

Issue 1, 2018

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

Greetings friends of MEDA...

Welcome to the first newsletter of 2018. The year is already shaping up to be a very busy one as the staff see an increase in consumer demand for advocacy in particular as the NDIS is implemented across the Eastern Region.



The year began with the Committee of Management (COM) meeting in early January for our annual strategic planning day to review and develop a new strategic plan 2018 /2021 focusing on our key objectives/priorities over the next 3 years. As always the commitment and focus is to achieve the very best advocacy service outcomes for our consumers and volunteers. The day generated new ideas and strategies determining future activities, inclusive of consumers and volunteers, as we strive to continually improve our services. Other great news received in January was a notification from the Department of Social Services (DSS) that our funding has been extended for a further 2 years to 2020.

Our key areas of focus include:

- Increase the consumer representation on the management committee;
- Maximise our fundraising efforts;
- Raise MEDA's profile;
- Ensure our systems remain compliant.



The staff team are in full swing with many projects and reviews underway, further development of the short-term Citizen Advocacy programme, ongoing recruitment and support of citizen advocacy volunteers, expanding community partnerships and networks, is just a snapshot of what's high on the agenda for 2018.



On behalf of the MEDA community we thank you for your ongoing support, especially to all our wonderful volunteers, as we look forward to an exciting year ahead.
Kate Hollins



Citizen Advocacy Partnership Updates

We welcome short-term Volunteer Citizen Advocate Peter who will be providing advocacy support alongside Marcus with his transition to NDIS.

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MEDA is funded by the Australian Government Department of Social Services

MEDA Program Manager's Update

We welcome friends of MEDA to 2018 the Chinese Year of the Dog, a symbol of loyalty & honesty. Since our last Newsletter in November we have had lots of enquiries for advocacy support particularly around NDIS. Since July 2017 we have provided advocacy support alongside 82 people with 16 people just around NDIS.



NDIS preparation and response:

We continue to engage our short-term volunteer Citizen Advocates to provide advocacy support for people transitioning to NDIS. MEDA continues to monitor NDIS developments, opportunities and involvement in lobbying for changes to NDIS that improve the experience for people with disability.



MEDA's End of Year Event

On November 25th 18 people came together at De-Ganis Box Hill to celebrate the end of another year. It was a great opportunity to share stories and to celebrate the festive season. Thanks to Nicole and Jim for their art work for our Christmas card.

MEDA's 2018—2021 Strategic Plan

MEDA's Committee of Management met in January to review and establish MEDA's new 3-year Strategic Plan. The plan captures MEDA's positioning for NDIS and continued commitment to best practice advocacy.



National Disability Advocacy Program (NDAP)

Recent announcements have confirmed that the National Disability Advocacy Program and MEDA will be funded until 2020. A few changes to the funding arrangements are currently being considered, including more flexibility around advocacy models and an opportunity to contribute to systemic advocacy.



Surveillance Audit

MEDA completed and passed our external surveillance audit in November 2017. Thankyou to everyone who participated and provided feedback to the auditors.

Jan M (Program Manager)

Providing Feedback, Compliments and Complaints

MEDA welcomes feedback from consumers, family and providers.

Feedback whether positive or not helps to strengthen the organization's practice and approaches to providing advocacy.

You can provide feedback by phone, email or letter. You can provide feedback to your advocate, Program Manager or Committee member.

MEDA'S EVENTS

NOVEMBER END OF YEAR EVENT

Friends of MEDA came together to enjoy each others company at De-Ganis café Box Hill November last year. We thank De-Ganis and Manager Hetal for their hospitality as everyone enjoyed an end of year celebration.



Consumer Focussed Feedback Question

For the July to December 2017 period we asked consumers:

“Would you recommend MEDA to a friend?”

Of the 37 responses we received to this question, 100% of the responses indicated that they would recommend MEDA to a friend.

This provides MEDA with some valuable insight into how people are feeling about the satisfaction of advocacy support where they would recommend to a friend.

MEDA's March to June 2018 consumer question, as decided by MEDA's Consumer Group, will be:

“Are you satisfied with your advocates work & knowledge?”

We look forward to everyone's feedback around this question.

National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) Advocacy Your Rights

NDIS Quality and Safeguards Commission

This Commission is a new independent organization set up to keep an eye on things to try to make sure that NDIS participants are safe from harm. The Commission will register and regulate providers, including Practice Standards and a Code of Conduct, respond to complaints and reports of abuse or neglect, and provide advice on key issues. The Commission will roll-out in stages, in line with the phased approach for the NDIS. It will begin as each state and territory reaches NDIS full scheme. The Commission will begin in each state and territory as follows:

- ◆ 1 July 2018: NSW and SA
- ◆ 1 July 2019: ACT, NT, Qld, Tas, and Vic
- ◆ 1 July 2020: WA

Unhappy with your NDIS Approved Plan

If participants are unhappy with a decision made by the NDIA, they can request an internal review of the decision with the NDIA.

If participants still disagree with a decision after the internal review, they can apply to the Administrative Appeals Tribunal (AAT) to conduct an external merits review. An external merits review is an independent assessment of an NDIA decision.

Help is available from a NDIS Appeals support provider <https://dss.gov.au/ndis-appeals>.



NDIS in plain language

VALID - has created a series of plain language videos about the NDIS that people can watch free at any time on their YouTube channel. Share this with your Advocate partner. [VALID YouTube channel](#)

National Disability Advocacy Program Update

In February 2018 the Department of Social Services announced that they will be extending the funding of the National Disability Advocacy Program until 2020. This means that MEDA has had funding extended until 2020.

A few changes to the funding arrangements are currently being considered, including more flexibility around advocacy models and an opportunity to contribute to systemic advocacy.

MEDA is pleased to have funding secured until 2020 and will work to continue to strengthen best practice disability advocacy.

Consumer Group Update

Consumer Group

Members:

Jim, Jodie, Kathleen,
Eddie & Andrew



MEDA's Consumer Group members meet every 2 months. At the last meeting, held in February, the group discussed our next consumer survey, NDIS and advocacy supports, self-advocacy and MEDA's strategic plan. If anyone is interested in joining the Consumer Group please contact MEDA on 9877 7990.

Eddie — consumer group member



We are pleased to introduce one of our Volunteer Consumer Group members - Eddie .

Eddie is one of the newest members of our consumer group and inputs enormously to the group. Eddie is in his mid-20s and lives independently in the community.

What do you like about being a member of our consumer group?

'I like being a part of the group and being able to listen to ideas and input new ideas. I enjoy being able to have a say and voice my opinions.'

What do you do during the day with your time.?

'I enjoy listening to music and playing computer games in my spare time throughout the day. I attend a day group with Burke & Beyond (B & B) 2 days each week. I also attend the Improving Independent Living Skills Program there and is also part of their volunteer program which is designed to learn new work skills in the community setting.'

What are your Interests?

'I like to listen to news, both local and international.'

'My interests include watching a bit of sport, listening to my favourite band Lincoln Park and Powder Finger. I love the Star Wars movies along with watching British and Australian programs on TV.'

What is one thing you would like the consumer group to do or achieve?

'To help people get more ideas around the NDIS and also help people with ideas around communication and other things.'

Citizen Advocacy Program Partnership Event

Volunteer Citizen Advocates and their Citizen Advocate partners are invited to come along to our first 2018 partnership event.

When: Tuesday 27th March @ 6.30pm



Where: Blackburn Hotel. 111 Whitehorse Road, Blackburn

RSVP: By Friday 23rd March Phone: Jan or Honi on 98777 990 or
email: office@meda.org.au

Be a part of MEDA

Become a Member

Do you know you can be a member of MEDA?

Membership enables individuals to vote, to receive updates and support MEDA's purpose.

Membership is \$30 individual, \$5 concession and \$50 for an organization.

Follow MEDA on Facebook or our Web site

Follow MEDA on Facebook. Like our MEDA Facebook page. Join in on the conversation that we are starting to build. Go to MEDA web site www.meda.org.au

MEDA's Newsletter

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.

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.

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