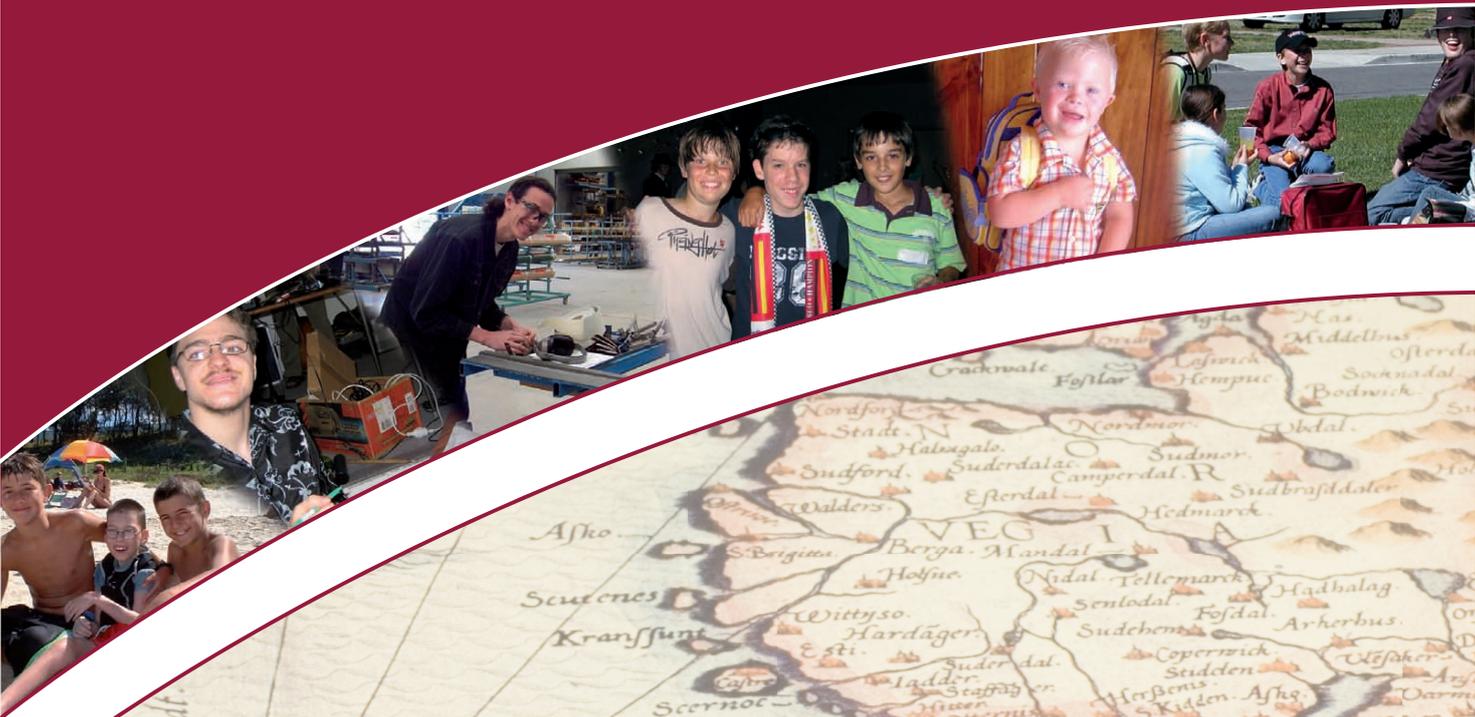


family

ADVOCACY

ANNUAL REPORT 2009



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## **Family Advocacy**

ABN: 82855711421

PO Box 502 Epping NSW 1710

Suite 305 16-18 Cambridge Street

Epping NSW 2121 Australia

Tel: (02) 9869 0866

Fax: (02) 9869 0722

Freecall: 1800 620 588

Email: [familyadvocacy@family-advocacy.com](mailto:familyadvocacy@family-advocacy.com)

Website: [www.family-advocacy.com](http://www.family-advocacy.com)

# Our Vision

Family Advocacy has a vision of families being agents of positive social change so that the inherent value of people with developmental disability is recognised within a just and inclusive society.

# Our Mission

Our Mission is to attain positive social roles for people who have a developmental disability through the development and support of advocacy by families and by strengthening the knowledge, role and influence of the family.

# Advocacy is....

Advocacy is speaking, acting and/or writing with minimum conflict of interest on behalf of the sincerely perceived interest of a person or persons with disability in order to promote, protect and defend their interests, rights and needs.

Advocacy strives to be emphatic and vigorous and is, or is very likely to be, costly to the advocate.

This definition of advocacy has been adapted from the original Wolfensberger definition so as to make it specific to social advocacy with, and for, people with disability.

# Who we are

Family Advocacy is an independent, state-wide, community-based advocacy organisation which promotes and protects the rights, needs and interests of children and adults with developmental disability.

Family Advocacy bases its work on the belief that:

- All people with disability are full members of the community;
- Good communities are made up of a diverse range of people;
- People who have a disability have contributions and skills to bring to society.

The organisation recognises that society has, as a matter of public policy, segregated people with disability from the mainstream of society. It recognises the extreme harm caused to people with disability and their families by segregationist policies, and supports the policies embodied in the Objects and Principles of the Commonwealth Disability Services Act, 1986, and the Objects, Principles and Applications of Principles of the NSW Disability Services Act, 1993. Regulatory processes designed to ensure that direct services adhere to these Principles are also critical.

## OUR PRINCIPLES

### Principles about People:

- All people, regardless of gender, age, disability, ethnicity, sexuality or religion, have the same human, social and legal rights.
- People who have a disability are contributing members of the whole community.
- All people, regardless of the nature and degree of disability, have the capacity to learn and develop throughout their lives.

- People who have a disability are vulnerable to oppression, exploitation, discrimination, segregation and rejection by society.

### Principles about Families:

Except for advocacy by individuals who themselves have a disability, advocacy by families constitutes the single most important safeguard to protecting and promoting the rights and interests of people who have disability.

The family is likely to be the most enduring and constant form of relationship in a person's life and, as such, is the first line of defence of the interests of a person who has disability.

The family provides the most natural and powerful environment for growth and development.

The family is the focus for the development of a range of relationships which lead to inclusion in the life of the community.

While the nature of family relationships changes as a person grows, for all adults, the family continues to act as an important emotional and strategic link into the community.

Positive growth and development is most likely to occur within a family in which each member is esteemed as valued.

### Principles about the Community:

Strengthening individual natural and informal relationships is the most powerful way to maintain, develop, or enhance the inclusion of people who have a disability in the community.

## OBJECTS

In carrying out its Mission, Family Advocacy recognises that families often find it difficult to affect ways in which they or their family member with a disability can be supported within the context of family and community. This is because of:

- lack of information about alternatives to what's on offer;
- isolation, vulnerability, extra pressures and financial costs;
- lack of opportunities for community members to get to know and value individuals who have a disability;
- diminished expectations by family about its role and influence in the life of the person with disability;
- lack of flexible, family-focussed supports;
- segregated service systems which lessen opportunities for people who have a disability to be included in the ordinary life of the community;
- lowered confidence to tap into ordinary community resources;
- underdeveloped skills and expertise to perform an advocacy role;
- lack of independent, organised formal advocacy which supports their individual or local advocacy efforts on behalf of people who have disability.

As a result, the Objects of the Organisation are:

- (a) to provide families in which there is a person with developmental disability with information, resources, skills and support in order to perform an advocacy role;

- (b) to encourage the development and effectiveness of family-based advocacy groups;
- (c) to provide an avenue for the development of leadership among families;
- (d) to monitor and, where necessary, make representations about legislation, practices and policies which affect people who have developmental disability and their families;
- (e) to disseminate information about legislation, policies and practices to families;
- (f) to encourage the involvement of people who have a disability, families and friends, in the work of the Organisation.

## ORGANISATIONAL GOALS

For people with developmental disability, Family Advocacy will:

- enable families to become agents of positive social change in the lives of people with developmental disability;
- be a credible public voice that defends, promotes and enhances the rights and interests of people with developmental disability;
- strengthen families to develop and negotiate alternatives to current service practice consistent with building positive social roles for people with developmental disability;
- broaden and activate the constituency of people who will speak out for the rights and interests of people with developmental disability;
- strive to enhance the capacity and operation of the organisation to ensure its renewal, viability and effectiveness.

## KEY FOCUS AREAS

### Children and families

Family Advocacy represents the interests of people with disability of all ages, but has a particular focus on the issues facing families with young children. Getting off to a good start is vitally important in most areas of life, but all the more so when looking at the journey faced by families of children with developmental disability. It is very easy to follow the 'disability specific' path which can leave families isolated, vulnerable and disconnected from their community. Family Advocacy has a focus on assisting families to remain in the typical, generic system as much as possible, seeking specialist support when necessary.

### Inclusive education

Family Advocacy seeks opportunities for all children with developmental disability to be educated, with adequate support, in the same classes and schools as their non-disabled peers. Family Advocacy has a long history of action around this key focus area and will continue with a new focus on transition to, and the support required, in high school.

### Post school adult education and training

Family Advocacy has a particular focus on the Programs for school leavers.

### Building relationships for people with disability and their families

So much of what makes up the 'good life' for people springs from the contacts and relationships that they and their families have. Many people

with developmental disability lead lonely, isolated lives. This too, can be the experience of the families supporting them. To turn this around requires conscious thought, planning and action.

### Supported living

Supported living involves a range of typical, accessible housing and the paid support required by an individual to meet their on going needs. These needs may include personal care, domestic assistance, safety, learning, and valued participation in the life of the community.

### People with disability are protected from harm

Within this key focus area sits the organisations core advocacy functions – being pro-active and reactive around unfolding issues which may lead to oppression, exploitation, discrimination, segregation and rejection of people with developmental disability.

# Chairperson's Report

MAREE SALZANO  
CHAIRPERSON



## Family Advocacy continues to be a credible and independent public voice that vigorously upholds our Vision and Mission.

This year has provided many opportunities to foster relationships with like minded people and organisations and to widen our area of influence in bringing about social change.

In March 2009, Family Advocacy was honored with an invitation to meet with the Governor General of Australia, Ms Quentin Bryce at her Kirribilli residence. Catherine Hogan and I had a very enjoyable time, which provided an opportunity to speak of the issues faced by people with developmental disability and their families and to provide an insight into the ongoing work of Family Advocacy. We were further inspired to hear her words of encouragement and recognition of the significance of the continuing work of Family Advocacy.

We were thrilled to participate in an Australian and New Zealand parent leadership development exchange with a Canadian organisation, Alberta Association for Community Living (AACL). This exciting opportunity involved Catherine Hogan and four members of Family Advocacy travelling to Canada to gain first hand knowledge of the ground breaking community developments in Alberta. All returned enthused and have been sharing their experiences, particularly in regard to working with community organisations as a means of enabling genuine inclusion for people with disability.

Family Advocacy has continued to forge links within our sector and has been integral in the formation of the Disability Advocacy Network Australia (DANA). DANA was established to fulfil the need for a national representative body to strengthen and support disability advocacy organisations across Australia.

The *Successful Inclusion ...building allies, practical strategies* conference was an outstanding two day event that provided a unique opportunity in bringing together family members of students with a developmental disability, educational professionals, students and allies. The conference provided a forum for exploring and

sharing ideas and strategies to facilitate inclusive classrooms and schools. The highlight for many people was the Education Panel session that provided an invaluable opportunity for participants to ask specific questions of the representatives from State, Catholic and Independent Schools.

Congratulations to the staff for the meticulous planning and coordination that enabled such a successful and inspiring event. Family Advocacy acknowledges the New South Wales Department of Education for their sponsorship of this conference.

Maree Salzano, Governor General, Quentin Bryce, Catherine Hogan



Family Advocacy is currently developing a new Strategic Plan. Our existing plan has guided the work of the organisation for the past five years and it is now appropriate to re-examine our priorities to ensure our work retains its relevance and responsiveness to the needs and interests of people with disability and their families. Thank you to our members who have contributed to this process by completing the member survey.

In forging new links and relationships we have been very fortunate to have had the expertise of David White, Zentricity Pty Ltd and Duncan Peppercorn, Social Ventures Australia, to assist us in preparing for our Strategic Planning Day to be held in August.

We are confident that this preparation, together with the energy, passion and shared values of the Management Committee and Staff, will result in a Strategic Plan that is relevant and has clarity in direction.

Additionally, David and Duncan have made significant contributions as facilitators at our Governance Workshop held in June. Committee Members gained a valuable insight into ways that we can best serve our members and people with developmental disability and their families.

Our warmest appreciation to David White who has very generously extended his contribution in a pro bono capacity that has provided significant and invaluable guidance and whose insight has enhanced our governance effectiveness and capabilities.

Family Advocacy continues to make representation to government seeking commitments for genuinely inclusive and individualised supports for people with disability. We remain committed to advocating for individualised supports that genuinely enables people with developmental disability and/or their families to have flexibility, control and choice about where they live and how they are supported to live their lives.

We are aware of the required planning, focus and energy that is given to garner support in achieving an inclusive and meaningful life for your sons, daughters and family members with a developmental disability. It is the actions of many that together bring about social change.

Family Advocacy is grateful for and strengthened by the contributions of an inspiring group of people who have shared values and a deep commitment to our work.

A very warm thank you to our many volunteers who give freely of their time and in doing so play a vital role in maintaining and increasing the capacity of Family Advocacy.

Our wonderful Session Leaders who present at workshops throughout the state and who in sharing their lived experiences, inform and inspire others on their own journey.

Thank you to each and every staff member, you all work so passionately and diligently accomplish an exceptional amount of work. Our

special thanks to Catherine Hogan for her outstanding leadership, professionalism and personal integrity.

My personal thanks to my fellow members of the Management Committee. It has been an absolute pleasure to work with a fantastic group of people who have shared values and an enduring commitment to the work of Family Advocacy. A very fond farewell and our warmest wishes to Jane Fraser who has provided many years of service as a Management Committee Member and who has also held the position of Chairperson.

Finally, thank you to our members and friends throughout NSW. Your support and encouragement continues to energise and inspire us.

Looking to the future, Family Advocacy is committed to strengthening and building on what has been achieved to date and to ensuring that we remain informed, vigilant and responsive to the needs of people with developmental disability and their families. We strive to respond to, inform and strengthen families in negotiating alternatives to current service practice consistent with building positive social roles for people with developmental disability.

MAREE SALZANO  
CHAIRPERSON

# Highlights of the year



CATHERINE HOGAN  
DIRECTOR

Family Advocacy assisted with the coordination of the first leg of a parent exchange initiative instigated by Bruce Uditsky, Executive Officer, the Alberta Association of Community Living (AACL), Alberta, Canada. (Please refer to the featured article in this report.)

The Inclusive Education Conference, held in May 2009, was a great success with 161 parents and teaching professionals attending across the two days.

Family Advocacy contributed to the establishment of In Control Australia to lobby for more individualised support to be offered to people with disability and their families.

The Supported Living project commenced to provide information to families in NSW about how people with disability might be supported to live in homes of their own.

Stories are starting to trickle in of families supporting their son or daughter with disability to set up homes of their own. Families have taken this wonderful step based on the information, inspiration, links, and support provided by Family Advocacy.

Within the reporting period, 35 face to face events, covering numerous topics, were held across NSW.



Successful Inclusion  
Conference guest speaker  
Mara Sapon-Shevin



**Parent Exchange Initiative:**  
Our gracious hosts AACL CEO, Bruce Uditsky (far left front) and AACL President, Wendy McDonald (second from the right, middle row), plus the parent exchange contingent – Australian, New Zealand and Canadian

## Snippets from parents over the year

### One day workshops and Information Sessions

"Thank you for yesterday's workshop. It was absolutely fabulous and I hope you run more such events in the future."

"Just wanting to reinforce my thanks for coming and discussing Family Advocacy with my students. They gave me great feedback after you left."

### Successful Inclusion Conference

"Firstly, congratulations on the success of the weekend conference [*Successful Inclusion Conference*]. It was truly inspiring and timely."

"Thank you for giving me the opportunity to strengthen my resolve to do the right thing for J."

"The content of the conference was fantastic. Each time I attend a Family Advocacy program I feel I gain more and more knowledge, insight and strength to benefit my daughter. I really do appreciate the assistance given to me to attend this event and would like to convey my thanks to the other staff and Committee."

### Advocacy related advice and information

"Thank you so much for your support, advice and guidance...I will always keep positive...thank you also for all the information and contact numbers. I now feel I have a good contact network as before I did not know where to go."

"Talking to you gave me my confidence back because the past three days have been really tough and I wish I had spoken to you earlier, but it is never too late."

### Resources from the Inclusion Collection Library

"Just wanted to say thanks so much for all the information you sent out to me – much appreciated."

### Family Advocacy's *Communiqué*

"Current, professional, informative, sound and contemporary in approach. Well done all who contributed or had a hand in content and production."

### Family Advocacy's systemic advocacy function

"Thank you for your letter to Jenny Macklin re seeking mainstream places in OOSH care for disabled teens... Our son is now in Year 6 and is successfully mainstreamed in both school and OOSH."

"I would like to thank Family Advocacy for acting on our (family with a member who has a disability) behalf. You provide a great service of keeping me informed about the politics involved and also you provide motivation and means to help me lobby for my child."

Proceed until apprehended.

UNKNOWN

# Family Advocacy at a glance

## WHERE WE HELD FACE TO FACE EVENTS



Number of face to face events run	34
Number of people attending Family Advocacy events	616
Number of financial members	171
Hits on the website 2008/2009	8,599+

# Advocacy and Leadership Development

## ADVOCACY DEVELOPMENT



KIM ROOTS



KAREN TIPPETT

The advocacy and leadership development work of Family Advocacy involves:

- enabling families in NSW to have opportunities to develop and enhance their advocacy skills;
- working with families to help increase their understanding of how to bring about positive change in the lives of children and adults with developmental disability;
- providing avenues for the development of advocacy related leadership among families.

2008/2009 was a time of invigoration in the area of Advocacy and Leadership Development at Family Advocacy. Highlights included a rejuvenated advocacy workshop, inspiring guest speakers from interstate and overseas and a conference about the importance of school inclusion – *Successful Inclusion... building allies, practical strategies.*

There was also an addition to the staff working in the area of Advocacy and Leadership Development, with Karen Tippett joining the organisation.

Family Advocacy continued its emphasis on running workshops for families around the State and on supporting families to attend events.

At all events, a range of materials and resources were made available to participants to facilitate the sharing of information and to enhance the opportunity for increased learning.

When travelling, presenters also met informally with Family Advocacy members as well as other families, friends and allies of people with disability. These meetings allowed a sharing of information about local issues as well as the current work of the organisation.

Family Advocacy has also continued its leadership development work supporting and meeting with families via a range of leadership opportunities.

The provision of telephone advocacy advice and information remained a focus with the organisation, receiving calls and emails from families, friends and allies from around the State.

With the addition of Karen Tippett to the Advocacy and Leadership Development team, the valuable contribution of volunteers has been increased with volunteers assisting to enhance the capacity and depth of experience that Family Advocacy can draw upon.

### FACE TO FACE EVENTS

**What is a home? What can we do to support people with developmental disability to have a true home?**

**November 2008 – West Ryde**

*What is a home?* was presented by Darcy Elks who hails from West Chester, Pennsylvania and, for over 25 years, has been a human services provider, trainer, consultant, evaluator and advocate on behalf of people who are socially devalued. She has travelled extensively and speaks at workshops

and conferences around the world. Her passion is the desire to see an inclusive community for all. She is the mother of three children, one of whom has a developmental disability.

The workshop was designed to provoke and facilitate thought about 'home' with topics discussed including: the importance of a true home, how to determine the differences between a place to live and a home, getting started - how to assist a vulnerable person to create a home, some of the obstacles that can be encountered and safeguards that can be implemented when creating a home, and the roles of family, staff and others in supporting people to have a true home.

The workshop was attended by 62 people, with the audience made up of families and allies of people with disability, as well as people who work with people with disability.

Some participant comments about the workshop included:

"Lots of strength based material and visions for what can be achieved. Has given me positive inspiration..."

"It was such a great step by step process guided by Darcy. The way Darcy facilitates participants is masterful."

"The information was easy to absorb, not overwhelming and I can apply it to my life."

"A couple of new directions for thinking about life for my daughter."



Left to right: Wendy McGlynn, Marianne Brazier, Wendy Stroeve, Julia Strang – NDCO, Orange, Kim Roots, members – Rhonda and Frank Cavalli

### After school – what then?

November 2008 – Armidale, Coffs Harbour, Port Macquarie, Newcastle

May 2009 – South Hurstville, Wollongong, Ulladulla, Queanbeyan

The workshop is about preparation and planning for when a student with developmental disability, who will need ongoing support, leaves school.

The focus is on the system of funding and support and covers information about Commonwealth and State Government responsibilities as well as those of non government service providers who are approved to support school leavers.

In choosing the locations of these events, Family Advocacy attempted to achieve a balance between making the workshop available to large populations and reaching families in more remote locations.

At the May workshops, Volunteer Session Leader, Sue Blackeby, presented at the workshops along with staff members Catherine Hogan and Kim Roots.

At the November workshops, Volunteer Session Leaders, Marianne Brazier and Sue Blackeby, presented with Catherine Hogan and Kim Roots.

Family Advocacy received a contribution from the Department of Ageing, Disability and Home Care (DADHC) to assist with the running of these events.

Some participant comments included those listed below:

“This was a wonderful workshop. I feel completely empowered. Thank you so much. I have a plan now that my daughter will benefit from.”

“We have learned that the path ahead is going to be confusing but we can use the information we obtained today to make it easier.”

“I found the workshop helpful and informative. It contained things I haven’t thought of before concerning after school options.”

“Lots of useful information. Feel very motivated.”

### Making a difference

February 2009 – Dubbo, Parkes, Orange, Penrith

In 2009, Family Advocacy’s key advocacy workshop, Making Change, was reinvigorated and presented under the new title, Making a difference.

*Making a difference* is a workshop intended to help families explore the basics of why and when advocacy skills may be needed.

The workshop allowed for a broad ranging discussion and was also a great chance for families to expand networks and knowledge.

Volunteer Session Leaders, Marianne Brazier and Wendy McGlynn, presented with Kim Roots. Amber Paisley-Topp attended to observe and assist with set up. These workshops are the first that Amber has attended in a leadership role and it was a great opportunity for her to observe two experienced volunteer session leaders in Marianne and Wendy.

Workshops were lively and each received positive feedback.

Some comments included those listed below:

“I’ve really understood the importance of staying calm, being a positive advocate without stepping on toes. Basically, getting the best of any given situation and doing things one step at a time.”

“I have learned to start with a vision.”

“I have learned how to structure in an effective way an advocating role. How to maintain that role. How to be totally effective.”

“Great help – strategies to work on.”



Workshop underway in Queanbeyan

If you don't go after what you want, you'll never have it. If you don't ask, the answer is always no. If you don't step forward, you're always in the same place.

NORA ROBERTS, AUTHOR

### **Taking the next step...putting the theory in practice**

March 2009 – Sydney



Family Advocacy hosted a presentation by Janet Klees in March, designed to offer practical strategies for families, support workers, advocates and other professionals to harness what our communities have to offer. It focused on building a context for relationships between people with disability and others who could enrich their lives. The workshop was particularly useful for families and allies of people with disability who do not currently have

support funding or financial resources to draw on. The workshop outlined many ideas that can be implemented immediately and noted that too many great opportunities can be overlooked while waiting.

All of Janet's work focuses on individually designed arrangements, and she is especially concerned that families are well supported to think through practical, principled ways to ensure that their family members live meaningful, involved and secure lives within their communities. Her work is rooted in a social role valorisation framework.

Janet Klees has been coordinator with the family governed Deohaeko Support Network in Ontario, Canada, for the past 15 years. She is the author of two books that are linked to the Deohaeko experience (*We Come Bearing Gifts* and *Our Presence has Roots*), as well as numerous other reports, documents, tools, and writings. 68 people attended and the event was well received.

Some comments included those listed below:

"Janet provided some very practical and easy to implement strategies which we can start today. Her anecdotal stories were great as they provided a deeper and greater level of understanding to relate to."

"I found it life giving and inspirational. Something I needed to hear."

"I really enjoyed it. Yes, it gave me lots of new ways of thinking around including my family member in the community."

"The workshop exceeded my expectations of learning a clear and achievable vision for the lives of people with disabilities and their families."

### **Create - don't wait**

May 2009 – Maitland

In addition to workshops run by Family Advocacy, Family Advocacy was asked to assist with the preparation and presentation of a workshop titled, *Create - don't wait*.

Family Advocacy talked to families about their vision for the life of their son or daughter and explored the importance of 'home'. The workshop encouraged families to think creatively about what could be possible for their son or daughter and some of the planning that could help progress these possibilities.

### **Planning for now, tomorrow and the future**

June 2009 – Tweed Heads

*Planning for now, tomorrow and the future*, a workshop presented by Jeremy Ward took place in Tweed Heads. Kim Roots and Catherine Hogan travelled to Tweed Heads to facilitate the event.



Jeremy Ward works as a consultant for Pave the Way, an organisation that works with families throughout Queensland to clarify their vision and to plan for a good life and a secure future for their relatives with a disability. He is a lawyer with many years experience in the law, as it relates to people with disabilities, and in working in advocacy organisations with people with disabilities and families.



Jeremy Ward

The workshop addressed one of the most common concerns for families - uncertainty about the future for their family member with developmental disability and explored a range of issues and ideas around preparing and planning for the future and keeping a person with disability safe in the long term. As well as legal tools, participants had the opportunity to hear strategies such as developing a vision and building networks of support.

Comments included:

"Very useful. Very thought provoking."

"The legal information is great - it was useful to have that clarified."

"It has made me think more about the future and how to plan for it."

"Great and easy going approach. Extremely challenging and awakening."

## ADVOCACY RELATED ADVICE AND INFORMATION

Throughout 2008/2009 Family Advocacy has provided timely advocacy related information and advice to the families, friends and allies of people with disability, primarily over the telephone and via email. Some people have also come to the Family Advocacy office to receive information and advice.

Family members and others have made contact to strategise and receive information around matters relating to the interests of the person with disability on a confidential basis.

This has been a useful way for people who have attended workshops to talk through information received on the day of the workshop and to receive additional information.

People heard about Family Advocacy in a number of ways including: when they received a flier about an event, when they read about Family Advocacy in a newsletter or newspaper, via ongoing contact as part of the mailing list, referrals from other organisations, by viewing the website, via word of mouth from other families, perusing directories and after seeing a Family Advocacy poster.

Recognising that telephone charges can create a financial barrier for people living outside of the Sydney metropolitan area, there is a free call 1800 number to call and discuss issues. People can call or email as often as they need to, and this varies according to the nature and the level of complexity of the issue or issues.

Advice and discussion over the year has covered a wide variety of life experiences

including: preparing a vision for the future, planning for starting school, working effectively with schools, considering leisure pursuits, transitioning from primary to high school, thinking about life after school, preparing to start work or interacting with employers, supporting a family member to develop relationships, planning the move from the family home, setting up a network of support and making long term plans around the person with disability.

Response to phone calls has varied depending on the circumstances but has included:

- sending resources such as articles or brochures to supplement knowledge and make the possibility of coming to an informed decision more likely;
- providing contact details for other organisations where the information required is outside the areas of expertise of Family Advocacy such as legal matters;
- completing research around an issue to ensure that the caller has the most up to date information or new perspectives about an issue;
- working with the caller to formulate a course of action;
- making contact with a senior decision maker where an issue is of systemic significance.

This contact, with a wide range and large number of callers from around the State, helps to inform Family Advocacy's planning around the workshops and the resources that are likely to be most useful for families. It also helps the organisation to be aware of issues that may be of systemic significance - either within a region or across the State.

# LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

**A very important focus of Family Advocacy involves supporting families to develop their advocacy and leadership skills and to increase their understanding of how to bring about positive change in the life of their family member with disability.**

Recognising that families have different skills, interests, and time constraints, the organisation attempted to nurture leadership via a number of different avenues.

Family Advocacy supported family members to:

- enhance their skills and knowledge by undergoing specific training;
- attend events sponsored by Family Advocacy;
- present and assist at Family Advocacy run workshops;
- contribute articles to the Family Advocacy journal, Families for Change; and
- attend and participate in meetings with politicians or senior bureaucrats.

In particular recognition of the time constraints of families, Family Advocacy has embraced a more decentralised approach to leadership development.

## LEADERSHIP TRAINING

### **Developing the skills of presenters**

Family Advocacy encouraged those that expressed an interest in becoming a Volunteer Session Leader to gradually develop their skills, responsibilities, competence and confidence.

Being a Volunteer Session Leader involves verbally presenting material and assisting with group work at workshops run by Family Advocacy across the State.

Training was of an ongoing nature, with those taking on this role gradually increasing their level of participation. Materials are provided and discussed before the relevant workshop. Self evaluation is encouraged and feedback is also provided.

Being a Volunteer Session Leader provides an opportunity to meet a wide range of people, exchange ideas, have access to the latest resources and to gain experience presenting to groups of various sizes. Presenting involved the use of a range of equipment that Volunteer Session Leaders are supported to master.

As well as adding to the breadth of experiences able to be shared at Family Advocacy workshops and hence adding to the value of these workshops, these skills and experiences were useful to Volunteer Session Leaders when promoting the rights and interests of their own family member with disability and when planning for his or her future.

### **Family Advocacy Leadership Training**

Historically, Family Advocacy has run an annual leadership event where interested families have come together in Sydney to hear more about the work of Family Advocacy, to gain a greater theoretical underpinning for their advocacy efforts, to develop their skills and to network.

In 2008/2009, recognising that not everyone who is interested in developing leadership skills can travel away from home or devote a weekend to a workshop, Family Advocacy held one weekend workshop and hosted numerous briefer discussions in other locations around the State.

### **Social Role Valorisation: Towards a Better Future**

**August 2008 – West Ryde**

Family Advocacy hosted in West Ryde. The workshop was presented by Jane Sherwin, a senior Social Role Valorisation trainer.



Social Role Valorisation theory underpins the work of Family Advocacy and it is very useful for those taking on a leadership role with the organisation to have an understanding of the theory. 20 people, including a good mix of Family Advocacy Management Committee Members, Volunteer Session Leaders and those new to leadership roles, were able to attend. Members of the Committee of Side by Side Advocacy also attended the two days.

Do not go where the path may lead, go instead where there is no path and leave a trail.

RALPH WALDO EMERSON

Informal feedback has been positive and some comments included those listed below:

"I thought the PowerPoint structure was great..."

"Very informative, useful course and way of thinking. Thank you very much."

"Thank you Family Advocacy for the opportunity."

"The videos were very powerful and relevant – well done!"

### Leadership Gatherings

April 2009 - Epping

June 2009 - Lismore, Armidale, Coffs Harbour

The matters discussed at each of these gatherings included those that have been identified by others over time as critical in enhancing their advocacy efforts.

These included:

- having a vision or plan;
- the fundamentals of advocacy – the essential elements of social advocacy and how to go about advocacy with the most impact;

- developing networks – including a consideration of circles of support; and
- moving advocacy efforts from the private to the public – when could this be useful/how should this be approached?

The gatherings offered an opportunity to enhance skills and connections and to build the capacity of families to direct advocacy efforts in both a private and public context. It also offered a chance to consider whether those attending would like to become more involved with the work of Family Advocacy.

### OTHER LEADERSHIP OPPORTUNITIES

#### Attending Events

Part of the way that Family Advocacy assists those taking on leadership roles is by supporting them to attend training run by other organisations. This offers exposure to fresh examples and ideas as well as networking opportunities.

### Disability Advocacy Network Australia (DANA) Strengthening Disability Advocacy National Conference

Family Advocacy sponsored Sharon Williams to attend the conference in Melbourne on 7 and 8 October 2008. Sharon had expressed interest in developing her advocacy skills and in taking on a leadership role in the area of systems advocacy.

The conference was a great way of exposing Sharon to a wide range of speakers, and perspectives, from across Australia. Sharon has since embraced a part time, temporary, role working at Family Advocacy around systemic advocacy issues.

### One Person at a Time

Family Advocacy sponsored Sue Blackeby and Amber Paisley-Topp to attend the *One Person at a Time* conference in Melbourne.

The presentations offered a great opportunity for discussion and the sharing of ideas and issues. The conference also provided helpful examples that attendees have been able to draw upon in providing advocacy support or in presenting at workshops.

### Programme Analysis of Service Systems Implementation of Normalisation Goals (PASSING)

Family Advocacy sponsored Susanne Walden to attend PASSING – an intensive live in event that involves visiting two different human services and using the PASSING evaluation tool to further her understanding of the life experiences of the people who use those services.



**Coffs Harbour Leadership Meeting**  
Left to right: Interested parents Liz Nojin, Pat Fagotter, Nicola Fox, Annette Bush, Vanessa Shearman, Kate McKenzie, Shari Raymond, Jo Downs



Attendees at the conference included Wendy Stroeve (middle) and Robert Goodlet

Susanne is a volunteer with Family Advocacy and continues to contribute to the work of the organisation in a range of ways, including resource preparation and, when possible, as a Volunteer Session Leader.

**Successful Inclusion...building allies, practical strategies**

May 2009 – Sydney

Family Advocacy hosted a state wide conference about inclusive education over two days in May.

For several years, Family Advocacy has held workshops across NSW that explore how to achieve an inclusive education for a student with developmental disability. The workshops have been for the family members and friends of children with developmental disability who are about to start, or who are at school.

As well as these one off workshops, a weekend workshop, *Travelling Through the Education Maze*, has been run annually for 11 years.

Family Advocacy decided to divert from this approach and run a conference with the aim of invigorating families by injecting some fresh voices and a different approach to information delivery.

Unlike the workshops presented in the past, the conference was also open to teaching professionals with the hope that, by attending the conference, professionals would be better equipped to go on the inclusion journey with families and have a better understanding of the perspective of families.



Catherine Hogan and Mara Sapon-Shevin

The conference brought together respected speakers from across Australia and overseas. The keynote speaker for the event was Professor Mara Sapon-Shevin. Mara is Professor of Inclusive Education in the Teaching and Leadership Department of the School of Education at Syracuse University. She is the author of over 250 books, book chapters and articles and writes extensively about the fields of full inclusion, cooperative learning, social justice education and teaching for diversity.

Other speakers included representatives from the NSW Department of Education, the New South Wales Association of Independent Schools and the Catholic Education Commission.

Family Advocacy is aware that it is often extremely difficult for families to afford to attend conferences and so contributed to their travel and accommodation costs. All families attended at a subsidised rate. The New South Wales Department of Education and Training provided sponsorship towards the conference, which made this support for families possible.



Fiona Cameron McGill

Numerous resources were distributed over the course of the two days.

A great deal of positive feedback was received with comments in emails and letters sent to Family Advocacy including those listed below:

“Conference was great!!!!!!!!!!!!!!”

“Thank you for giving me the opportunity to strengthen my resolve to do the right thing for W. I met many people who have already been involved in inclusive ed or are starting out...”

“Thanks heaps for the opportunity to attend your conference on successful inclusion, I look forward to going to many, many, more in the future...I attended my daughters LST meeting on the Wed after the conference, and it was a great success.”

“Thanks to Family Advocacy for the opportunity to attend...as it was wonderful to be able to listen to others and to gain ideas and talking to teachers from other schools was great also. Mara was truly an inspiration to us all...”



Parents: Anita Speed (far left), Anita O'Brien (third from right) and Maureen McLeish (second from right) visit 'Sheena's Sweet Shop' in Alberta

**The Global Village...it's much smaller and more familiar than we think!**

In October 2007, at Family Advocacy's national conference, *The Odyssey*, a terrific idea came to light. One of the keynote speakers, Bruce Uditsky, Chief Executive Officer of the Alberta Association for Community Living (AACL), Canada, made a commitment to coordinate a 'parent exchange' between Alberta and Australia. Bruce has worked in Australia many times over the past 20 years and has been one of the leaders internationally on inclusion for people with developmental disability.

Bruce had met families and people with disability in his travels here and felt that there was a wealth of experiences and stories that should be shared... so he determined to create an opportunity for some Aussie parents to travel to Canada to meet with families there and

facilitate a sharing of experiences, stories and ideas.

Bruce remained good to his commitment and in March 2009, 22 parents from around Australia, two parents from New Zealand, Family Advocacy's Director Catherine Hogan and two allies to families and people with disability spent eight amazing days on a whirlwind tour of Calgary and Edmonton. This experience was predominately funded by AACL. Family Advocacy partly sponsored Helen Durbidge from Coffs Harbour and Todd Sweeney from Wagga Wagga and fully sponsored Gina Wilson-Burns from Tapitallee, NSW.

Bruce had devised a combination of social get togethers, formal presentations, visits to colleges and a university, workplaces, people's homes and schools. Each of these activities was

used to demonstrate how the inclusion of people with disability was going in Alberta - the good as well as the not so good - and AACL's role in creating, supporting and advocating for it.

To cap the trip off, the Australian and New Zealand contingent were then warmly welcomed at the annual two day *AACL Family Conference*.

The exchange will be complete when, in the not too distant future, a contingent of families will come from Alberta to Australia to experience a similar sharing and exchanging of ideas. We are not certain when or how at this point... but where there is a will there's a way!

The special feature in the centre of the report has been contributed by Gina Wilson-Burns and captures some of the details from the trip.



Left: Helen Durbidge (centre of photo) at the *AACL Family Conference*

Above: Meg Sweeney and Daniel Desjardin at the conference

## EVENTS WE HAVE RUN THIS YEAR

### 2008

August	Social Role Valorisation: Towards a Better Life – Jane Sherwin	West Ryde
August	Information Session	Meadowbank TAFE
November	What is a home? What can we do to support people with developmental disability to have a true home? – Darcy Elks	West Ryde
November	After school – what then?	Armidale, Coffs Harbour, Port Macquarie, Newcastle
November	Supported Living	Epping

### 2009

February	Making a difference	Dubbo, Parkes, Orange, Penrith
March	Taking the next step – Janet Klees	West Ryde
April	Leadership Development with Family Advocacy	Epping (day and evening)
May	Successful Inclusion Conference	Sydney
May	After school – what then?	South Hurstville, Wollongong, Ulladulla, Queanbeyan
May	Planning for now, tomorrow and the future – Jeremy Ward	Tweed Heads
May	Leadership Development with Family Advocacy	Wollongong
May	Supported Living	Cherrybrook, Epping x 2
June	Supported Living	Epping x 2, Hornsby, West Ryde, Pennant Hills
June	Information Session	Evans Head
June	Leadership Development with Family Advocacy	Lismore, Armidale, Coffs Harbour

# Reflections on Alberta



GINA WILSON-BURNS

## PARENT EXCHANGE 2009

I was among the lucky contingent of Australian and New Zealand parents chosen to attend a parent exchange hosted by the Alberta Association for Community Living (AACL) in conjunction with Family Advocacy and other organisations around Australia and NZ.

Firstly, there were logistical elements to consider. Our son Mac had just started kindergarten some weeks earlier. Mac is in a mainstream class at his local school and has multiple disabilities. My parents stepped up to do morning preparation for school and the transportation and my sister and brother in law were there as back up. My husband had just started a new job one hour away from home, so wasn't as flexible as he would have been two months earlier. My brother and sister in law made their house (near school) available for Mac and his grandfather to wait after school until they could be collected. At this stage, if nothing else came out of the trip, there was the very important personal achievement of 'family involvement and engagement in Mac's life'. We had been a little too 'competent' in the past, never needing help, never asking, soldiering on. I realised we needed to do this more and more - my Canadian experience only cemented this fledgling thought.

Arriving at the airport ready to leave, I started meeting others travelling with us. Just that was enough to make me realise I was about to embark on a most amazing adventure. Here were a group of people, all but one, parents of children or adults with disabilities, all who had travelled the inclusion path or who were interested in pursuing it. The

Sarah Caldwell quote "Learn everything you can, anytime you can, from anyone you can - there will always come a time when you will be grateful you did" was never more apt. I tried to listen, take it all in, learn from these amazing people... and we still hadn't boarded our flight.

We arrived in Calgary, it was midday and we had free time until the next morning when we would be collected by our billets. We literally hit the ground running the next day. I was collected by my billet family Sheilagh and Darrell Cooke. Amazing people, parents of two adult children, one of whom has a developmental disability. We had been in email contact prior to my arrival and decided they would arrange a 'roving visit' style afternoon/evening where I was able to meet their daughter Jocelyn in her own 'condo' where she shares the two bedroom apartment with a university student who acts as a support person for her. Jocelyn works six hours a day, five days a week in open employment.

The next day was our scheduled day trip to Banff - a wonderful sightseeing opportunity but, more importantly, a chance to get to know the Australian/NZ contingent a little better. And an evening of drinks/nibbles with billets and Team Aus/NZ. There is something to be said for spending some time with like minded individuals. I know it is important to have your thinking challenged, but for me it was equally important to understand from those more 'seasoned' in this journey, why there is no alternative but to ensure all children are afforded an ordinary and inclusive life - and how it can be done.

Let the learning begin...

The official portion of the Parent Exchange was packed with information and opportunities most days running from 9am to 9pm.

The first three days were spent in Calgary, the remainder in Edmonton. Some of the information was at times overwhelming, particularly the post



school information, I guess because we are the parents of a young child - adult options are seemingly a long way off. That being said retrospectively all this information is now just part of my knowledge bank I (hopefully) use to make better decisions for us and Mac.

Some of the learning opportunities afforded to me included:

### **Supportive Communities: Strengthening Families**

An AACL project to promote awareness of how communities can work together to improve supports and possibilities for children with disabilities. A focus on the reality that if any other family seeks temporary care of their children by grandparents/babysitters etc it is not considered 'respite', but rather is viewed as a normative and natural part of child raising. However, for families of children with disabilities, there are often barriers to similar opportunities. This project aims to remove these barriers.

**Personal Highlight:** The realisation that 'respite' is not what we need - normative, natural supports are imperative to our family unit - just as they are to every family unit. The recognition that communities do have the capacity to drive these projects, they need not have the expertise, nor all the answers but they can, given the opportunity, learn and in some instances, become 'drivers of change'.

### **Inclusive Post Secondary Education**

Post secondary education opportunities have been occurring in Alberta for over 20 years. I attended the University of Calgary where we met the coordinator of the program and one of the students. Even though the consensus was U of C was not

operating perfectly, mainly due to some staffing issues, we all agreed that Inclusive Post Secondary Education is an amazing opportunity for the student, regardless of how well it runs behind the scenes. Students are able to undertake units of study in line with their chosen fields and to enhance employment opportunities for them when they complete their study. They attend classes on their own and have 'inclusion facilitators' who assist (almost invisibly) with both inclusion opportunities and study/learning outcomes.

**Personal Highlight:** This was a real 'wow' moment. I am still excited about these possibilities and would love to see a growth of these opportunities in Australian universities.

### **Family Voices**

This is a network of individual families in each region of Alberta that advocate on behalf of children and adults with developmental disabilities. These networks work with school districts to improve inclusive education; with child and family service authorities to improve supports to families and with the regional offices of Persons with Developmental Disability (PDD) (their version of DADHC), to improve supports to adults with developmental disabilities. Each network is supported by an AACL Family Voices Coordinator.

**Personal Highlight:** An amazing and diverse group of people. The depth of knowledge and experience in this group was inspiring. Particularly the Grande Dame of the group, Sharon Cobb, a mother who has been through the trauma of having her then 10 year old daughter, institutionalised and her subsequent recognition of the damage

being done. Sharon's daughter came back to the family home 11 years later. For those of us with young children, the horror of institutions is something we don't recognise; therefore we need to be wary of any return to the 'bad old days'.

### **Community Navigator Project**

I wonder if there was ever a choice of title as apt as 'navigator', to help you traverse your community when striving for an inclusive life. The Navigators help identify the appropriate balance between government funded services and supports available through generic community resources and natural community supports.

**Personal Highlight:** The removal of the terms and roles of caseworker, aide, support staff etc to a very appropriate 'navigator' who describe themselves as 'community connectors' - a reminder that language is so very powerful.

### **Multicultural Project**

This is a partnership between AACL, the Multicultural Health Brokers Cooperative (MCHBC) and the Edmonton Child and Family Services Regional Authority, to support immigrant and refugee families to access appropriate supports and services, as well as create family networks in their ethnic communities.

**Personal Highlight:** The strength of these families, particularly the women of the MCHBC to fight for what they know to be innately right - amazing and awe inspiring.

### **Rotary Employment Partnership**

In this initiative, Rotary Clubs and members will work in partnership with AACL and PDD to develop jobs for

people with developmental disabilities within the business community. This project taps into the respected voice of Rotary and fosters community commitment to the ongoing development of genuine and meaningful employment opportunities. A coordinator works with the employers to help establish the position but do not undertake the role of 'job coach'. If additional supports are required they are identified and sought by the employer and the coordinator.

**Personal Highlight:** A great project which could be emulated in any community and any Rotary Club. The Rotary Clubs currently engaged in this initiative are keen to help other clubs embrace this project in their own towns.

### **Family Managed Funds**

There has been individualised funding for 25 years in Alberta - something only just starting to gain momentum in Australia. However, it is about to cease in its current form. This has largely come about due to the fact many families simply defaulted to relying on service supports and were not given training/education on how to truly manage individualised funding.

**Personal Highlight:** The insight into this area was greatly appreciated and not something I had been exposed to previously. I was most intrigued by the recognition that when funding amounts were capped, people spent to the cap, but when they were uncapped, the overall costs dropped and people only used what they truly needed. I can see huge benefits in individualised supports for families.

### **Elementary School Visits**

I was fortunate to attend two elementary schools during our stay. Chosen because of their relevance to us as parents of kindergarten children. It was interesting to see the difference between the two schools we attended.

The first was an award winning, AACL recognised school as an excellent example of inclusive education. Being a former 'teaching school' there were viewing platforms behind one way glass into the classrooms. You could observe without upsetting the true class environment. A large 1-2 composite class of 50 children was managed by two trained educators and two support staff. There were five children in the class with additional support needs. Interestingly, not only could we not identify who was a learning support staffer and who was a teacher, we couldn't identify any child who may have had additional support needs because the class was structured in such a way there were group learning and peer based learning activities going on throughout the entire classroom.

The second school I attended was based in Edmonton. A different vibe entirely to the first school. It was considered to be a progressive school offering different learning style opportunities for students. You could choose their standard school program or a 'Cogito' program based more on the old style of learning, where whole group, direct instruction, is employed. Students are taught in an orderly and structured setting in an academically oriented program. From my understanding, this type of program

does not allow for adaptive education practices and therefore would not be suitable for inclusive practices. Their standard program was more likely to provide these opportunities, however on my observations I did not feel there was a truly inclusive approach. It appeared that if children had significant additional needs they were channeled away from that school setting.

**Personal Highlight:** Having the opportunity to attend with others more experienced than me was a great opportunity when it came to wading through some of the 'illusions of inclusion' and some of the 'spin'. It has made me savvier to listening to what people say and matching it to what they actually do. It has made me more confident in questioning tried and true methods and highlighting deficiencies in the system.

### **The Annual Family Conference**

This two day conference was a fitting end to our Parent Exchange. One of the keynote speakers was Dr. June Downing, Professor Emeriti of Special Education, California State University, Northridge. She is a national leader in the field of special education that targets the needs of students with severe disabilities, especially with regard to inclusive education. For me this was without a doubt the highlight. I have struggled finding practical solutions in education for a child like Mac. Dr Downing was able to break lessons down into manageable chunks, both high tech and low tech examples were given. Video footage showing it in action was plentiful. It was Dr

Downing's presentations that made me realise it 'isn't that hard'. Sure there are some strategies and learnings that are required, but once you 'get it' you GET IT. I have since purchased a couple of her books and would certainly recommend them all. Her latest book is *Including Students with Severe Multiple Disabilities in Typical Classrooms: Practical Strategies for Teachers* by June E. Downing. Paul H. Brookes Publishing Co 2008.

#### **In Conclusion**

There was no downside to this trip. The goals of inclusion globally are the same; it is nice to know we are not alone. The friendships forged, the insights gained are so invaluable and intrinsic to every plan we now make for Mac's future and our future. We dare to dream big and are determined to make those dreams a reality.

Was it life changing? It was certainly life consolidating and life confirming. I think to be granted the luxury of that type of affirmation this early in our journey will end up being life changing.

Family Advocacy has without a doubt been the catalyst for all of this. I am eternally grateful for this experience and look forward to supporting any initiatives for others to experience opportunities such as this.

A quote from Colleen F Tomko (inclusion advocate) sums up what I believe AACL, Family Advocacy and all those I met embrace "Let not our needs determine our dreams...but let our dreams determine our needs."



# Working to change the system – Systems Advocacy



BELINDA EPSTEIN-FRISCH



SHARON WILLIAMS

The systems advocacy work of Family Advocacy aims to remove barriers and facilitate opportunities for children, young people, and adults with disability, to lead good lives as active members of their community.

## KEY FOCUS AREA: INDIVIDUALISED SUPPORT

### Concern

Families and people with disability want paid supports to provide assistance with things that are important to them in ways that are responsive to their individuality. Unfortunately, support offered through the specialist disability service system seldom provides such a person centred approach. What is on offer tends to be rigid and unresponsive to the hopes, dreams and circumstances of individuals. Whilst government policy speaks of person centred approaches, this has not transformed service practice. In the main, existing services continue to congregate people with disability and segregate them from the community.

### Outcome

DADHC has understood the need for a more individualised approach and is exploring the option through the implementation of four pilots and a research agenda to inform future practice.

### Strategy

Family Advocacy held monthly meetings with the Director, Reform, Community Access, Department of Ageing, Disability and Home Care (DADHC). Regular meetings were also held with other senior DADHC staff

(including the Deputy Director General) to showcase the transformation taking place in other states and to discuss systemic change in NSW.

Family Advocacy met twice with the Minister for Disability Services and on three occasions with members of his staff.

Family Advocacy worked with the NSW Council for Intellectual Disability (CID) to make presentations about self directed support to groups of senior staff of DADHC and to DADHC's External Expert Group.

Family Advocacy was invited to sit on the DADHC External Working Group on Individualised Support.

Family Advocacy is a member of the DADHC Evaluation Steering Group which oversees a study evaluating services accessed by DADHC clients. A second piece of action research is being developed to document the experiences of the four pilot projects.

Family Advocacy organised a number of meetings which showcased the knowledge, skills and experience of overseas and interstate speakers on the issue of self directed support, to the Minister's office and senior DADHC staff. This strategy included Jo Kidd, from Skillnet, a self advocacy organisation in the UK and Margaret Ward from Mamre, Queensland.

### Outcome

People with disability, families, advocates and some services have improved their understanding of self directed support.

### Strategy

A new section of the Family Advocacy website has been developed to showcase information about individualised support.

Family Advocacy was instrumental in the establishment of In Control Australia. In Control Australia is a movement/collective of individuals and organisations who aim to bring about systemic policy change in Australia to enable individuals with disability and their families to manage their support. In Control Australia is an affiliate of In Control UK and works to provide an avenue for information exchange, critical inquiry, dialogue, collaboration, leadership and influence.

Family Advocacy assisted with the organisation and promotion of the first In Control workshop in December 2008 and was one of the keynote speakers.

Family Advocacy hosted a meeting of advocacy agencies and service

providers to hear Jo Kidd from Skillnet, UK plus a second seminar for respite providers, to hear Margaret Ward of Mamre, describe Family Managed Funds in Queensland.

Family Advocacy presented at the *Young People in Nursing Homes* conference in Melbourne showcasing an individualised approach built on a circle of support that enabled a young woman with very high support needs, as a result of a stroke, to return home and build a valued life, included in her community.

Family Advocacy presented at the Melbourne conference *Self Directed Services and Personal Budgets: The Emerging Agenda*, as well as at the National Disability Services (NDS) conference *Strength to Strength* in Sydney.

### Outcome

There is bipartisan political support for more individualised supports.

### Strategy

Family Advocacy organised for the Shadow Minister for Disability Services to meet with services, advocacy groups and families in Melbourne to receive first hand information about the impact of the transformation taking place in the service system in Victoria.

### Outcome

Government has an understanding of financing mechanisms that support the initiative of people with disability and their families.

### Strategy

Family Advocacy contributed to the consultation of the Commonwealth Disability Investment Group, providing information about programs and mechanisms in Canada, the UK and Western Australia, that enable people with disability to buy their own homes, start a business and plan for the future.



Kim Roots, Belinda Epstein-Frisch, Matt Donnelly, CEO, Ability Options, Libby Ellis, Coordinator, Connexions, Jewish Care, Jo Kidd, Skillnet, UK, Dan Culhane, Ability Options

## KEY FOCUS AREA: CHILDREN AND FAMILIES

### Outcome

Strong advocacy was provided to state and federal governments raising the view that new initiatives for after school support for teenagers with disability would not meet the needs of a significant group of students.

### Strategy

When both Commonwealth and State Governments developed initiatives for after school support that were only going to be provided in environments that segregate and group young people with disability together, Family Advocacy wrote to Ministers and held discussions with senior staff in the Commonwealth Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs (FaHCSIA) and with DADHC, arguing that a significant proportion of teenagers with disability, including those with high support needs, are now educated in the regular class and would not attend segregated after school programs. Their families would thereby be disadvantaged by being denied time in which their teenager was meaningfully engaged. Our efforts to date have not been successful in changing the focus of the program.

### Outcome

The need for reliable additional support for children with disability in early childhood settings was voiced.

### Strategy

When the Department of Community Services (DoCS) was reviewing the childcare sector, the provision of

Supporting Children with Additional Needs (SCAN) funding was perceived by some preschools to be uncertain. These preschools were therefore reluctant to enrol children with disability. Family Advocacy wrote to and sought meetings with senior DoCS staff.

Family Advocacy met with the Council of Social Services of New South Wales (NCOSS) Preschool Working Party to seek their support.

### Outcome

There was a major overhaul of a DADHC discussion paper - *New Directions for Disability Respite Services in NSW* that would have led to significant detrimental impact on children, young people and adults with disability, and their families.

### Strategy

Family Advocacy informed families across NSW of the existence and implication of the policy and encouraged people to voice their views.

Family Advocacy wrote to the Minister and wrote to and met with the Shadow Minister and senior DADHC staff responsible for the development and implementation of the policy. Family Advocacy also contributed our views at the Roundtable hosted by the Minister, via submission and at a public meeting held at Parliament House in Sydney.

Family Advocacy coordinated a meeting between the DADHC Director of Respite and three families who use the system, to provide first hand feedback and to share their visions of life with flexible self directed supports.

Family Advocacy spoke to journalists about the issue and was quoted in a Sydney Morning Herald article by Adele Horin.

## KEY FOCUS AREA: INCLUSIVE EDUCATION

The work of Family Advocacy has continued to support children and young people being welcomed and educated in the regular class of local neighbourhood schools.

### Outcome

Risk assessment processes are more transparent, involve parents and provide procedural fairness.

### Strategy

Family Advocacy initiated discussions with the Occupational Health and Safety unit of the Department of Education and Training (DET) with the aim of ensuring that the risk assessment processes used in schools promote the best interest of students and enable the parent's voice to be heard.

Family Advocacy worked with the Legal Branch of DET to provide feedback on the draft *Guidelines for the management of health and safety risks posed to schools*.

### Outcome

Student profiling and assessment takes a more holistic and positive view of the student. The fact that IQ assessment is no longer required as a major component of student assessment represents the achievement of a significant long term goal of Family Advocacy.

The future belongs to those  
who prepare for it today.

MALCOLM X

### Strategy

Family Advocacy worked with the Student Welfare Directorate of DET in the development of a more contemporary approach to student profiling and assessment.

### Outcome

Information developed for families of children with autism is family friendly and promotes a positive vision of children.

### Strategy

Family Advocacy was a member of a working group advising The Australian Autism Education & Training Consortium with regard to the running of events for parents across NSW.

### Outcome

The NSW State Budget special education initiative to employ 80 new Learning Support Coordinators reflects the direction sought in the Family Advocacy 2007 NSW state election campaign.

### Strategy

Family Advocacy ran a campaign in 2006/2007 that has seen an outcome in the 2008/2009 budget.

### Outcome

Family Advocacy is seen as a credible organisation with knowledge and skills in the area of education.

### Strategy

Family Advocacy has held regular meetings and has a good working relationship with senior DET staff in Disability Programs, the OH&S Directorate, Student Welfare, Legal Branch and with the Minister.

Family Advocacy has been invited to be a member of the National Disability Coordination Officers Consultative Committee.

## KEY FOCUS AREA: SUPPORTED LIVING

The work of Family Advocacy seeks to ensure that people with disability are supported to live in a range of typical, accessible housing with the paid and informal support required for a life of valued participation in the community.

### Outcome

The draft DADHC policy *Allocation of Places in Supported Accommodation* that was seriously detrimental to the interests of people with disability was withdrawn and redrafted.

### Strategy

Family Advocacy publicised the existence of the draft policy and assisted families to understand the implications of its implementation.

Strategies used to seek the withdrawal of the policy included meetings with senior DADHC officials, writing to the Minister, meeting with the Shadow Minister, a submission and speaking at public meetings, including one at Parliament House.

Family Advocacy contributed to the redevelopment of the draft policy through a Roundtable chaired by the Minister.

### Concern

There is insufficient housing stock that is affordable and available for people with disability moving out of the family home.

### Strategy

Family Advocacy wrote to the new NSW Housing Minister seeking a meeting. Unfortunately, we are unsuccessful in gaining a meeting to date.

### Outcome

The decision by the Minister for Disability Services to redevelop institutions is being challenged.

### Strategy

Family Advocacy supported People with Disability Australia in taking action in the Administrative Decisions Tribunal. Assistance was provided in the form of membership of a Person With Disability Working Group.

## SYSTEMIC ADVOCACY AT THE NATIONAL LEVEL

### National Disability Strategy (NDS)

### Outcome

Mechanisms to strengthen the NDS, as a force for transformation in the lives of people with disability, were presented.

### Strategy

Family Advocacy contributed a submission to the NDS.

Family Advocacy joined with the Disability Advocacy Network Australia (DANA) to lobby the Commonwealth Parliamentary Secretary for Disability Services, Bill Shorten, to ensure the strategy is underpinned by structural mechanisms to enhance its potency.

Those who dream by day are cognizant of many things which escape those who dream only by night.

EDGAR ALLAN POE

## INQUIRY INTO BETTER SUPPORT FOR CARERS

### Outcome

A perspective was presented at the inquiry that did not paint people with disability as burdens, and the actual cause of anguish to their families.

### Strategy

Family Advocacy gave evidence at this inquiry and supported two parents to also give evidence, which demonstrated that it is in fact the unavailability of flexible, individualised supports that causes most of the hardship experienced by the families of people with disability.

Family Advocacy also wrote a submission to this inquiry and encouraged members to do the same.

## DISABILITY ADVOCACY NETWORK AUSTRALIA (DANA)

### Outcome

A body to represent disability advocacy across Australia now exists.

### Strategy

Family Advocacy was a member of the taskforce that was charged with the role of setting up a national body to 'advocate for advocacy'. The formation of DANA is a watershed moment in the history of advocacy in Australia. Never before has there been a body whose sole purpose is to strengthen and support advocacy for people with disability in Australia.

### Other

Family Advocacy communicated with families about the initiatives and implications of state and federal budgets for people with disability and their families.

Family Advocacy continued to participate in the biannual Roundtable chaired by the NSW Deputy Ombudsman.

Family Advocacy spoke at numerous conferences including the conference of DADHC Case Managers, the annual conference of National Disability Services, Strength to Strength, the ASPECT conference Partnerships with Parents, and the conference of *Young People in Nursing Homes*.

Family Advocacy was invited to participate in the review of undergraduate and post graduate courses in Occupational Therapy at Cumberland College.



DANA's Board - back row, left to right: Catherine Peek, Disability Advocacy NSW; Kevin Stone, VALID, Vic; Andrea Simmons, ADACAS, ACT; Steve Doran, EO, Regional Information and Advocacy Council, Vic; Catherine Hogan; David Craig, EO, Action for Community Living, Vic;

Front row: left to right: Rebecca Thompson, Advocacy Tasmania, Tas; Kevin Cocks, EO, Queensland Advocacy Inc. Qld. Not present: Monica Baker, Disability Advocacy and Complaints Service, SA.

# Information

An important part of Family Advocacy's mission is to strengthen the knowledge of families. Through the Information role and the resources in the Inclusion Collection, Family Advocacy provides families with information that is both relevant and inspiring. Carole Calleia held the position of Information and Promotions Coordinator until December 2008. Wendy McKinnon commenced as Information Coordinator on 2 June 2009.

## INFORMATION SESSIONS

### About Family Advocacy

During 2008/2009 Family Advocacy provided an Information Session to welfare students at Meadowbank TAFE.

### About Supported Living

Family Advocacy travelled around local metropolitan areas running ten information sessions and meeting with families of people with developmental disability to discuss supported living. A range of materials and resources were distributed to participants. Families were invited to be part of an upcoming campaign to work to influence policy around individualised funding which could be used to support people with disability live in a home of their own, by writing to the Minister and Shadow Minister for Disability Services.

Further *Supported Living* Information Sessions are planned for regional areas of NSW in the coming financial year.

## RESOURCES DEVELOPED THROUGHOUT THE YEAR



The journal, *Families for Change*, aims to inform, challenge and inspire readers. Contributors come from a variety of backgrounds and disciplines and the resulting publication provides a broad overview on topics specific to the disability advocacy sector. In particular, *Families for Change* champions the philosophy and practice of inclusion, and advocates for broad systemic change. In 2008/2009, over 2,400 families and organisations received the journal. With every issue, the number receiving the journal via email increases. Themes for the journal included: *Systems Advocacy - Changing the System and Towards A Better Life: Re-framing Thoughts and Actions*, covering the topic of social role valorisation and its ongoing importance in the lives of marginalised people.



CAROLE CALLEIA



WENDY MCKINNON

## COMMUNIQUÉ

AN INFORMATION UPDATE FOR NSW FAMILIES



*Communiq  * is a publication designed to keep families updated on the current work of Family Advocacy and issues of relevance within the disability advocacy sector. It contains information relating to policy and legislation changes and the communications sent between Family Advocacy, politicians and government authorities. Some of the issues covered in *Communiq  * this year included a fact sheet on the National Disability Agreement (FAHCSIA), Senate Committee recommendations for changes to Special Disability Trusts, State and Federal budgets, a Federal Parliamentary Inquiry into Australia's carer support system and the National Disability Strategy Consultation Report – *Shut Out: The Experience of People with Disabilities and their Families in Australia*.

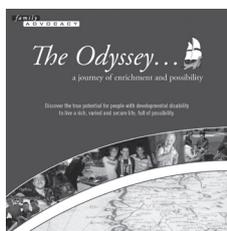
*Communiq  * is sent by post and email to approximately 300 families and allies.

### **Opening the Doors DVD**



After months of very intensive work in filming and editing, Family Advocacy's promotional DVD *Opening the Doors* was revamped and launched at the October AGM. This DVD is now used at information sessions describing and demonstrating the work of the organisation.

### **The Odyssey DVD**



The DVD capturing many of the sessions run at the *Odyssey* conference held in October 2007, was brought to the final stage and also launched at the AGM in October 2008. This DVD is now available for sale.

### GENERAL ENQUIRIES AND RESOURCE PROVISION

Providing information and resources to families and workers is a fundamental role of the organisation. Family Advocacy received approximately 395 individual requests for books, articles, videos and information packs during the past 12 months.

### THE INCLUSION COLLECTION LIBRARY

During 2008/2009 over 3,641 resources were accessed or borrowed from the library. Families were the main users, but students and workers also accessed information.

Several new resources were added to the library and out of date resources, with information no longer relevant, were removed. A strategy has been undertaken to further promote and encourage borrowing from the existing extensive collection and to only add new books and DVDs to fill any gaps in information. Articles that are relevant and timely will continue to be added as and when copyright allows.

The good life is inspired by love and guided by knowledge.

BERTRAND RUSSELL, BRITISH AUTHOR, MATHEMATICIAN AND PHILOSOPHER

# Management Committee

## Governance Statement

Family Advocacy is incorporated under the Associations Incorporation Act, and operates under the rules of association adopted by members on 19 June 1991. Under these rules Family Advocacy's affairs are managed by the Committee of Management (the Committee). This governance statement outlines how the Committee discharges that responsibility.

The Committee's primary responsibility is to ensure Family Advocacy stays true to its Vision and Mission, advocates effectively on behalf of people with developmental disability in NSW and achieves the goals set out in the Strategic Plan.

The Committee, which comprises the Chairperson, Immediate Past Chairperson, Treasurer, Secretary and up to a maximum of 12 ordinary members, is elected each year at the time of the annual general meeting. In fulfilling its primary role, the committee meet at least 6 times per year. At these meetings the committee considers:

- the Treasurer's report, which details income, expenditure and financial position;
- membership matters;
- staff and administrative matters;
- systemic and general advocacy matters;
- correspondence;
- complaints; and

Farewell to Robert Goodlet following five years on the committee, the last two years as Chairperson and Immediate Past Chair.

- outcomes of program delivery to families and people with disability in NSW.

The proceedings at each meeting are minuted and kept as a permanent record of the business conducted by the Committee.

The Committee report to members at the annual general meeting. At the annual general meeting the annual report, which includes the audited financial report for the year just ended, is presented to members.

## Governance Improvement

In keeping with the organisation's commitment to good governance practice, consultants from Social Ventures Australia, Duncan Peppercorn, and Zentricity's David White, ran a session with the Management Committee. The session covered topics such as:

- What do effective committees do?
- How has this committee been performing?

- What should the role of this committee be?
- Strategy discussion – engaging in strategic processes.

This event was also run to begin the thinking for the Strategic Planning day being arranged for August 2009. Family Advocacy has begun a new Strategic Planning cycle to cover the next three years.

The Committee would like to extend a sincere thank you to both Duncan and David for their input and guidance.

## Maree Salzano – Chairperson

Maree lives on the northern beaches of Sydney. Maree is committed to social justice and in achieving an inclusive and fulfilling life for her son Daniel. Daniel is a happy and valued member of his local high school. Maree advocates for a society where all members are included, respected and valued. Maree continues to be inspired and energised by the work of Family Advocacy.





Maree Salzano



Scott Phillips



Jane Fraser



Joanne Roberts



Catherine Hogan



Linda Hughes



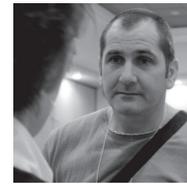
Annette O'Sullivan



Alex Purvis



Kate McNamara



Todd Sweeney

### **Linda Hughes – Immediate Past Chairperson**

Linda is from Newcastle, she lives with her 17 year old son Jacob and her partner Chris Hake. Jacob has disability with high support needs; he is in year 11 and is studying via Distance Education. The work of Family Advocacy continues to inspire Linda: she is committed to Jacob having a good life where he is included as a valued member of the community. Linda's association with Family Advocacy began in the early nineties. She has previously served on the Management Committee for four years. After a year off the Committee, Linda returned in 2005 and served as Treasurer in 2006/2007 and Chair in 2007/2008.

### **Scott Phillips – Treasurer**

Scott and his wife Cherie live in southern Sydney. They have two children, Bronte aged eight and Henry aged six. Bronte has additional needs. In 2007, Scott and Cherie turned their efforts towards Bronte's successful inclusion into a typical class at a nearby public school. Scott and Cherie have spoken at autism conferences, workshops and work with many families in similar circumstances.

### **Annette O'Sullivan – Secretary**

Annette and her husband live in Brooms Head on the north coast of NSW, with their two sons. They have, for many years, been involved in securing an inclusive education for their eldest son (in the regular class of their local school) and are now working towards enhancing his participation

within his local community. Annette has twenty five years of professional contact with people with disability and has both a professional and personal commitment to advocacy on behalf of those with developmental disability.

### **Jane Fraser**

Jane lives in Sydney and is a parent of a daughter with disability. She has worked for many years with and for people with disability and their families to gain better life opportunities. Jane worked for Action for People with Disability as Executive Officer for 20 years and is a past Chairperson of the Disability Council of NSW. Currently she is a member of the NSW Guardianship Tribunal. Jane has been on the Management Committee for three years.

### **Alex Purvis**

Alex lives in Grafton and has four children. He has been involved for many years in promoting the rights of his son, Daniel and has a particular interest in individualised self managed approaches to achieve a meaningful, enriched life for his son. Alex has previously been on the Management Committee, including a term as Chairperson.

### **Joanne Roberts (Joanne resigned April 2009)**

Joanne Roberts is a single mother who lives on the far south coast of NSW. She has three children, two of whom have a disability and they both enjoy being included at a local primary school. Jo has many interests and enjoys spending time with her family and shopping. Jo wishes to undertake study next year to enable her to be able to reenter the workforce and become a stronger voice in the

community. Joanne is involved at the local preschool and school that the boys attend, and actively promotes Family Advocacy and what it has to offer to families in regard to advice and seminars.

### **Kate McNamara**

Kate McNamara lives in Stanmore with her husband and three daughters. The eldest is 12 and since her birth, Kate's focus and work (both paid and unpaid) has been in the disability field. Kate enjoys reading, tennis and live music and looks forward with interest to an ongoing association with Family Advocacy.

### **Catherine Hogan – Public Officer**

Catherine is the Director of Family Advocacy and took on the Public Officer role following the resignation of Todd Sweeney, for family reasons, on 16 July 2008.

### **Todd Sweeney**

Family Advocacy would like to acknowledge Todd Sweeney's involvement with the organisation over a 17 year period. Firstly, as a financial member, then as a parent leader facilitating group work at workshops, then as a member of the Management Committee and finally, as Public Officer for six years.

Seven committee meetings were convened over the financial year and were held as either a face to face meeting or a teleconference.

The 2008 Annual General Meeting was held on 24 October and an orientation for committee members re-elected and new, was conducted in December 2008.

# Staff and Allies

## STAFF AND VOLUNTEERS

Full time:	Length of Service
Director – Catherine Hogan	13 years (5 years as Director)
Advocacy Development and Liaison – Kim Roots	4 years
Administration Support – Philippa FitzPatrick	6 years
Part time:	Length of Service
Systems Advocacy - Belinda Epstein-Frisch	14 years
Advocacy and Leadership Worker – Karen Tippett (from July 2008)	1 year
Information Coordinator - Carole Calleia (until December 2008)	1.5 years
Information Coordinator - Wendy McKinnon (from June 2009)	1 month
Administration Coordinator – Marybelle Ignacio	2 years
Project worker – Sharon Williams (from February 2009)	4 months

### Work Experience

Courtney Campbell (from May 2009)

## VOLUNTEERS

Volunteers have an increasingly important role at Family Advocacy.

Family Advocacy currently has over 50 volunteers throughout NSW, who with their local area knowledge and contacts are assisting Family Advocacy to disseminate information more effectively and to reach more families.

Thank you for your help. It is much appreciated!

**Volunteer Session Leaders** gave their time and skills to present at workshops across the State. This added immensely to the quality and texture of these events. We wish to thank these Volunteer Session Leaders for their contribution. We also acknowledge the support of their families.

Volunteer Session Leaders in 2008/2009 were: Marianne Brazier, Sue Blackeby, Wendy McGlynn and Amber Paisley-Topp. Thank you!

Throughout 2008/2009 Family Advocacy has held some large events, including the *Successful Inclusion Conference*. A special thank you is extended to all of the speakers who gave their time to present at this event: Wendy Stroeve, Julie Hook, Geraldine Gray, Margaret McKay, Suzanne Carrington, Fiona Cameron-McGill, Neale Waddy, Kristen Ody, Bronwyn Thoroughgood and Mara Sapon-Shevin.

Volunteers assisted by sending out information about these events, setting up on the day and a range of roles, including taking registrations, distributing resources and alerting people about the end of breaks.



### Guest speakers at Inclusion conference

1. Bronwyn Thoroughgood
2. Fiona Cameron-McGill
3. Geraldine Gray
4. Julie Hook
5. Kristen Ody
6. Mara Sapon-Shevin
7. Margaret McKay
8. Neale Waddy
9. Suzanne Carrington
10. Wendy Stroeve



Karen Tippett, Sharon Williams, Kim Roots, Belinda Epstein-Frisch, Wendy McKinnon and (seated) Philippa FitzPatrick, Marybelle Ignacio and Catherine Hogan.

Volunteers have also assisted Family Advocacy's work around computer issues, office based administrative tasks and writing publications.

The volunteers named below have been actively involved in 2008/2009:

- Wendy McGlynn
- Wilma Reed
- Paivi Rusanen
- Margaret Hardman
- Shari Raymond
- Clare Falzon
- Angela Guo
- Amber Paisley-Topp
- Melissa Shaw
- Di Samuels
- Sharon Williams
- Wendy Stroeve
- Lina Moffitt
- Courtney Campbell
- Meg Sweeney
- Fiona Dorrian
- Linda Hughes
- Helen Hooper
- Jacqui Currey
- Sheree Kelley



Margaret Hardman assists in the office 3 hrs a week

We know that many other people contributed to the work of the organisation by letting people know about Family Advocacy and the events run and we wish to acknowledge that

anonymous, but wonderful, and much appreciated contribution.

#### Office Handyman



Russell FitzPatrick

We wish to extend our thanks to Russell FitzPatrick for offering to be our handyman and assisting with the replacement of fluorescent tubes and the odd job around the office.

#### ADDITIONAL SUPPORTS

##### Accounting and Finance

We value the accounting support and professional advice provided by Gary Jones of Gee Jay Computer Services. Payroll and account reconciliation were entrusted to Mussarrat Haq.

##### Administration

We are pleased to have had the assistance of Courtney Campbell, who has provided administrative support as part of her work experience. She has helped in the areas of incoming and outgoing mail, fine-tuning the Inclusion Collection and in the assembly of workshop information kits and mail outs.

##### IT Support

We have collaborated closely with Andrew Kerr who has provided us with advice and support for all our website requirements. We have relied on Patrick Hasbani and his team at

PCQuest for IT and computer maintenance support.

##### Media Productions and Publications

We have worked in partnership with John Reynolds and his team from Art Resistance to produce The *Odyssey* conference DVD and the new *Opening the Doors* DVD, completed towards the end of 2008.

We appreciate the spirit with which Jon Gallimore and his staff at BEE Printmail produce timely and dependable work in the printing of our brochures, fliers and reports throughout the year.

Thanks also to Paul Hardman of Trademark Design, for the design and layout of this Annual Report.

#### STAKEHOLDERS AND ALLIES

Bringing about good change in the lives of people with developmental disability takes a concerted effort. Family Advocacy couldn't do what it does without the additional efforts of individuals and organisations that share our vision.

The Australian and New Zealand SRV Group Foundations Forum

DADHC Local Support Coordinators

NSW Council of Social Services (NCOSS)

NSW Council on Intellectual Disability (CID)

Disability Advocacy Network Australia (DANA)

NSW Disability Advocacy Network (NDAN)

People with Disability Australia

Margaret Ward

Thanks also to the many organisations that distribute our brochures and fliers.

# Membership

As an Incorporated Association, Family Advocacy has a membership base. Membership is an important factor in keeping community based organisations relevant and strong and Family Advocacy acknowledges and thanks members for their support during the 2008/09 financial year. Family Advocacy has 171 financial members throughout NSW, from Cobar in the far west to Albury in the south and Tweed Heads in the north.

Membership is open to individuals only (not organisations or individuals representing organisations). The membership fee has not changed and remains at \$10 per person per year or \$20 per person for three years.

Financial membership connects people who share the aims and goals of Family Advocacy. All of Family Advocacy's members are committed to achieving a vision of a genuinely inclusive society.

Some of the benefits of membership include:

- receiving complimentary editions of Family Advocacy's journal, *Families for Change, Communiqué* and *Taking Action*;
- links with others with similar ideas; and
- the ability to nominate to become a member of the Management Committee.

## LOCATION OF MEMBERS



# Internal Management and Administration

PHILIPPA FITZPATRICK AND  
MARYBELLE IGNACIO



With increasing importance placed on the organisation to provide relevant and timely information to families, as well as to address current issues affecting families of people with disability, a greater demand and load is placed on Family Advocacy to provide these within available and limited resources. The management and administration team continues to seek ways for the organisation to address its role efficiently amidst rising costs.

It has achieved this in a number of ways: by ensuring equipment is running at high efficiency with minimal repair and maintenance costs, achieved through maintenance contracts, through cost effective replacement of obsolete equipment, with the assistance of one off capital grants, and also through maximising the use of technological and financial resources that are already available to the organisation. Family Advocacy accomplishes this within the context of the wider community and acknowledges its responsibility to the environment.

## EQUIPMENT

The process, which commenced last year, to replace the obsolete telephone system was finalised with a contract that packaged the rental of new telephone handsets with line provision. This resulted in a cost saving of 25% from the previous year's expense.

A new photocopier/printer was purchased to supplement the existing one, which was running out of steam due to the heavy photocopying loads of the organisation, primarily prior to workshops. Both photocopiers are now able to sustain the day to day printing and copying as well as any periodic heavy workloads.

A small public address sound system was purchased and has been used extensively in various rounds of workshops throughout the year. The laptop and projector continues to be of great use during workshops.

## INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

### Database

During the 2008/2009 year, 999 new entries were entered into our database, pushing the total up to 9,993. This continues to be a useful tool for our mail outs.

### Website

One of the core functions of Family Advocacy is to provide information that is *current*, and *relevant* to families of people with disability. The website, being a valuable medium in this respect, was redeveloped and launched at last year's AGM. With its more contemporary look and interactive functions, staff are able to provide our members, stakeholders, and families with updated information in a more timely manner.

With the new website:

- People can find out about the organisation, its vision and goals, and what it has to offer. Any news about Family Advocacy, its workshops, papers, events, will be posted & highlighted on the homepage.
- Interested families can now view issues that affect them in the 'I want to know about...' section. Individuals are now able to browse through topics that are most relevant to their current situation, whether about young children starting school or older ones finishing school and transitioning to adult life, or adult children requiring support.
- As before, it is possible to search online for articles in our Inclusion Collection library that help support one's thinking and planning.
- Members can access the new member's area using their membership number sent to them when their membership application was approved or renewed. This area is used to view the organisation's rules and policy updates, as well as provide a tool for surveying members.

## OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH AND SAFETY

The safety of all staff, volunteers and visitors in the workplace is important to Family Advocacy. This is reflected in the regular safety inspections and workstation assessments we conduct, as well as the training we provide to staff on the use of our evacuation chair. The organisation has a Fire Warden and Deputy Fire Warden who undergo emergency procedure and fire warden training. Evacuation drills are also carried out each year.

## DATA COLLECTION AND CENSUS

As part of the requirements of our funding agreement with the Commonwealth, we continue to provide data on the organisation and its advocacy activities, client demographics and census information.

## SUCCESSFUL INCLUSION CONFERENCE

The administration and management team provided support in the preparations leading up to the Successful Inclusion Conference on education, as well as in the period following, in processing all the after conference costs and reimbursements.

## ENVIRONMENTAL CONSCIOUSNESS

As a responsible organisation, Family Advocacy continues to look for ways to minimise its impact on the environment through prudent use of resources and creative ways of continuing to fulfil its main functions. Recycled paper is used for internal purposes and all paper and cardboard that is no longer needed is collected for recycling.

This year, emails have been used more extensively by staff as the main mode for communicating with its members, stakeholders and families.

It has proven to be an efficient and financially prudent method of providing information, including distributing the journal, *Communiqué* and *Taking Action*. Follow ups, updates on upcoming workshops, confirmation of registration of workshop participants, and reaching out to volunteers, are also emailed. The number of publications being emailed to those who have chosen to receive it through this method is now closing the gap on the number of publications being posted. This translates to a 31% reduction in the use of paper for producing the journal and *Communiqué* alone.

Notwithstanding the increasing number added to the mailing list, mail outs regarding workshops have further been reduced through targeted postings to families that take into account the age of the family member with disability.

Go confidently in the direction of your dreams!  
Live the life you've imagined.

HENRY DAVID THOREAU

# Treasurer's Report



SCOTT PHILLIPS  
TREASURER

I am pleased to present the Treasurer's Report on behalf of Family Advocacy's Management Committee.

Like many not for profit organisations, Family Advocacy continues to undertake the challenge of fulfilling its advocacy role, reaching out to more people who need their support amidst the reality of rising costs, yet working within limited financial resources.

Family Advocacy receives recurrent funding grants from the Commonwealth Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs (FaHCSIA) and the State Government Department of Community Services (DoCS) through the Community Services Grant Program.

This year, Family Advocacy received a number of one off grants from various Commonwealth and State Departments.

A one off payment of \$10,000 was provided by FaHCSIA to all Commonwealth funded advocacy agencies for equipment, or training of staff and Management Committee.

The Department of Ageing, Disability and Home Care (DADHC) provided a one off grant to provide information to families around the state on post school opportunities.

A one off grant from the NSW Department of Education and Training (DET) helped to subsidise a conference focused on successful inclusion in an education context.

## **Recurrent funding and One off Grants for 2008/2009**

Revenue from Commonwealth Government	\$ 230,944
Revenue from State Government	\$ 232,996
One off grant from Commonwealth Government	\$ 10,000
One off grant from DADHC	\$ 24,600
Conference grant from DET	\$ 30,200
Donations	\$ 940
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$529,680</b>

We are pleased to report that all funding grants have been expended as per our funding agreements and a small profit was generated by the conference.

The organisation's liabilities can be fully funded from its accumulated provisions and the organisation continues in a sound financial position. A budget for 2009/2010 is in place.

## **Disclosure of Interests**

In accordance with the requirements of the Rules of the Association, I advise members that no payments have been made to any committee member other than for reimbursements for out of pocket expenses incurred in the course of carrying out their function as committee members.

SCOTT PHILLIPS  
TREASURER



*family*

A D V O C A C Y