

Access News

AAA

Access Audits Australia

disability access  advice  training

IATA

Institute of Access Training Australia

professional  development  training



Access Awareness August: IATA and MAV Partnership

IATA and the Municipal Association of Victoria (MAV) have teamed up to present '**Access Awareness August**'. This joint initiative provides an opportunity for Council staff and Councillors, as well as interested professionals in other organisations, to participate in a variety of disability access related training programs and seminars to support improvements to access for all. The MAV is committed to supporting Councils in understanding their obligations and responsibilities, particularly as they relate to the Disability Discrimination Act and similar legislation. With the impending introduction of the *Disability (Access to Premises - Buildings) Standards*, it is also imperative that Councils are aware of and understand their new responsibilities in relation to access to premises and how the new Standards will be applied.

Access Awareness August will incorporate the following:

Monday 17 th and Tues 18 th	Wed 19 th	Wed 19 th	Thursday 20 th
Certificate in Access Appraisal - Buildings 2 days	Draft Access to Premises Standards Seminar	'Joining the Dots' Understanding Tactile Ground Surface Indicators (TGSIs)	Understanding Access and Human Rights
8.45 a.m. - 4 p.m.	10 a.m. - 12.00 p.m.	2 p.m. - 4 p.m.	10 a.m. - 1.00 p.m.

Registration forms are available on the IATA website at www.accessinstituteaustralia.com.au or email accessinstitute@bigpond.com or phone 03 9431 3472 for a form to be sent to you. **Book now as places are limited!**

Certificate in Access Appraisal Buildings 2 day course plus assignment Dates for 2009

17th and 18th August, Melbourne
12th and 13th September, AIBS, Melbourne
17th and 18th September, Gold Coast
7th and 8th October, ANU, Canberra
19th and 20th October, Adelaide

Book now places limited

IATA Training Information is available on our website

Access News Volume 3 2009

Access Audits Australia & IATA

We provide a wide range of services including training, access projects, access audits and appraisals, community consultations, evaluations and advice in relation to access for all.

Royal Pines is Calling

Come to the Gold Coast
2 day - Certificate in Access Appraisal Buildings Course
and attend the ABCB Annual Conference.

17th & 18th September, 2009

Contact IATA to book

Don't forget your free golf game or massage voucher

Access News

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Gerrard and Jessica

Vision Australia's Gerrard Gosen's performance on Dancing With The Stars not only earned a great audience reaction, it impressed the judges, who advanced him through the competition.

Gerrard, a Special Projects Manager with Vision Australia, is blind. His dancing, with partner Jessica Raffa, is but one of his many achievements. He has competed in numerous marathons and has run the 2,000 kilometres from Cairns to Brisbane five times to raise money for charity. He has also run at the Paralympics, climbed to Camp 3 at Mount Everest (7300 metres above sea level), been an Australia Day Ambassador and a Beijing Olympic Torch bearer.

Gerrard's message and that of Vision Australia is that being blind or having low vision, should not stop anyone from living the life they choose.



IATA and Australian Institute of Building Surveyors (AIBS) Training

IATA is again partnering with the Australian Institute of Building Surveyors (AIBS) to present another 2 day **Certificate in Access Appraisal - Buildings** course on Saturday 12th and Sunday 13th of September 2009 at Darebin Arts and Entertainment Centre in Preston. Testimonials from previous course participants are available on our website and are full of praise from Building Surveyors who attended.

With the impending introduction of the **Access to Premises Standards** it is crucial that all Building Surveyors are able to identify access issues and understand the key elements that must be considered when reviewing sites and plans for appropriate access. Course bookings can be made directly with AIBS at vic.admin@aibs.com.au or phone 9415 7600.

Paying The Price

The importance of assistance dogs to people with a disability has been emphasised by new regulations in Queensland.

Fines have increased from \$500 to \$50,000 to any business that refuses access to guide dogs, hearing dogs or other assistance dogs. The new laws came into effect on July 1, 2009, and penalties can be imposed from September.

"The Bligh Government is committed to improving the lives of people with a disability and increasing their participation in all aspects of community life" said Disability Services Minister Annastacia Palaszczuk. All dogs certified under the laws will have to wear an identifying badge, coat or harness.

Individuals in control of a public place or public transport vehicle can be fined up to \$10,000, whilst privately owned businesses such as restaurants, taxis and sports facilities can be fined up to \$50,000 if they do not comply.



Autism Assistance Animals Update

The work of assistance animals was again recognised on a recent "60 Minutes" segment featuring the training of dogs to work with children with autism. The Righteous Pups organisation in Bendigo was shown training the dogs to respond to some of the behaviours exhibited by children with autism (see *Access News Volume 1, 2008*). The dogs have a remarkable effect assisting children to calm and communicate.

It's not just dogs that work wonders. Horses and dolphins were also highlighted for having the same positive effects. Whilst nothing has been scientifically proven on the reasons why such remarkable behavioural changes occur, the segment clearly showed that we have much to learn regarding the relationships between animals and humans.

Disability and the Media

A cynic might explain much of the media interest in human rights and disability to the saying *"If it bleeds, it leads"*. Whether it be unrest in a far off province in China, or one person's push to overcome adversity, we'll hear about it.

Much is undoubtedly old fashioned human interest, such as the coverage of Kurt Fearnley's plans, minus the use of his legs, to complete the 96 kilometres of the Kokoda Track (*The Age, July 11*); or Gerrard Gosens efforts on Dancing With The Stars and elsewhere (*see this Newsletter*).

The reason why we're interested is because such stories put our lives in perspective.

Motivated as he is (he's completed 32 marathons), Kurt himself needs to reach out and explains his own motivation deriving in large part from knowledge of Australian soldiers in World War 2 combating missing limbs, mud, bullets and illness for their country and their mates. He also wants to spread awareness of men's health issues, particularly depression.

Through Vision Australia's website, Gerrard explains his own desire to spread the message that *"everyone can make a worthwhile contribution"*. Like Kurt, Gerrard is proud of his many achievements and very much aware he is a role model.



And why is this important? Because we need role models to get us off our backsides. Who could forget Colonel Potter in MASH insisting that the latrines be built side by side *"so that the men can encourage one another."* Obviously the nurses were self motivated.

Bogged down by our own petty problems we look to the lives of others for inspiration. Earthquakes, tsunamis, bushfires; personal loss and tragedy, even the problems accompanying success and beauty (what else explains our fascination with *The Bold and the Beautiful*)? All are spreading the Barack message of *"Yes we can."*

Hence, stories of Kurt, Gerrard, autism and assistance animals (*see this Newsletter*).

They have one thing in common: our need to know and share. And whilst it's the sharing that gets us off the couch, what is interesting is it wasn't always like this. Once, people got on the Blue Bus that took them to a Centre where they were neither seen nor heard. People weren't interested.

That is what has changed.

JobAccess Employment Assistance

Negative attitudes to people with a disability play a large part in Australia's disproportionately high rate of unemployment for disabled job-seekers, says Nicola Tuckwell, manager of JobAccess, an organisation dedicated to providing employment assistance.

Employment for people with a disability is near 50%, while for those who are without a disability, there is a labour participation rate of 81%, she says.



Fear and ignorance are often responsible, she believes. *"Some employers (believe) that people with a disability can't do particular types of work"* she says. Others *"are afraid they will be inappropriate in dealing with someone with a disability instead of remembering we are all human beings and respond to open and clear communication."*

Employers are also often unaware of the government help available in ensuring that physical barriers in workplaces can be overcome by modifications. JobAccess provides help to employers via the Workplace Modifications Scheme, which provides assistance with such things as relocating toilets, supplying software, removing barriers, providing training, or even Auslan interpreters. Over 3000 people have been assisted with workplace modifications, by JobAccess. *"Disability doesn't stop us from having the skills and drive to do just about anything"* says Nicola.

Did You Know?

- A Brumby Government scheme will offset the cost of specialist smoke alarms for up to 520 Victorians who are profoundly deaf. The specialist smoke alarms consist of three components including: a smoke alarm fitted to the ceiling; a strobe light which sits in the eyesight of the house occupant; and a vibrating alarm which rests under the occupant's pillow or bedding.
- A racehorse named "Autism Awareness" will compete in the \$700,000 Hollywood Gold Cup Grade 1 racing event. The horse has won 4 of 22 starts, for a total of US\$228,745.
- Camden Creative Studios, which received a NSW award offered to "a group which demonstrates sophisticated and effective access at all levels" of an arts project, will premiere their horror film, *James Jones and the Living Dead*, this year. The film was written and shot entirely by people with a disability.
- The second world games for people with an intellectual disability have just ended. At the Global Games in Prague, swimming was our most successful team, winning more than twenty medals, twice that of second place getter, South Korea. The Games included 1350 competitors from 34 countries.

Draft Access to Premises Standards - Access (not) All Areas

On Monday, 15th June 2009, the Australian House of Representatives Standing Committee on Legal and Constitutional Affairs, tabled its report on the inquiry into the draft Disability (Access to Premises - Buildings) Standards entitled **Access All Areas**. The report can be downloaded from:

www.aph.gov.au/house/committee/laca/disabilitystandards/index.htm

There are 19 Recommendations included in this report with the first and key recommendation that "*the Premises Standards be introduced without delay. Any issue that cannot be finalised without causing delay should be considered at a later date*".

Whilst AAA and IATA agrees with the concept of 'Premises Standards' and believe they should be introduced, we have some concerns. IATA Director Joe Manton, through her role as Convenor of the Victorian Access Consultants Network (VACN), presented as a Witness during the hearings on the draft Access to Premises Standards. One of the key concerns is how professionals working in the built environment will interpret the scope of the Standards.

The draft Premises Standards in fact do not cover 'premises' as defined under the DDA. They only incorporate some elements of some new and upgraded buildings. They do not include some areas of some buildings and they do not include a wide range of fixtures and fittings. e.g. customer service counter heights and clearances, kitchen installations, general purpose outlets amongst others. Other areas they do not address include general signage, emergency egress and dignified access to some swimming pools. **Compliance with the draft Access to Premises Standards does not constitute compliance with all of the access requirements of the DDA.** IATA draft Access to Premises Standards Seminars will assist you to understand these anomalies. **Register to attend now!**

Contributions

Contributions to Access News are welcome and can be emailed to us at any time. AAAaxs@bigpond.net.au

Web site

Details of services provided by AAA and IATA can be found on our website 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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