Plumtree is proud to incubate the Now and Next program.

Our passionate, culturally diverse team of specialists work from the heart in a caring environment where families no longer feel isolated, but instead feel respected and informed.

We offer a range of tailored, family and community focussed services including Education, Therapy, Information and Training.

We also create innovative, research based approaches and resources to assist families to take control of their own learning to achieve positive outcomes.

plumtree.org.au

now & next™
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Educate & empower parents

2nd Annual 2018

Now & Next Alumni Conference

Reach for the stars

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Educate & empower parents

Alumni Conference Program
30th June 2018,
8.30am - 4.30pm
Canterbury Public School,
Church Street, Canterbury

Now & Next

An innovative program delivered for parents by parents

Now and Next is a program for parents and carers of children who have a delay or disability. Now and Next gives you the practical skills to make a difference to your child and family.

As parents or carers, you will make the biggest difference in your child's life. Now and Next gives you the practical skills to do this.

- An award winning program that is internationally recognised as ground breaking;
- Developed using the evidence on positive psychology, family leadership, gamification and family–centred practice;
- Run by trained and knowledgeable facilitators who are parents themselves;
- Being run across various countries around the world;
- Based on principles of adult learning.

Thank you to our supporters

Thank you to the **NDIA ILC** for the grant which has provided funding to expand the Now and Next program in the past 18 months and which has also enabled us to host our first two family conferences in 2017 and 2018.

Thank you to **Inner West Council Community Grants** for their support of the Now and Next Alumni Conference 2018.

Thank you to all the families involved with organising the Conference.

Reflections

Ideas I loved...

Best quotes...

My next steps...

Joanne Basha, Sydney

Joanne Basha is the mother of three boys including Nathan. Joanne and her husband always knew that they wanted Nathan to enjoy all that life has to offer and made a pact that they would do everything possible to enable Nathan to reach his potential… whatever that would be. Joanne brings a wealth of experiences and insights around creating a space for possibility.
Nathan and Jo will share their insights

Christopher Hills, Queensland

Christopher is a video editor, accessibility consultant and owner of Switched-On Video Editing. His clients include Queensland Health, Control Bionics, and the NDIA. An Accessibility Ambassador and member of the Apple Consultants Network, Christopher studied video production at RMIT University. His YouTube Channel videos cover how inclusive technology has impacted his life.
Christopher is a public speaker, presenting at various national and international conferences.
He enjoys all things technology related, flying flight simulators, and the Marvel Universe characters.

Garry Hills, Queensland

Garry is Christopher's father, who lives in the hinterland of Queensland's Sunshine Coast. Since 2003, he has been the primary carer for Christopher, who is quadriplegic with Cerebral Palsy. Garry's years as a carer, home-schooler and parent have been life-shaping. He is an Accessibility Ambassador, an Accessibility Consultant and an educator with extensive experience in public speaking across multiple platforms. Garry is passionate about helping parents, carers, support workers, educators and those with disabilities understand and make the most of Apple's inclusive technologies.

Karim Bouchafa, Sydney

Karim is a performer, university student and two times "Don't Dis My Ability" ambassador.
His dream is to show the world just how much people with disabilities have to offer. Since 2010 he has been a public speaker sharing the benefits of self-directed funding. His business, Karim's Mojo Disco, is a life-changing motivational presentation, in which he conveys his message that disability shouldn't stand in the way of achieving goals.

Welcome

As families we want the very best for our children and our mission is to aim high for a positive and hopeful future. But hope is not enough - we need the skills, knowledge and networks to help us continue to strive and Reach for the Stars.

The 2nd Now and Next Alumni conference is a by families for families event which provides us with the opportunity to reinvigorate our vision; challenge our thinking; and be inspired and informed to create a better future for our children, our families and ourselves.

I congratulate you for making the time to attend this important event which is an investment into your family's leadership. I urge you to continue investing into yourselves because it is only through our continued vision and effort as families that we will realise a better future for our children.

We are excited to welcome our presenters who are families of children with disabilities and people with disability from Sydney, Queensland, South Australia, New Zealand, Finland and Canada.

We also welcome the Now and Next Alumni, families and special guests. I hope that we all leave this conference with new ideas and energy to make the changes which will help our children and families to be more included in community, more independent and develop our agency and self-determination. Together we will Reach for the Stars!

Plumtree is proud to incubate the Now and Next program and Alumni and we will continue to work together to build family leadership in Australia with families of very young children with developmental delay and disabilities.

Sylvana Mahmic

CEO Plumtree

Sylvana Mahmic

Sylvana Mahmic is the CEO of Plumtree and an advocate for early childhood intervention and self-management. She has worked in the early childhood intervention field for 25 years, with a particular expertise in a whole of family and community approach to children and families. Since 2013, she has used action research to examine practice at Plumtree and this has resulted in co-design of the ground breaking Now and Next™ program and Pictability™.

She has served on over 15 reference and advisory groups in addition to five Ministerial appointments including membership of the Disability Council NSW. Ms Mahmic has held executive positions on the Board of Early Childhood Intervention Australia NSW throughout the past 10 years and was vice president of the inaugural Diversity Disability Alliance board. She is currently a member of the Access Advisory Group NSW Department of Premier and Cabinet, NSW Family and Community Services Multicultural Advisory Group, Australian Museum Access and Inclusion Advisory Panel and is serving a second term as member of the National Disability Insurance Scheme Independent Advisory Council.

Sylvana is completing post graduate research with a focus on individualised support and self-directed funding for families of young children. Since 2009, she and her family have been learning about and helping her son to self-manage his individual funding.

Program

8:30 - 9:30	**Conference registration and breakfast**
9:30 - 9:35	**Welcome to Country** Presented by Joshua Dinkin
9:35 - 9:45	**Family agency is the foundation of your child's future** Sylvana Mahmic, CEO, Plumtree
9:45 - 9:50	**Building evidence on Now & Next outcomes** Dr Annick Janson
9:50 - 10:30	**From little acorns, mighty oaks grow** Dr Pippa Murray

Pippa will explore ways parents can shape the lives of their children, whatever their needs. She will share inspiring stories and images of young people with disabilities having fantastic lives. Her talk concerns family life, the gifts our children bring, meeting the needs of siblings, the importance of listening to our children—however they might communicate. Other topics include finding ways to positively influence discussions and meetings with professionals; staying strong and feeling good. With the right support, we can do anything!

10:30 - 11:30	**Q&A Panel: Leaning in to relationships with professionals** Panel of parents and professionals

At last year's inaugural NANA Conference, participants collectively created a Parent Professional Relationships Statement. This year, our Q&A panel will tackle this issue more deeply. It will explore how parents can lean in to partnerships with professionals who provide support, to achieve the best outcomes for our children. By examining the relationships they have created with educators, therapists, and medical specialists, the panel will share their expertise about how you can maximize professional partnerships to benefit your child.

11:30 - 11:40	**Pictability launch**
11:40 - 12:30	**Lunch**

SESSION 1	SESSION 2
12:30pm - 1pm **Fostering your child's self-advocacy skills** Dr Melanie Heyworth	12:30 - 1pm **Creating connected communities with and without NDIS funding** Jacqui Godwin, Marie Vlahakis and Nicole Buffoni
For many of us, our lives have been punctuated by moments of needing to amplify our child's voices by being their advocate and champion within their community. We've ensured—or tried to ensure—that our community understands the needs of our children, and have fought to have those needs accommodated. But how do we encourage and support our children to accept the responsibility to self-advocate and embrace their role? This practical session will give you tips about taking the first steps to foster your child's self-advocacy skills.	Hear three very different parent stories on how they have created connections at school, in the home and the community, both with and without the use of NDIS funding. The discussion includes tips on: • Finding the right therapy assistants, training and managing them; • Using funding to train people across multiple settings (such as preschool teachers, family members and support workers) to support your child's development; and • Creating a community of friendship and support at school.

Dr Emma Goodall, South Australia

Emma is an aspie, a teacher educator and an autism consultant. Holding a PhD in teaching autistic students, she has supported students and teachers in school roles. She co-authored The Guide to Good Mental Health on the Autism Spectrum, The Parents' Practical Guide to Resilience for Children Aged 2-10 on the Autism Spectrum, and authored the wonderful parent/teacher resource Understanding and Facilitating the Achievement of Autistic Potential. Emma is a member of the ASAN AUNZ Committee.

Jacqui Godwin, Sydney

Jacqui Godwin looks after her gorgeous four-year-old daughter, Sophie, who has a rare genetic condition. She is managing Sophie's NDIS plan and funding with a plan manager.
She is writing a PhD thesis in Chinese Studies at Sydney University, and has taught Chinese Studies at the University of New South Wales and Sydney University. She has given twelve conference papers or talks, including a one-hour lunch-time talk at the University of Sydney Art Gallery.

Marie Vlahakis, Sydney

Marie is the Support Unit Parent Representative at Canterbury Public School which her son Kosta attends. Marie aims to encourage parent involvement with their child's education and have a close alignment with the classroom teacher(s) to get the most out of their schooling years. This also creates bonds between parents to not only build a support network for themselves but to also be an example to their children and show them the importance of friendships and communities. Marie is a big advocate of open discussions between students and teachers which fosters understanding and inclusion of all abilities, this helps in creating friendships and strong bonds to empower our children now and into their future.

Nathan Basha, Sydney

Nathan has Down syndrome, but asserts: "That's not who I am." He is a filmmaker, a University of Sydney alumni and employee at popular radio station Nova 96.9. Nathan is passionate about sharing insights on the possibilities when people are encouraged to live their dreams and live life to their full potential. He has spoken at international and national conferences, political forums, corporate functions, universities, schools, community groups and workshops.

Melo Kalemkeridis, Sydney

Melo has held National and State roles in Sales and Training within the FMCG sector for 20+ years. He is father to 8yo Yianni and 6yo Victoria who has a disability.
Since the birth of his daughter Melo shifted his focus from understanding consumer behaviour to studying individual behaviour. He is a Performance Coach, NLP Practitioner, Facillitator of parenting programs, Circle of Security, 123 Magic and Now and Next, and runs MyTime Men's Group. His philosophy is, Better Parent, Better Partner, Better Person. He couldn't do any of the work he does without the support of his beautiful wife, Angela.

Dr Melanie Heyworth, Sydney

Melanie became interested in disability four years ago, when her eldest son was identified with autism. In the subsequent years, her two other sons, and Melanie herself, have also been given identified as autistic. In order to better understand the implications of her sons' autism diagnoses, Melanie completed her postgraduate study in autism in 2015. She is a passionate champion of autism acceptance and inclusion, equity, neurodiversity, and listening to autistic voices. Although she home-schools her three boys, Melanie is deeply committed to helping families with school-aged children in their journey to experience genuinely inclusive schooling.

Nicole Buffoni, Sydney

Nicole is a peer worker at Plumtree. She supports parents of children with a delay or disability, gives them the tools to develop leadership skills and foster their child's development. Nicole has also worked as Theatre Director and Literary Co-ordinator for the Ensemble Theatre in Sydney. From the time she first suspected her son was on the Autism Spectrum, Nicole dedicated herself to learning more about autism and helping her son. Since then, she has learned so much from professionals and other parents, but most significantly from adults on the autism spectrum.

Stephanie Wacker, New Zealand

Stephanie is a mother of two amazing children, Melanie and Harrison, who are 20 and 17 years old, respectively. She is an Early Intervention Teacher at McKenzie Centre in Hamilton, New Zealand. Stephanie first became involved in the world of Special Education when her son required Early Intervention Services as a three-year old. In her personal life, Stephanie utilises her wealth of experiences and strategies to support and empower women in the community through a free 15-week course. She is passionate about using her expertise to help families be the best of their potential, and support and empower them on their journey.

SESSION 1

1pm - 1:30pm **Surviving the wet fish moment**
Stephanie Wacker

How do you survive embarrassment, anger or hurt in public places when with your child? It could a meltdown; a sudden question from a stranger; or an instance when you realise your child is different and unique to the children around them. Stephanie jokingly says these moments feel like being slapped across the face with a wet fish. They can bring up many emotions. This session will cover tips and survival strategies of how to handle them, and how to work through the situation in an empowering way for both the parent and the child.

SESSION 2

1:pm - 1:30pm **How to create a good life for our children**
Nicole Buffoni

What is a good life for people with a disability? How, as family members, can we ensure that our children receive opportunities for a good life both now and into adulthood? Recently, Nicole participated in the International Initiative for Disability Leadership in Ireland and Sweden. These were some of the questions that international leaders and family members unpacked together.
Nicole found it a life-changing event and will share what she discovered.

CONCURRENT PRESENTATION

1:35 – 2:15pm **Helping autistic children and young people achieve their potential**
Dr Emma Goodall

Being the best you can be means believing in yourself and your capabilities, and knowing what you need support with. This session provides practical tips on supporting autistic children. Emma will also share some insights into why some challenges seem ubiquitous across the spectrum, and how they can be addressed by understanding and effectively interacting with autistics.

1:35 – 2:15pm **The power of voice!**
Dr Pippa Murray

This interactive workshop will explore how powerful our children's voices can be. It will look at the many different ways children communicate; explore useful tools that help others understand and appreciate their communication; and discuss the delicate task of putting aside our wishes and opinions when helping others understand our children.

2:15 – 2:45pm **Afternoon Tea**

2:45 – 3:25pm **Living the dream and creating a full life of possibilities**
Nathan Basha and Joanne Basha

Every person has a unique dream—and Nathan has been living his. His family made it a reality by having a vision for Nathan's life that did not limit his possibilities. This session will explore Nathan's journey through school, his career, social enterprises and moving into this own home. Nathan and Joanne will also talk about how having a clear vision of goals and high expectations made it possible to live the dream and lead to endless possibilities.

3:25 – 4:05pm **The sky's the limit**
Christopher Hills and Garry Hills

Christopher and Garry will describe and demonstrate how technology has impacted their journey with cerebral palsy. Videos and live demonstrations will show how Christopher runs a business; produces, shoots and edits video; communicates with his global network of friends and colleagues; and automates his home for independent living. Garry will share his perspectives and insights gained as Christopher's father and carer.

4:05 – 4:15pm **Launch of Now & Next Alumni Statement: Leaning in to relationships with professionals**
Dr Melanie Heyworth

4:15 – 4:20pm **Closing of the Conference**
By Jyrki Pinomaa, President of Inclusion Europe

4:20 - 4:40pm **Karim's Mojo Disco**

Karim's Mojo Disco is a life-changing motivational presentation by Don't DIS My ABILITY campaign ambassador, Abdul-Karim Bouchafaa. Karim aims to show the world how much people with disabilities have to offer, and challenges audiences to think about being more inclusive. Most importantly, it's Mojovational!

Speakers

Dr Annick Janson, New Zealand

Dr. Annick Janson is an Associate at the Centre for Applied Cross-Cultural Research, Victoria University of Wellington, a clinical psychologist and researcher. Annick co-developed the evidence-based Now and Next™ award-winning family program and Pictability™ visioning system and training, rooted in positive psychology. Designed to grow collective capacity, these programs, spurned a global movement for families to lean in and guide the current changes in the disability sector. Annick is a recipient of the Gallup International Positive Psychology Fellowship and has authored over 50 peer-reviewed research publications. Annick's work is inspired by her son Yaniv, and his journey as an international artist with disability (www.yanivjanson.com).

Dr Pippa Murray, United Kingdom

Pippa is an internationally respected parent, social innovator and writer. She is working to transform the education system and support available for disabled children and their families to live happy and fulfilling lives. With experience in parenting a disabled and a non-disabled child, Pippa founded several parent-led organisations in the 80s and 90s, and has written several books on the topic. In 2005, she set up IBK initiatives to promote citizenships and innovative ways of helping families with young children. Pippa is passionate about the need to build resilience—as individuals, families and communities. She has also developed mindfulness programmes addressing disability-specific issues.

Jennifer Willamson, Sydney

Jennifer is the resident expert at Plumtree on the NDIS and enjoys facilitating workshops that get parents prepared for their Planning meetings. Jennifer and her husband Josh have an amazing boy, Henry, who is five, and has Cerebral Palsy. She is passionate about her little boy living an inclusive life and being the best little person that he can be! They enjoy Sunday cafe brunches, hanging out at playgrounds, and catching up with friends. On the rare occasion they have a Henry-free night, Jennifer and Josh like to see a good movie on the big screen. Jennifer loves being a Peer Facilitator because it allows her to meet parents and create new friendships and see parents learn from each other as stories, successes and strategies are shared.

Cathy Anthony, British Columbia

Cathy lives in Coquitlam, British Columbia, Canada and is the proud parent of two children, daughter Lani, 39 and son Joshua, who passed away a year ago at 32. Josh lived with the challenges of having a disability and complex medical needs. Cathy says Josh is her heartbeat, teacher, inspirer and so much more. He lived a wonderful rich full life and blessed so many. Cathy's career spans 30 years at Kinsight in Family Support and Advocacy. She has also volunteered extensively, both locally and at the provincial level. Cathy is Board Chair for Planned Lifetime Advocacy Network and has worked and volunteered for 30 years with Family Support Institute BC. Cathy holds a deep passion for family leadership and issues related to families and their loved ones and embraces the vision of people living rich, meaningful, inclusive lives, circled by the love of family and friends.

Jyrki Pinomaa, Finland

Jyrki and his wife Marianne have four children of which two, Markus (31) and Robin (27), have intellectual disabilities. He has decades of experience in advocating for the rights of people with intellectual disabilities and their families. Until May this year, Jyrki served as managing director of Aspa Foundation, a service provider founded by major Finnish disability organizations. Since 2010, he has been the president of Inclusion Finland KVTL, one of Inclusion Europe's member organizations. In May 2018, Jyrki became President of Inclusion Europe, where he will continue to fight for the rights of people with intellectual disabilities and their families across the region.

Trisha Benge, New Zealand

Trisha trained as an Occupational Therapist and graduated in 1982. Since then she has been involved in working with children at Tokanui Hospital, Child Development Centre: Waikato Hospital, Conductive Education Unit: Hamilton and McKenzie Centre. Trisha began at McKenzie Centre in July 1997 and worked as an OT until I took the position as Centre Director in August 2006.
Trisha have had 3 trips to Ireland, the Mid West area, to train early intervention teams in using the transdisciplinary approach to early intervention. In 2012 She completed a Graduate Diploma in Not for Profit Management at Unitec.

Debra Jefferis, Shoalhaven

Debra is a parent to Molly and Sam. Sam, 19 years, was born with Down Syndrome and started Early Intervention at Noah's Inclusion Services when he was 6 months. Debra shortly joined Noah's Committee and helped with Fundraising as a volunteer before becoming an employee and for the past 9 years she has held the role of Family Information Support Worker. Highlights include setting up monthly Parent Information sessions called The Parent Room, Family Advocacy Training, Annual Family Camps and helping guide parents through the maze and in particular supporting their child's transition to the NDIS.

Hori Barton, New Zealand

Hori is married to a beautiful woman. A father of 7 awesome children. Courier driver. My wife and I love to be of service to others and influence our children to do the same.