



# The Advocate



**Advocacy for Inclusion**

**JUNE 2010**

## **INCLUDED IN THIS ISSUE...**

- **Nutrition Project**
- **Inclusion Art Competition Winner!!**
- **Health Promotion Conference**

### **General Manager's Report**

The success of our art competition has been very exciting and we are hoping to hold an exhibition of all the entries later this year.

Thanks to everyone who was involved including the artists, the judging panel, the National Gallery, and the Post School Options Expo which exhibited the finalists. Don't forget to start ordering your Christmas cards featuring the winning artwork!

Recently several Advocacy for Inclusion staff have attended conferences. Julia went to Melbourne for the Australian Health Promotion Conference, which she writes about in this newsletter. She will also deliver a presentation on the conference at an ACT Health breakfast on 28 June.

Christina and Jamelle attended the Disability Advocacy Network of Australia conference. This brought together advocates from all over Australia to discuss human rights, government policy, and advocacy practice. It was great to share stories with advocates and to catch up on how we all work. There was a lot of interest in how we can monitor the implementation of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, and how to use the Convention in our advocacy work.

We have been successful in gaining funding to continue our Nutrition Project. Robyn writes about stage 1 and the interviews that she has been doing with group home tenants. The next stage will take 2 years and will work on developing resources and self advocacy training for group home tenants with a focus on nutrition and wellbeing. There will also be training for support workers to support the self advocacy graduates. We are very excited to be undertaking this project and thank ACT Health for their support. We'll be sad to see Robyn go at the end of June and wish her well in her retirement.

We continue to be challenged everyday by the situations that people with disabilities face. Our individual advocacy work is very busy and often very difficult. Jamelle tells us about some recent victories which have made a big difference to our consumers. Advocacy for Inclusion has been working with ADACAS, People with Disabilities ACT, and Women with Disabilities ACT to get more support for advocacy and the voice of people with disabilities.

The community sector has been focussing on an equal pay case which the Australian Services Union is working on. This is being supported by both the Federal and ACT governments and asks that work done by community sector workers is paid at the same rates as the same work being done by government sector workers.

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We hope to have an outcome by the end of this year. Advocacy for Inclusion closed our office on 10 June to attend the equal pay rally outside the ACT Legislative Assembly. This was one of several rallies held around the country on the same day.

Another significant change for community sector workers is the introduction of the portable long service leave scheme on 1 July 2010. For the first time workers in the ACT community sector will be able to keep their long service leave entitlements when they move to another community organisation. This change is designed to encourage workers to stay in the community sector.

Finally, I will be away for most of July attending the United Nations in New York as part of the small non-government delegation to the CEDAW Committee session. The Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) is the treaty addressing women's discrimination. I will be representing Australian women with disabilities and also working to bring the CEDAW work closer to the work being done on the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. I look forward to reporting when I get back, but am also happy to talk to organisations and groups who would like to know more about the outcomes from the United Nations about women with disabilities. Please contact Thao here at the office if you would like me to report to your group.

Christina Ryan  
General Manager

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## Nutrition Project

In *The Advocate* in March 2010 we introduced you to a 5 month project looking at the health and well being of people with disabilities who are tenants in group homes.

As part of the project, 10 organisations providing accommodation support for people with disabilities were approached and assisted Advocacy for Inclusion to successfully interview 28 people from 14 houses. 16 staff and parents/guardians also provided assistance with interviews and/or information.

We asked questions, used flash cards and also asked some people to fill in food diaries for a week.

We found out some interesting things like:

- ❖ Most people living in supported accommodation are aware of what kind of food is nutritionally good for them
- ❖ All people say that they eat mostly healthy food
- ❖ Some people do not have any choice about what they eat
- ❖ Some people have health reasons for restricted diets
- ❖ Cereal is the most eaten breakfast food
- ❖ Sandwiches and leftovers are the most popular lunch foods
- ❖ People have a wide variety of food for dinner, mostly including meat/fish and vegetables
- ❖ Most people do not drink enough water

A reference group of tenants has been working with us to deliver this project. They have been invaluable in helping to develop the questions for interviews, and assess materials for training.

A report of the project will be available shortly and will be made available publicly.

The exciting news is that the project will not be over then. We have successfully applied for funds for two years from the *ACT Health Promotions Grants Program* to provide follow up self advocacy training based around nutrition and food. The reference group will continue to work with us during the next stage of the project.

Look out for regular reports in *The Advocate* as this exciting project unfolds.

Robyn James  
Project Worker



## Current Issues

For something a bit different: we've had some recent successes after several months of work.

Thanks to both consumers mentioned below for allowing us to share their stories with you. We hope this gives an idea of the kinds of barriers that people with disabilities face in their everyday lives.

The first victory is for a student who wanted to be independent and catch the regular school bus home rather than the Special Needs Transport bus.

The high school next door had regular school buses and students living in the same area. There was support from both schools to catch the regular school bus, but a lot of red tape with ACTION who wanted medical letters, endorsements from both school principals, and other information.

We told ACTION that other students are not required to provide all this information before catching a school bus service, and questioned why this student couldn't simply catch the bus.

After many months the student was finally allowed to catch the school bus home. His mother sent us an email after his first day catching the bus home. *"..... exited the bus with such pride and achievement"* and the *"afternoon bus travel has gone really well, no problems whatsoever!!"*

This seems a small thing, but it has made a big difference in the life and independence of this student.

The second victory is for a young man living in a public housing complex of one bedroom units.

He faced eviction after being labelled a trouble maker, when in fact he was the victim of a bullying campaign throughout the complex.

With help from Welfare Rights and Legal Centre, he now lives in a two bedroom property in a more appropriate complex of town houses. He now feels that he has his life back together and is able to focus on what he wants to do with his future rather than focus on being too scared to go home.

Accommodation is still the most common issue we are asked to support people with. Whether it is inappropriate, not safe, or simply difficult to manage with the particular disability that someone has, we are regularly asked to advocate to find more suitable accommodation.

Far too many people with disabilities are living in circumstances which they do not choose, and which are unsuitable.

Jamelle Boettcher  
Advocate

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## Health Promotion Conference

The Australian Health Promotion Association (AHPA) is a national body that has branches in every state and territory across the country. Their mission is to advocate for health promotion, the health promotion workforce, and best health promotion practice.

The AHPA holds an annual conference, and also produces an academic journal (quarterly), showcasing effective practice which is innovative, sustainable and addresses the current inequity in health among marginalised populations.

In 2009 Advocacy for Inclusion piloted *'Damsels in the Driver's Seat'*; a self advocacy course for women with cognitive disability. This program explores human rights, assertiveness skills, goal setting and taking charge of preventative health checks. It shifts some of the locus of control from carers or guardians to women with disabilities.

*'Damsels in the Driver's Seat'* has grown through word of mouth and is being run in partnership with two other organisations in 2010. It has been so effective we are now designing a similar course for men with disabilities.

I attended the conference to learn strategies to provide a platform for people with disabilities to progress from self-advocacy to systemic opportunities; such as consumer representative work and political participation.

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The 'Walking the Talk Together' conference had seven workshops occurring at any one time. I saw presentations on a range of initiatives, including capacity building in remote Australian advocacy agencies, working with socially isolated women with disabilities, and suicide prevention strategies.

I felt very proud when comparing 'Damsels in the Driver's Seat' with other programs, as it is underpinned by some solid academic theory.

The conference focused on developing partnerships to achieve goals that were otherwise unattainable. This is also referred to as 'building capacity' or 'extending the reach' of a program or service. Partnerships help organisations to tackle complex problems.

Systemic and individual advocacy work almost always fits the description of a 'complex problem', and calls for the advocate to establish partnerships of some description. The types of partners that are possible in advocacy are limitless; other community organisations, private businesses, government departments, or universities. It is important that an advocate is able to think laterally and determine methods of making advocacy sustainable with minimal resources.

Since returning from the conference I have been putting the theory I have learned into practice. I have taken steps to establish a partnership with the Electoral Education Centre to run plain English training to teach people with disabilities how to vote in elections. The Australian Electoral Commission *Disability Action Plan 2008-11* is focused on physical access to polling booths and omits any reference to voters with cognitive disabilities. I have also begun to set up a consumer reference group for the forthcoming men's course to ensure that the content is appropriate and useful.

Julia Bocking  
Advocate



## Advocacy for Inclusion Art Competition Winner!!

Thank you to everyone that contributed to our *Inclusion* competition and for making it such a success!

We were very pleased with the number of entries, and the very high quality of the artwork.

All of the artists talked about inclusion in many different ways, and with some very strong messages.



A display of some of the wonderful artworks

A huge **THANK YOU!!** to our judges - Helen Maxwell, Steve Doszpot MLA, and Gai Brodtmann who had the very difficult task of selecting the winning artwork.



Judging panel (left to right): Steve Doszpot, Gai Brodtmann and Helen Maxwell, with Christina Ryan

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After lengthy discussion, they awarded first prize to Andrew Delaney for his piece "In my thoughts I have many friends".



Winning artwork by Andrew Delaney  
"In my thoughts I have many friends"

## Congratulations Andrew!!!

Andrew's work will now be transformed into a poster and will become our new Christmas card! Andrew has also won a membership to the National Gallery of Australia!

Andrew grew up watching his Grandfather doing art and has always wanted to have a go.

He has been doing art classes at Hands on Studio since October 2009 and loves to paint; in particular he loves to paint tractors and farms.

For the Inclusion competition, Andrew came up with the "many friends" concept himself. He is very proud of his piece of work.

The judging panel also short listed the following entries:

- "Inclusion" by Maureen Caelli
- "Lots of people having fun" by Anna Rouse
- "Untitled" by Chris Williams

Together with Andrew, these artists will be guests at a special workshop at the National Gallery of Australia. This is a wonderful opportunity for the artists to explore their art further with expert teachers.

The Winning and Short listed entries were displayed at the Post School Options Expo on Thursday 3 June for those that had the opportunity to visit the Expo and view the many wonderful displays during the day.



The Winning & Short listed entries on display at the Post School Options Expo on 3 June 2010

## ■ national gallery of australia

A special **THANK YOU!!** goes to the National Gallery of Australia for donating Andrew's prize and the workshop for the Short listed artists, and also the Women's Centre for Health Matters for letting us use their space for the judging process!

We will be holding an exhibition of all the entries later in the year so watch this space!

## CANaccess

CANaccess is a directory that has emerged from the strong public demand for a comprehensive and reliable linkage to services in the community sector.

Created by the Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB) in conjunction with Disability ACT, the directory is committed to providing up to date information, referral & support to all ACT residents.

CANaccess educates and informs people about their options, rights and responsibilities and access to community resources.

It is a comprehensive website resource for all local organisations and services for people with disabilities and their carers.

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This information will empower people to make informed decisions about their own life situations.

Visit [www.canaccess.org.au](http://www.canaccess.org.au) for more information.

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## Burch backs case for equal pay in the community sector

### Media Release 10/06/2010

ACT Minister for Disability, Housing and Community Services Joy Burch has lent her support to a test case being pursued through Fair Work Australia seeking equal pay for community sector workers.

Addressing an Australian Services Union rally in Civic on June 10, Ms Burch said an examination of pay and conditions in the community sector was long overdue, and welcomed the ASU's push for better working conditions for a highly valued but chronically underpaid sector, and one that was predominantly staffed by women.

Full media release:  
<<http://www.chiefminister.act.gov.au/media.php?v=9626>>

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## Access City Hotline

Have you ever had difficulty...

- Getting into or around buildings?
- Using doors or stairways?
- Negotiation footpaths, roadways, kerbed areas?
- Reading or understanding signs or directions?

The Access City Hotline is helping people to remove physical and sensory barriers to access in the ACT by providing a comprehensive referral service.

If you or someone you care about has encountered problems getting in or around structures, the Hotline is there to assist.

Call 02 6257 3077 or visit [www.accesscity.org.au](http://www.accesscity.org.au) for more information.

## Recent publications and submissions

1. Submission from the WAT Consortium to the 'Response to Taxi Industry Discussion Paper'
2. Short brief on 'The Use of Chemical Restraint' was prepared for Disability ACT and the Human Rights Commission

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## Pre- order your Advocacy for Inclusion Christmas cards today!!!

### \$10 per pack of 10 cards

All cards are Post Office preferred size.

Featuring the winning design by Andrew Delaney, from the Advocacy for Inclusion art competition, the cards will send an inclusive message during the festive season!

To order yours today, please fill in this form and return it to the address below.

*Please make your cheque or money order payable to  
Advocacy for Inclusion Inc.*

**Advocacy for Inclusion  
PO BOX 3653  
Weston Creek ACT 2611**

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Name

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Address

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Post Code

Number of packs		Total
	x \$10.00	



## MAKE A DONATION

Advocacy for Inclusion is now a registered charity. All donations over \$2 are tax deductible.

*We welcome your support.*

We are currently fundraising to buy materials for our Self Advocacy Nutrition training. You can help us buy food for cooking classes, and other resources.

All donations will go directly to empowering people with disabilities.

To make a donation, please fill in this form and return it to the address below.

*Please make your donation, cheque or money order payable to Advocacy for Inclusion Inc.*

**Advocacy for Inclusion**  
**PO BOX 3653**  
**Weston Creek ACT 2611**

\_\_\_\_\_  
Name for receipt

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Donation amount



advocacy for  
**inclusion**

improving life for people with disabilities

## MEMBER APPLICATION FORM

\_\_\_\_\_  
Name

\_\_\_\_\_  
Address

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Post Code

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Phone

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Email

\_\_\_\_\_  
Contact Person (Organisations only)

Please tick if you have a disability (free membership)

Donation \$ \_\_\_\_\_

*All donations over \$2 are Tax Deductable*

To become a member, please fill in this form and return it to the address below.

*Please make your donation, cheque or money order payable to Advocacy for Inclusion Inc.*

**Advocacy for Inclusion**  
**PO BOX 3653**  
**Weston Creek ACT 2611**

### Membership includes:

- Quarterly newsletter
- Policy consultation on key issues
- Representative opportunities
- Connection with local and national networks
- Right to nominate for our Board
- Membership rates for training

### Membership Categories:

- Individual
  - \$10
  - Free for people with disability
- Organisations
  - \$25