



The Advocate



Advocacy for Inclusion

SEPTEMBER 2010

INCLUDED IN THIS ISSUE...

- **The United Nations - New York**
- **Human Rights**
- **The Annual General Meeting & Art Exhibition**

General Manager's Report

We've had several staff changes at Advocacy for Inclusion since our last newsletter.

- Julia Bocking has moved on after almost two years – Julia worked right across our organisation in individual advocacy, she developed self advocacy training, and worked systemically as well. We wish her all the best for the future.
- Karen Hedley started with us in August as the Nutrition Project officer. Karen has a background in the disability sector, but has also worked as a sexual health educator, and a teachers' aide. We are really pleased to have Karen on board as part of the team.
- Robyn James finished up with us at the end of June after undertaking the first part of the Nutrition Project. We will miss Robyn and look forward to hearing more about her work with Australia Pacific Islands Disability Support (APIDS).

Our winning artist, Andrew Delaney, came to visit recently and signed some of the beautiful posters that have been printed from his artwork.



Andrew signing the first poster

We'd love to see all members at the launch of our art exhibition in early November and at the Annual General Meeting immediately afterwards.

The exhibition will feature the entries to our art competition with copies of the poster and Christmas cards available on the day.

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Read more about the exhibition and AGM in this newsletter.

Some Board members are retiring at this AGM, so we encourage you to consider nominating for the Board and contributing to the organisation through this important forum. Members who are interested should contact me as soon as possible for more information on how to nominate.

As usual we have been challenged and rewarded by the many individual advocacy cases we assist in. There is a new national push to better recognise the over representation of parents with disabilities in the Care and Protection system. We support several parents at any time and are pushing for greater supports and a different approach to the difficulties that parents with disabilities face which is more in line with the *Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities*.

This edition of our newsletter focuses on human rights and my recent trip to the United Nations as part of Australia's NGO delegation to the CEDAW Committee session. This was a ground breaking time for women with disabilities in Australia and proved to be very successful.

Finally, I would like to acknowledge my colleague Andrea Simmons who is leaving ADACAS after five years of passion and commitment. Andrea isn't going far as she moves across to establish the new Disability Advocacy Network of Australia (DANA), but I shall miss her day to day involvement in ACT matters. Andrea has been wonderful to work with and together we have achieved some rewarding outcomes for the rights of people with disabilities.

Christina Ryan
General Manager



Christina outside the UN building on 1st Avenue

Human Rights supporting advocacy

Australia is a party to most of the United Nations Treaties including:

- the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR);
- the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR)
- the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (CERD);
- the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW);
- the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (CAT);
- the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CROC); and
- the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD).

Advocacy organisations use these instruments in our day to day work to highlight continuing disadvantage, and to advocate for change in line with internationally agreed benchmarks. The content of the various treaties is not radical; rather it is the result of lengthy negotiations over many years. Many of these treaties have been ratified by 192 member countries, including the CRPD.

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At Advocacy for Inclusion our primary focus is naturally the CRPD, but we use all of the treaties as they are all interconnected and interrelated. For this reason we have recently been involved in the CEDAW session at the United Nations, and the outcomes from this session will contribute to the CRPD work currently underway to prepare for the CRPD session at the United Nations in 2011.

There is a constant and rolling human rights treaties process as each treaty that Australia has signed must be reported on to the United Nations regularly. For both the CRPD and CEDAW this is every four years.

In the ACT we also have a *Human Rights Act* to support our work. This is based on the ICCPR, but acknowledges all other human rights instruments that Australia is party to.

This means that we can use internationally understood human rights in our individual advocacy work on a day to day basis.



Country report day – team discussion

So, whether we are advocating for someone's right to live as they want to live (Article 19 of the CRPD), or their right to liberty and personal safety (ICCPR), we are mindful that the basic living conditions and lives of people with disabilities can be improved through reminders about Australia's (and therefore our ACT government's) obligations under the various treaties.

With new public authority obligations we are also able to remind those community organisations, who receive funding from the ACT government to provide services, of the rights of people with disabilities.

All people have human rights equally. This means people with disabilities have the same rights as all other people in our community and around the world. There is nothing to suggest that cost, or convenience, or behaving appropriately must be considered before rights are available to any person.

Christina

Women with Disabilities Australia at the United Nations July 2010

*Carolyn Frohmader - Executive Director
Women with Disabilities Australia*

Women with Disabilities Australia (WWDA) was recently represented by Christina Ryan, on the Australian NGO delegation to appear before the CEDAW Monitoring Committee in July 2010 in New York.

The *Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women* (CEDAW) is one of the core international human rights treaties and was ratified by Australia in 1983.

The Australian NGO delegation was:

- Anna Cody (Kingsford Legal Centre)
- Michelle Deshong (National Rural Women's Coalition and Network)
- Caroline Lambert (YWCA of Australia)
- Edwina MacDonald (Women's Legal Services NSW; Women's Legal Services Australia).
- Julie McKay (Australian National Committee for UNIFEM)

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- Christina Ryan (Women with Disabilities Australia)
- Sela Taufu (Network of Immigrant and Refugee Women Australia).

WWDA was involved in the process of developing the Australian CEDAW NGO Report; with issues facing women with disabilities well covered in this sector wide Shadow Report. However, for the first time, the CEDAW Committee also accepted a separate Shadow Report from WWDA, focusing solely on the situation of women with disabilities in Australia.

The CEDAW Monitoring Committee has now released its Concluding Observations on Australia's performance regarding the implementation of CEDAW.

The CEDAW Committee has taken great notice of WWDA's input, and has made very strong recommendations regarding the need for urgent action by Australian governments in relation to women with disabilities.

The Concluding Observations focus on women with disabilities in 2 key recommendations:

- **42.** The Committee is concerned that women with disabilities are almost entirely absent from key leadership and decision-making positions and continue to be disadvantaged with regard to educational and employment opportunities. It is concerned about the high levels of violence experienced by women, particularly those living in institutions or supported accommodation. The Committee also notes with concern that non-therapeutic sterilizations of women and girls with disabilities continue to be practiced in some states in Australia and notes that the Commonwealth Government considers this to be a matter for state governments to regulate.

- **43.** The Committee urges the State party, in the light of its recent ratification of the *Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities*, to undertake a comprehensive assessment of the situation of women with disabilities in Australia. The Committee recommends that the State party address, as a matter of priority, the abuse and violence experienced by women with disabilities living in institutions or supported accommodation. The Committee further recommends that the State party adopt urgent measures to ensure that women with disabilities are better represented in decision-making and leadership positions, including through the adoption of temporary special measures such as quotas and targets, in accordance with article 4, paragraph 1 of the Convention and the Committee's general recommendation No. 25. The Committee recommends that the State party enact national legislation prohibiting, except where there is a serious threat to life or health, the use of sterilisation of girls, regardless of whether they have a disability, and of adult women with disabilities in the absence of their fully informed and free consent.

Other recommendations which refer directly to women with disabilities include:

- **26.** The Committee notes with concern that, despite a large number of policies and programmes adopted by the State party to address under-representation of certain vulnerable groups of women, including indigenous women, **women with disabilities**, migrant women, women from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds and women from remote or rural communities, there has been slow progress in ensuring their equal participation in leadership and decision-making positions,

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in public and political life as well as their equal access to education, employment and health. The Committee continues to be concerned that the State party does not favour adoption of temporary special measures in the form of compulsory targets and quotas to address the under-representation of women in decision-making bodies, in political and public life and the persistent inequality of their access to education, employment opportunities and health care services.

- **35.** The Committee recommends that the State party adopt targeted measures, including temporary special measures with clear time frames, in accordance with article 4, paragraph 1 of the Convention and the Committee's general recommendation No. 25, to ensure the equal participation and representation of women in public and political life, with a particular focus on Aboriginal and Torres Straits Islander women and **women with disabilities**.
- **38.** The Committee is concerned about the labour force which continues to be segregated by gender; the persistence of the pay gap with women working full time earning eighteen per cent less than their male counterparts; the caring responsibilities which continue to affect women's labour force participation and the limited access to job opportunities for **women with disabilities** and indigenous women.

This recognition is long overdue.

WWDA takes this opportunity to thank all our members for your hard work over many years in getting us to this point - helping us to ensure that our issues are recognised as issues of human rights, and supporting us to demand accountability from our

Governments. Our work in many ways is now just beginning!

WWDA takes this opportunity to thank Christina Ryan for her sterling advocacy work on our behalf in New York. We would also like to acknowledge the support of Senator Sue Boyce, the Bendigo Bank (Calwell & Wanniasa branches), and the International Women's Rights Action Watch (Asia-Pacific), and the Womenspeak Alliance for providing funding support to enable Christina and her support person to travel to New York. WWDA also acknowledges the support of our member organisation Advocacy for Inclusion in supporting Christina to engage in this important work.

Work is currently being done on developing the Australian NGO Report on the *Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities*. The CEDAW Concluding Observations, and the experiences of the Australian CEDAW NGO delegation, will help in developing this new report which is due for submission to the United Nations in 2011.

The full CEDAW Concluding Observations are available by contacting the Advocacy for Inclusion office on info@advocacyforinclusion.org



Australian NGO Delegation

Meet our new Team member

Hi, I'm Karen Hedley. I've just started as the Nutrition Project Officer at Advocacy for Inclusion.

I've been working in the disability field for around 14 years, including most recently as a teacher assistant at a high school, and also working with people within their homes, in their jobs and to learn about sexuality and relationships and more!

I have a young family, including a 7 year old who was diagnosed with Asperger Syndrome this year, so now I'm seeing disability support and issues from another side.

I'm very excited to be in this position and am looking forward to learning a lot, and helping other people to learn a lot over the next couple of years.

Karen

Current Issues

Human Rights are rights and freedom that all humans are entitled to.

Many issues that we provide individual advocacy support for are centred on people's rights not being adhered to. Often it is not acknowledged that people with disabilities have the same rights as everyone else.

The Right to Education is a basic right that should be easily accessible for all students. This is not entirely so if you are a student with a disability.

There are a number of obstacles that stand in the way of accessing the desired education. These include restrictions in school choices or being told which school to attend; the required support is inaccessible due to the lack of funding and/or of trained staff; issues with transport to and from school and some learning disabilities are

not eligible for funding within the education system. As a result many students fall through the education gaps.

Under Article 24 of the *Convention of Rights for People with Disabilities* it states that all people with a disability are not to be excluded from the general education system based on disability and to have the supports required to facilitate effective education.

Unfortunately the resources available are not sufficient to meet the many needs of students with disabilities therefore their rights to education are not fully adhered to.

Transition into high school is a major step for any student, but for a student with disability it can be more of a hurdle. Parents often ask for our support through these transitions as certain supports fall away or are not readily available and placements in Special Learning Units throughout high schools are limited. This in turn results in restrictions with access to mainstream schooling.

We are continually working with parents to ensure that their children have the support to receive the education they are entitled to as well as remind schools of their rightful obligations in regards to education.

Jamelle Boettcher
Advocate



Nutrition Project

As you would know Robyn James completed Phase 1 of the project, and found out some interesting things like:

- Most people living in supported accommodation are aware of what kind of food is nutritionally good for them
- All people say that they eat mostly healthy food
- Some people do not have any choice about what they eat
- Many people have health reasons for restricted diets
- Most people do not drink enough water

The next part of the project involves developing workshops for people with disabilities which will help them to learn more about self advocacy, or speaking up for themselves, and skills around planning and preparing healthy, delicious meals on a budget.

These workshops will be held next year but if you are interested in attending please contact Karen on 6286 9422 to register your interest.

For a copy of the Report please contact our office on 6286 9422.

Karen

The Nutrition Project “Where’s My 2 & 5” Outcomes Report of Qualitative Interviews

We have released our report of the qualitative analysis of nutrition and wellbeing of tenants of disability group homes in the ACT.

The report is based on several months of undertaking qualitative interviews and other analysis with tenants and identifying their level of control over their own nutrition and broader lifestyle choices.

Our recommendations are as follows:

RECOMMENDATION 1: consider opportunities for tenants to participate in food preparation and support them to participate.

RECOMMENDATION 2: consider ways to encourage people to drink water throughout the day.

RECOMMENDATION 3: tenants should be a part of menu planning to increase their overall participation in their diet.

RECOMMENDATION 4: that support workers have access to a variety of resources to assist them in communicating with tenants about menus and shopping planning.

RECOMMENDATION 5: that support workers and accommodation providers involve tenants in shopping planning, and writing lists to match a menu.

RECOMMENDATION 6: that support workers are given training in cooking a variety of meals based on low cost, quality ingredients.

RECOMMENDATION 7: "specific cultural identity of persons with disability is recognised" (Article 30, United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities) through access to culturally specific menu choices.

RECOMMENDATION 8: ensure meal plans are frequently reviewed and changed.

The study has shown that very few tenants have an active role in their diet, meal preparation, or planning. There are also concerns that the right of people to express choice through food, including by eating culturally specific meals, is limited.

If you would like a copy of the report (in either Word or PDF) please contact us directly on info@advocacyforinclusion.org

Advocacy for Inclusion Board Call for Nominations

Are you committed to a society in which people with disability live inclusive and meaningful lives as part of the community, in accordance with the United Nations *Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities*?

Do you have strategic planning and thinking skills?

Do you have Governance and Leadership skills?

All 7 Board positions become vacant at our AGM on 9 November 2010. We encourage all our members to consider nominating for the Board.

The key role of the Board is to set the strategic direction for Advocacy for Inclusion. It is also the legally responsible body to make sure the organisation meets accountability measures.

If you are interested in becoming a member or nominating for a Board position please contact Christina Ryan for more information on 6286 9422 or email christina@advocacyforinclusion.org

You must be a member to nominate.

Nominations must be received **no later than 4 November 2010**.



The Annual General Meeting & Art Exhibition Launch

Advocacy for Inclusion invites members and friends to our *Inclusion* Art Exhibition Launch & Annual General Meeting.

When: Tuesday 9 November 2010

Where: Exhibition Room
ACT Legislative Assembly
London Circuit, Canberra
City

Art Exhibition Launch

Time: 11.30am – 12.30pm

We will be launching our Inclusion Art competition exhibition.

The exhibition will be open for public viewing during business hours from 9 November until Friday 12 November.

Come and see all the entries and how the artists displayed their message of *inclusion*.

Additionally the new poster (with the winning design) will be available and Christmas Cards will be available for purchase or ordering.

Annual General Meeting

Time: 1.00pm – 2.00pm

AGM Business to be conducted:

- Elections for the Board
- Acceptance of Audited Financial Statements and Auditor's Report

All members are welcome to nominate for the Board.

If you wish to nominate please contact Christina Ryan for more information on 6286 9422 or email christina@advocacyforinclusion.org

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Nominations from current members must be received no later than 4 November 2010.

For catering purposes please register your attendance by calling 6286 9422 or email info@advocacyforinclusion.org no later than 4 November 2010.

Our Art Exhibition and AGM venue is made possible with thanks to Steve Doszpot MLA

Defining Diversity – A two day conference looking at developing social change through Diversity and Equality.

- 4 - 5 November 2010 - ACTCOSS Conference
- 5 November 2010 - Diversity Ball and Community Sector Awards Presentation

The ACT Council of Social Service Biennial Conference is an opportunity to engage in leadership development, lively discussion on cutting edge ideas and practices, and to network with colleagues - sharing ideas and experiences.

Information and registration forms available from ACTCOSS or at www.actcoss.org.au

Recent publications and submissions

If you would like a copy of any of our publications or submissions, please email info@advocacyforinclusion.org

1. Endorsed the Australian Federation of Disability Organisations submission to the Productivity Commission inquiry into a national insurance scheme for people with disabilities
<http://www.ndis.org.au/theplan.html>
2. Australian NGO statement to the United Nations CEDAW Committee
3. The Nutrition Project "Where's My 2 & 5" Outcomes Report of Qualitative Interviews

Order your Advocacy for Inclusion Christmas cards today!!!



"In my thoughts I have many friends"

Artist Andrew Delaney

Andrew grew up watching his Grandfather doing art and has always wanted to have a go. He has been doing art classes at Hands on Studio since October 2009 and loves to paint; in particular he loves to paint tractors and farms.

\$10 per pack of 10 cards

All cards are Post Office preferred size.

To order yours today, please fill in this form and return it to the address below.

Please make your cheque or money order payable to Advocacy for Inclusion Inc.

**Advocacy for Inclusion
PO BOX 3653
Weston Creek ACT 2611**

Name

Address

Post Code

Number of packs _____ x \$10.00

per pack = \$ _____ Total Due



MAKE A DONATION

Advocacy for Inclusion is now a registered charity. All donations over \$2 are tax deductible.

We welcome your support.

We are currently fundraising to buy materials for our Self Advocacy Nutrition training. You can help us buy food for cooking classes, and other resources.

All donations will go directly to empowering people with disabilities.

To make a donation, please fill in this form and return it to the address below.

Please make your donation, cheque or money order payable to Advocacy for Inclusion Inc.

Advocacy for Inclusion
PO BOX 3653
Weston Creek ACT 2611

Name for receipt

Address

Post Code

\$

Donation amount



MEMBER APPLICATION FORM

Name

Address

Post Code

Phone

Email

Contact Person (Organisations only)

Full Membership

Associate
Membership

Please tick if you have a disability (free membership)

To become a member, please fill in this form and return it to the address below.

Please make your donation, cheque or money order payable to Advocacy for Inclusion Inc.

Advocacy for Inclusion
PO BOX 3653
Weston Creek ACT 2611

Membership includes:

- Quarterly newsletter
- Policy consultation on key issues
- Representative opportunities
- Connection with local and national networks
- Right to nominate for our Board
- Membership rates for training

Membership Categories:

- *Full Membership - Individuals*
 - \$10
 - Free for people with disability
- *Associate Membership - Organisations*
 - \$25