



Contents

Page 1	Introduction
Page 2	Quotes of the Season Newsflash ADDE funding awarded
Page 3	Government Tenders to favour employers of people with disability Diversity at work awards 2010
Page 6	International day of people with disability
Page 7	ADDE Board Member Profile Amy Marshall Newsflash - Prahran Mission Job Supply
Page 8	Newsflash - Job Vacancy

Hi all,

Since our last newsletter Australia has seen a new federal and State government elected. Bill Shorten was the Parliamentary Secretary for Disability in the Rudd government and was responsible for bringing into the realm of government the National Disability Strategy. The Gillard Government remains committed to ensuring that people with disability have the opportunity to lead rich and fulfilling lives and through Senator McLucas, Parliamentary Secretary for Disabilities and Carers, together with the Minister for Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs, the Hon Jenny Macklin MP, will deliver on this commitment to implement the National Disability Strategy. The Strategy is a key element of ensuring that the principles underpinning the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities are incorporated into policies and programs affecting people with disability, their families and carers.

Senator Jan McLucas has vast experience in disability, having served as Shadow Minister for Ageing and Disabilities from October 2004 to June 2005; and as Shadow Minister for Ageing, Disabilities and Carers from June 2005 until December 2007.

At ADDE we are keen to see how the new federal government performs in the area of disability employment. If 2011 is to be the year of action for the government then we look forward to some good news stories.

And may **you** have some good news stories over the Xmas break. Check out Newsflash on Page 7 to find out how. All the best for the coming year,

Kathy Leitch, Newsletter editor: kathy_leitch@hotmail.com

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- **QUOTES OF THE SEASON (or should it be “foot in mouth disease”?):**

I found several interesting comments recently, each of which indicates that the issue of disability employment is still under the radar and shows that ADDE, as a systemic advocacy organization, has much work to do:

1. Victorian 2010 election brought about this good one:

The Liberal Coalition spokesperson said, during a phone conversation with me about the disability employment forum ADDE was organising:

“I didn’t think disability employment was an issue for Victorian governments to deal with. Isn’t it the federal government’s responsibility?” The new Victorian government will have a lot of work to catch up on now that they have the responsibility for running the state!

2. Comment by CEO, Human Resources Institute, at Independence Australia Forum, November 2010, Melbourne Town Hall:

“The Human Resources Institute has many working parties on many employment issues, but not on disability employment...” And this is 2010?

3. Spokesperson for Chris Evans, Federal Minister for jobs, regarding increasing the Newstart allowance for the unemployed. Australia’s unemployment benefits are amongst the lowest of all developed nations and the journalist from The Age was asking if the government was going to address this situation:

“...the unemployment benefits have to be low, otherwise the unemployed will not try hard enough to get work...” Is this a Labor government talking here?

- **NEWSFLASH:**

ADDE has just received first round funding from Department of Human Services to manage the Leading from the Front Disability Employment in the Victorian Disability Sector Project. The project has been set up to develop options to improve employment opportunities including recruitment, retention and support for people with disabilities in government funded or DHS provided support services.

This funding will assist ADDE to implement the findings of our ‘Leading From the Front’ research, which we undertook in an effort to discover the level of employment of people with disability in the disability sector in Victoria. Surprisingly the results of this research showed that the sector and levels of government were not ‘leading from the front’ and so we are now able to act, through this project, to effect change in the sector.

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- **ACT GOVERNMENT TENDERS TO FAVOUR EMPLOYERS OF PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES AND THE LONG TERM UNEMPLOYED:**

The ACT Government is changing its tender process to favour organisations that employ people with disabilities and the long-term unemployed.

Chief Minister Jon Stanhope revealed the Government's new commitment to 'social tendering' at the launch of Woden's Café Ink which provides employment for people who are struggling to enter the workforce.

"This ACT Government initiative aims to break down some of the barriers faced by people with disabilities wanting to enter the workforce by making it easier for organisations that employ people with disabilities to win Government contracts," Mr Stanhope said. "The changes will mean that ACT Government departments and agencies must consider the social benefits of awarding contracts to such organisations alongside some of the more competitive requirements."

Mr Stanhope said he hoped the initiative would encourage more organisations like Café Ink to offer employment and training opportunities to people with disabilities. "Businesses like Café Ink provide opportunities for some of the most vulnerable and isolated members of our community to participate in the workforce," Mr Stanhope said. "Café Ink is an example of how social inclusion can be achieved in the workplace with the right combination of market knowledge, opportunity and goodwill."

The ACT Government already supports organisations like Café Ink through the ACT Social Enterprise Hub which offers business development support to organisations that employ people who might otherwise be excluded from the workforce.

"We are now taking the extra step of making it easier for social enterprise organisations to win Government contracts and provide their staff with employment security."

[Café Ink is an initiative of the Woden Community Services.](#)

Procurement in the ACT Government is governed by the Government Procurement Act 2001 and Government Procurement Regulation 2007 and is supported by policy circulars. Please see attachment for more information.

The Procurement Policy page of the ACT Procurement Solutions website provides links to the Act and Regulation and all the policy circulars are available there:

http://www.procurement.act.gov.au/about_us/procurement_policy

- **DIVERSITY AT WORK AWARDS 2010:**

Recently, ADDE was involved in the judging of the Diversity@Work 2010 Employment and Inclusion Awards: People with a Disability. This award recognises excellence in initiatives or programs related to the employment and inclusion of people with a disability. Peter Rickards, ADDE president, was a judge on the panel

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and stated how happy he was to once again have the opportunity to judge the nominations. “The awards are an excellent way for companies and organisations to showcase their employment practices which lead to an increase in the employment of people with disability in Australia. There were many worthy nominations but we had the unenviable task of having to choose one.” The following are the winners and commendations from the 2010 Awards Dinner held on 14 October 2010:

- **Award Winner** - Employment and Inclusion of People with a Disability - Small/Medium Enterprise (SME), (<1000 staff): **Psychiatric Rehabilitation Australia**
- **Commendation** - Employment and Inclusion of People with a Disability - SME: **Lyndoch Hill**
- **Commendation** - Employment and Inclusion of People with a Disability - SME: **Australian Retailers Association Retail Institute**
- **Award Winner** - Employment and Inclusion of People with a Disability - Large Organisation, (>1000 staff): **Ageing Disability and Home Care (ADHC)**
- **Commendation** - Employment and Inclusion of People with a Disability - Large Organisation: **Best and Less - Pacific Fair**

Winner, SME, Psychiatric Rehabilitation Australia (PRA), was an admirable winner due to a number of outstanding employment practices which have lead to this not for profit organisation showing an impressive measurable outcome of 25% of their workforce being people with disability. PRA’s great strength lies in the fact that it does not pigeon-hole people with disability into doing menial or repetitive jobs, which can lead to many of them soon realising that there is little hope of either advancement or opportunities to make a contribution at a policy and organisational level. The organisation embraces the participation of their consumer group in its workforce. Many of the 60 employees with disability work in specialist professional positions including Executives, Vocational Trainers, Team Leaders, Coordinators, Advocates, Support Workers to name just a few. Peter Rickards said: “Employing this level of staff who have lived experience of mental illness and who started off their involvement as consumers of PRA services, is worthy of the winning award”.

PRA have an attitude of not distinguishing between consumers of their services and the staff which has lead to another noteworthy result for the organisation – an increase in numbers of people coming to PRA to use their services and an increase every year in the number of consumers who are now staff. Democracy in the workforce has many benefits!

Winner, Large Organisation, Aging, Disability and Home Care (ADHC), have a commitment to ensuring older people, people with disability and their carers are valued, lead independent lives and have the opportunity to participate fully in community life. To achieve this, the domestic Services Manager, has established a domestic pool of staff, who trained as service Support Officers to work on a casual basis. Staff conditions include being offered at least 2 shifts per week covering 15 hours. The result is 15 people with disability have trained through the on-the-job program and are now employed. This result in 8 months is notable and as an

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organisation which serves people with disability it makes sense that they should 'practice what they preach'.

ADDE commissioned research into the employment of people with disability in the Victorian disability sector titled "Leading From the Front?" (http://adde.org.au/events_survey08.html). The research showed that this was not happening in the majority of disability organisations. PRA and ADHC are both organisations in the disability sector and both are showing that they can "Lead from the Front" in employing people with disability. ADDE recommends that other organisations look at their own employment practices to see if they can create measurable targets and 'put their money where their mouth is' to show that they too can offer best practice disability employment.



Left to right: Peter Rickards, ADDE President; Li Cunxin, Mao's Last Dancer, keynote speaker at the awards; Kathy Leitch, ADDE Development Officer at the Diversity @ Work Awards night, 21/10/10



Left to right: Kathy Leitch, ADDE Development Officer; Graeme Innes, Disability Discrimination Commissioner and Race Discrimination Commissioner of the Australian Human Rights Commission; Peter Rickards, ADDE President at the Diversity @ Work Awards night, 21/10/10

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- **INTERNATIONAL DAY OF PEOPLE WITH DISABILITY:**

To celebrate International Day of People with a Disability, the National Disability Coordination Officer Program hosted the largest disability services expo in the region this year. The expo, held at Kingston Town Hall Moorabbin, on November 25th, was attended by ADDE, where we had a display advertising our organization. With the help of board members including David Sullivan, Peter Rickards, Amy Marshall and Gordon Trott, along with ADDE staff members, Geoff Crawford and Kathy Leitch, 34 new people have been added to our mailing list and 5 new ADDE memberships were signed up. Our cheeky fridge magnets were a hit and were eagerly taken up by the many visitors to the expo. The massive champagne glass full of sweets was a drawcard and encouraged people to stop by our stand, whereupon Gordon and David eagerly presented them with information about ADDE. Peter, Geoff and Kathy had time to walk around the expo and hand out ADDE business cards to the other exhibitors and to find out about the many organizations involved in employment and support of people with disability. As a result of attending the expo, we realized we needed a few more display aids so we will look into this for the future.

Of those visiting the expo, many were people with disability as well as people in the disability “industry”. There was a large contingent of secondary school groups, many of whom had projects to undertake. One of the questions on the project sheet asked for them to find a systemic advocacy organization, of which ADDE was one of very few exhibiting, so we had quite good exposure amongst students and their teachers.



Kathy Leitch (left) Gordon Trott (centre) and Geoff Crawford (right) working at ADDE stand, Disability Expo, Moorabbin, Nov. 2010

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- **ADDE BOARD MEMBER PROFILE: Amy Marshall:**

After completing VCE, I commenced a double degree in Mechanical Engineering and Business at Swinburne University. During my third year of study, I decided that I was not really interested in a career in engineering and I left for full time employment. My immediate aim was to gain broad experience by travelling and working overseas. I have since had two extended journeys overseas during which I have lived and worked in London and Dublin

Various experiences during the past five years led me to decide to pursue a career in social work. Last year, as a first step in this career path, I obtained my Certificate 4 in Youth Work. During the course I participated in an American exchange program in which I travelled to Iowa, attended classes at the local college and participated in work experience with the community.

I have been working for the Department of Human Services since the beginning of this year. Secure Welfare Service in a unique service comprised of two units, one for young men and one for women. The young people are placed in our care for short periods of time due to behaviour that is considered to put them in immediate and substantial risk of harm. While in a secure environment it is possible for DHS to conduct assessments and perhaps reengage with the young people.

My career aspirations are to continue to build my skills and experience in the broad area of social services. I would value the opportunity to extend my experience by working with ADDE for the benefit of people with disability.

- **NEWSFLASH:**

Job Supply Personnel is Prahran Mission's Disability Employment Services (DES) program. We provide a free service for individuals to assist with employment preparation, job search, placements, and post-placement support. At Job Supply Personnel, we specialise in providing individual employment assistance for people with a disability or health condition (for example arthritis, depression, anxiety) by helping job seekers overcome employment barriers and secure meaningful employment. We provide a high level of support for our job seekers throughout the job preparation and job search process by:

- Identifying goals, strengths and skills
- Preparation of employment plans and goals
- Preparation of resumes and cover letters

We continue to support our job seekers once they have gained employment with fortnightly meetings with their employment consultant. For more information about the services of Job Supply Personnel, including how to be referred to the program, please contact Prahran Mission.

Level 3/211 Chapel Street

Prahran, 3181

Phone (03) 96929500

Email: jobs@prahranmission.org.au

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- **NEWSFLASH:**

Prahran Mission, Retail Work Experience Position **Starting immediately**

We are currently looking for eligible candidates who have entered the Work Experience phase, including candidates in the WORK FOR THE DOLE project. Prahran Mission has several positions available for candidates to undertake 6 months work experience within their retail operations in Dandenong and Chapel St Opportunity Shops. Person would be responsible for basic store cleanliness, sorting of donated products and restocking duties.

If you can assist, please contact Andrea Crawford on (03) 9692 9520 or email on andrea.c@prahranmission.org.au for further details.

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