

# Report for Cooloola Human Services Network Annual General Meeting

Tuesday 31<sup>st</sup> March 2009

## Access Advisory Committee

Throughout 2008 the Access Advisory Committee continued to progress its aims of:

- promoting the importance of access issues within the Gympie Region.
- providing an independent forum for discussing and investigating issues related to access and inclusion for all members of the Gympie Region.
- encouraging strong community involvement in identifying and resolving access related issues.
- making recommendations to Gympie Regional Council, business and community agencies on how best to improve access within the Shire for all members of the community, in order to enable better planning of new facilities, and develop appropriate modifications to existing facilities.

Some of the highlights for the Committee in 2008 included:

- Nineteen submissions to Gympie Regional Council on Development Applications referred by Council across the Shire as a Third Party Advice Agency in Council's Planning Scheme.
- Free audits and audit reports for a number of local facilities with recommendations for improving access including Member for Gympie's Electoral Office, Gympie Town Hall, Crab Creek Picnic area, Chatsworth Hall, Imbil Art Gallery proposal and Billy's Hotel.
- Commenced site visits and audits of Kilkivan and Goomeri townships.
- Committee requests have resulted in:
  - Gympie Regional Council completing access improvements to footpaths and kerb ramps in Tin Can Bay to improve pedestrian and scooter user safety
  - improvements to Gympie Hospital's accessible toilet facilities
  - relocation of a photo kiosk to an accessible height at Big W Gympie
  - improvements to accessible toilet door at Gympie Regional Gallery
  - improvements to access at Chatz Café Gympie
  - installation of hoist for access to Gympie Memorial Pool
  - access improvements to Sunshine Coast Airport
- Membership of Council's All Abilities Playground Steering Group to ensure accessible design of the new playground facilities
- Commenced working with the Australian Electoral Commission to enhance polling booth access across the Gympie Region and improve voting processes for citizens with disabilities.
- Continued to work with Gympie District Show Society on access improvements to the Gympie Showgrounds.

- Received a small grant from Disability Services Queensland's Building Supportive Communities for reimbursement of audit costs.
- Completed a full review of Committee operations and a re-structure in November 2008 which has resulted in a number of portfolio areas and more equitable distribution of tasks.
- Continued close collaboration with our partners, particularly:
  - Cooloola Regional Development Bureau – assisting in the production of 'Accessible Gympie' sections in CRDB's website, in street maps of Gympie, Tin Can Bay, Rainbow Beach and Mary Valley and an 'Accessible Gympie' feature in the 2008 Cooloola Holiday Guide. As well, the CRDB assisted Committee with its inaugural Universal Access Golf Challenge held at Gympie Pines Golf Club in September 2008. This enjoyable and successful event raised over \$5500 to continue to work of the Committee.
  - Gympie Regional Council - staff have greatly assisted the Committee in its role, especially staff from Planning & Development, Design, Works and Parks & Gardens Departments. Councillor Rae Gate is Council's nominated representative on the Committee and has been a keen participant.

After eight years as Chair, Fiona Green stepped down at the end of 2008 and Roxanne MacGregor has taken up the challenge of leading this dynamic and successful group. The Committee would like to thank Fiona for her dedication over these years. We are delighted that she is able to continue her association with the Committee.

The Committee thanks all our members who have made great personal contributions to the work of the Committee. In addition, we would like to acknowledge the support of Cooloola Human Services Network, Secretary Dianne Hughes, Cooloola Regional Development Bureau and Gympie Regional Council.

*Roxanne MacGregor*  
*Chairperson*