

MINUTES OF WWDWA Inc ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING  
Sunday, 26 November 2017  
Subiaco Arts Centre

1. Welcome & apologies

Meeting started at 2.20pm and Wendy welcomed everyone to the 2016/17 WWDWA AGM and acknowledged the traditional owners of the land and the elders leaders past, present and future and thanked them for allowing us to meet here today.

Present: Rayna Lamb (Coordinator), Wendy Wright (Chairperson), Petrina Lawrence (Committee Member), Leone Lawrence (Committee Member), Jackie Greene (Treasurer) with SW Jacint, Melanie Hawkes (Secretary) with SW Kaji, Marina Bentrovato, Jessie Raj, Sandra Yaxley, Paula Stekl, Ingrid Moore, Rachael Cox, Ardis Hood, Lisa Cairnes, Kabia Yapiwalla, AnniMac, Lynette-Kay Lewis, Janni Goss, Laura Sewell, Kerrie Duff, Sandra, Amanda, Monica McGhie, Georgie Hook, Lizzie Heynemann, Maggie Heynemann, Janet Tan, Kate Doherty, Zel Iscel, Wajina Podshall, Lisa Burnette with son Llewellyn, Linda de Rozario and Diane Vosganoff.

Apologies: Georgie George, Nihal Iscel, Alison McCarthy, Kerry Allan, Hilary Rumley, Sam Connor, James Hood, Annabelle Waller.

2. Confirmation of Minutes of 2017 AGM

No amendments, moved by Zel, seconded by Wendy.

3. Business Arising

none

4. Presentation of 2017 Reports

a. Coordinator's Report - Rayna

I too acknowledge the traditional owners of the land and in particular women with disabilities from the Noongar people. Thank you for all being here. This is my last AGM! As I announced last year I am stepping down from Coordinator at the end of December. I am proud to have started the organisation and run it for the past 14 years. It's extraordinary that it has not only run that long but run well and we are still getting new members. Welcome to the new members today. I hope you continue to be involved as I know it will be on to bigger and better things.

Since the last AGM I had a nasty health scare and ended up in Sir Charles Gairdner Hospital twice in one weekend in December. My immune system is

not what it used to be and I need to take a few years to improve it. I have also found that I haven't had the energy I had when I started the organisation and felt it needed fresh energy, fresh ideas to keep the organisation running. I have worked hard with the committee over the last few months to transfer all of the information and knowledge over to them so that they can hire the new coordinator. There are applications and an advert here so encourage any members to apply. I'm sure you will give the new person as much support and encouragement as you have given me. When I started the organisation I had actually never done anything like this before. I basically experimented on you all. But I have not achieved it all on my own, it's a group effort, and required everyone to come along. Even though women with disabilities can be isolated, it shows that when we band together, and use our different talents, we can do amazing things.

I haven't fully realised how amazing the last 14 years have been as it's been my whole life non-stop. It will take me a while to look back and think Wow! I am so grateful I was given the chance to do what I have done by all of you and to work with you all to make this a better world for women with disabilities. We have had a lot of opportunities to put forward our perspectives and experiences to government departments and other community organisations and the general public to raise awareness on the issues that affect us and how they affect us. It has been such an honour to be trusted with everyone's stories and experiences to make the world better for women and girls with disabilities, not just now but in the future.

Sometimes it's been exhausting and frustrating, but it has been such a privilege. One example is years ago, we held a forum on public speaking, and AnniMac and Amanda will remember, we all had to make up a speech and present it. I never forget Amanda's talk. She had always had male friends before joining WWDWA and since joining the organisation, had made friends with women with disabilities, and said at that forum that day that she is now proud to be a woman with a disability. And particularly for those of us born with our disability, it's a hard job to be proud of who we are. We are always told we are less than, or to be ashamed of what we can't do. So if this organisation has helped us to be proud of who we are, and if I drop dead tomorrow, I will die happy. I am so proud, if not a bit bewildered, that I got to facilitate this happening for so many of us. I am also prouder than I was 14 years ago. Being involved and knowing you all has changed me in so many ways and has made my life better. I hope it has made everyone's life a bit better. We can't change everything and we can't do it all overnight, but we can at least know we are not doing it alone.

I was asked to speak at the Dangerous Ideas forum by Sam Connor, in June or July, when it's cold and I am miserable, on disability pride. I enjoyed having a good rant! Now pride isn't about how you feel about yourself, or liking your disability. As some things are difficult, painful, exhausting, and inconvenient, but it doesn't mean that we can't be proud of who we are. Pride is the opposite of being ashamed. My cerebral palsy is not fun, but is part of who I am, and I am not ashamed of it but it took a long time to not be ashamed of it. Sometimes our disabilities cause problems, a lot of problems some of the time. But it doesn't mean we have any less right to be proud of who we are.

One of the other things I said was pride isn't just the way you feel about yourself, it's about how you feel about other people with disabilities. Because for many years of my life, I didn't want to be around other people with disabilities. I was taught to be as normal as possible, to fit in with able-bodied people. I was told I should want to be with normal people. I've learnt now that there's no such thing as a normal person and to get away from people who say they are normal! So I couldn't cope being around people with disabilities and I am sure a lot of us have felt that way. We are taught to feel that way, to fit in, to be mainstream. At the end of 2002 I attended the inaugural Women On Wellness Conference at Rocky Bay and my life completely changed. For the first time in my life I was around other people with disabilities and I didn't feel that they weren't my people. I felt like I belonged. And that's how all this started. So for me, seeing that we can band together and do things for ourselves and for each other and with each other, is so powerful. It has changed a lot of things about me and I think we have made some really important changes in WA for women with disabilities and a lot more people are aware of our issues. And that's all I wanted. And we've done that. This is my part of the journey done. I can't wait to see what the new coordinator will bring to it. I expect you to do amazing things and for the organisation to get even better and to do things that will make me think, "Oh jeez, I wish I'd thought of that!" You won't be seeing me around for a year or so as I plan to sleep, a lot. But I promise I will be at the next AGM unless something dodgy happens to my health as I'm really looking forward to hearing what you've all done without me.

In finishing, I would like to thank the committee, whose support has been wonderful. Melanie has stepped up and done an amazing job organising the AGM. I would like to thank you all for being here, and AnniMac, Janni Goss, in her absence, Peta Green, and Kate. AnniMac and Janni have been here from the start and have provided me personally with so much support. We could not have done this without you. And thanks to Kate for keeping me sane today. Thank you all so much and we will see you all next year.

b. Chairperson's Report – Wendy Wright.

2017 has been a year of challenges and triumphs for Women With Disabilities WA Inc. We were fortunate enough to receive a small grant from the Disability Services Commission – Disability Support Organisations Capacity Building Grants round. The grant enabled WWDWA to run and facilitate a number of workshops to unleash women with disability's creativity. The creative workshops were held at The Niche, Nedlands. They included voice and movement, visual art, writing and drama. The end result of the various workshops culminated in an exhibition of the work created by the women who attended.

We held our Women with Disabilities Telling Our Stories – Exhibition on the 28 March 2017 at the Kidogo Art House, Bather's Beach Fremantle. The opening of the event was received with a great turnout, and the varying works produced and exhibited by women with disabilities, ranging from black and white photography, painted self portraits and still life to spoken word and haiku, were absolutely outstanding.

I'd like to thank Samantha Connor, Jule Japhet Chiari and Leah Fewster, Suresh Rajan, Mallika McLeod, Bob Johnson, Annimac, Peta Green and Kate Doherty for their expertise, support, dedication and hard work that went into making our exhibition a great success.

On a slightly different note, WWDWA is saddened by, but totally support the resignation of our Coordinator, Rayna Lamb.

Rayna has continued to hold the role of coordinator in a voluntary capacity for almost 15 years and definitely deserves a long break after so long.

I sat for the longest time thinking of how to put into words, the amazing work Rayna has done for all women with disability in Western Australia, during that time, so I went back to the beginning, which by the way, is way before my time with WWDWA.

This is written with the utmost respect, admiration and love for you, Rayna. Women With Disabilities WA Inc. began as Women On Wellness in October 2003 after the successful 2002 Women on Wellness conference hosted by Rocky Bay and coordinated by Rocky Bay staff member Jane Donnelly. The conference led to a training course for women with disabilities held at the Loftus Street Community Centre in Leederville also coordinated by Jane and with the assistance of Rayna.

The training group further highlighted the need for a forum to take place regularly that specifically considered the needs of women with disabilities. Research and development undertaken found that there was a lack of opportunities for women with disabilities to meet, share information and build community and social networks that promotes inclusion and empowerment of women with disabilities in Perth.

In 2003, Rayna established a network of women with disabilities in Perth, which evolved into our community based organisation Women With Disabilities WA Inc.

We incorporated in June 2007, with a Management Committee made up entirely of women with disabilities.

In May 2013 thanks to a grant from the Developmental Disability Council, Management Committee members took part in our first Governance training workshop, and started to develop WWDWA Inc.'s first Strategic Plan.

The Ethnic Disability Advocacy Centre very generously donated the use of office space and equipment as well as administration support for Rayna to develop monthly forums and other activities for women with disabilities.

Rayna has been a pivotal part of WWDWA, a strong and sometimes fierce voice for all women with disability living in Western Australia, from that first conference put together by Rocky Bay, to all of the media and Parliamentary submissions regarding disability rights, people with disabilities & domestic and family violence, violence in institutions and disability activism you can find.

Rayna has been there for all of us, giving us tools and information we need to live the life we want, telling politicians what we want when we are not there, or couldn't say it. She has spoken to media when we were too shy to do so.

Am I going too far when I suggest Ms Rayna Lamb deserves an Order of Australia medal for her continuous work for women with disabilities?

Everyone clapped.

I would like to wish Rayna a safe and happy time and thank you from the bottom of my heart for everything you have done, the time, and energy you have given to WWDWA is so very much appreciated and will, I think, take some time to recover from. Take care of yourself, Rayna.

I'd like to thank the other women who made up the Management Committee this year - Jackie Green, Melanie Hawkes, Petrina Lawrence, Annabelle Waller, and Leone Lawrence and Elizabeth Edmondson. Everyone clapped. Elizabeth resigned from the committee during the year, I'd like to thank Elizabeth for her hard work and dedication to WWDWA and women with disabilities across WA.

Without your commitment, we would not have achieved what we have to date. Everyone clapped.

c. Treasurer's Report – Jackie Greene - read out by Leone.

Current Bank Balance:

As at 30 June 2017, the closing balance for Women With Disabilities WA Inc. was \$6,710.45. All donations gratefully accepted.

Grants:

The Community Inclusion and Participation Grant received from the Disability Service Commission in 2015 has been a great success. Resulting in the 'Telling Our Stories' Art Exhibition held at the Kidogo Arthouse down in Fremantle earlier this year.

The National Disability Insurance Agency - Disability Support Organisation Grant is going along well. So far, we have held two forums with Guest Speakers, Grace King – forum 1. Then Nihal Iscel spoke at forum 2. Forum 3 has been put on hold pending the WA Government decision on whether with the State or Federal NDIS. During the last financial year we applied to the Volunteer Grants 2016 under the Families and Communities Program. The Community Grants Hub received a large number of applications for funding from organisations and community groups across Australia. Overall, the standard of applications was high, making the selection process very competitive. Applications received under the Volunteer Grants 2016 selection process were assessed in accordance with the Community Grants Hub (the Hub) Policies. Unfortunately, our application was unsuccessful this time. However, this will not affect any applications we may make for grant funding in the future.

Donations:

No donations were received in the last financial year.

Summary:

Women With Disabilities WA Inc. now has an accounts email address. In the near future, I will be notifying all our regular suppliers to send their invoices to [accounts@wwdwa.org.au](mailto:accounts@wwdwa.org.au), to ensure prompt payment of their invoices.

As an organisation managing grant money, we understand the importance of being totally transparent in our financial dealings. We would like to reassure all our members that we take this responsibility seriously. There are strict policies and procedures put in place to guarantee all money is spent correctly e.g. the Coordinator and Treasurer must always co-approve any expenditure.

On a personal note, as we come together to celebrate the great contribution that the Legendary Ms Rayna Lamb has made to Women With Disabilities WA Inc. I'd

like to thank Rayna for giving me the opportunity to use my accounting skills for the benefit of others by becoming Treasurer of this organisation three years ago. Rayna was there from the beginning and has guided Women With Disabilities WA Inc. for many years. Along the way, she has advocated on behalf of Women with Disabilities in Western Australia on social justice issues. She has made a real impact on the way people in Western Australia view women with disabilities. It is with much respect that we inform you all that Rayna is stepping down from her position as Coordinator of Women With Disabilities WA Inc. The committee would like to thank Rayna for her enduring commitment to our organisation. We wish her every success in whatever new adventure she may endure, and hope she still comes visits us from time to time...

Reports moved by Zel and seconded by Sandra. No questions.

5. Election of 2017-2018 Office Bearers and Committee Members.

Call for nominations, two people nominated themselves. Wendy nominated as Chairperson, Melanie as Secretary, Jackie as Treasurer, Leone, Petrina, Georgie, Maggie and Marina as Committee Members.

6. Any Other Business

Maggie came to tell members about the annual White Flower Memorial, to take place after the AGM outside in the garden. Brought lots of white flowers today. Despite years of fighting, we are still waiting for a Royal Commission into disability violence, abuse and neglect, by friend, family and institutions. We are waiting for justice for hundreds of thousands of disabled people's lives who have been lost to violence, abuse and neglect. The government, despite being provided with countless substantiated testimonies to the Senate, rejected a call for a Royal Commission twice. And we know for the people who submitted testimonies, it would have been traumatic. Having to do it twice and been shot down twice has been pretty hellish. So today we gather for the annual White Flower Memorial to bear witness and honour each of these lives and demand justice. You may also be aware of the recent murder trial of 18-year-old Aaron Pajich-Sweetman. Some of us were honoured and unfortunate enough to sit through that violent trial with the family and heard things nobody should have to hear, and that Aaron lived and died through that. That highlights that violence still happens. This memorial is for Aaron and the many people who have gone before him. So the memorial, to be held here this afternoon, is to recognise these people and know that they are missed. We are not going to tolerate violence against people with disabilities. So feel free to join us at 4.30 for some snacks and fairy lights as we lay the white flowers and read out each name at this important event.

Jacint, Jackie's support worker, spoke: I am a 56-year-old woman, a chef by trade. Don't have a disability but may do soon as I am having trouble with my right hand. I would like to contribute to your organisation, doing arts and crafts, or anything really. I speak 5 languages, from Malaysia, a Muslim country. Came to Australia in 1986. This has been a wonderful community meeting and thank you for having me.

Zel spoke: since February, I have been working for the Women's Community Health Network on their Doors to Safety Project, which aims to promote safety for women with disabilities experiencing, mostly family and domestic violence, but all violence. The project entails working with the family and domestic violence sector, so we have capacity building workshops with the sector. So far I have done about 7 of them and have another 6 to go so far. We have capacity building with the disability sector around family and domestic violence as well. I ran 1 session in Geraldton and I have another to run on 14 December at NDS. I also have peer education sessions for women with disabilities and another session during Safety Week in September. I also plan on running other sessions for women with disabilities who not only have experienced family and domestic violence, but to prepare them for it if they encounter it in the future. We were hoping to run one with WWDWA this year but am really keen to do it next year. In exciting news, although I know it's not the be all and end all, is that the Department of Communities Disability Services has a new family and domestic violence policy, which now says that people with disabilities in residential care services experiencing violence from their co-residents, now counts as family and domestic violence so they can now get services. Everyone clapped. Rayna remarked that it has taken a long time to get there. Zel said it's a start as doesn't cover the staff of the service if they commit any violence against the residents there. So that is still a work in progress for us. But it's a start, as before, if one of the residents in care was abusing a co-resident, nothing would happen. They wouldn't move the person, there was no way for the person to find safety. So I am proud to work with the Doors to Safety Project in promoting this policy. So I just wanted to let you know what was happening, and if you want to be involved at any level, let me know. We hope to continue what we've started and have more gains in this space. Many attendees indicated their interest so Melanie asked Zel to send her the information to share with members.

#### 7. Close Meeting

Wendy closed the meeting at 3:15pm but asked everyone to remain where they are as we presented Rayna with a cake and present.