



Outside the Box

SUMMER 2009 / 10

Ghandi—Man of Destiny

Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi—Born 2nd October 1869—Assassinated 30th January 1948

This man of destiny, often affectionately known to friends and family as Bapu, knew well the disappointment and frustrations in his fight for people who had little or no voice of their own. His fight was against the inhumanity of governments and power brokers, against prejudice and inequity, social, economic and political. His tools were – truth, simplicity and faith, to name just a few. He was not a man who craved attention, even so, he said many things in the public domain, expressed anger, but never advocated violence, demonstrated a willingness to suffer so that others might have life and freedom - social, economic and political. **One thing he said to all peoples was, “be the change you want in the world”.....and history records that he did just that – but history also records that there was a high price to be paid before justice could be won for his people who had little or no voice of their own.**

No, I am not switching professions to historian or philosopher, but I am concerned to give voice to the disadvantaged people, the disabled adults and children and their families of the Western Downs.

For the past three years I have been directing ethical professional quality

Welcome To Issue No.5— Summer 2009/10

Here we are at the end of summer, so this newsletter is a bit later than it should be—all due of course to the frantic activity here as we prepare the ground for 2010.

Plans for the new childcare centre (My Little Hero’s Learning Centre), the new adult centre, expansion of our Childhood Development Program for children with Autism Spectrum Disorder and other special needs, and plans to extend our services to the other towns in the Surat Basin have really been the focus of attention here over the past four months.

A major change in the funding arrangements for Bridge Employment has also figured in the equation, and we have been given the opportunity to engage in a professional business assessment and budgeting program at no cost to Waminda thanks to the team at international accounting firm WHK.

And in all of that, our staff continue to provide excellent support for our service users. Some of the achievements and challenges are outlined in these pages, I hope you enjoy the read.

Stewart Mulligan —editor

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applications/communications to both State and Federal Governments for funding, and when that failed I virtually pleaded for their support. But I can only assume Governments and **Power Brokers haven't changed much since Gandhi's day. Waminda even undertook** entirely at its own cost, and for the second time in the last three years, to produce up-to-date childhood disability statistics through to Roma, because no accurate government statistics were available—state wide or nationally. What was that we said about marginalised people having little or no voice of their own? You make your own judgment about the lethargy of governments and far too many politicians in the matters I am here addressing.

From August 2009 to February 2010 a total of \$73.9 million in Federal / State funding

was handed out for Disability and related capital works and services. This substantial funding allocation was directed at capital cities and major provincial centres. If you are one of many thousands of families living in rural remote areas where much of our national GDP is produced – tough luck. If you live on the **Western Downs, don't have children with a disability. Be aware and concerned because our governments are seemingly not interested in their health and welfare. Yes – I know full well that more and more young families are being sought and encouraged to make up the work force to exploit our nation's multibillion dollar mineral and energy wealth, and it's a great life**

style, believe me. But what's in it for your children if they have any one of the many recognised disabilities? Safety—no, caring services—no, specialist support—no, demonstrated government support for the high tax dollars you pay into their coffers—sadly no, no, no.

But let's be fair; let's not be accused of complaining unjustly. Let's take a look at the figures as of January 2010 in schools from Jondaryan to Roma. A total of 353 children have diagnosed disabilities ranging across areas including Autistic, Spinal, Physical,

Intellectual, Hearing and Visual, and the various, often devastating syndromes, and this figure is still growing because a number of schools have yet to be surveyed.

THE WAMINDA MISSION

To make a positive difference in the lives of people with a disability.

To challenge attitudes, behaviours and practices that preclude people with a disability enjoying their rights as individuals in a multi-cultured democratic society as people with skills, abilities, challenges and personalities vital for the holistic health of the community.

Now let's look at some other anomalous situations and further imbalance: a) There has been no recognition of the needs of regional/ remote areas evidenced in the latest \$73.9 million allocations, b) Our region in both State and Federal jurisdictions have hard working, **caring elected members from 'opposition parties' and historically little favourable political consideration,** particularly financial, has been forthcoming. As a successful professional corporate manager in Australia I have remained totally apolitical, holding to a philosophy and belief that the role of company management should be to work with the government of the day to produce a better



Australia, this without taking an eye off profitable business operation and shareholder and staff benefits. BUT! Whatever political party holds sway, state wise and federally, **isn't it supposed to be government for all of the people, all of the time, irrespective of political persuasion?** Sadly historical evidence all too often says otherwise.

What did the Mahatma say back in the late 1800's early 1900's – **'be the change you want in the world!** Well the Western Downs is our world, our children's world, **It's up to us!...and it's about time our politicians across the board woke up to the reality that rural remote communities are part of their world too, whether they live in a city or country area.**

We are told again and again by University Professors and Specialists in medical and **related fields from around the globe that 'early intervention' is absolutely critical in the lives**

of children with a disability, particularly those with Autism and related syndromes. The ideal age group specified for early intervention is from 2 years to 5 years. So the question begs answering – does the Prime Minister of Australia and his Government and the Premier of Queensland and her Government expect parents and skilled Service Providers to hold back the hands of time and keep their children for ever at age 2 years until funds and facilities are provided so that early intervention can be take place.

Idiotic you say – certainly, but not anywhere near as idiotic and criminal as governments who deny help for our children, all on the slavish sacrificial altar of politics and the mighty dollar. And if you read this Mr. Prime Minister and Madam Premier and think it sounds rather personal – you bet it is...because the wellbeing and opportunities for a quality life for our children – every single one of them, is a very personal matter.

Stephen R Hicks – CEO.

Footnote: If anyone wants to check the gut wrenching, heart sickening indifference and **incompetence (couldn't give answers to basic questions)** and an altogether chilling detachment from the flesh and blood needs of every day rural / remote area Australian **children and young families...If you doubt** what I am saying, then I refer you to Hansard Senate Estimates (Community Affairs Legislation Committee) Thursday, 11 **February 2010. If you can't access a copy I will** be pleased to provide copies on request.

Community Living Initiative

If you are an adult with a disability, the Community Living Initiative may help you set up a home and lifestyle of your choice. If you are a family member who cares for an adult with a disability and are exploring the possibility of your family member making the transition to living in his or her own place, this initiative may also assist you.

Living the lifestyle of your choice requires thinking ahead and planning, particularly when you have a need for regular assistance from others.

A good place to start your planning is to look at how other people with a disability have created a reasonable lifestyle for themselves. Doing this first will make sure you are aware of the many possibilities before forming a picture of what you want.

Some people are lucky and a good lifestyle just happens. The reality for most of us, however, is that we need to work at making it happen. In many ways it's like any other project.

Depending on your circumstances the project might be as easy as planning a holiday or as difficult as building a house. Either way you will achieve a great sense of satisfaction by doing it yourself, despite the difficulties you might meet on the way.

You may have seen what others have achieved, but what lifestyle really suits you or your family member with a disability? Some people have a clear vision of what future they want; many of us don't. It's not often we ask ourselves this question, so don't be surprised if you don't know the answer straight away. It may be easier to begin by identifying what



most people want in life and applying these themes to your own life. When asked, most people would say they want:

- close relationships - for example, friends, someone to love, people who care for them
- a place to call home
- safety and security
- a passion - for example, an interest, occupation or hobby
- a sense of belonging.

Each person's list of what makes up a good life will be different. This is because we each have individual preferences and varied interests.

Up to date news and information about the Community Living Initiative in Queensland can be found on www.disability.qld.gov.au

For further information contact:

- Community Living Initiative, Department of Communities
- Tel: 3235 9669
- Freecall: 1800 177 120
- TTY: 1800 010 222
- Email: ruth.whereat@communities.qld.gov.au

Paul Myatt

**A/ Principal Program Officer
Disability & Community Care Services
South West Region
Department of Communities**

Bridge Bits

Well it's almost time to say goodbye to Summer and hello to Autumn.

Over the Summer we have experienced a number of changes, and there are still many to continue.

Firstly the Bridge office has undergone a facelift, which has included a brand new kitchen (looks brilliant), new air conditioners, and a whole new paint job both inside and out. We have also had a few minor alterations, which makes coming to work that little bit easier. So thank you to all the workers, and Western Downs Regional Council for organising the job.

As of March 1st. 2010 Bridge Employment will no longer be classified as a Disability Employment Network, instead it will be a Disability Employment Service. With this name change comes a lot of challenges both positive and negative. The staff have been working extremely hard to learn and overcome all the hurdles, so when you see a TPO, congratulate them for all their hard efforts.

Bridge will be a Program B provider, which provides ongoing and general support to all clients — virtually the same as our previous contract. However there will no longer be Capped clients—all clients will be Uncapped, whether they are voluntarily joining and participating with the service or if they are required to by Centrelink. Bridge will now accept all referrals made to us and has an open capacity, however a market share is yet to be clearly announced.

A big pat on the back for all the Bridge clients that have obtained new employment over the Summer and well done all of you for your hard work and efforts in your current employment.

Well that about sums it up. ENJOY THE COOLER WEATHER.

Sarah Valentine —Coordinator, Bridge Employment

Our reason for being ...



... To offer hope to people of all ages with a disability

Autism Library Update

We were very fortunate to receive funding from Jupiter's Casino Community Benefit Fund in February 2009 to create a Resource Library at Waminda for parents, carers, staff and the wider community.

To date we have over 70 books in our Library, with topics including, **Autism Spectrum Disorder, Asperger's Syndrome, Mental Health and General Business Topics**, which are available to borrow.

So, next time you are at Waminda, come and have a browse through our Library, and if you would like to borrow any books, please see Lisa or Deb.

We have established a *NEW* Resource Library Database and will need to register your details and record all borrowed and returned library books, just as the local Council library does.

If you have any suggestions for other topics of interest that you would like to see in our Library, please let us know.

Parents, if you have any books at home that were borrowed at the end of 2009, can you please return them, so we can enter them into our new Database. Thank you.

Lisa Hay.





A word from Jeff Brown

Waminda Services Limited Board Chairman

At the recent Annual General Meeting of Waminda Services Limited I was honoured to be elected as board chairman, and look forward to being part of the team that

will be bringing Waminda to the next stage of its development.

I would like to pay tribute to the dedication of our immediate past Chairman Merv Peltz who has been a board member at Waminda for more than 20 years and remains on the board as Treasurer.

Waminda, under the stewardship of CEO Stephen Hicks, has seen the progression of Waminda to that of a registered Company. His vision for the redevelopment of the 19 Patrick Street facility to accommodate the operations of a child care centre, together with the implementation of a specific program to help children with Autism has been embraced by the Board.

These projects are underway and the Board is waiting for the necessary Council approvals prior to building works commencing.

I look forward to meeting the staff and volunteers who are doing such an excellent job.

I would also like to thank them for their assistance during the redevelopment stage.

The new programs currently being offered have enhanced the traditional services provided by Waminda and will assist those children of the region who are most in need.

Traditionally the Board has existed on grants and funding provided by Governments, however, for Waminda to progress with the new programs on offer, more funding is required, and it is recognised that without Government and corporate sponsorship this will always be difficult.

Fundraising is an area that needs to be expanded and the Board will be considering some new initiatives at its next meeting. Additional funding will be required to enable Waminda to expand on the delivery of the quality services it currently has on offer.

At the recent Board meeting we accepted with regret the resignation of Deputy Chairperson Dale Pukallus. Dale was a well respected member of the Board, serving with distinction for many years.

Barry Weier was elected as his successor. Barry has also been a member of the board for many years and I would like to thank him for accepting the position of Deputy Chairperson.

New staff appointments

Lisa Hay joined the team late in 2009 and has helped set up our childcare program. She will continue as Coordinator Quality and Training.

Selina Cosgrove and Patricia Biggs, joined the support team at Brimblecombe St in January, with Luella Callaghan starting at the house in February.

Kate Johnson comes on board as Director of My Little Hero's Learning Centre . Kate is a qualified Primary School Teacher with qualifications and extensive experience in Special Education.

2010—a year of fundraising

We are in the midst of an extensive marketing campaign to raise both awareness of our work and funds for support.

A professional business plan outlining possibilities of partnership in building essential light infrastructure for the Surat Basin has been circulated to a number of local and regional businesses.

The plan was drawn up in conjunction with accounting firm BMO and designed by local graphic designer Larna Baker Designs, and thanks to their generosity, the cost to us has been minimal.

Another version has been sent to various State and Federal Government Ministers, local Members, and departments in a bid to gain **financial support for Waminda's work.**

We do see this exercise as a partnership arrangement with benefits for both parties, so would welcome contact with anyone who is seeking an opportunity to take part in a community project that can deliver tangible results.

Any partnership or donation enquiries should be directed to Stephen Hicks or Stewart Mulligan at Waminda—phone 07 4662 1434.

Individual donations can be made by direct deposit to:

Waminda Services Ltd Gifting Account
Commonwealth Bank Dalby
BSB: 064-412
Account No.:10223580
**ALL DONATIONS OVER \$2 ARE TAX
DEDUCTIBLE**

If you require a receipt, please put your name as the reference on your deposit, then contact Waminda and we will issue a tax receipt. Phone 07 4662 1434.

Waminda Services Limited is a registered charity under the Collections Act 1966.

Business review workshops



We have set ourselves the task of establishing new benchmarks for our service delivery in 2010. As we start that journey, we have been blessed to have well known accounting firm WHK agree to donate the time of one of their staff members, Mark Peters, to take us through that process.

WHK has representatives in offices throughout Australia and is part of a national consulting network which has been helping Australian businesses to reach their profit and growth goals since 1981.

WHK conducts a number of programs nationally **including Profit & Growth programs for SME's** over a 12 month period which are accredited with delivering a Certificate IV in Small Business Management. They also run One Day Business Success workshops, and workshops in Succession Planning, Marketing & Branding, Team Building and Customer Service.

Mark has a proven background in strategic and financial management, in manufacturing, process control, tourism and retail industries. His operational expertise as a Commercial Manager encompasses Marketing, Sales, R&D, Engineering, HR and Project Management.

He has a passion for developing new funding **channels for NFP's as well as mentoring** management teams. He has extensive cross-cultural experience having reported to European and US head offices as well as involvement in the set up of subsidiaries in Japan, China, Korea, Malaysia, Taiwan and Indonesia.

Mark holds a Diploma in Corporate Management, is a CPA, and has extensive experience including Corporate recovery strategies, Strategic evaluation skills and turnaround management, Coaching, mentoring & training seminars & workshops, and Financial acumen and project management.

We will complete the Waminda program on March 17.

My Little Hero's Learning Centre takes shape

Waminda's new childcare centre is a step closer to opening with the registration of its name and completion of the parent handbooks and application forms.

My Little Hero's Learning Centre is set to open mid-year according to director of lifestyle support and children's services Judy Chapman.

There has been keen interest in the new centre, which will offer long daycare for children aged three years to Prep, along with before and after school and vacation care.

It will be open to all children, whether they have a disability or not.

Specialist staff under the guidance of newly-appointed centre director Kate Johnson will offer Waminda's Childhood Development Program (CDP) as an early intervention strategy for those children with special needs.

The reason Waminda has gone down the childcare centre path to deliver this program is so parents and carers can access Government financial support through the Child Care Benefit.

All children in the centre will join in an early educational program designed to prepare them for their school life and help develop their ability to relate well with their peers, parents and teachers.

Trained staff will implement an Individual Development Program for each child with a disability which will be shared with schools, parents and medical specialists.

This will ensure that all those interacting with the child are on the same page, and what has been achieved at our centre is carried through to their school.

The Arrow Energy Light and Sensory Room, which features strongly in the CDP, will also be made available to help the local schools with their special education programs

"We expect to see all of our children heading off to Prep with anticipation and a sense that they are going on an enjoyable journey of learning," Judy said.

Centre receives much needed funds

Waminda was recently announced the winner of a McDonald's Justice League 'Be Your Local Hero' community grant of \$5000.

Judy was presented with the cheque by local McDonald's licensee **Andrea Steele**, and said she was really excited at winning.

Judy had applied while having a meal in the Dalby restaurant.

"We will add a music creation wall pad to our multi-sensory room at the centre," she said.

"This will help the children understand the process of sound and have fun at the same time."

The McDonald's promotion was open to children throughout Australia. Entrants were required to say in 100 words or less, who they want to nominate, why they think they should



"Courage is the greatest of all the virtues. Because if you haven't courage, you may not have an opportunity to use any of the others. "

- [Samuel Johnson](#)

receive \$5000 and how they would use the donation.

Andrea said “I was particularly happy one of my local groups was successful”.

Meanwhile local coal companies have made contributions to Waminda’s work.

Peabody Wilkie Creek general manager Blair Jackson presented Waminda with two cheques totalling \$9500 in the lead-up to Christmas.

Blair said Peabody Energy “is proud to sup-



McDonalds licensee Andrea Steele (left) presents (from left) Abby Bacon, Waminda Services Director of adult and children’s programs Judy Chapman and Director of Children’s Services Kate Johnson with a McDonald’s Justice League “Be Your Local Hero” community grant.

port their work within the community”.

“Peabody has an ongoing commitment to the communities it operates in and is very proud to be able to support worthy causes such as Waminda,” he said.

“Their initiative by way of developing enterprises with donated monies, like the childcare facility, will lead them some way into their self sustainability.”

New Hope Coal has also put in a donation of \$2000 towards our work.

Waminda chief executive officer Stephen Hicks said the funds were a welcome boost to the

group’s expansion plans for 2010.

This year will see the opening of a new childcare centre, further development of the Childhood Development Program for children with Autism, a new centre built for the adult day program, and services established in another town in the Surat Basin.

“We really do appreciate this help towards achieving our goals,” Stephen said.

“We are in every sense working partners with every employer large and small, and every member of these communities spread east to Jondaryan and west to Roma.

“We have the people, the skills and the heart to bring a range of professional programs, services and cutting edge technologies to regional Dalby and centres in the Surat Basin.

“We need tangible, substantial financial and other supports to make the vision into a genuine reality.”

Stephen said productive communities needed **“the full range”** of light infrastructure services to attract and retain a quality workforce.

“Waminda is committed to being a plank in that overall health and education infrastructure,” he said.

“The support of government, private enterprise and the general community, now when it is needed, can guarantee not only the dream, but the much needed reality.”



Community service a family affair

At Waminda we are blessed to have a truly professional and caring team that contributes in a variety of ways to the welfare of our service users.

It's just like a family really, so it should be no surprise that three members of that team really do belong to the one family.

Bernadette Muller is a support worker for the group home at Brimblecombe St and also does two days a week as a home support for another client.

Her daughter Amy, who is qualified in childcare, has recently come to join the team in **the day centre, while Bernadette's partner Brad** is often at the centre lending a hand with outings, activities and in the yard.

"I've worked with Waminda for 2½ years – before that I had worked with Endeavour for three years when the kids were young," says Bernadette.

She was introduced to disability by her aunt, and joined Endeavour as a cook.

"Then Endeavour were looking for extra people to be on staff at the residential house and asked if I would do it," she said.

"I was happy to do it – the guys are great, I love being with them.

"My kids were raised around people with disabilities – they have an uncle who is disabled at Endeavour in Toowoomba and they were around him a fair bit when they were little."

Her children often came to Endeavour with Bernie, which has helped them develop a genuine love for people with a disability.



Part of Bernadette's role at Waminda is shopping for the house. She is usually accompanied by one of the service users from the day centre, who enjoys a good community access event and gets some one-on-one time.

"Occasionally we will run into my other daughter with her kids and these guys all know my grand children by name and by sight," says Bernadette.

These contacts create a genuine family feeling for the service users.

"Hopefully we're raising all the kids without a prejudice against people with a disability," says Bernadette.

"That's part of the reason I said 'yes' to Endeavour – I didn't want my children to grow up and walk down the other side of the street because they might catch what somebody's got.

"It's not possible to catch anything, but that's the mentality that you have with a lot of people, and that's horrible.

"(The disabled) are no different to you and me – they just want somebody to love them, that's all they want.

“These guys look on the staff here as their family.”

Amy is following in mum’s footsteps and has been with Waminda in the day centre for 12 months.

“It came from seeing mum around town with the guys, and from that there was a bit of a connection,” she says.

“I was told there were jobs opening up and thought I’d give it a go. I came from working in childcare and we had children with disabilities there. “

Working at Waminda has opened up greater opportunities to work with children with a disability, but it’s the adults that have captured her heart.

“The adults are really good because you’re at work, but it’s a fun environment to work in,” Amy says.

“I’ve done a couple of days with the kids but work five days a week with adults.

“I am torn between the two but the hours with the adults suit me a lot better and I think I’ve got a connection now where I can’t let them go.

“I don’t just come to work, I come to see friends.”

Brad has always had a love for people with special needs after growing up around his uncle who has a disability. He comes in regularly to help with community access and programs within the day centre.

He particularly enjoys working with the service users because he could have been in exactly the same position after a bad accident when he was 18. He was lucky to survive, let alone come through with epilepsy but no other disabilities.

Brad said he “just feels a connection with these guys” and loves being around them.

Valuable Volunteers!!!!



There’s no forgetting it’s the second Tuesday of the month at Waminda — that’s the day when delightful aromas waft from our commercial kitchen as Barb, Elaine and the other volunteers bake the month’s orders that are part of our fundraising effort.



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