

AQA

NEWS LINK

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

November 2003



Japan

Wheelchair Rugby in Japan

Wheelchairs

New Innovative 'Vulcun Wheels'



Travel

Goulburn River Winery Cruises

PLUS MORE...



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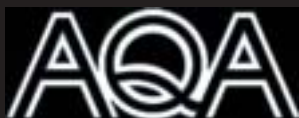
Tanya Clarke

A.Q.A. NEWS LINK is the official newsletter of A.Q.A. Victoria Limited, (Australian Quadriplegic Association – Victoria), and is published bimonthly. NEWS LINK seeks to publish material of interest to people with physical disabilities and their families, professional workers and other individuals and organisations concerned with the welfare of those who are physically disabled.

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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Volume 17, Number 5

From the CEO

On the 17th of October, Transport Minister Peter Batchelor announced some major changes to the way the Multi Purpose Taxi Program (MPTP) operated in Victoria.



Not only will there be a cap of \$550 per year for new members on trips made but it will also be means tested. Fortunately current Taxi Card holders as well as all wheelchair users won't be affected by these new changes. There will also be a charge of \$16.50 for all new applications with cards having a lifespan of six years.

On a sad note, long time member of AQA Victoria, Patsi Scott, has recently passed away. AQA Victoria sends our sincere sympathy to Barry, Patsi's husband and his family and friends. We would also like to thank Patsi's carer Leanne for her thoughtfulness in organising donation envelopes for AQA to be available at Patsi's funeral.

Rest in peace Patsi Scott.

Ian Bennett

Chief Executive Officer

ianbennett@aqavic.org.au

From the Editor

In this issue of News Link, you will find an interesting article that a couple of members have brought to our attention. They went on a winery cruise on the Goulburn River that they



wanted members to know about. They had a great time on the cruise and found the crew to be very helpful with whatever their needs were; you can read the article on page 5.

Another interesting article from Naz about his experience in Japan just goes to show that places you see on your travels are very different to what you imagine they will be like; you can read the article on page 12.

Finally I'd like to thank those members who have completed and returned their member surveys to us. To those of you that are still to complete the forms, I urge you to do so, even if you think your comments or thoughts won't matter, it all matters. Please contact us if you have lost the forms.

Simon Damevski

News Link Editor

simondamevski@aqavic.org.au

Vale from AQA and those that knew her

Patsi Scott, who has been a member of AQA for many years passed away recently. We would like to send our sincere sympathy to Barry, Patsi's husband and his family and friends. We would also like to thank Patsi's carer Leanne for her thoughtfulness in organising donation envelopes for AQA to be available at Patsi's funeral.

Rest in peace Patsi Scott.



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Fax: (03) 5956 8413

Email:

info@alvina.com.au

Website:

www.alvina.com.au

Survey Reminder

A few weeks ago you would have received both a “Member Update Form” as well as a “Member Survey”. We asked that all members fill out both forms and return the completed forms back to us in the Reply Paid envelope that was provided. For those members who hate pen and paper, we also made the forms available to be filled out on-line on our website www.aqavic.org.au/survey/.

We’d like to report that we have been getting many replies, both by post and email, and we’d like to thank those members who found the time to assist us.

Some responses have indicated we are doing a great job and others have been critical of us – we need to know all of this. Some people have completed the form by ticking a few boxes, others have written all over the pages because they didn’t have enough room for their comments.

We had a “test” question (“Has too much colour been used for this survey?”) where we wanted to get an indication of how many participants REALLY read the questions, and to our surprise a few answered “yes” (we only used black & white), while a few picked it up and answered “where???” and “what colour”.

One member answered the survey light-heartedly and made funny comments throughout, for example he/she suggested AQA do some fund-raising and provided his/her bank account number for the funds to be deposited into.

So if you haven’t found the time or have misplaced the forms, we encourage you to contact us at the Information / Peer Support Department so we can arrange a way to make it easier for you. We can resend the forms to you, or you can give us a call and we can fill them out with you, or you can still fill them out on-line at www.aqavic.org.au/survey/ - it’s still not too late!!!

Any comments, whether good or bad are needed, how else can we know if the services we provide are the ones you expect from us. We need to know what you expect from us and if you can assist us as well.

Disability Access in Victoria’s Alpine Resorts

A new draft strategy published by the Department of Sustainability and Environment encourages Victoria’s alpine resorts to comply with current disability access standards. The publication, “Alpine Resorts 2020”, remains in its draft phase and comments from the public can still be submitted.

Summertime activities in the region include fishing, horse-riding, 4WD tours and hot air ballooning. According to the draft, the challenge will be to provide disabled visitors with four-season access to resort accommodation and infrastructure. Suggested actions include:

- Ensuring that statutory obligations to provide disability access to public buildings are met;
- Ensuring that accommodation booking services are aware of accommodation providers with high-quality access for visitors with disabilities;
- Encouraging site holders to provide disability access.

karen Smethurst, the RuralAccess project officer for the Hume region, is well aware of the accessibility issues in resort country. “There is very little available and what there is, is not to standard.” She also says that the draft is a good start, but that informed public comment could help shape it into a more detailed and specific model for change. “The original document didn’t even mention disability, so we have made some progress.”

The final draft is likely to influence planning within all alpine resorts for the next twenty years.

To download the draft strategy go to the Department of Sustainability and Environment website at <http://www.dse.vic.gov.au/dse/> and type ‘Alpine Resorts 2020’ into the search box. Alternatively, hard copies are available by ringing 136 186. Disability access is introduced in section 6 of the strategy. Those persons wishing to submit comments can find contact details on the website.

Advertise in News Link!

Got anything to sell?

Advertise here and get rid of things that are lying around!

Goulburn River Winery Cruises



Now that the days are getting longer and the sun is starting to show its face again, why not make the most of it and take a cruise along Victoria's largest and prettiest river, the mighty Goulburn River near Nagambie.

Nagambie, only ninety minutes north of Melbourne, is where the Goulburn Weir was constructed in 1890 to supply irrigation water to Victoria's arid north. The Weir slows the water for some 50 kilometres upstream, providing a safe and spectacular waterway for Goulburn River Cruises to show people from all over the world the beauty and splendour of our natural bush and river settings, with the chance to spot some unique wildlife, ie platypus and koalas. Both Mitchelton Winery, with its modern tower and restaurant complex, and Tahbilk Winery, Victoria's oldest (Est. 1860), are located on the banks of the Goulburn, and provide a diversion from the serenity of the river. There's a choice of three different cruises with two starting at Tahbilk Winery (four hour & ninety minute trip) and the other at Mitchelton Winery (two hour trip).

A couple of our member's, wheelchair user Steve Mollison and his partner Sue Bayre, went on one of the winery cruises mentioned above on the "M.V. Major Mitchell", which is a 13.7 metre Luxury Cruiser (wheelchair accessible), and said they had a wonderful time and were very well looked after. Sue would like to mention that it is better access getting on at Tahbilk and getting off at Michelton than back again.

Here are the three different packages that are available:

BAYUNGA CRUISE – departs Tahbilk Winery for lunch at Mitchelton Restuarants or a gourmet picnic followed by a wine tasting. Cruise returns later in the afternoon.

(Four hour trip)

1860 CRUISE – Boarding at Mitchelton, a two course lunch is served en route to Tahblik Winery. After a wine tasting and exploring the history the cruise returns.

(Two hour trip)

TABILK TABILK CRUISE – is a scenic cruise from Tahbilk Winery with a light luncheon available on the early cruise, and afternoon tea or a cheese and fruit platter available on the latter cruise.

(Ninety minute cruise)

For more information or a brochure, please contact Goulburn River Cruises on the numbers below:

PO Box 100 Nagambie Australia 3608

Phone: (03) 5794 2877

Fax: (03) 5794 2789

Mobile: 0427 942 877

Email: ijjr@mcmmedia.com.au

Written by Simon Damevski.

Personal Support "Think Tank"

Earlier this year a forum was held in Melbourne in which *Mobile Attendant Care Service (MACS)* from Queensland presented their inspirational story of how they imagined and created a highly relevant and flexible service that is governed mainly by the people who use it (July & September News Link). MACS provide night-time support for people with physical disabilities who need personal care assistance throughout the night while living in their own home. MACS have enabled people who have physical disabilities to enjoy somewhat more "typical" lifestyles that most people take for granted.

As a follow up to this public forum we would like to offer an invitation to a limited number of people with physical and/or other disabilities who are interested in such advances to participate in a small "Think Tank" on the 4th of December 2003 to see the possible set-up of a similar system in Melbourne.

If you are interested in attending or have any questions, please contact Naz at AQA Victoria on (03) 9489 0777. Numbers are very limited so get in early!!!

Urinary Tract Infections, UTI

Spinal cord injured (SCI) people are prone to getting urinary tract infections (UTI's) and management is very important to maintain a healthy urine system. Now the normal way to combat a serious UTI would be to have your doctor get your urine tested for its level of UTI bacteria, then your doctor will select the antibiotics (if needed) to combat the particular bacteria in your urine.

If you have a UTI, you should always take the antibiotic exactly as prescribed by your doctor. Do not stop taking the medication simply because you no longer feel sick. It is essential that you totally kill the bacteria to keep them from becoming immune to the antibiotic, which makes them much harder to kill in the future.

It is **not** recommended that you take antibiotics simply because your urine is cloudy, smells badly or even if your urine test is positive for bacteria. You should only take antibiotics when you experience one or more symptoms of illness. Symptoms include fever, chills, headache, nausea, increased muscle spasms and hyperreflexia. Depending on your level of injury, you may feel burning while urinating and/or discomfort in the lower back, pelvic area or abdomen.

Prevention of infections and the spread of bacteria is the trick but not always easy. Clean your urinary supplies (leg bag, bed bag, catheters, etc.) and change when recommended. When you think you maybe starting to get a UTI stop drinking beverages with sugar, caffeine and alcohol because they limit the production of urine. Instead you want to drink good amounts of water so that it will have a good flow through your bladder which will help wash out the UTI bacteria.

If UTI's are becoming a problem and they are making you ill more than 2-3 times a year it may be a sign of other problems with your urinary system. Then its time for a urology exam, which consists of scan, ultrasound and abdomen X-ray to help identify any kidney and bladder stones and to see whether the kidneys are working properly, these tests should occur at least once a year. So it's very important to go to your yearly spinal review to identify symptoms before they become problems, to prevent long hospital stays.

By Peter van Benthem.

New publication: Nutrition for people with disabilities

A healthy diet is very important for people with a disability. It can be more difficult for some people with a disability to access healthy food and to have a choice of food that they eat. People with a disability may also have health problems that require particular attention to their diet, in order to maintain a healthy lifestyle.

A series of information sheets on food and nutrition issues for people with a disability are being developed and these can be accessed through Disability Online at www.disabilitynews.infoexchange.net.au/group/noticeboard/items/20030426004b.shtml.

The first two fact sheets are now available.

Nutrition for people with disabilities – Weight Management

Research suggests that people with disabilities are more likely to be overweight or obese than other population groups. On the other hand, some people with disabilities are prone to unwanted weight loss. For example, a person who has a physical disability may lose muscle mass, or may find it difficult to eat and swallow.

There are various management strategies that can help a person with a disability successfully manage their weight.

See your doctor or dietitian for expert advice.

Nutrition for people with disabilities – Fibre and Constipation

Some people with disabilities suffer from constipation. Contributing factors can include prescribed medications, low levels of physical activity, insufficient fluids and a diet that may be too low in fibre. Increasing the amount of fibre in the diet not only treats constipation, but also lowers cholesterol, may reduce the risk of various cancers and bowel diseases, and improves general health and wellbeing.

If you don't have access to the internet please contact AQA Victoria on (03) 9489 0777 and we'll be happy to send you a copy.



Name: Christine Parrish

Age: I'm 41 years of age.

Disability & Level: L 2-3, T 12 Complete

Are you Married/Single? Divorced.

Do you have children? I have a son Michael. He turns 21 next February.

How did you acquire your disability? I had a motorbike accident in August 1984 while on Holiday in Queensland with my then husband.

What is your living situation?

My parents live with me and all my pets (I have many!) Michael now spends most of his time in Melbourne.

Your Survival Tip for others? Don't ever take abuse from anyone, verbal or physical. Be strong and fight back as there's always help from many different people.

What has been your most embarrassing moment since you have been using a wheelchair for mobility? I was getting tips put in

my hair in Inverloch. My hairdresser is a one-eyed magpie supporter, but he's been a great sport over the years. I've sent him sympathy cards, a black and white wreath, had bets and in 1999 I made him a wooden spoon for being on the bottom of the ladder. After getting the tips put in my hair my son took a photo while I still had the cap on. I started getting phone calls about the "tiger supporter free to a good home". When I went back to Inverloch there was a photo of me on the window of the salon with a huge sign with the above writing and my phone number on it. I still don't know where that photo has ended up either.

Your greatest achievement? I would have to say finally having the courage to leave my abusive husband at the start of February 1989 and beating my anorexia which I had battled with for more than 10 years.

What do you do with your time?

At the moment I've torn the tendons in my arm, but most of my time is taken up with all my animals. I also like fishing, football and most outdoor things. Occasionally I give talks on eating disorders at the local schools.

Why did you choose to live in Country/City? (Draw backs/Positives) I was born in Korumburra, (it's in South Gippsland) and I love it here. All my family live here as well. The city is just too much of a rat race for me, I could never live there.

Your best holiday spot and why? I still like Inverloch and it's not too far from home. The people are

friendly, the fishing is great and it's also wheelchair friendly.

But the climate in Queensland is still the best.

What food do you like best? Seafood! It's great.

If money was no object what would you buy/do? I'd love to travel more or just buy the whole zoo as my parents always tell me.

Do you have an internet site you would recommend? No.

PS. I would love to get in touch with all the friends I made while I was in hospital in 1984, 1987 (13 west), and 1992. I would be most appreciative if you are able to contact me on (03) 5658 1979 or at 89 Mine Rd, Korumburra, Victoria 3950 so that we could catch up.



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New rules for reporting earnings & changes for working-age parents and pensioners

What is changing?

From 20 September 2003 some people need to tell Centrelink about their earnings on the same day each fortnight before they will receive their payments. Legislation introduced as part of the 2001 budget will change the way Centrelink assesses earnings for working-age people.

From 20 September 2003 Centrelink started taking into account what people can earn each fortnight to work out their Centrelink payment for that fortnight – rather than calculating their average earnings. This rule is already used for working out allowance payments – it is being extended to working-age pension and parent payments to make things fairer and simpler.

How will the change benefit people?

- The new rules are simpler than the existing rules that average earnings over a period.
- It will help people to avoid getting overpaid or underpaid by Centrelink. Currently people can accidentally provide incorrect or out-of-date information and are overpaid. As a result, they incur a debt that needs to be repaid.
- Reporting earnings on the same day each fortnight will make it easier for people to know when they need to tell Centrelink about their earnings.
- There will be quicker, easier ways to report earnings to Centrelink. Many people already choose to report their earnings to centrelink

each fortnight. Working-age parents and pensioners will also have access to working credit, which will allow them to keep more of their Centrelink payment when they work. It will also make it easier for people to get their payments restarted if they get a short-term job.

How often will people need to report their earnings to Centrelink?

People whose income varies will have to contact Centrelink on a specific day each fortnight. People with on-going stable earnings will only need to contact Centrelink if their income changes (within 14 days of the change). There are no changes for people who don't have earnings or who are self-employed. Everyone must still tell Centrelink when they start a job or their circumstances change.

How will people report their earnings to Centrelink?

Centrelink has developed easy ways people to report their earnings. They do not need to hand in a form. Depending on what best suits a person, they may be able to choose to report using:

- A priority phone number where they will talk to a Centrelink Customer Service Officer.
- An automated phone service (using speech recognition technology)
- The internet

People can still visit a Customer Service Centre, or mail if they wish. In many cases, if both members of

a couple get a Centrelink payment, one member can report for both people.

How will people know if they need to report their earnings every fortnight?

In the fortnight before 20 September 2003, people will receive a letter called Reporting and Income Statement. This letter tells people which day they need to contact Centrelink for the next six fortnights. Centrelink has already sent a letter and information Pack to people who have variable earnings. This pack has a booklet that explains what they need to tell Centrelink. It also has some 'earnings worksheet'. These offer an easy way for people to keep track of their hours and how much they earned. They do not have to be handed in to Centrelink.

What happens if someone forgets or doesn't report on time?

People will need to report in order for Centrelink to pay them. If they forget, their payments will be stopped. They should contact Centrelink as soon as possible.

What about people with special needs?

Identifying and helping people with special needs is a priority for Centrelink. Each Centrelink office has been given a list of people who are working in Business Services and Open Employment and who will need to report fortnightly. Local staff are working with these people and their nominees/agents to ensure they

Changes to Multi Purpose Taxi Program

continued from page 8,

understand what they need to do. Alternative arrangements can be made if fortnightly reporting is not appropriate for an individual. Centrelink is also working with Business Services to introduce a new process called Employer Reporting. This allows employees to get their Business Service to provide earnings information to Centrelink. It is voluntary for both the business Service and their employees.

What happens if someone's circumstances change?

Everyone needs to tell Centrelink if their circumstances change. If someone stops work, they will need to tell Centrelink and they will no longer need to report each fortnight. In cases when someone knows they won't be working or won't be able to report (eg they go on holidays or they have a planned stay in hospital), they need to contact Centrelink so that their reporting arrangements can be changed.

Where can people get more information?

Contact your local Centrelink office and arrange an information session, or email to:
helpdesk.workingcredit@facs.gov.au
or phone 132 850.

Electronic copies of the booklets in the Information Pack can be found on the Centrelink Internet site:
www.centrelink.gov.au.

Victoria's Multi-Purpose Taxi Program (MPTP) is to be modified to maintain its long-term sustainability.

The Multi-Purpose Taxi Program assists people in our community who are unable to use public transport because of a severe and permanent disability.

Victoria's Multi-Purpose Taxi Program has grown to three times the size of a similar program in New South Wales and it is continuing to grow beyond Victoria's capacity to fund it.

There are more than 180,000 members of the program and costs have been increasing by more than 6 per cent a year. A number of changes must and will be made to the existing program, to ensure the benefits of the program continue to be available to members of the community with severe and permanent disabilities who cannot use public transport.

"In order to ensure the viability of the MPTP, eligibility criteria must be tightened to bring Victoria in line with other States, with a focus on the functional impact of an individual's disability or impairment."

The changes will affect new applications from Friday, 17th October 2003. The eligibility of existing members will not be affected.

Means testing will also be introduced for new members, but will not apply to existing members of the program. In addition, holders of veteran's

pensions and people requiring permanent use of a wheelchair will be exempt from means testing.

MPTP application process is being redesigned and new applications to the program would not be accepted from today. However, future applications to the MPTP will be based on the new criteria and application forms are expected to be available later this year.

A \$550 annual trip cap will also be introduced. This cap will not apply until 1 July 2004, and will apply to all users other than those requiring permanent use of a wheelchair. A MPTP Review Panel will assess members with special circumstances such as those attending education, employment and day centres.

With the introduction of a new application form, a charge will also be introduced to recover costs of the issue, renewal and replacement of all membership cards. The fee will be \$16.50 per card and each card will have a lifespan of six years. Membership cards are currently lost at an alarming rate, leading to substantial potential for fraud.

In recent years, more than 6047 low floors trams have been introduced with raised platform tram stops, more than 500 low floor buses are now in service, there are 200 wheelchair accessible bus stops and 315 wheelchair taxis, including 80 in regional areas. In 1984 when the MPTP was introduced there were no wheelchair taxis.

Are you eligible for Telstra “Priority Assistance”?

Telstra provides a service called *Priority Assistance* for Telstra customers. It is designed to help residential customers, or people living at their home, who have a diagnosed life-threatening medical condition and whose life may be at risk without access to a fully-operational telephone service.

If there is ever a fault on the nominated line of a *Priority Assistance* customer and their residence does not have any other working standard telephone service, (whether supplied by Telstra or another provider), or they need to connect their first standard telephone service, it will be attended to with the highest level of service practicably available at that time. Timeframes are dealt with in more detail under the heading “Timeframes” which follows.

Are you eligible for Telstra *Priority Assistance*?

If you or someone living at your home has a diagnosed life-threatening medical condition with a high risk of rapid deterioration, and access to a telephone would assist to remedy the life-threatening situation, you could be eligible.

Other dependent patients who live alone, without support or in remote locations.

Patients with other dependent medical conditions would qualify for *Priority Service* *only* if they live alone, without social support, or in a remote location eg.:

- dialysis patients
- oncology patients
- AIDS patients
- haemophilia patients and others with bleeding disorders
- severely disabled persons

If you’re unsure about whether you’re eligible for Telstra *Priority Assistance*, please talk to your doctor.



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Email: automob@hotkey.net.au

Website: www.automobility.com.au

National survey of disability, ageing and carers

The Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) plans to conduct a national survey of Disability, Ageing and Carers between June and November 2003. Similar surveys were conducted in 1993 and 1998 and will be repeated every six years in future.

The survey sample will cover approximately:

- 13,500 households.
- 660 health establishments including hospitals, nursing homes and retirement villages.
- 200 non-private dwellings such as caravan parks and motels.

Information obtained will identify the number and demographic characteristics of people with disabilities and primary carers in Australia. For people with a disability, data will be collected about limitations experienced and help received in everyday activities, the health conditions that gave rise to the limitations and the use of aids such as wheelchairs and hearing aids. For carers, data will be collected on the effects of the caring role on their lifestyle. In addition, information on the need for and receipt of assistance, participation in community activities and the use of computers and the Internet will be collected from people with a disability and all people aged 60 years and over.

Results from the survey are expected to be available in mid 2004.

Acknowledgment to Australian Cerebral Palsy Network newsletter

Vulcan Wheels

I heard about the Vulcan wheelchair wheels a while ago and thought they were a great idea and was surprised no one had thought of them earlier.

The Vulcan wheels are innovative in that they are one piece instead of two – the wheels rim is formed in such a way that it is actually the push rim as well. Because the wheels are one piece, there are no gaps in between the tyres rim and the push rim, this feature makes it ideal for those of us who keep getting our fingers caught in the gap.



There is more surface area on the rim which is handy for pushing or stopping and it is more rigid, stronger, and a little lighter than ordinary wheels. Pricing for the wheels are about the same as ordinary wheels.

I had the opportunity to try out the Vulcan wheels for a couple of weeks after running into Mike DeSanto from Dynamic Wheelchairs. The pair I tried out had a rubber band in the groove which can be useful for quads with limited hand function but I didn't find them beneficial for myself because I use the tyre and the outer side of the push rim to push.

They are a great idea and an alternative to other wheels and best of all they are Australian made. So if you are looking for a new set of wheels, I'd recommend looking at these before you decide.

For further information;

Vulcan Wheels (02) 9310 5732

Mike DeSanto (03) 95488400

www.vulcanwheels.com

Written by Naz Erdem.

Wheelchair Users Guide



Yarra Trams will launch a new "Wheelchair Users Guide". The public announcement of this guide as well as other significant initiatives will be made on Thursday 13th of November at 11am at The Piazza (Box Hill Central Tram Terminus – opposite Market St – Whitehorse Road Box Hill (Melway map 47 D9).

Yarra Trams will also announce that they are now the major sponsor of Wheelchair Rugby in Victoria. Following the announcement, guests and Yarra Trams staff will be invited to see a demonstration of wheelchair rugby being played at a nearby venue.

If you are interested in attending the event or watching the wheelchair rugby demonstration game, please contact Clarissa Flockart from Yarra Trams on 9619 3268 or rsvp@yarratrams.com.au or Naz at AQA Victoria on 9489 0777 or info@aqavic.org.au.

Wheelchair Rugby



Wheelchair Rugby in Japan

I went to Japan on the 2nd of September for seven days to play wheelchair rugby in the Oceania Zonal Championships – which are qualifiers for the Athens Paralympics next year.

I didn't know what to expect when I got there. My image of Japan was of little people, little houses, little cars and confined spaces. Being on a fault line, I expected the geography to be hilly and mountainous (not good for wheelchairs). I could picture Mt. Fuji and those little timber houses that we all saw destroyed on the news a few years ago after an earthquake.

Unlike many other Asian countries, Japan is very modern, has a very good cash flow and is very thoughtful to its citizens.

After landing at Tokyo Airport we were greeted by about five airport staff to help collect our luggage, help us through customs and find our transport. The biggest obstacle we came across at this stage was the language barrier, a few of them can only speak a few English words with fewer speaking any kind of understandable English. They are such polite and friendly people that nearly everyone you pass either nods or says hi in traditional Japanese.

Accessible toilets at the airport and other public buildings are great. Both inside and outside there are two buttons (similar to elevator buttons), one to automatically open the door and the other one to close the door. I wish all toilets could be like this.

Making our way from the airport to our bus I noticed that everywhere was very clean (no rubbish or cigarette butts to be seen) and well laid out. There were ramps and lifts to get you anywhere you needed to go. Inside and outside of the airport they had made the effort to assist other disabled people, for example tactile tiles all over the place for the blind as well as taxis with wheelchair stickers on them (the taxis were sedans and I'm not sure how they can get a wheelchair into them but the doors were automatic opening and closing). They also have M50 type vans with hoists but unlike the hoists we see in Australian taxis, their hoists are actually part of

the floor and slide out the back and lower to the road, unusual but effective cause you can be strapped to the floor while sitting on the road.

Our bus was one of those big tourist buses where you sit about two metres above the ground, but we could see that they had it all worked out after seeing the on-board hydraulic hoist to get us up there.

After loading onto the bus and heading to our hotel in Chiba City (a port city about 45 kilometers from Tokyo) we could see how modern this part of Japan was, there were massive modern multi-storey office blocks and apartment buildings everywhere and to my surprise everywhere was very flat.

After arriving at the hotel and settling into our rooms, a few of us had a wander around the streets and local shops. Around here too we noticed those tactile tiles for the blind everywhere and low gradient curbs and smooth footpaths which made it very easy to get around in the wheelchair.

One thing that I tried to stay away from was the Japanese food – lots of raw fish, even for breakfast but luckily McDonalds was just around the corner. It was a little expensive but when you're hungry, you're hungry.

I really enjoyed my stay there and would recommend it to anyone wanting to go, just plan what you want to do beforehand cause asking people in the street or anywhere else for that matter for directions or sights to see is nearly impossible, or you could always learn the language.

Now back to the rugby. There were meant to be four teams competing, Australia, New Zealand, Japan, and South Africa but South Africa didn't turn up because of lack of funding. The two top teams at the end of the tournament would qualify for Athens with the third team gaining a wildcard entry because Greece has no wheelchair rugby team of its own and because the Oceania zone is so strong. The final placings at the end of the qualifiers were; Australia qualifying first, New Zealand qualifying second and Japan gaining the wildcard entry.

By Naz Erdem

Knox Community Arts Centre

Annual production presented by Knox Groups With Disability

2003 production is made up of "My Way Drama Group" and "Rhythmic Dance Class", both of which allow students with disabilities to improve their self esteem and build vital confidence skills in their everyday lives.

This annual performance is an opportunity to celebrate the achievements of these two groups.

"Rhythmic Dance & Movement"

2 choreographed pieces of work

"My Way Drama Group"

an entertaining play

Sunday 23rd November 2003 at 2pm

Adults: \$12, Concession/Child \$10

Phone: (03) 9729 7287.

Brunswick

Neighborhood House Annual Art Exhibition

Making Waves III

This exhibition showcases the artwork of people with disabilities that live in the Moreland area. The title "Making Waves" represents an image of people with disabilities contributing to and making known their presence in the community.

The exhibition can be viewed from 9am – 5 pm Monday to Friday until the 26th November 2003.

Where: Brunswick Neighborhood House,
18 Garden Brunswick

Phone: (03) 9387 9901

Email: bnhc@vicnet.net.au

Dynamic Wheelchairs

Address:

Unit 17, 14-26 Audsley Street
Clayton Victoria 3168

Postal address:

PO Box 4081
Mulgrave Victoria 3170

- à largest range of custom lightweight manual wheelchairs
- à imported - quickie, invacare
- à locally manufactured by – **A-1 mobility**
- à for quality, comfort, style and strength
- à folding, rigid and suspension frames (over 15 models to choose from)
- à children to adults
- à individually measured & highly adjustable
- à personalised service to home, hospital and rehabilitation

Seating products

- à experienced suppliers of: jay, roho, invacare
- à a wide range of accessories and spare parts
- à sports wheelchairs & recreation equipment



Suspension Chair



Folding Chair

**For further information
contact:**

Mike De Santo

Tel: (03) 9548 8400

Fax: (03) 9548 8411

Email: dynamicw@hotmail.com

Loving wife

A woman accompanied her husband to the doctor's office. After his checkup, the doctor called the wife into his office alone. He said, "Your husband is suffering from a very severe stress disorder. If you don't follow my instructions carefully, your husband will surely die. "Each morning, fix him a healthy breakfast. Be pleasant at all times. For lunch make him a nutritious meal. For dinner prepare an especially nice meal for him. "Don't burden him with chores. Don't discuss your problems with him; it will only make his stress worse. Do not nag him. Most importantly, make love to him regularly. "If you can do this for the next 10 months to a year, I think your husband will regain his health completely." On the way home, the husband asked his wife, "What did the doctor say?" "He said you're going to die," she replied.

Fuel injected

Bud and Jim were a couple of drinking buddies who worked as airplane mechanics in Atlanta. One day the airport was fogged in and they were stuck in the hangar with nothing to do.

Bud says, "Man, I wish we had something to drink!" Jim says, "Me too. Y'know, I've heard you can drink jet fuel and get a buzz. You wanna try it?" So they pour themselves a couple of glasses of high octane hooch and get completely smashed.

The next morning Bud wakes up and is surprised at how good he feels. In fact he feels GREAT! NO hangover! NO bad side effects. Nothing! Then the phone rings... It's Jim.

Jim says, "Hey, how do you feel this morning?" Bud says, "I feel great. How about you?" Jim says, "I feel great, too. You don't have a hangover?" Bud says, "No, that jet fuel is great stuff — no hangover, nothing. We ought to do this more often." "Yeah, well there's just one thing..." "What's that?" "Have you farted yet?" "No....." "Well, DON'T, 'cause I'm in PHOENIX.

Hiccups

A man goes into a drug store and asks the pharmacist if he can give him something for the hiccups. The pharmacist promptly reaches out and slaps the man's face. "What the heck did you do that for!?" the man screams. "Well, you don't have the hiccups anymore do you?"

The man says, "No I don't, you IDIOT... But my wife out in the car still does!"

Camping trip.

Sherlock Holmes and Dr Watson go on a camping trip. After a good dinner and a bottle of wine, they retire for the night, and go to sleep.

Some hours later, Holmes wakes up and nudges his faithful friend. "Watson, look up at the sky and tell me what you see."

"I see millions and millions of stars, Holmes" replies Watson.

"And what do you deduce from that?"

Watson ponders for a minute.

"Well, astronomically, it tells me that there are millions of galaxies and potentially billions of planets. Astrologically, I observe that Saturn is in Leo. Horologically, I deduce that the time is approximately a quarter past three. Meteorologically, I suspect that we will have a beautiful day tomorrow. Theologically, I can see that God is all powerful, and that we are a small and insignificant part of the universe. What does it tell you, Holmes?"

Holmes is silent for a moment. "Watson, you idiot!" he says. "Someone has stolen our tent!"

Bird Brain

A lady was walking down the street to work and she saw a parrot on a perch in front of a pet store. The parrot said to her, "Hey lady, you are really ugly." The lady was furious!

She stormed past the store to her work. On the way home she saw the same parrot and it said to her, "Hey lady, you are really ugly." She was incredibly ticked now.

The next day the same parrot again said to her, "Hey lady, you are really ugly." The lady was so ticked that she went into the store and said that she would sue the store and to get and promised he would make sure the parrot didn't say it again.

When the lady walked past the store that day after work the parrot called to her, "Hey lady." She paused and said, "Yes?" And the bird replied, "You know."

FOR SALE

Therakair bed

Matress replacement with air supply unit for pressure relief to help speed healing, reduce pain, edema and prevent skin breakdown. 12 months old – bed and air compressor only.

Price: Very low (negotiable)
Phone: (03) 9484 1821 Mrs Meyer

Gazelle Motorised Wheelchair

4 yr. old, very good condition. Chair has been rarely used.

Price: \$1,500 negotiable
Phone: (03) 9878 2947 Sue

Motorised Wheelchair

Avion motorised wheelchair, it is in fairly good condition, it runs on two drycell batteries that charge up by plugging a lead into a 240 v plug.

Price: \$700 negotiable
Phone: (02) 6024 2399 Colin McMcNeill

FOR SALE

House For Sale

House 4 sale in Bayswater - Heathmont border, available in 2-3 weeks, 4/5 bedrooms, 2/3 living areas, 3 bathrooms - 1 accessible, central heating x 2, 2 hot water systems, undercover parking, brick, bus stop is close, train station is 1 km away, 20 min push to shopping centre, quiet avenue, \$349,000.

Price: \$349,000.
Phone: (03) 9779 910 089 or 40240402 Lorraine

WANTED

Following the response to the "Free Power Chair" we advertised in the last two issues of News Link, we are asking members who have a power chair in working order gathering dust to please consider donating it to another member.

Please call AQA on 9489 0777.

MIND SPORTS



Phil Hooton who is a Chess Coach is planning on forming a CHESS CLUB if the interest is there. If you are interested in joining the club, please call Phil on 9534 1383 to register your interest or to find out more. Private Chess Coaching is also available, where they'll come to you!



Checkmate Chess Coaching, Phone: 9534 1383, Mob: 0421 901 530, phooton@datafast.net.au

If you like what you are reading and **you are not a subscriber to News Link, why not subscribe now?** It only costs \$5 per year. You will receive an issue of News Link bi-monthly.



NEWS LINK SUBSCRIPTION FORM

Name (Mr/Mrs/Miss/Ms/Company)

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Suburb State Postcode

Phone No. (.....) Email

Date of birth/...../..... Occupation

Disability (if any) Lesion

Interests

Signature Date

Post this form and the \$5 fee to : **AQA Victoria Ltd., PO Box 219, FAIRFIELD 3078**

CLASSIFIEDS

FOR SALE

1994 Ford Flash-cab

White stationwagon with 4 litre dual fuel engine, auto, P/steering, air-con. Ultimate vehicle for disabled comfort and has been fully retored in last 3 months, RWC + Reg until Oct 2003.

Price: \$24,000

Phone: (03) 9471 4511 or 0409 007 123 Steve

Electric Wheelchair

Jaguar model, fair-good condition, tilt back, 17 inch seat

Price: \$500

Phone: (03) 9723 8386 Chris

Wheelchair

Lightweight wheelchair, good condition, rigid frame

Price: \$250 ONO

Phone: (03) 9723 8386 Chris

wheelchair hoist

wheelchair hoist (Tieman), heavy duty, suit Toyota Hiace, see working, excellent condition.

Price: \$1,200 ono

Phone: (02) 6059 3594 after 5pm Noel (Wodonga)

Motomed Active Passive Trainer

Portable motorised fitness resistance trainer, leg and arm capability, two way movement – forward and backward, all accessories, excellent condition, cost \$3,500 new

Price: \$2,200 ono

Phone: (03) 5486 5457 Luke (Echuca)

1996 EL Ford Falcon Flash-cab

maritius metallic blue color, completely reupholstered including all seats, new brakes all round, new suspension, tinted windows, transmission is under warranty. All tests are welcome. This car will suit the most fastidious buyer. RWC.

Price: \$25,000

Phone: (03) 9570 9506 Chris on (03) 9579 1899

Phone: (02) 6024 2399 Colin McMcNeill

FOR SALE

Hydraulic Hoist

1 portable manual hydraulic hoist, no sling

Price: \$100

Phone: (03) 5278 6685 Nicko (Geelong)

Delivery can be arranged

2 Mobility Plus Wheelchairs

2 Mobility Plus wheelchairs, high backed to suit quad, 1 folding and 1 rigid.

Price: \$400 each

Phone: (03) 5278 6685 Nicko (Geelong)

Delivery can be arranged

Roho Cushion

1 Roho cushion.

Price: \$300

Phone: (03) 5278 6685 Nicko (Geelong)

Delivery can be arranged

Water Chair

1 water chair on castors.

Price: \$150

Phone: (03) 5278 6685 Nicko (Geelong)

Delivery can be arranged

Manual Glide 3 Wheelchair

restraining belt, reclining mechanism, back extension, padded arms, brakes, leg extension & support, Care Quip seat insert, Seat width 500mm.

Price: \$1000 negotiable

Phone: (03) 9787 6129 (Yaqirah) or 9531 8936 (Sol)

1999 Toyota Hiace/Commuter

70,000 km's, Tieman hoist, dual air conditioning, 5 speed manual, 2.4 fuel injected motor, can take 2 wheelchairs + 5 adults inc. driver, excellent condition, RWC + Registration

Price: \$25,000

Phone: (03) 9484 6987 Peter

... More Classifieds on page 15