

Active Participation South West



A Southwest Advocacy Association & Rural Access Project

The Active Participation Information Bulletin **August 2007**

The Active Participation Register provides information on opportunities for people with disabilities to get involved in consultations, events, forums and committees where decision making takes place. By providing such information we hope to get people with disabilities more involved in their community & to give them more of a voice on a broad range of issues.

Introduction

Welcome to another edition of the Active Participation Information Bulletin. The Active Participation South West was recently granted an extension of funding by the Barwon South West Regional Office of the Department of Human Services. This funding will now enable Rural Access and Southwest Advocacy (SWAA) to continue to run the Active Participation Register until the end of the 2007 – 08 financial year, which is good news.

We now have a number of people with disabilities and organisations listed on the Active Participation Register, but we hope to get many more in the coming months. If you know of any individuals or organisations who may be interested in receiving information through the Active Participation Register please ask them to contact us at SWAA on 55 614 584.

Things that may interest you

New Victorian Disability Act

As many people will already know, the new Disability Act came into operation on July 1. DHS has conducted a number of information forums and detailed Fact Sheets on the new legislation are available from DHS. The new Disability Services Complaints Commissioner is Laurie Harkin and the new Senior Clinician is Geoffrey Chan.

Victorian Advocacy Units

In late 2005 the Department of Human Services (DHS) announced funding for two new advocacy services, DARU and the Self Advocacy Resource Unit (SARU). SARU is aimed at increasing the ability of people with disabilities to better advocate for themselves

while DARU is aimed at increasing the ability of people to better advocate on behalf of others.

The Victorian State Government's Disability Plan is committed to the promotion and protection of the rights of all Victorians, including people with a disability. One of the actions identified is for the government to support the development of advocacy services to ensure people with disabilities have the same opportunities as all other members of the community; have the same responsibilities as all other citizens of Victoria; exercise choice and control over their lives and have equal access to a range of services to support quality of life.

Over the next three years DARU will:

- Develop a Code of Practice to improve advocacy practice;
- Offer professional development opportunities;
- Establish working partnerships with the tertiary sector to develop mentoring and coaching programs and courses in advocacy;
- Provide access to information to support people with a disability including, a clearing house to support advocacy efforts and a resource and equipment library;
- Work on broader social issues affecting people with disabilities through systemic advocacy;
- Provide links to broader social policy and generic advocacy.

Problems with new “MYKI” ticketing system

The Victorian Disability Advocacy Network (VDAN) has been engaged in negotiations with the Transport Ticketing Authority in regard to the new public transport ticketing system, known as, “MYKI”.

Problems with the new system identified by VDAN include ticket machines that are too high for wheelchair users and the need for people with disabilities to register for MYKI passes and provide photographs while other system users do not have to.

People can contact SWAA for further information.

Review of Disability Discrimination Act Transport Standards

The Australian Government is conducting a review of the Standards for Transport under the Disability Discrimination Act.

Written submissions to the Review can be made until **Friday, August 24 2007**. Contact SWAA on 55 614 584 for further information.

Community Sector AGM Season

Over the next few months most incorporated community organisations will be holding their Annual General Meeting (AGM). In the lead up to their AGM's community organisations are often looking for people who would like to join their Board or Committee of Management. People normally have to become general members of the organisation before they can serve on a Board or Committee and usually have to be nominated and seconded by another member. If you are interested in becoming a general member or serving as a Committee member on a community organisation that you have an interest in, you should contact that organisation and make some enquiries.

SWAA Committee of Management Vacancies

Southwest Advocacy Association still has two vacancies on its' volunteer Committee of Management. SWAA is an independent, not-for-profit, community organisation that has been funded by the Commonwealth Department of Families, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs to provide advocacy and information to people with all types of disabilities throughout south west Victoria since 1993. Under its' Constitution SWAA must try to ensure that at least half of its' Committee is made up of people with disabilities, so people with disabilities are particularly encouraged to apply. For further information, please contact SWAA on 55 614 584.

The Next Bulletin

The next Active Participation Register Bulletin will be sent out in about two months, but, remember, if you want to contact us, you can do so by mail, telephone or e-mail.

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People with hearing impairments or communication difficulties may contact us through –

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