

# VWDN NEWSLETTER – JAN & FEB 2009

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*The VWDN newsletter is compiled by Margaret Bayly, Keran Howe, Kate Hood, Tricia Malowney, Margaret Stevens, and Melanie Thomson.*

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>From the Executive Officer's Desk</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Policy Officer's News</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Announcements</b>	<b>5</b>
Victorian Bushfires	5
<b>Events and opportunities</b>	<b>7</b>
International Women's Day	7
PapScreen Victoria workshop	9
Parents with disabilities public forum	10
Young People with Disabilities Advocacy Training	12
Workshop: A Human Rights Act for Australia?	13
Join the Health Issues Centre Register	14
<b>From the media</b>	<b>16</b>
More Australians using disability employment services	16
Play lifts lid on mental health abuse	17
<b>Resources</b>	<b>18</b>
A gender agenda: a kit for women who want to stand for local government and for those who want to assist others to stand	18
Impact: Feature Issue on Employment and Women With Disabilities	18
Parentzone Newsletter	18
Human Rights Materials	19
Looking After me: A Resource Kit for Women with Intellectual Disability	19
<b>Websites of the Month</b>	<b>19</b>
Wheelies House Swap	19
NEW Domestic Violence Website Launched	20
Not Just Work: Exploring relationships between people with disabilities and attendant	20

### **VWDN Board 08/09**

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Sharon Granek  
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### **Advisor to the Board**

Dominique Saunders

### **Staff**

Keran Howe, Executive Officer  
Kate Hood, Policy Officer  
Melanie Thomson,  
Information & Admin. Officer

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## ***From the Executive Officer's Desk***



Hello all,

Welcome to our first newsletter for 2009. It has been a very difficult beginning to 2009 for us in Victoria and I would like to acknowledge those of you who have been affected by the shocking bushfires around Victoria in the past month. We feel deeply for the grief-stricken families and communities who have been caught in the fires. At the same time we are inspired by the resilience and strong spirit emerging through the grief. I have been inspired at this sad time by the wisdom of Leonard Cohen's beautiful song 'Anthem from the future':

"Ring the bells that still can ring, forget your perfect offering; There is a crack in everything, that's how the light gets in"

We have prepared some information specifically for people with disabilities affected by the bushfires, which you will find on page 5. We hope that you have all the support that you need. It is also important that we can learn from this disaster and we welcome your letters telling us of your experience from the perspective of disability.

Here at VWDN, we said farewell to 2008 by conducting an evaluation of the Advocacy Information Service and we used the evaluation to look at 'where to from here'. We have now developed our goals and we are documenting our strategic plan for the coming two years.

In addition to our continuing our substantial focus on violence against women with disabilities, we will be increasing our health promotion work on access to health services and also encouraging better support services for parents with disabilities. In January I met with Assunta Morrone from the Health Issues Centre (HIC) to discuss how women with disabilities might be more involved in the excellent program conducts for health consumers, see page 14 for more information on the Consumers network. With regard to parenting we will be attending the forum being held by Yooralla Society of Victoria to discuss strategies for improving support for women with disabilities as parents and we will report back on this forum in the next newsletter see page 10.

As part of our two year plan, we are also keen to engage more with our members. Later in the year we will be starting a project to develop a volunteer program for our members and also to commence a peer mentoring group.

We are also keen to encourage all our members to participate in the National Human Rights Consultation (see page 13). The rights of people with disabilities are enshrined in the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. VWDN supports the establishment of an Australian framework to ensure these rights are upheld. All around us we see examples of ways in which rights are ignored: our lack of access to basic services such as public buildings, transport, health services and family violence services to name but a few. We need a legislative framework that requires our community institutions to address this blatant discrimination. Please support the national consultation in writing to The National Human Rights Consultation Secretariat, Attorney-General's Department, Robert Garran Offices, BARTON ACT 2600.

We would like to wish you all a happy International Women's Day on March 8<sup>th</sup>. We hope you can stop and in some way celebrate your womanhood in solidarity with all women around the world.

*Keran Howe, Executive Officer*

## ***Policy Officer's News***



Hello everyone  
It's been a busy couple of months working on violence against women with disabilities, with lots

of engaging conversations on the subject. I'm settling into the job of Policy Officer for Violence Against Women with Disabilities slowly but surely, and enjoying the work very much.

I met with Sharon Granek from DARU to talk about Advocacy generally and to talk about the possibility of creating a training

session particularly for family violence workers who will work with Women with Disabilities. I feel that engaging with the people who have direct personal contact is vital for things to change and the needs of women with disabilities to be recognized generally.

Keran and I also met with Rachael Green from the Family Violence Co-ordination unit to discuss the strategies we have developed as part of the VWDN AIS Strategic Plan on Violence. We talked about the job of promoting the Building the Evidence report through e-mail,

which is the next step in getting our message across. We also spoke about the need to get family violence services communicating with disability services so that violence against women with disabilities can be understood as a problem which exists across different sectors. It is crucial too that family violence services provide intensive case management for women with disabilities, so that time and attention can be paid to the particular needs and wants of the woman who is being attended to.

We have begun to set in motion some plans for a forum in July, which we hope will include a speaker on disability from overseas, as well as our own presentations. A Roundtable on violence against women with disabilities is also planned. These events are very exciting, as they will co-ordinate well with the timing of rolling out our Building the Evidence report. Hard copies of this report have already been delivered to government ministers and senior public servants, as well as to some community organizations, and it has had a profound effect on the people and organisations it has gone out to. I'm hoping we can capitalize on the positive energy it has generated.

As you may know, there have been some big changes made to the

Family Violence legislation and at present, a review is being made of the Stalking legislation. We have been invited to provide some input to the new legislation around the needs of women with disabilities. These things take some time to change, but I'm hoping to make a positive contribution and that our voice will be heard clearly.

I met with Alison Richardson from Vitalcall for a demonstration of a product called B-Safe. This is a 24 hour personal emergency response service which gives people the means to call for help without having to get to a phone. We had a discussion about its possible use as a tool to prevent violence for women with disabilities. The Safer team are doing some research at the moment and will give us an evaluation.

We are proud to say that the VWDN AIS was featured in the Summer Edition, Newsletter 35, of the Australian Domestic and Family Violence Clearinghouse. Its good to promote the findings widely through this newsletter. The Building the Evidence report was talked about over two pages and its recommendations discussed.

Well, that's about all I have to tell you for the moment, but you can be sure there will be more to come. I hope you have all had a good

couple of months – including  
Christmas – and that we meet soon.

Warm Regards

*Kate Hood*

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## **Announcements**

### **Victorian Bushfires**

#### **Help for distressed bushfire victims and workers**

The Victorian Government has established a new telephone counselling support service for all Victorians affected by the devastating bushfires, which is being operated by Nurse-on-Call **1300 60 60 24**. This service gives all Victorians the peace of mind knowing that the best, professional health advice is only a phone call away. It will help families decide if they need to attend a hospital or a doctor straight away, whether the condition could be treated by a GP the next day, or that they may be able to manage themselves.

Other counselling services available include:

Lifeline Information Service – 131 114

Parentline -132 289

Kids Help Line - 1800 551 800

Griefline - 03 9596 7799

Suicide Line - 1300 651 251

Rural Support Line - 1300 655 969

Beyondblue -1300 22 4636

For more bushfire support visit

[www.dhs.vic.gov.au](http://www.dhs.vic.gov.au).

Human Services Directory website:  
[www.humanservicesdirectory.vic.gov.au](http://www.humanservicesdirectory.vic.gov.au)

#### **Registering as vulnerable persons**

The registering of vulnerable persons in some local councils is only available through a home care assessment to people with chronic health issue or people who have a significant cognitive impairment. People already registered will be made known to local police in the case of an emergency, and the police will assist them to leave their homes. Those not already registered should contact the Red Cross Registration Enquiry Line on 1800 727 077.

If you are concerned about bushfires in your area, please tune in to 774AM radio or go to the CFA Bushfire Information Line website. This can be found at <http://www.cfa.vic.gov.au/incidents/vbil.htm> If in doubt, activate your bushfire plan and leave early.

The Department of Human Services Emergency site has information and fact sheets at <http://www.dhs.vic.gov.au/emergency>.

For those of you who are forced to evacuate your homes the best support will be through your local fire response teams. These teams have links to disability supports, and have systems in place to respond to people with disabilities. They can be contacted through the relief centres. This list can be found at [http://www.cfa.vic.gov.au/incidents/images/news\\_image/Welfare\\_Information\\_21207.pdf](http://www.cfa.vic.gov.au/incidents/images/news_image/Welfare_Information_21207.pdf)

If you require advocacy support for any of the above a list of all disability advocacy agencies and their contact details can be found on the DARU website Victorian Disability Advocacy Organisations.

### **Aids and Equipment Program (A&EP) - Prioritising clients who have been affected by the bushfires**

The Department of Human Services is directing Aids and Equipment Programs Issuing Centres to assist people who have been affected by the Bushfires by prioritising replacement of items of aids and equipment as 'no wait'.

The Department of Human Services will waive the subsidy gap for any new item of aid or equipment for people who have lost or require A&EP as a result of the bushfires and where a suitable replacement item cannot be issued. If this applies to you, please contact you're A&EP Issuing Centre direct with your request.

If assistance is required to identify A&EP Issuing Centres, please phone 03 9489 0777, freecall 1800 999 128 (Regional Victoria and Tasmania only) or email [info@aqavic.org.au](mailto:info@aqavic.org.au).

### **Victorian bushfire legal help line: 1800 113 432**

Do you need legal help? Many people have lost family, friends, property, pets and livestock in the bushfires. In this difficult time it is

important to understand your legal rights. We are here to help you with your legal issues.

You can call the Victorian bushfire legal help line to get free legal information about:

- dealing with insurance companies about house, life and car insurance
- what to do if you are uninsured, underinsured or denied a claim
- housing and tenancy
- your property – repairs, rebuilding and selling, removing debris and demolition, looting and trespass
- dealing with electricity, phone and water companies
- Wills
- money problems, paying your excess, mortgages and other debts
- getting your superannuation
- Centrelink benefits
- sticking to court orders
- child support payments
- your identification and documents
- contracts and small business issues

- contacting the Coroner's office
- going back to work and leave entitlements
- victims of crime
- personal injury
- other issues.

We have lawyers at all relief centres. They can talk to you about how the law applies to your legal problem and what you can do about it. This service is free.

Call the Victorian bushfire legal help line on 1800 113 432 to get free legal information

This service is provided by Victoria Legal Aid, the Federation of Community Legal Centres, the Law Institute of Victoria, the Victoria Law Foundation, and the Public Interest Law Clearing House.

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## ***Events and opportunities***

### **International Women's Day!**

International Women's Day (IWD) is celebrated by women all over the world on the 8th of March. It's a busy time for women's organisations with plenty of events being planned. Check out what's on on the Office for Women's Policy event calendar at [www.women.vic.gov.au](http://www.women.vic.gov.au). Below is a selection of events:

#### **IWD Market at QV Square**

The Queen Victoria Women's Centre and the City of Melbourne are partnering to celebrate International Women's Day with the IWD Market at QV Square on Friday 6<sup>th</sup> March.

- ❖ Join Catherine Brown, Chair of the QVWCT and Susan Riley, Deputy Lord Mayor of the City of Melbourne for the official launch from 11 to 11:45am

- ❖ Browse through the fabulous IWD Market stalls and QVWC Women's Gallery
- ❖ Show your support for women-led businesses, social enterprises and community organisations
- ❖ Liven up your lunchtime with women's song, dance and roving performances til 3:30pm

### **International Women's Day Breakfast**

A celebration of women's courage, strength and diversity.

Women's Health East and EDVOS invite you to join us in celebrating International Women's Day with a continental breakfast. Guest Speaker Assoc. Prof. Adrian Howe will speak on naming and framing men's violence against women.

On: Wednesday 11th March 2009 (7.30—9.30am)

At: Women's Health East 28 Warrandyte Road  
Ringwood

Cost (pay at door): \$15.00 per head (\$7.50 concession)

RSVP - 2/3/09 to [reception@whe.org.au](mailto:reception@whe.org.au)

### **Victorian Trades Hall Council- 2009 International Women's Day Rally**

Peace, Justice & Equality

State Library, Cnr Swanston & LaTrobe streets

Friday 6th March 2009, 2.00pm- 3.00pm

We demand the right to:

- \*Safe and secure work
- \*Equal and decent pay & conditions
- \*Paid parental leave- "It's Time To Deliver"
- \*Free and public child care
- \*Flexible work arrangements

And the Right to:

- \*Be safe at home, at work, and all public spaces
- \*Affordable housing, education and health care
- \* Be treated with dignity and respect

For further information please contact: Jennifer O'Donnell-Pirisi, VTHC Women's Officer, 9669 3511.

## **PapScreen Victoria workshop**

### **Overcoming the Barriers**

In 2007, for the first time, PapScreen Victoria received data from Victorian Cervical Cytology Register, which provided the screening rate of each Local Government Area. Previously the data was only provided for each DHS region. 56.4% of women in Hobsons Bay had had a Pap test in the past two years compared to 63.4% in Victoria. It was identified by Hobsons Bay City Council that women with a disability in their community face a number of barriers to cervical screening which will be explored in a training workshop, ***Overcoming the Barriers***.

The workshop is an initiative of Metro Access, a partnership between Hobsons Bay City Council and the Department of Human Services and Pap Screen Victoria and is aimed at women with disabilities, support workers/carers of women with disabilities and health care workers.

### ***Cervical cancer information***

Cervical cancer is cancer of the cervix. Pap tests detect abnormal cells that may be found on the cervix. Pap tests do not pick up cancer, but will find changes that may lead to cancer. Finding changes early means they can be treated well before cancer develops.

The human papilloma virus (HPV) has been linked to more than 90% of cervical cancers. HPV affects four out of five women at some time in their lives. It is so common that it could be considered a normal part of being sexually active. HPV is passed on through genital skin contact during sexual activity. Condoms provide only limited protection as they do not cover all of the genital skin. This is why it is ***so important for all women who have ever been sexually active (even once)*** aged between 18 and 70 years need to have a Pap test every two years.

Most cases of cervical cancer take at least 10 years to develop. Having a Pap test every two years makes sure that if any changes are present, they can be treated before they develop into cancer.

The workshop will be held on:

Tuesday, 31st March 2009

10.30 am – 4.00 pm

Location: Hobsons Bay Civic Centre

115 Civic Parade, Altona

RSVP: Thursday 26 March 2009 - Helen 9932 1000

Or [hbouniotis@hobsonsby.vic.gov.au](mailto:hbouniotis@hobsonsby.vic.gov.au) (Resources and catering included).

## **Parents with disabilities public forum**

5th March, 10.30am-12.30pm,  
Yooralla, Melbourne

The parents with a disability community project believes that all parents, whether they have a disability or not, should have an equal opportunity to raise their children in a safe and loving environment. Here's what we're doing to support that belief.

We've known for a long time that parents with a disability often face stigma and discrimination from sectors of the community that believe they are incapable of raising their children, as well as unequal access to community services.

Fighting to address this problem has been a major goal of Yooralla's advocacy section since 1996, when the Parents with a Disability Community Project commenced. What was originally going to be a six-month project is still going as we have continue to battle the discrimination and other issues faced by parents with disabilities.

Formal recognition of the problems faced by many parents with a disability came in 2002, when

Yooralla partnered with the Disability Discrimination Legal Service and the University of Melbourne in an academic research report that confirmed our worst fears. The Pride and Prejudice: A Snapshot of Parents with Disabilities Experience of the Child Protection System in Victoria report found that parents with a disability were over-represented in child protection proceedings; had inadequate access to community resources and were more likely to face stigma and discrimination than parents without disabilities. The report put forward a series of recommendations to help address the inadequacies in the system as it was then.

The time has come to review those recommendations and see which ones have been enacted and how successful they have been in improving the situation of parents with a disability.

We are seeking the opinions and experiences of parents with disabilities and disability, community and service providers, as we look at the situation today and to plan what needs to be done in the future.

To give you the chance to put your views forward and get involved in the Project, Yooralla is holding a public forum on March 5 at 10.30am-12.30pm at Yooralla's Office on Level 1, 342 Flinders St Melbourne. This is a free event!!

Reserve your seat by emailing:

Olympia Tzanoudakis, Yooralla advocacy worker, at [olympia.tzanoudakis@yooralla.com.au](mailto:olympia.tzanoudakis@yooralla.com.au) or by calling Jeanette Lee on (03) 9916 5800 by March 2nd 2009. Contact the same number for any support needed at the forum.

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### **Connecting to the Community with Janet Klees**

When: Wednesday 11 March 2009, 9.30am to 4pm.

Where: Kew Library, corner of Cotham Road and Civic Drive, Kew.

Cost: \$180. Concessions and family rates available.

Registrations close on Thursday 5 March. For further information regarding content, call 0412 001 388, or for registration enquiries, call 0439 660 076.

Hosted by Personalised Lifestyle Assistance, this is a learning event for all those who are serious about exploring and discovering opportunities for welcome, engagement, and relationship that are abound within our communities. It will be of particular interest to those who are interested in transition to individualised community supports.

Janet Klees is the coordinator of the Deohaeko Support Network in Ontario, Canada. Deohaeko is a group of families who came together 15 years ago to think about and plan good community lives for their sons and daughters with disabilities.

Deohaeko established a housing cooperative in which their sons and daughters live alongside 200 other community members who also seek a good place to live. They have sustained a vibrant and diverse community spirit within the cooperative and the broader community. Janet also works closely with other families, groups and projects.

All of Janet's work focuses on individually-designed arrangements, and she is especially concerned that individuals and families are well-supported to think through practical, principled ways to ensure that each person lives a meaningful, involved

and secure life within their communities through fully integrated work, leisure, civic roles and relationships. Janet is well recognised for her contribution to the lives of people with disabilities, families and as an author and trainer.

Building a context for relationship;  
Discovering community spaces;  
Recognising & developing valued social roles;  
Maximising opportunities;  
Shoring up situations at risk;  
Engaging and supporting relationships that arise; The art of asking.

This event will cover the following:

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## **Young People with Disabilities Advocacy Training**

Youth Disability Advocacy Service

When: 11 a.m. until 4 p.m. Saturday March 21 and 10 a.m. until 3 p.m. Sunday March 22

Where: Youth Affairs Council of Victoria, Level 2, 172 Flinders St Melbourne  
Applications close Friday February 27

This weekend workshop hosted by the Youth Disability Advocacy Service is designed to increase the capacity of young people to advocate for themselves.

Here are some things that you will get out of the course:

1. Improved understanding of advocacy
2. Increased awareness of advocacy strategies
3. Increased understanding of disability rights, how to make complaints and the law
4. Improved problem-solving, communication and assertiveness skills
5. Ability to apply knowledge of advocacy to a specific advocacy issue that is important to you
6. Free lunch
7. The opportunity to meet other young people

Young people with a disability living in Victoria who are aged between 12 and 25 can take this course for FREE and have their transport reimbursed up to the value of \$100.

Young people from rural and regional Victoria will be supported to attend with overnight accommodation in Melbourne.

Attendant support and AUSLAN interpreting will be provided during the training sessions upon request. Support that is needed outside of the training sessions will need to be arranged and funded by the participant.

For more information or an application form, contact [info@yacvic.org.au](mailto:info@yacvic.org.au) or call Liz on 03 9267 3799, Toll-Free 1300 727 176, or SMS 0412 814 851

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## **Workshop: A Human Rights Act for Australia?**

### **Find out about the National Human Rights Consultation and how your organisation can be involved**

The Australian Government is conducting a National Human Rights Consultation to gather views on how human rights should be protected and promoted in Australia. The 3 key questions being asked are:

1. Which human rights should be protected and promoted in Australia?
2. Are these human rights currently sufficiently protected and promoted?
3. How could Australia better protect and promote human rights?

This interactive workshop will explain the consultation process and identify how Community Sector Organisations can get involved. It will examine the current system for the protection and promotion of human rights, and workshop how a

national human rights charter might better protect the rights of marginalised or disadvantaged people.

**Date:** Tuesday, 24 March 2009 at 3.00 – 5.30pm

**Venue:** Blake Dawson, Level 26, 181 William Street, Melbourne

**RSVP:** Please register by 10 March 2009 by visiting:

[www.pilch.org.au/human\\_rights\\_consultation](http://www.pilch.org.au/human_rights_consultation) and following the link on

the right hand side of the page to

‘Register for the National Consultation Workshop’. Places are limited. We will contact you to confirm your reservation.

The workshop will be presented by:

**Stephanie Cauchi, VCOSS:**

Stephanie is a Policy Analyst – Human Rights and Justice at VCOSS. She has been conducting training, advocacy and research on the Charter for the last 3 years. She has over 15 years experience in the community sector working on race, health, gender and refugee issues,

and local implementation of international human rights standards.

Simone Cusack, PILCH:

Simone is Public Interest Lawyer with the Public Interest Law Clearing House. She is a former Fellow at the University of Toronto Faculty of Law, has previously worked at Blake Dawson, and has

experience at the UN. Simone has published and lectured on international human rights law, women's rights law and international humanitarian law.

Further information: For further information, please contact Stephanie ([stephanie.cauchi@vcoss.org.au](mailto:stephanie.cauchi@vcoss.org.au)) or Simone ([simone.cusack@pilch.org.au](mailto:simone.cusack@pilch.org.au)).

**Join the Health Issues Centre Register**

Health Issues Centre (HIC) is an independent, not-for-profit organisation that began in 1985 to promote equity and consumer perspectives in the Australian health system. Our mission is to improve the health outcomes for Australians, especially those who are disadvantaged. The focus of Health Issues Centre's work is mainly in Victoria but we take a national approach where appropriate. We work with a wide range of consumers, health providers, researchers, governments and other health organisations to achieve this through:

- policy analysis and advocacy from consumer and equity perspectives
- consumer-focused research
- promoting and supporting consumer participation
- disseminating information

JOIN the HIC Consumer Register

Health Issues Centre maintains a register of over 170 consumers. As a consumer on the HIC consumer register you will receive information about: Consumer positions on committees, consultations and focus groups through the Consumer Nominee Program.

- Consumer events and training
- Information about our Consumer Support and Development Network
- Useful resources relating to consumer participation
- Opportunities to comment on important issues relating to health issues, policies, services
- HIC eNews

## Consumer Nominee Program

This Program is funded by the Victorian Department of Human Services. It aims to make consumers aware of the opportunities to participate in state-wide advisory committees and other related consultation mechanisms, to provide training and support for consumers involved in participation activities, and to assist health services seeking consumers to become involved in their community participation activities. When you join our HIC Consumer Register you also become eligible for our Consumer Nominee Program and the Consumer Network

## Consumer Network

Discussion with consumers has revealed that some individual consumers, who participate on committees, focus groups or consultations that are dominated by health professionals, can feel isolated or overshadowed and have few opportunities to develop their skills or network with other consumers. To address this consumers have suggested that they would like more opportunities to network with other consumers and build their skills using a peer support model.

The Health Issues Centre has responded to this by organising four Consumer Support and Development Network Forums. These forums will be delivered between October 2008 and June 2009.

Attendance to the Network Forums will be open but not limited to consumers, health professionals and individuals who have an interest in consumer participation.

The aim of the Consumer Support and Development Network Forums is to provide opportunity for consumers interested in health to

- Network with other consumers
- Build on their skills to be effective consumer participants
- Share resources and information
- Discuss current issues facing consumers and consumer participation
- Contribute to discussion, policies and issues

If you would like more information about joining HIC's consumer register please contact Assunta Morrone on 9479 3652 or [a.morrone@healthissuescentre.org.au](mailto:a.morrone@healthissuescentre.org.au)

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## ***From the media***

### **More Australians using disability employment services**

*Joint Media Release, 3rd February 2009 - The Hon. Bill Shorten MP, Parliamentary Secretary for Disabilities and Children's Services and The Hon. Jenny Macklin, Minister for Families, Housing Community Services and Indigenous Affairs.*

More Australians with disabilities are using Australian Government employment services according to new figures contained in the Australian Government Disability Services Census 2007 report.

Over 82,000 people used open and supported employment services to help them find a job - an increase of over seven per cent on the previous year. People with intellectual disability using the services were most likely to be employed (84.1%) while those with a physical or psychiatric disability face the greatest challenges in finding employment.

"The Government recognises the contribution people with disability can make and the considerable benefits which flow from their participation in the workforce - both economically and socially. That's why we are developing the National Mental Health and Disability Employment Strategy to set out clear and practical steps for government to expand employment opportunities for people with disability and mental illness," Ms Macklin said.

Parliamentary Secretary for Disabilities and Children's Services, Bill Shorten said many businesses in Australia were recognising the value of employing people with disability and giving them the same rights and responsibilities as other workers. "Employers who employ people with disability say they have better attendance records, remain longer and have fewer injuries at work than those without a disability." Mr Shorten said. To read this media release in full click here:

[http://www.fahcsia.gov.au/internet/billshorten.nsf/content/australians\\_disab\\_e\\_employment\\_services\\_03feb09.htm](http://www.fahcsia.gov.au/internet/billshorten.nsf/content/australians_disab_e_employment_services_03feb09.htm)

## **Tram delays leave disabled behind**

*The Age*, 8th February 2009 - Reid Sexton

Thousands of disabled people will be unable to travel on Melbourne's trams because the State Government has failed to buy enough accessible new vehicles.

The failure has outraged disability advocates and prompted Human Rights Commissioner Graeme Innes to warn the Government that unless it meets agreed standards it will be in breach of federal anti-discrimination law. The Government also is exposing itself to the risk of having to pay compensation to disabled people denied access to public transport. Under Disability Standards for Accessible Public Transport, part of the federal Disability Discrimination Act 1992, 55 per cent of trams must be accessible and safe for the disabled by the end of 2012. In its Disability Discrimination Act action plan published last year, Yarra Trams revealed low-floor trams were the only ones compliant with current standards.

The Government, which owns Melbourne's trams, has not ordered any new ones since coming to power in 1999, but is set to buy 50 low-floor trams — half of what was originally promised — for introduction in 2013 at a cost of \$1 billion. But even then it will not meet the standards.

To read this article in full click here: <http://www.theage.com.au/national/tram-delays-leave-disabled-behind-20090207-80gb.html>

## **Play lifts lid on mental health abuse**

*BBC News*, Monday 26th January

The incarceration of women in psychiatric hospitals, for social rather than medical reasons, is the subject of an award-winning piece of theatre now on tour in the UK.

[http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/entertainment/arts\\_and\\_culture/7846912.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/entertainment/arts_and_culture/7846912.stm)

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## **Resources**

### **A gender agenda: a kit for women who want to stand for local government and for those who want to assist others to stand**

If democratic Councils are to adequately reflect the interests and needs of the entire community, they must be as inclusive as possible of their constituents. This inclusion must be reflected through the elected representatives, the governance process, the employees and the consultative structures. Women are under-represented at all levels of government.

The numbers of women in Federal, State and Local governments do not reflect the fact

that they comprise half the population. There has been some improvement since the initial publication of *A Gender Agenda* in 1998. The percentage of women in local governments has increased from 22% to over 29% in 2005. However, clearly there is still some way to go before we approach equal participation.

Follow this link to access the kit:

<http://www.vlga.org.au/resources/items/2007/10/178199-upload-00001.pdf>

### **Impact: Feature Issue on Employment and Women With Disabilities**

What significance does employment hold for women with disabilities? What is known and unknown about these women? This issue of "Impact" answers these questions with articles by self-advocates and researchers. Issues covered include self-employment, mentoring, transition planning, disparities across ethnic groups, and career development. Several women with disabilities who are successful artists, scientists, educators and entrepreneurs are profiled. Follow this link to access the resource:

[http://www.hcbs.org/files/150/7475/Impact\\_Employment\\_and\\_Women\\_with\\_Disabilities.pdf](http://www.hcbs.org/files/150/7475/Impact_Employment_and_Women_with_Disabilities.pdf)

### **Parentzone Newsletter**

This newsletter provides information about support groups and information sessions for parents with disabilities, including Deaf Parenting Skills and Supported Playgroups. There are also groups addressing violence such as Parenting After Violence. The direct link is:

[http://www.anglicarevic.org.au/index.php?action=filemanager&folder\\_id=928&pageID=6102&ionID=5948](http://www.anglicarevic.org.au/index.php?action=filemanager&folder_id=928&pageID=6102&ionID=5948)

## Human Rights Materials

The Harvard Project on Disability develops and disseminates educational materials on the human rights of people with disabilities. An informed civil society is vital to promoting, implementing, and monitoring the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD). Educational materials are particularly relevant now that the CRPD has become international law. The Harvard Project's publications

- Explain the Convention and the rights it contains
- Enable self-advocacy of CRPD rights
- Teach persons on how to be a global advocate for people with disabilities
- Explain how to promote implementation of the Convention

More information and free downloads of human rights materials in different languages and formats can be obtained from

<http://hpod.org/publications/human-rights-training>

The Human Rights Yes! training manual developed for people with disabilities and their representative organizations can be read at: <http://hpod.org/pdf/HumanRightsYes.pdf>

## Looking After me: A Resource Kit for Women with Intellectual Disability

Women with intellectual disabilities are at much higher risk of violence in their relationships. The Looking After Me Resource Kit is a set of visual tools that targets these issues by helping to develop skills in achieving safe and healthy relationships. The kit is the result of a three and half year research project based in NSW and can be downloaded from:

[www.adfvc.unsw.edu.au/PDF%20files/Looking%20After%20Me%20Project%20Report.pdf](http://www.adfvc.unsw.edu.au/PDF%20files/Looking%20After%20Me%20Project%20Report.pdf)

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## *Websites of the Month*

### Wheelies House Swap

[wheelies.net.au](http://wheelies.net.au)

A new website for people who use wheelchairs

This website was the brainchild of Sharon Lennox with help from Harry Wilsdon, who both live with multiple sclerosis. It provides a free community

service for people who use wheelchairs and who find it difficult to have holidays because of cost or lack of suitable accommodation and enables them to meet, talk and swap houses that are suitable for their holidays. The website is proudly sponsored by the MS Society of Tasmania.

## **NEW Domestic Violence Website Launched**

[www.hurt.net.au](http://www.hurt.net.au)

'HURT' is an interactive virtual house that contains over 100 embedded video clips of women, children and men describing their experiences of domestic and family violence. Produced by the Women's Council for Domestic and Family Violence Services (WA) this innovative, one of a kind resource is designed to provide 'real life' insight to the experience of domestic and family violence.

## **Not Just Work: Exploring relationships between people with disabilities and attendant**

<http://notjustwork.info>

This website is to explore the dynamics of the relationships that are forged by people with disabilities and the workers who provide necessary support. The website goal is the further education of those directly and indirectly related to disability work.

The aim is to identify the pathways of courteous, mutually beneficial and helpful relating and partnering. The pathway needs to be identified so that by travelling it together, both parties can truly share life together. The website goal is to enhance the mutual enhancement of such relationships.

**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  
TELEPHONE TRICIA ON 9662 3755 OR EMAIL**

[VWDN@VWDN.ORG.AU](mailto:VWDN@VWDN.ORG.AU)