

Access News

AAA

Access Audits Australia

disability access  advice  training



Volume 2 • 2005

Living A Life..... Local Government

Every Tuesday morning I am reminded about the importance of local government in all our lives. At 6.00 a.m. the sound of the Council's rubbish truck coming down our court does two important things, firstly it collects our rubbish (when we remember to put it out), and secondly it acts as a very effective alarm clock.



Local governments throughout Australia play a vital role in providing services for all people. Whether it relates to work, recreation or just living our lives, access for all is imperative.

The provision of home and community care services, such as home help, can make the difference between someone remaining in their own home and being part of their local neighbourhood or moving to a nursing home, often a long way from relatives and friends.

The condition of footpaths and the implementation of footpath trading policies in local shopping centres may determine whether someone with mobility needs and in many cases their family, can access their local community. In this way the decision as to how people spend their money with local business is ultimately influenced by local councils.

Providing an accessible path to and through a local playground that enables a parent with a disability to participate with their child in play activity and providing ramped access to a local hall stage enables a student who uses a wheelchair to accept their graduation certificate, with fellow students. These are memories that last forever and Councils can make them happen by supporting access for all.

Local governments that take a 'Whole of Council' approach to providing access for all are at the forefront of a cultural change sweeping across Australia. This movement is ensuring that all people can participate and contribute to our vibrant communities.

Now, if I can just get the rubbish truck / alarm clock an hour later on Tuesdays I would be very happy with the way my local government helps me and my family sleep in and *live a life*.....

Access Audits Australia

provides the following range of services to support improved access to the built environment and to the provision of goods and services:

- ◆ Access awareness training
- ◆ Community consultations
- ◆ Access presentations, publications and inspirations
- ◆ Development and Review of Disability Action Plans, Community Planning policies and processes
- ◆ Access Audits, Evaluations and Design Advice

Access Audits Australia is pleased to advise or assist you with any access issue.

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Access in Local Government

Access can be a confusing word, subject to different interpretations. Some definitions of access include:

1. *the possibility or means of entering or approaching a place*
2. *the opportunity or right to experience or make use of something*
3. *the right or opportunity to meet somebody*

To show how improved access benefits all users, this edition of Access News highlights how Access Audits Australia (AAA) assists many Councils to achieve "Access for All":

MetroAccess has arrived

MetroAccess arrived with a bang! The long awaited MetroAccess workers have commenced in a number of Local Councils across the metropolitan area. Following on from the great success of the RuralAccess Program, AAA has been working with a number of Councils to facilitate their Community Mapping processes and assist the MetroAccess Workers identify service gaps and community needs within their local areas.

Footpath Trading Policies

Just look in the pages of most local papers throughout the first half of 2005 and there will probably be some reference to the changes occurring across shopping centres to improve access for all. AAA has been working with Councils and traders to develop Footpath Trading Policies, which aim to improve access and increase patronage in all local shopping precincts. Although initially reluctant to make the change, traders in many areas have now realised the benefits and opportunities of providing access for all. Good Access is Good Business.

AAA is also assisting a number of Councils by undertaking Footpath Impact Assessment Studies to identify Council infrastructure that will require removal or relocation to comply with the new Footpath Trading Policies. In addition, a design guide for access friendly street furniture and outdoor display units for use by traders is also being developed.

Targeting Tourism

Mornington Peninsula Shire Council has completed the third year of their access awareness project. AAA has facilitated a wide range of awareness raising initiatives. These have included training sessions for staff and traders, information sessions for winery owners, tourist accommodation providers and tourist services highlighting areas for access action that will improve their businesses and attract a much broader customer base.



Accessible Beaches on the Bay

AAA has been appointed to undertake the much publicised **Accessible Beaches on the Bay Project**. It is a joint initiative of Port Phillip, Frankston, Bayside and Kingston Councils. This very exciting project aims to identify a range of areas around Port Phillip Bay that can potentially provide access to the beach and water activities, for a wide range of users.

Planning for Access

Many Local Government Councils are now realising the strategic importance and economic value of planning for access early in the development phases of programs and facilities.

AAA is currently providing access advice for a range of projects, including the revitalisation of the Seaford Village area, the Croydon Leisure Centre redevelopment, the Long Island proposed development at Frankston and the Boronia Activity Centre Study.

Liberty Swings - Access Across Australia

In partnership with the City of Casey, AAA has developed an information brochure listing all Liberty Swing locations around Australia. The brochure will assist people with disabilities, who are travelling, to identify playgrounds that may be suitable to visit, particularly those that have a Liberty Swing installed.

One Person's View

Her interest in social justice and community development commenced with involvement in youth group activities at High School in Sunbury. While her initial studies on leaving school focused on recreation leadership, she subsequently decided to pursue community development qualifications, rather than youth work.

This commitment has formed the foundation for a very varied career, woven around occasional diversions from the mainstream when following her creative interests such as drama, song writing, performing arts, editing and script writing.

Her first local government employment was as a community development worker with the former Shire of Bulla, on a project that struggled to survive on piecemeal funding.

She later worked on the Flemington Housing estate in an after-school program, then as a tenant worker dealing with housing and welfare issues and coordinating home modifications with architects. During this time, the deinstitutionalisation process increased the number of people

needing physical, sensory and psychiatric supports.

Upon returning from a year traveling overseas Gail Price worked on three concurrent projects at the then City of Footscray, before moving to an ecumenical migrant centre handling refugee and general migration issues. Gail has also been employed in a number of short-term employment and training programs, including some projects with young people.

Later Gail commenced at the Maribyrnong City Council as an Access for All Abilities worker and then undertook the community development officer role. While studying script writing Gail assisted with the production of a well-received video based around recreation requirements for people of all abilities.

After a short time at Frankston City Council, Gail moved across to her current generalist community development position, at Mornington Peninsula Shire Council, initially assisting with development of a Community Drugs Strategy, then progressing to various projects



based around the needs of people with disabilities. This broad role focuses on using the Shire's Access and Equity Policy to respond to the needs of identified sections of the population who may be missing out on some Council services.

In order to support this process, Gail has initiated a comprehensive staff and community access training and awareness program. Her innovative approach, based on her social justice philosophy and community development experience, recognizes skills and influences within Council and the community, while utilizing Council's Access Plan and the active involvement of the Shire's Disability Consultative Committee to increase awareness, empower individuals, obtain effective outcomes and celebrate achievements.

Gail feels that her most important accomplishment has been in raising awareness of the topic of access, getting people talking, asking questions and ultimately recognizing that they can confidently work with others to improve access for all.

Congratulations

The AAA Team congratulates Director Joe Manton on receiving an Australian Government Sport Achievement Award. This award recognises Joe's contribution to sport including development and support of wheelchair basketball and netball for people with intellectual disabilities.

Playspaces

AAA has been working with the City of Maroondah on a range of access projects including review of new accessible playspaces provided within the municipality. In conjunction with the Playgrounds and Recreation Association of Victoria (PRAV) AAA will be working to further develop strategies to foster the improvement of access to all playspaces. See www.prav.asn.au/ for more information about PRAV.

Did you know ?

- That Napoleon Bonaparte, Julius Caesar and Charles Dickens all shared something in common.....epilepsy.
- That Channel 4 in the United Kingdom has recently announced a new comedy show called "I'm Spazticus" It may raise a few eyebrows with its practical jokes starring people with disabilities. It is understood to include such scenes as an amputee running out of the sea shouting "Shark!" and a person using a wheelchair stuck up a tree. Hidden cameras will capture the reactions of passers-by.
- That you will often find the toilet door open in a hearing impaired person's house, when it is not in use. This stops any embarrassing moments for a person who may not be able to hear a knock on the door!!
- That the Australian comedian, Adam Hills, who comperes the popular ABC TV show "Spicks and Specks", acknowledges that his artificial foot regularly sets off the metal detector systems when he is being screened at airports around the world.
- That when children who can hear don't want to listen to their parents they put their hands over their ears. When children with a hearing impairment don't want to listen they put their hands over their eyes!

Matching Houses



A new enterprise enabling people with disabilities to travel more freely has been launched in Europe by a group of friends frustrated by lack of choice.



The project is based on the established principle of house swapping but has been adapted to suit the needs of people with disabilities by offering a web site (www.matchinghouses.com) to bring people with the same or similar accessibility requirements together. This web site has been developed with a sophisticated database which can link people anywhere in the world with the same access needs and allow them to arrange a house swap.

It offers clear guidelines on how to organise a house swap and there is also a section that helps dispel any of the concerns you may have about swapping houses with a stranger such as security and confidentiality. The inspiration behind 'Matching Houses' was the idea that people with disabilities will often travel abroad on the understanding that the accommodation that they're going to is fully accessible, only to find that their access needs have not been met.

Disability Professionals Victoria Support and Networking for Professionals

The AAA team are pleased to support Disability Professionals Victoria (DPV). This is a professional association, formed as a result of a merger of the Institute of Disability Services Managers (IDSM) and Managers Association Victoria (MAV). DPV fosters excellence and leadership, provides peer support, networking, leadership development and support to professionals working in the disability sector in Victoria. For further information see www.dpv.org.au

AAA Web site

Details about services provided by Access Audits Australia can be found on our web site at www.accessauditsaustralia.com.au

Our site is designed to be accessible for all users. It has AAA W3C level compliance and is AAA Bobby approved. Earlier Access News editions can be downloaded and there are also links to other relevant access related web sites.

Information contained in **Access News** is intended to highlight the importance of improving access for every person

Disclaimer: Whilst every reasonable effort has been made to ensure the accuracy of the information contained in this publication, Access Audits Australia does not accept any responsibility for inaccuracies, omissions, incorrect information or action taken as a result of any advice given or information conveyed in this publication.