



RIGHTS IN ACTION INC

*Independent advocacy for people with
disabilities*

NEWSLETTER

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Message from the Manager

Hello everyone,

Going into the second quarter of 2021, RIA was presented with several challenges that turned into opportunities. Gaps in the way we operate as an organisation, motivated staff to onboard additional qualifications and skillsets to meet new advocacy needs and demands, set by the local community in which RIA are honored to serve. These included a Nationally Accredited Mediation qualification, Advance Diploma in Community Sector Management, Angelika William's achieving a Diploma in Quality Auditing and Human Resource Management and Genevieve Cridge studying a Certificate IV in Community Service.

In this period, we also worked extremely hard developing a new RIA marketing campaign. This will be launched in the next quarter with billboard and bus advertisements. It will also appear on newly available merchandise and brochures. RIA is proud to announce that we have a new RIA local hero "David," who will be seen in the mentioned advertising and brochures, representing our service provision throughout FNQ.

Jerry John our most recent James Cook University (JCU) placement has produced a RIA Reflective Practice Manual, which will be included in our policy and procedures to improve our advocacy practice and delivery. Furthermore, this product makes us a competitive local grass root service provider that responds to Post COVID 19 pandemic community needs.

I would like to take this opportunity to acknowledge one of our advocates, Zoe Armstrong, who recently left RIA to expand her horizons in the human service sector. Zoe was originally onboarded as a JCU placement, delivering a Trauma Informed Training package to RIA during the needed period of the COVID-19 pandemic. Zoe was subsequently employed as a policy development officer and finally as an Advocate, while successfully graduating as a Social Worker. Zoe was never short of a good yarn that motivated and brought a smile to all staff through tricky times.

Zoe you will be missed and will surely be an asset to your next employee.

Finally, RIA is looking forward to celebrating its 20th year of operations in the next quarter.

❖ **First People Disability Network**

❖ **Check In QLD App**

Rights In Action Inc

Staff

MANAGER
Raoul Wilson

Assistant Manager
Angelika Williams

ADVOCATES
Marlene Levasseur
Dianne Wellington
Maggie Robinson

ADMINISTRATION OFFICER
Genevieve Cridge

VOLUNTEER
Ariel Pose
Thomas Carter

RIA Board of Management 2020/21

PRESIDENT
James Barnes

SECRETARY
Bernadette Dimla

TREASURER
Allan Wilson

GENERAL MEMBERS
Janet Corcoran
Gwion Cain

Up Coming events:

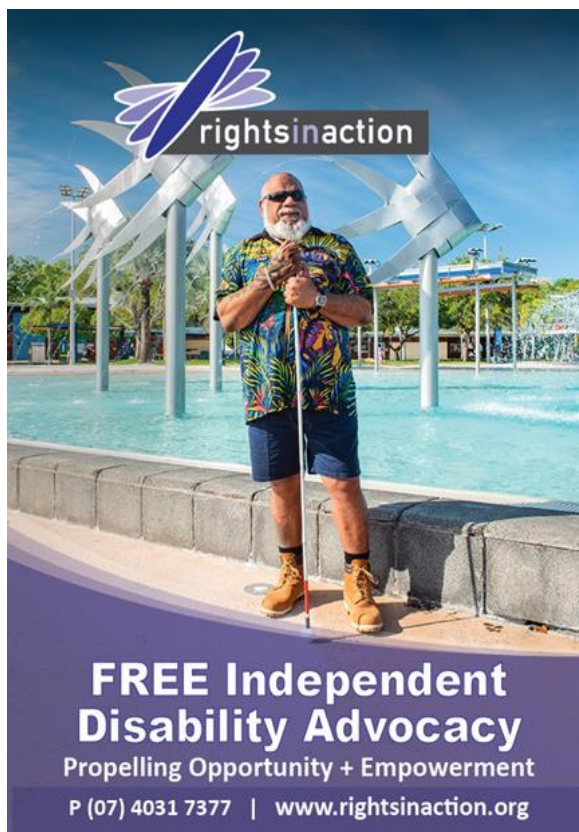
- **RIA 20th Anniversary**
- **RIA Marketing**

RIA has recently produced some marketing Advertisements which can be seen in Earlville Shopping center on their Digital screens as well as bus adverts.

Commencement dates for Advertisements:

- **Earlville shopping center - 7th July.**
- **Sun Bus Adverts start - 19th July.**

This is RIA Local hero David who kindly volunteered to be the face for our NEW marketing material. Below is the image of RIA Sun Bus advertisement. That will be seen starting 19th July.





While restrictions introduced at the height of the pandemic have largely eased in Queensland, we remain committed to monitoring those which remain in place.

Human rights protections apply in a pandemic as they do otherwise. During this crisis, courts have observed that governments must respect human rights during urgent or emergency situations. Rights can only be limited in a way that is reasonable and justified, and public entities must still act compatibly with human rights when they make decisions.

If you think your rights may have been limited or that you have been subjected to discrimination or vilification, you may be able to make a complaint to us.

- [Contact us to find out more](#)
- [Read about our complaints process](#)
- [Lodge a complaint online](#)

The Story of RIA marketing Local Hero

David's Story

I am a Torres Strait Islander who was born on the mainland in the 60's in a small seasonal town called Ayr, 90kms south of Townsville; but I have lived in the Cairns region for most of my life and have raised my children here.

In November 2021, it will be 20 years since losing my sight due to a workplace accident. Losing vision in both my eyes in an instant, changed my life forever.

At that time, four of my five children were in primary with the eldest in Year 9; so, the last memory of seeing my children was as I was leaving for work, all those years ago.

Psychologically and emotionally, it took me 11 years after the workplace incident to adapt to my new life, learn to live as a blind person who (still) needs a sighted guide just to leave the house; trying to cope with severe PTSD, major depression, and anxiety.

With the love and support from my family, as well as self-defense training to rebuild my confidence, with mobility and orientation training from the Guide Dogs and some psychosocial therapies; I was able to 'find myself again', learn to live with a disability and adapt to the new 'me'.

Throughout my life, I had experienced racial discrimination in work, in community and in my social circles; but never have I tolerated or accepted it. I learnt how to self-advocate from a young age and when I acquired a physical disability, the direct discrimination was there but my lived experiences somehow made me more resilient.

I turned the tables on those who discriminated against me and started to educate as there is no excuse for abuse. Armed with the tools of empowerment, I wanted to find a way to help and encouraged others who lost their sight due to diabetes, eye disease or trauma.

Since 2001, I have successfully maintained part time employment within the residential aged care industry. I work with other Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander elders and some young people with profound disabilities, medical conditions, and chronic illness.

With a qualification as an Indigenous Mentor, I have been trained in remedial massage in my workplace, I use my natural talents and a lifelong passion for music, singing, guitar playing and teaching others how to play guitar. Somehow, I developed my own culturally appropriate program, which was so successful, was adopted and implemented into my role description by my employer.

Everyone has the right to live their lives free from abuse, neglect, exploitation, and discrimination.

The mission and values of Rights in Action reflects what I believe in; their Advocates walk beside those who stand alone and gives them a voice; they know how to connect others with the supports they need.

Advocacy DOES matter for people with a disability, regardless of culture, country of origin or colour of your skin. For those in our community who are vulnerable, isolated and who cannot advocate for themselves, call Rights in Action.

Reconciliation Day at Synapse

RIA recently attended Synapse Reconciliation Event. Advocates got meet and mingle with client's other stakeholders to celebrate a lovely day of dance, song and food.



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.





Royal Commission
into Violence, Abuse,
Neglect and Exploitation
of People with Disability



**Are you an
Aboriginal or Torres
Strait Islander
person who needs
support for the
Disability Royal
Commission?**

The Disability Royal Commission is up and running until September 2023. It's looking at ways to prevent people with disability from experiencing violence, abuse, neglect and exploitation.

Independent, culturally appropriate support is available to help you.

RIA Community Radio Broadcast



Community Radio Interviews Rights In Action advocates

On 11th June 2021, Rights In Action (RIA) advocates Maggie and Di chatted with Mike Friganotis at the Cairns Community Radio station Cairns FM89.1 Friday program 'At Your Service'.

Each Friday morning, Mike interviews representatives from service organisations, legal services and government departments about the services they provide for the general public. Cairns FM89.1 has a broad 'footprint' reaching listeners to the north and south of Cairns and throughout the Tablelands.

Di and Maggie talked about the free, independent and confidential advocacy services RIA provides to people living with disabilities to promote, protect and defend their welfare and human rights. Advocacy may include issues related to NDIS Appeals.

Special attention was focused on talking about the **Disability Royal Commission** and the opportunity, for people of disability from First Peoples and culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds in the community, to have RIA advocacy support to share their story in their own way.

If you would like to share your story, Rights In Action can help you to communicate with the Disability Royal Commission. Our Advocates can help you:

- Share your experience in a way you feel comfortable
- Assist you to access free counselling
- Link you to free legal advice

- Free counselling support for you and your family to talk about your feelings in a safe and private way
- Free advocacy support to help you to tell your story, work out problems, and protect your rights

Support is available for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people across Australia by phone, online and in-person. Support in some areas is provided by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations.

Call the National Counselling and Referral Service **1800 421 468**, 9am to 6pm weekdays or 9am to 5pm weekends and national public holidays.

For a full list of support services visit www.dss.gov.au/disability-royal-commission-support

Respectful Listing

By Paul Calcott



Royal Commission
into Violence, Abuse, Neglect and
Exploitation of People with Disability

YOUR STORY

Have you been mistreated?
Would you like to tell your story to the
Disability Royal Commission?

Rights In Action
Independent Advocacy for People with Disabilities

Rights In Action can help you:

- communicate with the Disability Royal Commission
- share your experience in a way you feel comfortable
- tell your story in your first language
- with the process of telling your story
- link with free counselling and legal supports services

rightsinaction
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First Nation Disability Network



Disability Business Training

First Peoples Disability Network (FPDN) provided 'Disability Business Training' to RIA staff in May this year. FPDN is the peak organisation representing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people living with disability. It was a privilege to meet and collaborate with such a vibrant and knowledgeable team and to hear their stories about city, rural, island and remote First Peoples' communities.

The training was presented by Paul Calcott, National Training and Resource Development Manager, Disability Royal Commission Senior Advocate Carly Wallace and Chairperson & Elder Aunty Kay Sadler.

We were excited to learn that Paul is the world-renowned artist and Wiradjuri Elder who depicted the story of the Disability Royal Commission in his stunning artwork titled 'Respectful Listening'. The artwork illustrates the journey of seven Commissioners, carrying a message stick across the country, to collect stories from people with disability, their families and communities and shows the different ways the Royal Commission is gathering people's stories, through private sessions, public hearings and informal yarning circles. Uncle Paul, who lives with disability, said the colours in the artwork represent the diverse communities across Australia, including the desert, coastal and hinterland regions, as well as the Torres Strait. Carly Wallace is a Dulguburra Yidinji woman from the Atherton Tablelands.

#FPDN #Indigenous #disability #community #cultureisinclusion
#disabilitywarriors #humanrights

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 Genevieve 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



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>

Cairns Regional Council Parking Machines

As of the 1 July there will be some changes to parking when visiting RIA. Cairns Regional Council will have installed pay and display machines. The car parks outside the building will be metered a fee of \$1.80 /hour on both curbsides. Middle of road parking will be **free** for **3 hours** but **(monitored)** meaning the camera car will be passing by ever hour.

Please click on link to see map metered parking allocations –

https://www.google.com/maps/d/viewer?mid=111sQBC7dKnYdiotxnJocw_ZI_jRhZ0nV&usp=sharing



Check In Qld app

Just a reminder to please Check In when coming into our Office. If you are unwell, please do not present to our office. Please call to let Advocate know, to reschedule appointments.



The Check In Qld app is mandatory - Everyone who visits our office needs to check-in.

Thank you for your cooperation

