

MDAA Listening to Members



The MDAA Listening to Members forum was held on 1 February 2011 at Parramatta. We were very happy that despite the 41 degree temperatures over twenty members and associate members attended.

We heard from members about ways we can improve our services, their best experiences with MDAA and how people with disabilities can be supported to stand up for their rights.

The members had many valuable comments which will help us to continue to improve our work. One of the suggestions was that we provide more information about other organisations that can provide assistance. Each issue of Share With Us will now include an article from another organisation about their services. In this issue on page 4 we have an article from Guide Dogs NSW/ACT.

Thank you to all the members and associate members who attended the forum and so enthusiastically shared their thoughts with us.

MDAA needs more Community Voices. Can you help?

At MDAA we believe that the best way for people from NESB with disability, to raise awareness about disability and diversity in the community, is to tell their own story. The Community Voices program helps people from NESB with disability, their family, friends and carers to learn the skills to do this.

MDAA is often asked to information expos, TAFE classes, or other community organisations as a guest speaker. The Community Voice goes to these events and tells their story and answers questions about the reality of having a disability or being a carer or family member.

MDAA is looking for people who want to become a Community Voice. There will be free training starting on 6 April 2011. In the course you will learn public speaking, presentation skills and how to put your story together. You will also be meeting other people interested in raising awareness and participating in their community.

The training will be held each Wednesday for six weeks from 10am to 2 pm. Lunch will be provided. To book a place in the Community Voices training or for more information call Luis at MDAA on 9891 6400.

International Organization for Migration

The International Organization for Migration (IOM) has a **No-Interest Travel Loan Fund** that can help to meet up to 75% of the travel costs of families and friend coming to Australia on a Special Humanitarian Program visa.

A deposit of 25% of the estimated travel cost is paid to IOM before the travel arrangements are made. As well as helping you with the cost (and booking) of travel, IOM also provides advice and support before, during and after your family or friend's journey to Australia.

Loans are repaid in fortnightly instalments through Centrelink's Centrepay system.

IOM has access to discounted fares not

readily available to other travellers and will seek to make a booking for passengers within 3 to 10 weeks, following receipt of the deposit.

For more information contact IOM on 02 626 76634 or www.iomaustralia.org

(Picture from IOM Flyer)



Ramp Up—disability news and views

Last year on the International Day of People with Disabilities, the ABC launched 'Ramp up'.

Ramp up is a website for, by and about people with disabilities and disability issues. Anyone can submit an article, or participate in a blog.

It's at: <http://www.abc.net.au/rampup>.

The Editor of Ramp Up says "Ramp Up is a destination for news, discussion, debate and humour for everyone in Australia's disability communities. Whether you live with a disability, are a friend or family member of someone with a disability, ... or just want to get a better picture, this is a lively community space to have your say."

Zest Awards Finalist



NSW Network of Women with Disability

The NSW Network of Women with Disability was a finalist in Outstanding Voluntary Group/Organisation category at the Zest Awards. The Zest Awards highlight the strength of the Community Sector in Western Sydney.

The NSW Network of Women with Disability is supported by MDAA.

The aim of the Network is to address the needs of women with disability as both, individuals and members of a group.

The Network has only one part-time staff member, Ace Boncato. With over 200 members the Network relies on its member volunteers called the WOW Team. Volunteers come from a range of cultural backgrounds with a range of disability/abilities.

The volunteers are involved with community activities such as 'MsTical Women's Gatherings'. These activities give women an opportunity to connect, share experiences and discuss issues. A very enjoyable and empowering experience!

The Network's volunteers are also involved in important community events including International Women's Day (IWD).

The volunteers lobby and advocate for accessibility of events. The enthusiasm and strength of the Network's volunteers in advocating for accessibility, has meant there has been a significant improvement in event proceedings and women with disability feel they are equal participants and contributors in events such as IWD.

If you are interested in becoming involved with the NSW Network of Women with Disability please contact Ace Boncato at MDAA on 9891 6400.

Members News

Share with Us is your newsletter and we want to include stories from members. If you would like to share your story with other MDAA members please contact Luis on 9891 6400. You can write your own story or talk to Luis who will write the story for you.

Riad Receives Award

Hajj Riad Al Dhaibi, an MDAA member and member of the Committee recently received an award from the Friends of Bayt Al-Zakat Australia.

The award was given for Riad's ongoing support and work in his community.

The event was held on 12 February 2011 where more than 500 members from the Lebanese and other communities in NSW gathered to congratulate the achievements of Riad and others.

Riad is involved in a range of volunteer work including raising money each year to send food to support disadvantaged people in



Lebanon (called Eid Adhha).

For more information about Bayt Al-Zakat Australia contact them on 9758 5288 or Riad can be contacted on 0415 722 430.

Hannen's Holidays

On the 8 til 15 January my brother, my aunty, and the rest of the family all packed up our things to go to the south coast. We had lots of fun. Swimming, lots of yummy food, lots of fighting, lots of family lunch.

We took the kids to go on the rides. Sleeping in the sun most of the time. Going fishing.

There were 18 of us and when we got there; we had them all staying in one house

because the other one was taken. We had lots of fun. We had lot of rain and some sun too.

On the 18.1.2011 Vision Australia invited me to go to the city. We went and had a look at a new art work that is in the city. We had a look at what was in the city as well. We had lots of fun.

We got lost but then we found where we had to go to. We got the train to the city.



Congratulations Carmelita

Carmelita Bongco, who has been with MDAA for many years as a member and as a volunteer, recently celebrated her 70th birthday.

Many members would know Carmelita who works as a volunteer at MDAA's Harris Park office three days per week. Carmelita's assistance is highly valued by all the staff at MDAA who all wished her the best for her 70th Birthday.

Congratulations and thank you Carmelita!

Guide Dogs NSW/ACT: Our name only tells half the story

Many people think that Guide Dogs NSW/ACT only provides guide dogs to help people with impaired vision to travel around safely and independently. But this is only part of the story.

“Guide Dogs NSW/ACT provides a range of free mobility services and advice to help people with vision problems. Most of these services don’t involve a dog,” said Dannielle Hogan, Community Education Coordinator for Guide Dogs.

Mobility aids include long canes, folding support canes (white walking sticks) and Miniguides (hand-held sonar aid).

Other ways Guide Dogs NSW/ACT can assist include providing training in how to orientate around new areas and strategies for safe road crossings and using public transport.

“You don’t have to be blind to receive our services and we provide specialised programs for working with children who are vision impaired and people who have lost vision due to stroke or head injury.

“Interpreters are provided and our instructors come to you—at home, your work, school or university. If someone has a preference for a male or female instructor, this can also be accommodated.”

Snapshot of Guide Dogs NSW/ACT:

What we do Teach people who are blind or vision impaired to move around as safely and independently as possible

How? By providing one-on-one instruction in the use of mobility aids such as the long cane, support canes, electronic devices or guide dogs, and by teaching people how to access public transport and where the safest road crossing points are located, for example.

How much? All our services are free.



Lillian Wang who is vision impaired, being taught about road crossings, by Guide Dogs NSW/ACT Orientation and Mobility Instructor Jessie Jiang.

Who? All ages – from babies with impaired vision who need encouragement to move and reach for objects right through to the elderly.

How do I make a referral? Phone Guide Dogs NSW/ACT on 9412 9300, anyone can refer.

But I don’t need a guide dog! Although our name is Guide Dogs, most of our services don’t involve a dog.

English is not my first language: Guide Dogs can provide interpreters.

Where can I find out more?

www.guidedogs.com.au

Contact us:

MDAA

Harris Park Phone: (02) 9891 6400
or 1800 629 072

Griffith (02) 6962 5399

Newcastle (02) 4927 0111

Wollongong (02) 4226 9971

MDAA also auspices these services

SESA Rockdale (02) 9597 9970

SEA Bega (02) 6492 0200

CIWDA Ultimo (02) 9281 8699

E-mail: mdaa@mdaa.org.au

Website: www.mdaa.org.au