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## Latest News from Down Syndrome WA



### CEO's Corner

What a wonderful year we have had here at DSWA. We have seen growth in our membership, the addition of a very successful SLES program, and more placements in employment. As well we have provided support to families across the ages including our new Dementia Support group and Down Syndrome Regression group. Our membership numbers have grown with a number of babies and new families this year as well as the very welcome return of some early members of the association and new members who had never joined. Our engagement with members is up and we are delighted that 50% of you read our E News which is an outstanding open and read rate.

I thank you all for your invaluable input and support this year, we are grateful for the opportunity to support our community in such a wide variety of ways and your feedback is so important for us to do this and to continually improve.

It was wonderful to see over 200 people attend the "all of association" Christmas Party, we hope that this will continue to grow and encourage more families to join

us next year. As we close out and finalise 2023's activities we have also had some time to plan 2024.

2024 looks bright, with an announcement today that we have again secured Telethon funding for Family Support, Playgroup, Regional Outreach, resources and a fantastic new initiative which we will release in 2024. We will also be continuing both the SLES and employment programs, again offering the Teens Holiday program and look forward to bringing together a new over 40's club to support our older members.

From me, I personally wish to thank every staff member and volunteer who have supported the association in the last 12 months. We are fortunate to have an incredible core team who are so committed to DSWA and as with all modern organisations we have fabulous casual staff pool who support our programs, many of whom have gone on to full time roles with others from their experience here at DSWA. To our colleagues and partners in the DSA federation, our stakeholders and partners we can not thank you enough for your support. To our board, our thanks for your support, diligence and commitment to the membership.

On behalf of our team I wish all members, families, supporters and stakeholders a wonderful festive season.

We wish you all a safe, happy and fun break with loved ones.

See you all in 2024

Warmest Regards

Cassandra

Cassandra Hughes

CEO Down Syndrome WA

0432 407 527

[ceo@downsyndromewa.org.au](mailto:ceo@downsyndromewa.org.au)

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**DSWA Gala 2024 - Save the Date!**

# DSWA 2024 GALA

*Where*

MINERAL RESOURCES  
PARK

*Theme*

CELEBRATING  
CONNECTION

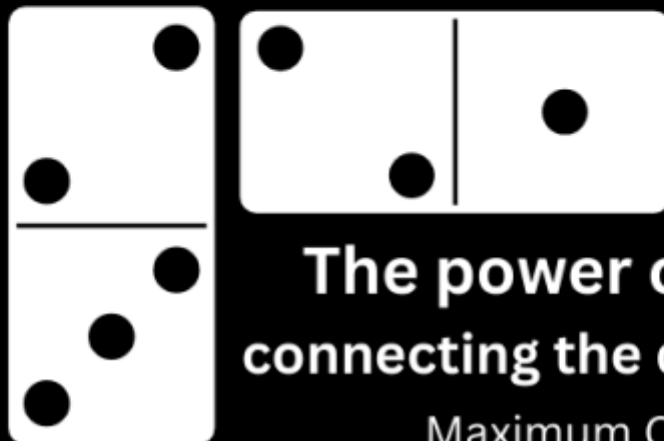
*When*

SATURDAY MAY 18 2024

*Cost*

TICKETS \$110  
EARLY BIRD \$90  
SALES OPEN 8 JANUARY

**An evening of fun, dancing and celebration.  
Black and White colour scheme based on our  
domino connection theme**



**The power of  
connecting the dots**

Maximum Capacity 270

## **Meet the DSWA Board**

This month's board update comes from sunny (and windy) Geraldton WA! For those that don't know me, my name is Emily McCain, mum to Lily who has Down syndrome and is almost 15! I joined the board in early 2023 and it has been an honour to be a part of the board over this past year. Some of our members may remember me from my time working at Down Syndrome WA, at the end of 2020 we

relocated to Geraldton and sadly, I had to cease working for the association. I am now settled in Geraldton, and I have my own business offering Support Coordination, which I love, however I really wanted to continue being a part of the DSWA team, so I applied to be on the board at the beginning of the year. We have lived in Regional WA for 10 of Lily's 15 years. We have lived in Port Hedland, Exmouth and now Geraldton, being the regional representative on the board, this experience has allowed me to bring a distinctive viewpoint to our discussions and decision-making processes. Living regionally can sometimes feel isolating, so knowing that I am able to represent regional families in this way and feel heard in the process is so important. With the availability of video conferencing, I am able to attend all board meetings and feel connected and included, even though I am not there in person.

As we approach the end of 2023 it is the perfect time to reflect on the amazing year DSWA has had! The many programs, workshops, social groups, and events not to mention the individual support provided by the association to our members has been a huge success and the staff at DSWA should be so proud of their achievements this year!

I have been able to attend a few events over the year in Perth and I love to see the close-knit bond shared by our families! We have also had some local catch ups here in Geraldton throughout the year and are currently planning our Christmas catch up thanks to the support of Telethon and our Regional Outreach program. DSWA plays an integral part in creating connections and supporting our families to come together and to be there for each other through the various life stages and these connections are so important.

I recently visited Perth to meet with the board for strategic planning and as we look ahead to 2024 and beyond, I am excited and confident that DSWA will continue to make a positive impact, fostering connections and enriching the lives of families throughout Western Australia. I look forward to continue to serve on the board and be a part of the important work of our association.

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## **Meetings and Association Events**

21 December to 8 January - DSWA Office closed (Reopening 8 Jan)  
27 January - Board Meeting  
26 February - Board Meeting  
21 March - World Down Syndrome Day  
18 May - DSWA Gala



Down Syndrome  
Western Australia

# Festive Season Office Closure

**The DSWA office will be closed  
from Noon Thursday 21 December  
Re-opening Monday 8 January**



Cas and the team at DSWA



## DSWA Christmas Party

Over 200 members of all ages joined us for our DSWA Christmas Party. DJ King played great tunes all day while everyone enjoyed the garden games, bubbles, facepainting and yummy food.

Of course, the big man himself, Santa, paid a visit, delivering all the children a present and keeping note of what they wanted for Christmas while posing for photos.



## Whats on!

21 Dec - 5 Jan

DSWA Office  
Closed

11 Jan

PCH Outreach

15-25 Jan

Holiday Program  
Teens

18 Jan

PCH Outreach

24 Jan

Behaviour Mgmt.  
Workshop

25 Jan

PCH Outreach

27 Jan

Fringe World  
Friends for Life

28 Jan

Barefoot Bowls  
Aim High

2 Feb

Playgroup  
North

2-4 Feb

Woodman Point  
Getaway

4 Feb

Maylands  
Waterland  
Kids Club

5 Feb

Playgroup  
South

6 Feb

Dementia Group  
Meets

4 Feb

Down Syndrome  
Regression Order  
Group Meets

10 - 24 Jul

World Down  
Syndrome  
Congress

## Ready for Employment

Our current Ready for Work program participants are kicking goals. Five weeks in and we have completed our vocational profile including what we are interested in, things we are good at, why we want to work and our skills and experience.

The team of four worked on their goals for employment, and decided their ideal job based on their likes, experience and skills. We worked on resumes, what they are, why we need them and the participants each scripted and filmed a video resume to use in pursuit of work.



The growth of the participants in the short few weeks has been wonderful and their futures are looking very, very bright.

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## Employment

Brayden is thriving in his new role as general hand at the Boxman. He took to his tasks like a duck to water.



He is enjoying working with his mate Jack who has been working independently in his role at the Boxman for more than a year.

Troy Hughes, Managing Director of the Boxman said, we love having Brayden and Jack as members of our team.





The Boxman is a bespoke box manufacturer and distributor based in Kewdale and have been wonderful supporters of the DSWA open employment program for the past two years.

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### **School Holiday Program for Teens**

We are running our popular school holiday program for teens in January.

What's On:

- 15 Jan - Soccer clinic with The Proper Player Mason Vojdani
- 17 Jan - Circus the show (Excursion)
- 19 Jan - Cooking Class in house / games and activities
- 22 Jan - Yoga and Movie
- 24 Jan - Music Rocks (Excursion)
- 25 Jan - Arts and Crafts & End of program Karaoke party

For further details and to book go to <https://www.trybooking.com/COBTU>

# School Holiday Program Bookings Now Open

- ✓ Soccer Clinic
- ✓ Circus the show Excursion
- ✓ Cooking Class & Games
- ✓ Yoga and Movie
- ✓ Music Rocks Excursion
- ✓ Arts & Crafts and Karaoke

15th – 25th January 2024

## Playgroup Calendar

Plan out your 2024 with this beautiful Playgroup Calendar. This beautiful calendar is perfect for those who love to keep our lives organised the analogue way! There is truly no more beautiful way to record what is happening in your life each month.

You can buy calendars online and collect them at the DSWA office, Playgroups, or any of the other social groups. Or, you can have them posted to you.

Go to our MyCause Merchandise Page

<https://www.mycase.com.au/events/dswamerchandise>



## Workshops

### Transition to School

The thought of, and preparation for your child starting their school life can be very daunting. Nikki Schwagermann, Senior Coordinator, Down Syndrome WA (DSWA), Mum of Wil, a young man with Down Syndrome, and two other sons understands this uneasiness first-hand.

Nikki together with Cassandra Hughes, CEO DSWA presented an online workshop on Transition to School to 8 of our members on Wednesday 13th December. They talked about the relevant considerations and worked through the decisions you need to make about schooling. The topics covered included choosing a school, your legal rights, school systems, getting your child ready for school, how to work with the school and advocacy.

### 2024 Workshops

See below for a list of our planned workshops for 2024. Watch our e-news and socials for further details and bookings next year.

<h1 style="text-align: center;">2024 WORKSHOPS</h1>	
<p>24 JAN</p>	<p><b>BEHAVIOUR MANAGEMENT</b> Identifying, understanding, supporting and reducing behaviours <b>For: Parents &amp; carers</b></p>
<p>27 MAR</p>	<p><b>RELATIONSHIPS</b> An overview of participant workshop <b>For: Parents &amp; carers</b></p>
<p>30 MAR</p>	<p><b>RELATIONSHIPS (6 sessions)</b> Types of relationships, private and public spaces, health v unhealthy relationships, staying safe and reporting abuse <b>For: Participants</b></p>
<p>TBD APRIL</p>	<p><b>HOUSING</b> Making housing decisions, Mainstream options, NDIS housing supports <b>For: Participants, parents &amp; carers</b></p>
<p>29 MAY</p>	<p><b>TOILETING STRATEGIES</b> Practical strategies for parents and carers <b>For: Parents &amp; carers</b></p>
<p>26 JUN</p>	<p><b>SUPPORTED DECISION MAKING</b> What is it? The right to make decisions. Concepts and strategies. <b>For: Participants</b></p>
<p>24 JULY</p>	<p><b>AGEING WELL</b>  <b>For: Participants</b></p>
<p>28 AUG</p>	<p><b>NAVIGATING FUSSY EATING</b> Practical strategies for parents and carers <b>For: Parents</b></p>

*Part of a National Capacity Building Program run by DSA and funded by the Australian Government through the Information Linkages and Capacity Building (ILC) Grant program*



## World Down Syndrome Congress 2024



**WDSC 2024**  
BRISBANE, AUSTRALIA

Brisbane Convention & Exhibition Centre

[www.wdsc2024.org.au](http://www.wdsc2024.org.au)

**World Down Syndrome Congress!**

Call for Presentation Proposals

Would you like to be part of the WDSC 2024 program?

It will include people with Down syndrome, academics, practitioners, family members and support people.

If you would like to do a presentation at the WDSC2024, you need to attend in person.

If your abstract is accepted, you will need to register for the conference and pay the registration fee to attend in person before you will be given a time in the program.

Tell us by submitting an abstract.

Closes 2 February 2024

<https://www.wdsc2024.org.au/presentation-congress.html>

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## **A Western Australia for Everyone: State Disability Strategy 2020 - 2030**

### **Survey of People with Disability**

Quantum Consulting Australia is currently undertaking the Year 3 Process Evaluation of A Western Australia For Everyone: State Disability Strategy 2020-2030 (State Disability Strategy) on behalf of the Department of Communities.

You are invited to provide the following survey link/s to people with disability known to and involved with your organisation. The involvement of people with disability is critical to ensuring the relevance of the evaluation outcomes.

Two versions of the survey are linked below – Standard English and Plain English. Please provide both when distributing the surveys to provide people with disability options in how best to respond.

[A Western Australia for Everyone: State Disability Strategy 2020-2030 - Survey of People with Disability \(Plain English\)](#)

[A Western Australia for Everyone: State Disability Strategy 2020-2030 - Survey of People with Disability \(Standard English\)](#)

The responses to this survey will contribute to the evaluation and a report of findings provided to the Department of Communities.

The report will not contain any comments or personal information that can be directly attributed to the respondents, their family and carers or your organisation.

This survey should take 3-5 minutes to complete.

Should you have any queries or concerns you would like to discuss before proceeding, please contact Simon Hood from the evaluation team on [shood@quantumconsulting.net.au](mailto:shood@quantumconsulting.net.au) or 0400 127 252

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# Regional Outreach



Down Syndrome WA's Christmas Festivities were kicked off with the Midwest Regional Outreach Christmas Party in Geraldton.

22 of the community shared a beautiful sunny afternoon on the Geraldton Foreshore at Stow Gardens.

Thank you to our volunteer regional representative Emily McCain for organizing the event.

Thank you Telethon7 Perth for your continued support to our Regional Outreach program, so DSWA can provide these events for families living regionally in WA.



Our DSWA South West Community had a great afternoon on Sunday at the Christmas party.

About 20 members met at the Donnybrook Apple Park for the kids to have a play, some afternoon tea and the opportunity to catch up with old friends and meet new ones too.

Thank you to our volunteer Regional representative, Rebecca Shepherd for organizing the catering for everyone.



Great Southern had 20 members celebrate at the end of year Christmas party. Jean and Sam hosted at their lovely home. Everyone had lots of fun catching up with old friends and meeting new ones.

Thank you to our volunteer regional representatives Wendy and Jenny for organising, and to Jean and Sam for hosting.





## Facebook - Cybersecurity and Safety Check

As many of you know, DSWA offers a range of closed Facebook groups to our membership.

In January we will be conducting an audit of all closed Facebook groups. Everyone on a DSWA closed page must be a member of Down Syndrome WA. This is to ensure that members are protected on our pages from Trolls, spammers and marketers.

Your privacy and the safety of our Facebook groups is critical to support families to share and connect, and to tell stories and ask for help and suggestions.

The audit will be completed in January, any not registered as a member of DSWA will receive one Messenger message, if those people do not then join, they will be deleted from the Facebook group without further notice. This will be complete by February 15 2024.

If you're not already a member, please complete the form at <https://forms.office.com/r/4Q3YMcRKW>

Membership of Down Syndrome WA is free and membership of our supportive online community is one of the many benefits of membership.

# Playgroups

Proudly supported by  
**telethon**  
7

## Playgroup South

The last few weeks at Playgroup South have been very productive. We've made some Xmas elves , some personalised Xmas baubles and had a yummy Xmas party which all our families brought a plate to share xx We wish all our families a safe and happy holidays and look forward to seeing you again in the new year. Xx





## Playgroup North

We'll that's a wrap for Playgroup North Metro for 2023. We have really enjoyed the last three weeks of playgroup together. We worked on making our baubles and having some sensory fun with playdough and snow.

Our Christmas party was fun and festive with music, food and great connections all around. Danica and I have loved welcoming our new families this year and seeing how much their kids have grown and build strong friendships.

We have another big year ahead this next year and can't wait to share what we'll be up to. We wish all our playgroup families a happy and safe Christmas and we'll see you all again in 2024!



# Kids Club

Supported by



STAN PERRON  
*CHARITABLE  
FOUNDATION*

Wow, I can't believe 2023 is nearly over! The KiDS Club have had a wonderful year, and it has been amazing to see all the kids grow their friendships and confidence over the last 12 months.

As we go into the new year, I would really appreciate it if you could complete the [KiDS Club 2023 Survey](#). The survey will take around five minutes, and it will assist us in ensuring the club is providing events that the community is interested in, in a way that works for you.

Our first event of 2024 is a morning at Maylands Waterland. Join us from 9:00am to 12:00pm on Sunday the 4th of February (32 Clarkson Rd, Maylands WA 6051). Book at <https://www.trybooking.com/COCNN>

Tickets are \$5 per child.

Come in bathers, and bring along something to sit on, a hat, and sunscreen. 🛖 🧴

Meet back at the grassed area at 10:00am for morning tea (provided). For any questions and dietary requirements, please contact me at [kidsclub@downsyndromewa.org.au](mailto:kidsclub@downsyndromewa.org.au).

I wish you all very happy holidays, and I look forward to seeing you next year!

Siobhan  
[kidsclub@downsyndromewa.org.au](mailto:kidsclub@downsyndromewa.org.au)

Check out the KiDS Club calendar for our upcoming events  
- [https://docs.google.com/document/d/1PpYtShwvBiBxHsUvHNGm\\_EHm8G5E5uwsqIB9rUXEu6Q/e\\_dit?usp=sharing](https://docs.google.com/document/d/1PpYtShwvBiBxHsUvHNGm_EHm8G5E5uwsqIB9rUXEu6Q/e_dit?usp=sharing)





KiDS Club

# MAYLANDS WATERLAND



Join us for our first event of the year!

**Come in bathers, and bring along something to sit on, a hat, and sunscreen.**

Set up, play, then meet back with the group at **10:00am** for **morning tea** (provided).



**SUNDAY 4TH OF FEBRUARY**



**9:00AM-12:00PM**



**32 CLARKSON RD, MAYLANDS  
WA 6051**



**\$5 per  
child**

Contact Siobhan at [siobhan@downsyndromewa.org.au](mailto:siobhan@downsyndromewa.org.au) if you or your child have dietary requirements

## Friends For Life

Our first event for 2024 is the Fringe World Show 360 All-stars! Book at <https://www.trybooking.com/COAHD>

See below for details of the show and our events for the start of 2024.

If you have any questions contact Laura at [friendsforlife@downsyndromewa.org.au](mailto:friendsforlife@downsyndromewa.org.au) or 0422 795 160.

# FRIENDS FOR LIFE JANUARY EVENT

Fringe World Show  
- 360 All-stars

2pm - 5 pm Perth City

**27**  
JAN



## Friends for life Upcoming *events*

**Jan  
27**

### **Fringe World Show - 360 All-stars**

2 - 5pm | \$39 Ticket  
Meet at Russel Square, Fringe show , food  
and Silent disco!

**Feb  
25**

### **Capoeira**

12-3pm | \$20 per person  
Meet at Lake Monger, picnic, games then  
Martial Arts fun!

**March  
16**

### **Picnic in the park**

2-5pm | Free event  
Jo Wheatley All abilities play space Dalkeith  
Picnic, games and fun!

**AIM HIGH**

Our first get together for 2024 is Barefoot Bowls! Book  
at <https://www.trybooking.com/CNYPB>

I hope many of you will be interested in coming, I have made the first activity nice  
and relaxed but also fun so I can meet you all and make the most out of our  
beautiful summer weather!

I look forward to seeing you in January.

\*Bookings will be closed Monday 15th January at 4pm.

Take care and see you soon

Laura - aimhigh@downsyndromewa.org.au or 0422 795 160

# AIM HIGH JANUARY EVENT

Barefoot Bowls  
(Lawn bowls)

2PM - 5 PM LAKE MONGER

28  
JAN





# Aim High Upcoming *events*

**Jan  
28**

## **Barefoot Bowls (Lawn Bowls)**

2-5pm | \$10 per player  
Lake Monger Bowling club

**Feb  
10**

## **Australian Geographic's Our Country 360 cinematic experience**

12-3pm | \$29.90 per ticket  
Train into the city - Perth Exhibition Centre  
for the exhibit, walk to Elizabeth Quay for  
ice-cream

**March  
17**

## **Sculptures by the sea**

2-5pm | Free event  
We catch the train and bus together to  
Cottesloe and back. Train locations to be  
advised.

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## **Getaways!**

Our first Getaway for 2024 will be on 2,3 and 4 February to Woodman Point Camp!  
You can book now at:

<https://www.trybooking.com/COAJZ>

A weekend of fun filled activities, seeing your old friends and hopefully making new ones too! Hopefully we see some of you who have never come to a getaway also.

I am excited to see you all in 6 weeks!

\*Bookings will be closed Friday 19th January at 5pm.

Take care and see you soon

Laura - aimhigh@downsyndromewa.org.au or 0422 795 160

# AIM HIGH JANUARY GETAWAY

Woodman Point  
Recreation Camp

2,3,4TH  
Feb



# Getaways *Dates*

**Feb**

2nd-4th

**Woodman Point Recreation  
Camp**

Weekend of recreation programs, including paddling, raft building, team games and archery.

**March**

23rd - 25th

**Jurien Bay**

Activities to include; Sightseeing, dining, swimming, games and so much more!!!

**May**

24th - 26th

**Bussleton**

Activities to include; Sightseeing, dining, swimming, games and so much more!!

## Compliments and Complaints

We always welcome your feedback and suggestions. Send your feedback to [admin@downsyndromewa.org.au](mailto:admin@downsyndromewa.org.au) or use our [online form](#).



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