

WINTER 2018 MIC-ING ABOUT

QUEENSLAND NARRATING SERVICE VOLUNTEER NEWSLETTER



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In May, QNS staff travelled to Mackay with Des and Rose, the State Library of Queensland's Indigenous Languages Project team, to run a basics-recording workshop with Yuwibara descendants. The group have been working hard over the past few years to revive their language. QNS provided audio equipment and resources and established two mini recording studios in the "silent" rooms of the Dudley Denny Library. After a general group training session covering basic recording skills, microphone technique and structure for recording the language words we divided into two groups. A staff member guided each group through



the recording process. Recording was slow to begin with but as the participants confidence grew so did the pace of the sessions. Over the course of the 3 days the participants recorded over 600 words from a wide range of categories including Kinship, Human Artifacts and Weapons, Dreaming and Spirituality, Mammals, Birds etc. On the final day, 4 students from North Mackay State High School joined the workshop, and, being guided by the elders in pronunciation, they each recorded a few words. We left a kit of audio equipment for the group to complete the remaining few word categories. QNS is responsible for the postproduction sound processing which includes preparation of the audio files uploading to the language APP for the community to use. The APP will comprise the print word, in language and english, audio word and an image.

For more information visit the SLQ Blog

<http://blogs.slq.qld.gov.au/ilq/2018/06/04/mackay-language-recording-workshop/>

NDIS ASKS THE IMPOSSIBLE OF THOSE IT SERVES

by Kenneth Wiltshire - published in The Australian, 21 May 2018

Not-for-profits have been doing the scheme's work quite well for 200 years.

The mess that is the National Disability Insurance Scheme can be traced directly back to its many design faults.

The very foundations of the NDIS are extremely shaky since it is based on the erroneous assumption that direct funding can be given to people with disabilities who will then be able to devise their own plans, seek and compare service providers who might deliver their plans, and enter into contracts with the government. This capability is simply not an option for very many disabled people, especially those with mental disabilities.

The concept of user choice and competition may be somewhat appropriate for economic and business services but is rarely appropriate in the fields of health, welfare and even education. In these sectors a client simply does not have the knowledge, confidence, performance data or capacity to engage in such an exercise. Indeed it is a gross insult to tell a disabled person, especially the mentally disabled, to go and "shop around".

The NDIS is also a slap in the face for charities and not-for-profits that had been more than capable of delivering services to disabled people with love, care and compassion for almost two centuries in Australia since the creation of our first charity, the Benevolent Society, in Sydney in 1813. Clients of charities and not-for-profits have trusted these charities that know their needs and aspirations from their close relationship with them and day-to-day contact. The NDIS has inserted a barrier between the client and the service provider, thereby threatening that trust.

The NDIS has been very disruptive, destructive and costly in the not-for-profit sector that has been faithfully delivering welfare and health services for governments for so long. Now forced to go touting for business, they have found that clients are simply incapable of devising their own plans and still require much assistance in this domain. Naturally those who do not seek assistance draw up unrealistic personal plans and this lies behind most of the cost blowout of the NDIS. As for advice, the irony is that after decoupling clients from their former not-for-profit providers, the governments have now created hundreds of jobs in the public services to attempt to provide such advice, which used to be part of the normal service of the not-for-profits.

And can you think of any other government program where clients are given open slather to work out a shopping list of their own to be funded by the taxpayer? It has become readily apparent that not-for-profits know best, and certainly know better than government bureaucrats when it comes to understanding client needs.

Of course all of this is symptomatic of the poor support that all Australian governments have been providing to not-for-profits. Despite the fact that the landmark Productivity Commission report revealed the outstanding contribution that not-for-profits make to GDP, employment, investment, volunteerism and national wellbeing, all that successive governments of both persuasions have done since then is to tax them, regulate them and create a climate of mistrust in them. Some governments that have outsourced service delivery to not-for-profits have inserted clauses in their contract forbidding them from criticising governments or their policies. The Australian Not for Profits and Charities Commission, which the sector hoped would be a white knight and its advocate, has turned out to be just a megaregulator. Also, our creaking federal system has once again frustrated the design and implementation of such a worthy idea for the nation.

The solution is clear — the present system must be stopped and no more clients admitted to its confines. All new clients must be handled by a reversion to the former model where funding goes to not-for-profits that are trusted to care for the interests of their clients.

Meanwhile the recently announced Thodey inquiry into the commonwealth public service needs to identify why Australia has had so many policy delivery failures. Grand nationally ambitious schemes such as the NBN, home insulation (pink batts), national curriculum, laptops for students, Murray-Darling Basin, renewable energy and the NDIS have all faltered in their design and particularly delivery. Are the skills of policy design these days missing in the public service? Are public servants unable to identify intended and unintended consequences of policy? Do they not understand market forces and consumer response and behaviour? Are they unable to navigate the federal-state divide? Is it merely a case of Canberra's isolation from the real world and lack of direct involvement in service delivery?

Or is it the politicisation of the public service that sees public servants unwilling to stand up to ministers, even prime ministers, who demand instant implementation of programs without time for careful planning, consultation and design?

The NDIS is a wonderful concept that needs urgent attention and rectification — and the not-for-profit sector can play a major part.

See also The Guardian article, Outsourcing NDIS contact centres to Serco published 23 April 2018.

https://www.theguardian.com/australia-news/2018/apr/23/outsourcing-ndis-contact-centres-to-serco-an-accident-waiting-to-happen?CMP=share_btn_tw

INTERESTING INFORMATION

Many of you would remember Noel Abrahams, who passed away last October. The Spring 2017 newsletter featured a story from EyeCure, The Queensland Eye Institute Foundation's newsletter so you would be aware that Noel donated his eyes to the institute. What follows is an update on Noel's legacy.

"Noel's Legacy"

Noel had a hereditary condition called Retinitis Pigmentosa (commonly known as RP with the effect of tunnel vision) and lost his sight completely in 1987. Pam meanwhile has Glaucoma and a long history of extremely low vision, after being born with no irises and she has also had cataracts removed.

Noel and Pam had both decided to donate their eyes to research and had been long-standing supporters of QEI having originally been patients of Professor Laurie Hirst, QEI's former Executive Director 1996 to 2010. Noel and Pam had given their time to be involved in QEI's Education programs and Noel together with Professor Hirst was a staunch advocate for the vision impaired.

Just one month after QEI told Noel and Pam's story, Noel sadly passed away. That meant that on the day of his passing on 19 October 2017, the heartfelt wish to donate his eyes for research could now be fulfilled and a prompt response was needed to ensure that Noel's eyes would be in best condition for study.

Professor Damien Harkin, a senior scientist at QEI and Queensland University of Technology, had met with Noel to discuss his bequest prior to his passing. "It was a real privilege to meet Noel. He had hoped to donate his corneas for clinical use, but unfortunately he was not eligible due to having lung cancer. The next best option was to donate his eyes to research, and so I discussed with Noel and Pam how this would work and the type of information that could be gained from studying his eyes."

Professor Harkin subsequently contacted several leading research groups across Australia to advise them of Noel's bequest. "There was much interest, but a clear strategy had to be devised in order to best make use of Noel's generous donation." With the help of staff from the Queensland Eye Bank and interstate colleagues including Dr Fred Chen (Lions Eye Institute in Perth), a plan was developed.

On the day of Noel's passing, QEI's Community Relations Manager, Jane Dodds who

had become a frequent visitor to the couple received a call from Pam with the sad news of Noel's passing. As Jane recalls, "It was naturally with mixed emotions that I received the news at around 5AM. Pam was clearly saddened by Noel's passing, but her commitment to ensuring that his eyes were collected promptly was really evident."

Jane relayed the news to Professor Harkin and with his team they swung into action. "I spoke with the Queensland Eye Bank and we initiated our retrieval plan," said Professor Harkin.

Having retrieved Noel's eyes within a few hours of his passing enabled Professor Harkin to preserve the retinal tissue so it would be suitable for future study by electron microscopy. This would enable scientists to study in very fine detail the effect of RP on Noel's retinas. But it was not just the retina that was of interest, other areas of the eye, including the cornea, would also be able to provide important information.

"While RP affects the retina, the genetic changes that cause this condition will be present throughout other cells in Noel's body," Professor Harkin explained. "So by growing cells from Noel's corneas we could obtain an additional source of cellular material for genetic analyses and other studies." These other studies include the potential use of Noel's cells for developing gene-correction techniques that might one day be used to treat patients like Noel before they become blind.

Within one month of Noel's passing, Professor Harkin had grown over 40 million of Noel's corneal cells stored frozen in liquid nitrogen, in readiness for distribution to the Australian ophthalmic research community.

QEI's capability to help people fulfill their desire to donate eye tissue and ensure that QEI's researchers and other groups in Australia can then utilise the tissue in their studies is all part of QEI's purpose to SAVE SIGHT.

Professor Harkin adds, "It's not just about how QEI can utilise a vital legacy like Noel's but also how we can support other researchers throughout Australia via collaborating and enabling us to save sight of future generations via our research and clinical trials".

Original article published in Eyecure Issue #08 March 2018

NEWS

The October 2017 to April 2018 catalogue of audio books has been distributed to libraries around the country and uploaded to the ALS Library Services database and the OverDrive market place. The catalogue contained 31 titles spanning a range of genres.

MAY THE ORDERS ROLL IN!!

A HEARTY THANKS to all our volunteers, narrators who keep the catalogue full of interesting novels, monitors for aiding in ensuring the accuracy of narrations and office assistants, your tireless efforts are greatly appreciated.



QUALITY ASSURANCE

Exporting

When you have finished recording and editing your chapter/ section of the book you will need to export the audio out of Audacity and into it's own separate folder. To do this:

1. Double click on audio with (I) tool. It should turn grey. Make sure it is all joined (zooming out so that you can see the whole track)
2. Click File – Export selection
3. Click Desktop in the left column
4. Click on 'New Folder'
5. Name this folder 'title of your book' FINISH
6. Click create
7. You may need to locate the folder (title of your book FINISH) in the middle column and click to select, it should turn blue.
8. Click 'Save'
9. If the Edit Metadata window shows just click OK
10. The file will now be exported to you 'title of your book FINISH' folder on the desktop. This can take a while depending on length.
11. Quit the session by clicking 'Audacity – Quit Audacity' and click 'Yes' to save your session.
12. You are now ready to start the next chapter of book

QUALITY ASSURANCE

Naming Files

When you have finished all of the sections of the book and copied the 'TitleofthebookFINISH' folder over to a USB, It is good practice to have one last check of the USB to ensure that all of the chapter files have been copied onto the USB before posting the USB back to QNS.

1. To do this, once the exported .wav files have finished copying to the USB, double click on the USB icon that should be located on the desktop. A window will open.
2. Check that the files on the USB correlate to the contents of the book. This can be done by checking the contents of the book. Also check that you have completed the Intro and Final announcements from the QNS announcement sheet.
3. This is also a good time to ensure that the files are listed correctly. If the order of the files is jumbled up you can slowly double click on the name of a file (it should turn light blue) and then type in a new name and hit enter to change it. An example for naming the files is as follows:

0a QNS Introduction
0b Synopsis
0c Contents
0d Foreword
01 Chapter 1
02 Chapter 2
03 Chapter 3
etc.....
xa Epilogue
xb Acknowledgements
xc Final Announcement

Naming the files in this way will let the chapter numbers match up to the file numbers. If the preamble section contains small parts you may wish to combine these into the one recording by just leaving a 6 second gap between the parts so that we can separate them later.