

Victorian Women With Disabilities Network Newsletter

Edition 2, MARCH - APRIL 2009



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VWDN Board 08/09

Margaret Bayly
Catherine Brooks
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Sharon Granek
Tricia Malowney (Co-Chair)
Effie Meehan
Delia Portlock
Margaret Stevens (Treasurer)

Advisor to the Board

Dominique Saunders

Staff

Keran Howe, *Executive Officer*
Kate Hood, *Policy Officer*
Sarah Boyd, *Information & Administration Officer*

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From the Executive Officer's Desk

Hello again,

Welcome to our second newsletter for 2009. I hope you have all had a lovely Easter break and that you have indulged in some really good quality chocolate!

We hope you like our new look newsletter and that it is easy to read and to find the information that most interests you. Please let us know what you think by emailing vwdn@vwdn.org.au.

New Board Director

We are pleased to welcome Simone Rutherford as a new Director of VWDN. Simone's skills as a Company Accountant will be of great assistance to the Board in monitoring and developing the finances of VWDN.

New Staff Member

Welcome also to Sarah Boyd as our new Information and Administration Officer. Sarah, who commenced with VWDN on 31st March, has experience in financial management, information technology, office administration and advocacy. She will be responsible for coordinating the Newsletter as well as managing the Website and the Online Resource Collection.

VWDN's Strategic Plan

We are proceeding with our two-year plan and have some good initiatives which we hope will connect both government and other community organisations with the specific needs of Women with Disabilities. Our Strategic Plan for 2009-2010 has now been developed and we will be putting up on our website shortly. If you would like to read it click on the link under 'Strategic Plan' at the following address <http://www.vwdn.org.au/publications.htm#strategicplan>.

The Non-family violence intervention Act

Right now we are working to influence the review of the 'Non-Family Violence Intervention Order System'. This used to be known as the Stalking Act. This follows on from the work we carried out to make sure that women with disabilities were considered in the 'Family Violence Protection Act'. This Act now includes situations where a person might be in a 'Family-Like' relationship without being a blood relative or partner as applies to many women with disabilities.

However the Family Violence Protection Act doesn't always include paid carers and personal assistants and we know that women with disabilities do sometimes experience physical, psychological, financial and even sexual abuse from people who are paid to care for them. So there is more to be done so that Women with Disabilities can be protected from abusers who are not family members, and do not come under the definition of 'Family-like'.

We want women with disabilities to be able to take out an Intervention Order when they are in a situation such as this, so that they can receive immediate protection in any circumstances, not just when they are being abused by a partner or family member.

We are working on a joint Submission to put to the Department of Justice which we hope will influence them to change the law so that it recognizes that this is a big problem for Women with Disabilities, and not something which happens only occasionally.

It seems obvious to us that this is a Human Rights issue and that under the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities our civil laws need to protect us. It also seems obvious to us that women with disabilities have a right to be believed by police and other services, and a right to the same legal representation as everyone else. It is very important that women with disabilities have easy access to Advocacy Services and can use them without the court





thinking that they are being influenced by the person who is advocating for them. It is also important to be able to remain in your home when the abuser is a co-tenant. We believe that women with disabilities who fear they will have to move from their home or group home because of violence from a co-tenant may not report violence.

We will be seeking your support for this Bill later in the year to encourage you to write to your local Member of Parliament about this issue and influence them to represent your point of view in the Parliament.

VWDN Policies

We have been busy developing new policies to guide the work of VWDN. These policies are important given that VWDN is assuming the funding of the VWDN Advocacy Information Service. Once these are finalized policies relating to members and other partners – the Membership, Representation, Privacy, Corporate Partnership and Volunteer policies - will be put up on the website for your interest.

Keran Howe, Executive Officer



VWDN Policy Officer's News

Kate Hood, Policy Officer on Violence against Women with Disabilities

Hello again. I am happy to report that it has been a busy time for us since I last communicated with you. I mean this in the most positive way, as it seems to us that there are some good changes occurring as far as the recognition of violence against women with disabilities goes.

The first thing I want to mention is our contribution to the State Plan to Prevent Violence Against Women. Lara Fergus, from the Office of Women's Policy, is planning five working groups to establish what constitutes Best Practice in the prevention of violence. She and I met and she said she wanted

representation on issues for women with disabilities on each of the working groups. We thought the best way to do this would be to use some of our own women to represent the VWDN on four of the Groups. So Jody Saxton, Margaret Stevens, Brenda Gabe and I will sit on four of the five groups with the intention of getting our voices heard on the issue of violence against women with disabilities. This is a very exciting thing for us, as it affirms one of our core values, which is to support and encourage women with disabilities to speak out on the issues that affect them at significant forums. We hope that this will lead to other people wanting our women to provide input at other events.

This leads me to a request. I'm wondering if there is anyone in our membership who would be interested in the possibility of representing the VWDN in the future. We already have some women who are doing a great job for us in the area of representation, but we feel that there are probably more who would like to do this work. Keran and I are planning some sessions to spend some time talking with anyone who is interested about what would be needed to support them to do this. So if you are keen to explore the possibilities with us, you can e-mail me on Kate.Hood@vwdn.org.au or phone me at the VWDN on 9664 9341. I'd love to hear from you.

We have also been busy contributing to the Non-Family Violence Intervention Order System.

Our Forum in July is still in the planning stages, but is coming along. The aim of the forum will be to highlight what needs to happen to make better access to services for women with disabilities. We feel that Disability Services and Family Violence Services need to collaborate in order for women with disabilities to get the best service possible. Also, there are many different regions in Victoria and we feel that a good long-term aim is to get one person working in each region who is focused on Women with disabilities and Family Violence.





We are planning to have at least one Guest Speaker at the Forum who specializes in issues for women with disabilities and how to support them.

The VWDN is starting up a bi-monthly Bulletin which will go out to Disability, Family Violence, Police, Health, and any other services which are interested. I have already had some e-mails from interested parties, which is very encouraging indeed! The idea is that we let people know what we are doing in the area of Family Violence and that they contribute initiatives that they have undertaken, so that the Bulletin becomes a means of communication between all sorts of different services, who can then communicate with one another rather than being isolated in the work they are doing in this area. We already know that there are some very good initiatives happening and we want them to be shared around so that they can be taken up by others.

One of these great initiatives is the creation of Disability Action Plans by organizations and services. We will be working with Women's Health in the North to create a template for a Disability Action Plan which we hope will be able to be used by family violence services generally. Victorian Legal Aid has created a Disability Action Plan, which they are already implementing within their organization. They set up a disability advisory group within their organization to help them capture all the necessary issues. We hope others will follow their example.

Well, that's all from me for this newsletter. I wish you all the best and hope you are all enjoying our beautiful autumn weather – and especially that you had a relaxing and happy break over the Easter period.

Warm regards,

Kate Hood



A word from our new Information and Administration Officer

Hi everyone,

I feel very excited, honored and grateful to have come on board as the new Information and Administration Officer for the VWDN AIS, and to be a part of such a passionate, caring and driven organisation. I look forward to supporting the objectives of the VWDN, through the provision of information resources and financial and organisational administration.

I have really enjoyed getting to know the wonderful personalities and characters of the VWDN Board so far, and look forward to meeting other members over time.

Lastly, I would like to acknowledge the dedicated work of Melanie Thomson in having scrupulously established and advanced the role I now undertake. Though I only got to spend a few weeks with Melanie in handover, it was clear that I would be succeeding a woman of inspiring nature and admirable character.

Yours in service,

Sarah Boyd

Events and opportunities

Comedy with a Difference!

Direct from the Melbourne Comedy Festival and Melbourne Fringe Festival, comedian and facilitator Trent McCarthy is running this exciting new program for ethnic people with a disability. By participating, you will:

- Build confidence and discover your 'inner comedian'
- Learn how to use humour to connect with people from different backgrounds and abilities
- Discover and share what's funny in your culture and other cultures
- Meet other people who also love to laugh

This program is being offered for the first time in Australia and includes five workshops, which will be held from 10.30am to 12.30pm on the following dates:





Workshop 3: Wednesday, 29 April
Workshop 4: Wednesday, 27 May
Workshop 5: Wednesday, 24 June

Workshops will be held at the Migrant Resource Centre North-West Region, 45 Main Road West, St Albans opposite the railway station.

Morning coffee will be provided. Attendant care support and interpreter available on request.

For booking and information call Chris at the Migrant Resource Centre North West on (03) 9367 6044 or email on dnd@mrcnorthwest.org.au

Please RSVP by 20th of March 2009 (!)

Family Violence Regional Roadshows

As part of the ENOUGH campaign, roadshows are being held in a number of locations to take the ENOUGH message to every corner of Victoria and ensure the campaign reaches local communities.

Roadshows will comprise a community information session and sector forum. The community information session will highlight the unacceptability of family violence and the significance of the new laws and is relevant to the general public.

Accessibility assistance, including reserved parking, Auslan interpreters and attendant carers can be made available at these events.

For more information contact:

Carmel Byrne, Victims Support Agency

Carmel.byrne@justice.vic.gov.au

8684 6714 or visit

<http://www.familyviolence.vic.gov.au/assets/148/1/Roadshowschedule.pdf>

Upcoming Sessions:

- Gippsland region - Traralgon
Performing Arts Centre
Tuesday 19 May

- Hume region - Benalla
Benalla Performing Arts and Convention Centre
Friday 12 June
- Grampians region - Ballarat
Wendouree Community Hub
Thursday 18 June
- Metropolitan region – Dandenong
(Diversity Focus)
Dandenong Town Hall
Friday 26 June

Feedback Project seeks the voices of people with disability

An innovative two-year Feedback Project titled *Speak, Listen, Learn about, Grow* has been launched by the Victorian Disability Services Commissioner, Laurie Harkin.

Developed by annecto - the people network; this project aims to improve support for people with a disability, older people and carers through collecting, providing and acting on both positive and negative feedback throughout the organisation leading to a culture of continuous quality improvement.

The project will involve seeking feedback in the form of surveys, Improvement Request forms, performance feedback and Occupation Health & Safety reporting among others. annecto CEO Estelle Fyffe admits that this is a big ask.

"We face the challenge to collect and act on both positive and negative feedback from people using annecto's services, families and carers, staff and other people with an interest in our work," she said. "People are often reluctant to complain, sometimes waiting until a situation becomes very difficult to resolve."

To read more about the project, see:





http://www.disabilitynews.infoxchange.net.au/news/detail.html?filename_num=265632

annecto – the people network is an independent, not for profit association located in the northern, eastern and western metropolitan areas of Melbourne, the Grampians and the Loddon Mallee region, and is committed to increasing opportunities and choices in the community for people with a disability, older persons and carers, and to realising a more inclusive society.

Contact Name: Di Erlichman
Contact Phone: 03 9687 7066
Contact Email: di.erlichman@annecto.org.au
Website: www.annecto.org.au

Sexual Assault : Giving Voice to Victim/Survivors' Knowledge of Sexual Offending Project

The Australian Centre for the Study of Sexual Assault is seeking participants for a research project. Females 18 and over are sought who: have been a victim of sexual assault that happened as an adult; have received counselling or are receiving counselling which involved speaking directly about the assault; and live in the Northern Territory, Victoria, New South Wales, South Australia or Queensland.

Project and participation details on <http://www.aifs.gov.au/acssa/> or contact Haley Clark (03) 9214 7878 for a private & confidential enquiry

Northern Centre Against Sexual Assault (CASA) – new support group

Northern CASA (Heidelberg) will be running a support group for women who have experienced sexual abuse or sexual assault, as soon as sufficient numbers have been filled.

The group is intended to be held on Tuesdays from 10:00-12:30am, over a 12 week period.

To register your interest or for further information, please contact Lia or Julie on 9496 2240.

Forums & Workshops

Community Forum - How can we prevent illness and promote good health?

Wednesday 6th May, 9:30am – 1:30pm

Oakhill Community Hall, Cnr Acheron Ave & North Road, Reservoir.

To register contact Rebecca via phone (03) 9903 0564 or email info@aihps.org

The aim of this forum is to gather information about the community's views on preventing illness and promoting good health, and to provide people with an opportunity to learn more about how we can achieve this.

As an outcome, we expect to develop proposals for government policy. We will be preparing a report on the outcomes that will be given to government policy-makers. We also want to assess whether community forums such as these are a useful method of improving community participation in the process of making policy.

Participants are not expected to be experts – just to be willing to listen and share opinions.

Participants will have an opportunity to learn about important health issues, and to have their say. We will discuss different examples of what can (or should) be done to prevent serious illness and promote good health, for example in relation to healthy eating, physical activity and alcohol use.

The forum is part of a research project being conducted by the Australian Institute of Health Policy Studies.

For more information contact Rebecca via phone (03) 9903 0564 or email info@aihps.org





Dementia Seminar Series May 2009

The Australian Institute for Primary Care presents two seminars to be held in May, 2009 led by experts in Cultural Diversity and Dementia, and Mild Cognitive Impairment.

**Seminar 1: Cultural Diversity and Dementia:
Will be held on 8 May, 2009**

**Seminar 2: Mild Cognitive Impairment:
Will be held on 22 May, 2009**

At The Chamber, John Scott Meeting House,
La Trobe University Bundoora Campus.

For further information and registration details.

Contact Name: Barbara Parker

Contact Phone: 03 94795810



Depression & Relationships Seminar

Helen Rimington works at the Drummond Street Relationship Centre. She has also worked at The Centre for Adolescent Health and at beyondblue, and has an interest in mental health promotion and families.

This *FREE* seminar will look at:

- * The ways in which depression impacts on couple relationships.
- * How women can support those with depression and also look after themselves.
- * Suitable if you or your partner experiences depression.

Monday May 11 2:30-3:30pm

The Atrium, 5th Floor
Queen Victoria Women's Centre
210 Lonsdale Street
Melbourne 3000

http://www.wire.org.au/womens_info/news/Depressioninfosession.pdf

RSVP 9921 0878 or email
inforequests@wire.org.au .

Protecting the rights of people with a decision-making disability – Workshop

The Office of the Public Advocate is holding a workshop on May 12 during Law Week 2009 on 'Protecting the Rights of People with a Decision-making Disability'.

The workshop for health and community care professionals will explore practice issues related to autonomy, advocacy, risk and rights, and guardianship and administration.

Places for the workshop (special Law Week price of \$25) are limited so interested people are encouraged to book early.

10am-2.30pm, Tuesday, 12 May

Level 5, 436 Lonsdale Street, Melbourne

Book with Lorraine on (03) 9603 9566

Human Rights Workshops

Australian Human Rights Commission Workshops The Australian Human Rights Commission is conducting further workshops to encourage participation in the National Human Rights Consultation. Details can be found at <http://www.humanrights.gov.au/letstalkaboutrights/workshops.html>

Victoria: 12 May – 14 May 2009

Fighting Fair : Conflict Resolution for Women

A *FREE* workshop for women who find themselves fighting, yelling and feeling frustrated that they aren't able to resolve their couple conflict in a better way – we can all improve!

This session will cover:

- * What's different about how women handle





conflict

- * Identifying the hot topics for you as a couple
- * Understanding the simple strategies that can reduce conflict
- * Learning to fight fair and make up

Helen Rimington works at Drummond Street Relationship Centre in Carlton running groups and community seminars about parenting and families and providing professional development to workers in the field.

Monday May 18, 3pm - 4:15pm

The Atrium, 5th Floor
Queen Victoria Women's Centre
210 Lonsdale Street
Melbourne 3000

Click here for flyer:

<http://www.adfvc.unsw.edu.au/specialcollection/shealth.htm>

RSVP: www.trybooking.com

or by ph. 9921 0878 or email
inforequests@wire.org.au.

Venue hire kindly provided free of charge by the Queen Victoria Women's Centre

Beyond Benzodiazepines & Mastering Anxiety discussions

'Beyond Benzodiazepines' & 'Mastering Anxiety: Learn Strategies to Reduce Your Anxiety and Stress'.

Wednesday 15th July 2009, Melbourne.

http://www.healthnews.foxchange.net.au/news/detail.html?filename_num=270720

Conferences

ADFO Conference

Policy about Us, For Us; A Practical Revolution in the Lives of People with Disabilities.

@ The Jasper Hotel, Melbourne

28 & 29 May, 2009

The program of the conference will focus on the recently ratified United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and how it relates to Australia. The discussion of human rights will have a significant presence at the conference.

More details and a draft program will be available soon, go to website www.pda.org.au

Communities in Control 2009 - Crisis, Catastrophe, Community: Rebuild, Renew, Recharge .

Invitation to the Communities in Control Conference:

Crisis, Catastrophe, Community: Rebuild, Renew, Recharge

June 15 & 16, 2009

I am writing to warmly invite you and your colleagues to join me at the 2009 Communities in Control Conference and play a part in the development of solutions to the most challenging questions of our time.

For more information on the Conference and the Pre-Conference skills day, go to: www.ourcommunity.com.au/cic2009.

4th Australian Community Support Organisation (ACSO) Forensic Disability Conference – Call for Papers

The 4th Australian Community Support Organisation (ACSO) Forensic Disability Conference will be held in Melbourne on

15th -17th July, 2009.

The Disability and Age Discrimination Law Reform Summit

The Summit will feature keynote presentations by: The Hon. Robert McClelland, Federal





Attorney-General, and Graeme Innes AM, Disability Discrimination Commissioner and Human Rights Commissioner at the Australian Human Rights Commission.

Commissioner Innes' speech, titled 'People with Disability: 20% of Employees', will cover:

- your obligations under the DDA
- what constitutes disability
- what constitutes discrimination
- reasonable adjustment and amendments to the law
- disclosure - you can increase it
- some practical examples.

Date: 30 – 31 July 2009

Venue: Swissotel, Sydney

For further information go to :

www.iir.com.au/disabilitylaw

Awards, Funding & Grants

National Disability Award

Nominations are open to people with disability who have achieved something remarkable or made a significant contribution to our community, and people within our community who have contributed to the disability sector.

Does someone outstanding spring to mind? Nominate them for a National Disability Award by visiting www.idpwd.com.au

or phone 1800 440 385.

The 2009 award categories are:

1. Minister's Lifelong Achievement Award for a person, over 25 years of age, with or without disability who has demonstrated a sustained and extraordinary personal commitment to improving and/or reshaping the lives of people with disability.
2. Disability Rights Young Leader Award for a young person, 12-25 years of age, with disability who has raised awareness and

shown outstanding leadership in improving the lives of people with disability.

3. Business Award for a person with or without disability who has displayed an innovative approach and achieved substantial outcomes, in advancing the lives of people with disability in areas such as transport, housing, communication and technology. No age limit.
4. Local Government Award for a person who has challenged or lobbied, and has succeeded in implementing substantial change by breaking down barriers faced by people with disability. No age limit.
5. Social Inclusion Award for a person who has worked towards a more inclusive environment by creating opportunities for people with disability to participate in areas such as sport, the arts, education and the wider community. No age limit.

Nominations close Friday 22 May 2009.

For more information on the awards, and to order a nomination pack go to :

www.idpwd.com.au or call 1800 440 385. TTY users please phone 1800 555 677 and ask for 1800 440 385.

The National Disability Awards are part of the Australian Government's celebration of International Day of People with Disability. Award finalists will be invited to attend the National Disability Awards Ceremony at Parliament House, in Canberra on 23 November 2009.

Positive Body Image Grants 2009

The 'Go for your life' Positive Body Image Grants fund community-based activities that promote positive body image messages and healthy lifestyle choices, and build self esteem. Grants up to \$5,000 are available for projects that target young people aged 12 - 25 years and actively involve them in managing the project.

Applications close 17 April 2009.





For information click here:

http://www.healthnews.infoxchange.net.au/news/detail.html?filename_num=271622

Australian Crime and Violence Prevention Awards

The 2009 Australian Crime and Violence Prevention Awards are now open for nominations. The awards reward good practice in the prevention or reduction of violence and other types of crimes in Australia, to encourage public initiatives and to assist governments in developing projects to reduce violent and other types of crime.

The closing date for nominations for the 2009 awards is Monday, 1 June 2009.

Winners will be notified in October. For application forms go to:

<http://www.aic.gov.au/acvpa/>

Victorian Volunteer Small Grants

Grants of up to \$5000 are now available to help not-for-profit groups attract new volunteers and increase the diversity of their volunteers.

To apply for a Victorian Volunteer Small Volunteer Grant visit

www.grants.dpcd.vic.gov.au or call the Grants Information Line on 1300 366 356.

Applications can be submitted at any time throughout the year.

Free reviews of funding submissions

Granted is a not-for-profit organisation that provides reviews of draft funding submissions. We assist community organisations that aim to make a positive impact, but which have limited resources to seek funding.

We provide a fresh perspective, comments on the strengths and weaknesses of submissions and suggestions for improvements. We don't write submissions or draft content, and we only

review funding submissions that are close to completion.

If you think Granted can help your organisation, please visit www.granted.org.au for more information, or email info@granted.org.au.



In the Media

Build for Life

The state government has responded to the lack of accessible housing options for the aged and people with disabilities through a new awareness initiative, 'Build for Life'. Launched on the 14th of April by Planning Minister Justin Madden, the new initiative is part of the Brumby Government's Fairer Victoria social policy action plan to address disadvantage. It aims to promote, and consider mandating, the inclusion of minimal cost accessibility features into new housing developments. Incorporating design features such as wider doorways and halls, no step entrances, and suitably equipped ground floor bathrooms will ensure more of the population access to housing that meets their needs. Renovating existing homes to include such features comes at a significantly higher price. With the demand for more accessible homes only set to increase in the future, as Australia's population ages and lives longer, the Victorian government urges other states to follow its lead.

The 'Build for Life' awareness campaign includes a website, consumer and industry publications and resources, and also a stand at this year's HIA Home Ideas Show (April 15 - 19).

The website is located at:
www.buildforlife.com.au

New initiative aims to 'build better lives'





Michelle Newland is a young woman with a simple dream to be independent and live in her own place. A new initiative launched in Victoria this month will aim to turn the dream of Michelle and many other young people with disabilities into reality.

A Victorian study found young people in nursing homes experience greater levels of social isolation, and are less likely to participate in simple community activities like shopping or visiting family. It's for these reasons that the Building Better Lives aims to raise \$10 million over the next five years to ensure young people with severe disabilities (such as an acquired brain injury, Huntington's disease or multiple sclerosis) can live in appropriate accommodation with the required support and state-of-the-art technology.

Read more:

http://www.healthnews.infoxchange.net.au/news/detail.html?filename_num=269000

Tell your stories:

Building Better Lives is currently seeking young people with disabilities to tell their stories about living in aged care.

Call 03 9894 7006 or email admin@summerfoundation.org.au to register your interest.

Disabled living in poorer suburbs: AIHW

The Age 01/04/09

The majority of people with severe disabilities in Australian capital cities live in poorer suburbs with relatively few economic resources, a new report shows.

Read the full article here:

<http://news.theage.com.au/breaking-news-national/disabled-living-in-poorer-suburbs-aihw-20090401-9je0.html>

Home truths: mental health, housing and homelessness in Australia

Mental Health Council of Australia

A secure home is widely recognised as providing a fundamental basis for building mental health, yet this is not always reflected in policies and funding. This report explores how this lack of recognition affects mental health and homelessness in Australia, and identifies what needs to be done to improve housing outcomes.

http://www.apo.org.au/linkboard/results.chtml?filename_num=270777

One in two Australians have suffered a mental illness

The latest snapshot by the Australian Bureau of Statistics shows that close to half the adult population has suffered a mental disorder in their lifetime and that one in five people may have suffered one in the last year.

The latest Australian Social Trends Report indicates that 45 per cent of Australians have experienced an anxiety, mood or substance use disorder at some stage of their life, with anxiety the most common of these.

The publication, which draws on data from a 2007 study, reports that of those deemed to be suffering a mental disorder nearly two-thirds (65 per cent) had never sought professional help and that most (86 per cent) of those people didn't think they needed it.

It also indicates that just over one-fifth (21 per cent) of sufferers were deemed as having a severe disorder, one-third had a moderate disorder and just under half (46 per cent) had a mild disorder.

Barbara Hocking from mental health group SANE Australia says the report sheds new light on the growing problem of mental illness in Australia.





"Until this year, we always used to say one in five Australians would experience a mental health disorder in their lifetime," she told The Australian newspaper.

"With these recent findings, we say it's one in five in a 12-month period."

View the full Australian Bureau of Statistics article here:

<http://www.abs.gov.au/AUSSTATS/abs@.nsf/Lookup/4102.0Main+Features30March%202009>



Resources

Recognizing Resilience and Rights

Helen Szoke / Centre for Public Policy

This paper discusses challenging and disconnected dialogue in Australia around human rights and how this dialogue intersects with public policy paradigms.

http://www.apo.org.au/linkboard/results.shtml?filename_num=270057

Victoria Legal Aid (VLA), in consultation with a variety of external organisations, has developed a Disability Action Plan to comply with the *Disability Services Act 2006* (Vic).

Planned actions include revisiting our approach to publications, both printed and online, and looking at whether phone lines are accessible to people with speech or hearing impairments. It extends to legal practice, by reviewing duty lawyer and legal advice services to ensure they are accessible to people with a disability, and encouraging private practitioners to act for people with a disability through grants of aid. It also addresses staff needs, committing VLA to be an organisation that is supportive of staff with a disability and encourages people with a disability to work at VLA.

Carman Parsons, Equity and Access Officer

Victoria Legal Aid Knowledge Services

Tel: (03) 9269 0272 Mon/Tues/Thurs



The geography of disability and economic disadvantages in Australian capital cities, Australian Institute of Health and Welfare

How is severe disability distributed within Australian capital cities? What is the relationship between the percentage of people with severe disability living in a local metropolitan area and the socioeconomic disadvantage of the area?

This report presents data on the geographical distribution of severe disability among people aged less than 65 years living in Australian capital cities, based on analysis of the 2006 Census of Population and Housing.

AIHW catalogue number (DIS 54).

The Report can be downloaded for free from the following website:

<http://www.aihw.gov.au/publications/index.cfm/title/10703>

Women in Australia 2009 Report Released

19/03/2009

Minister for the Status of Women, Tanya Plibersek today released the *Women in Australia 2009* report.

Women in Australia 2009, the fifth in this biennial series, contains a range of statistics and commentary regarding the status of women in key areas, including women's economic independence, education and training, and health and wellbeing.

Copies of *Women in Australia 2009* are available at:

http://www.ofw.fahcsia.gov.au/publications/wia_2009/default.htm





Jean Haile's Foundation for Women's Health

Menopause

The first of our monthly health articles is now available. This month's article focuses on menopause from a partner's perspective and offers practical tips from Jean Hailes Foundation psychologist Dr Mandy Deeks. Our free monthly health articles cover a different women's health issue each month and can be reprinted in your organisation's newsletter or magazine at no cost.

To register for our monthly health article, go to: www.jeanhailes.org.au/component/option,com_philaform/Itemid,651/form_id,9/

Be your own best friend

Our second article is a timely reminder during the month of March (when there are many events being staged to celebrate international women's day) how to be your own best friend. We are usually good at giving our friends wise counsel when they need it, but women are so often critical of themselves. Once again, psychologist Dr Mandy Deeks offers some advice and practical tips to help women recognise their own achievements, and most of all, be kind to themselves.

Links to the second article: Be your own best friend

http://www.jeanhailes.org.au/images/stories/articles/recognising_our_achievements.doc

http://www.jeanhailes.org.au/images/stories/articles/recognising_our_achievements.pdf

Websites of the month

CROWD Website

<http://www.bcm.edu/crowd/>

The Center for Research on Women with Disabilities (CROWD) is a research center that

focuses on issues related to health, aging, civil rights, abuse, and independent living. CROWD's purpose is to promote, develop, and disseminate information to expand the life choices of women with disabilities so that they may fully participate in community life. More specifically, researchers develop and evaluate models for interventions to address specific problems effecting women with disabilities.

One of the Center's most notable accomplishments is the establishment of a database on psychosocial behaviors of women with physical disabilities compared to women without disabilities. This database, which contains 950 responses to a comprehensive national survey, includes the first empirical data on a population of women with physical disabilities, ages 18 through 65. Current studies are examining health promotion for women with disabilities and violence against women with disabilities.

The abuses section of the website can be found at:

http://www.bcm.edu/crowd/abuse_women/abuse_women.html

The Australian Human Rights Commission has launched its Facebook page

At this stage, the page predominantly features news and event information about the National Human Rights Consultation and our resources to assist community organisations and individuals to take part in the consultation. It also features news on seminars and workshops about a federal charter of rights.

People are reminded that this is a positive space where people are able to publicly contribute their views to this page, without fear of abuse, harassment or exposure to offensive or inappropriate content.

Find us on facebook at:

<http://www.facebook.com/home.php?#/pages/Sydney-Australia/Australian-Human-Rights-Commission/58057437310>





In Control Website

www.in-control.org.au

Visit the new interactive In Control Australia website.

Features include:

- Disability News and In Control News
- Details of coming events and speakers on self-directed funding and person centred tools
- Forums for discussion
- Links to other websites with research, information, and tools on self-directed funding

Register on the site to sign up for premium content, *including:*

- A document library
- Publications and submissions by In Control Australia
- Presentations you can download about In Control Australia and self-directed funding



In the Community

Holidays for People with hearing impairment in Bass Coast and East Gippsland

Two popular visitor regions in Gippsland, Bass Coast and East Gippsland, have taken the initiative to improve travelling experiences for Deaf and hard of hearing visitors with the purchase of a Hospitality Kit.

Hospitality Kits are now available from the Visitor Information Centre in Bairnsdale, East Gippsland and the Phillip Island Visitor Information Centre in Newhaven, Phillip Island.

The 'Hospitality Kit for hotels, motels and all public venues' contains a number of items that

are highly valued by people who are Deaf or hard of hearing.

The Kit includes a:

- Telephone Typewriter (TTY) with Flashing Light alert
- 'Shake Awake' vibrating alarm clock
- Flashing Light Door Bell and Amplified Ringer
- TV Listening Sennheiser system (for use with or without hearing aids)

"It can be loaned to any motel or other accommodation house when they host Deaf and hard of hearing visitors," Mr. John Munns, East Gippsland Visitor Information Centre Coordinator said.

The Kit is very easy to use and comes with a simple step by step guide. East Gippsland and Bass Coast Shire's discussions with deaf access VICTORIA persuaded them that the Kits were highly valued by Deaf and hard of hearing people and could make a significant contribution to tourism growth.

To book the Kit or to get more information contact the Centres directly or use the National Relay Service on 133 677 and ask for:

Phillip Island Visitor Information Centre

Telephone: 1300 366 422,

Book online: www.visitbasscoast.com,

Email: Bookings@basscoast.vic.gov.au

Bairnsdale Visitor Information Centre

Telephone: 1800 637 060

Book online:

<http://www.discovereastgippsland.com.au/accommodation.asp>

Email: bairnsdalevic@egipps.vic.gov.au





IF YOU KNOW OF AN EVENT WHICH OTHERS MIGHT WANT TO ATTEND, OR YOU KNOW OF SOMETHING INTERESTING, LIKE A BOOK OR WEBSITE THAT WE MIGHT FIND INTERESTING, PLEASE SEND TO SARAH AT VWDN@VWDN.ORG.AU .

