



# Media Release

For immediate release

## Opening Doors To People with Disabilities

PEOPLE with disabilities face a range of challenges in accessing suitable housing and is the theme of the upcoming touring exhibition, “Opening Doors – Renting for all” opening at the St Arnaud Railway Station - Raillery Gallery, St Arnaud, on August 28 at 2pm.

The work consists of 28 beautiful portraits of people with a disability in their home environment by Melbourne photo artist, Paul Dunn, and a collection of videos exploring their journey into the rental world by internationally award-winning filmmaker, Lawrence Johnston. Both will be in attendance at the opening. These works are also accessible on the opening doors website:

<https://openingdoors.net.au>.

The aim of the exhibition is to break down discrimination and barriers to a range of housing options including access to the rental market.

The Opening Doors project was created for people with a disability and led by people with a disability – guiding them through the process of renting, whilst connecting them to information about the world of real estate.

It also serves to raise awareness and advocate for rights and community inclusion for people with a disability.

Paul’s photography has featured at more than 16 exhibitions, including 10 solo exhibitions at leading galleries and art centres in Melbourne.

Lawrence began his career at as a film repairer at 20<sup>th</sup> Century-Fox, is a graduate of Swinburne’s Film and Television School in Melbourne and his films have been screened and awarded at Cannes, Toronto, Berlin, Telluride, Chicago and London Film Festivals.

The project has been endorsed by The Real Estate Institute of Victoria and was used in Real Estate training sessions during 2020, raising awareness among more 2000 participants from the sector.

The Opening Doors Project was commissioned by AMIDA (Action for More Independence and Dignity in Accommodation) and funded by the Victorian Government.

AMIDA is an independent advocacy organisation which advocates for good housing for people with disability. We provide advocacy to individuals, with priority given to people with an intellectual disability, and advocate for change in systems which prevent people from achieving good housing.

AMIDA strongly supports the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with a Disability and works to assert these rights and community inclusion for people with a disability.

AMIDA acknowledges that people with disability have a right to a choice of who they live with and where they live, to good quality housing which is accessible, affordable and non-institutional.

The exhibition will continue until October 25 is presented in the refurbished historic St Arnaud Railway building in Queens Avenue, St Arnaud every Friday through to Monday from 11am to 4pm.

# ends

430 words.

For further information contact: RHI Vice-chair and Media Manager Jo Postlethwaite 0429 978228

Please note that Lawrence Johnson is available for interview at any time during the exhibition (prior to the launch and in the initial few weeks of the exhibition to accommodate media deadlines).

Pdf photos attached.

Artist Bios also attached for reference.