

Issue 1, 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...

As we start to see a change in seasons we reflect on the past few months and realise how busy we have been. In February the Committee of Management met for a planning day where we reviewed our progress on MEDA's Strategic Plan 2018-2021. Overall, we have achieved many objectives and are either ahead or on track to accomplish others .

One key area of focus for the Committee of Management for 2019 is to develop our marketing and communications plan to aid raising awareness of fundraising activities.

Our key fundraising activities for the year include;

Mother's Day photo shoot – 28<sup>th</sup> April

Virtual Golf night – 21<sup>st</sup> June

Trivia night – 25<sup>th</sup> October

Please mark your diaries and contact the MEDA office if you are interested in attending any of these events. We always have a great night and often it is an opportunity to mingle with others in our MEDA community.

Another key area of focus for us is to strengthen our membership and partnerships. We are undertaking an internal review of our membership policy and how we can grow our base. Building upon our membership we will hope to increase consumer participation to aid inclusion.

In sector news, Federal social services Minister Paul Fletcher announced that people with disability and those involved in the disability community will have the opportunity to take part in developing the National Disability Strategy to direct policy from 2020 onwards.

An open public survey, face-to-face community workshops in all states and territories, and an online forum will take place between April and June as part of the consultation process.



Launched 10 years ago the National Disability Strategy has made little progress in the development of disability policy. Whilst the NDIS is valuable social reform, it has not addressed some of the key areas identified in the strategy. This is supported by a recent review by the Productivity Commission which found very little progress for people with disability in this country.

MEDA will continue to advocate and contribute to these discussions.

Mary A—President

## Citizen Advocacy Partnership Updates

We farewell Citizen Advocates Marina and Kerrie and thank them for their support of their Citizen Advocate partners. We also bid a sad farewell to Alf who passed away on the 16th March 2019 and was partnered with Citizen Advocate Brian see p.6

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## MEDA Program Manager's Update

2019 has started off as another busy year. From June to the end of December 2018 MEDA has provided advocacy alongside 85 people with disability whilst addressing 98 individual advocacy issues. The top 5 advocacy issues have included NDIS, independent living, finances, accommodation and abuse

MEDA staff are always distressed when we are engaged as advocates around issues of abuse and we welcome the Federal Government's

announcement of a Royal Commission into the violence, abuse, neglect & exploitation of people with disability, with the Terms of Reference currently being developed.

MEDA's Committee of Management held their annual planning day on February 16th with the agenda including a review of MEDA's strategic plan & discussion around areas of funding, marketing, fundraising, membership and a recently completed governance health checklist.

An important decision was made to include within the 2018-2021 strategic plan an objective to strengthen the organisation's commitment to engaging people with disability / lived experience . MEDA will "increase the number of people with disability / lived experience engaged in MEDA's governance, advisory groups, membership, volunteer and paid workforce".

MEDA jointly submitted an application for the Victorian Disability Advocacy Futures Grants to explore & further research the application of the supported decision model alongside Villamanta Disability Rights Legal Service and VALID.

MEDA is also engaged in the VCOSS Strengthening Sector resilience project with a focus on supporting organisations to be better positioned for ILC funding and developing user led approaches.

MEDA continues to get regular feedback from consumers through our consumer focused feedback question. The September —December 2018 question "Is your advocate willing to help you?". 98% of respondents said yes with 2% said no as this person preferred to be matched with a female citizen advocate.



This feedback is part of our commitment to continuous improvement and with our 3 year audit coming up in May will be valuable to share.

Jan M Program Manager

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

## MEDA's 3 year audit

On the 7th and 8th May 2019, MEDA will be undertaking a 3 year audit with BSI. We will be making contact with consumers and volunteers to participate in our audit. The audit provides a great opportunity for reflection & identifying strengths and gaps. We thank you in advance for your participation.

## MEDA's Citizen Advocacy Partnership Event



What a fantastic evening at the Blackburn Hotel for our Partnership evening on 26/March. It was a great opportunity for everyone to come together and talk about how they support their partner's, along with some of the challenges they face. It is an opportunity for our consumer advisory group members and our committee to also meet and spend time with the people that Meda support. Thankyou everyone for a great turn out.

## MEDA Mothers Day Fundraise Event

- When: Sunday 28th April
- Appointments: Proposed 15min appointments from 10am
- Cost: \$50 for 3 digital images
- Where: TBC
- To book Ph. 98777 990



## National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) Complex support needs pathways

*The NDIA has announced the new Complex Support Needs Pathway for those living with disability that have many different challenges impacting on their lives, such as mental health issues, incarceration or homelessness.*

This new pathway is a result of feedback from participants and providers

It is estimated that 10 to 15 per cent of NDIS participants may require complex support.

The new pathway will have dedicated planning teams from the NDIA, with a network of specialised planners that have strong experience in high-level coordination and/or allied health experience.

A key feature of the new pathway will also include support coordinators to assist with the development of service plans and agreements with a strong focus on maintaining a participant's critical supports.

The new pathway will be progressively rolled out commencing in the Brimbank, Melton and Western Melbourne areas of Moonee Valley, Maribyrnong, Hobsons Bay and Wyndham.

For more information, please

visit [www.ndis.gov.au/pathways-experience](http://www.ndis.gov.au/pathways-experience).

The logo for the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) is displayed in a purple rectangular box. The word "ndis" is written in a lowercase, white, sans-serif font.

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

People with disability, and other stakeholders, have the chance to provide feedback on draft Terms of Reference for a Royal Commission into Violence, Abuse, Neglect and Exploitation of People with Disability.

The Government will seek the Governor-General's approval to establish a Royal Commission after the public consultation is completed.

The Royal Commission will focus on what governments, institutions and the community should do to prevent and respond to violence, abuse, neglect and exploitation of people with disability.

It is likely to cover all forms of violence, abuse, neglect and exploitation of people with disability, no matter where it happens. It also seeks suggestions on how to make the Royal Commission more inclusive and accessible for people with disability. This consultation does not seek specific information on cases of abuse or violence.

You can have your say on the Terms of Reference by completing the public survey. An Easy English guide and Auslan video are available along with further information about the consultation process.

If you have queries about the survey or the terms of reference, contact:

T: 1800 880 052

## Consumer Group Update

Consumer Group

Members:

Jim, Jodie, Kathleen,  
Eddie & Andrew



MEDA's Consumer Group members meet every 2 months. At the first meeting for 2019, held in February the group discussed the options for the next consumer focussed feedback question, how MEDA could strengthen the engagement of people with disability / lived experience and a potential slogan for MEDA. If anyone is interested in joining the Consumer Group please contact MEDA on 9877 7990.

## MEDA Life Member Profile—Merrilyn

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

### Merrilyn Shepherd

#### Why do you volunteer for MEDA?

I volunteer as a Citizen Advocate because I believe we all need companionship and the joy it brings and when I am with Carolyn I receive that joy fourfold.

Without family to provide warmth and fellowship people can become very isolated and it has been an honour to fill the gap as family. It is like having another niece.

#### 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 President. It is where I met Carolyn my partner in the program. She has been voice of those with an intellectual disability for a very long time. I was asked to help her at a time when there were changes in Carolyn's accommodation and she was rather anxious about where she would be living in the future. We have had lots to talk about over the years.

#### What is one memorable time as a volunteer with MEDA?

There have been many great times but I guess one that stands out is when the decision was made to move the Committee Meetings to Carolyn's home. To see her as our hostess and to watch her as she cared for us was a great thrill and I thank the Committee for accepting the invitation.

Merrilyn and Carolyn together



## In Memory of Alf

Alf and Brian - Volunteer Citizen Advocate partners. Thankyou Brian for your dedication to Alf as his Citizen Advocate, promoting and protecting Alf's rights.



"I joined MEDA about 20 years ago and was introduced to a little Italian chap named Alf Di Palma who had been born in San Lupo Italy. When I met him Alf had a severe disability and was a resident of the Alexander Nursing home in Clayton. With the aid of a walking frame Alf was able to get around and I was able, on a regularly basis, to take him for a drive to the Waverley Gardens Shopping Centre where we would have a coffee and a donut and discuss his favourite topics, cricket and football. Unfortunately Alf's health rapidly deteriorated and on Saturday 16<sup>th</sup> March I received the sad news that Alf had passed away. Thanks for everything Alf. You gave to me far more than I was able to give you. Brian L

## 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](http://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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**meda**  
melbourne east disability advocacy