

December 2019



**“working with, and for, people  
with a disability since 1996.”**

GdA, Board of Governance and Staff wish all of our members, families and friends a very **Happy & Safe Christmas & 2020!!** GdA offices will be closed between Xmas and the New Year. Some offices may be closed for a longer period. Call the Ararat office on **1800 552 272** for more information. **In case of emergency, contact a treating professional or you can call the Office of the Public Advocate on 1300 309 337.**



**Milestone 20 Years  
serving on the  
GdA Board of Governance**

Julie McDougall (pictured below) has been supporting Grampians DisAbility Advocacy since 1999.

Julie has attended more than 200 meetings.

During her time, Julie has served as Vice President, Secretary and Public Officer. Julie has brought to GdA her experience of working with, and understanding people with disabilities in the community, her vast knowledge of protocols, policies and human rights to assist

GdA to provide a great quality service.

The Board, members and staff thank Julie for her dedication.



PH: 1800 552 272

**Upcoming Events**

**International Day of People  
with a Disability December 3**  
(keep a watch out in your local newspaper for events)



**Important  
Announcement**

Join in the free celebrations at various locations on Dec 3

**Ararat Alexandra Gardens**

10am – 2pm

**Ballarat at the Lake Rotunda**

Wendouree Pde & Zoo Drive

11.30 am – 2pm

## Hidden Disability Program at Airport

An airport can be a stressful experience, especially when travelling on an international flight. It is even more stressful when you or someone you are travelling with has a disability which is not immediately apparent to airport staff – a Hidden Disability which can include autism, anxiety issues, mental health conditions, dementia, visual impairments deaf or hard of hearing. Melbourne airport has recently implemented the Hidden Disability Program for its International Terminal to assist travelers on their journey through the International Airport.

### **The Hidden Disability Program consists of:**

- A lanyard to wear through the airport from check in to departure to allow airport staff to recognise that you may require additional assistance throughout the journey.

**Sensory Map** - This identifies high sensory and low sensory areas to help you navigate through the terminal. This can help you prepare for additional noise, crowded areas and identify areas where you can stop in a quieter area if required.

**Social Stories** - Illustrating both our international departures and international arrivals processes in an easy to understand and pictorial format.

- Staff training - Melbourne Airport staff will all be trained in the Hidden Disability Program to ensure that additional care and consideration is provided during your time through our airport and ensures staff are able to assist in your journey. Whether that be guiding you through each step, providing you information or slowing down a process in the customer journey for you, staff are available to ensure mental and emotional health is looked after.

### **Sensory Map**

[T2 Departures](#)

[T2 Arrivals](#)

### **Social Stories**

[International Departures social story](#)

[International Arrivals social story](#)

### **Lanyard Program**

If you are travelling through the airport in the future and require additional support, you may contact the Hidden Disability lanyard program which will identify you to staff. To request a lanyard email [HiddenDisability@melair.com.au](mailto:HiddenDisability@melair.com.au)

## 1800 RESPECT



### The Mountain.

If the mountain seems too big today  
then climb a hill instead.  
If the morning brings you sadness  
it's ok to stay in bed.  
If the day ahead weighs heavy  
and your plans feel like a curse,  
there's no shame in rearranging,  
don't make yourself feel worse.  
If a shower stings like needles  
and a bath feels like you'll drown,  
if you haven't washed your hair for days,  
don't throw away your crown.  
A day is not a lifetime  
a rest is not defeat,  
don't think of it as failure,  
just a quiet, kind retreat.  
It's ok to take a moment  
from an anxious, fractured mind,  
the world will not stop turning  
while you get realigned.  
The mountain will still be there  
when you want to try again,  
you can climb it in your own time,  
just love yourself til then.

— Laura Ding-Edwards

## Do you need support for the Disability Royal Commission?



### Grampians disAbility Advocacy can support you to tell your story

GdA can support people with disability (or family members/ carers acting on their behalf) to help protect their rights and understand how to engage with the Disability Royal Commission.

We can help you to understand how to tell your story, work out problems, access communication supports, or other supports such as legal or financial services.

Advocates don't make decisions for you or tell you what to do.



The Disability Royal Commission hearings sometimes use terms that most Australians aren't very familiar with. PWD (People with Disability Australia) have produced a jargon buster, to help people navigate the tricky language. PWD is keeping a list of these and tries to explain them in plain language. Go to [www.pwd.org.au/drc-hub/jargon/](http://www.pwd.org.au/drc-hub/jargon/) or call **1800 422 015**

**(to give your suggestions and feedback)**



## GdA proud to be finalist



The **Wurreker awards** provide an opportunity to celebrate the achievements of individuals and organisations in the field of Koorie post-compulsory education and training. GdA was named a finalist in the Community Based Employer Award and received a special certificate at the gala dinner.



*L to R: Wimmera Indigenous advocate Kim Wiese, Ballarat Indigenous advocate Fiona Tipping and EO Deb Verdon accepted the finalist certificate on behalf of GdA.*

## VALID's Advocacy team triumphs

**(Victorian Advocacy League for People with Disability) congratulates Jake Castledine for AAT win)**

On Wednesday 16 October 2019, Jake, and his mother, Janice Castledine, received the news that they won their three-year-long battle with the National Disability Insurance Agency (NDIA) at the Administrative Appeals Tribunal (AAT).

Jake, who is in his late twenties and has multiple disabilities including intellectual disability and autism, needs funded support 24/7. He didn't have enough funding in his package before the NDIS, and despite promises from both the state government and the NDIA that he would finally get what he needed, his first NDIS plan left him worse off. VALID's advocacy team assisted with organising a plan review, but again, the NDIS denied almost all the supports Jake required. So, Jake's family asked for legal help from Villamanta Disability Rights Legal Service and Legal Aid Victoria to have his case heard at the AAT.

Jake and his family have pursued individualised funding based on his specific needs from the NDIS since his first plan in mid-2016, and the decision handed down by the AAT confirms that he will now receive what he asked for. *Perseverance pays off!*

## In the Community

### Wimmera River

#### Challenge at Dimboola

GdA Advocates Kim Wiese (Horsham) and Fiona Tipping (Ballarat) had a great day out at the Wimmera River Challenge in Dimboola, rowing eight kilometres in all. This a fabulous day where local Indigenous people, police and service providers gather for a couple of days of socializing and networking. (Nov 2019)



### GdA holds AGM in Horsham

Annette Creek from the Nhill Learning Centre was the guest speaker at the 2019 AGM. Her presentation was an overview of the importance of community support for refugee and migrant communities who call rural Victoria home.



*EO Deb Verdon (L) Annette Creek (R)*