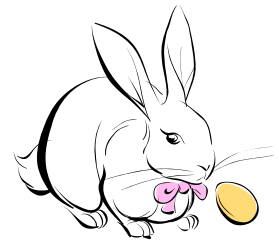


DWE NEWSLETTER

21st April



Introduction: Hello readers, Happy Easter to you all! Welcome to our newsletter. This month's theme is about effective 'Governance' practices. With the launch of the National Disability Strategy and the fact that we have been writing plenty of strategies ourselves it seemed like a timely topic. As well as drafting Strategic Plans for not for profit organisations, we have been commissioned by a few of our clients recently to deliver professional development training for Disability Advisory Committees and Committees of Management. The training is about making sure members of those groups are the most effective and proactive as they can be whilst understanding their roles and responsibilities a bit better.

Soapbox: I am sure that there are a lot of us who have been members of some ineffective committees from time to time. I am happy to say that with my background and qualifications in managing my own business and writing strategic plans on and off for the last 30 years and having been on many committees, I know what it takes to create an ineffective, (but generally well-intentioned) group of people on a committee, to work on a higher more productive and satisfying level.

Our workshop is very practical and solution focused and will move people away from personal agendas, dominant individuals, apathy or boredom into a role that will keep them enthused, wanting to come back and kick goals – *forgive me, it is the footy season after all!* Many groups I see are frustrated by lack of progress or see themselves as a means to 'rubber stamp' Government initiatives and then walk away never to return. Such a waste of good social capital! Constant membership turnover is very disruptive as you would be aware and should be avoided. If this sounds like a committee that you know about, call us for a chat and let us help you to bring them into a more satisfactory place.

Our news:

Another of our increasingly requested services includes creating 'universal access' booklets or guides for Councils. DWE has helped Councils to create user-friendly guides for universal access provision for architects, builders and trades people. Each guide has been tailored to suit the specific needs of the client. The information takes the complication out of the building standards and is written in a user friendly language. These practical guides not only describe 'what' the standards require but also explains the 'why' and the 'how' to create a more accessible environment.

There are several options available to you depending on your need. For example, the guide could provide information on:

- General 'universal access' provisions
- Tourism venues and sites
- Retailer's information
- Council specific infrastructure
- Playgrounds or parkland
- 'Accessibility' features for renovations (more information to follow)
- 'Adaptability' features for new private residences or housing estates.

The aim of this type of guide is to give renovators, builders and designers simple information about how to make the built environment more '**accessible**' or '**adaptable**' for everyone at home.

An '**accessible**' home is easy for a person with existing access needs to live in or visit.

'Adaptable' design features make the home on the surface look 'normal' but flexible enough to accommodate whatever comes along in life at a very minimal cost. Retrofitting to meet unexpected mobility restrictions can be very expensive. As the number of older people in the community increases, there will be more people living with a disability. A guide on adaptability can assist people plan for 'accessible' buildings that function in the future if needed. Creating an adaptable home can also add extra value to a house.

"Accessibility features that are included in initial design cost around \$870 for the average home. Renovating a similar home to add the same access features would cost around \$19,400 = 22 times the cost of including them up front."

Figures recently quoted from the Australian Building Commission.

Did you know?

The National Disability Strategy was officially launched in Melbourne on Friday 18 March by Parliamentary Secretary for Disabilities and Carers, Jan McLucas. It has hardly been in the news and living rurally, without the 'tom tom drums' in the disability sector, we wouldn't have known either.

'This is the first time in Australia's history that the Commonwealth, State and Territory, and Local Government have agreed to a unified, national approach to improve the lives of people with disability,' Parliamentary Secretary McLucas said.

'We will continue to work with people with disability, their families and carers, and the disability services sector, to deliver changes that will improve people's lives. The strategy provides \$11 million in new funding for accessibility packages to improve access to cinemas, local communities and library materials as well as liveable housing design, leadership development and the new ABC Ramp Up website.'

The long term strategy is supported by six key areas which aim to remove barriers and expand opportunities for people with disability and their carers through the support of:

- inclusive and accessible communities;
- rights, protection, justice and legislation;
- economic security;
- personal and community support;
- learning and skills; and
- health and wellbeing.

For more information or to access a copy of the National Disability Strategy, including accessible formats, visit www.fahcsia.gov.au.

(Thanks Malcolm!)

Any feedback or contributions are most welcome.

Archived newsletters are available from our website: www.disabilityconsultants.com.au/news/

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