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In our autumn newsletter I hope you find something to spark you. For example, who would have thought that equal opportunity laws could be used to try to stop employment of people from diverse backgrounds? Read the article in “What’s in the News?” to learn more.

People’s stories can be more powerful than second hand reporting, in imparting information about lived experience. Some of our inaugural board members have told their stories in “ADDE Board Member Profiles”.

Does your CV include referees and their contact details? According to some recruiters this is not a good idea. Why not? Read “Dr. Work” to find out more.

**Kathy Leitch, Editor. Enquiries:** [kathy\\_leitch@hotmail.com](mailto:kathy_leitch@hotmail.com)

### **QUOTE OF THE SEASON:**

**“Treating everyone the same is equated with fairness, but this fails to acknowledge that not everyone starts from the same base.”** Professor Hurriyet Babacan, writing in support of the Metropolitan Fire Brigade’s attempt to change its overwhelmingly white male workforce to reflect the community it serves.

### **NEWSFLASH! HELP NEEDED:**

Riki Domagalski is doing the Leadership Plus program this year and for her project she is making a DVD, raising the profile and the awareness of people with disabilities and their need for employment and the advantages of having PWD in employment. Riki would like to contact PWD who are employed, not employed, employers, employment agencies, and government organisations to participate by answering a few

questions while being filmed. Anyone interested in being involved can email her direct [rikianya@gmail.com](mailto:rikianya@gmail.com)

### **DOES YOUR ORGANISATION ASPIRE TO BE A “BEST PRACTICE EMPLOYER”?**

Would your organization like to aspire to nominate for a national Employer of the year award in the future?

We at ADDE have developed a product which we believe can achieve positive change in increasing employment for people with disabilities in the “not for profit” and Government sectors in Victoria.

The expertise of Peter Rickards as a judge for the national Diversity Employer of the Year awards in the small/medium and large disability employer categories will be of great benefit as workshop facilitator.

It will also be possible to have keynote speakers from award winning organizations to be part of some of these workshop presentations.

### **What is Australia’s best practice in employment of People with Disabilities Workshop?**

Invitation to Senior staff and Board to share some ‘learnings’

Why is increasing employment opportunities for people with disabilities so important??

What is the business case for employment of people with disabilities?

What is our present understanding of best practice employment in this organization?

Lets examine some national award winner case studies from 2008/9

What can we learn?

What can we implement?

How do we do this and in what time frame?

How do we measure success?

By attending this workshop you will be taking the first step towards being nominated for employer of the year award/s in the future.

Participatory workshop/case study analysis format (2 to 4 hours). Includes morning or afternoon tea

**Workshop presenter Peter Rickards,**  
**ADDE President, Judge Diversity at Work National Disability Employer of the year awards**

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For further information or to book a workshop for your organization contact ADDE office (03) 9489 2999 or Peter Rickards 0407 509117 [peter\\_rick@bigpond.com](mailto:peter_rick@bigpond.com)

### **WHAT'S IN THE NEWS?:**

#### **Union, Fire brigade clash over ethnic mix....**

The MFB's attempt to change the make-up of its workforce has run into a roadblock, with a union opposing its request to be exempt from equal opportunity laws.... While the United Firefighters Union supports equality of opportunity they are concerned that some people will gain access to a recruitment course through targeted pre-employment training (i.e. women, disadvantaged youth, indigenous and less dominant cultural groups), while others, not from these diverse targeted groups might miss out on recruitment by attending the regular training programs which take longer to complete. The union fails to acknowledge that the MFB has fewer women firefighters and people from diverse backgrounds compared to other emergency services and needs to redress this. One way is to implement a positive discrimination recruitment program, such as that which is proposed by the MFB which will not only increase the number of potential applicants for firefighting roles but also boost the safety message to the wider community from these diverse groups and help change negative views of people in uniform.

The following link shows more information about the MFB disability action plan:

<http://www.mfb.vic.gov.au/News/Media-releases/MFB-launches-disability-action-plan.html>

#### **ABC radio National Australia Talks 14/4/10**

Among OECD countries Australia is ranked 13th out of 19 in employment rates for all people with a disability. Only half of working age Australians with a disability have a job - compared with 80 per cent without a disability - yet the nation is struggling with the challenges of a skills shortage. Is business overlooking a home grown resource? What are the barriers, and how can they be overcome?

Thanks Ricki for alerting us to this. Copy and paste this link to hear the radio program:

<http://www.abc.net.au/rn/australiatalks/stories/2010/2870613.htm>

### **DR. WORK:**

#### **Some tips on your CV and including (or not including) referees.**

Does your CV include referees and their contact details? According to some recruiters this is not a good idea. Why not? Some recruiters and prospective employers may like your CV but may contact your referees and do their own preliminary investigation before they have even met you, the results of which might be inadvertently negative for you and might then lead to the potential employer not going further and meeting you. This has importance, especially if you haven't kept in contact with your referees. It would be best if your CV includes a statement such as "details of referees shall be provided on request".

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This way you can contact your referees once you get an interview or soon after your interview or if you are short listed, whereupon you can inform your referees that they may get a call. Who should you include as referees? This can be difficult, especially if you don't have much past work experience. Parents and friends are not professional references. They are character references and can be provided if asked for. Perhaps you have done some casual work or voluntary work. Such a referee from these sources can be very valuable and should be approached and kept in the loop about your job hunting plans.

### **ADDE BOARD MEMBER PROFILES:**

Earlier this year the ADDE committee started on the journey of becoming an incorporated body, by electing a board of management. Follows an introduction to the inaugural board members. They can be contacted via the ADDE office at:  
Action for Community Living, 86 Herbert St. Northcote Vic 3070  
**Phone:** (03) 9489 2999 **Fax:** (03) 9489 2988

#### **Peter Rickards, President:**

Peter has become a passionate advocate for improving employment opportunities for people from disadvantaged communities. "I decided to form ADDE because I found so many barriers to getting back into the workforce" Peter said. Many organizations such as State Federal, and Local Government, and Disability Agencies which you would expect would be leading from the front in employment of people with disabilities, were not doing so. I became tired of trying to change these injustices by myself with no obvious results. After nearly two years of frustration I realized that organizations and government only take you seriously if you speak from an organization which has credibility and numbers. There were so many people like me having the same problems and many people I came across had just given up trying to find work because it is too difficult when employers are not taking a pro-active approach. The next step was to get together to try and get change happening and create our own employment opportunities" Peter Rickards said. Since completing a post graduate qualification in Recreation and leisure studies, Peter played a leading role in developing Recreation and Leisure services for people with vision loss for 26 years at Vision Australia before being made redundant in 2003. His achievements included production of videos, a program series broadcast on National Radio for the Print Handicapped, and the publishing and writing of several books which sold world wide, also the establishment of many National and State Blind and Disability sporting and recreation associations. Peter played a leading role on the Disability Advisory Committee at Boroondara (winners of Prime Ministers employer award 2005), and he developed a business plan for the BtB (Becoming the Boss disability empowerment training program) at Action for Community Living. Another achievement is the establishment of a small business by Peter and his partner. Despite losing his vision at a young age while living in Africa, Peter has been keenly involved in many sports and recreational activities himself, the highlights of which have been to represent Australia internationally in three different sports. In 1980 Peter competed in the second winter Paralympics in Norway in the 10 and 20 km cross country skiing events coming within the top 10 in the world. In 1982 he won a gold medal in the 5 km walk in Hong

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Kong at the Asian disability games. And In 1990 his sailing team won bronze at the first world blind sailing championships in Auckland New Zealand. Other highlights have included entering teams in three five day 400 km canoe Murray Marathons, and the annual international Dragon boat festival, and leading a trip of vision impaired people who paddled the circumference of Port Philip Bay over eight days in sea kayaks. In addition to being father to three almost grown up children, Peter still finds time to play golf, go bush walking, cross country skiing, ball room dancing, canoeing, organize fund raising events for charity, and play chess. He also has been a leader of a Cub Scout pack for nine years. Recently Peter was President of Rostrum public speaking club, and represented his club at the Victorian public speaking finals in August 2005. He also was part of the inaugural Leadershipplus program in Australia. Peter was born in New Zealand and also lived in South Africa for five years before his family came to Melbourne in 1970.

Contact email [peter\\_rick@bigpond.com](mailto:peter_rick@bigpond.com) or leave a message with the ADDE office.

#### **Joy Stevenson, Vice President:**

My background is as a Community Development Worker and a Primary School Teacher, (I have a teaching degree and a post graduate diploma in community development).

Chronic Illness has kept me out of the workforce for 10 years, although I have remained active in community work around disability and chronic illness.

I have always been interested in social justice and working towards an inclusive society. I joined ADDE's management committee because they work for that goal too (and because the people here are good!).

Contact email [joystevenson@netspace.net.au](mailto:joystevenson@netspace.net.au) or leave a message with the ADDE office.

#### **Edward Manuel, Treasurer**

My name is Edward Manuel; I came to Australia in 1972. In 1994 I was diagnosed with "Cerebella Degeneration". Prior to this diagnosis I worked as an Accountant with a degree in Business Studies. I was employed in local government, before I ended up on DSP. I have two children; a boy and a girl.

To keep myself busy since I've been on a pension, I have been involved in Disability Advocacy such as Headway Victoria, Vicnord, ACL, Darebin Disability Advisory Committee and Health Issues Centre.

My experience with seeking paid employment has very long, tedious, frustrating and unfruitful, there is a distinct perception that people with disability aren't worth the worry of being productively employed. I have tried working for myself but the professional indemnity insurance and membership fees were more than the work coming in. My last job was with Vicnet, a branch of the State Library. This only lasted 6 months as the position was used as a stepping stone to encourage people with disabilities back to the workforce. Therefore I am now not employed but live in hope "something will come up".

Contact email [e.manuel@afcl.org.au](mailto:e.manuel@afcl.org.au) or leave a message with the ADDE office.

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### **Kathy Leitch, Secretary and Newsletter Editor**

Up until the age of 50 I thought I was very employable as I have had very broad work/life experience. I have worked in a diverse range of jobs including (from first to current) pharmacy assistant, retail sales, factory work – spot welding, spray painting and ice-cream packaging, primary school teacher, lifesaving and pool attendant, hospitality, ski lodge manager and ski resort work, housemaid, nanny, spare parts delivery, small, single mother to 2 children, brand merchandise manager, sales rep, business owner (retail, travel and tour host, mobile coffee and catering)... but I have found that diversity in the workforce is more of an idea than a reality. In addition to experiencing barriers to my age I also believe I have been excluded from at least one position, which I was short-listed for, due to my hearing disability. I hope that ADDE's work will help to redress the balance of diversity and disability in the Australian workforce.

Contact email [kathy\\_leitch@hotmail.com](mailto:kathy_leitch@hotmail.com) or leave a message with the ADDE office.

### **Asitha Gurusinghe, Website and IT**

Born in Sri Lanka, and brought up in New Zealand, Asitha brings Culture to ADDE as well as Graduating in Science and Computing with interests in Science education and Multimedia. He is a person with a disability who has experienced first-hand how the workplace fails to provide adequate support, and feels strongly enough about campaigning for Workplace Reforms to accommodate more people with disabilities.

Contact email [asitha1@fastmail.fm](mailto:asitha1@fastmail.fm) or leave a message with ADDE office.

### **David Sullivan, general member representative**

I've been the lucky one. My specialty early on was music - and I was born in England. After uni, I went to work for London Transport. After my first degree in Politics, Philosophy and Economics, I married the person I met at uni. She turned out to be a dual nationality - UK and Oz. So when The Age offered her a job in Melbourne, we could walk right in. I went to work in IR for ICI Explosives, which kept me busy at Deer Park and around Australia. At 32 I was diagnosed with MS, but stayed working for another 11 years, and this led me to overseas acquisitions and restructuring. My partner did several working trips overseas, and this led to us exploring all over. While publishing Short Circuit - the Internal Newsletter for People with MS, I met Peter Rickards, who was just getting ADDE off the ground. Subsequently, after the previous People with MS President had a full-on heart attack in the job, I was persuaded to take up the role of PwMS President. Having prepared for leaving the PwMS next year, I've now been elected as a Board Member of ADDE. Life continues to entertain - and now is the right moment to attempt substantial improvements for people who depend on pensions. If you feel this too - please join us as we take on the remaining barriers and unfair arrangements. My partner is just producing her second book - Little People - and our son is finishing Year 12. They are both tall blond left-handers – I never stood a chance.....!\_

Contact email [sullivandavid3@gmail.com](mailto:sullivandavid3@gmail.com) or leave a message with the ADDE office.

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**Peter Athan, general member representative**

(Profile will be submitted for next newsletter)

Contact email [peter.athan@live.com](mailto:peter.athan@live.com) or leave a message with ADDE office.