

Parliamentary Secretary for Disabilities and Children's Services

Media Release

Aussie Diamond sparkles on world disability stage

20/08/2008

The Australian Government today extended its congratulations to Victorian Maryanne Diamond on her election as the President of the World Blind Union (WBU) in Geneva overnight.

Parliamentary Secretary for Disabilities Bill Shorten today offered the Government's heartfelt congratulations to Ms Diamond and also announced \$350,000 over four years to support Ms Diamond in her role as WBU President.

Ms Diamond's appointment was ratified at the World Blind Union General Assembly overnight in Geneva, Switzerland.

"Maryanne is a remarkable Australian," Mr Shorten said.

"She is a totally blind mother of four and her election is testimony to the incredible impact she has made in the advocacy of blind and vision impaired people over the past decade.

"Her journey is an inspiration not only to people with disability but to Australian women with aspirations to senior executive and leadership positions.

"Maryanne is highly regarded in the disability sector, both nationally and internationally, and her elevation to this post is a magnificent achievement."

Ms Diamond was WBU's First Vice President and is Vision Australia's international development manager.

Previously she served as the inaugural CEO of the Australian Federation of Disability Organisations and executive officer of Blind Citizens Australia.

Ms Diamond becomes the second Australian to hold the WBU's top post, following David Blyth from 1992 to 1996.

"WBU is the international voice for more than 161 million people who are blind or vision impaired from around 600 organisations in 158 countries," Mr Shorten said.

"It works to secure equality and maximise participation in society for people who are blind or vision impaired.

"Having an Australian at the forefront of this cause again is really exciting."

The WBU is a founding member of the International Agency for the Prevention of Blindness (IAPB) and has consultative status within the World Health Organisation (WHO).

Unless otherwise indicated in this document, it is Copyright of the Commonwealth of Australia and the following applies:

Copyright Commonwealth of Australia. This material has been reproduced by permission but does not purport to be the official or authorised version. You should make independent inquiries and obtain appropriate advice before relying on the information in any important matter.

If you have any queries, please contact Capital Monitor, a division of LexisNexis Australia, on 02 6273 4899.