

Spire is a service division of AQA Victoria



Arnold Sports Festival Australia

9



Volunteer BBQ 2019

COMMUNITY

8



Nepal

TRAVEL

10



Badminton - more than a game

HEALTH & WELLBEING

12

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

Spire NewsLink seeks to publish material of interest to people experiencing issues in life arising from a spinal cord injury or other physical disability, their family and social networks, clinicians, professionals and other organisations with an interest in this community.

Spire NewsLink welcomes content for publication. Content will be published at the discretion of the Editor who retains the right to edit all submissions as they see fit.

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FROM THE CEO

Well, we're off to a flying start to the year following our move to 416 Heidelberg Rd in January. Since that time it's been great to see so many clients and members of our Community visiting the office and using the spaces for meetings and activities. We welcomed the Women with SCI Network to the Office over one weekend and it was great to see the spaces being used. It's also been great to see our staff and volunteers embracing the opportunity of the new spaces to collaborate, consult and work together to develop our Service approach. We see our Peer Support Coordinators and Support Coordinators working together with clients to set up NDIS plans and building capacity. Our Service Engagement Coordinator working closely with Information and Referral team to add value to every enquiry. Our staff and volunteers with lived experience contributing their perspective to our work with clients and the development of services.

Not to sit back following our move, we have now commenced a facilitated Strategy Review that we plan to complete by June this year.

Approaching Strategy as Insights fed into a Framework to inform Decisions about future direction

and priorities, our Directors and Staff will be revisiting our Why, our What and our How, based on insights gained from consulting clients, staff, volunteers, SCI leaders, the Research community and change leaders from disability and other sectors.

There will be a range of opportunities to participate including a general survey and I encourage you to offer up your insights and be part of shaping the future of AQA in supporting the clients and community we serve.

As we prepare for this review I can also let you know that as we do each year following the AQA AGM, the Board elects Board Office Bearers and this year I'm pleased to announce that Michelle O'Sullivan has been elected Chairman of the Board. Colin Daws steps down after 4.5 years as Chairman. I'd like to personally thank Colin for his contribution to the good governance of the organisation both as Chairman and as an active member of the Board's Finance & Audit Committee. The Board and the whole organisation have benefited from Colin's inclusive and collaborative leadership. Colin has played a significant role in the Board developing from Governing



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

business as usual in a relatively stable external environment to prepare for Governing Strategically in a volatile and uncertain environment. On behalf of all Directors who served with Colin, the staff and Volunteers of AQA and from me as CEO we thank Colin greatly for his commitment to AQA.

We look forward to working with Michelle O'Sullivan and Directors as we refresh our Strategy and look to maximise the opportunities of the times.

HIGHLIGHTS

Welcome to the April issue of NewsLink for 2019.

Volunteers play a huge role in the services that AQA provides to people with spinal cord injury. As a way of thanking our volunteers, we organised a BBQ at Altona Beach. Please turn to page 8 for a recap of the day.

Spire once again showcased inclusive sport as part of the Arnold Sports Festival. Turn to page 9 to read more.

Spire mentor Julie Kent, shares her amazing experience from an 8-week trip to China, Tibet and Nepal. Please turn to page 10 to read more.

On page 12 Duke Trench-Thiedeman shares his inspiring story of how going outside of his comfort zone has given him opportunities he never thought were possible.

Robert Chaffe had the privilege of spending an afternoon late

last year fly fishing, something that he thought was not possible. Turn to page 14 to read about his experience.

We welcome contributions to NewsLink. Deadlines for the upcoming editions of NewsLink are:

June	1 st June 2019
August	1 st August 2019
October	1 st October 2019
December	1 st December 2019

Vic Electric Wheelchair Sports Assoc. (VEWSA)

VEWSA is the peak organisation for powerchair sports in Victoria. All five of their sports are modified and designed for people in electric wheelchairs.

Balloon Soccer, Hockey, Powerchair Hockey and Powerchair Football are non-contact sports. All sports except for Powerchair Hockey have a speed limit of 10km/ph.

Balloon Soccer, Powerchair Hockey and Rugby are played at National level. Powerchair Football is played at National and International level, while Powerchair Hockey is also played Internationally.

For more information about the sports and to discuss your suitability please contact VEWSA's President, Luke David:

M 0424 160 174

E luke.david@vewsa.org.au

Smartphone App for Women with Disability

Sunny is free app that supports all women with disability who have been impacted by sexual assault, domestic and family violence, to understand violence, know their rights and reach out for support. Designed by women with disability for women with disability, it helps to:

- understand what violence and abuse are
- learn about different types of violence
- tell your story
- understand what has happened
- know your rights
- find people who can help

Learn more www.1800respect.org.au/sunny

If you or someone you know is impacted by sexual assault, domestic or family violence, call 1800RESPECT on 1800 737 732 or visit www.1800RESPECT.org.au.

In an emergency, call 000.

Discovering the Power in Me (DPM)

Spire will be holding a motivational/goal setting training program called 'Discovering the Power in Me' (DPM).

The program consists of 12 units and brings together aspects of positive psychology specifically developed for people who experience traumatic injury. The purpose is to help build hope, inner strength, resiliency, and self efficacy in people with disabilities and their family in order to re-assert control over their lives.

DPM is facilitated by people living with a spinal cord injury and combines video-based material with group discussion. Some goals of DPM are;

- creating a positive mindset;
- setting and achieving goals
- finding creative solutions and possibilities;
- building a future of hope and resiliency;
- creating a new vision of independence for the future;
- understanding how the mind works;
- taking control of the way we think.

The next DPM will be held in the AQA training rooms in Fairfield and is completely free of charge Spire members or subscribers.

As places are limited, please RSVP before 1st July 2019.

When: 8th, 10th & 15th July 2019 (11am–4pm)

Venue: AQA Office in Fairfield

RSVP: By 1st July 2019

Phone: 03 9489 0777

Email: info@spire.org.au



Research: Intermittent Catheter Quality of life survey

Ethics Approval ETHLR.18.044

Do you use an intermittent catheter to empty your bladder?
Are you aged 18 or over?

Hollister Incorporated is conducting this global research project in order to gain a better understanding of the catheter user. This is a comprehensive survey; it includes attributes like; quality of life, social connectivity, UTI management, emotional aspects of life and other areas. Please help represent Australian I.C. users in this international research by completing the survey:

Link to survey:

<http://www.bit.ly/HollisterICSurvey>

(note: Survey closes June, 2020)

If you would like to know more, please contact Hollister Continence on freecall 1800 880 851 or Local Survey Investigator: Paris Prunell, Snr Mgr Global Clinical Education M: 0438 366 992 or email E: paris.purnell@hollister.com

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Continence Care
People First



For your Wheelchair and Mobility needs

Wheelability is a new online business focusing on providing choice and an easy one stop online shop to maintain, personalise and improve your ride

Some of our growing product line includes

- Wheelchairs
- Scooters
- Everyday
- Bags
- Sports
- Pumps
- Wheels
- Bearings
- Tyres
- Ramps
- Tubes
- Gloves
- Casters
- Cushions
- Brakes
- Gloves
- Brakes
- Cushions
- Lightweight parts
- Brakes
- Tools
- Suspension forks
- & more

We have it all, top name brands at great prices so come and check us out at:

www.wheelability.com.au

Inspired. The way travel should be



Planning your holiday should be as exciting as your time away.

Hi, I'm Fiona. With over 20 years' travel industry experience, I can secure the most competitive rates, plus my natural ability to go the extra mile, ensures that all my

clients receive the highest quality service. And, as a wheelchair user myself, I have insight into the travel needs of a person with a disability. Your journey starts here.

Fiona Donaldson
Your personal travel manager

M: 0403 868 746
E: fiona.donaldson@travelmanagers.com.au
travelmanagers.com.au/FionaDonaldson

Part of the House of Travel Group
ACN: 113 085 626 Member: IATA, AFTA, CLIA



SCI Community Network Groups Round-up

There's always lots happening with our Community Networks. The groups provide an opportunity to connect with other people with an interest in spinal cord injury (SCI), share stories & ideas, network, socialise, and to get information on things like the latest equipment, policy developments, through to new developments in SCI management & research.

Mornington Network

The Mornington Network continues to meet at Steeples Restaurant in Mornington on the 3rd Monday of each month. They have been sharing information with each other on various activities they are involved with. They've had great discussions around access at the Melbourne Grand Prix, air rifle shooting at Springvale Shooting Club, sailing with Sailability at Blairgowrie Yacht Squadron etc.

Gippsland Network

The Gippsland Network usually meet on the 2nd Tuesday of the month. The group have decided to alternate their monthly meetings between Warragul, Traralgon and Bairnsdale. They have attended Painesville Yacht Club to do some sailing with Sailability, and most recently met at the Warragul Country Club where they had 2 guest speakers talking about incontinence and the NDIS. It's fantastic to see some of the group taking leadership roles in regard to organising guest speakers and venues. In May the group will be talking part in a "Discovering the Power in Me (DPM) workshop. This will be held in Traralgon

Shepparton Network

On the first Wednesday of

April, the Shepparton Network met in Echuca for the first time to network with different people in the local area. The group welcomed new members to the meeting where they had a social lunch at the Echuca Workers. It was a great meeting with each person getting something out of it, whether it's new social connections or going to an area they have not been to frequently. The group brainstormed future activities including canoeing and fishing at one of the many accessible jetties along the Murray River, developing the Information Booklet, and inviting Access Inclusion Officers from the local Shire.

Bendigo Network

The Bendigo Network continues to meet on the 2nd Thursday of the month, which was recently changed to accommodate more people. At the last meeting, the group learned about the PepperGreen Farm, which is a social enterprise that supports all individuals in achieving their goals such as dance, employment, woodwork and gardening. The Bendigo Network had a tour of the impressive fruit and vegetable farm, art gallery, cafe and retail shop, all of which is looked after by the community.

Ballarat Network

The Ballarat Network has been physically active since the start of the year. In addition to meeting on the 3rd Thursday of the month for wheelchair yoga and sailing, some members of the group have met at the Ballarat Yacht Club every Thursday to learn how to sail solo with Sailability. It has been a great opportunity to try something they never thought of, with everyone agreeing that sailing gave them a sense of freedom.

Geelong Network

The Geelong Network meets on the 3rd Wednesday of each month, and at their last meeting they had a wheelchair badminton and rugby try-day at the Try Boys Stadium with Parallel Sports. With the help of Spire's own professional badminton player Duke, and professional rugby player Josh, the Geelong Network enjoyed learning how to play badminton and rugby in a safe and social atmosphere. Sport wheelchairs were provided which enabled the group to play each sport more comfortably and easily. In late April, the Geelong and Ballarat Network will be having their first joint meeting on the accessible Corio Princess cruise in Geelong.

Ovens Murray Network

Spire is looking to start a new Regional Network in the Ovens Murray area, near the Victoria-NSW border. If you are in the Ovens Murray area, we'd love to hear from you. Please fill out this survey so we can

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get a better idea of what you want to see from this network: www.surveymonkey.com/r/OvensMurrayNetwork.

Women with SCI Network

The Women with SCI Network met at the new AQA offices for their most recent meeting. Being the first meeting for the year it was fairly casual and social, with the group members going for a push to Fairfield Park in the ideal weather. Afterwards the group

had some refreshments and a conversation about a range of subjects. The next meeting will be on Saturday 4th May around the topic of nutrition at the AQA offices in Fairfield.

Professionals with SCI network

The SCIP network meets every three months usually at the offices of the Lonely Planet in the city. The group supports people with SCI or similar physical complex disability in all

aspects of career development. You may be beginning your career, undergoing rehabilitation, volunteering, unemployed, employed f/t, p/t etc.

For up-to-date information on any of the SCI Community Network Groups, please visit www.spire.org.au/community/community-networks. If you're interested in getting involved, please contact us on 03 9489 077 or info@spire.org.au.

Upcoming Events	Date	Time	Location
Shepparton Regional Network	1 st May 2019	11am – 3pm	TBA
Women with SCI Network	4 th May 2019	2pm - 4pm	AQA Office 416 Heidelberg Rd, Fairfield
Traralgon Regional Network	14 th May 2019	11am – 3pm	TBA
Bendigo Regional Network	9 th May 2019	11am – 3pm	TBA
Ballarat Regional Network	16 th May 2019	11am – 3pm	TBA
Spinal Cord Injury Network of Professionals (SCIP)	16 th May 2019	4pm – 6pm	Lonely Planet Offices 551 Swanston St,, Carlton
Mornington Regional Network	20 th May 2019	11am – 3pm	TBA
Geelong Regional Network	22 nd May 2019	11am – 3pm	TBA
Ovens Murray Regional Network	May 2019	TBA	TBA
Shepparton Regional Network	5 th June 2019	11am – 3pm	TBA
Traralgon Regional Network	11 th June 2019	11am – 3pm	TBA
Bendigo Regional Network	13 th June 2019	11am – 3pm	TBA
Mornington Regional Network	17 th June 2019	11am – 3pm	TBA
Ballarat Regional Network	20 th June 2019	11am – 3pm	TBA
Geelong Regional Network	26 th June 2019	11am – 3pm	TBA
Shepparton Regional Network	3 rd July 2019	11am – 3pm	TBA
Discovering the Power in Me (DPM)	8 th , 10 th & 15 th July 2019	11am – 4pm	AQA Office 416 Heidelberg Rd, Fairfield

Community & Volunteer BBQ 2019

As a way of thanking our many volunteers, we organised a BBQ at Altona Beach. Our volunteers play a major role in allowing us to provide services to the Spinal Cord Injury (SCI) community.

Volunteers play a huge part in many organisations. AQA Spire is fortunate that our many volunteers have a passion just like us to serve the spinal community. As a way of saying thank you to our volunteers we hosted a BBQ at Altona Beach with the support of Hobson's Bay Council and the Life Saving

Club. Altona Beach is a great venue that is truly wheelchair accessible. They have a beach matt, beach wheelchairs, and a fully accessible change room with toilets and showers.

The weather gods were with us on the day but the thermostat was stuck in the mid 30's which made it a little hot. Thankfully

we had access to the Life Saving Club's indoor air-conditioned room which meant the heat wasn't much of an issue. The BBQ was cooked to perfection by Amy and Marty. It was so good that we'll let them cook for us again next year.

We sat around for hours afterwards enjoying the sun and each other's company. A few of us made good use of the beach wheelchairs and got out into the water. Thank you to everyone who came along to enjoy the day and help out.

Not many people are aware that we have nearly 100 volunteers who contribute to our services through community networks, WOT days, peer support, journalism, website, newsletters, video production etc.

We would like to mention that Sal and his team at the Royal Talbot also make a huge contribution to what we do.

If you're interested in volunteering, please don't hesitate to contact us on 03 9489 0777 or info@spire.org.au.



Arnold Sports Festival Australia 2019

In March this year, Spire once again was part of the Arnold Sports Festival held at the Convention Centre in Southbank; spending three days showcasing, promoting and demonstrating inclusive sports and activities on the exhibition floor. It's great that we're able to demonstrate and bring awareness of inclusive sports to the general public at a world renowned event.

Spire, along with other like minded organisations, demonstrated several different sports and activities over three full days at the Arnold Sports Festival 2019 in Melbourne.

The sports and activities featured included:

- Wheelchair Softball
- Fully loaded softball
- Wheelchair Tennis
- VEWSA Soccer
- Badminton
- Wheelchair Basketball
- Come & Try

All of these sports are available for people to play at a local level or at the highest level like the Paralympic Games. In fact, many of the athletes taking part were Paralympic Gold medallists.

Our appearance at the festival was once again a great success, particularly in exposing the wider community to the skills and abilities of athletes with a disability, and raising awareness about the range of inclusive sports available.

The 'Come & Try' sessions were hugely popular with the general community. Spare wheelchairs were on hand thanks to Disability Sport & Recreation (DSR) for people to learn some skills from the experts and see what it's like to participate

in a sport from a different perspective.

The big man himself (Arnold) made sure he spent time with us and was genuinely interested in what we do. He even had a go at playing tennis.

The Arnold Sports Festival is Australia's largest fitness expo

and multi-sport festival with over 40 different sporting events and hundreds of professional and amateur competitors. The festival is very popular amongst all age groups with over 60,000 visitors attending.

It has become Arnold's mission to bring his fitness crusade to the world, encouraging people of all ages and abilities to take part in sport and activities that promote fitness, health and well-being.

Thank-you to all the athletes and volunteers that gave up their time to attend this event and make it the success that it was.



Nepal

Spire mentor Julie Kent, shares her incredibly amazing experience from her travels through Nepal.

I have recently returned from an 8-week trip to China, Tibet and Nepal. It was an incredibly amazing experience and I am more grateful than ever to be a wheelie here in Oz!

Whilst I was travelling through Nepal, I met some fellow wheelies and was lucky enough to spend some time with them.

The Kathmandu and Pokhara ILC (Independent Living Centres) are run by volunteers whom themselves have disabilities. They offer supports such as Peer Support, Advocacy and help with equipment, (mostly chairs and very limited pressure care) as well as offer support to rural communities.

The equipment sourced is predominantly second-hand wheelchairs from China. These chairs are not scripted to suit the individual, they are granted to individuals by need – thus leaving individuals susceptible to further health complications, such as severe scoliosis.

Cushions are not prescribed and granted to individuals on the basis of where they are most needed. In most situations, cushions are not an option and where they are an option, the condition they present in is not of a standard to give sufficient pressure relief - greatly increasing the risk of pressure sores, which poses further health risks. The medical treatment available to treat, maintain and educate individuals on wound care

isn't readily available, leaving individuals to treat their own wounds. As a result, infection and amputation of limbs is not uncommon.

However, with a strong western influence emerging into Nepal, along with an influx of international aid agencies such as the UN and UNICEF, the quality of life for the Nepalese is gradually changing and they are seeing improved conditions to healthcare, housing, education and hygiene.

Currently in Pokhara alone, (the second largest city in Nepal) there are thousands of people living with a disability. The exact number is not recorded. Some of these people are living in dark rooms, isolated, shunned and bed bound hidden away from society. Even in today's society to be disabled carries a shameful and embarrassing stigma to families.

However, with an increase of disabled travellers visiting Nepal, attitudes towards disability are changing. The Nepalese people are welcoming of foreign wheelies and seeing disabled tourists wheel through the streets is a positive shift for the local disabled.

To accommodate for international disabled visitors, Nepal's tourism industry has been working with government agencies to improve infrastructure. This in turn has improved conditions for locals. Upgrades have been made to roads in certain areas of Kathmandu and new buildings now follow specific regulations in relation to been accessible for us disabled.

Nepal is financially one of the poorest countries in the world, yet it is culturally one of the richest. The Nepali people have a strong connection with their Hindu beliefs. It has one of the lowest divorce rates in the world, finding people afar who



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come to Nepal to get married as they believe Nepal will bring prosperity and good fortune to their marriage.

There is a saying, which states, "People visit Nepal for the mountains and return for the people". This is so incredibly true. The people may be poor, yet they are incredibly rich.

The last four weeks of my trip was spent at Khagendra. Khagendra in Jorpati, just outside of the Kathmandu Valley is the main centre of residence for those with a disability. Currently there are 85 residents living here, with a waiting list that is continually growing due to the fact it is the only facility which caters for the specific needs of people with a disability.

Khagendra itself is in need of upgrades to its facilities to support and care for its residents.

The bathroom amenities are currently under renovation and new rooms are slowly being built.

There are many more upgrades needed such as basic heating. Currently there is no heating and trust me Kathmandu is FREEZING! I left just as Monsoon (winter) was beginning and I will not complain of Melbourne's winter ever again.

Despite all that is faced by the disabled in Nepal, they are the most humble and beautiful people that I have ever met. I am in awe of their strength and will to carry on against all adversity.

Their kindred family spirit has united strangers as one. There is no distinction amongst one another, for them, the extreme differences in their disabilities and backgrounds are of no relevance to who they are to one another. They each care for each other and do what is necessary to make sure one another are ok. They are a true family and I am very lucky to have met and spent time with these guys.

Currently Khagendra receives very little government funding and relies on donations and charity to help with daily expenditures such as food, water and clothing. Khagendra has limited physio equipment. Occupational Therapists (OT) and OT equipment were not available.

Recently 'Creative Nepal', an organisation co-founded by Krishna KK, a spinal resident and voice for Khagendra began a program making bracelets. The sales of these bracelets contributes towards the purchasing of tools to help repair wheelchairs, buy parts and equipment necessary for daily living.



Khagendra needs our support

I welcome you all to help support our fellow disabled of Nepal and donate any unused equipment such as wheelchairs, commodes, cushions, slide-boards, crutches as well as equipment parts such as castors, brakes, non-slip matting, weights, thera-bands AND any other equipment you feel would be of help.

- www.creativenepal.nl/en/khagendra
- www.ilsociety.org.np/our-services

For all donations please contact Julie Kent via email: julie.kent11022@gmail.com

Please share and help pull as many people together to help support our fellow disabled Nepalese as they truly are beautiful and deserving of our support.

For all travel enquiries to visit Nepal contact:

- Pankaj - Four Season Travel & Tours - www.go-nepal.com
- Sandra - TravAbility - www.travability.travel

Badminton is much more than just a game or sport to me

Duke Trench-Thiedeman shares his inspiring story of how going outside of his comfort zone has given him opportunities he never thought were possible.

Badminton is more than just a game or sport to me. It is a pathway for change and new experiences. My name is Duke Trench-Thiedeman and I would like to tell you what I think wheelchair badminton is all about.

But firstly, a bit about myself. I'm 66 years of age and have an incomplete spinal cord injury at T10, as a result of a motor cycle accident in October 2009. I have titanium rods at vertebrae T10 through to T12, and fused vertebrae from L3-L5. My mobility is by a



Duke receiving two awards for his services to the SCI community

manual wheelchair and I drive a modified hand controlled Hyundai station wagon with my wheelchair hoisted on top of my wagon and my sports wheelchair in the rear cargo compartment.

Now about wheelchair badminton. Why did I take up badminton?

I was getting out quite a lot mentoring at Austin Hospital Ward 3 North and participating at film and Trivia nights at Royal Talbot Rehabilitation Centre. I was a board member for a not-for-profit organisation for a few years. I was always in a wheelchair living a very comfortable lifestyle visiting many cafes with mates and living a relaxed lifestyle. Unfortunately, a wheelchair belly was developing to be more than just one spare tyre. I wanted to get a more physical experience.

I had tried other sports like wheelchair tennis, wheelchair handball, golf and sailing. At the time these sports were either too vigorous, with too many hazards like collisions or dependent on good weather conditions.

In 2016, I tried Wheelchair Para Badminton with another wheelchair badminton player. The courts were conveniently located at a YMCA Stadium and

the court fees very reasonable. I thought if I was going to play badminton I would put the effort in playing 3 days per week and it paid off. In 2017, I was selected to play for Australia in the World Para Badminton Championships in South Korea. Being an old fart I never thought I would be representing my country in the green and gold. I think I was the oldest player in the world to be playing at that level.

However, there is more to badminton than competing. In 2017 we created the Ability Para Badminton Club. Para Badminton is not only for people in wheelchairs but also other forms of impairment including amputees, sufferers of spina bifida and those of short stature etc. Of course the club is open to people of any gender.

The club members meet mostly on Saturdays and either have structured training with a coach or just casual friendly hitting and having fun. What's more important is that we meet after practice over a coffee and light eats. We usually discuss topics that relate to impairments, spinal injury, transportation and accessibility issues.

It's like a mini "What's Out There" day.

The important aspects of badminton for me are:

- Inclusion NOT exclusion.
- Wheelchair Badminton is a non-contact indoor sport (minimising injury).

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Duke at the 2017 World Para Badminton Championships in South Korea

- Participation and not being a spectator of others, getting involved.
 - The social atmosphere and fun, where I can exchange ideas with others in a similar lifestyle after an injury.
 - Being part of a group and going alone myself.
 - Being taken out of my comfort zone gave me opportunities I thought were not possible.
- Finally, what drives me and what are my goals?
Originally, I used to be a very self-doubting individual and

this limited me from achieving things that I could ever do or think of doing. My attitude has changed from “I don’t think I can do that” to “I will have a go and try it” and experiment, go outside my comfort/safe zone.

My goals are evolving from being about pure self-improvement to helping and assisting others to realise their true potential.

A particularly important goal and focal point for me is to help seniors and adults migrate from thinking that it’s all passed them and to take on some new challenges and participate.

For more information about Para Badminton, please visit www.facebook.com/Abilitybadminton.

Peer Health Coaching

Our Peer Health Coaching service aims to enhance quality of life, foster independence and provide up-to-date information around health-related areas for people living with a SCI.

Peer Health Coaching

is a pilot health intervention service which combines up-to-date clinical information, together with the collective lived-experience and knowledge of spinal cord injury (SCI). It seeks to help people make informed decisions and explore options in making educated choices to achieve health and wellbeing outcomes which are important to them.

It can cover elements, including but not limited to;

- bladder and bowel health,
- skin and wound care,
- mental health and
- healthy lifestyles.

It is not a prescriptive health intervention, but an ongoing coaching service which supports and facilitates individuals to take control and ownership of their health outcomes and work

towards them in a considered and informed manner.

The Peer Health Coaching service is principally a phone service but can be offered in other ways.

Please contact us on 03 9489 0777 or info@spire.org.au if you’re interested in receiving support.

For further information on our Peer Coaching services please visit www.spire.org.au/resources/peer-coaching.

Paraplegia: no barrier to fly fishing

Robert Chaffe had the privilege of spending an afternoon late last year fly fishing, something that he thought was not possible. His friend set up his float boat especially for Robert to test the suitability of launch sites and river conditions on the mighty Goulburn River for paraplegics and others with a disability.

November 30 was the perfect late spring day with a brisk, cool southerly wind complemented by a powder blue sky with a scattering of white clouds. As Captain Geoff Hall issued the instruction "You will do what you are told, when you are told to do it", we readied the small inflatable dingy for its first fly fishing trip with a 'Sedan Chair'. What was immediately evident is that three people in a 10 foot boat would be a challenge, so the captain's instruction was readily adopted. On with the life jackets, sun screen, polarised sun glasses and we were ready to shift the oars from their travel position and get the rubber dingy into the mighty Goulburn River.



'Sammy' the Rubber dingy set up with Robert on the 'Sedan Chair'

No, we haven't forgotten the fly rod, flies and all the gear including the landing net that would allow 'catch and release' without damaging the fish. We only had one fly rod and for a very good reason - this was a trial fish to see if a paraplegic like myself could fly fish the Goulburn River at Alexandra. The team was one person with the fly rod, one to help spot the fish and support me, and one to provide the power and navigate the river.

Within minutes of launching a feeding fish was spotted. The hunt was on. "Get the fly over there". "That's it... a roll cast... then lift and a full cast, you have dropped it right on his nose." The first 30 minutes on the river passed so quickly casting to fish after fish. We paused for a moment to catch our breath and try a new fly. Captain Geoff asked "how's the chair going". The wicker 'Sedan Chair' proved to be a very secure and comfortable platform for me to fish from. I felt that I had complete control.

The highlight for me was when we stalked up along a small peninsular tracking a feeding fish when, whack the trout struck at my fly. "Wait a second, don't strike too early" was going through my mind and my strike was just off a



Captain Geoff tries his luck with the fly rod while Robert keeps his eye on the fly and the water around the cast

fraction. The brown trout won that battle. High fives all around and the team reflected on how the stalk required everyone to work together. Time for afternoon tea as Captain Geoff passed over a bottle of water and a banana. The first two hours had dissolved into a moment of total relaxation and distraction. The peace of the river environment had me healing the mind, body and soul. Afternoon tea came to an end as a family of black ducks with a gaggle of tiny ducklings (hardly bigger than a cigarette box) edged along the river under the cover of overhanging vegetation. Back to fishing with three fisherman and one fly rod - back to the team effort spotting, fishing and propelling the boat over the river, but this time downstream! A few deft strokes and the rubber dingy slid across the river to spot after spot where any ripple on

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Support person Andrew became a third pair of eyes and of course shared in the fishing

the surface was a fish, until proved otherwise. Two hours slipped by and the tempo was up again as a major rise was fished. No luck. Now it's time to head home. What a time we had – refreshed, relaxed and renewed. What, no fish? Clearly you weren't there! The river had given us much more than a fish. We were tired, in the very best possible way, as the team swung into action and I transferred out of the boat with no trouble at all, then up the 6:1 ramp to the car with some invaluable help from my friends.

This was all made possible by the rubber inflatable boat with a solid marine ply floor providing a firm stable platform. The inflatable tubes around the boat ensured adequate stability and security. The 'Sedan chair' was the perfect spot to cast a fly sitting down giving full support to the upper body of a paraplegic. A great start and

one that was hard to fault. The boat balanced like a dream and the rubber skin combined with the oars ensured a totally silent trip along the river. Access and transfer to and from the boat was so easy and would only be improved by proper docking facilities. Captain Geoff's years of experience ensured a safe and secure day for all.

Need to de-stress, to un-wind, to gain a new perspective the business of our modern lives often exacerbated by stress and trauma? How to discover the empowerment of teamwork, the beauty of the river and the peace of fly fishing? The understanding of the food chain, the role of the various elements of land and water and all the mysteries of the river that inspired Kenneth Grahame to write 'The Wind in the Willows', including the immortal words that Ratty said "Believe me, my young friend, there is

nothing - absolutely nothing - half so much worth doing as simply messing about in boats." Could only made better by casting a fly.

During my rehabilitation from cancer induced spinal cord injury (SCI) at the Royal Talbot Rehabilitation Centre there was no such word as can't. I had trouble believing that I could fly fish again, therefore I couldn't resist the challenge when Captain Geoff asked for help in testing 'access for all abilities' to fly fishing. The 'Sedan Chair' will be refined, moves will be made to get the ramp and access points improved to now cope with paraplegics. The Goulburn River can be very effective therapy when assisted by those that have the boating skills like Captain Geoff. The Goulburn River must be respected as it can be a killer if not used carefully. To the question can paraplegics safely fly fish the Goulburn River for trout? The answer is an emphatic yes!

Winter Weather Precautions

People with disabilities, and particularly those with a spinal cord injury (SCI), are vulnerable to the extremes of weather in Australia, whether in winter or summer. These extremes can be a real danger since the body has a reduced ability to regulate temperature. As the weather cools down, we have put together some tips & tricks for you to keep in mind to stay warm and safe this winter.

Body temperature

People with a spinal cord injury (SCI) often struggle to regulate their body temperature. It is important to adopt specific strategies and be aware of certain situations to keep warm during the colder months. It's recommended that people with a SCI don't use heat packs or hot water bottles (and if they do, do so with caution) as many may not feel the extreme heat. Hot water bottles can also leak and result in burns that a person may not necessarily feel.

When the body gets cold, its response is to shiver to try and warm up. Shivering does not typically occur below the level of injury in people with SCI. Therefore, the body cannot compensate for cold temperatures and warm up, which can lead to hypothermia (abnormally low body temperature) which is potentially dangerous. It's always helpful to use extra blankets and to keep your hands and feet as warm as possible. Keep your room/surroundings cosy and warm with the use of space heaters or fireplaces. Do not venture out in the cold unless you absolutely need to. Your body can get critically cold long before you will realise.

Clothes

Dressing in layers is an useful trick for people with a SCI to use to stay warm; especially if you like to get out and about during winter. The layers trap in the heat, and you can add or remove layers depending on the temperature around you. Another useful tip is to invest in winter-friendly clothing and accessories. Putting blankets on your lap or wearing a coat on backwards can help keep you warm without compromising your ability to manoeuvre your chair. However, you also must remember to cover your back - not just the front.

Hydration

The human body uses more water in winter than summer because it takes more energy to keep warm, so it's incredibly important to stay hydrated. Dehydration can make you feel chronically cold, or overheated. As much as possible, soft drinks, coffee and caffeinated teas should be avoided, as the caffeine present in these drinks has a dehydrating effect on your body. So drink plenty of water instead!

Winter air is not only cold, but also very dry and can cause the skin to become parched.

One of the first signs of dehydration is dry and itchy skin, which can worsen quickly and lead to cracking and the beginning of skin breakdown. Applying a light moisturiser to your hands can help keep the skin stay hydrated and supple, and prevent cracking and discomfort. Frostbite is a condition to be wary of in the winter months. If you think you have developed frostbite, move to a warm area and seek medical attention immediately.

Physical Activity

Exercise not only keeps you active, strong, and healthy, but helps you stay engaged, alert and occupied. Colder temperatures cause muscles to tighten up, and exercise helps to reduce spasms, as well as getting blood flowing to keep lower limbs warm. Exercise also helps combat anxiety and depression, which are often associated with winter. You could try a range of motion exercises daily to maintain bodily strength. Alternately, you can ask your healthcare provider or GP to prescribe an exercise program for you, keeping your ability, fitness levels and goals in mind.

Always remember to be aware of the weather forecasts for your area. If you decide to venture outside on a cold day, remember to dress warmly in layers and keep a bottle of water handy for hydration. Winter is a challenging time for those with a SCI, but with a little preparation and vigilance, you can make it exciting!

Para Dance

Para Dance is a sport or activity for those people who use a wheelchair. The benefits vary from being social active, to improved fitness and coordination, through to general health. There is now a group that meets weekly at the Royal Talbot in Kew.

Dance & Roll is the first Para Dance sport club in Victoria. The Club was created not only for those who enjoy dancing, but also to provide an alternative for those who do not want to practice a mainstream sport but want to keep physically active. You can use your daily wheelchair and just enjoy the rhythms of the music and express yourself. The group would like to invite everyone with physical disabilities to join

the class every Thursday (school calendar) at the Royal Talbot Rehabilitation Centre in Kew from 6pm–7pm.

Wheelchair dancing is a popular social and recreational activity, with participants in over 40 countries. The physical benefits of wheelchair dancing include the maintenance of physical balance, flexibility, range of motion, coordination and improved respiratory control. The psychological effects of

dancing are social interaction and the development of relationships.

Wheelchair dancing started in Sweden in 1968, originally for recreation or rehabilitation, with the first competition held in 1975. The first international competition was also held in Sweden, in 1977. Several regional and international competitions followed and the first World Championship was held in Japan in 1998, the same year the sport came under the governance and management of the International Paralympic Wheelchair Dance Sport Committee. The Para Dance Sport World Championships are held every two years and were last staged in 2017 in Malle, Belgium.

Para Dance Sport is an elegant, graceful and stylish sport which involves athletes with a physical impairment. Participants can compete in different styles: dancing with an able bodied (standing) partner, or duo dance for two wheelchair users together, or group dance which involves wheelchair users only or together with able-bodied partners.

Standard dances include waltz, tango, Viennese waltz, slow foxtrot and quickstep. Latin American dances include the samba, cha-cha-cha, rumba, paso doble and jive. Freestyle/show dance can include the standard dances (conventional) or any style for presentation.

For more information contact Rocca Salcedo 0408523742 or roccasalcedo@hotmail.com.





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FOR SALE

Quantum Jazzy 1420 - Electric Wheelchair

Complete with two brand new batteries and battery charger; features tilt and lie flat and docking pin.

Price \$2,950

Mobile 0447 551 450 (Ross)

Email Rosstarry@bigpond.com (02/19#a)

Roll-A-Ramp

Comes with stirrups & supports for edges; 8-10metres long; Cost \$3000.00; <https://mobilityplus.com.au/product/roll-a-ramp-2>.

Price \$1,000

Phone 00416 977 010 (Tim) (04/19#a)

Ti-Lite Manual Wheelchair

Titanium; Light weight; Fold up; Swing away/detachable footplates.

Price Best Offer

Phone 5263 2150 (Kevin) (10/18#a)

Scooter - Breeze IV

Used.

Price Best Offer

Phone 5263 2150 (Kevin) (10/18#a)

Pride Quantum 6000Z Electric Wheelchair

Purchased in 2010; very little use; fitted with a right hand side Q-Logic Controller; has a Tru-Balance Power Positioning system for power lift, tilt and recline; batteries are dead but I'm prepared to purchase new batteries once a buyer has been found; original cost \$14,500.

Price \$2,500

Phone 0410 413 166 (Sue) (08/18#a)

Quickie Manual Wheelchair 2 Lite

Frame Width 19", Seat depth 15", Frame length regular. 24" Lite spoke wheel. Backrest tension adjust Ballistic. Cost \$4500. Includes Roho Cushion 48x41cm. 10 x 9 cells. Brand new - never used.

Price \$900 ono

Phone 0419 342 015 (Judi) (09/17#a)

Electric Hospital Bed

Bed is 8 years old; hasn't been used for the last 4 years; comes with a good mattress.

Price \$1,000 ono

Phone 03 5821 2244 (Geoff) (03/19#a)

Logitech GT Racing Wheel & Tri Pin

PS3 / PS2 / PC; Excellent working condition; Comes with quick release Tri pin for quads to use.

Price \$200

Phone 0416 556 183 (Gab) (06/18#a)

Roho Cushions

4 cushions sizes; 2 x 9x9 cells and 2 x 9x10 cells

Price \$100 Each

Phone 0402 204 992 (Colin) (10/16#a)

FOR SALE

2011 Mazda 6 Wagon

Hand controls fitted, never been involved in an accident; service booked is stamped; RWC & Balance of Registration; 154,000kms.

Price \$8,990 ono

Phone 0417 538 700 (Gary)

2004 Nissan Cube Autech

Includes Transit Wheelchair for Nissan Cube Autech; Automatic; Seats 4 plus wheelchair; Ramp for wheelchair access; Odometer only 77,416 kms - service history included.

Price \$10,400 ono

Phone 0447 372 972 (Helen) (01/19#a)

2003 Toyota Noah Van Wagon

5door; Auto 4sp 2.0i (Wheelchair) X Disabled Rear Access (Sloper); Rego till 06/19. 135,537 kms; Rear Access (Sloper) Vehicle; 5 Seats + Wheelchair; Rear Air Suspension; Climate Control.

Price \$16,500

Phone 0402 676 983 (Steven) (09/17#a)

Olympian Wheelchair Hoist

Can lift up to 150kg power chair to car boots; Hardly used.

www.autochair.co.uk/products/scooter-wheelchair-lifts/smart-lifter

Price \$600 ono

Phone 9841 9255 (Michael) (10/18#a)

Vehicle Wheelchair Lift - Electric

Pride Silverstar Backpacker Plus; Installed in 2011; Very little usage; Remote controlled unit that comes out of the van and lowers to the ground; Easily fitted by auto electrician Original cost \$4,500.

Price: \$800

Phone 0410 413 166 (Sue) (07/18#a)

2001 Nissan Maxima ST

4 speed Auto; dual airbags, ABS; climate control; cruise control; central locking remote control; power front seat driver; power steering+windows+mirrors, seat belt pre-tensioner; radial style hand control R/H side Push/Pat; flip up accelerator mod; spinner knob; easy spin unit with function controls for left cancel indicators & HI /LO beam on spinner knob, removable instructor brake, Sto N Go roof mount wheelchair hoist system roof rack, fabricate skeleton ladder frame to mount roof hoist to roof rack; ADR, AS compliance; VASS certification not require for this mod.; 121,000kms.

Price \$6,000 ono

Mobile 0466 551 355 (Paul - Cranbourne) (12/15#a)

ITEMS FOR FREE

FREE – Enviro Rubber Shower Insert

900mm x 900mm; Needs to be picked up from Sunshine West

Phone: 0423 124 013 (Scot) (07/18#a)

WANTED TO HIRE

WANTED - VW Caddy or similar - Auto

Would like to purchase an accessible vehicle; need it modified for a power wheelchair. I was thinking of a VW caddy or similar.

Phone: 0424 145 722 (Josh) (04/19#a)



Did you know AQA is registered not only to provide standard needs assistance with self-care activities and community participation but also high intensity?



Qualcare is a division of AQA Victoria Limited and is an industry recognised provider of high quality personal care services. For over 20 years Qualcare has delivered personal care and support throughout the state of Victoria to people with a disability, injury or illness in their homes and communities.

T 03 9489 0777
E qualcare@aqavic.org.au
W www.qualcare.org.au

WOMEN WITH SCI NETWORK

Every woman living with a SCI has great knowledge, experiences and skills that could be shared to help form strong community and networking opportunities. At Spire, our aim is to facilitate the development and continuity of network groups that can eventually take ownership and coordinate themselves, while still being supported by Spire's people and resources. So in December 2017 Spire started a **Women with SCI Network** group.

The women's network is passionate and enthusiastic about providing a safe, honest and open space that is informed and led by women living with a spinal injury. The group meets the first Saturday every two months and participates in information sessions, practical classes and provides the opportunity to share their views, ideas and opinions.

If you would like to commit to this group but have other life commitments, or you are interested in just attending or contributing to specific events (e.g. workshops, seminars or information sessions), you can pick and choose to what suits you!

If you are a women living with a spinal injury and interested in joining the group, please get in touch with us at info@spire.org.au. We would love to have you involved, and have you help us continue to build and make this network successful.

SUPPORTING SERVICES TO PEOPLE WITH SPINAL CORD INJURY

Making a donation... (Donations of \$2 or more are tax deductible)

With community support Spire continues to make a difference in the lives of people with a spinal cord injury and their family that support them.

Spire uses the value of people with lived experience of SCI to provide peer-facilitated and peer-informed services & supports to others living with SCI to help them deal with the issues of life.

We invite you to consider making a donation to help maintain and grow Spire's resources and services. Whatever sum you donate will assist us to provide services to people with Spinal Cord Injury.

Online: www.spire.org.au/support-us/donate

By Phone: 03 9489 0777, please have your credit card available (Mastercard, Visa, American Express).

By Mail Please call us and we will post you a Donation Form.