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Welcome to the ATSA Update

Chris Sparks - Executive Officer, ATSA

The NDIS is happening!!! Well at least the launch sites are, in the ACT, NSW, SA, Tasmania and Victoria. WA is still in negotiation on a launch site and Queensland, although not directly involved, has strongly endorsed the NDIS and has committed to having it implemented eventually. In July, the Australian Government announced the appointment of David Bowen as CEO of the NDIS Launch Transition Agency, which will be the organisation responsible for coordinating the implementation of the NDIS. These are very positive steps towards making the NDIS a reality.

ATSA has always maintained that a national scheme for funding assistive technology (AT) should be a cornerstone of the NDIS with AT being a primary enabler for many individuals with disability. In consultation with our membership, ATSA's Senior Policy Advisor Dr Michael Summers has finalised our policy statement on providing AT under the NDIS. This statement outlines the critical elements necessary to ensure choice, quality and value for those in need of

AT. A copy of the statement can be downloaded from the ATSA website.

Back in August we were greatly saddened to hear of the passing of Penny Knudson. Penny was renowned around the world for her tremendous skills and knowledge when it came to seating and mobility along with her tireless commitment to improving the lives of people with disability through AT. In her early days Penny was a hands-on occupational therapist who revelled in helping people with complex needs to achieve greater mobility and function. More recently Penny held a senior role with Otto Bock as the Business Development Director for the Asia Pacific region. Penny was also an outstanding trainer and educator and always found the time to try to pass on her knowledge to other therapists and prescribers. She was a great contributor to ATSA and will be sorely missed by us all.

This year's Daily Living Expo was held in Melbourne for the second time and the feedback from exhibitors and the attendees was that it was a first class event. The exhibition space was sold out and unfortunately we could not accommodate a number of companies who were keen to participate. The clinical education program was outstanding and

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Count me in

I SUPPORT THE NDIS,
It's time to make every Australian count

featured a wide variety of topics presented by well known local and international AT specialists.

[Click here to view ATSA's NDIS Policy Statement](#)

The Expo is now firmly established in Melbourne and will return again in May 2014. The 2013 Expo is being held once more in Sydney at Rosehill and all the details can be found on www.dailylivingexpo.com.au

In September ATSA did another round of briefings with AT suppliers to discuss the many issues and reforms that are impacting our industry. We were pleased to see the many members and non-members who took the time out to come along. These forums provide an important opportunity for us to talk to businesses and directly impact our team's priorities and actions.

It looks like being a hectic end to 2012 with plenty on ATSA's agenda. The draft for Part 2 of the Australian Standard for wheelchairs is due soon and we have also been invited to consult with the Department of Infrastructure and Transport on a proposed labelling scheme for mobility devices. There is a lot of work to be done with the NDIS launch sites to help develop an effective and efficient AT supply model before they go live in 2013. In November we are looking forward to meeting with Ray Hodgkinson from the British Health Trades Association to discuss how the UK system of credentialing is developing through the AT Practitioners Society. Stay tuned for news on a formal AT Service Technician Apprenticeship scheme being championed by ATSA member Walk on Wheels.

Chris Sparks - Executive Officer, ATSA

Share your expertise at the ATSA Sydney 2013 Clinical Education Program

Contribute to the development of your peers in the rehabilitation and aged care industry, or start a conversation by shedding light on a topic you're passionate about. Position yourself and your organisation as the industry experts by sharing your knowledge at the upcoming Sydney 2013 Daily Living Expo.

ATSA supports the professional development of therapists in our industry and is now seeking submissions from individuals and organisations who would like to present at next year's Daily Living Expo Clinical Education Program.

Whether you're a therapist, equipment manufacturer, rehab engineer, medical expert, care giver or consumer, if you have something to say which you think would benefit the attending therapists and equipment prescribers, we'd like to hear from you.

This is your opportunity to speak on things like the latest breakthrough technologies, research findings, speaking out on issues relating to disability or ageing, introduce new product developments or demonstrate techniques for client assessment.

[Click here](#) to complete a submission for consideration.

The Daily Living Expo is Australia's foremost exhibition for Assistive Technologies, Rehabilitation and Aged Care Equipment. In 2013, it returns to Sydney's Main Grandstand at Rosehill on the 15th and 16th May.

Farewell Penny Knudson

On 27 August, we lost a friend and peer with the premature passing of Penny Knudson who sadly lost her two year battle with cancer.

A mother of 2, wife and business woman, Penny leaves behind family and friends, peers and clients touched by her generous spirit and witty sense of humour.



Penny Knudson

Working in the wheelchair seating industry in Australia for the past 20 years, qualified Occupational Therapist and business development manager Penny was a regular friendly face at industry events, an enthusiastic educator and ambassador.

Passionate about her work and our industry, Penny had a strong desire to help people develop and grow in their skills. She developed and ran numerous training programs for therapists and other equipment prescribers, including several for ATSA's clinical education workshops.

During the past 7 years, Penny was employed with Otto Bock Australia where her colleagues, managing director Terry Gallagher and business unit manager Jacinta Maurin describe her as a 'great

MAKE IT REAL

NDIS 2012



team leader and a caring mentor...a dear friend and wonderful team player'. They spoke about Penny's buoyant personality, gratitude for life and ask that we keep her fighting spirit and determination in our hearts.

Our thoughts are with her family, and her friends and colleagues at Otto Bock Australia.

Rest in peace Penny.

A win at ARATA

We're proud to announce that Dr Michael Summers, our Senior Policy Advisor has been recognised for his work identifying and bringing stakeholders together to form the National Aids and Equipment Reform Alliance (NAERA).

Michael was awarded First Prize for Developments, improvements and innovations in the Assistive Technology service industry by ARATA. NAERA was formed to advocate for a national aids and equipment policy framework and strategy and consists of peak bodies from across the health, aged and disability sectors.

The ATSA 2012 Daily Living Expo

The latest ATSA Daily Living Expo, Australia's foremost exhibition for rehabilitation and aged care equipment was held at Caulfield Racecourse, Melbourne on 16 to 17 May.

People with a disability, their carers, family and therapists visited from across Australia to see the latest in assistive technology, mobility solutions, pressure care, learn about employment support options, accessible (wheelchair friendly) recreation and holiday ideas and check out modified motor vehicles from over 60 exhibitors.

Clinicians who attended benefited



Dr Michael Summers is presented with his award by Desleigh de Jong, President of ARATA at the August 2012 Bridging the AT Gap ARATA Conference in Sydney

from the Clinical Education program where more than 20 speakers, including several international guests, presented on topics including using pressure imaging as a clinical tool and mobility options for kids on the go.

ATSA was delighted to have Senator Mitch Fifield, Shadow Minister for Disabilities, Carers and the Voluntary Sector attend the Daily Living Expo as a special guest. Senator Fifield said that the expo "demonstrated the potential that exists for people with a disability to achieve their full potential with the right support." He said that he was "impressed by the creative and engineering skill on display and the important role ATSA members play in finding the right solutions for individuals with mobility assistance needs."

Senator Fifield used the opportunity to

speak about the NDIS, for which he has been the driver within the Federal Coalition. "Everyone I spoke to at the Expo agreed that the system of support for people with a disability is broken. We need to do better. The NDIS is an idea whose time has come. Organisations like ATSA, and the businesses and organisations it represents, are vital partners in this reform. We need to get the NDIS right. The NDIS should be above partisan politics." He added "I look forward to working with ATSA on this great endeavour".

To see the video highlights from the 2012 ATSA Daily Living Expo, click the image below.



Click the image above to view the ATSA 2012 Daily Living Expo clip online



ATSA Code of Practice

Under the ATSA Code of Practice, all ATSA members commit to ensuring they act at all times with the best interests and welfare of the consumer in mind.

Clause 4.1 Part D states that - *“Any representations made by the company and its employees will be honest and truthful, and will not give rise to false expectations. Information, claims and comparisons must be accurate, balanced, fair, objective and unambiguous. They must not mislead either directly, by implication or by omission.”*

A PDF copy of the Code of Practice is available to download at <http://www.atsa.org.au/CodeofPractice.aspx>

When Size Does Matter... Road Rules and Powered Mobility

All too often Australian businesses and individuals have to run the gauntlet of laws and regulations that differ between the various state/territory jurisdictions. Through the processes of the Council of Australian Governments (COAG) there are genuine attempts at harmonisation, which is intended to make things simpler and deliver greater consistency.

The Australian Road Rules were established in 1999 as model laws to provide uniformity so that people were not confronted with different requirements as they travelled from one state or territory to another. Whilst these rules form the basis of state and territory road rules they remain “model rules” and have no legislative force of their own.

So what do the Australian Road Rules have to do with assistive technology? Quite a bit in fact, when it comes to mobility devices such as electric wheelchairs or powered mobility scooters.

For example, they state that “...a motorised wheelchair that can travel at over 10 kilometres per hour (on level ground)...” is by definition a vehicle which then has

major implications for registration and third party insurance.

They go on to specify that if the unladen mass of the motorised wheelchair/scooter is greater than 110kgs you are not permitted to travel on a path. Remember though that these are just “model” rules and the actual laws governing road users are still determined by the states and territories.

This is where things get complicated. In South Australia, motorised wheelchairs with an unladen mass of up to 250kgs are permitted to use the road. However they cannot use the footpath if they are capable of speeds higher than 10km/h unless their unladen mass is not more than 110kg. Queensland is the only jurisdiction where motorised wheelchairs and mobility scooters must be registered for use outside of the home but the weight limit is set at 150kgs.

Why does this matter? Well a quick check of marketing information for a number of popular powered wheelchairs and scooters reveals that many models would have an unladen mass in excess of the specified limits once batteries and specialised seating are included. It has been suggested that up to 30% of powered mobility devices sold in Australia weigh more than 110kgs and many would exceed the Queensland limit of 150kgs.

Unfortunately road rules across Australia have failed to keep pace with contemporary powered mobility technology and this places prescribers, suppliers, funders and users in a difficult position with the law.

Who would be potentially liable in the event of a catastrophic incident involving a powered wheelchair or scooter that weighed 165kgs? Is the prescribing therapist at fault for recommending the device in the first place or should it be the supplier or importer? What about the government agency or charity that provided funding for the equipment?

To remain law abiding citizens we would need to stop providing complex powered mobility solutions for ventilator dependent quadriplegics or perhaps bariatric individuals should never be allowed to use a suitable mobility scooter?

Clearly the laws need to be reviewed and the weight limit increased to reflect the range of powered mobility devices commonly

Travelling in taxis with mobility aids

For a guide to identifying which mobility aids passengers can remain safely seated in [click here](#)

Information Sheet from Victorian Taxi Directorate



Ray Saad from Wheelchair Sales

Wheelchair Sales is the name and the business over at Prestons, NSW (between Liverpool and Ingleburn) run by owner Ray Saad since 2005. They're a team of 5... 6 if you include the company dog who's around as another friendly face.

Ray saw his acquisition of Wheelchair Sales not only as good business opportunity but somewhere he 'could be a quality service provider and contributor'.

Wheelchair Sales joined ATSA as Ray is a strong believer that 'we need a body that can represent us in a unifying matter' and spoke of the benefits saying 'As a separate entity, [ATSA] can keep abreast of changes in the industry and keep [members] informed'.

Ray's top priority of ATSA's at the moment is concern about the tendering process and changes happening within EnableNSW.

Wheelchair Sales specialise in Sunrise's Quickie range of wheelchairs, selling both adult and paediatric manual wheelchairs plus paediatric electric wheelchairs. Complementing these, they also sell ADI, Jay cushions and offer customised seating and positioning.

in use. Everyone agrees that safety is paramount, however it is time that a realistic upper limit is determined and implemented across all states and territories.

Until that happens, watch out for rogue Queenslanders venturing south of the Tweed River in their outlawed 150kg devices.

NDIS Launch Sites

Following the COAG meeting on 25th July, announcements have been made regarding the NDIS and proposed Launch Sites.

Launch Sites will begin to deliver services in July 2013, with full implementation of the NDIS scheduled for 2018-19. The Launch Sites are expected to generate the detail needed to fully develop an effective and sustainable insurance scheme. Launch sites in the ACT, NSW, SA, TAS and VIC have all been confirmed. Discussions are still underway in WA, and although QLD has committed to the NDIS they are not taking part in the Launch Sites. Around 20,000 Australians with a disability are expected to benefit from the NDIS Launch sites from 1 July next year.

Overall funding for Launch Sites is \$1B by the Commonwealth Government over 4 years, with a proposed contribution from states/territories of \$20,779 per each adult. The Commonwealth Government has indicated that they are aiming for a funding split for the Launch Sites of 78% Commonwealth and 22% State/Territory funding.

In relation to the provision of AT through these NDIS Launch Sites it is simply too early for there to be any useful information, or even a good basis for speculation. Announcements have only just been made, and no substantive developmental work in relation to AT has begun.

States and Territories involved in the Launch Sites have also agreed to work with the Commonwealth on the development of legislation to establish both the NDIS and a National Launch Agency to administer the NDIS during the launch phase.

Significantly, all governments have also agreed that the funding and governance arrangements agreed for Launch Sites DO NOT create a precedent for the full scheme.

Discussions are ongoing about funding and governance issues for the full scheme.

The 25th July COAG Communique also notes that:

'COAG agreed that, as a first step to setting the design of an NDIS, consultation with people with a disability, their families and carers, the workforce and disability sector and peak bodies would commence from late August.'

Consultations closed at the end of September in relation to defining eligibility, and what constitutes 'reasonable and necessary' support, which will be central to any legislation and operational guidelines.

Agreed Launch Sites include:

- SA (about 5,000 aged 0-5 first year, extended to 0-13 2nd year)
- TAS (nearly 1,000 aged 15-24)
- ACT (6000 people across ACT)
- NSW (10,000 in Hunter region)
- VIC (5,000 in Barwon region)



Disability Standards for Accessible Public Transport

In 2009 Allan Consulting completed a review of the Australian Disability Standards for Accessible Public Transport which was then made publicly available in 2011 by the Commonwealth government along with its response.

[Click here](#) for a copy of the Review and also the Government's response.

Of particular interest to ATSA members is Recommendation 5: A mobility labelling scheme be developed which identifies the weight of the aid and whether its dimensions fit within the dimensions for allocated spaces, boarding devices, access paths and manoeuvring areas on conveyances, as specified in the Transport Standards. In its response the Government supports this recommendation, and has noted that amongst other things there will be cost implications for AT suppliers.

In early August, ATSA met with senior public servants in the Commonwealth's Department of Infrastructure who are charged with implementing this and other recommendations. It was a very preliminary meeting with Departmental staff who made it clear they didn't have any set ideas about how this should be done, and wanted to seek our input on what would be the main issues and any suggestions we might have on how it could work with a minimum of problems for AT suppliers. There is no set deadline or time frame for the process, and our discussions with them will continue over the coming months.

Importantly, while the Commonwealth has a major stake in disability standards for accessible public transport as a consequence

of its role in enforcing disability discrimination legislation, the states and territories have primary regulatory control over public transport. So agreements will need to be reached by all states and territories before anything proceeds and this will be a gradual process.

ATSA will be seeking input from its members on this issue.

ATSA Supplier Briefings

ATSA's recent Supplier Briefings were held in Brisbane, Melbourne and Sydney in September, with about 80 members and non-members attending across the three sessions. These forums provide an important opportunity for dialogue and discussion of what ATSA has been doing, as well as getting information and feedback from members that help determine our priorities. This year Sam Garland (ATSA's President) ran the Brisbane and Melbourne sessions, with Terry Gallagher (Committee member and former President) running the Sydney event. Dr Michael Summers was involved in all three briefings, and Mark Wheeldon (Committee

member) also assisted in the Melbourne session.

ATSA's new policy statement - Providing Assistive Technology in the National Disability Insurance Scheme - was presented and discussed in some detail (see website or contact ATSA for a copy). Key issues include the establishment of a national accreditation system for AT prescribers (such as OTs) and suppliers; recognition of the critical roles undertaken by suppliers; issues of tendering/bulk purchasing especially in relation to complex AT and also providing AT in rural/remote areas.

In each location there was also extensive discussion of a wide range of issues regarding each state's AT program – MASS in QLD, SWEP in VIC and Enable in NSW. Issues raised and discussed included the recent MASS tender; re-issuing processes in SWEP; and several questions around Enable regarding how new products get listed and promptness of payments.

Other topics discussed included recent changes in the DVA contract;



Sam Garland, President of ATSA & Director of Aidacare presents at the ATSA Melbourne Supplier Briefing session



mobility scooters, and updates on standards (powered wheel chairs and restraint of children with disabilities in motor vehicles) and equipment labelling. Equipment labelling issues include ongoing monitoring of TGA interest in having ARTG number on equipment – currently in abeyance; some health departments seeking Global Trade Item Numbers and barcodes (GTIN, see www.gtinfo.com); and early discussions with the Commonwealth regarding their exploration of the feasibility of labelling regarding compliance with Disability Standards for Accessible Public Transport (primarily weight & dimensions).

Finally, the Brisbane session included a presentation and discussion by Jim Boyd of Walk On Wheels about the new apprenticeship program they helped develop with Careers Australia for an AT Service Technician Apprenticeship. The formal qualification is a Certificate III in Engineering – Mechanical Trade (Maintenance – Fitting &/ or Turning) and is now available nationally through Careers Australia. There was much discussion and excitement about this development, and there was



ATSA members attend the Sydney Supplier Briefing

ATSA

Annual General Meeting

The Annual General Meeting of Assistive Technology Suppliers Australasia Inc will be held at Waterview Dooleys, corner Silverwater Road and Clyde Street, Silverwater NSW on Tuesday 13 November 2012 at 2:30pm

Please note, nominations for officer bearers must be in writing and lodged with the Secretary no later than 5:00pm AEDT on Tuesday 6 November 2012.

also considerable interest expressed at the other sessions.

For more information and details, a copy of the slides used for the supplier briefings is now available in the downloads section of the ATSA website [here](#).

Considered taking on an apprentice?

Careers Australia with Walk On Wheels (Brendale Qld) have established a formal AT Service Technician Apprenticeship which is now available throughout Australia.

This is a 4 year program that provides a qualification: Certificate III in Engineering – Mechanical Trade (Maintenance – Fitting &/ or Turning), MEM30205FT. People who already have some skills can receive 'recognition of prior learning' and significantly reduce the time and work required for the Certificate.

As there is a national shortage of fitting/turning engineers, Commonwealth funding is available for this training, making this cost-neutral for employers.

A copy of the course syllabus is available from Careers Australia, and importantly, up to 20% of the content can be tailored. Careers Australia offers a range of health, community care and disability courses with relevant modules such as infection control and working with people with disabilities that can be included.

Key contacts for more information are: Richard Belman at Careers Australia (0407998325) and Warren Robinson (07 3205 5654) or Jim Boyd (07 3847 2155) at Walk On Wheels. ATSA welcomes feedback about the suitability and quality of the course.



Welcome to new ATSA members



Ability in Motion

Ability in Motion

Ph: 1800 994 408 Fax: (07) 5335-1604 www.abilityinmotion.com.au

Queensland based company Ability in Motion is proudly Australian owned and operated, providing rehabilitation products for people with a disability. They carry a large range of Australian made manual and power wheelchairs manufactured by Glide Wheelchairs in WA, are an agent for Bodypoint positioning products, ROHO and Jay cushions plus some of the latest technology such as standing wheelchairs from LEVO, an electronic arm and leg exerciser from MOTomed and new age functional electrical stimulator from Hasomed.



Freedom Healthcare

Ph: (07) 3801-3910 Fax: (07) 3801-4292 www.freedomhc.com.au

A rapidly growing manufacturer, importer and distributor, Freedom Healthcare has offices in Brisbane, Melbourne and Sydney. They produce a wide range of products distributed through home healthcare retailers and chemists that includes high back chairs, scooters, bathroom aids, mobility aids such as the two wheeled walkers chosen for Queensland's 2012/2013 Medical Aids Subsidy Scheme (MASS) and more.

ATSA Committee

President	Sam Garland (Aidacare)
Vice President	Terry Gallagher (Otto Bock)
Secretary	Mark Wheeldon (GMS Rehab)
Treasurer	George King (Home Safety & Comfort)
Committee	Owen Davies (Permobil) Jill Barnett (Magic Mobility) Richard New (Hills Healthcare)

ATSA

Executive Officer	Chris Sparks
Senior Policy Advisor	Michael Summers
Marketing	Nikki McMahon

atsa Members Register

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www.pmeautoconversions.com.au

Scooters & Mobility Pty Ltd
Unit 4 - 166 Hannell Street
MARYVILLE NSW 2293
Ph: (02) 4962-4007
Fax: (02) 4962-4004
www.scootersandmobility.com

Scooters Australia
PO Box 3012
WHEELERS HILL VIC 3150
Ph: (03) 9799-9077
Fax: (03) 9799-9177
www.scootersaus.com.au

Scooters Australia Canberra
Waramanga Shops, 1-7 Waramanga Place
WARAMANGA ACT 2611
Ph: (02) 6288-3538
Fax: (02) 6288-3583
www.scootersaus.com.au

Scooter World Australia
81 Grange Road
WELLAND SA 5007
Ph: (08) 8245-1111
Fax: (08)-1110
www.scooter-world.com.au

Seating Dynamics Pty Ltd
Unit 3 - 19 Boden Road
SEVEN HILLS NSW 2147
Ph: (02) 9620-7839
Fax: (02) 9012-0087
www.seatingdynamics.com.au

Specialised Wheelchair Company
11 Mitchell Road
BROOKVALE NSW 2100
Ph: (02) 9905-5333
Fax: (02) 9905-2208
www.swco.com.au

Sunrise Medical Pty Ltd
Unit 7 - 15 Carrington Road
CASTLE HILL NSW 2154
Ph: (02) 9899-3144
Fax: (02) 9899-3244
www.sunrisemedical.com.au

Total Mobility Solutions Pty Ltd
Unit 1A 1-11 Burns Road
HEATHCOTE NSW 2233
Ph: (02) 9520-1866
Fax: (02) 9520-4345
www.totalmobility.com.au

Victorian Home Health Equipment
51 Lusher Road
CROYDON VIC 3136
Ph: (03) 9725-6577
Fax: (03) 9725-8067
www.vhhe.com.au

Walk on Wheels Australia (Brendale) Pty Ltd
260 Leitchs Road
BRENDALE QLD 4500
Ph: (07) 3205-5654
Fax: (07) 3205-5467
www.walkonwheels.com.au

Walk on Wheels NSW Pty Ltd
7/301 Hillsborough Road
WARNERS BAY NSW 2282
Ph: (02) 4954-8555
Fax: (02) 4954-5017
www.wownsw.com

Watercomfort Company
42 Alexander Avenue
TAREN POINT NSW 2229
Ph: (02) 9531-1699
Fax: (02) 9531-1799
www.watercomfort.com.au

Wheelchair Sales
Unit 6 - 1 Field Close
MOOREBANK NSW 2170
Ph: (02) 9822-4323
Fax: (02) 9822-4207
www.wheelchairsales.com.au

