

**Introduction:** Hello readers! Welcome to our newsletter.

I have included some information about the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) in this month's newsletter for your information after the news on respite services and computer training workbooks.

### **Do you know where to find Respite services?**

For many carers, finding services available to give them a planned, regular break from their caring role is critical in supporting them to manage the very demanding role they play.

The Victorian Carer Services Network (VCSN) is pleased to introduce the new Respite Seeker website, an online tool that will make finding respite easier for carers and provide greater coordination between services.

The web based application has been designed and built by Infoxchange Australia with grant funds from the Department of Health and Ageing's National Respite for Carers Program.

**Respite Seeker** provides easy access to current respite information and streamlines searching for and booking respite. Respite services listed include day centres, outings and group activities, residential respite in aged care homes, overnight community respite and respite services delivered in the home.

Have a look at this new website at [www.respiteseeker.com.au](http://www.respiteseeker.com.au)

**Internet Training Workbooks** especially for people with a disability.

Vicnet's Internet workbooks are written in Easy English, using simple language and illustrations to introduce new concepts and skills. The workbooks are designed to be used with the support of a trainer. They are particularly suitable for training people with a disability, seniors, people from non-English speaking backgrounds, and people with low literacy levels.

check them out at: [www.vicnet.net.au/publications/item/94-internet-training-workbooks](http://www.vicnet.net.au/publications/item/94-internet-training-workbooks)

### **Soapbox:**

It seems in our travels doing many Disability Awareness Training sessions around the state, that the majority of people outside of the disability industry are unaware of the NDIS. There are SO many inequities in the current disability funding system that it is more than time to find a solution to provide a simpler and fairer way to support people with a disability who either were born with or acquired a disability. Even if we don't acquire a disability in earlier life, with an ageing population it's time to consider what to do with ALL of us as we live longer, become more frail and inevitably will need some supports in later life. Read what the NDIS lobbyists have to say....

The '**Every Australian Counts!**' website offers "Ten reasons why we need an NDIS":

1. The support system for people with a disability, their families and carers is in crisis. If you, or someone you love, is born with a disability or acquires one later in life, you all run the risk of falling through a huge hole in Australia's safety net.
2. People with a disability and their families and carers want to participate in the social, economic, and cultural life of the nation. But there are many barriers to their full inclusion.

3. Lack of support and services means families are primarily responsible for meeting the needs of their family member with a disability. Many families are struggling with high rates of physical, emotional and financial stress.
4. The current situation is inequitable – people receive different levels of support depending on how, when and where their disability was acquired.
5. An economic crisis is looming. The number of people with a disability is increasing and the number of people willing and able to provide unpaid care is falling. This means the cost to government is expected to escalate dramatically in the future.
6. A National Disability Insurance Scheme would provide people with a disability and their families and carers with the regular care, support, therapy and equipment they need. As a Medicare-type scheme, it would provide a secure and consistent pool of funds for these services and support.
7. It would be fair, efficient and effective. It would focus on early intervention and delivering those supports which produce the best long term outcomes. It would maximise opportunities for independence, participation and productivity.
8. It would be individualised and person-centred. Support would be based on the choices of a person with a disability and their family.
9. The scheme would reframe support as investment rather than charity. Timely interventions, appropriate aids and equipment, training and development would become investment in individual capacity rather than welfare. The scheme would therefore lead to more positive results for people with a disability, their families and carers as well as being fiscally responsible.
10. All Australians would benefit from this scheme because disability can affect anyone, anytime. Everyone will benefit from building a more inclusive, more diverse community.

### **If you would like to show your support for the NDIS, join the ‘Target 100K’ campaign**

All sides of politics are supportive of the NDIS but we need bankable political support. At 27,000 members, we are just another interest group who can be dismissed because we don't have electoral clout. But if we can grow the numbers of campaign supporters rapidly in coming weeks and months, our politicians won't be able to ignore the groundswell of public opinion.

So, the target is to get **100,000** supporters registered online. This is a big number – the sort of number that influences election outcomes, particularly if our supporters also happen to reside in key marginal seats. If our current group of supporters can go and aim to recruit another 10 people to the cause, then we can really start flexing our muscle.

**Join the ‘Every Australian Counts!’ campaign now and vote on [www.everyaustraliancounts.com.au](http://www.everyaustraliancounts.com.au)**

#### **Media release about the NDIS:**

#### **Victorian Coalition Government Responds to Draft Report into National Disability Insurance Scheme**

*Media Release, The Hon Mary Wooldridge MP Minister for Mental Health Women's Affairs and Community Services, 23 May 2011*

The Victorian Coalition Government today released its submission in response to the Productivity Commission's Draft Report on Disability Care and Support.

Releasing the submission, Minister for Community Services Mary Wooldridge together with chair of the Victorian NDIS Taskforce and former Chief Executive of Yooralla Bryan

Woodford, said the government welcomed the draft report and reconfirmed the Victorian Government's commitment to the development of a National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS).

"The Victorian Coalition Government agrees with the commission's view that the provision of disability services in Australia is 'underfunded, unfair, fragmented and inefficient'," Ms Wooldridge said.

"The Victorian Coalition Government is committed to being a driving force for the reform process and believes we can do better as a nation by delivering major reform to the disability service sector through the establishment of an NDIS.

"Our commitment to support the introduction of a National Disability Insurance Scheme was made in response to calls from people with a disability for respect, to be acknowledged as experts in their own lives and to have the same opportunities as everyone else in our community to make choices and pursue opportunities to reach their potential," Ms Wooldridge said.

Ms Wooldridge said Victoria was well placed to host the first stage of implementation of an NDIS and is keen to do so.

"As our submission describes, Victoria has 15 years experience in implementing a self-directed approach to disability services and in developing a market-based approach to their delivery and has an excellent reputation for successfully managing lifetime care and support schemes through the Transport Accident Commission and WorkSafe Victoria," Ms Wooldridge said.

"Victoria is already playing a key role in leading national work which will be important in establishing an NDIS.

"This includes the development of a common assessment tool, together with Queensland, and the development of a National Quality Framework and Standards, to apply to service providers," Ms Wooldridge said.

Ms Wooldridge said the Victorian Government's submission has benefited from the breadth of expertise and experience represented on the Victorian NDIS Implementation Taskforce, which was established in February to provide advice to the Victorian Government.

"Our submission also draws on the expertise of the Victorian Disability Advisory Council, and the experience of people with a disability, their families and carers and service providers consulted at a roundtable in April 2011," Ms Wooldridge said.

"With the benefit of this community expertise and experience, the Victorian Government's submission seeks to make a constructive contribution to the Productivity Commission's final report.

"The Premier and I would like to thank all members of the taskforce for their dedicated hard work in the preparation of our response to the draft report.

"We look forward to continuing to work with the Taskforce through the next stages of planning for, and implementing a NDIS," Ms Wooldridge said.

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