

**The Disability Information & Resource Centre  
Board of Directors  
2006/2007**

*Chairperson  
Tracy  
Crisp*



*Heidi  
Meakins*



*Moss  
Politis*



*Ashley  
Halliday*



*Ian  
Bidmeade*



*Jayne  
Barrett*



*Julie-  
Anne  
Whitehead*



*Steve  
Goodman*



*Bob  
Tinker*

**The Disability Information & Resource Centre Inc**  
**Staff**  
**2006/2007**

*Sandy Puddy*  
*Director*



*Carolyn Gerhardy*  
*Library Co-ordinator*



*Sandy Newman*  
*Administration Officer*



*David Wallace*  
*IT Co-ordinator*



*Jane Hyde*  
*Information Officer*



*Phil Mcleod*  
*IT Support Officer*



*Doug Lyall*  
*Information Officer*



*Trent Gardner*  
*IT Support Officer*



## Chairpersons Report



It is a pleasure to present DIRC's annual report for 2006-07. Since our 20<sup>th</sup> birthday celebrations in 2006, we have launched the History of Disability in South Australia website; our library borrowers have continued to increase; our website has grown; we achieved our service excellence accreditation; and we welcomed Sandy Puddy as our new Director, following the retirement of Neil Lillecrapp.

An empowered community relies on access to information, and as a consumer-driven initiative of 20 years standing, DIRC plays a unique and vital role in empowering people with disabilities, their families and carers as well as individuals and organisations such as doctors, social workers and government departments. We provide information services not only to people with disabilities, but to the wider South Australian community. DIRC is a valuable South Australian institution and its scope of services is not replicated by any other organisation in the state. The high regard in which DIRC is held was on display at our 20<sup>th</sup> birthday celebrations in 2006.

It was, therefore, extremely disappointing to be told that the Minister for Disability, through the Office for Disability and Client Services (ODACS), would no longer be funding DIRC's information services in the coming financial year.

However, DIRC also receives funding from Arts SA, and we thank them for their ongoing funding commitment to DIRC and DIRC's work. With our continuing funding from Arts SA and the support and goodwill of the wider sector, DIRC is maintaining its current services and continuing its valuable work. In addition, the Board and staff are involved in renewed strategic planning initiatives as we plot our future path.

The DIRC team has shown particular spirit through some challenging months. I would like to thank all of the staff for their hard work and dedication to DIRC. You have shown an unfailing commitment not only to DIRC, but to the many people who benefit from DIRC's services.

At the end of 2006, we said goodbye to Neil Lillecrapp, who retired after almost 17 years as Director of DIRC. His farewell party was testament to the warmth people feel for Neil and the high regard in which he is held. I would like once again to record official thanks to Neil for the time, dedication and love he gave to the people of DIRC. He has left an organisation which is highly regarded and in good shape to face the challenges of the future. On a personal level, I feel very lucky that I had the chance to work with Neil.

This is my final year as Chair of the DIRC Board. I repeat my thanks to the DIRC staff and add my thanks to DIRC volunteers who help to ensure the provision of our services. The DIRC family is a large one, and so I would also like to thank the many supporters and friends of DIRC, including: the people who use the library, website, directory; who have contributed to the history project; who meet in our meeting rooms; who draw on our expertise for consultations and committee work. Finally, I would like to thank all of the DIRC Board members I have worked with - current and past - for their hard work, good humour and support during my time as Chair.

**Tracy Crisp**

## Directors Report



After almost seventeen years as Director, Neil Lillecrapp retired. Neil played a significant role in leading DIRC's development particularly in the area of electronic information services. He will be remembered for passionate commitment to furthering the empowerment of people with a disability through the provision of information.

I had big shoes to fill when I accepted the position of Director of the Disability Information & Resource Centre. I had all the usual fears of starting a new job and had the additional ones of taking over from someone that had led this organisation for so many years.

My first six months as Director proved to be extremely challenging. I set two significant goals that we wanted to achieve before the end of the financial year. The goals were to receive accreditation at certificate level through the service excellence program and to launch the History of Disability Website. Both goals were achieved.

I would like to acknowledge the hard working and dedicated DIRC staff, without whose acceptance of me and commitment to DIRC we would not have succeeded.

During June 2007 celebration turned to fear when we got news that \$208,000 had been cut from our funding from ODACS. This was more than 50% of our total funding allocation. We are now in the process of exploring new ideas and other sources of funding.

The Board of Directors have shown great support and strength in giving DIRC time to explore opportunities by approving operations at the same staffing level and service provision for the next 12 months, thus giving us time to generate an income or obtain alternate funding from another source.

We will continue to be committed to furthering the empowerment of people with a disability through the provision of information. All staff and myself are fully committed to the long term success of the Disability Information & Resource Centre. I believe we have the skills, strengths and abilities to continue into the future and look forward to the challenge.

**Sandy Puddy**

## State of IT and Future Directions



DIRC has been an innovator in information technology, and these technologies are an integral part of information provision at DIRC. In 2007, this was evidenced by the launch of our history website.

With much of our core IT work previously supported by funds from ODACS, this is where the loss of funding may be most keenly felt, and we will need to plan carefully if we are to retain our role as leaders and innovators.

Electronic information is no longer considered a subset of traditional print media. Increasingly information is searched, sourced, sorted and delivered electronically.

There is an underlying major shift happening in online information. This is bought about by the availability of cost effective Internet access and the ability for participation by people with little or no technical knowledge in online communications. In addition, access to online applications at virtually no cost is seeing a change in the way information is produced. Traditional consumers are moving from a position of being passive receivers to active producers and contributors of information online.

As the amount of information available and access to it moves from a position of scarcity to one of abundance, methods of service provision of information are rapidly changing also. Simply 'pushing' information at people who are well able to access and find what they are searching for will soon no longer be the asset it once was.

In such a realm that is emerging, the value is to be found in relationship, conversation and collaboration.

To that end, DIRC, as a provider of disability information to the community that finds itself with scarce resources in an age of abundance of information, will need to focus on two core things.

1. Build relationships across all sectors of the community around common issues in the disability sector.
2. Engage in and support conversations in and around disability issues.

The role of DIRC's IT services will underpin and facilitate these activities by

1. Developing systems and processes that leverage the abundance of open and accessible online tools and applications.
2. Developing systems and services that facilitate conversation and sharing of knowledge.
3. Building and leveraging the effect of relationships in the online technical community.

### **DIRCSA**

The DIRC website continues to play a role in providing information about the Centre's services online. It is often the first port of call to DIRC online. The number of web pages served to requests as recorded hits to the site were up by over 120% on last years reported result. The requests came from over 25,000 unique hosts.

The increase in overall traffic to the web sites at DIRC bears resemblance to the increase of the Internet traffic overall and higher use of online information by a broadening base of society.

## History

The History of Disability in SA project was developed and launched toward the end of the reporting period. Early indications of traffic to the site and positive feedback from visitors shows the positive potential of the site as well as an important indicator of the need for authentic voices on the web.

Technically, as well as socially, this site forms an early model as to the direction of the web and a direction that DIRC needs to pursue in the future of its online service provision.

## EnableNet

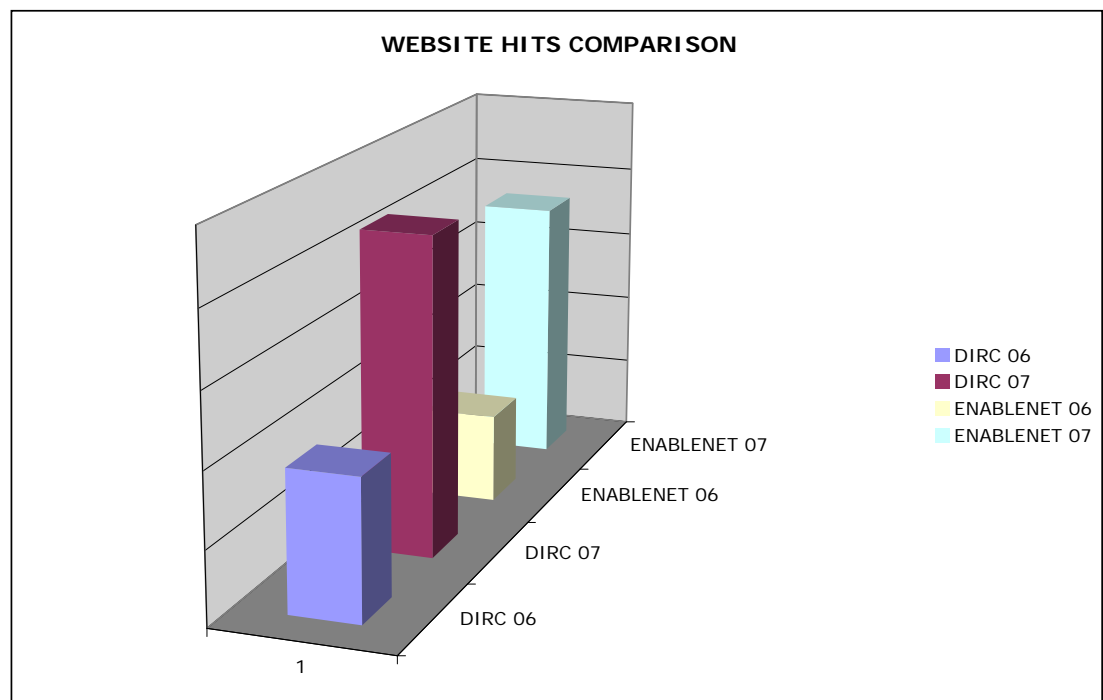
EnableNet plays a pivotal role in the publishing of disability information online. It is the place where DIRC's databases are made available online to the public. Currently these are DIRC Directory, DIRC Library Catalogue, DIRC Journals Catalogue, Events Database, and Access Database. In addition, DIRC also assists in making available online the databases and catalogues of other disability related organisations.

EnableNet also maintains a database of links to other disability information resources online which is structured according to the DIRC developed Thesaurus. These resources are searchable and arranged by the type of resource. The number of individual resources spidered for inclusion on the site currently number 8000 pages.

During the reporting period, Enablenet served on average 5000 requests for pages per day to over 80,000 unique hosts.

The DIRC Directory online continues to be used widely attracting approximately 7000 hits not including those used internally or from within those people visiting the DIRC library.

## David Wallace



# Library and Information Services

## Library



The aim of the DIRC Library is make information on disabilities and disability-related issues readily available to anyone in the community with an interest in any aspect of disability. The collection includes material, with a non-medical emphasis, on physical and neurological, intellectual, sensory and psychiatric disabilities, and currently contains 2,647 catalogued items.

New library borrower registrations totalled 157 for the year. A review of the Borrower's database was commenced, in which borrowers who have not used the service in the last five years are removed. The database will then reflect more accurately, active users of the collection.

During the year 1064 loans were recorded and 100 new items were added to the DIRC library. In addition, 225 items owned by and held at Disability Advocacy and Complaints Service of SA (DACSSA) were catalogued by a DACSSA volunteer working with DIRC staff. These items are listed in the DIRC catalogue which is accessible through the Enablenet website.

The Attention Disorders Association of SA library collection is one of a number of smaller collections housed at the DIRC library. This year the ADASA collection grew significantly with 35 new items being catalogued by library staff.

The poster collection was reviewed during the year with 293 items being catalogued and laminated. These have now been re-shelved in the DIRC library for easy accessibility. Poster loans for the year totalled 74.

A collection of pamphlet material supplied by a wide variety of disability organisations continues to be a useful source of information for visitors to DIRC.

DIRC also holds 113 journal and newsletter letter titles from Australia and overseas. The number of articles indexed is maintained steadily at around 2075 entries. Articles are deleted after five years to maintain the currency and accessibility of the journal collection.

## Databases

DIRC's database of disability organisations in South Australia lists 852 organisations/services. This information is updated on an annual basis during September - December each year, prior to the publication of the hard-copy Disability Information Directory South Australia in January.

The Events database, which includes conferences, training courses, and workshops relevant to the disability sector is maintained and published on Enablenet and in the bi-monthly Current Awareness Service.

Currently there are approximately 3,700 web links from the Enablenet website to other disability related websites which are checked and updated on a continuous basis.

### **Cooperative Relationships**

Valuable networking opportunities continue to be pursued through regular meetings of the Disability Information Network group (DINET) which includes representatives from DIRC, Disability SA, Novita Children's Services, the Special Education and Resource Unit, Parkinson's SA, Tinnitus SA, Talkback Association for Aphasia and University of SA.

As mentioned above, library staff worked with the Attention Disorders Association of SA in housing and maintaining their library collection, and Disability Advocacy and Complaints Service employed a volunteer who worked closely with DIRC library staff to catalogue resources held at the DACSSA office.

DIRC continues to host library catalogues from the AIDS Council of SA, Novita Children's Services, Victim Support Service and SHINE SA on the Enablenet website.

### **Enquiry Statistics**

The system whereby daily statistics on enquiries made to DIRC was reviewed and updated. All day, every day collection of data was instigated in order to collect more accurate statistics.

### **Volunteers**



Damien Lynch

The library and information services at DIRC are assisted by a number of valuable volunteers who perform a variety of tasks, including selecting material for noticeboards, selecting journal articles for indexing, maintenance of the pamphlet collection, database maintenance, book covering, web-link checking and abstracting of audio visual materials. Special thanks to Cathy Nirta, Cheryl O'Brien, Damien Lynch, Di Workman, Helen Scott and Lynette Willcocks.

### **Carolyn Gerhardy**

# The History of Disability in SA Website



On the 28<sup>th</sup> June 2007 we launched the “*History of Disability in SA*” website. It is located at <http://history.dircsa.org.au/>.

The website includes the history of disability in South Australia since settlement in 1836. Over the past 170 years much has changed in the lives of people with a disability. Much, however, has remained the same.

The website also records the personal experiences of people with a disability in South Australia. People now have the opportunity to describe their experience of living with a disability and the changes that have occurred within their lifetime. These stories will provide a lasting legacy for all South Australians.

We created the website to acknowledge, commemorate and celebrate the lives and the contribution people with a disability have made to the South Australian community.

Our aim was to raise awareness of disability and disability related issues within society as a whole and develop a sense of pride and empowerment within the disability sector.

The website reinforces The Disability Information & Resource Centre position as the key disability information provider in South Australia.

The internet has no boundaries and the website will extend well beyond South Australia and Australia to have a world wide audience. Since the website was launched over 5000 people have accessed it.

The website was made possible by a grant from Community Benefit SA in 2006 to fund the establishment of the project. The funding has provided us with the opportunity to create an important social document.

Tribute goes to Neil Lillecrapp, Director of DIRC 1990-2007 and Janet Williams, Information Coordinator of DIRC 1995-2006 who instigated the project and through their persistence obtained the grant to undertake this journey

**Doug Lyall**

# DIRC Services

## **Current Awareness Service (CAS)**

During 2006/2007, 153 people subscribed to this service with 1020 requests for photocopying of articles

CAS is a bi-monthly publication containing a list of journal articles on disability issues from a wide range of Australian and international journals. Over 60 articles are cited per issue. The articles have a broad scope covering issues relating to:

- specific disabilities
- new developments in research
- education, recreation and employment
- self help
- normalisation principles
- service models
- a listing of disability related seminars, conferences and other events around Australia
- a list of recent additions to the DIRC Library
- Updates on disability agencies by providing information on changes to existing services, on new services and any closures of services

CAS is aimed at people with a personal interest in disability, parents/carers, advocates, students, educators, researchers and workers in the field. While maintaining this broad appeal, the service is primarily consumer orientated. This means that although many articles included are aimed at workers, anything indexed will also be of interest and relevant to people with a more personal interest in disability.

CAS subscription is currently \$45 including GST and includes up to 10 free photocopies per issue.

## **DIRC Directory**

During 2006/2007, 271 people purchased the DIRC Directory.

The DIRC Directory is produced on an annual basis from the Disability Services database maintained by DIRC and is published in both hard copy and electronically which is available via our websites [www.dircsa.org.au](http://www.dircsa.org.au) and [www.enable.net.au](http://www.enable.net.au).

The DIRC Directory provides an overview of services, programs and benefits provided by organisations for the disability sector. In addition, the Directory covers locally based support groups and appropriate commercial agencies often outside the scope of other directories.

The DIRC Directory contains a list detailing

- South Australia's disability related services
- education options for children with a disability
- some selected interstate organisations
- national bodies
- regional health services
- community health services

The Directory can be purchased at the GST inclusive cost of \$45 + \$10 postage and handling (includes a binder). Cost without binder is \$40 + \$10 postage and handling.

## **Meeting Rooms**

During 2006/2007, 7162 people attended the 411 meetings held in the Disability Information & Resource Centre meeting rooms.

DIRC has 3 meeting rooms separated by bi-fold doors that allow 1 large room to be formed. The facilities are hired out at very reasonable rates which reflect DIRC's objective to support, promote and where practicable, resource the activities of organisations which work on behalf of people with a disability, and in particular to assist self-help organisations without major resources of their own.

Rooms are set up in Boardroom, Theatre or Workshop styles as requested by the hiring organisation. A full range of audio-visual equipment (VCR, DVD, OHP, slide and data projectors and CD Players) is available for hire. Each room is equipped with a whiteboard and pull down screens, an audio loop system is installed for people with a hearing impairment. A fully functional kitchen is adjacent to the meeting rooms.

## **Auspice**

The Disability Information & Resource Centre is responsible for managing the lease of the premises at 23A King William Road, Unley which provides office accommodation for member agencies of the Physical and Neurological Council of SA.

A funding agreement is in place between the Office of Disability and Client Services and The Disability Information & Resource Centre for operational costs including rent, maintenance, photocopying, security, cleaning and insurance for the premises.

The Disability Information & Resource Centre takes the lead role and provides management support, with decision making and functions related to the day to day sharing of office premises, equipment and other resources.

The Disability Information & Resource Centre is responsible for liaising with and assisting the agencies at 23A in relocating to more appropriate accommodation.

Current tenants include:

- Parkinson's SA Inc
- NODDS
- Motor Neurone Disease Association
- Stroke SA
- Talkback , Association for Aphasia
- Physical Disability Council of SA Inc
- Neurofibromatosis Association of SA Inc
- Australian Huntington's Disease Association SA & NT Inc



## **Public Access Computers**

The Disability Information & Resource Centre Library has 4 public access computers. These provide access to the internet and the service is free. There is a booking system in place.

# Quality Accreditation

## Service Excellence

The Disability Information & Resource Centre was assessed against the SEII Certificate Level criteria. A full review was conducted between 5<sup>th</sup> May and 26<sup>th</sup> June 2007. DIRC was assisted throughout this period by Carol Hammond Consulting Service.

There is only one area requiring action in order for DIRC to achieve 100% compliance with the framework. This is specifically in relation to Police Checks for Staff, Board and volunteers. Other areas identified were considered as opportunities for improvement.

DIRC approached the framework in a systems based manner. As a result the organisation is well on the way to meeting the requirements of ISO 9007:2000 systems, achieving the Award level of the framework, once implementation and maintenance phases can be demonstrated.

## New Directions for 2007/2008

### Training Facilitation

DIRC recognises the importance of having suitably qualified staff working within disability organisations. We also recognise the difficulty in planning and facilitating training sessions. With this in mind DIRC is going to use its expertise and premises to facilitate training sessions and make them accessible to all service providers.

Our goal is to assist organisations with meeting their requirements in regard to training and education of staff. With this in mind DIRC will

- Facilitate education sessions using DIRC facilities
- Source suitably qualified and experienced trainers to meet organisational needs
- Remain cost effective by sharing the costs of training across all participating organisations

### Website and IT Support

Access to electronic information is now the most common way for people to find what they are looking for. However when looking at some disability services websites it is very difficult to find the information the searcher is requiring.

Accessing commercial IT support is very expensive and the cost of this makes using these services out of the reach of smaller organisations. With this in mind DIRC is offering to service providers at a below market cost, the expertise of the DIRC IT team.

DIRC will

- Work with organisations to develop their websites that will suit the individual organisation's needs
- Provide updates as required either monthly, quarterly or bi annually
- Provide general IT support
- Assess organisation's websites to ensure they are accessible for people with a disability

## **Funding**

Due to the large funding cut, DIRC is taking the approach of exploring the many avenues and exciting opportunities which have presented themselves. We are positive, innovative and enthusiastic about our future destiny.