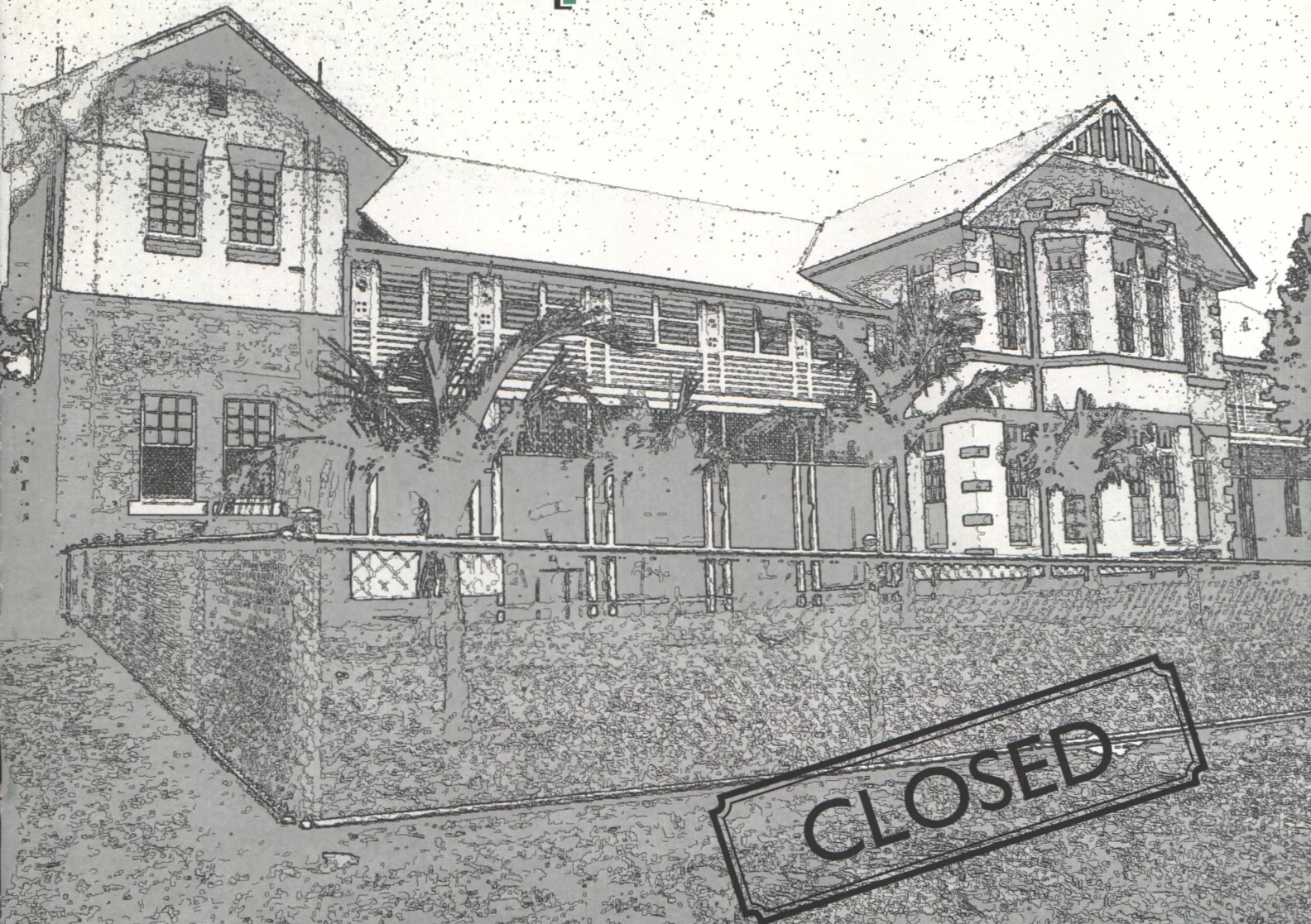


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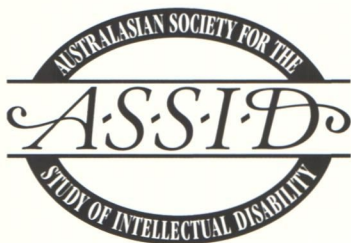
IDA

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Intellectual Disability Australasia

hope for the future



Magazine of the Australasian Society for the Study of Intellectual Disability



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Front Cover:

Photo courtesy of The Courier Mail

Editorial



The ASSID conference this year was held in Canberra and one of the highlights of the conference (and there were many)

was a keynote address given by Robert Martin. Robert is a remarkable ambassador for individuals with an intellectual disability. He spent his childhood in institutions and experienced the pain of separation from his family.

At fifteen, Robert left the institution to live at home and attended a day service with in New Zealand. He eventually lived in a residential service to learn to live independently in the community. He became employed as an aid at a hostel which provided residential care for 40 people with an intellectual disability.

Robert left the hostel to live and work in the community but he kept in contact with his friends. He was asked to join the local Branch Committee and gave his time to the work of the local People First Group. His work was recognised and he became a leader within the self advocacy movement within New Zealand. His next step was the International Self Advocacy movement promoted through Inclusion International.

Robert eventually became Chairperson of the International Self Advocacy Committee and later the Taskforce on Self Advocacy of Inclusion International. In this role Robert has travelled extensively throughout the world and his leadership is acknowledged both within the self advocacy movement and Inclusion International.

Robert has also been an outstanding spokesperson for his friends at the United Nations in preparing the Convention for Persons with a Disability.

Robert's speech, entitled *Risk and Resilience: Hope for the Future*, appears in this issue of IDA. Robert completed his presentation at the conference to a standing ovation that was a sign of how moved the audience was by Robert's keynote address. Delegates spoke with each other at length during breaks about the content of Robert's paper and many presenters used ideas expressed in his paper as a reference point.

To complement Robert's paper, we have two additional articles that address issues associated with full community participation and membership hinging around where and how people live. Fiona Porter offers an article describing the Neighbourhood Connections project in Melbourne. This project, an initiative of Marillac House, is based on an innovative accommodation support system implemented by the KeyRing organisation in the UK. Our plain English version of a paper published in the ASSID Journal of Intellectual and Developmental Disability prepared by Sheridan Forster is entitled *Deinstitutionalisation and Community Living: Progress, Problems and Priorities* written by Jim Mansell. In very different ways, the contributions to this issue of IDA provide an important commentary on the lived experiences of people with an intellectual disability and provide, in Robert Martin's words, some *hope for the future*.

Deb Keen

Risk and Resilience: Hope for the Future

by Robert Martin



A friend recently asked me, “Robert how come that in spite of all you and your friends have endured, you are all so positive and don’t hold a grudge”. My answer was “We hold things together because we have no other choice; it is how we cope with our lives”. This is my story of why and how we do that.

To understand our lives you need to understand our history. Each of us has a story to tell but while many may listen, sadly few really hear what we say. If they did our stories would be ones of achievement and success instead of struggle and disappointment. I will tell you some of my story. It is not a remarkable story as it is shared by many of my friends. It started when I was born and the doctor delivering me got it wrong with his forceps. I received an injury to my brain and my life turned out very differently as a result of his mistake.

At aged 18 months I was placed in an institution by my family. I joined many other babies not that I remember very much of this part of my life. I always knew I had a mum and dad and a sister, not that I saw a lot of them in those early days. I cried a lot but learnt not to as it changed nothing. As I grew up in the Institution I was one of the lucky ones who was allowed to go to school. Not a real school in the community but a special school that was part of the Institutions. I loved school and was very keen on animals. I learnt all about animals, an interest I still have today.

I was given a ball and soon learnt that if I kicked it onto the roof someone would notice and climb up and get it down. More importantly they would notice me and I felt important. I became an expert at kicking the ball on the roof. Soon I was Robert the kid who kicked the ball on the roof all the time. It was not long before I was a problem kid and people started to punish me by refusing to get my ball down. My attention seeking started to get me into trouble, something I experienced a lot of during the next few years.

I was allowed to go home for holidays but all I really remember was that I felt my mother blamed me for all the troubles in her life. When I was about 7 years old I was put in foster care with an immigrant family. I was looking for a home and they were looking for a slave. I was expected to feed the pigs even though I could hardly lift the feed bucket. They were very cruel to me and punished me whenever they thought I had done something wrong. I ran away many times and hid from them. I remember sleeping out under a hedge rather than going home.

The Welfare Officer would not listen to me and kept taking me back. Finally after I had run away so many times everyone got tired of it and I went back to the Institution. Until I turned 15 I was in and out of the institutions, each one was the same. This is something most people will not accept. The supporters of Institutions always believe the institution they run or know if different. Little do they know that they are all the same.

As I have said my life is not remarkable as many of my friends have shared similar experiences. What has been perhaps different for me is that I have been given some real opportunities later in life. It was these opportunities that changed my life.

Life in the Institution

Let’s first look at some parts of my life and the lives of some of my friends who grew up with me in the institution. Each of us is an individual but we have all shared some similar life experiences. We have all heard the stories but do we understand what really happened? None of us choose to go to the institution. We were placed there by others, often our parents who were told it would be best for them and us. Sadly many of my friends lost contact with their families. They were abandoned to the institution and were never told they had brothers or sisters. “It was best if we did not know these things”.

Try to imagine what it is like to find out 20 or even 30 years later that you have a *continued page 4*

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brother or sister that you have never been told about. Imagine what it was like for our brothers and sisters who were never told you existed or were told we had died at birth.

The Institution was there to protect us, there were laws and rules to make sure we were well looked after. We had rights and we were all to be well cared for. Well that was the official line, that's what the community was told, sadly all too often that was what our parents believed. The truth was very different. All too often the Institution became a place of abuse and denial of our most basic human rights. There were too few staff and too little care. Some staff tried very hard but others were mean and treated us badly.

We were often sexually abused, physically abused or emotionally abused. At times we were neglected and our health was not seen as important. It was the emotional abuse that often did the most damage as it destroyed our self worth and confidence. It has been usually later in life when those of us who were sexually abused really suffered. Some of this abuse was committed by other people with intellectual disability who had also been placed in the institution. I know from my own experience what institutions were really like. I witnessed people being hosed down using a fire hose. I saw the abuse. I almost died when I was given someone else's medication. So many who support institutions say that the ones they know are not like that. Our experience is different. For us the only good institution is the one that has been flattened by a bulldozer so our friends will no longer have to live there.

In spite of all they have suffered many of my friends from the institutions are now living successfully in the community. Some like me have their own home or live with family or friends. Others live in group homes which they share with others who may not have lived in an institution. We have made a successful transition from institution to the community because support was available. For many it has been a very slow process and even 20 or 30 years later we are still haunted by the experience we have endured. Now we are seeking acknowledgment that what was done to us was wrong. Some are seeking financial compensation while others want to hold those who abused them accountable. Most of all we want an apology from those responsible for the pain we suffered.

A few of my friends have been offered counselling to help them to understand what was done to them, that they were not responsible. However for years,

those living in the community are offered counselling if they have been abused or mistreated, we were put on a behaviour programme. Rather than dealing with the situation that caused our behaviour, our behaviour became the problem. How fair was that. The last big institution in New Zealand will close this year. However there are still tens of thousands of my friends around the world still incarcerated in institutions. I hope you will take the time to learn about their lives and become champions for them so they can join the rest of us in the community

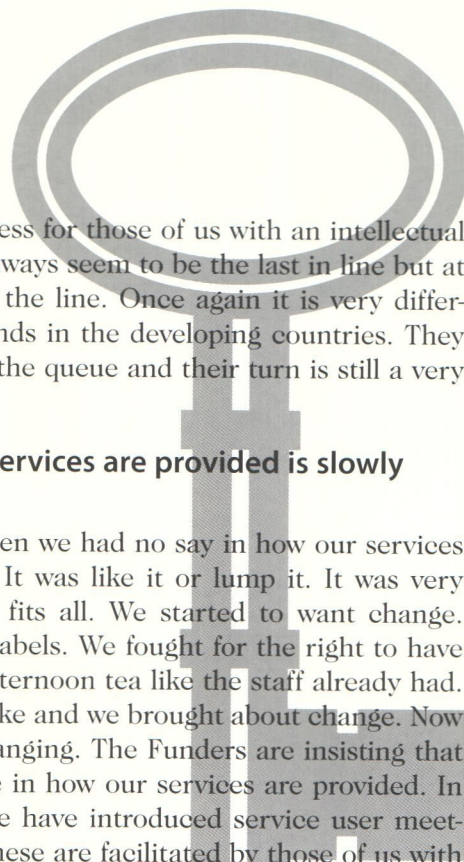
Life in the Hostel and Group Homes

I now want to talk about the hostels and group homes. These were often set up to help us to leave the institutions. They were our halfway houses, halfway from the institution and halfway to a life in the community. Other people with an intellectual disability also came to live in the hostels and group homes as placing them in an institution became unacceptable. At first many children came to live in the hostels. When I was at the hostel in Wanganui there were many children. However no children are allowed to be placed in a group home in New Zealand now. I lived near the Wanganui Hostel in a separate house. I shared my room with another person and we were supposed to learn to live in the community. In reality the house belonged to the staff. I got in big trouble when I refused to call the senior female staff person in my group home "mother". I knew who my mother was; I did not need another mother. It has taken a long time for things to really change. Even in my work today I still see some of my friends who live in the group homes being controlled by their staff. They have little real say in their own lives.

However for me this was the start of my journey to independence. I eventually moved to an independent living flat with a few others and learnt the skills I needed to finally move into the community. Some of my friends from the institution have made a similar journey. However many are still living in group homes and it is unlikely at their age that they will ever have a home of their own in the community. That makes me sad.

Working in the Community

For many of us with an intellectual disability paid work remains an elusive dream. We all started in the workshops and that is where many of us have remained. All too often we have been placed on a training programme and that seems never to end. While some of the workshops run very good programmes that peo-



ple really enjoy others are not very good. As I travel the world I find that this is true throughout the world. Meaningful work and proper payment for work is still just a dream for most of us. Our lack of education, our lack of good quality training and the attitude of others have been major barriers to employment. This has meant that we are over represented in the low income group. Throughout the world, particularly in developing countries, many of us live in poverty.

So given this situation what is our hope for the future?

There are some major changes going on in our education. In the developed countries children with an intellectual disability are getting a better education than we did. Many are able to go to their neighbourhood school. This is particularly true at pre-school and primary school. Some of us have been able to complete High School and go onto Polytech. Some of us want to go to University and this is already happening in parts of Canada. However the story is very different for developing countries where most children with an intellectual disability live. It is estimated by the United Nations that 96% of females with an intellectual disability do not go to school. They and their families live in poverty and there is little chance that this will change.

Our family life is changing.

We seldom experienced real family life. If we lived in the institution our families seldom visited. If we lived at home we were the ones who were left behind. Our families often become the disability families, shunned by the community and even their own relations. Now children with an intellectual disability are growing up in their own family alongside brothers and sisters. They know who they are; they have a family which they belong to. They are growing up in the community and are no longer invisible as we were at their age. There is more support available for both them and their families. There is more understanding in the community.

The community's attitude towards people with disabilities is changing.

In developed countries there is a greater understanding and tolerance for those of us with a disability. Many countries have good laws and try to give people with a disability the opportunity to live and work in the community. I know this through my work at the United Nations and with the International Disability Alliance. However I don't believe that there has been

the same progress for those of us with an intellectual disability. We always seem to be the last in line but at least we are in the line. Once again it is very different for my friends in the developing countries. They are still to join the queue and their turn is still a very long way off.

The way our services are provided is slowly changing.

I remember when we had no say in how our services were provided. It was like it or lump it. It was very much one size fits all. We started to want change. We fought the labels. We fought for the right to have morning and afternoon tea like the staff already had. We went on strike and we brought about change. Now services are changing. The Funders are insisting that we have a voice in how our services are provided. In New Zealand we have introduced service user meetings. Many of these are facilitated by those of us with an intellectual disability. It is exciting to see people who have said very little for 20 or 30 years having their say. Service providers are introducing supported living programmes and supported employment programmes. They are introducing services to meet our needs as we age. It is no longer one size fits all.

Some are starting to accept our right to have friendships and relationships.

This has always been a problem for us. Even our own families questioned our right to have real friends or to develop a relationship. Many of us have been sterilised to prevent us from ever having children. Having friends to visit us or stay over when we live in a group home is still a major issue for those of us living in a group home. As we move into the community our opportunity and ability to meet new people and make friends greatly increases. This can lead to finding that someone special who we want to share our life with. I know that was true for me and I have been married for 18 years. While our sexuality is important a relationship is much more than that for us. It is about having someone special in your life.

The Self Advocacy Movement

I want to turn now to some things that have made a real difference for those of us with an intellectual disability. The self advocacy movement has played a major role in bringing about the changes that have made a real difference in our lives. When we started over 20 years ago the term self advocacy had not been invented. We started with a client committee. We soon worked out that we had to *continued page 6*

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work together if we wanted things to get better. We started on the easy things but they were hard at the time. We got rid of the signs on our vans so others would stop laughing and jeering at us when we were driven through town. We learnt to stand up for our friends including our staff. We won the right to have morning and afternoon tea. As time moved on we started our People First Groups. We started to speak at conferences and meetings. At last we started to believe we could do things.

The self advocacy movement has brought a lot of new ways of thinking for us. We have learnt about the importance of self determination, our right to be our own person. It is about seeing ourselves as a person of value. In the past others always spoke for us. Now we claim that right for ourselves. We learnt about choice and to know what was possible. Other people always had this but we did not as all our choices were made by others. We started to understand empowerment. We learnt about disempowerment and how we lost our ability to make our own decisions. As we learnt about leadership and having a voice we became empowered. Once we found this power we have never wanted to return to the old days.

For many years we were segregated and shut away from others. We were the invisible people; few knew that we really existed. This has started to change as others started to include us. This has led to the principle of inclusion, one community for all. It has taken along time for others to understand that we are full people just the way we are. There is nothing broken, there is nothing to be fixed. We don't need to be rehabilitated to live in the community. The community needs to accept us for whom we are and meet our needs as it does for others. For us, inclusion is ensuring that our unique needs are recognised and provided for in the community. Be it school, housing, paid work or simply going to the rugby we deserve the same consideration as others.

We want to work in partnership with others. We want this partnership to be based on mutual trust and respect. As partners we can lean on each other for help and advice. We can learn to work together. However we will not be the junior partner any more as that is unfair.

Our support

One of the keys to our progress has been the improvement in the quality of support. I have always said that our success, particularly when we first enter the community is determined by the quality of our support.

Good support will encourage us to develop our skills and to do things for our selves. Poor support makes us over reliant on our staff and does not encourage us to learn. We become the conformers, the yes people. We don't learn to make decisions for ourselves. Self advocacy has helped us to understand our need for support and our need for role models. We no longer want to be controlled. We must be able to say what support we need and how it will be provided. We must be in control or others will control our lives.

I will now talk about the Convention for Persons with Disabilities

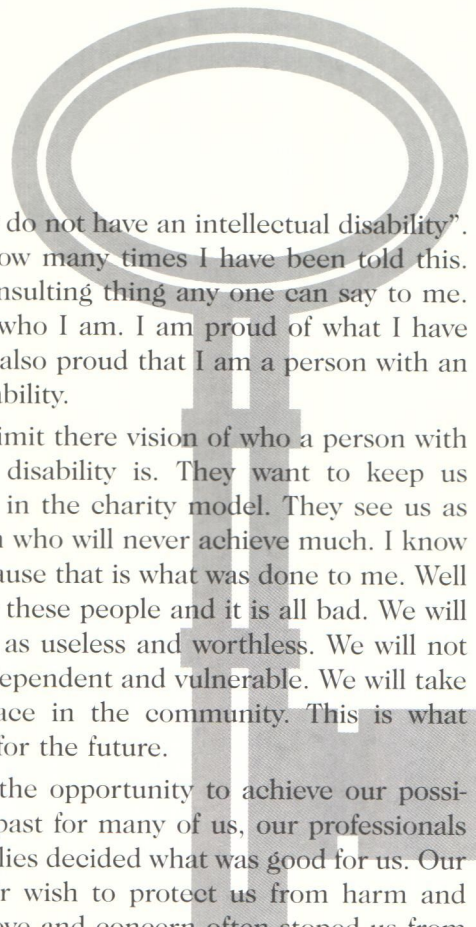
This Convention has the potential to make a real difference in our lives. I will only talk about three key areas that are very important for those of us with an intellectual disability. The first is our right to life - our right to be born. We all know about pre-natal screening for disability and genetic engineering. What is not so well known is that some scientists believe they can eliminate intellectual disability by eliminating people with an intellectual disability before we are born. That is why they support pre-natal screening. This leads to the devaluing of the lives of all of us with a disability. Also when you think about it what use are our rights if we do not get the same opportunity as others to life itself.

The second is our legal capacity. I was placed in an institution because others controlled my legal right to live as part of the community. They could make decisions without asking what was best for me. This was because I had a severe disability and would never be able to make my own decisions. Why else would I have been placed in an institution? I believe no one has the right to take our legal rights from us regardless as to the support we need to make our decisions. What is needed is the support we need to make decisions that are in our best interests and that best meet our needs.

The third is our right to live in the community and participate in community life. As I have already told you there are still tens of thousands of people with intellectual disabilities who are forced to live in institutions. While the convention is clear about the right to live in the community it is silent about the responsibility to support those living in the institutions to leave and live in the community.

Finally I want to leave you with some messages that will mean that we do have a future.

Those of us with high support and care needs are at most risk to mistreatment, abuse of our rights and



having our lives controlled by others. The United Nations Standard Rules have helped in those countries where there is the will to improve conditions. However we still have people dying because of mistreatment or neglect in some institutions. Many of my friends throughout the world live with another "friend" and that is poverty. Both the poverty that means they struggle to find enough food and a poverty of spirit which means they struggle to see any kind of future. My hope is that the Convention for Persons with disabilities will encourage and demand that governments take the needs of this group seriously and do something for them. We don't lack the will to do it for ourselves we just lack the means. The Convention has the potential to make a real difference - we must make it happen. This is what gives me hope for the future.

We must continue the struggle to change the attitudes of society in the way it sees those of us with a disability. This starts in our schools and there has been a lot of positive change in many countries. However in the developing countries children with an intellectual disability are the last to join the school queue, they are the last in a long line to get the chance to go to school. This needs to change if we are all to take our place in the community. As the strength of our voice grows more people are listening. Our cry for social justice is starting to be heard. We now have a voice at the United Nations. In the past our parents and supporters spoke for us. Now we are speaking for ourselves. At the last meeting of the Convention there were four self advocates speaking on the floor. In the past there was usually only me. We are moving forward. This is what gives me hope for the future.

Others must learn to acknowledge that we are a full person just the way we are. In the past we were expected to change, to be rehabilitated so we could live in the community. We can not change who we are nor should we be expected to do so. The community has to change so it includes all of us who are regarded as different. We are slowly learning to value diversity as that is the gift we bring to our community. As I always say we all enter this world with nothing but we all leave some thing behind. As our communities start including us as of right and not because of pity I know we are winning. We are beginning to be accepted as the person we are. Our disability is only a burden when others make it a burden. It is a part of our every day life and we learn to accept it.

What disappoints me most is that when we succeed and achieve more than others expect we are told

"well you really do not have an intellectual disability". I don't know how many times I have been told this. It is the most insulting thing any one can say to me. I am proud of who I am. I am proud of what I have achieved. I am also proud that I am a person with an intellectual disability.

Some want to limit there vision of who a person with an intellectual disability is. They want to keep us dependent and in the charity model. They see us as eternal children who will never achieve much. I know this is true because that is what was done to me. Well I have news for these people and it is all bad. We will not be labelled as useless and worthless. We will not be labelled as dependent and vulnerable. We will take our rightful place in the community. This is what gives me hope for the future.

We must have the opportunity to achieve our possibilities. In the past for many of us, our professionals and or our families decided what was good for us. Our families in their wish to protect us from harm and through their love and concern often stoped us from experiencing real life. We need to be encouraged to learn new things and try a new experience as that is the way we all learn. Because of our disability we may need extra help or help to be given in a different way but then all people are different and we need to recognise this fact. This is what gives me hope for the future.

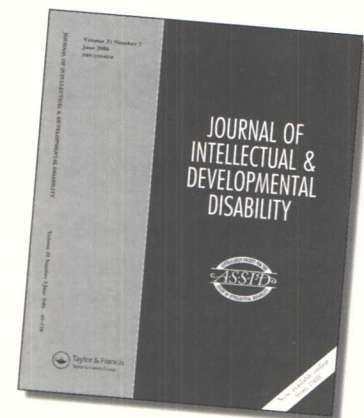
We must learn to understand what self determination can mean in our life. We must be allowed to participate in our own decision making. That is what legal capacity is all about, our right to make decisions and the right to act. For me this means we participate in all the decision making that affects our lives. This includes our everyday living, where we live, the work we do and the things we do in our free time. It also means that we will participate in decisions about the services we need and how they are to be provided. It is about decisions on who will help us. Who will be employed who will help us with our personal care if this is the help we need. This is what gives me hope for the future.

We must have the right to make friends and have a relationship. Have you ever stopped to wonder why so few of us have a proper relationship or get married? Have you ever also believed that if we have high needs we are best not to think about these things? Have you ever been frightened that we may have children we can not look after or that they may like us have a disability? We have the same feelings as you. We need to be loved and to give love. We need

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Deinstitutionalisation & Community Living: Progress, Problems & Priorities

by Jim Mansell



The following article is a Plain English Version of a paper that appeared in the Journal of Intellectual and Developmental Disability and was prepared by Sheridan Foster.

This article is about people with disabilities living in institutions or in houses in the general community. Some people have moved from institutions to houses in the community. This is called deinstitutionalisation. Some people live in community-based services with between three to eight other people who have intellectual disabilities. They have staff to help them in the house. This article is about:

- deinstitutionalisation around the world,
- research on community based services,
- problems in community services, and
- things to think about in the future.

Deinstitutionalisation Around the World

- In Sweden and Norway there are no institutions. There are laws saying people have the right to live in community-based services.

- In North America, the United Kingdom, and Australia many people live in community based services. Some people live in institutions.
- In Belgium, Netherlands, Germany, Spain, and Greece many people live in institutions. A small number of people live in community-based services.
- In the Czech Republic, Hungary, Slovakia, and Slovenia there are many very bad institutions. People are looked after badly in some of these institutions.

Research on Community Based Services

There is a lot of research that reports that community based housing is better than institutions. But, it is difficult to get a clear idea because some research says different things. In the research, there are some good

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someone special in our lives to share our good times and our sad times.

We must have the right to be children and to have children. It is a great pity that some scientists and the doctors don't put the same effort into improving the environment and medical services throughout the world as they do in trying to ensure we are not born. We know that poor health care, poor prenatal care and poor diet are the main causes of preventable disability in children. However in the developed countries like New Zealand we are prepared to spend millions of dollars on screening that is designed to prevent those of us with an intellectual disability from being born. Where is the justice and the humanity in that? However a lot of parents are rejecting the new technology. They are accepting both the challenge and the joy we can bring to their lives. This is what gives me hope for the future.

We must be able to seek paid work in the workforce. This is not just about pay. Paid work gives us value. We are seen as contributing to our society. Our work should be valued by us being rewarded like the rest

of the workforce and we need the respect of our fellow workers. Supported employment schemes can assist but what really needs to change is the attitude towards employing people with a disability. We just want to do a good job and for this to be recognised. More and more of us are seeking and finding paid work. This is what gives me hope for the future.

Finally we must build our allies and our friends. We cannot make our journey on our own – no one can. We need you to understand our world with all its promise and all its pain. We need you to walk alongside us and to be our friend. We need you to share our hopes and our dreams. We need you to be our champion but not through pity or through shame. We are people of value, we are able and we want to live a real life alongside the rest of our community. Together we can achieve what has always been seen as too hard or all too often as being impossible.

It is your willingness to join us that gives me the real hope for our future. Like you, we deserve to have the opportunity to become the best person we can. ♦

small institutions and some bad institutions. There are some good community based services and some bad services. The picture in research is not clear. The researchers talk about what makes services good or bad. Good services have:

- good team leaders,
- staff with good supervision from their team leaders,
- motivated staff,
- staff who work as a team,
- staff who are all trained,
- training that happens inside the house, not just in classrooms, and
- staff who are trained in how to help people do activities and have relationships with other people.

Unfortunately, many staff in the United Kingdom do not get the training that they need. There are big problems in many community-based services today.

What is Adding to Problems in Community Based Services?

There are three ideas that help us understand problems in community based services.

1. Market based approaches:

- People only get help for things that they cannot do themselves.
- People can only get help when they are in a crisis.
- People can only get help if there is enough money.
- People can only choose from what is already available.
- Some people do not get the help they need.
- There is not much money for training staff, not much money for paying staff, and staff often leave their jobs.

2. De-differentiation of intellectual disability services:

There are moves away from special services for people with intellectual disabilities, to services for people with all different types of disabilities. This means that:

- people with intellectual disabilities will have to compete with more people to get services,
- rules will be made for all people with disabilities,

and these might be harder for people with intellectual disabilities to live up to, and

- there might not be services where staff have a special understanding of what it is like to have an intellectual disability.

3. The rights-based model of disability.

The focus on all people having the same rights has had many good effects. All people should have the same rights. But some people do not think that having an intellectual disability means that you may need some special extra help. People with intellectual disabilities may miss out on getting the special help that they need.

For example:

- people may miss out on getting special help for making choices when the choices are very complicated,
- people may miss out on being able to learn things because staff have not been trained on how to teach a person who has an intellectual disability.

Conclusion

These three things have an effect on what happens in community-based services today. There is not a clear picture that community based services are always better than institutions. We need to get better at judging whether community-based services are good. It is not good enough to just talk about what we think is a good service. We should be able to take politicians, families, and people with disabilities, to visit other people living in good community based services. We should be able to make services that are so good that there we be no doubt that community based services are better than institutions.

Acknowledgements

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The home page for the *Journal of Intellectual and Developmental Disability* is

<http://www.tandf.co.uk/journals/titles/13668250.asp>. This page provides access to instructions for receiving the Journal's table of contents alerts via email. ♦

Tasmania

by Donna Venn

On the 18th October ASSID Tas co-hosted a statewide Support Workers Conference with ACROD (Tasmanian Division). This was an enormous success in a number of ways. The event was well supported with approx 120 people attending. There were 5 individuals/groups of Support Workers who were all presenting for the first time and each of them did an admirable job in front of such a large audience. One keynote speaker Mr Erick Pastoor gave a well-received motivational speech on his experience with Meningococcal Disease and Dr Keith McVilly presented a timely workshop on Professionalising Support Work (an outcome of which was general acknowledgement and agreement that there needs to be a Forum developed in this state for the Support Worker Body.

The evening before our one day Conference we held a reception at Government House where His Excellency, the Honourable William Cox, Governor of Tasmania, presented the inaugural Jim Woodworth Memorial Student Award to Ms Helen Russell from TAFE (Clarence Campus). Helen's nomination was successful based on her sound academic performance, the positive effect she has had on the lives of her clients, especially those with high support needs and her leadership potential has been recognised both by her teachers and her employer. In addition to her Certificate Helen received a membership to ASSID Tasmania, a Conference Registration to the 2007 Australasian Conference in Western Australia and a \$200 travel voucher to assist her to get to the Conference. Congratulations Helen.

Our AGM was held early this year to coincide with the Australasian AGM. Our committee is quite similar to last year with Darryleen Wiggins Vice-President, Moira McPherson, Treasurer, Harley Allen, Secretary, myself as President and Darryleen, myself and Craig Jones as Regional Councillors and we look forward to another year of consolidation and expansion. Our committee has grown steadily to have 10 valued members and although it was sad to say goodbye to a couple of committee members (who moved on to other pursuits - and we wish them well) it is great to see some new people involved. ASSID Tas has one more meeting for 2006 and from there we will determine our Planning Day for early 2007.

Victoria

by Daniel Pennefather

An enthused Victorian regional committee is currently benefiting from the perspectives of both new and ongoing members. An induction pack for new committee members has greatly assisted with gaining an understanding of ASSID's goals, vision and the nature of individual committee roles.

Upcoming events include the 6th Annual Conference for Disability Support Workers, on 16 & 17 November 2006, at the University of Melbourne. The conference is approaching fast! See the ASSID website or <http://www.courses.as.rmit.edu.au/psychology/dsw06/> for details. This year, a large number of registrations have been received from interstate, so the conference will provide a great opportunity to establish or renew networks across Australia. The conference will again host the annual Disability Support Worker Awards, to be presented by Mr Arthur Rogers, Executive Director, Disability Services, Department of Human Services. Discounts to

the conference apply for ASSID members.

Also coming up is a workshop on Evidence Based Practice, with Dr Pammi Raghavendra (Manager of Clinical Research at Novita Children's Services, Adelaide). The workshop (on 6 Dec at Yooralla, Level 1/342 Flinders St, Melbourne) will explore evidence-based practice and its applications in areas related to people with intellectual disability. Bring along your questions about the existing evidence for your area of interest. See the Vic page of the ASSID website for details. Discounts for ASSID members apply.

Early planning has begun for the 2008 ASSID National conference, to be held in Melbourne, with the theme 'Where's Your Evidence?' The vision is to have a focus on all regions participating in developing the conference. Stay tuned for further info.

A member survey is being developed, to ensure that the events developed by the committee match the needs of the members. The newsletter continues bi-monthly, and is usually distributed electronically. To be put on the list to receive the newsletter (a small PDF document) send an email to Daniel. Pennefather@dhs.vic.gov.au. The newsletter is also on the Vic page of the ASSID website.

NSW & ACT

by Tony Tinlin

The major event for NSW and ACT was the Australasian Conference held in Canberra in September. Those who attended appeared to find it stimulating and enjoyable. A report on the conference can be found in this issue of IDA along with photos of some of the delegates.

We have organized for Associate Professor Doug Boer to present a two day workshop on Risk Assessment and Management of Sexual Offenders in Sydney on the 7th and 8th February 2007. This workshop follows the very successful workshop hosted by the Regional Committee last year. For information contact John Brown at john@fiveislandsclinic.com.au

Watch your letter box for information on this years AGM which is coming up soon.

New Zealand

by Marleen Verhoeven

Several NZASID members made the trip across the Tasman Sea to the 41st Annual conference "Risk and Resilience: Hope for the Future" held in Canberra. It was reported that although the numbers attending were down this in no way impacted on the conviviality of the conference dinner.

The NZASID annual conference is coming up on 2 and 3 November 2006 in Wellington. The programme details are on the ASSID webpage. It is promising to be a full conference with three consecutive streams. The keynote speakers are Dr Anne Bray, "What is the message from research?" Dr Mark Barber, "Do we always have to get something done? Interaction for interaction's sake", and a video presentation, "Supporting people through flexible and creative residential services" followed by a panel discussion. Dr Olive Webb

will be presenting the Award of ASSID Fellowship.

The NZASID AGM will be held at the conference and invitations to the membership have gone out. We encourage people to come and join a team of likeminded people, to promote excellence in research and practice to the benefit of people with an intellectual disability nation wide.

Following the conference Keith McVilly will host workshops in Hamilton on 6 November, Auckland on 7 November and Christchurch on 8 November. Keith will be using these work-

shops to draw on his and participants' knowledge, focusing on a code of conduct in human services which he is developing. On February 20 and 21st 2007 Marleen Verhoeven is organizing a workshop in Auckland, "Journeying to Wise Mind - Dialectic Behaviour Therapy for people with a mild intellectual disability." She has spoken at several forums and conferences about her work and is finally able to share the details of this programme with a wider audience. DBT therapy is especially suited for people with self destructive behaviour patterns, as often seen in people with a Borderline Personality Disorder.

Western Australia

by Chris Coopes

This has been a very busy but satisfying three months. The second IDNetwork meeting of the year was held on 21st August. The Network is a joint initiative between ASSID(WA) and the Developmental Disability Council (DDC). The topic was the very important Commonwealth, State and Territories Disability Agreement which will be negotiated next year. The speakers were Mrs Amanda Simmes who is a parent of a 21 year old son who has multiple disabilities and who spoke very eloquently about the impact of severe disability on a family: Tony McRae, Minister for Disability Services; Senator Judith, Member of the Senate Community Affairs Committee and Dr Carmen Lawrence of the Parliamentary Friendship Group for People with Disability. The meeting was very well attended and there was plenty of animated discussion.

The ASSID WA State Council had its Annual General Meeting on the evening of Thursday 31st August in a meeting room in the Balmoral Hotel. The meeting was attended by a small but enthusiastic group of people. Reports were received from the Treasurer, President and Co-Convenor of the 2007 National ASSID Conference. There was plenty of discussion and a consensus that the Branch is very active. After the AGM we had a very good meal at the hotel.

This years ASSID State Conference was held on 26th September and was an outstanding success with over one hundred people attending. The Conference theme was 'Friendships, Relationships and Professional Expectation'. The keynote speaker Dr Keith McVilly gave an outstanding address on the topic 'I Am Your Support Worker Not Your Friend' which was well received and stimulated much discussion. There were two streams of parallel paper presentations on a diverse range of topics with six papers before lunch and

six after lunch. Following afternoon tea, a four person panel addressed the topic 'What obligations do you have as a worker and how is the relationship different to a friendship'. The following day, 27th September, ASSID(WA) had organized a half day forum for Dr McVilly to meet with direct care staff for input to assist in developing Ethical Guidelines for Disability Support Professionals. This project builds upon a series of workshops and seminars that have been conducted throughout Australia since 2002.

As a result of the organiser's request an ASSID (WA) representative attended a WA HEALTHY START FORUM on 25th October. Healthy Start is a National Strategy for Children with Learning Difficulties and this was mainly a meeting of the Learning Hubs. It is likely we will continue to be involved in Healthy Start.

The third and final IDNetwork meeting of the year will be held on Tuesday 21st November and will be on the topic FAMILY FRIENDS AND NETWORKS. Three speakers will give their perspectives on the relationships between people with intellectual disability and their family, friends and networks. The hardworking 2007 Conference organising committee continues to meet regularly and planning is very advanced. If all goes well the program and call for papers will be out in mid January. The ASSID(WA) Council expects to have another busy and positive year in 2007.

South Australia

by Richard O'Loughlin

South Australia held its AGM on 16th August in conjunction with a presentation by Professor Ken Rigby on bullying. Over 30 people attended this event. The 2005 ASSID (SA) committee members were returned for another term and there were no changes amongst the office bearers. (Any SA members interested in joining the committee or considering taking up a specific role on the committee would be made very welcome). Professor Rigby presented a summary of the research that had been done in the area of "bullying" and providing some suggestions and strategies for counteracting bullying. Feedback on the bullying session was mixed with some comments received indicating frustration that the presentation was not more focussed on the practical issues specifically faced by people with an intellectual disability. This feedback is being taken seriously by the ASSID (SA) committee. (We value constructive feedback whether it is positive or negative). Others who attended found the presentation fascinating and thought provoking (such as the 'eyes test' that provides a means of measuring an individual's ability to judge what emotion another person is experiencing).

We had planned for two additional events to be held in 2006: A University of SA research showcase; and an isolation forum considering the growing issue of dealing with isolation in the community with particular focus on people with intellectual disability. One of the specific intentions of the forum will be to generate a document that will inform government policy for effectively addressing the issues identified. Although planning has progressed, there have been delays and at this stage it is unlikely that either of these events will occur before the end of the year, but we anticipate that they will go ahead early in 2007.

As always, any ideas from the membership regarding what type of events or activities we should be organising, is encouraged. Send suggestions to richardoloughlin@bigpond.com ♦

41st Annual Conference of ASSID

Risk and Resilience: Hope for the Future

by *Linda Goddard*

Conference Convenor

National Convention Centre, Canberra

4-7th September 2006



The first ASSID conference I ever attended was held in Canberra way back in 1988, it was memorable for a person who was fairly new to Australia and who had never heard of ASSID. Then 17 years later as our state committee were thinking about hosting the 41st ASSID conference for NSW and ACT we thought it would be a great idea to look at Canberra again. The event was held with 200 people in attendance, at the National Convention Centre. The rooms were set out in cabaret style with all participants sitting around tables supplied with iced water and mints, this was the first time we had used this layout yet it added to the conference. It allowed people to get to know each other, promoted discussion and appeared to add to a relaxed, friendly and collegial atmosphere. Over the four days we had eight keynote speakers who embraced the theme of the conference, these included:

Gwynnyth Llewellyn (Sydney):

Families first, disability second: New directions offered insight into what we need to be thinking about when working with families, with take home messages related to the position of the family in society not just in relation to the disability or for being special. Consideration is required in the context of work and family life in Australia, the balancing of tasks and the 'Sandwich Generation' where women are caring for their children and their parents. In order to assist

families we have to understand what works in all families.

Robert Martin (New Zealand):

Healing the hurt: It's not about living in services, it's about having a life Robert received a standing ovation after sharing excerpts from his life story with us. He talked about his friends around the world who are still living in institutions, and the pain of segregation and marginalisation. How despite the worst abuse they still remain positive when so much of their world has been a very negative experience. He talked about the future and the understanding and support they need to be the very best they can be.

Tony Shaddock (Canberra):

Mainstream mindsets for resilient services: Or, "How to get into shape by getting rid of normal curves". Tony explored the reasons for successful and unsuccessful policy initiatives and examined factors associated with resilient and sustainable services. The take home message was that being part of the mainstream can be bumpy and dangerous, but it is where the action is. Tony also talked a lot about rivers. We were challenged to guess the names of those shown within the presentation for which Tony would shout the winner a bottle of wine!!! The answers: Swan, Wingercarribee, Torrens, Colorado and some unidentified puddle!



Levan Lim (Singapore):

Teacher education as an Agent of Hope for an Inclusive Society. Levan travelled from Singapore where he holds the position of Associate Professor at the Early Childhood and Special Needs Education Academic Group, National Institute of Education (NIE), Nanyang Technological University. Levan gave a very informative presentation about the integration movement in Singapore, and the need to consider the dynamic interplay between disability, culture and society in order to understand how best to effect change. Levan focused on teacher education and the engagement of pedagogies that effect change within individuals and their communities that in turn can become transformative resources for achieving the vision and hope of an inclusive society. We are hoping that this is the beginning of reciprocal visits between Levan and his colleagues in Singapore and members of ASSID and we hope to see them in Perth next year.

Jeff Sigafos (Tasmania):

Flashback to the 1960's: LSD in the treatment of Autism. Jeff described past studies highlighting the treatment of children with autism and the justifications given at the time for using LSD. He spoke of renewed interest in past studies, even though they lacked proper experimental controls there were positive outcomes. Jeff's talk offered important lessons for future efforts to evaluate new or controversial treatments for children with autism or related developmental disabilities.

Roger Stancliffe (Sydney):

Participation: Lessons from the past, hope for the future. Roger's paper really looked at participation of people with disabilities in a meaningful way. He discussed the paradox currently being faced in the field where people with mild intellectual disabilities

do better with less support while those with severe disabilities achieve greater levels of participation with higher degrees of active support. Striking a balance between offering enough support but not too much, in areas where the person actually requires assistance yet retains a level of autonomy is the challenge.

Concurrent sessions

There were eighty two papers in all with a fairly wide range of themes including: Families; Health; Participation; Legal Issues; Choice; Future Challenges; Communication; Sexuality; Self Advocacy; Staffing Issues; Abuse Issues; Policy; Transitions; Reviews; Positive Behaviour; Leisure and Community Living. There were also symposiums concerned with Health and Mental Health. The speakers came from all over Australia and New Zealand and included: people with disabilities; parents; clinicians; professionals, researchers and academics all from a wide array of services for people with disabilities.

Special Events

Monday evening we held the Cocktail party, which provided a great chance to meet each other, enjoy good food and a few drinks to help us relax. The Conference dinner was held on the Wednesday evening in a transformed ballroom (main room used for the plenary sessions) lit up with blue fairy lights and entertainment by Limelight, a four piece band who started off quiet and slow then livened up for everyone to let their hair down after dinner.

We would like to thank our sponsors: Australian Government Department of Families, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs, Taylor and Francis the publishers of the ASSID Journal of Intellectual and Developmental Disability, and Elsevier Publishers.

Feedback:

In the past we would hold a formal closing ceremony however this year we decided to *continued page 14*



take the opportunity to ask the participants to offer us feedback on the conference and the role of ASSID. There has been a National trend demonstrating an increase in the number of conferences being held as well as a decrease in numbers of attendees. It is reasonable to assume that numbers will be reduced if more conferences are held which cover the same themes. We asked groups and individuals a range of questions however have offered feedback to the first two questions below:

1. Has the conference been beneficial to you professionally? Why/why not?

Group feedback:

It was felt that there was not enough time to share ideas between people with disabilities and people without, limited time for discussion, we talk about people with disabilities but do not listen to them. It was felt that we provided information on a range of topics, with opportunity to link research and studies with issues in supporting people with disabilities, but this was perhaps not done as effectively as one had hoped.

Individual feedback:

The following are samples of comments received. This was quite positive, current practice, pertinent content, session on abuse was worth going to. Learning new things and reinforcing current work/ thinking, hearing the broader issues in the disability field. Yes, though not as relevant as last year, only minimal discussions of mild ID issues, and mental health or new issues/ideas. Seemed very advocacy focused to the cost of empirical presentations. Yes exposure to a wide range of opinions, service providers, current research and ideas. Yes has given me insight and knowledge into new ideas, theories, programs etc. Yes, it has been good to see that clinicians and academics alike struggle with the concept of resilience and are slowly moving toward 'walking the talk'.

2. What has been positive?

Group feedback:

Lots of different thing; to have been provided with the opportunity to attend; Meeting with different people from NZ; Presentations from people from different states and countries. Key note speakers; Well organized; Speakers from State BIS, CDDS, Sydney University finally linking research and clinical support that can be implemented immediately.

Individual feedback:

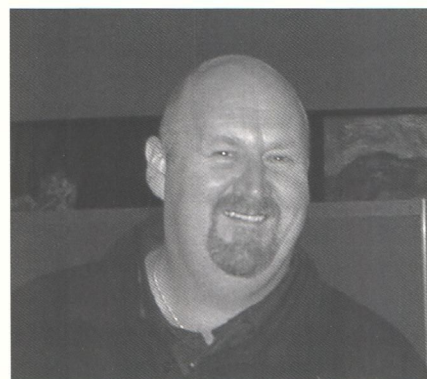
The following are samples of comments received. Cabaret style, space, audio visual; Friendly staff, food best ever at a conference, healthy food. Good program book, good conference organization, central location. Meeting the people from New Zealand; good keynote/plenaries; good variety of professional backgrounds and from different states and disability organisations. Great networking environment; mixing of practice and theory. Enjoyed legal presentations (Jim Simpson) and mental health, and concept provided by Tony Shaddock. Very good self advocate presentations, should support this more. Very good timing of presentations, finishing and starting on time. All of the presentations I attended. Variety of topics, legal, mental health; interactive presentations; people with disability presenting plenary session; presenta-



tions that combine research with real and practical application. Reflection that attitudinal impacts need to be more highly addressed. Positive encouragement on presenting research.

Finally thanks to the Conference Committees

It was at times difficult to convene a conference from a distance however regular teleconferences with the very supportive conference committee including: Tony Tinlin, Jenny Avery, Trish Wetton and Elizabeth Cusack helped enormously, thank you. Linda Henschke and her staff at Conference Coordinators Canberra helped allay anxieties as they emerged and they really did ensure that things ran incredibly smoothly as the event progressed. Thanks also to the abstract committee, Tony Tinlin, Lyn Lee and John Brown. ♦



ASSID and the International Association for the Scientific Study of Intellectual Disability (IASSID)

By Keith McVilly

ASSID is a member organization of the International Association for the Scientific Study of Intellectual Disability (IASSID). IASSID was founded in 1964 for the purpose of "the worldwide promotion of the scientific study of intellectual disabilities and related developmental disabilities and of the conditions of persons with such disabilities and their families" (IASSID Constitution). IASSID conducts a world congress every 4 years, with the next congress scheduled for South Africa in 2008. IASSID also conducts regional conferences, with one planned for the Asia-Pacific region in 2009 at Singapore. ASSID members can obtain discounted registrations at these major

world and regional events, if booked via the ASSID Secretariat. IASSID also publishes scientific journals; the Journal of Intellectual Disability Research (JIDR), which is published monthly, and the Journal of Policy and Practice in Intellectual Disability (JPPID), which is published 4 times per year. We are currently negotiating for ASSID members to obtain a discounted subscription to JPPID - further details to follow soon. The current ASSID Representative to the IASSID Board is Dr Keith McVilly of RMIT University at Melbourne (keith.mcvilly@rmit.edu.au). If you would like to know more about IASSID, you can go to the Web Site: www.iassid.org. ♦

FELLOW OF ASSID AWARDS 2006

Two awards were made and presented at the ASSID Annual Conference

Angus Cappie

Angus Cappie's exceptional and significant contribution to the field of intellectual disability in New Zealand commenced in 1980 with his appointment as Director of Services to IHC, a national parent governed provider of services to people with intellectual disability. Combining his considerable ability both as a persuasive communicator and writer, Angus played a significant leadership in different national forums and governmental working parties in relation to the following:

- Repeal of Education Act which discriminated against children with an intellectual disability
- Deinstitutionalisation of significant numbers of individuals from the existing government run psychopaedic (intellectual disability) hospitals
- Establishment of community –based tertiary training for staff working in the field of intellectual disability (with colleagues)
- Establishment of alternatives to sheltered workshops such as supported employment
- Establishment of a values-based internal training course based on best practice within IHC services
- Establishment of tools and processes involving service users and families in the evaluation of the quality of service provision to people with an intellectual disability
- Involvement of people with intellectual disabilities and their families in decision making within human services

In 1991 Angus became Chief Executive of Standards and Monitoring Services (SAMS), a not for profit Trust established by families of people with intellectual disability to develop family/consumer led evaluation of community services. SAMS has subsequently grown to be known nationally and internationally as an innovative and leading edge evaluation organization looking at quality of life outcomes from a service user and family perspective. SAMS has been fully committed to involving service users and family members in its governance and evaluation and monitoring processes. SAMS has invested considerable resources to train and involve service users and family members in service evaluation and a unique evaluation tool involving a multi perspective approach has been developed as a result.

This multi- perspective approach has attracted attention internationally and Angus has presented and consulted on this approach in a number of different

countries including Australia, the United Kingdom, the Netherlands and Ireland. Angus has published widely on this approach in New Zealand and the United Kingdom. Angus has also presented papers on consumer and family participation at numerous conferences including Australia, Austria, Ireland and the USA. Over the last five years SAMS has been contracted by the Ministry of Social Development of the New Zealand Government to evaluate all Ministry funded providers of vocational services to disabled people throughout New Zealand. More than 145 providers have been evaluated. SAMS has been tasked with providing evaluative feedback to organizations as to how well they are meeting government policy directions as outlined in Pathways to Inclusion. This document outlines government's intentions to repeal the Disabled Person's Employment Protection Act which currently exempts sheltered workshops from paying people with disabilities a minimum wage. SAMS' and Angus's contribution towards this major shift in direction in vocational services will significantly impact upon the future direction of vocational services to people with intellectual disability for many years to come.

Angus, in collaboration with Dr. Patricia O'Brien and Avril Thesing has been involved in a significant research project funded by the Health Research Council of New Zealand which examined the lives of a group of people ten years after leaving an institution. Findings of this research have been published in *Allies in Emancipation* edited by O'Brien and O'Sullivan in 2005. Angus has also presented on this research at 40th conference of ASSID held in Auckland in 2005.

Richard Bruggemann

Richard Bruggemann was the Chief Executive of the Intellectual Disability Services council (IDSC) from 1984 until April 2006 (after having originally being seconded from the SA Health Commission to IDSC in order to establish administrative , financial and workforce systems and service delivery networks at the time of IDSC's inception in 1982).

The public sector organisation (IDSC) had the task of developing services to enable people with intellectual disability to rely less on institutional or special services and more on services that were integrated and local. Following on from the McCoy Report - A New Pattern of Service for Intellectually handicapped persons (1981) that advocated deinstitutionalisation and separation of services for people with intellectual disability from those with mental health issues, Richard was charged with responsibility of establish-

ASSID 2006 AWARD WINNERS

for Journal of Intellectual and Developmental Disability

Australasian Research Prize

Awarded to Margaret Kyrkou, Michael Harbord, Nicole Kyrkou, Debra Kay & Kingsley Coulthard, for their paper on "Community use of intranasal midazolam for managing prolonged seizures", published in JIDD Vol. 31, No. 3 (September 2006) "and judged to be the most innovative contribution by an Australasian author/s resulting in positive life changes for people with an intellectual disability". ♦

JIDD Editor's Prize

Awarded to Lesley Steptoe, William R. Lindsay, Diane Forrest & Mick Power, for their paper on "Quality of life and relationships in sex offenders with intellectual disability", published in JIDD Vol. 31, Issue 1 (March 2006) "and judged to be the most outstanding contribution among all papers published in JIDD throughout 2006". ♦

ASSID Research Grant 2006

The 2006 ASSID research grant was awarded to Dr Jennifer Stephenson (Macquarie University Special Education Centre) and Dr Katrina McFerran (University of Melbourne) for a project entitled Providing the evidence: Examining the impact of music therapy interventions in special education. The study will use a single subject ABAB design to

investigate the hypothesis that students with severe disabilities and significant communication impairment who are developing early communication skills will produce more communicative acts in interactions that include the responsive use of music than in interactions without music. ♦

ASSID Media Award 2006

The 2006 Media award was presented to Margaret Wenham (pictured), Journalist with The Courier-Mail Queensland who has systematically reported on disability issues for more than 6 years in Queensland's biggest daily newspaper. As an investigative journalist, Margaret has rigorously researched a number of crucial issues pertaining to people with intellectual disability. A characteristic of Margaret's work has been its critical role in raising community awareness

and highlighting problems within service systems. She has adopted a strong human rights stance in all her work and is a staunch advocate for people with intellectual disability. Many of her features have brought pressure on government to address serious problems and have contributed to coordinated efforts with other key stakeholders, to bring about positive change for people with intellectual disability. ♦

FELLOW OF ASSID AWARDS 2006

continued from page 16

ing sustainable community base services for people with intellectual disability and their families. Up to that time, there had been no organisation that had been responsible for planning services for people with intellectual disability in SA. Richard brought together a number of disparate services that had not been coordinated. Setting up IDSC in the early 80s was brand new and quite revolutionary for its time.

Achievements include:

- 1) The establishment of a comprehensive service for people with intellectual disability across the state of SA (eg there had been no office in the rural regions when Richard commenced his role as CE - There are now case management services in 9 county locations).
- 2) The devolvement of Ru Rua Nursing home (involving moving over 100 clients from a nursing home into community accommodation)

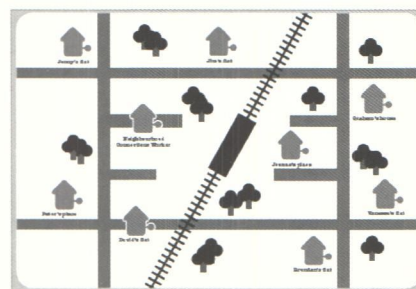
3) The (ongoing) devolution of Strathmont Centre - an institution that originally provided accommodation to over 700 people with intellectual disability - now reduced to 225 (with further devolution planned) Most have moved from the an institutional environment into community accommodation and are doing well. This devolution process included closing down the 'lock-up villa' which had previously provided secure accommodation to individuals with challenging behaviour. These individuals were amongst the first to be 'deinstitutionalised' and are now living in house in the community.

The expansion of accommodation and respite services through both public sector services and the establishment of a range of Non government organisation provide a diverse range of services including accommodation, respite and training. ♦

Neighbourhood Connections Innovative Housing Options: Help is just around the Corner

by Fiona Porter

Neighbourhood Connections Project Worker



Marillac House in Brighton, Victoria has been operating since 1943 and offers people with a disability a wide range of programs and services to meet their individual needs and wishes such as: creative housing options and residential support for children and adults; support and skills training for people who wish to live independently in the community; help accessing recreational and community activities; health care and skills training; and a wide range of specialist services including computer sessions, speech and music therapy, massage and full medical support.

What's the philosophy behind Marillac House?

We believe that every person has a right to develop physically, emotionally, socially, intellectually and spiritually to his or her full human potential. That is the basis of all our services. We measure our success by how well each person using our services feels their expressed wishes and needs are being met.

What is Neighbourhood Connections all about?

Neighbourhood Connections is a unique system of support, designed to make the best use of members' own abilities. A small number of properties are scattered around a neighbourhood (see diagram). You can walk easily from one property to another. One property is occupied by a Community Living Worker, who works part time on a flexible basis. Network members live in the other properties, and Neighbourhood Connections gives them support from each other, the Community Living Worker, and the wider community.

With Neighbourhood Connections' multiple levels of support, Network Members are assured of help at all times:

- The Community Living Worker lives nearby. They will carry out planned support and respond quickly to any problems, such as any signs of deteriorating mental or physical health.
- As a member of Neighbourhood Connections your skills are valued and your Community Living Worker helps you share your skills with your neighbours.
- Neighbourhood Connections members get support to build healthy links with neighbours, community organisations, police, the supermar-

ket, public transport operators and the local community centre.

- If more difficult issues come up, a Neighbourhood Connections Network Manager can intervene to support network members.
- Community Living Workers get to know all the network members very well. They can quickly and effectively advocate to help members if they need specialist support.
- Neighbourhood Connections network members can also get help from other network members, not just from the Community Living Worker.
- Over time in the network, Neighbourhood Connections members become more confident in their own resources and the resources of their neighbours and wider community, and rely less on the Community Living Workers.

Where did this idea originate?

The KeyRing organisation in the UK has been operating this system for over 15 years and has over 70 networks throughout England and Scotland. They have given Marillac House access to all of their intellectual property including policies and procedures so we can adapt their ideal to the Victorian environment quickly and efficiently so we don't have to reinvent the wheel. They have been very helpful answering our many questions.

Where did the funding come from?

Our activities are funded by the Victorian Government, private donations, fees and the Daughters of Charity. More than 170 people with a disability across Victoria are being assisted to find and make a success of living in accommodation of their choice as a result of an initial allocation in Accommodation Innovation Grants launched by the Minister for Community Services Sherryl Garbutt MP in February 2005.

These grants enable fifteen organisations to provide long-term and sustainable accommodation support to people with a disability as a positive alternative to the traditional Shared Supported Accommodation (commonly referred to as Community Residential Units or CRUs).

The support people will receive under the grants is in addition to any other supports they may need as a result of their disability such as HomeFirst or Support & Choice.

upcoming events

7 - 8 Feb 2007	Workshop on Risk Assessment and Management of Sexual Offenders <i>by Associate Professor Doug Boer presented by ASSID (NSW/ACT)</i> Ryde-Eastwood Leagues Club, Sydney c/- John Brown 02 4276 1918 john@fiveislandsclinic.com.au
7 - 9 March 2007	40th Annual Gatlinburg Conference <i>on research and theory in intellectual and developmental disabilities.</i> Loews Annapolis, Annapolis, Maryland USA www.waisman.wisc.edu/gatlinburg/2007.html
14 - 16 March 2007	Biennial Australian National Autism Conference <i>entitled Creative Futures</i> Royal Pines Resort, Gold Coast, Queensland www.astmanagement.com.au/autism7/
22 - 24 March 2007	AGOSCI Conference Melbourne c/- Jane Farrall 03 9848 4812 or email convenor@agosciconference.org.au
2 - 3 April 2007	ACROD Ageing and Disability Conference: <i>Between two worlds: Growing older with a disability</i> Adelaide, South Australia www.acrod.org.au/conferences/a&d2007/home.htm
2 - 5 May 2007	International Meeting for Autism Research (IMFAR) Seattle, Washington www.cevs.ucdavis.edu/Cofred/Public/Aca/
16 - 19 June 2007	Festival of International Conferences on Caregiving, Disability, Aging and Technology (FICCDAT) Brings together 5 international conferences related to disability and to aging. Toronto, Ontario, Canada www.ficcdat.ca/TheFestival/default.aspx?lang=en-US
25 - 30 Sept 2007	14th Deafblind International World Conference Perth www.dbiconference2007.asn.au
5 - 8 Nov 2007	Australasian Society for the Study of Intellectual Disability (ASSID) 42nd Annual Conference. Fremantle, West Australia. (see back cover)

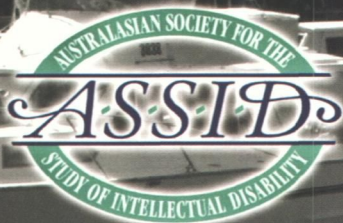
Grant projects cover both metropolitan and rural regions and represent a range of different ways of addressing the diversity of housing needs of people with a disability.

So where are we up to now?

Armada, a suburb of Melbourne, is where the first Neighbourhood Connections has started. Pilot members have been chosen. There are 6 people who are members. 4 people have accommodation and 2 people are looking to move to the area. Everyone is getting on really well with many dinners, DVD nights and trips to the city together being organised. We are encouraging more people to apply as the optimal

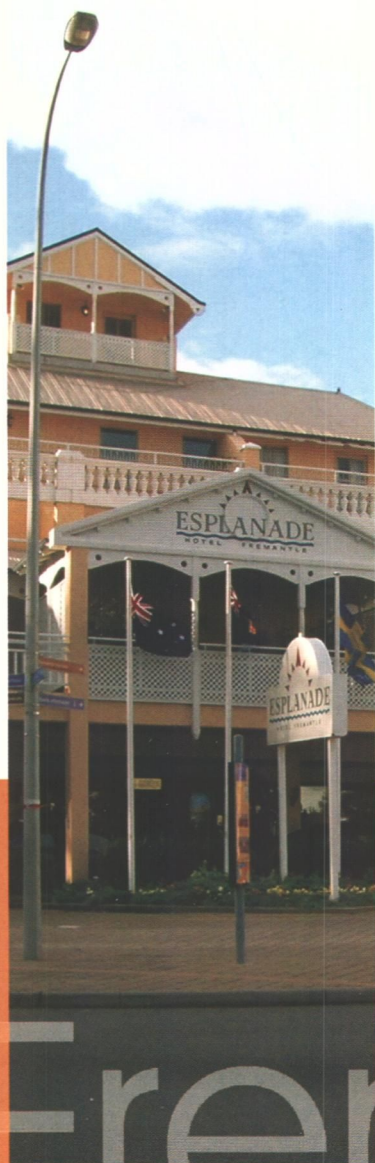
number of people to belong to a Neighbourhood Connections network is 9.

The Community Living Worker has been employed for 12 hours per week. She has her own apartment in Malvern and she is within walking distance of all of the network members. She has vast experience in the disability field including an exchange to the UK to study a KeyRing network and is also currently studying Community Development at TAFE. We are also focusing on starting another network in another suburb. If anyone is interested in applying for either network or would like to learn more please contact Fiona Porter the Project Officer of Neighbourhood Connections at Marillac House – Phone number 9591 6400 or email fiona@marillac.com.au ♦



42nd Australasian ASSID Conference

November 5 - 8 2007



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ACTIVE CITIZENSHIP AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Esplanade Hotel, Fremantle
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