



Action for More Independence and  
Dignity in Accommodation Inc.

*Advocacy, Self-Advocacy, Rights, Accessibility,  
& Community Living for People with a Disability*



# Annual Report 2020

**1<sup>st</sup> Floor, Ross House, 247 Flinders Lane, Melbourne 3000**

**Telephone: 03 9650 2722 Fax 03 9654 8575**

**Email: [amida@amida.org.au](mailto:amida@amida.org.au) Web: [www.amida.org.au](http://www.amida.org.au)**

**AMIDA**  
**Annual General Meeting**  
**6th October 2020**

**AGENDA**

10:30 Welcome and Acknowledgement

10:40 Present/Apologies

10:45 Confirm Minutes of the Previous  
AGM

10:50 Chairperson's Report

11:00 Treasurer's Report

- Present audited report

- Confirm auditor

- Charitable status motion

11:15 Activities Report – AMIDA  
advocacy, SARU, Projects

11.30 Nomination for and Election of  
committee members

11.45 Close of meeting

# **Annual General Meeting**

**1<sup>st</sup> October 2019**

## **MINUTES**

**Present:** Janet Curtain, Peter Waters, Judy Bourke, Angela Horton, Bronwyn Trickett, Lisa Brumtis, Pauline Williams, Brenda Penaluna, Larissa MacFarlane, Sally De Beche, Jane Rosengrave, Georgina Mills, Fiona Hopper, Sally Helm, Sue Arthur, Justin O'Brien, Peter Person, Pam Geoghegan, Kelly Geoghegan, John Wakefield, Denise Boyd, Luke Stone

**Apologies:** Brent Alford, Janice Slattery, John Slattery, Ann Van Leerdham, Jane Neubecker, Robyn McKenzie, Colin Hiscoe, Carmel Laragy, Amanda Millear, James Teeken

**Welcome to country** – Jane Rosengrave

### **Confirm Minutes of the Previous AGM**

**Motion:** “That the minutes of the 2018 AGM be accepted as an accurate record of the meeting”.

**Moved:** Lisa Brumtis **Seconded:** Jane Rosengrave

**Carried**

### **New member applications**

Applications were received from:

Shelley Hayson-Brain, Delia Portlock, Eve Kinnear, Jane Neubecker, Janet Curtain, Eva Siffis

**Motion:** “That the applications for membership be accepted”.

**Moved:** Jane Rosengrave **Seconded:** Luke Stone

**Carried**

## **Chairperson's Report – Peter Waters**

AMIDA gets bigger and better each year. We take on more projects. In 1991 we had a budget of \$71,000. In 2019 we have a budget of \$3,800,000 and employ 30 people in various roles. Peter commented on the success of SARU, NDAP and NDIS appeals projects. Thanks to the AMIDA committee team. If we lead we will succeed!

## **Treasurer's Report**

Pauline read the treasurers report on behalf of Carmel. We have a small deficit and have enough money to cover all our bills and staff entitlements.

**Motion:** “That the audited financial report for 2019 be accepted”.

**Moved:** Peter Waters **Seconded:** Kelly Geoghegan

**Carried**

The 2019 Annual General Report presented contained this report and forms part of these minutes.

**Motion:** “That Collins & Co be appointed auditors for AMIDA in 2019-2020”.

**Moved:** Peter Waters **Seconded:** Janet Curtain

**Motion:** “That AMIDA’s activities have not changed during the year and therefore remain eligible for Charity status”.

**Moved:** Larisa MacFarlane **Seconded:** Justin O’Brien

**Carried**

## **Activities Report – AMIDA advocacy, SARU, Projects**

Pauline talked about the work that SARU have been doing. One year ago, SARU started working with groups to understand the ILC. SARU supported,

Victorian Self Advocacy Network, NDIA reference group, Partnerships – PPP, BIM, DnD. All groups did fantastic work. BIM

did an app which has had worldwide attention. PPP created resources for parents around child protection.

Australian Self Advocacy Project created the Voices Together website.

AMIDA provided 168 people information advice and referral, and 117 people received individual advocacy.

## **Nomination for and Election of committee members**

Peter stood down as chair and Pauline conducted the election of the committee. The nominations for this year are;

Peter Waters, Amanda Millear, Delia Portlock, Luke Stone, Norrie Blythman, Eve Kinnear

As there were fewer nominations than positions vacant all nominations were declared elected.

## **Special Presentation of Opening Doors**

Lawrence Johnston is the worker for this project.

The focus of the project was to share the stories of disabled people in rental accommodation and try to break down barriers they face.

All the information is on a website <https://openingdoors.net.au/>

There has also been a Photographic exhibition and an interactive launch is coming up.

The website has included access features to meet the needs of disabled people.

Lawrence showed some of the videos and resources that will be on the website.

Close of meeting and Lunch

## Chairpersons Report – Norrie Blythman

The last year has been very challenging as the Covid 19 virus led Ross House to close. AMIDA, SARU and all our projects workers have been working from home. We have managed to continue our great services while facing huge pressures. AMIDA committee began meeting over zoom in April and we have all learnt quite a bit.

May I congratulate AMIDA, SARU and all our projects in yet another fantastic year. We have been successful. Our advocacy and self-advocacy work is more important than ever.

May I congratulate all our workers, volunteers, and the committee. Thank you to you all for your dedication and hard work.

Finally, let us all leave here with a passion for the next year as we the newly elected committee will continue the journey of AMIDA and all it has to offer.

Nothing it seems can hold us back.

**Norrie Blythman**  
**Chairperson of AMIDA**



AMIDA acknowledges the support of the Victorian and Commonwealth Governments

## COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Norrie Blythman	Chairperson
Carmel Laragy	Treasurer
James Teeken	Secretary
Peter Waters	Committee Member resigned Dec 2019
Amanda Milllear	Committee Member
Luke Stone	Committee Member
Lisa Brumtis	Committee Member
Justin O'Brien	Committee Member resigned March 2020
Robyn McKenzie	Committee Member
Delia Portlock	Committee Member
Eve Kinnear	Committee Member
Peter Whelan	Committee Member appointed May 2020



## AMIDA WORKERS to 30<sup>th</sup> June 2020

Pauline Williams	Projects Coordinator
Pam Geoghegan	NDAP Advocate / Disability Royal Commission
Bronwyn Trickett	NDAP Advocate
Belinda Filippis	NDAP Advocate
Mark Sandon	Disability Royal Commission/Changing Community/Staying Connected
Koula Sarimichaelidis	Administration/Finance
Judy Bourke	NDIS Appeals Advocate
Angela Horton	NDIS Appeals Advocate
Gab Reade	Radio Technical Producer
Brenda Penaluna	Finance and Admin Systems Co-ordinator/Staying Connected
Lawrence Johnson	Opening Doors Project Manager
Sue Smith	SARU
Dean Dadson	SARU
Sally DeBeche	First Peoples Project/Staying Connected
Melanie Keely	SARU Projects Support/ILC Readiness/Staying Connected
Larissa MacFarlane	Partnerships Project
Amy Lasslett	Voice at the Table (VATT)
Ann Van Leerdam	VATT
Justin O'Brien	VATT
Warren Loorham	VATT
Wendy Kelly	VATT-Mitchell and Murrindindi
Cathryn McKinney	VATT-Voices for Justice
Kylie Thulborn	All Abilities Advocacy-South West Vic
Rebecca Rowe	Transitions
Ben Corcoran	New Wave Leongatha
Mitchell Price	New Wave Leongatha
Kathryn Bartlett	New Wave Morwell
Rachel Walters	New Wave Morwell
Glenda Smith	New Wave Wonthaggi
Paul Drew	New Wave Wonthaggi
Cameron Bloomfield	Rainbow Rights and Advocacy and VATT
Jane Coles	Rainbow Rights and Advocacy
Rebecca Biddle	Peer Worker various projects
Jane Rosengrave	Peer Worker various projects
Francesca Lee	Peer Worker various projects
Kylie Fisher	Positive Powerful Parents
Susan Arthur	Positive Powerful Parents
Julie Brassington	Positive Powerful Parents

# AMIDA Activities Report July 2019- June 2020

## Advocacy

We provide advocacy funded by three programs from the Department of Social Services, the National Disability Advocacy Program (NDAP), the NDIS Appeals Advocacy and advocacy support for the Disability Royal Commission.

We provide individual advocacy, self-advocacy support and family advocacy. We also provide systemic advocacy to try to bring about positive change to policy and practice affecting large numbers of people with a disability.

## Key issues

- Responding to Housing and NDIS related issues for disabled people brought about by the Covid 19 pandemic including lack of accessible information reaching disabled people, increased anxiety, lack of access to communication technology, lack of access to supports
- Lack of affordable and accessible housing and increases in waiting lists for public housing
- No mechanism or capacity for provision of accessible housing when tenants in public and community housing require modifications or transfer to accessible home
- Needed maintenance, cleaning and security not provided in social housing
- Violence, abuse and neglect in group homes with restrictions during Covid making tenants more isolated and vulnerable with less access to family, friends, support workers and advocacy
- Whether submissions made to the Disability Royal Commission will remain confidential after the Commission ends its work.
- Problems with the National Disability Insurance Agency including,
  - During Covid Pandemic, the Administrative Appeals Tribunal made remote hearings possible. The NDIA tried to delay scheduled AAT hearings. The external solicitors for the NDIA say that the remote operation makes it too hard *for the NDIA and their solicitors*. The NDIA response gives absolutely no regard to the difficulties of the Applicant.
  - People with NDIS who are living in nursing homes are being pressured to move into aged care funding system when they turn 65 despite needing 1 to 1 support which the aged care system does not provide.
  - Decisions continue to seem random; support needs are not recognised even with specialist justification.
  - Getting timely reviews and decisions is a problem. An appeal cannot take place until a decision is made. There are jurisdiction issues where



the AAT will not make orders forcing reviews and decisions although they do recommend them.

- No transparency and long delays with NDIS complaints, complaints made to Commonwealth Ombudsman has not provided a viable alternative
- Still lack of clarity for NDIS participants on how compensation payouts affect their package.

## **Systemic Advocacy**

AMIDA assisted two disabled people to present evidence on a panel for the Disability Royal Commission Public Hearings regarding group homes. An AMIDA worker also presented as part of the panel who gave evidence.

Written response to the Issues Paper on Group Homes, Royal Commission into Violence, Abuse, Neglect and Exploitation of People with Disability – 28 Feb 2020

Office for Disability Vic State Disability Plan consult – 13 Mar 2020

Written response Parliamentary Inquiry into Homelessness submission – 16 Mar 2020

Meeting James Barca, DHHS Vacancy Coord & Tenancy Management Review – 16 Mar 2020

Responded to Accessible Building Economic Stimulus COVID- 19 – 28 May 2020

Public Hearings for Parliamentary Inquiry into Homelessness – 20 May 2020 & 23 Jun 2020

Disability COVID- 19 Taskforce meeting – 2020

Detailed submission made to the Tune review on the NDIS.

## **Some outcomes of our Systemic Advocacy**

- 2 of the people AMIDA supported to give evidence to the Public Hearing in Melbourne and the responses around Group Homes were singled out for mention and were quoted in the first Disability Royal Commission report.
- Victorian State Government to increase building of housing stock and renovation of state-owned stock
- Building Regulations to be reviewed and redrafted by 2022

## **Raising Our Voices Self Advocacy Group - the radio show**

Some of the contribution to community awareness that AMIDA undertakes is the monthly 3CR radio show Raising Our Voices, which has been on air for 33 years now and is presented by people with disabilities, covering topics that matter to people with disabilities. Topics in the 19/20 year included;

- Accessible holidays,
- In conversation with the Disability Services Commissioner,
- Moving out and independent living,
- NDIS Appeals advocates talk about the NDIS,
- Women With Disabilities Victoria and the Do Your Thing project,

- We ask Sally Capp, the Lord Mayor, How accessible is Melbourne?
- Jane's story of surviving abuse through self advocacy- Free as a bird
- Walk in my shoes- Homelessness
- The Having a Say conference 2020
- Celebrating Raising Our Voices during Covid lockdown 1
- The Disability Royal Commission
- Staying Connected during Covid 19 crisis

These shows are on our you tube channel with links on [www.amida.org.au](http://www.amida.org.au) And keep in touch via our Raising Our Voices Facebook page.

<https://www.facebook.com/raisingourvoicesradio/>

### Information, Advice, Referral and Individual Advocacy

Appropriate and timely advocacy is provided to all AMIDA advocacy service users, which is reflected in positive client feedback and satisfaction surveys and from the recent quality audit report by SAI Global. The amount and demand for advocacy support has outweighed our capacity. We provided information, advice, and referral to 160 people and individual advocacy to 125 people. We also delivered information to groups of people.

### Disseminating information about AMIDA and improving access to AMIDA

We produced 2 newsletters. The newsletters and lots of other information including our recent submissions are on our web site [www.amida.org.au](http://www.amida.org.au). Also, check our posts and events on our Facebook page. <https://fb.me/AMIDAinc>

## Opening Doors – Renting for all

AMIDA was excited to receive Victorian government Information Linkages and Capacity Building funding in 18/20 to carry out the Opening Doors - Renting for All Project.

This project has involved many people with a disability sharing their stories of renting. The films created provide useful information but

also aim to raise awareness and break down the barriers and discrimination against people with a disability in the private rental market. In late 2019 a roadshow took the films out for a tour in October and a Photographic exhibition was held at **No Vacancy Gallery, Queen Victoria (QV) Building: 34-40 Jane Bell Lane, Melbourne VIC 3000 November 4<sup>th</sup>-10<sup>th</sup>, 2019**. We also launched, a website containing the films at **Foys Arcade on International Day of People with a Disability**. Check it out <https://openingdoors.net.au/>



# The Self Advocacy Resource Unit (SARU)

A lot has happened at SARU over the last 12 months. We received funding from the Victorian Government NDIS Transition team, and the Office for Disability. We continued to support self-advocacy groups through the DHHS 2018-2020 Advocacy Futures funding. SARU has a new logo we hope you like it!



## SARU Projects

### Voices for Justice

The Voices for Justice project ran training for people with an ABI who had been in the justice system. The training provided opportunities for the people involved to learn about self-advocacy and to use their lived experience to inform disability policy and practice within the justice sector. They decided to become **their own** self advocacy group called **Voices for Change**. The group now meets weekly.



### Voice at the Table

VATT graduates and project staff together, between July 2019 – July 2020 we:

- Trained over 120 staff from community and public sector organisations in Inclusive Meeting Practices (in person and online)
- Delivered two consumer advocacy training courses for people with cognitive disabilities (in person and online)
- Employed and reimbursed 29 people with cognitive disabilities for their work on the project. Supported VATT graduates to run 11 peer led Monthly Meet Up sessions and create a monthly newsletter
- Supported graduates to apply for boards, committees and advisory roles
- Started the 'VATT chat' podcast



- Partnered with the Victorian Department of the Legislative Assembly on their Disability Inclusion Plan (ongoing)
- Contributed to and launched the DHHS Community Services Quality and Safety Office's Client Voice Framework and worked on a resource project with The DHHS Community Services Quality and Safety Office
- Facilitated presentations at Dental Health Services Victoria (DHSV) conference and supported their Victorian Community Advisory Board
- Made new resources that can be found on YouTube and our website [voiceatthetable.com.au](http://voiceatthetable.com.au)

## Staying Connected

In April 2020 SARU received funding from the Office for Disability to set up and run the Staying Connected project. The project was developed in response to COVID19. The project is helping support self-advocates to stay connected and engaged in their communities by providing access to laptops, phones tablets and training. The technology will enable self-advocates to connect with others, continue their self-advocacy work and attend online forums, social media and events thereby reducing their sense of isolation.



## First People's Disability Network Human Rights Training Project

In 2019 SARU worked in partnership with the First People's Disability Network FPDN to co-design resources for the Know your Human Rights Project. Jane Rosengrave is an expert self-advocate who advised on accessible materials and shared her knowledge through meetings and video content. Top ten articles from

The United Nations has written a list of rights for people with disabilities called articles. These are your rights



the United Nations Rights of Persons with a Disability were identified and put into Easy English and accompanied with easy English and culturally appropriate artworks. The project is currently paused due to COVID-19. To learn more about the project go to

<https://fpdn.org.au/know-your-human-rights/>

## Changing Communities

The project supported the All Abilities Self Advocacy Group to connect with other groups and to set up a committee. The project also worked with Reinforce supporting their partnership with Office of Public Advocate to continue. The project also supported Having a Say Bendigo to build networks in the Bendigo community.

## Congratulations

Congratulations to:

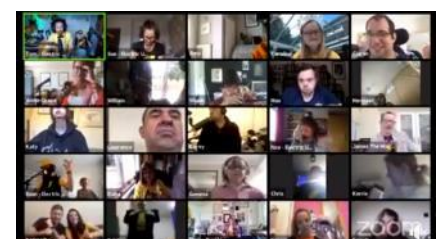
- **Rainbow Rights and Advocacy** the first and only self-advocacy group run by and for people with an intellectual disability who identify as LGBTIQ+. They had a very successful 2019/20, running a stall at the Midsumma Carnival, marching in the Pride March, and making an appearance on the long running Australian soapy, Neighbours. They also set up a website. <https://rainbowrights.com.au/>
- **Positive Powerful Parents** for setting up the Parents Rights Network for parents with a disability. They also set up a website. <https://positivepowerfulparents.com.au/>
- **Reinforce** for successfully applying for an ILC grant to set up a Self-Advocacy Training Unit.
- **New Wave** received ILC funding to run a technology project in the Bass Coast, Latrobe and South Gippsland shires.
- **Power in Ethnicity and Culture (PCE)** a new self-advocacy group run by and for people with disability who come from an ethnic background. The group is currently expanding its membership and receives support and advice from SARU as required.
- **Having a Say Bendigo** for building a great relationship with the library where they have their meetings.
- **All Abilities Advocacy Group** for successfully completing their Office for Disability funded Technology project.
- **Speak Up Alexandra** who worked in partnership with SARU to produce a video calling for an accessible taxi in Alexandra.



## SARU Support

Examples of key activities undertaken in 2019-2020 include:

- SARU and self-advocates met with Minister Luke Donnellan to talk about the importance of Self Advocacy in Victoria.
- Self-advocates ran an ILC funding Questions and Answer session with the ILC Branch Manager Daniel Leighton.
- Self-advocates were supported to connect through networks, sit on committees and advisory groups, undertake public speaking and run training events.
- Victorian self-advocates used Facebook to connect with self-advocacy groups and online events in other countries.
- Changes because of COVID-19 included:
  - SARU continued to map and meet self-advocacy group resource, training and support needs.



- SARU workers began working from home and continued to connect, meet with and support self-advocates, project support workers and peer workers through Zoom, online and regular phone calls.
- SARU regularly contacted individual self-advocacy groups to provide support and advice as required.
- In response to COVID-19 SARU created a new weekly newsletter called Stuck at Home. Over 100 self-advocates and supporters of self-advocacy receive the newsletter each week.
- SARU workers filmed, edited, and captioned videos as requested by self-advocacy groups and project workers.
- SARU began uploading daily self-advocacy videos to the SARU Facebook Page.
- All members of the SARU Management Group are now able to use Zoom to attend meetings online.
- Groups received Easy English COVID-19 resources and information including:
  - How to safely put on and take off your mask
  - An Easy English Mental Health Plan
  - How to stay safe when shopping video
  - Corona virus information and updates



SARU also received ILC readiness funding for assist self-advocacy groups to prepare and apply for funding. AMIDA auspiced NDIA ILC grants for Rainbow Rights and Advocacy, Positive Powerful Parents and New Wave through 2019/2020

SARU has experienced a significant increase in our workload as a result COVID 19



**Fingers crossed this time next year we will all be meeting face-to-face.**



## Treasurers Report – Carmel Laragy

For the 2019/2020 financial year, AMIDA received income over \$2 million. We have spent all of this on providing advocacy and self-advocacy resourcing to people with a disability. We have a small surplus of \$2821 We have a very healthy equity of \$69,365 and have accounted for all our liabilities including worker entitlements.

The financial report shows that AMIDA has grown as an organisation in the last year. Most of this funding has been provided on a short-term basis to finance various projects. For example, AMIDA received funding from Victorian Government Department of Health and Human Services and the Office for Disability for the Futures, Transition and Information Linkages and Capacity building (ILC) projects. We also auspiced several Commonwealth funded self-advocacy groups through the NDIA ILC project funding.

In summary, the 2019/2020 financial report indicates AMIDA is in a strong position to meet its financial obligations for the subsequent financial year.

We have reviewed our activities during the year and as our activities have not changed during the year, we continue to be eligible for charitable and deductible gift recipient (DGR) status.

