

# AMIDA NEWS

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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.

## **Caloola21: reuniting to celebrate a 21<sup>st</sup> century community for everyone**

**What:** *Caloola21*: a twenty-first anniversary reunion to celebrate the closure of Caloola in October, 1992 and call for the closure of all institutions.



**When:** Thursday 7 November 2013, 10.00am – 1.00pm

**Where:** Darebin Arts & Entertainment Centre, Cnr Bell Street & St Georges Road, Preston (to be confirmed)

**Who:** *Caloola21* is for former residents, community visitors, advocates, staff, families and any other interested people

**Why:** At *Caloola21* we will remember the past and look forward to a future where no person with disability has to live in an institution. We are asking government to close all institutions by 2018. Deinstitutionalisation became official policy in 1979; forty years is too long to wait.

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**How:** There will be speakers talking about what happened at Sunbury and what should happen in the future. We are asking the Government to present their vision for the closure of Victoria's remaining institutions. There will be a historical exhibition of video and photos. People will be able to talk about their memories with other people who were involved. Performers and musicians, including former Caloola residents will provide entertainment.

### **Who should come to *Caloola21*?**

- Anyone who lived at Caloola, or knew people who lived at Caloola, or who lived at other institutions
- Anyone who worked at Caloola or supported people who lived at Caloola
- Anyone who lives or works in an institution now
- Community visitors, self advocates and disability advocates
- People working for the closure of institutions
- Family members and Sunbury residents
- People from government departments
- Anyone else who is interested in deinstitutionalisation and improving the lives of people with a disability.

AMIDA will be assisting people to attend. Please phone if you need information or assistance – 9650 2722.

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### **Closure of Sandhurst Institution in Bendigo**

#### **AMIDA welcomes closure of disability institution**

Below is part of the press release from the Public Advocate:



The Public Advocate, Colleen Pearce welcomed the Napthine Government's announcement of the closure of one of the last remaining institutions for people with a disability in Victoria.

Ms Pearce said that the closure of Sandhurst in Bendigo, an institution for 29 residents, was one of the most significant decisions in the disability sector in many years. “I commend the Government for taking this step and making the investment necessary to move the 29 remaining residents to small-scale group homes in their community”, Ms Pearce said.

“Research here and abroad consistently shows that, while the changes can be unsettling for some residents, overall they have better lives in small-scale homes dispersed in the community, living just like their fellow citizens.”

“This is a real win for both the residents, their families and carers, and the whole community of Bendigo, which I’m sure will welcome them and include them in the life of their great city.”

OPA and volunteer Community Visitors have been advocating for the closure of all institutions for people with a disability for more than a quarter of a century. OPA has been involved in the closure of all institutions in Victoria for people with a disability and a mental illness, a process which began in 1984.

Ms Pearce said that small-scale group homes better meet the terms of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities which calls for the inclusion and full participation of people with a disability in society.

She advised that it was important that the closure process was done carefully with a well-conceived plan and was confident the government would work with her office towards a successful transition.

“We are hopeful the government will develop creative, innovative, supported accommodation for these people, many of whom have complex needs,” Ms Pearce said.

Community Visitors have been visiting the residents of Sandhurst for 25 years and will continue to visit them when they have moved to their new homes to monitor their treatment and care.

OPA recently called for the closure of all congregate-care facilities in Victoria before 2015. The government's announcement means that Victoria still has three institutions remaining:

- Colanda Residential Services in Colac for 99 residents
- The Oakleigh Centre for 30 residents
- Plenty Residential Services in Bundoora (which houses 110 people)

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## Increase in CRU Fees

AMIDA is concerned about this issue and has included below a press release from VALID for your information:

### Casualties of Disability Care:

Source: Media Release

Author: Kevin Stone, VALID

### 2,500 Victorians with Disability Set to Suffer as State Government Lifts Accommodation Fees

Put a cork in the champagne bottle. Celebrations for Victoria's signing onto the NDIS have been soured by one of the harshest and most callous State Government decisions we can recall.

While we have all welcomed the promise of the NDIS to meet the unmet needs of people with disability, who could have predicted it would come at the cost of reducing the quality of life for the approximately 2,500 people already receiving State-managed supported accommodation support services?

Disability Accommodation Service residents and their administrators have this week received notice of a massive hike in fees, from between 48%-58% of the DSP to introduce a 75% Board and Lodgings Fee. Bizarrely, they have been told that this will make them eligible for the Commonwealth Rental Assistance subsidy – which the State Government also intends to fully claim!

The justification is that this will bring these services into line with non-government services and services in other States. VALID completely rejects this rationale and condemns this decision. Its effect will be to drastically reduce what is already a meagre level of disposable income. In the past week, VALID has received many examples of financial plans that will see people's level of disposable income

slashed, plunging them into the red. Already burdened with day service fees, medical fees, transport fees and all the other expenses of daily living, many people will not be able to afford the price of a ticket to the movies, a ride on the train or a coffee at a cafe.

So much for the hype of the State Plan. So much for the vision of the National Disability Strategy. So much for the hope of entitlement.

While VALID has welcomed the other State Government Budget decisions to fund the closure of Sandhurst and fund new ISP's, we reject the cynical linking of these decisions to the State's cruel grab for Commonwealth subsidy and resident pensions.

We support the promise of the NDIS, but we reject the idea that it should be based on the lowest common denominator. The NDIS must be about improving the quality of life for all Australians with a disability, and not lowering the lot of 2,500 Victorians in order to match the poverty levels of the most exploited.

VALID demands that the State Government issue a guarantee that no Victorian with a disability will be worse off as a result of the NDIS. While DHS has advised us that there will be a Financial Hardship provision to review individual circumstances, VALID has no confidence that Government's view of what might be deemed 'reasonable and necessary' expenses will match the real life needs of people with a disability. The Government must rescind its decision and engage with the sector in full and proper consultations, if it expects this sector to believe they truly have the interests of people with disability – and not the interests of political and economic buck-passing – at heart



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You can find out about SARU by going to the website: [www.saru.net.au](http://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](mailto: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

### **AMIDA Committee meeting dates for 2013 are:**

13<sup>th</sup> August, 10<sup>th</sup> September (AGM), 8<sup>th</sup> October, 10<sup>th</sup> December

### **Raising Our Voices Radio show on 3CR, 2<sup>nd</sup> Wednesday of each month at 6.00 – 6.30pm**

**Raising Our Voices is now podcast.** Go to: [www.3cr.org.au](http://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](http://www.amida.org.au)*

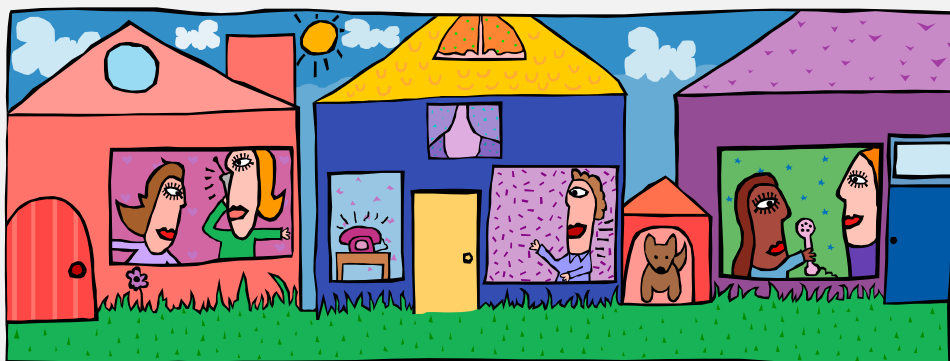


### **Radiothon 2013**

We are aiming to raise \$550 in the 3CR radiothon coming up in June. If you are able to make a donation in support of our show 'Raising Our Voices' please choose one of the following:

- post your donation to 3CR, P O Box 1277, Collingwood 3066
- call in to 21 Smith Street, Fitzroy
- phone 9419 8377
- go to [www.3cr.org.au](http://www.3cr.org.au)

## The Supported Living Project



Supported Living means someone gets some support to help them live more independently in the community. It is not the same as group homes. Many people have moved from group homes into their own place with some outreach support. Some people moved out of home and they rent a house and have funding to get workers to help them. This is Supported Living.

AMIDA is working with La Trobe University to research Supported Living. What makes Supported Living work well? What stops it from working well? We want to talk to people with an intellectual disability who can tell us their experience. We can give a \$25 voucher to people who we interview.

Are you a person with an intellectual disability? Do you know someone who is that might be interested?

Do you live in the community with some disability support?

Would you be interested in talking to us about what makes Supported Living work well?

To find out more you can phone AMIDA on 9650 2722 and speak to Pauline Williams. Or ring Chris Bigby at La Trobe on 9479 3041



**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](mailto:amida@amida.org.au)

Web: [www.amida.org.au](http://www.amida.org.au)



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AMIDA receives funding from the Commonwealth Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs, 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:

**AMIDA**, 247 Flinders Lane,  
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AMIDA has a website – [www.amida.org.au](http://www.amida.org.au)

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