

December 2024



Merry Christmas, Happy New Year
and a safe Summer to all



Strengthening Disability Advocacy Conference

GdA Disability Advocates attended the SDAC Conference in Melbourne in September. Despite the cheery faces of the advocates below, it was very serious business. The theme: Shaping tomorrow; Empowering today; Leading the way for Disability Rights. A lot to unpack; a lot of common interest and concern, and a lot of support and soul searching.

Our Advocates pic from left to right; (Ballarat) Phil Cutts, (NDIS Appeals Support Officer) Bern Duane, (Horsham) Trudy Joyce, Tiffany Kenny (who assisted with some of the advocacy cases) & (Daylesford Moorabool) Kaylene Howell



GdA Mission Statement

GdA stands beside people with disability as they:

- *understand & act on their human rights**
- *connect & build confidence, independence & friendships**
- *are empowered to live the life they choose**

Farewell to Sherree Unwin

After 5 years, Sherree has called it a day with being a disability advocate for the Ararat and Pyrenees region. Sherree has been endlessly studying and has moved on.

Sherree is now a qualified Behavior Support Person and is still helping people with a disability. GdA is sorry to lose her, and many clients have been fortunate to have had very good outcomes thanks to her great negotiating skills. Thanks Sherree & Best Wishes



GdA Welcomes New Advocates

Erin McCallum



Ararat/Pyrenees Area

Erin has worked in the community health sector for over 10 years, and worked with people with disabilities for over 5 years, also working as an NDIS Support Coordinator. Erin is passionate about assisting people to improve their lives and seek equal opportunities, working alongside people to reach their goals and achieve their potential.

Erin lives within the area that GdA services. This gives her a greater understanding of the challenges that people can face living in rural areas and allows her to build long lasting relationships with service providers and participants to be able to seek the most positive outcomes for individuals.

Erin also has a lived experience of disability, which provides her with a deeper and true understanding of the struggles faced by people with disabilities and the difficulties they face over their lifespan. Erin is committed to ensuring people with disabilities can live their lives, independently, free from discrimination and have the ability to make their own choices.

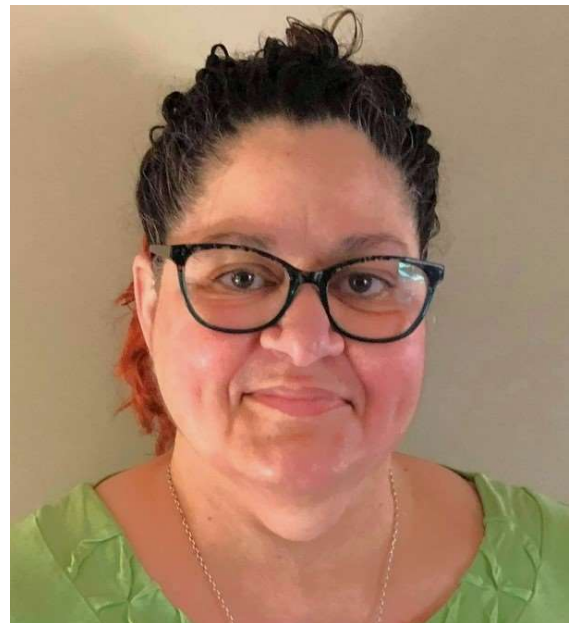
Jackie Gravatt

Jackie is a committed professional who works in Partnership with people of all ages and abilities and their families to help them achieve their individual goals and dreams, have real choices and make real life decisions.

Jackie is committed to working with high quality teams and the community to enhance the quality of life for people with disabilities, ensuring they have real choice and decision-making opportunities.

Jackie endeavors to support people to remain connected to their communities, have real interactions and enjoy their independence.

Jackie lives with FSHMD which is a form of muscular dystrophy where from the hips up she has weakened muscular impairments and uses a 4-wheel walker to get around. Jackie has a lived experience of the NDIS. She has supports in place to manage this, both from her family and paid supports via the NDIS.



Moorabool/Golden Plains Area

GdA Congratulates William Delaney Ararat Lions Club Youth of the Year Award



Pic L-R: (Judge) Councillor Peter Beales, (Judge) GdA EO Roy Reekie, Lions Youth of the Year (Ararat) William Delaney, (Lions Club Youth of the Year Convenor) Jo Richie, also GdA Board Secretary, (Judge) Local Business Woman Nancy Panter (Pic courtesy of the Lions Club Ararat)

A WIN FOR A DISABLED TRAVELLER BEING PERMITTED TO TAKE HER TRAVEL ASSISTANT DOG ON A PLANE

A Sydney woman with a disability has secured better access to assistance dogs on Qantas flights moving forward, following a Federal Court ruling. In 2022, a traveller was refused permission by Qantas for her assistance dog, to accompany her on a flight. The dog is trained to alleviate the effects of Fullerton's disabilities and is recognised by the NDIS.



It is unlawful disability discrimination for Australian businesses to refuse service to a person because they have an assistance animal. While this outcome is a step in the right direction, there is still a lot to be done. This entire case could have been avoided if there were clear national standards for assistance animal accreditation and disability standards for the aviation industry in particular.

This is an extract from the Australian Aviation website and article by Kace O'Neill 6.11.24 To read the whole article go to the below link
[Win for disability advocates in Qantas assistance dog case – Australian Aviation](#)

GdA Board of Governance

2024

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Norm McMurray

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Secretary

Jo Richie

Ordinary Members

Craig Townsend

Carol Okai

Helene Roche

Dale Edwards

Matt de Gruchy

GdA Board of Governance

& Staff wish all of our

valued members

and readers

a Happy Xmas & 2025



Closed Dec 23 -3 Jan

**During closure of our Offices,
please note that you can contact**

the Office of the Public

Advocate on

1300 309 337

NDIS CHANGES YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT

From 3 October 2024, participants and their authorised representatives:

- can only spend NDIS funding on things that are in the approved list of NDIS supports
- cannot spend NDIS funding on things in the list of non-NDIS supports.

These lists are available on the NDIS website ([click below](#))

<https://ourguidelines.ndis.gov.au/would-we-fund-it/what-does-ndis-fund>

Eligibility Reassessment

Participants (or nominees) will receive a letter explaining eligibility reassessments and any required information.

Under new laws, we may request specific details, such as:

- A particular type of assessment.
- A report from an allied health professional.

Participants have **90 days** to provide the information, with extensions available if needed.

While no specific requests have been made yet, if we do ask, we will support participants to understand what is needed, why, and by when.

If someone **doesn't** respond within the timeframe or is found ineligible, their NDIS access may be revoked to ensure support is directed where it's needed most.

Mandatory eligibility reassessments will apply in some cases, such as when children turn 9.

For a full list of FAQs relating to legislation changes please visit the [website](#).



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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<https://grampiansadvocacy.org.au>

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