

Spectrum News

The Magazine of Autism Tasmania Inc.

ISSUE: September 2014



Inside this edition

Autism CRC

Tasmanian Autism Community Engagement Project

The Lab... and more



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Cover image:
 Orr Street
 Queenstown Painting
 by Jamie Daft



Stephen Pender from MyState presents Terry Burke with a cheque, on behalf of the MyState Foundation

From the CEO Desk

One of the driving objectives of Autism Tasmania is to raise community awareness and understanding of autism and we have been overwhelmed over the last 18 months by the generosity of people that either support us directly or take up fundraising efforts to enable us to undertake various awareness raising initiatives.

Recently financial support has been received from the MyState Foundation, Specsavers Glenorchy and Tasmanian Brick Enthusiasts Inc that has allowed our members to attend the Victorian Autism Conference (VAC) Tasmanian presentations for free. These sessions included a selection of both international and national presenters on a range of autism related topics, having only been delivered in early August at Etihad Stadium in Melbourne.

The cover image of this edition of Spectrum News features an artwork from talented artist Jamie Daft depicting Queenstown, Tasmania. Jamie resides in Queenstown and is one of our unique Tasmanians.

There is a twofold reason for highlighting this artwork and the town of Queenstown. Firstly to encourage our members and the autism community generally to showcase their creativity and other successes that can be either shown or reported in your magazine. Secondly it is a way of acknowledging the great support that Autism Tasmania has received from the Queenstown community in the last year via the local Social /Support Group.

We are all acutely aware of the recent difficult times that this West Coast community has endured so we have included details of the upcoming Queenstown

Heritage and Arts Festival. We encourage our members to spread the word of this impressive event and to think of Queenstown as a destination for a visit to support those who are so willing to support others.

It is with some excitement that we report we have recently passed the 500 membership mark. This strong growth can be explained in some part by making some memberships free at our last Annual General Meeting but we have also seen significant growth in all membership classes. It is with this expanded base that we can seek to gain your views and represent your collective voice. Please see details of our member engagement project on page 25 of this issue.

The last few months have flown at Autism Tasmania and I acknowledge the wonderful work and commitment of our team throughout this calendar year. We have had a full dance card with Early Days Workshops, Teacher / Teacher Aid and Child Educators series of workshops, Parent Workshops run out of Launceston and provision of training to many service providers. This is in addition to the VAC presentations in early September and the provision of services to individuals and families.

Please enjoy the September issue of Spectrum News and again we encourage you to invite the people in your network to join our association by completing the enclosed membership form.

Terry Burke
CEO





Cooperative Research Centres are Australian Government Initiatives that pull together research being done at Universities, research organisations such as CSIRO and businesses across the nation, linking research and services for the benefit of the community. The Cooperative Research Centre for Living with Autism Spectrum Disorders (Autism CRC) is the **world's first national, cooperative research effort** focused on autism across the lifespan.

The goal of the Autism CRC is to improve outcomes for people with autism across the lifespan by implementing end-user driven research programs. Autism CRC has three core research programs, each linking throughout the lifespan, including diagnosis, education and adulthood.

Program 1: Diagnosis

The objectives of Program 1 are to harness existing knowledge of ASD to ensure early and accurate diagnosis and use breakthroughs in biological research to identify subtypes of ASD and the most effective interventions for each subtype.

Currently in Australia and around the world the diagnosis of autism is based solely on behavioural profiling of the child, teenager or adult, in a process that takes many months, involves many specialists and is often expensive.

This process may cause delays in diagnosis and, occasionally, there may be misdiagnosis and wrong or ineffective support provided.

Autism CRC is going to provide a comprehensive road map using biological information, neuroscience and genetics. Combined with the behavioural profiling already used to diagnose autism, they aim to accurately diagnose autism under two years of age - for the first time. This is a revolution in the way in which autism is diagnosed and it is enormously exciting.

One of the ways in which the Autism CRC intends **to do this is to create Australia's first and largest** autism Biobank. The Biobank will contain detailed biological information collected from over 1200 families where a family member has autism. This is a step towards:

- Trained health professionals to identify risk and recommend appropriate referral
- Accredited teams to use CRC developed genetic/biological screen to confirm diagnosis by 2 years using a national protocol
- Individualised early intervention tailored to a comprehensive behavioural, cognitive and biological profile

The first phase of the genetic profiling was published in Translational Psychiatry on 3 June, 2014. The whole article can be found here:

<http://www.nature.com/tp/journal/v4/n6/full/tp201438a.html>

The Autism CRC will put the research into practice by following up with behavioural surveillance which in combination with the biological markers produced through Autism CRC projects will ensure children can access appropriate interventions much earlier. Plans for further longitudinal studies through the CRC mean the potential to identify more targeted interventions for sub-types of autism in the future.

Program 2: Education

The Program 2 objectives are to provide ASD appropriate educational environments and **programs that optimise students' social, behavioural and academic success** and equip teachers to manage even the most complex behaviours.

Autism CRC will revolutionise the way the complex learning needs and behaviours of students with autism are managed in the classroom. All CRC projects are grounded within a school setting with a key research focus on how to create autism-friendly education programs and better equip teachers. The Autism CRC is recognising that with the prevalence of Autism, teachers are more likely than ever to have a child diagnosed with ASD within in their classrooms. The Program will look at the effectiveness of alternative technologies in the classroom, and how classroom structure, acoustics and technology can improve **educational outcomes and optimise students' social, behavioural and academic success**, and equip teachers to manage even the most complex behaviours.

Program 2 projects feature a collaborative approach with teachers, allied health professionals, parents and students working together to conduct research to identify evidence based practice in schools to ensure that students with autism have the best chance of social, behavioural and academic success at school.

The first step is the first Australia-wide education needs analysis of students with ASD (aged 5-18 years) and their educational needs. The results from the survey will guide the development of models of supports for students with ASD. This survey is now recruiting participants. To find out more about the Australian ASD Educational Needs Analysis – what are the needs of schools, parents, students with ASD across Australia? Visit <http://autismcrc.com.au/program-2-australian-educational-needs-analysis#overlay-context=program-2-australian-educational-needs-analysis> or Contact Dr Beth Saggars at Queensland University of Technology for more information at b.saggars@qut.edu.au

Recruitment for the Trajectory study - a longitudinal study of the developmental and behavioural trajectories of children with ASD, will begin shortly. Please visit <http://autismcrc.com.au/study-australian-students-autism> for more information and express your interest in participating. Upcoming projects include Overcoming the difficulties of students with ASD in written expression through the use of assistive technology and writing strategy instruction, a project that evaluates explicit writing instruction in tandem with assistive technology and Helping students stay on-task and move between tasks, a project that aims to develop a training package for teachers.

Program 3: Adulthood

Program 3 aims to improve opportunities for people with ASD to successfully participate in higher education and employment, and identify best practice in physical and mental health management. Autism CRC is producing the first Australian multisite, multistate, longitudinal, coordinated studies into appropriate services for adults with autism. Only 1% of all research into autism is focused on post school outcomes but with 2,500 to 3,000 school leavers in Australia with autism, it is an area where much can be done.

Autism CRC researchers will provide a comprehensive and unique profile of Australian school leavers with ASD as they transition to higher education and vocational training. This longitudinal study will track over three to four years the physical and mental health, wellbeing, life roles, time use, satisfaction, employment, community access and participation of adults. The study will inform interventions developed to enhance health and wellbeing in adults with ASD and their families. Projects will focus on identification and management by general practitioners, psychiatrists and other mental health professionals, of the physical and mental health issues frequently associated with ASD.

In 2009, the Australian Bureau of Statistics Survey, Autism in Australia, found the labour force participation rate for people with autism was 34%. This compares with 54% labour force participation rate for people with disabilities and 83% for people without disabilities. The National Disability Strategy notes: 'Employment contributes to mental health, personal well-being and a sense of identity'.

Further development of a vocational decision making tool and an employment success tool aims to increase the number of adults with autism in paid employment and therefore improve their overall wellbeing. The key research objectives of this project are to:

- Identify individual strengths and vocational abilities to assist adolescents and adults with ASD in vocational decision making, culminating in an Educational Vocational Assessment Protocol (EVAP);
- Identify key factors required for successful supported and open employment in order to develop an Integrated Employment Success Tool (IEST) that facilitates successful employment outcomes in existing and yet to be established jobs.

There has never been such a multi-faceted, collaborative research effort focused on improving the physical and mental well-being of adults with autism. Developing national protocols will give clear guidance to people with autism,

their families and the health professionals who assist them, removing uncertainty in the difficult transition from school.

It is an exciting time for autism research, never before has there been such a collaboration of researchers and end-users tackling autism research in Australia. Never before has there been such a coordinated effort and in key areas that people with autism and their families have identified as most critical.



The Australian ASD Educational Needs Analysis

Ethics Approval Numbers 1300000790 and 1400000501

Autism CRC needs your help to shape the future as we embark on a landmark, national needs analysis of students with ASD aged 5-18 years, and ...their educational needs.

We are calling on school administrators, teachers and specialist support staff, ancillary support staff such as teacher aides, parents of students with ASD and students with ASD to share your experiences.

To help improve outcomes for students with ASD take the survey today.

Visit: https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/choose_survey

Contact: Dr. Beth Saggars
(07) 3138 9615
b.saggars@qut.edu.au

This project is part of Autism CRC Program 2 - Education which aims to provide appropriate educational environments and programs for students with ASD so that they have the best chance of social, behavioural and academic success, and to equip teachers and health professionals to manage even the most complex behaviours.

Autism CRC is the world's first national cooperative research effort focused on autism across the lifespan. www.autismcrc.com.au

The Australian ASD
Educational Needs
Analysis
Ethics Approval



Holiday winners
announced



Prize winners announced

It is always a pleasure to bring a smile to our members. Today our Northern Autism Advisors, Maree and Deborah, had the opportunity to do so when presenting prizes to two of our lucky members. Discovery Holiday Parks kindly donated the First prize, a \$500 voucher that could be used at any of their Tasmanian parks for an individual or family living with autism. The competition was open to Autism Tasmania Members and shared via the Facebook page. Current Members were automatically entered. First prize was won by Autism Tasmania Member Trudi Cross who intends to use the \$500 Discovery Parks voucher to take her husband and four children on a well earned break visiting picturesque Strahan and hinted that a jet boat experience might even be on the list of things to do.

Our second prize of a \$100 Coles voucher was won by Naomi Simpson-Kitt, for liking and sharing the page on Facebook and becoming a new member, and says it will certainly be helpful in meeting some of the grocery costs for her family.

To both of our lucky winners congratulations from all the staff at Autism Tasmania, we hope you enjoy your prizes.

Many thanks to Discovery Holiday Parks for donating such a wonderful prize for us to share with our members.



(L-R) Maree Morgan, Naomi Simpson-Kitt with daughter Willow, Trudi Cross and Deborah Smith

AIS Sports Draft



Para-sport Draft approaching

The Australian Paralympic Committee and the AIS have joined forces to hold a Para-sport Draft throughout the country in late 2014 for individuals with cerebral palsy and other neurological-type impairments such as multiple sclerosis or an acquired brain injury.

This inaugural initiative provides a new entry point to sport for individuals aged between 15 and 30 in most Summer and Winter Paralympic sports.

We want to hear from individuals who are up for a challenge or keen to try something new and pursue a Para-sport pathway, even if you have never played sport. We are specifically targeting some of the higher needs (less functioning) individuals across a range of sports as part of this program.

Para-sport Draft testing dates for Hobart:
Sunday 7th December

For more information on the Para-sport Draft and to register, please visit the [APC & AIS Para-sport Draft site](#).



Rainbow Umbrella Image by Sanguinarabbita

Opening the Umbrella

(multi coloured thank you very much)

Diagnosis as an adult

Early in life I recognised the different tune humming through me, out of synch with other children my own age. Not with nature, not with the rhythms of the planet; those songs I understood. But with the world - **the 'peopled world'**- those harmonies were a constant clash.

It has been said often that many people with AS identify with the unpeopled world, whether it be nature, machines or the arts. Take the unpredictability of 'humanity' out of our life's equation and our ASD anxiety drops to a mere murmur.

For years, all those quirks (which on a bad day I called **my 'random defects'** and on a good day I called **'just being me'**) I kept tightly under wraps. I had learnt early on, that to say certain things got me stared at, stone silence or edged out of a conversation.

I thought that when I reached that magical and **elusive age called 'adulthood'**, all would fall into place and I'd finally hit my stride, somehow catch up to everyone else and work out what they were all on about. I would gesture, laugh and participate with ease - just like I saw others do.

However, no elusive age arrived and the eventual catalyst for appreciating my own rhythm came in a very different guise; a diagnosis of (what was then called) Aspergers, well into my thirties.

My diagnosis seemed to happen by chance; but if **truth be told, I'm a big believer that nothing happens by chance.**

As a school teacher, I come across a lot of children. One given year I had a child arrive my class who had been diagnosed with Aspergers Syndrome. Wanting to be prepared and give this child the best opportunity to learn, I decided to do some research.

In my quest for information, I remember picking up **Rudy Simone's book *Aspergirls*** at a bookstore. I casually flicked through a few pages; paused here and there, read just enough to raise an eyebrow. I shut it a little too quickly, put it down and walked away. A few moments later I was drawn back to the book. I flicked through a few more pages, swallowed hard, put it down and again walked away. When I was pulled back to that bookshelf for third time, as I picked up the title and stared at the cover, I heard a distinct voice inside my head say *Buy this book.*

I did.

I read that book and as I did, I realised I was reading about myself. And I cannot tell you the relief that washed over me.

I know such an idea sounds strange- suddenly discovering one has a recognised medical dysfunction *and* feeling relief, but allow me to elaborate.

For too many years I had questioned and agonised over why life felt so baffling and people so impenetrable. The cards that life deals: work, relationships, health, tragedies, happiness - all seemed to me like thorny, oversized pills to swallow. Yet, how did other people seem to sail smoothly through these aspects of life? While I felt utterly ill equipped, many seemed to thrive. Was I missing a vital tool or piece of information that everyone else had?

And here I was in a bookstore, reading in a stranger's book, all my thoughts, reactions and emotions - a carbon copy of my inner life - secrets that I had never told a soul. Within those pages I found a profound relief that someone, somewhere actually, *finally*, understood.

After some initial research and a recommendation, I made an appointment with a doctor of clinical psychology.

Why the Big Beautiful Umbrella?

Being in that psychologist's office - the waiting, the interview, the assessment- although I was at first acutely nervous, turned out to be a fairly painless process.

For the first time in many, many years, I felt I could actually be myself. As I relaxed back into the couch, the tense mask I had worn each and every day began **to slip away. For once, I didn't have to remind myself to look the psychologist in the eyes. I could take my time to speak. It didn't matter if I stumbled over my**

words or didn't understand her question. I could ask her to repeat it; ask her to be clearer.

The privilege of being oneself is a gift many take for granted, but for someone with ASD, being allowed to be oneself is the greatest and rarest gift of all.

As she explained my newly acquired, tailored-for-me diagnosis of Aspergers Syndrome, the psychologist drew a sweeping arc on her whiteboard. This, she explained, was to represent the autism spectrum under which there were many manifestations, Aspergers being just one. And under ASD there could be over 150 different manifestations, each combination of traits as unique as the individual.

As I listened, staring at the whiteboard, sitting in that office, I remember a clear, striking thought: *That's my umbrella.*

At that very moment a long-held pressure valve deep at the core of me just gave way. *Relief*- I suddenly had an answer, a name for it: *Aspergers.*

Finally, someone else sees me.

The Aspie Invisibility Cloak

Officially, I come under the banner of ' The Invisible Aspie'.

I wasn't diagnosed until my late thirties. I knew nothing about Aspergers – I hadn't heard of the word before I became a teacher- even then I had just a vague understanding. I had been to psychologists before when I was younger. The subject of Aspergers was never raised.

So how did a diagnosis of ASD, with all of its blindingly obvious traits, pass me by for almost forty years? There are many possible reasons.

Diagnosis of ASD twenty-five years ago, was in its infancy. Looking back in the literature, diagnosis of boys was prevalent; diagnosis of girls was extremely rare. It is only recent news that girls with ASD can manifest very different traits to their male counterparts. As a result, mistakes were made and many children were overlooked. A fair few adults today, aged 40 plus, are just now being diagnosed with ASD. For these people, a diagnosis in middle age may mean great upheaval but also that life suddenly begins to make sense.

Growing up I learned to watch others. Girls with ASD are more capable of observing social norms than boys, and they are more likely to imitate these norms

even though they can't decode or truly understand them. Any girl navigating their way through the teenage years does everything possible to fit in. Girls with ASD can do this to an extreme and become excellent mimics, imitators and actors.

Taking into account these factors, it was easy to be invisible.

With any unmasking in life there comes a continental shift – both for the one diagnosed and their loved ones. From my personal experience, although dramatic and initially confronting, the diagnoses of ASD was an illuminating experience.

What if everyone - parents, teachers, health professionals- all started seeing the diagnosis of ASD as a gift?

After all, a diagnosis gives one permission to be one's truest self; why spend years being something that you are not? Finally finding your stride, your true rhythm, can be the key to unlocking great creativity and purpose.

And with such direction, such freedom of expression, one can not only survive but thrive.

Alyssa Aleksanian

I have been living with ASD for the last 40 years. I am a primary school teacher with a Masters in Teaching. I also hold a BA in Conservation of Cultural Material (majoring in chemistry) and BA in Visual Arts.

The NEW Entertainment™ Memberships are here!



To order your copy please follow the links from the Autism Tasmania website: www.autismtas.org.au

Please remember to reference Autism Tasmania Inc. when registering your 2014 | 2015

Entertainment™ Membership.

"Toilet training" - two words which can fill any parent with anxiety let alone a parent whose child is on the autism spectrum! For some of these parents, toilet training might come easily and with a huge sigh of relief all round. For many others, toilet training can be a long and frustrating process.

With the right help, children with autism can learn to manage going to the toilet independently or with some assistance. Apart from enlisting the help from local services listed alongside this article, we recommend an excellent resource for helping children with special needs achieve greater independence called One Step at a Time: a parent's guide to toilet skills for children with special needs by the Victorian Continence Resource Centre.

Developed in conjunction with an expert advisory panel including psychologists, occupational therapists and dieticians who specialise in special needs and continence support, One Step at a Time is also available in two versions, the full resource including CD Rom of tip sheets or an Easy English version.

The Easy English version is very useful where your child may be able to read, or for busy parents who may want a "cut to the chase" version. This can be downloaded for free from the Victorian Continence Resource Centre via their website. The full One Step at a Time resource (and CD of tip sheets) is also



purchasable for \$25 or Autism Tasmania members can borrow it from our resource library.

One Step at a Time includes information on a whole host of toileting training related issues, for example constipation and managing diet, and includes recording sheets, checklists and tips for parents on such topics as: Goal Setting, the Toilet Area, creating a Photo Book etc. as well as recommended toilet training story books and excellent visuals and picture stories which especially appeal to children on the spectrum.

We have reproduced with permission an example of some of the picture schedules available from One Step at a Time.

To order your copy of One Step at Time or for more excellent information and support, and their latest news and events – such as the development of a Toilet Training for Children with Special Needs app, visit the website <http://www.continencevictoria.org.au>



Tasmanian Continence Support Services

Continence Foundation of Australia

Phone: 1800 330 066 (National continence helpline)

Website: <http://www.continence.org.au>

Continence Foundation of Australia
(Tasmanian Branch)

Repatriation Centre

90 Davey Street

HOBART TAS 7000

Phone: 1300 723 143 (Statewide continence service)

Phone: 03 6222 7303

Royal Hobart Hospital Continence Clinic

Royal Hobart Hospital

48 Liverpool St

HOBART TAS 7000

Phone: 03 6222 8327

Wetaway Program

St John's Park, Gellibrand House

NEW TOWN TAS 7008

Phone : 03 6230 7899

13 Mulgrave Street

LAUNCESTON TAS 7250

Phone: 03 6336 2130

Community Continence Service – North

Continence Clinic

33-39 Howick St

SOUTH LAUNCESTON TAS 7249

Phone: 03 6336 5102

Community Continence Service - South

16-22 Bayfield Street

ROSNY PARK TAS 7018

Phone: 03 6282 0760

Community Continence Service- Devonport

23 Steele St

DEVONPORT TAS 7310

Phone: 03 6421 7833

National Public Toilet Map

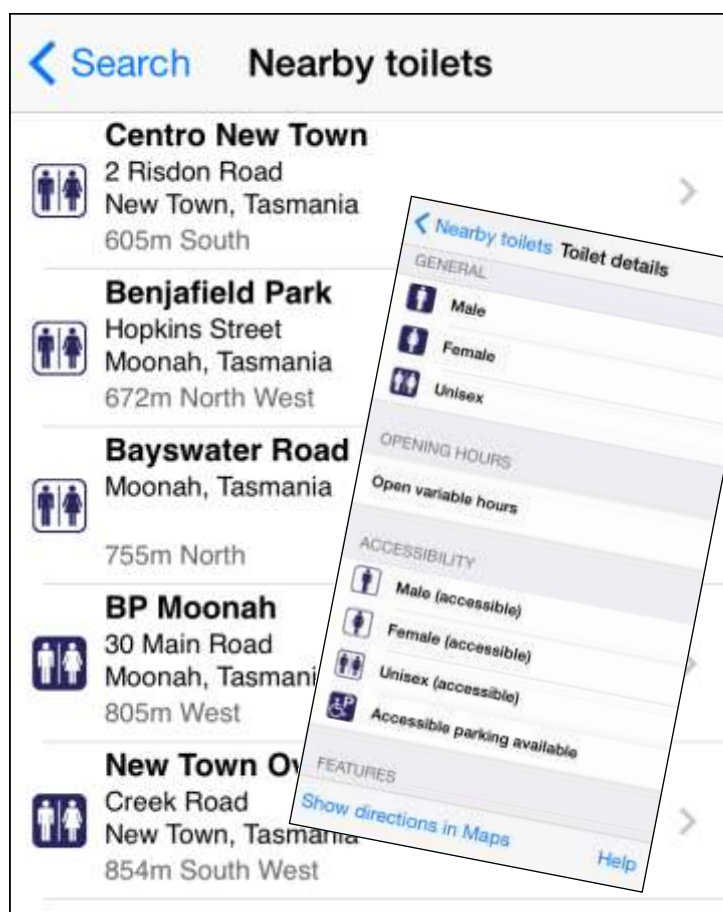
The National Public Toilet Map is a free resource, funded by the Australian Government, and shows the location of more than 14,000 public and private public toilet facilities across Australia.

Useful information is provided about each toilet, such as location, opening hours, availability of baby change rooms, accessibility for people with disabilities, parking and the details of other nearby toilets.

You can personalise the map to a particular area or plot toilets along a journey. It is also convenient for people with young families going shopping, attending events or those holidaying or travelling to unfamiliar destinations.

You can access the National Public Toilet Map and a free iPhone app via <https://toiletmap.gov.au/>

Sample search results:



Updated List of Department of Social Services Approved Panel Providers/Consortiums

(as at November 2014)

Providing Early Intervention Services to Tasmanian Families

As part of the Helping Children With Autism Package

The Department of Social Services has established a panel of early intervention service providers to deliver evidence based services to eligible children as part of the Helping Children with Autism (HCWA) package. More information about the HCWA package can be found at <http://www.dss.gov.au/our-responsibilities/disability-and-carers/program-services/for-people-with-disability/helping-children-with-autism>

Families can also access Panel Providers from inter-state, a list of providers can be found on the HCWA website.

Northern Providers

Dr Larry Cashion
Psychologist
www.drcashion.com.au
M: 0429 057 755
larry@cashion.net

Independent Kids—Occupational Therapists
(Burnie)
Alison Hopwood
Ph: 03 6234 5333
ahopwood@independentkids.com.au

Connect and Relate for Autism Inc.
Bronwen Prazak RDI program certified consultant
www.connectandrelateforautism.com.au
M: 0423 066 276
rdi@asdconnect.com.au

ISADD
Krystal Bassano (ABA Therapist)
M: 0400 567 646
www.isadd.org

Flexible Speech Pty Ltd
Leaps Ahead Early Intervention
Michelle Furminger, ABA Programs Supervisor
www.leapsaheadei.com.au
M: 0407 240 874
admin@leapsaheadei.com.au

SPOT ON
Speech Pathology Tasmania - Speech Pathologists
Rosalie Martin
Ph: 03 6234 5717
r.martin@spt.com.au

Giant Steps
Tim Chugg (Principal) Deloraine
www.giantsteps.tas.edu.au
Ph: 03 6362 2522
principal@giantsteps.tas.edu.au

St Giles Society Inc
Occupational Therapy, Speech Pathology and
Psychology
Contact Person: Ally White
Ph: 03 6345 7333
www.stgiles.org.au

Heartbeat Music Therapy
Minky van der Walt- Registered Music Therapist
Via Skype
<https://www.facebook.com/pages/Heartbeat-Music-Therapy/735739586464566>
M: 0404 921 298
minky.vanderwalt@gmail.com

Tim Feely and Associates
Tim Feely (Psychologist & Speech Pathologist)
www.timfeely.com.au
Ph: 03 6334 4451
admin@timfeely.com.au

Heidi Smit
Occupational Therapist
www.heidismit.com.au
M: 0410 085 225
heidi@heidismit.com.au

TLC Psychology
Mickaela Schelleman (Psychologist & Director)
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www.tlcpsychology.com.au

Updated List of Department of Social Services Approved Panel Providers/Consortiums

(as at November 2014)

Providing Early Intervention Services to Tasmanian Families

As part of the Helping Children With Autism Package

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Michelle Furminger, ABA Programs Supervisor
www.leapsaheadei.com.au
M: 0407 240 874
admin@leapsaheadei.com.au

Exceptional Kids
Dianna King (Occupational Therapist)
M: 0417 780 801
exceptionalkids@netspace.net.au

Heartbeat Music Therapy
Minky van der Walt- Registered Music Therapist
Via Skype
<https://www.facebook.com/pages/Heartbeat-Music-Therapy/735739586464566>
M: 0404 921 298
minky.vanderwalt@gmail.com

Heidi Smit
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heidi@heidismit.com.au

Lisa Maree Ford
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(Maternity Leave till 2015)
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annehadrill@bigpond.com

Miriam Kirby
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miriam.kirby@bipond.com

St Giles Society Inc
Occupational Therapy & Speech Pathology
Contact Person: Tennille Burns (Co-ordinator of EI Planning)
Ph: 03 6238 1888
www.stgiles.org.au

TLC Psychology
Catherine Silcock (Speech Pathologist)
M: 0439 010 285
catherine.silcock@gmail.com
www.tlcpsychology.com.au

Hobart Speech Pathology Service
Vicki Allen Speech Pathologist
Ph: 03 6225 4353
vta7@netspace.net.au



Heidi Smit, Occupational Therapy

A new occupational therapy practice has opened on **Hobart's Eastern Shore this year. Heidi Smit** Occupational Therapy operates from Lincoln Street Lindisfarne, however she is also available for home visits and school visits.

Heidi is a registered occupational therapist and has recently received her DSS and Better Start provider numbers. She is also a registered NDIS provider.

Heidi has trained overseas and has 18 years of extensive experience in working in schools and the community, as well as a clinic based setting with children aged 0 - 18. Through her family and friends, she has first-hand experience of children with an Autism Spectrum Disorder as well as sensory processing preferences and their home and school difficulties.

Her focus is on practical skills and she is passionate about making a difference in the day to day functional operations of a family – however small the matter seems to be to the general population.

Heidi has started working with a registered paediatric dietician on developing a Mealtime Management Clinic to address food aversions and other concerns concerning mealtimes, as so many parents and children find themselves in a daily struggle around this issue.

Heidi is available for individual consultations, school visits and staff development, as well as visits to the home to address difficulties in the natural environment.

Heidi provides occupational therapy for children with handwriting difficulties as well as addressing developmental concerns such as toilet training, sleep difficulties, delayed play skills and fine motor concerns.

Heidi can be contacted on her mobile 0410 085 225 or at the clinic on 6243 8715 or via email at occupationaltherapistheidi@yahoo.com.au



Minky van der Walt Heartbeat Music Therapy

Heartbeat Music Therapy, a music therapy private practice in Hobart, is pleased to advise it is now registered for the Helping Children with Autism funding through the DSS.

Heartbeat Music Therapy is founded and run by Minky van der Walt, a Registered Music Therapist, with a Bachelor of Music in Music Therapy from the University of Melbourne. Minky has over 15 years experience working with children & families in a range of school, community & medical settings, including working with children with ASD and their families through the Early Childhood Intervention Service in Hobart, and early intervention services & special schools in Melbourne.

How can music therapy help?

Music therapy can be beneficial across all domains of child development. For children with ASD, music therapy research demonstrates improved clinical outcomes in:

- self expression
- social skills, interaction & friendships
- family relationships
- concentration and attention
- motor skill functioning & motor planning
- body awareness, balance & coordination
- sensory processing & modulation
- language & communication
- No prior music skills are necessary to participate in music therapy.

INDIVIDUAL, GROUP & FAMILY SESSIONS
AVAILABLE

For further information OR to book an appointment contact:

Minky van der Walt, BMus, RMT
minky.vanderwalt@gmail.com

Registered Music Therapist

Ph: 0404 921 298



Social Safety, Sexuality and Wellbeing

Over the past 20 years or so there have been a couple of programs and strategies to help teach children with additional needs how to stay socially safe. While many of them contained useful tools they **didn't provide exactly what parents, carers and those educating our young people wanted.**

In the last decade many people have become aware of a program that is available through Family Planning Tasmania called SoSafe.

This program is a set of visual and conceptual tools which is designed to promote social safety for people with intellectual disabilities.

These include:

- A simplified and rule-governed model of social reality
- Teaching the type and degree of verbal and physical intimacy appropriate with different categories of people
- Teaching strategies for moving into relationships in a safe and measured manner
- Providing visual communication tools for reporting physical and sexual abuse
- Facilitating and maintaining support networks.

The program has been designed to suit the learning characteristics of people with moderate to severe intellectual disabilities. The resource uses a framework of visual teaching tools and concepts for instruction of social skills, social safety and sexuality education.

The program was developed by Special Education teachers working within schools in the ACT.

Training through Family Planning is essential for people to present the program however many schools have a staff member who has done the course. On completion of the training the recipient receives a SoSafe folder which contains a comprehensive overview of the program, visuals and how to use them as well. There is also a CD that contains the visuals for the program, social scripts and ideas for how to introduce the young person to the program. The visuals can be produced for games such as lotto, snap and similar activities to allow the young person to become acquainted with the terms being used.

The program is an interesting tool as it includes education about family, friends, community workers that the person with ASD knows and community workers that are not known but the person may come into contact with, girlfriends and boyfriends, partners and marriage as well as aspects of health and hygiene.

It is a program designed for the life span and is well worth looking at.

For more information about SoSafe and Family Planning Tasmania:

Phone: (03) 6273 9117

Fax: (03) 6273 9203

Email: info@fpt.asn.au

Address: 421 Main Rd,
Glenorchy TAS 7010



Family Planning Tasmania
sexuality education & clinical services



TASMANIA POLICE
Charity
TRUST

The Tasmania Police Charity Trust Bike Ride is on again, and travelling 400kms from Burnie to Launceston.

Cycling through such scenic places as Hellyer Gorge, Cradle Mountain, Cethana Dam, Railton, Deloraine, Westbury and George Town.

This years ride is supporting Autism Tasmania and Angels Goal Anti-Bullying Organisation.

Your support will assist these worthwhile organisations help young Tasmanian's living with Autism, or struggling as victims of bullying.

<http://www.everydayhero.com.au/event/tas-bike-ride>

School Holiday Programs

Northern

Queen Victoria Art Museum & Art Gallery (QVMAG)

Activities are held during the school holidays. For more information visit www.qvmag.tas.gov.au or phone 6323 3777

Launceston LINC School Holiday Program

The program is open to primary school aged children. LINC encourages parents/carers to accompany the children and to work with their child to enable effective participation. For more information contact Launceston LINC, Civic Square. Phone 6777 2455

QVMAG and Launceston LINC activities are not autism specific. Please use your own judgement as to their suitability for your child.

Family Based Care (North) School Holiday Program

Various activities (There are generally 2 activities every day over the 3 x 2 week holidays and over the longer summer break, run for 3 weeks).

Locations: Just Swim, cinema, roller-skating, sliders, 10 pin bowling, Kids Paradise and roller-skating to name a few.

Dates and times usually 1 – 2 hours, one session in morning and one in afternoon – sometimes a Saturday so Dads can participate. For example: coming up they are going to the Tram Museum on a Saturday morning so Dads can be involved.

Cost: no cost

Suitable age range: Child is at school

Eligibility requirements: Meets HACC (Home and Community Care) guidelines

Parent supervision required?: Parents need to attend as well as siblings

Registration process: Call Deb Robinson

Contact details for enquiries 6333 3999

This is a lovely opportunity for families to come together in the community.

Southern

Our Time

Provides planned breaks for people supporting family members or friends with a mental health issue and/or Autism Spectrum Disorder. Enquiries about school holiday assistance should be made to Anglicare 1800 243 232, remembering that now is the time to start planning for the January holidays.

Hobart Bush Adventures

http://www.hobartcity.com.au/Recreation/Bushland/Bush_Adventures

Family Programmes at TMAG

http://www.tmag.tas.gov.au/learning_and_discovery/families

The Library LINC also has programmes which would appeal.

<http://www.linc.tas.gov.au>

All programs are inclusive but it is recommended **to mention the child's needs/any special requirements** when booking.

October School Holidays Picnic in the Park

Date: Thursday, 9th October 2014

Time: 11:30am

Venue: Cornelian Bay Park

Please bring along your own lunch and a drink. Please come and join us for lunch and a chat and have the opportunity to meet with other parents and carers of children on the Autism Spectrum.

If you would like more information please contact:

Robyn Davis on 0408 376 838 or 6278 9985
robyn@autismtas.org.au



Family Get-Together at the Bike Centre

Launceston City Council Road Safety Centre, Lawrence Vale Road.

October 3, 9-11am

January 21, 9am-1:30pm

(drop in for as little or as long as you like – sausages will be sizzling)

Bring your bikes
Bring your scooters
Bring your helmets
Bring your family!

This is a free family event. Tea and coffee will be provided.

Robyn Thomas
Ph. 0458 375 604
robymt@autismtas.org.au

The Lab - Hobart

The Lab is a technology club for young people with Autism aged between 10 and 16 years who enjoy computers and gaming in a safe social environment.

The Lab was established in April 2011 in Footscray Melbourne, since then The Lab has now spread to many locations in Victoria, NSW and Darwin. Now thanks to the hard work from Linda, The Lab has been offered in Hobart.

Linda's son, Oliver, attended The

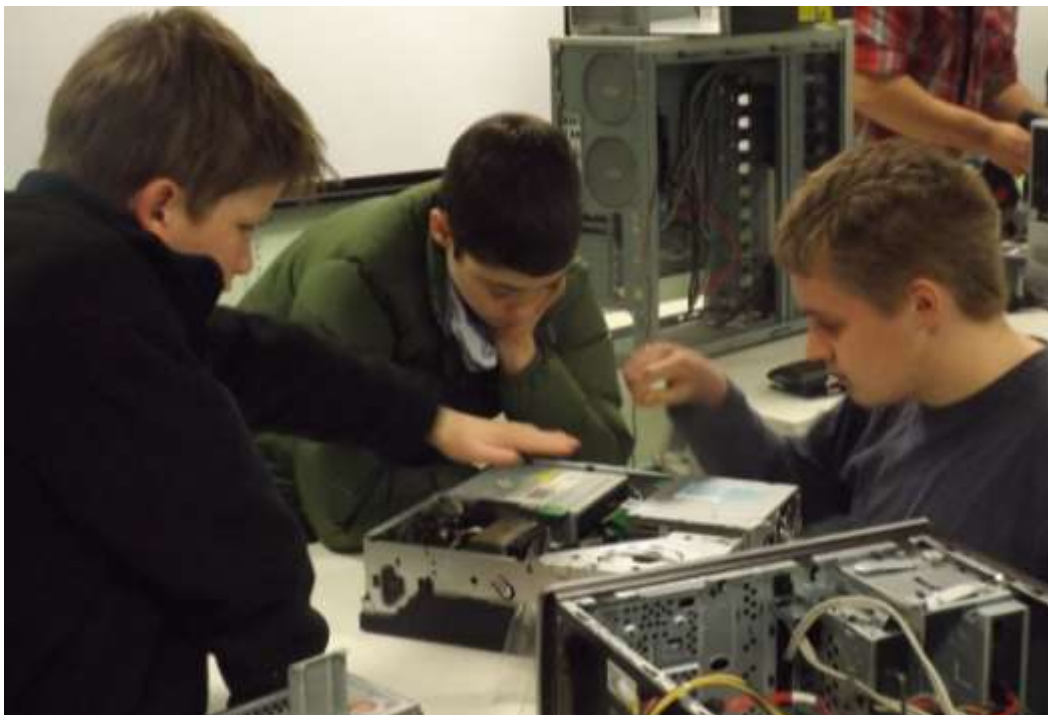
Lab in Melbourne and loved it.

When Linda and Oliver returned to Hobart and found there were little opportunities for Oliver to meet with other young people, they decided to start a group based on their experiences. The Lab in Melbourne assisted Linda in creating the framework and providing support to establish a group in Hobart. In eight weeks the group has grown and up to twelve young people now meet weekly during term time. The young people are starting to develop relationships with each other through using their common interest of technology.



"I want to bring young people with an ASD together to share their common interests, make friends and learn skills in their field of interest and connect with professionals in the IT industry. I love the fact The Lab is also a place of support for parents and a forum for us to share our experiences in raising kids with a diagnosed ASD. My son has been able to meet other young people with similar interests to him and to see him begin engaging in conversations and making friends has been wonderful."

Linda (Oliver's Mum)



"I like socialising with the other kids." says Liam.

"I like that Liam can meet some other people around his age that have the same thing in common...that they are all on the Autism Spectrum and they also have the interest in computer gaming etc. I also enjoy catching up with the other parents and having a casual chat, and sharing some morning tea"

Linda (Liam's Mum)

"The Lab is the only place - other than their homes - where they can totally relax and not worry about their autism. For the parents, it's a place that has parents from all different walks of life that are going through the same thing - bringing up these unique kids that are misunderstood so often."

Darlene

"Having something available like The Lab is fantastic! It provides a place for kids with autism who love computers and the like, to be part of a group environment which can enhance the skills they already have. It can help them gain social skills as they are learning from each other whilst they interact in the group. Because they all have such a strong interest in technology they really "bounce" well off each other. For my son, he has learnt so much from the older boys and he loves coming home and putting into practice what they have shown him. It's also great for the parents to have a chance to have a chat :)"

Bec

"I have found The Lab to be an extremely positive experience when interactions with other children can be quite negative. I feel he can be himself and not be judged."

Tracy

"I think it is fun for me and I really enjoy it thanks." says Liam

If you would like more information about the lab or if you specialise in any IT areas and would like to come along and help out by teaching the kids

something new please contact Linda
lindacliftonaus@yahoo.co.uk

For more info on the Lab Program see

www.thelab.org.au



Let's go Lego!

Did you knowThe LEGO® name is made from the first two letters of the Danish words LEG GODT, meaning "play well" (Lego Education website).

In the April school holidays the Launceston community was treated to a Brixhibition like no other. Brixhibition showcases some of the best Lego constructions presented by the Tasmanian Brick Enthusiasts Inc. The event was well attended with more than 7,000 people passing through the doors to view amazingly accurate Lego representations of well known structures.

In June, Ken Draeger of Tasmanian Brick Enthusiasts Inc. and a keen Lego exhibitor himself, presented a cheque to Autism Tasmania for \$2,500. This generous donation has allowed Autism Tasmania to showcase key presentations from the Victorian Autism Conference at the Tailrace Centre, Riverside in early September. This was less than a month from these speakers presenting at the conference at Etihad Stadium in Melbourne. The presentations cover key areas of interest to parents, carers and professionals such as sleep issues, friendship, adolescence, sensory processing, post school planning and enhancing self esteem.

It is with generous donations like this that Autism Tasmania is able to continue to help make or 'build' brighter futures. Thank you Tasmanian Brick Enthusiasts for making this possible.



Savings program helps families with \$500 for education costs

By Nicole Hacker

Local savings program, Saver Plus, is helping to ease the burden of education costs by supporting families with financial literacy workshops and \$500 in matched savings. Delivered in Southern Tasmania by The Smith Family, the 10-month program has already benefited more than 600 local families, encouraging them to set financial goals and learn about long-term savings habits.

As Saver Plus coordinator for The Smith Family, I have seen first-hand how Saver Plus builds **people's money management skills and** confidence with simple tools like budgets and spending diaries, but perhaps as importantly, through the sharing of ideas on local money saving tips. I've seen the program change people's attitudes towards money and in many cases change their lives.

Sharon, a sole parent from Bellerive, says the program has meant her son can pursue his passion for climbing, joining the squad at the newly reopened indoor climbing centre in Hobart. "It's great to know that I will have \$500 that I wouldn't normally have, to go towards education



Ollie Petith-Jones with Austin Franks and Ashton Burke at the indoor climbing centre



Sharon Jones with sons Ollie, Toby and Darcy Petith-Jones.

costs. It's really helped reduce the stress that can mount up after the holidays."

"I saw an opportunity to help me save, with a great big bonus at the end. I had recently become a sole parent and visited Centrelink for the first time in my life. I saw the Saver Plus brochure and it was a no-brainer. Being in the program and benefitting from the matched **savings didn't even impact on my Centrelink entitlements!**"

"I managed to save \$50 a month. At first it was hard to find the extra money to save, but the program leader was so supportive and helped me make it quite easy! I did it, and I've continued to save. Being in control of my finances has **completely boosted my confidence.**"

"I would definitely encourage others to join the Saver Plus Program because the financial rewards are more than just the matched funds;

you can build saving confidence and long term habits as well."

Sharon's experience echoes the latest research by RMIT University which shows that the benefits of Saver Plus often reach beyond the participants themselves, with 81% of those taking part encouraging family members including children to budget and save, and 87% of participants continuing their save at least \$50 a month after they have completed the program.

"Throughout the journey I learned that it's not hard to budget and save money and you can and will finally reach your saving goals. Plus it's the best feeling reaching such a rewarding goal" said Sharon.

How does Saver Plus work?

Saver Plus participants open a dedicated bank account into which they make regular deposits. They attend two informal workshops to build their financial management skills and when they reach their savings goal after 10 months their savings, up to \$500, are matched. The matched savings can be used to pay for education expenses such as books, uniforms, sports equipment, music and dance, computers, schools trips, tools and equipment to support studies etc. There are no costs or fees involved.

Find out more?

Contact me any time to arrange a time to chat about whether Saver Plus could help your family.

Are you eligible for Saver Plus?

You may be eligible if you:

- have a Health Care or a Pension Card
- are at least 18 years old
- have a child at school or starting next year or are studying yourself
- have some form of household income, such as yourself or your partner undertaking full time, part time, casual or seasonal work – formal or informal work is acceptable.

Contact Nicole Hacker from The Smith Family on 03 6223 7264 or 0448 428 043 or nicole.hacker@thesmithfamily.com.au for more information.

School savings tips:

- Use a budget to maximize payments such as the Schoolkids Bonus.
- Ask your school for an expenses list to see if you can pay for any costs via installments, such as school camps and excursions.
- **Do your research to find the best "back to school" bargains.**
- Hold a get-together with school parents, with children of different ages, to exchange children's school clothing.
- **Add children's names to all school items, so that any lost property is more likely to be returned.**
- Buy school supplies in bulk that you know will be used regularly.



SAVE THE DATE

Annual General Meeting

27 October 2014

6.00 pm to 7.00pm

Via Video Conference

At venues in Burnie, Latrobe, Launceston and Hobart

Locations to be included in Notice of Meeting

What's happening at Tascare Society for Children?

Please allow me to take this opportunity to introduce myself to all of the supporters, partners, families and friends of the Tascare Society for Children. My name is Michele Foley and I am the new Executive Officer.

It is a pleasure to be joining Tascare and I consider myself fortunate to have been given the opportunity to join an organisation with such an enduring history in providing support and advocacy for children and families in Tasmania.

I am looking forward to having an opportunity in getting out and meeting everyone and having a chat about a favourable future we can design together.

We are currently coordinating this years 'Family Fun Day' to celebrate International Day of

People with Disability with the Clarence, Glenorchy and Hobart City Councils. This will be held on,

Sunday, 30th November @ Simmons Park, The Esplanade, Lindisfarne between 11am-2pm.

Further details will be provided over the coming weeks.

There is also continuing bike clinics for the Freedom Wheels program with TADTAS where bikes are individually modified to accommodate the particular needs of the child and assessed by a physiotherapist from St Giles. Contact Tascare for further information.

Here at Tascare, we would like to invite expressions of interest to anyone wishing to **attend a KNOWME workshop on 'SETTING UP a PROFILE' in November 2014.**

Please feel free to call me on 6272 8265 to organise a meeting or to follow up on any projects and activities.

Glad to be on board!

Michele Foley.



The Knowme App is free for parents and carers of children living with disability or additional and complex health needs. The Knowme profile, created by the parent or carer, describes the needs and abilities of a young person. The app can be used to avoid the **need to tell a young person's "story" over and over again.**

Knowme lets you document all the specific information and needs in a secure online environment and share this with a range of **people in the child's life (teachers, doctors, physiotherapist and other carers for example).** Parents and carers are able to request their own password protected Knowme account from the website.

Once registered, information can be entered, and guests can be invited to view or contribute to the profile information.

Invite people to review or add documents – at **the parent's/guardian's discretion, set** permissions and specify how long someone has access to information, grant page access and remove guests.

Empowers parents to control the information that is recorded about their child.

Pages in the Knowme profile can be individualised, and images and PDF files can be uploaded. Not only does Knowme make it easier to share information, it provides a way to keep important information in one secure location.

For more information about the Knowme resource, visit the website and apply for registration.

<https://knowme.net.au/contact/>

Or contact Michele Foley at Tascare Society for Children on 03 6272 8265 or via email to eo@tascare.asn.au

This App has been developed as a partnership between the Tasmanian Department of Education and Tascare Society for Children.





Introducing the Autism Tasmania Information Team

Autism Tasmania's Information Team offers

autism specific information and advice to individuals with autism, their families, community members and service providers across the state.

The team consists of Robyn Davis, Robyn Thomas and Rose Clark (see photo L-R). We are located in each of the three key geographic regions of Tasmania (south, north and north-west) and we endeavour to collaborate with each other, with other Autism Tasmania staff members, and also with the network of stakeholders within our geographic regions to form an effective team which can provide autism related information and advice to anyone who seeks it.

Do you want to know more about autism? Are you wondering who can help you overcome a challenge at school, at home or in the community? Are you an employer wanting to **know how to become an "autism friendly"** workplace? Are you looking for a social support group? Are you looking for a suitable sporting or recreation activity for your child? Autism Tasmania's Info Team members are your "go to" people if you have any autism related query. We will do our best to answer your query directly, or provide you with the contact details of someone who may be better placed to offer you advice.

Autism Tasmania's Info Team is able to chat with

you on the phone or via email, or meet with you in person. We can also provide links to useful websites, access to books and DVDs in the Autism Tasmania library, and post you relevant material. We also hold group Autism Information Sessions for individuals with autism, their families, friends and interested community members. These sessions can cover any autism related topic that is requested. Recent Autism Information Sessions include: autism information for extended family members; a session discussing challenging behaviours; and a lively evening in which a panel of parents of older children with autism shared their experiences with parents of newly diagnosed children.

The Autism Tasmania Info Team also arranges and coordinates various social activities and events. We are able to help interested members of the community establish social support groups, and we organise a variety of family get togethers in the school holidays. Gatherings at the Bike Centre in Launceston and at various parks in the south and north west are continually well attended and enjoyed by many.

We are a committed and enthusiastic team. If **you're not sure whether we can answer your query – ask anyway! We don't profess to know** everything, or to be able to answer every question, but we will do our best to source the information that you need, or to refer you to an appropriate alternative service.

Keep an eye out on the Autism Tasmania Facebook page and on our website for upcoming events, or contact us with queries or suggestions. We look forward to hearing from you or seeing you soon!

Autism Tasmanian Information Team

Robyn Davis - South
0408 376 838

Robyn Thomas - North
0458 375 604

Rose Clark - North-West Coast
0407 320 048

Communiqué 1 August 2014

Background

The Government has established an independent taskforce to examine current provision and support for students living with disabilities; review evidence based research, and provide recommendations to improve educational support for these students and their families.

The Taskforce has representatives from the following organisations:

Autism Tasmania, Australasian Society for Intellectual Disability, Office of the Anti-Discrimination Commissioner, Australian Education Union, TasCare Society for Children, Tasmanian Association of State Schools Organizations, Tasmanian Disability Education Reform Lobby, **Tasmanian Principal's Association**, Australian Association of Special Education Two Community Representatives, Cheryl Larcombe chairs the Taskforce

Terms of Reference

- review current guiding principles, educational practices and models of delivery at State, National and International level, particularly in relation to:
 - ◆ parents being able to choose the right school for their child;
 - ◆ learning strategies and the provision of education materials;
 - ◆ how best to report on educational outcomes for students with a disability;
 - ◆ disability awareness training for teachers;
 - ◆ transitional planning.
- **highlight particular strengths and what's** working well within this current provision and models of delivery; identify areas for change or improvement that are supported by evidence based practice and reflects efficient use of resources.
- Provide a report and recommendations to the Minister based on their deliberations and findings by the end of June 2015.

Meeting Schedule

The Taskforce had their first meeting in June where Minister Rockliff outlined his vision and expectations for the group. The members discussed and drafted the Terms of Reference.

Meeting Thursday August 28th.

The draft Terms of Reference were agreed with minor amendments (above).

A selection of relevant materials were reviewed and discussed. These included articles from:

- Professor Michael Giangreco; Carol Ann Tomlinson and Edwin Lou Javius.
- *The Dance of Partnership: Why do my feet hurt? Strengthening the parent-professional partnership*; Janice Fialka, Young Exceptional Children; Vol 4, Number 2 Winter 2001.
- Engaging people with disability; Department of Premier and Cabinet, Tasmanian Government

The Taskforce were made aware of and viewed the following websites:

- <http://www.schooldisabilitydatapl.edu.au> SCSEEC National Consistent Collection of Data (School Students with Disability).
- <http://education.gov.au/disability-standards-education> A range of fact sheets.
- <http://www.taughtbyfinland.com/home/special-education-in-finland#.VAPJERYxHFL> **What's so special about special education in Finland.**

It was agreed that the Taskforce will call for submissions. These will be advertised in October.

Next meeting

The Taskforce will meet again on September 25th. Representatives from the Department of Education, Catholic and Independent Schools have been invited to this meeting to inform members of current policies, processes and ways of working that guide current practice.

Tasmanian Autism Community Engagement Project

As mentioned in the June issue of Spectrum News, Autism Tasmania is keen to hear from our members, those who live with an Autism Spectrum condition, parents, carers and those who may have experiences they would like to share as a part of our Tasmanian Autism Community Engagement Project.

Three key areas of focus for the project will be the experiences of people in relation to:

Area 1 - Gaps in post school options and services for adults 17-64 years

Area 2 - National Disability Insurance Scheme – Tasmanian youth 15-24 years

Area 3 - Education – suitability of supports and adjustments for Tasmanian children and young people aged 5-17 years living with an Autism Spectrum Condition including transition planning from secondary school.

The project will follow a two stage engagement process, commencing with semi structured one to one interviews followed by an electronic survey at a later date. The information gathered will be used to inform our representations to Government. All information provided by participants will be handled with the strictest of confidence and be de-identified to ensure privacy.

Interviews for Area 1 will commence on the 20th October 2014. Please register your interest to participate by contacting Deborah Smith by email deborah@autismtas.org.au or 0400 974 637.

Please note registration for Area 2 and 3 are also welcome at any time with commencement dates for interviews to be confirmed.

This is your opportunity to share your experience of what is working well and what needs improvement to allow for better participation in all aspects of Tasmanian community life.

Qantas Carer Concession Card

Often a child or adult with autism requires substantial individual support from an accompanying carer in order to successfully travel by air. In this situation, Qantas airlines offers the Qantas Carer Concession Card (issued through NICAN – the National Information Communication Awareness Network) which may be of assistance.

The Qantas Carer Concession Card entitles a person with a disability and/or autism who requires a high level of one-on-one support and their accompanying carer to up to a 50% discount (subject to booking class and availability) on domestic travel within Australia.

Support from a carer may include:

- toileting and sanitary requirements both in the aircraft and on the ground
- assistance with eating and drinking
- reducing anxiety, providing reassurance and managing transitions such as boarding, disembarkation and in flight expectations
- communication with staff and understanding flight instructions including emergency information
- administering medication
- carriage of carry-on baggage and/or equipment

The Qantas Carer Concession Card is issued in the form of a photo ID which is valid for three years. The card is not available for use on international travel, on flights operated by Qantas alliance partners, or in conjunction with other discounts or concessions (eg child fare). The card also has an administration fee of \$27.50 including GST.

For full terms and conditions and for further information and an application form contact the National Information Communication Awareness Network (NICAN.) via their website:

<http://nican.com.au/about/qantas-carer-concession>



Social/Support Groups and Information Sessions as at September 2014

Southern Tasmania

Dunalley

Dunalley Community Neighbourhood Centre,
Arthur Highway
First Thursday morning in the month - 10am - Midday

Hobart

Fortnightly on Fridays 10:30am - 12:30pm
Venue may vary each fortnight, contact us for current location

Contact: Robyn Davis 0408 376 838

Hobart - **Asperger's Syndrome Adult Support Group**

Autism Tasmania office, 1 Bowen Rd, Moonah
Last Sunday in the month 2.00 - 4.00pm

Contact: Rose Clark 0407 320 048

Regular visits are made to Bridgewater, Clarence Plains, Geeveston and New Norfolk. Please contact our office for details.

Northern Tasmania

Launceston

Autism information sessions are conducted regularly at:
Northern Children's Network, Amy Road, Newstead.
Please contact our office for details

Bike Centre family get togethers in school holidays
Contact: Robyn Thomas 0458 375 604

Launceston - **Asperger's Syndrome Adult Support Group**

Aspire Building, 190 Charles Street, Launceston
First Saturday in the month 1.30 - 3.30pm.

Contact: Rose Clark 0407 320 048

Regular visits are made to Scottsdale, Campbell Town and George Town. Please contact our office for details.

North West Coast

Burnie

Burnie Community House, 24 Wiseman St
Third Thursday in the month - 10.30am - midday

Circular Head

Smithton District Hospital's meeting room

Third Friday in the month - 10.30am - midday

Burnie - **Asperger's Syndrome Adult Support Group**

152 Wilson Street, Burnie
Second Saturday in the month 1.30 - 3.30pm

Contact: Rose Clark 0407 320 048

West Coast

Meetings on the first Thursday in every month on a rotational basis - Rosebery, Queenstown and Strahan
10:30am - midday
Please contact Rose Clark 0407 320 048 for details of upcoming venue

For more information please call: 1300 288 476
or
Email autism@autismtas.org.au

Adult Asperger Groups

There are now 3 adult Asperger groups operating in our state – they are located in Hobart, Launceston and the North-West Coast.

The Hobart group which is now in its ninth year meets on the last Sunday in the month at the Autism Tasmania office in Moonah from 2-4 pm. Each year the group has worked on topics of interest producing some informative and helpful strategies for group members on such issues as employment, the workplace and relaxation and anxiety. The year is completed with a picnic in the Botanical Gardens just before Christmas.

The Launceston group is in its fifth year and meets on the first Saturday in the month at the Aspire building in the city from 1.30 – 3.30pm. Like their counterparts in Hobart there have been discussions relating to topics and issues that have arisen during the course of daily life. There have also been times talking about passions and interests and if possible bringing some of these along to the session. This group also has **recently started a 'drop-in' session that is based in the Pilgrim Church precinct at Maggie's Cafe** in the city centre. This happens every Thursday from 2 – 4pm with a cost of \$2 to cover venue hire.

The North-West Group, the newest of the three is in its second year and is still looking for a permanent location to meet. Currently the group are being made very welcome at a church centre located in the city centre. Meeting times are 1.30 – 3.30pm. In July those who came along celebrated Christmas in Winter with a wonderful lunch and most recently visited galleries and a coffee shop as part of their time together.

All groups have very regular attendees and are very welcoming of new people who would like to

come along. There is a focus topic each month chosen by the group and sometimes an invited guest speaker talking about their specific area of expertise or interest. Recently the Hobart group had a speaker from Volunteering Tasmania talk about that organisation, what it does and how people can be involved. Both the Hobart and Launceston group had a guest from the Olga Tennison Research Centre who is conducting a sleep study with adults who have a diagnosis of High Functioning Autism or Asperger Syndrome. Each of the groups is open to older adolescents and adults who either have a diagnosis or think they maybe on the spectrum.

Rose Clark
Autism Information Team - North West Coast



The Pros and Cons of Being a Frog – a picture book with a difference.

The Pros and Cons of Being a Frog, written and beautifully illustrated by Sue deGennaro tells the tale of Frogboy and his friend, Camille. They are the best of friends but they are different.

Different from one another and perhaps different from other children too.

Camille speaks entirely in prime numbers and represents her thought and feelings accordingly.

Frogboy is a perfectionist but socially anxious.

He feels safer when he's taking on the role/identity of being an animal. But what animal should he be?

Finding the perfect animal is a difficult decision

for Frogboy but with Camille's support, he

decides that there are more pros than cons to being a frog. He sets to making a costume.

Bringing Camille in on the dressing up, Frogboy becomes frustrated that Camille keeps wriggling and the consequences of his actions form the main plot of the book.

Having shouted at Camille, Frogboy is frightened he might lose his friend and sets out to reconcile with Camille.

In order to do so he tries to

understand Camille's perspective and goes about

metaphorically entering her world – a world full of numbers and emotion– whimsically represented through symbols, colour and movement.

It's not clear whether Frogboy and Camille as

characters were intentionally based on traits of individuals with Autism Spectrum Disorder. The author and illustrator Sue deGennaro presents Frogboy and Camille as unique individuals first and foremost. In my opinion, this is one of the powerful features of the book. The reader must accept Frogboy and Camille as they are, without explanation. And this acceptance of difference is really the central subject matter of the book.

Just as Frogboy and Camille celebrate, accept and seek to know one another, we as readers are encouraged to consider stepping outside of our comfort zones in how we express ourselves and who we engage with. As a picture book, this is a hugely important theme to have built into such a small package and one adults will get as much joy out of reading as children. I give it five (which is a prime number) out of five croaks.

Amy Jansen



Are you a member of
Autism Tasmania?

If so, you can borrow books and DVDs (3 in total) from our libraries in Newstead and Moonah?

Books can be borrowed for 1 month,
DVDs for 1 week.

Check out our website for the listing of resources in your area.

Look what is new in our library.

Check our website for regional availability.

Thank you to our private donors and Footprint Books for regularly donating items to our library

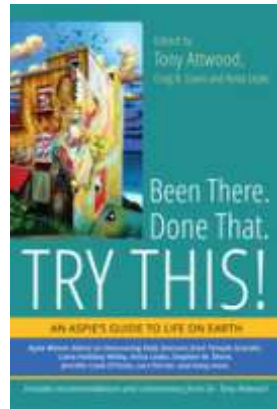


I'll Tell you Why.... I Can't Wear Clothes (Donated by Footprint Books)

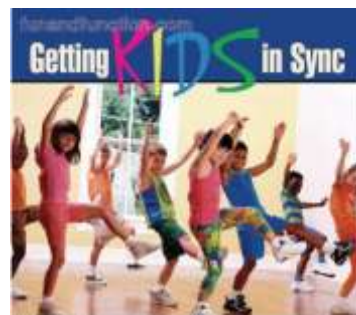


Toilet Time - A training kit for girls

Been There. Done That. Try This! An Aspie's Guide to Life on Earth (Donated by Footprint Books)

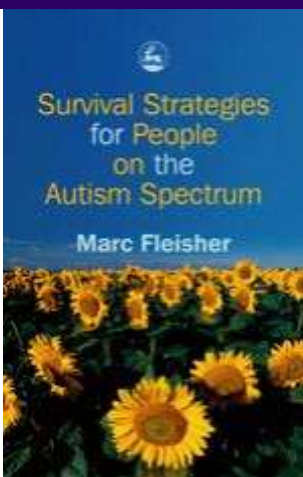


Loving Olivia - Bringing up my autistic daughter



Getting Kids in Sync DVD (Sensory-Motor Activities to help children develop body awareness and integrate their senses)

Focus on Library Resources



Title: Survival strategies for people on the Autism Spectrum

Author: Mark Fleisher

Publisher: Jessica Kingsley

Year 2006

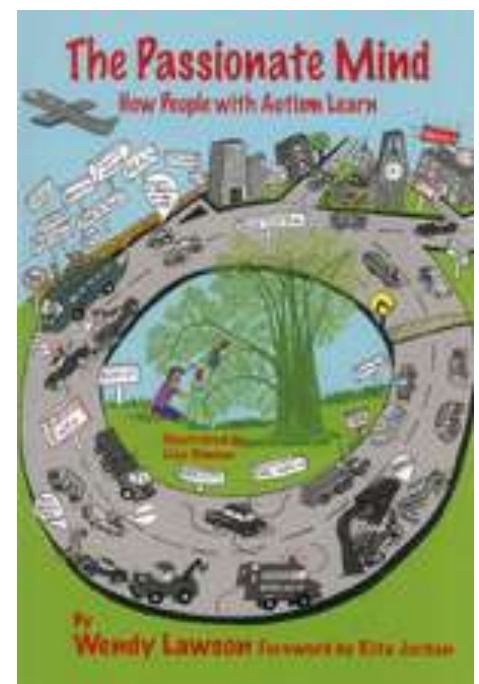
Interesting Points:

- Covers most common stress and anxiety triggers
- Easy to read
- Great overview of common difficulties in daily life.

A good starting point for ways to manage daily stress and anxiety triggers, daily life, social situations and "what if"-ing



The Passionate Mind - How People with Autism Learn



Early Days is a series of workshops that are designed to support mothers, fathers, carers and families of young children (0-6 years) who have an Autism Spectrum Disorder or who are going through the assessment and diagnostic process.

Autism Tasmania are proudly supporting families by providing workshops for mothers, fathers and other family carers of children who have an Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD).

Early Days is a national program funded by the Federal Government under the Helping Children with Autism Program and is run by local facilitators.

Early Days Workshops are:

- Free of charge to attend
- held in small groups and give you the chance to meet other parents
- Light refreshments provided, BYO lunch
- Childcare is not provided



Early Days

I have attended a few early days workshops and have found the information to be useful in confirming that I am doing things right or new ideas to try . To be able to meet other families and share experiences and ideas is amazing . To be able to hear how other children have attended university or have a job fills me with hope for the future. It's also great to be in a room of people who understand your days, fears and dreams .

Hobart workshops

Understanding Behaviour – A Step by Step Guide for Parents

During this practical workshop you will learn:

- **How to understand your child's behaviour.**
- Ways to select and teach your child new behaviour.
- How to promote positive behaviours.

Thursday 16 October 2014

10:00am - 2:30 pm

Helping my Child Cope with Change

During this practical workshop you will learn:

- Identify why change is challenging and how it impacts on the behaviour of young children.
- Strategies to prepare my child for the changes of everyday life (moving house, changes to family structure, going to childcare and celebrations such as Christmas and birthdays).

Thursday 30 October 2014

10:00am - 12:30 pm

Progression to School

During this practical workshop you will learn:

- Understanding how to successfully prepare your child with the keys to succeed at school.
- Funding options for children over 7 years.

Tuesday 11 November 2014

10:00am—12:30pm

REGISTER TODAY!

Email: autism@autismtas.org.au

Phone: Jodie Denman (Southern facilitator): 1300 288 476 or 6278 9985



These workshops is for parents and other family carers only. For professional development opportunities, please contact Autism Tasmania



ABN: 90 215 494 454

Hobart

1 Bowen Road, Moonah
PO Box 514, Moonah 7009
Ph: (03) 6278 9985

Launceston

59D Amy Road, Newstead
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