

David

I was born in Ballarat, and I play all abilities football for Ballarat Bulldogs.

I've always had a love for football, and I was very keen to join the all abilities football starting up in 1993 as a 15 year old playing with mates and meeting new people. We met weekly over a few years until our team was established in 1997, playing a competition within the Melbourne region. We were known as the Ballarat Knights based out of Eastwood Leisure Complex, and from 1998 until 2015, the North Ballarat Knights.

I learnt to play various positions on the football field but found my feet as full forward kicking many goals. It was great to represent my town playing with mates all with various disabilities but a passion for football with a lot of ability.

I played in many grand finals, both winning and losing but I just loved the football, mates and having fun. We have a lot of silverware in storage and sadly nowhere to display it all. We had a lot of great coaches but never had an oval to call home.

In 2016, we were based with East Point Football Club, becoming the Ballarat Bulldogs, and enjoyed success at three grand finals in a row.

I retired from football in 2019, after 20 years of football and ventured into coaching.

By 2022, Ballarat Bulldogs had plenty of players but no coach and a limited Committee. I decided to coach this amazing group. Then I assisted Gary Sternborg in 2023 but missed playing football and came out of retirement at the young age of 45.

My career is made up of 293 games, 10 premierships, captained 4, represented Victoria All Ability state team twice and have various awards and league's best and fairest. I'm hoping to continue to play in the future.

Georgia

My disabilities restrict me.

But they do not define me.

I am more than: deaf, Lupus, Tourette's, chronic pain and inflammation and cPTSD sufferer. I am more than my mobility aids and my interpreter.

I am Georgia

Daughter

Sister

Friend

Wife

Mother

Chef

Author

Artist

Life model

Curator of art exhibitions

Valued member of Open Door Singers (yes deaf people can sing)

A Founding member and President of an inclusive and accessible art group

Karate student and I'm off to the GKR World Cup.

I am Fierce

Loving

Caring

Nurturing

Enduring

Loyal

Funny

Adventurous

Spontaneous

Occasional instigator of shenanigans

Creative

Resilient

But most of all I am **TIRED**.

Tired of fighting for the right to be considered your equal or any approximation of.

Tired of being ignored, made fun of, disrespected, sighed at.

And I am **Tired** of being considered problematic because my life experiences, culture and language is different to yours.

I am **Tired** of asking for the small reasonable adjustments, like look at me when you talk to me, to make my life easier yet seem to offend and cost you everything.

I am **Tired** of fighting this battle every day.

I don't ask you to fight for me but with me.

Get to know me.

The real me, not your perceived image of me.

I am awesome.

Kate

It's important to me to use my voice to advocate for equality, inclusion, and self-determination. It's even more important to me to drive social changes that empower every single person in the world around me to have a voice, too.

My professional story is about inclusion consultancy - I work for one of the state's largest disability support providers. I get to design and deliver initiatives that support workplaces to be more inclusive and accessible, I get to present about human rights at conferences, and I get to deliver inclusive dating events. I also get to extend these skills into the retail world, accessibility testing for Country Road, Mimco and Witchery.

One of my favourite side-hustles is working with the Department of Health to embed parent voice throughout our hospital system, and I also sit on two Royal Children's Hospital committees.

But my personal story is far more interesting. I'm married, I have a beautiful daughter and a gigantic cat, I was a Committee for Ballarat Future Shaper last year, I'm happiest when I'm eating a donut man from Golden Nugget and last, because it always is the least important, I'm blind, hearing impaired and neurodivergent.

Keziah

I am talking about myself on my own and staying in the big world.

I want everyone to understand what it feels like to have a disability like I have...Down Syndrome.

It has been so hard to have it in my lifestyle and it is hard to live with it in this world. I was born with this disability but now I am an older 33 year old.

It is not easy to go on, but my mother is helping me to understand what I have to do. I have a nice encouraging family.

I have been to the HAVE A SAY CONFERENCE where I could collect pamphlets and listen to people speaking.

I have a special friend and I fell in love.

I love playing music. I put my own feelings in my heart with songs.

Sometimes I go for short walks and think about things in the fresh air outside in the bright sun, dancing in my own house and I like to look at plenty of photos on my phone. I do have photo books to look at.

I like to play with my brother's dog and play ball with him.

Letitia

When I was first diagnosed as autistic, it was classified as severe, and I was non-speaking at the time. The doctors told my family not to have any expectations of me.

Fast forward 20+ years and not only am I working part time for nearly five years, but I also have sold many of my artworks on the side, done a few markets and was a guest on LaNCE TV not too long ago for my art and disability.

I was able to achieve so much thanks to the support I've gotten from my family, friends, the Ballarat Specialist School and organisations like Pinarc to get me where I am today.

Screw the doctors who told my family not to expect anything from me.

Mark

Many people know who I am because of my work in advocacy for people with disability, which has often ended up in the media.

When I see something that is unfair, I like to get involved and work towards fixing it and I don't give up until that happens – no matter how long it takes!

In recent years, this has included advocacy through being the Chair of the Central Highlands Regional Advocacy Group, being a member of the City of Ballarat Disability Advisory Committee, and chairing the Ballarat Working Together Group.

I have advocated for changes at the Ballarat Train Station and encouraged many local businesses to improve their accessibility too. Like the Ballarat Art Gallery has done.

In my spare time, I like to do ocean swimming.

In the next couple of years, I hope to see changes to Ballarat Train Station since it has already been to VCAT.

Paul

I am 55 years old, and I'm married with one son who loves sport.

I come from a working-class family and like all of my peers, I drank too much growing up. This added to an already strong propensity for mental health issues.

I struggled in relative silence all through my teens and 20s and part of my 30s until serious cracks appeared and other people started to notice.

I went through a bad patch for around 10 years and through the strength of family and friends, and through some medication and different treatments, I found a path out of darkness. To say it just like that does not do the agony of myself and others any justice but it is also nice to be able to move on from that time.

I have worked in Mental Health to try to give something back for now a little over 15 years. I currently work for CatholicCare Victoria. It is my career when I never had one before. Prior to this work I just did any job to earn money to survive.

This work maybe always was my calling as it suits me so well. And it is a joy and my pleasure to meet gentle people who are having a hard time and offer what assistance I can.

My life is whole.

Tim

Hi. I'm Tim and I am an artist, song writer and film maker. I love sci fi films, collecting action figures and chatting to people.

I create sculptures from found objects and have made dinosaurs, dogs, fish and fantastic creatures. It's fun to make people smile. I have painted portraits of friends and family and then animals. I enjoy using colours and making designs. I start with drawings, then outline and paint my pictures. I have shown these at exhibitions including the Ballarat Art Gallery and the ArtHall at Learmonth. We made a really cool children's picture book called **Tim Sedgwick's 'Amazing Animal Alphabet'** book (2022). I have sold lots of copies and it is in the library. There are still some available if you like it. The alphabet is tricky and it helped me learn and will help kids too.

My songs help me solve problems, are just for fun or for film scores and film clips. I play guitar, a bit of keyboard and love sound effects.

I have lots of ideas and love making short films. My latest is nearly finished. It a sci fi/comedy set in a circus. I have written the script, painted backgrounds, created 3D and drawn circus figures to use in animation and made masks for the aliens. I have a full CD for the soundtrack. I have great help from other creative people.

I have wonderful friends, family and support people who help me with writing and putting together my ideas. I don't let my problems with hearing and my eyesight stop me from having fun.

My life is awesome!

Instagram: timbosedg

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