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Southwest Advocacy

News

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CO-ORDINATOR'S REPORT

Welcome to another edition of *SWAA News*.

SWAA is currently preparing to be audited by its' main funding body, the Commonwealth Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs (FaHCSIA). FaHCSIA will be checking SWAA's policies and procedures and interviewing SWAA Board members, staff and consumers to ensure that SWAA is meeting its' responsibilities under its' funding and service agreement and complying with the Disability Service Standards. SWAA will be contacting some of its' past and current clients in the next few weeks to ask them whether they would be prepared to attend a meeting with FaHCSIA representatives. The meeting will be friendly and informal & will go for approximately 1 hour. The consumers involved will simply be asked a range of basic questions about their involvement with SWAA and how useful it was. SWAA's staff will not be present during the meeting and everything that is discussed in the meeting remains confidential, so consumers will be able to speak frankly about their experience as SWAA service users.

SWAA continues to be busy advocating for changes and innovations that will make local communities more inclusive of people with disabilities. One of the issues that SWAA has been addressing lately is the need for a Wheelchair Accessible Taxi (WAT) in the Shire of Corangamite. It is well known that people with disabilities, particularly those living in regional and rural communities, are often isolated and disadvantaged in many ways due a range of factors, including a lack of accessible transport options. SWAA believes that the provision of a WAT would provide huge benefits to people with disabilities in Corangamite and the adjoining Shires, increasing the general mobility, socio-economic opportunities, and ability of people with disabilities to participate in community life. The cost faced by taxi operators in purchas-

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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.

**Have you visited SWAA's website:-
www.southwestadvocacy.org.au**

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ing a WAT can be offset by a Government subsidy of up to \$44,000 and we believe that this subsidy & the fact that a WAT can be used for general taxi work would make it a most viable commercial proposition, as well as providing a great service to the community.

SWAA has also recently nominated a person with a disability to join the State Government's Disabled Persons Taxi Advisory Committee, so if you have issues that you believe should be raised in this forum, you are welcome to relay them via SWAA.

SWAA is also continuing its' efforts to extend the Active Participation Register project and get more people to register an interest in this information-sharing and empowerment project. People with disabilities and organisations who are interested in getting people with disabilities more involved in the community are encouraged to contact us to register their details **Please complete and return the enclosed registration form or contact SWAA via e-mail coord.swadvocacy@bigpond.com or phone 55 614 584 if you're interested.**

Warm regards,

Robert Dick.
Co-ordinator

OOPS!

A psychiatric nurse filled out the necessary paperwork to notify the police of an absconded inpatient. Whilst driving home he was pulled up by the police who asked for his licence. After checking his name on the police database the police informed him that they were taking him into custody because he was an escaped psyche patient. After much fuss it was eventually found that when he had filled out paperwork he had put his name in the place where the absconded persons name was supposed to be put

!@#@!

(Taken from V.M.I.A.C. Vol:13.2 June 2009)

New! Easy Touch Mobile Phone

Telstra recently launched the Easy Touch Discovery mobile phone which has oversized buttons, larger text and a loud speaker for customers who want easy-to-use talk and text, plus simple access to more advanced features.



Ms Glenice Maclellan (Executive Director, Telstra Consumer) said, "Our customers told us that they wanted bigger buttons and font, louder volume and a simple menu, and the Easy Touch Discovery delivers all of this. It also offers customers a help button as part of the phone menu, and a DVD outlining how to use the features of the phone."

For more information visit the website: www.telstra.com.au
Or phone Telstra on: 1800 050 381

*(Taken from Disability Advocacy & Information Service Inc
— Advance — Autumn 2009 Edition)*

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.

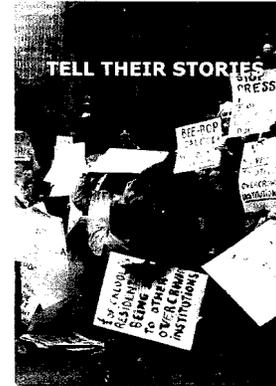
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**Are you receiving Active Participation Register
Mailouts?
Don't miss out—complete a registration form today.**

“I’m The Boss”

Reinforce Inc has produced this book of stories which was compiled by Colin Hiscoe.

The stories told in this book are about the personal life experiences of people with an intellectual disability. For some it was their first time ever to share their story. The energy, passion and strength shown by people was really inspiring and we were moved by the stories of the challenges and difficulties overcome by people with an intellectual disability.



With funding from the Department of Human Services we have been able to produce and publish this collection of stories as a way of inspiring others and as a record of the hard fought battle for rights by self advocates over the years.

The stories are moving and powerful and the book also features wonderful cartoons by Michael Buckley. It is a great read and a good training and educational resource.

If you would like a copy you should ring Colin Hiscoe or Janice Slattery at Reinforce on (03) 9650 7855 — Monday-Thursday from 10am to 4pm.

Price of the book: \$5.00 for self advocates & people with disability plus \$2.50 postage & handling.

Price of the book: \$20.00 for Organisations, Professionals & others plus \$2.50 postage & handling.

Early Childhood Intervention Reform

The 2008 Blueprint for Education and Early Childhood Development included a commitment to reform early childhood intervention services in Victoria.

An investigation into what would constitute good reform was undertaken during the second half of 2008.

Three parent focus groups contributed to the investigation which highlighted the need to strengthen services through better planning, governance and accountability. Improvements to be implemented include:

- A clear policy framework for early childhood intervention and universal (mainstream) services.
- Better funding to

respond to the needs of children with a disability or developmental delay and their families.

- Streamlined entry points for access to early childhood intervention support.
- Recruitment and retention of suitable staff.
- Greater links between specialist and universal services.
- Stronger support at key transition points, eg kindergarten to school.
- Good information to help better plan, monitor and evaluate services.

Better funding would mean more packages available to support children in the early years and better resourcing of the Preschool Field Officer Program. For this to become a reality, extra dollars need to be allocated in the upcoming

State Budget.

Along with our Association there are other groups in Victoria who are keen to see these changes occur—Kindergarten Parents Victoria, Early Childhood Intervention Australian, Victorian Council of Social Service and the Community Child Care Association of Victoria, to name a few.

You can add your voice to lobby for change by contacting your local state MP and encouraging them to support the Department of Education and early Childhood's agenda to reform early childhood intervention services in Victoria.

CEO, Elizabeth McGarry
E l i z a - b e t h m @ a c d . o r g . a u

(Taken from NoticeBoard magazine of the Association for Children with a Disability—Autumn 2009)

Helping Children with Autism package

ASD website

A new website about services and support for children with autism spectrum disorder (ASD) has been launched by the Raising Children Network.

The website includes sections on:

- Learning about autism
- Services pathfinder
- Guide to therapies
- Online parent forum

The website provides impartial, evidence-based information about ASD and early intervention. Future enhancements will include video clips, improvements to interactive feature, additional text based articles and further parent guides to therapies.

For more information about the ASD website visit <http://raisingchildren.net.au/autism>

Early Days workshops

Early Days provides workshops for parents and carers of children aged six and under who are on the autism spectrum.

Workshops are free and each family who attends the Early Days introductory Workshop is eligible to receive a \$100 support payment to assist with the costs of travel and childcare.

The workshops will be followed by skills sessions later in the year that focus on practical strategies for dealing with issues such as behaviour, language and play.

The workshops will also be available online or as self-directed interactive programs.

For more information about Early Days phone **1800 334 155** or visit **www.earlydays.net.au**

The ASD website and Early Days workshops are two initiatives of the Australian Government's Helping Children with Autism package.

Other initiatives include the introduction of Autism Advisors, Playconnect playgroups, changes to medicare items to assist access to early intervention and workshops for teachers.

In addition to the Helping Children with Autism package, six Autism Specific Early Learning and Care Centres are being established as part of the Australian Government's broader commitment to establish up to 260 Early Learning and Care Centre across Australia.

For more information about the Helping Children with Autism package

Phone **1800 289 177** or visit

www.facs.gov.au/internet/facsinternet.nsf/disabilities/services-help_child_autism.htm

(Taken from NoticeBoard magazine of the Association for Children with a Disability—Autumn 2009)

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