

Act to include the handicapped

EQUALITY FOR ALL

ON 25 NOVEMBER, the Premier introduced into the New South Wales Parliament legislation which will significantly affect the lives of physically handicapped people.

This legislation will amend the New South Wales Anti-Discrimination Act to include physical impairment as a ground for discrimination. The Act, which at present outlaws discrimination on the grounds of sex, race and marital status, will make it illegal for people to be discriminated against on the grounds of their physical disability. It is expected that the amendments will be passed in the first Parliamentary session, 1981.

The Anti-Discrimination Board believes that this legislation will lead to a closer examination by the community of their attitudes and priorities towards people with physical disabilities. The amendments to the Anti-Discrimination Act will allow people to assert their rights in the areas of employment, accommodation, access to goods and services, access to public places and vehicles, government educational institutions and registered clubs.

The importance of legal rights

Many issues are of great importance to the independence of handicapped people, but few

are as fundamental as the need for legal rights. Without them the disabled are locked into a situation which denies them any real opportunity for individual autonomy. People with rights may make their own decisions and take control of their own destinies. People without rights must remain supplicant and subordinate.

Discrimination has been defined as a denial of equal opportunity based on prejudice. Prejudice is an adverse judgment formed irrationally or without full knowledge of the facts. It is grounded in myths and stereotypes which bear no relationship to reality but which can work to deny an individual access to opportunities available to others.

The Anti-Discrimination Board's report *Discrimination and Physical Handicap* defines a handicapped person as 'one who as a result of a physical impairment, together with community attitudes and the physical environment is substantially limited in the opportunity to enjoy a full and active life'.

The Board quite deliberately included as important aspects of the definition physical environment and community attitudes. The difficulty many handicapped people have faced in gaining access to equal opportunity lies in the lack of awareness on the part of the community as to the needs, and indeed the

very existence, of people who are handicapped.

Separated

How many of us are aware that 10 percent of the population, or half a million people in New South Wales alone suffer a chronic limiting condition? We are shielded from this awareness by schooling which segregates the handicapped, by institutions which conceal the immobile, by buildings which exclude those in wheelchairs, by lack of curiosity about where the elderly are, and by the invisibility of one of the most common disabilities – deafness.

Because the physically disabled are separated from the rest of the community a vicious circle sets in: the community does not have contact with the disabled, so they are not included in its planning; particularly architectural planning. A person in a wheelchair, when confronted by such barriers as a flight of stairs or unsuitable toilet facilities does not need a sign saying 'Keep Out', to know they are not wanted. Proposed legislation to amend Building Regulations (Ordinance 70) to allow the physically handicapped access to new public use buildings is currently before the Government. Hopefully, this legislation will be passed before the end of 1981.

The affect of having legislation will enable people with handicaps to insist on their rights in employment, in housing and accommodation, in education, and in the provision of goods and all important services.

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IYDP: There's money to spend . . .



Official symbol for IYDP

EVERYONE MUST be aware that this year is the International Year of Disabled Persons.

This issue of *Incite* is an attempt to cover some aspects of IYDP. If you know of any projects which are happening, or should be happening, in your area please let us know as we hope to cover news about IYDP throughout the year.

The planning for Australia's participation in IYDP began in 1976 following a resolution passed at the General Assembly of the United Nations. The National Advisory Council for

the Handicapped (NACH) and the Standing Interdepartmental Committee on Rehabilitation (SIDCOR) have been working since then to encourage government bodies and voluntary organisations, private enterprise, etc to participate in special activities for the Year which will be of on-going benefit to disabled people.

The Federal Government awarded \$400,000 towards the Year – this has been divided between the states and territories. In addition, various state governments have contributed. For instance, the New South Wales State Government allocated \$750,000 to the Minister for Youth and Community Services 'to promote the aims and observance of the IYDP throughout the State', and the Queensland government has contributed \$100,000.

You don't need to be a mathematical wizard to see there's a fair bit of money to be spent this year. If you have a project in mind which would help disabled people, but need funds to get it off the ground, get in touch with the IYDP committee in your state.

There's a national IYDP Unit (Canberra) and a National Committee of Non-Government Organisations (NCNGO). Each state and territory has an IYDP Secretariat and a NCNGO member. A list of contacts appears elsewhere this issue.

. . . but don't hold your breath

PLANS TO PRODUCE a library resource kit for distribution to all Victorian libraries have bogged down – mainly due to slowness of allocation of funds from the IYDP State Committee.

The resource kit has been devised by a sub-committee from the LAA Victorian Branch, and will contain display material, bibliographies, checklists for library access and function for disabled users, guidelines for librarians on how to encourage use of libraries by disabled people, and contacts for information on resources in appropriate formats.

Plans to distribute the kit to all Victorian public and school libraries are now awaiting a possible ministerial decision in mid-May, although the first submission for funding was made in December.

The group producing the kit feels strongly that the effectiveness of the kit will be jeopardised by this time lag, and this feeling has been reinforced by constant enquiries to individual members of the sub-committee for display and informational material on IYDP for use in libraries.

Project MIND . . . a column on Meeting the Information Needs of the Disabled

Short courses on visual impairment and rehabilitation

Several courses are offered at the national Guide Dog and Mobility Training Centre, Chandler Highway, Kew, Vic, during 1981. The purpose of the courses is the development of practical skills and basic knowledge in dealing with visual impairment. Participants include professionals in health, education, welfare, and three who may in the course of their work encounter persons with visual impairment.

Each course is designed according to the interests of those attending as far as is possible, and includes:

- i dynamics of rehabilitation;
- ii attitudes of disability;
- iii use of community resources;
- iv practical sessions covering activities of daily living techniques for guiding a visually impaired person, orientation skills, etc.

The courses are subsidised by the Australian government, and cost \$20 per person exclusive of travel and accommodation. Dates of courses: 27 April to 8 May; 10 to 21 June; 10 to 21 August; 26 October to 6 Nov.

For details contact Jean Taylor, NGD & MTC, Kew (03) 860 4444 or Royal Guide Dogs for the Blind in your state.

Automated circulation system for special libraries

The division of the USA Library of Congress charged with the responsibility of servicing the disabled, the National Library Service for the Blind and Physically Handicapped, has awarded a contract to study the automated circulation systems being used or about to be used in 40 per cent of the 56 regional special libraries in USA. The purpose of the contract is to prepare a handbook for use by librarians and data processing specialists in designing new systems or evaluating operational systems. Interested people may contact the main parties: Allen Deschere, National Library Service, Taylor St NW, Washington DC; or Judith Wanger, Cuadra Assocs, 1523 Sixth St, Santa Monica, 90401.

DISCRIMINATION

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Beyond '81

It is appropriate that this legislation should occur in this the International Year of the Disabled Person: but it is more important that its effects will extend beyond 1981, and be incorporated into the mainstream of community life.

People who feel their rights have been infringed under the Anti-Discrimination Act can complain to the Counsellor for Equal Opportunity. The Counsellor has the power to investigate the complaint and attempt to reach a conciliation which is acceptable to the person complaining and the person or company complained about. All this is done in confidence and costs nothing. Some cases are not conciliated, and when that happens, the Counsellor can refer the matter to the Anti-Discrimination Board for an inquiry. The Board has the authority to issue orders, and award damages up to \$20,000.

The Counsellor for Equal Opportunity and the Anti-Discrimination Board are located on the 11th Floor, CAGA Centre, 8 Bent Street, Sydney, telephone (02) 231 1655.

Suzanne Jobson

Member, NSW Anti-Discrimination Board

Posters and publicity kits

Have you obtained your kit on IYDP yet? Wall posters, bumper stickers, brochures, newsletters and brochures publicising the 1981 IYDP have been printed and are available from the various IYDP offices in each state. A list of IYDP offices appears elsewhere this issue.

WAIT is quick to move

Western Australia Institute of Technology's Dept of Library and Information Science has shown an initiative by running a professional development course entitled 'A Library and Information Service for Disabled People' in a late afternoon time slot for several weeks, ending on 25 March. Perhaps you'd like to know what topics they covered and whether they can share some ideas. Write or call Jenny Woodroffe, course co-ordinator, at WAIT, South Bentley, 6102 (09) 350 7700.

Seminar for year of the disabled

Following a recommendation by the National Advisory Committee on Library Services for the Handicapped, the National Library of Australia is organising a second National Consultative Seminar entitled *Library services for the handicapped*. The seminar will be held at University House, Canberra, from 18-20 May 1981. For details of the seminar contact Clifford Law, NLA (062) 62 1251.

The initial consultative seminar was held in Canberra, 1978. Copies of the 1978 papers are available from the Sales Unit, National Library of Australia, 2600 (ISBN 0 642 99142 1) at \$5.75 each.

MIND in Queensland

Much has been happening in Queensland. Barrie O'Connor has been instrumental in listing MIND in a new publication put out by the Advisory Council for Special Education in Queensland – the *Services Directory: Children and Youth with Special Needs in Education Health and Welfare* (pilot edition, Oct 1980).

Six institutions with MIND panels met in October. Ideas suggested at that meeting will be of interest to readers who are endeavouring to improve facilities:

- (i) the use of free internal phones to cut down on unnecessary travel;
- (ii) publications of a booklet (or tape) informing disabled people of the things available to them on campus;
- (iii) the formation of a student aid group to facilitate recordings of lectures, articles, notes. Able bodied students enlisted to help disabled students;
- (iv) establishment of an accessible common-room on campus with accessible couches, chairs and tables with refreshment facilities. Storage space for heavy bags and books;
- (v) an information centre on the campus to not only inform but also prepare students for problems likely to be met;
- (vi) co-ordination and discussion between institutions to share gathered information.

Contributions to this column should be sent to Lloyd Junor, Lecturer in Media Studies, Department of Librarianship, Melbourne State College, 757 Swanston St, Carlton, 3053. Phone: (03) 341 8111. (MIND column no8).

AACOBS/LAA DOMSAT COMMITTEE

IN ORDER to adequately represent the interests of the library and information sector to the Satellite Project Office established by the Federal Government to develop Australia's Domestic Satellite, and to any other government or commercial interests who may become involved, AACOBS and the LAA have jointly established a National Consultative Committee for Libraries and Information Services.

Its Terms of Reference are:

- 1 Examine proposals both by government and by other interests for the operation of communication satellites in order to identify any elements in such proposals which may prove either beneficial or detrimental to the interests of library and information services, or to the users of such services.
- 2 Identify those needs of library and information services, or the users of such services for which the provision of communication services by satellite may be appropriate.
- 3 Make representations, as appropriate, to government or other bodies on behalf of the library and information service community.
- 4 Give regard to both technical matters concerning specific satellite proposals, and more general policy issues concerning the ownership, management and provision of services by organisations authorised to operate communication satellites.
- 5 Report annually to AACOBS and the Library Association of Australia.

Its initial membership, appointed until 31 December, 1982 is: Mr C.F. Cayless (Librarian, QIT), Mr R.F. Doust (State Librarian, State Library of NSW), Dr B.T. England (Science Advisor, Executive Office, CSIRO), Mrs L. Jones (Divisional Librarian: Systems Development, The Library Board of WA), Mrs R.H. McLauchlan (Research Librarian, CBC, NSW), Mr W.D. Richardson

(University Librarian, University of Melbourne). Mr Cayless is the Convener of this Committee.

As it is anticipated that the Committee will become the principal channel of two way dialogue between the library and information services sector and the DOMSAT Project, both members and divisions of the Association are invited to relay any matters of concern, information or advice to the Committee c/o Mr C.F. Cayless, Convener, DOMSAT National Consultative Committee for Libraries and Information Services, c/o Queensland Institute of Technology Library, PO Box 426, North Quay, Qld, 4000.

W.D. Richardson
LAA Past President

LAA 22

THE Steering Committee invites any person interested in giving a paper at the 22nd Biennial Conference, to be held in Adelaide, 22-26 August 1982, to submit abstracts of no more than 500 words on the topic of their choice for consideration by the Program Committee.

Intending speakers should keep in mind the Conference theme *Challenge and Response*, and the four major topics of the Conference: 'Libraries in a time of economic crisis', 'Networking', 'New technologies' and 'Libraries and the community'.

Abstracts should be sent by 20 April to Mr G.A. Stafford, Program Committee, LAA 22, GPO Box 742, Adelaide 5001.