



**Introduction:** Hello readers! Welcome to our newsletter. This week we are showcasing some arts related topics. Art in any form is such a great form of communication and especially for people who may not be very articulate in the traditional sense of communication. Art therapists have created a thriving business out of this philosophy so they can't all be wrong!!! We would also like to promote a project we are undertaking with the City of Ballarat in the arts sector – see more under 'Our news'.

Any feedback or other promotional contributions are most welcome.

### **Soapbox:**

My beloved husband and 'partner in crime' and I have been doing a series of 'road trips' around the state to talk to people who are currently mandated to create a 'Disability Action Plan' about helping them develop their Plans. Although I applaud the initiative and believe very strongly in the need for these Plans, we are increasingly frustrated on behalf of our clients and potential clients that we visit, that not enough thought has been put into the ramifications of this type of legislation. Expecting organisations and non disability services to find the time to create such an important strategy is a big task in itself (to be done thoroughly and effectively) but to not provide funding or even part funding to help the process along, places undue stress on already underfunded and under resourced services.

Added to that, the addition of insisting on developing other strategies that are equally as important but that are not agencies' core business either – for instance the multicultural framework is a huge ask, especially in remote and rural locations where there is limited diversity or multiculturalism. Don't get me wrong, we have created our business based on the side effects of this type of legislation and believe that all organisations should have a 'social access and inclusion policy' of sorts but I implore government agencies to consider a more strategic and coordinated approach to these initiatives. From a strategic point of view, (that's what we are = 'strategists!') wouldn't it be great if all of these important considerations of social equity and diversity were delivered in a coordinated and streamlined manner with some financial supports/enticements in place? I believe the good will and effort to 'do the right thing' for ALL community members to create a positive attitudinal change would increase substantially. Call me Pollyanna by all means.....

OK off the soap box now..... as you were.....

### **Our news:**

As a result of the discussions introduced in my 'soapbox' section, we are excited to offer a new service to help agencies develop their Disability Action Plans!

Developing a Disability Action Plan is a lengthy and time consuming process to 'get it right' to mitigate your risk against a formal disability complaint. Unless you have someone with specialist knowledge of disability access and inclusion issues undertaking the task, the results may not help you in the case of a formal discrimination complaint. DWE is aware that many organisations who are now mandated to create a Plan cannot afford the consultancy fees necessary to undertake this daunting task and with no Government funding available to these services to support the process, it becomes another stress factor for already stretched resources and staff.

#### ***"How can you help?" – I hear you ask!***

DWE has a tailor-made, practical and 'hands on' 5 hour workshop available to teach people how to actually put a Plan together themselves. Most agencies would have attended the Office for Disability training about the requirement for such a Plan but may not feel confident enough to advance the process. Our workshop will include information about:

- The format of a typical Plan and how it should proceed
- The methodology that is needed including the importance of literature reviews and community consultations and suggestions on how they could be undertaken
- Making sense of the findings of the literature review and consultation and what needs to be included (or not) in the Plan
- How to develop measurable actions and responsibilities and
- How to actually put it all in writing in an effective and meaningful way.

So, if you are a small not for profit organisation and know of other agencies who have the same dilemma, then think about pooling your limited resources and call us to do the workshop with you – the more agencies you collaborate with, the cheaper it will be per agency. It is an inexpensive, practical way to get the job done!

### **L.E.A.P. Program Arts Directory**

DWE is very proud to be associated with the City of Ballarat's 'Localities Enhancing Arts Participation' Program (LEAP). DWE is developing a database of arts participation and programs in the Central Highlands Region involving people with disabilities. The Central Highlands Region includes Ballarat, Pyrenees, Golden Plains, Hepburn, Moorabool and Ararat.

The project will involve a review and audit of the existing programs, supports and services that are provided across the Region. If you have an arts program that includes, or has the capacity to include people with a disability, and would like to promote your programs, please contact us asap.

### **Other agency services:**

#### ***The HACC 'Positive Living Expo'.***

Artists – here is an opportunity to have your work shown around the Region!

In conjunction with Centacare and Department of Health, an Expo showcasing Home & Community Care (HACC) services within the Central Highlands catchment will be held in Ballarat on 10<sup>th</sup> June, 2010. The theme this year is 'Positive Living'.

The **objectives** of the Expo are:

- To provide opportunity for HACC service providers to showcase their services within the Grampians Region.
- To assist in raising consumer and community awareness of the wide range of HACC services available within the area and contribute to enhancing access to the relevant HACC services system and engage service users.
- To provide a valuable opportunity to liaise with relevant stakeholders and network with other service providers.

We are calling for various artist groups catering for people with a disability to submit art work depicting 'Positive Living' to be used in our promotional and advertising material.

The successful submission(s) will be formally acknowledged with all other submission showcased on the day of the Expo. We are also hoping to road show the art to the various shires within our catchment area including City of Ballarat, Golden Plains Shire, Moorabool Shire and Hepburn Shire.

For any further information contact Benita Marson, HACC Access & Equity Worker at Centacare Ballarat on 5336 7945 or email [benita.marson@centacareballarat.org.au](mailto:benita.marson@centacareballarat.org.au)

### **BRACE - new arts initiative**

#### **Are you an Artist who identifies as having a disability?**

'Arts Path' is a new year long arts based mentor program. If you or someone you know is interested, please see below and attached some further information.

'Arts Path' is a project developed by BRACE Education, Training and Employment. Artists with a disability within Ballarat and Region are invited to apply to be involved. Selected artists will work directly

with an Arts Mentor to;

- ~Develop an independent pathway plan for greater access to the Arts and Cultural Sector
- ~Develop links with the broader arts and cultural sector
- ~Explore and engage in further education and employment options (Victoria wide)

Selected artists will meet with the Arts Mentor on a fortnightly basis (weekend times available) until December 2010.

To be eligible to apply, individuals must identify as an artist with a disability and have aspirations to further develop a career or individual practice within the Arts and Cultural Sector.

To apply you need to complete an application form. To access the form or for assistance with filling out this form, or to request this in another format, please contact; [emma.barrance@brace.com.au](mailto:emma.barrance@brace.com.au) or 53 333 700 or mobile: 0439 210 690

### **Applications due by 6th March 2010**

**Archived newsletters** are available from our website: [www.disabilityconsultants.com.au/news/](http://www.disabilityconsultants.com.au/news/)

**To subscribe** or unsubscribe please indicate on our Enquiry Form at:  
[www.disabilityconsultants.com.au/contact us/](http://www.disabilityconsultants.com.au/contact_us/)

#### **Contact us:**

##### **Disability projects:**

**E:** [deb@disabilityconsultants.com.au](mailto:deb@disabilityconsultants.com.au)

**W:** [www.disabilityconsultants.com.au](http://www.disabilityconsultants.com.au)

**M:** 0428 991 671

**BH:** (03) 5334 4358

##### **Organisational development & facilitation:**

**E:** [deb@dweconsultants.com.au](mailto:deb@dweconsultants.com.au)

**W:** [www.dweconsultants.com.au](http://www.dweconsultants.com.au)

**M:** 0428 991 671

**BH:** (03) 5334 4358

#### **Disclaimer:**

Information, views or opinions expressed on the DWE newsletter (other than the soapbox section) originates from many different sources and contributors throughout the general community. Please note that content does not necessarily represent or reflect the views and opinions of DWE or their affiliates.