



Southwest Advocacy News

Reg. No. A00 259 14Y

Funded by the Australian Government through the Department of Families,
Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs.

SEPTEMBER 2008

Address:
31 Princess Street
Warrnambool 3280

Postal Address:
P O Box 480
Warrnambool 3280

Phone: [03] 5561 4584
Fax: [03] 5561 4371
People with hearing or communication
impairments may dial 133 677 (National
Relay Service) & quote [03] 5561 4584

Email: swadvocacy@bigpond.com
Web: www.southwestadvocacy.org.au

CO-ORDINATOR'S REPORT

Welcome to another edition of *SWAA News*.

SWAA has been fortunate enough to be invited to speak to a range of groups in recent months, including SEAL Community Service students, South West Healthcare District Nurses, 3 WAY FM Radio listeners, Lyndoch Community Services staff and the Kyeema "Having a Say" Consumer Committee. It is good to know that people are interested in advocacy and the work that SWAA does and these speaking opportunities help SWAA to lift its profile in the community amongst service providers, people with disabilities and the general public.

SWAA recently made a written submission to the Government's review of Supported Residential Services (SRS). SRS's are privately owned business that provide accommodation and support to people for a fee and there are three registered SRS's in the south west: Themar Heights in Warrnambool; Victoria House in Koroit; and Seaview House in Portland. In its' submission SWAA has advocated for enhanced rights for residents, including an independent complaints mechanism and greater accountability requirements to be placed SRS providers. A copy of SWAA's submission can be made available on request and further information on the SRS review may be obtained from www.health.vic.gov.au.

As mentioned in the previous SWAA News, SWAA has obtained some funding from Rural Access to extend the Active Participation Register project into the Southern Grampians and Glenelg Shires. People with disabilities and organisations who are interested in getting people with disabilities more involved in the community are encouraged to register an interest in this information sharing and empowerment project. We

(Continued on page 2)

Inside this issue:

Co-Ordinator's Report	1
Payment of Consumers Participating in Research Projects	2
Making a Complaint to the Disability Services Commissioner	3
The Senior Practitioner and Restrictive Practices	3
Happy 1st Birthday to the Disability Act 2006	4
Self Advocacy Resource Unit	5
Getting Free from Abuse	6

Would you like to receive Southwest Advocacy News via E-mail?

If you have an e-mail address you can help us save paper & postage costs by receiving our newsletter via e-mail. Please contact Margaret on 5561 4584 or just send us an e-mail message notifying us of your email details to receive future editions of SWAA News electronically.

(Continued from page 1)

are slowly receiving new registrations from individuals and organisations, but would like to see a lot more come in. **Please complete and return the enclosed registration form or contact SWAA for further information if you're interested.**

SWAA's campaign to try to make Post Offices more accessible to people with disabilities is continuing. Unfortunately Australia Post is refusing to agree to calls from disability advocacy organisations for the development of a comprehensive Disability Action Plan to systematically address issues that disadvantage people with a variety of disabilities. **If you are aware of issues at your local post office that discriminate against people with disabilities, please contact us on 55 614 584.**

In the coming months, SWAA will be gearing up for its' Annual General Meeting. If you are interested in supporting SWAA's work on behalf of people with disabilities by becoming a member or nominating for SWAA's Committee of Management, please contact us. People with disabilities are encouraged to apply.

Robert Dick.
Co-ordinator

Payment of Consumers Participating in Research Projects

Excerpt from HIC position paper, June 2009 "Health Issues Centre recommends that organisations which invite consumer, carers and community members to have input into the planning of services and programs should offer consumers a suitable payment for their contribution and reimburse all of their out-of-pocket expenses associated with their participation.

In addition, Health Issues Centre recommends that organisations consider a range of mechanisms for supporting the ongoing contribution of consumers, carers and community members. Such mechanisms could include sponsorships for attendance at conferences or workshops, or access to information for training."

Consumer Nominee Program
Level 5, Health Sciences 2
LA TROBE UNIVERSITY VIC 3086
Ph: [03] 9479 5827 Fax: [03] 9479 5977

(Taken from V.M.I.A.C. Newsletter September 2008)

Making a Complaint to the Disability Services Commissioner

The Act started up a new place to complain called the Disability Services Commissioner. The Disability Services Commissioner wants people to know it's OK to complain if you are not happy about the disability services you are getting. The Disability Services Commissioner will sometimes have a meeting to talk about a person's complaint.

Sometime the Commissioner will investigate to find out what is going wrong and try to solve the problem. It is best to complain to your service provider first about the problem if you can.

You can call the Disability Services Commissioner on 1800 677 342

(Taken from Villamanta News—Winter Edition 2008)

The Senior Practitioner and Restrictive Practices

The Disability Act also started up a new job called the Senior Practitioner. The Senior Practitioner's job is to make sure that people's rights are protected if any restrictive practices are used on them. Restrictive practices are things that are done to a person like locking them up or stopping them from doing things.

Sometimes this is done to make sure the person does not hurt himself or hurt someone else. The Senior Practitioner wants to make sure that high standards are met and things are done in a good way. The Senior Practitioner has lots of power and he can find out what is going on and tell disability service providers to stop doing something or to start doing something.

The Senior Practitioner's phone number is: [03] 9096 8427

(Taken from Villamanta News—Winter Edition 2008)

CONTRIBUTIONS To SWAA NEWS

We welcome any contributions to the newsletter in the form of letters, stories, articles and news items relevant to disability issues.

Items printed in SWAA News do not necessarily reflect the views of SWAA, staff or Committee of Management

MEMBERSHIP

Membership is a great way to support our work, and we are very keen for people who have used the service to become members. Members receive our quarterly newsletter and other mail outs about disability issues and can have a say in the running of Southwest Advocacy by voting at our Annual General Meetings.

Membership of Southwest Advocacy is free.

If you would like to become a member please contact Southwest Advocacy for a membership form.

***Southwest Advocacy Association
31 Princess Street
Warrnambool 3280
Phone: 5561 4584
Fax: 5561 4371
Email: swadvocacy@bigpond.com***

HAPPY 1ST BIRTHDAY TO THE DISABILITY ACT 2006

The new Disability Act has been working for a year now. Here is a reminder about some of the important things the Act says.

The Act says there needs to be strong whole-of-government and whole-of-community work to make sure people who have a disability get their rights and needs met. The Act also gives a framework to make sure people get very good services and supports.

Easier access to disability services

The Act says people with disabilities may use disability services. The kinds of disabilities included are physical, sensory, neurological, acquired brain injury, intellectual disability or developmental delay. The Act changes the way people can get to use services. It is now meant to be simpler and the same for people with all sorts of disabilities to get services.

Planning for people — Guiding Principles

The Act has guiding **principles** for planning. The **principles** say planning should be:

- ◆ Individualised
- ◆ Directed by the person with the disability
- ◆ Consider and respect the person's family and other people who are important to the person with the disability
- ◆ Be underpinned by the right of the person with a disability to have control over their own life

Disability Service Providers

The Act says that disability service providers have to:

- ◆ Have a clear complaints making system
- ◆ Make sure people know how to make a complaint
- ◆ Give a report to the Disability Services Commissioner every year about how many complaints they got and what they did about them

Making rights in residential services stronger

Some people live in accommodation with staff to support them. This is called a residential service. The Act says there are rights and duties for people who live in these houses. The Act also says there are things the disability service provider who runs the houses must do. Some of these things are:

- ◆ Give a **residential statement** to a person with a disability when they start living in the house. The **residential statement** has to say what type of service it is, what the cost of the service is and that the person has a right to complain if they are not happy about something
- ◆ Make sure there is a balance of rights between the rights of a person and the safety of all the people who live in the house

Managing Money

The Act says a disability service provider is not allowed to manage the money of a person using their service, **BUT**, if the person, or their guardian or administrator, says in writing that it is OK, then a residential service may manage a small bit of the person's money.

Self Advocacy Resource Unit (SARU)

The big news is that AMIDA, Reinforce, Brain Injury Matters and Start have been successful in applying to run the Self Advocacy Resource Unit.

The Self Advocacy Resource Unit or SARU has finally opened its doors. The State government through DHS has funded a partnership of AMIDA, Brain Injury Matters, Reinforce and Start inc to set up and run the SARU.

It is the role of the SARU if for use by people with an acquired brain injury, people with an intellectual disability and people with high communication support needs. It is SARU's aim to make self advocacy stronger throughout Victoria. The jobs the SARU will be doing to make this happen include:

- ◆ Making sure that people with disabilities are involved in planning, managing and running SARU.
- ◆ Supporting self advocacy groups to become stronger.
- ◆ Helping new self advocacy groups to get started.
- ◆ Helping self advocates to meet other groups and network.
- ◆ Making sure self advocacy groups have the resources they need including videos, books, advice, support and information.
- ◆ Helping self advocacy advisers (support workers) and self advocates to work well together.

The people who will be working at the SARU are Jacqui Ward, Sue Smith and some members of Reinforce and BIM. The first jobs they will be doing are making a SARU information kit which will include a DVD, poster and flier. The first newsletter is being produced and will be available on DVD and on paper. In the first six months we will be visiting all the self advocacy groups which currently run in Victoria.

If you would like to find out more about the SARU you can call into the office:

Level 1, Ross House
247 Flinders Lane
Melbourne
Phone: 9639 6856
Email: saru@rosshouse.org.au



Getting Free From Abuse

New Resources to Assist Women with Disabilities

Now available online:

DVRC's guide for women with disabilities experiencing family violence (also available in Vietnamese and Arabic); and A kit for service providers who work with women with disabilities.

These products draw on interviews with women with disabilities who have experienced violence. The women told their stories in the hope that it would help others to deal with abuse.

Service providers can download a useful resource on how to support women with disabilities experiencing violence (also available in hard copy from DVRC). The resource provides suggestions from women with disabilities, as well as practical tips on what individual workers and agencies can do.

The web-guide for women with disabilities has a quiz to identify the warning signs of abuse by a partner, a family member, a carer, or someone else. It provides an understanding of the effects of abuse, and the steps women can take to get help. Women with disabilities tell their stories and share their advice for others on surviving abuse.

The main text of women's guide is also available in Arabic and Vietnamese. *'When I was married he liked to control everything ... I felt I was a prisoner in my own home' (Isabella...read her story or see all stories or advice).*



This project was developed by the Domestic Violence Resource Centre Victoria (2008) and was generously supported by the Telematics Course Development Fund

(c) Domestic Violence Resource Centre Victoria (Australia), 2008.

Ph. (03) 9486-9866. Email dvrcv@dvrcv.org.au. URL: <http://www.dvrcv.org.au>.

(Taken from Villamanta News—Winter Edition 2008)

You can help Southwest Advocacy by passing this newsletter on to someone else who might be interested in reading it after you.