

Issue 2/08  
Newsletter  
August 2008

# disability justice advocacy **The Broadcaster**

## **Acting Executive Officers Report By Richard Sherman**

Hi to all,

Change is the theme of the moment at DJA right now. My hope is that it means we are laying the foundations for a strong and secure future.

With the election of the Rudd Government in November, we know for sure that competitive tendering for advocacy funding is off the agenda. The organisation welcomes any review that enhances the efficiency and effectiveness of the National Disability Advocacy Program, which is our source of funding. But we oppose competitive tendering on the grounds that it could jeopardise small specialist advocacy services, such as DJA, and further disempower many of the people we support.

It has also been confirmed that our office will move – again. In late September we will leave 179 High Street for 86 Herbert Street, Northcote, about 1.5 kilometres away. We owe ACL, the lead tenant in both premises, much thanks for the work they have done to make this possible (and for making us welcome since

January on High Street). Herbert Street has much to recommend it, not least proximity to Northcote railway station, a wheelchair-friendly layout and improved staff amenities. We plan to sign a long-term lease.

As most of you would know, Kerry Potter began long-service leave on July 16 and will return on November 5, refreshed and ready to continue to lead the organization. I have taken on her role during this period and welcome any contact from our membership or others. Saadia Khan has been employed to fill my advocacy role and I welcome her to our workplace. In other staff news, Meredith Mayes begins maternity leave in August and Rachelle Porter plans to return from maternity leave in October.

Whilst change can also present challenges, with the continued commitment and support of all, I believe DJA's future will be enhanced and better equip us to provide advocacy support to people with high support needs associated with a physical disability.

Regards

Richard Sherman.

## **Advocates Report By Michele Brunsmann**

It's been a busy 3 months for a few people, including myself. There are some common themes and issues that people are looking for advocacy and assistance with. A high percentage of people seeking advocacy are in need of various types of housing / accommodation (lots of people looking for housing on their own, to share with partner or others, or fully supported shared). The current housing crisis is, of course, having most impact on those with minimal financial and support resources available to them. A range of other issues are ongoing for a number of people, including aids and equipment, attendant care, TAC issues, restrictive interventions, and access to education. A number of people have sought assistance to make complaints and have these responded to in a timely and satisfactory way. I've also been advocating on behalf of young people living in, or at risk of admission to, nursing homes. For many people, having a disability creates a complex set of inter-related issues which make negotiating the support and service system and actually getting what's needed much more difficult. In working alongside the people that I advocate for / with, we have had much work to do to avoid falling through the gaps.

In the past 3 months I've also been able to undertake more training and

participate a consultation forum on the National Disability & Mental Health Employment Strategy Consultation, with Hon Brendan O'Connor MP, Minister for Employment Participation and the Hon Bill Shorten MP, Parliamentary Secretary for Disabilities and Children's Services. This was a great opportunity to speak up about the many barriers to employment and training participation for people with disabilities, and to put forward ideas for how to address these.

### **Training, forums etc**

2 x workshops with VEOHRC re:  
Charter of Human Rights and  
Responsibilities, and how it can be  
used in advocacy  
Responding to Abuse workshop  
Communities in Control conference – 1  
day

## **Advocates Report By Paul Hume**

During July there were several visits to two clients who reside in Montrose, at the foot of the Dandenong Ranges.

One person is living in a nursing home and two of her administrators want to sell the family home while the other two administrators do not. The client does not wish her home to be sold as she envisions returning to her home or renting it out.

An application to the Victorian Civil and Administrative Tribunal (VCAT) for a variation of administrators and

guardianship was prepared and Disability Justice Advocacy (DJA) are waiting on a current doctor's report prior to lodging the application with VCAT.

The second person in Montrose lives with her carer although her attendant care and respite hours do not seem to be working properly. A meeting was set up by DJA involving DHS, Case Manager from Care Connect, Yarra Ranges Council, the Carer, DASSI, the persons Guardian and DJA.

An open discussion was held where ideas and suggestions were exchanged in the view to increasing services for the client. Nothing was set in concrete on the day although everyone has agreed to meet again on Tuesday 12th August 2008 with updated proposals that are achievable and in the best interests of the client and her carer.

A visit with a gentleman who resides in Yooralla accommodation in Carnegie resulted in a later meeting with the client, Area Manager from Yooralla, the house manager, a Community Visitor from the Office of the Public Advocate and DJA.

The meeting was somewhat successful with a new behaviour contract to be written up that is less restrictive than the old contract however DJA have also written to the Yooralla Regional Manager to complain about the actions of the Area Manager during this meeting. I am currently waiting on a response from the Regional Manager.

Paul Hume  
Advocate.

### **Introducing Saadia Khan**

Hi every one, my name is Saadia Khan and I have recently been employed as an advocate at DJA. I am an Afghan and arrived in Melbourne 3 years back to pursue post graduate qualifications in Public Health at Deakin University. I also completed a Diploma of Community Welfare Work to add to my list of qualifications and pursue career opportunities in community development and welfare work.

My experience of living in Melbourne has been fantastic and I love everything about Melbourne, well almost everything except the chilly winters! I especially love Melbourne's café culture and the spunky baristas. My daily routine is incomplete without a frothy skinny Mocha to kick start my day!

In my free time (wish I had more!) I enjoy group fitness, swimming and cycling though I must admit I don't have great stamina and can't promise that I am working hard to improve it either! I hope to undertake extensive travel around Australia, visit the Northern Territory, and witness the rugged beauty I've heard and read so much about. I've been to Queensland three times and absolutely fell in love with Noosa.

I look forward to working, living and staying in Melbourne but may eventually move up to Queensland just because of the beaches and the warmer climate. If you ever happen to drop by at DJA do pop in to say a quick hello, or join me for Mocha.

See you around and all the best.  
Ciao,  
Saadia

## Urgent call for feedback

Hi all,

I had a call from Melissa Hegney from The Melbourne Times, who has observed in her peak hour train travels a number of pwd haven't been able to get on their trains due to overcrowding.

She is wondering how regular an occurrence this is, and whether we know anyone who would be willing to share their experiences for the purpose of an article.

I haven't had any specific complaints about this but am not surprised that it's happening - it's every person for themselves much of the time on peak hour trains.

If you know of any instances of this occurring or know anyone who is willing to talk to TMT about it, please call Melissa on 9473 4742.

Please feel free to circulate this to other networks and organisations, also.

Cheers,

**Michelle Brunsmann**  
**Advocate**

## Sunbury Inclusive Theatre Company

In partnership with Arts Access we invite you to a workshop to explore how the performing arts and visual arts collide. Special guest presenters, Way Out West Program.

Way Out West (WOW) is a quality visual and performing arts program for adults with an intellectual disability, physical disability or acquired brain injury. Members of WOW will share with you how they recently created their highly successful performance "a sympathetic ear", by leading you through a combination of visual and performing arts workshops.

"a sympathetic ear  
Born from Greek myths, original costume designs and Makaton sign language, this performance is a collage of human experience - requiring the witness of a sympathetic ear."

This day is a totally *INCLUSIVE* workshop and open to people with, and without, disabilities.

Arts Access Victoria receives funding for Way Out West from DHS, Disability Partnerships, North and West Region.

*This workshop day is the FIRST of a series planned by the newly formed: Sunbury Inclusive Theatre Company - a community partnership.*

This workshop is supported by Metro Access in partnership with Hume City Council and The Department of Human Services.

Date: Saturday 30th August 2008

Time: 10am - 3.00pm This includes a lunch break

Venue: Sunbury Young Peoples Place,  
Evans St,

Melways Ref 382 E4 *Wheelchair accessible*

Parking: Refer to registration form for more information

Participants Cost: \$5.00 A light lunch of sandwiches / rolls and fruit will be provided; Tea / Coffee / Milo provided throughout the day Companion card accepted however a small donation for lunch for carers or support workers would be appreciated!

Spaces are limited so reserve your spot NOW!

Please complete the registration form:

Registration Form

Sunbury Inclusive Theatre Company performing arts and visual arts collide By the 30th of August 2008.

FAX: 9306 5644 Attention: Bernadette Hetherington

Mail: 175 Glenroy Rd, Glenroy, 3046  
Email: bernadetteh@mchs.org.au  
For further information please contact:  
Bernadette Hetherington 0448 656 680  
OR Tony Rains 0408 524 750  
Payment of \$5 would be welcome ON THE DAY with a receipt in return  
Companion card accepted  
Please keep a copy of this form for your

reference.

Name : \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Ad-  
dress : \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Phone : \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Email : \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Specific dietary requirements:  
(Vegetarian options will be provided anyway!)

Support needs:

The day will be facilitated by the WOW team of 6 participants, 2 professional practicing artists and 3 qualified disability workers. We recommend that participants bring along their own carers if required.

Please outline relevant support needs :  
Transport and parking;

There is limited disabled parking – a few spots across the road from this event and also outside the Sunbury Square Shopping Centre. If you have specific parking requirements please contact Bernie or Tony directly for alternate arrangements.

Will you require transport to this workshop day? Please detail your requirements:

Wear comfortable clothes which can get dirty; bring a change of clothes if Necessary.

## **DJA - Board Members Wanted**

Disability Justice Advocacy Inc (DJA) provides advocacy for people with a physical disability who have high support needs.

DJA is seeking new members to participate on their Board. The DJA Board provides governance for, and sets the strategic direction of, the organisation.

We are looking for people who have:

- A knowledge of the disability sector and the role of advocacy;
- Time management skills, and a commitment to improving the rights of people with a disability;
- An interest in equality and human rights for people with a disability.
- We are particularly interested in recruiting people with previous Board experience and sound financial skills.

For those who do not have previous experience and have the right commitment, Board training is available.

DJA can offer:

- Cabcharges to and from the meeting;
- A healthy lunch on the day;
- Opportunities to have say in how DJA could be run;

- Possible involvement in systemic issues that affect the lives of people with a disability;
- A chance to meet new people;
- Board training.
- Please note: Attendant care will be provided at the meetings.

Expressions of interest can be sent to Sue Whiting, Chairperson, Disability Justice Advocacy, PO Box 588, Northcote 3070

You can also express interest by sending an email to [info@justadvocacy.com](mailto:info@justadvocacy.com) with 'Board application' in the subject line. Please request a receipt to ensure your application arrives.

## **DJA BOARD MEMBERS**

**Chairperson: To be announced**

**Treasurer: To be announced**

**Secretary: To be announced**

**Michael Crockford  
Stavros Kalomiris  
Glenn Lott  
Sue Whiting  
Robert Williams  
Margaret Vadoros**

## Personal Journey Cards

Do you work with people who have difficulty being understood by taxi drivers?

Maribyrnong City Council, in partnership with Scope, Isis Primary Care and the Victorian Taxi Directorate, have developed Personal Journey Cards. The Personal Journey Card is designed to improve communication between passengers and taxi drivers. The card can be completed before the start of the trip (by a passenger or someone who supports them) to tell the driver the specific details of their journey and their payment method.

The Taxi Directorate has been happy to trial these cards, but so far they haven't had much feedback. If they don't get feedback, they won't go ahead and print lots of them and give them out to all passengers who have communication difficulties.

If you think these cards could make communication in taxis easier for someone you know please contact me to trial a pad of 50 cards. The only catch is that we will ask you to commit to filling in a feedback form and sending it to the Victorian Taxi Directorate. Only a limited number of pads are available, so get in quick!

Thanks, Eilís Hughes  
Maribyrnong City Council  
Community Participation and Planning.  
Phone: (03) 9688 0109  
Fax: (03) 9688 0158

E: eilis.hughes@maribyrnong.vic.go



## Aids and Equipment Action Alliance

Making participation and inclusion a reality

v.au

The Aids and Equipment Action Alliance has experienced more growth since the last Broadcaster issue and we now have over 30 members.

Our members have been working very hard over the last few months on a range of projects including the development of a Campaign Plan to lead us up to the Victorian election in 2010. We are also developing a website for the Alliance which will feature some fantastic work done by a university student on placement, mapping the various aids and equipment funders out there. We have also recently launched our own logo and slogan – *Making participation and inclusion a reality* - and big thanks goes out to Elaine Gan at Juggle Identity Solutions for her generous work designing this.

It is with some sadness, plenty of excitement and not a lot of sleep, that I say goodbye to the Aids and Equipment Action Alliance and DJA for a while as I commence maternity leave. It has been a pleasure to meet and work with so many of you. Work is underway to appoint a replacement and I hope you have an opportunity soon to meet your new Project Worker. I look forward to rejoining you all in 12 months.

Meredith Mayes, Project Worker, AEAA

**NDAP funding**

DJA Funding will now extend to June 2009. there will be ongoing discussions with the FaHACCSIA in relation to funding into the future.

A new quality assurance system will be implemented for all National Disability Advocacy Programs with the possibility of funding well into the future.

If undeliverable please return to:  
**disability justice advocacy inc**  
**179 High Street**  
**Northcote Vic 3070**



To:

The Broadcaster  
Print Post Publication No: 330038 / 00023

**disability justice advocacy inc, 179 High Street Northcote Vic 3070**  
**phone: (03) 9481 5070 freecall: 1800 808 126**

If you no longer want to be on the disability justice advocacy inc mailing list, please let us know.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Your new phone number:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Your new address: P/code:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Name:

Are you moving house? We need to know your new address.

