

Disability Project Newsletter



Recognise and Respond through Trauma Informed Care

Assisting Tasmanian health services to support survivors of sexual abuse who have a disability

July 2021

Kathryn Fordyce new CEO , Laurel House



Laurel House welcomes our new CEO, Kathryn Fordyce! Kathryn joins us from St Giles and possess a wonderful alignment of leadership and service delivery experience.

Kathryn has extensive experience in not-for-profit leadership in the disability, allied health and community sector. Kathryn's most recent role has been as a member of St Giles' Senior Leadership Team, providing oversight of allied health services, community and in-home support, supported independent living and autism-specific early learning in the North West, and autism diagnostic and psychology services state-wide. She has co-authored research papers on autism, early intervention and evidence-based practice, and has been actively engaged in national research collaborations and has presented research findings at national and international conferences.

On her appointment, Kathryn said:

"I am honoured to advance the vision of the organisation in advocating for policy reform that promotes the rights of everyone to live without sexual violence. I have been a committed advocate throughout my career for people whose circumstances create disadvantage and marginalisation particularly people with a disability, the LGBTQI+ community, and people from regional and remote locations. I am passionate about championing the voices of survivors of sexual assault, and in advocating for trauma-informed and inclusive services. It is a critical time to stand up against sexual violence."

Please send us your news, achievements, and activities of interest to share with the group. We want to hear your ideas about the project – and the newsletter.

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BACKGROUND

Laurel House has received funding from the Australian Government Department of Social Services (DSS) until 30 June 2022.

Using a co-design approach, we will develop and deliver educational materials and training that will build capacity of workforces to recognise and respond to sexual assault and associated trauma affecting people with a disability.



Laurel House support:

Phone: 6334 2740 Mon-Fri, 9-5pm

After hours: 1800MYSUPPORT

1800 697 877

NAIDOC Week is July 4-11

NAIDOC Week is an opportunity for us to join with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to celebrate their history, culture and achievements. The 2021 theme is Heal Country. This is a time to reflect upon the legacy of colonization, and to walk with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in a spirit of reconciliation, to learn from their powerful tradition of care for country and each other.



**HEAL
COUNTRY!**
4-11 JULY 2021

For a list of NAIDOC Week activities in Tasmania, go to:

<https://tacinc.com.au/naidoc-week/>

Read the Uluru Statement from the Heart, and see the paintings and stories at:

<https://fromtheheart.com.au/>

Disability Royal Commission

<https://disability.royalcommission.gov.au/>

There will be a public hearing of the Disability Royal Commission in **Hobart on 18 October** to gather evidence about violence, neglect, abuse and exploitation of people with disability. The focus of that hearing will be the health and safety of women and girls with disability.

Public hearings are formal proceedings in which witnesses give evidence, under oath or affirmation, about events and issues that are relevant to the Commission. All public hearings of the Royal Commission are recorded and streamed live on the Royal Commission website. Every public hearing will have live captioning and Auslan-English interpreters. The Commission will deliver a final report to the Australian Government by 29 September 2023.

Respectful Listening



'Respectful Listening' is video artwork depicting the story of the Disability Royal Commission, created by Wiradjuri Elder and artist Paul Constable Calcott. The artwork illustrates the journey of seven Commissioners carrying a message stick across the country to collect stories from people with disability, their families and communities. The artwork shows the different ways the Royal Commission will gather people's stories, through private sessions, public hearings and informal yarning circles.

Uncle Paul, who lives with disability, said the artwork shows First Nations communities that the Royal Commission is culturally safe and that it does want to engage with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. (<https://disability.royalcommission.gov.au/news-and-media/media-releases/first-nations-artist-depicts-disability-royal-commission-story-5-may-2020>)

The video and artwork can be viewed at: <https://fpdn.org.au/disability-royal-commission/>



Laurel House acknowledges with deep respect the palawa people, the traditional owners of lutruwita (Tasmania) Aboriginal land, sea and waterways. The palawa people belong to the oldest continuing culture in the world. They have cared for and protected Country for thousands of years. They knew this land, they lived on the land and they died on these lands. We honour them.

The Disability Project Update

The project has an updated name: **Disability Workforce Support Project**. The name change will convey a better understanding of the aims and focus of the work.

Kim and Rebecca have been developing fact sheets, posters and infographics that raise awareness of prevalence, impact and risk factors associated with sexual assault of people with disability. These are being reviewed by our dedicated and generous reference group members from across the community, and will be made available on the Laurel House website in the near future.

Below are some snapshots from our myth-busting infographics:

MYTHS ABOUT SEX AND DISABILITY



People with disability don't need sex.

FACT: People living with a disability are sexual beings like anyone else, with desires, feelings and fantasies. Some of the biggest barriers to expressing sexuality are negative societal attitudes and ignorant assumptions.



People with disability can't have real sex.

FACT: There are many different ways that people can have sex, not simply what is shown in the popular media. The only rules governing what sex can or cannot be, are that it must involve mutual consent, respect and safety



People with disability are not attractive or desirable

FACT: What attracts people to each other is unique and involves many factors such as personality, culture, timing and sexual fantasies. Rigid ideas of 'beauty' rarely have anything to do with attraction and desire.



People with disability don't need sex education.

FACT: Everyone needs sex education. It can empower people with disabilities with knowledge and information to have safe and pleasurable sex, prevent STI's, stop unwanted pregnancies and protect themselves from abusive partners. Sex education can also empower individuals to have fun and connect with others on a deeper level.

Also under development are draft Guides to responding to a disclosure of sexual assault. Each Guide will be specific for the workforce group, beginning with a focus on General Practitioners and disability support workers. They will provide practical advice and information in relation to disclosures by children or adults, of recent and historical assaults. Following further consultation, Guides will be developed for other workforce groups, including Aboriginal organisations and Emergency Department staff.

The project is on schedule to have a toolkit ready for trial sites at the end of August. We are about to set up closer consultation with people living with disability and disability support organisations, to seek further advice and direction for the products of the project. These will be a mix of face-to-face, on-line and telephone consultations. We hope to commence in August. Following the completion of consultations, we expect to start rolling-out training statewide. Training will be provided on-line, face-to-face, or text-based.

78 people have now done the on-line survey – thank you! The survey will close late in July, but can be accessed now at: <https://surveys2.utas.edu.au/index.php/911653?lang=en>

MYTHS ABOUT SEXUAL ASSAULT

Myths can increase the vulnerability of people with disability to assault, and worsen their suffering if they are assaulted.

1

MYTH: Sexual assault is an act of passion that the offender can't control. FACT: Sexual assault is about power and control not sexual gratification.

2

MYTH: The victim-survivor must have done something to make the assault happen. FACT: Sexual violence is NEVER the survivor's fault. The perpetrator is a criminal who deliberately selects the victim-survivor.

3

MYTH: People will lie about being assaulted. FACT: It is very difficult for any victim-survivor to tell someone how they have been sexually assaulted. False reports are no higher than for any other crime.

SPOTLIGHT ON!

Each month we will shine a light on some of our supporters



The spotlight is intended to highlight program or issues that are relevant to the Disability Project and is not an endorsement of the broader policies and practices of those organisations.



LEAP OT provides a variety of services for people with disability who live in North West Tasmania. Support services include group-based day care, independent living, coordination, clinical therapy, and ADL assessment. LEAP OT prides itself on delivering evidence-based, person-centred practice that focuses on improving functional performance across all ages and developmental stages. LEAP OT also provides support for the families of participants and support staff.

<https://leapocc.com.au/>

Possability

Possability's vision is of a world where everyone has the opportunity to pursue their potential. Possability provides a broad range of services encompassing short and long stay accommodation, independent living, employment, life skills, social skills and specialist services. It began in Hobart in 1989 as an NGO known as Euphrasia. It was led by a group of nuns with the aim of supporting clients to have socially valued roles that help them to, not get by, but achieve a good life. Its employment arm, Oakdale Enterprises, is Tasmania's biggest provider of supported employment. <https://possability.com.au/>



Self Help Workplace

Self Help Workplace is a proud social enterprise committed to providing people with disability with meaningful and productive employment so they can enjoy independent and fulfilling lives. Employment is undertaken in timber production, grounds maintenance, catering and recycled clothing stores. Prime Timber Production is a fully equipped timber production facility operating in Launceston, and can send products all around Tasmania and interstate. It manufactures pallets, survey pegs, garden stakes, crates and bins. Self Help Workplace also has a fully licensed commercial kitchen and provides corporate catering, room hire and even a bus!

<https://www.selfhelp.com.au/>





Advocacy Tasmania

Advocacy is all about helping you to be heard and understood. Advocacy Tasmania can help you if you are unable to speak for yourself, or find it difficult. Advocacy can help you if the way you're being treated doesn't feel right, or if you aren't getting what you're asking for.

Advocacy Tasmania can provide information about your rights and help you to deal with problems or complaints. They work with older people, people living with disability or mental health issues, and people who use alcohol or drugs. Their services are free, confidential, independent and professional! <https://advocacytasmania.org.au/>

Disability Voices

Disability Voices Tasmania is a new community organisation run by people with disability working with people with disability, families and allies to build a collective voice. There are some great stories and tips on their Facebook page, including a link to AT Chat which features a story about Tony Sarre, a blind filmmaker, as well as lots of information about assistive technologies.

https://www.facebook.com/pg/DisabilityVoicesTas/community/?ref=page_internal

AT Chat is a peer-led, co-designed community for assistive technology (AT) users to share information and lived experience about AT. AT Chat's mission is to deliver a peer-led information and mentoring service that provides their community with the opportunity to build their AT decision making capability and share their expertise with each other and the broader community. <https://www.atchat.com.au/about-us/what-is-at-chat>



Mental Health Council Tasmania

Mental Health Council Tasmania (MHCT) is the peak body for community-managed mental health services in Tasmania. It has a focus on advocacy and policy reform. MHCT works closely with stakeholders to identify service gaps, issues and opportunities for collaboration, and improve coordination of services in the Tasmanian mental health system. MHCT provides feedback directly to the Mental Health Alcohol and Drug Directorate (MHADD), Primary Health Tasmania (PHT) and the National Disability Insurance Agency (NDIA) on these challenges and opportunities to assist in improving the mental health system for Tasmanians. You can learn more about MHCT and access resources at: <https://mhct.org/>



RESOURCES AND TRAINING



NDS TRAINING

Supported Decision Making

This e-learning module introduces the Supported Decision-Making Practice Framework. The module will help you build knowledge and skills that promote best practice in supported decision-making. Critical concepts are explored and their application presented through examples and practical scenarios. By applying these concepts and principles you will be empowering a person with a disability and affirming their right to be in charge of their own life. This module is free.

<https://www.nds.org.au/training-and-development/e-learning/supported-decision-making-e-learning-module-3039>

Disability Safe

This is a comprehensive and applied program consisting of eight individual e-learning modules. The program has been designed to enhance the quality of disability services through safe work practices. Cost of the modules for an individual learner is \$105 each.

<https://www.nds.org.au/training-and-development/e-learning/disability-safe-elearning-program-3536>

Emerging Minds resources to support parents of children with disability.

Every child's experience of disability will be different, depending on a number of interrelated factors. Many professionals now understand that a child's 'level of disability' depends upon how well their support networks and community can accommodate and respond to them, rather than the child's physical, medical or emotional condition itself.

<https://emergingminds.com.au/resources/podcast/parent-voices-supporting-children-with-disability-part-1/>

<https://emergingminds.com.au/resources/podcast/podcast-children-with-disability-part-2/>



Options on-line

Options On-line is a series of 5 training modules on communication (assisted and unassisted), provided by speech pathologist, Dr Jane Remington-Guerniney, who lives in Queensland. They cost \$50 each and include audio-visual slides and text-based resources.

<https://drjaneremingtongurney.podia.com/>

DID YOU KNOW . . .



Northern Tasmania will host the first **Tasmanian Disability Festival** in December. The festival is the first event of its kind in Tasmania. Mosaic Support Services is set to be involved as an award sponsor and an exhibitor, while Laurel House has been liaising with Mosaic and the University of Tasmania to support the event. More information is available on the Festival Facebook site:

<https://m.facebook.com/TasmanianDisabilityFestival/>



Melissa Wimmer's School of Theatrical Dance in Launceston provides dance classes for adults with disability on Thursday afternoons. These classes are open to all, and cost \$10 per person.

Melissa has been producing dance events with people with Parkinsons' Disease for several years. You can check times and contact details here:

<https://www.melissawimmerdance.com.au/timetable>

Physical disABILITY Sports Tasmania is a state-wide sport and recreation program facilitated by ParaQuad Tasmania. The program is specifically designed for people with spinal cord injury and physical disability and welcomes all ages and abilities. Sport is great for everyone's health, and Physical disability sports provide healthy lifestyle options, promote constructive time use, positive social interactions and promote valuable life skills. Participants can join Wheelchair Aussie Rules, Wheelchair Basketball, Boccia, Putt Putt 18 mini golf, Wheelchair Sports in Schools, Powerchair sports, and K - Sport, a program designed specifically for young people. ParaQuad provides wheelchairs and equipment for its activities. To find out more go to: <https://www.pdstasmania.org/>



Disability in the Arts, Disadvantage in the Arts, Australia

Based in WA, DADAA is an arts and disability organisation that is playing an important role in providing opportunities for people with disability to participate in the artistic and cultural life of their communities. DADAA is an NDIS-registered provider and those enrolled in the NDIS can choose to participate by having DADAA written into their plan. The arts activities participants select will be designed to help them achieve their goals on both a personal and a professional level. <https://www.dadaa.org.au/about/arts-and-disability/>

[disability/](https://www.dadaa.org.au/about/arts-and-disability/)



To all our partners and supporters

Steering Group members

Advocacy Tasmania
Department of Social Services
Disability Voices
Esklegh Foundation
Laurel House
Mental Health Council of Tasmania
Mission Australia
Possability
Premier's Disability Advisory Council
Royal Flying Doctor Service
Self Help Workplace



Reference Group members, advisors and supporters

Acquired Brain Injury Association
Aged & Community Services Australia (Tasmania)
Circular Head Aboriginal Centre
Claire Woolley Psychology
ClientFirst Consulting
College of Health and Medicine, University of Tasmania
Community Care Tasmania
COTA (Tasmania)
David Hunnerup Counselling
Deakin University
Department of Communities Tasmania
Department of Health Tasmania
Department of Justice
Don Medical Centre
ELPE
Emily Dash
Engender Equality
Family Planning Tasmania
Forensic Medical Services, Tasmanian Health Service
Giant Steps
Gippsland SL&RR Network
Gippsland Disability Advocacy, Victoria
Glenview Community Services
General Practice Training Tasmania
GP Liaison, Tasmanian Health Service
Helping Paws Service Dog Training
Health Recruitment Plus

Hobart Communications Clinic
Jeannie McClymont, Occupational Therapist, Penguin
Karinya Young Womens Service
LEAP OT, Ulverstone
Migrant Resource Centre North Inc
Mosaic Support Services
Multicap
National Disability Practitioners
Northern Occupational Support Services (NOSS)
North West Residential Support Services
Patrick St Clinic, Ulverstone
Pinky
Primary Health North, Tasmanian Health Service
Primary Health Tasmania (PHT)
Robyn McKinnon Counselling
Royal Hobart Hospital
Rural Clinical School, University of Tasmania
SafeChoices
St Giles
Sexual Assault Support Service (SASS)
Student Services, University of Tasmania
TasTAFE
Wellways
Youth, Family, and Community Connections, Burnie