In this Disability Education and Employment News, we have information on the “History of Intellectual Disability” workshop, the Victorian event “Understanding Learning Disabilities and Inclusive Technology” and the Westpac graduate on-line application is now open.

Plus further information on other Resources, Conferences and Workshops, News articles and other information for the Disability Education, Training and Employment Sectors.

Please distribute the Newsletter to those that you think would be interested in it.

For information on subscribing, please go to the end of the newsletter.

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**Education News:**

**Gillard chalks a career path from cradle to grave**

Heath Gilmore and Jano Gibson

March 6, 2009

THE Federal Government is taking greater control of vocational training as part of its overhaul of higher education. In the second of three speeches addressing the Bradley review of higher education, the Minister for Education, Julia Gillard, announced that the Government would remove barriers between university and vocational education to allow cradle-to-grave learning.

Workers being retrained would move seamlessly between university and vocational education to drive the national economic recovery, she said. Campuses providing side-by-side education systems would be encouraged.

Ms Gillard said a new body, the Australian Qualifications Framework Council, would build links between university and vocational training sectors. It would expand the role of Skills Australia and improve TAFE retention rates.

For the rest of the article go to
Student loses part of $80,000 payout

Miki Perkins
March 5, 2009

THE State Government has successfully appealed against some aspects of a court decision that awarded a year 11 student with disabilities more than $80,000 in compensation.

But the primary finding of discrimination against 17-year-old Rebekah Turner remains.

It is the latest step in a four-year legal battle in which the Victorian Civil and Administrative Tribunal ruled that the Department of Education had discriminated against Ms Turner by failing to provide classroom help for her.

Anti-discrimination advocates say it could pave the way for similar cases.

Ms Turner has a severe language disorder and a learning disability and suffered from depression. She applied for a teaching aide and other classroom assistance in 1999 but never received it.


Gillard planning to raise the bar a degree higher

Heath Gilmore and Yuko Narushima
March 5, 2009

JULIA GILLARD has unveiled the biggest overhaul of higher education in 20 years in an effort to encourage an extra 300,000 people to attend university by 2025.

In the first of three speeches yesterday, the Minister for Education said an urgent and revolutionary investment in knowledge and skills was necessary for the prosperity of individuals and the nation, but warned Australia was losing ground because national participation and attainment in higher education was too low.

The cost of Ms Gillard's plan will not be outlined until the budget in May, and the scope of its ambition has been lowered by the global economic downturn.

Ms Gillard's primary goal is an additional 300,000 people starting university and about 200,000 graduates by 2025. She wants 40 per cent of all people aged 25 to 34 to hold a bachelor's degree or higher. This buys the Government an extra five years from the recommendations of Professor Denise Bradley's review of higher education.


Trades face 'class' divide

Caroline Milburn
March 2, 2009

MIDDLE-CLASS teenagers will continue to shun trades and other industry-based courses unless Australia radically alters how it provides such education, according to one of Australia's leading job-training educators.

About 14 per cent of senior secondary students are doing mainly industry-based training as their final-year certificate.

The vocational subjects offer training and apprenticeships in a wide range of industries, including hospitality, agriculture, food processing, community services, retail, automotive, business and information technology.

Schools and TAFEs provide most of the training, which is viewed by governments as a way to help overcome Australia's skills shortages.

But Stephen Lamb says the Rudd Government's recent initiatives to improve vocational training in schools overlook deep flaws in the scheme's structure.

"In Australia, if a student only does VET subjects (vocational education and training) they're not qualified to go to university - so it's been viewed by middle-class families as second-class and something to be avoided," Dr Lamb says.

For the rest of the article go to http://www.theage.com.au/national/trades-face-class-divide-20090227-8k4v.html?page=-1

New row over student unionism
February 24, 2009
A new row has broken out over student unionism, with the opposition accusing the government of breaking an election promise by imposing a $250 fee on students.

"It's a return to the bad old days of effective compulsory student unionism," opposition youth spokeswoman Sophie Mirabella told parliament on Tuesday.

The opposition will vote against the government's measure in what's shaping as a mirror-image battle of 2005 when the Howard government, in the face of fierce Labor opposition, forced voluntary student unionism through parliament.

When introducing the new legislation on February 11, Youth Minister Kate Ellis said it was not a return to compulsory student unionism.

Ms Ellis said it would allow universities to charge students up to $250 a year to improve vital student services, which were stripped of $170 million by the Howard government.

She said the bill also introduced national student representation and advocacy protocols to ensure students could participate in university government.


HSC audit finds special exams fair
The New South Wales Government has welcomed two independent reports which has found the Higher School Certificate's special examination provisions are appropriate and objective.

The provisions, such as extra reading time and larger font size, are there to assist students with special needs such as Asperger's syndrome or diabetes.

The reports looked at the procedures of the provisions, as well as assessing a random sample of applications to test whether Board of Studies benchmarks were being applied consistently.

It found there was no evidence of any one school or schooling system being treated differently than the others.

For the rest of the article go to http://www.abc.net.au/news/stories/2009/02/21/2497668.htm

Poverty focus a failure for education
Justine Ferrari, Education writer | February 18, 2009

Article from: The Australian

THE federal Government's focus on social disadvantage to improve students' education is misguided, a leading education researcher argues.

Instead, funding should be directed at low-performing students, the Australian Council for Educational Research's Steve Dinham said.

With the Government handing over more than $1 billion to schools with low socio-economic status, the biggest leveller in education was a quality teacher in every classroom, he said.

Asked if the Government's investment in socially disadvantaged schools was a waste of money, Professor Dinham said socio-economic status (SES) was a "red herring" and the funds should be put into "low-performing schools and low-performing students".

"Across the SES spectrum, there are low-performing kids in all schools," he said. Professor Dinham - ACER research director in teaching, learning and leadership - said low socio-economic status was often used as an excuse to dumb down curriculum. Many teachers wrongly believed that students' backgrounds determined their potential at school.

"There are too many fads, fashions and ideologies in education - postmodernist claptrap, things like learning styles and categorising students in various ways," he said.

For the rest of the article go to http://www.theaustralian.news.com.au/story/0,25197,25071146-2702,00.html

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Welfare News:
Unis slow to open doors to the poor
THE Group of Eight research universities are tough institutions for disadvantaged students to get into, but they are not, according to a surprising new study, the toughest of the lot: that dubious honour goes to the University of Canberra.

A report on student equity in higher education, by Griffith University researcher Leesa Wheelahan, found only 3.8 per cent of Canberra's students were of low socio-economic status.

The report, for the University of South Australia's new National Centre for Student Equity in Higher Education, found the Australian National University, an elite research institution, did marginally better, with 4 per cent of its students from the lowest socio-economic group.

After Canberra and the ANU, the worst commitment to equity was registered by Sydney's Macquarie University, with only 6.1 per cent of students from low socio-economic backgrounds.

For the rest of the article go to http://www.theaustralian.news.com.au/story/0,25197,25124606-601,00.html

Official calls for disabled care levy
Adele Horin
February 19, 2009

A TAX levy should be imposed on all Australians to fund lifelong care of people with severe disabilities, the state's chief disabilities bureaucrat says.

Brendan O'Reilly, director-general of the NSW Department of Ageing, Disability and Home Care, has called for a levy, similar to Medicare, to be in place within four years.

"It's wrong that a person who is born with a health problem, say a hole in the heart, has a system that guarantees them access to services, but a person who is born with, or acquires, a disability does not," he said.

Mr O'Reilly, who will retire in seven weeks, has run the country's biggest disability agency for five years. Speaking at a disabilities forum, he said his views were "personal" and did not represent government policy.

He said 6 to 8 per cent of Australians had severe or profound disabilities and most taxpayers would be willing to pay a small levy for their lifelong care. "My experience is that Australians want people who've suffered disabilities through no fault of their own to be well cared for and given opportunities."


$3b blow-out in disabled pension
Josh Gordon
February 15, 2009

THE Rudd Government is facing a $3 billion blow-out in the cost of the disability support pension, with new figures confirming earlier efforts to push recipients into paid work have failed.

The Howard government had predicted its 2005 plan to force people from the disability pension into paid work by tightening access rules would cut the number of recipients to 690,664 this year.

But internal Government figures show there are now 736,000 disability support pensioners on the public books - about 45,000 more than expected.

The federal budget is now straining to meet the rising cost of the scheme, which supports people assessed as unable to work because of a physical, intellectual or psychiatric impairment.


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International News:
Scoop Essentials: Beating The Employment Odds
By Michelle Diament
February 16, 2009
When the government released its first ever jobs report on people with disabilities earlier this month, it confirmed what was long suspected. Americans with disabilities are far more likely to be unemployed than their non-disabled peers. And, as the economy takes a nosedive, the number of people with disabilities who are jobless continues to climb.

But not to fear. There are opportunities to make money while doing something you enjoy, no matter your abilities or skill level. In this installment of Scoop Essentials, Doreen Rosimos, an employment specialist and a partner at IncomeLinks, LLC, shows you how.

Check out what Doreen has to say and then click here to submit your own questions to her.

Disability Scoop: Can you talk about the current employment situation for people with disabilities?

Doreen Rosimos: It’s tough to find a job right now for everybody, but I do believe it’s possible. One of the things I tell people is you need to be in people’s faces without agitating them. Use your connections. Use the people you know. When you go places, look for things that aren’t getting done. For people with disabilities sometimes they’re looking for full-time work, but most of the time they’re not. To get a part-time job right now is actually much easier. So this is an opportunity for us.

For the rest of the article go to http://www.disabilityscoop.com/2009/02/16/beating-the-employment-odds/2178/

Conferences and Workshops:

2009 NDS National Workforce & OHS Conference
Building Workforce Capacity: Satisfaction, Safety & Skills
4 - 5 May 2009, Hotel Grand Chancellor, Hobart
The disability services sector is grappling with workforce shortages, a need for new skills as new service models emerge, and a changing OHS regulatory environment. This exciting inaugural conference will equip service providers with knowledge and practical strategies to respond to these pressing challenges.

Program & Registration now available
Online Registration http://www.ors.net.au/NDSWorkforce.html
General Enquiries: Sarah Maguire Events Assistant Ph 02 6283 3200 sarah.maguire@nds.org.au
Sponsorship Enquiries: Julie Walton Conference Manager Ph 02 9256 3115 julie.walton@nds.org.au

AFDO Conference - Policy About Us, For Us!
A Practical Revolution in the Lives of People with Disabilities
May 28 & 29 2009
Jasper Hotel, Elizabeth Street, Melbourne
The Australian Federation of Disability Organisations is a peak body which represents people with disability at the national level. In May 2009 we will be having our first conference. The program of the conference will focus on the recently ratified United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and how it relates to Australia. The discussion of human rights will have a significant presence at the conference.

Please note the call for speakers will close on February 20, 2009

Registration fees are
* Individual $150
* Community Group $320
* Government $550

To register for the conference go to http://www.hotelnetwork.com.au/conferences/conferences/afdo

Call for Sponsors and Exhibitors
Interested in becoming a sponsor or exhibitor? There is a range of opportunities. For more information go to http://www.hotelnetwork.com.au/conferences/conferences/afdo/sponsorship
Towards A National Disability Studies Agenda
Disability Studies Conference, Australia UNSW Sydney
June 26-27 2009

The Disability Studies and Research Centre (DSRC) invites offers of papers for presentation at a Disability Studies Conference to be held at the University of New South Wales, from 26-27th June 2009.

Established in 2008, the DSRC is a national inter-disciplinary research centre which promotes the critical social perspective of disability in education and research to maximise Australia's capacity to ensure an equitable, participatory and accessible society for people with disability. Its forerunner was the Disability Studies and Research Institute (DSaRI). Recent research by DSRC and DSaRI includes disability and human rights, international development, accessible information, financing of disability services, specialist service design and delivery, housing and supported accommodation, bioethics, employment and income-support. The centre is aligned with the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences and the Faculty of Law at UNSW.

The overarching aim of the conference will be to bring together, for the first time, people from the disability studies academia, students and members of the disability community to discuss in the context of the new United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities developments towards a national disability studies agenda. The possibilities, realities and practical challenges of this will be discussed by two keynote speakers and taken up in contributed papers.


NDS Workability Conference
6–9 SEPTEMBER 2009
HILTON HOTEL, SYDNEY, AUSTRALIA

National Disability Services and Workability International have joined to host a 3-day conference to equip delegates with knowledge and strategies to help ensure that the employment of people with disability is not adversely affected by the economic challenges ahead.

ENQUIRIES
Philippa Angley
National Disability Services
Level 10, 369 Royal Parade
Parkville 3052
Phone 03 8341 4302 or 0411 773707
Email philippa.angley@nds.org.au
Website www.nds.org.au

For a list of all current national and international conferences and workshops click here.

NSW Events:
SYMPOSIUM
Constructing intellectual disability: a symposium on the history of a concept and public workshop on The history of intellectual disability

International Presenters include:
Christopher Goodey Centre for Studies in Inclusive Education, UK; Patrick McDonagh, Concordia University, Can; Tim Stainton, University of British Columbia, Can.
Venue: Charles Blunt Conference Room, Royal Rehabilitation Centre Sydney, 59 Charles Street, Ryde, NSW, 2112
Monday & Tuesday 18/19 May 2009
Further Information: Margaret on (02) 8878 0500 E-mail: cdds@med.usyd.edu.au
Advance Notice of a Seminar for Education Staff and Disability Service Providers in Southern and South-Western Sydney

Wednesday 24 June 2009, Campbelltown Catholic Club, 9am-3.30pm

What will this seminar provide?

- Presentations from expert practitioners in disability areas
- Strategies to support students with a disability or chronic medical condition prepare for transition from school
- Essential up-to-date information about post-school pathways, including:
  - Apprenticeships and traineeships
  - TAFE
  - University
  - Employment – open and Business Services
  - DADHC Post-School Programs – Transition to Work and Community Participation
- Details of how students can access support in post-school education and employment
- Panel discussions, case studies, resources and networking opportunities

Target Audience

Staff and providers from:

- Schools: Counsellors, Careers Advisers, District Guidance Officers, Disability Programs Consultants, STTs, AP (Learning Support), AP(V), AP(H), Principals, Head Teachers (Support), Head Teachers (Welfare), Support Teachers, ISTIs, Learning support teams, STLAs, SLSOs, Year Advisers 10-12
- TAFE: Equity Managers, Teacher/Consultants, Counsellors, Consultants (TVET), Disability Teachers
- Universities: Disability Advisors, Counsellors, Careers Advisors, Marketing Personnel
- Government, Community and other Agencies: Local Community Partnerships, Careers Advice Australia, Australian Apprenticeships Centres, DEEWR funded Employment Service Providers, Transition to Work and Community Participation Program Providers, DADHC staff

This event is free for participants and funded by the National Disability Coordination Officer Program. Morning tea and lunch included. Program details and registration forms to follow. For further information please contact National Disability Coordination Officer, Nicole Ison, on (02) 4620 3246 or n.ison@uws.edu.au or Gillian Hilt, on (02) 4620 3175 or g.hilt@uws.edu.au

VIC Events:

Understanding Learning Disabilities and Inclusive Technology

The National Disability Coordination Officer Program invites you to a Professional Development Event Understanding Learning Disabilities and Inclusive Technology

The presenters will provide insight into the learning challenges confronting students with learning difficulties and will introduce you to a range of assistive technologies that can be used in educational institutions to support student learning. This event is offered to educators in the secondary and tertiary sector, youth workers and parents.

Presenters

Bernie Monagle is a storyteller, writer, teacher and dramatist who has worked extensively in education, the community and theatre groups. In discussing learning disabilities, Bernie will reflect on his personal experience of wrestling with a learning disability and thirty years of experience of working with students with learning disabilities both in educational and community settings. The presentation will examine the nature of learning disabilities and the reasons why students with learning disabilities disengage from education. Bernie will discuss how to identify these students and will explore ways for these learners to build resilience and create a pathway to success. Bernie regularly runs workshops for teachers and writers.

Gerry Kennedy is a trained teacher with many years of experience in promoting and delivering effective information and communication (ICT) solutions. Specialising in assistive technologies, Gerry has a wealth of knowledge in providing practical and useful information to assist those who require effective and sustainable ICT.

Date: Tuesday 24th March 2009
Time: 9.00am — 2.45pm
Venue: NM1T Conference Centre
Building U
Cramer Street
Preston 3072
Cost: RSVP at: $20.00
Calls for Expressions of Interest and Input:
The Westpac graduate on-line application is now open
Talk to DWA about graduate careers at Westpac.
Disability WORKS Australia (DWA) has again been asked by Westpac to assist in recruiting and supporting applicants with disabilities/medical conditions for their 2010 graduate intake. There are genuine opportunities for graduates or near graduates to jobs with a financial institution. Any accommodations required as part of the recruitment program will be organized and also applicants received support during the recruitment process. DWA applicants can have graduated in 2007, 2008, 2009, or expect to graduate in 2010. Additionally interested 2006 graduates should also contact DWA.
Westpac is committed to providing a flexible working environment where people are respected, valued and encouraged to become the best they can be. As an equal opportunity employer they encourage applications from men and women of all ages, including those with disabilities.
In 2010, Westpac has over 130 graduate positions available with applications open from 20 February – 29 March 2009. Disability Works Australia (DWA) has formed a partnership with Westpac to support graduates with a medical condition or disability during the recruitment process to ensure your particular needs are met.
Contact DWA on 1800 356 670 or email national@dwa.org.au to register your interest and find out more. For more info on Westpac graduate programs and for application forms visit www.westpac.com.au/graduates

New Resources:
Disability Awareness Training - ‘In my shoes’
‘In my shoes’ facilitates access for learners with disability. This staff awareness/staff induction training program looks at issues in adult education for people with disability from the perspective of the person with disability and the perspective of the staff person. ‘In my shoes’ is designed to include the key messages and objectives of the Disability Standards for Education, through demonstrations of ‘real-life’ scenarios and practical, problem-solving questions. The training is designed for teaching staff, administrative staff, and disability support staff across the adult education sector.
The facilitator's guide and interactive training program are available at http://www.wodonga.tafe.edu.au/ndco/resources_and_publications.htm

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The Disability News Archive can be found at http://www.cdds.med.usyd.edu.au/ndco/DisabilityNews/
Funded by the Australian Government Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations (DEEWR) under the National Disability Coordination Officer Programme.

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