



# RIGHTS IN ACTION INC

Independent advocacy for people with disabilities

## NEWSLETTER

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**September 2015 – Issue 37**

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### Message from the Manager

Hi All, and welcome to our September Newsletter. It seems that the year is progressing well and we continue to have many enquiries about advocacy, the protection of human rights and the prevention of abuse, neglect and exploitation of vulnerable people with disabilities living in Far North Queensland.

Since our June Newsletter, RIA has undertaken several systemic advocacy issues including a short project on **Increasing the Representation of people at the Mental Health Review Tribunal** (funded by Centacare Partners In Recovery). Five forums were held in Cairns. Julie Hearnden (Solicitor, Queensland Advocacy Incorporated) presented at every forum and Barry Thomas (President, Mental Health Review Tribunal) presented at the two largest forums. Nearly 70 people attended including 14 legal practitioners; 8 carers, family members & significant others; 16 persons with lived experience; 36 service providers a representative from the Queensland Mental Health Commission and other interested persons. These forums provided an opportunity to both gain and provide information. Discussion was facilitated around people's personal experiences of the mental health system, knowledge regarding Involuntary Treatment Orders (ITOs) and Mental Health Review Tribunal (MHRT) processes and understanding of rights and responsibilities.

In addition we completed two consultations and submissions for **The Review of the National Disability Advocacy Program and the Review of the Mental Health (Recovery Model) Bill 2015**.

The Mental Health Bill 2015 was tabled in parliament in September by Minister Cameron Dick. There are significant changes in a number of areas. Some changes include:

- An Involuntary Treatment Order (ITO) will become known as a **Treatment Authority**.
- The **Patient Rights Adviser** will be *independent*, not employed by public sector authorised mental health services. The role will support patients and their support person (such as family and carers) in understanding mental health legislation, rights and the Mental Health Review Tribunal (MHRT) processes.
- People on an ITO can *nominate* support persons to attend Mental Health Review Tribunal (MHRT) formerly known as "allied person".
- A person will be required to be treated under an **Advance Health Directive** rather than a Treatment Authority if this is possible.
- The MHRT will provide a lawyer (free of charge) for reviews where the Attorney-General is represented, for 'fitness for trial' reviews, for ECT applications and for people under 18 years of age (minors).

We look forward to these changes that aim to improve the rights of people with mental illness.

The Management Committee and Staff Invite you to join us for our  
**ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING**

WHERE: Rydges – Tradewinds, 137 The Esplanade, Cairns  
WHEN: Wednesday, 28<sup>th</sup> October at 5.30pm  
TIME: 5.30 – 7.30 pm

To assist with catering, please RSVP by contacting Mary on 4031 7377 or email: [info@rightsinaction.org](mailto:info@rightsinaction.org) by 14/10/2015

## Rights In Action Inc

### Staff

#### MANAGER

**Robyn Renton**

#### ADVOCATES

**Bob Paten**  
**Dianne Wellington**

#### PARTNERS IN RECOVERY SUPPORT FACILITATOR

**Joanne Houghton**

#### ADMINISTRATION OFFICER

**Mary Klasek**

#### 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**

## Welcome to Sean McKinnon Partners in Recovery Support Facilitator & Project Officer

My name is Sean McKinnon. I have a wonderful partner in Deb and 2 lovely dogs. I was born in Newcastle upon Tyne England. My family home looked over Swan Hunter Shipbuilders (beautiful view) where I later became an apprentice wood turner.

This place was a typically working class environment with some fantastic characters that along with my family assisted with guiding me through my adolescence and into manhood, which believe me was not an easy job. This was my first experience with mentoring.

My mental health background started around 10 years ago when I was working in Cairns as a manager of a landscape and maintenance company, I was asked to Coordinate a community garden project with Worklink Employment, and the Department of Education. After this 6 month project I knew that working in the mental health area was for me.

I have worked in various roles for different organisations including Qld Health over the years in which I have met some inspirational individuals.

I am excited and looking forward to working with Robyn and team here at RIA on a project as well as a Support Facilitator with the PIR team.



## FNQ Secondary School Transition Expo 2015

Paolo and Bob started the morning bright and early setting up the Rights in Action table at the

FNQ Secondary School Transition Expo 2015. The day opened with a speech by MP Rob Pyne and a drumming performance by ARC Disability Services. This added to an atmosphere of excitement as a number of different schools came through as well as young people with their parents.

RIA notebooks were a hot item and were gone by the time Leah and Dianne arrived to take over at lunchtime. It was a great day! RIA was able to share information with up and coming school leavers and network with other organisations. Familiar faces and new ones all popped into the RIA stall for a chat and to pick up some brochures.



## COLOURING TIME IS RELAXING TIME!

Karen has joined the new colouring craze for adults. She really likes colouring time because it is relaxing and takes her mind away from any angry thoughts.

Karen colours while watching TV and when she is out on the patio listening to the birds. Karen loves animals and has completed her colouring book featuring animals.

Adult colouring books are available in many stores and you can also download free adult colouring pages from the internet. Color a mandala. it will tap into your creativity without any need for artistic expertise. The process of coloring can sooth and nourish you. The circular designs and concentric shapes of the mandala are intricate and are fun to colour with, crayons, colored pencils, paints, pastels, or markers in various colors. <http://www.printmandala.com/>

## EVENTS

**National Carers Week**  
11-17 October 2015

<http://carersaustralia.com.au/events/carers-week-2015/carers-week-2015/>

**International Day of People with Disability**  
December 3, 2015

<http://www.idpwd.com.au/>

**International Human Rights Day**  
December 10, 2015

<https://www.humanrights.gov.au/news/events/international-human-rights-day-0>

**White Ribbon**  
25 November 2015

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



## Violence against the disabled

Violence, abuse and neglect against people with disability is occurring at horrific rates in Australia. Shocking statistics recorded by People With Disability report that 90% of Australian women with an intellectual disability have been subjected to sexual abuse. Women with disability are also 40% more likely to be victims of domestic violence than woman without a disability. Despite these alarming statistics, violence, abuse and neglect against people with a disability is an issue that garners little attention.

Earlier this year the Australian Senate launch a National Inquiry into violence, abuse and neglect against people with disability in institutional and residential settings following a lengthy campaign led by People With Disability, along with other organisations and individuals.

If you need support please contact one of the organisations listed below:

**Tell Someone** - Website providing information to people affected by family violence - <http://www.tellsomeone.org.au/>

**1800 Respect** – Call 1800 737 732 for counselling, information and support 24/7

**Lifeline Australia** – Call 131 114 for crisis support and telephone counselling

**National Disability Abuse & Neglect Hotline** – Call 1800 880 052 to report abuse or neglect

## TRAVEL - Accessible Cruising

Cursing is a fantastic holiday option for people with a disability, with many companies specialising in the organisation of specialised cruises or rental equipment, making the holiday relaxing and easy!

For more information on specific companies click on their link below.

**CLUBMATES** – are a global leader in fully supported holidays for people with a disability. They also ensure that passengers receive the best care and support throughout their cruise.

Phone – 1300 158 003

**P&O CRUISES** – provide options for accessible cruising.

Subject to availability, there are wheelchair accessible rooms, other features such as specialised kits for hearing impaired guests.

<http://www.pocruises.com.au/AlreadyBooked/CruiseHandbook/Pages/DisabledAccess.aspx> or Phone - 1300 159 454

**ROYAL CARIBBEAN** – Facilities throughout the ship also accommodate people with a disability. Braille is also used in all public areas and a lift into the pool can be obtained upon request.

<http://www.royalcaribbean.com.au/allaboutcruising/accessibleseas/home.do?wuc=AUS> or Phone – 1800 754 500

**SPECIAL NEEDS AT SEA** – is an organisation that provides special needs equipment including wheelchairs, oxygen units and audio and visual aide rentals along with a range of other rentable items.

All rented goods are delivered directly to the passenger whether it is in their room on board, at a port or hotel.

[http://specialneedsatsea.com/sns\\_google/index.html](http://specialneedsatsea.com/sns_google/index.html) or Phone: 1800 5134515



## Useful

### Phone Numbers

#### DVConnect Womensline

1800 811 811

24 hours, 7 days a week

#### DVConnect Mensline

1800 600 636

9am to 12 midnight

7 days a week

#### 1800 RESPECT

1800 737 732

24 hours, 7 days a week

#### Kids Helpline

1800 551 800

24 hours, 7 days a week

#### Elder Abuse Helpline

1300 651 192

9am to 5pm

Monday to Friday

#### Basic Rights Queensland

(formerly "Welfare Rights  
Centre")

Is a statewide specialist community legal centre, providing free advice, advocacy and legal service to people having problems with social security or disability discrimination

1800 358 511

9.30am to 4.00pm

Monday to Friday

## CAN'T PAY AN ENERGY BILL?

Here are ten tips to help if you are having difficulty paying your electricity or [gas](#) bill.

- 1. Contact your retailer** - There is assistance available through your retailer. Before calling, prepare by: *Understanding your rights, Knowing your budget and/or getting third party assistance.*
- 2. Ask about concessions** - The Queensland Government provides concessions to reduce energy bills for people who meet certain eligibility criteria. More information call 13 74 68 or visit [www.qld.gov.au/concessions](http://www.qld.gov.au/concessions)
- 3. Negotiate a payment plan** - Your energy retailer must offer you a payment plan to allow you to pay the bill off in instalments.
- 4. Ask for the hardship team** - This may include incentive payments, energy efficiency audits or access to financial counselling. More information visit [www.communitydoor.org.au/energy](http://www.communitydoor.org.au/energy) for links to retailer hardship policies.
- 5. Apply for emergency assistance** - The Home Energy Emergency Assistance Scheme (HEEAS) offers a one-off payment. Visit - <https://www.ergon.com.au/retail/residential/support-programs/home-energy-emergency-assistance>
- 6. Change your payment arrangements** - Make more regular payments you can either choose Centrepay, monthly billing or direct debit.
- 7. Reduce your energy cost** - You may be eligible to apply for a no-interest loan to upgrade to a newer model to help you save money. Visit - [www.nils.com.au](http://www.nils.com.au). You could make other changes such as connecting certain appliances to cheaper off-peak tariffs. Visit - [www.energymadeeasy.gov.au](http://www.energymadeeasy.gov.au)
- 8. Ask for a discount** - If you live in South East Queensland you have a choice of electricity offers. You can also search for an energy offer at [www.energymadeeasy.gov.au](http://www.energymadeeasy.gov.au)
- 9. Contact a financial counsellor** - Financial counselling is a free, independent and confidential service. You can call 1800 007 007 or visit [www.financialcounsellingaustralia.org.au/Corporate/Find-a-Counsellor](http://www.financialcounsellingaustralia.org.au/Corporate/Find-a-Counsellor)
- 10. Take further action** - If you encounter difficulties with your energy company, or if you have a dispute you are unable to resolve with your energy retailer, you can lodge a complaint with the Energy and Water Ombudsman Queensland (EWOQ). To lodge a complaint call 1800 662 837 or visit [www.ewoq.com.au](http://www.ewoq.com.au)

## Disability Dolls



British toy manufacturers Makies, is now using 3D printing technology to make unique dolls and accessories, representing children with disabilities.

Recent statistics show that 1 in 6 school aged children has a disability, meaning diversity in toys and the representation of disability is more important than ever.

These [dolls](#) help to influence what is considered 'normal' and give children with disability a greater sense of self.

<http://www.today.com/parents/british-toymaker-makies-includes-disabled-dolls-t21676>



## 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](mailto: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



## 2016 Legal Topics for Older People Diary

The 2016 Legal Topics for [Older](#) People Diary is not just your average diary.

Designed for older Queenslanders, it is a valuable resource that empowers the user by giving them access to vital information (and writing space!) in one handy diary resource.

The topics covered in our 2016 issue include:

- Future Planning
- Wills
- Neighbour disputes
- Aged care issues
- Consumer issues
- Seniors rights and support services available.

The diary also provides useful tips on everything from free mediation services to protecting against elder abuse.

### How to order:

The 2016 Legal Topics for Older People Diary is available from QADA and costs \$10 plus postage & handling.

You can order the diary by calling our office on 1800 818 338 or filling out an order form.

<http://www.qada.org.au/news-resources/resources/2016-legal-topics-older-people-diary>

### QADA – Queensland Aged and Disability Advocacy



Many people may have a disability at some stage in their lives. For some, the disability will be temporary. Others may be affected for a lifetime.

Whatever the type or impact of a disability, **everyone has the right to be an active member of their community and to have a say in the decisions that affect their lives.**

### Disability Statistics

- 4 in 10 Australians aged 18 years and over report having a disability or long term health condition
- 1 in 4 people who report sexual assault are people with disabilities
- 1.2 million people with disabilities report difficulties using public transport
- 9 in 10 women with intellectual disabilities have been sexually abused
- Workforce participation of people with disabilities is 54%

For more information click on the link –

<https://www.humanrights.gov.au/face-facts-disability-rights>



## Rights In Action Membership Form

We welcome new [members](#). Please forward our Newsletter or this membership form to anyone interested in becoming a member of Rights In Action.

<b>Name:</b>			
<b>Street Address:</b>			
<b>Postal Address:</b>			
<b>Email Address:</b>			
<b>Telephone:</b>	<b>(h)</b>	<b>(m)</b>	<b>(w)</b>

*Note: It is the responsibility of every member to notify the RIA office of any change to the member's contact details.*

I prefer to receive information by  Post  Email

<b>Membership Fee</b>	
<b>TAX INVOICE</b>	
ABN 24 864 826 916 <i>(Please tick the appropriate box)</i>	
<input type="checkbox"/> \$5.00 Ordinary Member (individual – 1 year)	
<input type="checkbox"/> \$20.00 Ordinary Member (individual – 5 years)	
<input type="checkbox"/> Associate Member (no fee) <i>Member is unable to vote or nominate for a position on the Management Committee</i>	
<input type="checkbox"/> Donation I enclose a donation of \$..... (GST Free)	
Upon payment of the membership fee or donation you should retain this document for tax purposes.	
<b>Payment Details:</b>	
<input type="checkbox"/> Cheques payable to:	Rights in Action Inc
<input type="checkbox"/> EFT payment to:	BSB: 633 000 Account: 124993072 Account Name: Rights In Action Inc Reference: <b>Your Name</b>
<input type="checkbox"/> Cash:	Please visit our office Monday to Friday 9.00 am – 4.30 pm with the correct amount

Return your form and payment to:

PO Box 1041N, North Cairns, QLD 4870 or fax 4031 7383 or email: [info@rightsinaction.org](mailto:info@rightsinaction.org)

OFFICE USE ONLY	
Receipt Number:.....	Financial Year Membership current until AGM.....