



Information Service
South Australia



Dear SA Community,

Here we are at the end of 2025. What a year it has been.

Firstly I want to thank and congratulate Jennifer McCullough and Louise Taheny who have worked tirelessly this year with limited hours to provide as much support as possible to the South Australian Down Syndrome community. Their work has seen a raft of activity across the age groups, from wonderful engagement with the Fiona McBurney Match Day Experience to Pampering, Picnics, Workshops and engagement in Employment possibilities.

It has been our honour to support the SA community, and watch as we have excitedly seen ever growing member numbers.

The application for a new Association has been completed and will be submitted before the end of the 2025 and we look forward to being able to advise when there is formally a new association in SA to support our fantastic Ds community.

Thank you to all of the members that have reached out to me, supported Jen and

Louise and the activities they have run and those who have been instrumental in the engagement toward the new association.

I look forward to sharing great news with you in early 2026.

The DSWA office and the SA team will be closed from 24 Dec to 5 January.

I personally and on behalf of all of the team, wish you all, a safe, fun and joyous festive season.

With warmest regards
Cassandra
CEO, DSWA
ceo@downsyndromewa.org.au



Family Support Update

What a Busy and Wonderful Few Months!

At Information Service SA – Down Syndrome Australia, the past few months have been full of exciting progress and heartwarming moments. From forging new partnerships with the Women’s and Children’s Hospital to welcoming families into our community, to exciting events like the Variety Zoo Picnic and Kids Christmas Party, our journey continues to be one of connection, support, and celebration. We’ve also been inspired by the incredible response to our Down Syndrome Awareness Month campaign, bringing stories and smiles into the spotlight across South Australia.

We’ve been dedicated to supporting schools, support networks, families, and various organisations by providing information, guidance, and assistance whenever needed. While we’re not a referral service, we’re proud to have helped many individuals in our wider community connect with the resources and support they require.

We're grateful for your continued support as we work together to create a stronger Down Syndrome Community for SA.

Here are some key moments and achievements from recent months that we're excited to share:

Exciting New Partnerships Strengthen Support for Families

We're thrilled to announce a new referral partnership with the Women's and Children's Hospital (WCH) and the Maternal Fetal Medicine Unit, bringing tailored prenatal and new parent information packs directly to families.

Alongside our ongoing collaboration with Heartkids SA and the WCH Cardiology department, our goal is clear: no family should leave the WCH without discovering the warm support and resources of the South Australian Down Syndrome Community.

Thanks to these meaningful connections, we've already welcomed several new families into our Down Syndrome community—whether they've received a prenatal diagnosis or just celebrated the arrival of their beautiful new bub.

Together, we're making sure every family feels supported from the very start of their journey. This is something we have worked hard at and am proud to have achieved for our families in South Australia.

Variety Zoo picnic - A beautiful day full of smiles, laughter, and connection!

In September, 16 amazing kids (and their awesome carers!) represented Information SA – Down Syndrome Australia for a day full of laughter, games, and furry friends!

The zoo was buzzing with excitement — from meeting zookeepers and cool characters to puppet shows, games, and a very tasty lunch and snacks all round.

The kids had an absolute ball – the smiles say it all!

A huge thank you to Variety SA for making this experience possible.



Celebrating Connection: Down Syndrome Awareness Month Social Media Campaign

Wow — what an incredible journey Down Syndrome Awareness Month was! We were thrilled to see 34 amazing individuals with Down Syndrome step into the spotlight and share their stories, smiles, and spirit with our community. The response was nothing short of inspiring, sparking heartfelt conversations, meaningful connections, and a wave of awareness across South Australia.

Thanks to your overwhelming support — every like, share, and uplifting comment — our campaign truly came alive. It's been a beautiful reminder of the power of community and how, when we come together, we create lasting impact.

Exciting news: Our special calendars, featuring the profiles of our wonderful participants, are now in production and will be landing in your hands early next year. Stay tuned for details on how you can get yours!

A huge, heartfelt THANK YOU to our incredible South Australian Down Syndrome family. Your love, encouragement, and enthusiasm have made this campaign a shining success. We've loved celebrating every moment with you and hope you feel as inspired as we do by the amazing people who show us daily that we are more alike than different.

Christmas Fun and Festivities with Variety SA

At the end of November, 20 of our kids were lucky enough to experience the magic of Variety's Kids Christmas Party and Disco — and wow, did they have the time of their lives!

They joined more than 3000 children from across SA for a celebration filled with joy, excitement, and endless festive fun. From colourful face painting, incredible balloon

creations, and the enchanting Christmas sensory bus, to exploring police buggies, cool cars, and fire trucks, the excitement never stopped.

The kids also enjoyed a fun-filled photo booth, delicious treats, a special visit from Father Christmas, and walked away with the most amazing gift to finish off the day. The joy on their faces said it all!

A huge heartfelt thank you to Variety SA for creating such an unforgettable experience for our families and for the incredible work you do in the community.



A closing note...

As we, Louise and I, celebrate our first year working for Information SA – Down Syndrome Australia we also celebrate a year of meaningful progress and community connection, we extend our sincere gratitude to all who have supported Information Service SA – Down Syndrome Australia. It has been a privilege to work alongside this incredible community and to provide the resources, guidance, and support that families truly need and want. Together, we are building a stronger, more inclusive South Australia, empowering families throughout their journeys. We look forward to continuing this important work and sharing further achievements with you in the year ahead.

Wishing you all a joyful and peaceful Christmas season filled with happiness and hope.

Best wishes from Jennifer McCullough (Family Support Coordinator)

Employment Update

Wow – it is difficult to believe that we are very quickly coming to the end of the first year for Jennifer and I with the Information Service SA – Down Syndrome Australia! I would like to reiterate Jennifer's words above about the gratitude that we have for the South Australian Down syndrome families and community for the support and engagement that has occurred since the service began in February this year.

2025 Recap:

It has been wonderful to have the opportunity to meet and get to know many of our members and their families through the many and varied opportunities that we have had to come together during 2025.

Some of my favourite times have been the Celebration of World Down Syndrome Day at Government House in April where around 150 members of our community were so warmly welcomed by Her Excellency the Honourable Frances Adamson AC (the donuts so kindly donated by Vill's Bakery were a highlight also!). I also loved meeting some of the younger families and their families at the 'Picnic and Play' at the Orphanage Playground in July.

Speaking in August to over 200 postgraduate medical students from Flinders University with other families covering everything from healthcare to inclusion and everyday challenges. Knowing that our future Doctors will walk away with greater understanding, empathy and insight into the value and potential of people with Down syndrome was truly empowering.

Providing information and opportunities for our SA community to connect with DSA,

educational webinars and fun opportunities within our community ie: SACID workshops about Employment, Toileting Workshops and The Growing Space online workshop 'Can I Still buy It? Funded by the Scap Heap Adventure Grant that we were successful in procuring. We have also enjoyed celebrating significant days on the world calendar.

Employment Connector Program:

We have supported our community members from the Bedford community through a difficult time and lobbied for the support of this workplace through all possible channels. We have employed 3 Employment Ambassadors to represent our community, and I would like to thank Isaiah Caruso, Joseph Russell and Mia Johnson for their work and I look forward to continuing to work alongside you in 2026! We have supported community members to look for employment opportunities and have worked to procure employers to employ people with Down syndrome in open employment positions.

State Disability Inclusion Plan:

Our Employment Ambassadors and a small group of community members attended the State Government Launch for the State Disability Inclusion Plan 2025 - 2029 in August. Thank you to Robyn Blundell for her support in working with myself and the Department of Human Services Principal Project Officer for Disability Policy and Reform Inclusion and Safeguarding throughout the consultation and draft policy process. This enabled us to share information from our community and have a voice as major stakeholders.

Fiona McBurney Match Day Experience:

We have worked with the AFL and SANFL Umpires Association to enable 4 individuals to support the AFL Umpires at football games this year through the Fiona McBurney Match Day Experience opportunity. In 2026 the number of participants that will enjoy this opportunity has increased to 10! Have you applied? Applications can be submitted via attached link below – closing on Tuesday 9th December.

<https://downsyndromevictoria.snapforms.com.au/form/fiona-mcburney-match-day-experience-sa>

We have increased our social media presence and have celebrated the fabulous achievements of many of our members throughout the year such as Charlie Wilkins who was crowned the 2025 Channel 7 News Young Achiever Carclew Creative Achievement Award Winner and Hugo Taheny who represented Australia at the Virtus World Athletics Games winning Gold and Silver medals in the Discus and Shot Put.

Coming up in 2026:

Understanding Guardianship + Administration

We have the opportunity to join this incredibly important information session being

facilitated by the DSWA team – Online (via MS Teams) Wednesday 28th January 10am – 12pm. Please register via the QR below.

SACID – I Can Work Workshop

We are thrilled to be able to offer another opportunity to work with SACID - South Australian Council on Disability, following the success of the workshop held last earlier this year.

The interactive workshop will help you to find out about different types of work. You will make your own strengths poster you will do role play. You can practice sitting in the hot seat of a job interview or you can be across the desk as an employer!

This 2 hour workshop will be run on Wednesday 18th February 2026 1pm – 3pm. If you would like to put your name down to attend or would like further information, please email me on Louise@downsyndrome.org.au

Right To Work Program:

I hope to be able to offer a six week 'Right to Work/Work Readiness' program that supports people with Down syndrome to build their skills and to get ready for work and that helps to connect employers to new job seekers looking for work in open employment. Please let me know if you would be interested in doing this program by emailing me on:

Louise@downsyndrome.org.au

Finally, throughout the year we have excitedly facilitated several meetings for interested members of our community – with the support of Down Syndrome Western Australia and Down Syndrome Australia as we work towards the formation of a new South Australian Down Syndrome Community Association.

Together Jennifer and I are looking forward to working with members of our community in 2026 and continuing to offer opportunities to connect, learn and grow together. An enormous thank you must go to Cassandra and the DSWA Team for their support and guidance.

Wishing all a safe and happy festive season,
Regards, Louise Taheny

Diary Dates

24 December 2025 to 5 January 2026

South Australia office closed

17 January 2026

Community Catch up, Bonython Park
ALL WELCOME

28 January 2026

Key Word Sign Workshop Online

18 February 2026

SACID I Can Work Workshop

21 March

World Down Syndrome Day


Save the date, EXCITING things to come!


Registrations Open

Family Catch Up

You're Invited!

Join us for a relaxed Community Catch-Up at Bonython Park Playground!

 Saturday, January 17th

 From 10:30am onwards

 Bonython Park Playground

Bring the whole crew — families, siblings, supporters, grandparents... everyone is welcome!

Come along for a friendly morning together, a chance to connect, play, and enjoy the community.

✦ Feel free to bring snacks, drinks, or a picnic blanket!

✉ Bookings: Please book via TryBooking so we know you're coming.

👉 Book here: <https://www.trybooking.com/DHQVH>

We can't wait to see you there!



COMMUNITY CATCH UP

SATURDAY JANUARY
17TH

BONYTHON PARK
PLAYGROUND

10:30 ONWARDS

FAMILIES, SIBLINGS, SUPPORTERS,
GRANDPARENTS
- ALL ARE WELCOME



PLEASE LET US
KNOW YOU
COMING VIA

[WWW.TRYBOOKING.
COM/DHQVH](http://WWW.TRYBOOKING.COM/DHQVH)



Key Word Sign Online Workshop

Sunday 8th Feb 2026 | 9am–4pm

\$ \$150 | Registrations close 21/11

🔗 Book now: <https://www.trybooking.com/DGZBX>

Learn the basics of Key Word Sign to support communication for children and adults with speech or hearing challenges. Perfect for parents, carers, teachers & support workers.

☒ Use your NDIS funds if self/plan managed

☒ Public tickets available if no NDIS

Questions? Jennifer@downsyndrome.org.au | 0466 395 259

Don't miss out — secure your spot today!

Key Word Sign Online Workshop

*We are pleased to offer two Key Word Sign Workshop.
Introductory key word sign course, you will learn about the principles of key word sign and gesture, who it can be used with and how it can be used alongside other ways of communicating*

What does the workshop cover?

- Principles of Key word Sign and gesture
- How sign helps communication development and support verbal communication.
- Which signs to teach
- Basic vocabulary of signs to use everyday.

Who is the workshop suitable for?

- Parents
- Carers
- Family
- Teachers
- Support workers
- Anyone supporting someone with hearing or speech challenges.

Can I use my Childs NDIS funds to attend?

*If self managed or plan managed, YES!
Parents/carers build your capacity and skills to help your child achieve their goals.*

Can i attend if I don't have a child on NDIS?

Yes you can choose "Public" ticket option

Date: Sunday February 8th, 2026
Time: 9am - 4pm
Cost: \$150pp
Registrations close on the 21/11/2025
For more details contact:
Jennifer@downsyndrome.org.au
or call 0466 395 259
Booking Essential: <https://www.trybooking.com/DGZBX>



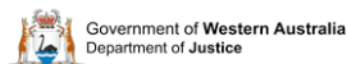
Understanding Guardianship + Administration

We have the opportunity to join this incredibly important information session being facilitated by the DSWA team – Online (via MS Teams) Wednesday 28th January 10am – 12pm. Please register via the QR below or at <https://www.trybooking.com/events/landing/1476286>

Understanding Guardianship + Administration

When a loved one with a decision-making disability becomes an adult.

Session provided by the Office of the Public Advocate



This free information session covers a variety of topics including:

- The principles of guardianship, administration and least restrictive alternatives.
- What are the future planning tools + are they appropriate for you and your adult child?
- Does an adult child with a decision-making disability need a guardian or administrator?

Wed 28 Jan 2026 10.00am - 12.00pm Online (via MS Teams)

Information Packs provided.



Thanks for reading!



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