

September



**GdA has been providing advocacy
for 30 years!**



You're warmly invited

Grampians disAbility Advocacy AGM

ALL WELCOME! Please join us for our
Annual General Meeting to review the
year and plan ahead.



DATE

**Monday,
19 October**



TIME

2:00-4:00 PM



**There will be a Guest Speaker
Afternoon tea will be served**



**VENUE: ARARAT COMMUNITY
CENTRE OVAL. ZOOM LINK CAN
ALSO BE PROVIDED**

**Please RSVP by 12 October for catering
purposes and dietary requirements**



1800 552 272

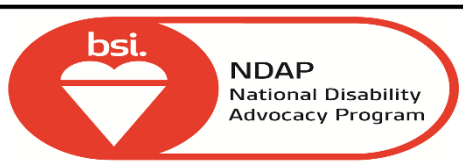


admin@grampiansadvocacy.org.au



Quality and Standards Audit completed in June

GdA has received accreditation for their service & policies around advocacy & service management. We are proud of our results. Thank you to all the clients that contributed by providing their feedback. Thank you to the Advocates always being so incredibly committed to what they do, And thank you to the GdA Board for ensuring that our policies current and reflect all the integral aspects of meeting our compliance.



New GdA Help Booklet for People with a DisAbility



Help and Resources Guide for people with a disability

A fantastic resource containing all helpful contacts for people with a disability has been created. A link will soon be on our website 😊

Thank you to Ararat Rural City Council for helping with this information booklet.

Hard copies will be available at GdA offices, as well as the Ararat Library and local providers in the coming weeks.

SIGNIFICANT ISSUES WITH NDIS REFORMS

OPA (Office of the Public Advocate) has made a submission on the National Disability Insurance Scheme Amendment (Securing the NDIS for Future Generations) Bill 2026, urging significant changes to protect the rights, safety and autonomy of people with disability.

The submission raises concerns that proposed changes to plan reassessments could make it harder for participants to seek changes to inadequate plans, weaken supported decision-making, increase delays and reduce appeal rights.

OPA also warns against provisions that would allow broad funding changes without adequate oversight and proposals that could narrow access to supports by focusing only on a participant's qualifying impairment.

The submission emphasises that any reform of the NDIS must uphold the scheme's original purpose: enabling people with disability to live safely, independently and with dignity.

The submission calls for multiple changes to the Bill, including timely reassessment processes, robust review rights and a continued commitment to supported decision-making.

For more information, click on the link >>

[Read OPA's response to National Disability Insurance Scheme Amendment \(Securing the NDIS for Future Generations\) Bill 2026](#) on the OPA website.

Information/Resources

Paid Opportunity for NDIS Participants and Plan Nominees

The NDIA are asking for NDIS participants to help improve the New Way of Planning in 2027

Voluntary participation that will not affect your NDIS

Online/Zoom - 2 hour sessions, accepted applicants to be paid \$200

The activity will be a simulation of a needs assessment to help train staff and gain feedback

Any necessary interpreters or supports can be organised

For more info or to express interest
Call **1300 790 467**

https://engage.ndis.gov.au/projects/test-the-new-way-of-planning?mc_cid=fe6f6a5303&mc_eid=UNIQID

GdA Advocate Jo Richie Recognised

LONG-serving Ararat Lions Club member Jo Richie has been recognised for her outstanding dedication to community service, receiving the organisation's highest individual honour. At the recent Lions District Changeover Dinner in Willaura, Ms Richie was presented with the prestigious Melvin Jones Fellowship, an award that recognises Lions members who have made an exceptional contribution to the organisation and the communities they serve.



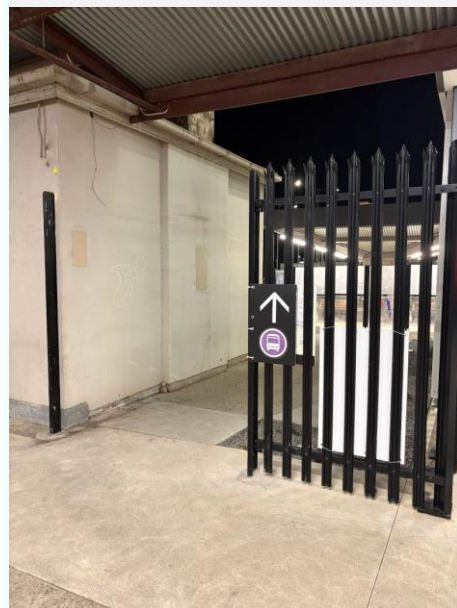
Jo with outgoing district Governor Susan Eyton

Ballarat Railway Station Update

A more accessible platform entry/exit section has been provided at the station.

Our Central Highlands Regional Advisory Group has been lobbying for this addition since the upgrade was completed in late March.

30 March 2026: The pedestrian overpass, lifts, and stairs opened for the first morning trains, marking the completion of major construction.

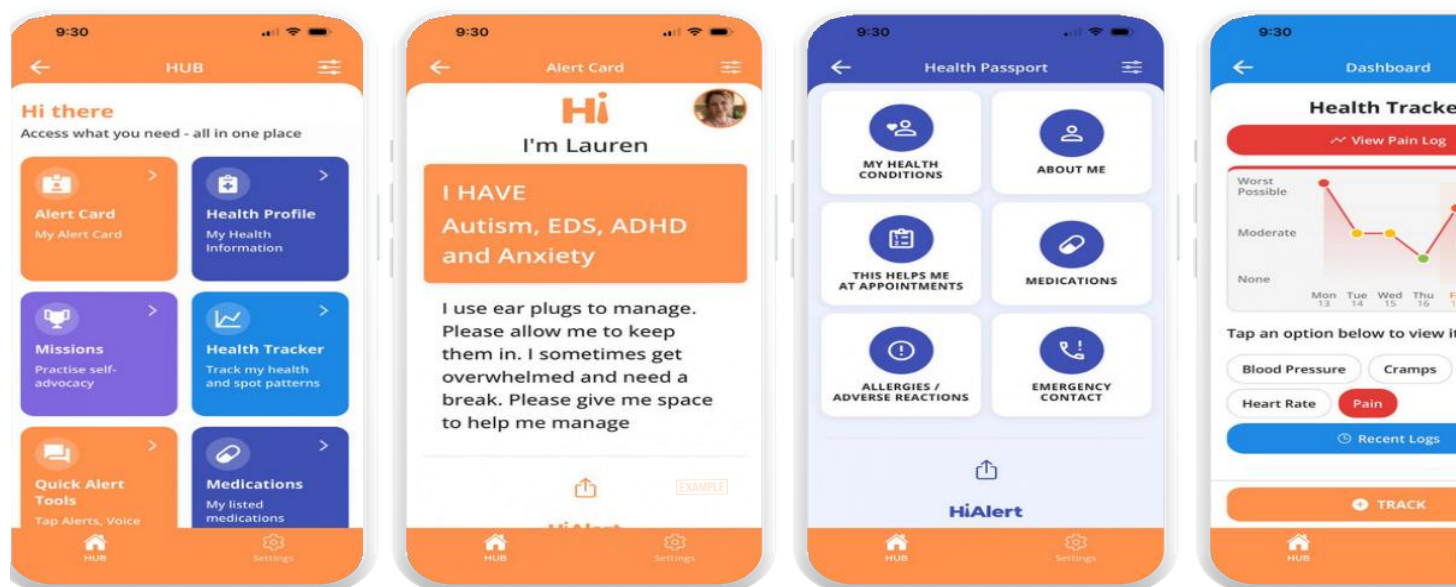


We are still working on getting a "Changing Place" amenity provided at the station.

Watch this Space!

The app to Communicate **Hi** your Health Conditions and Disabilities

14 tools and 9 activities for communication and advocacy one app, all specifically created for people to be supported, before, during, and after the moments that matter



[Download your Free Alert Card today](#)

Download HiAlert
Set up your free Alert Card
and show or share it when you need support & understanding
Add name & profile photo
Add conditions/ disabilities
Add message for support

Use it anywhere you need to communicate your needs, such as:

Public transport, airports, trains, taxis, rideshares
Medical appointments, hospitals, pharmacies
Shopping centres, malls, restaurants, gyms, cinemas
Schools, universities, workplaces, libraries
Social gatherings and public spaces

Go to>> <https://hialertapp.com/>

Pricing: \$1.99 AUD per month or \$9.99 AUD per year (14-day free trial on both plans) Free Plan available for those who just want to use the Alert Card



FAREWELL TO OUR BOARD CHAIR, NORM McMURRAY AND THANK YOU FOR ALL THE WONDERFUL YEARS OF BEING A BIG PART OF GdA

WE HAVE BEEN SO FORTUNATE TO HAVE HAD YOU TAKING CARE OF US FOR TWELVE FABULOUS YEARS.

LEAVING OUR BOARD OF GOVERNANCE IN GOOD HANDS AND PROVIDING REMARKABLE MENTORING, AND NOW THE TIME SERVED MEANS YOUR JOURNEY HERE IS FINISHED.

Normie began and ended his years on the Board filled with passion for all people with a disability, but especially those with mental health issues, the homeless and those in the justice system. Normie felt and advocated strongly wherever he went, about how very important rural and regional services are, about community, networking and all things related. Norm, thank you for being both lighthouse and a rock, ever supportive of all the GdA staff and other Board members. You have left big shoes to fill, but we know we will see and hear from you as you float around Victoria, as you do. We hope that you can take a quieter back seat from all the responsibilities that have gone with the job of GdA Chair. You have put in a remarkable 12 years of commitment and are one of the longest serving members we have been fortunate enough to have. Nearly half of how long GdA has been a service! You have seen our organisation grow, create and implement great programs, supported us through rough times, management changes, bushfires and not to forget Covid times, always with the most genuine concern for us all.

Molly McGrath is our latest employee at GdA. She is sitting in as Administration and Intake Officer until mid-September.

Molly also sits on the Disability Action Plan Working Group at Ararat Rural City, along with our EO Peter Harrison and GdA Board of Governance member Erin Mahmud.

Molly has a friendly and positive attitude and is keen to be a part of improving inclusiveness for all especially people with disabilities.
Molly loves music and her dog George.
It's great to have you with us 😊

Our Marvellous Molly McGrath



TEAM BUILDING DAY – BOWLING AND CELEBRATING PETER'S 1ST YEAR AS GdA EO



Back L-R: Kaylene, Phil, Malachi & Pete
Front L-R: Yvette and Carol

Top Left Pic: Pete Harrison enjoying the milestone anniversary, the next is 10 years



Jo the Bowling Queen



Front Left to Back: Kaylene, Jo, Malachi & Pete

Front Right to Back: Yvette, Bern, Phil & Angie

Raising voice, advocating for better transport access



UNITED: Horsham RAISE Your Voice group advocates meet to discuss issues that affect them and work to find solutions, in this instance public transport improvements for all abilities. Picture: PAUL CARRACHER

Horsham's RAISE Your Voice branch is advocating for more frequent and accessible public transport options across the state. The Regional Action for Inclusion, Self-Advocacy and Empowerment, RAISE, group members, all of whom live with a disability, meet to discuss issues that affect them and work to find solutions.

Similar groups also meet at Stawell, Ararat and Daylesford, with a new group establishing at St Arnaud. The group also acknowledged the infrequency of regional public transport, reducing the likelihood of being able to shop in major centres or attend events such as AFL matches.

They have one train from Horsham that only goes one way, once a week, and back the other way once a week – it doesn't happen on the same day! The group surveyed the public for their opinions and experiences, which will guide the group's next steps. (extract from the article in the Weekly Advertiser that was published in April this year) Since then the RAISE Your Voice Group also featured on the front page of the Wimmera Mail Times.

If you are interested to know more about RAISE, refer to the next page of this newsletter or contact Carol by email > projects@grampiansadvocacy.org.au

R.A.I.S.E Your Voice



R.A.I.S.E Your Voice is a group that teaches you about human rights and self-advocacy and how to speak up for yourself.

We will support you to use those skills in your community to make change and advocate.

Join the group and see what differences you can make in your community!

This group is for anyone over 18
There will be up to 8 people in the group
We will meet regularly
You will learn new skills in self-advocacy
It is all Peer-led ~ You decide what we focus on
It is FREE!

To find out more contact:

Carol at Grampians disAbility Advocacy



Phone: 0455 226 442



Email: projects@grampiansadvocacy.org.au



R.A.I.S.E
YOUR VOICE

**Regional
Action for
Inclusion through
Self-Advocacy &
Empowerment**

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 Locations

- ❖ Ararat
- ❖ Horsham
- ❖ Daylesford
- ❖ Ballarat
- ❖ Clunes
- ❖ Golden Plains
- ❖ Bacchus Marsh

& covering the Hindmarsh,
West Wimmera,
Yarriambiack,
Northern Grampians,
Pyrenees and Moorabool
areas

Central Intake 1800 552 272

admin@grampiansadvocacy.org.au
www.grampiansadvocacy.org.au

