

## Bring colour to Belmore House

Participate Australia's day program at Belmore has gone through some work to upgrade the front entrance. But we're not stopping there!



Our participant Reema likes mathematics. She was solving some maths problem under a wall of beautiful paintings from our participants in Belmore house.

Thanks to funding from the NSW Government's Community Building Partnership program and the support of Sophie Cotsis MP, Member for Canterbury and Shadow Minister for Disability, we have improved the accessibility for our participants to Belmore house by refashioning the area in front of the house entirely with a raised concrete floor and a new handrail.

In the coming weeks we will seek further funding to create an even better environment for our participants with planter boxes and a park bench.

(See more on page 3)



# A Message from the CEO

Readers of this newsletter in 2014 may recall the cancellation with mere days' notice of the Inclusion International World Congress in Nairobi, Kenya, owing to the eruption of terror violence there, and the great disappointment it caused to four members of our burgeoning self-advocacy group whose trip of a lifetime was cut short unexpectedly.

Four years later, Genny Haines and Rohan Fullwood, two founding members of our Participant Advisory Group, accompanied me to the Inclusion International World Congress in Birmingham, from 30 May to 1 June, 2018 – arguably the most important global event for self-advocates.

Genny and Rohan who had both undertaken successful crowdfunding campaigns and contributed their own money to be able to attend the event will give a more detailed account of their experience in the next edition of this newsletter.

From my perspective, the highlight of the Congress was definitely the self-advocate summit, which provided a significant platform for the voices of the many self-advocates that were in attendance. However, the entire conference was in large part focussed on self-advocacy and that was reflected throughout all sessions at the conference. It was a testament to true inclusiveness that Inclusion International has as its main objective.

Earlier this year, in April, a working group comprising Board members and operational staff reviewed our strategic plan and discussed its extension to June 2019. From this workshop, a draft plan was presented and adopted at the May Board meeting. The Strategic Plan 2017-2019 can be viewed on our website ([bit.ly/2sjBG0c](http://bit.ly/2sjBG0c)). It brings together some ongoing objectives resulting from the previous year, including the continuing transition and implementation of the NDIS and further positioning Participate Australia for sustained growth.

We will achieve this by pursuing four strategies, namely:

- enhancing quality assurance and managing risks by taking a preventative approach;
- building partnerships and alliance to maintain financial sustainability and affirm our reputation;

- continuing improvement through consultation with participants, families and staff, and
- building capacity across our workforce, infrastructure and adequate physical capacity and appropriate facilities for participants and employees.

The resulting Business Plan is currently being finalised for adoption by the Board at its meeting in early June and each department has already commenced putting in place an operational plan to ensure we remain on track.

All but a handful of our participants have now transferred to the NDIS and we continue to support them in the way that best suits their needs. As everybody becomes more familiar with the new environment, we are seeing a change to more personalised support, away from group activities. While this reflects the original intent of the NDIS, many participants find that the allocated funding is often insufficient to meet all of their needs.

At the same time, the NDIA continues the practice of suspending plans for a range of reasons and sometimes for weeks or months at a time. During such review periods, we continue to provide support and pay wages, while funding to cover those costs is not assured and may only become available several months in arrears. This is an untenable situation, which has been highlighted as a major challenge to the scheme's success in the Productivity Commission's report on NDIS costs last October.

We have been anticipating this situation since the scheme was announced several years ago and have made provisions to be able to deal with this financial insecurity safely. This has placed Participate Australia in a strong position to weather the uncertainties that remain, as the NDIS continues to transform the sector.



Jerry McNamara  
Chief Executive Officer

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## Board of Directors

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Participate Australia supports the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, and our employees are bound by the principles for which it stands. The Convention's purpose is to promote, protect and ensure the full and equal enjoyment of all human rights and fundamental freedoms by all persons with disabilities, and to promote respect for their inherent dignity.

# Free from bullying

In May, Shaun Spence, Wests Tigers Foundation Manager, ran an anti-bullying workshop with our participants.

Bullying can take place anywhere, anytime with people around. It is not just 'playing around'. It can really affect someone's feelings and emotions. It is important to understand that bullying is not okay, and help is always available if you're being bullied.

Wests Tigers Foundation was established as a charitable arm of Wests Tigers Rugby League Football Club. As part of its mission of 'enriching the lives of our community', the Foundation is



running anti-bullying workshops for groups of vulnerable people in the community. During the workshop with our participants, Shaun presented some helpful and practical steps to tackle bullying and showed participants how they can report bullying.

Bullying can cause distress, anxiety and loneliness. In order to ensure participants are feeling safe and being treated fairly and with respect, Participate Australia runs initiatives like this at no additional cost. If you're interested in finding out more, please call Tandip Bunait on 0412 933 705.

## Help upgrade Belmore House



The recent renovation has made Belmore House a more accessible facility, but we want to take further steps to create a more pleasant and comfortable environment for our participants. The current entrance is functional but fairly plain. We want to decorate it with some planter boxes and a park bench, and with some colour on the wall to make it look more attractive and lively.

This upgrade will cost an additional \$3,000, and you can help us reach this goal by making a donation. Any amount, big or small, makes a difference.

To make a donation, call us on 02 9799 4333, use the donation form on the back of this newsletter or make a secure online donation at [participateaustralia.com.au/donate](https://participateaustralia.com.au/donate).

All donations of more than \$2 are tax deductible!

On behalf of our participants, we thank you in advance for your kind gift!

# Sydney Disability Expo 2018

Participate Australia was exhibited in the Sydney Disability Expo at the end of May which was the biggest and most anticipated disability expo on the 2018.

With the NDIS now rolled out across most of NSW, thousands of people with disabilities and their families attended the Sydney Disability Expo to learn how they can gain greater control over their lives and make the best of their NDIS plan.

Participate Australia received a lot of enquiries regarding our services and activities from people with disabilities and also from other providers, many of whom recognise that we can achieve better outcomes through collaboration and partnerships.

Fourteen of our employees staffed the stall over the two days and spoke with visitors about our activities and how Participate Australia may be right for them. The wide range of programs and the diversity of our team proved to be of great interest to exhibition goers, and many said they'd be interested in attending the Open Day we are holding on June 16<sup>th</sup> at our Croydon centre. At the Open Day, you will be able to explore some activities, meet participants and staff, get advice on support options, and get a taste of some of the fun things Participate Australia has to offer.



**Participate  
Australia**

# OPEN DAY

**Saturday 16<sup>th</sup> June 2018**

**10am–2pm**

**113–119 Edwin St North, Croydon**

Come visit us and experience some of our signature activities –  
baking, Zumba, yoga, art and computer workshops.

Enjoy a sausage sizzle and have fun!

[enquiries@participateaustralia.com.au](mailto:enquiries@participateaustralia.com.au)

02 9799 4333

# Canada Bay Club's Directors Raffle

Participate Australia was the nominated charity Canada Bay Club's Directors Raffle in March this year.

The Director's Raffle is a weekly quiz event, hosted by the Club's Board Members, the proceeds of which are distributed widely through the community. On this occasion the raffle raised \$3,277 for Participate Australia.

We would like to thank the patrons and Board of Directors of Canada Bay Club for their very generous donation.



## Making Money Easy

At the end of 2017 we were awarded a substantial grant from Financial Literacy Australia to convert our financial literacy program into a learning management system (LMS) – a computer-based learning resource that works seamlessly on computers, tablets and smart phones.

Currently, we are converting our successful paper-based program into an accessible and interactive LMS. It is being tested with a range of participants, their families and support workers to ensure it is engaging and easy to use.

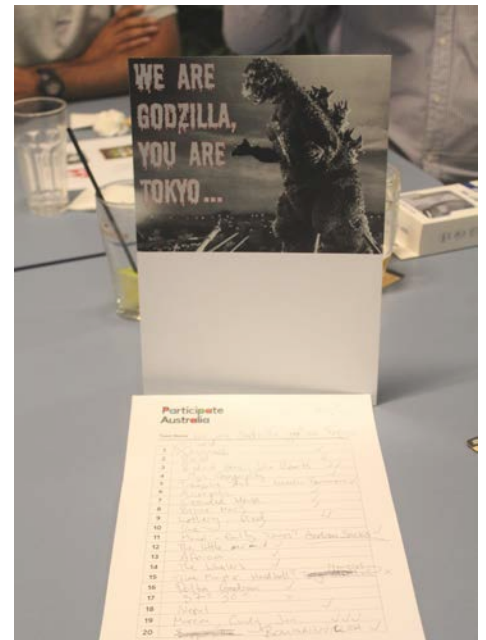
'Making Money Easy' enables users to practice the skills they learn online in everyday transactions. It contains ten modules that can be completed at the participant's pace. Lessons can be repeated multiple times to embed the learning experience, and a reporting tool allows teachers or parents to monitor progress. By mid-year we will have built and tested four modules.

'Making Money Easy' can be run on any device and be used anywhere.

Participants and families will be given unique logins to access all modules. Online learning is reinforced with real-world tasks, such as grocery shopping that allows people with intellectual disabilities to practice counting and money handling skills at a time and place that they choose. We thank Financial Literacy Australia for their ongoing support this project.

# A brain bending night

In April, Participate Australia's Self-Advocacy Group hosted another very fun trivia night, to help raise money for further education and attendance at self-advocacy conferences.



More than 130 people packed in to Ashfield Bowling Club for a night of fun quizzes and brain bending trivia.

Trivia MC extraordinaire, Bridie Tanner (FBi Radio) and the Self-Advocacy Group ran two rounds of brainy questions, interrupted by games of luck. When the dust settled and the final score was announced, just 1.5 points separated the first three teams, with 'The Triple T Gang' taking out the honours.

The fabulous prizes that the Self-Advocacy Group was able to solicit from some very generous donors, included dinner vouchers to the Sausage Factory in Dulwich Hill, the Tramsheds at Harold Park, a three-night getaway to Moby's Beachside Retreat on the NSW mid-north coast, Westfield gift vouchers, movie tickets and much, much more!

Thanks to the overwhelming generosity of Participate Australia supporters and friends, the event raised \$3,500, to help fund valuable training opportunities for the members of the Self-Advocacy Group, and towards attending conferences both nationally and internationally.

# New faces

We extend a warm welcome to 4 new staff who have recently joined our team. We asked them to tell us a little about themselves in their own words.

## Sanaa Chadda

### Facilitator, NDIS Support Coordination

Prior to my role in the Support Coordination team at Participate Australia, I worked in various roles including multiple positions within NSW Health and the Commonwealth Bank. I am currently completing my Masters in International Public Health. I enjoy learning new things every day and can't go a day without laughing. I enjoy meeting people from all walks of life. Outside of work I enjoy spending time with family and friends, and my fiancé and I are in the midst of planning our wedding.



## Tiba Hamady

### Facilitator, NDIS Support Coordination

I have been working in the disability sector for over eight years within the government sector and non-government organisations. I've completed my studies in Business, Leadership and Management and have always had a passion to support those in need in the community. I hope that I can use my skills and knowledge to support the team at Participate Australia and the wider community. I have a big passion for travelling and I enjoy adventure, music and spending quality time with family and friends.

## Marco Gonzalez

### Coordinator, Community Engagement

I have worked in the disability sector since 2007 and joined Participate Australia in 2015. Then I wanted to try something new and left for a couple of years to teach English in Thailand. Recently I came back and have taken up a temporary position as Coordinator, Community Liaison and as a Support Worker at Participate Australia. It's great to be back and see how much growth and transition has happened, not just for Participate Australia, but also for our participants. In my free time I enjoy cycling, cooking, reading, music and I have recently developed a budding interest in astronomy.



## Nicolas Fodor

### Support Facilitator

I joined Participate Australia in 2018 as a Support Facilitator following a decade of customer based, health focused roles. I've worked with families, fitting baby seats to cars; in ergonomics, fitting supportive seats to bad backs, and most recently I supervised a Hearing Clinic in Marrickville. I have a BA with a Major in English, and am currently moonlighting as a wannabe successful artist. I love going to the movies, sleeping on the beach, trying strange new food, and visiting weird parts of the world.

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## Funding received

We would like to acknowledge the very generous donation and funding we have received since our Autumn newsletter in March.

Funder	Description	Amount
Town Hall Hotel	General Donation	\$11,640
James N. Kirby Foundation	Supporting Young People to Vocational Training	\$8,000
Burwood Council Community Grants	Social Skill Development Program for Children	\$1,900

# Supporters

## Commonwealth

Department of Infrastructure and  
Regional Development  
Department of Social Services

## Government of NSW

Department of Premier and Cabinet  
Family and Community Services  
Transport for NSW

## Local Government

City of Sydney  
Burwood Council  
City of Canada Bay  
City of Canterbury Bankstown  
Inner West Council  
Strathfield Council

## Other Program Funders

ANZ Staff Foundation  
Atlassian  
Australian Chinese Charity Foundation  
Canada Bay Club  
Carers NSW  
Canterbury Hurlstone Park RSL Club  
Canterbury Leagues Club  
Club Ashfield  
Club Burwood RSL  
Club Five Dock RSL  
Commonwealth Bank of Australia  
Concord RSL  
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Drummoyne Sailing Club  
Executive Central  
Financial Literacy Australia  
Five Dock Leisure Centre  
Future 2 Foundation  
James N. Kirby Foundation  
JUST Printing & Design  
Marian and E H Flack Trust  
More Than Human  
Petersham RSL Club  
Sydney Motorway Corporation  
The Raymond E Purves Foundation  
Transurban  
Town Hall Hotel, Newtown  
West's Ashfield

# Support Participate Australia

**Supporting Participate Australia with a donation is easy...**

**Visit [participateaustralia.com.au](http://participateaustralia.com.au), or complete and return this form.**

Your donation helps us continue with services that nurture greater autonomy and help people with disability lead more fulfilled and engaged lives.

We guarantee that your donation goes towards these programs and that it will have a direct impact on the people who access our programs.

All donations of \$2 and more are tax deductible (CFN 14593; ABN 39 136 853 895, ACN 613 814 654)

YES, I would like to make a donation to Participate Australia.

Your support will provide:

\$50 — 1 hour of 1:1 support

\$120 — 1 day group outing

\$250 — 1 day of 1:1 support

Other: \$\_\_\_\_\_

I would prefer to give a regular gift of \$\_\_\_\_\_ to be automatically charged to my credit card every:

month  quarter  six months  year.

## Become a member

Members are eligible to vote at the Participate Australia AGM, join a subcommittee, and access and borrow books, DVDs and other resources free. Please apply now for 2018/2019.

\$20 Individual / Family membership

\$50 Organisational membership

Dr  Mr  Mrs  Ms  Miss

Name .....

Organisation .....

Address .....

Postcode .....

Phone .....

Mobile .....

Email .....

## Donation / Membership Payment Details

I enclose a cheque / money order payable to Participate Australia

Please debit my credit card.  VISA  Mastercard  Amex

Card no .....

Expiry date .....

Cardholder's name .....

Cardholder's signature .....

Return to: Participate Australia, PO Box 210, Croydon NSW 2132