



Southwest Advocacy

News

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DECEMBER 2012

CO-ORDINATOR'S REPORT

Welcome to the last SWAA Newsletter for 2012.

We have had our Annual General Meeting and it was a lovely evening enjoyed by all those who attended. Thank you for your interest.

December marks the end of another challenging year for Southwest Advocacy Association with no increase in funding remaining our biggest challenge. We are continually looking for other means of funding but this is difficult due to most philanthropic funds not being willing to pay for employee wages and our need is to employ more staff so that we can assist more people with disability. It's a bit of a catch 22 situation.

Next year we will be looking for new premises due to our current location being "on the market". We don't know how long we have here but will let you all know when we move. Once again finances limit where we can go. What we need is a benefactor who will give us a house that we can call our own permanently. We'll put that on our Christmas wish list.

The National Disability Insurance Scheme is due to begin the trials in July next year. We will wait and see what happens there and if the Commonwealth and States can come to some agreement on who pays for what. It will be interesting and will have a huge impact on people with disability's lives if it eventuates. We will keep our fingers crossed.

The Quality Assurance that I have mentioned in earlier reports is keeping me very busy and we will be having our first contact with the auditors in January. In the near future I will be asking for people with disability, family & carers and service providers to assist with questionnaires and feedback on our service. We will be looking at having a lunch here for those who wish to contribute to come and eat and fill out a survey and make any comments. We like positive comments but the negative ones are very useful in making improvements to our service.

I hope you all have a lovely Christmas and I will see you in the new year.

Regards
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Co-ordinator

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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

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The Committee of Management together with Adele, Marg & Roz would like to take this opportunity to wish you all a Merry Christmas and a Prosperous New Year.



The Southwest Advocacy Association office will be closed from Saturday 22nd December, 2012 and will re-open on Thursday 3rd January, 2013

Assistive Technology in the Workplace

People with a disability use assistive technology for a whole range of tasks. Whether it is simply accessing print media or communicating on the telephone, assistive technology provides a vast array of solutions. Hardware such as keyboards and the computer mouse are available specially designed for people with physical disabilities. Voice recognition technology allows many people with physical disabilities or vision impairments to control their computer. Simple adjustments to a car will enable people with physical disabilities to be mobile.

Deaf/Hearing-Impaired

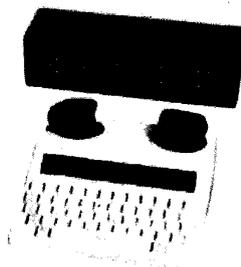
This technology generally falls into two groups – text based technology and listening devices. A third area focuses on web based video conferencing technology for people who are Deaf and who use sign language. Such technology includes laptops or desktop computers with webcams that use free software such as Skype to transmit sign language through interpreters. This is particularly valuable for the Deaf living in rural and remote areas where accessing sign language interpreters can be problematic.

Text Based Technology

Where hearing loss is such that amplification alone is not enough to provide access people often require text based technology in the workplace. For example smart phones can provide access to email and instant messenger allowing the Deaf or hearing impaired person mobile telephone access. Other devices such as laptops and the TTY allow text based access to the telephone.

Telephone Typewriter

A Telephone Typewriter (TTY) is a special device that lets people who are deaf, hearing or speech-impaired, or deaf-blind use the telephone to communicate "live", by



typing messages back and forth to one another instead of talking and listening. The conversation can be read via a small or large fluorescent display screen, a small in-built paper printer or in Braille. A TTY is required at both ends of the conversation. There are braille versions available for the Deaf-blind.

The National Relay Service (NRS) facilitates "live" telephone conversations between people who are deaf, hearing, speech-impaired, deaf-blind and the wider community. To access the NRS the caller simply dials 133 677 and quotes the number they wish to call.

The Internet Relay Service (IRS) provides free access to the NRS through computers, laptops, iPhones and iPads with internet connections (including wireless). Simply enter the number you wish to call (there is no need to call the NRS on 133 677).

Telephone – Captioned (CapTel 800i)

The CapTel works like any other phone as well as showing the Deaf or hearing impaired user every word the other person says on a screen that is part of the telephone. CapTel users can listen to the caller, and also read live written captions during the call. Both callers can use their own voice to talk using CapTel.



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Assistive Technology in the Workplace (Cont)

Live Remote Captioning

Live remote captioning is increasingly used in the workplace by people who are Deaf or hearing impaired to access meetings and training. It requires access to a laptop or desktop computer, high speed internet access and in some cases a data projector to transmit captioning to a large screen.

Captions are sent through the internet by a remotely based captioner who is linked to the meeting or training through either Skype or the telephone.

Listening Devices

There are many telephone listening devices for people who are hearing impaired including ones that amplify sound and Bluetooth devices that provide assistance to use the telephone, particularly mobile phones. Personal communication aids offer discreet and portable sound enhancement for use in a range of situations and are compatible with hearing aids and cochlear implants.



Sign Language Interpreting Via Skype

Many people in the Deaf community who use sign language can access sign language interpreters through the internet using software such as Skype. This is useful, particularly for people who are Deaf who reside in rural areas where access to sign language interpreters is limited.

Blind and Vision-Impaired Devices

These devices allow access to mobile phone, provide access to braille on hand held devices or simply allow access to print media.

Braille

The latest compact and portable Braille displays are compatible with most mobile communication devices including mobile / smart / touch phones, iPads, PDAs, laptops and desktop PCs.



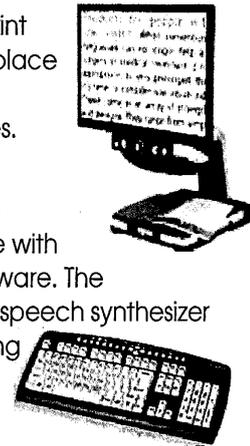
Screen Electronic Magnifiers

These electronic devices incorporate a digital camera, magnify text and display on a Closed Circuit Television (CTV).

They provide access to print based media in the workplace and some include text-to-speech capabilities.

Keyboards

Large print keyboards are available and compatible with screen magnification software. The BrailleNote Apex features speech synthesizer and braille display enabling the reading of text documents and emails.



There is a wide range of hardware and software providing access to print material in the workplace that is designed for people who are Blind and vision impaired.

For guidance and information contact:

Vision Australia www.visionaustralia.org.au

Quantum technology www.quantumrlv.com.au

Spectronics www.spectronicsinoz.com

DeafBlind Communicator

The Deafblind Communicator combines electronic Braille and texting technologies in one portable device to enable Deafblind and speech-impaired people to communicate in real-time. The units enable face-to face, direct-to-other BrailleNote and DBC users and SMS/Text messaging.



Physical Disability Devices

There is a huge amount of technology available for use by people with physical disabilities in the work place ranging from voice recognition technology to specially designed hardware for computers such as the mouse or keyboard. Other technology is designed for everyday tasks such as turning pages or to allow people to drive motor vehicles.

For more information about the types of technology used by people with physical disabilities in the workplace, contact JobAccess. This is a federal government program that provides funding for workplace modifications.

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Assistive Technology in the Workplace (Cont)

Learning Disability Software

A multitude of software is available for people with learning disabilities to access print based material and word processing programs that can be used in the workplace. These include programs that enable most computer based tasks without using a keyboard and operate solely through voice.

iPad / Tablet Computers

These devices offer inbuilt accessibility features that can be used in the workplace by people with a disability. They are light, easy to hold and carry with large multi-touch displays including an onscreen QWERTY keyboard.

Vision impairment

For the vision impaired there is a voice over function to aid navigation. The iPad includes wireless braille displays which can be read by voice-over and voice alerts to incoming and outgoing mail. The new iPad 3 onscreen keyboard has a microphone button enabling the user to dictate text for emails, SMSs or Facebook updates.

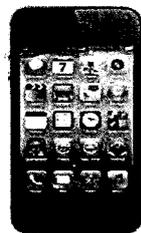


Hearing impairment

The iPad accessibility features address communication for people with hearing impairment with fast frame rate video for signing through Skype, captioning, including through Skype, full social networking capability and ability to customize sound quality.

Smart Phones

These are the new generation mobile phones and are more a compact portable computer and come with built in accessibility features to assist both people with vision impairment and those with hearing impairment.



Articles extracted from 'Assistive Technology in the Workplace for People with a Disability', National Disability Coordination Officer Program, University of Ballarat, June 2012.

To obtain the document in full and for agency and contact details for advice on available technology contact DAIS.



YOU have a right to complain

If you have any disability support services you have the right to raise your concerns if you are not happy. You can even raise concerns about SWAA. By speaking up you may clear up confusion or help improve the service for everyone who use the service.

You may not want to complain as you fear that it may make it difficult with the service you are depending on or that you will lose your service. You may worry that your support worker may get into trouble or lose their job.

However, complaints help make sure that the services are working properly for the people they help. Legally, a service cannot hold it against you if you complain. If your support worker has done nothing wrong they will not get into trouble.

How to complain

Find out how to complain

All disability service providers must have a complaint handling procedure and a way of telling clients how to complain. Most organisations have a brochure. You can ring the organisation and ask for a copy.

Talk to the people involved first

Many problems are the result of confusion or misunderstandings and can be easily sorted out. Discuss your concerns first with the person responsible. Try to stick to the facts and provide examples and reasons why you were not happy with the service.

If you do not believe your complain is being taken seriously, show that you are prepared to take it further. Ask to speak to a more senior staff member like a team leader or manager.

External Complaint Agencies

If you feel the service is not responding to your complaint or you do not feel comfortable contacting the service directly you can make a complaint to:

Disability Services Commissioner (Victoria)
Ph: 1800 677 342

Complaints Resolution and Referral Service (CRRS). The CRRS handle complaints for Commonwealth funded disability employment or advocacy services.
Ph: 1800 880 052

SWAA can also help you to make a complaint against a disability service.



**If you are happy with a service you are
receiving, tell them!
We all like a compliment**