



# Harness the Possibilities

Enriching lives in changing times



**Coffs Harbour 17 & 18 February 2016**

**Wagga Wagga 17 & 18 March 2016**

**Dubbo 4 & 5 May 2016**



Resourcing Families is an initiative of

*family*

A D V O C A C Y

These conferences are funded by  
NSW Department of Family and Community Services, Ageing, Disability and Home Care.

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### Change is upon us!

Australia's transition to the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) is one of the largest social reforms in the nation's history. Beyond the rhetoric, government commitments and rollout schedules, what difference will it make to people's lives? Will the life opportunities for people with disability change so that they too can enjoy the good things in life that so many of us take for granted?

Our conference speakers have a vision for achieving enriched lives for people and will harness any possibility to influence change around them. They will share real stories and experiences of people with disability finding purpose through work and vocational roles, meaningful connections with typical community in schools, clubs and associations, achieving citizenry pursuits and contributions and living in their own homes.

**High expectations, big dreams and full lives** are fuelling their plans in the present and future. Current reforms provide opportunities but will hold challenges as well. Come and be inspired, explore ideas, make new connections and leave with practical ideas for making positive change that affords people with disability a real life beyond a service or programme.



**Family Advocacy** is a statewide advocacy organisation concerned with the needs, interests and rights of people who have developmental disability. Its aim is to achieve positive social roles for people with disability through the development of advocacy by families and by strengthening the knowledge, role and influence of the family.

Family Advocacy began in 1991 and focuses on three levels. The systemic level; where it seeks to influence policy, legislation and practice. The advisory level; where it provides individual advocacy advice to families, together with information and resources to the wider community. The educational level; through the running of workshops and seminars concerned with promoting the rights and interests of people with disability. Family Advocacy receives funding from both the NSW and Commonwealth Governments.

[www.family-advocacy.com](http://www.family-advocacy.com)

**Resourcing Families** is an initiative of Family Advocacy and provides information for families to create full, meaningful and inclusive lives for their family member with disability. Workshops and resources focus on developing a positive vision, building support networks, creating community connections and exercising more choice and control through self directing supports.

Resourcing Families receives funding from the NSW Department of Family and Community Services, Ageing, Disability and Home Care.

[www.resourcingfamilies.org.au](http://www.resourcingfamilies.org.au)

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### Conference Speakers



**John Armstrong**

John has extensive experience as an advocate, guardian, consultant, educator and service evaluator. He is one of two *Accredited Teachers of Social Role Valorisation* in Australasia and is also the Chairman of the *Citizen Advocacy Trust of Australia*. John works nationally and internationally with services, families and government to promote the welfare of people and reduce the potential for neglect and harm. He is committed to teaching strategies for building better lives for people through tailoring valued roles to enhance an individual's skills, image and connections.



**Nathan Basha**

Nathan has his own motivational speaking business which he uses to advocate for and raise awareness about inclusion in society. Nathan's passion is to change mindsets and attitudes that would limit opportunities for young people to experience all the good things in life and live their dream. He is living his dream through travelling the world to speak at conferences, pursuing further studies in areas of interest and working at Nova radio station in Sydney. Nathan is an Ambassador for the NSW Government initiative, *Living Life My Way*, and promotes the importance of self direction for people's lives. In 2015 Nathan was a NSW Young Australian of the Year finalist.



**Dianne Brookes**

Dianne Brookes is a Yorta Yorta woman who prides herself on her ability to assist communities to achieve positive outcomes through planning, sharing and caring. As Manager of Aboriginal Disability Network NSW, Dianne mainly supports communities to engage with the changing disability sector. Dianne serves as consultant for Sydney Area Mental Health Service, secretary for Yarramundi Aboriginal Educational Consultative Group, and member of the NSW Community Care Gathering Committee. From 2005 to 2007, Dianne co-facilitated a local Aboriginal carers' group which supported knowledge-sharing among members. For this work, Dianne received an International Women's Day Award from Penrith City Council.



**Belinda Epstein-Frisch**

Belinda has worked for more than 35 years in advocacy, community development, social policy, management and consultancy in the non-government sector. She is and has been a member of ministerial advisory councils on disability reform and education at the State and Commonwealth level. For 20 years Belinda undertook the systemic advocacy work for Family Advocacy. Her current work includes being the adviser to the *Independent Advisory Council* of the National Disability Insurance Scheme and mentoring non-government organisations in NSW and Queensland in relation to contemporary capacity building approaches.



**Jennie Fenton**

Jennie is a parent, disability advocate, environmental scientist and founder of local social inclusion project, *Bello Bellonging*, a grassroots project about building a socially inclusive community in the town of Bellingen NSW. Jennie is also an Ambassador for the NSW Government initiative, *Living Life My Way*, and champions more choice and control for people with disability through self directing their supports. Jennie has a powerful vision for her daughter's future and a world that will welcome her contributions.



**Jacob Hughes**

Jacob Hughes lives in NSW and is on a mission to follow his dreams and enjoy a good life. Jacob works as a volunteer and a public speaker. He is keen to continue his education. He believes it is important that he chooses the direction of his life and with the support of his mother Linda, creates the life he wants through arranging personally tailored supports and by self managing his NDIS package.



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### Conference Speakers



**Linda Hughes**

Linda is the proud parent of Jacob Hughes. Her passion is to work with other families so that people with disability are fully included in society as active and valued citizens. In pursuit of this, Linda has been involved in establishing a user led disability support organisation in the Hunter. She now directs *Mind the Gap: Disability Matters* which assists people to self direct supports in the Hunter region.



**June Riemer**

June Riemer is a Dunghetti woman; her family being from the north coast of NSW. Her passion is the rights of Aboriginal people and in particular of those with disability. June is Deputy CEO of *First Peoples Disability Network Australia* and Executive Officer of *Aboriginal Disability Network NSW*. She has been a long-term member of the *NSW Aboriginal Community Care Gathering Committee* through which she developed policies to assist providers to deliver culturally appropriate services. June has represented *First Peoples Disability Network Australia* at the United Nations in Geneva and New York. She is current Vice President of the *Aboriginal Children's Advancement Society*.



**Meg Sweeney**

Meg Sweeney lives at Jervis Bay on the South Coast of NSW. Meg became involved with advocacy for people with developmental disability over 20 years ago upon the birth of her eldest daughter. Meg is a learner, educator and writer committed to assisting people develop authentic selves in the heart of community.



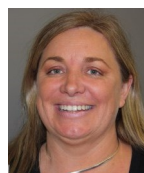
**Ric Thompson**

Ric is the Coordinator of *Inclusion Works*, a small community building agency based in Townsville, Queensland. Ric's work over the past 35 years, both nationally and internationally, has been about connecting people with people for building better communities. This is only possible when we assist people to discover "*the more*" about ourselves and "*the more*" about our communities and then connect them via community inclusion strategies. This can be somewhat daunting when you have identified over 2.4 million potential community inclusion opportunities waiting in Townsville. Ric lives on Magnetic Island with his partner Candy and Harvey, a Cavalier King Charles Spaniel and 3,000 other people.



**Dr Margaret Ward**

Margaret is a Postdoctoral Research fellow at Griffith University and a co-convenor of the *Australian Network for Universal Housing Design*. She has a longstanding interest in how community, families and services can work together in right relationship to build good lives for people with disability. Margaret and her family developed creative supports for their daughter that enabled her to have an independent life in her own home no matter her significant support and medical needs.



**Gina Wilson-Burns**

Gina is an unapologetic advocate for her son. She promotes the life changing experience of parenting a child with multiple severe disabilities not as a traumatic or crushing experience but one of hope, possibilities, love and laughter. Gina acknowledges we need to remove much of the red tape and perceived limitations to empower families to do what families do best; live, love and grow. She is the author of the inclusive education blog *Inky Ed!*

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## Conference Day 1

TIME	TOPIC	SPEAKER
9:00 AM	Registration and arrival tea and coffee	
9:30 AM	<b>Welcome to Country</b>	TBA
	<b>Conference Introduction</b>	John Armstrong
10:00 AM	<b>Living the Dream</b>	Nathan Basha
10:30 AM	Morning Tea	
11:00 AM	<b>Opportunities and challenges arising from the national reforms</b>	Belinda Epstein-Frisch
11:45 AM	<b>Getting a life not just support</b>	Linda Hughes and Jacob Hughes
12:30 PM	Lunch	
1:15 PM	<b>Tailor Made:</b> A life as individual as you	John Armstrong and Meg Sweeney
2:00 PM	Breakout Sessions:	
	• <b>Leading a Good Life:</b> What does the research tell us?	Belinda Epstein-Frisch
	• <b>Self managing through the NDIS</b>	Linda Hughes
	• <b>Preparing for work</b>	Family Advocacy with Nathan Basha
	• <b>Living My Way</b>	June Riemer and Dianne Brookes
2:45 PM	Afternoon Tea	
3:15 PM	<b>NDIS Ready Q&amp;A Panel</b>	Belinda Epstein-Frisch
		Linda Hughes
		ADHC
4:45 PM	<b>Closing Remarks</b>	John Armstrong
5:00 PM	Close of Day 1	

**Please note:** Speakers and timings may vary without notice.

Conference Sessions Day 1



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## Conference Day 2

TIME	TOPIC	SPEAKER
8:30 AM	Arrival tea and coffee	
9:00 AM	<b>Opening Remarks</b>	John Armstrong
9:15 AM	<b>The Power of Peers</b>	Gina Wilson-Burns
9:45 AM	<b>You are more than what you think you are and your community is more than what you think it is</b>	Ric Thompson
10:30 AM	Morning Tea	
11:00 AM	Breakout Sessions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>The Art of Asking:</b> How to be <i>ask prepared</i> for the <i>inviting in</i> of others</li><li>• <b>Is All Choice Good?</b> Supporting choices that lead to success</li><li>• <b>Inclusive Education:</b> Being one of the kids</li><li>• <b>Living My Way</b></li></ul>	<div>Ric Thompson</div> <div>John Armstrong</div> <div>Family Advocacy with Gina Wilson-Burns</div> <div>June Riemer and Dianne Brookes</div>
11:45 AM	<b>Belonging in Community:</b> Having a vision and making it real	Jennie Fenton
12:30 PM	Lunch	
1:15 PM	<b>Right Relationship:</b> How to create a partnership between families and services that really works	Dr Margaret Ward
2:00 PM	Breakout Sessions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>Future planning as a way of thinking</b></li><li>• <b>Tools for Advocacy:</b> Making it happen</li><li>• <b>Strategies for personal planning</b></li><li>• <b>Living My Way</b></li></ul>	<div>Dr Margaret Ward</div> <div>Family Advocacy</div> <div>Resourcing Families</div> <div>June Riemer and Dianne Brookes</div>
2:45 PM	Afternoon Tea	
3:00 PM	<b>Futures in Focus:</b> The challenge of change	Meg Sweeney
3:45 PM	<b>Closing Remarks</b>	John Armstrong
4:00 PM	Close of Conference	

**Please note:** Speakers and timings may vary without notice.

Conference Sessions Day 2



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### Conference Breakout Sessions Day 1

2:00 PM—2:45 PM

#### TOPIC and SPEAKER

#### DESCRIPTION

**Leading a Good Life:** What does the research tell us?

This session will explore seven enablers that research demonstrates are core factors in allowing people to lead a good life and are vital to any consideration about how people should be supported to live their lives.

Belinda Epstein-Frisch

**Self Managing through the NDIS**

Participants in the NDIS have the option of self managing their packages which provides the most opportunity for choice and control over funded supports. This session will discuss broadening the vision for a person's life, how self management can work and ways of employing your own staff.

Linda Hughes

**Preparing for work**

Having the opportunity to work or volunteer can provide a sense of purpose and self-worth through contributing to the community. This session will look at how to support a person with disability to pursue their interests and strengths to form a work or volunteering role by learning from the experiences of others.

Family Advocacy and  
Nathan Basha

**Living My Way**

June and Dianne from the Aboriginal Disability Network NSW will be facilitating *Living My Way*, a session around the changes in the disability service system and ways that you can prepare, think, plan and take charge. All are invited to come along to grow your knowledge, gain skills and develop new connections.

Contact June or Dianne for more information: 02 8399 0881 or email [enquiries@adnns.org.au](mailto:enquiries@adnns.org.au)

June Riemer and  
Dianne Brookes





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### Conference Breakout Sessions Day 2

11:00 AM - 11:45 AM

TOPIC	DESCRIPTION
<b>The Art of Asking:</b> How to be <i>ask prepared</i> for the <i>inviting in</i> of others  Ric Thompson	Many opportunities for people with disability are lost because the people supporting them are unsure of how to facilitate meaningful connections. This session will explore how to be <i>ask prepared</i> so that there are more successful invitations for others to be involved in an individual's life.
<b>Is All Choice Good?</b> Supporting choices that lead to success  John Armstrong	Choice is often used as a centrepiece for bringing a better life for people. But is it guaranteed to do that? Will all choice always produce good results for people? This session looks at how choices are really made and shows how one category of choices produces better results, while the other type of choice can end in ruin. Hear what research has brought to bear and what supporters, staff and parents can do to give people the boost they need to make choices that lead to success.
<b>Inclusive Education:</b> Being one of the kids  Family Advocacy and Gina Wilson-Burns	Our school years are a foundational part of our lives. As well as the teaching of curriculum we learn how to be a friend, form our personalities and our beliefs. Truly belonging in a school community is a gateway to having meaning and independence in our adult lives. This session will look at practical tools to achieve real inclusion in the regular class, why this is important, what supports are available and how to use these effectively.
<b>Living My Way</b>  June Riemer and Dianne Brookes	June Riemer and Dianne Brookes from the Aboriginal Disability Network NSW will be facilitating <i>Living My Way</i> , a session around the changes in the disability service system and ways that you can prepare, think, plan and take charge. All are invited to come along to grow your knowledge, gain skills and develop new connections. For more information: 02 8399 0881 or <a href="mailto:enquiries@adnsw.org.au">enquiries@adnsw.org.au</a>
2:00 PM - 2:45 PM	
<b>Future planning as a way of thinking</b>  Dr Margaret Ward	Planning can become how you think and act on a day-to-day basis. When you know where you are going, small decisions are easier, and you can more easily say "No!" to things that get in the way of a good life for your family member. Come to this session to find out how you can make planning a way of life, rather than a response to a crisis.
<b>Tools for Advocacy:</b> Making it happen  Family Advocacy	Families can actively and powerfully shape society. Taking action to improve the lives of people with disability and ensure positive and typical life experiences such as inclusive schooling or living in one's own home creates a better community for all. This session will explore some key advocacy skills so you leave more empowered to take action for shaping the good life for a person with disability.
<b>Strategies for personal planning</b>  Resourcing Families	People want a life not just a plan! This session will provide strategies to free up your thinking to craft life and supports around the individual that reflect genuine interests and aspirations.
<b>Living My Way</b>  June Riemer and Dianne Brookes	June Riemer and Dianne Brookes from the Aboriginal Disability Network NSW will be facilitating <i>Living My Way</i> , a session around the changes in the disability service system and ways that you can prepare, think, plan and take charge. All are invited to come along to grow your knowledge, gain skills and develop new connections. For more information: 02 8399 0881 or <a href="mailto:enquiries@adnsw.org.au">enquiries@adnsw.org.au</a>