

# RIAC Annual Report

2014-15



# RIAC

Rights Information and Advocacy  
Centre Inc.



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The history, culture, diversity and value of all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders, their Elders and Respected Persons are recognised and acknowledged.

# RIAC – Who We Are

The Rights Information and Advocacy Centre Inc. (RIAC) is a not for profit organisation operating throughout Geelong, central and north western Victoria and Southern New South Wales providing information, support and advocacy to individuals, families, carers and communities.

RIAC is funded by the Australian and Victorian Governments to deliver the following programs:

**Advocacy Assistance:** RIAC provides advocacy assistance to people with disabilities, their families and carers in 22 local government areas across central and north western Victoria, Geelong and southern NSW.

**Strengthening Parents Support Program (SPSP):** RIAC's SPSP program supports carers of people with a disability to meet on a regular basis for mutual support, networking opportunities, information sharing and training.

**NDIA External Merits Review Support:** From 1 July 2013, RIAC was selected by the National Disability Insurance Agency to provide support to people within the Barwon Launch site seeking an External Merit Review of decisions regarding their individual care plan and reasonable and necessary support.

**HACC Equity and Support:** RIAC is funded under the Home and Community Care (HACC) program to provide support to HACC eligible people with complex needs due to diversity, to access HACC Services and other services if required within the Bendigo, Swan Hill and Mildura local Government areas.

## OUR VISION

*Improving the lives of people by helping to build capacity and wellbeing of individuals, families, carers and communities.*

## OUR MISSION

*To encourage achievement and acceptance of all individuals irrespective of age, religion, race, sexual identity, culture or disability through the provision of quality support and service. To ensure an understanding of the life difficulties of all areas of disability.*

## OUR CORE VALUES

**R**     **Respect**  
**I**     **Independence**  
**A**     **Acceptance**  
**C**     **Collaboration**

## CERTIFICATION

In April 2015 RIAC successfully undertook our certification audit against the 6 National Standards for Disability Services 2013 and the 4 Department of Human Services Standards 2011. The Audit was conducted by SAI Global and the certification was a testament to the great work undertaken by our Advocates

# Board Directors

RIAC's Board of Directors as at 30 June 2015:

Karryn Goode	Acting Chairperson
Julie Goodall	Treasurer
Adriano Pati	Director
Graeme Murphy	Director
Kerrie Reardon	Director
Michael Curtis	Director
Leah Kateiva	Chief Executive Officer/Executive Officer

# RIAC Executive

Steve Doran	Chief Executive Officer-until November 2014
Leah Kateiva	Interim CEO

# RIAC Honour Roll

## 5+ Years' Service

Jill Myers	Employee (2007 - present)
Sharyn Laugher	Employee (2007 - present)
Marie Whitrow	Employee (2009 - May 2015)

## 10+ Years' Service

Bronwyn Huggard	Employee (2004 - present)
Steve Doran	Employee (2004 - 2014)
Mandy McKenna	Employee (2003 - present)
Julie Goodall	Board Director and Chair (2003 - present)
Athena Papadatos	Volunteer (2002), Board Director (2009 -12), Employee (2012 - present)

## 15+ Years' Service

Murray Shields	Board Member (pre 1995 - 2000), RIAC Employee (00 - present)
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## RIAC Life Members

Mary Bowman	Di Opray	Ed Crain
Geoff Bourke	Greg Cochrane	

# Chairpersons Report



This year 2014-2015 has been a very busy and stimulating time for the RIAC Board. I personally did not expect to find myself in the position of Chairperson, but it was a wonderful opportunity for me when the position of Board Chair became vacant and I was asked to stand for election to this role. The position of Chair has given me a much greater insight in to the work RIAC accomplishes and how much advocacy is still needed for people with disabilities in Australia.

We are about to embark on a new era for advocacy in Australia with the NDIS beginning its rollout Australia wide. Our previous strategic plan is finishing at the end of this year and we will be working together as a Board to define in our next Strategic

Plan how we will continue to provide the great service we now deliver and how we can enhance our services and grow into the future. We have had 2 Board members, Ayden Graham and Michele Cranefield finish their time with us this year and I want to thank them for putting in the time and effort in support of RIAC.

One new member has joined the Board, Michael Curtis, with several other people expressing an interest to join. New Board members bring with them new skills and a passion for the work RIAC performs.

I hope that this next year brings some stability in funding and growth for the organisation so that we can continue to provide advocacy and support for people with disabilities.

Thank you to all the staff and volunteers who helped make 2014-2015 a successful year.

**Karryn Goode**  
**Chairperson**

## Disability and education

- 36% of people with a disability aged 18-64yrs, have completed Year 12, compared with 60% of those without a disability [3]

Source: [3] Australian Bureau of Statistics. Disability, Ageing and Carers, Australia: Summary of Findings, 2012 (cat. no. 4430.0)

# Executive Officer's Report



•53% of people with a disability aged 15-64yrs are currently employed, compared with 83% of people without a disability [3]

*Source: [3] Australian Bureau of Statistics. Disability, Ageing and Carers, Australia: Summary of Findings, 2012 (cat. no. 4430.0)*

**This financial year 2014-2015 was the year that the Regional Information and Advocacy Council changed its name. The new name Rights Information and Advocacy Centre was decided on because it better describes the organisation and we are not a Regional organisation anymore, we cover almost 60% of the state with the six offices we operate from. The new name reflects a sign of the times and is more discerning of the work we do. It also let us keep the acronym RIAC which is extensively known in association with the organisation.**

Changes have also occurred within the organisation. Long term CEO Steve Doran retired and a new structure and Leadership team was formed. This change has meant that new visions for the future of the organisation have been forming and some ideas have already been implemented.

It is an exciting time for the disability sector with the rollout of the National Disability Insurance Agency. RIAC has been a driving force for Advocacy in the Barwon region doing both advocacy and External Merits Support for people with a disability. It has been a privilege for RIAC to be part of this historical change for the sector and how we support people with a disability. Having now spent 2 years at the forefront of this social change we can honestly say that we have learnt so much in this time and feel we can support people with disabilities throughout the state as the scheme continues to roll out.

The External Merits team have supported 18 people over the last 2 years to appeal decisions made by the NDIA in Barwon through the AAT and have had the pleasure of seeing people having their appeals being successful both through the conciliation and hearing process.

The Home and Community Care Access and Support program has also grown and we now have support workers in Mildura, Swan Hill and Bendigo. This program aims to connect people with special needs to the support services they need to remain living at home. The team have had some very good outcomes for participants and strives to engage all marginalised people with dementia, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders, people from diverse cultures and people who are financially disadvantaged.

The Supporting Parents Support Program (SPSP) has had a successful year and RIAC has provided support for 16 groups. Our aim is to enable the groups to function in a manner that best suits their needs. We provide advice, support and information when required.

Our self-advocacy program has seen a change in leadership with the previous co-ordinator finishing his contract. The program is now finding its feet again and we have established a wonderful team who will drive this program and bring leadership and a fresh approach to self-advocacy.

The RIAC Advocacy program operates across 22 local government areas in Victoria and southern New South Wales and the demand for advocacy from people with a disability has not lessened over the years. Advocacy for people with a disability and how it continues to be funded has been a hot topic of conversation this year within the Government and Social Services sector. The 2015 Ombudsman report recommended that advocacy continue to be funded and that it was important that advocacy remained independent and autonomous.

RIAC has made some considerable changes as to how it operates and continues to investigate ways to streamline our processes and manage in an efficient and economical way. We also want to, and need to, use Social Media as a way of letting people know of our services and to keep them up to date with what is happening within RIAC, throughout the state and in fact all of Australia. Watch out for us on Facebook and Twitter in the not too distant future.

We will be concentrating on doing a membership and fundraising drive in the near future. Membership is important to the organisation because members are aware of the 'work' the organisation performs and can let others know about us.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank The Board for supporting me during the last six months and for believing in me. I would really like to thank the staff at RIAC for their support and belief in what our agency stands for. Without their professionalism and ongoing enthusiasm and passion for the work they do, RIAC would be ineffective in our role. Lastly I would like to thank the clients who ground us and give life perspective and remind us of what still needs to be achieved.

**Leah Kateiva**  
**Interim CEO**

## Disability in Australia

- 1 in 5 Australians have a disability. Of these, just under 1.4 million have severe or profound core activity limitation [3]
- Every week, 5 Australians sustain a spinal cord injury [2]
- Every week 10 - 15 Australians sustain a severe brain injury [2]
- Every 13 hrs, a child is born with cerebral palsy [2]
- 1 in 1000 children born each year will have Down Syndrome [2]
- Every 7 hrs, a child is diagnosed with an autism spectrum disorder [2]
- Every 2 hrs, a child will be diagnosed with an intellectual disability [2]
- In 2099, it is estimated that approximately 4 million people will have a severe or profound disability in Australia – more than triple the current number [2]

Source: [2] Price Waterhouse Coopers, 2011. 'Disability expectations - Investing in a better life, a stronger Australia'.

[3] Australian Bureau of Statistics. *Disability, Ageing and Carers, Australia: Summary of Findings, 2012* (cat. no. 4430.0)

# External Merits Review Support Program

The External Merits Review Support (EMRS) Program was established by DSS (Department of Social Services) in 2013, to coincide with the Barwon launch of the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS). RIAC was selected to deliver this program. The EMRS role is to support any person affected by a NDIS decision, to seek an External Review by the Administrative Appeals Tribunal (AAT). The reasons for seeking review are typically that a person has either been denied access to the scheme, or is unhappy with the supports offered by the NDIA in their Participant Plan.

The program is now 2 years old and we have gained extensive experience in the delivery of the service, and have supported over 20 Reviews to the AAT. The experience we have gained, with many varied and different cases has given us the confidence to feel we can now support any person through the EMR Process. Every review in some way not only benefits the participant initiating it, but then also helps determine future decisions by the NDIA, and the type of supports they will and won't fund.

We have supported 10 Reviews in the past year with the following outcomes:

One decision went to an AAT Hearing with the applicant being successful in having her support funded. This is the first EMR case to be successful in Australia at a Hearing, since the launch of the scheme.

Five Reviews settled prior to a Hearing, with the Clients either being granted access to the scheme, or the supports they have requested being granted.

Four Reviews are still pending, with 3 awaiting a future hearing date, and one in Conciliation at present.

The commonalities of the presenting clients' needs inform the approach to how we support each individual. This ranges from the practical assistance, like the paperwork/phone calls/gathering new information to support their reviews/connecting with legal support, basically helping a person with a disability navigate all the requirements of the process, as well as the critical 'walking alongside' and supporting the Applicant in a "person centred" approach to the role.



Many of the Clients seeking review present as very overwhelmed and stressed by their experiences of being a NDIS participant or applicant, and therefore the EMRS role involves often helping that person to re-establish the will, energy and belief to continue and Advocate for what they believe are appropriate supports. The timelines and waiting periods involved in the process has often made the clients feeling anxious and frustrated, so again the EMRS role is often helping to explain and minimise the impact of this process, as well as helping the client to not feel despondent or hopeless about their often 'limbo' like situation.

Promoting Self Advocacy is a central part of the EMRS role. The process of seeking review has empowered our clients, and enabled the development of self-advocacy skills, in being able to articulate their case and stand up for what they believe is 'fair and reasonable'. To date most of our work in this area has been on one to one sessions with many participants; providing them the information and support they have needed to take the next step forward in finding solutions to meeting their unmet needs.

The EMRS Team is now beginning the process of instigating a Peer-Support group for people involved in NDIA Reviews. This may involve previous clients if they choose to participate, and help to further develop and foster Self Advocacy skills. It could also incorporate the use of social media, and other digital tools, in organising networks of peer- advocates that then challenges some of the 'individualising' approaches of the NDIA. We hope to keep the idea that the NDIS is a community held and accountable scheme, open to feedback and as transparent as possible.

The EMRS Team is committed to this important role, with our intention being that of collaboration in a fair and robust review process, with the higher goal being to help create the best possible scheme which leads to the most common good. The more people that seek review the more then that the NDIS is examined and fine- tuned. We the scheme moving to full rollout soon, the review process will continue to be vital and essential in protecting participants' rights.

**EMRS TEAM**  
**Leah Kateiva**  
**Lance Youston**  
**James Keith**

#### Disability and financial circumstance

- 45% of those with a disability in Australia are living either near or below the poverty line, more than double the OECD average of 22% [2]
- People with a disability in Australia are 2.7 times more likely to be at risk of poverty than other OECD countries [2]

Source: [2] Price Waterhouse Coopers, 2011.  
'Disability expectations - Investing in a better life, a stronger Australia'.

## Advocacy Program

**RIAC's advocacy program assists people living with a disability with a wide range of issues that are impacting on their lives. RIAC strives to provide high quality advocacy services which are independent, client directed and respectful of our client's rights, privacy and dignity.**

The past twelve months has been an extremely busy time for our advocates yet again, with our demand for Advocacy assistance continuing to grow and significant changes have been occurring within the Program. A number of our Advocacy Team members have had the opportunity to lead the team for short periods which has been a great opportunity, a special thanks to Marie Whitrow who is no longer with RIAC however her contribution to the team was really beneficial. Jill Myers also had the opportunity to take on the team leader role for a period of time, and lead the team with ease. Thanks so much Jill for your assistance and support to the team.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank each and every one of the RIAC Advocates for all their hard work.

**Trish Deakin**  
**Daryl Sloan**

# Advocacy in Geelong

Advocacy within the Geelong region remains high across all age groups and disabilities. The main advocacy supports needed are in relation to the national disability insurance scheme, although we are in the second year of the trial 90% of advocacy is related to the NDIA. We envisaged fewer cases due to the fact that the NDIA would have made changes to the way they support the participant, the systems are evolving and changes are being made but the participants still need support to navigate the complex and confusing system the challenge still remains. Earlier this year Sharyl Brockett was employed as a part time Advocate in the Geelong office. There have been many changes to plans in favour of the participant this has helped to reduce the amount of cases being sent to the external merit review system. We continue to provide essential support to the community and the sector as a whole as the NDIA is continuing to change. We are encouraged that we are giving individuals the strength and opportunity to self-advocate, there are two individuals who have gone on to do public speaking about the advocacy support they received from RIAC and telling their story "their lived experience"

I have been to several agencies within Victoria educating service providers about importance of advocacy and how to forward plan for the NDIA. The Geelong advocates are encouraged with the continued positive feedback from clients, service providers also the referrals from the disability service commissioner's office.

**James Keith**  
**Sharyl Brockett**

# In Western Victoria

RIAC in West Wimmera is approaching our 2nd year and as RIAC's 5th Office, it is certainly gaining a strong presence in this Region. RIAC provides an Advocacy Service that aims to value people with a disability in the shires of Hindmarsh, Yarriambiack and West Wimmera.

West Wimmera is a lively and friendly community where the majority of Service Providers work together to instigate and participate in a variety of collaborative activities. As West Wimmera's Advocate, I thoroughly enjoy being part of this, with the knock on effect of empowering our clients to speak up and raise awareness of disability. I have also been invited to be part of the Edenhope Steering Committee for the Disability, Access and Inclusion Plan, at the same time involved in the Reference Group with Volunteer Western Victoria's Youth Disability Social Support.

RIAC's West Wimmera Office is based in the township of Horsham at the newly built Wimmera Uniting Care premises.

Currently my role is on a part-time basis, working with people with a disability and their families residing in rural areas. It is evident that Advocacy Services play a critical role in guaranteeing that the people of West Wimmera have support in obtaining information about their rights and assistance in exercising those rights.

**18.5%** of the population have a disability. That's around 4.2 million people.

Source:  
<http://www.aihw.gov.au/disability>

RIAC advocated for the introduction of a pilot program for Social Skills Respite which has been specifically designed to provide respite for families with children with a disability through a group based program targeting the development of social interactions. The aim of the program was to assist young people develop their social skills with their peers, establish and maintain friendships. At the same time this program provided, respite support, education and assistance to parents/carers and families.

This pilot program was a huge success as the feedback provided to the facilitators from both the participants and the parents is that they did not want the program to end.

**Alyson Clements**  
*Advocate*

## A team approach to accessibility

**RIAC worked in partnership with a local health service to secure wheelchair access to the facility.**

A person contacted RIAC and arranged to meet with the Advocate and the Health Service representative and show them how difficult access was for a person in a wheelchair (or a pram, staff with trolleys) to navigate.

Within 5 weeks there was a new footpath at the rear of the building, a ramp at the front and the boom gate has been modified.

Our client expressed gratitude as to the manner and speed this Advocacy was achieved.

# Indigenous Advocacy Shower facilities, a narrative

**To be able to have safe, private place to shower is a basic human expectation, - or is it?**

I spoke to the Local Government Councillors about the causes of homelessness and of the polymer and complex needs of this marginalised and largely invisible population group with the result the Councillors support was obtained to assist in creating positive outcomes. Over the next few months, my proposal of hot shower provision was discussed with the outcome that the public shower facility located in a quiet local park near bushland was quietly opened for ~ 4 hours during weekday mornings for the homeless to make use of. Once opened, I then regularly visited to ensure the facility was being cleaned, unlocked and hot water, lighting available etc.

I continue to visit approximately fortnightly and to leave donated (new and packaged) soaps, tooth brushes and hygiene packs in both the male and female showers.

The limited provision of a shower in potable heated water is a good outcome, a basic human expectation that most of us wouldn't think twice about, but the understanding that there are marginalised and very disadvantaged homeless people with this need and much more in the forefront of councillors now gives them a greater understanding of stark coal face community needs that they didn't possess at all prior to this advocacy.

Today, the bushland nearby remains a last resort for many of our regions homeless, they living rough with poor physical(&/or) mental

health, ABI's, family breakdowns, addictions, unemployment or simply lost as a result of their institutionalisation. The availability of a hot shower isn't really much, but it's a decent start

Recently the Council has made the decision to make the showers available 24 hours a day. Deadly outcome!

***(The last two ABS censuses attest that the Hume region has a higher rate of homelessness per capita than metro Melbourne.***

**Daryl Sloan**  
**Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Advocate**

There were notable differences in the rates of disability in the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and non-Indigenous populations:

- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people had higher rates of disability than non-Indigenous people across all age groups - this was true for both males and females;

- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children aged 0–14 years were more than twice as likely as non-Indigenous children to have a disability (15.2% compared with 6.6%);

- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people aged 35-54 years were 2.7 times as likely as non-Indigenous people of the same age to have a disability (37.8% and 14.2% respectively);

Source:

<http://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/mf/4433.0.55.005>

## Goulburn Self Advocacy Groups

**2014 - 2015 has been a very exciting time for Self-Advocacy in the Hume Region. The Rainbow Self Advocacy Group has been ongoing for over two years now; commencing in May 2013. This group was the first independent self-advocacy group in the Hume Region.**

In February 2015 an information session about Self Advocacy was provided by the Self Advocacy Resource Unit (SARU) for those interested in Self Advocacy from the Murrindindi, Mitchell and Strathbogie Shires; participants from Dame Patty Menzies and Goulburn Options attended the sessions. Following this, 'Introduction to Self-Advocacy' training was provided by SARU. The training was held over four weeks.

A group has since formed - 'Speak Up Alexandra' Lower Hume Self Advocacy Group. The group meets once per month at the Murrindindi Shire Council. Since the group's formation, they have had the opportunity to draft a Mission Statement and Rules; develop a brochure and are even enjoying the chance to take turns at chairing each meeting. The group have also been taking part in a Radio Show. Congratulations to the group for all their work so far. A special thank you to Wendy Kelly (NEXUS Primary Health, Rural Access Worker) for her ongoing support to this group.

Joseph Fernandez worked closely with the Rainbow Self Advocacy group throughout the year with a range of members learning new skills.

Joseph ensured the members had the opportunity to meet with Arthur Rogers Deputy Secretary of the Department of Health and Human Services. Members also attended the 'Strengthen Disability Advocacy Conference' in August 2014 which they thoroughly enjoyed and the Positive Behaviour Workshop for Autism. The Self Advocacy Resource Unit (SARU) Planning Forum was attended by a number of the group's members where they were assisted to complete a questionnaire for feedback on the success of the State Disability Plan.



In June of 2015, two of RIAC's Employees commenced new roles as Self Advocacy Peer Advisors to provide additional support, advice, information and leadership to the groups.

RIAC would like to extend a special thanks to the Steering Committees for their ongoing support and direction with this project. The Self Advocacy Resource Unit has played a major role with the ongoing support to our group members, providing training opportunities including: "Getting into the Act" booklet to raise awareness of the Victorian Disability Act 2006 and the UN Convention on the Rights for People with a Disability. The group have designed posters on "No Bullying" and "Speaking up for your Rights".

**Bronwyn Huggard**  
**Joseph Fernandez**  
**Mandy McKenna**  
**Athena Papadatos**

## Strengthening Parents Support Program

**The Strengthening Parent Support Program (SPSP) is a program that directly supports 15 Parent and Carer support groups throughout the Loddon Mallee Region. This program which is administrated by RIAC is jointly funded by Bendigo Health – Carer Support Services (CSS), Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) and The Department of Education and Early Childhood Development (DEECD). The objective of the program is to promote advocacy and independence through the provision of parenting support, information, advice, referral and resources to parents and carers.**

There are over 570 members all of whom receive at least one or multiple services from the SPSP program. These services include information through newsletters, invitations to respite activities, education in such areas of accessing government payments and training sessions, one to one support over the phone, as well as informal referrals to other agencies.

The 2014-15 year has been embraced with great enthusiasm by the groups who have again held a wide variety of successful events that have included but are not limited to brunches, lunches, dinners, walk & talks, bowling days, movies, trips to Melbourne (to see productions & the football), seminars, book launches, fundraisers, pamper days, awareness days, education, information sessions and the provision of respite vouchers of various descriptions. All of these events and activities help not only to promote awareness of the groups, thereby increasing memberships but serve to strengthen the bonds of all group members and highlight the benefits they provide to their wider community.

None of this happens without the enormous contributions made by all group members and especially the group leaders and committee members all of whom volunteer a significant amount of time and energy to keep the groups moving forward. The level of both individual and group support provided to families and carers has been of a high standard (as evidenced by the feedback forms completed) and the assistance provided makes a difference to their lives and the lives of those they support.



Whilst the NDIS rollout is exciting we recognise that it is also potentially unsettling, therefore in the past year we have been actively making sure that the groups have been as informed as possible. Some examples of this include information sessions in both Echuca and Bendigo, spreading the word on webinars and workshops and having Elizabeth McGarry CEO of the Association for Children with a Disability (ACD) to present at the SPSP Bi-annual conference in Echuca in June this year. NDIS "readiness" will continue to be one of our key priorities for the forthcoming year.

The SPSP program would not function without the backing of Carers Support Services (CSS). Our ongoing relationships with Carers Support Services and a range of other providers is highly valued.

**Loretta Doran**  
**James Keith**

## HACC Access and Support Program

**The HACC Access and Support Program at RIAC has been funded by the Department of Health and Human Services since July 2013. The Home and Community Care (HACC) Access and Support Service provides support for HACC eligible people, those who are frail and aged, younger people with a disability and their carer's; who due to their diversity, have barriers to accessing HACC and other services to assist them to remain living at home.**

The aim of the HACC (Home and Community Care) Program is to support people in their own homes and communities by providing services that promote and maintain independence. These services provide basic support and maintenance to people living at home or who are at risk of premature or inappropriate admission into a residential care facility.

The Access and Support Program has a focus on five Diversity Groups that may experience difficulties with access to HACC services and other services within their community. At RIAC we offer the services of the HACC Access and Support Program to people living with Dementia or experiencing Financial Disadvantage within the City of Greater Bendigo, people from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) backgrounds within the Rural City of Mildura as well as the CALD Communities within Swan Hill Rural City Council. The remaining focus group is people living in rural and remote areas.

The HACC Access & Support Cultural & Linguistic Diverse (CALD) program in Mildura and Swan Hill was previously delivered by Sunraysia Mallee Ethnic Community Council (SMECC) and has been successfully transitioned to RIAC as of the 1<sup>st</sup> April 2015.

We have had some changes in recent months within our HACC Access and Support Team. Moya Phillips has been employed in Swan Hill as the new HACC Access and Support Worker working with the CALD Communities. We are also recruiting new workers in Mildura as our previous worker Diana King has left RIAC to move interstate with her family.

The Access & Support role is a direct support role assisting people to access services. The HACC Access and Support Workers in Bendigo and Mildura have worked hard since the role commenced to establish the program and have had a total of 106 clients since the program commenced until June 2015. They have established good networks in their communities and continue to be involved in local network meetings, attending community functions and events and assisting organisations with events that focus on their target client groups.

In May the Mildura HACC Access and Support Workers assisted The Turkish Association to hold an Aged Care Expo for the Turkish Community in Mildura in partnership with Sunraysia Mallee Ethnic Community Council (SMECC). There is also a plan to be part of a 2 day dementia awareness campaign being held in Bendigo organised by Alzheimer's Australia for Dementia Awareness Month on September 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> which we will report on next year.

### **Bridey Mildren**

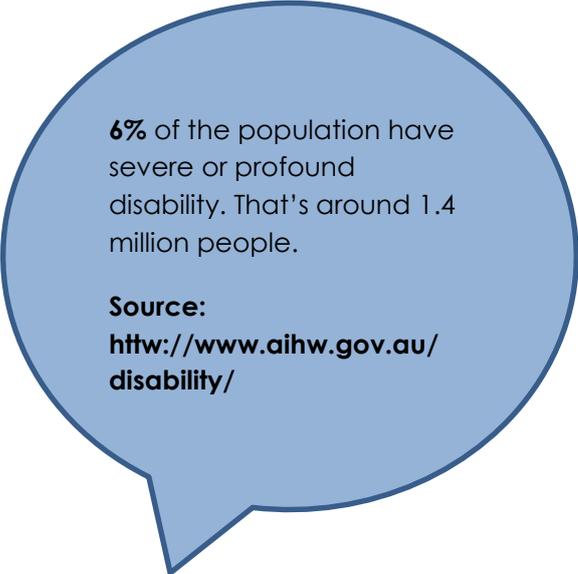
## **Karen Murphy Scholarship**

**RIAC's Karen Murphy Scholarship, to assist people with disabilities with their continuing educational needs.**

The scholarship is designed to assist people with a disability who are either senior secondary or tertiary students or studying an apprenticeship, to help fund their studies. Students must be 16 years and over to qualify for the Scholarship and live in the RIAC's catchment area.

For the 2015 calendar year, we received 14 applications for the scholarship in 2015 from a range of applicants across our service area. One application was chosen for the scholarship, with another application still pending and awaiting further confirmation of training for 2016.

The successful applicant was Jessica Tisler who is undertaking her Bachelor of Nursing. The scholarship money will be utilised to purchase specialised equipment.



**6%** of the population have severe or profound disability. That's around 1.4 million people.

**Source:**  
<http://www.aihw.gov.au/disability/>



## Rights Information and Advocacy Centre Inc.

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### **Shepparton – Head Office**

Office: 190 Benalla Road, Shepparton VIC 3630  
Postal: PO Box 1763, Shepparton, Victoria 3632  
Phone: 03 5822 1944  
Email: [admin@riac.org.au](mailto:admin@riac.org.au)

### **Bendigo**

Office: 31 Mackenzie Street, Bendigo VIC 3550  
Postal: PO Box 2219, Bendigo Delivery Centre VIC 3554  
Phone: 03 5443 0550

### **Geelong**

Office: 21 Regent Street, Belmont VIC 3216  
Postal: PO Box 427, Belmont VIC 3216  
Phone: 03 5245 7986

### **Mildura**

Office: 148 Lime Avenue, Mildura VIC 3500  
Postal: PO Box 2641, Mildura VIC 3502  
Phone: 03 5021 0265

### **Swan Hill**

Office/Postal: 98-100 Gray Street, Swan Hill VIC 3585  
Phone: 0497 333 114

### **West Wimmera**

Office: 185 Baillie Street, Horsham VIC 3400  
Postal: PO Box 483, Horsham VIC 3402  
Phone: 03 5362 2901

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



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