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*Please feel free to re-use material in the newsletter with appropriate acknowledgement to Deafness Forum of Australia*

### Deafness Forum of Australia

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Currently **one in six** Australians suffer from some form of hearing loss. This may increase to one in four by 2050. *Access Economics 2006*

## Captions for hearing impaired to increase film access

Deafness Forum is very pleased to note the recent announcement that the Film Finance Commission will require captions to be included as a condition of funding, for Australian feature films.

This is an area that Deafness Forum has lobbied strongly for over the past years, and it is great to see it come to fruition.

We especially acknowledge the work of Deafness Forum member John Byrne contributing towards this outcome.

Senator the Hon. George Brandis, the Minister for the Arts and Sport, has announced the change, which will come into effect from 1 July 2007.

Senator Brandis welcomed an initiative of Australia's Film Finance Corporation (FFC) to introduce, from July, captioning for deaf and hard of hearing audiences, on all feature films it finances.

According to the Film Finance Corporation Investment Guidelines, producers who seek FFC funding will be required to caption all feature films for cinema and DVD release.

The Film Finance Corporation has agreed to pay for the cost of captioning each film.

Until now captioned feature films have only been available in Australia for films produced overseas.

Visit [http://ffc.gov.au/investment/0708\\_investment\\_guidelines.pdf](http://ffc.gov.au/investment/0708_investment_guidelines.pdf) to read more

about the FFC Investment Guidelines.



### CAPTIONING IN CINEMAS

While the FFC decision is welcome, there is still much more to be done.

Deafness Forum and AAD recently wrote to the cinema industry regarding the cinema captioning access program. We have received a reply from industry but it is not a positive one. We are taking this very seriously and are implementing a number of strategies, to ensure that when Australian feature films are captioned under the recent FFC initiative, Australians in a variety of locations will have better access – certainly more than the current 10 locations showing captioned movies.

We feel that a comprehensive review of the entire arrangement is needed and are seeking a meeting with the Minister for the Arts, Senator the Hon George Brandis.

We urge you to write to Minister Brandis to express your views on cinema captioning, and supporting expansion of this program.

## WHAT HAVE WE BEEN DOING IN THE PAST MONTH?

Our work involves a number of different activities aimed at assisting you, our members; at developing relationships with key stakeholders, and furthering our lobbying and systemic advocacy work. Just a brief snapshot of some of the activities the Board members and staff, and other representatives have undertaken in the past month since the last newsletter include:

- Attended an Access Card meeting held by the Office of the Access Card.
- Met with the new National Manager of the Office of Hearing Services (Department of Health and Ageing). See further biographical details about Joy Savage later in this e-newsletter.
- Met with Australian Hearing Chairperson Kathryn Greiner, and Executive Manager, Customer Service Obligations, Margaret Dewberry, to discuss matters of mutual interest and concern.
- Met with Minister for Workforce Participation, the Hon Dr Sharman Stone, to discuss workforce matters, including the Auslan for Employment program. Disappointingly we did not leave this meeting with any feeling of optimism. The Minister seemed to regard 22 hours of interpreting as perfectly reasonable.
- Met with Senator Natasha Stott-Despoja to ask her to take up the captioning campaign. Senator Stott-Despoja was very positive about our request and we are discussing a number of strategies for her to progress. With thanks to member Adam Murdey of South Australia for his assistance in this.
- Met with Senator Penny Wong, Shadow Minister for Workforce Participation to discuss alternative workforce strategies, including a cost of disability allowance. Senator Wong was very interested in discussing the productivity impacts of people with a hearing loss being forced to leave the workforce, discussing possible changes to AFE, and to understand more about people who are Deaf or have a hearing impairment.
- Had a teleconference with the Department of Employment and Workplace Relations, to provide our feedback on the Auslan for Employment program. Many thanks to the numerous members, who provided Deafness Forum with input to inform this discussion. Your views were well received.
- Met with Carer's Australia, to discuss touchpoints between our organisations and create stronger bonds.
- Attended a meeting with Qantas to provide input about airline travel
- Attended a National Relay Service Consultative Committee meeting
- Participated in a workshop on the Machinery of Government, run by the Department of Communications, IT and the Arts, focusing on their consumer grants program. Deafness Forum has received grants through this program for a number of years.

- Attended a Communications Alliance Disability Council meeting
- Attended a briefing on stem cell research at Parliament House
- Met with Senator Andrew Bartlett (Democrats) to provide him with information about Australians who are deaf or hearing impaired and to ask for his support for a national campaign on noise injury awareness. Senator Bartlett was very supportive and referred to other meetings he has had with deafness groups in his office in Brisbane..
- Prepared a number of end-of-year reports for funding bodies, submitted new grants proposals, and generally kept very busy!

## WEBSITE UPDATES



As usual, there have been various additions and updates to the main Deafness Forum

Website: [www.deafnessforum.org.au](http://www.deafnessforum.org.au). Please take the time to visit the Website on a regular basis to keep up with what is happening.

## CAPTIONING FREE TO AIR TV

AAD and DF wrote to Free TV, ABC TV and SBS earlier this year to start negotiations about the next free-to-air TV agreement. We have received a positive response so far and will be having a meeting in the coming month or so with representatives of Free TV, ABC TV and SBS. We will keep members informed of developments in this area.

## CAPTIONING OF DVDS

Deafness Forum is representing the deafness sector on a small HREOC working party with DVD distributors and other media players, to try to come to an agreement about captioning of DVDs. We appreciate comments from members to inform us in this work. Please keep your comments coming in.

## 5TH NATIONAL DEAFNESS SECTOR SUMMIT – MAY 2008



The date has been set for the 5<sup>th</sup> National Deafness Sector Summit! The Summit will take place in Canberra on 24 and 25 May 2008, immediately following the Audiology Australia conference which is also set for Canberra. Registrations will be in the \$250 range (plus conference dinner) so make sure you put a little allowance in your next year's budget now for the Summit!

## SHOWCASE YOUR PRODUCTS AT THE UPCOMING SUMMIT

Want people with hearing loss, their families and loved ones to know more about your products? Then think about showcasing them at the 5<sup>th</sup> National Deafness Sector Summit in May 2008, a fully accessible conference for people with hearing loss to be held in Canberra 24-25 May 2008.

Contact [info@deafnessforum.org.au](mailto:info@deafnessforum.org.au) or visit our website at [www.deafnessforum.org.au](http://www.deafnessforum.org.au)

## WE NEED YOU

Deafness Forum Annual General Meeting and election of Directors will take place in October 2007. You might like to consider nominating for a position of the Board. More information will be sent out to members over the coming months.



## GET YOUR POSTERS NOW!

Hearing Awareness Week will be here before you know it, 19-25 August 2007. Posters are now available. Check the Hearing Awareness Week website [www.hearingawarenessweek.org.au](http://www.hearingawarenessweek.org.au) to register your event and request posters.

Sponsorship packages are available. Please contact the office if you want to get national exposure for your products/services through Hearing Awareness Week.

## NEW BROCHURE: CHOOSING THE RIGHT PHONE FOR YOUR HEARING NEEDS

Deafness Forum has recently completed a new brochure for people who are deaf or have a hearing impairment, on how to choose the home or mobile phone to best meet their communication needs.

Buying a new phone can be a bewildering experience with so many choices and options, from cameras to browsing on the internet. How do you know what will work best for your hearing needs?

The new brochure will be launched soon: stay tuned for further details!

Deafness Forum of Australia acknowledges funding from the Australian Government Department of Communications, Information Technology and the Arts through the Consumer Representation Grants program.

## 2007 CAPTIONING AWARDS

Confirmed guest at the 2007 Captioning Awards on Thursday 23 August is Senator Natasha Stott-Despoja, and Senator Helen Coonan is a possibility (to be confirmed).

To sponsor this highly successful and fun night out, contact our office.



Courtesy of AUSPIC

Senator Stott-Despoja will present an Award at the 2007 Captioning Awards

## NOMINATE YOUR FAVOURITE CAPTIONING FOR AN AWARD!!!

To nominate a program, a channel, or an event for the Members' Choice Award, just send an email to our office with details:

- your name and organization (if applicable)
- your contact details (mail, email, phone)
- What you want to nominate – include details eg channel, time, name etc so we can check it out
- Why (quality, volume, innovation etc)

Votes will be tallied and the award made at the 2007 Captioning Awards in Sydney on 23 August 2007.

# government news

## NATIONAL DISABILITY AND CARER MINISTERIAL ADVISORY COUNCIL

The National Disability and Carer Ministerial Advisory Council was created in October 2006 to provide advice to the Minister for Families, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs on issues affecting people with disability and their carers. Bobbie Blackson is a Deaf person on this committee. For more information about the Council, go to

<http://www.facs.gov.au/internet/facsinter.net.nsf/disabilities/representation-ndcmac.htm>.

## NEW NATIONAL MANAGER, OFFICE OF HEARING SERVICES

Joy Savage recently took up the position of National Manager for the Office of Hearing Services, within the Medical Benefits Division, Department of Health and Ageing. Joy has more than twenty years experience in health policy, program development and management.

Much of her experience has been in Indigenous health. With more than six years experience at the national health policy level, Joy has returned to Canberra from an eighteen month stint as CEO of the Wuchopperen Health Service, based in Cairns.

Joy graduated with an MBA in 2000 and first joined the Department of Health and Ageing in 2001 and worked across a range of Indigenous program areas, including substance use, communicable diseases, child and maternal health (including hearing) and mental health and became one of a small number of dedicated Indigenous Senior Executives within

the Australian Public Service in 2001.

In 1999 Joy was awarded a World Health Organisation fellowship to examine Indigenous substance use interventions in Canada, United States and New Zealand. Joy is also a 2003 alumni of the Australian and New Zealand Health Leadership Program.

Joy's public sector and community based experience gives her a valuable perspective into the development and implementation of health policy from the national level through to local service delivery.

## MORE PENSION FOR MORE PEOPLE

JOINT MEDIA RELEASE from the Hon Mal Brough MP Minister for Families, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs, and Senator the Hon Chris Ellison Minister for Community Services and Human Services Indigenous Affairs

Thursday, 7th June 2007

The assets test for Age Pension and other pension payments including Disability Support Pension and Carer Payment will become much more generous from 20 September 2007, as part of the Australian Government's Plan to Simplify and Streamline Superannuation.

Mr Brough today said hundreds of thousands of people would receive more pension or become eligible for a pension for the first time.

"From September 20, pensions will be reduced by \$1.50 each fortnight for every \$1000 of assets above the allowable asset limit for full pension, instead of the current \$3 for the same amount of assets," Mr Brough said.

Senator Ellison urged those who may become eligible for a pension as a consequence of the change to lodge their application from later this month.

"People who think they may become eligible for a pension don't have to wait until 20 September to claim, they can lodge a claim from 21 June, to begin receiving the payments from 20 September," Senator Ellison said.

"People already receiving a part pension under the assets test will also automatically receive a pension increase from 20 September."

Based on current pension rates, the assets limits to receive a pension from 20 September will be:

- single homeowners: \$520,750 (up from \$343,750 from July 1)
- single non-homeowners: \$641,750 (up from \$464,750 from July 1)
- couple homeowners: \$825,500 (up from \$531,000 from July 1)
- couple non-homeowners: \$946,500 (up from \$652,000 from July 1).

"These more generous assets test rules are a commitment by the Howard Government to increase incentives for people to save for retirement."

For more information about the assets test changes and how to make a claim you can visit your local Centrelink Customer Service Centre, go to the Centrelink website at [www.centrelink.gov.au](http://www.centrelink.gov.au) or call Centrelink on 13 2300

## NATIONAL DISABILITY AWARDS 2007

International Day of People with Disability (IDPwD) is celebrated internationally on 3 December each year. The annual observance of IDPwD aims to promote an understanding of disability issues, and mobilise support for the dignity, rights and well being of people with disability.

IDPwD celebrations in 2007 will see the introduction of the inaugural

National Disability Awards. The awards will celebrate and acknowledge the outstanding contributions and achievements that individuals with disability make to our community, as well as recognise individuals within our community who have contributed to the disability sector.

The Award finalists will be recognised at a gala awards ceremony in Canberra on 3 December 2007.

Nominations are now open to:

- people with disability who have made a significant contribution to their community
- people who have made a significant contribution to improving the lives of people with disability
- people with disability, or people caring for someone with disability, who has overcome adversity to achieve personal goals.

For more information, visit [www.idpwd.com.au](http://www.idpwd.com.au) or call 1800 677 427. Nominations close on 20 July 2007.

## SA BUDGET GIVES \$45M FOR DISABILITY SERVICES

7 June 2007

The South Australian Government will spend \$45 million over four years on services for people with disabilities.

The four-year Budget package includes almost \$6 million for equipment such as wheelchairs, walking frames and hearing and visual aids.

There will also be about \$11 million to help attract and retain staff at support agencies.

Disability Minister Jay Weatherill says disability funding has increased by \$83 million under Labor.

"People that have been lobbying for more funding have a good case," he said.

"I expect that they'll acknowledge this as a further step towards rebuilding the disability budget but recognising that more needs to be done."

David Holst from the lobby group Dignity for the Disabled says the package is encouraging.

"It's been a disgrace that there are waiting lists of years for children to get new wheelchairs and new equipment," he said.

"It's long overdue that that area was addressed and it's pleasing to see that area is well-targeted."

He says more work is needed to address issues such as supported accommodation and respite care.

## PRIVATE HEALTH INSURANCE



In April 2006, the Government announced reforms to private health insurance, including a

requirement that health insurers provide Standard Information Statements (SIS) on all private health insurance products they offer. These reforms were introduced on 1 April 2007.

Health insurers are required by law to provide these Statements so you can review your existing policy or compare private health insurance products.

A Standard Information Statement only gives a summary of the key product features. However, it does allow you to see if your broad needs are covered and where products differ in both price and features. You will need to contact the health insurer to get all the details about the product.

You should not rely on the \$ amounts for premiums or benefits on the Statement as they are there for comparison only. The actual premium may vary depending on your circumstances, for example, your age and your age when you first got health insurance. Benefits will vary depending on the details of your policy, the treatments you are having, the hospital you visit and who treats you.

There are three types of Standard Information Statements:

- **Hospital** - describes the features and limitations of hospital cover, including the type of [accommodation](#), which medical services are covered in full, part or not covered, waiting periods and additional payments (excesses, co-payments and gaps),
- **General Treatment** - describes the features and limitations of general treatment cover, including which services are covered, waiting periods, benefit limits and example benefits for each type of service, and
- **Combined** - describes the features and limitations of a combined hospital and general treatment cover, with details as above.

Having used the search to find products, you can print these one-page statements outlining the key features of your health insurance product. Detailed guides for each type of statement can be downloaded:

- [Guide to Hospital SIS](#)
- [Guide to General Treatment SIS](#)
- [Guide to Combined SIS](#)

Go to [www.privatehealth.gov.au](http://www.privatehealth.gov.au) to see more.

# community news

## HEARING AIDS AND MOBILE PHONES BROCHURE

A new "Hearing aids and mobile phones" brochure has been posted on the National Acoustic Laboratories website. Go to

[www.nal.gov.au](http://www.nal.gov.au) then click on:

- o "Publications", then
- o "Hearing Rehabilitation Devices", then
- o "Hearing aids and mobile phones Brochure".

## SYDNEY FILM FESTIVAL AND ACCESSIBLE ARTS REVEAL ACCESSIBLE CINEMA PROGRAM 2007

14<sup>th</sup> May 2007

Clare Stewart, the Executive Director of the Sydney Film Festival has revealed an enticing program for the 2007 Sydney Film Festival which incorporates **Accessible Cinema** - a powerful program of films about people with a disability for all film-goers. This not only sees the festival growing in size with an increased number of films, talks and forums, but also includes a much wider representation of society in its films. The scope of the festival has broadened, with a selection of kids movies and films by or about people with a disability, and the party factor will increase audiences with a range of live events, talks and shows at the Metro Theatre.

### ACCESSIBLE CINEMA

Working with Accessible Arts, Sydney Film Festival is thrilled to be screening a powerful program of films about people with a disability, for all film-goers. Highlights include *Autism Every Day*, a moving film about the life of eight families with children who have Autism, and *Blindsight* the awe-inspiring journey of blind Tibetan teens who climb

Mount Everest. *Hear and Now*, winner of the 2007 Sundance Film Festival Audience Award for Documentary, follows a couple's decision to undergo cochlear implant surgery after 65 years. Their journey is documented by their filmmaker daughter. *Braindamajd'd...Take II* follows filmmaker Paul Nadler's amazing take on Traumatic Brain Injury. Some sessions will be audio-described or close captioned, and intros and Q&As will be Auslan interpreted.

### AUSTRALIAN CINEMA

The Australian content of the festival is rich and diverse this year, with several world premieres and a large array of guests in attendance. One in particular that depicts one woman's struggle with epilepsy which leads her to make a life changing decision. *Rachel: A Perfect Life* one of toughest young woman you're ever likely to come across and now she wants brain surgery to get rid of her epilepsy once and for all.

### ACCESS INITIATIVES

Accessible Arts is thrilled to acknowledge the Sydney Film Festival policy that the festival is for all – this commitment has ensured that films are available to as wide an audience as possible. All festival venues have wheelchair access. For full access information about all the venues visit [www.sydneyfilmfestival.org](http://www.sydneyfilmfestival.org).

The Sydney Film Festival runs from 8-24 June 2007, taking place across the city at the State Theatre, GU George Street Cinemas, Metro Theatre and Dendy Opera Quays. Tickets and FlexiPasses are on sale from Thursday 10 May, and are available from Ticketmaster on 136 100. For further information and access details on this year's program, as well as up to the minute festival news and to select films for online booking, visit [www.sydneyfilmfestival.org](http://www.sydneyfilmfestival.org) and go the

Accessible Cinema page under 'Program'.

Accessible Arts acknowledges the support of The Other Film Festival and Access Arts Victoria in assisting with the disability strand of this project.

Accessible Arts

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## ACCESSIBLE PUBLIC TRANSPORT

A review of the Disability Standards for Accessible Public Transport is being conducted by The Allen Consulting Group (<http://www.ddatransportreview.com.au>). The objects of the review are to consider the efficiency and effectiveness of the standards to assess whether discrimination has been removed as much as possible, and whether any amendments should be recommended.

Submissions against the Terms of Reference can be lodged until 5pm on 24 August 2007. Public hearings will be held across Australia during July and August – you can register your interest in attending a hearing at <http://www.ddatransportreview.com.au/?x=hearings>.

A draft report will be released by 15 October for public comment by 15 November. The consultant's final draft report to the Minister is due on 14 December.

## AFDO WELCOMES NEW CEO

The Australian Federation of Disability Organisations welcomes its new interim CEO Ms Samantha Jenkinson who will be filling the role until November 2007.

Outgoing CEO Maryanne Diamond has moved on to an international development role with a major disability services organisation.

Ms Jenkinson has been involved in advocating and promoting the rights of people with disabilities since the early 1990's when she became involved with student politics at university.

"Over the next 6 months, I will be ensuring that the voice of people with disabilities continues to be heard through the work that AFDO does," said Ms Jenkinson who uses a wheelchair.

"I have a strong commitment toward seeing the organisation continue its move forward in its vision of promoting an inclusive society for people with a disability," she said.

Ms Jenkinson is a qualified Social Worker and has worked as a trainer, group facilitator, case manager, project officer and systemic advocate.

Ms Jenkinson has worked for community organisations, service providers and as a state public servant within human services.

The key areas in disability she has worked in have been employment services, housing, service co-ordination, and policy development in disability services.

She has extensive experience in governance having been involved with many community organisations as a member of various committees of management and boards of governance, including People with Disabilities WA, Women with Disabilities Australia and AFDO.

A permanent CEO for AFDO will be recruited before the end of November 2007.

### **NATIONAL RESEARCH PROJECT - SURVEY OF PARENTS OF SCHOOL STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES**

Investigating the Feasibility of Portable Funding for Students with Disabilities

Monash University has been engaged by the Australian Government through the

Department of Education, Science & Training (DEST) to investigate the portability of funding for school students with disabilities.

A key part of this research will be a survey of parents of school students with a disability.

It is important that all parents of students with a disability the opportunity to participate in this Survey.

The Australian Council of State School Organisations (ACSSO) and the Australian Parents Council have long been concerned at a range of unresolved issues affecting the learning and development opportunities for students with disabilities, and the support needs of their families.

The Online Survey can be accessed and completed at: <http://www.projects.education.monash.edu.au/disability-portable-funding/>

### **DEAF AND BLIND JURORS**

People who are deaf and blind should be allowed to sit on juries a NSW Law Reform Commission report states. The report calls for the Jury Act to be amended to enable that to happen, and for the existing automatic disqualification on the grounds of disability to be lifted. The NSW Attorney-General said the report's recommendations were worthy of examination. Order the report or download a PDF version from

[http://www.lawlink.nsw.gov.au/lawlink/lrc/lrc.nsf/pages/LRC\\_r114.pdf](http://www.lawlink.nsw.gov.au/lawlink/lrc/lrc.nsf/pages/LRC_r114.pdf). The media release from Human Rights Commissioner, Graeme Innes, can be read at

[http://www.hreoc.gov.au/media\\_release/s/2007/29\\_07.html](http://www.hreoc.gov.au/media_release/s/2007/29_07.html).

### **REVIEW OF ACCESSIBLE PUBLIC TRANSPORT STANDARDS**

The first five-year review of the Disability Standards for Accessible Public Transport will be conducted

by The Allen Consulting Group (<http://www.ddatransportreview.com.au>). The review will consider the efficiency and effectiveness of the standards to assess whether discrimination has been removed as much as possible, and whether any amendments should be recommended. An issues paper was released on 24 May – the Word document can be accessed at <http://www.ddatransportreview.com.au/downloads/ACGTransportIP.doc>. Submissions based on the Terms of Reference can be lodged until 5pm on 24 August 2007. Public hearings will be held across Australia during July and August and, until 15 June, you can register your interest in attending a hearing at <http://www.ddatransportreview.com.au/?x=hearings>. A draft report will be released by 15 October for public comment by 15 November. The consultant's final draft report to the Minister is due on 14 December 2007.

### **CONGRATULATIONS YOUNG-JOO BYUN**



Deafness Forum member Young-Joo Byun received an award from the Sydney Korean Women's Welfare Association for the first Australia-Korean Women's Day. Congratulations to Young-Joo.

### **POSITION VACANT: EXECUTIVE OFFICER NEDA**

The national peak organisation representing the rights and interests of people from non-English speaking backgrounds (NESB) with disability, their families and carers, is seeking applications for the position of Executive Officer.

This position provides an exciting opportunity for professionals with a strong background in strategic policy development to take on a leadership role within a small but dynamic peak organisation.

National Ethnic Disability Alliance is an EEO employer and has an affirmative action policy that applies for people from NESB with disability.

Selection criteria:

Demonstrated understanding of and commitment to people from NESB with disability, their families and carers

Extensive experience in policy development and analysis

Demonstrated management, strategic and leadership skills

High order interpersonal, negotiation and networking skills

Superior oral and written communication skills

High level computer literacy

Willingness to travel

Salary level up to \$70,000 depending on experience.

For an information pack please contact Judith, for further enquiries contact Diana Qian on (02) 9687 8933.

Applicants must address all of the above selection criteria.

Applications must be provided electronically in a Word formatted file and be directed to: President at [office@neda.org.au](mailto:office@neda.org.au)

Applications close 25 June 2007.

### **SIGNPOST WINS 'PROGRAM OF THE YEAR' AT THE ANTENNA AWARDS**

SignPost, the magazine style TV program of the Australian Deaf community, has won the coveted 'Program of the Year' award at this year's Antenna Awards in Melbourne.

The Antenna Awards, the national community TV awards, recognise

community television's important role as a training ground for the film and television industry. They also celebrate the role of community television in promoting diversity and harmony in the Australian culture.

SignPost is made entirely in Auslan (Australian Sign Language) and has voice overs and captions, thus making it accessible to all Australians. This award is not only a significant achievement for the hard working team of volunteers who make the show, but a recognition of the value and interest in Deaf television programming.

The program is made in Sydney but carries stories and items that have a national relevance.

The producers have negotiated broadcast slots with Channel 31 providers in the other capital cities across Australia. This brings a much valued and important program to Deaf people, their families, friends and interested people in lieu of a funded program on a national broadcaster.

The program's Executive Producer, Andy Carmichael says, "This is a 'feel good' story of the best type. It is evidence of an Australian community proactively showing that their stories can captivate and entertain across the audience spectrum. The fact that Signpost won this award in its first year of eligibility is proof indeed of the wider community's interest in innovative and accessible programs. Let's hope that this recognition helps to give the Deaf community a seat at the broadcasting table in Australia – a move that is long overdue if you compare what is available in other countries the world over."

You can see photos of the team receiving the award at [www.c31.org.au](http://www.c31.org.au)

The Antenna Awards were broadcast live from BMW Edge, Federation Square on C31 Melbourne on Friday 8th June.

## focus on technology

### **CALL QUEUING TO BEGIN AT NATIONAL RELAY SERVICE**

Call queuing will help manage the flow of calls to the Relay Service and make life easier for NRS users.

It's easy to dial the National Relay Service to make a call - but sometimes because of a surge in demand, all of our relay officers become busy. When this happens, some users can't get through.

This doesn't happen very often – less than once in twenty calls.

At present, if there's no relay staff immediately available, the screen just shows up as engaged and you hang up or disconnect.

This will change in June. The Relay Service will shortly introduce **call queuing** to help users, and save them the bother of redialing.

"This will stop the frustration of having to hang up and redial," Relay Service Education and Information manager, Sue Anne Randazzo said.

"Instead, users will be able to wait and make a connection with a Relay Officer (RO) as soon as their turn comes."

If there are no ROs available, a message will pop up asking the caller to **hold until the first available relay officer**.

"Users won't have to wait very long for a relay officer – if they wait, they won't have to pay for a second call," Sue Anne said.

"We handle more than 500,000 calls a year, and call queuing is just a helpful addition to the National Relay Service," Sue Anne said.

As at present, emergency callers will get immediate priority and will only very rarely have to queue.

## NEW LOOK FOR THE NRS

The National Relay Service has undergone a “makeover” with a new look.

The NRS logo has changed, and now depicts an old style phone in warm orange colours.

The website

[www.relayservice.com.au](http://www.relayservice.com.au) has a new look also with “50’s” style graphics and easy to follow links, along with the NRS text 106 emergency number to refresh everyone’s memory, in case of an accident.

These easy to recognise links guide users to the various “call options” that are available for the deaf, and hearing and speech impaired.

For our regular users, the home page also has a section with the latest news bulletins for the service.

Its all part of the **“A phone call is as good as a hug”** campaign to extend the users of the NRS — and let deaf, and hearing and speech impaired Australians who don’t know about the NRS, into the good news.

The campaign was launched by Communications, Information Technology and the Arts Minister, Senator Helen Coonan.

The campaign also developed a DVD to distribute to educators, doctors and care providers, along with a newspaper and magazine advertisements and radio ads pitched at people who may have family members who are becoming hard of hearing.

The campaign will be conducted over several months, so don’t be surprised to see posters or brochures encouraging people to use the NRS down at your local doctor’s surgery, or in your newspaper.

At the launch, Tony Clews from the Deaf Society of NSW and a representative of the Deaf community, told the Senator Coonan via an interpreter that the



National Relay Service was an integral part of communication for the Deaf community.

“The National Relay Service is great. It means I can access anyone in the wider telephone network through the NRS using my teletypewriter. The NRS can be used by anyone in the community to communicate with me,” he said.

## CTN AWARDS 2007 – CELEBRATING ACHIEVEMENTS

CTN Awards give recognition to those in and around the industry who work (and have worked) towards achieving better accessibility, affordability and quality of telecommunications services for Australian consumers.

### Recognition of Outstanding Contribution to Consumer Advocacy awarded to:

**Andrew Stewart**, who recently retired as Deafness Forum representative on the Communication Alliance Disability Council and CTN would like to recognize his momentous work on behalf of the Deafness Forum representing consumers with hearing impairments on many

different committees including the Telecommunications Disability Standard and the Industry Payphones Accessibility Guideline.

Note: Alan Keir has taken over as Deafness Forum representative on the CA DC.



*Andrew Stewart, Deafness Forum life member*

## upcoming events

JULY 2007			
6-8 Jul	<p>Conference of Aus &amp; NZ Educators of the Deaf 'Down Under and Leading the World'</p> <p>Hosted by National Association of Australian Teachers of the Deaf (Inc)</p>	Hobart TAS	<p>Email: <a href="mailto:gcolloff@aapt.net.au">gcolloff@aapt.net.au</a></p> <p>Web: <a href="http://www.anzced2007.com.au">www.anzced2007.com.au</a></p>
Wednesday 25 July 2007 (4.00 - 6.00pm) 2 hour session	<p><b>How to Apply Reggio Emilia Philosophy in the Sign Bilingual Classroom for Early Years (Preschool - Year 2)</b></p> <p><b>When:</b></p> <p>Presented by Leonie Jackson, Assistant Principal - Thomas Pattison School; Curriculum Coordinator - Auslan Programs, Royal Institute for Deaf and Blind Children</p>	RIDBC	<p>The Renwick Centre</p> <p>Royal Institute for Deaf and Blind Children</p> <p>Private Bag 29</p> <p>Parramatta 2124</p> <p>Fax: (02) 9873 1614</p> <p>Email: <a href="mailto:cpe@ridbc.org.au">cpe@ridbc.org.au</a></p>
	<p><b>Examination in Auditory-Verbal Development</b></p> <p><b>When:</b> Friday 27 July from 10am - 2pm</p> <p>Facilitated by Dr Jill Duncan, Certified Auditory Verbal Therapist, Senior Lecturer, the Renwick Centre, Royal Institute for Deaf and Blind Children</p> <p>For information regarding the examination, please contact AG Bell Academy for Listening and Spoken Language</p> <p>3417 Volta Place, North West Washington, D.C. 22314, USA</p> <p>Scott Smiley at <a href="mailto:ssmiley@agbell.org">ssmiley@agbell.org</a></p>		<p>The Renwick Centre</p> <p>Royal Institute for Deaf and Blind Children</p> <p>Private Bag 29</p> <p>Parramatta 2124</p> <p>Fax: (02) 9873 1614</p> <p>Email: <a href="mailto:cpe@ridbc.org.au">cpe@ridbc.org.au</a></p>
30-31 Jul	<p>Employment Forum run by National Disability Services</p>	Sydney	<p>National Disability Services,</p> <p>Locked Bag 3002, Deakin West ACT 2600</p> <p>Phone: (02) 6283 3200</p> <p>Fax: (02) 6281 3488</p> <p>Email: <a href="mailto:rebecca.gardner@nds.org.au">rebecca.gardner@nds.org.au</a></p>
AUGUST 2007			
19-25 Aug	Hearing Awareness Week	Nation-wide	<p>Email: <a href="mailto:info@deafnessforum.org.au">info@deafnessforum.org.au</a></p> <p>Web: <a href="http://www.hearingawarenessweek.org.au">www.hearingawarenessweek.org.au</a></p>
23 Aug	Captioning Awards	Sydney	<p>Email: <a href="mailto:info@deafnessforum.org.au">info@deafnessforum.org.au</a></p>

			Web: <a href="http://www.deafnessforum.org.au">www.deafnessforum.org.au</a>
<b>SEPTEMBER 2007</b>			
4-7 Sep	Hear, Speak, Live Conference It is hosted by the Deadly Ears Team - the Statewide Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Ear Health Program (RCH - Brisbane)	Gold Coast, Queensland	Bonny Marsh Deadly Ears - Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Ear Health Program Community Child Health Service 184 St Paul's Terrace SPRING HILL Qld 4002 Email: <a href="mailto:RCH-deadlyears@health.qld.gov.au">RCH-deadlyears@health.qld.gov.au</a> Fax: 07 3250 8509
25-30 Sep	The 2007 International DeafBlind Conference	Perth	For more information, go to <a href="http://www.dbiconference2007.asn.au/">http://www.dbiconference2007.asn.au/</a>
12-13 Sep	Second Annual Meeting of Leaders in Oral Deaf Education Featuring a keynote address by Dr Todd Houston	RIDBC Sydney	The Renwick Centre Royal Institute for Deaf and Blind Children Private Bag 29 Parramatta 2124 Fax: (02) 9873 1614 Email: <a href="mailto:cpe@ridbc.org.au">cpe@ridbc.org.au</a>
14 September	Annual Conference for Itinerant Teacher of the Deaf, Teachers of Hearing Impaired Students : Keynote address by Dr Todd Houston	RIDBC Sydney	The Renwick Centre Royal Institute for Deaf and Blind Children Private Bag 29 Parramatta 2124 Fax: (02) 9873 1614 Email: <a href="mailto:cpe@ridbc.org.au">cpe@ridbc.org.au</a>
<b>OCTOBER 2007</b>			
14 Oct	Deafness Forum AGM	Melbourne	Email: <a href="mailto:info@deafnessforum.org.au">info@deafnessforum.org.au</a> Web: <a href="http://www.deafnessforum.org.au">www.deafnessforum.org.au</a>
<b>MAY 2008</b>			
24-25 May	5 <sup>th</sup> National Deafness Sector Summit	Canberra	Email: <a href="mailto:info@deafnessforum.org.au">info@deafnessforum.org.au</a> Web: <a href="http://www.deafnessforum.org.au">www.deafnessforum.org.au</a>

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