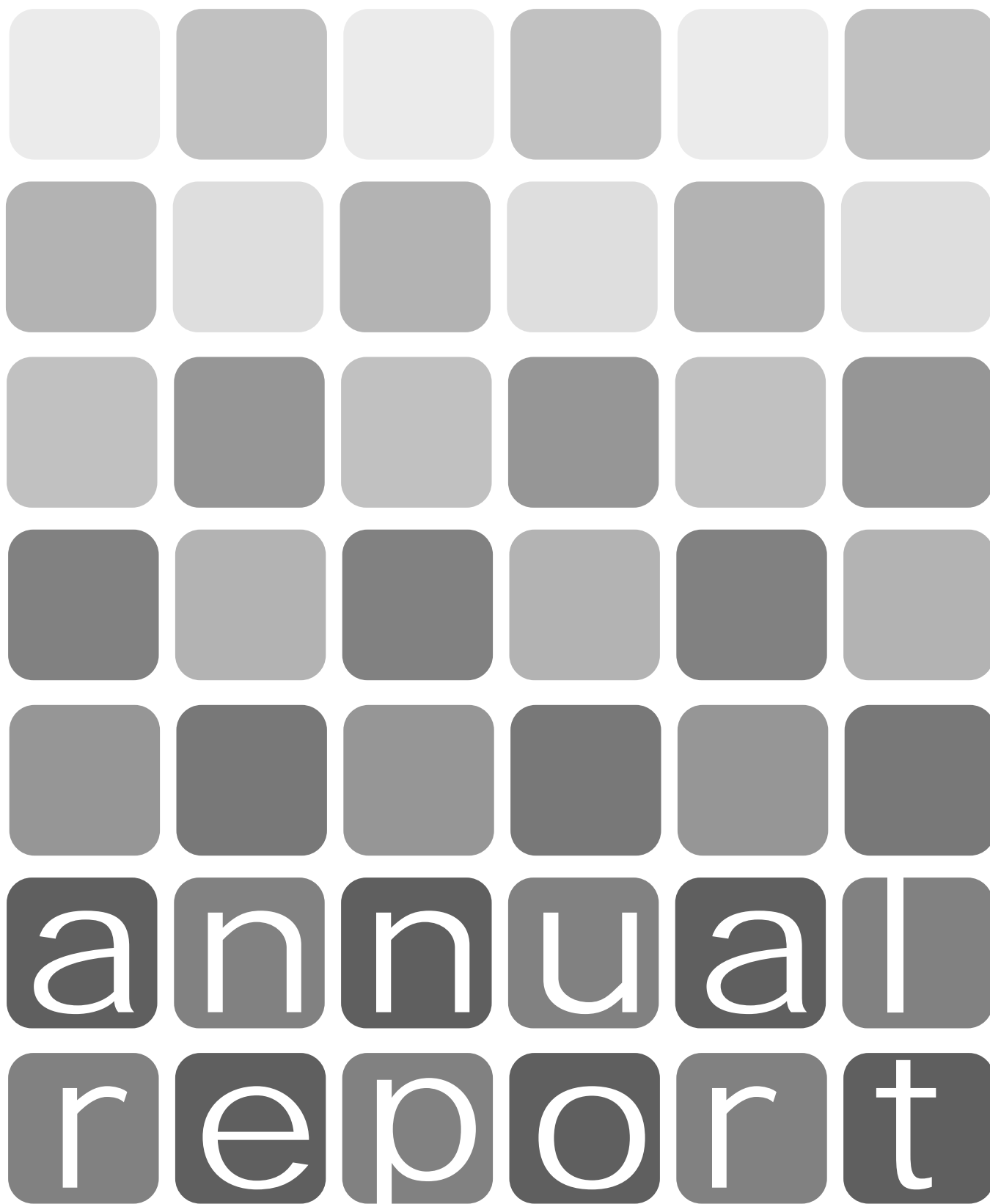


Community Resource Unit Inc



2011 - 2012

Overview of the Organisation

The Association

The origins of Community Resource Unit (CRU) lie in a 1987 initiative of Queensland families, professionals and people with disabilities who recognised that legislative change was insufficient to support authentic change for people with disabilities and their families. CRU was developed to support grassroots change in Queensland. CRU has 139 members who include people with disabilities, families, and workers from the disability field. CRU is an Incorporated Association, it was incorporated on the 20th of October 1988.

Purpose

CRU exists to support the development of leadership and authentic change that enhances the possibilities for people with disabilities to belong to, and participate in, community life. It aims to:

- Challenge ideas and practices that limit the lives of people with disabilities; and
- Inspire and encourage individuals and organisations to pursue better lives for people with disabilities.

CRU's Objectives

The main objectives of CRU include:

- Working towards intended, positive change by identifying issues of strategic significance and by exploring and demonstrating new possibilities;
- Challenging, encouraging and contributing to the growth and development of people who are involved in change efforts by offering a range of educational and developmental opportunities, and leadership opportunities;
- Developing and safeguarding those elements that contribute to quality services by supporting the work of community agencies that are striving to be responsive to the needs of people with disabilities and their families;
- Drawing attention to key challenges in the disability field and providing information about them;
- Operating a viable and accountable organisation that reflects, in its operation, the values and beliefs underpinning its Mission.

Management of CRU

The direction and management of Community Resource Unit is vested in the Committee of Management that is elected annually. The implementation of CRU programs is the responsibility of the Director and the staff team.

CRU Management Committee 2011/2012

President	Committee Members
Matt Stone	Richard Warner
Vice President	Sharon Daley
Mike Duggan	
Secretary	
Margaret Geldard	
Treasurer	
Sherryn West	

CRU Staff during 2011 / 2012

Director	Administration Officers
Margaret Rodgers	Bobby Noone
Senior Consultant	Kim Jensen
Lisa Bridle	Administration Support
Consultant	Kathleen Fleming
Suellen Welch	
Finance Officer	
Margaret MacDermott	
Bill Kyle	

President's Report

I am very pleased to prepare the President's Report for the Community Resource Unit 2012 Annual General Meeting. We have been a smaller committee of five for most of this past year. The strategy of operating as a smaller committee has improved our effectiveness in regards to achieving quorum and approving motions in a timely manner. We welcomed a sixth member, Sharon Daley in May 2012. My thanks go to Committee Members Mike Duggan, Marg Geldard, Richard Warner, Sherryn West and Sharon Daley for their commitment to and support of CRU.

In this report I would like to speak of a few achievements and identify some areas where progress has been slower than expected

We have welcomed the steady flow of memberships throughout the year. It is always great to adopt new members and subscribers at meetings. We had a spike in membership in **July and August 2011** in response to a membership drive led by our Secretary, Marg Geldard. Thanks Marg

In **August**, committee members participated in a conversation with international guests Bruce Uditski and Anne Hughson from the Alberta Association for Community Living (ACCL). We are grateful to Bruce and Anne for their insight and ideas. The topic of inclusive education at all levels: primary, secondary and tertiary was clearly articulated and the need to keep this conversation moving in relation to change was strongly argued.

- In **September 2011**, I travelled to the USA for holidays and while there joined our Director, Margaret Rodgers in meeting like-minded people and agencies in Portland. Following our time there, we both attended the IIDL conference, Agency Transformation. Both personally and professionally this was a great experience. I would like to acknowledge the tremendous job Marg does in representing CRU to the world. The benefits of her networking skills have been obvious throughout the year.
- We engaged 99 Consulting in **November 2011** to assist us with a review of our policies and procedures. We successfully passed audit in **February 2012**. The audit cycle continues to be less onerous each year. This is due, in part, to the attention given to tools of good governance such as the Compliance Schedule and the Policy & Procedure Manual. Passing audit would not have been possible, however, without the hard work of staff and committee who draft, re-draft, read and re-read many documents and forms. My thanks to Lisa Bridle and Marg Rodgers for their leadership here.
- Sherryn West joined the Committee in **December 2011** as Treasurer. Sherryn brings a wealth of knowledge and experience to this position from which the committee and CRU have already benefited.
- CRU staff and committee shared in the Strategic Planning between **July 2011 and January 2012**. We have added a 5th Goal to our Strategic Plan, which is to resource people with up to date and relevant information so that people with disability can belong to and participate in community life.
- The state election in **March 2012** resulted in a change of government. We congratulated the new Minister, Tracy Davies, and extended a welcome to her to visit CRU and learn more about our work.
- After many months of discussion and research, we approved a wage increase for CRU staff in **May 2012**. The wage increases brought CRU into line with Federal Award rate increases and ensures CRU remains competitive as an employer. I acknowledge the work completed by our Treasurer, Sherryn West and our Finance Officer, Bill Kyle and thank them for ensuring the committee was well

informed. We also relied heavily on information provided by Queensland Community Services Employers Association (QCSEA) and National Disability Services (NDS).

- A priority action from the current Strategic Plan was the establishment of the CRU **Stewardship Group**. This is moving along well and we confidently anticipate the first gathering of the Stewardship Group will occur in November 2012. Members of the Stewardship Group will be encouraged to raise local systemic issues, as well as broader issues that relate to the work of CRU. Key themes will be reported back to the Committee of Management.
- Another key element of the Strategic Plan was to increase the staff team by one, with the inclusion of a fulltime **Information Consultant**. Due to the uncertainty of state government funding, we delayed the approval of this position. With a clearer understanding of our funding position there has been recent movement on this decision – so watch this space.

Marg Geldard is not renominating for the committee this year. Marg has been on the committee for several years. She joined when CRU was going through the period of transition and has been a very steady and thoughtful member of the committee during the rebuilding phase. Marg has been particularly active on sub-committees in recent years associated with staff employment and recruitment. Sadly Marg is not well enough to be with us tonight. Our thoughts are with her and her family.

I can't finish without acknowledging the great work of the staff at CRU: Marg, Lisa, Suellen, Bill, Bobby, Kim and Kath. Thank you all for your hard work this past year – it is truly appreciated. I would like to especially thank Marg Rodgers. I look to Marg as a leader and appreciate her calm, realistic and reassuring approach. Thank you Marg.

On behalf of the committee I wish to thank YOU for your support as members, subscribers, attendees of events and conversation facilitators, teachers and leaders. Thank you for being the change we want to see.

Best wishes,

Matt Stone
President CRU Inc

Treasurer's Report

I welcome the opportunity to present the Treasurer Report for CRU for the year ended 30th June, 2012. I come to the role at a time where the organisation is in a sound financial position in contrast to the uncertainty of the funding cuts and NDIS within the sector in Queensland.

As Margaret has outlined in her report it has been a busy year at CRU with the varied projects and workshops. Having the responsibility of ensuring that the financial elements of the organisation support this work and ultimately enhance the possibilities for people with a disability to belong and participate in community life is something I value.

The financial position for the year is represented by a surplus of \$42,367. Income remained similar to the previous year as grants from government, workshop income and interest income. Expenditure is represented predominantly as wages and consultancy fees. The retained surplus at the end of the financial year is \$779,996, an increase from last year from \$737,599.

This financial year saw the commencement of the next three year strategic plan. Together with this and the retained earnings position the Board have made a number of commitments to ensure the sustainability and continuity of CRU's work. The first being the adoption of the increased pay rates for staff and the second a decision to allocate funds to employ a full time consultant on a fixed term basis - both of which will, over the next three years see a reduction in the retained earnings position.

I acknowledge the support of the Department of Communities, Disability and Child Safety with the funding of the core grant and at the time of writing the report CRU had received notification that we would see a reduction with application of an efficiency dividend on our grant for this next financial year.

I thank Peter Hallahan (Hallahan & Co) Chartered Accountant for the audited financial statements and his continued support of CRU.

I thank Margaret and Bill for their skills and dedication to enable me to have confidence in the strong financial accountability of CRU.

Sherryn West
Treasurer
2011-2012

Directors Report

In the year 2011-2012, as it has done for many years now, CRU existed to support the development of leadership and authentic change which enhances the possibilities for people with disabilities to belong to and participate in community life.

In this report I will outline the activities and achievements for 2011 – 2012 against this mission and stated objectives.

Objective 1

Working towards intended, positive change by identifying issues of strategic significance and by exploring and demonstrating new possibilities.

In my report of 2010-2011 I commented on three projects under this objective, namely the succession project, the follow up to Optimal Individual Service Design (OISD) – Emergency and Crisis initiative and the Baillie Henderson Project. Work in these three areas has not been as intense as in previous years but CRU has continued some activity in each area.

The Succession Project Between 2004 and 2009, CRU had used this particular funding source to assist people with disabilities and their families to develop individually or family governed collectives. In late 2010 a session with representatives of some of the individually and family governed initiatives or organizations from the southeast corner of Queensland identified a variety of gaps in the development and safeguarding of person centered approaches in our sector. During 2011, Disability services, Parent to Parent, CRU and Pave the Way collaborated on a report on this funding stream and made recommendations for further development in the area of Lifelong Planning. As a result of these discussions and in negotiation with Disability Services, CRU decided to use this funding to focus on the skill development of more person-centred facilitators for the sector. In May and June 2012 a facilitation course was designed by Suellen Welch and myself with the assistance of Catherine Allen of Callen Consultants. Our thanks to Bridget Wickert, Carol Brosi, Julie VanOosten, Leanne Burke, Josey McMahon and Natalie Palelei who gave suggestions and feedback on the course content and process in the development phase.

Follow up to Optimal Individual Service Design (OISD) – Emergency and Crisis initiative. In late 2009, the Department of Communities Disability Services engaged Michael Kendrick to run ten-day OISD courses in Brisbane and Maryborough to focus on the most highly funded people in Queensland who were supported in non-government organizations. CRU was invited by the Department to follow up with 20 people and assist them and the people who supported them to translate the ideas from a visionary proposal, developed in the course, into a plan for moving forward. We accepted this one-year contract for 2010 because we believed that this was a very important issue in Queensland. The majority of available funding in the State was being directed to crisis and emergency responses leaving no resources and little hope for funding for people who were not in that category. Most of the people receiving large amounts of funding had very poor quality of life, by any measure. After the initial planning phase, CRU then undertook to support the implementation of the plans with six people, When the funding finished, CRU committed to continue providing a small amount of support from the organization's resources to four people.

In 2011-2012 CRU continued to support one person. I wish to thank Jane Sherwin who has supported this man and his family on behalf of CRU. The nature of our contribution is largely informal network development, linking, providing a sounding board and planning. This project has strongly reinforced our belief that funding alone will never be enough to provide a good life for people with disability. We had some discussion with Disability Services and a potential evaluator during the year but no progress has been made on an external evaluation of this project.

Baillie Henderson Project. Queensland Advocacy Incorporated instigated a Wasted Lives Campaign in 2010 to highlight the needs of people with disability housed in Queensland Health facilities. In early 2011 CRU and Michael Kendrick were engaged to plan with 35 people who have a single diagnosis of intellectual disability and who reside at the Baillie Henderson Hospital in Toowoomba. CRU agreed to this work because these people are among some of the most hidden and forgotten people with disability in our state. This work was postponed due to the floods last year. A scoping visit by Michael Kendrick and CRU was conducted in May 2011 and a report with a number of recommendations was presented to Disability Services. In the 2011-2012 year CRU held a meeting with Disability Services; a number of meetings with QAI; conversations with family members and conversations with regional staff –however, unfortunately there has been no further progress in providing alternative options for these people.

Preparation for the National Disability Insurance Scheme – In the first part of this financial year, there was much talk in our sector about the NDIS and its likely impact in the future. CRU staff attended some of the NDIS readiness conversations hosted by NDS, the roundtable on the NDIS for people with intellectual disability and the NDIS rally in late April.

CRU believes that a national scheme that provides for greater direction by people with disabilities and their families is a welcome and necessary change. However we do not believe that control of the money alone is enough to provide good and meaningful lives for vulnerable people. Nor is it enough to fix a system that the productivity commission found to be 'underfunded, unfair, fragmented, and inefficient, and that gives people with a disability little choice and no certainty of access to appropriate supports.'

For people who live with disability to have decent lives that are comparable to those of other people in the community and for this quality to be sustained throughout the person's lifetime we believe that an investment in people and their families – so that they are assisted to develop and articulate their vision; to plan; to expand their thinking and to develop leadership and advocacy skills is critical. There also needs to be a commitment to inclusion, an investment in human services and their staff; infrastructure funding, streamlined administrative arrangements and intentional and explicit safeguards. Investment in people and investment in human services needs to be matched with the inclusion of family and friends and the development and engagement of the general community. Only when all these elements are routinely provided will self-direction be achievable for the majority of people with disability, including those who have been disconnected from their family and who only have paid relationships in their lives.

After the State election in March as we entered a period of uncertainty in the sector about our current and more immediate funding for services and as it became clear that the Queensland government will not commit resources to participate in the NDIS our belief that we should focus on self-direction rather than the NDIS as the particular vehicle for self-direction was confirmed.

As there is an alliance of organisations already engaged in self direction offering inspiring and informative workshops around the state, we decided to make a contribution to this thinking through the publication of CRUcial Times on the theme of self-direction. The combination of

local stories and national and international perspectives was very well received. CRU was also represented in a consultation and co-design process on self-direction with Disability Services in March.

Along with many other organisations CRU also holds some concerns about the security of our own ongoing funding under NDIS and the management committee has had some preliminary conversations about how to best prepare for that time.

The future funding of advocacy organisations is also under threat in the proposed NDIS model. This was one of the factors in mind when CRU worked with advocates earlier this year to design a workshop to revisit some of the fundamentals of Social Advocacy. This was seen as one way to help strengthen both formal and informal advocacy in Queensland. This workshop was held in Brisbane in March and led by Jan Dyke and Michael Kendrick and was very well attended. Following the workshop, discussion with representatives from key advocacy groups and other advocates was held to discuss follow up. A number of proposals were discussed about ways CRU (and others) can contribute to the ongoing development and safeguarding of advocacy. We see a particular role for CRU in the skill development of informal advocates.

Facilitated Communication safeguarding group - CRU has joined a small group of facilitated communication users, family members, service workers and interested professionals known as the Communication Rights Alliance who meet regularly because they are concerned about a threat to people's right to communicate in the manner of their choice. They are concerned that access to Facilitated Communication Training is likely to be at risk due to some changes in direction within Disability Services,. The Alliance is currently finalizing a position statement to encourage greater awareness of this issue and seek support for continued access to facilitated communication. CRU made a submission to the independent review of Facilitated Communication, commissioned by Disability Services.

Objective 2

Challenging, encouraging and contributing to the growth and development of people who are involved in change efforts by offering a range of educational and developmental opportunities and leadership opportunities.

CRU conducted fifteen events between July 2011 and June 2012. These ranged in length from a few hours to three days and there were 646 registrations received in total. Seven of these events were held outside Brisbane.

There were regional participants at many of the Brisbane workshops during the year. Some of these were self-funded; some supported by other organisations to attend and some were supported by CRU.

See details over page.

Events Offered in 2011/2012

Date	Workshop	Region	No of days	No of Participants
August 2011	Life Sharing with Patricia Fratangelo	Brisbane	1 day	65
	Half day conversations on Life Sharing with Pat Fratangelo		2 x half days	32
August 2011	Leadership with Bruce Uditsky and Anne Hughson	Brisbane	1 day	30
October 2011	Building a Context for Relationship with Janet Klees	Townsville	1 day	20
November 2011	Living Real Lives in the Community – Michael Kendrick	Brisbane	3 days	80
November 2011	Living Real Lives in the Community – Michael Kendrick	Mackay	2 days	42
November 2011	Living Real Lives in the Community – Michael Kendrick	Cairns	3 days	35
November 2011	Living Real Lives in the Community – Michael Kendrick	Toowoomba	1 day	60
February 29 2012 5.30-7.30	Crucial Conversation – Making Space for others to be Involved Facilitated by Neil Barringham.	Cru office Brisbane	2 hrs	25
March 8 2012 9 – 5pm	Responding Well to people with challenging behaviors and its messages– Ann Greer	Brisbane	1 day	34
March 12, 2012 9 – 5pm	An Introduction to the fundamentals of Social Advocacy - Presented by Michael Kendrick and Jan Dyke.	Brisbane	1 day	76
March 13, 2012 9 – 5pm	Dilemmas in Supporting Choice led by Michael Kendrick.	Sunshine Coast	1 day	40
April 27, 2012 9 – 5pm	Dilemmas in Supporting Choice led by Michael Kendrick	Ipswich	1 day	64
April 29,2012 10 – 3pm	Follow on day for past participants of previous OISD courses.	CRU Office Brisbane	Half day gathering for past participants	20
May 15, 2012 9 – 5pm	Leadership Models and Styles – Margaret Endicott	Townsville	1 day	23

During the year CRU convened regular meetings with other organizations, who offer development and training opportunities for Queensland families, particularly those that work on a state wide basis. This was done in a bid to co-ordinate strategies and timetables and to work together more efficiently. Pave the Way, Inspirit, Down Syndrome Association, Queensland Parents for People with a Disability, Parent to Parent and Workforce Council all accepted our invitation and this has already reduced duplication and strengthened connections. CRU convened and arranged for external facilitation of a planning day in early May with these groups and other interested individuals by invitation. The purpose was to reflect on what is likely to make a difference for people with disability and their families over time and how we might collaborate to more effectively meet these development needs, Notes were distributed to participants and CRU offered to host similar gatherings on an occasional basis.

Leadership During 2011-2012 CRU organised two leadership development opportunities. The first was a gathering at the CRU office with Bruce Uditsky and Anne Hughson from the Alberta Association for Community Living in August. This event drew on their experience of the benefits and limits of the introduction and subsequent decline of individualised funding in their province. They challenged our thinking on the NDIS and what will be needed for it to be a positive development. In May, we were also pleased to be able to offer a workshop which had been very well received in Brisbane to people in North Queensland. This workshop on Leadership Styles facilitated by Margaret Endicott is a very hands on interactive day that identifies and clarifies the many different styles of leadership.

During the strategic planning process CRU decided to continue to offer leadership development opportunities to emerging and existing leaders in the sector generally but to take a particular focus on the development of Family Leadership. Consequently, during 2012 Lisa Bridle has conducted consultations with local, national and international colleagues who are either family leaders or are offering family leadership and consulted with a number of Queensland family support organisations and interested individuals. From this she has developed a proposal for a family leadership program and also a list of possible participants based on the recommendations of these organisations. The proposal included short term and long term strategies A reference group began to meet in May to contribute to the development of this initiative. Our thanks go to Brian Procopis; Chris Procopis; Anita Speed; Sharon Bourke; Jo Stephens; Helen Webster; Sherryn West; Virginia Lonsdale and Jane Geltch for their contribution to these great discussions which helped to shape the proposal. The aim of the program is to support family members who are already in leadership roles and to strengthen the connections between families involved in change efforts. The program will be designed for family members who have not had many previous opportunities for leadership development .The program aims to reduce barriers to participation and to cater for families in regional areas.

The first international SRV conference to be held in Australia was held in Canberra in September 2011. CRU committee and staff saw this conference as important to support and attend. Social Role Valorisation theory (SRV) has been a critical influence in CRU's development. The theme "Getting the Good Life: from Ideas to Actions." fitted well with the investment that CRU and others have made in teaching SRV over the past 20 years and the subsequent initiatives, steeped in this work, that have developed as a result of this investment. CRU supported Suellen, Lisa and myself to attend the conference; subsidized the participation of one committee member and in collaboration with Pave the Way provided bursaries for 7 other people from Queensland to attend. These bursary recipients were 5 parents, 1 sister and 1 worker and came from Rockhampton, Mackay, Townsville, Innisfail, Toowoomba and Brisbane. Lisa presented a paper, titled "Choosing who belongs: the meaning of family in the age of genetics" and I presented a paper, entitled "Leading others from Ideas to Action" which

was developed in collaboration with Anne Cross and Jane Sherwin. CRU also held a bookstall at the conference which raised our profile **and** sold a lot of books!

In November 2011, we were very pleased to partner once again with Department of Communities- Disability Services in the provision of the “Living Real Lives in the Community – what does it take and what gets in the way” workshops by Michael Kendrick. In 2011 they were offered in Cairns, Mackay, Toowoomba and Brisbane and a total of 220 people had the opportunity to attend. During each workshop, a panel of people with disabilities and their family or friends shared their personal stories of living their lives in the community. I wish to thank June Arthy and Jan Dyke, Dan Read and Sharon Bourke, Brenda Schurman, Jill Hole, Bobby Noone and Cathie Rogers for giving so generously of their time and for being prepared to share their story so that others might learn. Partnering with Disability Services enabled us to take the workshops to more regional areas and introduced new people to CRU.

The future of these partnerships is unclear with changes in personnel and restructures in Disability Services so we are pleased that in the past 3 years we were able to assist 730 people to attend either the Living Real Lives workshop or the Optimal Individual Service Design course. This has been a worthwhile investment and gives us much to build on in the future

Objective 3

Developing and safeguarding those elements that contribute to quality services by supporting the work of community agencies that are striving to be responsive to the needs of people with disabilities and their families.

In the course of the year, CRU staff members have been involved in many informal or semi-formal conversations or meetings (and some celebrations) with community organizations. This is a role that ranges from being a sounding board, generating ideas, connecting people, providing a facilitator or lending a meeting room.

CRU continues to liaise with the Queensland SRV Safeguarding Group. These occasional meetings aim to develop a combined approach to promoting and safeguarding this thinking across the state. During the year we started to plan a retreat style day for members of this group to be led by Darcy Elks in July.

From time to time we have visitors from interstate and overseas who come to share with us what they do and hear what is happening in Queensland. This year we have had visitors from Ireland, Canada and Western Australia. CRU played a role in introducing and linking some of these visitors to various individuals and organisations in Queensland who had similar interests or expertise.

There was a steady stream of requests for information during the year via phone calls, emails and visits to the CRU office, with an average of 12 per month.

CRU staff also accepted invitations to present to medical students and early childhood education students and to present at the QCOSS conference, the SRV conference and the Compliance, Corporatisation and Community workshop. In addition, we were involved in co-presenting the Optimal Individual Service design workshop in Bendigo; a workshop on Support Circles in Auckland and the development of a workshop for support workers for the Workforce Council, which was presented in June. I contributed a paper to the “Thinking About” periodical for Belonging Matters, entitled “Asking others to be there- Creating a place for support and friendship to grow”.

In April 2012, twenty past participants of the Optimal Individual Service Design courses met with CRU and Michael Kendrick. There were representatives from the courses run by Disability Services in 2009; the Brisbane course in 2010, the Gold Coast course in 2011 or from interstate courses. As this is a costly and intensive course for all parties, we were keen to explore with past participants the extent to which they had been able to put into practice the philosophy and frameworks of the course and to what extent this investment had influenced their work and/or personal perspectives after the course. The feedback from the twenty people present was very positive. People reported that they appreciated the depth and breadth of the course and the encouragement to imagine better and to think beyond funding. Others talked of a move from 'risk management' thinking to thinking about how to safeguard a real life. The powerful and positive feedback from the day confirmed that CRU should continue to invest in this course in the future.

Objective 4

Drawing attention to key challenges in the disability field and providing information about them.

CRU has continued to be a member of the Community Safeguards Coalition during 2011-2012. This coalition of individuals and agencies is concerned about the rights, interests and lives of people with disability with particular focus on people's right to choose their living arrangements. During this year, CRU contributed financially to this work and has been a signatory on a number of petitions and letters but has not attended meetings due to capacity.

I have been a member of the Community Living Initiative Reference group and part of a team who oversee the Appraisal Panel for the Community Living Initiative. I am also a member of the associated Enablers Reference group, which met every six weeks this year. We acknowledge that this funding initiative is not suitable for everyone but CRU supports this positive move away from the crisis response.

The Department of Communities – Disability Services engaged Michael Kendrick to evaluate the Community Living Initiative in December 2012. Michael was assisted in this task by Sharyn Pacey, Anita Speed, Judy Pagan and Bronia Holyoak. The team was based at CRU for four days and CRU assisted with co-ordination of interviews and other practical tasks to support the team.

Two editions of CRUcial times were developed in this period. Edition 42 on the theme of Courage was published and distributed in October 2011 and Edition 43 on the theme of Self Direction was developed during this year and circulated in July 2012.

CRU launched a new website in July 2011. User friendly software means that most updates can now be done in house which is a step forward from the previous website.

CRU continues to offer its own publications for sale and an additional 13 publications, mostly from international writers. This is a small piece of our work that continues to be appreciated and well received as people seek to learn from the experience of others. In 2011-2012 CRU sold a total of 500 books. The bookstall at the SRV international conference accounts for increased numbers this year. Having Paypal and an online bookstore on our website have also contributed to a steady increase in sales.

In May CRU convened a meeting to discuss the merit of marking the 25th anniversary of the Search Conference which was held in October 1987. The 'idea' of CRU came from this event that was convened by QPPD. The general agreement was that this was worth celebrating as a

separate event to 25 years of CRU which will occur in 2013. The committee and staff of CRU have appreciated the enthusiasm, good ideas and practical advice from Bronwyn Moloney, Lesley Chenoweth, Anne Cross and Margaret Ward in the months since as plans for the celebration developed.

Objective 5

Operating a viable and accountable organization that reflects in its operation, the values and beliefs underpinning its mission.

Our strategies for meeting these goals have also been guided by the fact that we are predominantly funded as an information service.

Our staff numbers are small – the full time equivalent is just under 4 positions which include our administration and finance staff. CRU could not do what it does without the generosity, commitment and flexibility of the staff. Each member of our team is committed to the purpose and work of CRU and is also committed to the support of the other members.

I want to thank all staff who have been employed by CRU during 2011-2012 namely Bobby Noone, Kim Jensen and Kath Fleming who make up the admin team. My thanks to Lisa Bridle who is our Senior consultant and takes responsibility for the Leadership goal and Suellen Welch who is a consultant working in the area of person centred practice. Bill Kyle started with us as finance officer in September replacing Margaret MacDermott who had held the role in the first months of the new year. Thank you Bill and Margaret for your work, particularly your investigative and tracking skills in the finance area of CRU.

In addition to the employees of CRU there are a number of other people who helped keep CRU running during 2010-2011. I would like to take this opportunity to thank Paul Hebing, Rebecca Johnston, Vicky Leary, Stephen Tonge, Peter Hallahan, Margaret Endicott, Dave Drinkall and Helen, Judith and Jon from '99 Consulting' for their commitment to CRU in the 2010-2011 year. This band of people provided their services as consultants or on a contract basis and while often working in the background played a critical part in keeping CRU going.

Stephen Tonge, our Solicitor from Tresscox, has linked us with the pro-bono arm of Tresscox and we wish to particularly thank Stephen, Nicola Arvidson and their team for their assistance in 2011-2012.

From November to January, with the assistance of '99 Consulting' we undertook a review of our Policies and Procedures. The whole team was involved in the review and the streamlining and development of new processes and structures and as a result we are all more aware of the procedures. After that big effort, we hope that ongoing annual reviews and updates will be much more straightforward.

The Quality Systems surveillance Audit was conducted by Health and Disability Auditing Association in February 2012. CRU met the requirements of ISO9001. I wish to particularly thank Lisa Bridle for her contribution to this process.

We were successful in gaining a grant from the Community Gaming Fund for IT upgrades and development. A two year delay between our submission and receiving the grant meant that it was partially redundant. Further delays with renegotiation and payment mean that this will not be finalized until December 2012,

Between April and June, Lisa and I attended workshops at NDS on Business Planning, Financial Viability and Sustainability and Costing, Pricing and Budgeting.

At the end of June CRU signed a three-year output based service agreement with the Department of Communities – Disability Services for the period June 2012- June 2015.

CRU is in the fortunate position of having a surplus of funds. While the committee has a strong commitment to directing these funds back into the work of CRU as soon as possible, the conversation about how to use them has been complicated by our lack of certainty about our core funding. Thanks to Bill Kyle for his work in modeling and costing various options to support this decision making.

The introduction of the new award has been on the agenda throughout this period. As an information service, CRU did not receive supplementation funding so was not involved in the negotiations over back pay. In April, the committee decided to pay staff at the end point of the new award and not to delay that process over nine years.

CRU Committee and staff began a three year strategic planning process in July 2011 for the period 2011-2014 with the assistance of Margaret Endicott as facilitator. After a series of meetings this process was ratified by the committee at the end of January 2012. A yearlong operational plan and individual work plans were developed from the strategic plan. CRU's Strategic Plan 2011-2014 outlined five strategic goals.

1. Develop strategic alliances and relationships with a broad dimension of people and organisations to grow our sphere of influence in order to achieve our vision.
2. Take an effective and influential role in the development and maintenance of robust leadership for authentic change and better lives for people with disability.
3. Promote, strengthen and defend person-centred and directed responses.
4. Resource people with up to date and relevant information so that people with disability can belong to and participate in community life.
5. Develop CRU as a well governed, responsive organization that is clear and faithful to its mission.

The major change to this strategic plan was the addition of a fifth goal that articulates our role in information provision as a separate goal. To match this new goal the Management Committee also decided to allocate funds to a new full time, fixed term consultant position to provide a dedicated focus to the provision and dissemination of information eg CRUcial Times, resource collection, the website and the development of information resources. We are keen that our information provision takes advantage of 21st century techniques without losing the wisdom and knowledge of the past. In short, don't bother looking for us on twitter just yet! In June, due to the uncertainty of funding for organisations that are not considered front line, we decided to delay recruitment of another staff member until after the state budget and to reassess the situation then.

As an organisation, with a sole mission and purpose of change agency, CRU has few colleagues with whom we can discuss and develop our practice. While Bruce Uditsky and Anne Hughson were visiting from Alberta in August the committee and staff took the opportunity of having a conversation with them on an organisation to organisation basis. We found it challenging and helpful to have people we respected look at what we are doing and ask the 'outsiders' questions.

I had the opportunity in September to travel to Vancouver in British Columbia, Canada and while there met with five organisations, involved with advocacy, and resourcing of people or organisations. I would like to thank the staff of Spectrum Association; Community Living British

Columbia, Family Support Institute, British Columbia Association for Community Living and Tim Stainton of University of British Columbia, for their time and generosity during my visit.

I also travelled to Portland, Oregon. Matt Stone, President of CRU, was holidaying in the United States and was able to join in meetings with the Human Services Research Institute and OTAC. Matt and I both attended the IIDL conference on Agency Transformation in San Francisco. Opportunities like these are helpful in stepping away from the known and our established patterns and reflecting on what CRU is but also what CRU could become. They are also a valuable way to meet people and share resources globally.

So, in summary, 2011-2012 has been a year of

- continuing small investments in things that we had already begun
- questioning whether what we are doing is the most effective option
- sharing what is possible and taking it deeper
- welcoming more people
- creating new responses
- ensuring that the organisation runs efficiently to support the work we do.

As we enter the 2012-2013 year, cuts to funding; the loss or threatened loss of supportive infrastructure; the lack of clarity about the NDIS and insecurity about the amount of formal support for people are all understandably preoccupying our constituents across the state.

Discerning the most useful thing CRU can offer seems harder than ever – in the face of this we take heart from two pieces of advice – the first from Barack Obama who reminds us that “Change will not come if we wait for some other person or some other time. We are the ones we’ve been waiting for. We are the change that we seek.” While I like that quote it is useful at this time I think to link this call to participate in and initiate change with another quote from Fulton Sheen who reminds us that “Patience is power. Patience is not an absence of action; rather it is ‘timing’, it waits on the right time to act, for the right principles and in the right way.”

With this in mind we look forward to a new year of working for change. We look forward to *patiently* working to maintain and foster those things that are most likely to endure in the lives of people who live with disability over the long term. And, we look forward to doing this together.

Margaret Rodgers
26th October 2012