



RIGHTS IN ACTION INC

Independent advocacy for people with disabilities

NEWSLETTER

STREET ADDRESS: Ground Floor, 88 Abbott St
PHONE: (07) 4031 7377

POSTAL ADDRESS: PO Box 1041N, North Cairns QLD 4870
FACSIMILE: (07) 4031 7383

EMAIL: info@rightsinaction.org

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Message from the Manager

Well, we are halfway through 2015 and RIA has been actively advocating for over **88** people; provided an additional **120** people with information and referrals to alternate providers and supported **28** participants in our Partners In Recovery program.

We have participated in NDIS readiness sessions, attended consultations and completed a submission on the **Mental Health Bill 2015**, undertaken the new **National Standards Disability Service** quality assurance audit and currently completing a submission for the review of the **National Disability Advocacy Framework**.

The Management Committee and RIA staff has also worked tirelessly on future planning and development of our organisation. Firstly, I would like to formally farewell our Advocate **Jasmine Cook**. Jasmine worked at RIA initially in an Administrative role. She completed extensive studies during her time with us and is now moving onto future exciting challenges.

The July to December 2015 period will include several new faces joining our team. We welcome two **JCU Social Work students** Leah & Paolo who will be completing their vocational placements and studies. We also welcome **Project Officer** -Sean McKinnon. Sean will be working on a systemic project aiming to increase representation for people on **Involuntary Treatment Orders** at the Mental Health Review Tribunal in Cairns. We will be holding several forums and welcome anyone interested in talking to us about their experience, views or recommendations by contact us or get involved at our forums.

Joanne Houghton commenced work as our Partners In Recovery (PIR) Supports Facilitator and more recently Centacare has invited us to host an additional SF position.

Finally, RIA has had contact from many people interested in **volunteer work**. We are currently exploring how volunteering can be incorporated in our work and expect to commence induction training in October 2015. If you are interested in volunteer work, you can register by completing an Expression of Interest form found on our website www.rightsinaction.org or contact Mary on **4031 7377**.

Rights In Action Inc

Staff

MANAGER
Robyn Renton

ADVOCATES
Bob Paten
Dianne Wellington

PARTNERS IN RECOVERY
SUPPORT FACILITATOR
Joanne Houghton

ADMINISTRATION OFFICER
Mary Klansek

FINANCE OFFICER
Ted Barber

VOLUNTEER
Ariel Pose

PROJECT OFFICER
Sean McKinnon

JCU VOCATIONAL
PLACEMENTS
Leah Rauch
Paolo Gambi

Management Committee 2014/15

PRESIDENT
Joseph Lynd

VICE PRESIDENT
James Barnes

SECRETARY
Bernadette Dimla

TREASURER
Allan Wilson

GENERAL MEMBERS
Jennifer McCabe
Mark Phillips
Janet Corcoran



FAREWELL from Jasmine Cook



Dear clients, RIA team, Committee & members,

Late June 2015, I resigned from my Advocate position at Rights in Action where I have worked for 8 ½ years. I thank you and look forward to seeing many of you in what I hope to be a new job in the sector. Best wishes to you all. Kind regards, Jasmine Cook

Welcome to Joanne Houghton PIR Support Facilitator



Hello I'm Joanne Houghton the 'new' Support Facilitator with Rights in Action. Having been here almost three months I don't feel so new anymore particularly as I have been working alongside colleagues and other service providers to support the hopes and dreams of Partners In Recovery participants. I feel very blessed to have come into a role where the main focus is to value and support individuals to make their own choices and increase their rights and to determine their own goals, rather than being a passenger in their own lives. Navigating a system of networks, activities, services and programs can be a daunting task, so I highly recommend the Partners in Recovery initiative to people who live with or have experienced severe mental illness.

Prior to coming on board with RIA, I decided to make some changes in my own life including going back to university. At this stage I half way through a Bachelor of Community & Social Development at the University of Western Sydney. Hopefully, (as they say) it will be 'all downhill from here!' As a mature age student I have found that my life experience feed well into my studies and has increased my knowledge and understanding of human rights in society. Lastly I would like to say a big thank you to Robyn and the rest of the RIA team, Centacare as the lead agency of PIR and other PIR agency staff for making me feel so welcome. Thank you!

RIA Welcomes Two JCU Social Work Vocational Placements

Paolo Gambi



My name is Paolo Gambi and as you can tell it's not your traditional Aussie bloke name. My father is Italian and my Mother was English. I have been living in Australia for nearly twenty years now (only another twenty to be considered a Cairns local!!!!).

I have been married to Antonia for five years and we have two impressive teenage sons (who certainly keep us on our toes)

EVENTS

BANGONABEANIE

is the National campaign for Brain Injury Awareness Week

17 - 23 August 2015

<http://synapse.org.au/our-work/bangonabeanie.aspx>

WORLD SUICIDE PREVENTION DAY

10 September 2015

It is also R U OK? Day in Australia.

<http://wspd.org.au/>

HEARING AWARENESS WEEK

23 – 29 August 2015

<http://www.hearingawarenessweek.org.au/>

ANTI - POVERTY WEEK

11- 17 October 2015

<http://www.antipovertyweek.org.au/about/about-anti-poverty-week>

DISABILITY ACTION WEEK

13 - 19 September 2015

<https://www.qld.gov.au/disability/community/disability-action-week/>

and a dog called Giggys!

Four years ago I started what I thought was a social work degree, however I quickly discovered I was exploring myself and how I fitted into our wonderful society. Now that I am nearing the end of the incredibly challenging years of full time study, juggling family, work and University (with enormous support from Antonia) I am pleased with the opportunity to do my final placement with Rights in Action.

This experience has excited me as I have heard so many positive and supportive things about the organization. I am hoping this placement will expand and deepen my understanding around social justice, empowerment, participation and advocacy as these are values and beliefs I feel very strongly about.

Leah Rauch

I am currently working as an adolescent mental health support worker in Cairns and finishing my Social Work Masters at JCU.

I am very excited about my placement with Rights in Action as I'm eager to engage in research and am passionate about human rights and the potential that research has in contributing to systemic change.

I'm originally from Sydney and love Cairns for the lovely climate - because it's always dog park weather!

FWC ALERT

On Tuesday, 2 June 2014 the *Fair Work Commission* (FWC) handed down its decision regarding the Federal 2014/2015 Annual Wage Review.

The decision is to **increase award wages by 2.5%**, with weekly rates to be rounded to the nearest 10 cents.

The national minimum wage is now \$656.90 per week or **\$17.29 per hour**.

The increase will take effect from the **first full pay period commencing on or after 1 July 2015**.

Blue Care Customer Service Team

1300 Blue Care

(1300 258 322)

8:00am – 4:30pm, Monday to Friday

Blue Care provides care services for people of all ages, to support a range of health and lifestyle needs.

For more information on Blue Care services visit www.bluecare.org.



**Rights In Action
will be closed on**

**17th July
Cairns Show Day**

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

You can give your
feedback by
calling our office on
4031 7377 and speak to
Mary or email us at

info@rightsinaction.org

Visit our website to leave
your reply, comments and
feedback

“click on the home link”

www.rightsinaction.org

1300 MH CALL SERVICE 1300 64 22 55

The Cairns & Hinterland Hospital Mental Health Service has implemented a centralised phone number 1300 MH CALL (1300 64 22 55)

WHAT IS THE MH CALL SERVICE?

1300 MH CALL is a 24 hour, seven day a week centralised phone number for mental health referrals, crisis and support.

The MH CALL service will provide a triage response in times of crisis and emergency. Trained staff will assist consumers, carers, families and the general community to access services in a timely and effective way.

WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS OF HAVING A 1300 642 255 CALL NUMBER?

The benefits to consumers, carers, families and the community include:

- A single point of entry to public mental health services
- Improved ease of access and transition into the mental health service.
- Clear and consistent pathways for the for the community and other services
- Continuity and consistency of care for consumers outside of standard business hours requiring a service response
- Improved access for consumers who may be at risk of deterioration and need crisis intervention

For more information click on the link below –

<http://webapps.townsville.qld.gov.au/CommunityDirectory/Organisation/OrganisationDetails/4288>

Essential Medical Equipment Payments

The **Essential** Medical Equipment Payment helps with the additional costs of running essential medical equipment, medically required heating or cooling, or both.

You may be eligible for this payment if you or the person in your regular care at home: If you or the person you care for meet all the requirements to receive a qualifying concession card, you will also meet the residence requirements for this payment.

Using your Centrelink online account is a secure, convenient and easy way to start a claim for the Essential Medical Equipment Payment. Once you have completed your claim online, bring the supporting documents requested on the claim form to a service centre within 14 days.

If you already have a Centrelink online account You can log on to your Centrelink online account using your Customer Access Number (CAN) and password. Select Apply for a Payment then Make a Claim from the menu to start your claim.

If you do not have a Centrelink online account but have a Customer Reference Number (CRN) then you can complete your registration now. If you do not have a CRN you will receive a Customer Access Number (CAN) to get your started.

For more information click on the link below –

<http://www.humanservices.gov.au/customer/enablers/centrelink/essential-medical-equipment-payment/alternative-names-for-essential-medical-equipment>

Useful Links

Autism Qld

[Autism](http://www.autismqld.com.au/) Queensland is a community based organisation dedicated to bringing about positive change in the lives of children and adults with ASD.
<http://www.autismqld.com.au/>

Office of the Public Guardian

The Public Guardian is responsible for protecting the rights of vulnerable adults with impaired capacity to make their own decisions and children and young people in out-of-home care.
<http://www.justice.qld.gov.au/>

Anti-Discrimination Commission Queensland

The Anti-Discrimination Commission Queensland is an independent statutory body established under the Queensland [Anti-Discrimination Act 1991](#) (the Act).

They deliver frontline services to the Queensland community, including businesses, state and local government, the community sector and people throughout the state.
<http://www.adcq.qld.gov.au/>

Australian Human Rights Commission

<http://www.humanrights.gov.au/>

Mental Health Association Qld

<http://www.mentalhealth.org.au/>

National Disability Services

<http://www.nds.org.au/>



The [Companion](#) Card is issued to people with a significant, permanent disability, who are unable to access most community activities and venues without attendant care support.

The card contains a photograph of the cardholder and can be presented when booking or purchasing a ticket at events and venues, provided the cardholder requires attendant care support in order to participate at that particular activity.

Participating organisations will issue the cardholder with a second ticket for their companion at no charge.

Click on the link below to apply for a card and for more information

<http://www.companioncard.org.au/ccabout.htm>

TELECROSS SERVICE

[Telecross](#) is a Red Cross service that provides peace of mind to people who are isolated through a **daily call to check on their wellbeing and safety**.

Trained and friendly volunteers make calls each morning, 365 days a year.

In the event of three unanswered calls in one day, Red Cross begins an emergency activation procedure to make sure the person is OK. The details of the activation are prearranged with each person registered for Telecross.

Generally, Red Cross contacts the participant's emergency contact and that person checks that the client is OK.

If Red Cross cannot get in touch with the emergency contact then we contact the police and request that they conduct a **welfare check**.

If you would like to use the Telecross service, call **1300 885 698**.

If you would like to become a Telecross volunteer, check for available volunteer opportunities at <http://www.redcross.org.au/telecross>



[Com](#)Link is a not-for-profit, volunteer organisation serving the residents of Queensland since 1987.

In 2014 ComLink received Australian Government funding to expand the organisation into more Queensland cities and towns. As part of this expansion, ComLink has started a **Seniors Shuttle Service** in Cairns.

You can use this shuttle service for your medical appointments, shopping, lunching with friends, meeting up with family and other activities.

The cost is **\$2** for each use.

Phone - 1300 761 011 or **4053 7296** for more information or click on the link

<http://www.comlink.org.au/welcome-comlink>

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 Klansek 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

Parent survey: moving from regular to special school

Glenys Mann is a doctoral student with The University of Queensland and interested in the experiences of parents of children with disability who have decided to transfer their children from regular to special schools.

If this describes your situation and your child is currently enrolled in a Queensland special school, he would love to include your views and experiences in his research.

To participate, you can:

- Go to an online survey <http://tinyurl.com/k5e9whl> or
- Request a hard copy (with reply paid envelope)

Contact:

- Via email g.mann1@uq.edu.au or phone 3365 7383.

NDIS - Plan ahead Workshops

presented by Queenslanders with Disability Network (QDN)

This fun, interactive and free introductory workshop will help you get ready for the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS). It is for people with intellectual or learning disability, led by people with disability, which makes it a little different from other workshops. It's a chance for you to learn about the NDIS, gain some confidence and start thinking about your wishes for the future. They use games, drawing activities and other fun ways to learn new information. Plan ahead is a free workshop and it includes lunch. The workshop runs over 2 weeks, for 2 half days. A parent or carer is welcome to come along to support you if needed.

Atherton:

Part 1 - 5th August 2015 9:30 am – 12:30pm

Part 2 - 12th August 2015 9:30am – 12:30pm

Atherton International Club,

Cnr Kennedy Highway and Nasser Road, Atherton,

Cairns:

Part 1- 6th August 2015 9:30am – 12:30pm

Part 2 - 13th August 2015 9.30am – 12.30pm

Brothers Leagues Club, 99-105 Anderson Street, Cairns

Bookings: Required and cost is free

Further information contact: Mel Geltsch by phone: **1300363783** or Email: readytogo@qdn.org.au Website: www.qdn.org.au/readytogo/plan-ahead



Congratulations Andrew on your award

Andrew received an award from Tablelands Community Housing for volunteering in Atherton including pressure cleaning paths.

Picture: Andrew proudly displaying his community service award