



community partners in disability

A message from the

Executive Director

Summer 2005

Issue 10

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department of
disability, housing &
community services



WOW! What a year for Disability ACT, our community partners—and for people with disabilities, providers, friends, families and supporters in the sector.

I'm in awe of the quality and diversity of the work that has been delivered—and I acknowledge the critical role that our partners in the community have had in bringing many of these projects to fruition. Thank you all—for your support, trust and efforts throughout the year.

This edition of *Community Partners* will give you a more detailed look at our activities (see pages 14–15), but I will mention a couple of highlights.

2005 finished on a high note with the terrific celebrations for the International Day of People with a DisAbility on 3 December.

Each year the day's profile is growing. For the first time, Canberrans saw I-Day promotional flags flying along Commonwealth Avenue (thanks to NICAN).

Key activities for I-Day included the Rhodium ACT Chief Minister's Inclusion Awards that acknowledged the contributions of businesses, individuals and organisations; a wonderful family day at Canberra Museum and Gallery, the City Heart Art Prize—along with a host of other activities to celebrate and highlight the abilities of people with a disability. Thank you to everyone who hosted and supported events and activities.

Our year included a chance to see the amazing Chinese Disabled Performing Artists, and a unique once in a lifetime opportunity for 50 of Canberra's performing artists to meet and work with members of the Chinese troupe.

Disability ACT moved to new territory with the first ever BLITS (*Business Leaders–Innovation, Thoughts, Solutions*) Roundtable Event at the Hyatt in September.

This event was a gathering of some of Canberra's key business leaders, who heard from people with disabilities about their daily challenges and the opportunities for business.

Again—truly inspiring stuff. [Continued on page 2](#) ▶



Photo by Lindi Holly, Homimage

it's our day!:

ACT Chief Minister Jon Stanhope with Catherine Settle and Naomi Knight from the Women's Centre for Health Matters—winners of the 2005 ACT Excellence in Inclusion Award and Deborah Clark, Rhodium Asset Solutions. The 2005 Rhodium ACT Chief Minister's Inclusion Awards held at the Hyatt Hotel on 3 December celebrated International Day of People with DisAbilities in style. [See story page 2](#) ▶

Executive Director's message
Continued from page 1

Disability ACT took up a physical challenge in November, when our cycle team consisting of staff, family and friends joined the Hartley LifeCare Cycle Challenge from Canberra to Kosciusko.

There has been significant progress on many of the strategies identified under *Future Directions*. A few examples here include the implementation of the Disability Employment Framework, establishment of the Disability Information line; funding of Family Governed pilots and more funding for individual support.

Initiatives that deliver outcomes in the critical areas of training, recruitment and operations has again been a focus for Individual Support Services' team over the year. You can read more about these in the new pullout section of *Community Partners* that focuses on ISS news.

As always, a big thank you to the small, but hardworking team that makes up DACT. I am always impressed with the care, skill and enthusiasm that goes into your work to make it all happen.

Looking to the long term—Canberra celebrates its centenary in 2013. We have an opportunity to think about how we want Canberra to be, and to be seen by others. For the disability sector—we offer a challenge to everyone to make Canberra a truly inclusive community. If you'd like to know more about Canberra 100 visit www.canberra100.act.gov.au

I wish everyone a safe and happy festive season. See you in 2006.

Lois Ford

lois.ford@act.gov.au

I-Day...it's our day

Several hundred Canberrans attended the Awards presentation and cocktail party at the Hyatt on 3 December.

The Awards recognised local businesses, organisations and community members who have made an extra effort to include people with disabilities in the delivery of everyday services and activities.

The evening began with Duncan Smith's dramatic 'Welcome to Country'. Master of ceremonies, comedienne Jean Kittson delighted the audience with her energy and wit.

Awards in six categories were presented by ACT Chief Minister Jon Stanhope, Minister for Disability, Housing and Community Services John Hargreaves and category sponsors.

Highlights of the formal celebrations included David Helfgott's stunning piano performance and inspirational songs from the talented Deborah Wells, Lisa McClelland and Karen Strahan.

The cocktail party that followed was a chance for everyone to mingle and enjoy good food, wine and conversation. And who could forget the fantastic sight of attendees on stage with the



Photo by Lindi Holly, Holimage

Real Inclusion: starting young—David Helfgott with Alex Fitzgerald.

performers: dancing, singing and enjoying themselves.

The evening was a celebration of talents and abilities—and a public affirmation that even small changes can make a big difference for a person with a disability.

For more information visit www.inclusionawards.com.au

Small change — **BIG difference** Small

2005 Rhodium ACT Chief Minister's Inclusion Awards and our winners are...

Inclusion in Small Business, sponsored by Business ACT

Nominations

- David Wright — Canberra Cabs
- Dr Jane Taylor—Oasis Medical Centre Deakin
- Barry and Elizabeth Clark — Mr Spokes Bike Hire and Café
- Photoaccess
- Mashallah Kermanioun — Canberra Cabs
- The Captioning Studio Pty Ltd

WINNER: THE CAPTIONING STUDIO

Commendation

- Dr Jane Taylor—Oasis Medical Centre Deakin
- Mashallah Kermanioun — Canberra Cabs

Inclusion in Medium–Large Business, sponsored by MAXimusSolutions Australia

Nominations

- ESS Support Services Worldwide
- Hellenic Club Of Canberra
- Peter Zeck—Ratheon Australia Pty Ltd

WINNER: HELLENIC CLUB OF CANBERRA

Inclusion in ACT Government — Department or Agency, sponsored by Canberra Cabs

Nominations

- Canberra Connect
- Corporate and Community Affairs Area—ACTION Buses
- Kippax Team of 'Therapy Act'
- Tuggeranong Library
- Yarralumla Nursery
- Turner School Staff

WINNER: ACTION BUSES

Judges Recognition Award

- Turner School Staff
- Kippax Team of Therapy ACT

Excellence In The Community— Individual or Team, sponsored by Northrop Engineers Pty Ltd

Nominations

- Brindabella Power Ranger Guides
- Louise Cooper-Finch
- Megan Kelly
- Moyra Maestros
- Siosuia Pouralu Tofai — Phoenix Dance Company
- Sylvie Stern — 2XX FM Community Radio
- Trish and Glenn Mowbray

WINNER: BRINDABELLA POWER RANGERS

Commendation

- Moyra Maestros (Black Mountain School)

Inclusion in The Community— Organisation, sponsored by Koomarri

Nominations

- ACT Athletics
- Canberra Men's Centre
- Community Connections Inc
- Woden Community Services—Disability Programs — CLS and CSR
- 'The Warehouse Program' — Gunghalin Regional Community Service
- Gunghalin Regional Community Service
- Hartley Lifecare Inc
- Inanna Inc
- Megalo Access Arts
- Mental Illness Education Act
- North Belconnen Community Association Inc
- Pegasus Riding For The Disabled Inc
- Sailability ACT Inc
- St Margaret's Uniting Church
- Weston Creek Soccer Club
- Women's Centre For Health Matters

WINNER: WOMEN'S CENTRE FOR HEALTH MATTERS

Commendation

- Mental Illness Education ACT
- Sailability ACT

Inclusion in ACT Tourism, sponsored by Australian Capital Tourism Corporation

Nominations

- Department of Urban Services
- Royal National Capital Agricultural Society
- National Gallery of Australia

WINNER: ROYAL NATIONAL CAPITAL AGRICULTURAL SOCIETY

The 2005 Rhodium ACT Chief Minister's Excellence in Inclusion Award, sponsored by Rhodium Asset Solutions

Finalists

- Inclusion In Small Business
The Captioning Studio Pty Ltd
- Inclusion In Medium–Large Business
Hellenic Club Of Canberra
- Inclusion in ACT Government
Corporate And Community Affairs Area—ACTION Buses
- Inclusion In ACT Tourism
Royal National Capital Agricultural Society
- Inclusion In The Community—Organisation
Women's Centre for Health Matters
- Inclusion in The Community— Individual or Team
Brindabella Power Ranger Guides

WINNER: WOMEN'S CENTRE FOR HEALTH MATTERS

Award accepted by Catherine Settle, Project Worker

change — **BIG difference** Small change — **BIG difference**

2005 Rhodium ACT Chief Minister's Inclusion Awards— our sponsors and major winners



Alex French, Captioning Studio and
John Hargreaves.



Left to right: Ian Cameron, Hellenic Club, John Hargreaves, Alison Barrow and
Alex Kovaceski, MAXimus Solutions.



Peter Wallace, ACTION Buses and Kim Hancock,
Canberra Cabs.



John Hargreaves, Catherine Settle, Women's Centre for Health Matters and
Margaret Spalding, Koomarri Association.



Alison Barrow and Deborah Lowery,
Brindabella Power Rangers.



Dennis Algie, Royal National Capital Agricultural Society and Cheryl Patrick,
Disability Advisory Council.

Photos by Lindi Holly, Holimage

Celebration on I-Day



Small change —
BIG difference



On yer bike (for a great cause)

Disability ACT team in Hartley Cycle Challenge



We made it!!

Each year Hartley LifeCare hosts the Hartley Cycle Challenge—a ride from Canberra to Charlotte’s Pass—around 420km. It’s one of Hartley’s major fundraising events, and increases the awareness of the challenges that face people with disabilities, on an everyday basis. The ride was held 25–27 November.

For the first time, Disability, Housing and Community Services sponsored a team from Disability ACT including staff, family members and supporters.

Our team reflected a mix of cycling skills, experience and age—with the World Cup woman road cyclist Oenone Wood; experienced riders Duane Toohey (ride captain). Ric Bless, Fia Norton and Alex SikSik from NZ—and two new converts to

cycling, Deanne Michaels and Don Lambert, with a mere seven months of cycling experience. Our trusty support vehicle driver was Sally Gibson.

We left Fyshwick Markets at 6.05am on Friday 25 November—in the rain, which lasted until our lunchstop at Cooma. The weather cleared and we hit the coffee shop at Jindabyne at 3.30 pm—with a hundred or so other cyclists.

An overnight stay at the Jindabyne Winter Academy of Sport and Recreation, was a very enjoyable, and at times hilarious experience. We met old friends and made new ones.

On Saturday we continued our journey, and made the four hour climb to Charlotte Pass, which is

about 8km along the range from the summit of Mt Kosiuszko. As the last of our team reached the top, the spectacular alpine scenery disappeared as the weather closed in, reducing visibility to a few metres.

Sunday saw us leaving Jindabyne at 7.05am to head homewards in freezing conditions. On the long climb north, the rain started again—it was very cold. We reached Berridale (alas, missed morning tea), so we pressed on to Cooma for lunch. Thankfully from here conditions improved. It got warmer and we were able to shed our wet weather jackets. A total of seven punctures delayed our progress home.

We arrived back at the Fyshwick Markets at around 4.30pm to a BBQ, juices, wonderful cold beer, and TV interviews.

Most of us will be back next year—it was an incredible experience. Most importantly, our efforts supported people with disabilities.

PS This year’s event saw a record number of teams participating, with over 270 riders and support crew—raising over \$352,000 for Hartley Lifecare.

Don Lambert

Peer support group for people with mental illness

Do you have schizophrenia or bipolar and would like to talk to someone else with a mental illness about your current situation?

The Mental Health Foundation’s Peer Support Service (PSS) is a new, FREE informal, volunteer based program provided for people with a mental illness, by people with a mental illness.

If you are interested in finding out more, or perhaps being a volunteer—contact Rupert Gerritsen at the Mental Health Foundation office (weekdays) 6282 6658; email info@mmhf.org.au; or drop in at 42 Townsend St Phillip, ACT.

Sharing the journey:

Innovations grant

Morgan Jai-Morincome established the Belly Dance Performance Project in April 2004 after a short pilot program in 2004–5.

The project is funded by Disability ACT through an Innovations Grant and co-facilitated with Min Mae.

The group consists of around 20 women who come together each week to dance and create performances to share their love of movement with others. This integrated dance group affirms that all bodies have a dance, and a story to share.

In 2005 the group performed at the Hartley Life Care Expo, Chinese Embassy, Belconnen Community Festival, National Museum of Australia, Groovin in Garema and Festival of Ability.

The group's major performance for this year, 'Sharing The Journey', was on Sunday 27th November at the National Museum of Australia. The museum graciously hosted the event and provided the venue, support staff and additional publicity.



Challenging perceptions around dance.

The group performed to a full house (130 people) and regrettably turned away many others.

The group performed seven dances including improvisational and structured movement pieces. Many participants and facilitators chose to speak about their involvement in the project and share a visual collage on screen of the rehearsal process throughout the project.

Members of the audience expressed their gratitude for such

an inspirational and moving event. The dancers not only challenged society's perceptions of what dance is, and who can participate, but highlighted the potential benefits (physical, mental and emotional) for individuals and communities engaging in this kind of project.

The group hopes to continue next year with a broader dance base (predominantly dance theatre) and is open to new members.

For more information on the group or this project contact:
 Morgan Jai-Morincome on: 61611192 mob: 0400455965
 e: urbangoddess@bellydancingaustralia.com.au

Changes to **Therapy ACT services**

From January 2006 Therapy ACT will have teams to cater for each age group. There will be north and south side teams for children from birth to end of preschool, north and south side teams for school-aged

children (kindergarten through to Year 10) and an adult team.

This change in service delivery may involve changes in venue and/or therapist for some people accessing our service.

If you have any queries about the restructure please contact Jacinta Evans, project coordinator on 6205 4370.

FAMILY GOVERNED PILOT Getting a Life: what's happening?



Above from left to right: Ben, Daniel, Jackson.

The governance group of Getting a Life submitted a business plan to Disability ACT in June, to apply for funding to employ a part-time coordinator. We have been successful in our application, and are now able to employ a coordinator—Dr Sandy Hinson—for seven hours a week for two years.

Sandy is a Canberra business woman who is hoping to encourage businesses and local organisations to be more inclusive of young people with disabilities.

Sandy is currently the Director/CEO of Round it Up Australia and has run her own management consultancy business, Hinson & Associates since 1990.

She has run consultancy teams for corporations, government and non-government organisations, has advised state and federal governments regarding violence in

Australian schools, and has conducted research and advocacy work in relation to women's rights.

Sandy is very excited about being a part of the innovative Getting a Life project that aims to create new possibilities for three young men who have disabilities: Ben, Daniel and Jackson.

The coordinator is a key position for projects like this. Sandy will help each family individually, and the group collectively—to map out and hold a vision for the longer term. She will also ensure that what happens now remains relevant and sustainable.

The independent nature of the coordinator ensures that the family remains in control of the priorities, goals, and life directions—along with their family member. The relationship is symbiotic. The family teaches the coordinator and keeps them grounded,

and the coordinator offers ideas and alternatives that are easier to consider when seen at arm's length.

To date, Sandy has participated in each of our son's circles of support; met with each family; observed Daniel at work experience at the PCYC and met his colleagues. She has also started researching business opportunities for Jackson and discussed post-school options with Ben and Cheryl.

Getting a Life has taken off and we are all enjoying the ride.

The governance group of Getting a Life would like to acknowledge the financial and philosophical support of Disability ACT and the hosting support of Hartley Lifecare — both invaluable for the development and success of a project like this.

Sally Richards

CONFERENCES

Down Syndrome: **The way ahead ...**

The ACT Down Syndrome Association hosted a major conference on 26–28 August. Speakers covered across-life issues for people with Down Syndrome, their carers and the communities in which they live.

The weekend brought together individuals, families and professionals in a fun, interactive environment of learning and conversation.

The presentations were all well received (and will be collated on a CD for reference), but the number of attendees for the program for people with Down Syndrome was not as high as anticipated. However, both the cocktail reception at Old Parliament House and the 'Rock and Roll' dinner dance were very popular highlights of the social program.

The ACT Down Syndrome Association was pleased to attract several sponsorships, including funding under the

ACT Community Grants Program, which enabled costs to be kept to a minimum.

Meetings of state and territory delegates held throughout the weekend culminated in the very positive announcement about the formation of the Down Syndrome Australia Network.

For more information contact the Down Syndrome Association ACT on phone/fax (02) 6290 0656 or admindsa@actdsa.asn.au

Evelyn Scott

China Disabled Performing Arts Troupe meet with ACT disabled performance artists



Photo by David Paterson, M. Photog

Fantastic opportunity: the Belly Dance Mixed Ability Performance Group.

A unique interactive cultural exchange event involving the visiting China Disabled Performing Arts Troupe and ACT Disabled Performing Artists was successfully staged at the Chinese Embassy in September.

Fifty ACT disabled performance artists, representing nine independent ACT youth and adult performance groups presented vignettes in the genres of dance, human movement, mime, music, and clowning.

“The event was a terrific opportunity for our local performing artists with a disability to interact with the Chinese performers”, said Lindsay Burge, Disability ACT project coordinator for the event.

“The group had a once in a lifetime experience to share their skills and culture”.

The Canberra performers included the Noisy Friarbirds and Connections Dance Group from Black Mountain School, the Canberra College Hearing-Impaired Youth Contemporary Dance Group, Phoenix Mixed Ability Pacific Dance Company, Canberra Deaf and Signing Choir, A Touch of Beauty

Disability Performance Group, Troupe Fish Performance Clowns, The Belly Dance Mixed Ability Performance Group, the Salty Dogs Jazz Funk Vision-Impaired Ensemble and musician/vocalist TJ James.

The Chinese Ambassador, Her Excellency Madame Fu Ying and the ACT Minister for Disability, Housing and Community Services, John Hargreaves MLA praised all artists for their excellent performances.

For more information about ACT disabled performing artists contact lois.ford@act.gov.au.

ACT BLITS Roundtable

Partnering with business for permanent solutions

ACT BLITS (Business Leaders—Innovation, Thoughts, Solutions), is a three year program supported by Disability ACT.

The project aims to foster closer links with businesses in the ACT to develop new ways to increase the presence and participation of and respect for people with disabilities in the ACT.

In September this year, 20 of Canberra's business leaders convened for the first ever BLITS 'roundtable' event at the Hyatt Hotel. Representatives from Westpac, ClubsACT, ACTEW AGL, ACT Chamber of Commerce and

Canberra Business Council were among participants.

The primary objectives of the 'roundtable' were to

- identify potential new concepts that could enhance quality of life for people with disability
- identify strategies to enhance perceptions of people with disability
- explore the business benefits of various forms of involvement of people with disability.

Four Canberrans with disabilities, (David Heckendorf, Dennis Stabback, Justine Ray and Kylie Scott) talked to delegates about their personal

stories of past and current challenges and achievements.

A number of innovative and strategic recommendations emerged from the discussions and these are being actively pursued.

One example was the commitment by a business leader delegate (and major employer in the Canberra region) to implement an employment policy change making it mandatory for the employment of persons with a disability to be measured at five per cent.

The day's workshop was followed by a gala dinner featuring guest speaker Mark Bagshaw from IBM Australia who facilitated the 'roundtable', and a performance of 'Dislabeled' from the Australian Theatre for the Deaf.

Business Leaders—Innovations, Thoughts, Solutions

Left to right: David Heckendorf, Ilona Fraser, Kylie Scott, Justin Ray, Dennis Stabback.



ACT Chief Minister Jon Stanhope, John Hargreaves, Minister for Disability, Housing and Community Services and Sandra Lambert, Chief Executive, Disability, Housing and Community Services also joined guests.

Feedback from participants made it clear that the BLITS 'roundtable' did a great deal to raise awareness and educate participants about the challenges facing Canberrans with disabilities. There was also a recognition of business opportunities that existed, and the value of involvement beyond commercial terms.

For more information contact gerry.mckeeon@act.gov.au.

Frank Crews
BLITS Project Manager

Exploring housing options: the Canadian experience

In June this year, several family members and the coordinator of the Deohaeko Family Network from Pickering, Ontario, visited Canberra to talk about an innovative housing option for people with disabilities.

The presentations—a one day public workshop, and a second smaller information day for invited participants—were made possible through the support of Disability ACT, Community Connections and FaBRiC.

During the presentations, we heard about the development of Deohaeko (their family governed group), the role of the coordinator, the group's achievements, strategies, disappointments, challenges and hopes.

One of their major achievements was the establishment of a 105-unit housing cooperative—called Rougemount Intentional Community. The complex is home to six family members who have disabilities, as well as over 200 other people—a typical mix of singles, families, single parents—all from different cultures, levels of income, ages and abilities.

The complex cost \$15 million to build and was financed through joint federal and provincial funding.

Although the units are rented by the government, the operation of Rougemount is based on the traditional co-operative principles of mutual ownership, mutual effort and support. It belongs to, and is owned equally by cooperative members.

Such a philosophy creates continuity of home life and relationships, as

well as opportunities for working together, and an expectation that lasting personal relationships will develop between members.

The principles also ensures that all members have full rights and valued roles in the running of the cooperative.

Rougemount is called an intentional community because one of the basic tenets of living there is 'neighbourliness'. An intentional community is one that:

"...strives to be thoughtful about welcoming and including all of its members and which allows for the contribution and recognition of the gifts and talents of all of its members; and a way of life that involves relationship and commitment to others based on valuing gifts and similarities over deficits and differences." (p5 We Come bearing Gifts)

A vital aspect of Rougemount is that the people with disabilities started as, and remain as, key residents in the complex. People from the wider community can apply to live there through a process that involves a written application followed by an interview by a committee.

There is huge demand on the units at Rougemount, and a waiting list of several years. Not all applicants are accepted.

If you are interested in reading more about this initiative, Janet Klees, the coordinator of Deohaeko has written two books: "We Come Bearing Gifts" and "Our Presence has Roots". These books are available from Community Connections.

Sally Richards

DISABILITY ADVISORY COUNCIL

Notes from the Chair: Council note

**Craig Wallace (Chair)
and Cheryl Patrick
(Deputy Chair) from
the Disability Advisory
Council share their
thoughts for the year
ahead.**

We are both very pleased to be appointed to council, and we look forward to working with Minister Hargreaves and our council colleagues. Readers will see from the following individual profiles of council members, that this is a group of talented people, well grounded in disability issues.

Since its appointment in September, council has already met three times to discuss what we hope to achieve over the months ahead. As well, a recent planning day identified some key result areas for us, and we will provide a full report on this in the new year.

There are some important references that the Minister has given the new council and we embrace these keenly, especially developing a biennial scorecard to assist the ACT community to measure its own progress towards Challenge 2014.

Continued on page 12 ►

Meet the Council

Council will be looking closely at how we engage with specific sections of the disability community, especially indigenous people with a disability, people with intellectual disabilities and young people with a disability.

This process has already begun, and we are planning a series of themed meetings based in the community that will provide an outward focus and allow us to meet directly with people.

Work is also continuing in important areas, such as the report on Wheelchair Accessible Taxis. The report contained 39 recommendations to improve services for people with disabilities — all of which were accepted by the ACT Government.

On a final note, we would like to express our support for Koomari ACT, following the fire and storm damage at its new headquarters last month. We encourage readers to get behind the appeal. Donations can be made at any Westpac branch and are tax deductible.

Keep in touch with the work of the Council through our webpage, at www.dhcs.act.gov.au/DisabilityACT/AdvisoryCouncil/Council.htm

On behalf of the Disability Advisory Council, we wish everyone a safe and happy Christmas.

Craig Wallace
Chair



Craig Wallace
(Chair)

Craig works for a large Australian Government agency

and has a background in public relations, management and community services. He has been active in the ACT disability community for over a decade, and is the current vice president of People with Disability Australia. Craig interests include youth development, employment, fostering disability arts, adaptable housing, encouraging new leaders in the disability community and building Canberra's potential as a leader in the provision of disability services and access. He was awarded a Centenary Medal in 2002 for his service to the disability community, and Australia Day medals in 2003 and 2004 for his work with the Australian Government. Craig has a rare form of muscular dystrophy and uses a wheelchair for mobility.



Cheryl Patrick
(Deputy Chair)

Cheryl has been involved in the area of disability since the

birth of her eldest son Ben in 1987, who was born with cerebral palsy. She is currently a board member of Advocacy for Inclusion, an organisation providing systemic advocacy for people who have a disability. Cheryl is a member of the ACT advisory group for PWD in Vocational Education and Training, and has joined the Therapy ACT consultative committee. Over the past 14 years Cheryl has participated in consultation processes, forums and workshops relating to the issues that impact on the lives of people who have a disability their families and carers. She has also worked in the disability sector in the areas of systemic advocacy and project management.



Robert Altamore

Robert is a blind person. He has experience of education

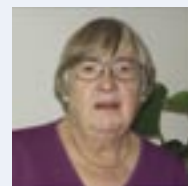
in both specialist and integrated settings and obtained degrees in Arts and Law. Robert has 24 years experience in policy development and legal services in the Australian Public Service and is currently employed as a legal officer with the Australian Government Solicitor. He is the vice-president of Canberra's Radio for the Print Handicapped Service Radio 1RPH. In 2003, Robert was awarded a Centenary Medal for services to people with disabilities.

Phillip Gleeson



Phillip was born in a small town in Gippsland, Victoria. At 24, he had his first symptoms of MS. His

career has primarily been in the areas of the environment and the arts, until ten years ago, when he had to stop full-time work. Since then he has been a volunteer committee member in the areas of health, disability and advocacy.



Terry Millar

Terry is the CEO of ACT Muscular Dystrophy Association, which supports those

in the community with MD and other neuro muscular disorders. Her background is in nursing. Terry is a member of the Housing and Tenancy Working Group. She is passionate about having coordinated centralised information about service provision and access to public housing. Other issues that Terry is keen to see addressed include improved access to respite, accommodation and equipment services for people with disabilities, as well as easier service pathways.



Trevor Robinson

As an aircraft engineer, Trevor has lived and worked in many parts of regional Australia and the South Pacific. Trevor and his wife have experienced firsthand the frustrations associated with disability issues, with their oldest son experiencing severe developmental delay and acute epilepsy. In partnership with his wife, Trevor is committed to improving not only the status of people with disabilities, but also their parents and carers, their extended family members and those employed in the disability industry. Trevor is keen to see improvements in the consolidation of communication from government and non-government organisations (NGOs), user-friendly guardianship laws and greater accommodation provisions.



Christina Ryan

Christina has campaigned locally on disability access issues, including the Supreme Court and improved disability parking; on public housing reform, including security of tenure and tenant services; and the right to reproductive choice for ACT women. Christina has worked for several community and advocacy organisations including: the Women's Electoral Lobby Australia, Womensport Australia, Women with Disabilities Australia (WWDA) and the ACT Council of Social Service. She was the first woman to run for any Australian parliament as a wheelchair user, as a candidate for the 2001 ACT Assembly election. Christina is the access coordinator for the National Folk Festival.



Toni Smith

Toni is the Executive Director of Community & Health Works, the ACT Community

Services & Health Industry Training Advisory Body (ITAB). Toni is a member of several committees including: ACTCOSS Sector Development Advisory Group, CIT Faculty of Community Services and Communications Advisory Committee and the Indigenous People in VET Committee. Toni's enthusiasm for reshaping the way society views disability is informed and tempered by personal experience, with two family members with disabilities.



Dennis Stabback

Dennis was born with cerebral palsy and has been actively involved with disability issues over many years, both in NSW and the ACT. His experience includes a term as a director of the Spastic Centre of NSW. Dennis has served on numerous committees and boards including the Disability Council of NSW, Access And Planning Advisory Committee, (AAPAC) and Self-Help Organisations United Together (SHOUT). He co-chaired the ACT Disability Reform Group in 2002.

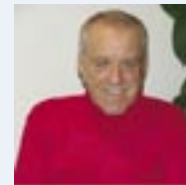
Currently Dennis is a member of the ACT Leadership and Development Group. He was on the ACT Council of Social Services (ACTCOSS) general committee for five years and was a member of the board of directors of Community Connections for six years. He is the current President of People with Disabilities (PWD ACT Inc). Dennis was 2001 ACT Volunteer of The Year and was awarded the Centenary Medal for his contribution to disability reform and to people with disabilities and their families.



Lily Troupe

In 2002, Lily enrolled in a university course to find that she was struggling with her mathematics subjects. Having never understood maths from her youth, and out of sheer frustration, she researched maths disorders

on the Internet and discovered a learning difficulty called dyscalculia. She joined the Australian Learning Disability Association and is their current Secretary and their ACT representative. Lily actively plays a part in advocating for children with learning disabilities ('the hidden disability').



Ian Trehella

Ian has had quadriplegia since a sporting accident in 1961. He has been heavily involved in disability issues over many years and was a successful paralympic athlete in 1980 and 1984. His extensive past membership of advisory and management boards include the chair of the ACT Disability Services Advisory Committee and the deputy chair of the ACT Paralympic Committee. He was awarded an Order of Australia Medal in 1992 for volunteer service to people with disabilities in the fields of sport, recreation and welfare.



Margaret Thompson

Margaret has taught for 14 years as a high school teacher in the ACT Government School system. Much of her work was in coordinating the Learning Assistance Program. She also had involvement with the Integration Support Program for students. She currently works as a Disability Liaison Officer for Canberra Institute of Technology and looks after support needs of students with disability across the six campuses. In 2004 she was appointed chair of the advisory committee for People with Disability in VET.

Ex officio members

Sandra Lambert (Chief Executive, ACT Government Department of Disability, Housing & Community Services), Lois Ford, (Executive Director, Disability ACT); and Jemma Martin (Australian Government Family and Community Services).

What has Disability ACT been up to?

Specific Actions December 2004–December 2005	Status
Service Delivery	
Funded Carers ACT to provide additional respite services for ageing carers of people with disabilities.	Completed
Funded Belconnen Community Services to provide Local Area Coordination services	Completed
Funded Independent PATH (Planning Alternative Tomorrows with Hope) Planning Network project.	Completed
Held ACT BLITS (Business Leaders – Innovations, Thoughts, Solutions) Roundtable, engaging business leaders to identify strategies to enhance quality of life for people with disabilities.	Completed
Co hosted a successful International Day of DisAbility celebration on 3 December 2005, including the Rhodium 2005 ACT Chief Minister's Inclusion Awards.	Completed
Completed a review, in partnership with the Australian Government, to evaluate the effectiveness of current post-school services and supports and identify ways facilitate community and employment participation.	Completed
Reviewed and reported on the Applied Behavioural Analysis Program, a specialised intervention pilot program for four children with autism.	Completed
Sponsored a 2-day presentation and workshop by Deohaeko Support Network about developing and operating a "Good Neighbour" housing cooperative for people with intellectual disabilities.	Completed
Supported development of service model for Consumers in Control, a project to develop mechanisms for people with disabilities to directly control financial resources allocated to them.	Completed
Funded Stepping Stones, a Family Governed Pilot Project to assist nine mature carer families to identify the future independent living goals for their family member and the supports that will assist them to work towards these goals.	Completed
Funded Getting a Life, a Family Governed Pilot Project to assist three families to participate in community-based activities that suit their individual interests, wants, talents, needs and aspirations.	Completed
Commissioned a feasibility study for Companion Card	Underway
Established project team and developing Disability Awareness Project proposal for implementation in 2006.	Underway
Implementing a specialist program to deliver Intensive Treatment And Support (ITAS) to a group of people that have a dual disability, complex needs and are at risk of entering or re-entering the criminal justice system.	Underway
Developing an implementation plan to improve transitions from school to post-school services including increasing community and employment participation.	Underway
Additional service development for an information phone-line providing the public with specific and general information on disability services in the ACT	Ongoing
Developed the By All Means project proposal, in partnership with Sharing Places, to establish a flexible and individualised service where families can design and make the key decisions about the service structure.	Ongoing
Infrastructure	
Completed baseline assessment audit against the National Disability Service Standards of all funded service providers.	Completed
Commissioned an independent audit of five funded service providers as part of Disability ACT's ongoing contract and quality monitoring processes.	Completed
Finalised the audit of Taxi Subsidy Scheme vouchers in August 2005.	Completed
Funded 15 disability support workers, 10 from Disability ACT and five from the non-government sector, to study Certificate IV in Disability Work through CIT. A further 15 workers will commence study in 2006.	Completed

A scorecard of key activities for 2005

Specific Actions December 2004–December 2005	Status
Infrastructure (continued)	
Hosted two sector wide networking events for the Disability Support Workers' Network: 'Working Together' in April and 'Valuing Our People' in September 2005.	Completed
Disability ACT team members completed 36 days of work experience in non-government organisations and a further nine days with other government agencies.	Completed
Funding	
Completed 2005 Post School Options grants funding round totalling \$248,800.	Completed
Funded six community-governed Innovations Grant Projects totalling \$120,000.	Completed
Allocated \$109,468 in Quality of Life Grants to assist 33 individuals to purchase specialist disability supports.	Completed
Assessed and allocated \$1,834,884 in funding as part of the 2004-05 Disability Support Funding round for people with high and complex needs.	Completed
Secured additional funding of \$792,000 for 2005-06, rising to \$854,000 in 2008-09 to provide critical support to a number of individuals who have been assessed as having high or very high support needs.	Completed
Secured funding of \$415,000 for 2005-06, rising to \$447,000 in 2008-09 for the establishment of a north-side community based person-centred service to improve outcomes youth and young adults.	Completed
Secured funding of \$410,000 for 2005-06, rising to \$442,000 in 2008-09 to assist families with children who have intensive support needs, including those children with challenging behaviours.	Completed
Policy	
Released the Fourth and Final Report on the implementation of the Government's response to the Board of Inquiry into Disability Services.	Completed
Established Oversight and Reference Groups as part of the implementation of Future Directions: A framework for the ACT 2004–2008.	Completed
Released the DHCS Employment Framework Toolkit for People with a Disability for potential applicants, managers and staff.	Completed
Developed Guidelines and Procedures Manual for People in Hospital in partnership with ACT Health, The Canberra Hospital, Calvary Hospital and Therapy ACT.	Completed
Completed community consultation and developed Five Key Housing and Tenancy Principles.	Completed
Developed policies and procedures to enable residents of Disability ACT group homes to hold individual tenancy agreements.	Completed
Established cross-agency working group to identify and develop non-standardised housing and tenancy solutions.	Completed
Consulted community on Workforce Development Framework.	Completed
Formed Project team for the implementation of a 'new approach' to Individual Support Packages. Implementation due for completion in February 2006.	Underway
Developed work plan and established project team for proposed review of the Disability Services Act.	Underway
Participating in Wheelchair Accessible Taxis ACT Working Group.	Underway
Redeveloping ISS Policy and Procedures Manual - to be available on-line and to include easy references and flow charts to assist staff in their roles.	Underway

For more information please refer to the DHCS Annual Report 2004-2005 available online at:

<http://www.dhcs.act.gov.au/pubs/index.htm>

Seeking support for proposed Medicare item

The National and NSW Councils for Intellectual Disability, the Australian Association of Developmental Disability Medicine and the Royal Australasian College of General Practitioners are seeking support for a proposal to benefit people with intellectual disability.

The group has prepared a proposal for consideration by the Minister for Health, Tony Abbott for the creation of a Medicare item to cover an annual comprehensive health assessment of a person with an intellectual disability, along similar lines as existing items for assessment of older, and indigenous people.

The reasoning behind the proposal is that currently many people with intellectual disabilities of have high rates of health problems

that are not identified or treated. Research shows that an annual comprehensive health assessment can make a major contribution to addressing this situation.

The cost to Medicare should be more than offset by savings to Medicare (and the health system more generally), from the prevention and early treatment of health issues.

If you would like to register your support you can:

- 1 Contact Jim Simpson, NSW Council for Intellectual Disability jcsimpson@optusnet.com.au tel: 9345 5504 to be included in a list to use for lobbying the Australian Government on this issue

OR

- 2 Write, expressing your support for acceptance of the proposal, to:
Hon Tony Abbott
Minister for Health
Parliament House
Canberra 2600.

Career option: Horticulture

CIT again will offer this course, with a focus on literacy, numeracy and practical Horticulture skills for people with special learning needs.

The skills will include: garden maintenance; plant care propagation; lawn maintenance; tree care and horticulture literacy.

Classes will begin in February 2006 and class times for 2006 are yet to be confirmed. The course will run for 17 weeks for either one or two half days per week.

Where: CIT Weston Campus, Heysen Drive, Weston Building A. Bring along paper and pens; lunch and wear comfortable clothes and covered shoes to work in the gardens.

A canteen is open throughout the term.

For further information please ring: Allyson Guy, Disability Coordinator, Student Equity Services, Canberra Institute of Technology on phone: 6207 3328 fax: 6207 3189 sms: 0413 774700 email: Allyson.Guy@cit.act.edu.au



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