



**Gippsland
Disability Advocacy**

2017-2018 Annual Report

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**Gippsland
Disability Advocacy**

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President's Report 2018

This last year saw the Executive Officer (EO), Nick Lawler, leave in January. After an extensive advertising and recruitment process, a new Executive Officer was appointed, Adrian Terranova. He started in June 2018. Adrian brings to the organisation an extensive knowledge and history of Gippsland Disability Advocacy (GDA), having been on the Board for 10 years as well as being President/Chair for 6 years. He also has his extensive experience working within the community and the Gippsland region.

The Board of Management has remained relatively stable with seven members on the Board. Although I was appointed Vice President/Vice Chair at the AGM in 2017, I was voted in as President/Chair on Adrian's appointment as EO, after he resigned from his position as President/Chair.

The rest of the Executive was made up of Mike Kitwood – Secretary, and Damian Maddaluno – Treasurer. The general board members included Yvonne Waite, Timothy Cook (who later became vice president/vice chair when the president/chair became vacant on my appointment), Amanda Grumley, and Fiona Fatchen. Fiona only recently joined the Board in July this year. I also welcome Rachel Kemp who joined in September 2018 as the minute taker of the Board's minutes. This has allowed Mike to take a more active role in the meetings without needing to be scribing the notes throughout the meeting.

The Board now meets once a month, whereas previously it was every 6 weeks. I would like to thank the members of the Board for their tireless work at meetings, and at other events throughout the year. As well as behind the scenes work that often goes unnoticed but without which GDA would not run as smoothly.

The members of staff of GDA have seen a bit of change. As mentioned above, the new EO was appointed in May and commenced in June this year. With his prior knowledge of the organisation, this has helped immeasurably in being a relatively seamless addition to the staff. He is also very passionate about the disability sector, and this helps in leading the organisation to be there for clients who require advocacy at often times of great stress and need in their lives. Adrian has also been able to source extra funding resources through his diligent work in making submissions to various bodies, including philanthropic funding groups, local government, and various business organisations.

GDA now has four advocates, Vi Seer, Sharon Bergles, Sam Gamlin, and Cathy Saleta. They variously work on individual advocacy, systemic advocacy, and advocacy specific to the National Disability Insurance Scheme. I would like to thank the advocates for their work advocating for various clients throughout Gippsland, some of which have quite complex cases that require an extensive amount of time and resources, and often 'thinking outside the box'. It is great to have a mix of staff who are able to bounce ideas off each other, learn from each other, and be able to support each other when one is away on holidays or on sick leave. Certainly, having a 'well oiled' team helps GDA as a whole, which in turn helps the clients and the broader community.

The administration has seen the leaving of Jo-Anne Morris, with just Leanne Blake left to run the office administration. Thankyou Leanne for your work maintaining the accounts, pay, preparing documentation for the board meetings, and ensuring GDA is running along as smooth as possible.

I would also like to mention that GDA as a whole ran very well under limited guidance throughout the 'caretaker' period between January and June 2018 when there was no EO to steer GDA through this period of time. Thank you all for your work.

I'd like to thank the various funding bodies, the Department of Social Services, and the Department of Health and Human Services, and the HH Trust, for their support and commitment without whom we would not be here, and able to function and provide the advocacy so desperately needed for the various clients.

Due to having some spare funds available the Board decided to investigate GDA's logo and branding. Hopefully the new design will be approved by the Board before the end of the year. The Board hopes to purchase various pieces of merchandise with the new GDA logo branding on them, such as fridge magnets, shopping/goodie bags, pens, etc to be provided at forums and community events.

Hunter Hadley
President/Chair

Gippsland Disability Advocacy

Treasurer's Report 2018

It has been another excellent year financially for Gippsland Disability Advocacy. Additional funds received through the federal government for NDIS Appeals Advocacy has strengthened our financial position and capacity to respond to this pressing need in our community.

The organisation had in excess of \$40,000 carried over into the new financial year. This arose as a result of staffing and timing of funding. We were funded additional monies for NDIS appeals effective Jan 1st, 2018 although advertising, recruitment and sufficient notice period meant the role was not filled until March 2018. We were also without an Executive Officer from late January 2018 until mid-June 2018.

Positively these funds have been redirected to Advocacy in the East Gippsland region for this financial year.

The work of our Auditor Vic Hill confirms that our financials are a true and fair view overall reflection of our finances and have been prepared in accordance with the requirements.

As with all organisations appropriate finance and budget control is necessary and full credit to our Finance Officer Leanne Blake for her efforts in ensuring our financials are always within budget and fully reflective of our current financial situation.

Our funding over the next few years will change so efforts will need to be put in to diversify and look for alternate opportunities.

The organisation is in a very sound financial position and full credit to the board and staff of Gippsland Disability Advocacy for making this possible.

The new year will no-doubt offer new challenges and opportunities.

It is a pleasure to be the organisation's Treasurer, an organisation that is providing a wonderful service to many people in Gippsland.

I look forward to the year ahead.

Yours sincerely

Damian Maddaluno
Treasurer

Gippsland Disability Advocacy

Executive Officer's Report 2018

It is a pleasure to supply my first report as Executive Officer of Gippsland Disability Advocacy following commencing in the role in mid-June 2018.

Thankyou

To our board Hunter Hadley (President/Chairperson), Tim Cook (Vice President), Mike Kitwood (Public Officer/Secretary), Damian Maddaluno (Treasurer), Yvonne Waite, Fiona Fatchen and Amanda Grumley for being so generous with your time and in ensuring our organisation has highly effective and quality leadership. Volunteering on Not for Profit boards takes a lot of effort and personal commitment and our board at Gippsland Disability Advocacy always have the best interest of our organisation.

Special thanks to our Chairperson Hunter Hadley who over the last year has dedicated so much time and effort to the organisation in a range of different ways and provides wonderful support and insights to me regularly.

To our staff, Leanne Blake, Sharon Bergles, Vi Seear, Sam Gladman and Cathy Saleta thank you for your continued efforts, commitment and diligence to ensure our organisation at all times is represented as professional as possible when advocating for persons with a disability.

The nature and size of our organisation means our staff need to multi task and this is performed admirably. Each day the demands of advocacy are evident, and our staff perform their Advocacy roles wonderfully well. It is an absolute pleasure and inspiring coming to work every day and working alongside Leanne, Sharon, Vi, Sam and Cathy. We understand the importance of our roles in advocating for people with a disability and appreciate we are all in positions of privilege.

Year of change

It has been a year of change across the organisation with our previous Executive Officer, Nick Lawler leaving the organisation moving to Canberra to take up a CEO role with a local disability organisation. This effectively saw changes to the Chairperson / President, Executive Officer, and Vice President. We also welcomed Fiona Fatchen to our board. Congratulations to all the board and staff who through the transition ensured the organisation continued to meet all requirements and demands.

I would also like to thank Nick Lawler for his efforts as Executive Officer of Gippsland Disability Advocacy.

Strategic Plan

Our current Strategic Plan needs review in 2019, so a collaborative effort will be required to implement a new strategic plan moving forward and will be a focus in 2019.

Budget Planning

As evidenced in the financials section of the Annual Report, Gippsland Disability Advocacy is in a sound financial position and full credit to Leanne Blake, our Finance Officer for her diligence in ensuring the organisation is meeting all its financial requirements very well. Leanne's diligence has led to the organisation being able to increase service delivery hours across three of our Advocates this financial year which is wonderful for our community.

Leanne has expert advice and assistance from our Treasurer Damian Maddaluno, and we are indebted to his support.

Initiatives undertaken since last Annual General Meeting

East Gippsland Advocate - As a result of unspent monies last financial year, we subsequently made a proposal to the Department to use these monies to assist with growing demand in the East Gippsland region by applying to appoint an advocate to a 0.5 EFT role located in East Gippsland. This will take effect shortly and we are indebted to Noweyung Disability Service for offering us co-location at no cost. This position is for a fixed term period.

Constitution - The board has undertaken work on our Constitution in order to make elements of it more contemporary and beneficial for board members and members of the organisation. The changes relate to a minimum and maximum number of board members, time period for board members. We are indebted to our Vice President, Tim Cook for his efforts and leadership in relation to our constitution and efforts to enhance it.

New branding / Logo – The board has played a leading role in updating the organisations logo, a local graphic designer has been engaged to provide options. The importance of a logo is not lost on all parts of the origination. Our new logo (once ratified) will be a graphic symbol used to aid and promote public identification and recognition of Gippsland Disability Advocacy.

Information Linkages & Capacity Grant – In 2017, we were fortunate enough to receive a grant via the Department of Health and Human Services to strengthen our service provision for people with disabilities. It was felt that with more and more people suffering from vision loss either as a result of age-related macular degeneration, diabetic retinopathy, glaucoma, cataracts or many other conditions, the grant enabled the organisation to purchase the newly designed “Connect 12”. This combines a high-performance digital magnifier with the versatility of an Android tablet, plus unmatched ease of use and integrates access to online libraries. It is the ideal solution for people with low vision which allows free and open access to more than a million apps.

Another device the organisation purchased with the grant was the “OrCam”, which develops and manufactures assistive technology devices for individuals who are visually impaired, partially sighted, blind, print disabilities, or have other disabilities was purchase. The grant also allowed the purchase of a Roger MyLink system to aid people with hearing loss. This wireless technology is compatible with all hearing instruments with a T-Coil, creating more inclusive advocacy opportunities for people with a hearing impairment. My sincere thanks and appreciation to both Leanne and Sharon for their efforts in facilitating this.

Social Media Increased Presence – The organisation has been working diligently to ensure we have greater impact and presence on social media, thanks to Hunter and Sharon for assisting me with continued efforts in this space.

NDIS Appeals monies – The organisation received funds to assist with the NDIS with a focus on planning including pre planning and appeals. This allowed us to appoint Cathy Saleta, who along with Sharon Bergles play a vital role in ensuring advocacy is occurring to many people navigating the NDIS across the region. Both Cathy and Sharon are making significant differences to many people navigating the intricacies of the NDIS.

Victorian Disability Advocacy Futures Plan 2018-2020 – The Victorian Government engaged with disability organisations to gauge opinions on how to grow the state advocacy program. Gippsland Disability Advocacy made a submission seeking additional funds to:

- 1). Increase our capacity to respond to Systemic Advocacy.
- 2). Have staff located in other parts of the region to effectively respond to service delivery across the region.
- 3). Funds to help establish and support a greater amount of self-advocate groups across the region.

Enabling Women Leadership Program – Gippsland

The “Enabling Women Leadership Program” empowers women with disabilities to have a voice about issues that relate to them and other women with disabilities. The program equips women with knowledge, skills, tools and networks so they can speak up in your community and helps support their leadership journey.

The program runs for six one-day sessions over six consecutive weeks. The program:

- 1). Brings together a diverse range of women of all abilities
- 2). Helps to develop confidence and self-esteem, knowledge and insights about human rights, identity, advocacy and leadership
- 3). Supports women to develop communication skills, the ability to be a voice for yourself and other women with a disability.
- 4). Supports women to become more involved in the local community.
- 5). Helps women to understand more about NDIS.

Our role as the Auspice assists us to positively promote our organisation and engage with other organisations and women with leadership capabilities who have a disability across the region.

Grants:

Since June 2018, we have applied for several community grants to increase the profile and opportunity for the organisation to be more visible and proactive amongst our community. The grants have focused on several initiatives predominantly community events, community education, systemic advocacy, employability, support to assist self-advocacy groups. The grants were submitted to:

Latrobe City x 2, Energy Australia x 2, Darren Chester Community Grants, Bass Coast Shire Council, Loy Yang Power Community Grants, Department of Social Services – Volunteer Grant, Latrobe Valley Authority, Pick My Project. Grants need to continue to be a focus on the organisation to diversify opportunities to assist our communities and grow to grow the organisation.

Systemic Advocacy:

Systemic Advocacy refers to advocacy that is required to bring about changes to an organisation or system. Systemic Advocacy focuses on representing the rights, interests and viewpoints of a group who are similarly affected by issues and seeks to identify potential solutions to the issues for people with a disability.

We are indebted to Hunter Hadley for his donation to Gippsland Disability Advocacy. Hunter is passionate about Systemic Advocacy and the benefits it provides to not only our community but the organisation. We are fortunate to have Sam Gamlin in the Systemic Advocacy role. Sam is tenacious in her approach to make significant change and has made many connections with community organisations, local, state and federal government as well as local businesses highlighting areas of concern and offering solutions. The donation by Hunter, including the efforts of Sam has allowed the organisation to be a leader in the sector with this initiative, as well as leverage off the project and subsequently apply for grants with a view of growing the program. It has been incredibly important to ensure the Board are well informed and connected to what is an innovative approach.

Professional Development

In order to continually improve, ensuring that as an organisation we continue to be effective, competent and confident, the board and staff are encouraged to undertake relevant training on governance and service delivery / advocacy accordingly. We have ensured this budget line item is one that supports staff and board and are always on the lookout for professional development opportunities.

Finally

I would like to thank all that staff and board for the confidence and support provided to me, it has been a pleasure to connect with all of you as well as many of the regions self-advocates and carers, who continually inspire me to ensure we are providing a high level of advocacy.



Adrian Terranova
Executive Officer

GDAI Project Reports

Systemic Advocacy Report

It has been a full year of activities and achievements within Gippsland Disability's Systemic Advocacy Project. Sincere thanks to Hunter Hadley for the guidance, support and generous financial contribution. This contribution and Hunter's leadership is allowing Gippsland Disability Advocacy the opportunity to make significant systemic changes across our community. Without this, the project would not exist. Our Executive Officer has been using this to highlight outcomes and initiatives to explore additional and future funding.

In the last year we have been able to positively engage with a number of organisations namely:

- Aquatic Centre, Traralgon
- Latrobe City Council
- Victoria Police
- Vic Roads
- Australia Post
- Department of Social Services
- State and Federal Governments
- Safeway / Woolworths
- Vision Australia
- Stockland Plaza – Traralgon
- Bass Coast Shire Council
- East Gippsland Shire Council
- South Gippsland Shire Council
- Taxi Services Commission
- Heritage Victoria
- Disability Resource Centre - Advocacy

All of these organisations have a role to play to ensure that persons with a disability have appropriate access and safety.

Some of the issues and outcomes we have addressed and obtained include:

Accessibility:

- *The new Aquatic Centre in Traralgon* – Advocated that it should include a zero-depth play area, accessible toilets, and lagoon style entrance. This is now coming to fruition.
- *The new Medicare / National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) office* - located in Traralgon has no disability parking located in close proximity. Advocated to have this addressed via the Department of Social Services and Latrobe City Council, with two accessible parking spots to be installed by the end of Dec 2018.
- *The driveway entrance into Safeway / Woolworths Traralgon* – Advocated that it was very steep and difficult to access for individuals in a wheelchair. Outcome was that the driveway entrance was upgraded in Sept 2018 with the angles enhanced, thus allowing access for people in a scooter and wheelchair.

Stockland Plaza saw a few issues raised including:

- The Taxi ramp was in disrepair and dangerous to people in a wheelchair and scooter. Following advocacy, the taxi ramp was upgraded including made safe and accessible.
- Posed a falls risk to vision impaired clients. Following advocacy and as part of the upgrade the installation of tactiles will occur in the facility in November 2018.
- The seats have been removed from the front of the Plaza due to youth posing a problem at the front of the Plaza.
- Meetings were held with the Plaza management in order to put forward issues by residents that they have nowhere to sit, whilst waiting for transport. The manager has expressed that once the Plaza upgrade is finished, they will reevaluate the area to place more seating.
- *The Traralgon Courthouse and the post office entry.* Neither safe for persons in a wheelchair nor accessible. Ongoing issues but Advocacy continuing.
- *Moe Police Station* - The accessible parking bay outside of the Moe Police station in Anzac Street was in total disrepair. Through advocacy, GDAI identified the issue to Vic Roads and Latrobe City Council with works now scheduled to be repaired late 2018 or early 2019 and made safe for individuals using a wheelchair.
- *Postal Boxes* – Australia Post - The height and location of local postal boxes make them difficult for individuals using a wheelchair. Engaged with Australia Post identifying the issue seeking relocation. Australia Post tabled it as an issue and will engage with local design company.

Safety:

- *The pedestrian crossing in Breed Street Traralgon* is unsafe for anyone with mobility issues, culminating in a recent fatality. Following advocacy agreement from Vic Roads and Latrobe City Council that enhancements and speed restrictions will commence in 2019.
- Issues for clients accessing the Disability Support Pension. This is impacting many people's health and wellbeing. Action as a result of this is that GDAI are liaising with Disability Resource Centre - Advocacy regarding a forum to be held in mid-November with clients present to collectively capture issues (de-identified) and take back to relevant authorities.
- Victoria wide forums held by DRC Advocacy: Issues include accessibility, timetables, services available, and lack of assistance causing isolation and safety concerns.
- Liaised with DRC advocacy about transport in the Gippsland area and challenges faced by people living with a disability.

Other issues to be explored:

- Accessibility to the Wonthaggi pool.
- Footpaths around the Latrobe area (new and existing subdivisions).
- Issues faced with people with a disability regarding NDIS and My AGED CARE: Have already started this discussion, as the discrepancy between the funding received in each is significant.
- Staff have also actively been involved with issues in Korumburra regarding access to a Pharmacy, East Gippsland Shire with regards to the ceramic toilets at the All Abilities Play Ground and assistance with a gentleman requiring access and assistance to a local supermarket.

Sam Gamlin

Systemic Advocate



The Wellington DART (Disability Advocacy Resource Team).

This group of individuals all have a disability of their own. Who have come together creating a Citizen advocacy group, they are assisting other people with a disability in the Wellington Shire.

Members of Wellington DART frequent various reference groups where they can provide firsthand information of the needs and experiences of people living with a disability, making for systemic change.

A big thank you to the members of Wellington DART who are actively making a difference in their community. Posts and information sharing is regularly published on their Wellington Disability Advocacy Resource Team Facebook page providing access for all.

Congratulations to James, one of our Wellington DART members who was nominated for an Emerging Leader Award for 2018 at the Victorian Disability Awards. The event was held in Melbourne at Federation Square to recognise and honour the achievements and contributions of individuals, teams and organisations that provide support, leadership, advocacy, service and education to improve the lives of people with disability living in Victoria. The awards are an opportunity to highlight the achievements of people with disability.

Sharon Bergles
Advocate



Report of the Committee Year ended 30th June 2018

Committee Members

- **Chairperson:** Hunter Hadley
- **Deputy Chairperson:** Tim Cook
- **Secretary/ Public Officer:** Mike Kitwood
- **Treasurer:** Damian Maddaluno
- **Committee Member:** Yvonne Waite
- **Committee Member:** Amanda Grumley
- **Committee Member:** Fiona Fatchen

Principal Activities:

The principal activities of the Association during the financial year were Disability Advocacy Services.

Significant Changes:

No significant change in the nature of these activities occurred during the year.

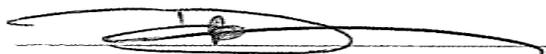
Operating Result:

The profit (loss) from ordinary activities after providing for income tax amounted to \$46,319. Last year \$4,801.

This report is made in accordance with a resolution of the Committee of the Association.



Chairman



Treasurer

Dated this day, the 7th day of November 2018.

**Vic Hill Audit
SMSF Auditor
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September 25, 2018

AUDITORS REPORT

To the board of Gippsland Disability Advocacy Inc.:

Report on the Financial Report

I have audited the accompanying financial report, being a general-purpose financial report of Gippsland Disability Advocacy Inc, which comprises of the Balance Sheet as at 30 June 2016, the Income Statement, Statement of Changes in Equity and Statement of Cash Flows for the year then ended, notes comprising a summary of significant accounting policies and other explanatory information, and the Committee's Report.

Committee's Responsibility for the Financial Report

The Committee of the association are responsible for the preparation of the financial report and have determined that the basis of preparation described in Note 1, is appropriate to meet the requirements of the *Associations Incorporation Reform Act 2012*. The Committee's responsibility also includes such internal control as the Committee determine is necessary to enable the preparation of a financial report that is free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

Auditor's Responsibility

My responsibility is to express an opinion on the financial report based on my audit. I have conducted our audit in accordance with Australian Auditing Standards. Those standards require that we comply with relevant ethical requirements relating to audit engagements and plan and perform the audit to obtain reasonable assurance whether the financial report is free from material misstatement.

An audit involves performing procedures to obtain audit evidence about the amounts and disclosures in the financial report. The procedures selected depend on the auditor's judgement, including the assessment of the risks of material misstatement of the financial report, whether due to fraud or error. In making those risk assessments, the auditor considers internal control relevant to the association's preparation of the financial report that gives a true and fair view, in order to design audit procedures that are appropriate in the circumstances but not for the purpose of expressing the appropriateness of accounting policies used and the reasonableness of accounting estimates made by the Committee, as well as evaluating the overall presentation of the financial report.

I believe that the audit evidence we have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for my audit opinion.

Independence

In conducting my audit, I have complied with the independence requirements of the Australian professional ethical pronouncements.

Auditor's Opinion

In my opinion the financial report of the association has been prepared in accordance with the *Association Incorporation Reform Act 2012* including:

- (a) giving a true and fair view of the entity's financial position as at 30 June 2018 and of its performance for the year ended on that date; and
- (b) complying with Australian Accounting Standards as referred to in Note 1 to the financial statements.

Basis of Accounting and Restriction on Distribution

Without modifying my opinion, I draw attention to Note 1 to the financial report, which describes the basis of accounting. The financial report has been prepared to assist Gippsland Disability Advocacy Inc to meet the requirements of the *Associations Incorporation Reform Act 2012*. As a result, the report may not be suitable for another purpose.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Victor Hill', written in a cursive style.

Victor Hill, FIPA

September 25, 2018

Gippsland Disability Advocacy Inc
Statement by Members of the Committee
For the year ended 30 June 2018

In the opinion of the Committee the Balance Sheet, Income Statement, Statement of Changes in Equity, Statement of Cash Flows and Notes to the Financial Statements:

1. Presents fairly the financial position of Gippsland Disability Advocacy Inc as at 30 June 2018 and its performance for the period ended on that date in accordance with accounting policies outlined in note 1 of the financial statements.
2. At the date of this statement, there are reasonable grounds to believe that the association will be able to pay its debts as and when they fall due.

This statement is made in accordance with a resolution of the Committee and is signed for and on behalf of the Committee by:



Chairman



Treasurer

The accompanying notes form part of these financial statements.