

# Pave the Way Newsletter



## Pave the Way in 2015

With the approaching implementation of the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) Pave the Way has been assisting people in the North Coast, North Queensland and Far North Queensland regions to be better prepared in order to take full advantage of what will be available to them. We've done this through conversations and workshops around planning, the importance of informal supports and valued roles and will continue this work through till the end of June 2016.

Throughout the year, the team presented over 100 workshops with over a thousand people attending in areas such as the Moreton Bay region, Sunshine Coast, Cassowary Coast, Cooktown, Yarrabah, Weipa, Townsville, Mackay, Whitsundays, Cairns, Mt Isa and indigenous communities such as Mossman, Hopevale, Normanton and throughout the Torres Strait Islands, to name just a few. As well as workshops, we conducted over 16 radio interviews, had 24 newspaper articles published, provided our triannual newsletters and led numerous individual and group conversations.

Pave the Way's legal information service continued to be utilised by many. This year a new workshop *Using the Law to Safeguard Plans* was offered and has been very well received. Next year there will be some changes to what legal information Pave the Way will provide, with the focus being on workshops rather than individual enquires. They will be handled by our new service *Disability Law Queensland*, which is detailed on Page 2.

I would like to thank the Pave the Way team; Sarah Thompson (Resource Worker), Helen Baird and Peter Vacca (Development Workers), Julie van Oosten (Team Leader), Katharine Vacca (Communications Officer), Aimee McVeigh (Legal consultant) Elaine Henderson (Pave the Way - Administration Support) and Sandon Godwin-Welch (Trainee Administration) for their significant contribution to the work over the year.

To everyone, I hope you have a safe and happy Christmas and New Year.

David Isitt  
Manager

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## Announcing Disability Law Queensland

For over 10 years Mamre Association, via Pave the Way, has offered legal services to families who have children with disability. These legal services are delivered through the provision of workshops, legal information and resources.

Pave the Way's view is that the law provides tools to assist families to safeguard their vision and their goals for their loved ones with disability.

A recent paper that was the result of a joint project of the School of Social Work and Human Services at the University of Queensland and the Australian Centre for Health Law Research at the Queensland University of Technology '*Journeying into the Future: Parents' Succession Planning for their Adult Children with Cognitive Impairment*' reported that many families do not access legal services for succession planning because they have not been able to find a trusted professional who has knowledge of disability and the disability sector and also because of the costs associated with obtaining this type of assistance.

We are now excited to announce that Mamre has responded to the experience of families and invested in the development of a new legal service – Disability Law Queensland.

From January 2016 Disability Law Queensland will provide families with access to affordable, accessible and expert legal services. Our legal consultant, Aimee McVeigh, will be the director of this service.

Disability Law Queensland will be an incorporated legal practice, wholly owned by Mamre Association. Disability Law Queensland will charge fees and funds generated will support the work of Mamre in building rich, meaningful and inclusive lives with people with disability and their families.

Disability Law Queensland will provide assistance in relation to succession planning (including developing wills and trusts and estate administration), decision-making (powers of attorney, guardianship and administration), human rights (disability discrimination), administrative law (review of decisions made by the National Disability Insurance Agency), child protection (where the risk of harm is directly related to a carer's disability or as a separate or direct representative where the relevant child or children has disability) and other issues (other than family, property and criminal law).

To register your interest in having an appointment with Disability Law Queensland or for more information please call 3622 1250.

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## Farewell from Julie van Oosten

It is with both excitement and sadness that I leave my role with Pave the Way after almost 9 years and from Mamre after almost 20 years off and on, to live in Holland with my family for a time. It has been an absolute pleasure to meet with so many of you during this time and I'm disappointed to leave at a time when there is so much positive change on the horizon for people with disabilities and their families.

One of my goals over the past year has been to try to penetrate some of the negative noise surrounding the NDIS. The noise, in part, comes from some very real concerns people have about the scheme, but I think some of it is coming from a place of fear. Fear of change, fear that the NDIS will not be affordable or sustainable, fear that it is just another Government program, fear that it will not deliver on its promises. I understand the fear but I hope it doesn't become a self-fulfilling prophecy.

I think we all should take some confidence from the fact that the NDIS did not begin with Government alone, but from the various grassroots movements taking place all over Australia and over many decades. Like all effective movements, it was people-power that led to the NDIS; the DisabilityTeas, the Blues Sky and the Every Australian Counts campaigns for instance, and the stories of every individual and every family who said the disability system was just not good enough. These movements and the many stories got the attention of the then Parliamentary Secretary for Disabilities, Bill Shorten, who took the concerns back to Canberra and advocated for change. Those same people who advocated for change will make sure the NDIS stays on track, of this I'm pretty sure.

The NDIS represents a significant shift, not least because many people will now have access to adequate funded support, but also because one of the other important functions of the NDIS is to work on building a more inclusive society, so that communities, generic and disability services and employers everywhere are better able to include and welcome people with disabilities to take their place in the world. We know that funding alone will not create good and safe lives, but meaningful participation in social and economic life does. This is where a big bit of work needs to occur and if the NDIS does indeed operate on its principals and delivers on its promises, I think we can go forth with optimism.

The NDIA prides itself on operating on co-design principles, so I encourage you to treat it, and services too, like clay, to shape and mould any way you can so that this scheme can help support your vision for a good and happy life, both now and into the future. I look forward to watching from afar how things develop over the years ahead and will be willing you to "dare to dream" as they say, and plan with hope and imagination.

Thank you to all of the families and Pave the Way and Mamre team members past and present. It has been an absolute honour to work alongside each and every one of you.

Julie van Oosten



"Mamre is farewelling a much loved member of the Pave the Way team. Julie van Oosten has been connected with Mamre for over twenty years and during that time has had many roles; her longest being that in Pave the Way.

Julie's obvious warmth, genuine care, and deep desire and vision for a good life for people with disability and their families has inspired so many people in countless different ways.

We will truly miss Julie. Her enquiring mind and curiosity in always finding a way to do things better has had a strong influence on the Mamre community and its people.

Travel well and safe Julie, as you join your family in the next stage of your journey. We will always be thankful for who you are and what you have contributed."

Rachel Drew  
Director

## Pave the Way

Pave the Way is funded by the Department of Communities' (Disability Service) to deliver Participant Readiness activities. This new aspect of Pave the Way's work will assist Queenslanders with disabilities, their families and carers in the North Coast, North Queensland and Far North Queensland regions to prepare for the roll out in July 2016 of the National Disability Insurance Scheme.

We will continue to assist families throughout Queensland to clarify their vision for their family member with a disability and to plan to implement that vision. We encourage planning which is vision driven, 'whole of life', developmental, outside service planning and which safeguards family members in the long-term.

## 2016

The Pave the Way team is currently in the process of planning our events calendar for 2016. We will resume with presentations and group and individual conversations from late January to early February. These events will be advertised on Pave the Way's website and flyers will be sent to those on our mailing list 3-4 weeks before holding an event in your area.

If you are not already on our mailing list and would like to join to be notified when we will be next visiting your area please contact us via the details below.

**Please note: The Pave the Way office will be closed from Friday 25<sup>th</sup> of December until Monday the 4<sup>th</sup> of January 2016.**

From all of us at Pave the Way we would like to wish you and your family a wonderful festive season and a very happy new year.

We look forward to seeing you in 2016!



## Contact Us

Please contact us if you would like to be on our mailing list, or if you would like information about planning for the future and preparing for the National Disability Insurance Scheme.

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