



THE CRU DIRECTOR'S CHAIR: February 2009

Greetings from my now very hot Director's chair! And understandably so since CRU is now 6 months into its transition process and at that interesting half-way point: having regained some lost ground, reintroduced, albeit a limited number of workshop programs, begun our CRUcial Conversation series and now poised to embark on a number of important newer initiatives, but not yet fully resourced and ready to do so. So school is definitely in with a State Election topping the first term agenda, alongside the daily curriculum of developing, safeguarding and promoting meaningful, long term relationships and individually tailored service responses for people with disability.

With less than 3 weeks to go to cast our votes let's throw cynicism aside and get behind the **Disability Alliance** Election campaign. For starters the Disability Alliance is asking that we support and promote their **promotional video** to Queensland stakeholders located on their site www.disabilityalliance.org.au. We are being urged to play the video on the homepage and then pass it on. For those with a more activist bent the Alliance is holding a media event outside Parliament House (corner of George & Alice Streets, Brisbane) on Sunday, 8 March 2009 at 9:30am and inviting Queenslanders with disability, their families and allies to show their support by being there on the day.

CRU's first workshop for the year "*What do we do in the meantime*", led by Janet Klees from Canada, seems to have struck a chord, judging by the record number of registrations. We hope to conduct a recorded interview with Janet and post it on YouTube, enabling those of you unable to attend, due to geographical or situational reasons, to hear, and learn from, the key messages and strategies.

Owing to the generous support of National Disability Service (NDS) I attended a 5 day conference in New Zealand 22-26th February run by the Down Under Institute (DUI) on *Inclusion, Community and Diversity*. DUI was inspired by the Toronto Summer Institute - an international gathering that provides a learning marketplace for all who uphold these and other values. It proved to be a melting pot of ideas and important contacts and provided clear demonstration of the power of conversations and that real change can only come about through broad collective action. Participants amongst other things experienced "The World Café" – "*living networks of conversation [that] lie at the heart of our capacity as a human community to create the futures we want rather than being forced to live with the futures we get.*" New Zealand, under the mentorship of the likes of Jack Pearpoint, Lynda Kahn and Mike Green, brought the institute down under for the first time and there is every indication that Australia will host a similar experience in 2010. The conference served to affirm and confirm the future course that CRU is currently crafting.

In April, following on from our operational planning session in February, CRU intends to hold an invitation only Mini Summit where we will take the opportunity to "unveil and test" our Vision and Strategic Direction for the future, before revealing all, to all. Finally and as always CRU cannot do its work without your support and we are humbled and encouraged by it. It urges us on to fulfil our mission as catalysts in creating the sorts of communities, relationships and service responses that will truly serve and embrace the needs and gifts of people with disability in order for them to take their rightful place in the world and engage in genuine processes of reciprocity and participation: in other words LIFE!

Christine Douglas
Transition Director