Webinar to explain about the Vision Australia National Library and the assistive technologies it offers

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The National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) is encouraging people to take part in a free Vision Australia Public Library 101 Online Webinar to show people what it can offer.

Vision Australia Community Engagement Library Information Services Coordinator, Anne Ford said whether you are blind, have low vision, have a print disability like dyslexia or have a condition preventing you from holding a book, like Parkinson's, the Vision Australia Public Library can help and the webinar will show you how.

"Often people don't realise we are a free public library so we are holding a webinar to better explain about how the library works and what it offers," Anne said.

"We have Braille and audio books in a whole range of genres, and given we are steadily moving to a digital world, we now have a free app people can download to access all our audio books.

"We also offer some helpful assistive technologies NDIS participants should consider including when they are developing their plans."

Anne said assistive technologies on offer include a specialised 3G Daisy Player. It streams direct to your home. There's also a Wi-Fi player, which can operate off your home internet.

"The 3G Daisy Player has the ability to set up a profile of books you are interested in, then they get streamed straight to your home via the player. All you do is plug it in and it will talk to you," she said.

Vision Australia Library is a national public library and the associated app is free. However, the 3G Daisy Player and the WIFI player are rentals.

"Many of our members are looking to include rental prices in their NDIS plans," Anne said.

There are two rental options: the 3G Daisy Player is $12 a month or $136 a year, and the Wi-Fi player it's $9 a month or $99 a year. It's a bit cheaper because you need a home internet service to run it.

"We've kept prices as low as possible," Anne said "But for some people we understand it is still a lot of money so if they are on an NDIS or a My Aged Care plan, or they have a Veterans Affairs Gold card, we can help them sort it out so it can be included in their plans.

"Personal support is also something people should consider including in their NDIS plans. At present, we can reproduce 360 pages, per person, per year, of written personal information and convert it into Braille or audio free of charge.

"Currently, the NSW Government subsidises it but if you think you may need more, I would encourage people to include it in their plan."

Anne said sight is one thing people take for granted and when they start to lose it, they start losing information.

"So many people tell me they've stopped reading and I ask them why? They say ‘I can't do it anymore'.

"It's a huge mind shift to go from using your sight to using your hearing but I tell them to join the library because it's free and you can access a huge range of books.

"Reading is knowledge, and with such a wonderful resource like our library there's no excuse," Anne said.

You can watch or participate in Vision Australia Library's 101 Online Webinar, on Wednesday 18 April, from 9am to 10am (AEST). Five experienced library staff will be on hand to answer questions. Please be mindful of your data downloads.

For more information, or to register your interest, visit Vision Australia Library's events page or contact Anne Ford via email at library@visionaustralia.org.

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