

STAR VICTORIA INC

Board of Management

2012 - 2013

President

James Henry

Vice President

Helen McFarlane

Secretary/Public Officer

Cynthia Pilli

Treasurer

Norrie Blythman

Assistant Treasurer

Gabrielle Dickinson

Board Members

Philip Graves

Emmy Elbaum

Loretta Krelle

Jane Rosengrave

Fiona Rowsell

Executive Officer

Esther Harris

Administration Officer

Pam Geoghegan

Auditor

Barco and Associates

STAR VICTORIA INC.

STAR is unique in Victoria in that it brings together people concerned with *all aspects* of intellectual disability, and works to support the interests and rights of people with an intellectual disability and their families throughout *all their lives*.

STAR was formed in 1970 when parents of people with an intellectual disability recognised that, whilst trying to improve the circumstances of their own sons and daughters, it was essential to change the community attitudes intellectual disability. Considerable change has been achieved and momentum maintained through consistent and targeted social action inherent in STAR's work. In later years other organisations have been formed and have joined with STAR in strengthening the momentum.

STAR was then and remains today, the only statewide advocacy organisation with a specific focus on the rights of individuals with an intellectual disability, to participate in the community as an equal from birth throughout their entire life.

STAR works to achieve greater community awareness, attitude change and government and systemic responsiveness to the needs of people with an intellectual disability, to enable inclusion, equity, and participation.

STAR Victoria is valued in Victoria and nationally, and its assistance, views and input are sought from a diverse range of individuals, and organisations both government and non-government.

STAR has a proud 43 year history of empowering and resourcing people with an intellectual disability, their families and supporters, to speak up, be heard and make change.

STAR VICTORIA INC.

VISION STATEMENT

STAR believes in a society that lives by the principles of equity and social justice by

- Ensuring people with an intellectual disability have rights and access to the services in our community they need to participate fully in society.

MISSION STATEMENT

STAR as a community organisation, advocates on a statewide basis for the rights of people with an intellectual disability and their families by

- changing community attitudes
- informing, assisting, advocating for and empowering people with an intellectual disability and their families
- working individually and collectively to influence the decision makers to bring about real inclusion and lasting change for people with intellectual disability

MINUTES OF ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING
STAR Victoria Inc.
5th December, 2012

Present: Gabrielle Dickinson (Chair), Cynthia Pilli, John Wakefield, Loretta Krelle, Andrew Daly, James Henry, Helen MacFarlane, Pauline Williams (AMIDA) Chris Jennings, Philip Graves, Amanda Hiscoe, Norrie Blythman, Shirana Nash (OFD) Mark Feigan (OPA), Anthony Kolmus(Office of DSC), Heather Hindle, Gillian Armstrong, Sarah Day (Ross House Ass), Marie Sheahan

In attendance: Esther Harris and Pam Geoghegan

Apologies: the Hon. Mary Wooldridge (Min.for Community Services), the Hon. Martin Dixon (Min. for Education), Danielle Green (Shadow Minister for Community Services) the Hon. Wendy Lovell (Minister for Children and Early Childhood Development) Jenny Mikakos (Shadow Minister for Children and Young Adults) Christine Campbell (State Member for Pascoe Vale) Colleen Hartland (MLC Western Region), John Slattery, Emmy Elbaum, Jane Hauser, Kelly Geoghegan, Carolyn Vimpani, Loraine Rodrigues, Sue Smith(SARU) Dean Dadson (OFD) Janice Slattery Colin Hiscoe, Gen Rowley (GDIA), Deidre Griffiths (Villamanta), Brenda McMinn, Julie Phillips (DDLs), Claire Thorne and Dina Bowman

1 .Welcome

President Gabrielle Dickinson opened the meeting and acknowledged the Traditional Land Owners and welcomed everyone. She noted that the Celebration of the life of Ethel Temby which had preceded this AGM had been a source of inspiration to us all. The numerous presentations from a diverse range of individuals who had worked with Ethel over the years reminded us of her vision, commitment and extraordinary contributions to the lives of people with an intellectual disability and their families as well as encompassing the many significant aspects of her life and wide ranging interests with both humour and substance.

She asked Esther to read the apologies.

"That the apologies as read be accepted"

Moved: Philip Graves **Seconded:** Helen McFarlane **Carried**

2. Allocation of Proxies

Esther informed the meeting that one proxy had been received which was then allocated, as directed, to the Chair.

3. Minutes of AGM 23rd November 2011 were tabled

“That the Minutes as circulated be accepted”

Moved: Cynthia Pilli **Seconded:** James Henry **Carried**

4. Presentation of Annual Report

Gabrielle tabled the Annual Report which had been circulated to those present She and Esther spoke briefly to this and responded to several questions from the floor.

“That the Annual Report be received and accepted.”

Moved: Loretta Krelle **Seconded:** Gillian Armstrong **Carried**

5. Treasurer’s Report The Treasurer, Cynthia Pilli referred to her written report and tabled the audited financial statements which had been circulated to those present

“That the Financial Report and audited statements for 2011/12 be received and adopted.”

Moved: Cynthia Pilli **Seconded:** James Henry **Carried**

6. Appointment of Auditor

“That Barco and Associates be appointed as Auditor for 2012/13”

Moved: Loretta Krelle **Seconded:** Cynthi Pilli **Carried.**

7. Election of Board Members

As no nominations had been received by the closing date, Gabrielle called for nominations from the floor to fill the remaining vacancies on the Board. No nominations were forthcoming. Gabrielle noted that the Constitution allowed for any remaining vacancies to be filled by co-option during the coming year and that the current Board members would be considering this at their next meeting.

8. Close of Meeting.

There being no other business Gabrielle thanked those present for their attendance and declared the meeting closed at 4.15pm

President's Report, 2012-13

I've enjoyed being on the STAR's Board again this year, and especially my first year as President. Being involved with the Board has been a very rewarding experience for me, and has given me the opportunity to increase my knowledge about a wide range of issues and benefit from the vast experience of members of the organisation, past and present.

Apart from STAR's ongoing and vital work of providing individual advocacy, we also worked on a number of systemic issues which are outlined in the Executive Officer's report. However the highlight for me was our work around Inclusive Education. Arising from the work of the Inclusive Education Alliance which was established last year, we organised a forum 'All Schools for All Children', which was held in September. This successful event went smoothly and the feedback from participants was positive and constructive. The discussions and comments were robust and insightful and people valued and appreciated the opportunity to share their own experiences and listen and learn from those of others. The success of this forum was due to many people in a team effort but I'd just like to especially thank Esther and Pam who did so much work over a number of months and on the day to ensure that it all went well. Thanks to the members of the STAR Board Working Group on Inclusive Education for driving this idea to its fruition with so much passion commitment and practical support.

Special thanks to our Executive Officer, Esther Harris, for her great dedication to STAR and our goals, for providing individual advocacy, promoting STAR and its work, and managing the office efficiently and effectively throughout the year. Esther's unwavering commitment and efforts have continued despite the trauma of personal loss and family illness this year, and we hope things will settle down for her.

Special thanks to Pam Geoghegan for her undertaking of some individual advocacy, her diligent attention to administrative matters, and in particular for her work on our website upgrade which is currently in progress.

Thank you to my fellow Board members who have all worked as a team, contributing their diverse experience, breadth of knowledge, and dedication to in working towards achieving STAR's vision of ensuring people with an intellectual disability have rights and access to the services in our community they need to participate fully in society

James Henry - President.

Executive Officer's Report

2013 has been another busy year for STAR with Board members, staff and volunteers working hard with and for people with an intellectual disability and their families

Again this year the Board of STAR has ably undertaken its role in leading and managing the organization, directing and monitoring our work within the framework of STAR's principles, policies and available resources. Individual Board members have brought issues to the attention of the Board or have had matters referred to them via correspondence or by staff for discussion, decisions and strategies for future action

At the Annual Planning day in February this year the following areas were identified as priorities for our work. These were Inclusive Education, Strengthening and Supporting Families, including parents with an intellectual disability, Monitoring and supporting the implementation of the NDIS and the Closure of all remaining Institutions in Victoria by 2015.

The office was again staffed 3 days a week, with the Executive Officer employed for 19hrs a week and the Administration Officer for 7hrs. The office was open Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday between 9-30a.m. and 4pm with some capacity for flexibility outside of usual hours when required.

50 new people received individual advocacy support, either in the short term or ongoing over weeks or sometimes months as we worked towards reaching a satisfactory outcome for the person concerned- The patterns of previous years were again evident with the most common areas being Education, especially schooling, Housing and support for adults to live independently outside of the family home and Disability services. Again, a common underpinning factor was the continuing level of unmet need across all areas but most especially in relation to real choice and quality.

We provided information and assistance to people with an intellectual disability and/or family members on a range of issues to enable them to advocate on their own behalf or with or for a family member. This includes referring and connecting people to the services with the relevant expertise to provide the support to meet their needs within their local area or community. Trends and issues identified from individual advocacy informs and focuses our systemic advocacy.

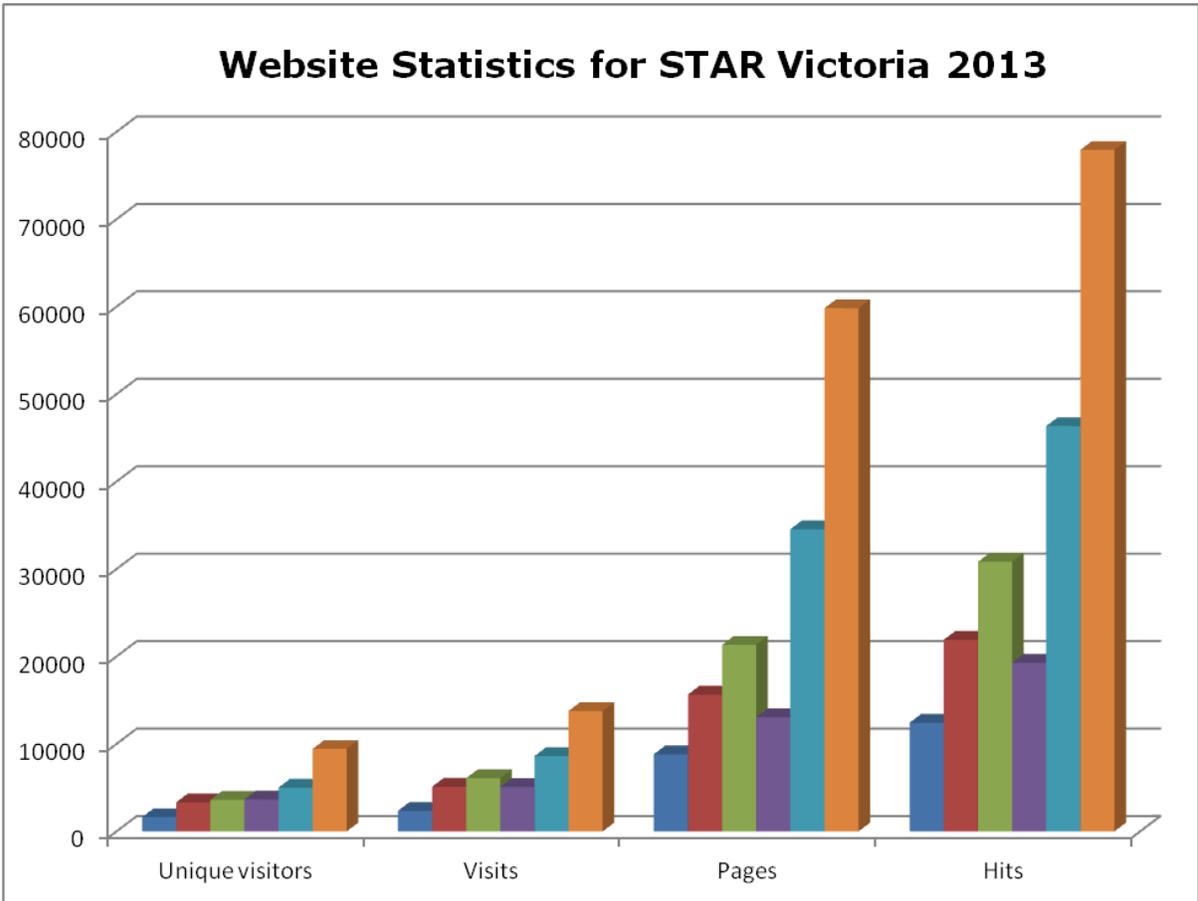
STAR's advocacy and support is firmly based on Human Rights principles.

We were able to further develop our knowledge and skill in regard to implementing a Human Rights approach to advocacy using the Victoria Charter of Human Rights, by participating in forums/workshops organized by DARU and, VEOHRC and DDLS.

Information was provided in print and other formats as requested and accessed via an extensive range of community data bases and links and was also made available at forums, conferences etc. Workers from both generic and specialist services contacted us for information and students and researchers sought access to our library and other resources.

The use of the STAR website as a contact point showed a marked increase. This is reflected in the statistics provided by Web3K as represented by the graph below.

STAR WEBSITE STATISTICS
Comparison of 2008, 2009, 2010, 2011, 2012 & 2013



This year we had 9,437 visitors to the site who visited the site 13,770 times, looked at 59,834 pages and made approximately 77,936 hits

Following on from the work undertaken in 2012, STAR increased its efforts in regard to achieving Inclusive Education in Victoria. This year we provided the administration support and facilitated a number of meetings of the Inclusive Education Alliance which was set up last year. The IEA is a group of individuals and organisations from the education and disability advocacy fields committed to the promotion and achievement of “Inclusion for all” in the education of students with disability in Victorian education. A key initiative of the IEA was a forum held in September “All Schools for all children” for which STAR took the lead role in regard to its planning and organization.

More than 50 people including parents, teachers, students, service providers, professionals, and advocates met to discuss and affirm the lifelong implications both individual and societal, for achieving full inclusion for students with a disability, to identify and address the challenges, to look at ways to actively support participants by sharing information, experiences and good practice and to create opportunities for ongoing dialogue and networking

There was an overwhelming recognition of the fundamental importance of the “All schools for all children” ideal and agreement that the barriers are not economic, they are attitudinal; and they are deeply rooted in our society. The losers in our prejudiced and excluding system are multiple-the students who have a disability who suffer rejection, humiliation, lack of understanding and opportunity, their families who are constantly faced with trying to overcome the barriers at every stage in their child’s education and everyone else who is denied the additional contributions which these members of our community can make.

STAR representatives including staff and Board members participated in consultations, forums, workshops across a range of areas. These included the NDIS, the Criminal Justice System, Supported Decision Making, and Disability Health & Social Inclusion, and MYKI. In March STAR representatives met with Laurie Harkin, Disability Services Commissioner, to discuss his role and explore current and emerging issues.

We also made a submission to the Senate Inquiry into Coerced Sterilisation of People with a Disability - Thanks to Chris Jennings for her invaluable assistance with this.

Whilst welcoming the closure of Sandhurst Institution in May this year we still need to be vigilant as still more needs to be done in Victoria to ensure the closure of all remaining institutions in Victoria and indeed across Australia. The recent celebration commemorating the closure of Caloola 21 years ago was a wonderful

opportunity to hear people share their memories of life in Caloola and how their lives have changed so much for the better since moving into the community.

Networking has always been a key feature and asset, as we worked collaboratively with other advocacy organisations and networks to achieve positive outcomes for both individuals and at a systemic level.

Our membership of Disability Advocacy Victoria, the peak body for advocacy orgs in Victoria has again enabled us to share information, develop agreed policy positions and take collective and effective action. This will be particularly crucial as the implementation of the NDIS progresses in the coming months. We will need to closely monitor this identify issues and concerns as well as good practice and to ensure that access to independent advocacy is safeguarded and available to people with an intellectual disability and their families at all stages of the NDIS process.

STAR welcomes the recent launch and establishment of the Victorian Self Advocacy Network and looks forward to working with them in the future.

Finally, on behalf of Pam and myself, thank you to all the members of the STAR Board for your encouragement and support throughout the year, both personal and professional. We look forward to working together with the new Board over the next 12 months to enhance the work of STAR in its 44th year.

The work of Cynthia Pilli in relation to the STAR Newsletters is much appreciated and has taken much of the load associated with their production off the STAR office.

The contribution of our volunteers, in particular Kelly Geoghegan, for their assistance with Newsletter mail outs and the preparation and distribution of information brochures/materials is acknowledged and much valued. Thank you too, to our Work Experience student Mario Doslovic for his assistance in the office during his placement.

Thanks also to Michael Cromie, Felix Neighbour and Alison Tunks from the Office For Disability for their assistance during the year.

And, most importantly, thank you to our members, supporters and allies of STAR for the interest and encouragement you have shown throughout the year.

Esther Harris
Executive Officer

Treasurer's Report
Financial Year July 1st 2012 to June 30th 2013

I have enjoyed my first year as Treasurer and am pleased to report that we have managed to achieve a lot with very limited resources. As part of our funding agreement 2012-2015 we received funding through the Advocacy Program for which the Office for Disability has responsibility in the Department of Human Services. A Minor Works and Equipment Grant of \$1,725 enabled us to upgrade one of our computers and purchase some ergonomic office furniture to address Occupational Health and Safety concerns.

As well as contributing to our finances annual subscriptions and donations from members and supporters indicate commitment to and recognition of the importance of STAR's work.

I would like to thank my fellow Board members for their support during the year as I took on my new role as Treasurer. Special thanks to assistant Treasurer Gabrielle Dickinson and Executive Officer Esther Harris for helping make my first year as Treasurer of STAR go without a hitch.

Norrie Blythman
Treasurer



STAR Victoria acknowledges the support of the Victorian Government.