



# RIGHTS IN ACTION INC

*Independent advocacy for people with disabilities*

## NEWSLETTER

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**March 2019 – Issue 50**

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### **Message from the Manager**

Hi Everyone

Our Newsletter is a great opportunity to catch up and share all the ACTION that’s happening across the local, state and national disability sector and of course there is way too much to report here so please regularly check our website [www.rightsinaction.org](http://www.rightsinaction.org).

OK so what is RIA doing... Well, our Advocates have been extremely busy keeping up with the increased number of people seeking our assistance. Unfortunately, due to our limited resources we are unable to assist everyone. So, we do try and provide relevant information for people to advocate for themselves or refer people to alternate service where applicable. To date RIA has assisted 209 requests for assistance, which is generally our total over a twelve-month period.

Please be aware that RIA a priority policy for people experiencing abuse, violence, neglect, exploitation and discrimination, people who are isolated or marginalised in our community. In addition to our advocacy work under the National Disability Advocacy program. <https://www.dss.gov.au/our-responsibilities/disability-and-carers/program-services-for-people-with-disability/national-disability-advocacy-program-ndap> RIA is also funded to assist people with NDIS Internal and External Reviews when they are not happy with an NDIA decision. The target group for advocacy support provided by NDAP agencies, as required under section 8 of the DSA, consists of people with disability that:

- is attributable to an intellectual, psychiatric, sensory or physical impairment or a combination of such impairments; and
- is permanent or likely to be permanent; and
- results in: - a substantially reduced capacity of the person for communication, learning or mobility; and the need for ongoing support services.

People requesting assistances to access NDIS, complete Disability Support pension (DSP) applications, revoking a QCAT Order appointing a Public Guardian and /or Public Trustee and people on Mental Health or Forensic Orders are currently placed on a waiting list as we are unable to provide immediate assistance.

**Referral Forms can be found on our website.**

You can complete a [Request for Advocacy Assistance](#) Or [NDIS Appeals Request Form](#)

### **Quality Assurance.**

A huge thank you to all the people who attended our QA recertification on 25<sup>th</sup> & 26<sup>th</sup> February 2019. Many past and current clients, families, carers, guardians and service providers gave up the time to talk to the auditors about their experience and our compliance under the National Standards for Disability Services and our commitment to the human rights of all people with disability. We appreciate your ongoing support and feedback.

### **New Staff.**

Big Welcome to Symon Magnus who is completing his Social Work placement with us until July 2019. Symon is assisting us with our intake process, providing helpful information to people to self-advocate, coordinating referrals to alternate services and

## Rights In Action

### Staff

MANAGER

**Robyn Renton**

SENIOR ADVOCATE

**Bob Paten**

ADVOCATES

**Dianne Wellington  
Marlene Levasseur**

ADMINISTRATION OFFICER

**Mary Klansek**

FINANCE OFFICER

**Ted Barber**

JCU VOCATIONAL  
PLACEMENT

**Symon Magus**

**RIA Board of  
Management  
2017/18**

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**Bernadette Dimla**

TREASURER

**Allan Wilson**

GENERAL MEMBERS

**Jan Corcoran  
Jennifer McCabe**

conducting research and case studies.

Also, a warm welcome to Angelika Williams. Angelika previously worked at the Department of Communities, Disability Services and Seniors and has extensive experience in the disability sector in roles including mental health respite carers, disability employment officer and Centrelink aged and disability call centre.

Final Words.....

The Australian Government has commenced a public consultation on the draft Terms of Reference for a **Royal Commission into Violence, Abuse, Neglect and exploitation of People with Disability**. They want to hear from people with disability, their families and carers on what the Royal commission should cover and what support may be required. RIA would encourage you to complete the public survey at [engage.dss.gov.au](http://engage.dss.gov.au) or call **1800 880 052** by **28<sup>th</sup> March 2019**. There are 4.3 million people with disability in Australia that should live free from abusive, neglect and exploitation. **It is extremely important to have a say. If you need assistance to complete the survey, please contact us on 4031 7377. We are happy to help.**



**New staff member**

**JCU Student Symon Magnus**

I am a third-year student studying a Bachelor of Social work full-time at James Cook University and since 2015 and work as a Youth Worker at Youth Justice part-time. Additional experiences from 2005 to 2012 include welding and heavy steel fabrication (trade qualified) and from 2012-2015. I did intermittent work as a security contractor for the Aurukun Shire Council and the Aurukun Koolkan Community School.

My interests are international relations, geopolitics, policy, sociology, and psychology. My hobbies are PC gaming and I have recently taken up the expensive hobby of collecting polystone gaming figures from the characters of my favourite games. In addition, I also frequent the gym 3 - 4 times a week to keep myself healthy so I am in a better position to continually help others throughout my lifetime.

I will be spending the next 500 hours here at RIA (Rights In Action), which began on the 19<sup>th</sup> of February and will conclude sometime around mid to late July. This is my first professional placement out of two (the second of which will be undertaken in semester two of 2020). I am very much looking forward to learning as much as possible about advocacy – both individual and systemic. In addition, what I am hoping to get out of placement here at RIA is the opportunity to put my knowledge and skills into practice, helping myself grow into a suitably qualified social-worker with the ability to professionally help people who need assistance.

I look forward to the 22-week journey that lies ahead and working with people with disabilities to strengthen my own knowledge base through praxis (repetition of skills) – informed by organisational and social-work ethic.

Although I am four weeks into my placement, I am enjoying my experiences here at RIA. I have found the team at RIA are very helpful, knowledgeable and passionate in what they do – and the wealth of knowledge and information they have for the advocacy sector is enormous. Through the team's passion for independent and systemic disability advocacy and through experience, they are facilitating learning and growth in a way I feel has been highly beneficial. I wish you all the best in the future and I hope I can be of positive assistance to RIA and the people they assist.

## Education or Vocational Education & Training

Working with Australia-wide colleagues we have launched our NDIS Pre Planning Toolkit for people with disability who are entering into Higher Education or Vocational Education and Training.

The resource has specific modules for different types of disability, discussing structuring supports and accessing supports at the right time, in the right place.

Click here to download resources



## Jokes...

**Q.** Why did the golfer wear two pairs of trousers?

**A.** In case he got a hole in one.

**Q.** What do you call a penguin in the Sahara Desert?

**A.** Lost

**Q.** What's furry and minty?

**A.** A Polo Bear

# Royal Commission Workshop

# Every Story Matters

**Tell the government why young people should not be pushed into aged care.**

**Are you younger than 65 years old, and**

- live in a nursing home?
- currently living in hospital or rehab?
- have lived in a nursing home at some stage in the past 5 years or in the last 3 years been told that you may have to live in an aged care facility?

OR

Do you have a family member or someone you care about in one of these situations? If so, you have an important story that the Royal Commission into Aged Care needs to hear.

**The Summer Foundation can help you tell your story.**

They are holding half-day workshops in many places around Australia. At the workshops, they will help you work out what you want to say, and help you write it for the Royal Commission.

Workshops will be conducted in a one-to-one discussion format with places limited to 6 per workshop. At the end of the workshop, you will have finished a submission for the Royal Commission.

If required, Summer Foundation will pay your travel and support costs and refreshments will be provided.

A workshop will be held in Cairns on the **5<sup>th</sup> April 2019**. If you want to come to a workshop and tell your story.

**Please call 1300 626 560 or email [info@summerfoundation.org.au](mailto:info@summerfoundation.org.au)**

## Get started sport & recreation vouchers for children

**What is Get Started Vouchers?**

Get Started Vouchers is one of the Queensland Government funding programs supporting sport and active recreation at the grassroots level.

Get Started Vouchers assists children and young people who cannot afford, to join a sport or active recreation club. Eligible children and young people can apply for a voucher valued up to \$150, which can be redeemed at a sport or recreation club that is registered for Get Started Vouchers.

**Who is eligible?**

Queensland children and young people aged from 5 to 17 (inclusive) who either:

- Hold or whose parent, carer or guardian hold a valid Centrelink Health Care Card or Pensioner Concession Card with the child's name on it or
- Are identified by a registered referral agent

For further information phone 13QGOV or email [getstarted@npsr.qld.gov](mailto:getstarted@npsr.qld.gov) or visit the website by clicking [Get Started](#)

# Cairns Disability Expo 2019

## NOTE TO EVENT DIARY:

[The](#) Cairns Disability Expo is happening on Thursday **18<sup>th</sup> July 2019 from 8.00 – 1.00pm then from 3pm – 6pm.**

This event is now fully open to the public. This event showcases supports services and providers available for people with disability in the Cairns region and to enhance linkages between providers, educators, families and more.

Location to be confirmed (Depends on exhibitor numbers)



[Rights](#) in Action will be closed on the following days

**19<sup>th</sup> April 2019  
Good Friday**

**22<sup>nd</sup> April 2019  
Easter Monday**

**25<sup>th</sup> April 2019  
Anzac Day**

**6<sup>th</sup> May 2019  
Labour Day**



# Every Family Program

**VPG's Every Family Program** [aims](#) to improve children's wellbeing and development. Every Family is unique and comes with their own strengths, skills and challenges. The Every Family program acknowledges these attributes and works with families to recognise and develop their parenting skills, increase their knowledge of child development and create opportunities for resource sharing, learning & support.

The Every Family program is a **free** service across the Atherton Tablelands and Cassowary Coast areas for parents/carers of children 0 -12years.

**Parent Coaching** provides parents with simple tips to implement positive parenting. Parent coaching does not tell you 'how to be a parent', instead it gives provides a range of strategies, to help make your family life more enjoyable. We provide a range of parenting programs including:

- Triple P
- Circles of Security
- Bringing Up Great Kids
- Brief parent support, information and referrals

**Parenting Workshops** are a great way to connect with other parents whilst gaining information about children's development and wellbeing. Workshops can be developed to address specific topics/issues and delivered to individual groups, within schools or the wider community.

Popular workshops include:

- Healthy Eating and Lunchbox Ideas
- Hassle Free Shopping
- Learning Games
- Dealing with Challenging Behaviours
- Toilet Training
- Adolescent Social & Emotional Development
- School Transition
- Anxiety
- Mindful Parenting

## **School Readiness and Junior RespectMe**

Junior RespectMe is a school readiness program delivered to Primary School Students in Year 6, promoting the development of skills necessary for adolescents to conduct respectful relationships. Junior RespectMe is delivered over 5 sessions within school time.

VPG also work with parents to support them and their children through the journey of starting prep through workshops, individual support and school support. For more information contact one of the following offices:

VPG Atherton or Mareeba - Phone 40916411 or  
Email - [everyfamily@vpginc.com.au](mailto:everyfamily@vpginc.com.au)

VPG Innisfail – Phone - 0488321605 or  
Email - [joleen@voginc.com.au](mailto:joleen@voginc.com.au)

Pressure is building on the Federal Government to establish a Royal Commission into abuse within the disability sector

The [Coalition](#) is set to support a motion from the Senate calling for the establishment of a royal commission, but it remains unclear if it will act upon those calls.

Ahead of the vote, disability advocates have descended on Parliament House to highlight the trauma they have received and lobby the Government for a royal commission.

*"At a rehab facility, a nurse used to come and set fire to my hair at night, in a church setting where I broke my arm, I was not offered any pain relief for that and also not offered any medical attention," Craig Wallace, campaigner and former president of People with Disability, told AM. "At the time you weren't kind of believed that this was happening to you, and there was a kind of culture of hushing these things up, of not making waves, a feeling that if you did so you might be punished in some way."*

Mr Wallace said the abuse he received happened as a child at the hands of carers, teachers and his church community.

[Read More](#)

Article from ABC news dated 18/02/2019

# National Screening System to Protect NDIS Participants

The [Liberal](#) National Government moved to establish a nationally consistent approach to screening people who work with people with disability in the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS).

Minister for Families and Social Services, Paul Fletcher, said the *National Disability Insurance Scheme Amendment (Worker Screening Database) Bill 2018*, introduced into the Federal Parliament, would establish a national database to support a nationally consistent approach to screening people who work with NDIS participants.

**The new approach to NDIS Worker Screening is due to start in July 2019** in all States and Territories, except Western Australia. Western Australia intends to join the national scheme from July 2020.

"Worker screening is a way to check that people who are working, or seek to work, in the NDIS do not pose an unacceptable risk of harm to people with disability," Mr Fletcher said.

"The effect of the Bill will be to establish a nationally consistent worker screening approach following extensive work by the Department of Social Services, the NDIS Quality and Safeguards Commission, and State and Territory governments.

"The Bill will enable the NDIS Quality and Safeguards Commission to establish and maintain a national database for information about NDIS worker screening.

"This will provide timely and accurate worker clearance status information for providers for NDIS services and supports, and for self-managed participants.

Mr Fletcher said NDIS worker clearance would be portable across jurisdictions, and apply to providers of NDIS services and supports and self-managed participants – reducing duplication and complexity.

"A worker who has been excluded by one State or Territory will be excluded nationally".

"Importantly, nationally consistent worker screening will deter individuals who pose a high risk of harm from seeking work in this sector.

"The database will support national ongoing monitoring of the criminal history records of workers with clearances to ensure that people who do the wrong thing do not remain in specified roles.

"Participants and their families can have confidence that workers with clearances have been assessed as not posing an unacceptable risk of harm to people with disability".

The database will cost \$13.6 million over four years (2018/19 – 2021/22) to establish and maintain, with funding shared between the Commonwealth and all states and territories.

Media Releases 13/02/19  
QAMH Spotlight Issue 3  
Ministers for the Department of Social Services

# Court Link

Court [Link](#) is a court assessment referral and support program.

It is a 12-week bail-based program helping people get the support and treatment they need to address the underlying contributors to their offending.

Court link provides participants with individual support together with referral to treatment and community support services.

Court Link focuses on a participant's problems to provide solutions to reduce re-offending and make communities safer.

Court Link helps participant live a full life in the community by improving their health and wellbeing, including reduced alcohol and or drug use and improved living conditions.

Further information contact court link on 07 3239 6411

[Read More](#)

## **Centacare FNQ opens a NEW office in Atherton**

Centacare [FNQ](#) is delighted to announce the opening of a new office in Atherton!

You can find them at 30 Mabel Street, Atherton.

Phone: 0437 611 304

Email:

[tablelands@centacarefnq.org](mailto:tablelands@centacarefnq.org)



## **EMPLOYERS SET TO BENEFIT FROM NEW DISABILITY EMPLOYMENT TOOLKIT**

The [Australian](#) Government today launched a comprehensive Employer Toolkit to help employers hire people with disability and build their organisation's disability confidence and competence.

The Employer Toolkit is an online resource to guide employers through the entire process of employing people with disability, using simple, straightforward videos, downloadable resources and highlighting real-life case studies.

Assistant Minister for Social Services, Housing and Disability Services, Sarah Henderson said one in five Australians live with disability. By making hiring processes more inclusive, employers can access a huge, untapped pool of talent.

"The Employer Toolkit will empower employers to give the one million Australians with disability looking for work, the same opportunity as everyone else – to demonstrate that they are capable, reliable and above all, employable," Ms Henderson said.

The Employer Toolkit has been created as part of the Employ their Ability campaign that aims to highlight the benefits of employing people with disability and raise awareness of the Australian Government supports available to assist large organisations.

Ms Henderson also announced the Employer Toolkit would support new work targeting small and medium-sized enterprises. Following new research findings in the Making it Easier for Small Business to employ people with disability report, half of the businesses surveyed were open to employing a person with a disability, but lack resources specific for small businesses.

Ms Henderson said the Employer Toolkit would encourage more employers from organisations of all sizes to hire people with disability.

"These resources are specifically designed to be user-friendly so time-poor, corporate professionals can quickly access and absorb the practical information to assist them navigate disability employment," Ms Henderson said.

"Our goal is to create awareness and let all employers know that support is available. The Employer Toolkit is there to help."

The Employer Toolkit covers a range of topics relating to disability employment, including creating inclusive policies, finding and interviewing jobseekers with disability, and making adjustments in the workplace.

"Research shows the biggest barriers to hiring people with disability are concerns about integration, and a lack of awareness and understanding. The Employer Toolkit takes hirers through every step of the process, providing the support and information they need to get started." Ms Henderson said.

The Employer Toolkit is one of many Australian Government initiatives to help support disability employment. Disability Employment Services (DES) has supported more than 808,000 jobseekers with disability in their search to find and keep a job. As of December 2018, there are around 213,000 people with disability participating in DES.

The Employer Toolkit is available online through JobAccess, the Australian Government's national hub for disability employment information and advice. Get started now at: [www.jobaccess.gov.au/employer-toolkit](http://www.jobaccess.gov.au/employer-toolkit)

# What is support coordination?

One of the easiest ways to describe Support Coordination is that they are kind of like an NDIS assistant. They are there to help you understand your NDIS plan and connect you with services that help you make the most of your plan.

The NDIS can be confusing, and the role of support coordinators is to try and make it a little less so.

Sourcing and then managing multiple providers and services can be complicated and time consuming.

'Who can provide me with the services I need?', 'What is a service agreement?', 'How do I manage so many appointments?', 'I need to ensure all my providers are kept up to date with my treatments', 'How do I change my service provider?'

Some people may prefer to do this themselves. For other people, that's where Support Coordination can be really handy.

Support Coordination works with you to source the right providers and the right services, coordinating your supports for you and building on your informal support like your family.

Article by Endeavour Foundation

# NDIS - 'Reasonable and Necessary' explained

## What are reasonable and necessary supports?

**Reasonable** is something that is fair.

**Necessary** is something you must have because of your disability.

NDIS funds "reasonable and necessary supports" relating to a person's disability to help them live an ordinary life and achieve their goals.

When you attend your planning meeting, the NDIA Planner will gather information on which supports are reasonable and necessary to your situation. When your planner is assessing what is reasonable and necessary, they will be evaluating whether a support request is:

- related to your disability
- not a day-to-day living cost that is unrelated to your disability support needs
- value for money
- likely to be effective and beneficial to you.

They will also consider the unpaid, informal supports provided to you by family, carers, networks, and the community.

What may be considered unreasonable for one person may in fact be quite reasonable for someone else with different support needs.

Don't assume the Planner fully understands the needs of you or your family member. **Be prepared to talk about why a request should be deemed to be 'fair and reasonable'**.

## Examples of reasonable and necessary supports

Supports that are often deemed reasonable and necessary:

- Support workers to help with personal care activities
- Therapeutic supports like behaviour support
- Aids and equipment
- Home modifications
- Mobility equipment

While these are commonly funded, every plan is different, and your plan and funding will always be based on individual circumstances.

## Bridging the gap

The NDIS exists to close the gap between having a disability and not having a disability. Ask yourself – would someone without a disability be expected to pay for this? If the answer is 'yes', then chances are it is a **mainstream cost**. Things like housing, food, holidays and vehicles are considered mainstream costs. Even though people with a disability often need or use these things, they are not disability specific and therefore unlikely to be covered by the NDIS.

Here is an example of the difference between a mainstream cost and something that the NDIS might cover:

**Tim has an intellectual disability and one of his NDIS goals was to attend more football games.**

Tim would need to use his own money to buy the things that someone without a disability would generally pay for. In this example, this would be things like:

- The entrance ticket to the game
- A pie and a drink
- A jersey to wear



## Circle of Security Parenting Program

At times all parents feel lost or find it hard to understand what their children might need from them. Imagine what it might feel like if you were able to make sense of what your child was really asking from you.

The Circle of Security® Parenting™ program is based on decades of research about how secure parent-child relationships can be supported and strengthened.

Using the model developed by the Circle of Security originators, our trained Facilitators work with parents and care-givers to help them to:

- Understand their child's emotional world by learning to read emotional needs
- Support their child's ability to successfully manage emotions
- Enhance the development of their child's self esteem
- Enable their child to have a secure base

The program runs for eight weeks. The current program started at the beginning of February and runs through until 26 March. **The next program is planned to start at the end of April with dates and times to be confirmed.**

**Please call 4044 0130 for more information**

The NDIS however could fund things that would help Tim overcome any barriers that arise from his disability. This could include:

- A support worker to support him to attend the game
- Specialised transport in line with his mobility needs (if applicable)

### **But who is buying the ticket for the support worker?**

Tim would have to pay for that ticket too (unless the football club accepts Tim's companion card and allows the support worker to attend for free).

*Article by Endeavour Foundation*

## Make Art part of your NDIS Plan

Art matters within an NDIS context and a participant can advocate to have it included in their plan. Called "cultural participation", art can be of benefit in a variety of ways. It may just make a person happy by creating a piece of work, or it could be the catalyst for much larger change in a person's life.

Connections between people with disability and the wider community are made by engaging in art activities. Confidence is built and a person's wellbeing enhanced. Positive social, employment, and education outcomes are all benefits from participation in art programs.'

Art isn't mentioned specifically within the realm of the NDIS but is found within the categories of Participation, Recreation or Skill Development. A number of key outcomes identify how art can fit within the Scheme. Social engagement is an integral part of an NDIS plan and arts programs are an ideal way for participants to spend time with friends and meet new people.

Mental health issues such as anxiety and depression have been known to gain benefits from art activities. The abstract concepts often used in art can be the cornerstone for people exploring their emotions and feelings.

A basic principle of the NDIS is choice and control, and the programs offered within the arts sphere by different services assist with the connection and creativity of participants.

Art is an important part of life, but some convincing may be necessary to let planners and administrators in the NDIS observe that art is a reasonable and necessary support. Self-advocacy will let a participant put forward their argument on the importance of art to them, and enable them to garner information from people who can assist.

Click on the link below for the document Art and You: A Planning Guide it provides information on thinking, talking and writing about how art makes a participant feel.

visit:

<https://www.artsaccess.com.au/ndis-art-and-you/>



*Article from Newsletter of IDEAS*

## The Housing Hub

### **What is the Housing Hub?**

The Housing [Hub](#) is a new way for people with disability to find suitable housing. Advertising vacancies from a range of housing providers, The Housing Hub also hosts a library of useful information about housing options and planning your move.

## 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**

### 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.*

The Housing Hub lists vacancies from housing providers in New South Wales, Queensland, South Australia and Victoria. Vacancies may include existing SDA (Specialist Disability Accommodation) properties, new SDA builds, non-SDA supported accommodation, private rental, and properties for sale. The range of vacancies will continue to grow as the website develops.



[Find disability friendly properties to suit your needs.](#)

Visit <https://www.thehousinghub.org.au/>

## Skills for Education & Employment

The Skills [for](#) Education and Employment program may help you improve your speaking, reading, writing or math.

### Eligibility

To join this program, you must:

- be 15 to 64 years old
- be looking for full time work
- be an active job seeker registered with a jobactive or Disability Employment Services, or the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet's Community Development Program
- have the right to work in Australia

### How it works

1. They make an appointment for you with a local training provider.
2. They assess your speaking, reading, writing and maths skills and offer training at the right level to improve your skills.
3. You train for 10 to 25 hours a week

### How it helps you

Your training will give you more confidence when you look for work. Such as:

- filling in forms
- writing letters
- preparing your resumé
- writing job applications

### What it's like

The courses are in small, friendly groups with other people who need help with the same things. The trainers have special skills and experience in teaching adults. If you can't go to face to face training, you can learn at home by distance education.



<https://www.humanservices.gov.au/individuals/services/centrelink/skills-education-and-employment>