



RIGHTS IN ACTION INC

Independent advocacy for people with disabilities

NEWSLETTER

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Message from the Manager

Following the Federal Budget announced on 13 May 2014 there continues to be great uncertainty around services and support for vulnerable people and the impact for some decisions around the Disability Support Pension (DSP) and other Centrelink benefits. RIA has had an influx of enquiries and hope that our referrals to National Welfare Rights Network have been of some assistance.

I was also saddened by the news that our Australian Disability Discrimination Commissioner, Mr Graeme Innes was leaving the Australian Human Rights Commission. Graeme is a passionate and leading Advocate for people with disabilities and he will be sincerely missed in the Advocacy Sector. Graeme's final speech can be found at <http://www.humanrights.gov.au/news/speeches/national-press-club-address> (*an inspirational read*)

Graeme's last day is 4th July 2014. I am unsure if this is a coincidence or Graeme's sense of humour. The 4th July is Independence Day - an American tradition of political freedom of which many communities celebrate with fireworks. (*It's not unlike Graeme to go off with a BANG!*)

On a brighter note I am pleased to report that in May, RIA completed our annual National Disability Advocacy Program quality assurance audit and continue to be certified. We will undertake a review of our Queensland Human Service Standards audit in October 2014. A big **THANK YOU** to the clients, families, Adult Guardians and organisations that participated, giving up their time to be interviewed by the Auditors. We appreciate your feedback and continued to support of our organisation.

We would also like to welcome people interested in supporting RIA and our *independent* advocacy by becoming members of our organisation. If you know someone that would like to join our membership, please contact us for a membership application form or visit our website.

I would also like to thank the individuals and organisations that support



Rights In Action will be closed for the following Public Holidays:

**Friday - 18th July
Cairn's Show Day**



We are always looking at ways to improve our service and would like your feedback

You can give your feedback by either calling our office on 4031 7377, visiting our website www.rightsinaction.org or by email to info@rightsinaction.org

us through the **Bendigo Bank Community Initiative Program**. If you bank with the Bendigo Bank you can nominate RIA as your preferred charity. This is at no cost to you. Just ask the Bank's Customer Service Officer for a nomination form. We would love local businesses to also come on board and support independent advocacy for people with a disability in our community. So, if you have these business contacts please encourage them to support us.

Finally, I would like to report that in 2013/14, our small team equivalent to 3 full time Advocates have assisted 89 people residing in Cairns Yarrabah, Atherton & Mareeba. We also addressed 96 enquiries and referred 86 people to over local services. Unfortunately we had turned away 24 people as we had no resources to assist.

MY POST CONCESSION CARD

Australia Post has increased the cost of postage stamps to **70c** each. People on a concession card are now able to apply for a "My Post Concession Card".



This card will allow you to purchase up to 50 concession priced stamps each year. Upon application for this card, you will also receive 5 free concession cards stamps.

To apply for a My Post Concession Card you have to fill out an application form and take the completed form with your Government Concession Card to your local post office. You should then receive your My Post Concession Card and the booklet with 5 free stamps within 14 days of lodging your application. For more information visit the link below.

<http://auspost.com.au/parcels-mail/mypost-concession-account.html>

Find a Carer

Find a Carer is a website that has been established to help you find a carer to assist with support needs. The website allows you to post an advertisement and it also allows support workers to register their profile.

The site also has some tips and guides to employing someone to assist you including: conducting an interview, police checks, reference checking and useful links.

For more information visit www.findacarer.com.au



Nominations are now open for the **National Disability Awards 2014**

This will take place at Parliament House in Canberra on Tuesday 25 November 2014.

How to nominate

Information on how to nominate can be found at

www.idpwd.com.au/awards

Closing Date: 18 July 2014

Disability Action Week
14th - 20th September 2014

New Cycling Rules

Whether you travel on two wheels, four wheels or more, we all need to get along and share the road safely.

Changes have been announced to improve the safety of cyclists on Queensland roads. The Queensland Government has introduced new rules to protect ALL road users. It's in everyone's interest to follow these new rules and stay safe. These new road rules will initially be trialled over two years. This law is the first of its kind in Australia and will road-test the impact the rules have on saving lives. For more information visit –



<http://www.qld.gov.au/transport/news/features/bicycle-rules/index.html>

Applying for Disability Equipment

To make it easier for Queenslanders to apply for medical aids and equipment, the Queensland Government is combining and streamlining the three subsidy schemes currently available through the Department of Communities, Child Safety and Disability Services and the Department of Health.

Queenslanders with disability will be able to apply for all their aids and equipment needs using one form. The Department of Health is now responsible for the Aids and Equipment subsidy scheme. For more information visit the links below –

<http://www.qld.gov.au/health/support/equipment/index.html>

The Community Aids Equipment and Assistive Technologies Initiatives (CAEATI) information visit – MASS-CAEATI@health.qld.gov.au
The Vehicle Options Subsidy Scheme (VOSS) information visit – MASS-VOSS@health.qld.gov.au Or phone: 3136 3636 or **1300 443 57**

Video Remote Interpreting (VRI)

Deaf people in Queensland will be better connected than ever before thanks to our new Video Remote Interpreting (VRI) service available at our Moorooka, Townsville and the Cairns Deaf Services offices.



Deaf Services Queensland can provide VRI anywhere throughout Australia, with a focus on reaching deaf clients in rural and remote Queensland, who otherwise do not have access to interpreters.

Video Remote Interpreting is a communication service that allows people to communicate via an Auslan interpreter over the internet. VRI can be used for the workplace, medical or legal appointments or any other setting.

For more information visit – www.deafservicesqld.org.au/vri

Useful Links-

Office of the Public Advocate

<http://www.justice.qld.gov.au/justice-services/guardianship/public-advocate>

Disability Services (Restrictive Practices) & other Legislation

Amendment Bill

<https://www.legislation.qld.gov.au/Bills/54PDF/2013/DisabilityServRPOLAB13.pdf>

National Disability Organisations' Clearinghouse

An accessible version of the **United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities** (the Convention) is available in the Australian sign language - Auslan.

The Auslan videos and text copy of the caption transcript of the UN Convention outline how existing human rights for people with disability should be put into practice. The videos provide a guide to the Convention, explaining it in a person-centred way, giving initial information and then using stories and examples to highlight pertinent points.

Further information, including the videos and text copy of the caption transcript, is available on the DSS website at

<http://www.dss.gov.au/the-United-nations-convention-on-the-rights-of-persons-with-disabilities-uncrpd-in-auslan-australian-sign-language>

Office of the Public Advocate

The Office of the Public Advocate, the Office of the Adult Guardian and the Community Visitor Program have undertaken a joint inquiry into **the use of electronic monitoring at disability accommodation sites in Queensland.**

The report discusses a range of issues associated with electronic monitoring of people with disability and provides guidance for the best practice approach to the use of electronic monitoring. The best practice approach takes into account both the human rights of residents subject to electronic monitoring as well as legal obligations of the organisations utilising electronic monitoring.

The Office of the Public Advocate will continue to work collaboratively with the Office of the Adult Guardian and the Office of the Information Commissioner to jointly develop some targeted resources to assist organisations in adopting a best practice approach to their use of electronic monitoring when supporting people with disability.

The report is available at www.publicadvocate.qld.gov.au



**Australian
Human Rights
Commission**

everyone, everywhere, everyday

ATTENTION! Keep abreast with the HRC News at

<http://www.humanrights.gov.au/news/latest-news>

Jokes ..

Q. What do you call a boomerang that doesn't come back?

A. A stick

Q. Why are ghosts so bad at lying?

A. You can see right through them

Q. What do you call a penguin in the desert?

A. Lost

Q. What do you get if you cross a sheep with a kangaroo?

A. A woolly jumper

Q. How did a guy drown in a bowl of muesli?

A. A strong currant pulled him in

Q. What happened to the Hyena who swallowed a stock cube?

A. He made a laughing stock of himself



SKILLS TO ENABLE PEOPLE & COMMUNITIES

The Skills To Enable People and Communities (STEPS) Program is open to **all adults aged 18-65 years** who have experienced an **adult-onset Acquired Brain Injury (ABI)** and their family members.

This 6-week structured group program provides an excellent opportunity for people to connect with others in their local community and develop strategies and skills to better manage with changes that have occurred in their life after brain injury.

The STEPS Program is a Queensland Health Metro South Health Service, separate to STEPS Group Australia Inc.

the Program in **Cairns North** will start on **Thursday 24 July** and **Edmonton** will start on **Monday 25 August**

If you have any questions about the program, please contact Areti Kennedy on **3406 2311** or **1300 727 403** (outside Brisbane)

More information can also be obtained from the STEPS Program website - <http://www.health.qld.gov.au/abios/steps/default.asp>

Hi my name is Ariel; I am 22 years old male who live with Autism. I work with my support workers to enable me to contribute to our community.



I enjoy doing many activities with my support workers both male and female. Some of the things I enjoy doing are shopping, walking, visiting the gym, washing my car and collecting brochures.

I do voluntary work at Rights in Action with my support worker and we are looking for other opportunities in the volunteer sector to widen my experiences.

At the moment I go shopping, do shredding, photocopying, putting newsletters together and putting them

in envelopes, post the mail, making up information kits, water plants and a little gardening. I do all these activities with my support worker.

I enjoy work and I let my support workers know by communicating in my iPad, word approximation or signing. **If you think you can offer me some volunteer work I am willing to try anything.**

Please contact Mary at Rights in Action. Mary will then pass on your details to us.

RIA Newsletter Articles

We encourage members, local services and the community to provide stories, interesting articles and advertisements for our quarterly Newsletter.

Our Newsletter is distributed **free** of charge by emails, post or by accessing our website.

If you would like to contribute to our next Newsletter, please contact Mary Klanssek at our office on 40317377 or email info@rightsinaction.org

NB: Sometimes space is limited and we reserve the right to decide on the content of The RIA Newsletter



Reminder

Please contact Mary on 40317377 if you do not want us to send you our Newsletter

Recycle Market - "Opening"



Endeavour Foundation will be opening the new Atherton Recycle Market at the Tableland Regional Council waste centre on Saturday 5th July 2014.

Atherton Recycle Market will be first to open North of the Sunshine Coast. Endeavour Foundation has opened up an employment option for people with a disability south of the Tableland.

The trading hours will be Friday, Saturday, and Sunday, open to the public from 8.30am to 4.30pm.

Mondays will be the day that refurbishment takes place and will be closed to the public.

If you would like further information regarding employment opportunities, please call **Sue Wood, Training and Development officer or Ross Menniti Foreman on 40923046**

The Office of the Public Guardian

From the 1 July 2014 new independent statutory body – the Office of the Public Guardian – will be responsible for protecting the rights of vulnerable adults with impaired decision making capacity and children and young people in Queensland's child protection system.

The Office of the Public Guardian is being established to implement the Carmody Inquiry. The Government tasked the Carmody Inquiry to find ways to improve Queensland's child protection system and it recommended that the roles of the existing Adult Guardian and Child Guardian should be combined to form the Public Guardian.

Services to vulnerable adults will remain the same

The Office of the Public Guardian will take on all current Adult Guardian functions under *the Guardianship and Administration Act 2000 (GAA)* including substitute decision making as guardian appointed by QCAT, investigating allegations of abuse, neglect and exploitation of adults without decision making capacity, statutory health attorney of last resort and the support of the Adult Community Visitor Program. The functions and powers for the Adult Guardian have been transferred to Chapter 3 of the new *Public Guardian Bill 2014*.