



Spring 2018

SIDE BY SIDE

The newsletter of Side By Side Advocacy

www.sidebysideadvocacy.org.au



STAFF MEMBERS

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EXECUTIVE OFFICER

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SENIOR INDIVIDUAL
ADVOCATE

DEB MAIO
CITIZEN ADVOCACY
COORDINATOR

NABIL MOHAMMAD

APPEALS SUPPORT
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ANGELA TALARICO

NICCI L GILMOUR

LIFE MEMBER

GEORGE GRAY

Office Hours

9:00 am to 5:00 pm

Emergency Phone

1300 162 510

Individual Advocacy

It has been a busy twelve months at Side By Side Advocacy for the Individual Advocacy Program. Twenty two new cases have been opened and ninety two cases were closed. We currently have twenty five open cases, the majority of which are complex with many of our clients seeking resolution of ten or more advocacy issues. Advocacy plans are developed *with* our clients, based on their individual needs. The approach taken to assisting clients in the resolution of their advocacy issues is *person-centred*. This allows for flexibility in advocacy plans, taking into consideration the changing needs of each client.

Issues related to abuse in group homes, and by family, friends, service providers and medical professionals are still a concern. Advocacy for housing matters, assistance in signing service agreements and advocating on behalf of clients to organisations and government bodies is ongoing.

There are also on-going difficulties for people who are not getting adequate funding or missing out on funding in their NDIS Plans. By providing reports from service providers and quotes that support *reasonable and necessary needs* at the plan review meetings, we have been able to get good results for clients in their following year's plans. This eliminates the need to lodge *Reviews of Decisions* and go through lengthy procedures later.

Time has revealed gaps in the NDIS system which has amongst other things allowed service providers to overcharge or take advantage of clients' plans. In these cases we have advocated for clients resulting in investigations by the NDIS Fraud Team. Action has been taken against the service providers and our clients have been reimbursed the monies that were fraudulently debited from their plans. It is hoped that the NDIS Commission that came into action on 1 July 2018 will help to plug the gaps.

Whilst the NDIS is a terrific system it is still being fine-tuned. Cases determined in the Administrative Appeals Tribunal (AAT), the NDIS Commission and in courts of law will establish precedents that will allow the system to better assist the participants of NDIS in the future. In the meantime Side By Side Advocacy will continue to assist our clients with advocacy matters. Our advocacy is thorough and timely. We work in a cooperative manner with clients and act with due diligence to resolve issues, and to help prevent the escalation of small matters into large ones. For all Individual Advocacy inquiries please ring the office on **9808 5500** or email info@sidebysideadvocacy.org.au

Individual Advocacy is available in eight local government areas in the northern region of Greater Sydney.

The **Citizen Advocacy Program** operates in the local government areas of Ryde and Hunter's Hill.

2018 CALENDAR

20.9.2018
Board Meeting

2.10.2018
Labour Day
Public Holiday

18.10.2018
AGM
followed by
Board Meeting

20.10.2018
Granny Smith
Festival

15.11.2018
Board Meeting

30.11.2018
Annual Cocktail
Party

3.12.2018
International Day
of
People With
Disability

20.12.2018
Board Meeting

24.12.2018
End of Year
Office Closure

7.1.2019
Office Reopened

Welcoming our newest member of staff.....

Nabil Mohammad first started working with Side By Side Advocacy in December 2017. He joined the team on a casual basis to assist when we were having a particularly busy time with Individual Advocacy matters. Nabil enjoyed working with us and felt that the values of Side By Side Advocacy were a good fit with his own. When a permanent role became available Nabil applied. He was the successful candidate and he is now our **Appeals Support Officer**. Nabil has extensive experience in the legal industry and has been admitted as a Solicitor in the State of New South Wales. Since April 2018 he has been assisting participants who are unhappy with NDIS decisions that affect their lives. Nabil is enthusiastic and excited about his role. The results of matters currently being taken to hearings of the Administrative Appeals Tribunal will have the effect of moulding and defining what the NDIS means to participants, their families and the relevant stakeholders. If you are unhappy with a decision regarding the NDIS, Nabil may be able to assist you with lodging an appeal at the Administrative Appeals Tribunal. Nabil may be contacted on 9808 5500 or ASO@sidebysideadvocacy.org.au



The Board of Management has two positions vacant!

Side By Side Advocacy is a not for profit, community based organisation. We have a voluntary *Board of Management* that meets in the evening on the third Thursday of each month. We discuss issues that help to keep Side By Side Advocacy running smoothly. Additionally we make plans for the future and we ensure that the funds that are provided to us by the Federal Department of Social Services are spent efficiently and effectively.

We have a vacancy for one more member of the Board. We are looking for a skilled person who embraces the values of our organisation and who can represent the interests of younger and/or CALD people in the community. We are also looking for another person to provide IT support to the Board during its meetings. You would need to have great IT skills and experience with Skype for this role.

If you are interested in finding out about either of these positions, please ring the office to leave a message or email board@sidebysideadvocacy.org.au

Accessing the Office

It is always best to make an appointment before coming to the office. The office is well located if you want to use public transport.



We are a short distance from West Ryde Railway Station.



There is a bus stop at both ends of Herbert Street.



If you travel by car please remember that parking outside the office is time limited. If you can't find anywhere to park there is visitors' parking under the building. Please call ahead for instructions.

The Annual General Meeting of

Side By Side Advocacy

will be held at our office on
Thursday 18th October 2018
from 6:00pm.

**All stakeholders are cordially
invited to attend.**

A light supper will be served at
the conclusion of the meeting.

**Please RSVP by
Monday 15th October 2018**

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OUR VISION

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

OUR 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.

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 rights.
- People with disability are to be treated in accordance with the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

We have developed a
Policies and Procedures Manual
in *Plain English*.

It is available on our website or you
can get a copy from the office.

Side By Side Advocacy is funded by the
Australian Government
Department of Social Services.

For more information visit
www.dss.gov.au/

A way to have your say!

Do you have any suggestions or ideas about
how to improve Side By Side Advocacy?

We encourage you to tell us what you think!

Please write, phone, email or leave a
comment in the Feedback Box at the office.

Your opinion counts!



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A note from Deb...

It's been a busy time for both the Citizen Advocacy program participants and the CA Coordinator. The NDIS is now in its second year in our area. This has led to new challenges for Citizen Advocates ensuring that Protégés' second plans retain or increase their opportunities for community inclusion. Two Citizen Advocates have become their Protégés' NDIS plan nominee which affords them more formal authority, alongside the ongoing, freely given commitment of Citizen Advocates to their Protégés.

There have been major changes in the provision of accommodation services in our area leading to a new level of bureaucracy and lots of new service agreements. However this has been a challenge that our Citizen Advocates have taken it all in their stride and gaining new levels of understanding with heightened negotiation skills.

Two of our matches were discontinued this year. Thank you to Jan and Kashel for their valuable advocacy over many years. A highlight of the year has been a new match between Joel & Natalya. Welcome to the Citizen Advocacy Program.

A protégé and two advocates are currently facing health challenges. We wish them and their families all the best for the future.

As always, it is an honour as the coordinator to witness and support the commitment of Citizen Advocates to their protégés.

You're Invited!

We will again be celebrating
**International Day of
People with Disability**
with a Cocktail Party at
Brush Farm House, Eastwood
on 30th November 2018

*This is an inclusive event where
people with disability are
welcomed as guests of honour.*

**Would you like a reason to
dress up and celebrate?**

**Please contact the office to arrange
an invitation for yourself or
someone you know.**

We hope to see you there.

