



community partners in disability

Winter 2005

Issue 8

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department of disability, housing & community services



building our city
building our community
ACT Government



“When the dog bites....”

See story page 10 ►

Artists at Hands on Studio’s recent exhibition took the theme of ‘my favourite things’. Pictured above: ‘Going to Town’—Felicity Beveridge, Janice Douch, Martin Lyall, Troy Mann, Keith McMillan and Steve Patrech.

A message from the Executive Director

Welcome to the autumn edition of *Community Partners*

In this edition, we are looking at inclusion. People with disabilities—and those who care for them—have a good sense of where we want to be as a community. But how are we going in reaching that goal?

If we don’t use inclusion for guiding our activities, our work in the service delivery area will have limited effect in terms of ‘real life’ for ‘real people’.

In the broader work of Disability ACT, we have an ambitious vision and plan with the *Challenge 2014* and *Future Directions* documents. These are our blueprint for

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developing policies and programs and sincere partnerships.

Do we know how we are travelling with our attitude and our actions in the community? In business?

In government? What does inclusion really mean, at an individual level? Is there more visibility, participation and presence of people with disabilities in ordinary places? Big questions.

The work by the Disability Advisory Council in 2004, contained in the 'Snapshot of community attitudes on disability in the ACT' gives some clues here (see this page).

There are great things happening that have the right philosophical base for moving forward. Great stuff from People With Disabilities ACT, with its initiative—Dramatic Realisations—a mixed ability theatre.

Similarly, Canberra Theatre's recent implementation of captioning for all its productions, and Capital Career's certificate training courses in IT for people with disabilities are good news stories.

Within ACT Government, there is a commitment towards employing people with disabilities through the next graduate intake program, and through the introduction of the Disability Employment Framework in Disability, Housing and Community Services.

What these initiatives have in common—is a demonstration of

how the **visibility, participation and presence** of people with disabilities in ordinary places can happen. We need to do a lot more.

The initiatives also highlight the need for a multi-faceted approach in effecting real change in the lives of people with disabilities. *One size does not fit all.* This notion is very much part of Disability ACT's work and we are working hard to thread this into policies and programs.

I've been delighted to get positive feedback around some of Disability ACT's initiatives, not just from the ACT, and across Australia—but from former colleagues in New Zealand.

These connections provide a chance to exchange ideas and experiences, and boosts the enthusiasm and commitment of Disability ACT staff. They can also open up greater opportunities for people with disability to be involved outside of the ACT.

With the mid-year mark past, planning for the International Day of People with DisAbility (I-Day), and the 2005 Inclusion Awards, is off and running. The activities are a tangible way to raise awareness of, and celebrate the contribution of people with disabilities make to our community. But what we really want to work towards, is I-Day presence EVERY DAY!

Lois Ford
Executive Director

Building inclusive

In 2004, the ACT Disability Advisory Council commissioned research into community attitudes on disability in the ACT. The findings make for interesting reading. Community Partners has outlined the key findings below, and talked to Canberrans on their thoughts about inclusion.

- **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 remain key areas of community life where knowledge and attitudes towards disability could be substantially enhanced.**
- **These include awareness of the abilities of people with different disabilities, employment, education, and attitudes about psychiatric disabilities.**
- **Practical work is needed—powerful change agents include education in schools, community events, first person contacts, integration at work and school and information campaigns.**

A significant proportion of ACT residents consider that people with a disability do not have the same opportunities as other community members.

- **Forty-five per cent of ACT residents indicate that people with a disability do not have the same access to services as other people in the ACT.**

communities

- Forty-four per cent of residents suggest that people with a disability do not have the same opportunities to participate in community life as other people.
- Thirty per cent indicate that, overall, people with a disability are not treated fairly in the ACT.

More than half (54 per cent) of the community feel that people with a disability do not have adequate government financial support.

- Ninety-seven per cent of residents said they would be comfortable about helping a person in a wheelchair carry groceries to the supermarket checkout.
- However, 17 per cent said they would be uncomfortable if a new work colleague confided that they have Schizophrenia and a quarter (26 per cent) said they would be uncomfortable if a person displaying challenging behaviours sat next to them.

ACT residents are significantly less likely to consider that people with intellectual, learning, psychological or psychiatric disabilities are able to fully contribute to society than is the case in relation to people with other disabilities.

Community Partners asked a range of people to give us their thoughts on the following questions:

- 1 When I say the word 'inclusion', what do you think this means?
- 2 Who do you see as being 'excluded' from our community?
- 3 What can people do as individuals, or as a community to be more inclusive?

■ Inclusion—when referring to people with disabilities means never having to think again about what 'inclusion' means when referring to people with disabilities!

■ I'm not sure I'd say that we 'exclude' people in the communities in which we live; it's just that particularly people with intellectual disabilities are not heard. That is, they often don't have the ability to express themselves as ably as they or we might like; therefore in that context they are overlooked, ignored and—dare I say it—disregarded.

■ As individuals, and as communities, we have to remember that people are people and every one of us has our shortcomings. Just as people treat me with consideration and understanding and have respect for my abilities—even though I wear glasses, am totally deaf in one ear, get off balance at times and increasingly get forgetful—so should we all focus on everyone else's abilities, no matter what they may be.

Evelyn Scott

President, ACT Down Syndrome Association, and mother of Kylie

■ The word 'inclusion' automatically makes me feel that there is difference and a present state of exclusion. To be included you first have to be excluded so I don't particularly like the word.

One can be invited in (inclusion) but not necessarily be accepted or valued as belonging to or being part of whatever or wherever the inclusion is being facilitated or done to. It has been my experience that 'inclusion' is something that one has to prove to be or encourage, that a person or persons are worthy of being included.

■ Anyone who is different or seen to be of no value or consequence. Exclusion can be a reaction caused by fear and the

unfamiliarity of something or someone. Lack of understanding and the assumptions we make about people and how their life should be often result in exclusion.

- Be more open to difference, value all members of our community and don't let fear and lack of awareness or understanding dictate the decisions and actions we make that affect and impact on others lives. If people and communities understand and remember that as a human being we all share the same basic need for love, acceptance, a sense of belonging, to feel safe and secure and have the opportunity to grow to the best of their ability within their own community. I believe if communities thought, planned and acted with awareness while truly valuing all its members then more inclusive communities would be a natural everyday thing.

Cheryl Patrick

Mother, caregiver and advocate for Ben

- Everyone working together—being in harmony. It's about kindness and courtesy to all. Not being patronising.
- Yes—anyone who is not considered as 'normal'. Anyone that people see as different to themselves.
- Education and awareness, starting in schools. It is also a generational thing, kids these days can be more accepting. I can see a change in our community, but there's much more to be done.

For me in business, it's about recognising that all people want to have an enjoyable experience when they come to a café. Some people just need a bit of extra care or time to make this happen.

We did think about access issues when we were setting up our business. For example, we have accessible toilet facilities, no steps and we put in a wider doorway.

Arina Paulakis

Barista/proprietor
Suga Cube Café

Showcasing **autism support** and **services** in the ACT

Therapy ACT and the Autism Association ACT jointly hosted an Expo at Therapy ACT's Holder offices on 12 May. The event was held as part of Autism Awareness Week.

Around 20 organisations that provide services and support for children with autism spectrum disorders gathered to showcase their wares. The 4–8pm time slot was the perfect opportunity for parents, carers and workers in the field to find out what was available for autism support in the ACT.

Rosalie Hardy, senior manager of Therapy ACT said, "We were delighted to partner with the Autism Association in putting the Expo together. It was a very practical

way of connecting with families who have a child with autism".

"When a child is diagnosed with autism spectrum disorder, many parents can feel overwhelmed. Finding out where to go for information and support can be time consuming and daunting." said Rosalie.

The range of organisations at the event demonstrated the diversity of approaches in managing autism, and several of these are mentioned below.

Organisations like the Asperger Syndrome Support Network and Action for Autism Inc (along with the Autism Association ACT) specialise in connecting people to information, support and advice.

Resource Link—part of the Communities at Work program—

along with Noah's Ark, were on hand to showcase a terrific range of resources. Training, equipment (for sale and loan), advice and assistance were all available.

Behavioural therapist Bobbi Cook was available to talk about working with parents to manage or change challenging behaviour. One of the key principles behind behavioural therapy was developing simple techniques, and choosing language that could "de-escalate a situation".

The Hillside Health Centre provided alternative therapies such as the Listening Program based around specially processed classical music.

For more information on any of the organisations that were part of the Expo, or about autism spectrum disorders, contact [http://autism.anu.edu.au/](http://autism.anu.edu.au) or 02 6286 8887.

"a very practical way of connecting with families who have a child with autism"

Inclusion at the theatre: Captioning— a first

The Canberra Theatre has done it again! The deaf and visually impaired now have full access to this season's productions.

The Canberra Theatre recently commissioned the Captioning Studio to live-caption its entire 2005

subscription season. This is the first time an entire Australian theatre season has been captioned.

The Captioning Studio has developed its own specialised proprietary captioning technology, which uses a combination of pre-prepared and real-time captioning techniques to provide a captioning system superior to all

other traditional theatre captioning systems used around the world.

Pre-prepared captioning is when a script of a performance is developed in advance and displayed on a screen for viewers to follow along. Real-time captioning is used to caption any ad lib lines or completely live performances. Here, words are typed using shorthand

Dramatic Realisations

a mixed ability theatre for the ACT

“Through art we can either make sense of our existence or recognise the absurdity of it”, Adam Moynihan, arts development officer at PWD ACT introduces readers to ACT’s newest arts initiative.

For everyone—regardless of ability—life can be challenging, confusing, unfair and beautiful. It is through art that pain and triumph can be reflected. It is through art that we feel what others feel, see what others see. In a way, art enables us to recognise our shared humanity. It is through the theatre that this can be achieved most powerfully.

In response to the success of the Canberra Disability Arts Festival in December 2004, PWD ACT (People With Disabilities ACT) appointed me as an arts development officer to

assist in the establishment of a mixed ability theatre company in Canberra.

After much community consultation and deliberation, including a public (and very well attended) planning meeting earlier this year, Dramatic Realisations Theatre Co. was born.

Dramatic Realisations is a new inclusive community theatre company aiming to break new ground in showcasing the talent of committed and passionate performing artists (who may happen to have a disability).

The company is a mixed ability theatre company that encourages *everyone* to participate in a meaningful way. The only requirement is a passion for theatre.

This is not a disability project. Rather it is a community theatre company aiming to produce work of a high artistic standard. The public should come and support our productions because of their quality—not out of sympathy or charity.

Ultimately, we aim to impart upon our audience a greater awareness of a shared human experience by communicating social realities and personal truths in a dramatic context.

It is proposed that Dramatic Realisation’s first feature production—a musical—will be staged in early 2006. Due to the overwhelming demand and interest from young people, it will have a youth and children focus, though there will be roles specifically for adults.

For more information, or to get involved in Dramatic Realisations debut production, please contact Adam Moynihan on 0413 767 600 or at dramatic@shout.org.au



in Australia

machines, and displayed to the audience shortly after the actor delivers them.

Aside from live captioning, The Canberra Theatre Centre also offers performances with Auslan Interpretation, and Audio Described Performances.

Access performances for 2005 will be Puff The Magic Dragon,

Two Brothers and Patch Theatre Company’s “Sharon, Keep Ya Hair On!”

For more information about The Canberra Theatre access programs or to book tickets phone Canberra Ticketing 6275 2700 www.canberratheatrecentre.org.au

Calling all performers

Saturday 3 December 2005 is

I-Day

Celebrate International Day of People With a Disability in Canberra.

See details on the back page

Disability and Sexual Health (DASH)

The DASH Project is being undertaken by the Department of Disability, Housing and Community Services (DHCS) to improve the way the Department promotes and protects the sexual health rights of people with disabilities in the ACT.

The first stage of the project will identify sexual health issues for people with disabilities, in the areas

of relationships and sexuality; sexual and reproductive health and problematic or sexually abusive behaviour.

Sexual Health & Family Planning ACT and DHCS hosted a network meeting in June to discuss the project, broadly identify sexual health issues for people with disabilities in the ACT and discuss how DHCS might best consult further on these issues

For more information contact Fiona McIntosh at DHCS on 02 6205 0454.

Disability Awareness Project Group

To foster positive community attitudes towards people with disabilities, Disability ACT formed the Disability Awareness Project Group in March 2005.

The group consists of 16 people drawn from community and government sectors. Their mission is to brainstorm, develop and implement innovative projects that promote an inclusive society. Disability awareness is a priority under Strategy 1 of *Future*

Directions: A framework for the ACT 2004–2008.

The project group is currently assessing the viability of a community inclusion project that uses relationship marketing and positive media attention to enhance the image of people with a disability. Although still in early development, the project will focus on showcasing individual skills and talents.

Stay tuned for more news on this project. If you are interested in participating in the group contact Liz Kinloch on 62071092 or Liz.Kinloch@act.gov.au

Reform Working Group updates



This is an update from Maree Wright on the progress of the Reform Working Groups

Housing and Tenancy

Quality and Standards

Workforce Reform

Access, Eligibility and Funding (AEF)

Legislative Reform

Future Directions Update



Reform Working Group updates

Housing and Tenancy Working Group

The Housing and Tenancy Working Group is in the process of finalising their work prior to the transition to the Future Directions model. The main body of outstanding work for this group is to consult with the community on the principles of good housing for people with a disability.

A workshop on the principles of good housing for people with disabilities was held on 4 July. A draft discussion paper will form the basis for consultation seeking input from the community.

The workshop will be looking for input on the transitional issues that will need to be addressed if the principles are to inform the way that accommodation support is provided for people with disabilities.

Copies of the discussion paper can be obtained by contacting Chris Bowen (chris.bowen@act.gov.au) or 6207 1409. Liz Forsyth from KPMG Consulting conducted the workshop. Outcomes from this workshop will be forwarded to the Department.

The group has developed a list of key features that are instrumental in turning housing into a good home. These areas should be considered in housing and tenancy policies for people with disabilities.



Malcolm Cameron is congratulated by Minister Hargreaves.

What makes a house a good home?

- Good quality building (functional, no leaks, the design meets all your specific housing needs)
- Affordable (you can pay for your housing and still have enough money to eat and have fun)
- Secure (you can stay as long as you want)
- Comfortable, safe and happy (you feel comfortable, safe and happy in your place and the surrounding neighbourhood)
- Good location (close to shops, places you like to go etc.)
- Allows you to have rights (your right to have privacy, your own money, visitors etc.)
- Choice (so you can choose the sort of place that is best for you, and choose who you live with)
- Not stigmatising or different (so people don't walk past and say "that house is especially for disabled people")
- Equitable, just and fair (everyone should have good housing. Housing should not be provided in a way that makes some people miss out)
- Allows you to have the support you want (no more/no less)
- Flexible (meets your needs through all the stages of your life, either by being adaptable housing or allows you to move to a more suitable place)
- Allows your friends and relatives to visit (accessibility, size, location)

Quality and Standards Working Group

The Quality and Standards Working Group has been looking at implementing service standards. Half day workshops were held on 9–10 March to introduce organisations to the quality process and to have some hands on experience looking at the baseline assessment tool from WA and its application.

Representatives from government and community organisations participated in these workshops. Groups discussed the ways in which they would best be able to use the tool, as well as how it would apply to their individual organisations. Lyla Rogan from RPR Consulting facilitated the workshop.

Initially, organisations' baseline assessments were due to be returned by May, 20, however extensions have been negotiated on an individual basis. So far 30

assessments have been returned and more are on their way.

Once these have been received and the action plans have been looked at, Disability ACT will determine the common issues and develop plans to assist agencies across the sector with their implementation.

Lyla Rogan will facilitate a further workshop for agencies to:

- review the process that has been used to introduce the standards and baseline assessment
- discuss the tool and its suitability to the ACT on an ongoing basis
- discuss the challenges and opportunities that the process presents for organisations.

A discussion paper has been prepared which looks at the way forward for a quality framework across the disability sector.

Minister Hargreaves, Paul Robertson and Larissa Cowlshaw.



Post Script: Working Groups

The contribution of the Working Groups was recognised by Disability ACT at a celebration at the Legislative Assembly in June.

John Hargreaves, Minister for Disability, Housing and Community Services presented certificates of appreciation to individual members of the groups. He formally thanked the groups for their innovative approach and their commitment.

Right: Minister John Hargreaves acknowledges the contribution of the Working Groups

Workforce Reform Working

Judy Netting is now the co-chair for Workforce Reform Working Group. Judy has worked for Centacare in a number of roles, part-time until 1995. As part of her work, she became involved with disability services in ACT and NSW.

Judy is currently manager of prolonged and aged care services. She is a member of the Workforce Reform Working Group, and the ACROD ACT committee.

The work of the Workforce Working Group has been extended further. Consultations about the funding framework have commenced. It is expected that the outcomes of these consultations will be available by the end of July.

If you have any questions about the consultations, contact the co-chairs for the Working Group.

More than 50 people attended 'Working Together', the workforce event for direct support workers



Legislative Reform Working Group

The key role for the Legislative reform group is to develop a workplan to look at the best processes to use in reviewing the *Disability Services Act 1991 (ACT)*.

During March, the group attended a workshop to consider Victoria's experiences and lessons learnt while reviewing their Disability Services Act. This workshop highlighted a number of areas to be considered to facilitate the review.

Group

on 6 April at Thoroughbred Park, Mitchell. Feedback about this event has been very positive. In particular, people at the event found that the 'real life' stories presented by people with disabilities, and a parent of a young person with a disability were valuable in assisting them with their work.

Following this event—Sandra Lambert, chief executive, DHCS and Lois Ford, executive director from Disability ACT—met with the working group to hear about workforce issues.

The group is planning to hold the next event in September, and a conference in March 2006.

The group is also looking at methods to circulate a document that was developed by David and Jenny Heckendorf. This is a humorous look at how disability support workers should support a person with disability.

Access, Eligibility and Funding Working Group

The Access, Eligibility and Funding Working Group (AEF) has finalised its work and presented its final report to John Hargreaves, the Minister for Disability, Housing and Community Services.

From its inception in January 2003 through until May 2005, this group has met 50 times. A summary of the issues discussed and the outcomes agreed to by the AEF were formally collated into a document 'Access, Eligibility and Funding Working Group (AEF) 2003–2005—A Summary of Proceedings'.

The AEF developed an outline of the ideal access system Disability ACT should aim to have in place for people with a disability and their families seeking information, referral, and access to support. This has been used by Disability ACT in developing future initiatives and processes.

Access

As a result of the AEFs advice, Disability ACT implemented:

- the Community Linking and Needs Assessment Service (CLANAS) to assess individual need and to assist with planning alternate accommodation options by linking individuals with their community and appropriate referral to generic and disability specific service
- a Local Area Coordination Service (LAC). This is in the process of being established, which will become the first point of contact for individuals and will assist them to access informal and community supports
- piloting an information service to provide relevant information and appropriate referral to each individual.

Eligibility

The AEF identified a set of desirable attributes of eligibility. These attributes focus on the need to develop a user friendly, fair and transparent process that is well accepted by the community.

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Working Group Updates

Funding

The AEF has identified a set of desirable attributes for funding priority. These include ensuring a person-centred approach and equitable distribution of resources through a justifiable and transparent process.

The AEF has provided advice on the future funding plan being developed by Disability ACT in consultation with ACT Treasury. The plan looks at the demographic information together with information on the current demand from the registry. The funding plan aims to provide the government with sufficient information to assist them to plan for future funding for disability.

As a result of the AEF's advice Disability ACT has applied:

- the principles and attributes of a funding framework when allocating funds in the 2004–2005 Disability Support Funding round
- the statement of attributes for priority in relation to determining individual priority for funding in the 2004–05 year
- the allocation of funds and the process for determining priority to develop the 2004–2005 Disability Support Funding Round and funding for the LAC process; and
- criteria that should be utilised to inform decisions on the allocation of funds.

Future Directions Update

In the last newsletter, we interviewed Pam Jenkins from Disability ACT for an overview of the implementation process for *Future Directions*. In this edition, we will be looking at the implementation process in greater detail.

The Future Directions Strategic Oversight Group will consist of eight members. This will be made up of:

- two ex-officio members (Lois Ford, and a Disability ACT staff member)
- three government members
- three community members.

The oversight group will be responsible for overseeing the implementation of *Future Directions*, and will be responsible for the priorities and actions specified.

This group will report to Sandra Lambert, chief executive of Disability, Housing and Community Services.

One of the roles of the oversight group is to evaluate and monitor the implementation of *Future Directions*.

There will be four reference groups which align with the strategic directions. These are:

Strategy 1: promoting an inclusive society

Strategy 2: strengthening the capacity of people with disabilities to maximise control over their lives.

Strategy 3: improving planning and the use of available funding; and

Strategy 4: developing a sustainable service delivery sector.

Reference groups will report to the executive director of Disability ACT (Lois Ford), but will also have the task of managing

projects underneath each of the strategies. Reference groups can appoint people on project teams, commission projects, ensure timeframes are met, and ensure that everyone knows what's going on.

Members of reference groups will be appointed at the same time as members of the Strategic Oversight group. It is expected that there would be approximately six people on each reference group—with a minimum of 50 per cent of the members being from the community. Prospective members will be able to indicate their preference for which group they would most like to be involved with.

There will be a range of strategies for determining actions and priorities. Disability ACT is committed to going out on an annual basis to consult with the community on actions and priorities.

Unfinished business of working groups may continue under new structure.

Four focus groups were held in April. These were attended by a range of stakeholders, mostly from peak bodies or service providers. Through these focus groups, the proposed new structure was endorsed. However, a number of suggestions for changes came from these consultations. One of the issues that were discussed was the need for excellent communication to ensure that the new structure worked. As a result of this suggestion, a communication protocol is being included in the structure for implementing future directions.

Disability Advisory Council:

Notes from the Chair

This is the second year that Council has put together a major budget submission seeking gains for the ACT community. The submission focused on funding for several critical areas of need, extensions to existing programs and identifying important areas for future funding.

Again, the council has seen some aspects of its agenda reflected in the ACT Budget.

For example, funding of \$3.292 million over four years to provide critical support to people with a disability who have been assessed as having high support needs; community support services for youth and young adults; support for children with high and complex needs (including autism); initiatives in the area of education, and transport and access.

The theme of this issue of *Community Partners* is inclusion. The council recently had the opportunity to address the Community Inclusion Board. On that point, I congratulate fellow council member and deputy chair—Margaret Spalding—who was recently appointed to the board.

The Board was especially keen to hear about the council's work in areas that align to inclusion, especially young people with disabilities. Board members were

also interested to hear of our work on changing community attitudes—particularly the research commissioned by the council presented in the 'Snapshot of Community Attitudes on Disability in the ACT'

I am delighted to report that this work is now moving towards the next stage of testing practical ideas for young people in schools—working with curriculum developers, teachers and principals.

An exciting development here is the growing interest in progressing national approaches to work on community attitudes. This was the subject of some early discussions between state and territory disability advisory bodies around Australia.

We are currently working to develop a national framework that will set out some options for conducting national work to be considered at a meeting of the national bodies later this month.

A key finding from the current research is that attitudes about the employment of people with disabilities need continuing effort. It was pleasing to see the ACT Government's recent commitment here—announcing that for 2006—half of its graduate intake program will comprise people with disabilities.

This was one idea that resulted in part from the council's contributions to a reference group that is looking at ways that employment opportunities in the ACT Public Sector can be enhanced.

Council is providing valuable input to a government and community reference group that is looking at improving the service offered by wheelchair accessible taxis—an issue that is close to the hearts of a many people in the disability community.

The steering committee has invited public submissions and will also be talking directly to various stakeholders including Canberra Cabs.

As part of the consultation process, the council agreed to host a specific consultation opportunity for people with disability, families and carers. This happened in June and was well attended.

On a related issue, readers would be aware of a number of 'welfare to work' initiatives announced by the Australian Government in its recent budget. Council is keen to ensure that the outcomes for Canberra people with disabilities are positive and we have sought a briefing from the Australian Government Department responsible for the changes.

We have also taken an interest in recent work to develop better pathways for young people leaving school, as they make the transition into employment. Early work being done through a joint project between the Australian Government Department of Family and Community Services and the ACT Government is very encouraging.

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Alongside post-school placements in training or employment, it is also important that our community look at ways to support young people with disabilities to make successful transitions to independence.

One key to achieving full inclusion for people with disabilities will be found in looking across the life course—and ensuring young people with disabilities have strong opportunities to develop and grow to full human potential.

The current situation is that there are few options, and young people with disabilities are among those most likely to fall through the cracks with failed transitions through schools, from home to community and then across the life course.

In talking about broad social problems, there is often much discussion about preventative approaches and capacity building. The post-school/transitions to independence is where this notion could be implemented. There is a need to foster robust social networks in the lives of children and young people with a disability.

Whether these networks are with other young people with—or without—disabilities, is probably less important than their depth and quality. Real inclusion is about more than integration. It's about including people in quality, robust networks that provide support through transitions.

We need to get young people with disabilities connected with age appropriate friends and adult mentors as well as active in sport and recreation, youth development and in community activities like

youth arts, youth leadership programs and volunteering.

Doing better for young people—in this and other areas—will surely be the test by which future generations judge whether we achieved real inclusion for all people with disabilities.

This is one of the reasons that I am very pleased to be a project mentor for the PWD Dramatic Realisations Theatre Co. project. The idea of Dramatic Realisations is to be an inclusive theatre company, a company that includes people with a disability and people without disability together in mainstream theatre. Read more about this terrific initiative on page 5.

Details of the first production are under wraps and its early days. But I can say, it will involve lots of young people, provide a new telling of a magical and well-loved story. You will love it!

Positions on the Disability Advisory Council were advertised during May 2005 and several members will not be seeking reappointment. I would like to thank these people for their strong work on the council since 2003.

I wish those who have applied for the council the best of luck. In the meantime I would encourage people with disabilities and families to continue to keep in touch with the varied work of the council and to provide us with feedback via our web page at www.dhcs.act.gov.au/DisabilityACT/AdvisoryCouncil/



Craig Wallace
Chair
ACT Disability
Advisory Council

Behind the scenes Individual

Community Partners brings you part two of 'Behind the Scenes at Disability ACT', this time profiling the Supported Accommodation area of Individual Support Services.

Individual Support Services (ISS) is the operational support arm of Disability ACT and encompasses many areas of support and assistance to clients, families and the ACT Community.

ISS is made up of:

- Supported Accommodation
- Respite Care, a centre-based respite service for children, youth and adults with a disability
- the Achieving Competencies through Experience (aCe) program, a recreational and skill development program for adults
- Community Linking and Needs Assessment Services (CLANAS), that supports and works with individuals and families.

We'll be introducing you to the team at Supported Accommodation. This service provides support to people with disabilities. The support includes assistance with the essential activities of daily living as well as facilitating community participation.

As you can imagine, this requires an extremely sound organisational structure as well as the commitment, skill and dedication of a very large number of people. It means our people on the ground who work in the group houses, network coordinators, managers and senior manager and the staff of the Scheduling Office.

of Support Services

Each home fits within a specific network of houses managed by the network coordinators. They in turn, report to the managers and senior manager of Accommodation Support.

On the people side, senior manager Wendy Dek is responsible for all staff and clients of Accommodation Support.

Assisting Wendy are Sue Nicol and Pam Emery, along with the administration support team of Richard Bourne and Philip Godwin—and the Network Coordinators—Frances McGrane, Leonie Motbey, Michelle Bamford, Paul Norris, Brian Myers, Leibi Harris, Fran Millington, Pieta Holmes, Ben White, Heather McKeon and Andrew Burgess. This group supervises the many support workers who take care of our clients each and every day.

Unfortunately, space does not permit a formal introduction to all our support workers—but these team members play a key part in delivering services to people with disabilities.

The Supported Accommodation team's commitment is to work towards achieving a common purpose and vision. That vision is that 'All people with disabilities achieve what they want to achieve, live how they want to live, and are valued as full and equal members of the ACT community.'

In the next issue we will profile CLANAS—the Community Linking and Needs Assessment Team.

Beth Elliott

Pam Emery, Louise Cooper-Finch, Wendy Dek and Ros Hayes.



Review of the *Disability Services Act*

**The ACT Government
Department of
Disability Housing
and Community
Services has received
expressions of interest
from people who
wish to contribute
to a project group
to review the ACT
Disability Services
Act 1991.**

The project group will include people who:

- are passionate about the rights of people with disabilities
- want to communicate with the community about these rights
- are interested in the legislation that impacts on the lives of people with disability
- like working in a project environment or wish to improve project skills.

Members will participate in:

- project planning
- the production of a discussion paper
- consultation with people with disabilities, their

families, friends and carers and disability sector

- the production of recommendations about the *Disability Services Act 1991 (ACT)* to the ACT Minister for Disability, Housing and Community Services.

The Department of Disability Housing and Community Services Community Reimbursement Policy applies to individual community members.

It is anticipated that participants would attend monthly meetings for 12 months.

For further information about the review, please contact Lois Ford by phone, email or mail and explain your background and interest in the project.

Phone: 62071475
Email: Lois.Ford@act.gov.au

Government Co-Chair
Legislation Reform
Working Group
Disability ACT
GPO Box 158
Canberra ACT 2601

All hands on deck

Disability ACT's Michelle Gilet writes about the latest exhibition developed by Hands On Studio.

"All hands on deck" was the call made to the students of Hands On Studio's printmaking classes when they were asked to collaborate on two large group works for an exhibition in June.

The exhibition, at the Tuggeranong Arts Centre was called "When the dog bites ..." from a line in *The Sound of Music*.

The artists worked with the idea of 'my favourite things' in order to complete an individual work and the two major group pieces. Each artist thought of their own favourite things in life and after sketching ideas on paper, they were able to fully realise them with paint on canvas.

The result was an exhibition of vibrant and expressive works that captured the often small and comforting things in life that bring joy and happiness.

Stephen Corsini and his artwork



Martin Lyall and his artwork

Subjects included, flowers, basketball, autumn leaves, special people, music and monkeys. I had the privilege of working with some of the artists on three occasions and was interested to see their individual pieces evolve from week to week.

During my time at the studio I had a chance to experience the working philosophy at Hands On Studio—art taken seriously in a relaxed and social environment.

I found that Hands On Studio classes not only provide an opportunity for the artists to work on exhibition pieces, but also to socialise while doing something they enjoy.

Rigorous coaching on techniques from the professional teaching staff comes a definite second to the mid afternoon tea break—it's a chance for everyone to catch up and share the day's work.

The success of the studio, which can be measured by both the enjoyment of the artists as they work—and the number of successful exhibitions held each year—would not have been possible without the dedication of the studio's coordinator, Carolyn Jander.

Carolyn clearly recognises the value of art as expression and its particular importance for people who may not always express themselves in conventional ways.

The next project is a travelling exhibition of work from the studio. This will not only allow more of the public to view a collection of interesting and energetic work but also bring greater exposure to the artists and philosophy underpinning Hands On Studio.

Contact Carolyn Jander at the Studio on 6232 7187.

Low cost Internet service launched

Thousands of Canberra's frail aged, veterans and people with disabilities will have access to a new national low cost Internet service thanks to a partnership arrangement negotiated by the ACT volunteer group Technical Aid to the Disabled (TADACT).

TADAustConnect was jointly launched in May 2005 by John Hargreaves, ACT Minister for Disability, Housing and Community

Services and Gary Humphries, ACT Liberal Senator.

The partnership, between TADACT and internet service provider ISPOne, will enable frail aged and disabled Australians to go online at the cost of only \$5.50 a month. Equivalent Internet services can cost up to \$40 a month.

John O'Neill, executive director of Technical Aid to the Disabled in the ACT said that access to the internet would enable them to contact banks and government services, explore education and job opportunities, communicate common concerns, join support groups or learn more about their disabilities.

"Normally the cost of such access is beyond the reach of many of the disabled, the frail aged and their carers.

"However, this agreement will provide a wonderful new range of opportunities for people to improve their quality of life.

"This program will operate nationally and I am pleased that local politicians have seen the benefits it poses for the ACT," he said.

You can register for this service online at www.tadaustconnect.org.au or call TADACT on 6287 4290 for a registration form.

Innovation fund update

The Innovation Fund was established to encourage families, individuals and organisations to explore initiatives and that would raise the visibility, participation and presence of people with a disability in the ACT.

In 2004 six projects were funded through a community governed process. A total of 14 projects have been funded to date including the development of post-school transition training materials; a mentoring program to assist people

develop personal projects; a replica hotel room within a high school to develop hospitality skills; and integrated belly dance and exercise programs.

Advertising of the program has been largely targeted towards the disability community and has generated projects that have mainly focused on best practice initiatives that have been tested elsewhere.

The 2005-06 program will place a high priority on encouraging cutting edge innovation and will target the business community—in particular those business that have had limited or no exposure to disability.

A major event is planned for later this year for business leaders to meet and work with people of different abilities to develop some innovative and sustainable projects.

This 'think-tank' approach will help business take on a greater community leadership role, and in the longer term, generate for Disability ACT a network of business partners.

For more information contact Gerry McKeon on 6205 0749.

For your **diary**

The Australasian Society for the Study of Intellectual Disability (NSW & ACT) Inc

2005 Regional Conference on Sexual Health, Behaviour Intervention, Forensic, Support Worker Issues 28—29 July

UCU Conference Centre,
University of Canberra
Building 1 Kirinari Street
University of Canberra

**Keynote address from
Dr Lilah Pengra, Dr Keith McVilly and
Dr David McConnell.**

Speakers include: Jennifer Avery, TAFE NSW, Associate Professor Katherine Brown (Director of Illawarra Sexual Health Service) John Brown (Sydney University) Linda Goddard and Tony Tinlin (Charles Sturt University), Trish Wetton (Foresight Foundation).

Cost for two days is \$240 (\$110 students/families/people with a disability).
For more information contact 6023 1800 or email ttinlin@bigpond.net.au

Dual Diagnosis Seminar

Management of Clients with a Physical/Intellectual Disability and Psychiatric Disorder

Thursday August 4, 2005.

Regional Fire Services Training Centre
Cnr Ellerton Drive & Bungendore Rd
Queanbeyan

9.00 am – 4.30 pm

Speakers: Bob Tsapilis (Consultant Psychologist, Disability Services) Bruce Todd (Training Consultant, Disability & Human Services)

Cost: \$143 Members
\$176 Non-Members

For more information, or to register contact Kevin Marron 9789-1348 kevinm@interchangensw.com.au

10th Awakening Festival

15–23 October 2005 Horsham Victoria

This festival is a feast of visual and performing arts, community fringe events, outdoor activities and a showcase for special projects. Visit <http://awakenings.horsham.net.au> for more information.

Saturday 3 December 2005 is

I-Day

Calling all performers

The UN International Day of People With a DisAbility will be celebrated with the Canberra DisAbility Performing Arts Festival.

PWD ACT, Arts and Recreation Training ACT and Disability, Housing and Community Services ACT will again be partners in this event.

To participate in the program contact Megan Kelly at PWD ACT on 02 6290 1984

Accessibility

The ACT Government is committed to making its information, services, events and venues, accessible to as many people as possible.

If you have difficulty reading a standard printed document and would like to receive this publication in an **alternative format**—such as large print or audio—please telephone **(02) 6205 0619**.

If English is not your first language and you require the **translating and interpreting service**—please telephone **131 450**.

If you are deaf or hearing impaired and require the **TTY typewriter service**—please telephone **(02) 6205 0888**.

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