

## **Welcome to another Active Participation** **Register E-mailout**

The Active Participation Register (APR) project aims to empower people with disabilities by providing information on disability rights & opportunities and events that enable people to have a say and have more influence in the community.

Interested individuals with any type of disability, carers, advocates and organisations who register their details with us are provided with news about conferences and consultations, opportunities to get involved in Boards, Committees and advisory bodies and relevant news & training opportunities that they may be interested in.

Apologies for any cross-postings or if you feel that any of this information is not particularly relevant to you. Please feel free to contact Southwest Advocacy if you no longer wish to receive information through the Active Participation Register.

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

[Please note that material contained in APR E-mailouts does not necessarily reflect the policy of SWAA or the views of any staff members. Statements in APR E-mailouts do not comprise advice and readers should avail themselves of professional advice where appropriate.]

## **Disability Care and Support - Forthcoming Public Inquiry**

The Productivity Commission invites the public to register their interest in a forthcoming inquiry into a long-term care and support scheme for people with a disability in Australia. The inquiry will begin in early 2010 and report by July 2011.

For more information on the public inquiry process visit - [www.fahcsia.gov.au](http://www.fahcsia.gov.au)

## **Home Based Programs - Students with Disabilities - DEECD**

The Victorian Department of Education and Early Childhood Development (DEECD) expect that students of school age with severe disabilities will attend school. In exceptional circumstances, however, the severity of the student's disability and the fragility of their health may prevent them from attending school for a period of time.

The Home-Based Educational Support Program enables students with severe disabilities to access an educational program where they are unable to attend school due to the nature of their disability.

Supplementary funding is available to assist with the delivery of a tailored educational program for the student including assistance with:

- salaries of teachers, education support staff and specialist staff
- essential, educational equipment.

Home-based educational programs must be developed by the student's local or nominated regular or specialist school in cooperation with the student's parent/guardian/carer(s).

Applications must be received after 1<sup>st</sup> December and before 18<sup>th</sup> December 2009.

For more information and to download the 2010 guidelines and application form visit the DEECD website.

## **Disability: Coming Soon To a Person Near You**

Disability Discrimination Commissioner, Graeme Innes, said that people should pause today to consider that more than 20% of Australians experience some form of disability. That is one in five people. This means disability is something close to all of us.

“Today is the International Day of People with a Disability, and it provides us with a chance to focus on the barriers which our society places in the way of some of that 20% of our population,” said Commissioner Innes. “This takes on an even more personal significance when we consider that a great many of us will develop some form of disability as we age.”

Commissioner Innes said that many everyday activities, which most people would take for granted, present barriers to people with disability. For example:

- For some of us, trains and buses are crowded, or don't run frequently enough. But people with physical disabilities are only able to board around 25 to 30% of them to begin with.
- As the Christmas and holiday season kicks in, some of us will become frustrated as movie sessions fill with films that are really only suitable for kids and teenagers. But for people who are deaf, or have a hearing impairment, captioned movies are only shown on 24 of the 3000 screens in cinemas in Australia, and then, only twice a week.
- For some of us, consulting our local GP can be an unpleasant experience. But for people with physical disabilities, only 40% of GP surgeries have adjustable height examination couches, so many are either examined on the floor or not examined at all.
- For most of us, checking information on the internet is a task we complete dozens of times a day. But for people who are blind or have low vision, many websites - including some government websites - are either not accessible at all, or not as accessible as they could be.

In our broader community, the unemployment rate is currently running at 5.8%. For people with mental illness, for example, it is around 19.5%.

For some of us, it can be a little inconvenient to get to our suburban accountant or solicitor if their office is up a flight of stairs above local shops. But, for people with mobility disability, this means that they cannot get there at all.

Commissioner Innes said, with the very real likelihood that many of us, and the people we care about, will develop a disability as we grow older (whether it be a mobility, hearing, sight or psychiatric disability), the issues that face people with disability on an everyday basis, and threaten their level of social inclusion, should have a much higher public profile than they currently have.

### **National Cooperation Delivers New Warning System**

4<sup>th</sup> December 2009

Attorney-General, Robert McClelland and the Victorian Police and Emergency Services Minister, Bob Cameron have launched the national telephone-based emergency warning system, 'Emergency Alert' at the Victorian State Control Centre.

The system will help warn the public in the event of a major emergency, and will add to a range of measures including television and radio alerts, public address systems, door-knocking, sirens, signage and the internet.

Under the emergency alert system, warning alerts will be sent by recorded voice and text to landline and mobile phones based on an owner's billing address. Mr Cameron said that Emergency Alert that went live can deliver up to 1,000 voice messages a minute to landlines and 300 text messages a second to mobile telephones.

"This is an additional warning mechanism available for use 24 hours a day, 7 days a week in the case of an emergency. It can swiftly reach a large number of people in a targeted manner," Mr Cameron said.

Both Mr McClelland and Mr Cameron warned that it was common sense to not rely solely on receiving a warning and highlighted the need for everyone in the community to take action to prepare for and respond to emergency situations.

Technological gaps currently limit the system to sending alerts to mobile phones based on the billing address, rather than where the handset is at the time of the emergency. The Commonwealth has

provided \$1.35 million to conduct research to determine how warnings can instead be delivered to mobile phones based on their physical location.

Nicole Lawler, CEO of Deafness Forum of Australia, has advised that the system has been developed without taking into account the needs of people who are Deaf or have a hearing impairment. At some points, consultations were made with a knowledgeable and authoritative person on the Board of AFDO about the needs of people who are Deaf or have a hearing impairment but their recommendations were ignored. Should you agree that this is not good enough, please feel free to make your views known to McClelland and Cameron.

### **Jetstar to Consult On Disability Issues**

The Age, 3<sup>rd</sup> December 2009 - By Steve Lillebuen

Jetstar will meet with the federal government after another complaint was levelled against the airline over its mistreatment of disabled passengers.

However, Jetstar officials insist the latest incident, in which a legally blind passenger was refused a booking because of her guide dog, isn't a sign the discount airline has a pattern of discrimination. The complaint comes a week after Jetstar launched an investigation into its wheelchair procedures after paralympian Kurt Fearnley blasted the airline for forcing him to check in his personal wheelchair before boarding a plane.

"There is no link whatsoever. There are no systematic issues here," Jetstar spokesman Simon Westaway told AAP. Glen Bracegirdle, 25, of Melbourne was told "No dogs, no dogs, no dogs" by a customer service clerk when he tried to book a flight to Sydney in advance for himself, his legally blind partner, Kathryn Beaton, and her four-year-old guide dog.

He had already travelled on the airline many times with the dog - and two guide dogs are allowed on board each Jetstar flight. This time, call centre staff disagreed until, after repeated calls, one staff member told him they were unsure about rules concerning seeing-eye dogs and offered a \$50 voucher. He booked flights on another airline instead.

Jetstar has since apologised and offered the couple free flights as compensation, pinning the problem on several staff members who gave out the wrong information about the company's guide dog policies.

"We see the matter as closed. We do regret it," Mr Westaway said.

Mr Bracegirdle said the apology was "a good result" but he was disappointed he had to lodge a complaint with the Human Rights Commission before the dispute could be settled.

Upon hearing of the couple's ordeal, Bill Shorten, Parliamentary Secretary for Disability, requested a meeting with Jetstar's management. Mr Shorten said he would ask the company to hire a set of disability advisers to review their practices and provide more training for customer staff.

Meanwhile, Jetstar still has not announced when its investigation into wheelchair accessibility will be complete.

Mr Westaway said the airline had to study all the airports it used before deciding on how to consistently provide access for wheelchairs.

### **DiVine Website**

The Brumby Labor Government has announced Victoria's first online community website for and by people with a disability.

To visit the new website go to <http://www.divine.vic.gov.au>.

### **INTERNATIONAL DAY FOR PEOPLE WITH DISABILITY**

December 3 was International Day of People with Disability (IDPwD). The 2009 theme was "Making the Millennium Development Goals Inclusive: Empowerment of persons with disabilities and their communities around the world".

There are a number of events still to be held around Victoria celebrating this special day. For more information on some of these events visit - [www.daru.org.au](http://www.daru.org.au)

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### **Act Now on Cinema Access – Deadline 7 December**

**Arts Access Australia urges you to voice your objection to the recent application made by Village Roadshow, Greater Union, Hoyts and Reading Cinemas requesting exemption from the Disability Discrimination Act for a period of two and a half years.**

**This means that Australians who are deaf, hard of hearing, blind and vision impaired stand to lose their right to complain to the Australian Human Rights Commission about the lack of provision of captioning and audio description at any of the 125 cinemas (1182 screens) owned by these four exhibitors.**

**If you don't think this is right, you can voice your concern by sending an email or letter to [disabdis@humanrights.gov.au](mailto:disabdis@humanrights.gov.au) by Monday 7<sup>th</sup> December 2009.**

**A key element of the Rudd Government's National Arts and Disability Strategy is to:**

*Explore opportunities to enhance accessibility and inclusive practices in the film, television and broadcast industry. This may include programs in Auslan and efforts to increase captioning and audio-description services, particularly for government funded films, and promoting international best practice models which support casting artists with a disability. (Focus area 4. Strategic development, 9. Film, television and broadcast industry)*

[www.cmc.gov.au/publications/nationalartsanddisabilitystrategy](http://www.cmc.gov.au/publications/nationalartsanddisabilitystrategy)

For further information, visit the Human Rights Commission website

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[www.humanrights.gov.au/disability\\_rights/exemptions/cinema/notice](http://www.humanrights.gov.au/disability_rights/exemptions/cinema/notice)

**Australian Government To Consider New Approaches To Disability**

The Prime Minister, Kevin Rudd, announced the inquiry at the National Disability Awards ceremony in Parliament House that the Productivity Commission will investigate the feasibility of new approaches for funding and delivering long-term disability care and support.

The inquiry forms part of the Australian Government's ten year National Disability Strategy being developed with State and Territory Governments and in consultation with the National People with Disabilities and Carer Council.

The Productivity Commission inquiry will examine the feasibility, costs and benefits of replacing the current system of disability services with a new approach which provides long-term essential care and support for people with severe or profound disabilities however acquired.

The inquiry will examine a range of options for long-term care and support including consideration of whether a no-fault social insurance approach to disability is appropriate in Australia. It will also examine if a scheme would fit with Australia's health, aged care, income support and injury insurance systems.

These are complex issues that require rigorous analysis, design and costing. The feasibility study will assess whether a long-term care and support scheme would be appropriate, practical and economically responsible in the Australian context.

The Productivity Commission will consult widely and will be assisted by an associate commissioner with specialist disability expertise. An independent panel of experts will also be established to advise the Productivity Commission and Government during the Inquiry. The Australian Government will appoint the associate commissioner and the independent panel of experts shortly.

The Productivity Commission will report to Government in July 2011.

For more information go to - [www.daru.org.au/news](http://www.daru.org.au/news) .

### **Information About Recent Changes To DSP**

The latest information on Disability Support Pension increase and change can be found on the Physical Disability Australia website.

For more information go to [www.pda.org.au](http://www.pda.org.au) and then go to News - Pension Factsheets section on the website.

## **The Access to Electronic Media for the Hearing and Vision Impaired**

Disability Discrimination Commissioner, Graeme Innes, has welcomed the release of a report on proposed approaches to improving access to TV, cinema, DVD and internet downloads for people with a disability, and encouraged people to provide their views on how we should move forward.

"This report outlines a number of proposed actions that Government is considering for improvement of media access for people with a disability and for aging Australians," said Commissioner Innes.

The report builds on an earlier discussion paper issued in 2007 which sought views on how to improve access to electronic media, particularly for people with a vision or hearing impairment.

The Australian Human Rights Commission has worked with the disability community, and the TV, internet, cinema and DVD industries for a number of years to improve the accessibility of electronic media.

This has included improving the availability of captions, which assist Deaf people and people with a hearing impairment, and more recently, audio description. Audio description provides audible background information about what is happening visually on a screen or TV in order to assist blind people to better understand the action.

The report can be found at -  
[www.dbcde.gov.au/mediaaccessdiscussionreport](http://www.dbcde.gov.au/mediaaccessdiscussionreport)

For more information on the Commission's work in the area of media access visit -

[www.humanrights.gov.au/disability\\_rights/captioning.htm](http://www.humanrights.gov.au/disability_rights/captioning.htm)

## **December 3 is International Day of People with Disability (IDPwD)**

This is a United Nations sanctioned day that aims to promote an understanding of people with disability, encourage support for their dignity, rights and well-being and increase awareness of the benefits of the integration of people with disability in every aspect of political, social, economic and cultural life.

The 2009 theme is 'Making the Millennium Development Goals Inclusive: Empowerment of persons with disabilities and their communities around the world'.

For a list of events go to -

<http://www.daru.org.au/events/list.shtml?folder=Upcoming%20Events%20in%20the%20Sector> or visit the official website - [www.idpwd.com.au](http://www.idpwd.com.au)

### **"LiveAccess" Event**

**When:** Sunday 6<sup>th</sup> December 6, 2pm - 6pm.

**Where:** Bella Union Bar (Trades Hall)

The Youth Disability Advocacy Service (YDAS) in partnership with the City of Melbourne MetroAccess Initiative, a partnership between Local Government and the Department of Human Services is proud to announce details of its second **LiveAccess** event, featuring a stella line-up.

This event will also commemorate International Day of Persons with Disabilities, celebrated around the world to as a time for people with a disability, their friends, families and carers to acknowledge their abilities and contributions to our community.

LiveAccess was established to raise awareness and promote action around making venues accessible to people with disabilities through a new website and by hosting regular live music events. To make the campaign a success, YDAS is working closely with a wide variety of people, including young people with and without disabilities, local government, artists and the entertainment industry.

This event will launch the new LiveAccess website - [www.liveaccess.org.au](http://www.liveaccess.org.au) - which will include accessibility reviews of venues and festivals, as well as useful information for people with disabilities, venue owners and staff. The site will continue to grow through contributions from the community. Anyone can submit a review or comment and local bands and venues can nominate to be part of a LiveAccess event.

For more information go to - [www.daru.org.au/events](http://www.daru.org.au/events)

### **Having A Say Conference 10 - Artwork Competition**

The theme for the Having a Say 2010 Conference is '*Making it Happen: Individuality, Capacity, Participation, Leadership, Citizenship*'

A Having a Say Art Competition about the Human Rights of *Freedom & Respect* will be take place at the Having a Say 2010 Conference.

For more information contact the VALID office via phone - 03 9416 4003 - or email - [havingasay@valid.org.au](mailto:havingasay@valid.org.au)

### **2nd Strengthening Disability Advocacy Conference 2009 – Copies of Presentations**

Following on from the success of last year's national advocacy conference, DARU - Disability Advocacy Resource Unit, SARU - Self Advocacy Resource Unit and VDAN - Victorian Disability Advocacy Network hosted the '2nd Strengthening Disability Advocacy – Working Together Conference 2009' on 17-18 November 2009.

Copies of the Conference presentations, where available, have been uploaded to the DARU website under the Conference tab.

### **Round Tableconference 2010: Call for Papers extended to Friday 4 December**

The Round Table on Information Access for People with Print Disabilities is a trans-Tasman organisation formed in 1981 to facilitate collaboration between organisations and individuals interested in information access issues.

The Round Table comprises over 30 organisation members in Australia and New Zealand, including major accessible format producers, libraries, educators and consumer groups. One of the major activities of the Round Table is an annual conference for information sharing and learning. For the first time in 2010, this conference will be held in Auckland, New Zealand.

**When:** 23-25 May 2010

**Where:** Heritage Auckland, Auckland, New Zealand

The full Call for Papers is now available on the conference blog at: <http://roundtable2010.wordpress.com/call-for-papers/>

The theme for Round Table's Annual Conference in 2010 is Think Globally, Act Locally.

The conference will consider:

- What are we achieving in the global context through international groups like the International Council on English Braille, the DAISY Consortium, the International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions and the Global Library initiative?
- What local initiatives have been successful in our communities? How can these be expanded to other regions?
- What are the issues and opportunities for the print disability community in a world where publishing is moving beyond print?
- How are service organisations meeting the changing information access needs of individuals and diverse communities?
- How does access to information empower individuals to participate in society?
- Where are the biggest gaps in information access?

The theme will be explored through a mix of speakers, panel discussions and workshops.

If you would like to be part of Round Table 2010 you can attend conference as a delegate, join the Round Table mailing list, or keep an eye on the conference blog for more information as it becomes available.