

DECEMBER 2023

NEWSLETTER



Welcome to the final edition for 2024!

By Chris McMillan, CEO Down Syndrome Queensland

Welcome to the last Newsletter for 2023! Support from our volunteers, corporate and community supporters, has assisted Down Syndrome Queensland (DSQ) to achieve much this year.

There are many highlights for 2023:

- We commenced the year with the Educators and the Parents Conferences.
- There was much activity in March around World Down Syndrome Day, where we celebrated the lives and achievements of people with Down syndrome.
- DSQ had many opportunities this year to provide input to the NDIS Review through our work as the Intellectual Disability Peak for Queensland, involvement with Queensland Disability Advisory Council and the Disability Network Forum.
- Following a successful QLD government grant application, we introduced the Skilling Queenslanders for Work program which aims to support young people with an intellectual disability to prepare for sustainable mainstream employment. [Click here to find out more about this program.](#)
- The MyTime peer support work continues to expand supporting parents and care givers.
- Our support services have expanded into facilitation of a Parent Relationship Workshop and an associated Relationships Course which culminates in a Speed Dating event.
- Many fundraising and community events/activities throughout the year have contributed to DSQ's success and spreading the word about our services. E.g., Many and varied Community and Corporate support activities, DSQ Coffee Brew and Tri 21 Series.

Finally, I want to sincerely thank our amazing volunteers, volunteer Board members, Community and Corporate supporters and our DSQ team, for their unwavering commitment to making a difference for the Down syndrome community in Queensland.

Wishing everyone a happy and safe festive season with loved ones. I look forward to working with all of you in 2024!

Disability Royal Commission Feedback Required

Following the release of the Disability Royal Commission in September 2023, the Australian Government has opened an online questionnaire and is inviting submissions from interested individuals and organisations.

The questionnaire is open until 11:59pm (AEDT) Friday 19 January 2024.

Click on the below link to tell us which Disability Royal Commission recommendations are important to you and why.

[Click here](#)

FUNDRAISING AND EVENTS

Time to stop and reflect on a great year!

By Michael Harrison, Community Engagement and Fundraising Manager

As we move into the final weeks of 2023, it's time for us all to take a breather and a well-earned rest over Christmas. 2023 has been an amazing year with so many great highlights for our community so we would like to take a few moments to reflect on some of our activities this year:



SUPPORT SERVICES

What a productive year!

By Laura Mugaba, Support Services Manager

The Support Services Team had a dynamic and productive 2023, marked by a series of events that complemented our ongoing daily support provision. The year began with the 'Key Word Sign' workshop, followed by a 'Sleep Research' webinar featuring insights from Dr. Jasneek Chawla and Dr. Emma Cooke, a webinar addressing 'Down Syndrome Regression Disorder' with Dr. Cathy Franklin, and a well-received parent conference.

In term two, we introduced the playgroup, parent morning tea, and Let's Chat groups, which became regular fixtures throughout the year. Additionally, we organised an 'Early Years' workshop, a webinar highlighting the 'Importance of Play,' and a 'Community Participation' workshop.

Term three showcased collaborations with Planet Puberty for a webinar exploring puberty. We hosted a 'Doing Relationships' workshop tailored for parents and carers of individuals with intellectual disabilities, an 'Understanding Down syndrome' webinar for professionals working in the field, and a 'Building Relationships and Connections' training for our Peer Leaders and QDSAN members.

Term four featured our much-anticipated family picnic day, hosting families from across southeast QLD. We organised an 'Information Session with Insight Law' focusing on support for people with intellectual disabilities and their families, the 'Doing Relationships' workshop for parents and carers held on the Gold Coast, a 6-week 'Relationships' workshop series for individuals with intellectual disabilities, and our very first 'Speed Dating' event.

Throughout 2023, we took pride in offering unwavering support to our community. As we approach the year end, we eagerly look forward to continuing our mission in 2024. We wish everyone a joyous Christmas and a happy, healthy New Year!

EDUCATION

2023 Wrap Up!

By Carly Lassig, Lead Education Consultant

(see next page)

2023 has been a busy year for the DSQ Education Team. Our **Top 5 highlights** include:

Presenting the Endless Possibilities conference with over 100 attendees on the day, a record number of registrations for any DSQ Education conference. A number of schools also purchased the conference recordings after the conference to share with staff: <https://www.downsyndrome.org.au/shop/product/endless-possibilities-conference-recording-teacher-educators/>



Completing the first year of the Kindy Inclusion Service, with our Kindy Education Consultant working with 38 kindergartens and completing 63 consultations.

Expanding our ID:8 service to include free follow-up visits for schools. In total, the ID:8 consulting team completed 84 consults across 41 schools.



Trialling a new QEST service - the Planning Support service - where we work collaboratively with schools to plan inclusive units and adjustments for students with Down syndrome and/or intellectual disability

Engaging with and supporting schools all over Queensland through our Professional Teaching Cluster, Now and the Future podcasts, webinars, phone support, email support, and online resources.



PROGRAMS

Can you believe it's almost Christmas?

By Teagan Cossor, Programs Manager

Let's take this time to reflect on some of our 2023 highlights before we head into a fresh year. Some exciting things that have happened this year in our Social Programs and Educational Programs:

- We ran over 228 events in our Social Programs, including online events.
- Pushing ourselves during our 5 Challenge Weekend camps for our adults and teens members
- We received a new Government Grant to run a program helping people learn important skills around employment.
- We have been successfully running our Skills for Independence Program for over a year now with many topics covered.
- Our CEP program grew in participant number significantly which means we are nearly at capacity!

We are so proud of everything all the staff in the Programs have achieved throughout the year and excited to see what 2024 bring.

We hope you all have a very Merry Christmas and look forward to creating more highlights with you next year.

If you would like to get in touch about what's to come for 2024, please call on 07 3356 6655 or email at tcossor@downsyndromeqld.org.au.

Please note that our DSQ offices will be closed from Friday 23rd December 2023 and will reopen on Monday 8th January 2024.

Thank you for your support throughout this year at Down Syndrome Queensland. We wish everyone a very happy and safe Christmas, and we look forward to doing it all again in 2024!



MERRY CHRISTMAS AND HAPPY NEW YEAR

from Down Syndrome Queensland

**OUR OFFICE WILL BE CLOSED FROM
23 DECEMBER 2023 UNTIL 8 JANUARY 2024**

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