



Beijing Paralympics Read about the results

Members Column Eddie's Great War Gormandale



Wheelchair Parking At Austin Health Facilities Parking Made Easy

Plus much more...



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A.Q.A. NEWS LINK is the official newsletter of A.Q.A. Victoria Limited, and is published bimonthly. *NEWS LINK* seeks to publish material of interest to people with physical disabilities and their families, professional workers and other individuals and organisations concerned with the welfare of those who are physically disabled.

A.Q.A. Victoria Limited always welcomes articles for News Link. Please feel free to send in your contribution. Articles will be published at the discretion of the Editor who also has the right to edit all submissions as it sees fit.

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AQA NEWS LINK

The Official Newsletter of AQA Victoria Ltd., & AQA Tasmania

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From the CEO



Everyone at AQA would like to pay tribute to all those involved in the 2008 Paralympics in Beijing. In this issue you'll find an account from our own Nazim Erdem of his games experience as part of the Australian wheelchair rugby team.

Given the level of comment we received both during the games and in the weeks since, these 2008 Beijing games appear to have cut through to the general public to a greater degree than ever before.

Particularly for those with access to ABC 2, the amount of prime air time certainly exposed more people to a wider range of events and enabled viewers to follow the progress of teams and individuals through their heats to finals and to get to know some of the background of the athletes.

It also appeared to us that much of the comment from the general public, with a few notable exceptions, was characterised by a genuine appreciation of the human issues involved in the achievements of the paralympians. Many people felt the achievements and the people involved were somehow easier to engage with and be affected by than in the Olympic competition that preceded them.

We'd be interested in what our members and subscribers experience was during the games and whether there is any effect that you detect in your local community.

At an operational level I'd like take the opportunity to welcome Gaelyn Taylor to the team at AQA Victoria in her role as Human Resources Coordinator. Gaelyn comes to us with significant operational management skills and substantial experience in both the hospitality and training sector and we look forward to her contribution in this important position.

Finally we remind all AQA members of our Annual General Meeting to be held at 440 Heidelberg Road, Fairfield, on Monday 24 November 2008 at 5.30pm.

Come along and meet members of the Silver Medal winning Paralympic Wheelchair Rugby team and hear about their exciting Beijing experience.

Our Annual report will be available in hard copy at the meeting and a soft copy will be posted on the website along with our full financial report.

Peter Trethewey

Chief Executive Officer

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From the Editor

Welcome to the November issue of News Link. It's amazing that the year is nearly over and soon we'll be writing 2009.

In this issue you can read Nazim Erdem's article about his experiences at the Beijing Paralympic Games. There are also a couple of articles regarding the receptions and awards for the athletes after they returned.

Also in this issue, is an amazing article about member Eddie Nowak and how he has become a bit of a legend and a talking point in Gormandale, a small town near Traralgon in the Latrobe Valley. Eddie is a paraplegic, and the subject that turned him into a local legend is his achievement of cutting enough firewood to last him the next six years or more. The stacked firewood is known locally as the "Great Wall of Gormandale".

For the last couple of years, Gary Allsop has been talking with Austin Health about providing more convenient parking facilities for wheelchair users. Gary is very pleased to announce that as a result of these discussions, the current arrangements are very favourable.

Finally, you can read how Chrissie Rowe from Moe deals with her pain issues. As a result she is now a regular fitness class attendee and Hydrotherapy pool user. She says that "it has made a big difference in my life".

I hope you enjoy reading all of the various articles in this issue, and look forward to receiving any information that you'd like other readers to know about.

Simon Damevski

News Link Editor

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Wheelchair Parking At Austin Health Facilities

Over the past couple of years Gary Allsop has been talking with Austin Health about providing more convenient parking facilities for patients who use wheelchairs. Gary is pleased to announce that as a result of these discussions new arrangements, which he details below, are now confirmed.

Austin Hospital

At the Austin Hospital patients who use wheelchairs can now park free outside the kiosk and western forecourt by turning into the hospital internal road near the top of Burgundy Street, opposite Powlett Street (just before Upper Heidelberg Rd).

There are 11 spacious "Wheelchair Only" car parks on level ground which can be accessed by;

1. Driving westward along Burgundy St (up the hill)
2. Left hairpin turn into service road just before Upper Heidelberg Rd
3. Drive to the gatehouse and push the intercom button
4. Tell security you are in a wheelchair (you will see the small sign to your right)
5. Turn right around the roundabout and security will raise the boom gate
6. The boom gate will automatically open when you exit

I have consulted security at Austin Health and if on the rare occurrence there is no security available at the other end of the intercom, due to unforeseen circumstances, and you find there are other cars queueing behind you, you may need to circle around the roundabout and re-enter past the gatehouse again to try the intercom once more. This is not a scenario anticipated to happen very often, but patience is a virtue with a new procedure being put in place.

If you drive your vehicle and think that you may have some difficulty pushing the intercom button, give Rob McGlynn or David Gorman (Heads of Security) a call on 9496-4999 and let them know approximately what time you will be arriving for your appointment and they

can arrange for security to meet you there to raise the boom gate.

Alternatively wheelchair patients can park in the new Austin Tower car park for \$3 under the dispensation policy. To arrange this, you will need to go to the Austin Tower Reception/Inquiry desk on level 1 before paying on the way out. There are 46 wheelchair accessible spaces on level B3 which are accessed via the Studley Road entrance.

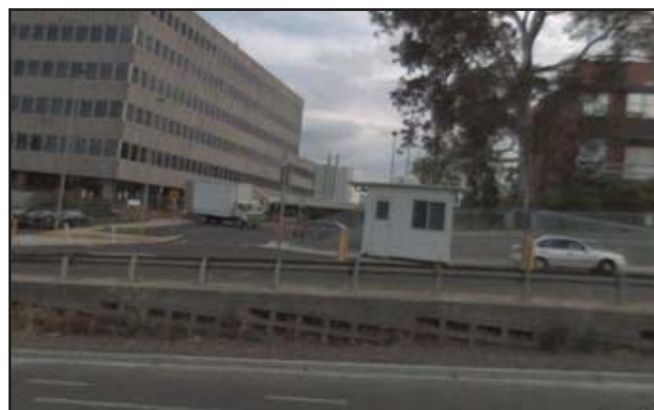
Royal Talbot Hospital

At the Royal Talbot Hospital, wheelchair bound patients can park free on any of the 25 wheelchair only car parking spots within the hospital. Push the intercom button on entry and state you are a wheelchair patient. Security will lift the boom gate and parking will be free.

Heidelberg Repatriation Hospital

At the Heidelberg Repatriation Hospital, wheelchair bound patients can park free by simply entering at Gate 9 on Waterdale Road and alerting the security guard that you are a wheelchair patient. Parking will be free anywhere on the grounds of the hospital.

These new arrangements are for the benefit of wheelchair patients and on behalf of them I thank Austin Health for taking into consideration the special requirements of wheelchair patients in Melbourne attending Austin Health facilities. If you have any troubles at all please e-mail me at madge@alphalink.com.au and I can consult with security who have welcomed any feedback from wheelchair patients. They want to iron out any teething problems and rectify them immediately.



Note: To read the rest of this article you need to be a current member. Please contact AQA Victoria or download a membership form.



The Pool Guy

Some of you may have heard about or seen the Channel 9 program called "Hole in the Wall". AQA is proud that we have a connection to the show. Our connection is member Andrew Meddings, who is the person who sold and delivered the pool to them. He also helped design and set it up in the studio.

As some of you may know, Andrew is a paraplegic who delivers pools all across Australia in his modified semi-trailer. He not only loads the pool onto the trailer, but also unloads them, ingeniously using the hoist.

In previous issues of News Link, you would have read about Andrew and his friend Matt, who is also a paraplegic, where they beat able bods in go-cart championships.

These guys don't let their disabilities stop them from doing what they want to do...

Earlier this year, they had another accomplishment. They delivered the world's largest fiberglass pool. They both delivered the 25.3 x 3 metre wide pool to Brisbane, using a police escort to get over the Kempsey Bridge. The pool itself was actually longer than a B-Double (those double trailered semi-trailers).



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Hydrotherapy - a welcome relief

Mrs Chrissie Rowe from Moe has sent in her experience of pain relief by using a Hydrotherapy pool which has made a big difference in her life.

I am a 59 year old woman who was somewhat of a social butterfly when in March 2002 I was diagnosed with breast cancer. Within two weeks I had a partial mastectomy and was supposed to start radiotherapy in August that year.

The weekend before my treatment was to start, my husband Rod booked a surprise three day weekend on the Gold Coast. On the Sunday of that weekend we had a car crash. I became an incomplete paraplegic. There is no TAC in Queensland which made things so hard for us.

My husband was self-employed in his own one-man business and could not stay with me more than a few days at a time or his business would not have survived. Our daughter stayed with me for a while and an old friend's daughter also spent some time there with me.

After a couple of months, I was flown down to rehab in Melbourne. For the first year after the accident I think I cried every day, I thought my life was over. I also had no idea that people with paralysis could experience pain; I just thought as many people do, that their legs don't work. I still today have the worst neuropathic pain and I take so many medications it's not funny.

Over the next 5 years I lost contact with just about all the people I had worked with for years. All I did was private physio once a week and some shopping with my husband. That was my life!

Last year I saw an ad in the local paper for people over 50 to join a fitness class at the Latrobe Community Health Centre. It took me quite a while to muster up the nerve to call and ask if a person in a wheelchair could attend. (I had not been mixing socially for a long time).

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Beijing Paralympic Games

Australia's Paralympic athletes have returned from China after a successful Paralympics campaign. Many athletes were ecstatic with their performances, some were disappointed as you can imagine. Personal best times weren't good enough in some cases as the competition had improved considerably.

Australia finished fifth on the gold medal count (4th in overall medal count), which is a great result. The breakdown of the 79 medals won was 23 Gold, 29 Silver and 27 bronze. Australia has now won 987 Paralympic medals since we started competing, just 13 medals short of the 1000 milestone.

Read further as Nazim Erdem, a member of the Silver winning Wheelchair Rugby team recounts his experience of the games.



Monday 1st of September

We flew out from Sydney on a morning flight direct to Beijing. When I say we, I mean all of the Australian athletes, officials and staff. Every seat on the Qantas flight was booked by the Australian Paralympic Committee.

This long flight was made enjoyable particularly for us Wheelchair Rugby guys, (even though it was a zero alcohol flight!), by being upgraded to Business Class seats. The reason for this was that the majority of us are quads and need the extra room for pressure relief etc. (that was our excuse anyway...). AQA member and fellow athlete in shooting, Jason Maroney also benefited from this decision. I spent at least half the flight playing around with the electric seats which could literally lay you flat or seat you in any position you wanted. The flight to Beijing took 11 hours but we were seated for over 14 hours by the time we loaded and unloaded. It is nearly impossible to get a decent sleep in economy class, but in Business Class I could have slept the whole flight if I wanted to, instead I chose to watch movies.

As the flight approached Beijing Airport, the city lights were in our view. The airport, not to mention the city, is HUGE. I think it may officially be the largest airport in the world. Any airport where you have to catch a train from the terminal to the Baggage Claim has got to be huge.

Once we landed, I had visions (generated from news reports back home) of seeing the army and police everywhere to make sure we acted appropriately and not wander into the off limit areas. Of course, this was not the case. The airport staff were everywhere, very organized and always willing to give a hand. In a way, they were a little too helpful sometimes, like when they pushed the chairs of athletes who didn't require assistance. It was about midnight by the time we had loaded all our equipment, boarded the buses and headed for the Athletes Village. We were all very tired by this stage but the excitement of arriving in China kept us going. We finally arrived at the bus station of the Athletes Village after the 40 minute drive.

Note: To read the rest of this article you need to be a current member. Please contact AQA Victoria or download a membership form.

Please Note:

This copy of News Link is only a sample. The full version is 20 pages of great articles and other information. Current issues are available only to current members. Please contact AQA Victoria regarding membership or download a membership form.