

The ARATA Biannual National Conference was held in Hobart, Tasmania from 11-13 August 2010. Nearly over 150 delegates attended from across health, disability and ageing sectors in Australia and internationally. Many consumers of AT were present as well as academics, allied health practitioners, suppliers, engineers and service providers. AEAA was represented by Board Members Maurice Gleeson and Dr Michael Summers; Natasha Layton, and Robert Pask who attended the final day to present at the AEAA led workshop.

Full details of the papers and program are available for viewing at

<http://www.arata.org.au/conf.php>

The following papers and workshops were presented by AEAA members:

1. I Want To Save my Funding Scheme Money but They Won't Let Me!

By Ricky Buchanan and Natasha Layton

What do you do when the equipment on the State Funding List is not the equipment you need? This paper tells the story of Ricky's search for a way to bathe in bed. This journey challenged the capacity of Victoria's Aids and Equipment Program to both support the user expert and to provide an individualised solution. The internet and international supply chain provided a cost-effective solution in the form of a Bed Spa™, eliminating the need for the next-best but far more costly shower trolley. Despite being a piece of equipment for self-care, a category supported by the State funder, Ricky needed to find alternative ways to obtain this non-traditional equipment item. This paper

illustrates a number of economic and person-centered principles emerging from the work of the Aids and Equipment Action Alliance, of which both authors are members. Discussion will centre on principles to improve the tailoring of equipment solutions and therefore outcomes for individuals. Ensuring the device works with the State-funded powered bed is the next challenge!

2. AT Solutions, Personal Care and the Environment

By Natasha Layton and Dr Wilson, Erin

This paper presents data as to the mix of environmental adaptation, personal care, and assistive technologies used by people with disabilities to participate across life domains. This evidence provides empirical support to the AT Collaborations' definition of Assistive Technology Solutions, and supports a call for wider adoption of such broad definitions in policy frameworks and appropriate resource reallocation.

3. Valued Outcomes and Life Domains

By Natasha Layton and Dr Wilson, Erin

Ensuring tools for outcome measurement capture valued outcomes for the person themselves is essential to person centred practice. The validity of life domains approaches is presented using data from a current Victorian study exploring the difference that assistive technology makes to life for people with disabilities.

4. Taking national action on AT policy and funding: a dialogue Facilitated by Michael Summers and Natasha Layton with a Panel of Key Stakeholders

The Aids and Equipment Action Alliance and MS Australia will facilitate a dialogue / workshop to advance a national AT agenda and the development and implementation of collective strategies to bring about improved national and state/territory AT policy in Australia.