



NEWS LINK

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

June 2004



Murray to Moyne

18 months in the making

Launceston Boardwalk

Access for All



Falls Creek

A Fantastic Opportunity to Learn
How to Sit Ski

Plus much more...



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

A.Q.A. Victoria Limited always welcomes articles for News Link. Please feel free to send in your contribution. Articles will be published at the discretion of the Editor who also has the right to edit all submissions as it sees fit.

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Volume 18, Number 3

From the CEO

Our News Link editor, Simon Damevski was married in late May. I would like to wish Simon and his new wife Sandra best wishes and lots of happiness for their future life together.



I would like to congratulate Kevin Bailey, Lyndal Falkenberg and the Kangaroo Flat Lions Club for the organisation and effort that went into the BBQ by the Bendigo Lake. Personally it was great to meet up with some of our country members. The AQA staff who attended also enjoyed the day and found it helpful to put a face to a name. It was a small but enthusiastic crowd and we would like to continue to hold future gatherings such as this in Bendigo and other regional areas where there might be an interest.

Ian Bennett

Chief Executive Officer

ianbennett@aqavic.org.au

From the Editor

On page 4 of this issue you will find some more results from our 'Member Survey'. These results deal with question 1 of the survey which dealt with News Link.

It's great to see that our members continue to contribute to the content of News Link and give our readers important information. We are appealing to any member who attended the 2004 Solutions Expo at Caulfield to let us know how they thought it went – we'd love to write about it.

Thank you to Peter Lloyd for the article on the Boardwalk in Launceston. Peter has agreed to forward regular articles of interest in Tasmania, so if you live in Tasmania or are planning to visit some of these may be of interest to you.

As mentioned by the CEO, our editor Simon Damevski was married in late May. The photo below shows the happy couple and I would like to join Ian in wishing both Simon and Sandra the very best for the future.

Nazim Erdem

Assistant News Link Editor

nazimerdem@aqavic.org.au



CONGRATULATIONS

Simon & Sandra

on your wedding

We all wish you both a
fantastic life together

Did You Know???

News Link is available in .PDF format and can be emailed to you.

What are the benefits;

- š You can view it in full colour
- š You can receive your copy instantly
- š No messing around with paper
- š Easy to keep in storage

Interested?

Email your details to
info@aqavic.org.au

Survey Results – Part 1

Over the next few issues of News Link, we will publish some of the results of the eleven questions asked in the survey. If you can't wait for the results to be published in News Link, pick up the phone or jump on your computer and contact us on (03) 9489 0777, FreeCall for Country and Tasmania members 1800 999 128, or email info@aqavic.org.au.

In this issue, we will cover question 1, which dealt with our newsletter. We wanted to find out which sections in News Link was read and enjoyed by our readers. Here's what we found;

Section / Column	'always/usually' read
New Technologies	88%
Health	83%
SCI Research	77%
Member's Profile	77%
Equipment	77%
Classifieds	76%
Travel & Accommodation	74%
Jokes Page	73%
Notices	70%
Member's Page	70%
Peer Support Column	69%
Transport	67%
Advertisements	63%
Environmental Innovations	63%
Wheelchair Rugby	26%
(we will introduce other wheelchair sports)	

Overall, a high majority of our members really enjoy the contents of News Link and congratulated us.

Some members asked for more about Technology, Travel & Accommodation, Equipment, Health and SCI Research which we will address.

Some country members would like more information about what's happening in the country and we will investigate sources for interesting information.

There were also some suggestions on how to improve the look of our newsletter:

- Use larger photos and graphics - we have now commenced this
- Use of colour - cost prohibitive but one option we have currently made available to members with email facilities is to send it via email (Acrobat .PDF) which can be viewed on computers in full colour. *(It's pleasing to note that members want a quality newsletter but are aware at the same time that cost is a prohibiting factor)*

LIFE SKILLS DAY

Approximately every three months, a 'Life Skills Day' is held at the Royal Talbot in Kew. The purpose of the day is to give patients an idea of what options there are out there for them. Patients also get the opportunity to meet and chat with people who have been living in the community for a few years with a spinal cord injury. This is perfect to get an insight into life after injury.

Although the day is aimed at people who are doing rehabilitation, there is limited space for anyone who has sustained a spinal cord injury or anyone else who has an interest in this area. If you are interested in attending one of the following days, please RSVP to Peter or Naz at AQA Victoria; Phone (03) 9489 0777, FreeCall 1800 999 128 (country Victoria and Tasmania only), email info@aqavic.org.au.

- Wednesday 30th of June
- Wednesday 22nd of September
- Wednesday 15th of December

City of Launceston Boardwalk

In keeping with its motto of "Access for All", Launceston's new Boardwalk is a tribute to all concerned in its construction. Users, especially those in wheel-chairs, can now pride themselves on having an extremely user friendly facility catering to various requirements.



The Boardwalk, as it curves itself around the North Esk has much to offer to the visitor and the local alike. You can view the vista over a cup of coffee or for the more adventurous class you can try your hand at some sailing (by appointment only). Otherwise, I know there are several in the Melbourne Office who would like to do this, you can kick back, wet your line and read a good book whilst trying to hook something worthy of hanging over the fireplace. The writer will take no responsibility for any ailment that may befall anyone foolish enough to eat anything caught. Also, there are many luxury apartments for sale in the area or, if you are like me you can just look around and dream a little.

Listed below is a brief outline of its construction phase and the different amenities.

Home Point - stage 1 of 'The River Plan'

- public landing pontoon with power and water
- tourist business opportunity
- office, toilet/ shower facilities
- completed 1997

Royal Park - stage 2

- boardwalk
- cycleway
- extended rowing ramp
- lighting
- planting
- completed 1999

Park Street - stage 3

- improved link to river edge
- additional short term parking
- traffic calming area
- urban design enhancements
- improved lighting
- completed 1999

North Esk Boardwalk - stage 4 (Home Point to Sea Scouts)

- boardwalk
- boat launching pontoon for Naval Reserve Cadets and Sea Scouts
- completed 2001



Old Launceston Seaport – stage 5

Private development incorporating:

- residential units / townhouses
- boutique hotel
- shops

- rowing centre and pontoons
- marina

Council responsible for:

- boardwalk
- car parks

Kings Park Share Way - stage 6

- public pedestrian and cycle path
- create link along the foreshore from Ritchie's Mill to Park Street
- create a wheelchair accessible path
- Completed 2002
- Length 270 metres
- New lighting along path



Future Riveredge Projects

- Esplanade - walkway improvements
- Melaleuca Forest - West Tamar improvements
- Improve links - city to river
- Improve links - City Park to Inveresk
- Links to "Ribbon of Blue' North Esk Projects"

My thanks to Bruce Harper from the URBAN DESIGN & ARCHITECTURE centre, Launceston City Council for providing the timeline construction details.

The Boardwalk is only a couple of minutes from the City and I highly recommend it to any visitor.

Written by Peter Lloyd

What's new in PEER SUPPORT

By Peter Van Benthem
petervanbenthem@aqavic.org.au

G'day members,

2004 is moving along very fast and the Information / Peer Support department is working well together to provide your needs. In the last few years, AQA's Information / Peer Support department has been growing considerably. News Link newsletter has improved because of the fantastic response from our members with the **AQA survey**. The survey has steered the newsletter in a positive direction, and to those who responded, your feedback is much appreciated. Some results are featured in this issue.

By the time you get this issue of News Link, AQA's Information / Peer Support department will have a **new female staff member** who will help cover SCI woman's issues. We welcome Anna Leyden and the knowledge and skill she will bring into the department. It will be great having articles from a female perspective. Anna will also help out with Peer Support work.

Companion Card - If you have a disability and need a carer to assist you when you attend paid venues (eg movies, football, concerts) you will now need a Companion Card to get your carer in for free. This new system needs your support and is the new standard for the entertainment industry. From now on if you try to

get a carer into the football without a Companion Card they will not let your carer in (for free). This new system is a great way of protecting people with disabilities that require assistance of a companion to access a venue or event. Legislation requires that venues do not discriminate against people with a disability because of their need for a companion. By charging two admission fees to the cardholder, they will be accused of discriminatory ticketing practices. Apply for the Companion Card now and stamp out any confusion.

For further information on the Companion Card please call them on their toll free number on 1800 650 611 or visit their website at www.companioncard.org.au

Federal Budget helps carers - In June 2004 recipients of Carer Payment will receive a one-off payment of \$1000 and recipients of Carer Allowance a one-off payment of \$600. Also the eligibility for the carers allowance will expand to include carers who provide substantial levels of personal care on a daily basis but don't live with the person for whom they are caring. Contact Centre Link for more info on 13 10 21 or email www.centrelink.gov.au

Written by Peter Van Benthem



Special Needs Accessible Housing
Authorized Real Estate Agent

Stop the Wastage of Modified Accessible Housing

If you are considering buying, selling or building a modified accessible house, please contact Geoff Buck – Lisenced Agent on 0418 306 588 or Sarah McFarlane on 0408 807 782.

Services offered include selling, vendor advocacy, database searching facility, liaison and introduction to builders and networking to the correct Estate Agent.

www.accesshousing.com

Latest Newsletter from Ability Technology

Ability Technology work with you to choose the best way for you to use a computer. They look at ways in which you can create text and undertake mouse functions. They look at options that will maximise your independence.

Some of their products include:

- Voice-Operated Remote Control
- Large key keyboards
- Pointing devices
- Special input devices

They can help with the setup of your system, training, and technical support.

Website: www.abilitycorp.com.au



Name: Wayne Bradshaw

Age: I'm 40 years of age.

Disability & Level: T- 4 Para

Are you Married/Single?
Married

Do you have children?

I have a son named Ben from a previous marriage who lives with his mother. I also have a step-daughter who lives with me and my lovely wife, Jodie.

How did you acquire your disability?

I fell three stories down an internal stairwell, say no more. I was in Adelaide on the end of year football trip and the Flying doctors flew me back to Melbourne. I was transferred to the Austin where I stayed for 14 months. I was a pretty sick puppy there for a while

What is your living situation?

I live in a great part of the state, Wonga Park. My home didn't need much alteration which was good

Your Survival Tip for others?

Take one day at a time, live for today and not tomorrow

The most embarrassing moment since you have been using a wheelchair for mobility?

A minor bowel accident at AQA ranks pretty high along with my many falls

What do you do with your time?

I work part time at AQA Victoria and do voluntary work at Candlebark Nursery in Croydon. I also push 40 km a week at Westerfolds Park

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

I have chosen the city as I love going to the football, watching the mighty Tigers which aren't that mighty at the moment. I also like going to the horse races around the spring carnival time

Your best holiday spot and why?

My good mate Zac Carr and his family had a wheelchair accessible cabin in Tocumal. We had plenty of late nights, beer with drunken falls and laughs. The weather up there is also perfect

What food do you like best?

Hard to go past a home cooked roast lamb with all the trimmings

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

My grand dad used to say your health is your wealth. Curing Spinal Cord injury, apparently the only thing holding up the progress is money

Do you have an internet site you would recommend?

Still working my way around a computer, my skills have improved ten fold working at AQA

Update - Multipurpose Taxi Program

Be aware when catching a taxi with a Multipurpose Taxi card that the taxi driver should not turn the meter on until after you have been settled into the taxi and it should be turned off once you have reached your destination. The Government will also provide an extra incentive to taxi drivers to transport wheelchair users, lifting the fee provided by the Government directly from \$6.60 to \$10. The additional \$3.40 increase will go to the taxi driver who assisting the wheelchair user.

Mr Bracks said the categories of disability which would now be exempt from the annual subsidy cap of \$550-00 included:

- Blindness/vision impairment
- Intellectual impairment
- Brain damage
- Dementia
- Wheelchair users
- Major Organ disorders
- Paralysis

Wheelchair Rugby

Christian Brackley has organised a rugby demonstration day in Shepparton for the 11th of July. So if you can get down there on the day, come and have a game or just see what all the excitement is all about. For further details call Christian on (03) 5821 1757.

Media Release – 14 April 2004

SpinalCure Australia new name for ASRT

SpinalCure Australia is the new name for Australasian Spinal Research Trust (ASRT), the national not-for-profit organization that raises funds for research to end paralysis.

The name change coincides with its ten year anniversary and was chosen to reflect a greater optimism that significant treatments for spinal cord injured people are rapidly approaching. It also heralds the merging of the Sydney based research group, The Spinal Research Foundation (SRF), with the newly-named organization.

“Ten years ago we had to look hard to find researchers that would support our hope that the spinal cord could be repaired, said Bob Turner, CEO (hon) SpinalCord Australia,

“Our new name – SpinalCure Australia - endorses the current belief that with the discovery of stem cells, advances in molecular biology, and with more scientists moving into this area, therapies and cures will be found.”

The organisation’s driving force is its Honorary Board of Directors and its office manager. The nine directors – five of whom have a spinal cord injury are all actively involved in fund raising, lobbying and providing support and encouragement for spinal cord research.

It has directly raised over \$1.9m for Australian researchers at institutes including the Prince of Wales Medical Research Institute (PoWMRI), Sydney and the University of New South Wales; the Walter & Eliza Hall and Austin Hospital, Melbourne; the University of

Queensland and the University of WA. It pioneered the first Neuro-Trauma program in Australia (WA) which funded neurological research through road safety initiatives. The concept has been developed and is now used in Sydney under the NSW Government’s Spinal Research & related conditions Fund. The resultant funding for research has amounted to more than \$10m.

The organization also played a significant part in advising on the NSW Government’s ‘Making Connections’ Forum, which centred on the visit of actor and activist Christopher Reeve in 2003.

It also played a significant role through advocacy, media relations and lobbying in the Embryonic Stem Cell debate.

Five years ago it helped establish an international collaboration of spinal research organizations called ICCP (the International Campaign to Cure Paralysis) which includes the Christopher Reeve Paralysis Foundation.

There are approximately 18,000 men and women living with paralysis caused by spinal injury in Australia. The average age for injury is 19 years, with 53 per cent of injuries resulting from motor vehicle accidents; 23 per cent from falls and 12 per cent from sports. One injury of this type occurs every day in Australia.

Phone: 1800 SPINAL

Email: spinetrust@ozemail.com.au

Website: www.spinetrust.com.au

Ski Weekend



For the last two years the Spinal Unit at Royal Talbot has run a ski weekend at Falls Creek for ex-patients in conjunction with Disabled Wintersports Victoria. The weekends have been a great success particularly with the support of AQA last year. We are aiming at people

who have not previously sit skied before and it’s a fantastic opportunity to learn the ropes and build the skills to get back out on the slopes with your mates.

This year it will be held on the 3-5th September, (leaving 12pm on the 3rd and returning early evening on the 5th). The cost for the weekend comes to just under \$300 (and that covers meals, accommodation, lift tickets, equipment and lesson), and spaces are limited!!

If you are keen, or just want more information, please call Gill Hilton at Royal Talbot on (03) 9496 4843.

Alvina Holiday Cottages – Phillip Island

I recently ventured to Phillip Island with my parents and stayed at the Alvina Holiday Cottages. These particular cottages are purpose built for wheelchair accessibility and cater for a wide range of disabilities.

The cottages both have two bedrooms, the main one with a queen size bed and the other with two singles and two trundle beds. Plenty of extra blankets, doonas, pillows and towels provided. Also on hand is an electronic mobile hoist for wheelchair bound patrons. It is suggested to bring your own slings, however, there is one provided.

There is also a sofa bed in the large lounge room area, as well as a TV, VCR, stereo, videos, books, and even games. You can sit back and relax in the recliner chair in either air-conditioned or heated comfort.

The kitchen is very modern and well thought out, with every utensil, bench tops at the right height for wheelchairs and for easy access, no cupboard doors. The fridge contains everything you will need for breakfast, including free-range eggs straight from the chooks that roam freely around the tranquil 15-acre property.

The large bathroom has an open shower for easy access with a commode, which is provided and the option of a hand held or wall mounted shower and a very easy to regulate hot and cold all-in-one tap. There is also a wall-mounted hairdryer, ready to go.

Outside the unit you will find an undercover barbeque area, trampoline, swings, slides for the children, an undercover four-person spa and a games room complete with billiard table. The quiet and peaceful rural environment allows you to enjoy the fresh air and a seemingly large amount of space.

There are many places to go and see on Phillip Island. In the short time we were there, we visited the Nobbies where there is viewing access to Seal Rock and Summerland Beach where the penguins come in at dusk. The coastline around that area is spectacular. Other attractions on the island include the Motorcycle Grand Prix track, Phillip Island wildlife park and Churchill Island, just to name a few. You can even take a scenic flight if you wish.

There's a myriad of restaurants and cafes on the island, including the Isle of Whyte Hotel, although access is a bit dodgy, the golf club which is a good place to go for a feed and the RSL, but make sure you book.

The wonderful owners and hosts of Alvina Holiday Cottages are Freda and Will Marshall. Freda is a former nurse from the Austin Hospital and Will is a builder. Between them they have paid attention to every detail and need of disabled people to ensure a very comfortable and private environment for anyone to stay in. They are very friendly people who will make you feel most welcome. They love a chat, but they also know how to give you your space so that you can enjoy your own privacy. Freda and Will are more than willing to advise on any good spots to visit or where to dine out. Meals can even be provided if required.

I can happily say that I spent a lovely weekend at Alvina Holiday Cottages and would highly recommend you put them on your next holiday agenda.

Written by Gary Allsop



Address: Lot 9, Ventnor Road Ventnor Victoria 3922	Postal address: PO Box 531 Cowes Victoria 3922
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Two fully self-contained, spacious, 2 bedroom cottages set on 15 acres near Ventnor Beach. • Purpose built wheelchair accessible - Mobility aids available (incl. Hoist & Shower/commode chair) • Personal care available. • Air conditioning, heater, TV, VCR, stereo, books, videos & board games. 	
Phone: (03) 5956 8416	Fax: (03) 5956 8413
Mobile: 0417 104 051	
Fax: (03) 5956 8413	
Email: info@alvina.com.au	
Website: www.alvina.com.au	

2004 Murray to Moyne

After 18 months of planning, **Team Handcycle** have successfully completed their first Murray to Moyne (M2M) relay, which is a 520km ride that starts by the Murray River in Echuca and finishes in the coastal town of Port Fairy near Warrnambool. An added challenge for this event was the time limit for completion of 24 hours. In order to cover the distance it was decided that the team would ride in pairs and rotate every couple of hours.

On Friday 26th March, the **Team Handcycle** convoy travelled up to Echuca in preparation for the start at 11 o'clock on the Saturday morning. In order to successfully get through the event we had to come up with a number of 'tactics'. Obviously a support crew was vital and ours would be multi talented! They would drive, encourage, feed, put wheelchairs together, help with transfers, make cups of coffee, load and unload hand cycles, be happy, make lunches, and on and on and on. They would also provide on road support, that is, they would ride conventional upright bikes alongside the hand cyclists. This meant that if anything went wrong, somebody would be on hand to change a tyre, or do some quick mechanics. They could also ride in front of the hand cyclists, as the use of a draft could help lift the average speed. By the time we departed on the Friday, the team was made up of 8 hand cyclists, 13 support crew/riders, 4 drivers and 2 film crew. We used 3 mini buses (with wheelchair hoists), 2 cars and 2 trailers to transport 27 people, 9 hand cycles, 12 conventional bikes, 6 wheelchairs and 2 prosthetic legs! The plan for the next 24 hours would be to have the right piece of equipment, and the right person, in the right place at the right time! Part of the event rules is also to have a support vehicle behind the riders at all times.



The event started at 11am on Sat 27th March, right next to the Murray River in Echuca. Mike De Santo and Ian Harrison were the first pair on the road

for **Team Handcycle** as the rest of the team hooted, yelled and carried on in sheer delight at the sight of the

two hand cyclists rolling out of Echuca with approximately 30 other riders. Mike and Ian covered about 20kms before the next pair of Stuart Tripp and Todd Philpott (both amputees) got on the road and covered 27 km at a blistering pace.

Next on the road were Glen Wood and Brett McArthur, who had to deal with 30 degree heat and then Matt Elliot and Michael Taylor took over cycling 25kms towards Hamilton. As the sun went down it became a crystal clear night and stunningly fresh after such a warm day! But with gloves and beanies and a few layers, the night ride was a highlight for all!



It was a strangely moving and empowering experience to roll along the country roads with total blackness and quiet all

around except for the whirr of tyres, the sound of your own breath and the small beam of light spilling out in front.

After a number of rider changes and as night turned into day Mike and Glen went back on the road to cover about 30kms in hilly, challenging terrain. Stu and Todd had not cycled any of the night section and were chomping at the bit to get back out on the road. It was a superb morning with a steadily brewing northerly, so despite some hefty hills the hand cyclists did brilliantly to keep pace and the next 40kms were thoroughly enjoyable. Almost 20km out of Port Fairy all the support



vehicles stopped and all the riders (hand cycles and conventional bikes) were put out on the road for the final stretch to the finish.

The group was an incredible sight, made even more enjoyable to be in it by the other teams coming past calling encouragement, recognising the efforts of these unique cyclists. Although visually impressive, I don't think anyone could really appreciate what real effort went in for each of those individuals over the weekend. There were so many things to take into account: finding accessible loos, negotiating steps, pressure relief,

temperature control, bedding, getting to food, transitions in wheelchairs on awkward terrain - simply getting in and out of the bus and on and off their handcycles had required enormous physical and mental effort.

As we turned into the main street of Port Fairy, the group rearranged themselves. Our inspiration Ian 'Harro' Harrison at the front, followed by the rest of the hand cyclists, with all the conventional bikes bringing up the rear. The street was lined with people cheering and waving and as we drew to a stop amidst all the other teams under the finishing banner, there was the greatest sense of satisfaction and delight for every single one of us.



The whole lead up to Team Handcycle's participation in the Murray to Moyne was demanding and enormously time consuming! Working out the pure logistics of moving

so many people with such specific needs and equipment alone, caused many sleepless nights. But the event itself was extraordinary and I feel utterly privileged that I was part of the emotion, the recognition of identity, the bonding of peers and the physical challenge that was felt by every single one of us, hand cyclist, conventional cyclist and support person alike.

The team was actually able to raise \$25,000 for Royal Talbot. The money paid for a brand new hand cycle (which has already been christened by several current inpatients.) We were also able to hire a film crew to make a documentary, establish a website www.teamhandcycle.org and cover all the weekend costs. Special thanks to our major sponsors and supporters, Athletique Health Club (Preston), TAC, Wheelchair Sports Victoria, Lecky's Electrical, Dynamic Wheelchair Solutions and The Jenman Group for helping to make the seemingly impossible happen.

Written by Gill Hilton


Community Integration and Leisure Specialist
Royal Talbot Rehabilitation Centre

Email: Gillean.Hilton@austin.org.au


Dynamic Wheelchairs

Address:
Unit 17, 14-26 Audsley Street
Clayton Victoria 3168

Postal address:
PO Box 4081
Mulgrave Victoria 3170



Suspension Chair



Folding Chair

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

Seating products

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

For further information contact:

Mike De Santo
Tel: (03) 9548 8400
Fax: (03) 9548 8411
Email: dynamicw@hotmail.com



A Perfect Day For A BBQ

On Sunday April 18, AQA along with the Kangaroo Flat Lions Club and Lyndal Falkenberg (local O.T.) presented version 2 of 'Barbecue by the Lake'. This time the elements were a lot more considerate and we enjoyed a wonderful day by the waters of Bendigo's Lake Weroona, being superbly fed once again by the Kangaroo Flat Lions.



All present made use of the opportunity to catch up with each other and get to know the crew from AQA a lot better. It certainly helps calling for advice or assistance when you have spoken face to face with someone.

John Simpson spoke to us on what Sailability has to offer and certainly took some of the apprehension out of that activity, in fact, if there had been vessels out on the lake most of us would have had a go.



Naz Erdem then told us a bit about wheelchair rugby and what it has to offer. He had also brought along his rugby chair which was certainly a piece of specialised machinery, although I think most of us would have been more likely to get in a yacht than a rugby chair.

We all came away with the idea that the day gave us a lot and we look forward to the next one. Speaking to people at the Shepparton clinic shortly after has encouraged us to try the same exercise there in the spring.

On the way home from the Bendigo 'Barbecue by the Lake' we seized the opportunity to call into Elmore and attend an art exhibition by long time AQA member, Kate Frawley. This was certainly a well patronized and top-shelf affair which everyone enjoyed. The work on display was excellent and keenly sought after, which is always a relief for an artist.



Kate is also a member of the Mouth and Foot Painters Association and indeed the exhibition was opened by Bill Mooney, another respected artist who is President of the Australian branch of that organisation. Part of being a member involves the commitment to

ongoing study which Kate undertakes at Bendigo. Some of Kate's works have been accepted by MFPA for possible inclusion amongst the cards and other works with which money is raised for that group. The bottom line of this work is that it must be able to stand beside any other paintings on its own merits and this was certainly evident at this exhibition.

Congratulations Kate!



Written by Kevin Bailey

Spinal Cord Research

Currently there is a lot of research going on around the world to discover a cure for chronic spinal cord injury. It is an exciting time and although scientists can't predict exactly when a cure might be, there is a common belief that it may come sooner rather than later. I am often asked what is happening as far as research goes and I am often sent many different snippets of information. So I thought I would pass on a few of the more interesting items for you to check out.

Scientists in the Northwestern University of Chicago are working on a gel like substance to repair spinal cord damage. For more information, go to <http://www.nature.com/nsu/040119/040119-13.html>

At the University of California Los Angeles, David Geffen School of Medicine, scientists are working on locomotor training, which is working with patients on treadmills, and finding it a viable therapy for helping those who have suffered a spinal cord injury learn to walk again. Further evidence suggests that adding weight to the limbs during therapy can provide an important sensory cue to help regain walking. For more information, go to www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2004/01/040127084528.htm

Scientists at Columbia University, New York, are working on a type of "by-pass" of the injured site. The information is fairly technical and can be seen at www.jneurosci.org/cgi/content/abstract/24/9/2090

Another good source of information is the Christopher Reeve Paralysis Foundation site at www.christopherreeve.org/

The first International workshop on clinical trials for spinal cord injuries was held recently in Vancouver Canada (February 20 – 21). The meeting was sponsored by the International Campaign for Cures for spinal cord injury paralysis (ICCP) including member groups ASRT (now Spinal Cure Australia) and the Spinal Research Fund, as well as others such as the Christopher Reeve Paralysis Foundation and the International Spinal Research Trust (ISRT) (now Spinal Research). Approximately 100 of the world's leading spinal cord injury researchers were invited because they were actively involved in pre clinical or clinical trials and they came together to focus on "translational" issues: how to

bring exciting animal based discoveries into clinical practice.

David Prast (ASRT) did a wonderful job talking about the need for therapies, the urgency of getting the therapies into clinical trials, and the feelings of the spinal cord injury community. He had a poster with all the stories that people posted on this site, as well as handouts on all the tables. The pictures and the stories were a constant reminder to people concerning the urgency of the situation.

The meeting ended with an enthusiastic acknowledgment that there would be many more clinical trials to report over the next 2 to 3 years. There was discussion among the organisers about a follow up meeting, possibly in Sydney in 18 months time. From <http://www.sciwire.com> Feb 2004.

There is so much information on spinal cord research going around, all you have to do is type "spinal cord research" into a search engine and a myriad of information will be at your fingertips.

One of the main factors hindering research is the lack of adequate funding. At Spinal Cure Australia we are endeavouring to raise maximum funds to go directly to research. Currently we are approaching the State Government and have a meeting arranged in the next couple of weeks. Wish us luck!

Gary Allsop

(Honorary Director Spinal Cure Australia)

Help... we need an article

The **2004 Solutions Expo** was held at the Caulfield Racecourse in Melbourne on the 20th and 21st of May 2004. Unfortunately none of us here at AQA was able to attend either day. We are appealing to any member out there that would like to write an article about their experience and if they felt it was beneficial. The article will be published in the August issue of News Link. Please contact Naz on (03) 9489 0777, FreeCall 1800 999 128 (country Victoria and Tasmania), email info@aqavic.org.au.

The Dingo

An Australian goes on a safari in Africa, taking his pet dingo along for company.

One day, the dingo starts chasing butterflies and before long discovers that he is lost. Wandering about, he notices a leopard heading rapidly in his direction with the obvious intention of having lunch. The dingo thinks, "Geez, I'm in deep trouble now!"

Then he noticed some bones on the ground close by, and immediately settles down to chew on the bones with his back to the approaching cat. Just as the leopard is about to leap, the dingo exclaims loudly, "Bugger me dead, that was one delicious leopard. I wonder if there are any more around here?"

Hearing this, the leopard halts his attack in mid stride, as a look of terror comes over him, and slinks away into the trees. "Whew," says the leopard. "That was close. That dingo nearly had me."

Meanwhile, a monkey had been watching the whole scene from a nearby tree. He figures he can put this knowledge to good use and trade it for protection from the leopard. So, off he goes. But the dingo sees him heading after the leopard with great speed, and figures that something must be up. The monkey soon catches up with the leopard, spills the beans and strikes a deal for himself with the leopard.

The leopard is furious at being made a fool of and says, "Here monkey, hop on my back and see what's going to happen to that conniving Aussie dingo."

The dingo sees the leopard coming with the monkey on his back, and thinks, "Struth, what am I going to do now?" But instead of running, the dingo sits down with his back to his attackers, pretending he hasn't seen them yet.

Just when they get close enough to hear, the dingo says, "Where the bloody hell is that monkey? I sent him off half an hour ago to bring me another leopard."



If you have heard any good jokes lately, why don't you send them in and share them with others

The new CEO

A company, feeling it was time for a shakeup, hires a new CEO. This new boss is determined to rid the company of all slackers.

On a tour of the facilities, the CEO notices a guy leaning on a wall. The room is full of workers and he wants to let them know he means business!

The CEO walks up to the guy and asks, "And how much money do you make a week?" Undaunted, the young fellow looks at him and replies, "I make \$300.00 a week. Why?"

The CEO then hands the guy \$300 in cash and screams, "Here's week's pay, now GET OUT and don't come back!"

Feeling pretty good about his first firing, the CEO looks around the room and asks "Does anyone want to tell me what that goof-off did here?"

With a sheepish grin, one of the other workers mutters, "Pizza delivery guy from Domino's."

The Inexperienced Pirate

A pirate walked into a bar, and the bartender said, "Hey, I haven't seen you in a while. What happened? You look terrible!"

"What do you mean?" said the pirate. "I feel fine."

"What about the wooden leg? You didn't have that before."

"Well, we were in a battle, and I got hit with a cannon ball, but I'm fine, now."

"Well, ok, but what about that hook? What happened to your hand?"

"We were in another battle. I boarded a ship and got into a sword fight. My hand was cut off. I got fitted with a hook. I'm fine, really."

"What about that eye patch?"

"Oh, one day, we were at sea, and a flock of birds flew over. I looked up, and one of them pooped in my eye."

"You're kidding," said the bartender, "you couldn't lose an eye just from some bird poop."

"It was my first day with the hook."

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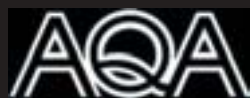
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Tilt 'N' Space wheelchair

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Mobile: 0412 476 388 Tony Palmieri

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4 wheeled Scooter, Pride - Zoom 4, red and grey, new - used for only 500 metres, very light 13 kg, 12 months guarantee, cost \$3,000 new

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