



Operational Report for Auburn Support and Social group

The Autism Community Network Auburn Support and Social Group commenced in March 2016. The group was facilitated by local volunteer and parent of a child with autism, Lucy Doherty. The group was promoted via

- Flyers prepared by council
- Autism Community Network Facebook groups and webpage
- Included in weekly email to all members on upcoming activities
- Emails from Lucy to network of contacts which included educators and early intervention providers
- Local media articles and 'community news'
- Council website and Facebook pages
- Local Member of Parliament
- Word of mouth

There was an official launch event in May 2016 which was very successful and included informative speakers such as Steve Drakoulis (ACN Founder), Miranda Chau (Chinese Parents Association – Children with Disabilities), Sophie Doherty (sibling of a child with autism) and Lucy Doherty

The group has met monthly for 2 hours on a Saturday, in Auburn Centre for Community, Multi-purpose room and youth space. For 3 of the monthly sessions, a music therapist was provided, using a "Carer Together" grant. This proved very popular. The last session was held on 10 December 2016 as part of the Festival of All Abilities.

A music therapist and afternoon tea was also provided for the December session, with funding from Festival of All Abilities

On average, 5-7 families attended each session. Some media around the group is attached. During this time, parents shared information and mutual support, friendships were formed and children developed their social skills. Parents were also linked in by other parents to local supports and other service providers.



A Community of Support for Autism

Autism Community Network Inc.

Address: Illawong Community Centre – 273 Fowler Rd Illawong NSW | Postal Address: PO Box 188, Riverwood, NSW 2210

Tel: (02)9543 9036 Email: info@autismcommunity.org.au Web: www.autismcommunity.org.au

Incorporation No. INC9896017 | ABN : 64 103 662 535 | CFA No: CFN/2282



During the time the group was held, Membership of Autism Community Network across Sydney grew to over 1000 households. In addition to the households in the Cumberland Council area, the group welcomes carers and children from other areas.

We have sought feedback from participating families, and there is still definitely an appetite for an autism support group in the area.

Families have indicated that instead of a regular monthly meeting in council rooms, they would like the group to evolve to comprise:

- A few larger, special events, potentially on Council premises, with activities for children provided
- Group outings to family friendly venues in the area (such as Granville Park and Holroyd Gardens), as social isolation for families impacted by autism continues to be a problem

Accordingly, we have decided not to continue the group in its current format in 2017.

We thank Cumberland Council immensely for their support and welcome the opportunity to continue dialogue with Cumberland Council on how we can work together in 2017

Sincerely


Steve Drakoulis
Operations Manager



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