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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*

Deafness Forum welcomes media access inquiry for Deaf and hearing impaired

The Deafness Forum of Australia has applauded the announcement of an investigation into access to electronic media for the Deaf and hearing impaired. The inquiry was announced today by Minister for Communications, Information Technology and the Arts, Senator the Hon Helen Coonan

The announcement follows on from a motion lodged by Senator Natasha Stott Despoja, calling for greater amounts of captioning. The deafness sector rallied to support Senator Stott Despoja's motion, contacting their Senators to make sure that they understood how important captioning was to people who are Deaf or hearing impaired. Senator Stott Despoja met with Senator Coonan to discuss the motion, and the inquiry was the agreed result.

The Government inquiry will investigate developments in captioning and other essential access technologies that assist hearing impaired Australians, and consider options for extending these services. The investigation into access to electronic media and films by the hearing impaired is to be completed by 30 April 2008, with the full report of that investigation to be tabled by the Minister in Parliament.

"Going to the cinema, watching TV, viewing movies from a website or even accessing live events can be difficult, if not impossible, for people who are Deaf or hearing impaired, unless captions are provided" said Deafness Forum CEO, Nicole Lawder today.

"We hope that this inquiry will uncover the extent of the problem, and ways to address it, because in these cases, people who are Deaf or have a hearing impairment are being discriminated against" said Ms Lawder.

"Over the past few years we have worked with various industries to increase the amount of captioning. In some areas, there has been enormous progress, goodwill and cooperation – but this is not the case in all industries. And we are well behind captioning progress in other countries, such as the US and the UK" Ms Lawder added.

Deafness Forum met with Senator Stott Despoja early this year, to seek her assistance in Parliament as "captioning champion". Senator Stott Despoja enthusiastically agreed as she has long campaigned for the rights of the Deaf and hearing impaired, and for more attention to their needs.

"The Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission and Media Access Australia have been assisting us to seek changes, but in some cases, change is very slow in coming". Ms Lawder said. "We are very hopeful that a government inquiry will assist this process."

CHOOSING THE RIGHT PHONE IF YOU ARE DEAF OR HEARING IMPAIRED

Deafness Forum recently launched 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 was launched in Sydney during 2007 Hearing Awareness Week by Senator the Hon Helen Coonan, Minister for Communications, Information Technology and the Arts, Deputy Leader of the Government in the Senate. The launch in Sydney was attended by a number of Deafness Forum supporters and members.

Multiple copies of the brochure can be requested by contacting Deafness Forum via email info@deafnessforum.org.au. Please ensure you include your name, your address and how many copies you

would like. Copies are free.

Deafness Forum of Australia acknowledges funding from the Australian Government Department of Communications, Information Technology and the Arts through the Telecommunications Consumer Representation Grants program, to enable us to produce this brochure.

Photo below: Andrew Stewart, Senator Helen Coonan, Alex Jones and Nicole Lawder at the phone brochure launch

WHAT HAVE WE BEEN DOING IN THE PAST MONTH?

The past month has been very busy, with end of financial year activities as well as attending a number of events and carrying out our systemic advocacy activities. Just some of the activities the Board members and staff, and other representatives have undertaken in the past month since the last newsletter include:

- Had the auditor at our offices in preparation for the annual report and annual financial statements.
- Preparations for Annual

general meeting and upcoming Board meeting

- Held the annual Captioning Awards in Sydney
- Launched a new brochure "Choosing the right phone" in Sydney, with Senator Helen Coonan
- Completed a number of end of year reports for funding agreements
- Attended the launch of the Internet relay, held at Parliament House on 3 September 2007
- Edited our Annual report ready for printing
- Lobbied Senators regarding motion on captioning by Senator Natasha Stott Despoja, including liaising with Senator Stott Despoja's office, and meeting with Senator Gary Humphries regarding the motion.
- Lobbied the government regarding the launch of a new parents' DVD without captions
- Communicated at length with members regarding Senator Stott Despoja's motion on captioning.
- Lobbied the government about Triple 0 advertisements without captions
- Attended roundtable on DVD captioning at the Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission
- Progressed arrangements for upcoming negotiations with Free to air TV regarding captioning agreement
- Progressed arrangements with cinema industry regarding next captioning agreement.



RAISING CHILDREN – APPARENTLY NOT FOR DEAF AUSTRALIANS?

21 August 2007

The Deafness Forum of Australia, the peak body for Australian consumers who are Deaf, have a hearing impairment or suffer from a chronic disorder of the ear, has questioned the accessibility of a new DVD aimed at parents. The Raising Children network was given \$2.7m of federal funds to make the parenting DVD available free of charge to all Australians.

Raising Children was launched by Prime Minister John Howard on 20 August, but calls and emails to the Prime Minister's office, and the Raising Children organisation on Monday failed to confirm or deny whether the DVD contains captions or audio description.

Captions would have enabled the one in six Australians who currently have some form of hearing impairment to follow DVDs, while audio description would enable people who are blind or vision impaired to access the DVD. Around 20 per cent of the population would benefit from captions and/or audio description on this DVD.

"I was very hopeful that the DVD would provide access features for Australians who are hearing or vision impaired" said Nicole Lawder, Deafness Forum CEO. "This would be a great companion to the Raising Children website, which has some great information on it for parents in an easy to use format. But unfortunately, the DVD does not include features which would provide access for parents who are deaf or hearing impaired."

"To add insult to injury", added Ms Lawder "this week is Hearing Awareness Week, and also the week in which we hold the annual Captioning Awards. This is one DVD and organisation that certainly will not win an award."

"I presumed that since federal funding – taxpayers money – was used to fund the DVD, that access was considered. This would be in line with a recent decision by the Film Finance Corporation (FFC) to require captions on all FFC-financed feature films from 1 July 2007. Also, federal government policy is to caption TV commercials for government information. "While it is not for me to judge whether this constitutes discrimination under the Disability Discrimination Act, we will certainly be following up to determine what we can do to ensure that government funding is used in a way that allows access for all Australians" Ms Lawder said.

Footnote: Following on from lobbying by Deafness Forum and a range of other organisations, the next release of the Raising Children DVD will include captions.

2007 CAPTIONING AWARDS

The Captioning Awards was an enjoyable evening where the initiatives and achievements in captioning over the past year were recognized. A sellout crowd enjoyed MC Colin Lane's sense of humour and winners were delighted with their awards.

2007 Roma Wood OAM Community Award

Presented to Dr John Byrne in recognition of his consumer advocacy to improve the amount of captioning, including the Film Finance Corporation lobbying.

2007 Members Choice Award

Shortlisted were: Dora the Explorer (Nickelodeon); Gena Apartments (Caloundra); Australia's Next Top Model (FOX8); Spongebob (Nickelodeon)

Winner QANTAS

2007 Award for DVD Captioning

Sponsored by



Highly commended ABC

Winner National Geographic Channel

2007 Award for Advertising Captioning

Sponsored by



Winner Area 51 captioning advertisements

2007 Award for Pay TV Captioning

Sponsored by



Winner The Great BBQ Challenge Grand Finale Live (Lifestyle FOOD Channel)



captioningawards

2007 Award for Free to air TV Captioning

Highly commended 2007 Australian Open, Seven Network

Winner ABC for increasing captioning, and the Anzac Day live captioning coverage

2007 Award for Best Promotion of Captioning or Best Consumer Education Campaign

Sponsored by



Winner Glen Street Theatre

2007 Award for Best Event Captioning

Highly commended The Captioning Studio for Libby Harricks Memorial Oration, 9th National Rural Health Conference

Winner Darebin City Council

2007 Award for Most Consistent Use of Captioning

Sponsored by



Highly commended Antiques Roadshow (Lifestyle Channel)

Winner Disney Channel

2007 Award for the Best New Captioning Initiative

Sponsored by

Australian Government through the Department of Families, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs

Highly commended The Captioning Studio (Go-Theatrical)

Winner FOXTEL IQ Upgrade

5TH NATIONAL DEAFNESS SECTOR SUMMIT – MAY 2008

The 5th National Deafness Sector 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 5th 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 or visit our website at www.deafnessforum.org.au

CAPTIONING FREE TO AIR TV

AAD and Deafness Forum are still working to get a new agreement with Free TV, ABC TV and SBS about the next quota of captioning for free to air TV. The meeting has not occurred as quickly as we would have liked. ABC is being very amenable however the response from the other free to air channels has been lukewarm.

In the next agreement, we hope to also include a Captioning Quality Guidelines so that channels will also be accountable for the quality of their captions.

We will keep members informed of developments in this area.

WEBSITE UPDATES

As usual, there have been various additions and updates to the main Deafness Forum Website: www.deafnessforum.org.au. Please take the time to visit the Website on a regular basis to keep up with what is happening.

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.

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Deafness Forum Annual General Meeting and election of Directors will take place on Saturday 13 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.

With thanks to our event sponsors who make this event possible:



community news

ANDREW MCKINNON PRESENTATIONS CREATES HISTORY FOR THEATRE ACCESS IN AUSTRALIA AND NEW ZEALAND

20 August 2007

In an outstanding new initiative being introduced by renowned Australian producer Andrew McKinnon, the 2007 touring production of *Dickens Women*, starring acclaimed British actress Miriam Margolyes, will feature captions for deaf and hearing impaired patrons at selected performances in every one of its 11 Australian venues and its venue in Auckland - the first ever theatre to offer captioning in New Zealand.

Captions on Tour, a service created by Alex French and Nari Jennings of award-winning Australian company The Captioning Studio, was greeted with great enthusiasm by Andrew and his production team at a recent launch event in Sydney.

With one in six Australians having some degree of hearing loss, there is a growing demand for theatre captioning, said Andrew McKinnon. Theatre should be inclusive. By offering the Go-Theatrical! service, we make theatre accessible and enjoyable to so many people who would not otherwise attend, and we have been delighted by the support we have received from the venues for Captions on Tour.

AFDO PRESENTS FLEXIBLE HOUSING OPTIONS: INTERNATIONAL LESSONS FOR AUSTRALIA

Time and Date 2:00-5:00pm

Thursday, 20 September

Where

FaCSIA Auditorium, B Block, Tuggeranong Office Park

Cost Free, but RSVPs essential
RSVP

Brenda Lacey

03 9662 3324 or email

brenda.lacey@afdo.org.au

Please indicate any support needs you may have.

Address by: Dr Carmel Laragy of La Trobe University

Dr Carmel Laragy from La Trobe University recently undertook a study of independent living programmes for people with disability in England and Sweden, looking at the factors that promote increased flexibility and choice, and greater social participation.

In June 2007, the Federal Government announced it would spend \$563 million over 5 years on accommodation services for people with disability. The Government also committed to releasing a discussion paper to canvas options for accommodation services.

The forum will consider Dr Laragy's findings and what they mean in the Australian context.

The Australian Federation of Disability Organisations would like to thank FaCSIA for the use of their facilities.



THE ACCESS TO PREMISES CAMPAIGN KIT LAUNCHED

The Access to Premises Campaign Kit addresses the issues of up to 4 Million Australians who are unable to access their own communities.

The Australian Federation of Disability Organisations today launched the Access to Premises Campaign Kit. The Kit will provide information and tools to people with

a disability that will help them speak out about the lack of access to businesses and services that they face in their local communities.

"The kit provides an opportunity for people with a disability to speak out about their experiences." said Australian Federation of Disability Organisations' Acting CEO Samantha Jenkinson. "People with a disability will be able to share the various ways they have been affected by the lack of accessible buildings in their local communities"

The Campaign's message is that:

- o People with a disability want access to the same buildings as everyone else.
- o People with a disability want to be able to work, shop and experience cultural and leisure activities just like everyone else.
- o Anything less than that is discrimination.

The *Disability Discrimination Act* 1992 has set out basic guidelines making discrimination against people with a disability illegal. People with a disability are still struggling to access their basic rights as citizens of Australia – the right to work, the right to the same level and quality of education as everyone else and the right to go freely where everyone else can go without hindrance or unnecessary barriers being put in place.

The Access to Premises Campaign sets out to help people with a disability gain more power and control in their lives by helping them to assert their rights and to share their stories within the community in which they live.

The campaign kit is available from the Australian Federation of Disability Organisations website: [Access to Premises Campaign Kit](#)

For further information:

Samantha Jenkinson, Acting CEO – 0412 887 674

NATIONAL DISABILITY SERVICES & FAMILIES AUSTRALIA

Co-hosting "Every child matters - National conference on children and young people with disability & their families" to be held during National Families Week 2008, ending on the International Day of Families

14 and 15 May 2008

Melbourne Park Function Centre at Melbourne Olympic Park

Mark your diaries now!

The aim of this inaugural conference is to identify issues, share solutions and celebrate successes. Additionally, discussion will focus on enabling services to better respond to children's and families' needs by focusing on family wellbeing, all-inclusive communities, policy, practice and priorities, and the voice of children, young people and families.



This conference is aimed at

- o disability service providers
- o families
- o children, youth and siblings groups
- o early childhood practitioners
- o Indigenous disability networks
- o culturally and linguistically diverse networks
- o advocacy and peer support groups
- o educators
- o therapists

- o child care agencies
- o governments
- o researchers

See <http://www.nds.org.au>

international

NAKED DEAF NEWS

August 17, 2007

TOKYO, Japan (Reuters) -- An embarrassed Japanese government has cut the subsidy, but a Tokyo TV company said on Friday it would carry on making a striptease news show with sign language for hearing-impaired viewers.

The government made grants totaling 400,000 yen (\$3,500) to help cover production of the weekly five-minute program on satellite TV, which features a news reader who removes her clothes between news items that she delivers in sign language.

The funding dried up when the government, under fire for supporting "Naked Sign Language News," changed funding guidelines for programming aimed at the disabled to exclude pornography, local media reported.

"Of course we will continue making the program," said Shinichiro Fukuyama, a spokesman for makers Paradise Television. "We weren't doing it for the subsidy, we just wanted to make something viewers would enjoy."

Most people who had contacted the station about the program were supportive, saying deaf people had the right to enjoy the same programs as other people, he added.

EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

There has been a rather sweeping Department of Justice settlement with a south Florida county. It will have a dramatic effect on the way

local government deals with emergency management as it relates to people with disabilities.

Found at

<http://www.usdoj.gov/crt/ada/washcout.htm> the ruling in part says:

"Within three months of the effective date of this Agreement, the County will implement and report to the Department its written procedures that ensure that it regularly solicits and incorporates input from persons with a variety of disabilities and those who serve them regarding all phases of its emergency management plan (preparation, notification, response, and clean up). The County will implement and report to the Department its written procedures that ensure that if its emergency warning systems use sirens or other audible alerts, it will also provide ways to inform persons with hearing impairments of an impending disaster. The use of auto-dialed TTY messages to pre-registered individuals who are deaf or hard of hearing, text messaging, e-mails, open-captioning on local TV stations and other innovative uses of technology may be incorporated into such procedures, as well as lower-tech options such as dispatching qualified sign language interpreters to assist with emergency TV broadcasts."

See: www.drgglobal.com

focus on technology

\$5 MILLION TO SUPPORT THE DEVELOPMENT OF EMERGENCY COMMUNICATIONS IN WA

The Minister for Communications, Information Technology and Arts, Senator the Hon Helen Coonan and the Member for Stirling Michael Keenan, today announced funding of \$5 million to support the development of communications for emergency services in Western Australia. Go to:

<http://www.minister.dcita.gov.au/me>

[dia/media_releases/\\$5_million_to_support_the_development_of_emergency_services_communications_in_wa](#)

From CTN WebNews No. 167

TELSTRA WITHDRAWS AND AMENDS NEXT G ADVERTISEMENTS

Telstra Corporation Limited has withdrawn and amended a series of television advertisements promoting its Next G mobile network after the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission raised concerns that the advertisements may mislead consumers about the coverage available on the network. Go to:

<http://www.accc.gov.au/content/index.php?id=796709&fromItemId/2332>

From CTN WebNews No. 167

NEW INTERNET RELAY SERVICE FOR DEAF AUSTRALIANS



The Special Minister of State, Mr Gary Nairn, launched a new communication option for

Australians who are Deaf, or who have a hearing or speech impairment on 3 September 2007.

Mr Nairn said that Internet Relay, provided by the National Relay Service, takes disability communication into the 21st century.

"This new service allows Deaf, hearing and speech impaired people to make phone calls with their PCs, laptops, and with internet-enabled mobile phones," Mr Nairn said.

Like other relay service phone calls, it allows the user to make calls to anyone, anywhere, anytime, with complete confidentiality.

A person using Internet Relay connects with the Relay Service and provides the phone number. A relay officer "relays" their

conversation, then returns the responses to the user's computer.

Connection is either through the National Relay Service website or through MSN or AOL instant messaging.

The National Relay Service to date has provided a service using TTY textphones, which are restricted to a fixed land-line.

Mr Nairn said advances in technology – such as texting - have given people with hearing and speech difficulties more independence.

"Internet Relay is the next big advance in disability communication," Mr Nairn said.

TELSTRA CRANKS NEXT G PUSH

Telstra is trying to push mobile phone customers off its regional CDMA network and on to its Next G network with an aggressive text message and telephone campaign, despite federal Government plans that may keep the old network open longer.

Go to:

<http://www.australianit.news.com.au/story/0,24897,22331312-5013041,00.html>

From CTN WebNews No. 168

REVIEW OF USO OBLIGATIONS

The Minister of Communications, Information Technology and the Arts, Senator the Hon Helen Coonan has called for public submissions as part of the Universal Service Obligation review. Submissions are due 1 November 2007.

For full details about the review, go to:

http://www.dcita.gov.au/communications_for_consumers/telephone_services/telephone_services/industry_issues_policies_and_legislation/the_universal_service_obligation_uso/universal_service_obligation_review

From CTN WebNews No. 167

sport

XV AUSTRALIAN DEAF GAMES

ADG is scheduled to take place 3-10 January 2008 on the Gold Coast. For further information, go to www.austdeafgames.org.au

We are seeking deaf and hearing impaired people of all ages who have an interest in the following events:



- o Basketball
- o Beach Volleyball
- o Cricket
- o Darts
- o Eight Ball
- o Golf
- o Lawn Bowls
- o Netball
- o Squash
- o Swimming
- o Table Tennis
- o Tennis
- o Ten Pin Bowling

Sport is a great equaliser for d/h people- it's a wonderful opportunity for young people to improve in their sport and to forge networks and friendships, particularly if they are still in, or have just left, high school. Likewise for young adults who may have been in the workforce for a while and are looking for a sporting outlet. People who do not know how to sign are welcome. People who are learning to sign are welcome. People with cochlear implants are welcome. It's all about the sport - and if a person is good enough, it's all about playing for Australia one day!

upcoming events

SEPTEMBER 2007			
25-30 Sep	The 2007 International DeafBlind Conference	Perth (WA)	Web: www.dbiconference2007.asn.au/
Thursday, 20 September 2:00-5:00pm	Australian Federation of Disability Organisations (AFDO) presents Flexible Housing Options: International Lessons for Australia Free, but RSVPs essential	FaCSIA Auditorium, B Block, Tuggeranong Office Park Greenway (ACT)	For more information Brenda Lacey, AFDO Phone: 03 9662 3324 Email: brenda.lacey@afdo.org.au
OCTOBER 2007			
5-7 Oct	Better Hearing Australia (BHA) National Conference 2007	Maryborough (Qld)	For more information Margaret Crowley Phone: (07 4129 8507)
13 Oct	Deafness Forum AGM	Melbourne (Vic)	Email: info@deafnessforum.org.au Web: www.deafnessforum.org.au
NOVEMBER 2007			
17-18 Nov	Victorian Council of Deaf People III Victorian State Deaf Conference	Melbourne (Vic)	Email: info@vcod.com.au
JANUARY 2008			
3-10 Jan 2008	Australian Deaf Games	Gold Coast, (Qld)	Web: www.austdeafgames.org.au
MAY 2008			
24-25 May	5 th National Deafness Sector Summit	Canberra (ACT)	Email: info@deafnessforum.org.au Web: www.deafnessforum.org.au
AUGUST 2008			
24-30 August	2008 Hearing Awareness Week	National	Email: info@deafnessforum.org.au Web: www.hearingawarenessweek.org.au

Please consider making a bequest to Deafness Forum to enable us to keep improving access for Australians who are Deaf, have a hearing impairment, or suffer from a chronic disorder of the ear. Please go to www.deafnessforum.org.au to donate – use the link that looks like the picture on the right.



acknowledgement

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