

**Date** 20 July 2012

**Subject** e-inclusion kit helps seniors with disabilities get online

A new resource kit that will help seniors with disabilities get online has been launched in a collaborative project between Media Access Australia and the Council of the Ageing (COTA) WA.

Supported by nib foundation, the Helping seniors with disabilities get online manual will be used by COTA members and their computer trainers across COTA WA's 170 member organisations to discover how to access the web, computers and other devices with free, readily available technologies.

Project Manager at Media Access Australia and author of the resource kit, Dr Scott Hollier, said "This manual aims to support seniors with disabilities by providing step-by-step instructions to make it as easy as possible to get online. Once they know how, people will have a lot of opportunities to be included in online media and use other modern technologies."

Ken Marston, Executive Director of COTA WA stated that, "Disability is unfortunately a part of life for many seniors, so this project has been very important for COTA WA."

"We know that, for example, 40% of those aged between 65 and 69 and 88% of those aged 90 years and over are affected by a disability, compared to 3.4% of children aged 4 and under."

"Media Access Australia has been a wonderful partner, bringing a fantastic level of expertise to the task to make this a valuable resource."

Along with their regular one on one computer sessions, COTA WA will hold social media workshops throughout the year, using the manual to provide seniors with disabilities the confidence to use social media to connect and socialise with friends and family, for example, through Skype or Facebook.

The manual will assist seniors with everyday tasks, such as paying bills, finding news and information, watching videos and the use of speech recognition and Microsoft Word to write personal documents with ease.

COTA WA board member, Marie Moloney, who has arthritis, said that "from personal experience, learning to use speech recognition software can be a great asset to anyone with arthritis or any disability that makes using a keyboard difficult. Being able to document my memoirs and short stories for my granddaughters keeps my family history connected."

nib foundation Executive Officer, Amy Tribe, said the project played an important role in allowing seniors with a disability to maintain their quality of life through access to information and social networks.

"The internet opens up a world of opportunities for these seniors, allowing them to connect with family and friends online as well as providing entertainment and the ability to learn new ideas and skills," she said.

"We believe every Australian should have access to such technologies that can significantly improve their lifestyle and this project will help make this a reality for seniors with disabilities in Western Australia," she added.

"We are delighted to partner with Starlight to help deliver such an important program that will assist seriously ill teenagers get through what is a difficult time in their lives," she added.

**-ENDS-**

**For a copy of the manual, more information or to organise a photo opportunity, contact:**

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