

Organisation Profile

Who We Are

and

What We Do

Last updated: July 2009

Vision

A society without barriers for people with spinal cord injury.

Mission

Our constant innovation creates independence and unlimited opportunity for people living with spinal cord injury.

The Board of Directors

The Board of Directors is elected by the Members of the organisation for a two year period with half standing down annually. There are also two Invited Directors, who are chosen for their particular skills or experience. The Board is ultimately responsible for the governance and performance of SCI Australia.

The Board consists of an elected President, a Chairman (these may be the same person), and other Directors. The maximum size of the Board is nine. Persons with disabilities constitute a majority of the board.

All Directors operate in a voluntary capacity. They meet at least once a month. In addition, many of them serve on sub-committees of the Board, which look at specific areas of operation or issues of interest, eg Member Issues, Finance, Planning, Governance, Policy Development and Legal Issues.

The Chief Executive Officer

The management of SCIA is delegated to the Chief Executive Officer who has overall responsibility for all areas of operation. The Chief Executive Officer is accountable to the Board and reports directly to the Board on the organisation's monthly activities and advises the Governance and Finance Sub-Committee of the Board on policy and strategic direction issues.

The Chief Executive Officer has overall responsibility for:

Independent Living:

- Accommodation
- Emergency Services
- Respite
- Carer Needs

Community Development:

- Walk On
- Geo & Data Processing

Regional Services:

- Southern Region (Wollongong)
- Central West (Mudgee)
- New England (Tamworth)
- Northern Rivers (Lismore)

Resource Development

- Member Engagement
- Member Growth
- Information
- Research
- Employment Services
- Peer Support
- Service Development
- Project Management
- Client Intake and Referral

Policy and Advocacy:

- Policy, Government Relations, Advocacy
- Accord Magazine

Partnerships:

- Fundraising Appeals and Events
- Trusts and Foundations
- Corporate Partnerships
- Teamsafe
- Wheelies Challenge
- Field Appeals
- Public Relations
- Marketing

Corporate Services:

- Finance
- Human Resources
- Information Technology
- Administration

A Brief Overview of our Services

Information Service (SCInfo)

The goal of SCInfo is to develop and improve existing information services in regards to the needs of people with physical disabilities. This service is available to consumers and their families, carers, professionals and the general public Australia wide through our 1800 819 775 telephone number. Requests for information can be made in any form including via our website www.scia.org.au

The information team answers queries by phone, in writing, by fax or email. Additionally, the team manages SCIA's resource databases, the library and Community Survival Kit; communicates with other agencies here and overseas; maintains the organisation's website; and has a major role in the production of SCIA's quarterly magazine, Accord.

Accord provides a regular channel of information to members and raises advocacy issues. This highly respected publication is eagerly awaited and is seen as the voice of people with physical disabilities in Australia. It is read by over 19,000 people - SCIA members, consumers and supporters, politicians (state and federal), disability workers and organisations concerned with people with disabilities.

Policy and Advocacy

Policy and Advocacy represents the interests of people with severe physical disabilities in fighting for their rights and an equitable life. This involves research and the development of systemic policy through discussions with consumers, federal, state and local governments and service providers.

The goal of the systemic policy area is to remove barriers to independent living for people with severe physical disabilities - barriers such as inaccessible buildings, public transport, inadequate personal care services, expensive technology, personal equipment along with medication etc.

Systemic issues are presented in our quarterly Accord magazine. To get a better understanding of national issues we have interstate representatives who write for our magazine on matters which affect people with severe physical disabilities in their localities.

Over the years the organisation has managed to maintain a balance between alerting all levels of government to the difficulties faced by people with severe physical disabilities and assisting these levels of government to recognise and develop solutions.

Individual advocacy support services are critical to people who are struggling to find essential community services and develop relationships with service providers. This service takes the form of providing support and guidance for people to advocate for themselves, or for Spinal Cord Injuries (SCI) Australia staff to provide direct advocacy on their behalf. We work with our consumers to agree how the advocacy should be undertaken and we keep the consumer informed of progress.

Independent Living

The goal of Independent Living is to provide a range of accommodation support options for people with physical disabilities who require a high level of physical and/or emotional support.

In addition to our accommodation, SCI Australia runs an Emergency Service which is available for 4 hours during the day and 8 hours at night for consumers in a limited area within the Eastern Suburbs of Sydney. The purpose of this service is to support people who wish to stay in their own homes by dealing with issues before they become medical emergencies.

Peer Support

This area of operation offers initial support for people with spinal cord injuries or similar conditions, their family and/or carers. Talking to someone who has “been there” and understands what consumers are going through can take a large part of the anxiety away for those with a recent spinal cord injury. Providing information and support to their families is also crucial in getting the families to understand the person’s need for support and for independence.

Our staff provide assistance to consumers to enable them to achieve their personal goals and independence. The Peer Support team will be an integral part of the Independent Living Skill program at the Sargood Transitional Accommodation and Respite Centre.

The Peer Support team also provides services during the post trauma period of a spinal injury. Our staff make regular visits to the spinal injuries units at both the Prince of Wales and Royal North Shore Hospitals, as well as the Moorong Rehabilitation Service. The team liaises with spinal injuries unit staff to identify ongoing post-hospital support requirements.

The Peer Support team also develops and maintains contact with SCIA’s consumers and networks with other community agencies and government services to develop links for consumers.

Regional Services

SCI Australia operates in the following areas of NSW: Central West, New England, Northern Rivers plus the South Coast and Southern Highlands.

The regional team provides information, case work, and advocacy to consumers and their families. The team operates as an SCI Australia in “miniature”. It is the section of the organisation working in regional communities to provide support and assistance to the individual while also working to effect community change and so provide for a more “friendly” environment for people with severe physical disabilities.

In the Illawarra we also have a Training and Resource Centre which was established in 1986 to meet the needs of the consumer group in the area. The role of the centre is to provide information and training to people with severe physical disabilities in the region. The centre also provides a focal point for any person from the region seeking to become a client, to assess that person’s needs and to coordinate the delivery of all services required to address those needs. It doubles as a recreation facility within the area where people can meet regularly to gain recreational and social skills, information and peer support.

The centre has been heavily involved in the general community promoting public awareness of disability issues, networking with other service providers, and identifying and participating in forums and committees that may impact on the lives of the client group.

Services managed by the South Coast and Southern Highlands Service include independent living training; peer support; brokerage/referral service; information on all issues relating to access and disability; and outreach.

Vocational and Employment Services for people with disabilities SCI Workforce Australia

SCI Workforce is the employment and vocational arm of SCI Australia. SCI Workforce services people with disabilities in achieving sustainable employment outcomes through its contract with the Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations (DEEWR). SCI Workforce helps job seekers by providing services from pre-employment training (such as Job Search Training and Career Planning) through to post-employment support - such as modification to work area if needed and regular follow up with the job seeker to ensure work is going well.

Pre-Employment Preparation

An Employment Consultant works with clients on an individual basis and establishes a job search plan. This includes identifying their key strengths and barriers to employment options. An Employment Consultant then discusses key goals, strategies and objectives with clients. Tasks are then allocated to the client for completion with the assistance of the Employment Consultant. In doing so, clients have a step by step job search plan with the aim of achieving a sustainable job.

Job Ready

“Job Ready” are review sessions that are designed to help clients plan their next step in gaining employment. These include aspects such as whether a change in a client’s goals and objectives is necessary to gain the best possible employment outcome. Most importantly the sessions aim at keeping clients on track in achieving their goals and objectives as identified in the job search plan.

Starting Work—Post Employment Support

SCI Workforce continues to support clients once they are employed. Employment Consultants maintain regular contact with their clients to ensure they are happy with their job.

In addition to its contracted Disability Employment Network (DEN) services with DEWR, SCI Workforce provides vocational guidance, training and re-integration back into the community.

SCI Geo and Data Processing

SCI Geo and Data provides Data Entry and GIS (Geographical Information Systems) based mapping requirements, using specialised software.

SCI Geo and Data are currently operating one contract. That is the “Crash Coding” contract with the Roads and Traffic Authority (RTA). They have maintained this contract for over 25 years. In this contract they provide mapping and data entry services as well as statistical and geographical analysis based on Police Reports of accidents in NSW – 45,000 are coded each year. This information is then used by the RTA for a myriad of purposes including the identification of ‘Black Spots’ on NSW roads. The contract is ever changing and is usually up for open competitive tender every 5 years.

SCI Geo and Data is also the main entry point for staff who enter employment through the FaHCSIA funded Australian Disability Enterprises scheme. FaHCSIA supplies basic funding to assist SCIA in supporting staff through their employment, as well as encouraging and developing their career employment plans. Unlike the majority of disability enterprises throughout Australia, SCIA provides full award wages, and these staff are fully integrated in SCIA’s inclusive approach to employment. In simple terms, all staff are employed on their abilities and potential and as such all SCIA staff are expected to support all other staff in the achievement of their specific roles.

Field Appeals

Field Appeals is the traditional face to face donation gathering arm of SCI Australia. The collection methods are street collecting and door knocking. We also provide Counter Collection Displays (CCD’s) in retail outlets to raise much needed funds to support the services of SCIA.

Street Appeals consists of Commission Agents who solicit funds from the public. These appeals are conducted predominantly in Sydney and surrounding metropolitan areas. Where possible we also attempt to hire Commission Agents in regional areas.

Field Appeals is very much an environment where we help our Commission Agents by providing worthwhile employment that they may not necessarily be able to seek in main stream employment fields, or need a source of income until they can.

Walk On

The “Walk On SCI Recovery Project” is an initiative of SCI Australia to bring the world leading Project Walk Spinal Cord Injury Recovery Program to Australia. The first facility is based in the suburb of Bowen Hills in Brisbane. The Walk On intensive exercise recovery program offers a path to maximising functional recovery through a structured program based upon the Project Walk www.projectwalk.org methodology. Project Walk findings have demonstrated that the techniques used increase central nervous system activity, muscle mass and movement, and decrease pain, depression, skin tissue breakdown and other health problems associated with spinal cord injury. These findings are supported by recent scientific discovery involving leading neuroscientists.

Partnerships

The Partnerships team works to raise funds and awareness to support the critical services that SCIA provides.

Our team manages a range of activities involving both the general community and the corporate sector. Our main goal is to build mutually beneficial partnerships with our supporters and to welcome new supporters.

Teamsafe

Teamsafe is SCIA’s injury prevention program. The aim of the program is to help reduce injury and death in the workplace by supporting positive Occupational Health and Safety outcomes.

Tens of thousands of people are seriously injured in the workplace each year. Many incidents result in death.

Such incidents have a ripple effect through the workplace, into families and communities.

Teamsafe aims to motivate employees to take personal ownership of OH&S in their workplace. The communication model is designed to emotionalise the issue of safety and make it personally relevant. Employees are engaged through a series of learning modules including the shared experience of people seriously injured in the workplace. We call them Teamsafe Ambassadors.

Appeals

We appreciate the generous donations from our supporters who respond to Appeal letters in June and December. Our Customer Relationship Database maintains the donor database for mailing appeals. There are currently over 3000 people on this database.

Planned Giving

The Supporter Partnerships team has set up a Planned Giving program to celebrate our known Benefactors while they are still with us. We appreciate the chance to directly thank those that have recognised us in their Will while we still have the chance.

A bequest transforms your will into a potent tool for change, while still providing peace of mind knowing your loved ones have been provided for. Writing your will is a simple but powerful way to provide support for the cause you've been passionate about throughout your life.

Additionally, for those unable to make donations in everyday life, bequests give them the chance to leave a legacy for future generations.

Specific Bequest: the gift of a specific sum of money or asset such as property, parcel of shares, debentures, bonds or a life insurance policy.

Residual Bequest: what remains in your estate, after all debts have been paid and all other gifts have been distributed.

Alternative Bequest: since it might be many years between the making of your Will and its operation, you can make provision that, if any named beneficiary cannot accept your bequest, Spinal Cord Injuries Australia will benefit.

Proportional Bequest: a specific proportion on your residual estate can be left, eg: 75 percent of your residuary estate.

For more information on leaving a bequest to Spinal Cord Injuries Australia please email bequests@scia.org.au

Trusts and Foundations

We are consistently working on developing relationships with Trusts in order to support our work. Charitable Trusts and Foundations distribute hundreds of millions of dollars each year to education, the arts, welfare, health, the environment and medical research.

- There are approximately 2,000 trusts and foundations in Australia.
- These foundations disperse between half a billion and \$1 billion per annum.
- Australian foundations have total assets of over \$10 billion.

Grants

Our team applies for appropriate funding from grants that support our programs and initiatives. Grants provide a valuable source of funding as they can often be

recurring over a period of years. Grants can provide for any number of different needs from prevention initiatives to equipment and supplies.

Sargood Centre

Plans have been drawn up for the Sargood Centre at Collaroy in Sydney's northern beaches. Featuring state of the art access and technologic assistive devices, this centre will provide short term transitional and respite accommodation.

The transitional accommodation service will be offered in conjunction with an independent living skills programme for people with spinal cord injuries. The purpose of this programme is to assist people with a recent spinal cord injury to adapt to the different way they will manage their daily activities when they return home. It will be the empowering link between the 24 hours of care in the hospital model and the reduced level of care they will have in their own homes. People with spinal cord injuries now have many new aspects of their life to manage - personal carers, equipment, pain management and programmes to prevent long term health issues. Through the independent living skills programme, we will assist people to be more confident in taking control and managing these new aspects of their life.

For people who are ventilator dependent having personal carers or nurses in their home 24 hours of every day is a big adjustment both to the person with the injury, their partner and their family. The independent living skills programme will be designed to support people through this adjustment period in a way that allows them to try different approaches in a safe environment before returning home.

The respite service will be available to a broader range of our consumers including people with spinal cord injuries, muscular dystrophy, and multiple sclerosis.

The centre will also have rooms made available to enable family members to stay for short periods. This facility is expected to be completed in 2011.