
From: Natasha Maclaren-Jones
Sent: Friday, 3 May 2024 9:16 AM
To: Abigail Boyd; Portfolio Committee 3
Subject: Disability inquiry and sibling support

Hi

At the hearing on Tuesday Siblings Australia mentioned supports available for young people.

They have sent me the following information about various networks and programs that are available (information publicly available) - based on evidence by Department none operate in NSW schools

Thought it might be useful for report.

- **Alex and Arlo** - A Sibling Story, written to help young sibling children (aged 4-7 years) feel less alone in their experiences, and to provide reassurance that there are others out there who understand how they feel. 'Alex and Arlo' takes readers through the various experiences Alex faces as a sibling to her younger brother Arlo, who has a disability. We encourage parents/caregivers to read the story with a sibling child, and to also take the time to reflect together on Alex's experiences and the coping strategies she uses. This is a free resource that can be [downloaded on our website](#).
- **SibWorks** – A peer support program for siblings aged 8-12. Facilitated by professionals in the health, education, disability, or community services sectors. The program is designed to support siblings by building their emotional well-being, resilience, and connecting with others who share the same experience. Upon completion of the course, participants will:
 - *understand more about disability and functional challenges*
 - *feel less alone*
 - *know new ways to deal with tricky feelings*
 - *develop coping skills they can use*
 - *feel more positive about themselves as siblings*
- **SibWise** – Designed for parents, health care workers, educators or disability professionals who care for, support or come into contact with siblings of children with disability. This e-learning program will assist people to better understand and respond to sibling needs and challenges. [Online](#) and self-guided, and can be used for CPD hours for professionals. Please note that the price of this is likely to change [after 1 July](#) - it is currently subsidised through a grant.
- **SibSupport** – One-on-one support sessions, now delivered in-house and facilitated by Siblings Australia staff member and registered counsellor, Rachel Bailey. There is a cost associated with these sessions, which [can be booked online](#).
- **TeenSibs** – National online and in-person (currently being piloted in Adelaide) peer groups provide an opportunity for teens aged from 12 years up to 18 years to connect with other teens who understand the sibling experience. Our peer groups provide the opportunity for TeenSibs to connect and exchange experiences in a fun and safe environment. We recognise that sometimes, no one understands a sib like another sib, so why not connect with people who understand the sibling experience better than anyone. [Teens can sign-up online](#) (we've just launched a Discord server, too).

- **SibPlan** – [A free, online resource](#) for adult siblings, and built from the sibling perspective, the SibPlan website provides tools and resources for adult siblings who are future planning with their brother or sister with disability. With a focus on supportive decision making and preserving natural relationships, SibPlan is for siblings who may be at the beginning of their planning journey or at a point of crisis – we are here for all stages of the sibling journey. SibPlan will give adult siblings guidance on services and supports they can access at transitional junctures in their, or their siblings lives, as the supports for their brother or sister change or grow
- **SibChat** – An [online private chat group](#) (hosted on Facebook) exclusively for adult siblings to find support and connect with others who understand the sibling experience. Provides an opportunity for siblings to connect online in a moderated forum and exchange experiences and provide mutual support.
- **SibConnect** - National, state-based, peer support groups that provide an opportunity for siblings to connect in person, and exchange experiences and provide mutual support, whether that be over a coffee or game of bowling. Recognising that, sometimes, ‘no-one understands a sib like another sib’. This program provides opportunities for siblings to connect with others who understand the sibling experience better than anyone. Groups are currently operating in VIC, NSW, SA, QLD and WA.
- **KidSibs** is a resource for children aged 5-12 that is launching in the next few months, too – we will have more details in due course.

The Hon Natasha Maclaren-Jones MLC

Shadow Minister for Families and Communities
Shadow Minister for Disability Inclusion
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