

Newsletter

The staff at DSC would like to wish you a Merry Christmas and a safe and peaceful 2016



Disability Services Commissioner is an independent voice promoting rights and resolving complaints about disability services.

Welcome to the Summer edition of our DSC Newsletter.

As 2015 draws to a close, it is timely to reflect on what has been a significant year for the Victorian disability services sector.

For all the progress the sector has made, the abuse of people with a disability in care continues. Governments remain committed to working to improve the support and protection of those that are most vulnerable. It has been encouraging to see the valuable inquiries undertaken at both a State and National level into this most important of issues. The report arising from the Senate Inquiry into violence, abuse and neglect against people with a disability in institutional and residential settings was released in late November. Phase two of the Victorian Ombudsman's report on her investigation into disability abuse reporting was released in early December and the second phase of the Victorian Parliamentary Inquiry into abuse in

disability services will be released in March 2016. It is encouraging that both reports highlight the need for a national oversight body that includes complaints and critical incident reporting.

Against this backdrop, the Council of Australian Governments Disability Reform Council is expected to release a paper in March 2016 that will provide further detail about the design and structure of a national quality and safeguarding framework for disability services under the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS).

The NDIS has the potential to significantly improve the lives of Australians with a disability and their families. However, to maximise this potential it is critical that we address people's safety and well-being. I am optimistic that these inquiries will be an important step towards achieving this.

We wish you a safe and happy festive season and a prosperous and healthy 2016.

Laurie Harkin AM
Disability Services Commissioner

p2. Celebrating International Day of People with Disability



p2. Are you receiving your annual check-up



p3. NDIS and making a complaint

I'm not happy with my disability service provider	Disability Services Commissioner	1800 677 342
I'm not happy with the NDIA's actions	Commonwealth Ombudsman	1300 362 072
I'm not happy with NDIA's decisions about eligibility and funding	Administrative Appeals Tribunal	1300 366 700

p4. Disability Services. What the Act requires you do to



Artability

Congratulations to Robert Scopelitti winner of the Disability Services Commissioner Artability Award.

Deputy Commissioner Miranda Bruyniks presented the award at ADEC's Artability earlier this month. Artability is an art exhibition showcasing works of over 100 artists of all ages, living or caring for someone with a disability or mental illness. This year the DSC award was given to Robert Scopelitti for his work 'Yellow and Green' For more information about the artist contact Tara from ADEC www.adec.org.au ph: 9480 1666

Celebrating International Day of People with Disability

In partnership with the Mental Health Complaints Commissioner, Lynne Coulson Barr we celebrated International Day of People with Disability by recognising the fabulous works of film maker Sarah Barton, artist Chris O'Brien and the compelling story of Mary



O'Hagan (former NZ Mental Health Commissioner). Sarah spoke about the film 'Defiant Lives' which is currently in the making and is about the history and the current state of disability rights. Artist Chris O'Brien shared his amazing stories that reside at the heart of his sculptures. The short but powerful film 'Madness made me' tells the story of Mary O'Hagan's personal journey with mental illness. Attended by many of the residents in our building at 570 Bourke Street, all these presentations had the audience captivated.

Sculpture by Chris O'Brien (left)



Artist Chris O'Brien



Film Maker Sarah Barton



Madness Made Me 3min clip

Links:

- International Day of People with Disability** idpwd.com.au
- Defiant Lives: 5min teaser** youtube.com/watch?v=e5Ccrkp5Y6w
- Chris O'Brien** artsproject.org.au
- Mary O'Hagan 'Madness Made Me'** vimeo.com/132294911

Earlier in the day Deputy Commissioner Miranda Bruyniks spoke at the launch of Access for All Ability (AAA) 'Play's Evaluation' at Parliament House. AAA Play connects people with a disability to sports and active recreation opportunities. For more information visit their website aaavic.org.au



What is CHAP and how it helps with GP check-ups for a person with a disability.

Regular health reviews, or the 'annual check-up', are important for all of us in maintaining good physical health and mental well-being. People and doctors are busy. At modern medical clinics we may not get to see the same doctor and increasingly patients don't develop or maintain the close relationships with GP's that were common in years gone by.

The Australian Institute of Health and Welfare reports that despite the overall improvement in population health, the gap between Australians with disability and those without disability

remains significant. People under the age of 65 who have disabilities have a higher rate of long-term health conditions than people without disability, and almost half of people with a disability report 'poor' or 'fair' health, compared to 5 per cent for those without disability.

In an effort to address this disadvantage and support people with intellectual disabilities, in 2007 the Victorian government introduced a tool designed to improve and maintain good health for adults with intellectual disabilities.

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The latest edition of our plain English newsletter, DSC Speaking Up, also addresses this important issue.

If you get disability...
 your support workers must help you to see your doctor.
 • Make the doctor's appointment.
 • Arrange transport to the appointment.
 • Arrange information that you need to take with you. If you don't have it, your support worker should get it for you.
 • The support worker should ask you if you want your hand to come with you.
 • The support worker should write in your personal file what the doctor said.

How to complain under the NDIS

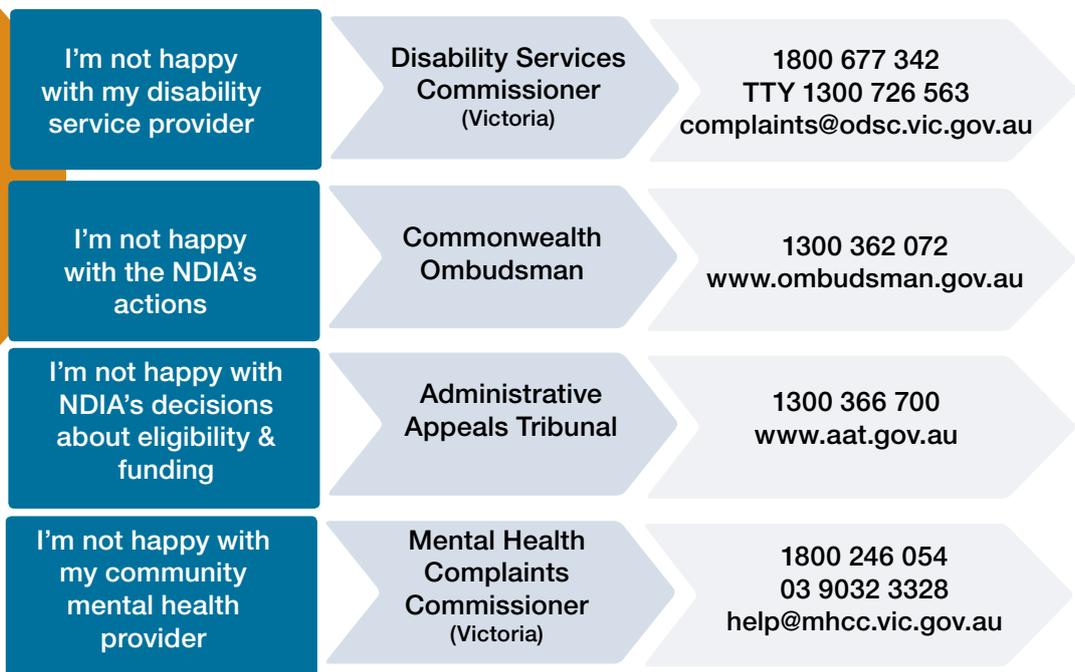
We have been dealing with complaints made about NDIS funded disability service providers since the commencement of the NDIS Barwon site in 2013. So far we've received a smaller than expected number of complaints. Indications are that all participants are not informed about who to contact to raise issues and that some people are fearful that making a complaint might lead to a reduction in funding or service. Everyone involved in the disability sector has a responsibility to support and empower people with a disability to have an equal voice and to assert their right to speak out.

That's why we held a forum with the Commonwealth Ombudsman and the Mental Health Complaints Commissioner in Geelong on 9 December to inform participants and service providers about the main complaints pathways (see figure below).

We emphasised the need for people to raise issues about what is and is not working with either the NDIA or their NDIS funded disability supports. This information can help to improve the scheme and further improve the quality of life for people with a disability.

Unsure about who to make a complaint to?

This simple diagram breaks it down into 4 streams. But there is no wrong door. If you call any of our offices we will help you get to the right place.



Farewell Jen Jackson Hall

It's with a little sadness that we say goodbye to Jen Jackson-Hall. Jen is leaving the DSC to take on a role as Manager, Complaints and Student Services at the Victorian Registration and Qualification Authority. Jen has been a part of the DSC team since 2008 and contributed an enormous amount to our complaints handling process. Whether as Assessment Officer or as Resolutions Manager Jen's expertise in the handling and conciliation of complaints, as well as her commitment to people with a disability, is well recognised by her colleagues and the sector. Over the last year Jen led a number of key initiatives in our complaints handling process to improve the experience of people who bring complaints to us. We congratulate Jen and wish her all the very best in her new role.

NDIS – Service Providers

Disability service providers in the Barwon NDIS trial site are still required to meet the safeguards in place for Victorian disability services.

Service providers must:

- Have an accessible and effective complaints management system in place
 - Provide information to participants about how to make a complaint and who they can complain to including the DSC
 - Take all reasonable steps to ensure that people are not adversely affected because a complaint has been made by or on their behalf
 - Report every year to DSC on all of the complaints they have received.
- Service providers, if you need access to our on line complaints reporting tool please contact our office on 1300 728 187 or at acr@odsc.vic.gov.au

These resources and more are available on our website

www.odsc.vic.gov.au/publications



What is the on-line Annual Complaints Reporting (ACR) Tool?

The ACR tool is a free and user-friendly reporting tool that provides simplified complaints reporting.

The tool is designed with:

- Password protected access to complaint records
- Easy-to-use online interface
- Easy data storage and retrieval functions
- Live organization complaint dashboard

These are only some of the functions contained in the online ACR tool. Visit our website for more information odsc.vic.gov.au/annual-complaints-reporting

**It's OK to complain
It can make services better**

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What is CHAP and how it helps with GP check-ups for a person with a disability.

The CHAP (Comprehensive Health Assessment Program) is a template that is completed by a GP together with the person with a disability, with a support person or family member as needed, and is then reviewed annually.

The CHAP forms an ongoing medical record that is kept in one place and helps GPs to make better diagnoses by acting as a prompt for them to check beyond the presenting issue when a person with a disability attends for an appointment. It assists doctors, patients and service providers (such as supported accommodation) to monitor ongoing medical conditions and can provide warnings when new issues may develop. Finally, the CHAP provides a link to other health services referrals such as immunology, optometry, audiology, podiatry, etc. and keeps the person with a disability's records all in one place.

To find out more about the CHAP speak to your service provider or book an appointment with your GP.

Disability Services Commissioner
Level 30, 570 Bourke Street,
Melbourne VIC 3000

Phone: 1300 728 187

Fax: 03 8608 5765

Web: www.odsc.vic.gov.au



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