

June 2026 Newsletter



WELCOME TO OUR NEW ADVOCATE YVETTE KING

Yvette joins Grampians Disability Advocacy as a Disability Advocate and Project Officer, bringing a strong background in community services, psychosocial recovery coaching, NDIS support coordination, youth work, and mental health support. Passionate about empowering people to have their voices heard.

Yvette is committed to person-centred, recovery-oriented practice and advocating for positive outcomes for individuals and families navigating complex systems.

With extensive experience in case management, crisis intervention, and stakeholder collaboration, Yvette values building genuine connections and supporting people to exercise their rights, choice, and independence.

Yvette will be taking over for Jackie Gravatt providing advocacy in the Bacchus Marsh and Golden Plains region. As well as working in the ILC programs as an Individual and Self-Advocacy Project Officer. We welcome and look forward to having you on the GdA team.



Outside of work, Yvette enjoys dot painting, contemporary art, gardening, reading, music, and values creativity and connection as important parts of wellbeing and community life.



Grampians disAbility Advocacy

Servicing:

Horsham
Yarriambiack
West Wimmer
Hindmarsh
Northern Grampians Shire
Rural City of Ararat
Pyrenees
Hepburn
Moorabool
Bacchus Marsh
Golden Plains
Ballarat

Call 1800 552 272 for more
information or go to

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



Have your say on the next State Disability Plan and the next Victorian Autism Plan

The current State Disability Plan and Victorian Autism Plan were extended to mid-2027.

Now you can have your say on the next state disability and the next autism plan.

The Victorian Government wants to hear from:

- people with disability
- Autistic people
- families, carers and friends
- advocates and allies
- disabled people's organisations
- community organisations
- local government.

The next plans will set out priorities and actions to make Victoria a more inclusive, accessible, and fair place for all.

The Victorian Government wants to hear from you about:

- what is working well and what could be improved
- priorities for the future
- ideas for the next plans.

The government will also work with the disability community to respond to national disability reforms. This includes changes to the National Disability Insurance Scheme, and the delivery of foundational supports such as Thriving Kids. There are different ways you can take part.

You can choose one or more of these options to have your say. You can:

- take part in a face-to-face workshop or online forum
- take part in an online survey
- share feedback and ideas on Engage Victoria

Send an email with a voice or video recording to disabilityplan@dffh.vic.gov.au mail a picture, document or recording with your ideas to Office for Disability, 50 Lonsdale Street, Melbourne, Victoria, 3000. To take part in a workshop, forum, or online survey **visit Engage Victoria** for information. If you need help to give feedback or would like to access information in a different format, contact disabilityplan@dffh.vic.gov.au. They can provide support or materials in a way that works best for you. You will find translations and accessible formats (such as audio, Auslan video, Easy Read) that help to explain the consultation on Engage Victoria. Consultation on the next State Disability Plan and the next Victorian Autism Plan will happen at the same time. This way, the new autism plan will line up with the new State Disability Plan.

Consultations close July 17.

CONGRATULATIONS TO BRENDAN BERNIER AND JULIE DICKSON

The ABC has awarded its 2026 International Day of People with Disability (IDPwD) Storyteller Scholarship to Brendan Bernier and Julie Dickson.

Run in partnership with the Department of Health, Disability and Ageing, the scholarship supports emerging creators with disability, helping break down barriers and challenge community perceptions. It is open to contributors previously engaged through the ABC's IDPwD Employment Fund.

ABC Director of News Justin Stevens said this year's recipients will create content representing diverse communities that can face stigma.

"By producing quality content and letting their skills and talents shine, this year's winners will help challenge perceptions and broaden understanding of disability in the community," he said.

Brendan Bernier, from Toowoomba, previously collaborated with ABC Radio North Queensland, co-presenting, producing interviews and contributing to an IDPwD showcase episode.

Julie Dickson, based in Melbourne, is an accomplished powerlifter who has won silver medals at the World Dwarf Games in both powerlifting and basketball. She has worked with ABC Lifestyle and ABC News Victoria on content highlighting the rise of women in powerlifting.

Click> [ABC IDPwD 2026 Storyteller Scholarship winners announced - About the ABC](#) (28/4/26)

Celebrating Disability in Our Community Panel Discussion and Lunch in Ballarat

The City of Ballarat, in partnership with the Ballarat Working Together Group, warmly invites you to take part in Celebrating Disability in Our Community as part of Disability Pride Month 2026. This event will involve a panel discussion with four key speakers living with disability, and MC.

Disability Pride Month takes place every July to promote awareness, celebrate people with disability, and encourage self-acceptance and pride in disability identity. Join us to connect, celebrate, and recognise the contributions of people with disability in our community.

When: Thursday 2 July 2026

Time: 11:00am – 12:15pm (lunch and networking until 1:00pm)

Where: Trench Room, Ballarat Town Hall

Lunch provided



Register: <https://events.humanitix.com/celebrating-disability-in-our-community>

A better NDIS website

The NDIS has updated its website to make it easier to use. You might notice changes on the website.

They've updated the participant and provider journey sections

- clearer menus
- shorter pages with more direct information
- simple, familiar language.
- All the information you need is still here. It just looks a little different.
- The updates to the website will make it simpler and easier for people to get information about reform and changes to the NDIS.
- There are links and redirects from previous pages and information to help you find your way.
- They have developed the website structure and information based on almost 700 hours of consultation with more than 300 participants and their supporters.
- The updates are based on what participants told us they need. The aim is to make it easier to find what you need with fewer steps.

Let the NDIS know what you think about the changes using their website feedback form.

NEW BILL PASSED

The Government's National Disability Insurance Scheme Amendment (Integrity and Safeguarding) Bill 2025 will become law after it passed the Parliament on the 1st of April.

It delivers tough new laws to protect people with a disability and safeguard the NDIS from exploitation at the hands of fraudsters, predators and shonks, and throws the book at those responsible for serious misconduct and unsafe practices within the scheme.

Key improvements include:

- Strengthened monitoring, compliance and enforcement powers of the NDIS Quality and Safeguards Commission.
- The Bill will also modernise NDIS claims by introducing mandated electronic claim forms to prevent fraud and abuse of the system at the expense of participants.
- It also creates a new power for the National Disability Insurance Agency to request evidence before claims are paid.

NDIS NEWSLETTER

If you would like to keep up with all the latest NDIS news, scan on the barcode below and sign up for their monthly newsletter!



Brain Teaser

How many words can you make using more than 3 letters and must include the centre letter & one nine letter word

D	F	E
T	A	H
E	R	E

Sister Rocks Self Advocacy Group Fun Get-Together In May



Pic above (Back) Left to Right: Kym, Luellyn, Tiffany, Kaye Josh
(Front) Left to Right: Lou, Brooke Jess and Kylie



Pic above: Caleb and Tiffany Warren enjoying a farewell for Tiffany going on "maternity leave"

After a great many years of campaigning by Central Highlands Regional Advisory Group, the Ballarat Railway Station now has an accessible overpass

New accessible pedestrian overpass with a lift and stairs on each platform

Ballarat Station has been upgraded to improve accessibility, safety, and connectivity for all public transport users, while considering the heritage of the station. The designs, endorsed by Heritage Victoria, provide contemporary companion structures to the enduring heritage-listed buildings, demonstrating accessibility and heritage considerations working together.

An accessible pedestrian overpass, with a passenger lift and stairs on each platform has been completed. Commuters no longer need to leave the station to change platforms, making it easier and safer for everyone, including people with disability, those carrying luggage or pushing a pram.

There is now improved access to the existing northern station entrance with a new ramp, stairs, and automatic swing door. GdA has been involved since 2018 lobbying the State Government to address these issues. In 2022, after the Commonwealth Games were announced for Melbourne, the State Government agreed to commence upgrades. In March this year, with the overpass completed, many Central Highlands Advisory Group members attended the opening. along with GdA Advocate.

We are still hoping to see improvements for accessing the platform to the lift & will fight to continue putting this request forward. **VIDEO>>: <https://www.facebook.com/watch/?v=989144116793432>**



Pic Above: cutting the Ribbon at the Overpass launch (including MP Julianna Addison, Bec Paton from Central Highlands Regional Advisory Group & MP Michaela Settle, and State Gov Reps
Pic Left: (L-R) Central Highlands Regional Advisory members Mark Thomposn, Bec Paton, Barry Devine and GdA Advocate Phil Cutts

Disability Rights and Culture, is a disability led human rights organisation based in Melbourne.

One of the things Disability Rights and Culture does, is facilitate a community called **Belong**.

Belong is a free to join community run by and for people with disability.

Within Belong members build meaningful connections, share experience, develop skills and find community, on each person's own terms.

Every member receives personalised guidance through welcome and induction, with pathways into tailored community groups that match your needs, interests and identities.

Belong recognises that community members carry multiple identities and intersectional needs, and the ways to connect are varied and evolving.

Each week there are between two and six facilitated meetings that members can choose to attend. Many groups gather online and there are also face to face groups meeting in Melbourne's CBD and the western suburbs.

Disability and Rights Culture is keen to build a hub in the Central Highlands area that is, like Belong, radically inclusive across age, gender, culture and disability experience.

Members of this hub could meet in Ballarat and surrounds to attend specific events together - picnics, art, karaoke, shows, protests, anything at all.

Members could also come together in a Care Web to share skills, time and practical solutions to support one another's particular needs.

If you would like to be part of a local hub please contact [Peter](#), the EO of Grampians disAbility Advocacy by calling 1800 552 272 and registering your expression of interest or if you prefer, you can email admin@grampiansadvocacy.org.au and Peter will forward on your details to Disability Rights and Culture.

You can find out more about Belong here: <https://drc.org.au/belong/>

<https://drc.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2026/04/BELONG-INDUCTION-written-version.docx>

NDIS NEWS

Ndis reforms

INTERVIEW WITH PRESIDENT OF THE PWDA JERAMY HOPE



Cuts are coming to the NDIS, with the federal government flagging 160,000 people are expected to be moved off the scheme by 2030 in a push to reign in spending growth. Health Minister Mark Butler says the reforms are necessary to rein in spending growth, with the scheme on track to cost \$70 billion per year by the end of the decade. The disability community has expressed alarm & anxiety amid ongoing uncertainty about how the reforms will work & which participants will be affected. To listen to this interview with Jeramy Hope from People with Disability Australia, and an NDIS participant himself, check out. Jeramy is speaking here with Tee Mitchell from SBS.

This podcast goes for approx.
17.46mins Pod
(click on text below)

INTERVIEW: President of People with
Disability Australia Jeramy Hope on NDIS
reforms | SBS News

How you can take action with PWDA

PWDA is building public pressure through our **Reasonable. Necessary. Ordinary** campaign.

So far, **more than 100** people have shared **their stories**, more than **300 emails** have been sent to MPs and decision-makers, and **more than 12,000 people** have signed our change.org petition.

[These stories matter](#)

They show what the NDIS really funds and the impact of these cuts

Take action today

Reasonable. Necessary. Ordinary.



Protect the NDIS

Help us get to 20,000 signatures

Share the petition

Sign our petitions to stop the NDIS cuts. PWDA has two petitions. **We are encouraging people to sign both.**

One builds **public pressure**.

The other creates a **permanent record**.

PWDA Change.org petition

PWDA Parliamentary e-petition

This is important because it becomes part of the official parliamentary record and is formally tabled in Parliament.

This petition closes on 30 May 2026

Email your MP and ask them to protect the NDIS