

*W*omenwithdisabilitiesvictoria  
empowering women

**Annual Report**  
.....  
**2013-14**



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# Our vision and mission

## Our Vision

A world where all women are respected and can fully experience life.

## Our Mission


Leading the way for Victorian women with disabilities and improving women's choices by:

- providing a voice for women with disabilities
- building partnerships
- providing information
- educating the community.

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Thank you to the following photographers, whose images appear in our report:  
Daniel Mendelbaum, Jorge de Araujo  
and Angela Wylie.



# Our goals and priorities

## Our Strategic Goals

Women with Disabilities Victoria (WDV) is an organisation of women with disabilities for women with disabilities.

WDV recognises that women with disabilities are among the most marginalised in our community and empowers women with disabilities to achieve their rights in Victoria.

We focus on those areas where gender inequity and/or disability have the biggest impact on the capacity of women with disabilities to be respected and to fully experience life.

We have three clear goals for this strategic plan:

- 1 Influence Government and the community to recognise and remove barriers to full participation by women with disabilities.
- 2 Empower women with disabilities to influence their communities.
- 3 Ensure WDV is a strong, vibrant and sustainable organisation.

## Priority Areas

The current priorities of WDV are:

- violence against women with disabilities
- access to health care.

We also have a secondary focus on:

- parenting rights of women with disabilities
- employment.

## Risk statement

Women with Disabilities Victoria seeks opportunities for innovative approaches to achieving our mission and goals.

We value taking measured risks in exploring new strategies and we are committed to being innovative in the way we do our work in research, community education, leadership and advocacy. In doing so, our goal is to work effectively to improve the outcomes for women with disabilities in Victoria and to ensure the sustainability of the organisation.

We are averse to risks related to legislative compliance, financial management and occupational health and safety and seek to mitigate such risks in all our activities. Our governance and operational policies and processes guide the mitigation of such risks.

# Our Board



Marija Groen



Binda Gokhale



Ann-Marie Baker



Angela Fitzpatrick



Saphron Hastie



Sonja Ilievska



Val Johnstone



Suzanne Lau-Gooye



Kumari Middleton



Delia Portlock



Trudy Ryall



Esperanza Torres

## **Marija Groen**

### **Chair**

*BA*

Appointed to the Board November 2011. Chair of WDV Board since February 2013. Finance Committee member.

Marija has over 25 years of management experience in the not-for-profit sector covering areas of homelessness, family violence prevention, housing and disability.

## **Binda Gokhale**

### **Treasurer**

*BEc, CPA, MBA, GAICD*

Co-opted to the Board as a Non-Executive Director and Treasurer in December 2011. Finance Committee Chair.

Binda is currently Manager, Financial Services for Wyndham City Council.

## **Ann-Marie Baker**

### **Joint Vice-Chair**

*BA (Hons), GradDip App.Sc.*

Appointed to the Board November 2012 and Joint Vice-Chair since February 2013. Membership Committee Chair. Brenda Gabe Leadership Award Committee Chair. Risk Management Committee member.

Ann-Marie has over 25 years experience in the tertiary education sector in the areas of museum management, curatorship and project management.

## **Angela Fitzpatrick**

### **Joint Vice-Chair**

*GradDipHR*

Appointed to the Board November 2011 and Joint Vice-Chair since February 2013. Governance Committee Chair. Membership Committee member.

Angela has a background in Human Resources, working in large corporations. She is currently a Consultant and Consumer Advocate in Health and Disability.

## **Saphron Hastie**

*BA (English & Women's Studies), Dip. Social Science Research*

Appointed to the Board November 2013. Governance Committee member. Risk Committee member. Membership Committee member.

Saphron is a project manager, trainer and research consultant specialising in the higher education and non-government organisation sectors.

## **Sonja Ilievska**

*BEc, MAICD*

Appointed to the Board November 2012. Risk Committee Chair. Governance Committee member.

Sonja is Director of Auditing at B&S RMP Audits with additional qualifications in internal quality auditing and quality concepts.

## **Val Johnstone**

*B.SW*

Appointed to the Board November 2013. Governance Committee member. Brenda Gabe Leadership Award Committee member.

Val has a background in social work in the health and rehabilitation sector and as an NDIS adviser.

## **Suzanne Lau-Gooley**

*B.Pharm, M.PublicHealth*

Appointed to the Board November 2012. Risk Committee member. Membership Committee member.

Suzanne is an experienced hospital pharmacist and a former HIV/AIDS adviser at Oxfam.

## Our Board *continued*

### **Kumari Middleton**

Appointed to the Board November 2010. Finance Committee member.

Kumari is the Co-Founder and CEO of Mayibuye and Artistic Director of 'Multicoloured Journeys'.

### **Delia Portlock**

RN

Appointed to the Board November 2013. Risk Committee member. Brenda Gabe Leadership Award Committee member.

Delia has worked as a registered nurse and has extensive experience in advocating

for people living with disabilities, particularly people with acquired brain injury.

### **Trudy Ryall**

Appointed to the Board November 2013. Governance Committee member. Membership Committee member. Brenda Gabe Leadership Award Committee member.

Trudy is currently the Information Officer at Able Australia and a recipient of the Sir John Monash Award from the Monash City Council for "Outstanding Advocate for people with disabilities".

### **Esperanza Torres**

*M.App. Social Research*

Appointed to the Board November 2013. Finance Committee member. Membership Committee member.

Esperanza is currently self-employed at Torres Research & Writing, working with small businesses and presenting workshops and seminars on the importance of research and marketing strategy.

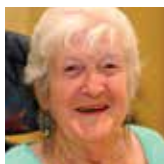
## Directors who resigned during 2013-14



### **Fiona Guthrie** (*resigned 15/8/2013*)

Appointed to the Board November 2010

Fiona has been a participant in the WDV Leadership and Mentoring Program 2011, Leaders of Tomorrow 2011-2012 and the Rotary Youth Leadership Camp.



### **Margaret Stevens** (*resigned 19/12/2013*)

Appointed to the Board November 2013.

Margaret was previously appointed to the Board at WDV's inception in 2007. She is an active advocate in the areas of transport, gender balance and access to aids and equipment.

## Our staff



Keran Howe



Sarah Boyd



Jen Hargrave



Sharon Granek



Jane Oldfield



Maria Burchell



Simone Flanagan



Fofi Christou

**Keran Howe:** Executive Director

**Sarah Boyd:** Information and Administration Officer (to August 2013)

**Jen Hargrave:** Policy Officer, Violence against women with disabilities

**Sharon Granek:** Program Manager

**Jane Oldfield:** Partnership and Leadership Development Officer

**Wendy Marris:** Accountant

**Maria Burchell:** Office Manager

**Simone Flanagan:** Communications Officer

**Fofi Christou:** Gender Equity Training Coordinator

**Pip Robertson:** Gender Equity Training Project Officer

# Chair's report



**Marija Groen**  
Board Chair  
Women with  
Disabilities Victoria

Women with Disabilities Victoria acknowledges the traditional owners of the land in which we work, the Wurundjeri people of the Kulin nation, and their elders past and present.

Women with Disabilities Victoria has again taken a leadership role over the past year in addressing some of the biggest issues facing women with disabilities through a range of important research, policy and advocacy initiatives.

Our Executive Director Keran Howe outlines those initiatives in more detail in her report but I would like to note the great value and importance of all of the work done throughout 2013-14 by the Women with Disabilities Victoria staff and management. On behalf of the Board, I acknowledge the quality of all their achievements and sincerely thank them all, with special thanks to Office Manager

Maria Burchell who also provides governance support to the Board.

My thanks also go to our Board members for their great energy and enthusiasm. It has again been a pleasure and honour to work with such a dedicated Board who give their time and skills so generously.

Our Board is made up entirely of women with disabilities and this year we expanded our ranks from 7 members to 12. This has given us much greater capacity across an expanded range of committees: Finance, Governance/Membership, Risk Management, and the Brenda Gabe Award committee, as well as an Executive Committee.

All of these committees have worked hard to develop transparent processes and policies to support the Board's vision: the viability and



“ On behalf of the Board, I extend our great thanks to the supporters, members, partners and funding bodies of Women with Disabilities Victoria, without whom we could not do the important work we do.”  
Marija Groen, Women with Disabilities Victoria



sustainability of Women with Disabilities Victoria as an organisation that will grow, maintain its high sense of integrity through a rights based approach, and value social, economic and financial outcomes equally.

The Board was also pleased this year to work with management and staff to develop and endorse the Women with Disabilities Victoria 2013–16 Strategic Plan.

Vital to that process was the consultation with our members and partners to ensure we are listening to their views and meeting their expectations. I believe we can see the success of that focus in the positive responses we received through a number of consumer forums hosted by the Board and in the growing numbers and diversity of WDV’s membership.

Women with Disabilities Victoria is a strong and respected organisation that works to empower women with disabilities. I look with confidence to the future knowing it will continue to make real change, raise real issues and embrace the real needs of women with disabilities in Victoria.

On behalf of the Board, I extend our great thanks to the supporters, members, partners and funding bodies of Women with Disabilities Victoria, without whom we could not do the important work we do.

# Executive Director's report



**Keran Howe**  
Executive Director  
Women with  
Disabilities Victoria

*"When I had my first relationship they just started naturally hitting me and I just thought: 'Oh well, that's right, that's how it's meant to be.'"*

*"I want you all to remember that you are people of worth who have a disability and you have the right to be treated with respect and dignity. It has not been easy, my abuse has left scars but don't give up trying to get your story out. It's hard, but you'll find a freedom in yourself once you do."*

Twenty Victorian women with disabilities shared their powerful words and terrible experiences with us in the *Voices against Violence* Research Project, one of our major pieces of work in 2013-2014 and done in partnership with the Office for the Public Advocate (OPA) and the Domestic Violence Resources Centre Victoria (DVRCV).

We thank the women who contributed their voices to this landmark two-year project, many of whom said they wanted to speak out so that other women could more easily get help. Their stories revealed the extent of degradation, horrific physical injury and economic abuse that women with disabilities suffer

and indicate that we still have a very long way to go in Victoria. The project will continue to inform our policy and advocacy work.

Already we have begun to roll out our violence prevention strategy, the *Gender and Disability Workforce Development Program* for frontline disability workers and managers and for women with disabilities using disability services. This work has so far shown great promise and we hope it will prove to be a powerful way to support better understanding of gender and disability inequity and of violence prevention.

Seeing our *Enabling Women* leadership program go from strength to strength this year has also been exciting, with participants empowering themselves and each other. It is fundamental to improving their status that women with disabilities can reflect together on their multiple identities and recognise their talents and leadership abilities. *Enabling Women* will continue to be spread across Victoria over the next year.

Our advocacy work continues to contribute the experience of our members, and the evidence of our research, to government

“ For all the work we have achieved this year, my heartfelt thanks go to all of Women with Disabilities Victoria’s staff and volunteers, and to all our funding partners.” Keran Howe, Women with Disabilities Victoria



Keran Howe presenting certificate to Di Barnes.

inquiries and advisory bodies as well as to building the capacity of community services to recognise the rights of women with disabilities and to tailor services appropriately.

Through our communications program we have been able to disseminate information and resources to our members, partners, media and the broader community, particularly building our presence in social media.

It was wonderful to engage with our members, partners, staff and the Board to develop

the Strategic Direction of Women with Disabilities Victoria over the next three years. This valuable process endorsed our priority focus on violence and access to health services for women with disabilities, as well as on our work to empower women with disabilities, improve access to mainstream services, and keep a strong gender lens on the implementation of the NDIS.

The welcome desire of our members to be more involved with WDV saw the inception of an annual members’ lunch and the

introduction of the Brenda Gabe Award was a fantastic opportunity to honour those who work on behalf of us all, particularly our inaugural winner Tricia Malowney.

For all the work we have achieved this year, my heartfelt thanks go to all of Women with Disabilities Victoria’s staff and volunteers, and to all our funding partners.

I look forward to working with you all through the next year.

# Strategic goal

# 1

*Influence Government and the community to recognise and remove barriers to full participation by women with disabilities*

## Raising our voices against violence

*Voices Against Violence* was a two-year research project undertaken by Women with Disabilities Victoria, in partnership with the Office of the Public Advocate (OPA) and the Domestic Violence Resources Centre Victoria.

It provided a rare and valued opportunity for Victorian women with disabilities to share their experiences of violence, to describe the support they received and to relate their experiences of the justice system. Importantly, women also provided recommendations for changes to the way the family violence service system supports women with disabilities.

The project has captured real stories from real women. They reveal the depth of our failure as a society to provide a safe environment for women with a disability and, when that fails, to provide a just and supportive response so that women are again safe.

As well as hearing the voices of women themselves, the research includes an overview of current issues, a review of legislative protections, interviews with OPA staff and volunteers, and reviews of 100 OPA files. The findings are published in seven reports.

This ground-breaking research was launched on 15 May 2014 by Natasha Stott Despoja AM, Ambassador for Women and Girls and Chair of the Foundation to Prevent Violence Against Women and their Children.

Over 200 people from the family violence, sexual assault, disability, mental health, aged care, legal and government sectors attended the launch.

We wish to thank the many women who participated in the *Voices Against Violence* project for their generosity and courage in sharing their stories. Thanks also to the Voices Against Violence Project Advisory Committee, researchers and project partners.

Women with Disabilities Victoria is now working on ways to implement the project's 21 recommendations.



## Voices against Violence research findings

- Women with disabilities experience violence to a higher degree and for longer periods of time than women in the general population.
- Women with disabilities experience a wide range of violence throughout their lives, in a variety of settings.
- Sexism and ableism intersect, increasing the risk of violence for women with disabilities.
- Stereotypes of 'disability' contribute to the reasons why women with disabilities are targeted.
- Social isolation can limit the opportunities for women with disabilities to seek help.
- Aboriginal women with a disability experience particular barriers to safety.
- The service and justice systems are difficult to navigate and responses are often poor.
- Women with disabilities do not have adequate access to safe, appropriate and affordable housing.
- Better outcomes are achieved when services and organisations tailor their responses to the specific needs of women with disabilities who have experienced violence.
- Violence against women is preventable. There is considerable scope for governments and communities to prevent violence before it occurs.

**Images** (top to bottom): Jane Rosengrave whose personal journey was published *The Age*; Fiona Guthrie who shared her story with us and Natasha Stott Despoja AM at the launch; A cast of many who all contributed their time and energy to make this important research happen; The panel who presented the *Voices Against Violence* project findings (L–R Delanie, Lucy Healey, Magdalena Maguire, John Chesterman).

## Strategic goal 1 *continued*

“ I want everyone to remember people with disabilities are people of worth. We have a right to be treated with respect. We have a right to safety.”  
Jane, WDV member

### Consulting women about their experience of safety

We were privileged to hear a diversity of women with disabilities speak about what safety means for them during a focus group held in March 2014.

Women spoke about their experiences of safety in the community, at home and in disability services. They talked about the impacts of having a disability worker come into their home or into their room, and raised the importance of support options, support information, and – above all – being heard.

The focus group themes fed into the National Disability Services' 'Zero Tolerance' project to prevent and respond to neglect and abuse in their member organisations.

This project is an important opportunity for disability services to consider gender and link to work being undertaken to reduce violence against women.

See the Summary Report, *Speaking Up about Safety*, at <http://www.nds.org.au/news/article/2972>

*Jen Hargrave: Policy Officer, Violence against women with disabilities*

### Making our voices heard

As part of our work to prevent and address violence against women with disabilities, we:

- sat on 13 committees, including the National Plan Implementation Panel and the Victorian Violence Against Women and Children Advisory Forum
- made substantial input into six submissions on violence, including *The Australian Human Rights Commission's Inquiry into access to justice in the criminal justice system for people with disability* and the *Victorian Parliament's Family and Community Development Committee's Inquiry into Social Inclusion and Victorians with a Disability*
- ran 5 consultations with women with disabilities through the year that informed our submissions and provided input into broader research programs
- responded to over 50 agencies seeking information and expertise regarding referrals, service improvements, policy development – and those seeking the views of women with disabilities
- grew our *Violence and Disability Quarterly* subscription list to more than 570
- made 9 presentations and delivered 6 training sessions to a variety of sectors.

“ *If we could change one thing, it should be to make sure that no violence happens and that, if it does, people are safe to talk out about it.*” Fiona, WDV member



Women with Disabilities Victoria were pleased to be invited to present at the 2014 South West Disability Network Conference. Our panel discussion explored ways for the disability sector to prevent, recognise and respond to violence against women with disabilities.

A theme in the discussion was the value of working across sectors. The panel itself

demonstrated the strengths of working together with panellists coming from a range of services: Barwon CASA, Victoria Police, Zena Women's Services and the Barwon Family Violence Regional Integration Committee.

Two panellists were women with disabilities, and the discussion highlighted the importance of including women with disabilities in all discussions about violence against women with disabilities –

both at a service level and at a policy making level.

**Image** Left to right: Fofi Christou (WDV), Peter Miller (Victoria Police), Jess Boccia (Barwon CASA), Claire Yeatman (Zena Women's Services), Jen Hargrave (WDV), Fiona Guthrie (WDV) and Russelle Beardon (Barwon Family Violence Regional Integration Coordinator).

## Strategic goal 1 *continued*

“ They need to provide information on our rights and support services. Unless you know the systems you don’t know what to ask for and you don’t have any power.” Sam, WDV Member

### **Violence prevention: changing the ways we work**

*“I’ve been working in a silo, and it’s great to see different connections, new connections that have been made, and everyone working towards the same goal that we could have and should have been working towards for a long time.”*

*Training participant*

Women with Disabilities Victoria began to roll out our Workforce Development Program on Gender and Disability after securing funding from the Victorian Government under the Action Plan to Address Violence Against Women and Children 2012-2015.

Our disability training package – “Human Rights and Quality Services: What does gender have to do with it?” – promises to have a significant influence on the knowledge and skills of disability service workers and management in responding sensitively to women with disabilities. Through this program we seek to raise workers’ awareness of the importance of both working in a rights based framework and having the knowledge necessary to prevent and respond to violence and abuse.

We launched with a five day Train the Trainer program in May, involving 11 women with disabilities (with diverse lived and professional experience) and 11 professional trainers (with gender equity training and/or violence prevention and response experience).

They came from across metropolitan Melbourne and regional Victoria, and among the women with disabilities were a deputy Mayor, an access and equity worker at a large banking institution, women from performing arts backgrounds and women who are active in a range of advocacy, health and prevention of violence networks.

We were also pleased to have involvement from services including women’s health, Women’s Legal Service and Centres Against Sexual Assault (CASA). Participating organisations included Barwon CASA, South East CASA, Women’s Health Goulburn North East, Women’s Legal Service Victoria, WRISC Ballarat, Women’s Health and Wellbeing Barwon South West, Women’s Health East, CASA House,



Women's Domestic Violence Crisis Service of Victoria, and Mental Health & Safer Community Programs, Monash University.

The mix of facilitators undertaking the program has significantly contributed to initiating cross sector work in gender and disability equity, linking the multitude of services and sectors participating in the training to collaborate alongside women with disabilities.

From there, we formalised a partnership with Yooralla and have progressed discussions with Gateways Support Services in Geelong as the second pilot organisation.

In June 2014 we delivered the first one day leadership workshop to 11 Yooralla Service Managers. A formal evaluation of the whole program is underway and will inform the further roll out of the program through 2014-15.



Participants in the Train the Trainer Program

### From our Train the Trainer Participants

“Working with people with disabilities, and without disabilities, and being on an equal footing and being able to work together... I don't know where else it's been done before.”

“The training has not been training, it's been building and empowering the sector.”

### From the Yooralla Service Managers Workshop

“The whole (day) was excellent – great relevant content, flowed well – never lost.”

“This is not a ‘box ticking’ exercise but there is political will to drive changes in this area.”

## Changing health care system policy and practice

### Health policy

As part of our Strategic Plan consultation we met with health service providers about how they were supporting women with disabilities and what gaps they identified in service provision. Education for health workers about how to provide appropriate care, tailored health promotion and health information for women with disabilities and better collection of data about disability by health services was emphasised as critical.

We continued to advocate for better policy on health issues affecting women with disabilities, including through the development on a position paper to secure funding to resource a Health Policy position within Women with Disabilities Victoria.

We met with Victoria's Parliamentary Secretary for Health, Georgie Crozier, to demonstrate how a health policy position would enable us to:

- provide highly informed consumer-based input into state and local government policy and planning for health

- support the participation of women with disabilities in Victorian health services and health organisations
- provide evidence-based information to support advocacy and professional and community education.

Women with Disabilities Victoria will continue to advocate strongly for this position given the ongoing failure of health services to adequately treat women with disabilities with respect and appropriate care.

### Health promotion

We secured seed funding from the Ian Potter Foundation to develop *Healthy Services Healthy Women*, a professional health and disability educational program to address the barriers in health care for women with disabilities.

This followed our 2010 literature review that highlighted the significant disadvantage women with disabilities experienced in accessing health services. As a result, a community development project was undertaken in 2012 and a DVD produced, written by young women with disabilities and depicting a variety of scenarios in health related settings.

The DVD will be a valuable resource in the training program, which will be implemented next year. The aim is to enhance knowledge, confidence and the capacity of health professionals to deliver quality health care to women with disabilities.

### Participation and research

- **WDV is represented on the Centre for Women's Health Gender and Society Advisory Committee** (now renamed the Gender and Women's Unit Advisory Committee) and provides advice on the involvement of women with disabilities in the Centre's research program.
- **We are a partner in the Disability and Mental Health Research Program** conducted by the Gender and Women's Health Unit at the University of Melbourne.
- **As a member of the Women's Health Association of Victoria**, we meet regularly with women's health services regarding the rights of women with disabilities and are currently discussing partnership arrangements for implementing our Gender and Disability Workforce Development Program.

“ We continued to advocate for better policy on health issues affecting women with disabilities, including through the development on a position paper to secure funding to resource a Health Policy position within Women with Disabilities Victoria”.

### **Influencing change through representation**

- The Multicultural Sexual Health Network brings us together with other stakeholders to discuss sexual health issues and strategies to ensure better health and wellbeing outcomes for multicultural communities in Victoria.
- Our focus as part of the Social Rights in Action quarterly forum is on how stakeholders – including academics, advocates and community members – can work together to highlight the nature and extent of the exclusion from social and economic opportunities for marginalised groups.
- As part of its Independent Advocacy Advisory Group, we provide a consultative and advisory role to Yooralla, one of Australia’s largest organisations working to support people with disability.
- On child protection, we contributed to the Office of the Public Advocate’s report: *Whatever happened to the village? The removal of children from parents with a disability.*
- We are a member of the Municipal Association of Victoria (MAV) Prevention of Violence Against Women (PVAW) network.
- We worked within a Communities of Practice (CoP) network – Women’s Health Against Violence (WHAV) – facilitated by VicHealth for all projects funded under the Victorian Action Plan to Address Violence Against Women and Children 2012-2015.
- We contributed to the Melbourne Business School’s Biannual Symposium: *Engaging with Philanthropy*, along with other strategic partners of The Trust Company, to build toward a collective action and promote best practice on program design, partnership, brokering and evaluation.
- We presented to the Victorian Disability Advisory Council on the importance of a gendered approach to policy development.
- We provided input to the following reference groups
  - VEOHRC Crimes Against PWD Reference Group
  - Eliminating Violence Awards (EVAs) judging panel
  - The Lookout Website Reference Group
  - Cross Sector Advisory Committee on VAW and the Media
  - Making Rights Reality Project Reference Group
  - Women’s Health West Intensive Case Management Advisory Group

## Strategic goal 1 *continued*

“ *[Increasing social inclusion] is the responsibility of all sectors of the public and private sector. From public transport, to health, to media, to justice, all must play their part.*”  
Women with Disabilities  
Victoria member



### Disability and human rights

Lunch time forum with Emeritus Professor Gillian Triggs, President of the Australian Human Rights Commission. Women with Disabilities Victoria Program Manager Sharon Granek in deep discussion about the lack of a national Human Rights Charter at a lunch hosted by the Australian Intercultural Society. (Photograph taken by AIS staff)



### Social inclusion

WDV saw the Victorian Parliament's Family and Community Development Committee Inquiry into Social Inclusion and Victorians with Disability as an important opportunity for the voices of women with disabilities to be heard.

We consulted widely ahead of developing our submission, including through a members' consultation forum and an online survey which attracted input from 42 women with disabilities. We spoke to our submission at a public hearing in March 2014, highlighting the gendered barriers to social inclusion and how violence is a major cause of social exclusion, and recommending initiatives which are tailored to improve inclusion.

**Image:** Victorian Parliamentary Family and Community Development Committee's Social Inclusion Inquiry Hearing with representatives from Women with Disabilities Victoria. Standing: Inquiry Committee Members Andrea Coote MP, Justin Madden MP, Dee Ryall (Chair) MP and David O'Brien, MP. Seated: WDV representatives Jane Oldfield, Keran Howe and Jen Hargrave.

## Strategic goal

# 2

*Empower women with disabilities to influence their communities*

### Enabling women

WDV's *Enabling Women* program was piloted in Melbourne in 2013 with 14 participants from a diverse range of backgrounds. Since then it has run in Gippsland and is underway in the south-east of Melbourne, with plans to roll it out over the coming year in Geelong, Shepparton, Warrnambool, Bendigo and Echuca.

*Enabling Women* is a leadership program for women with disabilities funded through the Portland House Foundation and developed with the assistance of community representatives and women with disabilities. It aims to provide training and skills to women with disabilities to become leaders of change within their communities.

Primarily based in local areas so women can establish links with local groups and other women, its modules cover the social model of disability, self-identity, human rights and advocacy. *Enabling Women* is in a constant state of evolution with a graduation celebration now part of the program, as well as a participant's manual in Easy English.

The program would not succeed without the support of a local reference group made up of women with disabilities and other stakeholders. The Gippsland group were so excited by the results they are currently seeking funds to run further programs in their region.

### Testimonials

“What a great opportunity to be amongst a room full of amazing women, inclusive from the onset.”

“This is the only group where I haven't felt left out. I felt included, It made us feel important and valued and respected.”

“My voice will be louder, It's given me more confidence to speak out, I'll be more vocal around non-disabled people, I have growing leadership skills.”

“The Leadership program: I didn't want it to stop!”

## Strategic goal 2 *continued*



Graduates from the Gippsland Course.



Graduates from the CBD course.



Georgia Green and Emily Seton working on leadership definitions.



Graduates from the Dandenong course.

## **Our *Enabling Women* graduates at work**

- One graduate presented so eloquently to potential applicants for the Dandenong program that they signed up on her recommendation.
- Another graduate is co-facilitating the Dandenong program.
- Four of our graduates are now advocating with the Australian Electoral Commission for a federal/state electoral voting system that offers greater accessibility to people with disabilities.
- Another graduate has joined our Board.

## The Brenda Gabe Award

This year we were delighted to initiate the Brenda Gabe Leadership Award to recognise, acknowledge and celebrate the work done by women with disabilities to improve the lives of women with disabilities and that of their local communities. Tricia Malowney was selected from among 26 nominations to win the inaugural Award.

Her win was announced to a full house at our 2013 Annual General Meeting by Dr Helen Sykes, Director of Future Leaders, who has sponsored the award.

Tricia was recognised for her extensive work for women with disabilities and long history with Women with Disabilities Victoria (WDV), including as convenor and chair of Victorian Women with Disabilities Network during its successful transformation and renaming to WDV and as inaugural Chair of the Royal Women's Hospital Disability Reference Group.

The award acknowledges many of her achievements including:

- helping to ensure women with disabilities were included in research, policy planning and development of key initiatives including the *Family Violence Protection Act 2006*
- working with the Cancer Council and other relevant organisations to support better access to cancer screening for Victorian women with intellectual disabilities
- lobbying successfully for women with disabilities to be included in the United Nations Population Health Research.

“

*Reading the nominations was a privilege. The courage and determination these women demonstrate to make a difference was totally amazing. The opportunity to recognise what they do is very satisfying as is the women's appreciation for the recognition the award brings.”* Jane Oldfield, WDV Partnership and Leadership Development Officer



Tricia Malowney and Dr. Helen Sykes.

## Strategic goal

# 3

*Ensure Women with Disabilities Victoria is a strong, vibrant, sustainable organisation.*

### Building our capacity

In a tough financial environment, it was critical that our base grant from Department of Human Services was supported by the philanthropic sector. We were delighted this year to again receive funding from The Collie Foundation to support our capacity building program. The funding of the position of Program Manager has enabled us to consolidate existing programs and continue to grow, supporting staff in their program implementation.

We were pleased also to attract two grants from the Lord Mayor's Charitable Foundation. One grant funded the development of the Women with Disabilities Victoria 2013–16 Strategic Plan. A second grant from the Youth in Philanthropy program at Lord Mayor's Charitable Foundation was

complemented with funding from the Gross Foundation. Together, these grants will enable us to produce a suite of fact sheets on topics important to women with disabilities in the next financial year.

### Managing our risks

In conjunction with the Board and staff we have begun to develop a Risk Management Strategy to ensure that we have the systems and processes in place to manage our assets effectively and ensure that we mitigate risk wherever possible.

The decision of our Board to expand its ranks this year from 7 members to 12 has given it greater capacity to provide leadership and oversight through an expanded range of committees: Finance, Governance/Membership, Risk Management, and the Brenda Gabe Award committee,

as well as an Executive Committee. The Board operates within a Governance Workplan and evaluates its effectiveness on an annual basis.

### The way ahead

We consulted widely and deeply with our Board, members and partners, as well of course as with our staff and management to develop and endorse the Women with Disabilities Victoria 2013–16 Strategic Plan. In addition to delivering a strong strategic plan for the coming years, its development was an important and valuable process.

Under the Plan, two of our key priorities – to prevent and respond to violence against women with disabilities and to promote accessible and inclusive health systems – are unchanged from the previous strategic plan.



“ We consulted widely and deeply with our Board, members and partners, as well of course as with our staff and management to develop and endorse the Women with Disabilities Victoria 2013–16 Strategic Plan. As well as delivering a strong strategic plan for the coming years, its development was an important and valuable process”.

We have made significant achievements in each of these areas but there is still much to be done and it will be an ongoing focus of our work.

Our commitment to providing leadership and empowerment for women with disabilities is a key strategy within all our priority areas.

The National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) is identified as a third strategic priority which gives us a clear focus for our future activity.

Through this process, our major funder, the Department of Human Services reported that Women with Disabilities Victoria does good representational work locally and nationally, and is seen as being a good partner: very good at engaging, respectful, professional, honest, proactive, accessible, consistent, evidence-

based, powerful, leading the way, sophisticated, responsible, focused, and able to deliver on targets. We very much welcomed that assessment and feedback.

Our members too provided positive feedback on what their involvement means to them:

- *Recognition of my worth*
- *Feeling valued*
- *Believe in the ethos*
- *Want to support it*
- *Solidarity for women*
- *Feeling of connection*
- *Broadens my perspective*
- *I can contribute*



## Strengthening our staff

At Women with Disabilities Victoria, we want to lead by example and demonstrate to others what an inclusive work environment looks like. To that end, we have not only doubled our staff numbers over the year to 8 staff, but also meet regularly as a team as well as for individual support. Despite the rapid growth the team is working cohesively and effectively. The majority of our staff are women with disabilities and our workplace seeks to follow good practice underpinned by principles of universal accessibility.

## Strategic goal 3 *continued*

### Spreading the word

We sought to engage through the year with our members and to use a range of communications channels and platforms to connect with and influence government, policy makers, women's organisations and individuals.

Wanting to promote our work more broadly, we employed Simone Flanagan as Communications Officer in late 2013. Simone has increased our social media profile and pursued opportunities to promote Women with Disabilities Victoria's work to the mainstream media and broader community.

We are continuing to see growth across all digital media platforms. Below is a snapshot of our hits:

- **Facebook:** our 'likes' more than doubled to 320
- **Website visitors:** 11,685 page views
- **YouTube:** most popular video – Stella Young at our 2013 AGM, 2205 views
- **Twitter:** doubled our followers to 282 (and were 'trending' in Victoria with the launch of *Voices against Violence*).

Our E-news is distributed fortnightly and in the last year has grown its distribution list from 208 to 352 subscribers. This is an important means for women with disabilities and partner organisations to keep in touch with events, employment opportunities and issues, reports and also regular updates about our work.



The launch of WDV's landmark research project *Voices Against Violence* resulted in major print and television coverage, including a feature in *The Age*, ABC TV and radio interviews, and a feature in Fairfax Media's *Daily Life*.

More than 200 people attended the high profile event and the Twitter hashtag #vav2014 trended in Victoria. All of this was achieved the week the Federal Budget was released and following a week of industrial action by Fairfax journalists, highlighting the fact that the stories of women with disabilities are important and of interest to the mainstream media.



# 2013-14 financial statements

## Statement of comprehensive income for the year ended 30 June 2014

	Note	2014 \$	2013 \$
<b>CONTINUING OPERATIONS</b>			
Revenue	3	986,786	551,737
Employee benefits expense		(476,704)	(280,759)
Depreciation expense		(10,574)	(10,467)
Client support services		(204,791)	(171,555)
Other expenses		(127,869)	(77,066)
Surplus before tax		166,848	11,890
Income tax expense	2(e)	-	-
<b>Surplus for the year</b>		<b>166,848</b>	<b>11,890</b>
<b>Other comprehensive income</b>		<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>
<b>Total comprehensive surplus for the year</b>		<b>166,848</b>	<b>11,890</b>

## Statement of financial position at 30 June 2014

	Note	2014 \$	2013 \$
<b>CURRENT ASSETS</b>			
Cash and cash equivalents	12(a)	683,639	443,936
Trade and other receivables	5	3,544	2,258
Other Assets	6	1,467	3,924
<b>Total current assets</b>		<b>688,650</b>	<b>450,118</b>
<b>NON-CURRENT ASSETS</b>			
Plant and equipment	7	35,259	40,118
<b>Total non-current assets</b>		<b>35,259</b>	<b>40,118</b>
<b>Total assets</b>		<b>723,909</b>	<b>490,236</b>
<b>CURRENT LIABILITIES</b>			
Trade and other payables	8	80,182	36,616
Provisions	9	73,534	49,435
<b>Total current liabilities</b>		<b>153,716</b>	<b>86,051</b>
<b>NON CURRENT LIABILITIES</b>			
Provisions	9	3,294	4,134
<b>Total non current liabilities</b>		<b>3,294</b>	<b>4,134</b>
<b>Total liabilities</b>		<b>157,010</b>	<b>90,185</b>
<b>Net assets</b>		<b>566,899</b>	<b>400,051</b>
<b>EQUITY</b>			
Retained earnings		566,899	400,051
<b>Total equity</b>		<b>566,899</b>	<b>400,051</b>

## Statement of changes in equity for the year ended 30 June 2014

	Retained Earnings \$	Total \$
Balance at 1 July 2012	388,161	388,161
Surplus for the year	11,890	11,890
Balance at 30 June 2013	400,051	400,051
Balance at 1 July 2013	400,051	400,051
Surplus for the year	166,848	166,848
Balance at 30 June 2014	566,899	566,899

## Statement of cash flows for the year ended 30 June 2014

	Note	2014 \$	2013 \$
<b>CASH FLOWS FROM OPERATING ACTIVITIES</b>			
Receipts from operating activities		1,033,706	566,452
Payments to suppliers and employees		(808,277)	(559,291)
Interest received		19,989	18,357
Net cash generated by operating activities	12(b)	245,418	25,518
<b>CASH FLOWS FROM INVESTING ACTIVITIES</b>			
Payments for property, plant and equipment		(5,715)	-
Net cash used in investing activities		(5,715)	-
<b>Net increase in cash and cash equivalents</b>		239,703	25,518
<b>Cash and cash equivalents at the beginning of the year</b>		443,936	418,418
<b>Cash and cash equivalents at the end of the year</b>	12(a)	683,639	443,936



The full Annual Financial Report for 2013-14 can be found on the WDV website at [http://wdv.org.au/WDV Financial Report 2013-14\(PDF 3.65 MB\)](http://wdv.org.au/WDV_Financial_Report_2013-14(PDF_3.65_MB))

# Auditor's report



Deloitte Touche Tohmatsu  
ABN 74 490 121 060  
550 Bourke Street  
Melbourne VIC 3000  
GPO Box 78  
Melbourne VIC 3001 Australia  
DX: 111  
Tel: +61 (0) 3 9671 7000  
Fax: +61 (0) 3 9671 7001  
www.deloitte.com.au

## Report of the Independent Auditor on the Summary Financial Report to the Members of Women with Disabilities Victoria Inc

The accompanying summary financial report prepared by Women with Disabilities Victoria Inc, which comprises the summary statement of financial position as at 30 June 2014, the summary statement of profit or loss and other comprehensive income, the summary statement of cash flows and the summary statement of changes in equity for the year then ended, is derived from the audited special purpose financial report of Women with Disabilities Victoria Inc for the year ended 30 June 2014. We expressed an unmodified audit opinion on that financial report in our report dated 7 October 2014. The financial report and the summary financial report do not reflect the effects of events that occurred subsequent to the date of our report on that financial report.

The summary financial report does not contain all the disclosures required by the Australian Accounting Standards to the extent described in Note 2 of the financial report of Women with Disabilities Victoria Inc. Reading the summary financial report, therefore, is not a substitute for reading the audited financial report of Women with Disabilities Victoria Inc.

### *Directors' Responsibility for the Summary Financial Report*

The directors are responsible for the preparation of the summary financial report.

### *Auditor's Responsibility*

Our responsibility is to express an opinion on the summary financial report based on our procedures, which were

conducted in accordance with Auditing Standard ASA 810 *Engagements to Report on Summary Financial Statements*.

### *Opinion*

In our opinion, the summary financial report derived from the audited financial report of Women with Disabilities Victoria Inc for the year ended 30 June 2014 is consistent, in all material respects, with that audited financial report.

### *Basis of Accounting and Restriction on Distribution and Use*

Without modifying our opinion, we draw attention to the "Directors' Responsibility for the Summary Financial Report" paragraph above. The summary financial report has been prepared to assist Women with Disabilities Victoria Inc to meet the financial reporting requirements to its members. As a result, the summary financial report may not be suitable for another purpose. Our report is intended solely for the members of Women with Disabilities Victoria Inc and should not be distributed to or used by parties other than the member of Women with Disabilities Victoria Inc.

DELOITTE TOUCHE TOHMATSU

Rachel Smith  
Partner

Chartered Accountants  
Melbourne, 7 October 2014

# Acknowledgements

On behalf of all women with disabilities in Victoria, we thank our members, pro bono contributors, financial donors and grant makers, and those who have volunteered their time and energy to work with Women with Disabilities Victoria.

Your support enables us all to work more effectively for a world where all women are respected and can fully experience life.

See also Disability and Gender Workforce development program for additional thank yous and acknowledgements

## **Grant Makers and Donors**

Department of Human Services (Vic)  
Portland House Foundation  
Legal Services Board Grants Program  
Lord Mayor's Charitable Foundation  
The Collie Foundation (managed by ANZ Trustees)  
Ian Potter Foundation  
Gross Foundation  
Gandel Philanthropy  
South Gippsland Shire Council  
Gippsland Women's Health Service  
Outlook  
Francis Vicary  
Revelation Software Concepts  
Marney Phillips  
Dale McCann

## **Pro Bono Contributors**

Deloitte Touche Tohmatsu  
Gilbert and Tobin Lawyers  
Jane Fenton  
Laurie Staub  
Lucy Healey  
Russell Kennedy Lawyers  
Wei Leng Kwok  
Wendy Brooks

## **Project Partners**

Domestic Violence Resource Centre Victoria  
Domestic Violence Victoria  
Office of the Public Advocate  
Vichealth  
Women's Health Victoria

## **Volunteers**

Sonia Marcon  
Georgia Kavanagh-Dando  
Don Kohlman  
Kim Fisher  
Edie Collyer

# Support our work

## Become a member

Our members can:

- help to strengthen the voice of women with disabilities by being involved in focus groups, consultations and campaigns and contributing to government submissions
- join our leadership programs
- share information through our e-News
- stay informed about the issues affecting women with disabilities through member events and other forums.

Full membership is available to women with disabilities in Victoria and is free.

Associate membership is open to individuals (\$40) and/or organisations (\$100) supportive of our aims, and enables exchange of knowledge and participation with WDV and its members.

More information on how to become a member is available on our website [www.wdv.org.au](http://www.wdv.org.au) or by calling 03 9286 7800.

## Tell your story

Sharing your story can be an effective way to make changes in the community and – indeed – the world! If you would like to share your experience with us, please contact Jane at [jane.oldfield@wdv.org.au](mailto:jane.oldfield@wdv.org.au) or on 03 9286 7807.

## Make a financial donation

We gratefully accept donations to support our work. Donations of \$2.00 or more are tax deductible. Please visit our website at [www.wdv.org.au](http://www.wdv.org.au) for the payment options.

## Donate your expertise

We welcome any pro bono support that can help us to realise our goals.

## Contribute to our newsletters

We welcome and encourage your contributions to our newsletters. Please email [wdv@wdv.org.au](mailto:wdv@wdv.org.au) with any suggestions and items for inclusion.

## Find us on facebook

[www.facebook.com/womenwithdisabilitiesvictoria](http://www.facebook.com/womenwithdisabilitiesvictoria)

You can access up to date news and engage with us through our Facebook page. Please “like” our page to receive our updates (and feel free to say ‘hi’ by posting a note!).

## Check out our youtube channel

<http://www.youtube.com/WDVchannel>

Check out and share our videos at ‘WDVchannel’ and suggest other videos that we might like to see. Our videos are a great way to get informed about issues affecting women with disabilities. Hear our staff and other women with disabilities tell their stories!

## **Women with Disabilities Victoria**

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Level 9, 255 Bourke Street, Melbourne VIC 3000

Postal: GPO Box 1160, Melbourne VIC 3001

Phone: 03 9286 7800

Fax: 03 9663 7955

Email: [wdv@wdv.org.au](mailto:wdv@wdv.org.au)

[www.wdv.org.au](http://www.wdv.org.au)