

Your questions

Araluen Participants, Families & Carers Network Meeting 7 December 2022



At our December meeting, Araluen CE, Tamara Cattach, introduced Araluen's new Strategic Plan 2023 - 2025, explaining the vision and direction it provides. Our COO, DFan Gleeson, explained why and how Araluen will be launching a Multi Disciplinary Therapy Team in 2023 and also joined Communications Manager, Lara Hynes, to start a conversation about better understanding the communication needs of our participants and families.

NDIS funding

Q1. In relation to the funding from NDIS, are you still in the position where you can only claim a certain amount for the group activities? Is that improving?

A. (TAMARA CATTACH): There are some new funding regulations coming in the next few months, which mean we will be able to bill for non-facing time. This means that we can bill for some of the activities that happen in the background such as phone calls, administration and incident reports. It doesn't change the hourly rate we receive but it will help. Up until this point in time we haven't been able to bill for that so any work that happens outside that direct face to face time has come out of Araluen's own pocket which is a part of the problem.

So next year we will be introducing some of those billing options. We're going to allow a long period of time so that people can adjust and make sure they've got money in their plan to cover it. They are slowly starting to introduce options for services – it won't fix the problem completely but it's certainly heading towards a more positive outcome financially.

Araluen's Multi Disciplinary Therapy Team (MDTT)

Q2. In relation to funding (for multidisciplinary teams), does each participant need to have a plan with Araluen for specialised funding for these services?

A. (JOSH BROUWER - General Manager, Quality, Safety & Practice): Yes - but some participants may already have this as part of their plan - and some participants already have behaviour support practitioners in place that they are working closely with; and we don't want to do anything to change those relationships that some of our participants might already have with their behaviour practitioner. However, yes - there are participants that might require behaviour support in the future – in that case we would work with them, with support co-ordinators and with families to get this into their plans as needed.

Q3. Follow up q: Will quotes come from Araluen?

A. (JOSH BROUWER - General Manager - Quality, Safety & Practice): Yes - we can provide the quotes – there's also pretty specific evidence we need to provide to the NDIS about why that person requires support. It could be an incident, or it could be the fact that they're on certain restricted medications for their behaviours. Or if a person needs things locked away as an example – things like that is further evidence that someone might require a behaviour support plan. We would work with them on providing that evidence to the NDIS, and to get that into people's plans.

A R A L U E N

Araluen's Multi Disciplinary Therapy Team (MDTT) continued

Q4. Comment from Sharon in chat:

C. (SHARON): Please be careful with recruiting of a BSP as I have been using Yooralla BSP's for over 10 years and they don't stay in the job. Each year of review I have to get another one up to speed on Benny's BSP which eats into his funding every year.

RESPONSE. (TAMARA): We are aware of that issue and we regularly speak to other providers about how they deal with those issues as well. That is a risk but we believe that it is a risk that is worth it in order to implement these supports.

The other thing about behaviour support is that we have existing staff who may go through an accreditation process to become a behaviour support practitioner if they should wish to do that. There are certainly staff within the organisation that have been here for a very long time and in their past have written behaviour support plans because 20-30 years ago, that was the role of an instructor. We certainly have staff that we're hoping will step up and take that on – this will help us to not only continue to have our loyal staff but also create some consistency for participants. With those staff who can now work with participants on a one-to-one basis to really look at how they can improve their communication or their anxiety levels.

Q5. We've been working with a behavioural therapist for a number of years which has been brilliant. Did you also mention art therapy? How would that work?

A. (TAMARA): We are exploring a lot of that now – we have a couple of art therapists on our team. They don't currently work for us as art therapists, but we are working alongside them, as well as some other organisations that offer art therapy to talk about what that might look like. Art therapy doesn't necessarily mean that a group of people have to sit in a room and do art – it can be completed in the home, it can be completed in the community. We spoke to an art therapist last week that talked about doing things such as the group of young women she was working with were really interested in cooking – so she decided to use cooking and art combined where they would make things out of food but make it look artistic so it was a form of therapy. So alongside all the other therapies – once again it's about reducing peoples anxiety, it's about reducing behaviours, so anything that people are interested in, that can be pulled into that art world can happen. It can be individual, it can be group, I think the preferred option is individual and Josh – jump in if I'm incorrect.

A. (JOSH): I think one of the other important things to say which is a positive that's come out from the NDIS more recently is that art therapy has been recognised as a therapy under the NDIS. The NDIS are also allowing a lot more flexibility around how participants choose to use their therapy bucket of funding. In the past, participants might come out with a certain amount of funding for occupational therapy, physiotherapy, other therapies and it was quite separate. What we are seeing now more in plans is that NDIS are a bit more flexible, allowing participants a therapy bucket that can be used for whatever therapies they wish to engage in. So it could still be OT and other things, but it just allows more flexibility around how participants might use that funding. For example, it might be that they use half of what they're expected to use on an OT and they can go and use the rest on an art therapist. It's good to see that there is that flexibility now in the therapy budgets.

A. (DAN - Chief Operating Officer): The introduction of art therapy doesn't stop our art program. Art therapy is an additional offering with a different outcome, so the art program and Art Connects will still be in place.

A R A L U E N

Community consultation and communications

- Q6.** If you look at the number of participants at Araluen and the number attending this call tonight, it's only a very small number. Is the information getting through to the other 80% of participant families?
- A.** (TAMARA): Please be careful with recruiting of a BSP as I have been using Yooralla BSP's for over 10 years and they don't stay in the job. Each year of review I have to get another one up to speed on Benny's BSP which eats into his funding every year.
- A.** (TAMARA): Agree and it's the first thing I noticed tonight. When we first started this network, it was during COVID and it was all online and there was a really good uptake. Lately attendance seems to have dropped off. We send out an email link with information about it we also do send out a reminder the day before or the day of. Lara has started to monitor some of our communications and she can see whether text messages have been received and people seem to respond more to a text message than they do to an email which probably just speaks to how busy peoples lives are these days where they have their mobile phones on them constantly. So that's why we want to come back to this group even though even though it is small. I've had some feedback that night time might not be the best time for people – that day time might be better – but I've also had feedback that a lot of our newer families work during the day. We're trying to get as much information as we can from you – the people that can really give us that feedback.
- A.** (LARA HYNES - Manager: Design, Marketing & Communications): We do monitor views by making the video available online after the meeting. So while people may not directly join in, we are getting reasonable viewership on the videos and the Q&A summaries we post on our site as well.



Question to audience from Araluen (Dan Gleeson):
What is the one piece of communication that we need to get right for you?

If you'd like to answer this question or provide any other feedback on how we communicate with you or what you need, please contact:



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- Q7.** Comment from Caral in chat:
- C.** (CARAL): Cara's mum Kim here. I would love to have a maybe 6 monthly meetings arranged with staff to get feedback about progress.
- Q8.** Comment from John & Jo in chat:
- C.** (JOHN & JO): We are very happy with Araluen's feedback and family consultations, especially via these monthly meetings. We have heard a few discussions during covid re various issues, but overall people seem very happy. Funding is a concern for programs offered of course. We need to continue to approach politicians. The online meetings suit us. Maybe we need to approach others, Staff are always approachable.

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Community consultation and communications continued

Q9. Comment from Neville:

C. (NEVILLE): We get a lot of information from these monthly meetings. Particularly around funding and issues facing Araluen. I haven't attended every one, but if you look back 4 or 5 years ago there was a housing group and we would attend the meeting at Araluen, it was face to face and I know through COVID that was impossible, and even now you probably don't want to have a meeting with 200 families. But I think these meetings, and the information we've gotten out of it, is alright.

Q11. Comment from Alison:

C. (ALISON): This is such a big topic and has been for Araluen for many years. You're never going to get a time that will suit everybody, evenings are difficult when we have our participants at home. I think with the face to face, we really miss the interactions with other Araluen families. The zooms are great for getting info but for actually networking and talking to other parents it doesn't really work if its not face to face. The most important thing that has to be right for me is that communication about my son's day, just on a day-to-day basis. And this varies so much from staff to staff – some are fantastic at it and some don't have the same skills.

Want to know more about anything that's happening at Araluen?

Who can I ask?



If you'd like more information about services or happenings at Araluen, you can contact Tamara or join in our monthly meetings. Your questions and feedback are always appreciated. Your service manager will also be happy to assist with any questions relating to day-to-day issues.



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