

Spire is a service division of AQA Victoria



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Spire NewsLink is the official newsletter of AQA Victoria Limited, and is published bimonthly.

NewsLink 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.

Spire always welcomes articles for Spire NewsLink. 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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FROM THE CEO

Welcome to the New Year.

Last year saw the launch of Spire – our fresh approach to peer facilitated supports and the SCI community. Spire is about Life with SCI, and not SCI as if SCI was all there was to life. As such we are interested in important areas of life that challenge and test us, bring us enjoyment and can be improved with a collective response.

Achieving employment and other meaningful activity after SCI is known to be a key factor in a person's enjoyment of life; however people have a 50% chance of not working post injury. Given the highest proportion of traumatic SCI are sustained by young people, and specifically young men, this can result in 30 – 40 years of lost opportunity, productivity and participation. We also know that as a part of life, employment is more than getting a job – it's about education / training, career development and change, retirement and is underpinned by all sorts of financial, health, practical and family considerations. It's not one size fits all, it's more like a personal pathway. If we think about employment as a part of life, and not a part of SCI, then we start to see resources that are outside SCI Health and specific Disability Employment

Services; the services and individuals that people have found useful along their pathway. We start to engage the experience of people with SCI who don't see their work life as an SCI thing but as a part of their wider life.

You'll see in this issue we've launched a project called Pathways to Employment where we are seeking to develop peer facilitated supports and services that will add value to existing components of the service system. We are engaging people with SCI lived experience and their employers, we are developing the skills and capabilities of our staff and volunteers to support people and enhance the functioning of existing services, we are advancing a community development model that builds bridges, makes connections, assists people navigate and maintain motivation along their pathway.

The project outcomes we're looking for include:

- Consultation and Liaison – engage people with SCI currently in employment / education and their employers, and the researchers, practitioners, and Employment Services they have found useful along the way;
- Outputs – produce resources, tools,



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materials, service offerings and supports, create new connections;

- Outcomes for SCI community – Participation and take up of service offerings, build capacity to navigate their pathways to employment / education and meaningful activity. Take advantage of new connections.

Please have a look at the articles in this issue and get involved in the Pathways to Employment project. We look forward to providing updates along the way.

HIGHLIGHTS

Welcome to the first issue of NewsLink for 2016. We hope that you had a great festive season and made the most of your time off to get away and catch up with family and friends.

On pages 8-9 in **Healthy shoulders for wheelchair users**, the physiotherapy team at the Victorian Spinal Cord Service (VSCS) has put together information on how to best protect your shoulders and decrease the risk of injury.

Please turn to page 7 to read about the **Salisbury Auto Lift** - a portable electric mounted hoist enabling the user to mount or dismount into any car or van.

One of our latest projects, **Pathways to Employment**, sees us aiming to setup a 'Professionals with SCI network' group to assist people with employment and further education. Please turn to pages 10-11 to read Sharyn's journey into gainful employment.

On page 12, Graeme Innes provides **10 top tips for getting a job** for people with disabilities.

Finally, below are this year's contribution deadlines for the upcoming editions of NewsLink:

| | |
|----------|-------------------------------|
| April | 1 st April 2015 |
| June | 1 st June 2015 |
| August | 1 st August 2015 |
| October | 1 st October 2015 |
| December | 1 st December 2015 |

Spire

With the launch of Spire as the new service brand of the Information and Peer Support Dept. at AQA, we've decided that our bi-monthly publication "NewsLink" has so many resources and varied topics of interest to our community, that we should be offering it free to everyone living with Spinal cord Injury (SCI).

Consequently, from now on we will no longer be charging the \$15 subscription for NewsLink. The actual cost to us to produce NewsLink is \$5.10 per print copy and \$3.75 per electronic copy (\$2,500 per issue or \$15,000 per year in total) and we'll be looking for other ways of funding this cost.

If you, or anyone you know, would like to support this cost in anyway, you may make a tax deductible donation on our new website at www.spire.org.au/donations.

We would also invite you to consider becoming a member of AQA Victoria and help shape the growth of the organisation and its mission to support people living with Spinal Cord Injury and those who support them.

Members play an important part in the success of AQA

As a member of AQA Victoria Ltd (AQA) (www.aqavic.org.au) you will have a say in the direction of the organisation by voting at general elections, electing directors and participating in board committees. Further information can be found on the website www.spire.org.au/membership.

Melbourne Zoo

Melbourne Zoo is constantly changing, with new and upgraded surroundings for both the wildlife and Zoo visitors. A special new facility opened recently that will ensure that the Zoo is more accessible and convenient than ever for all Victorians and visitors to the State.

A new and accessible deck has been built with a treetops view of the giraffe exhibit, with convenient ramps providing a chance to see these amazing animals from a different perspective.



Zoo Director Kevin Tanner notes that all new Zoo developments are designed with access as a priority: "Whether it is pushers or wheelchairs or people who have difficulty with steps, we are keen to make sure that all our visitors have a great Zoo experience!"

"Good viewing leads to an increased feeling of connection with this magnificent wildlife, and we hope that our visitors will make powerful connections that will inspire them to join us as conservation advocates!"

Do you use a mobility aid and use public transport?

Professors Carolyn Unsworth, Richard Tay and a team of researchers at CQUniversity are searching for participants to be involved in a phone survey. To be involved in the survey the participants need to be 18 years of age or over to participate, use a wheeled mobility aid (such as a scooter or wheelchair) and access public transport. The research is about having a better understanding of how people choose and use mobility aids, especially in relation to public transport.

All participants will be sent a \$30 Coles Myer Gift Card for their effort.

Please call Antonia Field on 03 9616-0585 to book an interview time.

Did you know - Free postage stamps

It's a well-kept secret, but Australia Post offers five free postage stamps each year to pensioners, health care card holders, seniors and veterans. The same people are eligible to buy up to 50 stamps each year at 60 cents per stamp (reduced from \$1).

To apply for the freebies and discounts, fill out a MyPost Concession form at any post office or online www.auspost.com.au/parcels-mail/concession-stamps.html.



AQA Spinal Injury Info & Support

For news, information, photos and more...



Join us on
facebook

www.facebook.com/AQASpinalSupport



SpinalHub is a community website for people with spinal cord injury in Victoria and throughout Australia.

SpinalHub covers a wide range of subjects related to spinal cord injury including:

- What is a Spinal Cord Injury?;
- How to Keep Healthy;
- Support, Equipment & Funding;
- Work & Leisure;
- Transport & Travel;
- plus much more.

The SpinalHub website can be found online at www.spinalhub.com.au and by registering free members can comment on articles, upload images and receive access to the forum.

SpinalHub TV is a collection of 'how to' online videos that feature people from the spinal cord injury community in Victoria. The short 2-3 minute videos provide practical and safe advice with the aim to help people get back into life after a spinal cord injury. Go to www.youtube.com/spinalhub to view the full list of online videos.

SUPPORTING SERVICES TO PEOPLE WITH A SPINAL CORD INJURY

Making a bequest...

Bequests provide a legacy to an organisation you already support or want to support in the future. Making a bequest to AQA in your will is a meaningful way of supporting people with spinal cord injury. All bequests help strengthen the services provided by AQA that promote independence, quality of life and inclusion of people with disabilities in the community.

If you have included AQA in your will, or you are considering making a bequest to AQA we would love to hear from you so that we can acknowledge your support.

We would also like to include you on our list of supporters who receive our bi-annual supporters newsletter that provides an update of our services, the year's events and other activities that AQA is involved in that support people with spinal cord injury.

If you would like more information about making a bequest to AQA please contact Peter Trethewey CEO or Robyn Canning Executive Assistant on 03 9489 0777.

Werribee Open Range Zoo Penguin Parade

Feel like an African safari experience without leaving Melbourne? Then head to Werribee Open Range Zoo where admission includes a 45 minute safari tour where you'll see grazing rhino, giraffe, antelope and zebra on savannah-like plains. Wheelchair users get the best views on the bus – you'll be sitting right at the front next to the driver.

Werribee Open Range Zoo also has an easy to follow pathway system, with easy access for people using wheelchairs.

With four wheelchair accessible Safari buses, accommodating two standard wheelchairs, or one electric wheelchair per vehicle, you'll feel like you're in Africa in no time!

Werribee Open Range Zoo's Off Road Safaris use a 12 seater vehicle that can accommodate a person in a wheelchair who can transfer across to a seat.



Prices

Adults: \$31.60.

Children (4-15 yrs): FREE on Sat, Sun, public/school holidays. \$15.80 (Mon - Fri outside holidays).

Adult Concession: \$24.20.

Senior Concession: \$28.40.

Child with a disability concession (Mon - Fri outside holidays): \$6.00.

Family: \$79.90 for 2 adults and 1-2 children.

Bookings are advisable and if you have a particular access requirement, or would like further information on accessibility at Werribee Open Range Zoo please contact them on:

T 03 9731 9600

E worzadmissions@zoo.org.au

Take advantage of a reserved area to watch the Penguin Parade on Phillip Island and take a waddle on the wild side.

The wheelchair viewing area gives an incredible view of the Penguin Parade. For those who have difficulty with temperature regulation can make a booking for the Skybox, an enclosed elevated viewing tower between the two stands of the Penguin Parade.

Penguin Parade disabled facilities

- Penguin Parade facilities provide an inclusive experience for people of all abilities.
- The front entrance has a ramp with handrails.
- Ramped access is available throughout the visitor centre.
- Interactive displays can be viewed from wheelchair height.
- Connecting boardwalks are wide, level and smooth. The slope to general viewing is 1 in 12.
- General viewing has a large area for wheelchairs at the top.
- The Penguins Plus area affords close penguin viewing and easy wheelchair access.
- Complimentary buggy if transport to beach required
- Disabled parking and disabled toilets in visitor centre.

Prices

Adults \$24.50 and Children \$12.25 (Companion Card accepted and Victorian Carers Card holders receive a 10% discount).

Penguin Parade address

1019 Ventnor Rd
Summerlands VICTORIA 3922

By car: Phillip Island is located 90 minutes drive from Melbourne. Allow a further 20 minutes from the bridge to get to the Penguin Parade. Free car parking on site.

T 03 5951 2800

E info@penguins.org.au

W www.penguins.org.au

The Access Unlimited Lift

Access Unlimited Lift Australia has designed a lightweight portable hoist to aid wheelchair users to safely transfer to and from a vehicle. The Salisbury Auto Lift can be customized fitted on all doors on every car and has a lifting capacity of 135 kg.

The Salisbury Auto Lift is a portable electric mounted hoist that is designed for personal use, enabling the user to mount or dismount into any car or van. It attaches to the vehicle lifting a person without putting strain on the carer or person being lifted, safely. Manufactured in lightweight aluminium, the body of the lift only weighs 10 kg, whilst retaining great strength. It comes with a sling that tucks behind your back and under your feet.

The lift is designed as a vehicle mounted hoist. A mounting bracket is attached to the door hinge area of a motor vehicle and the lifting boom is hooked onto the fixed pins. The boom and spreader bars allow for unlimited

rotation within the vehicle door opening. Standard patient lifter slings are attached to the yellow spreader bar allowing lifting between the vehicle seat and a wheelchair. The spreader bar accepts patient lifter slings with standard loop attachments.

The lifter can be operated by the user or attendant. A portable hand wand with clearly marked raise and lower buttons control the lift and lowering operations. Power to the electric actuator is from either a 240V mains connection or power from a vehicle accessory outlet.

It can also be used in Trucks, Tractors, Headers, Caravans, Motorhomes and Boats as well as be adapted to suit your bathroom or bedroom.

Key Features:

- Body weighs approximately 10 kg
- Lifts up to 155kg
- Can be customized to all doors on every vehicle
- Power is supplied by 12V battery of your car
- Lifter comes complete with sling, electrics, with full fitting and operating instructions
- Guaranteed for 12 months against faulty parts or workmanship



- The Access Unlimited Lift lifts a person up/down. Sideway movements into or out of the car are done manually, however they are very easy due to the substantial pivot points on the lifting arm and extra bearing.

To watch a demo of the Auto Lift in action please visit www.youtube.com/watch?v=FPWSYHOFmpg.

For further information please contact the Victorian Rep Mark Heverin:

M 0401 397 612

E butchheverin@gmail.com

W www.accessunlimitedliftaustralia.com.au



Healthy shoulders for wheelchair users

Shoulder pain is a common form of musculoskeletal pain following SCI and is often the result of increased physical demands. The physiotherapy team at the Victorian Spinal Cord Service (VSCS) has produced the below information for individuals with SCI on how to best protect their shoulders and decrease the risk of injury. In the next edition of NewsLink we will provide an exercise sheet which includes exercises that have proven to be the bare minimum to help either manage or prevent shoulder pain.

As a wheelchair user you rely on your arms a lot. Overuse and weightbearing on weak shoulders can lead to injury and pain which reduce your independence. Once you get in a cycle of pain and instability it can be hard to break. Talk to your healthcare

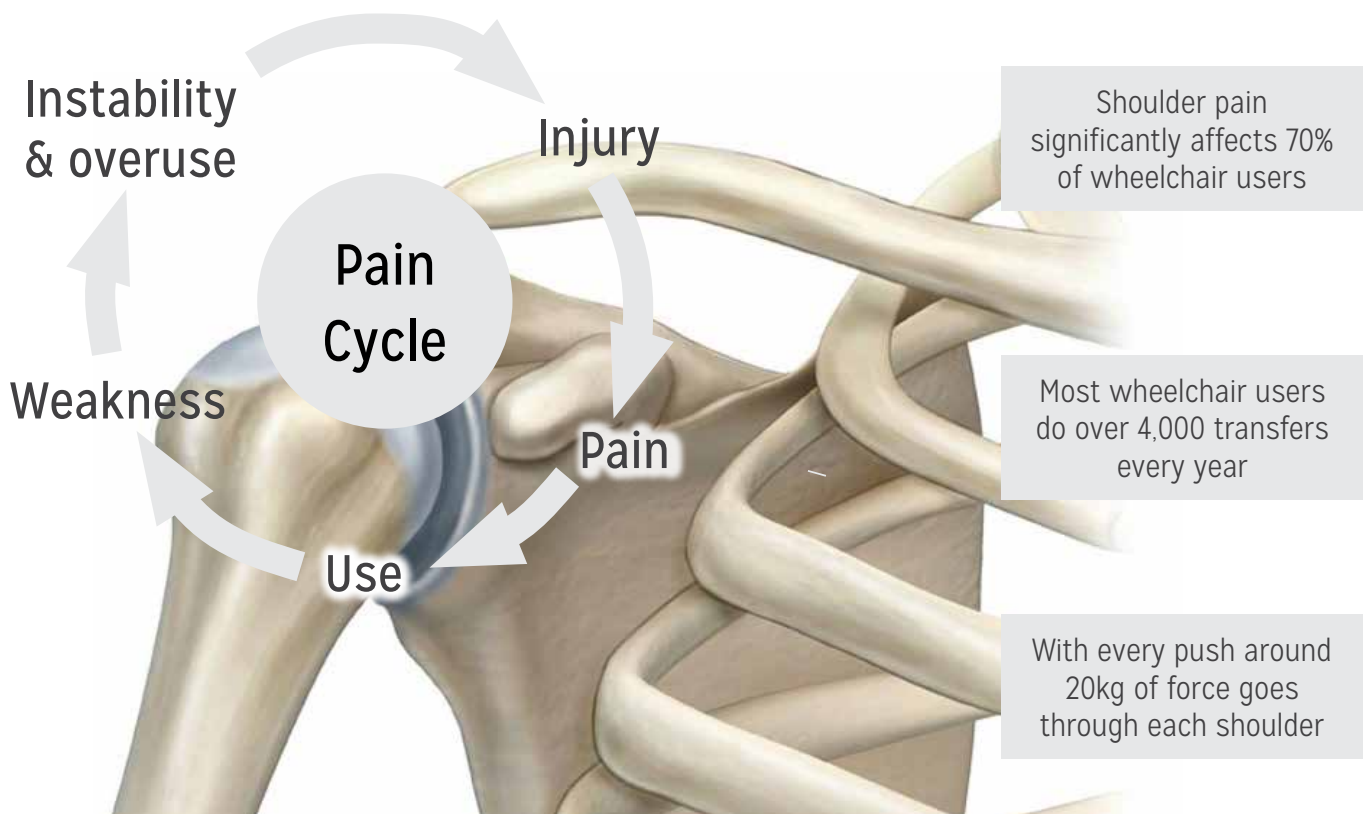
team about how you can make your shoulders the best they can be.

Top 5 tips

- Pace Yourself: Avoid unnecessary transfers and lifting, rest when you can, use

equipment to make life easier, ask for help when you need it.

- Wheelchair Setup: Have a chair that's light, supportive and set up to make the most of every push.
- Transfer Technique: Get your transfer technique as consistent and efficient as possible.
- Environment Setup: Make sure the places where you spend the most time are easy to use and set up with all the right equipment.
- Exercise: Keep your shoulders strong and flexible.



Research shows that wheelchair users who look after their shoulders with regular exercise reduced their shoulder pain by 40%

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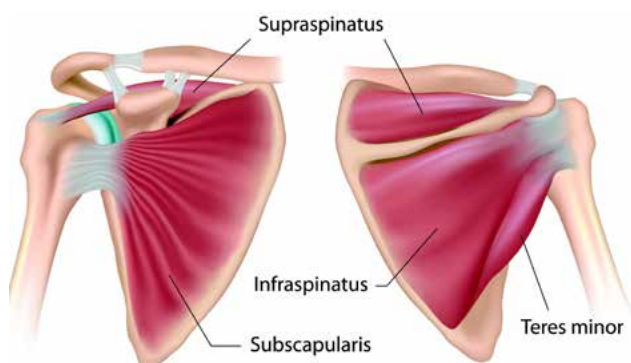
Common shoulder injuries explained

Rotator Cuff Tendinopathy

The rotator cuff is made up of four muscles which attach the shoulder blade (scapula) to the upper arm bone (humerus).

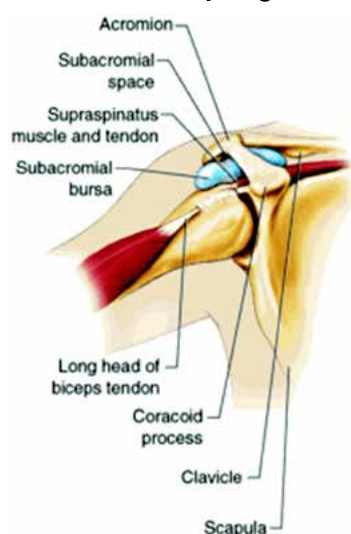
The shoulder relies on the rotator cuff to produce the subtle rolls and slides of the humerus to ensure smooth movement.

Overuse leads to micro tearing of the muscle and tendon, inflammation and pain.



Rotator Cuff Muscles

Shoulder Impingement



The small space between the humerus and the top of the shoulder blade (acromion) contains the rotator cuff tendons, joint capsule and a bursa (fluid filled sack).

The rotator cuff stabilises and pulls down the humerus to keep this space open when you lift up your arm.

Rotator cuff weakness and other muscular imbalances cause the humerus and acromion to impinge, narrowing the space, pinching the tendons and bursa causing inflammation and pain.

Factors decreasing risk of injury:

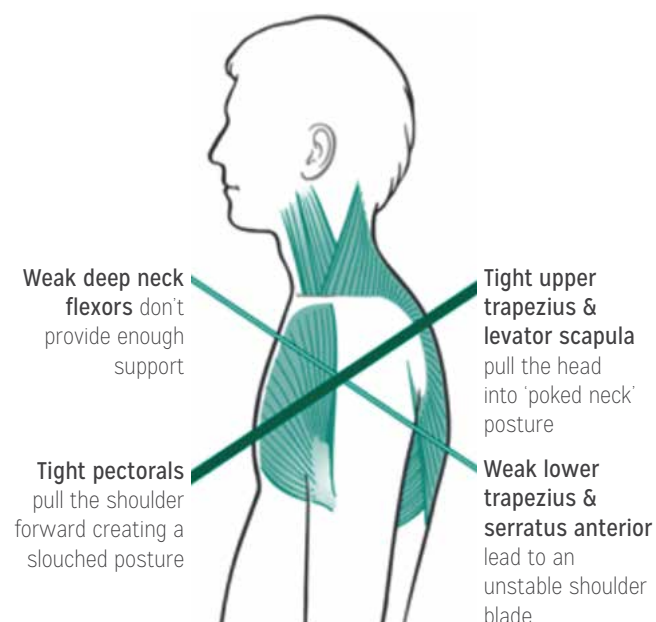
- Exercise
- Pacing
- Efficient transfer technique
- Good wheelchair & environment setup

Factors increasing risk of injury:

- Age
- Weight
- Time since injury
- Level of injury
- Repeated transfers and heavy lifting

Muscle Imbalance

Most muscle groups work in equal, opposite pairs to ensure smooth, effective movement. Muscular imbalance in the trunk, shoulder and neck can lead to poor posture, pain and inefficiency of the shoulder muscles.



A well designed exercise program can help keep balance in strength and length of key muscles. For further shoulder information visit SpinalHub at [www.spinalhub.com.au/how-to-keep-healthy/diet-and-nutrition/article/Common Shoulder Injuries](http://www.spinalhub.com.au/how-to-keep-healthy/diet-and-nutrition/article/Common%20Shoulder%20Injuries).

Sharyn Craven

One of our latest projects, Pathways to Employment, sees us aiming to setup a 'Professionals with SCI network' group to assist people with employment and further education. One of our mentors, Sharyn, transparently shares below her inspiring journey from education and volunteering to independence and gainful employment.

Hi, my name is Sharyn and I acquired a spinal injury at the C6/7 level in November 1982 as a result of diving into our backyard pool. At that time I was in year 9 at Shepparton High School.

It had always been my goal to join the Air Force and complete training as an officer once I completed year 12. Clearly my career direction needed some adjustment after my accident and I wasn't entirely sure what I wanted to do for a long time. My main goal at that point in time was to get back to school and at a minimum complete year 12.

In summary, I completed year 12 over two years, then gained successful entry to a university course but failed to finish for a number of reasons. So that puts us at around 1989, where we were living in Gisborne after relocating from the Shepparton area in 1987. In 1990, as a family, we relocated to Kyabram which is half way between Shepparton and Echuca.

Essentially the main goal that I set for myself was to move out of home and get a job that paid well enough so that I could eventually buy a house. There were a number of blockers at that point, the main ones being that I only had year 12 qualifications and

had a disability. So as a result, my employment prospects were limited, that and I could not independently get in and out of my car. The other main blocker was my confidence, as I had failed a number of subjects when attempting university in 1988.

As we lived in a small country town employment options were limited. So I decided to volunteer my services at the local community centre. I was at reception fielding enquiries and answering the phone. As my confidence grew I completed a number of short courses at the community centre which included volunteering as a life-line volunteer. Having succeeded

there, I felt encouraged to apply for a few short courses at the TAFE in Shepparton. Being encouraged by my success, and in turn increasing my confidence, I decided to go back to university to increase my employment prospects.

In 1991 I was assisted by the Commonwealth Rehabilitation Service to apply for a university course in Melbourne. They funded a new wheelchair that I could independently get in and out of the car with and they assisted with the cost of books. I found accommodation through the paraplegic and quadriplegic association. I moved to Nunawading in 1992 to commence a Bachelor of Arts in Public Administration at RMIT.

In the meantime, my family had relocated to the Geelong region. After successfully completing my degree I moved back home. I applied for numerous jobs but



Sharyn at the Airshow with her Sister

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was unsuccessful. As volunteer work had assisted in my development prior to university I decided to volunteer again; feeling as though that looked more positive on a resume than simply being unemployed.

I volunteered on reception at a community organisation that organised leisure activities and carers for people with disabilities. Throughout the volunteer work I established various networks. This led me to find accessible accommodation, and a part-time employment opportunity at another disability organisation which I was successful in obtaining.

I worked with this organisation for 18 months. I left this job without having another job lined up and in hindsight that was a mistake; it's much easier getting a job when you are still employed, as you have up-to-date skills and relevant referees. I was unemployed for around 10 months, in this time I

continued to look for work. I had a relative who worked in the call centre for the Department of Social Security (now known as the Department of Human Services). So my interest in a role within the department was driven by the role they had available, which was a customer service officer taking calls in a call centre environment. I tried on three separate occasions to gain employment through a recruitment agencies employment service. On my third try I was successful in gaining entry to the group interviews and continued through the process until I was offered a position in September 1997.

During my 18 years with the Department I took every opportunity I could to develop my skills. I put my hand up for any openings such as training or taking on additional roles. I found myself a mentor who was able to give me advice on how to develop towards a leadership

role. I was successful in gaining a permanent Team Leader position in March 2000. I am now on a 12 month secondment with the National Disability Insurance Agency which started November 2015.

I believe the only way to move forward is to look back and learn from your mistakes. Accept feedback from the people you trust and always make yourself available for development opportunities, whether they are offered to you or you have to seek them out. If you are not working, take the time to research appropriate volunteer roles, look at the availability of TAFE courses and take a risk. You may not always be successful but at least you have tried. Courage, determination and goal setting are three very important essentials in moving forward.

Good luck to all of you, in your pathway to employment.

Invitation: Professionals with SCI Network

In light of one Spire's latest projects Pathways to Employment after SCI, we are aiming to set up a 'Professionals with SCI' network group.

Spire would like to help form, resource and assist a group of likeminded people to set their own agendas around what is important to them in the professional community; from employment and further education to meaningful activity.

If this sounds like something you would like to be a part of you can find more information via the link below, as well as short survey in which to express your interest www.surveymonkey.com/r/PROFSCI

Once the survey results have been assessed we will set up an initial meeting. This meeting will be a chance to discuss how people would like the group to run, what topics they want to cover, and how we can work together to develop and support the groups success.

10 top tips for getting a job

People with disabilities in Australia are 30% less likely to have a job than people without disabilities. Although Graeme Innes's doesn't have a spinal cord injury, he has some great points for people with all disabilities looking for work. His 10 points below make very good sense and are worth considering. Graeme is blind but has had great success after lots of set-backs. After becoming a qualified lawyer, he spent a year attending thirty job interviews without success. He took a job as a clerical assistant in the public service, and recently ended a nine year term as a Commissioner at the Australian Human Rights Commission.

One, it will be harder for you to get a job than your peers without disabilities. That's the reality, supported by the statistics. So suck it up. And as Sara Henderson famously said – don't wait to see the light at the end of the tunnel – get down there and turn the bloody thing on yourself. Your opportunities are in your hands. Be proactive, and keep being proactive.

Two, think hard about whether or not you disclose your disability. It's a bit hard for me not to disclose mine when I walk into a job interview with my guide dog. I learned quickly that when I disclosed my disability during a phone conversation with an employer, that was usually the last interaction I had with them. So I just turned up, and surprised them at the interview.

If you have a mobility disability, and need an accessible venue for the interview, that may be more of a challenge than you are prepared to give an employer. On the other hand, it may put you in a stronger negotiating position.

Your only legal obligation to disclose is if your disability means that you cannot carry out the inherent requirements of the job. Don't be told otherwise.

But there may be benefits in disclosing. Some employers are

now running programmes to encourage employment of people with disabilities; eg Westpac and Woolworths.

In essence, the answer to the disclosure question is – it depends – on you, and on your view of the employer.

Three, prepare for each job application, and send an individually written letter which indicates you have done so. You may have a standard CV, but your cover letter should always be written for each application. As a person with a disability, you have to follow the Baden Powell principle and be better prepared.

Four, research the job with a disability focus. Be in a position to point out to recruitment agencies that there is a specific stream for people with disabilities into which you would fall. Getting past the mass-production recruitment process is often the biggest hurdle you will face.

Five, if you do disclose, be up-front at the interview about your disability and any reasonable adjustments. If employers don't ask you about your disability – and many won't – be prepared at the end of the interview to talk about the disability, and how you will do the job for which you have applied.

Give them all the material they need to make an informed – rather than an uninformed – decision.

Six, research some successful people with the same disability as you. If they are working in the same profession as you even better. Get some stories or youtube clips about them, and show them during discussions with employers. It's all about challenging assumptions.

Seven, be prepared to do some voluntary work, internship, or "stepping into" programmes. If you can't get the job you want, or for which you are qualified, take a lower level job and work your way up. The biggest challenge we face is that people can't see how we can do the job. Showing them may just get you over the line.

Eight, find a good mentor. Someone with a similar disability to yours, who has been successful in employment, would be great. Peer support is always valuable. You don't have to follow their advice, but you can always learn from sharing experiences.

Nine, make sure that you understand the Australian Employment Assistance fund process, and how that might be relevant for reasonable adjustments for you. Work with the employer to make this happen. If there is a problem, own it. That is a great approach to show to employers.

Ten, always dress up, not down. People with disabilities are generally viewed more negatively than others, and these visual judgements are often made in the first few seconds of the interview. So compensate by strutting your stuff.

Research Study. The Secret of Success: Exploring the experience of ageing well with a disability or impairment

Would you like to help improve levels of understanding of what it means to age well with a disability or impairment and the supports that need to be in place to help people achieve this? Spire is currently supporting a Melbourne University PhD project that's looking to do just that.

Older adults are now the fastest growing segment of the population. And as medical treatments improve, we are now seeing more people with differing levels of physical disabilities live beyond age 65.

Unfortunately, so far very little research has looked at how individuals with a long term disability or impairment maintain a sense of ageing well, or the supports that need to be in place to help people achieve this. It is anticipated that this research can be used to develop effective interventions that can assist other people ageing with a disability to age well over the longer term.

The researchers are now looking for volunteers aged 50 – 80 who incurred a spinal cord injury 15 years or more ago and who are willing to share their experiences and thoughts about what it means to age well with a long-term disability or impairment.

As part of the study participants will be asked to take part in an individual interview, which can be conducted either in your home or another convenient location. The interview will last about 45 – 60 minutes.

If you're interested in participating or finding out more about this project please contact Niki Heath:

T 0458 894 674

E nheath@student.unimelb.edu.au

Research results: Social and community participation following spinal cord injury

Linda Barclay, an occupational therapist and researcher at Monash University, has just released the results of the first phase of her study Social and community participation following spinal cord injury. Enabling engagement in meaningful activities in the community has been shown to be a significant contributor to quality of life following an acquired disability, which is why Linda has chosen to complete her PhD on this topic.

Linda identified three main themes from the interviews she conducted with 17 people with SCI. These themes related to resources in the environment (such as access to appropriate transport, accessible buildings, adequate financial resources and use of technology), other people in the community (such as health professionals, the general public, family members and peer mentors), and health conditions (including physical and mental health concerns).

The main facilitators of community participation were adequate financial resources and social support (from friends and family or from peer mentors), while the physical environment, unsupportive social attitudes and mental health issues were identified as the main barriers to community participation.

If anyone would like more information about Linda's research, or a copy of her article published in the Australian Occupational Therapy Journal, please contact Linda on linda.barclay2@monash.edu.

Operational Plan Commitment between the National Disability Insurance Agency (NDIA), State Government of Victoria and Commonwealth Government for transition to the NDIS

On 16 September 2015 the Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull and Victorian Premier Daniel Andrews signed a Bilateral Agreement for transition to the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) in Victoria.

You can read the agreement on the Council Of Australian Governments website at www.coag.gov.au/node/526.

This Operational Plan sets out the implementation arrangements to give effect to the Bilateral Agreement and other key deliverables agreed between the National Disability Insurance Agency (NDIA), the State Government of Victoria and Commonwealth Government to support the roll out of the full NDIS. The parties to this Operational Plan are the NDIA, the Commonwealth Department of Social Services (DSS) and the Victorian Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS). This Operational Plan serves as the roadmap for transitioning to the NDIS as best achieved in Victoria.

The Operational Plan is made up of twenty different sections in two parts:

- Part one is about the bilateral and national policy.

- Part two is about administration and service delivery.

For anyone who is interested in reading the Victorian Operational

Plan Commitment you can download it from the NDIS website at www.ndis.gov.au/sites/default/files/documents/our-sites/Vic-OP-plan.pdf.

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Ballarat, Bendigo and Shepparton

Spire's Regional Networks have been going for over a year now, meeting monthly on a regular basis. The first group was set up in **Ballarat** (Grampians area). The local input has been invaluable in making this such a success. The energy of everyone involved motivated us more in ensuring this pilot was a success.

We have learnt what is important to people living with SCI in regional areas. Spire's goal is to keep rolling out into different regions and partnering with locals who have an interest in creating networks for people with SCI. This led to the creation of the **Bendigo** network (Hume area).

The area of Hume has proven to have a high number of people living with SCI in regional Victoria. The development of the Bendigo Network was assisted from the learnings from the Ballarat pilot. The Ballarat group sees the importance of networks so much so that a few of them regularly take part in the Bendigo meetings to share their experiences and to help set the agenda. In April, the group will be taking part in a motivational workshop called *Discovering the Power in Me*.

Moving forward with the Regional Networks, our next target area will be **Shepparton** which we intend to start in August 2016.

From there we will create more partnerships with locals in other areas.

These SCI regional networks are a partnership and we encourage all your feedback and welcome all regional people living with SCI plus family & friends into these communities to support and find what's important to your own regional network. Come along and have a cuppa and chin wag with us!

To keep up with the latest updates:

Web: www.spire.org.au

Facebook: AQA Spinal Injury Info & Support

Phone: 03 9489 0777



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independenceexpo

Spinal Cord Injuries Australia

15-16 April, 2016 | Australian Technology Park, Sydney

Explore amazing products, equipment and technology on display. Be inspired by information packed workshops that will also be live-streamed.

Register to attend: scia.org.au/expo

scia.org.au



Victoria's parks more accessible than ever!

Summer is the perfect time for everyone to get out and explore a park, no matter how mobile you are. Victoria's parks have never been more accessible and there are a wide range of facilities to help people of all abilities enjoy our wonderful parks.

Parks Victoria's work in the area of accessibility was recognised in December last year by the 2015 National Disability Award. Parks Victoria's Chief Executive Bradley Fauteux accepted the award at his first official function at Parliament House in Canberra and said it was wonderful to see our parks lead the way in ensuring that everyone can enjoy spending time in the great outdoors.

Last month, Bradley was joined at Norman Beach in Wilsons Promontory National Park by two young men, Judeland Antony and Steven Sweeney, who hadn't visited the beach for many years let alone ventured into the ocean. The occasion was the launch of the Lasher beach wheelchair, a purpose-built lightweight



Wheelchair users, Judeland Antony and Steven Sweeney at Norman Beach, Wilsons Promontory NP.
Photo: Bill Forrester, Travability

chair that can be operated independently by people with paraplegia and leg amputations without the need of a carer. The chair was funded by the People and Parks Foundation.

The event received statewide media coverage as well as the attention of some curious visitors who stopped to ask questions and watch Judeland and Steven try out the new wheelchair and one of the all-terrain wheelchairs also available at Tidal River. The pictures really do tell the story! It was a fantastic day for everyone involved and most importantly, Judeland and Steven gave the chair the big thumbs up in terms of allowing them to get right into the water without any assistance.

Spending time in the natural environment, in places like our magnificent parks, is good for our mind, body and soul, and Parks Victoria is committed to making our parks accessible to everyone.

Did you know?

- There are eleven TrailRider all terrain wheelchairs available for people to explore Victoria's park trails.
- The world's first motorised TrailRider all terrain wheelchairs are now available at Grampians, Wilsons Promontory, and Mount Dandenong national parks and at the Buchan Caves Reserve.
- Trained volunteers from the Sherpa Volunteer program are available in the Grampians National Park to assist visitors with disabilities to explore the many spectacular park trails using the TrailRider chairs.



Judeland Antony, John Kenwright (Parks Victoria's Access & Inclusion Coordinator) and Steven Sweeney.

Photo: Bill Forrester, Travability

- There are ten children and adult beach wheelchairs available to explore Victoria's coastal parks.
- Accessible park accommodation at Wilsons Promontory National Park and Cape Conran Coastal Park has electric high low beds, personal hoists and other accommodation equipment available to make visitors stay more comfortable.
- There is a beach access ramp at the Sailors Grave Day Visitor Area at Cape Conran Coastal Park.
- Victoria's first Lasher Beach Wheelchair is available at Tidal River, Wilsons Promontory National Park.
- Thirty-eight of Victoria's most visited parks now have more comprehensive park access information provided to help visitors plan their park visit and park activities.

For more information about accessible facilities in Victoria's parks go to www.parks.vic.gov.au/visit/improving-park-access-for-all.

New all terrain wheelchair gives everyone access to Dandenong Ranges National Park

All visitors to Dandenong Ranges National Park will now be able to enjoy trails in the park thanks to a motorised all terrain wheelchair - called a TrailRider.

A modified version of a Canadian invention, the motorised TrailRider, was created by Parks Victoria and is the first of its kind in the world.

TrailRider all terrain wheelchairs are a cross between a rickshaw and a wheelchair and can handle more rugged bush trails where conventional wheelchairs cannot go.

The motor on the chair makes it easier to manoeuvre the chair over rough trail surfaces and makes it easier for visitors with mobility limitations to access steeper and longer trails than ever the before.

“Everyone has the right to enjoy the benefits of being in nature and we want to help everyone to be active in our parks. This is just one way we are making this possible,” said John Kenwright, Community Inclusion Coordinator, Parks Victoria.

“The TrailRider really opens up park areas that people with limited mobility may never have been able to see or experience.”

The TrailRider has recently been trialled by a YMCA Recreation camp in the Dandenong Ranges for children with disabilities. Having a TrailRider based in the



Dandenong Ranges will make it much easier for the YMCA, other organisations and individuals to regularly access a TrailRider chair to explore parks.

The TrailRider is located at “Grants on Sherbrooke café” at Grants Picnic Area in Mount Dandenong National Park. It can be booked by calling 03 9755 2888.

Getting into shape can be really hard to do at a regular gym.

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You could have

A lady decided to give herself a treat for her 70th birthday by staying overnight in one of Melbourne's most expensive hotels.

When she checked out next morning, the desk clerk handed her a bill for \$500.

She exploded, demanding to know why the charge was so high.

The clerk told her \$500 was the standard rate. So she insisted on speaking to the manager.

The manager appeared, and was filled in.

"This hotel has an Olympic-sized pool, a gymnasium, a sauna and a huge conference centre, which are all available for use," he said.

"But I didn't use them," she protested.

"Well, they are here, and you could have," he explained.

He went on to explain she could also have seen one of the in-hotel shows for which the hotel was famous.

"But I didn't go to any shows," she protested again.

"Well, you could have," the manager replied.

Since the manager would not be moved, she wrote out a cheque and handed it over.

"But madam," said the manager, "this cheque is made out for only \$200."

"That's correct," she replied.

"I charged you \$300 for sleeping with me."

"But I didn't!" exclaimed the very surprised manager.

"Well, too bad," she said.

"I was here, and you could have."

Bee Help

A man was driving down the road and ran out of petrol. At that moment, a bee flew in his window.

"What seems to be the problem?" asked the bee.

"I'm out of petrol," the man replied.

The bee told the man to wait right there and flew away. Minutes later, the man watched as an entire swarm of bees flew to his car and into his petrol tank.

After a few minutes, the bees flew out.

"Try it now" said the bee.

The man turned the ignition key and the car started right up.

"Wow," the man exclaimed. "What did you put in my petrol tank?"

"BPee," answered the bee.

Naughty Baby

A woman suddenly went into labour at the same time that the power went out.

Only one paramedic responded to the call. The house was very dark, so the paramedic asked the woman's five-year-old daughter, Kathleen, to hold a flashlight so he could see while he delivered the baby.

Kathleen did exactly as she was asked. The mother pushed and pushed and after a little while, the baby was born.

The paramedic lifted him by his little feet and spanked him on his bottom. The baby began to cry.

The paramedic thanked Kathleen for her help and asked her what she thought about what she'd just witnessed.

"Well," said Kathleen, "He shouldn't have crawled in there in the first place. Smack his bottom again".

Grandma

Two young boys were spending the night at their grandparents. At bedtime, the two boys knelt beside their beds to say their prayers when the youngest one began praying at the top of his lungs.

"I PRAY FOR A NEW BICYCLE..."

I PRAY FOR A NEW BICYCLE...

I PRAY FOR A NEW BICYCLE..."

His older brother leaned over and nudged the younger brother and said, "Why are you shouting your prayers? God isn't deaf." To which the little brother replied, "No, but Grandma is!"

FOR SALE

Mobility Plus Wheelchair

17" Wedge Rigid manual wheelchair; aluminium frame; candy green; fold down backrest; 3" latex rubber cushion; removable lift out footplate; 2 sets of 24" rear wheels inc. green and grey constricta slick tyres; larger sized front caster wheels; 1 pair of black spoke guards.

Price \$800

Mobile 0403 623 434 (Roy) (12/15#a)

Glide Light Weight Manual Wheelchair

Harnesses / headrest; tie down points; folding frame.

Price \$1,000

Phone 0409 132 537 (Trish Henry)

Email mrspuppets@bigpond.com (8/15#a)

Magic Mobility Electric Wheelchair

Tilt in space; head rest; gel cushion; battery pack with 12V battery charger; tray, in good condition.

Price Make an offer

Mobile 0427 545 266 (Nancy) (01/15#a)

Jazzy 1121 Electric Wheelchair

Right hand controls plus rear controls for carer; RoHo cushion; Tilt in space; head rest and tray; very good condition but requires a new battery.

Price \$2,000 ono

Mobile 0427 545 266 (Nancy) (01/15#a)

Pride Q 600Z Electric Wheelchair

Heavy duty custom built chair with heavy duty motor, batteries and charger; tilt in space; power elevating leg rests; head rest; curved back rest; adjustable height arm rests; seat belt; Ro-Ho cushion; attendant controls; seat dimensions: 650mm wide x 500mm deep - can be extended to 600mm.

Price \$10,000 ono

Phone 03 5243 2351 (Joan) (01/15#a)

Quantum 6000 Electric Wheelchair

Headrest and Tilt.

Price Make an offer

Mobile 0434 923 189 (Andrew) (04/14/#a)

Magic V6 Frontier

12 months old; left-hand controls; comes with spare motor; mint condition.

Price \$5,500 ono

Mobile 0490 067 334 or 0468 339 541 (Sue) (02/14#a)

Glide G2 Portable Wheelchair

Never used; no armrests; paid \$2,600.

Price \$500 ono

Mobile 0490 067 334 or 0468 339 541 (Sue) (02/14#a)

Rugby Wheelchair

Built by Melrose in 2007; only used for 1 year; wheelchair is built for a high point attack, 2point +; comes with wheels and wheel bag.

Price \$1,000 ono

Phone 0414 715 591 (Nathan) (02/14#a)

FOR SALE

2007 Chrysler Grand Voyager Limited

Dark khaki, converted into a Activan by Capital Special Vehicles; LHS push-pull hand controls; remote controlled ramp on left hand side; many drive options e.g. carer driver, Self drive and docking station to enable you to drive; luxury features; leather interior; DVD player for your rear passengers; car and modifications serviced regularly; 210,000 kms; one owner; good condition.

Price \$16,000 ono

Mobile 0419 708 434 (Matt)

Email mattingram@y7mail.com (12/15#a)

2002 - Citroen Freewheeler Berlingo

Heritage green; 5speed manual; air-con; 3 seats plus wheel chair; 1440mm headroom in rear of vehicle; smooth riding air suspension; vehicle lowers down for easier loading; retractable locking wheelchair restraints; CD player with controls accessible to wheelchair occupant; 101,000 km; one owner; very good condition.

Price \$15,500

Mobile 0409 212 842 (Jeni) (12/15#a)

1999 Holden Combo

Manual ramp access; 5 speed transmission; regularly serviced (160,000 km); Seats 3 and wheelchair passenger; tie downs; wheelchair seatbelt; CD player.

Price \$7,999

Phone 0409 132 537 (Trish)

Email mrspuppets@bigpond.com (08/15#a)

Falcon 1998 EL Flashcab

Complete with wheelchair tie down straps; LPG; 329,000km; drives great but body in poor condition due to hail damage; Feb 2016 Rego; no RWC.

Price \$3,500

Phone 03 9326 0335 (Peter) (08/15#a)

1999 Holden Combo SB Wheelchair Access Van

Holden Combo Freewheeler Sydney 2000 Olympic Edition; was used in the 2000 Sydney Olympics & will come with Certificate of Authenticity; cost \$50,000 new; professionally converted for wheelchair access; air-con; power steering; rear access ramps; tie downs; 2 x foldable rear seats; 45,000kms; excellent as new condition.

Price \$14,500

Phone 0413 639 099 (Hamza)

Email utback1966@hotmail.com (7/15#a)

Body-Worx Arm Bike

Great condition. no faults; as new.

Price \$100

Phone 0403 623 434 (Roy)

Email roy.davie@gmail.com (12/15#a)

Outdoor Chair on Wheels

Ideal for wheeling across paddocks or uneven ground.

Price \$100

Phone 0409 132 537 (Trish)

Email mrspuppets@bigpond.com (08/15#a)

CLASSIFIEDS

ITEMS FOR FREE

Magic Mystic Electric Chair

10 year old electric wheelchair; left hand controls; fair condition.

Phone 0490 067 334 or 0468 339 541 (Sue) (#9/13)

6 x Conform Support Bed Panels

- 1 x panel: 700mm x 500mm (15 nodules x 10 nodules) high profile.
- 4 x panels: 830mm x 500mm (18 nodules x 10 nodules) high profile, plus joining strips for same.
- 1 x foam panel: 830mm x 500mm with joining strip. Normally used with 3 panels to make a complete mattress.

The foam panel goes under your pillow which is fine for a person of average height. Tall people need 4 inflatable panels.

Phone 03 8838 2866 (Ed or Livia)

Medical Continence Supplies

- 200 x Unomedical Nelaton Catheters - Firm - FG14 - 40cm x 4.7mm Exp. 09 / 2016
- 400 x Unomedical Nelaton Catheters - Firm - FG14 - 40cm x 4.7mm Exp. 07 / 2017
- 1 x Self Inflating Resuscitator - The Bag II Ref 805011

Phone 03 9489 0777 (Spire)

ITEMS FOR FREE

Blueys and continence pads

Big box of blueys (unsure of qty) and 5 boxes of mens Depend incontinence pads.

Phone 0403 623 434 (Roy) (12/15#a)

Commode

Otto Bock Commode chair; wide padded toilet seat.

Phone 0403 623 434 (Roy) (12/15#a)

Electric Bed

Electric bed in the Albury Wodonga area; owner is in nursing home but can organise pick-up of bed.

Phone 02 6057 3189 (Elizabeth) (10/15#a)

Car Roof Wheelchair Hoist

Wymo car roof wheelchair hoist; never used.

Mobile 0417 378 905 (Dani)

MORE CLASSIFIEDS ON PAGE 19

For a full list of classifieds and items for free, please visit www.spire.org.au/classifieds or contact us on 03 9489 0777 or info@spire.org.au.

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