

Overview of RSAC Activities

Recreation, Sports and Aquatics Club is a registered charity that provides sport, recreation, vacation care, carer support and personal development activities for people with disabilities across ten local government areas of Sydney. RSAC was established in 1987 and from small beginnings has grown to provide activities for around 1000 participants each week. It provides opportunities for participants with a range of disabilities, including participation in national and international competitions through the Special Olympics movement for athletes with an intellectual disability as well as appropriate opportunities for people with other disabilities.

Contribution from NSW Clubs to RSAC

Registered Clubs have supported RSAC since before the inception of CDSE and continue to support to this date. Over the past two financial years Bankstown Sports Club, Revesby Workers Club, Canterbury Hurlstone Park RSL, St George Leagues Club, Canada Bay Club, Canterbury Bulldogs Leagues Club, Punchbowl Ex-Servicemen's Club, Arncliffe Scots' Sports Club, Illawarra Catholic Club, Rockdale RSL, Mount Lewis Bowling Club, Birrong Bowling Club, and Penshurst RSL have contributed a combined total of \$83,000 in donations to RSAC. Donations ranged in size from \$500 to \$12,500 and averaged \$6,000 per Registered Club.

In addition, since September 2007, Bankstown Sports Club has provided free office space and club rooms for our organisation, giving us a rent-free space accessible by public transport. They also assists us with donations in kind, such as our Annual Presentation Day for members with a buffet lunch in the auditorium for 350 people; and for the past six years, the food and drinks for our annual Volunteers Appreciation Dinner for 100 people.

In recent years Revesby Workers Club has provided in kind donations for functions and an ongoing commitment to supporting RSAC activities through CDSE grants.

Club Rivers at Riverwood has provided a venue for a fortnightly dance program for three years as well as several CDSE grants.

Significance of Club Support for RSAC

As community organisations local Registered Clubs appreciate the value of the activities provided by RSAC. Some of our strongest supporters from Registered Clubs who have taken a particular interest in our activities have also had first hand experience of the needs of people with disabilities in our community. Clubs providing grants to us are confident that money donated to RSAC will make a practical and tangible difference to the lives of people with a disability. Board representatives from the Registered Clubs who attend RSAC functions have first hand knowledge of RSAC and the effect the funds they provide on service delivery to people with disabilities.

As a niche sporting and recreational organisation RSAC has great difficulty attracting government funding. We provide activities on weekends and evenings when many organisations offering similar activities are not open, and this enables people with disabilities of all ages to experience the health and social benefits of sport and recreation from which they are often excluded by mainstream sporting clubs and other organisations. RSAC provides vacation care for parents of adolescents with a disability who otherwise are unable to work, or provide activities for siblings of their teenage child with a disability. RSAC activities benefit not only people with disabilities who participate directly but also their families by providing incidental respite for carers and family members while their family member with a disability is engaged in RSAC programs; and through the provision of informal support as family members get to know each other while at RSAC activities.

Support from Registered Clubs is greatly appreciated by RSAC parents and members, who find themselves still fundraising for their adult children's activities after years of effort on their behalf. At a stage of life when other families see their children as independent, families of adult children with disabilities are often worn out by the demands of day to day care for their children, and older carers will often have health and mobility issues of their own. RSAC members with disabilities have limited capacity to fund raise on their own behalf.

The support of Registered Clubs is essential for RSAC to maintain its office and clubrooms, and to provide a range of activities each year, in particular vacation care. The support of Registered Clubs relieves families of some of the burden of fund raising, especially since our office is provided rent free. We appreciate the way Registered Clubs support us year after year, since other organisations such as philanthropic trusts or council community grants programs are reluctant to fund programs, regardless of needs and success, more than once. Registered Clubs also have realistic expectations about the capacity of small organisations to evaluate and report on our activities. They ensure that we are accountable for how we spend their grants, but unlike many philanthropic trusts they do not demand that we complete complex, time-consuming reporting processes that can make it hardly worthwhile applying for grants at all.

The support of Registered Clubs, whilst being valuable social institutions in their own right, also make our volunteers, members and their families feel valued. Their support encourages us to continue our activities, knowing that our worth is recognised.