From the Desk of the Executive Director ODACS

Welcome to the January edition of Communiqué.

One of the important sources of Aboriginal client and carer advice for Disability SA is the Aboriginal Disability Network of SA, which is supported by the Aboriginal Inclusion Unit in ODACS.

The network held a community consultation and barbeque at Berri in early January 2009. Despite 44 degree days and last minute difficulties with accommodation and transport, the consultation was judged a success by the network. Members of the local Aboriginal community along with some local service providers from Disability SA, ‘Life without Barriers’, and Anglicare attended. While the severe weather prevented a number of local persons with disabilities from attending, around twenty in all attended the consultation.

The consultation resulted in better information about service needs for service providers, and local Aboriginal people with disabilities being connected to respite services. Through discussion a local community member was also identified and agreed to nominate for committee membership at the next election in April 2009.

I congratulate the network on these very positive outcomes and thank all involved for their efforts.

You also may have seen some media reports over Christmas in relation to the Supported Residential Facilities (SRF) sector. The SRF Association had been threatening to withdraw key services from residents (such as medication management) on the basis that SRFs could no longer afford to do this. We have been working with Mental Health to develop a response, with the result that the State Government has approved a supplementary payment to residents, which effectively doubles the current subsidy to the sector from $6 to $12 per resident per day. The Association has also agreed to work with government to develop a longer term reform and investment plan for the sector which focuses strongly on standards and quality.

Most of us are now returned from leave and 2009 has begun in earnest. We all look forward to a successful and productive year working on behalf of people with disabilities.

Suzanne Carman
Executive Director
Office for Disability and Client Services

From the Desk of the Executive Director Disability Services

I hope that at least some of you had a refreshing break over the Christmas new year period, recognising that the majority of our staff keep services running over that period.

Before the close of 2008, the Directors and I were fortunate to visit the “Ramsay Rebuild” project at Hillcrest and saw a great example of an accessible building with the added features of climate control and other new technologies. We thank ParaQuad for the invite.
I also had the opportunity to catch up with Professorial Fellow Richard Bruggemann to discuss the major projects to be undertaken by our staff who are undertaking post graduate Leadership studies at Flinders University. The Executive have generated a list of topics we wish to investigate further in 2009 using the many opportunities we have in DFC including Youth Challenge, Emerging Leaders Business Improvement Challenges and of course, the Flinders Course. We will keep you posted on the presentations by the students.

The Administration Review is drawing to a conclusion as is the Service Coordination review. Whilst we realise we need to have a regular cycle of reviewing what we do and how we do it, I look forward to these two projects concluding early in 2009. Thank you to all staff who have made very constructive contributions and vision into these reviews.

Regional Managers in the North and South Directorates held a planning day in the first week of January. Claude Bruno, Director North and Chris Renshaw, A/Director South, reported that the Managers had some great ideas and strategies for their regions. We look forward to their reports throughout the year.

Disability Services are reviewing our current practice around serious complaints management. We are working with the Customer Strategy Unit, within Housing SA, and will be running a pilot of a complaints data collection system commencing in February. We respond to individual complaints coming directly from our clients and their families as well as those that are elevated to the Minister and to the Health and Community Services Complaints Commissioner (HCSCC), Ms Leena Sudano. The Commissioner meets with staff from Disability Services around specific complaints and also receives a quarterly report from our Chief Executive, Joslene Mazel, regarding trends, response rates and other key performance indicators. We will be presenting to the Commissioner in February so that she and her staff have a better understanding of Disability Service structure and processes. I look forward to a productive 2009 and invite you all to contribute to Communiqué and Connect so that all staff in DFC are aware of the range of services and innovations offered through Disability Services.

Lynn Young
Executive Director
Disability Services

Update on CSTDA Funding

National Disability Agreement

Negotiations for the next Commonwealth/State Disability Agreement are complete. The new agreement, which came into effect from 1 January 2009, will see Commonwealth funding for Disability in South Australia grow by an average of six per cent annually, in line with the National Gross Domestic Product. Whilst further financial analysis is required, the new Agreement is expected to provide approximately $30 million of additional funding over the next five years.

The new agreement, now referred to as the National Disability Agreement was negotiated as part of the Council of Australian Governments’ (COAG) Specific Purpose Payment reforms. These reforms introduce an increased focus on government accountability for better service delivery and outcomes. While the details are not yet available it is understood that governments’ progress on implementing the agreement will be monitored closely.

Incorporated within the National Disability Agreement is an expansive reform agenda which entails the following:

- **Better Measurement of Need** – Under this priority: a national model to estimate demand will be developed by mid 2010; there will be improvements in the data collected through the Survey of Disability, Ageing and Carers (SDAC), which will provide a stronger basis for demand estimates; and improvements in the quality of data reported under the National Minimum Data Set, and jurisdiction-level unmet demand data.

- **Population Benchmarking for Disability Services** – A National Population Benchmarking Framework will be developed and initial population benchmarking of disability services, based on information available, will be achieved by mid 2010 and improve the evidence base to assist in policy, service and planning decisions.
Making Older Carers a Priority – The National Disability Priorities Framework will assist Governments to target services to more vulnerable population groups based on relative need (including older carers and Indigenous people with disability).

Quality Improvement Systems based on Disability Standards – A National Disability Quality Framework with a National Quality Assurance system for disability services will be developed to introduce a national approach to quality assurance and the continuous improvement of disability services by mid 2010.

Service Planning and Strategies to Simplify Access – The National Framework for Service Planning and Access will be developed, focusing on providing a person-centred approach to service delivery and to simplify access to specialist disability services.

Early Intervention and Prevention, Lifelong Planning and Increasing Independence and Social Participation Strategies – An Early Intervention and Prevention Framework will be developed to increase Governments’ ability to be effective with early intervention and prevention strategies and to ensure that clients receive the most appropriate and timely support by mid 2011.

Increased Workforce Capacity – A national workforce strategy will be developed to address qualifications, training and cross-sector career mapping issues and establishing the disability sector as an ‘industry of choice’ by the end of 2010.

Increased Access for Indigenous Australians – A National Indigenous Access Framework will ensure that the needs of Indigenous Australians with disability are addressed through appropriate service delivery arrangements.

Access to Aids and Equipment – More consistent access to aids and equipment by end of 2012.

Improved Access to Disability Care – Systems that improve access to disability care and ensure people are referred to the most appropriate disability services and supports, including consideration of single access points and national consistent assessment processes in line with nationally agreed principles by end 2011.

The growth in Commonwealth funding arising from the Agreement will need to address implementation of this reform agenda, combined with the indexation and service growth requirements of the sector.

Other Agreements and Negotiations
The new National Disability Agreement is one of three intergovernmental agreements negotiated in 2008. The other agreements are:

$8.09m ‘one off’ capital funding for supported accommodation facilities provided by the Commonwealth in June 2008 under a Memorandum of Understanding.

The Disability Assistance Package Bilateral Agreement which commenced in July 2008. This agreement provided $72.9m in Commonwealth funding for South Australia over four years. South Australia matched the Commonwealth money with a State commitment of $26m in new funding as part of the 2008-09 Budget and $46.9m of additional money committed in 2007-08.

The Commonwealth, State and Territory governments have also been giving consideration to their future roles and responsibilities for the aged care and disability systems. COAG have requested that further work be undertaken on this matter.

Service Coordination Review Update
Consultation
All consultations have now been completed. Reports from the various consultations will be available when completed.

Workload Review
To date, we have received approximately 75 per cent of daily activity sheets from staff. To ensure that we get the best and accurate data, it is imperative that all reviews from all staff involved are returned.
Needs Assessment Review
The committee has completed the first phase of the review and has made a series of recommendations. These have been presented to staff in the regional offices to gain feedback and support for the direction of the project.

Brokerage Review
This has been completed and a report and recommendations are currently being developed.

Next Steps
The next stage in the project is to synthesise all the information that has been collected and to develop some ideas that can be used to make recommendations for our future direction. This will be done in a series of workshops facilitated by Robbi Williams with broad representation across the sector. We will be seeking a representative from the field as soon as dates are finalised.

If you would like to know any more about the project, please contact Sue Deeprose on 8372 1486.

Nice Tales of Partnership Between the RSPCA and Disability SA

Case Scenarios

By Andrea Lewis, Senior Inspector RSPCA

Case 1
In September 2008 I had cause to attend to a property in the north of South Australia due to a complaint about a number of sheep that had not been shorn for some time and were in danger of becoming fly blown. At the property and spoke to the elderly male owner and his wife who had concerns about shearing the sheep due to previous experiences. During my visit I noticed a large number of cats around the house and farm area, they appeared to be in good condition.

I made comment to the couple about the large number of cats that they had at the property. He advised me that there were about 30 or 40 cats outside and they had about 10 inside as well. I asked him why he had so many cats and he advised me that they had feral cats from the area that were feeding around the house and breeding in the sheds and around the property. He really didn’t know what to do about them. He advised me that in the past the Animal Welfare League had attended and taken some of the cats away and were going to come back to get some more a month later but never came back (he had contained the cats inside so they were easier to catch).

We eventually resolved the shearing issue with the sheep and they were shorn in November 2008. The wife has an intellectual disability and is under care. In November 2008 I was contacted by the care workers at the local Medical Centre expressing concerns for the couple due to the number of cats they had and the stress it was causing them. RSPCA agreed to offer assistance to help to remove some of the animals if required.

I contacted the Disability SA care workers and the local Lions Club and arranged for a day to meet at the property. I caught and removed 23 cats from the property in December 2008 and left cat traps there for the capture of the remaining animals.

A very big thanks to the volunteers from the local Lions Club who assisted by transporting the trapped cats to the local Veterinary Clinic each morning.

Another big thanks to the local Veterinary Clinic who made special considerations for us by only charging us a one off fee of $50 for the euthanasia of the animals (and a reduced rate to the owners to have the two pet cats they are keeping desexed ASAP).

As of the end of December 2008 there has been over 40 cats removed from the property and the elderly couple appears to be much less stressed and their house no longer resembles a cat litter tray. This should have positive effects for their health and well being.

There is still approx 10–20 cats left at the property that will hopefully be trapped and removed in the New Year. Unfortunately the future of most of the cats is probably euthanasia due to their feral nature (and also to do with the high number of cats we have surrendered to shelters each year).
Case 2
A family of three adult siblings with intellectual disability in country South Australia was under the care of Disability SA and the Public Trustee. They had many cats at their home kept in some unusual ways. There were reports made to RSPCA that there were 40 cats tied up in the rear yard of the property with more inside and some inside the house.

I attended with an Operations Officer and with people from Disability SA and from the Public Trustee to look at the animals. Without these agencies at the property we would not have been able to easily view the cats or to discuss their care.

Many of the cats were wearing collars and were dragging leashes behind them. The cats appeared healthy and were in reasonable body condition. There was approximately 30 cats at the property. There was a shed with male cats where, with the help of the other agencies, we were able to take approximately 12 cats away with us on the day.

The Council had also assisted on previous occasions to remove cats from the property.

Recently the Council and Public Trustee had all of the remaining cats removed except for two de-sexed adult cats.

E-reference Survey
Thank you for your response to the E-reference survey. There was a 61 per cent response rate, which was impressive.

63 per cent of responses came from Service Coordination staff and of that, 49 per cent were from the client services area. Over 80 per cent of responses were from staff that have worked for Disability SA (including IDSC, JFS and ILC) for more than two years.

The following graph shows the responses to the question “How easy is it for you to find Disability SA documents (eg policies, procedures, guidelines, standards, forms, templates, etc) on the intranet?”. Over 43 per cent of staff find it difficult to locate information.

66 per cent of responses from staff indicated that they had not used the E-reference tool. Of those staff who had used the tool, about half found it useful. We anticipate that this figure should increase as more information specific to Disability SA is placed on E-reference.

74 per cent of responses from staff indicated that a documents/forms helpdesk would be helpful until a more user-friendly system is established. In response to this we will provide assistance via phone or email. Please phone 8372 1419 or email disability.iru@dfc.sa.gov.au for assistance.

We will re-run the survey at the end of the current project and we hope for progressive improvements for locating information.
**Disability SA Intranet Improvements**
A small group will work together to make improvements to the information available on the intranet.
If you have any suggestions email: disability.iru@dfc.sa.gov.au

**Disability SA Information and Referral Services: brief update**
Work continues trying to locate a relevant venue to collocate Disability SA’s Statewide services whose primary business is the provision of information and advice to members of the public.
Disability SA’s web-based information will undergo further development and review during the next six months as it is integrated into a common SA Government internet site.

**Newsletters**
For access to the latest DFC newsletters, which include Connect, Disability, Families, Housing, Domiciliary Care and Office for the Ageing refer to: [http://inside.dfc.sa.gov.au/News/default.aspx](http://inside.dfc.sa.gov.au/News/default.aspx)

**Annual Reports 2007-2008**
The Department’s Annual Reports have been released and are available for downloading from the publications section of our internet site at [www.dfc.sa.gov.au](http://www.dfc.sa.gov.au)
Annual Reports available include:
- Department for Families and Communities Annual Report 2007-2008
- South Australian Housing Trust Annual Report 2007-2008

The Annual Reports reflect the substantial progress that has been made in meeting our objectives as outlined in *Connecting to the future: the strategic agenda for the Department for Families and Communities 2005-2008* and our efforts in contributing towards the targets of *South Australia’s Strategic Plan*.

All queries about the Department for Families and Communities Annual Report should be directed to the Strategy Unit by contacting Belinda Trimboli on 8413 8129 or Greg Myers on 8413 8128. Queries about the South Australian Housing Trust Annual Report should be directed to Cathy Burgess in Housing SA on 8207 0132.


★★Gold Stars★★
*Kris Kringle in a grocery box!* — **Staff from the Early Childhood Program** at the Park Terrace site decided to exchange the tradition of Kris Kringle into donating essential items to families within the service who were struggling this Christmas.

Families and friends of the team caught on to the idea and 20 Hampers containing a mix of essential, traditional and of course some developmentally appropriate products were distributed to very appreciate families.

Well done Sarah, Rachel, Alex, Tatiana, Bec, Sonia, Sarah, Liz, Cherie.
Glittering Gold Star to **Denise Lucey**, Service Coordinator, Southern Adelaide, for her contribution and involvement in helping a client with intellectual disability to overcome his fear of policemen due to a traumatic experience he had previously had with the police force. Denise asked a policeman whether he would be prepared to meet with the client to discuss the work police do and to show him that police are not threatening. The policeman agreed and visited the client and his family. He has also indicated that he will be taking the client to cricket at the end of January. As a result of the policeman’s input and involvement, the client’s doctor reported that his client is no longer anxious and is a different person. The doctor congratulated Denise for introducing the policeman.

Well done Denise for this fantastic outcome!

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**Tracey Simpson** and the **In-Home Support** team have been acknowledged by a client and her husband who the team matched with care support services. The clients said Tracey had worked hard to ensure that they have carers who understand their needs and the quality of care they require.

Service Coordinator Tanya Strokowsky said that Tracey has worked hard to match clients and carers so that standards of care are met, "**personalities have some common ground and people are compatible and has tirelessly followed through on all feedback and alterations as (the client’s) needs have increased**".

Managers/Supervisors please make sure that staff who do not have access to email are aware of and have access to all staff communiqués.