



A Half-century of Service

Cootharinga North Queensland has been fortunate, over the years, to have dedicated directors on the Board. Three of those individuals have stepped down from their Board positions.

With almost 50 years of combined service we have said a fond farewell to Alan Parry from Townsville, Scott Keft from Cairns, and Diane Catley from Mackay. All of whom have served the volunteer role as members of the Board with distinction.

Mr Parry is a dealer principle at the Nissan dealership in Townsville and has been a great supporter of Cootharinga for almost 30 years. He began his association with Cootharinga when Nissan (then Datsun) were major sponsors of the Miss Australia Quest. The Quest had been raising much needed funds for organizations, including Cootharinga, for many years prior and the association with the pageant would end in the 90s when such forms of fund raising became unacceptable in Australian society.

Alan, in his letter of resignation to the Board said that he was pleased after 60 years "Cootharinga is still an autonomous North Queensland Charity". He was also thrilled that we are now seen by others to offer Quality Service and Training.

The recent retirement from the Board of Diane Catley has meant an almost two decade connection with Cootharinga is about to end for this Mackay businesswoman.

"Dianne has ably served the Board and the organisation as our Mackay based Director," CEO Brendan Walsh said.

The third former director, Scott Keft who has stepped down as our Cairns based representative on the Board, after more than 10 years of service to Cootharinga, commented:

"I hope (Cootharinga) continues to... improve (its) quality of care to clients over the next ten years.

"It's been said that we will have 'success' in business if after 20 years we look back with concern that what we once offered was 'such poor conditions' because the care provided in 20 years time is so much better."

All three former Directors have been given Life Membership of Cootharinga because of their service to the organisation.

And as Alan wrote in his resignation letter, this continual commitment will help us further achieve our vision: Building a Better World with People of all Abilities.

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A Scheme You'll want to sink your teeth into

Cakes that spelt out support

Around 200 people from a number of disability support organisations, including Cootharinga, Lifeline, TIPACL, and Spinal Injuries got together on the 2nd August for a special morning tea. The DisabiliTea was held at the Townsville RSL.

Students from Barrier Reef TAFE were asked to bake 33 cakes, each 30cm high, and spelt out the letters of "National Disability Insurance Scheme". It ended up being a 10m long cake and something luscious to behold!

At the time Cootharinga produced a leader board... where you could see a politician's commitment or otherwise to the NDIS. We gave a green ✓ of approval.

"This was very visually compelling.

The idea of an NDIS was first discussed back in the early 70s.

"And I believe this is a very important step for the nation, and if we don't get this up now I'm told it wont happen for another 10 years," Cootharinga CEO, Brendan Walsh said.

If you are wondering "Why do we need a NDIS?" well, put simply; because the number of people needing assistance is increasing and having a scheme similar to Medicare will guarantee the funds needed will be not only sufficient but also cover everything that is required.

The morning was a resounding success. It was extremely pleasing to receive confirmation of support for the NDIS from nearly all Local, State, and Federal politicians.



NDIS | revolutionising disability services

<http://everyaustraliancounts.com.au>

Our vision:
Building a better world
with people of all abilities

YES! I WANT TO CONTRIBUTE TO COOTHARINGA NORTH QUEENSLAND

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From the Editor

Hang on!



Some years ago I had the opportunity, with others, to abseil off Mt Stuart south-west of Townsville. As you can see from the photo on this page I was strapped into a wheelchair. The 'drop' was just over 12 metres (around 40'). But it seemed much further when I looked down. I had to trust the people "holding the ropes" that were guiding me down the side of the mountain.

It's the same for disability support organisations such as Cootharinga, we have to trust those who "hold the ropes" through strategic and person centred planning, achieving their vision and focusing on ability. Cootharinga is currently reviewing its Strategic Plan. Based on a solid foundation set in 2009, Cootharinga has achieved many goals over the past three years and will now build on them.

Their achievements included the establishment of more supported housing across the North. That has occurred in Cairns, Mackay and Mareeba. An article about these sites is in this edition of the newsletter.

A major focus within Cootharinga over the past three years has been the introduction of our Autism Services, with a number of trained professionals now working with both families and individuals.

This year two major events on the Cootharinga calendar will occur on the same day. Friday 23 September, during Disability Action Week there will be an inclusive festival full of entertainment and other celebrations on Townsville's iconic Strand. This will be preceded by Walk with Me, an exciting fundraising event which promotes inclusion and breaking down of barriers. There is a story about the day on page 3 of this newsletter.

I'm off to have a coffee and listen to my favourite song on my iPod....Little River Band's....Hang on.....Help is on its way.....LOL.....

By the way, if I can abseil down the side of Mt Stuart, so can you..... why don't you give it a go!

Ross
Editor



Picture Courtesy
Townsville Bulletin

From the CEO

Time Flies!



You barely have time to blink, and time seems to fly past you at an ever increasing rate!

The Board of Directors recently met with our senior leadership group to look at our achievements against our three year Strategic Directions, 2009 to 2011. The Board were impressed with the achievements made in the last three years, including improvements in staff retention and morale, our new vision, values, and strategic directions, our new logo and branding, usage of vacant or under-utilised properties, and increase in the number and strengths of partnerships across North Queensland, and even across Australia. We have also achieved sustainable growth in services, while reducing the cost of our organisational overheads.

The Board and senior team have also begun developing the Strategic Directions for the next three years. So far, we have identified five key strategies, and we welcome your input. During July and August 2011 we consulted with the people we assist, their families, our staff and volunteers, and a range of key external stakeholders, including the funding bodies that assist us. Their ideas and suggestions resulted in the following Strategic Directions:

1. Deliver excellence through flexible, responsive and person-centred approaches
2. Drive a dynamic, person-centred and positive workplace, workforce and culture
3. Drive sustainable growth while enhancing and protecting our reputation and profile
4. Lead and influence industry, governments, and the community to create inclusive communities
5. Build strong, deep and enduring partnerships.

With a recent allocation of over 10% increase for disability services in the Queensland State budget, we expect to receive additional funding so that we can assist more people in the coming year. Beside the National Disability Insurance Scheme being accepted/not adapted, we are also now hopeful there will be long-term growth in funding for supports for people living with a disability.

I'm so pleased that Cootharinga continues to confidently move forward, while pursuing our vision of "building a better world with people of all abilities"!

Brendan Walsh
CEO



The Walk with Me and Inclusive Communities Festival Details are:

When: Friday 23 September 2011

Time: 3.00pm – 4.00pm Walk With Me commencing at Picnic Bay Surf Life Saving Club, Burke Street Headland, The Strand
4.00pm – 7.00pm Inclusive Communities Festival Picnic Bay Headland

Walk a Mile (or two) in my shoes

Walk with me - Friday 23. September 2011

Who doesn't love a celebration, or walk that not only promotes inclusion, but also creates a sense of community? This month (September) two major events on the Cootharinga calendar will occur on the same day, Friday 23 September, as part of Queensland's Disability Action Week.

Walk with Me is an exciting fundraising event which promotes inclusion and the breaking down of barriers. There are a number of ambassadors promoting the event. Please visit www.walkwithme.org.au for further information.

The Inclusive Communities Festival aims to promote positive attitudes towards people with a disability and encourage their inclusion within the community, therefore making our community a better place for everyone. In keeping with the festival's aim - everyone in the community is welcome.

A wide variety of events have been organised for the festival, which includes performances by the Full Moon Drumming Circle, the ever popular Happy Feat dance troupe; a local band. Two Steps From Home and the very popular Matt the Music Man, as well as fire twirlers.

These acts will be supported by hands-on activities, static art displays, sporting activities such as wheelchair basketball, hula hooping, yoga, wheelchair bocce and market stalls throughout the festival site.

For the first time, both of these exciting events have also been expanded to Cairns and Mackay.

Please visit www.walkwithme.org.au for further information or to sponsor one of our wonderful ambassadors!

abilityfirst
AUSTRALIA



Cootharinga developments offer homely support

In our early years Cootharinga operated with an Institutional Model then we moved to one focused on providing support in the home, and a model based on Supported Accommodation Units. This model meant building something looking more like what is in the neighbourhood. This decentralization of services has meant some people have come to believe that once we were no longer on that very large corner block in North Ward, Townsville we had closed down.

This is not the case. In most cases now Therapy Services that were once offered at North Ward are now mostly delivered where the people we support live. Many of the people we once supported in a dormitory model are now - because of better individualized service delivery - able to live with their family while still being supported.

For those who are not able to live with their family, we still offer Supported Accommodation. And because of their design, the buildings do not look out of place with their neighbours.

Around 20 years after building a Supported Accommodation Home in Mackay the site recently underwent a redevelopment. The property is now home to four men who are being supported by us. (see attached photo)

We have also been successful in receiving funds to build a Supported Home in Mareeba on the Atherton Tablelands, west of Cairns.

"This is our first venture into the Tablelands.

"But, it won't be our last."

"We're building (these homes) so that those we support can be integrated into the community, as they should (be)", Steve Cairns, General Manager Quality & Property, Cootharinga said.

The architect for the Cairns redevelopment was Tippett Schrock Architects, who worked on our last project, a Supported Accommodation building in Townsville, which was built to be environmentally friendly.

Like the property in Cairns, the newly opened home in Mareeba has people supported under the Older Parent/Carer Program. This program aims to help aging parents who have been supporting their adult siblings.

All this activity is helping us achieve our Vision Statement of... Building a better world with people of all abilities.

Men from Mackay

- Kim Bowerman – Black shirt
- Michael Argent – Yellow shirt
- Paul Ruddell – Broncos shirt
- Nathan Johnson - Green Shirt

