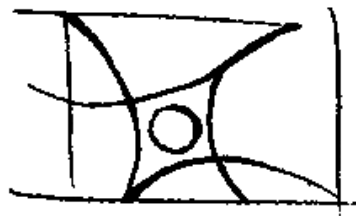




The Western Region Disability Network
Strategic Plan 2007–2010



Western Region
Disability Network

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Disclaimer

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Acronyms

CALD	Cultural and Linguistic Diversity
Co.As.It	A community organisation for Italians and Australians of Italian descent
COSHG	Collective of Self Help Groups
DHS	Department of Human Services
HACC	Home and Community Care (Program)
LLEN	Local Learning and Employment Network
NRDN	Northern Region Disability Network
RMIT	Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology (University)
VU	Victoria University
WRDN	Western Region Disability Network

Introduction

The Western Region Disability Network (WRDN) was established in 1993 to increase the communication between people with a disability, their carers and service providers. It is a unique Network with over 600 members comprising people with disabilities, carers and family members, service providers and members of the community who have an interest in disability. The focus of the WRDN has strongly been on the 'West', addressing disability issues in the local government areas of Brimbank, Hobsons Bay, Maribyrnong, Melbourne, Melton, Moonee Valley and Wyndham. The WRDN has documented the 'WRDN Model' which provides a comprehensive discussion of its history and achievements from 1993 to 2006.

The WRDN is auspiced by annecto, an independent, not for profit organisation that provides services to people with a disability. annecto – the people network, has a strong commitment to developing partnerships that connect people to their local communities.

Funding for the WRDN has come from the Department of Human Services (DHS) North West Region via two program areas, Home and Community Care (HACC) and Disability Services. Funding provided via HACC is recurrent. Funding provided by Disability Services is non recurrent and has been provided by a series of block grants on an application basis. In 2005, DHS North and West Metropolitan Region, Disability Services, informed the WRDN that non-recurrent funding to support the Network in the form of a paid worker would no longer be available.

The DHS Disability Services representative has continued to work with the WRDN on its future directions and has offered in-kind support, including administrative support in Network meetings. The DHS Disability Services provided a grant of \$10,000 to the WRDN to support civic participation of people with a disability and their carers in being involved in the Network's future directions planning and other participatory mechanisms.

The WRDN has moved quickly to identify alternative sources of funding to ensure its work continues. The Coordinating Group and Executive Officer of the WRDN recognised the need to develop a new strategic plan to guide the Network's activities over the next three years and assist in securing its future. A successful application was made to the Helen Macpherson Smith Trust to fund the development of the strategic plan.

During 2006, other factors also impacted on the work of the WRDN. The former Western and Northern Regions of the DHS had amalgamated in 2004 to form the DHS North and West Metropolitan Region. The new DHS North and West Metropolitan Region had an interest in ensuring equity of service that it funds to be provided to the whole region and so had an interest in the WRDN expanding its work to include the northern part of the region.

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At the same time, the DHS North and West Metropolitan Region informed the Northern Region Disability Network (NRDN) — a similar network to the WRDN that services the northern part of the region — that it was no longer eligible for grants to fund its operations. The NRDN approached the WRDN to establish a relationship whereby the voice of disability in the north could continue to be advocated and represented. The WRDN has agreed to formalise the relationship with the NRDN and has included strategies in the strategic plan to address disability issues for the north.

Development of the WRDN Strategic Plan

The Western Region Disability Network Strategic Plan 2007–2010 represents the work undertaken over a five-month period from July to November 2006. Activities undertaken to develop the strategic plan include:

- Surveying members, conducting forums and holding individual interviews with over 100 members, supporters and partners to identify key issues for the WRDN in determining its future direction.
- Commissioning consultants SJF Australia, to assist the WRDN develop and document its strategic plan.
- Reviewing the outcomes of forums, focus groups and surveys of the WRDN members coordinated by the Executive Officer and the Coordinating Group.
- Conducting a SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats) Workshop.
- Conducting individual consultations with key stakeholders including: the WRDN Executive Officer, the Chief Executive Officer and Service Development Manager of annecto, DHS North and West Metropolitan Region Disability Services representatives; regional MetroAccess Workers and the former Executive Officer of the WRDN.
- Conducting three, half-day strategic planning meetings with members of the Coordinating Group to develop and refine the strategic plan (refer to appendix 1 for a list of members of the Coordinating Group).

The Western Region Disability Network Strategic Plan 2007–2010 has redefined the Vision and Mission of the WRDN. These statements give a clear statement of what the WRDN does and how it is done. The principles that have been developed represent the values and beliefs that underpin the work of the strategic plan.

The strategic plan has identified the priority areas of *Governance and Management*, *Regional Services* and *Membership* with accompanying goals and strategies. Actions to meet the strategies have been developed with responsibility assigned and time frames specified for implementation. During the course of developing the strategic plan a number of discrete projects were identified that emerged from some of the strategies and actions. These are listed in a separate section at the end of the strategic plan.

Western Region Disability Network Strategic Plan 2007–2010

Vision

We are a passionate regional grassroots Network that informs and empowers people with a disability and those who support them to have an active presence and influential voice in community and civic life.

Mission

Collectively we promote participation, leadership, equality and a voice in decision-making through information exchange and systematic advocacy by building bridges and partnerships.

Principles

The work of the WRDN is committed to:

- Equality — membership is open to all people and organisations that have an interest in disability in the region and every member's contribution is valued and respected equally.
- Partnership — people with a disability, carers, service providers, community and government are most effective when they work in partnership to enhance opportunities for people with a disability.
- Empowerment — the activities of and information provided by the WRDN are used to empower people with a disability.
- Choice — people with a disability have the right to be involved in decisions that affect their daily lives.
- Fairness — people with a disability have the right to fair and equitable access to opportunities available to other members of the community.
- The United Nations motto — *"Nothing About Us Without Us"*¹.

¹ <http://www.un.org/esa/socdev/enable/iddp2004.htm>

Key Priority Areas

Governance and Management

Goal: To ensure the long-term viability of the WRDN

Strategies

- Improve the effectiveness of the management structure
- Identify projects that advance the mission and goals of the WRDN and seek potential funding contributions to implement them
- Identify any grants for which the WRDN is eligible
- Investigate sponsorship opportunities
- Expand coverage to include the northern part of the region
- Strengthen the auspice relationship with annecto
- Explore potential future autonomy
- Review capacity to expand statewide

Regional Services

Goal: To develop a profile as the key disability information and systemic advocacy body in the region

Strategies

- Develop a marketing plan
- Establish partnership relationships with key organisations within the region
- Identify and raise key regional issues that impact on people with a disability and those who support them
- Keep people connected and informed
- Improve accessibility of the WRDN written material

WRDN STRATEGIC PLAN 2007–2010

Membership

Goal: To provide every person with a disability and those who support them an opportunity to become a member

Strategies

- Develop a comprehensive understanding of the WRDN membership
- Increase the number and diversity of members
- Utilise the diverse skills and resources of members

Implementation, Monitoring and Review

Overall responsibility for implementing the Western Region Disability Network Strategic Plan 2007–2010 will be assumed by the Coordinating Group. Progress of implementing the strategic plan will be monitored regularly by the Coordinating Group with a formal review being conducted annually and reports provided to the membership.

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Key Area: Governance and Management

Goal: To ensure the long term viability of the WRDN

Strategies	Actions	Responsibility	Time Frame
1. Improve the effectiveness of the management structure	1.1 Develop sub committees or working groups to take on priority areas	Coordinating Group	June 2007
	1.2 Review membership of coordinating group and encourage members with expertise if a need is identified		June 2008
	1.3 Update policies and procedures		Dec 2010
	1.4 Mentor people with disabilities and carers to take on leadership roles (see strategies under Membership)		Dec 2010
2. Identify projects that advance the mission and goals of the WRDN and seek potential funding contributions to implement them	2.1 Analyse the Victorian Government <i>Fairer Victoria</i> document to determine potential funding opportunities and project partners (government and non-government)	Funding Sub-committee	Dec 2007
	2.2 Target Disability Action Plan officers of three key government departments to identify joint projects that can be funded through these bodies		Dec 2007
	2.3 Identify joint projects with three other key government bodies		Dec 2007
	2.4 Maintain dialogue with government departments to identify potential sources of ongoing funding		Dec 2007
	2.5 Seek in-kind support from identified organisations		June 2008
	2.6 Consider advantages and disadvantages of membership fees		Dec 2010
	2.7 Develop fee-for-service opportunities		Ongoing

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Key Area: Governance and Management continued

Strategies	Actions	Responsibility	Time Frame
3. Identify and secure grants for which the WRDN is eligible	3.1 Regularly review government funding opportunities 3.2 Review websites to source grants and funding opportunities 3.3 Identify projects that are eligible for grants from philanthropic trusts 3.4 Join Collective of Self Help Groups (COSHG) to identify funding opportunities	Funding Sub-committee	Ongoing
4. Investigate sponsorship opportunities	4.1 Identify key businesses and organisations in the region to approach for sponsorship 4.2 Review membership base to identify potential sponsorship relationships	Funding Sub-committee	Dec 2007 June 2009
5. Expand coverage to include the northern part of the region	5.1 The NRDN to become a subcommittee of the WRDN 5.2 Regularly monitor coverage to the northern part of the region 5.3 Obtain funding to continue involvement in the northern part of the region when dedicated funds expire	Coordinating Group and NRDN Sub-committee	June 2007 Dec 2007 Dec 2007
6. Strengthen the auspice relationship with annecto	6.1 Build on the auspice relationship by making presentations to the Board of annecto 6.2 Support annecto in its planning and development	Chairperson and annecto representative	June 2008 June 2008
7. Explore potential future autonomy	7.1 The Coordinating Group to discuss pros and cons of incorporation	Chairperson and Vice Chair	June 2008
8. Review capacity to expand statewide	8.1 Identify governance, management and infrastructure requirements to deliver statewide services	Chairperson and Vice Chair	Dec 2010

WRDN STRATEGIC PLAN 2007–2010

Key Area: Regional Services

Goal: To strengthen the profile and influence of the WRDN across mainstream services

Strategies	Actions	Responsibility	Time Frame
9. Develop a marketing plan	9.1 Develop promotional and publicity material, e.g. flyers, PowerPoint presentation, case studies, media articles etc	Marketing Sub-committee	Dec 2007
	9.2 Identify resources to support the development of a marketing plan, e.g. philanthropic grants, tertiary students		Dec 2007
	9.3 Develop a communication strategy as part of the marketing plan targeting: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - New members - Local governments in the region, including Local Government Disability Advisory Committees - Commonwealth Government departments - Service providers to culturally and linguistically diverse communities - The Victorian Office for Disability 		Dec 2007
	9.4 Identify additional resources to assist with the communication plan, e.g. tertiary institutions and professional communication organisations (pro bono)		Dec 2007
	9.5 Obtain reciprocal listings on key databases, e.g. Disability Online, local government and disability advocacy organisations		Ongoing
	9.6 Promote Speaker's Bank across the region		Ongoing
10. Improve HACC services to people with a disability in the region	10.1 Participate in regional HACC forums and planning processes	Coordinating Group and Executive Officer	Ongoing
	10.2 Be an active partner in the HACC Training Committee to ensure that training reflects the needs of people with a disability and carers		
	10.3 Maintain an interface with the aged care service system via the Aged Services Network		
	10.4 Provide feedback to DHS on service gaps and needs identified by the membership		

WRDN STRATEGIC PLAN 2007–2010

Key Area: Regional Services continued

Strategies	Actions	Responsibility	Time Frame
11. Establish partnership relationships with key organisations within the region	11.1 Formalise links with all MetroAccess Workers in the region to obtain copies of their community plans and share databases	Coordinating Group and MetroAccess Worker representative	Ongoing
	11.2 Use MetroAccess databases to identify key organisations to promote the WRDN		
	11.3 Partner with MetroAccess Workers to promote the WRDN and Speaker's Bank		
	11.4 Identify WRDN members to attend relevant MetroAccess Worker meetings		
	11.5 Invite MetroAccess Workers onto the Co-ordinating Group		
	11.6 Identify contact people for each of the regional local government Disability Advisory Committees	Coordinating Group and MetroAccess Worker representative	Dec 2007
	11.7 Invite representatives of local government Disability Advisory Committees to Network meetings		Dec 2007
	11.8 Investigate opportunities for Network members to make a presentation to the local government Disability Advisory Committees		June 2007 and ongoing
	11.9 Review the current networks in which the WRDN participates to determine whether they are the most strategic in providing opportunities to promote disability awareness and undertake systemic advocacy	Coordinating Group and Executive Officer	June 2007
	11.10 Identify any networks in the region in which the WRDN can promote disability awareness and undertake systemic advocacy, e.g. regional education, employment and business networks		June 2007
11.10 Identify key people to represent the WRDN at the regional networks	June 2008		

WRDN STRATEGIC PLAN 2007–2010

Key Area: Regional Services continued

Strategies	Actions	Responsibility	Time Frame
12. Identify and act on key regional issues that impact on people with a disability and those who support them	12.1 Use Network meetings, focus groups and information obtained through other WRDN and regional network meetings to identify and collect data on key regional issues that impact on people with a disability and those who support them 12.2 Identify key bodies that can address the identified issues, e.g. education providers, local government town planners, make formal presentations and advocate for change 12.3 Submit articles to local media highlighting identified issues for people 12.4 Undertake systemic advocacy by acting on the identified issues through submissions, developing partnerships and raising community awareness with decision makers at local, regional and state-wide levels	Executive Officer and Marketing Sub-committee	June 2007 and ongoing
13. Keep people connected and informed	13.1 Review the way we keep members connected and informed including the expansion to the northern part of the region 13.2 Maintain the Network meetings and rotate venues across the region 13.3 Promote the Speaker's Bank across the region	Membership Communications Sub-committee and Information and Membership Officer	December 2007 Ongoing Ongoing

WRDN STRATEGIC PLAN 2007–2010

Key Area: Regional Services continued

Strategies	Actions	Responsibility	Time Frame
14. Improve the accessibility of the WRDN written information	14.1 Expand electronic newsletter distribution to include new partners 14.2 Link with disability specific organisations to assist in the production of written material in alternative formats, i.e.; large print, Braille, Easy English and Board Maker 14.3 Identify opportunities to have the newsletter translated into other languages by establishing relationships with culturally and linguistically diverse service providers, e.g. Australian Greek Welfare Society, Australian Polish Community Services, Vietnamese Women’s Association, Migrant Resource Centres, Action on Disability within Ethnic Communities 14.4 Link with DHS and ONCALL Interpreting and Translating Agency (using annecto's PIN) for translation services	Membership Communications Sub-committee and Information and Membership Officer	June 2009

WRDN STRATEGIC PLAN 2007–2010

Key Area: Membership

Goal: To provide every person with a disability and those who support them an opportunity to become a member

Strategies	Actions	Responsibility	Time Frame
15. Develop a comprehensive understanding of the WRDN membership	15.1 Review the categories of membership and how these are identified	Membership Communications Sub-committee and Information and Membership Officer	Dec 2007
	15.2 Review and update the membership data base		Dec 2007
	15.3 Redesign the database and membership form		Dec 2007
16. Increase the number and diversity of members	16.1 Identify gaps in the membership from the review of the data base and then hold a targeted membership drive	Marketing Sub-committee, Membership Communications Sub-committee and Information and Membership Officer	Dec 2007
	16.2 Investigate barriers that prevent participation		Dec 2007
	16.3 Identify other suitable databases and obtain permission to distribute the WRDN newsletter		June 2008
	16.4 Increase the number of members with higher support needs by partnering with organisations that work with this group of people in the region to actively promote membership		June 2009
	16.5 Increase membership of CALD and Aboriginal people by targeting ethno-specific organisations, Migrant Resource Centres and Aboriginal community organisations in the region		June 2009

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Key Area: Membership continued

Strategies	Actions	Responsibility	Time Frame
17. Utilise the diverse skills and resources of members	17.1 Identify interests and skills of members in order to develop a membership skills bank	Communications Sub-committee	June 2007
	17.2 Encourage members to become actively involved in Network activities		Ongoing
	17.3 Develop an orientation and training program for members who are interested in leadership roles within the Network.	Training Sub-committee	June 2009
	17.4 Provide personal development opportunities for members		Ongoing
	17.5 Identify opportunities for WRDN members to participate in training being offered by other programs and services, e.g. HACC	Communications Sub-committee,	Ongoing
	17.6 Expand the Speaker's Bank and conduct additional courses	Training Sub-committee	Dec 2008

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Potential Projects

Key Area	Strategy	Project Name	Project description	Tasks	Potential Partners
Regional Services	Develop a marketing plan	Marketing the WRDN	<p>Develop a marketing plan and accompanying communication strategy for the WRDN. The marketing plan will develop a range of resources, including flyers, PowerPoint presentation, case studies and media articles that the WRDN can use to promote its services. The communication strategy will detail how the promotional material will be used and groups to be targeted including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - New members - Local governments, including Local Government Disability Advisory Committees - Commonwealth Government departments - Service providers to culturally and linguistically diverse communities - The Victorian Office for Disability 	<p>Prioritise publications and promotional material to be developed</p> <p>Identify skills within the membership base to assist in the development of the material</p> <p>Identify funding sources for the development of promotional materials</p> <p>Prioritise individuals and groups to be targeted as part of the communication strategy</p> <p>Identify external individual and organisations that can assist with this work</p>	<p>VU and RMIT Art and Design, Creative Writing, Community Development Public Relations and Marketing students</p> <p>Local graphic artists</p> <p>Local printing services</p> <p>Large communications and advertising agencies (pro bono work)</p> <p>Melbourne Cares</p>

WRDN STRATEGIC PLAN 2007–2010

Potential Projects continued

Key Area	Strategy	Project Name	Project description	Tasks	Potential Partners
Regional Services	Keep people connected and informed	<i>Responding to cultural diversity</i>	Develop links with key organisations that target people of cultural and linguistic diversity to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Develop strategies for promoting the WRDN services ▪ Assist the WRDN to develop its resources in community languages ▪ Assist in identifying people with a disability and carers who have an interest in becoming members 	Identify funding to assist in the development of publications in community languages Identify members with an interest in supporting this work Utilise students to develop a joint project with identified partners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Action on Disability within Ethnic Communities ▪ Migrant Resource Centres ▪ Australian Polish Community Services ▪ Australian Vietnamese Women’s Association ▪ Australian Greek Welfare Society ▪ CoAsIt ▪ ONCALL Interpreting and Translating Agency (using annecto’s PIN)
		<i>Meeting the communication needs of our members</i>	Provide WRDN information in alternative formats Develop links with organisations that have expertise in the production of information in alternative formats	Identify funding to assist in the development of publications (electronic and hard copy) in alternative formats, e.g. large print, Braille and Easy English, accessible emails and website	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Vision Australia ▪ Scope ▪ VU Information Technology students

WRDN STRATEGIC PLAN 2007–2010

Potential Projects continued

Key Area	Strategy	Project Name	Project description	Tasks	Potential Partners
Regional Services	Establish partnership relationships with key organisations within the region	<i>'Networking with Networks'</i>	<p>There are many networks in the West that are of relevance to WRDN members, including education, employment, business and community services. Some of the networks operate within local government areas and others across the region</p> <p>Databases developed by local government, MetroAccess Workers, Primary Care Partnerships, LLENs and others list the networks. Mapping these networks would assist the WRDN to promote the Network and identify which are the most strategic Networks for members to attend</p>	Review local government, MetroAccess Workers, Primary Care Partnerships, LLENs and other databases to include details on the WRDN database.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Local government ▪ MetroAccess Workers ▪ Primary Care Partnerships ▪ LLENs ▪ A Fairer West: Partnerships of Networks

WRDN STRATEGIC PLAN 2007–2010

Potential Projects continued

Key Area	Strategy	Project Name	Project description	Tasks	Potential Partners
Membership	Develop a comprehensive understanding of the WRDN membership	<i>Profiling the WRDN</i>	<p>The WRDN database requires review to update it, reactivate membership and identify the skills and resources within the membership</p> <p>The WRDN has over 600 members with potential to contribute a vast range of skills of resources. The WRDN has a commitment to providing opportunities for its members, particularly people with a disability to utilise their skills, expertise and experience and to further develop their skills. A review of the database will assist the WRDN to more accurately identify the skills and expertise of its members</p>	<p>Identify:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Individuals with the skills and expertise or with an interest in reviewing the membership database ▪ Training requirements of individuals ▪ Resources required to update the database 	

WRDN STRATEGIC PLAN 2007–2010

Key Area	Strategy	Project Name	Project description	Tasks	Potential Partners
Membership	Utilise the diverse skills and resources of the members	<i>Our people, our Network</i>	<p>The WRDN has a commitment to providing opportunities for its members, particularly people with a disability to utilise and further develop their skills to assist in the governance and activities of the Network</p> <p>The WRDN also recognises that some people with a disability require support to assist them to undertake these functions</p>	<p>Develop position descriptions for Coordinating Group members</p> <p>Identify support and training requirements of members</p> <p>Develop interest groups that meet before or after the Bi-monthly meetings</p>	
	Provide personal development opportunities for members	<i>WRDN Leaders</i>	<p>The WRDN Speaker's Bank provides qualified speakers to attend functions and events</p> <p>There is significant potential to expand the Speaker's Bank and provide more members with opportunities for personal development</p>	<p>Formalise the management structure of the Speaker's Bank</p> <p>Offer additional courses and mentoring to members to undertake Speaker's Bank training</p>	

Appendix 1: Coordinating Group

Christine Williams, Individual

Elizabeth Ellis, Individual

Ian Gray, Individual

Peter Thomson, Individual

Peter Keith Reis, Individual

Alba Gatto, Carer

Christi Tsafos, (ex officio), Vision Australia

Eilis Hughes, (ex officio), Maribyrnong City Council

Robyn Close, Commonwealth Care Respite Centre & Carer Links West

Sophie Hart, Care Connect

Annie Grant, (ex officio), annecto

Sylwia Pichel-Smaczny (ex officio), DHS North and West Metropolitan Region

Pauline Cadd, Carer

Shirley Mottram, Carer

Helen Adams, (ex officio) WRDN Executive Officer

Tina Polizzi, (ex officio) WRDN Info & Member Officer

*Estelle Fyffe, CEO, annecto (provides advice and support to the Coordinating Group)