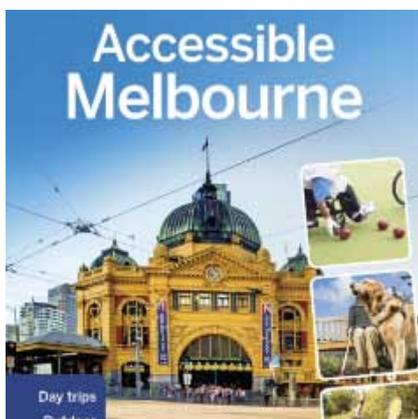


Spire is a service division of AQA Victoria Ltd



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TRAVEL

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NewsLink is the official newsletter of AQA Victoria Ltd (AQA), and is published bimonthly. NewsLink seeks to publish material of interest to people with spinal cord injury and their families, other people with disabilities and those with a personal or professional interest in the issues of life with spinal cord injury.

NewsLink welcomes content from a wide range of sources, particularly from those with lived experience. 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 NewsLink. This first issue in 2015 also represents the first of a number of opportunities for AQA to introduce you to Spire – our Spinal Injury Resource and Support Network. Many of you will have known our Information & Peer Support Service. This valued service has developed over the last few years, progressing our thinking about peer facilitated supports to the point where from 2015 they will operate as Spire.

In this issue we introduce not only the Spire name but also share the colour scheme and style of Spire.

Unlike a reveal type launch where we throw a switch on a new brand, and it's out with the old and in with the new, Spire has been developed as a vehicle to energise and promote what has always been important to AQA – that there are resources in our community, be they people's lived experience, talent, expertise and wisdom or the mix of common interests and the diversity of

a real community, that when mobilised are of immeasurable benefit and support to people with spinal cord injury.

Spire reflects our focus on Life with SCI where Life is far more than the SCI.

Spire is an expression of our strategic priorities of Community, Leadership, Service & Sustainability. It is an invitation to build community partnerships around each of these priorities as they relate to life with SCI.

It's about connecting, networking, supporting and partnering with our community and as such is the latest expression of a 28 year history of endeavour involving every AQA volunteer, mentor, supporter and friend who has made a contribution to people with spinal cord injury.

We look forward to a program of activities across the year that will give us the chance to introduce Spire and further energise and promote what has always been important to AQA.



Peter Trethewey
Chief Executive Officer
petertrethewey@aqavic.org.au

HIGHLIGHTS

On page 6 in **Accessible Melbourne – free eBook**, Accessible Travel Manager Martin Heng tells us about Lonely Planet's recently released accessibility guide. The comprehensive guide includes the most relevant, up-to-date advice for travellers with special needs.

This year for the first time Melbourne will participate in the unique international **Wings for Life World Run** event. For further information on date, time and how to register please turn to page 7.

On page 12 in **The Hoist**, Dagwood Johnson provides an entertaining blog into the world of portable hoists. Over the last few years, AQA has been working towards developing support networks for people living with SCI in regional Victoria and Tasmania. This year, we are excited to officially launch our **Regional Networks Program**, as part of the Spire launch year. Please turn to page 14 for further information.

On page 16 in **Buchan Caves Stairclimber and world-first wheelchair design improving access**, you can read about the

newly acquired stairclimber and motorised all-terrain wheelchair at Buchan Caves Reserve. Visitors with significant mobility limitations can now enjoy one of Victoria's most scenic attractions thanks to Parks Victoria.

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

June	1 st June 2015
August	1 st August 2015
October	1 st October 2015
December	1 st December 2015

What's Out There Day (WOT)

The 'What's Out There' day (WOT) aims to give people who have sustained a Spinal Cord Injury insight into the possibilities of life after injury. It's proven to be a very successful way of opening the eyes and motivating those with a new or recent SCI. The event is popular with current and former patients, their family and friends, and staff from other organisations interested in life after SCI.

WOT days are held every few months (April, August, December) at the Royal Talbot Rehabilitation Unit in Kew and involve a panel, group discussions, delicious BBQ lunch and a number of exhibits showcasing things like adaptive equipment, sports, accommodation, vehicles and more.

The aim is to motivate and empower all those attending with an interest in all things Spinal Cord Injury.

If you are interested in attending one of these days, let us know so we can put you on the mailing list.

When: April 15, between 11am to 4pm

Where: Royal Talbot Rehabilitation Unit

Phone: 03 9489 0777

Email: info@Spirevic.org.au

RSVP: April 13, 2015 for catering purposes

VALE

It is with great sadness we advise the passing of three AQA members:

- Andrew Millar
- Pamela Simmons
- Geoff Craig

Geoff Craig, a former Director and Secretary of AQA from 1990 to 1997 made a valuable contribution to the organisation during that period. In later years he moved interstate but continued his membership with AQA.

We would like to convey our sincere sympathy to the families and friends of these people.

Electric Wheelchair Sport season

The Victorian Electric Wheelchair Sports season is now in progress.

Run by the Victorian Electric Wheelchair Sports Association (VEWSA), the season consists of four sports - Hockey, Balloon Soccer, Rugby League and Powerchair Football. The program is specifically designed for electric wheelchair users.

VEWSA aims to provide a social but competitive experience for all players.

The program is a great way to make new friends, build confidence, improve leadership skills and most importantly, have fun. It is open to all ages and all genders. Beginners are welcome!

When: Sundays fortnightly.

Where: Aquahub, 11 Civic Square, Croydon.

Time: 1pm - 4pm.

VEWSA is run entirely by volunteers and attracts players from all over Melbourne, including some regional areas. If you use an electric wheelchair and love sports, please contact Grace David to find out how you can join in the fun:

Phone: 0458 014 443

Email: vewsa@outlook.com

UNIVERSITY OF QUEENSLAND SCHOOL OF HEALTH AND REHABILITATION SCIENCES

IS YOUR MOBILE SHOWER COMMODOE USABLE?!

If you are over 18 years old, have a spinal cord injury and use a mobile shower commode for showering and/ or toileting, we need your help!

We are conducting a study to assess the usability of mobile shower commodes. The study involves completing two surveys on SurveyMonkey. The first survey is available here: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/eMASTstudy>.

For more information, please contact Emma Friesen at emma.friesen@uqconnect.edu.au.

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SpinalHub
.com.au

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.

HOW CAN I SUPPORT 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 Victoria in your will is a meaningful way of supporting people with spinal cord injury. All bequests help strengthen the services provided by AQA Victoria that promote independence, quality of life and inclusion of people with disabilities in the community.

If you have included AQA Victoria in your will, or you are considering making a bequest to AQA Victoria 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 Victoria is involved in that support people with spinal cord injury.

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

Accessible Melbourne - free eBook

In 2010 Martin Heng was working as the Editorial Manager with Lonely Planet. A very rewarding but stressful position in a multinational company - a job he loved. However one day while cycling to work, a 20-kilometre commute, he was t-boned by a car, leaving him with an incomplete C4 spinal injury.

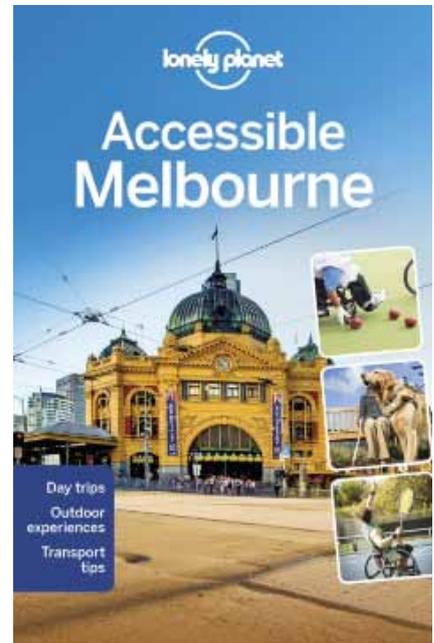
After a year of rehabilitation, Martin returned to work and started to look at the field of travel with a disability, or, more broadly, accessible travel. He took on the role as Lonely Planet's Accessible Travel Manager, launching their 'Travel for All' project last December. With his team, he has since produced a pilot online eBook called Accessible Melbourne. It is available for free and the hope is that if it is popular, they'll look at including other cities. Martin tells us below in more detail about the comprehensive guide.

It is with great pleasure (and a little pride!) that I present to you Lonely Planet's pilot accessibility guide, Accessible Melbourne, which includes the most relevant, up-to-date advice for travellers with special needs. Discover Melbourne's best wheelchair-friendly restaurants and shops, get active with accessible sports, and enjoy spectacular scenery, food and wine along the Great Ocean Road. We've gathered user reviews and insider tips from a wide range of travellers to ensure those with mobility, hearing or vision impairment get the most out of a Melbourne holiday. Download your preferred version of this FREE e-book at www.lonelyplanet.com/accessible-melbourne.

This has been some months in the making and could not have been achieved without the help of many people both within

and outside the company. Luke Savage and Liz Heynes, my primary partners in production, deserve a special shout out for their enormous contributions, as well as the other in-house staff mentioned under This Book. In addition, I'd like to thank my boss, David Carroll, and Lonely Planet for backing me in this important venture into new territory.

As a pilot project, our main aim was to learn lessons that will inform our future strategy in the field of accessible travel and the Travel for All initiative that we launched almost exactly a year ago. We did learn important lessons throughout the planning and production process, but it does not end there. We hope to learn as much from the reception and feedback from the community. If you're someone who has access issues, a carer, a family member, a friend of



someone who has access issues, or a professional working in a related field, we want to hear from you - the good, the bad and, yes, even the ugly! Please send all feedback to accessmelbourne@lonelyplanet.com.au and I guarantee to read and respond to every email.

Martin Heng
Accessible Travel Manager

Darebin Council unveils new access and mobility maps

The Darebin Access and Mobility maps show key access features such as accessible car parking, public transport routes and stops, accessible public toilets and pedestrian crossing points.

The Access and Mobility maps cover the five main shopping strips in Darebin

- Reservoir Village Shopping Centre
- Broadway Shopping Centre
- Preston Central Shopping

Centre

- Fairfield Village Shopping Centre
- Northcote Shopping Precinct

Copies of the maps are available from the Darebin Customer Service Centres, downloadable from the Darebin website at www.darebin.vic.gov.au/en/Darebin-Living/Community-support/PeoplewithDisability or to organise hard copies to be posted out to you please contact Christine Mulholland on 03 8470 8368 or email Christine.



Wings for Life World Run

This year for the first time Melbourne will participate in the international event run by the not-for-profit spinal cord research foundation Wings for Life.

At 9pm on Sunday 3rd of May the race will begin from Elwood Park in Melbourne's south with the track winding its way down the Mornington Peninsula to Portsea. This is a truly global event, with the whole world running at exactly the same time - 35 cities across 6 continents!

Wings for Life's mission is to find a cure for spinal cord injury. They fund world-class scientific research and clinical trials around the globe aimed at healing the injured spinal cord.

Wings for Life World Run is a unique race, where you run ahead of a 'Catcher Car', instead of running towards a finish line. Set your goal for 5km or 50km – once

the 'Catcher Car' overtakes you, your race is over. Don't worry, you get a 30 minute head start on the 'Catcher Car'!

Spire will be supporting this event by encouraging our Run Melbourne team to use it as a warm-up event, and promoting it through our networks.

Wheelchair entrants are



welcomed with a few stipulations including that it be in a manual wheelchair (not a handcycle or racing chair) without attachments, click on the wheelchair symbol on the below link for details.

Let us know if you sign up so we can support you on the night!

www.wingsforlifeworldrun.com.au/en/melbourne.

Can-Do Musos

“Musos” or “musos” are terms used widely in parts of the world to describe a musician or group of musicians with passion and dedication to their music.

‘Can-Do Musos’ was established by a group of musicians with challenges to be a new global voice for musicians and bands with disabilities from all over the world. A Can-Do Muso is a musician with challenges who is very passionate about their music. They use the word “challenges” with Can-Do Musos because quite often disability gets misinterpreted as inability. People with challenges can overcome them and be empowered and successful. John Koumourou, a NewsLink contributor, is just one of the Can-Do-Musos.

The below profile is published on the Can-Do Muso website and can be accessed at www.candomusos.com/profile-john-koumourou.php.

John Koumourou is a Melbourne-born ‘muso’ – flugelhorn player - who won’t let his disability be a roadblock to anything he wants to do. His love for music has driven him to try different instruments to find one ‘that fits’ his ability. With his limited finger movement he had to be creative on how to get around this challenge.

John had a diving accident when he was 19 that left him a quadriplegic in a wheelchair, in his 20’s he wanted to play an instrument but with very limited finger movement and the love for jazz and blues the obvious answer to him was the trombone.

Over the course of the following years he progressed to play in local council brass bands, church bands, and some ‘home grown bands’. He got involved in a work band back in 1994 which fitted the style he loved - (www.youtube.com/watch?v=fH-vmYtU_Ro).

John played with The Predicaments for a few years, playing at venues like the St Kilda National Theatre ‘foyer’ & The Tower Hotel at Alphington.

He stopped playing in his early 30’s with other life endeavors absorbing his time like family, sport and work. Married to Robyn who plays piano, sings and composes, 2 daughters who have also taken on instruments, music is never far from the family environment

Now in his ‘very’ early 50’s, over the last several years the passion to get back into music has grown and with the love for the flugelhorn and with his limited finger movement he had to be creative on how to use his hands to play. With playing only 2 valves on the flugelhorn and by using alternative note/finger positions he got around the roadblock of playing.



The flugelhorn being quite a reflective sounding instrument, and with influences like Mark Isham & Ibrahim Maalouf, he now enjoys playing to a different style music. This recent piece was heavily influenced by Ibrahim www.wikiloops.com/backingtrack-jam-22419.php

John uploaded his first improvised piece www.youtube.com/watch?v=6mU3PL34d2U to YouTube playing to a backing track. He will soon load a YouTube clip to show how he actually plays, to hopefully show/encourage others with limitations to see what can be done and have fun doing it by being a little creative with what movement we have.

City Access Permit

A City Access Permit provides extra time for parking within the City of Melbourne for the permit holder to attend work, study or specialist medical appointments on a regular basis.

Eligibility

To be eligible for a City Access Permit, applicants must hold a valid Parking Permit for People with Disabilities issued in their name.

Applicants must also provide a letter on company letterhead from their:

- workplace confirming their employment, or
- educational institution confirming their enrolment, or
- medical specialist confirming their ongoing requirement for medical treatment within the municipality.

The workplace, educational institute or specialist medical appointments must be within the City of Melbourne.

Applicants may nominate up to three vehicle registration numbers on the permit.

There is no fee for this permit.

General information about using a City Access Permit

Provided it is valid and correctly displayed, the permit allows the holder to park in any regular parking bay or area (to which a green permissive parking sign applies) for the whole day.

The below example image shows a permissive parking sign:

The permit must be displayed in conjunction with a Parking Permit for People with Disabilities (category one or two) at all times.

Both permits must be securely displayed so all details remain clearly visible through the passenger side of the front windscreen throughout the duration of parking.

The permit must only be displayed when the vehicle is being used to transport the permit holder.

The permit will show the registration number of the vehicle/s for which it is issued.

The permit does not allow the holder to park in an area reserved only for people with disabilities (these parking areas are designated for category one permit holders to park for the amount of time specified on the sign only).

Example of a parking sign indicating that the parking bay is reserved for Category one permit holders only:



Parking is not permitted in restricted locations (indicated by



red signs) such as Clearways, Loading Zones, No Stopping, Taxi Only Areas, Bus Zones and Residential Permit Zones.

When selecting parking, permit holders must ensure a sign for a restricted parking area will not apply for any part of their intended stay. Any time allowed by a permit stops when a red sign starts.

Failure to adhere to the City Access Permit's conditions of issue and use, regardless of entitlement to the permit, may result in the permit holder incurring a parking infringement notice.

How to apply

You can either apply online at <https://eservices.melbourne.vic.gov.au/ePathway/Production/Web/Default.aspx?js=-394072467>

Or,

Submit a PDF application form ([www.melbourne.vic.gov.au/ParkingTransportandRoads/Parking/ParkingPermits/Documents/City Access for People With Disabilities Parking Permit Application OL.pdf](http://www.melbourne.vic.gov.au/ParkingTransportandRoads/Parking/ParkingPermits/Documents/City%20Access%20for%20People%20With%20Disabilities%20Parking%20Permit%20Application%20OL.pdf)) via:

- email: scanned copy emailed to permits@melbourne.vic.gov.au
- post: Permits Team, City of Melbourne, PO Box 488, Melbourne VIC 3001
- in person: Melbourne Town Hall Administration building 120 Swanston Street Melbourne

between 7.30am and 5pm, Monday to Friday.

SPiRE

SPINAL INJURY RESOURCE & SUPPORT NETWORK

“ We’re very excited to be launching a new name and new look to our peer facilitated services. Spire will further energise our approach to things AQA has always considered important; to what can be achieved when you connect people with the lived experience of others, to information and the resources of our community. Spire is about the breadth and depth of life following SCI with the emphasis on Life rather than injury. ”

Peter Trethewey - CEO



Discovering the Power in Me

We will continue to run this goal-setting and positive mindset course that is tailored specifically to people with SCI. We’ve had so much feedback from people that have participated in this, it’s giving our community tools to live a more fulfilling life.



Peer Support

We have peer support workers as well as volunteers. They are all trained and experienced and each has their own lived experience of SCI. We believe one person’s experience of SCI and everything that comes with the resulting change to their life is invaluable when shared with others.

Hello New Look!

Yes we've changed things up a bit!

Our Information and Peer Support service will now be known as **Spire** - Spinal Injury Resource & Support Network.

Our aim is to continue to offer resources that will aid you to tackle the issues of life with SCI, help you to connect with others that can share their personal experiences of living with SCI, and to assist you to achieve your own personal goals for life with SCI.



Community Events

Our What's Out There (WOT) Days at the Royal Talbot Rehabilitation Centre, our social lunches such as the Ladies & Gents Day Out, and our community forums are all essential ingredients to what we do here at Spire.

New Website coming soon!

Our primary resources will be located on our awesome new website www.spire.org.au. Features include blog, gallery and more.



Regional Networks

We've kicked off with the Ballarat Regional Network which aims for a more connected and supportive local spinal community. There's big plans for the development of this group and we're excited to work with the locals to achieve their goals.

www.spire.org.au

The Hoist

One of the exciting new developments here at Spire is the community blog that is featured on the soon to be launched Spire website. The blog will be located in the Community section of the website.

Below, one of our volunteer bloggers Dagwood Johnson provides an entertaining view into the practical and non-practical world of portable hoists and their functionality.

When I broke my neck in 1998 I was told I'd never walk again. Of course that's just a euphemism, walking is the least of a quadriplegic's concerns. But I got the message; I was not a forty-something go-getter any more. So how was I to go from A to B?

The first shift I was aware of, from trolley A to trolley B, was interesting. Two chatting nurses were sliding me across, when one confided to the other that her husband had belted her – and the other went on strike in sympathy, with me pivoted half way between the trolleys. “Oh you poor thing” she sympathized, “that's awful, what a brute.” Indeed he was

a brute, and I would have joined in the commiseration and condemnation, if only to remind the two lovely ladies that I was still there feeling rather precarious; but I had a tracheotomy in my throat and couldn't speak. I tried telepathy: “Hey girls, remember me?” When they did remember they glared down and plonked me on trolley B. “Thanks ladies” I wanted to say, “please remember that not all men are brutes.” I wondered whether a wink would tell them I was on their side, but thought better of it.

But from then on I was moved from A to B just fine. In the Austin Hospital in those days they had strapping young bucks who pumped iron in the gym to attract the girls and lifted us patients around to earn their gym fees – and some older orderlies whose backs had stood the test of time due to their orderly philosophies of sagacious movability. These guys were so quick and efficient that I wished I could have taken a couple with me when I was moved to the Royal Talbot Rehabilitation Centre. There the nurses taught the paraplegics how to move themselves and moved us

quadriplegics using what I'll call the Coat-Hanger-Hoist. The base of this device consists of two meter long feet on wheels that can be closed parallel to get into confined spaces or spread wide to straddle a wheelchair. On this base is fixed a crane like stand, and at its end hangs a 62cm wide coat hanger. The hardest part of the move is getting the sling under me, but once that's done it's a breeze. The nurse hooks the sling's corner loops onto the hooks on the two ends of the coat hanger, then pumps a jack-handle to lift me off the bed, then wheels me out and around, opens the feet with a lever, and drops me on my wheelchair. It takes a couple of minutes of one little nurse's time with no fuss or loss of any dignity the patient might have left. At least that was the way it was done in 1998 - the new millennium demanded new tricks.

On my all too numerous trips back to a menagerie of hospitals over the last decade I discovered that someone, somewhere in the bureaucratic behemoth of our hospital system decided that the Coat-Hanger-Hoist was so last-century that they had to be trundled down to the hospital graveyard with the wobbly wheelchairs and white elephants. What they were replaced with were shiny new machines that I'll call H-Hoists - the H standing for huge, heavy, horrendous, and the shape of the hanging bit that takes the place of the coat hanger. They come in various

■ *continued on next page*



■ *continued from previous page*

makes and models, but all run on batteries and come with color coded slings that hook onto the four ends of the H shaped device that pivots on a hanger from the end of the crane like machine. And they all function something like this:

To get me from A to B in a H-Hoist takes an average of four nurses and orderlies (once it took seven) about quarter of an hour (once it took half an hour). The first thing is getting the sling under me, which is cause for much debate: This way? Top? Bottom? Around or between the legs? The green straps, blue, orange? Whoops that can't be right, go and get Joe, he knows how it's done, what about Sally? Eventually the committee takes a vote and gets the sling under me. Right way? Who knows? Now they push the great crane over my wheelchair (after I tell them about opening its feet). Then they try to lift the sling and me – but the battery is flat! "What do we do now?" "Joe knows", "I'll see what I can find on ward X". Eventually someone finds a replacement battery that fits and is charged. Then the fun starts.

When they lift me up I pitch forward or tip back. But "don't worry", the H hanger has a handle, so a couple of nurses hang on to that for grim death to keep me sort of upright as the hoist lifts me up with my legs spread wide as if in stirrups in the maternity ward. While the two on the handle grunt and groan to keep me from pitching

or tipping two more grunt and groan trying to get the crane to deliver me to the trolley - but now we have a problem. They can't get me over it because the feet are too fat to go under it. They try this way and that way, "Joe would know", from the top? "Didn't Sally do it from the side?" Eventually a consensus forms that since I weigh less than a tonne they can pull the sling sideways so to land me on the edge of the trolley from where they can grunt and groan me into position.

After my procedure is (expertly, efficiently, excellently) done and dusted, I'm trolleyed back to where a repeat performance of the H-Host high wire act occurs in reverse to land me back on the edge of my wheelchair cushion with one leg tangled up in the air the other buckled beside the wheel. Any two of the bigger nurses or orderlies could have lifted me on and off the trolley in about 10 seconds each way – but they're not allowed to. Many of

them are dedicated competent professionals, who are apologetic about the H-Hoist circus, but even with an expert ringmaster the performance would still rival those of the lion-tamer and the clowns.

Those infernal hoists cost a preposterous amount of staff hours to do a ludicrously bad job that the Coat-Hanger-Hoist would do at a fraction of the cost and fuss. I am available any time to introduce the hospitals to a car crushing plant for their H-Hoists. And if they can dig up some of the good old Coat-Hanger-Hoists, I'd be happy to teach the staff how to use them. It would take about five seconds.



Steps Neurological Physiotherapy

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Have you tried Clinical Pilates?

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Move Better; Feel Better; Live Better

Call Steps on 03 9568 5611 today to arrange an appointment

Regional Networks Program

Over the last few years, AQA has been working towards developing support networks for people living with SCI in regional Victoria and Tasmania. This year, we are excited to officially launch our regional networks program, as part of the Spire launch year.

The Spire vision for the regional networks is based on partnership. We're looking to set up these networks progressively across the regional areas in Victoria and Tasmania. The process we're following involves an initial survey sent out to people living with SCI in the region to help inform where and how we start. Based on the results of the survey, we invite those who registered interest to a meeting to form a core group to work with us to build the network in their region and help set the priorities for the group.

Ballarat SCI Regional Support Network

The first such group is based in Ballarat, in the Grampians Region and the official launch was on Friday, 20th March at the Lakeview Hotel in Wendouree. This group has got off to a great start with 20 people attending the launch event to socialise over lunch and share ideas and vision for the group and how they could work in partnership with Spire to progress a common agenda. Prior to the launch event, the group has already been meeting monthly since December last year to get to know each other and plan their agenda of activities for the oncoming months. Already a Discovering the

Power in Me (DPM) session has been scheduled extending over 3 weeks from end April to early May (one day a week) for this group in Ballarat.

Hume / Southern Loddon Region

Now that the Ballarat network has been launched, we have

already sent out a survey for the Hume / Southern Loddon Region and the results are already in. We'll be collating the results and providing feedback to the respondents over the coming weeks.

Other areas will follow soon and meanwhile you can follow the roll out and activities of the group on our Facebook page and on the new Spire website to be launched soon, which has a separate noticeboard for regional networks under the Community section.



AQA CEO Peter Trethewey launches Spire regional networks in Ballarat



First planning meeting for Ballarat SCI regional support network

Health, fitness & mindset with Curtis

Paralympian and qualified personal trainer Curtis Palmer will feature as a guest writer in NewsLink sharing his wealth of knowledge around health, fitness and mindset. Below Curtis provides his first post on what we hope will be a popular and ongoing series of educational information.

G'day everyone, my name is Curtis Palmer and I'm really looking forward to sharing with you some of my insights around health, fitness, & mindset.

Spire is a wonderful organisation that accomplishes a lot for the community and I'm very honoured to be involved with such a quality organisation. I appreciate the mission statement Spire has fostered and it is one that I empathise with in my own business, "We enable individuals affected by spinal cord injury to attain maximum independence."

We do it pretty tough sometimes don't we? I'm not sure where we'd be without the help of organisations like Spire, but we are a very resilient bunch of people and I love the fact that in the face of a lot of adversity we stand up the best we can and smash through the barriers put in front of us.

We do our very best to prove to society that we are worthy employees - we voice our opinions when our rights are affected, we live as ordinary lives as possible and, among other things, we have some of the best challenged athletes in the world. But that doesn't hide the fact that we are a marginalised group of society, our health is below par, our incomes are

low, the services we get aren't necessarily adequate. Still, we soldier on.

With all this in mind going to the gym or eating nutritious, organic, locally grown food is probably not that high on the priority list, even though we all know the benefits of moving, being active and looking after what's on the inside.

The aim of writing for Spire in this newsletter is to give you the tools to make some changes in your health and fitness. Its free advice for you to do with as you please. I'll share with you what's worked for me over my years as a Paralympic athlete and also share the knowledge I have gained from my mentors and courses I have done.

To give you a brief background on who I am I'll start with my history as an athlete. I broke my neck in 1992 at the age of 15 in a rugby league tackle and I used sport as a rehab tool to regain my confidence and get back to living. I'm a kiwi but I call Australia home. I've been to four Paralympic games and medaled in three. I'm a World Champion and currently training my butt off to make the team that competes in Rio 2016, representing Australia.

For many years I've lived my life as an athlete and it was this passion that lead me to take up



a career as a Personal Trainer. When I'm not training myself I am working as a PT at a gym in South Caulfield. I love what I do and have lots of plans to help the disability community reach their health and fitness goals. Sharing my knowledge in this newsletter is part of that plan.

I can understand why we see very few people attend gyms or take up a personal trainer. It's expensive, can be inaccessible, transport maybe an issue and do trainers actually know what to do with someone with a disability?

This is where we have to take charge of our own lives and adopt a solutions based mindset. We deal with obstacles everyday so let us use those skills to figure out how to improve our health. Don't settle for the mediocre. Demand the best for your health.

In upcoming newsletters I'll share some helpful tips but feel free to contact me if you have further questions at curtis.palmer@bigpond.com.

Buchan Caves Stairclimber and world-first wheelchair design improving access

A new stairclimber and motorised all-terrain wheelchair at Buchan Caves Reserve will help visitors with significant mobility limitations enjoy one of Victoria's most scenic attractions thanks to Parks Victoria. Previously, both Fairy Cave and Royal Cave were inaccessible due to the many steps, narrow passageways and uneven ground, however now the stairclimber which is operated by Parks Victoria cave guides enables visitors to experience one of the most spectacular viewing areas of Fairy Cave.

The Stairclimber is provided by the Buchan Caves Reserve and can take passengers with mobility limitations up to 60kgs in weight. To use the Stairclimber, visitors who use wheelchairs are required to transfer from their personal wheelchair into the Stairclimber. The Stairclimber is operated by an experienced cave guide who will take the visitor down into Fairy Cave.

Please visit www.youtube.com/watch?v=0qt7RedcyAA to view a short video made by the manufacturer of the PS Outdoor

Stairclimber to get a better understanding of how it works.

Booking a tour of Fairy Cave using the Stairclimber is by appointment only and bookings are required in advance. Cave tours using the Stairclimber are not available at peak visitor periods such as Easter weekend. Use of the Stairclimber is free but a cave tour fee still applies.

For further information and to make a Stairclimber booking contact the Buchan Caves Reserve on 03 8627 4700.

Also recently launched was the world's first motorised all-terrain wheelchair that is available to help people with limited mobility explore Buchan Caves Reserve and Cape Conran Coastal Park.

All-terrain wheelchairs are suited for sandy and semi-rough tracks and this new motorised version was designed to make it easier for people to explore the hilly trails in these areas. The all-terrain wheelchair is suitable for children and adults, easy to disassemble and fits in the back of a station wagon.

Two operators, or sherpas, are required to operate the motorised all-terrain wheelchair and the passenger is required to wear a bike helmet. Passengers must provide their own helmet.

The motorised all-terrain wheelchair can be borrowed for free and may be booked in advance by contacting Cape Conran Coastal Park Cabins and Camping on 03 5154 8438. Best access to the beach using the chair is at Sailors Grave Day Visitor Area.

Two new picnic tables that can be accessed by people in wheelchairs are also soon to be installed at Buchan Caves Reserve.

The equipment is part of a broader program instigated by Parks Victoria to improve park access for all. The program has resulted in 15 wheelchairs being provided in seven parks across Victoria in the past three years.



A busy year ahead for Foundation 97

Foundation 97 is a not-for-profit organisation dedicated to assisting non-funded spinal cord injured Victorians in the areas of sport and recreation. Foundation 97 co-founder, Tracy Clarke, provides a brief overview of the fundraising events they have in store for the months and year ahead.

There's lots of exciting things happening at Foundation 97.

A wonderful day was had by all on Australia Day in Bendigo. Foundation 97 was present at Lake Weeroona which saw over 12,000 people take part in the celebrations. The foundation was joined by two brave Bendigo locals in Matt & Dion who have been helping the Foundation to raise much needed funds for unfunded Spinal Cord Injured Victorians.

Matt and Dion will be taking Foundation 97 with them when they travel to the Northern Territory to take part in one of the toughest Desert Rallies in Australia. The Finke Desert Rally covers more than 400kms on dirtbikes and quadbikes. Foundation 97 will be with the guys every step of the way.

To donate to Matt and Dion's fundraising cause please visit: www.gofundme.com/dion-mattfinke.

I have also just received word that Motorcycling Victoria (MV) are donating \$200 towards the boys fundraising and the CEO has stated a quote to be released as part of a Press Release within the next few days. The plan for the Press Release is going to Australian Dirt Bike Magazine,

MotoOnline, Fullnoise, Trial Rider, the Bendigo Advertiser, WIN News Bendigo, the Herald Sun and Nine News Melbourne.

March will see the Second annual Bendigo Wheelchair Tennis Tournament held in conjunction with Foundation 97 major sponsor, the Bendigo Tennis Association. The 2015 McDonalds Classic Gold tournament will be held from the 28th March - 5th April in Bendigo. If you are interested in playing or would just like to watch a game or two, please contact Noel & Tracey Clarke - 0417 895 166 or visit f97.com.au for more details.

Foundation 97 would like to announce that Applications are once again open for funding

opportunities. Grants will be awarded to successful applicants for the purchase of essential modified equipment for regular and consistent participation in sport and recreational activities or education. Please visit f97.com.au for more information and application forms.

To stay updated on everything the Foundation is up to, Like us on Facebook, Follow us on Twitter or check out the Website at - f97.com.au.

And don't forget 'Lucky I'm Alive Day' - 31st May 2015. 97cents is all it takes to make a huge difference. If you would like to fundraise for Foundation 97, give us a buzz.

This year is getting very exciting already.

Many thanks again and buzz me if you have any queries.

Tracey
0417 895 166



Dion Duvoisin (left) and Matt Combs (right) will be riding to help raise much-needed funds for Foundation 97. Their target is to raise \$10,000.

Please help me

A lady goes to see the doctor. "I fart all the time, Doctor Johnson, but they're soundless, and they have no odour. In fact, since I've been here, I've farted no less than twenty times. What can I do?"

"Here's a prescription, Mrs. Barker. Take these pills three times a day for seven days and come back and see me in a week."

The next week, an upset Mrs. Barker marched into Dr. Johnson's office: "Doc, I don't know what was in those pills, but the problem is worse! I'm farting just as much, and they're still soundless, but now they smell terrible! What do you have to say for yourself?"

"Calm down, Mrs. Barker," said the doctor soothingly. "Now that we've fixed your sinuses, we'll work on your hearing!"

Cross eyed dog

A guy takes his Rottweiler to the vet.

"My dog is cross eyed. What can I do"

The vet says "Let me have a look" and he goes over and picks up the dog and starts examining its eyes.

After a while the Vet says to the man "I am going to have to put your dog down"

"Why? Because he is cross eyed?"

"No" says the vet. "Because he is really heavy"

Day off work

Paddy and Murphy are working on a building site.

Paddy says to Murphy. "I need to have a day off. I am going to pretend I am mad and get a day off"

So he climbs up the rafters, hangs upside down and starts screaming "LOOK AT ME I AM A LIGHTBULB. I AM A LIGHTBULB"

The foreman sees this and shouts out "Paddy your mad. Go home"

A few minutes later Murphy starts packing his stuff to leave as well.

The foreman says "Where the hell do you think you're going"

Murphy says "Well I can't very well work in the dark can I"

Things not to say on your Valentine's date...

- I really don't like this restaurant that much, but I wanted to use this 2-for-1 coupon before it expired.
- I used to come here all the time with my ex.
- I never said you NEED a nose job. I just said it wouldn't hurt to consider it.
- I really feel I've grown in the past few years. Used to be I wouldn't have given someone like you a second look.

Horse wants a beer

A horse walks into a bar. He walks up to the bartender and says "Give me a beer." The bartender is stunned, so he heads to the back of the bar to speak with the owner.

"Hey boss" he says, "there's a horse in the bar asking for a beer."

The bar owner pauses for a second, then replies "Well then give him one, but charge him double. Horses don't know the price of beer." So the bartender heads back out front and hands the horse a beer.

"You know," says the barkeep, "we don't get many horses around here."

To which the horse replies, "At these prices I'm not surprised."

Quick Jokes

- When you get a bladder infection, urine trouble.
- A man was caught stealing in a supermarket today while balanced on the shoulders of a couple of vampires. He was charged with robbery on two counts.
- Two cows are in a field eating grass. One cow turns to the other and says "Hey, what are your thoughts about Mad Cow Disease". The other cow replies "I couldn't care less. I am a sheep"
- Two fish swim into a concrete wall. One looks at the other and says "dam"

FOR SALE

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 I121 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 \$11,000 ono

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

Karma Electric Wheelchair

Near new 18" Karma Electric wheelchair, double batteries with ROHO cushion.

Price \$1,500 ono

Phone 03 9830 2506 or 0413 071 082 (Lyn) (09/14#a)

Infinite Handcycle

Colac region, but can get it to Geelong.

Price \$800

Mobile 0406 103 490 (Peter)

Email macktruck68@hotmail.com (08/14#a)

Quantum 6000 Electric Wheelchair

Headrest and Tilt.

Price Make an offer

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

Vogue R 400, Tilt @ Recline Powerchair

3 years old with battery charger, tools and ponchos for the rain.

Price \$2,700 ono

Phone 03 9429 1000 (Alice)

Email alicep@genser.com.au (03/14#a)

Magic V6 Frontier

12 months old; Left Hand Controls, Excellent 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)

FOR SALE

Holden Vx Calais 2001

5.7 Litre V8; Dual Fuel (70 Litre gas & 75 Litre petrol); Has Vx SS spoiler; 2100kg Hayman Reese tow-bar; tinted windows; hand controls fitted (standard push/pat controls, fold away accelerator pedal, electronic indicator/horn/wipers on hand controls); 260,000 kms.

Price \$5,000 with no RWC or \$6,000 with RWC

Phone 0458 309 702 (Frank) (01/15#a)

1990 Toyota HiAce Commuter

Auto; air-con; power steering; rear electric hoist & ramps; 12 seater or 9 seater with wheelchair access; 165,300 km, RWC.

Price \$7,000

Phone 03 9429 1000 (Alice)

Email alicep@genser.com.au (03/14#a)

2001 Nissan Maxima ST

4 speed Auto; dual airbags, ABS; climate control; cruise control; central locking Push/Pat hand-controls; flip up accelerator; spinner knob; function controls for self cancel indicators & HI /LO beam on spinner knob, removable instructor brake, Sto N Go roof mount wheelchair hoist system roof rack, & more, 121,000 kms.

Price \$12,000 ono

Mobile 0466 551 355 Paul (Cranbourne) (02/14#a)

Electric Bed

King single from GMS Rehabilitation; fully adjustable; 2 years old; no mattress; in Very good condition; Cost \$2,400 new.

Mobile 0425 834 008 (Joyce - South Morang)

Price: \$800 - negotiable (01/15#a)

Body-Craft Home Gym

Body Craft Home Gym and dumbbells, pick-up only from Croydon.

Mobile 0409 519 011 (Josh)

Price: \$300 ono (12/14#a)

ROHO Cushion

RoHo Cushion rarely used suit large person.

Price \$250 ono

Mobile 0490 067 334 or 0468 339 541 (Sue) (07/14#a)

LIKO Overhead Hoist

Maximum 200kg, comes with motor, rail and sling.

Price \$2,000 ono

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

LikoLight Portable Hoist

Lifting capacity: 140 kg, gel type batteries, battery charger, no part weighs more than 10 kg, comes with LikoLight Travel Bag.

Price \$2,000 ono

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

Double Bed with Single Air Pressure Care Mattress

Double Bed with single air pressure care mattress (Ultimate 75); comes with raised sides, electric remote and repositioning.

Price \$3,000

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

CLASSIFIEDS

ITEMS FOR FREE

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)

Handsome Ramp

3m x 1.5m steel framed ramp with merbau top and landing. Owner to dismantle and take away; Beaumaris area.

Phone: 03 9589 1268 (Jan) (5/14#a)

Braun Hydraulic Wheelchair Platform Lift

Suitable for large van; in perfect working order.

Phone 9489 0777 (Spire Info Department) (11/12/#a)

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)

Medical Continece Supplies

Please call the Info/Peer Support Department on 03 9489 0777)

- 25 x 750ml Simpla Trident T1 Leg Bag - Short Tube
- 70 x 750ml Simpla Trident T1 Leg Bag - 30cm Tube
- 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

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.

HOW CAN I SUPPORT PEOPLE WITH SPINAL CORD INJURY

Make a donation

With community support Spire continues to make a difference in the lives of people who sustain spinal cord injury and for the family that support them. You can provide support with a donation.

By Phone – please ring AQA Victoria on 03 9489 0777 and have your credit card details available. (Mastercard, Visa, American Express)

By Mail (cheque or credit card) – fill in the slip below and send with your cheque to:

AQA Victoria Ltd
P.O. Box 219
Fairfield VICTORIA 3078

Name: (Mr/Mrs/Miss/Ms) _____

Address: _____

Suburb: _____ P/Code: _____

Phone Number: _____ Mobile: _____

Email: _____

I'd like to donate: \$ _____

Card Type: Visa Mastercard Amex

Card Number:

Expiry Date: _____

Name on Card: _____

Signature: _____