

THE SELF ADVOCATE

NEWSLETTER OF THE SELF ADVOCACY NETWORK

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IASSIDD World Congress 2016

The IASSIDD World Congress conference was held on the 14th to 18th of August at the Melbourne Convention & Exhibition Centre. People from around the world came together to talk about the study of intellectual disabilities.

13 Self Advocates from around Australia were invited to participate at the conference. Self advocates were involved in chairing sessions, answering questions on panels and asking questions of speakers.

The self advocates met at the VALiD office in Fitzroy to prepare for the conference. VALiD staff members Katie and Anthony with Jemima and Patricia from the Centre of Disability Studies in Sydney supported people to prepare for the conference and learn their roles.

It was great for everyone to meet and get to know each other before the conference.

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VALiD



IASSIDD World Congress

1. The Self Advocates attended a number of social events during the conference where they meet self advocates from other countries. This photo was taken at the Opening Ceremony at Melbourne Convention and Exhibition Centre.



2. Heather Forsyth from VALiD pictured with the delegates from Singapore. They were interested to hear about what Heather does at VALiD and the VALiD self advocacy program.



3. Heather pictured with Judy Huett from Tasmania who is the Chair of the Our Voice Committee and Kate-Lyn McKenzie from Queensland. All 3 ladies are members of the Our Voice is a committee of Inclusion Australia. This photo was taken at the Eureka tower in Melbourne. The conference organisers hosted an evening with food and drinks for Self Advocates. There were people there from around Australia and many different countries around the world.



4. Simone Stevens from VALiD chaired the accessible session with presenter Robert Cummins, who talked about The Golden Triangle of Happiness which was one of Australia's largest surveys about well being.

Eastern Network

Changing Places

At the Eastern Network meeting in August, Brendan McCarthy did a presentation on Changing Places. Changing Places is a project to advocate for public toilets at major public places with full sized change tables and hoists to meet the needs of people with disabilities.

Brendan has started a campaign with his mother Dianne for Chadstone Shopping Centre to build a Changing Places facility. Brendan enjoys spending time with friends at Chadstone and having this facility would allow him and many other people to increase their time socialising and shopping.

If you would like to find out more about their campaign visit:
www.changingplaces.org.au



Feedback on the Self Advocate Newsletter

We would like to hear what you think about the VALID Self Advocate Newsletter.



Do you get the Self Advocacy Newsletter? If yes, where do you get it from?

- What is your favourite part of the Newsletter?
- What articles or stories do you like to read about?
- Information about Guest Speakers at Networks
- Personal Stories from Self Advocates
- Information about VALID events
- Information about what is going on in Advocacy



Are you interested in writing a story to put into the newsletter?
What do you think?

You can tell us what you think of the Newsletter at the Network meetings.

You can write to us in an email at katie@valid.org.au or anthony@valid.org.au

You can call us to tell us what you think on 9416 4003.

Network News



During July's Network meetings guest speakers Heather Forsyth and Kylie Fisher from VALID presented to the members **Support Decision Making**. Heather and Kylie presentation was about people having the right to make their own choices and decisions and be responsible for their own decisions.



Heather and Kylie also said that it is Okay to get help to make decisions and asked the members who they thought the best people in their lives could help them with difficult (hard) decisions. The members spoke about people that they trusted like parents, family members, friends and support staff. The members of the network agreed that it was also Okay to learn from our mistakes and learn from our experiences and it is Okay to be able to change your mind.

In August's network meetings, staff from the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) attended the network meetings to share information about the **9th of August Census**. Basil Mackinaly and Paloma Jain from ABS talked about what is the census and why the Census is important.



The Census is a form with questions for everyone to fill in so the ABS can collect the information which helps the Australian Government to plan and build services like hospitals. Basil and Paloma also talked about how to complete the census and how you can get help to fill in the forms.

VALiD Peer Action Groups

Peer Action Groups provide an opportunity for people with disabilities and their families and supporters to come together to support individual needs, address collective issues and make our communities more inclusive and welcoming to all citizens.

What is a Peer Action Group?

VALID's Peer Action Groups will be made up of between 5-12 people who will meet regularly (usually monthly) to:

- Get up-to-date information about the roll out of the NDIS and how this will affect participants in this disability funding support scheme
- Share information and ideas with other people on how to make good use of this funding



For more information and/or if you would like to join in the Peer Action Group contact David Craig. Email: david@valid.org.au

Residential Focus Group

On the 13th of July, Elvira and Colin presented 'What are resident Focus Group Meetings' at the Western Melbourne Area DAS House Supervisor's Forum. Elvira and Colin wanted to encourage other residents to attend their Brimbank Melton Area / Western (BMA/WMA) Metro Area Focus groups, so they developed a presentation.

In Elvira and Colin's presentation they talked about:

- What are Focus group meetings
- Why we have focus group meetings
- What do you speak up about
- What are the responsibilities of the members of the Focus Group
- What are the rights of the members of the Focus group
- What are some of the things talked about at the meeting
- Some of the guest speakers that have been invited to talk

At first they were both nervous to speak in front of the group but overcame their nerves and did a fantastic job.

The BMA/WMA Focus group meetings are held once every two months (Bi-monthly) at either the DHHS Footscray or DHHS Sunshine offices.

The aim of Focus groups is to empower people living in DAS homes to come together and have a say on things that are important to them about their home. It is also a good way for DAS managers to listen to people's concerns. Focus group meetings are a way for residents to have say and control over management decisions affecting DAS homes, for example policies and procedures.

The Focus group meetings also build resident's confidence and leadership skills. Members of the Focus group represent others living in their home and are empowered to advocate for their concerns.



VALiD Self Advocacy Forum Report

The VALiD Self Advocacy Forum committee meet up bi-monthly (once every two months) at VALiD offices in Fitzroy. The Forum committee is made up of a leadership group from VALiD Self Advocacy Networks and self advocates from around Victoria.

The aim of the Forum is for people to give their opinions, feedback and expertise to services who want to pass on information about their services or projects they are working on to people with disabilities.

For example in March Katherine from Disability Sports and Recreation asked the forum for their opinions on the design of their new brochures.

The forum is also an opportunity to talk about issues in the disability sector and relevant topics that people are facing in the community.

At the July forum meeting guest speaker Andy Calder from Uniting Church asked the group their opinions on an easy English position statement on spirituality or faith. Andy and the members of the Forum discussed the importance of faith and spirituality for people with disabilities.

Dina Theodoropoulos from the Disability Services Commissioner showed and asked the Forum members for their input on photos used in their annual report. Dina also showed and asked the Forum to pass on to Network members an easy English information flyer on “Your rights in a group home”.

The third speaker at the July’s meeting was John Mckenna from VALiD. John asked the committee for feedback and ideas on a new project that he is working on about how to be a reporter.

The VALiD Self Advocacy Forum Committee services are available to service providers, community groups, government organisation and business. If you are interested please contact Anthony or Katie on 9416 4003 or email on anthony@valid.org.au or katie@valid.org.au.



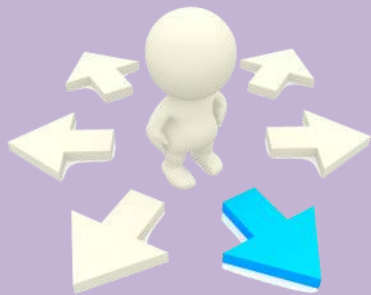
VALiD in association with Inclusion Australia presents

Having a Say Conference



8th - 10th February 2017

Deakin University, Waterfront Campus, Geelong



Lead YOUR Life!

The largest conference for people with disability in Australia

The Having a Say conference is a place where people can speak up and have their voice heard, be respected and empowered and it's a lot of fun!

**Registration is now open.
Get your registration booking in soon to get the early bird rate.**

If you need a registration application or more information contact the VALiD Office on 9416 4003 or go to the website: www.valid.org.au

VALiD



Network News



Do you have a story you would like to share?

You can call the VALiD office and talk to Brenda or arrange for Tully and Heather to come to your service and interview you.

You can give your story to a VALiD staff member at your network meeting or email your story to: brenda@valid.org.au



VALiD Membership for Network Members

Would you like to become a member of VALiD?

Membership is free to all people with disabilities that attend the VALiD Network meetings.

If you would like more information about becoming a member, talk to a VALiD staff member or call the VALiD office.



Contact



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VALID

Victorian Advocacy League for Individuals with Disability Inc

