



[CEOS Corner](#)

[Meetings & Association Notes](#)

[Updates from Our Members](#)

[What's On](#)

Get Involved

[Family Support](#)

[Regional Outreach](#)

[Open Employment Program](#)

[Life Skills Lab](#)

[Current Research Projects](#)

[Playgroups](#)

[Kids Club](#)

[Friends for Life and Aim High](#)

Stay Connected

[Supporting My Rights App](#)

[Digital Champions Program](#)

[Razzamatazz Shows - Free Tickets](#)

CEOs Corner

As we come to the end of a busy and sometimes challenging year, I want to share a few highlights that remind us of the strength, talent, and generosity within our DSWA community.

This month, we attended the opening of the new Special Needs Dental Clinic, a long-awaited service for the disability community and the only one in Australia. It is a beautiful clinic and a beautiful design for those who need particular support for dental work. I want to extend a very special acknowledgment of our wonderful DSWA member David Guhl, whose beautiful artwork graces the walls of each treatment room. His work Land of Many Colours hangs in receptions and elements of it are in each room, the work is both vibrant and calm and brings comfort and consistency across the centre for visitors.



I was invited to speak on the City of Melville "Let's Get to Work" panel, alongside the wonderful Sian King, who represented her living experience of her work at Curtin University with warmth, honesty, and professionalism. Presentations by our members, like Sian's strengthen the message that meaningful employment is both achievable and essential for our community.

We were fortunate to be invited be guests at a CCIWA business breakfast, making important new connections for our employment projects. These conversations are opening doors for 2026, particularly as we seek to broaden partnerships and opportunities for our members seeking work placement.

Two personal highlights this month were attending the final Parents & Bubs Morning Tea for the year, which was a beautiful morning, meeting new families, reconnecting with familiar faces, and seeing the friendships forming among parents of our youngest members. Second was spending five hours with our fantastic Down Syndrome WA Advisory Network members who reflected on their work this year, did a brainstorming exercise on activities for 2026, and made major contributions to shaping the 2026 Gala and 40th anniversary celebrations. Meeting such as this

continues to inspire me and reminds me of the incredible capacity and contribution our members make.

We ended the month at the Australian Disability Sector Awards, where DSWA was honoured as a Finalist in both the Employment Award and the Most Visionary Leader Award. This recognition is deeply humbling. It reflects the extraordinary work of our staff, volunteers, and the families who partner with us every day. None of this is possible without our remarkable team and community.

DSWA Business Hours

I would like to remind our community that our usual business hours are Monday to Thursday, 8:30am – 4:00pm. Almost all DSWA staff are part time or casual and it is very important that our team have the opportunity to disconnect from work outside of these hours. Appropriate methods of communicating with our team are through our Landline, work mobiles, email or did you know, you can now direct message us via our Facebook groups. We can only contact you with this method if you have reached out to us first.

2025 Christmas closure - DSWA will be closed from 24 December and will reopen on 5 January.

Finally, we are seeking to increase the number of people on the Down Syndrome WA Advocacy & Advisory Network (DSWAAN). We encourage adult members (18yrs plus) to apply to become members. You can find out more about the DSWAAN by following this link - <https://www.downsyndrome.org.au/wa/wp-content/uploads/sites/11/2025/11/251127-Attachment-DSWA-AN-Governance-Documents-Easy-Read-Version.pdf>

Following the application is essential and ensures each application is assessed equally. Please ensure that you can attend most meetings which are held on a Wednesday at 10am. The DSWAAN members make an outstanding contribution to DSWA and I would highly encourage our adults to apply.

I look forward to seeing many of you at the wonderful DSWA All Ages Christmas Party.

Warm regards

Cassandra

Cassandra Hughes

ceo@downsyndromewa.org.au



Upcoming Board Meetings

15th December



Angelina Kell - Little Library Art

The City of Belmont approached DSWA to promote the opportunity for a local DSWA artist to decorate a Community Little Library for Garvey Park. This coincided with

the annual Kidz Fest community day held by the City.

DSWA member Angelina Kell was selected as the successful artist. Angelina is pictured below with her beautiful artwork.



Greg Carstens - Hidden Disabilities Sunflower

Melita, Greg's Mum, sent us an update on Greg traveling with a sunflower lanyard.

"Our son Greg Carstens has asked to share onto all his family friends at DSWA the ease of travelling with the new Hidden Disability Sunflower Lanyard.

He received his free Sunflower Lanyard from Virgin Airport staff in Perth when we recently travelled to Queensland NSW & New Zealand. He took pleasure in wearing his new Lanyard at all the airports and onboard the planes whilst travelling/ holidaying. He would keep it handy and make sure he had it on prior to entering the airport & boarding the planes.

Greg received excellent assistance throughout his journey, and was allowed to board the plane early, given extra time to settle onboard prior to all other passengers entering. The Sunflower Lanyard was sighted & recognised and priority assistance was always offered by airport staff with no verbal requests having been spoken. It has made travelling for Greg so much calmer and safer for him.

We hope our DSWA families embrace this new support offered not only at airports nationally but overseas also."

What is the Hidden Disabilities Sunflower?

The Hidden Disabilities Sunflower is a simple tool to make you visible to us, so we can assist as needed. Wearing a sunflower lanyard at Sydney Airport enables our staff to recognise that you may require assistance as you make your way through the airport.

We can support with things like guiding you through special assistance lanes or allowing you extra time, and more. Please note that the lanyard does not fast-track you through security or passport control areas.

Read more at:

<https://hdsunflower.com/au/>

<https://www.facebook.com/HiddendisabilitiesANZ>

<https://www.sydneyairport.com.au/hiddendisabilities>



Joe Salt - City of Perth

Kathryn, Joe's Mum, sent us an email she received from Joe's Team Leader at the City of Perth. Joe has been working at The City of Perth for six years and this work opportunity was made possible through the Down Syndrome WA Employment Program. We are forever grateful for this start.

"I'd like to start by acknowledging the outstanding work Joe has done over the past three months. He has worked tirelessly to help us build our tourism database, processing over 23,000 data points related to the demographics of tourists visiting our iCity volunteer kiosk. This data is a vital resource for identifying visitor trends and preferences in the City, and Joe has really embraced the task—managing the Excel spreadsheet and generating various graphs with great care and enthusiasm.

He takes genuine pride in this work and has shown a keen interest in uncovering patterns in visitor behaviour, whether it's shopping habits, requests for tour brochures, or questions about public amenities."



What's On

Details of the events below are in this newsletter, on our Events page (<https://www.downsyndrome.org.au/wa/news-and-events/events/>) page or contact the DSWA Team – admin@downsyndromewa.org.au



Get Involved

Family Support



This month, Nikki and Paula had the pleasure of welcoming a new family into our community!

PCH Outreach

Things have been a little quiet at PCH over the past few weeks, so please don't forget to give Nikki or Paula a call or text if you're there for an appointment or staying in a ward — we would love to come by and say hello.

We know this time of year can be tough, but you are not alone. We're here to help however we can, so please reach out if you need support.

You can find us at Ronald McDonald House on a Thursday, or email familysupport@downsyndromewa.org.au

Key Word Sign

We had a successful day at the Intermediate Key Word Sign course on Wednesday! Four families joined us, and everyone gained lots of new skills — including learning how to sign their names. It was a fun, engaging session for all involved!



Parents and Bubs Morning Tea

Morning Tea was a great success — sad to see it's our final one for the year! Cas, Nikki, and Paula were joined by four wonderful families for lots of laughs, great conversations, and plenty of cuddles.

We'd like to extend a heartfelt thank-you to all the families who have joined us throughout the year. We hope you've enjoyed connecting with one another as much as we have.

We look forward to seeing you all again next year!



Thank You



Regional Outreach

Barefoot Bowls was a big hit with our MidWest community, with lots of families coming together for a great chat and plenty of laughs!

A huge thank you to our volunteer Regional Representative Emily, who did an amazing job organising this family event — it was enjoyed by everyone who came along.



Open Employment Program



Ready for Work – Expression of Interest for 2026

In 2026, we plan to run our Ready for Work program.

This program is for people who want to start work but are not sure how to begin.

In this program, you will learn:

- what it is like to work in a workplace
- what you need to know before you start a job
- how to feel confident and ready for work

If you or someone you care for would like to join the Ready for Work program in

2026, please contact our Employment Coordinator, Lara

employment@downsyndromewa.org.au

New DSWA Staff Member

Tilly Geoghegan has started work in the office and is helping Lara, our Employment Coordinator.

For Inclusive Employment Week, Lara talked with Tilly about working in the DSWA office.

Read the questions Lara asked — and Tilly's answers — below.

How do you feel about working at DSWA?

"It's fun and it makes me happy."

What is your favourite part about working at DSWA?

"I love working."

How has working at DSWA helped you so far?

"It helps me being independent and confident."

Do you feel part of the team at DSWA?

"Loves the teamwork and loves the computer."

Congratulations Tilly!



Life Skills Lab

The Life Skills Lab Public Transport Course is complete and we are already looking forward to the next one in February 2026.

The final session saw us travel to Perth Underground along a route that we all planned as a group. We had 8 people on our final trip and everyone had a job to perform, from walking us to the right bus stop, picking the right train platform and letting everyone know when to get off at Perth, everyone did great.

100% of the course attendees said that they would recommend the course to somebody.

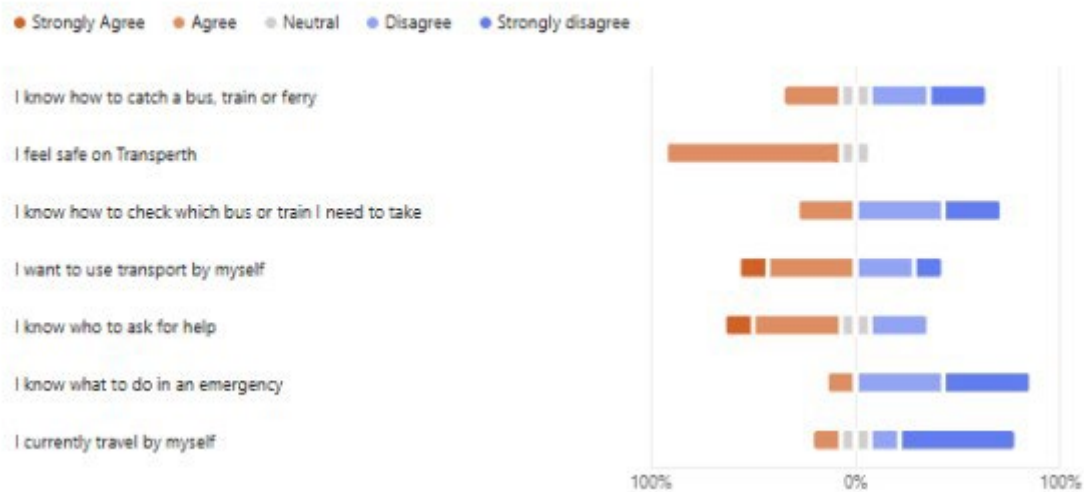
We are so proud of everyone who took part and improved their skills and took a step towards independent travel.

Take a look at our survey results from the 5 week Transport Course. These results show the improvement in skills that participants gained, which is exactly what this programme is all about.



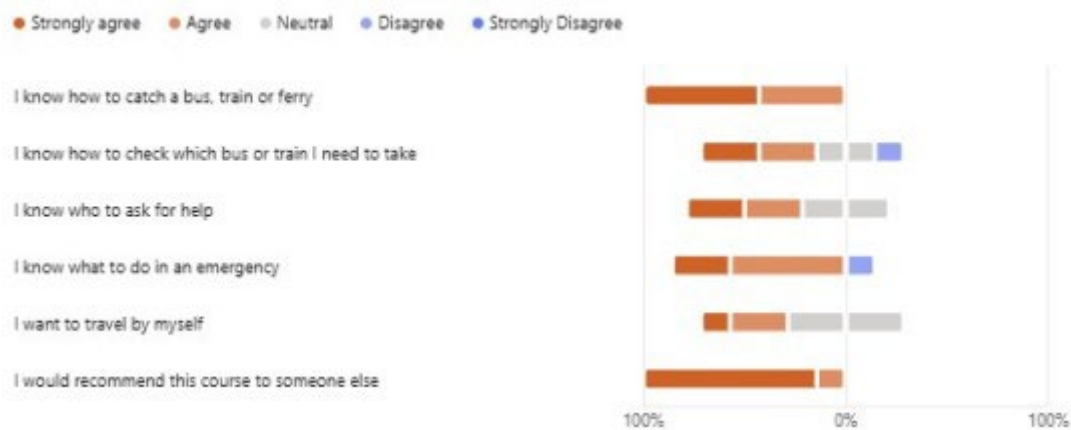
2. Survey questions

[More details](#)



4. Confidence statements

[More details](#)



We also need to recognise Transperth who is doing a lot of great work to support people with disabilities. If you want to find out more about what they are doing check out their website - Disability Assistance. <https://www.transperth.wa.gov.au/using-transperth/disability-assistance>



2026 will be a big year for the Life Skills Lab Project

This year, we ran many different workshops.

Next year, we will run even more.

Starting in January, we will run a new program called Living My Best Life.

- It is for people aged 16 and over.
- It will run every Wednesday for 5 weeks.
- The time is 9:00am to 3:00pm each day.
- It is a full day of learning and fun.

The program is being co-designed with our AAA members, so the sessions are fun, helpful and meaningful.

Each day will include learning, social time and enjoyable activities. You will learn small parts of different life skills.

Some of the activities include:

- 2 hours each week of Healthy Eating, including learning and cooking
- What to do in an emergency training with AAA
- Money management talks with role play
- Public transport training

Sign up for the Living My Best Life program at

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



Current Research Projects

We need your help to understand the support adults with neurodevelopmental conditions (NDC) need to manage their medicines and health

- Are you aged 18 years or older?
- Do you live in Australia?
- Are you a person with a NDC like autism, intellectual disability, ADHD or cerebral palsy?
- Do you get some support to manage your medicines and health?

- Or are you a person who gives some support to an adult with a NDC to manage their medicines and health?

We invite you to tell us about your experience in a short survey. This information will help us to understand how medicine review services and related health care can be improved for adults with NDC and those who support them.

Participant information and the survey can be accessed via this link:

<https://redcap.link/medicationsupportsurvey>



Playgroup East

Supported by



At Playgroup East this month our theme was 'In the Garden'. We searched for giant insects, took a ride on a giant caterpillar and even tried a round of (very) mini golf! As part of our song session, we planted some sugar snap peas. The seedlings are growing so fast and are currently 15cm tall. I wonder how much taller they will grow before I bring them to our next session?

Connections made at playgroup are so precious and we love to see our little ones exploring, developing skills and having lots of fun. Join us if you can for our final session of the year on Thursday 6th December from 9:30am. If you haven't joined us before, please send an email to familysupport@downsyndromewa.org.au and we'll know to expect you.

And stay tuned for exciting new Playgroup East developments in 2026!

Anita



Down Syndrome
Western Australia



City of
Belmont



PLAYGROUP EAST



Thursday 4th December

9:30am - 11:30am

Rivervale Community Centre



SUMMER WATER
FUN



Playgroup South

Proudly supported by
telethon
7

What a beautiful October and November we've had at Playgroup South! 💖

We baked monster cookies, dressed up for Halloween, got gloriously messy with our handprint flowerpot art, and soaked up the sunshine with some outdoor water play 🌞💧

To our lovely new members — you're welcome any Monday during the school term from, 9:30am to 11:30am. Just send an email to familysupport@downsyndromewa.org.au and we'll send you the detail

Renee and Nicole



Playgroup North



We've had a Neat November at Playgroup North!!

Our kiddos learned all about their Feelings (with corresponding Key Word Signs), had fruity fun with Apples and Bananas when we had a visit from the lovely Shelby from Bright Bunch Therapy, they cared for some poorly ducks for 5 Little Ducks/Vet

week and had loads of messy fun when our friends from Messy Mats visited.

We hope you can join us next month as we get into the festive spirit with loads of Christmas crafts PLUS our Kindy Kids Graduation Ceremony.

Playgroup North is run every Friday 9.30-11.30am during the school terms.

Please contact playgroups@downsyndromewa.org.au for more information.

Karina and Anita



Kids Club

Supported by



For our November event the Kids Club had a basketball fun day with Hoops Nation
🏀 Thanks to all who turned out and gave it a go! The event included general skills,

hoop shooting, energising games such as rob the nest and red light green light, and of course dodgeball to finish it off.

It was also great to welcome some new faces into kids club this month. It's amazing to see the group continue to grow.

Our next event will be the DSWA wide Christmas party, we look forward to seeing you all then!

We are in the process of planning the 2026 Kids Club calendar. Please let us know if there are any particular events you would like to see in next year's planner via the form below We look forward to hearing from you!

[Kids Club 2026 calendar event interests – Fill in form](#)

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 and Aim High

It was wonderful to see so many of you on Saturday! The creativity was next level — with lots of laughs, little chats, and plenty of concentration throughout the afternoon.

A big thank you to Bernadette for coming up with such great festive ideas, and to the support workers and parents who helped on the day. We appreciate you all!

We are looking forward to seeing those of you that have registered for the December event the DSWA Christmas Party. It is going to be a wonderful day full of Christmas festivities and catching up with friends.



Stay Connected

Supporting My Rights App

The Down Syndrome Australia Supporting My Rights app is here!

With the app, you can:

- Learn about your rights and navigate the NDIS with confidence.
- Help support workers understand and respect these rights.
- Access Easy Read resources, videos and stories that make rights clear.

The app has been co-designed and tested by people with Down syndrome and intellectual disability. It's practical, easy to use and accessible for everyone.

Download the app now:

Apple: <https://buff.ly/X6RjP3W>

Google Play: <https://buff.ly/NhPKNyZ>

Digital Champions Program

Want to help people with Down syndrome and other intellectual disability get more confident online?

Down Syndrome Australia and Good Things Foundation Australia are looking for Digital Champions!

The Digital Champions are a group of 10 people with intellectual disability.

Digital Champions learn new skills and help others in the community to:

- Have a say in the Digital Champion Program
- Support people with intellectual disability taking part
- Help peers and community groups understand online safety

This is a great way to make a difference and share your knowledge.

Find out more and apply today: <https://www.downsyndrome.org.au/national/about-us/our-work/digital-champions>



Razzamatazz Shows - Free Tickets

2025 Perth Razzamatazz Variety Shows - Free Tickets Now Available!

We are thrilled to invite Down Syndrome WA clients, participants and carers to attend our 2025 Perth Razzamatazz Variety Shows at Astor Theatre, Mount Lawley.

Shows:

- Sunday 7th December 11.30am, 1.30pm, 3.30pm
- Monday 8th December 10.30am, 12.30pm

To book your free tickets, please email your name, preferred showtime(s), and ticket numbers to meredithnewman@showintent.com.au or call / text 0404 367 782.

One hour shows. Suitable for all ages and accessible for people:

- with diverse abilities and needs (wheelchair accessible)
- who might require a more flexible and inclusive environment when attending the theatre (sensory-friendly).
- who are deaf or hearing-impaired (Auslan Interpreter at all shows).
- who are facing hardship.
- are without access or opportunity to live theatre.

*Featuring moving and flashing lights, and upbeat, sometimes dramatic music.

Lions Festival for Disadvantaged Children (WA) Inc. proudly presents...

2025 Razzamatazz Variety Show

The Razzamatazz Variety Show provides a live theatre experience for children, young adults, and families in the Greater Perth area. Featuring world-class acts performing astonishing circus skills, interactive magic, and comedy.

Audiences will enjoy a relaxed atmosphere, with a casual attitude to audience noise and movement in an accessible and inclusive environment, where they are welcomed and free to be themselves without restriction or judgement.

One hour shows. Suitable for all ages and accessible for people...

- with diverse abilities and needs (**wheelchair accessible**)
- who might require a more flexible and inclusive environment when attending the theatre (**sensory-friendly**).
- who are deaf or hearing-impaired (**Auslan Interpreter at all shows**).
- who are facing hardship.
- are without access or opportunity to live theatre.

*Featuring moving and flashing lights, and upbeat, sometimes dramatic music.

ALL TICKETS ARE COMPLIMENTARY, including parent, sibling and carer tickets. Thanks to sponsorship from local businesses.

*Bookings from staff, carers and families are all welcome.



Scan the QR Code to visit the shows website and watch highlights from previous shows...



ASTOR THEATRE PERTH - 659 Beaufort St, Mount Lawley WA

SHOW DATES	#1 SHOWTIME	#2 SHOWTIME	#3 SHOWTIME
SUNDAY, 7TH DECEMBER 2025	11.30 AM	1.30 PM	3.30 PM
MONDAY, 8TH DECEMBER 2025	10.30 AM	12.30 PM	

To book your free tickets, please email your name, preferred showtime(s), and ticket numbers to...

meredithnewman@showintent.com.au

or call / text 0404-367-782



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