

## Vale Marie Little OAM

It is with great sadness we advise that Marie Little OAM passed away peacefully on Sunday 17<sup>th</sup> August, after a short battle with cancer. Marie was surrounded by her adoring family and at this stage no funeral arrangements are known, however we will inform our Members and supporters of any public memorial.

In the early eighties Marie returned home from an international forum on normalisation conducted by a Swedish philosopher, Bengt Nirje. Marie was totally inspired to focus on a person's worth and ability while providing them with an opportunity to be a valued and integrated member into mainstream community life. She believed that sport would be the perfect medium to achieve this feat in Australia.

In 1981, a feasibility study was carried out by the State Department of Recreation and Sport regarding how South Australian people with an intellectual disability were represented or included in community sport, recreation and leisure activities. SRAIDP was established to address the outcomes of this study, which was to ensure the inclusion of people with an intellectual disability into valued community leisure activities.

Marie was elected as the inaugural President of SRAIDP in 1982 and continued until 1987 where she was then seconded from IDSC (Intellectual Disability Services Council) now known as Disability SA, to become the inaugural Executive Officer. It was here, with in kind support from the Department of Recreation and Sport, that appropriate programs were established within seasonal activities of mainstream leisure bodies.

After founding SRAIDP in 1982, Marie assisted other State and Territory organisations to collectively form Ausrapid in 1985. When Marie first took her concept to National Sporting Organisations and the Australian Paralympic Federation (now Committee) most thought that people with a disability needed to conduct their own events, generate their own resources and that mainstream sport did not have the resources, knowledge or willingness to become involved.

She remained strong with her belief that sport was ultimately responsible for all of their players and lobbied hard to have successful examples of integration showcased. She pushed this case internationally and countries who aim to have sport inclusive of all abilities have followed Australia's lead. Her vision and foresight has seen many National Sporting Organisation's work towards opening their doors to all Australians, regardless of ability.

In 1990, the Association's name was changed to the South Australian Sport and Recreation Association for People with Integration Difficulties Incorporated (SASRAPID) to cater for the needs of all people with an integration difficulty. In 2014 our new name, 'Inclusive Sport SA', will lead us into the future.

When Marie retired from her public roles in 2011 she volunteered time to Anglicare and reading at her local primary school. While she achieved so much for others, she was also well loved by her family and friends.

Marie fought for the rights of people with an intellectual disability in every facet of her life, from local to international level and often was the only person prepared to do so. The success of Marie's work is evident throughout Australia and her vision has been a revelation to the development of sport for people with a disability in this country and throughout the world, and is the foundation for Inclusive Sport SA.

Rest in peace, Marie.