



A peak consumer voice for people with disabilities in Canberra

PWD Bulletin #22

DECEMBER 2007

MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

On 26th November at the Concluding Summit of the Consultation into Disability Services in the ACT, service providers workshopped the framework document of the Review. Service Providers agreed to work more co-operatively to provide services for people with disabilities. A copy of the paper on the Consultation is available. One of the participants with a disability asked the convenor a most pertinent question - "Why are the services not getting better?"

At the Advocacy Groups Combined meeting on 22nd November it became apparent that there is little opportunity in the ACT for people to access individual advocacy. PWD ACT is hoping to support Advocacy for Inclusion to acquire funding for the training of people with disabilities with a self advocacy kit that they have developed.

Karin Mac Donald announced a new information service for people with disabilities called CANaccess that has been developed by Disability ACT and the Canberra Citizen's Advice Bureau. It is available on the Internet. www.canaccess.org.au PWD ACT will monitor this service for its accessibility, effectiveness and ability to support people with disabilities. All comments are welcome.

Linda Crebbin, the ACT Disability Commissioner stressed the importance of the UN convention to every aspect of a person with a disability's life. At the workshop on 29th November she explained to all those present the relevance of the Convention to people of Canberra. A simplified version of the Convention for children is available.

A copy of the program from the Commonwealth Government's FaCSIa's Disability Awards is available. Mignonne and I attended the evening at the National Museum of Australia on Monday 3rd December. Most people who gained Awards were not activists.

Margo Hodge

President

'GETTING INTO THE ARTS' FILM & THEATRE WORKSHOPS FOR PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES

Flyers advertising PWD ACT's free 'Getting Into The Arts' film & theatre workshops for people with disabilities have been emailed far and wide. Places are filling up fast so don't delay in booking into the workshops of your choice. You can take part in as many as you like, dependent on vacancies. There is a limit of ten people per class. It's first in, first served.

Contact pwdact@shout.org.au or ring 6290 1984 to book. Workshops include:

- ‘What Makes Good Theatre? A Critical Approach to Viewing Theatre.’ (4th February 2008)
PLACES STILL AVAILABLE
- ‘Improvisation for People With Disabilities’ (5th & 6th February 2008) *FULLY BOOKED*
- ‘Acting in the Theatre’ (7th, 14th & 21st February 2008) *FULLY BOOKED*
- ‘Performing Stand-Up Comedy’ (11th February 2008) *FULLY BOOKED*
- ‘Directing & Acting for the Camera’ (12th, 13th & 19th February 2008) *FULLY BOOKED*
- ‘Directing for the Stage – working on short scenes (18th February 2008)
PLACES STILL AVAILABLE
- ‘Singing Workshop – “The Musicals” (20th February 2008) *FULLY BOOKED*

PWD ACT ACTIVITIES OVER THE PAST MONTH

- ❖ 4/12 PWD ACT held an International Day of Disability Celebration at the Pearce Community Centre
- ❖ 10/12 PWD ACT’s Executive Officer, Kylie Mahar went to the Human Rights Community Forum at the Legislative Assembly to hear Craig Wallace speak
- ❖ 11/12 PWD ACT’s President, Margo Hodge, Treasurer, Alison Chinn and Executive Officer, Kylie Mahar met with Leanne Power and James Harmer from Disability ACT to discuss our new funding contract
- ❖ 11/12 PWD ACT met with Dr Deb Foskey from the ACT Greens to discuss issues for people with Disabilities in the ACT
- ❖ 11/12 PWD ACT’s Executive Officer, Kylie Mahar, went to the launch of SHOUT’s new large flat screen TV for the meeting room, donated by Kaz Technologies
- ❖ 12/12 PWD ACT’s President, Margo Hodge, Vice President, Ian Trehwella and Ian Goodacre, Advocate from Advocacy For Inclusion, met with ACT Minister for Transport John Hargreaves to discuss Wheelchair Accessible Taxis

UPCOMING PWD ACT ACTIVITIES

- ❖ PWD ACT will be closed from Monday 24th December until Thursday 3rd January 2008 when normal hours of Mondays, Tuesdays, Thursdays and Fridays 9am-2pm will recommence.

DEATH OF PWD ACT MEMBER

The Board of PWD ACT was saddened to hear of the recent death of member Diana Palmer. We extend condolences to her family and friends.

PWD ACT MEMBER FORUM

We are introducing a new section to the PWD ACT newsletter. We're giving members the opportunity to talk about their particular disability and the effect it has on their lives.

Please send in your stories.

First cab off the rank is **Ann** who describes the disabling effects of **Chemical Sensitivities**.

[Discussions about] disability seems to be limited to the needs of people in wheelchairs etc. but not included in the discussions are children and adults who are chemically damaged and have become sensitive to chemicals. They need a very clean environment not polluted with chemicals worn by people and out gassing from furniture, cleaning products and building materials. People don't realize the difficulties that chemical sensitivities cause and the disruption to life.

I wear a mask when on planes, but as long as I am careful to avoid the triggers can function. I have good and bad days. I do miss not being able to go to Archives and the Library to research. I had to have an X-Ray yesterday and just rushed in and out. I feel for the people working there as it's a new building and I certainly could smell formaldehyde. One lass working in the building is expecting and that is a worry.

I have permanent brain damage from the chemical exposures and damage to my central nervous system. Just being near areas that have been sprayed with chemicals also causes major problems. During one treatment in Sydney (chelation to remove heavy metals) I found it difficult to walk after leaving. Subsequently I had three weeks of severe joint pain that made it difficult for me to walk. I found out later that three weeks before treatment the owners of the clinic had the cavity walls sprayed with chemicals to prevent termites. Over a year later I still cannot stay in that room for any length of time.

I had full neuropsychic tests to determine the extent of brain damage. I have patchy feelings in my legs and arms caused by central nervous system damage. The chronic fatigue was very bad but now I manage it and get enough rest. The hard part is that I used to train at the gym at least four times a week and before that used to swim a mile every day. I had to learn to rest, but the weight gain too was disturbing. I put on 20 kilos over the period of a few months as the body stores the toxins in the fat when it can no longer expel it. I had an absurd thing happen when I went to the gym and did aerobics. Instead of losing weight I gained it, probably caused by deodorants worn by others - deodorants and perfumes contain benzene and toluene plus.

I'm lucky I can use electricity and as long as I limit my time at the computer I can manage that too. Some people that I know have had to move into the country into buildings without electricity etc. One lady cannot tolerate light and now lives in a half world without books, radio etc. She has a husband who has supported her in so many ways.

One of the fears that many of us have is that we may need to go into hospital. The chemicals used in these buildings can kill us and to top 'things off' is that we do not

PO Box 717 Mawson ACT 2607
Ph: 02 6290 1984 Mob: 0437 877 356 Fax: 02 6286 4475
Email: pwdact@shout.org.au Web: www.pwdact.org.au

look as though we have health problems and there are many who think that we are 'putting it on'.

I'm happy to speak to anyone who wants information.

NEW ZEALAND WINS INTERNATIONAL DISABILITY AWARD

New Zealand has been awarded a prestigious international award recognising their contribution to the rights of disabled people. The Franklin Delano Roosevelt International Disability Award was received for the work done by the government and NGOs in developing a national disability strategy. Cabinet Minister Lianne Dalziel says their leading role in negotiating a UN convention on the rights of disabled people was also a factor. She says it is her understanding that it is the first time the award decision has been made without any dispute over who the recipient should be, which speaks volumes for the efforts New Zealand has made.

MEMBERSHIP PRICES REDUCED

PWD ACT is no longer in the GST system, so we don't need to charge GST on memberships anymore, resulting in the lowering of membership prices.

- An Individual disability membership will now be **\$5**
- An Associate (non-disability) membership will now be **\$10**

- Organisational Membership (consumer disability organisation) **\$10**
- Organisational Membership (Associate) **\$20**

Now there is no excuse for those of you who haven't renewed your membership for 2007-2008!

PWD ACT BULLETIN

PWD ACT's Bulletin has been introduced as an easily read, compact and timely way of keeping members and allies informed about advocacy work, issues and coming events.

Your views – we're listening!

We strongly encourage people with disabilities to send feedback on systemic advocacy issues directly to us.

Call (02) 6290 1984 or email the office pwdact@shout.org.au

Please send us an email if you would like to receive your PWD ACT Bulletin electronically, as this will save our environment.