**Committee Members**

Muriel Bic  
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**RECENT AND COMING EVENTS**

Hello to all members and readers of the dArpa newsletter.

I am sure that members have noticed the paucity of newsletters in recent times. There are three major reasons for this:

1. A huge amount of energy has been devoted over the last year to planning for, running, and finalising issues related to the dArpa conference in late January this year (2nd State Conference - EMBRACING DIVERSE ABILITIES)

2. Members and other interested people are provided with regular emails about events, jobs, and other matters, and

3. The development of the website at http://darpa.asn.au has also provided information to members and others. Nevertheless, the dArpa committee feels that a newsletter is an important part of what is provided to the membership and we will continue to make efforts to provide these as regularly as time allows.

In this issue we will discuss

The dArpa AGM in November 2004  
The dArpa 2nd State Conference—Embracing Diverse Abilities (Jan 2005)  
A Social Event and AGM on August 23rd 2005  
Useful Websites

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**USEFUL INFORMATION ON THE dArpa WEBSITE**

Recently the website has been updated, so check some of the useful information there. Just go to http://darpa.asn.au and follow the Coming Events link on the left of the homepage.  

Some of the useful information is about

- the coming Social Event and AGM on Tuesday 23rd of August at the Baptist Community Centre, St Marys  
- the Graduate Certificate in Down Syndrome starting in Feb 2006  
- a range of training events and workshops.
THE DARPA AGM IN NOVEMBER 2004

EXCERPTS FROM CHAIRPERSON’S REPORT

2003 Members Survey

Mandy Mabarrack (Chair for first half of the last year), summarized the results of the 2003 members survey. Issues that were most relevant included:

Graduate Title
Suggestions have included
• Disability Therapist,
• Developmental Practitioner,
• Developmental Disability Educator, and
• Disability Educator.

With changes to the Disability degree and clarification of the current role of DE’s, discussion of a graduate title is continuing.

The formation of Special Interest Groups

Proposed is a letter to organizations raising the profile of dArpa and requesting interest in the formation of specialized sub groups. Some such subgroups include interest in young adults with a disability, awareness of indigenous people with a disability and a focus on training professionals to work with people with a disability living in rural areas. Suggestions have also been made to make connections with like organizations overseas.

Professional Development Calendar

Numerous workshop and training days have been discussed, including mentoring, narrative therapy and autism issues. Verity Bottroff was able to secure Donna Williams for a one day workshop in January 2004 on ‘Exposure Anxiety- one of the three faces of Autism’ and ‘Autism at the Table – An exploration of food, eating, anxiety and behaviour’. This was well attended and Donna was also invited to speak at the 2nd State Conference in January 2005.

Accreditation Scheme

This was discussed in depth but held over until more information was obtained as research needs to be more detailed in regards to:

How other systems operate for useful approaches
Types of accreditation point systems
Systems of recognition developed per activity
Administration possibilities
Costs to dArpa
Oncosts to members in regards to requests to participate in the program

Mentoring

There seems to be a great deal of confusion in regards to what mentoring means to professionals as individuals and as workers. We need to decide on a clear statement for direction. I met with Paul Edginton from Training Prospects who suggested considering a pilot project that focuses on addressing:

What is mentoring and how do we see this happening within the disability industry?
What are management perceptions of people working in the disability field?
What outcomes are we expecting?

Discussion was related to the concept of encouraging employers to use mentoring approaches rather than appraisal.

Insurance ramifications

this topic has been held over until further research into mentoring and accreditation has been conducted.

Graduate Title
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• Developmental Practitioner,
• Developmental Disability Educator, and
• Disability Educator.

With changes to the degree and clarification of the current role of DE’s, discussion of a graduate title is continuing.”

Kellie Thomas (Chairperson, 2004)

Changes To The Disability Studies Degree at Flinders University

This was originally planned for 2006 but has subsequently been deferred to 2007 due to the lead time required to gain accreditation for the rehabilitation counselling component. The change is from a three year degree to a four year degree. The degree will continue to look at maintaining current competencies but expand more into the community rehabilitation area. While current graduates have a lot to offer, a specialisation like rehabilitation counselling would add to graduates’ employment prospects.

The new degree will also ultimately be available externally, making it accessible for rural and post graduate students wanting to up-skill their qualifications. More information on these changes as they develop.
Successive graduates of the Diploma of Developmental Disabilities (remember the DDD acronym), the Bachelor of Applied Science (Developmental Disabilities), and the Bachelor of Applied Science (Disability Studies) have been working in disability and related fields for 20 years now. And yet it has been difficult for this group to clarify their identity within the field. If you mention Psychologists or Social Workers, Speech Paths, or OTs, people have some idea of what you are talking about, but DEs do not have a clear identity.

To promote discussion on these issues, the dArpa committee invited a number of CEOs of disability organisations to discuss *The role of DEs in Disability Services - A DE Forum at the 2004 AGM*.

**The Framework suggested for employers’ comments**

Employers were asked to comment on

- The types of roles that disability graduates (DEs) play in his/her organisation
- His/Her view of the value of DEs as professionals within his/her organisation
- Any other comments that he/she has about DEs and professional training in the disability field

Below are some notes from the Forum—apologies for omissions and possible misrepresentations.

**Denice Wharldall – CEO Leveda**

Was one of the first Disability Graduates to graduate in the mid 1980s. Her organization specialises in people with complex needs, health care etc.

Developmental Educators become managers, and are considered a very valuable resource in her organization.

Denice went on to explain that she believed that the extra year of study outlined for the new degree at Flinders University would be very important and valued by Leveda.

**Dr David Caudrey – CEO Disability Services Office**

Currently the demand for disability services is “running hot” due to the publicity in the Advertiser of late.

David went on to explain that four out of the nineteen employees in his Office were DE’s. and that they played valuable and senior roles in the disability sector.

David discussed the disability industry generally and said that an estimated $220 million dollars a year was spent on service delivery.

**Phil Martin—CEO Minda Inc.**

Minda currently employs between 90 and 110 DE’s, and Minda currently accommodates 650 residents.

The role of the DE relates to that of Accommodation Services Coordinator (ASC), which is second to the Unit Manager within the Minda campus.

DE’s also become part of the specialist training team, the professional resource team, and are considered very valuable within Minda’s hierarchy.

The DE is also the only individual who works directly with the client in a “hands on” capacity, as opposed to the OT & Speech Pathologist, who provide ongoing support.

They also train care workers, and become team leaders.

**Richard Bruggemann - CEO, IDSC**

Many DE’s become case managers in IDSC, however the DE does not get paid in the same stream as other case managers such as Social Workers (PSO). DEs are generally employed at SACS level 3-4 which is comparatively close to the PSO level 1 award.

DEs also become part of IDSC specialist teams (Developmental Services).

How do we get a DE to improve their skills to move on to middle management within the organization? Post graduate study is one option. In most professions most managers go on to do further study before being promoted.

One concern for graduates is their expectation to move directly into a management role within the organization, only having a degree behind them and little hands on work experience. It was pointed out that experience and a formal qualification are both important if an individual is going to lead individuals.

Richard explained that he believed that a 4 year degree would assist in an increase in recognition, and increase in pay and should be seriously considered. In particular, the extra year of study would support the change from a SACS award to the higher PSO level.

**The dArpa committee thanks all speakers for their time and efforts on the night and apologises to Greg Box (CEO CARA) because the notes on his presentation were mislaid.**
After the successful Inaugural Conference held in December 2002, it was decided to hold a conference every 2 years. A major purpose of these conferences is to connect disability professionals from a diverse range of allied disciplines. The purpose of creating a forum for all disability professionals is to reduce the fragmentation which often exists in the disability field. Our aim is to build a strong disability sector by more collective and collaborative approaches.

The theme for the Conference (Embracing Diverse Abilities) is dArpa’s “tag line”. This came from the dArpa Committee’s strong commitment to encouraging people to accept people with disability regardless of how well they fit into the “norms” of society. Everyone has their own abilities and, it seemed consistent with the aims of dArpa, that this conference took the opportunity to highlight the abilities that people have as well as addressing how we may overcome difficulties that people experience. To this end, the conference offered papers that focused on people’s achievements and novel practices that are being explored to allow people to engage in the community at a variety of levels. Importantly, also, papers were offered by consumers of disability services and this provides the opportunity for professionals to hear first hand about issues that may be useful in shaping their own practice.

An important feature of this State Conference, as with the last Conference, was the involvement of entertainment groups (No Strings Attached, Tutti Ensemble, and Club Slick) who provided practical demonstrations of the range of abilities that people with disabilities in our community have developed. We thank SHine SA (Sexual Health Information Network and Education) for providing the funding so that we could provide some reimbursement to these groups for their efforts.

Another important feature of the conference was that a decision was made to develop a DVD of the Conference Highlights. Roger Lorenz (Visual Aspect) and Tony Doyle (Tony Doyle Visions) were the producers of the video and they did a great job. This DVD will be a very useful marketing tool for dArpa over the next few years, and it highlights the involvement of people with disabilities in the conference. Thanks to Roger and Tony for their efforts and I can recommend their services to agencies or groups wishing to develop promotional videos for their organisations. The Department of Disability Studies at Flinders University has subsequently employed Roger and Tony to produce a DVD promoting their courses.

We would like to publicly thank the following people and organisations for their efforts in supporting the Conference:

- Sue Goodall, Lorene Thiel, Karen Surfield, Ali Hemmings, Vikki Schultz, Jan Cockrum, Kellie Thomas, Barbara Matthews, Simon Pavelic, John McKiernan, No Strings Attached, Club Slick, Tutti Ensemble Inc., SHine SA for donation, Minda Inc., IDSC, Autism SA, Aboriginal Disability Unit, Commonwealth Care Link Centres, Centrelink, Career Systems, Enhanced Ability, Inside Arts, Julia Farr Services, Centacare, Innovation Communication Programming, Peter Cookson and Graham Webber (Evaluation & Consultancy Options), Mental Illness Fellowship, Wilderness Escape, Independent Living Care and Mobility Centre, The Association of Relatives and Friends of the Mentally Ill (ARAFAMI), Commonwealth Carer Respite Centre, Independent Living Care & Mobility Centre, Inclusion SA, Homecare, Glenda Needs (Inside Arts), Best Friend Magnetic Products Australia, Department of Disability Studies, Flinders University, the ACPA Conference and SAPMEA Conventions, and we must not forget Karina Atkinson and the catering staff from the Student Union at Flinders University for having coffee, tea, lunches and the dinner ready and waiting, and Neil Lockwood and the Buildings and Property Staff in the Sturt Buildings who were so efficient in providing support materials for the conference.

It is planned that the Proceedings of the 1st and 2nd Conference will be available on the dArpa website in the near future.

A special thank you to everyone who presented at the conference for their time and efforts. Your names and contributions will be available soon at the dArpa website.

Brian Matthews

[Quick Quiz— Which Associate Professor at Flinders University was caught standing on tables at the Conference Dinner? - Clue below]
OTHER COMING EVENTS—SEE THE DARPA WEBSITE FOR LINKS TO INFORMATION

The Ethics Centre of SA presents a seminar by Prof Martha Nussbaum, Ernst Freund Distinguished Service Professor of Law and Ethics, University of Chicago, on the evening of Wed 24 August. Her topic is: Disability and Issues Concerning the Social Contract Tradition

A Graduate Certificate in Down Syndrome being offered internally and EXTERNALLY starting Semester 1, 2006

ASPECT Solutions - Mandatory Notification Courses

Intensive Weekend of Creative Arts Therapy by Glenda Needs from Inside Arts. (Friday 23 - Sunday 25)

Look at the e-flyer about Vocabulary, Restless Dance Company's latest production

NovitaTech and Novita Therapy Services is organising a Research Day on Thursday, August 18th as part of Cerebral Palsy week.

Call for Abstracts - 29th Annual Brain Impairment Conference, Sydney, April 2006.

Parliamentary Report on Multiple Chemical Sensitivity

The parliamentary inquiry report into Multiple Chemical Sensitivity (MCS) can be found at:

The report concludes that MCS is “very real” and there are some groundbreaking recommendations on developing MCS disability access. Below are two very good sites looking at MCS workplace accommodation, which should be part of every disability access strategy and OHS workplace committee’s understanding.

A Really Useful Website for Those Working with People with Hearing Impairments

Often my students and other contacts will send me a web address that they think I will find useful.

The following is really useful


It is a resource called “Are you being heard” and a copy can be printed free from this website - Thank you to Jeanette Sullivan (from Tasmania) for contributing this

Brian Matthews
Invites you to try the 
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