

Workability Oceania 2008 Annual Report

As Workability International enters its twenty first year the Oceania region continues to develop and play an active role in the global organisation. It is only four years since Workability Oceania was formed in Christchurch, New Zealand, but during that time significant progress has been made to grow and support the members.

Workability Oceania has been a vital link in bringing Australian and New Zealand services together, so that now a multitude of networks and friendships have formed to the benefit of member organisations and to the people with disabilities that they support.

Many members are also initiating and providing assistance to services in the Asia and Pacific region. This remains a key goal of Workability Oceania and one which is progressing through the efforts of individual members and partnerships with aid organisations involved in developing countries.

Membership

Membership has remained stable during the past year with a small number of resignations offset by new members joining. Those resigning have generally done so because of their change of direction away from employment services.

The membership of Workability Oceania is diverse – in size, types of services provided and people supported, locations and demographics. This is seen as a strength of the region, where members can share the experience and knowledge of many different types of organisations. The national industry bodies in both Australia and New Zealand also remain strong members and partners of Workability Oceania. This opens up a much wider network of services and contacts which benefits everyone.

Key Strategies

- Support members
- Assist members to build networks and partnerships
- Develop strong relationships with services from developing countries
- Build alliances with other Workability International regions, particularly the Asia Group.
- Build long term financial sustainability in the Oceania Group
- Foster closer trans-Tasman ties
- Support the strategic directions of Workability International
- Build the profile of Oceania within the region's disability sectors, Governments and communities
- Ensure effective corporate governance

Key Results

- Held two forums in New Zealand highlighting best practice on a range of services and businesses
- Undertook study tours in the South and North Islands of New Zealand
- Promoted National Disability Services (NDS) Conferences in Australia to New Zealand members
- Facilitated visits by Oceania members to other Workability International regions
- Participated in Workability International conferences and forums throughout the world
- Actively contributed to Workability International Board meetings and activities
- Provided staff from member organisations to Workability International working groups on Marketing and Branding, Finance and Constitutional Reform
- Hosted the President and Secretary of Workability International in Sydney, Australia
- Maintained sound corporate governance and finances

Future Strategies

- Continue to support members and facilitate networks, alliances and partnerships
- Provide forums and study tours that inform members of new and best practices in service provision and business
- Work collaboratively with the national industry bodies in Australia and New Zealand
- Continue to explore opportunities and partnerships to assist services in developing countries
- Work collaboratively with other Workability International regions
- Actively participate in the strategic direction and corporate governance of Workability International
- Maintain a sound financial base whilst offering members value based fees

Workability Oceania remains committed to “opening doors” for its members – both across the Tasman and throughout the world.

This strategy recognises that members will have different needs and capacities to network and travel to different regions. However, Workability Oceania has provided the opportunity for members to do this and have seen some great results over the past four years.

Many members are also providing support to services in developing countries, like Bangladesh, East Timor and Malaysia. National Disability Services in Australia has also been instrumental in forming a partnership with overseas aid agencies called the Australian Disability Development Consortium, whose aim is to focus attention, expertise and action on Disability issues in developing countries.

Another example of good networking and cooperation is a recent tour of Australia by Korean Disability Service providers. This came from contacts made in during a WI Asia forum in Korea. NDS arranged the program which included visits to Workability Oceania member services.

Progress is being made on many fronts.

Workability Oceania does believe though that the international organisation must continually review its strategic focus and structure as it grows, so that it remains relevant to member’s needs and the wider challenge of providing employment to people with a disability.

As always there is a lot of work to do. Thanks must go to the many individuals and organisations who have contributed to Workability Oceania, including the Board and the General Secretary Alain Rialland.

We look forward to the coming year and the challenges ahead.

Tony Lund

Chairman