



RIGHTS IN ACTION INC

Independent advocacy for people with disabilities

NEWSLETTER

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Message from the Manager

Hello again to our clients, members and stakeholders, and thank you for your continued support of independent advocacy for people with disabilities.

I would also like to give special mention to the Bendigo Bank and our supporters who have nominated RIA as the preferred charity for the Bendigo Bank "Building Active Connected Communities FNQ" initiative. This community banking program donates funds to RIA. Individuals, business and other organisations that bank with Bendigo Bank simply inform the banking staff that they nominate us to receive the charitable funds. It costs *nothing* to do so, however the more people that nominate us the more funds we receive to support people with disabilities in our community. So, I encourage all our readers to spread the word, and again, a big thank you, for your efforts, it is sincerely appreciated.

RIA has completed our strategic plan 2017 to 2019, with many activities to undertake to ensure advocacy for Far North Queensland remains strong and effective in our transitions to the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS).

It is not without concern that independent advocacy assistance in Queensland remains very limited under the National Disability Advocacy Program funded by the Department of Social Services, and that last year the Queensland Government confirmed their commitment to fund state advocacy agencies during the transition to the NDIS, 30 June 2019.

However, if the Queensland Government transfers the advocacy funding to the NDIS, access to independent advocacy will be significantly reduced as advocacy is not funded by NDIS in an individual's support plan.

Access to independent advocacy is a crucial form of early intervention for people with disability that:

- Address serious issues of discrimination, violence, abuse, neglect and exploitation of people with disability;
- Represents the rights and interests of the most vulnerable in our community, who do not have a voice, or close family or friends who can support their aspirations, or speak on their behalf;
- Build capacity of individuals with disability and their family members to understand their rights, make informed decisions and to speak up about what is important to them;
- Prevents the escalation of the persons vulnerability and provides information on mainstream and disability supports to ensure their fundamental needs and rights are met.

Given the increase demand for advocacy in Queensland where the NDIS has already rolled out, the implications of decreasing the access to independent advocacy in the future is a major concern.

RIA will continue to lobby with other Queensland advocacy agencies and may call on your support in future campaigns.

**Rights In Action
Staff**

MANAGER
Robyn Renton

ADVOCATES
Bob Paten
Rebekah Segar
Dianne Wellington

ADMINISTRATION OFFICER
Mary Klasek

FINANCE OFFICER
Ted Barber

VOLUNTEER
Ariel Pose

**RIA Board of
Management 2016/17**

PRESIDENT
James Barnes

VICE PRESIDENT
Christine Ryan

SECRETARY
Bernadette Dimla

TREASURER
Allan Wilson

GENERAL MEMBERS
Jan Corcoran
Jane Simpson



Farewell from Zac

The thoughts, feelings and challenges of a student placement in an advocacy organisation

As my time at Rights In Action (RIA) draws to a close, I can now begin to reflect on my experiences. It has been more than free coffee and unlimited internet access, but an incredible opportunity to share experiences and wisdom from people who are passionate about advocacy. We are nothing without the people we assist, and hearing the stories of resilience and strength has fuelled my own passion and the need of advocacy. It has been a journey of both professional and personal development.

In the beginning, I was apprehensive and confused with my placement. What was my role? How does advocacy practice in the current social and political environments? How am I going to contribute to the RIA team?

I can honestly say, I have never felt so warmly welcome. The staff at RIA provided me with a wealth of knowledge, support, guidance, patience and eagerness to assist me in my learning to becoming an effective and passionate RIA team member. I have now seen the importance of advocacy, because unfortunately, there will be those who are marginalised in our community and need a voice. RIA can assist in that voice being heard.

The biggest challenge to me was understanding the complexities of what human service organisations do, and how can they assist people in need.

Working in an office environment was also taxing, due to long hours sitting and staring at a screen. This is all part of the learning experience and I have appreciated the challenges to my learning style and need to put into place good organisational practices.

Big shoutout to all the advocates: Sean, Bob, Jody and Dianne; and Robyn for giving me this amazing opportunity and; Mary, who kept me focused and listened to me in times of stress and madness

Hopefully, I'll get to work with the RIA team further into the future.



Farewell from Sean

My time at Rights in Action as an advocate over the last 3 months has been one of learning and development.

Advocacy is a special talent not understood by some but needed by many of the disadvantaged and vulnerable people in our community.

I have had the privilege of working with some dedicated hardworking people that despite all obstacles still manage to get positive outcomes for individuals with disabilities. I have had even greater privilege of working with some brilliant participants who continually amaze you with their resilience, inventiveness and positivity, even when things are not going as planned, or life has taken a turn for the worst.

With NDIS on the horizon there is even more need for services such as Rights in Action and the dedicated skilled staff who work there. There is an urgent need to keep advocating for people who continually find themselves falling through the service gaps or are having trouble navigating the complex world of the systems which are put in place to support them.



MEN'S GROUP

Mens Group

The [Men's](#) Group meet fortnightly every Monday.

The group currently has 20 members from Ravenshoe and Mt Garnet communities.

For more information
Phone: 07-4043 5200



Women's Group

Womens Group

The Women's Group meet fortnightly every Wednesday.

The group currently has 18 members from Ravenshoe and Mt Garnet communities

For more information
Phone: 07-4043 5200

Both groups have only been formed in the last 2 weeks.

I would like thank to all of the staff and participants who have gave me the privilege of being part of their lives.

I would also like wish Rights in Action all the very best for the future.

Independent Patient Rights Adviser (IPRA)



Keeley & Larry

[Keeley](#) & Larry are the newly appointed Independent Patient Rights Advisers (IPRA's) and would like to introduce themselves to the carer community.

Larry & Keeley's role will primarily be supporting Individuals receiving treatment under the Mental Health Act 2016 and their Nominated Support Persons/Family Members.

They will be dividing their time between the Inpatient Units at Cairns Hospital, the Cairns Community, Community Mental Health Services based in Regional Areas and the Cape & Torres.

They work independently and impartially to empower individuals to negotiate the sometimes complex pathways associated with the mental health service.

TRANSLink



Vision Impairment Travel Pass (VITP)

Vision Impairment Travel Pass (VITP) holders can travel on all Translink services and regional qconnect bus services for free.

New Electronic VITP

The new electronic go access VITP provides more independence to eligible customers, particularly when entering/exiting fare gates at train stations.

If you already have a VITP flash pass, you can use it until it expires. You can choose to replace your VITP flash pass with the new electronic go access VITP prior to expiring by calling us on 13 12 30.

Eligibility

You need to be a Queensland resident and comply with one of the following: -

- Hold a current Department of Human Services Pensioner Concession Card showing the code "DSB"
- Hold a current Department of Veterans' Affairs Blind Concession Card
- Be assessed by a relevant medial professional as legally blind (requires visual acuity on the Snellen Scale after correction by suitable

Australia Post

If you're in charge of a deceased estate, or a victim of Domestic Violence or a natural disaster within Australia, you may be eligible for a free 12month mail redirection

As a part of Australia Post's support of the community, we will be expanding the free mail redirection offers for special circumstances to include support for Victims of Domestic and Family Violence.

Eligible customers can apply in store to receive a redirection service from your old address to your new address within Australia for up to 12 months.

How to apply for free mail redirection

Apply at any Post Office in Australia

You will need to bring –

Completed mail redirection form available at Post Offices

Individual proof of identity

For deceased estates: copy of the grant of probate or letter of administration

For victims of Domestic Violence: either an intervention order, statutory declaration from the police, or notice on an approved letterhead from a supporting agency

For victims of a natural disaster: your "from" address ID must show an address within the region of the natural disaster, as declared by Australia Post

For more information visit

<https://auspost.com.au/parcels-mail/manage-your-mail/redirect-hold-mail/redirect-mail/free-mail-redirection>

lenses of less than 6/60 in both eyes, of a field of vision constricted to 10 degrees or less of arc around central fixation in the better eye, irrespective of corrected visual acuity)

How to apply

1. Download and complete the Vision Impairment Travel Pass Application form by clicking on the link <https://www.support.transport.qld.gov.au/qt/formsdat.nsf/Forms/QF4250> . A copy of the form can also be posted to you by calling 13 12 30 to arrange this.
2. Post your application form and 2 passport photos (one of which must be certified to: - Vision Impairment Travel Pass Scheme, PO Box 3066, Stafford Qld 4053
3. Allow 15 days for your application to be processed. Your new pass will be sent out by registered post. If you haven't received your pass within this time, please call 13 12 30.
4. Please ensure you read the product terms and conditions.

For more information click on the link below –

<https://translink.com.au/tickets-and-fares/ticket-types/disability/vision-impairment-travel-pass>

My Health Record

My Health [Record](#) is the name of the national digital health record system.

At the moment, individuals must register if they would like a My Health Record, and it is not intended to replace healthcare provider medical records.

Having a My Health Record means your important health information like allergies, medical conditions and treatments, medicine details, test or scan reports can be digitally available in one place. You won't have to remember everything and continually repeat your sensitive medical history.

My Health Record is a secure online summary of your health information. You can control what goes into it, and who is allowed to access it. You can choose to share your health information with your doctors, hospitals and other healthcare providers.

You can add emergency contacts and their details, your personal health notes and your advance care planning information (this records your wishes about your healthcare in the event that you are too unwell to communicate).

It is part of a national system – your My Health Record travels with you wherever you may be and no matter who you are seeing (as long as they are registered). Your My Health Record is accessible at all times when it is needed, included at the point of care, and can be added to by you, your authorised representative(s) and healthcare providers involved in your care.

If an individual lacks capacity to make their own decision, a My Health Record can be created on behalf of another person by an authorised representative. To do so, this form will need to be completed or an application must be made in person at a Medicare Service Centre

If you do not have a computer or phone you will be unable to access the information held in your My Health Record. However, you can still benefit from having a My Health Record as your important healthcare information will be



Rights in Action will be closed for the following Public Holiday:

**2nd October
Queen's Birthday**

Don't try this in your office



Emptying the ink waste container the hard way !



available in one place online that is easily accessible by your authorised health care providers involved in your care.

You can register by phoning 1800 723 471 or visiting a Medicare Service Centre or clicking on the link - www.myhealthrecord.gov.au

Commission welcomes new President



The [Australian](#) Human Rights Commission welcomes the appointment of a new President to replace Professor Gillian Triggs, who departs at the end of July after a five-year term.

The Attorney-General, Senator the Hon George Brandis QC today announced Emeritus Professor Rosalind Croucher AM will be the Commission's next President.

Professor Croucher has been with the Australian Law Reform Commission (ALRC) for more than 10 years, almost eight of those as President.

During this time, Professor Croucher has led nine law reform inquiries, including inquiries on Client Legal Privilege, Secrecy Laws, Family Violence, Discovery, Age Barriers, Disability Laws and Freedoms. She recently completed the Elder Abuse Inquiry.

Professor Croucher has had a distinguished career in legal education prior to joining the ALRC, with 25 years in university teaching and management. This included working as Dean of Law at Macquarie University and Acting Dean of Law at Sydney University.

She has lectured and published extensively, was made a Foundation Fellow of the Australian Academy of Law in 2007, and received a Member of the Order of Australia in 2015 for "significant service to the law as an academic, to legal reform and education, to professional development, and to the arts".

All Commissioners and staff look forward to working with the new President. Professor Croucher will begin her seven-year term on July 30, 2017.

Baby Bridges



[Baby](#) Bridges is an early intervention program for children with a disability aged between 0 and 5 years, and their parents. It is both a therapeutic play group and support group that provides an opportunity for respite as well as a learning environment for parents and carers, and their children.

The program consists of 6 weekly two hour sessions. During each session the parents/carers and children participate in two different groups which run simultaneously in two adjoining rooms. The parent/carer component involves information, training and support.

The children's session involves specialist play activities with individualised input from qualified therapists. These play activities aim to maximise the children's sensory stimulation and learning capacity.

Baby Bridges meets weekly during term time, on Tuesdays from 9.30am to

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

11.30 am. We are now taking bookings for Baby Bridges Term 3.

Program Dates for Term 3, 2017 –
Tuesday 18th & 25th July 2017.
Tuesday 1st, 8th, 15th & 22nd August 2017

If you would like more information or to register, please contact Nicole Brown on 4046 3608 or nicole@arcinc.org.au



The 2017 National Disability Awards

It's that time of the year again to recognise the outstanding achievements of individuals and organisations helping to improve the lives of people with disability.

The 2017 National Disability Awards are the Australian Government's main celebration of International Day of People with Disability, a United Nations (UN) sanctioned day celebrated each year on 3 December.

Please help us to honour those who are working tirelessly to make our society a better place.

For further information, please email ipdwd@dss.gov.au, or click on the link www.idpwd.com.au

Important Announcement

Rights in Action have moved to an electronic version of the Request for Advocacy Assistance Form.

You can now complete and submit the form using the link on our website

Just go to Referral Process and click on the Request for Advocacy Assistance in the drop down menu.



**for
scanning and basic administration duties**

If you are interested in volunteering a few days a week please contact Rights in Action on 4031 7377 to arrange an interview