

MARCH 2021



Exciting Comings and Goings in 2020-21

GdA welcomes two new Board Members and farewells outgoing Chairperson

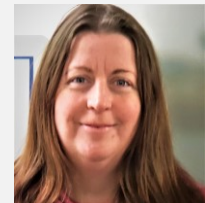
2020 was a memorable year for some milestones, including a few farewells and welcoming new faces in the GdA world.



Judi Smith left the Advocacy team after 13 years, to finally enjoy her retirement. Advocates Kim Wiese (Indigenous), April Noe (Karen Community, Nhill) and Advocacy Futures Project Officer Kathryn Delahunty's programs all came to an end. Fiona Tipping became the Disability Royal Commission Indigenous Advocate. Phil Cutts began as the Ballarat Advocate. Lou Makin left the IPaLS program and Lisa Arnfield (pictured below) will be looking after IPaLS across Grampians / Pyrenees / Wimmera region. The program launches in February 2021 in Ararat, followed by other regions in March. Melbourne based Bernard Fitzgerald commenced a five week internship at the Ararat Office. Executive Officer Deborah Verdon clocked up the big "20". (see page 3 for more). GdA held its 24th AGM in December and farewelled Board of Governance Chairperson Jenni Starick after 15 years of valued commitment. Norm McMurray has taken up this new position and brings vast experience of various board member roles as well as a depth of knowledge about rural services and needs. Norm has been an integral part of the GdA Board for more than 7 years. Jo Richie and Carly McKinnis have joined the Board of Governance and each are well known in the local community. We look forward to great changes as we progress into this new decade.



Norm McMurray
GdA Chairperson



Carly McKinnis
New Board Member



Jo Richie
New Board Member



New Book: Growing Up Disabled in Australia “ from the “Growing Up” book series

extract below from SENATOR JORDAN STEELE – JOHN

“Nothing in my life has changed me more for the better than knowing that I am loved by my family. And that’s what I hope people reading this take away. If you are a disabled kid growing up, love yourself. Or if you have just been gifted an incredible little baby that’s disabled, love them. Love the hell out of them. Treasure them as the incredible thing that they are. Treasure yourself as the incredible thing you are. Know that whatever you are, you are enough.”



Reshape
Our Future

Youth Forum &
Sector Conference
May 31–June 2

 Youth Affairs
Council Victoria

This is a face to
face and online
event, for more
info, go to the
YACVIC website
www.yacvic.org.au
or email
info@yacvic.org.au

REGIONAL CAMPS FOR CHILDREN, YOUTH & ADULTS WITH A DISABILITY



People Outdoors is a branch of the Australian Camps Association, and was established in 1989 to provide outdoor recreation for people of all ages with physical or intellectual disabilities. The Australian Camps Association is a registered NDIS service provider, certified with the Dept of Health and Human Services (DHHS) and accredited with the Quality Tourism Framework. People Outdoors camps are outcomes focused and are all about fun, personal development, social connection and enjoying the great outdoors. People Outdoors are experts in providing outdoor experiences for people living with disabilities: People Outdoors provides “Adventure for All” – outdoor experiences and residential camp programs for people living with disabilities. Their mission statement says People Outdoors dedicates enormous resources to training, nurturing and developing our volunteers and skilled professional staff, who deliver excellent “Adventure for All” programs. For more information about “Adventure for All Program” Ballarat Contact Simon Milligan 0455 514 879 or email: simon@auscamps.asn.au

R	L	I
E	S	T
N	E	I

How many words can you
make of 4 letters or more?
Each word must contain the
centre letter, and each letter
can only be used once. There
is one 9 letter word to be
found. *Believe it or not*, there
are more than 100 words
possible. Plurals are allowed.
Have fun ☺☺



**You can contact the DRC
directly on 1800 517 199**

If you would like an advocate to
support you to engage with the
Royal Commission, contact
GdA on 1800 552 272

To speak to the
Indigenous Advocate
call **1800 978 544**

This free service can help you
understand how the Disability
Royal Commission works and to
tell your story.

GdA can help you access free
legal services & counselling

Confidentiality Guaranteed

Able Foods is a registered NDIS provider that offers fresh ready-made meal options, texture modified meals, snacks and fruit delivered straight to your door. The service is tailored for NDIS participants who are self, plan or agency managed. But, if you aren't on the NDIS you can still order their meals! The National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) assists people living with disability by providing funding for supports and services. If delivered ready-made meals are considered necessary for the participant, the NDIS will cover the meal preparation and delivery. The participant will only pay for the cost of the ingredients. For more info, call **1300 123 2253** (Currently delivering once a week in Ballarat on Mondays, Horsham and Ararat on Tuesdays & in Daylesford on Mondays, check this information to check delivery days in your area, in case of changes)



Petition: Tell the VIC Government to Make Public Transport Work for Everyone

For 40 years the State Government has been bound by the Disability Standards for Accessible Public Transport 2002 to make all tram stops accessible by the end of 2022, but over the last 20 years there has been so little progress that there is now no possible way they can meet this deadline. People with disabilities have been campaigning for equal access to independent travel for over 40 years, and at the current rate of change the system will finally be inclusive in 2066! Go to www.drc.org.au (Disability Resource Centre) to sign the petition

A LOT CAN HAPPEN IN 20 YEARS= 7,300 DAYS, STILL COUNTING, STILL ACHIEVING!

When Deb Verdon walked into the GdA role as Co-Ordinator (of the previously known Ararat and Stawell Advocacy Services) in 2000, she could not have realized the magnitude of running an organization that covered a good third of Victoria (11 local government areas.) The team would grow from five to almost 20 employees over the period. Deb has led great changes, secured many impressive grants and innovative projects. Deb has helped many and mentored many. Advocates have been honoured to have such an insightful and grounded EO at the helm. Deb has always managed staff with care, humanity and a supportive attitude that has brought out the very best in staff and clients alike. Thank you Deb, for making such an incredible difference in the advocacy world, and beyond. 😊



Disability Gateway
Connecting you to information and services

Disability Gateway

The Disability Gateway has information and services to help people with disability, their family, friends and carers to find the support they need in Australia. The website is now in the public beta phase, meaning the general public are still able to provide feedback on the website and influence its ongoing development. The Disability Gateway is for all Australians with disability, whether they are a National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) participant or not.

Disability Gateway and COVID-19 Supports

The Disability Information Helpline has now transitioned to the Disability Gateway.

People with disability can contact the Disability Gateway to get free, fact-checked and private information and advice about COVID-19. They can

also be referred to other support services if needed, including counselling and advocacy. The Disability

Gateway can help families, carers and support workers, too. The Disability Gateway number (**1800 643 787**) is the same as the Disability Information Helpline number, so there will be no disruption of service or inconvenience for people with disability.

To learn more, please visit the **Disability Gateway** or call the dedicated Disability Gateway phone line on **1800 643 787** www.carergateway.gov.au

Developing the new National Disability Strategy

The second stage of comprehensive public consultations on the new National Disability Strategy wrapped up in late 2020. This second round of consultations had a strong focus on the Australian Government's proposals, which are outlined in the [National Disability Strategy Position Paper](#) and the draft [Outcomes Framework](#) introductory paper. Feedback from consultations along with other reviews and other inquiries mean the views of people with disability are helping to shape the new National Disability Strategy for release in the second half of 2021. Further information about the consultations to inform the new Strategy is available on the [Department of Social Services website](#).

Disability Ministers from across Australia issued a [Statement of Continued Commitment](#) to the current National Disability Strategy. This ensures efforts to uphold and progress the rights of people with disability will continue between the expiry of the original Strategy at the end of 2020, and the finalisation of the new Strategy. As a first step towards demonstrating the Australian Government's commitment to better collaborating and engaging with people with disability, Disability Ministers agreed to work together to establish a National Disability Strategy Advisory Council to advise Governments on the implementation of the new Strategy. The Advisory Council will be developed in close consultation with people with disability and will commence alongside the new Strategy in 2021. To read more about the Ministers meeting on the website, go to <https://www.dss.gov.au/disability-and-carers-programs-services-government-international-disability-reform-council/communique-4-december-2020>



What does GdA do?

- *Help you write a letter or submission to represent your interests
- *Make a telephone call with/for you or help get info to resolve a concern
- *Find information about another agency that may be able to assist
- *Provide information on disability issues
- *Support people to advocate for themselves

GdA Office Locations

- ❖ Ararat
- ❖ Horsham
- ❖ Daylesford
- ❖ Ballarat
- ❖ Clunes

Central Intake 1800 552 272

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www.grampiansadvocacy.org.au

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