

Disability Services



Melbourne Citymission
Building Inclusive Communities
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Be Involved ! DISABILITY SERVICES, MELBOURNE CITYMISSION

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Do you have something you would like to share with others from your experiences either as a carer or someone who has a disability?

You can send in a draft which we can work on together. You can hand write it and give it to us. We can then type it up for you.

Maybe you have an idea, but you are not sure how to write it down — no problem !

We can meet or talk about it over the phone.

Interested ?

Contact Helen on 9385 3224 or email: hparker@mcm.org.au

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What has the consumer committee been up to ?

Feedback boxes



The committee has produced two feedback boxes which are placed at Thornbury and Hartnett House to make feedback more accessible to even more clients.

You can't miss them- very vibrant ! Any feedback as the box says "the good the bad and the ugly" ! We welcome your input.

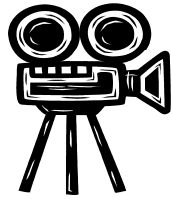
Service user exit form

The exit form for people leaving Disability Services has been signed off. There will be a six month trial in 2012.

The committee will also be given numbers of people leaving per month for various reasons. We can then gauge the use of the form.

If you leave Melbourne Citymission during the trial, arrangements can be made for you to have independent assistance to fill in the form.

Film on consumer participation



We have met with a film maker and working out the cost and what is involved. We are still trying to secure funding for the film.



A new webpage for consumer participation!

We have a temporary website that can be used until the official site is launched. Feel free to help this website to gain momentum. We invite you to have a look on <http://www.melbournecitymission.org.au/What-We-Do/Consumer-Participation>

Three new members on the committee ! We have filled our vacant positions on the committee that were advertised in the last edition of "Be involved!". They represent

- Outreach
- Parenting in partnership
- Disability Planning and coordination service (Planning)
- Bridges day program

We have one volunteer recruited to support one of the new members. She takes notes during the meetings. This support is really valued as this is what we are striving to achieve— participation from anyone who wants to get involved.

We also have the new Director of Children and Disability Services on the committee who is Liz Bishop .

As this will be the last edition for the year it 's time to say that the committee wishes the whole Melbourne Citymission community a
Happy Christmas and Merry New Year!



Written by Cameron, a member of the consumer committee

FEEDBACK SHEET



This form can be used for all comments, compliments and complaints relating to your experience at Disability Services. It can also be used for feedback on this newsletter—any stories you would like to see ?

Please put this sheet into the envelope provided.

If you want to give feedback over the phone you can phone Helen on 9385 3224

To help us make the most of your feedback , please tell us two things first of all

Which program do you receive services from ? _____

Are you a service user or a carer (please circle one)

Outcome wanted:

Your experience of what has happened:

If you want to be contacted about your feedback you will need to give us your contact details below .

Your name:

Postal address:

Phone number:



NDIS | revolutionising disability services

Update on the
National Disability
Insurance Scheme (NDIS)

www.everyaustraliancounts.com.au

Designing a National Disability Insurance Scheme

Following in the footsteps of Medicare, an NDIS will make sure Australians with disability have access to the services they need to participate in society, no matter where they live or how they acquired the disability.

The government has recently announced the creation of an agency responsible for leading and coordinating the work necessary to introduce the NDIS. They have announced a further \$10 million to support projects designed to help individuals and organisations prepare for the enormous changes the NDIS will bring.

This is separate to the \$10 million announced in August to complete the ground-work necessary to establish the NDIS.

The agency will also oversee new projects to help prepare the disability sector and workforce, and people with disability, to move to a new ways of delivering disability services. There will be opportunities to work with government on the design and development of the NDIS.

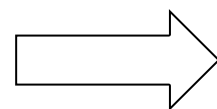
These projects will look at how to deliver planned individual, personalised care, instead of being reactive.

An NDIS will involve important changes to the way disability care and support is provided in Australia. It will operate on insurance principles and give people with disability greater control and choice over the services they receive, for example through individualised funding.

If you want to support NDIS, please go to the website and sign up as a supporter on www.everyaustraliancounts.com.au

Do you have something to say to MCM?

You can use the feedback sheet



Introducing Liz Bishop, the new Director of Children and Disability Services, Melbourne Citymission.

My name is Liz Bishop and I started as the Director of Children's and Disability Services at Melbourne Citymission on the 1st of August.



Jen Deurwaarder has been in this role for a long time, she is now in a new role as Director of Development, which is all about building on the services we already deliver and starting some new things here at MCM. Jen and I will be doing lots of work together.

I am married to Tony and have a 23 year old daughter, Hannah who has just finished at University. I have lived in Eltham for over 23 years; I love it there because it is almost like living in the bush. We have a black cat called Zac. In my spare time I like to read, go out with my friends and family to cafes, the movies or art galleries and I love to go the beach in summer.

I have worked for people with a disability all my working life, that's 29 years (not long if you say it fast!). I first started at Janefield Training Centre in 1982 as a nurse, I also had roles in training staff and in helping people with their general and individual service plans. In the early 1990's I worked for the North West DHS regional team, managing the case management team and later some other teams including the BIST team. In 1993 I ceased working for the government and started work managing the residential program for an organization called Nadrasca.

Following this I managed Broadmeadows Disability Services for 7 years and for the past 8 years I have worked at St John of God as a General Manager of Accommodation and then as the CEO.

Just before coming to MCM, I took a year off fulltime work and completed a few community and sector based projects, one was establishing a community centre in Geelong and the other was organizing a Human Rights conference that was held in Melbourne. I then traveled to England and toured around for 6 weeks in May and June.

After having a good rest I am very happy to be working here at MCM, I hope that I will meet you as I visit and get used to all the services that we run.

Profile of Residential Services at Melbourne Citymission

Melbourne Citymission's (MCM) Disability Residential Services has 12 houses located in the Western and Northern suburbs ... Sunshine, Maidstone, Braybrook, East Keilor, Sydenham, Preston, Thomastown, Reservoir and Thornbury. In total, about 70 people receive support.

Residential Services has been operating for over 21 years. The adult houses provide long term support and these houses become the person's home. People are encouraged to participate in the running of their home through house meetings and being involved in general household chores.

We are a 24 hour service which means that staff are present when people are home from school, day program or work. We provide support to children and adults, some who are now well into their 70's.

We have 2 children's houses, one of which is a planned respite house. This means that parents are able to "have a break" from their normal caring role, whilst the MCM staff provide support to their child.

The people we support may have a range of disabilities including, intellectual disability, physical and/or sensory disabilities and mental health issues. Some of the people we support engage in behaviours of concern.

Each person has an individual plan that includes his or her goals and aspirations for the next 12 months. Depending on the person's there may be a focus on learning new things, community access or social engagement with family and friends. Staff support each person to achieve these goals to the best of each person's ability.

Staff provide support based on the model of active support. This model encourages people to do things *for* themselves. The type of support provided is dependent on the needs of the person. Some of the people we support are very independent and self reliant—while other people may require intensive one on one support.

They seem to revel in the glory of what they have achieved, with out giving any or very little recognition to what the person themselves has achieved.

At this stage in my journey of being a parent of two children with disabilities I see myself more as a facilitator . I should provide the right environment so that my children can demonstrate what they are capable of.

Would we consider it "fair" that everyone is told to wear the same size shoes?

Would we complain about someone performing CPR only on one person in a crowd if they were the only one to require it ?

6. Do we see the concept of fairness as treating everyone the same?

I have witnessed many people (eg. teachers, workers) who think it is inherently unfair to the wider group if special provisions are made for the person with special needs.

This fails to understand that we must attempt to meet the needs of all people and that these needs will vary from person to person. I have even got the impression that sometimes there is an element of trying to deny the particular needs of the person with a disability and thereby "wish" that the disability was gone

It is sometimes connected with the idea that we need to hide/ deny the disability and make the person seem like everyone else. If that is the desire of the person with a disability, then I would respect this position, but If it is because the mainstream person has their own agenda of making the person with the disability the same as people without disabilities, then I see that as denying the humanity of the person with additional needs.

I hope that this jumbled collection of thoughts, written in between caring for my two wonderful children is stimulating and thought provoking and contributes in some small way to my personal goal of educating wider mainstream society about some issues around disability.

Thankyou for reading.

4. Are we open to the idea that people with disabilities also have many abilities as well?

I know of a child with a disability who also has many abilities. He was competing in a mainstream competition. The people who had worked with him thought that they had made amazing progress with him by getting him to participate and compete. What they did not know is that the child had already competed in similar situations in his school environment and had done so on a number of occasions.

They were actually being quite patronising by suggesting that it was something wonderful that they had done, rather than recognising that the child himself had already demonstrated this ability previously.

Recently my child had the experience of being taught specific skills for a recreation activity by a young adult. What actually occurred is that both my child and the person working with them taught each other.

My child developed her skills and a sense of pride as well as a close bond with the person teaching her. In response to this, my child gave a small gift to the person who was greatly moved to think that someone had thought her worthy of being treated nicely.

How open are we to the fact that people with disabilities have the ability to teach us if we are open to it?

5. Do we leave someone important out, in the picture of achieving goals?

I know of a person who after a series of traumatic life experiences decided to set up an organisation to support young people as they dealt with difficult issues in their lives. This has been extremely successful and there are a multitude of testimonies from young people outlining how much it has helped them— even to the extent to say that it had stopped them from taking their own lives.

When the organiser was asked in an interview whether the organisation saved lives, their sage and considered response was that “the organisation did not save lives—the young person themselves saved their own life”. That is, the organisation is merely a tool, to enable the young person to help themselves.

I tell this story because I have witnessed people who work with people with disabilities (and abilities) who perceive themselves as almost wholly being the one responsible for achieving some kind of transformation in the person they work with.

Introducing Lisa— a new member of the Consumer Participation Reference Committee, representing Outreach and Parenting in Partnership

My name is Lisa Haynes

I am 36 years old and the mother of Connor, my 3 year old son.

I became involved with MCM after returning from hospital in August, 2008 following complications during the birth of my son, resulting in an ABI.

I feel that I am at the stage where I would like to give back something in return for the efforts in people helping me recover.

Initially I was looking for a job to keep me engaged.

My MCM Case Manager made me aware of a committee seeking members and I decided to positively respond as I have been active on a committee before. This was with the Superfits Committee with the Epilepsy Foundation of Victoria. I found this both rewarding and challenging.

I am looking forward to helping MCM staff to improve services through the client feedback processes.



BE INVOLVED! Feedback in any shape or form is what we are looking for to help us all to be involved and to have a voice, to say what works what doesn't - to help the committee see how we can improve services across Disability Services

Service user story– Connie and Diana

Connie receives services from respite and Diana is her worker.

CONNIE

What has been your experience of receiving respite?

The respite program has assisted me in achieving my goals with the support of Diana, respite support worker. We have gone to many musical concerts, movies, shopping adventures. Diana has been a great help as I am vision impaired. She understands what I am feeling and going through.

What sort of things have you done together with Diana ? What has been the best thing about respite?

Respite allows me to access services and places in the community that I otherwise would find difficult to access on my own. We have gone to information sessions and expo's as I have recently been diagnosed with Celiac disease. Diana has assisted me by attending support groups and specialist doctors appointments, which helps me better manage and understand my condition.

How do you work out what you are going to do?

I enjoy going to musical concerts and I will ask Diana to look into available dates so that we can go together. I generally have an idea each week about what I would like to do and I inform Diana in the morning when she picks me up. We are planning to go and see "Annie ." next year.

What kind of support do you get from Diana?

Diana has assisted me in many different ways for example, completing forms, shopping for gluten free foods, going to information sessions and support groups. As a I am vision impaired due to my diagnosed Multiple Sclerosis, Diana also assists me with walking safely, for instance, when we are approaching steps, gutter, avoiding stairs and locating lifts etc,. This provides me with reassurance.

I once heard an inspiring speaker who stated that he was glad that he had a physical disability because he had the opportunity to talk with and inspire many people in society about what he had achieved in spite of the challenges facing him. He has touched many people in a way that he may not have been able to if he was able bodied.

2. Are we trying to make the person with a disability the "same" as everyone else?

For me this ties in with keeping the disability hidden because it is somehow "shameful".

Within the culture of our family, we have always talked openly about the topic of disability. We do not see having a disability as something inherently "shameful". I was influenced to take this approach by a good friend, who told me as part of her story, how around the age of 20 she started manifesting symptoms of a mental illness. Her family's response was to hide her away, and never to discuss it. She grew up with a great sense of shame about her illness, but in spite of this she has managed to advocate for both herself and others on consumer committees addressing the needs of people with a mental illness.

When I talk with my children about disability, I try to emphasise first and foremost that they are wonderful , valued, worthwhile people. We talk about their many abilities and that there are some things that are much trickier for them than for many other people.

Whilst I acknowledge that this approach may not be right for all families, and I respect every families' right to approach it in a way that feels right for them, so far I have feel that it has served us well.

If my children indicated to me that they did not want anyone to know that they had a disability, then obviously my approach would need to change. But , generally I feel that our society would be a better one if we could discuss it more openly. Our ability to be more open around mental health issues in recent years I feel is very positive and I would like to see a similar campaign around disability

In having the courage to reach out for help and support -the system failed her miserably and added untold stress to her relationship with her partner. In spite of this, she persisted further in seeking help until she finally found someone who had the skills and abilities to make the diagnosis.

Although her circumstances are still challenging, she is in a better place than she was before. She has the benefit of being highly educated and I often wonder how difficult it must be for parents who are disadvantaged in some way, such as not having English as first language, or not having had access to a comprehensive education.

From my own personal experience , I recall the Maternal and Child Health Nurse telling me to speak more with my child whose language was showing some signs of being delayed. Even though I was a stay-at -home mum who was constantly singing and reading to my child, at the first sign of some kind of issue it was my interaction with the child that was questioned.

It was not until about 3 and a half years later (after lots of speech therapy), that a therapist finally told me "Its not your fault". For years I had blamed myself that I had not provided a rich enough language environment for my child (even though my background is as a primary teacher).

Another all too common experience is that we are constantly challenged as to whether our child/ren really **do** have a disability.

This is often said by people who hardly know the child and only see them in a context where their particular difficulties are not exposed.

In my case, I have a child who if you were to observe running around the schoolyard at lunchtime shows no sign of any kind of disability. But put this child in a different and challenging context their difficulties come out.

Many issues have arisen over the years which lead me to reflect on various views around disability.

1. Do we see people with a disability as people that we must "fix up" or "cure"?

For example, do we believe that people with a hearing impairment should have a cochlear implant if it could lead them to being able to hear better. Surely it is up to the person with the hearing impairment to decide whether or not they feel they would benefit from the implant.

DIANA

What has been your experience of working with Connie?

It has been gratifying supporting Connie since 2007. I feel as though I have been on many journeys with Connie, including her diagnosis of Celiac disease. I have learnt a lot through my involvement with Connie. We have many great outings together. I get to see many fantastic concerts , movies and attend activities that I wouldn't ordinarily see.

What have you learnt from working with Connie?

I have learnt a lot about Connies' diagnosed medical conditions including multiple sclerosis, type 1 diabetes mellitus and celiac disease. Most importantly, I have been able to witness what it is like living with comorbid medical conditions, and in such a positive manner that Connie possesses.

Why did you decide to work in respite?

Initially, I joined the respite program as I had completed a relevant degree and was looking for experience in the industry. I have always enjoyed supporting, fostering independence whilst also educating others and the respite programs allows me to utilise these skills.



Diana and Connie

International Day for People with a disability – the development of a new MCM Disability Action Plan



On December the 3rd every year International Day of People with a Disability (*idpwd*) is celebrated worldwide. The day recognizes the achievements and contributions of people with a disability. IDPWD brings together people with a disability and the general community and aims to :-

- Showcase the skills, abilities, contributions and achievements of people with disabilities
- Promote positive images of people with a disability
- Involve people with a disability and the broader community in activities to celebrate and raise awareness of *idpwd*

Melbourne Citymission provides 22 services to hundreds of people with a disability every year. Services include 24 hour residential support, case management, service planning and co-ordination, outreach, day support, employment, sibling programs and early childhood development.

Our major announcement for *idpwd* 2011 was the development of an MCM Disability Action Plan. The plan will assist MCM to ensure that the needs of people with a disability are always considered in the decisions that it makes, from employment to leasing a building. The development of the plan will be guided by a Disability Advisory Group comprised of service users, their families, support staff, and corporate staff.

It will take about a year to complete and will be launched on the 3rd December 2012.



Carer's page

“See the person, not the disability”

The following story is from a carer who receives support from Disability Services at Melbourne Citymission.

“See the person, not the disability” states the billboard ad, prominently displayed in the skyline above a Melbourne train station.

I totally support the sentiment as expressed in this ad and applaud the fact that an organisation is striving to change attitudes around disability within mainstream society.

However, today I am writing this as a mother and carer of two children with mild levels of disabilities, who, to the naked eye, have absolutely no physical manifestation of such.

Within society the symbol that we use to denote disability is a person in a wheelchair. In my mind, this contributes to the misunderstanding that disability is something that you can see. This gives rise to some common issues facing parents of children/ adults with “invisible” disabilities and I would like to document some of these issues.

Unfortunately, it is all too common that the carer (or in my experience, the mother), is seen as the problem. We can be perceived as being overprotective, or as nervous anxious mothers worrying about nothing.

A good friend of mine, whose child was recently diagnosed with ADHD (after years of investigating), and who is responding well to the treatment of such, was told by a psychologist that she was the cause of the child’s challenging behaviour.

BE INVOLVED! We are always on the never ending hunt for content



Please feel free to send us any goings on, news, triumphs, events, pictures, poems.....