



identikite

Update

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October 2007

i.d.entity.wa

The official newsletter of i.d.entity.wa

A couple of months ago, the Social Club had a Rock 'n Roll workshop on a Sunday afternoon. I happened to be in the office for a short time, and they persuaded me to leave the paperwork for a while, and join them. They were short of women!

I had a great time – along with everyone else.

Most of this *identikite* "Update" is about things that I am involved in when I'm *not* rockin' an' rollin' with people with intellectual disabilities. Much of it is about issues that are the bread and butter of the Board of Governors and management, finance and administrative staff. Some of it is about the results that have been achieved by staff, volunteers, families and others, after behind-the-scenes work that largely goes unseen.

As you will see, the newsletter also discusses some matters that are current in the disability sector in WA and/or across Australia. **i.d.entity.wa** is involved with them in one way or another, and they have the potential to ensure powerful improvements for many people with disabilities and their families.

The Alister McLean Foundation (AMF):

The Foundation's announcement of its imminent dissolution is an insert with this newsletter. If you have any comments or concerns, or would like further information, please contact Leah Colman at i.d.entity.wa on phone: 9474 3303 or email: paed@identitywa.com.au

Getting Involved:

i.d.entity.wa depends on your input to be relevant, and to provide excellent services. Please give us your thoughts and ideas about the internal directions, plans and achievements that are discussed here, and about the external initiatives. There are many opportunities for your comments and feedback to be heard.

An important opportunity that is coming up is "The BIG Picture" consumer forum, to be held on Sunday, 25 November 2007 at 2.00pm. We would love a large crowd.

You can also write to the Board of Governors (details are always on page two of the *identikite*) or to me or Gillian Martelli (Executive General Manager Operations) with your ideas and feedback. Or you can ask any staff member to pass your comments onto their Manager, and to Gillian or me.

If you would like to contribute occasionally through a working party, we have a register where you can lodge an expression of interest by phoning Leah Colman or Gillian Martelli on 9474 3303.

Family members and others are encouraged to nominate to join the Board of Governors. (Unfortunately, staff are not eligible.) Your input is invaluable.

Thank you to everyone who contributes to i.d.entity.wa through sharing your comments, ideas, skills, experience, time energy, other resources, prayers and commitment. Working together, we achieve wonderful things.

MAUREEN JEWELL, Executive Director

The Residential Services Plan, 2005 – 2008

It is now two years since i.d.entity.wa embarked on the Residential Services Plan (RSP). It is a plan that foresaw major change in our Residential Support Services in order to ensure:

- (i) that services respond appropriately to the current and future needs of existing and new residents; and
- (ii) that i.d.entity.wa's long term viability is assured.

There have been major achievements over these two years, and some disappointments. The learning curve for most of us has been great and, from time to time, patience and trust have been seriously tested. The most important thing is that residents, family, staff and management have worked together to ensure that each person receives the best service available to them, at a financial cost that is feasible and sustainable.

Major Achievements:

- The Gatter Report (February 2005) identified 31 residents whose situations required action "as soon as possible".
 - 27 of these individuals' situations have been resolved.
 - 1 person's situation has been improved.
 - 3 people's situations will be resolved when new housing is available to them.
- i.d.entity.wa has identified a further 12 residents whose situation required action. All of them have been resolved.

- i.d.entity.wa established one new service (in a rental property) for 4 people. The service will be financially viable when new housing allows an increase to 5 residents.
- i.d.entity.wa is currently establishing a new service for 5 people, in existing premises.
- i.d.entity.wa has created 6 new places across 5 existing houses.
- 16 new residents have moved into i.d.entity.wa's services.
- 21 existing residents have moved within i.d.entity.wa.
- Through the moves, the new places in existing services, and new people moving in, the majority of i.d.entity.wa's residential services are financially viable at this time.
- The Department of Housing & Works (DH&W) has allocated three large blocks of land to us, to replace existing housing that is not appropriate. They are working on plans for:
 - A duplex in Hilton;
 - Two houses (each for 5 residents) on a Cloverdale property; and
 - A large house in Bassendean.
- DH&W have decided to build an additional house (for 3 residents) beside an existing house that i.d.entity.wa has in Shakespeare Avenue, Balcatta.

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Disability Assistance Package (DAP)

Do you receive
Carers Allowance?
or
Carers Allowance (Child)?

To be eligible 'for funding and support for most DAP programs' you need to receive one of the above allowances.

To apply for them:
Contact your nearest

Centrelink Office

<http://www.centrelink.gov.au/>

i.d.entity.wa's Business Plan

The end of June/beginning of July 2007 saw the end of the first year's implementation of our current Business Plan, and the start of the second Annual Plan.

Achievements and Disappointments:

Over 2006/2007, we achieved most of our goals. Many of these were associated with the Residential Services Plan (RSP). (See p1.) A large number related to human resource issues (staff recruitment, recognition, training, terms and conditions of employment, and so on) and some related to financial leadership; financial management at all levels of i.d.entity.wa; risk management; and, review of our Statutes. (See p3.)

Two major goals were not achieved: to develop a communications strategy; and, to decide the future of the adult residential respite service (with the participation of all stakeholders). Both have been brought forward to 2007/2008, and will be finalised this year.

Working Relationships with Funding Bodies:

We had major disappointments, and some successes, in relation to Strategic Direction Three: To achieve strong on-going relationships with key stakeholders (organisations). Our major funding bodies are the Home and Community Care (HACC) program, the Department of Housing and Works (DH&W) and the Disability Services Commission (DSC).

We have always had a strong working relationship with HACC, and that continued over the year, despite some HACC changes that are causing us some consternation.

The RSP means that we have worked a great deal with DH&W over the past two years, and will do so for the next few years, too. DH&W are happy with our working relationship as is i.d.entity.wa.

Service Agreement with DSC:

In some aspects, our work on our relationship with DSC was not as successful as we had hoped. At times it was good, but at other times DSC expressed concern about how we were working with them. DSC's concerns led to a 12-month extension of our existing, two year Service Agreement with them. Conditions were added to the extended Agreement, related to our management of complaints; effective communication with stakeholders (and specifically DSC); on-going progress in implementing the Gatter Report (the RSP being the major component of that); continued service delivery to service users (or else, to exit service users in compliance with the Service Agreement); and, to provide quarterly reports to DSC about our implementation of these conditions.

DSC said that a number of small things over the years had accumulated for them, resulting in these conditions. We are committed to achieve the conditions to our own and DSC's satisfaction, and to achieving an excellent working relationship between our organisations. Achievement of the conditions is included in this year's Annual Business Plan.

The 2007/2008 year has begun with very positive work and relationships between us.

We are now working towards a new, 5-year Service Agreement with DSC, to be effective from 01 July 2008.

New Commonwealth Government Funding for Disability Services

The Prime Minister, John Howard, announced on 28 June 2007, that the Commonwealth Government was committing new funding of \$1.8 billion over five years for people with disabilities. The funding is for a number of initiatives, referred to as the Disability Assistance Package (DAP).

Almost \$1 billion of this funding is specifically to assist older carers (aged over 64 years) whose family member lives with them.

The DAP includes funding for:

- Supported accommodation (older carers);
- Supported employment;
- Targeted alternatives to employment (a continuation of programs that were previously funded only until May 2008);

- In-home support for people with disabilities so that they can continue to live in the family home (older carers);
- In-home and centre-based respite care (older carers);
- Services for children where there are gaps (such as early intervention, vacation care, out-of-school care); and
- An enquiry to discover why there are not more private, for-profit organisations providing services to people with disabilities, and how they could be encouraged to become involved.

Information about the supported accommodation programs is above. For further information about the programs listed, and everything covered by the DAP contact the Disability Assistance Inquiry Line on: 1800 101 888.

Disability Services Sector Health Check: There's Excitement in the Air!

Last year, the (then) Minister for Disability Services, Tony McRae, established a review of disability services in WA, called the Disability Services Sector Health Check.

While there have been some criticisms of how the review was structured, the recommendations of the Sector Health Check have been welcomed widely. In fact, there is enthusiastic optimism that the Disability Services Commission (DSC), service providers, people with disabilities, families and other stakeholders can work together to greatly improve what we do, and how we do it.

An Implementation Committee has begun work to ensure that the recommendations are achieved in their fullness, as soon as possible. Ms Joan McKenna-Kerr (Chief Executive Officer, Autism Association) is the Chairperson of the committee: it is difficult to think of anyone who could have been a better choice.

The major recommendations of the Sector Health Check Report include:

- Development of a WA State Disability Plan – with a minimum of 15 year projections – to guide responses to the needs of people with disabilities.
- Provision of innovative community living services for when people leave the family home, and the development of a disability Community Living Plan.
- Establishment of a Sector Round Table where the Director General of DSC and the Chief Executive Officers of all funded agencies will meet regularly to address major policy, planning and funding issues.
- Facilitation of projects that measure the quality of services and report on what services actually achieve.
- Support to address the sector's current difficulties in recruiting and retaining appropriate staff.

The issue of attracting and keeping good staff (especially direct care staff) is a major issue for **i.d.entity.wa**, as it is for every organisation. In the context of the economic boom in WA, disability workers' poor pay rates are a major reason for the current staffing difficulties. As a direct response to this issue, the Minister for Disability Services, Sheila McHale, announced in July 2007 that the WA Government would provide funding for an increase of \$33 per week (in their pocket, before tax) for all direct care disability staff in non-government services that receive DSC funding. The increase will be back-dated to 01 July 2007.

A further increase is required: disability workers are still paid less than child care and aged care workers. The point is that it is a start. It demonstrates that we can all work together to benefit people with disabilities and their families.

The Sector Health Check has created an air of excitement and goodwill between all stakeholders that has not been there for some time. It is an opportunity not to be missed, and there will be numerous ways to be involved.

Disability Services Sector Health Check Report

To obtain a copy of the full Report
or the Executive Summary and Recommendations

- Contact DSC (Community Access & Information Branch) on (08) 9426 9325, or:
- Download a copy from www.dsc.wa.gov.au

Review of i.d.entity.wa's Statutes

As many readers will know, **i.d.entity.wa** is a Catholic organisation that is incorporated under the Corporation Sole of the Roman Catholic Archbishop of Perth. That is one of a number of ways in which Catholic organisations can be incorporated. (They are known as "Archdiocesan" agencies.) It means that the Church has direct responsibility for **i.d.entity.wa**, and is liable if there are major difficulties in the organisation.

In September 2004, Archbishop Barry Hickey asked the Board of Governors to review **i.d.entity.wa's** incorporation, Statutes and structure. This was related to **i.d.entity.wa's** size: we are far-and-away the largest of the organisations that come under the Corporation Sole. In such a large organisation, the complexity and time-consuming nature of some issues with which he was directly involved, led him to seek alternate ways that these issues could be managed.

A couple of other "Archdiocesan" agencies had moved to separate incorporation, while still maintaining their Catholic identity. The Archbishop suggested that this was one possible way forward for **i.d.entity.wa**.

The Board has taken the time to undertake a thorough review of **i.d.entity.wa's** incorporation; Statutes; relationship with the Church; the possibility of a formal membership (not possible under the Corporation Sole); the role and membership of the Board; and, relationships between the Board and the Chief Executive Officer (CEO).

Initially, separate incorporation (under the Associations Act) – while remaining a Catholic organisation – seemed to be the direction for **i.d.entity.wa**. Then, the longer the Board looked at it, the more the advantages of being an "Archdiocesan Agency" were seen to outweigh any disadvantages.

Rather than seek separate incorporation, the Board has drafted changes to strengthen the powers of the Board, the relationship between the CEO and the Board, and the relationship between the Board and the Church, without changing **i.d.entity.wa's** status under the Corporation Sole. This addresses the Archbishop's concerns about his involvement in day-to-day issues, while allowing **i.d.entity.wa** to continue as an "Archdiocesan" agency.

The new, draft Statutes have been forwarded to the Archbishop, for his comments and approval.

Details of the recommended changes will be available at "The BIG Picture" consumer forum to be held on Sunday, 25 November 2007 at 2.00pm, at **i.d.entity.wa** (46 David Street, Kensington.)



New Commonwealth Accommodation Funding

The Disability Assistance Package (see p2) includes \$562.6M (over 5 years) for supported accommodation for people with severe and profound disabilities. The funding is particularly for people aged 40 years and over who are living with a family carer (not a spouse) who is aged over 64 years.

The Department of Families, Community Services & Indigenous Affairs (FaCSIA) will administer the funds.

They have stated that places will be available on the basis of need, and not necessarily allocated across States and Territories according to population statistics. However, if WA was to be allocated 10% of the places (i.e. 175 places) that is an average of 35 new Commonwealth places per annum for this group over each of the next 5 years.

There was little notice of this new program, and most features – including funding models, administration, monitoring and service delivery structures – have not been decided, and will be developed on the basis of current national consultations with people with disabilities, families and service providers. It is almost certain that it will be run parallel to existing systems and structures, because, in part, it is a statement by the Government that they have lost patience with most of the States (although that sentiment does not apply to the WA Government or the Disabilities Services Commission).

The best case scenario is that it will support innovative service delivery models and flexibility for people with disabilities and their families. On the other hand, there are

fears that it will duplicate planning, funding, administration, monitoring and other accountability structures that are already in place in the States and Territories.

Transition Support

Centrelink has already appointed social workers as “Transition Support Workers”, who are systematically contacting carers over 64 years of age who receive the Carer’s Allowance, and are caring for a person with a disability at home.

The major role of the Transition Support Workers is to provide information to older carers about the services and support that they may be eligible to receive. They can assist the person with a disability and his/her carer and family to plan for the person’s future, if they would like that support.

The Transition Support Workers may be able to refer individuals and carers to disability support services and to more general services (such as emergency respite, individual or family counselling, and financial information services).

When people with disabilities and their carers are contacted by a Transition Support Worker, it is equally acceptable to arrange the home visit they offer, or to decline it. If a visit is arranged, anyone who already has contact with i.d.entity.wa, with a Local Area Co-ordinator (LAC) or with any other organisation can invite any of those people – or a family member, advocate or supporter – to participate in the meeting with the Transition Support Worker. Feel welcome to ring and ask.

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Although it was initiated prior to the RSP, four residents in interim premises moved into their new, purpose-built house recently. A fifth person has joined them there, which was made possible primarily by the commitment and goodwill of the staff.

24 of i.d.entity.wa’s existing services have been affected by at least one person moving out and another moving in, and/or by a new person moving in when the number of permanent residents in the house has increased by one or two people.

Disappointments:

The major disappointment for i.d.entity.wa in the residential services over the last two years relate to the fact that four residents left our services. All of them transferred to other service providers. One move was related to the changes associated with the RSP.

One of the moves was initiated by i.d.entity.wa. The needs of the young man who moved had increased, and we were unable to care for him appropriately in the short-term. DSC worked closely with us to resolve the matter, and provided excellent professional and practical support to us. Eventually he moved to DSC on a long-term basis, as there was no short-term option available to him, much to our regret.

Thank You:

The RSP is such a major project with such profound implications for i.d.entity.wa that it has touched or involved the majority of people associated with the organisation. Our grateful thanks go to everyone who has supported it in any way.

There is still a long way to go – particularly with the building program, and with reviewing how we do many things, and planning how we can improve for the future, with your guidance and whatever assistance you can offer.

MAUREEN JEWELL
Executive Director

STEPHAN VAN VLIJMEN
Project Officer

Welcome and Best Wishes

to Bruce Langoulant,
the new Chairman of
the Disability Services
Commission Board.

Farewell and Thank you

to Barry MacKinnon
who has retired from
the Board after 13
years’ service as
Chairman.