

Issue 2, 2019

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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...

I hope this finds you all well and keeping warm in these winter months. Winter gives us the ideal opportunity to stay indoors and review and reflect on what we have achieved in the first half of the year. The Staff and Committee of Management have been busy working through the objectives in MEDA's strategic plan and are either meeting or exceeding the goals we set earlier in the year.

MEDA successfully passed our External Audit in May thanks to the great work of Jan, Honi and Libby. An enormous amount of work goes into the preparation for the audit and the Committee of Management is grateful for the expertise and diligence the staff applied to the review.

In June, Jan and I met with our Department of Social Security representative to discuss a variety of topics. In particular we raised the increased demand of MEDA services from local government areas outside our geographical catchment and our interest to support the Royal Commission into Violence, Abuse, Neglect and Exploitation of People with Disability. The Royal Commission was established on 4 April 2019. MEDA has been granted additional funding from DSS to support consumers to prepare submissions to the Royal Commission. We will continue to raise debate over the abuse of individuals with a disability.

NDIS access and planning queries continue to dominate the request of support from our consumers as they experience increased difficulties in navigating the NDIS. In particular, staff have provided advocacy for consumers who have no family or independent supports and have had difficulty in expressing their needs and goals with NDIS planners. At times these are met with resistance and delays from planners which reinforces the need and importance of advocacy for consumers.

In sector news, on 1 July 2019 the NDIS Quality and Safeguarding Commission assumed the responsibilities previously undertaken by the Office of the Disability Services Commissioner. The NDIS Quality and Safeguarding Framework has considered the UN Convention of the Rights of People with Disabilities and provides an avenue of accountability for upholding these rights.

A key focus for the Committee of Management is to continue to pursue funding opportunities to ensure long-term viability and increased service to consumers.



Amongst other fundraising activities we are preparing for our annual Trivia Night on the 25th October. There will be plenty of silent auction items and prizes. Tickets are \$25 per person and we are hoping many of you will join us for a fun filled evening. You don't need to purchase a whole table as we have a number of Individuals who we can group together. This is our third year and it is on track to be one of our best.

Mary Appleby
President

Citizen Advocacy Partnership Updates

We farewell Citizen Advocates Isabelle and thank Isabelle for her support of David for the past 4 years. We also bid a sad farewell to Lizzy who recently passed away and was partnered with Citizen Advocate Virginia for the past 19 years see p.6. We also welcome Kent who is matched with Andrew, Ely matched with Derik & Peter matched with Terry.

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MEDA Program Manager's Update

Since the last newsletter we have successfully completed our 3 year audit. The audit provided a great opportunity to showcase the work of MEDA and to hear from people using the services of MEDA. Thanks to everyone who participated in the audit.

We have also had another big financial year providing advocacy.

From July 2018 to June 2019 MEDA has provided direct advocacy support to 96 consumers, provided phone support and referral to another 114 people and provided 6 new long and short term citizen advocacy matches. With two part time advocates and one 5hr / week business support this has been a big year. The demand continues to increase with our top 5 advocacy issues being NDIS Access & Planning, Independent Living Support, Abuse & Neglect, NDIS support implementing & Vulnerable & isolated.

Systemic advocacy has been a new advocacy model that MEDA has been contributing to this last year. With the formation of a systemic advocacy plan MEDA has engaged in strategies to address issues of abuse of people with disability, increased training opportunities for our volunteer citizen advocates and responded to a range of agendas and discussion papers including the Mental Health Royal Commission & the National Workplace Sexual Harassment Inquiry.

Our Consumer focused feedback question for the March to June 2019 period "Would you contact us if you had another problem"? saw 41 respondents with 100% indicating that they would return to MEDA and that "MEDA has helped so much".

MEDA has also had a change of logo and "branding" with thanks to our volunteer graphic designer Vincent see p.6

From July 2019 we have also seen the NDIS Quality and Safeguards Commission come to Victoria. This commission will provide further oversight and opportunity to hear and respond to complaints within the disability sector. We welcome the Commission.

We are continuing to also build our presence and profile within social media and our Facebook page, highlighting a number of opportunities and announcements from the sector and MEDA. Join us on facebook.



Jan M Program Manager

MEDA is funded by the Australian Government Department of Social Services (DSS)

MEDA's 3 year audit

On the 7th May 2019, MEDA undertook our 3 year audit with BSI. The audit provided an opportunity to showcase the great work, practice and systems in place in providing advocacy for people with intellectual disability. We thank everyone who took part in the interviews and provided feedback. MEDA successfully passed the audit.

MEDA's Volunteer Dinner Celebration

Meda celebrated National Volunteer Week by hosting a dinner for volunteers on 23 May. For MEDA this includes our Volunteer Citizen Advocates, Consumer Advisory Group members, MEDA's Committee of Management members and on occasions, other skilled volunteers who support the work of MEDA. We are so fortunate to have such a wonderful group of people who devote their time and skills for MEDA.

We are truly grateful for the dedication of all of MEDA's volunteers.



MEDA's Trivia Night Fundraiser

Come and join us for a fun filled evening of Trivia whilst raising valuable funds for MEDA

When: Friday October 25th @ 7pm

Where: East Kew Uniting Church

Cost: \$25 / person

RSVP: 23rd October, ph. 98777 990 or email office@meda.org.au

BYO: nibbles and drinks to share at your table & coins for fun activities

TRIVIA
night
FUNDRAISER

National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) Quality and Safeguards Commission

The NDIS Quality and Safeguards Commission is an independent agency established to improve the quality and safety of NDIS supports and services.

“We work with NDIS participants, service providers, workers and the community to implement a new nationally consistent approach so that across Australia participants can access services and supports that promote choice, control and dignity. We regulate NDIS providers, provide national consistency, promote safety and quality services, resolve problems and identify areas for improvement”

Mr Graeme Head was appointed in December 2017 as the inaugural Commissioner to lead the NDIS Quality and Safeguards Commission.

Graeme has a wealth of experience in policy, public administration and regulation, including senior roles in both environmental and consumer protection regulation.



Quality & Safeguards Commissioner
Mr Graeme Head

Royal Commission into violence, abuse, neglect & exploitation of people with disability

The Royal Commission into Violence, Abuse, Neglect and Exploitation of People with Disability was established on 4 April 2019 by the Governor-General of the Commonwealth of Australia, His Excellency General the Honourable Sir Peter Cosgrove AK MC (Retired).

The Hon Ronald Sackville AO QC has been appointed as Chair of the Royal Commission. Mr Sackville will be supported by five other Royal Commissioners:

- Ms Barbara Bennett PSM
- Ms Andrea Mason OAM
- The Hon John Ryan AM
- Dr Rhonda Galbally AC
- Alastair McEwin AM

The Commission has the power to:

- find out about abuse
- tell the public what they find.

They can do this at public hearings and they might also use other ways to gather information.

The Commissioners understands how hard it can be for some people with disability to communicate.

They acknowledge that it's important that we make sure people feel safe enough to tell their stories.

MEDA is committed to providing advocacy support alongside people with intellectual disability so they can have a voice at this Royal Commission

Consumer Advisory Group Update

Consumer Group

Members:

Jim, Jodie, Kathleen,

Eddie & Andrew



MEDA's Consumer Group members meet every 2 months. At the Consumer Advisory Group meetings in May and July a number of topics were discussed including MEDA's audit and participation, the Royal Commission in the Mental health system, recruitment of new members, Royal Commission into the abuse of people with disability and ways to engage and preparing for second NDIS plan. If anyone is interested in joining the Consumer Group please contact MEDA on 9877 7990.

MEDA Life Member Profile—Carolyn Thomas

MEDA is privileged to have a number of volunteers who for their outstanding years of commitment and work with MEDA are awarded Life Membership. Over the next few newsletters we will introduce some of our Life Members.

Carolyn Thomas (reflections made in the absence of Carolyn being able to contribute)

Why do you volunteer for MEDA?

I enjoy catching up with the people at MEDA in particular I used to host the Committee of Management meeting. My friends are from MEDA.

What have been your volunteer roles with MEDA?

I have been on the Committee of Management for many years now and had the honour of being the consumer representative. I was also involved with MEDA's Consumer Advisory Group. For many years I have also had a Volunteer Citizen Advocate, Merrilyn and we are good friends.

What is one memorable time as a volunteer with MEDA?

I used enjoy all of the social events with my Citizen Advocate Merrilyn. Hosting the Committee meeting also a highlight



was

MEDA Life Member
Carolyn Thomas



In Memory of Lizzie

On the 9th April we sadly lost Lizzie (Elizabeth) Miller. Lizzy passed away in her sleep at home. For 18 year Lizzy was supported by Virginia one of our dedicated Volunteer Citizen Advocates.

We are most grateful to Virginia and we acknowledge the sad passing of Lizzy. May Lizzie rest in peace.

MEDA's New Logo

With thanks to Vincent Chen, our Volunteer Graphic Designer, we have had the opportunity to refresh MEDA's logo. We will slowly be updating the logo on all of our material. Thanks Vincent



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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