**INTRODUCTION**

My name is – Josephine Matthews. My age is 74yrs. (I was a physical education teacher in Victoria, a publican in Benalla, Vic and owned boutiques in Noosa, Gold Coast and Port Douglas).

My disability is Polymositis (Autoimmune disorder). I am at this time 80% paralysed in both legs.

For the last 3 years I have needed a mobility scooter to be mobile and independent. I use a walker and a walking stick to get around the house at home. I live in Far North Queensland, Port Douglas.

**GOAL**

My goal is to work with the Douglas Shire council and Tourism Industry so we can make this area ‘Disability Friendly’.

80% of the income generated in The Douglas Shire including Port Douglas and Mossman comes from Tourism.

Stage 1.

In this Shire we need a mobility map. In this map we could highlight clear signage for toilets, disabled parking and pathways that are disabled friendly. Doctors and phone numbers, chemist locations. Ambulance contact details and taxi phone detail.

Stage 2

On the back of the map:

Accommodation and tours that are mobility friendly.

Stage 3.

Restaurants and retail outlets.

Education for all staff in the hospitality industry.

I have prepared a rough map of Stage 1 and have given it to Council on the understanding they are going to set up an advisory committee.

I am pleased a national disability strategy is being updated with emphasis on:

1. Feeling valued and being a member of the community.
2. That people with disabilities need to be involved in all aspects of ‘designing’ the strategy and the programs and action that affect them.

**VISION**

I would love to see in this new strategy paper th following:

For disabled people to be asked to speak at schools . Perhaps it could be done in the National Disabled once a year or more if practical. Show them our wheelchairs, our mobility scooters etc so it becomes the norm.

The children will educate their parents and friends.

I look forward to that day when I can feel normal in a society that does not understand what our needs are and will give me better mobilty.

Looking forward to hearing from you re the new National Disability strategy and any other information re ideas to make the Douglas Shire Mobility Friendly.