



## *Disabled in Norwood Payneham and St Peters*

*Newsletter 8 - October 2013*

### **ISSUES AND OPPORTUNITIES PAPER**

PurpleOrange, the organisation charged by Council to develop the new Access and Inclusion Plan, presented a report to Council staff in September. This will be the basis to develop the actual plan.

I am told it will be several weeks before that plan will be available for public consultation.

I found the report to be generally positive, but I expect that we will need to keep working to ensure that the actual plan includes the detail necessary to ensure the situation for the disabled in the community improves.

For example, the report calls for more effective consultation with respect to matters such as assistance with rubbish bins and hard waste. This is something I have been chasing unsuccessfully for years, but perhaps this will change now. It was interesting to read a news report that indicated that many “elderly” people had been injured and required hospitalisation after falling while trying to put out their bins.

I have brought that information about potential injuries to the attention of council.

### **THOSE PESKY FOOTPATHS**

In August I reported that “a draft policy on the use of Council footpaths for Business Merchandising Purposes is currently being prepared and is expected to be presented in September according to the minutes of the July meeting.”

From the Agenda of the October Council meeting, this has now moved out to December.

The issue of footpaths is one which seems to exist as a separate entity, but has also formed part of PurpleOrange’s report. They note the problems many have with obstructed footpaths such as those on The Parade, but also the difficulties with lumps and bumps in footpaths of side streets.

It is noted that Council owns approx. 337 km of footpaths, and to expect them to know where all those lumps and bumps are is a bit much. It is also our responsibility to report footpaths which need repair. On the couple of occasions I have done this, I have received a prompt response.

### **COUNCIL WEB PAGE**

In late July, Council’s new web page was placed on line. I know some of you do not have computers, but this is one of Council’s major ways of communicating with the community.

For some with disabilities, using a computer is a major problem: users may be blind or visually-impaired, they may be colour-blind, they may have physical difficulties that mean they have to use the keyboard and not the mouse. In using the internet they may be limited by reading difficulties or problems reading English. They may have a hearing loss.

Some of these issues can be addressed by “assistive technologies” such as screen readers.

But the major need is for the person who is constructing a web page to code it in such a way that these technologies work for the user.

Unfortunately, while the new Council web page is more visually attractive, it fails to meet the standards for web accessibility.

Council staff have been helpful in providing me with information and making some minor corrections and improvements. The page, however, will, in my opinion, need a major overhaul, probably requiring external services. I have prepared a reasonably extensive report and will be approaching Councillors shortly in an attempt to get something moving on this.

We have the support of the Norwood Residents Association and the Royal Society for the Blind in this and the potential for assistance for Council from the RSB.

One of the issues which is constantly on my mind with respect to the web page is the fact that the disabled are the people least likely to have computers and to be on line. It is important for Council to bear this in mind and perhaps install computers in Council facilities for access by the community, together with the empathetic assistance needed for their use. Other effective means of communication must also be found in formats accessible by the disabled e.g. large print, audio, etc.

### **ESSENTIALLY ECONOMIC?**

A Melbourne firm, Essential Economics, recently presented a report to the Norwood Parade Precinct Committee for a retail strategy for The Parade.

It was noticeable that in the MTA (main trade area) they estimate that the annual per capita expenditure is \$161/ week on food, \$126 on non-food items such as goods and apparel, and \$14 on services such as beauty salons.

The direction of a retail strategy towards people who can afford to spend these amounts on food and other goods suggests to me the strategy is in no way directed towards disabled and ageing residents.

It also mentions maintaining the role where it will “meet the more traditional needs of surrounding residents”.

In my view they have not seen that the area has already lost much of its traditional charm and no longer meets the needs of residents in supplying the necessities of daily living as it did just a few years ago.

The emphasis on attracting “well-heeled” visitors, with the proliferation of “fashion” and cafes, is slowly shutting out the ordinary resident. The difficulties of using the footpaths, and simply of getting into shops up steps or through clogged shop aisles, etc., is a limiting factor on what the disabled might spend on The Parade. Can’t get in, don’t buy.

Attempts to bring these facts to the attention of the Norwood Parade Precinct Committee and Essential Economics have failed.

### **BUYING A MOBILITY SCOOTER**

If you know someone intending to get a scooter, please advise them to visit the Independent Living Centre, 11 Blacks Rd, Gilles Plains. Ph: 8266 5260. They can provide professional independent advice and allow you to try out a variety of scooters before purchasing from a retailer.

If the person needs assistance in riding confidently and safely, please contact me as I am happy to provide an hour or two of training (free). There are no known “official” courses in SA, but what I do is similar to courses developed for NSW and ACT by the NRMA and associates.

[users.adam.com.au/marcia/DisabilityNPSP.html](http://users.adam.com.au/marcia/DisabilityNPSP.html)  
or  
Google DisabilityNPSP  
Ph: 8362 5526  
or [marcia@adam.com.au](mailto:marcia@adam.com.au)