role to play in the dynamic and changing environment for people with intellectual disabilities ensuring the link of research to practice is at the forefront of developments. ASID's voice will remain relevant, strong and authentic through current and new activities. ASID is as only strong as its membership and I encourage you not only to continue to support this organisation but promote it widely.

