

## Disability Professionals Australasia

I recently gave a talk to the Disability Alliance group, which represents a group of NGOs in South Australia, on Disability Professionals Australasia, how this came about and where it is going.

There was considerable interest from the group and some people asked how they could be involved. Below is a short outline of the history of the DPA movement. The development of the DPA is going quickly and there will soon be a constitution agreed upon. There is a high level of good-will amongst the group and I encourage others to see this as a positive development.

While I have been a member of the Steering Committee for a while, there are others from SA who have been involved (Sally Powell, Bedford; Verity Bottroff, Flinders Uni; Terese Edwards, Barkuma) and interested people are encouraged to contact me so that we have a list of people prepared to keep the momentum going and to ensure that SA is adequately represented in the Australia wide discussions. Some notes from the last meeting of the steering committee in Sydney in January explains this well

"... the intention always was that the make up of the National Disability Professional Association Steering Committee was to be informal and organic and not have a rigid membership structure. The intention was that DPA Steering Committee members would naturally appear in the form of passionate Disability Professionals who share a commitment to the professionalisation and sustainability of our sector. As such this means that Steering Committee members may come and go and that recruits will also be approached to participate."

Below is a document put together to explain the DPA "movement" - if you are interested in having some involvement at the planning level, please email me at [Brian.Matthews@flinders.edu.au](mailto:Brian.Matthews@flinders.edu.au) to indicate this and I will see that you are kept "in the loop". The Steering Committee is also interested in contacts in the field in the NT.

Finally, all members of dArpa, assuming the membership agrees to the changes, will in the near future become "Founding Members" of the DPA as dArpa is "wound up" and the state chapter of DPA takes its place. So, even if you don't want to become a member of the Steering Committee "watch this space" for how you might become involved in the future.

Brian Matthews

Chairperson – DisAbility and Rehabilitation Professionals' Association

## DISABILITY PROFESSIONALS AUSTRALASIA

It was just a matter of time before the development of Disability Professionals Associations in Victoria (DPV) Tasmania (DPT), NSW (DPNSW) and SA (dArpa) opened the discussion about the advantages of developing an Australasian Disability Professionals Association. This Association would be the instrument that could help facilitate the professionalisation of the work that **Disability Support Professionals** do to provide quality services to people with disabilities. Most industries have Professional Associations so it was logical that an Australasian Association for disability support professionals could develop into being a meeting point and resource hub for members. The membership is intended to focus on direct support professionals – support workers, community workers, respite carers, personal care assistant, social educators, lifestyle support workers, employment consultant, case workers, team leaders, coordinators, managers, disability administration staff, disability allied health professionals (podiatrists, OTs, physiotherapists etc).

Disability Professionals Australasia (DPA) is envisioned as a single National Association which will support state and territory as well as overseas Disability Professionals “chapters” which will focus DPA professional development activities on areas of interest relevant to that chapter as well as providing a mechanism for Australasian activities, information sharing and networking.

DPA is being developed by a National Steering Committee which has representation from key stakeholders from across Australia. There is strong interest from Disability Support Professionals in New Zealand who wish to be able to enjoy the professional development initiatives that will be fostered by Disability Professionals Australasia.

The 2 main purposes for which DPA is being established are:

1. To be a Professional Association for all individuals who work the Disability and Allied Health Profession in Australasia by:-
  - o Providing peer support for members
  - o Providing networking opportunities
  - o By promoting professional standards
  - o Raising the profile and identity of the Disability Sector
  
2. To foster excellence and leadership for Disability Support Professionals by:-
  - o Exchanging ideas and information
  - o Providing an extensive range of professional development opportunities for members

After extensive consultation, it is likely that DPA will be incorporated by early 2009 and the members of Disability Professionals Associations already in existence in States and Territories by then will be able to transition to becoming members of the National Association.

Further information about DPA and how you may be able to participate can be provided by contacting:

Kevin Mead  
CEO, Integratedliving Australia  
National Convener, DPA National Steering  
Committee  
Ph (61 2) 6774 8999  
[ea@integratedliving.org.au](mailto:ea@integratedliving.org.au)

Or Frank Price  
Secretariat  
DPA National Steering Committee  
ph (61) 1300 88 46 55  
[frank@directionsaudstralia.com.au](mailto:frank@directionsaudstralia.com.au)



National Steering Committee DPA Inaugural meeting 4 Feb 08.

L-R: Dianne Wallace – Directions Australia; Richard Dent – E W Tipping (Vic); Kevin Mead – Integratedliving (NSW); Lindy O’Neill –Foundation member DPV and representing Tasmania; Carlo Calogero – NDS WA (WA); Frank Price – Directions Aust (NSW & Qld); Kelvin Spiller – Endeavour Foundation (Qld)