

Empowering families with a bright outlook

"Two years ago, I felt very alone and totally out of control. Life as a mother of four children, especially one with a disability, was totally overwhelming. I couldn't see a bright future for our family."

Diana Jelovic is not alone as she shares these emotionally fuelled words looking back on a time of desperation; many parents experience a similar situation as they struggle with adapting in their role as carer for their child living with a disability.

"Our little boy Tom has autism and the autism has made life such a challenge for him and every member of our family," shared Diana.

"It got to a point a few years ago that we ceased going out as a family. This was physically and emotionally isolating. It also elicited feelings of guilt and neglect towards my other children. In addition, a parent struggles with the dilemma of accepting the child the way they are, yet harbouring a desire for normality."

At this bleak time, Diana Jelovic found Northcott's Intensive Family Support Service. This service, designed for families who are in crisis or under a high level of stress, is a family focused in-home support service designed for families that have a child or young person with a diagnosed disability. The service provides practical assistance, counselling and support to develop behavioural strategies and out of hours telephone support.

"Not only did Northcott provide practical help and emotional support, but they removed the feelings of isolation and helped me to regain control," shared Diana Jelovic.

Diana is one of many who have been empowered in their role as a carer of a child with a disability through Northcott's Intensive Family Support Service and with the practical help she's received in implementing

changes at home, Diana has been able to return to work now that home life runs more smoothly.

"I have been enabled to return part-time to work after a long absence in my profession of Orthoptics. In many ways my few days at work is my respite and has restored my self-worth, hence empowering me for my role as wife and mother," shared Diana.

"I don't have much time for hobbies that I enjoy like quilting and crafts but instead my husband and I try very hard to spend time at home with the children. We no longer look upon this as an imprisonment, but an investment into healthy, happy futures for all of us."

Diana and her family no longer requires the support of Northcott's Intensive Family Support Service but have continued their journey with Northcott by accessing a range of support groups, including Northcott's Mothers group and the Nepean Siblings group, which provides outings and social opportunities for siblings of people with disability.

"Whenever I think of Northcott I have warm, happy thoughts. I think of the smiling happy faces of the staff, of the security I feel knowing that they are there, and the positive impact they have had on our lives," shared Diana.

Diana Jelovic has been appointed as Northcott Disability Services 2011 Client Ambassador and will share her story throughout the year to others, promoting the positive difference Northcott makes in the lives of people with disability and their families.



On the couch...Diana Jelovic with her family

Message from the CEO



Dear friends of Northcott,

We have an exciting edition of Northcott News for you to read; and I am particularly pleased that we are featuring three of our Client Ambassadors – Riana Head Toussaint, who was one of our Ambassadors for 2010, and Diana Jelovic and Ben Keyte, who are taking up the role of Client Ambassador for 2011.

While I am sure you are interested to hear about what we are doing at Northcott, and the gains we are making, it is vitally important for management and staff at Northcott to remind ourselves why we are here, and client stories give us the opportunity to do that. It also gives the opportunity to our generous supporters to see the difference their support makes to the lives of real people who are living with their own disability or those of their family members. Riana, Diana and Ben are wonderful examples of what a difference support can make to the opportunities for people with disabilities and their families to enable them to live full and successful lives.

2011 promises to be a busy year for Northcott. Disability services are the subject of a great deal of discussion at both Federal and State government levels, and we expect there will be significant

change over the next five years in the way services are organised and funded. At the centre of any change, we hope there will be choice and opportunity for people with disability and their families. Northcott is committed to ensuring we remain a service that people choose because we offer quality, professionalism and compassion, and we listen to our clients.

To that end we are continuing our emphasis on research, and we are focussed on the type of research that will improve our services to clients and improve outcomes for them. Our research fund has been established from the generosity of our donors, and we are currently seeking ideas from staff and clients on the research areas, which will best improve our services and clients' day to day lives. As we establish our research, we intend to keep you informed of our progress, both successes and failures, and what we are learning from them.

We encourage any of you who wish to engage with us to do so. Shortly we will be launching our 2011-2014 Strategic Plan, and it will be published on our website and in our publications. I am always happy to discuss where Northcott is heading with any of you.

Thank you

Kerry Stubbs

Chief Executive Officer

Here's to you!

We like to recognise your generosity, so here's to you!

Wagga Wagga Auxiliary for \$35,000 worth of upgrades to the centre-based respite house in Wagga Wagga.

Fred P Archer Charitable Trust for the donation of \$30,000 towards a new accessible kitchen at Roselands respite house.

The Thyne Reid Foundation for the donation of \$27,500 to fund modifications to a new accessible bus.

The James N Kirby Foundation for the donation of \$15,000 to assist with renovations at Roselands respite house, with a new large awning installed at the front of the house.

The Bluesand Foundation for donation of \$10,000

Liangrove Foundation for donation of \$5,000

Bruce and Joy Reid Foundation for \$5,000 donation

The Westfield Community Program (Burwood and Hornsby) for donation of \$2,503

St Mary's Auxiliary for \$2,000 donation

Grafton Truck Drivers Social Club for donation of \$2,000

The James N Kirby Foundation of donation of \$2,000

Westfield Auto Body Repairs for donation of \$600

State Transit Employees Welfare Fund for donation of \$500

The R A Gale Foundation for donation of \$767

BATA for a grant of \$90,000 this year to replace two kitchens at Beverley Park to make them fully accessible

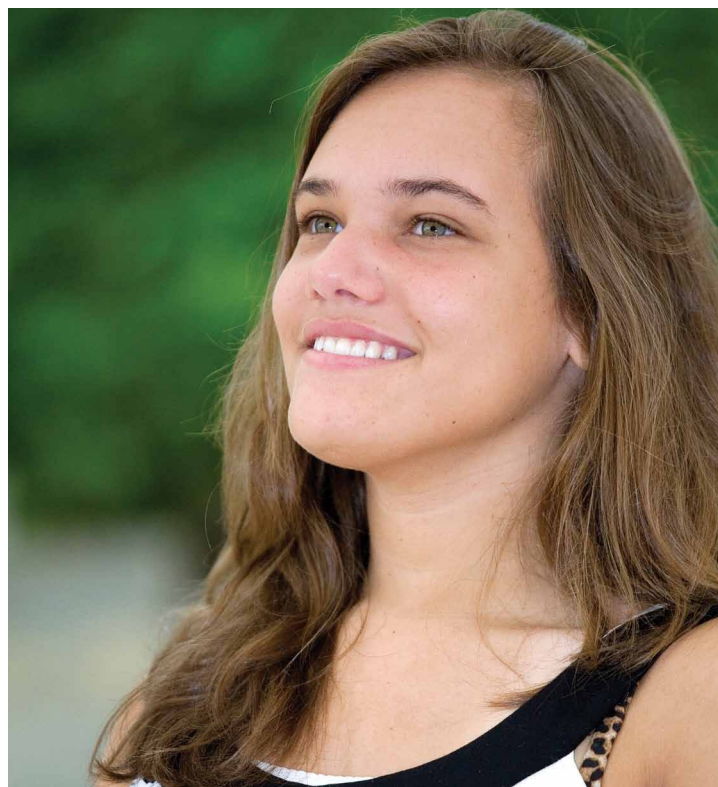
To the many generous and loyal individual donors that donated as part of our Summer Appeal Campaign to raise money for counselling services, wheelchair assessments and sports carnivals. Over \$53,000 was raised – thank you!

Generosity abounds

In November last year, many supporters of Northcott reached deep into their pockets to give money after reading a story about 18-year-old Riana Head-Toussaint, who became a paraplegic at the age of 10-months after being involved in a car accident.

In the letter you received about Riana's story, you learnt that she was currently completing her HSC at Killarney Heights High School. It was Riana's aspiration to finish school with high marks so that she could enter a double degree in Law and Media at Macquarie University. It is our pleasure to announce to you that Riana completed her HSC with an outstanding 93.2 ATAR and commenced her double degree in February.

The generosity from you, our supporters, was overwhelming. A total of \$53,337 was donated to support children and adults with disability, like Riana, in everyday needs. This money will make a difference to thousands of individuals like Riana to live fulfilled, independent and rewarding lives.



New play area at Tamworth respite house

A new play area was launched at Northcott Disability Services respite house in Tamworth to provide more opportunities for people with disability to access the outdoors in a safe and fun environment on Friday, 17 December 2010.

The equipment in the playground is designed to suit all ages, be accessible to people who use wheelchairs and incorporate elements of touch, feel and sound.

Northcott Disability Services New England Area Manager Matt Old said: "All clients who access the respite house will benefit from the new playground area. It won't matter if the client is eight years of age or 30, or if the client has mobility issues, vision or hearing impairments, there are parts of this equipment that no matter the disability each client will be able to enjoy something."

The main structure of the outdoor space includes slippery dips, tunnels, a sliding pole and is covered by shade cloth. Other features of the play area include a hammock and drums.

"For people who have an autism spectrum disorder the playground has elements of touch and sound to enhance their sensory enjoyment and skills," Matt Old said.

"There are bongo drums to beat out different sounds and telephone poles that one person can talk in one end and the noise travels underground for the listener to receive the message."

This new \$60,000 playground is generously donated by ongoing supporter Sargents Pies Charitable Foundation.

"Northcott staff are extremely grateful to Sargents Pies Charitable Foundation for their kind donation of the playground for the respite centre," Matt Old said.

"It is thanks to the generosity of businesses like Sargents, who put dollars into the community that Northcott is able to provide more opportunities for people with a disability to live fulfilled, happier and independent lives."

Sargents spokesperson Karl Fretwell said: "Sargents Pies Charitable Foundation is a proud supporter of Northcott and their commitment to providing services to people with a disability."



Children breaking in the new playground

Meet a supporter...

Regular donor, Raymond Preston

Eighty-three year-old Raymond Preston was just 16 when he made his first donation to Northcott Disability Services. He made the decision to become a regular supporter after visiting a friend's child, who was a client of Northcott at its then Pymont hospital.

"I served my apprenticeship with James Watt near Pymont Bridge and passed Northcott everyday on

my way to work. However, it was that meeting that stayed with me and drove me to help Northcott," said Raymond.

"I was very impressed with they way the Northcott staff treated the kids and with all the affection they gave them."

Raymond, who is also a former first-grade NRL player with Newtown and Parramatta and held the Newtown club record for the most amount of tries in a season, started giving Northcott 'two' bob out of his 18 shilling wage as an electrical apprentice.

Raymond now has four children, eight grandchildren and 17 great-grandchildren and continues to help Northcott on a regular basis.

"I contribute what and whenever I can contribute," said Raymond. "I do it because there are so many young people with disabilities and it is a good way to help."

A big tick for research

Northcott has received its first-ever ethical approval to begin a research project. This approval by an ethics committee is required before any research involving people can start. It involves a review of the project's method and potential risks for people in the project.



Kathy Prasad, Sentheesh Thiruchelvam, and Hayley Gozzard showcase assistive technology that they will use in the research project

The Early Intervention Assistive Technology (EIAT) Project team, who received the approval, will now begin working with preschools and early intervention centres to help the staff use assistive technology with the children at the centre. The assistive technology will include communication books, talking devices, a different mouse or computer keyboard, and the use of switches to play with toys or the computer. This technology will give children, particularly those with a disability, access to activities that they may have difficulties participating in, such as talking, using a computer or playing with toys. EIAT will also work with parents of children attending the centre to help them learn to use the technology their child needs.

The project staff will work with the young children, centre staff, parents and carers at each centre for six months. This will include assessments, therapy and training. Centres will be based in Sydney and in regional NSW. As a research project, an evaluation will be conducted to see: If children met their goals; How much and what technology was used at the centre; and How confident staff, parents and carers are with using the technology.

The project received ethical approval from the Royal Rehabilitation Centre Sydney Human Research Ethics Committee and is funded by NSW Ageing, Disability and Home Care.



Connect with Northcott using social media!

You can keep up-to-date with news from Northcott Disability Services on a regular basis by connecting with Northcott on social networking site Facebook.

Northcott posts stories, events, and relevant

information for you to access weekly on these sites. You also have the ability to comment on the news and share your opinions and views.

To connect with Northcott on Facebook simply search for the Facebook page Northcott Disability Services and click the 'like' button.

A breakfast fit for champions

Over 150 people gathered to share in a breakfast fit for champions at the Novotel, Sydney Olympic Park on Friday, 4 March. The breakfast, ably hosted by Felicity Harley, Editor of Women's Health magazine, featured a lively discussion panel with some of Australia's best female sporting stars including Louise Sauvage, Catherine Cox, Alex Blackwell and Natalie Porter. These leading sportswomen spoke of their achievements and the issues in succeeding in the world of women's sport, inspiring everyone in the room.

Northcott client and young sportswomen, Kristy Pond, also spoke at the breakfast, leaving few eyes dry. Kristy shared wonderful achievements, as she currently holds 30 track and field Australian records and one Oceanic record, and has been selected for track in the Paralympic Program for London. Kristy also spoke of the importance of Northcott's sporting carnivals, and the positive difference they made in her life from such a young age, as she was unable to participate in her own school carnivals because they could not cater to her needs. Kristy attributed a boost in self-esteem and confidence to these carnivals, because everyone received a ribbon and had the chance to place and not come last.

The Women's Sports Festival breakfast raised close to \$6,000 for Northcott's Interschool Sports Carnivals, which currently receive no government funding. Thank you to Sydney Olympic Park Authority for sponsoring the breakfast and to everyone who attended this event, we hope you enjoyed it.



Northcott client Kristy Pond shares her story



On the panel: Alex Blackwell, Catherine Cox and Natalie Porter

I wish to support the life changing work of Northcott Disability Services

Please accept my donation of \$ _____

Name: _____

Company: _____

Address: _____

Postcode: _____

Phone: _____

Email: _____

Would you like to receive information on including Northcott in your will?

Yes No

Please complete and send to Northcott Disability Services, PO Box 4055 Parramatta NSW 2124.

Please debit my credit card Mastercard Visa Amex

Card No:

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Expiry Date: □□□□ CSV: □□□□

Name on Card: _____

Signature: _____

If preferred, please identify the specific service you would like to support: _____

*All donations over \$2.00 are tax deductible.

Thank you for your contribution



Northcott to develop a new style of cricket suitable for all abilities

Northcott Disability Services responded to an international need in the sporting and disability community on Wednesday 22 December, announcing the development of Adaptive Cricket, which will allow people of all types of abilities to play a new style of inclusive cricket.

At the announcement at ANZ Stadium, the Minister for Disability Services, Peter Primrose presented Northcott CEO Kerry Stubbs with a cheque for \$20,000 to develop and establish the sport.

"This funding will go towards developing the game of Adaptive Cricket and will enable more people to take part in the nation's favourite summer sport," Mr Primrose said.

"The funding will be spent on developing and modifying the equipment required for people who use a wheelchair or have a range of motor skills to play; creating formal rules, a guide on how to play the game and the set up costs associated with establishing a competition," he said.

Ben Keyte, a 22-year-old cricket fan who is living with arthrogryposis, a condition that is characterised by the immobility of one or more joints, is one of the clients supported by Northcott who has been instrumental in first developing the concept for Adaptive Cricket

It is through camps held by Northcott where Ben, who is also Northcott's 2011 Client Ambassador, and a group of Northcott clients and staff loosely developed rules to enable everyone to play a game of cricket.

"I can't play cricket as my legs and arms don't work so I cannot bat, bowl or catch a ball," said Ben.

"There is no cricket game out there that accommodates people with high physical support needs, in the same game as able bodied people; I am really excited to know that thanks to the funding we now have the opportunity to perfect this sport," he said.

"I will definitely play in the Adaptive Cricket competition when it starts up and I am looking forward to being able to have the camaraderie with other players that develops when you play a team sport."

SpeedBlitz Blues player and Northcott Ambassador Stephen O'Keefe demonstrated Adaptive Cricket and the new opportunities this game presents to bring people of all abilities together, bowling a few balls to Ben.

"I am really pleased to promote this project," said Stephen. "We all have a passion for cricket and it's good to know that due to the work of Ben and staff at Northcott, and the funding that has been made

available, we'll be able to share the sport with as many people as possible."

Northcott CEO Kerry Stubbs said: "People with disabilities should have the same opportunities in life that everyone else has, including being able to participate in sport."

"We are thankful to the NSW Government for the generous funding that will enable Northcott to establish this game. The long-term aim of this project is to share Adaptive Cricket locally, nationally and internationally to provide people with disabilities who are interested in cricket the opportunity to participate in an inclusive sport."

Cricket NSW, an official charity partner of Northcott Disability Services, will be consulted in developing the sport.



A sizable figure... Northcott clients Corey Webster, Gareth Bush, and Ben Keyte guard the cheque with Northcott Ambassadors Alex Blackwell and Stephen O'Keefe



On the pitch... Stephen O'Keefe bowls to Ben Keyte and David Warner plays Wicket Keeper