



community partners in disability

Summer 2004

Issue 6

In this issue:

Canberra DisAbility Arts Festival and International Day of People with a DisAbility

How Disability ACT is working with the community

What has Disability ACT been up to?

Caring for the carers

Helping out to save water

Developing important housing principles

Summer activities

Disability Advisory Council—Notes from the Chair

Accessibility focus

ISBN: 1449-6089

department of disability, housing & community services



building our city
building our community
ACT Government



A message from the Executive Director

Welcome to the summer edition of *Community Partners*

2004 was all about consolidation—strengthening our relationships with people with disabilities, families, and the non-government sector, and to share our understanding of some of the issues facing the sector.

This consolidation has seen the delivery of some key partnership projects such as changes to individuals support funding, initiation of family, consumer and community governed projects, sector celebrations, planning for the future and much more, as you will see in the scorecard on page 6.

None of these things could have happened without the involvement of the whole sector,

in particular our close working relationship with the Disability Advisory Council, disability reform working groups, and importantly, the dedicated team across Disability ACT and the department.

Building on these relationships is all about trust and action to achieve better outcomes for people affected by disability—we know we still have a way to go but we are committed to getting there.

From little things big things grow, and this year has provided us with a solid platform for moving forward. Best wishes for a safe and harmonious Christmas from all the Disability ACT team.

Lois Ford
Executive Director

Canberra DisAbility Arts Festival

Friday 3 December was international Day of People with a DisAbility, and there were huge celebrations to mark this occasion.

This year, the day was combined with Canberra DisAbility Arts Festival which showcased some amazing talents from around our region.

Full story page 2 ►



Canberra DisAbility Arts Festival and



ABOVE (photos left to right): Disability staff and clients enjoy themselves at the festival; Indigenous dance group Wiradjuri Echoes entertain the crowd; Disability Minister John Hargreaves speaks at the festival; Some of the fabulous artwork on display at the Disability Arts Festival.

BELOW: More scenes from a fabulous day.

Friday 3 December 2004 was the UN International Day of People with a Disability.

Each year this day unites individuals, disability organisations, business, government and the community in recognition of the Ability of every citizen living with a disability.

The day united individuals, disability organisations, business, government and the community in recognition of the abilities and achievements of people living with a disability, and highlighted the positive contribution they make to our community.



International Day of people with a disability



In Canberra, the day was celebrated with the first ever DisAbility Arts Festival in Garema Place. The festival showcased the talents of Canberra artists and performers with a disability through an exciting program of performances, live music,

visual art, an arts market and a digital art show.

People With Disabilities ACT (PWD ACT) and Arts & Recreation Training ACT coordinated the event in association with Disability ACT and local arts organisations.



How Disability ACT is working with the community

A far-reaching partnership involving people with disabilities, their families and carers, and the broader community has been developed in the ACT to enhance and improve opportunities for people with disabilities.

The various partnerships recognise the responsibilities of community and government to collectively improve outcomes for people with disabilities.

The Department of Disability, Housing and Community Services realises the importance of this collaboration and the need to share ideas and work together to progress the ACT Vision and Values Statement. We intend to continue to build all our partnerships using *Challenge 2014: A ten year vision for disability in the ACT* as our guide.

Below are just some of the examples of Disability ACT's partnership with people with disabilities, families and the community.

Community Governed Innovations Grants

In 2004, the Innovations Grants process was managed by community members—Sally Richards and Cheryl Patrick. Both are parents of sons with a disability, and have been advocates and activists for disability for the past 18 years.

The 2004 Community Governed Innovations Grants are an excellent

example of the community playing a key role in shaping the disability sector, with community members driving the process from development to recommendations, with support from Disability ACT staff.

Successful projects will be announced in the next issue of *Community Partners in Disability*.

Disability Advisory Council—Welcoming Community project

In 2003, the ACT Disability Advisory Council (DAC) developed a strategy for Council to investigate ways that encourage a more accepting, valuing community for people with disabilities in the ACT. This Welcoming Community strategy supports the Vision and Values statement developed by the former Disability Reform Working Group. Strategic Direction 1 of *Future Directions: A Framework for the ACT 2004–2008* also aligns closely with the aims of the strategy.

To progress the strategy, DAC commissioned a project towards the end of the 2003–2004 financial year to conduct research into attitudes of the ACT community towards people with a disability. This project will be completed in 2004–2005 by Orima Research Pty Ltd, who will gather data and provide analysis and a final report to DAC.

Key findings from the research to date were released on 3 December 2004 during International Day of People with a Disability celebrations. The data from the research will be

critical to the development of any education/information strategies aimed at improving overall community acceptance and support for people with a disability. It will also be critical to developing strategies that aim to increase the visibility of people with a disability in the ACT community. It is hoped that the ACT community will be challenged by the findings of this research and be inspired to make the ACT a welcoming community to people with disabilities.

Disability support workers events program

A committee of disability support workers from community organisations and Disability ACT are planning four events for 2004–2005.

The first event, held in December, was a planning workshop to develop a program of activities for disability support workers. A second event in December focused on *Future Directions: A framework for the ACT 2004–2008*, ethics and values, and developing a map of the sector.

These will be followed by workshops and a conference covering a wide range of issues and topics. It is anticipated that speakers at these events will include those from community organisations, community members, parents and clients from the disability sector.

Call Pearl Snaddon on **6205 0222** or email pearl.snaddon@act.gov.au for more information on the events.

Disability: looking to the future

In my new role as the Minister responsible for disability in the ACT, I am committed to continuing the reform of disability services.

I want to confirm to the disability sector that the Stanhope Government is dedicated to involving people with disabilities, their families and carers, in the development and delivery of policies, programs and services.

The recently launched *Future Directions: A framework for the ACT 2004–2008* is a demonstration of this commitment: setting out the plan of action for Disability ACT over the next four years.

Importantly, Future Directions supports the vision developed by

the community in a companion publication *Challenge 2014: A 10-year vision for disability in the ACT*.

The connection between these two landmark documents is mirroring the partnership between Disability ACT and the wider community in working together to achieve significant gains for people with disabilities.

I want to acknowledge the significant contribution made by the ACT Disability Advisory Council and Disability Working Groups in developing both Future Directions and Challenge—and contributing to the wider work of Disability ACT.

At the November 2004 Disability Advisory Council meeting, I was honoured to meet many of the Council members. I look forward to supporting the Council's inspirational work, and that of the working groups over the next four years.

I also want to recognise—and applaud—the important work of those Canberrans who care for people with disabilities. Their work is often invisible and undervalued in the broader community.

Finally, I encourage everyone to take up the challenge to increase the visibility, participation and presence of people with disabilities to enrich our community. This commitment is the true measure of a healthy community.

John Hargreaves
ACT Minister for Disability,
Housing and Community Services.



Disability Services Commissioner for the ACT

The establishment of a Disability Services Commissioner is part of the ACT Government's response to the Board of Inquiry into Disability Services.

The main functions of the Commissioner will include:

- monitoring the quality of disability services
- investigating complaints about the quality of disability service

- making recommendations to improve and rectify services, and
- providing education, training and support to disability service providers and the public to promote service quality improvements.

The proposed functions and powers of the Commissioner reflect recommendations made by the Disability Reform Legislative Working Group. The group was formed to consider key issues raised by the Inquiry, and the Disability Reform Group, about how a Commissioner should operate.

The Commissioner will reside in the new Human Rights and Service Review Commission (HRSRC), which will be set up by the ACT Government in response to the Review of Statutory Oversight and Community Advocacy Agencies, which was finalised in late 2003.

The HRSRC is expected to be established in late 2005.

More information about the Commissioner and the HRSRC can be found in the publication *The Right System for Rights Protection* at www.dhcs.act.gov.au

What has Disability ACT been up to?

Specific actions December 2003–December 2004	Status
Service delivery	
Funded a respite service provider to provide services for people with disabilities who are from a culturally and linguistically diverse background	Completed
Consulted on and prepared a plan for the implementation of a 'new approach' for Individual Support Packages	Completed
Reviewed and updated a range of client safety procedures across Individual Support Services in Disability ACT	Completed
Co-hosted a successful International Day of DisAbility celebration on 3 December 2003, including the inaugural ACT Inclusion Awards	Completed
Extended the Taxi Subsidy Scheme to under-16-year-olds	Completed
Distributed 25 computers from the <i>Digital Divide</i> project at a subsidised rate to people with disabilities in the community, in 2004	Completed
Commenced a review, in partnership with the Australian Government, to evaluate the effectiveness of current post-school services and supports and identify ways to facilitate community and employment participation	Underway
Expansion of the <i>Active Support</i> Program in Disability ACT Individual Support Services (ISS) Group homes	In progress
Supported the pilot project, <i>Applied Behavioural Analysis Program</i> in the ACT education system for four children with autism	In progress
Establishing a panel of auditors to assist ACT government agencies to undertake disability access audits	In progress
The ISS Community Linking and Needs Assessment Service, in partnership with community providers, provided support to 32 families and 26 individuals	Ongoing
Initiated an information phone-line providing specific and general information on disability services to the public	Ongoing
Initiated the <i>Consumers in Control</i> project exploring mechanisms for people with disabilities to directly control resources allocated to them	In progress
Developed, in partnership with Sharing Places Inc, the <i>Family Governed Pilot Project</i> to increase the control that participating families have over services allocated to family members with a disability	In progress
Initiated a project to enable residents of Disability ACT group homes to hold individual tenancy agreements	In progress
Infrastructure	
Initiated Access Audit across all government agencies	Completed
Developed a Performance Management Planning process specifically for Disability Support Officers	Completed
Conducted a sector-wide survey of the workforce supporting people with a disability and those providing respite services	Completed

A scorecard of key activities for 2004

Specific actions December 2003–December 2004	Status
Negotiated with a registered training organisation to deliver the Certificate IV course in disability work, commencing in 2005.	Completed
Provided training for ISS staff e.g. Senior First Aid, Managing Challenging Behaviours, Medication Training	Completed
Allocated \$50,000 in grants to 20 individuals under the <i>Digital Divide</i> project	Completed
DACT team members spent total of 25 days work experience in non government organisations	Completed
Initiated a Disability Support Workers (DSW) network steering group and hosted two networking events for DSWs	Ongoing
Funding	
Assessed and allocated funds from the 2003–04 Budget to people with high and complex needs	Completed
Advertised the 2004–05 funding round for people with high and complex needs including Post-School Options	Completed
Negotiated three-year funding contracts with 36 non-government agencies to provide services for people in key target groups	Completed
Allocated a total of \$500 000 to 28 agencies to assist them to build capacity, strengthen infrastructure, and improve quality	Completed
Established the 2004 Community Governed Innovations Grants Program	Completed
The ACT Government Budget provided \$1.25 million growth monies in the 2004-2005 increasing to \$1.5 million in 2005–2006 to introduce the Local Area Coordination program and fund support for people with unmet needs	In progress
Policy	
Allocated \$600 000 to individual support	Completed
Developed, consulted with the community and launched <i>Future Directions: A framework for the ACT 2004–2008</i>	Completed
Released the <i>ACT Public Service Employment Framework for People with a Disability</i> with Chief Minister's Department.	Completed
The Department launched the <i>Caring for Carers Policy</i> and the <i>Caring for Carers in the ACT—A Plan for Action 2004–2007</i>	Completed
Completed evaluation of, and community consultation on, the Individual Support Package (ISP) and revised processes in relation to the flexibility and person-centred-ness of current arrangements	Completed

Caring for the carers

In the usual course of life, most people will provide care to others, or receive care themselves.

In fact, you may be one of the ACT's estimated 40 000 carers who provide unpaid assistance to people who have needs associated with disability, ageing, physical or mental illness or substance abuse.

There is no such thing as a 'typical' carer.

Caring occurs in all types of relationships and people of all ages can be carers—including children, young people, adults and older people. Carers may include parents caring for children, children looking after parents, or people providing care to friends or relatives.

Many carers have other responsibilities such as full-time or part-time employment, study commitments and raising children. Most carers live with the person they care for, but this is not always the case.

Caring is a role that requires courage, compassion and love. For many, it is a role that has to be sustained not just for an hour, a day or a week, but day after day, week after week, and year after year.



The *Caring for Carers Policy*, released in December 2003, recognises the social, economic and health risks that carers can face and their distinct needs for support. It is underpinned by seven core principles:

- 1 Carers have the right to decide whether to take on or continue the role of care and are supported in their choices.
- 2 The health and well being of carers is supported through services and programs that are flexible and responsive to individual needs and circumstances.
- 3 Resources are available to provide timely and adequate assistance to carers.
- 4 Affordable services of a high standard are available to people who need care, complementing the role of the carer.
- 5 The critical contribution of carers is recognised, valued and promoted in the community.
- 6 The carer and the person receiving care are regarded as a partnership, in which each person has rights and responsibilities.
- 7 Organisations welcome and support carer participation at all levels of decision-making, with respect for the rights and choices of people receiving care.

In August 2004 a further resource, *Caring for Carers in the ACT: A Plan for Action 2004–2007* was released.

The action plan outlines 13 strategies and 34 actions to implement the *Caring for Carers Policy* over the next three years. It is based on what carers want, with clear responsibilities and timeframes including:

- Increasing access to information, training and social supports to assist carers in their caring role.
- Improving the accessibility and quality of respite, accommodation and supports for people in care relationships.
- Working with professionals to improve identification, support and referral of carers to appropriate supports.
- Working with employers and educators to help carers access and maintain work and study.
- Improving the recognition and support of carers in the community.
- Improving the responsiveness of policy, programs and services to the needs and choices of people in caring relationships.

A Carers Implementation Partnership, comprised of carers, people receiving care, community and government agencies will make sure that the plan is implemented. It will meet over the life of the Plan to monitor implementation and re-examine priorities.

For further information about the *Caring for Carers Policy*, please contact: Fiona McIntosh on **6205 0454** or visit www.dhcs.act.gov.au

There is no such thing as a 'typical' carer.



Carers ACT

Carers ACT supports people who have taken on unpaid caring

responsibilities through providing information, counselling, education, support and respite services.

Their mission is to enable and empower all family carers to fulfil their role through community education and advocacy for social change.

Carers ACT works in partnership with government and non-government agencies to improve the working conditions of family carers and to increase awareness of their contribution to the ACT community.

The organisation has been a key policy partner with the Department of Disability, Housing and Community Services in assisting the ACT's estimated 43,000 carers who provide unpaid assistance to people who have needs associated with disability, ageing, physical or mental illness or substance abuse.

As a member of the Carers Advisory Group, they have had considerable input into the development of the

ACT Government's *Caring for Carers Policy* and *Caring for Carers: A Plan for Action 2004–2007*. Their commitment ensured that the policy and its action plan were responsive and accountable to carers' needs and issues.

Carers ACT is also committed to ensuring that all family carers in the ACT have fair and equal access to appropriate programs, services and planning processes without discrimination of any kind.

For further information, contact Carers ACT:

Ph: 6296 9900

Email: carers@carersact.asn.au

Website: www.carersact.asn.au

Helping out to save water

In Canberra we are currently experiencing the most severe drought in our history, with dam levels at all time lows. Water restrictions have been in place since November 2002. Stage 3 restrictions are currently effective.

In general, Stage 3 means that private residences are not permitted to use sprinklers but may use hand held hoses or manually operated drip irrigation between 7am–10am and 7pm–10pm as per the 'odds and evens' system.

The odds and evens system is based on your house number, or

your block number in the case of units.

If your house or block has an even number you can water your garden on even numbered dates. For odd numbered houses and blocks, watering is allowed on odd numbered dates. However, only water the garden if it needs it.

Exemptions

Residents who are unable to use a hand held hose during the required times because of a disability may apply for an exemption to operate their sprinklers.

Applications must be in writing and need to explain why they are unable to use a hand held hose during the specified times and include a

certificate from their doctor that supports the application.

In addition, applications need to state that there is no other able-bodied person in the house that can water during restricted times.

For further information please contact the Drought Advisory Office on **6248 3131** or visit www.actew.com.au

The Drought Advisory Office is bound by the Privacy Act, so all information provided to the Drought Advisory Office remains private and confidential.

Developing important **housing principles**

The Housing and Tenancy Reform Working Group has been busy in 2004, focussed on developing principles of good housing for people with disabilities.

Members of the group come from a wide range of backgrounds and circumstances including: people with disabilities; parents of people with disabilities; carers; community support workers; Disability ACT staff; and Housing ACT staff.

The working group has also received valuable contributions from other government staff and people with particular expertise in disability, housing, tenancy rights or a related field.

Applying the tenancy principles will ensure the best possible housing outcomes for the individual and that people with a disability have the same access to appropriate housing as any other member of the community. These principles

recognise that appropriate housing is essential to supporting people with disabilities to achieve the aspirations identified in the Vision and Values Statement.

The principles will apply when people with disability rent, lease, or occupy properties or enter into other tenancy arrangements. They will also serve as a guide for people considering providing housing for a person with a disability.

The group has developed, edited and consulted 'in-house' on these principles and the next step is to take them out to the wider community to enable people with disabilities and other members of the sector to comment.

In the next few months, the group will join with a community organisation to conduct the wider consultation process. Although the exact format, wording and questions are still to be determined,

the consultation will cover the following general areas:

- Do you agree with the principles?
- Has anything been left out?
- Is the language clear and easy to understand?
- Could you assess your housing needs using these principles?

If the principles receive support from the broader community, they will be used to assess existing housing and tenancy models as well as providing a basis for assessing new tenancy models.

The principles will be an important tool in supporting the implementation of strategies and actions contained in *Future Directions: A Framework for the ACT 2004–2008*. In particular, they will apply to Strategic Direction 3—Improve the planning and use of available funding to meet the needs of people requiring ongoing support.

Chris Bowen

chris.bowen@act.gov.au

Friends of the Brain Injured farewells founders

Disability ACT farewells Pat and Dick Jenkins, founders and office bearers of Friends of the Brain Injured since 1988.

Disability ACT would like to acknowledge the fine contribution they have both made to the disability sector.

The organisation provides activity programs for severely disabled

children and produced an educational brochure on various disability conditions and issues that parents or carers could face, as well as listing available services.

Summer holidays...

there's so much to see and do

Summer is a beautiful time in Canberra—the weather is brilliant, there's so much to see and do in the city and surrounding region. The coast is a mere 90 minute drive and wonderful wildflowers bloom on Mount Kosciusko.

During the year, the intrepid staff of Individual Support Services have road tested some of Canberra's tourist destinations to see just how accessible and user friendly they are for people with a disability. A selection of accessible destinations is presented below—go forth and enjoy!

Cockington Green

This complex, located at Gold Creek Village, Nicholls, features miniature buildings set within beautifully landscaped gardens. Call **6230 2273** for further details.

The Bird Walk

The Bird Walk is a walk-in aviary located at Federation Square, Gold Creek Village, Nicholls. There are over 500 birds—54 different species—that fly free in the aviary, and quite often they land on visitor's arms to be fed. For more information call **6230 2044**.

Australian War Memorial

People who are interested in the history and themes of war can explore displays such as the Bradbury Aircraft Hall, the ANZAC Hall and the First and Second World War Galleries. There is also a discovery room where children can participate in a variety of fun activities. For more information, contact the Public Events team on **6243 4518**.

Putt Putt Mini Golf

Putt Putt Golf offers a choice of 18 or 36 holes. The course features obstacles to keep the game interesting, however, the structure of the course can pose difficulties for people in a wheelchair. The course is located at Rosevear Place, Dickson. Call **6247 0509** for more information.

Pegasus

Pegasus provides opportunities for people with disabilities to experience the pleasure and benefits of riding and caring for horses. More than 100 people with disabilities ride with Pegasus each week, and the organisation cares for about 20 specially selected and trained horses. Integrated classes for riders with a disability and non-disabled riders are available, and private lessons are also available. For more information or to make a booking, call **6254 9190**.

Canberra International Sports and Aquatics Centre (CISAC)

CISAC, in Belconnen, offers gym and aquatics facilities and indoor sports. The aquatics area has two disabled hosting chairs which can be lowered into the water, allowing people with a disability to participate in water activities. Call **6251 7888** to find out more.

Canberra Deep Space Communications Complex

The Canberra Space Centre is located at Tidbinbilla. There are many displays and spacecraft models to explore. The Complex also offers magnificent views of the largest antenna complex in the southern hemisphere, as well as images from Mars. Call **6201 7968** for more details.

P&O Cruises

If you would like to travel outside of Canberra, P&O Cruises have put a lot of thought into making a number of their ships accessible for all guests, with wheelchair accessible cabins, corridors and lifts, and ramps. Wheelchairs are also available for use onboard the ships.

For more information, visit:

www.pocruises.com.au/html/default.cfm

Disability Advisory Council — Notes from the

The courage to change

This year has been a busy one for Council, highlighted by the launch of Challenge 2014: A ten year vision for disability in the ACT.

As the year draws to a close it is appropriate to ask what the community shift in attitude and action which Challenge asks us to make, might actually mean.

If a single phrase was needed to sum up that shift it might be that we are being asked to find in ourselves the courage to change.

Change in the community

For Canberra people, but especially employers, change is about the courage to question long held and comfortable attitudes about the employment of people with disabilities.

This need is reinforced by the key findings of research commissioned by the ACT Disability Advisory Council, which were released on the International Day of People with a DisAbility on 3 December 2004.

The *Snapshot of Community Attitudes on Disability in the ACT* is the first research of its kind undertaken in the ACT. It tells us that there is a major task ahead to change community attitudes so that people with disabilities are welcomed as full and equal members of the community.

Eighty-nine per cent of Canberra residents agree that the ACT community is becoming more accepting of people with a disability



over time, however there are key areas of community life where attitudes could be substantially enhanced.

These include awareness of the abilities of people with different disabilities, issues surrounding employment and education, and attitudes about psychiatric disabilities.

Practical work is needed and powerful agents for change will include education in schools, community events, first person contacts, integration at work and school, and information campaigns.

Change in services and community organisations

In addition to attitudes, the *Vision and Values, Challenge 2014* and *Future Directions* also ask organisations and services which work with people with disabilities to find the courage to improve and change.

One challenge is for organisations to embrace discussion about

accountability for performance so that we can all provide the best possible services to people with disabilities and families. A challenge, in turn, is for government to provide organisations with the means to do this.

Organisations face a legitimate demand for accountability from those who invest in their activities as much as from those receiving them, and this is very much in line with the values of consumer power and service excellence described by the vision and values.

The practice of accountability, transparency and rigour provides those of us who serve in the non-government sector with the ability to demand high standards for people with disabilities across our community.

Allied to this, we need the courage to state plainly that people with disabilities and families deserve high standards of personal and ethical accountability from all those who serve in disability work. Vigilance is doubly important in those who work directly with vulnerable groups of people with disabilities.

Bringing ability, dignity and joy to the lives of vulnerable people is the most important job in the world. The idea of a relaxed or 'make do' set of standards and attitudes to the work we do for people with disabilities directly demeans those who approach the vocation with integrity, passion and commitment.

Change for people with disabilities and families

When we speak about courage and people with a disability and families it is often in the context of personal endurance.

Chair

However, having courage for people with disabilities and families can also be about becoming an active rather than a passive consumer or becoming involved in governing the services that you rely on for daily living.

It could also mean calling the Access City Hotline rather than saying it's 'too much trouble' the next time you need help to remove a physical or sensory access barrier in your community. (Access City Hotline—phone 6257 3077)

Nothing takes more courage than tracing the path of life to adulthood.

For young people with a disability, this can involve the courage to overcome personal obstacles, finding ways to pursue passions and enjoying community activities alongside other young people who may have little understanding about disability.

Change in our public policy

For Disability ACT and the Disability Advisory Council, the courage to change has sometimes meant, in the words of a late American statesman with a disability, driving a policy of 'bold, persistent experimentation'.

Examples of this include Council's role in seeking outcomes for the community through the ACT Budget process, the Innovation Grants, a move to community governance, and funding for the local area coordinator model. They might also include projects such as Consumers in Control, a commitment to make the ACT

an employer of choice for people with disabilities through a new employment framework, and the implementation of the ACT Access to Government Strategy.

We can also embrace new ways of raising awareness such as last year's highly successful ACT Inclusion Awards, this year's first ever Canberra DisAbility Arts Festival, and a raft of other changes that form part of the ACT Government's Steps to Reform response. Council looks forward to another year of energetic experiment and practice in partnership with government as we work to change and improve the lives of all people with disabilities in the ACT.

Thanks to fellow members of Council and the work of all our friends in the disability community over the past year and wishing you a happy holiday season.

Merry Christmas!

Craig Wallace

Chair
ACT Disability Advisory Council



RAID summer program

The YMCA of Canberra conducts a recreational program for people of most ages with an intellectual disability from the ACT and surrounding region.

RAID offers numerous programs each week, as well as discos, day camps and fun event evenings.

RAID basketball caters to all levels of basketball ability from beginner right through to advanced competitions. Advanced players are encouraged to become part of the ACT representative teams and attend the national Australian Basketball Championships.

Participants are also encouraged to develop and maintain a variety of skills through the other classes run by RAID staff. These skills include: gross and fine motor skills, soft equipment use, ball skills, fitness, basic coordination, community access and social inclusion.

Enrolments for the summer program close on Friday 24 December 2004.

For more information, or to enrol, phone **6249 8733**.

Out and about on buses



On their way: David and Kim Adams, with Disability ACT's Lois Ford and Peter Wymark, off to catch the bus.

Buses offer people an easy and affordable way to get around town, and ACTION are keen to constantly improve their services for passengers with a disability.

Earlier this year, Kim Adams and her husband David, accompanied by Disability ACT's Lois Ford, Rebecca Kearns and Peter Wymark, tried out one of ACTION's new accessible buses—designed to allow people with a disability greater access to public transport.

Kim said that she had thoroughly enjoyed what was, for her, a special

adventure—special, because the new buses would allow Kim and her husband a greater degree of freedom and independence.

“Being able to access the bus will make life much easier for people with disabilities, and the air conditioning in the new buses makes the trip really comfortable,” Kim said.

Kim's use of ACTION buses is not as frequent as she would like it to be as there is currently only one bus route (Route 34) that the accessible buses have been specifically assigned to. At present, ACTION staff are not able to advise which other routes will have accessible buses available.

Kim feels that once this issue has been addressed, people with disabilities in Canberra can add another dimension of independence to their lives.

DACT staff member Peter Wymark also recently took a ride on the Melbourne Skybus—from the airport into the city and back again—an experience he found to be most enjoyable.

Peter said that there was plenty of room to park his wheelchair on the bus, and his chair didn't move around at all during his trip.

Buses are becoming an easier way for people with a disability to travel—definitely an option worth considering.

Accessibility focus

Canberra Theatre Centre

Over the last 12 months the Canberra Theatre Centre has introduced a number of access initiatives to assist people with disabilities.

Auslan Interpreted

Performances—professionally signed Auslan (Australian Sign Language) interpreted performances for four productions in the 2004 Subscription Season, three in the Playtime Family Season and in the 2005 Subscription Season.

Audio Described Performances—this complimentary service is provided in the gaps between actors' dialogue to assist people who are blind or visually impaired and will be offered for six productions in the 2004 Subscription Season and three in the Playtime Family Treats Season.

Tactile Tours—2004 also saw the introduction of tactile tours of the stage for a number of shows. Tactile tours give sight-impaired patrons the opportunity to get a sense of the stage while also providing a context to understand the audio description.

Wheelchair access and special assistance—wheelchair access to The Canberra Theatre and The Playhouse is available. A concierge service for wheelchair patrons is also offered between Canberra Ticketing and Canberra Theatre Centre.

FM Radio Assisted Hearing

Loop—an FM radio assisted hearing loop for patrons who require hearing assistance is available.

Live Captioning—2005 will see the introduction of live captions into selected Subscription Season performances. This will not replace Auslan interpreted performances but will benefit deaf and hearing impaired people and also those for whom English is a second language.

Mobility assistance—The Canberra Theatre Centre also provides mobility assistance in the theatre and help with seating arrangements.

Large print—A large print copy of the 2004 Subscription Season brochure and booking form is also available by request for those with a vision impairment.

Staff training—A first for 2004 was staff training from the Royal Blind Society about ways to provide high quality customer service to patrons with a vision impairment. There are also plans for training of the Box Office staff who may be required take a booking through the National Relay Service.

Parking—There are a limited number of disabled parking spots behind The Link Foyer and behind The Playhouse. These are accessed via London Circuit behind the North Building.

For more information please contact The Canberra Theatre Centre:

Phone: (02) 6243 5749

Website: www.canberratheatre.org.au

Email: access@canberratheatre.org.au

Making theatre accessible: left to right—Canberra Theatre Centre's Naomi Specer and David Whitney with Lyn Mitchell and Michael Linke from the Royal Blind Society, and Emma Dykes, also from the Canberra Theatre Centre.



Culturally and linguistically diverse overnight respite program

Earlier this year, Home Flexi Care—part of the Baptist Community Service, was successful in their tender to provide innovative respite care services under the Respite Care Budget Initiative for 2003–2004.

The program—Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Overnight Respite (CALDOR)—has commenced and provides short-term respite for CALD background carers and the people they care for.

The program aims to provide up to 14 days of respite for 30 clients per year. Clients can design a flexible program to suit their individual needs. Five individuals have accessed the program to date.

Home Flexi Care is currently looking for workers to provide respite services for the program.

For further information, contact Beneta Hadzi-Popovic on phone **6239 5994** or email BhadziPopovic@bcs.org.au

20th Deaflympic Games—Melbourne 2005

From January 5–16 the streets of Melbourne will come alive with elite deaf and hard of hearing athletes and their supporters competing and participating at the 20th Summer Deaflympic Games.

The Games, with participants from more than 90 countries, will raise awareness of deaf related issues and showcase some very talented athletes.

For information on tickets, accommodation and events, visit the website <http://2005deaflympics.com>



**Disability ACT
would like to wish
all of its clients and
community partners a merry
Christmas and a successful year ahead**

Contact details

ENGLISH	If you need interpreting help, telephone:
ARABIC	: إذا احتجت لمساعدة في الترجمة الشفوية، إتصل برقم الهاتف:
CHINESE	如果你需要传译员的帮助，请打电话:
CROATIAN	Ako trebate pomoć tumača telefonirajte:
GREEK	Αν χρειάζεστε διερμηνέα τηλεφωνήστε στο
ITALIAN	Se avete bisogno di un interprete, telefonate al numero:
MALTESE	Jekk għandek bżonn l-għajnuna t'interpretu, çempel:
PERSIAN	: اگر به ترجمه شفاهی احتیاج دارید به این شماره تلفن کنید:
PORTUGUESE	Se você precisar da ajuda de um intérprete, telefone:
SERBIAN	Ако вам је потребна помоћ преводиоца телефонирајте:
SPANISH	Si necesita la asistencia de un intérprete, llame al:
TURKISH	Tercümana ihtiyacımız varsa lütfen telefon ediniz:
VIETNAMESE	Nếu bạn cần một người thông-ngôn hãy gọi điện-thoại:

TRANSLATING AND INTERPRETING SERVICE

131 450

Canberra and District—24 hours a day, 7 days a week

TTY telephone

6207 0494

Disability ACT

Central Office

12 Moore St
Canberra City 2601

GPO Box 158
Canberra City 2601

Telephone 6207 1086
www.dhcs.act.gov.au