

# September 2019

## Our Voice, Our Choice

We have introduced our “new look” newsletter, we have made these changes so that you find it easier to read.

We welcome your feedback, suggestions and input, or include articles that are relevant.

Call the GdA office on **1800 552 272**

### NAIDOC WEEK AT THE BALLARAT SHOWGROUNDS



Ballarat & District

Aboriginal

Co-operative



BADAC Naidoc Open Day was held on July 3<sup>rd</sup> at the Ballarat showgrounds.

Western Bulldogs player Brett Goodes (*pictured above*) with Debbie Verdon, the GdA Executive Officer were part of a fabulous day.

Indigenous Hip Hop Project entertained the crowd and held a dance workshop, singer Dave Arden gave a wonderful performance as well.

Support services were present to promote what they do to support Indigenous community members.



### Upcoming Events

**October 14 2-4pm**

#### GdA Annual General Meeting

Church of Christ Auditorium  
91 River Rd, Horsham

#### Special Guest Speaker

All welcome, afternoon tea will be provided, please phone **1800 552 272** for catering purposes or to advise any accessibility requirements.

**RSVP by October 5**

#### International Day of People with a Disability December 3

See page 4

(keep a watch out in your local newspaper for events)



## INFORMATION, LINKAGES and CAPACITY BUILDING GRANTS



*Pictured above (L-R) Carol Starkey Project Officer, EO Deb Verdon, Sherree Unwin Ararat Advocate*

Grampians disAbility Advocacy received \$118,000 to help grow membership and better communication strategies.

GdA Executive officer Deborah Verdon said part of the emphasis of NDIS was to build the capacity within communities to include people with disability.

"We have over 200 members with either a disability or people who are involved in the disability sector," she said.

"The funding will include looking into our board structure, providing training for the board, a review of our membership and working out the ways we can more effectively communicate with our members.

New Project Manager Carol Starkey will be involved setting up peer support groups across the region.

To increase the capacity for people with a disability to

Even though we are known as "Grampians" we cover Western Victoria region from Ballarat right through to the South Australian border. Our offices are located at Ararat, Daylesford, Clunes, Horsham, Stawell & Ballarat.



### Communities of Respect and Equality

WOMEN from diverse backgrounds experience higher levels of family violence and discrimination.

Women's Health Grampians recently employed 11 women from diverse backgrounds, including women of colour, women living disability, or women who identify as LGBTIQ+, as advocates for its "Equality For All" project in a bid to tackle discrimination.

Each advocate made a short film in which they recount their experience of discrimination or family violence.

You can view the advocates short films by going to [www.whg.org.au](http://www.whg.org.au)



**SPEAKING UP:** WHG Grampians equality advocates Shannon Hill and Belinda-Sue Parsons (Coordinator's) share their stories with Equality For All Advocates Joy Juma, Michelle Dunn, Catherine Macharia and Ripsina Chatterjee. Picture: courtesy Adam Trafford (The Ballarat Courier)

## IF YOU RECEIVE BILLS IN THE MAIL, YOU MAY BE CHARGED

### A PAPER BILLING FEE.

Some companies charge customers a fee each time they send out a paper bill. The fee goes toward the cost of printing and posting the bill. If you can't receive bills electronically (via the internet/email format) fee exemptions may be available to you if you:

- are senior
- are registered for a concession
- receive income support or
- don't have internet access

If you don't want to be charged this fee, here are some options that might work for you:

[Receive bills electronically](#) OR [Request an exemption from fees](#)

If you have friends or family who do not have internet access or are on a low income, let them know they might be eligible for an exemption from paper billing fees.

If you have checked with a provider that you are eligible for an exemption, but are having difficulties getting your exemption processed, please contact Consumer Affairs for help.

Call **1300 55 81 81** or TTY users: call **133 677**, then ask for **1300 55 81 81**  
or Speak & Listen users (speech-to-speech relay): call **1300 555 727**, then ask for **1300 55 81 81**.



## New data shows more Australians benefitted from NDIS

The NDIS Quarterly Report for 1 April 2019 to 30 June 2019 shows the strong progress the NDIS has made. The report shows the world-leading NDIS had benefitted more Australians and from increasingly diverse backgrounds than ever before.

It's now exceeded 300,000 Scheme participants being supported, including close to 100,000 participants who have received supports for the first time.

Eligible Australians across almost all areas of Australia now have access to the NDIS.

Over 2,000 participants identifying as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander joined the NDIS and represent 7.3 per cent of all participants. Additionally, 10.3 per cent of participants who received an NDIS plan in the quarter were of Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD).

More children aged 18 years and under were benefitting from the NDIS than ever before.

New results show the NDIS is having a significant impact on children and their families after just two years benefitting from the Scheme. (extracts from article Mirage News Australia 15/ 8 /2019)

## [Fabulous News: Kurt Fearnley 2019 Patron for IDPwD](#)

Kurt Fearnley, an Officer of the Order of Australian, was recently named New South Wales Australian of the Year for 2019. Kurt has also been announced as the 2019 Patron for International Day of People with a Disability (December 3).

Kurt hopes to encourage Australians to take concrete action, to help make change in the lives of people with disability.

“People with disability are entitled to the same respect, independence and choice as others,” he said.

Kurt is undoubtedly one of Australia’s greatest athletes, and a passionate advocate for the rights of people with disability and for inclusion in all its forms.

Kurt has won three Paralympic gold medals, two Commonwealth Games gold medals, and more than 40 marathons. *(Kurt participating at an event pictured right)*

For more info about IDPwD go to [www.idpwd.org.au](http://www.idpwd.org.au)

Australia courtesy of Paralympics Australia



Kurt Fearnley pictured above Image courtesy of Paralympics Aus

## **INTERNATIONAL DAY OF PEOPLE WITH A DISABILITY DEC 3**

Schools are being encouraged to enter the Grow Inclusion school’s competition as part of IDPwD, to raise awareness about the contribution and achievements of people with disability. IDPwD has been began in Australia since 1996.

Students and teachers across the country are encouraged to get involved by holding an event at their school and entering the competition. The winning school will receive \$3,000 in accessible learning resources. It is a great opportunity for schools to start a conversation about disability — to help break down barriers, promote respect and create a more inclusive society for everyone.

Schools can sign up for the competition while registering an event on the International Day of People with a Disability website [www.idpwd.com.au](http://www.idpwd.com.au) where free competition packs, event planning kits, merchandise, lesson plans and other resources are available.

The competition closes November 8.

The competition closes Friday 8 November 2019, 5pm AEDT.

## **In the Community**



The Travellers Aid Companion Service is a **free service** available to any eligible person travelling to, from or within Melbourne, Seymour and surrounding areas. Trained volunteers provide assistance along the way.

Companions meet travellers at Southern Cross, Flinders Street or Seymour stations.

### **Who is eligible?**

Any person who is able to travel independently, walk unassisted or with the help of a walking frame, can use this service. Clients must be able to comfortably enter and exit a taxi, tram and/or train without physical assistance from the companion.

**Phone 9654 2600**

or go to the website

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

The final step is for schools to post photos or video of their event or activity on their school Facebook page showing how