NDCO
National Disability Coordination Officer Program
an Australian Government Initiative

Helen Lewkowicz Local Area Coordinator Disability Services Commission, Aquinas Crowe and Ronita Jackmarra addressed those attending.

The Kimberley

Fitzroy Crossing

In early November the Fitzroy Crossing Disability Awareness organising committee saw their organising efforts come to fruition, with the holding of a Transition from School to further study and work event at the Fitzroy Valley District High School.

Ronita spoke passionately about the opportunities available beyond school such as the studies she undertook at the Fitzroy Adult Education Centre. She also noted that she has 3 children and works for Wangki Radio as an announcer.

Alice Gibson Student Services Coordinator Fitzroy Valley District High School stated. *"It was fantastic and one of the most positive things we have held at the school in a long time."*

Broome

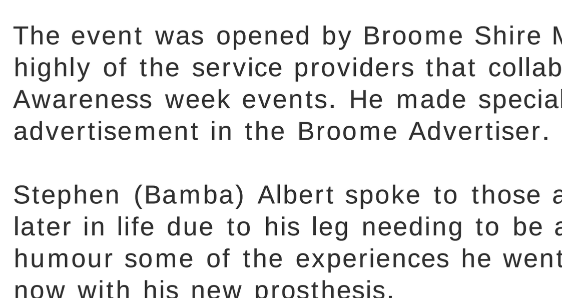
In early December the Broome Disability Awareness organising committee held five separate events over one week to celebrate International Day of People with Disability.

Jesse Derne spoke of his study at KTI and of the assistance Kimberley Personnel (Disability Employment Service) provided.

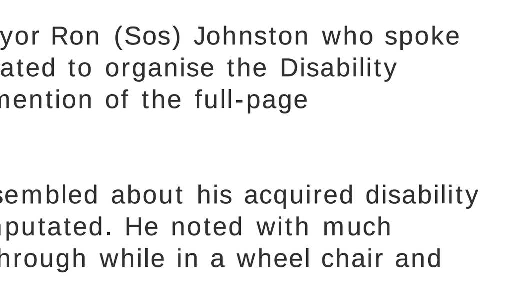
Steve Cook CEO Kimberley Personnel addressed students, families and community members at the Transition Expo held at Father McMahon place.

The event was opened by Broome Shire Mayor Ron (Sos) Johnston who spoke highly of the service providers that collaborated to organise the Disability Awareness week events. He made special mention of the full-page advertisement in the Broome Advertiser.

Stephen (Bamba) Albert spoke to those assembled about his acquired disability later in life due to his leg needing to be amputated. He noted with much humour some of the experiences he went through while in a wheel chair and now with his new prosthesis.



Jesse addresses students and the community at Kimberley Training Institutes (KTI) morning tea.



Stephen (Bamba) Albert speaks at Broome at the event in Broome.

Bunbury Future Possibilities Youth Conference

The annual Bunbury Future Possibilities Youth Conference was held at the Sanctuary Golf Resort on the 1st of September 2015. The conference is designed for students from years 10-12 who are preparing to transition from school to work or further study. Conference participants came from as far afield as Bunbury, Collie, Australind, Manjimup and Busselton.

Conference Committee Chair, Donna Wroth, with the Cookie Monster!.

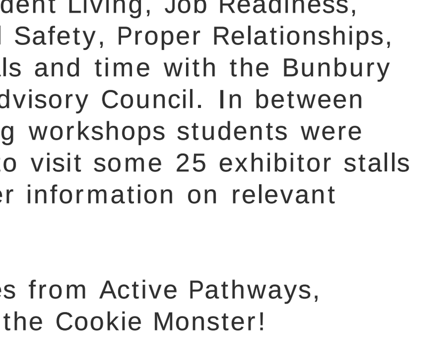
National Disability Coordination Officer (NDCO), Dale Arthur says this was the biggest and best Conference to date. Some 95 registrants attended along with support staff, stakeholder agency staff and the Choir and Junior Jazz Band from the Australind High School. This gave a grand total for lunch of 245 persons.

The day was made up of presentations, workshops, some recreation and most importantly in the eyes of the students – lunch! Workshops included; Independent Living, Job Readiness, Personal Safety, Proper Relationships, Life Goals and time with the Bunbury Youth Advisory Council. In between attending workshops students were invited to visit some 25 exhibitor stalls to gather information on relevant disability support services in the region.

The organizing committee included representatives from Active Pathways, Conference Committee Chair, Donna Wroth, with the Cookie Monster!

Australind Senior High School, City of Bunbury, Disability Services Commission, Forrest Personnel, Geographe Education Support Centre, National Disability Coordination Officer Program, Newton Moore Education Support Centre, Sanctuary Golf Resort, South West Institute of Technology and South West VETlink.

By far the most most popular recreation activity was the Zumba class. Staff and students enjoyed it immensely. Students also enjoyed the Nerf Gun for the second year running!



The Cookie Monster (NDCO Dale Arthur) leading a workshop on appropriate relationships.

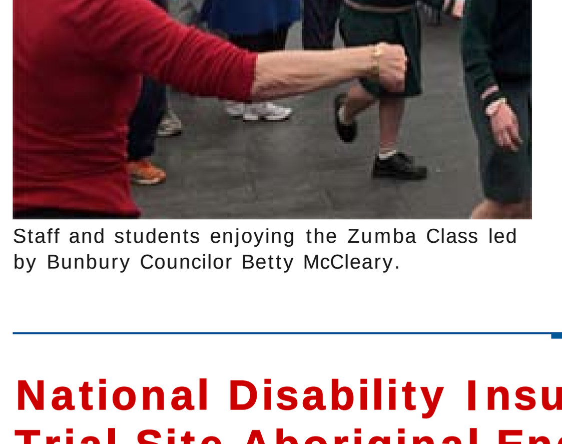
An incentive program for the day was that students had to have a sheet stamped from each of the exhibitors to indicate they had visited each of the exhibitors. The first complete entry drawn won the prize of the day. This incentive had each of the students well focused during their day.

The program is largely executed on the day by supervised students from education support centres in the regions where the participants are drawn from. Specific effort has been made where indigenous students are encouraged to take part in leading the event. The local indigenous school performed the 'welcome to country' ceremony.

Over the last five years the program's success can partly be judged by the fact that it has consistently grown to the point that this year saw the number of students attending doubled.

Funding this year was provided by a consortium of South West VETlink, City of Bunbury, NDCO, Forrest Personnel and Sanctuary Golf Resort.

The committee is looking forward to next year when we may well break the 100 registrant barrier. This event is well received by students, parents and staff. The strength of the event seems to be that there are real learning experiences delivered for students through the workshops as part of the conference.



Staff and students enjoying the Zumba Class led by Bunbury Councilor Betty McCleary.

Dale Arthur (NDCO), Bunbury Councilor Betty McCleary and prize winner, Larry Green, from Collie High School.

National Disability Insurance Scheme - NDIA Trial Site Aboriginal Engagement Group

As reported in our last news letter the NDIS - NDIA Trial site organisation were keen to engage with Indigenous locals within the trial site. Initially the NDIA engaged with Peedac, an Indigenous organisation, to help with the planning for this program. NDIA have since set up an in-house Aboriginal Engagement Group involving a number of key Indigenous representatives from relevant organisations inside the trial site boundaries.

Direct engagement with this group, allows the NDIA to plan and receive feedback from a wider range of stakeholders, ensuring a more inclusive delivery plan for their Indigenous program and information package. This group also provides a great sounding board for future engagement initiatives involving Indigenous participants accessing the NDIS.

The group has met regularly during the year and will continue to do so into 2016 and beyond. An information and engagement function for local Traditional Aboriginal elders in the area is planned for early December 2015, we will report more on this event in our next news letter.

Geraldton Employment Forum

On the 11th of August 2015 the first annual Employment Forum for people with a disability was held at The Provincial in Geraldton. This event was co-sponsored by the NDCO Program and APM Employment Services. The event was an after-hours function, inviting local business owners in the Geraldton region, to come along and listen to some guest speakers and consider taking on people with a disability, when next employing some one in their business.

The event was well attended with members from the local schools and Polytechnic also attending. The key note speaker, Glen Fleeton from Midwest Medicare Local, related personal experiences from his time as a retail manger in the region and the engagement of employees with a disability. A representative from the venue also spoke and pointed out that a number of the Waite staff working at the venue had a disability, to the surprise of many present.

The event was successful in that as a direct result, APM managed 8 employment outcomes over the next 4 weeks. This outcome is made all the more impressive when taking into account the depressed nature of the local employment market. The success of this forum has ensured that it will continue as an annual marquee event, for transitioning people with disability in the region into employment and a conduit for sharing information on how to go about disability engagement with employers.

Abilities on Display

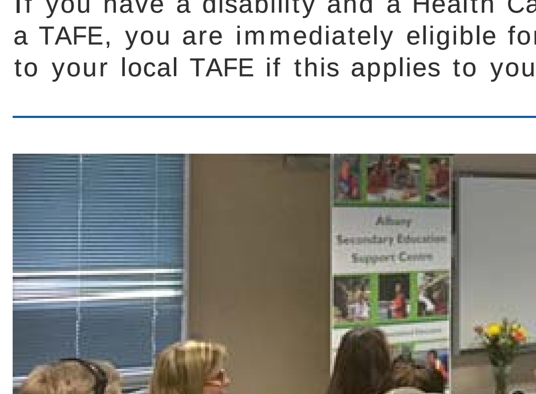
The sixth annual Abilities Expo was held on the 15th of August 2015 at the Crown Casino in Perth. This event has been heavily supported by the NDCO since it's inception on a much smaller scale. The Expo targets those students with a disability, their parents and industry professionals. It is an opportunity for those with a disability to see first-hand what is on offer (jobs wise and education wise) for them on completion of high school.

This year the expo was extremely well attended by more than twenty schools from across the Perth metropolitan area. The Honorable Peter Collier, The Minister for Education, Aboriginal Affairs and Electoral Affairs was the VIP guest and also officially opened the 2015 Abilities Expo. Minister Collier was impressed by the range of exhibitors on display and the range of activities/choices available to students with a disability who were finishing high school.

In the history of this event 2015 was the most well attended of all, with over 800 attendees passing through the expo in a 4 hour period and over 150 of those attendees being parents.

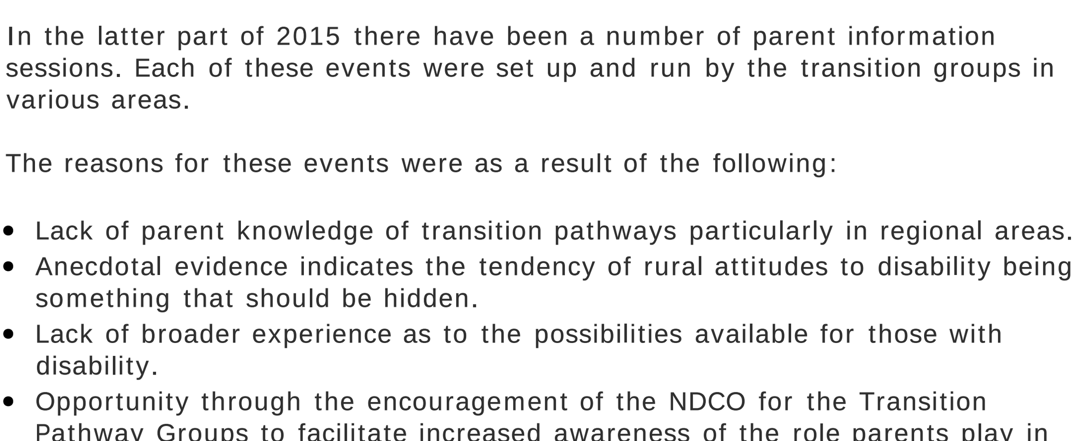
Entertainment for people attending the expo was provided by the Music Rocks program comprising three bands from Canningvale High, Mirrabooka High and Cyril Jackson High's Special Education student body. The Crown Casino coffee stand was a particular hit and the staff there were kept busy throughout the expo.

This event is planned to be run again in August of 2016 with our support to make it as big or bigger than 2015.



Are you Aware Of

If you have a disability and a Health Care card and are looking to do Training at a TAFE, you are immediately eligible for a 50% reduction in course fees? Speak to your local TAFE if this applies to you.



Former Albany student, Amy May, speaking about her pathway through Albany Education Support Centre and Great Southern Personnel into employment.

Region 26 Parent Information Sessions

In the latter part of 2015 there have been a number of parent information sessions. Each of these events were set up and run by the transition groups in various areas.

The reasons for these events were as a result of the following:

- Lack of parent knowledge of transition pathways particularly in regional areas.
- Anecdotal evidence indicates the tendency of rural attitudes to disability being something that should be hidden.
- Lack of broader experience as to the possibilities available for those with disability.
- Opportunity through the encouragement of the NDCO for the Transition Pathway Groups to facilitate increased awareness of the role parents play in assisting the transition of their children with disability into employment and or study.

Albany Education Support Centre Principal, Karen Dale, sampling some of the spread prepared by Great Southern Institute students with disability while interacting with parents.

The transition Groups' main objective for the events were to increase parent knowledge and under-standing of the transition pathways available for their children. They also acquainted parents with the various service agencies available to support the student's process of transition into meaningful employment and or study.

One of the keys to facilitating the interaction between parents and stakeholders was the provision of a finger food meal.

Success of the information sessions was directly related to the willingness of the Education Support Centres and other agencies working together through the local transition groups.

A number of local stakeholders associated with the transition of those with disability attended and provided information to parents. Most importantly it gave the opportunity for agencies and specifically Disability Employment Service providers to meet with parents and introduce themselves with the view to developing a workable relationship with parents that would ultimately assist in student transition.

From personal discussion with the attendees it was apparent that parents had moved from an atmosphere of despair to that of hope.

Valuable information was presented to assist in the transition of the students and for parents to be better informed as to the agencies that are available to give support for the process of transitioning their children into meaningful employment options or further study.

Annie Paterson, Region Disability Service Manager presenting to Manjimup area parents concerning the changes under the "My Way" program.

Parents interacting with the with agency staff and the Principal of the Esperance Education Support Centre, Megan Reed.

Visit our website

Visit our NDCO website at www.ndcowa.net.au

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