

Womenwithdisabilitiesvictoria  
empowering women

Annual Report  
**2017-18**



Women with Disabilities Victoria acknowledges the Traditional Owners of the land we are on and the sea we live by, and their Elders past and present.

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## Our vision

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

## Our mission

To advance real social and economic inclusion for women with disabilities in Victoria, we will:

- be a voice for women with disabilities
- create opportunities for women with disabilities to be visible and to be heard in their communities
- build partnerships to deliver the best results for women with disabilities
- engage the community to challenge attitudes and myths about women with disabilities.

## Our values

Our values uphold human rights and social justice:

- |                     |                  |
|---------------------|------------------|
| • equal opportunity | • effectiveness  |
| • accessibility     | • creativity     |
| • respect           | • diversity      |
| • collaboration     | • accountability |

## Our approach

We will:

- work with our members' experiences as women with disabilities
- provide specialist policy advice and representation to government
- create opportunities for women with disabilities to realise their leadership and advocacy potential
- adopt a collaborative approach to government and community organisations
- build the evidence base to develop and share knowledge and resources to inform best practice
- monitor our work and report on outcomes.



# Executive Director's Report



**Keran Howe**

Executive Director  
Women with Disabilities Victoria

I am delighted to present the 12th Executive Director's report for Women with Disabilities Victoria (WDV) and my final report as Executive Director.

This year has been a challenging one due to the exponential growth at WDV, funding opportunities that meant additional, unforeseen projects being instigated and a depleted management team in the last two quarters that resulted from personal circumstances.

Despite these challenges, it is very pleasing to recognise how much has been achieved, that staff morale has been maintained and that we have delivered our overall project objectives.

WDV doubled its staff to 25 through the year. We have been extremely fortunate to secure funding for the short-term appointment of a General Manager in the coming year and have developed a more robust management structure. At the same time new policies and processes suitable for a larger workforce have been drafted and an Employee Assistance Program has been introduced.

Our estimated funding income more than doubled through the year, for a total of \$2.4 million. The Workforce Development Program and the Community Inclusion and Women's Empowerment Program have



Keran Howe, part of a panel with Leah van Poppel, Carly Findlay and Jax Jacki Brown for the Women's Health Victoria AGM in November 2017.



“ It is with mixed feelings that I take my leave of Women with Disabilities Victoria. I am extremely fortunate to have been given the opportunity to lead this organisation and the wonderful team of dedicated women who work here. I am proud of my part in creating an organisation by women with disability for women with disabilities and to be part of the chain of women agitating for a better and more just world for women with disabilities.”

both expanded their reach, whilst the Policy and Research team has continued to represent WDV in major forums concerned with violence prevention and responses and the reforms of the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS).

With the Victorian election due in November 2018, we have been working to develop an election platform in consultation with our members and partners and have had and set up meetings with key MPs ahead of the election campaign.

It is with mixed feelings that I take my leave of Women with Disabilities Victoria.

I am extremely fortunate to have been given the opportunity to lead this organisation and the wonderful team of dedicated women who work here.

I am proud of my part in creating an organisation by women with disability for women with disabilities and to be part of the chain of women agitating for a better and more just world for women with disabilities.

I have been reminded time and again that interdependence is the key to progress. I have learnt that to be interdependent we have to create the right environment where everyone is able to contribute. That takes thought and financial investment.

As an organisation we have sought to model a universally accessible work environment where people can exercise their particular skills and insights to achieve our goals.

I have learned the power of our collective voice as women with disabilities with all our differences and shared experience; and

I have learned to always analyse where the power is, and to challenge concentrations of power that are exclusive and unjust.

As I write, Leah van Poppel has been announced as the incoming Chief Executive Officer of Women with Disabilities Victoria. I have absolute confidence that Leah will lead WDV effectively and wisely in its next phase of development.

I would like to express my gratitude to the members, board, staff, partners and supporters of WDV for their shared vision, collegiality and dedication to our task of creating a world where all women are respected and can fully experience life.



# Co-Chairs' Report



**Saphron Hastie  
and Sonja Ilievska**

Co-Chairs

Women with Disabilities Victoria

We are proud to report that 2017–18 has been another big year for Women with Disabilities Victoria (WDV).

We have continued to grow – with more members, more staff, more funding and projects, increasing in size, reach, and impact.

WDV remains a trusted intersectional organisation at the forefront of current debates. We have ensured that policy makers and other advocacy organisations are listening to our voices in areas that most impact us. We continue to work towards our mantra of 'nothing about us, without us'.

In addition to our strategic advocacy, WDV has continued to make real change in the lives of our members and other women with disabilities. That has come through our women's empowerment programs, our research and resource projects, and our capacity and awareness building engagement with the disability support and carer sectors.

Our members and our women's leadership alumnae also continue to make a difference to their communities and each other's lives – in many ways, large and small, formal and informal.

We acknowledge that none of what WDV does would be possible without the support and active engagement of our members, so we thank you.

We also would like to thank the WDV staff and other Board members for their commitment and dedication throughout the year.

Of course, growth and success have not been the only things happening at WDV this year.

Our Executive Director Keran Howe announced her retirement from WDV.

Keran was appointed as the inaugural Executive Officer in 2007, following a period as Project Manager, to establish the foundations of the organisation under the auspice of Women's Health Victoria.

“ Our members and our women’s leadership alumnae also continue to make a difference to their communities and each other’s lives – in many ways, large and small, formal and informal. We acknowledge that none of what WDV does would be possible without the support and active engagement of our members, so we thank you.”

Over the following 12 years, Keran helped WDV flourish into the mature and respected organisation it is today. As members and Board directors, we are all incredibly grateful for her hard work and dedication.

Keran’s retirement is a landmark moment for WDV, providing us with the chance to look back and celebrate how far we have come.

We now look to a new phase for the organisation, as we welcome Leah van Poppel into the CEO role.

Leah is a highly respected woman with a disability and a strong feminist who has an excellent track record as a disability rights advocate, working at state and national levels over the last decade. We look forward to working with and supporting her and WDV into 2019 and beyond.







## Our Board



Top row: Sonja Ilievska, Saphron Hastie, Ann-Marie Baker, Catherine Brooks and Marija Groen.

Bottom row: Angela Fitzpatrick, Haidi Badawi, Trudy Ryall, Leah van Poppel and Lisa.

### **Sonja Ilievska Co-Chair**

*BEC, MBA, GAICD*

Appointed to the Board November 2012. Finance & Risk Committee Chair.

Sonja is experienced in risk management, policy development and governance and is Managing Partner in a risk management and consulting firm.

### **Saphron Hastie Co-Chair**

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

Appointed to the Board November 2013. Co-Chair of the Executive Committee.

Saphron has varied experience in not-for-profit governance and community leadership and currently works as a manager in the higher education sector.

### **Ann-Marie Baker Vice-Chair**

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

Appointed to the Board November 2012. Board Liaison for the Brenda Gabe Leadership Award. Governance Committee member and Executive Committee Co-Chair.

Ann-Marie has more than 27 years' experience in the tertiary education sector in the areas of museum management, curatorship and project management.

### **Catherine Brooks Secretary**

*BLLA*

Board member in November 2009–2011. Re-appointed November 2016.

Catherine is a Principal lawyer at Moores where she launched the Not-For-Profit Assist legal membership service and is accredited as a workplace relations specialist. She is a regular blog writer for MS Society.

### **Marija Groen**

*BA*

Appointed to the Board November 2011. Finance & Risk Committee member, on the working group for the EBA.

Marija has more than 25 years of experience in management, service delivery and advocacy in



the not-for-profit sector covering areas of homelessness, family violence prevention, housing and disability, and services for older people. She currently manages the United-Spanish Latin America Welfare Centre.

### **Angela Fitzpatrick**

*GradDip HR*

Appointed to the Board November 2011. Governance Committee Chair.

Angela has 15 years' experience in strategic planning of human resources, and works as a consultant and consumer advocate in health and disability.

### **Haidi Badawi**

*phD, Genetics, Masters (Educational Management and Leadership)*

Appointed to the Board 30 November 2017. Finance & Risk Committee Member.

Haidi has seventeen years of teaching and leadership experience in analysis, coordination and teaching. Haidi is fluent in English and Arabic, has five patents to her name and is currently on the Advisory Board of Gene Technology Access Centre.

### **Trudy Ryall**

Appointed to the Board November 2013. Completed three year term in 2016. Reappointed to the Board 30 November 2017.

Trudy has over 20 years of experience working in the not-for-profit sector in disability advocacy and other sectors, including animal care, administration, library and research. Trudy has served on a number of disability related committees for the City of Melbourne, City of Casey and City of Monash.

### **Leah van Poppel**

*BA*

Appointed to the Board 30 November 2017. Governance Committee Member.

Leah has over a decade of experience in disability advocacy agencies and government in direct service provision, disability policy and management roles. Leah has an interest in creative writing and stand-up comedy.

### **Directors who resigned or whose term was completed during 2017–18:**



### **Esperanza Torres Vice-Chair**

*B.Behav.Sci,  
M.App.Social  
Research*

Appointed to the Board November 2013. Membership Committee and Executive Committee member. Retired at the end of her term November 2017.

Esperanza works as a consultant on research, evaluation and data analysis for the government and not-for-profit sectors, and on

contract to the Department of Health and Human Services.



### **Val Johnstone**

*B.SW, ADWS,  
Dip.Bus Studies*  
Appointed to the Board November

2013. Membership Committee and Governance Committee member. Retired at the end of her term November 2017.

Val is a social worker, experienced in the public and private health and rehabilitation sectors. She is an NDIS adviser and has served on the Disability Advisory Council of Victoria, the Victorian Equal Opportunity and Human Rights Commission's Disability Reference Group, and many health related working groups.



### **Binda Gokhale Treasurer**

*BEC, CPA,  
MBA, GAICD*

Co-opted to the

Board as a Non-Executive Director and Treasurer since December 2011. Finance Committee Chair.

Binda is employed as Manager, Financial Services for Wyndham City Council and holds several finance and management qualifications. Binda resigned before the 2017 AGM due to extended work commitments.



# Our Members

Women with Disabilities Victoria would not be able to do the work we do and have such influence in policy and practice without the enthusiasm of our program participants, the wisdom of our mentors and the generosity of women in sharing their experience of living with a disability.

This year, another 86 women and organisations have joined us as members, taking our total membership base of women with disabilities, associate individuals and organisations past 500.

To better support our members, WDV worked this year to create a new position of Membership Engagement and Communications Officer.

In preparation for that appointment, we focused this year on building a new WDV website, designed to include additional content for members, and implementing a new membership management system to better understand and connect with our members.

That exclusive member content will offer resources, forums, event information and opportunities to sign petitions, contribute to government submissions and be part of our work in many other ways. We look forward to greater connections next year.

Become a member now and stay tuned!





Images: Members enjoying – and performing in – our Free and Equal event in November 2017.





# Our Staff

July 2017 – June 2018



Keran Howe



Nadia Mattiazzo



Olympia



Akii Ngo



Jane Oldfield



Jess De Mercurio



Carly Myers



Bridget Jolley



Lauren Brain



Amanda McCartney



Cath McNamara



Fofi Christou



Bianca Evans



Jess Boccia



Edwina Breitzke



Kelly Parry



Colleen Hall



Mary-Ann Robinson



Jen Hargrave



Maria Burchell



Vikki Cummings



Dee Henry



Elyse Cox



Lis Perry



Christine Spence

**Keran Howe:** Executive Director

## **Community Inclusion and Women's Empowerment**

**Nadia Mattiazzo:** Program Manager, Community Inclusion and Women's Empowerment (from Oct 2017)

**Akii Ngo:** Program Manager, Women's Empowerment

**Jane Oldfield:** Women's Engagement and Empowerment Officer

**Jess De Mercurio:** Women's Engagement and Empowerment Officer (CALD/Youth)

**Carly Myers:** Women's Engagement and Empowerment Officer (to May 2018)

**Bridget Jolley:** Women's Engagement and Empowerment Officer (from April 2018)

**Lauren Brain:** Rural Linkages Project Officer (from Oct 2017)

**Karleen Plunkett:** Advisor, Rural Linkages (casual, Nov 2017 to Jan 2018)

**Amanda McCartney:** Here We Are Project Officer (from Jan 2018)

**Agnes McDermott, Bethany Minster, Chloe Millar, Erin Ure, Keltie Blake, Vickie Priscina:** Enabling Women Co-Facilitators (casual)

**Concetta McFall, Johanna Schmidt, Lara Wallis, Mary Henley-Collopy:** Enabling Women Mentor Co-ordinators (casual)

**Deb Haygarth, Jenny Godwin, Lou Hollis, Rosalie O'Neil:** Rural Hub Liaison Officers (casual)

## **Workforce Development**

**Fofi Christou:** Senior Program Manager, Women's Empowerment and Workforce Development (to Oct 2017) / Senior Program Manager, Workforce Development (from Oct 2017)

**Bianca Evans:** Gender Equity Training Co-ordinator

**Jess Boccia:** Gender Equity Trainer

**Edwina Breitzke:** Senior Family Violence Workforce Development Officer (from Nov 2017)

**Kelly Parry:** Family Violence Workforce Development Officer (from Nov 2017)

**Colleen Hall:** Isolated Women with Disabilities Project Officer (from Aug 2017)

**Cath McNamara:** Safeguards Resource Development Officer

**Carly Myers:** Resource Development and Communications Officer, Workforce Development (from May 2018)

**Chris Walters:** Workforce Development Project Officer (casual, Oct to Dec 2017)

**Dagmar Jenkins:** Co-Facilitator, Workforce Development Program (casual)

## **Strategy, Policy and Research**

**Mary-Ann Robinson:** Program Manager, Strategy, Policy and Research (to April 2018)

**Jen Hargrave:** Senior Policy Officer

## **Operations**

**Maria Burchell:** Operations Manager (to Mar 2018) / Special Projects Manager (from April 2018)

**Vikki Cummings:** Administration Officer (from Aug 2017 to Feb 2018) / Acting Operations Manager (from Mar 2018)

**Dee Henry:** Administration Officer (to Aug 2017) / Administration Project Officer (from Aug 2017)

**Bridget Jolley:** Program Support Officer (to April 2018)

**Elyse Cox:** Program Support Officer (from April 2018)

**Lis Perry:** Executive Assistant

**Serena Burchell:** Administration Officer (casual)

**Christine Spence,** Green Wedge Business Services: Accountant



# Empowering Women

## ● Enabling Women

Enabling Women is our exciting community leadership program that empowers women with disabilities to have a voice about issues that relate to them and other women with disabilities. So far 188 women have participated in the program.

Women with Disabilities Victoria held six Enabling Women Programs across Victoria this year, in: Melbourne West, Melbourne North, Wodonga, Gippsland, Melbourne Outer East and the Central Highlands.



Left: The Enabling CALD Women group being interviewed on 3CR's disability and equity radio show "Are you looking at me?" Right: Participants of the Melbourne Outer East Enabling Women program at their Graduation Ceremony.

## Highlights of the program



Two of the programs were delivered for young women and women from a culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) background.

Four of the programs included a mentorship component and 38 new mentor/participant relationships were developed.



Ten women with disabilities were employed as co-facilitators and mentor coordinators.



## Feedback on the Enabling Women program

“ This program has helped me find my voice. It is important that I use my voice not only for myself but for my children and for women like myself who have experienced illness and disability through trauma... I am so grateful to this program for giving me the skills, the knowledge, the support and encouragement to move forward and beyond what I had experienced as restrictions due to my disabilities into possibilities.”

“ The Enabling Women program provided me with confidence with public speaking and advocacy. Many people, including my government back in my home country, have invited me to be a public speaker and to talk about advocacy and rights for women/people with disability. I am thankful and glad for being able to participate and be part of Enabling Women because it has given me the confidence and tools to pursue this.”

## ● Rural Linkages

Women with disabilities from specific regional areas in Victoria are now more strongly connected with advocacy organisations in their area, as a result of the Rural Linkages Project that Women with Disabilities Victoria (WDV) has delivered this year.

Funded through the Office for Disability Advocacy and Innovation Fund, Rural Linkages has organised a number of forums in Gippsland and Barwon South West that link women up more strongly with WDV, each other, and local advocacy organisations and services.

The project has also worked with WDV's Workforce Development team to deliver tailored workshops on violence prevention to advocates working with women with disabilities.

Women have had the opportunity to engage with local advocacy organisations, women's health organisations, Rural Access, and the Victorian Electoral Commission.

Women who participated in the project were invited

to attend a final forum in Melbourne, where Colleen Furlanetto, Commissioner of Commercial Passenger Vehicles Victoria, presented on strategic advocacy.

All the women participating in the project were able to meet, share their experiences, and learn from other regional perspectives.

The Rural Linkages Project will continue next year as 'Linking Up Speaking Out'.



Top: Women from New Wave self-advocacy group at a Rural Linkages forum. Bottom: Debra Taylor (far left) from the Victorian Electoral Commission presents to women at a Rural Linkages forum in Drysdale.



## Brenda Gabe Leadership Award

### About the award

The Brenda Gabe Leadership Award recognises and rewards the contribution women with disabilities have made that is of direct benefit to women with disabilities or to making a more inclusive community in Victoria.

It was first presented in 2013 and is now awarded biennially – every two years.

The award is named after Brenda Gabe – a much loved and respected member of the WDV community.

During her life, Brenda had many roles, including psychologist, champion swimmer and mother. After she was diagnosed with multiple sclerosis, Brenda also went on to become a strong and committed disability advocate.

She played a leading role on disability related campaigns, including accessible housing and public transport, and preventing violence against women with disabilities.



Nominee Mandy McCracken with her daughters.

For each award, WDV invites nominations for individuals or groups of women with disabilities who reside in Victoria.

This year's selection panel included Melissa Hale – Disability Advocacy Resource Unit (DARU) Coordinator, Ann-Marie Baker – WDV Board Co-chair, and Keran Howe – WDV Executive Officer.

The winner of the award receives \$2,000 towards a capacity building project or professional development, kindly donated by Dr Helen Sykes – Future Leaders Director.

## Congratulations to

**Jenny Godwin** who was winner of the 2017 Brenda Gabe Leadership Award, announced at Women with Disabilities Victoria's 2017 AGM.

Jenny is a committed advocate for women with disabilities whose work has informed and strengthened partnerships to include women of all abilities.

Women living with disabilities in rural areas, and their communities, have benefited from Jenny's commitment to equality and seen increased inclusion and participation for all.

A single parent and resident in a small rural town, Jenny has lived experience of the many barriers to access, inclusion and community participation for rural women and their families.

She has been an active member of the Moira Shire Council Disability Advisory Committee since 2011 and member of the local community learning centre and neighbourhood house. Jenny has also been involved with many local advocacy projects including the *Rural Access Challenge*, and the *Good Access = Good Business Guide*.

“ *The Brenda Gabe Award is significant because it recognises and celebrates women with disabilities who give so much, often so quietly, to ensure a better life for women with disabilities.*” – Jane Oldfield, Women's Engagement and Empowerment Officer

In late 2017 Jenny took on the role of Hub Liaison Officer at Women with Disabilities Victoria to run the Moira Leadership Network Hub.

## Nominees for the Award this year

**Jenny Godwin** – nominated by Bern Fraser, Women's Health Goulburn North East

**Karen Fankhauser** – nominated by Virginia Richardson, Mornington Peninsula Shire

**Mandy McCracken** – nominated by Cassie Browne, Nexus Primary Health

**Rhiannon Tracey** – nominated by Bill Mitchell, the Next Step Spinal Cord Injury Recovery Centre

**Simone Pilens** – nominated by Alex Mills, Link Health and Community



Bern Fraser, Women's Health Goulburn North East, Jenny Godwin and Executive Director Keran Howe.



“ *I was surprised and honoured to be nominated for the award, and even more honoured to win given the amazing candidates and the amazing work they have been doing.*” – Jenny Godwin

“ *Here We Are employs four women with disability, embedded as regional capacity builders to lead and model social inclusion with a particular focus on women’s support structures and activities.*”

## ● Here We Are

Women with Disabilities Victoria (WDV) worked with key organisations in regional Victoria this year to employ four local women with a lived experience of disability as local community builders.

Their role is to lead local community capacity building and promote inclusion in four rural/regional locations.

The project is funded through the National Disability Insurance Scheme’s Information and Linkages Capacity Building stream and has seen agreements developed with our partner organisations who have each been vital to the initial project development.

The four local community builders and our partner organisations are:

- Kim Adams, in partnership with the Shire of Wellington and the Sale office of Gippsland Women’s Health

- Grace Moloney, in partnership with Warrnambool City Council
- Nancy Campbell, in partnership with Cobram Community House
- Bridget Stone, in partnership with Women’s Health and Wellbeing Barwon South West (Geelong Office).

They have been supported by the project officer Amanda McCartney, who prepared resources, researched current issues for each area and undertook general groundwork in readiness for the local community builders to begin their work.

Watch this space for more exciting news on this project.

## ● Leadership Hubs

In the last year, Women with Disabilities Victoria (WDV) has established four rural community Leadership Networks, also known as Hubs, in Barwon (Geelong), Wellington – Gippsland (Sale), Moira (Cobram), and Warrnambool. Within the next year, we hope to have established another Hub in Melbourne’s South-East.

The role of the Hubs is to:

- create a safe, welcoming space for women to come together to share experiences and gain information on their rights
- be inclusive and support members’ access needs
- provide opportunities for members to connect with other women with disabilities in their local areas
- advocate on local and systemic issues
- foster leadership development
- increase community awareness on gender and disability.

Highlights of the Hubs' work this year include:

- developing partnerships with local organisations
- participating in the Her Voice Matters women's health project
- participating in the 16 days of Activism against Gender Violence, including screening the *Defiant Lives* documentary
- attending social events such as theatres and musicals
- supporting WDV's Rural Linkages forums
- connecting Hub members with local services
- supporting members to become more empowered and take greater control of their lives
- meeting with local MPs to talk about barriers and challenges faced by women with disabilities
- attending workshops relating to the National Disability Insurance Scheme.

You can watch a video featuring members of the Barwon Hub talking about why the Hub is important to them at this link – <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=I2xs0C2NHwY>

## ● Inaugural Women's Board Leadership Program

Women with Disabilities Victoria (WDV) was proud to be involved in the establishment of the inaugural Women's Board Leadership Program, led by the Department of Premier and Cabinet in partnership with Australian Institute of Company Directors and Leadership Victoria.

The initiative was a response to findings from the State Government's 'Safe and Strong – A Victorian Gender Equality Strategy'. The strategy noted that women continue to miss out on the highest levels of leadership and decision making in business, government and the community.

Notably it found that representation of women with a disability, as well as of Aboriginal women and women from culturally diverse backgrounds, remains disproportionately low.

To help address this, the Women's Board Leadership Program provides scholarships in governance training for women to become influential board directors and leaders, which ultimately greatly enhances gender representation in decision-making.

In this first year of the program, 257 scholarships were awarded to 192 women, 16 of whom identified as having a disability.

We are continuing to work on this initiative in 2018 with the hope there will be even more women with disabilities applying for a scholarship.







# Engaging with the NDIS

## ● Linking the NDIS and family violence work

Women with Disabilities Victoria (WDV) continued to work with Domestic Violence Victoria (DViVic) to advocate for stronger links between the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) and family violence services so that people with disabilities experiencing family

violence can receive the supports they need.

Together we have begun working with inter-departmental representatives of the Victorian Government who are drafting a Family Violence and NDIS interface work plan 2018–2019.

We are encouraged that the plan will tackle what can be done in Victoria to improve areas such as risk assessment,

referral pathways, and plan reviews. With the NDIS managed at a national level, WDV looks forward to the work ahead to develop shared goals and coordinate services between the levels of government.

For their work and commitment to build service links, WDV thanks the Department of Premier and Cabinet, Department of Health and



Speakers at the NDIS forum for family violence workers in November 2017, left to right, Fiona McCormack (DV Vic), Marlene Park (DHHS), Alex Gunning (NDIA), Daniel Leighton (Brotherhood of St Laurence), Jen Hargrave (WDV), Anna Donne (DHHS), Maya Avdibegovic (Family Safety Victoria) and Anna Faithful (DPC).



Erin Davis (DV Vic), Peta McCammon (Department of Premier and Cabinet), Jen Hargrave (WDV) at the June meeting of the NDIS Implementation Taskforce Cross-Sector Working Group.

Human Services and Family Safety Victoria. We also wish to acknowledge the significant time, effort and expertise contributed by DVVic to women with disabilities.

Collaboration for this work began with a forum held in November 2017 and co-hosted by DVVic and WDV, to provide the family violence sector with NDIS information.

A captioned video of the forum is available at the DVVic website (<http://dvvic.org.au/>). The video gives viewers a sense of the pressing issues facing women

with disabilities experiencing family violence and the services that work to support them.

As a member of the NDIS Implementation Taskforce Cross-Sector Working Group, WDV presented on the critical issues faced by women with disabilities and community workers when the NDIS and family violence systems do not work effectively together, and presented recommendations for action.



# Preventing and Responding to Violence



Minister Natalie Hutchins (front, second from left, with WDV staff and Board members) announcing continued commitment and funding for the Workforce Development Program on Gender and Disability.

## ● Working on Family Violence Policy

As Family Safety Victoria leads projects and activities to implement recommendations from the Royal Commission into Family Violence, Women with Disabilities Victoria (WDV) has worked with them

extensively to represent the requirements of women with disabilities for the reform.

WDV's evidence to the Royal Commission and advice to government has supported important outcomes and processes. For example:

- Funding has been allocated to ensure all 17 of Victoria's existing communal refuges

will be redeveloped to the new 'core and cluster' model which provides private spaces and was found by the Royal Commission to be more accessible for people with disabilities.

- Two new facilities specifically for Aboriginal women will be built.



- At least one unit at each of the 19 sites will be constructed to a Platinum Standard of Liveable Design, which means disability support workers can visit or stay on site.
- Family Safety Victoria hosted a disability-specific consultation on family violence, risk assessment, and management tool redevelopment, providing a rare opportunity for people from a range of sectors to meet each other, focus on disability and impairment based risks, and provide advice to those developing the assessment tools.
- WDV Executive Director Keran Howe has co-chaired the Family Violence Diverse Communities and Intersectionality Working Group, a cross sector group which meets to review aspects of reform through an intersectional lens. The group has played a key role in the development of Family Safety Victoria's webpage on Diversity and Intersectionality and strategy.



Video still from the 'Respect Women: Call it Out campaign'.

- WDV coordinated a presentation to the Family Violence Diverse Communities and Intersectionality Working Group on disability, presenting alongside the Office of the Disability Services Commission.
- The Victorian Government released its latest video as part the 'Respect Women: Call it Out' campaign. WDV's representation on the Ministerial Prevention Taskforce gave us the opportunity to raise the need for the videos to be captioned and audio described for accessibility. Family Safety Victoria confirmed that these features would become a standard for future video communications.



## Our Right to Safety: Safeguards Project

Work continued through the year on our Safeguards Project which, supported by the Victorian Government, aimed to increase access for women with disabilities to safe, useful and good practice information about their right to safety and respect.

Through the project, we produced two resources. Our resource for organisations – *Our Right to Safety and Respect: Guidelines for developing resources with women with disabilities about*

*safety from violence and abuse* – was developed in the first phase of the project and launched at our AGM in November 2017.

A second resource was developed for women with disabilities – *Our Right to Safety and Respect. A video resource and video guide developed by and for women with disabilities about violence, abuse, safety and respect.*

In the 20-minute video, women with disabilities speak about their experiences of violence and abuse. They talk about

how they found ways to speak up, to be heard, and to get support to live free from violence and abuse.

Other women who work in services and are leaders and advocates in their community talk about women's rights to respect and safety from violence, and abuse and how to get help.

The video is accompanied by a video guide which assists women with disabilities to safely watch the video alone and with other women.

“It's important to listen to women with disabilities. We have good ideas about our right to be safe – not just rights in relation to their disability but also women's rights.” – Maree Ireland



Still shot from Our Right to Safety and Respect video featuring disability advocate Maree Ireland and an Auslan interpreter.

Additional information is provided, including phone numbers and links to services and organisations that can support women to feel safe. The resource includes a range of features to ensure that it is accessible to a wide audience and the video guide will be produced in a range of accessible formats.

A project advisory group provided oversight and guidance to the project and included WDV members who acted as expert advisors, Office of the Public Advocate, Disability Services Commissioner, Women's Health Victoria, Scope and the Department of Health and Human Services. We also thank many others who contributed, including nine women with disabilities who participated in individual and group consultations to help shape the contents and form of the resources. We particularly thank Jane, Sam and Tess for sharing their stories in the video.

“ Sometimes it feels like it's not going to get better, you're not going to feel better, but you do, I promise you, you do.” – Tess as quoted from the video

“ As women with disabilities we challenge abuse of power and violence in our lives. We are strong and we are not alone.” – Keran Howe, Executive Director



Top: Covers of Our Right to Safety and Respect resources. Bottom: Keran Howe showcasing the resources at the Free and Equal event, November 2017.



In the studio, Joanne Howard (Kildonan), Rodney Vlasis (men's behaviour change consultant), Cathy Humphreys (University of Melbourne) and Jen Hargrave.

## ● Online training in family violence

The Melbourne University School of Social Work has developed online training for post graduate students on recognising and responding to family violence experienced by a diversity of people.

One module focuses on people with disabilities who experience violence or choose to use violence in the family context. In July 2017, WDV's Senior Policy Officer Jen Hargrave joined a panel for a Q&A which was filmed for the course.

WDV encourages the approach taken to this course design, where issues of diverse identities and experiences have been woven through the content and, at times, are brought into the centre of the content.





# Contributing to the Evidence

## ● Isolated women with disabilities

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The Isolated Women with Disabilities Project this year produced important research into the isolation experienced by women with disabilities and what strategies worked best to alleviate it.

The 12 month project was funded through the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) Transition Support Package and grew out of a number of pieces of work that WDV had already undertaken or had underway.

These included our landmark Voices Against Violence research and the Safeguards Project. It also fitted strategically with other work, including the Rural Linkages and the Enabling Women's Leadership program.

An extensive literature review carried out for the project revealed that isolation for women with disabilities mostly referred to social isolation. It found that individual strategies such as befriending and mentoring were valuable, but the most

successful peer and social support strategies were group strategies, such as participating in support or activity based groups. This was because group strategies provided participants with the opportunity to strengthen their social networks, or to simply make new friends.

Another significant finding was that some women with disabilities experienced higher levels of social isolation than others. They included Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women and LGBTIQ women with disabilities, and those who were older, had roles as carers, and came from culturally diverse backgrounds.

The project made recommendations and scoped some potential partnerships to trial a number of peer and social support strategies to reduce social isolation among women with disabilities in the near future.

Fact sheets will be produced to share some of the findings from the literature review.

“ During this period of my life, I felt isolated from other people. I felt neglected by the medical profession. I felt judged by society. I felt unsupported as a parent. I felt discriminated against based on my experiences and the resulting health issues.”  
– Jo

“ For me the hardest battle is not against stigma or discrimination by others though it exists in abundance, it's the internal battle of self-worth. Isolation makes this battle virtually unwinnable.”  
– Sandra





# Changing Workforce Culture

## ● Workforce development

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It was a very exciting year for the Workforce Development Program on Gender and Disability, which achieved a \$1.48 million commitment over four years from the Victorian Government as part of the Family Violence Industry Plan.

This provides Women with Disabilities Victoria (WDV) with the longer term investment opportunity to redevelop, scale up and sustain the program and its efforts to change workforce culture within and across the disability and social services sector.

“ All the information allowed me to have more knowledge that I didn't know about women/men with disabilities in Victoria. It allows me to have a different mindset and thoughts towards those with a disability.”

The program has been providing training to executives, senior managers, team leaders, direct service staff, advocacy and local government workers, within and associated with the disability sector, in the following areas:

- gender and disability intersectionality
- violence prevention against women with disabilities
- gender and disability equitable and responsive practice.

Our co-facilitation model has continued to be fundamental to the program.

It has enabled us to bring together women with disabilities and prevention specialists to ensure high quality training design, development, implementation and delivery from both expert lived experience and violence prevention perspectives.

Over the past year, WDV has begun the redevelopment the Workforce Development Program on Gender and Disability to:

“ It raises awareness and reinforces the reasons that I am in this field.”

“ It opens up a lot of issues in the world with women with disabilities.”

“ ...we are still a long way from where we need to be but now I think we can do better.”

- identify and initiate strategic development and delivery partners for increased visibility, scale up and reach of the program beyond WDV
- increase the evidence base and alignment with Our Watch's Change the Story violence prevention framework and the Preventing Family Violence & Violence against Women Capability Framework
- create more opportunities for interactive learning, increased resources on violence prevention and flexible delivery options.

## Snapshot of the program in 2017–18

- Delivered gender equity and violence prevention training to 184 participants from Mind, The Tipping Foundation, Future Social Service Institute (FSSI) Certificate III and Certificate IV Scholarship students, and to Department of Education and Training Respectful Relationships special educators. Training feedback was overwhelmingly positive.
- Diversified its audience and format to extend its reach beyond traditional disability support organisations to local government disability focused workers and disability advocacy organisations.
- In partnership with the Disability Advocacy Resource Unit (DARU) and Municipal Association of Victoria (MAV), hosted *Preventing Violence against Women with Disabilities: Intersections of Gender and Disability* one day workshops for rural and metro access workers and their gender equity and violence prevention colleagues within local government as well as advocacy workers across Victoria. The workshops were a great success with fantastic feedback.
- Partnered with the WDV Rural Linkages Project to deliver a successful half day violence prevention workshop to rural advocacy workers with a follow up virtual community of practice.

“ Need to continually work at changing the... gap between genders in terms of opportunities and cultural pressures/influences of gender stereotypes.”

“ More knowledge about the alarming facts about violence against women and factors which perpetuate this.”

“ More knowledge and understanding of sexuality and how it impacts on people with disabilities.”

“ Now we can... Address attitudes to women in the facility by males... [through] positive mentoring.”



Left: Training with Future Social Service Institute at RMIT 2018 Certificate IV students in disability support with their teacher Michelle McCann and a guest speaker Sam Winch.  
Right: Mind staff at the training with facilitators.





Training session in Ballarat.

## ● Actions in the workplace

A number of strategies to prevent violence against women with disabilities were explored by the range of workforces participating in training and workshops, including actions in the workplace to increase gender and disability equality. For example:

- Encourage and role model respectful relationships.
- Include gender and violence prevention as topics in team meetings.
- Provide education or formal conversation to men who have disrespectful attitudes towards women.
- Use a gender lens in the workplace when planning activities.
- Support staff to challenge disrespectful attitudes and behaviours.
- Challenge and reduce stereotypes in groups, in-house activities and duties (staff and clients).
- Provide education around sexuality and reproductive health to staff, clients and families – information sessions.
- Review policies and procedures, gender and disability equity, family violence and recruitment.
- Educate staff on responsibilities, rights and choice.
- Challenge/reframe protective behaviours to support carers and families to think about gender, disability and preventing violence against women.
- Focus on areas such as media and workplace.
- Challenge the idea that women are likely to experience violence from a stranger.
- Organise a women's shed event to bring women together.
- Consider including/prioritising the voices of women with disabilities in mainstream preventing violence against women programs.

## Feedback from some of our training participants

“ ... opens up conversation on gender equality, bias, assumptions, and how this relates to everyday practice.”

“ ... opens your eyes to a different way of thinking.”

“ [I will] change culture in my direct contact team.”

“ Great introduction to an often overlooked topic.”

“ I will be... looking at what I do through the lens of gender equality especially with disability.”

“ I will be... mindful of gender stereotyping.”

## ● **Women's Health Services: Intersections between gender and disability**

Gender Equity Victoria (GEN VIC) invited Women with Disabilities Victoria (WDV) to facilitate a workshop on the intersections between gender and disability for the Women's Health Services Prevention of Violence Against Women (PVAW) Community of Practice.

Attendees prepared by reviewing disability-specific activities in their current partnerships, action plans and strategies. WDV then ran a series of activities and

discussions around approaches to furthering the work of women's health services to prevent violence against women with disabilities.

WDV collated the actions developed in the discussions and delivered them back to the Community of Practice as an additional resource for future work in their services. The session was a chance to share and develop understandings on the compounding drivers of violence against women with disabilities, to reflect on the challenges and opportunities in addressing them, and to support inclusive and intersectional work to prevent violence against women.

## ● **#MeToo for women with disabilities in the workplace**

Women with Disabilities Victoria (WDV) was pleased to be invited to speak at the #MeToo discussion hosted by the Greek Australian women's network, Food For Thought.

WDV senior policy officer Jen Hargrave presented alongside Minister for Women Natalie Hutchins and lawyer Jennifer Kanis on ways to make safer workplaces for women. She said:

'Making #MeToo real for women with disabilities means employing us, supporting us in the workplace, and ensuring that gender equity campaigns represent and reach us.'



Left: Participants from the local government and advocacy workshop: Preventing Violence against Women with Disabilities: Intersections of Gender and Disability. Right: Minister Natalie Hutchins speaks on the #MeToo movement.

## ● Responsive Access Project (RAP)

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In the last year, Women with Disabilities Victoria received funding from the Victorian Government to deliver the Responsive Access Project (RAP), to address Recommendation 139 of Victoria's Royal Commission into Family Violence, to:

*Fund family violence programs for older Victorians, diverse communities and people with disabilities.*

RAP aims to improve service responses for women with disabilities at risk of, or experiencing family violence, by providing advice, resources and training for specialist family violence services and universal services.

Early in 2018, RAP undertook extensive consultations to develop partnerships, map training content on women with disabilities and family violence and identify workforce development needs. The consultation and mapping phase found:

- There was no training on family violence and women with disabilities currently available for specialist family violence workers or workers in universal services.
- There were many areas where general family violence training offerings could be enhanced to better support appropriate service responses for women with disabilities at risk of, or experiencing, family violence.
- Current training and resources on abuse and safeguarding for disability workers provided very little information about recognising and responding to family violence.
- Workers outside the disability sector did not feel confident in supporting people with disabilities.
- There was a need for a more diverse range of training and resources on family violence and women with disabilities, including short and more flexible offerings that allow workers to begin and continue a learning journey over time.

The project is currently developing training which will be tested later in 2018, and refined for further piloting in 2019.

RAP is also collaborating with a wide range of stakeholders to bring a gender and disability lens to their family violence workforce development activities. This includes:

- working closely with the Domestic Violence Resource Centre Victoria to develop written materials and training for specialist family violence workers
- providing feedback on the training being developed for workers on the Family Violence Information Sharing Scheme and the Family Violence Risk Assessment and Risk Management Framework
- participating in the Royal Commission into Family Violence Recommendation 29 Advisory Group, which is advising on the design and development of a family violence-training package for the whole child protection workforce.

## Working with women with disabilities

This tip sheet was developed for workers by Women with Disabilities Victoria with support from DVRCV.

Women with disabilities experience **higher levels** of violence than other women but are **under-represented** as users of family violence, sexual assault, counselling and victim support services.

Workers can **support women** with disabilities by maintaining a **strengths-based approach** and **avoiding deficit language**.



**Focus on the person and their support requirements rather than the disability.**

✓ "Leanne **has an acquired brain injury** and **understands new information best** when it is clear and succinct and a written summary is provided. **She is able** to assess her own level of risk when given sufficient time to understand and consider her situation."



✗ "Leanne's acquired brain injury causes difficulties with short term memory, and increases her vulnerability and risk."

It's more important to **understand her strengths and the support she requires**.

A woman **may not describe herself as having a disability** despite receiving National Disability Insurance Scheme or Centrelink payments for people with a disability. This may include people who have a chronic health condition, an illness or an impairment, who belong to the deaf community or who have a mental illness.

**Avoid describing people as their disability**



✓ "Mia has schizophrenia."  
"Eleni has autism."

✗ "Mia is schizophrenic."  
"Eleni is autistic."

**If you are describing a woman's disability:**

**Avoid deficit language**

Use **factual language** that doesn't **reinforce stereotypes, imply weakness or alienate** women.

✓ "Does your partner provide you with support?"

✗ "Are you *dependent* on your partner?"

✓ "Hanh uses some spoken words and a communication device. She understands spoken and written English."

✗ "Hanh has communication *problems*."



**People are not 'bound' by wheelchairs, they are enabled by them.**

✓ "Mia uses a wheelchair."

✗ "Mia is *wheelchair-bound*."



**Talk about accessibility rather than disability.**

✓ "Louise has early stage dementia."  
"Jenny was recently diagnosed with depression."

✗ "Louise *suffers* from dementia."  
"Jenny *struggles* with depression."

Describe facilities, language and signage as **accessible**, not **disabled or handicapped**.

✓ "Fatima requires an **accessible** refuge."

✗ "Fatima requires a refuge with a *disabled* toilet."

Domestic Violence  
Resource Centre Victoria

Women with disabilities victoria  
empowering women



Tip sheet created by the Responsive Access Project for the Advocate, Domestic Violence Resource Centre Victoria's family violence sector magazine.





# Speaking Out: Communications

## ● Getting the messages across

As our membership grows, it is exciting to see our eNews readership grow through online subscriptions and our new eNews link through social media, which makes it more shareable and available to an audience wider than our existing networks.

Facebook has been excellent for sharing the stories of women with disabilities and promoting events and opportunities to community members. Our page gained around 20 new followers each month.

Twitter continues to be a strong performer for engaging with our partners and stakeholders, with some tweets achieving up to 30,000 impressions.

Jen Hargrave continued in the role as our 0.1 EFT Communications Officer this year, managing and developing our fortnightly eNews, Facebook and Twitter. As she hands over to our new Communications Officer, we thank her for growing our online representation of women with disabilities.



Follow Women with Disabilities Victoria on Twitter @WDVtweet.



Follow Women with Disabilities Victoria on Facebook at <https://www.facebook.com/womenwithdisabilitiesvictoria/>



Sign up for the eNews and/or Quarterly via the WDV website mailing list or contact [wdv@wdv.org.au](mailto:wdv@wdv.org.au)

## ● Violence and Disability Quarterly

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Our own respected publication, *Violence and Disability Quarterly* (issued four times a year as an e-newsletter), reached its 32nd issue at the end of 2017–18.

It is an important platform to share women's stories, our violence prevention and response projects, new research and resources, and upcoming events and training and we welcome the generous feedback we get about its value.

“What a useful quarterly update on new work happening – would be handy for O.S. people too.”

*Sally Robinson, Research Fellow, Southern Cross University*

“Just opened *Violence and Disability Quarterly*. Great “stuff” (info) inside. Well done.”  
*Margaret Baily, WDV Member*

“Another great issue as always.”  
*Brianna Laughler, Community Member*

“Fantastic newsletter – great to see that there are so many good initiatives happening to address the double-disadvantage experienced by women with disabilities.”

*May Haeder, Policy and Planning Officer, Moreland City Council*

“This is such a useful resource. I find it really tricky to keep up to date with all of the literature in the different areas I’m working across and your newsletter draws together everything in the disability/family violence space so neatly. I’ll be sending it onto others in the branch too.”  
*David Leermakers, Manager, NDIS Reform Branch, DPC*



# Submissions, Representation and Collaboration

## ● Having an impact

Women with Disabilities Victoria (WDV) has contributed to a broad range of disability policies through the year, including three key initiatives in relation to supporting the safety of people with disability in disability services. They were:

- *Dignity, respect and safer services: Victoria's abuse prevention strategy* to guide Victorian service provision during transition to the NDIS.



WDV contributed to the state government's disability abuse prevention strategy.

WDV is pleased that our recommendations for the strategy to link with violence prevention and response programs were adopted.

- Victoria's first legislated disability worker *Registration and Accreditation Scheme*. WDV consulted extensively with our members and, subject now to its passage through Parliament, we are proud to say the scheme will represent their wishes, including that:

- people with disability will be able to choose either a registered worker using a registered title, or a non-registered worker who does not use a protected title. If choosing a registered worker, a list will be publicly available to provide information about that worker
- minimum registration standards are set and monitored
- a publicly accessible web-based, up to date register of registered disability workers is established

- complaints about disability workers are received and investigated
  - qualifications are accredited as meeting registration requirements
  - workers be limited or banned from practising if they breach codes of conduct.
- the Victorian Council of Social Service (VCOSS) Collaborative Systems: Disability Advocacy Project to develop shared positions across Victorian Disability Advocacy Services. This work should strengthen the profile of Victorian advocacy through NDIS implementation and the upcoming elections. WDV has enjoyed this opportunity to work more closely with VCOSS and other advocacy services.





## ● **Lending our voices and words**

We have worked with other organisations to highlight issues of concern including:

- With the Domestic Violence Resource Centre Victoria (DVRCV), we co-wrote an article for the 'Advocate' magazine, distributed through the family violence sector by DVRCV. It described the vital role of Victoria's Disability Crisis Fund – a brokerage fund for people with disabilities experiencing family violence.

The piece was written to let people know about expanded eligibility criteria for the fund which WDV urged to the Royal Commission into Family Violence, and also to highlight the fund's uncertain future in the transition to the NDIS.

- Women with Disabilities Victoria (WDV) was invited to peer review Project Respect's position statement on accessing sexual services through the NDIS which supports the National Disability Insurance Agency's decision to exclude sexual services from NDIS payments. The paper was published in April 2018.

- WDV was also invited to peer review 'Spotlight on women and unpaid care' by Women's Health Victoria. This was an opportunity to highlight the need for services to recognise the caring responsibilities of women with disabilities. Additionally, the paper explains that developing a service system the community can trust to be good, safe and accessible will decrease the demands on women to provide unpaid care.

## ● Submissions/ consultations

- *Dignity, respect and safer services: Victoria's abuse prevention strategy* to guide Victorian service provision during transition to the NDIS.
- Family Safety Victoria's webpage on Diversity and Intersectionality and strategy.
- Victoria's first legislated disability worker *Registration and Accreditation Scheme*.

## ● Presentations

- Australian Association of Social Work: *Social work management and leadership* (panel participant)
- Disability Advocacy Resource Unit (DARU) Strengthening Disability Advocacy Conference 2018: *Gearing Up for the NDIS Journey* (panel facilitation)
- Disability Services Commissioner: *Preventing and responding to abuse: Guidance for service providers* (panel participant)
- Food for Thought: #MeToo event: *Making safer workplaces for women*

- Having A Say Conference 2018: Enabling Women Program and Warrnambool and Barwon Hubs information session
- National Employment Services Association (NESA): *Making choice work*
- NDIS Implementation Taskforce Cross-Sector Working Group – June meeting: *Critical issues faced by women with disabilities and community workers while the NDIS and Family Violence systems are not linking*
- *Prevention of Abuse – Scope Special Event: WDV's Our Right to Safety and Respect* resources
- Royal Women's Hospital statewide forum: *Strengthening hospital responses to family violence* (panel participant)
- University of Melbourne School of Social Work: *Growing knowledge about preventing and responding to violence against women with disabilities* (panel Q&A)
- Victorian Council of Social Services (VCOSS) summit: *Stronger Together* (panel participant)

- WIRE: Diverse Voices of Feminism (panel participant)
- Women in Leadership summit: *Debunking stereotypes and bridging the gender leadership gap, one woman at a time: The road less travelled* (panel participant)
- Women with Disabilities Barwon Hub screening of *Defiant Lives* (panel participant)
- Women's Health In the North: *Developing content for your preventing violence against women project*
- Women's Health West AGM: *Why be happy when you can be normal?* (panel participant)
- Yarra Ranges Council & Women's Health East International Women's Day panel: *Press for progress: Leave no women behind* (panel participant)

## ● Representation

### Government and Statutory Committees

- Disability and Family Violence Sector and Government Working Group
- Disability Service Registration and Accreditation Reference Group
- Family Violence Diverse Communities and Intersectionality Working Group
- Family Violence Industry Taskforce: Implementation and Qualifications Subgroups
- Family Violence Ministerial Taskforce on the Prevention of Family Violence and other forms of Violence Against Women
- Family Violence Steering Committee
- MARAMIS Expert Advisory Group
- NDIS Implementation Taskforce and relevant Working Groups:
  - Cross-Sector and Innovation Transition
  - Participant Readiness Transition
  - Workforce Development Transition

- NDIS Workforce Expert Advisory Group (Department of Education and Training) (to review disability qualifications)
- Victorian Skills Commissioner Advisory Group for development of introduction to the NDIS course

### Community Boards, Committees, Coalitions and Research Projects

- *Building Safe and Respectful Cultures* pilot research project
- Centre for Research Excellence in Disability Advisory Committee
- DARU Network
- Domestic Violence Victoria:
  - Members Meetings
  - Policy Roundtable
  - Refuge Roundtable
- Gender Equity Victoria (GEN VIC)
  - Preventing Violence Against Women Community of Practice
  - CEO Meeting
- EVA Media Action Group
- Family Violence Policy Advocacy Network (FVPAN)

- Future Social Service Institute (FSSI):
  - Consumer-Led and Co-Design Workforce Training and Innovation Project Steering Group
  - Experts by Experience Advisory Group
  - FSSI Board (Keran Howe, member)
  - Scholarships Evaluation Advisory Group
- *More than the Sum of My Parts* research project
- Municipal Association of Victoria Preventing Violence Against Women Network
- Victoria Policy Disability Portfolio Reference Group
- Victorian Council of Social Service:
  - Collaborative Systems: Disability Advocacy Project
  - Peaks and Statewide
- Victorian Safeguards Projects Network Meeting



# 2017-18 Financial Statements

## Statement of profit or loss and other comprehensive income for the year ended 30 June 2018

	2018 \$	2017 \$
<b>CONTINUING OPERATIONS</b>		
Revenue	2,373,563	2,433,449
Employee benefits expense	(1,401,576)	(863,221)
Depreciation expense	(17,136)	(18,303)
Client support services	(276,777)	(127,022)
Other expenses	(219,217)	(163,141)
Surplus before tax	458,857	1,261,762
Income tax expense	-	-
<b>Surplus for the year</b>	<b>458,857</b>	<b>1,261,762</b>
<b>Other comprehensive income</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>
<b>Total comprehensive surplus for the year</b>	<b>458,857</b>	<b>1,261,762</b>

## Statement of financial position at 30 June 2018

	2018 \$	2017 \$
<b>CURRENT ASSETS</b>		
Cash and cash equivalents	2,472,732	2,054,644
Trade and other receivables	200	200
Other Assets	33,692	8,643
<b>Total current assets</b>	<b>2,506,624</b>	<b>2,063,487</b>
<b>NON-CURRENT ASSETS</b>		
Plant and equipment	59,610	28,363
<b>Total non-current assets</b>	<b>59,610</b>	<b>28,363</b>
<b>Total assets</b>	<b>2,566,234</b>	<b>2,091,850</b>
<b>CURRENT LIABILITIES</b>		
Trade and other payables	136,615	129,873
Provisions	174,495	176,804
<b>Total current liabilities</b>	<b>311,110</b>	<b>306,677</b>
<b>NON-CURRENT LIABILITIES</b>		
Provisions	17,383	6,289
<b>Total non-current liabilities</b>	<b>17,383</b>	<b>6,289</b>
<b>Total liabilities</b>	<b>328,493</b>	<b>312,966</b>
<b>Net assets</b>	<b>2,237,741</b>	<b>1,778,884</b>
<b>EQUITY</b>		
Retained earnings	2,237,741	1,778,884
<b>Total equity</b>	<b>2,237,741</b>	<b>1,778,884</b>



### Statement of changes in equity for the year ended 30 June 2018

	Retained Earnings \$	Total \$
Balance at 1 July 2016	517,122	517,122
Surplus for the year	1,261,762	1,261,762
<b>Balance at 30 June 2017</b>	<b>1,778,884</b>	<b>1,778,884</b>
Balance at 1 July 2017	1,778,884	1,778,884
Surplus for the year	458,857	458,857
<b>Balance at 30 June 2018</b>	<b>2,237,741</b>	<b>2,237,741</b>

### Statement of cash flows for the year ended 30 June 2018

	2018 \$	2017 \$
<b>CASH FLOWS FROM OPERATING ACTIVITIES</b>		
Receipts from operating activities	2,332,221	2,409,946
Payments to suppliers and employees	(1,907,092)	(1,027,124)
Interest received	41,342	23,503
Net cash generated by operating activities	466,471	1,406,325
<b>CASH FLOWS FROM INVESTING ACTIVITIES</b>		
Payments for property, plant and equipment	(48,383)	(31,097)
Net cash used in investing activities	(48,383)	(31,097)
<b>Net increase in cash and cash equivalents</b>	<b>418,088</b>	<b>1,375,228</b>
<b>Cash and cash equivalents at the beginning of the year</b>	<b>2,054,644</b>	<b>679,416</b>
<b>Cash and cash equivalents at the end of the year</b>	<b>2,472,732</b>	<b>2,054,644</b>



The full Annual Financial Report for 2017–18 can be found on the WDV website.



# Auditor's Report

# Deloitte.

## Independent Auditor's Report to the Members of Women with Disabilities Victoria Inc

### Opinion

We have audited the financial report, being a special purpose financial report, of Women with Disabilities Victoria Inc (the "Entity") which comprises the statement of financial position as at 30 June 2018, the statement of profit or loss and other comprehensive income, the statement of changes in equity and the statement of cash flows for the year then ended, and notes to the financial statements, including a summary of significant accounting policies and other explanatory information, and declaration by Members of the Board.

In our opinion, the accompanying financial report presents fairly, in all material respects, the Entity's financial position as at 30 June 2018 and of its financial performance and its cash flows for the year then ended in accordance with the financial reporting requirements of the *Associations Incorporation Reform Act 2012* and the *Australian Charities and Not-for profits Commission Act 2012 (Cth)* (the ACNC Act) and the accounting policies described in Note 2.

### Basis for Opinion

We conducted our audit in accordance with Australian Auditing Standards. Our responsibilities under those standards are further described in the *Auditor's Responsibilities for the Audit of the Financial Report* section of our report. We are independent of the Entity in accordance with the ethical requirements of the Accounting Professional and Ethical Standards Board's APES 110 *Code of Ethics for Professional Accountants* (the Code) that are relevant to our audit of the financial report in Australia. We have also fulfilled our other ethical responsibilities in accordance with the Code.

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We believe that the audit evidence we have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinion.

### Emphasis of Matter – Basis of Accounting and Restriction on Distribution and Use

We draw attention to Note 2 to the financial report, which describes the basis of accounting. The financial report has been prepared to assist the Entity to meet the financial reporting requirements of the *Associations Incorporation Reform Act 2012* and the *Australian Charities and Not-for profits Commission Act 2012 (Cth)* (the ACNC Act). As a result, the financial report may not be suitable for another purpose. Our report is intended solely for the Members of the Board and should not be distributed or used by parties other than the Members of the Board. Our opinion is not modified in respect of this matter.

### Other Information

Management is responsible for the other information. The other information comprises the information included in the Entity's annual report for the year ended 30 June 2018, but does not include the financial report and our auditor's report thereon.

Our opinion on the financial report does not cover the other information and we do not express any form of assurance conclusion thereon.

In connection with our audit of the financial report, our responsibility is to read the other information and, in doing so, consider whether the other information is materially inconsistent with the financial report or our knowledge obtained in the audit, or otherwise appears to be materially misstated. If, based on the work we have performed, we conclude that there is a material misstatement of this other information, we are required to report that fact. We have nothing to report in this regard.

## **Responsibilities of Management and the Board for the Financial Report**

Management of the Entity is responsible for the preparation and fair presentation of the financial report and has determined that the basis of preparation and accounting policies described in Note 2 to the financial report is appropriate to meet the requirements of the *Associations Incorporation Reform Act 2012* and the *Australian Charities and Not-for profits Commission Act 2012 (Cth)* (the ACNC Act) and is appropriate to meet the needs of the Members of the Board. Management's responsibility also includes such internal control as management determine is necessary to enable the preparation and fair presentation of the financial report that is free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

In preparing the financial report, management is responsible for assessing the ability of the Entity to continue as a going concern, disclosing, as applicable, matters related to going concern and using the going concern basis of accounting unless management either intend to liquidate the Entity or to cease operations, or has no realistic alternative but to do so.

The Board are responsible for overseeing the Entity's financial reporting process.

## **Auditor's Responsibilities for the Audit of the Financial Report**

Our objectives are to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial report as a whole is free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error, and to issue an auditor's report that includes our opinion. Reasonable assurance is a high level of assurance, but is not a guarantee that an audit conducted in accordance with the Australian Auditing Standards will always detect a material misstatement when it exists. Misstatements can arise from fraud or error and are considered material if, individually or in the aggregate, they could reasonably be expected to influence the economic decisions of users taken on the basis of this financial report.

As part of an audit in accordance with the Australian Auditing Standards, we exercise professional judgement and maintain professional scepticism throughout the audit. We also:

- Identify and assess the risks of material misstatement of the financial report, whether due to fraud or error, design and perform audit procedures responsive to those risks, and obtain audit evidence that is sufficient and appropriate

to provide a basis for our opinion. The risk of not detecting a material misstatement resulting from fraud is higher than for one resulting from error, as fraud may involve collusion, forgery, intentional omissions, misrepresentations, or the override of internal control.

- Obtain an understanding of internal control relevant to the audit in order to design audit procedures that are appropriate in the circumstances, but not for the purpose of expressing an opinion on the effectiveness of the Entity's internal control.
- Evaluate the appropriateness of accounting policies used and the reasonableness of accounting estimates and related disclosures made by management.
- Conclude on the appropriateness of management's use of the going concern basis of accounting and, based on the audit evidence obtained, whether a material uncertainty exists related to events or conditions that may cast significant doubt on the Entity's ability to continue as a going concern. If we conclude that a material uncertainty exists, we are required to draw attention in our auditor's report to the related disclosures in the financial report or, if such disclosures are inadequate, to modify our opinion. Our conclusions are based on the audit evidence obtained up to the date of our auditor's report. However, future events or conditions may cause the Entity to cease to continue as a going concern.
- Evaluate the overall presentation, structure and content of the financial report, including the disclosures, and whether the financial report represents the underlying transactions and events in a manner that achieves fair presentation.

We communicate with management regarding, among other matters, the planned scope and timing of the audit and significant audit findings, including any significant deficiencies in internal control that we identify during our audit.



DELOITTE TOUCHE TOHMATSU



Rachel Smith  
Partner  
Chartered Accountants  
Melbourne, 16 October 2018



# Acknowledgements

## ● Funders

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- Department of Health and Human Services
- Department of Premier and Cabinet
- Family Safety Victoria
- Future Leaders (Dr Helen Sykes)
- Gross Foundation
- Portland House Foundation

## ● Partners

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- Australian Federation of Disability Organisations
- Barwon Disability Resource Council
- City of Ballarat
- City of Brimbank
- City of Greater Geelong
- City of Latrobe
- City of Wodonga
- Cobram Community House
- Coonara Community House
- Department of Education and Training
- Department of Health and Human Services

- Department of Premier and Cabinet
- Disability Advocacy Resource Unit
- Domestic Violence Victoria
- EACH
- Future Social Service Institute
- G21- Geelong Region Alliance
- Gender Equity Victoria
- Gippsland Disability Advocacy Inc.
- Gippsland Women's Health
- Golden Plains Shire Council
- Grampians Disability Advocacy
- Knox City Council
- Latrobe City Council
- Latrobe Community Health Services
- Maroondah City Council
- Mind
- Moorabool Shire Council
- Multicultural Centre for Women's Health
- Municipal Association of Victoria
- Office of the Disability Services Commissioner
- Office of the Public Advocate

- Rights Information and Advocacy Centre
- Scope
- Self Advocacy Resource Unit
- South Gippsland Shire Council
- South West Advocacy Association
- Surf Coast Shire Council
- Tipping Foundation
- Victorian Electoral Commission
- Villamanta Disability Rights Legal Service Inc.
- Warrnambool City Council
- Wellington Shire Council
- Women Health in the East
- Women's Health and Wellbeing Barwon South West
- Women's Health Victoria
- Women's Health West
- Women's Legal Service Victoria
- Yarra Ranges Shire Council
- Youth Disability Advocacy Service



## ● Pro Bono and voluntary contributors

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- Amanda Chen
- Anthea Maher
- Bev Watson
- Bhensri Naemiratch
- Brooke Murphy
- Carol Roberts
- Cath McNamara
- Cina Loren
- Colleen Duggan





# Support Our Work

Help us to strengthen the voice of women with disabilities in Victoria and nationally:

- become a member
- join our leadership programs
- come to our events and forums
- contribute to our submissions and campaigns
- share information on social media
- be informed about issues affecting women with disabilities
- participate in our workforce programs
- donate to support our work.

## Join Women with Disabilities Victoria

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

Associate membership is open to individuals (\$50) and/or organisations (\$140) who are supportive of our aims.

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.

## Make a financial donation

We gratefully accept donations to support our work. Donations of \$2 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

Please email [wdv@wdv.org.au](mailto:wdv@wdv.org.au) with any suggestions and items of interest.

Follow us on social media:



facebook

<https://www.facebook.com/womenwithdisabilitiesvictoria>



Twitter

@WDVtweet

## Watch WDV TV!



Check out our YouTube channel <http://www.youtube.com/WDVchannel>

Watch our staff and other women with disabilities tell their stories.

Share our videos and suggest others that we could feature.



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