

Spectrum News

The Magazine of Autism Tasmania Inc.

ISSUE: March 2013

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Clinton Taylor is about to
commence his
Ride Tasmania for
Autism Awareness



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Cover image: Clinton Taylor outside our Moonah office preparing for Ride Tasmania for Autism Awareness.

See page 6 for further details of this amazing fundraising effort.





A Welcome and A Farewell

The start of the year brought a mixture of emotions. We are very pleased to welcome Terry Burke as the new CEO of Autism Tasmania, having formally taken over the role on Monday, 21 January 2013. At the same time we said farewell to departing CEO Andrea Brumby, whose final day with AT was on Friday, 18 January. With the extensive notice that Andrea gave of her decision to leave AT, we were able to complete the recruitment process and make an appointment which gave a week of handover from outgoing to incoming CEO, so that **we're readily able to build on the excellent foundation established by Andrea and staff throughout 2012.**

Andrea Brumby has returned to a new full-time, off-class leadership role in learning support with Holy Rosary Catholic School she had taken leave from during 2012. On behalf of the Committee and staff, we give our heartfelt thanks and deep appreciation for her leadership and achievements in her twelve months as CEO of Autism Tasmania. Her thoroughness, energy and enthusiasm, along with her professionalism and sheer hard work, have been the constants that have enabled her to build a strong and effective staff team and turn around the fortunes of the Association.

To have done this and resolved a wide range of complex matters – some known at the time she started, others only subsequently revealed, some requiring difficult decisions and confronting actions – as a new CEO in her first appointment further demonstrates her capacity and success.

In a very short time, Andrea developed exceptional external relationships with grant providers and external service agencies; their accolades to her in response to the announcement of her departure are testament to what she achieved and the regard in which she is held.

As we said at her farewell, Andrea's regard for Autism Tasmania, its staff and the people we serve is clear; her passion for education is also clear. We can readily appreciate how difficult the decision to leave must have been. On behalf of everyone associated with Autism Tasmania and personally, I say thank you and wish Andrea the very best in the next exciting phase of your career.

As our new CEO, Terry Burke brings a wealth of general management experience from the private and community sectors. During his extensive financial services career as a senior manager with Tasmania Perpetual Trustees, he had a strong involvement with estate planning, financial and human resource management, as well as a significant role in strategic planning, marketing and working with and leading successful teams.

Four years ago he made a defining career choice to move into the community sector, accepting the role of Program then Operations Manager with Carers Tasmania. He was able to become familiar with the funding models, the politics of the sector and the different skills, knowledge and values of the people. It also gave him the opportunity to develop strong relationships with funders, other service providers and the carer members of that organisation.

In this role, Terry was responsible for establishing and maintaining practical and emotional support services/ programs [including counselling] for carers. This included staffing, service delivery, contract reporting and management. Among his achievements were the better utilization of the database to improve internal and external reporting requirements; the establishment of carer support and well-being checks; very significant growth of and engagement with the carer membership base; successful transition to new sites in Hobart and Burnie for better service delivery; and implementation of the *Better Start for Children with Disabilities* – the extended program for additional disabilities, based on the *HCWA* package and Autism Advisor Service.

In addition, he has been involved with several state and national working groups in mental health, aged care and carer issues; as Andrea has been, so too **will Terry be proposed as AT's nominee director on the national Australian Advisory Board on Autism Spectrum Disorders [AAB-ASD].**

Cont'd...

During both his personal and business life, Terry has had association with people with disabilities. We believe these personal experiences, with his extensive skills, knowledge and experience will be a terrific asset to Autism Tasmania.

During his first four weeks, Terry has worked closely with people inside and outside AT to build his understanding of our organisation and get his own perspective of how it works and the various issues, opportunities and imperatives we need to consider. While several Committee Members have worked with him during this time, our first full Committee Meeting for the year was on Monday, 25 February 2013.

Mick Clark, President of Autism Tasmania

From the CEO desk



Above: Our new CEO Terry Burke working hard to Make Futures Brighter

Having been in the chair for the last eight weeks I would like to thank staff, the Committee, suppliers and external stakeholders for their welcome and support as I familiarise myself with the challenges and opportunities for Autism Tasmania. I am fortunate to be joining such an enthusiastic and passionate team, descriptors which I do not use without justification.

I also would like to acknowledge Andrea Brumby's contribution to Autism Tasmania and for her assistance during my induction into the family that is Autism. With her efforts I have inherited an organisation well placed to grow to meet the needs of its membership. The momentum of your organisation has also been maintained during this changeover and a busy schedule of events is upon us with Positive Partnerships in Burnie, Making Futures Brighter Walk and the Jacqui Roberts Workshop. Please note that a Positive Partnerships workshop is planned for Launceston on the 18 and 19 June next with registrations commencing six weeks prior.

I look forward to connecting with our membership, talking with our support group participants and other stakeholders over the coming months and hearing about your aspirations for your organisation and further developing my understanding of the issues important to you.

Terry Burke, CEO Autism Tasmania

Autism Tasmania Committee Members:

President
Mick Clark

Secretary
Ms Anita Brunacci

Treasurer
Mr Mike Derbyshire

Committee Members

Mr Paul Campbell
Mr Keiron Cornwell
Mrs Linda Murphy
Mr Neil Reardon

Raising Awareness

We are quickly approaching International Autism Awareness Day on Easter Tuesday 2 April and local events to celebrate and raise awareness of Autism within the Tasmanian community.

Hobart Event

This year we are grateful to the Lions Club of Hobart Town for approaching us and volunteering to assist us organise an event to be conducted at the Domain Athletic Centre on Sunday the 14 April between 11.00 am and 1.30 pm. The event culminates in a celebratory lap of the athletics track at 1.00pm where we will be proudly wearing blue (the International colour for Autism) to increase awareness.

We invite all people who have a connection to Autism or wish to learn more about this lifelong condition to join us for an hour or two to raise community awareness and understanding. Our hope is that this will become a significant annual event to celebrate and raise awareness of Autism Spectrum Disorder. Prior to the walk there will be activities for children (jumping castle, games) whilst parent can enjoy a refreshing coffee or sample the delights on offer at the Lions Club BBQ.

We look forward to blues skies and sunshine to match our blue clothes and bright outlook. Please join us.

Launceston Event

When: Saturday April 20, 11am-1:30 The walkathon will set off at 11:15 and finish in time for lunch at noon.

Where: St Leonards Croquet Club

Walkathon: Autism Tasmania is organising a Walkathon and Family Picnic in Launceston. The Walkathon is a registered fundraiser for Autism Tasmania through Run4Autism.com.au. Walkers are needed!

If you would like to participate in the walkathon, please contact Robyn Thomas at Autism Tasmania for copies of the flyer and encourage your family members, friends and the wider community to sponsor you via your registration page at run4autism.gofundraise.com.au. Registrations and donations can also be taken on the day. If you want to walk one lap or fifty laps of the Croquet Lawns we would love to have you there! Supporters are also needed, so please come, bring a picnic, bring your family and friends and come and celebrate the achievements and diversity of people in the autism community. A sausage sizzle will be provided courtesy of the St Leonards Croquet Club, and the club rooms will be open in case of inclement weather.

For enquiries, comments and offers of help please contact Robyn Thomas 0458 375 604 or roblynt@autismtas.org.au.

To make a donation, please use this link:
<http://run4autism.gofundraise.com.au/page/walkathonfamilypicnic>

**MAKING
FUTURES
BRIGHTER
WALK**

An event to raise awareness for
Autism and those it effects.

Wear blue in support of Autism
Awareness Month

April 14 from 11am-1:30pm
Domain Athletics Centre
Queens' Domain

- Walk a celebratory lap at 1pm
- Kids activities & jumping castle
- BBQ
- Coffee for the parents
- Gold coin donation

**Autism
TASMANIA INC.**
Making Futures Brighter

Supported by Lions

April is Autism month which is all about celebrating the achievements and diversity of people in the autism community and raising awareness in the wider community. Rotary Youngtown have very kindly offered to assist Autism Tasmania by holding a BBQ at Bunnings Launceston on Sunday 14th April from 8am – 4pm.

Please come along and support us.

North West Event

At the time of publication, the venue and event details have yet to be finalised for the event in Burnie. Please keep an eye out on our Facebook page and website. We will also produce an information flyer for electronic distribution.

Growth of Online Fundraising

A new fundraising phenomenon is raising thousands of dollars for charities around Australia whilst at the same time Australians are improving their health by pounding the pavement, riding their bikes or walking for their preferred charity. With the use of dedicated web based platforms, such as Everyday Heroes and Gofundraise, and the use of social media family and friends can donate with confidence that their support will go directly to the charity nominated. These platforms also directly issue via email downloadable tax receipts to sponsors/supporters.

The sites allow you to monitor the progress of the event with photo updates and how much has been raised against the event target.

These altruistic events conducted by teams and individuals, with the generosity of sponsors, have raised some serious money for charitable causes for example the Cancer Council Queensland recently raised \$80,000.00 from the Gold Coast Airport Marathon.

Autism Tasmania has embraced this new concept in fundraising with the previously promoted Ride Tasmania for Autism Awareness event of Clinton and Crystal Taylor and our recent registration for the Run4Autism site an Australia wide initiative by Travis Saunders. Please see event updates on page 7.

We note also note our appreciation for our recent inclusion in the State Service Workplace Giving Scheme and to the management and staff of Specsavers Glenorchy for making Autism Tasmania their charitable beneficiary for fundraising this year.



Above: Autism Tasmania's very own CEO Terry Burke riding alongside Clinton Taylor in the Ultra 106.5 fm studio.

Ride Tasmania for Autism Awareness 2013



Going the distance for Autism

Clinton and Crystal have been busy planning this event which commences on Easter Tuesday. They have done a great job with sponsors to cover their out of pocket expenses so that all monies donated will find its way to Autism Tasmania.

Clinton recently promoted his awareness ride on Ultra 106.5 fm morning show by riding on a training bike in the studio for just over one and a half hours covering over 65 kilometres- great work Clinton. Thanks to Scotty and Joe at the station he raised a **significant amount to help cover Clinton's out of pocket expenses** to have his wife and beautiful boys join him on this inaugural awareness ride.



Clinton has agreed to finish this marathon effort at our *Making Futures Brighter Walk* on April 14 at the Domain (see advertisement page 5). Please **check out Clinton's Facebook page, or his Everyday Hero fundraising page** (see links below) or get out and cheer him on as he travels around our beautiful state.

www.everydayhero.com.au/clinton_taylor

[www.facebook.com/
RideTasmaniaForAutismAwareness](http://www.facebook.com/RideTasmaniaForAutismAwareness)

Run4Autism

This year I am running 12 marathons in 12 months
To raise money and awareness for Autism.
This is my commitment, but I need your help.

Travis' Story

Two years ago, my family's life was turned upside down when our son was diagnosed with autism.

Our family home has been turned into a therapy centre and we devote every minute of the day to helping our son learn to communicate and make sense of the world around him. My partner and I found part-time jobs to enable us to develop a relationship with our son, keep him calm and help him learn. Our little boy made little to no eye contact, didn't talk, and it broke our heart to see him so often overwhelmed by what was happening around him.

We realised that autism is a marathon and not a sprint, and that hard work and lots of it would be the only thing to make a difference. We turned to Speech Therapy, Occupational Therapy, Relationship Development Intervention, bio-medical approaches, Hanan- More than Words, and Verbal Behaviour/ABA.

Exhausted and unfit, I struggled to make it through a five km run. Within months I was running further and training for my marathons. I run at 5am in the morning and 7pm at night to keep fit and maintain a healthy mind. This is critical to being able to care for my family. I've dropped 14 kgs and more importantly found a way to deal with the constant pressures we face.

Two years on, the little fella has made some good progress but it is a long road. Financially it has been tough. Money comes in, money goes out. Therapy is not cheap.

And it is for this reason that I set up [run4autism](#) (Yes this website is my idea. I wanted a place where other parents could fundraise for their child's organisation and members of the community could join in and help children with autism).

So, if you have ever run around the block and thought wow that was hard think about what life is like for many families with a child with Autism. I will be running 12 x 42kms over 12 months. But that is the easy bit, it will involve thousands of kilometres in training when the sun goes down and even more 1:1 therapy hours with my son.

All you have to do is give me the incentive to reach my goals - I'll be the one doing all the hard work!

Thank you,
Travis Saunders



Recently Autism Tasmania joined the [Run4Autism.gofundraise](#) website that allows individuals, families and teams to raise money for their preferred Autism organisation. This site was instigated by a very courageous father, Travis Saunders, who is completing 12 marathons in 12 months (see his story, left). Travis has promoted this site Australia wide so that other Autism organisations can also benefit.

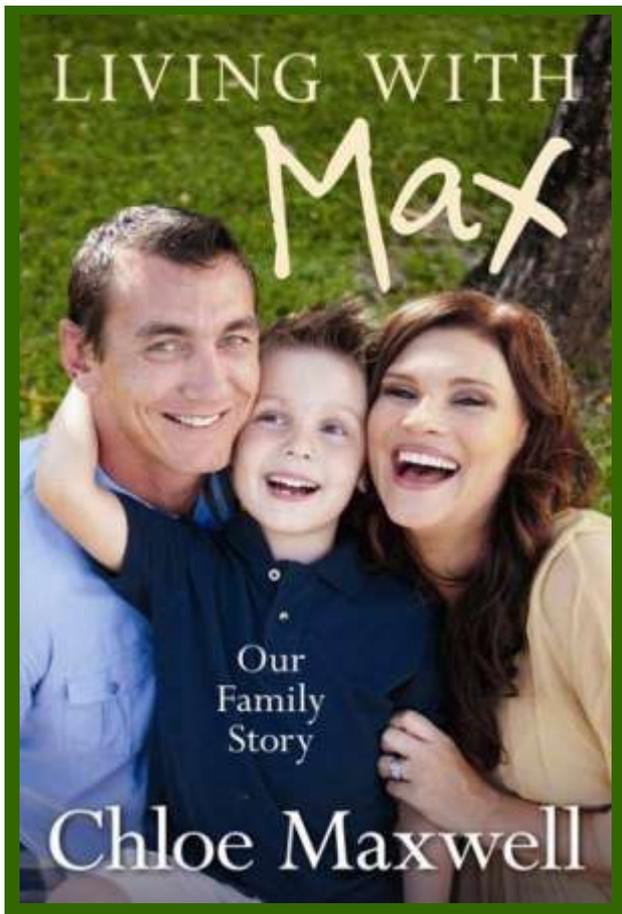
Travis completed his first marathon in Hobart in January this year and will complete his twelfth marathon with the Bruny Island Ultra Marathon (64kms) on Saturday 30 November. Autism Tasmania is keen to support Travis and is currently speaking with event organisers to see how we can be involved and increase awareness of autism. Autism Tasmania will also be looking to target some local events during the year to raise some funds for our support service.

How you can get involved:

1. Find an existing running or walking event anytime, anywhere (eg 5k, 10k, half or full marathon) OR
2. Create your own run or walk (eg a bush-walk with friends, school athletics or cross country carnival, walkathon, or a treadmill challenge)
3. Then sign up on the Run4Autism website: <http://run4autism.gofundraise.com.au/> as an **individual** or **team/school** and create your own fundraising page
4. **Don't want to run or walk? Support** an individual, team or school already signed up and simply **donate now!**

www.run4autism.gofundraise.com.au

Please check out the website above and spread the message!



(Harper Collins Publisher 2012)

Living with Max is a candid and raw reminder that Autism Spectrum Disorder pays no credence to lifestyle, income, demographics, fame or career.

Chloe Maxwell was “discovered” by a modelling agency as a teenager and went on to become a well-known Australian TV personality. *Living with Max* is her honest, moving and telling recount of her journey in life; from her pre-modelling days through to her “party-girl” stage and when finally she went onto meet and marry rugby star Mat Rogers. Chloe became an instant step-mother to Mat’s two (2) children Jack and Skyla and then had to endure and support her husband through the trauma of when his legendary football father Steve Rogers suddenly ended his own life. When Chloe became pregnant with her and Matt’s child they were ecstatic, as they felt that birth of their child would symbolise a new start and era for them as a family. Max “Danger” Rogers was born via caesarean section and both Chloe and Mat were convinced that Max would be a world changer. Little did they know that this was to be so true – he changed their world and lives forever in a way they could never ever have foreseen.

From an early age it became apparent that Max was not like other children and Chloe in particular struggled to come to terms with Max’s challenging behaviours and rages and the how to cope with these in everyday situations. The story provides us with some brutally honest recounts of Chloe’s thoughts and emotional battles both prior to and following Max’s diagnosis. Chloe describes in detail her personal struggles to deal with Max’s diagnosis of autism and her loss of confidence in her own ability to parent and connect with her son. She also graphically chronicles some of those “dark thoughts” that parents may sometimes experience through times of anguish and exhaustion; not so much as to gain the reader’s pity, but to generate understanding that this can be normal part of parenting a child with special needs and for parents to never give up despite the pressures that life may present them with.

What unfolds next is the beginning of a whole new journey of self-discovery, learning and ultimately healing for the family as they embrace the precious gift that Max is to their lives. Max enters a Centre-based intensive early intervention therapy programme and both Chloe and Mat are floored by the remarkable progress that he makes under the guidance of the therapists there. Through their own personal experiences Chloe and Mat were inspired to set up a charitable fund “4ASDKids” to help families gain access to and fund early intervention programmes/therapies that are not covered by Government allowances. A portion of the sale of each copy of “*Living with Max*” will also be directed to this charity.

Whilst Chloe Maxwell and Mat Rogers are a “high profile/celebrity status” couple and live what many of us would deem to be a very privileged lifestyle, “*Living with Max*” highlights that their feelings, struggles, challenges highs and lows are not unlike those of any parent that has gone through the process of having a child diagnosed with an Autism Spectrum Disorder. For this reason, I think that this book will resonate with many readers and will provide an insightful and inspiring read.

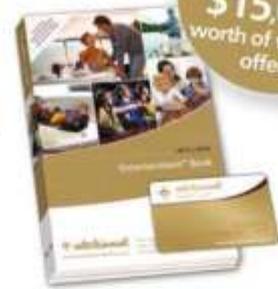
Jodie Denman



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 - Written on Tea
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 - Sapa Rose
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 (Subject to availability)

Sensory Kits and Support for Displaced Families



2 iPads for 2 lucky students!

Penni Riddell from Bendigo Bank was the lucky winner of a CGU Insurance promotion. Penni, with her husband Adrian, chose to use the \$750 prize money to purchase 2 iPads at cost price from JB Hi-Fi, where Adrian works, and donate them to 2 local children with Autism.

"We have decided to partner with Autism Tasmania to provide an iPad each to 2 local children with Autism. Recent studies have shown that certain applications that have been developed for these devices can greatly assist the learning process of Autistic children" Penni explained.

A big thank you goes out to Penni and Adrian, Bendigo Bank and JB Hi-Fi for their generous donation!

The generosity of Tasmanians is widely understood and well documented. This was no more evident than with the recent bushfire crisis during our hot dry summer. Autism Tasmania staff and supporters reacted very quickly to provide both sensory kits to families in the affected areas and fact sheets (social stories) to increase awareness of the increased stress experienced by children and adults on the Autism Spectrum.

Due to their great efforts, our website was updated and calls for donations to provide items for inclusion in emergency sensory kits was up and running within a few days. Considering the time of year and low staff numbers this was a fantastic effort by our staff (Robyn Davis, Jodie Denman, Allison Lapham and Rose Clark) and ably assisted with the great support of Kate Wilson, Kristen Desmond and Sara Lindsay.

The response was overwhelming and Autism Tasmania would like to sincerely thank the following people, businesses and organisations for their incredible generosity and donations which have enabled us to compile Autism emergency kits and other items to help those families who have suffered loss or who have been displaced in the recent destructive Tasmanian bushfires.

Our heartfelt thanks goes out to:

- Amanda Cause
- Autism Parents Association
- Brent Prins
- Calming Clothing for Kids
- Echidna Kids (Mandy Marmion)
- Eliza Gill
- Georgia Turvey
- Glenn Broad (Syntec International)
- Gloo Advertising (Raz)
- Included Kidz (Rachel Thistleton)
- Independent Kids
- Jaks Nic Nacs (Jacqui Bennett)
- Jenny Hughes
- Julia White
- Langford Support Services
- Little Blue Frog (Cheryle McKenzie)
- Matt Picone
- Nat & Lee Tiffin & children
- North-West Coast families
- PRM Sales & Marketing
- Sallyanne McShane
- Slick Promotions
- Tiffany Cooper
- Tracey Thorpe



Photo above: An example of one of the Sensory Kits distributed to families by our staff at Autism Tasmania.



We have also received some anonymous donations—so thank you to those people who left parcels at our offices, but did not leave names.

Updated List of Early Intervention Service Providers (FaHCSIA approved)

Families accessing the FaHCSIA funding can select an early intervention service that is best suited to the needs of their child and family. These providers are referred to as panel providers or consortiums.

The Early Intervention Service Provider Panel in Tasmania currently consists of the following providers:

Panel Service Providers	Contact:
Dr Larry Cashion www.drcashion.com.au Psychologist	M: 0429 057 755 (Larry) larry@cashion.net
Connect and Relate for autism www.connectandrelateforautism.com.au Bronwen Prazak (RDI program certified consultant)	M: 0423 066 276 (Bronwen) rди@asdconnect.com.au
Giant Steps www.giantsteps.tas.edu.au Tim Chugg (Principal)	Ph: 03 6362 2522 (Tim) principal@giantsteps.tas.edu.au
ISADD www.isadd.org Krystal Bassano (ABA Therapist)	M: 0400 567 646 (Krystal)
Lisa Maree Ford Lisa Maree Ford (Psychologist)	M: 0411 117 765 (Lisa) lisaford.psychology@gmail.com
SPOT ON Speech Pathology Tasmania—Speech Pathologists Rosalie Martin, Lisa Johnson, Linda McKillop, Felicity Laurence, Sarah Kay, Natalie Leader, Sonia Lillico Independent Kids—Occupational Therapists Alison Hopwood, Karen Fair, Rachel Reid, Ruth Crosser, Wendy Roberts, Linda Barker Psychologists Anne Hadrill, Miriam Kirby	Speech Pathology Tas Ph: 03 6234 5717 r.martin@spt.com.au Independent Kids Ph: 03 6234 5333 ahopwood@independentkids.com.au Psychologists M: 0419 535 215 (Anne) annehadrill@bigpond.com M: 0417 110 842 (Miriam) miriam.kirby@bipond.com
St Giles Society Inc www.stgiles.org.au Ally White (Occupational Therapist & Speech Pathologist)	Ph: 03 6345 7333 (Ally)
Kirsty Bartlett Clark (Manager, Southern Services) Merryl Darby (Co-ordinator of EI Planning)	Ph: 03 6238 1801 (Kirsty & Merryl)
Tim Feely and Associates Tim Feely (Psychologist & Speech Pathologist)	Ph: 03 6334 4451 tfeely@newmed.org
TLC Psychology www.tlcpsychology.com.au Mickaela Schelleman (Psychologist & Director) Catherine Silcock (Speech Pathologist)	M: 0410 788 844 (Mickaela) mickaela@tlcpsychology.com.au M: 0439 010 285 (Catherine) catherine.silcock@gmail.com
Hobart Speech Pathology Service Vicki Allen (Speech Pathologists)	Ph: 03 6225 4353 (Vicki) vta7@netspace.net.au
Trish O'Brien Samantha Van der Wijngaart (Psychologist)	M: 0438 908 331 (Samantha) sam@forpsych.com.au

Families can also access Panel Providers from inter-state, for a list of providers
Australia wide please visit the FaHCSIA website:
www.fahcsia.gov.au

Are you a person with ASD aged 18-30?

If so, the Future Leaders Program being developed as part of APAC 2013 might be just the thing for you.

About the Program

This initiative is designed to bring together a group of young adults aged 18-30 with a diagnosis of an Autism Spectrum Disorder to participate in the APAC 2013 conference training and familiarisation during May. The program also includes a structured, integrated program and mentoring by older adults on the spectrum at the conference in August.

The organisers of APAC are seeking expressions of interest for those wanting to be part of this unique initiative. The Future Leaders Program is most suited to young adults who have recently finished school. Participants should have an understanding and interest in ASD and looking for further opportunities to increase their self-advocacy skills.

See poster (right) and visit the APAC2013 website for details:

<http://www.apac13.org.au/future-leaders-program>

Autism Tasmania has fully sponsored one place for a Tasmanian to attend this conference, so please get online today to register your interest it may be you going to Adelaide this August!



*Engage the Disengaged, Connect the Disconnected,
Picture the Potential & more... 03-6334 4451*

Tim Feely and Associates have been approved under the Helping Children with Autism (HCWA) Early intervention Services.

Consulting Psychologist Tim Feely, Certified Speech Pathologist Siu Chan and Specialist Teacher Mary Brake are based in Launceston.

We will also be offering services to families from Devonport and Burnie given a minimum number of requests.

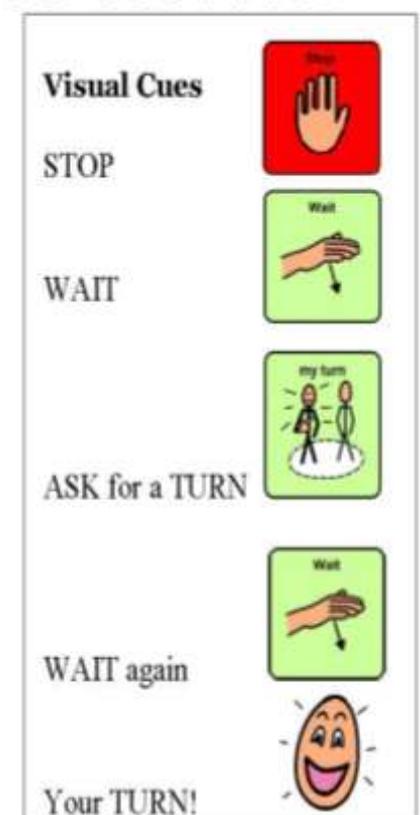
For more information, contact Skye at spadman@newmed.org

Tim's creative hands on approach engages young children with ASDs.

He manages behavioural issues with insight and enthusiasm. Siu treats children with ASDs as individuals with personalities. Young children learn multi-dimensional communication through play.



Come and experience the fun of learning!



TRUE COLOURS



BE BOLD. BE BRAVE. BE BRILLIANT.

CONFERENCE THEME

True Colours has been adopted as the conference theme. The letters overlap to represent the connectedness of the autism community and the range of colours represent the diversity of the autism spectrum.

The theme motivates us all to reveal, encourage and support the collective skills, talents and abilities of all of us that are part of the autism community. The conference theme inspires us to be bold, be brave and be brilliant as we collectively create a good life for people with an Autism Spectrum Disorder.

CONFERENCE PROGRAM

The conference program includes international keynote speakers, symposia sessions, workshops and poster presentations. All streams will incorporate presentations from a professional, personal and practical perspective.

Keynote and invited speakers and biographies can be found at www.apac13.org.au

SPONSORSHIP & EXHIBITION

APAC 2013 has several sponsorship packages available, providing sponsors with a choice of exposure related to financial commitment.

Participating as a sponsor and / or exhibitor at APAC 2013 can take you straight to your target market and demonstrate your level of support and commitment to the Autism Spectrum community, its clients and partners.

Download the sponsorship and exhibition proposal from www.apac13.org.au

REGISTER NOW TO ATTEND

Registration is now open! To register online, please visit www.apac13.org.au/register and view registration inclusions and fees.

CONTACT US

For more information please contact the conference organisers:

All Occasions Management

41 Anderson Street,
Thebarton SA 5031
Australia

T: +61 8 8125 2200

F: +61 8 8125 2233

E: apac13@aomevents.com

W: www.apac13.org.au

www.apac13.org.au

A Mother's Journey (part 3 of 5) by Alison Trimble

Lockers, Lunch Lines and Loos

Lockers and lunch lines have been central problems for Matt at High School, mostly because they are both situations where physical nearness to other students is inevitable and there are informal rules which everybody knows about and obeys, except for the Aspie kid who gets punched for not complying. I have *added "loos", because they can raise similar issues – and they represent another battle that I didn't fight for Matt, but should have.*

Lockers

At the Independent High School that Matt started to attend for Grade 7, lockers were arranged in banks of about 15 wide and 4 high. As is the natural pecking order, the Grade 10 students were allocated the top row, the Grade 9s had the next row down, and so on. All Grade 7 students had their lockers on the bottom row, at floor level. And that arrangement might have been a bit annoying if Matt was a neurotypical student, but he would very soon have worked out that any attempt to access his locker amongst the forest of *other students' legs would be pointless, and that he would simply have to wait until the area cleared of older students.*

But not my Matt. In his hyper-literal mind, the final bell meant it was time to go home. Going home required him to get his bag from his locker. And if there were other students in the way, too bad for them. His schedule for going home was completely rigid and inflexible: he had to get his locker open, grab his bag, *and get out of there at the first possible opportunity. And his getting shoved and kicked, and banging others' ankles and knees with a steel door did not deter him from his intended goal.*

I was always there to pick him up anyway – *a few minutes here or there didn't matter. But when he was younger he was absolutely the centre of the Universe, and he expected everything to revolve around his needs. And the locker pecking order never did.*

After Matt changed schools he was again allocated a locker befitting his status, this time as a Grade 9. Unfortunately this set of lockers was tucked away in an alcove, hidden from technological oversight by the CCTV cameras. And, unsurprisingly, this area was much utilised by school bullies for invisible assaults and unwitnessed standover tactics. Predictably, Matt found himself in all sorts of trouble when accessing his locker.

By this time I was finally becoming aware that Matt had problems with other students and lockers. It took me quite a while to figure out the simplest things – mostly because Matt adopted the normal teenaged boy *communication of single syllable grunts, combined with his Asperger's disinterest in discussing matters of emotion.* But I did eventually catch on, and went to a senior teacher and requested that he be given a *different locker: one that was high up (because he's a tall young man), was with only a few other lockers, and was in an area that teachers could keep an eye on and sort out issues if required. And the teacher actually listened to me, and did it. And what a difference it made!*

With the change in arrangements Matt was able to get to his locker straight away, without waiting – waiting *for anything at all poses a problem for Matthew; in his world delayed satisfaction simply doesn't exist* – and he could avoid touching other students, and they could avoid touching him. But naturally, finding an answer to one issue meant that a different problem arose. As Matt got chronologically older, so his self-awareness *slowly grew. And we had to deal with the difference issue: 'Why do I have to have my locker in a different place to everybody else?' 'Why can't the other kids just leave me alone?' 'Why do I have to have Aspergers?'* I wish I could say that we have managed to resolve all those questions, and a million similar ones besides, but *we haven't*.

I have had to wait for Mat to mature (and it has happened, probably slower than for neurotypical kids, but it has occurred nonetheless), and then present explanations and choices to him on a very rational and logical basis. Any attempt to use emotional arguments have been doomed to failure from the beginning. In terms of the whole locker issue, he came to agree that having a locker in a different area from everybody else was a negative for him because it put him in a different situation from his classmates, but that disadvantage was outweighed by the advantage of avoiding being bullied, and having easy access to his locker when he needed it.

Lunch Lines

It's amazing, sitting down to put some of my memories into words about Matt's time at High School, how guilty I feel. There were so many elements of the experience that he had problems with, and I really only dealt with the most pressing. I did what I could to sort out the major hurdles, but some of the other issues got left by the wayside. One of those was about buying a snack or lunch from the school canteen.

A packed lunch had always been acceptable at primary school, but things were different at High School. *'Everybody buys their lunch at High School'. And the buying of lunch, as such, presented no difficulties: Matt* had an allocated amount of lunch money and he could choose what to purchase; but buying food from the canteen also meant standing in line with other students, and waiting to be served. Waiting was not good. And when Matt was getting impatient he would jiggle about and get into problems (probably unintentionally) *by stepping on somebody else's feet, or knocking their elbow or making a completely inappropriate comment* about another student. I was called to the school so many times because there had been an incident in the canteen line.

Eventually Matt did his own mathematical assessment and concluded that standing in line with everybody else had too many disadvantages, and he decided to wait until the lunch rush was over to buy something. Of course, this meant that the selection was pretty limited, but he put up with that, to avoid getting himself into trouble. And he still preferred doing that, than taking a packed lunch – I think it was really his attempt to fit in and be like everyone else.

If I had boundless energy, time, insight and support, I think I might have tried to negotiate with the special needs coordinator, and the canteen manager, for Matt to have different access for buying his lunch – maybe *coming to the door of the canteen with a special card to say that different access was approved. I'm sure that there must be arrangements which can be made, that don't make the challenged kids feel too different or weird, that would make life just that little bit easier for them.*

Loos

Loos, lavatories, toilets, bathrooms. These can be a nightmare at High School. Matt simply would not use the bathroom facilities at school (and generally will not use public toilets anywhere – *but that's a subject for another story*). He would rather have had his kidneys explode than go to the school toilets. There were even days when he had a slightly upset stomach, that he point blank refused to go to school, because he might have been forced to use the toilets. According to Matt (and this is his perception – and other students might have different experiences about other schools) the bathrooms were dirty, with wet floors, and smelled of kids smoking, and doors were broken and didn't close, and people bumped you and knocked into you (it must be hard sometimes being a boy).

This is another issue that I ignored and hoped would magically be solved, but wasn't. Maybe there was something that I could have done to make the experience better for Matt (a personal portaloo in the car park perhaps?) I do know of another parent, in another school, who did, and achieved a really good outcome for her child. After she approached the school and described her child's anxiety, they were able to identify a bathroom that was tucked away and was not often used by anyone, and they allocated it for her child's use. It had a sign on the door 'X's toilet', it was cleaned properly every day, and duty teachers made sure that no other students used the facilities. Obviously this wouldn't be a possibility in every case, but it shows the sorts of arrangements that schools can make for children with particular needs.

To be continued...

Pulse Psychology Clinic

Pulse Psychology Clinic is a DHHS endorsed free service available for 12-24 year olds. Conveniently located between Centrelink and the State Library, 2 Terry St, Glenorchy.

The Clinic runs many exciting and fun youth programs.

Facilities include:

- Recording Studio
- Music Studio
- Pool Room
- Industrial Kitchen
- Computers available
- Art Facilities
- Shower & Laundry Facilities

Drop in or phone 6233 8901 to make an inquiry or appointment.



The flyer features a green background with a white starburst graphic. At the top left is the Pulse logo, a stylized 'P' inside a circle, with the word 'Pulse' written below it. To the right of the logo are three horizontal bars labeled 'YOUTH', 'HEALTH', and 'SOUTH'. The main title 'Pulse Psychology Clinic' is written in red. Below the title, the text reads: 'We can support you to deal with a range of things like feeling depressed, feeling anxious or managing stress relating to exams or family stuff. We can also help with issues relating to becoming a new parent, issues relating to feeling sad or angry or helping you to find ways to make changes in your life. We also like to help people be happier and healthier and it's easy to make an appointment—just come into Pulse or phone 62338901 and ask for an appointment with the psychology clinic. And there is no COST for this service.' At the bottom, it says 'Sarah is available at Pulse Youth Health South every Wednesday'.

The Autism Advantage

Like most parents with a child newly diagnosed with an Autism Spectrum Disorder, Thorkil Sonne was concerned about the future challenges his son may face. As his son grew, Thorkil began to notice that apparent weaknesses (bluntness and obsessiveness, say) can also be marketable strengths (directness, attention to detail).

Below is an excerpt from Gareth Cook's recent article "The Autism Advantage" in *The New York Times* (published on 29th of November, 2012). If you are interested in reading the full article, it is available online at the following link:

<http://www.nytimes.com/2012/12/02/magazine/the-autism-advantage.html>

The autism advantage NOV 29 2012

In the NY Times, Gareth Cook writes about the advantages some companies have found in employing people with autism.

To his father, Lars seemed less defined by deficits than by his unusual skills. And those skills, like intense focus and careful execution, were exactly the ones that Sonne, who was the technical director at a spinoff of TDC, Denmark's largest telecommunications company, often looked for in his own employees. Sonne did not consider himself an entrepreneurial type, but watching Lars and hearing similar stories from parents he met volunteering with an autism organization he slowly conceived a business plan: many companies struggle to find workers who can perform specific, often tedious tasks, like data entry or software testing; some autistic people would be exceptionally good at those tasks. So in 2003, Sonne quit his job, mortgaged the family's home, took a two-day accounting course and started a company called Specialisterne, Danish for "the specialists," on the theory that, given the right environment, an autistic adult could not just hold down a job but also be the best person for it.

I particularly liked Tyler Cowen's observations:

Tyler Cowen, an economist at George Mason University (and a regular contributor to *The Times*), published a much-discussed paper last year that addressed the ways that autistic workers are being drawn into the modern economy. The autistic worker, Cowen wrote, has an unusually wide variation in his or her skills, with higher highs and lower lows. Yet today, he argued, it is increasingly a worker's greatest skill, not his average skill level, that matters. As capitalism has grown more adept at disaggregating tasks, workers can focus on what they do best, and managers are challenged to make room for brilliant, if difficult, outliers. This march toward greater specialization, combined with the pressing need for expertise in science, technology, engineering and mathematics, so-called STEM workers, suggests that the prospects for autistic workers will be on the rise in the coming decades. If the market can forgive people's weaknesses, then they will rise to the level of their natural gifts.

Support/Social Groups

Northern Support

The first family get together for 2013 proved to be very popular with almost fifty people converging on the Launceston City Council's Transport and Road Safety Centre to share in a sausage sizzle, a chat and some fun. These school holiday events at the "Bike Centre" provide a regular opportunity for families to relax together in an enjoyable secure environment. This is a venue that suits people of most ages and abilities; it seems that investigating the street scape murals is every bit as fun for some children, as riding around the roads is for others. At the suggestion of a parent, we also set up a "teen zone" for older children to sit together to share games and other things of interest. This area will be developed further for future events. It was really rewarding for me to see parents sharing tips on challenges such as hoarding and sleeping while armed with tongs and sauce bottles around the barbecue!



Most Northern Support and Information Groups are underway for 2103. It is exciting to see the Dorset Group continue to develop. With excellent support from the Dorset Community House in Scottsdale and some committed parents this group is establishing itself as a valuable source of support for families experiencing life with the Autism Spectrum in this area of the north.

Our Launceston Evening Information Sessions commenced in February. Our first session involved some adult "Aspies" sharing their life experiences with us. Their honest, eloquent and at times confronting accounts provided the appreciative parents and carers who attended the evening with highly valuable insights into what it is like to experience life on the Autism Spectrum.

I am truly grateful to the two guest speakers for their generosity in being so willing to help us "neurotypicals" gain a better understanding of Autism.

The Zone activity group for children in Grades 5 to 8 has now met for five consecutive months. It's hard to pick which event has been most fun!



Our visits to Tasmania Zoo, PCYC for gymnastics and trampolining, Tassie Tiger Mini Golf and games in the park have all helped the participants to try new activities and establish friendships. The most exciting moments for me have been witnessing some children forming friendships for the very first time (and extending these beyond The Zone), observing some participants challenge themselves and each other to overcome anxieties, and hearing that some members are so keen to come each month that they bound out of bed and make sure that their family is organised so that they won't be late!

Robyn Thomas



Brixhibition North 2013
Do you love LEGO?

Following the success of Brixhibition which has been running in Hobart for the last two years, the TAZ-Brick Collectors Club is proud to present Brixhibition North 2013 with the assistance of Lions Club of Kings Meadows.

WHEN:
Saturday 20th April 2013—9:30 am to 4:30 pm

WHERE:
Lions Club of Kings Meadows Clubrooms,
18 Merino Street, Kings Meadows, Launceston

Any enquiries about Brixhibition North 2013 or the TAZ-brick Collectors Club please contact:

Paul Blundell: tanger32au@gmail.com
Brent Prins (President): brentprins@bigpond.com

Support/Social Groups

The Zone—South

The Zone is a social group for children from Grade 5 to 8 with high functioning autism the Hobart Zone started in November 2012 and has now been running for 5 months.



For the first get together we all sat down and got to know each other and talked about what the group would like to do over the next 9 months.

Some of the things we have done so far are:

In October we went to Zone 3 laser tag. We had 3 games, 2 of the games we played parents vs. kids and the last game the kids played each other. I am not sure who had more fun - the parents or the kids!



In December we decided to do something for Christmas so we built and decorated Gingerbread houses and one of the mums Janet is a very good card maker and she offered to bring her card making equipment along and show the group how to make some really cool Christmas cards which was a lot of fun.

All the gingerbread houses turned out great and very tasty. Thanks to our wonderful Autism Advisor Nella and her husband for preparing our gingerbread house kits for us.



In January we went to Zoo Doo where we got to pat a baby Tasmanian devil and feed the kangaroos, deers and goats. The group then jumped on the feeding bus to go and feed the animals.

In February we went to Tolosa Street Park for a BBQ and games day it was very windy but we still tried to play some of the games.



In March we played mini golf. It was great, we had a few hole in ones and the end scores were very close. After the game it was one of the boys birthday so we had cake and ice cream to celebrate.

Robyn Davis

Support/Social Groups



 Autism Tasmania is proud to offer a range of Support/Social Groups at the locations indicated above.

We are always looking to expand our services to best meet the needs of our families.

If you are interested in becoming involved in one of our many support or social groups, please check out our Workshops/Events tab on our website at: www.autismtas.org.au

or contact Autism Tasmania Ph 1300 288 476 for an up to date Support/Social Group flyer.

Southern Tasmania

Bridgewater

Bridgewater Community House
Second Thursday morning in the month – 10.30am – Midday.

Hobart

Autism Tasmania office, 1 Bowen Rd, Moonah
Last Thursday evening in the month – 7.30pm – 9.30pm.

Dunalley

Dunalley Community Neighbourhood Centre,
Arthur Highway
First Thursday morning in the month – 10am – Midday

Contact: Robyn Davis 0408 376 838

Hobart- **Asperger's Syndrome Adult** Support Group

Autism Tasmania office, 1 Bowen Rd, Moonah
Last Sunday in the month 2.00 – 4.00pm.

Contact: Rose Clark 0407 320 048

North West Coast

Burnie

Burnie Community House, 24 Wiseman St, Burnie
Third Thursday in the month - 10.30am - midday.

Circular Head

Smithton District Hospital's meeting room
Third Friday in the month – 10.30am - midday.

Devonport

Devonport Community Health Centre, Cnr MacFie &
Steele Sts Devonport
Third Monday in the month - 7.30pm - 9.30pm

Burnie—**Asperger's Syndrome Adult** Support Group

152 Wilson Street, Burnie
Second Saturday in the month 1.30pm - 3.30pm

Contact: Rose Clark 0407 320 048

Northern Tasmania

Launceston

Northern Children's Network, Amy Road, Newstead
Coffee mornings - Fourth Tuesday in the month from 10am
Evening Meetings - Third Tuesday in the month from 7pm
Bike Centre family get togethers in school holidays

George Town

Wattle Group, Agnes St
Third Tuesday in the month – 10 am – 11:45 am.

Scottsdale

Dorset Community House
Second Tuesday in the month 11am—12:30pm

Contact: Robyn Thomas 0458 375 604

Launceston

Asperger's Syndrome Adult Support Group
Aspire Building, 190 Charles Street, Launceston
First Saturday in the month 1.30 – 3.30pm.

Contact: Rose Clark 0407 320 048

West Coast

Meetings on the first Thursday in every month
on a rotational basis—Rosebery, Queenstown,
and Strahan 10.30am -midday. Please contact
Rose Clark for details of upcoming venue.

East Coast

Monthly meetings organised by Karen Rawnsley
Phone 6372 5077 or 0418 375 450



For more information please call: 1 300 288 476

or

email admin@autismtas.org.au



promoting development of
young children on the autism spectrum

Autism Tasmania is proudly supporting families by providing workshops for mothers, fathers and other family carers of children who have an Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD).

Early Days is a national program funded by the Federal Government under the Helping Children with Autism Strategy and is run by local facilitators.



Autism
TASMANIA INC.
Making Futures Brighter

REGISTER TODAY!

Email:
autism@autismtas.org.au

Phone:
1300 288 476

Diagnosis: Autism? Where to now?

Early Days Introductory Workshop
During this workshop you will learn:

- About ASD and what it means for you and your child
- **Practical strategies that can make a difference to your child's** development
- How to select and maximise an intervention service

Understanding Behaviour—A Step by Step Guide for Parents

During this practical workshop you will learn:

- **How to understand your child's behaviours**
- Ways to select and teach your child new behaviour
- How to promote positive behaviours

Introductory Workshop

North West - Friday 5th April 2013

Hobart - Monday 15th April 2013

Launceston - Friday 19th April 2013

Behaviour Workshop

Hobart - Monday 6th May 2013

Launceston - Thursday 9th May 2013

North West - Friday 10th May 2013

- Free of charge to attend
- Workshops are held in small groups and give you the chance to meet other parents
- Light refreshments provided, BYO lunch
- Childcare is not provided
- Session times 9:30 - 2:30 pm

This workshop is for parents and other family carers only.
For professional development opportunities, please
contact your State/Territory's Autism Association.



Professor Jacqui Roberts
Autism Across The Lifespan
 11th April, 2013
 Tattersall's Park Function Centre, Glenorchy
 Registration 8:45am
 for 9 am prompt start – 4 pm



Registration Form

Participant Name(s)

Dietary requirements

Y/N

Description:

1 _____
 2 _____
 3 _____
 4 _____
 5 _____

Organisation (if applicable): _____
 Contact phone no or email to confirm registration: _____

Payment (which must be made with your registration)

This document becomes a Tax Invoice for GST when you make a payment. Please keep a copy.

Registration fee includes GST. If you require an individual invoice, please contact us at the details given below.

***Morning tea, lunch & afternoon tea provided. Please indicate any dietary requirements above.**

Standard Rate	Early Bird Rate	Non-Professional Members Rate	Total Payable
_____ X Persons at \$125 each	_____ X Persons at \$95 each	_____ X Persons at \$10 each	\$ _____

Please indicate method of payment:

- Paid directly to Bendigo Bank** [Please include your name when making an EFT or direct deposit]
Account Number: 633-000 136780525 **Account name:** Autism Tasmania Inc.
- Cheque or Money Order** enclosed [please do not send cash through the mail]
- Name on **Visa or MasterCard:** _____ Expiry Date: _____
 Card Number: _____ Cardholder's Signature _____

POST TO: Registrations, Autism Tasmania Inc, PO Box 514, Moonah, TAS, 7009.

Email: admin@autismtas.org.au

Enquiries: 1300 288 476

TERMS AND CONDITIONS: (which you accept by registering)

- Workshop participation is not confirmed until payment has been received, processed and receipted.
- Please arrive at least 15 minutes before the starting time of the workshop to confirm your attendance on the day.
- If the workshop is cancelled by Autism Tasmania Inc. we will contact you and give you a full refund.
- If you cancel your attendance in writing up to 14 days prior to the workshop, you will receive a full refund. If you cancel in writing within 14 days of the workshop, you will receive a 50% refund.
- No shows will not receive a refund.**
- Information provided by registrants will be treated in accordance to privacy legislation.

Professor Jacqui Roberts presents

Autism Across The Lifespan

Focus on DSM-5 and NDIS implications

A workshop for Parents/Carers, Educators & Disability sector providers.

Professor Roberts is national and internationally renowned for her research and expertise in the field of Autism. She is the chair of Autism Centre of Excellence, Griffith University. Prior to her appointment, she was a consultant for a variety of national projects in Autism, and responsible for content in the Australian Autism Education and Training Consortium (AAETC) Positive Partnerships Program.

Professor Roberts is a consultant to the Commonwealth Department of Families, Housing and Community Services and Indigenous Affairs (FaHCSIA) on the distribution of the Federal Government Helping Children with Autism (HCWA) package; a director of the Australian Advisory Board on Autism Spectrum Disorders and serves on the DEEWR Students with Disability in Schools Advisory Council.

Workshop Outline:

Session 1

Focus on diagnosis and the implications of the proposed changes in DSM 5.

Focus on functional assessment and the implications for program development and for NDIS funding.

Session 2

Good practice in Autism intervention across the age and ability range.

Making schools work for children on the Autism spectrum.

Session 3

Focus on communication and Autism across the age and ability range.

A holistic approach to understanding and responding to the communicative function of behaviour.

Tattersalls Park Function Centre, Glenorchy

9am prompt start — 4pm

11th of April, 2013

* Ample Parking * Morning Tea and Lunch Provided *

COST: \$125 Early bird rate: \$95 (ends 15th of March)

DISCOUNTED RATE FOR NON-PROFESSIONAL MEMBERS \$40

NEW MEMBERS ALWAYS WELCOME!



CONTACT AUTISM TASMANIA ON 1300 288 476 or email admin@autismtas.org.au