

AUSTRALIAN LANGUAGE GUIDE

Information for persons preparing Abstracts:

The Organisers of the 2nd World Congress on Adult Guardianship in October 2012 will work closely with members of Australia's disability community and hope that the conference will include numerous speakers and delegates with disability to inform our understanding of guardianship law and practice.

The Australian disability community has a proud and successful history of social, legislative and political activism which resulted in Australia ratifying the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in 2008 and the Protocol in 2009 and many other fine achievements.

One of the results of an active and vibrant Australian disability community is the recognition that the way that we write or speak reflects our core values about and respect for people with disability. It is important in Australia to ensure that publications and public addresses embrace the "People First" approach.

A "People First" approach is a way of recognizing the personhood of a person with disability and also recognising and celebrating the diversity that results from disability. It moves the concepts of disability away from a medical (suffering, charity based) construct to a social construct of disability which is consistent with contemporary Australian discourse. On the other hand, overly "politically correct" language is seen as excessive, e.g. terms such as "intellectually challenged" or "specially abled" or "differently abled".

The organising committee is aware that many excellent international speakers may not be aware of the importance that Australians place on language relating to disability and we are concerned that some great speakers and great papers may be undermined by poor word choices rather than a lack of intellectual content or appropriate motivation. This can lead to important discussions being diverted into discussions about language (which are themselves important, but may not be the appropriate focus for the Congress).

Language that in some countries would represent an acceptable manner in which to speak or write about people with disability is not acceptable in Australia and may cause serious offence. Abstracts that contain inappropriate language (that is language that is likely to cause offence or to jar with people with disability and advocates when used in the context of disability) may be sent back by the organising committee for modification or rejected on that basis. To avoid embarrassment to our international guests, the following is prepared as a basic guide for international speakers and delegates who are preparing for the World Congress:

Incorrect term	Correct term
Handicapped Person Disabled Person Patient	Person with disability
The disabled The handicapped	People with disability
Normal, able-bodied	People without disability

Incorrect term	Correct term
Suffering with, sick, ill, stricken with	Has a disability
Retarded Intellectually disabled Intellectually challenged Mentally challenged Mentally disabled Physically disabled Schizophrenic Demented Down's Syndrome person Epileptic Person of unsound mind Blind, visually impaired Deaf and dumb Birth defect, congenital defect	Person with intellectual disability Person with intellectual disability Person with intellectual disability Person with cognitive impairment or intellectual disability Person with mental illness or person with intellectual disability Person with physical disability Person with schizophrenia or person with mental illness Person with dementia, elderly person with dementia Person with Down's Syndrome Person with epilepsy Person with mental illness Person with vision impairment Person with hearing impairment Person with a ... disability since birth, person with congenital disability
Wheelchair bound, confined to a wheelchair	A person who uses a wheelchair or person with limited mobility or person with mobility impairment. A wheelchair is an aid to mobility, not a confining instrument.
Defective, defect, cripple, invalid, normal, abnormal, subnormal, idiot, lunatic, spastic, sufferer, vegetable, retarded, crazy, mongoloid/mongol, deaf mute, deformed, afflicted	All unacceptable terms <i>unless</i> being explicitly quoted from historical texts or legislation
Carer	Usually reserved for an unpaid family member or friend providing care for a person with a disability. People remunerated to provide personal care to a person with a disability would usually be referred to by their job description or generically as "support workers".

People with disability should not be referred to in ways that suggest they are a burden on either family or friends, or on the resources of the community.

It is acceptable to add other qualifiers to the word "person" such as "young person with schizophrenia", "elderly person with dementia", "young woman with an intellectual disability" etc.

Please refer any language enquiries to the conference organiser.