

Welcome to another Active Participation Register E-mailout

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Regards,

Robert Dick (Southwest Advocacy Association - Ph. 55 614 584)
Manager
Active Participation Register

People with hearing impairments or communication difficulties may contact us through - National Relay Service: Ph. - 133 677

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Access Travel Pass

The Access Travel Pass has been developed for people with a significant permanent disability who travel independently on Victoria's

public transport network and can demonstrate that due to their disability they cannot use ticketing systems.

The Access travel Pass entitles you to free travel on Victoria's public transport network.

- Melbourne metropolitan trains, trams and buses
- V/Line ticketed services
- Urban bus services in regional cities
- Regional services that have a contract or service agreement with the Department of Transport.

The pass holder should check with the relevant operator before booking and travelling.

For more information visit the [metlink website](#) or contact Metlink Central Pass Office via phone 03 9619 1159, TTY 03 9619 2727, National Relay Service 13 36 77, Multilingual information 03 9321 5450 or Speech-to-Speech-Relay 1300 555 727.

Video Relay Interpreting Service

A Video Relay Service has been launched in October 2009 to help provide better and quicker access to services for deaf people in regional areas.

The Video Relay Interpreting Service trial (funded by the Victorian Government - Department of Human Services) will cater to Deaf people who live in regional areas of Victoria where access to professional interpreters is usually extremely limited.

Video Relay Interpreting (VRI) service rooms have been established in Ballarat, Bendigo, Morwell and Geelong as part of the trial.

The interpreters, based in Melbourne, will be available via the use of high quality videoconferencing equipment that has been set up at Vicdeaf.

The VRI project will provide free interpreting services during part of the trial period, from 1 October to 31 December 2009.

Information sessions are available where you will:

- **Learn what the Video Relay Interpreter Service trial is;**
- **Understand the role of VRI service staff;**
- **Understand how VRI works in different settings;**
- **Understand the difference between video relay interpreting and face-to-face interpreting.**

For more information on the VRI service and information sessions visit the Vicdeaf website - www.vicdeaf.com.au .

"Let's Act On Report Recommendations And Bring Human Rights Home"

[Australian Human Rights Commission, 8th October 2009]

The Australian Human Rights Commission has welcomed the release of National Human Rights Consultation Committee's Report.

Commission President, Cathy Branson QC, said "The report emphatically demonstrates that human rights matter to Australians, wherever they live, and that they want our government to make sure that rights are better protected and better understood. We must now act on the report's findings to bring human rights home."

Ms Branson welcomed the report's major recommendations that the Australian Government focus on human rights education and adopt a federal Human Rights Act.

However, Ms Branson said she was disappointed with the Committee's recommendations relating to economic, social and cultural rights.

"These rights, such as the right to the highest attainable standard of health care, adequate housing and education, touch the every day lives of all Australians," she said.

"As the report details, these issues were consistently raised across the country as major areas of concern. They should not be treated differently from other human rights. What we want is very simple: a

nation where the basic human dignity of all people is respected, where our government decision-makers always think about the human rights impacts of their decisions, and where people whose human rights are breached can do something about it.”

To access the Australian Human Rights Commission’s submission to the National Consultation go to - www.humanrights.gov.au/legal/submissions/2009/200906_NHRC.html

Human Rights Act Would Give Canberra Final Say

[The Age, 9th October 2009 - By Mary-Anne Toy and Jonathan Pearlman]

Politicians would have the final say on whether individual human rights could be overridden, under a compromise proposal that brings Australia a step closer to introducing a National Human Rights Charter.

A review commissioned by the Rudd Government has recommended creating a minimalist Australian Human Rights Act, which would allow individuals to take the Federal Government and agencies such as Centrelink to Court if their human rights were violated.

Another opponent, former NSW premier Bob Carr, yesterday warned the act would mark a "vast shift of power" from Parliament to the judiciary.

Releasing the National Human Rights Consultation's report in Melbourne yesterday, federal Attorney-General Robert McClelland would not comment on whether he supported the proposed human rights act, saying he did not want "to colour the debate at this stage".

However, he promised that the Government would respond to the report's 31 recommendations by the end of the year.

The report is set to trigger a lively debate within cabinet and is not assured of approval, despite the fact the Rudd Government initiated the review.

Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities- NGO Shadow Report

Leading disability organisations have partnered to form a project group which is compiling a Shadow Report on Australia's implementation of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD).

The overall aim of the Shadow Report is to make recommendations to the United Nations Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

These recommendations will provide the basis for the United Nations recommendations to the Australian Government regarding Australia's implementation of the Articles of the Convention.

The main focus of the Shadow Report will be reporting the extent to which Australia has implemented its obligations under the CRPD and to provide recommendations for future action by the Australian Government.

For more information contact Amelia via phone - (02) 9286 8590 or - email - amelia.dixon@dlaphillipsfox.com.

A New Self Advocacy Website

"Label Free Zone" is a new website from People First Canada.

It enables you to watch videos, look at pictures or join up and add your own pictures and videos. The website uses sounds and great images. You can use a webcam to have your say and they also have a map of the world which you can add your group to.

It is a great website and a good way to connect with groups overseas. To visit the website go to <http://www.labelfreezone.ca/> then click on the word English to the left of the screen. If it does not work you may need to download flash player, which you can click on the opening page.

If you have any problems the Self Advocacy Resource Unit (SARU) will be happy to help you via phone 9639 6856 or email - saru@rosshouse.org.au.

AMIDA General Meeting

When: Tuesday 10th November 2009, 10am – 1pm

Where: Hayden Raysmith Room, Ross House, 4th Floor, 247 Flinders Lane, Melbourne

Register: To register contact AMIDA via phone 9650 2722

AMIDA (Action for More Independence & Dignity in Accommodation) is a disability advocacy group that works on housing issues. This means we speak up for people with a disability or help them to speak up for themselves about problems they have with their housing.

At this meeting, AMIDA will officially launch the new Housing Know Your Rights – Community Residential Units & Disability Act DVD

AMIDA Committee of Management

AMIDA is seeking more people to be involved in its Committee. The Committee meets once every 2 months, for 3 hours. Meetings are usually held on a Tuesday between 10am – 1pm.

Committee members have the opportunity to learn about running meetings, management of an advocacy organisation, the networks we belong to and keep your ear to the group and learn what is happening in the disability field.

If you would like to discuss this opportunity further please contact AMIDA office via phone - 9650 2722 or email - amida@infoxchange.net.au .

National Arts and Disability Strategy

[Arts Access Australia E-news October 2009]

Arts Access Australia congratulates the Cultural Ministers Council on the release of the National Arts and Disability Strategy.

Arts Access Australia is the national advocacy organisation for arts and disability with members in every Australian state and territory. The National Arts and Disability Strategy is the result of several years of work by our network supported by significant input from individuals and organisations working across arts, disability and mental health.

We are particularly pleased to see all nine state, territory and federal Arts Ministers agree to make access and participation in artistic and cultural activities a priority for people with disabilities as part of the broader social inclusion agenda that includes disability, mental health, employment and education.

The effectiveness of the National Arts and Disability Strategy in improving cultural access and participation will also rely upon advocacy at a local level. Arts Access Australia encourages you to read and use the National Arts and Disability Strategy in discussions with arts, disability, and mental health services, organisations, programs and venues.

The National Arts and Disability Strategy complements the National Disability Strategy being developed by the Commonwealth Government in partnership with state and territory governments, the National Mental Health and Disability Employment Strategy and the Fourth National Mental Health Plan.

The Strategy is the result of extensive consultation, including 115 submissions made in response to a discussion paper released in late 2008, targeted consultation with arts and disability peak bodies, and consultation with government agencies at all levels.

Further versions of the Strategy, including plain text with visuals, Braille, and standard hard copies, will be available shortly. To request a copy of any of the versions of the Strategy, please contact Jacqui via phone 1800 185 693 or email arts.disability@environment.gov.au.

For more information and comment about Arts Access Australia and the National Arts and Disability Strategy contact Gareth Wreford,

Executive Director, Arts Access Australia via email
ed@artsaccessaustralia.org or phone 02 9518 0561.

Welcome to another Active Participation Register E-mailout

The Australian Federal Government has launched a full Senate Inquiry into deafness!

2 October 2009

Is there anything about having a hearing loss or being deaf that frustrates you?

- * Have you ever felt frustrated at the cost of your or your families hearing loss?
- * Have you ever been upset by the difficulty of getting access to a hearing service or audiologist?
- * If you have been deaf since a kid, have you ever wished you could stay with Australian Hearing after you were 21 years old?

The Australian Federal Government want to hear from EVERYONE in Australia about what issues they face when they have to deal with a hearing loss.

They are planning on using your input to change the way hearing health is dealt with in Australia.

It is so important that you email them to let them know what it is like for YOU personally.

All you have to do is **send a short email** to community.affairs.sen@aph.gov.au **by 9 October 2009**, letting them know what frustrates you most, and what you would like to change.

This is your chance to finally let your Government know how difficult it can be being deaf or hearing impaired, and to tell them how you think it can be changed.

Don't miss this chance.

Please email the Government with your thoughts before **9 October**, and tell your friends about this too.

Erica Smith

deaf access Victoria

Barwon South West Co-ordinator

Ph: 03 55618114 Fax: 03 55618100

Email: dav@mpower.org.au; Web: www.mpower.org.au

daV fulfils its goals by:

- Helping community organisations and services to work more effectively with deaf and hard of hearing people.
- Raising awareness in the local community about the issues and needs of deaf and hard of hearing people.
- Providing information relating to deafness or hearing loss to: deaf and hard of hearing people; their families or carers; as well as to agencies that provide services to deaf or hard of hearing people; and to the general community.

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Grave Concerns For Vulnerable Populations This Summer

Media Release - Disability Emergency Management Advocacy (DEMA) October 2009

"Many people with disabilities and seniors require assistance to complete household emergency and relocation plans and organise survival kits. Many are physically unable to attend community meetings, so how are they going to be informed and assisted to prepare for the coming summer?"

With an aging population and high rate of illiteracy, disability issues and considerations must be included in emergency management policy and practice.

1. All hazards approach in community safety campaigns.
2. Provide community with household emergency and relocation plans to complete, supports for those who require assistance.
3. Policies for those unable to relocate independently, requiring extra support services.
4. Multiple accessible formats for all communication, including Easy English and updates not reliant on electricity.
5. Multiple accessible formats for all community engagement and education, & strategies to engaging those unable to access community meetings or web-based information.
6. Provide relocation transport and venues for people without private transport or family to relocate to.
7. Continuity of support services, such as attendant care, for people with disabilities, in their homes, and at relocation venues during and after an emergency."

To read this media release in full go to
<http://www.advocacyhouse.org/library/acl/reports.shtml>

Contact: Susan Stork-Finlay, Project Coordinator DEMA, email
abilitiesot@uniting.com.au, phone 0458 98 1476.

New Scanners Out Of Reach Of Many Disabled Travellers

The Age, 4th October 2009 – by Reid Sexton

THE MYKI ticket system will breach anti-discrimination laws when it is finally introduced, according to Victoria's leading social welfare group.

The Victorian Council of Social Service said train platform MYKI ticket scanners would be 20 centimetres higher than set out in guidelines that the State Government is bound to follow.

The 1.1-metre-high scanners will be 10 centimetres higher than current Metcard validators and cannot be used by people in wheelchairs with limited arm movement.

The council's chief executive, Cath Smith, said the scanner's height breached the Australian standard and the Disability Discrimination Act.

"The choice to proceed with MYKI readers at this height despite objections at an early stage by ourselves and disability advocates makes it appear that making the system accessible was not a priority," she said.

A ticket authority spokesman denied it was breaking the law, saying the Australian standard allows the scanner to be 1.2 metres high.

But a spokeswoman for Standards Australia, which sets the standard, said it should be 80 to 90 centimetres.

Yooralla's Jeanette Lee, who advises Public Transport Minister Lynne Kosky on accessibility, said she had warned the Government about scanner height but was ignored. "They said that would cost a lot of money," she said.

Social Inclusion and Disability - A Leadership Plus Leader's Network Event

When: Wednesday 4th November 2pm - 4pm

Where: Victoria University, Level 12/300 Flinders Street
Melbourne

Register: To Register by Friday 30th October 2009 contact Anita Newbery via email <mailto:anewbery@leadershipplus.com> or phone 03 9445 7426.

Come and hear some of the Leaders involved in this area share their ideas and expectations.

Opening - Professor Peter Creamer, Pro-Vice Chancellor Industry and Community, Victoria University

Speakers include;

- Ms. Elleni Bereded–Samuel, Community Engagements Coordinator, Victoria University, Member of the National Social Inclusion Board.
- Father Joe Caddy, CEO, Centacare, Catholic Family Services
- Keran Howe, Executive Officer, Victorian Women’s Disability Network
- Alan Blackwood, Manager Policy and Community Partnerships, MS Society

For more information contact Anita via email <mailto:anewbery@leadershipplus.com> or phone 03 9445 7426.

2nd Strengthening Disability Advocacy Conference 2009

When: Tuesday 17th November - Wednesday 18th November 2009
Where: Jasper Hotel, Melbourne

Register: To download a copy of the registration form which is also available in Plain English visit - www.daru.org.au .

A reminder the registrations are now open for the 2nd Strengthening Disability Advocacy – Working

Together Conference 2009.

The cost to register for the 2 day conference is

- \$220 (incl. GST) per participant for Advocates and not-for-profit organisations
- \$440 (incl. GST) per participant for Government Officers
- \$ 90 (incl. GST) per participant for concession cards holders.

Limited sponsorship is also available for people with disabilities.

To apply for sponsorship or for assistance filling out the registration form contact DARU via email admin@daru.org.au or phone 03 9639 5807.

For more information including information on the Pre Conference Get Together for Self Advocates visit www.daru.org.au . The Conference Program will be uploaded prior to the Conference start date.

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Optional Protocol to the Disabilities Convention Enters into Force for Australia

Human Rights Legal Resource Centre (HRLRC), Volume 42 - October 2009

On 20th September 2009, the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities entered into force for Australia.

The Optional Protocol establishes a 'communication procedure', which enables people to submit a complaint to the UN Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities alleging that their human rights have been breached. It also establishes an 'inquiry procedure', which enables the Committee itself to inquire into alleged grave or systemic violations of disability rights.

According to the Attorney-General, the Hon Rob McClelland MP, 'the entry into force of the Optional Protocol is an important milestone for people with a disability in Australia and further demonstrates the Government's leadership at an international level.'

The Attorney-General has also declared the Convention under the Australian Human Rights Commission Act 1986 (Cth), thereby enabling the Australian Human Rights Commission to conciliate complaints based on breaches of the Convention."

For more information and to access the HRLRC Volume 42 - October 2009 visit - www.hlrrc.org.au .

Risk Management Approach Has Failed Vulnerable Victorians

Media Release - VCOSS, 25th September 2009

Recent allegations of assaults and mistreatment in supported residential services (also referred to in the media as state monitored care homes) point to a risk management approach by Government that has clearly failed.

"Advocates have been calling for years for reforms to improve the rights and welfare of residents in these facilities but the Department of Human Services has been more concerned about the risk that regulation may cause closures than in ensuring that all residents have their rights and dignity protected," said Cath Smith, CEO.

"VCOSS strongly supports the advocacy of the Office of the Public Advocate and the community visitors that volunteer their time to protect our most vulnerable Victorians every day- not just when these stories make it into the headlines," Cath Smith said.

A copy of the VCOSS submission is available at:

http://www.vcooss.org.au/documents/VCOSS%20docs/Submissions/2008/August%2008/SUB_080829%20VCOSS%20Submission%20to%20SRS%20Review.doc

Health Issues Centre Survey - Enabling Consumers, Carers and Community Members to have their say- National Health and Hospitals Reform Commission Report

The Commonwealth government is planning a major reform of the Australian health system. The Prime Minister and Minister for Health have been visiting hospitals around Australia to consult on the 123 recommendations in the National Health and Hospital Reform Commission report.

The government needs a number of consultation mechanisms with a number of different groups to ensure that they capture the diverse views of consumers, carers and community members.

The Health Issues Centre at La Trobe University would like to provide feedback to the Federal Government from a consumer perspective.

This survey should take between 15-20 minutes to complete. To request a hard copy of this survey contact Assunta at La Trobe University via phone 03 9479 3520.

To access the survey on-line visit -

http://www.surveymonkey.com/s.aspx?sm=OARPsalsr0eYP156ViaBtA_3d_3d

Closing date for this survey is Friday 16th October 2009.

Launch of e-forum on Human Rights and Cultural Diversity

A partnership between the Australian Human Rights Commission and the Institute for Cultural Diversity has led to the development of a new E-Forum on human rights, which is located on the website <http://www.culturaldiversity.net.au>.

This site provides a new way of finding out about what is happening in culturally diverse Australia in human rights, the arts, justice, research and among agencies working in government, business and the community.

The site is run by a not-for-profit, non-government company - the Institute for Cultural Diversity.

The site is designed to help generate an informed network of people able to contribute to Australia's development as a creative, democratic and productive society. In this way, it bridges communities, faiths and states.

Human rights is just one theme which the site covers. The site's other themes include: arts, justice, agencies and research.

The cultural diversity website offers a new, exciting and secure space for informed debate, valued contributions, practical feedback, sustained consultations, formulation of new and creative ideas and canvassing of diverse opinions.

Visit <http://www.culturaldiversity.net.au> and take a look.

If you have any questions, please email administrator@culturaldiversity.net.au .