



Opening doors – enhancing lives

# Annual Report 2015

## **Our Vision**

Opening doors- enhancing lives

## **Our Mission**

Brighter Access - supporting choice, opportunity, inclusion and acceptance in our community

## **Our Values**

- Empathy of support.
- Resourcing, supporting and empowering families to make informed choices, within their community.
- Helping families to help themselves
- Foster and enhance strong relationships and partnerships based on mutual Respect and trust
- Strive for improvement in all areas

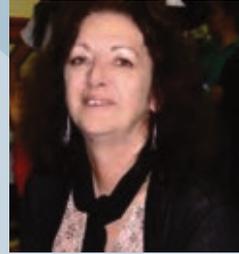
# Board of Management



**Cheryl Wilson**  
Chairperson



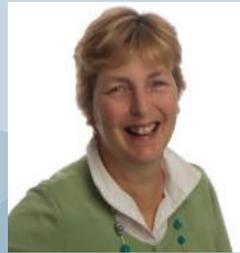
**Jenny Ryan**  
Vice Chairperson



**Debbie McCowen**  
Treasurer



**Joe Holahan**  
Secretary



**Kate Lockhart**



**Cheryl Hill**



**Taina Summers**

Again Tanya, Trudy, and all other staff working for Brighter Access, on behalf of the Management Committee I extend to you all a sincere thank you and our appreciation for the outstanding work you do to maintain Brighter Access as a valued and highly respected organisation which I am proud to be associated with.

We have an interesting road to travel across the next few months and by this time next year will be working within a new environment post change. I have confidence that through Tanya's excellent management and vision for Brighter Access, the support of the Management Committee and our staff that we will find ourselves well placed to continue the wonderful work and excellent services we provide to our clients, families and community.

I look forward to working with you all during the next 12 months

# Our Standards

1. Rights

2. Participation & Inclusion

3. Individual Outcomes

4. Feedback & Complaints

5. Service Access

6. Service Management

## Service Managers Report Tanya Fox



The role of Service manager has been to provide advice and make recommendations on service direction for Brighter Access whilst ensuring all programs operate effectively and efficiently, and provide a quality service. The uncertainty of the last couple of years has been somewhat relieved with the announcement that the National Disability Insurance Scheme will roll out in New England from July 2016.

We have worked at building the capacity of participants and families, our staff and community to create more inclusive communities for people with a disability.

This is being achieved through:

- actioning person centred principles in all areas of service delivery.
- reflecting on vision, mission and values in everything we do.
- increased presence within the community promoting inclusion at every opportunity.
- Providing opportunities for families and individuals to share their stories

Brighter Access collaborated with National Respite Association and eight other service providers to develop marketing and a client management system. The marketing project has provided templates and marketing documents for use by the organisations. The client management project has identified a CMS system that will support organisations into the NDIS world, however it does come at a high price. A spin off of the projects is the establishment of a Disability Services Network consisting of Brighter Access, Illawarra Interchange, Buckets Way Neighbourhood Group and Riverlink (Ermington). The Disability Services Network will help members compete on the shared soft edge of values, culture, and a distinctive smaller service proposition for people with disability and their local communities by: gaining scale and sharing costs; building strategic capability; sharing knowledge. Our first 3 years will focus on projects to create network and individual value

This year we supported carers on a whale watching trip to Coffs Harbour and the Outback Spectacular at the Gold Coast. These trips were a good opportunity for carers to relax and share their experience with each other and build friendships and networks. We also supported families and their informal networks to enjoy a day of bowling and recreation at Inverell Shake Rattle and Bowl.

Following on from the success of the 2014 Joey's Mini World Cup, Brighter Access teams competed in the Paddlefest, with one of our teams securing a place in the final. We increased our participation in the 2015 Joey's Mini World Cup with sponsorship of the under 9's competition which had one child with a disability integrated into each team and allowed the opportunity for full inclusion. Two Brighter Access teams played in the older division and resulted in wins over our friendly rivals, Connections. A huge thank you to Heinrich Haussler, who sees the potential in our kids and creates opportunities for them to share that with the community. Also thanks to Jackson Haussler for training our teams in preparation for the soccer.

Partnerships within the service sector have continued with:

Best Employment Connections  
Inverell Child & Families interagency meetings  
New England HACC Development Board  
National Respite Association  
Illawarra Interchange  
Riverlink  
Neighbourhood Group  
Northcott  
Kempsey Respite  
Buckets Way  
Facilitators of NE Regional Respite Coord Group  
Families NSW Delegated Regional Officers Group  
Hastings District Respite Care  
NE Early Childhood Intervention Area Coord Committee

Community partnerships include:

Inverell Joeyes	Printfresh	Inverell Majestic Cinema
Inverell Shire Library	Shake Rattle & Bowl	Inverell Chamber of
Commerce Copeton State Recreation Park	TAFE	Lake Keepit
Sport & Rec Centre		
18 community volunteers		

This year also saw the introduction of iCAN into Brighter Access, with a focus on inclusion, community and providing our participants with things that THEY want.

iCAN is constantly on the hunt for ways for our participants to feel part of the community, in work, social or learning environments, which we believe gives them a greater sense of value, dignity and confidence.

We believe education is key, and know that small changes and thinking creatively creates opportunities that can change the world we live in.

Brighter Access is changing to better support people with a disability, their families and the community whilst holding strong to our values and beliefs. We are focused on preparation for the rollout of the National Disability Insurance Scheme, ensuring the people we support are ready to move into that world. Our Third Party Verification against the Disability Standards in December 2015 highlighted the high standard of our services and identified many examples of best practice within the organisation.

I would like to thank the Management Committee for your commitment and work over the year. To all staff and volunteers, your contribution is what makes the difference in the lives of those individuals and families we support – thank you.

# Quality Assurance Manager Report

**Kathy Croft**

Quality Assurance Manager



It is with pleasure that I present the first Quality Management Report.

The Quality Management role at Brighter Access commenced with preparation for our Third Party Verification (TPV) which was conducted on 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> of December 2014. An enormous amount of preparation went into compiling the evidence required to be presented, crossing our "t's" and dotting our "i's", along with arranging staff and families for interviews.

We were very excited to receive an overwhelmingly positive result, along with our Certificate of Verification. The result was a great motivation to continue the development of our Quality Management System and further the Continuous Improvement of our organisation.

Since TPV, the Quality Management role has continued to grow. The first quarter of the year was very busy with preparations for relocation including set-up of new building, packing-up previous location, unpacking and setting-up in new building and WHS and other quality matters for the new location.

The role has also included the following tasks during 2015:

- Continued development and improvement of forms and documents, and Quality Management System and processes
- Development of Priority Action Plan for operational staff in preparation for NDIS
- Development of security register for new premises
- Continued development WHS Management system and information
- Maintenance of IT register
- Social media promotion including Facebook
- "NDIS Transition Readiness for Small and Micro Orgs" Facebook group for networking and information
- Promotion of BA in the community including participation in Inverell Town Wide Sale with Open Day, Morning tea and promotion, and advertisements in local media

- Quality process discussions with staff
- Involvement in NDIS Transition Fund Marketing project
- Attendance at NDS meetings and workshops
- Continued facilitation of NE Respite Coordination Group (RCG)
- Facilitation of BA's involvement in the NDS Social Impact Measurement Toolkit pilot
- Quality management support for service manager and coordinators

The aim of the Quality Management role is to ensure that service users have access to high quality and consistent supports that meet their needs and that comply with Disability Service Standards. Our focus is our participants and providing them and their families with the best support possible.

## Inverell Early Childhood Intervention Report Trudy Johnson

Inverell Early Childhood Intervention Teacher/ Coordinator



As a proud employee of Brighter Access for more than 16 years, I continue to provide my Coordinators report with great pride, gratitude and pleasure. This year has challenged all facets of our thinking, innovation and creativity, particularly with the National Disability Insurance Scheme becoming a reality.

We have successfully promoted and facilitated a number of programs this year with great success. Inclusion into mainstream activities and programs is a priority with many families attending the Mum'n Bub's playgroup at Shake Rattle n Bowl, playgroups in Victoria Park, story time at the Town Library and water confidence classes at the town pool. We have 12 families actively participating in the learn to swim groups supported by Brighter Access staff.

We have also had good attendances at the monthly coffee n cake gatherings at a variety of coffee shops throughout the community. These mornings are filled with, conversation, laughter, problem solving and yummy cake. We have even had 2 dads join us on occasion adding great value and comedy to the conversation.

We are very excited to commence our transition groups for children who will be attending school in 2016. Brighter Access have contracted a Speech Pathologist and Occupational Therapists for 15 weeks. I will organise and facilitate small group sessions with the Therapists where the focus will be school readiness skills. The groups will run Tuesday and Wednesday mornings. Parents will be participating in information sessions, support groups and casual morning teas while their child participates in the learning groups.

Although there has been a degree of uncertainty, vagueness and at times insecurity within the sector this year we have strived to maintain our true commitment to family centred best practise ensuring all families are contributing participants in the program that is delivered to their family. Our aim and focus has remained to resource, support and empower families to make informed choices about their child and family.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank all the coordinators for their support and ongoing professionalism, it is wonderful to be part of such a great team. To Tanya who continually strives for excellence, thank you for your mentoring, trust, commitment and dedication. I'm certain the organisation will be safely guided into the new world with her great vision and enthusiasm.

It is with sadness we say goodbye to Jenny Campbell who has been a wonderful addition to our team over the past 3 years. We wish her luck in her future adventures. And lastly my biggest thank you goes to Cheryl. Her commitment, dedication and ongoing enthusiasm ensures all programs run smoothly, she is loved and respected by all colleagues, families and most importantly the children.



Early Childhood Intervention  
learning and exploring through  
play





## **iCAN Report**

**Abby Hooker**  
**iCAN Coordinator**

I seem to have joined Brighter Access at a very exciting time with huge changes under the NDIS.

It is taking some time for me to understand how things currently work (and all the acronyms) while also trying to understand the “new ways” after roll out in June. While it is all a bit foreign, it is definitely creating plenty of interesting and exciting avenues for my position.

The main focus for iCAN up to date has been the development of the program and increasing exposure and inclusion.

Website development is ongoing to create a site that will be in line with NDIS clusters, and make the transition easier for participants and families to understand.

Social media participation has increased substantially with a total reach increase of 2,380.1%, and an increase of people engagement by 1,158%.

An event calendar is being worked on, as well as a presentation booklet to be able to present to participants and their carer's, to show a large variety of local events and classes. From this I have started to plan group outings, to things such as a Gala Garden Parade and a Model Railway Hobby Display.

I hope that in the future these tools will be pivotal in helping to encourage and secure participants within Brighter Access.

A Super Hero day is also in the works as a major event for next year, extending to all the children in our area.

Early Childhood Inclusion Grant evaluation forms are starting to be received, for completion by September 30th where possible.

From this I have had the opportunity to go out into the community and see some of the projects first hand, at either progress or completion stage. This has given me great insight into the way Brighter Access fits within the community, and some ideas on how to increase that exposure.

One of the biggest highlights for me so far has been the opportunity to be involved with the kids at the Joeys Mini World Cup, and getting to spend time with them.

I look forward to getting to know everybody as I continue as iCAN coordinator.

## Staff

Karla Bedford  
Jenny Campbell  
Sam Johnson  
Trudy Johnson  
Julie Lute  
Cheryl Pettit  
Brittany Turner-Conley

Brett Parnell  
Gail Brownlow  
Valerie Campbell  
Karen Dengate  
Stephen Kenny  
John O'Driscoll

Rhiannon Summers  
Kathy Croft  
Cheryll Lane  
Mandy O'Driscoll  
Cheryl Youll  
Abby Hooker  
Cassandra Walls

## Volunteers

David Dewberry  
Stephanie Kenny  
Jason & Carly Leece  
Robert Kenny  
Jennifer Brentnall  
Robert (Huey) Rogers

Darryl Culhane  
Rob Lane  
Reginald Wilkins  
Lana Granger  
Shirley McIntyre

Caitlyn Culhane  
Hillary Fuller  
Graham Leece  
Rod Dengate



## **Out of School Hours Care Report**

### **Rhiannon Summers**

Program Coordinator

We have had a fantastic year in our after school and vacation care programs, with 20 young people attending the OOSH program and 13 children attending the ASH program.

The biggest impact this year has been the change of location. With more space available we were able to move the ASH program to our new building alongside our OOSH program. This change went smoothly and has worked out great for the program.

Being in a new location has also meant we have had more access to the community. We have been able to take the kids to the parks, the library and walk to activities such as shopping and cinema.

One of our biggest achievements this year was our participation in the Paddlefest. Our kids trained 2 times a week over several months. On the day we had we had 3 teams of kids and two staff teams participate. All of our teams put in a fantastic effort and one of our kid's teams made it into the finals.

Our kids have also enjoyed a variety of other activities including cooking, building and constructing, kites, football, soccer, excursions to Green Valley, cinema, Shake Rattle N Bowl and out of town trips to the Tamworth Marsupial Park, and Ceramic Break Sculpture park.



OOSH & ASH enjoying our new facilities and excursions





**Community Participation, Life choices  
and Adult Leisure**  
**Gail Brownlow**  
Program Coordinator

It has been another busy year with clients participating in a variety of community based activities and focusing on developing skills and goals as set out in individual plans.

Clients have participated in sewing, Meals on Wheels, Tree Tenders, cooking and life skills, Community Kitchen, horse riding and more.

Over the last few months our day programs clients have been volunteering at Tree Tenders. They sort and pack vegetables and eggs which they then deliver to people's homes in the community. We have plans to expand this and will soon be making bread to add to the deliveries. We have already been to bread making training and can't wait to start.

Our Adult Leisure program has done 5 excursions to the Moree artesian pools over the past several months. Clients have enjoyed socialising on weekends away and the therapy of the pools. Our ALP program has also enjoyed trips to the Warialda Sculpture Park, Cranky Rock and trips to Copeton Dam.

Clients also participated in kayaking weekends in preparation for Paddlefest, with 8km kayaking sessions to build confidence, endurance and physical fitness.



Adult participants gaining life skills and life long friends during the Adult Leisure Program and Day Programs



# **Respite- Flexible, Host family, Brokerage reports, Individual Accommodation Support Package Report**

**Gail Brownlow & Rhiannon Summers**

Brokerage- Brighter Access continues to provide respite support to families and individuals through brokerage from other organisations including Commonwealth Respite and Carelink Centres, Life Without Barriers and Foundations Care.

Host Family offers families overnight breaks where a family member can spend time with a volunteer host family. Host family is cost effective and is a great experience for all involved.

Brighter Access recruits hosts families from the Inverell community and surrounding areas.

One young lady who enjoys the host family model is able to spend time with her host family in the garden, feeding the animals and helping to cook.

Flexible respite services are provided to give families and carers a break. Many families are utilising these in a combination of formal supports and family managed allocations which can be used in a flexible way.

One young teen was able to use his funding to purchase a bike and safety equipment, this has enable him to access the community, his job, school and programs at Brighter Access.

## Individual Accommodation Support Package

We support one young lady to live in her home. Brighter Access provides drop in support to assist with shopping, meal preparation, budgeting, appointments and cleaning. This has enabled her to live independently.

Another client was able to use her funding to support her to have a break away with a volunteer family. She enjoyed fishing, visited the jail, meals out with the family then travelled to the pet porpoise pool in Coffs Harbour to see the dolphins.

Brighter Access also supported carers by taking them on a trip to see Outback spectacular; this allowed families to socialise and build supports with other carers and to have a break from their caring role. It was a fantastic trip and families gave very positive feedback about the weekend.

## Chairperson Report Cheryl Wilson



Again a year has passed, the passing of that year sees us now preparing for the implementation of the NDIS from the 1st July 2016. We have spent significant time discussing and planning for its implementation. The recent announcement of a commencement date now makes it real and preparations are well and truly underway.

During the past 12 months, again there have been many achievements Brighter Access can be proud of and exciting activities which Tanya will be highlighting in her report. Therefore I will concentrate more on our need to continue building strategic relationships and change we need to undertake which I believe is critical to the success of the organisation as we move toward the full implementation of NDIS.

Relationships and collaborations are critically important for us with a range of government, non-government and business sector partners who support our operations in a variety of ways. Brighter Access is continuing to establish new, and nurture existing, relationships. These are going to be critical to our success into the future. Strategic alliances and partnerships will also need to be considered into the future.

Increasingly Brighter Access and other non-government organisations (NGOs) in the sector have been considering support models in a world of person-centred, individual funding, and to assist in building community capacity and the development of broader skills in our workforce. We certainly have been on the front foot and continue to progress through the transition we need to make.

With continuing change taking place, there are few parts of our business that will remain untouched as the nature of disability services at both state and national level continues to evolve. One of our primary challenges is to ensure that the individual needs of our clients, their families and carers remain at the forefront of these changes and we continue to deliver improved outcomes for all people accessing our range of services.

Our first steps towards making organisational change are now taking place. This is going to have significant impact on the organisation as a whole but needs to happen to enable the organisation to be competitive, responsive, flexible and at the forefront of service delivery within New England. Along with change comes other challenges – uncertainty, increased stress, mistrust, cultural change – the eventual organisational change will take place and we will continue to thrive I am certain, due to strong leadership, skilled staff and a strong vision for the future.



Enjoying excursions and independent living within our Individual Accommodation Support Package

## New England Early Childhood Inclusion Grants



Grants have been made available through Brighter Access to early childhood services, community groups, and people in the New England region to explore new ways to support children 0-8years with disabilities and their families, and to create more inclusive communities so that the families are supported in their community environments.

Funds support projects for:

Capacity Building, Innovation, Social Inclusion, Community Partnerships and enhancing community understanding of Disability

The location of successful grants for the 2014-15 period are:

Inverell- 26

Tamworth- 17

Glen Innes- 8

Armidale- 4

Gunnedah- 3

Gwydir Shire- 3

Moree- 2

Ashford- 2

Tenterfield- 2

Barraba- 1

Kootingal- 1

Curlewis- 1

Walhallow- 1

Uralla- 1

Quirindi- 1

Manilla- 1

Werris Creek- 1

Short Films of some of the projects are being made by Stiff Jam Productions and will be used to promote the grants and also to share stories of inclusion of people with a disability in the community.