

Brand News

Ability Centre Celebrate
**New Brand
Launch**



Industry Events

**Disability Support
Awards Trifecta**

In the Community

**The Great Wall
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The provision of employment assistance services to people with disabilities is funded by the Australian Government under the Disability Employment Assistance Program.

At Ability Centre, we are about choice and the freedom to access the best support that suits your lifestyle and needs.

It has been our aim for over 60 years to help Western Australians living with disability achieve their dreams and celebrate possibilities.

We care about adding value every step of the way to foster long lasting relationships.

Our ability to adapt to the changing needs of people with disability has put us at the forefront of service excellence and built our reputation as a leading disability service provider in our State.

CEO and Chairman's View

Welcome to our first edition of Brand News under our new name and brand, Ability Centre. For almost 65 years our Centre has specialised in cerebral palsy. It's part of our DNA and it's the reason we were originally formed. It will always be our passion and our specialisation.

But particularly over the last decade, people with other disabilities have also come to use our services and benefited from our quality services and supports – and expertise.

**So, we asked ourselves:
Is there a role for us as a
broader disabilities provider
while retaining our specialty
in cerebral palsy?**

We decided there was.

After substantial consultation with service users, families, staff and others, we chose the name Ability Centre to better represent what we do everyday. We want to challenge, to inspire and support people to achieve their dreams.

As you will see, our new brand represents a bold step into the future. Our challenge in designing our new identity was to create a brand that captures the optimism, energy, breadth of expertise and the exciting vision we have for our organisation.

Our new brand suggests a positive and exciting future while building on our past achievements.



Judy Hogben
Chief Executive Officer



Rob McDonald
Chairman

We look forward to welcoming you to Ability Centre to see the changes. And while we might look different on the outside we will continue to remain true to our values: a commitment to individualised support and services, innovation and above all else, excellence.

Regards,
Judy and Rob



Ability Centre Celebrate

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New brand launch

Ability Centre celebrated the unveiling of the new brand last month with an open air cinema event at Yokine Reserve.

The organisation announced a bright new future under the name Ability Centre, representing a stronger future for people with disability and their families right across WA.

Ability Centre was joined by staff, service users and their families and friends, many of whom were involved in the rebranding process, for a night of family fun followed by a screening of the heart-warming West Australian film, Paper Planes.

Around 400 guests were treated to live music, special Ability Centre treats and in conjunction with the evening's theme of fun and big dreams, a paper plane throwing competition, encapsulating the Ability Centre's exciting new vision of Dream, Drive, Determination.



6 Trifecta at 2015 Disability Support Awards

More than 700 people attended the 2015 Disability Support Awards gala dinner at Crown Perth last month, acknowledging the outstanding contributions of disability support officers and the role they play in the lives of people with disability and their families.

Now in its seventh year, the sold out event showcased the disability services sector as a place of innovation, a place for employment, and a place to have a career. The awards celebrated the achievements of people with disability and rewarded those who demonstrated excellence, passion, vision and commitment to supporting people with disability.

Over 100 nominations were received for the 2015 Awards. Three of Ability Centre's six nominees were winners in their respective categories.

Excellence in Personal and Community Support Award
Mahziar Bahreini

Excellence in Improving Employment Opportunities Award

Ian Thomas, Goodwill Engineering

Lifetime Achievement Award
Gary Taylor

Elinor Loomes was also a highly regarded finalist in the Excellence in Improving Participation category, and nominees Tracey Adams and Peace Mandewo were recognised.

Ability Centre's CEO Judy Hogben said the Awards are a wonderful way of recognising the positive contribution support workers make on a daily basis to individuals and families.

"We are proud to have our support officers recognised for going above and beyond their role and we thank them for their commitment to enriching the lives of our service users," Ms Hogben said.

"I am incredibly thankful for the positive and profound work undertaken by our winners, nominees and indeed, of the work undertaken by all of Ability Centre's support officers".



Top: Excellence in Improving Participation Finalist Elinor Loomes

Left: Imran Ariff, Gary Taylor and Honourable Kerry Sanderson AO

In the Community

Keith set to walk the Great Wall

Keith Robinson has been selected as ambassador of the Ability Centre Great Wall Challenge. Mr Robinson will trek along the Great Wall of China for 10 days in September, raising funds for a \$100,000 customised Sleep Solutions van.

A spokeswoman from Ability Centre said the Sleep Solutions van would help children with complex disabilities manage sleep issues.

Mr Robinson said he was excited at the opportunity to travel the world and meet new people.

"Dad told me that the members from Ability Centre were going on a trip to China and they were asking if I wanted to be the ambassador, and I said yes," he said.

"What I'm most looking forward to is climbing the great wall, meeting a few people and speaking Chinese."

Mr Robinson's father Steve said he was proud to see how far his son had come.

"It's brilliant; Keith has been associated with Ability Centre for 15 years so it's wonderful. They've been great supporters of Keith over the years so it's nice to give something back," he said.

"The work Ability Centre does is absolutely fundamental. We don't know where he'd be without them, but he'd be significantly worse off. Before he went there he wasn't walking or talking and he needed significant therapy. All the associated occupational therapy that came from Ability Centre was to get him into mainstream school, which is what he's done."

Mr Robinson works at Woodlands Primary School three days a week assisting teachers, administrative staff and gardeners.

Tom Rabe



"What I'm most looking forward to is climbing the great wall, meeting a few people and speaking Chinese."

To donate to Keith's walk and the Sleep Solutions van, visit <https://tccp-greatwallchallenge2015.everydayhero.com/au/keith>

Breathing for life

Many children and young people with cerebral palsy (CP) are vulnerable to chest infections and breathing problems. They cause many sick days for children and parents, and are the commonest cause of hospital admissions in children with CP. A bad chest infection puts family life, school life and recreation on hold until it is resolved.

For the past five years, researchers and therapists from Ability Centre (Dr Marie Blackmore, Lisa Moshovis, Charlene Freedman), Princess Margaret Hospital for Children (Dr Kate Langdon, Dr Andrew Wilson, Natasha Bear, Kellie Steer), and the Telethon Kids Institute (Assoc Prof Eve Blair) have been investigating breathing problems in children and young people with CP.

The goal of this research is to improve the quality of life of children and young people with CP by reducing the burden of chest infections.

The research aims to identify which children and young people are at highest risk of being admitted to hospital for chest infections. If these children and young people can be helped early enough, then it may be possible to prevent them from developing very bad chest infections and needing to go to hospital.

In 2012, 551 children and young people with CP and/or their parents/carers completed a questionnaire about their respiratory symptoms, and 481 of them gave the research team

permission to get details of their hospital admissions from the Health Department.

The hospital admissions data showed that once a child or young person with CP had been admitted to hospital with a chest infection, the likelihood of re-admission the following year was very high: 47% of children and young people with CP admitted to hospital for chest infections in 2012 were re-admitted for a chest infection in 2013.


Which children and young people were likely to be admitted to hospital with chest infections?

Children and young people with swallowing difficulties were more likely to be admitted to hospital for chest infections in the year of the questionnaire and in the following year. These individuals have weak or uncoordinated muscles around the mouth and throat. For some of them, it is not safe to eat unmodified foods and they need thickened or puréed foods and/or drinks or they take their food and drink using a tube. They also tend to have trouble

managing their saliva, which can lead to coughing and choking.

Most children and young people with CP do not use a tube or have food modifications. But some of them still have trouble swallowing. Their parents reported that these children and young people would sometimes choke, vomit or regurgitate food, wheeze, cough or sneeze, or have a gurgly voice at mealtimes. These are signs that the food may be going down the wrong way (into the windpipe instead of the foodpipe). Children and young people who showed these symptoms were more likely to be admitted to hospital for chest infections.





47% of children and young people with CP admitted to hospital for chest infections in 2012 were re-admitted for a chest infection in 2013

Children and young people with gastric reflux were at higher risk of hospital admissions. For these individuals, some of the food coming up from the stomach can go down the windpipe into the lungs.

Young children are more at risk of hospital admissions for chest infections than older age groups. Children in the 0-3 age group were at the highest risk (although respondents ranged from 0 to 26 years of age).

Children and young people with a current diagnosis of asthma were at higher risk being admitted to hospital with chest infections. Children and young people who have seizures and

those with scoliosis were also at higher risk.

If you are concerned about any swallowing or chest symptoms in yourself or your child with CP, please discuss it with your therapist or medical professional.

In the coming year, the research team are planning to create a checklist of risk factors. This can be used to work out children's and young people's risk of needing to be admitted to hospital for a chest infection. If an individual with CP is known to have a high risk of getting a severe chest infection, then there are often ways of helping the child and preventing it

from becoming so bad that the individual needs to go to hospital.

The researcher team would like to thank the Health Department for Health Networks Funding for funding this research, and also the generous individuals who've donated money towards this research. The research is ongoing and further updates will be provided in Brand News.

For further information, please contact Marie Blackmore at Marie.Blackmore@abilitycentre.com.au.

Prescott's Paralympic call up

Teenager Nicholas Prescott has been selected for Australia's Under 19 Paralympic team to play at the 2015 World Youth Championships in England after his impressive performances for WA at the recent National Championships in Coffs Harbour.

The young up-and-comer, who has cerebral palsy, was outstanding for WA and will now travel to Nottingham in August to compete against the world's best young Paralympic players.

Nicholas, who will be 15 at the championships and the youngest player in his team, has been named vice captain. Off the back of his selection in the Under 19 Paralympic team,

Nicholas has also been selected as part of the National Paralympic Football team, the Pararoos, and will represent Australia in the Cerebral Palsy International Sports and Recreation Association World Games.

"I'm very excited to be playing football for Australia, and to have two competitions in one year is very exciting," Nicholas said.

"It's my dream to one day captain the Australian Pararoos team."

Nicholas will travel to England in June with the Pararoos as the youngest member of the team and the only player from WA to be selected.



Left: Nicholas Prescott (middle) with fellow WA teammates

Ability Centre is excited to announce a new alliance with Dreamfit Foundation, one of WA's most creative and experienced providers of innovative equipment solutions for people with disability.

Dreamfit's focus on providing equipment solutions that are not readily available, including sourcing specialised equipment from across the world, will complement Ability Centre's existing customised technology service, CP Tech.

The alliance will also provide Dreamfit's customers with an even greater choice for supports, including access to therapy and health, accommodation, employment and recreation.

Ability Centre welcomes a new alliance with Dreamfit

Right: Dreamfit CEO Darren Lomman and Ability Centre CEO Judy Hogben

Ability Centre will be working closely with Dreamfit to identify opportunities to enhance the services of both organisations and ultimately improve the lives of thousands of individuals with disabilities and their families.



In the Community

Joseph Michell Scholarship Awards

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Ability Centre's community recently attended the 2015 Joseph Michell Scholarship Awards at the WA Basketball Centre to recognise and acknowledge the academic achievements of five outstanding nominees.

Now in its 12th year, the event was a celebration of effort, determination and success as well as an acknowledgement of the significance of the transition from school to tertiary education.

The winner of the Joseph Michell Scholarship, a cash scholarship awarded assist with further education, was Bryce Soraru. Ability Centre CEO Judy Hogben described Bryce as an inspiring individual and worthy winner of the award.

"When we met Bryce, we were instantly struck not only with his achievements, but by how he had achieved this in the face of additional challenges. Yet despite everything he has gone through, he is optimistic and focused on his future," Ms Hogben said.

"I have no doubt Bryce will go on to do amazing things in the sustainable resource sector. We are very proud of him and everything he has accomplished."

Over the past few years and through the partnership with the Minderoo Foundation, Ability Centre has been able to grow the Awards from one single and small Scholarship, to offer a wider range of awards as well as other financial assistance.

Also announced on the night was the winner of the Minderoo Foundation Lifelong Learning Award, Benjamin Tirabosco, and the winner of the Service Excellence Award, Keith Robinson.



"We are very proud of him and everything he has accomplished."

Top: Rob McDonald, Bryce Soraru and James Davies

Above: Stephanie Neville, Bryce Soraru, Benjamin Tirabosco, Matilda Sivewright and Keith Robinson

A man with short brown hair, wearing red-rimmed glasses and a white patch over his right eye, is smiling. He is wearing a black t-shirt with a red and white graphic, grey shorts, and black shoes. He is seated in a wheelchair, which has various assistive devices attached, including a camera on a pole to his left and a device on his forehead. He is outdoors, surrounded by lush green foliage and purple flowers.

Matt's motivational message to youths

After a devastating car accident turned his future upside down, Matt has made it his new life mission to deliver a sobering message about the dangers of driving drunk and distracted.

A result of driving tired and under the influence of drugs and alcohol, the crash caused the Hillroyd resident to suffer a brain stem stroke, which has affected most of his bodily functions including eyesight, hearing and movement in his limbs.

— **“This is my way of dealing with it because my number’s not up yet!”**

“Since the crash, my attitudes have changed and suddenly what I knew was a different perspective; everything in my life changed,” Matt said.

At the beginning of 2014, Matt sat down with his support worker, Elinor, and made a list of his future goals, all of which revolved around his need to make a difference by educating people of the dangers of driving drunk or distracted through public speaking.

A daunting task for most, public speaking would prove even more challenging for Matt as he communicates via a device requiring him to use a reflective sensor on his forehead.

Matt undertook the laborious task of researching the events leading up to his incident and what occurred after. Matt then composed and inputted his story into his device and

at the end of last year, Matt facilitated his first presentation for the Paraplegic Benefit Fund’s P.A.R.T.Y program.

His first presentation was a huge success. Matt was not afraid to draw from tough personal experiences to further his rewarding new career and make a real difference in people’s lives.

“It is my new found passion. I do what I can to boost awareness that an accident can happen to anyone at any time. This situation has left me helpless and vulnerable. It does not discriminate. This is my way of dealing with it because my number’s not up yet!”

Matt has future bookings to present both at the Royal Perth Hospital and specific schools in the metropolitan area.

Picture: Andrew Ritchie

In the Community

“We value our partnerships with strong community focused organisations such as Ability Centre.”

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Lavan Legal announces new partnership with Ability Centre

Lavan Legal, one of Australia’s most innovative legal services firms and a long-term supporter of Ability Centre, has recently announced its sponsorship of Ability Centre’s Corporate Lunch Series. This support is a continuation of Lavan Legal’s relationship with the disability service provider which spans over 50 years since its inception as the Spastic Welfare Association in 1951.

As Ability Centre’s largest corporate sponsor, Lavan Legal will be recognised across Ability Centre’s wide range of events including the Charity Golf Day and Corporate Lunch Series.

Lavan Legal Senior Associate and Ability Centre Board member Dan Butler, said the firm has a long history of supporting Ability’s Centre’s positive work in the community and looked forward to this new opportunity to continue to help make a positive impact on the lives Ability Centre supports.

“We value our partnerships with strong community focused organisations such as Ability Centre, and look forward to continuing to work alongside their team to help advocate the role disability services play in our local community,” Mr Butler said.

Ability Centre CEO Judy Hogben said securing this new component in the long-term partnership with Lavan Legal was testament to Ability Centre’s long standing reputation in the WA community, and the strength of the organisation’s new brand.

“Lavan Legal is one of the most respected legal firms in WA, their long standing support is recognition of the good work our staff do every day in helping people with disability,” Ms Hogben said.

Lavan Legal is an independent Western Australian law firm dedicated to building a strong culture of legal excellence, balanced with meaningful relationships with clients and the wider community.

Below: Ability Centre Board Members Glen Mitchell, Priya Cooper and Dan Butler



Letters from our volunteers

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Dear Julie,

Thank you so much for your generosity in placing staff from Trinity College with your organisation. It was a memorable experience for all of our staff and the thoughts they shared at the final briefing reflected what an impact it had had on them.

The opportunity to step outside the environment of our school and engage with agencies which are directly involved with caring for and supporting people with special needs in the community, was an eye opening, somewhat challenging but also very rewarding one. One staff member said it was the best PD experience he has ever had.

We really appreciate your assistance in placing our students at different times in the year and this opportunity for our staff has been wonderful, so thank you once more for all the time and energy you put into making the day such a worthwhile experience.

Marya Stewart
– Trinity College

Dear Julie,

Over the past couple of months, I have had the pleasure of volunteering at Ability Centre's Children's Respite Home. Not only was the experience enlightening, enriching and lots of fun, but it was an eye opener into the incredible services that can be provided to so many wonderful children to support their parents.

The staff very evidently created an amazingly positive atmosphere and homely environment for the children. It's no wonder the children had constant smiles plastered on their faces and there was never a time where the home was silent.

The activities that the children invited me to join ranged from cooking elaborate cakes, Xbox car racing, playing in the ball pit to swinging on the swings, making lemonade, transforming rooms for birthdays, beading, crafting and much, much more.

The children had endless stories to tell, such creative imaginations, a real love for One Direction and loved to dance. This experience has inspired me and drawn me to this home and there is no doubt that I will try to go back to visit the children and outstanding staff whenever I can.

Tara Bargh



Above: Tara reading with the children at the Ballajura Children's Respite Home

**For further information on volunteering,
please contact Julie McLean-Phillips on
08 9443 0202.**



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ability centre



Ability[★] Centre

2015 Annual Golf Day

Friday 23 October



To register your interest in entering a team, or to become a sponsor of this year's event, please send an email to events@abilitycentre.com.au

The 2015 Ability Centre Annual Golf Day will be held once again at the prestigious Mount Lawley Golf Club on Friday 23 October.

Teams of four will spend the day on the course, with lunch and drinks included, followed by a three course meal and charity auction. Partners, colleagues and friends are welcome to join the team for a decadent three course meal in the private dining room. Dinner will involve guest speakers, a lively charity auction, and team presentations.

More information and registration packs will become available within the coming weeks.

Thank you for your support

Dream, drive,
determination.



Mr / Mrs / Miss / Ms / Dr _____

Address _____

Telephone _____

Email _____

Ability Centre Australasia

106 Bradford Street, Coolbinia WA 6050
PO Box 61, Mount Lawley WA 6929

I would like to donate ☐ \$30 ☐ \$60 ☐ \$100 ☐ other: \$ _____

Cheques and money orders payable to: Ability Centre

Credit Card payment ☐ Mastercard ☐ Visa **Expiry date** ____/____

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To donate by phone, call (08) 9443 0230

☐ Please send me information on donating a regular monthly gift to Ability Centre.

Donations of \$2 or more are tax deductible.

A receipt will be sent to you shortly. Thank you for your gift.

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