

Ability Links NSW Newsletter

Issue # 3, October 2014



Ability Links NSW State-wide Expansion

On Monday 22 September 2014, the Minister for Disability Services, the Hon. John Ajaka MP, announced the state-wide expansion of Ability Links NSW. The event, held at Penrith Panthers in Sydney's west, was a huge success and officially commenced the state-wide launch of the Ability Links program. More than 130 people attended, with guests including community members and leaders, Ability Links providers, other NGO providers and State Government representatives.



The Hon. Minister Ajaka MP, Minister for Disability Services officially announcing the state-wide expansion of the Ability Links NSW program. Pictured with an Auslan Interpreter.

Ability Links NSW and Living Life My Way Ambassador, Nicholas Gleeson, facilitated the event and local Aboriginal Elder, Uncle Greg Smith, performed the Welcome to Country. We were very privileged to have Nick, Uncle Greg, Living Life My Way Ambassador Tracy Barrell and the Knight family share their stories and perspectives of how people with disability and the community can work together to achieve a more inclusive and equal society.

Representatives from Ability Links NSW providers also gave guests a glimpse at the Ability Links program from a different perspective:

Maria Knipe, an Ability Links NSW Team Leader from the St Vincent de Paul Society talked about some of the changes and experiences that people with disability and the community have made in the Hunter area with the support of a Linker.

Uniting Care NSW/ACT Families Director, Clive Price, and Sydney Region Aboriginal Corporation CEO Ralph Scott spoke from the perspective of newly appointed providers and shared some insight into their organisations. Ralph also spoke about the potential benefits to the Aboriginal community, as the newly appointed Aboriginal provider for the Nepean Blue Mountains district.

Twinsanity provided fantastic vocal entertainment for the event.



Ability Links NSW Ambassador Nicholas Gleeson, with his guide dog Unity, in discussion with Living Life My Way Aboriginal Ambassador Tracy Barrell.

The event was an opportunity for Minister Ajaka to announce the additional 20 Aboriginal positions, allocated to Aboriginal providers, bringing the total number of Aboriginal identified Linker positions to 47 and the state-wide team to 268 Linkers.



Guests included representatives from Ability Links NSW providers as well as Uncle Greg Smith (front left) who provided a very inspiring Welcome to Country.

One Year Anniversary of Ability Links NSW in the Hunter region

The one year anniversary of Ability Links NSW in the Hunter region was held at Caves Beach on Wednesday 16 July 2014. The event, also celebrated the one year anniversary of the NDIS in the Hunter region, acknowledging the Ability Links program as one of the NSW Government's contributions towards the NDIS.

Ability Links in ACTION

1. Jennifer is a full time carer for her husband Alan who is an amputee. They would both like to be more socially involved, however Alan's priority is that his wife is able to participate in something she loves – she would like to learn to paint more accurately. A Linker is currently working to find art classes for Jennifer. They are a lovely couple who only want what's best for one another, often prioritising the other over themselves. Some leads have been found, and Jennifer is willing to try many new things with support from the Linker.

2. Daniel was having trouble getting to school. The linker spent some time with Daniel and his Mum and a number of dreams and ideas about Daniel's gifts became clear. The linker met with the school where ideas to make the day less anxious were discussed. After a few days of meeting the linker before school, Daniel joined computer club that was running before school. Now Daniel is having a full day at school and starting to make friends in the computer club.

**Names have been changed*

Ability Linkers state-wide Conference

The inaugural Ability Links NSW state-wide conference is to be held in Sydney on Monday 17 and Tuesday 18 November 2014. The conference will bring all Ability Links NSW providers and Linkers from across the state and will provide Linkers with an opportunity to meet, share their knowledge and ideas. The state-wide conference is one part of the ongoing commitment the Ability Links NSW team is providing to the providers and Linkers.

Introducing the Ability Links NSW (Aboriginal) Logo



**ABILITY
LINKS**
NEW SOUTH WALES

Aboriginal artist, Saretta Fielding (also recently announced as the winner of the Ray-Ban Indigenous Special Edition Wayfarer competition) has redesigned the Aboriginal logo for Ability Links. The artist's concept for the logo is as follows:

The three cultural symbols for people linked together highlight people with disability, their families and carers, and depict Linkers working alongside people and communities. The expanding circles within the peoples' heads symbolise a meeting place of people across community to help achieve personal goals.

The figures sit on top of interwoven circles which represent the many tribal groups of the NSW communities across the state. The central red circle represents the heart of this program and its values of quality, trust, respect, understanding and cultural appropriateness – while the 27 small circles sitting within the 3 people figures symbolise the 27 Aboriginal identified Linkers within local communities across NSW.

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Ability Links now available state-wide!

People with disability, their families and carers can now elect to access a generalist or Aboriginal Linker in their local community. There are now 16 providers and partnerships delivering Ability Links across NSW:

UnitingCare NSW/ACT in partnership with Settlement Services International (Northern Sydney, Western Sydney, Nepean Blue Mountains, Illawarra Shoalhaven and Southern NSW Districts)

UnitingCare NSW/ACT

Email: abilitylinks@unitingcarenswact.org.au
Phone: 02 8830 0768

Settlement Services International

Email: info@ssi.org.au
Phone: 02 8799 6700

St Vincent de Paul Society (Central Coast and Hunter New England Districts)
Phone: 02 4905 0700

St Vincent de Paul Society in partnership with Settlement Services International (South Western Sydney, Sydney and South Eastern Sydney Districts)
Email: ability.links@vinnies.org.au
Phone: 02 8622 0456

North West Alliance – partnership including **Northern Rivers Social Development Council, Mid Coast Communities, Intereach, Pathfinders, CareWest** and **Murrumbidgee Medicare Local** (Hunter New England, Mid North Coast, Northern NSW, Murrumbidgee, Western NSW and Far West Districts)

Northern Rivers Social Development Council (Northern – Far North Coast)
Phone: 02 6620 1866

Mid Coast Communities (Northern – Mid North Coast)
Phone: 02 6651 1788

Pathfinders (Northern – New England)
Phone: 02 6771 1527

Intereach (Western – Riverina Murray)
Phone: 03 5881 1855

CareWest (Western – Central West and Orana Far West)
Phone: 1300 227 393

Murrumbidgee Medicare Local (Western - Murrumbidgee)
Phone: 02 6938 6666

Annecto Incorporated- The People Network in a Joint Working Arrangement (JWA) with **Kinchela Boys Home Aboriginal Corporation** (South Western Sydney and Sydney Districts).
Phone: 02 8047 0913

Barkuma Neighbourhood Centre (Hunter New England and Central Coast Districts)
Phone: 02 4937 1094

Booroongen Djugun Ltd. (Mid North Coast and Hunter New England Districts)
Phone: 02 6560 2100

Deniliquin Local Aboriginal Land Council (LALC) as the lead organisation in a JWA with **Orange LALC, Broken Hill LALC** and **Intereach**, (Western NSW, Far West and Murrumbidgee Districts)
Phone: 03 5881 4891

Illawarra Aboriginal Corporation (Illawarra Shoalhaven District)
Phone: 02 4276 1878

Jaanimili (UnitingCare Children, Young People & Families) in partnership with **Yenu Allowah Aboriginal Child & Family Centre** (South Western Sydney and Western Sydney Districts)
Phone: 02 8796 9707

Kurranulla Aboriginal Corporation as the lead organisation in a JWA with **Wyanga Aboriginal Aged Care** and **Guriwal Aboriginal Corporation** (South Eastern Sydney and Sydney Districts)
Phone: 02 9528 0287

National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Corporation, Community Transport Network, in partnership with **Advanced Community Solutions Ltd** (Northern NSW and Southern NSW Districts)
Phone: 0427 779 992

Ngurrala Aboriginal Corporation (Mid North Coast District)
Phone: 02 6568 4400

South Coast Medical Service Aboriginal Corporation (Illawarra Shoalhaven and Southern Districts)
Phone: 02 4448 0200

Sydney Region Aboriginal Corporation (Nepean Blue Mountains, Western Sydney and Northern Sydney Districts)
Phone: 02 4722 3524

Winanga-Li Aboriginal Child and Family Centre Incorporated (Hunter New England District)
Phone: 02 6743 0999

Ability Links Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) Framework

In August 2013, Cultural Perspectives were engaged to hold a workshop with key stakeholders and peak organisations to discuss the issue of cultural responsiveness in the roll out of Ability Links. From the feedback gained at this workshop an Ability Links NSW CALD Framework was developed. A state-wide follow up meeting with the attendees who participated in this workshop will be scheduled once all providers have had Linkers in place for at least 6 months to discuss progress against CALD priorities.

A number of other CALD initiatives have been or are being implemented in the delivery of Ability Links:

- CALD representation on the Ability Links tender panels and Ability Links Advisory Group
- Settlement Services International is one of the new providers across the state and is a key partner in the delivery of Ability Links. Settlement Services International has specific CALD experience and strong community responsiveness experience
- The new providers are implementing targeted strategies to recruit Linkers from CALD and Aboriginal communities
- Cultural competency training will be delivered to all Linkers and their Managers
- Ageing, Disability and Home Care continues to work with the providers to develop and implement strategies to engage with CALD communities

Ability Links NSW Evaluation

Urbis Pty Ltd has been engaged to undertake the formative evaluation and outcome evaluation of Ability Links NSW.

During the first year of Ability Links NSW, a series of consultations took place with key stakeholders to assess the implementation and progress of the program. The findings from the consultations are being used to shape the Evaluation Framework and improve processes for the benefit of participants.

For more information about the Ability Links NSW Evaluation, visit:

www.abilitylinksevaluation.com.au

For more information

If you'd like to find out more information about accessing Ability Links NSW, you can contact the Ability Links NSW provider within your local community.

Additional program information is also available on the ADHC website at:

www.adhc.nsw.gov.au/individuals/inclusion_and_participation/ability_links_nsw