

Newsletter of IDEAS



FINDING YOUR WAY

IDEAS does
information
so you can
do life.

Disability Information
Free, Accurate & Independent



info@ideas.org.au



1800 029 904



www.ideas.org.au



[@disabilityinformation](https://www.facebook.com/disabilityinformation)



[@IDEASAU](https://twitter.com/IDEASAU)

I'M FREE
Take Me!



Editorial - *Diana Palmer* *IDEAS Executive Officer*

Welcome to this edition!

2020 is certainly shaping us as a year we won't want to revisit in a hurry at all. Like everyone we are dealing with the impact of the coronavirus within our workplace and home life.

The Government's response to supporting people with disability dealing with the impact of the coronavirus has included the implementation of a Disability Information Helpline. IDEAS is delivering the Helpline on behalf of the Australian Government in conjunction with a number of other partner organisations. The Helpline is available Mon-Fri 8am to 8pm (AEST) and on the weekends between 9am and 7pm (AEST). The phone number is 1800 643 787. The Government also have a page on the Department of Social Services website www.dss.gov.au for more information.

The service will be able to ensure that people get access to the practical support they need, keep people informed about the latest official Government information, connect people with free, independent and emotional support and referral to advocacy supports as needed.

IDEAS has been part of a large sector call to have other supports put in place and we will continue to highlight where we can see gaps in systems and supports as we identify through our interaction with people with disability in our normal course of information support work.

Coronavirus is having a major impact on everyone's lives at the moment. Be sure to follow the Government restrictions on activities and social distancing, that way we will save lives and help slow the spread. This will help us come out on the other side with our diverse community intact.

We hope you enjoy this edition.

Regards,
Diana

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Should I Get the Flu Shot During the COVID-19 Crisis?



Government-funded influenza vaccines should have been available to providers from early-mid April 2020. Experts are unclear how seasonal flu could worsen COVID-19, however, it is recommended people avoid having both.

Getting a flu shot can help to protect others in the community including those who can't be vaccinated due to sickness or being too young. It can also protect vulnerable groups such as babies, people over 65 years and pregnant women.




Eligibility

Some people are eligible for a free flu vaccine under the Federal Government's National Immunisation Program because they are most at risk. This includes:

- Children aged six months to five years
- Pregnant women (during any stage of pregnancy)
- People aged 65 years and over
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people aged 6 months and over
- People aged six months and over with medical conditions that mean they have a higher risk of flu complications

For most cases, the flu vaccine is available through local GPs, Pharmacies, community health clinics and Aboriginal medical services. With major changes in place, check with official information channels regarding immunisation programs at schools and workplaces.

NATIONAL IMMUNISATION PROGRAM CONTACT DETAILS

-  1800 671 811
-  <https://bit.ly/health-gov-immunisation>
-  IDEAS ID: 57846

Information sourced from National Immunisation website.



Seniors Travel Card

In January 2020, a trial began for a new \$250 Regional Senior Travel Card. The prepaid card will let seniors in regional and remote areas buy fuel, use taxi services or book a NSW Trainlink fare, so as to ease the cost of travel. Each card is valid for 14 months from the date of issue. Eligible seniors can apply now, with cards distributed from mid-February 2020. It is a 2-year trial covering 2020 and 2021.

To be eligible for the trial a person must be:

- Aged over 66 years
- Receiving the Age Pension (you must have received the Age Pension for at least one month), or
- Receiving either a Service Pension, Disability Pension under the Veteran's Entitlements Act 1986 or a War Widow(er) Pension
- A Commonwealth Seniors Health Card holder (you must have held your card for at least one month), and
- Living in a designated regional area of NSW outside of Sydney, Newcastle and Wollongong.

The Service NSW website has a Register Now point to enable a person to receive an email or SMS text to see when they can apply for the trial. The Card will be pre-loaded with \$250 to pay for travel-related expenses over the phone, online and at retail outlets. It is a pre-paid, non-reloadable Visa card with a 4-digit PIN. It can be used Australia-wide, including in metropolitan areas and with interstate travel.

SERVICE NSW CONTACT DETAILS



13 77 88



www.service.nsw.gov.au



IDEAS ID: 6783

Information sourced from Service NSW website.

The Adventures of MIL & Me



Just to explain from the “get-go”, MIL stands for Mother-in-Law. Unlike other stereotypes, my MIL and I, get along exceedingly well.

It was the spring of 2017. My sister-in-law had just asked me if we would consider a cruise to Papua New Guinea (PNG) and the little-known Conflict Islands. Husband said no, MIL said yes, with gusto! Amazing due to her limited mobility. With medical issues, her desire to travel had been suppressed to the point of letting her passport expire. So began a learning curve regarding travel and disability.

The Conflict Islands are the remains of an ancient volcanic rim that has no permanent inhabitants. It is a state that is guarded vigorously by their current owners to preserve them. Permission was given to anchor in the deep water of the drop off and a floating jetty was in place to accommodate passengers on the days that visitors are invited. I give you this picture to demonstrate the logistics of negotiating our adventurous day.

MIL had chosen not to visit an island the previous day due to the need to manage steep stairs and use the tender (dinghy) boats to alight the cruise vessel. Soon after we awoke, MIL sadly told me that she didn't think she could manage the day. Reluctantly, I left her and joined the rest of our party. While I waited in the marshalling area, a man using a wheelchair joined our group. I asked him what day trip he was doing. He said that he was on the same trip as us so I ran to our room and told MIL that she should be alright. In a flash, she was ready to come with me, walking cane in hand.

Nervously we joined the rest of the group and agreed that if things got too rough we would opt out, but take it one step at a time. Well, the day was superb with each step an adventure in itself. Leaving the marshalling area, the steep stairs that we needed to descend seemed less than the previous day, as three attendants

guided MIL gently to her seat on the tender. Step one done. Next, from the tender to the jetty. Five robust men assisted her onto the jetty... the floating jetty. With flimsy railings it was not weight bearing and it was floating. MIL took a deep breath, gripped her cane and began. It was like a marathon for her to make the 50 – 70 metres without needing to sit, but she made it, to a seat, albeit a stump. Next, the beach and soft sand. Moving from stump to rock to seat, we got to the water's edge. A man nearby gathered some mates and they all but carried MIL to the waiting dingy. For the rest of us this meant wading through the water and climbing over the edge of the boat.



A 1.5km trip to the tour vessel followed, with a climb up to the top deck. By now, we had caught up to the fellow in the wheelchair and saw he was being helped. On the tour boat, more crew emerged to help MIL and our wheelchair-using friend. These people were some young PNG women and men who showed MIL respect and allowed her discreet dignity in alighting the boat and climbing the stairs. At no time was there any sense of danger, just carried over the obstacles without fuss and with dignity. No hoists, no lifts, just strong and caring arms.

MIL settled in with the other passengers and enjoyed a two-hour tour of this remote yet stunning place. Of course, we needed to do it all in reverse at the end of the tour, but MIL was curled up with a good book and resting comfortably by early afternoon. With a bit of recovery and soul revival, the story has been retold to extended family members for months to come. MIL had given up a little on her bucket list, so she'd surprised even herself. The adventure's success is due largely to the wonderful caring people from PNG who seem to wrap up their elders, and others who need care, without a second thought. It was a different attitude to people with disabilities and older people and a matter of course that they were genuinely included. I believe there is something we can learn from our neighbours in their non-first world country. Inclusiveness, respect and dignity for our elders and those less able.

Written by Kath Hetherington - IDEAS Lead Information Officer

1981

1981 WAS A TURNING POINT INTO THE HISTORY OF THE AUSTRALIAN AND INTERNATIONAL DISABILITY RIGHTS MOVEMENTS.



The regional Council of DPI applied for a grant program from the Federal Government **celebrating the international year of disabled people**, to develop a community directory of equipment suppliers available for people with disability in the Riverina. The project was based in Tumut, as the lead Project Officer, Jenny Stanzel lived there.

IDEAS was formed as an incorporated association. Based in Tumut, led by Jenny Stanzel. Project funds were gained in 1984 from the federal Health department to establish a national one stop shop for information for people with disability. **A new employee commenced – Sue Gorman.**

With two staff the organisation began collecting information about services and supports available for people with disability and housed it in a computerised database using Asksam as a database software.

Jenny Stanzel became well known as a strong advocate for people with disability and **represented people with disability on numerous committees and consultative bodies** through the 1980's retiring from the service in 1997. In **1998 Jenny was award an AM** for her services to people with disability.

In 1981, **disability became more than a diagnosis and something to be dealt with** by medical professionals. **People with disability became united** to overcome their social oppression as a group. **"Nothing About us without us"** was appropriated by people with disability in their activism.



Help at hand for Emily and Lachlan

The NDIS explained



1996

IDEAS goes online with its first website.

1988

IDEAS publishes newsletters.

1986

Disability rights advocacy was recognised as a programme area to be funded under the **Disability Services Act 1986.**

Since then, disability activism and advocacy began a sustained focus on several important cornerstones of **disability self-determination**; a general move away from institutional type services to community based services; the establishment of **'public advocates'** and **guardianship boards** in most states, the Disability Services Act 1986 (DSA) and the **Disability Discrimination Act 1992 (DDA).**

1997

Jenny Stanzel retires and **Diana Palmer** becomes the second Executive Officer.



Making culture accessible to everyone

DISCOVER THE WHICH AND THE WHO OF THE NDIS AND WHAT IT MEANS FOR YOU



“The current disability support system is underfunded, unfair, fragmented, and inefficient, and gives people with a disability little choice and no certainty of access to appropriate supports. There should be a new national scheme - the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) - that provides insurance cover for all Australians in the event of significant disability. Funding of the scheme should be a core function of government (just like Medicare).”

**IDEAS moves from
Asksam to the
LINGS Database;
updating the
website and giving
access to online
information
from the IDEAS
database.**



IDEAS merges with DIRC.

The **adoption and ratification** by the Australian Government of the **United Nations Convention for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD)**. By ratifying the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, Australia joined other countries in a global effort to **promote the equal and active participation of all people with disability**.

National Disability Strategy

“People with disabilities want to bring about a transformation of their lives. They want their human rights recognised and realised. They want the things that everyone else in the community takes for granted. They want somewhere to live, a job, better health care, a good education, a chance to enjoy the company of friends and family, to go to the footy and to go to the movies. They want the chance to participate meaningfully in the life of the community. And they are hopeful. They desire change and they want others in the community to share their vision. They recognise that governments cannot work in isolation and they want others to see the benefits of building more inclusive communities (Shut Out, 2009)”

Ideas flow at disability forum

Now at disability forum

2020

**Independent information
matters more than ever.**

NSW Inclusion Act.

IDEAS
becomes
a company
limited by
guarantee.

**National
Disability
Insurance
Scheme Act
2013 legislated.**

From Tumut Jenny's IDEAS network reaches the country's disabled



Royal Commission Update



The Royal Commission into Violence, Abuse, Neglect and Exploitation of People with Disability (**Disability Royal Commission**) and the Royal Commission into Aged Care Quality and Safety (**Aged Care Royal Commission**) have both suspended all hearings and workshops for the time being.

This is due to the evolving Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic and affects all hearings, face to face consultations and workshops scheduled until at least the end of May 2020. Consequently, the **Aged Care Royal Commission** public submissions deadlines has been extended to 30 June 2020.

AGED CARE ROYAL COMMISSION CONTACT DETAILS



1800 960 711



<https://agedcare.royalcommission.gov.au/>



IDEAS ID: 95383


The **Disability Royal Commission** has issued a Statement of Concern about the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on people with disability.

Emergency planning and responses of Australian governments should include a specific strategy to provide appropriate guidance, support and funding to meet the particular needs and requirements of people with disability.

Both Commissions have already conducted hearings on issues relating to the health system. The Disability Royal Commission held this public hearing in Sydney from 18 February to 28 February 2020.

The hearing looked specifically at the provision of health care or services for people with cognitive disability, including people with intellectual disability, autism and acquired brain injuries. The Commission found that health outcomes for this group were worse than for the general public. One of the main issues raised was clear communication between health providers and patients.

DISABILITY ROYAL COMMISSION CONTACT DETAILS

 1800 517 199

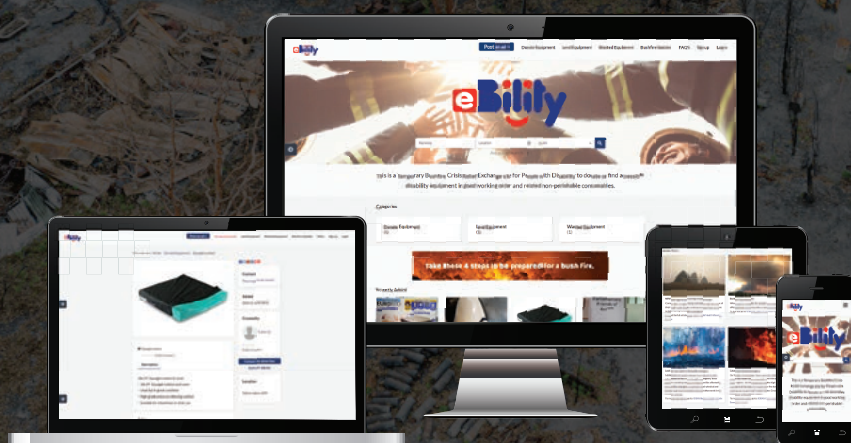
 www.disability.royalcommission.gov.au

 IDEAS ID: 95338



eBility Crisis Relief

Temporary Crisis Exchange for Australians with disabilities to donate or find accessible disability equipment and non-perishable consumables. Helping people connect and share resources in times of crisis.



ebility-crisis-help.ideas.org.au

Information Sharing as Market Stewardship in the NDIS report



In March, IDEAS launched the report 'Information Sharing as Market Stewardship in the NDIS' at the National Library in Canberra and we are pleased to be able to share this critical research with you.

Prepared by Associate Professor Gemma Carey and Eleanor Malbon from the University of New South Wales Centre for Social Impact, it examines the distinct role information provision plays in the NDIS market.

“

This report demonstrates how independent information services are already playing essential market stewardship functions within the NDIS.

”

As both state and federal governments grapple with ensuring the market can meet the needs of people with a disability, it is clear independent information services must exist if people are to have choice and control, and the market is responsive.

Our experience and expertise in providing information for people with disability and the broader community are also recognised, timely given that IDEAS is currently facing funding uncertainties as there is no guaranteed provision for our service to continue.

“

The loss of IDEAS as an organisation would leave a problematic and highly concerning gap in the system of market stewardship in the NDIS, leaving many NDIS participants with a lack of clarity of how the NDIS works and how to use it to meet their service needs.

”

The report tells us what our customers have been telling us for years - we simply need good information to be able to make choices.

IDEAS will be continuing the fight to make sure that people always have a friendly and experienced voice at the end of the line to make life easier.

If you value information, please email **info@ideas.org.au** and tell us why it matters to you.

You can download a copy of the report from **www.ideas.org.au** or contact our call centre and ask us to send you a copy.

DID you KNOW?



IDEAS is now open from

8AM - 8PM AEDT/AEST

Monday to Friday



Freecall: **1800 029 904**



Email: **info@ideas.org.au**



Livechat: **www.ideas.org.au**



Coronavirus

COVID-19 or SARS-CoV 2 (Coronavirus) is a new virus closely related to SARS (Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome) and is in the same family of viruses as MERS (Middle Eastern Respiratory Syndrome). Spreading worldwide the original outbreak was in Wuhan, Hubei Province in China, in December 2019.

Worldwide, there have been more than 2 million confirmed cases (this number is expected to rise), and many deaths reported. People with disability, the elderly and those with chronic health conditions are at greater risk than the rest of the population of dying from COVID-19.

The situation is changing rapidly, and it is important to stay informed. You can check our Coronavirus pandemic blog on our website for up to date info or call us for free on **1800 029 904**.

What are the symptoms?

The virus commonly causes fever and may cause coughing, sore throat and shortness of breath. Symptoms take 2-14 days to develop. People with disability, especially those with respiratory and lung conditions and older people are at higher risk of complications.

If you have symptoms you should call your doctor or call the National Coronavirus Helpline at **1800 020 080**. Do not go to your doctor's surgery or emergency department without calling ahead so that arrangements to isolate you from other patients can be made.

Practice good hygiene by covering your coughs and sneezes, and washing your hands thoroughly for at least 20 seconds with soap and water. You should wear a mask if you have one and avoid public transport and public places. There isn't a known treatment or vaccine for novel coronavirus just yet.

Social Distancing

Social distancing is one of the main ways to stop or slow the spread of infectious diseases. It means less contact between you and other people. Stay 1.5 m or two big steps away from other people and avoid social situations where possible. It means not shaking hands, not hugging or kissing or coming into close physical contact with people when you are out and about.



Social distancing also means limiting how often you are out and about. Schools, universities, businesses and other workplaces have put policies in place to help slow the spread of the COVID-19, including cancelling or postponing events where large numbers of people are in close contact.



Stop the Spread

The Australian Department of Health has launched a national campaign to help all Australians be informed and prepared for the coronavirus pandemic.

The campaign focus is on “Stop the Spread and Stay Healthy” and aims to reduce the risk to individuals and families by providing practical and straightforward steps to help prevent the spread of disease. The campaign consists of print ads, posters, TV ads and radio spots, which all aim to educate the general public on ways they can stop the spread and protect vulnerable people in the community, including older people and people with disability, from catching the COVID-19 Coronavirus Disease.

These resources are accessible and inclusive, including closed captions and Easy Read principles with illustrations to aid communication.

WHERE TO FIND THE RESOURCES

 www.health.gov.au

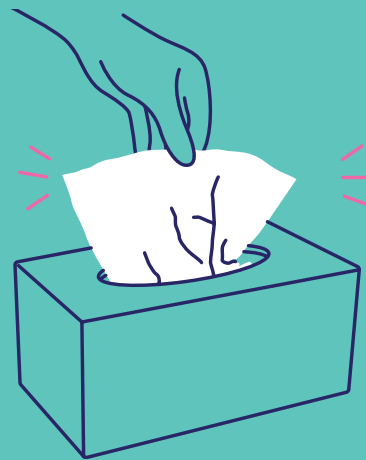
Information sourced from the Australian Department of Health website.

SIMPLE STEPS TO HELP STOP THE SPREAD.

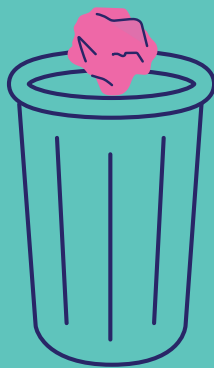
**Cough or sneeze
into your arm**



Use a tissue



Bin the tissue



Wash your hands



**TOGETHER WE CAN HELP STOP
THE SPREAD AND STAY HEALTHY.**

For more information about **Coronavirus
(COVID-19)** visit **health.gov.au**



Australian Government



Telehealth

What is it?

Telehealth means using telecommunication technology, including telephone and video calling, like Skype and FaceTime, to conduct bulk billed medical consultations remotely. This reduces the chance of spreading infection from sick patients to doctors, nurses and other medical professionals and subsequently to other patients.

How does it work?

Temporary Medicare Benefits Schedule (MBS) and Department of Veteran's Affairs (DVA) item numbers will allow GPs and other health professionals to be more flexible with patients who are at risk or unwell. The new MBS items enable people to access essential health services in their home while they are in self-isolation or quarantine. These Medicare item numbers will be in place for six months initially.

Who can access it?

People in isolation or quarantine for COVID-19 can see eligible health providers with these new telehealth items. Patients who have seen that provider (or another one at the same practice) at least once face-to-face in the last 12 months are eligible.

Telehealth services will be available to:

- People isolating themselves at home on the advice of a medical practitioner or following home isolation guidance
- People who meet the testing guidelines for COVID-19
- People over the age of 70
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people over the age of 50
- People with chronic health conditions or who are immunocompromised
- Parents with new babies and people who are pregnant

How to use it

Contact your GP doctor, mental health practitioner or midwife by phone, especially if you have cold or flu symptoms and explain your situation.

Information sourced from the Australian Department of Health website.



In This Together

In May-June we celebrate National Sorry Day on May 26 and National Reconciliation Week (NRW) from May 27 to June 3. NRW starts and ends by commemorating two significant milestones in the reconciliation journey – the Referendum (27 May 1967) acknowledging Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, and the High Court Mabo decision (3 June 1992), respectively.

This year marks the 20th year and this year's theme for NRW is "In This Together", which, considering the times we are living in, is particularly poignant.

National Sorry Day is held on 26 May each year to acknowledge and recognise members of the Stolen Generations. The Bringing Them Home report (tabled in Federal Parliament on 26 May 1997) recommended that a National Sorry Day be celebrated each year. It wasn't until 13 February 2008 that the Australian Prime Minister of the day, Kevin Rudd, made the Apology to Australia's Indigenous peoples.

Quaden's journey

Quaden Bayles is a young Indigenous boy with a visible disability. He is a person of short stature and was born with achondroplasia dwarfism. He is an advocate for Stand Tall 4 Dwarfism.

Earlier this year, Quaden's mum decided to make a live broadcast on social media showing his pain and suicide ideation after a bullying incident at school. The video went viral with more than 17 million views and was met with an outpouring of love and support for Quaden.

He should not have to carry this burden. His social and emotional well-being should be supported and nourished by his community.

Quaden has since been in contact with a resilience coach from the United States, who is helping him online to develop the skills and the mind frame he needs to combat his feelings of sadness and suicide ideation. Quaden's journey from his lowest point of desperation and depression to building resilience skills and self-empowerment has been a tremendous one.



The Big Picture

Bullying can be very hurtful and cause lots of pain. It can even lead to feeling suicidal. Indigenous people experience racism, and people with disability experience ableism everywhere they go. They are more likely to experience bullying and abuse too.

Suicide is the leading cause of death for young people and suicide rates are at least 2 and a half times higher for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples than the national average. School students with disabilities are also more likely to be bullied due to systemic ableism and a lack of disability awareness and education in the wider community.



Photo: Stand Tall 4 Dwarfism: Facebook

Systemic disability, cultural awareness and community engagement are needed to build a more accepting and inclusive society. We are “In This Together”.

Disability and appearance activist, Carly Findlay, spoke up to support Quaden in the aftermath of the viral video. Carly has a skin condition called Ichthyosis, which causes redness and dry skin. Carly regularly calls out people who exclude and bully her for the fact that she looks different.

In 2010, Carly wrote a very profound and candid blog post about bullying in response to media reports on the death of a young girl by suicide triggered by bullying.

A

“

It is heartbreaking to know that human beings have the power to make others feel so worthless to the point they take their own life.

”

She also describes her own experiences of bullying because of the way she looks.

“

I have been bullied throughout my life, mostly at school. I've never forgotten it. I would be called names, teased because of my appearance, I was once stabbed with a protractor in class, and I felt I never had many true friends through my school life. The worst thing I felt was the exclusion by other kids. I had no one to sit with at lunchtime – I would sit with another boy who was bullied and isolated or in the library alone.

”

You can read the full blog post on Carly's website.

 <http://carlyfindlay.com.au/2010/02/08/bullying/>

Bullying hurts

Bullying, name-calling and violence hurt. When they say “sticks and stones may break my bones, but words will never hurt me” it is a far cry from the truth.

It can be distressing to know that your child is being bullied. Stay calm and positive but allow your child a safe space to feel sad and hurt. It is okay not to feel okay, and the words and actions of others can hurt. Talk about and practice strategies for face to face or online bullying (known as cyberbullying) and report any bullying incidents to the school.

School principals, school counsellors and classroom teachers can help kids who have been bullied. It is important for kids to feel safe and have an adult they can trust and talk to if they experience bullying. Parents need to talk to their children about respect and kindness and to educate them about differences they will come across in their daily lives. Differences include disability, size, shape, skin, hair and eye colour, cultural, language and religious differences.



Bullying can happen online, in the workplace and community too. It is not just a “school-yard” problem. If you experience bullying in the workplace, you are protected by anti-bullying regulations under the Fair Work Act.

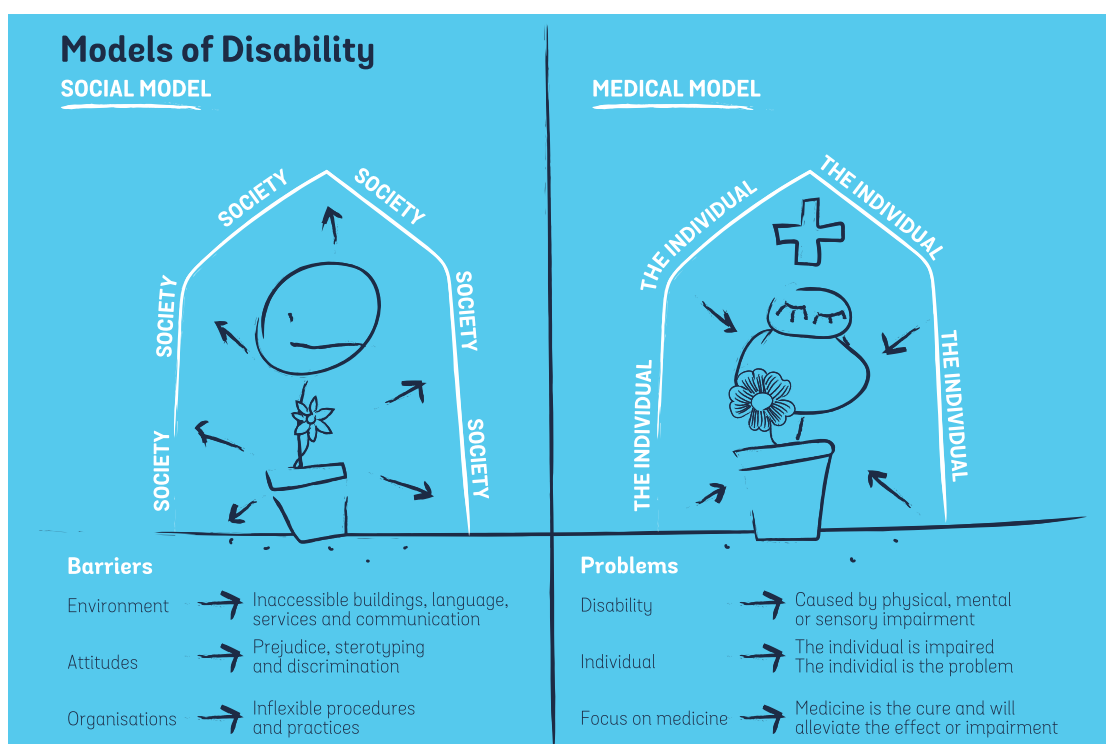
Information and resources are available. Please refer to the crisis services listed on the following page.

Ableism

Visible or discernible differences are a part of life. Everyone is different. People with a disability, however, can face barriers to access and inclusion due to their differences. Social barriers can be just as significant as physical or practical ones.

Over 20% of Australians have a disability, however, many of these disabilities are not visible. Ableism is a set of beliefs and practices which devalues and discriminates against people with physical, intellectual, sensory or psychosocial disabilities. Ableism relies on an understanding of disability where people with disability need to be ‘fixed’ in one way or another and is consistent with the medical model of disability.

The social model of disability, however, acknowledges that barriers to inclusion and access are external to people with disability and that social expectations and physical barriers to access and inclusion are what need to be addressed.





Racism. It Stops with Me

Racism comes in many forms. It happens in many places.

It can be easy to ignore it or think it's not worth the trouble to respond.

But that can just help make it acceptable.

All of us can say no to prejudice.

All of us can take a stand against discrimination.

Cheers turned to boos in the final years of AFL champion footballer Adam Goodes' career when he publicly called out racism. The Final Quarter is an impassioned documentary film which tracks Australia's heated response to Adam Goodes and was featured at the Sydney Film Festival in 2019.

Visit www.itstopswithme.humrights.gov.au for information and resources.

If this article has raised any issues for you, please talk to someone. You can contact Lifeline or Kids Helpline any time of day or night.

LIFELINE CONTACT DETAILS


 13 11 14 (24 hours 7 days)

 www.lifeline.org.au

 **IDEAS ID: 130**

Information sourced from Lifeline website.

KIDS HELPLINE CONTACT DETAILS


 1800 551 800 (24 hours 7 days)

 www.kidshelpline.com.au

 **IDEAS ID: 12313**

Information sourced from Kids Helpline website.

RECONCILIATION AUSTRALIA CONTACT DETAILS

 02 6153 4400

 www.reconciliation.org.au

 **IDEAS ID: 10765**

Information sourced from Reconciliation Australia website.



Power Blog: Touring with a Mobility Scooter



Like many older people, I have a mobility problem. I can walk, but only slowly and for limited distances. That means I miss out on many adventures when I am travelling and I'm limited to visiting places that are easily accessible by hire car or public transport. That rules out most gardens, history walks through towns and much exploring of cities.

After much badgering by my daughters and wife, I bought a Luggie Elite mobility scooter, powered by an electric motor and battery, for my recent visit to Norway and Scotland.

The scooter is designed to fold up into a compact shape and weighs only 25 kg. It can be carried easily in the boot of a car and best of all in the hold of an aircraft. There are several other makes of mobility scooters that do the same thing. Some actually fold themselves up at the press of a button.

Most airlines will carry mobility aids, such as electric wheelchairs and scooters free of charge, but impose conditions.

You can't just rock up at the check-in desk with a scooter. You have to get approval from the airline first. This can involve some serious negotiation. Generally, the battery has to be removed and carried in hand luggage and the airline has to know the weight and overall dimensions in advance.

Airport security tends to look askance at the batteries and it is best to carry written authorisation, especially when dealing with security staff who have limited English.

I found that ‘electric wheelchair’ was a better-understood description than ‘mobility scooter’, and ‘scooter’ sounds like a child’s toy.

My first overseas trip with my scooter went well. Qantas, Qatar and KLM all agreed to carry my scooter after some time spent getting to the right department for approval. Loading at Perth was no problem and the scooter arrived at Oslo along with me, my wife and other baggage. But then the fun began.

Oslo pavements have spoon drains, in which small scooter wheels stick, and often-excessive sideways slopes.

On my first tentative trip around the city, my scooter rolled over going around a corner leaving me holding on to a signpost to prevent me from falling into the gutter. I was stuck – unable to let go – when two kind Norwegians in a nearby café saw my predicament and hauled me back upright. “Takk, mange takk og tusen takk,” and I was on my way.

The following day I explored Oslo’s main shopping mall, the grounds of the royal palace and the Peace Museum, followed by a cross-fjord trip and long ride to the Viking Ship and the Kon Tiki museums, then back to my hotel for a recharge.

In Bergen, I was able to explore the city and even take it up Mount Fløyen overlooking the city on the funicular railway.

In Scotland, we carried the scooter in the boot of our hire car. This allowed me to take it out and explore towns, gardens and historical sites and to travel further afield in search of restaurants. I was even allowed to ride my buggy through a stately home and a church on one occasion.

I successfully negotiated a walk-through Loch Garten Osprey Centre’s pine forests at Nethy Bridge in spite of uneven ground and protruding roots, only falling off when I attempted to turn round on a soft sand patch and head back to the car park.

Frank exploring a pine forest at Nethy Bridge in the Strathspey area of the Scottish Highlands. Abernethy Forest is famous for its ospreys that visit every summer to breed, and the largest remaining remnant of the ancient Caledonian pine forest in Scotland.

The only disadvantage is that my mobility scooter tends to rush down slopes and cannot tackle very steep uphill slopes without my reluctant wife or a kindly bystander giving me a push. It also proved difficult to use in a crowded area without danger to other pedestrians. However, I did not run over anyone.

The other problem was the airline baggage handlers who clearly ignored the 'fragile' warning and broke off two scooter wheels and those of the carrier bag.

In spite of the hazards, I'm convinced that I won't leave Australia again without my mobility scooter. I'm uncertain if I will be able to travel as I get older and lose more of my limited mobility, so I'm seeing as much of the world as possible until then.

- By Frank Smith

About the Author

'I have always travelled, and still worked part-time at 79 to earn money to travel. As an intellectual exercise, I usually try to learn a little of the language spoken in the country I am to visit, although my command of Norwegian is very limited. I have been disabled since 2003, the result of stenosis damaging my spinal cord. I was determined not to let my disability get in the way or to prevent my wife from enjoying travel.'

Read more Power Blogs online, where we showcase people with disability using their **POWER** to overcome obstacles and their **VOICE** to tell their own stories and find their own way.

IDEAS POWER BLOGS

 www.ideas.org.au/stories/power-blog



Things To Do At Home



With Coronavirus restrictions in place, and people confined to home more than ever, we have some suggestions to help you pass the time.

For Adults and Teens

- Try to exercise and eat healthy.
- Avoid too much time “online”.
- Edit photos.
- Home maintenance or furniture restoration.
- Cook your way through a favourite recipe book.
- Play an instrument or listen to music.
- Crafts or Hobbies – now is a great time to learn a new skill how to knit, sketch, take photographs, build a scale model, sew a garment.
- Reading – audio-books, hard copy or downloadable.
- Netflix – time to binge-watch your favourite episodes on Netflix, Blue-ray or DVD.
- Spring cleaning early or decluttering - a draw, a wardrobe, bookshelves, DVD's.
- Night owl's with clear skies and low light pollution, can stargaze, watch for satellites, meteorites and constellations.

For Younger Children

The below ideas cover exercise and fun as well as learning. Children need a “brain break” too, so mix activities for this purpose.

- Colouring in or drawing.
- Playdough
- Board games, card games or puzzles. Use a mix of short and long games, quiet and noisy games, simple, and harder games.
- Build an indoor tent, fort or cubby.
- Teach a pet a new trick.
- Good old “dress-ups’ and play-acting.
- Boxes - The Biggest Cardboard ones you can find, let their imagination run wild.
- Crafting and painting
- Make paper bag puppets, sock puppets, characters made from toilet rolls, and create a play.
- An indoor treasure or scavenger hunt.
- Build with Lego, Duplo – have a tallest tower competition, or build a city.
- Simple cooking – younger children can decorate a pizza with precut ingredients, or icing and decorate biscuits. Older children can bake a cake or biscuits or learn an easy recipe (supervised).
- Get some fresh air, a walk, kick a ball, soak in the sun, grab a skipping rope.
- Look through printed photo albums together.
- Plant and nurture a herb garden.
- Tie-die a t-shirt.



This is an abbreviated version.

For more online ideas and activities to try out, visit www.ideas.org.au and see our Ideas Blog titled “Tips to get you through a staycation” Or call us to receive a hard copy posted to you.



Getting Out and About



The Mobility Parking Scheme (MPS) provides parking concessions to people with a mobility disability. If you're eligible, Transport for NSW will issue you a licence-style card called an MPS permit, which will include your photo and other security features.

There are two types of permits available:

- Individual (blue card) – issued for 5 years if you have a permanent disability
- Temporary (red card) – issued for up to six months if you have a temporary disability

When you apply for an MPS permit in NSW, you will also be issued with an Australian Disability Parking permit (a large purple card)

To get parking concessions both permits must be displayed.

Concessions are available for pensioners for the cost of an MPS permit.



For more information on Disability Parking Permits

Visit: <https://bit.ly/disability-parking-permits>

Or call us to receive a hard copy posted to you.

The National Public Toilet Map

The Toilet Map is a part of the National Continence Program and provides information on over 19,000 publicly available toilets in Australia. This includes accessibility, opening hours and facilities such as baby changing and showers.

The Toilet Map is available on mobile devices at www.toiletmap.gov.au and the official National Toilet Map App can be downloaded from the App Store or on Google Play.

MLAK

MLAK stands for Master Locksmiths' Association key. It is a master key that fits into specially designed locks allowing 24 hour a day access to public toilets. Eligible people – those with a disability and a letter of authorisation from a doctor, disability organisation, local council or community health centre – can purchase a key that opens all accessible toilets displaying the MLAK symbol.

MLAK CONTACT DETAILS

☎ 1800 810 698
 🌐 www.masterlocksmiths.com
 ⓘ IDEAS ID: 9171

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Poolpod Products



Originally, the Poolpod was developed for the London 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games. Across Australia, these unique submersible platform pool lifts are increasing in number.

Offering independence, dignified access, and eliminating poolside transfers, the Poolpod has been designed for any swimmer unable to use a pool ladder or steps. Allowing access by remaining standing, or using the custom-designed submersible wheelchair, this equipment allows safe access to the water. Control can be through a wristband, hands free operation, wireless remote control or on-board user controls, positioned for wheelchair and ambulant users.

Currently, across the eastern seaboard, Poolpods are available at:

- Palm Lake Resort Caloundra
- Beachmere Moreton Bay
- Palm Lake Resort Toowoomba
- Palm Lake Resort Cooroy-Noosa
- Palm Lake Resort Tea Gardens – Great Lakes
- Aquamoves Shepparton
- Gurri Wanyarra Wellbeing Centre- Bendigo
- Burnie Aquatic Center
- Bairnsdale Aquatic Centre
- Westbourne Grammar School
- Collingwood Leisure Centre
- Geelong Grammar School
- Harold Holt Swim Centre – Stonnington
- Ashburton Pool and Recreation Centre - Boroondara
- Hobart Aquatic Centre

POOLPOD PRODUCTS CONTACT DETAILS



+44 (0)1412 372 127



poolpod@corepdgroup.com



IDEAS ID: 95838



Book Review

After the Diagnosis: The Journey Beyond (2008) by Trish Robichaud, Jeff Cadwell & Sylvia McGrath.

The diagnosis of a chronic illness or a disability can really rock a person's sense of security and affect how they view their future, whether that is with their work, their family and friends, and certainly, with any long-term plans they may have.

After the Diagnosis: The Journey Beyond offers insight and support while being a guide through the different stages that are involved with learning you have a chronic illness or disability.

The chapters of this book cover the five areas of grief, denial, anger, bargaining, depression and acceptance. There is a section titled Research which suggests ways of gaining a sense of control and keeping informed, among other things. The Decision-making chapter includes prioritising, making lifetime decisions for your health. The chapter Support Networks discusses ideas for building a solid foundation and working together. Moving forward offers some thoughts on applying the knowledge you've gained, and building and planning your new journey.

“

As you conquer each step in the journey beyond diagnosis, you will gain confidence that you are adjusting to your new reality.

”

Available through Amazon and Book Depository, and as a digital version through Changing Paces.

TO WATCH A SUMMARY OF AFTER THE DIAGNOSIS: THE JOURNEY BEYOND

 https://youtu.be/Q8YWD_FRaY8



**IDEAS is proud to be
by people's side
helping them through
the coronavirus crisis**

**Disability Infoline
1800 029 904**

Text: 0458 296 602 - LiveChat: www.ideas.org.au

**Disability Information
Free, Accurate & Independent**

IDEAS is a free telephone information service for people with disability, their family, carers and other supporters.

Ask us the questions, we give you the answers and you make the decisions.

IDEAS accepts selected advertisements and articles for the Newsletter of IDEAS, although this does not provide an endorsement of these actual services or products. You should always consult with a health professional before making a decision based on your individual needs. IDEAS gratefully acknowledges funding from the NDIS, the Australian Government through the Home & Community Care Program & the New South Wales Government FACS (Families and Community Services Department).