



**DECEMBER 2022**

## **BIG WIN FOR BALLARAT STATION!!!**

There was great excitement at GdA and in the City of Ballarat in October when the Victorian State Government announced \$50m in funding for lifts and a pedestrian overpass between platforms at the Ballarat Railway Station. A four and a half year GdA campaign for appropriate disability access has finally come to fruition.

Works are expected to be completed in time for the Commonwealth Games events in Ballarat in 2026.

The decision is just reward for every person who has struggled with the inaccessible infrastructure at the historic station. The GdA Board has thanked Member for Wendouree Juliana Addison for the part she played in keeping the issue front and centre in the Government. The Board also thanks Save Our Station Ballarat for its ongoing support. To everyone who attended meetings, wrote letters and emails or turned up for media opportunities, our sincerest thanks for your efforts. We can't wait to see the works begin.

More information: [Commonwealth Games spending to deliver long-awaited infrastructure upgrades in Ballarat - ABC News](#)



GdA members Shirley Mitchell and Mark Thompson at the Station



**GdA Board of Governance & Staff** wish all our wonderful members and readers a very **Happy and Safe Christmas and New Year.** We

hope that every one of you continues to be heard and valued and thrive as well as you can. We all face many challenges and we look forward to being here to continue to support you the best we can.

We will be closed between Christmas and New Year. In an emergency, please don't hesitate to call the appropriate service. The Office of the Public Advocate can be contacted on 1300 309

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Lifeline: 13 11 14

Orange Door

Ballarat [1800 219 819](tel:1800219819)

Wimmera: [1800 271 042](tel:1800271042)

Loddon: [1800 512 359](tel:1800512359)

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& fun  
weekly  
group

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

## Thomas Marks is new GdA Board Member & member of GdA Reconciliation Action Plan Working Group

Thomas Marks, also known as Marksey, is a proud Wotjobaluk / Gunaikurnai artist who grew up on Gunaikurnai country. He is currently based in Ballarat on Wathaurong Country, where he is involved with Ballarat based arts collective Pitcha Makin Fellas. Thomas has featured on the ABC telling his story. He participates in the TORCH Program and was commissioned to paint a Melbourne tram. With the support of Fiona Tipping GdA (Indigenous) Advocate, he told his story in a video to the Disability Royal Commission. GdA is delighted to have Thomas on the Board and the working group  
Video trailer: <https://youtu.be/VvCRzXPMNe0>



LEFT: Thomas with the Melbourne tram featuring his artwork

### Your feedback can help improve the NDIS

The NDIS is working to deliver a better experience for participants. They know the best way to do this is to listen to people with lived experience of disability and first-hand experience of the NDIS. That's what Participant First is all about. Participant First is looking for participants, families, carers and people within the disability community to share their views about the best ways to improve. You can receive a weekly invitation to provide feedback, including completing surveys, joining focus groups or taking part in interviews. Some feedback opportunities are paid.

*You don't have to take up any of the invitations if you don't want to – you can just keep an eye on how the NDIS is working with participants. Your feedback is confidential and not added to your official NDIS participant record. If you change your mind, you can unsubscribe at any time. For more information, go to :*

[www.ndis.gov.au/community/have-your-say/participant-first-help-improve-ndis](http://www.ndis.gov.au/community/have-your-say/participant-first-help-improve-ndis)

## Christmas Puzzles



How many words can you find here? Google says there are over 200 words and even as many as 350. The 9 letter word is the main challenge. And below are more 9 letter festive words for you to unscramble.

R	I	U
A	F	E
T	C	K

NOESATRNM \_\_\_\_\_  
 SEGTERIGN \_\_\_\_\_  
 EDACRODTE \_\_\_\_\_  
 SSGBILENS \_\_\_\_\_  
 CENIMTAEM \_\_\_\_\_  
 EDTGRAIUT \_\_\_\_\_  
 ETOLMESTI \_\_\_\_\_  
 GNLTASOAI \_\_\_\_\_  
 EPGADRIRT \_\_\_\_\_  
 ESKNAOLWF \_\_\_\_\_  
 GTSMMRINI \_\_\_\_\_  
 NTORITDAI \_\_\_\_\_



## DISABILITY ROYAL COMMISSION SUBMISSIONS ARE CLOSING

As the end of the Disability Royal Commission draws near, GdA would like to thank everyone who has contributed.

We have successfully submitted more than 70 important stories. We hold great hopes that these stories will bring about the change we need to see in the disability sector and our community. We look forward to continuing to help clients with their advocacy needs.

**GdA thanks our DRC Advocates Sherree Unwin and Fiona Tipping for carrying out this important work with sensitivity, care and professionalism.**

## INFORMATION, LINKAGES AND CAPACITY BUILDING (ILC) PROGRAM

GdA has some great news to share regarding the ILC program! On 5 August 2022, the Department of Social Services announced the Minister has agreed to a funding extension up to June 30, 2024.

The additional funding means that GdA's I-PaLS individual capacity building program will continue across the region for another 18 months.

To find out more call us on 1800 552 272. You don't have to be an NDIS participant to join I-PaLS.

## SISTER ROCKS SELF ADVOCACY GROUP CELEBRATES ITS 10<sup>TH</sup> BIRTHDAY

It is a credit to the facilitators and the members of the group to reach this milestone anniversary. It started out at the Stawell Health and Community Centre in 2011 and has retained many of its original members, meeting monthly to share experiences and raise issues of importance for people with disability. A range of community services have visited as guest speakers, e.g. St John Ambulance. The "We can Work it Out" Booklet was published as a guide to self-advocacy. SRAG meets at the Stawell Neighbourhood House during the afternoon on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Wednesday of each month. The group continued throughout COVID-19 with the aid of technology. Special thanks to Jenni Starick and Deb Verdon who got the group going, and recent facilitators Carol Starkey and Sherree Unwin. Special mention to the members who have shown what can be achieved together. More information: call 1800 552 272

## Easy Gingerbread Recipe

- 125g unsalted butter
- 1/3 cup brown sugar
- 1/4 cup golden syrup
- 1 egg
- 2 cups plain flour
- 1/4 cup self raising flour
- 1 tsp bicarbonate of soda
- 330g icing mixture, to decorate
- Small decorations of choice (e.g. cachous and pearls), to decorate
- Food colouring, to decorate
- 1 tbs ground ginger

**Preheat** oven to 180°C.

Line 2 baking trays with baking paper. Beat butter, sugar & syrup together in a bowl until creamy. Add egg & beat well.

**Sift** flours, soda & ginger together. Stir into butter mixture.

**Turn out** onto a lightly floured surface & knead lightly until smooth.

**Roll out** to 5mm thick. Use cutters to cut out shape. Transfer to tray.

**Bake** for 10-12 minutes until light brown. Transfer to a wire rack to cool.

**To decorate;** prepare the icing mix following packet instructions.

**Colour as desired.** Spread on biscuits and decorate

## 26<sup>th</sup> GdA AGM

GdA held its first “hybrid” Annual General Meeting and members voted to adopt its own Constitution instead of using the Model Rules for Incorporated Associations.

Guest Speaker was Justine Kingan from the Northern Grampians Shire, who gave a presentation on the Stella Young Project.

Most of the Board of Governance was returned for another year. Norm McMurray continues as Chairperson for the third year. Long term Board member Steven Harmer was the one resignation. Thomas Marks was welcomed as a new Board member (See page 2 for more).



Board from left: Carly McKinnis, Mark Thompson, Jo Richie, Norm McMurray (Chair), Kay Timmins, Thomas Marks, Bernie O'Shannessy



Top picture: (left) Justine Kingan (NGS) & GdA's Carol Starkey  
Middle pic: (left) Ararat Rural City Mayor Jo Armstrong & GdA Board Member Carly McKinnis,  
Left pic: (left) Martha Haylett, Board Member Bernie O'Shannessy and Paul O'Shannessy



### 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)

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

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