



Winter

Edition 2009

"Tandem extends its gratitude to both Capital Insurance Brokers and Zurich Insurance Ltd for their expertise and generosity. Their assistance with ensuring that we are appropriately insured has led to a significant reduction in costs as a direct result of our management of hazards and incidents. The strong relationship between Capital Insurance Brokers, Zurich Insurance Ltd and Tandem is further strengthened by their financial contribution to our Quarterly newsletter and training."

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In the PICTURE

With the new financial year upon us the economic downturn has become a harsh reality for many, Tandem included. We will be facing a challenging year ahead to ensure ongoing sustainability. As outlined in 'From the Board Room' (see p2) we are tackling these challenges on number of fronts.

The office staff at Tandem - especially our Coordinators - have been putting in a remarkable effort to ensure that the impact of changes that we have to make is kept to a minimum. Likewise, many of the people and families who

have already been approached by their Coordinator have been

understanding of the necessity for these changes. This has been very helpful in negotiating an outcome that works for them and that Tandem can sustain.

On a happier note I would like to remind you to apply for funding from the Carer's Support Fund. We are accepting applications for the \$300 Carer Support fund until the end of July. The fund is very flexible and I strongly encourage you to apply for this one off opportunity. If you would like to apply for this funding or would like more information, please contact the office.

In other news: Tandem has recently completed a recruitment process and has inducted another 23 Support Workers. Also our office has welcomed Susan Williams, Graham Bourne and Hamish Glasscock. A warm welcome to all of our new Support Workers and office staff.

Cheryl Daw, *Chief Executive Officer*

From the BOARD ROOM

Tandem's first birthday: Tandem celebrated its first birthday in style. The party commenced with a staff picnic on the site of our soon-to-be new accommodation at the Blaxland Centre in Griffith. Celebrations continued in grand style with a cocktail party sponsored by the Eastlake Football Club and held in its newly refurbished conference rooms in Oxley Street, Griffith. Clients, staff and the Board mingled with federal and local politicians, local business and government representatives and colleagues from other community based organisations. It was an excellent opportunity to promote our new organisation.

We are grateful to Eastlake for funding the event. I would also like to take this opportunity to thank Federal MP, Annette Ellis for her kind words about the role our organisation plays in the community. Thanks too, to radio personality Alex Sloane, for taking on the role of Master of Ceremonies; David Pembroke of Content Group for assisting with publicity; and **St Edmund's College for providing us with a fine young group of jazz musicians who added beautifully to the ambience of the evening.**

Publicly launching Tandem had a twofold purpose. First, we were keen to recognise the work that has gone into bringing this organisation together. The first twelve months of operation (and for many more months prior to the official merger) staff have been working hard to develop new business plans, update policies and procedures to reflect the new **organisation's structure, and to identify resource, recruitment, training and development opportunities.** This has been achieved while at the same time maintaining the high quality of service to our clients for which we are recognised. This is not just my assessment. The Board is very pleased to acknowledge that a recent Home and Community Care (HACC) national audit against its service standards has rated Tandem highly. Two areas were identified as needing improvement; the need to more clearly inform consumers about our informal and formal complaints process and the need to develop individualised support plans that integrate other data we may hold. We will be working on these matters.

Secondly, the launch enabled us to get our name and services more generally known out in the community. This is an important aspect of our new strategic plan: Key Goal Two *Our Influence* highlights the need to promote the strengths and needs of our clients and to promote the services we provide with the aim of growing those services and giving more individuals and families access to them. We will be following up many of the attendees to talk with them about how they, their organisations and their business may benefit from forming partnerships with us or from sponsoring some of our activities.

Budget deliberations: It will come as no surprise that Tandem is not immune from the current **economic downturn. The Board is currently settling Tandem's budget for the 2009-10** financial year. Government funding does not cover all of our expenses and we are currently finding it difficult to break even. This situation cannot be maintained longer term and we need to be able to build reserves for future investment in capital and services. Our ability to attract corporate partnerships and to develop collaborative projects with other organisations will be an important plank in shoring up future funding. In the meantime, we are identifying opportunities to reduce costs and increase income across our programs. Some proposed staff payment increases have been held over until the collective employment agreement is signed off. We are also reviewing the number and timing of hours we provide, particularly weekends and public holidays. We recently increased our brokerage fees in line with market movements and we now need to similarly increase our user payments. While we recognise the importance the contributions make to our bottom line, we also recognise the **importance of keeping our fees to a minimum to adequately reflect clients' ability to pay.** Any client with concerns is welcome to talk with our CEO on a confidential basis.

Continued on page 10.

For Your INFO

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- **Tandem Website**

In keeping with our efforts to provide the latest important information and news relating to Tandem, we are more frequently updating our website so clients, support workers, sponsors and friends can keep up to date. Information on recruitment, programs offered, training and development, news and special events will be regularly updated online. An electronic copy of our latest newsletter is also always available, so

when you're next online ensure you make a quick visit to www.tandem.org.au

Keeping the QUALITY

Since the last edition of the newsletter Tandem has successfully completed the Home and Community Care (HACC) National Standards and Agency Appraisal. Tandem was pleased to be rated in the highest category. This is an excellent outcome and reflects well on all our staff. Whilst we are very pleased with the result, there were some recommendations made as a result of the appraisal regarding how we can continue to improve the support we provide to individuals and families. We will be evaluating and where appropriate implementing these recommendations over the coming months.

Tandem has recently created a new Service Delivery Handbook for clients and families. The Handbook contains information about the various programs that Tandem offers, the services provided, as well as policy and procedures that our clients and families need to be aware of. The Service Delivery Handbook will also prove useful for Support Workers and will be issued to new families and clients as part of the assessment process, with existing families and clients being provided with the Handbook at the time of service review. The Service Delivery Handbook along with the Policy & Procedures Manual can also be accessed on the Tandem website, or alternatively you can ask your Coordinator for a copy.

Richard Duckett, *Quality Assurance Manager*

SWAG's Handy Hints

"To leave or not to leave"

One of the issues faced by Support Workers is leaving one session on time so you are able to get to your next support session on time. It is often difficult to leave when you know that there are still things to be done with the person or family that you support. One suggestion to try and avoid the problem of having to rush things before a session finishes is to set the alarm on your phone 10-15 minutes before the end of the support session. This will give you the opportunity to check if there is any particular activity that the person or family wants assistance with before the support session ends for that day. Finishing support sessions on time is important as it lessens the chance of you having to rush (ie. speed) to the next session.

Support Worker Handy Hints is provided by the Support Worker Advisory Group (SWAG). If you have suggestions or would like to know more about the SWAG you can contact the representatives at swag@tandem.org.au or Richard Duckett on 6288 0955 or richard.duckett@tandem.org.au

Programs PROFILE

The service delivery teams are busy places with coordinators doing assessments and reviews, ensuring that support sessions are useful and enjoyable, and that clients and their families and carers have opportunities for some increased quality of life experiences. Assessments of new clients and regular reviews of existing clients are the backbone of the services we provide, and help us keep on track with providing a service that is meaningful and accessible.

Filling sessions continues as a focus for all coordinators. There is immense satisfaction to be had when a support worker is successfully matched to the client and their needs, likes and dislikes. Tandem prides itself on this client/worker matching and on the rigorous recruitment, selection and training process that all support workers undergo.

Do you know your coordinator? Have you met with him or her recently? Have you met at all? Perhaps they are a friendly voice on the end of the phone calling to talk to you about sessions and how we can meet your needs, or perhaps calling to ask you if you are available to work a session. If you – the client - have not yet met your coordinator, they will be in touch with you to arrange a time to meet and have a chat, so you can match a face to name and voice. Can I also urge you to contact your coordinator for a review if your circumstances have changed?

Support workers: **if you haven't yet had an opportunity to meet the coordinators please pop into the offices at Mulley and Stapylton Streets in Holder and meet the members of our great coordination teams.** You are all welcome to visit at any time, although please call first to make sure the coordinators are in the office. We are very fortunate to have great staff working for us out in the field and in the office, without whom the rewarding **work that we do just wouldn't happen.**

It was said recently that there always seems to be something big going on at Tandem; an astute observation. We continue to absorb and adapt to the changes that have resulted from the amalgamation process, all the while maintaining a clear focus on service excellence as our target. Tandem recently underwent a quality audit of our HACC services (with the **Children and Young People's program being the actual audit focus**) and gained a very respectable score. This means that our work is effective, efficient and meaningful and done within organisational and service structures that are clear, understandable, professional and ethical.

The teams welcome Susan Williams to the Living Skills program along with Graham Bourne and Hamish Glasscock to the AFFIRM team. There is capacity for new referrals across all programs, so please contact us for more information on this.

Lisa Grant, Operations Manager

Interested in Joining Tandem's Workplace Giving Program?

In keeping with Tandem's ongoing search for additional forms of fundraising to add value to the services it offers and address unmet needs, Tandem is offering a Workplace Giving program to employees, families and other businesses to regularly donate to Tandem.

Workplace Giving is an Australian Government initiative established to assist community organisations to raise additional funding. It provides an opportunity for donors to elect to contribute regular donations through deductions via their payroll system and receive an immediate tax benefit for doing so. For example, a \$5.00 a week donation, means a reduction in take home pay of \$3.50 and an annual contribution to Tandem of \$260.00.

If you're interested in participating in the Workplace Giving program and would like to make regular pre-tax donations to Tandem, call the office for more information on 6287 2870.

SUPPORT WORKER Training

As usual Tandem will be running a variety of training throughout the second half of the year. Please check your mail box and the website for dates.

July

Induction

Continance Workshop

Sexuality and Disability

Multiple Sclerosis

Living with trauma, grief and loss arising from disability and illness

August

Anaphylaxis Workshop

Bees, stings & other things

Asthma Workshop

CALD Awareness

September

Rights/Responsibilities and Ethics

Managing Chronic Pain

PART Training

Managing critical incidents arising from a person's experience of Mental Health

OHS Outlook

H1N1 Influenza 09 (Human Swine Influenza)

You will all be aware of the recent outbreak of Human Swine Flu that has dominated news headlines around the country. Tandem was quick to act when incidents of Human Swine Flu began to rise in the ACT. We are happy to report that at the time of writing there have been no reported cases of Human Swine Flu from any of our staff, clients or families. Whilst the potential of this variation on the Flu virus is of concern it is none-the-less a useful opportunity to see how our

Control of Infectious and Communicable Conditions policy stood up to the test.

Happily our Infections and Communicable Conditions policy did not need refining when we were faced with the challenge presented by the Human Swine Flu virus.

Recommendations from ACT Health, the Department of Health and Ageing and the **World Health Organisation were already covered in Tandem's existing policy.**

Indeed it became apparent at various meetings with other agencies that Tandem was leading the way when it came to controlling the spread of both the Human Swine Flu virus, as well as the seasonal flu virus that presents a risk to many of our clients and families on an annual basis.

On a less happy note the virus is still spreading. We remind you to remain alert to symptoms in yourself and others and to advise your coordinator as soon as possible if you start to experience flu like symptoms. All staff, clients and families are reminded that the virus is contagious for 24 hours before symptoms present and that the use of Personal Protective Equipment minimizes the risk of cross infection. Gloves and masks are available at the office.

Melinda Mitchell, OHS and Training Manager

BOOK Review - Who Cares.....?

With thanks to the staff at Ms Annette Ellis MP's office for assistance provided.

Who Cares...? is a report on the inquiry into better support for carers, produced by the House of Representatives Standing Committee on Family, Community, Housing and Youth which is chaired by Ms Annette Ellis MP.

The report covers the findings and conclusions the Committee came to when it set out in May 2008 to determine the most effective ways to support carers and their families. From the outset of the inquiry, the Committee listened to the opinions and personal experiences of more than 1300 carers, who cared for a family member or friend, to determine the needs of carers.

Through further research and valuable input from carers themselves, the Committee concluded that while every caring situation is unique, in essence what carers want are more choices in their lives. The Committee then made 50 recommendations to assist carers, which targeted their most urgent and important problems and aimed to make their lives easier over the long term.

Who Cares...? is recommended reading material for carers and friends, family and supporters of carers, as it provides a very valuable insight into the lives of carers and the additional obstacles they face, as well as highlighting the ways in which the government plans to further assist with overcoming these obstacles.

Jono Condon, Community Relationships and Marketing Officer.

MEET The Team

Hi my name is Hamish Glasscock and I have recently joined the AFFIRM team as a Family Support Practitioner. I have worked in the industry for three years now, starting as a support worker, then moving to a Coordinator position and now a member of the AFFIRM team in a role that is proving both challenging, but equally as rewarding.

Hello my name is Susan Williams and I have recently started three days a week as the Living Skills Coordinator. Previously I have been a community volunteer and worked as a Case Manager, Coordinator and support worker, including for FaBRiC and Tandem. I've also worked for the Commonwealth Government. I am enjoying using my skills and experience to establish a new phase of the Living Skills Program so that over time, individuals and families will have more options and choices in their lives.

Hi my name is Graham Bourne **and I'm a new AFFIRM Family Support Practitioner** working Mondays and Tuesdays. My background includes front-line social work in **the U.K. where I've worked with children - including those with a disability and their families for twenty years.** I arrived in Canberra in January 2009 and enjoy my AFFIRM role as it allows me to be highly pro-active **and responsive to families' needs.** I have 3 kids – who are all enjoying the adventure of emigrating.

YOUR Voice

My name is Lyndee Savage and I am a single mother of three children. Benjamin and Joshua are fraternal twins who are nearly nine years of age and attend Malkara Special School, and Jade is five. Benjamin is Autistic and Joshua has a dual diagnosis of Down syndrome & Autism.



Being a parent is a challenge at the best of times, let alone if your children have extra hurdles. There is no doubt that this is a 24 hour a day, 7 days a week, 52 weeks a year **job. I wouldn't swap my children for all the money in the world, but I'd be lying if I said that I didn't find myself in a position where I am both physically and mentally exhausted** on a regular basis. Combine that with the fact that if you are a single parent, or perhaps do not have the immediate support of family or friends – what do you do, and where do you go? Human beings are by nature social creatures and enjoy the company of others, however if for one reason or another you are unable to make contact or even have someone to talk to, you become insular and begin to doubt yourself as a parent. It is for this reason the Special Needs Mums Night Out group was initiated and I will also be eternally grateful for the access I have to respite workers who are literally my lifeline to normality and staying reasonably sane!

Initially the group went out for dinner. Just to sit back, relax and have someone else to cook and clean up after us which was fantastic! Some women who attend are not necessarily parents of kids with extra needs but feel that they want to support us, or the **causes of the disabilities that our children have! They too are welcome; it's all about being social and enjoying the company of other likeminded women.**

Often when you spend a great deal of time at home, the needs of children consume your every thought and action. So whilst we encourage mums to chat about their background, situation and family, we also want mums to have fun, enjoy the moment, giggle, laugh **and get back into the swing of things. Often you don't realise just how much you talk only of your kids and their disability and it can be a hard road getting back into having 'regular' conversations. We are all empathetic to different cultures, situations and disabilities but for one night every 4-6 weeks we are a fun-loving group of women who revel in good company and entertainment and become 'single' again for a short period.**

For more information email: Lyndee Savage - Lyndee@internode.on.net

If you would like to share a story in **"YOUR Voice"** we would love to hear from you. Please contact Jono Condon on Ph: 6287 2870 or via email: Jonathan.Condon@tandem.org.au

Carer Payment Changes

Recent changes have been made to how the national Carer Payment is allocated. In the past, allocation has been based purely on the level of disability however now carers complete the Disability Care Load Assessment which takes into consideration the carers perception of their own level of need and care load. It is expected an extra 19,000 carers will now be assisted under this new method of assessment. Contact Centrelink for further information.

OUT and About

Street Soccer

People facing substance abuse, homelessness, family breakdown, grief and loss and mental illness of all ages, ability and fitness levels, get together to train and play. The aim is to help individuals get fit, make new friends, and seek support and advice.

When

Wednesdays from 2.00 – 4.00pm, Reid Sports Oval.

Contact

Tim Skinner Ph: 0466 386249
canberrasoccer@bigissue.org.au



Disability Sports Expo

People 16 and older with a disability will have the opportunity to have a go at a range of sports including Basketball, Cricket, Floorball, Table-Tennis, Bocce and Heartmoves. The sports will be run in a rotational format with participants split into groups with 30mins for each sport.

When

Wednesday 16 July 09, 9.00am - 12.30pm
\$10, morning tea provided.

Contact

Applications: www.tandem.org.au/site/Events.php
Location: MPowerdome Coyne St Fadden
Jeff Thompson, LEAD Development
Ph: 02 62577 088



CDTeens and Jumping Juniors

Canberra Dance Theatre is holding dance classes for young people with special needs and allow participants to commence at any time.

When

Jumping Juniors (primary) 10.05 - 11.05am
CDteens (teenagers) 9.00 - 10.00am
\$16 per class or \$140 for 10 classes.

Contact

www.canberradancetheatre.org
info@canberradancetheatre.org
Ph: 0435 025 365

Canberra Dance Theatre Studio, corner Kingsley St and Barry Drive, Canberra City.

2XX 98.3fm Radio - Mental Illness and Carer Programs

Opening Minds airs every Tuesday from 6.00 to 6.30pm and aims to reduce stigma, raise awareness about mental illness and encourage help-seeking behaviours.

Contact: openingminds@mieact.org.au

UPLIFT airs every Monday from 6.00 to 6.30pm focusing on carers' issues and news, and aspires to uplift the carers' community by encouraging better networking. A sitcom is planned for later in the year.

Contact: Oakley Stuart-Holmes 0425 334 581 or email:
2xxcarersradio@gmail.com

In Your COMMUNITY

Disability Advisory Council (DAC)

Made up of members including people with a disability, family members and carers, care and service providers and other advisory councils, DAC independently advises the Minister for Disability and other Ministers across a range of issues. If you have an issue to contribute, you can send an email or letter to them.

Contact

dacsecretariat@ozemail.com.au
PO Box 129, Woden ACT 2606.



National Disability and Carer Alliance

This new alliance is made up of representatives from the Australian Federation of Disability Organisations National Disability Services and Carers Australia. Its aim is to get a better deal for people with disabilities, their families and their carers by bringing matters to the attention of the government and the community. The Alliance was launched on Monday 15 June 2009 at the Communities in Control Conference in Melbourne.

Contact

Andrew Geraghty
Ph: 02 6122 9911 or 0411444145



Council of the Aging (COTA)

COTA advises the Government, the media and the community about issues concerning older people in the ACT. It contributes to the development of national policies and agendas and is a member of several ACT government committees. The services they provide include the Seniors information line, Housing Options Advice, seminars, courses, information sessions, manages the Seniors Card Scheme and the production of publications all targeted at older people in the ACT.

Contact

Ph: 02 6282 3777
contact@cota-act.org.au
www.cota-act.org.au



In The SPIRIT of Fun

Recreational Activities Program Update

In round six of the Recreational Activities Program most applicants received either partial or full funding. A variety of exciting recreational activities receiving funding included: tennis lessons, ballet, gymnastics, cub scouts, indoor cricket, instrument tuition, martial arts classes, calisthenics and swimming lessons. With a high demand for financial assistance to participate in activities, priority is given to families who have not previously received assistance, however this should not deter previously successful families from applying for future rounds. This Program is made possible through the generous support of the Canberra-Ginninderra Lions Club and the ACT Government's Health Promotion Grants Program.

Thanks to



We Serve

Ginninderra Club

Bocce Team Update

You may remember the Autumn newsletter featured the 'It's Good News' story: Anyone for Boccia, which chronicled the efforts of Tandem client Tyler Ellis in introducing competitive boccia to Canberra three years ago. Since then, the ACT Boccia Team which he and a few other Tandem clients play in, has continued to achieve further greatness, with the triples component of the team, including Tyler himself recently taking out the national title. Two of the members and its coach were then honoured with an invitation to join the Australian Boccia Team, which they proudly accepted. The Australian Boccia Team will soon be heading overseas to participate in an elite training camp and then compete in various tournaments. The championships win was dedicated to the memory of Damien Caesar, the boccia president, with the 'Sportsman of the Year' award being renamed the 'Caesar Award'; with the very first winner of this award being a member of the ACT team.

News!

"The LeisureLink

Volunteer Program has successfully applied for funding from the ACT Volunteer Grants Program to assist in the reimbursement of transport costs to clients. For further information contact our Leisurelink Coordinator Michelle Preston on 62880955.

Continued from page 2.

Board Changes: We say farewell to Board member Brenda Malcolm, who has served in the community sector for many years, including as the former Executive Director of Community Connections. **Brenda's incisive input to Tandem, especially on our Service Delivery Committee** was very much appreciated. It came not only from her professional background but also from her personal experience caring for a family member with a disability. I encourage family members or friends of people with disabilities to consider seriously whether you might be able to contribute to our organisation as a member of the Board. Cheryl Daw or I would be very happy to talk to you about what this would involve. In the meantime, we welcome new Board Member Jean McIntyre. Jean is the Canberra based Manager of Marketing Angels and she serves on the Chamber of Women in Business. We look forward to being able to make use of her marketing and communications skills as we take our own strategic and marketing plan forward. Welcome Jean!

Catherine McPherson, *President*

Taking a BREAK

Client Holiday Scheme Update

Tandem and the Calwell and Wanniasa Community Bank Branches of Bendigo Bank have been delighted to contribute funding towards some exciting holiday proposals that have either been taken or are about to be taken by successful applicants. These getaways include: holidays for two to Townsville, for three to Kiama, for two to the South Coast, for a family to Mossy Point and for two to Bega.

Thanks to



Proud Supporters of Tandem

Eastlake conferences

Eastlake offers modern and stylish facilities in the heart of Canberra. The function facilities have been recently refurbished and include state of the art audio visual equipment in every room.

Eastlake's function centre boasts four contemporary and beautifully appointed rooms. The boardroom is perfect for a small meeting of up to fourteen people. All rooms are equipped with operable walls, providing the flexibility of accommodating up to 250 people.

The club is able to cater for conferences, weddings and social events. There are a number of conference packages, comprehensive menus and catering options to suit any occasion or dietary requirement.

We guarantee you won't be disappointed.



functions@eastlake.com.au | 02 62280999



Thanks To Our SUPPORTERS

All Phones
Australian Medical Council
Bendigo Community Bank
(Calwell & Wanniasa Branches)
Capital Insurance Brokers
Content Group

Datavoice
DECCA Building Group
Defence Housing Australia
DLA Phillips Fox
Lions Club of Canberra
(Ginninderra Branch)

Eastlake Football Club
Partners in Health
Watsons Blinds & Awnings
Zurich Insurance Ltd.



It's GOOD News - A Hardly Normal Morning

During a Tandem support worker's regular session with a client, the client decided they needed a heater as they were really beginning to feel the cold. After some initial discussions on the type of heater required etc. they decided to check them out at Harvey Norman in Fyshwick. Once in the electrical section, they said they received very helpful customer service from a kind salesperson. The kindness however, wasn't due to end there. Upon going to purchase the item, the two were pleasantly surprised to learn that the item was discounted as part of a sale but when coming to pay for it the client found that they didn't have the full amount in cash and had forgotten their

EFTPOS pin number. The two left to withdraw funds from a bank, which was to be considerable effort for the client using their walker in the busy shopping centre, but they didn't get far before a Harvey Norman salesperson caught up to them explaining how another customer had offered to pay the amount they were short and that Harvey Norman were instead going to further reduce the price of the heater for the Tandem client.

Our client is now greatly enjoying having a warm home and Tandem would like to give a BIG THANK YOU to Harvey Norman Fyshwick for their very generous discount!

Tandem Launch



Striving for Best Practice

As part of Tandem's commitment to ongoing improvement we are always pleased to hear how you think we can do things better. If you would like to make suggestions on how we can improve our services please contact your coordinator or Cheryl Daw at cheryl.daw@tandem.org.au

