



**Your help line**  
**(03) 9916 5821**

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## Welcome to Spring!

The wattle is out, the blossoms are blooming and in spite of the cold and rain (well, we could do with some more of that) it seems that Spring is on its way.

Our theme for this edition of the newsletter is Physical Access – not the easiest for some people to achieve but if you are considering an upgrade of your premises, the check list on page 4 will, we hope, be helpful.

It's great to hear news of what providers are doing to promote and practice inclusion. Over the page are two stories we heard recently. If you have a story of your own to tell, please get in touch with Judy or Olympia and we will try to include it.

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## Coordinating Committee

Did you know that the ACE DisAbility Network is directed by a Coordinating Committee of ACE providers like yourselves? We have had a pretty consistent membership for some years, but we would like to have more representation from providers who are not specialist disability service organisations. Are you willing to give a couple of hours of your time every six weeks or so – plus a visit to the CBD - to give us your thoughts and wisdom? Current members are from: Eastwork, Vision Australia, VicDeaf, Yooralla, Inclusion Melbourne and ACFE with Japara Neighbourhood House (newly nominated).

## Shut out: the experience of people with disabilities and their families in Australia

This is the name of a new report prepared by the National People with Disabilities and Carer Council for the National Disability Strategy. It is well worth a read and is available on the National Disability Strategy website.

[www.fahcsia.gov.au/sa/disability/progserv/govtint/Pages/nds.aspx](http://www.fahcsia.gov.au/sa/disability/progserv/govtint/Pages/nds.aspx)

## Congratulations!

Well done to all the winners and finalists of the ACFE awards.

## **Inclusive gold mine in Beechworth**

Beechworth Neighbourhood House has found an innovative way to be inclusive with their program of dance and movement, and art (with lunch in between). This program not only involves people with a disability and members of the local community, but also prisoners from the local Beechworth Prison as participants. However, because the program is run by highly qualified teachers they needed to be able to subsidise the costs for people with a disability to participate.

Thus, the Quercus\* Bookshop was formed. This bookshop, located in a comfortable reader friendly environment, has all its substantial stock of preloved books provided free by the community (and the community here includes tourists as well as local residents). It is also staffed seven days a week by volunteers and all the proceeds go towards assisting people with a disability access the dance/art program.

As manager, Judy Lazarus, says: residents and visitors to the town have warmly embraced the concept and it is a truly community driven enterprise.

Check out the Quercus bookshop when you next visit Beechworth and/or find out more on: [quercuscommunitybookshop.com.au](http://quercuscommunitybookshop.com.au)

Note: Beechworth Neighbourhood House was also winner of the ACFE Award - Innovation in ACE Learning

(\*Quercus is the botanical name of the oak tree which grows outside the shop.)

## **Inside the Quercus Community Bookshop**



## **Learner with disability inspires-Meadow Heights Learning Shop**

Meadow Heights Learning Shop is a medium to large ACE provider in the Northern Region serving up to 1200 ACE students. As well as a large literacy program they also offer a Certificate III class in Education for student aides supporting children with special needs.

What has made this class even more special is that their teacher, Amy Bailey, an ex-primary school teacher, is herself a person with low vision and so has first hand experience of disability.

This has been very much to the advantage of the Learning Shop. Apart from her classroom skills (and Michael, the centre manager says that Amy was by far the best candidate for the job) Amy has been able to provide experiential training for their staff in disability awareness and been able to direct them on where to find resources to be more inclusive. Further, she was also able to advise them in the development of their Disability Action Plan.

But Amy is more than just an educator in every sense of the word at Meadow Heights, she is also a student, since although she had teacher training qualifications she also needed a TAA certificate, which she is obtaining through the Learning Shop.

As her manager says, Amy is a real life role model for both staff and students as someone who is pursuing a valuable career.

## Physical Access- Summary Sheet: What you need to know.

The **Disability Discrimination Act** makes it unlawful for public premises to be inaccessible to people with a disability. Every area and facility open to the public should be open and available to people with a disability. They should expect to enter and make use of places used by the public in the same way that people without a disability can.

For example:

Places used by the public should be accessible at the entrance and inside,  
Facilities in these places should also be accessible (wheelchair-accessible toilets, lift buttons within reach, tactile and audible lift signals for people with vision impairments),  
Rather than being confined to a segregated space or the worst seats, all areas within places used by the public should be accessible to people with a disability,  
Information available to users of the premises should be accessible.

Further it is just as important for people to be able to get out of a building (egress) as it is for them to get into it. More and more builders and architects are aiming for what is called “universal design”; that is design that accommodates everyone not just people with a disability. However, it is not always that easy for some ACE providers, some of whom are situated in old buildings or on challenging terrain, to achieve this.

While changes may not happen overnight, people with a disability should expect that changes will be made. A person with a disability has every right to complain when they are discriminated against because a place used by the public is inaccessible.

### Who is responsible for access?

The **owner of the building** is ultimately responsible for the accessibility of your building – this could be your local council, community health centre or you may own it yourselves, Even if you don't own the building, you have a moral responsibility to let the owner know where access is failing. This is where a Disability Action Plan can be very useful.

### What if we can't comply right now?

The Act allows for “unjustifiable hardship” but before deciding that providing access is unjustified, a person or organisation ought to:

thoroughly consider how access might be provided, if not now then into the future.  
discuss this directly with the person involved, and consult relevant sources of advice or funding. (Reference: [http://www.hreoc.gov.au/disability\\_rights](http://www.hreoc.gov.au/disability_rights))

### Who can help create accessible premises?

**Access Audits:** The Association of Consultants in Access Australia have a directory of people who will do access audits: 5221 2820 [http://access.asn.au/aca\\_home](http://access.asn.au/aca_home)

**General Advice/Support:** ACE DisAbility Network (9916 5821); Metro/RuralAccess officers at your local shire or council; or National Disability Coordination Officers (133 873)

## ACCESS TIP SHEET

(Please note this only covers very basic access considerations. For more details consult Australian Standard 1428.1 and the Access to Premises Standards (Draft) on [http://www.hreoc.gov.au/disability\\_rights](http://www.hreoc.gov.au/disability_rights)).

Areas to consider	Including	Details
Access pathways		An accessible path of travel from street/car park/drop off. This should: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Be a minimum width 1000mm (1200 mm at doorways, at a turn greater than 60 degrees, and at accessible sanitary facilities)</li> <li>Have contrasting colour strip at edge of path</li> <li>Have no overhanging branches or vegetation</li> <li>Have a non slip surface</li> </ul>
Car parks		Accessible parking should be minimum of 3.8 metres wide
Entrances	Doors	At least one accessible entrance way with the following features: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Width minimum of 850mm ( wider preferable to take into consideration new, larger wheelchairs)</li> <li>Pushable door weight</li> <li>Plate glass doors to be marked to indicate their presence</li> <li>Handles either D or lever type</li> </ul> Automatic entrance lighting
	Ramps	Minimum gradient 1:14 Non slip With railings conforming to AS 1428.1
	Steps	Non slip Contrasting nosing strips With railings conforming to AS 1428.1
Signage	General	Colour contrasted letters Non serif font Well lit At eye level Visual and tactile formats Use of international symbols
	Noticeboards	Notices at eye level Large print notices
Toilets	Size	1600mm X 2300mm minimum Note: accessible toilets should not be used as storage areas
	Accessible furniture	Toilet bowls Hand basins and taps Hand drying facilities Mirrors Grab rails
	Doors	Opening outwards in case of emergencies Signage D or lever type handles
Corridors		Uncluttered Step ramp gradients no more than 1:10 Maximum height of a threshold ramp 35mm
Emergencies	Signage	Exit signs Exit alarm for people with vision impairments Visual and tactile egress indicators Emergency information in large print and Easy English
	Fire drills	Held regularly