



*Ending the isolation.*

# **Therapy & Specialist Services**

## **Annual Report**

### **2009-2010**

#### **Service Overview**

The Therapy & Specialist Services provide three Disability Professional Services: Early Childhood Intervention; Adult Therapy; and the Deafblind Statewide Consultation Program. Over the 2009-2010 period, there has been recurrent growth funding within the Early Childhood Intervention and Adult Therapy programs, which has enabled three additional part-time therapy staff to be recruited. The Deafblind Statewide Consultation Program was fortunate to receive substantial non-recurrent funding and has provided training and resources throughout Western Australia on deafblind issues.

There has been zero turnover within the Therapy & Specialist Services during the 2009-2010 year. Therapy staff have provided intervention across both Early Intervention and Adult Therapy programs with some staff providing services in the Deafblind Statewide Consultation Program to complement the deafblind consultant's activities.

The Therapy & Specialist Services team have had a very successful 2009-2010 and have provided services which are committed to excellence, innovative, respectful and with integrity.

## **How Therapy & Specialist Services have been working towards Senses Foundation's Major Strategic Objectives:**

### **Leadership in Service Delivery**

- The Therapy & Specialist Services received an Excellence Award for recognition of outstanding contribution to early childhood intervention in Western Australia from Early Childhood Intervention Australia (ECIA) WA.
- The Therapy & Specialist Services are undertaking a pilot project to investigate the impact Communication Guides have on the quality of life of individuals who have a dual sensory loss.
- The Manager of Therapy & Specialist Services is completing a Graduate Certificate of Not-for-Profit Leadership & Management at Notre Dame University.
- The Social Worker is completing a Master of Social Work at the University of Western Australia.
- The Early Childhood Intervention Program is able to offer the multidisciplinary "Little Explorers" playgroup and "HydroActive" hydrotherapy groups to clients on the waitlist.
- A Key Contact Person role has been established in the Early Childhood Program to ensure communication is more effective with families.
- The Adult Therapy Program has established a "Wellness Program", initially focusing on physical fitness and integration of clients in community gym programs.
- The Deafblind Statewide Consultation Program has conducted training throughout Western Australia on deafblind issues.

### **Sustainability**

- The Early Childhood Intervention, Adult Therapy and Deafblind Statewide Consultation Programs are all fully funded via Disability Services Commission.
- This financial year, the Early Childhood Intervention, Adult Therapy and Deafblind Statewide Consultation Programs provided a surplus of approximately \$40,000.
- Re-current growth funding has been achieved in both the Early Childhood Intervention and Adult Therapy Programs.

## **Uniqueness**

- Two staff presented “Foundation for Life” at the inaugural More Than Gadgets: Assistive Technology conference in Fremantle, August 2009.
- All Therapy & Specialist Services team members attended the National Deafblind Conference in Melbourne, April 2010. Three staff presented a paper and one presented a poster.
- All Therapy & Specialist Services team members attended the Deafblind Studies by Paul Hart (Sense Scotland) and Megan Mann (Sense England) in May 2010, completing the Dual Sensory Impairment One and Communication One modules.
- There has been greater support provided to clients who are deafblind with a priority given to these clients.

## **Governance**

- Policies and procedures have been systematically reviewed during team meetings, ensuring all staff are aware and practising these guidelines.
- The Therapy & Specialist Team conduct three weekly client review meetings where staff can discuss client related issues with other team members and seek opinions and feedback.

## **Communication**

- Team members have participated in a number of Senses Foundation client case conferences, involving accommodation and ATE staff.
- Team members have worked with Accommodation Services support workers to improve functional outcomes of clients. This has helped to improve the open communication within the organisation.
- The Therapy & Specialist Services team are committed to using an electronic filing system, which enables client information to be accessed by all authorised staff from all areas and locations.

## **Brand Awareness**

- Staff have participated in discipline specific interest groups.
- A mail-out to all local area coordinators was conducted promoting the Adult Therapy Program. This not only increased awareness of the services available but also of Senses Foundation.
- The Manager of Therapy & Specialist Services represented Senses Foundation at the National Sensory Forum, in Melbourne, conducted by National Disability Services.
- Staff attended an open day at Wooldridges – Clarkson to promote Senses Foundation and our services.
- A number of handouts and publications have been developed by Therapy & Specialist Services staff, which are available on the website.

## Program Information

### Early Childhood Intervention

Contract hours	Hours delivered	Difference (+/-)	Contract client numbers	Clients provided a service
1397	1845.15	+448.15	13	18

The Early Childhood Intervention program provides a comprehensive professional service for pre-school children who have a disability. Over the financial year, an additional six places were obtained via growth funding, which increased client places from 7 to 13. There are currently two children on the waitlist.



As has been the case over the past three years, significantly more hours (132%) have been delivered within this program than what has been funded by DSC. This intensive service delivery demonstrates the high needs of the children in the program. The “HydroActive” and “Little Explorers” have continued this year, with great success. A \$5000 grant was obtained from LotteryWest and Chevron donated \$4000 towards these groups, which enabled a range of therapeutic equipment and resources to be purchased to enhance the intervention provided.

A Key Contact Person role has been implemented within this program. This role is to be the primary contact for a family and is responsible for ensuring the family receive invitations, consent forms are completed, organising Individual Family Plan appointments, ensuring Individual Family Plans are signed and returned by family.



### Adult Therapy Program

Adult Therapy Sub-Program	Contract hours	Hours delivered	Difference (+/-)	Contract client numbers	Clients provided a service
Adult Comprehensive Service	1161	1163.05	+2.05	48	53
Adult Transition Service	767	469.33	-297.67	7	14
Adult Waitlist Service	375.5	87.83	-287.67	8	11

The Adult Therapy Program provides a comprehensive professional service for adults who have left school, acquired their disability prior to the age of 60 years and require assistance in a functional area such as self care, communication, mobility or decision making. The majority of clients within this program are part of Senses Foundation's Accommodation Services, however with successful marketing, a significant number of referrals are now being received across the disability sector.

In July 2009, the Therapy & Specialist Services were successful in obtaining two new services, Adult Transition and Adult Waitlist. The Adult Transition Service is funded at a higher rate than the other Adult Therapy programs and is for adults three years post leaving school. It is designed to assist the transition of the client from school to their new workplace or Post School Options provider. Unfortunately, even after much marketing to relevant organisations and providing a service to double the clients required, this program has only completed 61% of its contracted hours.

The Adult Waitlist service is non-recurrent funding designed to service clients on the waitlist and is to be completed over two years. The full hours required over the two years to complete is 751. In 2009-2010, the Therapy & Specialist Services team delivered 87.83 hours, with the remaining 663.17 to be completed in 2010-2011.



During 2009-2010, the Adult Therapy Program established a "Wellness Program". This has initially focused on physical fitness and has supported three clients integrate into their local gym with specialised programs. It is hoped that over the next financial year, this program will expand the range of programs offered.

### Deafblind Statewide Consultation Program

Contract hours	Hours Delivered	Difference (+/-)	Contract client Numbers	Clients provided a service
2,231	2,549.17	+318.17	60	52

During 2009-2010, the Specialist Communication Program changed its name to Deafblind Statewide Consultation Program to better reflect the work being conducted within this program (ie. not just communication). The Deafblind Statewide Consultation Program provides specialist assistance and support to people who are deafblind or sensory impaired with additional disabilities throughout Western Australia. This has changed slightly from previous years, where clients were either deafblind or vision impaired with additional disabilities. There was a need to provide this service to those also with a hearing impairment and additional disabilities, and DSC has agreed to incorporate this group into the eligibility of this program. The Deafblind Statewide Consultation is a targeted service, which has a shorter term, outcomes orientated focus and are delivered within a consultative service model.



The Deafblind Statewide Consultation Program has been able to continue to achieve Senses Foundation's strategic direction of providing services to regional and remote areas of Western Australia through the non-recurrent funding received from Telethon and Pilbara Royalty to Region grants. Services were provided to Karratha, Roebourne, Bunbury, Narrogin, Port Hedland, Paraburdoo and Tom Price. Education, Health and Disability organisations were targeted and information session was provided.



In 2009-2010, Senses Foundation was successful in obtaining funding from DSC and Ian Potter Foundation to conduct a pilot project into the impact of Communication Guides on the quality of life of people with a dual sensory loss. This project is being administered through the Deafblind Statewide Consultation Program and has linked with

Curtin University of Technology's Centre for Research into Disability and Society to ensure a high standard of research.

## **Standards Monitoring**

### **Early Childhood**

No standard monitoring occurred in the 2009-2010 period.

### **Adult Therapy Program**

The Adult Therapy Program participated in a pilot of the new standard monitoring process, now called Individual Evaluations. Overall the report was very positive with no required actions. Recommendations for service improvement and summary are outlined below:

#### **Key Priority for Service Improvement - Program and Outcome/Standard 2 Individual Needs**

Individual therapy plans need to be put in place for every client with a clear link to goals and outcomes and a time-frame for action and review. Consistency in the recoding of case notes needs to be developed and for some staff this may require specific training.

#### **The Independent Evaluators were particularly impressed by:**

- The commitment and motivation of the team to continually look at better ways of providing intervention.
- The passion expressed by all staff spoken to in working with this group of clients.
- Staff working individually and collaboratively as members of a team in order to offer a personalised service to clients.
- The development of the 'Wellness Program' that is aimed at better inclusion and which will cover a variety of areas such as health and fitness, nutrition and stress and relaxation.
- The therapists that presented papers at the recent National Deaf Blind Conference.
- The Manager's comment that 'all therapists have exceptional interpersonal skills and are totally committed to the clients'.

### **Deafblind Statewide Consultation Program**

No standard monitoring occurred in the 2009-2010 period.

## **Projects & Grants**

### **1. Usher Support Group**

The Australian Communication Exchange (Friends of ACE Support) provided Senses Foundation with \$14,768.75 in January 2009 to support the Usher Support Group. The focus of this group is to providing education, support and counselling to people with Usher Syndrome. The group have participated in a number of social activities as well as group counselling. Although this funding has been expended and the grant acquitted in April 2010, this group remains committed to supporting one another, with ongoing resources provided by Senses Foundation via the Social Worker, who continues to coordinate the group.



### **2. Communication Guide Support for West Australians with Dual Sensory Loss: A Pilot Project**

In this study, 14 participants who have a dual sensory loss, will be recruited and provided with six months of weekly specialised “Communication Guide” support provided by Communication Guides. Seven participants will be between the ages of 35-45 and seven between the ages of 60-70. The study design is a series of single case studies, using mixed methods including pre-post analysis of quality of life, health and occupational performance standardised measures and grounded theory analysis of interviews. The Communication Guides will undergo competency based training and provide services to participants using person-centred approaches.

This pilot project was funded by DSC (\$83,216) and the Ian Potter Foundation (\$50,000) and is due for completion in June 2011.

### **3. Family Leadership**

The Milton Corporation Foundation provided Senses Foundation with \$7,000 to support our Family Leadership program. The program aims to provide a retreat for family carers to take a break from the caring role and to learn skills, coping mechanisms and resources that will enable them to continue to provide support and assistance to their family member.

### **4. Specialist Training for People who are Deafblind in Western Australia**

Senses Foundation was fortunate to receive funding from Telethon (\$66,000) and Pilbara Royalties to Regions (\$40,700) to provide training on deafblind issues throughout Western Australia. Training has been provided in the Pilbara (Karratha, Roebourne, Port Hedland, Paraburdoo and Tom Price) as well as Narrogin, Bunbury and Albany. Key local health and disability stakeholders in regional areas are contacted and training sessions in the regional centres targeting local service providers, family members and carers of people who are deafblind has been provided. Outcomes of the training are:

- To increase knowledge and skills of key stakeholders working with people who have deafblindness or vision impairment with an additional disability;
- Develop links with local key stakeholders in regional areas;
- To provide resources and training on deafblindness to key stakeholders in regional areas.

Further training in other regional areas will continue under the Telethon funding in the 2010-2011 period.

### **5. Mobile Sensory Equipment**

The Department of Education and Training (NGCS), provided \$9,105 to fund various equipment and toys that would enable the therapy staff to take on home and community visits which may promote vision and hearing skills.

### **6. Deafblindness in Aboriginal People – Brochure**

Senses Foundation was successful in obtaining a \$5,000 grant from the Ethic Disability Advocacy Centre to produce and print a brochure for Aboriginal people regarding deafblind issues. Rod Garlett, an Aboriginal Noongar man was commissioned to consult on the content and language used, and to provide Aboriginal artwork.



**7. Active Ageing at the Local Level Grant: Responding to Ageing and Dual Sensory Loss – A Training Package for Support Workers**

This project was funded \$15,484 by the Department of Local Government & Regional Development. The training package has been developed and this information has been produced into a booklet.

**8. Sit, Stand & Walk: Equipment for Living**

The Department of Education and Training (NGCS), provided \$25,520 to fund various equipment (such as walking frames, standing frames, specialised wheelchairs) that would enable the therapy staff demonstrate and trial with families prior to applying for funding.

**9. Basement Renovation**

The Department of Education and Training (NGCS), provided \$13,545 to partition the basement areas into two rooms and install heavy duty shelving to store therapy equipment.

**11. Little Explorers & HydroActive Group Resources**

The Department of Education and Training, Non-Government Centre Support (NGCS) provided \$18,156, Chevron \$4,000 and LotteryWest \$5000 to the purchase of a range of equipment, toys and other resources to support the therapy programs of the children in Early Childhood program.

*Senses Foundation - providing services to people with disabilities including unique services for people who are deafblind.  
Enabling, Enriching, Empowering.*



*Ending the isolation.*

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