



Women  
With  
Disabilities  
(Australia)

# **Women With Disabilities Australia (WWDA)**

## **Annual Report**

**September 2003 – September 2004**



Women  
With  
Disabilities  
(Australia)

*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*

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## **I. 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, an 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](http://www.wwda.org.au)



***The WWDA National Office***

## 2. WWDA President's Report By Samantha Jenkinson

Every year WWDA seems to make an impact in some way, somewhere, which raises awareness of the issues faced by women with disabilities. As a measure of whether an organization is successful or not, I believe that this shows that WWDA is a very successful organization.

This time last year our Executive Director was busily trying to finish a submission in French as WWDA had just been nominated for the French Human Rights Prize, and as I write two WWDA delegates are arriving back in Australia from the Disabled Peoples International World Summit where they upheld the reproductive rights of women with disabilities. The year in between has been full, the details of which are in the Executive Directors Report, with major wins such as the health summit for people with disabilities organized by HREOC which was essentially triggered by WWDA raising issues around inadequate breast and cervical screening for women with disabilities. The introduction of monthly reports to members has truly shown how much has been done, and feedback has been very positive about this way of reporting back to members.

As President it would be easy to highlight the fantastic work done by WWDA throughout the year. However I would rather highlight the only reason so much is done, which is because of the two dedicated staff, the committee, and the members who contribute to the practical aspects of writing submissions, attending forums, and presenting papers. This year, as usual, the amount of work WWDA has done to move forward on the policy issues prioritised by the WWDA members as well as respond to government policy, has well exceeded the resource capacity of the organization.

It is a fine balance in trying to maintain and if possible improve our level of impact on policy related to the issues facing women with disabilities, while also fighting to maintain our resources. Each year this issue becomes more pressing with our actual operational funding remaining stagnant yet the costs increasing. As an organisation we are constantly looking for ways to work towards our stated goals with whatever resources we can find. Our Executive Director is very skilled at writing funding submissions and we have been successful this year with gaining funding for our work through organizations such as the Global Fund for Women and the Reichstein Foundation, whilst also gaining funding to assist with organizational development and basic Occupational Health and Safety issues such as appropriate desks, chairs and computers.

This year we have managed to keep our focus on our goals and from the work done at last years strategic planning forum, the staff have finalized a strategic planning document that should keep WWDA heading in the right direction. As an organization we will continue, nay must continue, to fight and work hard to maintain and increase our resources. This will only be possible with continued dedication and work from both staff and committee, however I know that each will work to the best of their ability because they believe in the goals of WWDA.

On behalf of the Management Committee I would like to thank Carolyn and Angela for their work with WWDA and their support of the Management Committee and myself this year. As President of WWDA I would like to thank my fellow committee members for their support throughout the year. I would also like to thank all of our members who have supported WWDA in whatever way they can throughout the year, and encourage all members to continue to support WWDA and the ideals we stand for.

Yours in solidarity



Samantha Jenkinson

### **3. WWDA Executive Director's Report By Carolyn Frohmader**

WWDA has had yet another busy year, and continues to go from strength to strength. 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 Samantha Jenkinson, WWDA's President, for her hard work in this role over the past year. Thanks too, to Annie Parkinson for her valuable support in the role as WWDA's Vice President. My thanks go to the WWDA Management Committee members for your efforts over the past year, particularly for your hard work in Hobart in September 2003 on the development of WWDA's Strategic Plan for the next five years. I would like also to acknowledge those WWDA members who have undertaken representative work on behalf on WWDA over the past year. And finally, a big thank you to Angela Court, who has worked tirelessly and efficiently in the WWDA Office.

The following report gives an overview of WWDA's major areas of activity over the past 12 months.

#### **3.1. Invitation from the French Government to Apply for the French Republic's Human Rights Prize 2003**

In late 2003, WWDA was formally invited by the French Government to apply for the French Republic's Human Rights Prize for 2003. The French Republic's Human Rights Prize, endowed by the Prime Minister of the French Government, is awarded by the Commission Nationale Consultative des Droits de l'Homme (National Advisory Commission on Human Rights). The prize distinguishes field work and projects connected with the practical defence and furtherance of human rights, in the spirit of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

This was indeed a great honour for WWDA. WWDA was one of only two Australian entries for this most prestigious Award, and the only Australian entry invited to apply around the theme of 'Discrimination Against Women' (The prize is usually associated with one or two themes concerning the defence and furtherance of human rights. In 2003, the themes related to 'Discrimination Against Women' and 'Refugees and Detainees'). The winner was announced by the Prime Minister of the French Government in Paris on December 10, 2003 - International Human Rights Day. Unfortunately, WWDA's entry was unsuccessful. The winners of the Prize for 2003 came from Iran and Cambodia. WWDA received the following letter from the French Government:

*AMBASSADE DE FRANCE, EN AUSTRALIE  
Canberra, 21 November 2003*

*Ms Carolyn Frohmader, Executive Director  
Women With Disabilities (Australia)  
PO Box 605, ROSNY PARK TAS 7018*

*Dear Ms Frohmader,*

*I refer to your submission for the French Government's Human Rights Awards 2003. I have much regret in informing you that your submission has been unsuccessful. Rest assured that, although your organisation was not chosen among the very many candidates received from all over the world, we found your action aiming at improving the condition of women with disabilities a very deserving one indeed. May I take this opportunity to congratulate your organisation for devoting so much efforts to such a worthy cause and wish you every success in your endeavours.*

*Yours sincerely,*



*Patrick Henault  
Ambassador of France*

### **3.2. Systemic Advocacy on Government Policy and Service Delivery Issues**

WWDA has provided significant input to a wide range of government, non-government and industry processes, reviews, inquiries, and consultations during the past 12 months. Over twenty – five formal submissions have been provided to a range of Federal Government and related Policy Reviews and processes in the past year. The policy areas addressed in these submissions are diverse and demonstrate the breadth and scope of WWDA's work. A listing of submissions completed for the year is included in Appendix I. During the past year, WWDA has also sought out opportunities to provide input to a wide range of State/Territory Government Policy Reviews relevant to women with disabilities. Policy areas addressed have included sterilisation and reproductive health; violence; and disability services provision. All WWDA submissions are routinely provided to every politician in Australia (via email). WWDA Submissions are also widely disseminated to a large number of stakeholders and are made available on the WWDA website.



***WWDA Executive Director, Carolyn Frohmader, in the National WWDA Office***

WWDA's systemic advocacy to Government on specific policy and service delivery issues has achieved significant outcomes over the past year. Examples include:

#### **3.2.1. Sterilisation of Women and Girls with Disabilities**

In mid 2004, the Australian Government released an Issues Paper which proposed the development of national uniform legislation on the sterilisation of minors with decision-making disabilities. WWDA's submission in response to this proposal was informed by women with disabilities whose lives have been touched by sterilisation. WWDA's submission clearly articulated the organisations position on the issue, which asserted that the Government's proposed legislation infringes the human rights of people with disabilities. WWDA's submission further asserted that sterilisation is an act of unnecessary and dehumanising violence which denies a woman's basic human right to bodily integrity and to bear children and which results in adverse life-long physical and mental health effects. WWDA strongly recommended that the Federal Government develop universal legislation which prohibits sterilisation of children except in those circumstances which amount to those that are a serious threat to health or life. In the case of adults, WWDA also strongly recommended that sterilisation be prohibited in the absence of the informed consent of the individual concerned, except in those circumstances where there is a serious threat to health or life.

WWDA has lobbied hard on this issue and has worked hard to advocate for the Government to protect the human rights of women and girls with disabilities by acting immediately to ban all sterilisations except in those circumstances where there is a serious threat to health or life. WWDA's position has been supported by the New South Wales State Government, and WWDA continues its lobbying with the remaining State and Territory Governments.

WWDA's systemic advocacy in this area also resulted in an invitation to present a paper on the issue at the Disabled People's International (DPI) World Summit in Winnipeg in September 2004. This Summit was attended by over 1000 delegates from around the world. WWDA's paper 'Moving Forward or Losing Ground? - The Sterilisation of Women and Girls with Disabilities in Australia' outlines WWDA's work in the area, traces developments in Australia and discusses some of the critical issues in the consideration of sterilisation and reproductive rights as a human rights issue. The Global Fund for Women kindly assisted two WWDA delegates to attend the Summit, by providing a travel grant.



**WWDA Presentation at the DPI World Summit, Canada, September 2004**



**Australian Delegates at the DPI World Summit, Canada, September 2004. WWDA's Annie Parkinson is on the far left, and Leanne Dowse is on the far right of the picture.**

During the past year, WWDA has received television and newspaper coverage on the issue of unlawful sterilisation of minors. WWDA was interviewed for a story on national television's 'Today Tonight' Current Affairs Program, and was also represented on national ABC television's 'Four Corners' documentary on Sterilisation and Disability. Newspaper interviews were also conducted.

### **3.2.2. Development of a Comprehensive and Integral International Convention to Promote and Protect the Rights and Dignity of Persons with Disabilities.**

Over the past year, WWDA has participated in the development of the Comprehensive and Integral International Convention to Promote and Protect the Rights and Dignity of Persons with Disabilities. During 2003, WWDA developed a Submission to Government on the need for a convention on the human rights of people with disabilities, including the need for the Australian Government to develop a process whereby people with disabilities can have legitimate and meaningful input to the Convention proposals.

In February 2004 WWDA developed a Submission in response to the '*Draft Text for a Comprehensive and Integral International Convention to Promote and Protect the Rights and Dignity of Persons with Disabilities*', released internationally in early 2004. WWDA's Submission to the Australian Government outlined reasons why WWDA believes a UN Convention to Promote and Protect the Rights and Dignity of Persons with Disabilities is needed. It also discussed reasons why WWDA does not support the Government's position that a 'free standing new convention' is not required. WWDA's submission also examined the Draft Text, and suggested ways in which the Draft Text could be strengthened to better reflect the impact of multiple discriminations caused by the intersection of gender and disability. This included:

- the need to create a specific article on Women With Disabilities within the Draft Text;
- the need for States Parties to employ gender-specific measures to achieve equality and non-discrimination for women with disabilities;
- the need for specific articles to include issues such as forced sterilization forced/coercive abortion, female Infanticide, honour killing; violence (including sexual abuse and sexual exploitation); female genital mutilation; and the fundamental right to life for the girl child with disabilities.

WWDA's Submission was disseminated widely both within Australia and overseas. Disabled women in Canada used WWDA's submission to inform their participation in consultations held in Canada. A copy

of WWDA's Submission to the Commonwealth Government on the 'Draft Text for a Comprehensive and Integral International Convention to Promote and Protect the Rights and Dignity of Persons with Disabilities' is available on WWDA's website at: <http://www.wwda.org.au/unconvsb2.htm>

Women With Disabilities Australia (WWDA) continues to participate in work surrounding the development of a Comprehensive and Integral International Convention to Promote and Protect the Rights and Dignity of Persons with Disabilities. In mid 2004, the Australian Government announced national consultations with people with disability on the proposed United Nations convention on human rights and disability. Unfortunately, the consultation period was very short and ran from mid-July through to early August. As part of these national consultations, WWDA co-ordinated and hosted a national teleconference on the 4th August with women with disabilities. This teleconference focused on a text proposal for the convention developed in January this year, and also focused on specific issues of concern to women with disabilities in the Draft Convention. The information from WWDA's national teleconference was incorporated into a report from the national consultations which was submitted to the Australian Government on 12 August 2004.

### **3.2.3. Human Rights & Equal Opportunity Commission (HREOC) National Summit on Access to Health Services for People with Disabilities**

In February 2004, WWDA developed a Submission to the Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission (HREOC) requesting that HREOC undertake a Public Inquiry into Access to Breast & Cervical Screening for Women with Disabilities in Australia. This request was in direct response to the expressed needs of women with disabilities in Australia, who have consistently identified their lack of access to breast and cervical screening in Australia as a major issue.

In responding to WWDA's request, HREOC agreed to convene a national summit meeting, which could cover access to breast and cervical screening services but also cover other key issues in access to health facilities and services for people with disabilities. The National Summit on Health Services for People with Disabilities was held in Sydney on May 28th 2004 and was attended by representatives from national disability organisations, as well as representatives from the medical and health sectors. In his opening address to the National Summit, HREOC Commissioner Sev Ozdowski stated in part:

*'I should acknowledge Women With Disabilities Australia for providing the initial stimulus for today's meeting when they requested that the Commission consider conducting a public inquiry on access to breast and cervical cancer screening services for women with disabilities.'*

WWDA was represented at the Summit by Keran Howe (Vic) and Annie Parkinson (NSW). Keran presented a paper on behalf of WWDA entitled '*Lack of Data Means lack of Action: A Clinical Examination of Access to Health Services for Women with Disabilities*'. The paper, prepared by WWDA members Sue Salthouse and Keran Howe, examined a range of issues, including: the impact of structural inequality on health; the medicalisation of disability; lack of data (particularly in relation to access to breast and cervical screening for women with disabilities); and systemic barriers facing women with disabilities in accessing health services. A copy of WWDA's Paper '*Lack of Data Means lack of Action: A Clinical Examination of Access to Health Services for Women with Disabilities*' is available on WWDA's website at: <http://www.wwda.org.au/hreocsumm.htm>

As an outcome of the National Summit on Health Services for People with Disabilities, WWDA was invited by the Commonwealth Department of Health & Ageing, to attend a meeting with the State/Territory managers of the BreastScreen Australia and the National Cervical Cancer Screening Programs. Sue Salthouse represented WWDA, and attended three meetings in Perth on 18-19 August. The first was with the Disability Services Commission of Western Australia and officers from the Breast Screening Section of the Department of Health WA. Its purpose was to look at ways they could enhance their co-operative work in the area of breast screening and outreach to women with disabilities. Issues discussed included: use of advisory bodies and good consultation processes; dissemination of information; accessibility of information; training of health professionals, service providers and carers were discussed. The need for simultaneous and integrated consideration of gender/health/disability was emphasised.

The Second meeting was with the Commonwealth/State and Territory managers of cervical screening programs. Barriers to access to the programs were discussed in detail. The need for improved collection of data was emphasised, as was the need for more holistic approach to consideration of the health of women with disabilities. Program Managers agreed to look at ways of collecting and using data on participation in cervical screening by women with disabilities. The third meeting was with the Commonwealth./State and Territory managers of breast screening programs. The issues discussed were similar to those discussed in the previous meeting. However there was more emphasis on the need to ensure accessibility of clinics, and to improve training of staff. A major outcome from this meeting was an agreement for officers from the National Screening Section to work with WWDA and the Australian Bureau of Statistics and Australian Institute of Health and Welfare to work out the most strategic way to collect data about the women with disabilities, their participation in breast screening programs and the incidence of such cancer.

The major areas of importance taken up by managers of both programs were in the intersection of Health, Gender and Disability and the need for a holistic approach to the health of women with disabilities; information accessibility; distribution of information, the need for training of all people who work with women with disabilities, and the need for evaluation of current programs and strategies directed to encourage participation by women with disabilities.

### **3.3. Development of Standard Information Kit and Orientation Package**

During the past year, WWDA has developed and published an updated Membership Brochure and four page WWDA Information Flyer which has been widely disseminated across sectors. WWDA also developed a standard WWDA Information Pack for new members and other relevant stakeholders, which includes a range of information about the organisation. A graphic designer was selected to develop the Information Kit Presentation Folders. The updated Membership Brochure and four page WWDA Information Flyer were developed 'in house' using desk top publishing software, and were then printed professionally.

During 2004, WWDA was approached by one of Australia's leading Insurance companies, ANZ, to inform WWDA that they were hosting a national luncheon for all their women managers from across the country. They had decided that they would use the national luncheon to raise funds for a women's charity. For their 2004 luncheon, they had selected WWDA as the charity for fundraising. WWDA had been chosen on the strength of WWDA's website, which ANZ had found to be an 'excellent resource'. WWDA provided 250 copies of our Information Flyer, which was put at every place setting during the luncheon. Over \$600 was raised for WWDA from the luncheon, and a number of attendees also took up WWDA membership as a result of the information provided by WWDA.

The WWDA Information Flyer and Membership Brochure was also used in late 2004 at a national disability conference. The Inaugural National Ageing & Disability Conference was held on 24th - 26th August 2004 in Hobart, Tasmania and hosted by the ACROD, the National Industry Association for Disability Services. Over 400 delegates attended this national Conference. WWDA's Information Flyer and Membership Brochure was included into every Conference satchel, meaning that over 400 people received the information. A number of Conference delegates have since taken up WWDA membership, with new memberships still coming into WWDA as a result of the Conference.

### **3.4. Development of an Orientation and Procedure Manual for WWDA Management Committee Members**

In late 2003, WWDA developed an Orientation Manual for WWDA Management Committee members. This Manual provides detailed information for new and continuing Management Committee areas. The information provided in the Manual includes: About Women With Disabilities Australia (WWDA); WWDA Management Committee Roles & Responsibilities; WWDA Staff Roles and Responsibilities; WWDA Operational Policies; WWDA Operational Information and Procedures; Industrial Information.

Since the development of the Orientation and Procedure Manual for WWDA Management Committee Members, a number of other disability organisations have used WWDA's Manual as a model to develop similar Manuals for their own organisations.

### **3.5. Development of a WWDA Library, Administration Information Management System and Electronic Mailing Database**

During 2004, WWDA has worked hard to improve the infrastructure of the organisation, particularly in the area of internal information management systems. WWDA has developed an Administration Information Management System, which includes hard copy folders covering a range of categories including, for example:

- Incoming and Outgoing Correspondence
- Media releases
- WWDA Representation Reports
- WWDA Publications and Order Forms
- WWDA Publicity Information
- Completed Project Funding Applications
- Current Project Grants and Potential Grants
- WWDA Policy Submissions
- Management Committee Information
- WWDA Constitution and Taxation Information
- WWDA Members Resumes and Skills Register
- WWDA Membership Information
- Human Resource Information – Staff Awards, Superannuation, Personnel Files

WWDA has also developed an internal Financial Management System which includes hard copy folders in a range of categories, including:

- Accounts – all accounts are filed under each supplier
- Outstanding Invoices
- Auditor Preparation
- Incorporated Association Files



***WWDA Office Manager, Angela Court, in the National WWDA Office***

WWDA has also begun work on organising an internal WWDA Library System, which includes collection, collation and cataloguing of a wide range of resource materials relevant to the operation of the organisation. The Library is organised and catalogued by Issue area, and includes: reports; newsletters; academic journals and literature; books; magazines; resource manuals; and more.



*The beginnings of WWDA's Library System in the WWDA National Office*

Of particular value to the organisation, has been the development of an internal electronic mailing list, to enable fast and widespread dissemination of material. The electronic mailing list includes every politician in Australia, including at Federal, State/Territory levels. Also included are key stakeholders, such as international, national, local organisations across a wide range of sectors. The development and implementation of this mailing list has seen a significant rise in the public profile of WWDA.

### **3.6. Development of Five Year WWDA Strategic Plan**

In late 2003, WWDA conducted a Strategic Planning Forum where the Strategic Plan 2004-2009 for WWDA was developed. During the Planning phase of the Project, WWDA undertook a national survey of its members and key stakeholders in order to enable members to have input into the Strategic Planning process. The Survey was specifically designed to elicit information from members about key policy areas that they believed WWDA need to take action on as a matter of priority over the next 5 years. The Survey was disseminated using a range of formats (such a via email and post) and respondents were also given the opportunity to participate in a telephone survey. The results of the Survey of WWDA members were analysed, documented in a report and incorporated into the WWDA Strategic Planning Forum process. During the Planning phase of the Project, WWDA also undertook an analysis

of organizational data to assist in informing the Strategic Planning process. WWDA collated and analysed information from members who had made contact with the organization over the past 5 years, in order to ascertain what types of issues members were most concerned about. This information was documented in a report and incorporated into the WWDA Strategic Planning Forum process.

A woman with a disability was appointed to organize the National Strategic Planning Forum held in Hobart on September 11-14, 2003. Eleven women with disabilities from around Australia attended the Strategic Planning Forum. Participants came from Tasmania (metropolitan and rural); Victoria (metropolitan and rural); South Australia; Northern Territory; and New South Wales. A Facilitator was selected to facilitate the Strategic Planning Forum. Teleconferences were held with the Planning Committee and the Facilitator to plan the structure of the Forum. Supports necessary to enable women with disabilities to participate in the Strategic Planning Forum were identified and organised. Examples of supports included: attendant care; accessible transport; information in alternative formats; equipment, hoists, shower chairs; specific dietary requirements; etc).

WWDA's Strategic Plan 2004-2009 contains five main goals, each supported by a Goal Statement. Under each goal are listed key objectives which set out how WWDA intends to achieve the goals. Each key objective is supported by a number of Strategies, which describe how each objective will be achieved, as well as by a series of Performance Indicators which will help WWDA monitor progress. Due to lack of funding, the WWDA Strategic Plan 2004-2009 in its entirety was not able to be professionally graphically designed and professionally printed. However, WWDA was able to develop a smaller publication entitled '*WWDA Strategic Plan 2004-2009 – A Summary*' which was designed and typeset, and printed professionally. It was mailed out to all WWDA members and other relevant stakeholders. A PDF version of the Strategic Plan Summary document was emailed to every politician in Australia and all relevant State/Territory and Commonwealth Government Departments and agencies. The '*WWDA Strategic Plan 2004-2009 – A Summary*' document has also been made available on WWDA's website. The WWDA Strategic Plan 2004-2009 (complete version) was produced internally by WWDA staff utilizing basic desk-top publishing software, and mailed out to relevant stakeholders including: key disability, women's and human rights organizations; relevant Commonwealth, State/Territory Government Departments; relevant Ministers responsible for disability and/or women's policy; and State/Territory Premiers.

### **3.7. Leadership and Mentoring – internationally, nationally, locally**

WWDA has provided leadership support to a number of organisations over the past year. WWDA has provided resource materials and advice to the Disabled Women's Support Organisation (DWSO) in Zimbabwe, a newly formed support organisation for disabled women and girls. WWDA also provided resource materials and advice to the National Union of Women with Disabilities of Uganda, based in Kampala. Resource materials and information about WWDA was also provided to the Regional Network for Women With Disabilities Asia-Pacific Project (Thailand), and a WWDA delegation also met with representatives of the Regional Network, in Sydney. Over the past year, WWDA has been called upon to provide a number of referee reports for both organisations and individuals. For example, WWDA was able to provide a referee report to the Global Fund for Women (USA) to support an application from the Regional Network for Women With Disabilities Asia-Pacific (in conjunction with People With Disabilities Australia) for delegates to attend the Women's Human Rights Court in Sydney in 2004. WWDA also provided referee reports to support the proposal from People With Disabilities Australia for the project 'Mentoring and Leadership Development of Young Researchers with a Disability'. WWDA has supported the establishment of new women with disabilities support groups in Australia, including the NSW Network of Women With Disabilities, and the Victorian Women with Disabilities Advocacy Service.

### **3.8. WWDA Website Development**

The WWDA website continues to be extremely popular and successful. For the period September 2003 – July 2004, the WWDA website has received 192,733 visits (not 'hits'). This is up by 82,105 visits from the previous year, where the total number of visits was 110,628. 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. More than 21 WWDA Submissions to Government have been added to the WWDA website, along with a collection of writings addressing a wide range of issues affecting women with disabilities, including sexuality; health; housing, and many more. The full transcript of the Four Corners (ABC Television) Documentary on Sterilisation & Disability (entitled "Walk In Our Shoes") was added to the WWDA website with permission from the ABC. All WWDA's Monthly Update Bulletins have been added to the WWDA website. Up to date information about the organisation is provided on the WWDA website, including membership details and forms. The WWDA Website content currently includes over 65 Conference and other articles and 31 submissions to Government.

### **3.9. WWDA Representation and Conference Presentations**

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.

During the period July 2003 – September 2004, WWDA presented papers at a number of national and State/Territory Conferences and Forums, covering a wide range of issues, including: gender and disability; the UN Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities; health; access to breast & cervical screening; menopause; disability and ageing; violence against women with disabilities, and much more.

In mid 2004, WWDA was notified that it had been selected to present a Paper at the Disabled People's International (DPI) World Summit in Canada in September 2004. WWDA presented its National Project on the Sterilisation and Reproductive Health of Women and Girls with Disabilities. WWDA's paper *'Moving Forward or Losing Ground? - The Sterilisation of Women and Girls with Disabilities in Australia'* outlines WWDA's work in the area, traces developments in Australia and discusses some of the critical issues in the consideration of sterilisation and reproductive rights as a human rights issue.

A list of Conference presentations by WWDA during 2003-04 is included in Appendix I.

In late 2003, WWDA was invited to contribute to the International Encyclopedia of Disability, being published by SAGE publications in Chicago in late 2004. The project involved the written contributions of 400 international scholars in disability, and will be marketed to every major library in the world. WWDA contributed an entry to the International Encyclopedia of Disability, which gives a brief overview of WWDA's evolution, role and major achievements. During 2004, WWDA also had a major article on 'Women With Disabilities and Homelessness' published in the Journal 'Parity', the publication of the Council to Homeless Persons.

In late March, a WWDA delegation met with Senator Kay Patterson, the Federal Minister for Family & Community Services, in Hobart. At the meeting, WWDA raised and discussed with the Minister five main issues of concern to women with disabilities, and suggested specific action by the Minister in relation to these issues. The issues raised included: Sterilisation; Violence Against Women With Disabilities; Access to Breast and Cervical Screening for Women With Disabilities; Individual Advocacy; and WWDA's operational funding. Since the meeting, WWDA has kept the Minister informed of progress relating to each area. In June, a WWDA delegation met with Senator Bob McMullan (Shadow Minister for Finance and Small Business) in Canberra. Sue Salthouse and Annie Parkinson represented WWDA at this meeting, where information about WWDA was provided, along with a detailed discussion about policy priority areas of concern to women with disabilities.



***WWDA's Sue Salthouse (left) and Annie Parkinson meet with Senator Bob McMullen, in Canberra, June 2004.***

A number of Reports from WWDA's Representatives are available from the National WWDA Office. Examples include:

- Australian Federation of Disability Organisations (AFDO) Report
- WWDA Telecommunications Consumer Representation Working Party Report
- WWDA National Women's Policy Network Report
- Report on WWDA Representation at DPI World Summit
- Report on the 'Going Further' Project
- Top End Division of General Practice Consumer Reference Group

### **3.10. WWDA Funding Submissions**

During the past year, WWDA has written 16 formal submissions for project and related funding. Eight of these submissions have been successful, with several yet to be decided. A listing of the funding submissions written is included in Appendix I. Examples of successful grants applied for included:

#### **3.10.1. Improving the status of women with disabilities through systemic advocacy (Reichstein Foundation \$20,000 AUS)**

The aim of this project is to improve the status of women with disabilities through systemic advocacy at a national level. The main objective of the Project is to develop a range of systems, activities and processes that:

- provide informed and representative advice to government on women's policy development and implementation relevant to the views and circumstances of women with disabilities;
- represent the views of women with disabilities through consultation with the WWDA constituency and other groups and organisations relevant to women with disabilities' concerns;
- enable specific policy analysis on individual areas of organisational expertise and concern;
- contribute to WWDA's commitment to creating leadership opportunities for women with disabilities;

A woman with a disability was employed one day a week for 12 months to coordinate the Project, which is due for completion in December 2004.

### **3.10.2. Telecommunications Consumer Representation Grants (Federal Department of Communications, Information Technology and the Arts \$8,000 AUS)**

Through this Project, which runs for one year, the objective of WWDA is to:

- represent the interests of Australian women with disabilities in the development of government and industry policy relating to telecommunications;
- give women with disabilities a voice in the development of industry codes and practices and other telecommunications industry processes that affect them;
- support initiatives which facilitate discussion and research into making telecommunications equipment (including assistive equipment) available to disadvantaged groups (such as women with disabilities) in an equitable way;
- inform and educate Australian women with disabilities on developments in telecommunications, its accessibility and affordability.

### **3.10.3. Women's NGO's Project Grants Program Capacity Building Funding (Federal Department of Prime Minister & Cabinet Office of the Status of Women \$25,000 AUS)**

This project will seek to enhance WWDA's capacity to better respond to meeting the needs and concerns of women with disabilities. It will do this by developing internal information systems which enable WWDA to provide effective information, advice and referral to women with disabilities, their associates and the broader community. Specifically, WWDA will research and develop an accessible Information and Referral Portal of relevant services, agencies, and organizations at national, State/Territory, regional and local levels. WWDA will also develop a Data Collection System which records incoming requests for information from women with disabilities. This data will inform WWDA's systemic advocacy work and will enhance WWDA's capacity to act as a two way conduit between the Government and the community on social policy issues as they affect women with disabilities. Once developed, the Information and Referral Portal will be made available on WWDA's website, and will be developed in line with international Standards of Web accessibility for people with disabilities. This Project runs for eight months, and is due for completion in June 2005. A woman with a disability has been employed two days per week for 8 months to coordinate the Project.

## **4. WWDA Management Committee 2004-2005**

The WWDA Management Committee for 2004-2005 is:

Annie Parkinson (NSW)

Samantha Jenkinson (VIC)

Pamela Menere (Rural VIC)

Sheila King (QLD)

Joyce Deering (NT)

Sue Salthouse (ACT)

Margie Charlesworth (SA)

Kate List (NSW)

Jill Fowler (SA)

Fiona Given (NSW)

The WWDA Public Officer for 2004-2005 is Sue Salthouse of the ACT.

## 5. 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



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

**Associates:**

D. R. RICHARDS  
B.Com., C.A.  
K. A. NELSON  
B.Com., C.A.

**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: 01/07/2003 to 30/06/04

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  
Po Box 28 Rosny Park TAS 7018

**Address:**

(03) 6244 5044

**Telephone No:**

**Fax No:**

(03) 62447319

**Date:**

27/9/2004

## Appendix One

### Formal WWDA Submissions to Government and related Policy Reviews and processes 2003-04

- Federal Government's Welfare Reform Paper "Building a Simpler System to Help Jobless Families and Individuals";
- Productivity Commission on the Review of the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) 1992;
- Board of Taxation Consultation on the Definition of a Charity;
- Federal, State/Territory Attorneys General on Sterilisation and Reproductive Health of Women and Girls with Disabilities;
- Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission Discussion Paper on the Discussion paper: "Assistance animals under the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) 1992";
- Family Court of Australia Family Violence Committee Consultation Report;
- Standing Committee on Employment and Workplace Relations Inquiry into Increasing Participation in Paid Employment;
- Legislation Committee for Environment, Communications, Information Technology and the Arts on the "Telstra (Transition to Full Private Ownership) Bill 2003";
- Australian Communications Authority (ACA) Payphones Review;
- Attorney General's 12<sup>th</sup> NGO Forum on Domestic Human Rights;
- Federal Government's Discussion Paper 'Resolving Deadlocks: A Discussion Paper on Section 57 of the Australian Constitution';
- National Evaluation Supported Accommodation Assistance Program (SAAP IV);
- National Secretariat Program (NSP) Review;
- Productivity Commission's Draft Report 'Review of the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) 1992' (2 submissions);
- Department of Communications, Information Technology & the Arts 'Review of the Operation of the Universal Service Obligation & the Customer Service Guarantee';
- Commonwealth Government on the 'Draft Text for a Comprehensive and Integral International Convention to Promote and Protect the Rights and Dignity of Persons with Disabilities' (two submissions);
- Human Rights & Equal Opportunity Commission for a Public Inquiry into Access to Breast & Cervical Screening for Women with Disabilities;
- Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission (HREOC) on the Temporary Exemption Application from the Australian Subscription Television And Radio Association (ASTRA);
- Commonwealth Office of the Status of Women '2005 National Safety Survey';
- Submission to the Commonwealth and State/Territory Governments regarding Non-Therapeutic Sterilisation of Minors with a Decision-Making Disability;
- Submission to the Australian Government on the Draft National Action Plan on Human Rights;
- Submission to the Social Policy Research Centre on the Discussion Paper 'Designing the Evaluation of the Commonwealth Disability Strategy';
- National Consultations on the Development of a Comprehensive and Integral International Convention on the Rights and Dignity of Persons with Disabilities;
- State/Territory Attorneys General on Sterilisation and Reproductive Health of Women and Girls with Disabilities;
- South Australian Government's Discussion Paper: "Valuing South Australia's Women: Towards A Women's Safety Strategy For South Australia";
- Tasmanian Department of Health and Human Services on its Draft Strategic Framework For Disability Services 2003 – 2008;
- Tasmanian Government's Options Paper 'Safe at Home: A Criminal Justice Framework for Responding to Family Violence in Tasmania'.

## **WWDA Representation 2003-04**

- Telecommunications Disability Consumer Representation Project Advisory Body
- Telstra Disability Forum
- Telstra Disability Equipment Program Consumer Advisory Group
- Australian Communication Industry Forum (ACIF) Disability Advisory Body
- Attorney Generals' Human Rights NGO's Forum
- Australian Federation of Disability Organisations (AFDO) Board of Directors
- Australian Federation of Disability Organisations Working Party
- Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) Standards Project Steering Committee;
- Disability Studies and Research Institute of Australia (DSARI) Board of Directors
- National Disability Advisory Council
- Northern Territory Division of General Practice Management Committee
- Telstra Consumer Consultative Council Darwin
- Human Rights & Equal Opportunity Commission (HREOC) Accessible Telecommunications Forum
- Human Rights & Equal Opportunity Commission (HREOC) Forum on the 'Draft Text for a Comprehensive and Integral International Convention to Promote and Protect the Rights and Dignity of Persons with Disabilities'
- Human Rights & Equal Opportunity Commission (HREOC) National Summit on Health Services for People with Disabilities
- Disability Council of NSW Roundtable on Deinstitutionalisation
- Victorian Community Campaign & Advocacy Skills Workshop
- Going Further Leadership Program;
- Family Court of Australia Family Violence Policy Reference Group;
- Centrelink DisAbility Customer Service Reference Group
- National Financial Industry Complaints Service Panel (nomination unsuccessful)
- Telecommunications Industry Ombudsman Council (nomination unsuccessful)

## **WWDA Conference Presentations 2003-04**

- Australian Council of Social Service (ACOSS) 2003 National Congress;
- ACROD National Convention 2003 'Competing Voices';
- Diversity In Health Conference 2003.
- The National Summit on Health Services for People with Disabilities 2004
- National Organisation of Women Students Australia (NOWSA) Conference 2004
- Inaugural Conference on Social Aspects of Disease, Disability and Disablement 2004
- Australian Menopause Society National Conference 2003
- Inaugural National Ageing & Disability Conference 2004
- National Conference on Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault
- Disabled People's International (DPI) World Summit (Canada)

## **National and State/Territory Forums Attended by WWDA 2003-04**

- Attorney Generals' NGO Forum on Domestic Human Rights;
- Human Rights & Equal Opportunity Commission (HREOC) National Accessible Telecommunications Forum;
- Human Rights & Equal Opportunity Commission (HREOC) Forum on the 'Draft Text for a Comprehensive and Integral International Convention to Promote and Protect the Rights and Dignity of Persons with Disabilities';
- Human Rights & Equal Opportunity Commission (HREOC) National Summit on Health Services for People with Disabilities;
- National Consultations on the development of a Comprehensive and Integral International Convention to Promote and Protect the Rights and Dignity of Persons with Disabilities';

- Disability Council of NSW Roundtable on Deinstitutionalisation;
- Victorian Community Campaign & Advocacy Skills Workshop;
- Going Further Leadership Program (Vic)
- 'From Rhetoric to Reality' Human Rights Conference (Vic)

## **Funding Applications Submitted 2003-04**

- Tasmanian Community Fund Round 6;
- Department of Communication, Information Technology & the Arts - Telecommunications Consumer Representation Grants Program;
- Global Fund for Women (USA) General Purpose Grant;
- Tasmanian Community Support Levy;
- Tasmanian Community Fund Round 7;
- Tasmanian Department of Health & Human Services;
- Reichstein Foundation;
- FACS Volunteers Equipment Program;
- Microsoft Corporation Community Organisations Grants Program;
- Tasmanian Community Support Levy Equipment Grants Program;
- Tasmanian Community Fund Round 8;
- Rural Press;
- Department of Prime Minister & Cabinet Office of the Status of Women (OSW) - Women's NGO's Project Grants Program Policy Project Funding;
- Department of Prime Minister & Cabinet Office of the Status of Women (OSW) - Women's NGO's Project Grants Program Capacity Building Funding;
- Tasmanian Computers for Community Groups.
- Global Fund for Women (USA) Travel Assistance Grant;