

Women With Disabilities Australia (WWDA)

Annual Report

September 2002 – September 2003



**Women
With
Disabilities
(Australia)**

*Winner Australian Human Rights Award 2001
Winner National Violence Prevention Award 1999*

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WWDA President Report By Helen Meekosha

Once again it has been an honour to serve as WWDA's president, although due to increasing ill health I had to resign from my position as President at the beginning of May. Annie Parkinson and Sam Jenkinson were able to step in and jointly share the role and I express my gratitude to them. I would also like to take the opportunity to thank all those members who wrote to me on an individual basis at that time.

Since the last AGM WWDA has faced a number of major challenges. Firstly, Carolyn Frohmader, our Executive Officer, was on maternity leave for 6 months. The organization was consequently understaffed and we were unable to perform at our usual, if not to say, unusual capacity! But it was with great delight we welcomed the beautiful Lottie Sorrento who arrived, somewhat prematurely, on International Day of Disabled People in December 2002. We were fortunate to have Angela Court available to act as Executive Officer for 4 days a week and I would like to acknowledge Angela's work in keeping WWDA on track during Carolyn's absence.

The second major challenge resulted from the restructuring of the organization at the last AGM. Recognising the difficulty of sustaining regional groups of WWDA with little or no funding, the management structure now reflects a more realistic situation, that is, we are a large network of women with disabilities across Australia. Many of these women are active in local organizations and thus there are different accountability processes at work. We also have made space for individual women members to participate on the management committee, recognizing that there are times when women are more active on the national than the local level and commitment to the running of WWDA may preclude local work.

The past year has not been an easy one for women with disabilities, continuing concern about how 'welfare reforms' will affect women has remained of major concern. While some advances have been made, such as in the telecommunications area, other issues of great concern to women with disabilities have been neglected or put on the back burner by governments – sterilisation and reproductive health being an obvious issue. It is vitally important that WWDA continues to exist, grow and strengthen – the many particular issues faced by women with disabilities need to be continually made visible to governments and the wider community.

I would like to thank all the 2002-3 committee members and wish them well in the coming year.

WWDA Acting President's Report

By Annie Parkinson

I've held the position of president unexpectedly since May, when Helen Meekosha, after some years of inspirational leadership, was forced by ill health to resign. We wish her well and appreciate the quantity and quality of the work she did for WWDA. Samantha Jenkinson has assisted me in carrying out the role of president.

As usual, it's been a full and busy year for WWDA, starting with the acceptance of our revised constitution at the last AGM. Carolyn was on maternity leave from the end of last year to June of this year. She is now the mother of Lottie who seems from photos to be a charming baby. We were fortunate that during Carolyn's maternity leave, Angela was able to increase her hours to take over the position. This meant that although our capacity was a little diminished because there were fewer hours all up, there was still a smoothness and continuity to that period of transition. We are lucky to have staff of such calibre, and we thank you both for your continued impressive work.

Throughout the year, WWDA has continued to work for its goal of seeking systemic change for women with disabilities in Australia. We have provided input to government policy on a range of issues detailed in the Executive Director's Report and also participated in the setting up of the Australian Federation of Disability Organisations.

In September we have a Planning Weekend coming up, a chance to clarify our aims and objectives and to come up with a strategic plan for the next five years. This meeting, to be facilitated by Leanne Dowse, will take place in Hobart and has been made possible because of a grant by the Tasmanian Community Support Levy. We particularly appreciate this opportunity to meet up, many of us for the first time, and work together on our vision for WWDA. One of the difficulties of being a national peak organisation with extremely modest funding is that we have to conduct all our work by email or telephone link up. It will be a very grounding experience to be in the same place at the same time.

Finally I'd like to thank the rest of the Management Committee for their support over the last few months and welcome our two new incoming members, Sam Salvaneschi and Jenny-Bridge Wright. We all have an organisation to be proud of in WWDA.

WWDA Executive Director's Report By Carolyn Frohmader

WWDA has had another busy year. I had almost 6 months off on Maternity leave following the birth of my daughter, and returned to WWDA in May 2003, only to find the organisation busier than ever. WWDA has achieved a number of significant outcomes over the past 12 months, and I am often amazed at how much we get done given our small amount of resources.

As Executive Director, I would like to take this opportunity to thank Helen Meekosha, our President who resigned due to ill health early in 2003. Annie Parkinson and Samantha Jenkinson have shared the responsibility of President since Helen's resignation, and I would like to thank them both for their hard work in this role. My thanks to the WWDA Management Committee members for your efforts over the past year. Thanks also to all those WWDA members who have undertaken representative work on behalf of WWDA. And finally, a big thank you to Angela Court, who has worked tirelessly and efficiently in the WWDA Office, particularly during the time I was on maternity leave.

The following report gives a brief synopsis of WWDA's performance over the past 12 months, under the categories: *Input into Government Policy and Service Delivery; Consultation, Representation and Networking; Information, Awareness Raising and Education; and Corporate Governance.*

1. Input into Government Policy and Service Delivery

WWDA has provided input to a range of government, non-government and industry processes, reviews, consultations, etc. Written submissions were provided by WWDA to a range of Federal Government Policy Reviews and processes during the period September 2002 – August 2003, including:

- Regional Telecommunications Inquiry;
- Family Court of Australia – Review of Family Violence Policy;
- National Women's Safety Project;
- Development of a UN Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities;
- Productivity Commission Review of the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA);
- Welfare Reform - "Building a Simpler System to Help Jobless Families and Individuals";
- Consultation on the Definition of a Charity;
- House of Representatives Standing Committee on Employment and Workplace Relations Inquiry into Increasing Participation in Paid Work
- Assistance Animals under the Disability Discrimination Act;

Submissions were also provided to a number of State/Territory Government Policy Reviews. Examples include:

- Queensland Government's Disability Round Table;
- Queensland Government's Agenda for Women and Girls, including response to "*Mapping the Future: a discussion paper for Queensland women and girls*".
- Victorian Government's Women's Safety Strategy;

WWDA has had regular input and feedback to Government on telecommunications policy and service delivery through WWDA's Telecommunications Working Party. WWDA is represented on: Australian Consumer Industry Forum (ACIF) Disability Advisory Board; ACIF Consumer Advisory Group; Telecommunications Disability Consumer Reference Group (TEDICORE); Telstra Disability Forum (Consumer Chair and Co-ordinator); Telstra Disability Equipment Program Consumer

Advisory Group; ACT Community IT Advisory Panel, Telstra Consumer Consultative Council Forums, Australian Communications Authority Broadband Forum.

WWDA developed a Paper on *'Practical Application of the Commonwealth Disability Strategy'* which was provided to FACS for distribution to all Commonwealth Departments and agencies.

WWDA has co-sponsored and attended a number of national seminars where long-term strategic directions for the sector have been addressed (eg: Social Relations of Disability Network seminars; Disability Studies Research Institute (DSARI). WWDA is a co-founder of the National Disability Studies Research Institute (DSARI) and is the community representative on the DSARI Board. WWDA was also represented at the National Disability Advisory Council (NDAC) Round Table Consultation on Welfare Reform.

WWDA sought out members to apply for a position on the National Disability Advisory Council (NDAC). A Tasmanian member of WWDA has applied to NDAC for one of these positions. WWDA Executive Director wrote a reference to support the members application.

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 FACS. Information on Government policy initiatives has been disseminated extensively by WWDA. Examples include:

- Australian's Working Together (AWT) Newsletter;
- Australian's Working Together (AWT) Community Information Package;
- Prime Ministers Employer of the Year Awards;
- Prime Ministers Business and Community Partnerships;
- FACS Disability Reforms and Quality Assurance Newsletters;
- Office of the Status of Women (OSW) 'Women in Focus' Publications;
- Prime Ministers Information on Ideas to Increase Philanthropy;

WWDA has participated in the Working Party of the Australian Federation of Disability Organisations (AFDO). A WWDA representative has been nominated for the AFDO Board.

WWDA has established collaborative relationships with the four national women's secretariats funded by the Commonwealth Government through OSW. Partnerships have been developed to ensure that the needs and concerns of women with disabilities are included in policy advice to Government as it affects women. WWDA is currently participating in two national women specific projects: The National Women's Report Card and CEDAW Shadow Report; and the National Security for Women Project. WWDA has also established a National WWDA Working Party on CEDAW.

WWDA has participated in a number of research projects being undertaken by other stakeholders. Examples include:

- R&M Consultants Study on the Establishment of a National Indigenous Disability Network;
- Family Court of Australia Family Violence Policy Research;

WWDA has maintained links within the disability, human rights and women's sectors, with relevant Commonwealth, State/Territory Government Departments, with international organisations, and other relevant stakeholders. WWDA is represented on Pamelas List (the email list of all national women's organisations); Ozadvocacy (the national disability rights email list) Disfed (the email list of the Disability Federation Working Party); AWHN List (the email list of the Australian Women's Health Network); HREOC List; International Disabled Women's Network List.

Monthly WWDA Update Bulletins have been written and disseminated widely, outlining WWDA activities and providing up to date information on relevant issues. WWDA has undertaken

consultation with members on a number of issues throughout the year. Mechanisms for consultation have included the International Women With Disabilities Discussion List (wwda-discuss) which is owned and managed by WWDA.

WWDA has maintained regular contact with FACS personnel. WWDA met with FACS in June to participate in annual performance review. WWDA Annual Report provided to FACS in September 2002. WWDA's updated Constitution provided to FACS in November 2002.

WWDA is represented on a number of national Working Parties, committees, advisory bodies, and other fora. WWDA is also represented on several State/Territory, regional and local Committees, Working parties etc. Examples include:

- Australian Consumer Industry Forum (ACIF) Disability Advisory Board;
- ACIF Consumer Advisory Group;
- Telecommunications Disability Consumer Reference Group (TEDICORE);
- Telstra Disability Forum (Consumer Chair and Co-ordinator);
- Telstra Disability Equipment Program Consumer Advisory Group;
- ACT Community IT Advisory Panel,
- Telstra Consumer Consultative Council Forums,
- Australian Communications Authority Broadband Forum.
- Northern Territory Division of GP's Consumer Committee;
- Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) Standards Project Steering Committee;
- Disability Studies and Research Institute (DSaRI);
- Centrelink Disability Customer Service Reference Group;
- Australian Federation of Disability Organisations Working Group

3. Information, Awareness Raising and Education

WWDA's international email list (wwda-discuss) has been used extensively and regularly to disseminate information to members. WWDA also uses several other electronic lists to disseminate information (including for eg: Pamelas-list; ausfempolnet; disfed; Ozadvocacy; Australian Women's Health Network List; Disabled Women's Network Canada List; and many more). WWDA Update Bulletins have been written monthly and widely disseminated to key stakeholders.

WWDA website has proved extremely popular and successful. WWDA continues to receive letters of congratulation on the standard and quality of its website. Over the past year, the WWDA website has received 110,628 visits. The highest number of visits to the website was received in March 2003, with 13163 visits. The most popular pages on the website are: About WWDA; Sexuality; Violence; WWDA Articles, although the figures are spread relatively evenly across all of the pages of the website. This indicates that users are accessing most of the WWDA website once they get to the site. Users of the website come from many countries, with the majority coming from Australia and the USA. The other countries represented in the usage statistics include: Canada, UK, New Zealand, Japan, Spain, Netherlands, Mexico, Saudi Arabia, France, Germany, South Africa, Italy, Indonesia, Sweden, Argentina, Brazil, Czech Republic, Hong Kong, Russian Federation, Switzerland, Chile, and more.

WWDA website has been extensively updated during the past year. An extensive number of papers, articles, reports etc have been added in the past 12 months. Website content includes 60 articles and 20 submissions to Government. Up to date information about the organisation is provided on the WWDA website. The updated WWDA Constitution is available on the website, as is Membership forms and Publications Order Forms.

WWDA database is updated regularly. All new members are processed within 5 working days. WWDA Information Package is distributed to all new members.

Examples of presentations related to community education and awareness raising over the past 12 months have included:

- Presentation of Paper at the ACROD National Convention Brisbane, November 2002: *Sexual Abuse of People With Disabilities*;
- Presentation of Paper at the International Forum on Disabilities, Osaka Japan, October 2002: *Toward the Adoption of UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in Australia*;
- Representation at the FACS forum on the Commonwealth Disability Strategy. WWDA Paper on *'Practical Application of the Commonwealth Disability Strategy'* provided to FACS for distribution to all Commonwealth Departments and agencies;

Specific work in relation to Sterilisation and Reproductive Health of Women and Girls with disabilities has included:

- background research and networking for the Four Corners Documentary on Sterilisation and People with Disabilities;
- assistance provided to the program producer in identifying significant people to interview, providing briefings on the issue as it impacts on women with disabilities and supporting women with disabilities to speak out;
- WWDA member appeared on the Program to represent the interests of women with disabilities;
- securing permission from Four Corners to reproduce transcript of program and interviews onto the WWDA website;
- follow up letters by WWDA to all State/Territory Attorney's General requesting assistance to progress the WWDA "Moving Forward" Report, including the proposal to discuss the report at the Standing Committee of Attorney's General (SCAG) in August 2003;
- liaison with FACS to discuss mechanisms FACS can employ to progress the WWDA "Moving Forward" Report.

Working with organisations to adapt WWDA Resource materials for their specific purposes. Examples include:

- Blind Citizens Australia (BCA) – adapting the WWDA Leadership and Mentoring Resource Kit (to meet the specific needs of women who are blind);
- Canada Speak Up Project – adapting WWDA resource materials on violence and women with disabilities (to meet the specific needs of people who are unable to speak and who use augmentative and alternative communication to convey their messages).

Working with organisations to address the issue of violence against women with disabilities. Examples include:

- Family Court of Australia Family Violence Policy and Procedures;
- Multicultural Disability Advocacy Association of Australia – Women from NESB with Disability Experiencing Violence;
- Family Planning Association of Tasmania Protective Behaviours Program.

4. Corporate Governance

During 2002, WWDA was primarily concerned with reshaping the structure, governance, and operational management of WWDA with a view to developing a more efficient and viable organisation whilst maintaining our involvement in the broader disability movement and women's groups. WWDA secured pro-bono legal assistance to aid in the task of updating the WWDA Constitution. New WWDA Constitution accepted via Special Resolution at 2002 AGM. New Constitution made available on WWDA website, and copy provided to FACS (National Secretariat Program and Office of Disability) in November 2002. New WWDA Management Committee elected at WWDA AGM in 2002. Committee reflects new national structure as detailed in updated WWDA Constitution. WWDA Management Committee meets regularly via teleconference. WWDA staff provide reports (including financial reports) to the Management Committee each month. WWDA provides Annual Reports to its membership, as well as regular update reports as required. New

Electronic mailing list (known as 'sp-wwda') established by WWDA for the members of the WWDA Management Committee

WWDA secured project funding from the Tasmanian Charities Grants Program to conduct a National WWDA Strategic Planning Forum in Hobart, in September 2003. Forum will be attended by members of the WWDA Management Committee and other delegates. A new 5 year Strategic Plan for WWDA will be developed at the Forum, and priority policy issues for WWDA will be determined at the Forum.

WWDA has undertaken a number of other activities in relation to corporate governance, including:

- development of an Orientation Kit for Management Committee members;
- development of Operational Policies for WWDA;
- development of procedures to maintain an effective, well-managed and accountable organisation.

An annual audit of WWDA's finances has been completed by a Chartered Accountant/Auditor, and the audited statements for WWDA's operational funds have been provided to FACS. All processes as required by the ACT Registrar General's Office (under requirements of the ACT Incorporations Act) have been completed by WWDA. Any Project funding received by WWDA during the past 12 months has been audited at the completion of each project, and audited statements have been provided to the relevant funding body.

WWDA has written several submissions seeking funding from sources other than FACS. Examples include:

- Commonwealth Dept of Communications, Information Technology & the Arts (DOCITA): Telecommunications Representation (successful);
- Tasmanian Community Support Levy: A National Strategic Planning Forum for Women with Disabilities (successful);
- Tasmanian Community Grants Program (unsuccessful);
- Global Fund for Women (USA) (decision pending);
- Reichstein Foundation (decision pending);
- Tasmanian Government Disability Funds (unsuccessful).

In relation to the establishment of the Australian Federation of Disability Organisations, WWDA's contribution to date has included:

- the establishment, facilitation, management and maintenance of an email listerv for the Disability Federation Working Group and Consultant;
- writing the Project Brief and Draft Workplan for the Consultant;
- writing the legal contract between the Federation Working Group and the Consultant;
- writing General Terms and Conditions for the contracting of Consultants;
- writing a draft Position Description for the Federation CEO;
- providing written responses to questionnaires distributed by the Consultant;
- providing feedback and comments on the draft Constitution for the Federation;
- providing the Consultants with a copy of WWDA's Constitution for reference.
- participating in a series of telephone meetings with the Federation Working Party, as well as telephone meetings with personnel from the Commonwealth Department of Family & Community Services (FACS) National Secretariat Program;
- developing proposal for a process to establish membership of the Federation Board.

WWDA provided detailed written response to draft Federation Constitution in late 2002, including reworking major sections of the Constitution. WWDA representative has been nominated to the Board of the Australian Federation of Disability Organisations.

Audit Certificate

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: 01/07/2002 to 30/06/03

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.

13.	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
14.	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
15.	I am satisfied that the organisations observed all Condition of Program Funding relating to the organisations audited financial statements.	Yes
16.	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



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: 8/8/03

NB: *The complete Audit Report for 2002-03 is available to members from the National WWDA Office.*

WWDA Telecommunications Consumer Representation Working Party

By Sue Salthouse, Co-ordinator, Telecommunications Group

1. Members of the WWDA Telecommunications Group

The members of the Telecommunications Group, in alphabetical order are

Louise Bannister	
Vanessa Cini	(ACIF DAB, Oct. - Nov.'02)
Margherita Coppolino	
Margaret Cooper	(TEDICORE, Oct. – Dec.'02)
Joyce Deering	
Jo-An Partridge	(ACIF DAB)
Sue Salthouse	(TDF Co-Chair, DEPCAG, Project Officer)
Christine Tilley	(TEDICORE/ TCCC)

The Telecommunications Consumer Representation Grant from the Department of Communications, IT & the Arts is for an amount of \$10,700. The period of the Grant is from 1 October 2002 to 30 September 2003.

2. Representation

In all representation, members of the Telecommunications Group emphasise the need for people with disabilities to be consulted at the inaugural stages of development of ICT information, products and services, and for these to be developed with elements of universal design incorporated.¹ In addition, we emphasise the need to maintain “connectivity” between new equipment and existing or new assistive equipment.

2.1 ACIF DAB

The ACIF DAB has been chaired by Dr Christopher Newell. Under his direction the body has begun to have a higher status within ACIF. In addition to dealing with consideration of a large number of ICT standards, ACIF DAB had a considerable input to the ACIF Any-to-any Text Connectivity Seminar held in March 2003, and has ongoing influence in this area. The ACIF DAB has a good overview of the Industry, with Representatives dealing with AUSTAG, CTRAC and ACA, on matters of regulation, standards and disability equipment. Jo-An's representation has presented logistical and technical challenges for her, with landline malfunction preventing participation by teleconference in one instance, and organisation of transfer assistance a difficulty for actual attendance. I thank Jo-An for her determination and perseverance to find solutions. Sue attended in one instance.

2.2 CITAG

The ACT Community IT Advisory Group gives ongoing advice to the ACT Information Management (ACTIM) section of the Chief Minister's Department and helped to draw up the Community IT Access Plan which is currently being implemented. Sue compiled a listing of ACT commercial, government and community Internet Access Points for the Group. Sue was a member of this Group from its inception until 30 June 2003.

2.2 TEDICORE

TEDICORE has had input in a wide range of ICT areas including the Productivity Commission Inquiry into the DDA 1992 (emphasising the need for increased DDA influence

¹ Universal design is relevant even in 'information' development. Sue is currently encouraging the Telstra Disability Services Unit to promote consideration of colour contrast/fonts which are easily read by vision impaired in its design of publications.

in the public procurement of accessible IT and telecommunications products and services); the Senate Inquiry Committee on the Australian Telecommunications Network; lobbying for a separate, independent Disability Equipment Body; lobbying against the closure of the Telstra Aged & Disability Centres; presentation and ongoing contribution to the Any-to-Any Text Connectivity considerations; input to the HREOC project on Telecommunications access; and to the ACA on low volume disability Equipment and compliance testing. The Project year commenced with Margaret as Rep. Christine is our current Rep. with Louise attending in one instance.

2.3 TDF

TDF has had input to discussion in a number of Telstra areas such as the Priority Assistance scheme; the PDCA Mobile Scheme; the development of the 'Access for Everyone' package; development of accessible payphones; the Disability Equipment Program; the closure of the Aged & Disability Centres, and the development and current implementation of the corporation's DAP. The TDF was instrumental in having the new payphone prototype put on hold so that pre-development consultation with Reps. can lead to better outcomes. Sue is also on the working party which is developing guidelines for the operation of the TDF, to give it greater status within the corporation Sue continues as Co-Chair, with the other Co-Chair for each meeting coming from a different section of Telstra.

2.4 Telstra DEPCAG

DEPCAG has had input to the development of the new standard phone, now released; to a new volume control/hands free phone for the DEP; to the wording of consumer survey; to the operation of the Disability Enquiry Hotline, and comment on the closure of the Aged & Disability Centres. Disability Equipment is now available on a wholesale basis to other carriers, so that people with disabilities are no longer restricted to using Telstra as their primary carrier in order to gain access to the DEP. Sue is Rep. on this Group.

2.5 TCCC (Brisbane)

The Annual Forum of the TCCC was held in Brisbane. Its major objective was to articulate & discuss the consumer/user vision from a demand perspective with senior Telstra managers who are working with Internet & Broadband futures, mobile futures & innovative applications. TCCC discussion touched on the issues outlined in 2.2/2.3/2.4. A second TCCC meeting will be held in Brisbane before the end of the Grant period. Christine is an invitee to Brisbane TCCC meetings, and has been requested to provide advice to TEDICORE and Telstra on ad hoc basis on a number of occasions.

2.6 TCCC (Darwin)

as per note for 2.5. Joyce is an invitee to these meetings, and provides advice and information through IDA on ICT, and in particular on the status of NT/Darwin payphones.

2.7 ACA Broadband Forum

Forum convened to examine consumer issues with respect to consistency of information, and delivery of broadband services in Australia. Margherita was Rep.

3. Activities

3.1 On-line Project Wrap-up

Contact was made with all Hardware Hosts which still host computers allocated in the @ccessibility Online Project (1999-2000). Computers located in Adelaide, Brisbane, Darwin, Newcastle and Perth are still getting good community use, with those at Disability Information Resource Centre SA and at the Newcastle & Hunter Community Access Inc. getting 50% or better use by women with disabilities. All these Hardware Hosts have been officially thanked (framed certificate also sent) and the computers formally transferred to their ownership. The Sydney computer (from People With Disabilities) has been re-homed with the Council of the Ageing in Canberra, whilst that from Canberra will be donated to

another ACT organisation. Both organisations are being chosen for their ability to deliver training support for the ACT Digital Divide project. The Melbourne and Hobart computers are in use at WWDA Head Office.

3.2 Bridging the Digital Divide (ACT)

In this project, information about low cost computers, ISP's, training courses; training support available in the ACT has been co-ordinated. Radio and print interviews are being used to contact women with disabilities in the ACT community who wish to 'get connected' but have been daunted by apparent high costs and lack of training options. Though limited in scope, the project should enable a data base of such women with disabilities to be built up, and handed on to those implementing the ACT Community IT Access Plan to further plan to assist women in this target group. Feedback indicates that they have already made some changes as a result of Sue's liaison on this project with ACTIM.

3.3 Magazine Articles

3.3.1 Article on DD issues for *Paraview* (Paraquad Queensland magazine) - Christine

3.3.2 Interview on IT issues, with Kevin Cocks, Director of Queensland Advocacy Inc, for future *Paraview* – Christine

3.3.2 Interview with John McPherson, outlining some of the Brisbane IT Access Plan, for future *Paraview*. - Christine

3.3.4 Liaison with Lee-anne Davies, Brisbane City Council IT Officer, for potential article in *Paraview* – Christine

3.3.5 Article on ACT IT for *Disability Reporter* (Disabled People's Initiative magazine) – Sue

3.4 Submissions

3.4.1 to Senator Alston in reply to the Estens Inquiry, incorporating section on the need for an independent Disability Equipment Program - Sue

3.4.2 small contribution to the WWDA submission on Welfare Reform "Building a Better System" with respect to the need to factor in the cost of ICT. – Sue

3.5 ICT Information exchange

3.5.1 to Scott Hollier, Ph.D student, on 'Digital Divide and Disability'. - Sue

3.5.2 to Rape Crisis Centre on providing online one-to-one crisis intervention/referral for people who experience sexual violence. - Sue

3.6 Meetings

3.6.1 Oct, Melb: 'Communications & IT the Big Questions' – Jo-An

3.6.2 Feb: Telstra Teleconference on wholesalers access to the DEP. – Sue

3.6.3 March, Brisbane: Telstra Broadband Forum launch, plus launch of Goggin/Newell book 'Digital Disability'. – Christine

3.6.4 March, Sydney: Launch of Goggin/Newell book 'Digital Disability' at University of NSW. Helen Meekosha was a panel member of the discussion which accompanied the launch.

3.6.5 July, Brisbane: Telstra Information Meeting on the new arrangements for displaying Disability Equipment, etc. – Christine

3.7 Working Parties

Sue is a member of the Working Party developing the guidelines for the optimal operation of the TDF.

3.8 Contact with other organisations/individuals

3.8.1 Jo-An continues as individual member of ECNA, reporting back to group on activities.

3.8.2 Sue continues as individual member of CTN. Network activity has been low throughout year, due to funding cuts and managerial changes.

3.8.3 Sue continues as an individual member of VicNet's mc² (my connected community) disability group, garnering information about the operation of an integrated multi-purpose community site.

3.8.4 Margherita/Sue made contact with Optus Disability Services and through them with Robin Wilkinson (Rep. on the Optus Disability Consumer Advisory Group). Robin Wilkinson has not taken up offer of liaison.

3.8.5 Sue maintains contact with the TechAssist Online Project for information about their now active library loan scheme of assistive equipment.

3.8.6 Contact was made with the Tasmanian Local Government Association, Darwin Community Council for information about local Community IT Access Plans. No responses to date.

3.8.7 to Barbara Evans, School of Business Swinburne UT, with respect to ICT research undertaken by students. No follow-up from Evans. - Margherita/Sue

3.8.8. to Sue Vardon, CEO Centrelink, with respect to ICT & women with disabilities. Follow-up in train from Centrelink. - Margherita/Sue

3.9 Contact with other carriers

Sue contacted Orange, Vodaphone, IPrimus, AAPT and NewTel for information about their Disability Access Plans, awareness of ICT needs of people with disabilities, with offer for meeting/liaison/information sharing etc. Deadly silence from all.

3.10 wwda-discuss

3.10.1 A total of 50 postings have been made to wwda-discuss.

3.10.2 In May and June, Jo-An and Sue trialled a 'News Bulletin' for disseminating the ICT information garnered by Jo-An from monitoring of a number of national and international sites. The trial was discontinued because of the number of topical announcements which could not effectively be held over for a bulletin.

4. Recruitment

Some members have indicated a desire to retire from the group. However a procedure to attract and select new members has not been developed to date.

5. Summary

The group has certainly been busy and DCITA is getting value for its Grant money. In ICT matters, there does seem to be a shift in attitude in government and industry to acknowledge that people with disabilities are particularly important stakeholders in ICT, and that their ICT needs must be considered in all aspects of telecommunications. There seems to be more consultation happening. It is more timely, more in-depth, a more automatic component of development and applies to information, products and services. However, women with disabilities in general continue to be disproportionately underrepresented in the use or uptake of IT. Where people with disabilities are a target group for DD projects, women with disabilities are nowhere to be seen. Likewise they are not users of CAPs. I do not see any changes from the findings of the 2000 WWDA "Telecommunications Use by Women with Disabilities". Much more work needs to be done to target women with disabilities on low income and with mobility restrictions. As Project Officer, I would to thank all the group members for the sterling work they have done in representation, and for their ICT advice given both within and outside the group.

Sue Salthouse
July 2003

Abbreviations:

ACA	Australian Communications Authority
ACIF DAB	Australian Communications Industry Forum Disability Advisory Board
ACTIM	ACT Information Management (section of the Chief Minister's Department)
ANU	Australian National University
AUSTAG	Australian Telecommunications Advisory Group
CAP	Community Access Point (free/low-cost Internet/Computer facility)

CCC	Competitive Carriers Coalition
CTN	Consumer Telecommunications Network
CTRAC	Communications Technical Regulatory Advisory Committee
DAP	Disability Action Plan
DCITA	Department of Communications Information Technology and the Arts
DD	Digital Divide
DEPCAG	(Telstra) Disability Equipment Program Consumer Advisory Group
HREOC	Human Rights & Equal opportunity Commission
IAP	Internet Access Point (public access Internet/Computer facility)
ICT	Information & Communications Technology
TDF	Telstra Disability Forum
TEDICORE	Telecommunications & Disability Consumers Representation Project
TCCC	Telstra Consumer Consultative Council
TCRG	Telecommunications Consumer Representation Grant
WWDA	Women With Disabilities Australia

Report on Representation on behalf WWDA 2002 - 03

By Leanne Dowse

**EVENT: Hypothetical on Sexual Abuse/Protection at
“Crossing the Divide”
ACROD 2002 National Convention
Sheraton Hotel, Brisbane, 20-21 November 2002**

I was very pleased to be able to represent WWDA as a participant in a Hypothetical focusing on Sexual Abuse and Protection at the ACROD National Convention in Brisbane in November 2002. The session aimed to raise awareness in the audience (mainly disability service providers) of the variety of ethical, social, political and practical issues which impact on the occurrence of and response to sexual abuse within disability services. The hypothetical format encouraged an exchange of views between invited panel members. The panel consisted of representatives of HREOC, Violence and Women with Disabilities Project, Victoria; Spastic Centre NSW; Cerebral Palsy League QLD; Office of the Guardian, QLD; The Ester Centre, Brisbane; Commission for Children and Young People QLD and WWDA.

Initially specific areas to be addressed included legal dimensions, implications for staff training and recruitment, rights of consumers and ‘grey’ areas. Participants were encouraged to make suggestions in the weeks prior to the session as to the key issues which should be addressed. As part of this process I was able to argue for the inclusion of issues of gender, in particular the vulnerability of women with disabilities living in institutional care and the inter-relationship between sterilisation of disabled women and their targeting as ‘safe’ victims of abuse. I was also able to raise the broader issue of the culture of many service settings which is based on understandings of disability as a personal tragedy or a medical or individual problem to be treated or controlled. These understandings inevitably result in women and men with disabilities marginalised within services. This has a direct impact on an organisation’s commitment to the prevention of and response to sexual abuse. These issues were subsequently incorporated into the questions posed to the panel for discussion.

The organisers and audience response to the session was very positive and I believe it provided a valuable opportunity to represent the interests of women with disabilities in what is an important and difficult area.

EVENT: Participation in Four Corners Report on Sterilisation of Women with Disabilities. Broadcast on ABC June 17 2002

Building on the 2001 WWDA Report "*Sterilisation and Reproductive Health Of Women and Girls with Disabilities - Moving Forward*" I participated in a report for Four Corners. A great deal of assistance was provided to the producer in identifying significant people to interview, providing briefings on the issue as it impacts on women with disabilities and supporting women with disabilities to speak out. The resulting report was disappointing in that it failed to provide a balanced interpretation, concentrating more on the issues as they affect parents of women with intellectual disabilities. The report did however highlight how complex and difficult the issue is and the inadequacy of government responses for all of the stakeholders.

**Report on Representation at Welfare Reform Round Table Discussion
By Annie Parkinson**

Early in 2003, I represented WWDA at a round table discussion along with a dozen or so other representatives from various peak disability organisations. The meeting was held by the National Disability Advisory Committee, bureaucrats from FaCS were also present and the agenda was to discuss *Building a Simpler System*, the Federal Government's latest document on Welfare Reform.

The discussion was divided into three major areas:

- Who would be eligible?
- How would it be designed?
- How would it be delivered?

The high costs of disability, which affect how we survive on benefits as well as the expense of moving into occasional or regular employment, were raised by the representatives. The latter cost seemed to be recognised by the government, in the sense that they were aware of disincentives to work being a problem, but unfortunately, they seem to have grasped it as the one and only issue. Their focus is entirely on 'rewards' for work and getting as many people off benefits, or onto a single streamlined benefit (one size fits all) as possible.

This may be fine for women with disabilities who want to work, are able to work, can find suitable jobs and just need the transition to be made more straightforward (not having complicated compliance procedures, not having significant chunks of wages deducted, and so on).

What it doesn't address is:

- that many, for whom regular paid employment is never going to be an option, may find their quality of life diminishing;
- that the economic climate doesn't deliver the jobs needed;
- gender issues in how work is distributed;
- the complexity of disability and capacity to work. The department's understanding about who can or can't sustain employment is fairly unsophisticated, so that ideas of who may or may not be capable of employment are pretty skewed;
- the changing job market, and the move away from permanent, full-time work to part-time, casual and occasional work. This is often the sort of work that women with disabilities are most likely to engage in because of its flexibility.

I left the Canberra meeting feeling that there was strong agreement on the issues from the disability peaks, but dubious about how much of what was said would make its way into the Federal policy on welfare reform.

Bridging Pathways Annual Report **By Margie Charlesworth WWDA Representative**

This Report was produced by the Executive Officer of the State Implementation Steering Committee. Although there has not been many meetings, there has been some activity which has involved the Executive Officer as can be seen below:

- contribution to the South Australia VET Strategic Plan in South Australia (for two years) in terms of the needs of people with a disability in relation to VET.
- promotion of the abilities of people with a disability to employers and Registered Training Organisations, plus promotion of VET to people with a disability through the Abilympics breakfasts. This year, as a direct result of the breakfast activity, nine employers registered with disability employment agencies to place people with a disability in employment.
- As a direct result of advice from BP committee, the State government has provided funding for a project in partnership with Department of Education, Science and Technology to ensure that 24 people with a disability will undertake New Apprenticeships during 2003. People with a disability who do undertake New Apprenticeships have excellent long term employment outcomes. However, people with a disability only represent 2% of all people undertaking New Apprenticeships (nationally).
- A CD Rom is being developed by the Department of Education and Children's Services with support from the Committee. The CD will be available to secondary school students, their parents/carers and teachers and outlines 12 post school options available to students with a disability. The post school options include VET, University Employment, New Apprenticeships and Adult Community Education programs
- Committee is about to participate in an ANTA funded professional development model - a Community of Practice - to ensure that there is good exchange of information and problem solving between the representatives from the disability sector and the VET planners and policy makers on the Committee. It's the first time the model has been applied in a situation such as this in Australia. Committee members are also enthusiastic about participating because the model is a very useful one to apply in community development situations. So, should prove useful to the disability sector agencies.

*Margie Charlesworth WWDA Representative
Via Helen Bowen EO State Implementation Committee*

Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) Standards Project Steering Committee **By Joyce Deering**

There have only been 2 meetings of this committee, in September 2002 and July 2003, at Novotel Olympic Park and Novotel Brisbane respectively.

At both meetings, reports were given on the Standards being currently worked on, Transport, Education, and Access to Premises. The successful completion of the Accessible Transport Standards after many years of work culminated in the Federal Parliament finally saying Ay Ay in October 2002, and there will be a Review in 5 years to see how progress is being made on parts that have exemptions for certain areas of transport or facilities.

The Education Standards are high on the Agenda, and much discussion and reports on progress were made at both meetings. Earlier in 2002 MCEETYA had agreed to the introduction of the Standards, but required legal, financial and policy issues to be addressed and resolved by December 2002. Members of the Steering Committee working on the Education Standards held meeting with various Govt. Depts for the legal drafting, and with further work, the R.I.S. was put out to tender, and the draft report was released. Another meeting of MCEETYA was held in Perth on 10th July 2003, just after our meeting, and a representative working on the Education went to Perth to lobby those attending. We now know that the Federal Minister for Education, Dr Brendon Nelson has now stated he will unilaterally bring the Education Standards to the Parliament, even though only 2 States were happy to support the Standard.

The Access to Premises Standard was also reported on at both meetings, and work is progressing slowly. There have been many meetings attended by the Working Group, including looking at the wheelchair footprint, and we were assured that access to premises will be achieved. There had been discussion during the year about other Standards that may be needed but at this stage the Attorney's General's Dept is not anxious for this to happen.

Top End Division of General Practice Consumer Reference Group By Joyce Deering

I have attended meetings of this committee as a WWDA representative. There have been some ups and downs with numbers during the year but mostly we have managed a quorum.

There is both a Top End, and a Central Australian section both with CRG's, and one of our meetings was talking to a member of the Central Aust. CRG about their group and how we might work as an NT wide Consumer Forum. Lots of pros and cons to be looked at, and still being considered.

A major event was the launch of a Tropical Health Manual, which several members had been working on for some time, for GP's going to remote areas where common problems not found in the cities will be addressed by the manual. We have also had members of Royal Darwin Hospital administration attend our meetings when we have had unanswered questions about the hospitals protocols, and to let the hospital know about the CRG's activities.

Some members of the CRG sit on other Board and Committees of the TEDGP.

Report as WWDA representative in the 'Going Further' Project By Samantha Jenkinson

The '*Going Further*' Project is a leadership program designed to bring together young leaders in Victoria and stimulate debate about the relationship between economic, environmental, social and cultural issues. Over six months the sixty participants attend six presentations with guest speakers on relevant topics. I attended the first lunch for '*Going Further*' on July 30 with the topic of 'Context for Sustainability' presented. The next one is coming up on August 20.

The set up of the '*Going Further*' project is that participants are separated into diverse teams and given a topic to explore then present on at the final meeting. The team that I am a part of is very diverse including people from state and local government, town planners, police, lawyers, finance experts, community project workers and of course myself. The question we have been asked to consider is (in summary) how to effectively educate about sustainable development, and how to

tackle the balance between education and statutory regulation on environmental issues. Our group is already organising to meet outside the set times and I'm looking forward to working on this project. It is very broad and I see my role is about informing the others of the most disadvantaged in society, and the part lobby groups play in policy change. I am also representing WWDA as a role model of a young leader with a disability.

The guest speakers at the first meeting were very informative. Don Henry, the Executive Director of the Australian Conservation Foundation talked about environmental sustainability and how much we can do now to help that will also save money. He used a new building, 60 Liecester St in Carlton, as an example of a green building, with energy saving properties, rainwater tanks and recycling of water. This building is also an excellent example of a fully accessible design for people with disabilities.

The other guest speaker was Professor David Yencken AO, who talked about the concept of sustainability and it's context. He gave us the definition of sustainable development from the World Commission on Environment and Development (Bruntland Commission):

'development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs'.

He also went through the Australian governments National Strategy for Ecologically Sustainable Development that includes:

- Social development - individual and community well being, cultural development and equity;
- Economic development - to further human well being; and
- Protection of the environment and life support systems - for the sake of present and future generations, and many would argue for the protection of other species.

Looking globally, the Professor discussed how the European Union has developed principles for the practical application of sustainable development and how the international standard for reporting for corporations has moved from the 'triple bottom line' to the 'quadruple bottom line'. Quadruple bottom line reporting is economic, environmental, social and cultural reporting.

I am looking forward to doing this project and this first session has set a context which is about taking the social and cultural perspective into account with any discussion on sustainability, so I think I have an important role as the only person with a disability represented.

Report on Representation on behalf WWDA 2002 - 03 **By Margherita Coppolino**

On 14th March, I attended the Australian Telecommunication Industry Ombudsman Disability Action Plan Launch in Melbourne. Some 10 consumer representatives from disability organizations were presented as well as service providers. WWDA was thanked for its work on Telecommunication issues for women with disabilities.

I have attended two Centrelink Disability Customer Service Reference Group meetings held in Canberra since the last WWDA AGM. I will be stepping down from this Reference Group in October this year as I have held this role for three years. During this time, Welfare Reform has been developed and implemented and have had input into this reform through this Reference Group> I was also selected to become Consumer Representative for the Centrelink Australia Working Together Reference Group chaired by Sue Vardon (Centrelink CEO). At the lend of this year, I will be handing this role over to another consumer after been on this Reference Group for 12 months.

Report on The Disability Studies and Research Institute (DSaRI) Achievements for 2002 - 03

The Disability Studies and Research Institute (DSaRI) was established in early 2002. DSaRI undertakes research into disability issues from a social perspective, and promotes community debate associated with the rights of disabled people. The Institute involves stakeholders from organisations of people with disabilities, universities, the research community, service delivery bodies and industry. It aims for a wider understanding of the social causes and responses to processes that disable people with impairments, and promotes their participation in the social, economic, cultural and political life of the nation. WWDA is a founding member of DSaRI and is represented on the DSaRI Board by Helen Meekosha. In early 2002, WWDA donated \$1,000 to DSaRI to assist in its establishment. This report gives a brief synopsis of DSaRI's activities over the past 12 months.

1. DSaRI Research Program

Contracted research projects

- DSQ – development of costing and funding models for specialist disability services (in partnership with SPRC)
- UNSW – review of services to students with disabilities (in partnership with Westwood Spice)
- Families First (in partnership with SPRC)
- Carers NSW
- Wesley policy review
- Wesley policy writing

Alternative format development projects

- Wesley easy English and alternative formats
- FACS easy English and alternative formats
- DADHC Advocacy and Information Services discussion papers

Tenders awaiting response

- DSQ boarding house program evaluation (with SPRC)
- CRS parent project advice (with SPRC)

Investigation of ARC Research grants: developing applications

- Media and Disability (with UTS)
- Housing and Disability (with SPRC)
- War and Disability (?)

Tenders/grant applications submitted (further to above projects):

- Australian Taxation Office development of Easy English material
- Governance of disability service organisations by people with cognitive disabilities – to Law and Justice Foundation

Unfunded projects

- Governance (involving Blake Dawson Waldron and UTS student placement) – nb: currently making grant applications for this project

2. DSaRI Education Program

Forums/ Conferences/Events

- In conjunction with SRDRN staged four major events which involved over 40 speakers and over 300 participants:
 - *It's Not Just About Dollars: Measuring and reporting economic and social benefits of the enactment of standards under the Disability Discrimination Act;*
 - *Employment and Disability: The Individual and the System;*
 - *Towards a Comprehensive and Integral International Convention to Promote and Protect the Rights of Persons with Disabilities;*
 - *Exploring The Cost of Disability: Theoretical Underpinnings and Research Methodology*
- Forum on Digital technology and disability (with Christopher Newell and Gerard Goggin);
- Forum on Bioethics by Tom Shakespeare

Publications

- Human Rights Defender – article on DSaRI UN Convention conference

Conference Papers/Presentations/Sessions Convened

- ACE National Conference: panel on Disability and Employment
- ACROD National Conference: Hypothetical on Sexual Abuse
- FaCS: Forum on Accessible Information
- Inclusion International paper – voice and participation of people with intellectual disability
- Human Rights and Diversity – paper and co-convening of session on human rights, people with disability and the UN Convention
- Australian Social Policy Conference – paper on cultures of disability and deafness
- Convening of DSaRI six paper strand at Australian Social Policy Conference

3. DSaRI Organisational Development

- Development and production of marketing and membership package.
- Membership Drive: University Vice-Chancellors; Disability Peaks and more general.
- Marketing/Networking/Collaboration Building:
 - Freilich Foundation ANU
 - FPA Health
 - HREOC
 - DADHC
 - National ACROD
 - NSW Disability Council
 - UNSW Faculty of Law
 - UNSW Faculty of Built Environment
 - Greater Inner West Community Transport
 - Association of Competitive Employers
 - Pacific Disability Forum
 - Blake Dawson Waldron

4. Mentoring of Disabled Researchers

- Employed four disabled researchers on projects

5. Student supervision

- 2 students from UTS (governance project)
- 3 students from ACU (current – to Sept)
- 1 student from Macquarie (current – to Nov)

WWDA Management Committee 2003-2004

The following members of the WWDA Management Committee were elected at the 2002 WWDA AGM and have a three year term:

- Annie Parkinson
- Sue Salthouse
- Pamela Menere
- Margie Charlesworth
- Samantha Jenkinson
- Lisa Murray
- Joyce Deering

Helen Meekosha resigned from the WWDA Management Committee in May 2003. Christine Tilley resigned from the WWDA Management Committee in July 2003.

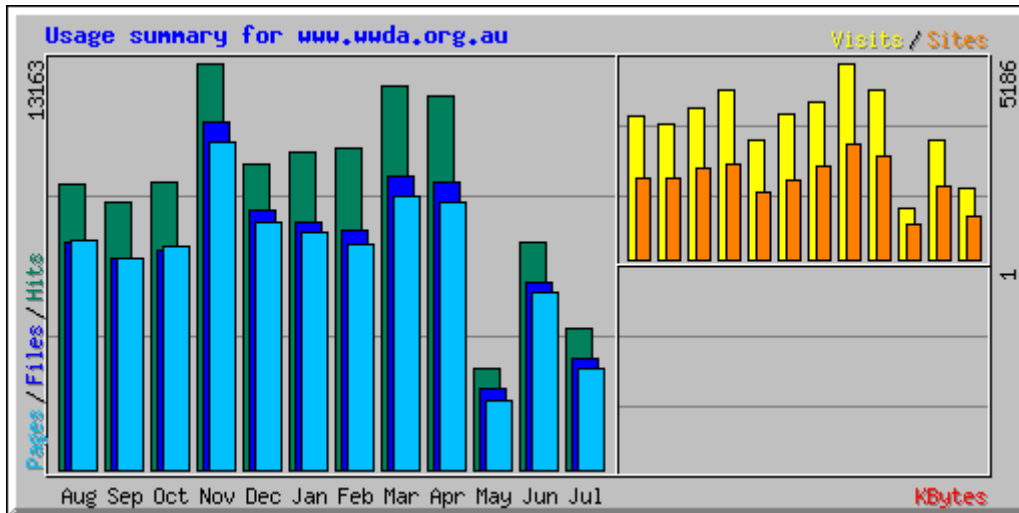
There were two new members appointed to the WWDA Management Committee for 2003-04:

- Samantha Salvaneschi
- Jenny Bridge-Wright

The WWDA Public Officer for 2003-2004 is Sue Salthouse of the ACT.

Appendix 1: Usage Statistics for www.wwda.org.au

Summary Period: Last 12 Months
Generated 19-Jul-2003 02:23 EST



Summary by Month										
Month	Daily Avg				Monthly Totals					
	Hits	Files	Pages	Visits	Sites	KBytes	Visits	Pages	Files	Hits
Jul 2003	327	257	232	132	1128	0	1857	3254	3605	4581
Jun 2002	244	201	191	104	1929	0	3124	5731	6047	7330
May 2003	413	331	278	171	913	0	1371	2228	2651	3306
Apr 2003	464	357	332	171	2744	0	4461	8647	9286	12071
Mar 2003	400	306	286	167	3063	0	5186	8870	9511	12427
Feb 2003	371	277	260	148	2462	0	4155	7291	7760	10410
Jan 2003	331	257	247	123	2080	0	3826	7665	7988	10288
Dec 2002	318	271	257	101	1765	0	3145	7992	8401	9866
Nov 2002	438	375	353	148	2524	0	4449	10614	11277	13163
Oct 2002	300	230	234	128	2431	0	3974	7259	7131	9318
Sep 2002	287	228	227	119	2138	0	3587	6811	6860	8639
Aug 2002	297	238	240	121	2142	0	3781	7447	7392	9229
Totals						0	42916	83809	87909	110628