

Spire is a service division of AQA Victoria



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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

For the first time all Victorians are having a firsthand experience of what's known as PPE – Personal Protective Equipment. As Victorians here in Melbourne and across the State find our way through various levels of CoVid restrictions, including the mandatory use of masks, it's a chance to re-think what we consider to be our Personal Protective Equipment when facing challenging, uncertain and sometimes fearful times.

AQA people have been working hard to ensure our staff and clients have access to the practical equipment needed to help reduce the spread of Covid19 and to keep safe, including appropriate face masks, eye protection, gloves and so on. Our people are also working hard to adopt hygiene practices to help reduce the spread including washing and sanitising hands, cough and sneeze hygiene and social distancing where possible. These things apply to all parts of our life whether we are at work, at home or moving around the community.

So our PPE definitely includes equipment and supplies and

practical behaviours, but what else can we be using. The restrictions we are experiencing are designed to reduce movement around the community and create physical distance between people. For many they may also contribute to feeling disconnected and isolated; stuck at home and not being able to see family and friends face-to-face or do the social things we liked to do.

"R U OK?" day is on the 10th of September. R U OK? is an Australian suicide prevention organisation that encourages us to have conversations with others to help:

1. Boost our confidence to connect in a meaningful way and ask about life's ups and downs
2. Nurture our sense of responsibility to regularly connect and support others
3. Strengthen our sense of belonging because we know people are there for us
4. Be relevant, strong and dynamic

AQA shares these objectives and we're encouraging all of us to



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consider these conversations as part of the *Personal Protective Equipment* we use when facing challenging, uncertain and sometimes fearful times in our lives.

Have a think about the PPE you're using at this time and what else you might add to that list to ensure that it's more than just a mask. I encourage you to draw on the information and supports at AQA, and I thank our community for the support you are showing and providing back to our people.

## HIGHLIGHTS

Welcome to the August issue of NewsLink. We hope you are doing well in the crazy COVID-19 environment. It's great to see most people are following the restrictions to bring the numbers down. It's important to set and follow a daily routine for your mental health.

This is exactly what Young Ok is doing. In our feature article starting on page 8, you can read about how she is dealing with the restrictions and at the same time continuing her passion with gardening.

AQA has taken all of our

Community Networks online during COVID-19. It's a great way of connecting with people and sharing your lived experiences. The Networks have expanded to include people living across Victoria and along the NSW-Victoria border, offering a way of meeting new people regardless of distance or transport. There is also a network for Family & Friends. Turn to page 5 for the full details.

On page 12, you can read Part 2 of our series on the History of AQA. Part 2 talks about The founding of AQA services, starting with home-based care for people with disabilities.

Anthony Bartl was lucky enough to travel to Jakarta in Indonesia just before COVID-19 restrictions. He had a fantastic time over and timed his return flight perfectly. You can read his story on page 16.

Remember to let us know if you'd like something included in future issues of NewsLink. Below are this year's contribution deadlines for the upcoming editions of NewsLink:

October	1 <sup>st</sup> October 2020
December	1 <sup>st</sup> December 2020

## Service for People to Assist with Domestic Violence

Like most people across Victoria, your life has probably changed in response to the coronavirus outbreak and the public health measures designed to stop it spreading. These changes could include a loss of family income, being required to stay home or in quarantine, or struggling with a heightened sense of fear and uncertainty.

The behaviour of your partner or family members might also have changed or escalated. If this behaviour makes you fear for your safety – or the safety of another person – it is likely to be a form of family violence.

The Disability and Family Violence Crisis Response Initiative (DFVCRI) at Safe Steps assists women and children with a disability who are experiencing family violence to access the services and supports they need to stay safe, quickly.

The team at Safe Steps support victim-survivors of family violence living with a disability or who have disability needs (physical, mental health, intellectual, or emotional, including temporary conditions and due to family violence).

Safe Steps will help you explore your options, create a safety plan, and put in place safety measures to help reduce risk including access to aids, support or equipment.

**Phone:** 1800 015 188

**Email:** [disability@safesteps.org.au](mailto:disability@safesteps.org.au)

**Web:** <https://www.safesteps.org.au/>

## Multi Purpose Taxi Program (MPTP) – Temporary Changes

While we are all being asked to stay at home to stop the spread of COVID-19, sometimes we have to make essential trips by commercial passenger vehicles. To help you travel safely on these essential trips, the State Government has introduced some changes for the next three months.

Until the 3rd November 2020, the MPTP subsidy will increase from 50% to 70%. The subsidy will also apply to the full cost of any MPTP trip you take, including tolls and other charges.



The \$60.00 per trip limit and your individual (yearly) member cap remain unchanged.

You do not have to do anything differently when booking a trip to receive these benefits. They will be applied automatically.

From the 4th November 2020, the subsidy you receive will return to 50% - but this will apply to the total cost of each trip, including tolls and charges. This means you will still pay less than you did before the 4th August.

Extra cleaning resources are being given to drivers and booking service providers to maintain high cleaning and hygiene standards in the commercial passenger vehicles you use. Stricter cleaning rules will also be introduced.

More information on the subsidy changes can be found at [www.cpv.vic.gov.au](http://www.cpv.vic.gov.au)

## Online Community Networks

Are you interested in connecting with people and sharing your lived experiences? The Community Networks have successfully moved online using "Zoom", a teleconferencing platform. The Networks have expanded to include people living across Victoria and along the NSW-Victoria border, offering a way of meeting new people regardless of distance or transport. If you're interested in getting involved please contact Spire 03 9489 0777 or [info@spire.org.au](mailto:info@spire.org.au)

### Northern (Shepparton-Echuca) Network

The Northern Network meet on the first Wednesday of each month, with people joining in from Deniliquin, Echuca, Albury and Wodonga. Recently, they discussed working with Campaspe Council on a project to increase Council's awareness of people living with SCI in the region.

### Central West (Bendigo) Network

The Central Network meets on the second Wednesday of the month, with people joining in from Bendigo, Mildura and Barham. Last month, they shared photos of things that were meaningful to them which created lots of great conversations.

### Gippsland - Mornington Network

The Gippsland - Mornington Network welcomes people from all over southeast Victoria, and meet on the second Thursday of each month. This month, they learned about new continence products from Hollister, and discussed the importance of regular continence reviews.

### South West (Geelong) Network

The South West Network meet on the fourth Wednesday of each month, with people joining in from Geelong and Warrnambool.

The Network learned the benefits of integrating digital assistive technology in everyday life, such as controlling the house environment with a smartphone.

### Western (Ballarat) Network

The Western Network meet on the third Thursday of the month, with people joining in from Ballarat, Bacchus Marsh and Kaniva. They met with Sports Central to discuss a regional Victoria survey how to support people with disability to engage in local sports and recreation.

### Professionals with SCI network

The SCIP network meets every three months and aims to support people with SCI or similar physical complex disability in all aspects of career development. An ongoing project is building a relationship with TAC to raise awareness of the needs of clients.

### Women with SCI Network

The Women with SCI Network is informed and led by women living with SCI. At the last meeting, they welcomed new members from regional Victoria, and learned the importance of stretching and keeping active from an exercise physiologist.

### Family & Friends SCI Support Network

Together with Independence Australia and the support of Austin Health, we run a monthly group to support family members and friends of people with a spinal cord injury. It's an opportunity to have your questions answered in a confidential and supportive group. You can also share information, experiences, knowledge and support in a friendly and informal setting.

For further information, please visit [www.spire.org.au/community/community-networks](http://www.spire.org.au/community/community-networks).



# Discovering the Power in Me (DPM)

Throughout the year AQA will be holding a motivational/goal setting course called 'Discovering the Power in Me' (DPM), specifically designed for people with SCI.

**The course** 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;

- setting and achieving goals
- finding creative solutions and possibilities;
- building a future of hope and resiliency;

- taking control of the way we think.

A unique part of DPM is each participant will have one-on-one sessions with their assigned peer coach. We have delivered this course for over 10 years. Here are some comments some past participants have made...

*"I really **appreciated the opportunity to step out of my life and evaluate where I am at and where I am going. I think the planning and positive thinking will stay with me and influence the way I talk with my son also.**"*

*"**The course has given me the tools to help me identify where I need to make changes in my thoughts and behaviour to provide positive results in my life. I'm using positive self-talk and affirmations to transform my thinking and beliefs**"*

For further information please see attached poster and FAQ or visit our website <https://www.spire.org.au/resources/personal-development/>

Please let us know of your interest as places are limited for each session.

## Volunteers Needed for Research Project

Volunteers are needed who are 18 years or over, have a spinal cord injury, and are receiving peer support using videoconferencing from a community organisation.

You can take part by completing an online survey. The survey asks questions about your perceptions of using videoconferencing for peer support following spinal cord injury. The total time required of you is approximately 30 minutes.

The information gained from this study will assist organisations to establish guidelines and protocols for delivering peer support using videoconferencing in the future, which will assist them to best support their members.

If you complete this survey you can go into the **draw for a \$100 Coles/Myer voucher.**

To participate in this study you simply click on the link below and commence: [https://monash.az1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV\\_3E0mTDgjEqwMxzD](https://monash.az1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_3E0mTDgjEqwMxzD)

If you have already completed the survey and want to go into the draw, or you have any other questions about this study, please contact Linda Barclay by telephone on 03 9904 4493 or by email on [linda.barclay2@monash.edu](mailto:linda.barclay2@monash.edu).



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## How Gardening Has Kept me Active and Social Throughout COVID-19

In 2015, after climbing Mt. Nogodan (at 1,507 metres, the third highest peak in South Korea) with her husband earlier in the day, Young Ok sustained a spinal cord injury in a catastrophic car crash. She had life-saving surgery in a regional hospital before transferring to Seoul for further surgery and recovery. It took one month to recover sufficiently to be flown back to Melbourne to the acute spinal unit at the Austin Hospital.

Now, almost 5 years on, and like everyone else, she is following the COVID-19 restrictions assiduously even though it has affected her life at home and in the community – no more home helpers, swimming, tennis, socialising (in person) or concerts. One thing that has helped her keep sane is her passion for gardening, something she had a love for before her spinal cord injury. Young Ok is fiercely independent and does as much of the gardening that she can manage.

### Her story...

After repatriation to Australia, I spent a week at the Austin (ironically now, in quarantine) and then 6 months in rehabilitation at Royal Talbot. I then returned home and started to rebuild my health and strength, all the time missing my beloved garden.

Initially, I had a Korean lady help with cleaning and tidying the house and to take me into my garden which was overgrown with weeds and flowers. Whenever trying to garden with her, our neighbours would come to see me. The time in the garden was the most enjoyable since my accident. However, I wanted to actively work in the garden and decided I needed a wheelchair accessible one.

With my husband, Bob, I visited numerous raised and accessible gardens to see whether they were wheelchair-accessible. I had many discussions with Anton Harrington at Talbot who provides accessible gardening

there. Through the Spinal Community Integration Service (SCIS), we were put in touch with the Monash University Architecture Department which produced a design for our front and rear gardens. Although great on aesthetics, it did not allow me to get my hands dirty! After reviewing all sorts of on-line resources for function,

design and materials, I decided to design my own garden. With learnings from the university approach, we decided to divide the project into 2 stages – front garden, then rear garden. Finally, after 2 years' research and endless drafts, with my husband's help we started construction of Stage 1. It was my happiest time to see my



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garden develop according to my own design.

As I would tire quickly, I project managed while Bob supervised/assisted with the various activities/workers. The project involved a builder/carpenter and labourers, a plumber, concreter and a landscape gardener/horticulturist and crew and diverse equipment and materials.

Eventually, the result was a wheelchair-accessible garden in what used to be our front lawn/garden. With the effort involved in completing Stage 1, we decided that Stage 2 could wait until I had the front garden working well.

We learnt that creating a



wheelchair-accessible garden isn't just a matter of putting in a raised garden bed(s). A lot of research, thought, measurement and preparation went into the shapes, widths, heights and likely plantings

to maximise access, shade and light. It also necessitated having an automated watering system.

Pathways had to be firm and all-weather. The area needed to be as flat as possible to reduce effort in a wheelchair, and drainage had to be able to clear heavy deluges as a result of the reduced porous surface area.

With my husband's devoted help in my garden, I planted fruit trees, shrubs, flowers and vegetables and headed towards my next goal, having a great time in my garden!

Now I tend to my garden on most days, weather depending. In the summer months, I grow tomatoes, cucumbers, capsicums, zucchinis, strawberries, rhubarb, grapes, loganberries, persimmons, pears, mulberries, nashi pears, cherries, blueberries, beans, basil, Italian parsley, garlic, silver beet, lettuces, spring onions, and some Korean vegetables. In the winter months, I grow lettuce, silver beet, kale, broccoli, spring onions, coriander and Korean vegetables.

I also grow flowers - roses,



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## FEATURE ARTICLE

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orchids, bromeliads, daphne, osmanthus, succulents, cosmos, snow drops, daffodils, irises, forest lilies, lilies, freesias, rosemary and lavender. Most of the time we have some flowers in our garden. All year round, I can look out from our front windows and enjoy the colours of the foliage, fruit and flower displays changing with the seasons, and the birds and insects visiting. I can sit and relax in peace and happiness.

Fortuitously, I enjoy cooking. Initially, Bob did most of the cooking with me doing some with a helper. Now I can do a lot more and so Bob and I share the task ensuring that very little of the produce from my garden goes to waste. What we don't use, we give to family, friends and neighbours. That is a bit restricted at the moment!

Food isn't the only benefit from my garden. I get great therapeutic benefits and satisfaction from being in and working in the garden. I don't notice my neuropathic pain when I am in the garden



and I get exercise, vitamin D and fresh air. Despite COVID and the restrictions, I still have great conversations with neighbours and passing locals out for exercise. My garden is also a local talking point.

Finally, gardens are never finished. They need constant care. However, plants always give me back more than what I have put into them – they give me warmth, happiness and

pleasure.

I will finish with a quote from Jenny Uglow, "We may think we are nurturing our garden but, of course, it's our garden that is really nurturing us."

Young Ok is proud of her garden and loves to show it to others. It is a great asset for her and she is keen to share the benefits with anyone interested in her research and experience with constructing and using her garden and in the trees, shrubs and plants in it.

You are welcome to have a look at her garden in person, COVID-19 restrictions permitting. Contact Spire at AQA or Anton at Talbot.

I just want to leave you with a couple of websites I think you'll like:

[www.diggers.com.au](http://www.diggers.com.au)

[www.offthegridnews.com/survival-gardening-2/peecycling-how-to-fertilize-your-garden-with-nutrient-rich-urine/](http://www.offthegridnews.com/survival-gardening-2/peecycling-how-to-fertilize-your-garden-with-nutrient-rich-urine/)



## Community Networks Made a Huge Impact on Me

Barbara had a spinal cord injury in 2005 and completed her rehab at Olympia Private Rehabilitation Hospital. Olympia Private wasn't dedicated to the rehab of people who have SCI, which meant she didn't receive mentoring until she met Naz and Peter at a Regional Spinal Clinic operated by Austin Health. Since then, she has been heavily involved in our networks, particularly with our Women's and Ballarat Networks. Barbara has decided to return to New Zealand and wrote to us about her experiences.

**My name** is Barbara Simpson and as I am in the process of leaving Australia – my home for the past 37 years – to return to New Zealand, I would like to take this opportunity to give a huge THANK YOU to everyone at AQA and the Ballarat Regional Community Spinal Support Group for all your help, guidance, education on spinal cord injuries and fun outings but more importantly your support

and friendship.

I became a paraplegic in February 2005 and joined AQA later that year. I apparently met Peter Van Benthem sometime during my 3 months rehabilitation at Olympia Private Rehabilitation Hospital in Thornbury, sadly I have no recollection of us meeting but Peter did – sorry Peter.

I met Naz and Peter in Ballarat in November 2005 at a Spinal



Review Clinic which is run out of the Queen Elizabeth Centre, organised by Austin Health. Naz and Peter talked about AQA and the benefits of becoming a member. Without hesitation I joined and it has been a wonderful experience.

Being a member of AQA has given me a better understanding of my spinal cord injury and a chance to be able to share ideas, share problems, and sharing ways to solve or overcome them and help each other. Like everyone who has a spinal cord injury, it is life changing and scary so having AQA and Ballarat Regional Community Support Group have helped me immensely.

I look forward to keeping in touch and seeing what is happening via Facebook.

Stay safe everyone.



### Part 2: The founding of AQA services

AQA Victoria began to deliver home-based care for people with severe disabilities in 1991 through the Qualcare respite program, one of the first such services to operate in Australia. The initiative was led by Mary Reid OAM, a polio survivor who understood from the inside why it was needed.

**The disability** support service AQA Qualcare was established by a talented trio from diverse backgrounds who served distinct but compatible motives.

Spearheading the project was Mary Reid, a polio survivor who had grown up in Mt Beauty, at the foot of Mt Bogong in north-eastern Victoria.

Reid had the most to gain personally from the initiative, seeing it as a path to liberation from her profound dependence on her family, when she lived at Mt Beauty, and on staff at the Fairfield Infectious Diseases Hospital, where she had stayed when in Melbourne.

Known in childhood for her energy and buoyant spirit, she had fallen ill with polio a few days before her 11th birthday.

"It struck me pretty quickly," Reid says of the infection. "I lost the use of my arms and legs. I had to be put in the iron lung. I remember that I was very frightened going into the box."

Reid never regained movement in her legs but recovered limited use of one arm. She had lived with her paralysis for nearly 40 years by the time her relentless lobbying led federal minister for health and community services Brian Howe to launch the Qualcare Service Respite Program in February 1991.

Interviewed at a Melbourne retirement home, Reid explains that she had followed for decades the development of assistance for fellow polio survivors in Australia and overseas, and had travelled to United States cities and London in the course of her research.

"A pilot program for attendant care was just starting in Sydney," she recalls of her decision to agitate for a Victorian service.

"I thought this attendant care business sounded pretty good, and that with that I could do lots of things."

#### Something completely different

Engineering the project was Fiona Gologranc, who joined AQA Victoria in 1990 under her maiden



**Reid embarks on another journey**

name of Fiona Hopkins. After completing high school and business college, Gologranc had spent eight years in sales and marketing support with a Melbourne importer of machine tools.

"It was a very cutthroat type of business setting," recalls Gologranc, who would go on to become AQA finance manager. "I felt a bit burnt out and wanted to do something that had more meaning.

"AQA had advertised for someone to provide administrative support for their lobbyist, who was trying to get an interesting program off the ground. I thought that would work for me."

#### Challenged to do more

Catalysing the project was Ian Bennett, born near the goldfields city of Ballarat, northwest of Melbourne, who had been living with incomplete quadriplegia from a car crash at 21. Bennett had

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**Qualcare founders Fiona and Mary with former NewsLink editor Ian Williams**

retained significant control of all limbs and could walk with the help of a stick.

Recruited to AQA at a time when it was a branch office of the Sydney-based Australian Quadriplegic Association, and operating mainly as a sheltered workshop, Bennett had overseen its incorporation in 1987 and had been appointed CEO.

After taking the helm of the newly independent non-profit enterprise he had broadened its mission, initiating a peer support program for people with spinal cord injuries and accumulating a membership that he served with a newsletter.

Early in his tenure, he had been challenged by a young woman with quadriplegia whom he had visited at the nursing home where she lived.

"She said: 'What can you do for me?'" Bennett, then in his mid-30s, recalls. "I said, 'Not a lot right now.'

"And I started to think about

what AQA might do for someone like her.

"She didn't want to work – didn't even know if she could work. What she said she wanted, in an ideal world, was to live independently."

### **Favourable climate**

Bennett was aware that he had a relevant connection in Reid, who had been assessing the costs of providing attendant

care at home for people with severe physical disabilities. Reid's study had operated autonomously, but from a former AQA office in Northcote and supported by government funding channelled through AQA.

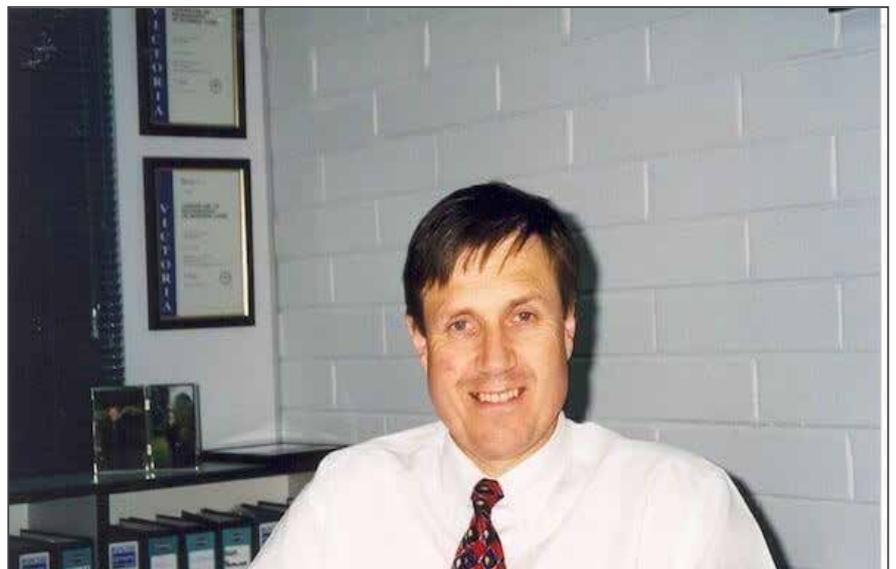
He invited Reid to join AQA Victoria, develop a proposal for an attendant care service, and seek financial support for it.

The political climate was favourable. A ground-breaking review had recently led the Australian government to pass a Disability Services Act, which became effective in June 1987. The legislation sought to improve opportunities for people with disabilities, in part through helping them take more control of where and how they lived.

Bennett secured a small grant that supported Reid's work, and employed Gologranc to assist her.

### **A grassroots organisation**

"The organisation was three years old at that point," says



**Ian Bennett**

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## HISTORY OF AQA

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Gologranc, describing the scene she settled into at 70 Station Street, Fairfield. "I came in from a very swish, corporate, money-no-object type of background. "I walked in to be given a sheet of Con-Tact adhesive vinyl, and was told to try and make this bookshelf work with some Con-Tact on it. Some of the chairs only had three legs. It was a very donated-furniture, grassroots organisation. Nothing matched. But people were there for the right reasons, and trying to get some exciting programs up and running."

From Bennett's perspective, the division of labour in Reid's small team was sharp.

"Mary was the front-person, the lobbyist, and she did a good job," he says.

"Fiona was the nuts and bolts behind it. She did all the submission writing, as well as acting as Mary's personal carer."

### Strength of will

However, Gologranc emphasises that it was only through Reid's dedication and strength of will that their joint efforts succeeded.

"Mary was not a professional lobbyist," she notes. "She was a very determined, independent person with a severe disability.

"She was a driven woman, and our program wouldn't have got off the ground without her.

"She had been around Fairfield Hospital and knew people using iron lungs who had been institutionalised their whole lives. She was all about empowering people, and trying to get people out of institutions and living in the community.

"I was really the administrative

sidecar to Mary.

"The submissions were built directly on what Mary could tell me from her prior knowledge and from her research and contacts."

### Travels to Canberra

Gologranc undertook a series of trips to Canberra with Reid, meeting politicians and bureaucrats. The duo focused on developing a service through which trained carers could bring respite to people who were supported by family members at home.

cover Northcote and Fairfield," she remembers.

"First thing I knew, someone from his office rang me and said our program would be funded and there would be a budget for a set number of places.

"It was agreed that AQA would deliver that funding and I had to choose a name.

"I said, 'Well I want Quality Care, because we should do quality care only from here.'

"A guy in the AQA office who worked on the phones said: 'That's a dorky name.'



**Federal minister for health and community services Brian Howe, with Ian and Mary**

Reid says she had thought that the respite service might work with 10 clients initially. She says she was told in a phone call from Canberra that she needed a bigger number, and was taken aback when her impromptu suggestion of 40 was accepted immediately.

"We kept haggling Brian Howe, who was health minister and whose electorate happened to

"I said: 'Well, that's what it needs to be.' So we went with Qualcare."

Gologranc confirms: "The Qualcare Service Respite Program, which was the foundation of AQA Qualcare, was about providing respite care for a group of 40 people we had identified, half in the city and half in the country.

"It became quite a political thing

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**Mary's fundraising for a trip to the US generated this 1983 newspaper article**

– we had to try to find clients in the right electorates, although we weren't driven just by that criterion.

"The structure we set up to operate the respite service allowed AQA Qualcare to accept other clients, and these came to us with funding from sources such as the newly formed Transport Accident Commission."

### Honoured for service

Reid stayed with AQA for several years after the Qualcare program was launched, drawing on her lived experience to develop guidelines for carers and build training programs.

"This was a time when the personal narrative carried significant weight," observes Peter Trethewey, in that period a

social worker with the spinal unit at Austin Hospital. Trethewey was appointed CEO of AQA Victoria in 2007.

"The fledgling AQA was certainly at the cutting edge of shaping what attendant care would look like, in a context of de-institutionalisation," Trethewey says.

"People like Mary with her energy and her research of emerging community-based options for care were formidable.

"This was also an early expression of what has become AQA's DNA, and in particular of its building individually tailored experiences that empower its clients."

In 2006, Reid was awarded the Medal of the Order of Australia for her service to people with disabilities. The citation highlighted her work "as a contributor to the advancement of attendant care services to allow independent living."

"I feel proud that I was able to do the work that I did," she says, "and that I was able to achieve a lot more than I thought I would. I got to learn quickly that you need to be persistent, and I have been dogged in my persistency."

At the end of 2019, nearly 29 years after the program began, AQA was supplying individualised supports to about 240 clients living with complex physical disability, through the dedication of more than 400 disability support workers.

### Story by Ian Baker

## My Trip to Jakarta

Anthony Bartl loves travelling and challenges. Last March he travelled to Jakarta in Indonesia, a trip he's been planning for over a year. Being a C1 quad he had to do lots of planning with the help of others. As with any trip there were highlights as well as lowlights. We hope you enjoy reading his adventure.

**I love** adventure and trying new things. I got the travel bug a few years ago when I spent time in South Africa. This time around I wanted a taste of Jakarta Indonesia for a few reasons; I had an old school friend that lived there; it wasn't too far from Australia; it would be cheaper than other destinations; learn new a culture; and the challenge of visiting a developing country.

I was meant to go a year earlier in 2019 and started my planning back then. However, my plans had to change after my wheelchair was badly damaged after running into a solid pole. Twelve months later, and with the help of a Recreational Specialist to help me plan, I made my way to Melbourne Airport with five carers and the equipment needed for my 8-day holiday. I made my way to the gate where I was met by staff and their trusty hoist to take me to my seat.

After crossing Marble Bar near Port Hedland, I am well into my 7-hour flight to Jakarta on Garuda Indonesia Airlines. It's an isolating experience, even from my Business Class seat. The hostesses seemed like they didn't want to engage with me and I felt awkward and angry at the same time.

They communicated through my carers instead. I sensed they had never interacted with disabled people and were daunted by the prospect.

Once we landed and were met by the tour company, "Access Indonesia", we were told they had the only accessible van in the entire country. It is clear the archipelago is impoverished. Furthermore, on Jakarta's streets (Indonesia's capital) access for people with disabilities isn't evident. Searching for answers, it isn't hard to see why. Jakarta isn't made for pedestrians in wheelchairs. Footpaths are either non-existent or inaccessible, no curbs, starting but abruptly ending with stairs or broken to the point of not being a footpath. In most cases, roadside is my only option and I'm up against the throng of streaming motorbikes and constant horn blaring.

Fortunately, I can retreat to my stay, at the Borobudur, where opulence abounds. Chandeliers adorn ceilings

and a grand staircase winds majestically up multi levels. Here too are issues though. Although ramp access into its lobby is a start, some lifts can't carry my wheelchair's weight. Likewise, room electricity is intermittent. My mind races. "To breathe I rely on a powered ventilator." I just hope there is constant electricity to keep my ventilator working. It's an unsettling feeling for me.

But there's more to Jakarta than its problematic infrastructure and welfare supports. It's the people here that make up for the lack thereof.

For my time in Jakarta, I have diligent and selfless Wasito, my driver, who saves me from tackling the city's made-for-car/motorbike roads. He treats me to Indonesia's lively culture in the old town of Kota Tua.

With a makeshift rickety ramp welcoming people in wheelchairs to Jakarta's Wayang Museum, a random passer-by helps push me up the slope.

The Wayang Museum -



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dedicated to Javan Wayang puppetry, marionettes of all kinds line the walls. The Javanese Wayang Kulit puppets have a leather make-up. Made by chiselling the parchment with fine tools and aided in movement with carefully shaped buffalo horn handles and control rods, they are decorated in beautiful hues.

Later... squeezing into a narrow doorway, pokey and chock-full room of all thing's puppetry, I see Aldy. Meticulously and proudly he revels in parading every step of assembling a puppet. A highlight here, I am shown the royal treatment, a private impromptu shadow puppet performance, "Bayang Wayang", of figures manipulated between lamp and screen... with me a character in a good versus evil story!

Another highlight is in the highlands, a 3-hour drive from Jakarta. The bubbling boiling mud, wafting steam, intense radiating heat and burnt ash smell that is Tangkuban Perahu is an awe-inspiring experience. Emitting sulphur fumes and one of 127 active volcanoes in Indonesia, I am able to wheel right up to a low fence and peer down into its heart. In much cooler air, Tangkuban Perahu is the only volcano in Indonesia where you can drive up to its very rim. It has a peculiar shape, something that bears a resemblance to an upturned boat, its name, referring to a creation myth ending in tragedy where love is swept away from a misunderstanding.

Apart from marvelling at two authentically Indonesian charms, the country's misgivings



are tossed aside by fully functioning modes of public transport and again other generous folks. At a newly built subway at Istora Station, conductors stand proudly ready to serve, laying down ramps with exuberance. The same goes for the city's tourist buses where an official at a rank, horse trades between three rides as to which one can take me before an automatic ramp pops out footpath bound. When not using disability friendly services, on safari, I fortunately have two able carers and "Access Indonesia" who all chip in to sling me up a staired safari truck. This before my trusty driver Wasito, as always a constant, as we hit the road back. Although transport has been good to me, I lament not being able to self-explore more, being left to my own devices. Maybe next trip.

My trip could have been enhanced had we planned better. Don't assume 'Recreational Specialists' and others know it all because they don't. Planning is the key. Find out what you want to see and

how you will get there. The Lonely Planet has great access information and lists 'must do's' (I found this out too late). One must-do was to see all of Jakarta from the famous Skye Bar. Unfortunately, the people I relied on to organise this hadn't looked into the opening times. We drove all the way there to find it was closed.

Once back in Melbourne and disembarking from my flight, transferring back into my wheelchair, the entire Garuda Indonesia crew stood agog, not averting their awestruck gaze until I was finally comfortably strapped in and able to wheel away. Disability is new ground for them... it's not something they see in their homeland.

I just want to finish off by saying I was lucky to return to Melbourne just before returning travellers had to self-isolate in hotels. This would have been a daunting situation for me as I'm not sure if my carers would be allowed to stay with me to provide care. Am I looking forward to the next time I travel... yes definitely.



## Use our lived experience to get the most out of your NDIS plan

We can assist you in building your capacity to implement your plan, connect with services and achieve your plan goals.

NDIS Support Coordination | Personal Development | Personal Care | Community Participation

03 9489 0777  
ndis@aqavic.org.au  
www.aqavic.org.au



## FOR SALE

**Likorall 250 – Ceiling Hoist**

Comes with a Sling; Can be arranged to be removed from the ceiling for a serious buyer; 3 Years old; Serviced Annually; No Problems with it; Pick Up is in Mt. Martha.

**Price:** \$3,500

**Phone:** 0432 566 930 (Selina) (08/20#a)

**Electric Standing Hoist**

Oxford Journey Standing machine is in excellent condition sold and serviced by Fisher Lane (Abbotsford) 10/ 2017. Purchased for (\$3,780). Also includes a large sized sling, battery & battery charger.

**Price:** \$2,700 (Coburg)

**Phone:** 0419 884 106 (Lou) (07/20#a)

**Standing Frame – Easy Stand**

Comes with strap; Excellent condition; Hardly used.

**Price:** \$2,500 (Cash on pick-up)

**Phone:** 0449 881 200 (Hadyen) (07/20#a)

**2017 Mercedes Benz Valante 116 BlueTEC**

Auto; 2.1L Turbo Diesel ; 24,000 kms; Rego until April 2021; RWC Supplied; Service History; Flint Grey Metallic; Includes: Fiorella Wheelchair Lift with seatbelt and 4 Q'straints; capacity for 6 passengers plus wheelchair passenger; Electrical Operation of Sliding Doors; 3rd Row Seats; Privacy Black Glass; every possible extras are fitted.

**Price:** \$64,900 ONO (coburg)

**Phone:** 0419 884 106 (Lou) (07/20#a)

**2016 VW MY16 Passat 140TDi**

12 Months Registration; 28,000Kms; Built in 2016 but was first registered in 2017; Highline fitted with Abiloader; Push Pat Hand Controllers; The market value is about 35k but it's got 20k of mods; Located at the Gold Coast.

**Price:** \$40,000

**Phone:** 0419 803 894 (Ryan) (08/20#a)

**Quickie Explore - Electric Wheelchair**

Height adjustable; Tilt in space function; Comes with backpack; Very good condition.

**Price:** \$8,000 (Cash on pick-up)

**Phone:** 0449 881 200 (Hadyen) (07/20#a)

**Quantum iLevel Power Chair**

Good condition; Only used occasionally in 3 years; Comes with Roho cushion; Side supports; Serviced regularly.

**Price:** \$3,500

**Phone:** 0432 566 930 (Selina) (06/20#a)

**Ti-Lite Manual Wheelchair**

Titanium; Light weight; Fold Up; Swing Away & Detachable Footplates

**Price:** Best Offer

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

**Mattress – Oska Pressure Relief**

Dimensions 200cm x 105 x 18; In excellent condition; Mattress type (Swedish) Oska CuroCell Area Zone with Heel function; Will need to be collected or could be couriered at receivers cost.

**Price:** \$200

**Phone:** 0408 213 847 (Patrick) (06/20#a)

## FOR SALE

**2016 Kia Carnival Si Diesel – Modified**

Low mileage at 28,000 kms; Full Service History 4 more years on Kia Warranty; Modified by Automobility with warranty; Modified for power and manual wheelchair; Docking station; Electric winch for manual chair; Electric ramp; Full Sat Nav facilities; Reversing camera; Excellent condition; Welcome to view in Mt Martha.

**Price:** \$55,000 - Negotiable

**Phone:** 0432 566 930 (Selina) (06/20#a)

**2004 Chrysler Grand Voyager**

211,500 Kms; Good Condition; RWC; Fitted out by Capital Conversions; Auto Side Door & Ramp; Docking System to Drive from Chair; Suit C5 / C6.

**Price:** \$20,000

**Phone:** 5756 2016 (Phil) (06/20#a)

**2014 Renault Kangoo**

Black in colour; Only 22,000 kms; Bought in 2014. Underwent \$30,000 in modifications; Full service history; Receipts of any work/modifications; Air conditioned; Automatic; Cruise control; Electric windows etc... Roadworthy and no work is needed; Rego paid, Comfortable to drive; Asking \$28,000 (negotiable); Good value given the amount of kms and original investment (over 60k)

**Price:** \$28,000 Negotiable

**Email:** steve@escor.com.au (Steve) (12/19#a)

**Wymo Car Roof Hoist**

Made in Grafton; Good condition; All parts needed are still with the unit; I have had this for five years.

**Price:** \$150

**Phone:** 0418 573 702 (Mark) (06/20#a)

**Electric Wheelchair Handcycle**

14 months old; Cost \$1,500; Attaches to most wheelchairs; Comes with battery charger - All attachments and instructions; 16" tyre; 36v Lithium battery; Max speed 25 km/hr; Range approx.20 kms; Charging time 5 hours.

**Price:** \$ - Make An Offer

**Phone:** 0409 705 900 (Philip) (05/20#a)

**Apollo Residential Hydraulic Lift**

Apollo lifts are a brilliant concept that makes installation a very simple project; Complete with own prefabricated shaft; Only needs a recess of 80 mm; Easy to plumb with the supplied control cabinet; Only requires a single phase 20 amp power supply and is suitable for internal or external installation. Lift is a few years old but has never been installed or used; The Apollo Lifts are sold new through Aussie Lifts.

**Price:** \$6,500

**Phone:** 0414 593 790 (Mal) (05/20#a)

**Trailer for Electric Wheelchairs**

Trailer holds two large electric wheelchairs or the smaller electric Wheelchairs; Specially made for me by TRIK Trailers in 2017; Features Include: Two hand winches; Ramps; Front stabilizers; Spare Tyre; 3 months registration until June 20; Wheel Lock; Size of tray: 2.4 x 1.5 metres; Overall size: 3.9 x 2.0 metres; Can be attached to any car with a tow bar; Used 4 times, like new.

**Price:** \$2,800 – Negotiable

**Phone:** 0408 594 129 (Philomena) (02/20#a)

## ADVERTISEMENTS

### FOR SALE

#### Bruno Wheelchair Lift

Bruno Out-rider PUL-1100 lifts - Manual chair into back of ute; Only used 6 months; Installed by Mobility Plus; Stored indoors; Manual and parts

**Price:** \$1,000

**Phone:** 0418 314 006 (Kate) (02/20#a)

#### Wymo Wheelchair Hoist

Used; Good Condition.

**Price:** \$600

**Phone:** 0402 204 992 (Colin) (01/20#a)

#### Easylift Liftboy II

Manufactured by Lehner in Germany and tested to all Australian specifications and approvals; Virtually brand new - Used for 1 week only; Suitable for indoor and outdoor use - fully waterproof; 240V plug in - no hard wiring or hydraulics required; Suitable for a max. lift height of 830mm, or any required height in between, maximum lift weight of 300kg, user and attendant capable; This lift can be packed up and moved in less than 10 minutes! A fully mobile or permanent solution for the home or business; The unit was \$12,000 brand new.

**Price:** \$6,500

**Phone:** 0438 008 584 (Gerard) (06/19#a)

### ITEMS FOR FREE

#### Bathroom Stool & All Purpose Trolley

Free to a good home.

**Phone:** 0479 066 712 (Darren) (08/20#a)

#### Top Form Omega 2 Maxi Lift Chair

Triple Tier; 4 Button, 2 Motors; In black leather; Original cost \$2,400; Includes a massage mat; Suit a large person

**Phone:** 0407 332 761 (Carol) (05/20#a)

### WANTED

#### Mobility Equipment / Aides / Accessible Vehicle

If you have any mobility equipment / aides that you either no longer need or have upgraded from, we would love to hear from you. Also looking for a wheelchair accessible vehicle with a minimum of 4 regular seats.

**Phone:** 0403 515 605 (Christine) (05/20#a)

## SUPPORTING SERVICES TO PEOPLE WITH A SPINAL CORD INJURY

### Making a bequest...

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

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

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

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

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