



Western Region
Disability Network

Network News

Newsletter of the Western Region Disability Network

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DISCLAIMER

The information contained in *Network News* may not reflect the opinion of the WRDN or its auspice, nor does the WRDN guarantee the accuracy of the information.

SPEAKERS' BANK

What a lucky person I am! I have been given a job that doesn't seem like work!

My name is Leigh Martin and I am the new Speakers' Bank Coordinator. My role is to work with the 11 trained members of the Bank who are now public speakers. I will help them to maintain their skills and find speaking engagements for them.



*Leigh – Speaker of the Year
2006 and 2007 Australian Champion*

So why doesn't this feel like work for me? Because I am a passionate public speaker too!

I have been a member of POWERtalk International for 10 years and I love nothing more than to be asked to present a speech, a workshop or lead a program for an audience. So to be invited to work with other speakers is just fun for me!

Public speaking has taken me on an amazing journey and taught me skills that I can use at work and in my everyday life. In 2001 I went back to school and studied how to be a marriage and funeral celebrant and have been naming babies, marrying couples and burying people since 2004.

Before coming to work with the Speakers' Bank, I worked for three years for Interchange Western Region helping to run the Host program. Interchange gave me a wonderful chance to meet with families, talk to them about their lives and to try and help them. I made lots of great friends.

I am very proud to say that I am mother to 4 very handsome sons and grandmother to twin grandsons who are nearly two. I live in Brunswick with my husband Ross and our two little dogs.

The members of Speakers' Bank all have a story to tell. It is my job to help them tell that story to as many people as possible. I will be making contact with many organisations to create opportunities for the Speakers to talk.

By telling their stories, the Speakers are teaching the ordinary people of the community what it is like to live with a disability. The more people that understand and accept what having a disability means to someone, the better the community can respond.

The Speakers will speak to groups such as Rotary and Lions; in schools to children of all ages, including young adults studying to work in the disability field; to Church groups; Community Centres and Neighbourhood Houses and to professionals who provide services to disability.

I have planned monthly meetings for the Speakers to come together, practice their skills and share their experiences with each other. It is important that the Speakers' Bank becomes a strong team, but it is also very important that they have fun in what they do.

If you know of an organisation that would like to use a Speaker from our Bank, please call me on 9687 7066 or send me an email to speakersbank@annecto.org.au.

WRDN UPDATE

It's been a very busy time at the WRDN. The staff and the Coordinating Group have been putting in place some of the actions that were outlined in the Strategic Plan.

- **SPEAKERS' BANK** is mentioned several times in the Plan as a way to develop peoples' skills, find more members and also to raise awareness in the community about the WRDN and the needs and contributions of people with disabilities and carers/family members.

As you have read we now have a dedicated Coordinator who will work with the Speakers' Bank participants to build the program. We are very lucky to have such a skilled and passionate person to help the WRDN get the Speakers' Bank going.

Congratulations Leigh on winning the Australian Championship for the 2nd year in a row.

- The **FINANCE SUB-COMMITTEE** has been established. The role of this sub-committee is to look for funding opportunities and to help staff manage the budget, write submissions and talk to people and organisations that might be able to help the WRDN survive and grow. Getting on-going money to support the WRDN and Speakers' Bank is the top priority.
- The **MEMBERSHIP SUB-COMMITTEE** has also met once. This sub-committee will need to do lots of work on increasing and supporting the membership. This includes how to make the WRDN relevant and helpful to people with disabilities, carers and service providers across the North as well as the West of the Region.

This committee will have many different tasks to do. The first task is to look at the database. This database was designed when the Network was quite small and consisted mainly of service providers. We need to see if the database collects all the information needed to make the WRDN as efficient as possible.

Once this task has been finished the sub-committee will look at membership forms, brochures etc.

As you can see the sub-committees need people with lots of different interests and skills. If you would like to help please call the WRDN office.

- The first meeting of the **MOONEE VALLEY CARER SUPPORT GROUP** will be held on Tuesday 18th September 2007 at 10am at the Moonee Valley Council Offices. Please come and/or encourage others to attend. This is a new group and is open to all carers who live in or around Moonee Valley. An agenda is attached.

- Work on the **DHS COMPLAINTS PROJECT** has started. This project is looking at how making a complaint or giving feedback can help organisations to provide better services (improve service quality). The WRDN is working on a 'kit' of resources that will help organisations make sure they are doing everything the new Disability Act says they must.

If you or your service/organisation have any resources you would like to share – please send them to Helen at the WRDN office.

If you or your service/organisation have ideas about what would help you or the people who use your program please let Helen know.

We ALL want the best services – the more ideas we have and the more feedback we get the better the project outcomes will be.

- The new **DISABILITY SERVICES COMMISSIONER, Laurie Harkin, has agreed to come to the December meeting** of the WRDN to talk about what he does and to answer your questions. Please mark Thursday 6 December in your diary and keep that date free for the meeting.
- Because the Complaints Project takes lots of time, and because it is a very important project, Helen will not be able to go to all the meetings she usually attends on behalf of the WRDN. Leigh Martin (Speakers' Bank Coordinator) will sometimes go instead of Helen. At other times members of the Coordinating Group will represent the Network.

- Renato Poloni-Lee has finished his placement. He produced a very easy to follow, **STEP-BY-STEP MANUAL** to help people **PUT INFORMATION ON THE E-UPDATE**. Tina and her wonderful team of volunteers get so many things to put on the e-update every week. This information is very important to WRDN members. The manual is currently on our Disability Connections website.

You can help us by putting items on yourself and then telling us if you found Renato's guide helpful. Of course if you do not have a computer or the confidence to do this please send it to Tina or Helen as usual. Tina has to approve anything that is posted to make sure it is suitable and filled in properly.

(If you receive information you think may be of interest to other people please put it on or send it to us – sometimes we get missed off mailing lists. Tina thinks it is better to get it lots of times than not at all).

- VCOSS is undertaking a **PUBLIC TRANSPORT SURVEY**. They are holding an information session on Friday 24th August at the WRDN office in Footscray from 10am till noon for any person with a disability who would be interested in using and reporting on public transport.

We are looking for 10-20 people from the North and the same from the West. There are still some places available. There is a small reimbursement for attending the information session and another small payment for doing the surveys. For more information please ring Helen, Tina or Leigh.

It is very exciting for the WRDN to be working with a big, well-known advocacy service like VCOSS (Victorian Council of Social Services). VCOSS has been working

with the Victorian State Government on many issues that affect people with disabilities such as public transport, taxi issues and housing

- The WRDN hosted 2 public forums where DHS staff talked about the new **DISABILITY ACT**. These were very well attended (70 people went to Maribyrnong and 130 went to the meeting in Darebin). Lots of these people were not members of the WRDN nor the old NRDN.

If you came to either of these meetings the WRDN would like to hear what you thought of the meeting and the information given.

- The WRDN held a forum looking at the issues for families with a child with a disability and the Federal Government's **CARER PAYMENT (CHILD) REVIEW**. A submission raising WRDN member feedback was sent to Canberra.
- The WRDN also held 2 forums looking at the **DHS STRATEGIC PLAN FOR RESPITE SERVICES in the Region**. A letter telling DHS what members think will be sent to DHS soon.

If you have any comments to add please ring 9687 7066 or email Helen helen.adams@annecto.org.au. As with all of our submissions what you say will be treated confidentially. We do not identify who said what – we only pass on comments and concerns.

- Student LIZ ELLIS is finalising a first draft of the **WRDN ORIENTATION TRAINING PROGRAM**. If you have not spoken to Liz and you would like to chat about what you think would be good to include please give Liz a ring at the WRDN. Liz works Wednesdays, Thursdays and Fridays. Liz can be emailed wrdn.student@annecto.org.au

CLUB WILD
MELBOURNE'S HOTTEST FULLY ACCESSIBLE DANCE PARTY!
FRI 7th Sept
7-10pm Arts House
NORTH MELBOURNE TOWN HALL

DJ FUNKMASTER
BIPOLAR BEARS
WILD DIVAS
FUNKY TURTLES DJ JOHN
DJ FLIPPER
PLUS SPECIAL SURPRISE ACT!

ENTRY: \$10 (Carers Free)
VENUE: Corner Queensberry and Errol St, North Melbourne
BOOKINGS: 9326 9970 or katrine@clubwild.net
INFO: www.clubwild.net



The Australian CP (Cerebral Palsy) Register has been launched to assist researchers find causes, manage its progress and provide more effective services. The CP Register is a confidential research database of information about people with cerebral palsy in Australia.

The main aims of the CP Register are to:

- monitor incidence and prevalence of cerebral palsy
- gain further understanding about the causes of cerebral palsy
- evaluate preventative strategies
- assist in planning services for children and adults who have cerebral palsy.

Visit the website for more information and to become a member at:

<https://secure.cpreister-aus.com.au/>

TADAust Connect

Dial-up Internet for people with disabilities, the elderly and veterans.

TADAust Connect has the following Dial-up Internet services:

- Dial-up Internet Plan for \$5.50 per month
- Fast Dial Internet Plan for an extra \$3.00 per month
- Free Dial-up Plan when you transfer your home phone to TADAust.

The service details include:

- Unlimited download, unlimited time on (4 hour session limit with 20 minute idle time out)
- \$36 Establishment Fee which includes an Auto Loader CD is required to get online
- Local call connect from anywhere in Australia
- One email address at xxxx@tadaust.org.au
- Overdue accounts attract a \$10 late payment fee.

For more information you can phone 1300 735 439 or visit

www.tadaustconnect.org.au



Awakenings is a festival for everyone.

This year you can:

- perform on stage beginner to pro;
- strike a note in music performances and jam sessions;
- mix it up with multimedia workshops and interactive performances;
- learn and network at the breakfast conference;
- engage in workshops;
- go live with schools, community and street performances;
- wear a mask at the Awakenings Ball;
- rock on with Claymore;
- get into the blues with Jeff Usher;
- get active with outdoor adventures;
- spin a wheelchair dance;
- snap for the photographic competition;
- visit visual arts;
- participate in community events.

It all happens in Horsham from Friday 12 to Sunday 21 October. Come and share the Awakenings Experience.

For more information, call 5362 4006 or 5362 4058, email awake@wimmera.unitingcare.org.au or visit the Awakenings Festival website at www.awakeningsfestival.com.au

NEW WEBSITES

www.nmit.vic.edu.au/excellence

Centre of Excellence for Students who are Deaf and Hard of Hearing is a statewide leader in providing information, research and advice to educational policy makers, and teaching and support staff who work with deaf students in Victoria.

www.brainlink.org.au

Brainlink Services Limited is a state wide service that is dedicated to improving the quality of life of people affected by conditions of the brain and providing support to their families.

USEFUL WEBSITE

www.imvc.com.au/broadenhorizons

Broaden their Horizons is a centralised website that houses resources for careers practitioners when working with students with disabilities.

XS access

Making the inaccessible accessible for people of all abilities

XS access provide complete assisted holiday packages around the beautiful Phillip Island area for the aged and people with disabilities. Transport is provided from and to your home.

XS access runs five-day packages all year round and group sizes are kept small to ensure you receive a quality holiday experience. Bookings are taken for 2 ambulant and 2 non ambulant clients **or** 5 ambulant clients. Qualified carers staff XS access and all have police checks and first aid training prior to service.

Give Dean or Emily a call for more information on **0425861614** or email holiday@xsaccess.com
You can visit the website at: www.xsaccess.com



*You are Invited
to the Celebration of the*

*Opening of
Basecamp 3030*

On Saturday 15 September 2007

From 1pm to 4pm

Official Opening at 2pm

BaseCamp 3030 is a new respite program for families with children with disabilities in the Wyndham local community. This service aims to meet the needs of local families who have not had access to local services of this kind in the Wyndham area.

The service will be located on the same site as the Werribee Baptist Church on the corner of Heaths and Derrimut Roads in Hoppers Crossing.

Activities on the day will include paint pot people, jumping castle, Huggy Bear, afternoon tea and live music.

For further information please contact:

Sue Wild – email: Foundation@werribeebaptist.org.au

Bar None

The Victorian Government's Office for Disability is seeking nominations from individuals and organisations across Victoria as part of its Bar None local leadership recognition project.

The state-wide search launched by the Minister for Community Services Gavin Jennings on 20 July aims to highlight the efforts of people with and without disabilities who have made a difference in their communities.



Who can enter? People with and without disabilities who are working to eliminate barriers in their communities are eligible to enter. For example, people or organisations who are making a difference by doing things like making buildings more accessible or leading the way in providing opportunities for people with disabilities to gain meaningful employment, participate in sport, recreation or the arts are eligible. View the full nomination criteria online – visit www.disability.vic.gov.au and follow the links. Nominations close on 10 September.

How can I enter? Enter online or post back the form that will appear in your local Leader Community Newspaper in metropolitan Melbourne or your local daily newspaper in regional Victoria between July and September.



CONFERENCES

Australian Association of Developmental Disability Medicine Annual National Conference

Sex, Drugs and Rock & Roll – The Centre for Intellectual Disability Health Conference Organising Committee together with the Australian Association of Developmental Disability Medicine Annual National conference, invites all Professionals with an interest in the health of people with developmental Disability, health research, practice and ethics to join colleagues in Adelaide on 12-14 September 2007. Register online at www.plevin.com.au/aaddm2007 or contact Plevin & Associates on (08) 8379 8222 or email events@plevin.com.au

3rd Forensic Disabilities Conference

Who's In, Who's Out (and what we do about it)
This conference discusses questions such as 'How can we support the inclusion of people with disabilities in generalist criminal justice services?' It will be held 17-19 September 2007 at Albert Park, Melbourne. Register online www.acso.com.au or contact Brett Anderson by email banderson@acso.org.au

Arts Activated Conference

Leading examples of inclusion of People with Disabilities in the Arts. This Conference is the first of its kind to be held in NSW – it is being organised by Accessible Arts, the peak arts and disability organisations across NSW, in Partnership with the Spastic Centre NSW. It will be held 26 and 27 September 2007 in Sydney. For more information visit the conference website at www.thespasticcentre.com.au and follow the links or contact Accessible Arts on 02 9251 6499.

Family Advocacy National Conference

Security, Friendship, Your own Home.....Family Advocacy's first national conference 'The Odyssey - a Journey of Enrichment and Possibility' tracks the potential throughout the lives of people with developmental disability. It will be held on 25 & 26 October 2007 in Sydney. For more information phone (02) 9689 0866 or email conference@family-advocacy.com or visit the website at www.family-advocacy.com and follow the links.

7th Annual ASSID Disability Support Worker Conference

Positive Cultures = Positive Supports – to be held on 22-23 November 2007 at the University of Melbourne. For conference information and registration you can visit the website at www.courses.as.rmit.edu.au/psychology/dsw07
Email dswconference@rmit.edu.au or phone (03) 9925 7899.



WORKSHOPS

“Everyone has a Story to Tell” will be held on 4 October 2007.

Person-centred thinking underlies the disability industry today – how do we carry this out with people whose likes and dislikes may be difficult to find out because they do not use speech to communicate?

“Challenging our Approaches to Behaviour” on 5 October 2007.

The various reasons why we see challenging behaviour at all will be considered.

These workshops are being hosted by the Australasian Society for the Study of Intellectual Disability (ASSID) and presented by Mr. Paul Hart who is a Principal Officer (Practice) with Sense Scotland, a national voluntary organisation working alongside people with complex support needs.

Both workshops will be held from 9am – 5pm at the Yooralla Human Resources Dept., Level 1/342 Flinders Street, Melbourne. RSVP to Sheridan Forster by 17 September. For more information please email Sheridan at sheridan.forster@med.monash.edu.au or phone 0405 190 509. Visit the website for more information www.assid.org.au

Innovations in Community Care on Friday 21 September 2007

Workshop will be held at UCA, 130 Little Collins St. Melbourne from 9am to 1pm (registration at 8.45am).

Learning from the Wisconsin Experience – with Donna McDowell who is the Director of the Bureau of Ageing and Disability Resources in Wisconsin, USA. In this workshop, Donna will outline some of the Wisconsin initiatives that may be of interest to community care providers in Victoria. Target audience is Managers and Coordinators in Community Care.

For more information please contact Jasmine Sapolu at Uniting Care Community Options on 8809 3010 or email training@ucco.org.au
Download registration form @ www.distss.org.au/infocast07/ucco/ucco_community_leadership.pdf



FORUMS

'Adolescence and Asperger Syndrome' – presented by Dr. Richard Eisenmajer will be held on Monday 27 August 2007 from 7.15pm for a 7.30pm start at the Iramoo Community Centre, 84 Honour Avenue, Wyndham Vale.

The evening is presented by the Asperger Syndrome Support Network Vic Inc (ASSN).

For any enquiries please phone 9845 2766 or email assnvic@mssociety.com.au
You can visit the ASSN website at <http://home.vicnet.net.au/~asperger/>

'Moving on to your Future' forum will be held on Tuesday 28 August 2007 from 4.00pm to 6.30pm at Hume Global Learning Centre, 1093 Pascoe Vale Road, Broadmeadows – adjacent to Broadmeadows Shopping Town).

The forum will provide an opportunity to hear about various post-school options and specialist supports from various service areas such as TAFE, Disability Employment Network, Supported Business Service, Centrelink, Day Service and Department of Human Services.

Please RSVP to Janet Bailie on 9309 7448 or email janet@bds.org.au
RSVP is essential. More information is available on the Broadmeadows Disability Services website at www.bds.org.au

Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities: Rural and Regional Forums, August to November 2007.

The Department of Human Services, in conjunction with the Victorian Council of Social Services and the Victorian Equal Opportunity and Human Rights Commission, invite registrations for attendance at a series of full-day forums on the new Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities.

Please contact VCOSS for a list of venues – phone 9654 5050 or email vcoss@vcoss.org.au

A session will be held in Footscray on Monday 12 November.

Please note that places are strictly limited and registration is essential.

