



20-21 August 2014 – Sydney Town Hall

Media Release – Thursday 29 August 2014

MOMENTUM FOR A UNIVERSAL DESIGN CENTRE GROWS SAYS COTA NSW

Age Discrimination Commissioner Susan Ryan heaped praise on Australia's first universal design conference, which was held last week. According to Commissioner Ryan, she's yet to encounter an idea "that's as exciting in its ramifications and possibilities as the idea of universal design."

Instigated by Council on the Ageing NSW (COTA NSW) and supported by the City of Sydney, the conference enabled participants to hear from a range of international experts in universal design. Dr Gerald Craddock from the world-leading Centre for Excellence in Universal Design in Ireland gave one of the conference's key-note speeches, which saw him describe how his Centre has helped to create environments and products that are accessible, safe, and easily used by everyone.

"Australians would benefit enormously if we established our own Centre for Universal Design," says Ian Day, CEO of COTA NSW. "People who apply the principles of universal design ask themselves how they can make sure a product, building or environment can be used by everybody, equally. For example, a city designed according to universal design principles will be as easy to get a round for a person with a walking frame or pram as a kid on a skateboard."

"We urgently need our own universal design centre in Australia," added Mr Day. "It would give architects, builders, planners and product-designers practical advice about applying universal design principles in their work."

Mr Day noted that there are strong economic reasons to embrace universal design, as well sound ethical reasons to do so. "We are an ageing society; the cost of retro-fitting homes, buildings and urban spaces is much greater than designing things properly in the first place. The presentation offered by Kay Saville-Smith, director of the Centre for Research, Evaluation and Social Assessment, highlighted how the application of universal design can actually contribute to affordable housing solutions," he said.

Further information about universal design and COTA NSW's Liveable Communities Project can be found on the COTA NSW website.

ENDS

Ian Day is available for interview: 0417 210 234 T: (02) 9286 3860

The conference was organised by Interpoint. It has the support of the NSW Government (keynote sponsor), and the support of the Queensland Action for Housing Design, Australian Network for Universal Housing Design, Local Government NSW, and Institute of Access Training Australia.

Hosted by



Sponsored by



Supported by



Keynote Sponsor



Organised by

