

## **Feasibility study for a Rotary training and mentoring program for disability consumer representatives to improve access to telecommunications**

**A joint project of Rotary eClubOne and the Rotary Club of Canberra East, Australia**

### ***Background***

People with disabilities need improved opportunities to access the Internet, telephones and other telecommunications (ICT) products and services.

Government and industry are working on methods to improve accessibility to telecommunications for people with disabilities. To help achieve this, a wide variety of consumer consultative committees have been set up to get direct input from consumer representatives. Disability consumer organisations advocate for and support this approach but have limited funding to participate. Most organisational representatives on these committees are volunteers. Telecommunications is complex, both technologically and in a legislative and regulatory sense. Therefore, there is a big learning curve for the volunteers to effectively represent their organisations, for example relating to vision, hearing or speech impairment or physical disability. There is a small number of people to do this work and the work is increasing year by year.

### ***Vision***

In order to achieve improved access to telecommunications for people with disabilities, representatives from disability consumer organisations will participate in a training and mentoring program for professional skills development in representing their organisations effectively and professionally on industry, Government and regulatory forums and committees.

### ***Objectives***

A feasibility study funded by Rotary eClub One and Rotary Canberra East Club will determine the best approaches for the development of a training and mentoring program. Gunela Astbrink in Australia will be conducting the feasibility study.

The feasibility study will outline the:

1. Structure of the Leadership Program
2. Costing Analysis
3. Identification of Government involvement and possible funding
4. Identification of international linkages
5. Ways forward

### ***Rotary involvement***

Besides funding the feasibility study, a Reference Panel of interested Rotary Club members has been set up. We are keen to hear from other Rotarians who wish to provide input into the feasibility study and join the Reference Panel.

For further information, please contact:

Gunela Astbrink  
[g.astbrink@gsa.com.au](mailto:g.astbrink@gsa.com.au)