



Short Statured People of Australia Inc.  
**THE NATIONAL JOURNAL**  
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Est: 1968  
Co-founders: George and  
Rosemary Whitaker

## 2021 ADELAIDE CONVENTION – ARE YOU IN?



For more information about this year's convention, turn to p. 12

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# National President

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Dear members,

I hope this Journal finds you well. I am especially thinking of my fellow Victorians and our members overseas who are again in lockdown. Hopefully, you are coping as best as possible, everything will hopefully be back on track quickly, and we can get back together soon. In the meantime, I encourage all of you to reach out to each other if you are struggling. Leaning on one another when times are tough is the cornerstone of support, and if there is anything we can do to help, please don't hesitate to contact us.



## National Council

As you will have seen for some time now, the SSPA has begun preparations towards the mentoring and parent support programs that we will be running with the help of the NDIS OCB and ICB grants received last year.

There will be information coming in the next few weeks about these programs and further details available in this journal. If you would be interested in being involved in either of the programs, please register your interest: [pab@sspa.org.au](mailto:pab@sspa.org.au).

## National Youth Representative:

The SSPA National Council have invited Lucia Bruce-Gilchrist and Kaed Dawber to join the council in an official capacity as Youth Representatives. Lucia and Kaed have shown remarkable leadership over the last 12 months in organising and participating in events and advocating on behalf of young people, giving us a better idea of the critical issues that impact young people and how we begin to tackle them. I want to thank them both for all their work so far, and I look forward to listening to their knowledge and learning from their ideas moving forward.

## National Convention

This year the 54th SSPA National Convention is scheduled to be held from the 2nd – 8th of October 2021 as we return to Nunyara Conference Centre in Belair, South Australia. It's the first time since 2014 that we have returned to South Australia for a National event. We are all, of course, looking forward to being back together face to face for the first time since 2019 and the opportunity to reconnect with our South Australian members and friends is an immense delight. The week in Belair will include all the things that we love about National Conventions: Arts and sporting activities, an impressive line-up of medical experts and health professionals from the Professional Advisory Board providing presentations on a wide range of topics, day trips to see some of the beautiful tourism that South Australia has to offer and of course the AGM and more! I hope to see you there.

As we know, we are still living in a time where organising events on a national scale is no easy task. The challenges surrounding Covid-19 and the potential for border closures and lockdowns are real. I want to thank the convention committee for their ability to think laterally and the flexibility of ideas involved in organising this year's event. Despite the challenges, we remain confident that the event will go ahead in person at the Nunyara Conference Centre. The country is now in a much better position with very few virus cases and the rollout of the vaccine programs well underway. However, it would be remiss if we weren't aware and prepared for every possible complication as best we can. I want to reassure members that should the need arise we can move the 2021 event online if necessary.

Please look out for more information regarding the 2021 convention in this journal and the registration information posted on our website: [www.sspa.org.au](http://www.sspa.org.au) and social media pages. If you have any questions regarding the convention or registration, please do not hesitate to contact us.

### **SSPA Annual General Meeting**

This year's AGM is being held on **Sunday the 3rd of October at 10:00 am**. Members will have the ability to join in person at the convention or online via Zoom. Information on National Council roles and responsibilities and details of the nomination process will be available in the next Journal. Before the AGM, office-bearer's reports will be circulated in order to highlight the achievements of the past twelve months and the vision for the next twelve months.

I encourage and welcome all members to attend the AGM as it's your opportunity to shape the future of our organisation.

Looking forward to seeing you all soon.

Kind regards,

**Sam Millard**

National President – SSPA

E: [president@sspa.org.au](mailto:president@sspa.org.au)

## A message from our VP/PAB liaison

Dear members,

How time flies when we have fun! May 2021 already! Here I am having fun catching up with two good friends, Vicki Fallon and Maree Smith (Vicki refers to us as M1 & M2). Our catch-up took place earlier this year when I was in Lithgow visiting another friend's exhibition. As you probably know, Maree (M1) and I have known one another since the very first SSPA convention in Port Macquarie 54 years ago, when we were very young chickens ☺. I love that our friendship has strengthened as we have grown up. I know there are more of you who have made strong bonding friendships as a result of your SSPA connections.



A couple of weeks back I was watching ABC Australian Story “Sophie’s Choice” about a young Deaf woman who was born to hearing parents. Like my parents, Sophie’s parents wanted to do all they could to ensure she had the best quality of life. Her mother halted her own career as a famous ballet dancer to teach her daughter to speak using cochlear implants in order to function in a hearing world. When she was older, Sophie said that she felt something was missing. It was when she connected with the Deaf community and learnt Auslan that she immediately felt that connection. It reminded me so strongly of my first connection with the short statured community. I remember after my first convention telling my parents “*now I have two families*”. I am grateful to my parents for seeking out and connecting me to the SSPA. Even though I spend a majority of time with average height friends and family, when I get together with my short statured peers and mentors it is very empowering to compare notes, share stories, and have fun ☺. This supports us in the challenge of living in a world built for average height people.



To finish off this section, I thought I would share one of my favourite pics which was taken at the last NSW/ACT get together. The wonderful Palmer family hosted a great pool party at their family home at Bronte Beach, Sydney.

The young ones in this photo are a BIG part of why I volunteer with SSPA; my second family! ☺

**Maree Jenner**

Vice President and PAB Liaison Officer, SSPA

E: [pab@sspa.org.au](mailto:pab@sspa.org.au)

## From the Editor's Laptop

Hi everyone,

The past few months have been full-on for me. I've started a job, uni is in full swing, and I just completed a four-week gym challenge.

After two years of looking for work, I am excited that I have secured a job! It's a short commute, my colleagues are very lovely, and I love the office environment. It's casual work at a call centre and it involves cold-calling people and asking them if they'd like to participate in a survey which they mostly reject. It involves a lot of answering machines and people hanging up on me. However, if people reject doing a survey, most of the time they do it in a nice manner. The surveys range from different things such as Jobseeker to public transport usage, and they change every few weeks so that keeps things interesting.



I recently participated in my all female gym's four-week challenge. This involved two small group personal training sessions and two bootcamps a week, a pelvic floor workshop, a foam rolling workshop, the 1000 steps walk, and a 10km trail walk, as well as a fully body scan before and after.

The 1000 steps is a popular bushwalk in the Dandenong ranges with a steep trek going uphill. I was excited to participate as I'd never done it before. Despite the name, it's 1000 steps just to *get* to the starting point, and the actual walk is more than 1000 steps too. Walking uphill was challenging but I was surrounded by beautiful scenery and great company. At the end of the challenge, I participated in the 12km trail walk from Tremont to Olinda in the beautiful Dandenong ranges. It was even more challenging than the first, as it was a two hour trek up and down some very steep hills.

The goal of the challenge was to beat our time trial. I knew I wouldn't be the winner of the challenge as I had tried too hard in my first time trial so I knew it would be *very* difficult for me to improve at the end (I've learnt that

sometimes in life there are times when it's best not to try), so I guess I was trying to come up with a way to make me feel better about myself.

It left me thinking how do I know if the challenge was successful or not? So, as a writer, I put my thoughts into words.

Success is about the friends you make along the way and the laughs you share with them. It's the strong women you get to witness in action and get to accompany on their journey and watch their growth.

Success is smashing personal bests and creating new ones. And if you don't, it's about showing up anyway and trying again next time.

Success is feeling the positive changes in your body and feeling yourself becoming stronger—the changes that can't always be reflected on the scales or in the mirror.

Upon writing this reflection, I have realised we would all have a much better relationship with success if a) *we* defined our own measures of success instead of letting other people define it for us, and b) if we defined success in qualitative moments, not quantitative ones.



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A week or so after the challenge finished, I was announced as the dedication award winner, which I guess you could call a quantitative measure of success and a form of success defined by someone else. I was super excited to find out I had won this award because it recognised my dedication to the challenge as I had participated in the most classes and had attended all of the workshops and adventure sessions. It has also made me realise that although the intentions behind the award are pure, it can be dangerous tying success to quantitative measures.

My gym has just announced a six-week challenge which will be commencing soon. My initial response is to prioritise the challenge above everything else and to attend all of the sessions. However, I have realised that six weeks is a long time and I have a lot of great social opportunities that I would have to miss out on if I did that. So, I will still be participating in the challenge and attending as many sessions as I can, but I will be prioritising my social life and the other things that bring me joy. I believe a combination of the two will lead to the most rewarding outcome.

Kind regards,

**Julie Dickson**

Journal Editor SSPA

E: [journal@sspa.org.au](mailto:journal@sspa.org.au)

**The last date to receive material for the next edition of the National Journal will be the 1<sup>st</sup> of August 2021.**

**Please send all reports, news, stories, and articles to:**  
[journal@sspa.org.au](mailto:journal@sspa.org.au)



## Yearly SSPA memberships are due for renewal in July.

The SSPA has recently changed how membership details and payments are collected.

To renew your membership please use this link

<https://www.revolutionise.com.au/sspa/>

You will be receiving an email reminding you to renew at the end of June.

If you are a multiyear member you will be receiving an email confirming the time remaining on your membership.

If you have any questions regarding your membership or the new system please contact the membership secretary  
[membership@sspa.org.au](mailto:membership@sspa.org.au)





# NATIONAL CONVENTION & SPORTS WEEKEND

SATURDAY 2ND OCTOBER- FRIDAY 8TH OCTOBER

Short Statured People of Australia are pleased to announce the details of our 54<sup>th</sup> Convention. This year we are heading to the Nunyara Conference and Retreat Centre situated on spacious grounds in the Adelaide Hills - only 20 minutes from the Adelaide CBD, South Australia. The SSPA endeavour to deliver a successful program with convention favourites still at the core of our programming. We understand the significant impact conventions have on our members, from social interactions to educational opportunities. The convention is open to all members and non-members, short-statured people, or relatives and friends of short-statured people.

## TIMETABLE:

SAT 2 <sup>nd</sup> OCT	SUN 3 <sup>rd</sup> OCT	MON 4 <sup>th</sup> OCT	TUE 5 <sup>th</sup> OCT	WED 6 <sup>th</sup> OCT	THUR 7 <sup>th</sup> OCT	FRI 8 <sup>th</sup> OCT
ARRIVAL	MEDITATION/ YOGA	SPORTS SESSION 3: 10am – 12pm	DAY TRIP	MEDICAL DAY AND PROFESSIONAL ADVISORY DAY	DAY TRIP 2 ADELAIDE HILLS TOUR	FAREWELL
	SSPA AGM		OPTION 1: CLELAND WILDLIFE PARK OR OPTION 2: MCLAREN VALE WINERY TOUR.		FREE AFTERNOON	
SPORTS SESSION 1: 2PM – 4:00PM	SPORTS SESSION 2: 1:30 – 3:30PM	ARTS AFTERNOON				
WINE & CHEESE NIGHT + ARTS SHOW	DINNER DANCE	KIDS DISCO				

### SATURDAY: Welcome Evening

The traditional convention opener Wine and Cheese, social chats, and an evening of spectacular artistic display. Attendees will get the chance to catch up with old friends, meet new ones, and have a great evening. View works by Emerging and established artists, speaking about and sharing their creative practice.

### SATURDAY – MONDAY: National Sports Weekend

Sports is back, and we are pleased to be joining in alongside the SSPA Convention. As per previous editions, we will have sports for all (including kids, adults, and masters). Additionally, we will have Short Statured Only Sports, as well as siblings and friends' sports. Sports will be held predominantly onsite to host Basketball, Soccer, Athletics, Boccia, OzTag, Frisbee Golf, Archery and Badminton. Please note these sports are subject to change (pending weather, number of athletes and facilities).

### SUNDAY NIGHT: Dinner Dance at the Tonsley Hotel



# NATIONAL CONVENTION & SPORTS WEEKEND

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## TUESDAY: DAY TRIPS

Day Trip option 1 - Cleland Wildlife Park. Enjoy the day by exploring Cleland Wildlife Park, an immersive nature experience, and the chance to get close to some of the state's most iconic animals.

Day Trip option 2 - McLaren Vale winery tour. Enjoy the day with friends, winery hopping and sampling some of the exquisite wines this beautiful region has to offer. Even if you are not a wine drinker, the scenery of the area is second to none.

## WEDNESDAY: Medical Day And Professional Advisory Day

Professional Advisory Day, we will have a good representation from the SSPA Professional Advisory Board; Prof David Sillence, Prof Ravi Savarirayan, Dr Penny Ireland, Alison Wesley & Tracy Tate from Westmead Children's Hospital; plan to attend personally. Dr Louise Tofts and Ass Prof Verity Pacey have also offered to present online. In addition to the presentations, a range of workshops will be held in the afternoon.

## THURSDAY: Adelaide Hills tour.

Enjoy a leisurely bus ride through the Adelaide hills. First stop Mt lofty summit, where you will enjoy the views of the city and the ocean from Adelaide's highest point. The next stop is the old German Village of Hahndorf, where you can enjoy the sights, food and culture of this lovely town at your own pace. You can enjoy a packed picnic lunch at the park or eat at one of the many local eateries—the choice is yours. After lunch, get back on the bus and on the return trip, stop at the Beerenberg farm shop to sample the local produce they have on offer.

## THURSDAY: Talent Show

I've got talent! You've got talent! We've got talent, who could ask for anything more?! Come and share your talent at our Short Artss Collective Talent Night. Talent comes in all forms. Gotta question? Want to be involved? Email Graci for more information - [graci.lynch@sspa.org.au](mailto:graci.lynch@sspa.org.au)

**Refund Policy:** SSPA is conscious of holding a safe and accessible Convention for all individuals. However, we are aware of the potential health and financial risks surrounding a COVID-19 breakout or state lockdown. If South Australia goes into Lockdown, then all attendees will receive a refund. If your State goes into Lockdown, we will also offer a refund. We encourage those booking flights to ensure they have the option of rescheduling and or refund if circumstances change.



## Welcome to the Family

In this edition of "Welcome to the Family", we warmly welcome ...



- Kiara from Melbourne

Hi all. I'm Kiara, a 26-year old millennial from Melbourne. I'm the Senior Content Officer at La Trobe University, and I have a master's degree in publishing and communications.

I was born with a rare type of dwarfism called Russell-Silver Syndrome. I never had access to a support group growing up, so I'm excited to join this community and get involved, albeit later in life.

I'm more than happy to be contacted regarding SSPA projects and opportunities where my skillset may be of some use.

### Welcome to the Family

New members ... we'd love to meet you! If you'd like to introduce yourself, please send us a 'hello' with a couple of pictures to:

[membership@sspa.org.au](mailto:membership@sspa.org.au)

## BORN SMALL

*Anthony Koedyk*

On the 20<sup>th</sup> of April, SBS Dateline presented an episode discussing the new drug in testing Vosoritide. The episode can be found here: <https://www.sbs.com.au/ondemand/video/1879512131569/dateline-s2021-ep6-born-small>

The SSPA has no official position on medical treatments. We are an inclusive organisation aimed at welcoming all viewpoints. We will continue to provide a wide range of medical information as well as social viewpoints to our community. If you want to continue the discussion, please write into the Journal.

### My reflections

*Born Small* was a brief introduction into the use of the Vosoritide and its social implications. It explained this revolutionary new drug and how it's currently undergoing initial trials. Professor Ravi Savarirayan gave a summary of the function of the drug. It then followed Daisy and her son Casper as he undergoes treatment with the drug. Both Professor Ravi and Daisy explain that the motivations of using the drug are to reduce and prevent the complications associated with Achondroplasia.

The episode then explores the life of Becky Curran and her husband Ryan. They are a short statured couple who live in the United States. They are shown living their relatively normal lives, with the occasional snag like not being able to reach something on a supermarket shelf. Becky then explains the hesitancy that some in the short statured community have about the drug treatment. The episode continues swapping between the stories of Daisy and Casper and the viewpoints of Ravi & Becky.

The drug is being touted as a ground-breaking treatment, with some sources referring it to a cure. So, it may come as a surprise that there is opposition to the drug. It appears to be a fantastic therapy that will ease and counteract the complications associated with Achondroplasia. The hesitations of some people stem from concerns about the acceptance of people with dwarfism and how people's disabilities are viewed. Becky viewed the drug as a feature of people not accepting dwarfism, or not accepting difference in society. This sort of perspective originates from a social model of disability where disability is caused by the barriers that society places on people with disabilities rather than on medical issues. With the social model people are encouraged to accept their disability, to accept their difference, and that we need to drive society to remove the barriers that it places on people with disabilities.

The possibility that Vosoritide could almost be a cure does start to diverge with the idea that we need to accept ourselves. Whilst some media outlets tout it as a cure, medical professionals have a much more subdued view that it is a treatment aimed at reducing complications, it's not some magic quick fix that will completely remove the condition. The episode rebuffed the idea that participants and the medical community is using the drug for cosmetic reasons.

Personally, I still worry about the long-term social implications of drugs like this. I am not against the drug and I don't really question parents' motivations. There are serious

complications with forms of dwarfism. But I worry how attitudes will change over time. In ten or twenty years' time when this drug is commonplace. I fear that dwarfism will be this treatable condition that means people's motivations will start to be cosmetic. Again, I'm not against the drug, but I imagine in twenty years' time I'll be asked why am I short? Why didn't I take the drug? The burden of disability will be back on me, not on the prejudice of society.

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## ACCESSIBLE SPORTS

### *Sammy Lilly*

I have commenced a role within the Sport and Recreation Victoria as a Diversity and Inclusion Officer, with a primary focus on including people with disability in sport and recreation. Recognising the lack of awareness and opportunities for people, particularly children with disability to access inclusive sport, the Victorian government has funded the AAA Play website, managed by Reclink Australia.

Access for All Abilities website (AAA Play) <https://aaaplay.org.au> which is run by Reclink and funded by the Victorian government, has been launched and is up and running! The website links people to accessible sporting opportunities, taking into consideration age and location of the child.

It's the only dedicated referral and connection service for people with a disability in accessing accessible sport. Drawing on a network of State Sporting Associations, Regional Sports Assemblies, active community clubs, local governments, and disability specific sport and recreation providers, AAA Play can link people with a suitable sport or recreation activity, in a timely manner.

Please feel free to reach out if you have any questions. Feel free to contact me on 0400 826 912 or [samanthalilly10@gmail.com](mailto:samanthalilly10@gmail.com). And feel free to pass this wonderful resource on to those who may benefit. Sadly, this is only Victoria-wide at the moment ... but who knows what's down the track.



# Parents Tips and Ideas

**Katrina Reynolds**

Toilet training can be difficult for any family, but short statured children can need some extra assistance when it comes to:

- Removing clothing
- Getting onto the toilet
- Wiping
- Pulling clothing back up
- Getting down from the toilet

Here are a few assistive technology items that can make things easier.



Toilet Handles  
[www.throne.com.au](http://www.throne.com.au)



Wiping Assist Tool  
[www.ebay.com.au](http://www.ebay.com.au)



Family Toilet Seat  
[www.bunnings.com.au](http://www.bunnings.com.au)



Squatty Potty Step  
[www.amazon.com.au](http://www.amazon.com.au)

3D Ergonomically Curved Heated Seat  
with Adjustable Temperature



Smart Wash & Dry  
[www.kogan.com](http://www.kogan.com)



Travel Bidet  
[www.ebay.com.au](http://www.ebay.com.au)



The Children's Hospital at Westmead tells us that on average a short statured child will not begin to wipe their own bottom until nine years of age. To help with reach there are wiping tools available. I cannot personally recommend these as we do not have one, but I would like to hear of others experience with these.

*Wiping Assist Tool*  
[www.ebay.com.au](http://www.ebay.com.au)

This is a travel bidet which was recommended at one of the sessions during our 2020 convention. You can have this bidet with you when out and about already filled with water. This would be great to give your child independence at school or while out with friends and family.

Travel Bidet  
[www.ebay.com.au](http://www.ebay.com.au)



Smart Wash & Dry  
[www.kogan.com](http://www.kogan.com)

Another option to assist with toileting at home is to install a bidet. There are two options, you can have an independent bidet installed though this will require both the space to install it and significant plumbing work. Or you can update your toilet to one with a bidet function.

The second option is to have a bidet function installed onto your existing toilet. This Smart Wash & Dry bidet heats the water which would be important in colder areas of Australia and it has a built in fan to aid drying. There are many bidets available which can be attached to an existing toilet.

# GAMES TO INCREASE YOUR CHILD'S TOILETING INDEPENDENCE

Canberra Occupational Therapist Jaclyn White of Take Flight Occupational Therapy Pty Ltd has given us some fun games to play with our children which will increase their toileting independence. Playing these games once or twice each week will help them with the movements required for toileting and increase their balance.

For the first game place a page of stickers on the floor and a piece of paper on the wall within reach of the stickers. Have your child squat down to pick up a sticker and then stand up again to place the sticker on the paper.



Next have your child step up onto a step that is the right size for them and then back down again. You may want to begin with a small step and increase the size as their abilities grow. You can add this into the previous game. Firstly, have your child squat to retrieve the sticker, then have them climb the step to reach the piece of paper.

The next game is to have your child sitting on a seat with their feet planted on the ground. Have a box of black and white socks within reach on both sides of your child. They have to use their right hand to reach into the left box and vice versa. You may need to have the boxes up on a platform to aid reach. Have them sort the white and black socks into the two boxes so that they are no longer mixed. You can then move the boxes further behind your child so that they have to reach back but not behind the chair. For this task they use the right hand to reach for the right box and the left hand for the left box. You can put a target or bucket in front of them that they can throw the socks into. This will increase your child's ability to reach behind.

Jaclyn also suggests that you encourage bear walking (walking on hands and feet) and army crawling whenever possible as these will improve core strength and balance.

**Please consult your child's Occupational Therapist or paediatrician before starting these exercises as your child's individual physical needs may not allow for these actions or the movements may need to be adapted.**



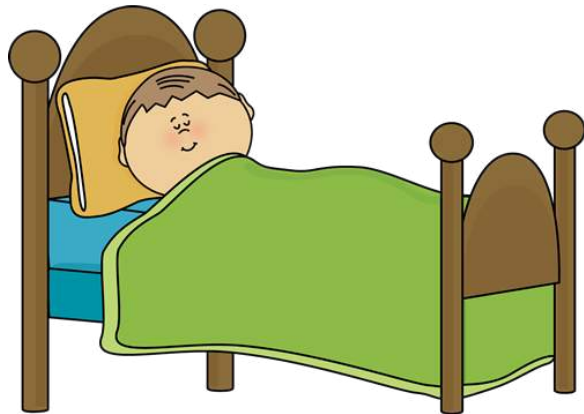
Jaclyn White Occupational Therapy

*Take Flight*



# MORNING STRETCHES FOR ADULTS

Many of us experience stiffness and pain when we wake up in the morning. This can make going to the bathroom more difficult as our bodies abilities are different when in pain or when joints are stiff. Jaclyn White from Take Flight Occupational Therapy Pty Ltd has given us some movements and stretches we can use to wake up our bodies and help us to move.



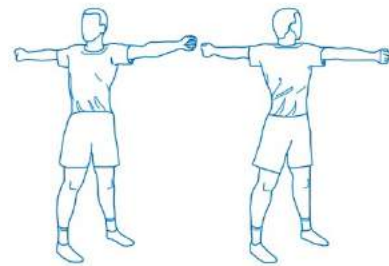
Before getting up, lie on your back and begin by wiggling your hands and feet. This will restore blood flow to your limbs. Once your limbs are awake bring your knees towards your stomach one leg at a time so that your thighs are vertical. Do this slowly as it will also stretch your back.

Next raise your arms to the ceiling a couple of times. Also raise your legs, keeping them straight, up off the bed a

few times with each leg.

Now sit on the edge of your bed. Move your feet in a circular motion being sure to move in both directions. Then do some arm circles rotating from your shoulders and arm crossovers going as wide with your arms as you can.

Lastly perform a gentle torso twist. You may find that as you do this movement you can twist further each time.



**Always think about your own physical abilities before following these stretches. If you are unsure, please consult your Occupational Therapist or your doctor.**

**If you would like to share any tips, ideas or questions please email the journal editor or the membership secretary as we would love to hear from you.**

Katrina Reynolds

E: [membership@sspa.org.au](mailto:membership@sspa.org.au)



Jaclyn White Occupational Therapy

*Take Flight*



The SSPA Parent Reps will be hosting a parents catch up session on the 31st of July at 3pm via zoom available for all SSPA parents to attend.

During the session you will have the chance to meet other parents, ask questions of both parents and short statured adults and listen to other parents talk about their experiences.

Watch out for the zoom link which will be emailed out to all parents closer to the event. There will also be reminders of the event on our Facebook page and Instagram.

If you are a short statured adult who wishes to participate please contact the membership secretary.

Please join us for chat over a cuppa, it will be wonderful to see you all.



# CATCHUP!

*Maree Jenner*

Recently I had a chat to James Chapman about the interesting things he is doing in Year 11, which is all new to me. James is participating in HSC SmartTrack – which is an alternative approach to Years 11 and 12, allowing students like James to complete the HSC (Non-ATAR) in an independent adult-learning environment. Exciting, as they didn't have this when I went to school. 😊



James is currently doing four VET courses that includes Certificates in Education Support, Fitness, Business Administration, and Christian Ministry. They are valuable qualifications to assist James on his career path to achieve his goals. In addition to the training/study, he is also gaining great experience at his school as he is working a couple of afternoons per week either in the office to assist with administration tasks or to assist with Years 3&4 Physical Education classes. Once he has finished his VET courses, he can then be employed as a Fitness Instructor in a gym etc and/or as a Teacher's Support within both public and independent schools. James told me his longer terms plans are to go onto uni to become a Physical Education teacher. I am certainly impressed with how supportive school is now compared to when I was in my senior years. James also told me that his school has put in modifications for him and other students with disabilities, which is good to hear. All the best James on your career path!

When not in school, James enjoys spending time at the skate park and surfing the waves at his local beach, such a cool dude. 😊

The other young member I have featured is Isabella (Bella) Eyles. Here she is with the team at her first netball match. As soon as Marta sent me the pics, I couldn't resist asking if I could include them in the Journal. I remember when I was young it was so important for me to be part of the school hockey team. I didn't want to be the mascot, a position I was initially offered as they thought I would get hurt. I wanted to be included, an active team player, so they gave me a back position to help with defending. Every Saturday I would be so happy to be out there playing with the team, just like my average height peers and siblings. Go Bella!

😊



**Maree Jenner**  
VP/PAB Liaison Officer  
E: [pab@sspa.org.au](mailto:pab@sspa.org.au)

## YLL BUDGET WEEK TRIP

*Julie Dickson*



Late last year, Sam, a girl I know through my university's writers club reached out to me and told me she was forming a ticket called Stand Up! to run for student council, and she asked me if I was interested in running for the disability and accessibility officer position. Back then I had no idea about student politics, and I knew hardly anything about DUSA (Deakin University Student Council). The little I knew was that if you bought the gold

membership, you got a super comfy hoodie which cost more than the sign-up price, so it was a great bargain. Unfortunately, I wasn't a DUSA member (because I hated the hoodie that year), so I couldn't run for the position, but I agreed to still help out because I thought working behind the scenes would give me a great insight into the student council world and it would better prepare me for the role the next year.

So, I joined in on their Zoom meetings and listened to them come up with policies and agree on the best ones. Then I wrote up a bunch of their policies for them and I found myself agreeing with all their policies and thought they wanted to implement some fantastic changes. So, their ticket didn't win the election, but they're ready and determined to try again this year.

Since then, we've had a few social catchups to actually meet each other in person and to celebrate the effort we all put in. I also met up with Sam and she gave me a crash course in student politics. She also invited me for a week away with her and a small group





of other students (also involved in Stand Up!) in Canberra. I thought it sounded like the perfect opportunity to bond with other Stand Up! members and to learn more about the world of student politics.

The week away was organised by Young Labour Left (YLL) for Budget Week and students from other universities—Latrobe, Melbourne Uni, Monash, and Swinburne would also be going, and it was a yearly thing. It was a long drive up to Canberra, but it was made fun by great company and road trip tunes.

On Tuesday we were all super excited because we were supposed to be in the caucus room to watch the budget that evening. It turns out only liberals were allowed to be in the room to watch the budget so YLL had organised for us to watch it at a local pub instead. My housemates and I took too long to get ready, so we figured it was alright if we missed the first five minutes of the budget. When we arrived at the pub, it was dead quiet. We didn't see any familiar faces or the budget on TV and after speaking to the staff we realised we were at the wrong pub—we were at the pub we were supposed to be at for the next night, so we sent frantic messages in the group chat and went back and forth trying to work out who to blame for the miscommunication because one other car from our house had ended up at the right place. So, by the time we had finally agreed on who to blame and had called new Ubers and had arrived at the correct pub, the budget was over. We had missed the whole thing, which was the purpose of this trip, but it made me realise that the actual purpose was to make connections with other students and to create memorable experiences.

We met a number of MPs including Libby Coker, Tanya Plibersek, Ged Kearney, Andrew Giles, and Jess Walsh. These meetings all happened in the courtyard of Parliament House instead of inside due to COVID restrictions, so it involved a lot of standing around which was killer on the feet. It was interesting hearing their views on the budget—their expectations, what they knew, how they would respond, and what they would have done differently.



An evening drinks and networking event gave us the opportunity to talk to a number of MPs and students from different universities. Thankfully, due to an improvement in our communication skills, we arrived at the correct pub this time and super early. It was easy to tell who the MPs were because they stood out since they were old, although most of us had no idea who they were, and we had to pretend we knew their importance while chatting with them.

We also had the opportunity to attend the Change the Age protest which was a worthy cause to get behind. It was a peaceful protest out the front of Parliament House. At eighteen, teenagers are able to vote, drive, drink, and smoke. However, they are still not considered independent.



They need their parents' approval in order to receive income support for Centrelink as the Centrelink Age of Independence for Youth Allowance is twenty-two. This can be difficult in some situations as not every teenager has supportive parents or parents who are present, and they can be denied access to these much needed funds. Therefore, the age should be lowered to eighteen.

As if we weren't already exhausted enough, we tried to jam as many touristy things as possible into every second of free time we had. This included a tour of Old Parliament House which was only meant to be quick but ended up taking three hours. Although it was a self-guided tour, one of the students from Latrobe was a walking encyclopaedia and soon became our unofficial tour guide. We also ventured to Questacon—a place I remember going to on a primary school excursion ages ago and

seemed a hundred times more exciting and interactive back then than it did this time—I did not remember having to read as many science facts on display. Of course, a holiday is not complete without a trip to the local Westfield. No matter what anyone tells you, shopping at a Westfield on holiday is not the same as going to your local Westfield (even though many of the shops are very similar). And before our long road trip home, we made a quick trip to The Royal Australian Mint to make our own coin.

The highlight of the trip was being in the caucus room for the budget reply. After our disappointment of not being allowed into the caucus room on Tuesday night, we were all super excited to be in the caucus room this time. We had to go through security and hand over our bags and phones so we wouldn't share the news with anyone else. It was a fantastic experience



being in the caucus room and I was lucky that I had the perfect view and was in direct eyesight of Anthony Albanese—hopefully I didn't look too tired or bored. Contrary to my facial reaction, it was actually a very interesting reply. Anthony Albanese outlined his vision for the future. He spoke about ensuring a strong future for the working class and making sure no one gets left behind. He promised more social housing properties, to criminalising wage theft, and creating jobs for construction and new energy apprentices, among other things. I found it to be quite uplifting and motivating.

This trip has been an incredibly rewarding experience for me. I have learnt so much about the world of student politics and politics in general. Although the purpose of the trip was the budget reply, I realised it was so much more than that. It was about meeting students from other universities who shared the same values as me, networking with MPs, and building a stronger relationship with the people from my uni who I'd be working closely with this year.

Politics often gets a bad rap, and it's the topic people warn you not to talk about at dinner parties because it's quite a divisive topic. So far, my introduction to the world of politics has

been a magnificent one. This trip has made me realise I'm part of a fantastic community of likeminded people who all want to work together to fight for change. They have fantastic values, and their focus is on making the world a better place. I'm excited to work closely alongside them.



## Shout out to Cathy Stewart!

I absolutely love my karate! At the end of the third lockdown in Vic, this online/face-to-face opportunity came up. It was perfect in assisting me to keep active and to try and control my weight with daily practice theory. Of course, there are more moves that I can't do or can only do to the best of my ability due to bone length. But I'm not doing it to earn the belts. I'm doing it for my mind, the discipline, and to keep fit. My teacher is amazing and really supportive.





## **CAREERS AND VOCATIONAL GUIDANCE FUND**

The Careers and Vocational Guidance Fund is a Trust Fund especially set up to receive donations, invested in a capital fund, and to utilise these donations, and income generated from those donations, for the assistance of short statured people. The following circumstances would indicate generally the areas in which assistance would be granted –

but these are not exhaustive:

1. An allowance for a child who requires special coaching in a subject or subjects whilst still at school – this applies to either primary or secondary school
2. TAFE courses that are oriented towards a job situation
3. Business College
4. Vocational Guidance Test
5. University courses – assistance where necessary
6. Any other course of instruction which would lead to improvement of individual employment
7. Assistance with textbooks
8. Modification of assets (cars, home etc.)
9. Assistance to attend events such as Conventions, sports meetings (The Trustees also consider that courses or other assistance that help to improve self-esteem, and a sense of accomplishment, would be considered along with the original guidelines).

It should be noted that assistance is only available to a short statured person or a child of a short statured person.

As part of the concessions allowed by the Australian Tax Office, the Fund is required to assist those applicants who are in “necessitous circumstances”, that is, that the applicant would find it difficult to finance the above listed activities, due to limited income.

Applicants who feel they would qualify for assistance under the above guidelines are invited to apply to the trustees for assistance. The current trustees are: Rosemary Hobbs, Linda Henderson, Megan Lilly, Robert Millard and Malcolm Paton. Decisions of the trustees are final.

**Prospective donors are also reminded that the Fund is a Deductible Gift Recipient Fund, and so donations to the fund are tax deductible.**

Rosemary Hobbs, Trustee, on behalf of the trustees.

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# National Sports Update

*By Kobie Donovan*

**<MAY>**

## Around the Country

### **Athletics National Championships**

Lucia Bruce-Gilchrist

Junior – U20 and Open

100m Gold \*U20 and 4<sup>th</sup> Open Women (New PB)

200m Gold \*U20 (New PB)

James Gladman: Junior - U20:

100m - Silver and a PB of 15.99

Shot Put - Bronze and a PB of 7.61m for the 4kg SP



### **Swimming National Championship**

Great to see so many Short Statured Athletes involved.

Congratulations Kirrily Woods on achieving multiple PBs and meeting your idol, and Paralympian Tiffany Thomas Kane.



### **Para Badminton**

Great to see Kaed Dawber added to the Victorian Para Badminton Development Squad, alongside national team member Luke Missen.

Additionally, we also have Angelina Melki from South Australia who was a part of the recent National Development squad. The squad is targeting 2024 Paralympic Games.



## High Performance Camp

Lucia Bruce-Gilchrist



In April, I competed in the National Athletics championships in Sydney. On the final day of the competition, I travelled to the Australian Institute of Sport in Canberra to attend a Para Talent Identification camp. The camp went from the 19th to the 22nd of April and is the only of its kind so far. It is intended to identify the potential of some of the best para-athletes in Australia and whether they have the skills to make it to the Paralympics. Fourteen young athletes from around Australia were chosen to attend, and it was an amazing opportunity for us all.

Since there are no track events in the Paralympics for T41 athletes, I went to the camp to delve into my potential in throws—specifically shot put and discus. I was trained by Hamish McDonald (head of throws on the Paralympic Australian Committee) and Marty Jackson. I was the only short-statured athlete there, training with a wide range of disabilities. I found this camp an incredibly enriching experience that opened my eyes up to a whole new world within athletics.

I think one of the most valuable things I got out of the camp was the experience I had of what it would be like if I decided to pursue athletics as a career in the future. Getting a dip into the "elite athlete" lifestyle is an experience I doubt I will ever forget. I learnt a number of things from the education sessions on nutrition, recovery, and anti-doping. I was also introduced to a number of big names within the Paralympic community which was really inspiring to me.

**Kobie Donovan**

Sports Coordinator

E: [admin@sspa.org.au](mailto:admin@sspa.org.au)

## SPITFIRES BASKETBALL UPDATE

*Mikey Spain*

G'day all,

Providing a quick update on the progress on our Spitfires basketball team, down here in Melbourne, Victoria.

It has been an exciting and challenging start to the season, we are now four games into the competition and hoping to get back very soon once lockdown restrictions ease (minor roadblock).

We compete in an under 14's boys' competition at the Melbourne Sports and Aquatic Centre (MSAC). Our team is a very big mix of beginners to experienced players as well as juniors to senior players. We are having fun and riding the wave, each week we are seeing progress in building that team chemistry and working together to everyone's strengths to achieve that ultimate goal of winning our first match!



Genuinely exciting to see our junior players thrive and grow in this environment, shout-out to Noah Austin and Lachie Zeuschner who are improving each game and showcasing some great talent and athletic ability—the next generation of junior athletes are on the rise! Also shout-out to Julie Dickson and Zahid Nisar who have taken this opportunity and put themselves out there to give basketball a go for the first time—been great to have them apart of the team and seeing their improvements.

Then for all our senior players, I hope you are enjoying being back just as much as I am! Full credit to everyone showing up each week—a big part of making this team a success is commitment and numbers, so thank you so far and I hope it continues!



Finally, we are always looking for support on the sidelines in you are interested in coming down to spectate, also if you are interested in playing or have a child 12 years old and above and they would like to be involved—please reach out to myself to discuss further!

Follow our Instagram page @spitfires\_basketball

LETS GO SPITFIRES!!!





**CRITICAL STAGES TOURING  
RESIDENCY 2021  
'LITTLE THINGS MATTER'  
DEBRA KEENAHAN AND KATRINA DOUGLAS  
With  
PAUL PRESTIPINO and ROBERT BRINDLEY**



Spending a week in Cowra to develop the performance work 'Little Things Matter' was an opportunity approached with anticipation for the indulgence of creative time and surrounds that were being offered to us. The township of Cowra prides itself on being welcoming to visitors, set in attractive environs and having a prominent role in Australia's WWII efforts - being the place of the largest prisoner of war breakout in modern military times. This picturesque place delivered everything it promised.





Jonathan Llewelyn, Manager of the Cowra Civic Centre was a generous, good humoured and supportive host and the facilities made available throughout our stay ensured the creative process progressed smoothly and optimally. Having a full stage, lighting, projection and sound technologies meant 'Little Things Matter' moved far beyond the scripted monologue with which we began the residency.



Our creative focus for the week was to evolve the script of 'Little Things Matter' to address issues of medical interventions/abuses for dwarfism; reveal internal monologues, self-affirmations and coping strategies employed by people with dwarfism in the face of discrimination and abuses; and focus upon introducing physicality and movement as integral to the narrative. To these ends we experimented with three new scenes for 'Little Things Matter'.



When we were joined on day three by Paul Prestipino the sound artist for 'Little Things Matter', our energies became focused on conceptualising and recording the soundscape for the new scenes resulting in further experimentation with ambient sound and its different roles within the narrative of each new scene.



On the final day of the residency, members of the public joined us for the creative development showing of 'Little Things Matter' and were invited to provide feedback on their impressions and experience.



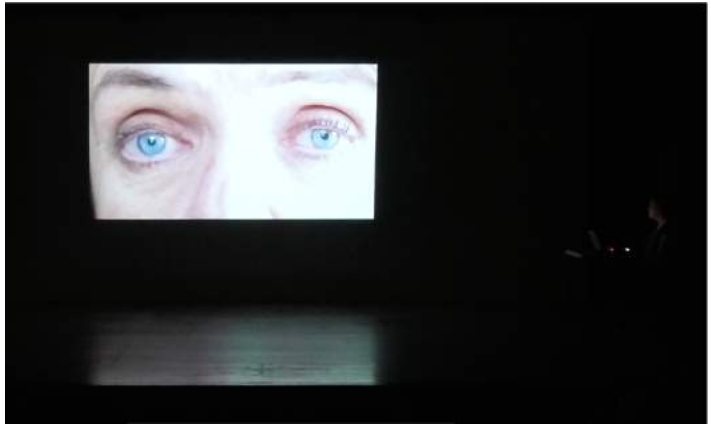
## MEDICAL INTERVENTIONS



## INTERNAL MONOLOGUES AND SELF AFFIRMATIONS







CROWDS AND PHYSICALITY





The audience for the viewing were very appreciative and provided us with sometimes quite personal insights to their limited understanding and experiences of people with dwarfism prior to the showing and the new insights provided by 'Little Things Matter'. The extent to which audience members were comfortable enough to share their own stories of social exclusion was quite humbling and provided confidence that the new developments in narrative and performance structure were effective. Audience members identified potential further developments for the work such that extended conversations were had about the inclusion of live camera feed, points for comic relief and extended physical performance.





The residency offered by Critical Stages Touring has been critical in moving what had commenced as a 7-minute short film of a scripted monologue titled 'Little Things Matter' into a cross artform performance with 4 distinctly visually and emotionally engaging scenes. Thankyou Critical Stages Touring.

# What's happening around our Nation?



## Victoria

Hi everyone!

The Vic group have been fortunate enough to have had the opportunity to organise a few activities this year. We started off with a summer get together in Indented Head on the 30<sup>th</sup> of January. On the 7<sup>th</sup>-9<sup>th</sup> of May, we gathered for a weekend in Castlemaine where we met some new families and caught up with old friends. I want to thank those who travelled far and wide to come to the weekend. We loved catching up with you! Thanks also goes to Keiran Watson-Bonnice, who was the first person to recommend this destination! There is a lot to see and do in Castlemaine, so I would recommend a visit anyway—even if you missed our get together.



Our next event, which will be our last until the convention this year, is our ***Christmas in July*** (10<sup>th</sup> of July). This event is a family friendly event, open to all. We welcome both Vic and Interstate guests (if you're able to travel!). We are currently gathering expressions of interest, as this will help us determine costs. Please complete the form below if you're interested in attending.

### **Expression of Interest: Christmas in July 2021**

<https://forms.office.com/Pages/ResponsePage.aspx?id=E2XzAPoTREe0vD7xIvRA5Ks-hA9CgedHvDuCAmR466lURUZGSzVTRjhGVk1JSTk0Q1JWUIQ5WVU1MC4u>

We are looking to include activities, gift-giving for both young and old, and some raffles on the night! More details to come.

Location: The Vale Hotel (Mulgrave)

Date: 10<sup>th</sup> of July

Time: TBD (Evening)

Cost: TBD

Dress Code: Festive Frock!

The Mulgrave Motel (150 metres distance) is right next door to The Vale Hotel, for those travelling far and looking for accommodation.

They have advised me that they would have approx 10-15 rooms available for our group. Room types are Queen, Twin (two beds), and Family Room (2-3 beds). Minimum cost is \$100 per night at this time. A discount would apply to group bookings (10% off the regular price - \$110 approx, to \$100).

We will also organise a few more coffee catchups in between Christmas in July and the SA Convention, so please look out for those details in your email or in the SSPA Journal too.

Until we meet again, stay safe and well. 😊

**Graci Lynch**

SSPA Victorian Branch

**E:** [graci.lynch@sspa.org.au](mailto:graci.lynch@sspa.org.au)

## New South Wales/ACT

Hello everyone,

So far this year our branch has held both a face-to-face meeting/lunch and a very successful pool party event.

Our face-to-face meeting was held at the Blair family residence in Blaxland. As Blaxland is more or less at the foot of the Blue Mountains (Sydney side), it presents a fairly central place for the branch members to gather as we are scattered right across the expanse of the Sydney metropolitan area as well as the regional/country areas. Emily and Michael were great hosts for our meeting and little Lachlan was a very interested observer. Prof Sillence and Jenny were also in attendance, and we were really pleased to see that Prof had recovered so well after his recent surgery.



Our late summer pool party event was held at the home of the Palmer family at Bronte Beach, and the weather was perfect on the day. This was the second time the Palmers had graciously hosted a pool party for the NSW/ACT branch and from all reports it was even more successful than the first!

**Coming up** – we are currently planning our next social get together, so pencil in 28 August, as we are planning a picnic in the park at Ocean Beach Umina, where there are lots of fun things for the

younger members to do such as a fantastic skate park, BMX track and awesome play spaces. And right next door is NRMA Ocean Beach Caravan Park as we thought some people may like to stay over. Keep an eye on your email and social media as we will update soon with more details.

In October we have a Bunnings BBQ Dwarfism Awareness fundraiser planned for Saturday 16 October 2021 @ West Gosford Bunnings, on the Central Coast.

Call out to Sydney, Central Coast and Newcastle members “if you can spare an hour or two helping out to cook a snag, serve customers etc, your support will be greatly appreciated, as it can be a very busy day.” Contact Maree Jenner 0401001958 or email [pab@sspa.org.au](mailto:pab@sspa.org.au)



**Vicki Fallon**  
NSW/ACT Secretary  
E: [secretary@sspa.org.au](mailto:secretary@sspa.org.au)



## NDIS and people with dwarfism

**Maree Jenner**  
Email: [pab@sspa.org.au](mailto:pab@sspa.org.au)

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### **PAB Liaison Officer Report May 2021**

In relation to mentoring, you may have read in the previous journal or on social media, that the SSPA is currently looking for participants to be involved in **SSPA Mentor Program**. The program has been developed as a result of parents asking for support when their children are dealing with the issues of “difference”, as they navigate a world built for average height people & contend with a society that places emphasis on appearance.

**SSPA Mentor Program** is facilitated by Headspace trainers in conjunction with PAB psychologists. The training workshop will strengthen participants mentoring skills and provide a certificate in Youth Mental Health First Aid. The experience and qualifications earned in participating in the program will add value to a participant’s resume whilst at the same time be an opportunity to give back to the young short stature/dwarfism community. All of the training, travel and accommodation costs are funded by the grant. We encourage short statured adults to volunteer to be involved in the mentor program.





In addition to the mentor program, we also have funding to strengthen the **SSPA Parent Representatives Network**. Our parent reps provide important positive early intervention for families of short statured children of any age group. Parent Representatives may act as the first contact for parents of newborn short-statured child. Our parent reps are based around the country, and they have practical knowledge and experience having raised at least one child of short stature. We would like to increase the number of parent reps in each state, so we encourage both average height and short statured parents to volunteer to be part of our parent rep network. If you would like to volunteer, please let us know [pab@sspa.org.au](mailto:pab@sspa.org.au)



### **Adelaide Convention; Medical/Professional Advisory Day 6/10/2021**

Over the last few months SSPA has had inquiries asking when the next SSPA national event will occur? When will we be able to come together, to renew friendships, get to know new members and have fun? The good news is that we are currently planning a face-to-face convention in the middle of this great land in the beautiful city of Adelaide. Fingers crossed all goes to plan, so please check out information about the convention and activities in this journal and follow us on social media.

In regard to the convention Medical & Professional Advisory day once again we have good representation from the SSPA Professional Advisory Board. Professor David Sillence, Professor Ravi Savarirayan, Dr Penny Ireland, Alison Wesley & Tracy Tate from Westmead Children's Hospital all plan to attend in person. Dr Louise Tofts and Associate Professor Verity Pacey have also offered to present online. The choice of presenters will help us facilitate a good range of workshops etc. In regard to an NDIS presentation, I am currently in communication with The Growing Space <https://www.thegrowingspace.com.au>. Please let us know if there is a workshop/topic that you would like included in the program; [pab@sspa.org.au](mailto:pab@sspa.org.au)

### **Getting to know our Professional Advisory Board (PAB)—introducing Alison Wesley**



Thank you for the opportunity to introduce myself to the SSPA membership. I have worked as a Paediatric Occupational Therapist for over 25 years as a clinician and educator. In the last 13 years I have specialised in connective tissue disorders including those with Achondroplasia and Osteogenesis Imperfecta at The Children’s Hospital at Westmead. I have a particular interest in the management of hand function in children with connective tissue dysplasia so in my spare time I am pursuing this through a PhD. My research involves looking at the characteristics of a connective tissues dysplasia that may affect hand use which I hope to finish in a couple of years!

As an Occupational Therapist I am passionate about finding solutions to increase the functional independence of the babies, children, and young people I see at work. I have come across many challenging situations but enjoy working in partnership with families to find solutions. I did enjoy being involved in last year’s SSPA Annual conference and hope to have the opportunity of meeting you via zoom or in person in the future.

Alison has published a “Learn to drive information sheet for people with short stature requiring car modifications”. It is available via the link below and also on the SSPA website.

[https://www.schn.health.nsw.gov.au/files/attachments/short\\_stature\\_driving\\_info\\_sheet.pdf](https://www.schn.health.nsw.gov.au/files/attachments/short_stature_driving_info_sheet.pdf)

**Medicare rebates for dental and orthodontic consults (under the age of 22 years).**



Dr Louise Tofts, Rehabilitation Medicine Paediatrician at WCH and a member of the SSPA PAB, would like to advise SSPA membership that some dental/orthodontic consults are covered under the cleft palate scheme for those with a cleft, achondroplasia, or OI and some of the rare dysplasias (refer to list).

For further information refer to the link [https://sspa.org.au/?page\\_id=4178](https://sspa.org.au/?page_id=4178) on SSPA website, under Medical> Medical Rebates **Medicare Benefits Schedule – Note CN.3.1**

Families/individuals just need to tell the dentist they think they are eligible for benefits Category 7- under **Cleft Lip & Palate services - Certified with a condition approved by the Minister.**



As PAB Liaison Officer, I continue to receive enquiries via SSPA website/social media on a range of topics from allied health professionals for information on specific types of short stature, requesting assistance for home modification specifications, sourcing equipment, information for resources and support and or information from PAB.

Recently I was invited by Professor Karen Nankervis to be on the Project Advisory Group, as the University of QLD is conducting a research project in relation to genomics and disability. The project is funded through the Medical Research Future Fund and is called “*We need to talk: genomics and disability*”. The project aims to explore the ethical, legal and social issues related to genetics and disability through a co-design approach with diverse stakeholders, including people with lived experience of disability – this is where I can contribute. A timely topic and conversation to have, especially during the current drug trials for achondroplasia.

As communicated prior, SSPA’s statement on the drug trails can be found here @ <https://sspa.org.au/?p=3278>

SSPA supports medical innovation that leads to a reduction in evasive surgery and the need for further surgical intervention. SSPA continues to advocate on behalf of our community, and play an important role by providing access to information on both medical and social advancements, so members can make an informed decision in regard to their own health.

On behalf of SSPA, I have been a spokesperson to the media on two occasions in April. One was on Channel 7 (QLD) News program for their Flashback series “Good, Bad, and Ugly” in regard to a flashback to Midget/Dwarf Tossing that I’m pleased to say was in the past and will hopefully stay there. The other interview was on ABC Radio Central Coast, as they had picked up on the SBS Dateline program “Born Small”. On both occasions I was pleased to be able to represent SSPA and continue to advocate on behalf of our community.

Maree Jenner VP/PAB Liaison Officer – May 2021 [pab@sspa.org.au](mailto:pab@sspa.org.au)



SSPA continues to advocate and work with NDIA/NDIS to assist with increasing their awareness of supports for people of short stature. To assist with yours or your child's access application, I recommend that you mention the terms "short stature dwarfism as well as the diagnosis of the condition. If anyone would like support or advice with accessing the NDIS please email [pab@sspa.org.au](mailto:pab@sspa.org.au)

A good thing to see is that they have updated the NDIS Access Request Form which I think should help people applying for access to understand what type of information they need to provide, and who needs to fill in the information etc, Dr/ GP and or therapist.

Linked here, <https://www.ndis.gov.au/how-apply-ndis/what-access-request-form#access-request-form>

I also found this resource which may be helpful; [Patient Information Booklet: accessing the NDIS](#)

### **SSPA Facebook groups:**

**SSPA NDIS Discussion Forum** - is a place to ask questions, offer advice and share experiences of people of short stature on your NDIS journey.



**SSPA Hacks & ideas group** - is a place to ask questions, offer hack ideas and share them with others in the short statured community. Ideas/hacks that will make our vertically challenged lives that little bit easier. Please check it out and feel free to add your ideas or ask for suggestions etc.



A couple of weeks back I was again invited by Accessible Arts, as an Arts Access Advisor to do a walk-through of an Artist in Residence cottage on the beautiful Georges River, see shot below from the veranda. I really enjoy participating in these events as it increases awareness of the need for access and inclusion for all types of disabilities in arts organisations small and large.



While I was undertaking the walk through of the artist in residence cottage, I took a pic of the handy wall mountable basket (pic below) that I noticed on the bathroom wall; something that people of short stature could use if in a rental unit/house to hold shampoo and conditioner bottles within easy reach on bathroom wall (also available in black). Plus, in the same Ikea – “Tisken” range are suction hooks for the wall that could be used at any level.

Afterwards, I decided to go to IKEA for lunch and check things out for myself, which is where I also saw this handy collapsible step stool hung on the end of kitchen cupboards. Great ideas, please feel free to share your Hacks/ideas in the above Facebook Group.



**Maree Jenner**  
VP/PAB Liaison  
Officer  
E: [pab@sspa.org.au](mailto:pab@sspa.org.au)

# BOOK REVIEW

Julie Dickson

*The Godmothers* by Monica McInerney is a family drama novel set in Australia, England, Ireland, and Scotland.

Eliza grew up in Australia, constantly moving around with her troubled single mother, who entertained her with her elaborate stories. She was treated to annual holidays by her two doting godmothers. When Eliza was seventeen, her mother tragically passed away, leaving Eliza devastated.

Thirteen years later, still grief-stricken, Eliza embarks on a trip to Scotland to be reunited with her godmothers. Determined to find out more about the past, she gets caught up in another family's dilemma and learns that there are two types of families—the family you're born with and the family you make along the way.

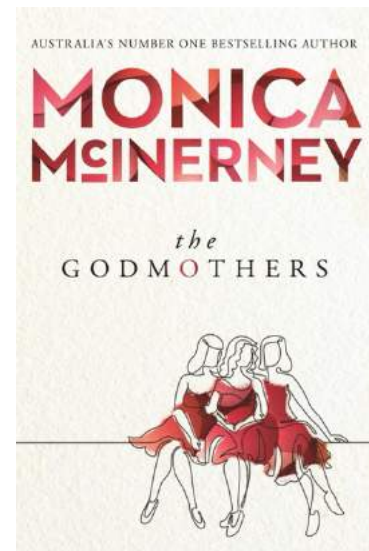
*The Godmothers* is an enjoyable and addictive read. It is a character-oriented story about the secrets and lies that stem from familial drama.

Eliza is a relatable protagonist, and her grief for her mother is raw and real. Her godmothers Olivia and Maxie make mistakes, but it is clear how much they care for Eliza and her mother. An insight into their personal lives rounds out the story. The characters, right down to the secondary characters, are well fleshed out. Celine, Olivia's demanding almost mother-in-law, and Sullivan, Eliza's young flying buddy and newfound friend, have quirky personalities that are entertaining to read about and provide comic relief. It is evident how much development has gone into the creation of the characters and their intricate relationships with one another.

I love how the familial drama provides an element of mystery throughout the novel, as Eliza tries to unearth more about her family's past. Pairing it with the characters' relationship dynamic, it makes the novel a page-turner.

Monica McInerney paints beautiful pictures of the various locations in the novel, igniting a sense of wanderlust. It is well-researched and provides the perfect escape, especially due to the current travel restrictions.

*The Godmothers* is a beautiful family saga, filled with humour, warmth, and drama, which is perfect for fans of family drama novels.



## PARENT REPRESENTATIVES OF SSPA 2020-2021

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\* Denotes person of short stature

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**Got a question for our Professional Advisory Board? Send it to:**

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**NB:** QLD, SA and TAS are not officially formed branches. They are informal groups with the above named coordinators.

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