

AMIDA NEWS

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December, 2013



AMIDA (Action for More Independence & Dignity in Accommodation) is a disability advocacy group that works on housing issues. This means we speak up for people with a disability or help them to speak up for themselves about problems they have with their housing.

Below is an excerpt from a 4th November, 2013 media release by the Office of the Public Advocate

“Focus on Closure of all Victorian Institutions

The Acting Public Advocate, Dr John Chesterman, today reiterated the call of his office for all remaining institutions for people with a disability in Victoria to close by 2015.

Dr Chesterman said all Victorians had a right to individualized care and that, while staff of the four remaining institutions strove to provide that, the style of institutional settings did not support it.

“Caring for people in large groups inevitably means that their individual needs must be subsumed to the needs of the wider group,” Dr Chesterman said.

“In the 21st century, we owe our fellow citizens with a disability more than that.”

Dr Chesterman was speaking ahead of Caloola21, an event to mark 21 years since the closure of one of the state’s largest institutions, Caloola Training Centre, in Sunbury in 1992 (*which took place on Thursday 7th November*).

Caloola housed 549 people with intellectual disability until its closure.

OPA's volunteer Community Visitors, who regularly reported on the rights and dignity of Caloola residents, provided a special report on Caloola to the Minister in 1988, leading to its closure.

As well as a myriad of human rights abuses and issues outlined in their report, Community Visitors wrote that "Life at Caloola has no correlation with the conditions and patterns of everyday life for a similar group in the general community." [Annual Report of Community Visitors 1989, p. 94]

"At Caloola21, we remember the past and look forward to a future where no person with a disability has to live in an institution," Dr Chesterman said."



Caloola21 Former residents, staff, government operatives involved with closing Caloola, as well as Community Visitors, advocates and family members attended the event (see photos).

Speakers included the Parliamentary Secretary for Families and Community Services, Andrea Coote, who discussed what the Victorian Government is doing about the remaining institutions.



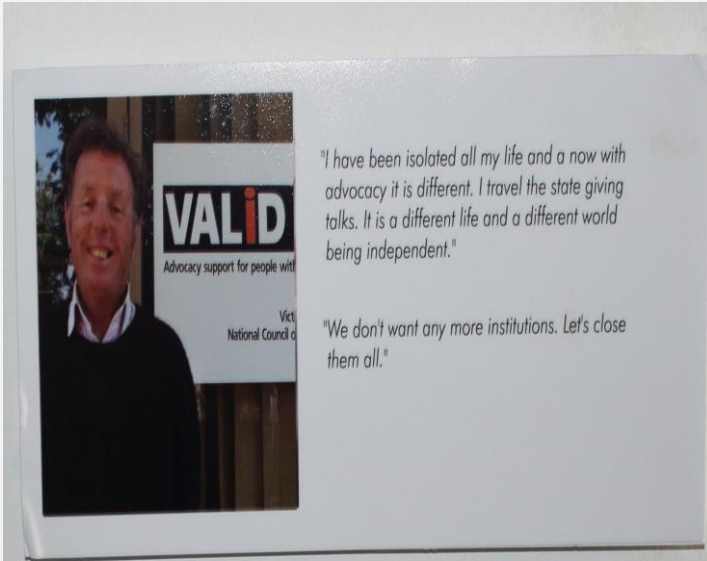
Former Community visitors, Chris Borthwick and Kate Kennedy outlined what Community Visitors did when they started visiting Caloola in the 1980s; and former resident, Graeme Williams, talked about his life.

Kay Setches & Chris Borthwick



Professor Trevor Parmenter from New South Wales outlined what makes good services for people with a disability.

Remaining institutions in Victoria are the Colanda Centre, Colac, (92 residents), the Oakleigh Centre (29 residents), Plenty Residential Services (accommodation for 100 residents) and the Sandhurst Centre, Bendigo, (29 residents), which the state government has slated for closure. (see previous AMIDA NEWS)



Jane Rosengrave
 Alan Robertson (left)
 Graham & John reunion (below)
 Kay Setches & Daisy Serong (bottom)

Your case and your file. . .

Alan spent nearly twenty years in four different institutions. He now lives in his own home. He is a committed activist and advocate. He works for VALID, a Victorian based advocacy organisation. Alan travels the state giving talks and attending conferences and is a member of the Victorian Disability Advisory Council. Alan also works part-time doing maintenance at a local primary school.

Alan collaborated with photographer Sharon Cutajar



Ray Groves





Kate Kennedy, Pauline Williams & Graeme Williams at Caloola21

Shut In Campaign

Our Issue

Everyone has a right to adequate housing and to adequate social support. These are fundamental human rights outlined in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD).

Cake cutting at Caloola21 (below)



People with disability should be able to choose where and with whom they live, and have the same housing options as other members of the community (Article 19 CRPD). In order to effectively exercise housing rights, many people with disability require social support such as personal care domestic assistance, and living skill support (Article 28 CRPD).

People with disability should be provided with the supports they need to live in the housing option of their choice.

Our concern

Many people with disability continue to live in segregated accommodation or congregate care facilities in Australia. Some governments are still

funding and licensing these facilities and redeveloping new 'contemporary' institutions for people with disability.

Housing and support for people with disability are often viewed through a 'supported accommodation' framework that does not separate housing needs from social support needs.

This framework is underpinned by a view that people with disability need specialist types of housing and support options, and so the provision of housing and support becomes focused on the development of special purpose care facilities.

The Shut In Campaign challenges Congregational care as 'A Choice' or 'Typical'.

The National Shut In Campaign is a campaign to close institutions and secure housing and supports that enable people with disability to live in the community in the same way as everyone else. More information can be found at www.shutin.org.au



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You can find out about SARU by going to the website: www.saru.net.au

SARU sends out a Weekly Memo and a SARU Newsletter (available in DVD format). Please contact - 9639 6856 or Email: saru@rosshouse.org.au if you would like to receive them.

AMIDA supports SARU which is helping develop the self-advocacy sector.



AMIDA Committee: The Committee meets Tuesdays once every two months from 10.00am – 1.00pm. Meetings are at 10.00am, Ross House, 247 Flinders Lane, Melbourne

At the AGM on 10th September the following people were elected to the Committee: Norrie Blythman, Luke Stone, Brenda Lacey, Graeme Williams, Peter Waters, Simon Chong, Kay Forstner, Ray Groves, and Lauren Rosewarne.

Meeting Dates for next year: Meetings are held Tuesdays at 10.00am – 1.00pm, Room 1.3, unless indicated otherwise.

11th February
11th March

Further dates to be advised later.

Closure of AMIDA office at Christmas/New Year

Office closes Thursday 19th December

Office reopens Monday 13th January, 2014

Raising Our Voices Radio show on 3CR, 2nd Wednesday of each month at 6.00 – 6.30pm

Raising Our Voices is now podcast. Go to: www.3cr.org.au and download Raising Our Voices to your computer.

Copies of the radio shows are available from AMIDA on CD or audio tape, website www.amida.org.au



Why Self Advocacy Matters

– Empowering People, Strengthening Services, Building Community

On Tuesday 19th November the Self Advocacy Resource Unit and Victorian self advocates held a forum which was opened by Andrea Coote, State Parliamentary Secretary for Families and Community Services who announced a \$43,000 funding increase to the SARU.

'Why Self Advocacy Matters' provided an opportunity to hear about some of the exciting developments in self advocacy across Victoria. The forum focused on the way self advocacy works at a number of levels: to empower people, to change and strengthen the disability support system and to build more inclusive communities.

Speakers included: Paul Ramcharan, Associate Professor RMIT, Sue Smith, Co-ordinator SARU, Colin Hiscoe, Reinforce Self Advocacy Group, Peta Ferguson, Brain Injury Matters, Members of Deaf Blind Victorians, New Wave Self Advocates with Bill Lawler.

'Speaking Up Over the Years'

A new book, 'Speaking Up Over the Years', is one of the major outcomes of collaborative research which explored the part of self-advocacy in building social inclusion for people with intellectual disability. It chronicles the remarkable achievements of the first generation of self-advocates in Victoria and their allies, and demonstrates the case for the continued support of independent self-advocacy groups such as Reinforce as one means of building more inclusive communities.

The Melbourne launch will be Monday 24th February, 2014, LaTrobe University City Campus, Franklin Street, Melbourne.

Download a copy: <http://hdl.handle.net/1959.9/212879>. It will also be available online at www.reinforce.org.au.

Alternatively you can order a copy of this book by emailing either Chris Bigby c.bigby@latrobe.edu.au or Patsie Frawley at p.frawley@latrobe.edu.au

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The AMIDA office is usually open:

Monday 9.30 - 5.00
 Tuesday 9.30 – 5.00
 Wednesday 9.30 - 4.00
 Thursday 9.30 - 2.00
 Friday 9.30 – 2.00

Please phone AMIDA for an appointment: 9650 2722.

Email: amida@amida.org.au

Web: www.amida.org.au



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AMIDA receives funding from the Commonwealth Department of Social Services, the Office for Disability and the Victorian Department of Human Services.

You can offer any comments you have on AMIDA Policy or Newsletter by phone, email or writing:

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AMIDA website – www.amida.org.au

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