

## BLITS E-Newsletter October 2010

### *Message from the Chair*



Welcome to the latest edition of the BLITS E-news.

On behalf of the board of BLITS I am delighted to congratulate the nominees, the category winners and the overall winner of the 2010 Chief Minister's Inclusion Awards. Special thanks to the sponsors of the awards who make this important award program possible. Please read on for an appropriate tribute to award winners and recognition of our valued sponsors.

Once again the ACT Chief Minister's Award program attracted a large field of worthy award nominations. It is clearly evident that the number of businesses and organisations delivering a range of new opportunities for people with disabilities is growing. The end result of these contributions is an incremental increase of the presence and participation of people with disabilities in all aspects of our community. While on the whole there remains much opportunity for improvement, these nominees and category winners provide clear examples to all businesses of what can be achieved by actively including and engaging with people with disabilities.

Thank you again to the Chair of Judges, Craig Wallace and all the members of judging team who had the difficult task of comparing the excellent range of submissions and selecting this year's winners.

**Lois Ford**

Chair

ACT BLITS

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### *ACT Chief Minister's Inclusion Awards Sponsors*

#### ***Award Principal Partners***

***MAXimusSolutions Australia and Drake Medox***

#### ***Award Major Partners***

***ActewAGL - Koomarri - Department of Disability Housing and Community Services***

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### *2010 ACT Chief Minister's Inclusion Awards*

#### ***Chief Minister's Award for Excellence (Overall Winner):***

Winner: **Cafe Ink**



Photo: L to R: Master of Ceremonies - 'Effie', Principal Partner of Maximus Solutions - John Gaudry, Matthew Gallagher - Manager, Cafe Ink, National Manager Drake Medox - Scott Mullaly and Mary Porter AM, MLA

Café Ink is a social enterprise, established by Woden Community Service with the support and assistance of Social Ventures Australia through the ACT Social Enterprise Hub.

Café Ink was established to provide employment and training opportunities to people who have been excluded from the labour market due to an enduring disability or other circumstance that has limited their ability to engage in the work force.

Cafe Ink also provides an impressive example of inclusion woven through the business model in a highly competitive service industry in a busy cafe precinct.

As well as the overall winner of the night, Cafe Ink also won the Inclusion in Small Business category.

### ***Inclusion in Medium/Large Business***

Winner: **Aspen Medical**



Photo - L to R: Master of Ceremonies - 'Effie', Senior Manager, Aspen Medical - Helen Graham, accepting the award on behalf of CEO Glenn Keys and National Manager Drake Medox - Scott Mullaly.

Aspen Medical is an Australian based company, headquartered in Canberra, with broad expertise and extensive experience in the delivery of healthcare solutions in complex environments.

Aspen's whole of business focus on disability is a rounded one which includes sponsorship and support of a range of disability and national sporting organisations; provision of personnel and equipment to support disability organisations; provision of staff to support disability organisation events, engagement with work experience programmes for people with disabilities and the employment of people with disabilities.

Aspen supports over 300 athletes with disabilities to realise their sporting goals ambitions, nationally and internationally as well as over 100 coaches and team managers to provide professional sporting assistance.

### ***Inclusion in an ACT Government or Agency***

Winner: **ANU College of Business and Economics**



Photo: L to R: Master of Ceremonies - 'Effie', Human Resource Manager, ANU College of Business and Economics - Julie Veitch and National Manager Drake Medox - Scott Mullaly

The ANU College of Business and Economics has developed an innovative, lasting and well supported program to ensure ongoing training and employment for people with disabilities. Establishing a cafe in 2003 to provide products for the 4,000 students and 450 staff members on campus the College was determined to use this opportunity to build a sense of community, break down social barriers for employees and provide meaningful training and employment opportunities for people with a disability.

Seven years on, the café remains an integral part of College life. Every morning staff from across 5 building precincts, gather to enjoy not only the services provided by the trained barista's, but also their generous friendship and their company.

### ***Inclusion in a Commonwealth Government Department***

Winner: **Property Services - Department of Health and Aging**



Photo: L to R: Master of Ceremonies - 'Effie', Commonwealth

Department of Health and Aging - Stephen Oxford and Joint Principal Partner of Maximus Solutions - John Gaudry

Property Services in the Department of Health and Aging have decided to drive initiatives that are providing ongoing full time employment for people with disabilities including through created positions tailored to ensure a good job match. The approach is integrated and offers an example for other Departments to follow in terms of scale and innovation. The Department has also made some efforts to ensure the integration of people with disabilities within the workforce. The Departments efforts have been framed within triple bottom line context and also an increase in overall productivity.

### ***Inclusion in Education and Training***

Winner: **National Gallery of Australia**

In 2007 the National Gallery of Australia committed to design, develop and implement a range of educational and access based programs to ensure the art experience is available to all, including people with mobility, sensory or sight and other disabilities. This extensive range of programs has been offered both at the Gallery and outside the ACT as part of touring exhibitions and events. The level of direct support and commitment to these programs as well as the determination to see them continually improve and evolve above and beyond the minimum requirements. In addition to this focus through its education programs, The Gallery has also supported inclusion multiple fronts including through tailored programs and a focus on overcoming significant structural barriers to improve access to people with a range of disabilities.

Commendation: **Merici College**



Photo - L to R: Master of Ceremonies -

'Effie' and Antoinette Proseri of Merici College.

In 2009 the Merici College initiated a relationship with Black Mountain School where student leaders formed relationships with students who were of similar age but who had a range of disabilities. This continuing program sees over 40 students visiting Black Mountain School over two semesters and building relationship with the students of that school. The positive results of this program illustrate real impact on all the students participating and those close to them.

### ***Inclusion in Sports***

Winner: **Fit-Ability - Tandem Cycling Program**



Photo - L to R: Master of Ceremonies - 'Effie',

Sharon Sobey, Lauren Brand of Fit-Ability, Julia Dalbo and Head of Retail, ActewAGL - Ayesha Razzaq

FIT-Ability provides visually impaired people access to cycling with a sighted rider at the front of a tandem bicycle. The visually impaired rider can enjoy the combination of undertaking a physical activity while extending their social network through a social

and competitive sporting activity normally out of reach. Tandem riding is offered to people with other disabilities that might prevent them from riding alone such as those with autism, amputees, and intellectual disabilities.

Fit-Ability facilitates participation either through enabling them to ride in FIT-Ability cycling events with a trained partner, or by training a carer or family member to be their tandem partner, and by providing a short term loan of a tandem bike until they can acquire their own.

Cyclists with disabilities who partner with cyclists without disabilities participate equally in riding in mainstream cycling activities.

A sporting activity outside the reach of many people with disabilities, Fit-ability provides complete inclusion to people with disabilities interested in cycling or expanding their sporting experience while opening door to a myriad of related social activities and networks.

## ***Inclusion in Sports***

Commendation: **Kings Swim School**

Kings Swim School is a mainstream facility which has chosen a solid integration model to ensure people with disabilities have full access to all teaching and training programs. Kings swim school do not run segregated swimming lessons for children/adults with a disability, rather the expectation is that staff, children and families are supported to include children/adults with a disability to swim within the typical program. A range of initiatives ensure access to facilities, events and all manner of swimming enjoyment is available.

In addition to this mainstream focus through its general service offer, Kings Macgregor has hosted some targeted disability specific programs to lift participation, including a come and try day for swimmers with a disability which will become an annual event for the ACT with Kings providing the facilities free of charge. Kings also provides an aqua-aerobics program designed to cater for adults with a disability.

## ***Inclusion in the Arts***

Winner: **Belconnen Community Centre**



Photo - L to R: Master of Ceremonies - 'Effie',

Manager Belconnen Community Centre Mental Health Unit - Sally Paterson, General Manager Canberra FM Radio - Eoghan O'Byrne, Kate Wells, Sybille Kodac and Leane Rumble

Belconnen Community Services' Open Art Program runs inclusive art classes for people experiencing mental health issues or dual diagnosis or disabilities. Classes provide a hands-on art experience in a friendly supportive environment where social interaction and creativity go hand in hand.

Classes range from Djembe (African) drumming, to drawing and painting, sculpture, digital photography and film making, mosaics, pottery, printmaking, poetry and short story writing and drop-in art classes. The Open Art program also has an Outreach Programs are run by an art therapist using music, drama and visual art in small groups and on a one to one basis as a therapeutic tool to assist isolated people at various locations in Canberra.

Innovative partnerships with other organisations and Gallery's provide exhibition and workshop experiences and access. In 2010 the BCC mounted a film festival surrounding the theme of 'Recovery and Hope' with many participants seeing their film on screen at the Dendy Cinemas.

### ***Inclusion in Hospitality Business***

Winner: **National Convention Centre Canberra**



Photo - L to R: Master of Ceremonies - 'Effie', Manager

National Convention Centre - Cindy Young, BLITS Executive Officer - Frank Crews

The National Convention Centre is committed to an expanding program of inclusion of people with disabilities. The Centre has come a long way in a short time to build the support and profile of disability within its business and has also chosen to make disability a focus in its corporate social responsibility profile across a range of fronts.

Commitments include a focus on access, including in ways above minimum requirements, well developed employment policies, support for disabilities and Arts organisations and the provision of exhibition spaces for artists with disabilities.

### ***The Margaret Spalding Award for an Individual***

Winner: **Mirinda Lawrence**



Photo - L to R: Master of Ceremonies - 'Effie', Mirinda

Lawrence receiving the award from CEO of Koomarri - Miranda Garnett

Mirinda developed a unique business opportunity for her son, Ronnie, who has multiple disabilities. With Ronnie, she is the founder of Ronnie's Succulent Snails, a social enterprise established to breed and grow snails for the restaurant market.

Mirinda's dynamism and advocacy go well beyond this innovative social enterprise and her family. Over the past 12 months, Mirinda Lawrence has been responsible for the Christian Blind Mission launch of Luke 14 and the coordination of Luke 14 in Canberra, providing work experience and small business development through Shaw Possibilities and touring Australian states providing motivational talks focussing on how to expanding opportunities for people with disabilities. She has assisted the committee for the International Day of People with Disabilities; provided a driving force for 'Disability Sunday' and developed a skill transfer program delivering the skills and knowledge of ACT retirees benefiting people with disabilities and their carers. Mirinda is working closely with the ACT Social Enterprise Hub to assist in establishing a micro business incubator to provide hands-on support for people with a disability in the ACT region.