



# RIGHTS IN ACTION INC

*Independent advocacy for people with disabilities*

## NEWSLETTER

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**December 2019 – Issue 52**

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### **Message from the Manager**

Hi All - Yes, unfortunately the rumours are true .. I'm am retiring soon.

I commenced with RIA in 2004 as the Coordinato/Advocater, replacing our Lifemember Gill Townsend.

At that time our part time Advocate Lyn Coyle and part time Administration Officer Bhupinder Singh were the backbone of a small but effective team providing advocacy to approximately 40 people with disability reisdng in Cairns.

RIA's advocacy efforts has grown steadily over the past 15 years. We currently have 6 funding contracts and have assisted over 239 people over the last 6 months with a team of 7 staff and a strong Board of Management.



**From left: BOARD OF MANAGEMENT 2019/2020: President James Barnes, Vice President Jane Simpson, Secretary Bernadette Dilma, General member Janet Corcoran & Treasurer Allan Wilson**

Our state and federal funding is essential. We thank and acknoweldge the funding providers for their support of our organisation.

- Department of Social Services (DSS) National Disability Advocacy Program (NDAP) individual advocacy for people residing in Cairns & the Tablelands and systemic advocacy (addressing local, state and

## Rights In Action

### Staff

MANAGER  
**Robyn Renton**

SENIOR ADVOCATE  
**Bob Paten**

ADVOCATES  
**Dianne Wellington**  
**Marlene Levasseur**  
**Angelika Williams**

ADMINISTRATION OFFICER  
**Mary Klansek**

## RIA Board of Management 2019/2020

PRESIDENT  
**James Barnes**

VICE PRESIDENT  
**Jane Simpson**

SECRETARY  
**Bernadette Dimla**

TREASURER  
**Allan Wilson**

GENERAL MEMBERS  
**Jan Corcoran**

- national issues that impact on the lives of people with disability)
- DSS – NDIS Appeals for people who are unhappy with NDIS decisions (internal reviews and external appeals to the Administration Appeals Tribunal (AAT))
- DSS – Disability Royal Commission into Violence, Abuse, Neglect and Exploitation of People with Disability. Advocacy to support people to tell their story to the DRC and to assist them to access, interpreters, legal or financial services.
- Department of Communities, Disability Services and Seniors (DCDSS) – Advocacy program
- DCDSS Rural and Remote (funding until 30/06/2020) – assistance for people with disability gain access to NDIS who reside from Port Douglas to Cooktown.
- Queensland Health individual advocacy addressing instances of discrimination, abuse and/or neglect, educate people about their rights and build capacity for them to self advocate.

In addition, funding grants, membership, donations and fund raising has also become part of our strategic plan to support the organisations financial sustainability.

### HOW YOU CAN HELP

We welcome new and ongoing membership at \$5.00 per year. Please show us your support and become a member. You can access our membership form from our website <https://www.rightsinaction.org/forms-3/membership-form/>



### MAKE A DONATION

Rights In Action is a charitable organisation and registered with the Australian Charities and Not-for-Profits Commission (ACNC). Donations over \$2.00 are tax deductible. All donations can be made by EFT payment or via our website link "Give Now" Please visit [www.rightsinaction.org](http://www.rightsinaction.org)

*We would like to sincerely thank Anna and Simon Areke for the generous donation of \$300.*





Membership fees are a small contribution of \$5.00 per year or \$20 for 5 years. However, we do accept more generous financial donations.

Membership benefits include:

You receive our quarterly Newsletter that provides current information on local services, systemic issues and campaigns, changes to government legislation, social events and activities.

You can contribute to the direction of our organisation by attending meetings and providing your views and feedback that is welcomed and valued.

Financial members are encouraged to nominate as a Board member at our annual general meeting.



Donations help us promote the rights of people with disabilities by addressing systemic issues and campaigns, presentations and static displays, social events and activities.

<https://www.givenow.com.au/>  
<https://www.rightsinaction.org>

## FUNDRAISING

Recently we held a Christmas Craft Fare and a Cent Sale. This was coordinated by our Board member **Jan Corcoran** with 18 craft stalls held in the large function room at Mercey Place with local sponsors including:

- Paronella Park
- Sunlover Reef Cruises
- Chill Café
- Villa Marine Holiday Apartments
- Masterlifts
- Cairns Printing
- Print Brokers
- Passions of Paradise
- Mamu Sky Walk
- ISP Fish Market
- Salt House
- Cazlays Sport Club

Jan raised over \$1,300.00 on the day, through generous cash donations.

Our sincerely thanks and appreciation to you all.

In closing, I wish everyone a very Merry Christmas, safe and happy holidays and a prosperous New Year. 2020 will be a new page, new beginnings and a New Manager. Best wishes to all... Robyn

## *Family Support– In Home Care Service*

### **What is In Home Care (IHC)?**

IHC is an approved childcare service designed to support the provision of early childhood education and care in the home. IHC is a service provided in collaboration between the Department of Education and Centrelink for after school care, play, education, assistance with homework, stimulating care for eligible children that supports families' workforce participation and childcare requirements.

Families unable to access Centre-based Day Care (CBC), Family Day Care (FDC) and Outside School Hours Care (OSHC) because of their unique circumstances may be able to access education and care provided in the family home through IHC

IHC is for families working non-standard or variable hours, geographically isolated from other approved childcare services or those with complex and challenging needs but not to subsidise medical, health or disability care.

IHC Support Agencies will ensure families are aware of the range of approved childcare, government funded and community-based support services available to meet their needs and support them to transition to mainstream childcare services, when available and appropriate.

For more information or Contact [info@ihc.org.au](mailto:info@ihc.org.au) 1800 993 737



## Taking care of yourself and staying well at work

Many of us spend large part of our days at work so your workplace and how we go about doing our work has a substantial impact on our mental health.

While much of our working environment is determined by others, individually we can take steps that will help to protect and enhance our mental health and wellbeing.

### Some strategies for managing your work role.

Limit working extra hours

Schedule meetings during core work hours

Take regular breaks

Try not to take work home

Take your holiday leave

Set realistic deadlines and deliver on time

It's OK to say "no"

Have a technology switch-off

Make use of EAP (Employee Assistance Program)

Flexible working arrangements

For more information [click here](#)

# Avoid paying extra fees for bills you receive in the mail

Companies may be charging you extra to send your bills by mail. This fee may be charged by the business to cover their costs to print and post your bill.

If you want to avoid this fee, there are some options that might work for you.

The simplest way is to receive your bills electronically – by email or via the company's app. Check the company's website or contact the company to find out how you can change to online billing.

If you are not able to receive bills electronically, find out *if you are eligible for an exemption from paper billing fees*.

Companies have different rules about when they will give exemptions. Some companies will give an exemption if customers:

- Are seniors
- Are registered for a concession
- Receive income support
- Are on a hardship program
- Don't have internet access.

Please contact Queensland Office of Fair Trading to discuss your consumer rights [www.qld.gov.au/law/fair-trading](http://www.qld.gov.au/law/fair-trading)

ARTICLE SOURCE: Australia Consumer Law - <http://www.consumerlaw.gov.au/paperbilling>



## Update: Royal Commission into Violence, Abuse, Exploitation & Neglect

### Royal Commission Submissions open

The Royal Commission is now inviting people with disability, their family members and supporters and other interested members of the public and institutions to make submissions. A submission form has been created to assist, and submissions are also being accepted via phone or email.

The Commission is seeking information from people about the following:

- If you have experienced incidents of violence, abuse, neglect and/or abuse
- Your experiences of making a complaint process and any outcomes
- Your access to places and services
- The quality (how good they are) and the safety (how safe you feel) of disability specific services
- Best practice and innovation – example of when services get things right

Any submissions made to the Commission at this point will be treated as public documents. If you want to make a confidential submission you will be able to do this soon.

## 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.

An information line has been launched for the Royal Commission to support people with disability, families, carers and others to have their say in the Royal Commission. The number is 1800 517 199 (9am to 5pm AEDT, Monday to Friday).

An email address for enquiries is also available at [DRcenquiries@royalcommission.gov.au](mailto:DRcenquiries@royalcommission.gov.au) For more information [click here](#)

# Mental Health Week Morning Tea with RIA

## This year's theme was Take Time for Mental Health

The Queensland Mental [Health](#) Week event was a great way to encourage awareness of positive mental health and wellbeing in your community.

Mental health is important to everyone, yet it is a part of life we often overlook. Busy lives get in the way of us caring for our mental health, as does a fear of feeling vulnerable if we share our mental health challenges.

Queensland Mental Health Week is an opportunity to bring communities together, reach out to those who need support, and shine a spotlight on the things we can all do to support mental health.

Special thanks to Jennifer McCabe and Zachary Tonkin for coordinating our event this year.



Ro-anne Jeboult, Teegan Jones  
Alison Hardwick, Tea McKean  
& Dianne Wellington



Kerry Buckland, Mary Klansek,  
Sean McKinnon & Angela Aversch



Ailsa Rayner, George Portelli Bob Paten  
Wendy & Thomas



Anna Bartho, Simon Areke, Angelika Williams  
Hayley Day, Marlene Levasseur

# Christmas Jokes ...

**Q.** How does Jack Frost get to work?

**A.** By icicles

**Q.** What do you call a train loaded with toffee?

**A.** A chew chew train

**Q.** How do sheep greet each other at Christmas?

**A.** A merry Christmas to ewe!

**Q.** What kind of cars do elves drive?

**A.** Toy-otas

**Q.** What do you call a crate of ducks?

**A.** A box of quackers

**Q.** Who hides in the bakery at Christmas?

**A.** A mince spy

**Q.** What do snowmen call their kids?

**A.** Chill-dren

**Q.** Why does Santa have 3 gardens?

**A.** He likes to ho-ho-ho

**Q.** What do you call Santa when he stops moving?

**A.** Santa Pause!

**Q.** Did Rudolph go to school?

**A.** No, he was Elf-taught



# QDN Event

On 31 October 2019, RIA was invited to join Queenslanders with Disability Network (QDN) Panel Discussion on gaining access to the NDIS held at Cairns Regional Council on 31 October 2019.

Disability Advocates, Angelika Williams and Marlene Levasseur, represented RIA at the event.

The event was well attended by people with disabilities wishing to gain information about accessing the NDIS, carers of people with disabilities, Mission Australia representatives and representatives of other NDIS service providers plus other community organisations.

A big thank you goes out to Jeremy Farley, QDN Project Officer, who was instrumental in organisation the event, Wayne Maitland QDN Local Peer Group Convenor, Panel Member, and Paige Armstrong, QDN CEO, who delivered information around QDN's key policy work around gaining access to the NDIS and their NDIS participant readiness projects.'

In terms of NDIS matters RIA have State and Federal funding around:

1. Assisting people in gaining access to the NDIS in the Cairns and Tablelands region. We can also assist people with NDIS planning, support implementing their plan and accessing services.
2. NDIS Internal Reviews and Appeals to the Administrative Appeals Tribunal (AAT) should people not be satisfied with the funding under their NDIS plans or on the basis that they have been denied access to the NDIS.
3. NDIS Access in for rural and remote communities from Port Douglas to Cooktown.

If you are a person with a disability, family member or carer, please contact us on 4031 7377 for assistance.



*Wayne Maitland – Marlene Levasseur – Sarah Brown - Natasha Rivett - Muriel Bin Dol*



The **RIA** office will be closed from

**Monday 23<sup>rd</sup>  
December 2019**

**re-open 6<sup>th</sup> January  
2020**



**Board of  
Management  
and Staff  
would like to wish  
you all a**

**Merry Christmas  
and a  
Happy New Year**

**Have a Safe and  
Happy Holidays**

## The **Cairns** Community Christmas Flyer

**Free  
Christmas Lunch**

The Cairns Community Christmas Lunch is to be held on Christmas Day by a community group that provides a meal and some company for anyone who has nowhere else to go.

- There is **NO CHARGE**
- There is **NO PREACHING**
- There are **NO STRINGS**

*Just a friendly get together for Christmas*

Lunch will be served from 11.30am on Christmas Day  
at the dining hall of St Augustines College  
Draper Street, Cairns.

If you need more information or would like to book free transport to and from  
the lunch within 15km of Cairns CBD,  
Phone 4059 2478

The success of the event relies on the generosity of community  
members and sponsors - donations are appreciated.

**SEE YOU AT CHRISTMAS**

