



Women With Disabilities Australia (WWDA)

Annual Report

2005–2006



Winner Australian Human Rights Award 2001
Winner National Violence Prevention Award 1999
Nominee, French Republics Human Rights Prize 2003
Nominee, UN Millennium Peace Prize for Women 2000

This document was published by:



Women With Disabilities Australia (WWDA)
ABN 23 627 650 121
PO Box 605
Rosny Park TASMANIA 7018
AUSTRALIA

Ph: +61 3 62448288
Fax: +61 3 62448255
Email: wwda@wwda.org.au
Website: www.wwda.org.au

Winner Australian Human Rights Award 2001
Winner National Violence Prevention Award 1999
Nominee, French Republics Human Rights Prize 2003
Nominee, UN Millennium Peace Prize for Women 2000

Design & Layout Seventy Five Design
Printing Loongana Print, Hobart, Tasmania

Contents

About Women With Disabilities Australia (WWDA)	5
WWDA President's Report	6
WWDA Executive Director's Report	8
WWDA Management Committee 2005-2006	24
WWDA Operational Funding Audit Certificate	27
Appendices	
WWDA Representation 2005-06	28
WWDA Feedback	30

© Women With Disabilities Australia (WWDA)
December 2006

This work is copyright. Apart from any use as permitted under the Copyright Act 1968, no part may be reproduced without written permission from Women With Disabilities Australia (WWDA). All possible care has been taken in the preparation of the information contained in this document. WWDA disclaims any liability for the accuracy and sufficiency of the information and under no circumstances shall be liable in negligence or otherwise in or arising out of the preparation or supply of any of the information aforesaid.

About Women With Disabilities Australia (WWDA)

Women With Disabilities Australia (WWDA) is the peak organisation for women with all types of disabilities in Australia. It is a federating body of individuals and networks in each State and Territory of Australia and is made up of women with disabilities and associated organisations. The national secretariat is located in Tasmania, the island State of Australia. WWDA is run by women with disabilities, for women with disabilities. It is the only organisation of its kind in Australia and one of only a very small number internationally.

WWDA is inclusive and does not discriminate against any disability. WWDA seeks to ensure opportunities in all walks of life for all women with disabilities. In this it aims to increase awareness of, and address issues faced by, women with disabilities in the community. WWDA seeks to ensure the advancement of education of society to the status and needs of women with disabilities in order to promote equity, reduce suffering, poverty, discrimination and exploitation of women with disabilities. WWDA is unique, in that it operates as a national disability organisation; a national women's organisation; and a national human rights organisation.

WWDA addresses disability within a social model, which identifies the barriers and restrictions facing women with disabilities as the focus for reform. The aim of Women With Disabilities Australia (WWDA) is to be a national voice for the needs and rights of women with disabilities and a national force to improve the lives and life chances of women with disabilities. The objectives of Women With Disabilities Australia (WWDA) are:

- to actively promote the participation of women with disabilities in all aspects of social, economic, political and cultural life;
- to advocate on issues of concern to women with disabilities in Australia; and
- to seek to be the national representative organisation for women with disabilities in Australia by: undertaking systemic advocacy; providing policy advice; undertaking research; and providing support, information and education.

WWDA is managed by a National Management Committee, which is elected each year at the Annual General Meeting. All members of the Management Committee are women with disabilities. WWDA has two paid staff members: an Executive Director, and a Business Manager. WWDA receives a small amount of operational funding annually from the Commonwealth Government, and is required to re-apply for funds each year.

More information about Women With Disabilities Australia (WWDA) can be found on WWDA's website at: www.wwda.org.au



WWDA President's Report

Annie Parkinson



As always a busy year for Women with Disabilities Australia, and one the staff and management committee have faced together despite the fact that some of us have never even met. All our communication is either by teleconference a few times a year or via email on one of our two lists, one for communication between the WWDA office and the management committee, and one for our larger membership, *wwda-discuss*. As most of you know this is used for sharing of information and also sometimes for discussion and debate. Following are some of the highlights of the past twelve months.

One of my last WWDA activities of 2005 was going to a rather poorly attended consultation held by the Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Sex Commissioner, Prue Goward. It was to give feedback on her discussion paper *Striking the Balance*, a piece of work that examined the strains caused in women's lives by the multiple demands of employment, housework and childrearing commitments. Her work was initiated by earlier studies that showed that contrary to popular opinion, women were still doing the lion's share of housework and childcare duties along with their careers. *Striking the Balance* attempted to investigate how women and men might more easily balance these competing calls of employment and family.

One of the interesting things about the timing of these discussions was that they were happening at pretty much the same time as the Workplace Relations changes were being so hotly discussed last year. The Commissioner's findings for women in the workforce were very much not in line with the new government thinking. So far, so good, but WWDA was very disappointed to discover that there was no recognition that women living with disability also participate in this daily juggling act and for us it is combined with the extra strain of managing our impairments. *Striking the Balance* refers to those with disability only in the context of being extra burdens of care for already overstretched women whom, one presumes from the text, are all able bodied.

Moving on to 2006, my calendar year began with a trip to our office in Hobart where I spent a couple of days having in depth discussions with Carolyn and Angela. I also met our accountant Karen for first time. We talked about several matters to do with our finances, for instance putting together a budget that works better for us than the method we've used in the past. We also looked at how to improve the efficient running of the office, from clearer time management to upgrading our assets register and developing and streamlining our database. Of course we spent a fair bit of time talking about the bigger picture for WWDA in terms of representing our membership and the larger constituency of women with disabilities across the world. We see our brief as being not only what is required of us by the conditions of our funding but as much as possible, working to improve the position of women with disability in this society.

This year WWDA has continued its efforts to see adjustable height examination tables used more regularly in general practitioners' surgeries. We have been at the forefront of a push to improve the access to health provision of women with disabilities, knowing that if we are able to achieve that, then it improves access for others across the board. In relation to the adjustable height beds issue, I have represented WWDA at meetings with other disability groups, with HREOC, with the Royal Australasian College of General Practitioners and with senior bureaucrats from Department of Health and Ageing. These processes always grind on very slowly but I have hope that all those involved in making the change possible will do so. This is such an obvious equity issue from our point of view.

I was honoured a few months ago to be one of a group of disability representatives who had the opportunity to meet Miloon Kothari, the UN Special Rapporteur on Housing. During the previous year, WWDA (via Carolyn) had contributed to a UN publication on the theme of Women and Housing and our presentation this year built on the gender and Human Rights issues facing women with disabilities in the area of housing. Other participants raised issues of living

out of the community, including life in institutions, boarding houses, nursing homes and so on. One participant named prisons as de facto institutions, because of the disproportionately high number of prisoners who have disabilities. While he was in Australia, Mr Kothari met with many groups that looked at various housing themes, including several meetings with Indigenous groups. You may have come across some of his comments in the press, expressing grave concern about the housing situation for Indigenous people particularly, but not exclusively, in remote areas.

WWDA applauds the completion of the United Nations Convention on the Protection of the Rights and Dignity of Disabled Persons. A lot of hard work went into getting a final version that all countries involved were happy with and those disability advocates who went to New York and argued out the final contentious Articles should be complimented. Although we did it from a distance, WWDA also played an important role in the document, ensuring that the preamble to the Convention mentioned that women had particular disability issues, that issues specific to women with disability were also raised where appropriate throughout the document and finally that an Article on women's issues be included. We were very pleased that the intersection between gender and disability has been so thoroughly recognised in such an important document. Now all that remains is for the Australian government to ratify it. We can only hope!

Recently, Sue Salthouse and I had the opportunity to visit Parliament House for a meeting with the advisor on women's issues of the Hon. Julie Bishop, Minister for Education, Science and Training and the following day a meeting with Senator Andrew Bartlett. We raised a few of the more pressing issues facing women with disabilities in general and WWDA as an organisation, particularly the sterilisation of minors which has come into focus again as the Standing Committee of Attorneys General attempts to put together steps for authorisation of such a procedure. We have always held the position that any sterilisation of minors should be unlawful unless there is a threat to life. Along with violence against women with disabilities, this is an area WWDA continues to address. These meetings with politicians and their advisors rarely bear immediate fruit, but we think it always useful to remind our elected representatives of our existence and of the issues we face.

What I've focused on in this report is part, but a significant part of what I've been doing with WWDA this last year. Of course it's only been possible because of the fantastic work that Carolyn does in our Hobart office ably supported by Ange who keeps everything running smoothly, and by all the support and work that comes from the rest of the management committee. I'd like to particularly thank Sue Salthouse, our Vice-President for being available as a sounding board and source of advice. I would also like to thank the Department of Family and Community Services and Indigenous Affairs for providing funding for us. We are very productive for such a small organisation, so thanks to all of you for making this possible.

Annie

WWDA Executive Director's Report

Carolyn Frohmader



Women With Disabilities Australia (WWDA) has had yet another busy, eventful and demanding year. Despite the small amount of funding WWDA receives, the organisation has achieved a number of significant outcomes over the past 12 months. We have been particularly active and successful in our systemic advocacy work - at the national level in relation to the Federal Government's welfare to work policies and industrial relations reforms, as well as at the international level in the development of a new United Nations treaty on the rights of people with disabilities. WWDA has also undertaken two major projects during the past year on issues of great concern to our constituents – violence against women with disabilities; and increasing representation and leadership opportunities for women with disabilities in Australia.

As Executive Director, I would like to take this opportunity to thank Annie Parkinson, WWDA's President, for her hard work in this role over the past year. Thanks too, to Sue Salthouse for her support in the role as WWDA's Vice President and her project work, specifically in the areas of welfare to work and industrial relations reforms, telecommunications policy, and leadership. My thanks go to the WWDA Management Committee members for your efforts over the past year, and the support and guidance you provide both myself and Angela in the WWDA National Office in Hobart. I would like also to acknowledge those WWDA members who have undertaken representative work on behalf of WWDA over the past year. And finally, a big thank you to Angela Court, who has worked tirelessly and diligently as always, in the WWDA Office.

The following report gives a brief synopsis of WWDA's performance over the past 12 months, under the categories: *Advice to Australian Government on Policy and Service Delivery; Consultation, Representation and Networking; Community Information, Awareness Raising and Education; and Corporate Governance*. These categories are consistent with the outcome requirements within WWDA's funding contract with the Commonwealth Department of Families, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs (FaCSIA).

I. ADVICE TO AUSTRALIAN GOVERNMENT ON POLICY AND SERVICE DELIVERY

WWDA has provided significant input to a number of government, non-government and industry processes, reviews, inquiries, and consultations during the past 12 months. At a Federal Government level, WWDA's formal submissions demonstrate the breadth and scope of the organisation, with submissions developed across a diverse range of issue areas, including: sport & recreation; national disability policy & programs; employment; income support; access to health care; development and implementation of international human rights treaties; and more.

I.1. WWDA POLICY SUBMISSIONS

Over the past year, WWDA contributed detailed submissions and input to the following:

- Review of the *Commonwealth Disability Strategy (CDS)*;
- *Draft UN Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Rights and Dignity of Persons with Disabilities*;
- Senate Inquiry into the *'Employment and Workplace Relations Legislation Amendment (Welfare to Work and Other Measures) Bill 2005; Family and Community Services Legislation Amendment (Welfare to Work) Bill 2005'*;
- Review of the *National Disability Advocacy Program (NDAP)*;
- Australian Government's *'Reducing Red Tape'* Initiative;
- Senate Inquiry into *Women in Sport and Recreation in Australia*;
- 14th Attorney-General's *Non-Government Organisation Forum on Domestic Human Rights*;
- Senate Inquiry into the *Commonwealth/State/Territory Disability Agreement (CSTDA)*;
- National Roundtable Discussion on *Sexual and Reproductive Health and the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) in the Australian Aid Program*;
- Human Rights & Equal Opportunity Commission (HREOC) *'Improving the Availability of Adjustable Examination Couches in General Practices throughout Australia'*

WWDA has provided regular advice, input and feedback to Government and industry on telecommunications policy and service delivery through WWDA's Telecommunications Working Party. A number of formal Submissions have been developed. Examples include:

- Senate Inquiry into *Telstra Sale* legislation;
- Department of Communications Information Technology & the Arts (DCITA) Review of the *Telecommunications Consumer Representation & Telecommunications Research Grants Program*;
- National Review of the *'Provision of Telecommunications Equipment to Consumers with Disabilities'* (Allen Consulting Pty Ltd);
- Review of the operation of the *Telecommunications Industry Ombudsman Scheme* (Allen Consulting Pty Ltd);
- Australian Communication Industry Forum (ACIF) Review of Guideline G: 586-2006 *Disability Matters: Access to Communications Technologies for People with Disabilities and the Elderly*;
- Australian Communication Industry Forum (ACIF) Review of Guideline G586:2001, *Access to Telecommunications for People with Disabilities*.
- Telecommunications Industry Ombudsman's *'Disability Action Plan'* Review;
- Australian Communication Industry Forum (ACIF) *Development of Payphone Industry Code*.

During the past 12 months, WWDA has been called to appear before three Senate Inquiry Hearings (Welfare to Work; Women in Sport and Recreation; and Review of the Commonwealth State/Territory Disability Agreement (CSTDA)). WWDA used these opportunities to present information on the multiple discriminations faced by women with disabilities in the areas of employment; sport and recreation; and uptake of CSTDA funded services and programs. WWDA also used these opportunities to reiterate the lack of data and research by the Australian Government on any aspect of the lives of women with disabilities – despite the fact that disabled women make up 10% of the Australian population, numbering approximately 2 million women.

1.2. CONVENTION ON THE RIGHTS OF PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES

WWDA's systemic advocacy on the development of a UN Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Rights and Dignity of Persons with Disabilities, has been a major area of success for the organisation, and has demonstrated the effectiveness of WWDA's systemic advocacy work at both national and international levels.

In 2001, the United Nations (UN) General Assembly agreed to a proposal for an international convention on the rights of people with disability, called the draft '*Comprehensive and Integral International Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Rights and Dignity of Persons with Disabilities*'. A committee was set up to discuss what should be in the convention, called the Ad Hoc Committee. WWDA has participated in a range of consultations on the development of the proposed Convention.

Following the Sixth Session of the Ad Hoc Committee in August 2005, the Chairman of the Committee (Don MacKay) prepared a "Chair's text", reflecting the work to date, streamlining the draft Convention in light of that, and making suggestions as to how some of the differences of view might be bridged. The need for a separate article dealing with women with disabilities was a contentious point in the development of the Draft Convention, right from the beginning of the process. Many involved believed that 'women with disabilities' could be covered in the Convention generally, and that there was no need for a separate Article. The Australian Government initially supported this position. WWDA worked tirelessly to demand that any UN Convention on the Rights and Dignity of Persons with Disabilities, must contain an Interpretive Article dealing with women with disabilities. Such an article would recognise that women and girls with disabilities are subject to multiple discrimination and that focused, gender-specific measures (including protective measures) will be necessary to ensure that women and girls enjoy all human rights and fundamental freedoms on the basis of equality with men and boys.

After many months of lobbying, WWDA was heartened by the Australian Government's decision to adopt the proposed article written by WWDA in our many Submissions on the Convention. This represented a significant shift for the Australian Government, which previously did not support a separate (interpretive) article on women with disabilities. The Australian Government delegation proposed WWDA's recommended Article at the Ad Hoc Committee meeting in New York in January 06:

Australian proposed Article No. 6 - Women With Disabilities

State Parties recognise that women and girls with disabilities are subject to multiple discrimination and that focused, gender-specific measures (including protective measures) will be necessary to ensure that women and girls enjoy all human rights and fundamental freedoms on the basis of equality with men and boys. State Parties shall take all appropriate measures to ensure the equal right of women with disabilities to the enjoyment of all rights set out in this Convention.

Australian Intervention on Article 6

Australia has proposed a separate Article which is substantially reflected in the Facilitator's text. We believe that it is important to recognise that the multiple discrimination experienced by women and girls is based on the intersection of gender and disability. We are flexible on the proposal for the preamble (n) bis and the twin track approach proposed. However we strongly support both the inclusion of a separate article on women and the facilitator's text for this Article.

The Final Draft of the Convention on the Rights of Persons With Disabilities was adopted on August 26, 2006, and contained a separate Article on Women With Disabilities, and was based on the recommended Article proposed by WWDA:

1. States Parties recognise that women and girls with disabilities are subject to multiple discrimination, and in this regard shall take measures to ensure the full and equal enjoyment by them of all their human rights and fundamental freedoms.

2. States Parties shall take all appropriate measures to ensure the full development, advancement and empowerment of women, for the purpose of guaranteeing them the exercise and enjoyment of the human rights and fundamental freedoms set out in the present Convention.

The Convention goes a long way in affirming the rights and dignity of women with disabilities and is potentially a powerful tool in addressing violations of their human rights. However, as with most human rights treaties, the challenge will be in its implementation. It is not known at this stage whether the Australian Government intends to be party to the treaty. WWDA will continue its systemic advocacy work to urge the Australian Government to not only be a signatory to the treaty, but commit to its implementation.

1.3. ACCESS TO BREAST AND CERVICAL SCREENING FOR WOMEN WITH DISABILITIES

Over the past year, WWDA has continued its systemic advocacy work on the issues relating to access to breast and cervical screening for women with disabilities, particularly looking at infrastructure needed to promote uptake of screening. This work has been supported by research conducted by Sheila King from the Access for All Alliance (and also a member of WWDA's Management Committee) who undertook a national survey of the availability of adjustable examination couches by contacting every General Practice in Australia. In broad terms, the survey of 3553 General Practices nationally identified 14,008 fixed height examination couches compared to only 719 adjustable examination couches.

WWDA's focus over the past 12 months has been to work in partnership with the Human Rights & Equal Opportunity Commission (HREOC), the Royal College of General Practitioners, and the Commonwealth Department of Health and Ageing, to develop strategies to improve the availability of height adjustable examination couches in general practice surgeries around Australia. This work has involved identifying the factors that limit the availability of adjustable examination couches; identifying the options for increasing the availability of adjustable examination couches; and looking at what needs to be done, and by who, to ensure women with disabilities do not experience a lower quality of service as a result of lack of access to adjustable examination couches.

1.4. CONVENTION ON THE ELIMINATION OF ALL FORMS OF DISCRIMINATION AGAINST WOMEN (CEDAW)

Over the past year, WWDA has continued its systemic advocacy work with both the Australian Government and Australian women's NGO's, on the implementation of the United Nations Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), to which

Australia is a signatory. CEDAW, adopted in 1979 by the UN General Assembly, is often described as an international bill of rights for women. Consisting of a preamble and 30 articles, it defines what constitutes discrimination against women and sets up an agenda for national action to end such discrimination. CEDAW was ratified by Australia in 1983. Countries that have ratified or acceded to the Convention are legally bound to put its provisions into practice. They are also committed to submit national reports, at least every four years, on measures they have taken to comply with their treaty obligations.

The Office for Women (Australian Government) has responsibility for monitoring Australia's obligations under CEDAW, including preparation of Australia's report under the Convention (required every four years) and providing advice on new developments relating to CEDAW. Progress with implementation of the Convention is monitored by the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women primarily through considering the reports of state parties. The Australian Government's Report 'Women in Australia' (the combined Fourth and Fifth Reports on Implementing the United Nations Convention on the Elimination of All forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) was presented to the 34th Session of the Committee on the Elimination of All forms of Discrimination Against Women, held at United Nations Headquarters in New York from 16 January to 3 February 2006.

As well as the Australian Government reporting on its implementation of CEDAW, the Australian women's NGO's submitted a 'Shadow Report' entitled 'Australian NGO Shadow Report on the Implementation of the Convention on the Elimination of All forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW)', the culmination of a two year project conducted by the Women's Rights Action Network of Australia (WRANA). WWDA worked closely with WRANA on the development of the Shadow Report to ensure that issues of concern to women with disabilities were included, and formally endorsed the Shadow Report in December 2005.

The CEDAW Committee's assessment of the Australian Government's progress was detailed in the document 'Concluding Comments of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women: Australia'. This document contains a number of 'concerns' of the CEDAW Committee as well as recommendations. The neglect of women with disabilities by the Australian Government was included in the document. The Committee expressed its concern at the lack of attention given by the Australian Government to disabled women. The Committee states:

'.....The Committee regrets the absence of sufficient information and data on women with disabilities. The Committee requests the State part to include adequate statistical data and analysis, disaggregated by sex, ethnicity and disability, in its next report so as to provide a full picture of the implementation of all the provisions of the Convention. It also recommends that the State Party regularly conduct impact assessments of its legislative reforms, policies and programmes to ensure that measures taken lead to the desired goals and that it inform the Committee about the results of these assessments in its next report.'

'.....The Committee is further concerned that the health needs of disabled women are inadequately met due to the lack of special equipment and other infrastructure.....The Committee recommends that the State Party develop the necessary infrastructure to ensure that disabled women have access to all health services.'

(CEDAW Concluding Comments February 2006)

WWDA's systemic advocacy work on the implementation of CEDAW will continue over the next 12 months. Naturally, as the peak body for women with disabilities, WWDA is eager to work cooperatively with the Australian Government to ensure that the areas of concern identified by the CEDAW Committee are addressed as a priority. WWDA will keep members updated on our progress in this area.

1.5. WELFARE TO WORK & INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS REFORMS

In 2005, WWDA began working with the four women's secretariats funded by the Australian Government through the Office for Women, to examine the likely changes which the proposed raft of legislative changes known as Welfare to Work might have on women, with our focus being those with disabilities. Following a seminar in mid-2005, the group of Women's Organisations formed the What Women Want (WWW) consortium to look at different scenarios in greater depth. WWDA presented papers at two forums held by WWW. Working through the National Foundation for Australian Women, the National Centre for Social and Economic Modelling (NATSEM) at the University of Canberra was commissioned to do 3 studies. The first modelled the distributional impacts of the changes on single parents, the second looked at similar changes for people with disabilities, again with a special focus on women and the third looked at the impact of some small changes to the legislative conditions to be applied. All reports were launched at press conferences at Parliament House. The first two showed a number of potential negative impacts including high effective marginal tax rates, and the danger of locking disadvantaged people into precarious employment and income situations. Both reports had their own impact on politicians, non government organisations and all those trying to understand the implications of the legislation. They gave WWW the tools for further in depth discussions on the intersection of the Welfare to Work legislation with that of the Industrial Relations (Workplace Relations Amendment [WorkChoices] Bill) legislation passed in November 2005.

As a result of its involvement with the WWW work, WWDA made a submission to the Senate Community Affairs Legislative Committee to receive submissions on '*Employment and Workplace Relations Legislation Amendment (Welfare to Work and Other Measures) Bill 2005; Family and Community Services Legislation Amendment (Welfare to Work) Bill 2005*' and was asked by AFDO to appear with it as a witness at the associated Senate hearings.

Much activity was generated by disability and welfare groups around this time. WWDA presented papers at a number of conferences looking specifically at the intersection of the two sets of legislation. These included a conference convened by the Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology; Womenspeak Secretariat; Queensland Working Women's Service/Griffith University; ACTCOSS, and the ACTU/Australian Council of Churches.

Following the introduction of Welfare to Work on 1 July 2006, WWW saw the need to continue its work, with a new emphasis on examining the changing employment conditions for working women. WWDA is deeply involved in this work to gather information and case study material. The research will be undertaken by academics from a number of different universities who form the Women in Social and Economic Research (WiSER) group. A comprehensive report on women's position in the Australian workforce, Women's Employment Status Key Indicators, was released in September by the three commissioning organisations, the National Foundation of Australian Women (NFAW), the Women's Electoral Lobby (WEL), and the Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission. Their first piece of research, carried out in conjunction with HREOC is the Women's Economic and Social Key Indicators.

WWDA will also be working cooperatively with a number of other groups who are collecting information on how those more at risk in the workforce are faring in the new workplace environment, and will maintain positive negotiation with politicians, policy makers and administrators of the new regulations to ensure that the stated aims of the legislation may be realised for the maximum number of people.

2. CONSULTATION, REPRESENTATION AND NETWORKING

WWDA has performed its role as a two way conduit between the community and Government on social policy issues, as detailed in WWDA's funding contract with the Commonwealth Department of Families, Community Services & Indigenous Affairs (FaCSIA). As the national representative organisation for women with disabilities, WWDA has continued to work hard over the past year to consult with its members on a wide range of issues, including Government policy initiatives such as welfare and industrial relations reforms; the development of a UN Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities; the Australian Governments reviews of national disability policies and programs; and telecommunications policy and services. WWDA has also undertaken extensive consultations with its constituents on issues of concern to WWDA members, including: violence against women with disabilities; leadership and advocacy; motherhood & parenting; education, employment and income support, and more.

During the past year, WWDA has been (and continues to be) represented on a number of national, State/Territory and local working parties, committees, advisory bodies, and other fora. WWDA has also been represented at a number of one off forums during the past year. Examples of WWDA representation for the year are included in Appendix I.

Over the past year, WWDA has actively sought out opportunities to establish and develop new collaborative relationships that will assist the organisation to achieve improved outcomes for women with disabilities. WWDA has continued to expand its international networks and has built further on existing relationships at the international level. WWDA has also established new, and strengthened existing, networks with a wide range of organisations throughout Australia, at national, State/Territory and local levels. WWDA's two major projects for the year, the development of a '*Resource Manual on Violence Against Women with Disabilities*' and the '*Advancement through Advocacy for Women With Disabilities Project*' have provided the impetus for WWDA to significantly enhance its profile and develop links and networks with a wide range of organisations, groups and services at international, national, State/Territory and local levels. WWDA is represented on a large number of electronic mailing lists and discussion groups and routinely uses these lists to disseminate information.

WWDA has worked in close partnership this past year with the national Womenspeak Network, which has enabled WWDA to further develop and strengthen its alliances with national and State/Territory women's organisations. The Womenspeak Network is a network of national women's organisations which work together on issues of common concern and provide representative advice to the government on policy issues as they affect women. WWDA participated in the Womenspeak Conferences in November 2005 and June 2006.

WWDA has continued to work with the *Australian Federation of Disability Organisations (AFDO)* on a wide range of issues affecting people with disabilities. WWDA is represented on the AFDO Board of Directors and has also provided delegates to represent AFDO on various forums. WWDA has also contributed to the development of AFDO's Communications Strategy, Strategic & Business Plan and provided input to a number of AFDO surveys.

2.1. ROUNDTABLE MEETING WITH THE UNITED NATIONS SPECIAL RAPPORTEUR ON ADEQUATE HOUSING

In early August 2006, WWDA participated in a Roundtable Meeting with the United Nations Special Rapporteur on Adequate Housing, Miloon Kothari. WWDA was represented at the meeting by Annie Parkinson (WWDA President) who gave a presentation on 'Gender, Disability & Housing in Australia'. WWDA's presentation addressed a range of issues specific to women with disabilities and housing and highlighted the current inequities and discrimination experienced by women with disabilities in housing.

The UN Special Rapporteur on Adequate Housing issued a Press Release on 23 August calling on the Australian Government to address the 'serious hidden national housing crisis in Australia'. He identified a number of vulnerable groups for which there is an urgent need to address the situation, including people with disabilities. He also pointed to the lack of reliable disaggregated data on the number of people affected by these issues. The Special Rapporteur also noted the particular negative impact of the housing situation on women. He recommended, amongst other things, that:



'A human right to adequate housing approach with the primary task of meeting the needs of the most vulnerable should be adopted. The principles of non-discrimination, gender equality and indivisibility of human rights need to be rigorously applied.'

Special Rapporteur on Adequate Housing, Miloon Kothari

2.2. REPRESENTATION MEETINGS WITH GOVERNMENT

WWDA has participated in a number of meetings during the year with politicians and government department representatives to raise issues of concern to women with disabilities in Australia, and to provide feedback on Government policy initiatives as they affect women with disabilities. Examples include:

- Minister Mal Brough – Minister for Families, Community Services & Indigenous Affairs;
- Senior Advisor to the Hon. Sharman Stone MP, Minister for Workforce Participation;
- Senior Advisor to the Hon. Julie Bishop, MP, Minister for Women, and Minister for Education, Science and Training;
- Senator Andrew Bartlett, Australian Democrats;
- Commonwealth Department of Family & Community Services (FaCS) National Secretariat Program (NSP) – Annual Performance Review Meeting;
- Commonwealth Department of Health & Ageing – Adjustable Height Examination Tables;
- WWDA Delegation Meeting with Federal Politicians - Telstra (Transition to Full Private Ownership) Bill 2005.



In March 2006, WWDA was invited by Minister Mal Brough (Minister for Families, Community Services & Indigenous Affairs) to accompany him to the Commonwealth Games. Lina Pane (WWDA Management Committee) represented WWDA at this event, which was also attended by a number of other invited guests from the disability sector.

Lina Pane (middle row, left) and other invited guests at the Commonwealth Games with Minister Mal Brough (back, centre).

3. COMMUNITY INFORMATION, AWARENESS RAISING AND EDUCATION

As the only national representative organisation for women with disabilities in Australia, WWDA has worked hard over the past year in its work to improve the lives and life chances of women with disabilities by: undertaking systemic advocacy; providing policy advice; undertaking research; and providing support, information and education.

WWDA has worked hard over the past year on two projects which address policy priority areas identified by WWDA members: violence against women with disabilities; and increasing leadership and representation opportunities for women with disabilities. The process of undertaking these two projects has been an important part of WWDA's work on awareness raising and education.

3.1. DEVELOPMENT OF A RESOURCE MANUAL ON VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN WITH DISABILITIES

In April 2006, Women With Disabilities Australia (WWDA) received funding from the Commonwealth Office for Women (OFW), under the Domestic and Family Violence and Sexual Assault Funding Program, to undertake a major project on violence against women with disabilities. The Project commenced in April 2006 and will be completed in early 2007. Through its diverse and broad membership, WWDA identified an urgent need to undertake the Project, which focuses on the development and production of a Resource Manual on Violence Against Women With Disabilities. This Manual is being developed in alternative formats in order to ensure accessibility for all women with disabilities, and is being developed in consultation with the members of WWDA and other key stakeholders.

There is a dearth of information and educational resources about violence which are accessible to women with disabilities and which addresses the diverse nature of violence perpetrated against them. WWDA's proposal for the Project was developed in response to the expressed needs of women with disabilities in Australia, and the lack of information that is available to this group. The Project is national in scope and has international applicability. The Resource Manual on Violence Against Women With Disabilities is being developed to serve a wide range of users and includes information targeted at disabled women; as well as students, policy makers, service providers, academics, researchers and the broader community.

Information WWDA is incorporating into the Resource Manual includes:

- Information for women's refuges and crisis services about how to develop accessible services and programs;
- Information about violence against women with disabilities – for women with disabilities; service providers; and the broader community;
- A comprehensive literature review & discussion paper, including an annotated bibliography of published literature on the issue;
- An annotated bibliography of resource materials worldwide;
- Narratives, poetry, and artwork from women with disabilities who have experienced violence including strategies they used to break the cycle;
- A guide to services and support at national, state/territory, regional and local levels.



The Resource Manual has been developed into a series of four Booklets (with accompanying CD ROM).

3.2. ADVANCEMENT THROUGH ADVOCACY FOR WOMEN WITH DISABILITIES PROJECT

In early January 2006, WWDA received grant funding under the Office for Women (Department of Families, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs) Women's Development and Leadership Programme, to undertake a year long project to improve the status of women with disabilities through systemic advocacy. Specifically, the Project is aiming to:

- develop systems and processes whereby women with disabilities can be identified, and recruited to act as advocates to improve the status of women with disabilities;
- develop the necessary tools to support women with disabilities in their representative and advocacy roles;
- research and identify representation, leadership and systemic advocacy opportunities for women with disabilities.

The project has involved the identification of opportunities for representation of women with disabilities on relevant committees, advisory bodies and other relevant fora at State, Territory and national levels. A WWDA Representation Opportunities Database is being produced, as well as a WWDA Representatives Register. A range of tools to support women with disabilities in their representative and advocacy roles has been developed as part of the Project, including a 'Guidelines for WWDA Representatives Manual'; WWDA/ Representatives Agreement; WWDA Representatives Report Templates; WWDA Policy on Representatives; WWDA Representatives Code of Ethics.



Logo used for the Advancement through Advocacy for Women With Disabilities Project

The initial dissemination of information phase was successful with responses and enquiries being received from Far North Queensland, far West Tasmania, the Northern Territory and the north of Western Australia. The Register was quickly built up, and personal contact with many women established. Confirmation of registration using a standard proforma and curriculum vitae developed by the Project has taken more work than originally projected. The calibre of the women on the Register is excellent, with many already having extensive representative experience, at all levels of the community and government. These women have much to offer both as representatives and as mentors to those just commencing an advocacy and consumer role.

In doing the investigative work to establish a list of representative opportunities, personal contact has been made with the administrators of all state, state territory and commonwealth registers, as well as *ourcommunity* and the *communitybuilders* community websites. At the outset, it became obvious that the administrative input needed to build and maintain an Australia-wide list of government representative positions would be beyond the scope of the Project. Nevertheless a substantial database has been built up. Negotiations with the Register administrators continue, with the aim of making sure that women with disabilities are approached for representative work. All of the Registers have a place where applicants can choose to disclose their disabilities. The project will ultimately give a comprehensive picture of where to access all the state/territory/ commonwealth government advisory bodies. Progress on furthering the relationship between WWDA and individual register administrators was the projected coordination of this work through the Ministerial Council of Women Ministers. MINCO met in September and various initiatives have been followed up since then.

In compiling the Guidelines for representatives, WWDA drew on a wide range of established guidelines which fulfill all the specifications of the project outline. However, feedback from a number

of registrants indicated that comprehensive and detailed information can be too dense to be assimilated, especially in cases where particular disabilities are interfering with cognitive abilities. The Guidelines drawn up have pared back this information to present a simple, straightforward outline which will not be daunting for representatives. It is accompanied by ample backup of sources of further information for those who are interested. One of the bonuses of making personal contact with Administrators of Registers has been that WWDA is now fed information about vacancies by a number of women's organisations within government. This has meant that considerable project time has been taken up in making potential matches for a number of positions. Placements are still in the pipeline.

Liaison with government personnel will continue, as this is a means of raising the profile of women with disabilities so that they are not a neglected group without consumer voice.

3.3. DEVELOPMENT OF AN ACCESSIBLE INFORMATION AND REFERRAL DIRECTORY FOR WOMEN WITH DISABILITIES IN AUSTRALIA

During 2004-05 WWDA undertook a major project to develop an online accessible Information and Referral Directory for Women With Disabilities in Australia. This Project was funded through the Commonwealth Office for Women (OFW). The Project aimed to develop an accessible Information and Referral Portal to enable WWDA to provide effective information, advice and referral to women with disabilities, their associates and the broader community, in an efficient and effective manner. The Online version of the Directory was completed in mid June 2005 and has been an outstanding success. During the past year, WWDA has expanded the Directory and it continues to grow. As part of WWDA's project to develop a Resource Manual on Violence Against Women with Disabilities, WWDA has updated and greatly expanded the Violence section of the online Services Directory, which now contains an extensive range of detailed information on services and programs to support women experiencing, or at risk of experiencing violence.

3.4. PRESENTATIONS & DELEGATIONS TO CONFERENCES

During the past 12 months, WWDA has presented papers at a number of national and State/Territory Conferences and Forums, covering a wide range of issues, including: gender and disability; welfare reform; leadership; telecommunications and more. Although there are many conference opportunities which are of great interest to WWDA and where advocacy opportunities are great, WWDA is restricted in participating due to lack of resources. Unfortunately, WWDA's operational funding does not extend to funding WWDA to present at Conferences, particularly if there is travel involved. WWDA is therefore required to try to secure funds from other sources for any Conference attendances and/or presentations.

Sue Salthouse, WWDA's Vice President, presented a paper on behalf of WWDA at the Second Forum conducted by WWW consortium in 2005 on Work Choices and the proposed Welfare-to-Work legislations. The paper entitled *Women with disabilities still 'at a loss'* which used emerging information to re-examine the potential affect of the changes. This was followed by a more generalist paper presented at a National Conference: *'Fair Go, Going, Gone? Public Policy & the Reframing of Values'*, convened by the Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology in Melbourne in late November 2005. Sue's paper entitled *'The Puppetry of Poverty'* examined the loss of autonomy, and the resultant affect on self worth and self direction, of the Federal Government's welfare and industrial relations reforms on women with disabilities in Australia.

In July 2006, WWDA presented a panel address at *Our Work, Our Lives* the National Conference on Women and Industrial Relations conducted by the Queensland Working Women's Service and Griffith University, held in Brisbane. Sue Salthouse, representing WWDA, presented a paper entitled

'Constant Bridesmaids' which examined how the Federal Government's Work Choices and Welfare to Work changes interact, and the affects that they will have on the workforce participation and experiences for women with disabilities.

WWDA was invited to participate in a panel at the ACTCOSS *Lifting the Chill: Rights and Reform in a cold climate* where Sue Salthouse presented a paper *Ice Maidens* which updated the material presented to the Brisbane conference in the light of feedback received from women with disabilities affected by the Welfare to Work legislation, and statistics already available from government websites.

Another national gathering of people concerned about social justice, the National Civil Society Forum, was held at Parliament House in early October. Sue Salthouse presented a paper entitled *Whose Values? and who values us? Fair Communities for People with Disabilities in Australia in 2006* in which the national Declaration of Human Rights was used as a scaffold to build a set of values for a truly inclusive society. A list of Conferences attended is included in Appendix I.

3.5. MEDIA & PUBLICATIONS

During the 2005-06 year, WWDA has continued to provide information to the community and raise awareness of the issues facing women with disabilities. WWDA has undertaken a number of interviews on radio to highlight issues of concern to women with disabilities, particularly the impact of the Federal Government's welfare & industrial relations reforms on disabled women. During the year, WWDA was also interviewed by Radio WORT-FM in Madison, Wisconsin USA on the issue of violence against women with disabilities.

WWDA has had several articles published in both Australian and overseas publications, including for example:

- Association for Women's Rights in Development Newsletter (Canada);
- Success Stories of Inclusive Development - Mobility International USA;
- Disability World Magazine
- Women's Health Statewide Newsletter
- Loris and Lucy's Later Life Guide
- The Nappy Bag Book
- The Weekend Australian
- Link Disability Magazine

3.6. SUPPORT TO INTERNATIONAL ORGANISATIONS

WWDA has continued to provide support to emerging groups of women with disabilities and disability organisations around the world and has been able to contribute copies of our publications and resource materials to many of these groups. Reciprocal networking relationships have been established with many new groups, including:

- Access Nepal
- Swat Youth Front (SYF) –Pakistan
- Arun Gupta – India
- Association Culturally Deportiva Stephen Hawking (Peru)
- National Union of Women with Disabilities of Uganda – Uganda
- Iranian Handicapped Scientific, Cultural and Art Association
- Lao Disabled People's Association (LDPA) – Phou Kong
- African Community Initiative Services (ACIS) – Nairobi, Kenya

- Blind Education and Rehabilitation Development Organisation (BERDO) – Bangladesh
- HAN Soamliland Women and Children with Disabilities
- TEKLA and CHAWATA in Kagera Region (Africa)
- KOWIP (Kenya)
- Feminist Response in Disability Activism (FRIDA)

WWDA was pleased to be able to support the 3rd International Women's Institute on Leadership and Disability (WILD 2006) was held in Eugene, Oregon, USA, hosted by Mobility International USA. This international conference brought together 30 young disabled women from around the world to strengthen leadership skills, exchange wisdom and strategies, create new visions and build networks of support to improve the lives of women and girls with disabilities internationally. WWDA was able to support this important event by providing complimentary copies of WWDA's acclaimed publication 'Taking the Lead: A Leadership & Mentoring Resource Kit for Women With Disabilities'.

WWDA has continued to support the Global Fund for Women through Executive Officer Carolyn Frohmader's role on Global Fund for Women Advisory Committee. Carolyn has provided a number of referee reports for GFW grant applicants from the Asia Pacific Region.

3.7. WWDA WEBSITE

The WWDA website continues to be extremely popular and successful. For the period November 2005 – September 2006, the WWDA website has received 132,915 visits and 379,781 hits. This is a significant increase from the previous 12 month period (Nov 2004-Sept 2005) which saw the WWDA website receive 106,623 visits and 283,740 hits. This means that, compared to the year 2004-05, the website has received an additional 26,292 visits and an additional 96,041 hits.

Usage statistics for the WWDA website show that users are accessing most of the WWDA website once they get to the site, and that users come from many different countries throughout the world.

The WWDA website has been updated and maintained during the past year. In early 2007, WWDA will be concentrating on updating the Online Information and Referral Directory, which has proved to be extremely popular.

3.8. INDIVIDUAL ADVOCACY

Although not funded to provide individual advocacy, WWDA has continued to assist and support individual women with disabilities who contact the organisation for assistance. In recent years, WWDA has witnessed a major increase in requests to the organisation for individual advocacy, particularly from people in crisis. This explosion in the number of specific enquiries has stretched WWDA's capacity to respond, particularly given the fact that WWDA is an organisation with only 1.5 paid staff. However, WWDA considers it imperative that the organisation respond because a significant number of the enquiries for assistance come from women in crisis from all over the country. The individual advocacy issues WWDA is contacted about are very diverse and include for example: sexuality; motherhood & parenting (including access to assisted reproductive technologies); housing; health; violence; employment; income support; access to disability and community based services; accessible travel; and more.

Over the past 12 months, the issue of motherhood and parenting has emerged as a major issue for women with disabilities in Australia. Many disabled women have contacted WWDA in desperation to find any sort of information/support/service etc to assist them in their role as mothers and/or

potential mothers. WWDA has also been contacted by a range of service providers who are seeking similar information to support their clients. It has become evident that this is a major, unaddressed issue in Australia for women with disabilities, and covers a wide range of issues – everything from locating adaptable equipment, through to accessing assisted reproductive technologies.

As the national representative organisation for women with disabilities, WWDA has a responsibility to respond to the identified concerns of its members. Over the coming 12 months, WWDA will be working to identify funding sources to begin to address this most important issue for women with disabilities in Australia.

3.9. AWARDS

A number of WWDA members have been formally recognised over the past 12 months for their contribution to improving the lives of disabled women. In December 2005, the WWDA affiliate organisation located in the Australian Capital Territory (ACT) (WWDACT) was recognised by the ACT Government for its innovative fitness program for women with disabilities. The WWDA ACT group won the 'Best Community Project' from a field of 16 nominees, as well as the overall prize (from a field of more than 40 nominees), the 'ACT Chief Minister's Inclusion Award for 2005'.

WWDA's congratulations also go to Louise Bannister (WWDACT) who was one of the three finalists in the 2006 Australian Centre for Leadership for Women (CLW)'s Leadership Achievement Award. Louise was recognised for her contribution to and establishment of the *Well and Able pilot program*.



Far left: Louise Bannister. Centre and Left: Women with disabilities participating in the 'Well and Able Fitness Program' (ACT) Photos courtesy of the Women Centre for Health Matters (ACT)

In March 2006, WWDA was delighted to learn that one of the organisation's longest serving members, Diana Palmer (pictured below) from the ACT, was awarded the International Women's Day Award in the Australian Capital Territory (ACT). As a trailblazer in the area of women's rights, and especially those of women with disabilities, Diana was one of the first blind women to have permanency in the Australian Public Service, one of the first people with a guide dog to take up residence in a Government Hostel in Canberra, and one of the first blind people in Canberra to become an independent tenant in public housing. Diana has always been a social justice crusader, and is well known by Ministers in both Territory and Commonwealth Government circles for her penchant for starting 'at the top' when taking up any equity matters.



WWDA also takes this opportunity to congratulate Sue Salthouse (WWDA Vice-President) and Keran Howe (WWDA member and past WWDA President) for their nominations for prestigious Awards in 2005. Sue was nominated for the Australian Capital Territory International Women's day Awards, and Keran was nominated for the national Human Rights Awards.

4. CORPORATE GOVERNANCE

As the only national representative organisation for women with disabilities in Australia, WWDA has continued its work to improve the lives and life chances of women with disabilities by: undertaking systemic advocacy; providing policy advice; undertaking research; and providing support, information and education. As a national peak body receiving operational funding from the Commonwealth Government, WWDA has contributed to Government policies affecting women with disabilities, carried information between the Government and the community on social policy issues, and represented constituents' views on a wide range of issues.

During the past year, WWDA has continued to develop and improve its organisation policies and procedures, and undertake capacity building initiatives to reflect the growth and changing needs of the organisation. Inherent in this, has been WWDA's continued efforts to diversify its funding and resources, not an easy task in the current climate.

WWDA has written several funding submissions over the past year seeking project funding for various aspects of its work. Examples include:

- Submission to the Commonwealth Office for Women (OFW) Women's Leadership and Development Programme – successful;
- Submission to the Commonwealth Office for Women (OFW) Domestic and Family Violence and Sexual Assault Funding Program – successful;
- Submission to the Global Fund for Women (USA) – successful;
- Submission to an Independent Philanthropist, via the Reichstein Foundation (Victoria) – unsuccessful;
- Submission to Australian Ethical Investment Limited – unsuccessful;
- Submission to the Commonwealth Department of Communications Information Technology & the Arts (DCITA) – successful.

WWDA has continued to work to its *Strategic Plan (2004-2009)* during the past year. WWDA Policy Priority areas for 2004-2009 were developed following extensive consultation with WWDA members, associate organisations, and other stakeholders. The Policy priority areas reflect a range of issues of concern to women with disabilities and include: Violence (including unlawful sterilisation); Health (with a particular focus on cervical screening; breast screening); Housing and Accommodation; Disability Support; Employment and Income Support; Information & Communication Technologies; and Education. Underpinning these priority areas is a focus on women with disabilities who are identified as at particular risk; including those women who face multiple or aggravated forms of discrimination as a result of race, ethnicity, sexuality, or other status.

WWDA has complied with all aspects and conditions of its funding contract with the Commonwealth Department of Families, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs (FaCSIA). It has also met its Constitutional requirements and requirements under the Australian Capital Territory (ACT) Incorporations Act.

Carolyn

WWDA Management Committee 2005-2006



Annie Parkinson - President

Annie Parkinson, a long-standing member of WWDA, has over 30 years experience in activism in the women's movement, and the gay and lesbian rights movement. She was involved in the development of the ground-breaking publication 'I Always Wanted to be a Tapdancer', a book of stories of women with disabilities published in the late eighties. She has worked as a research assistant in the disability field, and in the 1990s, co-founded an organisation called Access Plus, a group that addressed issues which particularly affected queers with disabilities. She has been actively involved in the establishment and management of several organisations, and has been a member of a number of management committees. Annie has most recently joined the management committee of a small SAAP funded housing organisation which offers short-to-medium term housing for women who have experienced sexual abuse.



Sue Salthouse - Vice President

Sue Salthouse has worked in the area of social justice since 1996, playing an active role in systemic advocacy for women with disabilities. Sue runs her own Consultancy company which specialises in a range of work in the disability sector – social research, government and non government policy advisor, conference facilitation, project development and management, TAFE teaching, and individual advocacy. Sue is a research and policy consultant to WWDA, coordinator of WWDA's Telecommunications Working Group, and WWDA spokesperson on Industrial Relations and Employment. She has also undertaken a number of research and advocacy projects for WWDA covering a wide range of issues of concern to disabled women. Sue is a representative for WWDA and as a WWDA-affiliate, for the Australian Federation of Disability Organisations, on a wide range of Advisory Groups. She regularly presents papers for WWDA at Conferences and other forums. Sue also convenes Women With Disabilities ACT (a WWDA-affiliate organisation).



Kate List - Secretary

Kate has a keen interest in disability policy and is an enthusiastic campaigner for the rights of women with disabilities. Kate has worked as a Policy & Research Officer for WWDA and has also worked in disability policy with the Commonwealth Government. As a qualified scientist, Kate has also worked at the Australian Museum and taught at the Australian Defence Force. Kate has undertaken a number of representative roles on behalf of WWDA including being the WWDA rep on the Board of the Australian Disability Studies and Research Institute (DSARI).



Pamela Menere - Treasurer

Pamela lives in Corryong in North East Victoria and has been involved with WWDA for many years, having held positions of Secretary and Treasurer of the Management Committee. Pamela has been involved with several advocacy and disability related groups including the Victorian Women with Disabilities Network, Towong Shire Community Access Committee and the Hume Region DHS Disability Advisory Committee. She is also actively involved with numerous other community organisations in her local area. Pamela has worked in part time paid employment as an outreach employment counsellor with a disability employment agency.



Lina Pane

Lina has extensive experience in working as a social worker in the disability field and is well known as a feminist disabled writer and keynote speaker. Her professional career has included carer support; service development in the areas of women's health programs, women's employment services, mentoring and peer support programs, and life coaching. Lina has her own Consultancy company which specialises in community development work, social work, and research particularly in the disability field. Lina has particular interest and experience in stress management for women and the study of psychotherapy, mind mastery and relaxation techniques.



Jill Fowler (Resigned August 2006)

Jill Fowler has extensive experience in the disability sector and is a passionate advocate for the rights of women with disabilities. Jill is a part of the successful Consultancy Firm, H C Harrison Consultants, which provides the general public, businesses and all levels of government with advice about how to provide equitable access within and around the built environment as well as staff development in the area of Disability Awareness. Jill has worked across the Disability, Recreation, Carer and Advocacy sectors for 15 years. She has had extensive involvement in both access and service delivery issues including: representation on many boards of management, committees and consultative groups.



Sheila King

Sheila King has a long history of advocacy for people with disabilities. She is the Secretary and founding member of Access For All Alliance, a volunteer community group established to ensure equitable and dignified access to all premises and facilities whether public or private, to all members of the community. In November 2003 Sheila received an Annual Peer Award from the Physical Disability Council of Australia for her efforts in addressing the issue of access to health professionals across Australia. This took the form of a study into the lack of adjustable height examination beds in doctor's surgeries throughout Australia. Sheila serves on a number of Committees and undertakes a wide range of representative work in the disability sector.



Helen Meekosha

Helen Meekosha is Associate Professor in the School of Social Work, University of New South Wales, Australia. She worked as a community development worker for 17 years in the UK and Australia prior to her appointment at UNSW. Her research interests cross boundaries of race, ethnicity, disability and gender. In 1996 she was instrumental in establishing The Social Relations of Disability Research Network, a group of interdisciplinary scholars interested in Disability Studies. Later she went on to be a founding member of the Disability Studies and Research Institute (DsaRI). Helen has written and spoken extensively, from a feminist and a disability perspective on citizenship, human rights, social movements, the media and the body, communications and multiculturalism. Active in the disability movement for 20 years, she has been involved with Women with Disabilities Australia since its inception over a decade ago and as President in 2001 accepted the Australian Human Rights Award in the community category. She is an Overseas Consultative Editor of Disability and Society, on the JORSEN International Advisory, a member of the International Advisory Editorial Board of the Encyclopaedia of Disability 2006 (Sage), and an editor of Volume 4. In June 2005 she was the Noted Scholar in feminist disability studies at the University of British Columbia.

Management Committee



Josephine Dixon

Jo Dixon has a keen interest in human rights, disability and gender issues. She is currently undertaking a Bachelor of Laws Degree at Latrobe University in Victoria. Jo is very active in student advocacy within the University, and is the current Disability Liaison Officer where she actively promotes the needs and rights of students with disabilities. She is also the student representative on the La Trobe University Disability Advisory Committee. Jo is an active community volunteer and has undertaken voluntary work in the areas of asylum seekers and refugees; aboriginal legal aid; youth support services and domestic violence support services.



Vicki Alipasinopoulos

Vicki Alipasinopoulos has been a member of WWDA since 1999. Vicki's background is in social work and she also holds a Certificate IV in Workplace Training and Assessment. Vicki has been an active member of the disability sector and attended the first Leadership and Mentoring Workshop run by WWDA in 1999. Vicki currently serves on a number of committees in the disability sector, including the Management Committees of the Disability Resources Centre and Blind Citizens Australia. Vicki is also currently serving on a consumer feedback committee as part of the newly formed blindness agency, Vision Australia. This Committee provides feedback to staff to the Training, Technology and Employment team in Victoria. Vicki participates in voluntary work at various agencies where she provides counselling to clients who have an intellectual/psychiatric illness. Other voluntary work involves providing emergency relief, information, referral, advocacy and support.

WWDA Staff



Carolyn Frohmader
Executive Director



Angela Court
Business Manager

WWDA Operational Funding Audit Certificate

Partners & Directors:
 D. W. STEELE F.C.A.
 M. J. BURNETT B.Com.,
 F.C.A.



STEELE BURNETT & NELSON

CHARTERED ACCOUNTANTS

A.B.N. 36 009 552 694

Associates:
 D. R. RICHARDS B.Com.,
 C.A.
 K. A. NELSON B.Com., C.A.
 K.L.BULL B.Com., C.A.

Chartered Accountants
 Business Advisers
 Tax Agents
 Registered Auditors
 Established 1975
 Steele Burnett & Nelson
 Services Pty Ltd Member of
 CA Associates Australasia
 & CPA Associates
 International

Federal Department of Family and Community Services Audit Certificate

Program Funding Recipient: Women With Disabilities (Australia) Incorporated

Type of Funding: National Secretariat Program

Statement of Income and Expenditure for the period: 01/07/2005 to 30/06/06

I have audited the financial statements of the organisation for the period indicated and provided answers to the following questions. Where a "No" answer is given I am providing an accompanying note to the certificate.

1.	I have read the Conditions of Program Funding under which payments have been made to the organisation by the Department of Family and Community Services for the audited period.	Yes
2.	I am satisfied that all payments made to the organisation by the Department of Family and Community Services in, or for, the audited period were spent for the agreed purpose(s) or, if not yet fully spent, have been accounted for in the audited financial statements.	Yes
3.	I am satisfied that the organisations observed all Condition of Program Funding relating to the organisations audited financial statements.	Yes
4.	There were no other matters of a material nature that came to my attention, other than those noted in my audit report.	Yes

Name of Engagement Partner:

Derek Steele

Signature of Engagement Partner:

Name of Audit Firm:

Steele Burnett & Nelson

Address:

Po Box 28 Rosny Park TAS 7018

Telephone No:

(03) 6244 5044

Fax No:

(03) 62447319

Date:

22 September 2006

Appendix 1

WWDA Representation 2005-2006

Forums, Workshops, Hearings, National Meetings

ACOSS National Advocacy Day

Attorney Generals' Human Rights NGO's Forum

Australian Communications Industry Forum (ACIF) & Disability Council Forum on 'Informed Consent'

Australian Communications Industry Forum (ACIF) Disability Council

Australian Electoral Commission National Meeting

Australian Federation of Disability Organisations (AFDO) Board of Directors

Australian Federation of Disability Organisations (AFDO) Consultation Forums on the Draft Convention on the Rights of Persons With Disabilities

Australian Housing and Urban Research Institute (AHURI) National Research Project on Housing Careers

Centrelink DisAbility Customer Service Reference Group;

Disability Committee of the Client Student Voice Advisory Group (CSVAG)

Global Fund For Women (USA) Advisory Board

Human Rights & Equal Opportunity Commission & Royal Australian College of General Practitioners National Forum 'Improving the Availability of Adjustable Examination Couches in General Practices throughout Australia'

International Day for People with Disabilities – Tender Assessment Panel

International Day for People with Disabilities – Ministerial Launch

Internet Users Society of Australia Conference on 'Convergence' of Broadcasting/Communications

Medicare Australia Consumer Communication Group

Museums Australia Access and Disability Sub-Committee

National 'What Women Want' Forum

National Roundtable Discussion on Sexual and Reproductive Health and the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) in the Australian Aid Program

National Roundtable on 'Amending the Disability Discrimination Act: Cause for Celebration or concern?'

National Roundtable on Financial literacy of marginalised groups of women (RPR Consulting)

Rountable with United Nations Special Rapporteur on Adequate Housing

Senate Inquiry (Hearing) into the 'Employment and Workplace Relations Legislation Amendment (Welfare to Work and Other Measures) Bill 2005; Family and Community Services Legislation Amendment (Welfare to Work) Bill 2005'

Senate Inquiry (Hearing) into the Commonwealth/State/Territory Disability Agreement (CSTDA)

Senate Inquiry (Hearing) into Women in Sport and Recreation in Australia

Telecommunications Disability Consumers Representation Project Advisory Body (TEDICORE)

Telstra Consumer Consultative Council Darwin

Telstra Consumer Consultative Council Forum – Staying Connected: Credit Management and Essential Services

Telstra Disability Forum

Workplace Training Advisory of Australia ‘Australian Women & Leadership Forum’

Young People with Disabilities in Residential Aged Care – National Advisory Group

Conferences

National Conference: Fair Go, Going, Gone? Public Policy & the Reframing of Values (RMIT, Vic)

Telecommunications Industry Ombudsman Conference

Asia-Pacific Telecommunity Accessibility and Usability Workshop (ASTAP)

Australian Council of Social Service (ACOSS) Congress Re-imagining Australian Society – visions and solutions

WomenSpeak Conference Nov 2005 & June 2006

International Women’s Development Agency Symposium – Canberra

Workplace Training Advisory of Australia (WTAA) Australian Women & Leadership Forums Qld & ACT

National Conference on Women & Industrial Relations

ACTCOSS conference – “Lifting the Chill: Rights and Reform in a Cold Climate”

Australian Council of Churches/ACOSS – Civil Society Conference “Fair Means and Foul – Whose Values and who values people with disabilities in Australia in 2006?”

Awards

WWDA ACT – ‘Australian Capital Territory Chief Minister’s Inclusion Award for 2005’

Louise Bannister – Australian Virtual Centre for Leadership for Women (CLW)’s Leadership Achievement Award

Diana Palmer – International Women’s Day Award Australian Capital Territory

Sue Salthouse – Nominee, International Women’s Day Award Australian Capital Territory

Keran Howe – Nominee, National Human Rights Award

Appendix 2: WWDA Feedback

Women With Disabilities Australia (WWDA) regularly receives feedback on its performance. Included below are some examples of the type of feedback WWDA has received from its constituents over the past year.

Hi Carolyn
I have just (finally) taken a look at the information and referral Directory that I received early in July. This is great information, well presented and useful to every person who wishes to seek information about women living with a disability, on many topics.

Well done WWDA.

Regards
Jan
August 2005

Congratulations on the New Directory. It has been needed for so long. It will make a difference to so many. Thank you to all concerned.

Best regards
Beth
7 July 2006

Hello to you women in Australia!

Hail from DAWN Canada Disabled Women's Network Canada. We are participating in a national Status of Women Canada (governmental agency representing issues of women in Canada) consultation on gender equality and we want to use some of the ideas that you presented to the UN working group on the proposed Convention to Promote and Protect the Rights and Dignity of Persons with Disabilities submitted by your group and put together by Carolyn Frohmader.

I'm not certain yet what we will say but I wanted you to know that your work reflected many of our own thoughts. I found it a good reminder about our politics of social political definition of disability. We hope that you are okay with us using some of your thoughts as we discuss issues related to women with disabilities in Canada.

We will keep in touch.

Yours sincerely Eileen O'Brien
Co-chair DAWN Canada
23 September 2005

Dear Sir,

It's a matter of great pleasure to me to read all what your organisation is doing for the welfare of Handicaps in this world. It's the efforts of organisations like yours which help physically handicaps to improve. I really appreciate your efforts as I am a Handicap suffering from Polio and also helping other handicaps in northern India with my resources.

Arun Gupta
India
11 January 2006

Dear WWDA,

I would like to congratulate you on your input in the UN deliberations on the Rights of people with disabilities ensuring that you made it have gender considerations. Indeed your contributions are a gift to women with disabilities all over the world. On my own behalf, the African continent and Kenya I salute you. I believe there is a lot that I can learn from you to help organise Women with disabilities in this region. The women have very weak institutions that lack the power to compete for resources and even democratic space on any platform. Having said this, organisations like your serve as role models for the rest of us.

Your sincerely
Salome Muigai
12 September 2006

Dear Ms Frohmader

I am writing to thank you and your organisation for the recent work you have conducted, in collaboration with other Women's groups, in the area of Welfare Reform. The Report, the Distributional Impact of the Welfare-to-Work Reforms upon Australians with Disabilities, compiled by the National Centre for Social and Economic Modelling (NATSEM), University of Canberra raises a number of significant concerns for the Western Australian Government. The full impact will not only be on people with disabilities, but also their carers. Thus, Australian women, particularly those with the least resources, will be directly affected by the Welfare Reforms on a number of fronts.

I intend to use the information from the public report to inform Western Australian citizens of the personal implications of the legislation, should it pass. I will also be informing my fellow Parliamentarians of the significance of the reforms on Western Australian citizens with disabilities, their carers and state funded and provided disability services.

I would like to encourage you to continue this exceptional independent work. Thank you once again for the outstanding work you and your colleagues are undertaking in this vital area of concern.

Yours sincerely
Hon Mark McGowan MLA
Minister for Disability Services (WA)



Winner Australian Human Rights Award 2001
Winner National Violence Prevention Award 1999
Nominee, French Republics Human Rights Prize 2003
Nominee, UN Millennium Peace Prize for Women 2000