

**February 2018**

Website – [www.qai.org.au](http://www.qai.org.au)

**QAI's mission is to promote, protect and defend, through advocacy, the fundamental needs and rights and lives of the most vulnerable people with disability in Queensland.**

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**QAI's**  
**February Newsletter**

**1. Membership Drive**

**Are you a person with a disability? Are you a family member or supporter of people with disability?**

If you share the values and vision of our organisation - **WE NEED YOU!!!** Please call us or download a [membership form](#) and join our vibrant team to be involved in changing the lives of vulnerable people with disability.

**Stay in Touch**

Please keep an eye on our website, [www.qai.org.au](http://www.qai.org.au), Facebook page  (please like and share with your contacts), check out our videos at  and Twitter  for news of upcoming events and the next QAI forum.



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**Queensland Advocacy Incorporated, 2nd Floor, South Central, 43 Peel Street, SOUTH BRISBANE QLD 4101**

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**Patron: His Excellency The Honorable Paul de Jersey AC**

## 2. Current Work

### Campaigns

#### OPCAT

QAI was thrilled to see the Federal Government honour its commitment to ratify the Optional Protocol to the Convention Against Torture (OPCAT). This human rights treaty will have a significant practical impact in opening up previously closed places of detention to scrutiny. We have campaigned very hard to help to make this happen, and will now focus our efforts on ensuring that the national mechanisms developed for monitoring places of detention are well informed about and responsive to disability issues. You can read QAI's media release here:

<https://qai.org.au/queensland-advocates-applaud-the-federal-government-commitment-to-ending-torture/>

#### Human Rights Act



We have continued our active campaigning towards a Human Rights Act for Queensland and are very hopeful that we will see the enactment of legislative protection for the human rights of all Queenslanders in the very near future.

For more information about this campaign, visit:  
<http://www.humanrights4qld.com.au/>

You can donate to this campaign from our Facebook page or here  
<https://chuffed.org/fundraiser/a-human-rights-act-for-queensland-3462>

#### Campaign to Address Violence against People with Disability in their Homes

QAI is collaborating with WWild, Women's Legal service, Beth Dumont, Paula Ingles from TAFE and Linda Steele from University of Technology Sydney on the project: *Violence against People with Disability in their Homes*, incorporating violence against women with disabilities with the assistance of MC member Chanelle McKenna.

#### Accessible NGR Trains



QAI has continued to work on the campaign to ensure that the new generation of rollingstock are accessible for people with disability. We are presently awaiting the decision of the Australian Human Rights Commission on the exemption application, which may be handed down any day now.

Further information is available here:

<http://www.humanrights.gov.au/our-work/legal/exemptions/exemption-applications-under-disability-discrimination-act-1992-cth>

#### Inquiries, Law Reform Submissions and Presentations

QAI has made the following submissions in the last six months:

- *General Issues around Implementation of the NDIS*
- *Feedback on DSS Worker Screening Consultation paper*
- *General Comment on Equality and Non-discrimination (Article 5) – CRPD*
- *Fees for Paperless Bills - Inquiry into Paper Billing*
- *RBWH Clinical Services Plan 2018-23 Consultation*

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- *Review of Termination of Pregnancy Laws in Queensland*
- *Cashless Welfare Card submission*
- *NDIS Transitional Arrangements*
- *Child Protection Reform Amendment Bill*
- *Submission to the Law Council of Australia – The Justice Project*
- *Medicare Levy Amendment (National Disability Insurance Scheme Funding) Bill 2017 and 10 related bills*
- *NDIS Quality and Safeguards Bill*
- *Guardianship and Administration and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2017*

Copies of these submissions are available on our website: <https://qai.org.au/>

## Recent events

### **Launch of Human Rights Watch Report: *I Needed Help, Instead I Was Punished: Abuse and Neglect of Prisoners with Disabilities in Australia***

QAI was excited to host a sold-out expert panel discussion to launch this important and harrowing report at the Supreme Court library on 9 February 2018. Our expert panel, chaired by Queensland's Public Advocate Mary Burgess and comprised of Kriti Sharma, disability researcher from Human Rights Watch and author of the report, Debbie Kilroy, founder of Sisters Inside, Michael Cope, President of Queensland Council of Civil Liberties and Helen Blaber, Principle Casework Solicitor from Prisoners Legal Service, discussed some of the most significant issues requiring reform in this area.



You can read our media release about this important report here:

<https://qai.org.au/launch-of-the-human-rights-watch-report-i-needed-help-instead-i-was-punished/>

A full recording of the event will be uploaded soon to our Facebook page: 

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## Public hearings and symposiums

QAI has appeared at the following public hearings and events:

- *ADA Australia event “Shifting Consumer Control and the new Mental Health Act”*
- *Public Hearing—Examination Of The Guardianship And Administration And Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2017*
- *Senate Community Affairs Committee Inquiry- NDS – Inclusive And Accessible Communities*
- *Sexual Violence Awareness Month forum at Parliament*
- *Shadow Report to the CRPD workshop*
- *Expert Symposium on Preventing Torture and Abuse in Places of Detention*
- *Roundtable – OPCAT in the Australian Capital Territory*
- *CLCQ leadership forum in Townsville*
- *ASID 2017 Conference in Hobart*

## Michelle and Byron’s trip to Cherbourg

In December, QAI’s Director Michelle O’Flynn and President Byron Albury travelled to Cherbourg for two days to meet with the local Mayor, the convenor of the Rations Shed Museum and to promote and distribute material for the NDIS Appeals Support. They met with NDIA officials, representative Ron Wetherall and Andrew Horn from Department of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island Partnerships, and a service provider. They visited the local Aged Care facility, the hospital Centrelink and connected with Levi Murray Indigenous Outreach Worker from CRAICCHS - a community-controlled health organisation.

## 3. Pro Bono, Volunteers and Student Placement

### Pro Bono Support

We thank law firm **Allens** who provide volunteer lawyers to represent clients at the Mental Health Review and **Hall & Wilcox** whose volunteer lawyers assist with our Telephone Legal Advice Service. We would also like to thank our pro bono barristers, **Nanette Noble** and **David Cormack** and are pleased to welcome **Kylie Hilliard** and **Kate Slack** to our panel. We are grateful to **Minter Ellison** for reviewing QAI’s pro forma employment contracts on a pro bono basis.

### Volunteers

QAI continues to be supported by a number of student volunteers through the Disability Law Clinic (University of Queensland, two students every Tuesday) and Legal Clinic (Queensland University of Technology, two students every Monday). We thank these students and universities for their ongoing support.

We also thank our law student and other volunteers who generously donate their time to support the work of QAI.

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## 4. Individual Advocacy and Training

### National Disability Insurance Scheme – Reviews and Appeals

The Department of Social Services has granted funding to QAI to give **FREE** and **INDEPENDENT** support for people seeking to access the NDIS, or seeking a review of their plan.

In August we commenced the NDIS Appeals support in Rockhampton with our new but well known advocate, **Jenny Smith** who is now managing an ever-growing caseload.

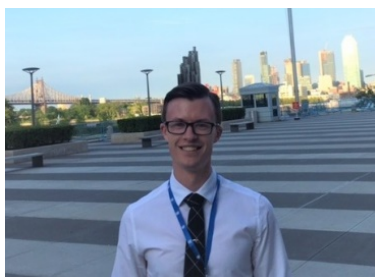


In December, we farewelled **Roy Henderson** and welcomed **Evee Perich** as NDIS Appeals Support Advocate. Eevee is a passionate and skilled advocate who came to QAI on a 500 hour social work placement towards completion of her Masters of Social Work. QAI is currently finalising our recruitment of a third NDIS Appeals Support Advocate.

### Advanced Health Directive Training for Clinicians

QAI has been working with ADAA to develop a training package for clinicians on Advance Health Directives (AHDs). This builds on work undertaken in 2017 to deliver training workshops to consumers and carers regarding the tool, which seeks to provide a means of documenting a person's views, wishes and preferences regarding their treatment and care and preferred supports should they be assessed as losing capacity in the future. QAI and ADAA have continued two-monthly meetings with a multi-stakeholder group including clinicians, consumer and carer network representatives, Independent Patient Rights Advisers and the Office of the Chief Psychiatrist. The training will be rolled out from March to May 2018.

## 5. Goodbye and Hello

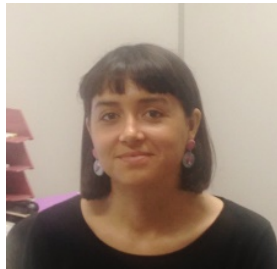


We were sad to farewell Human Rights Legal Service lawyer **Tony McCarthy** from QAI in late 2017. Tony was a dedicated and skilled advocate for his clients. We wish Tony well in his work with the Office of the Public Guardian.

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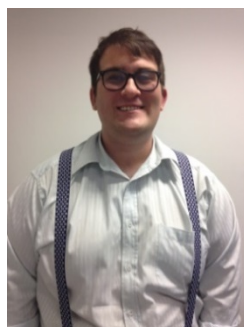
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We are pleased to welcome **Jason Abraham** to QAI as co-ordinator of the Human Rights Legal Service. Jason comes to us from the Office of the Public Advocate in Western Australia. After completing his law degree in London, Jason travelled to Australia where he has worked in various capacities within non-government and government agencies. Jason brings a wealth of knowledge of guardianship and administration laws to QAI.



We were sad to farewell **Anna Brasnett** as a paralegal but are excited to congratulate her on her admission as a Solicitor of the Supreme Court of Queensland. We thank Anna for her wonderful work at QAI and wish her all the best in her legal career.

We are pleased to welcome **Catherine Collins** to the role of paralegal. Catherine is joining us from Legal Aid Queensland where she worked as both a Client Information Officer and a Prison Support Officer over a period of 4 years. Catherine is an active member of the community legal sector having participated in several human-rights focused volunteer projects with community legal centres while studying toward her law degree. We look forward to her contributions to the QAI team.



We are pleased to welcome **Elijah Edwards** to QAI to provide administrative support for our NDIS Appeals support advocates. Elijah has degrees in both law and social work and is a former student volunteer with QAI.

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**Rebecca Howes** remains on sick leave – we wish her a speedy recovery. While Bec is away, we are grateful to have reception ably run by two of our former law student volunteers, **Ashleigh Wakefield** and **Jasmine Drummond**.

Mental Health Lawyer **Elle Beaumont** has reduced to part-time while she completes her psychology degree. Elle is now running QAI's Telephone Legal Advice Service every Tuesday and Friday, with support once a month from our wonderful volunteer lawyers from Hall & Wilcox.



## **6. Support QAI**

You can make a **real difference** to the lives of vulnerable people with disability by financially supporting QAI to make sure our advocacy efforts continue in the future. All donations over \$2.00 are tax deductible. All gifts are also welcome. You can make a donation online by visiting our website and clicking on the “How you can help” link on the front page. You can choose to make a one off donation or a recurrent donation. On our website QAI has partnered with Give Now.

Alternatively, you can contact us on **07 3844 4200** for further details about supporting QAI.

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