



# RIGHTS IN ACTION INC

*Independent advocacy for people with disabilities*

## NEWSLETTER

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### Message from the Manager

Its been another busy year for RIA. I can hardly believe twelve months have passed so quickly. I would like to welcome all our new members and the support we have from our existing members. Your contributions and feedback are incredibly important to us. This helps our organisation continually develop and improve our assistance to people with disability in our region, and although we remain a small advocacy agency, we anticipate that we will continue to grow in 2019.

I would also like to thank our community partners for their support in 2018 and the Bendigo Bank - *Building Active Connected Communities* who distribute income to RIA based on people who bank with them supporting RIA as their nominated recipient. *So, if you do bank at Bendigo, please remember to nominate us – its free, but the additional income enables us to do more for people we assist.*

In October we held our Annual General Meeting at the Rydges Plaza. We are very pleased that the members of our 2017/18 Board of Management renominated for 2018/2019. This will enable us to have consistency in achieving the business and operational goals of our Strategic Plan 2016 – 2019.

So, on reflection what did we achieve in 2018?

- New Service Agreement – NDIS Appeals (assisting NDIS participants with internal reviews of decisions they are no happy with, and external appeals to the Administrative Appeals Tribunal)
- Increased staff – welcoming Marlene & Zach
- Provided information and presentations to community and disability organisations on advocacy and NDIS issues
- Maintained our funding through the “Advocacy Matters Campaign”
- Celebrated the RIA 15<sup>th</sup> Anniversary and
- Launched a new RIA website [www.rightsinaction.org](http://www.rightsinaction.org)

More importantly we continued to increase the number of people assisted by our advocacy to ensure that their rights are protected, their liberty and freedoms are upheld, their choices are respected and that they are free from abuse, neglect, exploitation and discrimination. This could not be archived without the support and professionalism from our staff and volunteers. Thanks everyone – Merry Christmas and Happy New Year!

# RIA member became a Australian Citizen Congratulations Suzie

## Rights In Action

### Staff

#### MANAGER

**Robyn Renton**

#### SENIOR ADVOCATE

**Bob Paten**

#### ADVOCATES

**Dianne Wellington  
Marlene Levasseur  
Zachary Tonkin**

#### ADMINISTRATION OFFICER

**Mary Klanssek**

#### FINANCE OFFICER

**Ted Barber**

## RIA Board of Management 2017/18

#### PRESIDENT

**James Barnes**

#### VICE PRESIDENT

**Jane Simpson**

#### SECRETARY

**Bernadette Dimla**

#### TREASURER

**Allan Wilson**

#### GENERAL MEMBERS

**Jan Corcoran**



Rights In Action member, Suzie was very happy to become a citizen of Australia in November 2018. She attended the citizenship ceremony at Cairns Regional Council with her family and pledged her loyalty to Australia, accepting the responsibilities and privileges of citizenship. Cairns Mayor Bob Manning gave a wonderful welcome to the new citizens and he talked about the strength of diversity in Australia.

Suzie was born in PNG and has lived in Queensland for 20 years. Becoming a citizen was a long process, taking over two years, so we jumped for joy when Suzie successfully passed her citizenship test in March and then received the letter of approval from the Minister of Home Affairs in July. Suzie is proud to call Australia home.



*Suzie, her sons & RIA Advocate Dianne Wellington*



# Inclusive Education

The Queensland Collective for Inclusive Education is a group of families who promote inclusive lives for our children with disability and work together to make inclusive schools a reality for all.

Inclusive Education means that all students attend and are welcomed by their neighbourhood school in age-appropriate regular classes and are supported to learn, contribute and participate in all aspect of the life of the school.

For more information click on the link <http://qcie.org/> or phone Sue Tape on – 0424 603 892



BreastScreen Cairns has moved to 116 McLeod Street, Cairns

If you're a woman aged 50-74 years, book your free breast screen today. Phone 132050 or book online at <https://breastscreen.qld.gov.au/>



# The Choice is Yours

Recent changes to disability employment services (DES) means that clients have more say about the services they receive and how they get them.

My Pathway National Manager DES, Rob Friskin, said that DES providers had been working hard to attract new clients and help them to reach their goals.

*"We're really stepping up for job seekers with a differing ability to provide them the support they need on their path to employment,"* he said.

*"The team is focused on innovative, adaptable and personalised services that will better connect clients with their community and prospective employers."*

*"Our service is not just about getting people into jobs. Its about building their confidence and uncovering their hidden talents, so they can find sustainable and rewarding employment."*

It's well documented that diverse and inclusive workforces are more engaged and productive. All employers should consider how they might be more inclusive by enabling people with different abilities to contribute to their workplace.

Mr Friskin said, *"hiring people with a disability may require some groundwork, but the benefits made it worthwhile"*.

*"It's true that accommodating differing abilities could include extra planning, training or workplace modifications. But the benefits you stand to gain are huge,"* he said.

*"Embracing diversity forces us to evaluate what's important to our business and get back to the roots of what drives us to succeed. Simply rethinking how roles are structured including the hours, location and tasks, can boost employee engagement and enable greater profitability."*

My Pathway offers DES assistance in Cairns, Townsville, Mackay, Rockhampton, Hobart and Launceston. For more information, you can contact 1800 319 588 or email [des@mpath.com.au](mailto:des@mpath.com.au)

# LaunchMe

## What is LaunchMe?

LaunchMe is a free initiative offering young carers the opportunity to develop, finance and launch their own startup goals.

Successful applicants will work alongside other young people to create their business ideas from scratch with support from experts in the field.

## How can LaunchMe help you?

LauchMe is about allowing you to balance your role as a carer, while providing the support and assistance you need to start up a career outside of caring.

[Read more](#)



Rights [in](#) Action will be closed from 24<sup>th</sup> December re-open 7<sup>th</sup> January 2019

# Jokes ...

Q: [Why](#) can't you play games in the zoo?

A: Because there are too many cheaters!

Q: What do you call a group of sheep rolling down a hill?

A: A lambslide

Q: How do hedgehogs play leapfrog?

A: Very carefully!

Q: How can you tell which spiders are the trendiest?

A: They have their own websites

Q: What do you call a crate of ducks?

A: A box of quackers

Q: What animals need oiling?

A: Mice, because they squeak

Q. What to you call a smelly Santa?

A. Farter Christmas



# Meet Sunny

**A New app for women with disability to learn about violence and abuse**

[Women](#) with Disabilities Australia (WWDA) is proud to release a new app for women with disability in Australia that we created with a team of women with disability, and our friends at 1800RESPECT – Australia's national sexual assault, domestic and family violence counselling service.

## What is Sunny?

Designed by and for women with disability, Sunny a new app that supports women with disability to learn about violence, know their rights and reach out for support.

While the app is designed for use in Australia, the easy to read content on violence and rights is relevant to women with disability everywhere.

Women with disability can use Sunny on their iPhone or Android phone to,

- Tell their story
- Learn about different types of violence and abuse
- Learn about who can do violence and where it happens
- Know their rights
- Contact people who can help.

The Sunny app is free and available now on iPhone and Android. For more information [click here](#)



[Accessible Telecoms](#) – a new nation-wide disability telecommunications information service goes live

[Australian](#) Communications Consumer Action Network (ACCAN) has today launched Australia's first independent information resource for telecommunications products suitable for people with disability.

Known as the Accessible Telecoms project, the interactive website and call centre will be the much needed one-stop shop for information about the accessibility features of both mainstream and assistive telecommunications equipment suitable for people with disability. It is made possible thanks to a National Readiness grant from the National Disability Insurance Agency (NDIA).

As Australia's peak body representing communications consumers, ACCAN has been advocating for a service that will eliminate the growing information vacuum about equipment and services suitable for people with disability in our increasingly digitally connected society.

Telecommunications are now a vital part of our everyday lives, from accessing government services, to keeping in touch with family and friends. This is no less true for the more than 4 Million Australians who identify as having a disability. It is essential that every one of us is able to connect and communicate using telecommunications.

For more information [click here](#)

Phone IDEAS on **1800 029 904**

Fact sheet - [Accessible Telecoms Information Sheet](#)

## 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](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**

#### **DISCLAIMER:**

*Our Newsletter is a way to share information.*

*The information published is intended for general information only. RIA checks that information is factual however we are not responsible for any opinions or Articles provided by other services.*

*Information is not considered professional advice.*

## Appoint a nominee to help you do business with Centrelink

**Do you need help to claim Disability Support Pension?  
A nominee can help you.**

You can appoint a nominee to help you deal with us on your behalf.

A nominee can help you submit a claim and may be able to do it on your behalf.

A nominee can also:

- help you get medical evidence for your Disability Support Pension claim
- support you if you need to have an assessment
- check if you can get other payments and services from us.

You can choose a person or an organisation to be your nominee.

Your nominee needs to have a Centrelink online account to act on your behalf. If they don't already have one, they can register for one through myGov.

For more information [Click here](#)

## JCU Allied Health Clinics

James Cook University in Townsville have allied health clinics (Psychology, Occupation Therapy, Physiotherapy, Speech And Language) that offer assessments at a significantly discounted and sometimes free depending on the individuals circumstances. Assessments are usually undertaken by students training in the field and on placement and under supervision by a qualified and experienced practitioner.

This service is only in Townsville therefore, the individual needs to be able to travel to Townsville. Information on each service can be found here <https://www.jcuhealth.com.au/home/jcu-clinics>

Specifically, for cognitive and Autism Spectrum Disorder assessments the JCU Psychology clinic offers these and information can be found here <http://www.jcuhealth.com.au/our-clinics/psychology>

If you have any questions you can contact Jessica Orford on 4048 9935

## Board and Staff would like to wish you



## And a Happy New Year