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**The Newsletter of Side By Side Advocacy**

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**A message from our Executive Officer**

Welcome to the Summer edition of Side By Side!

It has been a busy and challenging time at Side By Side Advocacy. People with disability continue to experience barriers to having their voices heard and needs met. Demand for advocacy remains high. The availability of timely, high quality advocacy has never been more important.

There has also been a great deal to celebrate.

We hosted a well-attended AGM with guest speaker, John Armstrong and shared the year's happenings in our [Annual Report](#).

We also celebrated 30+ years of Citizen Advocacy. It was a fabulous coming together of people with a shared commitment to inclusion.

The inclusive practices of Side By Side Advocacy were also acknowledged with a local business inclusion award.

The team at Side By Side Advocacy will be taking a short break over the holiday season with the office closing from 5pm on 23 December 2022 and reopening on 3 January 2023.

The Side By Side Advocacy team wishes you a peaceful and relaxing holiday season.

Kim Roots  
Executive Officer



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### **Celebration of 30+ years of Citizen Advocacy**

Side By Side Advocacy was delighted to host an event that brought together allies who are committed to the inclusion of all people in the local community to celebrate 30+ years of Citizen Advocacy.

This included:

- people involved in Side By Side Advocacy's Citizen Advocacy program
- people who played a pivotal role in the beginnings of the organisation
- people who are leaders in local council, advocacy and community organisations
- people with lived experience of disability
- and people who are friends, allies and family members of people with disability.

Citizen Advocacy promotes and protects the rights, needs and interests of people with intellectual disability by connecting them with local citizens in one to one freely-given relationships.

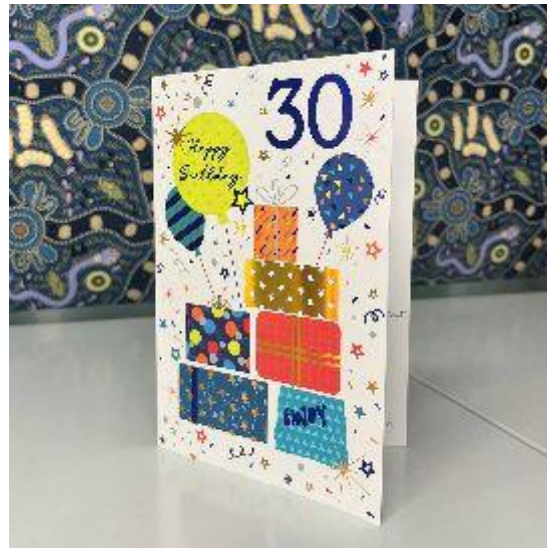
At the moment, there are more people with disability seeking to be matched with a citizen advocate than there are citizen advocates. We want to change that.

Identifying more people keen to be citizen advocates starts with raising awareness of what citizen advocacy is and involves.

We can come to speak with your community group or just have a chat.

If you are interested in learning more about becoming a citizen advocate we would love to hear from you.

Thank you to the City of Ryde Council for their ongoing support and for making the event possible. Side By Side Advocacy has been embedded in local community for these 30+ years and it is very much appreciated that the organisation's contribution is recognised and supported.



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### **Great news! The Inclusive Governance Project has been extended**

We are really excited to tell you that the Inclusive Governance Project has

received a funding extension. The project will now be continuing until the end of June 2024 with funding from the Federal Government.

The extension will give us the opportunity to reach out to more people and support the increased inclusion of people with intellectual disability in the decision-making and governance of community organisations.

In other news, the project has completed the data gathering stage of the research project. It is now finalising the analysis and writing up findings, presenting to conferences and promoting the concept of Inclusive Governance.

In October, Bernadette and Katrina presented at the Contemporary Governance and Leadership Summit in Brisbane. This day was organised by National Disability Services (NDS) and was attended by over 200 people, mainly Board members and senior managers of disability services.

If you would like to know more about the findings of the study and how this can be used to support the inclusion of people with intellectual disability in the decision-making and governance of community organisations, please contact Bernadette on 0411 952 974 or [igp@sidebysideadvocacy.org.au](mailto:igp@sidebysideadvocacy.org.au)



Bernadette and Katrina in Brisbane for the presentation at the governance summit

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### **Disability Royal Commission coming to an end**

The Disability Royal Commission into abuse, neglect and exploitation of people with disability is coming to an end.

The Royal Commission is a great opportunity to share your experiences and insights. Thank you to everyone who has contributed.

The deadline for submissions is 31 December 2022.

Contact Side By Side Advocacy's Disability Royal Commission team if you need help with a submission.

If you have something to say but do not know how, we can make suggestions.

Note that the Side By Side Advocacy office will be closed from 5pm on 23

December and will reopen on 3 January - so contact us ASAP if you would benefit from assistance.

You can email [DRC@sidebysideadvocacy.org.au](mailto:DRC@sidebysideadvocacy.org.au) or phone 02 9808 5500.



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### Quality and Safeguards Commission Update

Side By Side Advocacy was invited to attend a consultation with the NDIS Quality and Safeguards Commission in Victoria.

The NDIS Quality and Safeguards Commission is an independent agency established to improve the quality and safety of NDIS supports and services.

The consultation was attended by advocacy organisations across the country and the Commission asked for feedback about what is working well and what could be better.

A key message was that the Commission can and will take action against non registered, as well as registered, providers.

## [NDIS Quality and Safeguards Commission](#)

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### **Inclusive Advocacy Campaign**

Family Advocacy has a campaign to promote inclusive education in the lead up to the New South Wales State elections.

Same Classroom, Same Opportunity - Securing Better Futures aims to ensure ALL students in NSW, no matter their circumstance, are welcomed and supported in the general classroom of their local school, all day, everyday.

There is a link below to get more information about the campaign.

[Same Classroom, Same Opportunity](#)

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### **International Day Of Disability - Making Rights Real**

The Intellectual Disability Rights Service (IDRS) is a free service for people with intellectual or other cognitive impairment. They can help people living in NSW. You do not need an NDIS package to get help from IDRS.

IDRS has an advisory group called Making Rights Real. The Advisory Group informs the way the organisation operates. Members of the group are selected based on their interest in the rights of people with disability, their personal experiences in standing up for their rights and their understanding of the work and role of IDRS.

The Making Rights Real group and friends decided to share their thoughts on International Day of People with Disability and make a video.



There is a link to the video below.

[\*\*Making Rights Real\*\*](#)



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### **My Rights Matter**

The Council for Intellectual Disability has a project called My Rights Matter.

My Rights Matter will run for 2 years.

The project will help people

- Learn about the rights of people with disability
- Make new decisions in their life
- Engage with supports to achieve what they want.

There is a link below to get more information about the project.

[\*\*My Rights Matter\*\*](#)

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### **News Updates**

[The NDIS has transformed my life – and the last thing we need is media hysteria about its cost](#)

[NDIS funding isn't just a one-way street – it helps participants secure work and give back to the economy](#)

[Europe names world's first disabled astronaut](#)

[Anyone who says language doesn't matter or that I need to grow thicker skin can save their breath](#)

['I thought she was drunk': Embarrassed security boss calls for industry training to help staff see invisible disabilities](#)

## **NDIS Updates**

[Have your say about the NDIS](#)

[Independent External Review of NDIS](#)

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## **Meet the people of Side By Side Advocacy**

In each edition of Side By Side we get to know someone from the Side By Side Advocacy community. This month, Kim spoke with team member Preeti Thadani.



**Kim:** When did you start working at Side By Side Advocacy?

**Preeti:** It was March 2017 – so more than 5 years ago.

**Kim:** Could you describe your role?

**Preeti:** I am the senior advocate in the Individual Advocacy Team. That involves different things on different days. Many people come to me with very complex, intertwined issues. I see my role as helping people to unravel that detail to clarify and prioritise issues.

I work with people with disability along with their family, friends and allies. Contemporary systems are complex and constantly changing and my role often involves talking through processes and supporting people to make decisions.

I work directly with the person with disability, along with friends, families and allies, as appropriate.

I also engage with groups. This includes presentations to community organisations to raise awareness about advocacy and the barriers people with disability experience and presentations to people with disability so that they are better aware of their rights, options and the availability of advocacy.

**Kim:** What do you enjoy about your role?

**Preeti:** I like to make a difference in people's lives. Every person has different circumstances and I enjoy the challenge of working through the details systematically so that the person achieves a great result. The best outcomes are when the person has had the time to understand the options and decide what they want.

It's also excellent to be part of a collaborative team of knowledgeable advocates who are all passionate about their work.

**Kim:** Is anything challenging about the role?

**Preeti:** The most challenging part is not having enough hours in the day. The whole advocacy sector is currently experiencing high demand.

Side By Side Advocacy specialises in advocacy for people with intellectual disability. Many people who seek or are referred for advocacy don't have family or friends actively involved in their lives. They are experiencing complex, serious issues and what seem to be intractable barriers. Navigating issues in these circumstances takes time.

There are not enough advocates to meet the demand for skilled, specialised advocacy as quickly as we would like to.

**Kim:** What do you enjoy doing in your spare time?

**Preeti:** I enjoy dancing. If I hear music that moves me, I have to put steps to it. It brings me a lot of joy.

If you would like to become more involved with Side By Side Advocacy, let us know and we can explore possibilities!

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### **Dates for your calendar**

3 December – International Day of People with Disability

10 December – Human Rights Day

15 December – Online introduction to self-advocacy workshop – [online event](#) by the NDIA

25 December – Christmas Day - public holiday

26 December - Boxing Day - public holiday

27 December - public holiday

31 December – Final day for submissions to the [Disability Royal Commission](#)

1 January – New Year's Day - public holiday

2 January - public holiday

22 January – Lunar New Year

26 January – Australia Day - public holiday

11-12 February – Advancing Citizen Advocacy Conference – [event](#) in Melbourne

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## **Emergency contact numbers**

Emergencies sometimes arise over the holiday season.

In case of fire, medical or police emergency, dial **000**.

Blue Knott's counselling service will be open on public holidays: 1800 421 468.

Here is a link to some other emergency contacts that may be useful:

[Emergency contacts](#).

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## **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.

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## **Information about Side By Side Advocacy**

Links to Side By Side Advocacy brochures for you to print, download and/or share:

- [Citizen Advocacy](#)

- [Individual Advocacy](#)
- [National Disability Insurance Scheme \(NDIS\) Appeals](#)
- [Disability Royal Commission](#)
- [Inclusive Governance Project Brochure](#)

For an overview of what we offer see our [Side By Side Advocacy Brochure](#).

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### Contact details for Side By Side Advocacy

**Phone:** (02) 9808 5500

**Email:** [info@sidebysideadvocacy.org.au](mailto:info@sidebysideadvocacy.org.au)

**Website:** [www.sidebysideadvocacy.org.au](http://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.

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

*We recognise that people with intellectual disability experience particular barriers in having their voices heard and needs met and for that reason we specialise in providing advocacy for people with intellectual disability.*

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Side By Side Advocacy acknowledges the Wallumedegal people, Traditional Custodians on the land on which we live and work. We pay respect to Elders past, present and emerging.

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

For more information visit: [www.dss.gov.au](http://www.dss.gov.au)

**Contact:**

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

(02) 9808 5500

[info@sidebysideadvocacy.org.au](mailto:info@sidebysideadvocacy.org.au)

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