

# Shane Kelly

- ▶ Hi. I am Shane Kelly. I was born with Cerebral Palsy, because of an accident at birth. This has affected all my limbs, and my speech, but not my intellectual capability.



- ▶ If somebody didn't know me they might think I have a perfect life, but this is far from the truth.
- ▶ I live with six other people with different degrees of disabilities in a Community Residential Unit run by a large non profit organization. I enjoy living there, but it's not like other people my age living in the community, holding down employment and living in a loving situation.

- Employment is something that many people with disabilities strive for, because they want to be like everyone else in the community. I do have some occasional casual employment. I am a disability educator with Scope, a large organization in Victoria. This gives me the opportunity to share my experiences as a person with a significant disability and hopefully people will understand that I am no different to them.

# Sport, Life and Work

- ▶ I enjoy going out to dinner, and socializing with friends. I like being independent, and going out by myself.
- ▶ I have held a number of jobs, as well as positions on various boards and advisory committees, and have been a long time campaigner, for the rights of people with disabilities.



# Accepting Assistance

- Over the years, I have come to accept that I need the physical assistance from other people. But that doesn't come with them telling me what to do, or how to live my life. One of the frustrations when I was younger was the lack of technology available to enable me to communicate. Here is an example of what it is like, when people do not understand you.



# Life Before Technology

- ▶ Before I had my computer, I found myself in the city, with a wheelchair on the verge of a flat battery.
- ▶ My chair was getting slower and slower, and I wasn't going to make home on the train.
- ▶ After wondering what to do, I made it to the taxi rank, hoping to get a driver to call a wheelchair taxi.





# When No-One Understands

- ▶ I tried unsuccessfully for two and a half hours. Most people ignored me, others put money on the tray of my wheelchair, and the rest didn't understand me.



- ▶ Eventually I got a policeman to phone my home number and he actually asked them if I had escaped! When I finally got home I had twenty six dollars on my tray. I didn't want money. I wanted people to try to understand.

# Computers and Communication

- ▶ The advances in communication technology have been great for me.
- ▶ I am using a computer to write to you today. I control it with a single switch using my left foot and use a special type of software

This computer enables me to overcome my biggest challenge, not being able to talk. It needs constant repairs, and without it, I'm back where I was 20 years ago.





# "Just Another Bloke"

- ▶ I would like you to remember that I am no different to you.
- ▶ I want to be treated with as much respect as you would anyone else. I know that I have a disability, but I see myself as just another bloke.
- ▶ Now I'd like to tell you what I think should happen with a new DCASS.



- ▶ One of biggest problems with the present system around disability is the insufficient funding of all aspects life for people with disabilities.
- ▶ For an example, often a person with a disability doesn't have any real say in what circumstances they live in. This could lead problems between people later, because it's only for so long that you can put up with this lack of choice.

- ▶ The system has many aspects that work against people with disabilities and their wants and needs as members of the community. For instance when a person with needs a new bit of equipment that they rely on daily basis, such as a wheelchair or a computer for communication, it often takes time to get fixed this adds another layer of frustration to our lives.
- ▶ In my life, this means not being able communicate effectively because I have no computer, or not being able to get around independently because my wheelchair has broken down, this is another huge problem to overcome.

- ▶ The disability system does try to cater for people and their needs but it doesn't have enough money. This leads to many people with disabilities leading sub standard lives. In my circumstance, more money would mean I would live in the community without worrying about my carer's hours, or my equipment breaking down and it taking for ever to get fixed, and I would lead a more fulfilling life and become a happier person.

- ▶ A system that meets everyone's real needs and expectations is well over due. It should be able to give people with disabilities the opportunity to choose the life style they desire, instead of having to conform to the system's directions.
- ▶ If a scheme like this comes about, people with disabilities should be involved in all aspects of starting it up and in every issue along the way and manage it themselves wherever possible.



- ▶ In my world this would mean I would have a say in decisions such as where I live, who supports me, and when, where and how I would use my own carers to assist me. I would be just another member of the community, which is all I want in life.
- ▶ People with disability should have the same life style as able bodied people in the community, and that's what the system needs to provide for.