

Melbourne East Disability Advocacy

M E D A

Newsletter

Disability Rights are Human Rights.

Outgoing President's Update (from MEDA's 2022 Annual Report)

It is through the hard work of our staff, volunteers and committee of management that MEDA as an organisation is able to carry out the work.

I thank and commend everyone that is involved in MEDA for the successes that we have had this year.



I would like to acknowledge the Department of Social Services (DSS), our supporters and donors for their generosity.

Our management and staff have continued to provide amazing service, improved our processes and coped with the challenges that the third year of the global pandemic have brought. The NDIS, abuse/neglect and discrimination have continued to be significant issues that our staff have supported consumers in dealing with.

The Consumer Group has continued to meet every month and has provided valuable advice to the committee of management in making decisions.

Our committee of management has recruited three new members, Lachlan E as treasurer and Edward Elder (newly elected President 22-23 term) & Beryl Power (not re-nominated for 22-23 term). I am very pleased to welcome our new committee members and look forward to the contributions they will make to MEDA in the years to come.

I would like to thank the other committee members who have all been with MEDA for several years - Eddie C, Debbie O and our vice-president Mary A. It is with sadness that I advise I will not be nominating for the 22-23 committee again as family and work commitments are taking up an increasing amount of my time.

The first 2023 Newsletter & Presidents Update will be from incoming President Edward E.

Will Elder
Outgoing President



Welcome to MEDA's third newsletter for 2022. A busy few months with MEDA's AGM, a fundraise movie event and engagement with a number of systemic advocacy priorities. Demand for individual advocacy remains high with our wait list remaining steady, We continue to be privileged in supporting people to share their stories with the Disability Royal Commission with one of our advocates being by someone's side for a public hearing. Our Systemic Advocacy continues to be busy and has included feedback around the Disability Services Act & the new National Centre for Disability. MEDA has welcomed new Disability Advocate Mike who brings a great deal of passion and knowledge to the advocacy role but we have sadly farewelled Advocate, Miranda and Business Support Officer, Tina. We also welcomed new Committee members Edward E & Lachlan E, farwelled Will E & Beryl P and thank Mary A, Deb O & Eddie C for their continued committment. We are hoping with the closing of the Disability Royal Commission that the value and investment in advocacy is highlgihted and supported.

Jan M EO

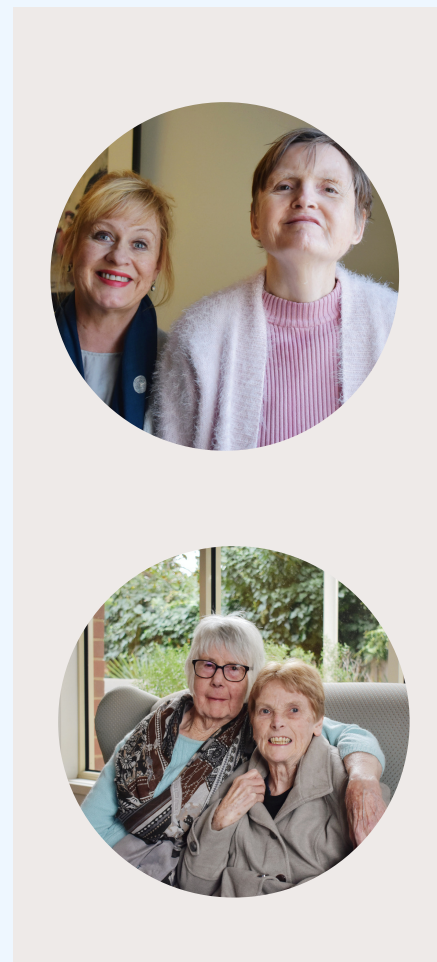
Citizen Advocacy Program & Partnerships Update

Since our last newsletter we have had no new partnerships but we have honoured at our AGM the following Citizen Advocates & volunteers for their service to MEDA.

5+ years - Jim V, Eddie C, Libby H, Ali G, Emily D, Matthew L & Will E

10 + years - Mary A, Robyn T, Alan D, James T, Kathleen B, Vickie V-T, Tom F & Ainsley C

Life Membership awarded to Greg J



Disability Royal Commission Update



As the Disability Royal Commission (DRC) closes on 31st December 2022, MEDA have been busy finalising submissions alongside consumers who are sharing their story with the DRC to ensure all story's are submitted before the end of this year. To date, MEDA has had the honour and privilege of supporting over 60 people with disability to share their stories of violence, abuse, neglect & exploitation with the Disability Royal Commission. MEDA have also submitted 3 separate case-study submissions to the DRC:

- sharing the stories of LGBTIQ+ people with intellectual disability
- sharing the stories of Aboriginal and Australian and Torres Strait Island people with disability.
- case studies that highlight the integral role of advocacy in promoting and protecting the rights and interests of people with intellectual disabilities

The Final Report (from the DRC to the Governor-General) will now be due on 29 September 2023.

MEDA is hopeful of seeing an increased investment and an enhanced profile of disability advocacy organisations as a recommendation from the Disability Royal Commission.

For more information and updates on the DRC go to:
disability.royalcommission.gov.au/

NDIS & Advocacy Update

NDIS have created an Independent Expert Review program to help reduce the number of cases needing to go through to an Administrative Appeals Tribunal hearing.

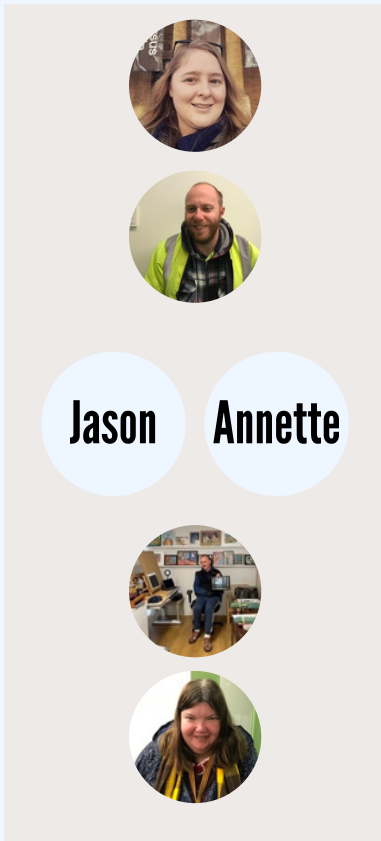
The Independent Expert Review program involves an Independent Expert reviewing a matter that a participant has already sought to have reviewed externally.

The Independent Expert will make a recommendation. The IER is a free, voluntary and confidential process. The Independent Experts are independent from both the NDIA and the participant.

The Independent Expert's recommendation will be given to the participant (and their representative) and the NDIA. If both parties agree to accept the recommendation, the matter can be settled quickly. Alternatively, if the parties choose not to accept the recommendation, the matter will continue through the AAT process.



Consumer Advisory Group Update



The Consumer Advisory Group has been busy for the past few months! In September they made some recommendations for changes to our exit survey. The group also had a teamwork training day in October. And in November, we had our last meeting for the year, where the group provided us with feedback about what they think makes a good and bad MEDA advocate.

This group is an opportunity for volunteers with intellectual disability and acquired brain injury to give feedback and suggestions for making MEDA better, as well as helping us speak up for important issues about disability rights in our systemic work. We meet monthly on the 2nd Wednesday of each month. If you'd like to join this group, get in touch!

Phone: 98777990
Email: office@meda.org.au



2023 Citizen Advocacy Conference

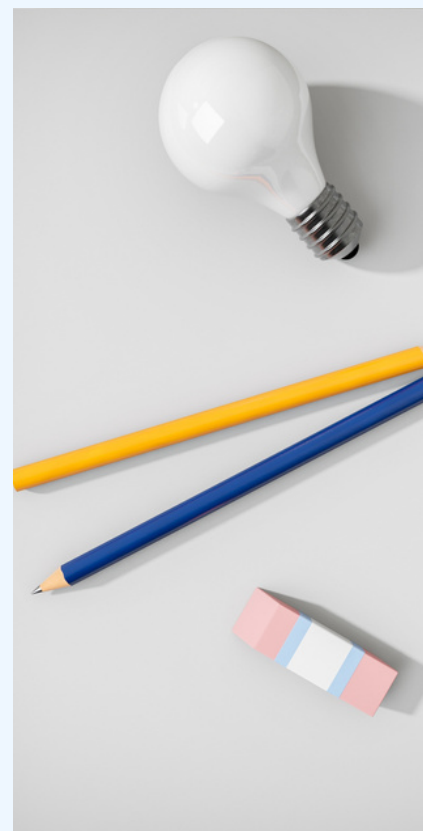
Advancing Citizen Advocacy Conference - "Strong Boards, Strong Practice, Strong Co-ordinators"

This conference will enable people involved in, or wanting a better understanding of, Citizen Advocacy to come together either face-to-face or online. The aim of the event is to secure the future of Citizen Advocacy through strong boards, strong coordinators and strong practice.

11th & 12th Feb, 2023: 9am - 5pm, Melbourne

Register online
More information

<https://advancingcitizenadvocacy.info/>



Other News etc

MEDA's work with LGBTIQ+ people with disability

MEDA has been doing some work to be a more inclusive and safe space for LGBTIQ+ people with disability to seek advocacy support from. LGBTIQ+ is a short way to say lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans and gender diverse, intersex, queer and asexual.

Why is MEDA doing this work?

LGBTIQ+ people with a disability experience reduced access to services and supports throughout their lives. LGBTIQ+ people with a disability wanting to explore the LGBTIQ+ community and find supportive ways of understanding diverse bodies, genders, and/or sexualities may face some barriers and gate-keeping - often because of risks perceived by others.

If left unaddressed, these barriers and lack of access can result in serious consequences for LGBTIQ+ people with disability. The role of organisations like MEDA is to address these potential barriers alongside LGBTIQ+ people with disability.

Some of the work MEDA has been doing

- Staff training
- Building our knowledge of relevant resources and services that we can connect the LGBTIQ+ people with disability we work with to.
- Updating our policies and forms to be more LGBTIQ+ inclusive.
- Connecting with LGBTIQ+ organisations and disability organisations about the support we can offer LGBTIQ+ people with disability.



MEDA acknowledges the Wurundjeri people of the Kulin nation as the traditional custodians of the land on which we work and live and we pay respect to Elders past, present and emerging.

Disability Information Helpline & Gateway - COVID-19

1800 643 787



@melbourneeastdisabilityadvocacy



office@meda.org.au



<https://meda.org.au/>



Long Time Healing Mob

The symbols at the top represent people with disabilities. The next symbol represents the long hard journey that they have been on to finally arrive at the Royal Commission. The Elder symbols represent the head of Court and below, the people before the Court during the Royal Commission process. The last symbols represent the healing of those people with disabilities that needs to take place after the Decision has been finally handed down.

Artist: Paula Wooton