

NEWSLETTER



*Photo of peers
and CDAH staff
at Wallsend
Country Catch-
up smiling*

CDAH BOARD

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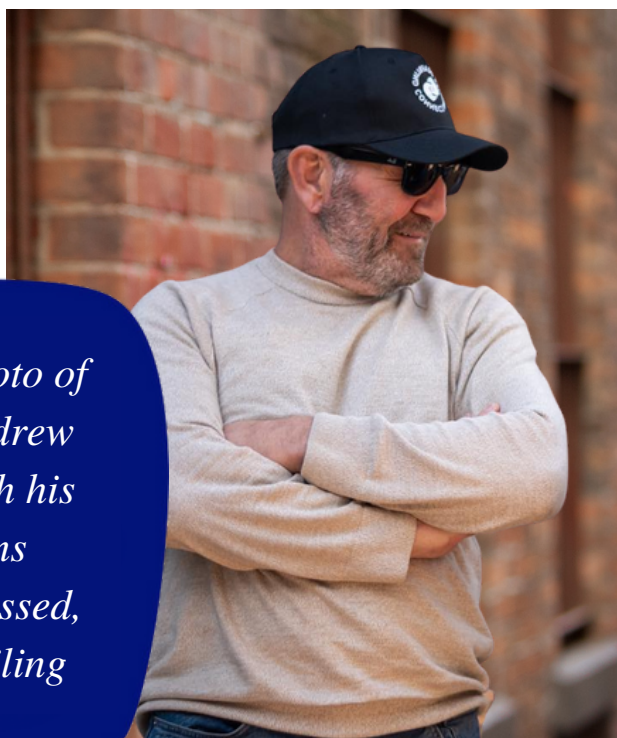
RECAP OF RECENT EVENT

The Community Disability Alliance Hunter (CDAH) recently completed its latest project, the Country Catch-up. The project was aimed at connecting with potential new members residing outside the Newcastle area and introducing them to the CDAH community.

By creating a network of connections in rural areas, CDAH hoped to extend its reach and continue to provide support and advocacy for people with disabilities across a wider region.



*Photo of
Erin and
Julie
wearing
the CDAH
shirts*



*Photo of
Andrew
with his
arms
crossed,
smiling*

MESSAGE FROM CEO

"It has been a busy start to 2023 at CDAH, and I am thrilled to share some exciting updates with you all."

Firstly, please join me in welcoming our new operations manager, Kellie Summers. Kellie brings with her a wealth of experience and a strong commitment to working with peers and within the disability sector. We are excited to have her on board and look forward to the positive impact she will have on our organization.

In addition, I am pleased to share that all of our ILC grants have been extended until June 2024. This news is particularly 'significant for Deafblind Connect, Community Connections, and the development of our peer groups and training programs'. We are grateful for this opportunity to continue our important work in the community.

Finally, I want to express my appreciation for our new board. It is a pleasure to work alongside both our new and experienced board members as we move forward into the future. Together, I am confident that we will continue to make a meaningful difference in the lives of those we serve.

Thank you for your ongoing support of CDAH.

CDAH EVENTS

Planning Cafe:

DisCo Info and Planning Session

Date: 27th of April 2023

Time: 12:30pm to 3pm

Location: CDAH Office,

408 King Street Newcastle West

Planning Cafe:

DisCo Info and Planning Session 2

Date: 3rd of May 2023

Time: 1pm to 3:30pm

Location: CDAH Office,

408 King Street Newcastle West

CDAH NEWS

SHIFTING THE LINE

On the 9th of December last year, Speak Up Hunter put on an event called Shifting The Line. The purpose of the event was to promote disability awareness and highlight the barriers that still exist for people with disabilities living in the Hunter. The main activity was a “Diversity Walk” - A diversity walk us when people start in a line and are then asked yes or no questions and depending on their answer they move forward. This is to visually show the diversity of experience people have. The event was a success, with community members coming along on the day and participating.

Speak Up Hunter coordinators Sarah and Arron had this to say:

Sarah “My experience as Event Coordinator of Shifting The Line was challenging and rewarding. I would love to plan another event again, with support”

Arron “Shifting The Line was fun, challenging and different experience! A real eye-opening adventure! I am proud that I was a part of it.”

The event was captured by a videographer and we will host a premier night to showcase the film, so keep this on your radar and we will send out an invite when it’s on!



*Photo of
Leigh, Erin
and Shaylie
participating
in the event*

HUNTER DEAFBLIND COMMUNITY NEWS

Welcome to 2023! It's going to be another big year for the Deafblind community with fortnightly drop-ins, awareness raising events and workshops on a variety of topics.

The last months of 2022 were busy with CDAH and project staff supporting peers to attend private sessions and writing written submissions to The Disability Royal Commission regarding Violence, Abuse, Neglect and Exploitation of people with a disability. We look forward to how the information provided can inform the recommendations that will come from this inquiry.

Planning is in progress to run a series of workshops for the Deafblind community this year on a variety of topics, including First Aid, coffee production, Haptics, and Physiotherapy. The first session on LGBTQIA+ is being held at the CDAH office on the 28th April with 3 guest presenters from Sydney.

Three Deafblind community members have been working with Deafblind Australia and Senses to plan for the 2023 Deafblind Awareness Week activities in early July. They are working with a local artist Holly Macdonald to create a sculptural art installation, as we collaborate with Lake Macquarie local council to select a site for its permanent display. We will keep you updated on its launch date.

Great news, The Deafblind Project has received an extension from the ILC board to continue our great work through until June 2024.

We would like to thank all Deafblind Connect members and allies for respecting the choice of Deafblind community members to limit numbers during the various covid outbreaks during 2022. We are happy to welcome you all back this year, but we will continue to assess covid numbers ahead of each Drop-in, so keep an eye on our Facebook page for regular updates at @HunterDeafblind. Also please let one of the project team know when you will be attending for catering purposes.



Photo of
Geoff using
Tactile
Auslan, to
communicate

WHAT'S ON!

DISABILITY EXPO

Community Disability Alliance Hunter (CDAH) has announced that it will be sharing a space with the City of Newcastle at the upcoming Disability Expo. The decision to attend was made in response to the many requests from people with lived experience who wanted to see CDAH present at the event.

During the two-day Expo, CDAH members will be involved in various activities. These include conducting peer surveys to gauge how the community is responding post-Covid, sharing information about CDAH peer groups and activities, and welcoming members of the local disability community to join CDAH.

In addition, CDAH will be sharing information with peers about CDAH Training, and opportunities in the newly formed Disability Co-operative (DisCo). The DisCo will provide suitably trained and skilled peers with opportunities for paid work in facilitating real cultural change in the broader community.

Before the Expo, two planning cafes are scheduled to take place in April. These cafes will explain more about the DisCo to CDAH members, providing them with an opportunity to learn more about this exciting initiative. By conducting surveys, sharing information, and welcoming new members, CDAH hopes to connect with even more people in the disability community and continue making a positive impact in the lives of those they serve.

Date: Friday 12th and Saturday 13th of May 2023

Time: 9am to 3pm

Location: Newcastle Entertainment Centre



*Photo of
CDAH
Peers sitting
at a table
with CDAH
flyers*

COUNT US IN FESTIVAL AND CDAH

CDAH CEO Andrew is enthusiastic about partnering with Newcastle City Council for the upcoming Count Us In Festival, stating that "Count Us In is not just a festival, it's a movement for change." This year's festival promises to be bigger and better than before, with networking opportunities, disability awareness training, and a focus on creating a more inclusive community. The festival includes a variety of activities, and the "nothing about us, without us" ethos encourages community engagement.

Count Us In also provides a platform for co-design, with a small grants scheme for creative contributions. Partnering with the City of Newcastle allows for highlighting year-round programs at their venues and facilities. The festival also provides opportunities for collaboration and innovation and leverages Count Us In to grow CDAH's peer support groups.



*Photo of
CDAH
Peers and
Allies
together
outside*

**"Count Us In is not
just a festival, it's a
movement for change"**

*Photo of
two CDAH
peers
talking
outside*



COMMUNITY NEWS

'TOGETHER WE CAN' CONFERENCE

Community Disability Alliance Hunter (CDAH) recently participated in the Together We Can Conference (TWC), a major event in the disability community. The conference was aimed at promoting the importance of working together to create an inclusive and accessible world for all.

CDAH CEO Andrew expressed his appreciation for the "efforts of all the CDAH presenters in making the conference a success". However, we acknowledge there were technical issues that affected the virtual attendance of many CDAH members, which caused some frustration. The sessions were all recorded and will be made available via the DD-Alliance youtube channel.

Despite the technical difficulties, CDAH remains committed to working towards a more inclusive and accessible world for people with disabilities. They look forward to future opportunities to collaborate and share their message with the wider community.



*Photo of
Peers at
the
Together
We Can
Conference*

INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY

International Women's Day 2023 in Newcastle, NSW was marked by several events and activities that celebrated the achievements of women and raised awareness of gender equality issues. CDAH, played an instrumental role in organizing and promoting events that highlighted the intersectionality of gender and disability.

On International Women's Day itself, CDAH collaborated with other community organizations to organize a march and rally to highlight the importance of gender equality and disability rights. The event was a powerful show of solidarity and demonstrated the community's commitment to working towards a more just and equitable society for all.

Overall, CDAH's involvement in International Women's Day 2023 celebrations in Newcastle, NSW ensured that the events were inclusive, empowering, and representative. Their efforts helped to raise awareness of the unique challenges faced by women with disabilities and highlighted the importance of intersectionality in addressing these challenges.



CDAH
Women at
International
Women's
Day



Photo of Sarah smiling and waving

MEMBER MOMENT: SARAH SIMMONDS

Let me introduce you to Sarah! She's excited for new adventures in 2023 and is currently working on several projects, including the Together We Can Conference, attending monthly Speak Up Hunter meetings, and conducting research. Sarah's favourite part of being a CDAH member is the supportive community. In her free time, Sarah enjoys arts and crafts, photography, and spending time with loved ones. She is passionate about working with women, people, and the community and feels especially passionate about CDAH because of the support they've provided her on her journey.

QUESTION FOR SARAH

What have you been working on so far in 2023?

Working on the Together We Can Conference for peers. I'll be contributing in two sections – Speak Up Hunter and the Peer Research. I've done the Women's March representing CDAH for International Women's Day. I'm also work with Jenny's Place on a brochure to help women with disability to access help if they are experiencing difficult relationships.



Photo of Sarah holding the sign she made for International Women's Day

TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES

INTRO TO PEER SUPPORT

CDAH aims to create change through a peer movement. Join our training to learn about peer support, creating a peer movement, and important skills. The training is led by peer workers who also developed the content. Intro to Peer Support Training is a one-day training session, at the CDAH Office!

DATE

Next training date is to be confirmed

**If you are interested in enrolling,
please contact: suzy@cdah.org.au**

PEER MENTOR TRAINING

CDAH aims to create change through a peer movement. Join our training to learn about peer support, creating a peer movement, and important skills. Peer workers facilitate the sessions.

The Peer Mentor Training takes place over 4 weeks, in three 3-hour sessions, at the CDAH Office!

DATES

Session One: 4th of May: 9:30am to 12:30pm

Session Two: 11th of May: 9:30am to 12:30pm

Session Three: 18th of May: 9:30am to 12:30pm

Session Four: 25th of May: 9:30am to 12:30pm

**If you are interested in enrolling, please contact:
suzy@cdah.org.au**



*Photo of Peer
Katrina
receiving her
Certificate of
Completion for
Training*

PEER GROUP DATES

Queer Peers: 2nd Tuesday of Every Month from 2:30pm to 3:30pm

Home Sweet Home: 2nd Thursday of Every Month from 3pm to 4pm

Hunter Deafblind Drop-in: 2nd and 4th Friday of Every Month from 10am to 1pm

Speak Up Hunter: 2nd Friday of Every Month from 11am to 1pm

The Hive: 3rd Thursday of Every Month from 5:30pm to 7pm

Writing Group: Last Tuesday of Every Month from 5:30pm to 7pm

Women First: Last Friday of Every Month from 1:30pm to 3pm

Crafting Around: Second Wednesday of every month from 3pm till 5pm, at the CDAH office

PEER GROUP SPOTLIGHT: THE HIVE

The Hive is a peer-led mental health support and advocacy group for people who identify as having any type of mental health issue. We are all peers with lived experience who give and receive support, share experiences and information, and help and hear each other. We welcome new members.

We recently had our 5th birthday and are planning to have a celebratory picnic soon.

Some of our members are presenting at the Together We Can conference in March.

We meet on zoom on the 3rd Thursday every month at 5.30pm to 7pm. Our next meetings are the 16th of March then the 20th April. Go to the cdah.org.au webpage and click on the large red zoom office button at the top of the page to join us, or contact Cedar Whelan via email to thehive@cdah.org.au

*Photo of
some of the
Peer Group
Facilitators
at CDAH*



WRITING GROUP

The CDAH Writing Group for peers with living experience of disability is a new, inclusive personal interest group that started in February. We had an enjoyable and interesting meeting and did some writing during the meeting. Our writing prompt for this month is 'a journey you've had or wish to have' - which you can interpret in any way you like. And any form you like.

When we meet we bring a sample of our writing to share with the group by reading to each other. It doesn't have to be writing to the prompt, which is just to get you putting some words down if you're not already. We'll also share information and ideas. Any type of writing you are interested in.

Our next meeting will be the 25th of April (last Tuesday of every month on zoom) 5.30pm - 7pm. To join us go to the cdah.org.au website and at the top of the page click on the big red zoom office button. We look forward to meeting you!

You are also welcomed to contact Cedar Whelan via email to cedarwhelan@gmail.com

CRAFTING AROUND

This month we had 6 attendees at Crafting Around. Some of us did card making, kindness rock painting and we had a short presentation on glass pendent making by Douglas and Jane. We had a lovely afternoon connecting with our peers, we look forward to next month's get together and we hope to see you there!

Our next crafting around session will be on the 19th of April, it is later in the month due to the Easter break.



*Photo from
Crafting
Around with
everyone
sitting at a
table*