



Wishing you all a joyous
and safe festive season

From all of the team at
Down Syndrome WA

Thanks to everyone that
contributed to an incredible year.



Dear Members,

It is with a full heart myself and the whole team at DSWA wish you each a safe, joyous, reflective and positive festive season. This time of the year can be especially difficult for families, and I send you my thoughts and prayers for peace and gratitude. As I sit quietly at my new desk in the new office early in the morning, it is hard not to be slightly emotional about the incredible year we have had in 2024. The team has worked incredibly hard, it has been a full year, delivering every outcome, phone call, email, event, activity and eNews with the equivalent of just 4.78 full time staff. I also reflect that both our team and our community have faced loss, challenges and difficulties with grace and humility and with compassion and kindness. In our losses and difficulties, we also found connection and the value of memories and the power of love.

I am very grateful for the incredible year we have had, working alongside some of

the most dedicated and caring people I have ever worked with and working with and for this beautiful community.

There are of course always operational and service topics to discuss, and the end of the year doesn't interrupt that flow of work, ideas and challenges.

Getaways – with the recent In / Out lists published by the NDIS, DSWA's Getaways have been impacted. The NDIS will no longer cover accommodation or food, making an overnight camp expensive for families who would have to cover the costs of all of the items not funded by NDIS as an out-of-pocket expense. I have made the difficult decision to suspend the delivery of weekend, capacity building Getaways. At this stage, due to the NDIS changes we won't be offering any Getaways in 2025.

Aim High and Friends for Life – these programs have been filled with ups and downs over the past three years. We have had 5 coordinators of this program in that time, and our goal of long-term planning has been difficult to achieve. We are aware of the many challenges AH presents for some families, who pay DSWA for the event and support, and also need supports to transport their loved one to the event. This is costly and not the best use of a persons NDIS funds. The other impact of delivering an NDIS service for Aim High has been the loss of connection with families, parents, siblings and of our volunteers. Similarly, Friends for Life has also been challenging.

So, we are making a change. Both Friends for Life and Aim High will offer activities throughout the year and you will be able to bring your sibling, parent, friend or support worker to be alongside of you for any support you need. We will also be aiming to partner with other fabulous organisations such as SailAbility and many others to bring you access to a wider group of people, introducing you to others and hopefully making new friends. We hope to have a program out in the New year for the first half of the year for both groups. If you have input on the activities you would like to do, please contact me directly at this stage.

ceo@downsyndromewa.org.au

I want to acknowledge the effort and contribution of Laura Pinnel who resigned from the coordinator role in November. We wish Laura well in all future endeavours.

The year in reflection

We have produced a little infographic, representing the achievements of the year.

Grant Success

DSWA has received wonderful news over the last 4 weeks.

Funding for Primary School and Teens programs has been received from the Stan Perron Charitable foundation. The Foundation has funded Kids club for the last 3 years which has been amazing. Funding was to end in November, and we submitted a new, broader application. We are delighted to have received funding for 5 years to support Kids Club, some activities for our Teens and their families. The long-term funding supports us to be able to plan a program of activities that support families and young people with Down syndrome with social connection, and social skill development. We are very grateful to the Stan Perron Charitable Foundation for their ongoing, long term support of the work of the association and our members.

We also received notice yesterday that we have been successful with Telethon funding for 2025. We can't possibly overstate the importance of the funding we receive from Telethon, which provides 2 Playgroups, 1 Day per week PCH support, the Regional outreach program that will now extend to 5 regions with Peel and Wheatbelt coming on line in 2025, and critically, our general Family support – every call, email and messenger message answered is funded by the support we receive from Telethon.

Finally, we were the successful recipients of the NDIS Peer Support and Capacity Building grant for a period of two years. The Life Skills Lab - Empowering Pathways to independent Lives, Living and Aging will bring to the community two 1 day forums, a series of workshops, engagement from the Down Syndrome WA Advisory network members, and others in the community. We will be appointing a Senior Project Coordinator – Adults early in the new year and the project should be well underway by the end of February running until December 2026. This is a wonderful win for the community, being able to focus on adult and aging, and providing support, resources and experts on living well in the future.

What about 2025? - What a year we have planned for you..... Just some of the activities already planned, with so much more to come

- Founding Members Morning Tea February
- Educator Professional Learning Day 21 February
- The Launch of Peel and Wheatbelt regional support
- World Down Syndrome Day 21 March
- The Down Syndrome WA Gala Dinner 3 May (tickets on sale now – don't miss early bird)
- One Day Life Skills Lab Project forum
- Series of Life Skills Lab Workshops
- Regional Visits,
- Regular PCH visits
- 76 Playgroups full of learning, joy and fun.
- Awesome interactive Aim High, Friends for Life and Kids Club Activities throughout the year
- Step Up 2025 - October 12
- Children and Teens activities for children and families
- Telethon Family Festival stand
- DSWA AGM - October 22
- DSWA Christmas Party 6 December

On behalf of us all, thank you to each of you, our wonderful community members for the trust you place in us, and the support you have for others in this community. Building community, connection and compassion is so important and from the first families that set up the association to the newest members we look forward to sharing an exciting, uplifting and educational 2025 with you all.

Cassandra

Cassandra Hughes

CEO Down Syndrome WA

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What's On

DSWA Office Christmas Closure



The Down Syndrome WA office is closed over the festive period from the 12 noon on Thursday 19th December 2024 and will reopen at 8.30 am Monday 6 January 2025. From all of us here at DSWA, we wish you a positive and joyous festive season and 2025.

For support over this period please contact one of the helpline specialists which operate 24/7:

Lifeline: 13 11 44

Beyond Blue: 1300 22 4636

Further helplines can be found at <https://www.healthdirect.gov.au/mental-health-helplines>

If your request is **urgent**, please reach out to our CEO, Cassandra Hughes, at 0432 407 527 for assistance.



DSWA has moved to the Belmont Hub!

It is a multi-purpose, cross-generational community building featuring a library, digital hub, seniors hub, museum, cafe and a dedicated space for community service organisations. Which is where the new DSWA office is located!

Our new address is Unit 4, Level 2, Belmont Hub - 213 Wright St, Cloverdale. You can still contact us at admin@downsyndromewa.org.au. While our office phone is being transferred, please call us on 0422 795 160

For details of our location and parking see the City of Belmont map <https://www.belmont.wa.gov.au/docs/ecm/belmont-hub-local-area-map>




2025 Gala

We are thrilled to share that the 2025 Gala Dinner is officially being announced!

In 2025 the gala theme is "The Difference Support Makes." This aligns with the 2025 World Down Syndrome Day (WDSD) theme.

It's all about celebrating the incredible value of community and recognising everyone who supports us, our members, and the wider community.

 When: Saturday, 3rd May 2025

 Where: Pan Pacific, Perth

Tickets are now on sale! Don't miss out—book yours here: <https://www.trybooking.com/CXYJW>

We can't wait to see you there for an unforgettable night of connection, celebration, community and a bit of a boogie!

There are a few things that are important to know.

- In the past, DSWA has charged cost price for tickets to cover food. As we all know costs for everything have increased and as such, ticket prices have increased.
- There are discounted fixed price tickets (at cost) for people with Down syndrome - \$115/each
- Early Bird tickets are available until 23 February \$150. There can be NO extension on Early Bird, even if you have held a table.
- Table Holds - please send a table number request to admin@downsyndromewa.org.au. Holding a table, doesn't hold the early bird price.
- Full price after early bird \$175
- Until we can upload a floor plan, please assume that Table 1 is at the front of the room and table 42 is at the back.
- DSWA cannot provide companion card exemptions.



The DSWA board would like to meet and celebrate the founders and early members of Down Syndrome WA with a morning tea in February 2025. We invite all founding members and early member families of the association to join us for morning tea at

our new premises at The Belmont Hub, 213 Wright St Belmont. The event can be found on Trybooking where you can book a place so we can determine numbers and manage the RSVP's please click this link - <https://www.trybooking.com/CXNRC> For enquiries please contact admin@downsyndromewa.org.au. Many early members of the association are no longer connected with DSWA and we are keen to locate and invite as many of the early families as possible. If you are reading this, and think of an early family that may not receive the E-News, please forward the information to them.

We hope to bring you together, to share your history of the association and to share with you the new Adult project which we hope will offer beneficial resources and activities for older members living with Down syndrome. We would also like to discuss the 40th Anniversary which occurs in 2026.

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

INVITATION TO

Founding and Early members Morning Tea



The DSWA Board invite founding
members and early member families
to join them for morning tea

Thursday 20 February 2025



Educator Paid Learning

Our annual Educating Children with Down syndrome Professional Learning Day is back in 2025, and it's the perfect professional learning opportunity for teachers, education assistants, and school administrators. This full-day professional development will focus on practical strategies for supporting students, including:

Classroom adaptations

Pre-reading and numeracy

Boundary setting and understanding behaviour

Classroom management

When: 21st February 2025

Where: In Person at the Belmont Hub, 213 Wright St, Cloverdale (includes morning tea, lunch, and afternoon tea) or Online via Zoom.

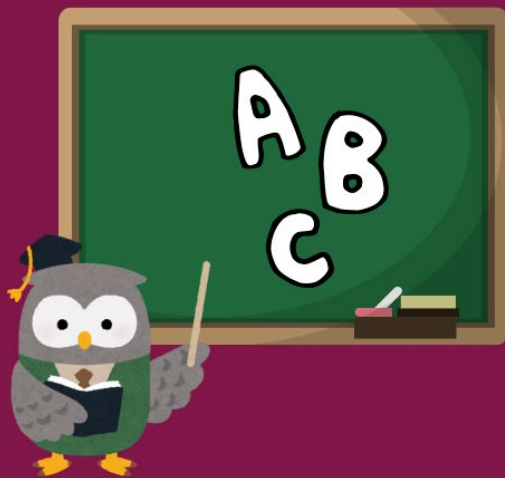
How to Register: <https://www.trybooking.com/CWYOB>

Help us spread the word! Share this with your school and encourage your teachers to join us for this incredible day of learning.

For more info, contact the DSWA Team at admin@downsyndromewa.org.au or 0861823690.

Educator Professional Learning

A full day workshop, with multiple presentations to support Educators, Education Assistants and Administrators to teach and support a child with Down syndrome in their classroom. (May have relevance to children with other similar Intellectual Disability)



DATE Friday February 21st, 2025

TIME 9:00am to 4:30pm

VENUE The Belmont Hub
213 Wright St, Cloverdale, 6105

TICKETS <https://www.trybooking.com/CWYOB>



Down Syndrome
Western Australia

Get Involved

Family Support



DSWA's Family Support team has had a really big year in 2024.

We are sad to see Danica leave our team and wish her and her family lots of fun and adventures in their new chapter.

We hope to announce a growth to our team in 2025.

Keep an eye out for our January Enews, as we hope to introduce you to the new Family support team members then.



Nikki will be on leave from Thursday the 19th of December until January the 6th to align with the DSWA office closures over the festive season. There will be no PCH outreach during this time. Her first day back at PCH will be Thursday the 9th of January.

Regional Outreach

Our Great Southern Regional Outreach families had a lovely Christmas Catch up. With 24 people attending they had a lovely afternoon of cheese and fruit platters, dinner, dessert and even some birthday cake.

Thank you to our Regional Representatives Wendy, Jenny and Jean for all of the hard work with the catch ups over 2024. A big Thank you to Jean and Sam for hosting the event at their house.

We look forward to working closely with our Regional Representatives in 2025 to hold more events and engage our wider community.



GREAT SOUTHERN CHRISTMAS CATCH UP



Christmas Party

🌲 What a Wonderful Way to Wrap Up an Amazing Year! 🎉

A huge thank you to everyone who joined us for our All Ages Christmas Party – your presence truly brought the Christmas spirit to life!

This joyful celebration was made extra special as old and new members came together to share in the festive fun. We enjoyed games, 🎵 music, 💃 dancing, and 🍷 delicious food among friends, creating memories to cherish.

Special thanks to:

Spudshed for generously donating healthy snacks 🥕🍎

Lilacs Cakes & Cupcakes for the most delightful Christmas treats 🍰🌲

☀️ To our amazing volunteers: your hard work and festive energy were the magic that made it all come together – thank you! ❤️

From all of us at Down Syndrome WA, thank you for making this celebration so wonderful. Here's to a new year filled with love, support, and cherished memories.

✨ We can't wait to see what 2025 has in store for us all! ✨



DSWA CHRISTMAS PARTY



Stay Connected

Playgroups



Playgroup South

What a lovely last few weeks at Playgroup South we've had. We've enjoyed doing a lot of Christmas crafts and enjoying each other's company. We've enjoyed the festive creations and wish everyone a safe and happy holidays xx

We look forward to seeing everyone again in the new year.

Much love, from Renee xx



Playgroup North

Playgroup North has been Merry all the way to the end of term with our Christmas activities. From reindeer biscuits to Christmas craft and even a fun dance session we have all enjoyed this festive season together.

Danica and I said our final farewell to our loved Playgroup North family on Friday. We would like to take this opportunity to say thank you to all our families for allowing us to be a part of your journey. We have enjoyed watching your babies grow and loved witnessing them reach those amazing milestones. We have also been grateful to help you all through the harder times when you may have needed that extra coffee on a Friday morning. Thank you once again and we know you are all in very good hands with Karina and Anita at the helm.

To all our families we wish you and merry and safe Christmas.

From Tracy and Dancia



Kids Club

Supported by



Wow, what a year!

Thank you to all the families who attended Kids Club across the year. It was a pleasure to continue to see everyone grow, learn new skills, and make new friendships. We farewelled a few families who transitioned up to the next age group and welcomed some fresh faces from playgroup.

It is great to see the community continue to thrive and build connections, and I'm so excited for what 2025 holds!

Siobhan



2024 Wrap Up *KIDS Club*

UPCOMING EVENTS

The first Kids Club event of the year is a morning with Studio Dre.

Date: Sunday 12 January 2025

Time: 10:30am-12:30pm (Arrive at 10:15am for a 10:30am start)

Location: Studio Dre, Unit 2/99 Catherine St, Morley WA 6062

Price: Members with DS Free, \$5 per sibling

Book here: <https://www.trybooking.com/CXXDV>

Check out the Kids Club 2025 Calendar here:

https://docs.google.com/document/d/1rIJ2mgicxIdjplZP7PxMTUtV_rwvo-co37f7UOammZs/edit?usp=sharing



FrienDS for Life

2024 WRAP UP



Aim High

Aim High

2024 Wrap Up



Broader Community Information

NDIS Regional Tour

Do you live in **rural or regional** Western Australia and have questions about the NDIS?

The National Disability Insurance Agency (NDIA) and partners (APM and Wanslea) will be visiting rural and regional WA, on board the Services Australia Mobile Service Centre.

You can visit the Mobile Service Centre and connect with an NDIS representative virtually or face-to-face about a range of topics including:

- understanding the NDIS, including early childhood and local area coordination services
- applying to access the NDIS for funded supports
- understanding the options of managing your funding
- requesting services with an approved plan.

They will be visiting the following towns:

- Tuesday 14th January - Wandering
- Wednesday 15 January - Boddington
- Thursday 16 January – Williams
- Friday 17 January - Dwellingup
- Monday 20th January – Waroona
- Tuesday 21st January - Yarloop
- Wednesday 22nd January – Harvey
- Tuesday 28th January - Darkan
- Wednesday 29th January – Boyup Brook
- Thursday 30th January – Greenbushes

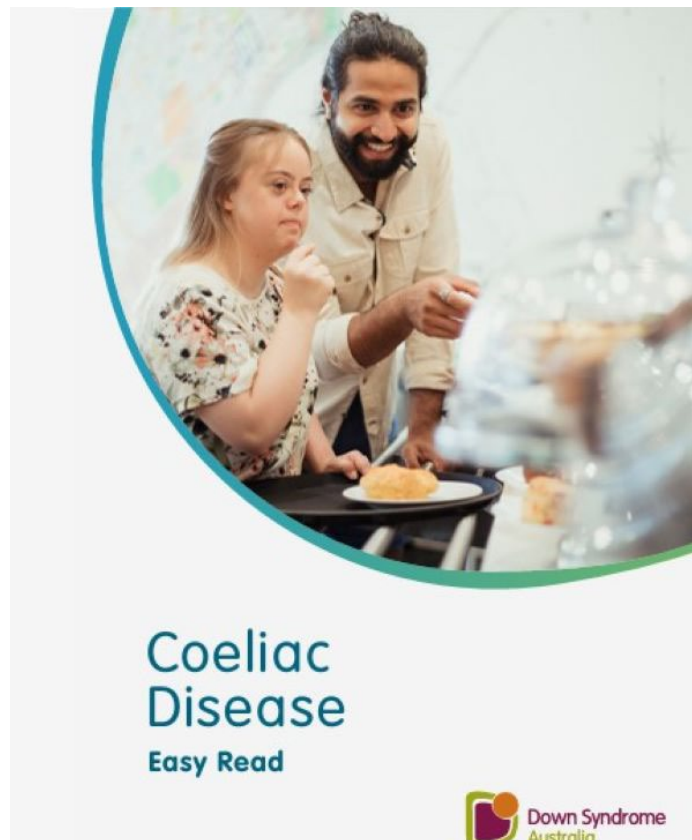


Coeliac Disease

Have you or someone you know been diagnosed with Coeliac Disease?
The Down Syndrome Australia Health Ambassadors have made this resource to help explain Coeliac Disease.

Read it at the link below

<https://www.downsyndrome.org.au/blog/resource/coeliac-disease-easy-read/>



Comprehensive Health Assessment Process (CHAP)

The Comprehensive Health Assessment Process (CHAP) tool for annual GP health assessments which includes questions focused on health conditions common in people with Down Syndrome.


<https://www.health.gov.au/resources/collections/comprehensive-health-assessment-program-chap-annual-health-assessment-for-people-with-intellectual-disability?language=en>

Depression Checklist

Addressing mental health challenges is so important, yet is often quite complex. People with intellectual disabilities may be unable to describe their feelings or experiences.

Introducing the Depression Checklist—a valuable tool designed to aid this process. It allows caregivers and support networks to provide critical insights, enabling doctors to screen for issues that might otherwise go unnoticed.

Access this resource for free on the Centre of Developmental Health Victoria website - <https://cddh.monashhealth.org/index.php/depression-in-adults-with-intellectual-disability-checklist>



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festive season

Compliments and Complaints

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

Thanks for reading!



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