

SACOSS Essential Services and Consumers Living with Disability

Conference 2018: Energy, Water, Telecommunications and Transport

Monday 14 May 2018, Adelaide Oval Cathedral Room

Program

8.30am Registration Tea and coffee on arrival
9am Welcome
9.15am Official Opening Address
9.30am Plenary Session The Energy Penalty - disability and fuel poverty We know that ‘being poor costs more’, with those on lower incomes paying a disproportionate amount of their disposable income on utilities bills compared to higher income households. However, in Australia, there is less attention in the essential services sector about the specific challenges faced by individuals living with a disability, their families and carers. For example, there are additional energy costs and needs related to disability with significant health and wellbeing implications. These conversations are more prominent in the UK with low-income families, disabled people and elderly citizens considered among the most vulnerable groups at risk of poor health due to cooler climates and poor housing stock, with specific policy aimed to address fuel poverty among these groups. This session will welcome an expert from the UK to explore the concept of fuel poverty, as it relates to households living with disabilities. Key-note presenter: Professor Cosmo Graham – Centre for Consumers and Essential Services, University of Leicester (confirmed)
10.30am Morning Tea
11.00am Showcase – Delivering Better Practice This session showcases leading examples of retailers, not-for-profits, businesses and consumer groups delivering better practice for consumers living with disabilities in the essential services. Case-studies: Telecommunications: Vision for an inclusive future As Australia’s largest telecommunications company, Telstra has a long history of supporting people with disability – from TTYs and big buttons phones, to directory assistance and access for everyone programs. Now, with technology enabling people to connect and participate, Telstra has a vision and a plan to create products and services that are accessible and inclusive: not just meeting minimum requirements and regulations. Confirmed presenter: Kelly Schulz, Senior Advisor – Accessibility and Inclusion, Telstra Transport: New digital platforms connecting individuals to disability services and transport

providers

- [ConnectingUp](#) is a not-for-profit tech company based in South Australia, which provides support for 26,000 not-for-profits by providing access to affordable digital technology and software. ConnectingUp are undertaking a pilot program to engage with disability service providers and transport providers to create a new “sharing portal” providing access to disability transport vehicles. The pilot will enable companies, and individuals, to rent out their idle transport assets directly to disability service providers and primary caregivers.

Confirmed presenter: Anne Gawen, Chief Executive Officer, Connecting Up

Energy: Bright Sparks, helping people with a disability to learn about how to save on energy bills

- Bright Sparks is a program being run by the [Queenslanders with Disability Network \(QDN\)](#) to support people living with a disability to learn about the changes to the energy market in South East Queensland. The Bright Sparks Program is supported by AGL and the Queensland Government (through The Switched On Communities Grants).

Confirmed presenter: Michelle Moss, Operations and Business Manager, QDN

12.00pm Lunch – 45mins

12.45pm Community Awareness of People living with Disabilities in the Essential Services - State of Play Q&A Session

Those living with disability are more likely to be vulnerable to experiencing payment difficulties and face unique barriers to equitable and fair access to essential services. Each panellist will outline one area of living with a disability which needs more focus. Questions will be invited from the floor on the themes of: What are the key strategic issues which need to be addressed in providing better customer service to those living with a disability? How do we best tailor services to meet the needs of people living with a disability? What prospects are there that government, business and the consumer sector will be able to respond to these challenges? What are the barriers that need to be overcome?

Panel Chair: Phillip Beddall, SACOSS Life Member and Deputy Chair of SACOSS Policy Council (confirmed)

Panellists:

Thomas Banks, Managing Director of Centre for Access (Confirmed panellist)

Mike Taggart, Chief Project Officer, Disability Policy Unit, DCSI (Confirmed panellist)

Jill Mitchell, JFA Purple Orange Peer Group - Disability Elders of All Ages (Invited panellist)

Pam Kirkham OAM, Associate Board Member, Brain Injury SA (Confirmed panellist)

1.45pm Concurrent Sessions – 60 mins

Room 1

Digital inclusion and disability

People living with disability are less likely to be engaged in the digital world. Digital platforms are increasingly important for accessing government services, goods and services, and social

Room 2

Needs and experiences of water consumers living with a disability

What are the emerging systemic issues for people living with a disability in terms of the cost, use and quality of water

Room 3

Transport disadvantage

Transport is an essential service for those living with a disability.

However under the NDIS, there has been no funding commitment to cover ancillary

<p>connection. On the other hand, technology also has the potential to transform the lives of those with a disability. This session will explore the extent that digital communications and technology can improve social inclusion and well-being, and whether affordability is a barrier to greater uptake.</p> <p>Panel Chair: Jo De Silva, SACOSS</p> <p>Panellists:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wayne Hawkins, Disability Policy Advisor, ACCAN (confirmed) • Kelly Schulz, Senior Advisor – Accessibility and Inclusion, Telstra (confirmed) 	<p>and sewerage services? This session will explore the experiences of water consumers with a range of disabilities to identify common issues as well as policy and practice measures to address them.</p> <p>Panel Chair: Kerry Rowlands, General Manager of Customer Delivery, SA Water (confirmed)</p> <p>Panellists:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Jackie Hayes, Team Leader, Policy and Projects, JFA Purple Orange (confirmed) • Bob Tinker, Board Chair, JFA Purple Orange (confirmed) 	<p>costs such as vehicle maintenance, prompting many providers to consider cutting back on services (e.g. community bus services).</p> <p>This session will explore the impact on those living with a disability and their carers.</p> <p>Panel Chair: Rebecca Law, SACOSS</p> <p>Panellists:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • David Militz, Chief Executive Officer, Carers SA (confirmed) • Greg Killeen, Senior Policy and Advocacy Officer, Spinal Cord Injuries Australia (confirmed)
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2.45pm Afternoon Tea – 30 mins

3.15pm The Power of Choice – Who’s choice and who’s responsibility?

In the energy sector, ‘Power of Choice’ reforms have given consumers more control over how they use their electricity. For example, some retailers reward consumers for changing their consumption behaviours by offering cheaper tariffs to use electricity at non-peak times. However, not all consumers have the ability to exercise their choice as freely as others, including those living with a disability or with low-incomes.

What is the responsibility of retailers and essential service providers when it comes to supported decision making processes and access to essential services? What mechanisms are in place to help those living with a disability navigate their options with regards to essential services and access to supports and concessions?

This panel session will bring together representatives from various sectors to discuss how we could better streamline support for those living with a disability.

Panel Chair: Phillip Beddall, SACOSS Life Member and Deputy Chair of SACOSS Policy Council (confirmed)

Panellists:

- Associate Professor Jeannie Paterson, Associate Dean - The Melbourne Juris Doctor, Melbourne Law School, University of Melbourne (confirmed)
- Professor Cosmo Graham – Centre for Consumers and Essential Services, University of Leicester (confirmed)
- Lisa Brown, Policy Manager, AMTA (Australian Mobile Telecommunications Association) (confirmed)

4.15pm – 4.45pm Concluding Remarks Ross Womersley, Chief Executive Officer, SACOSS and Phillip Beddall, SACOSS Life Member and Deputy Chair of SACOSS Policy Council (invited)