

reinforce
self advocacy

38th Annual Report 2025



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www.reinforce.org.au



www.facebook.com/groups/reinforceadvocacy



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Management Committee

2025

Reinforce members elect a committee of management each year. The committee meet every month to run Reinforce and make plans for the future. Committee members all volunteer their time to support Reinforce to run well.



Colin Hiscoe
President



John Slattery
Vice President



Amanda Millear
Treasurer



Janice Slattery
Secretary



Jane Rosengrave
Assistant Treasurer



Sally Heggaton



Eve Kinnear



Mr Mouse



James Teeken

President's Report



Hello and welcome everyone to our Reinforce Annual General Meeting for 2025. This year has been very very busy with the resignation of three of our paid workers: Georgina Mills, Amelia and Chris Lowe - our old support worker. I want to thank them all for supporting Reinforce and all their hard work.

So hopefully you will now be able to understand and see what I meant by a very busy year. But thank you to the self-advocacy resource people like:

- Melanie who worked with the peer workers and the Reinforce committee.
- Jessica for all your help and support.
- Heidi for helping us write a submission for My House, My Home, My Rights - Revisited which was successful.

We also have a steering committee for the My House, My Home, My Rights project who are Jane, Sally, Janice, John, Amanda, James, Mr Mouse, and Colin. These meetings are to be held on the fourth Wednesday of each month, and the Reinforce Management Committee Meeting are held on the first Wednesday of each month.



Things I have been involved in:

- Office of the Public Advocate meetings.
- Independent Third Person training.
- Preparing some training for management committee members and new members to Reinforce next year.
- Setting up steering committee meetings.
- Looking at, reading and talking about the job ad for a new support worker.
- Meeting and organizing and preparing with Melanie a flyer for the management committee to meet in person our new support worker in person.
- Been involved in the National Self-Advocacy Day Award.
- Meeting with our new support worker and giving her information on what we are working on and what to concentrate on which is our Annual General Meeting and report.

New Support Worker



It is my great pleasure that we all at Reinforce welcome our new support worker Georgia Smith and we all look forward to working with you and looking forward to your knowledge and skill and training that you will bring to share with us all here at Reinforce.

Thank You

- To the Department of Social Services for funding My House, My Home, My Rights - Revisited project.
- Heidi for helping to write the submission and everything else you helped us with.
- My friend John and management committee for all your hard and ongoing support when I was sick and in hospital.



To the new Management Committee in December 2025 I look forward to working with you all and listening to your suggestions and ideas and seeing how and if we can do them.

Thank you all for coming and we all hope you got a lot of information and enjoyed yourself.

Colin Hiscoe
President Reinforce

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Treasurer's Report



Hi folks, this is my 22nd report as Treasurer. It was another busy year and learning new things as well. I kept an eye on the money that goes in and out of Reinforce's account. Our funding is used for rent, phone bills, catering and that sort of stuff.

And costs are going up, which means we need more money to cover our bills and wages. Reinforce has applied for some funding to do more projects. We as Reinforce thank the State Government for our funding which comes in every month. I still give my monthly treasurer's report to the committee of management and I do keep an eye on the bank account when I'm home too.

Chris left in May of this year and I thank him for all his support, he supported me lots as treasurer and with the finance meetings. From me, best wishes for the future for Chris! Thank you to the finance committee for their time and commitment and dedication. To the people who approve pays. I want to give a big thank you for their support to a number of people who do those things. Thank you to Brenda for supporting me with the Finance subcommittee and my role as Treasurer.



Hope you've all enjoyed my treasurer's report, it has been an honour and a pleasure to serve you in my 22nd year as treasurer at Reinforce.

Catering Coordinator

I have now been Reinforce's Catering Coordinator for 15 years. For the last 12 months Reinforce have catered for the committee meetings, the Big Issues Group and My House, My Home steering meetings as well. And I'd like to say thank you to all the people who have got things and set up things for these three meetings. We have had sandwiches, cakes and biccies, and soft drinks, that were given to people at these three meetings to give these people strength to carry on with food and drink! That's all folks, now bye!!



Pass the biscuits
please!

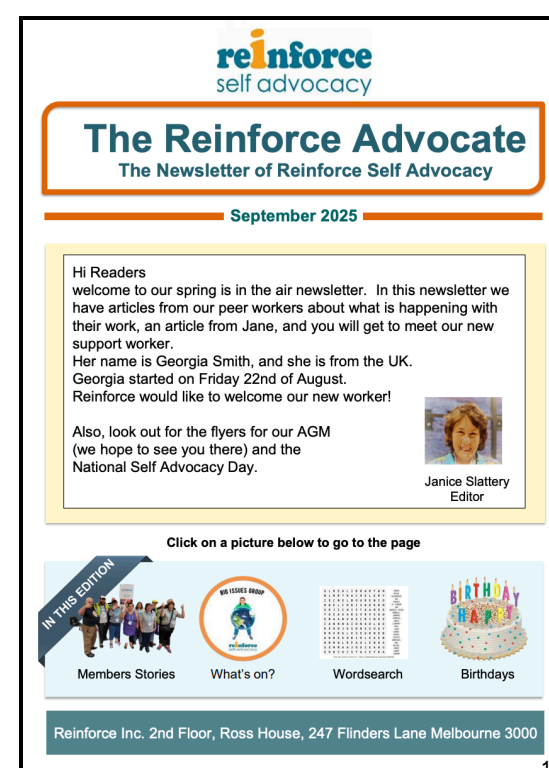
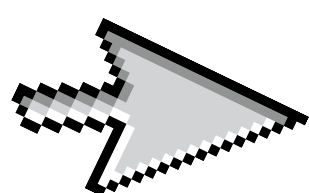
Amanda Millear
Treasurer & Catering Coordinator

Secretary's Report



I have been the secretary now for 5 years, phew that's gone fast!
I've learnt a lot in those 5 years and also I've been editor of the newsletter for 15 years, how time flies!!

In my time as editor I have learnt how to use the computer to put parts of the newsletter together and add in photos. As the secretary I send out the minutes after meetings, I like doing that. We're hoping to get more funding to use to get new members and updating our equipment, new computers - that actually work! That will make my job a lot easier.



And in my spare time when I'm not at Reinforce, I enjoy going on holidays and riding my bike and having coffee with my husband. We're going on an 11 day cruise in October to Adelaide, Kangaroo Island and Hobart and Port Arthur.

Janice Slattery
Secretary & Newsletter Editor

Peer Worker's Report



Leonie



Heather



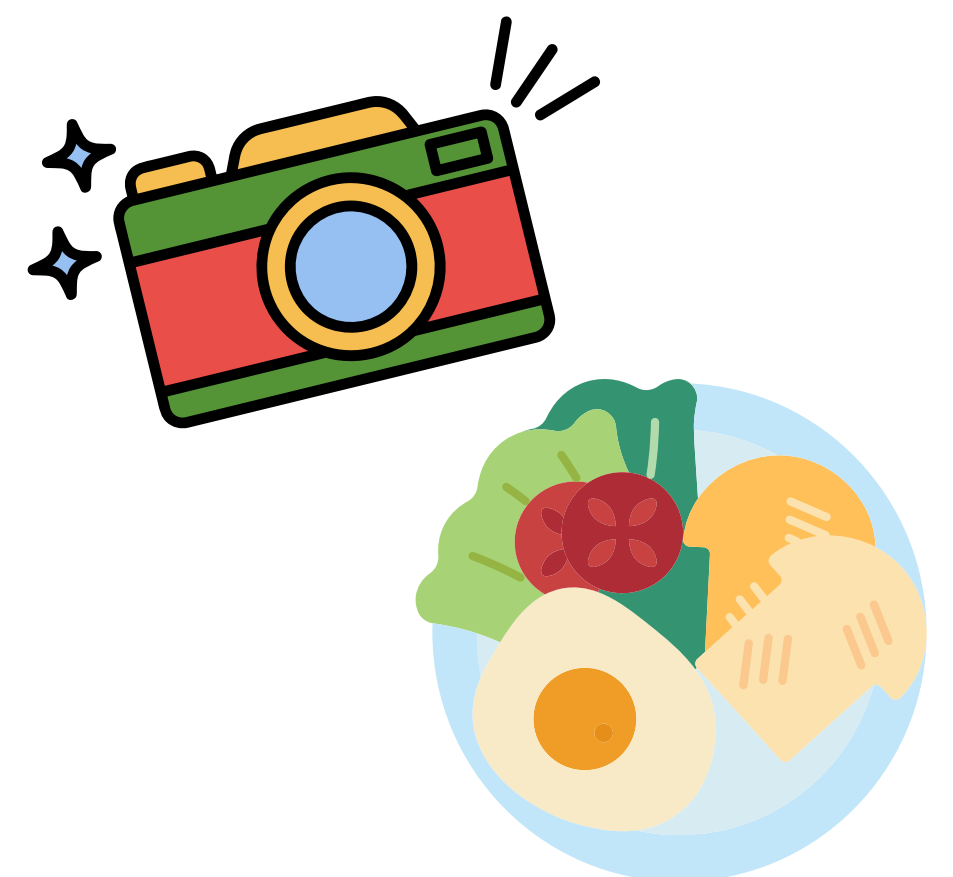
Eddie

2025 has been a challenging year for the Peer Workers because there has been a long wait to get the funding to start a new project. There was also no support worker at Reinforce for a long time so some projects were stopped.

The Peer Workers stepped up to support Reinforce by getting the rooms ready for meetings, doing extras tasks around the office, going shopping for meeting snacks and setting up Zoom meetings. It was quite a challenge but interesting to learn new skills.

The Peer Workers organised Big Issue Group meetings for Reinforce, this is talked about on page 11.

The Peer Workers did a project with Victoria University about food and the lived experience of people with intellectual disability in Australia. They had to take photos of all the food they ate for 2 days.



Leonie:

The thing I liked doing at Reinforce for the year was helping with the Big Issue Group.

I am excited about starting a new project in 2026 about My House, My Home, My Rights in CRUs.

Heather:

My favourite thing I did at Reinforce this year was attending Mel Keely's farewell lunch as a Reinforce volunteer. Even though it was a sad time saying goodbye, I have heaps of good memories of Mel within the Self-Advocacy movement.



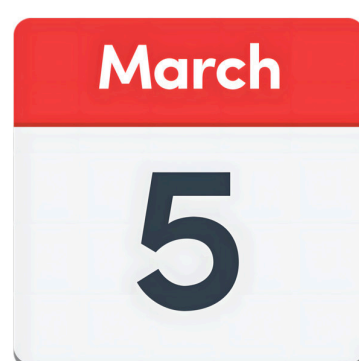
The thing I am excited about doing in 2026 is being employed again by Reinforce to work on the updated version of My House, My Home, My Rights. This will give us peer workers longer hours and more pay. This would relieve some of the stressful situations knowing that I will be receiving an ongoing income for more affordability.

Eddie:

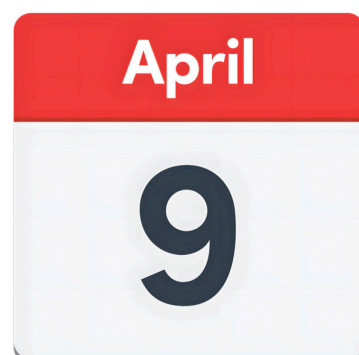
My favourite thing I did this year at Reinforce was doing the Big Issue Group and doing the stuff for it and setting it up. Next year I'm excited about doing a new project. Looking forward to recruiting new members.

Big Issue Groups 2025

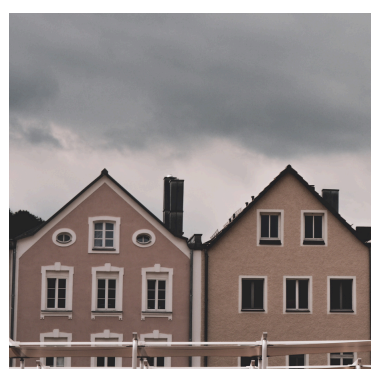
The Big Issue Group is a supportive place to talk with other self advocates about issues that affect people with disabilities. We meet on Zoom and in-person to talk about different topics which are important to us. In 2025 Reinforce hosted 6 Big Issue Groups:



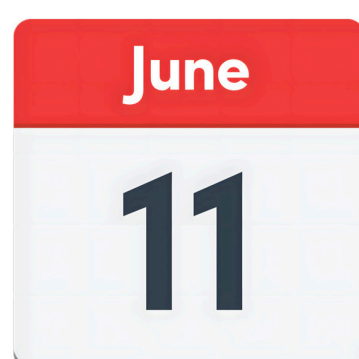
The Cost of Living Crisis



Victorian Electoral Commission



Cost of Living and Housing



Safety on the Internet



Drugs and Alcohol Awareness



Housing (with a guest speaker from HAAG)

Leonie, Heather & Eddie
Peer Workers

2025 Groups

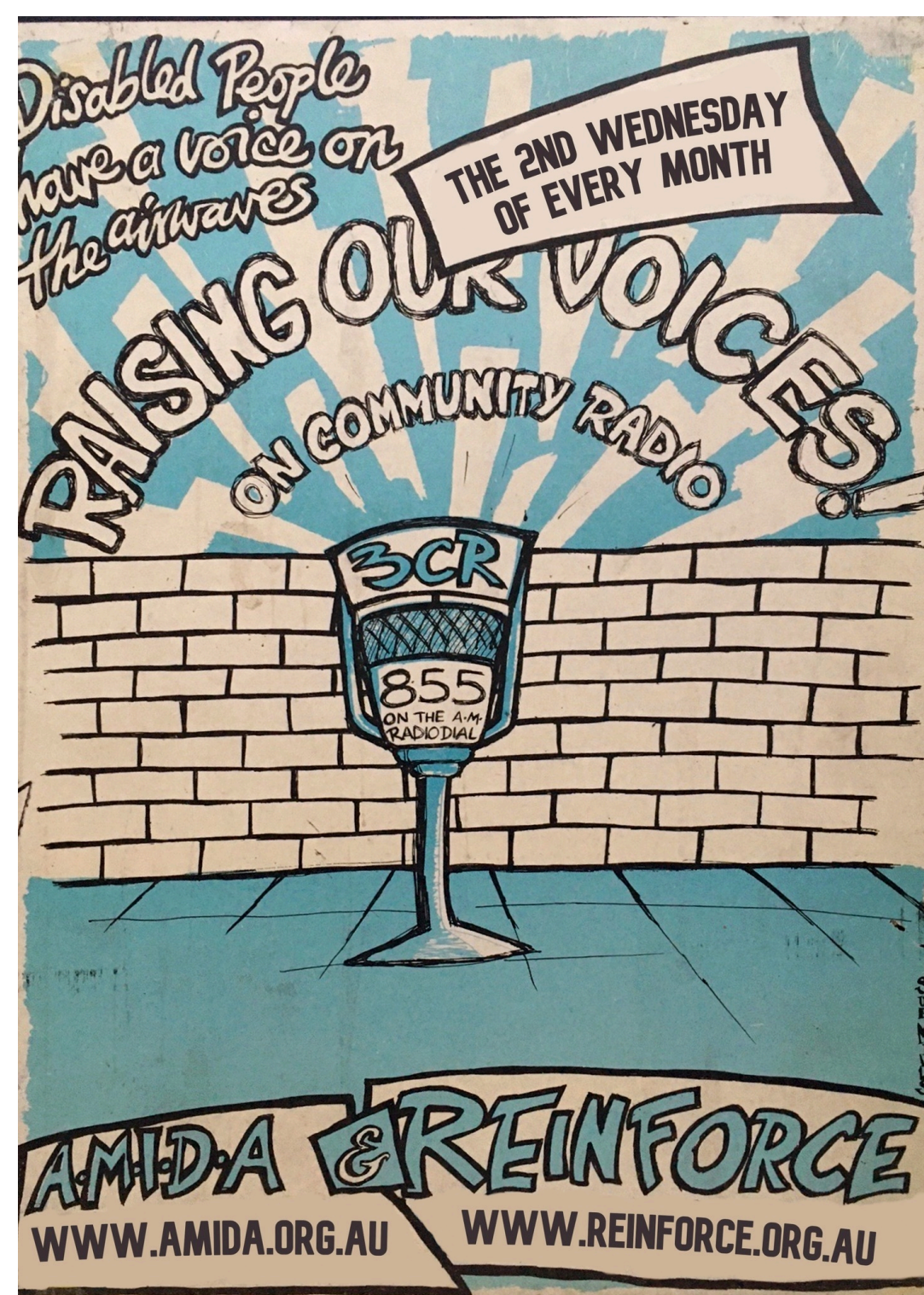
SARU Management Group

Reinforce have an important job telling SARU what it needs to do as a member of the SARB consortium. A consortium is a group of organisations who come together to do a project. Sally and James have helped to make sure SARU runs well at the monthly SARU Management Group (SMG) this year.

Raising Our Voices

The Raising Our Voices radio show had it's 38th Birthday on the 17th of August 2025. This year Reinforce has kept working with Raising Our Voices. James and Amanda and other members of Reinforce have been working on the show. We have covered many issues this year on programmes and shows. There have been easy shows and quite hard shows to do. We tell our stories on the airwaves 3CR. Amanda is a founding member of Raising Our Voices from 1987, in her eyes people with disabilities can plan shows and have them recorded. People with disabilities can do radio with support and help etc. etc. She wants to thank AMIDA for the money support and that type of stuff.

GO RAISING OUR VOICES!



Plans for 2026

My House, My Home, My Rights

Reinforce is starting a new project called My House, My Home, My Rights - Revisited. This project is about making training videos and manuals to protect the rights of people with intellectual disabilities living in supported accommodation. The Peer Workers, Leonie, Heather and Eddie, will work on this project with the support of Colin as a Project Mentor and a new Project Coordinator Reinforce is hiring.

Management Committee Training

Reinforce is planning to run training for our Management Committee to make sure we use everyone's skills and make the biggest impact in our work.

2026



Planting the Seed

Mr Mouse is planning a new project for Reinforce where he would like to visit different Intellectual Disability groups with other Committee Members and talk to new people about Reinforce.