

## Melbourne East Disability Advocacy

**M E D A****Newsletter**

Disability Rights are Human Rights.

---

**President's Update**

Dear MEDA Community,

As winter is approaching, the days shortening and the temperature dropping, it was wonderful to get together with MEDA staff and volunteers in May at the National Volunteer Week Dinner organised and hosted by our MEDA staff. It was a great opportunity to meet new volunteers and reconnect with other MEDA volunteers, and enjoy a lovely meal all while acknowledging the important work of volunteers. The Committee of Management is pleased to announce two new members, Ken Nakagawa and Natalie Jarosch, who have recently joined the committee. I, along with the Committee, are excited to work with both Ken and Natalie. Their diverse backgrounds and experiences will be of great benefit to MEDA.

The Committee has been working hard to finalise the 2023/24 budget while also looking to see how we can best support the MEDA staff through updating the Instrument of Delegation to empower our team, leading to more freedom, faster responses and less red tape.

Keep your eyes out for more information regarding our Trivia Night coming up in October. If you have any items to donate to our Silent Auction for the event the Committee will be keen to hear from you.

**Executive Officer's Update**

Since MEDA's last newsletter it has been a busy time continuing to respond to individual advocacy requests, finalising support and stories for the Disability Royal Commission & onboarding new Volunteer Citizen Advocates & Committee members. Time has also been spent developing up MEDA's response to the "Voice to Parliament", contributing to consultations on the development of the new National Centre for Advocacy and the Disability Advocacy Support Helpline and reviewing MEDA's constitution with pro bono support from law firm Johnson, Winter & Slattery.

MEDA advocates have been supported to complete training in trauma informed practice and MEDA's Committee a governance training session. We also celebrated National Volunteer Week with a dinner with our volunteers. Finally we welcomed Cindy to our team who is raising the profile of MEDA, advocacy & disability rights within our Chinese community. Jan M EO

Edward Elder  
President



# Citizen Advocacy Program & Partnerships Update

Since the last newsletter we welcome new Citizen Advocate Martin soon to be matched.

We have also sadly farewelled Citizen Advocacy partnership with Robyn and Marcia, with Robyn passing away in April 2023. For over 40 years Robyn and Marcia developed an incredible friendship and bond. During this time Marcia as a Volunteer Citizen Advocate was by Robyn's side ensuring that Robyn's voice was heard and she pursued her dreams and passions in life. Robyn will be missed and we applaud Marcia for her incredibly important role as Robyn's Volunteer Citizen Advocate. Vale Robyn 1945 - 2023.



## NDIS & Advocacy Update

National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) participants will have greater support to make their own decisions about their NDIS journey, with the release of the new Supported Decision-Making Policy. This Policy will support and empower participants to take control over this part of their lives.

It was developed in close collaboration with people with disability who will benefit most from supported decision making, including those with complex communication access needs, from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, people with an intellectual or psychosocial disability, or who identify as LGBTQIA+ and First Nations. Supported decision making is the process of providing support to people to make decisions to remain in control of their lives.

The implementation plan has 5 key themes for the NDIA to action, these are:

- Increase opportunities for participants to make decisions
- Support participants to develop skills and knowledge
- Build skills and knowledge of decision supporters
- Build skills and knowledge of NDIA staff and partners
- Strengthen the supported decision-making approach in the appointment, operation and review of nominees

Minister for government Mr Bill Shorten MP, said "People with disability have the right to make their own decisions and have those decisions respected"

Follow the link to read more:

<https://www.ndis.gov.au/about-us/policies/supported-decision-making-policy>



## Disability Royal Commission Update

As the Disability Royal Commission comes to a close on July 30th 2023 the DRC reports that over the course of the DRC Royal Commission 7,944 submissions were received, there were 17,655 phone enquiries, 14 issues papers were published, 710 responses to issues papers were received, there were 1,713 private hearings held, and 33 Public Hearings held.

Last month the Disability Royal Commission held their last public hearing: Public hearing 33 in Brisbane. The Public Hearing explored how and why Kaleb and Jonathon experienced violence, abuse, neglect and were deprived of their human rights.

Also last month the Royal Commission released a report about services for people with disability from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds. 'Towards best-practice access to services for culturally and linguistically diverse people with disability' was written by researchers at the University of New South Wales and National Ethnic Disability Alliance (NEDA).

The DRC will deliver a final report to the Australian Government by 29th September 2023. In this report, the Royal Commission will recommend how to improve laws, policies, structures and practices to ensure a more inclusive and just society. Further updates on the DRC can be found in their monthly Connect Newsletter: <https://disability.royalcommission.gov.au/news-and-media/connect-newsletter>



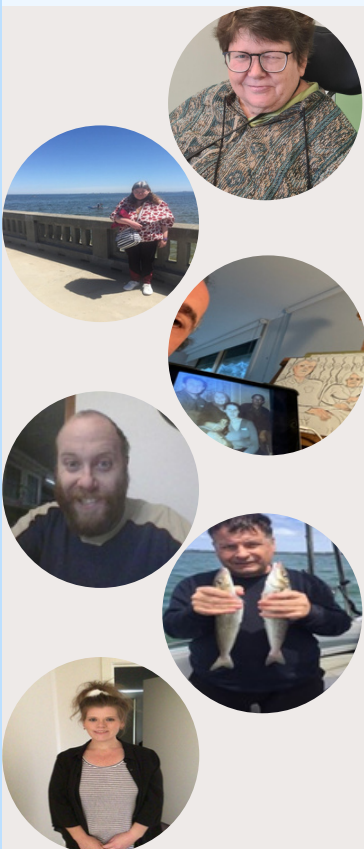
## Consumer Advisory Group Update

The consumer advisory group have added their opinions to the online survey of the Review of Disability Standards for Accessible Public Transport. It was a great opportunity for the CAG to have a say about the public transport system.

We have welcomed a new member to our group last month, Jane, and we look forward to Jane's valuable contributions to the group.

We are currently exploring some training options for the second half of the year for the CAG members and current MEDA consumers. The training will hopefully be run by FVREE, focusing on Building Gender Equality and Respectful Relationships. Other training by Belonging Matters may also take place the second half of the year but this has not been finalised.

The Consumer Advisory group (CAG) is currently meeting monthly, alternating with zoom 1 month and in person the next. We are continuing to look for people who may be interested in joining the group. If interested contact 98777 990



# Strengthening Connections with our Chinese communities

Following reports from the Disability Royal Commission of significantly low submissions from the multicultural community, this suggests these communities may be less informed about advocacy and disability rights and therefore less likely to seek support. MEDA recognised the importance of building greater connections with the multicultural community, in particular the Chinese community who have a high representation in MEDA's catchment areas. Therefore, in April MEDA welcomed Cindy Kung to the team as our first Multicultural Liaison Officer for a short-term project to raise the profile of MEDA, advocacy and disability rights within our Chinese community. MEDA have been very fortunate to work in partnership with the Louise Multicultural Community Centre to engage Cindy for this short-term project. Cindy is the Programs Coordinator at Louise Multicultural Community Centre and comes with a wealth of knowledge and connection amongst the multicultural community in MEDA's catchment areas.

As MEDA's Multicultural Liaison Officer Cindy has been focusing on:

- Producing accessible information for the Chinese community: MEDA Consumer Handbook, Chinese Postcard and MEDA Magnet, translated into Chinese.
- Connecting with local community members and services to share information about MEDA, human rights, zero tolerance to abuse.
- Reviewing MEDA's website to explore multicultural accessible information.
- Increasing MEDA's social media presence within the Chinese community.

Cindy has approached this project with great enthusiasm and commitment and will continue in this role and project through to the end of June 2023.

MEDA倡导者致力于促进和保护智障人士的权益

MEDA是一项免费的宣传服务，由Department of Social Services 资助，旨在帮助人们了解他们的权利并说出他们的需求

残疾人权利是人权

**MEDA** MELBOURNE  
EAST  
DISABILITY  
ADVOCACY

人权  
正义  
公正



MEDA 是一项非政府的独立宣传服务，为居住在Boroondara、Whitehorse、Manningham、Monash 或 Maroondah 当地社区的人们（满18岁）提供服务

请联系MEDA讨论免费宣传服务：

电话：(03) 9877 7990  
电子邮件：office@meda.org.au  
网站：www.meda.org.au

**MEDA** MELBOURNE  
EAST  
DISABILITY  
ADVOCACY



## **MEDA's Statement in support of an Indigenous Voice to Parliament**

**Melbourne East Disability Advocacy (MEDA) acknowledges and respects the First Nations people's deep connection with land and waters with Country, which is central to spiritual identity. We recognise the need for change where First Nations peoples have more say on the laws, policies and services that impact their lives to create a shared responsibility where First Nations Australians can work in partnership with governments.**

**MEDA supports The Voice to Parliament proposal as a recommendation made by the Uluru Statement from the Heart, which calls for the establishment of a First Nations Voice to be enshrined in the Australian Constitution. MEDA is hopeful that this Voice will give Australia's First Nations people a permanent say in matters of national significance affecting them, and the potential to influence policy and legislative decisions that deeply impact their lives and communities.**

**MEDA applauds that the proposal is based on a human rights approach, which recognises the right of First Nations peoples to self-determination and the right to participate in decision-making processes. As such, it aims to ensure that Australia's First Nations peoples have a meaningful and sustained voice in the national conversation about the future of the country. MEDA upholds the right to self-determination as a fundamental human right enshrined in the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP), which Australia has adopted. Article 3 of the UNDRIP states that "Indigenous peoples have the right to self-determination. By virtue of that right they freely determine their political status and freely pursue their economic, social, and cultural development". Additionally, Article 18 recognises the right of First Nations peoples to participate in decision making processes that affect their rights. MEDA actively acknowledges that these rights encompass people with disability and respect the importance and value of their voice.**

**In summary, MEDA supports the human rights approach to Voice to Parliament proposal, recognising the right of First Nations peoples to self-determination and the right to participate in decision-making processes. MEDA is hopeful that the establishment of a First Nations Voice in the Australian Constitution would provide a permanent mechanism to ensure that these rights are upheld and respected in Australia.**

## Artwork by Artist: Paula Wootton, a Tharawal woman of the Yuin Nation with lived experience of disability.

### Long Time Healing

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 represents 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.



MEDA engaged artist Paula W and we now use this art work in our promotional material including MEDAs Voice to Parliament Statement



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\\_](https://www.facebook.com/melbourneeastdisabilityadvocacy_)



[@meda\\_advocacy](https://www.instagram.com/meda_advocacy)



[office@meda.org.au](mailto:office@meda.org.au)



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