



## DECEMBER 2021

### Farewell to Long Time Board Member Julie McDougall

Julie McDougall (pictured below) has served on the Board of Governance since 1999 when GdA was Ararat and Stawell Advocacy Service. In that time she has been the Secretary/Public Officer and after 22 years is moving on to a well-earned break. Julie has always been the backbone to the governance of our organization, tirelessly providing advice and support from policy review to staff recruitment, government audits and so much more behind the scenes work. Julie has been involved in the disability community in Ararat for more than twenty years and has a great depth of knowledge about people who live with and are faced with many challenges daily. Julie has been a campaigner and champion of human rights. We will miss Julie's friendly bubbly personality at our meetings and wish her a very leisurely or busy retirement just doing whatever takes her fancy. Thank you from all the Board, Staff and members of Grampians disAbility Advocacy Association for everything you have done to ensure that the organization is the success that it is today. Julie has been awarded a Life Membership Award, so worthy!



### INTERNATIONAL DAY OF PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES

December 3 this year, during the annual celebration of "people with disabilities", the 2021 theme is "Fighting for rights in the post-COVID era". This year we are celebrating the challenges, barriers and opportunities for people who live with disabilities, in the context of the global pandemic. For more info go to [www.idpwd.org](http://www.idpwd.org) and keep an eye out in your local papers for any events taking place



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For more information  
**Phone: 1800 552 272**

## CONSUMER FEEDBACK FOR EXTERNAL STANDARDS AUDIT

In October 90 surveys were sent out to past and current GdA clients for their anonymous feedback about our service. We received 35 back which was an excellent response rate. Below are some of the comments we received about GdA.

- ♦ *At all times the advocate (& the staff) went above and beyond the call of duty – nothing was too much trouble. "Extremely Helpful" would be understating the assistance they provide and continue to provide.*
- ♦ *I don't think you can improve; you listen to angry pain filled people like me, tell them the score and give them the time they need.*
- ♦ *Service was excellent and I can't think about anything more that needs to be done. Keep doing what you're doing guys and people will always be happy with you. Thank God you exist.*
- ♦ *The service I have received and still getting is amazing, my advocate has been incredibly helpful and has supported me throughout this whole time; phone calls, text messages, emails, keeping in contact and a lot of communication which has been wonderful.*
- ♦ *My advocate has been amazing, supportive and has explained things more thoroughly than I was aware and is helping to achieve the required outcomes. They have been supportive and respectful.*
- ♦ *My advocate is really wonderful, they have helped me so much, I am happy they helped me get my problems worked out.*
- ♦ *I think my advocate does an incredible job, but if there was funding for an extra day per week, think how much more could be done, with the NDIS there is a lot more to do. Surely the government could be more generous. Please consider this seriously.*

We are very grateful to the people that took the time to tell us what they think. We did not receive any negative feedback or suggestions to change what we already do. The Board of Governance are very proud of the amazing work the advocates have continued to provide, especially during the COVID-19 restrictions which have made their jobs more challenging than they already are. So, thank you to the Advocate team and their clients for staying focused and positive in another difficult year.

<b>R</b>	<b>I</b>	<b>S</b>
<b>A</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>O</b>
<b>G</b>	<b>E</b>	<b>N</b>

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 540 words possible. Plurals and nouns 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.

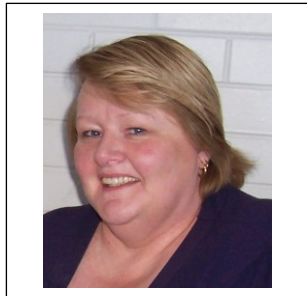
GdA can help you access free legal services & counselling

**Confidentiality Guaranteed**

## 10 Years of Serving on the GdA Board of Governance

\*\*\* Congratulations \*\*\*

Kay Timmins and Mark Thompson (both from Ballarat) joined the Board in October 2011 and have each been highly committed throughout the entire period. They provide an important perspective for the GdA Board, as they not only have a lived experience of disability, they both are involved in many other Boards which brings diversity in their approach as to the many aspects involved as members. Kay has been serving as Vice-Chairperson for 9 years. Congratulations and thank you.



## ACCESS TRAVEL PASS VICTORIA

You can travel with an Access Travel Pass if you have a permanent physical disability, cognitive condition or mental illness that prevents you from using myki.

### To be eligible for an Access Travel Pass you must:

- have a significant permanent physical disability, cognitive condition or mental illness
- be unable to consistently touch on or off due to your condition
- be able to travel independently on public transport, without assistance from a carer or companion
- be a Victorian resident.

If you're not eligible for the Access Travel Pass, you may be eligible for (*you can click the underlined links*)

- [Companion Card](#)
- [Scooter and Wheelchair Travel Pass](#)
- [Multi-Purpose Taxi Program membership](#).

There's information about how to apply on the form. If you would like the application form posted to you or help completing the form, call **1800 800 007** or visit a [PTV Hub](#). Or click on or search on your computer: <https://www.ptv.vic.gov.au/tickets/myki/concessions-and-free-travel/access-travel-pass/>



## All Abilities Basketball in Ballarat

Basketball Victoria provides many participatory opportunities for people with an intellectual disability, through playing, coaching, officiating, volunteering, and administrative support. For more info, contact:

**Kathy.perry@basketballvictoria.com.au**

Basketball Victoria are able to provide chairs and facilitate the program with a coach for the day. For further information on Basketball Victoria's Wheelchair programs, contact

**Jontee.brown@basketballvictoria.com.au**



To find out about all abilities sports or events in your town:

<https://www.aaaplay.org.au/>  
or phone 1800 222 842

## New IPaLs Project Officer for the Wimmera

**Welcome Tiffany Kenny**



Tiffany has a Bachelor of Human Services & Social Work, has trained with Lifeline in Mental Health First Aid & has also worked as a disability support worker.



## Exploring the use of capacity building supports to help make individualised living a reality

Posted October 28, 2021 (DARU Newsletter)

This research project aims to understand how participants use formal and informal capacity building supports to transition to more individualised living options (ILO) and choose a home that's right for them.

NDIS participants, family, carers, and other supporters are invited to participate in focus groups. Participants need to:

- be 18 years and over
- have lived experience with intellectual disability, Down syndrome, On the autism spectrum, Psychosocial disability or Cerebral palsy (or parent, carer, other supporter),
- Individualised Living Options (ILO) or Supported Independent Living (SIL) funding in your plan.

Participating in this research is voluntary and it will not impact your NDIS plan or any other communication you have with the NDIA. If you are interested in participating, please contact the NDIA Research Programs team on Email: [researchprojects@ndis.gov.au](mailto:researchprojects@ndis.gov.au) or Ph: 9621 6118

### Finally.....

Wishing all of our valued GdA members and non-members who are reading our newsletters, your families and friends a wonderful Christmas and New Year.

**We wish you all great health and a much brighter, less challenging 2022.**

We would like to thank all our GdA Board of Governance and Staff and Clients for your important input and helping us to manage this difficult year.



### 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**

[admin@grampiansadvocacy.org.au](mailto:admin@grampiansadvocacy.org.au)

<https://grampiansadvocacy.org.au/>

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