



Update

From the Executive Officer

It's that time of year again when all of those involved in the assistive technology (AT) supply chain are working away furiously to try to get people's AT delivered and fully configured prior to the Christmas hiatus. I've worked for several northern hemisphere corporations, and they could never grasp just how Australia winds down from Christmas almost through to Australia Day more than a month later. It is a time when many allied health professionals go on holiday, which can make it impossible to deliver some AT until school returns, and things normalise in February.

This can be a frustrating time for AT consumers, their families and caregivers as they await the delivery of equipment that is often essential for independence, health and wellbeing. It can be a tough time for AT suppliers as cash flow slows down with equipment accumulating in their warehouses that cannot be delivered and invoiced.

ATSA's annual general meeting was held in Sydney on 27 November, and was followed by an AT industry briefing. Details of the new ATSA Committee are on page 7. I want to express my great appreciation to our 2014 committee for all their hard work and support of ATSA. On a personal note, I am disappointed that we have said farewell to Warren Robinson (Walk on Wheels) and George King (Home Safety and Comfort) who did not stand for re-election. George has been a committee member and treasurer since 2008 and has been a great contributor to the development and governance of ATSA. Warren joined the committee in 2012 and has done a brilliant job developing our membership and effectiveness in Queensland. Both these gents will be sorely missed.

Stand by for the release of the Clinical Education Program for the 2015 ATSA Expos in Sydney and Brisbane. We hope to have this finalised in early December and the list of local and international presenters is shaping up to give us one of the best programs we have been able to put together. Both Expos are close to being sold out which will guarantee two really fantastic events. Our friends from InterPoint are doing an outstanding job to ensure all goes off without a hitch and we are ramping up our marketing activities to try to achieve record attendance at both Expos. Keep the dates clear – BRISBANE 7 May and SYDNEY 13–14 May. You can pre-register to attend and stay up to date with all the Expo news at www.atsaindependentlivingexpo.com.au.

ATSA's Senior Policy Advisor, Dr Michael Summers, has put together an excellent suite of policy papers and a detailed background paper on various aspects of AT. There is a real need to raise the profile of AT provision with policy-makers at all levels and these papers are great tools to quickly communicate the complex issues associated with getting AT right. There are printed copies available of all the briefing papers and they can also be downloaded from the ATSA website through our downloads link www.atsa.org.au/Downloads.aspx.

In this issue

- ATSA goes to Parliament
- The MASS SOA and standards testing for motorised mobility devices
- NCOSS launches its NSW 2015 Election Platform
- The ups and downs of the Australian dollar
- Industry opportunities in Hong Kong
- NDIA first annual report out now
- Events registration for 2014 International Day of People with Disability
- SWEP contracts in place
- Search function to find a NDIA registered service provider improved
- WHO reports now available
- New standing offer arrangements at Qld MASS
- Report on retail trade costs
- Batteries and planes
- CAEATI's transfer to MASS improving service
- Copies of presentations from EnableNSW events available
- Good news from the NDIS
- Key NDIA statistics for quarter ending 30 June 2014 now available

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

Count me in

We are eagerly awaiting the release of two important consultation documents. AustRoads has been working on new regulatory guidelines for motorised mobility devices, and we hope to get to see the final recommendations in the near future. And the NDIA has been developing a framework for a national system to deliver AT under the NDIS. It is important that all stakeholders, particularly consumers and their families, take a close look at the recommendations, as they are likely to have a major impact on how AT is delivered, what degree of choice and control a consumer really has, and also what equipment will be available. ATSA will ensure our sector is advised as soon as the papers are open for public consultation.

2014 has been a great year for ATSA with a substantial growth in our membership and a great deal of work done on behalf of our industry. In closing, I would like to express my tremendous gratitude to my hard-working colleague Dr Michael Summers, our committee led by Sam Garland, Carla Taines and Stefan Jayawardana for their work in lifting the quality of our communications, and all the members and donors who have supported our work.

Merry Christmas and all the best for a brilliant 2015.



Chris Sparks
Executive Officer, ATSA

ATSA Code of Practice

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

Clause 4.1 states that: 'When selling products, they [suppliers] will ensure that these are of satisfactory quality and fit for the purpose specified. Their selling techniques will be ethical and they will deliver high standards of service.'

A PDF copy of the Code of Practice is available to anyone by emailing info@atsa.org.au

DIARY

11 December 2014

Sunrise STEPS Education Workshops:
Adult assessment for seating and mobility,
Melbourne. For details, see:
www.sunrisemedical.com.au

**SAVE
THE  DATE
ATSA
INDEPENDENT LIVING EXPO**



7 May 2015

**RNA
Showgrounds
Brisbane**

ATSA goes to Parliament

On 22 and 23 October Chris Sparks and Michael Summers had 8 meetings with federal politicians and/or their senior policy staff, including:

- Bruce Billson, MP (Lib, Dunkley, Vic), Minister for Small Business
- Senator Mitch Fifield (Lib, Vic), Assistant Minister for Social Services
- Jamie Briggs, MP (Lib, Mayo, SA), Assistant Minister for Infrastructure and Regional Development
- Senator Rachel Siewert (Greens, WA)
- Jenny Macklin, MP (Lab, Jagajaga, Vic), Shadow Minister for Disability Reform and for Families & Payments
- Shayne Neumann, MP (Lab, Blair Qld), Shadow Minister for Ageing and Indigenous Affairs
- Senator Helen Polley (Lab, Tas), Shadow Parliamentary Secretary for Aged Care
- Senator Jan McLucas (Lab, Qld), Shadow Minister for Housing

The meetings were all very productive and a range of different topics were covered in each, depending on the portfolio and committee responsibilities of the various Senators and MPs. In many instances it was also an important opportunity to communicate the importance of AT to those who need it, and the role of suppliers in ensuring good outcomes for consumers at a fair price. The recent ATSA briefing papers on *AT in Australia, AT Pricing and Supporting Choice and Control* as well as larger background paper on *AT Pricing* were also distributed widely. Topics discussed included:

- Providing AT within the NDIS to ensure choice and control remains with the participant
- Enquiring about what ‘the plan’ is for providing AT for people 65 and over
- Viewing AT pricing and AT suppliers as a ‘service industry’
- Asking if/when the PWC review of DVA’s RAP will be released
- Redressing red tape that impacts AT, including the current Austroads’ work on a draft Vehicle Safety Bulletin

Also, while we were in Canberra we met with Michael Keen, Director – Client Support Services, Rehabilitation, Aged and Community Care Service. His responsibilities include managing the delivery of AT in the ACT. We had far-ranging discussions, including an extensive tour of his facilities. The ACT is unique in many respects in relation to the NDIS given that their NDIS Trial includes all of the ACT, and that the ACT has already expressed a desire to hand over the whole of AT provision to the NDIA as part of the trial. ATSA believes this is an ideal opportunity to trial a retail model of AT provision and Michael Keen appeared open to the idea.

Given the extensive reforms involved with aged care and implementing the NDIS, it is important that we keep AT in the minds of public policy-makers Australia wide.

The MASS SOA and standards testing for motorised mobility devices

For some time now Queensland's Medical Aids Subsidy Scheme (MASS) has required that items submitted for their various assistive technology (AT) tenders be tested to pass applicable Australian standards or their international equivalents. This caused some difficulties with MASS's recently finalised standing offer arrangement (SOA) for AT, specifically in relation to motorised mobility devices (MMDs) and the Australian standards requirement for a park brake operated independently of tyre wear and inflation which can be applied when the motors are disengaged.

MMDs include both electric wheelchairs and mobility scooters. The vast majority of scooters do not have a manual park brake and therefore did not meet that requirement of the previous Australian standard. The new Australian standard for powered wheelchairs (AS/NZS3695.2) is now similar to the equivalent European Standard EN12184 (the 2009 edition). The new standard allows for the use of manual or automatic parking brake systems, including those that operate through a gearbox. Unfortunately, the Standards Committee has just recognised that the test for parking brake effectiveness requires it to be assessed with the motor drive system disengaged and if a device does not have a manual park brake, operating independently of the motor drive system, it will fail the standards test. Those who took the time to review the standard during its public consultation phase did not pick up this issue, and it will be resolved when Australia harmonises the new ISO7176-3. In the interim, Standards Australia will be issuing an amendment to AS/NZS3695.2 to make it clear that the effectiveness test can be completed with the gearbox engaged.

As an interim solution, MASS has liaised with Novitatech and agreed to adopt the approach that where MMDs pass all other tests the parking brake requirements will be interpreted to match the EN12184 and the soon to be amended AS/NZS3695.2 requirement.

This will mean that if re-engaging the drive then satisfies the parking brake effectiveness requirement of the standard, then the MMD will comply. However, it will still require a warning label on the wheelchair to indicate that the drive system should be re-engaged before an occupant is left unattended and a warning in the operator information (user manual), i.e. WARNING: THERE IS NO BRAKING ON THIS WHEELCHAIR WHEN IT IS IN FREEWHEEL MODE.



NCOSS launches its NSW 2015 Election Platform

The Council of Social Service of New South Wales (NCOSS) is the peak body for the social and community services sector in New South Wales. NCOSS works with their membership on behalf of disadvantaged people and communities towards achieving social justice in NSW. NCOSS provides an independent voice on welfare policy issues and social and economic reforms and is the major co-ordinator for non-government social and community services in NSW. The council acts as a channel for consultation with government and between parts of the non-government sector with common interests and diverse functions.

Recently NCOSS launched its 2015 NSW Election Platform at an event attended by Treasurer Andrew Constance, Minister Gabrielle Upton, the Hon. Linda Burney, other stakeholders and their membership. The document makes some important observations and recommendations on ensuring choice and control for those who require assistive technology (AT).

The heading on page 14 plainly states: **'People with disability need choice and control over assistive technology'**. NCOSS argues that people with disability have too little involvement in decisions about their equipment and AT, and there is a lack of 'whole of life focus' that can limit people's life opportunities and outcomes.

It makes the important point that 50% of people with disability in NSW (some 680,300 individuals) used aids or equipment in 2012 and notes that 66% of EnableNSW's clients are over 65 and will not be eligible for the NDIS.



NCOSS goes on to make some key recommendations regarding AT including:

- Increasing involvement of people with disability, advocacy and representative organisations in planning, evaluation, and strategies for equipment provision
- Reducing direct delivery of equipment and services by government, and government moving to being a funding body only, to increase people's choice over their supports
- Abolishing co-payments.

ATSA has a long-held policy that the important functions of providing advice (such as engaging an allied health professional), supplying AT and funding should be separate to avoid conflicts

and ensure optimal outcomes for the consumer. We therefore endorse NCOSS's call for governments to reduce direct delivery of equipment and services and return to being a funding body only, along with other recommendations.

The full document can be downloaded at: www.speakplanact.net

The ups and downs of the Australian dollar

If you cast your mind back to the early 1990s, many of the brands that dominated the Australian AT marketplace were manufactured locally in Australia. Wheelchairs from Met-A-Lite, Aitchison, Knix and Denyer; powered mobility from Rollerchair and Sibbings; there were Promed lifters along with beds from Murphy and Hendicare – all iconic manufacturers who are no more. In fact, the first ever mobility scooter designed and mass-produced was the legendary 3-wheel Gopher built in South Australia.

Some Australian manufacturers remain, including ATSA members AC Mobility, KCare and Magic Mobility; however, it is estimated that over 90% of all AT sold throughout Australia is now imported. Lower cost, more standardised products are generally sourced from low-cost manufacturing countries such as China and Taiwan, whereas more complex AT usually is imported from Europe, the UK or the USA.

Australia's manufacturing industries have been in decline for several decades due to our high cost of skilled labour and the strength of the Australian dollar. Our relative geographical isolation also makes developing export business difficult due to the high freight costs of servicing the larger global markets, another factor that undermines the Australian manufacturing sector.

With AT imports increasing, retail prices are now heavily dependent on the value of the Australian dollar (AUD) relative to major international currencies including the US dollar, UK pound sterling and the Euro.

The AUD was floated in December 1983 and in 2011 was the 5th most traded currency in the world, behind the US dollar, the euro, the yen and the pound sterling. Since being floated the AUD has traded from as low as \$0.48 (2001) to a high of \$1.10 (2011) compared to the US dollar. Over that time the average value of the AUD has been just under \$0.78.

The following table shows the impact of the AUD/USD exchange rate on a product that costs USD \$1,000, has international freight of 10%, and delivers both the importer/wholesaler and the retailer a 30% margin. The resulting retail price would vary from a high of \$4,338 to a low of \$2,167 due solely to currency fluctuations that cannot be controlled by the local importers. Note that the margins made are not the profit made by the business as they have to cover wages, rent, insurance and all other business costs.

The impact of AUD/USD rate over 15 years:

Product cost (USD)	\$1,000
Freight (USD)	10%
Wholesale margin	30%
Retail margin	30%

Year	Average AUD/USD rate	AUD cost	AUD cost incl freight	AUD retail price
1999	\$0.6453	\$1,550	\$1,705	\$3,479
2000	\$0.5819	\$1,719	\$1,890	\$3,858
2001	\$0.5175	\$1,933	\$2,126	\$4,338
2002	\$0.5440	\$1,838	\$2,022	\$4,127
2003	\$0.6523	\$1,533	\$1,686	\$3,441
2004	\$0.7364	\$1,358	\$1,494	\$3,049
2005	\$0.7621	\$1,312	\$1,443	\$2,945
2006	\$0.7533	\$1,327	\$1,460	\$2,980
2007	\$0.8389	\$1,192	\$1,311	\$2,676
2008	\$0.8529	\$1,172	\$1,290	\$2,632
2009	\$0.7936	\$1,260	\$1,386	\$2,829
2010	\$0.9205	\$1,086	\$1,195	\$2,439
2011	\$1.0324	\$969	\$1,065	\$2,174
2012	\$1.0358	\$965	\$1,062	\$2,167
2013	\$0.9676	\$1,033	\$1,137	\$2,320
2014	\$0.9147	\$1,093	\$1,203	\$2,454

In order to manage the risks associated with currency fluctuations, some importers take out currency hedges. In very simple terms, currency hedging is when a business enters into a financial contract in order to protect itself against changes in currency exchange rates. However, most importers hedge currency for no more than 6–12 months and then usually to cover only a percentage of their exposure. Hedging for longer periods usually results in significantly lower rates that unnecessarily increase costs.

One of ATSA's concerns is the increasing trend for government tenders to request fixed prices for the period of the contract. It is impossible to guarantee prices for much more than 12 months given the volatility in the AUD. Over the past 3 years the rate has varied from \$1.11 to the current level of just \$0.86 – a fall of over 22%. ATSA's policy is that all tenders for AT should have a clear and transparent mechanism for modifying prices (both up and down) due to significant changes in the exchange rate.

Also most people don't understand that when the AUD falls, the percentage increase in the landed cost is greater than the percentage decline. The following table shows that a 20% lowering of the AUD from parity to \$0.80 results in a 25% higher landed cost. A 50% decrease in the AUD results in a doubling of the landed cost. We also need to note that international freight is generally billed in US dollars and is therefore subject to changes in exchange rates.

When rates decline:

USD cost	AUD/USD rate	AUD cost	Increase in AUD cost
\$1,000	1.0000	\$1,000	
\$1,000	0.9000	\$1,111	11%
\$1,000	0.8000	\$1,250	25%
\$1,000	0.7000	\$1,429	43%
\$1,000	0.6000	\$1,667	67%
\$1,000	0.5000	\$2,000	100%

The recent decline in the AUD has put many importers under pressure to increase prices and most financial commentators are predicting a return to rates closer to the historical average of \$0.78. This, coupled with the Reserve Bank's push for a lower AUD, will inevitably mean AT prices in Australia will have to increase in the near future.

Industry opportunities in Hong Kong

Hong Kong's medical and healthcare equipment industry mainly targets the household consumer market. Between January and August 2014, Hong Kong's total exports of medical and healthcare equipment increased by 6%. Specifically, exports to the US and the EU increased by 23% and 14%, respectively. The advancement in medical technology and techniques, as well as the increase in the world's ageing population, is driving demand for medical devices and supplies.

Outsourcing has been growing in popularity among Australian and New Zealand manufacturers of medical and healthcare equipment in recent years. Hong Kong companies are positioned to act as contract manufacturers or sourcing partners given their knowledge regarding quality assurance and intellectual property (IP) protection. Most medical and healthcare equipment companies in Hong Kong are engaged in original equipment manufacturer (OEM) business, and many of them also provide engineering design services to enhance their competitive edge.

To lower production costs, many Hong Kong manufacturers have relocated their production facilities to the Chinese mainland.

However, quality control, marketing, research and development, design, as well as material and equipment procurement continue to be conducted in Hong Kong.

The Hong Kong International Medical Devices and Supplies Fair, organised by the Hong Kong Trade Development Council, is a trade platform for all kinds of medical and health-related technology, equipment, devices and supplies. The fair also features a number of seminars, with industry experts discussing topics ranging from medical device technology to market development and trends. The Rehabilitation and Elderly Care Products zone has been among the fair highlights.

With more than 40 offices around the world, half of them in Asia, HKTDC would like to invite and assist more Australian and New Zealand companies to find their partners and expand their medical devices businesses in the Asian market via Hong Kong.

The Hong Kong International Medical Devices and Supplies Fair will be held on 18–20 May 2015. Visit www.hktdc.com/hk-medicalfair for more details. For exhibiting and visiting enquiries, contact: Sydney Office, HKTDC, ph: +61 (0)2 9261-8911; email: sydney.office@hktdc.org

NDIA first annual report out now

The NDIA Annual Report 2013–2014 summarises the first year of operation of the National Disability Insurance Agency (NDIA) and the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS). As of 30 June 2014, NDIA had approved 7316 plans for people with disability, and 1350 services providers across the four trial sites had registered with the NDIS. During 2013–14, NDIS provided \$130 million of support to participants, well within the funding envelope of \$148 million. Participants' satisfaction levels are high – 94 per cent rated NDIA planning good, or very good.

The report was tabled in federal Parliament on 29 October 2014. For a summary and the full report, see: www.ndis.gov.au/document/925

Events registration for 2014 International Day of People with Disability

International Day of People with Disability (IDPWD) is held on 3 December each year. It is a United Nations sanctioned day that celebrates progress in breaking down barriers, opening doors, and realising an inclusive society for all. Disability organisations, businesses, governments and the community come together at events across the country to mark the occasion and celebrate the achievements of people with disability. You are invited to register an event to celebrate the International Day of People with Disability, 2014. For more information: www.idpwd.com.au

SWEP contracts in place

SWEP recently finalised its current tender for low-cost, high-volume, non-customised equipment with the contracts in place for over 70 items awarded to 10 suppliers.

A list of the contracted equipment and suppliers as at 14 November 2014 can be found on the SWEP website www.swep.bhs.org.au

Loretta Zeeck, SWEP Deputy Director, noted 'that the evaluation process for this range of equipment has guaranteed quality of the products which will enhance quality of life for clients with equipment performance assured. Each of the contracted suppliers has clearly demonstrated their organisational capability and we are excited about the partnership opportunities these contracts will bring'.

SWEP has conducted 33 roadshows around Victoria for registered prescribers outlining the procurement strategy and evaluation process, items contracted, and prescription and process changes.

As part of the tender rollout, SWEP and our contracted suppliers will be conducting 5 expos around the state to view the equipment and liaise with the suppliers within the next few weeks. This is a chance for prescribers to get hands-on experience and familiarise themselves with the contracted equipment.

There is no change to current processes for non-contracted items.

Search function to find a NDIA registered service provider improved

The new function added to the Registered Provider page of the NDIA website allows participants to search by support clusters/items. Searches by support items and by postcode can be undertaken within three major support clusters. Service providers should check their service registration and ensure they are registered for the correct support clusters/items. The new search function can be found at: www.ndis.gov.au.

WHO reports now available

The World Health Organization has recently released several reports of interest to those involved with ageing populations and assistive health technology.

WHO Global Forum on Innovations for Ageing Populations; www.who.int/kobe_centre/publications/gfiap_report/en/

Survey of Needs for Assistive and Medical Devices for Older People in Six Countries of the WHO Western Pacific Region; www.who.int/kobe_centre/publications/ADMD_Survey_Report/en/

Reports on the Global Cooperation on Assistive Health Technology (GATE) meeting in Geneva, 3–4 July; www.who.int/phi/implementation/assistive_technology/first_gatemeet_participants/en/

Dr Lloyd Walker made a significant contribution to the last two items, and spoke about the research at the 2014 ARATA Conference in August.

New standing offer arrangements at Qld MASS

Queensland Medical Aids Subsidy Scheme's (MASS) new assistive technology (AT) standing offer arrangement (SOA) commenced 1 November 2014. This SOA has over 1,000 products listed, providing significant choice for both MASS clients and clinicians. MASS will monitor demand in this SOA to see the positive affect that increased choice and variety of products will have in the selection of appropriate assistive technology and how it contributes to improvements in turnaround times for MASS clients.

The director of MASS also expressed his appreciation to all the suppliers who participated in this SOA process as MASS recognises the important role suppliers play in their service delivery.

In another area, the MASS Continence team has been busy on their new SOA. Keep an eye out for information – it will be effective from 1 February 2015. Webinars, etc., will inform clinicians and clients of changes between old and new SOAs. MASS is looking to the new Continence SOA to improve choice for clients and clinicians. The current SOA lists approximately 400 products and MASS is hopeful of increasing this by approximately 50%.

Report on retail trade costs

Released on 10 October 2014, the report *Relative Costs of Doing Business in Australia: Retail Trade* examines the cost structures of businesses operating in the Australian retail trade industry, including costs relative to international competitors. For a summary of key points and a copy of the report, go to: www.pc.gov.au/projects/study/business-costs/retail-trade/report

Batteries and planes

Airlines have been tightening their regulations after fire broke out in the cargo hold of a Boeing 737 just before take-off from Melbourne to Fiji. The Australian Transport Safety Bureau's report indicates that the fire was caused by a short circuit of lithium batteries (see: www.atsb.gov.au). For details of the incident in April 2014, see: www.flightsafetyaustralia.com.

CAEATI's transfer to MASS improving service

Administration of the Community Aids Equipment and Assistive Technology Initiative (CAEATI) was transferred to MASS earlier this year. The CAEATI program enables people with a disability to participate in their communities of choice by funding a range of assistive technologies that connect their choices with funded options. The eligibility criteria, guidelines and policy remain under the guidance of the Department of Communities, Child Safety and Disability Services.

Small changes have taken place with CAEATI, including the ability to upgrade and combine MASS and CAEATI funding. In circumstances where a client meets the eligibility criteria for MASS and CAEATI and requests an upgrade to their MASS-funded equipment to meet their CAEATI goals, CAEATI funds may be used to subsidise the cost of upgrades to the equipment (e.g. frame, motor, battery, etc.) to enhance the use of the equipment in the community. A good example of working in the interests of the client.

Copies of presentations from EnableNSW events available

EnableNSW has made presentations from supplier and prescriber information sessions available online. The presentations from the 8 October Supplier Information Morning and from the Prescriber Forum are available at: www.enable.health.nsw.gov.au.



Rehab Tech Asia, 26–28 March 2015, Singapore

RehabTech Asia 2015 features the latest innovation in assistive technology, integrated care and rehabilitation engineering. The conference and exhibition is the industry platform for academics, clinicians, end-users, policy-makers and suppliers to network and to learn about the latest industry products and trends. Over 4000 trade visitors and 150 exhibitors across are expected to attend. For further information, and visitor and exhibitor registration details, see: www.rehabtechasia.com

ATSA Independent Living Expo, 7 May 2015 Brisbane; 13–14 May 2015 Sydney

In 2015, ATSA will hold two Independent Living Expos, one in Brisbane (Brisbane Showgrounds 7 May), the other in Sydney (Rosehill Racecourse 13–14 May). The combined events will have over 100 exhibitors displaying a wide range of products and services for people with disability and the elderly. On display will be the latest in assistive technology, mobility solutions, pressure care, employment support, accessible recreation/holiday ideas, modified motor vehicles, and more. A key feature of the Expos is the free Clinical Education Program – run in rooms next to the exhibition floor.

Admission is free to therapists, the general public, end users and ATSA members for both events. See: www.atsaindependentlivingexpo.com.au

Hong Kong International Medical Devices and Supplies Fair, 18–20 May 2015

The Hong Kong International Medical Devices and Supplies Fair, organised by the Hong Kong Trade Development Council, is a trade platform for all kinds of medical and health-related technology, equipment, devices and supplies. The fair also features a number of seminars, with industry experts discussing topics ranging from medical device technology to market development and trends.

For more details, see: www.hktdc.com/hkmedicalfair. For exhibiting and visiting enquiries, contact: Sydney Office, ph: +61 (0)2 9261-8911; email: sydney.office@hktdc.org

RESNA 2015, 10–14 June 2015, Denver, CO

The annual RESNA conference is a unique, multidisciplinary gathering of assistive technology professionals from around the world. Designed by and for people passionate about the use of assistive technology to improve the health and well-being of people with disabilities, RESNA 2015 offers educational sessions, scientific paper sessions, posters, plenary sessions with internationally recognised speakers, and exhibits. Submission of Scientific and Student Scientific Papers closes on 13 January 2015. For further information, including guidelines for submission of papers, and exhibitor and visitor registration, see: www.resna.org

The Enabling Technology Festival, 12–14 August 2015, Singapore

Three international conferences will come together for cross-disciplinary knowledge transfer and experience sharing that focus on technology as the enabler for innovative solutions. The International Conference on Rehabilitation Robotics (ICORR2015); the International Convention on Rehabilitation Engineering and Assistive Technology (ICREATE2015); and the Serious Games Conference (SGC2015) will host researchers, academics, clinicians, engineers and industrial practitioners. For further information, go to: www.enabling-technology-festival.org; the call for abstracts closes on 28 February 2015 – click ICRAVE on website.

APT (Aidacare Professional Series) back in 2015!

Are you keen to learn about the latest products and technology and accrue CPD points at the same time?

- Learn from highly skilled APT educators/presenters
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- Get to know specialists who can assist with advice and/or problem-solving

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Good news from the NDIS*

Stephen Fagg was born with a genetic disability – Usher's Syndrome – and as a result he has vision and hearing loss. In saying that, it's never deterred him from achieving his dream – to become a lawyer, and now he works for the NDIA as a senior lawyer, within the Representation and Merits Section based in Canberra.

It's a critical agency role but Stephen, even with disability, is able to do the job to the best of his ability because he works for an employer who sees his worth well beyond his disabilities and provides him with assistive technologies to get the job done.

'Assistive technologies have made a massive difference and really opened up my world', Stephen says.

And it's broken down a lot of barriers. ...I started with the NDIA, in February, 2013, and since then I've been getting so much support, and now I able to do a whole range of tasks I was never able to do before.

Prior to joining the NDIA, Stephen worked for the Department of Agriculture, in its Legislation Unit. Stephen said:

In my former role I was very much restricted to paper-based tasks. I was quite limited and didn't get the opportunity to branch into other areas of law that really interested me. But now, thanks to assistive technologies, I've been able to branch out. When I first started with the NDIA, I did operational guideline support work and I also worked on NDIS rules but majority of my work involved preparing human rights compatibility statements. Then, thanks to assistive technologies, I progressed to doing internal reviews and now most of my work is representing the Agency before the Administrate Appeals Tribunal, which is where, as a lawyer, I ultimately wanted to be.

Stephen said it's quite a busy role but one he enjoys '*immensely*'. *'In terms of the workplace, the biggest change for me was actually having access to a live 24-hour-a-day, seven-day-a-week captioning service'*, he said.

If I had a branch or division meeting, a conference, or had to appear before the tribunal, all I needed to do was make a booking with the live captioning service to let them know the day and time. A captioner would then phone in to my meeting to receive an audio feed, mute the phone and respeak everything being said so it appeared on my ipad in large font. This meant I could actually read it within a matter of seconds. It was great.

It's an extraordinary piece of technology. And it's really opened up more doors for me career-wise. It's allowed me to pursue something I've always wanted to do and that's to represent my employer before a tribunal or in court so it's been a real massive change for me.

Stephen also has access to a caption telephone just in case he may not get the gist of the conversation, but thanks to a cochlear implant he received in late 2012, he doesn't use it as often now.

Prior to starting here, I had a cochlear implant. It's helped me hugely and it's allowed me to follow conversations like I've never done before. But the captioning phone is still very helpful.

It's similar to the captioning service. It's available 24-hours a day, seven-days-a-week. If someone tries to call me, I know who the person is and the captions on my phone tell me what they are talking about. It's great because if someone wants to call and discuss something quickly, I've got that piece of technology without having to book through the captioning service.

Stephen is a firm believer that people with any injury or disability can do anything if they have the right assistive technologies. *'In this day and age, assistive technologies make the sky the limit, especially for those who are seen with disabilities'*, he said.

The big thing is trying to shift attitudes. I know there's particular resistance to using assistive technologies in the private sector, due to cost, but people need to look beyond that and think about the benefits because at the end of the day it's the same argument for the National Disability Insurance Scheme itself – people look at the cost of the scheme but the benefits back to the community and the economy far outweighs this.

I'm really fortunate to work for the NDIA – an employer who sees my worth well beyond my disability and values me for my perspective and my ability.

Nearly 11 per cent of its staff identify as having a disability, and 55 per cent have lived experience with disability – I only hope more employers can follow its lead.



* All the information for this article was provided to ATSA by the National Disability Insurance Agency.

Key NDIA statistics for quarter ending 30 June 2014 now available

The NDIA's quarterly report ending 30 June 2014 to the COAG Disability Reform Council is now available. Go to: www.ndis.gov.au.



Welcome to our new ATSA Members



Freedom Motors Australia & Freedom Access Vehicles

17 Plasser Cres St Mary's, NSW 2760
ph: 1800 672437 | www.freedommotorsaustralia.com.au

Freedom Motors Australia have been converting standard vehicles into wheelchair accessible vehicles since 1997. The company converts a wide range of models to create wheelchair vans and wheelchair accessible taxis. The conversions are designed with a straight in/out entry and a rear fold-down ramp for ease of use.



PROFESSIONAL ASSISTANCE for LIVING

Equipment with expertise...

Professional Assistance for Living (PAL)

Ethelton, SA 5015
ph: (08) 8449-5462 | Mob: 0434 339 910
email: pal_info@iprimus.com.au

Providing a mobile service to metropolitan Adelaide and regional South Australia, PAL specialises in the supply and support of quality rehabilitation products for children and adults. PAL is owned and run by Simone Fejer, a highly experienced rehabilitation physiotherapist.



Sensory Calm

Sensory Calm

Suite 8.02, 12 Mars Rd Lane Cove West, NSW 2066
ph: (02) 8355-2290 | <http://sensorycalm.com.au>

Sensory Calm supplies anti-anxiety tools such as chain weighted blankets (for adults and children), comforters and vests, as well as a number of chewable items, to assist people with concentration difficulties or sensory integration problems.

ATSA Committee

Sam Garland (Aidacare) – President

Geoff Purtill (Invacare) – Vice President

Rob Hogan (Country Care Group) – Treasurer

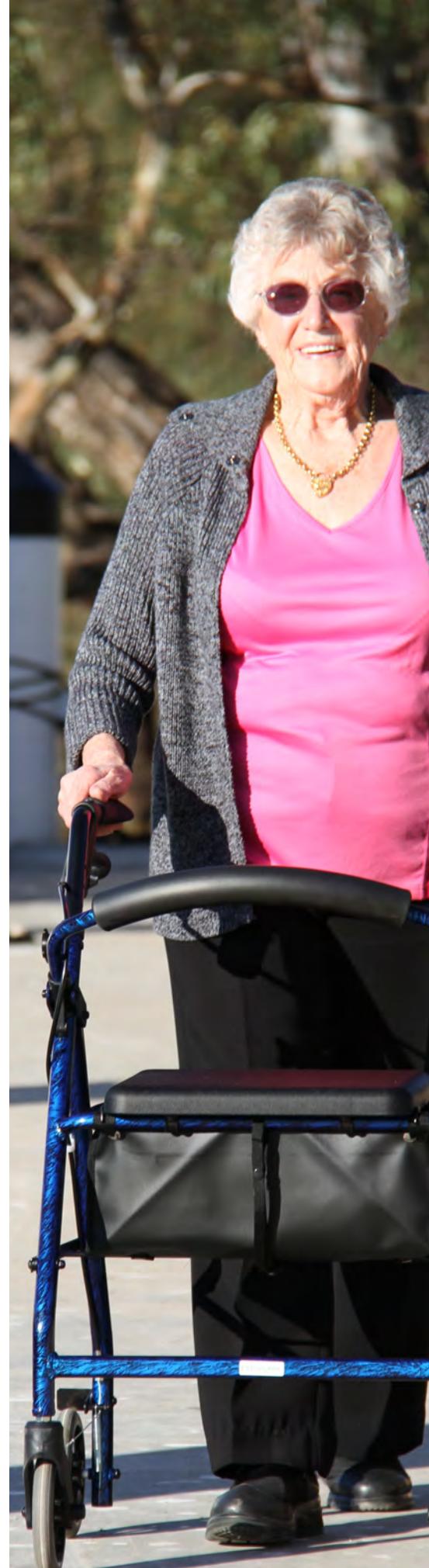
Ian Rothall (Scooter World) – Secretary

Mark Wheeldon (GMS Rehab) – Committee Member

Owen Dawes (Permobil) – Committee Member

**Matthew Woosnam (Walk on Wheels Qld)
– Committee Member**

David Fagan (Paragon Mobility) – Committee Member



ATSA Members Registered

Ability in Motion

ph: 1800 994 408
www.abilityinmotion.com.au

AC Mobility

ph: (08) 9209-1777
www.acmobility.com.au

Aidacare Pty Ltd

ph: 1300 133 120
www.aidacare.com.au

Astec Equipment Services

ph: (03) 5336-3900
www.astecsolutions.net.au

Austech Medical

ph: (07) 5495-8663
www.austechmedical.com

Auto Mobility

ph: 1800 662 454
www.automobility.com.au

Better Living Care Pty Ltd

ph: (02) 8853-1100
www.betterlivingcare.com.au

Blue Badge Insurance

ph: 1300 304 802
www.BlueBadgelnsurance.com.au

Canterbury Concepts

ph: (03) 9580-1744
www.canterburyconcepts.com.au

Capital Special Vehicles

ph: (03) 9794-8888
www.csv.com.au

Care & Mobility

ph: (02) 6581-0018
www.careandmobility.com.au

Central Queensland Mobility

ph: 1800 201 070 or (07) 4972-4449
www.cqmobility.com.au

Country Care

ph: 1800 727382
www.countrycaregroup.com.au

DeJay Medical and Scientific Pty Ltd

ph: (02) 9838-8869
www.dejay.com.au

Deutscher Healthcare

ph: (03) 5339-5708
www.deutscherhealthcare.com.au

Disability Hire Vehicles

ph: (02) 4577-2225
www.disabilityhire.com.au

Drive Medical Pty Ltd

ph: (03) 9551-1548
www.drive-medical.com.au

Durable Medical Equipment Ltd

ph: (02) 9674-8904
www.durmed.com.au

Dynamic Controls Pty Ltd

ph: +64 3 962-2519
www.dynamiccontrols.com

Dynamic Wheelchair Solutions Pty Ltd

ph: (03) 9548-8400
www.dynamicwheelchairs.com.au

Eden Healthcare Solutions

ph: (02) 6041-9700
www.edenhcs.com.au

Elan Medical Supplies

ph: 1300 137 250
www.elanmedical.com.au

Endeavour Lifecare Pty Ltd

ph: (03) 9703-2900
www.endeavourlifecare.com.au

FAS Therapeutic Equipment

ph: (03) 9587-6766
www.fasequipment.com

Fisher Lane Pty Ltd

ph: (03) 9419-2250
www.fisherlane.com.au

Franks Engineering Pty Ltd

ph: (03) 9354-0400
www.franksengineering.com.au

Freedom Healthcare

ph: (07) 3801-3910
www.freedomhc.com.au

Freedom Motors Australia & Freedom Access Vehicles

ph: 1800 672 437
www.freedommotorsaustralia.com.au

Geelong Wheelchair Services Pty Ltd

ph: (03) 5244-0844
www.geelongwheelchairs.com.au

GMS Rehabilitation

ph: 1300 734 223
www.gmsrehab.com.au

GTK Rehab

ph: (02) 9620-9177
www.gtkrehab.com.au

Guardian Mobility Pty Ltd

ph: (02) 6288-3538
www.guardianmobility.com.au

Healthcare Innovations Australia

ph: 1300 499 282
www.hiaus.net.au

Healthcare Lifting Specialist

ph: (03) 9878-4448
www.healthcarelifting.com.au

Home Safety and Comfort

ph: (02) 6581-2400
www.homesafetyandcomfort.com.au

Hospital at Home

ph: (02) 9601-7757
www.hospitalathome.com.au

ILS Rehab

ph: 1300 366398
www.ilsrcab.com.au

Independent Home Care Supplies

ph: (02) 4227-4315
www.ihcss.com.au

Independent Living Solutions

ph: (07) 4728-1200
www.living-solutions.com.au

InterPoint Events

ph: (02) 9660-2113
www.intermedia.com.au

Invacare Australia Pty Ltd

ph: 1800 460 460
www.invacare.com.au

K Care Healthcare Equipment

ph: (08) 9248-4444
www.kcare.com.au

Keep Moving Pty Ltd

ph: (08) 8947-5122
www.keepmoving.net.au

Liberty Healthcare

ph: 1300 885 853
www.libertyhealthcare.com.au

Magic Mobility Pty Ltd

ph: (03) 8791-5600
www.magicmobility.com.au

Mandurah Mobility Products

ph: (08) 9535-1411
www.mandurahmobility.com.au

Maroondah Home Healthcare

ph: (03) 9879-8885
www.homehealth.com.au

Medi-Repair Services

ph: (03) 6334-8844
www.medirepairservices.com.au

Medistore ph: 1300 882 194 www.medistore.com.au	ParaQuad NSW ph: (02) 8741-5685 www.paraquad.org.au	Sensory Calm ph: (08) 8355-2290 http://sensorycalm.com.au
Medix21 Australia ph: (02) 9970-7342 www.medix21australia.com.au	Patient Care Products ph: (03) 9786-3092 www.patientcareproducts.com.au	Shoprider Pty Ltd ph: (08) 9248-4180 www.shoprider.com.au
Megalong Positioning Service ph: (02) 4759-2800 www.megalongpositioning.com.au	Peak Care Equipment Pty Ltd ph: (02) 4272-2688 www.peakcareequipment.com.au	Special Needs Solutions ph: (07) 5527-9794 www.specialneedssolutions.com.au
Melrose Wheelchairs Pty Ltd ph: 0407 502 729 www.melrosewheelchairs.com.au	Peninsula Home Health Care ph: (03) 9786-7004 www.phhc.com.au	Specialised Wheelchair Company ph: (02) 9905-5333 www.swco.com.au
Mobility Aids Australia ph: (03) 9546-7700 www.mobilityaids.com.au	Permobil Australia Pty Ltd ph: 1300 858 424 www.permobil.com	Statewide Home Health Care ph: (03) 9541-6220 www.shhc.com.au
Mobility Care ph: (03) 9568-8383 www.mobilitycare.net.au	Personal Independence Providers ph: 1300 65 7016 www.haleberry.com.au	Sunrise Medical Pty Ltd ph: (02) 9678-6600 www.sunrisemedical.com.au
Mobility Engineering ph: (02) 9482-4572 www.mobilityengineering.com.au	Power Mobility Pty Ltd ph: (07) 3889-8921 www.powermobility.info	Think Mobility Pty Ltd ph: 1300 88 1968 www.thinkmobility.com.au
Mobility Matters Pty Ltd ph: (02) 6280-7244 www.mobilitymatters.com.au	Pride Mobility Products Australia Pty Ltd ph: (03) 8770-9600 www.pridemobility.com.au	Total Mobility Solutions Pty Ltd ph: 1300 868 662 www.totalmobility.com.au
Mobility Options ph: (02) 9875-5530 www.mobilityoptions.com.au	Problem Management Engineering Pty Ltd ph: (02) 9482-2808 www.pmeautoconversions.com.au	Tunstall Australasia Pty Ltd ph: (07) 3637-2200 www.tunstallhealthcare.com.au
Northcott Equipment Solutions ph: (02) 9890-0186 www.northcottes.com.au	Professional Assistance for Living (PAL) ph: (08) 8449-5462; 0434 339 910 pal_info@iprimus.com.au	Victorian Home Health Equipment ph: (03) 9725-6577 www.vhhe.com.au
Northern Rivers Surgical ph: (02) 6686-6644 www.intermobility.com.au	Push Mobility ph: 1300 721 328 www.pushmobility.com.au	Walk on Wheels Australia (Brendale) Pty Ltd ph: (07) 3205-5654 www.walkonwheels.com.au
Novis Healthcare ph: 1300 738 885 www.novis.com.au	R82 Australia Pty Ltd ph: (02) 8213-6666 www.r82.com.au	Walk on Wheels NSW Pty Ltd ph: (02) 4954-8555 www.wownsw.com.au
Omni Healthcare ph: (03) 5333-4006 www.omnihealthcare.com.au	Scooters & Mobility Pty Ltd ph: (02) 4962-4007 www.scootersandmobility.com	Watercomfort Company ph: (02) 9531-1699 www.watercomfort.com.au
Otto Bock Australia Pty Ltd ph: (02) 8818-2800 www.ottobock.com.au	Scooters Australia ph: (03) 9799-9077 www.scooterusaus.com.au	Wheelchair Sales Indesign ph: (02) 9607-3355 www.wheelchairsales.com.au
Para Mobility ph: (02) 9651-4446 www.paramobility.com.au	Scooter World Australia ph: (08) 8245-1111 www.scooter-world.com.au	Wicked Wheelchairs ph: (07) 5500-0882 www.wickedwheelchairs.com.au
Paragon Mobility ph: 1300 652 382 www.paragonmobility.com.au	Seating Dynamics Pty Ltd ph: 1300 845 483 or (02) 8838 3100 www.seatingdynamics.com.au	Your Mobility ph: (03) 9391-9810 www.yourmobility.com.au

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