

Access News

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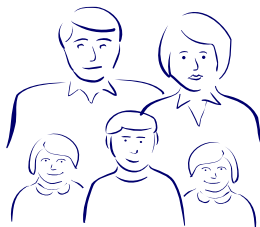


Access Audits Australia

disability access advice training

Living A Life.....Training

Working in staff training and being a parent have many similarities. My career as a presenter and staff trainer started twenty three years ago, as an excuse to miss an accounting class. A teacher at my high school asked me to talk to the Year Seven students as part of their studies during the International Year Of Disabled People in 1981. My life as a parent started much later than that, but I have found that both roles have many similarities.



Here are a couple of golden rules to good presentation that I use when training and I hope as a parent as well:

Be yourself

I always let a group/my kids know a little about me, even the faults like being a Saints supporter. It helps break the ice and lets them realise there is more to you than your work.

be yourself
expect the
.....unexpected
be flexible
be realistic
have fun

Expect the unexpected

The power goes out, the presentation equipment doesn't work and the session is on the third floor and the lift is out of action and you are in your wheelchair on the ground floor andthat's on a good day.

As a parent the only guideline seems to be - never expect your children to be predictable.

Be flexible

Every training session or presentation should be and is different. The reason is the audience. Although the information presented maybe the same - the feel, interest level and questions from the group will be different. One of the challenges for a trainer is to make the training interesting and relevant to most, if not all the participants.

Be realistic

As a trainer or parent one of the first lessons you learn is that you can give information and/or advice but there are no guarantees it will be taken - you can only hope, and if it's not - it is not your fault.

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Access Audits Australia

provides the following range of services to support improved access to the built environment and to the provision of goods and services:

- ◆ Disability access training
- ◆ Community consultation
- ◆ Access presentations, publications and inspirations
- ◆ Development and Review of Disability Action Plans, Development Access Plans, policies and procedures
- ◆ Access Audits, Evaluations and Design Advice

Access Audits Australia is pleased to advise or assist you with any access issue.

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Year of the Built Environment 2004



The built environment contributes to many aspects of our lifestyle. It also contributes various access barriers that some people experience on a regular basis.

2004 has been proclaimed the Year of the Built Environment across Australia. It is intended that the year will be a collaborative celebration by government, industry, environmental and community groups to raise awareness in the Australian community about the built environment. The built environment is the buildings, places and structures in which we live, work and play. It is all around us and is where we spend a great deal of our lives.

The year is designed to promote community debate, educate, demonstrate best practice, and provide the tools and encouragement to develop vibrant, healthy built environments.

One of the key themes of the Year of the Built Environment is "Design for All", which directly connects with the philosophy and practice of "Access for All" when considering access requirements for every person. This theme and its sub-themes (architecture for all, engineering for all, landscapes for all etc) examines the relationship between affordability and design and what are the possibilities and avenues for making good design more widely available.

It is hoped that all decision makers will stop and think about how the built environment affects everyone's quality of life and how designs for new buildings, works and planned modifications can maximise access responsive outcomes.

For more information as to what is happening around Australia during the Year of the Built Environment go to the YBE website at <http://www.builtenvironment2004.org.au/ybe>

Taxi !

A new SMS service has been established in Melbourne to assist people wanting to call a taxi, but who are Deaf or have a hearing or speech impairment.

Silver Top Taxi, Message4U and VCOD (Victorian Council of Deaf People) have combined to establish this service which means that an SMS message can be sent and the sender will receive a response. The sender will even be advised if the calling location is not within the service area. More information and initial registration can be obtained from the web site at www.m4u.com.au/silvertoptaxi

Jeff Heath

Many people involved with disability and access issues in Australia would have worked with, communicated, benefited from or known Jeff Heath by reputation. Sadly, Jeff passed away recently and his loss will be felt by many people.

His enthusiasm, ongoing activism combined with his positive contributions towards raising awareness of the rights and needs of people with disabilities was known throughout and beyond Australia. Jeff lived in South Australia where he was a journalist and the energetic editor of the well-known Link magazine, which he established to promote and inform people about activities and issues in the disability sector.

Access Audits Australia recognises the significant contributions that Jeff has made throughout his life. He will be sadly missed, by many people.

One Person's View

Kathryn Pryor has worked for 2 years as the RuralAccess Project Officer for the Shires of Bass Coast and South Gippsland, in the south east of Victoria.

Both Shires comprise rural farmland and coastal areas as well as a number of large and small townships with significant industry and tourism.

As part of the implementation of RuralAccess, Kathryn spoke about the impact that AAA Access Awareness Training has had on the staff of both Councils. Awareness Training is a compulsory component of training for all staff.

A range of new initiatives have been developed due to increased staff understanding and awareness of access issues, including:

- Further training in relation to the use of TTYs (telephone typewriters) to better support customers with hearing impairment.

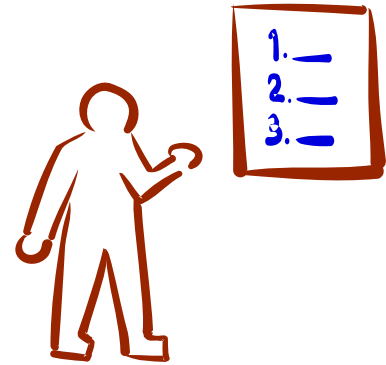
- Enlarging of print sizes on rates notices and other publications distributed by Council, to better meet the needs of residents, particularly for older persons with vision impairment.

- Redesign of customer service counters to provide better access for people using wheelchairs.

- Upgrading of local parks, particularly play areas, pathways and seating to ensure better access for children and adults of all abilities.

- Implementation of changes to Council web sites to ensure compliance with accessible web design (W3C) guidelines, as well as the development of information for staff on how to improve access for all, included in Communication Charters.

- Provision of information in alternative formats, with Council newsletters now available on audiotape for people with vision impairment.



- Removal and regular maintenance of vegetation covering handrails and trees/shrubs covering signage, to improve access.

Both organisations have readily and enthusiastically embraced a culture of access for all.

Staff generally now have an improved understanding of their responsibilities in promoting and providing access for all and are excited about the new developments.

Staff who attended the sessions were very motivated by the AAA trainers who each have personal experience of disability.

Further training is to be provided for staff at both Councils in regard to access issues specific to particular work areas.

Living A Life.....*Training*

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Have fun

Working in the access and disability fields may not sound like fun, but it is because I make sure it is not only fun for me but hopefully for the people I work and live with as well.

Throughout my career, which I believe has been successful, I have tried to implement these rules in every presentation or training session. As a parent I try to use the same principles. How successful am I ? The jury is still out - ask my children in about 15 years time !

Meanwhile..... I will continue *Living A Life*.

Did you know ?

- That a pilot in Britain ordered 11 Deaf people off a plane because he thought they would not understand emergency instructions. Legal action because of this discrimination is being pursued and the airline has admitted it made a mistake.
- That with obesity rates on the rise in Australia it has been predicted that taxation levels will need to increase to cover the cost of treating such diseases and conditions.
- That poor nutrition and physical inactivity are considered to be two factors contributing to significant increases in the incidence of Type-2 diabetes in overweight adolescents. Long term health concerns associated with Type-2 diabetes include heart disease, stroke and kidney problems.
- That three retirees, each with hearing loss, were playing golf one fine March day. One remarked to the other, "Windy, isn't it?" "No," the second man replied, "it's Thursday." And the third man chimed in, "So am I. Let's go have a beer."
- That British TV programs for the Deaf have stopped using some traditional sign language gestures as it was thought these may offend people who are gay or belong to religious and ethnic minority groups.

Training Benefits All



We all experience various types of training throughout our lives. Most likely we don't remember our earliest training due to our young age, but we no doubt would remember our last.

One of the benefits of people experiencing training in the areas of disability awareness is that they often realise what they didn't know and in doing so gain a new perspective on a range of their day to day activities.

This type of response particularly applies to customer service, front of house staff or those regularly involved with members of the public. Traders and business operators often recognise the commercial benefits of responding to the needs of all of their potential market, as well as reducing the risk of a claim of discrimination in the provision of their services.

It is also observed that such training assists technical, design and maintenance staff to often become aware that there are many opportunities to incorporate low cost or no cost initiatives into their procedures to achieve more access responsive outcomes.

Training and Publications booklet

AAA has produced a 2004 Training and Publications booklet outlining the wide range of training sessions available to community, government and commercial organisations. Also included are details about our Access Awareness Handbooks designed to assist specific business, corporate and government operations. This booklet can be obtained from www.accessauditsaustralia.com.au or by contacting the AAA Office on 03 9431 3472.

AAA Web site

Details about services provided by Access Audits Australia can be found on our web site at www.accessauditsaustralia.com.au

Our site is designed to be accessible for all users. It has AAA W3C level compliance and is AAA Bobby approved. Earlier Access News editions can be downloaded and there are also links to other relevant access related web sites.

Information contained in **Access News** is intended to highlight the importance of improving access for every person

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