



Riding for the Disabled Association (N.S.W.) Wagga Centre

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Founded: 1975 by Jennifer Davis **Patron:** Dr Joe McGirr, M.P.

10th May 2023

RE: Annual General Meeting and Ballot

Dear Board of Directors,

I am writing to you on behalf of the management committee of Wagga RDA(NSW) Centre regarding the recent events as revealed at the recent workshop and AGM, which commenced with an email received on Friday evening informing centres that there had been a withdrawal of a candidate standing for election to the board. No information was (or has since) been forthcoming from the board answering questions from centres at the AGM as to who this was and whether it was a voluntary withdrawal or a forced removal.

As you are aware, our centre nominated one of our centre members, Charles McClintock, to stand as a nominee for the board of directors of RDA(NSW) in the 2023 AGM, so were particularly interested.

Heather and myself, as centre delegates, were surprised to find on arrival at the workshop, that there has been a dispute taking place between yourselves and Charles McClintock – a member of our centre and a volunteer on our committee – as we had been completely unaware of this situation. We had only seen correspondence sent to centres warning against ‘some nominees’ and Charles’ (and others) responses to this correspondence. Charles had at no time discussed his actions or correspondence to the board with the centre, and has not been representing the opinions of Wagga RDA(NSW) Centre Committee during his interactions with the board.

Charles disclosed on Saturday during the workshop that he believes he is the nominee the board is referring to as being withdrawn and that he had received a request from the board for him to attend a disciplinary meeting, which he, acting on legal advice, did not attend.

Our centre would like to remind the board that:

1. We are the Member of RDA(NSW) and that Charles is a financial member of our centre.
2. We have made a valid nomination of an eligible person
3. Criticism of the Board of directors is a legitimate part of governance and the reason why Members have the right to question and raise issues at AGMs and Special AGMs

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4. There are rules in the Constitution for a reason –the Board is answerable to its Members and Members have the right to disagree with and to question the Board – who should be open to feedback.
5. Charles, as the nominee of the Member (Wagga Centre) is entitled to query statements made by directors regarding the nominees, and to have a contrary view, as is the Member.

In our discussion with Charles, he has indicated that in the spirit of conciliation, he will apologise for the manner in which he approached and addressed the issue and will withdraw his Fair Work Commission Complaint, subject to the Board following the correct process for the nomination of candidates and allowing his valid nomination to stay and for the members to vote as they wish.

We are extremely disappointed following the AGM and discussions with other centre delegates, that there is still such a high level of discontent in our organisation, with interactions with Members (the centres) not being transparent.

In the past we have recommended independent mediation, and again we would like to recommend once again that the board organise an independent mediator to sit with Members (the centres) and the Board to facilitate an agreeable resolution to these ongoing issues. Previously the board agreed they would attempt this, but we have seen no correspondence to evidence this – no invitation issued by the board to centres to attend such a session.

We implore you as the board elected by the members you agreed to represent, please listen to your members with an open mind – we acknowledge your position is not easy and that you take on the final responsibility for the organisation – but please work with your Members, rather than against them to help keep the vision of our founders alive and the spirit of RDA strong.

We would appreciate a response by **5pm Monday 15th May 2023** in order that Charles has enough time to withdraw his Fair Work Commission Complaint before it proceeds further should the Board keep our centre's nomination in the ballot.

Please put past actions aside, listen to your Member Centres, and consider external independent mediation to keep this great organisation moving forward into the future.

Dr Michelle Eastwood

BAppSc (Equine), BVetBiol/BVetSc(Hons), GCLTHE.

President

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