

Access News

AAA

Access Audits Australia

disability access  advice  training

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Access Action On Line

As most people are aware, the Internet is an essential and convenient source of information for many people in either their work or personal life.

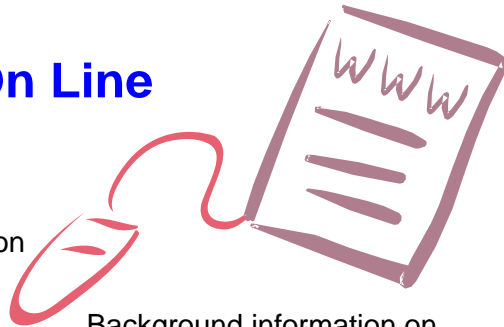
Local Government staff and councillors now have a website available to assist them with the broad and ever expanding range of access and disability issues.

This comprehensive on line resource is the Local Government - Access Action On Line website, at www.mav.asn.au/access/.

This was a joint initiative of the Municipal Association of Victoria, the Department of Human Services Victoria and the Local Government Disability Officers Network. It was developed by Access Audits Australia.

The site encourages "A Whole of Council" approach to ensure that all staff and councillors understand that they have a vital role to play when it comes to access issues.

The website covers a wide range of issues including definitions of disability and a listing of commonly used terms in the disability sector.



Background information on legislation and regulations applying to Local Government, in relation to access issues is included, as well as a How To Get Started section to help people through what can sometimes seem like a daunting and complex area.

The Local Government Areas of Responsibility pages include detailed information about key responsibilities regarding access issues and suggestions for action.

Links to other useful web sites are provided for anyone looking for specific information in relation to disabilities or areas of particular interest.

The site is accessible for people with vision impairment who use screen readers.

A feedback section also provides the opportunity for users to make sure that the site is relevant and meets their needs.



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:

- t Disability access training
- t Community consultation
- t Development and Review of Disability Action Plans, Development Control Plans, policies and procedures
- t Access Audits, Evaluations and Design Advice
- t Advice on improved access to publications, communications and web sites

AAA is pleased to advise or assist you with any access issue. Contact

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Standards Australia has recently released AS 1428.1 - 2001 Design for access and mobility - General requirements for access - New building work. This Standard specifies the design requirements applicable to new building work, excluding work to private residences, to provide access for people with disabilities.

It is a review of AS 1428.1 - 1998 and includes expanded or additional information on a range of access issues. Particular attention is given to accessways, circulation spaces and consistent linkages suitable for use by people who use wheelchairs, and access and facilities for people with ambulatory disabilities and for people with sensory disabilities.

This Standard is intended to be used in the design of buildings and related facilities as required by the regulatory authorities, or by other Standards, but may also be applied for the provision of access to existing buildings. Although this Standard is intended to be used for the provision of access to buildings, in the absence of specific information, appropriate Clauses could well be applied to external locations such as walkways and landscaped areas.

Compliance with this Standard will, in general, satisfy the requirements of the Building Code of Australia (BCA) in terms of the provision of access to buildings for people with disabilities; however this does not in any way preclude the use of any alternative method that can be shown to satisfy these requirements.

AS 1428.1 - 2001 Design for access and mobility - General requirements for access - New building work has now been referenced in the Building Code of Australia by way of BCA Amendment 9, thereby superseding the previous edition, AS 1428.1 - 1998, which will be withdrawn 12 months from the date of the publication of this edition.

AS 1428.4 - 1992 Design for access and mobility - Tactile ground surface indicators for the orientation of people with vision impairment is currently being reviewed and is expected to be released in early 2002. It is anticipated that this revised Standard will incorporate additional information on the applications and placement of tactile ground surface indicators.

Copies of Australian Standards can be purchased from Standards Australia offices or via their web site at www.standards.com.au

Victorian ResCode restricts access

The recently released Victorian ResCode is a comprehensive package of planning and building provisions to govern the design of housing in residential areas. During the ResCode Advisory Committee process various stakeholders encouraged improved access requirements for residential properties, for people with disabilities.

When launched in May 2001 ResCode included Standard B25, which required *“that the ground floor of dwellings should be accessible or able to be easily made accessible to people with limited mobility”*. Whilst ResCode did not clearly indicate how this was to be achieved it was generally considered to be a positive improvement. However, the Victorian Government has subsequently announced some minor changes to the released version of ResCode. The amended Standard B25 now requires *“The dwelling entries of the ground floor of dwellings and residential buildings should be accessible or able to be easily made accessible to people with limited mobility.”*

Many people, including members of groups representing people with disabilities, consider that by only requiring access to a dwelling entry an opportunity has been missed to encourage safer, more accessible and adaptable designs, that better support or respond to changing life-styles of all residents.



One Person's View

Marc Brew resurrected his dream of being a successful dancer when his ballet *Access* and his solo piece *Fly* were recently performed to appreciative audiences at the Infinity Dance Theatre in New York.

Yet only a few years ago such an achievement seemed impossible after he was severely injured in a car accident that left him without use of his legs. Marc was determined to maintain his passion for the arts and this passion has resulted in him being a winner in the 2001 Young Australian of the Year Awards.

Last year in Melbourne he formed his own dance company *Danceability* for



both able bodied dancers and dancers with disabilities. After his ballet and solo piece premiered in Melbourne, he was invited to New York to teach his works to members of the Infinity Dance Theatre.

Following on from his success in the United States he intends to travel to London to perform and undertake further teaching to another dance company which also features dancers with disabilities.

Access Expo Royal Exhibition Building Melbourne 25 - 27 October 2001

Disability Referral Guide

The Disability Access Service of the State Library of New South Wales has expanded its website to include a Disability Referral Guide.

The Guide is a searchable database of peak disability organizations in NSW. It also lists disability information services and agencies that handle complaints and discrimination.

You can check it out for yourself at <http://stlib.sl.nsw.gov.au/DAS/>

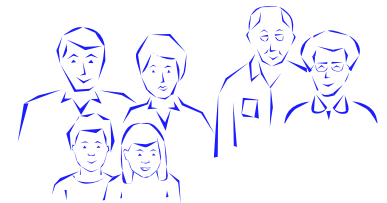
Don't Forget



**The International
Day for People
with a Disability
3 December 2001**

Arthritis in Australia

A recent report by Access Economics found that:



- Arthritis is Australia's major cause of disability and chronic pain. It affects an estimated 3.1 million people or approximately 16.5% of Australians. Women are significantly over-represented and almost 60% of all people with arthritis are of working age (15-64 years).
- Juvenile chronic arthritis affects 4 per 1000 with 3 per 1000 not diagnosed.
- Arthritis has a significant economic impact. It affects nearly 11% of the workforce. Rheumatoid arthritis in particular is recognised as one of the major health reasons for leaving work early.
- Arthritis is responsible for nearly 1.8 million days of reduced activity and about 213,000 days off work or school each year in Australia.
- The overall financial cost of arthritis in Australia is enormous - approaching \$9 billion (1.4% of gross domestic product) in 2000.
- The direct, health system costs of prevention and treatment are estimated at about \$2.24 billion in 2000. Of that, \$900 million (41%) are hospital costs. Each year, arthritis accounts for 8.5 million GP visits, 2.2 million specialist visits and 1.4 million visits to other health practitioners.
- The indirect costs, including loss of earnings and lost production due to premature retirement are estimated at triple the direct costs (\$6.72 billion).
- As the population ages, we are seeing a growing burden of arthritis to the individuals, their families, their voluntary carers, the health system, the social welfare system, the labour market and the economy.

Did you know ?

- That recent research indicates that 22% of the Australian population, aged 15 years and over, (approx. 3.25M people) experience hearing impairment.
- That a man in Germany was arrested for being drunk in charge of his electric wheelchair. He was found to be three times over the legal blood-alcohol level.
- That recent press publicity has highlighted the involvement of many children with disabilities in general sporting activities.
- That Melbourne City Council has available, free of charge, "Eating Out with Wheels" - The Wheelchair Users Guide to Melbourne's Accessible Eateries. Of 140 eateries checked for this publication only 79 were considered to be accessible.
- That 1 October is International Day for Older Persons.
- That most people who have vision loss retain residual vision throughout their lives. Often the remaining sight is significant and substantial, although altered or diminished.
- That anyone working to improve access to the provision of goods and services, or to the built environment, may need to declare a potential "conflict of interest". They may be creating a future benefit for themselves!

Local Government Accessible Communities Awards

The Building Better Communities - Victorian Local Government Accessible Communities Awards were announced recently by the Minister for Community Services, Christine Campbell.



The Awards, in their second year, are a joint initiative of the Department of Human Services, The Municipal Association of Victoria and Arthritis Victoria.

In announcing the winners Ms Campbell said the awards were a reflection of the common goal of promoting best practices that support people with disabilities and ensures their inclusion in local communities.

This years winners were:

- **Bass Coast Shire Council** - for creating *Accessible Footpaths in Bass Coast Shire*
- **Darebin City Council** - for its *Disability Working Party project.*
- **Maribyrnong City Council** - for the *upgrading of a Senior Citizen Centre to a fully integrated community facility.*
- **Melbourne City Council** - for the *development and launch of a Kerbside Café Code.*
- **Wodonga City Council** - for its *continuing work towards developing an Inclusive Community.*

The Awards aim to encourage improved access for all and to highlight leading examples of excellence in ways to increase participation, particularly for people with disabilities.

Each of the award winners is a fine example of what can be done by local government to encourage participation by everyone in all aspects of their communities life.

AAA Director Joe Manton was again on the judging panel for the awards and AAA congratulates the winners and all who took part.

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

Disclaimer. Every effort has been made to ensure information contained in this newsletter is accurate. AAA does not accept any responsibility for action taken as a result of any advice or information contained herein.