



SIDE BY SIDE ADVOCACY

**ANNUAL REPORT
2011-12**

Statement of Purpose

Side By Side Advocacy promotes and upholds the rights, needs and interests of people with intellectual disability to enable full and meaningful participation in the community.

SIDE BY SIDE ADVOCACY INCORPORATED

ANNUAL REPORT 2011-2012

CONTENTS

ABOUT US.....	P3
VALUES.....	P4
OUR ADVOCACY DEFINED.....	P5
CHAIRPERSON’S REPORT.....	P6
VISION STATEMENT	P7
COMMITTEE OF MANAGEMENT.....	P8
EXECUTIVE OFFICER’S REPORT.....	P10
STAFF.....	P11
FINANCIAL REPORTS.....	P12
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS.....	P19

ABOUT US

Side By Side Advocacy Incorporated is a community-based not-for-profit organisation with the status of a charity. It provides advocacy and support to people with disability, primarily intellectual disability. An advocate gives a voice to a person to enable that person's needs to be met. Issues requiring advocacy include housing and accommodation, payment of bills, education and medical procedures.

Side By Side Advocacy originated as Citizen Advocacy Ryde-Hunters Hill (CARHH). A steering committee was established in 1989 and the association was incorporated in 1991. One of the driving forces of the steering was John Roarty, a resident of Weemala. He wrote forcefully about his experience of being institutionalised in his book *Captives of Care*. The citizen advocacy movement originated in the USA in the 1970s and follows the principles of social role valorisation (SRV) enunciated by Wolf Wolfensberger. SRV explicitly brings people with disability into the general community by recognising their role as valued members of society instead of categorising them because of their disability. Citizen advocacy finds the most vulnerable members of a community and matches each person with a caring person from that community who can freely provide advocacy and encouragement in an unpaid capacity. Such relationships can extend for many years and are very frequently expressive, that is, provide emotional inclusion and support and do not merely exist just to undertake the advocacy role. Side By Side Advocacy's support role in citizen advocacy is through the professional experience and training of our staff that advise and assist the citizen advocate directly. In addition we can call on our advocate associates with particular expertise (eg law, pharmacy, housing, nutrition) who donate their time and knowledge to inform the advocacy. Citizen advocacy is an ongoing relationship between two parties- members of the general community- and it is not appropriate for us to intervene in those relationships except to support the relationship.

Our individual advocacy program involves professional dedicated staff responding directly to a person with disability requiring assistance. There is no cost to the client. Individual advocacy is distinguished from systemic advocacy, which involves speaking up about difficulties in the welfare system as a whole. A person may ask us for individual advocacy assistance whenever it is required. This form of advocacy is more easily quantified for accounting purposes, although a numerical value does not necessarily reflect the time spent in and complexity of individual advocacy acts. We changed our name to Side By Side Advocacy in 2006. The name reflects the structure of organisation as we have two separate advocacy models running alongside each other. It also reflects our advocacy style. The Citizen Advocacy Program is offered in the Ryde and Hunter's Hill local government areas. Our Individual Advocacy Program is available to people with intellectual disability who

STATEMENT OF VALUES

- **Each person's life is of equal and inherent value and worth.**
- **People with disability have the right to advocacy and to protection from devaluation, neglect, abuse and the denial of human rights.**
- **People with disability have the right to be treated as individuals, and not in terms of their disability.**
- **All people are entitled to comprehensive and appropriate support to ensure full inclusion into the community.**
- **All people have the right to make decisions about their own lives.**
- **All people should be treated with dignity and respect.**
- **All people have the right to be safe, valued and accepted.**
- **All people have the potential to grow and develop and should be provided with opportunities.**
- **All people regardless of gender, age, ethnicity, sexuality or religion have the same human and legal**

OUR ADVOCACY DEFINED

WHAT IS CITIZEN ADVOCACY?

We seek to meet the fundamental needs of people with intellectual disability by establishing and supporting freely given relationships of advocacy.

Citizen Advocacy is an international movement that seeks to promote, protect and defend the rights, interests and dignity of people who are vulnerable. It involves the unique and powerful response of ordinary citizens, who are unpaid and independent of the human service system. They choose to enter into relationship with a person with disability for the sole purpose of meeting one or some of that person's needs. The citizen advocacy relationship is governed by clearly defined principles. These include fidelity, persistence, and freedom from conflict of interest, loyalty, person-centred planning and inclusion.

Although contemporary society continues to look to professionals for answers, citizen advocacy offers opportunities for neighbours to help neighbours. Ordinary citizens possess a variety of talents through their experiences in family, work, church and community associations. The program also enlists the support of skilled and resourced advocate associates who provide information and support to advocacy relationships and program staff.

WHAT IS INDIVIDUAL ADVOCACY?

The rights, needs and interests of a person with disability have primacy in our Individual Advocacy Program. Our advocates meet with and respond directly to the person to gain the clearest understanding of their advocacy needs. Our advocacy actions assist not replace the 'voice' of that person.

Individual advocacy is provided by our professional advocates who respond to a range of issues from one to one support of clients (people with intellectual disability). Individual Advocacy focuses on the interests, rights and needs of an individual and attempts to overcome barriers or injustices faced by the person with disability in their everyday life.

. Priority is given to the most vulnerable people who are disconnected from family or any meaningful and significant relationship and who are at risk of harm

Individual Advocacy provides support in meetings with service providers through to assisting in the lodging of formal complaints, review of guardianship orders and appeals concerning administrative decisions of government funded services.

If we are not able to provide support to a person with disability due to geographical constraints or resource issues we will provide appropriate linkages to other organisations or individuals better able to assist or assist them to take an alternate approach. If the concern is about a systemic problem, we will ensure that specific peak body and/or specialist advocacy organisations are made aware of the relevant issue.

CHAIRPERSON'S REPORT

As has become my practice in writing this report, I sat down and read the passing year's minutes as though it were a novel. I am struck by the repetition of the monthly goings on of the board. Our agendas and meetings have a familiar sameness to them – the agenda's follow a standard format, the attendees are nearly always the same people, and similar items of discussion come up over and over again. While this makes for tedious prose, it does tell me a lot about the way Side By Side Advocacy goes about its business - we are methodical, thorough, thoughtful, careful, accountable and transparent.

Throughout the year the board and the staff have continued to enjoy a harmonious and respectful relationship. We have had numerous occasions where we have worked side by side, including a planning day in February where we updated our Vision, Values and Statement of Purpose. Each staff member has spoken at a board meeting this year which has further enhanced our mutual understanding of each other's role in promoting and protecting the rights needs and interests of people with intellectual disability. In spite of serious health challenges, our Executive Officer Gary Goodship has ably and enthusiastically led the organisation with vigour and enthusiasm. His personal and professional commitment to people with disability is genuine and unwavering.

Our Individual Advocates, Kirsty MacDonald and Maree Salzano, have been exemplary in the way that they have supported their clients. Their enthusiasm, creativity, resilience and tenacity make them a team that you want to have on your side. The board congratulates Kirsty and Maree for the results that they have achieved and for the way in which they steadfastly work for social justice.

Matt Dimmock began the year and his second month with us with some intensive training. He immediately impressed us with the intelligent and forthright way in which he went about his role as Citizen Advocacy (CA) Coordinator. Matt conducted a "relationship review" of the Citizen Advocacy Program, developed some new promotional materials, reconnected with many program participants and began actively recruiting for the protégés on the working list. To our dismay, Matt tendered his resignation in May as he needed to move on to a job that could offer him full time employment. We wish Matt and his growing family all the best, and are pleased that he is still able to work in a role that benefits people with disability.

The high turnover of staff in the Citizen Advocacy Coordinators role caused the board to seriously consider the future of the CA program. As Gary has CA training, the immediate future of the program is stable, but finding a suitable candidate for the role is of high priority. At the time of writing we are actively recruiting for this position. As two new Citizen Advocacy matches were made in May and June there is reason for celebration and optimism.

Meantime the board has been busy! We completed the long, tedious, demanding and vitally important task of reviewing and ratifying our policies and procedures. We also set about trying to give the organisation a more consistent and professional look. A branding committee was established and we have now updated the logo (the dudes as we call them!), standardized our colour, designed and purchased Side By Side Polo shirts for use at community events, and established some other protocols to try to make our organisation more recognizable in the community.

Being recognized in the community is vital to our organisation. We need to be known so that people who would benefit from advocacy know that it is available. We also need to increase our profile in order to attract volunteers and board members, both of whom continue to be in short supply. Our stalls at the Granny Smith Festival, The Ryde Community Expo and the CALD information day at Meadowbank TAFE served to increase our profile and bring information to members of the public.

Our highest profile event was a cocktail party to celebrate International Day of People with Disability which was held in December 3 at Brush Farm House. Ryde City Council partnered with us to celebrate this occasion. It was of great significance, that before a crowd of over 120 people, the mayor of Ryde City welcomed people with disability to Brush Farm House as honoured guests. The evening was a celebratory, inclusive event in stark contrast to the historical venue's segregating and devaluing past.

We have secured a grant from Ryde City Council which will assist with the staging of the cocktail party to celebrate International Day of People with Disability again in December 2012. Additionally, we were successful in gaining a second grant from Ryde City Council which will enable the design and development of our brochures in Korean and Chinese languages.

As always the Board undertook training and self-evaluation, and we were very happy to recruit a new board member in February. Welcome to Steve MacDonald, a long-time volunteer of Side By Side Advocacy. Steve's knowledge of computers and IT will be an asset to our organisation and the board in particular.

Of course there are some challenges facing our organisation. The award under which our staff members are employed has changed. This sector has been underpaid for too long, and this is reflective of the devalued status of the people with whom they work. While assurances have been given that our funding will increase to compensate for any increased staffing costs we need to consider and monitor the situation to ensure the continued financial stability and viability of our operation.

The other challenge is around the new the Disability Advocacy Service Standards and the related Quality Assurance Program that has been put in place. We, and all other government funded advocacy organisations, have 18 months to comply with and be certified according to the new standards. The fear is that this will just be another set of hoops to jump through with more policies to be rewritten, files juggled and papers shuffled. The hope is that such a certification process will indeed lead to better quality advocacy and a continuous improvement of all organisations. Here's hoping!

I would like to thank my fellow board members for their support and hard work this year. Each board member brings a set of unique and valuable skills, and I believe that together we are more than the sum of our parts. It is a pleasure and an honour to be part of this team working collectively toward social justice for people with intellectual disability. Ming Chak Lee willingly and capably acted in the role of chairperson when I took personal leave earlier this year. I offer him my sincere thanks, as I do to all board members for their ongoing personal support to myself and my family.

Coralie Jensen
Chair

Vision Statement

We envisage a world where people with disability are equal and valued; where diversity is celebrated, needs are fulfilled and opportunities realised.

A voluntary Committee of Management (the Board) oversees the legal and financial operation of the program. Management Committee members are elected annually at the Annual General Meeting and contribute at every level to ensure the ongoing success of the program.

COMMITTEE OF MANAGEMENT

CHAIRPERSON– CORALIE JENSEN

Coralie has a background in education and a passion for inclusion and social justice for people with disability. She has been a member of Side By Side Advocacy for many years. After eleven years as a volunteer to the organisation, Coralie joined the Committee of Management six years ago. She is the Chairperson for a fourth year. Coralie has been deeply involved in the preparation of our fundraising events, development of policy, strategic planning, and in promoting and lobby for the organisation and disability issues in general.

VICE CHAIRPERSON – MING CHAK LEE

Ming is a long time resident of the Ryde area. After completing his studies he approached Ryde Council to enquire about volunteering in his community. Ming was put in touch with Side By Side Advocacy and spent some time learning about the organisation. After seeing the enormous impact the organisation has on improving the lives of people with disability Ming agreed joined the Board in July and. In November 2010 he was elected to the position of Vice Chair. Ming is a practicing doctor and has an interest in promoting the welfare of people with disability in the community.

TREASURER – MICHAEL SLINN

Michael is a professional accountant. Without Michael and his commitment we would be poorer in many senses. Michael gives many hours to this organisation and is also active with other organisations helping towards a better life for disadvantaged people. Michael and his wife live at Cherrybrook and have two children and two grandchildren, and two foster grandchildren.

MEMBER - JULIA BOVARD

Julia originally became involved in Citizen Advocacy Ryde-Hunters Hill as a Crisis Advocate in 2003. She has been a board member for 8 years, and is the immediate past Chairperson. She has been active in lobbying on behalf of Side By Side Advocacy aiming to give us a positive profile in the wider community. Julia has a legal and policy background and lives in West Ryde.

MEMBER - STEPHEN MACDONALD

Steve is originally from the UK has lived and worked in Australia since 2004. He has 14 years' experience in various IT roles, including technical support, training and project management, and now provides IT services for Sydney's non-profit organisations. Steve began volunteering with Side By Side in February 2008, and became a board member in March 2012.

MEMBER – MICHELLE DONELLY

Michelle is one of the founding members of Citizen Advocacy Ryde-Hunters Hill and has been actively involved in the organisation for over twenty years. Michelle ensures that people with disability are included as valuable members of society. Michelle has an academic professional as well as a personal commitment to educating people about disability. Michelle has provided extensive SRV oriented training and assistance to staff.

MEMBER – JAN GORMAN

This is Jan's second year on the Board of Management. She is the mother of four delightful adults: one daughter and three sons who have blessed her with four grandchildren. The family has lived in Eastwood for almost 30 years. Jan has worked in schools for 35 years and has been involved with dyslexia correction for more than 10 years.

MEMBER – GEORGE GRAY

George has served the Board of Management for nine consecutive terms. He is a fine speechmaker and a consummate networker and has wide social contacts over the northern Sydney area. George also provides assistance in recruitment of staff as required. George lives in the Ryde area.

ASSISTANT TO MEMBER – MARIELLA PAVONE

Mariella has been a Ryde resident for 13 years, Mariella is interested in giving back to her community. She enjoys contributing to the organisation by providing support to one of our board members. Mariella is currently employed in the customer service field and has had considerable experience with people with disability.

EXECUTIVE OFFICER'S REPORT

While the 2011-2012 financial year has once again been a year of extreme sadness, change and uncertainty Side By Side Advocacy continues to gain status and momentum in the sector. Our growing profile in the sector certainly assists in our ability to be a voice for the voiceless,

In a continuing effort towards improvement our Board of Management is increasing our "branding" profile by standardising our "look' in all areas of presentation, and expanding into our local community by developing brochures and banners in a number of community languages. This livery etc. change will enhance our already strong Advocacy profile across our operating areas; as a matter of course our Advocacy is already our strongest point of "branding". Some of these measures were precipitated and seeded by the UTS Shopfront team.

Our board and staff continues to go from strength to strength on this uphill drive to Quality Assurance with an attitude that certainly exhibits the ongoing commitment to providing Advocacy in all forms to the vulnerable in our community

What changes can we see in the profiles of our clients, those people we support in both our programs, and the issues they bring to us? No diminishing of numbers of issues, no improvement in people's lives, can be demonstrated regardless of Person Centred Approaches, NDIS and the endless consultations How did Jerry Maguire put it "**Show Me The Money**". As with all the promises to people in the welfare sector everything is not funded or at best underfunded.

Only late in the year were we appraised of the fact that we would be receiving a three year contract with our funding body FaHCSIA (Families and Housing Community Services Indigenous Affairs) , with some additional funding to facilitate Quality Assurance Third Party Certification, absolutely all agreed at the eleventh hour.

With the changes to the award structure for our staff it is harder and harder to predict the sustainability of Advocacy programs , such as ours, into the future, once again we are asked to look towards continuous improvement with an even lower level of funding in real dollar terms.

We continue to provide efficient, excellent and timely Advocacy across our designated area and are increasing involved in the bigger issues as a consequence of our involvement with NDAN (NSW Disability Advocacy Network), DANA (Disability Advocacy Network Australia) and the DNF (NSW Disability Network Forum) to name a few with many staff and board having cross sector associations providing a synergy not previously so evident in our organisation.

These myriad cross sector associations provide at once an extended viewpoint and an external critique of what we do, why we do it and most importantly how we do it allowing for a good ongoing review of our current effort and our aspirations for the future of our organisation and our programs.

To finish off on a positive note: we will continue to improve on what we do for the most vulnerable in our community, we will continue to be 100% "Person Centred" (we were even before the term was invented) and as responsive to the needs of our clients as it is humanely possible to be.

Gary Goodship
Executive Officer

STAFF

EXECUTIVE OFFICER – GARY GOODSHIP

Gary Joined Side By Side Advocacy in November of 2008 after a number of years working in senior roles within service provision for people with a disability, in various regions of Sydney. He has also taken on the role of a Citizen Advocate through an allied organisation in Sydney's western suburbs. Gary has a keen interest in social justice for people living with intellectual disability and certainly enjoys the variety of roles that he is able to enact on a daily basis within Side By Side Advocacy. Gary is stationed at our West Ryde office.

ADVOCATE – MAREE SALZANO

Maree has been a Citizen Advocate for many years and has other personal experience of being an advocate as well as having been member of the Board of Management of an advocacy organisation. In 2007 Maree established our individual advocacy program on the Northern Beaches and shares her time between an office in Dee Why and our West Ryde office. Maree has a deep commitment to social justice.

ADVOCATE – KIRSTY MACDONALD

Kirsty is a trained legal practitioner. She has a keen interest in the rights of people with disability heightened through her prior volunteer work with the Welfare Rights Centre and the Intellectual Disability Rights Service - Criminal Justice Support Program. Kirsty has been working fulltime as an individual advocate for us since May 2008, covering many areas in the Northern Sydney region which of course includes our historic Ryde Hunter's Hill LGAs

COORDINATOR CITIZEN ADVOCACY – MATT DIMMOCK

Matt joined us in June 2011 and left us in May 2012, Matt made a considerable contribution in his time with us to our Citizen Advocacy program.

FINANCIAL REPORTS

2011-2012

SIDE BY SIDE ADVOCACY INCORPORATED gratefully acknowledges the support of the Australian Government through the Department of Families and Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs (FaHCSIA)