



## ***Building on the vision...***

**First Report to the ACT Minister for Disability, Housing and  
Community Services**

ACT Disability Advisory Council

**March 2004**



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## Building on the vision ...

### Introduction

Council has now been at work since April 2003. Over the last few meetings the focus of our work has crystallised and so this report, presented to you at the March 2004 meeting of Council, is timely.

Council has been a busy group and has worked well together – a list of current members are at Attachment A.

An early focus was to seek extensive briefings from DHCS, FaCS and the Working Groups. These have been useful and thorough.

Council has now identified four key focus areas which include work to support the implementation of the Vision and Values, A Welcoming Community, Performance Indicator Group and a Commonwealth Policy Group.

A recent important step has been developing a major budget submission. This submission sets out a number of key focus and program areas which we have identified as needing further support and funding assistance in the 2004/05 ACT Budget process

Council has also provided many inputs to you and your Department on a range of matters including housing options for people with disabilities, the ACT Carers Policy and other matters. Shortly we will be providing you with comments on Challenge 2013.

Council was closely involved in the management of last year's successful ACT celebrations for the UN International Day of People with a Disability including the ACT Inclusion Awards. The Awards and the other community based activities were a first for the ACT and were well received.

Council is now focussing on a number of specific project areas which align closely to the Vision and Values for Disability Services (refer Attachment B).

Council is *Building on the Vision* by suggesting concrete ways that we can operationalise and promote the Vision and Values as well as create a welcoming community where people with disabilities are included and have opportunities for meaningful involvement in the ACT community.

This is at the heart of values of community and inclusion as well as the vision of a Canberra community where all people with disabilities achieve what they want to achieve, live how they choose to live, and are valued as full and equal members of the ACT community.

We commend this report to you. We perceive that the community are keen for news on the Council's activities and I seek your agreement to publicly release the report on DAC's new web presence at <http://www.dhcs.act.gov.au/DisabilityACT/AdvisoryCouncil/Council.htm> and to issue a Media Release.

Should you wish to discuss this report further please do not hesitate to contact me on 0413 135 731.

Best Regards



CRAIG WALLACE  
Chair  
ACT Disability Advisory Council  
23 March 2004.

## Executive Summary

- The ACT Disability Advisory Council has been hard at work for nearly a year and its focus has crystallised. Council has put in place sound procedures for managing briefing and policy advice and is developing a growing profile in the Canberra community through a website and other communications activities.
- Council has provided advice to you and other ACT Government Ministers on a range of matters including education, housing models, access to bushfire recovery materials and the implementation of the ACT Access to Government Strategy.
- Council has also provided advice on Australian Government matters, such as the review of the DDA and is pursuing links with State and Territory counterparts and the National Disability Advisory Council.
- Council has made a major submission as part of the 2004/05 ACT Budget process which sets out a number of areas which we have identified as needing further support and funding assistance
- Council was actively involved in the planning and preparation of last years ACT celebrations for the UN International Day of People with a Disability and Gala Celebration Dinner which included the presentation of the ACT Inclusion Awards. These events were a stunning success with more than \$17,000 in sponsorship raised, 31 nominations for the Awards, a distinguished panel of judges and over 400 guests at the Gala Dinner.
- Council has identified four key focus areas. These are Building a Welcoming Canberra Community for People with Disabilities, building a framework to help Disability ACT to operationalise and promote the Vision and Values on a whole of Government basis, sound national policy advice through a national policy group, and to review performance indicators to assist Council to assess how well the Govt is proceeding to implement its commitments in Steps to Reform.
- Council is poised to commence three specific funded projects prior to the end of this financial year. These include commissioning a Welcoming Community attitudes research project, a scoping project to identify powerful ways to raise the community profile of people with a disability and the wider publication and distribution of the Vision and Values Statement.
- The lack of employment opportunities for people with disabilities is a strong emerging area of concern for the Council. Council is developing a number of proposals which will be made in the form of a contribution to the Strategy being developed by RPR. Council is also developing linkages between employment outcomes and our work on a number of projects proposed as part of our focus on Building a Welcoming Canberra Community.

## Key outcomes since April 2003

### Operational Matters

#### *Briefing process*

An important need identified early in the term was for Council to obtain briefings on a range of policy and program issues, especially the work of the previous Disability Reform Group and the Working Groups. These have been a busy few years for disability and the reform of disability services.

Hence a series of briefing opportunities were organised over several meetings and these have proved very important in bringing council up to speed and ensuring continuity of approach. These included:

- The former Disability Reform Group (DRG)
- The former Disability Advisory Council
- Disability ACT Individualised Support Services
- Briefings from each of the Working Groups

There is likely to be a continuing need for briefing and Council will be receiving quarterly briefings from the Manager of ISS and a periodic whole of agency briefing from Sandra Lambert, Chief Executive of DHCS. Council is very interested in maintaining a close watching brief over service reform in ISS as well as drawing links across Government in addressing disability issues.

#### *Operating procedures*

The provision of sound policy advice to Government is the main objective of Council.

Council has recently put in place a number of improved operating procedures to ensure that the advice process is well managed and seamless.

These include a set of Council procedures for bringing matters of major business before the Council – a major feature of this is an agenda paper system and some changes in the production of Minutes.

The Council secretariat has also commenced a weekly scan of consultation opportunities.

Council believes that there is scope for us to provide better advice and information flows to you and hopes that these will provide a basis for that. Work done in the preparation of agenda papers will also provide source material for providing feedback to stakeholders and the general community.

### Communications

#### *Council's new website*

Council recognises the importance of providing regular feedback to the ACT community on our activities as well as channels for the community to communicate with us. We have utilised a number of mechanisms for this:

Council has worked with DHCS to launch a new web presence which includes biographies of council members, Council's Terms of Reference, information on our key focus areas as well as a contact point at the Council secretariat. The website also contains a very extensive contact and links directory which was developed by Council in conjunction with DHCS media and communications.

## Building on the vision ...

Council is interested in exploring ways that we can maximise the opportunity for people with disabilities, especially young people, to utilise the website as a means of providing input to Government policy. Possibilities include a chatroom, online polling and a link to work underway elsewhere in the disability community to build an online consumer skills register that would develop a pool of people with disabilities available to contribute to consultation processes and ACT government committees (not limited to disability specific).

Refer:

<http://www.dhcs.act.gov.au/DisabilityACT/AdvisoryCouncil/Council.htm>

### **Reports**

Council has begun providing regular inputs to the DHCS *Community Partners* newsletter. This has proved a good forum for reaching a wide number of people with disabilities and families with information on the activities of the Council. Other inputs have been provided to *The Disability Reporter*, a practice begun under the former council.

### **Attendance at key meetings**

As a part time voluntary Council it is difficult to attend a breadth of meetings across the disability community, however Council maintains a presence at those where it is strategic to do so. Council members are widely networked and are part of a range of organisations. Council members have taken part in a number of specific reference groups, for instance two council members are represented on the Carer Partnership. The Council Chair also provides regular updates to the Consumer Peaks Forum which meets quarterly and includes a number of consumer bodies.

### **Policy advice**

Council provided advice on a range of policy and program issues as well as advice to the Minister. This is arguably the first and most important function of Council.

Key areas of policy advice have included

- DDA Education Standards
- The Education Bill
- Suggestions on ways to operationalise the Vision and Values for Disability Services
- Feedback on a housing project for people with disabilities
- Amendments to the ACT Education Bill
- ACT input to Australia's nomination for a UN FDR Award
- Review of Statutory Oversight and Advocacy Agencies
- Accessible formats for Bushfire recovery materials and the McLeod Report
- Provision of advice and support ACT Celebrations on the UN International Day of People with a Disability and the inaugural ACT Inclusion Awards
- The ACT Access to Government Strategy
- Support for the Interim ACT Guidelines for Access and Mobility
- Comments on the ACT Carers Policy
- Reforms to the ACT Tax Subsidy Scheme

More detail on some of the notable areas is presented below

### **Housing options**

An early issue for Council was concern in some sections of the community about a drift towards housing models for people with disabilities that did not appear to align with the vision and values or likely, in our view, to produce good long term outcomes for people with disabilities. Council gave you specific feedback on these matters.

Council has identified a need to ensure funded housing outcomes aligned to the vision and values. Council supports further work to identify housing options that meet the needs of people with disabilities, families and carers and this is included in our Budget priorities.

## Building on the vision ...

### **Amendments to Education Bill**

Council reviewed proposed Amendments to the Education Bill.

### **Review of Statutory Oversight and Community Advocacy Agencies**

Council received a briefing in on progress with the review by the Foundation for Effective Markets and Governance during 2003. Comment was provided on final report

Council has invited Govt to give us a reference to provide advice on implementation.

### **Access to ACT Government Strategy**

The strategy as launched in mid 2003. Kits, which the previous council developed, have been circulated extensively. Council continues to take a close interest and received a briefing earlier this year.

Council is very pleased with progress towards first audits and news that DHCS is well advanced toward a June 2004 deadline for itself and other agencies.

Council is keen to remain involved and will be available to provide advice on DHCS Action Plan and others as they are advanced

### **Employment of People with Disabilities**

This is a strong emerging policy area for the Council. Council members have direct experience of employment challenges and there is concern about this issue in the consumer and service provider communities.

We also acknowledge and share community concerns about falling numbers of people with disabilities finding employment in the ACT Public Services.

Council requested and received a briefing on the work between Chief Ministers and DHCS in February. A small working group of the Council met with Lyn Stevens to discuss the project in March.

Ideas discussed at that meeting included the need to focus on subcontracting and tendering requirements, the use of employment service providers and the creation of a cadetship or internship scheme for graduate recruitment.

Council is developing a number of proposals which will be made in the form of a contribution to the Strategy being developed by RPR. Council is also developing linkages between employment outcomes and our work on a number of projects proposed as part of the Welcoming Community Strategy.

### **Challenge 2013**

Council has received your letter seeking comments on this and an agenda paper has been prepared for the March Council meeting. Council will consider the document, consult with our existing networks (as agreed with your office) and provided advice during May 2004.

### **Guidelines for Access and Mobility**

Council supported implementation of draft Guidelines and was pleased by the announcement by you and Minister Corbell in 2003. The Building Code process is still slow and the decision to take Territory based steps has been vindicated.

Early concern from parts of the Property Industry, based in part on confusion between Territory and National issues, appears to have receded. Guidelines have now been in place for some considerable time and are proving a sensible measure to provide local guidance on a range of local planning and development issues.

## Building on the vision ...

It is unlikely that the Building Code will cover all of the planning needs of the Territory in respect of access issues especially adaptable housing where local measures are not matched at this stage by national planning legislation, although there are encouraging signs from the Australian Network for Universal Housing Design. (Council is represented on that body through the Chair). Council strongly recommends that the ACT Government continue with Guidelines for Access and Mobility after the changes to the Building Code of Australia have been made and would be pleased if you could convey that to your Ministerial colleagues.

### **Commonwealth issues**

#### ***Disability Advisory Bodies/intrastate liaison***

ACT a small jurisdiction and so some limits on the level of involvement have been necessary and appropriate, however we continue to make a strategic contribution.

I attended the face to face DABS meeting in Sydney late last year. There have been several teleconferences and we have made inputs on a range of matters and the ACT has been invited to chair the next national meeting of the DABS.

Council representatives are meeting later this month with counterparts from the Disability Council of NSW and this is an important opportunity to exchange information and ideas and to raise cross border issues.

#### ***Commonwealth policy group***

Council has formed a Commonwealth policy subcommittee which is an important conduit for advice in our work on Commonwealth policy matters

Providing feedback on an adhoc basis on reforms of business services, quality assurance, employment policy, the CSTDA and other issues within the gift of the Australian Government. Briefing has been requested from the Australian Government FaCS on these issues and is anticipated at the March meeting.

#### ***National Competition Policy Review of DDA***

Council felt that the review of the Disability Discrimination Act by the ACCC needed a strong response and we made a submission to the Review. Our submission highlighted the competition benefits of the ACT and was utilised in final report

### **2004/05 ACT Budget submission**

#### ***Introduction***

Late last year the ACT Treasurer, Mr Quinlan, wrote and invited the Disability Advisory Council to make a submission on our priorities for the coming 2004/05 ACT Budget. Council subsequently formed a small group to identify budget priorities and made a submission.

- The Council believes there is a substantial amount of unmet need across the disability sector. Our recommendations therefore cover some areas that Council recognises as being the very highest in priority. We feel that support of the recommended funding priority areas will make a difference, but would stress that there is much more to be done.
- Transition to independent living: homelessness, joblessness, early pregnancy, criminal activity, substance addiction

#### ***Key priority areas***

Council has identified a number of broad budget priorities which respond to the developing Vision and Values framework, the reform process and broad community priorities for improvement in disability service provision in the ACT. Some of the key broad priorities are:

## Building on the vision ...

- Support funding in 2004/05 – significant backlog and unmet need
- Skills development and capacity building in disability services
- Identifying better housing models
- Addressing unmet need for equipment to make lives of people with disabilities easier, safer and more comfortable.
- Supporting a more welcoming environment for ACT families of people with disabilities

### **Disability Services Renewal Package**

Council offers six specific initiatives for consideration in the 2004/05 Budget context as part of a disability services renewal package in response to some of these priorities:

- **Boost to general support funding** – Council believes there needs to be a boost to general support funding provided to people with disabilities.
- **Small Equipment Grants for People with disabilities 2004** – a program aimed at assisting disability services and care providers to purchase equipment to make every day living activities possible, safer and more comfortable for people with disabilities.
- **A community capacity development initiative** to build the capacity of organisations providing support to people with disabilities and to enhance the skills of staff working with people with disabilities in the ACT;
- **A training and skills development initiative** to build the capacity of organisations providing support to people with disabilities and to enhance the skills of staff working with people with disabilities in the ACT;
- **A Better Practice Housing in Disability Project** to find better practice housing responses for people with disabilities which meet the needs of both people with disabilities and families in the emergent context of the Vision and Values.
- **Introduction of a new ACT Companion Card** to encourage a range of businesses and community providers to offer discounted or free goods and services to the companions and families of people with disabilities and older citizens.

Approximate total costs of disability service renewal package are around \$1.1 million in 2004/05. A copy of the Submission is at Attachment A to this Report.

## **Celebrating ability – the ACT Inclusion Awards and UN International Day of People with a Disability**

### **Council role**

Council recognised a good opportunity to promote abilities and achievements of people with disabilities and change community attitudes

Links to Councils Welcoming Community built into the Awards and community celebrations  
Council leadership in the Celebrations and involvement in the PWD convened steering group

### **Awards**

This event was a stunning success and we are proud to have been associated with it. 31 nominations were received and more than 400 people were at the dinner. \$17,000 in sponsorship was raised along with some in kind support. The gala dinner was inspirational, particularly Warren McDonald's contribution as guest speaker and James Kearney's recital. Community/Govt partnerships worked well and Council was involved at many points in the process.

### **Community celebrations**

While the Awards were a highlight of the day a range of other celebrations and offers are occurred around Canberra. A number of businesses and cultural institutions were approached to welcome people with disabilities throughout the day with offer and discounts. Participating businesses and attractions included Hoyts Cinema's, ACTION buses, the National Zoo and Aquarium

## Building on the vision ...

### **Future**

Council supports a continued emphasis on the Day but perhaps a different focus from year to year to keep the Day fresh and meaningful.

We believe there are strong links between the Community token scheme and welcoming community objectives and that it would be worth exploring these further, as well as opportunities to celebrate the day through mainstream arts and cultural activities.

We await the Review report from PWD with interest.

## Building on the vision ...

### Our key focus areas

Council reviewed the information received during the briefing process, considered a number of possible areas for work over the life of Council and identified four key focus areas:

#### **Building a Welcoming Canberra Community for people with disabilities**

Council has formed a subcommittee to develop a Welcoming Community Strategy to look at ways to encourage a more accepting, valuing and inviting (or welcoming) community for people with disabilities in Canberra. This was one of the key areas of work identified by the former Disability Reform Group. There are close links between the work of this group and the Vision and Values group and the Government's support of a range of measures around Inclusion (such as the Inclusion Awards).

The members of the Welcoming Community Subcommittee are Craig Wallace (Convenor), Greg Walker, Toni Smith, Robert Altamore, Phillip Glesson and Betsy Gallagher.

The Welcoming community subcommittee has proposed two projects:

#### ***A Welcoming Community Attitudes Research Project***

This will sample community perceptions towards disability to inform the development of specific measures (such as a communications campaign) to encourage the community to be more welcoming towards people with disabilities.

A proposal is currently before Council which recommends that the proposed attitudes research have 3 phases.

These include:

*Phase 1: Desk research and questionnaire development.* Brief desk research to identify work, if any, already done in the area followed by the development and testing of survey questions

*Phase 2: Ad hoc survey:* A Quantitative random survey of at least 300 ACT households. Possibly consisting of interviews of 10-15 minutes each with qualitative elements on their perceptions towards disability. This will include a question on attitudes to employing a person with a disability

*Phase 3: Report writing and analysis.* Analysis of raw survey data followed by the production of a report recommending key focus areas for future communications activities in the welcoming community area.

Subject to Council agreement, researchers will be invited to submit proposals, a Council panel will assess these and a funding agreement will be drawn up with milestones around the research phases.

#### ***Finding powerful ways to raise the profile of people with a disability:***

A scoping project will identify powerful ways to raise the profile of people with disabilities, families and companions in the Canberra community. This includes participation in events and celebrations as well as art and cultural institutions.

The project will aim to increase the visibility of people with disabilities in a range of mainstream community settings. The target audiences will be the community generally, but include employers and other users of arts and cultural products where attitudinal change will make the most difference.

## Building on the vision ...

The project will ride alongside the research – we already know that people with disabilities are not well represented in mainstream community events, so it is appropriate to identify opportunities at an early stage.

Project will consist of scoping of a range of opportunities. Interviews with key institutions and event organizers to identify opportunities to include people with disabilities and disability themes and messages in a range of Canberra community events, mainstream celebrations, art, historical and cultural events.

A key objective will be to identify the most promising and powerful opportunities to embed the participation by and presence of people with disabilities in high profile Canberra events such as ACT celebrations for National Youth Week, Volunteer Week, Floriade, The Science festival, the Multicultural festival and Canberra Day activities.

At this stage it is envisaged that a report will be produced for Council by the end of the financial year and this list of opportunities will then be assessed and could form part of a 'Step 2' project, post 30 June 2004, which will focus on implementing a disability focus within the most promising mainstream opportunities, possibly in conjunction with the International Day of People with a Disability 2004.

Subject to timing, early results from the attitudes research could be used to inform the targeting of these so that maximum community impact will be achieved in key areas (such as changing attitudes about the employment of people with disabilities).

### Operationalising the Vision and Values

Another subcommittee of Council is considering a Vision and Values project that will support Disability ACT to build a framework to operationalise and promote the Vision and Values on a whole of Government basis.

The subcommittee has identified its main purpose as providing advice to the Council in regard to the implementation of the Vision and Values both into the sector and the community at large and suggest ways that Disability ACT might lead the sector in implementing the Vision and Values.

The subcommittee suggested a number of specific strategies to promote the Vision and Values:

- A way to promote the Vision and Values in the short term is to have it seen and heard in conjunction with the International Day. Based on this advice the DAC commissioned the printing of a product containing the Vision and Values which were placed on tables at the gala Celebration Dinner on 3 December 2004. The Vision and values were produced as a calendar in order to serve as a reminder of the Vision and Values, and the messages behind the Inclusion Awards, over the next twelve months.
- That Disability ACT should provide all services which they fund with a Vision and Values statement immediately
- That for the signing of next years monies the contract schedule should require service providers to demonstrate how their organisation has moved towards the implementation of the Vision and Values statement.
- That the department would expect that within the first 12 months an organisation would be able to demonstrate what steps they have taken and that within 24 months they should be able to have fully implemented the Vision and Values and to be able to show quite clearly how and what they have done.
- The group thought that rather than simply have well prepared documents there needed to be an accreditation system which worked on an outreach model (i.e. in the actual process of the service delivery). This would confirm that the paper trail was in fact being implemented to benefit the service user.
- The group felt that Disability ACT should implement the Vision and Values immediately across their department

## Building on the vision ...

- The group also felt that it might be useful for you to brief the cabinet to ensure understanding and a cross government commitment.
- The government should have the same time frames as funding recipients. I.e. be able to demonstrate what steps they have taken towards implementation within 12 months and within 24 months be able to have fully implemented Vision and Values in every government department. This means that every contract sent out on behalf of any department will have the Vision and Values statement as part of the contract.
- The group believed that it was essential that members of DAC speak out publicly about their commitment to the Vision and Values statement.
- The group felt that a brochure by DAC should be produced which outlines the DAC commitment to Vision and Values. This would be sent to all advocacy groups, service providers, parents of children who attend Koomarri, Woden, Cranleigh and Malkara schools.

The members of the Vision and Values Subcommittee are Betsy Gallagher (convenor), Matt Drummey and Dennis Stabback.

### **Providing sound advice on National Policy**

Council has formed a national policy group to support the Council to provide quality advice on a range of relevant Australian Government policy matters.

The group has been assisting council to providing feedback as needed to reforms to business services, quality assurance, employment policy, the CSTDA negotiations and other issues within the gift of the Australian Government.

An extensive briefing has been requested from the Australian Government Department of Family and Community Services (FaCS) on a number of Australian Government issues and is anticipated at the March meeting.

The Subcommittee has also identified a need for a publication to promote awareness of the split in responsibilities between the ACT and Australian Governments under the CSTDA and further work is proposed on this in the 2004/05 financial year.

The members of this Subcommittee are David Buchan (convenor), Margaret Spalding and Jan Collins.

### **Reviewing performance indicators for Steps to Reform**

Council is poised to begin work on a project to review performance indicators to assist us to assess how well the Govt is proceeding to implement its commitments in Steps to Reform.

The members of this subcommittee are Andrea Simmons (convenor), Greg Walker and Anna Saxon-Taylor.

## Building on the vision ...

### Future directions

Council expects to continue to have a busy program over coming months as we continue to provide you with sound advice and progress a range of work which builds on the Vision and Values for disability services.

In summary, we will:

- Provide you and other ACT Government Ministers with **sound advice and feedback** on policy issues effecting people with disabilities and families
- Provide a **conduit to the community** and develop our communications capacity, especially through the new Council website
- Provide **input on a range of National policy issues** and build links to other disability advisory bodies
- Progress work on the **four key focus areas** through our subcommittees
- Initiate work on two projects to build a **more welcoming Canberra community** for people with disabilities
- Initiate a **republication of the Vision and Values Statement**
- Provide input to the Strategy being developed to **encourage the employment of people with disabilities in the ACT public service** and build linkages between Councils welcoming community focus and employment outcomes.
- Provide you with **comments on Challenge 2013** by May 2004
- Provide you and your Department with advice on the **implementation of Councils proposed Disability Services Renewal Package** if elements adopted by Government in the course of the 2004/05 Budget Process
- Undertake other work on your reference as needed.

**Attachment A: Members of Council**

Craig Wallace, Chair & convenor Welcoming Community Subcommittee  
Margaret Spalding, Deputy Chair

Mr Robert Altamore  
Mr David Buchan, Convenor Commonwealth Policy Subcommittee  
Ms Jan Collins  
Mr Mathew Drummey  
Ms Betsy Gallagher, Convenor Vision and Values Subcommittee\*  
Mr Phillip Gleeson  
Ms Anna Saxon-Taylor  
Ms Andrea Simmons, Convenor, Performance indicator Subcommittee  
Ms Toni Smith  
Mr Dennis Stabback  
Ms Philippa Steele\*\*  
Mr Greg Walker

*Ex officio*

Ms Sandra Lambert, Chief Executive, Department of Disability Housing and Community Services.

Ms Lois Ford, Executive Director, Disability ACT

Mr Allan Fisher, ACT Office of the Australian Government Department of Family and Community Services

*Secretariat*

Ms Geraldine Haywood Mercer (Council employee)  
Mr Chris Bowen (DHCS project officer)

\*Resigned effective 23 March 2004

\*\*On leave until August 2004

## Attachment B: Vision & Values Statement

### **Vision**

All people with disabilities achieve what they want to achieve, live how they choose to live, and are valued as full and equal members of the ACT community.

### **Values**

#### *Community*

All people with disabilities have opportunities for personal relationships and for meaningful involvement in the ACT community in positive and creative ways, building on their individual abilities. This in turn enhances the skills, perspectives and diversity of the ACT community as more people have the opportunity to be involved in the lives of people with disabilities.

#### *Inclusion*

All people with disabilities are recognised and respected as valued and contributing members of society. Community education is an important means of achieving this outcome.

#### *Self-determination*

All people with disabilities and/or their guardians are free to make or influence the decisions and choices that affect the course of their lives. This empowers them to realise their self-worth in every aspect of life.

#### *Equality*

All people with disabilities enjoy equal rights, responsibilities and opportunities with the rest of society. Equality is promoted by people with disabilities, their advocates and supporters.

#### *Family Involvement*

The roles of families, guardians, friends, carers and significant others in the lives of people with disabilities are supported, valued and promoted.

#### *Equity*

Sufficient resources for people with disabilities are distributed strategically to best meet their overall needs, taking a holistic view of the community.

#### *Freedom of Access*

All people with disabilities have full and direct access to all public places in the ACT.

#### *Access to Information*

All people with disabilities and/or their representatives give and receive accurate, timely and understandable information, and are supported in that process to enable appropriate decisions to be made.

## Building on the vision ...

### *Transparency*

Principles, priorities and processes for service provision for people with disabilities are public and clear.

### *Partnership*

All people with disabilities have the opportunity to work collaboratively with government and the community to set agendas where appropriate and to be leaders and decision makers, particularly in the development and reform of relevant services. All parties have a clear understanding of their relationship and share relevant information with each other.

### *Consumer Power*

When obtaining supports and services, all people with disabilities enjoy protection, choice, information and redress, and can define their own needs, to the same extent as other consumers.

### *Culture of Excellence*

Services that support people with disabilities, their families and friends are flexible and innovative, and aim for, and continue to be at world best practice levels.

### *Creativity and Development*

All people with disabilities have the opportunity to enrich the community through their own growth and development.

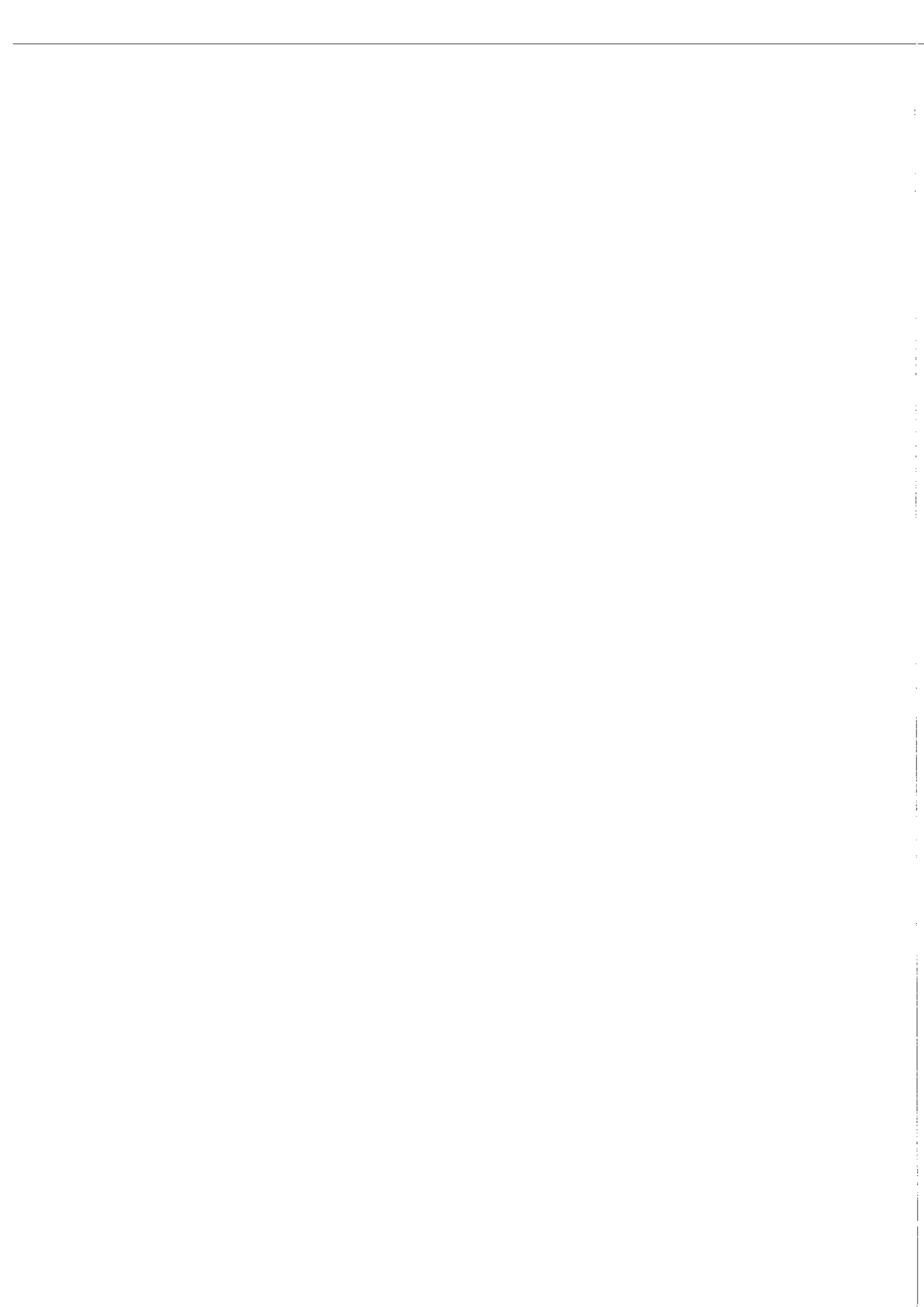
Research and recognition of the unique life experiences and skills of people with disabilities, their families, friends and carers, provide ongoing opportunities for learning.

### *Safety*

Optimal levels of safety for people with disabilities are determined in consultation with all stakeholders.

### *Representation*

All people with disabilities are empowered through advocacy support and representation of their needs and rights where necessary.



**ACT | DAC**  
**ACT | DISABILITY**  
**ADVISORY COUNCIL**

**secretariat**  
[dacsecretariat@ozemail.com.au](mailto:dacsecretariat@ozemail.com.au)

Mr John Hargreaves MLA  
Minister for Disability, Housing and  
Community Services  
GPO Box 158, Canberra ACT 2601  
Email [hargreaves@act.gov.au](mailto:hargreaves@act.gov.au)

Dear Minister

**Updates on Council work and progress**

I am writing to provide you with a number of updates on the work of your Council and to seek your agreement to proposed key result areas and some suggested areas of work and next steps.

*Overview, Council strategic planning and proposed key result areas*

Since your appointment of the Council in September we have met three times, appointed a new Secretariat and held a planning exercise as well as continue important work resulting from our terms of reference and your references to us.

At the first meeting of your Council in September we agreed to hold a planning exercise in place of the October meeting. This was held on 21 October 2005 and Elisabeth Morgan, an independent facilitator, assisted us.

The planning session was highly productive and produced good outcomes – it included a discussion on our preferred working arrangements and culture, our ToR's, stakeholder agenda analysis, and the development of Key Result Areas (KRA's) and strategies.

You have given a number of specific references to this Council and these, and other issues, are strongly reflected in the KRA's proposed out of this session which are as follows

**1. Providing evidence based and timely advice to Government**

This engages with your Councils Terms of Reference and your reference to us regarding participation by all Council members and value for the communities investment in the Council

**2. Engaging with the community, especially under represented groups**

This engages with your reference to us regarding engagement with young people, indigenous people and people with an intellectual disability

### 3. Monitoring the community's progress toward Challenge 2014

This engages with your reference to us regarding the development of a biennial scorecard for Challenge 2014

### 4. Leading on changing community attitudes about disability

This relates to progressing important work on community attitudes at a local and national level (canvassed with you in this and another letter)

### 5. Maximising our internal effectiveness

This relates to ensuring the Council is high functioning and effective in delivering on your references to us

Some initial suggestions from the day have already been adopted and these include mapping out agenda business and Budget planning against KRA's and adopting a reporting tool for reporting back and maintaining accountability for representation on DAC business at out of session meetings

The next outcomes could include a strategic plan for publication with actions, strategies and indicators of success under each key result area for release by the Council as part of our first report which could also include information on important Council work such as wheelchair taxis, employment and the attitudes research.

I seek your comment on these proposed key result areas for Council and your agreement to these forming the basis for a Council strategic directions and report for publication. If you agree, Council would like to progress this through a small working group which would present a draft to you early in 2006 with a recommendation for publication in the new year. I also seek your agreement to use Council funds for a publication (an amount was set aside by the previous Council) and to begin the process of selecting designers and printers for a publication, to be cleared by you early in the new year. \*

#### *Community attitudes research*

As you know last year your Council and the Department partnered on a project to commission research on community attitudes and I would like to present the results of the project to you and to seek your comments and agreement to some next steps,

The project included desk research, focus groups and a household survey that culminated in a full report to Council and a *Snapshot of community attitudes on disability 2004* which was released on 3 December 2004, the UN International Day of People with a Disability.

One of the key suggestions of respondents to the 2004 survey of attitudes towards disability in the ACT was to increase community understanding and acceptance of disability through education in schools. Council agreed to the next phase of the Attitudes Research project being fieldwork with teachers, principals and curriculum developers in ACT Schools on ways that we can encourage attitudinal change amongst children and/or young people and we exchanged letters about progressing this project before Council went into recess.

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The research involved a focus group discussion with school principals, curriculum coordinators and teachers from ACT primary schools and was agreed by the Department of Education and Training. The fieldwork session was held on 2 November 2005, was well attended and there are some insightful outcomes which offer good opportunities for further work.

A report was produced by Orima and is attached to this letter, however some of the key findings are that

- A well targeted disability awareness and education programme, working at a younger age group, would be regarded as welcome, timely and useful.
- There is a high need to build understanding about some disabilities. For instance, autism and non visible.
- The group were very keen on a visitor/Ambassador programme including people with a youth-appropriate profile and disabilities who have achieved in employment, youth development, business or sport who would come into classrooms.
- The group would welcome well targeted teaching materials that related to disability especially opportunities for inquiry learning i.e., web quests and Yr 9 exhibitions. Teacher, student and parent attitudes seem linked - they could be educated in the fact-finding process also. There was support for fusion in core subjects, like disability positive reading options in English and subtle approaches which emphasise person first, disability second.
- The idea of experienced based learning focussed on disability was strongly supported and the group had some innovative ideas about exercises that might be adapted for learning and intellectual disabilities. There was a preference for interactive activities within a feature such as Questacon.

The ACT Department of Education and Training has indicated that they would be keen to meet with your Council to discuss the findings of the focus group. Council feels that one option, subject to your agreement, is offering to partner in piloting some of the most powerful awareness raising options, possibly including those above, suggested by the research. This may involve a small contribution of uncommitted Council funds in the region of up to \$5,000.

I seek your permission to meet and to engage with them on the next steps as detailed above.

#### *Community engagement*

One of the important references you provided to Council was for us to engage with youth with a disability, with indigenous people who have a disability and with people with an intellectual disability. Council has been considering this closely, including in the planning session, and would like to seek your agreement to some initial engagement strategies.

As a first step, Council would like to seek your agreement to hold a number of Council meetings in community venues that offer us an opportunity to engage with your references to the Council, to connect with the community and also provide the community with opportunities to engage with us and provide feedback on key issues.

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These community-based meetings would be hosted by the community venue, with Council supporting associated meeting costs. Meetings will begin with a welcoming event, involving Council members, relevant invitees and the host organisation, prior to the formal business meeting. We would propose at this stage to hold 2-3 such meetings per year.

Our first meeting of this kind, with a youth focus, is being considered for 28 February 2006 and we were wondering whether we might approach the Department of Education and Training to host this meeting (or another soon after) within a mainstream ACT College with a good record of providing access and integrated opportunities for students with disabilities

This could showcase positive work within an ACT school as well as to unveil the results of the fieldwork stage of the attitudes research work undertaken by your Council. The meeting might also include discussions with ACT youth peaks and the advisory council.

On a related matter, I also note that Council is also participating in a meeting with the Chairs of other Ministerial Advisory Councils being convened by Mike Harris next week and that this will also provide opportunities to engage with these bodies. Other meetings which provide opportunities to build links with the indigenous community and with people with intellectual disabilities would also be scheduled.

I seek your agreement to proceeding with this idea and to approaching the Department of Education regarding an initial youth focussed meeting.

#### *Conclusion*

The next meeting of the Council is on 13 December and if possible you may wish to provide some feedback from this letter before that time to enable planning on the various issues outlined above, especially preparations for the proposed February meeting, to progress.

To discuss please contact me on 0413 135 731 or the Secretariat via email - [dacsecretariat@ozemail.com.au](mailto:dacsecretariat@ozemail.com.au)

Regards



**Craig Wallace**  
Chair

30 November 2005

cc. Cheryl Pattrick, Deputy Chair

**PO Box 129**  
**Woden ACT 2606**

**0413 135 731**

?

## Introducing ... the ACT Disability Advisory Council

The ACT Disability Advisory Council was established in May 2003, to independently advise and make recommendations to the Minister for Disability and other Ministers as appropriate across a range of issues in relation to people with disabilities.

The Council has 14 members including people with a range of disabilities and family members and a broad cross section of the ACT disability community as well as from Disability ACT and the Australian Government Department of Families, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs.

The Council has broad terms of reference and is tasked with: advising the Minister on disability issues working in partnership with Disability ACT on key activities; communicating the needs of people with disabilities and families; and establishing links with the National Disability Advisory Council.

The Council has been busy working for people with disabilities and families. For instance, Council has provided advice to ACT Government Ministers on successive ACT Budgets, community health, education, housing, individualised support, employment issues, community attitudes, the needs of employees with a learning disability, wheelchair taxis and the implementation of the *Access to ACT Government Strategy*.

Council has played a seminal role in the implementation of new policy frameworks including *Challenge 2014 - A ten year vision for disability in the ACT*, Disability ACT, *Future Directions for the ACT 2004 - 2008*, the *ACT Public Service Employment Framework for People with a Disability* and programs such as the Quality of Life and Innovations Grants.

Council is convening a *Citizens Jury* to issue the first biennial scorecard on Challenge 2014 in 2006. Council has begun moving its meetings out of the boardroom and into the community and meetings in 2006 have been held in a college and an employment service.

An important theme has been changing community attitudes on disability and Council along with other community partners has played a key role in ACT celebrations on the UN International Day of People with a Disability including the highly successful *ACT Inclusion Awards* in 2003 and 2005 and the *Canberra Disability Arts Festival in 2004*. This featured the launch of Council's *Snapshot of community attitudes on disability in the ACT*.

Council reports regularly to the community in *Community Partners in Disability* produced by Disability ACT and more information is available on our website:  
[www.dhcs.act.gov.au/DisabilityACT/AdvisoryCouncil/Council.htm](http://www.dhcs.act.gov.au/DisabilityACT/AdvisoryCouncil/Council.htm)

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# ACT | DAC

## ACT | DISABILITY ADVISORY COUNCIL

secretariat

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### Achievements - ACT Disability Advisory Council

Since the ACT Disability Advisory Council was established in May 2003, it has:

- **Provided advice to Government** on a range of matters including disability services reform, planning, access, education, community nursing, disability parking, housing models and allocations, support and therapy programmes, equipment, access to bushfire recovery materials and the implementation of the ACT Access to Government Strategy.
- Played a key role in **new policy frameworks** including Challenge 2014 - A ten year vision for disability in the ACT and Disability ACT, Future Directions for the ACT 2004 – 2008
- Implemented an innovative process called a **Citizens Jury** to measure progress by the community against objective's in Challenge 2014, a ten-year vision for disability in the ACT
- Made **submissions in the 2004/05, 2005/06 and 2006/07 ACT Budget processes**. Priority areas in the submissions have gained support by Government, such as the companion card study and the Quality of Life grants. Despite a tough Budget in 2006/07, disability held ground.
- Commissioned and completed a successful **community attitudes research project** which has identified key areas and tools for lasting change.
- Planned and **developed a pilot Disability Ambassadors in Schools** project for Torrens Primary School
- Completed a **desk research project on learning disability in the workplace** including the information needs of people with disabilities, co workers, staff and managers on their rights and responsibilities relating to the experience of.
- Boosted the profile of **ACT celebrations for the UN International Day of People with a Disability**. Council was actively involved in the planning and preparation of the 2003 and 2005 ACT Inclusion Awards and supported the Canberra Disability Arts Festival in 2004.
- **Connected with the community** by moving our meetings into the community, establishing a webpage and regular reports in Community Partners in disability.
- Lead on addressing the lack of **employment opportunities** for people with disabilities with significant inputs to the ACT employment framework and Federal MAC review.
- Achieved **targets for graduates with a disability** within the 2006 GAA intake across the ACT Public Sector
- Achieved the **reform of the ACT Taxi Subsidy Scheme**

More information?: [www.dhcs.act.gov.au/DisabilityACT/AdvisoryCouncil/Council.htm](http://www.dhcs.act.gov.au/DisabilityACT/AdvisoryCouncil/Council.htm)

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*"disability is a whole of community issue ... the true measure of success will be the extent to which the spirit and practice of Challenge 2014 is evident in the everyday lives of people with disabilities and their families".*

From Challenge 2014

secretariat

[dacsecretariat@ozemail.com.au](mailto:dacsecretariat@ozemail.com.au)

## A Citizens Jury for Challenge 2014

Challenge 2014 is a vision for the future of disability in the ACT. It is a 10-year vision that describes a world where the vision and values developed by the ACT Disability Reform Group in 2002 are readily available for people with disabilities and families throughout their lives.

The ACT Disability Advisory Council launched the document on September 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2004. The Council issued this Challenge to the community to improve the way it involves, supports and provides for people with disabilities.

Council has stewardship of Challenge 2014 and has been given responsibility by the Minister for preparing a biennial scorecard on community progress towards meeting Challenge 2014. The scorecard will represent the reissuing of the challenge.

The Council has decided to convene a Citizen Jury to assess the progress being made toward Challenge 2014. This will mean the verdict on the community's progress will be developed, in a real sense, by the community itself.

A Citizens Jury is an innovative tool for obtaining meaningful public or stakeholder input on an important matter. Citizens Juries have been found to provide a very impartial and thoughtful contribution to organisations and government in many parts of the world.

The Citizens Jury will be facilitated by Twyford Consulting and will consist of randomly selected members of the ACT community identified by an independent research company. The Citizens Jury will hear a range of presentations and deliberate over questions. It will talk to ordinary people with disabilities and families about their everyday lives.

It is anticipated that the Citizens Jury will sit over a two-day period on 21-22 October 2006. The media will be invited to cover part of the process and proceedings will be filmed.

It will be opened by the ACT and Commonwealth Ombudsman Professor John McMillan who was appointed Ombudsman in March 2003, for a five-year term. Prior to this appointment he was the Alumni Professor of Administrative Law at the Australian National University and has had a varied career in law, government and community affairs.

The first biennial scorecard by the Jury will be issued in conjunction with the UN International Day of people with a disAbility on 3 December 2006.

A link to Challenge 2014 is at:  
<http://www.dhcs.act.gov.au/DisabilityACT/AdvisoryCouncil/Publications.htm>

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# ACT | DAC

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### Introducing ... *Frameworks*

#### - Northside Individualised Community Access and Inclusion Service

The Community Programs Association (CPA) is a government-funded service that offers a variety of programs to people who have a disability. These programs address issues such as employment and community access and involvement. Programs primarily cater for people with intellectual disabilities, but services are provided for people with all disability types.

CPA established Sharing Places, it's first program, in 1989 (Sharing Places was separately incorporated in the early 1990's). CPA now runs a wide range of programs that support over 260 people. These programs include:

- *Workplaces* - Established in 1990 as a research grant looking at supported employment options for students attending the Koomarri School. Starting with 7 people, the program has now grown to support 175 people in the ACT and surrounding areas. There are 2 program types; an open employment service that seeks employment for people in the open labour market; and a business service where CPA employs people with a disability in horticulture and cleaning businesses it operates.
- *CAPS Access* - A non-centre based community access program established in 1992.
- *CAPS Plus* - Provides a combination of community access and employment (paid or unpaid) for people at a transition point. It also allows interested people to pursue volunteer work. Funding support for this program was first gained in 1998.

Now, **the new Frameworks service**, to be provided by CPA and funded by Disability ACT, will be announced at the second community meeting of the ACT Disability Advisory Council to be held at CPA on 26 September 2006.

Frameworks, the Northside Individualised Community Access and Inclusion Service, encourages and enhances the use of community facilities by people with disabilities.

The service will support young people and adults who have completed school, and who are not ready or who may not be able to seek or participate in full time employment.

CPA also receives funding from the Australian Government Department of Families, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs.

More information about CPA is available on the web: <http://www.cpa-inc.com.au/index.htm>

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FACT SHEET

*I believe there is confusion over understanding what exactly a 'learning disability' is, what it means for a person, and what it means to work with that person.*

*Too many assumptions and incorrect beliefs and not enough true understanding.*

A co-worker of a person with a learning disability

**secretariat**

[dacsecretariat@ozemail.com.au](mailto:dacsecretariat@ozemail.com.au)

## **Learning disability information in the workplace – Overview of key findings from the ACTDAC desk research project**

Early in 2006, Council presented some ideas to the Chief Ministers Department and identified the potential for Guidelines to provide advice and support to people with disabilities, co workers, staff and managers on their rights and responsibilities relating to the experience of learning disability in the workplace.

We identified that more information was needed especially what is already available, what the level of perceived need was, what might be the most useful types of information and what was being done in other jurisdictions.

A desk research project was undertaken by the ACT Disability Advisory Council, which looked at the need for learning disability guidelines in the public sector workplace.

Work was undertaken to survey Internet resources including examples of guidelines here and overseas. A brief knowledge survey was developed and circulated to a group of key informants including executives, managers, people with learning and other disabilities, co workers, trainers and others who could provide feedback.

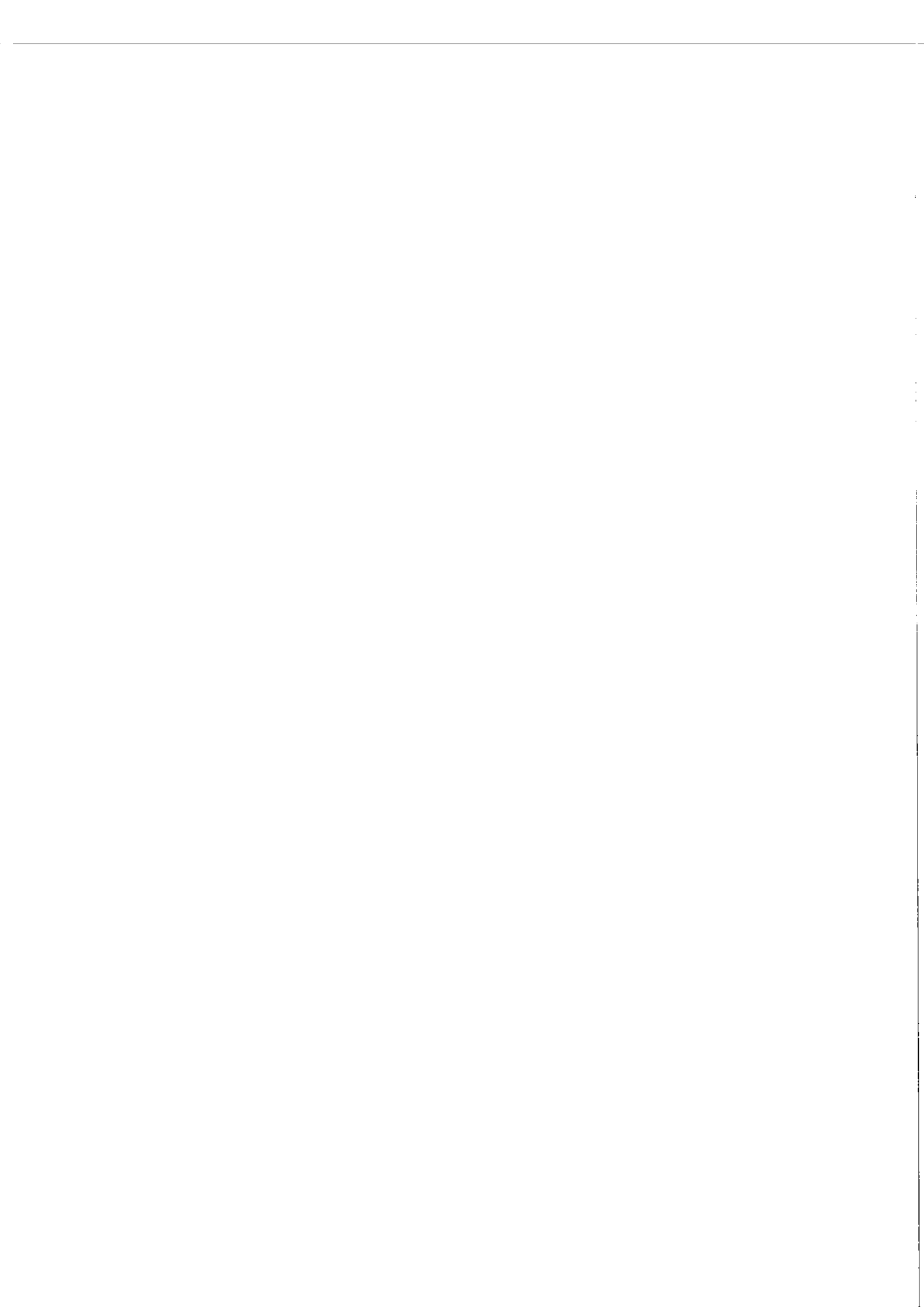
- 28 responses were utilised with a mix of perspectives. A third were from managers.
- A high number of respondents (86%) believe assistance is needed
- Most people would prefer separate Guidelines, while others argued for information within other disability material.
- Most people (60%) are unsure about the practical tools and strategies that they can use to assist people with a learning disability in the workplace.
- Managers and co workers want more information ranging from what learning disability is and is not to tools and techniques that can be used in the workplace.
- There are features which make the needs for learning disability exceptional – for instance the potential for issues to manifest in ways that threaten job stability
- There are other Guidelines that could be adapted for the ACT, but there is a difference in the quality of information in the Guidelines, so a tailored approach is recommended.

There is a strong case for more information about learning disability being made available to managers, staff, coworkers and people with disabilities in the public sector. The best approach might be a series of ready reference fact sheets that provide key information.

More information will be available on our website:

[www.dhcs.act.gov.au/DisabilityACT/AdvisoryCouncil/Council.htm](http://www.dhcs.act.gov.au/DisabilityACT/AdvisoryCouncil/Council.htm)

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# **The things we got done**

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**ACT Disability Advisory Council:  
Four year report to the community**

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**Access to Attitudes Research  
ACT Government Allied health  
Taxi Reform Inclusion  
Budget submissions Citizens Jury  
Air travel Community meetings  
Disability Ambassadors  
Employment  
Cultural training Strategy  
Festival! Learning disability  
Access CSTDA  
Guidelines Framework**

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Chapter

**1**

# Welcome

## The things we got done

ACT Disability Advisory Council: Four year report to the community

### Introduction

*It is common sense to take a method and try it.  
If it fails, admit it frankly and try another.  
But above all, try something.*

Franklin D Roosevelt

It gives me real pleasure to introduce a report for the ACT Disability Advisory Council appointed in 2003.

While we have produced a number of reports in that time this is first one that provides an account across the range of this Councils work since its set up in 2003.

The last four years have been quite a journey for the members of Council. A highlight of that journey has been the opportunity to make some lasting contributions to changing community attitudes on disability.

Creating a more welcoming Canberra community for people with disabilities has been a defining theme running through Councils work over the last four years.

It recognises that without broader systemic change to the way that the community includes and involves people with disabilities and families we can only ever apply band aids to the daily problems people face.

Council has always recognised that people with disabilities and families face a constant struggle in their daily lives. We know that disability is a 24/7 issue.

Nowhere was this better highlighted than in the presentations to last years Citizens Jury to measure the community's progress towards Challenge 2014. We also heard it in the people who came to the forums on community nursing and WATS.

We commend those stalwarts in the Canberra disability community who continue to come forward to make their voices heard – often in difficult circumstances.

If there is one thing I hear again and again from disability advocates it is frustration and surprise that our issues do not resonate in the community.

Last years Citizens Jury was a defining process in that it was an experiment in engaging a slice of the whole community in measuring its own progress and finding the solutions.

Confronted for a moment with a taste of the lives and experience of people with a disability our jury reacted with surprise, then empathy and engagement. Here perhaps is a path to understanding – a constant effort to keep disability in the face of the community.

It has been very pleasing to be part of a Council that is the embodiment of persistence and has never felt that that near enough is good enough.

Phillip Gleeson has kept us focussed on employment, Lily Troupe on learning disability, Dennis Stabback on the need to reflect the Vision and Values across our work, Christina Ryan on good governance, Trevor Robinson and Terry Millar on the needs of parents and service providers and Toni Smith and Margaret Thompson on education and training issues. Ian Trehwella and Robert Altamore have brought sage experience and advice to the Council. Exceptional support was provided by the Deputy Chair, Cheryl Patrick.

Council has been very lucky with the standard of staff support it has been able to attract including Geraldine Haywood Mercer, Anna Hackett and most recently Sarah Buchanan.

No doubt future DAC's will improve on almost everything we did and I really hope they do. But we do challenge *anyone* to top the 400 plus show bags and the array of discounts, offers and samples to the value of \$42,000 that Sarah Buchanan somehow managed to extract from a boggling army of sponsors as part of DAC's contribution to last years International Day of People with a Disability.

We have also been lucky to have the full engagement of the Department from the top down. The fact that Sandra Lambert, the Chief Executive, has rarely missed a Council meeting speaks for itself.

We have been incredibly lucky to have a change agent as tenacious as Lois Ford over the last four years. Lois has taken Council seriously and shown a willingness to take chances for better outcomes. The difference in profile since 2003 is nothing less than stunning.

The commitment to long term goals in disability, forged by the will of successive Ministers and the staff of Disability ACT in the form of Future Directions and Challenge 2014 is unprecedented in the ACT.

Those of us with long memories will easily recall the days when this – or any sort of planning for disability – was a lost utopian ideal. We have been very fortunate to work under successive Ministers who take disability seriously. Those who come after us share an obligation to advance and protect these long term commitments and ensure that we never return to the piecemeal policy approach of former times.

The Council has built on an important legacy which includes significant contributions made by the previous Council including Robert Altamore, who chaired the Council appointed in 2000, and Dennis Stabback who chaired the ground breaking Disability Reform Group. Both Robert and Dennis are retiring this year and I acknowledge their contributions.

On behalf of the retiring members of Council I would like to thank you and the ACT Government and community for the opportunity of being part of a remarkable journey over the last four years.

To the next Council I leave where I began with a parsing of my favourite quote in the whole universe from Franklin D Roosevelt. *But above all, try something.*

Craig Wallace  
26 June 2007

Chapter

**2****About the Council****A snapshot of the Council**

Membership • ToRS • Strategic Focus • Achievements

**About the Council**

The Disability Advisory Council was established in May 2003, to independently advise and make recommendations to the Minister for Disability and other Ministers as appropriate across a range of issues in relation to people with disabilities.

The Council has representation from a broad cross section of the disability community as well as from Disability ACT and the Commonwealth Department of Families, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs.

The Council has broad terms of reference and is tasked with: advising the Minister on disability issues working in partnership with Disability ACT on key activities; communicating the needs of people with disabilities and families; and establishing links with other disability advisory bodies.

In line with its terms of reference Council has provided advice to ACT Government Ministers on successive ACT Budgets, community health, education, housing, rehabilitation services, individualised support, employment issues, community attitudes, wheelchair taxis and subsidies and the implementation of the Access to ACT Government Strategy.

Council has played a seminal role in the implementation of new policy frameworks including Challenge 2014 - A ten year vision for disability in the ACT, Disability ACT, Future Directions for the ACT 2004 - 2008, the ACT Public Service Employment Framework for People with a Disability and programs such as the Quality of Life and Innovations Grants.

An important theme has been changing community attitudes on disability and Council along with other community partners has played a key role in ACT celebrations on the UN International Day of People with a Disability including the highly successful ACT Inclusion Awards in 2003 and 2005 and the Canberra Disability Arts Festival in 2004.

This featured the launch of Councils Snapshot of community attitudes on disability in the ACT which is a summary of a research project on community attitudes to disability commissioned by the Council in partnership with DHCS in 2004 and undertaken by ORIMA Research.

Current focus areas for the Council include working in partnership with the ACT Department of Education and Training on developing a pilot Disability Ambassadors in Schools project and devising an innovative method to help the community produce a biennial scorecard to measure its progress towards Challenge 2014. Council was also involved in producing the report of the Reference Group on Wheelchair Accessible Taxis.

Council also provided an ACT perspective on some Australian Government matters and participated in regular meetings with other state and territory Disability Advisory Bodies. Some of this work saw the Council take a leadership role, such as in the development of a Framework for the preamble for the next CSTDA developed in Adelaide in late 2006.

From 2006, Council began holding some meetings in community settings as a way of building knowledge and connections. Council has also been working to better engage with young people with a disability, people with an intellectual disability and indigenous people with a disability.

Council reported regularly to the community in *Community Partners in Disability* produced by Disability ACT and its website.

## **Council Members**

### **Appointed 2003**

Craig Wallace (Chair), Margaret Spalding (Deputy Chair), Robert Altamore, David Buchan, Jan Collins, Matthew Drummey, Betsy Gallagher, Phillip Gleeson, Anna Saxon-Taylor, Andrea Simmons, Toni Smith, Dennis Stabback, Phillipa Steele, Greg Walker

Appointed to vacancies 2004: Terry Millar, Cheryl Patrick

### **Appointed 2005**

Craig Wallace (Chair), Cheryl Patrick (Deputy Chair), Robert Altamore, Phillip Gleeson, Terry Millar, Trevor Robinson, Christina Ryan, Toni Smith, Dennis Stabback, Margaret Thompson, Ian Trehwella, Lily Troupe

Appointed to identified positions in 2006: Justin Ray and Sharon Sobey

## **Key Achievements**

**Since the ACT Disability Advisory Council was established in May 2003, it has:**

- Provided advice to Government on a range of matters including disability services reform, planning, access, education, community nursing, disability parking, housing models and allocations, support and therapy programs, equipment, access to bushfire recovery materials and the implementation of the ACT Access to Government Strategy.
- Played a key role in new policy frameworks including *Challenge 2014 - A ten year vision for disability in the ACT* and *Disability ACT, Future Directions for the ACT 2004 – 2008*.

- Implemented an innovative process called a Citizens Jury to measure progress by the community against objectives in Challenge 2014, a ten-year vision for disability in the ACT.
- Made submissions in the 2004/05, 2005/06 and 2006/07 ACT Budget processes. Priority areas in the submissions have gained support by Government, such as the companion card study and the Quality of Life grants. Despite a tough Budget in 2006/07, disability held ground.
- Commissioned and completed a successful community attitudes research project which has identified key areas and tools for lasting change.
- Planned and developed a pilot Disability Ambassadors in Schools project for Torrens Primary School.
- Completed a desk research project on learning disability in the workplace including the information needs of people with disabilities, co-workers, staff and managers on their rights and responsibilities relating to the experience of this disability.
- Boosted the profile of ACT celebrations for the UN International Day of People with a Disability. Council was actively involved in the planning and preparation of the 2003 and 2005 ACT Inclusion Awards and supported the Canberra Disability Arts Festival in 2004.
- Connected with the public by moving our meetings into the community, establishing a web page and regular reports in Community Partners in disability.
- Lead on addressing the lack of employment opportunities for people with disabilities with significant inputs to the ACT employment framework and Federal MAC review.
- Achieved targets for graduates with a disability within the 2006 GAA intake across the ACT Public Sector.
- Achieved significant reform of the ACT Taxi Subsidy Scheme.
- Highlighted national issues with accessible air travel.

## **Terms of Reference**

1. Advise and make recommendations to the Minister for Disability and other Ministers as appropriate as to:
  - 1.1. Issues, policies and practices generally as they impact on people with disabilities, their families and carers and service providers, including matters affecting the rights of people with disabilities, legislation and policy proposals;
  - 1.2. The progress in developing and implementing "Steps to Reform";
  - 1.3. Issues arising out of community consultations, complaints and other sources; and
  - 1.4. Any other matter, at the determination of the body which affects the lives of people with disabilities and their families and which arises or is related to their disabilities.

2. Work in partnership with the Department of Disability, Housing and Community Services in the development and implementation of the key activities that impact on the lives of people with disabilities and their families.
3. Communicate the needs of people with disabilities and their families by:
  - 3.1. Promoting awareness and education across government and the community sectors about the needs of people with disabilities and their families; and
  - 3.2. Receiving advice from, and providing information to, different communities to ensure that varying perspectives are heard and considered by the advisory body.
4. Establish links with the National Disability Advisory Council to ensure coordination of federal and ACT advice to Government.

## **Key Result Areas**

### **The Council has identified 5 key areas of focus in its advice to the Minister**

- Maximising our internal effectiveness
- Providing evidence based and timely advice to Government
- Monitoring the communities progress towards Challenge 2014
- Leading on changing community attitudes about disability
- Engaging with the community, especially with under-represented groups

Chapter

**3**

# Key Result Areas

## KRA1: Maximising our internal effectiveness

Planning • Business • Governance • Guidelines

### Strategic Planning

At the first meeting of the Council appointed in 2005 it was agreed that the Council hold a planning exercise on Friday 21 October 2005. Elisabeth Morgan, an independent facilitator, assisted us.

The planning day was highly productive and produced good outcomes – it included a discussion on our preferred working arrangements and culture, our ToR's, stakeholder agenda analysis, a Strengths Weaknesses Opportunities and Threats matrix and the development of Key Result Areas and strategies.

The Minister has given a number of specific references to this Council and these, and other issues, are reflected in the KRA's agreed on the day which are as follows:

1. Providing evidence based and timely advice to Government
2. Engaging with the community, especially under represented groups
3. Monitoring the community's progress toward Challenge 2014
4. Leading on changing community attitudes about disability
5. Maximising our internal effectiveness

Many suggestions from the day were adopted and these include mapping out agenda business and Budget planning against KRA's and adopting a reporting tool for reporting back and maintaining accountability for representation on DAC business at out of session meetings

### Conduct of Business

The Council has worked to set a high standard in terms of good governance. Specific areas of focus were probity and the efficient ordering and processing of business.

Council operates an agenda paper system whereby all matters needing a decision by Council, outside of standing items, which are to be included in the Agenda at a Council meeting, must be accompanied by a completed agenda paper using the agreed pro forma which includes a purpose and draft recommendation for councils consideration. It is a requirement that all papers be linked to strategic business under a KRA, be in plain English and highlight the key decisions to be made.

Council members attending meetings on official business must also provide reports to Council specifying implications for Council business.

These measures ensure that Council is able to give adequate, equitable and timely attention to business.

Council members are paid sitting fees and attendances are tracked. Council had a high meeting rate between 2003-2007, and met monthly on average over the period. Events also substituted for some meetings including in 2006 and 2007.

<b>Year</b>	<b>Number of meetings</b>
2003 (appointed in May)	9
2004	12
2005	12
2006	11
2007 (to June)	3

Table: Council meetings 2003-2007

Budget is a standing item of each meeting and Council has adopted Operating Guidelines and Guidelines for conference attendances (see below).

## **Council Secretariat and Policy Support**

The ACT Disability Advisory Council hires and manages its own independent Secretariat. This arrangement supports a clear role for Council in the provision of independent advice to the Minister and prevents confusion between advice, stakeholder management and support roles for Departmental staff. It is a busy Secretariat whose work includes handling agendas, minutes and correspondence and providing a range of other support to the Council and working on specific projects, such as the International Day of People with a Disability. The Secretariat was hired through an agency – Wizard - to obviate the need for the Council to manage payroll and other issues.

Council has been well supported by its Executive Officers including Geraldine Haywood Mercer, Anna Hackett and the current support person, Sarah Buchanan. We thank each of our support people for their work and support of DAC.

A separate policy support function is operated within the ACT Department of Disability, Housing and Community Services. The role involves the provision of policy advice and support as well as facilitating contacts within the ACT Government. This has often been an exceptionally busy role as this Council has seen its role as encompassing disability interests across a range of ACT government agencies. Council has been very pleased with the support provided by the two relevant officers of Disability ACT, Chris Bowen and subsequently Gerry McKeon and Pam Jenkins.

## **Operating Guidelines**

Council has developed a set of Operating Guidelines that describe the accountabilities of Council and its members. The intention was to provide clarity and workable riding instructions on key issues of governance, procedure and authority and limit the potential for these issues to monopolise the time of Council.

The Guidelines cover a range of issues including the Terms of Reference, the role of Council, composition, executive, terms of appointment, operation of Council, presentation of business, confidentiality, conflict of interest, support for Council, conduct of business between meetings, official business and representation of council views, the use of taxi vouchers and reimbursement of expenses

## **Conference Guidelines**

During 2006 a small working group of the Council, developed a set of Guidelines to inform the process around the provision of support Council may provide to individual members in attending relevant conferences.

Key features of the Guidelines were that priority for attendances will be determined in accordance with the needs of Council in meeting Key Result Areas (KRA) as well as providing guidance on a range of probity issues.

A key issue was the requirement for the development of a business case outlining the benefits to Council and the ACT prior to travel being approved. These Guidelines will hopefully provide clarity, high levels of probity and guidance to future Councils.

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## **KRA2: Providing evidence based and timely advice to Government**

Policy • Strategy • Funding • Advice • Consultation • Action

### **Access to ACT Government**

**ACTDAC develops initial Access to ACT Government strategy – now implemented in nine public sector agencies and audit kit published**

The Access to ACT Government Strategy was launched by the former Minister, Bill Wood, in 2003 following extensive work by the previous Disability Advisory Council spanning the Carnell, Humphries and Stanhope Governments.

The Access to ACT Government Strategy is an initiative of the ACTDAC, who worked in collaboration with Disability ACT to complete the strategy. The Strategy is an implementation framework to assist government agencies to identify areas where access barriers exist. Through an audit process, agency-specific plans will be developed to eliminate such obstacles. These plans will include timeframes and details on how issues will be addressed.

In 2003 an Access to Government audit kit was published which was also extensively written by the Council.

While the implementation side of the Strategy has now moved to Government, where it belongs, Council has continued in a monitoring and oversight role and has also assisted some Departments, such as Transport and Municipal Services (TAMS), develop their action plans and training strategies.

All the agencies below have developed Action Plans following audits:

- Chief Minister's Department
- Department of Treasury
- Department of Disability, Housing and Community Services
- Department of Urban Services
- ACT Health
- Department of Education and Training
- ACT Planning and Land Authority
- Department of Justice and Community Safety
- ACT Emergency Services Authority
- Canberra Institute of Technology

## Budget Submissions – 2003, 2004, 2005, 2006

### ACTDAC made 4 successive Budget submissions – priorities adopted by Government and disability holds ground in tough Budget cycle

The Council made submissions in the 2004/05, 2005/06 and 2006/07 ACT Budget processes. These submissions have focussed on prioritising existing Government commitments, identifying new and pressing areas of unmet need as well as scoping new policy proposals for Government consideration.

Some priority areas in the submissions have gained support by Government, such as the companion card study and the Quality of Life grants. Despite a tough Budget period commencing in 2006/07, disability held ground.

Since 2002/03 there have been funding *increases* for disability in each successive ACT Budget and these have totalled almost \$14 million as follows:

2002/03	\$2.000M
2003/04	\$3.165M
2004/05	\$3.350M
2005/06	\$1.638M
2006/07	\$0.736M
2007/08	\$3.000M
Total	\$13.891M

## Future Directions Oversight Group

Council was represented on the Future Directions Oversight Group. The Oversight group was tasked with monitoring the Governments implantation of the strategies in Disability ACT, Future Directions for the ACT 2004 – 2008.

Future Directions identifies four strategic directions that will benefit all people with a disability, their families and carers who live in the ACT. These include promoting an inclusive society; strengthening the capacity of people with disabilities to maximise control over their lives; improving planning and the use of available funding; and developing a sustainable service delivery sector. It provides a framework through which Disability ACT can support people with disabilities to realise their vision and their rights to self determination, respect, dignity and participation at all levels in the community.

The Future Directions Oversight Group is accountable to the Chief Executive for the strategic oversight of the implementation of Future Directions 2004-2008. The oversight group is made up of six members, three of whom are community members as well as the Executive Director of Disability Act and the member of Council as ex-officio members of the group.

## Employment

The Council has maintained a focus on maximising employment opportunities for people with disabilities. Employment levels for people with disabilities are well below what they should be given the prevalence of disability in the community.

### **ACT Public Service Employment Framework for People with a Disability**

**ACTDAC involved in employment framework launched in 2004 and recommends graduate target – more than one-third of the recruits for the 2006 ACT Public Service Graduate Program had a disability.**

Council was involved in working with the Chief Ministers Department on the development of the ACT Public Service Employment Framework for People with a Disability, released in August 2004.

The Framework provides the vision and principles and sets the strategic direction for the next four years through seven key objectives underpinned by 27 practical strategies with associated responsibilities and timelines.

Council was involved in a standing committee of the Human Resources Council which developed the early approach to implementation and recommended some early high value measures to increase awareness of the strategy including a target for Graduate Recruitment.

More than one-third third of the recruits for the 2006 ACT Public Service Graduate Program had a disability.

### **Assistance with Agency Strategies**

Council provided advice and support on an agency specific basis to both Transport and Municipal Services (TAMS) and ACT Health on strategies, tools and products to improve the disability employment profile of those agencies. The Council delivered an information session as part of a workshop to remove myths about disability employment within TAMS.

### **MAC Review**

Council provided policy advice to the Management Advisory Committee (MAC) forum of Australian Government Secretaries and Agency Heads in its review of the Employment of people with disability in the APS. The Review was responding to similar trends in the ACT whereby fewer people with disability are being recruited into the APS, and existing staff with disability are leaving at a faster rate than they are being recruited.

**Learning Disability Guidelines Research Project****ACTDAC completes desk research project on the needs of staff and co-workers with learning disability in the workplace**

Early in 2006, Council presented some ideas to the Chief Ministers Department and identified the potential for Guidelines to provide advice and support to people with disabilities, co-workers, staff and managers on their rights and responsibilities relating to the experience of learning disability in the workplace.

We identified that more information was needed especially what is already available, what the level of perceived need was, what might be the most useful types of information and what was being done in other jurisdictions.

A desk research project was undertaken by the ACT Disability Advisory Council, which looked at the need for learning disability guidelines in the public sector workplace.

Work was undertaken to survey Internet resources including examples of guidelines here and overseas. A brief knowledge survey was developed and circulated to a group of key informants including executives, managers, people with learning and other disabilities, co-workers, trainers and others who could provide feedback.

- 28 responses were utilised with a mix of perspectives. A third were from managers.
- A high number of respondents (86%) believe assistance is needed.
- Most people would prefer separate Guidelines, while others argued for information within other disability material.
- Most people (60%) are unsure about the practical tools and strategies that they can use to assist people with a learning disability in the workplace.
- Managers and co workers want more information ranging from what learning disability is and is not to tools and techniques that can be used in the workplace.
- There are features which make the needs for learning disability exceptional – for instance the potential for issues to manifest in ways that threaten job stability.
- There are other Guidelines that could be adapted for the ACT, but there is a difference in the quality of information in the Guidelines, so a tailored approach is recommended.

There is a strong case for more information about learning disability being made available to managers, staff, co-workers and people with disabilities in the public sector. The best approach might be a series of ready reference fact sheets that provide key information.

The Minister provided a foreword to the report which has been sent to the ACT Chief Minister.

## **Service Quality Monitoring**

### **ACTDAC took a close interest in safety and quality improvements in Group homes following the Gallop Report**

The Council requested regular quarterly updates from the manager of ISS services. Updates focussed on the introduction of safety measures and improved training in group homes.

ACTDAC has maintained a close watching brief on service improvements in this area since 2003.

## **Innovations and Quality of Life Grants**

ACTDAC provided representation on the panels for the Innovations Grants and also played a key role in the development and planning of the Quality of Life Grants which were in turn a variation of a suggestion by ACTDAC in its 2003 ACT Budget Submission.

ACTDAC drew up draft criteria for the Quality of Life Grants which focussed on spreading the benefits widely and making a difference in the everyday lives of people with disabilities which were drawn on in the final grant process. Phillip Gleeson sat on the community governed assessment panel for the DAC.

Both of these grants processes have made a considerable difference for people with disabilities and families on the ground.

## **Taxis - WATS Reference Group and TSS Reforms**

### **ACTDAC hosts community consultation on WATS – Minister accepts 39 recommendations from reference group which includes ACTDAC**

A Reference group was formed by Minister Hargreaves to look at ways to improve services to users of Wheelchair Accessible Taxis. The Group consisted of a Steering Committee and a Working group appointed by the Minister.

Council was represented on the Steering Committee by the Chair and on the Working group by Dennis Stabback and consumer representatives Jonathon Crowley and Maree Wright.

The Steering Committee received public submissions and the last Council agreed to facilitate a face-to-face consultation opportunity for people with disabilities and families and this took place at the Legislative Assembly on 18 June 2005.

The previous Council approved a submission, which stressed the need for early action to address major concerns with the wheelchair taxis and to improve services, especially in the areas of safety, comfort and access; timeliness and reliability; and customer service. It also canvassed micromanagement. The Council submission included strong points on the need to address immediate safety issues including the wearing of seat belts in cabs.

The Wheelchair Accessible Taxis Reference Group Report launch was held on 25 October 2005. The Group made 39 recommendations to the Minister and the Minister has accepted all 39. The recommendations reflect a number of major issues from the Council submission.

A copy of the report and other information on WATS can be found at  
<http://www.urbanservices.act.gov.au/transroads/wheelchair.htm>

A key recommendation is for DUS to mandate "micro-management" of WATs through the Canberra Cabs booking system.

The ACT Government will provide funding this financial year and in three forward years to subsidise the cost.

## **ACT Health and Allied Services**

ACTDAC raised concerns about community health services for people with disabilities in the early part of 2005 and these issues have continued to attract a close monitoring brief.

Specifically ACTDAC was made aware of changes to community nursing procedures which meant that some people with high level spinal cord injuries would receive highly restricted bowel care programmes.

ACTDAC maintains that there is a need for better strategies to balance occupation health and safety issues and patient safety issues to ensure that the rights of both people with disabilities and chronic health conditions and staff continue to be protected.

## **CSTDA 2007 – Framework and Preamble**

ACTDAC provided national context and background for ACT during the development of the preamble to the 2007 CSTDA.

Council played a lead role in the development of the framework for the next CSHA at a meeting of the Disability Advisory Councils around Australia in Adelaide from 5-6 October 2006.

DACS provided views on what we think the themes and outcomes ought to be which could be shaped post meeting into a preamble.

Key features of this were the idea that the world has moved on significantly since 2003 and we wanted a broader approach which recognised that the CSTDA was the only joint national framework that described our collective project for disability:

- Demand management is important but it needs to occur within a context of human rights and the enhancement of peoples lives.
- The agreement must put people at the centre.
- To achieve these objectives and as a precondition to effectively managing demand, the parties to the Agreement have to acknowledge that the CSTDA is part of a whole of Government reform agenda which include wide ranging reforms in areas such as Standards, Education and Labour Market Reform.
- Better Community Access Initiatives and Better Planned Broad Generic Services.

The DACS were also keen to acknowledge the need for continuous improvement. We do not always do it well. There needs to be an emphasis on doing better for rural, regional and remote; and indigenous Australians. Some areas like general attitudes, early intervention, post school options, consumer involvement, barriers in the community and delivering seamless services to individuals need specific attention. We need to ensure funding is delivered equitably and proportionately. Sometimes the strategies don't link up – even within Government.

DACS also highlighted some threshold (non-negotiable) issues. Following the meeting the ACT was asked to continue in a lead role and we await the next stage of the preamble along with the rest of the Commonwealth State Territory Disability Agreement.

### **Draft Bill on the Sterilisation of Children**

Council provided input to the ACT Attorney General on the draft (Federal) Bill on the Sterilization of children (with a decision making intellectual disability). We indicated strong concerns with the Government's current proposal to develop a nationally consistent approach to the authorisation procedures required for the lawful sterilisation of minors with a decision-making disability.

DAC strongly emphasized that sterilization should be a last resort and can be justified only in circumstances where it is necessary to save life or preserve the health of the individual.

### **UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with a Disabilities**

ACTDAC wrote to the ACT Government asking it to make representations to the Prime Minister to agree to the signing of the draft UN convention during 2006. The Australian Government signed the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in a formal ceremony opening the Convention for signature held on 30 March 2007 at the UN Headquarters in New York.

Work now moves towards ratification and Council member Ian Trehwella, was asked by Council to attend a workshop on implementation of the convention in June 2007.

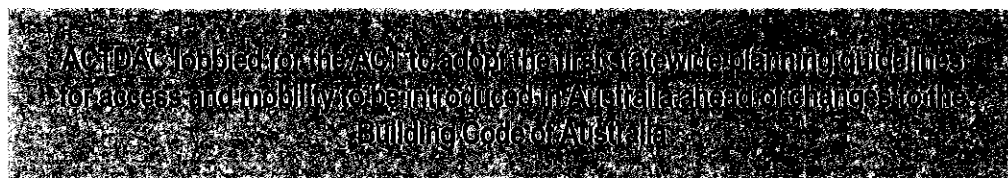
## Accessible Air Travel

The ACT Disability Advisory Council's Chair lodged a personal discrimination complaint with the Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission (HREOC) after he was forced to abandon a booked flight to return from a national meeting of Government appointed Disability Advisory Councils around Australia.

The complaint arises from Virgin Blues 'independent travel criteria': This criteria includes a poorly framed requirement that passengers be able to assist themselves evacuate out of the plane in an emergency or travel with a carer.

Council continues to support national efforts to force Virgin Blue to end this unfair practice of discrimination which prohibits people with disabilities from enjoying the same modes of travel and travelling with dignity and equality.

## ACT Guidelines for Access and Mobility/AAPAC



The ACT is the first State or Territory in Australia to adopt statewide guidelines for access and mobility.

ACTDAC was heavily involved in lobbying for the Guidelines and the Chair of ACTDAC was also the inaugural Chair of the ACT Access and Planning Advisory Committee (AAPAC) which developed the Guidelines within PALM, later ACT Planning and Land Authority (ACTPLA), sitting under the then ACT Department of Urban Services

The ACTPLA formerly adopted the ACT Planning Guidelines for Access and Mobility (the Guidelines) on August 28, 2003. ACTDAC lobbied heavily in the final stages of the development of the Guidelines during early 2003.

The Guidelines were developed to ensure that people have unimpeded access to spaces and buildings that they have a right or expectation to visit. They will also assist the Territory, designers, developers and property owners/managers in meeting their obligations under discrimination legislation including the Commonwealth Disability Discrimination Act 1992 (DDA) and the ACT Discrimination Act 1991 (ACTDA).

The Commonwealth Government is apparently developing an Access to Premises Standard that will ensure that all building work that complies with the Building Code of Australia (BCA) will also comply with the DDA.

The ACT Guidelines were brought into effect over considerable opposition from some quarters of the planning and development industry which insisted that the ACT Guidelines should wait until some future point where the Commonwealth process was enacted.

However work on this national process is very slow and four years later there are still no sign of Commonwealth Guidelines meaning that the ACTDAC decision to lobby for ACT Guidelines is now fully vindicated

The ACT Guidelines will stay in place until if and when the Commonwealth work is concluded. When the introduction of the Premises Standard occurs, the Guidelines will in the main be brought into line with the changes to the Access to Premises Standard. However, the Territory will still require guidance on areas that will fall outside the scope of the Premises Standard.

This will likely include areas such as adaptable housing, access to communal open space, accessible fittings and facilities, streetscapes, facilities within parks, recreational areas and outdoor services.

ACTDAC advocacy and work on this issue over many years means that the ACT is now in a very strong position to ensure that the Territory takes leadership on access and design issues in a way worthy of the national capital.

It provides certainty to builders and developers and hopefully will ensure that the ACT will be more insulated from the expensive task of retrofitting poorly designed buildings into the future.

Access will be increasingly important in an ageing capital and increasing expectations that people with disabilities will engage in full social and economic participation in the whole life of the community.

ACTDAC was however disappointed with the Governments decision to disband AAPAC in 2005, feeling that this was pre-emptory given the likely need to revisit these issues following any future changes to the BCA.

There is still a need for additional effort on access – particularly encouraging small business to make community level changes on the ground.

## **KRA3: Monitoring the communities progress towards Challenge 2014**

The Challenge • Citizens Jury • Key outcomes

### **About Challenge 2014**

***Challenge 2014 – a ten year vision for the future of disability in the ACT is launched by ACTDAC in 2004***

Challenge 2014 is a vision for the future of disability in the ACT. It is a 10-year vision that describes a world where the vision and values developed by the ACT Disability Reform Group in 2002 are readily available for people with disabilities and families throughout their lives.

The ACT Disability Advisory Council launched the document on September 3rd, 2004. The Council issued this Challenge to improve the way the community involves, supports and provides for people with disabilities.

Council has stewardship of Challenge 2014 and has been given responsibility by the Minister for preparing a biennial scorecard on community progress towards meeting Challenge 2014.

### **Citizens Jury**

For this first scorecard in 2006, Council decided that a tailored Citizens Jury approach would be a powerful and inclusive approach to producing this scorecard.

Specifically, a Jury provided a way to get the community involved in renewing the challenge and in a sense it means that the community itself issues the scorecard.

A Citizens Jury is an innovative tool for obtaining meaningful public or stakeholder input on an important matter. Citizens Juries have been found to provide a very impartial and thoughtful contribution to organisations and government in many parts of the world.

The Jury convened on 21 – 22 October 2006 had a number of important features:

- Proceedings were filmed by Greg Lacey, an independent filmmaker who has had experience with producing small scale documentaries. A documentary DVD was released to coincide with the report and is available for a small charge from the Council website. Greg and his son Nathan contributed much 'outside time' to complete the documentary and also designed the cover of this report.

- Gabrielle Higgins, a student with an interest in the process, spoke to Jurors, presenters, members of the organising team and the Gallery to compile an anecdotal record of the project.
- The public gallery was invited to participate and leave feedback via a visitor's book and a jargon box was opened to demystify technical terms in disability.
- The Jury proceedings were opened by the ACT and Commonwealth Ombudsman, Professor John McMillan, who provided a valuable insight into his role and the context of the process.

The Canberra Institute of Technology (CIT) was an important partner, providing a venue and much more.

It was hard work and we asked much of those involved, especially the Jury. We were lucky to have presenters, especially people with disabilities and families, who told their stories with passion and enthusiasm.

## **Outcomes**

### **An innovative Citizens Jury developed Scorecard on progress towards Challenge 2014 is handed to Business, Community and Government**

The scorecard developed by the Jury was issued at a handover event held in the lead up to the UN International Day of people with a disability to the ACT Deputy Chief Minister Katy Gallagher, Roger Buckley (ACT & Region Chamber of Commerce and Industry) and Clinton White (Community Inclusion Board).

The Jury reported that while ACT can celebrate progress, there are still significant gaps around the inclusion of people with disabilities in all aspects of the community.

Areas that were singled out by the Jury for greater work are employment, education, access and accommodation. The report identified a need for sustainable cultural change. The high cost of disability was also highlighted.

The Scorecard gives clear recommendations to business, government and the community — as well as the Disability Advisory Council.

Encouraging public debate and discussion on issues is a key objective of deliberative processes like these. Council was pleased to see that aspects of the Scorecard prompted lively discussion on how we can all do better for people with a disability. This included questions in the ACT Legislative Assembly and media attention.

Work is currently underway to nominate the process for an International Association for Public Participation IAP2 Core Values Award.

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## **KRA4: Leading on changing community attitudes about disability**

V&V • Attitudes Research • International Day • Ambassadors

### **Introduction**

One of the focus areas identified by the 2003-2005 Council and subsequently was to examine ways that we can create a more welcoming environment for people with disabilities across the Canberra community

The development of strategies to influence attitudes takes its remit in part from the Vision and Values Statement, which provides that "All people with disabilities are recognised and respected as valued and contributing members of society. Community education is an important means of achieving this outcome".

Following Council's identification of a remit around community attitudes, a small working group was formed by Council to look at strategies and came up with a number of suggestions which included work to establish benchmark data on public perceptions of and attitudes towards people with disabilities.

The results of this survey would provide an understanding of public attitudes towards people with disabilities and the experience of these attitudes by people with disabilities. This will help to inform the development of strategies to influence public attitudes in a positive manner.

Council also identified a need to raise the profile of public events, including the International Day, to raise consciousness of the Vision and Values and for other work to raise the profile and presence of disability in the community. The attitudes research identified further areas of focus, especially with children, which were adopted as the work moved forward.

### **Building on the Vision and Values**

#### **ACTDAC distributes Vision and Values Calendars around the ACT community - a constant reminder of the change we want to see in disability**

A set of Vision and Values for disability were developed by the former Disability Reform Group in 2002 and were subsequently supported by Council.

The Vision and Values respond to a number of systemic issues identified in the wake of the release of the Report of the Board of Inquiry but are also forward looking, describing the values we wish to see in the design and delivery of supports and services and inclusion generally. They also laid the philosophical basis for Challenge 2014, over which Council has stewardship.

Dennis Stabback, the former co-chair of the Reform Group, chaired a small working group of Council tasked with suggesting ways to promote consciousness of the Vision and Values. This group suggested the development of a calendar as a sensible way of keeping the Vision and Values at the forefront of the minds of planners, business and service providers in their daily work and planning. The Calendar was printed by Council and distributed at the first Inclusion Awards in 2003 and was also sent to a wide mailing list of senior business and government stakeholders.

## **International Day of People with a Disability**

3<sup>rd</sup> December is the UN International Day of People with a disability and the day is celebrated around the world and in Australia to highlight the achievements and aspirations of people with disabilities, families and allies.

Since 2003 the Council has been part of a significant collaborative effort involving a range of partners including Disability ACT, the Australian Government Department of Families, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs (FaCSIA), PWD ACT, and various collaborator organisations and sponsors to lift the profile of ACT celebrations for the International Day of disability in the ACT as follows:

### **2003: Premiere of Inclusion Awards and Tokens**

#### **AIA: Star studded gala evening with over 300 at AIS**

First ever ACT inclusion Awards funded by Disability ACT held at the AIS arena with more than 300 guests with pianist James Kearney and guest speaker Warren Macdonald and MC'd by ABC journalist Maxine McKew. ACTDAC sponsored an Award category.

Held in tandem with community tokens scheme funded by FaCS to encourage businesses and attractions to open their doors to people with disability on 3 December.

### **2004: Canberra Disability Arts Festival**

#### **First ever Canberra Disability Arts Festival and ACTDAC release of Snapshot**

The Festival funded by Disability ACT showcased the talent of artists and performers with a disability through an exciting program of performances, visual art, an art market, recognition awards and a digital art show on the big screen in Garema place. IDPWD 2004 also saw the release of the Council Snapshot of Community Attitudes about Disability.

**2005: Arts launch, 2nd Inclusion Awards****Launch of Making the Journey: Arts and ability**

Council, PWD ACT and FaCS sponsor the Family Fun Day at the Canberra Museum and Gallery including the launch of a book about artists with disabilities called *Making the Journey* which has been supported by FaCS and the Australia Council for the Arts. Second inclusion Awards held at the Hyatt Hotel and Council involved in judging panel. Council also represented on Judging panel for Second ACT Inclusion Awards and speaks at a range of events, including the FaCSIA auditorium.

**2006: Show bags, 3rd Awards**

**ACTDAC provides 100's of people with disabilities and families IDPWD show bags and carers packs - \$47,000 worth of free discounts, benefits and products from more than 20 Canberra businesses and attractions**

Council in partnership with FaCSIA and Koomarri organise IDPWD Show bags and Carers Pamper pack programme, building on the smaller project in 2003. Hundreds of local people with disabilities and families receive up to \$47,000 worth of free discounts, benefits and products from more than 20 Canberra businesses and attractions with a launch event at Edison Park. Council represented on Judging panel for Third ACT Inclusion Awards funded by Disability ACT.

**Research on Community Attitudes on Disability in the ACT**

**ACTDAC completes Australia's first comprehensive research on community attitudes - international benchmarks, focus groups, household survey and post research field work**

In mid 2004 the previous Council appointed ORIMA Research to conduct an Attitudes Research Project following a select tender process. The project was partly funded by DHCS and by Council.

The project included desk research, focus groups and a household survey which culminated in a full report to Council and a Snapshot of community attitudes on disability 2004 which was released on 3 December 2004, the UN International Day of People with a Disability.

The consultants were also asked to provide some scope for post survey fieldwork and this is the final remaining phase of the project.

In early 2005, based on findings from the household survey which indicated that work amongst children and young people was a powerful way to change community attitudes, Council agreed to the next phase of the Attitudes Research project being fieldwork with teachers, principals and curriculum developers in ACT Schools on ways that we can encourage attitudinal change amongst children and/or young people.

The involved a focus group discussion with about ten people and a facilitator from ORIMA Research using a discussion guide.

Participants consisted of school principals, curriculum coordinators and teachers from ACT primary schools. Teachers said in this focus group that they would welcome the involvement of people with disabilities who could talk about their skills, abilities and experiences in a classroom setting, and that they believed that this was the best way of reaching young people.

The fieldwork session was held in late 2005 and identified a number of strong possible programme opportunities and with our Ministers agreement we initiated contacts with the ACT Department of Education and Training (Craig Curry, Executive Director, Education), to discuss the outcomes and opportunities for implementation (see Disability Ambassadors in Schools) below.

DET indicated that they were enthusiastic about the project possibilities and it was agreed that our preferred initial focus would be on partnering in the design and implementation of the pilot disability Ambassador programme, one of the options that was strongly recommended by the focus group, in a cluster of ACT primary schools. Council and DET agreed to partner in developing the programme.

## **Framework for a National Project**

### **ACTDAC develops national framework for research on community attitudes on disability for the Disability Advisory Bodies**

Council worked with State and Territory Advisory Bodies around Australia to develop a costed framework for future work on national disability attitudes using the ACT work as a benchmark.

Council contends that this project of establishing baseline national information remains an important future priority to establish basic information on community attitudes given the extensive resources poured into campaigns designed to change community attitudes around Australia.

## Disability Ambassadors in Schools

### ACTDAC and DET developed the framework for an innovative Disability Ambassador's in Schools program

One of the key suggestions of respondents to the 2004 survey of attitudes towards disability in the ACT was to increase community understanding and acceptance of disability through education in schools. We therefore included a further phase of the Attitudes Research project, which was fieldwork with teachers, principals and curriculum developers in ACT Schools on ways that we can encourage attitudinal change amongst children and/or young people.

The fieldwork session was held in late 2005 and identified a number of strong possible programme opportunities and with our Ministers agreement we initiated contacts with the ACT Department of Education and Training (Craig Curry, Executive Director, Education), to discuss the outcomes and opportunities for implementation.

DET indicated that they were enthusiastic about the project possibilities and it was agreed that our preferred initial focus would be on partnering in the design of a pilot disability Ambassador programme, one of the options that was strongly recommended by the focus group, in ACT primary schools.

This would be a programme involving people with a range of disabilities, including young people, who would be available to come into classrooms and talk about disability and raise awareness on a range of issues including psychiatric disability. The Ambassadors would include people with a 'youth-appropriate' profile who have achieved in employment, youth development or sport.

It was agreed with DET that a first step in building the Ambassador programme would be to convene a working group who would take part in a programme design workshop (around half a day) to plan the programme including its scope, design and implementation.

Council undertook some initial development work and sponsored this workshop which developed the principles and parameters for the programme.

Torrens Primary School volunteered to be the site for an initial pilot project and Council provided some initial assistance with grant seeking activities to the School.

We understand that the Department of Education and Training has since also offered some funding to the School.

Sharon Sobey, a member of the Council, spoke to the School Assembly about disability awareness issues in the lead up to last years International Day.

## Awareness Raising Across Government

Following the release of Councils attitudes research we made contact with the media coordination area within the ACT Chief Ministers Department and held productive discussions on strategies to ensure the profiling of people with disabilities within mainstream ACT Government advertising.

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## **KRA5: Engaging with the community, especially with under-represented groups**

Reports • Website • Fact sheets • Media • Meetings • Outreach

### **Reports in Community Partners**

**ACTDAC provided reports in all 13 editions of Community Partners.**

Council provided reports to the Community on a quarterly basis through the Departments *Community partners in disability* newsletter. This was published quarterly in hard copy and on the Departments website. Council also made occasional contributions in other disability media such as PWD's Disability Reporter and Link Magazine.

Council developed a positive working relationship with the media unit at DHCS, especially with Julie Jefferis.

### **DAC Website**

**There have been around 4,671 hits on the ACTDAC web page since its opening.**

Council has worked with DHCS to launch a web presence as part of the Disability ACT page.

This includes biographies of council members, Councils Terms of Reference, information on our key focus areas, publications, media releases as well as a contact point at the Council secretariat. The website also contains a contact and links directory.

The page is located at  
<http://www.dhcs.act.gov.au/DisabilityACT/AdvisoryCouncil/Council.htm>

## Media

**ACTDAC was a steady presence in the mainstream media from 2003 onwards and contributed comments, letters and articles on key issues in disability**

Council issued 9 official media releases between May 2003 and May 2007, as follows:

Title	When issued	Media Responses
Statement on appointment: Minister Wood, Craig Wallace and Margaret Spalding	19 May 2003	Assembly Press conference: Canberra Times, WIN, Prime and ABC
Making the Challenge	3 September 2004	WIN, ABC Radio and Radio 2CC
WATS Forum – Public meeting on wheelchair taxis	14 June 2005	Canberra Times, WIN, ABC TV and Radio 666, FM 104.7
Disability Ambassadors in Schools	19 May 2006	Canberra Times, ABC Radio, Radio 2CC
ACT Disability – Citizens Jury, New Service and Traineeships	22 September 2006	ABC Radio
Disability leader forced off flight – launches discrimination case against Virgin Blue	29 September 2006	Canberra Times, JJJ, ABC News Radio, Radio 2CC, FM 104.7, Adelaide Advertiser, Hobart Mercury, Wikipedia
Citizens Jury to test community on disability	20 October 2006	ABC Radio, Radio 2CC
Citizens Jury verdict – we can do better to include people with disabilities	30 November 2006	ABC Radio, WIN TV
Koomarri and ACT Disability Council hand out 350 free show bags and tickets worth \$47,000	30 November 2006	Canberra Times, ABC Radio

Table. ACTDAC Media releases and responses 2003-2007.

In addition, Council responded to about 30 requests for media comments on issues as diverse as stem cell research to wheelchair taxis. Council contributed articles to some specialist publications such as *Link* disability magazine and also wrote letters to the Canberra Times on issues including the BCA Standards process and Koomarri.

Council also provided inputs to media releases issued by Disability ACT, the Minister, the Chief Minister and TAMS. This item also relates to KRA 4.

## Community Meetings

ACTDAC has moved some of its meetings into the community to the best of its ability.

During 2006 Council began holding some meetings in community venues to enable us to build enhanced networks and facilitate knowledge sharing on a range of disability and service issues.

The meetings were a good opportunity to meet with consumers and service providers on the ground and an opportunity to discuss issues 'in place'.

### **ACTDAC CANBERRA COLLEGE: 23 May 2006**

The first Community meeting, themed around engagement with young people, was held on 23 May 2006 at the Canberra College and included:

- the unveiling of the Framework for the Disability Ambassadors in Schools Program; and
- the announcement of new Council members.

The event was well attended by senior staff and members of the school community and also received positive local media coverage. Following the meeting a number of Council members participated in a stall at the Post School Options Expo.

### **ACTDAC COMMUNITY PROGRAMME ASSOCIATION: 26 September 2006**

The second community meeting, themed around the employment needs of people with an intellectual disability, was held at the Community Programmes Association. This busy event was attended by Minister Gallagher and staff and board members of CPA and included:

- The launch of Frameworks — a new Northside Individualised Community Access and Inclusion Service by Minister Gallagher.
- Council's announcement that it will use an innovative process called a Citizens Jury to measure progress by the community against objective's in Challenge 2014.
- The awarding of certificates to Graduates who received traineeships from the Community Programs Association.
- The release of an overview of key findings from the ACTDAC desk research project on learning disability information in the workplace.

## Fact Sheets

**Five fact sheets were developed by ACTDAC on key projects including the Citizens Jury, Disability Ambassadors in Schools and Council achievements.**

Council has developed a series of Fact sheets to provide a useful ready reference on the work of the Council.

## Broadening DAC's Membership

**Two new members were appointed within one year of ACTDAC appointment to fill significant gaps – youth and intellectual disabilities**

In May 2006 Justin Ray and Sharon Sobey joined the Council. These new members were identified and canvassed by the Council to fill significant gaps with underrepresented groups identified as a focus for Council by the previous Minister. Justin Ray is a long term consumer advocate including with Advocacy for Inclusion and brings an important perspective on the needs of people with an intellectual disability. Sharon Sobey is a young person with disabilities who has a background in youth development and was ACT Volunteer of the Year 2005 and ACT Young Australian of the Year 2006.

## Talking with Young People

**ACTDAC speaking exchange with the MYC and the Youth Affairs Coalition**

The Council hosted a speaking exchange with the ACT Ministers Youth Council (MYC). A member of the MYC attended a meeting of the ACTDAC and later in the year the Chair of ACTDAC addressed the Youth Council. A number of areas for crosscutting work were identified including the potential for the promotion of a disability perspective within mainstream youth events. The MYC also attended the youth focused meeting at the Canberra College.

The Youth Affairs Coalition attended a meeting of the Council in early 2006. The Youth Coalition is the peak youth affairs body in the Australian Capital Territory and responsible for representing the interests of people aged between 12 and 25 years of age, and those who work with them. The Coalition briefed the Council about better practice in youth consultation as well as their policy and advocacy work.

Council also has a policy interest in youth issues and the previous Council developed a submission to a review of post compulsory training as well as a proposal to support young people with disabilities in mixed youth development and career exploration activities.

## Engaging with People with an Intellectual Disability

### New members, removing barriers, community meetings and research

Another of the key priorities identified for the Council appointed in 2005 was engaging with people with an intellectual disability. It is very clear that Council has not always done this well and there is a natural bias in many of the forms and processes of an advisory Council which can present barriers to participation. An initial focus of the Council was in removing some of these and the Council agenda paper system was substantially altered in 2006 to include an emphasis on plain English text and clarity of meaning.

In May 2006 Council membership was expanded to include Justin Ray – a consumer representative with a history of work with Advocacy for Inclusion. Justin spoke to conclude the September 2006 community meeting held at community programmes association, an employment service for people with primarily intellectual disabilities. CPA chair Glenn Cocking was also invited to speak at the main Council meeting on the needs of CPA's client group and their families.

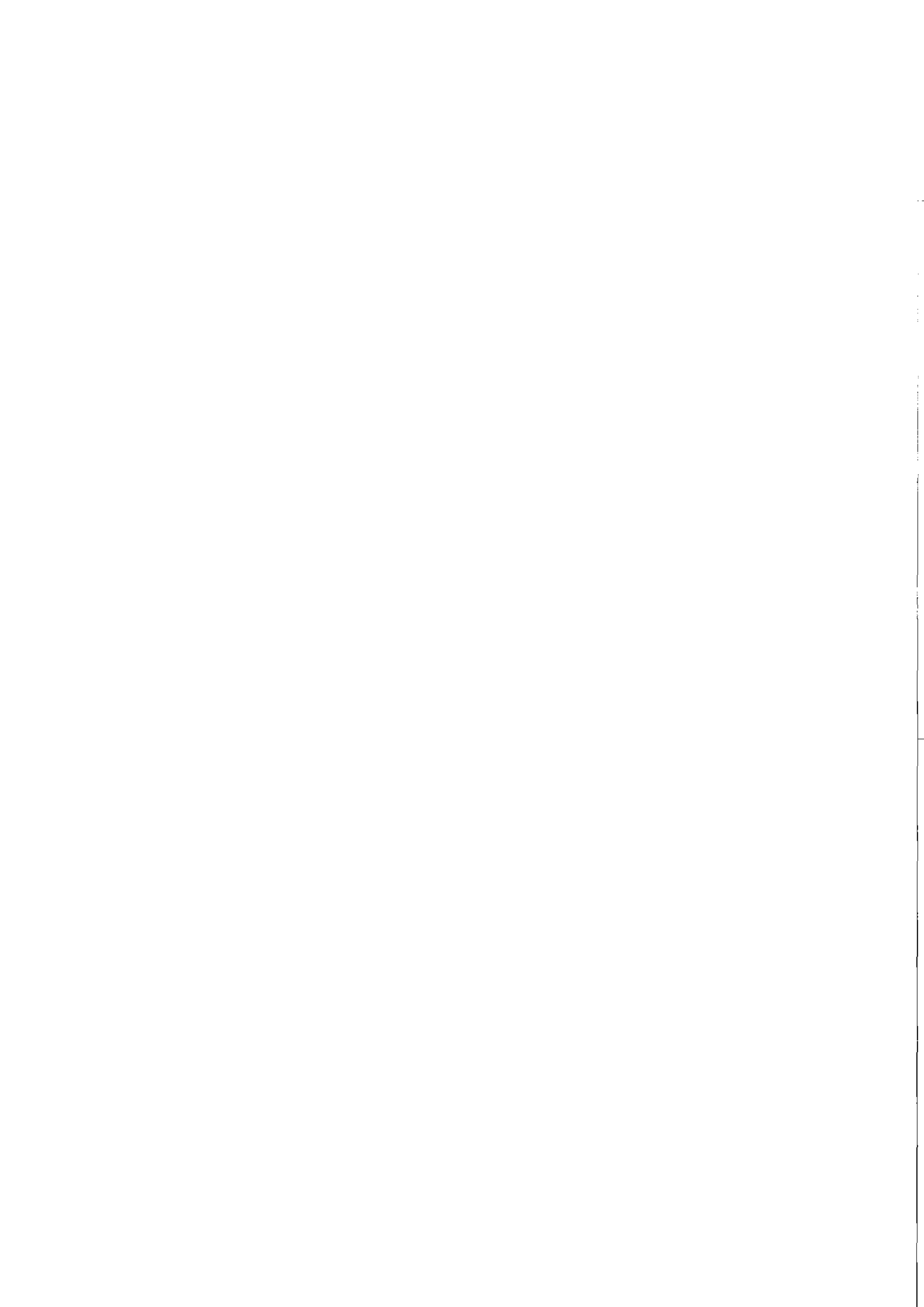
Council has also undertaken work in the area of the needs of people with learning disabilities in the public sector workplace. While clearly focussed on learning, rather than intellectual disability, there are some cross cutting outcomes which also support Councils mandate in this priority area.

The Disability Advisory Councils, including DAC, have also provided inputs to a research project on better practice in the involvement of people with an intellectual disability in disability advisory councils.

## Building Indigenous Cultural Awareness

### ACTDAC cultural awareness training day for council members and DACT staff

As part of the Disability Advisory Council's responsibilities to develop strategies to engage with indigenous people with a disability in the ACT, the Council held a cultural awareness training day for council members, which was also attended by staff from Disability ACT and the ACT Office of FaCSIA. Tracey Whettnall who is a training consultant and specialises in indigenous awareness training facilitated the training day. The day was very productive and produced a very useful exchange of knowledge about inclusive cultural practice in the context of both disability and indigenous communities. It is clear that disability is a large if sometimes hidden issue in this community and the day was also useful in identifying useful pathways for contact with the community into the future.



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# 2007-2009 Term Report

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ACT Disability Advisory Council

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Trevor Robinson - Chair

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## Chair Reports

### Sharon Sobey (Sept 2007 to Feb 2009)

My time as chair had its ups and downs. It took me a little while to find my feet and just when things were getting into a pattern my deputy chair had an accident and we had a few resignations. I have enjoyed my time as chair despite these troubles.

It was educational getting together with the chairs from the Dac's over Australia. The first one was in Melbourne shortly after I had been appointed to the Chair and the deputy chair came as well, so it was interesting to see how the other Dac's did things and see what problems we had in common. My second trip was to Darwin, with this trip I had to attend without another ACT member due to it being during the school holidays. Again the meeting had a lot of useful information but we were unable to make many decisions because the national dac hadn't been appointed yet and a lot of what we wanted to do included the national council. Since the appointment of the national council there hasn't been a chairs meeting held.

In conclusion I did enjoy my time as chair and I thank the minister for giving me the opportunity and allowing me to step down to a general council member when family issues needed my attention. As a young person with little to no experience in this sort of position it was educational and has given me confidence to think about other smaller leadership positions. However if another young person is offered the chair in the future I would suggest they are offered some support or training for the position. It was suggested for me to have some help in the beginning but unfortunately there wasn't any follow through.

### Trevor Robinson (March 2009 to Aug 2009)

2007-2009 was an unsettling and testing period for the ACT Disability Advisory Council. A cabinet reshuffle following an election meant a change of responsible Minister for the Council, while a series of unfortunate events led to dramatic changes in the Chair and deputy Chair positions. Adding to the disconcertion was a more than expected churn of community and *ex officio* members over the two year term. This lack of consistency of both membership and leadership caused a significant loss of traction for Council, resulting in a lowering of credibility from the disability community and a paucity of output by the Council for its constituency.

Towards the end of the term Council settled into framing some strong and achievable goals. However to achieve these, Council first had to rationalise its workload by sidelining some of its more ambitious projects, such as redrafting the Council's Terms of Reference (ToR) and Operating Guidelines or the capaciously titled Work Plan. While both projects are equally important, the energy needed for successful delivery of both projects eluded Council during its term.

The diversity of the disability portfolio places considerable strain on the role of Council, specifically the position of Chair. With the Council budget frozen since 2003, and increasing demands to attend meetings with government officials and key disability stakeholders, the role of the Chair has evolved beyond chairing one meeting a month. My

experience in the role strongly suggests that the position has developed into more than a just a voluntary position. It would be impossible for a full-time employed person to assume the role. An increase in administrative support, while needed, would do little to abate the ever increasing burden.

In closing, the glacial pace of change in the disability field from ACT government entities is both depressing and amoral. Far too much energy is expelled in measuring, gauge or discussing known and accepted problems – Wheelchair Accessible Taxis or unmet need in accommodation – while little more than a trickle is spent actually solving the problem. And even when a problem is discussed – relocation of the Independent Living Unit – no-one is listens. While positives most certainly exist, disenchantment still dominates community sentiment.

## **About the Council**

The ACT Disability Advisory Council (ACTDAC) was established in May 2003 to independently advise and recommend to the Minister for Disability and other Ministers as appropriate across a range of issues about people with disabilities.

The Council has broad terms of reference and is tasked with several key responsibilities. They include advising the Minister on disability issues working in partnership with Disability ACT on key activities; communicating the needs of people with disabilities and families; and establishing links with the National Disability Advisory Council.

In line with its terms of reference, Council has provided advice to ACT Government Ministers on numerous of topics. This includes the ACT Budgets, community health, education, housing, rehabilitation services, individualised support, employment issues, emergency services, community attitudes, social inclusion, corrective services, parking, and wheelchair taxis and subsidies.

Achievements of the 2007-09 Council can be referenced to its Key Result Areas. This includes;

- Ratification of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities;
- Council representation on the Accessible Public Transport Action Plan Review;
- Monitoring development of the Alexander Maconachie Centre to determine its ability to cater for prisoners with a disability;
- Ensuring school signage outside Special Education schools are consistent with ACT schools and;
- Requesting that accessible toilets managed by the ACT government have installed locks compatible with Master Locksmith Access Key (MLAK) Scheme locks for afterhour's access.

A current focus area for the Council include working in partnership with ACT Business Leaders Innovative Thoughts and Solutions (BLITS) and Territory and Municipal Services to develop and implement Charge Centres for wheelchair users into major shopping centres and services.

During 2007-09 Council engaged in numerous meetings with other state and territory Disability Advisory Bodies to provide an ACT perspective.

Regular reports on Council initiatives and current areas of focus are available to the community on the Disability ACT website.

## Membership

There are 14 members on the Council and membership is drawn from people with disabilities, the family members of people with disabilities, service providers, people who work with people with a disability and community leaders. The term of office is two years with no members serving more than two concurrent terms. The ACTDAC Operating Guidelines states the Chair of the Council will be a person with a disability and three of the members will be Government *ex officio* members:

- a representative of FahCSIA,
- the Chief Executive or Deputy Chief Executive of the Department within which Disability ACT operates, and
- The Executive Director of Disability ACT.

In November 2008 Council invited two representatives from the Youth Advisory Council (YAC) to attend their meetings and provide an insight into youth issues.

Profiles of the community members of the Disability Advisory Council are at Appendix A.

## Community Members

Trevor Robinson (Chair)  
Liz Blakey (Deputy Chair)  
Dwayne Cranfield  
John Dalton  
Dee McGrath  
Justin Ray  
Christina Ryan  
Wayne Schofield  
Sharon Sobey  
Fiona Sowden  
Ian Trehwella

Appointed to vacancies 2008:

David Zilber  
Annette Crotty

## *Ex Officio* Members

### **ACT Department of Disability, Housing and Community Services**

Sandra Lambert, Chief Executive  
Martin Hehir, Deputy Chief Executive

### **Disability ACT**

Lois Ford, Executive Director  
Andrew Whale, Director

### **Department of FahCSIAs**

Rikki Bailey (2007-08)

Neil Mahoney (2008-09)

**Youth Advisory Council (YAC)**

Kelly Lokan (2008-09)

Ben Harris (2008-09)

A new ACT Disability Advisory Council will be elected in September 2009. Recruitment of the new Council began in June 2009 with a rigorous selection process undertaken. First-term members have been encouraged to reapply for second terms to preserve continuity of membership.

**Council Support**

An independent Secretariat Officer and a Disability ACT Support Officer support the ACT Disability Advisory Council. This arrangement supports a clear role for Council in provision of independent advice to the Minister and prevents confusion between advice, stakeholder management and support roles for Departmental staff.

The Council Secretariat Officer is employed for approximately 10 hours a week. Duties include preparing agendas, drafting minutes and correspondence, and providing other support to the Council and working on specific projects such as the Citizens Jury and communication initiatives. The Secretariat was hired through the recruitment agency PCA to reduce the need for the Council to manage payroll and other issues. As Council does not currently have an office, the Secretariat works from home. The current Council Secretariat Officer is Jennifer Leslie.

Karen Drady currently provides the Council support function provided by Disability ACT. The role involves maintaining effective links between Council and DHCS, including the Office of the Chief Executive and Executive Director, Disability ACT, providing policy support to the Council, and maintaining effective links within the Department to support Council business. The DACT support officer also provides financial information to Council to support their planning processes.

## Key Result Areas

The ACT DAC Draft Work Plan 2007-2009 was developed by Council as a guide to the Key Result Areas (KRAs) it proposes to concentrate its efforts upon. Achievements against the objectives are noted in the Key Achievements section of this report. Council members identified their particular areas of interest and subcommittees formed to regularly provide Council updates.

### 1. Human Rights Watch

**Objective 1:** To support ratification of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (including ACT implementation and impact);

**Objective 2:** Review ACT Human Rights Commission proposed amendments to the ACT Human Rights Act.

### 2. Inclusion and Community Engagement

**Objective 1:** To influence policy and culture to ensure the full inclusion and engagement of people with a disability, their carers and families in the ACT Community;

**Objective 2:** Monitor employment policies and opportunities for people with a disability in both the ACT Public and Private Sector;

**Objective 3:** Monitor the ongoing upgrade and developments in the ACT Public Transport System in their compliance to the Disability Standards for Accessible Public Transport 2002;

**Objective 4:** Monitor the Department of Territory and Municipal Services (TAMS) Action Plan for Accessible Public Transport 2008-2012;

**Objective 5:** Monitor development of the Alexander Maconachie Centre (AMC) to determine its capacity to suitably cater for prisoners with a disability;

**Objective 6:** To ensure the safe evacuation of people with a disability at risk in high-rise buildings in cases of emergency;

**Objective 7:** To determine if the Access to Government Strategy is achieving positive outcomes and improvements for people with a disability, their carers and families;

**Objective 8:** Fill vacancy on the ACTDAC with a representative for indigenous people with a disability;

**Objective 9:** Determine if people with a disability have equal access to affordable and accessible housing in the ACT;

**Objective 10:** Monitor ACT Guardianship laws, policies and practices to ensure guardians, families and people with a disability achieve good outcomes.

### 3. Services

**Objective 1:** Monitor development of the 4<sup>th</sup> Commonwealth, State and Territory Disability Agreement (CSTDA);

**Objective 2:** Review the Future Directions Policy Framework to ensure it has provided improvements since its inception for people with a disability, their carers and families;

**Objective 3:** Monitor the Review on the Role of Government as a Service Provider and its findings to ensure recommendations and changes don't adversely impact on the service provided to people with a disability;

**Objective 4:** To review and monitor the shortages in unmet need for support services for people with a disability, their carers and families in the ACT (e.g. respite, personnel support, equipment);

**Objective 5:** Review the broader mainstream services and how they cater for people with a disability;

**Objective 6:** To provide input for the reporting process for the Convention on Eliminating of all forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW).

#### **4. Past Council Work – Challenge 2014**

**Objective 1:** To conduct a Citizens Jury in line with the 2006 Citizens Jury.

## Key Achievements

- Provided advice to Government during the review of the Canberra Social Plan, a framework to guide government and community decision-making in social policy over a 15-year timeframe.
- Provided advice reviewing the 2004-07 Action Plan for Accessible Public Transport in the ACT. Two members of the Council, Sharon Sobey and Ian Trehwella were invited to join the advisory group to assist with evaluation and revision of the Action Plan.
- Played an active role in new policy frameworks for the new correctional facility the Alexander Maconochie Centre to ensure the needs of prisoners with a disability and their families are met.
- Monitored development of the 4th CSTDA through briefings and reports from Disability ACT and the ACT Minister for Disability.
- Consulted with the ACT Electoral Commissioner and the Elections ACT Electronic Voting Reference Group regarding the assistance voters with disabilities require in the lead up to the October 2008 ACT election.
- Flagged the gaps existing in the ACT Community Emergency Plan regarding what things are in place to assist people with disabilities during emergency situations, particularly in high-rise buildings.
- Provided advice on the standards and policies for accessible playgrounds to Delfin Lendlease for developing suitable facilities in a residential development in Canberra.
- Submitted to the 2008 National Disability Strategy and attended the public consultation session held in November 2008.
- Maintained partnerships with the ACT Human Rights Commission to seek ongoing advice on the amendments to the ACT Human Rights Act. Took the lead in calling for information on how the ACT Government planned to incorporate the Convention for people with disabilities across the ACT Government.
- Worked in partnership with other State and Territory Disability Advisory Councils and the Australian Human Rights Commission to discuss the draft Disability Standards on Access to Premises.
- The Council Chair served on the Strategic Governance Group. The SGG provides advice and strategic direction to the Chief Executive of the Department of Disability, Housing and Community Services on implementing whole of community responses and the desired outcomes of government funded services and supports.
- Provided consolidated DAC input to the Community Inclusion Board during the February 2009 forum *Building Inclusive Communities*. Areas of importance noted were independent and supported living accommodation (particularly integrated community models), improved employment opportunities for people with a disabilities and that people with disabilities have improved opportunities to belong and engage with community for all of life.

- Initiated induction training from the Human Rights Commission for Council members. Specific interest is the ACT Disability Services Act, the Disability Discrimination Act, the Human Rights Act, Equity & Diversity and Occupation Health and Safety. Such training would offer members a demonstrated understanding of the environment in which DAC, Disability ACT and the Human Rights Commission operates.
- Proposed establishment of Charge Centres in the ACT. The initiative would provide independence for users of power wheelchairs and scooters and less reliance on the WATs and currently inaccessible public transport system.
- Achieved amendment to the signage around Special Education Schools in the ACT.
- Request that all accessible toilets managed by the ACT government be fitted with Master Locksmith Access Key (MLAK) locks after noting the increasing difficulties faced by people with a disability because of limited number of after hour's accessible toilets.
- Connected with the public by placing promotional information about the work of Council in the newsletters of the major disability organisations in the ACT.
- Organised a 2009 Citizens Jury process to deliver the Challenge 2014 biennial report card. The 2009 Citizens Jury will focus specifically on community and business.

## **Council Governance**

The Council has worked hard to set strong governance. Specific areas of focus were the efficient ordering and processing of business and accurate record keeping.

Council operates on an agenda paper system where all items requiring a decision by Council must be accompanied by a completed agenda paper using the agreed template that includes a purpose and draft recommendation for Council consideration. All agenda papers are submitted to the Secretariat and sent to the Chair for clearance. Agenda papers are distributed to Council members a week before scheduled meetings. Unless otherwise indicated all Council papers and Minutes are confidential and the Council will make determinations on what papers are marked for release at the end of each meeting or in subsequent meetings.

Council members attending meetings on official business are required to provide summary reports to Council specifying the implications for Council business. Strict adherence to these measures ensures that Council is able to give adequate, equitable and timely attention to business.

The Council normally holds one meeting a month, and members may also undertake ongoing work on specific projects in small subcommittees. A quorum for meetings is 50% the membership of the Council or seven members, whichever is less. Any vacancy on the Council shall not affect its power to function.

A member must disclose to the Chair any situation that may result in a conflict of interest, a potential conflict of interest, or a potential perceived conflict of interest. The Chair will make the determination whether there are adequate grounds for excluding a member from any related discussion or decision-making regarding a conflict of interest issue.

The Minister must approve conflicts of interest that are sufficient to justify termination of a member's appointment. In such a situation the Chair has the power to suspend the person's membership until the Minister's agreement is obtained.

Council has a set of Operating Guidelines that clearly describe the accountabilities of Council and its members. The Guidelines cover a range of issues including the role of Council, terms of appointment, operation of Council, the use of taxi vouchers and reimbursement of expenses.

Sitting fees are paid to Council members and the Secretariat and the Department of Disability, Housing and Community Services record attendances at meetings. Tables 1 and 2 detail the number of meetings and attendances received.

**Table 1**

<b>Year</b>	<b>No. of meetings</b>
2007 (appointed in September)	2
2008	10
2009 (to July)	6

**Table 2**

<b>Meeting</b>	<b>Attendance</b>	<b>Apologies</b>
October 2007	14	0
November 2007	9	5
February 2008	12	2
March 2008	11	3
April 2008	11	3
May 2008	11	3
June 2008	9	5 (resignation of two members)
July 2009	12 (two new members)	2
August 2008	9	5
September 2008	10	4 (resignation of one member)
October 2008	9	4
November 2008	9	4
February 2009	12 (two new ex-officios)	3
March 2009	11	4
April 2009	12	3
May 2009	14	1
June 2009	11	4
July 2009	12	2

## **Guest Speakers**

Guest speakers are also an integral part of Council meetings and are often invited in response to Council issues.

Speakers that participated during the 2007-09 Council meetings included:

**David Heckendorf**, Policy Officer, Disability ACT

- Presented information on policy development in the disability arena and on Human Rights Legislation.

**Sue Watson**, Senior Manager, Intensive Treatment and Support, Disability ACT

- Provided information on the Alexander Maconochie Centre.

**Phil Green**, ACT Electoral Commissioner,

- Sought input from Council on voting assistance for people with a disability in preparation for the ACT Election in October 2008.

**Linda Crebbin**, former ACT Human Rights Commissioner

- Provided an ACT and Federal Human Rights update.

**Susan Healy**, Chief Executive, Sharing Places

- Presented information on the workforce strategy for the ACT Disability Sector.

**Meredith Whitton**, **Richard Bourne** (DHCS) and **Shanna Provost**, Emergency Services Officer, Australian Red Cross

- Provided information on the ACT Community Emergency Plan.

**Grant Carey-Ide** and **Ian Thompson**, ACT Health

- Responded to Council concerns regarding the Keen Report and relocation of the ACT Equipment Loan Scheme to Kambah.

**Andrew Buchanan**, Chair, NSW Disability Advisory Council

- Presented current issues and work areas for the NSW Disability Advisory Council.

**Esther Woodbury** and **Alison McGregor** from the Community Living Project

- Provided insight in the proposed community village living project.

## **Appendix - Biographies**

### **Trevor Robinson (Chair)**

With Master degrees in both Marketing Communication and Applied Anthropology & Participatory Development, Trevor is sufficiently skilled to lead an organisation as dynamic and diverse as the Disability Advisory Council. A member of the previous Council, Trevor has been involved in numerous committees and working groups focused on improving the Rights and inclusion of those with a disability.

Trevor's primary involvement in the disability sector stems from his eldest son, who has a moderate to severe developmental disability. With his son now in his midtwenties, Trevor anguished at the evaporation of services as those people with a disability age. Of particular concern is the area of accommodation, carers and guardianship.

During 2008 tragedy struck the Robinson family, with Trevor involved in a serious accident that left him a paraplegic. Trevor spent eight months of rehabilitation, both at The Canberra Hospital and Prince of Wales Spinal unit in Sydney. Trevor's experience during this time gave him valuable insight into the hurdles of a physical disability and systemic shortcomings in health and disability agencies. Areas of interest are similar to the above concerns; lack of specialised accommodation, the gap between those with compensable and non-compensable disabilities and the difficulty to attract carers.

### **Liz Blakey (deputy Chair)**

This is Liz Blakey's first term as a member of the ACT Disability Advisory Council.

She has completed a Bachelor of Community Education, Community Advocacy and has worked as a systems advocate and then as Executive Officer for Advocacy for Inclusion in the ACT from 2002 to June 2007.

In her work, Liz vigorously advocated for positive and inclusive systems change in early intervention, education, accommodation and respite for people who have a disability. Liz is the current ACT Board Director for the National Council on Intellectual Disability.

Liz has a 15-year old son who has autism and she is committed to ensuring that he has a full and inclusive life.

### **Dwayne Cranfield**

Dwayne Cranfield has lived in the ACT since 1989 and has worked within the welfare sector since 1984 by advocating for the rights of disadvantaged people, both in Australia and abroad. He has worked with refugees in Sweden as well as with young male sex offenders in the USA.

In Australia, Dwayne's working life has been spent within the area of child protection and substitute care and in the last few years he has gravitated towards issues of homelessness and disabilities. This change in direction was facilitated by an assault that Dwayne sustained from a client in 1999 that left him with an Acquired Brain Injury (ABI) which he lives with daily.

Dwayne views the Disability Advisory Council as a conduit to assist the disability community in voicing their needs and concerns that may not be heard. Dwayne is employed as the Manager at the National Brain Injury Foundation. Dwayne lives with his partner and two daughters aged 9 and 5. This is his first term as a Council member.

**Annette Crotty**

Annette Crotty is the mother of 4 adult children. She currently accesses a power wheelchair to assist with her mobility. Over 20 years, Annette has specialised in gerontology (as director of an aged care facility) and then delivering community based programmes aimed to empower individuals with a disability towards independence.

With a professional skill set in Social Science and as a Neuro Linguistic Practitioner, Annette works holistically to support individuals reach their full potential. In the past 4 years Annette has been the sole carer for her grandchild while working full-time as a registered family dispute resolution practitioner, workplace facilitator and mediator. Her private practice 'Achievable Outcomes' also works with parents seeking to develop life pathways (succession planning) for adult children with a disability.

Annette promotes education and support services for parents with a disability and carers of children with a disability. This is Annette's first term on Council.

**John Dalton**

Born in Brisbane, John has Holt Oram Syndrome, a rare genetic disability characterised by hand, arm and heart abnormalities. John's arms are 25cm long with 3 fingers on each hand. He has had 4 holes in his heart, which were repaired at age 4.

John studied at RMIT where he became involved in media and has worked with various Radio and TV stations before moving to Canberra in July 2006 to take-up the Station Manager position at 2XX FM.

John does not allow his physical disability to affect his active life. He took up snow skiing in 1996 and has skied various mountains in Australia and internationally. In 1999, he represented Australia at the New Zealand Disabled Skiing Nationals. He played indoor soccer for approximately 3 years and in 2001 took up scuba diving. John now has about 500 dives to his credit including his trip to Vanuatu to dive the President Coolidge, which became the subject of an article in Dive Pacific and Dive New Zealand in June/July 2005.

This is John's first term as a member of the ACT Disability Advisory Council.

**Dee McGrath**

Dee McGrath has Master of Business Administration (MBA), a Graduate Diploma in Marketing Communications and a certificate in Public Relations Management.

Dee was a 2001 Finalist, Telstra ACT Business Women's Awards is an Honorary Ambassador, appointed by the ACT Chief Minister for recognition of personal contribution to develop a significant business base in Canberra.

Dee joined Carers ACT in 2005 as the Chief Executive. Before this, Dee was a member of the Review of the Mental Health Act Review, an ACT Government Committee.

Dee is keen to use her previous and current work experiences to assist the Disability Advisory Council with issues faced by people with disabilities. Dee is a first term member of the ACT Disability Advisory Council.

**Justin Ray**

Justin Ray is in his second term as a member of ACTDAC and has been involved with the disability community for well over ten years. As a self-advocate from 1992-1993 and an Administrative Officer for People First, Justin now works with Advocacy for Inclusion. He's involved in various groups such as The Advocacy for Inclusion Advisory Forum, Our Voice, which is a group of national representatives that are all members of the National Council of Intellectual Disability (NCID).

Justin is an unashamed advocate of people who have a disability and has a particular passion for supporting the rights for people who have an intellectual disability. He pushes for equality for all people with disabilities for employment, public transport and accommodation services. His vision is that one day there will be a person who has an intellectual disability in both local state and federal government. Justin strives to represent people who have an intellectual disability on the Disability Advisory Council.

**Sharon Sobey**

Sharon Sobey is a young woman with a vision impairment, arthritis and a cancer survivor. Her passion for life and involvement in the Canberra community was recognised by her being named ACT Volunteer of the Year for 2005 and the ACT Young Australian of the Year 2006.

Sharon is the secretary for the ACT Blind Citizens Australia, a committee member with the Canberra Blind Society, a committee member with FITAbility and a Joey Scout Leader with the Lake Ginninderra Sea Scouts.

Sharon is completing her second term on the Disability Advisory Council.

**Ian Trewhella**

Ian Trewhella AM has had quadriplegia since a sporting accident in 1961. He has been heavily and actively involved in disability issues over many years. He was a successful Paralympic athlete in 1980 and 1984 with many other national and world disability sporting successes.

His extensive past membership of committees, advisory and management boards include the Chair of the former ACT Disability Services Advisory Committee and the Deputy Chair of the ACT Paralympic Committee. Currently, he is Vice-President of People with Disabilities ACT and holds positions on several ACT Government advisory groups.

Ian has also owned and operated a small business in the ACT called 'The Wheelchair Factory' for over 18 years. He has also held many positions within the Federal public service in the areas of policy, information technology and financial accounting.

Among his many awards is an Order of Australia Medal, which he received in 1992 for volunteer service to people with disabilities in the fields of sport, recreation and welfare. This is Ian's second term on Council.

**David Zilber**

David Zilber's involvement in the disability field began in 1976 as a psychologist in a large psychiatric hospital, which included about 170 people with intellectual disability. He soon adopted the philosophy of community inclusion and set-up projects for moving clients into community settings.

In partnership with Koomarri and the University of Canberra, David developed a demonstration project which demonstrated the capacity of people with severe intellectual disability to engage in complex work tasks given intensive skills training. During that time, David also became involved in staff training and research.

In 1995 David produced a report on dual diagnosis for ACT Mental Health. In 1996 David worked for Marymead, where he set-up and managed a disability support programme which provided residential, shared care and respite care to children and adolescents with high support needs. David has worked with JobSolve supporting people in open employment and is working with LEAD concentrating on staff development and training.

This is David's first term on Council.