

# STRATEGIC PLAN 2020-2022

*Inclusive lives  
Inclusive society*



*family*

ADVOCACY

# *Inclusive lives Inclusive society*

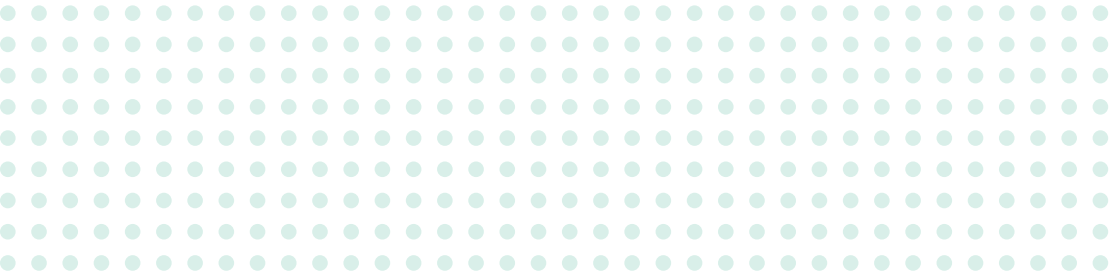
Family Advocacy, formally known as ‘The Institute for Family Advocacy and Leadership Development’ is an independent advocacy organisation that supports families across New South Wales to promote and defend the rights and interests of people with developmental disability\*.

The organisation was founded by families and continues to be governed by families. This intentional foundational structure enables the organisation to be embedded in the ‘lived experience’ of disability including the many issues and barriers that present themselves in the lives of their family members with disability. Family Advocacy recognises that advocacy is often undertaken by families and that advocacy efforts can be required over the lifetime of their family member. The organisation also recognises that the advocacy undertaken by families can act as the greatest safeguard in their family member’s life.

Family Advocacy is also managed and staffed by families and allies of people with disability, who recognise the issues and systemic barriers that people with disability face. They work to overcome these barriers by focusing on the advocacy leadership development of families whilst addressing the broader systemic issues within society.

Family Advocacy has been providing advocacy initiatives across NSW for over 29 years including the following:

- State-wide advocacy advice and advocacy information for individuals
- Advocacy development for family members, friends and allies of people with developmental disability
- Systemic advocacy



Family Advocacy is currently the only advocacy organisation of this kind in Australia. We receive funding for our work from the State and Federal Government. For more information on the model of advocacy undertaken by Family Advocacy, please view this film developed by the Department of Social Services, “Six models of advocacy”: <http://bit.ly/six-models>

## OUR VISION

Our Vision is of families being agents of positive social change so the inherent value of people with developmental disability is recognised within a just and inclusive society.

## OUR PURPOSE

Our purpose is to attain positive social roles for people with developmental disability. This is accomplished through the development and support of advocacy by families and by strengthening the knowledge, role and influence of families. Our focus is to encourage and support families to speak up and seek opportunities with and on behalf of their family members so as to enjoy the same environments, lifestyles and living conditions afforded to most Australians.

\* Developmental disability occurs in the developmental period of a person's life (from conception to adulthood) and includes intellectual disability, cerebral palsy, spina bifida, autism and any combination of physical, intellectual or sensory disability.

# ABOUT OUR STRATEGIC PLAN 2020-2022

This Strategic Plan helps shape the priorities we undertake over the three years of the plan. It describes **our goals** - the longer term outcomes that we are working towards in all the work that we do. For each goal there are a number of **strategies** that we intend to pursue to achieve our outcomes.

The plan also describes three **focus areas** for our work.

Finally, the plan gives **organisational enablers** that we will pursue in the next period to ensure that Family Advocacy remains a robust and viable organisation with sound operational and governance practices.

Each year, a more detailed program of work will be developed, the **Operational Plan**, guided by our Strategic Plan and what we have learned and achieved in previous years.



# OUR GOALS 2020-2022

## STRENGTH OF FAMILIES



People with disability and their families/allies have the skills, knowledge and confidence to be active and valued members of community.

## STRENGTH OF COMMUNITY



The narrative within Australian society has changed; enabling people with disability to lead ordinary lives rather than segregated and programmed lives.

## STRENGTH OF ADVOCACY



Working together, we challenge restrictive and discriminatory laws, policies and practices that keep people with disability segregated and limited. The requirement of advocacy is clearly understood, has a large support base including secured funding.



# OUR FOCUS AREAS

We recognise that what happens to children with disability in the formative years and through to adulthood has the potential to set them up to have access to all the good things in life that most Australians have access to. Alternatively, the formative years can restrict opportunities which may lead to a life of isolation from community. For this reason, our focus will be on three critical life stages:



**EARLY CHILDHOOD**



**EDUCATION INCLUDING  
HIGHER EDUCATION**



**EMPLOYMENT**

By focusing our attention on these three areas, we are working to ensure that people with disability have the foundation for a good life that is embedded in the community.

All of our work is directed towards people with disability determining their own lives as active and valued citizens, with the support of their families and allies.

Over the life of this plan we will continue our work towards inclusive education becoming the norm of community expectation across NSW and Australia broadly.

We will focus more on early childhood, tertiary education and employment. The intention is to position Family Advocacy to do more extensive work in these areas in future years, based on research, relationships and strategies we develop over the course of this plan.

# OUR STRATEGIES

## STRENGTH OF FAMILIES

*People with disability and their families/allies have the skills, knowledge and confidence to be active and valued members of community.*



### Strategies/Focus Areas

- Continue to build the advocacy leadership development of families, ensuring that they consistently lead and participate across all areas of our work and that families across NSW have the opportunity to learn from each other directly

### EARLY CHILDHOOD

- Gain a stronger understanding of the key influences and pathways of families of children with disability from diagnosis to transition to school

### EDUCATION

- Strategically deploy our advocacy parent education and resource programs in relation to inclusive education
- Conduct an audit of families to understand and document their experiences in supporting family members into tertiary education

### EMPLOYMENT

- Conduct an audit of families to understand and document their experiences in supporting family members into employment

# STRENGTH OF COMMUNITY

*Australian society has changed; people with disability are able to lead ordinary lives in the community. We no longer tolerate segregated and programmed lives.*

## Strategies/Focus Areas

### EARLY CHILDHOOD

- Conduct research and determine a new narrative around the diagnosis of a child with disability and the vision we can have as a community concerning inclusion in early life

### EDUCATION

- Conduct an action research project on inclusive education in one geographic area and concentrate work across the community (with parents, school administrators, teachers, businesses) to create and demonstrate the impacts of systems-wide change. Document learnings about the levers and barriers to change
- Continue to push the narrative to community that children with disability have a rightful place within regular classrooms in NSW Schools

### EMPLOYMENT

- Develop a strong narrative concerning the employability of people with disability across NSW and Australia





# STRENGTH OF ADVOCACY

*Working together, we have changed restrictive and discriminatory laws, policies and practices that have kept people with disability separate and limited. The requirement of advocacy is clearly understood, has a large support base including secured funding.*

## Strategies/Focus Areas

### EARLY CHILDHOOD

- Map and expand our connections to the Early Childhood sector and begin work on developing advocacy related content relevant to Early Childhood



### EDUCATION

- Continue our systemic advocacy for an inclusive education system across NSW and within Australia
- Work with the NSW Department of Education to ensure the Disability Strategy includes a clear and unequivocal commitment to inclusive education (using the UN Convention definition of inclusion)
- Monitor stakeholders' accountability for the implementation of the Disability Strategy adopted in early 2019 and participate in defining how progress will be measured
- Obtain a commitment from the NSW Government to cease building any more schools for specific purposes (SSPs) and support class infrastructures that isolate and segregate students with disability
- Work with the Department of Education and Members of Parliament to gain commitment to work towards implementing the obligations within the UN Convention for Persons with Disability
- Continue to strengthen the coalition of organisations, groups and individuals working towards inclusive education as the norm in NSW schools and across Australia
- Create stronger links to adult education and work towards opening up normative pathways to adult education for people with disability



## DISABILITY ROYAL COMMISSION

- Support people with disability and families to engage with and give evidence to the Disability Royal Commission

## EMPLOYMENT

- Identify and participate in relevant groups pertaining to people with disability gaining employment in the labour market that equates to 'real jobs' for 'real pay'
- Build strategic alliances pertaining to employment and challenge the Australian narrative concerning the current use of Australian Disability Enterprises (ADE) and Day Services as post school options for people with disability
- Create a strong narrative concerning the employability of all Australians with disability and promote this message widely
- Work to strengthen the National Disability Strategy and the NSW Action Plan in line with the UN Convention pertaining to employment



# ORGANISATIONAL ENABLERS

We will pursue these organisational enablers to ensure that we remain a robust and viable organisation with sound operational and governance practices:

## FINANCIAL SUSTAINABILITY

We are a financially sustainable organisation, attracting funding from a variety of sources including State and Federal sources, philanthropic organisations and corporate sponsors.

## STRONG PROFILE AND EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATIONS

Family Advocacy is well respected, has a strong profile and participates in government and other forums to advance its purpose. It is recognised as an expert in progressing inclusive practices for people with disability and is known and sought out to undertake this work.



*family*

A D V O C A C Y

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