



community partners in disability

Winter 2004

Issue 4

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department of disability, housing & community services



A message from the Executive Director

Welcome to the Winter edition of *Community Partners in Disability*

Welcome to Winter! Thank you to everyone who gave valuable feedback to the consultation on Future Directions for Disability ACT 2004–08. Our newsletter will pull themes from this document and explore these in more detail over the coming editions.

In this edition of *Community Partners*, we will be looking at work and employment-related topics.

We look at the issues around employment for people with disabilities from different perspectives: what's happening that is working well, initiatives that will improve the

current situation, and we look at training in the disability workforce.

We also explore some of the barriers faced by people with disabilities in relation to work and receiving quality support services.

All of these issues raise an important point to consider. As individuals, we all have a responsibility to support and improve conditions, so that people with disabilities can access opportunities to achieve their potential.

But, we need to acknowledge that people with influence in our community have greater

Image: seventyeight.com.au



Diversity builds healthy workplaces

Yarralumla Nursery is proof that diversity in the workplace delivers big benefits. People with disabilities have been part of their workforce for many years through a Job Match partnership with Koomarri.

Picture: Michael Faint (left) and Peter Flynn at Yarralumla Nursery.

Full story inside. ▶

Message from the Executive Director *continued*

responsibility. Their responsibility extends to the way they approach the development, provision, reform and monitoring of policies and services that can impact on achieving more, and better outcomes for people with disabilities.

Canberra's community is unique in the way it operates. Having only two levels of government, a relatively small population, and geographical area, all contribute to Canberra as a unique place to live. It also gives us all an opportunity to effect real and lasting change.

So it's about using our networks — at work and play — and about being ambassadors for people with disabilities. Importantly, it's about speaking out — at all opportunities.

Who do you know who could progress or initiate ideas or actions? How can you start meaningful dialogue in our community?

I encourage you all to champion the concepts behind the *Vision and Values* statement — and for those people who have greater access to making change happen — just do it!

Lois Ford

Executive Director
lois.ford@act.gov.au

Future directions: **workforce development**

The Future Directions for Disability ACT sets out the intended direction over the next four years to improve outcomes for people with disabilities and their families that care for them.

There are four strategic directions:

- influence policy and culture to promote an inclusive society
- improve government and community responses to people with disabilities, their families and carers
- improve planning and funding to better meet the needs of people requiring ongoing support
- develop a sustainable and responsive service delivery sector.

The last strategic direction will develop and implement a service development framework incorporating the following:

- a Quality Improvement Framework incorporating incentive-based performance agreements, standards, self assessment and consumer feedback mechanisms
- a Workforce Development Strategy to attract, train and retain staff

- new Service and Funding Models to expand the range of services available to people with disabilities and to improve accountability and transparency in Government decision making.

The work has a broad scope and includes government service provision as well as the non-government sector and the natural supports, such as family and friends.

The work will also look at what is required to ensure sustainability and responsiveness of services. This will include developing strategies for training, attraction and retention, linkages with external organisations, training bodies, performance management for individuals and organisations, and career pathways requirements.

There will be extensive consultation across the sector. It is an exciting piece of work that will move disability services forward over the next four years.

For more information contact:
barbara.baikie@act.gov.au

Improving **employment opportunities** for people with disabilities



Many things can be done to improve employment opportunities for people with a disability, writes Margaret Spalding, general manager, Koomarri Association ACT Inc.

Employment is important to people with disabilities, as it is with most people in our society.

Having a job helps individuals with a disability establish and shape their identity, develop their social skills, grow in confidence and establish a social network.

A job can also mean income security and improved lifestyle.

In short, employment can provide a gateway for individuals with a disability to 'get a life', but access to this gateway can be fraught with obstacles.

These obstacles include physical barriers, lack of social supports, limited education opportunities, segregation and of course, lack of access to transportation.

Unfortunately, one of the most significant of these obstacles is society's low expectation of people with disabilities.

This is despite the demonstrated fact that with appropriate training, specialist support, encouragement and opportunities, many people with disabilities — including those with high support needs — are able to maintain productive employment.

The gateway to employment for individuals with disabilities falls into two main categories — the mainstream processes; and the specialist employment services funded by the Commonwealth Department of Family and Community Services.

It is common practice for individuals with a disability to move between

these employment options as their needs and wishes change.

Since 1997 the Commonwealth government has engaged in reform of its disability services program.

A new Quality Assurance system for disability employment services requires organisations to be audited against Disability Services Standards by independent accredited teams, which include a person with a disability.

In introducing its reforms the Commonwealth government has provided additional financial assistance to business services to implement the reforms.

Against this backdrop, Koomarri supports people with a disability to become more independent through achieving and maintaining employment, and by living and participating in their communities.

The Koomarri Association provides community support and employment services to over 300 people with moderate to severe disabilities — and their families — in the ACT and surrounding districts.

The Koomarri Employment Services Branch runs an open employment service, JobMatch, and also runs six business services which include Pack 'n' Post; Koomarri Garden Maintenance, Ezi Iron, The Cut Cloth Shop, Contract Solutions and Koomarri Flowers Queanbeyan.

Drawing on this experience, Koomarri has developed a unique strategy to assist the employment of

people with disabilities with significant support needs to work in government departments.

For more than ten years Koomarri has been successful in placing people with disabilities in Office Support Agencies (OSA) within various departments. This involves small groups of employees with disabilities providing support to the general work force within a government agency.

This support may include tasks such as mail sorting and distribution, courier runs, collating, producing kits, packaging and producing handouts.

Working in an OSA may lead to full time employment for some employees who are seeking this option. For others it provides a normative work environment as well as the individualised and ongoing support they require. Individuals may work full time or part time.

With strong support from the Department of Disability, Housing and Community Services, Koomarri has been working to establish OSAs within ACT government departments.

Earlier this year the ACT government launched a project to develop strategies to enhance the employment opportunities for people with disabilities in the ACT Public service.

It is expected that the report from this project will be available by the end of June.

Employment is not an end in itself, but a means to social and economic integration and to legal and social rights.

For more information on Koomarri initiatives, contact Margaret at: mbspalding@koomarri.asn.au

Employing people with disabilities in the ACT Public Service

The ACT Government is committed to having a diverse and representative work force, writes

Fia Norton.

People with disabilities are not well represented among ACT Public Service employees. Recently the numbers have been decreasing. The shift has been small but significant.

In 1997, 355 employees in the ACT Public Service self-identified as having a disability. By the end of 2003 there were 293 people who self-identified with a disability.

The possible reasons for this fall include the scarcity of entry-level positions in the service, a reduction in identified programs for employing people with intellectual disabilities and the demand for multi-skilling.

The ACT Government is committed to turning this situation around.

Its aim is to maximise the opportunities for people with disabilities to gain employment in the ACT Public Service. In doing so it's determined to provide an example to businesses and other agencies.

The Access to ACT Government Strategy — an initiative of the Disability ACT Advisory Council and Disability ACT — identifies employment for people with disabilities as

one of the target areas for action within ACT Government departments.

The Department of Disability, Housing, and Community Services and the Chief Minister's Department are working jointly to develop a service-wide framework to enhance employment for people with disabilities in the ACT Public Service.

The development of the Framework has the support of the Commissioner for Public Administration and the Chief Executives of the ACT Public Service and the ACT Disability Advisory Council.

Throughout June 2004 consultations took place with key stakeholders, including people with disabilities who work in the ACT Public Service.

These stakeholders have suggested a range of different actions to improve access. These ideas and others will be evaluated for applicability to the ACT Public Service and inclusion in the Draft Framework. The consultations, facilitated by KPMG have been very well supported.

If you would like any information about this process or you would like to receive a copy of the Draft Framework once it is released, please contact Fia Norton on 6205 1928 or email fia.norton@act.gov.au

a change in action and attitude so that people with disabilities are recognised as integral members of the community

Diversity builds

'Inclusive workplaces' is a term we hear much about.

But what does it really mean for an employer and employees — and for the well being of an organisation?

In Canberra, Yarralumla Nursery is proof that diversity in the workplace delivers big benefits.

The idea is nothing new at the Yarralumla Nursery. Managers and staff have a longstanding commitment to working with disadvantaged people in the Canberra community.

Community Partners in Disability recently spent time at the beautiful 90-year-old Nursery, which is managed for ACT Government by Michael Kidd and his team.

Since its establishment in 1914, the Yarralumla Nursery has shaped Canberra's landscape, both socially and culturally. The Nursery's work has been integral in the development of early Canberra's 'garden city' concept and later, the 'bush capital'.

Today, the Nursery — employing around 28 people — is the largest wholesale nursery in the southern tablelands.

Despite operating as a working nursery, the business is involved in an impressive number of projects and programs that support a diverse group of Canberrans.

It has won a host of employment industry awards for its commitment to an inclusive workplace philosophy.

healthy workplaces

But awards only tell part of the story. Such a high level of involvement in community-based projects and programs is additional to the day-to-day business of the Nursery — so why do it?

Production manager, Sue Hearne, puts it simply: “We’re pretty privileged to be working here. We have a wonderful place and we want to share that with others”.

People with disabilities have been part of their workforce for many years through a Job Match partnership with Koomarri. The program currently employs four people on a permanent basis in the production area.

The Job Match team members work 8am to 3pm each day.

Apart from making sure that all staff are well briefed about OH&S issues, Sue says that the Job Match participants fit in with everyone else at the Nursery, and are very much part of the whole team.

“We are all committed to the idea of developing our workplace as one that allows all people to reach their full potential.”

Students with special needs from Black Mountain School visit the Nursery each week. They come for training and skills development and to soak up the atmosphere at the Nursery.

As well, the Nursery is known across Canberra schools for providing work experience for students with special



Left to right: Sue Hearne, Steve Giorgiom, Carol Harrington and Pete Flynn pot and trim plants.

needs, particularly for those who have just completed high school and are starting to look for work.

The Nursery is actively involved in a redeployment program. People from government and private sector organisations, who have had a physical or psychological injury at work, participate in a structured ‘return to work’ program.

“This beautiful physical environment, and the diverse range of tasks in horticultural work are key elements in assisting people who are part of the redeployment program,” Sue said.

As Nursery manager, Michael Kidd points out: “The nature of our business favours people with restrictions. It’s therapeutic getting

your hands in the soil and seeing the plants grow.”

Sue explained that nursery work has a lot of repetitive-type jobs. “We pot thousands of seedlings, for example. People who have experienced physical or psychological injury or have a disability respond positively to this.

“Far from being boring for these people, it meets a need for order and certainty in their day. People are achieving something meaningful in a safe and supportive environment.”

Last year the Nursery won funding through the Urban Services Community Partners (CP) program for a horticultural project with The Woden Special School. ▶

Yarralumla Nursery is

proof that diversity in the workplace

delivers big benefits

Diversity builds healthy workplaces *continued*

The project involved teaching students how to grow vegetables for use in the hospitality classes at the school.

When the Woden project finishes, the Nursery has a new Community Partnership program to begin a cross-cultural project with the Aboriginal community at Boomanulla Oval, Narrabundah.

More than achieving tangible outcomes, the project is about learning and building bridges between cultures.

The concept of job sharing is active at the Nursery, with a number of women working 9am to 3pm. This means they can be part of the workforce and still collect their children when the school day ends.

Incredibly, there is still time for the Nursery to be involved at varying times with the Work for the Dole Scheme and one participant has recently begun an apprenticeship at the Nursery. Two days each week, Green Corp comes to the Nursery to work with their team of older adults.

After spending time with the dynamic Sue Hearne and experiencing just a slice of every day life at Yarralumla Nursery, it becomes clear that an inclusive workplace is more achievable than people might think.

Great workplaces — like Yarralumla Nursery — are about acknowledging that people's abilities and strengths are different. Turning this into reality is all about having a management style that is committed to supporting and promoting this diversity as 'business as usual'.

ACT planning agency leading the way in accessible workplaces

The ACT Planning and Land Authority (ACTPLA) has been actively developing an inclusive workplace. Their efforts were recognised at last year's first ever Inclusion Awards.

Chief Planning Executive Neil Savery says that at any one time the Authority employs up to 12 people with disabilities including people who have hearing, mobility and intellectual impairments.

Their jobs range from general administrative support including file scanning, customer services, development of mapping products, lease administration, and the assessment of development applications.

"A highlight has been the three fold increase in progress in a building file scanning project since several people with a physical or intellectual disabilities were employed on it," Mr Savery said.

In an initiative by one of the Authority's employees with a hearing impairment, a number of staff have completed the Auslan sign language course.

The Authority's work environment is arranged to provide adequate space around furniture, workstations, walkways and in common areas.

The Dickson and Mitchell offices have wheelchair accessible toilets and disabled parking for staff has been provided immediately outside the front entrances and in Dickson, in the basement and ground level of the parking structure. A ramp is provided at the entrance.

"The authority believes that it should lead the way in terms of accessible buildings and provide an example to other employers and building owners," Mr Savery said.

Contact: david.moncrieff@act.gov.au

Budget news

A number of important Disability initiatives were announced in the ACT Government's 2004-05 Budget.

Almost \$3.5m was allocated over the next four years to establish a specialist intensive care and treatment program for young people who have dual disabilities.

The ACT Taxi Scheme has also received a boost. A total of \$241 000 has been provided, on-going and indexed, to further support people who are not able to access public

transport services. More than \$960 000 is now allocated to the scheme.

The Government has also committed \$5.75m over four years to provide direct support to people who have unmet needs and to create stronger links to the community. Importantly too, a number of proposals put forward by the Disability Advisory Council (DAC) have been incorporated into the Disability ACT 2004-05 work plans, along with new initiatives to be undertaken between DAC and ACT Government. (See Council's report on page 9.)

Women and work

Women with disabilities face a number of barriers and difficulties when exploring the world of employment, writes Disability Council member, Anna Saxon-Taylor.

From a statistical perspective we know that women with disabilities are less likely to be in paid work than men with disabilities, women in general, and indeed, the population as a whole.

In fact, men with disabilities are almost twice more likely to have jobs than women with disabilities.

Many women feel that they have to give 200 per cent to overcome employer and co-worker prejudice and stereotyping.

The kind of support that a person with a disability requires in the workplace can be relatively easy to organise and tailored for the individual.

A simple example here is the provision by the employer of a laptop computer with accessible technology for a WwD to use in meetings or when talking to groups. Volunteer committee members could also be supported in this way.

Employers need to recognise that many women with disabilities cannot easily fund this kind of support. Most are at the lower end of the socio-economic scale.

It's worth remembering also, that poverty exacerbates the negative self-image that many women with

disabilities have about themselves. This has a significant impact on their ability to pursue employment opportunities.

The following case studies illustrate the experience of women with disabilities in relation to employment.

Elizabeth is a young, intelligent blind woman. She has been employed over many years by government departments and the private sector, mainly on a contract basis.

While she has gained valuable experience, the breaks between each contract means an employer can perceive her CV negatively. Constant job seeking impacts on self-esteem and this in turn can lead to depression.

Lynn had to resign from teaching soon after her MS was diagnosed. Following completion of a degree in Theology (one of her passions), she was ordained as a Deacon. However, (mainly) because of her MS, she was not allowed to practise as a priest. Despite her formal qualifications, she can do no more in the church than perform the role of a layperson.

Gina took a different approach to entering the world of work. Having experienced many barriers in gaining employment in her chosen career, she has found it easier to set up her own business.

This has given her the freedom to control her own work hours, as well as her tasks, tools and environment.

She often employs WwD or women who are disadvantaged. Gina's

experience as an employer is that these women are prepared to work harder and longer than other employees.

However, in general, it should be possible for conditions to be different—not just for male employees, as in the following example—but for most people with disabilities.

Tom was a primary school teacher. He was provided with a support teacher, but gradually his eyesight deteriorated further and tasks such as report writing became virtually impossible. This caused a great deal of stress for Tom, so he took leave from the job.

Not wanting to lose his expertise, the department found him a school where most of his work would involve working with children who have English as a second language, and who most of all need conversational skills.

Tom's experience demonstrates "what is possible" when employers have a good understanding and recognition of the issues that people with disabilities face.

I know that the *Vision and Values* statement can help change things for WwD. But as a community, we all need to do our bit so that experiences like Tom's become the benchmark—especially for women—and indeed for ALL people with disabilities.

New **training partnership** for disability work

In February this year, Disability ACT advertised a Request for Proposal (RFP) for the delivery of a Certificate IV in Disability Work to Government and non-Government employees.

Disability ACT intends to partner with a registered training organisation to develop and deliver 'work integrated learning' based on the ACT *Vision and Values* statement for 15 employees across the sector, as the first phase of a workforce development strategy.

The RFP closed on 4 March 2004, with six training providers submitting proposals. Following a selection process Disability ACT will begin contract negotiations shortly with the successful training organisation.

The selection panel was strongly representative of the disability sector.

This project delivers on the government's commitment in the *Response to the Board of Inquiry into Disability Services*.

The project also signals Disability ACT's commitment to foster a culture of ongoing learning, and to ensure that support staff receive high quality values based training that will enable them to fulfill their roles.

The project aims to increase the number of workers who demonstrate the skills, knowledge, behaviour and attitudes that exemplify an understanding of and commitment to the ACT *Vision and Values* statement in performing their roles in working effectively with people with a disability and their families in the ACT.

Contact barbara.baikie@act.gov.au for more information.

Workforce **survey**

Good planning is based on accurate information. In January 2004 Disability ACT surveyed organisations that provide services to people with a disability and their families.

The survey has collected snapshot data about workforce characteristics and staff development issues. This includes data about the number of staff members in each organisation, their employment status, work patterns, demographic data, qualifications, as well as information about induction and other training provided by each organisation.

The data is intended to provide a picture of characteristics of the workforce that supports people with a disability in the ACT. The information will be used by Disability ACT and the Workforce Reform Working Group to prepare strategies to address workforce issues.

The survey was distributed to 74 non-government organisations, six (6) private companies, and four (4) government agencies on 19 January 2004.

Over the following six weeks, 52 survey returns were received, a response rate of 62 per cent. The survey was undertaken in partnership with ACT Health, who is seeking similar information about respite services.

Initial results suggest that of the 1213.76 full-time equivalent positions reported by responding organisations:

- 76% of these are for support workers
- 8% for coordinators, case managers or brokers
- 7% are for professional workers
- 5% for administration workers
- 4% for managers.

There are 1584.5 people employed in these positions, with:

- 57% permanent workers (both full and part time)
- 35% casual workers
- 8% temporary workers
- 12 (21%) of respondents indicated that they have vacant positions.

The findings of the survey will be published as a report in the near future.

Contact sue.pedder@act.gov.au for more information.

The data is intended provide a **picture of characteristics of the workforce that supports people with a disability in the ACT**

Disability Advisory Council

Notes from the Chair



The development of a strong and sustainable workforce for disability services is an issue very much on the agenda of the ACT Disability Advisory Council.

For that reason, Council's submission on this year's ACT Budget stressed the need for a training and skills development initiative to:

- build the capacity of organisations providing support to people with disabilities
- enhance the skills of staff working with people with disabilities in the ACT.

Council was pleased that elements of the training and skills package we proposed were picked up in a number of Budget and related measures.

Council is keeping a close eye on these, as well as the implementation of ongoing workforce development initiatives that will enhance the safety and wellbeing of those living in ISS accommodation.

A good example here, is the recent implementation of senior first aid training for staff in ISS accommodation.

Others priorities were also identified by Council and following the Budget we asked for an analysis of the program and funding responses to the initiatives we proposed.

Council is delighted to report that a number of the measures align to priorities identified by Government in the Budget and elsewhere.

To our knowledge, this is the first time that the ACT Disability Advisory Council has made a comprehensive submission to the Budget process and reported the outcomes to the ACT community.

In regard to workforce matters, Council is looking at ways to encourage the participation of people with disabilities in ACT public sector employment.

It's involved in a joint project between the ACT Chief Minister's Department and the Department of Disability, Housing and Community Services.

This project is taking place in the context of the Access to ACT Government Strategy. This is a whole of Government framework to ensure compliance with ACT and Australian Government discrimination legislation.

The Strategy being implemented throughout Government takes the form of agency audits. It is a vital step on the way to creating a more welcoming employment culture for people with disabilities in public sector employment.

Council recognises that there is also a need for targeted initiatives to ensure that the ACT community has the full benefit of the skills and experiences that people with disabilities can bring in public sector employment.

Council believes we need to issue a major challenge to Government consultants and private contractors — especially those working close to

disability issues — to adopt positive employment practices.

This is both a challenge and an invitation, as there are many benefits to be gained by drawing on the skills and knowledge of people with disabilities.

A familiar theme for many of us is the lack of opportunities to build a precious resume of skills and experiences that lead to employment, especially for young people.

This is one of the reasons why Council is supporting — under an ACT Innovations Grant project — new work being undertaken to encourage the emergence of new leaders and consumer representatives with disabilities,

Among other things, work in this area provides the opportunity to build the skills, confidence and the contacts that are so essential to gaining employment.

Closely allied to that is the potential for participation in volunteering, to provide people with disabilities with the skills and experiences that may provide a passport to employment.

I was especially pleased to learn that Volunteering ACT is investigating ways that the community sector here and overseas is creating a welcoming climate for volunteers with disabilities.

While this work is in an early phase, there is no doubt the ACT does have a vibrant volunteer sector for a community of our size. The potential is clear, and I look forward to providing more news on this in future editions of *Community Partners*.

Craig Wallace

Council Secretariat at
talyealve@netspeed.com.au

Accessibility focus:

Canberra International Sports & Aquatics Centre

The Canberra International Sports & Aquatic Centre (CISAC) located at Belconnen was opened in January 2004. It is the largest sports and aquatic centre in the ACT and has some great features to assist people with disabilities.

Comprising Club Lime (Gym), Club Blue (Aquatics), and Club Team (Indoor Sports), this multi purpose recreation/leisure facility hosts the following:

- three swimming pools—a 10-lane 50 metre pool, a five-lane 25 metre pool, and a leisure pool for the children.
- four indoor sports courts, designed to cater for soccer, netball, cricket, and volleyball.
- gym floor—consisting of over 45 pieces of cardio vascular equipment, 27 pieces of free weight equipment, and 25 pieces of pin loaded equipment.
- two aerobic studios for a variety of group fitness classes.

In the planning and development stage, a great deal of consultation was given to making sure that



Image: CISAC

CISAC's gym: Scott Bellingham demonstrates easy wheelchair access.

people with disabilities would be provided with appropriate access to all of the facilities that are offered.

This begins with the car parking facilities for people with disabilities, the graded slope on the pathway to the main entrance, the elevator that allows patrons access to the first floor where the gym is located.

In the aquatics area, there are two hoist chairs, one for the spa, and one for the 50 metre pool. This allows people to be moved onto the hoist chair and lowered into the water where they can continue with their activities.

In the 25 metre pool, there is a 'beach entry', a gentle gradient sloped entry into the pool, as well as stairs into the pool.

A person who is in a wheelchair has the ability to manoeuvre themselves throughout the entire facility. There is no restricted access at all, plenty of clearance space, and the gradient of the sloped flooring allows for easy progress.

The centre already has several members who come into the gym in their wheelchairs, and have no problems in getting around the facility.

At the end of the day, it's all about 'inclusion'. Making the facilities available to all people in the community.

Craig Wallace

General Manager
Canberra International Sports & Aquatic Centre.
Contact 6251 7555.

There is **no restricted access** at all,

plenty of **clearance space** and

the gradient of the sloped flooring allows for **easy progress**

Working together: telling stories



Community — valuing creativity.

Creativity, taking a risk and story telling were all part of a fantastic new exhibition by artists from Hands on Studio.

Lois Ford, executive director of Disability ACT launched the exhibition—Infusion— on June 16 at the Tuggeranong Arts Centre.

In opening the exhibition, Lois acknowledged the power of creative expression, particularly for people who had difficulty expressing themselves within the cultural norms of society.

“The ability to use this expression as an art form is a rare and precious gift” said Lois.

Artists from the studio worked with print artist Lyndy Delian to explore the theme of indigenous story telling. Through painting and printing on textiles, the 18 artists created individual wall hangings using their own style of story telling imagery that also reflected Australia’s uniquely combined culture.

Lois recognised the element of risk that was involved in exhibiting creative work saying that, “it takes the courage of an artist in taking risks to bare a piece of themselves”.

The spirit of true integration was also at work in bringing the exhibition to life.

Lois noted this spirit by seeing “...organisations like Hands on Studio that enabled talent to grow... people like Lyndy Delian who encouraged and nurtured that growth....artists who took a risk to exhibit their work...and a community that valued that creativity — true integration.”

For more information contact Carolyn Jander on 6232 7187.



Artistic expression: Stephen Corsini.

Create — challenge — change

2004 Innovations Grants

Disability ACT is again providing funding for innovation grants for 2004–05. The Community Government Innovations Grants program supports projects that:

- encourage or act as a catalyst for long term change in community attitudes and cultural perceptions of people with a disability
- create partnerships and support families in new ways
- redesign conventional practices to better address people’s needs.

Target areas for projects are: social interaction; community attitudes; formal and informal supports; advocacy and families and partnerships. Funding of up to \$25,000 is offered to projects that meet application criteria.

A significant change for 2004 is the management of the grants program by parent advocates Sally Richards and Cheryl Patrick, with the selection process being coordinated by representatives from business, community and non-government sectors.

“Our role as project managers demonstrates real innovation. It means that the program is managed by the community at each stage”, said Sally.

For more information contact sallyr1@inet.net.au or cherylpatrick@bigpond.com

Employment, training and education information

The Canberra Institute of Technology (CIT) can assist people with disabilities who are looking for information on specialist employment agencies, or training and education opportunities.

Contact the DisAbility Coordination Officer on **6207 4900** or email dco@disabilitycoordinationoffice.com.au or visit www.disabilitycoordinationoffice.com.au

Diary date

Canberra Blind Society Inc. will be hosting an Overview Seminar and Technology Exhibition on Friday 30 (9.30pm–5pm) and Saturday 31 July (9.30am–3.30pm).

Come along to the Griffin Centre—Rooms 1 & 2 and find out about the latest in low and high assistive technology, new products and support for people who are vision impaired.

For more information contact 62474580 or email canblind@effect.net.au.

Access issues: **disability toolkit**

<http://www.disabilityaware.org/index.html>

The UK Disability Rights Commission has a great online toolkit to support businesses that are looking to achieve disability best practices. Keep in mind the info is based around UK legislation, but it's still worth a look.

ENGLISH	If you need interpreting help, telephone:
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We have **moved!**

Individual Support Services staff previously located at Tuggeranong, Phillip and Kippax in the areas of Accommodation Support, Community and Family Support, Scheduling, the Taxi Subsidy Scheme and the Dual Disability Team have moved.

The new location is Ground Floor, Nature Conservation House, corner of Emu Bank and Benjamin Way, Belconnen. Contact number is **6207 1121** and **fax 6207 1371**.

Payments for aCe, Respite and Taxi Subsidy can be made at our new location, as well as at the finance area on Level 7 of the CFM Building at 12 Moore Street in Civic.

Contact details

Disability ACT

CFM Building
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