

Dear Members of Parliament and the Media

I would be very pleased if you could look into these thoughts and issues with extreme interest.

This is for the benefit of the most vulnerable people in our communities. We need your kind assistance.

### **DISABLED ISSUES IN WESTERN AUSTRALIA AND THE NATION**

**Seniors Card Discounts** - No retail discounts exist for the disabled or their carers. Some companies are ignoring calls to speak to me about the financial disadvantages facing the disabled. I do not think they understand that anyone over the age of 60 is entitled to a Seniors Card, no matter their financial status.

Many disabled people have never worked and may never have built up a nest egg for their senior years, they are stressed physically and mentally on top of the financial burden.

I have promoted to these companies to provide the disabled the same discounts as seniors. Spoken to Baci Cafe, Gelare, Open Eye Bookshop, Brumby's, Ace Cinemas, Greater Union, Astor Cinema, Muffin Break, J.T's Hairdressing Belmont, Croissant Express, Subway, Chicken Treat, Atrium Management, Pancakes at Carillion, Aroma Cafe Belmont, Pure & Natural, Miss Maud, Red Rooster, Wendy's, Hoyts, Atrium Hotel, Westfield, MYO, Zucchini Bros. (some of these companies have shown a desire to help)

**The WA government has done nothing and still will not answer my letters on this matter.**

**Insurance, Legal System and Unhealthy Products** - The insurance industry, lawyers and harmful industries are making vast sums of money from the misery and suffering of injured workers, the sick and the disabled.

I believe that harmful industries, such as tobacco, liquor, chemicals, the drug industry and harmful food additives, should have to provide more education campaigns and funds to support people with health problems caused by the most harmful of the world's industries, so as to free up more money to aid those in our community who have a sickness or disability through no fault of their own.

**Disability Symposium** - Now over 4 months old and no significant changes. The Chairman, Mr Barry McKinnon even made jokes at my expense when I stated that I was willing to give my time freely as an Ambassador to offer assistance to the disabled. I was not even respected when I stated Perth could

become a role model for the rest of the nation to follow, on the treatment of the disabled.

**United Nations** - Human rights are not being adequately addressed. Access Housing for myself (once again the WA Department of Housing and Works, Access Loans Manager, Mike Goode, is making it difficult for me to obtain a Housing loan for the disabled, even when the issue has been mentioned to the Premier), earnings and financial capability is being destroyed, harassment of the disabled in Acrod bays by members of the public and security staff (twice I have been harassed at Burswood Resort) and the Equal Opportunity Commission and the Federal Human Rights Commission has done nothing about it.

**THIS IS A LIST OF SOME EXCERPTS FROM THE UNITED NATIONS DOCUMENT:**

**STANDARD RULES FOR THE EQUALIZATION OF OPPORTUNITIES FOR PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES:**

**1. PRECONDITIONS FOR EQUAL PARTICIPATION**

**Rule 1. Awareness Raising**

States should take action to raise awareness in society about persons with disabilities, their rights, their needs, their potential and their contribution.

1. States should ensure that responsible authorities distribute up to date information on available programmes and services to persons with disabilities, their families, and professionals in the field and the general public. Information to persons with disabilities should be presented in accessible form.

**Centrelink and the ATO conveniently miss informing disabled people of what they are entitled to. I am looking at taking Centrelink to the SSAT again and both my matters will probably end up in court or at the UN.**

2. States should initiate and support information campaigns concerning persons with disabilities and disability policies, conveying the message that persons with disabilities are citizens with the same rights and obligations as others, thus justifying measures to remove all obstacles to full participation.

**Acrod and the government have never taken concerns over disabled parking harassment seriously.**

3. States should encourage the portrayal of disabled persons with disabilities by the mass media in a positive way; organizations of persons with disabilities should be consulted on this matter.

4. States should ensure that public education programmes reflect in all their aspects the principle of full participation and equality.

6. States should encourage enterprises in the private sector to include disability issues in all aspects of their activity.

**With our weak building codes and bad customer service to begin with, the disabled do not stand a chance.**

7. States should initiate and promote programmes aimed at raising the level of awareness of persons with disabilities concerning their rights and potential. Increased self reliance and empowerment will assist persons with disabilities to take advantage of the opportunities available to them.

9. Awareness raising should be part of the education of all children and should be a component of teacher training courses and training of all professionals.

**This section is of concern because of the stories I have received about children with non-visible disabilities being intimidated and forced to do physical education by teachers.**

#### Rule 4. Support Services

States should ensure the development and supply of support services, including assistance devices for persons with disabilities, to assist them to increase their level of independence in their daily living and to exercise their rights.

4. States should recognise that all persons with disabilities who need assistance devices should have access to them as appropriate, including financial accessibility. This may mean that assistance devices and equipment should be provided free of charge or at such a low price that persons with disabilities or their families can afford to buy them.

**If this is the case, then why are there so many charity drives and people stating that they are finding it difficult to be given assistance devices?**

## 2. TARGET AREAS FOR EQUAL PARTICIPATION

#### Rule 5. Accessibility

States should recognise the overall importance of accessibility in the process of the equalization of opportunities in all spheres of our society. For persons with disabilities of any kind, States should (a) introduce programmes of action to make the physical environment accessible: (b) undertake measures to provide access to information and communication.

(a) Access to the physical environment

1. States should initiate measures to remove the obstacles to participation in the physical environment. Such measures should be to develop standards and guidelines and to consider enacting legislation to ensure accessibility to various areas in society, such as housing, buildings, public transport services and other means of transportation, streets and other outdoor environments.

**As far as I can see, our governments at the local, state and federal level have all failed. This is evident in the building codes for residential buildings, renovation of older buildings, damaged footpaths, railings missing on steps and stairs, dangerous obstacles and new developments not including the disabled in the entire design process.**

3. IMPLEMENTATION MEASURES

Rule 13. Information and Research

States should assume the ultimate responsibility for the collection and dissemination of information on the living conditions of persons with disabilities and promote comprehensive research on all aspects, including obstacles that affect the lives of persons with disabilities.

**With the stories I have heard about the Third World living conditions of the disabled and the elderly, it would make your skin crawl. Poverty is the biggest problem.**

Rule 14. Policy Making and Planning

States will ensure that disability aspects are included in all relevant policy making and national planning.

3. The needs and concerns of persons with disabilities should be incorporated into general development plans and not to be treated separately.

4. The ultimate responsibility of States for the situation of persons with disabilities does not relieve others of their responsibility. Anyone in charge of services, activities or the provision of information in society should be encouraged to accept responsibility for making such programmes available to persons with disabilities.

Rule 15. Legislation

States have a responsibility to create the legal bases for measures to achieve the objectives of full participation and equality for persons with disabilities.

2. Legislative action may be needed to remove conditions that may adversely affect the lives of persons with disabilities, including harassment and victimization. Any discriminatory provisions against persons with disabilities must be eliminated. National legislation should provide for appropriate sanctions in case of violations of the principles of non- discrimination.

**So far, our state and federal governments, as well as organizations, such as Acrod are not bothering to do a great deal about harassment by businesses and members of the public towards the disabled community. I have complained many times to the Equal Opportunity Commission and every time the business wins and does not even have to write me an apology. The Federal Human Rights Commission is not very helpful either.**

#### Rule 16. Economic Policies

States have the financial responsibility for national programmes and measures to create equal opportunities for persons with disabilities.

3. States should consider the use of economic measures (loans, tax exemptions, earmarked grants, special funds, and so on) to stimulate and support equal participation by persons with disabilities in society.

**There is a little of this around, with tax exemptions not mentioned by the ATO or Centrelink, unless you find out by chance. Centrelink always takes their little pound of flesh. They never let DSP pensioners get ahead, even a little bit.**

#### Rule 21. Technical and Economic Development

States, both industrialized and developing, have the responsibility to cooperate in and take measures for the improvement of the living conditions of persons with disabilities in developing countries.

**This will never happen as long as Centrelink is taking money off you on gross amounts earned every time you earn a little extra, paying GST and taxes on wages, when officers in minsters offices keep saying were better than other countries, applications for housing made to hard and confusing and the disabled ignored when they write to the Premier or the P.M. regarding problems they are having in their community.**

**Disabled Symbol** - This symbol is antiquated and long past its used by date. Ignorance of the disabled community has well proven this. We need a refreshing change that indicates all disabled, including the mentally ill, invisible disabilities, wheelchair bound, blind, etc.

**Universal Access** - Poor in almost all areas of our society. Retail businesses should be enforced to provide buzzers for the disabled to receive assistance. Building codes, in this developed country, are a joke.

**Acrod** - Disabled parking passes should be handled by the government and free. Acrod makes a large sum of money every year. The disabled should not have to pay for the right to shop and park. Acrod has not adequately helped the disabled when they stated that people were harassing them in disabled bays, when the perpetrator did not believe they were disabled. The model in some US states, has the disabled symbol on the registration plate of the vehicle. Not enough parking in the metropolitan area and the City of Perth is the only council that charges the disabled to park.

I park illegally in the City of Perth and I always encourage the disabled community to follow my example. How dare they take money from the most financially disadvantaged and unhealthiest people in our communities who can not always use public transport, while other councils do not charge a thing.

**DSC** - Waste of taxpayers money. It confuses the disabled with too much information that is not helpful to individuals with unique situations. Plush buildings all over the metro area. Latest observations show that there were no disabled people working in this office.

**Politicians** - As an example: The Hon. Bob Kucera had an advertisement in the Community Newspaper for the International Day of Disabled Persons, ensuring people that they can get quality support and access to services from his office. His office never even returned my call. This is not good enough when you are dealing with the Minister of Health. Others, including the Premier, have been very slow in responding to the plight of the disabled, their families and carers.

The Hon. Tom Stephens, The Hon. Judy Edwards and even The Hon. Sheila Mchale, Minister in charge of Disabled Services have not been helpful with my Access Housing problem at all.

The Lord Mayor Dr. Nattrass told me at a recent meeting, that he was unaware that the disabled are struggling financially. Is he for real. With these sorts of ignorant representatives it is know wonder why the disabled are struggling with educating the public.

A lot of people are extremely angry and guess what, we vote, so those who will not get behind this large group and their families, look out.

**Building Codes** - Residential buildings of a certain height do not have to provide lifts. This means that the disabled can not live where they like and cannot visit friends or family that reside in these places. Large companies that have older buildings before the new codes came in should have to make new additions and all businesses should have to provide ramps and rails to all steps and stairs, at least.

The department that handles these queries never even responded to my email for further information.

**Disabled Groups and Charities** - Splintered all over the place and in opposition towards each other. A waste of resources and money. The government or the Lotteries Commission could provide a building for these groups to have an office. There are too many egos at work in these organizations and I believe that our governments have a moral obligation to stop it.

**Centrelink** - Disability pensioners should be entitled to a full pension with casual earnings too help build a nest egg, free or significantly reduced medication and aids, tax breaks and concessions. This agency does not allow people, who can work a little, build a nest egg, without taking their pound of flesh.

No email address to send in earnings, to cut postage and travel costs, paying out costs to run a home office and a vehicle and not being entitled to claim back losses at the same time that Centrelink cuts my pension on my gross earnings then I pay tax on top of it. Centrelink deceives people and does not give the correct information to all people. Twice I have had to have an Authorized Review, over Centrelink trying to con me out of entitlements. I lost the first case at the Social Security Appeals Tribunal and now I intend to go through the Administrative Appeals Tribunal again.

Centrelink stole almost \$10,000 off me for 3 motor vehicle accidents I never even caused and decide to rip me off when I get a payout for having a bad back on top of my other disability.

Forget about me saving lives on those days for my quick driving actions, I should be treated like garbage, just like the rest of us are.

“Any frontal attack on ignorance is bound to fail, because the masses are always ready to defend their most precious possession - their ignorance” - Hendrik Willem van Loon, Dutch-American journalist and lecturer (1882-1944).

Thankyou for taking the time to read these concepts and the issues facing the disabled community in Australia.

Please contact me at anytime for more information on .....  
Kind regards

Troy Ellis

Human, Disabled & Consumer Rights Campaigner

Young Achiever of the Year Finalist WA 1994 - Environment Category

Young Australian of the Year Awards 1997 - Outstanding Achiever/Career Achievement