

# Christian Disability Partnership In Australia



## A Welcome From the Chair

On behalf of the CDP Committee I would like to welcome you to our very first newsletter!! We are thankful and so grateful to our God. He has blessed our team with a vision to see people with and without disabilities, working together so that the Body of Christ may be Glorified! I am overwhelmed at how far He has brought us in this much needed ministry!

As you read on you will discover our *"Inclusive Congregations Program Update"* and read about the most recent congregation to join.

*"Citizenship In God's Household"*, an article by Martin Butcher is a biblical perspective on disability. Our *"Quick Tips"* are there to encourage us to make our churches disability friendly.

And don't forget to keep your eyes on our *"Future Events"* section for future training, seminars and other CDP activities from which your congregation might benefit.

I therefore pray this newsletter will build up, encourage, educate and train our Christian Communities so that the whole Body of Christ may benefit from the gifts of all people, disabled or not.

Yours in Jesus  
Athena Pavlis-Goard

## WESLEY UNITING JOINS PARTNERSHIP

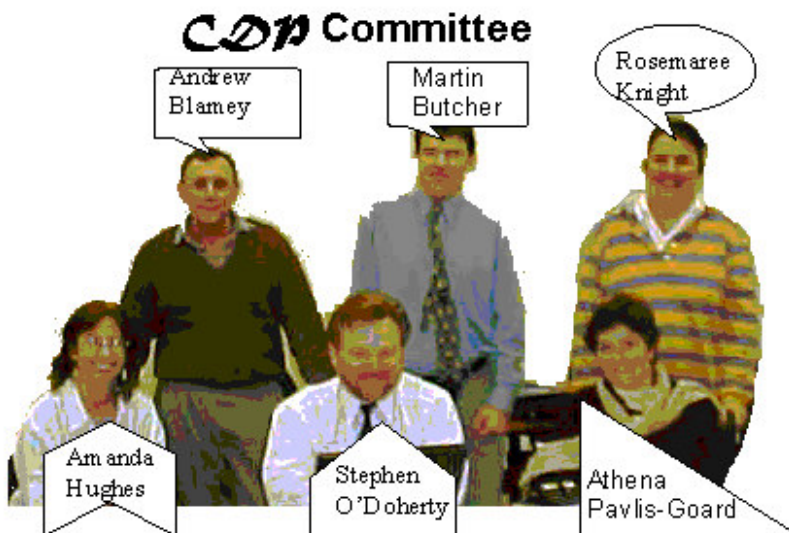
Wesley Uniting Church, Castle Hill recently announced they are joining the **Inclusive Congregation Program** as a further step towards being more welcoming to people with disabilities in their congregations.

Mr Malcolm Squire, a member of the congregation said. "The Church has had a Crossroads Branch for many years however it was time to take a further step and welcome people with disabilities into the main activities of the church".

By joining the **Inclusive Congregation Project**, the church will accept a number of principles including:

- People, with and without disabilities, are valued as individuals, as they have been made in the image of God.
- We all share the need for God's grace through Jesus' death and resurrection.

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# Citizenship in God's Household

By Martin Butcher

***“You are no longer foreigners and aliens but Fellow Citizens with God’s people and members of God’s household” Ephesians 2:19***

In Ephesians 2, we see that the church is made up of individuals who have different abilities and need. They are brought together by Jesus Christ dying on the Cross for the forgiveness of our sins. There was a time when we were all excluded from citizenship in God’s household but through the blood of Jesus we are all able to be members of God’s household, the Church.

Despite these promises, there are many people, including people with a disability, who feel that they remain aliens in God’s household, the church.

To be a citizen of a nation like Australia provides a person with rights, responsibilities and duties. Some rights of an Australian Citizen include: freedom to speak and to be heard, to move about as they wish; and to participate in the national activities such as voting for our leaders.

Citizens also have responsibilities including: following the rules of the land and respecting other people. Their duties include swearing allegiance to the Crown and participating in running the nation.

A citizen of God’s household has similar rights, responsibilities and duties. For instance, in the church, a Christian has a right to hear from God’s word and to have it explained. In return members have a responsibility to be involved in the mission of the church and to serve others.

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***Christians with disabilities have a desire to be citizens of God’s household***

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Christians with disabilities have a desire to be citizens of God’s household rather than just attending the service and being observers. They are wanting opportunities to serve and to be involved in the mission of the church. For people with disabilities to be able to take a greater role in the life of the church requires the leaders and other members to look for opportunities which enable their brothers and sisters in Christ to participate in church activities.

Over the past decade the secular literature discussing social issues relating to disability has used the term citizenship to describe how people with disability have been left on the fringe of society and membership of social groups. Most people with a disability are now living in the community but are not connecting with it.

Some people may be attending church but they are not being given the opportunity to be full participants in church activities as there may be a social, economic or architectural barrier. Citizens with disabilities have rights,

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***Citizenship recognises that all people, including people with a disability, have God given gifts, talents and abilities which they can use to contribute to the functioning of the group***

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responsibilities and duties to the groups to which they belong.

Citizenship recognises that all people, including people with a disability, have gifts, talents and abilities which they can use to contribute to the functioning of the group. It has been observed that when a person is given an opportunity to

contribute to a group they experience an increase in self-esteem and self-worth. Other members of the group benefit from seeing a person with a disability contributing to the outcome of the group.

## Case Examples:

### Jane

Jane, who has an intellectual disability spent the first 32 years of her life living in a large institution up on the hill.

Five years ago Jane moved into a community house and started attending St Paul's. One Sunday morning recently Jane told Kim (another member of the church) that she was doing a cooking course at TAFE and she was learning how to cook cakes.

Kim said to Jane "I am on the morning tea roster next Sunday. Do you want to cook a cake and then help serve the morning tea"?

Jane went home that week with a big smile on her face because after 4 ½ years attending the church someone asked her to minister to others rather than just take from others. Jane now regularly serves on the morning tea roster.

### Peter

Peter has been a member of his church for about five years but did not really feel part of the congregation until he was asked to operate the computer, putting words up on the screen during the service. Since Peter has been doing this job he has been going to every service on Sunday.

Peter is also making friends with the technos at the church because he has a common topic to talk about.



\* *Martin Butcher heads up **Creating Christian Communities**. Members of the team who have disabilities are available to speak to churches and run seminar on how to be an inclusive church.*

## WESLEY UNITING JOINS PARTNERSHIP

### FROM P1

- The congregations will endeavour to remove architecture, communication and attitude barriers that exclude people with disabilities from full and active participation.
- People with and without disabilities, are encouraged to practice their faith and use their gifts and talents in worship, service, study and leadership as part of the body of Christ.

Becoming an inclusive congregation is an acknowledgement that the congregation wants to take steps to remove barriers which are preventing a significant proportion of the community from participating in the activities of the church.

"Our church is by no means fully accessible to people with disabilities however we want to make a commitment to work towards reducing the barriers that prevent people with disabilities from participating in the church." Mr Squire said.

By participating in the **Inclusive Congregation Program** the congregation will have access to the resources being developed by Christian Disability Partnerships.

**For further information about joining the Inclusive congregation Program look at the web page at [www.pastornet.net.au/crossrds/cdp](http://www.pastornet.net.au/crossrds/cdp) or contact **Christian Disability partnership**.**

**Christian Disability Partnership** is an inter-denominational network of Christians committed to facilitating Christian ministry for, by and with people with disabilities.

Through working together, churches and Christian organisations can be encouraged to include people with disabilities into their activities.

**The partnership** aims to:

- **Increase awareness** of people with a disability.
- **Educate congregations** using resources developed for this purpose and through encouraging theological examination of disability issues.
- Promote a **National approach** to inclusion of people with disabilities within the life, worship and service of congregations.

# ASK AGNUS

**If we have people with disabilities as part of our church will this effect our insurance?**

NO! All people, including those with disabilities, who participate in church activities are covered under public liability insurance which all organisations should have.

An insurance broker recently said "providing activities for people with disability would be no more risk then having a Sunday School full of children or a youth group with teenagers".


An insurance company cannot discriminate against an individual or group because there are people with disabilities unless it can be demonstrate that there is additional risk.

**If we are providing care to adults with disabilities do our volunteer members need yo do checks like we do when we work with Children?**

If you are providing care to people over 18 there is no legal requirement to screen paid and volunteer workers for serious sex offences and neglect.

However churches still have a duty of care to all people. It is recommended that, if care is provided to people with significant intellectual impairment, that checks be undertaken.

Most churches should have procedures in place to check children and youth workers. The same process can be used.



**Do you want to "Ask Angus" a question. Drop us a line and we will give an answer in the next newsletter and/or contact you directly.**

## I would like to know more!!

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone Number

Postal Address: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ (H)

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ (W)

- I would like to know more about **Christian Disability Partnership**.
  - Please send me future additions of the newsletter.
  - How can our church participate in the **Inclusive Congregation Project?**
  - Please provide me with information on hosting a **Creating Christian Community** seminar at our church.
  - How can I be involved with **Christian Disability Partnership?**
  - Please **remove my details** from CDP maillist:
- Please tick appropriate boxes**

<b>C o n t a c t i n g C D P</b>	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Post address:
<input type="checkbox"/>	PO Box 120
<input type="checkbox"/>	Thornleigh NSW 2120
<input type="checkbox"/>	Phone: (02) 9980 8911
<input type="checkbox"/>	Fax: (02) 9875 4002
<input type="checkbox"/>	Email:
<input type="checkbox"/>	cdp4christ@hotmail.com