



# December Newsletter 2020

## EDITORIAL



Welcome to our summer edition. this year has been really difficult for people with a disability working from home because we weren't able to get back in the office due to COVID19 but we hope we can get back Early next Year.

Reinforce is having a Christmas picnic on 16<sup>th</sup> December at Ross House and we are breaking up that day and returning on January 13<sup>th</sup> 2021.

We are all waiting and wanting to get back to our normal lives again. We have missed each other and all of our friends at Ross House.

The committee and staff wish our members a very Merry Christmas and a Safe New Year!

With COVD-19 we think this year has gone very fast or slow (What does everyone else think, give us your answer yes) or No)

We would like to hear from our members what you like about the newsletter? if you would like to receive the newsletter by email? I will make sure you get a copy.

Send in your email address to [gipsygirl88@bigpond.com](mailto:gipsygirl88@bigpond.com) or [sw@reinforce.org.au](mailto:sw@reinforce.org.au)

If you wish to know more about Reinforce please see our website

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

**Disclaimer** All information contained within the Reinforce newsletter is as accurate as possible and is provided in good faith, however it is not guaranteed. Reinforce does not recommend any product, activity, organisation, service or item – such details are provided with the Reinforce news for general information and interest only.

### WHAT'S IN THIS NEWSLETTER

Articles from Colin Hiscoe

Our new Worker Annie Hooper.

Janice And John.

From Susan Arthur.

Georgia Mills.

Amanda Miller.

Our award.

Chris Lowe

Birthday Column

Jane Rosengrave

## **Birthday Column**

We wish the following Reinforce members a very happy birthday for December and the upcoming months.

James Teekan: December 20<sup>th</sup>.

Heather Smith: January 26<sup>th</sup>.

Pam Geoghegan: February 1<sup>st</sup>.

Amanda Miller: February 5<sup>th</sup>.

Julie Brasington: February 9<sup>th</sup>.

Jane Rosengrave: February 21<sup>st</sup>.



**If any of the members would like their birthday mentioned in the birthday column just SMS me your birthday and your name to (0439806000)**

## **COVID19**

Since Ross House have closed their door I have heard people saying this working from home is really difficult and wishing we could go back to Ross house. People with an intellectual disability have had a hard time keeping in touch with people, especially those who live in supported accommodation.

For me what do I think about this virus? I think that if Daniel Andrews had locked down the state for about a month, people being tested but some were still going to work or in the community. Look at the people demonstrating about the masks and I am wondering how did other people catch the virus? I think it was because of people not obeying the rules and they touch something or cough near someone. I don't understand how a person can catch the virus if they are obeying the rules the only thing I can think of is what I have already said the person with the virus touching something or coughing on people. The Government or the police or both parties need to be stricter on people not obeying the rules. I also believe that fining them might be good but I am sure they will still not obey the rules.

## **What is VDAC?**

This is the Victorian Disability Advisory Council which is made up of members who have different disabilities. This council provides independent policy advice to the Minister for Disability, Ageing and Careers on whole-of-government strategies to build a more inclusive Victoria and to increase opportunities for people with disabilities.

For more information this is the link to the website

<https://www.statedisabilityplan.vic.gov.au/vdac>

You can see who is a member of VDAC and their expertise and lived experience of disability, you can also sign up for VDAC updates at the bottom of the above webpage.

My name is Annie Hooper.

I am the new Project Inclusion Worker at Reinforce.

I am so excited to be starting work at Reinforce! I can't wait to meet everyone and start working as a team.

I will be working on the Self Advocacy Training Unit project with Heather and Georgina. We will also be employing two new peer workers for this project.

This project will be about spreading the word about the wonderful work that Reinforce does. We will also be talking to different groups about self-advocacy and how to speak up!

Thank you for giving me a warm welcome on ZOOM.

Hope to meet everyone face-to-face one day!



## COVID-19 and us!

It has been a long haul but Melbourne is getting there but we still have a long way to go to get back to a normal life, it has been frustrating especially for people with a disability.

We are happy the shops are back and you can sit down at the café and have coffee and lunch but you still have to wear masks.

We should feel sorry for Adelaide.

We hope nothing happens to Victoria because it has taken us a long time to get here.



## **Positive Powerful Parents Update**

Positive Powerful Parents were lucky enough to receive another grant from the (ILC) Information Linkages Capacity building.

It is an extension to the parent's rights network project with a new focus on parents helping parents.

The project will continue to work with parents with an (I.D.) Intellectual Disability.

The project is to train parents and help them make Parent Self Advocacy Groups.

The states we are working in are Victoria, New South Wales and Queensland. And we will also keep in-touch with our current friends that we have been working with.

The project has been funded for 2 years.

PPP is really excited and we are looking forward to making some new friends that are parents with an I.D

### **Catch up with Amanda**

Hi to you all in outer space from Sale,  
How are you all doing?

I am bringing home a big bag of things like stories, photos, and other things like drawings, paints and much more to share when I am back in Melbourne.

This bag has been a big pain in the butt because it has stopped me from doing my things at home and work.

On the other hand I had to learn new skills and knowledge here from Sale on my iPad.

At times it has been like world war 3 for me here (let me out) I have been keeping Sale going by spending my money up here. Now it is over 8 months. This Trecky! is coming home from Sale and outer space on the 25-11.20. I missed you all.

## The Aspire Awards

Congratulations to Susan Arthur and Janice Slattery for their achievements! Join the virtual awards on 2<sup>nd</sup> December.



## **Chris – Reinforce Support Worker**

It looks like COVID-19 restrictions are finally starting to ease and things are slowly starting to go back to something more like normal. We can finally see our families and friends as well as do other fun things we have not been able to do like eating at cafes or swimming. But it is important to remember that things are not fully back to normal and we still need to keep our distance and make sure to wash or sanitize our hands often.

Everyone from Reinforce has been working from home since March because of the restrictions. Right now, as I type this the current restrictions mean we are still not allowed to work in the office or have events at Ross House and we must wear masks when are not at home. Hopefully, some of the rules will change soon, and we will be able to start slowly getting back to a more normal way of working next year.

Even when we can get back to the office Reinforce will need to make a plan to make sure we can work safely. We will have to have rules about the number of people who can come into the office at one time, so if you are thinking of coming in please contact us first to check that it is ok.

I would like to wish everyone a happy Christmas. Stay safe and see you in the New Year.





Self Advocacy Training Unit Project Co-ordinator  
- Georgina Mills

Hi Everyone, I can't believe we are at the end of another year! We have done so much since we last saw each other in the Reinforce office in March. We have had meetings and done training and now we are very excited that we have a new worker.

Annie Hooper is our new Project Inclusion Worker. Annie has a lot of experience working with self advocacy groups in London and community and union groups here in Victoria. Please make her feel welcome when you meet her at the next zoom meeting or in person.

We will be finishing the year with our usual end of year event. This time it will be outdoors. You will receive your invitation soon and you must reply if you are wanting to come. We hope to see you there on Wednesday 16<sup>th</sup> December at 12 noon. Please let us know if you can make it!

Next year will be a great one with many new things ahead for the project. At the start of 2021 we will employ 2 new Peer Workers. Please keep a look out for more information in February. As the year goes on there will be more training and events for you to come to as well.

Thank you to all members who have worked hard this year and to everyone who has enjoyed the social events and made an effort to learn new things.

Let's hope we can be together in the office next year!

Merry Christmas, Georgina

---

## **A message from Jane – Sincerely Survivor**

I have been involved with the message that the following performance represents. I have had several meetings with Hannah in the last couple of years to provide information about my early life in institutions in Victoria. The dance is an interpretation of what people with an intellectual disability and others felt while living closed away from society for many years. I spoke about my life in (not so) Pleasant Creek institution – the dances take place inside the eerie Pleasant Creek and Arandale institution's with the many ghosts we left behind. This performance is on at the Melbourne Fringe Festival.

More information about the outcome –

'Sincerely Survivor is a touring performing and visual art exhibition produced by Grace Dance Company and Inertial Frames, working in partnership with many other established stakeholders including Dax Centre Melbourne, SANE Australia, Transit Dance Studios, and Grampians disAbility Advocacy.

Sincerely Survivor was founded to provide a platform where lived experiences of mental ill health can be articulated, harnessing the therapeutic power of art and peer support in the recovery journey. We collaborate with artists and survivors of mental ill health, complementing the Royal Commission into Victoria's Mental Health System, which seeks to provide opportunities for wider community conversations about mental health with a view towards ending stigma and discrimination.

Our process engages arts-based research, a holistic alternative to more traditional research methods. As our work expands we are looking to engage with people and partners who may be able to help our mental health advocacy efforts go further, as well as outreach to new communities. You can find our online public portfolio of works and a link to our community fundraising page here -

<https://www.sincerelysurvivor.org/>