



Down Syndrome
New South Wales

Our Newsletter

The Latest from Down Syndrome NSW

Our final newsletter for 2021 and what a year it has been (in more ways than one!)

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CEO Update



Here we are at the end of 2021, and what a year it has been. We had a successful first half of the year delivering UPCLUB and Up, Up, and away activities face to face and what a great time we had connecting with old friends and making new ones. We met with many Government representatives and advocated for people with Down syndrome on several matters, launched our 2021-2023 Strategic Plan at Parliament house.

We had another long lockdown period and back to successful zoom sessions, with many people attending. We had a successful NDIS Quality & Safeguards Commission audit, packed up the office, a new CEO started, applied for some new funding and was successful, started the Employment Connections program, employed a new UP!Club Coordinator had a rocking Christmas party and lots more.

Time for the team to take a little rest. The office will be closed from 5 pm Friday 24 December 2021 until 8 am 10 January 2022. There will be a staff member on call during this period and can be contacted by phone: 02 9841 4444.

I want to take the opportunity to thank the team for the work they have done in 2021, mainly since I commenced in August. It is a significant change for staff when a new CEO starts, especially one who runs 100 miles an hour. However, the team has raised to all the challenges I have given them and more. Thank you, team, and looking forward to a very big 2022.

To all the members who have welcomed me and given their time to Down Syndrome NSW, you are a fantastic group of people, and I have learnt a lot over the last four months. I love lifelong learning.

I look forward to connecting and working alongside you all next year as Down Syndrome NSW continues to grow in its journey. I wish you and your family a very Merry Christmas and a safe and prosperous New Year.

Take care, and I leave you with a bit of Christmas cheer below.

Lessons from a Christmas Tree:

Be a light in the darkness.

We all fall over sometimes.

You can never wear too much glitter.

Bring joy to others.

Sparkle and twinkle as often as possible.

It's okay to be a little tilted.

~ Jane Lee Loga

Sherie Avalos

CEO

Holiday Hours

Our wonderful team are taking a well deserved break over the holiday period. Our office will be closed from 5pm on Friday 24 December, re-opening from 8am on Monday 10 January.

In the event of an emergency, you can contact our office during this period on 02 9841 4444. You can also still email us at admin@dsansw.org.au and we will respond upon our return.

We wish our members and their families a safe, restful and beautiful festive season.

We can't wait to welcome the new year with a bang, with some exciting announcements to follow!

Christmas 2021

Our recent Christmas Party at the Belvedere Hotel was a huge success! Thank you to Bill and Mario Gravanis of Oscars Hotels for covering the whole event. From delicious food, to fabulous drinks, a killer playlist and the very best company, the day was a huge success!

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[Check out the photos here, plus more on our Facebook page.](#)











Advocacy, Policy and Strategy Update

Working with our members to create an inclusive, diverse and vibrant NSW for all people with Down syndrome, their families and carers

Funding Update

We are thrilled to have been successful in the following new funding:

- NSW Disability Advocacy Futures Program
- NSW Social Sector Support Fund

We have submitted applications for the following:

- Australian Government Strong and Resilient Communities Grant

Government Relations Update

We have confirmed our annual World Down Syndrome Day celebration at NSW Parliament House, to be hosted by Minister Henskens on Tuesday 22 March 2022 for morning tea.

Mark this date in your diaries!

We will also be showcasing an art and photography exhibition at NSW Parliament House to mark the occasion. More details to follow in the new year!

COVID Update

Keeping our members safe, protected and active across the lifespan.

Down Syndrome NSW sit on the NSW Health Community of Practice in relation to Covid, meeting monthly to advocate for and promote the needs of people with disability.

The Council for Intellectual Disability have produced a number of easy read guides that may be of interest to our members:

[COVID Vaccination Stories - YouTube](#)

[Booster doses of the COVID vaccine fact sheet - Council for Intellectual Disability \(cid.org.au\)](#)

[The third dose of the COVID vaccine fact sheet | CID](#)

[COVID vaccine third dose vs booster dose fact sheet | CID](#)

The latest NSW Health rules in relation to Covid 19 are available here:

[COVID-19 rules | NSW Government](#)

The latest figures for NSW are here:

[COVID-19 \(Coronavirus\) \(nsw.gov.au\)](#)

Accessible information from NSW Health is available here, with the next instalment to feature our very own Ruth Cromer speaking with Dr Jan:

[COVID-19 information for people with disability \(nsw.gov.au\)](https://nsw.gov.au/covid-19-information-for-people-with-disability)

The Australian Government's Head to Health website is a great source of information and mental health support, including the "Chat Starter" to assist in speaking with children:

[COVID-19 Support | Head to Health](#)

UP! Club Update

UP!Club

Program for adults with Down syndrome aged 18+ years

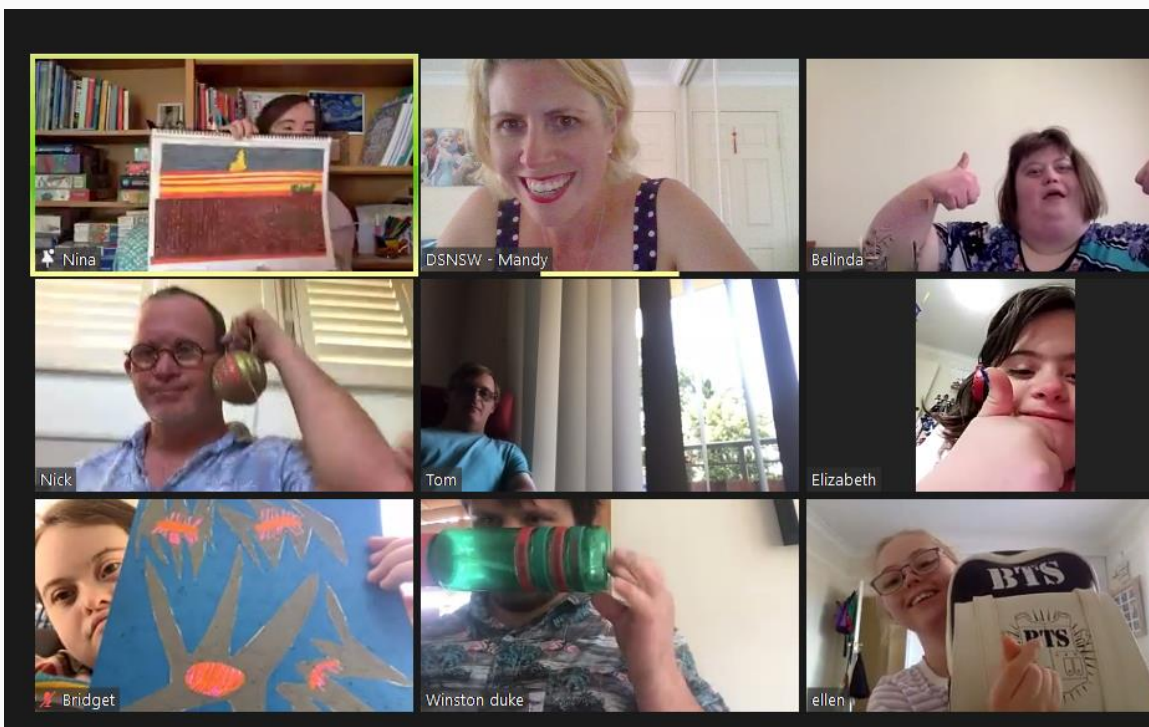
January Program

We are back in the New Year! Join us through January.

[View the full January program online.](#)

Staying Connected in December

In December, we started our Christmas planning and festivities throughout all of our sessions and activities. At our 'Crafternoon' sessions, we held some Christmas card workshops as well as making our own baubles for the Christmas tree with some great results. Caption: Nina, Facilitator Mandy, Belinda, Nick, Tom, Elizabeth, Bridget, Sam, Ellen at a Crafternoon session on 14 December.

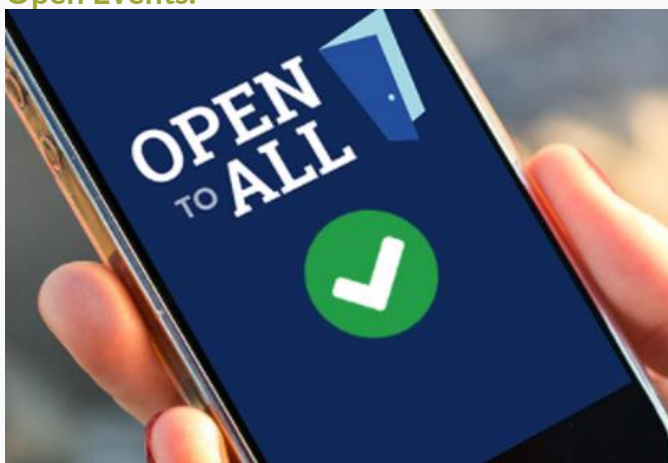


Caption: Nina, Ellen, Annabel, Jules, Lucy, Belinda, Josie, Facilitators Aly & Mandy, Rohan, Nick and Amanda at a Christmas themed Zoom dance party in December.

We also farewelled our Tri State members for December and are looking forward to more joint sessions in the New Year and beyond: Caption: UP!Clubbers Rohan, Elizabeth and Nick join a mix of participants from Queensland's DSQ program and Victoria's Club 21 Program, Plus, at the bottom centre, we herald our new UP!Club Co-ordinator Mark who joined us for his first UP!Club Zoom!



Open Events!



Look out for the “Open events” in our UP!Club program, where we especially welcome the wider family members of our UP!Clubbers, as well as other participants without Down syndrome.

As with all things UP!Club, talk to Nikki if you need any more information on our events or individual help on booking in: Nicola.Hayhurst@dsansw.org.au

Up, Up & Away Update

Up, Up & Away

Program for children with Down syndrome aged 4-17 years

Lots of planning has taken place this month and we will be launching the 2022 Up, Up and Away program in early January 2022. With the first events planned for February. You will see some changes, including splitting the groups according to age and also joining in activities with the UpClub! Keep an eye on your email inbox for the program, coming soon.

Employment Connections Program Update

Our new program supporting adults with Down syndrome to be work ready with individualised support.

Our Employment Connections Project will address the barriers to employment experienced by people with Down syndrome and will be delivered nationally in collaboration with the Down Syndrome Australia and State and Territory Associations. The project is being funded by the Department of Social Services (DSS).

As we proudly announced in last month's newsletter, our first Employment Connection Ambassador is UP!Club regular participant, **Ellen Maher!** Ellen has been doing some leadership training so she can do a great job as our ambassador in 2022 to share her experiences of working in a paid job in open employment.

Calling those in our Down Syndrome community who are interested in paid employment – we are gearing up to provide a work readiness program so that we can start to connect you into the right jobs where you will thrive with customised support for your needs. If this interests you, contact Nikki to register your interest: Nicola.Hayhurst@dsansw.org.au

Employment Opportunities: Access Easy English

Access Easy English interpret documents into simple, everyday language, supported with images so that people can read, understand and use the written information.

The goal is for important messaging to be presented in the simplest and most effective way. Sometimes they ask us to help them out which is called consumer testing.

Do you have lived experience of speech and language problems?

A new one-off paid work opportunity has arisen for one of our members who experiences difficulties with their speech, especially someone who uses augmentative and alternative communication (AAC).

Speech Pathology Australia have asked us to link them up with someone with this lived experience of communication difficulties to help review some documents about the words that people use to talk about their difficulties when communicating.

Whether you use high tech (IPad or speech generating device) or no tech options (gestures, writing, drawing, photos, pictures), your consumer review will really help.

Please let Nikki know if you would like to register your interest for this paid work opportunity: Nicola.Hayhurst@dsansw.org.au

Your Stories

Our new newsletter section, dedicated to sharing your wonderful stories with our DS NSW community.

Our beautiful members Scarlett, Toby and Arlee with their amazing mummas in Dubbo having a Christmas catch up, ahead of their very first Christmas.



The scrumptious Charlie ready to celebrate his very first Christmas in his awesome festive romper:



The very adorable Henry dressed to the nines in his festive attire, looking divine:



Shona showing off her impressively decorated Christmas tree – look at all that colour!



Amanda proudly showing us her gorgeous Christmas tree:



[Stay tuned with all our news, photos, stories at our Facebook page](#) – we post every day!

You can also send us your photos – we love to get them and are always keen to share with our community! Email Emily at media@dsansw.org.au

Share Your Story

If you'd like to share your story with our community, we'd love to hear from you! Please email Emily Caska with your story and any photos you'd like to share.

We love hearing from you!

Christmas Appeal

We've got some big ideas for 2022 and beyond! Which is why we are asking this Christmas for you to give the gift that keeps - and help us achieve our strategic goals for the coming years.

We are asking for your support this Christmas to help us achieve our goals for 2022 and beyond.



THIS YEAR GIVE THE GIFT OF..

HELPING US UPDATE AND UPLIFT OUR INFORMATION
PACKS AND DELIVERING THEM TO ALL EXPECTANT
PARENTS IN THE PRENATAL STAGE



We've got some big ideas for 2022 and beyond! Which is why we are asking this Christmas for you to give the gift that keeps - and help us achieve our strategic goals for the coming years.

Every dollar you donate will be put toward our strategic priorities, including:

- **Updating and uplifting our information packs** and delivering them to all expectant parents in the prenatal stage
- **Engaging early with new parents and their beautiful babies** with personalised, expert support, updated DVD resources, Babies Day and parent support groups
- **Delivering more age appropriate, diverse and innovative services** and supports for our youth, teens and young adults
- **Providing advocacy, resources and support for ageing adults** across participation, health, housing and aged care
- **Supporting our rural, regional and remote members** through setting up vibrant parent to parent networks
- **Launching our intergenerational mentoring program**, linking up adults and youth with Down syndrome
- Establishing our **Down Syndrome Advisory Network**, supporting adults with Down syndrome to play a key strategic and advocacy role in our organisation
- **Digitising our incredible library and archives**, one of the biggest collections in the Southern Hemisphere

[Help us reach our goal by making a tax-deductible donation...](#)

Community News

In this section, we share with you community events our members might be interested in attending! With lockdown affecting all of us, we aim to share lots of accessible, relevant and free events to support you all.

If you have any community events you'd like to share with our members, [feel free to email us](#).

World Down Syndrome Day

For World Down Syndrome Day each year the Down Syndrome Australia Federation share 21 stories from across the country of people with Down syndrome who are achieving their life goals.

In 2022 our organisations are collaborating and want to feature members from DSNSW who are currently working in open employment.

Do you have a job and want to share your employment story for World Down Syndrome Day in 2022?

Availability: we are doing photo shoots on Monday January 31 between 10am – 3pm at the Redfern Community Centre (200 metres from Redfern train station).

Contact Nikki via email nicola.hayhurst@dsansw.org.au before January 14 if you would like to be involved.

Australia's Disability Strategy

[Australia's Disability Strategy 2021-2031](#) outlines a vision for a more inclusive and accessible Australian society where all people with disability can fulfil their potential as equal members of the community. Its purpose is to:

- provide national leadership towards greater inclusion of people with disability
- guide activity across all areas of public policy to be inclusive and responsive to people with disability
- drive mainstream services and systems to improve outcomes for people with disability
- engage, inform and involve the whole community in achieving a more inclusive society.

The NDIS is a key part of the ecosystem of supports that Australians with disability rely on. Our role will be to continue working with all levels of government, people with disability and the sector to build a strong mutual understanding of:

- what is considered a reasonable and necessary support and [whether these supports should be provided by the NDIS](#) or other mainstream or community services
- how the NDIS and other service delivery systems interact and complement one another
- how to determine the most appropriate funding and service delivery approach

You can learn more here: [Australia's Disability Strategy 2021-2031 | NDIS](#)

my NDIS App

The my NDIS app gives self-managed participants a more accessible and user-friendly way to:

- make and manage claims
- view their self-managed budget and personal details

Participants with Android devices can now [download the my NDIS app](#) from the Google play store.

The NDIA have made the my NDIS app available to Android users early to get more feedback on the app. It will be available on both Android and Apple devices when it is fully launched soon.

Employ My Ability

The Australian Government, through the Department of Social Services (the department), has developed Employ My Ability – the Disability Employment Strategy, to provide a guiding framework for governments, employers and the broader community to increase employment outcomes for people with disability.

Learn more here:

[Disability Employment Strategy | Department of Social Services, Australian Government \(dss.gov.au\)](#)

All About Me; Free Workshop

Is your child starting school, preschool, childcare or changing schools?

Join this free interactive online workshop by [Reframing Disability](#) to learn how to create a positive introduction for your child, show their strengths and motivators, what they love, and what works best for them.

Date: Monday 10th January 2022;

Time: 8pm-10pm, AEDT

During this workshop, you will also:

- Strengthen your knowledge and skills on how to think about the positives of what your child can do.

- Create an ALL ABOUT ME page to share within various settings, including family & friends, education, medical and community groups.
- Learn how to share your 'All About Me page with others across a range of different settings.

This interactive presentation will be hosted on Zoom.

Zoom details will be emailed after registration is complete.

[Registration is FREE and you can do so here.](#)

Accessible Film Studies Program

Bus Stop Films is heading to the Blue Mountains to deliver its award-winning Accessible Film Studies Program for people living with disability in partnership with the Blue Mountains City Council.

The classes are aimed at older teens and young adults living with a mild to moderate intellectual disability. The Program offers a film school experience as well as literacy, social and work ready skills, and is a fantastic post school option. Additional screen industry excursions, masterclasses and professional workplace opportunities are offered through the Program.

Mentored by passionate professional filmmakers, students create amazing films of the highest artistic quality, many which have won multiple awards and screened in festivals all over the world.

The program fees can be funded through a participant's NDIS funding.

To get you in the mood the team is hosting Free Taster Workshops at the Blue Mountains Cultural Centre.

Registrations to the workshops are essential.

FREE Taster workshop 1: Monday 10th January 2022 10.00am - 12noon

FREE Taster workshop 2: Monday 17th January 2022 10.00am - 12noon

FREE Taster workshop 3: Thursday 20th January 2022 10.00am - 12noon

For more information and to register:

<https://www.busstopfilms.com.au/programs/>

Head High Virtual Workshops

Head High are offering progressive and interactive virtual programs for adults with a disability. Run by specialist disability consultant and adult educator Julia

Ross-Edwards, these sessions are tailored and focus on individual goal setting as well as improving employability skills and daily living skills. This program can be claimed under NDIS.

You can contact Julia for more information at headhighskills@gmail.com or phone 0420 553 695