

JUNE 2025



RECOGNISING GREAT PEOPLE

**GdA Congratulates Professor Christine Bigby (OA)
and Georgina Harman (OA)
Officer of the Order of Australia Award
Kings Birthday 2025**

Professor Christina Bigby - director of the Latrobe University Living with Disability Research Centre, who received an AO for distinguished service to people with intellectual disabilities, to social welfare and inclusion research, policy and practice, and to tertiary education



Georgina Harman - Beyond Blue CEO & former National Mental Health Commission Deputy, for distinguished service to the Mental Health Sector, & the LBGTQIA+ community, & not-for-profit organisations



Thank you for all your hard work, commitment & passion



What's happening around GdA?

In March this year, Roy Reekie resigned after 22 months as the GdA Executive Officer.

Fortunately, our GdA Board of Governance Acting Secretary Carol Okai stood down from the Board to become the Acting EO.

We have commenced the recruitment process and hope to have a new Executive Officer settled in before the next newsletter.





Women With Disabilities Australia (WWDA) is calling on the re-elected Albanese Government to deliver meaningful reform that puts the rights, needs and leadership of women, girls, and gender-diverse people with disabilities front and centre.

In a statement on the WWDA website, it pledged to continue the fight for gender reform and for the Government to act on the findings of the Disability Royal Commission and NDIS Review.

There are 5.5 million Australians living with disability, and roughly 22% identify as female, according to the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS).

The ABS also states that women with disability are almost twice as likely as women without disability to have experienced physical or sexual violence by a cohabiting partner over a 12-month period, with fewer than one in three reporting incidents to police.

Considering this, WWDA is calling on the government to establish a disability-led gender-based violence working group to inform the National Plan to End Violence Against Women and Children and change the legal definition of 'domestic and family violence' to reflect the realities of violence experienced by women and gender-diverse people with disabilities.

WWDA CEO Sophie Cusworth, believes a shared focus on disability, health, and the NDIS, is an opportunity for NDIS Ministers Mark Butler and Jenny McAllister to better address the current fragmentation between disability and gender-based violence.

This parliamentary term will be critical. It must deliver long-overdue reform that responds to the realities of our lives – especially when it comes to ending gender-based violence, reforming discriminatory legal frameworks, and ensuring foundational supports reach those currently left behind.

This article is taken from the Women with Disabilities Australia website
Go to <https://wwda.org.au> for information and resources

WWDA advocates for the rights of women, girls and gender-diverse people with disabilities through diverse projects and initiatives. We work tirelessly to eliminate discrimination and violence, fostering an inclusive society where all can thrive.

Information/Resources

<https://www.disabilitysupportguide.com.au/>

Topics Include
Accessible Travel
Accommodation
Autism
Down Syndrome
Early Intervention
Education
Employment & Disability
Equipment & Technology
Finance
Health & Wellbeing
Mental Health Options
Plan Management
Sport & Recreation
Support Coordination
Stories by people with a Disability
Services, Info Guides & More

Congratulations Jo



Jo Richie (pic above courtesy of Ararat Advocate) has been a member of the Ararat Lions Club for 12 years & has been bestowed one of the organisations top honours as V2 District Lion of the Year. Jo is the past Secretary for the GdA Board of Governance, but is currently working as a disability advocate for GdA.

A Service for One

For many people with complex support needs, mainstream group-based disability services do not work well. For some people, those services have caused a lot of harm & trauma. Instead, families of people with complex support needs might decide to set up a service-for-one. In a service-for-one, supports are tailored specifically to an individual's needs. Using the participant's NDIS funding, the family member—or other people important to the person—directly employ staff who provide support. This means the person with disability can get supports that centre their needs and preferences and adapt as support needs change. They have made this factsheet to explain more about this model.

To read the full article, click>
[A Service for One – Inclusion Australia](#)

How would you like to join one of our groups?

A flyer for the Stawell Group. It features a blue background with orange and yellow abstract shapes. At the top left is the R.A.I.S.E. logo with the tagline 'YOUR VOICE'. At the top right is the GdA logo with the text 'Grampians disAbility Advocacy'. Below these is the text 'Regional Action for Inclusion through Self-Advocacy & Empowerment'. The main content is in a yellow box with a torn-edge effect, containing the group name 'Stawell Group', location 'Stawell Neighbourhood House At The Powerhouse 42 Sloane Street', frequency 'Every second Tuesday of the month', and time 'From 1.00pm to 5.00pm'. There are also small icons for location, frequency, and time.

A flyer for the Ararat Group. It features a blue background with orange and yellow abstract shapes. At the top left is the R.A.I.S.E. logo with the tagline 'YOUR VOICE'. At the top right is the GdA logo with the text 'Grampians disAbility Advocacy'. Below these is the text 'Regional Action for Inclusion through Self-Advocacy & Empowerment'. The main content is in a yellow box with a torn-edge effect, containing the group name 'Ararat Group', location 'Ararat Neighbourhood House 56 Campbell St, Ararat', frequency 'Every second Tuesday Starting the 20th of May', and time 'From 1:00pm to 5:00pm'. There are also small icons for location, frequency, and time.

See pages 6 and 7 to learn more 😊

NDIS Introducing 3-Month Funding Periods for New Plans

Starting 19 May 2025, the NDIA will gradually introduce shorter funding periods—typically three months—for new and reassessed NDIS plans to help participants better manage their budgets. Currently, participants receive all their funding upfront for a 12-month period, which can make budgeting difficult and increase the risk of overspending. The new approach will not affect total funding amounts but will spread access to funds more evenly over time. These changes will only apply after a discussion during plan reassessment or creation and are tailored to each participant's needs, preferences, and risks. Funding periods have been part of NDIS legislation since October 2024.

Free Supported Decision-Making Sessions from the Office of the Public Advocate

The Office of the Public Advocate's Inclusion Team is offering free Healthy Discussions/Supported Discussions information sessions, presented by William Ward-Boas and Tarli Sali. These sessions focus on the rights of adults with disability to make their own decisions and receive the support they need to do so. Aimed at improving communication between people with disability and health practitioners, the sessions equip participants with practical skills to support informed decision-making. Tailored versions are available for people with disability and families, support staff, and community members. Sessions are interactive, include videos and key takeaway messages, and can be delivered in person or online. For more information, visit the Healthy Discussions and Supported Discussions project pages on the Office of the Public Advocate website, or contact William Ward-Boas at william.ward-boas@justice.vic.gov.au.

The above articles were taken from the VALID newsletter June 4

VALID is a State Funded Advocacy Organisation, VALID runs training sessions for people with disability and their supporters. For more info go to>> <https://valid.org.au/>

New Treasurer for GdA Board of Governance

Danny is a retired solicitor and accountant. From the mid 1980's, he and his wife Helen raised their family in north-central Victoria. Two years ago they relocated to Melbourne to live closer to their children and grandchildren. Their son-in-law attended the GdA 2024 AGM as an observer and was very impressed with the advocacy services being delivered and the people involved with GdA. He encouraged Danny to offer to help with GdA's administration because of his business background. He is honoured to have been appointed as Treasurer in February.

DANNY RYAN



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](#). Click<)



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

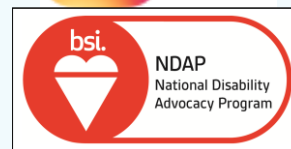
GdA Office Locations

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

Central Intake 1800 552 272

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

Like us on Facebook. Follow us on Twitter or Instagram



Sister Rocks



Who is our group?

Sister Rocks is a Self Advocacy Group run by people with disability in the Grampians, Victoria.

Grampians DisAbility Advocacy is an organisation that supports this Self Advocacy Group.



What does our group care about?

We work together to make sure our members have the same rights, choices and opportunities as anyone else.

Things our group has worked on:

- Supported people with disability in the Grampians to speak up for their rights
 - Running training for people with intellectual disability about how to speak up
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- Running training for people with intellectual disability about how to speak up

Who can be member of our group?

Anyone with a disability in the Grampians can be a member of Sister Rocks.

It is **FREE** to be a member of Sister Rocks! **Contact our group via** [grampiansadvocacy website](#) [Grampians DisAbility Advocacy | Free advocacy support for people with a disability across the Grampians region.](#) **or FB** [\(7\) Social Space and Peer Support - Grampians Disability Advocacy | Facebook](#) or call 1800 552 272



Learn what self advocacy is
Find self advocacy groups
Find self advocacy resources
Self Advocacy Resource Unit
(Click in below)

[Home - Voices Together](#)

These poems are from the Women with Disability Australia website. There is an un abundance of support, information & resources available to women They represent women, girls, & gender-diverse people with disabilities across Australia. For more info, go to their website <https://wwda.org.au/>

Where There is Life by Cherie Galbraith

*I'm sitting at my computer
Bored as bored can be
What can I do to amuse myself?
Now let me see
Shall I go see a movie?
Now that might be fun
But I don't have any money
So there goes plan number one
Maybe I can go for a walk
But the sun is high above
And it is very hot today
And the heat I do not love
Okay there goes plan number two
What can I think of next?
Maybe I could watch T.V
But it's Sunday and all you get is re-runs
Oh I'm feeling quite perplexed
So I'll go and have a nanna nap
As I'm feeling rather weary
And anyway I've had enough of this day
It has been awfully dreary
But tomorrow is another day
And I'll have to get up off my butt
And make plans to do something good
As I don't want to get into a rut
Cause being a person with Parkie
Can make life a little rough
But it's up to me to keep busy
And challenge the things that are tough
And sometimes I will make a blue
But quite often I have a win
Nothing's going to keep this lady down
I'll take the good and bad
Cause at least I'm still breathing
And that's got to make you grin.*

Any woman with disability, or supporter of women with disability can join WWDA. **Membership is free.** To find out more visit the **WWDA website** (external link). There is also Women with Disability Victoria <https://www.wdv.org.au/>

Disability Invisible by Marie Bledsoe

*In the whispers of the evening breeze,
A woman dances, with hidden unease.
Beneath her grace, a tempest stirs,
Unseen battles, her spirit incurs.
Her wings may seem clipped, yet they rise,
Defying odds beneath the skies.
Her eyes tell tales of silent fights,
Invisible struggles, day and night.
Let empathy guide our steps anew,
To understand what she goes through.
In her quiet strength, we find a spark,
A testament to resilience, in the dark.*