

Update



From the Executive Officer

2015 has started with a bang and as we ease into the cooler months, thoughts of holidays, getting away and having a break become distant memories as we get back to the grind. February and March are very hectic months for AT suppliers who are playing catch-up on client assessments and AT installs that have largely been in abeyance due to the large number of OTs away on Christmas holidays. It is also a time when OTs caseloads can be overloaded making it difficult for those needing an AT assessment.

However, the disability sector did not get much of a break as the NDIA released its long-awaited discussion paper 'Towards Solutions for Assistive Technology' on Christmas Eve. The NDIA did a soft launch of the paper but word spread quickly thanks to networks like National Disability Services (NDS), ARATA, ATSA and others. ATSA has provided a formal response to the paper, as have a number of AT suppliers and other groups (NDS, ARATA, etc.) and hopefully many people with disability and their families. You can download ATSA's response [here](#).

ATSA does not endorse the paper's suggested approach of the extensive use of 'panel supply' and bulk procurement. We believe this severely undermines the core value of the NDIS: ensuring choice and control remains with participants when selecting what supports they have and importantly who they source them from. The paper also proposes a wholesale re-engineering of the AT supply sector which is a high-risk approach likely to take a long time to achieve. If the paper's recommendations are adopted, it is likely that many of the smaller, highly specialised AT suppliers will struggle to compete and this would be a great loss of skills and expertise to those with disability who rely on AT for their everyday living. ATSA has encouraged the NDIA to publish responses to the paper so as to increase the sharing of information and knowledge about this important debate.

Its now just five weeks til the ATSA Independent Living Expos come to Brisbane and Sydney. Because of the increasing popularity of the Expos, in 2015 both are moving to exciting new venues that allow us to accommodate many more exhibitors. The Brisbane Expo will be at the Royal International Convention Centre on 7 May and will feature over 60 exhibitors. Although still at Rosehill, the Sydney Expo moves to the Grand Pavilion where we will welcome a record 100+ exhibitors displaying a vast array of products and services for people with disability of all ages. Both Expos have a free Clinical Education Program with leading AT experts from Australia, USA, UK, New Zealand, Switzerland and Italy. Parking is free for the Sydney Expo but *please note that to qualify for free parking in Brisbane you must register online in advance and bring your confirmation email with you*. To avoid queues it is always best to pre-register for both events through the Expo website: www.atsaindependentlivingexpo.com.au

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Towards the end of 2014 several major AT tenders were announced in Victoria, South Australia and Queensland. Although a great deal of thought and discussion goes into the preparation of the tenders, it is only after the projects have been operating for some months that we get to see the real-world impacts on AT outcomes for consumers. ATSA is about to conduct an industry survey so that we can provide feedback to the likes of SWEP, DES and MASS as to how effectively the tender projects are working. Early indications are that there are some real challenges for trials of AT packages due to the fact that many suppliers are only on contract for a specific basket of items and not their full range. If you are contracted to supply only the wheelchair, there is no incentive to trial other essential items (cushions, backrests, etc.) that are needed as part of the whole AT solution. We are also being told that allied health practitioners in some rural towns are finding it impossible to obtain trial items as the local supplier is not on contract. Such issues demonstrate that providing AT is not a simple process and the pursuit of savings can add costs and frustration elsewhere.

You may notice a couple of long-term ATSA members are absent from our register of members in this newsletter. Independent Living Solutions have been serving the people of northern Queensland for many years under the tireless leadership of Nikki Bowler. In January Nikki's business was acquired by Brisbane-based ATSA member Think Mobility, with Nikki remaining actively involved in the business on a part-time basis. Similarly, my good mate Mike Desanto who owns Dynamic Wheelchair Solutions has joined forces with Mark and Mandy Wheeldon's GMS Rehabilitation. Mike is a guru when it comes to custom manual wheelchairs and his skills will be a welcome addition to the GMS Specialist Equipment Assessment Team.

I hope to see you in May at our Independent Living Expos in both Brisbane and Sydney.



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 best interests and welfare of the consumer in mind.

Clause 4.1 states that: 'They will act at all times in such a manner as to justify public trust and confidence, to uphold the good standing and reputation of the healthcare industry, to serve the best interests of society, and above all, to safeguard the interests of individual customers. They will respect the confidentiality of information obtained and not disclose such information without the consent of the customer concerned or a person entitled to act on that customer's behalf, except where such disclosure is required by law. They will be honest and truthful in all their dealings with customers.'

A PDF copy of the Code of Practice is available to anyone by emailing info@atsa.org.au and can be downloaded at www.atsa.org.au

26-28 March 2015

Rehab Tech Asia
www.rehabtechasia.com

27-29 March 2015

Multi-discipline Rehab Treatment and Rehacare & Orthopedic
en.cantonrehacare.com

28 March 2015

Disability Support Awards, Perth
www.nds.org.au

30-31 March 2015

National Disabilities Services Conference, Brisbane
www.nds.org.au

15-18 April 2015

Alzheimer's Disease International Conference, Perth
www.fightdementia.org.au

1-3 May 2015

Abilities Expo, New York Metro
www.abilities.com

7 May 2015

ATSA Independent Living Expo, Brisbane
www.atsaindependentlivingexpo.com.au

12-13 May 2015

Elephant in the Room Aged Care & Disability Conference
www.2015elephant.iwannaticket.com.au

13-14 May 2015

ATSA Independent Living Expo, Sydney
www.atsaindependentlivingexpo.com.au

18-19 May 2015

Pacific Rim International Conference on Disability and Diversity
www.pacrim.hawaii.edu

18-20 May 2015

Hong Kong International Medical Devices & Supplies Fair
www.hktdc.com

21 May 2015

Control & Choice Disability Services Expo, Canberra
www.advocacyforinclusion.org

21-22 May 2015

Carers NSW Biennial Conference, Sydney
www.carersnsw.org.au

19-23 June 2015

World Congress of the Int. Society of Physical and Rehabilitation Medicine
www.isprm2015.org

23-25 June 2015

Alzheimer's Disease Congress
www.regonline.co.uk

1-3 July 2015

Occupational Therapists National Conference & Exhibition, Melbourne
www.ota2015.com.au

8-9 Sept 2015

Let's Talk About Sex Conference 2015: Relationships and Intimacy as We Age, Melbourne
www.ltas2015.com

AT entrepreneurs with disability

While doing some work on a personal response to the NDIA's AT discussion paper, I was caused to reflect on the number of AT-related businesses started up by people with disability or their families. Also of the number of people with disability that they employ. Perhaps this is something we should do an industry survey on in order to quantify the contribution of our industry in generating employment for people with disability.

It is a national embarrassment that Australia ranks 21st out of 29 OECD countries for employment participation of people with disability, with the likes of Mexico and the Slovak Republic outdoing us. Even worse, Australia currently ranks 26 out of 27 OECD countries for the percentage of people with disability living in poverty.

According to the [Australian Social Trends, March Quarter 2012 Report](#) (Cat. no. 4102.0), in 2009 the labour force participation rate for those with disability aged 15–64 years was 54%, compared to 83% for those without disability. Even the Australian Public Service is a poorly performing employer, with the number of employees with disability more than halving over the last 17 years to just 3.1% last year.



The 2011 Deloitte Access Economics report '[The Economic Benefits of Increasing Employment for People with Disability](#)' concluded that Australia would increase its gross domestic product (GDP) by \$43 billion if employment rates for people with disability were increased by just one-third. The report went on to identify this goal as achievable, perhaps even modest, estimating that a 10% increase in the labour market would equate to an increase of between 191,000 and 203,000 jobs for people with disability.

More than a decade ago when I was with Invacare Australia, approximately 15% of our 60–70 employees had a disability including those who had an amputation, cerebral palsy, hearing impairment and of course as general manager I had a spinal cord injury.

Ken Ferris is a quadriplegic who started his own business because no one would give him a job. He runs a unique business in Sydney's west, offering accessible motor vehicles for hire. Ken provides vans and buses with full wheelchair access and also cars fitted with a variety of hand controls and other essential modifications. Ken also operates Wheelchairs and Stuff, a service-providing sale, rental, repair and customisation of a diverse range mobility equipment. He employs three full-time and two casual staff from the local community, and is quick to note he has employed numerous staff with a variety of disabilities (spinal cord injury, amputee, hearing impairment and mental health).

One of my old wheelchair basketball comrades is Dion Reweti who established Wicked Wheelchairs up on the Gold Coast when he found himself out of work in 2006. Dion has 31 years experience in all facets of wheelchair design and uses his concept of the 'perfect chair' to provide custom-made, stylish wheelchairs for people with a variety of needs. Dion has grown his business from a one-man show working in his garage, to a modern facility in Oxenford employing 6 in total, 2 with disability.

When asked about the NDIS, Dion commented,

Wicked Wheelchairs is very supportive of consumer choice when it comes to AT. We believe that a range of elements contribute to providing the highest level of service, product and customer care. These elements include the relationship between the client, therapist and supplier as well as the product, the price, accessibility and convenience of obtaining the product, and customer service. As suppliers of AT we contribute to providing the ultimate solution to our clients. Each individual has differing needs and it is impractical to limit all people with a disability to a very small range of products. With a broader range of options, consumers are able to optimally combine all of the elements that contribute to their well-being.

Modified motor vehicles are a must have for many of us and Bill Georgas from Problem Management Engineering (PME) is a true pioneer when it comes to innovative vehicle controls. Bill founded PME in 1989 after he suffered a spinal cord injury and was unhappy with the hand controls fitted to his vehicle. PME's expertise is recognised internationally and Bill exports his products to a number of world markets. PME employs a total of 11 staff, including some family members, and is renowned for inventing the first practical set of hand controls for the Can-am Spyder 3 wheeled motorcycle.

All small suppliers like these are concerned about bulk procurement initiatives and the extensive use of national contracts that always benefit the larger AT suppliers. This can inevitably lead to some smaller suppliers failing, a reduction in competition, service and specialisation, and eventually increased prices.

ATSA actively encourages AT funders to carefully consider how to proceed with AT procurement initiatives so that highly skilled and specialised businesses like these can continue to compete fairly while employing people with disability across Australia. If more businesses followed their example, Australia could easily be number 1 on the OCED ranking.

Some AT entrepreneurs with disability:

Ray Saad	Wheelchair Sales
Bill Georgas	Problem Management Engineering
Ken Ferris	Disability Hire Vehicles, Wheelchairs and Stuff
Mal Turnbull	Seating Dynamics
Michael de Santo	Dynamic Wheelchair Solutions
Dion Reweti	Wicked Wheelchairs
Shane Hryhorec	Push Mobility
Mandy Bonvita	Goodlife Medical
Danny O'Neil	Mobility Plus
Michael Nugent	Surgical Engineering
Michael Callahan	Mogo Wheelchairs
Paul Crake	Total Ability
Greg Skipper	GDS Mobility

NDIS and AT

This has been a very busy year so far for the NDIS. The release of the AT Discussion Paper on Christmas Eve last year (see www.ndis.gov.au/document/1286) was followed by the release of the *Framework for Information, Linkages and Capacity Building* focused on the broad principles and purpose of the Tier 2 of the NDIS (see www.ndis.gov.au/document/1421).

ATSA strongly encouraged people with disability, AT suppliers and other stakeholders to get involved by reading the AT Discussion Paper and making a submission. The Discussion Paper proposed that AT within the NDIS be primarily sourced and provided through a 'managed procurement model' underpinned by centralised purchasing via tenders, panel procurement and other centralised procurement arrangements. The choice of this model was driven by claims of extensive savings that could be made by doing this, coupled with proposed large-scale re-issuing of AT.

ATSA's submission, and those of many other suppliers and stakeholders, noted that this model would drastically undermine NDIS Participant choice and control in relation to selecting their AT products and their AT supplier/retailer. The only products that will be easily available to NDIS Participants will be those products that were successfully tendered for via centralised and some would say 'paternalistic' managed procurement processes, and those retailers that were selected via these processes as 'preferred providers'. If Participants want or need AT or a supplier outside this framework, the onus will be on the Participant to demonstrate that this was necessary.

There was little focus on Participant outcomes in the Discussion Paper which was dominated by a focus on AT prices. Proposed savings on AT prices via managed procurement was not well conceptualised and was based on purchasing AT at close to wholesale prices. It was noted in several instances that various services now provided by AT retailers would have to be developed and provided, but the costs of these services were excluded from the financial modelling. It is ATSA's view that the costs of separately developing and delivering these services would far exceed any claimed savings, and de-coupling these services from the provision of the AT product in this way is also likely to lead to a much more complex process for Participants and poorer outcomes. See the ATSA submission at www.atsa.org.au for a more detailed discussion of these and other related issues.

The high level framework paper describing the Tier 2 NDIS framework (renamed ILC – Information, Linkages and Capacity Building, not to be confused with Independent Living Centres (also ILC)) outlines the foundations of what will be provided and for whom via this part of the NDIS. The ILC framework clearly incorporates the need for providing some AT (particularly low-cost and one-off items) to people with disability who need AT but do not qualify for the top tier and individualised funding, or who may qualify for the top tier but whose needs are better and more efficiently met via ILC. For more details see the ATSA submission at www.atsa.org.au.

Additionally, the NDIS released another consultation paper in February: *Proposal for a National Disability Insurance Scheme Quality and Safeguarding framework* (see www.ndis.gov.au).

Unfortunately, ATSA resources have been stretched getting the above two submissions in, and we've been unable to respond to this one. Fundamentally, if the proposed centralised managed procurement structure for most AT within the NDIS does proceed, it seems likely that a separate quality and safeguard scheme will have to be constructed to support it. The proposed quality and safety framework is designed to function within the market-oriented service system utilised throughout the rest of the NDIS and focused on supporting Participant choice and control. This proposed quality framework will have little applicability and relevance in a traditional centralised purchasing model. For example, under the NDIS Australia's very robust consumer protections embodied in the *Competition and Consumer Act 2010* will have little applicability when Participants do not directly purchase or own their AT within the proposed managed procurement framework.

Aged care reforms and AT

From 1 July 2015 all Home Care Packages will be transitioned to the new 'consumer directed care' service provision model. Like the NDIS, this model is intended to give consumers more control and choice over their services. Consumers receiving Home Care Packages will receive an individual budget and a monthly statement of their funding and expenditure. Packages will be based on consumer goals, and will be reviewed regularly and reassessed at least once a year.

The new Commonwealth Home Support Programme will also begin on 1 July 2015. This new structure is an amalgamation of several previous programs including Home and Community Care (HACC), National Respite for Carers, Day Therapy Centres, and Assistance with Care and Housing for the Aged. This program is aimed at people who need lower levels of care than those on packages, but will cover approximately 500,000 people with an expected budget in 2015–16 of about \$1.7B. A draft manual to assist in this roll-out is now available at: www.dss.gov.au. Note that this manual does not yet apply in Western Australia or Victoria where negotiations are still underway.

What do these changes mean for AT and people 65 and older? In relation to Home Care Packages, a wider range of AT can now be purchased than was previously possible. However, the monthly funding structure and overall intent of the program means that rental of AT will be the most likely option pursued, and that large-scale AT needs are unlikely to be able to be met via the program.

For the Home Support Programme, the original cap of \$500 annual expenditure for items such as AT has been revised. Now the limitation is \$500 for each item, with no apparent annual limit. This is good news for people who are using this program and who need a small amount of funding for several low-cost AT items.

Unfortunately, there still appears to be little planning underway to provide a primary AT program for people 65 and older. Given that the Commonwealth is now responsible for all aged-care service provision, and the likely ongoing financial pressures on the states/territories, it seems unlikely that the existing state/territory AT programs will continue indefinitely to be the primary source of major AT funding for elders. Indeed, some 'pull-back' is already occurring, such as with EnableNSW which now explicitly excludes funding of anyone receiving a Commonwealth Aged Care Package.

The one hint that some planning is underway for a major AT program for seniors can be found in the NDIA discussion paper on AT that the proposed a centralised managed procurement approach for the NDIS (see the NDIS and AT article in this newsletter). That NDIA paper includes a proposal to further leverage the Commonwealth purchasing power and extend this model into aged-care AT provision. If this plan proceeds as suggested, it will result in an over-consolidation of AT purchasing which not only will greatly undermine any real choice and control for consumers over their AT and their choice of AT supplier, but will also reduce competition, diversity, innovation, quality and services, and ultimately lead to higher prices and poorer outcomes.

COAG, NDIS and AFR

Following the COAG Disability Reform Council's meeting on 16 February 2105, and the informal discussions among ministers after that meeting, the *Australian Financial Review* of 26 February 2015 carried an article regarding some issues discussed around the NDIS.

'Given the distortion and gross misrepresentation of those discussions conveyed to the *Australian Financial Review*', Senator the Hon Mitch Fifield, Assistant Minister for Social Services, issued a media release outlining the government's position on matters concerning the NDIS.

Senator Fifield indicated that it was not true that 'the Commonwealth wants a "winding down" of the NDIS'. In fact, 'The Coalition is completely committed to the full rollout of the NDIS.' He also noted that the discussions regarding board positions revolved around establishing staggered terms, which 'represent best practice corporate governance', and were not 'due to the nature of [the board members'] advice'.

Intergenerational Report and NDIS

The Intergenerational Report, released on 5 May 2015, outlines the various fiscal issues that Australia could face over the next 40 years. Several points outlined in the report – falling productivity growth, the reduced number of people 15–64 years for every person 65 or over, the increase in real terms of health spending, and the fact that the government spends more money than it collects – could lead to problems if no mitigating actions are taken.

In regards to the NDIS, while current costs are considerable and will rise in the near term, the cost of the scheme will stabilise at 1.1% of GDP once fully implemented. The costs share of the federal government will grow over time, especially as it has responsibility for people over the age of 65 who remain in the NDIS.

The benefits of the NDIS, in social and economic terms, are not analysed in this report, though a Productivity Commission study concluded in 2011 that the benefits of the NDIS would outweigh the costs in the long term.

For further information, see: www.treasury.gov.au

Sad farewell to a talented AT practitioner, Damien Borg

Although competitors in business, AT suppliers are a very close, tight-knit community that shares a great deal of camaraderie and goodwill. We were all shocked by the sad news of the recent passing of Damien Borg, a talented young occupational therapist from ATSA member Independent Living Specialists (ILS).

Damien joined ILS in May 2007 as the company's first prescribing OT for homecare equipment. Damien's traits were evident to all from the beginning: his energy levels, compassion, desire to help those less fortunate, his friendly helpful disposition and indeed his love of life.

In 2011, Damien was presented with the opportunity to further hone his skills as an OT and develop expertise in the prescription of complex power/manual wheelchairs and seating. Supported by Owen Dawes from Permobil, ILS Rehab was born. ILS founders Peter Reid and Ian Farquharson had the privilege of being business partners with Damien in this exciting venture.

Damien approached this new chapter of his career with enormous energy, a willingness to listen to the industry experts and sheer grit to create a successful business from an idea. In the early days, Damien would shadow Owen on appointments learning the ropes, which he grasped with great speed. Soon he would be flying solo, providing sound professional advice to independent prescribing OTs and clients alike.

During his 8 years with ILS Damien would have helped hundreds if not thousands of individuals to achieve greater independence and enjoy a better, more dignified life through assistive technology. He was one of the all-too-few highly capable AT professionals and will be sorely missed by his customers, fellow workers and our industry as whole.

Josh Colmer's (GTK Rehab) reflections on his uni mate Damo:

As a not so fresh faced teenager 'Damo' entered Sydney University to not just tackle, but conquer the OT world! Damien stood out head and shoulders above the crowd – it had so much less to do with being one of 10 guys in the course or the nickname Gonzo! And so much more to do with his incredible work ethic, thirst for knowledge, and constantly asking why. He always had a smile across his face that lit up the room and his infectious personality always brought people together!

Damien Borg was a young man who was destined to be successful. He had drive and determination and always sought perfection. Damo squeezed so much into life – always putting friends and family before himself. He worked hard but also played hard – people loved being around him!

We have lost a kind, caring and generous soul who touched so many lives. He was an amazing ambassador for both the OT and AT communities.

His enthusiasm for quality products, his natural appreciation and understanding of the complex nature of custom wheelchairs and seating, and his natural ability to connect with all types of people made Damien one of a kind. It is for these reasons that ILS has experienced a great loss. Peter and Ian note that ILS's Tracee Lee Maginnity and Nick Reginato are now charged with the responsibility of building upon Damien's legacy. They say *'rest in peace Damo, your memory will forever be embedded in the soul of our company'*.



NSW Disability Inclusion Plan

On 26 February 2015, the Minister for Disability Services John Ajaka launched the Baird government's Disability Inclusion Plan. The Plan is central to the *Disability Inclusion Act 2014* and takes a 'whole-of-government approach to planning of services to make them more accessible and communities more inclusive'.

Parks Victoria & ATM wheelchairs

Parks Victoria is reviewing its regulations for visitors using all terrain motorised wheelchairs in parks and is developing a range of projects to improve park access and inclusion in Victoria's parks for visitors with disability. For more information, see: www.parkweb.vic.gov.au

Response to WA Green Paper on Compulsory Third Party (no-fault) insurance scheme

The Compulsory Third Party (CTP) insurance scheme – an 'at-fault' scheme – in place in Western Australia since 1947 has been providing cover for drivers/owners of registered vehicles for personal injuries caused to other people as a result of an accident. On 15 Oct 2014, the WA government released a Green Paper setting out options, and some cost estimates, for a no-fault catastrophic CTP insurance scheme. By the close of public comment on 24 Dec 2014, more than 2,000 submissions had been received. For the Green Paper, see: www.icwa.wa.gov.au To read the submissions in response to the Green Paper, see: www.icwa.wa.gov.au

SWEP*

A new Snapshot Report is available on the SWEP website outlining the achievements each program has made during the month. See: www.swep.bhs.org.au.

As with other funding agencies, SWEP understands the importance of purchasing equipment that is safe to use and fit for purpose. Current standards exist that can deliver this requirement and the recent Non-customised Aids and Equipment Tender ensured that contracted products complied with relevant standards where applicable. To continue with this measure SWEP will require all equipment quotations to confirm Australian Standard (or equivalent) compliance. Detailed information is available at: www.swep.bhs.org.au.

SWEP reports that 'the Non-customised Aids and Equipment Tender has seen significant savings for clients accessing equipment through SWEP'.

Contracts are in the final stages for the provision of Disposable Continence Products to NDIS eligible clients in the Barwon Region. Information will be made available on the SWEP website, once details are finalised.

** This article was provided to ATSA by SWEP.*

Survey: Is your mobile shower commode usable?!

If you are – or someone you can give this notice to is – over 18 years old, have a spinal cord injury and use a mobile shower commode for showering and/ or toileting, we need your help!

We are conducting a study on mobile shower commodes used by adults with spinal cord injury. Our study builds on research we have done over the past four years to understand the usability of mobile shower commodes in the home environment. It involves completing two online questionnaires on SurveyMonkey, one week apart. The first survey is available here: www.surveymonkey.com

For more information, please contact Emma Friesen at: emma.friesen@uqconnect.edu.au

University of Queensland School of Health and Rehabilitation Sciences; the study has been approved by The University of Queensland: UQ MREC Approval (#2010000826) 28/03/2014 – AMENDMENT

Survey: Blue Badge Insurance

ATSA member Blue Badge Insurance has launched plans that offer comprehensive insurance for mobility scooters and electric wheelchairs. They are now collecting information about what features people require in car insurance for modified motor vehicles and would appreciate anyone who holds a disability parking permit completing this short questionnaire:

www.bluebadgecommunity.com.au

Expo breakfast with the National Committee on Rehabilitation Engineering

Given the ever-increasing pressures and needs on AT technology and rehabilitation engineering, the National Committee on Rehabilitation Engineering (NCRE) of Engineers Australia is holding ThinkFests this year to discuss the future for the field and how to lift its standing and cohesiveness as a group.

At the Sydney ATSA Independent Living Expo, we are sponsoring one of these ThinkFests over a free light breakfast snack and tea/coffee from 7.45am Thursday, 14 May. The ThinkFest will give the wide range of people – such as those from professional engineering, industrial design, ICT and trades as diverse as electronics and plastic fabrication – now involved in the area an opportunity to voice their opinions and ideas on how the NCRE can be a part of the future of the rehabilitation engineering and assistive technology industry.

We need to know numbers for catering so please RSVP to Melanie on melanie@intermedia.com.au.

Industry opportunities

AC Mobility

Position: Full-time rehabilitation engineer

AC Mobility in Malaga, WA, seeks to employ a full-time rehabilitation engineer in the Engineering Department, with some time in Prescription Product Sales. The work involves: client assessments; assembly, delivery and set up of prescription equipment; carrying out modifications and repairs of equipment.

Essential selection criteria include: professional or trade training qualifications in rehabilitation engineering; and demonstrated excellent mechanical skills.

For the full PD and contact details, go to: www.acmobility.com.au



Special Needs Solutions

Special Needs Solutions will be in the following areas on the dates below. Appointment times are available for therapists and families to arrange individual trials, and for service centres to host open days to showcase paediatric equipment or to access additional training on equipment.

Sunshine Coast

- Mon, 30 March
- Tues, 2 June
- Thurs, 13 Aug
- Tues, 13 Oct

Ipswich/Toowoomba

- Mon, 27 April
- Thurs, 16 July
- Tues, 8 Sept
- Tues, 1 Dec

Gympie/ Hervey Bay

- Tues–Weds, 28–29 July
- Tues–Weds, 27–28 Oct

Lifetec Brisbane will be available by appointment on the following dates for local therapists and families to arrange equipment trials.

- Tues, 21 April
- Thurs, 21 May
- Tues, 16 June
- Tues, 21 July
- Tues, 18 Aug
- Tues, 15 Sept
- Tues, 20 Oct
- Tues, 17 Nov

Special Needs Solutions will be exhibiting at the ATSA Daily Living Expo on 7 May at the Brisbane Exhibition Centre.

For more information and/or to schedule an appointment, contact Bridget: info@specialneedssolutions.com.au

Seating Dynamics Pty Ltd

SDL is running a number of seminars for professional development 4–20 May in cooperation with the 2015 ATSA Expos.

Seminars will be held on:

- Pressure injury prevention and management
- Manual wheelchair configuration
- Postural support strategies in complex rehab
- Upper limb preservation and power assist technology; and
- Designing complex modular seating solutions

For more information and/or to register for the seminars, contact Malene: (02) 8838 3111 or training@seatingdynamics.com.au

Invacare Australia event

Tues, 5 May 2015, 9–11am

Julie Ott of Kuschall, Switzerland, will present a training/development session on 'Custom manual wheelchairs: The importance of precision and driving performance'

At: Lifetec – Level 1, Reading Newmarket Cnr Newmarket and Enoggera Rd, Newmarket QLD

RSVP online: www.campaign.invacare.com.au/Lifetecevent

GTK Rehab – Seminars

Standing for function, by Jacinta Maurin (Ottobock Australia)

Tues, 5 May 2015, 9.30am–11.30 am

GTK Rehab Sydney Office, 11/14 Boden Rd Seven Hills

For more information and to register, email: gajaka@gtkrehab.com.au

The balancing act – Factors in a wheelchair seating selection, by Stephanie Tanguay

The importance of precision and driving performance,

by Julie Ott Fri, 15 May 2015, 9am–12pm

GTK Rehab Newcastle Office, 6/2 Frost Dr, Mayfield West

For more information and to register,

email: arousham@gtkrehab.com.au or jmurray@gtkrehab.com.au

Harry Bolch and the NDIS*

The National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS), assistive technology, and a persistent speech pathologist has enabled Tasmanian Harry Bolch to work towards his goal of enjoying a more fulfilling social life. Harry, 16, has severe Athetoid cerebral palsy, which means his body makes involuntary movements; he is non-verbal; is fed by percutaneous endoscopic gastrostomy (PEG) and he is quadriplegic.

'He can't control his body at all,' Kelly his mother noted. 'But he's quite bright and he communicates through a mixture of technologies, including his eye-gaze computer.'

'Harry has had his eye-gaze computer for a year now', Kelly said. '...it was ... challenging to get it set up to ... where all the timing and screens were right for him to navigate through... But thanks to his persistent speech pathologist, it's now up and running well and recently we've had a bit of a breakthrough', Kelly said. '... you can say "Is there something you want?" and he will navigate through his computer and say, "Can I have a drink?", or he'll go to the family page and say "Hello mum", which is beautiful. It's not like he's writing essays but it's been great and it's a start!'

Kelly said Harry became an NDIS participant in March 2014. *'The NDIS has definitely improved our lives – Harry's and ours as a family,' she said. 'We've been able to ... purchase Harry a manual wheelchair. ... now he can access places he could never in his electric wheelchair.... Recently he was able to go to the beach with his classmates ...', Kelly said.*

Kelly said the NDIS has also given her family financial security. *'Prior to Harry becoming an NDIS participant, life was pretty stressful', she said. 'Every school holiday break, year after year, I'd have to apply to the state government and hold my breath to see if they had ... funding ... [for] a carer for Harry so I could continue to work my two-day-a-week job for the ... the school holiday period!'*

Kelly said recently the family has started exploring social options for Harry, which is something they could never contemplate prior to the NDIS, due to a lack of funding.

'It was hard enough just scraping by with my work and financial commitments,' Kelly said. 'Although Harry's life will never be that of a regular teenager, the funding we've obtained will help him to socialise as a teenager and live his life to the fullest and best of his ability... he's quite excited about being able to plan outings, independently, without his mum and dad!' Kelly added with a smile.



* The article and photo were provided to ATSA by the National Disability Insurance Agency.



Welcome to our new ATSA Members



DRP International Healthcare

1/15 Kenji St, Mornington Vic 3931

ph: (03) 5975-4153

web: www.drpinternational.com.au

email: info@drpinternational.com.au

DRP International Healthcare, with distribution throughout Australia and New Zealand, is the exclusive importer and distributor of the Canadian-made Broda Healthcare Seating range and the Pro-Bed Medical Technologies' Freedom Bed.



Integrated Technologies Australia

PO Box 570, Kilsyth Vic 3137

web: www.integratedtechnologiesaustralia.com.au

email: info@integratedtechnologiesaustralia.com.au

ITA is one of Australia's premier smart home and business specialists, providing smart technology, energy management and general electrical systems to deliver solutions that are matched to best suit the client's needs.

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

Jill Barnett (Magic 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.astecservices.net.au

Austech Medical

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

Auto Mobility

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

Awsum Assistive Technology Group

ph: 1300 687 195
www.comfortandmobility.com.au

Better Living Care Pty Ltd

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

Blue Badge Insurance

ph: 1300 304 802
www.BlueBadgeInsurance.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 Group

ph: 1800 727382
www.countrycaregroup.com.au

Dejay Medical

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

DRP International Healthcare

ph: (03) 5975-4153
www.drpinternational.com.au

Durable Medical Equipment Ltd

ph: (02) 9674-8904
www.durmed.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 Mobility

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.freedomhcs.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.ilsrehab.com.au

Independent Home Care Supplies

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

Integrated Technologies Australia

www.integratedtechnologiesaustralia.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.keeppmoving.net.au

Liberty Healthcare

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

Life Mobility

(formerly Maroondah Home Healthcare)
ph: (03) 9879-8885
www.homehealth.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

Medi-Repair Services

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

Medistore

ph: 1300 882 194
www.medistore.com.au

Medix21 Australia

ph: (02) 9970-7342
www.medix21australia.com.au

Megalong Positioning Service

ph: (02) 4759-2800
www.megalongpositioning.com.au

Melrose Wheelchairs Pty Ltd

ph: 0407 502 729
www.melrosewheelchairs.com.au

Mobility Aids Australia

ph: (03) 9546-7700
www.mobilityaids.com.au

Mobility Care

ph: (03) 9568-8383
www.mobilitycare.net.au

Mobility Engineering

ph: (02) 9482-4572
www.mobilityengineering.com.au

Mobility Matters Pty Ltd

ph: (02) 6280-7244
www.mobilitymatters.com.au

Mobility Options

ph: (02) 9875-5530
www.mobilityoptions.com.au

Northcott Equipment Solutions

ph: (02) 9890-0186
www.northcott.com.au

Northern Rivers Surgical

ph: (02) 6686-6644
www.intermobility.com.au

Novis Healthcare

ph: 1300 738 885
www.novis.com.au

Omni Healthcare

ph: (03) 5333-4006
www.omnihealthcare.com.au

Otto Bock Australia Pty Ltd

ph: (02) 8818-2800
www.ottobock.com.au

Para Mobility

ph: (02) 9651-4446
www.paramobility.com.au

Paragon Mobility

ph: 1300 652 382
www.paragonmobility.com.au

**ParaQuad NSW
and BrightSky Australia**

ph: (02) 8741-5662
www.paraquad.org.au

Patient Care Products

ph: (03) 9786-3092
www.patientcareproducts.com.au

Peak Care Equipment Pty Ltd

ph: (02) 4272-2688
www.peakcareequipment.com.au

**Peninsula Home
Health Care**

ph: (03) 9786-7004
www.phhc.com.au

Permobil Australia Pty Ltd

ph: 1300 858 424
www.permobil.com

PersonalIndependence Providers

ph: 1300 65 7016
www.haleberry.com.au

Power Mobility Pty Ltd

ph: (07) 3265-4663
www.powermobility.info

**Pride Mobility Products
Australia Pty Ltd**

ph: (03) 8770-9600
www.pridemobility.com.au

**Problem Management
Engineering Pty Ltd**

ph: (02) 9482-2808
www.pmeautoconversions.com.au

**Professional Assistance
for Living (PAL)**

ph: (08) 8449-5462; 0434 339 910
pal_info@iprimus.com.au

Push Mobility

ph: 1300 721 328
www.pushmobility.com.au

R82 Australia Pty Ltd

ph: (02) 8213-6666
www.r82.com.au

Scooters & Mobility Pty Ltd

ph: (02) 4962-4007
www.scootersandmobility.com

Scooters Australia

ph: (03) 9799-9077
www.scootersaus.com.au

Scooter World Australia

ph: (08) 8245-1111
www.scooter-world.com.au

Seating Dynamics Pty Ltd

ph: 1300 845 483 or (02) 8838 3100
www.seatingdynamics.com.au

Sensory Calm

ph: (02) 8355-2290
www.sensorycalm.com.au

Shoprider Pty Ltd

ph: (08) 9248-4180
www.shoprider.com.au

Special Needs Solutions

ph: (07) 5597-4321
www.specialneedssolutions.com.au

Specialised Wheelchair Company

ph: (02) 9905-5333
www.swco.com.au

Statewide Home Health Care

ph: (03) 9541-6220
www.shhc.com.au

Sunrise Medical Pty Ltd

ph: (02) 9678-6600
www.sunrisemedical.com.au

Think Mobility Pty Ltd

ph: 1300 88 1968
www.thinkmobility.com.au

Total Mobility Solutions Pty Ltd

ph: 1300 868 662
www.totalmobility.com.au

Tunstall Australasia Pty Ltd

ph: (07) 3637-2200
www.tunstallhealthcare.com.au

Victorian Home Health Equipment

ph: (03) 9725-6577
www.vhhe.com.au

**Walk on Wheels Australia
(Brendale) Pty Ltd**

ph: (07) 3205-5654
www.walkonwheels.com.au

Watercomfort Company

ph: (02) 9531-1699
www.watercomfort.com.au

Wheelchairs & Stuff

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

Wheelchair Sales Indesign

ph: (02) 9607-3355
www.wheelchairsales.com.au

Wicked Wheelchairs

ph: (07) 5500-0882
www.wickedwheelchairs.com.au

atsa

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