Down Syndrome Western Australia

Supporting a Life of Possibilities

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Dear Members,

It seems July is the fastest month of the year – hard to believe we're finalising another financial year already! As we engage our auditor and close off the books, we're expecting another positive financial result for DSWA. This is due in large part to the additional fundraising and donations we've received – support we simply couldn't do without.

We're pleased that Kern Routley has made a strong start in his new role as Life Skills Lab Coordinator. The first course, *Personal Safety*, is ready to launch, with many more topics in development – all co-designed with members. This project is intentionally different: every course begins with conversations with people with Down syndrome, their families, and carers. Over the next 18 months, the Life Skills Lab will be a vital and exciting space for learning. We invite you to get involved in surveys, discussions, and feedback – your voice matters. If we want to do better, it must start with what you need.

Another exciting update is the arrival of Amanda Bright, who has joined DSWA as Executive Assistant to the CEO. This is a 12-month, part-time role (15 hours per week) supporting my work as CEO. Amanda brings deep lived and professional experience to the team, and we're delighted to welcome such a vibrant and well-connected member of the DSWA community.

At the end of July, we'll be farewelling the lovely Zali Stipanicev. Zali has contributed so much across multiple roles, including Employment Mentor, Project Officer, and Administration support for both our Employment and Family Support programs. We thank her sincerely for her flexibility, commitment, and support wherever it was needed. We wish her all the very best in her new adventures.

Earlier this month, I had the privilege of meeting with the CEOs of Down Syndrome and Other Intellectual Disability Queensland, Down Syndrome Victoria, Down Syndrome Australia, and Down Syndrome and Other Intellectual Disability ACT. We gathered in Sydney during the National Centre of Excellence in Intellectual Disability Health Conference – a truly inspiring three days.

I was struck by the inclusive spirit of the event and the many powerful presentations by people with intellectual disability who generously shared their stories and insights.

We also heard from the Chief Medical Officer, who expressed a strong commitment to transforming how the medical profession engages with people with intellectual disability. Professor Alastair McEwin reminded us of the need for sustained social change and visibility, while American researcher Dr Gloria Krahn gave a compelling presentation tracing decades of research and its impact on health and policy.

Looking ahead, there's lots to be excited about!
StepUP 2025 is shaping up to be another fantastic celebration. Once again, we'll be hosting **StepUP** and **Dance for Down Syndrome**, because we know how much you love to dance! This event is for **everyone** – individuals, families, friends – and is our biggest community fundraiser of the year. Entry is just $15 per person.

This year, we encourage you to:

- Form a team
- Start fundraising
- Join us on the day!

We're still accepting applications for **market stallholders** and are working toward a fun-filled day with stalls, activities, music and – of course – lots of dancing. Please **share** our social media posts widely. Liking is great – but sharing helps to expand and amplify our message! Even I will be having a market stall this year selling clothes, with 100% of the sales going to DSWA.

We are very keen to partner with a **major naming rights sponsor**, and other **sponsors** to bring you the best StepUP ever. If you or someone you know is interested in supporting the event, please reach out directly to me or the team to be sent a copy of the sponsorship package.

There is more...this month we have; had a film crew in at DSWA - we can tell you more soon, more award nominations, planning and strategy work for the coming year, and the introduction of more technological solutions to help refine our work and improve our delivery of services to you.

As always I wish to recognise the work of all members of the DSWA team, who continue to go above and beyond in every sense, as CEO I am extremely fortunate to work with an incredible team of people and a wonderful board and community.

Warm regards
Cassandra

Cassandra Hughes
ceo@downsyndromewa.org.au

Meetings & Association Notes

Upcoming Board Meetings
18th August
22nd September
17th November
15th December

We are Hiring

We are looking for a star Admin Support for the amazing DSWA Family Support Team.

Working for us 3 days per week, you will support events, activities, social media posts, and communication with members on behalf of the team. This is a busy and interesting role, working in the lovely DSWA team.

If you are interested please send a CV and cover letter to @admin@downsyndromewa.org.au

StepUP Logo Design

Calling All Artists - Design our new Step UP logo!

We are looking for a fun and exciting new logo for our event Step Up and Dance for Down Syndrome – and we want YOU to help create it!

What should your logo include?

- People dancing
- DSWA brand colours like orange, burgundy and green like the Step Up logo
- Happy faces
- Music notes

How to create your logo:

- You can draw it by hand on paper
- Paint it
- Or use a computer or iPad if you like digital art

What date do we need it from you?
Please send us your design by 8th of August

How to send it
Email it to us at familysupport@downsyndromewa.org.au, or drop it off at the DSWA office.

What happens next?
The DSWA board will choose one of the designs to become the new logo for Step Up and Dance!

It might be printed on posters, shirts, and even on social media!

We can't wait to see your creative ideas. Have fun and get dancing with your art!

HESTA Awards

Our CEO, Cassandra Hughes. has been named as a finalist in the National 2025 Hesta Excellence Awards. Of 420 nominations, Cassandra is one of 24 finalists across 8 categories she is nominated in the Disability Services – Individual Leadership category, for her work on Down Syndrome Regression Disorder.

Congratulations Cas!

Read more on the HESTA website:
https://www.hesta.com.au/about-us/media-centre/hesta-announces-2025-excellence-awards-finalists

What's On

1 August
Playgroup North

3 August
Science Lab Kids Club

4 August
Playgroup South

7 August
Playgroup East

8 August
Playgroup North

14 August
PCH Outreach

15 August
Self Defence Course (18+)

24 August
Karaoke Friends for Life

24 August
Karaoke Aim High

5 September
Father's Day Darts

6 September
Aim High Hike Tomato Lake

20 September
Aim High Hike Kensington

4 October
Aim High Hike Canning River

12 October
Step Up and Dance

1 and 2 Nov
Darlington Arts Festival

Step UP and Dance

SAVE THE DATE for StepUp and Dance for Down Syndrome

Down Syndrome WA's Biggest Annual FUNDRAISING Event is back! Get ready to StepUp and DANCE for Down Syndrome!

🎉 Date: Sunday, October 12, 2025
📍 Location: Taylor Reserve, Victoria Park Foreshore.

Join us for an incredible day filled with:

- A daytime Dance Disco for all ages
- Live interactive dance performances.
- Market Stalls
- Opportunities to connect with other families and the community

This year, we're aiming for our biggest fundraising year to date, and we need YOUR support! Stay tuned for more information on how you can get involved, make a difference, and be part of this incredible event.

Save the date, spread the word, and mark your calendars! Let's come together as a community to raise awareness. Together lets shout out the worth of, and support individuals with Down Syndrome and their families. 💚🌈

Expressions of Interest for Performers at Step UP!

We are seeking expressions of interest for interactive dance performances for the Step Up and Dance for Down Syndrome event on the 12th of October 2025. This will involve a performance on stage by your group, with an interactive aspect for the crowd to learn some movements and join in. We are still looking for a person or people with a disability to DJ the event - please let us know if you are interested.

Please complete the form below with your interest 😊
https://forms.office.com/r/ppbpaD8p4T

Darlington Arts Festival

Calling Artists and Craftspeople with Down Syndrome in WA!!!

We are so excited to announce that DSWA staff will again be volunteering to set up and run an exhibition stand at this years Darlington Arts Festival. Last year was such an outstanding success for our artists that we are doing it all again.

We hope many of our artists will join us this year. The event runs on 1 & 2 November, in Darlington in the beautiful Perth Hills, just 30 minutes from the city centre. It is a very popular and busy festival. If you are one of our amazing creatives, maybe you have a microbusiness selling things you make, we would LOVE you to join us.

Here is the expression of interest form link: https://forms.office.com/r/6kfbm5JiCN

It would be wonderful to expand the number of artists participating this year. For more info please contact Cas, our CEO ceo@downsyndromewa.org.au

Mega Movie Outing

On Sunday the 29th of June DSWA held a whole community movie event. 100 members young and old enjoyed watching 'How to Train your Dragon' at the Belmont Reading Cinema where we had the whole cinema to ourselves.

The feedback from the community was very positive. Everyone loved posing with Toothless and Hiccup at the end of the movie.

Easy Read

Susie, James' Mum, emailed us the message below:

James got his Australian DSA magazine the other day and carefully read the easy read section on living arrangements. Took a photo because I felt it was such a wonderful example of enablement. I know you guys do all the easy read too and am so grateful for this.

What a great reminder about the importance of Easy Read. Next up, we're working on including Easy Read in the DSWA e-news!

Get Involved

Family Support

Proudly supported by telethon 7

PCH Outreach

✉ Email:familysupport@downsyndromewa.org.au
📞 Paula: 0435 831 085
📞 Nikki: 0480 311 739

Just a reminder Paula and Nikki will be at PCH on alternative Thursday. If you're there for an appointment or on a Ward please reach out for a visit, a coffee, something to eat or a friendly chat!

Steps to Success – Toilet Training Workshop

On Tuesday, 22nd July, we hosted the Steps to Success Toilet Training workshop, facilitated by Annie from Steady Steps Continence.

We were thrilled to have 17 families join us online, making the workshop a great success. Participants walked away with valuable knowledge and practical strategies to support their child's toilet training journey.

Keyword Sign Workshops

We are so excited to be able to offer another Key Word Sign Workshop for our community. The wonderful workshop will be taking place in the southern suburbs.

Firstly, you may be asking yourself "What is Key Word Sign". From the Key Word Sign Australia website they say "Key Word Sign is a tool or strategy which can be used to support children and adults with communication difficulties to understand and get their message across to others. Key Word Sign (KWS) adds signs to spoken words. The key words in a message are signed. KWS is not a sign language, but it borrows the signs from the sign language of the country it is used in."

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 every day.

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 the 'Public' ticket option.

Included:

- Morning and Afternoon tea (BYO Lunch)

- Key Word Sign booklet
- Certificate of completion.

Event Details:
Date: Wednesday 17th September 2025
Time: 9:30am - 4pm
Venue: Treeby Community and Sports Centre, 1 Torwood Avenue, Treeby WA
Cost: $200 pp
Tickets: https://www.trybooking.com/DDPLU

Registrations close on the 3rd September 2025

For more details contact: familysupport@downsyndromewa.org.au or call 08 6182 3690.

Parents & Bubs Morning Tea

On Wednesday, 23rd July, Nikki and Renee hosted our Parents and Bubs Morning Tea at the lovely Ellie Café.

We were so pleased to welcome 3 families to the event. It was heartwarming to see mums connecting, sharing stories, and enjoying a well-deserved coffee while their little ones played and made new friends.

Events like this remind us of the power of community—and the joy of a good chat and a warm cuppa. We're already looking forward to the next one!

Father's Day Darts

Dads' Night Out – Connect, Relax & Throw Some Darts! 🎯🎯

Are you a dad connected to Down Syndrome WA? We're inviting you to a child-free evening to unwind, connect with other dads in the community, and enjoy a friendly game of darts.

When: Friday 5th September
Where: Flight Club, Perth CBD
Who: Dads of young kids, Dads of adults, as long as you are a dad to a kiddo with DS you can come
Cost: $25 Per person

Tickets: https://www.trybooking.com/DDIFN

Open Employment Program

Ready for Work Program – Expressions of Interest Now Open!

We're thrilled to announce that expressions of interest are now open for our Ready for Work Program! This program is a fantastic opportunity for DSWA members who are looking to gain the skills and confidence they need to take the next step toward employment.

Our Ready for Work Program supports our members by:

- Exploring different types of employment that may suit individual interests
- Building an understanding of workplace expectations
- Assisting with resume writing
- Preparing for job interviews

If you're a DSWA member interested in joining the next round of our Ready for Work Program, we'd love to hear from you!

Contact us at: employment@downsyndromewa.org

This is a great chance to get ready for the workplace with the support of our dedicated team. We can't wait to meet you and support you on your employment journey!

Join Our Employment Program!

At DSWA, we're thrilled to offer exciting employment opportunities to our members! Employment provides valuable experiences that help build independence, confidence, and a strong sense of belonging in the wider community. It's a fantastic step toward personal growth and being part of something new and meaningful.

If you, or a loved one who is a DSWA member, are interested in joining our Employment Program, we'd love to hear from you! Please get in touch with our Employment Coordinator, Lara, at employment@downsyndromewa.org. She'll be more than happy to help you get started on this rewarding journey.

Life Skills Lab

July for the Life Skills Lab has been full of planning, we have listed some of the activities that will be taking place between now and December.

Sign up for the Self Defence course:

- Claremont - https://www.trybooking.com/events/landing/1434039
- Belmont - https://www.trybooking.com/events/landing/1433796

The Life Skills Lab is funded until December 2026, to make sure that the benefit of the project is spread as widely as possible we will be creating booklets, videos and interactive content, ensuring we have co-designed information to share for years to

come. You, the community, are incredibly important and will guide the development of these key resources. Any adult members over 17 who wants to take part in the creation of educational booklets, videos or sessions please sign up here https://forms.office.com/r/r90hKFSxqU

We really want to encourage adult members to attend as many sessions as possible, the more members attending the more impact the project has. If you have more suggestions for workshops or sessions please let us know 😊.

Parents we haven't forgotten about you don't worry, in August we have experts from the National Scam Centre for an online webinar. They will teach us how spot scams and how to set up privacy / security settings. Later in the year we will be hosting a Housing and Living workshop for parents, covering future living options and chatting to others who have loved ones living independently.

Playgroups

Playgroup East

Supported by City of Belmont

Winter can be a tricky time and sadly no families were able to join us at Playgroup East for our July session.

We will be going for a second take on our COLOURS theme on Thursday 7th August at 9:30am and hope to see some beautiful faces there.
Anita and Karina.

Anita
playgroup@downsyndromewa.org.au

Playgroup South

Proudly supported by telethon 7

What a fantastic and cold start back at Playgroup South. We hope everyone had a lovely break 💕.

We have a heap of activities and crafts planned for term 3 so keep an eye out for our posts on the Playgroup page.

I would like to thank Nicole Campher for taking the reins on our first session back whilst I did some work training, the children loved our new bubble machine and playing with the animal themed sensory tub 😄.

We welcome you to join us every Monday of the school term in Baldivis.

Love from your playgroup team Renee and Nicole xx
playgroup@downsyndromewa.org.au

Playgroup North

Proudly supported by telethon 7

Joyful July at Playgroup North!!

Our families enjoyed a "deadly" NAIDOC celebration complete with damper making and Noongar language song before we had our relaxing holiday break.

To start off Term 3 our kiddos bathed, dressed and cared for their own baby dolls, learned about bathtime and bedtime routines and had lots of fun with bubbles; plus we had a visit from Michelle of Nose To Toes Physiotherapy who spoke to our families about milestones.

We finish off July with a My Hands themed playgroup where our kiddos will learn all about the amazing things their hands can do.

Karina and Anita
playgroup@downsyndromewa.org.au

Kids Club

Supported by

STAN PERRON CHARITABLE FOUNDATION

The Kids Club enjoyed a DSWA wide event in July, watching How To Train Your Dragon. It was super to see our members all come together.

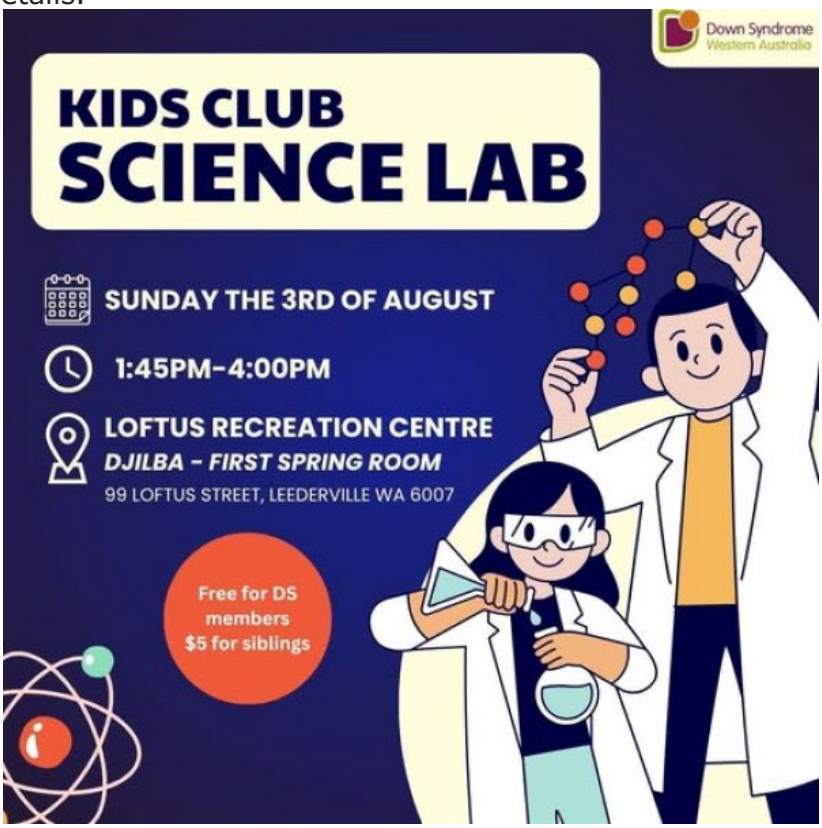
Our next event is a Science Workshop. Get ready to spark curiosity and have fun with science at our August event!

DSWA Kids Club invites you to a hands-on Science Workshop, where kids will dive into exciting experiments, explore cool scientific concepts, and enjoy an afternoon full of discovery and wonder!

When: Sunday, 3rd of August | 2:00 PM – 4:00 PM
(Arrive at 1:45 PM for a 2:00 PM start)
Where: Loftus Recreation Centre – Summer Room (99 Loftus St, Leederville WA 6007)

Afternoon tea provided after the workshop!
Tickets: Free for members with DS, $5 for siblings
Book your spot now: https://www.trybooking.com/DDPYX

If you have a child aged 5 to 11 with Down syndrome and would love to connect with other families to encourage peer relationships, social skills and networking for parents, please contact Siobhan Painter at kidsclub@downsyndromewa.org.au for registration details.

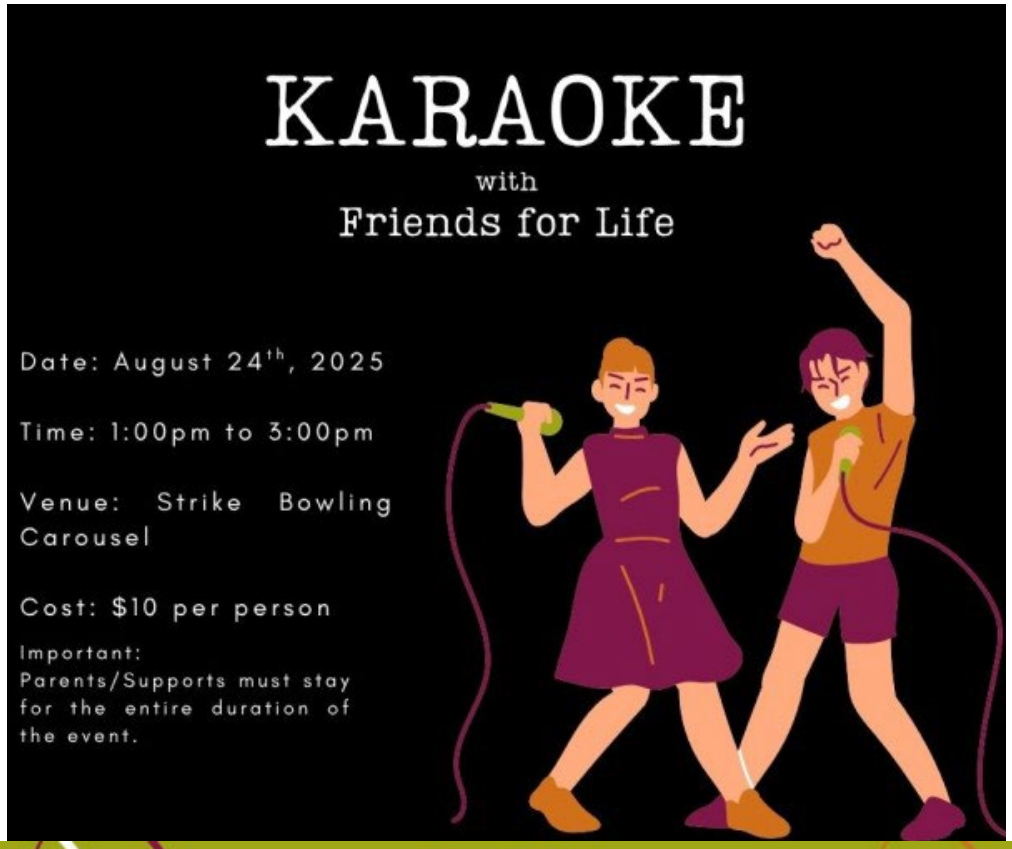


Friends for Life

Get your singing voices ready, line up your favourite songs because in August the F4L crew will be heading out for a Karaoke Afternoon!

There will be lots of singing and dancing and hopefully heaps of laughs. After, you can buy some food from the restaurant and even stick around for a game of bowling with your mates.

Event Details
Date: Sunday, August 24th
Time: 1:00pm to 3:00pm
Location: Strike Bowling Carousel
Cost: $10
Tickets: https://www.trybooking.com/DDQOO



Aim High

Get your singing voices ready, line up your favourite songs because in August the Aim High crew will be heading out for a Karaoke Afternoon!

There will be lots of singing and dancing and hopefully heaps of laughs. After, you can buy some food from the restaurant and drinks from the bar. There is also a bowling alley so you stick around for a game once Karaoke is finished

Event Details
Date: Sunday, August 24th
Time: 3:00pm to 5:00pm
Location: Strike Bowling Carousel
Cost: $10

Tickets: https://www.trybooking.com/DDQPH

Teens and Adults

13 of our Friends for Life and Aim High members had a great time on Friday night, joining the All Abilities Hoops WA program for some Basketball fun.

They ran through skills and drills and ended the night with two games. It was great to have some of the AAH players be mentors for our members and help them with the rules and skills.

We finished the night celebrating Annabelle’s 13th Birthday with some cake.

Thank you to Dannie and the Team for an amazing event.

ROCKETS
WARRIORS
EAGLES
Bendigo Bank
WARRIORS

Aim High Walk & Nature Activity

In September and October we are heading outside for some easy hikes with some post hike activities. This is a series of hikes/walks, hosted by Hikes West as a part of their All Abilities Hiking Program. This series features three hikes at three different locations. You are able to attend as few or as many as you would like. This isn't just a walk in the park, it is much more.

Here are some words from the team over at HikeWest:

"HikeWest's All Abilities Hiking Program is all about inclusivity, adventure, and connecting with nature. We want to empower people with disabilities to explore the great outdoors, pick up new bushwalking skills, and build lasting friendships in a supportive and fun environment. Our program offers a series of beginner-friendly hikes through Perth's breathtaking parks and forests, and in the picturesque Perth Hills. We provide opportunities for participants to walk safely, discover the beauty of the Australian bush, and enjoy the outdoors with others. Along the way, we'll nurture resilience, teamwork, leadership, and healthy habits"

Hike 1: Tomato Lake, Saturday September 6th
Hike 2: Kensington Bushland , Saturday September 20th
Hike 3: Canning River National Park, Saturday October 4th

All hikes start at 10:30am and are intended to be very chill to suit all levels of abilities. After every hike there will be activities such as nature bingo or arts and crafts.

Stay Connected

Menstruation Study

How do parents and their children with intellectual disability manage menstruation and make decisions?

What we want to know
What do parents and their children with intellectual disability consider and do when managing menstruation? How are menstruation decisions made and by whom?

We want to talk to
Parents of people with intellectual disability who are aged between 10 and 25 years and menstruate.

What will you need to do
Participation will involve being in an interview on a video call or on the phone that will take about an hour.

Are you interested?
Email: jess.keeley@thekids.org.au

The Date-ability Program

First Step Solutions are kicking off their new Date-Ability programs in WA.

The 12-week program helps people build stronger relationships and feel more confident in social situations.

See their website for more information and a referral form:
https://fs-solutions.com.au/date-ability-program/

World Festival of Magic Shows

The Rotary Club of West Perth are thrilled to invite the Down Syndrome WA clients and participants to attend the 2025 World Festival of Magic Shows.

Where: Astor Theatre Perth
When: Sunday, 31st August - 11.30am, 1.30pm, 3.30pm and Monday, 1st September - 10.30am, 12.30pm
Cost: Free!
Who: For children and young adults

To book tickets, please email your name, preferred showtimes, and the number of tickets required to meredithnewman@showintent.com.au or call / text 0404 367 782.

Hidden Disabilities

What is the Hidden Disabilities Sunflower?

The Hidden Disabilities Sunflower is a simple tool for you to voluntarily share that you have a disability or condition that may not be immediately apparent – and that you may need a helping hand, understanding, or more time in shops, at work, on transport, or in public spaces.

Read more about the Hidden Disabilities Sunflower at https://hdsunflower.com/au/

The Disability Dialogue

THE DISABILITY DIALOGUE

The Disability Dialogue offer online events throughout the year. Some upcoming events include: Disability Dialogue: Foundations for a good life, Unlocking potential: support for children with disability.

Go to the link to register for events and sign up for updates.
https://disabilitydialogue.com.au/events/

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

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