



Grampians
disAbility
Advocacy

ANNUAL REPORT

2018/2019

WORKING WITH
AND FOR PEOPLE
WITH A DISABILITY
SINCE 1996





MISSION: This advocacy service listens to, takes direction from, and stands beside people with a disability, from the Central Highlands to across the Wimmera, in their interactions with organisations and the community. We help people to learn about and act on their rights to achieve the best possible result.

Values

- *integrity*
- *fairness*
- *respect*
- *self-determination*
- *social justice*
- *commitment to human rights*
- *faithfulness to clients and staff*

Goals

- provide advocacy for people with a disability and those who support them
- eliminate discrimination and abuse
- increase the awareness of the general community to the rights of people with a disability
- increase the awareness of individuals and/or groups of people with a disability of their rights and responsibilities
- support individuals or groups to represent themselves
- provide systemic advocacy
- lobby organisations, Government and policy makers about the needs of people with a disability
- apply the principles of the United Nations Declaration on Human Rights



Where to get assistance from GdA

1800 552 272
Central Intake/enquiries

ARARAT (head office)

admin@grampiansadvocacy.org.au
advocate@grampiansadvocacy.org.au
eo@grampiansadvocacy.org.au

**BALLARAT
& INDIGENOUS
ADVOCACY**

ballarat@grampiansadvocacy.org.au
ararat@grampiansadvocacy.org.au

**DAYLESFORD
& CLUNES**

daylesford@grampiansadvocacy.org.au

**HORSHAM
& STAWELL**

horsham@grampiansadvocacy.org.au

**WIMMERA INDIGENOUS
ADVOCACY**

kimwgrampiansadvocacy@gmail.com

NDIS APPEALS SUPPORT

appeals@grampiansadvocacy.org.au

Website: www.grampiansadvocacy.org.au

(membership forms, Annual Report and newsletters available from the website)





GENERAL MEMBERSHIP

elects Board of Governance

BOARD OF GOVERNANCE (eight members)
at least 50% people with lived experience of disability

Deborah Verdon
Executive Officer
Ararat Office

Angie McKew
Administration/Intake
Sue Horvath
Finance
Ararat Office

Trudy Joyce
Advocate
Wimmera/Stawell

Kim Wiese
Advocate
Wimmera

Fiona Tipping
Advocate
Ballarat

Judith Smith
Advocate
Ararat/Ballarat

Kaylene Howell
Advocate
Daylesford/Clunes

Bernadette Duane
NDIS Appeals
Support Officer

GdA BOARD OF GOVERNANCE 2018-19

CHAIRPERSON

Ararat



Jenni Starick

14 years

VICE CHAIRPERSON

Ballarat



Kay Timmins

8 years

SECRETARY

Ararat



Julie McDougall

20 years

TREASURER

Ararat



Steven Harmer

11 years

ORDINARY MEMBERS



Mark Thompson

Ballarat 8 years



Norm McMurray

Daylesford 5 years



Bernadette O'Shannessy

Horsham 3 years

Board Charter

The Board provides effective leadership and collaborates with the Executive Officer to:

- articulate and exemplify the organisation's Mission, Vision, Values and Strategies
- develop strategic plans and order strategic priorities
- maintain open lines of communication between Board and management
- develop and maintain an organisational structure that supports the achievement of strategic objectives
- appoint the Executive Officer and monitor her/his performance against agreed performance indicators

Members and staff of GdA appreciate the voluntary work the Board does for advocacy.

This year the Board engaged two Year 12 students from Marian College to provide a youth perspective to its deliberations.

They are Jae Pinniger and Emma Blackie from Ararat. The Board sincerely thanks Jae and Emma for their valuable contribution and looks forward to working with them into the future.



GdA Board of Governance

Chairperson
Jenni Starick
(*chair since 2004*)

I would like to welcome you all here today, on behalf of our staff and Board of Grampians disAbility Advocacy to this, our 23rd Annual General Meeting.

Throughout this last year we have helped many people with generalist advocacy issues, issues around the NDIS since it started, and issues with people trying to access the Disability Support Pension.

As a board, we are committed to good governance, board expansion and being more knowledgeable as we progress.

Through external audits we ensure GdA meets the National and State Disability Standards.

Staff and Board members who are available meet in Bendigo three times a year with five other Victorian Rural Advocacy Agencies (Victorian Rural Advocacy Network) for networking, training and meetings over a two-day period each time.

Our Ararat Advocate for the past 10 years, Judi Smith, is now working in Ballarat along with our other staff until the end of the next financial year.

Through additional project funding we look forward to employing a new advocate in Ararat, plus a full time Project Officer. We will also be employing a project officer and a part time advocate to work with the Karen community in Nhill.

We currently offer an enewsletter to all people via email on a monthly basis as well as quarterly edition which is either emailed or posted.

Our Self-Advocacy group has been going for more than six years now. We meet monthly and discuss a variety of subjects and have more new members attending. Two of our members have attended statewide forums in Melbourne.

GdA is planning to set up more peer support groups within the area we cover, with a steering committee established to guide this work.

If you are interested in issues that impact you and your community, please contact us.

Thank you for supporting us over the past year and into our future, which is looking fabulous.

Jenni Starick

Chairperson



Executive Officer

Deborah Verdon
(with GdA since 2000)

I am pleased to present this EO's report at the conclusion of another significant year for GdA in assisting people with a disability across the Wimmera and the Central Highlands.

Much of our combined energies in 2018-19 was dedicated to aiding our clients to navigate the National Disability Insurance Scheme in regards to access and the planning process. At times engagement with the NDIS presented major challenges for clients, their families and advocates. GdA continues to receive funding from the Commonwealth Department of Social Services to support people who disagree with a decision made by the NDIS. During the past year our NDIS Appeals Support Officers have been inundated with requests for assistance from people across the wider region who are dissatisfied with a range of NDIS decisions that significantly impact their lives, from rejection of access requests to home modifications to aids and equipment. It has been troubling to see a scheme that promised so much fall short in so many areas, but we remain optimistic about its future as going back to the previous "broken" system is not an option.

Over the past year GdA has provided advocacy support through our offices at Ballarat, Ararat, Daylesford, Clunes, Horsham and Stawell. Our partner agency Assert 4 All in Geelong has delivered advocacy on our behalf in Bacchus Marsh and Golden Plains Shire, funded by the National Disability Advocacy Program. Our thanks go to Assert 4 All, its Board and Executive Officer Carol Okai, and advocates Kate Carroll and Leonie Dillon, for working with us to deliver quality advocacy in Moorabool and Golden Plains Shires.

We thank our funding bodies for their continued support of our organisation, now in its 23rd year. They are the Victorian Department of Health and Human Services (Office for Disability) and the Commonwealth Department of Social Services. We were especially grateful for the increase in funding from the State Government for 2018-2020 in recognition of the additional workload experienced by advocacy services as a result of the rollout of the NDIS. As you will see in the stats table, 50 percent of the issues presenting for our clients are related to the NDIS.

Our thanks go to the project and contract managers in each of State and Federal Government departments - specifically Amy Gough, Ashley Heenan and Ian Graham - for their advice, assistance and support for what we do throughout the year.

In 2018-19 GdA received an extension of funding for its Wimmera Indigenous Program from the Victorian Government's Disability Advocacy Innovation Fund. The focus of the Program is the establishment of a sustainable and mutually beneficial relationship with the Goolum Goolum Aboriginal Co-op in Horsham. As a result, we were able to employ an Aboriginal advocate, Kim Wiese, to work closely with the members and Elders at the Co-op, following on from the excellent work already completed in this area by our Horsham advocate Trudy Joyce. This culminated in an invitation to present at the DARU sector conversation about what GdA has learnt regarding the most culturally appropriate way to engage with Aboriginal Co-Ops. The Wimmera Program complements the long established Ballarat Indigenous Program which has been successfully operating for almost nine years without any targeted grant funding. We thank our advocate Fiona Tipping for her hard work and commitment to community in Ballarat over that period.

The statistics we provide to our funding bodies each year are testament to the return for money provided by GdA for the investment made in advocacy. Each individual is assisted with their issue/s for an average of less than \$1800 per person. In most cases the assistance received leads to significant changes in a person's life in the areas of financial support, housing, employment, independence, family relationships and safety. Problems solved by the intervention of an advocate save the Government and the taxpayer many dollars in the long run. We believe GdA like other advocacy services does in indeed provide "value for money". An independent cost benefit analysis of Australia's independent disability advocacy agencies conducted in 2017 revealed that every dollar used by Australia's independent disability advocacy agencies delivers \$3.50 in benefits. With the introduction of the NDIS independent advocacy is needed more than ever.

A small portion of our DSS funding is devoted to systemic advocacy. This is the way large scale change is made that can improve the lives of many people. GdA has continued to benefit from membership of the Victorian Rural Advocacy Network (VicRAN), with peer support, information sharing and training opportunities a feature of this pivotal network. In 2019 VicRAN gained funding from the Victorian Government Disability Advocacy Futures Grant program to investigate and undertake systemic advocacy regarding common issues for people with a disability across rural Victoria. Some issues already presenting are equal access to transport and health care.

Advocacy Futures funding was also granted in 2019 for GdA's long held plan to establish links with, and provide advocacy for, the Karen community in Nhill. This project is in its early stages and we look forward to a close working relationship over the next 18 months with the community and Annette Creek and the team at the Nhill Learning Centre.

This year GdA was successful in a funding application to the NDIS for an Information, Linkages and Capacity Building grant for 12 months. This was given to build the capacity of the organisation as well as the capacity of people with a disability by setting up a number of peer support groups across the region. Through this funding GdA has been able to employ a full-time project officer for the first time, greatly enhancing our ability to grow and provide services we have not had the resources to provide in the past.

GdA has also greatly benefitted from the invaluable support and assistance provided by the State Government funded Disability Advocacy Resource Unit (DARU) and the Self Advocacy Resource Unit (SARU). Both these units provide practical advice, training and networking opportunities to keep us energised and focused in the professional delivery of independent advocacy support. SARU has been particularly supportive of the Sister Rocks Self-Advocacy Group in Stawell, which is auspiced by GdA. Special thanks go to project officer Jenni Starick for organising and facilitating the monthly meetings, and to Angie McKew for providing additional support at the meetings.

Grampians Advocacy greatly appreciates the time committed to the ongoing development of the advocacy service by the members of the Central Highlands Regional Advisory Group. This group has been informing the work of the GdA Board for many years, ensuring knowledge of what is happening regarding systemic issues in the largest community in our region - Ballarat. The group continues to work hard to improve access for all who live in that area. GdA is currently engaged in lobbying the State Government to fully fund an access upgrade at the Ballarat Railway Station, following successful legal action against Public Transport Victoria and the Department of Economic Development, Jobs, Transport and Resources. We are working in collaboration with Save Our Station Ballarat to bring about the standard of access that people with a disability demand and are entitled to. We are working hard to ensure the much needed funds to complete the access works will be allocated in the 2019-20 State Budget.

On a personal note, I cannot offer enough thanks to my colleagues at GdA - staff and Board members. What a magnificent group of dedicated and enthusiastic people. All are diligent in the way they perform their duties, with Board members giving unselfishly of their time for the sake of the agency and the disadvantaged and vulnerable in our community. Thanks to the office bearers who take on extra responsibilities for the organisation.

GdA's advocacy and NDIS Appeals team of Judi Smith, Fiona Tipping, Trudy Joyce, Kim Wiese, Kaylene Howell and Bernadette Duane are to be congratulated on the standard of work they provide for GdA, day in day out. Working in satellite locations throughout the region presents many challenges, all of which they handle with aplomb and professionalism. Exit surveys reveal the extent to which they are valued by their clients, and the Board and management thank them for their continued efforts.

My sincere thanks also go to our Intake and Admin Assistant Angie McKew and Finance Officer Sue Horvath, who combine their skills to ensure everything runs smoothly in the Ararat office and appropriate support is given to all our staff. I also would like to thank Angie for her tireless efforts in making sure everything was in place for today's Annual General Meeting.

Combined GdA and A4A Advocacy Statistics for 2018-19

(Ararat Rural City, Northern Grampians Shire, Horsham Rural City, Yarriambiack Shire, West Wimmera Shire, Hindmarsh Shire, Ballarat City, Pyrenees Shire, Golden Plains Shire, Hepburn Shire, Moorabool Shire)

Individuals assisted	309	
Most common disability	Physical	107
	Psychiatric	81
	Autism spectrum disorder	36
	Neurological	36
	Acquired Brain Injury	20
Most common issues	NDIS	153
	Health	94
	Intellectual Disability	77
	Finances/Govt payments	45
	Access to justice/legal	36
	Housing/homelessness	32



Judith Smith

Advocate Ararat/Ballarat

(with GdA since 2007)

I am happy to be writing this report and it will be my penultimate report as I have signed a new 12 month contract for 12 hours per week at the Ballarat office. This transition has gone relatively smoothly.

July 2018 to June 2019 has brought many challenges and forays into new areas of work. I attended the DARU Conference in September and came away inspired by the hard work and achievements of my advocacy peers across Australia. The GdAA team all declared the day a truly wonderful experience and a lot of networking was achieved. I did follow this up with connections to other work being done in prisons around Australia.

I continue my work with the DARU Board of Governance which gives me access to wider networking and a better understanding of what is happening at a political level at both a State and National level. I attended a VCOS conference and an Advocacy Futures consultation. Such a pity that these occur in Melbourne and take a huge all day commitment to attend. However, the reputation of GdAA grows and we are increasingly singled out for grants and references from key body groups for our work in specialised areas. These include working in prisons, working with Indigenous communities and leading into inclusive work with refugee/migrant communities.

My individual cases continue to reflect the extent of work to be done in assisting people to access the NDIS and the DSP. The specialised information and language use denies so many worthy applicants access to what they should gain. I have to become more inventive and push harder than ever before. In one particular case I engaged the support of ABC News with a wonderful Saturday 7pm news segment about my client's issue. This was followed up with a half page article in the Ballarat Courier with favourable results that took two and a half years to achieve. An enormous workload which also involved Federal politicians, the Federal Police, state and national Ombudsmen, Equal Opportunity commissioners, Disability Commissioners, State building authorities and the local city council. I could write a book on this one, but we got what we were fighting for in the end and my client and I felt like David after the battle with Goliath.

My other new foray has been dealing with the Office of the Public Advocate and we should have this issue worked out favourably by the end of 2019. Sometimes the slower tortoise wins the race.

I continue to work with issues around education, access, housing and the widening of the voice and opportunities of people with a disability. I also enjoy giving presentations on advocacy and again Federation University invited me to speak with its students. This is a great opportunity to spread our understanding of the issues confronting people with a disability in our communities.



Fiona Tipping

Advocate/NDIS Appeals Support
Ballarat Office

(with GdA since 2010)

2018/19 has been an extremely busy and exciting year dominated by Centrelink Disability Support Pension (DSP) claims and complaints.

My case load was double what it normally was for each quarter resulting in a waiting list being applied and a central intake system being implemented. Most DSP claims were approved before referral to the Administrative Appeals Tribunal. The other noteworthy development is that my use of the complaints process was also resulting in positive results. This included contact with the Federal MP Catherine King's office, whose staff are very adept at escalating urgent matters.

In regards to my NDIS appeals work I have continued to be 100% successful in getting legal aid representation for my clients. This is despite new changes to the criteria that have the potential to make it difficult to obtain legal representation. Not only do the cases have to be seen as novel and complex but they also have to have merit. I took issue with this in feedback that I provided at a VLA (Victorian Legal Aid) team meeting where I was invited to provide a presentation. I discussed my concern about the layers of rejection my clients were facing which was detrimental to their well-being. Such concerns were taken on board resulting in some positive changes for my clients.

I also brought the issue of merit up at a VICDAN (Victorian Disability Advocacy Network) meeting, highlighting the issue of a client not getting legal representation being a human rights breach due to the imbalance of power. I believe that this will be an ongoing issue that will require more systemic advocacy to ensure our clients are not unfairly disadvantaged in the appeals system.

Throughout the year I continued to attend monthly VICDAN meetings at VLA. This group was and continues to be a terrific networking opportunity building valuable relationships with VLA lawyers, NDIS and DHS representatives, and other advocates.

I also attend DHELK DJA (formerly known as GIFVRAG, Grampians Indigenous Family Violence Regional Action Group). DHELK DJA means "Safe Our Way". This group meets quarterly and has proven invaluable in my work providing advocacy for the Wathaurong Community in Ballarat. I continue to attend Ballarat and District Aboriginal Coop every Friday meeting with a craft group at the tea room table as it is the busiest time of the week.

I attend the quarterly GdA CHRAG (Central Highlands Regional Advisory Group) meetings where we have experienced some major successes in addressing systemic issues within the Central Highlands.

2019/20 will be an interesting year as our organisation gains more project funding and associated staff, and we experience the challenges that present as we continue to adjust to an ever changing landscape in the world of advocacy.



Kaylene Howell

Advocate/NDIS Appeals Support
Daylesford/Clunes Office
(Hepburn and Moorabool Shires)
(with GdA since 2014)

Once again it has been an action-packed year! Our workload continues to grow but so does GdA. More people have been able to join our team recently with the success of procuring additional funding.

Throughout this year I have taken advantage of the free training that the Disability Advocacy Resource Unit has offered to disability advocates. I also attended training in "Influence, Persuasion and Negotiation Skills". A great upskilling opportunity.

I have participated in training for the DSP toolkit, this was held at VCOSS in Melbourne. The Disability Resource Council (DRC) and SSRV Social Security Rights Victoria were involved in making an accessible publication about the process for applying for the Disability Support Pension. This can be downloaded and provided to our clients to further encourage independence and build skills in self-advocacy which will assist them to manage their own applications. A successful funded project!

We all attended The Disability Discrimination Legal Service training and presentation which was held in Ballarat. This was well attended by all advocates, Board members and members of GdA. It provided some great discussions, networking and resources to benefit our work. I was excited to study Auslan for beginners to help broaden my range of communication skills and assist our clients with hearing impairments.

I attended a local Autism Conference which was facilitated by Positive Partnerships. This has already been a very useful resource to provide more positive interactions with local schools. Access to Education is a human right, but it can become more challenging in rural communities to find schools who have the appropriate supports and funding to equally accommodate any child with differing abilities. Autism diagnosis is becoming more prominent in our schools and so is the need for assistance and advocacy to navigate the education system.

Hepburn Health Service continues to be our highest source of referrals with so many different professionals working across the Community Health campuses. I highly value the working environment I am in, working in a space within this well-resourced and supportive organisation. It has become a positive for GdA and our clients and does produce faster and better outcomes. We also receive referrals from the Medical centre, local NDIS Support Co-ordinators, disability support workers and self-referrals.

A large percentage of our workload continues to be access to the DSP and the NDIS, although we are always still dealing with educational issues, Centrelink, housing, family violence, discrimination and physical access issues.

I am interested in staying informed about the Royal Commission into Violence, Abuse, Neglect and Exploitation of People with a Disability and am already considering how we might be able to connect and assist affected members of our community to have a represented voice, and provide them with a safe, skilled and supportive environment.

I cannot believe it is coming close to finishing my fifth year at GdA and I continue to be grateful for the work I get to do for our community every day.



Trudy Joyce
Advocate
Horsham/Stawell Office
(Horsham, Yarriambiack, West Wimmera, Hindmarsh
& Northern Grampians Shire)
(with GdA since 2012)

I have now been working for Grampians disAbility Advocacy Association for just over seven years within the areas of Northern Grampians, Horsham, West Wimmera, Yarriambiack and Hindmarsh shires.

The NDIS has now been operating on the ground within the local shires that I serve for two years. I have found there are a lot more members within my community being funded for support yet the feedback from community is that the system is complex and a lot of the time the funding or supports is taking quite some time to implement.

The advocacy work is currently inundated with support needed for participants navigating NDIS with access, plans, implementation and appeals processes.

Along with the workload for NDIS issues are issues such as education for students with disability, eligibility for disability support pensions and many other issues. I am continuing my work with consumer/employee meetings monthly at Grahams Bridge Rd during the year, which is now closing down in November, and Cooina in Nhill and Woodbine in Warracknabeal.

Referrals are coming from West Wimmera Health Service, Horsham Mental Health Services, Latrobe Community Health Service, Axis Employment, Western District Employment Agency, Access Worx, NDIS support coordinators and people who have friends/family that have used the service before, as well as self-referrals.

This year I completed training provided by the Centre of Ethnicity and Health: "5 steps to effective communication for culturally and linguistically diverse communities", and I attended the DARU Strengthening Disability Advocacy Conference 2019.

In the Wimmera we are putting additional resources into advocacy support for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people with disability and Karen people with disability.

I continue to enjoy my work as an independent advocate and look forward to the next year of advocacy for people with a disability and would like to thank Debbie Verdon and the GdA board for their amazing support and guidance and to thank all my fellow advocates for the inspirational work they contribute to in advocating for people with a disability.



Bernadette Duane

NDIS Appeals Support Officer
Ballarat Office
(with GdA since Sept 2017)

The NDIS has been rolled out in Central Highlands since 2017. It was a newly designed system to provide the supports and assistance that people with disabilities required. Many NDIS participants have not been eligible for assistance of this nature prior to the rollout of the NDIS.

Choice and control for people with disabilities is one of the cornerstones of the NDIS.

As with any new system the implementation of the NDIS continues to have its challenges.

As an NDIS Appeals support officer I assist clients with Internal and External Reviews of reviewable decisions made by the NDIS. This assistance can range from guidance and advice over the telephone, to assisting a client to get the evidence required to lodge an appeal either for an internal review by the NDIA and/or at the Administrative Appeals Tribunal. This also involves applying for legal aid assistance with AAT matters.

There has been a steady flow of referrals from a wide range of sources including self - referrals, disability service providers, the NDIS local area coordinators, word of mouth, GPs and allied health providers.

Initially most referrals were for access reviews. These are still occurring, however the complexity of the cases has increased. In many instances there is a lack of recent engagement with services and expert supporting evidence of sufficiently reduced functional capacity to meet the access criteria. This is often due to the nature of the person's disability, lack of access to appropriate services to obtain the required reports due to socio-economic factors, regional thin markets and wait times. In the case of psychosocial disability many referrals have been from organisations that assist people who have been disengaged from services for a long time due to their mental health condition.

Currently the majority of referrals are for internal reviews of the plan issued by the NDIS. The participants feel their support needs are not funded appropriately in their NDIS plan. Most are requests for:

- Increased funding in general core supports
- Home modifications and assistive technology
- Increased therapy budgets
- Assistance animals
- Supports the NDIS claim are for a health condition not disability
- Supports the NDIS deem "parental responsibility"

There has been an increasing number of AAT appeals and this has required a greater collaboration with Vic Legal Aid. I am an active participant in the VICDAN forums held at Legal Aid in Melbourne. This has been an opportunity to establish a channel for communications and access to other valuable resources.

To keep on top of the changing landscape in NDIS Appeals I attended the 2018 NDIS Mental Health Conference, 2018 Indigenous NDIS Conference, Working with People with Mental Health Issues DARU training, NDIS Disability Housing Information Session and the Autism and Anxiety Workshop in Ballarat. I also presented at various local disability support groups.



Kim Wiese

Indigenous Advocate (Wimmera)
Horsham Office

(with GdA since 2018)

Firstly, I would like to say that the year has taken an unexpected, challenging yet fulfilling and gratifying turn for me, with massive thanks to everyone at GdA. It has taken me a while for me to find my feet, and even with some absence at the start of the year, I have received tremendous support from the team and have been blessed with such wonderful opportunities.

Some of the issues I first encountered in community were accessing suitable housing and NDIS rejections for children needing supports due to their disability. As my time continued at GdA, some other challenges I found community was facing were accessing in-home support, linking in with My Aged Care, financial stress and emotional wellbeing.

There's been success with one client moving into more suitable housing, which has been a long process. There simply is not enough housing available across the region for those in need. Other clients have been approved for My Aged Care packages and are now receiving extra supports for their daily living, which they have not had before. I have seen their spirits and morale uplifted in the most positive ways which is most rewarding.

I have been fortunate in being able to attend multiple different functions. GdA was invited to DARU where GdA and RIAC were asked to speak about advocates working with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. What an honour it was to be there to hear our EO give an amazing speech of the research that has gone into this project and the way it has given me this opportunity. It was great seeing Aunty Alva Taylor up on the big screen to represent the community we are working with here in Horsham.

I attended an NDIS training session at Budja Budja Aboriginal Co-op in Halls Gap, as well as doing some mingling with the staff from the medical clinic to offer an overview of our services. Budja Budja Aboriginal Co-op was established in 1999 and has been getting bigger every year. They offer many services on site and a neighbourhood house. There were more buildings going up while I was visiting.

The GdA team attended a two-day conference held by DARU and a half day by VICDAN. What an absolute privilege it was to be a part of this experience. The professionalism and the dramatic performance was astounding, and I was able to gain some valuable insight and knowledge about my role.

I am thankful for my time at GdA with such an amazing strong team, and hope that I can continue to learn and grow while supporting my community.



GdA Board of Governance

TREASURER
Steven Harmer
(*treasurer since 2012*)

As treasurer of GdA over the 2018/19 financial year, I have been keeping a vigilant eye on our finances and assets.

We continue to receive grants from Department of Health and Human Services, Department of Social Services, and other smaller grants to help fund advocacy. One significant DSS grant for the next three years is to support people wishing to engage with the Royal Commission into Violence, Abuse, Neglect and Exploitation of People with Disability.

We continue to receive funds for Advocacy and NDIS Appeals Support. Our services are still in high demand, as the numbers of people needing support increases.

A big thanks to Finance Officer Sue Horvath for doing her job so diligently and well.

Our future is looking great as we enter 2019/20 and onwards, with budget goals met. Our accounts are healthy as can be seen in our financial report tabled today.

I have decided to step down as Treasurer from today, after being diagnosed with Parkinson's disease. I will remain on the GdA Board, and wish the new treasurer all the best in the role.

Steven Harmer

Schedule 1
Regulation 15
Form 1

Associations Incorporation Reform Act 2012

Sections 94 (2)(b), 97 (2)(b) and 100 (2)(b)

**Annual statements give a true and fair view of financial performance and position
of incorporated association**

We JENNI STARICK and STEVEN HARMER being members of the
committee of the GRAMPIANS DISABILITY ADVOCACY certify that -

"The statements attached to this certificate give a true and fair view of the financial
performance and position of the above named association during and at the end of
the financial year of the association ending 30-6-19."

Signed: J Starick. chairperson

Date: 9-10-19

Signed: 

Date: 9-10-19

Grampians disAbility Advocacy Association Inc

ABN 19 253 808 264

Statement by Members of the Committee

For the year ended 30 June 2019

In the opinion of the Committee the Statement of Financial Position, Statement of Financial Performance, Statement of Cash Flows and Notes to the Financial Statements:

1. Presents fairly the financial position of Grampians disAbility Advocacy Association Inc as at 30 June 2019 and its performance for the year ended on that date in accordance with Australian Accounting Standards, mandatory professional reporting requirements and other authoritative pronouncements of the Australian Accounting Standards Board.
2. At the date of this statement, there are reasonable grounds to believe that the association will be able to pay its debts as and when they fall due.

This statement is made in accordance with a resolution of the Committee and is signed for and on behalf of the Committee by:



Jenni Starick
President



Steven Harmer
Treasurer

The accompanying notes form part of these financial statements.

Grampians disAbility Advocacy Association Inc

ABN 19 253 808 264

Income and Expenditure Statement

For the year ended 30 June 2019

	2019 \$	2018 \$
Income		
Grant - Department of Social Services	325,981.97	300,788.60
Grant - NDIS	100,962.03	93,600.00
Grant - Depart of Health & Human Service	223,781.54	243,304.17
VICRAN		911.78
Interest received	2,034.27	2,877.33
Sister Rocks	3,649.75	4,089.44
Profit on sale of property, plant, equip	(2,924.73)	100.00
Total income	653,484.83	645,671.32
Expenses		
Accommodation	2,021.47	1,316.91
Accounting & Audit Fees	11,900.11	1,111.80
Advertising and promotion	9,615.63	1,902.25
Advocacy - Bacchus Marsh	75,192.00	75,192.00
Bad Debts	276.80	
Bank Fees And Charges	188.03	112.29
Catering	574.78	531.93
Computer Software & Supplies	23,477.39	4,770.16
Conference/Workshops		1,665.91
Consultants fees		1,156.52
Depreciation	9,769.00	14,235.00
Electricity	1,390.49	1,394.70
Expenses NDIS	13,628.82	51,533.58
Hospitality	1,269.60	1,247.34
Insurance	2,240.92	1,098.11
Journals & Newspapers	99.29	92.20
M/V car - Fuel & oil	5,497.56	5,157.67
M/V car - Lease	9,582.77	7,927.87
M/V car - Rego/Insurance	1,438.35	2,814.98
M/V car - Repairs	1,981.53	2,385.73
Postage	1,444.58	1,393.68
Printing & stationery	4,012.44	2,952.85
Provision for Annual Leave	(1,339.00)	11,954.01
Provision For Long Service Leave	5,540.24	14,881.49
Rent	36,015.92	23,762.10
Repairs & maintenance	85.00	100.00

The accompanying notes form part of these financial statements.

Grampians disAbility Advocacy Association Inc
ABN 19 253 808 264
Income and Expenditure Statement
For the year ended 30 June 2019

	2019 \$	2018 \$
Staff training	2,490.13	1,817.67
Subscriptions & Registrations	2,070.26	1,868.72
Sundry expenses	70.09	538.00
Superannuation	39,103.15	33,026.75
Telephone	17,958.84	15,477.20
Travel Expenses	5,276.00	10,424.93
Wages	430,191.50	355,028.10
Workcover	5,065.59	2,326.24
Total expenses	<u>718,129.28</u>	<u>651,198.69</u>
Profit (loss) from ordinary activities before income tax	(64,644.45)	(5,527.37)
Income tax revenue relating to ordinary activities		
Net profit (loss) attributable to the association	(64,644.45)	(5,527.37)
Total changes in equity of the association	(64,644.45)	(5,527.37)
Opening retained profits	182,744.95	188,272.32
Net profit (loss) attributable to the association	<u>(64,644.45)</u>	<u>(5,527.37)</u>
Closing retained profits	<u>118,100.50</u>	<u>182,744.95</u>

The accompanying notes form part of these financial statements.

Grampians disAbility Advocacy Association Inc

ABN 19 253 808 264

Statement of Financial Position as at 30 June 2019

	Note	2019 \$	2018 \$
Assets			
Current Assets			
Cash assets		355,858.19	228,631.47
Receivables		1,557.08	31,257.49
Total Current Assets		357,415.27	259,888.96
Non-Current Assets			
Property, plant and equipment		54,677.13	55,912.60
Total Non-Current Assets		54,677.13	55,912.60
Total Assets		412,092.40	315,801.56
Liabilities			
Current Liabilities			
Payables		8,105.63	30,780.03
Current tax liabilities		41,421.62	23,058.60
Provisions		10,667.00	9,174.81
Other		159,553.24	
Total Current Liabilities		219,747.49	63,013.44
Non-Current Liabilities			
Provisions		74,244.41	70,043.17
Total Non-Current Liabilities		74,244.41	70,043.17
Total Liabilities		293,991.90	133,056.61
Net Assets		118,100.50	182,744.95
Equity			
Retained profits		118,100.50	182,744.95
Total Members' Funds		118,100.50	182,744.95

The accompanying notes form part of these financial statements.

Grampians disAbility Advocacy Association Inc

ABN 19 253 808 264

Statement of Cash Flows

For the year ended 30 June 2019

	2019	2018
	\$	\$
<hr/>		
Cash Flow From Operating Activities		
Receipts from customers	683,798.90	611,436.50
Payments to Suppliers and employees	(547,148.19)	(578,253.45)
Interest received	2,034.27	2,877.33
Net cash provided by (used in) operating activities (note 2)	<u>138,684.98</u>	<u>36,060.38</u>
 Cash Flow From Investing Activities		
Payment for:		
Payments for property, plant and equipment	(11,558.26)	(15,147.86)
Proceeds from disposal of:		
Proceeds from sale of property	<u>100.00</u>	<u>100.00</u>
Net cash provided by (used in) investing activities	<u>(11,458.26)</u>	<u>(15,047.86)</u>
Net increase (decrease) in cash held	127,226.72	21,012.52
Cash at the beginning of the year	<u>228,631.47</u>	<u>207,618.95</u>
Cash at the end of the year (note 1)	<u><u>355,858.19</u></u>	<u><u>228,631.47</u></u>

The accompanying notes form part of these financial statements.

Grampians disAbility Advocacy Association Inc

ABN 19 253 808 264

Statement of Cash Flows

For the year ended 30 June 2019

2019

2018

Note 1. Reconciliation Of Cash

For the purposes of the statement of cash flows, cash includes cash on hand and in banks and investments in money market instruments, net of outstanding bank overdrafts.

Cash at the end of the year as shown in the statement of cash flows is reconciled to the related items in the balance sheet as follows:

Commonwealth Bank Cheque A/c	9.58	9.58
Commonwealth Bank Fuel A/C	1,013.39	1,034.78
Bendigo Bank - Social Investment	222,956.37	121,387.48
Bendigo bank - Transaction a/c	131,192.15	75,339.64
Bendigo Bank NDIS	0.57	30,476.88
Cash on hand	293.85	80.55
Visa Debit card	392.28	302.56
	<u>355,858.19</u>	<u>228,631.47</u>

Note 2. Reconciliation Of Net Cash Provided By/Used In Operating Activities To Operating Profit After Income Tax

Operating profit after income tax	(64,644.45)	(5,527.37)
Depreciation	9,769.00	14,235.00
(Profit) / Loss on sale of property, plant and equipment	2,924.73	(100.00)
Changes in assets and liabilities net of effects of purchases and disposals of controlled entities:		
(Increase) decrease in trade and term debtors	29,700.41	(31,257.49)
Increase (decrease) in trade creditors and accruals	5,674.95	322.96
Increase (decrease) in other creditors	131,203.89	28,553.35
Increase (decrease) in employee entitlements	1,492.19	1,689.29
Increase (decrease) in sundry provisions	22,564.26	28,144.64
Net cash provided by operating activities	<u>138,684.98</u>	<u>36,060.38</u>

The accompanying notes form part of these financial statements.

Grampians disAbility Advocacy Association Inc

ABN 19 253 808 264

Independent Auditor's Report to the Members

Report on the Audit of the Financial Report

Opinion

We have audited the financial report of Grampians disAbility Advocacy Association Inc (the association), which comprises the statement of financial position as at 30 June 2019, the statement of profit or loss and other comprehensive income, statement of changes in equity and statement of cash flows for the year then ended, and notes to the financial statements, including a summary of significant accounting policies, and the certification by members of the committee on the annual statements giving a true and fair view of the financial position and performance of the association.

In our opinion, the accompanying financial report of Grampians disAbility Advocacy Association Inc is in accordance with the Associations Incorporation Reform Act 2012 including:

- (a) giving a true and fair view of the association's financial position as at 30 June 2019 and of its performance for the year then ended; and
- (b) that the financial records kept by the association are such as to enable financial statements to be prepared in accordance with Australian Accounting Standards.

Basis for Opinion

We conducted our audit in accordance with Australian Auditing Standards. Our responsibilities under those standards are further described in the Auditor's Responsibilities for the Audit of the Financial Report section of our report. We are independent of the association in accordance with the ethical requirements of the Accounting Professional and Ethical Standards Board's APES 110 Code of Ethics for Professional Accountants (the Code) that are relevant to our audit of the financial report in Australia. We have also fulfilled our ethical responsibilities in accordance with the Code.

We believe that the audit evidence we have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinion.

Information Other than the Financial Report and Auditor's Report Thereon

The committee of the association is responsible for the other information. The other information comprises the information included in the association's annual report for the year ended 30 June 2019, but does not include the financial report and our auditor's report thereon. Our opinion on the financial report does not cover the other information and accordingly we do not express any form of assurance conclusion thereon. In connection with our audit of the financial report, our responsibility is to read the other information and, in doing so, consider whether the other information is materially inconsistent with the financial report or our knowledge obtained in the audit or otherwise appears to be materially misstated. If, based on the work we have performed, we conclude that there is a material misstatement of this other information, we are required to report that fact. We have nothing to report in this regard.

Responsibilities of the Committee for the Financial Report

The committee of the association is responsible for the preparation of the financial report that gives a true and fair view in accordance with Australian Accounting Standards and Victoria under the Associations Act 2012 and for such internal control as the committee determines is necessary to enable the preparation of the financial report that gives a true and fair view and is free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

In preparing the financial report, the committee is responsible for assessing the association's ability to continue as a going concern, disclosing, as applicable, matters related to going concern and using the going concern basis of accounting unless the committee either intends to liquidate the association or to cease operations, or has no realistic alternative but to do so.

Grampians disAbility Advocacy Association Inc

ABN 19 253 808 264

Independent Auditor's Report to the Members

Auditor's Responsibilities for the Audit of the Financial Report

Our objectives are to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial report as a whole is free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error, and to issue an auditor's report that includes our opinion. Reasonable assurance is a high level of assurance, but is not a guarantee that an audit conducted in accordance with Australian Auditing Standards will always detect a material misstatement when it exists. Misstatements can arise from fraud or error and are considered material if, individually or in the aggregate, they could reasonably be expected to influence the economic decisions of users taken on the basis of the financial report.

As part of an audit in accordance with Australian Auditing Standards, we exercise professional judgement and maintain professional scepticism throughout the audit. We also:

- Identify and assess the risks of material misstatement of the financial report, whether due to fraud or error, design and perform audit procedures responsive to those risks, and obtain audit evidence that is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinion. The risk of not detecting a material misstatement resulting from fraud is higher than for one resulting from error, as fraud may involve collusion, forgery, intentional omissions, misrepresentations, or the override of internal control.
- Obtain an understanding of internal control relevant to the audit in order to design audit procedures that are appropriate in the circumstances, but not for the purpose of expressing an opinion on the effectiveness of the association's internal control.
- Evaluate the appropriateness of accounting policies used and the reasonableness of accounting estimates and related disclosures made by the committee.
- Conclude on the appropriateness of the committee's use of the going concern basis of accounting and, based on the audit evidence obtained, whether a material uncertainty exists related to events or conditions that may cast significant doubt on the association's ability to continue as a going concern. If we conclude that a material uncertainty exists, we are required to draw attention in our auditor's report to the related disclosures in the financial report or, if such disclosures are inadequate, to modify our opinion. Our conclusions are based on the audit evidence obtained up to the date of our auditor's report. However, future events or conditions may cause the association to cease to continue as a going concern.
- Evaluate the overall presentation, structure and content of the financial report, including the disclosures, and whether the financial report represents the underlying transactions and events in a manner that achieves fair presentation.

We communicate with the committee regarding, among other matters, the planned scope and timing of the audit and significant audit findings, including any significant deficiencies in internal control that we identify during our audit.

Grampians disAbility Advocacy Association Inc

ABN 19 253 808 264

Independent Auditor's Report to the Members

Signed on



Ellen J O'Connell CPA
7 Crebbins Lane Ararat

Systemic Advocacy

Win for GdA – better access on the way at Ballarat Railway Station



In May 2018 Grampians Advocacy made an application to VCAT Human Rights List about the lack of appropriate access for people with a disability at Ballarat Railway Station. The applicant was GdA, the respondent was Public Transport Victoria and the Department of Economic Development, Jobs, Transport and Resources

The complainants were five GdA members with a disability: Shirley Mitchell (totally blind), Mark Thompson (mobility impaired), Judi Smith (sight impaired), Gary Fitzgerald (mobility impaired), Joyce Watson (mobility impaired).

The first compulsory case conference was held on January 14, 2019 before Dr R Wilson. The complaints were as follows:

1. No adequate way for members of the public with reduced mobility to transfer between platforms
2. No public accessible toilet on platform 2; doors to accessible toilet and restaurant on platform 1 too heavy for person with a disability to use
3. Restaurant layout is not accessible
4. Inadequate size and layout of accessible toilet on platform 1
5. Station lacks appropriate aids, lighting and signage for sight impaired
6. Level difference from platforms to train create problems for boarding for those using a wheelchair or mobility aid
7. Shortage of accessible parking close to the station

At the case conference the Dept of Transport committed to include the input of the complainants in a consultation process underway about the Station and to conduct an access audit of the seven issues (above) and return to VCAT in May with an options report for addressing the seven issues. At the second compulsory case conference May 13, 2019 the matter was settled and a Deed of Settlement and Release between GdA and the Dept of Transport and PTV was signed.

The Departments committed to access improvements on Platform 1 within 3-6 months: installation of automatic doors at accessible toilet and restaurant, improved layout of the accessible toilet, upgrade to signage and TGSIs at the Station to meet standards for sight impaired people, construction of a raised platform for boarding and reconfiguration of accessible parking bays to meet access standards.

The construction of a new pedestrian overpass and DDA compliant lift for safe transfer between platforms will be subject to the 2020 State Budget process.

Lobbying is underway to ensure the lift and overpass are included in the 2020-21 State Budget.

To add your voice to the campaign email the following **NOW:**

Juliana Addison MP for Wendouree: Juliana.Addison@parliament.vic.gov.au

The Hon Melissa Horne, Min for Public Transport: Melissa.Horne@parliament.vic.gov.au

SISTER ROCKS SELF-ADVOCACY



Meets 3rd Thursday of the month at
Stawell Health & Community Centre 4- 6pm

Sister Rocks is a group of individuals with a disability who:

- Stand up for themselves
- Support each other to make choices
- Discuss problems and talk about big issues
- Learn new things
- Work on projects together
- Get together and have fun

Phone **GdA** on **1800 552 272** or email
admin@grampiansadvocacy.org.au to find out how to join



Thank you to those who have worked with GdA over the past year

- All our members, clients and advisory group members
- Ararat Neighbourhood House
- Ararat Psychiatric Services
- Assert 4 All, Geelong, Golden Plains and Bacchus Marsh
- Axis Employment
- Ballarat Business Centre
- Ballarat and District Aboriginal Co-operative
- Ballarat City Council
- Commonwealth Department of Social Services
- Cooina, Nhill
- Daylesford Neighbourhood Centre
- Disability Advocacy Network Australia
- Disability Advocacy Resource Unit
- Disability Discrimination Legal Service
- Disability Services Commissioner
- Eastwood Leisure Centre
- Ellen J O'Connell C.P.A.
- Goolum Goolum Aboriginal Co-operative
- Grampians Community Health
- Grampians, Central Highlands and Wimmera RuralAccess
- Health Services Commissioner
- Hepburn Health (Community Health Centre)
- Ian and Jocelyn Chegwin
- Karkana, Horsham
- Latrobe Community Health
- Mental Health Complaints Commissioner
- Moorabool Shire Council
- National Disability Insurance Agency
- Nhill Learning Centre
- Office for Disability (DHHS)
- PINARC, Ballarat
- Pinnacle Inc.
- Powerhouse Stawell
- Self Advocacy Resource Unit
- Stawell Health and Community Centre
- VALID
- Victoria Legal Aid
- Victorian Department of Health and Human Services
- Victorian Disability Advocacy Network
- Victorian Rural Advocacy Network
- Villamanta Disability Rights Legal Service
- Wimmera Disability Access Forum
- Wimmera Regional Sports Assembly
- Woodbine, Warracknabeal