

[Typed by the Commission from the hand-written original]

To Disability Care and Support Inquiry
Productivity Commission
GPO Box 1428
Canberra City ACT 2601

From Lynette-Kay Wood (disabled artist), WA

☺My visions and aspirations are as follows:-

*Because "Skywest Airlines" allow disabled passengers to use their Companion Card to enable stress-free travel, perhaps other airlines could follow their example!

*As a follow-up from this I envisage a team of able-bodied people, trained especially as teams qualified (first aid - carers certificates etc) on emergency standby at all times to assist and be of service! Imagine if you will, what great job opportunities this entails! It could grow in becoming not only nationwide in Australia – but with overseas prospects as well, an unique service delivery.

☺ This idea came about from one of my friends (in W.A.). When, having to travel by air to Melbourne in her wheel-chair to a funeral had to fork out \$2000.00 to do so (for one weekend) hiring a carer to accompany her. I was shocked! Hence the ideal job idea! as expressed above.

*I enclose two of my poems. One is about access (I have overlooked plans in the past for two buildings in W.A. being the Performing Art Centre in Mandurah and also the Maritime Museum situated on the waterfront of Fremantle W.A. Both my inspections had the "back-to-the-drawing board" effect for corrections to the access (for aged and frail persons and those with disabilities also). Such simple corrections that should be standard throughout Australia for any new buildings pending. Note, some wheelchairs are huge to be catered for!

*Also another poem, regarding living with a disability. I was born with congenital dislocated hips. I've had nine years (all told) years of hospitalisation for corrective surgery via Sir Alexander Gillies. He last operated on me (an osteotomy was conducted then). He was 75 years young, at that time, in the 1960's. A brilliant surgeon! My daughter was born and put into a splint at 10 weeks of age) and by the time she was 18 months old, was due for an operation for dislocated hips that were worse than mine (and Sir Alex said I was his worst case in the southern hemisphere) – He had operated on me, at first when I was two years of age). X-rays, however proved a great miracle had taken place (via a church who prayed over my baby). Sir Alex showed us her X-rays where he said "She can come out of her splint! I do not have to operate! I know God's handiwork when I see it. Always remind her that she was healed by God". (Well, I've seen her dancing on T.V. she is very active). Her own baby was unfortunately born with a 'clicky-hip' and I witnessed her baby splints removed at 3 months old. She is a grown woman granddaughter now (We hope it has "died out" in our family now). I myself "walk" with the aid of two walking sticks. I have a wheelchair for long distances and have to sit in it at restaurants owing to the scoliosis of now my spine. The cartilage in my right foot has gone, so every step is agony. But as you will see from my poem, I'm happy! I do not take pain killers – despite everyday I am in pain. I'm an artist – which in fact lifts me from the pain when I get engrossed in it. (I've won many art awards). I represented Australia in the Abilympics 2000 in Prague (where 800 disabled persons from 33 countries took part). Another winning award was as the winner of a painting internationally and the Republic of China put me up in a 5 star Taiwan hotel for a week, all expenses paid (including airfares). I won the Gold award of Art Idol '07, a few years ago, too! My disability has caused deterioration somewhat, these last few years, but, I keep-on keeping-on somehow! (I've been the founder of four clubs now for people with disabilities). Some of them are now government funded and two have been growing since 1991 and 1992. I've enjoyed being a consultant for the Government Department of Culture and the Arts, now-a-days I'm writing my life story (at many people's requests) and also getting on with my art. (I'm illustrating my own storybook

for children – part of the proceeds will go to children's hospitals when it's eventually finished). I have a life! – Despite living with a disability. People need to know it's possible to make the most of what your circumstances are!!! And to make the best of what you've got!!!

*I would like all the services to drop their boundaries in a win/win situation where they can share with other services without losing their own identity. There should be a main Hub concept data-base where a person can be helped entirely (instead of being turned away, fobbed off and forgotten – and therefore slipped through the cracks and LOST).

The appropriate service help must be located to assist people through this Hub database idea system. i.e. There should be a continuance of help when parents (who cared for their offspring) die, for instance. Their child – often grown now needs the support and care of about 20 people who can take it in turns for the daily contact required (like the system Canada has in ACTION). Discovering of the types of disability is imperative and it should be noted how, for instance, the deterioration with age also occurs (like in my case). A database would also be inclusive of mentoring programmes – job sharing – skills workshops – NOT SEPARATE BUT INCLUSIVE of able-bodied folk who (although of retired age, are still useful to pass on skills!). Our senses of TRIBE have diminished, over the years, where all inclusive ages together take part in gatherings for social enjoyment, as well. A “celebration of life” is very necessary in song and in dance and festival mode. A balance of entertainment is very important emotionally for us all to realise that laughter is a great tonic to uplift all people's spirits!

The hub concept idea like the spokes of a wheel that meet at the hub – could have many spokes representing various services as well as the aspects of life. Everything could be achievable when the integration of services cooperate fully so any new person approaching is registered, surmised and slotted into the right, appropriate assistance to meet their current...and progressing or changing follow-up needs, catered for. Updates are most imperative... for people to move between services – each case will be protected from being lost when tracked fully at the Hub data-base.

A person's interest in learning to cook as a job – (even job-share) or, to only personally look after his/her personal nutrition survival needs, could be put into a programme where chef instruction is available. Retired chefs also can be a mentor/coach. In fact a win/win situation can be here run, for restaurants to put in requisitions, for say, a hundred desserts to be made, via such cooking programmes and could be picked up when done! A sense of achievement is imperative to well-being and this is only one “spoke” programme idea.

Individual service providers could be part of the Hub concept. i.e. there is a church in W.A. who have allowed the community access to their wood-working workshop/shed. They are most willing to be involved in “the Hub concept”.

Another lot of ideas; I envisage, to prevent further people ending up disabled (via car accidents) are.... to attend (prior to receiving their car licence) either a paraplegic ward visit to talk to disabled persons or to attend a talk by disabled persons direct – or, to have year twelve youngsters introduced to these disabled persons (who visit schools in an ‘awareness programme’ to help educate them before they become learner drivers. Also, defensive driving should be part of their course, so how to control sudden situations positively in negative moments (like the car wheels caught in a skid) taught how to correctly handle the vehicle before their licence received, would surely lower the road death tolls, and catastrophic injuries. Prevention is the best cure!

Q: What lessons are there for observing overseas national disability schemes?

A: Germany allows their youth to choose between Army service.... OR spend that same time as an assistant/carer to a disabled person in their community. (Compulsory service).

*Workforce Issues:-

I feel all workers should have a mock-up stint of being a patient to know exactly, for example, the discomfort of a bladder nearly bursting (for so long) the wait of a pan, for instance. The

feeling also of being a number. No chance to rest or sleep from noisy outside garden crew loud noise equipment running full bore. Noise control should be a must! Hospitals should respect a person's need for peace. I've spent nine years, all told, in hospitals and know a novice nurse is often more gentle and caring than a bossy overdecorated (with medals from an intense career in nursing) who cares only for their own importance and efficiency. Sincere dedication to the care and feeling of a patient's dignity are a must! It would be good if the mock-up week's duration, as a "patient", would indeed teach patience and tolerance and understanding, to be on the receiving end.

(To only be put into a wheelchair for one day would be enough duration of experience!).

☺ Should the seeds (ideas) sown here finally bear fruition, or not, it has been a load off my chest to share them as input to the solutions that may balance out to bring about an inclusion – bonding nation where separateness or indifference become unknown as our sense of togetherness... of tribe, flourishes.

Lynette-Kay Wood

'DO YOU SEE ME?'
by Lynette-Kay Wood

I live my life so fully,
It's perfect in every way.
Yet I live with a disability,
I cope with it everyday.
To live this life, it's expensive,
On nerves and emotions, I'll agree
And costly too, in much to pay.
Like services and equipment,
Comes not easy on the purse.
You're helped more if
Deformed via an accident,
Than from one's very birth.

It takes its toll, it's real.
There's no rehearsal here.
So when others in society,
With stare or common talk
Comment of your difficulties,
Like the funny way you walk,
They deem they are the lucky ones,
Far better off than you.
But you only notice, then,
You are different, when,
They, with their reminders,
Come filtering through.
Your joys of your life's
Achievements, and the
Struggles you've conquered too.
And how happily each day,
Comes with new promises for you.

For with a jolt you're, by them
Reminded, that the life,
You live your way,
Is not readily accepted,
By those others in life's fray.
They have eyes but cannot see,
That the vision that I've chosen for me,
Is different entirely.
I'm a woman getting on
With a happy life,
Sure we all have difficulties.
There is laughter, tears and strife.

If you look for faults and dread,
You'll ever find them,
Best be beauty-finders instead.
I'm the lucky one really,
For my friends see me
As a precious gem, they've said.
It's not the hand you are dealt
In the game of life,
Buy the way you of it, cope and deal.
You play the game your own way
And get on with your life,
Too busy to be side-tracked,
With those reminders of surmises,
That others, who don't know, may feel.

Like they said I'm a cripple,
Then they decided to change all that
To my being handicapped,
Til that then became old hat.
The longest label has been disabled,
But it, all along, has been just me.
The latest title, I'm physically challenged,
Has never appealed you see.
Yes, I may be a woman living
With a disability,
But there are other ways to define
A person, like their talents,
And their capabilities.

A cut diamond has many facets
That flash and sparkle in the sun.
It's the entire presentation,
Collectively,
Why just select and
Focus on only one?

They fancy I'm a disabled woman
But hardly ever see the real me.
There really is a difference,
From those others opinions,
Expressed to me.
I'm a woman living with
A disability,
Seen only by those – truly
With eyes that clearly see.

I live my life so fully,
It's perfect in every way.
The aspect of it I'm born with,
I deem as only 10%,
Despite how others may see me,
All crippled and all bent.
I don't let it ever diminish
Who I am,
Or get in my way.
I live my life so fully,
I cherish every day.

**“BUILDING A NEW REPUTATION ...
AWAY FROM NO ACCESS”**

by Lynette-Kay Wood

Who are they who have responded,
To the cry DO LET US IN?
With hearts that have heard, and matched
With actions, to begin,
To re-construct and to correct
Such absurd hurt from NO ACCESS
With intense fervour to rectify
And aptly, they reply,
We hear your plight,
We will put things right,
So you too will have the way.
You will assured be,
Of your freedom to enter,
Come what may.

How little of importance,
That you have ever felt,
Along with indignation,
And frustration always too.
These will – hopefully diminish,
From such past hurts
We put you through.
Where you endured such
Sorrows previously,
When forced to turn away.
But know you well you're
Counted and welcomed,
In value this day.
Yes, wanted of your
Presence too,
You'll, no more, feel dismay.

Put to rest all past humiliation,
Feeling you're excluded in any way.
For whatever condition or difficulty
Life presents itself you are in,
We bow our heads in reflection
We were, once, in mode
Of discrimination,
To banish the likes of you,
From entering our premises
Of business and abode.
Forgive us our ignorance
We did not have a clue.

We rallied round your importance
And took heed of your need,
Showing, by example to others,
That we hope, too, will
Follow-up of our lead.
We fully respect the differences,
Of all who approach our front door.
We value of your patronage,
And will do so forever more.

We are they who have responded
To the cry DO LET US IN.
On us you ever can depend.
We've felt so strongly
In recollection, of how
We'd wanted to make amends.
We realize far more – now
Than the bricks and mortar,
And cost of the reconstructions
That we, in the end
Did greatly extend.

Far reaching beyond
What we had built
Came the foundations
Of another sort.

The very pricelessness
Of the true value
That real understanding ... yes,
And compassion
Has brought.