



side by side

The Newsletter of Side By Side Advocacy

Spring 2020

www.sidebysideadvocacy.org.au

Spring Update

A great deal is happening at Side By Side Advocacy!

There have been many changes over the last few months.

Most of you will have heard the very sad news that Gary Goodship passed away earlier in the year. Gary loved his job and was passionate about advocacy. Advocacy has lost a great ambassador. Read on for a tribute to Gary from Side By Side Advocacy's Chairperson, Coralie Jensen.

I was appointed to the role of Executive Officer in mid-July and am excited to work with such a longstanding and respected organisation. I have been impressed by the knowledge, flexibility and dedication of the staff of Side By Side Advocacy who work hard every day to promote and uphold the rights, needs and interests of people with intellectual disability to enable full and meaningful participation in the community.

Everyone has made me very welcome and I will be sharing more about our new initiatives as well as opportunities to get involved with Side By Side Advocacy soon.

There have been some additions to the staff of Side By Side Advocacy. We recently welcomed Tina Huang to the Individual Advocacy Team and Bernadette Curryer to a new

inclusive governance project. The focus of Cathy Milne is now supporting people affected by the Disability Royal Commission. So the team at Side By Side Advocacy is now:

- Executive Officer – Kim Roots
- Citizen Advocacy Coordinator – Deb Maio
- Senior Advocate – Preeti Thadani
- Individual Advocate – Tina Huang
- Appeals Support Officer – Nabil Mohammad
- Disability Royal Commission Advocate – Cathy Milne
- Inclusive Governance Project, Research Officer – Bernadette Curryer

I would also like to acknowledge the commitment, passion and hard work of Side By Side Advocacy's Board. This skilled group of people volunteer their time to ensure that Side By Side Advocacy remains a sustainable, respected organisation that is true to its vision, values and purpose. This has required a huge amount of time and energy during the period when Side By Side Advocacy did not have a full time Executive Officer. Thank you to you all.

There have also been recent changes to the Board with Steve MacDonald re-joining after a short break. Steve brings a wealth of technological and business experience. The Side By Side Advocacy Board, elected at the AGM on 15 October 2020, is now made up of:

- Chairperson - Coralie Jensen
- Vice-Chairperson – Fiona Given
- Treasurer – Michael Slinn
- Secretary – Ruth Perram
- Member – Michelle Donnelly
- Member – Angela Talarico
- Member – Nicci Lindemann Gilmour
- Member – Steve MacDonald

I am looking forward to the chance of meeting with you all face to face when Covid-19 restrictions ease.

Kim Roots
Executive Officer - Side By Side Advocacy

Remembering Gary Goodship

It is an honour for me to be able share with you my thoughts about our friend, colleague and advocate, Gary Goodship. Gary passed away on 9 January 2020 after a long, brave and defiant battle with ill health. Gary was the Executive Officer of Side By Side Advocacy for over 11 years. During this time he proved himself to be a passionate and dedicated supporter of our organisation and the values for which we stand.

In our 11 years working together Gary and I developed a supportive, respectful and cooperative professional relationship. This is not to say that we agreed on everything, but we were always able to reach a solution based on mutual respect and a shared passion for defending and upholding the rights and needs of people with disability.

Gary was a kind and generous man who was passionate about social justice –especially for people with disability, and not only during work hours. In spite of being told, Gary would not turn his phone off out of hours “just in case”. Gary was in the main an easy going sort of fellow, and yet he could be fierce and unwavering in the face of discrimination. He had a favourite saying which summed up his style of advocacy... “Don’t mistake my kindness for weakness”. Another favourite saying was one he used in regard to protecting someone from harm or managing risk...“we’ll take the belts and braces approach”.

Gary was a family man through and through. It was impossible to have a meeting with Gary without hearing about the comings and goings of his extended family who brought so much joy to him. A great weekend for Gary was one spent with his wife and “grandbabies” – in the fairy garden or entertaining deck that he had built at their home. Gary was quite a larrikin and had a close circle of friends. He loved camping, travelling, shopping and gadgets!

Gary’s battle with ill health was an extended one. In spite of his many challenges he remained steadfastly committed to the Purpose and Values of Side By Side Advocacy. We were astounded time after time, when Gary having experienced another health setback, bounced back ready to take on the world again. Gary said he would never retire – and so he didn’t. His determination and dedication will be missed by the organisation, his colleagues, and the people for whom he advocated. He certainly made a difference, ran his own race and was one of the good guys.

Coralie Jensen

Chairperson of Side By Side Advocacy Board



Gary Goodship

COVID-19 Update

Like everywhere else, Side By Side Advocacy has been impacted by COVID-19. We are all hard at work but are being careful to follow advice from health authorities. This means you can still talk to us about advocacy related issues but we may do things slightly differently

Some of the things that may be different include:

- we may talk over the phone rather than meeting face to face
- we will ask a few questions to make sure it is ok to meet
- some of us will be working from home so not all of us will be working in the office at the same time
- we will not shake your hand when we meet.

The important thing to remember is that you can still get advocacy support. Let us know if there is an issue you would like to discuss.

If you would like more information about COVID-19 you can head to the [Australian Government Department of Health](#) website.

The Individual Advocacy Team

As I noted, there have been some changes in the team providing Individual Advocacy at Side By Side Advocacy. Senior Advocate, Preeti Thadani, has been joined by Tina Huang.

Tina started at Side By Side Advocacy in April 2020 as an Individual Advocate. Prior to joining Side By Side Advocacy, Tina worked in a variety of roles in the tenancy and housing sector. Tina is currently completing a Bachelor of Arts (Gender Studies) / Bachelor of Laws from the University of Sydney. Tina is very passionate about the rights of people with disability.



Tina Huang

Disability Royal Commission

In April 2019, the government responded to the call to address the disproportionate rates at which people with disability experience violence, abuse, neglect and exploitation by calling a Royal Commission. The terms of reference for the Commissioners are broad, empowering them to investigate and report on mistreatment and abuse of people with disability wherever it may have occurred, including institutional settings such as disability or health services, but also in the family home or more broadly within the community.

What does this mean for you or people you know?

Additional counselling, advocacy and legal supports have been funded to support people affected by the Disability Royal Commission. This means that these supports are available not only for people who have decided they want to make a submission to the Commission but also for people with disability who have experienced or are currently experiencing violence, abuse, neglect or exploitation. Side By Side Advocacy is one of the disability advocacy organisations offering extra advocacy support.

For some people, the Royal Commission is the opportunity they have been waiting for to have their story heard. For others it has brought mixed feelings as both an opportunity, but also a reminder of historical wrongs.

The Royal Commission is due to hand down its final report in October 2022, so there is plenty of time to make a submission if that is something you are considering.

If you would like to know more about the Disability Royal Commission, would like to talk about making a submission or if you are concerned about violence, abuse, neglect or exploitation, contact Side By Side Advocacy's Disability Royal Commission team on 02 9808 5500 or drc@sidebysideadvocacy.org.au

Inclusive Governance Project

Great news! Side By Side Advocacy has a new project. It is a research-based project looking at inclusive governance. This project will run until early 2023 and will consider how community organisations can best include people with intellectual disability on their Boards

and committees. This will help people with intellectual disability to have a real voice and involvement in the decision-making of community organisations.

Bernadette Curryer started work as the Research Project Officer at the end of July. We will provide more information about this project in the next newsletter. However, if you are interested in finding out more about this project before then, Bernadette would be happy to discuss it with you.

Please contact her on 0411 952 974 or igp@sidebysideadvocacy.org.au



Bernadette Curryer outside Side By Side Advocacy

New website for people with intellectual disability and mental health issues

The Black Dog Institute has teamed up with the University of New South Wales to develop an accessible website called [Healthy Mind](#), to support people living with intellectual disability manage their mental well-being . People with lived experience were involved in its development.

The website uses plain English as well as audio and pictures to facilitate engagement

and includes information to help identify unhelpful thinking, deep breathing techniques and strategies for relaxing and managing anxiety.

Information about other organisations that can provide mental health support are available on the Australian Government website - [Head to Health](#)

Meet the People of Side By Side Advocacy

Each edition we will get to know someone from the Side By Side Advocacy community. This month, Kim talks to longstanding staff member, Deb Maio.

Kim: What is your role at Side By Side Advocacy?

Deb: I coordinate the Citizen Advocacy Program.

Kim: What is Citizen Advocacy?

Deb: Citizen Advocacy is the name given to the relationship between a person (known as a citizen) who provides long-term advocacy to a person with a disability so that the person with disability is no longer entirely alone and without support.

Kim: Why is Citizen Advocacy so important?

Deb: Often people with disability who are matched with a Citizen Advocate have no people in their lives other than people who are paid to be there. They don't have friends, they don't have family.

A Citizen Advocate provides a relationship free of conflicts of interest with the focus on the two people in the relationship. A Citizen Advocate can look beyond basic needs to really get to know the person with disability and consider what is important to that unique person. They aren't trying to fit them into a service model or category.

Such a relationship – someone just being there – can also prevent incidents that might otherwise have happened in a way that some other forms of advocacy can't. A Citizen Advocate who truly knows a person with disability can be alert to that persons vulnerabilities. They can step in long before bad things happen.

Kim: What does your role coordinating the Citizen Advocacy program involve?

Deb: The crux of my role involves recruiting Citizen Advocates and providing support. This support can take many forms. I can be a sounding board if things go wrong and things do go wrong. That's life. Sometimes my role includes affirming the bona fides of the relationship between and Citizen Advocate and a person with disability. This often comes up in the early stages of a relationship or where there is a new staff member in a service who is unfamiliar with Citizen Advocacy. I can also provide encouragement and learning opportunities for Citizen Advocates. I'm very much in the background.

Kim: What makes you excited to come to work?

Deb: For me it's the relationships. Every time I speak with a Citizen Advocate I'm reminded of how much they bring.



Deb Maio

Dates for your calendar

3 December: UN International Day of People with Disability. Side By Side Advocacy is continuing to prioritize safety and social distancing in these unusual times. For that reason, we regret to inform you that the annual cocktail party will not go ahead. If you usually come to our cocktail party, contact us to find out how we will be celebrating this year.

Seasonal Closure of Side By Side Advocacy: The office will be closed on 25 December and will reopen on 4 January 2021

22 February 2021: Side By Side Advocacy Audit

Have your say!

Do you have any suggestions about how we could do things better or differently at Side By Side Advocacy?

If you do, we would love to hear from you! You can use the contact information below to tell us.

Contact details for Side By Side Advocacy

Phone: (02) 9808 5500

Email: info@sidebysideadvocacy.org.au

Website: www.sidebysideadvocacy.org.au

Address: Shop 1, 30-32 Herbert Street, West Ryde, NSW 2114

Office hours: 9am to 5pm

Side By Side Advocacy is a short distance from West Ryde Railway Station.

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

There is time limited on street parking.

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.



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