



**People With
Disabilities**

ACT Inc

'OUT & ABOUT WITH ABILITY'

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**MERRY CHRISTMAS AND
HAPPY NEW YEAR**



**THE PWD ACT OFFICE IS CLOSED FROM
23 DECEMBER & REOPENS 4 JANUARY**

PRESIDENT'S REPORT FOR DECEMBER

It's been a busy month for People With Disabilities ACT in December. We hosted a free BBQ to celebrate International Day of People With Disabilities which was a huge success. I'd like to thank the Rotary Club of Tuggeranong for bringing their BBQ trailer along for their many volunteers to cook sausages for our members' lunch. Maida and Kylie deserve thanks for organising the day. Also thank you to Robert Altamore for his informative and insightful speech which really touched on the reason for the existence of I Day. We all enjoyed hearing about the setting up of Radio For the Print Handicapped in Wagga Wagga. It gave us a new appreciation for the work that Robert as President, and the rest of the RPH volunteers do. Bellyup Belly Dancers did a great job entertaining the crowd.

It was a highlight of 2009 for PWD ACT to finally launch our report 'Making Diversity Work' at the Legislative Assembly on the 10th December. We were very glad to see Bill Shorten there on the day and enjoyed his speech which made many good points about employment and people with disabilities. Thanks to Flair Gourmet for the outstanding food and service they provided at the launch.

We were pleased that the Canberra Times acknowledged the launch of our report with an article that followed from an interview they conducted with me about 'Making Diversity Work' and the employment of people with disabilities. If anyone missed out on reading the article, please contact the PWD ACT office to request a scanned copy to be emailed to you or if you would like to see it reproduced in the next newsletter.

PWD ACT looks forward to another exciting year in 2010 and many new challenges and triumphs. Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year to all of our members and supporters.

Justin Le Couteur
President



LAUNCH OF 'MAKING DIVERSITY WORK' – A STUDY OF THE EMPLOYMENT OF PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES IN THE ACT PUBLIC SERVICE



Figure 1 the Hon. Bill Shorten MP, Parliamentary Secretary for Disability and Children's Services, launching PWD ACT's report 'Making Diversity Work'

On Thursday 10 December the Hon. Bill Shorten MP, Parliamentary Secretary for Disability and Children's Services officially launched PWD ACT's report 'Making Diversity Work' – a study of employment of people with disabilities in the ACT Public Service. It is a report with dual objectives. Its first purpose is to act as a resource tool for people with disabilities seeking employment; to help them find job search agencies; to gather the resources; to get assistive equipment to help them find work; to get the job support to keep that employment position and to know how to handle negative attitudes and other challenges which might prevent them from having a positive experience in the workplace. The second purpose is to act as a tool to stimulate discussion between the ACT Government and Disability People's Organisations to reinvigorate and re-focus the resolve to improve the level of employment of people with disabilities in the ACT Public Service. In addition it is a copiously referenced report and serves as a rich source of information for researchers into the employment of people with disabilities.

The stimulus for undertaking the study came when a number of highly qualified graduates with disabilities became frustrated by lack of support in the ACT Public Service, lack of understanding by fellow workers, Human Resources personnel, managers and supervisors and left positions that they had travelled interstate to take up. A major part of the background material was obtained from in-depth interviews with current and former ACTPS employees with disabilities.

PWD ACT was honoured that the Hon. Bill Shorten MP, accepted our invitation to officially launch the report. This is in keeping with the focus at a Federal level to improve all aspects of the lives of people with disabilities across Australia. The 2009 legislative changes which strengthen the Disability Discrimination Act (1992); changes to procurement which will enable people in Disability Employment Services to get a greater number of Australian Government departmental contracts; and changes to the operation of the Disability Employment Network, are all facets of an inclusion agenda which will lead to better life outcomes for all Australians with disabilities.

The report finds that the ACT Government has the right legislation and policies in place. If the outlined actions contained therein were followed, the employment levels of people with disabilities in the ACTPS would improve markedly. The study found that five years ago, the ACT Government started a targeted campaign to improve levels of employment of public servants with disabilities. However, the impetus has been lost, focus is no longer there, and thus employment levels are languishing.

Hopefully the launch of 'Making Diversity Work' will be the impetus for renewed focus, and better outcomes for people with disabilities.

(parts of this text are taken from the Women With Disabilities ACT media release written by Sue Salthouse, co-author of 'Making Diversity Work')

WOULD YOU LIKE A COPY OF MAKING DIVERSITY WORK – A STUDY OF EMPLOYMENT OF PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES IN THE ACT PUBLIC SERVICE?

Please email pwdact@shout.org.au or ring PWD ACT on 6286 4223 if you would like a copy of the report. Let us know if you would prefer an E-copy or hard copy of the book.

FREE BBQ TO CELEBRATE INTERNATIONAL DAY OF DISABILITY

On the 3rd December PWD ACT held a free BBQ to celebrate I Day. We had a good crowd of people with disabilities attend for the free sausage sizzle supplied by Tuggeranong Rotary Club and a talk by Robert Altamore, President of Radio for the Print Handicapped, who spoke about the launch of RPH in Wagga Wagga. The day was capped off by a belly dancing performance by Bellyup Bellydancing who taught some techniques to those who were interested. Thank you to everyone who attended.



AUSTRALIAN PENSIONS HAVE CHANGED

Significant changes have been made to Australian pensions, as part of the Australian Government's Secure and Sustainable Pension Reform. The changes came into effect on 20 September 2009

These changes may apply to the Age Pension, Disability Support Pension, Wife Pension, Widow B Pension, Carer Payment, Service Pension or Income Support Supplement.

The changes include:

- An increase in the maximum pension rate of \$65.00 a fortnight for singles and \$20.30 per fortnight combined for couples, on top of indexation
- The introduction of the Pension Supplement which combines the GST Supplement, Pharmaceutical Allowance, Utilities Allowance and internet rate of Telephone Allowance into the new Pension Supplement and an additional increase, which will be paid fortnightly
- New indexation arrangements for the base pension to better reflect changes in pensioners' living cost
- Changes to the income test, which may affect how the rate of your pension payment is determined. Existing pensioners at 19 September 2009 did not receive a payment reduction because of changes to the income test. Centrelink will assess all current pensioners under both the old income test rules and the new rules
- Enhancements to Advance Payment for pensioners from 1 July 2010 with an increase in the amount of pension that can be advanced and multiple advances made each year
- An annual Carer Supplement for Carer Payment and Carer Allowance recipients has also been introduced. The next annual payment will be made to eligible

recipients from July 2010. Carer Allowance recipients will also receive an additional supplement for each eligible person in their care

For more information about the pension reforms, please visit www.australia.gov.au/pensions

Information from ACTCOSS on the HACCDSnet@communitylists.org.au

PAT ON THE BACK

A pat on the back to the teams of cyclists, altogether numbering about 200, who travelled from Canberra to Kosciusko and back, on the weekend of 28 November -1 December. It was a charity ride, raising some \$440,000 for people with disabilities in Hartley Life Care. The event passed with little fanfare - only a thin patter of applause at certain meal stops. So we'd like to congratulate everyone who participated including our former board member Ross Morton who rode in the "Tangerine Dream" Team, as a "stoker" - i.e. riding at the back of a tandem.

INVITATION TO A FOCUS GROUP SEEKING THE VIEWS OF WOMEN WITH A DISABILITY/CHRONIC HEALTH CONDITION

The Women's Centre for Health Matters is conducting research to gather information about how and where ACT women seek out information about their health and wellbeing. The WCHM wishes to extend an invitation to women with a disability or chronic health condition to participate in a focus group to be held on **13 January** to share their thoughts and experiences about accessing relevant health and well-being information in the ACT, the needs and barriers and any ideas for improving access to such information. This will involve a discussion with other women for 2-3 hours, with a series of questions about your views and experience. Your individual comments and responses will be confidential, but the overall findings will be used in a final report by WCHM which will be used to influence policy and service delivery in the ACT.

A light lunch will be provided and you will receive a gift voucher in recognition of the costs involved in attending the forum.

Location: Large Meeting Room, Building 1, Pearce Community Centre, Collett Place, Pearce

Contact: Angela Carnovale at WCHM on 6290 2166 if you would like to be involved

MAKING A COMPLAINT TO THE ACT HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION

Your Complaint must be submitted in writing in order for the Commissioner to act on it. It is not essential that you use the complaint form, but it is recommended, the form will help you to provide the information they need. Or, you can visit the Human Rights and Discrimination section of the website, and click on 'How to Make a Complaint'

www.hrc.act.gov.au

human.rights@act.gov.au

Postal Address: GPO Box 158 Canberra ACT 2601

WHEELCHAIR ACCESSIBLE TAXIS COMPLAINT LINE, THROUGH CANBERRA CONNECT

PHONE: 13 22 81

To make a complaint, please phone Canberra Connect on 13 22 81 (you can also use TTY 6207 0494 or the National Relay Service 133 677, or the Translating Interpreter Service 13 14 50). The Canberra Connect operators now have a WATs complaint form and will collect relevant information from you. Canberra Connect will put together all the statistics and will make a monthly report to Kerry Bell, the Manager of Public Transport Regulation at TAMS.

They will also give you the direct complaints numbers for each Taxi network so you can also make your complaint direct to the taxi service if you wish to do this as well. Don't JUST do this, or the statistics will not get back to TAMS. TAMS has begun to impose fines where appropriate as well.

PWD ACT ACTIVITIES OVER THE PAST MONTH

- 3/12 - PWD ACT hosted a free BBQ to celebrate International Day of People With Disability
- 5/12/09 - an article featuring PWD ACT President Justin Le Couteur talking about the launch of the 'Making Diversity Work' study into employment of people with disabilities in the ACT Public Service was published in the Saturday Canberra Times

- 9/12 – PWD ACT Executive Officer, Kylie Mahar, pre-recorded a radio interview with 2CC Capital Radio about 'Making Diversity Work'
- 10/12 – the Hon. Bill Shorten MP officially launched 'Making Diversity Work' at the ACT Legislative Assembly
- 11/12 – EO, Kylie Mahar, attended a meeting of Advocacy Groups Combined with Christina Ryan of Advocacy For Inclusion and Sue Salthouse of Women With Disabilities ACT

PWD ACT SOCIAL GROUP

Season's Greetings to all those associated with PWD ACT and all the members of the PWD ACT Social Outings and Events group. It's the wonderful time of the year to be happy, to socialise with family and friends and of course....to be merry!

My time as facilitator of the PWD ACT Social Group has been both fun and satisfying. Organising activities and events, in different areas of Canberra and providing a variety of interesting and fun outings has sometimes been challenging but also rewarding. Because I'm planning to do some study and personal growth and development courses etc next year, I will need to cease my role as the facilitator of the PWD ACT outings and events group. I apologise about this and any disappointment it may cause any of the members, but I hope you understand.

If there is anyone who particularly enjoyed the monthly outings and events and would like the PWD ACT Social Outings and Events Group to continue, you may like to take on the role as the new facilitator/s.

Please contact Kylie or Maida at the PWD ACT Office on 6286 4223 if you are interested.

It's been lovely knowing those associated with the group and once again wishing you all a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

Sarah Ferguson.

UPCOMING ACTIVITIES AND COMMUNITY EVENTS

Something for everyone!

**FREE ACTIVITY FOR ADULTS WITH DISABILITIES AT THE
NATIONAL MUSEUM OF AUSTRALIA**

Guided tour of the exhibition *Water: H2O=Life* followed by a music workshop with Music For Everyone
No previous musical experience necessary. Participants may be accompanied by a carer if needed.

Date: Thursday 21 January 2010
Time: 1pm-2:30pm (12:45pm arrival for 1pm start)
Venue: National Museum of Australia: Lawson Crescent, Acton Peninsula, Acton
Who: Adults with disabilities
Cost: Free of charge
Bookings Essential, visit www.mfe.org.au and go to Special Events to download your booking form. Places are limited.
Contact: Music For Everyone on 6230 7190 or info@mfe.org.au for all inquiries
(Please note the MFE office is closed from 19/12/09 to 10/1/10)

WOMEN'S FESTIVAL OF WHEELCHAIR BASKETBALL 2010

12 – 14 March 2010
Sydney Academy of Sport, Narrabeen, Sydney

Come and join women and girls from all over Australia to develop your skills in wheelchair basketball. There'll be coaching clinics, all-star game and a round robin competition where all players are divided into equal teams. Players of all skill levels and experience are welcome and able-bodied women are also encouraged to play. Bring yourself or bring a team.

Check out www.wsnsww.org.au for entry details



For more information, please contact:
Lisa Edmonds 0417 445 046 Lisa.edmonds@bigpond.com
Sarah Stewart 0403 938 562 sarstewa@arts.usyd.edu.au

'LIVING A HEALTHY LIFE WITH LONG-TERM CONDITIONS' 2010 COURSE SCHEDULE

Do you have diabetes, asthma, heart disease, arthritis, cancer, back pain, suffer from obesity or any condition lasting longer than 6 months? Does it prevent you from living life as you would like? Cause you stress? Impact on your relationships?

Courses held at Arthritis ACT Weston Creek, Holder, Belconnen Health Centre, Lake Ginninderra College, Phillip Health Centre and Tuggeranong Health Centre.

To register for courses, or discuss course details please phone:

Community Health Intake – 6207 9977 between 8am – 5pm Monday - Friday

ELECTRIC WHEELCHAIR SPORTS

REGULAR FIXTURES

Wheelers meet fortnightly on Saturday mornings during school terms to play soccer, rugby and hockey.

Everyone who uses an electric wheelchair is welcome to come along and play.

Regular fixtures are fun for everyone:

They provide beginners with a wonderful opportunity to learn the skills and rules of the games and give seasoned players an opportunity to hone their skills. Experienced players help younger players to develop. Come and join in the fun

When: Fortnightly on Saturday mornings -during school term

Time: 10.30 am - 12.00

Where: Lake Ginninderra College Gymnasium

For more details about the ACT Wheelers please contact any of the following:

Coach - Terry Gallagher

Mobile: 0417 218 654

**PWD ACT Memberships are still FREE for people with disabilities!
Please contact us if you would like to be a member.**

FREE PWD ACT MEMBERSHIP DEFINITION OF DISABILITY

PWD ACT uses the Disability Discrimination Act definition of disability, this broad definition includes:

- Physical
- Intellectual

- Psychiatric
- Sensory
- Neurological, and
- Learning disabilities, as well as
- Physical disfigurement, and
- The presence in the body of disease-causing organisms.

This covers a disability which people:

- Have now,
- Had in the past (for example: a past episode of mental illness),
- May have in the future (eg: a family history of a disability which a person may also develop).

USEFUL WEB LINKS

www.dhcs.act.gov.au/disability_act/serviceswww.concessions.act.gov.au/

www.communitiesonline.org.au/index.php

www.accesscity.org.au

www.canaccess.org.au

Ausport.gov.au/disability

www.specialolympicsact.org.au/

www.actwheelers.org.au

www.mpowerdome.com.au

Please support the organisational members who support PWD ACT

PWD ACT'S Latest Organisational Member

ORGANISATIONAL MEMBERS

Organisational Name	Address	Email Address	Phone:
ACT Deafness Resource Centre	PO Box 3239 Weston ACT 2611	actdrc@iimetro.com.au	6287 4395
ACT TPI	PO Box 5792 Turner ACT 2606	secretary@acttpi.org	6286 3593 / 6291 9185
ACT Down Syndrome Ass. Inc	PO Box 717 Mawson ACT 2607	admindsa@actdsa.asn.au	6290 0656
Advocacy for Inclusion	PO Box 3653 Weston Creek ACT 2611	info@advocacyfoinclusion.org	6286 9422
Belconnen Community Service	26 Chandler St Belconnen ACT 2617	Karen.etheredge@bcsact.com.au	62640200
Brocklebank's Woodcraft	8 Fitzherbert Pl Bruce ACT 2617	hugh_brocklebank@hotmail.com	6251 6369
CHC Affordable Housing	PO Box 6239 O'Connor ACT 2602	chc@chcaffordablehousing.com.au	6248 7716
Community Events Calendar	communityeventscalendar.com.au	communityeventsteam@communityeventscalendar.com.au	62558287
Nationsheart Christian Community	Crn Maclaurin & Eggleston Cres Chifley ACT 2606	.nationsheartc@onnect.org.au	62531672
Nican	PO Box 110 Mitchell ACT 2911	info@nican.com.au	6241 1220
Om Physic	8 Yabtree Pl, Isabella Plains ACT 2905	info@omphysic.com.au	6248 7716
RSI & Overuse Injury Association of the ACT	Griffin Centre, 20 Genge St, Canberra ACT 2601	rsi@cyberone.com.au	6262 5011
Sharing Places INC	PO Box 704 Mawson ACT 2607	admin@sharingplaces.com.au	6290 1964
Stroke Association of ACT	PO Box 220 Deakin West ACT 2600		6269 2636
Tandem	PO Box 3501 Weston Creek ACT 2611	admin@tandem.org.au	6287 2870
YMCA Canberra	Crn Maclaurin & Eggleston Cres Chifley ACT 2606	brett.bowden@ymca.org.au	6281 0124
Arthritis ACT	PO Box 4017 Weston Creek ACT 2611	info@arthritisaact.org.au	6288 4244

PWD ACT CONTACT DETAILS

POSTAL ADDRESS

PO Box 717
Mawson ACT 2607

OFFICE LOCATION

SHOUT
Building 1
Pearce Community Centre
Collett Place
Pearce

Phone: 02 6286 4223

Fax: 02 6286 4223

Email: pwdact@shout.org.au

Website: www.pwdact.org.au

“For people with disabilities,



by people with disabilities.”

PWD ACT NEWSLETTER

PWD ACT's newsletter is an easily read, compact and timely way of keeping members and supporters informed about our advocacy work, issues and coming events. We strongly encourage people with disabilities to send feedback on systemic advocacy issues directly to us on the above contacts. Please send us an email if you would like to receive your PWD ACT newsletter 'Out & About With Ability' electronically, as this will save our environment. This newsletter is provided with the assistance of the ACT Government through Disability ACT.



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department of
disability, housing &
community services