

AQA NEWS LINK

The Official Newsletter of A.Q.A. Victoria Ltd., & AQA Tasmania

October 2001



Ian Williams

**A Valued Colleague
That Will Be Sadly
Missed**

1947 - 2001

See middle pages...

Inside

▣ **Qualcare News**

▣ **Member Input**

▣ **Plus More...**

▣ **Low Floor Trams
For Melbourne**





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Australian

Quadruplegic

Association

Victoria

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A.Q.A. NEWS LINK is the official newsletter of A.Q.A. Victoria Limited,

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ARTICLES and items of interest are welcome from any individual or organisation.

NEWS LINK reserves the right to edit all submissions as it sees fit. Published articles do not necessarily reflect the policies or opinions of A.Q.A. or its members.

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AQA NEWS LINK

The Official Newsletter of AQA Victoria Ltd., & AQA Tasmania

In this issue . . .

COVER STORY

- Low Floor Trams For Melbourne Page 4-5

SPECIAL FEATURE

- Memorial to Ian Williams Page 8-9

MEMBER INPUT

- I Had A Great Holiday In Townsville - *by Ray Kennedy* Page 10
- SHEARING - A Rams Story - *by Bill Detlefsen* Page 11

AQA VICTORIA INFORMATION

- AQA's Day In The Park - Cancelled For This Year!!! Page 13
- Annual General Meeting - AQA Victoria Ltd. Page 13

LEISURE

- Boating And Fishing Tours For The Disabled Page 14

NOTICES

- Wheelchair Skills Training Page 14
- Positive Outcomes To Research Project - Austin Hospital Page 14

HORSE RIDING

- Horse Riding - Letter From A Member Page 15
- Riding For The Disabled Association Page 15

REGULAR features

WHAT'S NEW IN PEER SUPPORT *By Baden Whitehead*

- Information/Peer Support Page 5

YOU ASKED A QUESTION???

- Purchasing a Car & The GST Page 6-7

AQA VICTORIA MEMBER PROFILE

- Raelene West Page 7

LAUGH OUT LOUD!

- Jokes Page 11

WHEELCHAIR RUGBY *By Nazim Erdem*

- Chris Handy Cup, Coloplast 2001 Australian Wheelchair Rugby Nationals, Victorian Wheelchair Rugby Training Camp, Coming Up... Page 12

QUALCARE NEWS

- Quality Improvement In The Disability Sector Page 13

CLASSIFIEDS

Page 16

Volume 15, Number 5

A.Q.A. NEWS LINK OCTOBER 2001

From the CEO

On page 8 & 9 of the newsletter there are tributes to Ian Williams who passed away on 27/9/01. Ian was a valued employee with whom I was lucky enough to enjoy an honest and friendly working association. AQA News Link is a tribute to Ian Williams which he edited for over 10 years and as attested to by his colleagues and friends he will be sadly missed at AQA.

Please note the date for the AGM (see page 13), all members are welcome.



There is also a notice advising the cancellation of our annual Day in the Park (see page 13). We look forward to receiving suggestions from members on how we can develop this event in new ways.

Ian Bennett
Chief Executive Officer
ianbennett@aqavic.org.au

From the Editor

It is a very short world that we live in. Making the most of what we have is not an easy thing to do. Some people make the most of their lives and more. Ian Williams was such a man.



I was very saddened to hear the passing of Ian on the 27th of September. He was a genuine bloke and you knew exactly where you stood with him... He'd let you know if he liked you or not, just like that – as far as I know, I was in his 'liked' category. His knowledge in so many different areas was so great that you could describe him as an encyclopedia, and that knowledge was shared as much as possible. He helped not only AQA, but other organisations and people with his expertise and knowledge. He made an impact with whoever he met, and was an inspiration to me personally with what he did with News Link. He turned our newsletter from a couple of pages of information, into what it is today.

He will be greatly missed by everyone who knew him. My condolences to John and his family. I will miss his humour, his wit, his arrogance, and his company. If he could say something now, it would be something like, "Shut up and get on with it you B——".

On a brighter note, turn to pages 4 and 5 for information on the new 'Low Floor Accessible' trams that are about to hit the streets of Melbourne. This has been a long time coming but now the disabled, elderly and other members of the community will have a more accessible tram network.

Nazim Erdem
News Link Editor
nazimerdem@aqavic.org.au

SAFETY RECALL BY CUSSONS PTY LTD

Cussons Pty. Ltd. is conducting a voluntary recall of all current stock of Imperial Leather Talcum Powder.

The items affected are only Imperial Leather talcum powder products marked "Made in Indonesia", sold after September 2000.

Cussons P/L has advised that overseas test results on Imperial Leather talc indicate the presence of low levels of *Clostridium perfringens*. This testing is indicative of the bacteria that may be present in Imperial Leather talc in Australia.

Clostridium perfringens is a commonly found bacteria which can cause serious infections if it gets into wounds or sores. Concerned consumers should seek medical advice.

Customers who have further queries can call the FreeCall number on 1800 660 020, Monday to Saturday between 9am and 5pm and speak to a customer service representative.

Sexuality & Women With Spinal Cord Injury

There are many changes that can affect your quality of life following a spinal cord injury. The changes to sexuality, as a result of changes to sexual function, can have a major impact on quality of life. The Victorian Spinal Cord Service is currently involved in a drug trial to look at sexual function in spinal cord injured women. If you are more than twelve months post injury, over 18 years old and interested in participating in the trial, please contact any of the following people.

- Dr. Doug Brown – Principal Investigator – 9496 4220
- Dr. Steve Hill – Co-Investigator – 9496 4220
- Annie Norrish – Study Co-ordinator – 9496 4732

Low Floor Trams for Melbourne

A lot of people in European cities are familiar with the following situation, and us Melburnians will soon experience the same situation. It is something that we probably imagine happening in the future but not now. Melburnians – especially wheelchair users and the elderly – will appreciate this fantastic moment. What am I on about? Well, read on and find out...

It glides into a railway station-like tram stop and comes smoothly to a halt. A small ramp automatically slides out from the tram body, allowing those in wheelchairs, parents with pushers, and the elderly to roll or shuffle off/on safely. There is no conductor, but the driver checks a video camera mounted on the outside of the tram to make sure that passengers have got on or off safely, before moving off.

Once on the platform, passengers can rest on an under cover seat, safe from the elements, consult a high-tech "real time" timetable for their next connection, use a public toilet or buy a drink or newspaper from a vending machine.

Yarra Trams and M-Tram (Melbourne's two tram companies operating the tram system under a franchise deal with the local government) hope to make this scene a reality for Melburnians very soon. The scheme is part of a push by the tram companies to greatly improve passenger numbers, passenger satisfaction, while at the same time making it easier for the disabled and elderly to use the tram system.

Yarra Trams has announced that it is to invest \$100 million in a new fleet of state of the art low-floor trams, with the first due into service in October.

The 36 "Citadis" trams, which will be manufactured by ALSTOM, will offer vastly improved accessibility, particularly for people with disabilities, the elderly, and parents with prams. ALSTOM is one of Europe's leading transportation manufacturers.

Instead of having to climb stairs, customers will now be able to step directly onto or off the tram, thanks to the low floor design. Passengers wanting to get off a tram, simply press a square red button, which replaces the old pull-cord's. Wheelchair users have to press a square green button, which lets the driver know that the automatic ramp

will need to be lowered.

The new trams will have easy access at platform level and there will be additional ramps to make it easy for wheelchair users to get onboard. The interiors of the new trams are spacious and modern. There are also large windows, which make sightseeing enjoyable. All new trams will have exterior video cameras that allow the driver of the tram to monitor passengers moving in and out of the tram. This will make sure that people get on and off the trams safely.

While Yarra Trams was conscious of the local manufacturing industry, it decided to give the contract of supplying Melbourne's trams to an overseas company because they produced the most modern tram in the world.



Some consolation for the local industry is that all of the maintenance of the new trams will be carried out in Victoria – this will inject \$27 million over the period of the contract into Victoria.

Gradually, they hope that they will upgrade their whole

fleet to the low floor type trams. The low-floor trams will replace the aging Z-Class model, with the first due to go into service in October 2001 on route 109. Route 109 makes its way from Port Melbourne through to Mont Albert.

M Tram – previously known as Swanston Trams – changed its name in March 2001. They have refurbished and repainted their old fleet of trams.

They, like Yarra Trams, will be introducing new accessible low floor trams. They hope to have 59 state-of-the-art low floor trams, with new passenger safety and information features including under seat luggage storage systems in service. But unlike Yarra Trams, their new trams won't begin servicing Melburnians until late 2002.

Continued on next page...

What's new in PEER SUPPORT

By **Baden Whitehead**
Information & Peer Support
Co-ordinator
badenwhitehead@aqavic.org.au



Information/Peer Support

It was a sad day for AQA Victoria when Ian Williams passed away. Ian had accumulated so much knowledge and experience from living and working in this field. He had used a wheelchair for mobility for twenty-seven years and had traveled extensively, even venturing into communist Russia.

When living in Adelaide in the seventies Ian was talking about people with disabilities and issues of sexuality. He researched new information for Newslink readers and never allowed his disability to interfere with anything he wanted to do.

Ian liked to pass-on information and I think it appropriate to remind our readers to attend to your yearly check-ups and bladder ultrasounds/x-rays. It has been proved that people with spinal cord injuries and who have continence problems are at greater risk of contracting bladder cancer (because of infections, irritations etc) than is the general populous.

So take responsibility for your health! Ring the Spinal Unit and book-in for the country clinics or make an appointment at the Austin Hospital. Don't wait for an invitation ... ring and make an appointment for yourself!

Current Information & Peer Support

Department Staff are:

Baden Whitehead: Department Co-ordinator, country clinics, Lifeskills at Royal Talbot.

Nigel Steel: Two days each week - computer systems, database, membership and information.

Nazim Erdem: Two days each week - Newslink editor, peer support and information.

Peter Van Benthem: Two days each week - Information, peer support, Newslink (jokes, member profiles, articles).

Phil Butterworth: Two days each week - AQA Victoria website (interactive plus information).

Raelene West: Two days each week, Newslink (women's issues, advertisements, articles) peer support and information.

Rees Houston: Three days each week - Information, library, peer support and Newslink articles.

Scott King: Newslink articles, Tasmania.

Kevin Bailey: Peer support (country, north of Melbourne) Newslink articles, country clinics.

... from previous page.

SUPER STOP'S

To make the tram system more accessible, Yarra Trams will be installing new "Super Stop's" at selected high profile and modal interchange sites.

The Super Stop's are amongst 200 tram stops to be upgraded by Yarra Trams during 2001, at an estimated cost of \$12 million. Under the Franchise Agreement, there are 15 Super Stop's planned for the Yarra Trams network, which consists of 10 routes.

Wherever possible, safety zones will be widened from 1.2 metres to 3 metres and wider platforms will be installed at tram stop's. Yarra Trams is working in consultation with VicRoads, local councils and groups that represent people with disabilities to help design these new stop's



and to get the best results possible for the community.

The first "Super Stop" is due for installation at the corner of Collins and Swanston Street's within the next few weeks. Each Super Stop will include a platform equipped for low floor wheelchair access, a safer environment for getting on and off trams, and real-time information of tram arrivals and departures. The Super Stops **MAY** also include telephones, toilets, kiosk and ticketing facilities, and ticket vending machines.

Low floor trams and the 30 centimetre high platforms of the Super Stop's will allow those in wheelchairs to roll in and out of trams with ease. The Super Stop's will be 3.5 metres wide and 4 metres long. For many people with disabilities, it will be the first time they have been able to get on a tram.



YOU ASKED A QUESTION???



In the last News Link, you asked a question about purchasing a car and the GST

Through you asking that question, AQA Victoria and a most helpful Centrelink officer and information provided by the tax office, we have come up with some interesting changes since the introduction of the GST. More to the point, this information may save you some money when purchasing a new or used car, car parts or when leasing a car.

This article covers two departments, the Australian Taxation Office (GST Legislation) and Centrelink (Social Security Act).

A New Tax System; Cars and GST

Under the goods and services tax (GST) legislation, there are concessions for eligible disabled veterans and eligible people with a disability who purchase new cars, second-hand cars and car parts or lease cars.

Who is an eligible person with a disability?

An eligible person with a disability is a person who has a current disability certificate, issued by Health Services Australia Ltd (HSA), certifying that the person has lost the use of one or more limbs to such an extent that they are unable to use public transport.

To obtain a disability certificate, a person with a disability will need to:

- call the Tax Reform Infoline on 13 24 78 or ring/email AQA Victoria to obtain NAT 3417 - *Application to obtain a car or car parts GST-free*, which includes a 'Medical Report on Applicant' form;
- have the form completed by the treating doctor or specialist;
- send the completed form to HSA including *any relevant medical reports*;
- enclose a cheque to cover the HSA assessment fee; and
- post the form, the cheque and any other medical reports to HSA.

HSA will then assess the application and if they believe that the applicant meets the criteria, they will issue them with a disability certificate.

People who are issued with a certificate will need to retain the certificate as it is required when purchasing a car or car parts GST-free.

When can an eligible person with a disability buy or lease a car GST-free?

An eligible person may purchase or lease a car GST-free only where the person intends to use the car for their personal transportation to or from gainful employment for a period of two years or until the car has travelled 40,000 kilometres.

What does 'gainful employment' mean for GST purposes?

An eligible person with a disability is 'gainfully employed' for GST purposes where the person is undertaking paid work, or working in their own business for at least eight hours a week on a regular basis and receiving a monetary reward which is commensurate to their age, experience and capabilities.



Other useful information

The value of the car, up to the car limit (\$55,134 for the 2001-2002 financial income year) will be GST-free. GST will be payable on any amount in excess of that limit.

When buying or leasing a car or purchasing car parts GST-free, an eligible disabled person must give the supplier a declaration on the approved form. Declaration forms are available through the ATO by calling the Tax Reform Infoline on 13 24 78 or by visiting the ATO website at www.taxreform.ato.gov.au.

In addition, the following items are GST-free provided that they are specifically designed for people with an illness or disability, and are not widely used by people without an illness or disability:

- special purpose car seats;
- car seat harnesses specifically designed for people with disabilities;
- wheelchair and occupant restraints;
- wheelchair ramps;
- electric/hydraulic wheelchair lifting devices; and
- motor vehicle modifications.

This article has condensed much of the information, so if you have any queries, please contact the Australian Taxation Office by any of the following methods.

- phoning the general public Tax Reform Infoline on 13 61 40
- logging onto their website at www.taxreform.ato.gov.au then searching under personal "disability"
- writing to the ATO at PO Box 9935 in your capital city

Continued on next page...

Name: Raelene West

Age: 29

Disability & Level:

Quadriplegic C4/C5

Are you Married/Single? Single

Do you have children? No

How did you acquire your disability? Car accident.

Year? 1994

What is your living situation?

Living in a new apartment in town with the help of carers.

Your Survival Tips for others?

Learn in a polite but firm way how to voice your needs and concerns to others. Take control and responsibility of your life-some things in life you can't change but A LOT u can.

What has been your most embarrassing moment since you have been using a wheelchair for mobility?

Falling face first out of my chair down the aisle at the football...my brother said afterwards was I trying to be the pre-match entertainment.

Your greatest achievements?

Completing a Bachelor of Arts Degree and moving into my own place.



What do you do with your time?

Phew, lol (lots of laughter)...I am currently enrolled in 2nd year Interior Design at RMIT, I work 2 days a week at AQA Victoria doing peer-support and information resourcing, meeting up with friends for lunch/dinner/coffee, movies, theatre and sleep, lol (lots of laughter).

Why did you choose to live in Country/City? (Draw backs/Positives)

I live in the city because nearly everything is literally at my doorstep downstairs. Instead of doing car transfers, I just wheel down to the

cafes, shops, banks and movies, which saves time and energy and is thus a big positive. The drawbacks are the noise during the day, particularly when emergency vehicles fly past with sirens blaring.

Your best holiday spot and why?

The family holiday house up in the high country on the back of lake Eildon...it's just a beautiful part of the world.

What food do you like best?

hmmm... chocolate and Japanese a close second.

If money was no object what would you buy/do?

Fix Australia's environmental damage...solar power every house in Australia.

Do you have an internet site you would recommend?

www.commbank.com.au <<http://www.commbank.com.au>> because you can do most of your banking and pay your bills from home.

... from previous page.

Mobility Allowance available from Centrelink and the New Tax System (GST)

If you are a person with a disability and are eligible to buy a car GST free, you may do so without it affecting your Mobility Allowance payments and Health Care Card. With the new tax system, you may now claim both and there is no two year cancellation of your mobility allowance payment when buying a new car.

The only problem people may have now is if you bought a new car within the last two years before the GST was introduced. With the old tax system, after buying a new car, you relinquished the mobility allowance payments for two years, though you still remained eligible to receive a health care card over that period. If you are in this bracket, you need to serve out the two years from when you bought your new car before you become eligible to reapply for the

mobility allowance payments.

I have sometimes had trouble with Centrelink phone staff as there are some grey areas in the current social security act, and this part of the act will not be rewritten until the new tax system (GST) has been in for two years. If you have any problems, ask for a supervisor.

If you have any queries about the article, contact us at the Information Department of AQA Victoria 9489 0777.

Baden Whitehead

Can you help with next issues 'Question & Answer'? A member who loves motor sports asks, "I love motor sports but are the racing circuits in Victoria accessible?"

Ian Williams - A Valued Colleague That Will Be Sadly Missed - 1947 - 2001

PERSONAL OBSERVATION

He stared at the crowd mingling before him, they came through the door in two's and three's, some in wheelchairs, others via Shanks' pony. He was wearing a plain white shirt and a narrow tie. With a smile on his face and a twinkle in his eye, he leaned out of the frame that was sitting on a coffin covered with red carnation's and red rose's. On the pews, lay computer generated images of the man in the frame sitting on the coffin. Some with his parents, gentle folk long gone, others in black and white still framed his being, a golden haired boy from Faraday Street in Melbourne.

Aloe Vera impregnated tissues enclosed in plastic were scattered throughout the funeral parlour for those of us who could not contain our grief. The parlour filled quickly. The back of the room was packed with different strands of our friends life. They had come to celebrate his life and dwell on their own mortality. At 2.30pm sharp, the funeral service began, a simple service, no priests, religious motifs or Gods in sight. A human service for human a being, nothing more, nothing less. Everything had been planned, although he died suddenly, his death was not unexpected. He had been able to structure his service in the way he wanted. No white-wash, just plain simple truths about a man who struggled with living in a wheelchair for almost three decades.

A dapper man in a sharp suit opened the proceedings, a little music, a few words to set the scene. His partner followed, a man who he had lived with for almost a quarter of a century, told us about his life, his mischievous sense of humour, the love they shared. He battled on, glancing at notes, nearly breaking down, but containing himself. I followed, I spoke about those intangibles that sit between the body and the non-existent soul. Those characteristics that make us who we are and which guarantee our immortality in the minds and experiences of others in our lives. The ceremony ended as it began, conversation from the suited gentleman, a little bit of music, a few parting words. People scattered, some spoke to each other, others made their way to his home to close their physical account with him. Cakes, coffee and conversation drifted through the house and into the garden. I made my leave after speaking to his partner and visiting his artichokes in the back garden, arguably the best in Melbourne.

Joe Toscano



I worked with Ian for over 10 years. He was a work colleague and a friend. His wit and humour were unique and he had a devilish sense of play. His contribution to AQA not only as a loyal and valuable employee, but also part of a team, will be greatly missed.

Robyn Canning

Ian Williams, I have known Ian for 10 or more years, he was always the one to see when I needed to spell a tricky word or get a sentence in context he was the man, that must have been the teacher in him. His smart dry wit will be missed

Mark W.

Ian Williams
"A gentle man"
A model now and always of

- Courage
- Strength
- Dedication and
- Commitment

I have missed the opportunity to know a good man better.
My sincere respect and support to Ian's family and friends,
Kevin Bailey

His wit and humour were quick and his uniqueness was all Ian Williams. He knew how to make people laugh, smile and catch them off guard.

You knew where you stood with him and you always knew how he felt.

I will miss him, I already do, but he will still continue to make me smile and I am glad I had the opportunity to work with him.

Keep them laughing Ian.

Natasha Bradley

I was saddened, to hear of Ian's passing, he will be greatly missed. He was always a sharing person, his experience shared without prejudice. My condolences to his family and those in the office.

John F. van Aken



Ian Williams - A Valued Colleague That Will Be Sadly Missed - 1947 - 2001

I knew Ian Williams much too briefly. Four years now seems such a short time, but I was fortunate in that I shared an office with Ian and during that time we had some very interesting conversations.

Ian quickly put me straight about asking after his health. "Don't ask me how I am when I come into work because you really don't want to know." Ian didn't suffer fools ... he gladly told them where to go.

He had a wealth of knowledge. If he didn't know something he used his research skills to find the answer. He then double-checked the information before sharing it with anyone who might benefit from his research. He liked things to be in order.



Ian loved to shock and surprise. When talking with Ian about sensitive issues such as sexuality, religion, even people's attitudes in general, I soon realised that there was no bull. Any topic was discussed openly and frankly.

Ian had a job to do and he did it exceptionally well. There was no fuss and fanfare ... News Link just appeared. We now have nine staff contributing to News Link's production.

Jill and I remember Ian with great affection and often talk about an evening which we enjoyed with him and John at their home ... one of those outings that we will always remember.

Farewell Ian ... thanks for the memories.

Baden Whitehead

To all that knew Ian Williams. We at the Australasian Spinal Research Trust would like to express our sadness



on the passing of Ian. Our sincere condolences go to his family, friends and workmates. He was a committee member of the A.S.R.T. and on a personal note he was always there to assist me in publishing any articles I needed to. He will be missed by many, a good man has left us. RIP mate.

Gary Allsop (Hon. Director, A.S.R.T.)

I am very saddened to hear of the passing of another AQA old work mate, Ian Williams.

I worked with Ian for many years and we both had different kinds of humour. Ian knew how to stir me up and I took him seriously at the beginning, but at the end of the day we knew where each other stood and enjoyed each others humour and company. I'm very sure Ian has teamed up with my old mate Sia and carried on writing news letters about the upstairs life. When it's my turn to go, I look forward meeting up with those great blokes again.....

Ray Kennedy

I admired Ian's strength and courage. Although I only worked with Ian for a short time I enjoyed his sense of humour and his friendly attitude. I miss not working with him.

Nigel



I have known Ian.W for about 10 years. Ian had a wicked sense of humour. Ian and I use to have a good laugh every day. What I liked most about Ian was that you could say anything to him and he would not be offended. In a way, he had his own unique language that was not in the Oxford dictionary. When he started talking that way, you knew that that was the best point to leave - while you could (he would take the micky out of everyone if he could). RIP Ian.W

Jason Hunt



R.I.P. Ian
1947 - 2001

I Had A Great Holiday In Townsville

G'day AQA workers and members. Well, I just got back from Townsville and what a great holiday it was. Paula, Cameron and I got there at about 4 pm last Friday (21.9.01) on a Qantas flight, where they always get me on and off the plane with no problem at all.

Just before boarding at Brisbane, the valve on the ROHO cushion got ripped off (I have the cushion slid across when I get transferred and always sit on it) and after a quick call to PQ – a company that stocks medical equipment – in Townsville, they had one waiting at the motel for me by the time I got there. In the meantime, I used 2 small airline cushions with a small sheepy on top and that did the job.

While up there, my nephew, Brent, drove us around in a commuter van which I was lucky to borrow off a Quad mate who lives in Ayr, a bit over an hour south of Townsville.

The Strand in Townsville is the main beachfront esplanade, just above the shoreline with plenty of clean grassy areas, shade, water fountains and safe places for the kids to play. There are eateries, pubs and restaurants. The first evening was spent having a feed of delicious Mackarel and chips near the rock pool, which is down the northern end of the strand. After that, we drove up Castle Hill which is in the township, and from up there you get a good view of Magnetic Island and the layout of the town, highways and rivers... magnificent!

The following day we were up early and off to Charters Towers, an hour and a half west. Years ago, there was about 50 million dollars worth of gold found out there. Gold is still found in the area. Heading out, I took particular notice of the Burdekin River, thought it might be worth panning in.

After arriving at Charters, we stopped at a lookout, where you can see the Great Divide and desolate land as far as the eye can see. From there we drove up a steep, rocky gold field mountain, where there are small, concrete humpies scattered around everywhere, I think some of them had mine shafts down through the floor of them. There were mine shafts in every direction you looked.

Before leaving Charters, I bought a small pan at an antique shop and we downed a couple of light beers and headed back towards Townsville and stopped at the beautiful Burdekin River (quite shallow and about 80 foot across), where Paula and Cameron did some panning and found a lot of flecks of the yellow stuff, which were put in a small lemonade bottle and accidentally thrown out by the cleaner at the motel. I have since been told there are no shortage

of crocs in that river, I'm sure Brent or myself would have seen one from where we were sitting up on the bank if one came to the edge for a snack. We left there about 5 and saw a lot of road trains and a wild pig that came second in a fight with a vehicle... great country side. It was after dark when we got back and called it a day after a feed of Chinese.

That was Saturday over with and a great day, but that night I suffered bad from Hypereflexia and after the third anginine tablet in as many hours, I managed a few hours sleep. We rose at 6 to be on the barge to take us across to Magnetic Island, which is a 30 minute trip. While there, I stumbled across an old mate and had a good look around and a few light beers. His 3 kids, Paula and Cameron had a go at the peddle boat things, while Brent did some snorkelling and Pete and I had a few yarns. After doing a few touristy things and a feed of schnitzel, we got the barge back to Townsville at 6.10 where the sea was very choppy. That night, we had tea at the Quarter Deck, which is on the water and a drop punt from the Casino. I had a sea food platter which was good, but the calamari rings were like rubber as usual.

Monday morning we took off to Ayr to see the mate who lent us the van and took a couple of kg's of king prawns which they appreciated very much. The day went pretty fast after yarning about old times, plus it was a late start that day. We headed back about 5 and saw a lot of sugar cane, thousands of acres of the stuff. Had pizza for tea and an early night.

Tuesday morning we went to the Billabong Sanctuary just out of town, where a 5 foot kangaroo had escaped and when eventually caught, he put a hind claw through a blokes groin. At this place, you can hold small crocs and pythons if you want and take your own photos, which we did. One of the pythons I held made his way under the left armrest and under the wheelchair and tried to come up the other side, but was getting jammed tight the more he moved. In the end, three blokes including Brent, got him unstuck. We saw some big crocs get fed, then went fishing on the Ross River. A nice accessible spot was found and one fish was caught just on sun down.

The final day we had a feed on The Strand and videoed the views from Castle hill, then got the 2.25 flight back to Brisbane. That was the Townsville trip, and I reckon it was one of best one's yet...

Ray Kennedy

SHEARING – A Rams Story

By Bill Detlefsen

We were grazing in the paddock when the word was passed around that the shearers had finished Thompson's job. They were feeling very cranky as the year had been real tough and they still had to shear Detlefsen's mob.

We were hiding, when they found us, near the distant bracken patch, old trigger was flying down the fence. The farmer in the battered ute was tooting on the horn, and yelling, "That dog's got no flamin sense."

But Trigger knew what he was doing, he'd caught us unawares, we didn't have a chance to change our fate. He had us in a circle, our tongues were hanging out, as we surrendered and headed for the gate.

Out on the road we galloped with Trigger snapping at our heels, he hardly gave us time to catch our breath.

My lungs were nearly bursting as he pushed us up the hill, and I was sure that I was very close to death.

Just as I thought that I was finished, as we were choking in the dust, a familiar sight appeared just up ahead.

I could see it in the distance beside the old sheepyards, that relic, Thompson's ancient shearing shed.

I saw the open gate to freedom, as we were hustled through the yards and prodded up the narrow draughting race.

I accelerated briefly but then came to a grinding halt, as the gate swung round and hit me in the face.

I was mighty groggy as I staggered up the ramp and we were packed like sardines in the shed.

And I'm sure old Trigger had a smile upon his face, when he saw the blood that trickled down my head.

The shearing shed was noisy and filled with diesel fumes, I saw two shearers and four other men.

I don't know what they were doing, but I could smell coffee brewing, as they jammed us in the smaller catching pen.

I hid in the corner, thinking I would be the last, but alas, I had a nasty shock in store.

When the shearer grabbed me by the horns and almost broke my neck, as he threw me down and dragged me out the door. I bellowed for assistance, but there was none in sight, so I acted dead and lay there mute.

As I heard the shearer tell his mate, "I'll need a coffee, by the time I finish off this wrinkly brute."

Is he a butcher or a shearer? Quickly crossed my mind, as I felt something running up my neck.

But I relaxed a little and sighed in pure relief, when he spun me round and I saw wool falling on the deck.

At last the ordeal of shearing was all over, as I staggered to my feet and the shearer kicked my backside on the way.

The blowflies swarmed around me, as I stepped out in the blazing sun, in the middle of a hot November day.

Back in the hilltop paddock where the sweetest grasses grow and a cool breeze soothes the weary mob.

A lone ram swaps stories, with a hundred ewes, of the ordeals of the annual shearing job.



Who Notices?

Five cannibals get appointed as programmers in an IT company. During the welcoming ceremony, the boss says, "You're all part of our team now. You can earn good money here, and you can go to the company canteen for something to eat. Just don't trouble the other employees". The cannibals promise not to trouble the other employees.

Four weeks later the boss returns and says, "You're all working very hard, and I'm very satisfied with all of you. However, one of our cleaners has disappeared. Do any of you know what happened to her?" The cannibals disavow all knowledge of the missing cleaner.

After the boss has left, the leader of the cannibals says to the others, "Which of you idiots ate the cleaner?" A hand raises hesitantly, to which the leader of the cannibals says, "You fool! For four weeks we've been eating Team Leaders, Managers, and Project Managers so no-one would notice anything, and you have to go and eat the cleaner!"

Watch The Ducks

Three women die together in an accident and go to heaven. When they get there, St. Peter says, "We only have one rule here in heaven...don't step on the ducks."

So they enter heaven, and sure enough, there are ducks all over the place. It is almost impossible not to step on a duck, and although they try their best to avoid them, the first woman accidentally steps on one. Along comes St. Peter with the ugliest man she ever saw. St. Peter chains them together and says "Your punishment for stepping on a duck is to spend eternity chained to this ugly man!"

The next day, the second woman steps accidentally on a duck, and along comes St. Peter, who doesn't miss a thing, and with him is another extremely ugly man. He chains them together with the same admonishment as for the first woman.

The third woman has observed all this and not wanting to be chained for all eternity to an ugly man, is very, VERY careful where she steps. She manages to go months without stepping on any ducks, but one day St. Peter comes up to her with the most handsome man she has ever laid eyes on...very tall, tan, muscular, and thin. St. Peter chains them together without saying a word.

The woman remarks, "I wonder what I did to deserve being chained to you for all of eternity?" The guy says, "I don't know about you, but I stepped on a duck."

Wheelchair Rugby

By Nazim Erdem
nazimerdem@aqavic.org.au



Chris Handy Cup

The Australian Rugby squad (the Australian Steelers) flew to Christchurch, New Zealand on the 9th of August, to play the New Zealand National squad (the Wheel Blacks) for the annual 'Chris Handy Cup'. We played the Wheel Blacks over the next three days in a test series of three games.

The game that decided the winner of the Chris Handy cup was played on the Friday. Because the cup was going to be decided by one game (unlike previous years where the cup is decided by three games), we knew that we had to go all out and play our best rugby. It was a very tight and tough game – as it usually is against the Wheel Blacks – but we managed to hold them off and win the cup 41 to 37.

The next two games against the Wheel Blacks were a lot tougher and they managed to win them both. I think that the first game took a lot out of the Australian Steelers but we were happy that we won the cup anyway. We won the Cup but they won the series 2 to 1, so we still have got a lot to improve on.

Coloplast 2001 Australian Wheelchair Rugby Nationals

As you all may know, the Coloplast 2001 Australian Wheelchair Rugby Nationals were held in Melbourne from the 5th to the 7th of September.

There were teams from Victoria, New South Wales, South Australia, Queensland, Western Australia, and Canterbury from New Zealand, all trying to take out the position of "Australian Champions".

The Victorian team had been preparing for this tournament for months. We had a new coach, assistants, and new members in the team and had trained very hard leading up to the Nationals. We were pretty confident that we would place in the top three.

We started all of our games with confidence, but unfortunately, we never ended up winning a game. Our disappointing performance and standing

at the end of the Nationals was a combination of many factors including having a new coach, new players, overconfidence, and especially stronger opposition teams. Previously, Queensland, which had never won a game at any Nationals, managed to play for the bronze medal after winning two games. They also – like Victoria – had new players and a new coach (Terry Vinyard, the Australian coach) but improved immensely.

All of the other teams had improved from previous years. The final results were;

- South Australia (Gold)
- Canterbury (Silver)
- New South Wales (Bronze)
- Queensland
- Western Australia
- Victoria

We now know that we have got our work cut out for us. We underestimated the other teams, but now know in which areas we have to improve. As we, as a team improve, we know that we will be a threat to the other states in the future. There is already a noticeable improvement in everyone including the coach, assistants, and players.



Victorian Wheelchair Rugby Training Camp

The last, past and coming months will see the Australian Rugby coach, Terry Vinyard, visit each state and conduct training camps. The idea is to improve the level of wheelchair rugby in each state and to identify up and coming players.

Victoria's turn was on Saturday the 6th and Sunday the 7th of October at Monash University. There was a good turnout of local rugby players wanting to learn some new skills, tactics, improve their fitness, and generally improve their rugby.

Both days of training was gruelling with the training sessions going over seven hours. At the end of each day of training and testing, everyone was buggered but happy to be there. Everyone involved got so much out of the sessions and I could see improvement, both in fitness and tactics of everybody there. A lot of testing was done and every one of the players knows in which areas they have to improve in.

I hope that some of the players caught the eye of Terry and will be invited to the future Australian Squad training camps.

Coming Up...

The Goulburn Valley Games will be held on the 10th and 11th of November at the Shepparton Sports Stadium, Shepparton. The Games will involve both Rugby and Basketball. I'm sure that it will be a very successful two days of competition. We are expecting big crowds out there to watch the two different types of games. So if you are in the area on the two days, make sure you come and watch two excellent types of wheelchair sports.

The IWRF Oceania Zone Championships will be held in Christchurch, New Zealand, on December 1-3 and will include New Zealand, Australia, Japan and South Africa. These championships are very important for Australia because the two top teams at the end of the competition will qualify for the World Championships that are going to be held in Sweden next May. We have played New Zealand and Japan before but the South African team will be an unknown force. I'm sure that all of the teams involved will be super competitive.

QUALCARE NEWS!

By *Nicholas Ross*
Nickross@aqavic.org.au



Quality Improvement in the Disability Sector

In 1996 the Victorian Government committed \$1.89 million over three years to improve the quality of services provided to people with disabilities and their carers. The then Minister for Youth and Community Services, the Hon. Denis Napthine MP, launched the Quality Framework for Disability Services and the Victorian Standards for Disability Services in August 1997.

The Quality Framework aims to ensure a cohesive approach is taken to support quality in the disability service sector. From this framework, the Disability Services Self-Assessment System was developed and are based on the Victorian Standards for Disability Services, which are the minimum operating requirements for government and funded non-government disability service providers in Victoria.

Continuous improvement of service delivery with a strong emphasis on positive client outcomes is the overall goal of the quality assurance process. Agencies funded to provided services to the disabled like attendant care

programs are required to progress towards full compliance by 2003 and comply with the nine Victorian Standards for Disability Services.

Participation in the process is extended but not limited to clients of services and various agencies are taking different measures to include clients in determining the way an agency works towards compliance. At AQA Qualcare clients, carers, advocates etc will be able to participate through the establishment of a working group. This group will examine the processes and procedures that exist in the delivery of attendant care services against the Disability Service Standards and is expected to be established in the New Year.

Moving towards full compliance can only be positive for the recipients of services and the agencies that deliver those programs. If anyone is interested in finding out more about the Self-Assessment System or would like to inquire about participating in the working group then please contact me on 'nickross@aqavic.org.au' or on 9482 4373.

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

A.Q.A. VICTORIA LTD

*To be held at 440 Heidelberg Road,
Fairfield, 3078 on Tuesday 27th
November, 2001 at 7pm.
All Welcome*

AQA's "DAY IN THE PARK" CANCELLED FOR THIS YEAR!!!

☎ (03) 9489 0777

Please note our annual Day in the Park will not be held this year. This social day has been operating for seven years now and we feel it is time for a change. We would be happy to receive any suggestions from members in regard to making changes to the format, location, time of year etc. Please let us know if you have any ideas.

Can you help us in regard to finding:

New format
Another location
A different date

Boating and fishing tours for the disabled

Mick Harris was watching Foxtel television, when a feature on boating tours for the disabled on the Colorado River grabbed him.

Having being a keen fisherman all his life Mick pursued his interest, and now operates 'Fox's Fishing And River Adventures' from Echuca, with a six metre Suntracker Pontoon boat designed to take people requiring wheelchair access.

The Suntracker is capable of cruising at 60 km/h and seats up to ten able body persons or four people in electric wheelchairs with carers comfortably.

The Suntracker is the only boat surveyed on the Murray River and surrounding

Waterways that specializes in tours for the disabled, incorporating fishing and river cruises. Mick also caters for fishermen who wish to catch that elusive Murray Cod. Groups of five to six are an ideal number for lure fishing or trolling, but in conjunction with Nick Wren of Murray River Fishing Tours, they are happy to cater for groups of eight or ten.

Of the many tours on offer, one of the most popular is the two and a half hour Wetlands tour, which leaves

from Barmah and travels through the Barmah Lakes and down the Narrows, the best part of the Murray River according to Mick.

Another great tour is the 3 day - 2 night camping tour from Picnic Point to Tocumwal which is fully catered for with a road back up crew to do all the work, leaving more time for fishing and relaxing. Fox's Fishing also offers Half and Full day fishing tours which are also popular.



As the boat is trailorable, Mick is able to travel to places such as Yarrowonga - Mulwala, Cairn Curran reservoir, Lake Mokoan, Eildon, Eppalock or any another place parties wish to fish.

All fishing tours include rods, reels bait and lures - Mick said we only use the best, there is nothing worse than hooking up and the gear let's go. Lunch and refreshments can be provided on request and BBQ facilities are available for lunch.

WHEELCHAIR SKILLS TRAINING

☆ IS YOUR LIFESTYLE LIMITED BY YOUR LACK OF WHEELCHAIR SKILLS??

☆ WOULD YOU LIKE TO LEARN NEW SKILLS TO ASSIST WHEELCHAIR USERS SAFELY IN THE COMMUNITY??

☆ ARE YOU A HEALTH PROFESSIONAL WORKING WITH WHEELCHAIR USERS WHO WOULD LIKE TO BE TRAINED IN TEACHING WHEELCHAIR SKILLS??

Where / When?

- Caulfield General Medical Centre
Saturday 10th Nov
- Geelong, Physio Gym, Grace McKellar Centre
Saturday 24th Nov

The course has been organised by the Spinal Physiotherapy Department at Royal Talbot Rehabilitation Centre in Melbourne.

The course will run for 3 hours from 10am and will include a video presentation followed by practical sessions in groups.

For more information, contact Aliçon Bennie at Royal Talbot Rehabilitation Centre on 9496 4500, pager 1226 or email janette.hall@armc.org.au

The course is FREE but numbers are limited so be quick!!

POSITIVE OUTCOMES TO RESEARCH PROJECT - AUSTIN HOSPITAL

As some of you may recall, in a couple of previous issues of News Link, Jo Le Mura - who is a final year student, studying for her BA in Community Development at Deakin University - was seeking participants to help her complete a research project as part of her course. The research project sought to answer the question "What are the experiences and views of people with spinal injuries and hospitalisation?".

Well, she has now completed her project and come up with recommendations and conclusions. She was informed of the recent improvements to the Public Sector Enterprise Agreement and the implementation of improved nurse/patient ratios in areas such as ARMC's spinal ward. We are unable to publish the findings of her research (because of space restrictions), but if you would like to get your hands on a copy, email Jo Le Mura directly at tinkey@jeack.com.au. She will happily send you out a copy of her findings.

Horse Riding - Letter From A Member

Recently, Bairnsdale RDA held a special ride to raise money for a lifting machine to assist in the transference of riders from their wheelchair on a mounting ramp, onto their horse (especially for the heavier paras that standing transfers are too hard to do).

The cost of the already designed hoist is \$5000. The Apex club donated \$2000 and RDA have held market days, special ride days and soon to have a movie night, all in aid of reaching the amount required.

My name is Kim Lee, I'm a T6 paraplegic of 21 years and I have discovered the benefits provided from riding. My first visit to the 'Riding for the Disabled', was just for a look and to find out how they could get me on a horse. They have a ramp built in the middle of the paddock and they lift the rider straight onto the horse. I decided that I would do it. I began by being led around a paddock with a 'walker' either side of me in case I fell - I really thought I'd need a back brace to ride - but anyway gave it a go!

I began as a "jelly belly" and now, two years later, ride on my own. I still need help to get onto the horse, but ride independently. Over this time, the riding was working on my trunk muscles - although I was unaware of it. I could never raise my arms above my head without falling forward but I CAN NOW! It's been a miracle. This has helped a great deal in my life. Hanging out the washing is easier too! I don't have to hang me first then the clothes. In fact it has been a bloody miracle!!!

I now ride independently with a front rider and a rider behind me, just to keep an eye on me! We go for at least an hours ride through the pine forest, up and down hills and around the ducks on the dam. We quite often see a kangaroo or red toadstools with white polka dots on top (the ones that we all thought existed only in fairytale books). I do a lot of trotting which makes me puff (I'm not really sure why, but they say I'm using a lot of muscles just sitting there)! Just walking up and down hills really works on the muscles in my back and trunk that

I can't feel.

Due to the weather lately, I've gone through places I would have only got bogged in. It's actually a real thrill to go through 6 inches of thick mud and water when you haven't or couldn't for 21 years.

I work full time and look forward to my escape from the chair every fortnight. Just a word of advice - Do try it if you can. The Riding for the Disabled are very qualified and do the best they can to help individual situations.

It's the best thing I've ever done and I expect to keep going for a long time.

Regards,
Kim Lee

Editor's Note: Kim is planning to do a tour of New Zealand next February. A paraplegic that she knows has just started up a business that deals with organising trips and adventures for groups. If you are interested in joining her, phone her on (03)5152 4892 or 0412 829 042 for more information. She says that, "If I don't get any takers, I'm going on my own anyway!"

RIDING FOR THE DISABLED ASSOCIATION

Riding for the Disabled Association of Victoria is part of an international organisation dedicated to providing people with disabilities the unique opportunity to participate in horse riding and related activities.

46 RDA centres operate in Victoria catering for a 850 riders, with 7 hundred volunteers helping at these centres.

RDAV allows people of all ages to enjoy safe, stimulating and social activities. RDA Victoria is an unusual organisation as it caters for people with a broad range of disabilities. These include: intellectual disabilities, specific learning difficulties, injuries resulting from accidents, cerebral palsy, spina bifida, muscular dystrophy, multiple sclerosis, congenital deformities, visual and hearing impairments, autism and amputees.

For people using wheel chairs, horse riding restores their height advantage in relating to other people, and extends access to beaches, bush trails and other places inaccessible to wheel chairs.

Riding For The Disabled Association of Victoria State Headquarters:

87 Orrong Crescent
North Caulfield
Victoria 3161
Ph: (03)9527 7285
Fax: (03)9527 7328
<http://www.rdav.asn.au>

Riding for Disabled Australia Inc

PO Box 424
Ascot Vale Vic 3032
Ph: (03)9372 2126
Fax: (03)9376 6698
<http://www.rda.asn.au>
Email: scusack@rda.org.au

CLASSIFIEDS

For Sale

• **"Mobility Plus" titanium folding wheelchair**
Black in colour. 15 inch width. Very light weight titanium wheelchair.
PRICE: \$800 neg.

• **"Quickie" lightweight rigid wheelchair.**
Dark green/black in colour. 15 inch width.
PRICE: \$800 neg.

• **Portable lightweight aluminium ramp.**
2 pieces. 2 metres in length and folds in half for storage.
PRICE: \$400 neg.
PHONE: Gudana (03) 5348 1480 Mobile: 0414 977 284

• **Kuchall (America) lightweight folding wheelchair**
Charcoal in colour, excellent condition, tip bars, push handles, armrests, detachable footplates, 17 in. wide, 15 in. high
PRICE: \$500
PHONE: Matt (03) 5127 3924 Latrobe Valley (Moe)

• **STANNAH Chair Lift to fit side of stair case**
2.6 metre lift. As new condition. Cost \$10,000, Sell \$995 ONO.
PRICE: \$995 ONO
PHONE: Malcolm (03) 5974 8125, business (03) 5984 2247

• **Large VECTOR manual wheelchair**
Excellent condition,
PRICE: \$350
PHONE: Fay (03) 9481 0584

• **ELECTRIC WHEELCHAIR,**
Glide 5. Batteries new April 01, strong, in/outside chair, left or right hand joystick control. Adjustable manual elevating leg rests, calf pads, power tilt, Power backrest.
PRICE: \$1600.00
PHONE: Gary or Cheryl 94361029. Mobile: 0408109583
Email: econnel@bigpond.com

• **Mobility Seat (swivel seat):**
German built seat (was installed in VL Commodore by Freedom Access, Melbourne). Seat rotates & extends out of car for easy transfer in and out of cars. Has head-rest with Velcro for head support attachments. New condition - only used twice
PRICE: \$1500 ONO
RING: Annette Barkley 5823-2086 (0301/03)

Advertise in News Link!

Sale of your goods is not guaranteed, but there's a better chance of selling if others know your goods are for sale!

For Sale

• **Ford Falcon EF Gli Station Wagon 1995**
Burgundy, 64000 kms, 4 speed automatic, with power steering and air conditioning. Fitted with a removable hand control - suitable for a person with a disability. Includes: tow bar, full set of new tyres, regular service history.
EXCELLENT CONDITION
12 months reg. Reg. No. NHP 437. PRICE: \$14,000
PHONE: 9587-2618 (Jake) (0401/2)

• **"Reliant" (London Cab) 92 model van**
Suitable for Wheelchair. Power steering, air conditioning, runs on gas. Electric windows, 6 cylinder 4 speed auto. Central locking, licenced for 5 passengers, RWC & Registration, maroon in colour. PRICE: \$9,500
PHONE: Jerry 9776 0522 or
Mobile: 0411 142 386 (0601/1)

• **Motorised wheelchair - Quickie P 120**
18 months old, with instruction manual, battery NEAR NEW, new tyres, all black frame & upholstery.
Seat width 45 cm, Back height 40 cm
PHONE: Donna 9315-0796
PRICE: \$2,000 (approx \$4500 new) (0401/2)

WANTED

• **Wheelchair - Second hand**
Manual, folding wheelchair required. Occupant will be pushed. For casual use only. SEAT: 45 cm (15"), BACK = average. Phone: 9489 0777 Naz for Mrs Lee

• **Accommodation:** Elderly male with a physical disability living in the Williamstown area, interested in sharing accommodation with mature female for companionship and a sense of security. Accommodation and meals are provided free. COST: small contribution to phone and utilities only. I
PHONE: 9415-1200 Terri Alderson (0601/1)

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