



S . W . A . A .

Southwest Advocacy

News

Reg. No. A00 259 14Y

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

CO-ORDINATOR'S REPORT

Welcome to this winter edition of *SWAA News*. There have been some promising developments in regards to legislation and Government policy pertaining to people with disabilities this year. The type of things that I am referring to include the following.

- New Standards for Access to Premises under the Disability Discrimination Act have been adopted and will become law from May 2011.
- The Federal Government is developing a National Disability Strategy (NDS) that will set out a ten year plan for improving life outcomes for Australians with disabilities, their families and carers. It will aim to increase participation of people with disability in society, and to reduce prejudice. The NDS will be built around six policy areas: health and wellbeing; personal and community support; economic security; learning and skills; rights, protection, justice and legislation; and inclusive and accessible communities.
- A new Australian Disability Parking Scheme will be rolled out by the end of the year and the new system will be in place when States have changed their legislation. The Scheme includes national minimum standards for concessions, although States which have better concessions than the minimum will be able to keep them, to ensure permit holders are not worse off.
- A review of regulations governing the operation of Supported Residential Services (SRS's) should result in increased protection for residents.
- Reviews of the Mental Health Act and the Guardianship Act have been conducted. We now hope to see new legislation enhancing the rights and protections of people with disabilities and mental health issues.

Please feel free to contact SWAA for further information about any of these matters.

Regular readers of this newsletter will recall that in the last edition I spoke about Southwest Advocacy Association's (SWAA's) increasingly difficult financial situation and the fact that we were reluctantly considering reducing staff hours in order to make ends meet. I am now pleased to inform our members that SWAA has been offered funding by the Federal Government for the next 12 months that includes a 15% overall increase. This increase in funding will provide some welcome relief from the financial pressure that SWAA has been facing, however, without wanting to appear ungrateful, the reality is that this increase amounts to \$1,250 per month and really only just brings our organisation up to speed with the increased operational costs that it has been facing without additional funding for some years. The Federal Government is continuing with its' plans to introduce an accredited quality assurance system for the National Disability Advocacy Program, so we remain hopeful that it will be recognised that more realistic funding is vital to providing the highest quality advocacy services. Thank you to those people who took the time to speak or write to our local Federal Member of parliament and/or the Minister for Community Services.

Best regards,
Robert Dick.
 Co-ordinator

JUNE 2010

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

Inside this issue:

Co-Ordinator's Report	1
Productivity Commission Inquiry into long-term care and support for people with a disability	2
Exploring the Possibilities booklet	3
Deaf people to get SMS emergency service	4
Employment Assistance Fund	5

Productivity Commission Inquiry into long-term care and support for people with a disability

Last November Prime Minister Kevin Rudd announced a Productivity Commission Inquiry into the feasibility of new approaches for the funding and delivering of long-term care and support for people with a disability in Australia.

If accepted, a new scheme could fundamentally change the way support services are funded and provided to people requiring long-term care and support. The new approach may require social, economic and tax reform on par with the introduction of Medicare in the 80s, compulsory superannuation in the 90s and GST in the 00s.

The Productivity Commission Inquiry begins in April 2010 and is due to hand down its final report by July 2011. The Commission will consider submissions from different groups presenting a number of models. You are welcome to register your interest directly to the commission. To find out how go to: www.pc.gov.au/projects/inquiry/disability-support or phone Freecall: 1800 020 083

Some of the schemes being proposed include:

National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS)

This is the model supported by most advocacy and peak disability service providers. This would see all Australians entitled to a no fault insurance scheme where they would receive life long care regardless of how they received or acquired their disability.

The scheme would work similar to people who receive an injury as a result of a motor vehicle accident or work place injury where people generally receive financial support. This scheme would be funded by a Medicare style tax levy of .8% being charged to personal income tax. You can read more at www.ndis.org.au

Lifelong Disability Entitlement Scheme

This model is being put forward as an alternate to reduce government red tape and costs.

The proposal is to replace existing state and commonwealth disability programs and funding. They would direct all entitlements to a management agent nominated by the person with disabilities. The agent would manage the funds, purchase services and pay an income in consultation with the Person with the disability. Funds would no longer be paid direct to service providers. This would give the opportunity for the individual to control the services they are receiving.

By the agents being funded direct it would cut out the bureaucrats and service providers resulting in significant cost savings which would be passed onto providing direct support to people with a disability. Under this scheme there would not be a need for a tax levy as savings would be made through cutting out the middle person. For more information on this scheme go to www.partnerships.org.au or phone: [03] 9824 4713

What can you do from here?

- You can contact the organisation listed in the articles and find out more about the different proposals.
- You can register your interest with the Productivity Commission and keep up to date with the proceedings.

(Taken from DAIS Advance Autumn 2010)

Exploring the Possibilities booklet

If you have a child or young adult in Year 10, 11 or 12, now is the time to start thinking about, and planning for, post-school options.

The *Exploring the Possibilities* booklet is a resource guide to assist young people with a disability aged 15 to 18 years and their families to plan for the future and life after school.

The guide explores the range of options available to young people in the transition from school to adult life. This may include further study, employment, volunteer work or training. The guide emphasises the importance of planning from as early as Year 7.

The first edition was developed by VALID and has been rebranded and printed by the Department of Human Services.

For more information and to download the booklet visit
www.dhs.vic.gov.au/disability/supports_for_people/being_part_of_my_community/futures_for_young_adults

(Taken from NoticeBoard magazine of the Association for Children with a Disability—Autumn 2010)

**Are you receiving Active Participation Register
Mail outs?
Don't miss out — contact SWAA on 5561 4584 &
complete a registration form today.**

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*

Deaf people to get SMS emergency service

Deaf Australia is delighted with today's announcement that the Australian Government will establish an SMS emergency service for people who are Deaf or hard of hearing.

The move was announced by the Minister for Broadband, Communications and the Digital Economy, Senator Stephen Conroy in an address to the CommsDay Summit in Sydney.

The announcement follows a feasibility study into the provision of an SMS emergency service conducted by ACMA in 2009.

Deaf Australia has been advocating for an SMS emergency service for a number of years. Following a forum and roundtable discussion on access to emergency services hosted by Deaf Australia in 2008, where it was agreed that "something is better than nothing" ACMA agreed to conduct the feasibility study.

"We are absolutely delighted with this news. Finally Deaf and hard of hearing people will be able to feel more safe when they go out into the community because they will be able to call emergency services if they need them," said Deaf Australia President Kyle Miers.

Deaf Australia congratulates the Minister on this progressive step forward for equal access for Deaf and hard of hearing people.

Currently Deaf and hard of hearing people are only able to access emergency services by using a TTY (telephone typewriter) or computer modem and calling the National Relay Services on the dedicated 106 emergency number. TTYs are not portable, so when a Deaf or hard of hearing person leaves their home or workplace they have no access to emergency services.

With the establishment of an EMS emergency service Deaf and hard of hearing people will finally have access to emergency services regardless of where they are.

Deaf Australia also congratulates the Minister on his announcement that the Government will consult on improvements to the National Relay Service (NRS). Deaf Australia will continue to advocate for a Video Relay Service to be included in the NRS.

The Minister's speech is at <http://www.minister.dbcde.gov.au/media/speeches/2010/006>

About Deaf Australia:

Deaf Australia is the only leading national peak body for deaf people managed for and by deaf people. We represent, promote and preserve the Australian Deaf community and its language and culture. We provide an advocacy and information service for and about deaf people. We work with the deaf community and stakeholders in the best interest of deaf people.

Deaf Australia (established in 1986) is the Australian national member of the World Federation of the Deaf, is a founding member of Australian Federation of Disability Organisations (AFDO), and work cooperatively with many organisations to achieve a better quality of life for deaf people.

Deaf Australia is funded by the Australian Government through the Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs.

Further information:

Deaf Australia Inc.: www.deafau.org.au

Contact:

Karen Lloyd
Executive Officer
Email: karen.Lloyd@deafau.org.au
Ph: (07) 3357 8266

**Southwest Advocacy News is also now available at
www.southwestadvocacy.org.au**

Australian Government Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations

Employment Assistance Fund

The Employment Assistance Fund replaces the Workplace Modifications Scheme and Auslan for Employment from 1 March 2010.

The Employment Assistance Fund helps people with disability and/or mental health condition by providing financial assistance to purchase a range of work-related modifications and services for people who are about to start a job or who are currently working, as well as those who require assistance to find and prepare for work.

The Fund may cover the cost of work-related modifications and services including, but not limited to:

- . The cost of modifications to the physical work environment
- . Modifications to work vehicles
- . Adaptive equipment for the workplace
- . Information and communication devices
- . Auslan interpreting
- . Specialist services for employees with specific learning disorders and mental health conditions
- . Disability awareness training
- . Deafness awareness training, and
- . Mental health first aid training

Recruitment agencies may also apply for reimbursement of Auslan interpreting that they provide for a job interview.

Who can apply for assistance?

Employers, people with disability and employment service providers may apply for assistance by completing an on-line—Employment Assistance Fund application form at www.jobaccess.gov.au.

It is a good idea to discuss any questions you may have with the Job Access service on TTYT via the NRS (phone 1800 555 677 then type **1800 464 800**).

JobAccess may be able to provide information about possible equipment, services and modifications. JobAccess can also guide you through the application process.

The application process is designed to be flexible, simple and quick so that the person with disability gets the right assistance as soon as possible.

Workplace Modifications Assessments

The Employment Assistance Fund also provides a free workplace assessment to help identify required modifications. The assessment will examine the workplace and any work barriers and discuss suitable modifications, services and equipment. The assessor will make a recommendation which the JobAccess service will consider prior to final approval of the application.

More information

You can visit www.jobaccess.gov.au or contact a JobAccess adviser on TTY via the NRS (phone 1800 555 677 they type **1800 464 800**) for further information. The JobAccess advisers are a team of friendly professionals who provide advice on all matters relating to the employment of people with disability. The Employment Assistance Guidelines are also available from www.jobaccess.gov.au.

JobAccess

AN AUSTRALIAN GOVERNMENT INITIATIVE

(Taken from vicdeaf communicate—issue 22 Mar/Apr 2010)

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



Hi!

I'm Laura, I am in my mid twenties. I have Cerebral Palsy. My physical disability is quite severe including being non-verbal. I access the computer via two head switches and a morse code program. If you would like to find out more, you can read my autobiography.

To purchase my book:

Order through major book stores - \$29.95

or

Send cheque or money order for \$35.00 to:

Laura McGee
PO Box 4344
Penrith Plaza NSW
2750

or

Go to:
www.bookpal.com.au
\$29.95 + freight

You can look me up on the Facebook Group —
Laura McGee's Wheels in Motion