



# NEWSLETTER – June 2017

## “Our Voice, Our Choice”

GdA is funded by the Australian Government Department of Social Services under the National Disability Advocacy Program and the Victorian Government Department of Health and Human Services



## SPECIAL NDIS EDITION

### NEW BUNINYONG CROSSING OFFICIALLY OPENED

(from *Ballarat Courier* 15/5/2017)

A new pedestrian crossing at Buninyong will make the notorious intersection safer for people who are visually impaired, a spokesperson for Vision Australia says.

Vision Australia has lobbied for changes to the crossing at the intersection of Warrenheip and Forest Streets for more than three years. The site was identified in 2014 as part of a tour of problematic roads in the Ballarat area, led by Vision Australia regional manager Laura Allison. As a result of community consultation, the new traffic light system will have only red and amber lights, which will only be activated by a pedestrian to reduce the visual impact on Warrenheip and Forest Streets. The traffic light poles – which are shorter than traditional poles – are painted in heritage green.

“VicRoads made changes in Warrenheip Street including reducing the speed limit and creating painted pedestrian refuges, but we kept advocating for our clients in the area and lobbying State Government and the Opposition for funding to achieve a better Solution,” Ms Alison said. The crossing, which received \$350,000 from the State Government, was officially opened by Buninyong MP Geoff Howard (pictured right with Buninyong community members).



### SUMMER FOUNDATION AND THE NDIS

The NDIS is a significant reform, rolling out across Australia, for people with disability to receive the funding they need to live in the community. To ensure everyone benefits, the Summer Foundation established the NDIS Connections Project in February 2014 to find young people in nursing homes in the Barwon (Victoria) and Hunter (NSW) NDIS trial sites, later expanding into the ACT and Perth Hills trial sites. With the commencement of the NDIS in the Central Highlands region in January 2017, the Summer Foundation engaged with the aged care facilities in the area. In doing so, it has provided advice and resources to ensure young people residing in aged care can access the full benefits of the Scheme to increase their independence and improve their quality of life. The Foundations aims to work collaboratively with residential aged care facilities, the National Disability Insurance Agency and participants and families, to ensure that accessing the NDIS is as easy as possible. It continues to provide information and advice for younger residents in aged care, young people at risk of admission to aged care, their families and individuals working in the field. To view the

Practice Guide How to Connect Young People in Nursing Homes to the NDIS, go the website below:

[www.summerfoundation.org.au/resources/practice-guide/](http://www.summerfoundation.org.au/resources/practice-guide/)

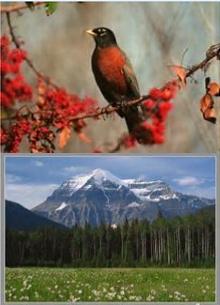
**CONTACT THE SUMMER FOUNDATION**

**on 1300 626 560**

**or go to [www.summerfoundation.org.au](http://www.summerfoundation.org.au)**



Grampians disAbility Advocacy



## Productivity Commission warns NDIS is at risk

By Rachel McFadden, a journalist specialising in the social sector for ProBono Australia News (this article 16<sup>th</sup> June 2017)

The NDIS costs position paper, recently released by the Productivity Commission, confirmed that the speed and pace of the NDIS rollout has compromised the quality of the individual plans being developed.

The paper said ambitious targets, agreed to under the Gillard government, had resulted in “the NDIA focusing too much on meeting participant intake estimates and not enough on planning processes, supporting infrastructure and market development. This focus is manifest in poor outcomes such as confusion for many participants about planning processes; rushed phone planning conversations; inadequate pre-planning support for participants; problems for providers with registering, pricing and receiving payment; and a lack of effective communication with both participants and providers,” the report said.

The Productivity Commission warned of a cost blow-out because more children than expected were signing up to the scheme. Productivity commissioner Angela MacRae said while NDIS costs were still on track the NDIA had identified early cost pressures that needed to be managed for the full scheme.

The report suggested the Government would also need to re-examine policy to address emerging workforce shortages.” A real challenge is growing the disability care workforce needed to deliver the scheme. As many as one in five new jobs created in Australia over the next few years will need to be in the disability sector. There are unlikely to be enough providers and workers as the scheme rolls out under current policy settings,” MacRae said. The report concluded NDIS costs were “broadly on track” with the NDIA’s long-term modelling, based on trial and transition data. “The level of commitment to the success and sustainability of the NDIS is extraordinary. This is important because ‘making it work’ is not only the responsibility of the NDIA, but also that of governments, participants, families and carers, providers, and the community,” the report said. Social policy commissioner Richard Spencer said: “Everyone wants the NDIS to work, but there are challenges to be overcome and work is needed by all governments. Putting the enormous goodwill behind the NDIS into action is needed now more than ever.”

The Productivity Commission is inviting written submissions on the commission’s position paper. Public submissions are open until July 12.

## NDIA to Appeal Disability Transport Ruling as Test Case

By Lina Caneva, a journalist for more than 35 years, and Editor of Pro Bono Australia News since 2000



The National Disability Insurance Agency (NDIA) has decided to appeal a Federal Court decision over funding arrangements for transport costs under the National Disability Insurance Scheme, claiming it will be a test case for the future viability of the scheme. The agency said it had carefully considered the Federal Court decision handed down on 28 March 2017 in relation to the case of 21-year-old Geelong man Liam McGarrigle who has autism spectrum disorder and an intellectual disability. Mr McGarrigle challenged an earlier ruling that the NDIS pay only 75 per cent of his transport costs. The court heard that Mr McGarrigle lived 25 kilometres from Geelong, and spent nearly \$15,850 per year on taxis transporting him to and from his work and NDIS-supported activities. Justice Debbie Mortimer ruled that the decision by the Administrative Appeals Tribunal erred in law and should be set aside and ordered the tribunal to reconsider the matter. The McGarrigle decision is set to benefit thousands of NDIS participants who live in remote localities if the NDIS is made to fund 100 per cent of transport costs. Chief executive of the NDIA, David Bowen said: “Because the court ruling is effectively a test case with implications for the long-term financial sustainability of the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS), the NDIA has decided to appeal the Federal Court decision to the Full Court.” While the NDIS was set up to be able to contribute to some of a participant’s transport costs, the NDIS Act specifically requires the NDIA to fund reasonable and necessary supports that ‘take into account what is reasonable to expect families, carers, informal networks and the community to provide’. Mr Bowen said the issue goes to the long-term sustainability of the NDIS. “The appeal is an important test case which arises from a set of circumstances in the trial phase of the NDIS. It could affect the future of the whole NDIS,” he said.



## The NDIS and vehicle modifications: *quick facts*

\* Funding through the NDIS may be available both for modifications for a person to operate a vehicle, and to gain access to a vehicle as a passenger

\* A participant of the scheme looking for funding to operate a vehicle must have an endorsed licence at the time of request, or have been approved through the "Accessing Fitness to Drive" medical standards.

\* Funding may be available through NDIS for driving lessons, assessments, or additional insurances

\* The NDIA will require that modifications represent value for money that is that the costs of modifications are reasonable relative to the cost of alternative supports

\* NDIS participants should speak to their planners about the possibility of funding vehicle modifications, as eligibility for funding will depend on individual circumstances



ARTICLES COURTESY OF LINK MAGAZINE

### *10 tips for overseas travel*

- 1) Different airlines have different policies on specific disabilities and needs. Do your research first on the airline's website. Most will offer assistance, priority check-ins.
- 2) Allow plenty of time for checking-in, boarding and meeting connecting flights.
- 3) Make photocopies of important documents (or take photos of them on your phone)
- 4) Consider using a travel agent, accommodation provider or tour group who specialise in disability friendly holidays.
- 5) Research your destination. Understand the history, culture and way of life.
- 6) Learn common phrases if travelling to a destination with a foreign language.
- 7) Insurance essentials. Some providers may cover pre-existing conditions, replacement medication, mobility equipment, etc. Always read the fine print.
- 8) It is almost always cheaper to book your accessible accommodation in advance.
- 9) Avoid the stress of misplaced luggage and take your medication in your hand luggage.
- 10) Travelling with a disability takes some forward planning to go ahead.

## It's now easier to find disability advocacy organisations online, using the Disability Advocacy Finder

The Commonwealth Department of Social Services has updated its online disability advocacy finder to now include NDIS Appeals Support agencies and state and territory funded advocacy providers. The finder will also continue to help people with disability find National Disability Advocacy Program services across Australia. The Disability Advocacy Finder makes it easier for people to find the service to meet their needs and can be accessed from the Department of Social Services' website. It's quick and easy to use and you can search by the location or provider type. The finder displays contact details for each provider, their service location and directions to get there through Google Maps.

The finder can also be accessed using your smart phone or tablet.

<http://disabilityadvocacyfinder.dss.gov.au>

## DO YOU DISAGREE WITH AN NDIA DECISION?

NDIS participants or those wishing to become participants may not always agree with a decision made about them by the National Disability Insurance Agency.

If this is the case for you there are things you can do to make matters better.

Grampians Advocacy has been funded by the Commonwealth Department of Social Services to help people with a disability to have their voice heard when a disagreement arises.

Contact GdA to find out how our NDIS Appeals Support Officer can help you to apply for an internal review or to take your matter to the Administrative Appeals Tribunal.

**Call Grampians Advocacy on 1800 552 272 for more information or to get help with the review process.**

## DO YOU HAVE AN EMAIL ADDRESS?

In order to reduce our postage costs, and to minimize our environmental footprint, GdA would prefer to email future newsletters.

If you have an email address please let us know by writing to us at [asas@netconnect.com.au](mailto:asas@netconnect.com.au) with "member email" in the subject line.

Thanks from GdA!

If you would like to include an item of interest in our newsletter, contact the Ararat Office on 1800 552 272.

### SOME WAYS YOU CAN GET INVOLVED AT GRAMPIANS ADVOCACY

*At GdA we value your opinion*

*Tell us what you think:*

Please write in and let us know what you think of the newsletter and its content.

***News articles:***

Do you have any community news or an article you might like us to include in our newsletter?

Please note - all news, articles, stories need to be of benefit to people with a disability.

***Policies:***

Let us know if you would like to attend a forum to review our policies.

***Nominate*** for the Board of Governance at the AGM in October.

***Don't forget*** - the GdA newsletter can come to you in large print, audio format or via email.

If this is your preference please contact us on:

**Free Call: 1800 552 272**

Fax: 5352 2733

*We would appreciate any comments on the service we provide.*

Post your comments to: GdA, PO Box 112, Ararat 3377, or email them to us at [asas@netconnect.com.au](mailto:asas@netconnect.com.au)



[www.grampiansadvocacy.org.au](http://www.grampiansadvocacy.org.au)



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