

Toowoomba Intellectual Disability Support Association Inc.
2010 Annual Report

The Past

TIDSA's 5 year Strategic Plan, launched in 2004, mapped out the objectives necessary to achieve our aim "the provision of Safe, Supported, Happy homes for loved ones with an intellectual disability".

The Here and Now

The purchase of Anden House, Toowoomba by the State government in July 2009, marked not an end but rather, the end of a beginning. This project, whilst providing long term supported accommodation for six residents, should be viewed as a valuable but tiny step towards fulfilling the unmet need for such accommodation in the region. Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) figures and TIDSA research paper "An Analysis of Accommodation Needs of Adults with an Intellectual Disability in Toowoomba and surrounding Areas" estimate that 3% of the population or some 7,300 people are living with varying degrees of intellectual disability in this region. The majority of these people continue to live at home with aged family carers and constitute part of the Social Housing dilemma, which continues to be crisis managed on a case by case basis. All this has been recognized and referred to by successive State and Federal government ministers with a disability portfolio responsibility.

In particular, we are heartened by the informed and positive approach to the unmet needs of the disability sector by the Hon Bill Shorten MP, Parliamentary Secretary for Disabilities and Children Services. Governments at all levels have finally come to realize that the current 'cap in hand', combative State versus Federal system of disability funding is broken beyond repair and must be replaced by a transparent and equitable national arrangement. Delivering the 2008 keynote address on the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) in Brisbane, Mr. Shorten asserted the following, quote:

- I don't accept that an ageing parent can't be guaranteed that if they predecease their adult children with Down syndrome, their adult child will have independent accommodation.
- I don't accept that it's necessary that we should have young people in nursing homes if that's not where they want to be.
- I don't accept that if possible that we can't have common schemes of lifetime care for people who acquire brain injury.
- I certainly don't accept that it is not possible for us to do far more to provide access to transport.
- I don't accept that we need 20 aids and equipment schemes in Australia
- I certainly don't believe that our tax system quite picks up the challenge of the expenditure on disability. For every dollar that government spends, families and communities spend 5 or 6 dollars I don't accept that we can't leverage the investment which families are already contributing.
- I don't accept that systemic advocacy should be viewed as a threat. We need systemic advocacy because it is the check and balance which keeps the system honest. Unquote.

In his closing remarks, Mr Shorten stated, quote:

The Rudd government, I know, is highly committed to giving disability a chance, **but wouldn't it be great one day to see elections fought over the disability policies** - unquote.

Well, now is the time for each and every person living with a disability to turn the above words into action in this election year. The Australian Electoral Commission assures that no barriers whatsoever exist to qualified persons with a disability voting in this, or any other, election. So get out, seek assistance if necessary and register – forms and pre-paid envelopes are available at all post offices. Whilst the table below relates to marginal seats in the 2007 Federal election, it is a fair assumption that, even allowing for re-distribution, similar circumstances will prevail in 2010.

A FAIR GO

How people with a disability could influence the outcome of the election

Electorate	Voters needed to change their vote to lose the seat	Number of people on disability pension
Dobell, NSW	3671	4943
Bennelong, NSW	3426	2185
Eden-Monaro, NSW	2596	5205
Lindsay, NSW	2248	3862
Solomon, NT	1347	2325
Moreton, Qld	2161	3061
Bass, Tas	1643	4456
Stirling, WA	1552	4635
Hasluck, WA	1303	4094
Braddon, Tas	733	5260
Parramatta, NSW	663	4624
Makin, SA	790	4819
Wakefield, SA	541	7926
Bonner, Qld	398	3364
Kingston, SA	60	6619
Total	23,132	67,378

(Source: Australia Fair)

National Disability Insurance Scheme

The proposed National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS), whereby a levy, similar to the Medicare levy, would fund an Australia wide acceptable level of lifelong support for all persons born with an incurable disability is currently under review by Federal government. Such a scheme has operated in many countries for many years and the introduction to this country is long overdue. TIDSA will continue to lobby for urgent, bi-partisan support for this initiative. Members and friends are strongly encouraged to go to www.australiansmadashell.com.au which spells out exactly what you can do to address the current inequitable funding system.

Workshops/Forums/Meetings etc.

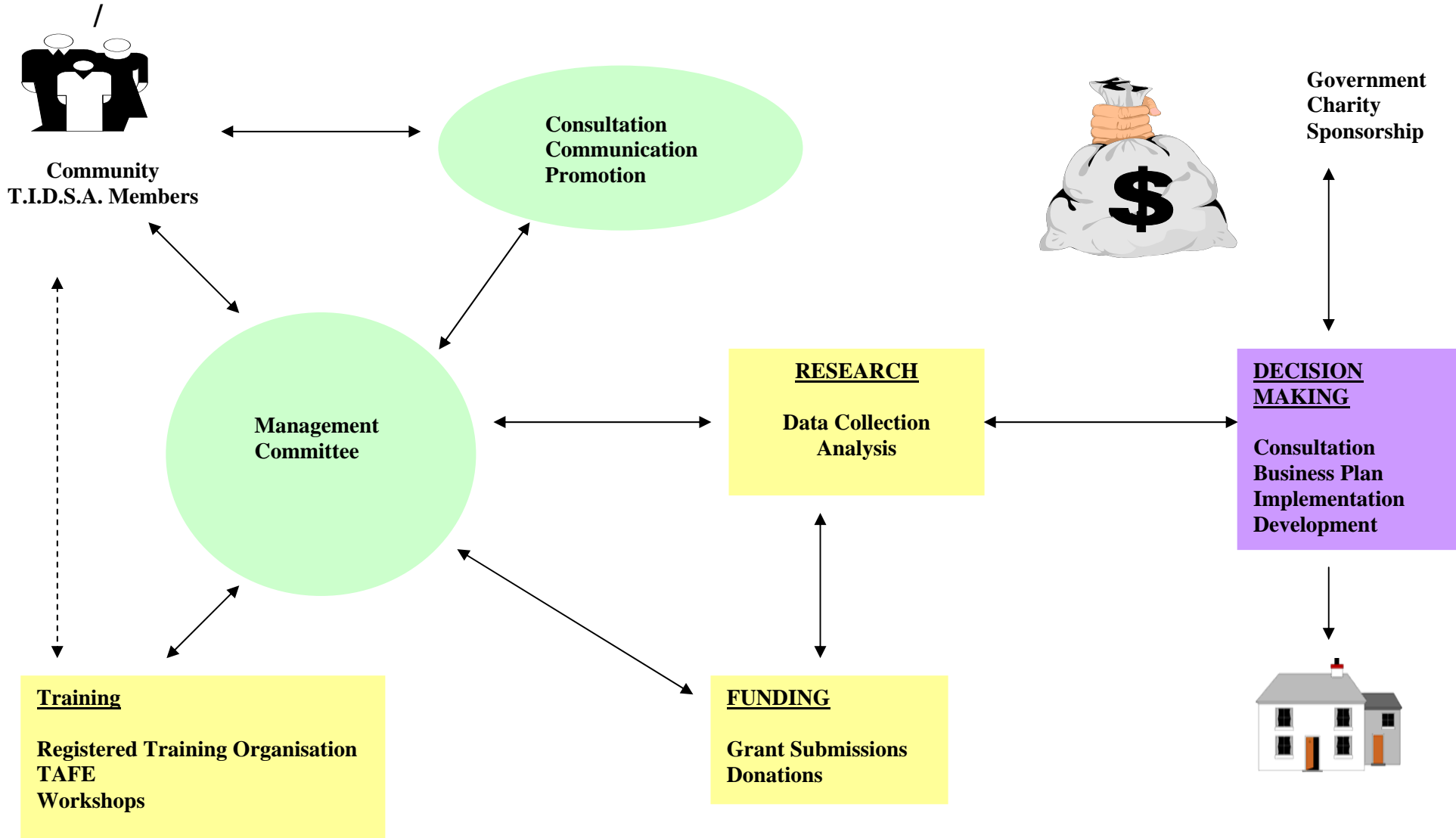
We have represented at numerous gatherings over the year, the most notable of which included a workshop in Toowoomba, at which Dr Michael Kendrick, a widely experienced consultant to the disability sector, shared his worldwide observations of empowerment (or lack thereof) within the service provider industry – his most important advice on supported accommodation - “staying small is best”. A larger three day workshop, which attracted 170 statewide attendees to Brisbane, was guided through wide-ranging roundtable discussions by a team of four speakers from the U.S. This was an excellent, thought provoking event with a common international conclusion – self-help is essential rather than wait for governments to provide. As in Australia, the United States disability sector is drowning in bureaucracy. Both events were facilitated by the Community Resource Unit (CRU), Brisbane whose bursary allowed our attendance.

The Future

TIDSA continues to collaborate with Lutheran Community Care (LCC), specifically seeking to establish a physical focal point in Toowoomba, to gather regional corporate and government funding support. LCC remain committed to supporting our long term aim of providing new build accommodation for those whom we strive to support – the development of an inclusive community village on existing Lutheran land is one option worthy of a feasibility study.

T.I.D.S.A. STRATEGIC PLAN

13 February 2004



“Happy Safe Homes”