



# **SIDE BY SIDE ADVOCACY ANNUAL REPORT 2017-2018**

**Side By Side Advocacy Incorporated**  
Shop 1, 30-32 Herbert Street West Ryde NSW 2122  
Reg. Charity: Cc28451 ABN: 83 395 894 577  
[www.sidebysideadvocacy.org.au](http://www.sidebysideadvocacy.org.au)

## **Vision**

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



## CONTENTS

1. Vision	pg. 1
2. Statement of Purpose	pg. 2
3. Values	pg. 3
4. About Side By Side Advocacy	pg. 4
5. What is Citizen Advocacy?	pg. 4
6. What is Individual Advocacy?	pg. 5
7. What is Appeals Support at the AAT?	pg. 5
8. Chair Person's Report	pg. 6
9. Committee of Management – The Board	pg. 8
10. Executive Offer's Report	pg. 10
11. Staff of Side By Side Advocacy	pg. 11
12. Financial Reports	pg. 12
13. Acknowledgements	pg. 19

### 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.



## STATEMENT OF VALUES

1. Each person's life is of equal and inherent value and worth.
2. People with disability have the right to advocacy and to protection from devaluation, neglect, abuse and the denial of human rights.
3. People with disability have the right to be treated as individuals, and not in terms of their disability.
4. All people are entitled to comprehensive and appropriate support to ensure full inclusion into the community.
5. All people have the right to make decisions about their own lives.
6. All people should be treated with dignity and respect.
7. All people have the right to be safe, valued and accepted.
8. All people have the potential to grow and develop and should be provided with opportunities.
9. All people regardless of gender, age, ethnicity, sexuality or religion have the same human and legal rights.
10. People with disability are to be treated in accordance with the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.



## ABOUT SIDE BY SIDE ADVOCACY

**Side By Side Advocacy Incorporated** is a community based, not-for-profit organisation with the status of a charity. We are located at Shop 1, 30- 32 Herbert Street, West Ryde. We promote and uphold the rights, needs and interests of people with intellectual disability. We do this through advocacy. A voluntary management committee, known in the organisation as “the Board”, is responsible for the governance of the organisation. Our five members of staff, led by the Executive Officer, deliver two distinct advocacy programs, being individual advocacy and citizen advocacy. This is now joined by the Appeals Support to the AAT,

Side By Side Advocacy originated as **Citizen Advocacy Ryde-Hunter’s Hill** (CARHH) and our citizen advocacy program continues to operate in the local government areas of Ryde and Hunters Hill. In 1989 a steering committee was established to investigate the feasibility of setting up a citizen advocacy program to address the unmet needs of people with intellectual disability living in the Ryde and Hunter’s Hills local government areas. 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 steering committee was successful and the association, known as Citizen Advocacy Ryde Hunters Hill was incorporated in 1991.

In 2006 the constitution of CARHH was changed to enable the organisation to add a second model of advocacy. This form of advocacy is called Individual Advocacy and is delivered by members of staff, whom we call advocates. In 2006 we also changed our name to **Side By Side Advocacy**. Our name is significant on a number of levels. It is indicative of the structure of our organisation in that we have two distinct advocacy models working side by side. It is also reflective of our advocacy style as we work side by side with the people for whom we are advocating.

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 reside in the local government areas of Hornsby, Hunter’s Hill, Lane Cove, Mosman, North Sydney, Ryde, Willoughby and Northern Beaches Council. There is no cost to people who receive assistance from Side By Side Advocacy.

---

### WHAT IS CITIZEN ADVOCACY?

---

The Citizen Advocacy movement originated in the USA in the 1970s and follows the principles of social role valorisation (SRV) developed by Dr Wolf Wolfensberger (1972). SRV brings people with intellectual disability into the



general community by recognising each individual's role as a valued member of society rather than categorising people because of their disability.

Our Citizen Advocacy program is available to people with intellectual disability in the Ryde and Hunter's Hill local government areas. Our Citizen Advocacy Coordinator finds vulnerable members of the community whose needs are not being met and recruits them into the Citizen Advocacy program. We call this person a *protégé*. The protégé is then matched with a caring, proactive person in the general community who becomes a citizen advocate. Together the protégé and the citizen advocate form a citizen advocacy match – a one to one freely given relationship that may last for many years. The function of Side By Side Advocacy is to make and support the match between a person with unmet needs and a caring person in the community, who freely gives their time in an unpaid capacity.

---

### **WHAT IS INDIVIDUAL ADVOCACY?**

---

Individual Advocacy is provided by our experienced and qualified staff and focuses on the rights, needs and interests of our clients. Individual advocacy assists eligible people with one to one support when they are facing challenging situations, dealing with uncertainty or being treated unfairly. Some examples include: problems at work, home or with neighbours; dealing with government departments; accessing educational opportunities; negotiating and navigating Guardianship, Public Trustee matters and more recently NDIS issues.

Priority is given according to the relative need of the person and considers factors such as physical and emotional harm, homelessness, incarceration, hunger, poverty, and vulnerability. Individual Advocacy is without cost and is available to people with intellectual disability that live in the areas of Hornsby, Hunter's Hill, Lane Cove, Mosman, North Sydney, Ryde, Willoughby and Northern Beaches Council.

---

### **WHAT IS APPEALS SUPPORT AT THE AAT?**

---

Appeals Support is provided by our staff (ASO) to ensure that the best possible case is presented to the Administrative Appeals Tribunal after internal reviews are exhausted. The protagonists are invariably a Person with a Disability and the NDIA. Appeals support is not Individual Advocacy it is the promotion of Self-Advocacy engendered by the support and advice provided by our staff to the person with a disability. Under certain circumstances a lawyer will be instructed by the ASO to litigate the case at hearing. Side By Side Advocacy provides this support across the Greater Sydney region.



## CHAIRPERSON'S REPORT

To prepare for the writing of this report, I have read from cover to cover the minutes of the Board Meetings of Side By Side Advocacy, for the year 2017-2018. In all honesty, I cannot say they make exciting reading. Our agendas look pretty much the same from meeting to meeting, and from year to year there is a familiar pattern in the way that we conduct the business of the Board which is the governance of the organisation. Some of this is in response to the community and society in which we exist – for example discussion about the *Granny Smith Festival* and *International Day of People with Disability* occurs to coincide with preparations for these events – the timing of which is determined by others. Some of our patterns are driven by the requirements of good governance – reporting to our funder and other regulatory bodies, planning for the year to come and evaluating the year that has past. As well as the predictable and routine matters there have been challenges aplenty this year, and as a voluntary Board of Management we have approached the governance of Side By Side Advocacy with due diligence, dedication and transparency. The successful audit in September against the *National Standards for Disability Services* and the attached favourable financial report attest to the effectiveness of our thorough and methodical approach.

Notwithstanding the diligence and dedication of the Board, it is the staff of Side By Side Advocacy who deliver our programs and are pivotal in making advocacy available to people with disability. While our minutes are predictable, the appendixes that accompany the Executive Officer's monthly report to the Board are not. Month after month Gary Goodship presents real life examples of the discrimination, abuse, and neglect that people with disability are experiencing on in funded area. The appendices also outline the robust, thorough and sometimes ground breaking advocacy that our staff undertake on a daily basis in order to promote and uphold the rights, needs and interests of people with disability.

There have been some changes in staffing in the last year. Sian William was appointed to the newly created position of Appeals Support Officer (ASO). However, she resigned from the organisation in October meaning that we had to recruit both an Individual Advocate (IA) and an ASO. This was also at a time when Gary Goodship was facing some major health challenges, so our resources were stretched to the maximum. Preeti Thadani and Deb Maio once again demonstrated their loyalty and commitment to our clients, program participants and the organisation, and worked "above and beyond" to keep the office running and our programs functioning well. It was during this time that we decided to promote Preeti to the position of Senior Advocate (SA). In order to cope with the number of Individual Advocacy cases, we engaged the services of some casual workers. And this is where the proverbial silver lining shone through. One of the casuals, Nabil Mohammed, found that his values aligned well with those of the organisation. He applied for the advertised position of Appeals Support Officer. Nabil was the successful candidate and was appointed as ASO in May, and was able to hit the ground running. Recruitment for the IA position continues, and we look forward to having a full complement of staff in the near future.



I would like to thank and acknowledge the work of the staff of Side By Side Advocacy. We are fortunate to have such a highly qualified, diverse and dedicated team. Gary's able leadership demonstrates his resilience and commitment to promoting and upholding to the right needs and interests of people with disability. It also demonstrates his commitment to the organisation and his skill at promoting a working environment which nurtures and encourages the individuals within it. We understand how challenging the roles at Side By Side Advocacy can be, which is why we have established an Employee Assistance Program to support the wellbeing of the staff.

The current strategic plan of Side By Side Advocacy (2013 -2018) is reaching its conclusion. In 2019 the organisation and its stakeholders will undertake a thorough evaluation of our performance against the goals of the current plan. We will also need to look to the future to determine what, if any, changes need to be made to our organisation. Some of the questions we need to ask are:

- Do we still hold the same vision?
- Is our statement of purpose accurate?
- Are our goals realistic and achievable?
- Have (or should) our stakeholders changed?
- Where do we see the organisation in 5 years' time?
- How will we achieve this?

The NDIS has had a serious impact on the lives of people with disability in our funded areas – some positive, others negative. In turn, this has impacted upon the type of advocacy that Side By Side Advocacy is making available to people with disability. The effect of the NDIS will be of major influence when we establish our Strategic Plan for the next five years.

As an organisation we continue to strive to increase our membership base, unfortunately without much success. This is in spite of taking action to increase our profile in the community through attendance at community events, our website, newsletters, corporate partnerships and of course our annual high profile event to celebrate *International Day of People with Disability*. We currently have two vacancies on the Board. We would dearly like to fill these as a full complement of board members we would widen our circle of contacts, increase our skill set and diversity, and increase our capacity to take on other projects. We are currently in the process of actively recruiting a new board member and are optimistic that her appointment is imminent.

I would like to conclude by acknowledging and thanking my fellow board members. They give their time and skill with generosity and enthusiasm. Although we may have divergent opinions and robust discussions, our meetings are always conducted in a thoughtful, cooperative and respectful manner. Each and every member is dedicated to achieving the purpose of the organisation, and has a personal commitment to the values offered by Side By Side Advocacy.

**Coralie Jensen**

Chair - Side By Side Advocacy Board of Management



---

## **COMMITTEE OF MANAGEMENT - “The Board”**

---

### **CHAIRPERSON – CORALIE JENSEN**

---

Coralie has a background in education and a passion for inclusion and social justice for people with disability. As a mother and carer of a person with disability, she gained firsthand knowledge and experience in advocacy. After eleven years as a volunteer to the organisation, Coralie joined the Committee of Management in 2003, and has served in the position of chairperson since 2007. Coralie has been deeply involved in the organisation of our events, quality assurance and in promoting and lobbying for the organisation and disability issues in general. Coralie continues her dedication to Side By Side Advocacy, as a living memorial to her son Finley.

---

### **VICE CHAIRPERSON – FIONA GIVEN**

---

Fiona joined the board of Side By Side Advocacy in November 2013. Since graduating from Macquarie University in 2004 in Arts Law, she has worked in a range of legal settings including as a paralegal and solicitor with the Crown Solicitors Office, and as a policy officer with the Australian Centre for Disability Law. She is currently a part time member of the Guardianship Division of the NSW Civil and Administrative Tribunal. Fiona is passionate about protecting the rights of people with disability. Fiona is also a member of the board of Assistive Technology Australia.

---

### **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 Side By Side Advocacy and is also active in other organisations, using his skills to help build better lives for people with disability and those who are disadvantaged. Michael and his wife live at Bullaburra in the Blue Mountains and have two children, two grandchildren, and two foster grandchildren.

---

### **SECRETARY – RUTH PERRAM**

---

Ruth has a background in psychology and education. She retired in 2013 after a 22 year career as a high school teacher. Ruth has a strong sense of community and speaks up and out on various issues when she feels that justice is not being served. She is the mother of three adult daughters, loves travel and lives in Eastwood with her husband. Ruth was elected to the Board in 2013 and became secretary in 2014.

---

### **MEMBER – MICHELLE DONELLY**

---

Michelle is one of the founding members of Citizen Advocacy Ryde-Hunter’s 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. She



has an academic, professional and personal commitment to educating people about disability. Michelle has provided extensive SRV oriented training and assistance to staff.

---

#### **MEMBER – ANGELA TALARICO**

---

Angela , born in Italy has lived in Australia for 51 yrs., she is the mother of 4 sons ,grandmother of 8,her young son has down syndrome, he's 35 years old and lives in a l'Arche community, she has lived experience of disability. Angela is passionate about people with disability living a good life, she originally joined SBSA as a volunteer supporter for 1year, she then joined the board as a member.

---

#### **LIFE MEMBER – GEORGE GRAY**

---

George is our only life member having served on the Board of Management for ten consecutive terms. He is a fine speechmaker and a consummate networker and has wide social contacts over the northern Sydney area... George lives in the Ryde area.



## EXECUTIVE OFFICER'S REPORT

The complete rollout of NDIS in Greater Sydney region has radically changed the focus of our Individual Advocacy to a more complex family/carer support. Many of the NDIS participants are now on their third (3) NDIS plan. We really hear very little about the classic issues that we have previously encountered in the Northern reaches of Sydney, even though we retain many of our individual advocacy clients of many years standing. These clients of long standing now have compounding problems that the NDIS exacerbates rather than it living up to the commitment of “no disadvantage” and “continuity of supports”. We find that the inflexibility of the NDIS plus the lack of knowledge exhibited by the staff are the two greatest threats looming for our cohort, people with Intellectual Disability.

Most surprising is the ongoing and accelerating impact that the NDIS rollout has had on our Citizen Advocacy program, many of our protégés are aging and so do not qualify for NDIS, but quite a number do. Our erstwhile Citizen Advocates often struggle in these matters and Deb Maio has provided support well beyond her remit, but thankfully well within her skill set. Thus for the moment “pouring oil over troubled waters” The Federal Government seems to believe that these “early teething problems” will be solved within a 2-3 year time frame but ominously these does not appear to be evolving in that direction, more and more people are finding areas in their life that were adequately supported by the many and varied programs from the State and Federal governments. Disability support organisations are finding that they have to reduce services to the bare minimum this then further disadvantages the already massively disadvantaged

So what is the good news, well thankfully the good outweighs the bad, many times over, through the diligence of the Board and the loyalty and effort of the staff.

During the time of my various hospital stays in the first half of the financial year both Deb and Preeti, our senior (individual) advocate, really showed the calibre of our staff, they ensured that all aspects of our programs ran smoothly and seamlessly, while ably keeping our board in the loop. If only cloning was legal and commonplace! Whilst the AAT Appeals Support (previously the External Merits Review) program got off to a slow and erratic start, through no fault of SBSA or its staff, the employment of Nabil, just prior to Christmas in 2017, as Appeals Support Officer gave it the momentum it required. Nabil, a qualified and experienced lawyer, has a history of working with some of the most vulnerable people in our community at the juncture of them having arguably the worst experiences of their lives. The program, while not advocacy as we know it, has assisted many vulnerable people in our community, the wins are certainly impressive and appear to be ongoing due to Nabil's effort and ability. We are still attempting to employ an incumbent for the vacant Individual Advocate role with no success, the search goes on.

I must finish this note off with a heartfelt thank you to the Staff and Board of SBSA for the ongoing support and personal loyalty shown to me.

**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 disability, across Greater Sydney. Gary has a passion for providing social justice to 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.

---

### CITIZEN ADVOCACY COORDINATOR – DEB MAIO

---

Deb joined Side By Side Advocacy in May 2013. Her experience in disability is as a parent, guardian and professional. She has worked in both Individual Advocacy and in Citizen Advocacy and spent many years in the education sector working to provide equal access to mainstream education for students with disability. Deb values the opportunity to support advocates to speak up for people with disability their right to a full and inclusive life in their community.

---

### SENIOR (INDIVIDUAL) ADVOCATE – PREETI THADANI

---

Preeti joined the Board of Management in 2015. She has an extensive work background in Dispute Resolution. After resigning from the Board, Preeti commenced working as an Individual Advocate in March 2017. She is passionate about the protection and promotion of human rights and is committed to giving people with disabilities a 'fair go'. She has assisted other organisations and worked to help improve circumstances for disadvantaged people from CALD backgrounds. Preeti and her family have lived locally since 1979

---

### APEALS SUPPORT OFFICER – NABIL MOHAMMAD

---

Nabil joined Side by Side Advocacy in December 2017. He has worked previously as an Individual Advocate and is currently the Appeals Support Officer. Nabil has extensive experience in the Legal Industry and has been admitted as a lawyer in the state of New South Wales. He is passionate about ensuring clients are afforded procedural fairness and receive equitable outcomes.



# FINANCIAL REPORTS

## 2017-2018



## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENT**

Side By Side Advocacy Incorporated  
gratefully acknowledges  
the support of the Australian Government through  
the Department of Social Services (DSS)