

Parent Focus News

Many new and familiar faces gathered for the May meeting of Parent Focus to hear guest speaker Laura Jones speak so passionately on Conductive Education and her role as teacher-conductor within the pilot programme at Carson Street School.

An educative and holistic approach, using facilitation to empower and motivate our children with cerebral palsy and other neurological disorders, Conductive Education is nothing new to Western Australia. In private practice, Ildiko Szivek has been embedding the principles of Conductive Education into the daily lives of many of our children and their families over the past 13 years.

Until recently, lack of available positions with Ildiko has meant frustration for a number of our families unable to access Conductive Education. The pilot program at Carson Street School in East Victoria Park means that children of Kindergarten to Year 1 age are now able to access Conductive Education free of charge for up to 3 days of each week to complement the child's mainstream educational experience.

There is also 'School for Parents', which "aims to develop parents' skills and confidence in supporting their (pre-school) child during the vital early years of life (0 - 4)".

Questions to Laura and Carson Street School Principal John Exeter flowed freely at the end of a most informative session. A couple of our

Mums who are already committed to the program spoke openly of the tangible results they are seeing in their own children, and they are happy to talk to you if you wish.

Laura encourages you to go along to Carson Street School for an opportunity to see the program in action. Contact either Laura Jones or John Exeter on (08) 9361 7500 to make arrangements.

Many thanks to both Laura and John for spending the morning with Parent Focus.

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I'm sure those of you who threw caution to the wind to celebrate Family Week on Friday the 13th at the Beach House will back me up and say what a top evening it was! So great to see families enjoying the facilities, and a chance to catch up. I wonder if a reckless stint in the jumpy castle with my 4 year old has anything to do with the muscles I feel today that I didn't even know existed?

Thank you to Daniel, CPAWA and everyone involved in making the evening possible... also to the Beach House and CPAWA staff members who kindly volunteered their time to ensure the kids had access to as much fun as they could handle.

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Well, with rain gauges overflowing and 'mini-tornados' the talk of the town, a group of 16 Parent Focus Mums from as far afield as Busselton and

Australind are eagerly anticipating calm seas as they head to Rottneest Island for a short break over the weekend of 20 - 22 May.

With thanks to Carers WA and the Red Cross Carer Respite Centre, Sam, Wendy and Amanda have burned the midnight oil and met a number of challenges to plan a fun-filled, relaxing and well deserved weekend in great company. Inclement weather doesn't faze us, because we know the wine will be cool and the conversation warm.

Keep an eye out for the post-trip write up and photos in the next edition of Brand News - which will hopefully go a long way towards convincing YOU to join us next time!

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Our next meeting is planned for 15th June. There are some *really terrific things* planned for the upcoming months at Parent Focus, so if you're not already receiving the flyer two weeks before each meeting, get on board and contact Sam on 9305 9713 or Odette at CPAWA on 9443 0219 with your mailing details.

In closing, we send Katrina (Trevor, Kaiden and Riley) our love and all good wishes as they await the arrival of the latest addition to the Granland family - and are secretly relieved that the baby won't be born on Rottneest!

All the best to you and yours

Clare Masolin



Goodwill Industries
337 Victoria Road
MALAGA
Ph 9249 3444

Awards for May

Reliable Worker of the Month



Ian Gelley

Safe Worker of the Month



Chris Milburn

Employee of the Month



Trevor Corboy

CEO's Corner

Hello

The recently announced 2005-06 Commonwealth budget brought mixed news as the Australian Government announced a substantial 'welfare-to-work' package, worth \$3.6 billion over four years.

A key direction that the Government wishes to tackle is the significant number of people in receipt of Disability Support Pensions (DSP).

Eligibility for the DSP will tighten from 1 July 2006, however this will not affect current recipients who have had their benefits 'preserved'. This means that their entitlements will not be eroded. Furthermore, there are no changes foreshadowed for recipients of the blind pension.

Currently, a person is eligible for the DSP if, because of a disability, they are unable to work 30 hours or more at full award wages. From 1 July 2006, this will be reduced to 15 hours for all new recipients.

Our peak body ACROD reports that "New obligations, incentives and assistance for future DSP applicants able to work 15-29 hours will be introduced. They will be required to undertake job search activities and meet part-time requirements such as part-time employment, education or part-time work for the dole.

"The 15-29 hour group will receive the Pensioner Concession Card, Pharmaceutical Allowance and Telephone Allowance and be eligible for a once-a-year Employment Entry Payment of \$312. They will also be eligible for an increased Mobility Allowance (up from \$69.70 to \$100 per fortnight from 1 July 2006).

"Anyone on DSP who is being assisted by an employment service provider will also be eligible to receive this increased Mobility Allowance.

"People who leave the DSP because of earnings from work will

be able to return to the DSP, for any reason, within two years. People with disabilities who move into work will be able to keep their Pensioner Concession Card for 12 months if they lose entitlement to DSP, Newstart Allowance (NSA) or Youth Allowance (YA) because of earnings."

A revised income test for all working age allowances (including NSA and YA) will reduce the rate at which income support payments decrease as earnings increase. It will thereby lessen the financial disincentive to work. The amount of this income test was not available at the time of writing this article.

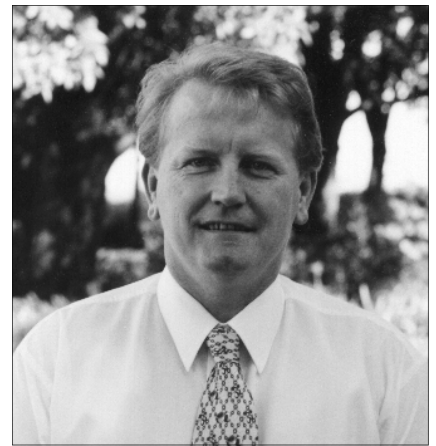
To support these changes, 20,600 new disability open employment places will be created at a cost of \$170 million over four years. Other new places over the next four years include:

- 42,000 vocational rehabilitation places
- 137,000 places for Job Network.

Funding has also been announced to boost employer demand for workers with a disability. These include the establishment of an information service, and additional funding for both the wage subsidy scheme (\$12 million) and the workplace modifications scheme (\$29 million). The Government will also spend \$29 million over four years on a communication strategy to promote workforce participation to the community and target groups.

Whilst the proposed changes for prospective recipients of DSP have the potential to cause hardship (for instance, Newstart Allowance is less than the DSP), if prospective employment options can be significantly increased, more positive opportunities may exist for this group in the future. This will need to be closely monitored.

The Association will seek to strongly position our employment service 'Access Employment' in



John Knowles

this new environment.

In respect to carers payments, recipients of the Carer Payment will receive a \$1,000 bonus, and recipients of the Carer Allowance a \$600 bonus by the end of June.

Changes, at a cost of \$3.4 million, will be made to the Carer Allowance (Child), with the listing of new conditions and the modifying of some of the disability or medical condition eligibility descriptors in the Lists of Recognised Disabilities that entitle families to the Carers Allowance.

A review of the Lists was held to determine whether they were providing a consistent and objective means of assessing eligibility for the Carer Allowance. Some of the proposed changes were causing concern amongst some of our families and the Association made a submission to this review.

The Government has adopted most of the recommendations by the independent review panel, which was made up of peak disability and carer organisations and specialists in childhood disability.

According to the Federal Minister, the adopted recommendations included:

- adding some conditions to the Lists such as Asperger's Disorder and Lamellar ichthyosis
- modifying the descriptions of some existing conditions
- developing new categories to simplify the Lists and allowing for the future inclusion of other conditions
- increasing the flexibility and

CEO Corner continued...

longevity of the Lists without compromising their integrity

- streamlining the assessment process for medical practitioners.

If a child has a disability or medical condition on the Lists their parent or carer can be fast tracked on to Carer Allowance with no need for further medical assessment until the child's 16th birthday.

As part of its election commitments the Howard Government will also increase the number of hours that a carer may work or study without losing qualification for Carer Payment, from 20 to 25 hours per week from 1 April 2005.

For Business Services such as Goodwill Industries, there are no further changes foreshadowed in the budget. Given all the recent change to funding, accreditation etc, this benign outcome is very welcome!

The National Respite for Carers program has been expanded by \$207.6 million over four years to provide respite care to an estimated 50,000 carers, including:

- Respite Care to assist carers in paid employment and carers re-entering the workforce
- Overnight respite in community respite houses: funding will also support the development of specific standards and reporting requirements for community respite houses
- Rural and Regional respite services.

The Continence Aids Assistance Scheme has been increased by \$29.2m over four years. It has not been possible to determine if this includes an increase in the actual subsidy or if it is just a growth initiative or both, but we will advise families as more information comes to hand.

John Knowles
Chief Executive Officer

Inaccessible - Unacceptable Campaign

In conjunction with the Australian Federation of Disability Organisation (AFDO), the Physical Disability Council of Australia (PDCA) is proposing to build a team of people across Australia, to work on the issue of access and inclusion in our society.

Action will include events such as 'sit ins', staged one day per state, some time before the end of June, to expose inaccessible or inappropriate access to public places.

In the meantime, the organisers want interested people to provide their names and contact details, indicating what state they are from – capital city residents are best. They also need participants to identify inaccessible public buildings in their city such as shops, government buildings, public services such as insurance, tax, accounting, doctor, dental etc. This information should be sent to pdca@pdca.org.au.

Grace Reid
Member Liaison Officer

ARE YOU ELIGIBLE FOR SUBSIDIES FROM THE OFFICE OF STATE REVENUE?

The West Australian Government has introduced the Life Support Equipment Energy Subsidy to help pay for the cost of electricity for operating medically prescribed home based life support equipment.

The following table lists the equipment and the annual subsidy.

Equipment	Annual Subsidy Amount
Ventilators	\$214
Oxygen Concentrators (adult)	\$408
Oxygen Concentrators (child)	\$612
Feeding Pumps	\$73
Suction Pumps	\$98
Apnoea Monitors (child only)	\$122
Nebulisers (child only)	\$24

To be eligible you must be a holder of one of the following:

- Pensioner Concession Card
- Health Care Card or
- Health Care Interim Voucher.

In the case of children, parents or the primary caregiver will be eligible for the subsidy on behalf of the children if the parent or primary caregiver is the holder of one of the above cards.

For more information on how to apply for the subsidy please contact the Office of State Revenue on 9262 1373 or visit their website

www.osr.wa.gov.au.

Linda Kelly
Manager, Children's Respite Services



Changing Address?

If we do not know where you live, you will not receive Brand News. Make sure we keep in touch with you. Please complete the section below and return to us.

Old Address

New Address

Name _____

Name _____

Address _____

Address _____

Postcode _____

Postcode _____

Phone Number _____

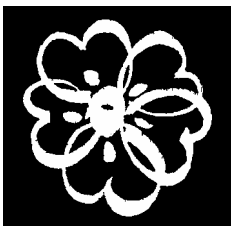
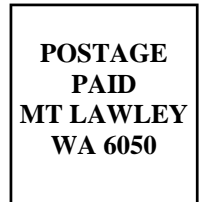
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Return slip to: The CEO, The Cerebral Palsy Association of WA, PO Box 61, Mt Lawley, 6929

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Complete this form whenever you see a staff member/volunteer practising random acts of kindness - or just when something good happens.

Whom would you like to thank? _____

What happened and why was this special to you? _____

Can we publish this in our staff newsletter In Touch? Yes / No

Your name: _____ Contact number: _____ Date: _____

Please return this form directly to
The Chief Executive Officer, Cerebral Palsy Association of WA, 106 Bradford St, Coolbinia 6050