

March 2015

Issue 1, 2015

Phone: 9808 8633  
1059 Riversdale  
Road (PO BOX 302)  
Surrey Hills 3127  
office@meda.org.au  
www.meda.org.au

**meda**  
melbourne east disability advocacy

*Melbourne East Disability Advocacy promotes and protects the rights and interests of people who have an intellectual disability.*

## Greetings friends of MEDA...

### *Breaking News, we're on the move!*

I am pleased to announce that MEDA has been offered an exciting opportunity to relocate the office to the Whitehorse Community Resource Centre in Forest Hill. We plan to transition over the next few months and will keep you informed with updates of the relocation. More information from Jan on page 2.

The year began with the Committee of Management (COM) holding a planning and review day in January. The annual review included the development of a new Strategic Plan 2015 -2018. The review highlighted MEDA's progress and achievements to date and confirmed a collective commitment to continually improve and expand our services, being the main focus of our future goals and objectives.



The staff team are in full swing with many projects and reviews underway, ongoing recruitment of volunteer citizen advocates, expanding community networks, aligning the MEDA quality system to the National Standards, hosting a volunteer partnership event and seeking consumer feedback are just a snapshot of what's high on the agenda for the first half of 2015.



On behalf of the MEDA community we thank you for your ongoing support as we look forward to an exciting year ahead.

Kate Hollins  
President

## Citizen Advocacy Partnership Updates

Welcome to new Citizen Advocate partners Adrian & Peter, Isabelle & David, Sarah and Kathy. We also farewell Volunteer Citizen Advocate, Jacinta. Thank you Jacinta for your support to Carmen & Marie and your commitment to MEDA. You will be greatly missed.



**Inside this issue**

President's Update p1  
 Program Manager's Update p2  
 We are on the move p2  
 National Disability Standards p3  
 Federal Government Funding p4  
 MEDA Citizen Advocacy Partnership Event p4  
 MEDA Citizen Advocacy "Buddy Program" p4  
 Consumer Group Update p5  
 Have Your Say p5  
 The importance of Police checks p5  
 Your information p6  
 MEDA's Newsletter p6

MEDA is funded by the Australian Government Department of Social Services



**MEDA Program Manager's Update**

Welcome to MEDA's first Newsletter for 2015. We continue to support over 30 Volunteer Citizen Advocate partnerships and provide individual advocacy for a number of people with a disability in the Eastern Region .

We have almost completed the review of our suite of policies and documents to meet the new Disability Standards.

We remain proactive in preparing for any Federal Government funding changes and responding to opportunities to work in partnership with other Disability Advocacy Services and the Disability sector.

In the first quarter of 2015 I have been meeting up with all of our Volunteer Citizen Advocates to provide and identify any further support needed and to acknowledge the efforts of these amazing Volunteers.

We have also been connecting with people on our Citizen Advocacy waiting list to ensure that MEDA can still meet their needs and to address any issues of concern if they have arisen.



With Federal Government's recent announcement that Disability Advocacy Services will have their funding agreements extended at least for another 12 months, we can now continue to focus our efforts on strengthening our service to our communities.

**We are On the Move**

MEDA is excited to inform everyone that we have been offered and accepted an opportunity to re-locate and be a part of the Whitehorse Community Resource Centre, located in Mahoneys Rd Forest Hill. This decision to move is both a financial and networking decision where MEDA will be better positioned financially for the future and will have an enhanced opportunity to engage with other local community based organizations and groups. Timelines for re-locating are yet to be confirmed with the move also being discussed with MEDA's Committee of Management and Consumer Group. I would like to take this opportunity to also thank our current landlord Dev & Marjorie Bok for their support of MEDA throughout our tenancy and through this transition.

# National Disability Standards

MEDA is working hard to review our existing suite of policies and documents to meet the new National Disability Standards.

## An overview of the Six National Standards

1. Standard 1 Rights: The service promotes individual rights to freedom of expression, self-determination and decision-making and actively prevents abuse, harm, neglect and violence.
2. Standard 2. Participation and Inclusion: The service works with individuals and families, friends and carers to promote opportunities for meaningful participation and active inclusion in society.
3. Standard 3. Individual Outcomes: Services and supports are assessed, planned, delivered and reviewed to build on individual strengths and enable individuals to reach their goals.
4. Standard 4. Feedback and Complaints: Regular feedback is sought and used to inform individual and organisation-wide service reviews and improvement.
5. Standard 5. Service Access: The service manages access, commencement and leaving a service in a transparent, fair, equal and responsive way.
6. Standard 6. Service Management: The service has effective and accountable service management and leadership to maximise outcomes for individuals.

Although we acknowledge the loss of the Disability Advocacy Standards that honoured the work directly within the Advocacy arena we embrace the New Disability Standards to strengthen our core business of Disability Advocacy.



## Federal Government Funding

Recently the Assistant Minister for Social Services, the Hon Mitch Fifield announced a 12 month extension for the current National Disability Advocacy Program (NDAP) agencies, to 30 June 2016. This includes MEDA. This will enable MEDA and the sector to continue to work with the Government to identify and establish the future of Disability Advocacy programs and to have broader discussions about advocacy in the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS).

Late 2014 our peak body DANA (Disability Advocacy Network Australia) was de-funded amongst a host of other peak Disability specific agencies leaving people with a disability feeling vulnerable and a collective and united voice to Government inhibited.

A recent announcement however has indicated that the Federal Government will provide some transition funds, until the end of June, to these peak organizations to assist them to transition. MEDA will continue to engage with DANA to support a future platform for a peak Disability Advocacy organisation.



## MEDA Citizen Advocacy Partnership Event

On Friday 27th March our Citizen Advocacy partners will be hitting the local bowls club to have a spirited game of barefoot bowls.

We look forward to an opportunity to continue to foster our connection with our Citizen Advocate partners and to provide a social opportunity to bring friends of MEDA together.



## MEDA Citizen Advocacy “Buddy” Program

Feedback from some of our Volunteer Citizen Advocates have indicated that they would like an opportunity to learn from each other in their role as a Volunteer Citizen Advocate. We are looking to both develop up and pilot a Volunteer Citizen Advocate “Buddy” Program where a more experienced Volunteer Citizen Advocate is buddied with a newer Citizen Advocate to support them in their new role and to share learnings and experiences. We are hoping that this will add another support strategy for our valuable Citizen Advocates.



For any further information please contact Jan M 9808 8633.

## MEDA Consumer Group Update

The Consumer Group commenced its 2015 meetings in February. The next Consumer group meeting is scheduled for April 2015. We are discussing a number of items including MEDA's funding, re-location, consumer feedback opportunities, disability sector changes and ideas for MEDA to provide a better service.

One of our Consumer Group members Carolyn sits on the Consumer Group as a leader in supporting others to have a say. Thanks Carolyn.

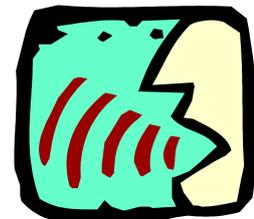
So come and join us. For further information on our Consumer Group ph. 9808 8633.



## “Have Your Say”

EDA is looking to have more opportunities for our consumers and protégé's to have a say. We are fortunate to have the interest of one of our Volunteer Citizen Advocates who will co-ordinate a consumer feedback initiative where we hope to meet up with and get feedback from some of our consumers who are part of either our Citizen or Individual Advocacy Programs.

We look forward to getting some further ideas and feedback so we can strengthen our work and programs through MEDA.



## The Importance of Police Checks

MEDA must both comply and honour our obligations as a Disability Service Provider to ensure that all of our staff and volunteers renew their police checks. We must not forget that people with a disability can be some of our most vulnerable community members and it is our responsibility to reduce any risks to our consumers.



We remain vigilant in both monitoring and renewing police checks.

# Do you want to continue to receive the MEDA newsletter?

## Your information



MEDA continues to ensure that consumer information is kept private and confidential in keeping with the Australian Privacy Act and Principles.

We are currently working on a project where all consumer information will be transitioned and only be kept electronically. We are planning to move key paper documents and information across to our electronic consumer file system and will be archiving hard copies of consumer information. A big but important task is to ensure that we continue to sensitively manage and protect consumer information.

## MEDA's Newsletter

In the September and December MEDA Newsletter a request was made that if you wanted to continue to receive the MEDA newsletter by post you could respond and let us know.

We thank those who informed us.

We have a commitment to continue to send the newsletter to our consumers and other people requesting the newsletter by post.

If at any stage you are wanting to receive this newsletter by email or you are no longer wanting to receive this newsletter please let us know Phone 9808 8633

Thankyou.



### Contact Details:

Please don't hesitate to call or email us if you have any questions or comments about this newsletter. We welcome your contributions. If you do not wish to receive this newsletter, please contact us.

Phone: 9808 8633  
1059 Riversdale Road (PO BOX 302)  
Surrey Hills 3127  
office@meda.org.au  
www.meda.org.au

**meda**  
melbourne east disability advocacy