



NATIONAL E-NEWSLETTER

## 21<sup>st</sup> Anniversary Newsletter

By Kim Collins National Coordinator

Welcome to our 21st Anniversary Newsletter. My name is Kim Collins and I am the National Coordinator of the DSNSG

21 years ago, the DSNSG was established by Margaret and Terry Fisk. In the following few years, as the number of families seeking support grew exponentially, a number of members who had joined the group became coordinators to help cope with the influx of families around Australia and to provide localised support to areas where there were a number of Defence families with special needs. This was the beginning of the DSNSG structure that you see today. With the assistance and support of successive

Chiefs of the Defence Force, Defence personnel ministers, senior Defence executives, corporate supporting partners and the DSNSG members themselves, DSNSG has grown into an organisation that at its peak, had 32 local groups and supported around 4000 families nationally, a figure that remains consistent with the number of Defence families with special needs today.

The DSNSG held its 21st Anniversary conference in May to celebrate its achievements and success, and to say thanks to all of the volunteers that were involved in the group over the years as volunteer Coordinators and/or National Committee members. The Conference enabled the current coordinators to come together and meet each other, establish new friendships, and undertake training to help them in their role as a local group Coordinator. They were also provided the opportunity to meet our supporting partners and learn more about their organisations.

The National Committee has been working very hard to bring together more programs for our families, organising many Connecting Families and FYI events for 2015. Collectively, we are very committed to ensuring that our volunteer coordinators and our special needs families receive the support and information that has been the hallmark of the group since its inception.

The DSNSG National Committee and Coordinators would like to thank you for your patience and ongoing support of the group as we transition into this new and exciting year.

Celebrating Our  
**21<sup>st</sup>**  
 Anniversary

## New Programs for 2015

2015 has been quite a busy year for our group and I am very excited to announce the 3 new programs for our families launched in May.



### Family Emergency Care Plan

A specialised care plan which can assist in the event of emergencies, when families have a member absent on duty. The folder that families receive will contain information to assist emergency workers and/or police to appropriately support the member with special needs. Please email [FECP@dsnsg.org.au](mailto:FECP@dsnsg.org.au) for further details.



### iPad for kids

### Computers 4 Kids

To assist families to purchase a product to improve the skills of their child or children diagnosed with behaviour issues speech delays, learning and literacy delays, delayed or under-developed motor skills. This product will encourage better communication between the child, parents, extended family and their community. This program is sponsored by Defence Health and DSNSG. Please email [computer4kids@dsnsg.org.au](mailto:computer4kids@dsnsg.org.au) for further details.

**Safe Driving is About Your  
Ability not Your Age**

### Drive Safe Program

To assist and help members of our DSNSG families with ASD, ADHD, and Asperger's to gain confidence and self-esteem when learning to drive. This program was developed because we recognised that people with a disability needed specialised training and assistance to gain their driving licence. Having a licence will likely make job hunting more accessible to these young men and women and in turn help reduce the financial strain of having a special need. This program is sponsored by Aspen Medical and DSNSG.

**Both the Computers 4 Kids and Drive Safe Program will require a financial co-contribution from families. For more information about the eligibility criteria for the Computer 4 Kids and Drive Safe Program, please contact Kim Collins National Coordinator [national.coordinator@dsnsg.org.au](mailto:national.coordinator@dsnsg.org.au)**



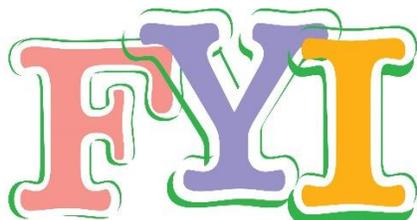
## Connecting families

The Connecting Families Program is a way of bringing together local groups for an event, for the purpose of families increasing their networks, peer support, information sharing and assistance. Because Connecting Families is about bringing families together in a social environment, events that do not meet this requirement will not be approved, as it defeats the overall purpose of program. Co-contribution by families towards attendance at events is normally 50% of the actual cost. Connecting Family events organised in the 2014/2015 Financial Year include: Wicked, Disney On Ice, Lion King, Les Miserables, California Dreaming and Nitro Circus.

We try to cover all areas of Australia for our families, so if there is an event in your area that you feel families would enjoy, please email your suggestions to your local coordinator. If you do not have a local coordinator, please email your suggestions through to the Connecting Families Coordinator on [events@dsnsg.org.au](mailto:events@dsnsg.org.au) or call 1800 037 674

### Connecting Families Coordinator: Terry Fisk

Please ensure that you list all family members in your family information, not just those with special needs, as some of our programs are offered to the whole family, not just those with special needs. We also have a website [www.dsnsg.org.au](http://www.dsnsg.org.au) so why not take a look and see what is happening in your local area.



• FOR YOUR INFORMATION •

## FYI

FYI For Your Information is a program that provides educational and information support to parents and carers of those with a disability or a special need by providing the opportunity to attend workshops or seminars by specialist speakers in their field at a greatly reduced cost. DSNSG typically charges members a co-contribution of \$20-\$50 towards the cost of workshops, with DSNSG paying the rest of the full ticket price.

Whilst the workshops to date have predominantly been associated with ASD due to the ever increasing numbers of children within DSNSG with this diagnosis, workshops and lectures across a broad range of disabilities can be subsidised under FYI should a need be established, and where numbers warrant, speakers may even be brought to the families' location.

If you know of workshops or seminars that you would like to have included in the FYI program, or if you would like to know more about FYI and see what events are happening near you, please email [fyi@dsnsg.org.au](mailto:fyi@dsnsg.org.au)

### FYI Coordinator: Margaret Maher



## Memberships

### A Word from Memberships

Hi, my name is Sandy Soulsby and I am the current National Memberships and Communication Officer. We now have a new email address for contacting the National Memberships and Communication Officer, it is [memberships@dsnsg.org.au](mailto:memberships@dsnsg.org.au). Please use this email to update your information or to join the group. In order for you to join the group or if updating your information, we will need:

- Your Name
- . Your Partner's Name
- . Your Address
- . Your Phone Contact numbers
- . Your Email Address
- . Your/Your Partner's Service
- . All Your Children's Names and Dates of Birth
- . Your Family Members' Special Needs

If you are updating your information, we will also need the area from which you are moving. If you have recently moved, please don't forget to update us with your new address and contact details. If you have not heard from us for a while, then drop me an email with your current details to ensure we have you correctly listed. Please note that we receive no information from Defence about postings or movements, so if you don't tell us you have moved and update your contact details, we have no way of knowing, and you may miss out on important updates and information.



The DSNSG Facebook page is proving to be a great source of information and support for all families. If you have not already linked into us via Facebook, then please do so. To join, you will need to send an email to the Memberships/Communication Officer at [memberships@dsnsg.org.au](mailto:memberships@dsnsg.org.au).

The DSNSG Facebook page is only open to members of DSNSG. If you are not a member, then you will be asked to join the group. You will be asked for some basic information and then placed on the relevant local family list.

DSNSG has some basic rules to help the Facebook page run more effectively and to ensure that it stays as a means of support and information. Please take the time to read the "Group Rules" and remember that the page is for support, information and assistance only. We ask that you be polite and respect one another. General advertising or promotion of a business is not allowed and if in doubt, please contact the National Committee for advice before posting. If we feel that a post is not appropriate for the page, then we will contact the person concerned and reserve the right to delete any such posts.

In order to be added to the Facebook page, we will also need to know the email address linked to your facebook page as this is a secret group and you will need to be invited.

## Important Links



National Welfare  
Coordination Centre  
<http://www.defence.gov.au/nwcc/>

Defence Community  
Organisation  
<http://www.defence.gov.au/dco/>

Partners in Defence  
<http://www.defence.gov.au/dco/partners/htm>

Conditions of Service  
<http://www.defence.gov.au/dpe/pac/>

ADF Family Health  
<http://www.defence.gov.au/health/SC/DependantHealthcare/>

Defence Families Australia  
<http://www.dfa.org.au>

Department of Veterans Affairs  
<http://www.dva.gov.au/>

Veterans & Veterans Families  
Counselling Services  
<http://www.vvcs.gov.au/>

Defence Housing Australia  
<http://www.dha.gov.au/>

Australia Post Defence Mail:  
<http://auspost.com.au/parcels-mail-for-defence-personnel.html>

Translating & Interpreter Service  
(TIS) <https://www.tisnational.gov.au>

Deployment Activity Book:  
<http://www.defence.gov.au/nwcc/documents/deployments/deploymentActivityBook.pdf>

Family Welfare Plan  
<http://www.defence.gov.au/nwcc/documents/FamilyWelfarePlan.pdf>

Changing Address Or Going On  
Holidays  
<http://www.defence.gov.au/nwcc/Documents/ChangeofAddressorHoliday.s.pdf>

## National Committee Members:

National Coordinator: Kim Collins - [national.coordinator@dsnsg.org.au](mailto:national.coordinator@dsnsg.org.au)

National Assistant Coordinator: Terry Fisk - [terry.fisk@dsnsg.org.au](mailto:terry.fisk@dsnsg.org.au)

National Assistant Coordinator: Margaret Maher - [margaret.maher@dsnsg.org.au](mailto:margaret.maher@dsnsg.org.au)

National Treasurer: Karen Dobbin - [karen.dobbin@dsnsg.org.au](mailto:karen.dobbin@dsnsg.org.au)

National Communication/Memberships: Sandy Soulsby - [sandy.soulsby@dsnsg.org.au](mailto:sandy.soulsby@dsnsg.org.au) / [memberships@dsnsg.org.au](mailto:memberships@dsnsg.org.au)

### Local Coordinator Team

#### NEW SOUTH WALES

Sydney South: Mara Bean- [mara.bean@dsnsg.org.au](mailto:mara.bean@dsnsg.org.au)

Liverpool: Rebecca Mitchell- [rebecca.mitchell@dsnsg.org.au](mailto:rebecca.mitchell@dsnsg.org.au)

Williamstown: Laurie Coleman- [laurie.coleman@dsnsg.org.au](mailto:laurie.coleman@dsnsg.org.au)

Albury/Wodonga: Karen Ramsay- [karen.ramsay@dsnsg.org.au](mailto:karen.ramsay@dsnsg.org.au)

Wagga Wagga: Melissa Pike- [melissa.pike@dsnsg.org.au](mailto:melissa.pike@dsnsg.org.au)

#### ACT/CANBERRA

Canberra South: Margaret Maher- [margaret.maher@dsnsg.org.au](mailto:margaret.maher@dsnsg.org.au)

Canberra North: Carol Johnstone- [carol.johnstone@dsnsg.org.au](mailto:carol.johnstone@dsnsg.org.au)

#### QUEENSLAND

Amberley: Kim Collins- [kim.collins@dsnsg.org.au](mailto:kim.collins@dsnsg.org.au)

Brisbane: Sabrina Mejia- [sabrina.mejia@dsnsg.org.au](mailto:sabrina.mejia@dsnsg.org.au)

Brisbane: Michelle Lafferty- [michelle.lafferty@dsnsg.org.au](mailto:michelle.lafferty@dsnsg.org.au)

Townsville: Sarah Pedrana- [sarah.pedrana@dsnsg.org.au](mailto:sarah.pedrana@dsnsg.org.au)

Townsville: Diana Simpson- [diana.simpson@dsnsg.org.au](mailto:diana.simpson@dsnsg.org.au)

Darling Downs: Sandy Soulsby- [sandy.soulsby@dsnsg.org.au](mailto:sandy.soulsby@dsnsg.org.au)

#### NORTHERN TERRITORY

Darwin: Shannon Winkler- [shannon.winkler@dsnsg.org.au](mailto:shannon.winkler@dsnsg.org.au)

#### WESTERN AUSTRALIA

Perth: Amanda Hope- [amanda.hope@dsnsg.org.au](mailto:amanda.hope@dsnsg.org.au)

#### SOUTH AUSTRALIA

Adelaide and Woodside: Emma Duyzer- [emma.duyzer@dsnsg.org.au](mailto:emma.duyzer@dsnsg.org.au)

#### VICTORIA

Albury/Wodonga: Karen Ramsay- [karen.ramsay@dsnsg.org.au](mailto:karen.ramsay@dsnsg.org.au)

Puckapunyal: Christine Bryant- [christine.bryant@dsnsg.org.au](mailto:christine.bryant@dsnsg.org.au)

We have a number of areas across Australia that do not have a Local Coordinator. If you are interested in helping other families with special needs and can spare some time, we would love to hear from you.

Please contact the National Coordinator on [national.coordinator@dsnsg.org.au](mailto:national.coordinator@dsnsg.org.au) or call 1800 037 674

The National Committee can be reached on [nationalcommittee@dsnsg.org.au](mailto:nationalcommittee@dsnsg.org.au)

National Support and Helpline

1800 037 674

Supporting  
**Families**

## SUPPORTING PARTNERS

