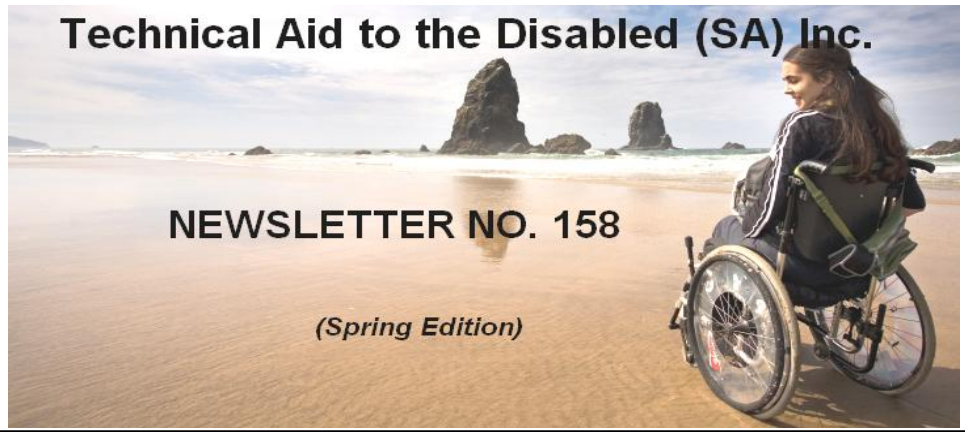




PO Box 540, Modbury
 South Australia 5092
 (Mon-Thur 9.00am-5.00pm)

Phone: 08) 82612922
 State-wide Local Call: 1300 663243
 Website: www.tadsa.org.au
 Email: admin@tadsa.org.au
 Fax: 08) 8369 1051



**Accredited at Certificate Level of the
 Service Excellence Program**

SERVICE
 EXCELLENCE
 CERTIFICATE
 ACHIEVED

You are invited to attend

TADSA ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

To be held on

TUESDAY SEPTEMBER 27TH 2011 AT 2PM

**Venue: Disability SA – Independent Living Centre
 Blacks Road, Gilles Plains (see enclosed map)**

Followed by Afternoon Tea and a tour of ILC

Please RSVP by 20th September, 2011

TADSA's VISION

To be a leader in developing unique and innovative equipment for people with disabilities in South Australia.

TADSA's MISSION

To improve the lives of people with disabilities, the frail, the aged and those who care for or assist them through the development of unique and innovative equipment, using the skills of volunteers and staff.

**** REMINDER ** Have you paid your membership fees?**

Technical Members are uninsured with TADSA unless financial. Your continued support of TADSA is greatly appreciated. If you joined TADSA after January 2011, your membership is current for the period 2011/12.

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**We gratefully acknowledge the sponsorship of this issue of our
 Newsletter by the Lions Club of Blackwood Inc.**

TADSA INFORMATION



Technical Aid to the Disabled (TADSA) Inc is an Australia wide voluntary organisation, with TAD branches in every State. Technical members are people with skills in many fields, who give their time to helping people with disabilities and elderly people with practical problems for which no completely satisfactory commercial solution is available. This may require modifications to existing equipment, or the construction of new, specialised aids. Sometimes we can provide the means to overcome difficulties that had seemed insurmountable.

Technical Aid to the Disabled (SA) Inc.

Is based at The Royal Society for the Blind, Gilles Plains, on site with The Royal Society for the Blind, Disability Services SA and Disability Services SA-ILC. Our members work, where necessary, in close cooperation with health professionals. If you have a problem for us to solve, or if you know someone who has, contact us at the TADSA office. No referral is necessary; cost is normally only that of materials used, service charge and expenses actually incurred (usually small).

Volunteers Needed - If you have skills such as mechanical, carpentry, electrical or electronic fields, good handyman etc, you might like to use some spare time on this challenging and most rewarding work. TADSA is always seeking more volunteers. If you would like to know more about how you could be part of our team, please telephone the Office on 08) 8261 2922.



Freedom Wheels Program is a national program involving all state TADs working with TADNSW using a range of standard add-ons that fit on a range of modified bikes. This means that an Occupational Therapist or Physiotherapist can "prescribe" the attachments needed to correctly support a child. The bike set up by TAD technical volunteers to suit is delivered to the child.

For further information contact the TADSA Freedom Wheels Program Manager, Tony Scully, at the TADSA office.

Page-Turner Loan Program – New eReader Loan Program

TADSA is in the process of updating this program. Thanks to a kind donation from the Glenelg Rotary Club we have purchased 2 eReaders. These are locally designed and we have the opportunity to work with the designing company to incorporate special switching to suit the most severe disability. We are hopeful these devices will eventually replace the existing page-turners. A small loan fee will still be requested. Contact Julie in the office for further information.

Electric Wheelchairs Program –

Rugged terrain wheelchairs – TADSA has two electric wheelchairs available for loan to people with severe disabilities living in rugged terrain.

Fold up electric wheelchair – This chair has been added recently to our loan pool of equipment and is available to anyone seeking short term loan of a chair to be used in standard conditions. It can easily be transported in the back of a car.

For further information, contact Julie in the Office.

Home Phone Numbers for Urgent TADSA Business –

<u>Chairman</u>	– Richard Jackson 08) 8294 8591 or 0412 895826 (mob)
<u>Secretary</u>	– Tony Scully 70000022 (H)
<u>Office Manager</u>	– Julie Peak 0411 240 118 (mob)

Supported by



Government of South Australia

Department for Families
and Communities

TADSA Management Update

Service Excellence Program - *Internationally Accredited Standards*

As mentioned in our last newsletter we can now officially announce that we have achieved the Certificate Level of the Service Excellence Program. Areas for audit included three key categories:

- Leadership and Management
- People, Partnership and Communication; and
- Service Provision

We are proud of our achievement and will continue to monitor and maintain the program.

Government Funding

We are also pleased to announce that some extra government funding will be available to TADSA. Unfortunately this will not be enough to have a paid Project Manager, but it will certainly keep the doors of TADSA open for the immediate future. TADSA is committed to providing this unique service to people with disabilities in our community, so we will continue to lobby for more funding as needed.

Project Management

In the meanwhile, we have been delighted to welcome Ralph Drage and Joe Nimbs into the office to work on project management. At this stage both Ralph and Joe will be co-ordinating projects, with Richard maintaining his input during this initial "training stage". Joe will also take on the role of Client Liaison Officer for project follow ups.

Meet the New Project Management Team:



Joe Nimbs

Joe Nimbs joined TADSA in November 1995 and was made a Life Member five years ago. He specialises in computer technology, previously working for University of SA - he is also a general handyman. Joe has extensive experience

working with people with disabilities, both within TADSA and also in other areas.

We are very fortunate to have two such willing and skilled volunteers to help with project management and we are now currently working on how the project team will work. This is however an ideal time to streamline the process, share responsibilities in the office and come up with an efficient project management system. Clients and Technical Volunteers can now look forward to a liaising further down the line with either Ralph, Joe or Richard.

Ralph Drage joined TADSA in June 2010, but has been in our background for many years. Ralph was previously employed by Levi Strauss and was



Ralph Drage

part of the team that supported us with some very substantial donations that we used to purchase page-turners and an electric rugged terrain wheelchair. So whilst only a relatively new member, Ralph also has quite a good knowledge base of TADSA's activities. Ralph's background is Tradesman Fitter & Turner and an Industrial Engineer - ideal skills to help us with project management.

It has been a very busy and at times quite difficult time since losing our paid Project Manager due to lack of funding. TADSA is very fortunate however to have many very good and dedicated volunteers and in particular, we are very grateful to both Richard Jackson and Ken Lawson for the extra time they have put in to helping with project management. This teamwork kept the machine going for many months and on behalf of everyone at TADSA we do thank Richard and Ken for the effort they put in. Ken will continue sharing his expertise and experience by attending our weekly project management meetings.

20+ Year Continuous TADSA Service Group



Joe Tieste

Technical Volunteer & Committee Member Joe recently celebrated his 20th year with TADSA by joining other members of the 20+ Year Continuous TADSA Service Group

for a luncheon and award presentation held at the Sussex Hotel, Walkerville.

Well done Joe and many thanks on behalf of all those people you have so willingly helped.

Men's Shed Meetings

Our Men's Shed Meetings have proven to be quite successful. The first one was held in April 2011 and we have continued with the meetings on a monthly basis. It is an ideal time in a relaxed environment to discuss projects, chew over ideas etc. and a chance for members to get to know each other. We are also looking at finding extra meeting areas to cater for members living north and south of Adelaide.

In the meanwhile, Men's Shed Meetings will continue to be held at the Morialta Rotary Shed on the first Wednesday of each month. It was agreed by those participating at the recent meeting that members would pay \$2 (this includes morning tea) and TADSA would subsidise the balance (\$1 per person). This is a cost that is requested from us by the Rotary Club to cover their costs. Please contact the office if you would like more info.

TADSA Loan Pool of Equipment – Page-turners

TADSA has operated a very successful page-turner loan program for over 30 years. These page-turners were donated to TADSA by various organizations and have helped provide some pleasure to many people with severe disability or who may have been terminally ill. Our page-turners have also helped many carers over the years. By enabling the person with the disability to read independently, the carer is then able to have some free time.

Our page-turners are now old and many need repair, we have been looking into the use of e-readers as a replacement. At present we are trialling a local device that looks as though may well be able to replace the existing page-turner. This particular device not only allows the user to read books but also listen to music, display photos, play games, web browsing and record and playback voice memos. We are now working with the company to make the devices more accessible for people with disabilities. Our aim is to replace the existing page-turner with another suitable device to continue providing a much valued service, not only for the client but also for the carer.

Glenelg Rotary Club - Following a recent talk by our Chairman, Richard Jackson, this Club offered a donation of \$1,000. This will go toward the purchase of 2 eReaders, additional special switching and transport boxes. We thank the Glenelg Rotary Club and the unknown donor for their generosity.

TADSA Community Information and Promotion Program

Without clients – there is no TADSA.

Without volunteers – there is no TADSA.

Without TADSA – needs of many people with disabilities are not met.

It is important that we continue spreading the word about the unique services we provide to people with disabilities in our community. Our Public Relations Officer Ian Beaton has been kept busy giving talks to service groups etc. and to other disability service providers, carers, physios etc. Of course we need to do this in conjunction with maintaining existing services and when necessary, build up our volunteer base.

We also need to constantly peg away at finding extra funding to keep our doors open.



We very much appreciate the donation of \$2,000 from HomeStart toward this program. We have also received several other donations which will certainly help with this program. Our sincere thanks to those concerned.

Projects Assigned to Members

1st May – 31st July 2011

(*tp* = *technical project* *ap* = *assessment*)

(*999*) = *in house project*

<u>Project No.</u>	<u>ap/tp</u>	<u>Project Title</u>
2011-176	ap	Bed table
2011-177	tp	Alarm call mounting - repair
2011-178	tp	W/Ch tray + camera mount
2011-179	tp	Tray for walker
2011-180	tp	Chair raiser plinth
2011-181	tp	Chair raiser plinth
2011-182	tp	Chair raiser plinth
2011-183	tp	Exercise machine mod
2011-184	tp	Sack truck modification
2011-185	tp	Bike helmet modification
2011-186	tp	Single brake walker modification
2011-187	tp	Door opener switch replacement
2011-188	ap	Communicator problem
2011-189	ap	Springing on 4-wheel walker
2011-190	tp	Call system new handset
2011-191	ap	Wheelchair hoist on ute
2011-192	tp	Phone stand for scanning
2011-193	tp	Wheels on shopping basket
2011-194	ap	Shaver holder
2011-195	ap	Toilet frame
2011-196	tp	Call device
2011-197	tp	Washing trolley height extended
2011-198	tp	Trial prototype Pilot
2011-199	tp	Bath insert
2011-200	tp	Audible light sensor
2011-201	tp	Supply IR controller
2011-202	tp	Walker modification to seating
2011-203	tp	Foot stool for bed
2011-204	tp	Folding toilet frame
2011-205	ap	Music keyboard mod
2011-206	tp	Painting equipment
2012-001	tp	Adjust bowling ramp
2012-002	ap	TV controller with audio prompts
2012-003	ap	Fit smaller casters to overway
2012-004	tp	Drinking system revamp
2012-005	tp	Computer Speed Issue
2012-006	tp	Reduce stool height
2012-007	tp	Fit smaller casters to overway
2012-008	tp	Shower chair casters
2012-009	ap	Hand Cycle
2012-010	tp	Laptop key guard
2012-011	tp	Walker brakes: Slides on stool
2012-012	tp	Mount walker on scooter
2012-013	tp	Repair castor cart
2012-014	ap	Device to get out of bed
2012-015	tp	Device to get out of bed
2012-016	tp	Raise handles on Wheelchair
2012-017	tp	Drinking Straws
2012-018	ap	Walker strap
2012-018	ap	Princess chair needs analysis
2012-020	ap	Assess kitchen gate
2012-021	ap	Move wheelie bin from w/chair

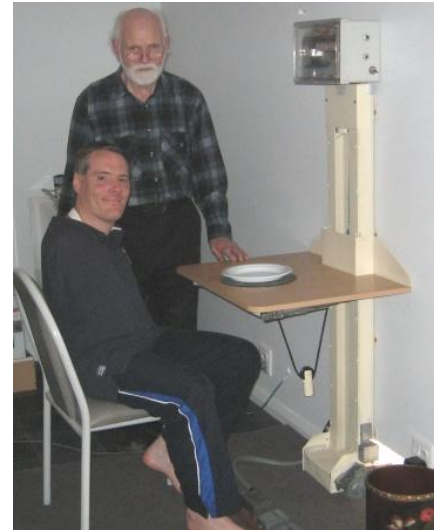
How it was Done

Please Note – Personal names have been altered to respect client’s privacy

Project No. 211.169 - Wall Mounted Elevating Table
Technical Volunteer - John

TADSA was approached by Bill who lives independently and wanted the facility to be able to prepare and eat food in his kitchen.

Bill has no arms, so a special device operated by Bill’s foot that would elevate a small table from approximately 150mm to 1000mm above the floor level was designed and made by Technical Volunteer John. This table also incorporates a rotating device that holds Bill’s dinner plate, enabling him to eat off the further most part of the plate.



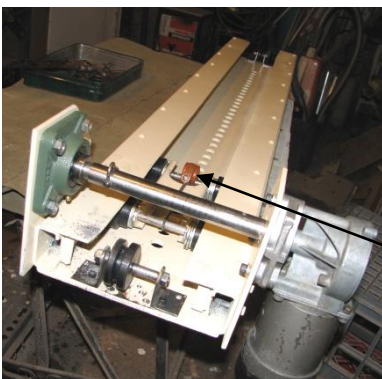
Various parts to be installed

The photo on the left shows various parts undergoing manufacture. At the bottom left hand side of the bench is part of a Gliderol door that will become the turntable. To the right is a Ford window winder motor with a gear attached so that it will drive the turn table.

In the centre of the photo you can see part of the carriage fitted with two of its four main wheels.



Various parts installed



This photo shows the drive motor, gear box and main drive shaft for the lifting table. The carriage is fitted between its guide rails which have been bolted to the back plate.

The arrow shows part of the safety catch that prevents the table falling uncontrollably.



Electrical Control box – note all conductors are numbered



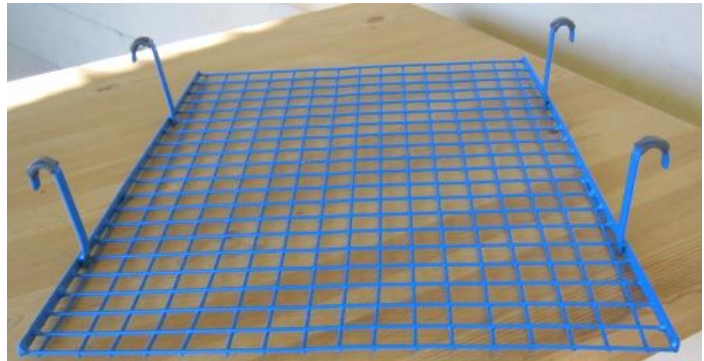
Picture of the hoist carriage fitted with four main guide wheels and two anti-twist wheels. One of the two table support brackets can also be seen, as can the safety latch between the two top wheels.

Total Design and Construction Time: 367 Hours

Project No. 2011.127 - Laundry Basket Frame
Technical Volunteer - Wally

Fred had injured his back in a work-related accident. He found it difficult to bend forward. One problem he had was with his laundry basket. He had a standard trolley that the basket fitted into but this was too low for him to lift the basket without pain. He also found it difficult to take the clothes out to hang on the line.

John already had the use of a wire shopping trolley donated by his local supermarket. TADSA member Wally made a steel mesh frame with a vertical hook on each corner so that the frame would "hang" inside the shopping trolley about 100mm from the top. The laundry basket was then placed on this frame giving Fred easy access to the clothes and making it easy to remove without bending. The frame was powder coat for a durable finish.



Total Design and Construction Time: 10 Hours

Project no. 2011-178 - Wheelchair Tray with Easel & Camera Mount
Technical Volunteer - Terry



Frank had had a stroke in his late forty's and lives in a residential care unit. He wanted to have a small easel on his wheelchair so he could paint. He also wanted a mounting system for his digital camera. Tech member Terry designed a wooden tray that attached to the armrests of the chair with a U-shaped aluminium channel on each side. A Velcro strap at the back held it in place.

An attempt was made to find a suitable commercially available easel but to no avail. So Terry made a bespoke one that was just the right size. This fitted on the tray with two wooden spigots on the easel matching two locating holes in the tray.

An adjustable aluminium mount for the camera was also made. This fits firmly into an aluminium socket in the centre of the tray bringing the camera up to eye level. And when the camera is removed and the easel is in place, a pencil sharpener can be fitted to the central socket.

Total Design and Construction Time: 40 Hours

Digital Photos - Many volunteers are now using digital cameras, so why not take the opportunity to email us photos of your projects. Progress shots and completed photos would be very much appreciated. Remember, a nice uncluttered background is needed, a blank wall is ideal. A good colour contrast between your photo subject and the background is very important.

We are always looking for good photos to use with our publicity and the website. Please keep this in mind when you deliver your next project, a nice shot of yourself with the client and the device tells a three-way story - the client, the new (and often unique) project and you, the technical volunteer. Email your photos to admin@tadsa.org.au

Meet a TADSA Technical Volunteer



Technical Volunteer John delivering his latest project

Technical Volunteer John joined TADSA about 3 years ago and has since been busy designing and making specialized equipment for TADSA clients. John's knowledge and wealth of experience has been fully utilized with the making of various devices, many mechanical that required quite a lot of heavy thinking, planning and finally, construction.

Some projects John has undertaken include -

<i>Motorised Workdesk (mech)</i>	<i>Sponge Holder</i>
<i>Motorised Overtable for Chair</i>	<i>Shower Chair Mods</i>
<i>Electric Overway Table</i>	<i>Phone Holder</i>
<i>Wheels on a Walker</i>	<i>Grooming Aids</i>

John has just completed his latest TADSA project – a Lifting Table for a person who has no arms, but wanted a facility to help him prepare his own food. This job was a real challenge (see page 6 of this newsletter), but the end result is excellent, the client now has more independence in his kitchen.

We all have our “best time of the day to think and work”, In John's case, his best time to think and work is 4am onwards. So for the past few months, John has been getting up around 4am, sometimes even earlier, to work in his outside workshop on this project and remember, we have just experienced a very cold winter! Total time that John spent on this project (design and construction) is 367 hours and that is a conservative figure. We must also acknowledge and thank Mavis, John's wife for being so understanding and supportive of the work John has been doing for his TADSA clients.

We have many wonderful TADSA technical volunteers, all with good skills, experience and enthusiasm. Of course we appreciate all the good work done by our technical volunteers, but in John's case however, there is a difference. You see... John has Parkinson's Disease – and this is a two way story. Whilst keeping busy helping other people with disabilities (and we are certainly helping him out there!), John finds his Parkinsons is under better control.

Disability is a personal thing, and everyone deals with it in their own best possible way. But keeping that positive attitude and a little sense of humour along the way must certainly help. John's positive attitude, sense of humour and desire to help others is truly inspirational.

How High is a Piece of String?

Two workmen were standing at the base of a flagpole looking up. A young woman walked by and asked them what they were doing? Paddy replied, “We're supposed to be finding the height of this flagpole, but we don't have a ladder.”

The young woman opened her handbag and took out an adjustable spanner. She loosened a couple of bolts through the bottom of the pole and laid the flagpole down. She took their tape measure and proceeded to measure the pole. She then turned to them and announced the length of the pole as 7.5metres, then walked off. Paddy turned to Mick and said, “Isn't that just like a woman! We need to find the height and she gives us the bl...y length!

Occupational Health, Safety, Welfare & Environment

Petrol Safety (part 1)

General Information

Petrol, when ignited in a controlled manner to power engines, serves a very useful purpose. Because it is so commonplace, however, we sometimes take its presence for granted without realizing how dangerous it can be. The same quality of explosive ignition that makes petrol so valuable as a fuel can cause terrible injuries when it is handled carelessly or used for a purpose for which it is not intended. Petrol and other flammable liquid-related burns, however, are a preventable problem. These accidents are often associated with careless use (misuse) of petrol.

Most accidents occur in the summer months due to an increased use of petrol for farming or recreational purposes (i.e. bonfires, burning leaves, boating, yard work, etc.). A lack of understanding of the explosive nature of petrol by the general public seems to contribute to both its improper storage and misuse as a solvent, engine primer or fire starter. Petrol burns decrease markedly in winter months except burns associated with carburetor priming to start cars. Although anyone can be injured in a petrol or flammable liquid related incident, the highest rate of petrol-related injuries occurs among those whose use petrol in their work, such as mechanics, yard maintenance, heavy duty and light power equipment operators.

Petrol associated with recreational activities such as boating, camping and barbecue grilling can cause burn injuries. Most injuries associated with these products occur in the home, however, where the improper use and storage of petrol and other flammable liquids can result in the both body and property damage. Knowing how to prevent these injuries can protect you and those you love from a devastating burn injury.

The first step to ensure a safer home environment is to increase your awareness and identify potential hazards. The next step is to make the necessary changes in behavior and your environment. Change in the environment and modifying high-risk behaviors involves eliminating the cause of the problem, thereby reducing the risk.

Portable Petrol Containers – *Extreme care should be taken when storing petrol.*

- The container must have a tight fitting cap for both the spout and vent.
- The container should be predominately red in colour and properly labelled, "PETROL". It should also bear a warning label about the dangers of petrol.
- Metal containers when grounded, provide the greatest protection against fires caused by static electricity.
- Never use glass or plastic bottles for transporting or storage of petrol

Portable Container Procedures

Never siphon petrol by mouth. It can be fatal if swallowed. Because portable containers are much smaller than vehicle fuel tanks, they fill a lot faster. To prevent over-filling or a spill, the consumer needs to carefully control fuel flow when filling a container. The container should be filled only 95% full. The remaining air space allows room for the petrol to expand if it warms up later. Otherwise, expansion could force liquid petrol out of the container or distort the container.

The filling location should be a safe distance (about 2 metres) from the consumer's vehicle and other vehicles. Engines that have just been turned off have hot surfaces (exhaust manifold and catalytic converter) that could ignite petrol vapour.

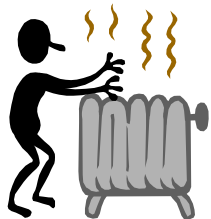
Extreme care should be taken when opening petrol containers, especially in warm or hot conditions. Ensure there is no ignition source (pilot flames, running engines, cigarettes etc.) within 2 metres.

(Part 2 - Next newsletter – Small Engines & Petrol Powered Equipment)

Home Safety Information

Using Heaters, Clothes Dryers & Electric Blankets Safely

Heaters are responsible for a large number of house fires in Australia every year. Use heaters safely to protect you and your home.



Reducing the fire risk from heaters

- Never leave heaters unattended. If a fire starts it could spread through your home before you are able to respond.
- Keep clothes, upholstery, curtains and other material that could catch fire at least a metre away from the heater at all times. The majority of house fires are caused by people hanging clothes or towels to dry on or in front of the heater.
- Make sure portable heaters are secured upright and not left in locations where people or pets could knock them over.
- Avoid using portable heaters on table tops unless they are secure and designed for that purpose. There is a risk of heat damage to the table top and if it falls off it could damage the heater and start a fire.

Electric heater safety

- Don't plug electric heaters into powerboards, double adaptors or extension cords with other appliances. Heaters consume large amounts of power and may overload the supply and cause a fire.
- Before using an electric heater check the condition of the appliance and power cords for obvious damage. If there is damage contact an electrician or the service technician to fix it.

Gas heater safety

- Never use gas heaters designed or marked for outdoor use inside. They are a fire risk and can also release toxic gases which can accumulate inside and potentially harm you.
- Using LPG cylinders indoors to provide fuel for unflued heaters or other gas appliances is dangerous and is not recommended.
- Unflued heaters must not be used in bedrooms, bathrooms or small rooms that have no permanent ventilation. Toxic gases can build up inside and potentially harm you.
- Never use your gas oven or stove as a room heater.
- Always check your gas heater is working correctly. Signs of problems with gas heaters may include difficulty when lighting, yellow flames, unusual smells or noisy or inoperable fans.
- Regularly service your gas heater according to the manufacturer's instructions. Always use a [licensed gas fitter](#) for this task.

Clothes dryer safety

- Ensure that the lint filter is cleaned regularly. Lint that has built up can catch fire.
- Follow manufacturer's instructions and only place suitable materials into the clothes dryer.

Electric blanket safety

- Electric blankets should be rolled when stored away. Folding an electric blanket can damage element wires within the blanket.
- When using a blanket for the first time after storage, lay it flat on the bed and check for hot spots as it heats up. Only add sheets once you are sure the blanket will operate safely at a maximum temperature.
- Electric blankets that are not properly maintained can cause fires.
- Avoid using double adaptors or power boards wherever possible.
- Older electric blankets might be damaged and may not have the safety features of modern blankets, so consider replacing them.

For more information - www.sa.gov.au/subject/Water,+energy+and+environment

Disability SA – Equipment and Home Modification Program

The Department for Families and Communities (DFC) oversees a statewide equipment and home modifications program available to Disability SA clients. Disability SA can arrange a clinical assessment of your needs by a qualified health professional to prescribe equipment and home modifications which will promote safety, function and independence. This includes equipment and home modifications for mobility, access, transfers, bathing and personal care, pressure management and seating.

Applying for equipment or home modification - If you wish to apply for an item of equipment or a home modification, or if you are having difficulty using any current equipment, please contact your Service Coordinator or Accommodation Manager who will arrange a clinical assessment of your needs by a health professional, usually through referral to Adult Specialist Services Intervention and Support Team (ASSIST). The supply of equipment and home modifications is managed through Domiciliary Equipment Services (DES).

The types and specifications of available equipment are shown on the DES online catalogue at www.des.domcare.sa.gov.au. DES will delivery and install equipment using fully trained staff. DES also repairs, maintains and replaces equipment.

Repairs and Maintenance – If you require repairs or maintenance to equipment provided by Disability SA-Equipment and Home Modification Program, please contact the DES Repairs and Maintenance Service. The equipment may be exchanged for an equivalent item, but where this is not possible, DES will arrange for repairs to be undertaken in your home or at a DES workshop. DES may arrange another repairer to do the work, depending on the nature of the repairs or maintenance required.

Contact DES Repairs and Maintenance Service.
Telephone 1300 130302 (9am to 5pm weekdays, except Public Holidays). After Hours phone (emergencies only) 8372 1414. Fax: 8193 1258.
 Email: des.frontdesk@dfc.sa.gov.au

DISABILITY GUIDE

Blepharospasm (*Benign Essential Blepharospasm*)

Description - Benign essential blepharospasm (BEB) is a progressive neurological disorder characterized by involuntary muscle contractions and spasms of the eyelid muscles. It is not life-threatening. It is a form of dystonia, a movement disorder in which sustained muscle contractions cause twitching and repetitive movements. BEB begins gradually with occasional eye blinking and/or irritation. Other symptoms may include involuntary winking or squinting of one or both eyes, increasing difficulty in keeping the eyes open, and light sensitivity. Generally, the spasms occur during the day, disappear in sleep, and reappear after waking. As the condition progresses, the spasms may intensify, forcing the eyelids to remain closed for long periods of time, and thereby causing substantial visual disturbance or functional blindness. It is important to note that the blindness is caused solely by the uncontrollable closing of the eyelids and not by a dysfunction of the eyes.

Blepharospasm should not be confused with: Ptosis - drooping of the eyelids caused by weakness or paralysis of a levator muscle of the upper eyelid, Blepharitis - an inflammatory condition of the lids due to infection or allergies or Hemifacial spasm - a non-dystonic condition involving various muscles on one side of the face, often including the eyelid, and caused by irritation of the facial nerve. BEB occurs in both men and women, although it is especially common in middle-aged and elderly women.

Treatment - In most cases of BEB the treatment of choice is botulinum toxin injections, which relax the muscles and stop the spasms. Other treatment options include medications (drug therapy) or surgery. Stress makes all movement disorders, including blepharospasm, worse. Some patients may benefit from a course of stress management from an occupational therapist. Support from family and friends is also important.

Prognosis - With botulinum toxin treatment most individuals with BEB have substantial relief of symptoms. Although some may experience side effects such as drooping eyelids, blurred or double vision, and eye dryness, these side effects are usually only temporary.

For more info -Email: efo33132@bigpond.net.au



Disability Information & Resource Centre (DIRC)

Information Sessions -

The Disability Information & Resource Centre forums provide information sessions on issues within the disability sector. They have proven popular and brings together a diverse group of people who are interested in learning and sharing their experience and knowledge and for others seeking answers to difficult questions.

If you have an interest in issues facing the disability sector these forums provide an excellent opportunity to network with other sector workers, parents and health professionals.

The forums are held monthly at DIRC in the first week of the month, 10.30 – 12.30. The next forum will be on the 1st September and David Hobbs will be presenting information on *Universal Design – Applications for everyday life*.

Pod casts of previous forums are available from the DIRC website and include:

- June – Post School Options – panel presentation
- July – Presenter Richard Bruggemann - Disability in Darkness, Disability Policy 'just problems to be solved'
- August – Presenter Dr Brian Matthews - An overview of disability in the last 30 years

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