

Shared Visions

disability conference 2009



Times are changing

Facts, figures, fire words

A "big shift" in demographics, fresh and funny approaches to communication, and an introduction to a new Minister for Disability Services were among the first-day highlights of the Shared Visions Disability Conference 2009.

Following a generous sharing of language and personal experience by Auntie Carol Currie, from Brisbane Council of Elders, Disability Services Minister Anastacia Palaszczuk spoke of the new vision that she is planning to take forward. She covered recent developments such as Australia signing the Human Rights Convention for People With a Disability, Queensland's commitment to the National Disability Agreement, and the proposed National Disability Insurance Scheme, aired earlier this week by Federal Parliamentary Secretary for Disabilities Bill Shorten.

"An exciting initiative arising out of the 2020 Summit is the concept of a National Disability Insurance Scheme," Anastacia said. "This is something that I'm very keen to explore."

Other priorities the Minister outlined included improving the lives of children with a disability, early intervention,



support for carers, alternative living arrangements for younger people in nursing homes, the needs of service providers and the rights of individuals.

The Minister shared some of her personal interest in the disability sector, including working as a senior policy officer under former Minister



Warren Pitt, and her experiences of meeting people with a disability and dealing with their concerns.

Facilitator Robyn Moore shared some of her wisdom in the art of communication, advising that the "bugger-me" factor could pull at the heartstrings and, more importantly, make things happen. Robyn inspired the 500-plus crowd with her musings on the value of laughter, the ability to "access our abundance", and the strategies advertisers use to get messages across.

Robyn discussed her work with children from the Make a Wish Foundation, and passed on her learnings, such as "intentionality", "words of fire" and putting the "urgency before the emergency".

Trend forecaster Bernard Salt took a starkly different but equally fascinating approach, informing delegates of the trends facing the disability sector.

Bernard covered the issues of: a threatening skills shortage, the sector's ageing workforce, the challenges of rapid population growth, and the need to plan for the changes ahead.

His presentation will be available at www.disability.qld.gov.au/community/shared-visions

Brisbane Convention and Exhibition Centre 2-3 April 2009



Queensland Government
Disability Services Queensland

From the people



1. Alissa Phillips

By being here as a congregation I think we're more likely to come up with innovative answers as opposed to everyone trying their own thing. There's a sense of community.



2. Sue Duncan-Kemp

The conference is about a chance to reflect, renew, revitalise, rethink.



3. Chris Grimes

I enjoyed Robyn's comments on how important it is to use humour in our messages. And her point about the tools used that they use in advertising to get their message across.

4. Scott Green

It's a great opportunity for people to meet and share their stories, and work out how services can connect to assist people. And it's great to hear what new initiatives the governments are bringing forward too.

5. Leanne Walsh

I think it's really great that we have a new Minister with fresh ideas, someone's who sounds quite passionate, someone who has a general interest in disabilities. It's things like this that can get things up and going, and it takes people like us to let her know what our thoughts are and what changes we think need to be in place and hopefully she'll take that on board.

6. Sandra de Jersey

We work in employment for people with a disability so I guess we're looking to get some ideas of how to work with them, better opportunities for them, and how to break down the barriers of people's perceptions.



Lesson in communication



The only problem with concurrent sessions of course is choosing which one to attend. For those who heard 18-year-old Marlena Katene, *above*, the experience during yesterday's plenary sessions brought them into a contact with a bravely honest, informative, and cheekily entertaining young woman.

Speaking with the aid of an ABC board and dynovox, along with her valued friend and facilitator Bert Hibbert, Marlena presented "I may be non-verbal but I got a lot to say".

Marlena discussed the importance of accessing tools for communication. Marlena considered herself lucky that she's had people around her who have been willing to listen, advocates that have helped her access mainstream schooling. She has already completed a university subject while at school. It was an elective at Bond University – "Communication skills".

She said: "I have a future because I can let people know what I want to do even though I am non-verbal. Better still, I determine my future."

"If we facilitate communication, we facilitate friendships – friends are EVERYTHING." And, finally: "Please don't ignore people with a disability ... facilitate them and take them to the place they have never been."



Message from Fran Vicary Queenslanders with a Disability Network

At this Conference, QDN has been encouraged by the Minister's commitment to work with the Commonwealth Government to explore ways of reframing and responding to disability issues differently, to truly assess and meet needs in innovative and proactive ways.

As a statewide network of, for and with people with disability, QDN members are people with disability, parents, significant others and allies. QDN has most contact with the demographic of people with a disability aged between 18 and 65 years. This group represents the majority of people with disability living in Queensland.

Some of the most interesting and exciting moments at the conference have been audience comments and positive feedback from the concurrent sessions, including the joint presentation on social inclusion by National Disability Services and QDN. These two organisations working together, on a common theme, prove that unlikely partnerships are possible and beneficial. QDN is pleased to have the opportunity to present at, and be part of, Shared Visions 2009.

