

Having a Say 2025



Our Lives, Our Voices!

Conference Report



Australia's largest conference for people with disability

**Deakin University, Waterfront Campus, Geelong
28th - 30th January 2025**

Sponsors

VALID and the Having a Say conference Committee would like to thank ...

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Major partners

Having a Say conference organisers would like to thank its major partners ...



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Meet us at VALID! Stand 5 in Costa Hall Foyer.

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start by calling 1800 555 727

inlife.org.au

View our services



InLife client Eliza and Coordinator Ash

Opening Ceremony



Kate Grant-Foley
Chairperson Local Reference Committee

Kate on behalf of the Local Reference Committee, welcomed everyone to the conference and wished everyone a great event.



Prof. Iain Martin
Vice-Chancellor, Deakin University

Iain welcomed the delegates to Deakin University and spoke about how proud the Uni is to continue to support the Having a Say Conference. He talked about the importance and the challenge of listening and really hearing what people have to say and he hoped that people would do this during the conference.



Cr Stretch Kontelj
Mayor of Geelong



The Mayor talked about Disability and inclusion being in the DNA of the city of Geelong. Over 55,000 people in greater Geelong have a disability. The city has a new Disability and Inclusion Plan released last a month with aims to continue improving access to public places.



Lifetime Achievement award - Heather Forsyth

VALID's Senior Sel-Advocate Heather Forsyth recently was awarded a Lifetime Achievement Award through the Victorian Disability Awards by DFFH. VALID celebrated this at the conference. Kevin Stone, VALID's founding CEO, talked about Heather's work at VALID and in self-advocacy before that.



Dan Stubbs
Victorian Disability Workers Commissioner (VDWC)

Dan talked about 'what makes a good worker'. (see page 23)

The Victorian Disability Worker Commission (VDWC) was thrilled to participate in the VALID Having a Say Conference again this year. Commissioner Dan Stubbs and the team loved talking to conference attendees at our booth, at sessions and at the disco.



For more information you can contact the VDWC by email:
info@vdbc.vic.gov.au web: www.vdbc.vic.gov.au

Memorial for Sir Robert Martin KNZM

Heather Forsyth and Judy Huett spoke about Sir Robert Martin, as they knew him as a fellow self-advocate on the international stage. He represented his country, New Zealand and they represented Australia.

Judy and Heather talked about his life. Robert was born in 1957 and as a toddler was put into an institution as that is what was done in those days. As an adult Robert married and made a life for himself which centred around speaking up for people with intellectual disability. He fought to get New Zealand to close its institutions, which they did.



He was a strong voice and he became the first person with an intellectual disability to be appointed to the UN (United Nations) CRPD (Convention on the Rights of Person with Disability) audit committee.

Robert was awarded a Knight Companion of the New Zealand Order of Merit (KNZM) in the 2020 New Year Honours, for services to people with disabilities.

Sir Robert attended HaS conference many times and was a great role model to others. We will miss him and continue to remember him through the Self-Advocacy Award given out each year at HaS.

Special Presentation



Rosemary Kayess, Human Rights Commissioner

Rosemary Kayess' five-year term as Disability Discrimination Commissioner began on Monday 29 January 2024.

Ms Kayess spoke about the CRPD - the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities - as she was part of writing it. She is serving her second term on the United Nations (UN) Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, as Vice-Chair. She was awarded the Human Rights Medal in 2019 in recognition of her outstanding contribution to the promotion and protection of human rights.

Ms Kayess is a current and former member of a number of disability focused councils and committees. Current memberships include the NDIA Independent Advisory Council and the Australian Discrimination Law Experts Group.



Wednesday Plenary

Louise Glanville and Natalie Wade

NDIS Quality & Safeguards Commissioner



Louise Glanville will address the conference on the high value the Commission places on the voices of people with disability for both its day-to-day operations as a regulator and for proposed reforms that will strengthen its powers to protect the safety of NDIS participants.

Commissioner Glanville will outline the impact of regular consultation with people with disability through the Commission's Consultative Committee and other forums, the breadth and importance of input from NDIS participants into Supported Independent Living (SIL) Practice

Standards development and other regulatory reform consultation, and the Commission's efforts to uplift the accessibility of its communications. More info: [website](#)

Launch of the new Australia's Disability Strategy

Amanda Rishworth, the new Federal Minister for Social Services launched the updated Australia Disability Strategy. She then spoke about the process for updating the strategy and key areas of the strategy.

Minister Lizzie Blandthorn, Victorian Minister for Disability, spoke about the new national strategy from the Victorian view. She encouraged people to tell government their experience so we can work together to create change.

Jane Spring Chair of the Australia's Disability Strategy Advisory Council also spoke about the importance of the strategy.



Fionn (VALID CEO), Min. Rishworth, Heather Forsyth, Min. Blandthorn, & local member

More info on the strategy <https://www.dss.gov.au/australias-disability-strategy>

Special Presentation

Judy Huett, Self Advocate Leader, Speak Out Tasmania

Judy lives in Burnie, Tasmania with her husband Peter. Judy is a skilled leader who is admired and respected by people from all walks of life. She has won several awards in Tasmania and represented Australia at the United Nations in Geneva to report on the UN CRPD two times.

She spoke about her journey of self advocacy, which took time.

Judy encouraged everyone with these tips:

- important to have the right support to encourage you to speak up
- good information
- practice at speaking up
- asking for support when you need it



Closing Ceremony

Award Presentations

Family Empowerment Award

was presented to Suesan Baker (more information on page 15)



Pentland-Banfield Award

Was awarded to James Teeken (more information on page 15)

Art Competition

The announcement of the winners of the Barbara Donovan and Sarah Guilfoil Art Competition was made by Mandy Donley, Victorian Senior Practitioner. Winners were presented with a certificate and a prize (see page 10)



HaS's Got Talent Finals

The three finalists performed and the winners were announced. More details on page 12



Opening Ceremony

[See Me Sing choir performance](#)
was titled Our Voice, Our Future!

See Me Sing is a local Geelong performance group.



Dinner Disco

The Dinner Disco was held at a new venue, Club Italia. As always the band 'Un-Limited' blew us away with great songs and perfect music. So, it was a fantastic night of fun and plenty of singing along too! Thanks again to the Un-Limited band members below.

(Add in Band members names)



Thank you to the Victorian Disability Workers Commission for sponsoring the Having a Say Conference dinner.

Key note Speaker: Zane McKenzie, President Villamanta Disability Rights Legal Service

Topic: Meaningfully including people with disabilities in organisations:
What needs to Change?

Zane McKenzie began his working life as a freelance public speaker and disability advocate in Geelong. His dedication to enhancing the lives of individuals with disabilities stems from both his professional commitment and own lived experiences.

He has also been employed as a Community Educator and his work at Scope has included spearheading the creation of Scope's Client Advisory Panel. Zane is also serves as the Chair of the Board at Villamanta Disability Rights Legal Service and a dedicated husband and father.

Zane's speech at the disco was a rousing call to people with disability to speak out about the changes in the disability sector, especially t the current threats to the NDIS.



We thank the



for the **Photo Booth** at which we all had great fun!!



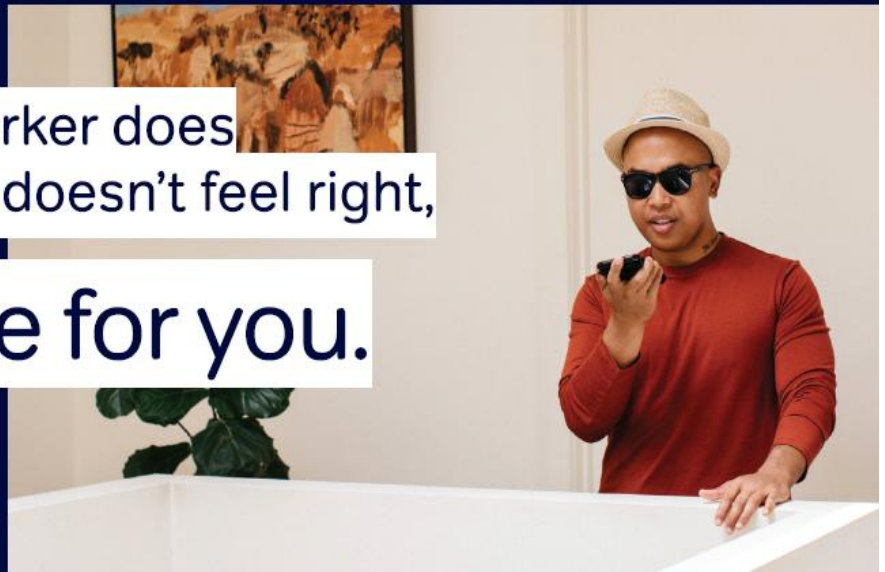
PLATINUM
SPONSOR



Scan the QR code
for more information



If a disability worker does
something that doesn't feel right,
we're here for you.



The Victorian Disability Worker Commission can deal with your concerns about a disability worker's behaviour or quality of their work. Our complaints service is confidential, and we can take action if something isn't right.

Because people with disability deserve to feel safe.

For more information about complaints, or if you have concerns about a disability worker, contact us:

- Visit vdwc.vic.gov.au/complaints
- Call 1800 497 132
- Meet us face to face
- Via the National Relay Service, including for Auslan interpreters: call 1300 555 727 or SMS 0423 677 767



Authorised by the Victorian Government, 1 Treasury Place, Melbourne.

Art Competition

The Having a Say Art Competition has been named in remembrance of Barbara Donovan's work for people with disabilities over 50 years. Barbara passed away in 2019. Barbara was a Life Member of VALID and other Geelong organisations. She also volunteered at the Having a Say conference for over 10 years.



The Barbara Donovan Art Competition is proudly sponsored by the Office of Professional Practice, Victorian Senior Practitioner. All winning art works will be displayed in the foyer and corridors of the Office of Professional Practice, DFFH.

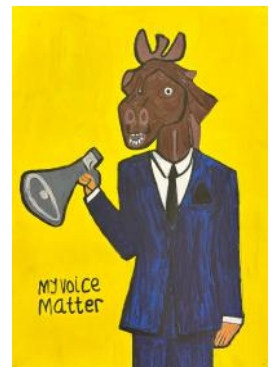


There were five winning artworks selected, three conference delegates and two non-conference entries. The Senior Practitioner Mandy Donley presented the winners with a certificate and cheque.

**The Future is
Rosy
by
Patrick Francis**



**My Voice Matters
by
Jason Vu**



**Fly Away Day
by
Colby Hickey**



**Threads of
Expression
by
Brianna George**

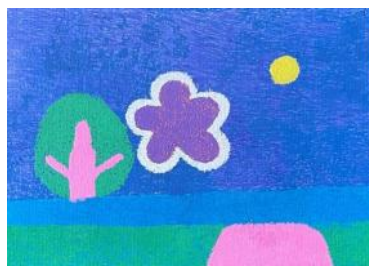


**Grandpa
With a
Bald
Head
by
Hayden
McLean**





Some
of the
entries



Be who you want to be with Scope

Come and visit the
Scope stand to find out
how we can support you.



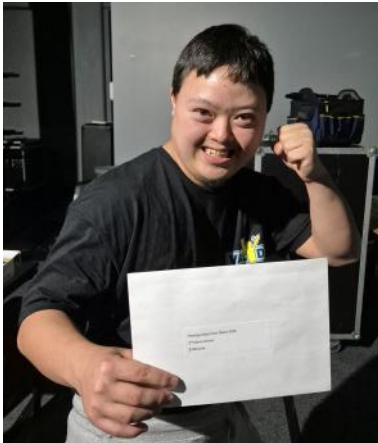
Having a Say's Got Talent

The Having a Say's Got Talent (HGT) Auditions were held at the Sphinx Hotel on the **Wednesday** night. The venue was buzzing with excitement as the **fourteen** acts performed, the crowd dancing and singing along.

The judges at the auditions included Eliza Charters, vice-chair of the Local Reference Committee, and InLife (HGT sponsor) rep.

The three finalists performed at the closing ceremony in Costa Hall. The judges had a hard time deciding who would be the winner.

Thank you to the sponsor of HGT— InLife Independent Living.



Expo Gallery



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Who was part of Having a Say?



Overall Attendance

Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Disco & Dinner
652	708	398	421



Empowerment, Networking & Skill Development

People with disability presenting in daytime program	112
Volunteers with disability	18
Lived experience Session Chairpersons	14
HaS's Got Talent performers	12
Art works entered in the Art Competition	35
Number of different agencies/groups involved including exhibitors in the Expo	140 +



Participants over the three days by Category

Person with a Disability	355
Support Staff	185
Workers & supporters e.g. families	171
Volunteers	83
VALID staff working on conference	12
Exhibitor Staff	162
Other: evaluators, facilitators, media etc.	6
Total number of different participants	974



Awards

Sir Robert Martin Award

Sir Robert Martin is one of the leading international self advocates from New Zealand. He led the charge to close institutions in New Zealand and took the fight all around the world. In recognition of Robert's achievements, VALID sponsors the annual Robert Martin Award.

The award was presented to Gerard Langridge by Heather Forsyth, Senior Self-Advocate at VALID and Judy Huett, Speak Out Tasmania. James has been a self-advocate for himself for many years and also promoted the rights of people with disability to .



Gerard Langridge (and Heather & Judy)

Pentland - Banfield Award

Angela Dew from the Deakin Uni Disability and Inclusion department who sponsors this award presented the 2025 award to James Teeken.

Doug Pentland and David Banfield were founding members of Reinforce which was the first self advocacy group in Victoria and Australia. Doug and David were pioneers of self advocacy and they both had a passion and commitment to see improved support for all people with an intellectual disability. VALID and Reinforce started this award to honour their contribution.



James Teeken
(and Angela Dew)

Family Empowerment Award

The Family Empowerment Award is awarded to a family member who has 'stood beside' their family member and advocated for their rights to obtain appropriate support, community inclusion and a good life.

Deb Honeyman, Life Without Barriers (sponsor of this award) spoke about the award and the winners work (along with her husband) to promote the talents of their son in performance and his right to a good life. Unfortunately, Susan was not present on the day. The award will be presented to her at a later date.



Susan Baker

Our Choice Expo

The Expo aims to provide information about services, rights, complaints, and the many choices available to people with disability.



Expo Sponsor

Exhibitors

Abilityworks Australia
Accessing Connections
Support Services
Access Easy English
All Access Holidays
Amaze
Ambulance Victoria
Australian Electoral
Commission
Aruma
Bourizk Design
Breastscreen Victoria
Cancer Council Victoria
Care Au Health & Community
CareChoice
Carer Solutions Australia
CID (Council Intellectual
Disability)
Continence @ Conquip
Deakin University
Disability Housing Victoria
Down Syndrome Victoria
Edge Community Services
Enliven Community
Everyday Independence
Fire Rescue Victoria
Gateways Support Services
genU

Golden City Support Servs
Housing Choices Australia
Housing Hub
Inclusion Australia
InLife Independent Living
In Place Living
Leisure Networks
Liberty Disability Services
Life Without Barriers
Mable
Melba Support Services
Multicap
My Plan Manager
My Support & Care
National Disability Services
Nat. Ctr Excellence Intellectual
Disability Health
NDIA Engagement team
NDIS partner - Latrobe
Community Health Service
NDIS Quality & Safeguards
Commission (QSC)
Nextt
Office of the Public Advocate
ON-CALL Group Australia
Palliative Care Victoria
Plan Partners
Possability

Prestige In Home Care
Public Transport Ombudsman
PTV (Dept of Transport)
Safe Steps
SARU (Self Advocacy Resource
Unit)
Scope Australia
Speakers Bank (Annecto)
STAR Victoria
Summer Foundation
The Cliq Connection
Transport Accident
Commission (TAC)
Travellers Aid
Untapped Customer
VALID Training & Consultation
VDWC - Victorian Disability
Workers' Commission
Victoria Fire Services
Victorian Electoral Commission
Victoria Legal Aid
Villamanta Disability Rights
Legal Service
V/Line
Women with Disabilities Vic.
Workforce Plus
Yooralla





Come and have some fun and learn about Melba. Visit us at the Expo and the Main Hall.

From independent living to your next adventure,
get support to live your life, your way.

**Talk to us
about:**

- Supported Independent Living
- Respite
- Social and Community Participation
- Positive Behaviour Support
- Leisure and Recreation



**Get in touch
about support**



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Exhibitor Connections

National Centre of Excellence in Intellectual Disability Health

The National Centre of Excellence in Intellectual Disability Health works to make sure people with intellectual disability get better health care. They had a stand and held a session.



Watch a video about us and download Easy Read information about the Centre from our website www.nceidh.org.au

Safe Steps ran the workshop on *What is Family Violence?*

Family violence is not a popular topic, but it is important that everyone knows more about it.

People with disability are more likely to be victims of family violence just because they live with disability.

Safe Steps is a family violence service that can support people with disability who are experiencing family violence to keep people safe.

Our workshop looked at

- what family and domestic violence looks like
- what to do if you are experiencing this kind of violence
- where you can get help

We also let everyone know about our new Easy English booklets.

If you are experiencing family or domestic violence or know someone who is experiencing family violence, call

1800 737 732 (1800RESPECT) the national domestic, family and sexual violence counselling, information and support service.

or

1800 015 188 Safe Steps

The **Safe Steps Disability Liaison Officers** can also come out to your workplace, day program or your supported accommodation to talk to you and staff about family violence and how we can help.

Just email disability@safesteps.org.au



1800RESPECT
NATIONAL DOMESTIC FAMILY AND
SEXUAL VIOLENCE COUNSELLING SERVICE
1800 737 732

Safe Steps

NDIS Quality & Safeguards Commission

NDIS Quality and Safety Commissioner Louise Glanville and Associate Commissioner Natalie Wade spoke to the whole conference about:

- the work of the Commission
- the importance of hearing from participants

It's on our YouTube channel here: https://youtu.be/IL5_rfngOf4



NDIA & NDIS Commission What's the difference?



NDIA

If you have questions about NDIS plans or access to funding

Call the NDIA on

1800 800 110

www.ndis.gov.au



NDIS Quality and Safeguards Commission

NDIS Commission

If you have a concern or complaint about a provider or worker

Call the NDIS Commission on

1800 035 544

www.ndiscommission.gov.au

Participants are people with disability who receive support from the NDIS

1



NDIS Quality and Safeguards Commission Booth
Leah Gulliver NDIS Commission and Tara Elliffee



Andrew Radford at the NDIS Quality and Safeguards Commission Booth

Presentations

"I Can Decide In My Language" Supported Decision Making



VALID

PROJECT TEAM

NSW VIC



VALID

What do you think might be some **key challenges** a Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) person faces in accessing services?



VALID

What is I Can Decide In My Language?

I Can Decide In My Language is a project that will empower people to make their own decisions.

This 3 Year Project will support people:

- with intellectual disability
- from 3 different Culturally & Linguistically Diverse (CALD) communities.
- We are already working with Chinese & Vietnamese Communities.



VALID

What is Supported Decision Making?

Supported Decision Making is a process where people make decisions together.

It focuses on what people want and need to make decisions.

This is to make sure they can participate fully in their own lives.



VALID

What will this project do?

We will work with people to develop the:

- skills
- knowledge
- confidence

needed to do Supported Decision Making.



VALID

What will this project deliver?

- Resources
- Workshops
- Practice guidance
- Peer mentoring groups.

This information will be co-created with people with intellectual disability and their families and carers.



VALID

QUESTIONS? Please reach out...

Croos – 0435 344 501



Katy - 03 9416 4003



VALID



***Empowering
People
to Speak Up***

About VALID Connect:

VALID Connect provides a range of essential services, including training, consultations and the development of Easy Read materials.

We are committed to delivering services that are tailored to your needs.

We focus on quality, timeliness and ethical practice.

Five great things about VALID Connect:

1. **Expertise and Experience** - Our team has decades of experience in the disability sector.
2. **Unmatched Insights** - We consult with people with disabilities to make sure their voices are heard and their lived experience is valued.
3. **Not-for-Profit Integrity** - Every dollar generated is used to support VALID's critical disability advocacy programs.
4. **Fair and Reasonable Pricing** - Designed to be fair and affordable, our work provides excellent value for our customers.
5. **Strong Values** - Respect - Collaboration - Courage - Humility - Passion - Dedication - Integrity. We're committed to doing the right thing, every time, and to ensuring our work reflects these guiding principles.

For more information contact:
Jon Slingsby at jon@valid.org.au
Zoe Broadway at zoe@valid.org.au

www.valid.org.au

Level 1, 144 Langridge Street
Collingwood, VIC 3066
Phone 03 9416 4003

Presentations continued



Our presentation was about employment and disability in NZ. Each member of the presentation group talked about their experiences living with an intellectual disability and how this impacted on their journey with employment.

Treena Armstrong discussed how she had experienced discrimination in the workplace over the last 20+ years from being ignored when asking for a new uniform, to new technology being introduced into the workplace which she did not have adequate training or support to use. This technology is also inaccessible and difficult to work.

Adam Fanning talked about his journey to gain paid employment. He now works for an organisation that values and appreciates him, but prior to this he struggled to find employment due to people not wishing to hire someone with a disability and being scared of him having epilepsy and what that would mean for their company/workplace.

Following this, Shannon Bowden talked about some of the solutions that workplaces could implement to better support individuals with a disability in the workplace to ensure they felt empowered, valued, and supported.

Nathan Child ended on a positive note around his experience at his current workplace and how positive he finds this, along with the skills they have taught, and he has developed along the way.

A Supported Life (New Zealand) <https://www.asupportedlife.com/>



Treena Armstrong



Adam Fanning



Shannon Bowden



Nathan Child



On the couch with Heather

Heather Forsyth is VALID's Senior Self-Advocate. She conducted two sessions where anyone could have their say on stage.

People talked about their things but Heather also asked questions about things VALID wanted to have feedback on.

Presentations continued

A highlight for VDWC was the workshop we ran on what it means to receive good quality support.

Workshop participants shared so many great ideas about what makes a great disability support worker, and what makes them feel happy, safe and respected when receiving support.

It is so important to talk about these things.

People with disability need to share what good quality means to them.

This helps people know when they get treated in the wrong way.

We should all speak up when people make us feel unhappy, unsafe or disrespected. If you are experiencing poor quality support from a disability worker, you can tell VDWC.

During the workshop we had a graphic artist create a live drawing of the discussion and feedback people gave. We are pleased to share that image here, highlighting what good quality disability support means to people.

If a person isn't happy with the support they receive, they can contact us on 1800 497 132 or visit www.vdwc.vic.gov.au/complaints for more information.



Presentations continued



VALID believes people with disability should have:

- a say in how and where they want to live.
- information about housing that is accessible and easy to understand.
- information about the supports they can get from the NDIS to help them live more independently.

My Housing Plan Workshops

- 72 workshops across Victoria
- Team members with lived experience lead the workshops
- Participants fill out their own 'My Housing Plan'



My Housing Plan Information Book

Resources

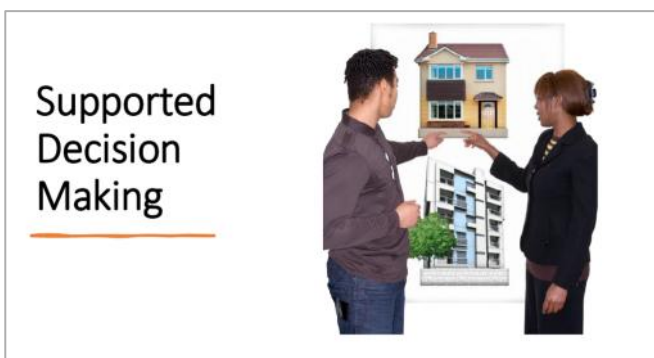
Rights And Responsibilities

You have the right to have a say about:

- where you live
- how you want to live
- who you live with

My Housing Plan and the NDIS

My goals
This is what I want to achieve



Activities

What is something you like about where you live?

Presentations continued

My Living Choices

If you could live anywhere, where would you want to live?

Circle or tick who you want to live with:

- ☐ By myself
- ☐ With friends
- ☐ With family
- ☐ With 2 people
- ☐ With 3 people
- Other: _____

You should be able to choose your "housemates" – who you want to live with.

What do you want to live close to?

Do you want any pets?

What kind of home do you want to live in?

What would you like to have in your home?

The NDIS can give money to help people live more independently

Support Services and the NDIS

Supported Independent Living means support services that help you live in your home.

Skill Building

What skills do you want to learn to help you live more independently?

Presentations Continued

Melba Support Services

At HaS 2025, Hayley and Kate took to the stage to talk about intimacy. They started off by exploring what intimacy is – for some people, it's owning a pet, or having a close friend who knows that you love espresso martinis. For others, it can be going on a date or having a partner sleep over.



In our **workshop session** with Hayley and Ryan, we heard from people about what intimacy means to them – they told us how they want to be supported to access intimacy, and the challenges they've experienced when they have wanted to access intimacy in the past.

Melba's Intimacy Project is designed to increase access to intimacy for people with disabilities, recognising that access to intimacy is a fundamental human right.

Exploring what intimacy means to people is a key part of this. For some people, it's owning a pet, or having a close friend who knows that you love espresso martinis.

For others, it can be going on a date or having a partner sleep over. Some people enjoy spiritual intimacy, some enjoy physical intimacy - and some choose to access no intimacy at all. There is no one "right" way to experience intimacy because everyone is different.



We also talked about what Melba is doing to increase access to intimacy for people with disabilities, including training that our staff do and also some workshops we have coming up this year.

We also held a **Mates 'Dates friend dating session**. Everyone got to know each other with lively chats about group questions like "What's the best holiday you've been on?" The feedback we got was that everyone had a great time.



For more information contact Melba 1300 696 352
Website: <https://www.melbasupport.com.au/>



Presentations Continued

Everyone can be leaders! The South Australian Council on Intellectual Disability (SACID) presentation *Becoming a Leader in your life and your community* talked about how to become a leader, why it is important to be a leader, skills of a leader and how everyone can be a leader of their own lives. It had tips about setting goals and how to have inclusive meetings. We had so much fun sharing our tips at the Having a Say Conference!

SACID www.sacid.org.au

South Australian Council on Intellectual Disability

Becoming a leader
in your life and in your community

Leading Through Inclusion

sacid
South Australian Council on Intellectual Disability

Tips for good meetings

- Check in with people.
- Have traffic light cards.
- Have an icebreaker question.
- Use simple language.
- Talk to US not our support person.
- Have accessible information.



23 **sacid**

What might better housing and support look like for you? Summer Foundation

The conference presentation went through a quick history of disability housing within Australia over the past 50 years. The Summer Foundation exists to improve housing and support for people with complex needs.

We introduced our 'Disability Housing and Living Survey' and asked the people in the room about their home. We asked what is working well, what is not working well and what people wanted to change in their housing. We need to understand what people want to support change across housing and support.

We surveyed nearly 30 attendees, with 76% identifying as NDIS participants. We heard valuable insights from 7 people who lived by themselves, 7 people who lived with their parents and 6 people who lived in a group home. Some people told us they were very happy with their housing and support set up. Other people were interested in moving but were unsure about who might be able to help with exploring options, organising funding and planning a move.

Housing Resources

<https://www.summerfoundation.org.au/housing-resources/>



Presentations continued



Bowel Screening Information session

Before we start ...

We will be talking about cancer, private body parts and poo.

Some people here today may know someone who:

- has cancer
- had cancer
- died from cancer

If you feel upset, please let us know.

You can leave the room anytime you want.



Words we are using today

- "Poo" there might be different words we use for poo like bowel movement.
- "Screening" means a test to see if you are sick.
- Please ask if you're not sure word we are using.
- No question is a silly question!

Please ask questions any time.



What is cancer?

Cancer is a disease that:

- grows in your body
- can grow in any part of your body
- can spread from part of your body to other parts
- can make you sick

Some people die of cancer.



Bowel Cancer

You can have less of a chance of getting Bowel cancer when you do a Bowel Screen Test.



Presentations continued

How to find bowel cancer early

All people aged 45 and over can do the FREE test at home every 2 years



You are more likely to get bowel cancer if you

	Are older
	Have a family member who has had bowel cancer
	You have some bowel diseases, like Crohn's Disease
	Eat a poor diet – not enough fruit and vegetables.
	Are not exercising
	Drink alcohol
	Smoke



How to (prevent) not get bowel cancer

	Quit smoking
	Eat healthy food
	Eat less processed and red meats
	Drink less alcohol
	Do regular physical activity
	Eat whole grain foods



Less than 5 in 10 bowel cancers are diagnosed early

GET THE FACTS

When caught early

9 in 10

of those diagnosed with bowel cancer

will beat it.



For more information

Government Program

www.health.gov.au/nbcsp

Test Kit Helpline- 1800 930 998

Cancer Council Victoria

www.cancervic.org.au/bowel

Speak to a nurse 13 11 20



Inclusion Australia presentations

Inclusion Australia presented many sessions at the conference. These included sessions on employment, earning money, governance, yearly health checks and more.

The Our Voice committee presented on being part of Boards and Committees. Everyone should have a go! It is important people with an intellectual disability have a say in issues that affect them.



Sam Mouakkassa, Kalena Bos, Sarah Byrne and Sonia Hume from the Our Voice Committee presenting at the conference. Photo by Theresa and team.

Inclusion Australia : Your job, your choice – Supported Employment Advocacy (SEA) Project

What is the Disability Support Pension?
What are Disability Employment Services?

These workshops were presented by Inclusion Australia team members, Luke Nelson (Policy Officer) and Lorraine Sequera (Access and Inclusion Officer), with our CEO, Catherine McAlpine.

It was Lorraine's first time presenting at a conference and she did an amazing job explaining how Disability Employment Services are changing and what this means for people with an intellectual disability.



We answered questions from the audience about employment and their rights, what the changes to the Disability Employment Service mean and how someone can get the Disability Support Pension and also have a job, and earn more money.

Inclusion Australia is working with VALID and their other members around Australia to deliver a project called Supported Employment Advocacy (SEA). There are so many different things people might like to know about having a job and we are working together to help people find the answers.

There is more information about this project at www.inclusionaustralia.org.au and more information about employment at www.everyonecanwork.org.au

Inclusion Australia



The Inclusion Australia stall at Having a Say 2025 was a hive of activity. We loved being next to our friends at VALID. We gave away conversation cards on our projects Your Service, Your Rights and Make Decisions Real. We had Easy Read information on important issues.

Inclusion Australia information stall at Having a Say 2025. Photo by Theresa

Its Doctor Time!

We were proud to show people 'It's Doctor Time!' - our project on yearly health checks. The 'It's Doctor Time!' clock was a big feature of our stall. We had an 'It's Doctor Time!' selfie frame too.

Many people had their photo taken with the big clock and selfie frame. We also gave away 'It's Doctor Time!' magnets, postcards and conversation cards. Don't forget to book in a yearly health check with your GP! GP means your regular doctor.



*Kalena Bos, Chair of the Our Voice Committee, with the 'It's Doctor Time!' clock.
Photo by Theresa and team.*

More Info on Annual Health Assessments [link](#)

Resources on for Its Doctor Time [resource link](#)



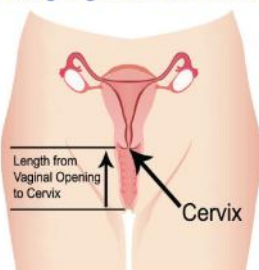
Presentations continued



Cervical Cancer Screening

What type of cancers will we talk about today?

Today we are going to talk about cervical cancer



Where is the cervix?



Cervical Cancer

- Cervical cancer is one of the easiest cancers to find and treat.
- Almost every cervical cancer is caused by a virus called the **Human Papillomavirus or HPV**.
- You can stop cervical cancer by
 1. Speaking to your doctor if you have any cervical cancer signs.
 2. Get a HPV vaccine if you can.
 3. Practice safer sex.
 4. Do cervical screening tests every five years.



What about Pap smear tests?

Australia no longer does Pap smear tests.

We now have Cervical Screening Tests.

Pap smears were every 2 years, now we do a Cervical Screening Test every 5 years. This is a better test than a Pap smear test. ✓

You should get a cervical screening test if you are **age 25 – 74** and have ever had sex.



Cervical screening test options

You can now choose between two different ways to have a Cervical Screening Test.

You can choose to

1. Self collect that means do your own test by putting a swab in your vagina
- or
2. Clinician collect that means have a nurse or doctor do your test using a speculum and small brush.



Presentations continued

Who should have a Cervical Screen Test?

- ✓ Women or anyone with a cervix
- ✓ Have EVER had sex
- ✓ Aged 25 – 74 years old
- ✓ Every 5 years



Option 1: Do the test yourself

- This is done privately in the doctor's office (toilet or behind a curtain).
- You can ask for help from the nurse or doctor
- You can take a support person, family member or someone you trust with you
- You can take your time
- You can do it sitting (including in a wheelchair), lying or standing.



Option 2: the doctor or nurse does the test

- This is done the same way as a Pap smear used to be done, but the lab testing is different.
- You will need to lie on a bed and spread your legs.
- The doctor or nurse will put a speculum in your vagina and take a small sample with a small brush. This may be uncomfortable but should not hurt.



Cervical Screen Test Results



It can take up to **2 weeks** for the results



Your doctor will **call** you about the result



Most test results are **normal**



More information

You can contact the Cancer Council for more information about cancer and support. You can do this by:

- Calling 13 11 20 on your phone
- Going to their website, cancervic.org.au/cervical
- Emailing askanurse@cancervic.org.au



Presentations Continued

Scope Co-research: A course to learn about research and do a research project

Marcus, Geoff, Nell and Stella from Scope did a presentation about doing a co-research course. The course helped people learn about research and how to do research. The presenters said that the course was good and that more people with disability should be involved in research. The presenters also talked about a research project they did. The research project was about how to support people with disability to live independently.



If you would like to know more about the co-research course at Scope, you can email Caroline at chart@scopeaust.org.au

Connections TV

Our Genu Connections TV Crew absolutely enjoyed performing at the Having a Say 2025. We had everyone up and dancing.

Wow, what an awesome day our Connections TV crew had doing a live show for everyone at the VALID Having A Say Conference.

So many people danced and got into the party, and huge thanks to DJ fuzzy logic (Ryan, Paul & Phil) for setting up the gear! Connections TV been at the HAS conference for three years now, and we're already excited for next year!!



Gallery



← VEC
expo table

VALID
Community
Development
team →



Thank you to our Volunteers

AN extra special thank you to all the people who volunteered their time during the conference, especially those who took time off from their paid work so they could help out!

The volunteers....

Aaron Hall
Adrain Keegan
Allison Oke
Amanda Quarrell
Andrew Gordon
Angelique Etiennette
Anna Kotarac
Arlene Tan
Bella Scott
Caroline Weiss
Carolyn Tetaz
Caz Hearn
Charlene Bier
Claire Pritchard
Danielle George
Deanne Bond
Deb Cairns
Dedee Pya Saripella
Deepika Gautam
Elica Petrovsk
Ellie Constantinou
Email Washington
Emily Barrett
Emma Murphy
Frances Risoli
Gael MacPherson
Glenn Van Dord
Graci Lynch
Gunjan Bhullar
Hanna Gauci

Holly Broughton
Jack Hewitt
Jackie Costa
Jacinta Oakley
Jamie Bannister
Jacinta Thomas
Janelle Accheni
Jen Jackson-Hall
Jenny Crosbie
Jessica Fairnsworth
Jocey Lu
Joanna Rui
Joshua Sawyer
Judy Kelly
Julianne Nguyen
Julia Di Cesare
Julie Anderson
Jonathon Rollason
Karen Kerr-Chapman
Karen Major
Kate Grant-Foley
Kate Lynch
Keith Purcell
Kelly Trainor
Kerry Mutke
Kim Bonney
Kris McCormack
Kristy Major
Leah Baxter
Leanne Pearman

Lenore Green
Liam Rodger
Lucy Macali
Lynne Foreman
Madonna Plumb
Marcia Ludinic
Maree Skiadis
Meg Stewart-Snod
Mel Fletcher
Meril Perera
Michelle Sutton
Mitch Burns
Mitch Child
Monica Sidhu
Nerissa Campbell
Nicole Hassall
Nicole Kearsey
Nicole Spehar
Pauline Risoli
Rebecca Van Abel
Rebecca Young
Robert Lloyd
Simone Stevens
Stephen Scott
Suzanne Priestley
Sue Cox
Tamara Reinisch
Toby Ward-Boas
Todd Davies



← Volunteers on the job in the courtyard

Kate & Simone from the Local Reference Committee →



Thank you, Come & Try Facilitators

VALID would like to thank all of the facilitators for their support in making this year's Come and Try activities such a huge success:

Art - painting	Kim Pearce
Badgemaking	Pauline Risoli
Colouring in for Adults	Kim Pearce
Craft with Wood	Stephen Scott
Dates & Mates	Melba Support Service
Dream Catcher	Stephen Scott
Hair & Make-up	Pauline Risoli
Harley Rides	Michael Thornton Leather knights Harley Chauffeurs
Karaoke	Volunteers
Self Advocacy Bingo	Anthony Risoli
Speed Friendship	Jon Slingsby

Online activities

Quizzes (Music & Trivia)	Heather Forsyth & Katy Gagliardi
Yoga	Katie Fox, Yogadition



Speed Friendship



Harley Rides



Craft with Wood



Art—painting



Dreams & Aspirations

Thank you to our Supporters

Thank you to all the individuals and organisations that supported the Having a say Conference to make it another great event!

- **City of Greater Geelong** - supporting with parking for delegates
- ***dal*** - delicious morning and afternoon teas and amazing catering staff
- **Deakin University Event Staff** - Great support with running the conference and parking
- **DFFH (Dept of Families Fairness & Housing)** for a Grant to sponsor people living in group homes attend
- **NDIA** - Barwon and National Offices for volunteers
- **NDIS partners LCHS** - for providing volunteers to support participants
- **Sphinx Hotel** - HaS's Got Talent Auditions
- **The Italian Club** - for supporting the Dinner Disco
- **Tourism Greater Geelong and the Bellarine**
- **Un-Limited** - entertainment at the Dinner Disco
- **Upstage Sound** - the disco light and sound show
- **Vic. Senior Practitioner's office** - for providing volunteers
- **Video Essentials** - Conference DVD



Our Choice Expo



Disco at Club Italia



Mandy Donley, Vic. Senior Practitioner
presenting Art Awards

Thank You to the LRC

Local Reference Committee (LRC)

Special thank you to the members of the Local Reference Committee for all their hard work during the year.



Geelong Community Members

Angus Bannister

Eliza Charters (Vice-Chairperson)

Simone Stevens

Kate Grant-Foley (Chairperson)

Nicole Spehar

Lynne Foreman



VALID Inc.

Christine Scott



Lots of people bought a HaS T-shirt



Lots of time to network



VALID is a not-for-profit organisation managed by a voluntary Board. Board members include people with disabilities and parents. VALID is funded by the State Government to provide advocacy support to adults who have an intellectual disability.

VALID also runs programs to empower people with disabilities and families, such as self-advocacy training, peer action groups and the Having a Say Conference.

For more information contact VALID by:



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Collingwood Vic. 3066



Web: www.valid.org.au



Email: info@valid.org.au



Having a Say havingasay@valid.org.au

Visit the Having a Say conference



Facebook page



@VALID_Inc



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