



Changes to DSWA emails to our community

As you may have noticed lately we have been having issues with the system we use to send emails to our community. We apologise for any frustration caused to members, this issue was outside of DSWA control.

We are pleased to be returning to MailChimp to send our emails. If you miss an email or receive one in error please get in touch so we can update your details - admin@downsyndromewa.org.au



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Dear Members

February has been full of activity across our programs, events and advocacy work.

Our Living My Best Life five-week course concluded this month with wonderful feedback. I had the opportunity to attend one of the cooking sessions and it was fantastic to see the members' enthusiasm and growing confidence in preparing and cooking food. Thank you to Debbie and Daniel from FYI Everybody Cooks, and to Kern and the team, for delivering such a practical and empowering program.

Although I sadly missed the February Parent and Bub morning tea (an event I try to attend each quarter), it was great to see a strong turnout in the southern suburbs and to know new families are connecting early.

Our playgroups continue to thrive. We now offer weekly sessions on:

- Monday – Baldivis
- Tuesday – Rivervale
- Friday – Gwelup

It is wonderful to see families engaging across all three locations.

Our age-based social groups are also back in full swing. KiDS Club, FriendS for Life and Aim High are running monthly programs again, delivered both north and south of the river. I encourage members to get involved and make the most of these opportunities to connect.

World Down Syndrome Day is almost here. I hope our adult members will enter the ballot to Take a Leap for DSWA – On behalf of the CEO at <https://forms.office.com/r/jSiEMTStpN>. Unfortunately, I will miss this year's family picnic, but I look forward to seeing the photos and celebrating from afar.

Gala season is also fast approaching — one of my favourite events of the year.

Tickets are now on sale, and the DSWA Advisory Network (DSWAAN) are working hard preparing ideas and speeches for what promises to be a memorable evening.

We are currently seeking at least two additional DSWAAN members. This is a program designed to build skills, confidence and knowledge — it is about growth and opportunity, not just public speaking. If you or someone you know may be interested, please reach out.

I have also attended a number of positive stakeholder meetings this month, including with MLA Cassie Rowe (Member for Belmont), the Department of Communities, Chamber of Commerce, Leadership WA and several business partners. Strengthening these relationships is critical to ensuring the voice of our community is heard.

Finally, we have seen a concerning increase in advocacy matters raised with us in recent weeks, particularly relating to Health, Education, and the NDIS.

Families are reporting issues including:

- Requests to reconfirm a Down syndrome diagnosis
- Significant funding reductions where support needs have not been appropriately recognised
- Decisions that appear inconsistent with existing medical documentation

We are also aware that recent service delivery changes, including outsourced contact services, are creating additional challenges in attempting to resolve matters with outcomes being hard to achieve despite elevating issues to the highest levels.

While DSWA is not formally funded to provide individual advocacy, we remain committed to supporting our community wherever possible. We continue to raise systemic concerns through appropriate channels and will keep working toward fair and reasonable outcomes for families.

Warm regards
Cassandra
Cassandra Hughes
ceo@downsyndromewa.org.au

What's On

Looking for more information about an event? Find it in this issue of the eNews, visit our Events page - <https://www.downsyndrome.org.au/wa/news-and-events/events/>, or contact the DSWA Team - admin@downsyndromewa.org.au or 08 6182 3690.



World Down Syndrome Day

Come and celebrate World Down Syndrome Day 2026!

Take the Leap for DSWA

We're hosting an unforgettable Zipline Fundraiser, and you're invited to be one of just 32 brave adventurers to take the leap!

What's involved?

- \$50 sign-up fee (credited toward your zipline experience)
- Plus fundraise or self-fund \$300 per participant

For more information and to register follow this link

<https://www.downsyndrome.org.au/blog/event/dswa-take-the-leap-for-dswa/>

Annual Community Picnic

We will be holding our annual World Down Syndrome Day family picnic on the grass at Burswood Park (at the base of the Zipline). This is a free event and we would love to see the whole community there. Bring a picnic and cheer on the brave zipliners as they soar in for their final landing.

[Register for the picnic on our Facebook event to let us know you're coming and receive all the updates –](https://www.facebook.com/events/1411064914040065/)

<https://www.facebook.com/events/1411064914040065/>

Lots of Socks Fundraisers

Get involved this World Down Syndrome Day (WDSD) by hosting a Lots of Socks Day at your workplace, school or community group.

Ask everyone to wear their brightest and most interesting socks and make a gold coin donation to DSWA.

WDSD falls on Saturday 21 March, but you can host your Lots of Socks Day on any date that works best for you!

Add your donation at <https://www.mycase.com.au/page/388193/dswa-lots-of-socks-fundraiser-2026>

[For more information, see](https://www.downsyndrome.org.au/blog/2026/02/16/dswa-lots-of-socks-2/)

<https://www.downsyndrome.org.au/blog/2026/02/16/dswa-lots-of-socks-2/>

WA Lights Up for WDSD

WA is lighting up to celebrate World Down Syndrome Day!

Go to our website to see the locations and share your photos with us on socials: <https://www.downsyndrome.org.au/blog/2026/02/26/dswa-wa-is-lighting-up-for-world-down-syndrome-day/>

DSWA Gala

It is almost time for the 2026 Gala and we can't wait to see you there.

The event will be hosted at the beautiful Pan Pacific Hotel Perth and we will again be entertained by the fabulous The Drycleaners Band.

Early bird tickets are on sale now. \$150 each
Tickets for Adults with Ds are also now on sale \$115. These are at cost price and only available for those that have Down syndrome. Carers, please purchase a full price ticket. (No companion cards are available for this event)

Early bird ticket sales close on 4 April. Tables can again be reserved by emailing admin@downsyndromewa.org.au

Reserved tables can only be held until 18 April if unpaid.

This is an 18yrs and over event.

Book Here <https://www.trybooking.com/DIMTC>



Emotional Resilience Workshop

Workshop on Emotional Resilience and Wellbeing for Parents and Carers of a person with Down syndrome

In May, we're thrilled to welcome Steve Wells, an internationally recognised psychologist and parent of an adult son with Down syndrome here in WA, for a practical and empowering workshop on emotional resilience.

This amazing workshop is sponsored by Aimees' Fund. There is a small cost of \$10 per attendee for catering.



If you are feeling stretched, overwhelmed, or worn down by the pressures of parenting or caring this course is designed specifically for parents and carers. This session focuses on real-life challenges—stress, uncertainty, systems fatigue, and emotional overload—and offers clear, usable tools to help you regain calm, clarity, and confidence, even in tough moments.

Steve is known for translating complex psychology into simple, effective strategies you can use straight away. You'll learn practical techniques to manage stress, regulate emotions, recover from setbacks, and build resilience for yourself and your family.

With decades of experience supporting families, educators, and leaders—and a deep personal understanding of the Down syndrome journey—Steve delivers a session that is grounded, relatable, and genuinely helpful. This is a chance to walk away with tangible skills that support not just surviving, but thriving

Register to attend at: <https://www.trybooking.com/DJPUJ>

Tools for Tough Days

A Parenting Wellness Workshop

Practical tools for Parents and Carers to regain their calm, clarity, and confidence, even in tough moments

Presented by:



Steve Wells

International Speaker,
Psychologist, & Perth father
of a child with Down
syndrome

Secure Your Spot!



Light afternoon
tea provided

only
\$10

Will be held on

- Sunday 3 May ●
- Start at 1:00pm ●
- Venue TBC - Central Location ●



CELEBRATING **40** 1986 - 2026

Get Involved

Family Support Team



Family Support

Our Family support team have had a great month organizing the World Down Syndrome Day fundraiser and Ziplining event, Parents and Bubs morning Tea and the Educator Professional Learning Day.

We welcomed 4 new babies to our community and supported 2 prenatal parents.

PCH Outreach

Nikki and Paula are at PCH on a rotational basis every Thursday. They'll be so happy to see you if you're attending an appointment or staying as an inpatient on a ward.

If you would like to see us, please don't hesitate to contact us via our mobile numbers or email us at familysupport@downsyndromewa.org.au

Nikki: 0480 311 739
Paula: 0435 831 085

Parents and Bubs

DSWA's very first Parents & Bubs Morning Tea for 2026 was recently held at Ellie's Café in Baldivis, bringing together families in a warm and welcoming setting.

Nikki, Paula and Renee were joined by four families with little ones under two years old. It was especially lovely to meet one new little bub and to see families who have been part of the DSWA community warmly welcome them.

The morning was filled with open and supportive conversations — from diagnosis and birth stories to navigating the NDIS and early intervention. We also made sure families were aware of upcoming playgroups and community activities, helping everyone feel connected and informed about what's ahead.

We're so pleased to see these early connections forming and look forward to seeing even more families at our next catch-up in Term 2.



Annual Educator Professional Learning Day – Building Confidence in Inclusive Education

DSWA's annual Educator Professional Learning Day was held on 20 February, bringing together 49 educators from 25 schools across Western Australia. Participants joined us both in person and online for a full day of learning, connection and practical strategies.

The day featured presentations from DSWA staff Nikki and Cassandra, alongside valued guest presenters from SECCA, SEND and Joondalup Education Support Centre. Sessions covered important and practical topics including boundary setting and protective behaviours, classroom adaptations, early literacy and numeracy development, and the use of Functional Behaviour Assessments to support students in the classroom.

We were also privileged to hear from DSWAAN member Jessica Toster, who shared her personal schooling journey and experiences of life after school. Her insights were both inspiring and deeply valued by attendees.

Educators shared that they left the day feeling more confident and better equipped to support their students with Down syndrome.

What participants said:

"Loved Jessica Toster's experience, especially her experience in a country school."

"The activities with Bri from Joondalup ESC were really helpful, practical and relevant to students with Down syndrome."

Thank you to all who attended and contributed to such a meaningful and impactful day of professional learning."



Open Employment Program



Two members have got new jobs through DSWA's employment program.

Next month we will share photos of them in their new workplaces.

If you are looking for a job send an email to employment@downsyndromewa.org.au

We will then talk to you about what we need to help you get a job.

Do you know the steps to getting a job?

- Discovery – working out what you might like to do.
- Ready for Work course – 5 weeks. Running all through the year.
- Resume, Cover Letter and Video Resumes – we can help with those.

- We find an employer right for you.
- You start work.
- We provide the mentor for you until you can do the job independently.
- We also offer transport training if you need to catch public transport for work.

Ready for Work Program

We were happy to run our first Ready for Work program in January and February. It was a five-week course to help people feel confident and learn work skills.

Five DSWA members, aged 18 to 33, joined the program.

In the first two weeks, participants learned about themselves. They talked about what they like and don't like, their strengths, and things that might be hard at work. This helped them think about jobs that might suit them.

In the last three weeks, they learned practical work skills. They made resumes (some written, some as videos), practiced interviews, and talked about what is expected at work, like how to dress and what makes a good employee.

It was great to see everyone's confidence grow. Each person learned important skills to help them get a job. We are excited to see what they do next!

Congratulations to Lileigh, James, Jessica, Izzie and Gabrielle for finishing the course.

The next Ready for Work course will start on Tuesday 24th March in the Peel area.

You can book at <https://www.trybooking.com/DIXTD>

We will be running this program, again in the metro area. To express your interest please email employment@downsyndromewa.org.au.

Do you have 4 people who are interested in the Ready to Work program? We can organise a program near you.



Life Skills Lab



Life Skills Lab has started 2026 in a great way!

Don't just take our word for it—go to the Aim High Facebook page and watch a video from someone who joined our Living My Best Life five-week course - <https://www.facebook.com/groups/aimhighclub>

We ran six hours of activities every Wednesday for five weeks.

[fyieverybodycooks](#) helped with the cooking classes.

First Steps Academy helped us with money management classes.

We worked with DSWAAN for three months to plan the course.

We had many meetings to make sure the course was right for our participants and helped them learn skills to live their best life.

We asked everyone what “living your best life” means to them. People gave different answers:

- Living on their own
- Getting a job

- Becoming a TikTok influencer

Living on your own means learning many different skills. Everyone in the course improved their skills.

In the future, we will run more classes to teach these skills. This includes:

- Learning about scammers
- How to safely cut fruit and vegetables

All of these skills are important.

Our events email goes out once a month. It tells you about all our Life Skills Lab events. Make sure you read it. We are also planning new events.

We are working on:

- A personal care course – complete this quick form, tell us your story, and help others – <https://forms.office.com/r/bA5LXBDc9s>
- Another Public Transport Course
- A Forum at the start of May about independent living, microboards, NDIS funding, nutrition, and what “living your best life” means.



Coffee Club for people over 35.

We have a great opportunity for anyone aged 35+.

It will run every Monday from 10am – 11:30am.

The Coffee Club will be in Perth city, close to Perth Underground Station, so it is easy for everyone to get to.

Let us know you are coming: <https://www.trybooking.com/DJJAW>

Playgroups



Welcome back to Playgroups for 2026! For the first time, we have had three Playgroups running weekly, thanks to Telethon and the City of Belmont. Families can attend any of the Playgroups either weekly or casually as you are able to - You are always welcome!

It has been fantastic to welcome new and familiar faces as we dived into a 'Splish Splash Sea' theme, just perfect for summer! Our families in the South, North and East enjoyed exploring the sights, sounds, textures and of the ocean through sensory play, arts and crafts, water play, songs and so much more. At Playgroup North, we also had Laura from 'Made to Be Messy' set up a gorgeous array of sensory experiences for our kids to get their hands (and whole bodies) into!

I love how the children experience Playgroup in their own way, from gorgeous, sleepy babies taking in the sights and sounds, to delightfully busy toddlers and creative pre-schoolers with so much energy! Developing a sense of community and being available to support one another is just so precious too. We have so much fun with you all!

Here is what two of our families have to say about Playgroup:

"Everything was so nicely organised, Batoor had lots of fun...he could play there the whole day!" Dana

"I joined Playgroup recently with my daughter Croíadh who is 2 years 8 months. It has been so lovely to meet other children with Down Syndrome the same age as Croíadh and watch them interact with each other. It has also been great to meet other parents of children with Down Syndrome and chat to them about our children, upcoming schooling and life in general. There have been lots of activities for the children to do there and also siblings are welcome if they are not at school." Clíodhna

Would you like to join Playgroup? Contact the team at familysupport@downsyndromewa.org.au



Kids Club



STAN PERRON
CHARITABLE
FOUNDATION

The Kids Club had a great start to the year with a yoga session with Sacred Yoga.

We went on a trip under the ocean with kids yoga, before finishing the session with sound therapy. It was good to see everyone so relaxed, it was a great way to start the year.

Our first term will see yoga, a trip to the zoo, and a circus workshop. Make sure to join the [Kids Club Facebook](#) group to stay up to date with upcoming events.

Our next event is a trip to the zoo! Join us for a Habitat Heroes incursion, before a morning tea and zoo explore. Check out the details below:

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

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

FrienDS 4 Life celebrates a successful first event — and gets ready for the next!

Our very first FrienDS 4 Life event was a wonderful success, with families coming together for a fun and memorable day of bowling at Super Bowl Warwick.

The session was filled with plenty of smiles as our young teens had the chance to catch up with old friends and meet new people through some friendly competition in a relaxed social setting.

It was also incredibly special to see so many families connecting with one another — especially those who were new to our community.

FrienDS 4 Life is all about supporting our kids to build genuine, meaningful and lifelong friendships within our amazing community, and our first event truly showed just how powerful these opportunities can be.

After such a positive and successful first session, we are excited to announce that we are now planning our next FrienDS 4 Life event — a hands-on cooking and baking experience to celebrate World Down Syndrome Day led by [fyieverybodycooks](#).

We can't wait to welcome all our families back for another fun-filled event. Whether you joined us at our very first session or are thinking about coming along for the first time, we would absolutely love to see you there.

More details will be coming soon — for now, please save the date and keep Friday 14 March free in your calendar.





Aim High started 2026 with a pub meal in Fremantle. More than 10 people came along.

We sat, relaxed, and talked about lots of things — from work to sharks!

The food at Cicerellos was delicious, and the meals were very big. Luckily, we could take leftovers home to eat later.

The evening went very fast.

It was great to meet new people and catch up with old friends.



We will have more pub meals during the year because they are a great chance to chat and talk about people's interests.

Our next Aim High event is zip lining for World Down Syndrome Day.

Do you want to zip line and raise money for DSWA this World Down Syndrome Day?

There are limited places to zip line from Matagarup Bridge on 21 March 2026. We are also celebrating 40 years of Down Syndrome WA.

If you have been thinking about signing up, now is the time!

For more information, click the link below:

<https://www.downsyndrome.org.au/blog/event/dswa-take-the-leap-for-dswa/>

2026 WA Intellectual Disability and Autism & Deaf Hard Of Hearing Open

Tournament:

Tennis West are excited to host the **2026 WA IDA & DHoH**

Open at **Alexander Park Tennis Club** on **March 21-22, 2026!** This tournament is part of our signature series with Australian Ranking points on offer.

Registrations are now open for Womens, Mens, Boys and Girls singles and doubles in both Deaf and Hard of Hearing and Intellectual Disability and Autism categories. To enter go to

<https://tournaments.tennis.com.au/tournament/dd6ae563-669e-4d71-a030-a47c085fbf19>

Come & Try session:

Not ready to compete just yet? We have a session for you! If you'd love to try the Deaf and Hard of Hearing or Intellectual Disability and Autism streams but aren't familiar with the rules or skills of the game, fill out this expression of interest form and we'll share all the fun Come and Try details for the competition

weekend! <https://airtable.com/appxtYbxrj45G2YZw/shrRlixMLkjPuQGwS>

Weekly Tennis Lessons

Special Olympics

We have just begun a six-week pilot Special Olympics Tennis program at Loton Park Tennis Club. Registrations newcomers are still welcome to join!

Contact:

Charlie Brierley, Tennis West
Mob: 0479 179 482



Signature Series Tournament with Aus Ranking Points on offer!

WA IDA & DHoH Open

21 - 22 March 2026

For players with intellectual disability or autism or who
are deaf or hard of hearing

Alexander Park Tennis Club

Surface: Grass

Entries close 14 March

Siblings Australia Workshops

Life Changes Workshops

Life Changes is a skills building program that seeks to empower people with disability and their adult siblings to navigate the ups and downs of life together.

Facilitated workshops will introduce you to strength-based approaches, like supported decision making, future mapping and using person centred tools to solve challenges.

Workshops are free, with separate groups for siblings and people with a disability over the age of 16.

Want more information? Register your interest in three easy steps:

- 1 Click the Life Changes link: <https://siblingsaustralia.org.au/services/life-changes/>
- 2 Complete the online registration form.
- 3 We'll get in touch with you.

Note: Workshops are run in separate groups for siblings and people with a disability, and the minimum age for attendees is 16 years.

SibWorks Workshops

Siblings Australia are excited to host their first SibWorks workshops for 2026, and this year they are a little different.

The nationally recognised SibWorks program is running in-person and online so all sibling children (the brothers and sisters of someone with a disability or chronic illness) aged 8–12, can access this program, which is designed to support emotional wellbeing, resilience and connection.

Give your sibling child the opportunity to build connections, develop new skills and have fun in a safe, nurturing space or perhaps your work brings you into contact with siblings of children with disability, and you'd like to do more to support these children through your professional practice?

Whether you'd like to register your child or find out more about becoming a facilitator, click the link for more information: <https://bit.ly/SibWorksbySiblingsAustralia>



Sculpture By the Sea

Sculpture by the Sea, Cottesloe is offering tactile tours for people with disability, including those who are vision-impaired.

Touch selected sculptures, hear their stories with DADAA trained guides, and enjoy a relaxed, sensory-rich experience by the beach.

These are free of charge events for visitors with disability, friends and families.

Weekday Tours 10.15am & 11.30am
Monday 9 March– Friday 13 March
Monday 16 March – Friday 20 March

Evening Tours 6.00pm
Thursday 12 March and
Thursday 19 March

Auslan Interpreted Tour 10.15am
Wednesday 18 March

Weekend Tour 10.15am and 11.30am
Saturday 14 March

For more information:

Please contact DADAA Access & Inclusion Producer, Jacqueline Homer
Email jacqueline@dadaa.org.au or 9430 6616



FEEL THE ART COME ALIVE

Sculpture by the Sea, Cottesloe is offering tactile tours for people with disability, including those who are vision-impaired. Touch selected sculptures, hear their stories with DADAA trained guides, and enjoy a relaxed, sensory-rich experience by the beach. These are free of charge events for visitors with disability, friends and families.

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Thursday 12 March and
Thursday 19 March

Auslan Interpreted Tour 10.15am
Wednesday 18 March

Weekend Tour 10.15am and 11.30am
Saturday 14 March

BOOKINGS ARE ESSENTIAL (there are a limited number of places per tour).

All bookings will be confirmed by email. All Access & Inclusion Tours last up to an hour.

Please complete the booking form. Your booking will be confirmed by email to jacqueline@dadaa.org.au.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

Please contact DADAA Access & Inclusion Producer

Jacqueline Homer: email jacqueline@dadaa.org.au

If you require any assistance, please contact Jacqueline on 9430 6616



Compliments & Complaints

We always welcome your feedback and suggestions. Send your feedback to admin@downsyndromewa.org.au, use our [online form](#) or see the website for other methods - <https://www.downsyndrome.org.au/wa/about-us/feedback/>



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