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• **QUOTE OF THE MONTH:**

Compromise: The art of dividing a cake in such a way that everybody believes they got the biggest piece. Unknown

• **EDITORS REPORT:**

The ADDE Annual report follows. Note that the third paid staff member has started work as Membership officer. Congrats to the 3 staff members we now have on board – Geoff Crawford (Project Coordinator), Alan Bartlett (Fundraising and Admin.) and Michael Merrett (Membership Development).

Have a great break at this festive time and we wish all our readers much success in the New Year.

Kathy Leitch - Newsletter editor

• **ADDE COORDINATOR REPORT:**

Annual Report 2009 – ADDE**Leading from the front research project.**

After the successful launch of the research project ADDE has been invited to become a member of a project board being set up by DHS and NDS to formulate a strategy focusing on disability employment in the Victorian disability sector. Some of the key issues found in the leading from the front

research project will be addressed and DHS have agreed in principle that some state government funding should be made available over the coming years to ensure the sustainability of ADDE. The project team is expected to meet in February 2010.

Membership

ADDE has grown its membership to over 330 members and by means of several philanthropic trusts has employed a part time project co-ordinator and administration officer to continue to grow the capacity of ADDE. Major focus of the organisation is advocacy on the crucial issue of disability and diversity employment. It is expected that a third paid position of membership development officer will commence part time in November 2009.

Leading yourself project

ADDE has developed a partnership with Diversity @ Work to market the skills and experience of both organizations to similar groups within the community wishing to set up a more formal structure such as ADDE has done. At this stage the target market is local councils and several have shown some interest in further involvement.

Funding opportunities.

Staff of ADDE are actively pursuing a number of new funding opportunities to increase the capacity of the organization and develop more employment opportunities for people with a disability. We are looking forward to continued growth and positive outcomes in 2010.

Geoff Crawford, ADDE Project Coordinator

THE DIVERSITY@WORK DISABILITY EMPLOYERS OF THE YEAR:

The following summary by Peter Rickards outlines the winners of the award for 2009. Peter was again one of 3 judges of the award and is pleased to show how these companies are leading from the front in disability employment.

Winner, Small to Medium business (under 1000 employees)

Scan Conversion Services (SCS) South Australia

Scan Conversion Services (SCS) is a scanning bureau operating throughout Australia and New Zealand and has been delivering highly effective document and drawing management solutions for ten years

Since April **2008 35 people with varying types of disabilities have**

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commenced training and employment with SCS. All 35 job seekers have been employed by SCS in a casual, part-time or full-time capacity in permanent or contract positions. Of these 35 job seekers, 15 are still employed by SCS. The remaining **20 have moved onto other employment opportunities** armed with the experience they gained from SCS.

When Managing Director, Richard Bates, approached CRS Australia's Adelaide office seeking assistance to recruit a job seeker with a disability for the position of Document Preparer, he outlined the specific nature of the role and skills required for a job seeker to succeed. A successful candidate was placed in a job with SCS and due to such a positive outcome, Richard now uses CRS Australia as a leading partner in staff recruitment, **specifically employing people with a disability.**

When new employees and trainees commence work or on-the-job training with SCS they all undertake a *new employees' induction*. Part of this induction process involves discussing the **company's values and commitment to social inclusion.**

Monthly staff meetings are used to promote the on-the-job training program and the benefits of employing people with a disability. These meetings are also used to introduce and welcome new staff, openly discuss work topics and reinforce SCS's commitment to employment and inclusion of people with a disability.

Richard **actively promotes the benefits of employing people with a disability** by encouraging SCS customers and his network of contacts to consider providing training and employment opportunities for people with a disability. Richard also attends monthly Entrepreneur Organisation meetings where he often discusses the benefits of employing people with a disability, especially when people mention they are having staff problems or shortages. The on-the-job training initiative was implemented 15 months ago in April 2008 and involves an induction and tailored training appropriate for the specific job the trainee will undertake. Once the trainee is comfortable with the job and feels confident with their responsibilities, SCS expands their training and the variety of work undertaken by the trainee.

In terms of measurable success SCS has seen their trainees' with a disability skills and confidence grow to a point where the company can send trainees to remote parts of the country to manage major projects. Richard finds that the training and communication provided to trainees creates employees that are

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driven to succeed despite any obstacles that can affect projects.

‘We want to **find people who are going to do a good job, care about what they are doing, have good attention to detail and want to work.** This contributes in turn to a stable workforce and a low staff turnover. We have found that **staff with a disability display these qualities more than people without a disability,**’ says Richard.

Richard is **working towards a recruitment strategy to employ more people with a disability within all SCS offices throughout Australia.**

Working in a production environment, SCS measures every aspect of their business. The immediate value created by this program includes **less absenteeism, less staff disagreement, greater flexibility in the hours SCS can operate, higher quality of work and surprising innovation.**

For example, one trainee with a disability, on his first day was scanning microfilm. During this process an image is created in a propriety format. SCS then uses software to crop out each frame on the roll of film, which takes approximately two hours. Upon leaving work, the trainee asked if he could write a programme that could do the job better. Managing Director, Richard Bates, mentioned this to one of his information technology staff and he advised that it is often a difficult process to write new programmes. The next morning the trainee arrived with a disk with the new programme he had created.

‘We tried the programme and it worked! He managed to reduce the time to process each film down to fifteen minutes,’ said Richard.

SCS benefits greatly from the on-the-job training program and is moving forward to franchise the business. Franchise owners will be encouraged to employ people with a disability, in the same way SCS head office has thus promoted equal opportunity employment in the broader market.

Richard says, ‘Our company only **focuses on what people can do, not what they can not.** People who have come to us are hardworking, motivated, and have in turn helped us develop the safest possible work environment for everyone through workplace safety initiatives.’

Richard also finds that by employing people with a disability, **employees respect the business more because it demonstrates that the organisation is not just focussed on business, but also on helping others.** Morale is healthy as staff are also happy to work there and the business has developed a good reputation.

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Managing Director, Richard Bates', ongoing commitment to giving people with a disability a job opportunity has been life changing for many. It has meant that trainees who may not have had the required work experience or confidence to apply for a job in this area are given a safe and encouraging environment to learn and build their skills and confidence to become a valuable employee. Having a job with SCS has given many trainees independence, increased confidence and satisfaction, financial benefit and opportunities to learn. Employing people with a disability has made employees more forgiving and more supportive of their colleagues. Staff believe in what the company does and actively participate in making SCS grow by working together to service SCS clients.

SCS employees with a disability have provided feedback which states that they are extremely grateful for the opportunities they have been provided to re-engage into **open employment**.

Employing people with a disability is now a part of SCS's general human resource and recruitment practices.

Winner Large business (more than 1000 employees)

Department of Transport (Victoria)

Our ultimate aim is to provide safe, meaningful and sustainable employment pathways for people with a disability, which is supported by a diverse and inclusive work environment.

Our objective is to increase employment opportunities in DOT for people with a disability and educate managers and employees about disabilities and the benefits of employing a diverse workforce. Under the banner of the "DOT Diversity & Inclusion Strategy", DOT has a range of initiatives, which aim to create an inclusive work environment and support and promote our objectives. Supported by the "DOT Disability Action Plan (DAP) 2009-2012", initiatives implemented to achieve this include:

- **Flexible recruitment strategies** that are inclusive of people with a disability.
- Training and development opportunities that are accessible to all DOT people, including people with a disability. This includes providing **tailored training in alternative formats**.
- The introduction of a **mentoring** program for people with a disability.
- Delivering disability and mental health **awareness education** programs to DOT people.

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- **Building managers' capability** around managing people with diverse needs, including people with a disability, through the "Managers' Induction" and "Management Development Program".
- Providing **accessible and supportive work environments** including flexible work practices.
- Establishing a working group comprising DOT people with a disability, to assist in the development of the DOT DAP and provide an **ongoing opportunity for consultation**.
- Facilitating annual forums, to be held in conjunction with VicRoads, to ensure ongoing consultation with people with a disability, while raising awareness and education for disability related matters. This is also an opportunity to **celebrate and acknowledge our successes and achievements**.

In support of our **goal to increase employment opportunities** for people with a disability, DOT commenced our involvement in the Career Start program in March 2009. The purpose of this program is to support Victorian graduates with a disability into employment within the public and community sector. It caters for a wide range of disabilities, including people with mental health issues. The program **aims to achieve a long-term increase in the number of people with a disability employed across all areas and all levels of the public service**, including the Department of Transport and our wider portfolio.

We **employ the program participants on short-term (four month) work placements** in a variety of positions across the department and at varying levels. Each person is placed according to their skills and experience. These placements provide flexible working options for the participants including job sharing and part-time hours. The program provides the individual with valuable work experience and training, builds their confidence as a valued team member by contributing to a workplace, and creates pathways to meaningful ongoing employment, which they may not have received otherwise.

This initiative benefits other traditionally under-represented groups. The rate of disability amongst Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians is almost twice as high as that of non-Indigenous people. It is also estimated that one in four people with a disability comes from a non-English speaking background, or is the child of parents from a non-English speaking background. Several of our Career Start placements are representatives of these under-represented groups. These initiatives also support our YES Trainee program, as many of our trainees, who are from disadvantaged groups, also have a disability and/or are from traditionally under-represented groups.

In partnership with *Sign On* (a disability employment agency registered as a provider for the Career Start program), we introduced the Career Start program in DOT in March 2009.

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The DOT DAP 2009-2012 and the DOT Diversity & Inclusion Strategy represent a strong commitment to building a diverse and inclusive workplace. Department-wide support of these strategies puts us in a great position to implement programs like Career Start.

Coordination and communication of the program is managed centrally by the People & Organisational Development division. This allows DOT to ensure consistent and ongoing support for people with a disability, as well as for managers who employ people with a disability. We can also make assessments as to what supporting programs are required to complement the program.

Working closely with the divisional people services teams, the program is targeted to managers across the department. The program is also actively promoted by the DOT Leadership Team and senior managers, who actively encourage their respective divisions to participate.

Due to the success of the Career Start program, DOT has made an ongoing commitment to the program as part of the DOT Disability Action Plan 2009-2012. Our DAP is fully supported and endorsed by the DOT Leadership Team, the People and Organisational Development division, the DOT Disability Working Group and the DOT People Matters Group (this group comprises of representatives from all divisions in DOT).

Key to communicating the initiative have been the delivery of disability and mental health **awareness education programs to DOT people and the building of managers' capability around managing people with diverse needs**, including people with a disability, through the "Managers' Induction" and "Management Development Program".

Since the inception of the Career Start program in DOT earlier this year and the supporting initiatives, we have **increased the number of employees with a disability from six to 20 (which is an increase of over 300% in less than six months)**.

In the last six months, **three Career Start participants have successfully secured ongoing and fixed-term employment** with the Department. DOT is quickly developing a strong reputation within the broader community as being a diverse and inclusive workplace.

To ensure the ongoing success of employing people with a disability, and to build a **culture of inclusiveness**, we have implemented a number of supporting initiatives:

- A **tailored induction program** for all Career Start participants to ensure a smooth transition into employment into the Department
- Provision of disability and mental health **awareness training for all DOT employees**. In particular, for those divisions who employ people with a disability

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- Ongoing **support for managers** who employ people with a Disability
- **Customised support** for individuals with a disability, including ongoing case management support for Career Start participants from the disability employment organisation
- **An Alumni program** for all Career Start participants to ensure ongoing involvement with the Department so they can stay informed of current departmental news, events and employment opportunities
- Ongoing support from the People & Organisational Development division in developing initiatives that support a diverse and inclusive workplace,
- Ensuring that the DOT value of “Enabling and Inclusiveness” is demonstrated by DOT people every day.

DOT has developed a partnership with Randstad and Diversity@Work under the new Victorian Government Specialist Disability Recruitment Services contract to create an **ongoing employment pathway for all Career Start participants**. DOT is the lead agency, and will work with Randstad and Diversity@Work to coordinate **placements in DOT and other Victorian Public Service (VPS) Departments**.

“The program that I manage focuses on social inclusion and dealing with people with disabilities, so for me it was important to have a workforce that reflects the community we serve. It was also important for me that my staff increased awareness of dealing with people whom are hearing impaired. I have also broadened my understanding of how we make a workplace and work processes flexible to be able to cater for people with these sought of issues.”

Chris, Manager Multipurpose Taxi program

“It has opened my eyes to the potential of people with disabilities, and it’s increased my team’s awareness and understanding of the needs of people with a disability and impressed them as to the opportunities and capabilities such an individual can bring.”

Andrew, Manager Executive Employment Services

The most crucial element to the success of this initiative is the strong support of Department’s Secretary, the Leadership Team and senior management.

A centralised point of contact for coordination and support is essential to getting a program such as Career Start off the ground. The People & Organisational Development division provides ongoing support to DOT managers who employ people with a disability, including:

- Assistance with **workplace modifications**
- **Disability awareness training**, and
- Access to **specialist support and advice from an external disability employment provider**, with whom we have a built a close working relationship.

A key driver of providing this arrangement has been **simplifying the process for managers**, to help to change the perception that employing a person with a disability is “too hard”.

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A supportive and flexible work environment

DOT's established approach to flexible working arrangements support people with a disability to balance the demands of work, their personal life and their health. For example, we have people who use the Department's "personal rooms" to meditate during work hours to enable them to successfully manage their anxiety. We also have a number of employees, particularly through the Career Start program, with a disability who either job-share or have flexible working hours to allow them to adjust back into full-time employment with support.

- **THERE IS MORE TO LIFE THAN WORK....**

This section of the newsletter shows the lighter side of our membership. Please email me with what you do in your spare time – some photos would be nice too.

Ania's artistic incarnation:

Hello to all my friends who are interested in what I got up to at the Polish Festival recently. I was demonstrating the Art of Polish Wycinanki (paper cut-outs) at Federation Square at the Kid Stop tent down by the Yarra.



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Kathy and Peter canoodling :

Canoeing is a great activity for us – Peter is my ears and I am his eyes.



- **JOB HUNTING TIPS FROM AROUND THE WORLD...**

Know what you want

Before you send a bulk email with your application to every advertised position that is even vaguely related to your industry or experience – STOP! Take time to think about what you want and narrow your focus so you don't waste both your time and the employer's. Make a list of what you are looking for (both personally and professionally) and only apply for jobs that match your priorities, talent and experience.

Where to look

Job opportunities can be found anywhere and everywhere. Don't limit your search to traditional methods – it's about opening your eyes, extending your networks and putting yourself out there. Newspapers, trade magazines, Internet job-search websites, Centrelink, Job Network services, recruitment companies, networks, online social networking sites and industry workshops are all at your disposal. Don't put all your eggs in one basket, but divide your time between looking through advertisements, networking both in person and online, and touching base with recruitment companies.

Establish a routine

Treat your hunt for a job as if it's a job in itself. Your next brilliant career isn't going to land in your lap if you aren't actively on the lookout for it. Set aside time to seek out opportunities, put in applications and attend interviews. It will also pay to use your excess spare time to bump up your employability rating

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by attending courses to brush up on old skills or learn new ones. Doing temporary work will build work experience, keep your bills paid and may even turn into a permanent position.

Safeguarding your sanity

Don't expect to find your dream career in a week or even a matter of months - it can sometimes be a long war of attrition. You'll have to be prepared to tough it out and that means being able to deal with rejection. Don't get disgruntled or demoralised if you miss out – stay focused and tell yourself that the right one is just around the corner. Seek support from family and friends, remind yourself of the positive efforts you are making and look after yourself by eating good food and keeping yourself physically fit. It's also important to separate your 'leisure' time from your 'job hunting' time so you don't get an attack of the guilts if you indulge in a bit of down time.

Strike while the iron is hot

The job market is dynamic and very quick – it's not the place to 'um', 'ah' or bide your time. Respond to job advertisements promptly (within five days of it being posted) and if you hear of an opportunity, grab the phone and give the company a call. Lots of employers will jump on the first decent candidate they see, so get into gear quickly.

Juggling the offers

Effective job-hunting is not just about getting as many offers as possible, but knowing which is the right offer. After weeks or even months of furious job hunting and countless rejections you'll probably be cheering all the way to the bank when you get the call letting you know you can start on Monday. Think back to what you initially wanted when you started hunting – seemingly endless weeks of trying to track down the dream job may have skewed your perspective slightly. Ask yourself whether the salary is fair, whether you will enjoy the day-to-day work, whether you are willing to make the required life-style changes and if you are suited to the company's values. If the answer is no, then let the hunt continue!

Keep a record

It's important to keep good notes of jobs you apply for, application requirements, job interviews, contact people and their details, and your impressions before and after an interview.

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