

VALID

presents

Having a Say Conference 2026

Program Summary

as of 23rd Oct. 2025

27th – 29th January 2026

Deakin University, Waterfront Campus
1 Gheringhap Street, Geelong



Platinum Sponsors



Theme: '25 years: Strengthening our Voices for a better Future!'

Having a Say (HaS) conference is celebrating 25 years of in-person conference that have promoted self-advocacy skills to strengthen the voices of people with disability.

That is thousands of people with disability who have:

- presented or performed at HaS
- had their voices heard and told their stories
- found inspiration from their peers
- gained information to help them with problems
- had their achievements celebrated
- learned about their rights

This is a time when everyone's voice matters. HaS will keep equipping people to speak up and promoting the talents, achievements and voices of people with disability.

More Information available:

www.valid.org.au

T: 03 9416 4003 E: havingasay@valid.org.au

Tuesday 27th January 2026

Open at 9.30am	<i>Foyer</i> Grab your Registration Package, get a Coffee & start planning your day!						
10.30am – 12noon	 VDWC Victorian Disability Worker Commission Welcome to Country Official Opening, Prof. Iain Martin, Vice Chancellor, Deakin University TBC Welcome to Geelong by Stretch Kontelj, Mayor of the City of Greater Geelong TBC Keynote: Dan Stubbs, Victorian Disability Worker Commissioner (VDWC) Special Presentation for 25th HaS conference Open Microphone   <i>Costa Hall (Auditorium)</i>						
12noon - 1.30pm	 Have lunch with friends at 'The Common' Café or in the Courtyard and check out the Our Choice Expo						
1.30pm - 2.30pm	Performance The Wizard of Scope (Scope Ballarat) Costa Hall	Workshop My Health Matters Masterclass (Council for Intellectual Disability) Yellow Room	Presentation Promoting a safe and high-quality disability sector – with the Victorian Disability Worker Commission (VDWC) and the Disability Services Commissioner (DSC) Blue Room	VALID Stream VALID Connect – Get Connected Green Room 	Presentation Supporting My Rights (Down Syndrome Australia) 3 Different Self-Advocacy Journeys (New Wave Bass Coast South Gippsland) Grey Room	Come & Try  Gentle Tango Hair & Make-Up Self-Advocacy Bingo Tie-dyeing <i>Meet in Courtyard</i> Harley Rides <i>Meet out front</i> ONLINE ONLY Trivia Quiz	Presentation Changing the Disability Discrimination Act (Inclusion Australia) TBC Pink Room 
2.30 - 3.00pm	 Afternoon Tea break <i>Foyer</i>						

Tuesday 27th January 2026

3.00pm - 4.00pm	Open Microphone 'On the Couch with Heather & Luke' Including your stories of 25 years of HaS  Costa Hall	Workshop Let's Get Loud (Down Syndrome Aust & National Centre for Excellence in Intellectual Disability Health) Yellow Room	Workshop Changes to Disability Employment Services: What it means for people with intellectual disability (Inclusion Australia) Moving Forward From Institutions in NSW (Hunter Circles) Blue Room	VALID Stream International Self advocacy To be confirmed (VALID) Green Room 	Presentation Accessing VLA to strengthen your voice (Victoria Legal Aid - VLA) ABI and the Criminal Justice System: Lived-Experience Training Made for Us, With Us (Voices for Change) Grey Room	Come & Try  Art - Painting Badge-making Hair & Make-up Craft with Wood <i>Meet in Courtyard</i> Harley Rides <i>Meet out front</i> ONLINE ONLY Yoga	Presentation Tenant Voice - Putting the voice of people with disabilities first in SDA Housing (Young People In Nursing Homes) TBC Pink Room 
6.30 - 10.00pm	Disco Event <i>Let's Party & Sparkle</i> – celebrating 25-year silver anniversary of HaS, to the music of 'Unlimited' <i>Croatian Community Centre</i>				Speakers Guest speakers: 25 Years of HaS in the words of those who have been part of it.		



Thanks to our SILVER Sponsors:



Thanks to our BRONZE Sponsors:



Note: ONLINE Sessions

All sessions that have the Zoom symbol will be available ONLINE via a Zoom link - which will be sent to people who have registered the week before.



Wednesday 28th January 2026

Open at 8.30am	Grab your Registration Package if it's your first dayget a Coffee & start planning your day! 						
	Foyer						
9.30am - 10.30am	 NDIS Quality and Safeguards Commission Special Keynote: Colleen Pearce, former Victorian Public Advocate Sir Robert Martin Award Performance by 2025 Having a Say's Got Talent winner – Adam James Keynote: Louise Glanville, Commissioner and Natalie Wade, Associate Commissioner NDIS Quality & Safety Commission 						
	Costa Hall						
10.30am - 11 am	 Morning Tea						
	Foyer						
11.00am - 12.00pm	Performance	Workshop	Workshop	VALID Stream	Presentation	Come & Try 	Presentation
	The Sugar Bells Live (Scope Ballarat)	Introduction to friendship, relationships and intimacy workshop (Melba Support Services)	Improve your public speaking skills! (Down Syndrome Victoria)	VALID Self-Advocacy Projects Driving Change (VALID Self Advocacy team)	Easy English Family Violence Safety Planning (Safe Steps)	Badge Making Colouring for Adults Karaoke Speed Friendship <i>Meet in Courtyard</i>	People first: improving co-design of health professional education (Office of the Public Advocate)
	Silent Voices (We are Vivid)		How inclusive governance can build a better future for everyone (Our Voice)			Harley Rides <i>Meet out front</i>	genU Using our Voices to Support others – R U OK Day – at genU
	Costa Hall	Yellow Room	Blue Room	Green Room 	Grey Room	ONLINE ONLY Music Trivia	Pink Room 
2.00pm - 1.30pm	Have lunch with friends or look at the Our Choice Expo or join in the fun in the Courtyard 						
12.15pm	Courtyard	 Live entertainment by Genu Connections TV. Have your lunch and join in the fun!					



indicates ONLINE sessions for people who have registered

Wednesday 28th January 2026

1.30pm – 2.30pm	Open Microphone 'On the Couch with Luke' (with Luke from VALID)  Costa Hall	Workshop Supporting family violence victim survivors (Safe Steps) You can be a researcher too – learn how! (Melbourne Uni) Yellow Room	Presentation Talking to your loved ones about friendships, relationships and intimacy (Melba Support Services) Blue Room	VALID Stream I Can Decide Project (VALID Community Development team) Green Room 	Presentation Food choice: why is it important and who helps? (Victoria University) Working Together: preventing everyday harm (Inclusion Group) Grey Room	Come & Try  Art - painting Colouring with Adults Gentle Tango Craft with Wood <i>Meet in Courtyard</i> Harley Rides <i>Meet out front</i> ONLINE ONLY Yoga	Presentation Stronger Together – Advocates Growing Self Advocates (Speak Out Tas.) Respecting Our Ability – inclusive governance project (Speak Out & SACID) Pink Room 
2.30 - 3.00pm	<i>Foyer</i>  Afternoon Tea break						
3.00pm - 4.00pm	Open Microphone 25 Years of Having a Say conference – Memory Lane, videos & Open Microphone  Costa Hall	Workshop Life Changes: speaking up and managing change with your brother or sister (Siblings Australia) Yellow Room	Workshop You should have a say in your behaviour support (Melbourne Uni) Blue Room	VALID Stream Employment Advocacy Project (VALID Advocacy Team) VALID Q group and Rainbow Rights Green Room 	Presentation Life in Transition: Change, Choice and Confidence (Cerebral Palsy Support Network) TBC Grey Room	Come & Try  Craft with Mosaics Karaoke Speed Friendship Smoothie Bike <i>Meet in Courtyard</i> Harley Rides <i>Meet out front</i> ONLINE ONLY Self-Advocacy Online	Presentation Community for Everyone (Hunter Circles) genU Client Leadership Teams – Big Voices, Big Ideas (genU) Pink Room 
7pm - 10pm	Having a Say's Got Talent (HGT) Auditions Contestants will sing, dance & entertain you as they audition (Note: finals on Thurs. 29th at 12.00pm) The HGT competition is sponsored by InLife Independent Living						
	The Sphinx						

Thursday 29th January 2026

8.45 – 9.30am	Foyer Grab your Registration Package if it's your first day.....get a coffee & start planning your day!						
9.30am – 10.15am	Open Microphone 25 Years of Having a Say conference – Memory Lane, videos & Open Microphone  Costa Hall	Workshop Making Self-Advocacy groups stronger (Inclusion Australia) Yellow Room	VALID Stream Confused about the changes to the NDIS – then we will talk about them in plain English and what you can do to self advocate (VALID)  Green Room	Presentation The Great Accessible Road Trip (Great Ocean Road Tourism) TBC Blue Room	Presentation Deakin Uni TBC Grey Room	Come & Try Karaoke Colouring for Adults  ONLINE Self-Advocacy Bingo Meet in Courtyard	Presentation BIG Events for BIG futures! (genU)  Pink Room
10.15am	Foyer Morning Tea 						
10.45am – 11.30am	Performance 'Sing it out loud' (MusicSpace) Bird is the Word – puppet (Ellie Blackney) Costa Hall	Workshop 'Dreams & Aspirations' * come and write/tell/draw your dreams & goals for your life Yellow Room	VALID Stream To be Confirmed (VALID)  Green Room	Presentation Supporting older people with intellectual disability living in SIL homes (Scope) Health Story – Leah Scott Blue Room	Presentation My journey from school to work (Council for Intellectual Disability) Grey Room	Come & Try Karaoke  ONLINE Yoga Meet in Courtyard	Presentation Hear about the MINDS group from Singapore  Pink Room
11.30am	Foyer Brunch 						
12.00pm – 1.00pm	CLOSING CEREMONY HaS's Got Talent Competition Final Family Empowerment Award 'Pentland - Banfield' Self Advocacy Award and the <u>Art Competition Prizes</u> sponsored by the Victorian Senior Practitioner   <i>Costa Hall</i>						