

THE SELF ADVOCATE NEWSLETTER

Volume 5 Issue 1

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Kicking Goals

For many years Luke Nelson, with enthusiasm, dedication and commitment, has been working with VALID as a volunteer to help people build their confidence and self advocacy skills.

At the beginning of his VALID journey, Luke was very determined to learn as much as possible to develop his independence, knowledge and personal skills in advocacy and how to best support others. Luke's aspiration of wanting to work in disability and the advocacy field began with being invited to contribute to one of VALID's Self advocacy training courses.

Luke's self confidence and public speaking skills have improved enormously and he has become an active leader in representing other people with disabilities. He leads the Banyule Peer Action Group who are currently working out solutions to increase employment opportunities & options and National Disability Insurance Scheme issues.

Luke says *"Peer Action Groups are a fantastic program and concept"*

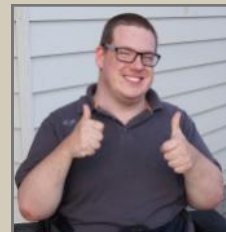
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VALID



Kicking Goals *continued from page 1*



Recently Luke was voted by members of the Self Advocacy Forum to represent them on VALID's Committee of Management. Luke's role is to report to the committee any issues and information from the networks and Self Advocacy Forum. During a forum meeting late last year, members of the forum were asked for their feedback and expertise from a new company called Seeva. The Seeva team wanted to know how to improve and make their website user friendly for people with disabilities to book and manage services for anyone on the NDIS.

The Seeva team was so impressed with Luke's insights that they offered him a job to promote, consult and liaise with the community about its website. *"It's great having him involved. He has so much passion and is such a great communicator that he adds so much value."* Shol Blustein (founder & CEO of Seeva)

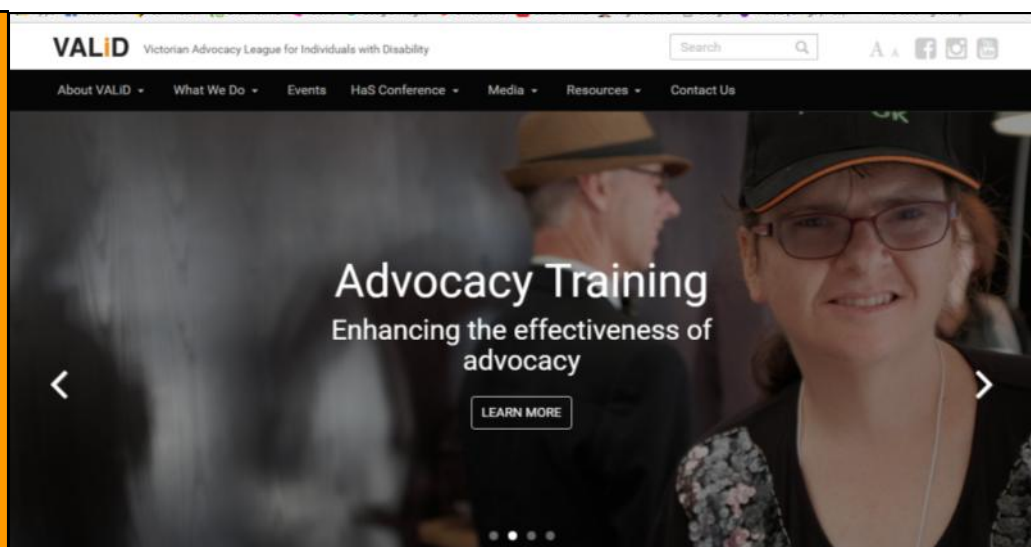
This offer seemed to open up the flood gates for Luke. He has since started working with the National Disability Insurance Agency. You can see Luke on the NDIS website promoting the NDIS and is involved with their webinar discussions talking about NDIS plans.

Luke recently received the news that he got a casual position with Co-Health as a Peer Educator. In the coming months he will be trained to run information workshops about respectful relationships, sexuality and rights for people with disabilities. Luke said: *"I'm living the dream of working in the field that I chose. I have been given the freedom and support to get to this point"*

Luke has shown that with hard work, self belief, perseverance and the right supports anything is possible. Luke is **"kicking goals"** with his career.

**VALID has
launched its
new website:
www.valid.org.au**

**Be sure to
check it out**



VALID Eastern Network Meeting



Adam James and Christine Wilson from Knoxville represented the Eastern Network by performing in the Red Faces Auditions, at the Having a Say conference.

Adam played the guitar and sang an Eagles song while Christine sang a song from Grease. Christine won an encouragement award for her performance.



VALID Western Network Meeting

Emma Norton did a presentation at the Having a Say Conference and also at the March Western Network meeting.

Emma's presentation "Strong and Tall, Hear Me Call" talked about speaking up and the tricks actors use for public speaking, being heard and how to get the audience's attention through fun, physical, vocal and musical activities.

During the presentation Emma showed (demonstrated) activities that actor's use which could help people to speak up such as:

- Breathing exercises to pick yourself up
- Physical activities to feel comfortable performing, such as slow motion running to music or pretending to catching a ball or pretending to climb a tree
- Say words out loud, like beautiful or mmmmm to help say or pronounce words
- Body language exercises like step forward I'm powerful or step back I'm afraid

Emma shared these creative ideas to help people to be confident, to speak up and be strong when talking in front of groups.

At the end of Emma's presentation, she encouraged the group to say out loud "Strong and Tall, Hear Me Call".



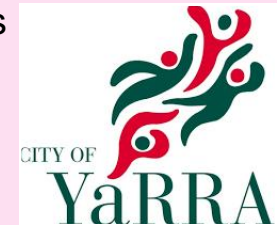
VALID Northern Network Meeting



During February's meeting, Guest Speakers Anna Vu from Co Health and Christine Mulholland from the City of Darebin, talked about an exciting opportunity for people with disabilities living or working in the City of Darebin and Yarra.



Co Health is looking for people who would like to help other people to learn about respectful relationships. Co Health wants people to work with groups to run activities and talk about relationships, respect, sexuality and rights. The Casual Peer Educator will be trained and then work as a member of a team to plan the program.



Since the meeting, some members of the Northern Network have applied for the Peer Educator position and been involved in interviewing for the job.

The people who get the job will be involved in running the Sexual Lives and Respectful Relationships program to their peers living in the Northern suburbs.

Paul Campbell from Northern Support Services was a volunteer at the Having a Say conference. This was Paul's third year as a volunteer. He worked in the kitchen helping the catering team to prepare the morning and afternoon teas for the delegates at the conference.

Paul is pictured below cutting the grapes into small bunches and also with some of the catering team.

Paul sent VALID a handmade thank you card and said it was a fantastic conference.

The VALID team would like to thank Paul, members of the catering team and all the volunteers for all their hard work .



VALID Southern Network Meeting

“Life is a puzzle, you never know where the pieces will go”

Self Advocate, Lisa McLeish presented her Individual Story “Life is a Puzzle” at the Southern Self Advocacy Network Meeting.



Lisa shared some of the difficulties and barriers that she has had over the last two years, and the steps and supports she has needed to help her get through them. Lisa talked about some of the great things that have happened and things she has achieved, like the birth of her nephew Patrick, winning awards for her art and photography in the Dandenong Show and coming 2nd in the Victorian Cole Cup bowling competition.

Lisa shared some ideas of what to do if things are going wrong, like asking for help and getting everything in writing.

Her summary was:

- Not everything goes to plan
- Know who you can trust
- Get support when things go wrong
- Know what you want to change
- Know that VALID are here to support you
- Know who your true friends are, and keep in touch with them



VALID

OUR CHOICE EXPO

10.30am - 4pm

Wednesday 7th June, 2017

State Basketball Centre
291 Georges St, Wantirna South



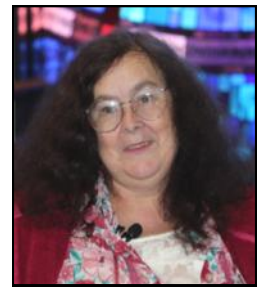
VALID invites you to visit the Our Choice Expo featuring a wide range of services (day activity, leisure, travel, personal care), equipment, training, early intervention, housing, technology and other supports available for participants of the NDIS (National Disability Insurance Scheme) and their families.

Especially of interest to Eastern Metro residents looking to be informed and prepared for the transition to the NDIS, starting from 1st November 2017.

Free visitor entry

Heather Speaks Up

Articles on self advocacy by *Heather Forsyth, a highly experienced self advocate, who has overcome many challenges in her life to become a leader and support worker for other people with a disability.*



Geelong Disability Awards

I attended the Geelong Disability Leadership Awards on the Tuesday night before the Having a Say conference. Simone Stevens from VALID won the Volunteer & Employment Award. Chloe Hayden won the Young Achievers Award and entered the Red Faces Talent Show and won 1st prize. Kelly Cartwright, paralympian was the Guest Speaker who talked about her journey to win two medals at the London Paralympics in 2012.



Having a Say in Review:

Red Faces Auditions were very good this year with all the acts scoring high marks. Robert Martin from New Zealand and I, MC'd the auditions. Congratulations to all the acts and I would also like to thank the judges, Maree, chair of the Local Reference Committee, Sadat from Encompass and Half Cat, Geelong Mascot for their support on the night.



A special highlight for me was listening to Robert Martin talk about his role on the UN Convention Committee. We had open mic at the end of the Opening Ceremony. Open mic is an important part of the conference as it gives people the chance to speak up and have their say.

Judy Huett, chair of the Our Voice Committee, Kalena and I did a presentation about our trip to Orlando, Florida to the UN Convention. Self Advocates from around the world were given the chance to talk about self advocacy in their country. We talked about self advocacy in Australia and how we are more advanced than some countries.

Having a Say Conference Report

The conference theme was “**Lead Your Life!**” which was all about the Six Powers of Strong Self Advocacy.

- Self Expression
- Self Determination
- Self Confidence
- Self Reliance
- Self Development
- Self Esteem



The first day of the conference was buzzing with excitement as people arrived for an exciting, fun filled three days of the Having a Say conference. People came from all over Australia and New Zealand.

The open Ceremony began with the Welcome to Country and was followed by Guest Speaker, Robert Martin from New Zealand, who talked about his role as Asia Pacific representative, on the United Nations Convention Committee.

Josh Moorfoot who won the Red Faces Talent Show competition in 2016 was invited to perform in the Opening Ceremony. He sang, Men at Work’s “Nothing Gonna Slow Me Down”.

There were some amazing performances and presentations from people with disability sharing their stories and achievements.

VALID and Writers Victoria launched the Dulcie Stone Writers Competition. The competition is open to people with intellectual disability for them to showcase their voices.

The dinner disco was another fun filled night with the new band ‘Un-Limited’ who had everyone up on their feet dancing and singing along. Everyone got into the spirit of the evening dressing in their hippy costumes.



Red Faces Talent Show

The three finalists from the Red Faces auditions performed on stage in Costa Hall on the final day of the conference.

First prize was awarded to Chloe Hayden for her outstanding performance.

Second prize went to Andrew Prior and Justin Hallinan for their Priscilla Queen of the Desert act.

Andrew's feedback about the conference:

I entered the Red Faces competition with Justin and we performed Priscilla Queen of the Desert. On the Friday we performed at the closing ceremony and came in second. I went to the Dinner Dance. I had a great time and had a dance with VALID staff.

Harley Muscat was awarded third prize for his Time Warp performance.

Congratulations to all 3 finalist as well as everyone who entered the competition.



Awards



Doug Pentland - David Banfield Award

This award is given to a Self Advocate for speaking up.

Kevin Stone, CEO VALID & Norrie Blythman from Reinforce presented the award to Stephanie Challis

Robert Martin Award

Robert presented the award to members from Stockton for shining the light of rights and justice for people with disabilities.





Art Competition

The Having a Say Art Competition is sponsored by the Office of Professional Practice. Frank Lambrik, Senior Practitioner presented the winners with their certificates and cheques.

Winners of the Art Competition were:

1. Steve Canning
*Title: Watch what you eat.
 Lead your life - feel, think, BE HEALTHY. I feel healthy, I think about being healthy. I want the whole world to be healthy. Everything in balance.*
2. Tom Leembruggen
*Title: Smile on the dial.
 The Tri State games theme nights are lots of fun. We receive our medals, we dance the night away and everyone has "a smile on their dial".*
3. Brady Freeman
*Title: Jellyfish Gathering.
 Brady's work, whatever the basis is giving him a voice to express his personality, develop his skills, grow in confidence and participate in the professional art world as a respected artist.*
4. Sarah Guilfoil
*Title: Reach for the stars.
 Sometimes life is difficult. It feels like climbing up the hill. Obstacles like rocks may lay in your path. Despite it all we have to be strong. If we try, we can reach for the stars.*

The Having a Say Conference featured in the local newspaper

Having a Say: 1100 people at disability conference

Jemma Ryan,
Geelong Advertiser
February 8, 2017 6:53pm

AUSTRALIA'S biggest conference for people with a disability was launched at Deakin waterfront campus today.

The three-day Having a Say event is being attended by 1100 people from all over the country. The conference includes speakers, workshops, activities and social events that tie into the theme of "Lead Your Life".

Day one included activities such as canoeing, fishing, bike riding, zumba, creative writing and karaoke, along with information sessions about speaking up over abuse and becoming a leader.

Xavier from Woodbine, pictured with volunteer, Peter Dibbs in his Mazda MX-5



Minister for Housing and Disability Martin Foley spoke at a Future Housing and Accommodation Options Forum on the final day of the conference. Since being founded in 2000, Having a Say has grown from 190 people to a record 1200 participants in 2013. The conference aims to celebrate the achievements of people with disabilities across the nation's industries.



Balloon Football



Harley Ride

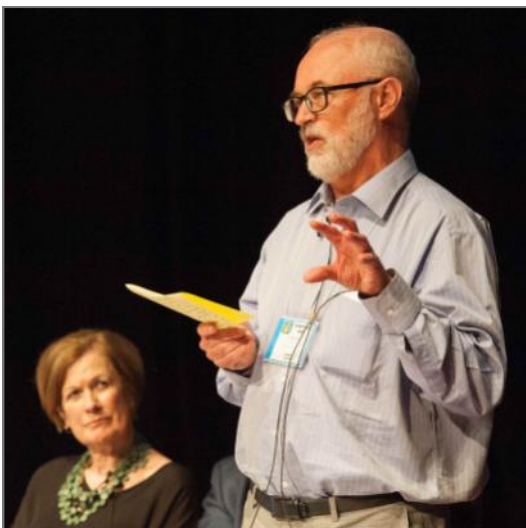
Housing Forum

The last day of the conference began with the Hon Martin Foley, MP talking about Specialist Disability Accommodation payments and how they will operate under the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS).

A Task Force is being set up by the Victorian Government to encourage the housing industry to invest in accessible housing.

The minister's presentation was followed by a panel made up of parents, advocates, business people and a staff person from the NDIS. They talked about how their son or daughter has moved into independent living and also about a project that may give people the chance to own their own home.

Minister Foley is pictured below with Kevin Stone, CEO from VALID.



Network News



Do you have a story you would like to share?

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

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



VALID Membership for Network Members

Would you like to become a member of VALID?

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

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



Contact



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VALID

Victorian Advocacy League for Individuals with Disability Inc

