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# WWDA

## **ANNUAL REPORT**

on Key International and National Projects,  
Activities and Achievements

1 July 2013 – 30 June 2014

Women With Disabilities Australia (WWDA)

# WWDA



## Women With Disabilities Australia (WWDA) Annual Report on Key International and National Projects & Activities

1 July 2013 – 30 June 2014

by Carolyn Frohmader for Women With Disabilities Australia (WWDA) October 2014

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**Executive Director** Carolyn Frohmader

Front Cover Image:

WWDA Executive Director Carolyn Frohmader accepting the Australian Human Rights Award (Individual) 2013, Sydney, December 2013.

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# WWDA

## ABOUT WOMEN WITH DISABILITIES AUSTRALIA (WWDA)



Women With Disabilities Australia (WWDA) is the peak non-government organisation (NGO) for women with all types of disabilities in Australia. WWDA is run by women with disabilities, for women with disabilities, and represents more than 2 million disabled women in Australia. WWDA's work is grounded in a rights based framework which links gender and disability issues to a full range of civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights. Promoting the sexual and reproductive rights of women and girls with disabilities, along

with promoting their rights to freedom from violence and exploitation, and to freedom from torture or cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment are key policy priorities of WWDA.

WWDA's human rights based approach recognises that the international human rights normative framework, including the international human rights treaties and their optional protocols, and the general comments and recommendations adopted by the bodies monitoring

their implementation, provide the framework to delineate the respective obligations and responsibilities of governments and other duty-bearers in relation to the human rights of women and girls with disabilities. It is this framework that WWDA utilises to promote and indeed demand, accountability from Governments and other duty bearers in relation to recognising and addressing the violations of human rights and fundamental freedoms experienced by women and girls with disabilities. WWDA is internationally recognised as a leader in the field of gender and disability, and is increasingly in demand to support and mentor groups and organisations in developing countries, and to showcase it's critically acclaimed work.



WWDA is funded by the Australian Department of Social Services (DSS), (formerly the Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs), under the National Secretariat Program. WWDA receives \$165,000pa from DSS and has no other source of revenue income. WWDA operates a national secretariat which works at regional, state/territory, national and international levels; services a direct and fast growing membership; undertakes substantial research; implements projects at national and international levels; and provides extensive policy advice to a wide range of stakeholders, including all levels of government, non-government, researchers, industry groups, United Nations machinery, and more.

WWDA has one paid employee, (an Executive Director), and a Board of Management made up of women with disabilities from around Australia who volunteer their time to the organisation. Many of WWDA's members actively support the work of WWDA through volunteering their time and expertise in a variety of ways, including as representatives of the organisation at events within Australia and overseas.

## WWDA'S STRATEGIC GOALS 2010-2015



**1.** Promote and protect the rights of women with disabilities nationally and internationally.



**2.** Undertake systemic advocacy in specific areas of concern to women with disabilities.



**3.** Continue to build on WWDA's key role in the consolidation, production and dissemination of high quality information, publications and research on issues relevant to women with disabilities.



**4.** Further develop the internal and external operations of the organisation in order to achieve its vision, goals and objectives.



**5.** Contribute to the development and implementation of Australian Government policies affecting women with disabilities.

## WWDA MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE 2013-2014



Karin Swift  
- President



Margie  
Charlesworth



Rayna Lamb  
- Secretary



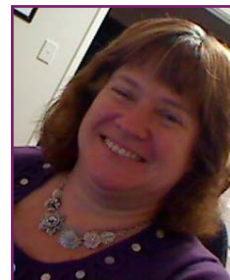
Pamela Menere  
- Treasurer



Dr. Iva Strnadova



Katharine Annear



Kerrie Duff



**KARIN SWIFT,  
WWDA PRESIDENT**

## **WWDA PRESIDENT'S REPORT 2013-2014**

WWDA has achieved some great things this year, both nationally and internationally, despite many challenges to the organisation due to funding changes and uncertainty around our future. Our Executive Director, Carolyn Frohmader, has very capably managed our organisation despite great professional and personal adversity – including a stint in hospital in late 2013 with a very severe case of pneumonia and pericarditis.

Carolyn will be reporting on some of our major challenges and achievements during the 2013-2014 year, so I won't duplicate our effort in my report. Rather, I would like to use my President's Report to say some thank-you's and also to reassure our members that despite funding uncertainty and difficult times, our work to promote and protect the human rights of women and girls with disabilities will continue into the future with as much commitment and dedication as ever.

I would like to take this opportunity to remind everyone that WWDA has one paid employee, (our Executive Director), and a Board of Management made up of women with disabilities from around Australia who volunteer their time to the organisation. Although we currently receive just \$165,000 per year in operational funding from the Australian Government, we still manage to undertake work that is ground-breaking, cutting edge and critically acclaimed. Whilst as President, I am obviously extremely proud of our organisation and what we achieve on such limited resources, it would be remiss of me not to say very clearly, that our funding situation remains inequitable and unsustainable. WWDA is held in high esteem by our government for our work and the integrity of our work, but we are yet to see that esteem translate into funding and resources commensurate with the work we do. As President of WWDA, I am keenly aware that the next twelve months must see a significant change

in the way WWDA is resourced, if we are to continue and build on the work we undertake.

First and foremost, on behalf of the WWDA Management Committee and WWDA's members and allies, I would like to thank our Executive Director, Carolyn Frohmader, for her extraordinary dedication and commitment to our organisation. For the past 18 years, Carolyn has given above and beyond the call of duty to WWDA, and this past year has been no exception. Carolyn has had to work under the most difficult circumstances, yet has still managed to lead our organisation with dignity, professionalism and grace. Her work, on and behalf of our members, is always of the highest standard, and she steadfastly refuses to compromise on the standard and integrity of work in the name of WWDA.





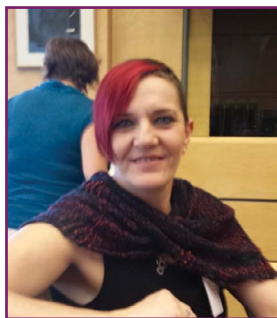
I would of course, like to formally recognise and acknowledge the WWDA Management Committee for their ongoing commitment and efforts over the past year. It has been a tough year and I appreciate the support the Committee has shown to me in my role as President, and to Carolyn as Executive Director. We say farewell and thanks to Katharine Annear, who stepped down from the Committee in June. On behalf of the Committee and WWDA members, we wish Katharine all the best for her future.

I also wish to acknowledge the many contributions our members make to the work and success of our organisation. Whether it is through representing WWDA at national or international conferences and events; on state or national boards or committees; contributing to our discussion lists, facebook page, website and twitter; or sharing with us your lived experiences of being women with disabilities, we highly value your contribution. It is the lived experiences of women and girls with

disabilities that inform and direct the work we do, so thank you for your efforts, support and dedication.

And finally, I would like to acknowledge the Australian Department of Social Services (DSS) for providing WWDA with our operational grant of \$165,000 per annum. We are also appreciative of the project funding we received from the Australian Government to carry out our national '*Stop the Violence Project*' and the national '*Disability Employment Services Project*'.

***Karin Swift***  
***WWDA President***



CAROLYN FROHMADER  
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

*This Annual Report provides a summary snapshot of WWDA's key projects and activities at the international and national level for the financial year 1st July 2013 – 30th June 2014.*

## WWDA EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

The 2013-2014 year has been an extremely difficult one for WWDA. The ever increasing demand on our organisation from the local level, through to the international level, has placed great strain on WWDA – an organisation with an annual operating budget of only \$165,000 and an organisation of only one paid employee. The government's changes to the way it funds services and organisations, (including WWDA), the reform of the model for funding disability peak organisations, the uncertainty regarding our future; and the lack of recognition and respect by Government for the breadth and extent of WWDA's role, work, productivity, and achievements has had significant impact on not only myself as WWDA's only employee, but also on our Management Committee, members and allies.

In March 2014, WWDA had no option but to make the decision to close our national office. After 15 years in the same location, we were unable

to renew our 5-year lease as our funding contract with the Australian Government expired on June 30, 2014, and we had no guarantee of ongoing funding post that date. Following reform of the Federal Government's grants programs and processes, WWDA was required to go through a public tender process to apply for operational funding into the future. We submitted our application for the tender in July 2014, however, the outcome of the tender process will not be known until late 2014 or early 2015. WWDA has been advised by the Australian Government that we will receive interim funding (through an extension to our existing funding contract) until December 2014. The impact of these reforms and delayed decisions on the part of Government has had great impact on WWDA. We found ourselves in the difficult position of trying to maintain our extensive international and national work program; closing down and relocating our national office, whilst at

the same time, applying for a tender to secure our future funding. The stress and personal cost to me as WWDA's Executive Director during the past year cannot be over-stated.

Despite these tumultuous times, WWDA has worked incredibly hard to maintain our extensive work program and continue to produce quality work that is highly regarded throughout Australia and overseas.

Our work this past year at both national and international level has had great purchase and resulted in significant achievements and successes. Our increased online presence through social media networks and online activism, has substantially raised our profile and contributed to the increased demand for our expertise and advice to a wide range of stakeholders, particularly in the areas of gender and disability, violence prevention, sexual and reproductive rights, international human rights treaty monitoring, and



## WWDA EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT CAROLYN FROHMADER

domestic disability legislation, policy and program development.

In addition to WWDA's major work program and activities, we have also had to cope with a significant increase in requests for individual advocacy, particularly from women with disabilities in crisis situations. Issues for which women have sought support from WWDA are many and varied, but key issues still remain: violence, abuse, exploitation and neglect; violations of sexual and reproductive rights; legal issues; removal of babies and children; lack of services and support programs; lack of coordination of care; discrimination in employment; discrimination in education; lack of housing options; and much more.

During the reporting period (July 2013-June 2014), WWDA has undertaken an extraordinary program of work in our role as a transnational human rights organisation. We have worked hard to strengthen our collaborative partnerships with various United Nations mechanisms, such as the

treaty monitoring bodies, and UN institutions and agencies, such as the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR); the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA); the World Health Organisation (WHO); UN Women; the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW); the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO); the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF); the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UN DESA); the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UNESCAP), and more.

WWDA's work has become widely respected within the United Nations. For example, the *Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD)* have publicly acknowledged the significant contribution WWDA has made in assisting the work of the Committee. In September 2013, Professor Theresia Degener, Vice Chairperson of the CRPD Committee,

publicly stated that she, and other members of the CRPD Committee are of the view that WWDA is *"the best disability organisation in the world"*. In June 2014, Professor Emeritus Ron McCallum AO, (CRPD Committee member and former CRPD Committee Chairperson) wrote to WWDA: *"I can attest that the work of WWDA is truly superb. You good people have given enormous help to the CRPD Committee, and WWDA is so very highly respected on the international scene."* And in 2013, CRPD Committee member Ms Ana Peláez Narváez, wrote to WWDA stating, in part: *"I follow your activities and work at WWDA with a keen interest. I believe you are at the forefront of the ongoing advocacy work regarding women with disabilities and serve as an inspiration for many other organisations of women with disabilities."*

This Annual Report provides a summary snapshot of WWDA's key projects and activities at the



international and national level for the financial year 1st July 2013 – 30th June 2014. The Report demonstrates the breadth, scope and high standard of WWDA's work, on a wide range of initiatives and programs, across all portfolio areas and across jurisdictions. Our Annual Report clearly demonstrates and reflects WWDA's commitment to promoting and advancing the rights and freedoms of women and girls with disabilities – both within Australia and around the world. Our Annual Report also reflects the human rights based approach from which we operate – recognising that the international human rights normative framework, including the international human rights treaties and their optional protocols, and the general comments and recommendations adopted by the bodies monitoring their implementation, provide the framework to delineate the respective obligations and responsibilities of governments and other duty-bearers in relation to the human rights of women and girls with disabilities.

As Executive Director, I would like to take this opportunity to thank Karin Swift (WWDA President) and the WWDA Management Committee members for their support over the past 12 months. I also wish to acknowledge those WWDA members who have undertaken representative work on behalf of our organisation over the past year, and also to our members and supporters for their continued faith in WWDA and our work. I would also like to particularly acknowledge the assistance and support given to me over the past year by WWDA's accountant, Cody Burdon from Crowe Horwath. I acknowledge the Department of Social Services (DSS) for providing WWDA's operational funding, and trust that the funding reforms undertaken by the Australian Government will result in our organisation being funded in the future in a more equitable manner, and commensurate with the work we undertake.

I would like to pay special tribute to the WWDA Management Committee for nominating me for the prestigious 2013 National Human Rights Awards. It was a special honour for me to be awarded the Individual Human Rights Award for 2013, at a gala event in Sydney on international human rights day in December. I was over-whelmed by the honour and the occasion, but thrilled to have the opportunity to raise the profile of WWDA and highlight the ongoing human rights violations of women and girls with disabilities in Australia.

And finally, I would like to take this opportunity to thank my young daughter Lottie, who at 11 years old, continues to show amazing patience and understanding in supporting me to carry out my role. As a single mother with no family, I am very lucky to have a daughter who has a strong sense of social justice and who shares my commitment to improving the human rights of women and girls with disabilities.

*Carolyn Frohmader*  
WWDA Executive Director



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# WWDA

Key International and  
National Projects & Activities  
**2013-14**

## SUMMARY OF WWDA'S KEY INTERNATIONAL PROJECTS & ACTIVITIES



*Carolyn Frohmader, WWDA Executive Director (L) with WWDA Member Judy Huett*

## SUMMARY OF WWDA'S KEY INTERNATIONAL PROJECTS & ACTIVITIES

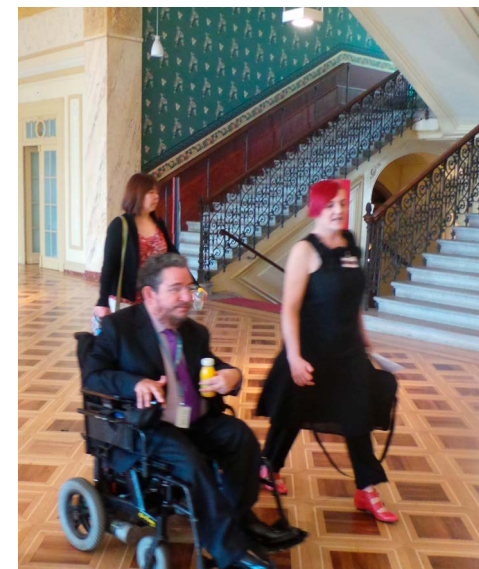
### KEY ACTIVITY:

#### United Nations Review of Australia under the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD)

The **Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD)** was ratified by Australia on 17 July 2008, and it entered into force for Australia on 16 August 2008. The **Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities** is the body of independent experts which monitors implementation of the Convention by the States Parties, including Australia. In August 2013, WWDA Executive Director Carolyn Frohmader, was selected as a member of the 'Australian Civil Society Parallel Report Group Delegation' to represent the views of people with disabilities in Australia to the Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities during its first formal review of Australia's compliance with the CRPD. The Review took place during the CRPD Committee's 10th Session in Geneva, 2-13 September 2013.

For more than two years prior to the CRPD review of Australia, disabled people's organisations, disability advocacy and human rights organisations, had worked hard to develop the Australian Civil Society 'Shadow' or 'Parallel' Report on the implementation of the CRPD in Australia. The Report, entitled **Disability Rights Now** contained over 130 recommendations and was endorsed by more than 80 organisations. *Disability Rights Now* was sent to the CRPD Committee for its review of Australia's compliance with the CRPD. The CRPD Committee also accepted and formally tabled WWDA's **Submission to the Senate Inquiry into Involuntary Sterilisation of People with Disabilities in Australia** as a formal Shadow Report to help inform the Committee's review of Australia.

An enormous amount of work was undertaken by the Civil Society Delegation prior to departing for Geneva. The delegation members attended preparation meetings, wrote and organised fact sheets, developed



*CRPD Committee Member, Mr. Carlos Ríos Espinosa and Carolyn Frohmader*



*Carolyn Frohmader delivers her presentation to the CRPD Committee*

## SUMMARY OF WWDA'S KEY INTERNATIONAL PROJECTS & ACTIVITIES

draft recommendations under each of the articles in the CRPD, organised presentations and much more. WWDA Executive Director Carolyn Frohmader had a key role in within the delegation, particular around gender and disability, and critical issues for women and girls with disabilities, such as forced sterilisation; violence, abuse, exploitation and neglect; and sexual and reproductive rights. WWDA's work is well known to the CRPD Committee and WWDA has a good working relationship with several of the CRPD Committee members, so this brought an added strength to the Civil Society delegation.

Carolyn spent a week at the **United Nations in Geneva**, working with the CRPD Committee as a member of the Civil Society delegation, as well as participating in a number of other events during the week. During her time in Geneva, Carolyn was also able to take up a range of opportunities to meet with several key stakeholders to specifically focus on WWDA's work and also to provide advice and expertise



*Judy Huett delivers her presentation to the CRPD Committee*

on issues concerning women and girls with disabilities. As well as having several meetings during the week with members of the CRPD Committee, Carolyn gave a presentation to the Committee during the Civil Society delegation's formal session with the Committee. Carolyn's presentation focused on violence against women and girls with disabilities (particularly in institutional and residential settings), as well as forced/involuntary sterilisation; sexual and reproductive rights; and the

right to found and maintain a family. WWDA member Judy Huett, who was also a member of the Civil Society delegation, gave a presentation to the Committee on the violations of people with disabilities in institutional and residential settings; as well as the right to meaningful employment, wages and conditions for people with intellectual disability.



# WWDA

## SUMMARY OF WWDA'S KEY INTERNATIONAL PROJECTS & ACTIVITIES

Whilst in Geneva, Carolyn was invited to meet formally with the secretariat for the **Committee of the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women**.

The CEDAW Committee is the body of 23 independent experts on women's rights from around the world that monitors implementation of the **Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW)**. Carolyn was able to use the opportunity to specifically discuss how the CEDAW reviews of all states parties can be more inclusive of women and girls with disabilities, and how WWDA might contribute more to the work of the CEDAW Committee, in efforts to ensure that women and girls with disabilities are considered and included as a matter of course in CEDAW Reviews.

Carolyn was also able to meet with personnel from the Office of the High Commissioner on Human Rights; members of the **UN Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (CESCR)**, the **International Disability Alliance (IDA)**, the **World Network of**

**Users and Survivors of Psychiatry**, staff from the Australian **Permanent Mission to the UN**; members of the South Korean NGO delegation; and many more.

On her return to Australia Carolyn wrote a detailed Post Event Report '*Report from the United Nations Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) 10th Session - Review of Australia*' which was widely disseminated and is also available on WWDA's website for download in both **PDF** and **Word** formats.

### KEY ACTIVITY:

#### Sixth session of the Conference of States Parties (COSP) to the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD)

The Sixth session of the Conference of States Parties (COSP) to the CRPD was held in New York from 17-19 July 2013. The theme of the 6th Session was "*Ensuring adequate standard of living: empowerment and participation of persons with*



*Margie and the Canadian Human Rights Commissioner*



*Some of the Members of the Committee on the Rights of Persons With Disabilities, preparing for the Review of Australia in September 2013 in Geneva*



## SUMMARY OF WWDA'S KEY INTERNATIONAL PROJECTS & ACTIVITIES

*disabilities within the framework of the CRPD*". In mid 2013, WWDA sought a grant from the **Australian Human Rights Commission** (AHRC) under its Disability International Participation Funding Program to contribute to the costs of a WWDA delegate (Ms Margie Charlesworth) to attend and participate in the **sixth session of the COSP to the CRPD**. WWDA's application was successful, with WWDA receiving \$5000 (GST inclusive) to contribute to the costs of Margie's attendance at the COSP in New York from 17-19 July 2013. WWDA was able to source an additional \$4500 to cover all costs associated with Margie's travel to, and participation in COSP. In the lead up to the COSP, Carolyn worked alongside Margie to prepare and provide briefing materials for her representation work at COSP.

Margie spent 6 days in New York and was able to attend many different sessions during the COSP 6th session. Margie attended a number of Side Events during the COSP, including film screenings, and a session on Disaster

Risk Management. Margie was also fortunate to meet with many people with disabilities from all over the world that were attending the event. On Margie's return to Australia, she wrote a detailed Post Event Report which was widely disseminated and also provided to the AHRC and the (then) Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs (FaHCSIA), now known as the **Department of Social Services**. The AHRC subsequently wrote to WWDA, stating in part: "*Thank you for the development of such an informative and entertaining report. Indeed, FaHCSIA have said that it is a best practice example of post-event report writing – it includes the personal as well as the processes and outcomes of the event.*"<sup>1</sup> Margie's post event report available on WWDA's website for download in both **PDF** and **Word** formats.

### KEY ACTIVITY:

#### Development of CRPD General Comment No.1 on article 12 [Equal Recognition Before the Law]

Earlier this year, WWDA was invited to contribute a written submission to the *Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities*, to inform the development of the Committee's first General Comment – which was on article 12 [Equal Recognition Before the Law]. 'General Comments' provide an authoritative interpretation of the rights contained in the articles and provisions of the international human rights treaties. The main purpose of a General Comment is to promote implementation of the particular treaty and assist States parties in fulfilling their reporting obligations.<sup>2</sup>

1. Email to WWDA from Helen Potts, AHRC, 20th August 2013.

2. For more information, see: <http://www.ohchr.org/EN/HRBodies/Pages/TBGeneralComments.aspx>



## SUMMARY OF WWDA'S KEY INTERNATIONAL PROJECTS & ACTIVITIES

WWDA developed a written Submission to the CRPD Committee regarding the draft of General Comment 1. WWDA's Submission commended the CRPD Committee on the Rights of Persons With Disabilities; General Comment No 1 (2014): Article 12: equal recognition before the law. UN Doc.No: CRPD/C/GC/1; 11 April 2014. for its commitment to develop the Draft Comment on Article 12, and highlighted the importance of the Draft Comment to be gendered. WWDA's Submission also highlighted the fact that Australia's Interpretative Declaration to the CRPD (in respect of Articles 12, 17) has in fact exacerbated the pervasive violations of the human rights of women and girls with disabilities, and has been used by successive Australian Governments as a justification to deny women and girls with disabilities their human rights, particularly their sexual and reproductive rights. WWDA's Submission clarified that regardless of the fact that the monitoring bodies of the core international human rights treaties have all found that forced/

involuntary and coerced sterilisation clearly breaches multiple provisions of the respective treaties, the Australian Government has determined that Australia's obligations are shaped by the Interpretative Declarations made at the time Australia entered into the Convention. In entering to the treaty, Australia declared its view that the CRPD allows for substituted decision-making and compulsory medical treatment.

The 2013 report from the 2012-2013 Australian Senate Inquiry into Involuntary Sterilisation of People with Disabilities, uses Australia's Interpretative Declaration in respect of Article 12, to recommend that where a person with disability does not have 'capacity' for consent, substitute decision-making laws and procedures may permit the sterilisation of persons with disability, including children with disabilities.

The General Comment,<sup>3</sup> published in April 2014, makes it clear that *'the right to equal recognition before the law implies that legal capacity is a universal attribute inherent in all persons by virtue of their humanity and must be upheld for persons with disabilities on an equal basis with others.'* It clarifies that there are *"no circumstances permissible under international human rights law in which a person may be deprived of the right to recognition as a person before the law, or in which this right may be limited. No derogation from this right is permissible even in times of public emergency."* The General Comment also clearly recognises the imperative of a gendered analysis of legal capacity and equal recognition before the law.

3. Committee on the Rights of Persons With Disabilities; General Comment No 1 (2014): Article 12: equal recognition before the law. UN Doc.No: CRPD/C/GC/1; 11 April 2014.

## SUMMARY OF WWDA'S KEY INTERNATIONAL PROJECTS & ACTIVITIES

### KEY ACTIVITY:

#### Seventh session of the Conference of States Parties (COSP) to the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD)

In mid 2014, WWDA supported and endorsed a young WWDA member, Cashelle Dunn, to successfully apply to represent both WWDA and Australians with disabilities, on the national youth delegation to the **Seventh Session of the Conference of States Parties (COSP)** to the *Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities*, held in New York, 10-12 June 2014.

Cashelle was an active member of the Australian delegation, attending the conference roundtables as well as multiple side events and presenting as a panellist at a side-event. At the Civil Society Forum, Cashelle met with speakers involved with inclusion for women and children with disability in the post-2015 agenda, including Akiko Ito (Pacific Rim Secretariat for the CRPD), and numerous international Civil Society delegates. During the roundtables, Cashelle learned a great

deal about the progress and aims of different countries, and the need for Australia to be held at a higher standard.

Cashelle attended numerous side-events, including the *"Voices of Women, Children and Youth with Disabilities: From Uganda, Zambia, India, Japan, and Russia"*. Panellists admitted there is a long way to go regarding inclusion of women with disabilities in their involvement with decision making and learning about sexual rights and sexual and reproductive health. Cashelle was invited to further discussions with panellist Rashmi Chopra (Disability Rights Watch) about education for women with disabilities on sexual and reproductive rights.

The *"Intersectionality between the CRDP and the CEDAW"* side-event pushed zero tolerance to violence against women and girls with disabilities and the need for all government disability legislation to be gendered. Cashelle was able to use this event as leverage in her meeting



Cashelle Dunn with Maria Cisternas Soledad Reyes, Chairperson of the CRPD Committee.



Cashelle presenting at the UN CRPD Side-Event "Youth with Disabilities: Barriers and Opportunities"



## SUMMARY OF WWDA'S KEY INTERNATIONAL PROJECTS & ACTIVITIES

with Evan Lewis (Department of Social Services) to discuss the need for a gender perspective in Australia's currently gender-neutral *National Disability Strategy* (NDS).

Cashelle was also a panellist for a side-event entitled "*Youth with Disabilities: Barriers and Opportunities*". The focus of Cashelle's speech was "*Young women and girls: if you have not got control of your own body, how can you be a leader?*"

Cashelle discussed rights to reproduction, forced and coerced sterilisation, and violence against young women and girls with disabilities. There was a positive response to the side-event with numerous representatives from Civil Society and Australian Government in attendance.

### KEY ACTIVITY:

#### Development of CRPD Draft General Comment on article 6 [Women With Disabilities]

As a follow up to WWDA's contribution to the CRPD 9th Session of the Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and its **General Discussion on Women and Girls with Disabilities** (April 2013), WWDA was invited to provide input to the development of the framework for the CRPD Draft General Comment on article 6 [Women With Disabilities]. The urgent need for a CRPD General Comment on Article 6 was identified in the *CRPD General Discussion on Women and Girls with Disabilities*, and also as a result of the Committee's country reviews to date, which has highlighted the fact that the issue of gender and disability is not given close consideration by States parties to the Convention. The CRPD Committee have identified that there is an acute lack of information about women and girls with disabilities in States Parties reports.

*The urgent need for a CRPD General Comment on Article 6 was identified in the CRPD General Discussion on Women and Girls with Disabilities*



## SUMMARY OF WWDA'S KEY INTERNATIONAL PROJECTS & ACTIVITIES

Given the serious and systematic rights violations presented during the General Discussion on Women and Girls with Disabilities, *"the Committee noted with increased concern the evidence of violence, exploitation, abuse and maltreatment that women with disabilities suffer, restrictions to their sexual, reproductive and maternity rights, as well as the failure to include gender as a cross-cutting issue in public policies on disability and disability as a cross-cutting issue in public policies addressing women in general."*

Consequently, the Committee decided to draw up a general comment on article 6 of UNCRPD, on women with disabilities, and to set up an ad hoc working group charged with this task. The working group was established during the **10th session of the CRPD Committee** in September 2013. The CRPD Committee has identified that States parties to the Convention will benefit from clear interpretation of Article 6 as it relates to the whole Convention, including how States

parties can better fulfil not only the implementation of the CRPD as it relates to women and girls with disabilities, but also their reporting obligations.

WWDA provided input to the draft framework for the CRPD Draft General Comment on Women with Disabilities, and the ad hoc working group is now working to prepare the draft content. WWDA will be continuing to contribute to the ongoing work of the ad hoc group in the development of the content for the General Comment on Article 6.

# WWDA

## SUMMARY OF WWDA'S KEY INTERNATIONAL PROJECTS & ACTIVITIES



Margie Charlesworth at CSW58

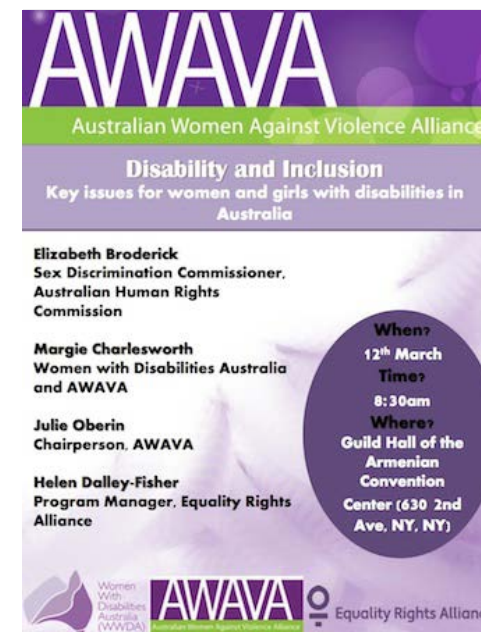
### KEY ACTIVITY:

#### Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) 58th session (March 2014) and Follow-Up Work Program

The **Commission on the Status of Women (CSW)** is a functional commission of the **United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC)**, and the principal global policy-making body dedicated exclusively to gender equality and advancement of women. Every year, representatives of Member States gather at United Nations Headquarters in New York to evaluate progress on gender equality, identify challenges, set global standards and formulate concrete policies to promote gender equality and advancement of women worldwide. The theme for the 58th session of CSW was "Challenges and achievements in the implementation of the Millennium Development Goals for women and girls". The 58th session of CSW was held 10th -21st March in New York.

WWDA developed a written submission for the Australian Government (Office for Women) to provide input into the Australian Government priorities for the 58th Session on the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women (CSW). The position taken by the Australian Government on various issues, guides its engagement in the annual CSW process, particularly during the negotiation of language in the Agreed Conclusions, discussions with other participating nations, and when determining Australia's side events.

WWDA's Submission provided an overview of the rights of women and girls with disabilities in the future development agenda Beyond 2014 and Post 2015. WWDA's Submission also focused on three key issues for women and girls with disabilities in the context of the CSW58 priority theme, which WWDA believed were critical for inclusion in the Australian Government's priorities for CSW58. The three key issues were:



Promotional flyer for the Parallel Event: 'Disability and Inclusion: Key issues for women and girls with disabilities in Australia'

## SUMMARY OF WWDA'S KEY INTERNATIONAL PROJECTS & ACTIVITIES



Margie Charlesworth, AWAVA delegates and Minister Michaelia Cash at CSW58

- Violence Against Women and Girls with Disabilities;
- Sexual and Reproductive Rights of Women and Girls with Disabilities;
- Participation, Inclusion and Decision Making of Women and Girls with Disabilities.

WWDA received a letter from Senator Michaelia Cash thanking us for the high standard of our written submission.

WWDA was also very fortunate to be able to support WWDA member Margie Charlesworth, to apply for a position on the **Australian Women Against Violence Alliance (AWAVA)** delegation to CSW58. Margie's application was successful, and she was able to attend CSW58 representing WWDA, AWAVA, and Women with Disabilities South Australia (WWDSA).

A key highlight at CSW58 was the Parallel Event hosted by AWAVA entitled '*Disability and Inclusion: Key issues for women and girls with disabilities in Australia*'. Margie

presented a paper on behalf of WWDA (written by Carolyn Frohmader and Margie Charlesworth), entitled '*Building on the Millennium Development Goals for Women and Girls with Disabilities – A Long Way to Go*'. The paper highlighted some of the key shortcomings of the MDG's as they relate to women and girls with disabilities. It also canvassed the main principles that women with disabilities argue must be embedded in the Post 15 Development Agenda, in order to ensure that the new global development framework is inclusive of, and responsive to, women and girls with disabilities all over world. Sex Discrimination Commissioner, Elizabeth Broderick, also presented at the Parallel Event where she spoke about violence against women and girls with disabilities, and showcased WWDA's national '*Stop the Violence Project*'. WWDA's paper, '*Building on the Millennium Development Goals for Women and Girls with Disabilities – A Long Way to Go*' was widely disseminated both within and outside Australia. The paper was also made

available on WWDA's website in both **PDF** and **Word** versions.

Margie participated in a large number of events during her time in New York, including several Side Events and Parallel Events. Examples included:

- Special Rapporteur on Violence Against Women: Achievements, Gaps, Challenges
- Rehabilitation International - Challenges to Realising Rights of Women with Disabilities
- Irish UN Ambassador - A Girls Right: The Irish Consortium on Gender Based Violence

On Margie's return to Australia, she wrote a detailed Post Event Report which was widely disseminated and also made available on WWDA's website in both PDF and Word formats.





## SUMMARY OF WWDA'S KEY INTERNATIONAL PROJECTS & ACTIVITIES

### KEY ACTIVITY:

#### United Nations Universal Periodic Review (UPR) Monitoring Follow-Up Programme

The **Universal Periodic Review (UPR)** is a unique process which involves a periodic review of the human rights records of all 193 United Nations Member States. The UPR provides an opportunity for all States to declare what actions they have taken to improve the human rights situations in their countries and to overcome challenges to the enjoyment of human rights. The reviews are conducted by the UPR Working Group which consists of the 47 members of the **Human Rights Council**. Australia was reviewed under the UPR process in 2010 with the Report (A/HRC/17/10) released in March 2011, and containing 145 recommendations for the Australian Government to consider.

In early 2013, WWDA was formally invited by the **UPR Info** (an international NGO established to promote and strengthen the UPR process) to provide a Submission

on our observations regarding the implementation (or lack thereof) by Australia of the recommendations received in the UPR of Australia (2010). WWDA formal Submission was provided to UPR Info in September 2013. WWDA's Submission was used to inform the broader evaluation of Australia's response to the UPR recommendations of 2010. As a result, UPR Info released the Mid-term Implementation Assessment (MIA) on Australia. The MIA is based on information received from all stakeholders. It details whether recommendations were fully, partially or not implemented approximately two years and a half after the Universal Periodic Review. It is a quick overview on the implementation of recommendations and a way to prepare the next UPR as well. The Mid-term Implementation Assessment (MIA) on Australia can be downloaded at: <http://www.upr-info.org/followup/assessments/session23/australia/MIA-Australia.pdf>

### KEY ACTIVITY:

#### Shadow Report to the Australian Government's Periodic Report on the implementation of the UN Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW)

Following a competitive tender, the YWCA Australia was awarded the Australian Government contract to prepare the Shadow Report to the Australian Government's Periodic Report on the implementation of the UN Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW). Australia was last reviewed in 2010 and is due to provide its next periodic report to the CEDAW Committee in late 2014.

In April 2014, YWCA Australia established an Advisory Group to assist in the development of the CEDAW NGO Shadow Report. WWDA Executive Director Carolyn Frohmader was approached by the YWCA to act as an Expert Adviser throughout the development of the Shadow

## SUMMARY OF WWDA'S KEY INTERNATIONAL PROJECTS & ACTIVITIES

Report. In mid 2014, Carolyn met with the CEDAW NGO Shadow Report Consultants regarding the processes of consulting with women with disabilities to inform the development of the Report. Throughout the second half of 2014, Carolyn will continue to work on the development of the CEDAW NGO Shadow Report to ensure that women with disabilities are included throughout all elements of the report, and that major issues facing women and girls with disabilities are prioritised in the report.

### KEY ACTIVITY:

#### UNESCO Global Survey on Women With Disabilities and ICT

In May 2014, WWDA Executive Director Carolyn Frohmader was approached by the **United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization** (UNESCO), to assist in the development of a global survey on the usage of Information and Communication Technologies by women and young girls.

The Communication and Information Division (at UNESCO Headquarters in Paris) were responsible for the Project, and contacted WWDA after becoming aware of "the great work of your association does".<sup>4</sup>

Carolyn provided a range of assistance with the development of the global survey on the usage of Information and Communication Technologies by women and young girls. Carolyn worked on several drafts of the survey instrument, which was designed to elicit information regarding the potential of ICT's for accessing, evaluating and sharing information by, for and between women and girls with disabilities. The research findings will be used to promote the development and design of gendered, targeted ICT policies to assist in operationalising and implementing the CRPD, particularly in relation to CRPD Articles, 6, 9, and 21



*UNESCO Headquarters, Paris*

4. Email to WWDA from Carla Corona, Communication and Information Sector, Knowledge Societies Division, UNESCO HQ, 12 May 2014.



## SUMMARY OF WWDA'S KEY INTERNATIONAL PROJECTS & ACTIVITIES

### KEY ACTIVITY:

#### World Future Council 2014 Future Policy Award Nomination

The **World Future Council** (WFC) is an international foundation governed by 50 eminent global change-makers from governments, parliaments, civil society, academia, the arts and business.<sup>5</sup> The WFC pursues the implementation of long-term policies that promote sustainable living in order to secure the rights of future generations to inhabit a healthy and intact world. Each year, the WFC awards its 'Future Policy Award', which celebrates policies that create better living conditions for current and future generations. Each year the World Future Council chooses one topic on which policy progress is particularly urgent. In 2014, the Future Policy Award will celebrate exemplary laws and policies that contribute to ending all forms of violence against women and girls.

In early 2014, WWDA was approached by the WFC after the Council became aware of WWDA's 'Stop the Violence Project', a national project led by WWDA in partnership with People With Disability Australia, and the University of New South Wales (UNSW). The WFC expressed its high regard for the 'Stop the Violence Project', which was funded as an initiative funded under the first action plan (2010-2013) of the **National Plan to Reduce Violence against Women and their Children 2010 – 2022**. After several meetings with the WFC, WWDA Executive Director, Carolyn Frohmader, subsequently wrote and submitted a nomination for the Australian Government's National Plan to Reduce Violence against Women and their Children 2010 – 2022, for the international 'Future Policy Award 2014', which, for the first time ever, will celebrate exemplary laws and policies that contribute to ending one of the most pervasive, worldwide human rights violations: violence against women and girls.



The nominations for the Future Policy award 2014 will be analysed in a thorough evaluation process and assessed by a high-level jury. The jury members also conduct interviews with key stakeholders and informants as nominated by WWDA.

In July 2014, WWDA was advised by the WFC that WWDA's nomination of the *National Plan to Reduce Violence against Women and their Children 2010 – 2022*, had been selected as a finalist for the prestigious international World Futures Council 'Future Policy Award 2014'.

Twenty-five policies on ending violence against women and girls from around the world were shortlisted as finalists for the Award. The winning laws and policies will be announced by

5. The World Future Council was launched in 2007 and its head office is located in Germany. For more info, see: <http://www.worldfuturecouncil.org/>



## SUMMARY OF WWDA'S KEY INTERNATIONAL PROJECTS & ACTIVITIES

the World Future Council in October 2014, in partnership with the **Inter-Parliamentary Union** and **UN Women** (the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women). The award ceremony will be held at the Inter-Parliamentary Union's 131st Assembly in Geneva, a gathering of 1200 delegates from 170 Parliaments around the world.

### KEY ACTIVITY:

#### ICPD 2014 International Conference on Human Rights – Follow Up

In early 2013, WWDA Executive Director (Carolyn Frohmader) was invited by the **United Nations Office of the High Commissioner on Human Rights (OHCHR)** and the Government of the Netherlands, to join the *International Reference Group of High Level Experts for the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) Review International Conference on Human Rights*,<sup>6</sup> held in The Hague, Netherlands 7-10th July 2013. Carolyn

was specifically invited to provide expert technical advice on gender and disability, along with advice on issues relating to the planning and implementation of the conference, as well as its follow-up. Carolyn was the only Australian invited to be a member of the *International Reference Group of High Level Experts*. Carolyn's role on the Reference Group included:

- a) researching potential invitees and drafting a list of key international experts on women with disabilities and sexual and reproductive rights; as well as generalist experts (as the Conference was invite only);
- b) assisting with the development of the Draft Conference Program, draft Background paper, and technical papers to support the Conference; and
- c) assisting in the development of the post Conference '**Civil Society Conference Statement**': "*The Hague Civil Society Call to Action on Human Rights and ICPD Beyond 2014: All Different, All Human, All Equal*".

The Government of the Netherlands invited Carolyn to attend the Conference (all costs covered) and take a key role in facilitating specific Conference sessions. Unfortunately, Carolyn was unable to attend in person, so WWDA member Therese Sands delegated for Carolyn and represented WWDA at the Conference. Carolyn was also successful in advocating for 2 other women with disabilities to be invited to the Conference. Therese Sands from Australia was invited to represent WWDA (and PWDA); Myra Kovary (USA) was invited to represent the International Network on Women with Disabilities (INWWD); and Stephanie Ortoleva (USA) was invited to represent Women Enabled.

6. The International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) Review International Conference on Human Rights, held in July 2013 in The Hague, focused strategically on the intersection between gender equality and sexual and reproductive health and reproductive rights, as defined in the **ICPD Programme of Action (PoA)**. The Conference outcomes focused on opportunities to strengthen the operational links between human rights and implementation of the PoA. The conference explored issues such as the intersections between sexual and reproductive health, human rights and the global development agenda.

## SUMMARY OF WWDA'S KEY INTERNATIONAL PROJECTS & ACTIVITIES

The OHCHR and the Government of the Netherlands asked Carolyn to author the definitive **Conference Paper on Sexual and Reproductive Rights of Women and Girls with Disabilities**. This paper was subsequently developed by Carolyn and Stephanie Ortoleva and made available to inform Conference delegates and provide input to the global ICPD Beyond 14 and Post 15 Development Agenda.

During the second half of 2013 and the beginning of 2014, WWDA worked hard to promote the '*Civil Society Conference Statement*', which was signed by hundreds of civil society organisations from all over the world. WWDA also continued to actively publicise and disseminate the Paper on '*Sexual and Reproductive Rights of Women and Girls with Disabilities*', which was very well received and utilised in many ways. For example, students in the graduate program Master of Health Science (Developmental Disability) at the University of Sydney, were required

to use the paper to undertake a study on the application of human rights approaches and theory to the sexual and reproductive rights of women and girls with disabilities.

On 22nd September 2014, world leaders will unite for the United Nations General Assembly Special Session on ICPD Beyond 2014, to specifically discuss the progress and achievements of the goals set out in the landmark International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD).

More information about the ICPD 2014 International Conference on Human Rights is available at: <http://humanrights.icpdbeyond2014.org/>



*Therese Sands facilitating the Human Rights Cafe at ICPD Beyond 2014*

## SUMMARY OF WWDA'S KEY INTERNATIONAL PROJECTS & ACTIVITIES

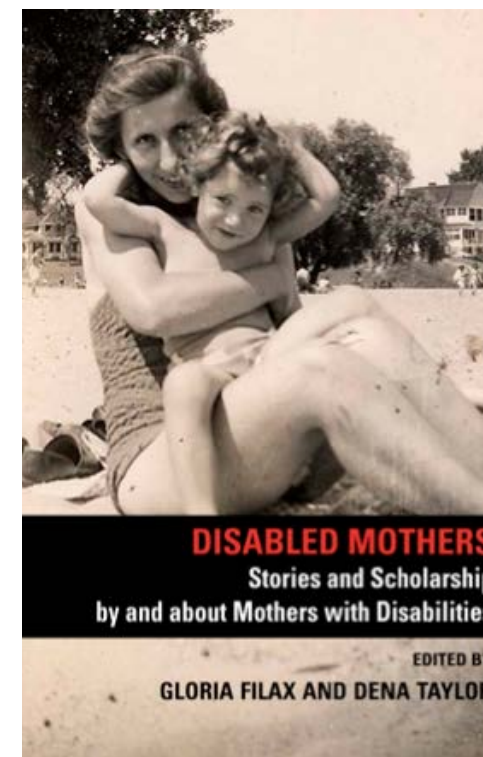
### KEY ACTIVITY:

#### Publishing

During 2013, WWDA Executive Director Carolyn Frohmader worked with WWDA members Associate Professor Helen Meekosha (UNSW) and Dr Karen Soldatic (UNSW) to jointly author a book chapter for an international book entitled *'Disabled Mothers: Stories and Scholarship by and about Mothers with Disabilities'*. Our chapter, entitled: *'Unruly Mothers or Unruly Practices? Disabled Mothers Surviving Oppressive State Practices in Australia'* covers the history of and advocacy by disabled women in Australia, arguing that "the Australian nation state has long removed the children of disabled women", and that "for many disabled women in Australia, fundamental human rights are yet to be realised." WWDA is used as an example of an organisation actively working to reverse the "stolen children" phenomenon as well as other injustices inflicted on disabled mothers.

The book *'Disabled Mothers: Stories and Scholarship by and about Mothers with Disabilities'* was published in March 2014 by **Demeter Press**, and formally launched in Canada in April 2014.

In late 2013, WWDA Executive Director Carolyn Frohmader was also invited to co-author book chapter *'Violence Against Women in the Global South'*, for the first international handbook on Disability in the Global South called: *Disability in the Global South: the Critical Handbook* (Springer). The focus on this chapter aims to explore and recognise the ongoing work of disabled women globally advocating for international recognition of the issue through their extensive campaigns. It will explore the international collaborations between Northern based disabled feminist groups and Southern disabled feminist groups in moving this issue forward to drive global change.



## SUMMARY OF WWDA'S KEY NATIONAL PROJECTS & ACTIVITIES



### KEY ACTIVITY:

#### The 'Stop the Violence Project'

The **Stop the Violence Project (STVP)** was a major focus of activity for WWDA over the past 12 months, and an enormous step forward in WWDA's efforts to address and prevent violence against women and girls with disabilities.

The STVP emerged from WWDA's long standing commitment to addressing one of the most pressing issues for our membership: violence against women and girls with disabilities in Australia. Managed and implemented by WWDA, in conjunction with a research team at the **University of New South Wales (UNSW)** and a project team from **People with Disabilities Australia (PWDA)**, the project was national in scope and aligned with the CRPD and the **National Disability Strategy 2010-2020**. It's intent was to lay the groundwork for improved service provision by building the evidence-base for future reforms so that the service system is more responsive to the needs of women

and girls with disabilities experiencing or at risk of domestic and family violence. The STVP formed one of the **Council of Australian Government's (COAG)** Reform projects under the First Action Plan of the Government's 12 year *National Plan to Reduce Violence against Women and their Children 2010-2022* (the National Plan). The Project addressed two key immediate national initiatives under the First Action Plan, which were specifically focussed on women and girls with disabilities:

- support for better service delivery for women and girls with disabilities through the development of new evidence-based approaches where existing policy and service responses have proved to be inadequate; and,
- investigation and promotion of ways to improve access and responses to services for women and girls with disabilities.

A Project Steering Group (PSG) was established at the beginning of the Project, and included



*The STVP PSG at the February meeting in Sydney*

high-level representation from State and Territory governments. Sex Discrimination Commissioner, Ms Liz Broderick, chaired the PSG. An Expert Consultative Group (ECG) - consisting of a targeted group of experts in issues relating to violence prevention and responses for women and girls with disabilities - was also established to provide voluntary expert advice and feedback on key outputs. The Project Implementation Committee (PIC) led by WWDA, and comprised of staff from UNSW and PWDA, monitored implementation of the STVP to ensure that the project outputs were delivered in a timely and effective manner and remained in line with the contracted requirements.

## SUMMARY OF WWDA'S KEY NATIONAL PROJECTS & ACTIVITIES



*WWDA President Karin Swift (L) and Ms Donna Ingram (Metropolitan Local Aboriginal Land Council)*

In order to build the evidence base for the STVP, a range of strategies were used to gather information to identify current policy and practice which impacts on women and girls with disabilities who are experiencing, or are at risk of, violence. The evidence gathering strategies included:

- **Desk-Based Reviews** - national and international research literature was reviewed to identify key issues relevant to understanding and addressing violence against women and girls with disabilities. Possible principles informing and exemplifying good policy and practice were collated. Additionally, existing legislation and policies were analysed to map structural and systemic issues in a rights-based approach to addressing violence against women and girls with disabilities.

- **Stakeholder Engagement and Consultations** - regular consultations were held with the Project Steering Group (PSG), the Expert Consultative Group (ECG); and other key stakeholders from relevant fields of research and advocacy with interest and experience in issues relating to violence prevention and responses for women and girls with disabilities. Forums were conducted with women with disabilities to tap their experiences and expertise in identifying measures and strategies to enable women and girls with disabilities to be equal and active participants in violence prevention and response policy and practice.
- **National Survey** - information was collected from service providers, representative organisations and policy makers through an online survey. The purpose of the survey was to map good policy and practice across the breadth and depth of stakeholders in relevant sectors (including human service,

disability, violence and justice) and across jurisdictions. Invitation to participate (and to further distribute the survey through their organisational networks) was distributed via email to over 400 stakeholder organisations mapped with the assistance of the PSG and the ECG members. A total of 367 agencies responded to the survey. The Survey found, amongst other things, that violence is present in the lives of approximately twenty-two per cent of women and girls with disability who had accessed service support<sup>7</sup> in the preceding 12 months.<sup>8</sup>

7. Services included those in the disability, family violence and sexual assault sectors, housing/ homelessness sector, the youth services sector, child welfare, employment and training, health, aged care and the justice sector.

8. The main types of violence experienced by the women included domestic violence (80%); emotional abuse (68%); sexual violence and abuse (63%); financial abuse (58%); the withholding of care (23%), and the withholding of medication (14%). Importantly, findings from the survey provided data only on women and girls with disability who had accessed services.



# WWDA

## SUMMARY OF WWDA'S KEY NATIONAL PROJECTS & ACTIVITIES

A central component of the STVP was the *National Symposium on Violence against Women and Girls with Disabilities*, held on Friday 25 October 2013 at the Australian Human Rights Commission in Sydney. The *National Symposium* was attended by 58 participants including women with disabilities, key stakeholders and decision makers in the government and non-government sector, as well as experts and academics working in the field of disability and violence against women. The *National Symposium*, the first of its kind conducted in Australia, was designed to foster active participation and discussions to identify good policy and practice measures for reform across different sectors so that women and girls with disabilities can escape violence, be able to live with dignity and respect, and participate fully and equally in Australian society. The *National Symposium* consisted of two plenary and panel discussion sessions followed by eight simultaneous working group discussions which addressed key emerging issues and mechanisms for directing good policy and practice

emerging from the project followed by presentations and discussions at a larger plenary session.

Following the welcome to country from Ms Donna Ingram (Metropolitan Local Aboriginal Land Council), the *National Symposium* was formally opened by Senator the Hon Michaelia Cash (Minister Assisting the Prime Minister for Women). Before delivering her opening address, Senator Cash read a message from the Prime Minister, the Hon Tony Abbott, who was unable to attend the Symposium, but sent a prepared message to be delivered by Senator Cash. The Prime Minister's message read:

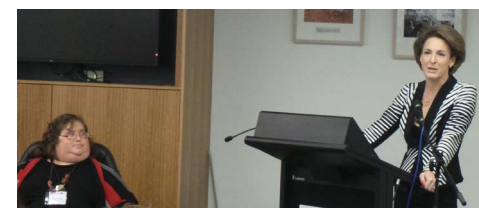
*"Violence against women and girls is utterly unacceptable. It is unacceptable in Australia and unacceptable across the world. The Stop the Violence National Symposium is confronting the serious issue of violence against women and girls. In particular it will focus on confronting violence against women and girls with disabilities. The Symposium is also promoting the National Plan to Reduce Violence*



*Commissioner Elizabeth Broderick chairing the panel of women with disabilities*



*Discussion Group participants at the National Symposium*



*WWDA President Karin Swift (L) and Senator Michaelia Cash*

## SUMMARY OF WWDA'S KEY NATIONAL PROJECTS & ACTIVITIES

*against Women and their Children. I am working with my colleague and Minister Assisting for Women, Senator the Hon Michaelia Cash, to ensure the National Plan is implemented, is effective and supports our most vulnerable. I congratulate Women With Disabilities Australia, People With Disability Australia and the University of New South Wales for your work on the Stop the Violence Project and for organising this event. I send my best wishes for a successful event."*

The 'Stop the Violence' Project Reports were launched in 2013 and 2014. The *STVP Background Report* presents the outcomes of the evidence-building elements of the STVP. It provides information on the project context, activities and outcomes, highlighting six key issues and their implications that are considered a priority in addressing reform in the area of violence against women and girls with disabilities. The STVP Background Report was used to inform deliberations at the *National Symposium on Violence against*

*Women and Girls with Disabilities* conducted in Sydney in October 2013. The *STVP Background Report* is available in **PDF** and **Word** versions on WWDA's website.

The *STVP Symposium Proceedings and Outcomes Report* provides information on the outcomes of the *National Symposium*. It includes a message from the Prime Minister; transcript of the opening address from Senator Michaelia Cash; Introductory remarks from Australia's Sex Discrimination Commissioner; an introductory address from WWDA President Karin Swift on behalf of WWDA; the proceedings from the Symposium panels and plenaries, and future directions for reform under the following key themes: 1) Information, Education and Capacity Building for Women and Girls with Disabilities; 2) Awareness Raising for the Broader Community; 3) Education and Training for Service Providers; 4) Service Sector Development and Reform; 5) Legislation, National Agreements and Policy Frameworks;



*Participants at the National Symposium*

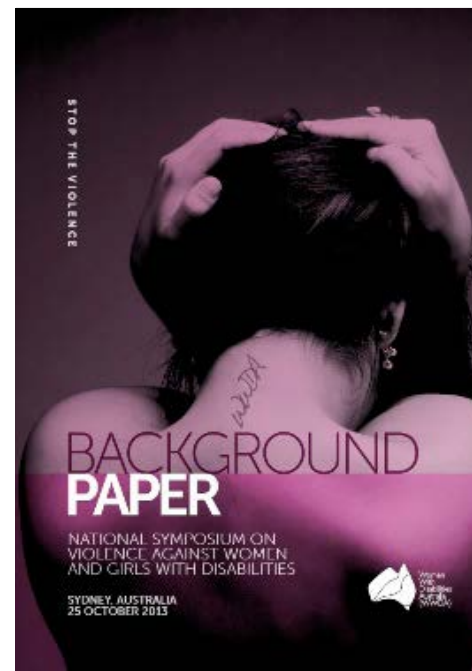


*Discussion Group participants at the National Symposium*

## SUMMARY OF WWDA'S KEY NATIONAL PROJECTS & ACTIVITIES

6) Evidence Gathering, Research and Development; 7) Establishment and Development of the Virtual Centre for the Prevention of Violence Against Women and Girls with Disabilities; and, 8) Establishment of a National Women with Disabilities Expert Panel on the Prevention of Violence Against Women and Girls with Disabilities. The *STVP Symposium Proceedings and Outcomes Report* is available in **PDF** and **Word** versions on WWDA's website.

The 'Stop the Violence Project' is receiving national and international acclaim and is being used widely by a range of stakeholders. WWDA's long standing advocacy, coupled with the process and outcomes of the STVP, has resulted in the prevention of violence against women and girls with disabilities being prioritised in the Australian Government's **Second Action Plan 2013-2016** of the *National Plan to Reduce Violence against Women and their Children 2010-2022*, which will see the Australian Government "work with expert



'Stop the Violence Project' Background Paper

organisations including Women With Disabilities Australia (WWDA) to prioritise and implement key outcomes from the Stop the Violence project. This will include:

- bringing together and disseminating good practice information on preventing violence against women with disability;



'Stop the Violence Project' Symposium Proceedings and Outcomes Report

- training for frontline workers to recognise and prevent violence against women and children with disability; and
- providing accessible information and support in National Plan communications.<sup>9</sup>

9. Department of Social Services Second Action Plan 2013-2016 – *Moving Ahead* – of the National Plan to Reduce Violence against Women and their Children 2010-2022.

## SUMMARY OF WWDA'S KEY NATIONAL PROJECTS & ACTIVITIES

The outcomes of the STVP have also been instrumental in seeing the prevention of violence against women and girls with disabilities being prioritised in the research priorities of the **Australian National Research Organisation for Women's Safety Limited** (ANROWS),<sup>10</sup> and in the core work of **'Our Watch'** - the new Foundation to Prevent Violence Against Women and Their Children.<sup>11</sup> In addition, the STVP is having significant purchase at the international level – being utilised within various agencies of the United Nations, and as highlighted earlier in this report, coming to the attention of the World Futures Council, which expressed its high regard for the STVP and invited WWDA to nominate it for the World Future Council (WFC) Future Policy Award 2014.



*L to R: Commissioner Elizabeth Broderick; Associate Professor Leanne Dowse; Therese Sands; Carolyn Frohmader; Cristina Ricci; Karin Swift; Commissioner Graeme Innes; Alison Aggarwal*

In 2014, WWDA was delighted to advise our members and constituents that our *'Stop the Violence Project'* Research Team from the University of New South Wales (School of Social Sciences) won the UNSW [Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences] Dean's Social Research Impact Award, for

their work on the STVP. The team of Associate Professor Leanne Dowse, Dr Karen Soldatic, Dr Aminath Didi and Georgia van Toorn, worked above and beyond the call of duty on the STVP, showing extraordinary dedication and professionalism throughout all aspects of the Project.

<sup>10</sup>. More information is available at: <http://www.anrows.org.au/>

<sup>11</sup>. More information is available at: <http://www.ourwatch.org.au/>

## SUMMARY OF WWDA'S KEY NATIONAL PROJECTS & ACTIVITIES

### KEY ACTIVITY:

#### National Consultations on the Second Action Plan - National Plan to Reduce Violence against Women and their Children 2010-2022

During late 2013 and early 2014, WWDA played a key role in advising and consulting with Government, regarding the development of the *Second Action Plan* of the twelve year *National Plan to Reduce Violence against Women and their Children 2010-2022*. WWDA provided submissions to Government to inform the development of the second action plan, participated in round table consultations throughout the country; developed briefing papers on violence against women with disabilities for other stakeholders involved in the consultations; and worked with Government to utilise the Stop the Violence Project reports and outcomes to help inform the Second Action Plan. WWDA Executive Director Carolyn Frohmader also participated in key stakeholder interviews as part of the consultation process.

*The Second Action Plan: Moving Ahead 2013-2016* (the Second Action Plan) was released on 27 June 2014 and aims to build on the First Action Plan to channel efforts towards ongoing and new priorities, and broaden communication and consultation mechanisms to engage more sectors, groups and communities. The Second Action Plan contains five National Priorities and 26 actions, which are joint areas of work that all governments agree are critical to moving ahead in reducing violence against women and their children. These are:

- National Priority One: Driving whole of community action to prevent violence
- National Priority Two: Understanding diverse experiences of violence
- National Priority Three: Supporting innovative services and integrated systems
- National Priority Four: Improving perpetrator interventions



- National Priority Five: Continuing to build the evidence base

Women with disabilities have been prioritised within the Second Action Plan and one of the 26 priority actions is dedicated to 'Tailoring responses to meet the needs of women with disability' [Action 12]. Under this specific action, the Plan states:

*Women with disability are more likely than other women to experience domestic and family violence and sexual assault, and the violence is likely to be more severe and continue for longer. Women with disability can also face considerable challenges in accessing services and justice. Under*



## SUMMARY OF WWDA'S KEY NATIONAL PROJECTS & ACTIVITIES

*the First Action Plan, the Stop the Violence project, led by Women With Disabilities Australia, was established to investigate and promote good practice and improvements in service delivery for women and girls with disabilities who experience or are at risk of violence. Under the Second Action Plan, governments will work with expert organisations including Women With Disabilities Australia to prioritise and implement key outcomes from the Stop the Violence project. This will include:*

- *bringing together and disseminating good practice information on preventing violence against women with disability;*
- *training for frontline workers to recognise and prevent violence against women and children with disability; and*
- *providing accessible information and support in National Plan communications.*

### **KEY ACTIVITY:**

#### **'National Disability Strategy' 2014 Stakeholder Engagement Project**

The *National Disability Strategy* (NDS) is the national policy framework to guide Australian governments to meet their obligations under the United Nations *Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities* (CRPD), which entered into force in Australia in 2008. The NDS is a ten-year Strategy that was formally endorsed by the Council of Australian Governments (COAG) in 2011. Both the *National Disability Strategy 2010-2020* and the first NDS Report to COAG in 2012, commit governments to ensuring that people with disabilities remain actively engaged during the implementation of the Strategy and that their views are reflected in the two-yearly progress reports to COAG. The first of the NDS progress reports was due in mid-2014.

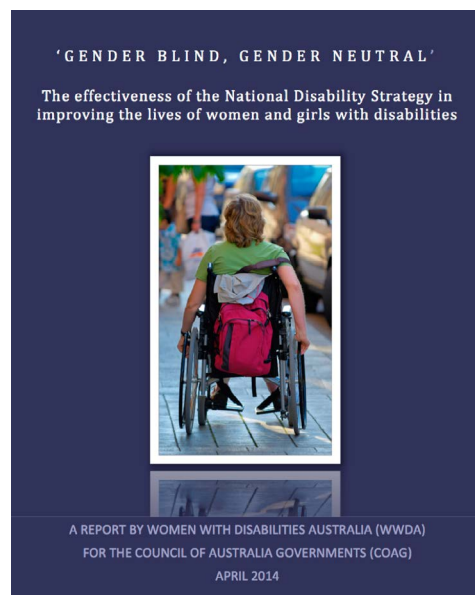
As part of its funding contract with the Department of Social Services (DSS), WWDA was required to undertake a *NDS Stakeholder Engagement Project*, to assist in informing the development

of the first progress report to COAG. A four step process was developed by DSS for the engagement process, which included:

- a two hour Briefing Teleconference between DSS and the national disability peak bodies;
- a written submission to DSS based on input provided by constituents, along with research and other evidence;
- an analysis of written submissions by DSS to identify key issues, themes and recommendations;
- a national Focus Group with disability peak bodies, hosted by DSS.

WWDA Executive Director Carolyn Frohmader participated in the briefing teleconference on 5 February 2014. In summary, the briefing session covered: the purpose and scope of engagement; the role of participating disability organisations; high level questions for engagement; and the timeframe for the engagement process. Given that the *NDS*

## SUMMARY OF WWDA'S KEY NATIONAL PROJECTS & ACTIVITIES



*Stakeholder Engagement Project* was an unfunded activity, several of the peaks expressed concern regarding the capacity of some of the peaks to undertake this large project.

WWDA researched and published a detailed Submission as part of the *NDS Stakeholder Engagement Project*. WWDA's Submission, entitled '*Gender Blind, Gender Neutral: The effectiveness of the National Disability Strategy in improving the lives of women and girls with disabilities*', assesses whether, if and how the NDS is promoting, protecting, respecting and fulfilling the human rights of women and girls with disabilities in Australia. Importantly, this assessment from WWDA includes the provision of a critical analysis of where the NDS appears to be failing women and girls with disabilities. This Submission from WWDA is critically important given that to date, despite Australia's international human rights obligations in relation to gender equality - all aspects of the NDS are un-gendered. WWDA's Submission sends a strong and urgent

message to all Governments that public policy which treats people with disabilities as a homogenous group only serves to perpetuate the stereotype of people with disabilities as asexual, genderless human beings, and gives rise to a policy, program and service vacuum whereby the human rights of women and girls with disabilities remain violated, denied, ignored and trivialized.

WWDA's Submission demonstrates the vital importance of gender as a central consideration in the development of legislation, policy and programs to advance gender equality and to promote the human rights of women and girls with disabilities. It also includes, for the consideration of COAG, key areas for future directions in order to strengthen the NDS as a mechanism to advance the human rights of women and girls with disabilities. This includes ensuring the NDS provides gender specific measures and women-specific initiatives, programs and projects in order to address the undisputed

gender inequalities and ultimately, to achieve the NDS vision of 'an inclusive Australian society that enables people with disability to fulfil their potential as equal citizens'.

WWDA's Submission '*Gender Blind, Gender Neutral: The effectiveness of the National Disability Strategy in improving the lives of women and girls with disabilities*', was published in April 2014 [ISBN: 978-0-9585268-2-1] and was widely disseminated. It was provided to DSS to assist in informing the development of the first progress report to COAG. WWDA also wrote formally to each member of COAG (State and Territory Premiers and Chief Ministers), providing them with a copy of WWDA's Submission, and requesting that it be considered not only as part of the Progress Report to COAG, but also be used to inform the development of the Second NDS Implementation Plan 'Driving Action 2015–2018'. WWDA's Submission was very well received by the members of COAG, with several Premiers writing formally to WWDA to congratulate us on the quality of the



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work. WWDA's Submission was also well received internationally, with the United Nations agency 'UN Women', formally congratulating WWDA on the Submission, and advising that it was being utilised by UN Women and other UN agencies.

The *National Focus Group* with disability peak bodies was held on 29 May in Canberra. DSS appointed a consultant to facilitate the event. WWDA Executive Director Carolyn Frohmader attended the Focus Group in Canberra and worked through the key points as outlined in WWDA's major written Submission. The Focus Group covered a wide issues and themes, in line with the NDS six areas of mainstream and disability-specific public policy. The six areas are:

- 1) Inclusive and accessible communities;
- 2) Rights protection, justice and legislation;
- 3) Economic security;
- 4) Personal and community support;
- 5) Learning and skills; and
- 6) Health and well-being.

Through the processes of the focus group, it was unanimous that the area which has

seen little or no purchase since the NDS was launched, was in the area of rights protection, justice and legislation (NDS Area 2).

WWDA's Submission '*Gender Blind, Gender Neutral: The effectiveness of the National Disability Strategy in improving the lives of women and girls with disabilities*' is available in both **PDF** and **Word** format from WWDA's website.

### KEY ACTIVITY:

#### National Disability Employment Services (DES) Project

In July 2013, the then Minister for Employment Participation, Hon Kate Ellis, advised WWDA that the Australian Government would be providing \$41,000 to a number of national disability organisations, including WWDA, to assist in improving the delivery of *Disability Employment Services* (DES). The specific purpose of the one off funding grant was to lift consumer engagement and knowledge of the DES program,

facilitate provision of consumer advice to the Government about the needs of women with disabilities in the context of the DES, and look at ways to improve future disability employment services. The project commenced early in the 2013/14 financial year and was completed by 30 June 2014.

The *WWDA Disability Employment Services (DES) Consumer Engagement Project* was undertaken in two phases, and consisted of five major project elements:

1. Development of a detailed *Disability Employment Services Consumer Engagement Strategy*;
2. Establishment and development and of effective participation, engagement and consultation mechanisms including the development of a dedicated information portal on WWDA's website on '*Employment Programs for People With Disabilities*';
3. Representation at, and participation in two National Disability



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Employment Services (DES)  
Consumer Engagement Forums;

4. Systemic Advocacy Initiatives, including departmental and ministerial briefings regarding violence and abuse of women with disabilities in both open and supported employment;
5. Consultation and Engagement Forums with Women with Disabilities.

The first phase of the *WWDA DES Consumer Engagement Project* focused on the first four key Project elements. A detailed report on work undertaken in the first phase of the Project was provided in WWDA's Mid-Term Project Progress Report, which was published in February 2014 and which provided substantial information on the first phase of the Project. The Report '*Women With Disabilities Australia: Mid Term Progress Report for the Disability Employment Services (DES) Consumer Engagement Project*' (February 2014)' is available in both **PDF** and **Word** formats on WWDA's website. WWDA's Mid Term Progress

Report provides information on specific activities and deliverables of the Project (up to the end of January 2014), and also highlights a range of key systemic advocacy and public policy themes that WWDA identified during the first phase of the Project.

The second phase of *WWDA's Disability Employment Services (DES) Consumer Engagement Project* specifically concentrated on consulting and engaging with women with disabilities regarding their access to and experience of, disability employment services in Australia. WWDA collaborated with its affiliate networks of women with disabilities in Western Australia, South Australia, the Australian Capital Territory and Queensland, to conduct focus group forums for women with disabilities in each of these localities.

The main objectives of the Forums were to:

- Identify issues affecting women with disabilities in relation to their access to, and use of, Disability Employment Services (DES);



- Identify ways that future Disability Employment Services can be improved to better meet the needs of women with disabilities;
- Provide information to women with disabilities about the DES Program; and,

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*Western Australia Disability Employment Services Forum for Women With Disabilities – hosted by Women With Disabilities Western Australia (WWDWA)*

- Identify any other issues that impact on women with disabilities seeking, finding and maintaining employment.

The outcomes of WWDA's *Disability Employment Services (DES) Consumer Engagement Project* was detailed in a final report to the Department of Social Services (DSS) at the end of the Project. The Report (available on WWDA's website in **PDF** and **Word** formats) includes as attachments, the four detailed reports from the Forums held with women with disabilities in Western Australia, South Australia, the Australian Capital Territory and Queensland. These four reports were retained as stand-alone reports to enable networks and groups of women with disabilities, and other key stakeholders, to use the reports within their own jurisdictions to advance the human rights of women with disabilities in relation to employment.

Report 1: *Queensland Disability Employment Services Forum for Women With Disabilities* – hosted

by Women With Disabilities Australia and Queenslanders With Disability Women's Network **[PDF]** **[Word]**

Report 2: *South Australia Disability Employment Services Forum for Women With Disabilities* – hosted by Women With Disabilities South Australia (WWDOSA) **[PDF]** **[Word]**

Report 3: *Australian Capital Territory (ACT) Disability Employment Services Forum for Women With Disabilities* - hosted by Women With Disabilities ACT (WWDACT) **[PDF Only]**

Report 4: *Western Australia Disability Employment Services Forum for Women With Disabilities* – hosted by Women With Disabilities Western Australia (WWDWA) **[PDF]** **[Word]**

## KEY ACTIVITY:

### Reform of National Disability Peak Organisations Funding Model

The past 12 months has seen great changes for WWDA in relation to our future and the way that Government intends to fund and organise disability peak representation into the future. For the past 18 years, WWDA has been involved in a number of government initiated reviews of the model of peak disability representation in Australia, particularly those national disability peak organisations which have been funded by Governments under the national disability secretariat program (and the similar programs which have replaced it over time). Many of the past reviews have recommended that the funding model for representation of people with disabilities at the national level, needs to be reformed.

In 2013, the Australian Government advised that it would be reforming the way that it provided grants and funding to organisations and services funded through the Department of



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Social Services (DSS). This included peak disability organisations, including WWDA. In 2012 and 2013, DSS requested peak disability organisations to recommend proposed models for disability peak representation in Australia. WWDA had always maintained that the *Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities* (CRPD), the other relevant international human rights treaties to which Australia is a party, as well as the *National Disability Strategy* (NDS), provided the logical and coherent framework from which to develop a model of disability peak representation in Australia. To that end, WWDA's view was that utilising a human rights framework in the development of such a model, particularly the CRPD, would recognise that women with disabilities, children with disabilities, indigenous people with disabilities, and people with disabilities from Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) backgrounds, experience multiple and unique forms of discrimination, disadvantage and violations of their human rights. WWDA further argued that a human rights based model of

disability peak representation in Australia should make provision for specific, targeted, special and extra measures to ensure these more marginalised and disadvantaged groups achieve substantive equality in practice of the enjoyment and exercise of their human rights and fundamental freedoms.

In this context, WWDA formally suggested to the Australian Government that a potential model for disability peak representation in Australia could consist of one national cross-disability Disabled Persons Organisation (DPO), and four additional DPO's – one representing women with disabilities; one representing children and young people with disabilities; one representing Aboriginal persons with disabilities; and, one representing CALD persons with disabilities. WWDA suggested that an appropriate governance structure to promote and maximise collaboration and co-operation, could then be determined through a process of consultation between the DPO's and their memberships.

In June 2014, the Australian Government announced that the model for disability peak representation in Australia would be reformed, along the lines of WWDA's proposed model. The Government announced that it would fund up to seven national disability organisations to effectively and collegially represent the interests and views of people with disability and service providers that support them. A public tender process would be used to seek applications for the seven national disability organisations. The Government specified that the following parameters would be applied:

- Consistency with the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities;
- Representation provided across the following key areas: cross-disability issues, women with disability, children and young people with disability, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people with disability, people with disability from



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Culturally and Linguistically Diverse backgrounds and service providers that provide support to people with disability.

Applications opened on the 19 June 2014 and closed on 23 July 2014.

WWDA subsequently developed our own stand-alone application to be funded as the national disability organisation representing women and girls with disabilities. WWDA was required to address the following criteria in our tender application:

- Demonstrate your understanding of the need for the funded activity for the selected target group.
- Describe how the implementation of your proposal will achieve the Activity objectives for all stakeholders, including value for money within the Grant funding.
- Demonstrate your experience in effectively developing, delivering, managing and monitoring activities to achieve the Activity objectives for all stakeholders.

- Demonstrate your organisation's capacity and your staff capability (experience and qualifications) to deliver the Activity objectives for the selected target group.
- Describe how your current or proposed organisation structure fulfils the Activity requirements (as defined in the Programme Guidelines "Orgs representing PWD's."

As part of the tender application process, WWDA initiated a meeting of CEO's from the existing cross-disability peak organisations, to develop a model for how these organisations could work as an Alliance should our individual tenders be successful. The organisations were: Women With Disabilities Australia (WWDA); People with Disability Australia (PWDA); First People's Disability Network Australia (FPDNA); Children with Disability Australia (CDA); and, the National Ethnic Disability Alliance (NEDA). WWDA worked on behalf of these organisations to draft a model for a national cross-disability alliance. The cross-disability alliance will consist

of the five (5) independent national DPOs that will work co-operatively, with mutual respect, understanding and commitment, to promote, protect and advance the human rights and freedoms of people with disability in Australia. Whilst these five (5) national DPOs will work independently to provide specialist expertise for and on behalf of their members and constituents, we will come together as a cross-disability alliance to work collaboratively on areas of shared interests, purposes and strategic opportunities to advance the human rights of people with disability. The model for the cross-disability Alliance accompanied each of the 5 organisations' individual tender applications.

The results of the tender process should be known by end of 2014.



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### KEY ACTIVITY:

#### Relocation of WWDA National Office

In March 2014, WWDA had no option but to make the decision to close our national office. After 15 years in the same location, we were unable to renew our 5 year lease, as our funding contract with the Australian Government expired on June 30, 2014, and we had no guarantee of ongoing funding post that date. WWDA was notified in late June 2014, that our funding contract with the Australian Government would be extended until end December 2014, whilst the tender applications for disability peak representation in Australia, were assessed. However, even with this extension of our funding contract until end December 2014, we were still left in the position of not being able to renew our 5-year lease.

The WWDA Management Committee agreed to relocate the WWDA national office to the home of Carolyn Frohmader, the WWDA Executive Director. Carolyn had always maintained a home office due to the nature of the job, and the long hours she works, so it seemed logical to simply relocate the WWDA national office to Carolyn's home office, until at least such time as the tender applications have been decided. As is often the case, there was no government funding to support WWDA having to relocate the national office. So, Carolyn called in favours from family and friends, who generously donated their time (and their utes!) to assist Carolyn to physically relocate the office to her home. It was indeed a mammoth exercise having to close down and relocate a national office which we had worked from for the past 15 years. WWDA is very grateful to Carolyn's friends for volunteering their time to help with the office move.

### KEY ACTIVITY:

#### ALRC National Inquiry into Equal Recognition Before The Law And Legal Capacity For People With Disability

The national Inquiry into 'Equal Recognition Before The Law And Legal Capacity For People With Disability' was announced by the Australian Government in July 2013. The Inquiry was undertaken by the Australian Law Reform Commission (ALRC) to examine laws and legal frameworks within the Commonwealth jurisdiction that deny or diminish the equal recognition of people with disability as persons before the law and their ability to exercise legal capacity, and consider what, if any, changes could be made to Commonwealth laws and legal frameworks to address these matters. The ALRC's final report is due in August 2014. WWDA provided a detailed formal *Submission to the National Inquiry into Equal Recognition Before the Law and Legal Capacity for People With Disability*. WWDA's

# WWDA

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Screenshot of the Home Page of the new WWDA Website

Submission examined six key priority areas for women with disabilities that are considered crucial in the context of the National Inquiry. These six areas are: 1) Gendering the National Inquiry into Equal Recognition Before the Law and Legal Capacity for People With Disability; 2) Sexual and Reproductive Rights and Freedoms; 3) The Right to Freedom from Violence, Abuse, Exploitation and Neglect; 4) The Right to Found and Maintain a Family; 5) The Right to Work; and, 6) The Right to Participate in Political and Public life.

WWDA's *Submission to the National Inquiry into Equal Recognition Before the Law and Legal Capacity for People With Disability* was widely disseminated both within Australia and overseas, and is available on WWDA's website in **PDF** and **Word** formats.

## KEY ACTIVITY:

### WWDA Website Development Project

WWDA's **website** was developed manually 17 years ago by WWDA's Executive Director and since that time has been maintained and updated manually by Carolyn in her own time. Although primitive in design and functionality, it became one of the most widely known disability websites in Australia, and indeed internationally, and is now recognised as a leading centre for information and resources on disability, both in the Australian and international contexts. In order to be able to effectively promote information to women with disabilities, WWDA constituents and users worldwide, WWDA recognised the urgent need for its website to be totally re-developed into a much more user friendly and functional site. To this end, during the second half of 2013, WWDA undertook a major website re-development project. The re-development included a total re-design, building a new site utilising the WordPress platform;

migrating existing content of more than 500 HTML pages and more than 2500 separate publications; building navigation links; researching and updating existing material and researching and adding new resource materials and information; testing the beta site with potential users; ensuring accessibility including the development of alt tags for all images and graphics; categorising and organising information into categories and themes that are easily navigated; developing and testing an in-site search facility; and much more. WWDA worked with Hobart based company **Ionata Design** to re-design and build WWDA's new site. Carolyn worked with Ionata over a six month period on the Project, which was finalised early in 2014.

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Karin Swift, WWDA President

### KEY ACTIVITY:

#### National Roundtable on the Role of DPO's in CRPD Implementation in Australia "Political Participation, Inclusion and Decision Making"

In mid 2013, WWDA was invited to take a major participatory role in a major study being led by the University of Sydney. The study, *'Implementing the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) – The Participation of DPO's'* aimed to provide an overview of the implementation of the CRPD in the Asia Pacific region. The findings of the major study were incorporated into the European Union Human Rights Global Campus Report which reports on CRPD implementation and DPO engagement across the world.

WWDA Executive Director Carolyn Frohmader, was interviewed as key stakeholder for the research study, and provided extensive input to the study on WWDA's role and activities in CRPD implementation and monitoring, at both the national and international levels. As part of the study, a *National*

*Roundtable* was conducted in August 2013, with WWDA taking a major role and giving a keynote presentation. The Roundtable, called *'Political Participation, Inclusion and Decision Making,'* brought together researchers and Disabled People's Organisations (DPO's) to explore how political participation and decision making for people with disabilities can be reconceptualised, particularly in light of CRPD Articles 12, 19, 29, 30 and 33.

WWDA President Karin Swift represented WWDA at the National Roundtable, where she presented a keynote address authored by WWDA Executive Director Carolyn Frohmader and Karin. WWDA's presentation highlighted the fact that whilst access to decision-making, political participation and representation are essential markers of gender equality, women and girls with disabilities in Australia are often excluded from, and denied opportunities to participate in decision-making about issues that affect their lives and those of their families, community and nation.

WWDA's presentation examined some of the ways this exclusion manifests, and also highlighted the kinds of reforms that are required to create full and meaningful participation and inclusion for disabled women and girls. The presentation also highlighted some activities WWDA has been involved with at an international level as a Civil Society Organisation (CSO) to promote the participation, inclusion and representation of women with disabilities.

WWDA's presentation to the National Roundtable *'Political Participation, Inclusion and Decision Making,'* is available on WWDA's website in **PDF** and **Word** formats.



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### KEY ACTIVITY:

#### Parliamentary Inquiry into the human rights issues confronting women and girls in the Indian Ocean – Asia Pacific region

On 28 February 2014 the Minister for Foreign Affairs, The Hon Julie Bishop MP, asked the Human Rights Sub-Committee of the Joint Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade, to inquire into and report on *'the human rights issues confronting women and girls in the Indian Ocean – Asia Pacific region.'* The inquiry sought to investigate challenges facing women and girls of the Indian Ocean – Asia Pacific region in order to improve their human rights and make practical policy recommendations that will make a real contribution to women's empowerment and gender equality. Issues the Human Rights Sub-Committee examined during the Inquiry included:

- barriers and impediments to enhancing the human rights of women and girls in the Indian Ocean - Asia Pacific region, especially regarding the impact

of family and sexual violence, women's leadership and economic opportunities;

- achievements to date in advancing women and girls' human rights in these key areas;
- implications for economic and social development in the Indian Ocean - Asia Pacific region of promoting women and girls' human rights; and
- the effectiveness of Australian programs to support efforts to improve the human rights of women and girls in the Indian Ocean - Asia Pacific region.

WWDA developed a brief Submission to the Inquiry and formally tabled WWDA's Report *'Gender Blind, Gender Neutral: The effectiveness of the National Disability Strategy in improving the lives of women and girls with disabilities'*, which addressed a wide range of issues facing women and girls with disabilities in Australia, including the lack of gendered policies and frameworks to advance their human rights. The Human Rights Sub-Committee is due to report on the findings of the Inquiry in late 2014.

### KEY ACTIVITY:

#### National Audit of Disability Research in Australia

In 2013, WWDA was invited to be an expert member of the Advisory Steering Committee for a National Research Project being undertaken by the Centre for Disability Research and Policy at Sydney University. The Project, *'An Audit of Disability Research in Australia'* aimed to provide a comprehensive picture of the current state of disability research evidence in Australia. The project aimed to identify the gaps in disability research evidence so that areas that have not been well resourced previously or where there has been little research to date can be targeted. WWDA Board member Dr Iva Strnadova represented WWDA on the National Project Steering Committee, which was chaired by the principal researcher, Professor Gwynnyth Llewellyn, Director, Centre for Disability Research and Policy, University of Sydney.



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The study found, amongst other things, that issues specific to women with disabilities are significantly under-represented in the disability research base, and called for collection of more comprehensive data and investment in research on priority groups including women with disabilities. The *Report of the Audit of Disability Research in Australia* is available online in [PDF](#) format.



### KEY ACTIVITY:

#### Project to develop a longitudinal study on the social and economic participation of people with disabilities'

In mid 2013, WWDA was invited to work with the University of Melbourne on a project led by Professor Anne Kavanagh titled, '*Development of a questionnaire for a longitudinal study on the social and economic participation of people with disabilities*'. A number of researchers from across Australia and the UK were involved in the design of the project. This project was funded by a National Disability Research and Development Grant through the Disability Policy & Research Working Group. WWDA Executive Director Carolyn Frohmader was invited to work with the Research Team to identify important issues to be addressed in the longitudinal study questionnaire; provide advice as to how the questionnaire can best be administered and adapted to meet the needs of various disability groups; and advise on the preliminary version

of the questionnaire. The Project sought to establish the foundations for a major longitudinal study which will be a unique resource for people with disabilities, researchers and policy-makers. Carolyn also participated in a stakeholder interview as part of the research phase of the Project.

### KEY ACTIVITY:

#### National Survey on Community Attitudes To Violence Against Women Project

The *National Community Attitudes to Violence Against Women Survey* (NCAS) is an initiative under the *National Plan to Reduce Violence against Women and their Children 2010-2022*. The national survey of 17,500 Australians aged over 16 is undertaken every four years to gauge how Australian society is tracking in terms of beliefs and attitudes about sexual assault, violence in all of its forms, sexism and gender equality. The Survey was developed by VicHealth in partnership with The



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University of Melbourne, the Social Research Centre and violence against women experts across Australia. For the past couple of years, WWDA Executive Director Carolyn Frohmader has worked as a key adviser to the NCAS Steering Group to ensure the survey includes issues for women with disabilities; and to provide expert advice in relation to Australia's human rights obligations in the context of gender, disability and violence, and also to assist with mapping legislative and policy frameworks relevant to the survey in the context of women with disabilities. Carolyn also worked as member of a specific NCAS Project Working Group on Women with Disabilities, and in 2014 worked with the NCAS team to advise on the draft Survey reports. The findings of the NCAS are due to be released in September 2014.

### KEY ACTIVITY:

#### Senate Inquiry into Domestic Violence

Describing violence against women in Australia as 'a national tragedy',<sup>12</sup> the Australian Greens proposal for a *Senate Inquiry into Domestic Violence* passed the Senate with tri-partisan support on 26th June 2014, and was subsequently referred to the Australia Senate Finance and Public Administration References Committee for inquiry and report by the 27 October 2014. Through the Terms of Reference, the Senate Inquiry will examine:

- the prevalence and impact of domestic violence in Australia as it affects all Australians and, in particular, as it affects: women living with a disability, and women from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander backgrounds;
- the factors contributing to the present levels of domestic violence;
- the adequacy of policy and community responses to domestic violence;

- the effects of policy decisions regarding housing, legal services, and women's economic independence on the ability of women to escape domestic violence;
- how the Federal Government can best support, contribute to and drive the social, cultural and behavioural shifts required to eliminate violence against women and their children; and
- any other related matters.

WWDA will be developing a written Submission to this critical Inquiry, and has begun work to draft a joint Submission to the Inquiry from the national cross disability organisations: Women With Disabilities Australia (WWDA); People with Disability Australia (PWDA); First People's Disability Network Australia (FPDNA); Children with Disability Australia (CDA); and, the National Ethnic Disability Alliance (NEDA).

12. The Greens (June 26th, 2014) Greens Secure Senate Inquiry into Domestic Violence. Accessed online June 2014 at: <http://greens.org.au/node/5291>



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### KEY ACTIVITY:

#### National Foundation for the Prevention of Violence Against Women and Children

During 2013 and 2014 WWDA Executive Director Carolyn Frohmader worked with various consultancy companies charged with the task of establishing and developing the *National Foundation to for the Prevention of Violence Against Women and Children*. Over the past few years, Carolyn had contributed to the consultations regarding the model for the Foundation, which is an initiative under the *National Plan to Reduce Violence against Women and their Children 2010-2022*. In early 2014, the Foundation engaged consultancy firm, the 'Nous Group', to assist in the development of the Foundation's first five year Strategic Plan and internal business plan. WWDA was approached by Nous Group to assist with this task, and WWDA Executive Director Carolyn Frohmader worked with the consultants to advise on the development of the

five year Strategic Plan, particularly in the context of how the Foundation would ensure women with disabilities were prioritised within the work of the Foundation. The National Foundation to for the Prevention of Violence Against Women and Children will be publicly launched in September 2014.

### KEY ACTIVITY:

#### Australian National Research Organisation for Women's Safety (ANROWS) National Research Agenda

Australia's National Research Organisation for Women's Safety Limited (ANROWS) is an independent, not-for-profit company established as an initiative under Australia's *National Plan to Reduce Violence against Women and their Children 2010-2022* (the National Plan). It is jointly funded by the Commonwealth and all state and territory governments of Australia, who are the members of the company. ANROWS was initially established in 2012-2013 as

the 'National Centre of Excellence to reduce violence against women and their children', however in 2014 it took on a new name and commenced its operations as a research centre, under the leadership of the Chief Executive Officer, Heather Nancarrow. WWDA has worked for the past few years on a range of initiatives involved in establishing ANROWS. We participated in several consultations and stakeholder interviews in relation to the model and function of ANROWS. WWDA has also been a key stakeholder in relation to assisting with the development of the ANROWS national research agenda, which was released in 2014 and prioritises women with disabilities.

In June 2014, WWDA was invited to join the ANROWS Networking Database to enable researchers, practitioners, policy-makers, community members, and others interested in reducing the impact and incidence of violence against women to connect directly with each other. WWDA Executive Director



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Carolyn Frohmader was also invited by ANROWS to become an ANROWS Peer Assessor, in order to assist in the assessment of ANROWS research grants applications. However, due to WWDA's limited capacity and the fact that WWDA receives no funding to undertake work in the violence prevention field, WWDA had to turn down this opportunity until such time as our organisation is better resourced. WWDA has however, continued to provide expertise and advice to ANROWS within the limitations of our capacity and resourcing. WWDA Executive Director Carolyn Frohmader has recently been invited to participate in a targeted key stakeholder interview with ANROWS to advise on the development of ANROWS range of publications.

### **KEY ACTIVITY:**

#### **WWDA President Internship at WWDA**

In February 2014, WWDA President Karin Swift was fortunate to have the opportunity to undertake a week-long internship at the Women With Disabilities Australia (WWDA) National Office in Hobart, Tasmania, as part of her Leadership Development Plan through the *Leaders of Tomorrow Program*, of which she was a participant in its final intake in May 2013. Karin spent the week immersed in the day to day world of WWDA – witnessing first hand the very busy and hectic work program, and the ever constant requests to WWDA for individual advocacy and support from people with disabilities (and their families, support persons, friends) from all around the country. Karin spent a week working with WWDA Executive Director, Carolyn Frohmader, undertaking high level research and policy development, and gaining first hand experience of working with UN Conventions and Protocols to help articulate organisational positions

and policies. Karin also undertook a number of networking opportunities whilst in Hobart, including giving a presentation on WWDA and the human rights of women with disabilities, at a special function organised and hosted by Speak Out Advocacy, Tasmania.

Karin prepared a Report of brief internship at the WWDA National Office and it is available on WWDA's website in both PDF and Word formats.

### **KEY ACTIVITY:**

#### **National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS)**

Over the past year, WWDA has continued to promote the *National Disability Insurance Scheme* (NDIS) to our constituency. Over the past few years, WWDA has undertaken a substantial amount of work relating to the NDIS, particularly around areas such as the legislation, rules, operating guidelines and safeguards. WWDA's last annual report details some of the



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work we have undertaken in this area. Although WWDA has continued to promote the NDIS through our many communication and information mechanisms, feedback from members does indicate there is still a level of confusion as to how the NDIS will operate in practice. A particular area of confusion seems to be understanding how the NDIS will ensure that supports and services which 'sit outside' the NDIS, will meet the needs of eligible NDIS participants. Feedback from members also indicates that there is still a lack of clarity around the NDIS and that there are "mixed messages" coming through as to how the NDIS will work in practice once fully rolled out.

### **KEY ACTIVITY:**

#### **Individual Advocacy**

Although WWDA is a national systemic advocacy organisation, and is not funded to undertake individual advocacy, WWDA is often contacted by people with disabilities, service providers, families and carers, for direct assistance with individual advocacy. On many occasions, those contacting WWDA have been given WWDA's details by another service or individual, and been advised to contact WWDA. These referrals to WWDA also come from crisis services and services which are specifically funded to undertake individual advocacy. Many of those contacting WWDA have often been on a 'referral merry-go round' and still not managed to secure any support or service response to their issues. More often than not, these issues are urgent and require an immediate response.

Although WWDA has always received request for individual advocacy, the past year has seen a significant increase in contacts to WWDA for assistance. We have witnessed

many more calls from women with disabilities in crisis situations. Issues for which women have sought support from WWDA are varied, but key issues still remain: violence (including sexual violence), abuse, exploitation and neglect; violations of sexual and reproductive rights; legal issues; removal of babies and children; lack of services and support programs; lack of coordination of care; discrimination in employment; discrimination in education; lack of housing options; and much more. A common theme is the lack of support the women have received from services which are typically meant to serve people in crisis. For example: a woman with a disability living in hostel style accommodation in a remote country town, was repeatedly raped by a stranger who broke into her room. Although the police were called, and the perpetrator was apprehended, no investigation ensued because it was deemed that the woman was not a credible witness because she had an acquired brain injury and substance abuse issues. She had contacted many



## SUMMARY OF WWDA'S KEY NATIONAL PROJECTS & ACTIVITIES

organisations and services requesting ongoing support, particularly in relation to her urgent need to relocate to safer accommodation. She became suicidal and in desperation, rang Lifeline for help. Lifeline referred her to WWDA, advising her that WWDA could “fix all her problems”. This is not an isolated case. In situations like these, WWDA simply cannot advise callers that we are not funded to provide individual advocacy, particularly when we know that the person has already been on a “referral roundabout”. More often than not, WWDA spends many hours dealing with the person concerned, and working to find them a pathway to safety. Unfortunately, much of our work in the area of individual advocacy is not recognised nor is it funded, yet it remains a very real part of our role.

### KEY ACTIVITY:

#### WWDA Communications

WWDA maintains a number of mechanisms to provide information to its constituency and other stakeholders. WWDA has a **Facebook**

site; a very popular **website**; a **WWDA Members E-List (wwda-discuss)**, a WWDA Management Committee E-List (sp-wwda); an extensive general email distribution list and also subscribes to a wide range of e-lists (such as the International Women With Disabilities Network E-List (INWWD), and the United Nations Women’s E-List) in order to facilitate information dissemination, consultation, engagement and participation of women with disabilities, both nationally and internationally. WWDA has also recently immersed itself in the world of Twitter, and WWDA’s youth delegate Cashelle Dunn, is doing a fantastic job in taking charge of **WWDA’s Twitter account**.

WWDA’s Facebook page is growing in popularity and has subscribers from all around the world. The Facebook Page is maintained and administered by the WWDA Executive Director and is proving to be a very successful mechanism to consult with stakeholders and also to provide up to date information on issues relevant

to women and girls with disabilities at regional, state, territory, national and international levels. WWDA is hopeful that we will receive some additional operational funding from Government in 2015, so that we can build on our growing and popular social media networks and online activism.

WWDA has not produced its bi-annual Newsletter this year, due to the vast work program and demand on the organisation. However, it is also becoming clearer that the use of our Facebook, website and Twitter is replacing the need for the Newsletter. These days, information tends to be immediate, and Facebook and the website also act as an archival source of information for those seeking it. Should our tender application be successful, and should we receive some additional operational funding from Government in 2015, we will be re-considering whether the concept of a Newsletter could be replaced with an annual WWDA journal.



## SUMMARY OF WWDA'S KEY NATIONAL PROJECTS & ACTIVITIES

### KEY ACTIVITY:

#### WWDA Governance

Although WWDA is an organisation of only one paid employee, we have continued to employ high standard governance and financial management practices, with our accountancy firm (Crowe Horwath), providing wonderful service and support to our organisation. At the time of writing this Annual Report, WWDA is funded by the Australian Department of Social Services (DSS), under its National Secretariat Program, and receives \$165,000 per annum in operational funding. WWDA's bookkeeping and accounting are managed by our accountant, Cody Burdon, from Crowe Horwath. Quarterly financial reports are prepared by Crowe Horwath for the WWDA Management Committee, and comprise detailed reports including for example: reconciliation reports; job profit and loss reports; year to day profit and loss reports; income transactions report; expense transaction reports; balance sheet; and entitlement

summary reports. WWDA's Management Committee meets on a quarterly basis via teleconference, and the WWDA Executive Director and President meet weekly via teleconference. The WWDA Executive meets via teleconference as required. WWDA has met all its governance requirements during the past year.

### KEY ACTIVITY:

#### National Human Rights Award

In December 2013, WWDA Executive Director Carolyn Frohmader, was awarded the prestigious Individual Human Rights Award for 2013 at a gala event in Sydney for the 2013 National Human Rights Awards. Carolyn was nominated for the Award by the WWDA Management Committee, and the promotions for the Awards which publicised Carolyn as a finalist for the Individual Award stated:

*Carolyn Frohmader has made a significant contribution to the promotion and protection of human rights for women and girls with*

*disabilities. As executive director of Women With Disabilities Australia (WWDA), Carolyn is a strong voice for gender equality and an advocate for the prevention of violence against women and girls with disabilities. She has increased awareness of issues of injustice for women and girls with disabilities and worked tirelessly to counter discrimination on the basis of gender and disability.*

The winners of the Human Rights Awards for 2013 were announced at a ceremony in Sydney at the Museum of Contemporary Art, on 10 December 2013. Carolyn was able to take her young daughter Lottie to the event with her, which was an amazing opportunity. Carolyn was strongly supported at the event by a contingent of WWDA supporters and allies from the disability sector. On being announced as the winner of the Individual Human Rights Award for 2013, Carolyn was required to give a short acceptance speech, which has been reproduced here:

# WWDA

## SUMMARY OF WWDA'S KEY NATIONAL PROJECTS & ACTIVITIES

*"Thank you very much for this honour. Firstly, I would like to acknowledge and congratulate all the other finalists for this year's Human Rights Awards. I am very humbled to receive this Award in recognition of my work with and for women and girls with disabilities. I would like to thank the Board and members of Women With Disabilities Australia for entrusting me with the job of leading our organisation over the past 17 years. I am very proud of what we have achieved, and I hope this Award will, in some way, help to raise awareness of the many human rights violations still being experienced by women and girls with disabilities in Australia and throughout the world. I would like to thank my friends and colleagues in the disability, women's, and human rights sectors, for their support. But most importantly, I would like to thank my beautiful 11 year old daughter Lottie, for her patience, support and selflessness in enabling me to do the work that I do.*

*My beautiful Lottie could be forgiven for thinking that her middle name is "Wait a minute", because that is what she has grown up hearing – as I have endeavoured to juggle single motherhood with the demands of my more than full time job. So, thank you my Lottie – for always inspiring and encouraging me to be the very best that I can be. Mummy loves you, and I share this Award with you."*







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

# WWDA

## **FINANCIAL REPORT** for the year ended **30 JUNE 2014**

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Board Report  
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YOUR BOARD MEMBERS  
SUBMIT THE FINANCIAL  
REPORT OF THE  
ASSOCIATION FOR THE  
FINANCIAL YEAR ENDED  
30 JUNE 2014

## BOARD REPORT 30 JUNE 2012

### 1. General information

#### Principal Activities

- To promote and protect the rights of women with disabilities nationally and internationally.
- To undertake systemic advocacy in specific areas of concern to women with disabilities.
- To continue to build on Women With Disabilities Australia's key role in the consolidation, production and dissemination of high quality information, publications and research on issues relevant to women with disabilities.
- To further develop the internal and external operations of the organisation in order to achieve its vision, goals and objectives.
- To contribute to the development and implementation of Australian Government policies affecting women with disabilities.

#### Significant Changes

No significant change in the nature of these activities occurred during the year.

### 2. Operating Results and Review of Operations for the Year

#### Operating result

The surplus/(deficit) of the Association for the financial year amounted to \$ 6,319 (2013: \$ (4,825)).

Signed in accordance with a resolution of the  
Members of the Board:

Board Member

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'K. Swift'.

Board Member

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Janet Meneer'.

Dated this 20th day of September 2014

## STATEMENT BY MEMBERS OF THE BOARD

The Board has determined that the Association is not a reporting entity and that this special purpose financial report should be prepared in accordance with the accounting policies outlined in Note 1 to the financial statements.

In the opinion of the Board the financial statements:

1. Present fairly the financial position of Women With Disabilities Australia Inc as at 30 June 2014 and its performance for the year ended on that date.
2. At the date of this statement, there are reasonable grounds to believe that Women With Disabilities Australia Inc will be able to pay its debts as and when they fall due.

This statement is made in accordance with a resolution of the Board and is signed for and on behalf of the Board by:

Board Member 

Board Member 

Dated this 20th day of September 2014

**STATEMENT OF COMPREHENSIVE INCOME**  
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2014

	<b>2014</b>	<b>2013</b>
	<b>\$</b>	<b>\$</b>
<b>INCOME</b>		
Grants Received	385,244	545,116
Donations	777	4,030
Consultancy	-	11,031
Interest	5,529	9,137
Membership Fees	-	2,592
Reimbursed expenses	2,059	-
Loss on disposal of assets	(1,228)	-
<b>TOTAL INCOME</b>	<b>392,381</b>	<b>571,906</b>
<b>EXPENSES</b>		
Accommodation & meals	24,270	3,514
Accountancy & audit fees	14,607	8,590
Bank charges	235	210
Catering	310	-
Conference registrations	906	-
Consultancy	139,580	65,116
Depreciation	2,623	3,428
Donations	-	4,400
Electricity	1,974	1,582
Employee costs	108,253	122,458

**STATEMENT OF COMPREHENSIVE INCOME (CONT.)**  
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2014

	<b>2014</b> \$	<b>2013</b> \$
Grants distributed	18,000	305,000
Information technology	1,136	5,863
Insurance	4,254	5,103
Leave provisions	13,528	11,840
Office supplies & equipment	5,526	3,040
Postage & freight	747	381
Printing & publication design	1,781	3,975
Registrar General fees	-	108
Rental costs	9,533	8,245
Sitting fee & report writing	300	560
Subscriptions & publications	257	302
Sundry expenses	389	165
Telephone, teleconferences & internet	4,698	5,439
Travel	33,155	17,412
<b>TOTAL EXPENSES</b>	<b>386,062</b>	<b>576,731</b>
Net surplus/(deficit)	6,319	(4,825)
Other comprehensive income	-	-
<b>TOTAL COMPREHENSIVE INCOME</b>	<b>6,319</b>	<b>(4,825)</b>

**STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION**  
AS AT 30 JUNE 2014

	Note	2014 \$	2013 \$
<b>ASSETS</b>			
<b>CURRENT ASSETS</b>			
Cash and cash equivalents	2	261,918	249,710
Trade and other receivables	3	2,079	2,317
<b>TOTAL CURRENT ASSETS</b>		<b>263,997</b>	<b>252,027</b>
<b>NON-CURRENT ASSETS</b>			
Furniture & equipment	4	11,559	9,033
<b>TOTAL NON-CURRENT ASSETS</b>		<b>11,559</b>	<b>9,033</b>
<b>TOTAL ASSETS</b>		<b>275,556</b>	<b>261,060</b>
<b>LIABILITIES</b>			
<b>CURRENT LIABILITIES</b>			
Trade payables	5	29,944	10,294
Short-term provisions	6	81,491	92,964
<b>TOTAL CURRENT LIABILITIES</b>		<b>111,435</b>	<b>103,258</b>
<b>NET ASSETS</b>		<b>164,121</b>	<b>157,802</b>
<b>EQUITY</b>			
Accumulated surpluses		164,121	157,802
<b>TOTAL EQUITY</b>		<b>164,121</b>	<b>157,802</b>



## STATEMENT OF CHANGES IN EQUITY FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2014

### 2014

	Accumulated Surpluses \$	Total \$
Balance at 1 July 2013	157,802	157,802
Net surplus/(deficit) for the year	6,319	6,319
<b>BALANCE AT 30 JUNE 2014</b>	<b>164,121</b>	<b>164,121</b>

### 2013

	Accumulated Surpluses \$	Total \$
Balance at 1 July 2012	162,627	162,627
Net surplus/(deficit)	(4,825)	(4,825)
<b>BALANCE AT 30 JUNE 2013</b>	<b>157,802</b>	<b>157,802</b>



## NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2014

### 1. Summary of Significant Accounting Policies

#### (a) Basis of Preparation

This financial report is a special purpose financial report prepared in order to satisfy the financial reporting requirements of the *Associations Incorporation Act (ACT) 1991*. The Board has determined that the Association is not a reporting entity and therefore a special purpose financial report has been prepared. The Association is a not for profit entity for financial reporting purposes. The financial statements have been prepared on an accruals basis, are based on historic costs and do not take into account changing money values or, except where specifically stated, current valuations of noncurrent assets.

The following significant accounting policies, which are consistent with the previous period

unless otherwise stated, have been adopted in the preparation of these financial statements.

#### (b) Comparative Figures

Where appropriate, comparative figures have been adjusted to conform to changes in presentation for the current financial year.

#### (c) Cash and Cash Equivalents

Cash and cash equivalents include cash on hand, deposits held at call with banks, and other shortterm highly liquid investments.

#### (d) Trade and other receivables

Provisions are recognised when the association has a legal or constructive obligation, as a result of past events, for which it is probable that an outflow of economic benefits will result and that outflow can be reliably measured.

#### (e) Property, Plant and Equipment

Office equipment is carried at cost less, where applicable, any accumulated depreciation. The depreciable amount of all equipment is depreciated over the useful lives of the assets to the Association commencing from the time the asset is held ready for use.

The depreciation rates used for each class of depreciable assets are:

Office Equipment	10-20%
Computer Equipment	33%

#### (f) Trade and other payables

Trade and other payables represent the liability outstanding at the end of the reporting period for goods and services received by the Association during the reporting period which remain unpaid. The balance is recognised as a current liability.



**NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (CONT.)**  
**FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2014**

**(g) Employee Benefits**

Provision is made for the Association’s liability for employee benefits arising from services rendered by employees to the end of the reporting period. Employee benefits have been measured at the amounts expected to be paid when the liability is settled. Contribution made by the Association to an employee superannuation fund is charged as an expense when incurred.

**(h) Income Tax**

No provision for income tax has been raised as the Association is exempt from income tax under Division 50 of the *Income Tax Assessment Act 1997*.

**(i) Goods and Services Tax (GST)**

Revenues, expenses and assets are recognised net of the amount of GST, except where the amount of GST incurred is not recoverable from the Tax Office. In these circumstances the GST is recognised as part of the cost of acquisition of the asset or as part of an item of the expense. Receivables and payables in the statement of financial position are shown inclusive of GST.

**(j) Unexpended Grants**

It is the policy of the Association to treat grant monies as unexpended grant liabilities in the statement of financial position where the Association is contractually obliged to provide the services in a subsequent financial period to when the grant is received or in the case of specific project grants where the project has not been completed.

**(k) Revenue and Other Income**

Interest revenue is recognised over the period for which the funds are invested.

Membership income is recognised over the period to which the membership relates.

Grant income is recognised when expensed in accordance with the terms of the funding agreement.

Donation income is recognised when the Association obtains control over the funds which is generally at the time of receipt.

All revenue is stated net of the amount of goods and services tax (GST).



**NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (CONT.)**  
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2014

<b>2. Cash and Cash Equivalents</b>	2014	2013
	\$	\$
Cash on hand	-	17
Cash at bank	261,918	249,693
<b>Total cash and cash equivalents</b>	<b>261,918</b>	<b>249,710</b>

<b>3. Trade and Other Receivables</b>	2014	2013
	\$	\$
Trade receivables	2,079	2,317
<b>Total trade and other receivables</b>	<b>2,079</b>	<b>2,317</b>

<b>4. Property, Plant and Equipment</b>	2014	2013
	\$	\$
PLANT AND EQUIPMENT		
Furniture & equipment		
At cost	18,508	25,731
Accumulated depreciation	(6,949)	(16,698)
<b>Total furniture &amp; equipment</b>	<b>11,559</b>	<b>9,033</b>

<b>5. Trade and Other Payables</b>	2014	2013
	\$	\$
Trade payables	6,986	3,978
PAYG tax payable	17,196	3,709
Superannuation payable	3,237	(1,253)
GST payable	2,525	3,860
<b>Total trade and other payables</b>	<b>29,944</b>	<b>10,294</b>



## NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (CONT.) FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2014

<b>6. Provisions</b>	2014	2013
	\$	\$
CURRENT		
Annual leave	43,338	58,086
Long service leave	38,153	34,878
Total provisions	<b>81,491</b>	<b>92,964</b>

### 7. Capital and Leasing Commitments

There are no capital or leasing commitments as at reporting date to be disclosed.

### 8. Contingent Liabilities and Contingent Assets

There are no contingent liabilities or contingent assets as at reporting date to be disclosed.

### 9. Events After the End of the Reporting Period

There are no events after the statement of financial position date affecting these financial statements to be disclosed.

### 10. Economic Dependency

Although there is no reason to believe that grant funding will cease, the ongoing viability of the Association as a going concern is dependent on funding from the Department of Social Services continuing.



## INDEPENDENT AUDITOR'S REPORT

### To the members of Women with Disabilities Australia Inc.

We have audited the accompanying financial report, being a special purpose report, of Women with Disabilities Australia Inc., which comprises the balance sheet as at 30 June 2014, the income statement for the year then ended, notes comprising a summary of significant accounting policies and other explanatory information, and the officers assertion statement.

### Officers Responsibility for the Financial Report

The officers of Women with Disabilities Australia Inc., are responsible for the preparation of the financial report, and have determined that the basis of preparation described in Note 1, is appropriate to meet the requirements of the *Associations Incorporated Act 1964* and is appropriate to meet the needs of the members. The officers' responsibility also includes such internal control as the officers determine is necessary to enable the preparation of a financial report that is free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

### Auditor's Responsibility

Our responsibility is to express an opinion on the financial report based on our audit. We have conducted our audit in accordance with Australian Auditing Standards. Those standards require that we comply with relevant ethical requirements relating to audit engagements and plan and perform the audit to obtain reasonable assurance whether the financial report is free from material misstatement.

An audit involves performing procedures to obtain audit evidence about the amounts and disclosures in the financial report. The procedures selected depend on the auditor's judgment, including the assessment of the risks of material misstatement of the financial report, whether due to fraud or error. In making those risk assessments the auditor considers internal control relevant to the association's preparation of the financial report that gives a true and fair view, in order to design audit procedures that are appropriate in the circumstances, but not for the purpose of expressing an opinion on the effectiveness of the association's internal control. An audit also includes evaluating the appropriateness of

accounting policies used and the reasonableness of accounting estimates made by the officers, as well as evaluating the overall presentation of the financial report.


We believe the audit evidence we have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our audit opinion.

### Opinion

In our opinion, the financial report presents fairly, in all material respects, the financial position of Women with Disabilities Australia Inc., as at 30 June 2014 and of its financial performance for the year then ended in accordance with the *Associations Incorporated Act (1964)*.

### Basis of Accounting and Restriction on Distribution

Without modifying our opinion, we draw attention to Note 1 to the financial report, which describes the basis of accounting. The financial report has been prepared to assist Women with Disabilities Australia Inc., to meet the requirements of the *Associations Incorporated Act (1964)*. As a result, the financial report may not be suitable for another purpose.

  
.....  
Michael J Burnett FCA  
Registered Company Auditor  
PARTNER, Accru+ Hobart

Date: 2-10-14

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