

*family*

A D V O C A C Y

*Supporting big dreams  
Building bright futures*

Show Your  
STRENGTH



2010 – 2011 ANNUAL REPORT

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## 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.

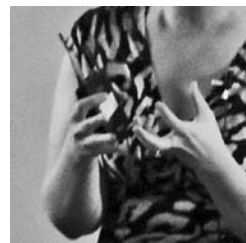
## Advocacy is....

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

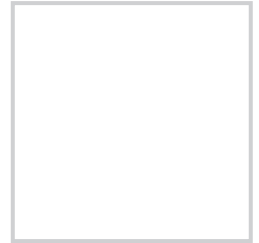
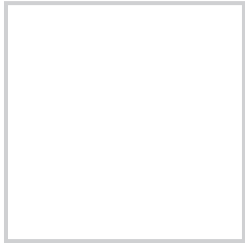
#### Personalised support

Having control over the what, when, where and by whom of support increases the opportunities for people with disability to lead full and meaningful lives, included in their communities. Personalised support describes an approach that places the individual at the centre of decision making and treats their family members as partners. It is built on planning that is directed by the person and their family/ support network, uses resources that are allocated to the individual and uses paid support to compliment rather than replace informal support.

Family Advocacy seeks to exert influence to enable all people with disability to receive personalised support.

#### Solid foundations for children 0-6

Getting off to a good start is vitally important for all children, particularly children with developmental disability. A good start means a start on a path that keeps the child embedded in their family and community. It is too easy to follow the 'special and separate' path which can leave families isolated, vulnerable and disconnected from the typical and ordinary environments other children and families enjoy.



Family Advocacy seeks to exert influence so that all children are supported in age appropriate ways to be active members of their families and communities.

**Welcoming, inclusive communities**

Communities are places of great possibility. Much can be gained by supporting families to look to their own neighbourhoods and communities for the natural supports and opportunities they can provide people with developmental disability.

Family Advocacy seeks to support families to build and contribute to welcoming, inclusive communities.

**Meaningful adult lives**

Too many people with developmental disability are living lives of little meaning. A schedule full of 'programs' and 'activities' keep people busy, but can serve little purpose.

Family Advocacy seeks to exert influence so that all adults with developmental disability have lives that are rich with valued adult roles, opportunities for personal growth and development of lifelong learning and employment and relationship building.

**Advocacy for people with developmental disability**

Some people with developmental disability are subject to oppression, exploitation, discrimination, segregation and rejection.

Family Advocacy is proactive and reactive in relation to unfolding issues which may lead to these negative impacts on the lives of people with disability.

**Family Advocacy as a prudent and sustainable organisation**

Family Advocacy strives to enhance the capacity and operation of the organisation to ensure its renewal, viability and effectiveness.

Our thoughts are a magic part of us, and they carry us to places that have no boundaries, and no limitations.

– Wayne Dye

# Chairperson's Report



Alex Purvis, Chairperson

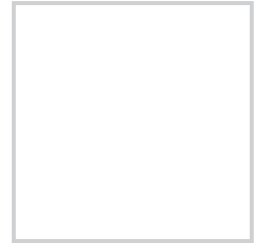
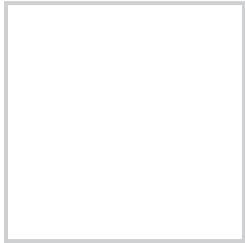
It is my pleasure to present the Chairperson's Report for this inspiring organisation.

Family Advocacy continues as a leading voice in protecting and promoting the rights, needs and interests of people with developmental disability in NSW. This is as always an enormous task as we seek to challenge and change the values and accepted ways of our society and promote the needs and rights of some of our most vulnerable citizens. If you look at the big picture, and I hope I'm not being hopelessly naïve, it is just possible that we are entering a period when the times do indeed suit us. I do sense a mood in the broader community that the status quo is no longer enough and some of the creative ideas that Family Advocacy has been pushing for oh so long may yet get their time in the sun. I would not have said that just a few short years ago.

The recent election in NSW has brought with it many changes that will take some time to comprehend as they work themselves out over the coming months and years. We have a high profile with incoming new Ministers, advisors, department heads and senior public servants and our strategy of making ourselves known to potential Ministers and advisers on all sides of politics has served us well. We continue to be sought out as a resource of innovation and a barometer of the community mood.

*Stronger Together* – The second phase, as it is now called, continues with the new State Government with more money and an encouraging emphasis on individualised funding and self directed support and hopes for the Family Advocacy initiative of a Supported Living Fund. From 1 July 2014 anyone using disability services in NSW can have an individualised portable package if they want it. An enormous change and something with the potential to turn the disability support system on its head. We are entering exciting times.

At the national level the Productivity Commissions Report on a National Disability Insurance Scheme has gone to the Federal Government with hopes for a positive decision by the end of 2011. Family Advocacy has made strong submissions to the Productivity Commission at various stages of the process and we strongly support the recommendations they have made. Its fate is now in the hands of the politicians and we urge everyone to get behind the *Every Australian Counts* campaign to ensure the Federal Government makes a good decision to improve the lives of people with disability. Now is a critical time.



The *Resourcing Families* initiative is well and truly up and running. It is providing information, ideas and strategies to families and young people with developmental disabilities to help them realise the enormous benefits of having more control over their lives. There are workshops, a website, a mentoring initiative and many other things including a visit by a group of Canadian families sharing ideas and experiences of the benefits of self managing support as a way to the good life.

Despite all this and much more, much still needs to be done and it remains true that in NSW people with developmental disabilities and their families still face a system that struggles with current and changing demands and is often in crises. Living conditions for many people with developmental disability remain poor and inflexible. The good life for many is still elusive. But there is hope.

I would like to express my admiration and thanks to Catherine Hogan and all the staff of Family Advocacy for the outstanding service they have given to the organisation over the past year. Our staff numbers have greatly increased and the complexity, number of issues and government reporting requirements, continues to increase. This makes for a very large workload and a correspondingly large time commitment from staff members. This is very much appreciated and the organisation could not function if it weren't for this dedicated group. We have been able to more than hold our own.

I would also like to thank the members of the Management Committee for their dedication and hard work throughout the year. They are a great bunch of people. Being a volunteer member of a Management Committee is a significant undertaking in these times and the organisation is very much in their debt.

They have been a great support to me throughout the year.

Other people who are working away, often unsung, behind the scenes, and without whom Family Advocacy couldn't function, are the volunteer parent presenters and session leaders at our workshops. These people bring to these activities authentic knowledge, wisdom and lived experience that provide a unique and powerful message. Thank you for your contribution.

Finally, thank you to all our members, their families and supporters who are out there on the ground creatively building communities around their family members, demonstrating how the world could be.

It has been my privilege to serve as Chairperson.

**Alex Purvis**  
**Chairperson**



# Highlights of the year



Catherine Hogan, Director

Family Advocacy's campaign, in the lead up to the recent State election won bipartisan support for the Supported Living Fund. The campaign strategy is fully described in the Centrepiece of this report.

Family Advocacy's strategic plan was reviewed and updated with new strategies identified to assist the organisation in working towards its identified goals.

Four events were run during the year drawing on the experience and expertise of two international guest speakers, Dr Michael Kendrick and Dr Paula Kluth and two interstate speakers, Dr Bob Jackson from Western Australia and Jeremy Ward from Queensland.

Family Advocacy has developed a new workshop, *Positive Directions for Lives of Meaning and Fulfilment*, with the assistance of consultant Jane Sherwin. The event focuses on helping families think about developing community connections and the importance of valued social roles.

Within the reporting period, 92 face to face events, covering numerous topics, were held across NSW.

## **What do others have to say about the work of Family Advocacy?**

### **About face to face events**

*Thanks for the workshop - I found it very interesting and informative. Being a teacher it was an excellent opportunity for me to see inclusion from a different perspective and I spoke to quite a number of parents on the day which was very helpful.*

*I also would like to thank you all at Family Advocacy for a wonderful two days down in Sydney - very uplifting, and so well organised.*

*The session has really broadened my view and has provided me with a wealth of information and has taught me more of what to expect from a mainstream school. I was so glad that I went.*

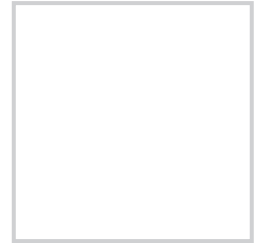
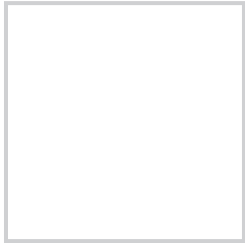
*Thanks again for all the information you supplied. It really got me thinking about things and how to approach things a bit better. I tend to be a bit strong headed and can often jump the gun a bit but from your workshop I learnt that I need to take a step back, calm down and then approach things.*

### **About information sessions**

*I really wanted to say a big thank you for your presentation yesterday – it was fantastic, it was really nice to see your enthusiasm, the students found it very insightful and interesting.*

*It was great to see how your organisation has developed and continues to support families in a most constructive way.*

*Our sincere appreciation is extended for the wonderful presentation made at our recent Carer forum.*



*Thank you so much for your presentations on Thursday. Participants from both sessions have contacted me to say how valuable they found the information, and that they will now think differently about the options available to adults with disability.*

#### **About advocacy advice and information**

*Thank you so much for the email and for taking my call yesterday. The information you have given me has given us a lot of different options to consider for my son's further education.*

*Cheers, and thanks for the support and encouragement that you give to families like ours. It really was Family Advocacy that convinced us that the dreams we had for our daughter really could become a reality – and that attitude has spread to extended family and friends.*

#### **About resources**

*Just wanted to say that I sat down at 12.30 to watch a couple of segments of The Odyssey DVD and haven't been able to tear myself away since! Listening to Darcy Elks, Meaghan Sweeney and Ric Thompson in particular was inspirational and has helped enormously in my understanding of the importance of having a vision and how to convey that to families starting out on their journey with advocating for their child.*

*I just wanted to let you know what a wonderful resource your May edition of Family Advocacy's Communiqué is and thanks for putting it together.*

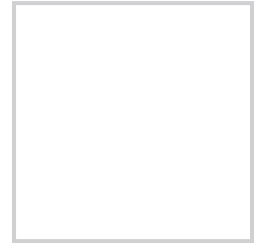
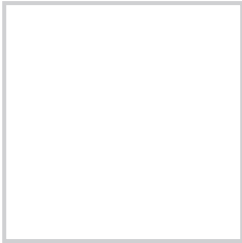
*I received the 'information package' you kindly sent in the mail. You really did your homework as I now have a wealth of information to share.*

#### **About our systems advocacy work**

*I and I know others left the last day feeling confident and think you have done a great job which is still continuing. Some of us who care for our disabled loved one, run out of steam. So it is really comforting to know that at the 'policy level' organisation's such as Family Advocacy don't back off from taking on the big challenges for the disadvantaged.*

*I am so grateful you are actively out there, well established on the human service industry horizon. It is meaningful to me to know the philosophy of inclusion is not being allowed to fade away in rhetoric or funding smokescreens. I look forward to one day being able to resume a more active role in these issues but in the meantime I strive to live the principles you promote with my children and challenge expectations at ground level.*

# Family Advocacy at a Glance



## WHERE WE HELD FACE TO FACE EVENTS



|   |        |
|---|--------|
| Number of face to face events run                 | 51     |
| Number of people attending Family Advocacy events | 1,375  |
| Number of financial members                       | 160    |
| Hits on the website 2010/2011                     | 29,588 |

# Advocacy and Leadership Development



Left to right:

Kim Roots, Advocacy Development Coordinator

Karen Tippett, Advocacy and Leadership Worker

Rick Hansen, Advocacy Development and Liaison Officer

## ADVOCACY DEVELOPMENT

The Advocacy and Leadership Development team provide families with opportunities to increase their understanding of how to bring about positive change in the lives of their family member with developmental disability. This is achieved by offering families in NSW a variety of ways to expand and enhance their advocacy skills as well as by offering opportunities for individuals to develop their leadership potential.

2010/2011 has been a busy period in the area of Advocacy and Leadership Development. Highlights have included the presentation of new workshops informing families about the benefits and support available for their child to start school in an ordinary class (*Let's Get Started* and *Entering the Maze*) as well as workshops with guest speakers from interstate and overseas (Dr Bob Jackson, Jeremy Ward and Dr Paula Kluth). We are excited about the soon to be released DVD of the two day *Joyful Learning* workshop presented by Dr Paula Kluth.

The Advocacy and Leadership Development team targets several of Family Advocacy's Key Focus Areas to enhance the skills and knowledge of family members and others and to assist them in creating rich valued lives for

people with disability. In 2010/2011, Key Focus Areas were: building solid foundations for children aged 0-6 years, encouraging welcoming inclusive communities, creating meaningful adult lives, and enhancing the advocacy skills of family members of people with disability.

The events and workshops pertaining to these are detailed below.

### Key Focus Area: Solid foundations for children 0-6

#### Let's Get Started...getting ready for school and life

**Coffs Harbour, Wollongong, Burwood, Penrith, Bankstown, Hornsby, Gosford, Newcastle, Belrose, Kingsford, Mittagong, Hurstville (July 2010, August 2010, June 2011)**

Family Advocacy presented eleven information sessions, *Believing in them*, *Supporting big dreams* and *Building Bright futures* and *Let's Get Started* workshops across the State. The information sessions provided an introduction to Family Advocacy and took place immediately prior to *Let's Get Started*. These were particularly useful for family members who were unfamiliar with the resources, activities and work of Family Advocacy.

*Let's Get Started* is a workshop that presents information to parents and family members who have a child preparing for school or who has recently started school. It includes information about the benefits of mainstream education, choosing and enrolling in a school, the range of support that is available within the school system as well as ideas for building positive relationships with school staff. People who attended were given an information pack containing a range of resources and articles to read after the workshop.

These workshops were presented by Kim Roots and Rick Hansen along with Volunteer Session Leaders Amanda Fletcher and Sharon Williams. Shari Raymond and Annette Bush assisted with the workshop in Coffs Harbour.

Some of the comments from participants are included below:

- *Thank you for opening my eyes to other possibilities.*
- *I definitely feel more equipped emotionally and information wise to mainstream my son.*
- *Thank you for a wonderful learning experience - warm, supportive and very informative.*



Participants at the Let's Get Started event, Bankstown

### **Entering the Maze – Thinking and planning in the lead up to school and beyond**

**November 2010 – Parramatta**

*Entering the Maze* is a live in weekend workshop specifically for parents of children starting school in the next few years or who have recently started school. Parents attending the workshop were able to further expand their knowledge, understanding and skills in pursuing mainstream education for their child/children.

The weekend workshop was presented by Kim Roots and Rick Hansen along with family members; Nathan Basha, Jo Basha, Annette Bush, Meg Sweeney and

Amanda Fletcher. Other presenters were; Emeritus Professor Phil Foreman (Academic and author, University of Newcastle), Neale Waddy (Manager, Learning Support and Development, Disability Directorate, Department of Education and Communities) and Anne Stewart (Principals Liaison Officer, Disability Directorate, Department of Education and Communities).

The feedback was very positive and included the following comments:

- *Presenters were high quality, very knowledgeable and professional.*
- *Exceeded expectations.*
- *Really opened my eyes about inclusion.*

### **Joyful Learning – Engaging all students in the inclusive classroom**

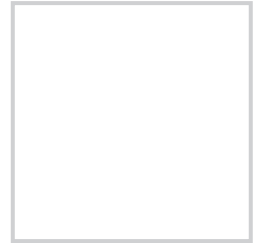
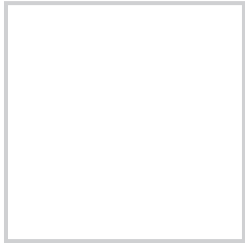
**Presenter – Dr Paula Kluth**

**March 2011 – West Ryde**

Family Advocacy hosted Dr Paula Kluth to present a two day workshop, *Joyful Learning*. The workshop was open to both parents and education professionals and provided attendees with a clear understanding of the principles and practices of inclusive classrooms. This knowledge will continue to enable parents to be active partners with teachers and educators to further increase this understanding.



Dr Paula Kluth with Participants at the Joyful Learning event



Given the unique opportunity to capture Dr Kluth's presentation, this workshop was filmed for the purpose of creating a DVD resource. This DVD will be available as a learning tool for parents, teachers and educators to develop inclusive classroom strategies.

The workshop feedback was very positive, with consensus that Dr Kluth was very knowledgeable as well being an engaging presenter.

Some comments on the evaluations from participants are:

- *'...content was inspiring, Paula was engaging, best workshop ever.'*
- *'I liked the 'popcorn game' and will implement it into my classroom.'*
- *'...you have re-energised me!'*

### **Why stop now: Inclusive education at High School**

**Presenter – Dr Bob Jackson**

**May 2011 – West Ryde**

Family Advocacy hosted Dr Bob Jackson to present a one day workshop focused on transition to high school, curriculum adjustments and social inclusion strategies which support a successful high school experience for students with disability. This workshop was open to both family members and education

professionals, offering information and the occasion for parents and educators to connect and collaborate.

Feedback from workshop participants included the following comments:

- *'...a very educational and eye opening workshop.'*
- *'Strategies and common sense approach very useful.'*
- *'Gave me a different insight (into families concerns).'*

Family Advocacy received a contribution from NSW Department of Education and Communities (DEC) to assist with the cost of running of these events.

### **Key Focus Area: Meaningful adult lives**

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

**Presenter - Jeremy Ward**

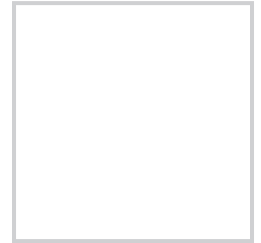
**September 2010 – Sydney**

One of the most common concerns for families is uncertainty about the future for their family member with developmental disability.

*Planning for now, tomorrow and the future* 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. Legal avenues and planning strategies were discussed.



*Family Advocacy staff with Jeremy Ward  
Left to right: Karen Tippett, Jeremy Ward, Rick Hansen and Tamara Marczak*



The workshop was presented by parent, lawyer and consultant Jeremy Ward.

Some of the comments from participants are included below:

- *A very useful and inspiring, motivating, thought provoking workshop.*
- *Excellent speakers, materials and venue.*
- *I feel more empowered to go away and start 'doing'.*

### **Moving out...from planning to action**

**Nowra, Wollongong, Hurstville  
(March 2011)**

*Moving out...from planning to action* is a workshop which assists families to start thinking and planning for their family member with disability to move into a home of their own with appropriate support. It provided information about a variety of strategies for planning and which focus on the needs and interests of the person with disability.

This workshop was presented by Catherine Hogan and Rick Hansen along with Volunteer Session Leaders Sharon Williams and Meg Sweeney.

Feedback from workshop participants included the following comments:

- *Excellent presentation, to the point and very timely for my circumstance.*
- *It was very informative and well presented.*
- *Well worthwhile.*

### **After school – what then?**

**Grafton, Armidale, Tamworth,  
Maitland (May 2011)**

*After school - what then?* is a workshop about post school support for students with disability. This is a particularly helpful workshop for parents who are planning towards and looking for information about navigating the post school system. It included material about post school supports such as Transition to Work and the many ways to utilise the flexibility of Community Participation.

This workshop was facilitated by Catherine Hogan and Rick Hansen along with Volunteer Session Leader Meg Sweeney. During the week, the team also met up with Family Advocacy Members, a family member, and a National Disability Coordination Officer.

Feedback from workshop participants included the following comments:

- *Very friendly and informed presenters.*
- *Great presentation.*
- *Very thoughtful and well planned out seminar.*

### **Key Focus Area: Advocacy for people with developmental disability**

#### **Shaping the Future**

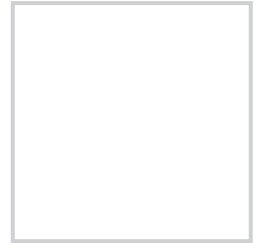
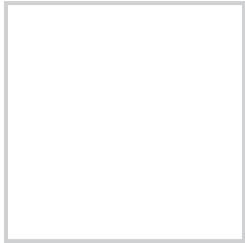
**October 2010 – Parramatta**

*Shaping the Future*, a two day live in workshop, included a range of presenters and topics intended to encourage family members to gain a deeper understanding of Social Advocacy and how it can bring about social change. The information provided people with an environment to develop their knowledge and to enhance their leadership potential.



*Family members at Shaping the Future event  
Left to right: Meg Sweeney and Maree Salzano*





This event was facilitated by a broad range of people who presented information about many aspects of Social Advocacy. The presenters from Family Advocacy were Catherine Hogan, Belinda Epstein-Frisch and Tamara Marczak. Presentations were also given by James Whelan (Director of The Change Agency), Judith Ellis (Consultant and family member), Adele Horin (Journalist, Sydney Morning Herald) and Glen Klatovsky (Community Activist).

The workshop was well received and participants made the following comments:

- *Great presenters with very relevant information and experience to share.*
- *Excellent information, speakers, mix of practical and theory.*
- *Thank you for a great weekend, well organised and inspiring!*

### **Making a Difference**

#### **Bega, Batemans Bay, Nowra, Mittagong (September 2010)**

Family Advocacy presented four of our core advocacy workshops *Making a Difference* across the State.

*Making a Difference* is a workshop that provides family members with the opportunity to explore the basic principles of Social Advocacy. It included information about why and when Social Advocacy may be required as well as creating an awareness of some fundamental advocacy skills.

These workshops were presented by Catherine Hogan and Rick Hansen with Volunteer Session Leaders Amber Paisley-Topp and Sharon Williams.

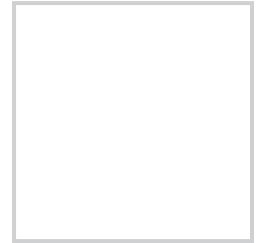
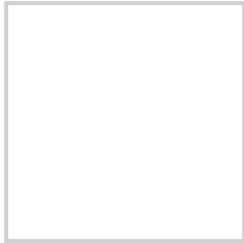
Some of the comments from participants are included below:

- *I found the workshop to be very helpful and I know I can share the things I have learnt with other people in our lives.*
- *Amazingly professional workshop... really appreciated how succinct the presentation and presenters were.*
- *An extremely informative day.*



*Participants at Making a Difference workshop*





### ADVOCACY RELATED ADVICE AND INFORMATION

Family Advocacy has provided advocacy related information and advice to the families, friends and allies of people with disability throughout 2010/2011. Family members and others have made contact to strategise and receive information relating to the interests of the person with disability. 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 topic.

The primary means of communication is via telephone and email, while some people have visited the Family Advocacy office. There is a 1800 free call number available ensuring that people living outside the Sydney metropolitan area have access to information and advice offered by Family Advocacy.

Advice and discussion over the year has covered a wide variety of topics which includes: preparing a vision for the future, establishing a network or circle of support, education matters (such as starting school, support options, transition points, working effectively with schools), developing a range of relationships, considering leisure options, planning for life after school, moving from the family home and making long term plans around the person with disability.

The response to each of these requests has varied depending on the individual circumstances but has included:

- working with the individual to formulate a course of action;
- providing resources such as articles or documents to increase knowledge and assist people in coming to an informed decision;
- advising contact details for other organisations when the request is outside the expertise of Family Advocacy (e.g. legal matters);
- gathering research around a specific topic to ensure that up to date information or new perspectives are supplied; and
- making contact with senior decision makers where an issue is of systemic significance.

The large number of these requests enables Family Advocacy to gather information about State wide trends and enables planning to be responsive to these needs. It also informs the organisation of systemic issues that are able to be raised in appropriate forums and with appropriate decision makers.

### LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

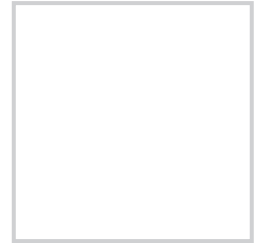
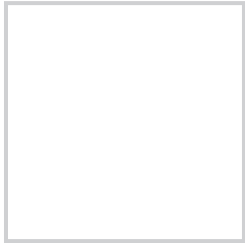
A primary focus of Family Advocacy is to support families to develop their advocacy and leadership skills and to increase their understanding of how to bring about positive change in the life of their family member with disability.

Recognising that all families are unique and have different skills, interests and time constraints, the organisation has provided a range of opportunities to nurture leadership potential.

Family Advocacy supported family members to:

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

The two weekend events *Shaping the Future* and *Entering the Maze* were particularly intended for families who wish to deepen their advocacy skills within their family and beyond. Families were supported to attend these events.



## LEADERSHIP TRAINING

### Developing the skills of presenters

Family Advocacy has provided many exciting opportunities for family members to increase their skills in the past year.

Family Advocacy encouraged individuals who expressed an interest in becoming a Volunteer Session Leader to gradually increase their skills, competence and confidence. Being a Volunteer Session Leader involves presenting material and assisting with group work at workshops run across the State.

Training is of an ongoing nature for those people who take on this role. Volunteer Session Leaders increase their level of participation at a pace that suits their individual skills and confidence. To ensure that they are as prepared and professional as possible, relevant workshop materials are supplied and discussed in advance. Self evaluation is encouraged and feedback is also offered.

Being a Volunteer Session Leader is a great opportunity to meet a wide range of people, exchange ideas, sharing personal experiences, expand their knowledge around specific topics and gain experience presenting to groups of various sizes. Presenting also creates the impetus to gain experience using a range of equipment and technology with support.

As well as contributing personal knowledge and experience at Family Advocacy workshops, Volunteer Session Leaders gain many skills and experiences that are useful 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 - Attending Events

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

### Social Role Valorisation: Towards a Better Future

#### August 2010

Social Role Valorisation theory (SRV) underpins the work of Family Advocacy and it is very useful for those taking on leadership roles with the organisation to have an understanding of it.

Four family members were sponsored to attend this workshop, which was presented by John Armstrong, Senior Social Role Valorisation Trainer.

### P.A.S.S.I.N.G (5 day live in SRV workshop)

#### October 2010

P.A.S.S.I.N.G. provides attendees with a deeper understanding of Social Role Valorisation (SRV) theory and incorporates visits to two different human service organisations. This enables the participant to use the P.A.S.S.I.N.G. tool to assess the human service organisations according to these principles and to deepen their understanding of SRV.

One family member was sponsored to attend the workshop led by John Armstrong, Senior SRV Trainer.

Some families were supported to attend the following Family Advocacy events:

- Joyful Learning – Engaging all students in the inclusive classroom (March 2011).
- Why stop now: Inclusive education at High School (May 2011).

## EVENTS WE HAVE RUN THIS YEAR

### 2010

|           |   |  |
|-----------|---|--|
| July      | Let's Get Started...getting ready for school and life   | Coffs Harbour, Wollongong, Burwood, Bankstown, Penrith |
|           | Information Session, Believing in them, Supporting big dreams and Building bright futures     | Wollongong, Burwood, Bankstown, Penrith                |
| August    | In Control forum  | Sydney   |
|           | Practicalities of Supported Living  | West Ryde  |
|           | Let's Get Started...getting ready for school and life   | Hornsby, Gosford, Newcastle                            |
|           | Information Session, Believing in them, Supporting big dreams and Building bright futures     | Hornsby, Gosford, Newcastle                            |
| September | Planning for now, tomorrow and the future - Presenter Jeremy Ward                             | West Ryde  |
|           | Family Advocacy Information Session   | Campsie  |
|           | Making a difference   | Bega, Batemans Bay, Nowra, Bowral                      |
| October   | Family Advocacy Information Session   | Woollahra  |
|           | Shaping the Future - live in event  | Parramatta   |
|           | Political candidates forum  | West Ryde  |
| November  | Entering the Maze – Thinking and planning in the lead up to school and beyond - live in event | Parramatta   |
| December  | Family Advocacy Information Session   | Fairfield  |
|           | Family Advocacy Information Session   | Wollongong   |

### 2011

|          |   |   |
|----------|---|---|
| January  | Family Advocacy Information Session   | North Ryde                                      |
| February | Family Advocacy Information Session   | Lake Macquarie                                  |
| March    | Joyful Learning – Engaging all students in the inclusive classroom - Presenter Dr Paula Kluth | West Ryde                                       |
|          | Family Advocacy Information Session   | Strathfield                                     |
|          | Family Advocacy Information Session   | Belmore   |
|          | Moving out...from planning to action  | Nowra, Wollongong, South Hurstville             |
|          | Information Session   | Sydney  |
| May      | Why stop now: Inclusive education at High School - Presenter Dr Bob Jackson                   | West Ryde                                       |
|          | After school - what then?   | Grafton, Armidale, Tamworth, Maitland           |
| June     | Let's get started   | Belrose, Kingsford, Mittagong, South Hurstville |
|          | Information Session, Believing in them, Supporting big dreams and Building bright futures     | Belrose, Kingsford, Mittagong, South Hurstville |

# Resourcing Families at a Glance



## WHERE WE HELD FACE TO FACE EVENTS



|  |     |
|--|-----|
| Number of face to face events run                            | 41  |
| Number of people attending <i>Resourcing Families</i> events | 491 |



*Left to right:*

*Emma Baxter, Advocacy  
Project Officer*

*Kim Roots, Advocacy  
Development Coordinator*

*Chris Jackson, Advocacy  
Project Officer (until  
September 2010)*

In 2010, Family Advocacy commenced an initiative called *Resourcing Families* that aims to support families in which there is a child or young person with developmental disability to establish community connections, develop networks and have skills and ideas to direct any necessary supports.

The project set up phase was completed at the end of June 2010 and *Resourcing Families* was formally launched at Family Advocacy's AGM on 15 October 2010.

*Resourcing Families* is particularly useful for families keen to forge a good life for their son or daughter that sees them included as valued members of their community.

*Resourcing Families* provides information, ideas and strategies to help families make decisions, use initiative and have the confidence to consider options such as taking up self directed opportunities.

The emergence of *Resourcing Families* is timely given the move in NSW towards people with disability and their families having the opportunity to take up self directed opportunities.

A key focus of *Resourcing Families* is facilitating opportunities for families to learn from each other - to share their own successes and challenges.

The initiative's focus topics have been informed by feedback from families about what will be most useful – including families in other jurisdictions and include:

- having a long term plan or vision for the future
- developing networks of support
- accessing informal support
- self managed and self directed support
- supporting connections, developing skills and enhancing image via valued social roles.

*Resourcing Families* is attempting to be useful to as many families as possible by travelling extensively and by providing information and advice in a range of ways.

## **1. INFORMATION AND ADVICE – OVER THE PHONE AND VIA EMAIL AT A TIME THAT SUITS**

Families keen to hear more about *Resourcing Families* and those interested to think through and facilitate a good life for their son or daughter can make contact by telephone or by email.

A free call number means that people can call from anywhere in the state without incurring great expense.

Families can also email *Resourcing Families* for information and ideas so that they can communicate whenever it is

convenient. Use of email also makes it possible for families to access articles, web links and resources quickly.

## **2. WORKSHOPS AND OTHER EVENTS**

*Resourcing Families* has been running and developing events focusing on topics that families have told us are most useful to them. Families have said that having a vision or plan for the future is crucial and this is reflected in the workshop emphasis thus far. There has been a particular focus on meeting with families face to face – including those in rural and remote locations – resulting in events in a wide range of locations across the State.

### **Gaining Control and acting with vision**

**Presenter - Dr Michael Kendrick**

**30 August 2010 - Ryde**

Presented by Dr Michael Kendrick, this first event helped attendees think about the importance of vision in planning for the future and in interacting with the service system.

59 people attended and feedback included:

- *Easy to listen to, great speaker.*
- *Very professional - positive and affirmative.*
- *I would definitely be interested in anything Resourcing Families has to offer. I think it's a fantastic initiative.*



Participants with Dr Michael Kendrick

### **A vision bigger than your vision**

**Presenter - Dr Paula Kluth**

**5 March 2011 – Parramatta**

Presented by Dr Paula Kluth, this workshop gave families and interested professionals the opportunity to think through:

- the importance of having a clear vision for the future
- how to start the process of creating a vision (or refine the one they have)
- how to sustain that vision for the future as a living, useful, reference
- how to use a vision to drive goal setting and planning
- practical tips and tools to bring others on the journey towards achieving a positive vision for the future.

The presentation was both dynamic and inspiring.

Comments included: “The inspiration, motivation and tools that you provided were great” and “Paula was outstanding – very positive, full of energy – a delight!”

41 people attended.

In addition to these workshops that have taken place, other events have been created. These workshops are exploring other focus topics.



Participants with Dr Paula Kluth

### **New workshop – Positive directions for lives of meaning and fulfilment**

A new workshop has been created to help families think about developing community connections and the importance of valued social roles.

A training day, intended to refine format and content, was run for interested families.

The workshop is scheduled to take place in September 2011.

### **New workshop – Circles of support**

By popular demand, a workshop about circles of support is in development.

### **Information Sessions**

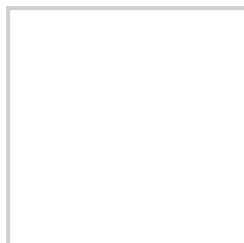
Because *Resourcing Families* continues to be a new initiative, many families and workers are still learning about *Resourcing Families* and how it could be useful for the first time.

Information sessions are one way that families have been made aware about how *Resourcing Families* can help them harness the possibilities for the young person in their family who has a disability.

To ensure that families in rural and remote locations have the opportunity to learn about *Resourcing Families* - and some of the key concepts and ideas – Emma Baxter, Kim Roots and, since her arrival, Rhiannon Brodie have been travelling extensively across the state as well as continuing to run information sessions around Sydney.

Sessions have taken place along the length of the NSW Coast – extending beyond Bega in the North and to Coffs Harbour in the South. Sessions have also taken place inland to Condobolin with more sessions planned.

These sessions are adapted according to the interests of each group and provide core information about the importance of roles, ideas for increasing community



Emma Baxter with Participants at an information session in Coffs Harbour

connections, the potential for circles of support and the value of having a vision or plan for the future.

Each information session involved small groups of families and, sometimes, workers coming together. The small scale was conducive to good discussions and attendees having the opportunity to ask questions.

Where possible, family members involved in leadership roles within *Resourcing Families* accompanied staff in presenting at these sessions. Notably, Cassie Gardner, Shari Raymond, Annette Bush, Di Samuels, Marion Trabe, Sharon

Williams and Gina Wilson-Burns attended information sessions and shared their experiences.

Feedback about the *Resourcing Families* initiative has been positive with many people indicating that they were hearing about concepts like circles of support and the importance of having a vision or plan for the future for the first time.

In addition to the information sessions specifically run by *Resourcing Families*, families and professionals attending Family Advocacy events heard about *Resourcing Families* and received information about the initiative.

### Circles of support – information session in Towamba

A family who live in a small town beyond Bega called Towamba are concerned about their daughter having every opportunity to be a valued member of her small community.

*Resourcing Families* was invited to speak to people who expressed interest in being part of the circle.

After conversations with the family, a presentation specific to their needs was prepared as well as an information pack for participants to take away.

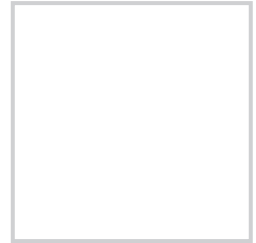
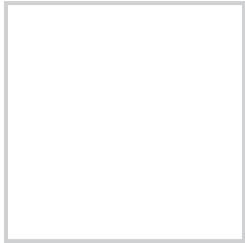
The presentation took place in the local school hall and included friends and family.

The family are now better positioned to start a circle of support.



Participants at an information session about circles of support - Towamba





### 3. MENTORING

One important element of *Resourcing Families* that facilitates families learning from each other is mentoring.

Within the context of *Resourcing Families*, mentoring generally involves a parent seeking information talking to another parent or family member who has experiences they can share. The purpose is to advance the interests of a young person with disability.

Families from across NSW have been supported by mentors in two ways:

- **“Phone a friend”**

Families have been matched with a mentor who shares his or her experience around specific plans, tasks or issues - on an issue by issue basis in a one-off capacity.

Staff members of *Resourcing Families* coordinate these links after talking to families about what they want to discuss and considering the mentor who is most likely to be able to assist.

- **Ongoing mentor/mentee relationship**

Other families have decided that having ongoing contact with a mentor would be helpful and have been matched with a mentor for a 12 month period.

By having mentors available in these two different ways it makes it possible for more people to benefit from either the mentor or mentee role.

Mentoring links began in the final week of April.

Nine mentors and mentees have now been matched for a 12 month connection and been provided with supporting resources including Mentoring Guidelines, Tips for being a mentor/mentee and a Mentoring Log.

The quality of mentors has meant that excellent matches have been made.

Each mentor and mentee has had a discussion with a staff member of *Resourcing Families* to confirm that all are comfortable with the process.



Left to right: Jo Basha, Jo Cross and Vicki Logan at mentor training

Mentor Guidelines, logs, tips sheets, feedback forms and fact sheets have been created.

Mentors are being offered further training opportunities that will increase their capacity and skills.

One training opportunity was a gathering held for people interested in becoming mentors over two days in January.

Attended by 18 people, the event provided participants with the chance to practice skills they would need as a mentor.

### 4. WEB SITE

A new *Resourcing Families* web site ([www.resourcingfamilies.org.au](http://www.resourcingfamilies.org.au)) has been created and includes useful resources and information – with new information being added all the time.

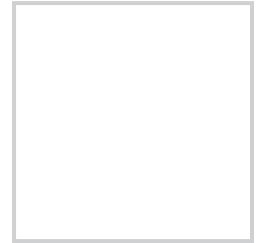
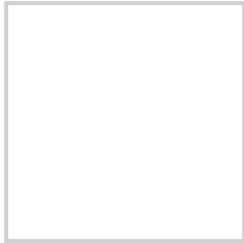
The web site includes a range of resources types including:

- DVD extracts
- fact sheets translated into Chinese, Arabic, Greek, Italian, Korean and Vietnamese
- information about changes to policy in NSW
- manuals and other resources to assist families – such as about how to start a circle of support
- stories from NSW families who share their insights and experiences.

*Resourcing Families* is actively gathering stories from families. This is an ongoing process that includes drawing on examples from NSW and beyond.

To make *Resourcing Families* more useful to Aboriginal families, families from the Torres Strait Islands and culturally and linguistically diverse families, a new staff member has joined *Resourcing Families* to help increase connections and ensure that information is available in a way that is useful.





## EVENTS WE HAVE RUN THIS YEAR

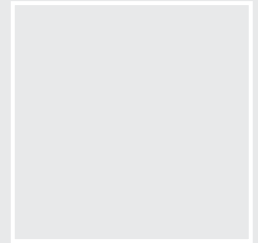
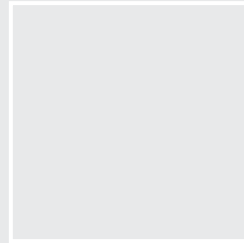
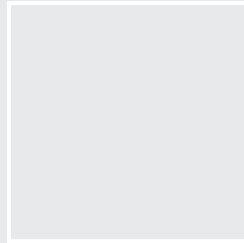
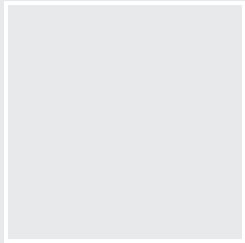
### 2010

|          |  |           |
|----------|--|-----------|
| August   | Gaining control and acting with vision – Presenter Dr Michael Kendrick | Ryde      |
| December | <i>Resourcing Families</i> Information Session                         | Fairfield |

### 2011

|          |   |   |
|----------|---|---|
| January  | Mentor training event                                   | Parramatta  |
|          | <i>Resourcing Families</i> Information Session          | North Ryde  |
| February | <i>Resourcing Families</i> Information Sessions         | Epping, Lake Macquarie, Newcastle (2), Blackett, Blacktown  |
| March    | A vision bigger than your vision – Dr Paula Kluth       | Parramatta  |
|          | <i>Resourcing Families</i> Information Sessions         | North Sydney, Kirrawee, Gladesville, Liverpool, Rosehill, Epping  |
|          | Positive directions for lives of meaning and fulfilment | Ryde  |
| April    | <i>Resourcing Families</i> Information Session          | Epping  |
| May      | <i>Resourcing Families</i> Information Sessions         | Campbelltown, Eastwood, Coffs Harbour, Kempsey, Port Macquarie (2), Bega, Batemans Bay, Nowra (2), Wollongong (3) |
|          | Circles of Support Information Session                  | Towamba   |
| June     | <i>Resourcing Families</i> Information Sessions         | Condobolin (3), Parkes (2), Orange, Campbelltown, Springwood  |

# Campaign for a Supported Living Fund



In NSW in October 2010 the Minister, Shadow Minister and the Greens provided political endorsement for a Supported Living Fund – a stream of government funding that builds on family initiative to enable men and women with disability to establish a home of their own. For the first time in more than 20 years, people who were not in crisis would be allocated government funding to assist in their transition to their own home.

This article describes the campaign run by Family Advocacy that led to this commitment. Whilst our primary goal was a stream of government funding, an equally important goal was that of family empowerment because we know that the lives of people with disability are always improved when their family is a capable advocate on their behalf.

## **The environment**

We recognised that we could take nothing for granted. Many families had become passive recipients of services and we had to inspire them with a realistic belief that they could become agents of positive social change. We also had to reframe demand – from supported accommodation where people were allocated a bed in a group facility, to supported living in which people had the right to determine how they live, with whom they live, who provides them with help and support and how they live their lives.

Families are divided on this issue. Many families dream of supported living but don't know how to 'do it'. Other families feel threatened by the ordinary, inclusive nature of supported living believing that only grouped accommodation fully funded by government can work.

Many factors had the potential to hinder the achievement of our goals. There was a perception that it was 'unfair' to allocate

funds to people not in crisis. In addition, the lack of affordable housing and the lack of experience of non government service providers in facilitating supported living and developing and utilising informal support, are real impediments.

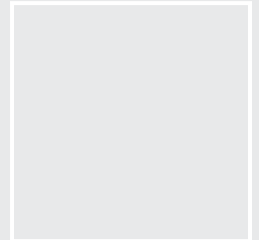
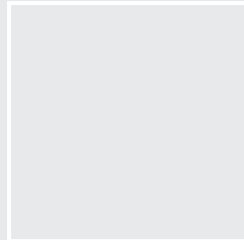
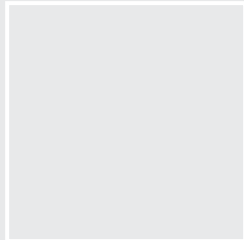
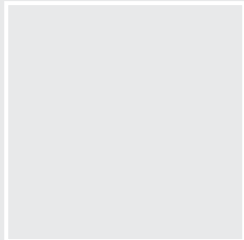
On the positive side, all stakeholders acknowledge that the current system is flawed. People with disability and families do not get what they want and need; services have little choice of who is allocated to their houses and are aware that many residents want something different; government acknowledges that the system is always at boiling point with many unhappy customers.

In addition, there was widespread recognition that an accommodation system totally reliant on government resources is unsustainable.

## **The hidden problem**

We knew that most people had no idea about supported living – about approaches to supported accommodation that did not congregate people and segregate them from the community. We knew that when you argue against something, you bring out the ferocity of opponents. Perhaps their anger would not be so virulent if we argued *for* something.

In mid 2007, Family Advocacy committed to a long term strategy to secure a Supported Living Fund for NSW. We would use the confluence of the next



state election and the second stage of the *Stronger Together* 10 year plan to have a four year campaign for a Supported Living Fund.

As a first step, we worked together with the Multicultural Disability Advocacy Association (MDAA) that generously sponsored the development of the supported living website, [www.supportedliving.org.au](http://www.supportedliving.org.au)

### Increasing the tension

We needed to promote our evidence base. Unmet demand and its negative impact on people with disability and families was already clear. When in 2006, the NSW Government published the *Accommodation and Support Paper* that misrepresented research evidence to argue for cluster housing<sup>1</sup>, Family Advocacy developed a paper, *Presenting the Evidence*, to accurately disseminate the evidence about different approaches to housing and support for people with disability.

Family Advocacy put supported living on its main agenda. Information sessions, teleconferences and a new workshop

were developed that reached hundreds of families sharing new possibilities. We developed a NSW edition of *A Home of My Own*, an excellent Queensland publication developed by the Queensland Disability Housing Coalition that provided information to assist families think about housing and support.

Our interest in supported living as a real possibility was enhanced by the West Australian Governments move in 2008 to establish their Community Living initiative. We read and talked widely, seeing it as a possible model for replication.

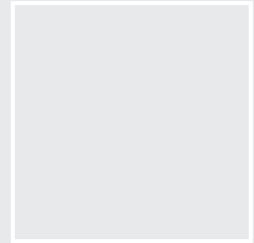
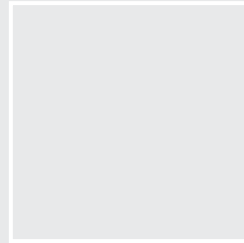
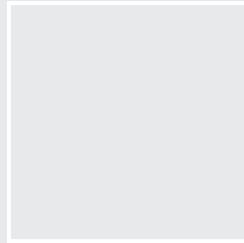
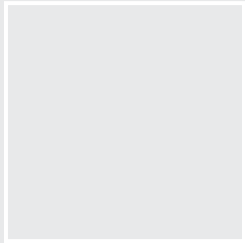
Finally, the establishment of In Control Australia in 2008 provided Family Advocacy with a framework to partner with service providers to spread the message of self direction, including in supported living to a wide audience. Throughout 2009 and 2010, Family Advocacy hosted four In Control events, building the knowledge base of people with disability, families, service providers and government about self directed support. We showcased supported living as an example of self directed support at Parliament House to 200 people.

### Ripening conditions

In February 2010, Family Advocacy used its Journal to disseminate a concept paper on the Supported Living Fund to encourage active discussion in the sector. The paper was sent to the Minister, Peter Primrose, the Shadow Minister, Andrew Constance and the Chief Executive of Ageing Disability and Home Care, Jim Moore. All were keen to meet because our paper seemed to tick many of the boxes contained in their thinking.

Our paper argued that the NSW disability service system is not effective in preventing crises and fostering family initiative. The fact that government provides accommodation for people with disability when families are in crisis and the person about to be homeless, sends the wrong message across the whole disability service system. We argued that demographic factors make it imperative for our system to change particularly in the context that most accommodation options delivered with government resources are expensive and are not evidence based. We concluded that if the NSW Government wants to move from

<sup>1</sup> The *Accommodation and Support Paper* quotes Felce and Emerson (in Stancliffe & Lakin 2005:152) to report, accurately, that a number of jurisdictions have developed new campus-style accommodation. What is not acknowledged, however, is that the statement is taken from the introduction to a number of large scale evaluative studies undertaken by Felce and Emerson that conclude: "Across a range of measures of resource inputs (eg staffing ratios, buildings), non resource inputs (eg social environment) and process and service recipient outcomes (eg choice, activity, social networks, social integration, medical usage), residential campuses offered significantly poorer quality of life than dispersed housing schemes (Emerson:2005 in Stancliffe & Lakin 2005:168)."



crisis intervention to prevention, from having sole responsibility for long term care and support, to being a partner in care and support, it must encourage and support family initiative while families still have the capacity to partner.

We had the opportunity to meet a senior Treasury official and developed a business case for the Supported Living Fund.

We argued that a Supported Living Fund would create a shift to more evidence based approaches that lead to good outcomes for people with disability and are cost effective for government. In addition, such an approach would strengthen prevention and early intervention strategies in disability service provision to minimise the need for high cost intensive supports.

In April 2010, we contracted with The Change Agency to assist us with the campaign in order to push us beyond our comfort zone of the usual advocacy strategies. We brought together a planning group to guide our path. Our invitees included a senior unionist, a health advocate, an anti poverty campaigner and a former political staffer. Whilst all showed interest, only the political staffer actually attended our planning day in June 2010. We engaged a final placement social work student to provide support for the campaign.

An important strategy that emerged from our planning day was the need for a coalition of organisations who would support the Supported Living Fund both to government and to their constituents. We approached 17 organisations and 16 came on board in support of our campaign.

### **Take – off and waging the movement**

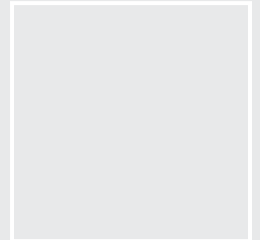
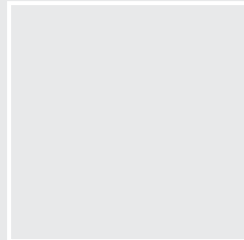
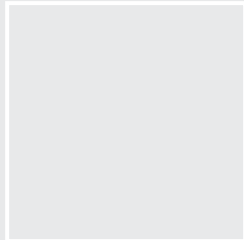
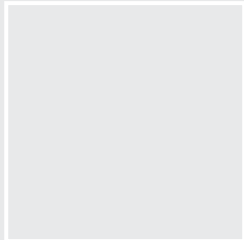
In July 2010, we started to make contact with 3,200 families providing information about our campaign and urging them to become involved. We offered to assist families to write letters at various stages to the Premier, Opposition Leader, Minister and Shadow Minister. Since we did not want form letters that seemed easy to ignore, we had lengthy conversations with several hundred family members, helping to turn their personal story into a powerful letter written in their voice and used a regular campaign update to keep everyone informed of responses sent to individual families. We developed a campaign Facebook page to further spread our message.

We used the endorsement from major disability organisations to demonstrate to the same targets that the concept of a Supported Living Fund had wide organisational as well as parental support and this helped us to get a second round of meetings with the Minister, Shadow Minister and Greens' spokesperson, Ian Cohen.

In September, Ian Cohen made a speech in Parliament endorsing the Supported Living Fund. We used this commitment to invite the Minister and Shadow Minister to a Political Candidates' Forum to inform the public about their real level of commitment. We reasoned that disability tends to be peripheral to mainstream issues in state or federal elections and so it was critical that we confirmed support prior to the election. We tightened our campaign 'ask' so that we could be clear about what we expected in relation to the Supported Living Fund. Consequently we indicated a commitment to the Supported Living Fund would involve:

- providing new money;
- extending the target group to include families not in crisis;
- enabling people with disability to have a home of their own, using a combination of paid and unpaid/informal support; and
- enabling families and people with disability to direct their own support.

We made our demands clear in our letter of invitation to the Political Candidates' Forum and offered the politicians the opportunity to also talk about other policies they would take to the election. Our invitation was confident and bold. Ultimately, all three were very keen to participate.






The Political Candidates' Forum was held on Monday 25 October 2010. On the previous Friday, we had an opinion piece published in the Sydney Morning Herald entitled 'Support for the living would save lives from despair'. We sent out media releases in an attempt to get media to cover the meeting but ultimately no media attended the event or reported on its commitments.

The Political Candidates' Forum was a great evening for the people present. We scored the politicians as they spoke which provided a light touch in what at the beginning was a tense mood. And ultimately, the Minister, Shadow Minister and Green's spokesperson all endorsed our four requirements and we felt a new era was upon us.



Left to right: Greens' spokesperson Ian Cohen, Shadow Minister Andrew Constance, Minister Peter Primrose, Family Advocacy staff member Belinda Epstein-Frisch at the Political Candidates' Forum, October 2010.

| Supported Living Fund<br>score card   |   |   |  |
|---|---|---|--|
| will you...<br>✓ x  | <br>ALP<br>Peter Primrose | <br>LIB<br>Andrew Constance | <br>GRN<br>Ian Cohen |
| Provide new money for SLF   | ✓   | ✓   | ✓  |
| Extend the target group for supported living to families not in crisis  | ✓   | ✓   | ✓  |
| Enable people using the SLF to have a home of their own, with a combination of paid and unpaid/informal support | ✓   | ✓   | ✓  |
| Enable families and people with disability using SLF to direct their own support                                | ✓   | ✓   | ✓  |

We recognised, however that "a verbal commitment is one thing... implementation is another" and so we are currently working with the NSW Government to implement its commitments.

#### What have we learnt?

Family Advocacy has learnt many lessons in securing the Supported Living Fund.

We learnt that it's about the long haul. A social change movement, grounded in fundamental values of justice, democracy and rights is only as strong as its grass roots support. Our recognition of the

critical importance of winning the hearts and minds of families was pivotal if ultimately we were to change the minds and policies of political and bureaucratic decision makers.

We learnt that we could build a base through information sessions, teleconferences and workshops that helped families envisage something different. Once we had 'created demand' we could use that demand to gain political commitments. And that when you offer assistance, families are happy to tell their stories in the hope of gaining an important commitment.

# Working to change the system - Systemic Advocacy



Left to right:

Belinda Epstein-Frisch,  
Systemic Advocate

Catherine Hogan, Director

Nadia Samperi,  
Systemic Advocate

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: PERSONALISED SUPPORT

2010/2011 has seen a number of significant milestones on the path to give people with disability and their families control over the government funded resources allocated for their support.

On 3 December, the NSW Government announced *Stronger Together – The second phase* committing to a major shift in service delivery for people with disability.

*“Individualised funding arrangements will become available from 2011/12 and by the end of 2013/14, anyone receiving disability services will have the option of using an individualised and portable funding arrangement. (This includes funding in day programs and congregate accommodation services.) The policy settings to achieve this goal will be developed in consultation with people with a disability and their families and carers, service providers, peaks and other stakeholders.”(p21)*

At the national level, the Draft Report of the Productivity Commission into Long Term Care and Support documented that *“The current disability support system is underfunded, unfair, fragmented, and*

*inefficient, and gives people with disability little choice and no certainty of access to appropriate supports.”*

The Commission has proposed a new, national system, the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS), which would **entitle** all Australians with a significant disability to high quality, long term care and support. The Draft Report recommended that support be delivered via individualised support packages, enabling eligible people to choose service providers, use financial intermediaries or receive self directed funding.

These achievements reflect years of work by advocacy organisations including Family Advocacy.

## Strategies

Family Advocacy strategies in the last 12 months that have contributed to these outcomes include meetings with the Premier, Minister, Shadow Minister and the Chief Executive and other senior staff of Ageing Disability and Home Care (ADHC) and as a member of the ADHC External Working Group on Individualised Support on behalf of In Control Australia.

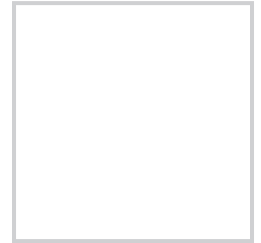
Family Advocacy worked closely with In Control Australia to broaden the base of people knowledgeable about and committed to self directed support. We ran a joint campaign *Self Directed Supports: a NSW Campaign* that

activated people to write to and visit local Members of Parliament. In addition, we hosted a seminar on supported living (as self directed support in action) at Parliament House in August and co hosted a two day Big Event in May. The seminars showcased overseas and interstate experience to over 600 people with disability, families, services and government personnel.

Family Advocacy held a number of meetings with representatives of the Industry Development Fund in an effort to ensure that government funds allocated to the transformation of the service system are spent in ways that ensue positive outcomes for people with disability.

In addition, Family Advocacy provided a submission to the Parliamentary Inquiry into ADHC and was a member of the Evaluation Reference Group on Demonstration Support Networks.

The Productivity Commissions Inquiry into Long term Care and Support was an important point of focus for Family Advocacy. We wrote two submissions and gave evidence as well as supporting families to understand the issues and contribute to the Inquiry process. We also worked closely with In Control Australia to explore what is required to ensure that all people with disability and families benefit from the new opportunities foreshadowed through self directed support.



## **KEY FOCUS AREA: SOLID FOUNDATIONS FOR CHILDREN 0-6**

### **Children and young people**

The emphasis of advocacy in this area involves strengthening opportunities to enable all children and young people with disability to grow up in families that are well supported and as active and contributing members of their communities. This involves being welcomed and supported in age appropriate local opportunities including early childhood formal and informal services and supports, being a member of the regular class of the local neighbourhood school, participating in after school and vacation programs with peers in inclusive settings and having an age appropriate break from their family through the same opportunities as their peers without disability.

### **Outcome**

Emerging practice in service provision reflects an increased understanding of ways to embed children in families and in ordinary paths of life.

### **Strategies**

A member of staff sits on the national Common Approach to Assessment, Referral and Support (CAARS) Taskforce chaired by Jenny Macklin, Minister for Families, Housing Community Services and Indigenous Affairs and Fiona Stanley, Australian Research Alliance for Children

and Youth. The Taskforce has worked to develop a common approach to assessment and referral in child protection and improve mechanisms for information sharing between primary and secondary level services which may have contact with children who are potentially at risk and their families.

A member of staff is a member of the ADHC Expert Advisory Group on Children and Young People with Disability and their Families.

A member of staff was a member of the reference group overseeing the evaluation of ADHC funded demonstration support networks.

Family Advocacy contributed to the review of draft regulations on voluntary out of home care.

Family Advocacy gave feedback on the discussion paper re inclusion and professional support for child care services.

### **Concern**

A small number of children with disability continue to require out of home care. The Wood Special Inquiry into Child Protection expressed concern at the lack of models available for children and young people who are unable to live in the family home. Whilst government policy states that children belong in families and children under 12 should not be placed in non family based care, the reality is that

currently there are more children in need of family care than there are families ready to support them.

### **Strategy**

Family Advocacy contributed to the work of the Children and Young People Accommodation Options Reference Group. Whilst not a member of the Reference Group, Family Advocacy made representations to provide a voice for children. The outcomes of the Reference Group are not yet public and we will continue to monitor the options for out of home care particularly for children under 12.

## **KEY FOCUS AREA: WELCOMING, INCLUSIVE COMMUNITIES**

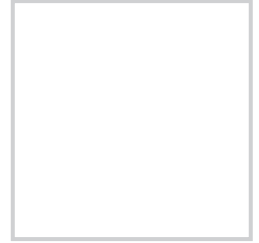
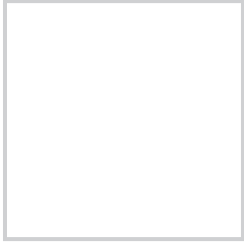
### **Inclusive Education**

Inclusion in the regular class of the local neighbourhood school is a key strategy to enable children, young people and their families to be active members of their community. Family Advocacy's work in this area focuses on systemic changes needed to build the values, knowledge and skills to enable school communities to welcome all learners.

### **Strategy**

Family Advocacy was involved in regular meetings with senior staff of the Department of Education and Communities (DEC) which provided a forum to raise issues of concern.





Family Advocacy contributed to discussion and developed a submission in relation to the Commonwealth Review of the Disability Discrimination Standards for Education.

Family Advocacy developed a submission in relation to the Commonwealth Review of Funding in Schools.

#### **Concern**

The School Learning Support Program (SLSP) continued to be under threat. Whilst a trial of the Program, implemented in Illawarra and the South Coast was positively reviewed by Westwood Spice, the new O'Farrell Government was reluctant to recommend its implementation state-wide.

#### **Strategies**

Family Advocacy was a member of the Community Consultative Group associated with the SLSP.

Family Advocacy sought a meeting with the new Minister for Education but was unsuccessful.

#### **Concern**

Family Advocacy was concerned that there is inadequate planning and preparation for young people with disability when they leave school. It appears that a significant proportion of

Support Teachers Transition have low expectations of students with high support needs who they encourage into congregate day programs in the Community Participation (CP) Program.

#### **Strategies**

Family Advocacy met with senior staff of Department of Education and Communities to progress the issue and then a member of staff spoke at the annual conference of Support Teachers Transition about life opportunities for young people through the self managed options of the Community Participation (CP) Program.

#### **Concern**

Special provision in the national standardised numeracy and literacy assessment, the National Assessment Program – Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN), in Years 3, 5 and 7 was not adequate. In addition, reporting of the results of NAPLAN on the 'My Schools' website took no account of the number of students with disability in the school leading to a concern that inclusive schools that had children with disability enrolled in the mainstream classes would be disadvantaged.

#### **Outcome**

Families were more informed about whether their child should participate in NAPLAN and how to negotiate appropriate supports. DEC and the Board of Studies agreed to work on clearer guidance to schools re 'special provision'.

#### **Strategy**

Family Advocacy developed a fact sheet that was distributed to families and put on the website.

### **KEY FOCUS AREA: MEANINGFUL ADULT LIVES**

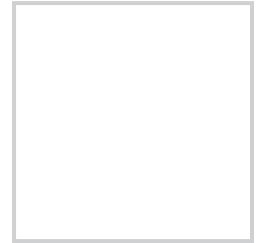
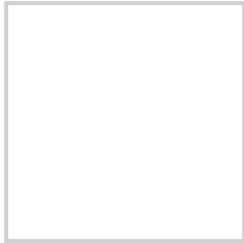
#### **Supported living**

Securing opportunities for men and women with disability to live in their own homes continues to be a major focus of work by Family Advocacy. The campaign for a Supported Living Fund was a major highlight of the systemic advocacy work this year and is described in the centrefold of the report.

#### **Outcome**

*Stronger Together – The second phase* provides resources for 300 places in the Supported Living Fund over 3 years. This will provide the opportunity for men and women with disability to move into their own home using a combination of paid and informal support while their families have capacity to support the transition.





### Strategies

Staff visited Western Australia to meet with government, service providers and families who have been involved in the WA Community Living initiative, on which the Supported Living Fund is modelled.

A member of staff is a member of the Supported Living Fund Working Group, tasked with the implementation of the Supported Living Fund.

Family Advocacy ran four teleconferences for people over the past 12 months. Teleconferences continue to be an accessible way to reach busy families who are able to participate on a day and time that fits with their other responsibilities.

### Outcome

Family Advocacy contributed to the development of policy at State and Federal level to provide positive opportunities for adults with disability to lead ordinary lives embedded in the community.

### Strategies

Family Advocacy made a submission and gave evidence to the Senate Inquiry into people with disability who are ageing.

Family Advocacy continued to support the work of People with Disability Australia in seeking closure of all large residential centres.

### Self Managed Models of support

Ensuring that young people with disability are provided with opportunities once they leave school, that will assist them build a life rich with roles and meaning, remains a strong focus for Family Advocacy.

### Outcome

Young people and their families are informed about the benefits of self managing allocated funds and understand what it entails.

### Strategies

Family Advocacy has remained an active member of the ADHC Transition to Work and Community Participation Stakeholder groups.

Family Advocacy responded to an invitation from ADHC to have input into a new resource for young people and their families, describing the self managed model.

### KEY FOCUS AREA: ADVOCACY FOR PEOPLE WITH DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITY

#### Concern

Since the idea of a National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) first came to light, Family Advocacy has been concerned with how advocacy might be dealt with in an environment where each person with disability has an individualised funding package.

### Outcome

The Productivity Commissions Final Report into the NDIS recommends that independent advocacy remains block funded.

### Strategies

Family Advocacy submitted a response to the Productivity Commission Draft Report into a long term care and support scheme suggesting that advocacy must remain block funded as people with disability should never have to pay for advocacy when and if they need it.

Family Advocacy remains on the Board of the Disability Advocacy Network Australia (DANA) who echoed this concern and put forward the same view.

### Other

Family Advocacy made a submission and gave evidence to the Senate Inquiry into people with disability who are ageing.

Family Advocacy continued to support the work of People with Disability Australia in seeking closure of all large residential centres.

Family Advocacy has been invited to sit on the newly formed Disability Network Forum, which will be providing advice to Government from a non-service provider perspective.

# Communications



*Far left: Rhiannon Brodie,  
Communications Officer*

*Left: Trisha McIlroy,  
Information Coordinator  
(until September 2010)*

An important part of Family Advocacy's mission is to strengthen the knowledge of families.

Towards the end of 2010 Family Advocacy decided to reform the Information Coordinator role into the Communications Officer, which role incorporates; resource/information management, website administration and support to the *Resourcing Families* Project.

Through the Communications Officer's role and the resources in the Inclusion Collection, Family Advocacy provides families with information that is both relevant and inspiring.

Rhiannon Brodie commenced work with Family Advocacy as Communications Officer on 10 May replacing the Information Coordinator Trisha McIlroy who left in September 2010.

## **Information Sessions**

### **About Family Advocacy**

The information session functions as a means of briefly introducing attendees to our work and our vision for persons with disability. The purpose of the information session is to encourage those attendees interested in our organisation to join our mailing list and, or, those who have specific issues around their family member with disability to contact us for assistance in working through specific challenges.

Throughout 2010/2011 Family Advocacy ran a total of 20 information sessions for a variety of groups and organisations.

In September 2010 we ran an information session for Uniting Care to a group of older carers whose children were between 18 and 50 years of age. Their particular concerns were around planning for the future, what other families are doing around NSW and the proposed National Disability Insurance Scheme. Family Advocacy was able to provide information on these areas along with information on what we offer to families.

In October 2010 we were invited by the Holdsworth Community Centre in Woollahra to run an information session for families. The information session to the group of 20 people was positively received with the group having a particular interest in housing, independence and creating a positive future for their children.

Family Advocacy presented an information session in January 2011 to Early Childcare Managers of Lifestart at their staff development day in North Ryde. A total of 35 managers attended with the purpose of gaining a greater understanding of Family Advocacy and *Resourcing Families*. Following the day, some of the managers have been in contact to ask us to conduct further information sessions for families who attend their centres.

'Advocacy in Action' was the theme of our information session we presented at the Carers Forum on 'Who will look after my child when I'm no longer around', run by the Samaritans in February 2011 in Lake Macquarie. A group of 90 parents



Attendees at an information session, Lake Macquarie

attended with the purpose of gaining a greater understanding of Family Advocacy and the Supported Living Fund.

We presented an information session to a group of students from the Australian Catholic University who are studying Inclusive Education and Disability Studies. The information session was provided to the group to give them an understanding of what advocacy organisations do, how we do it and who are the people we advocate for. The students were particularly interested in hearing how we work with families to achieve a 'good life' for their family member with disability.

Family Advocacy had a stall at the Twelfth Annual Transition Expo 2011 held in

Sutherland in June 2011. On the day we were able to openly chat with attendees about the function of advocacy and the importance of having informal supports for people with disability as well as provide information and advice on post school options.

A total of 11, one hour information sessions were ran as a prelude to Family Advocacy's workshop *Let's get started*. They were open to all families prior to the three hour workshop about starting school. The info session was particularly useful in giving the workshop participants new to Family Advocacy an opportunity to understand who we are prior to delivery of the topic based workshop.

## Resources developed throughout the year



The summer edition of the Journal in 2010 covered the topic of Social Advocacy and included articles from individuals who have spent years working in the different types of social advocacy, and they described the various ways in which the interests and rights of individuals with disability are promoted and defended.

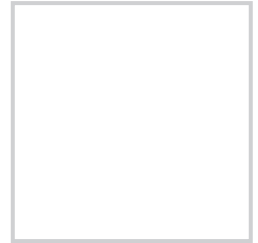
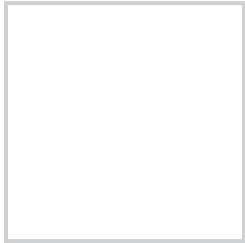
Due to the Communications Officer position being vacant for some time, only one edition of the Journal was produced this financial year. It was decided in June 2011 the Journal will retire for a period of time.

## COMMUNIQUE

AN INFORMATION UPDATE FOR NSW FAMILIES



*Communique*, which is published quarterly, provides up to date information about the issues that affect people with disability and the quest for inclusive lives. It highlights developments in Family Advocacy's systemic advocacy efforts, new additions to the Inclusion Collection,



coming events, interesting snippets from around the state, as well as drawing attention to issues that require long term planning and focus.

*Communiqué* is sent by post and email to approximately 2300 families and allies, an increase of 1500 readers since last financial year.

### **A Home of My Own – Right, Rhetoric or Reality?**

The publication was developed as a resource to assist people with disability and their families to understand the current environment around accommodation and service provision in NSW and to help establish a framework to critique options that are currently on offer for housing and support – in order to achieve the dream of a home of one's own.

The Queensland Disability Housing Coalition generously donated this resource to Family Advocacy so that it could be adapted for people with disability and their families in NSW.



*A Home of My Own – Right, Rhetoric or Reality?*

### **General enquiries and resource provision**

Providing information and resources to families and workers is a fundamental role of the organisation. Family Advocacy received approximately 1800 individual requests for books, articles, videos and information packs during the past 12 months.

### **The Inclusion Collection Library**

During 2010/2011 over 4700 resources were accessed or borrowed from the library. Families were the main users, but students and workers also accessed information.

The Library continues to be reviewed and updated so the resources provided are of interest, relevant and up to date. A review into the accessibility of the Library is also underway.

We continue to promote the Library through our website, workshops, information sessions and promotional material.

### **Website**

In addition to the Family Advocacy website and the Supported Living website, a new website for the *Resourcing Families* initiative was also established. The *Resourcing Families* website provides insight and personal stories as well as practical resources for families. All three websites will now be managed internally while maintaining their individual identities.

Family Advocacy is also looking to continuously improve the website so that it can get its message across to families in the most efficient and effective way.

Knowledge is power. Information is liberating. Education is the premise of progress, in every society, in every family.

*Kofi Annan*

# Management Committee



Alex Purvis



Lyn Bruce



Anne Chaffey



Meg Sweeney



Kate McNamara



Amanda Fletcher



Margaret Curry



Garry Smith

## 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
- 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.

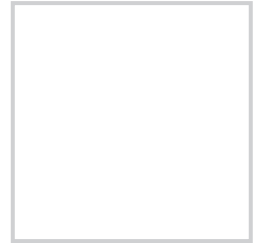
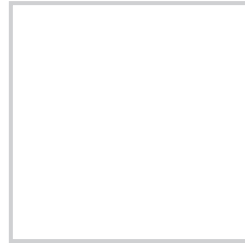
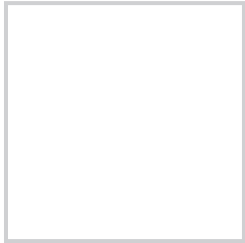
The Committee report to members at the annual general meeting. At the annual general meeting the annual report, which includes the audited financial report for the year just ended, is presented to members.



Andrew Brak



Catherine Hogan



### **Annual General Meeting**

Family Advocacy held its AGM on 15 October, 2010 at the Mantra Hotel in Parramatta. We were joined by members of the organisation who had nominated to join the Committee and others who came to demonstrate their on-going support of the work of Family Advocacy. AGM's can be quite dry affairs, so we are very pleased to have members who come along each year to show their interest and to hear first hand from staff members, about the work that has been undertaken throughout the year.

An orientation for committee members re-elected and new, was conducted in the Epping office of Family Advocacy on the 10th December 2010.

### **Committee members**

#### **Alex Purvis**

Chairperson

Alex is a father of four children and lives in Grafton. For many years he has been involved in promoting the rights of his son. His knowledge of advocacy, legal and persuasive techniques were honed through his experiences in encouraging the education system to include all children. He has a particular interest in developing individualised self managed approaches. An innovative support arrangement has given his son a meaningful and enriched life.

#### **Lyn Bruce**

Treasurer

Lyn brings with her a wealth of executive and change management, financial and project management experience across a range of industries: aged care (current), acute care, retail, legal and local council. She utilises her financial and analytical skills to assess the strengths and weaknesses of organisations and facilitates change when necessary. Being currently an Aged Care CEO in a Catholic organisation, she has a firm commitment to social justice and inclusion of people with disability. She also believes strongly that everybody has the right to live as completely as they can with the abilities they have. She endorses the philosophy of assisting people to fulfil their potential and giving them the tools to enable this.

#### **Anne Chaffey**

Anne and her husband live in Armidale, with their three sons, 24, 22 and 20 and a daughter 14. With a full time aide, her daughter has been able to attend mainstream school and is now in year 8 at her local high school with her friends. Anne has always been a strong advocate for all of her children, actively supporting inclusion in mainstream schools, and has been involved with many community organisations, the majority of these in the disability field. Anne was a member of the National Disability & Ministerial Advisory Council with the Department of Family

and Community Services, Indigenous Affairs. Anne brings her passion, experience and beliefs to this position on the committee.

#### **Meg Sweeney**

Meg has been involved in advocacy for people with intellectual disability for over 18 years. Meg's experience has seen her serving on the Disability Council of NSW, acting as a Community Visitor, and achieving life member with the Institute of Family Advocacy and Leadership Development. Meg is passionate about assisting people to develop and maintain their own unique identity through valued roles and inclusive practice.

#### **Kate McNamara**

Kate lives in Stanmore with her husband and three daughters. The eldest is 14 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 on-going association with Family Advocacy.

#### **Amanda Fletcher**

Amanda lives in Sydney with her partner and two children, aged six and three. She has had a wide variety of work experience including the childcare and finance areas. Amanda is a passionate advocate for her daughter and strives for both of her children to be valued members of the community. Amanda enjoys walking,



baking, gardening, shopping and is known for saying hello to everyone!

#### **Margaret Curry**

Margaret lives with her husband in Epping and has three daughters. One of her daughters is thirty-three years old and works in open employment in a childcare centre. She has moved into her own cottage which has recently been completed in the back yard of the family home. Margaret is an educator and has worked with students of all ages including those with an intellectual disability. She and her family have a firm and abiding commitment to the principles of equity and justice for all, and in particular for family members who cannot advocate for themselves. Throughout the years, the driving force behind the family decisions made for, and with, their daughter who has an intellectual disability is the fundamental principle that each and every individual deserves respect as well as the opportunity to participate in work and social situations that are the least restrictive but are appropriate, safe and satisfying.

#### **Garry Smith**

Garry has extensive professional experience in the education field, having retired as Principal of a school in 2009. His career includes roles as classroom teacher, disability consultant and trainer as well as policy officer within the NSW Department of Education and Training



*Attendees at the AGM, 15 October 2010*

(DET). His 38 years in education include 31 years in the disability area. During his time within the State Office of the DET Garry sat on Ministerial Advisory Groups, consulted with the NSW Board of Studies on curriculum writing and spent several years' training school staff in health care procedures for students with disability. Garry maintains a real passion for the rights of people with disability and their families. He also recognises the ongoing need for professional development for school staff working with students with disability in mainstream schools.

#### **Andrew Brak**

Andrew and his wife Isabel live in Sydney, with their youngest son Alan. After a career in accounting Andrew enjoys volunteering in community organisations. He is especially interested in self directed funding from government for individuals

with disability, and the development of circles of support and the positive role they play for people with disability. Their family's involvement with Family Advocacy over the years has been instrumental in supporting them with some of the hurdles they have encountered in providing support to Alan. Andrew and his family are entirely committed to providing a fulfilling inclusive life for Alan, with their belief that all people have a valuable contribution to make to the community.

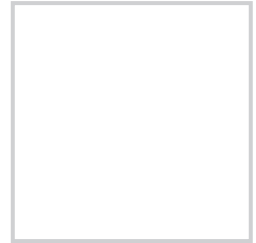
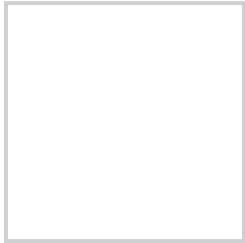
#### **Catherine Hogan**

Public Officer

Catherine is the Director of Family Advocacy and also holds the Public Officer role.

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

# Staff and Allies



## Staff and Volunteers

| Full time:   | Length of Service                 |
|--|-----------------------------------|
| Director – Catherine Hogan   | 15 years<br>(7 years as Director) |
| Advocacy Development Coordinator – Kim Roots                       | 6 years                           |
| Advocacy Development and Liaison – Rick Hanson                     | 1 year                            |
| Information Coordinator – Trisha McIlroy (till Sept 2010)          |                                   |
| Communications Officer – Rhiannon Brodie (from May 2011)           | 6 weeks                           |
| Administration Support – Philippa FitzPatrick                      | 8 years                           |
| Advocacy Project Officer – Chris Jackson (till Sept 2010)          |                                   |
| Emma Baxter (from Oct 2010)  | 8 months                          |
| Part time:   | Length of Service                 |
| Systems Advocacy – Belinda Epstein-Frisch                          | 16 years                          |
| Systems Advocacy – Nadia Samperi                                   | 7 weeks                           |
| Advocacy and Leadership Worker – Karen Tippet                      | 3 years                           |
| Administration Coordinator – Marybelle Ignacio                     | 4 years                           |
| Accounts and Administration Officer – Sally Goh (till Nov 2010)    |                                   |
| Accounts and Administration Officer – Reno Philips (from Feb 2011) | 4 months                          |

## Consultants

### Governance

Alison Plant

### Workshop development

Jane Sherwin

### Supported Living

Lee-Anne Whitten

### Student Placement

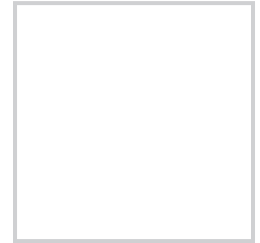
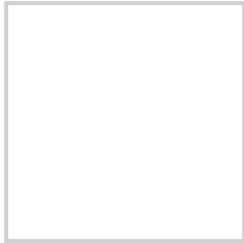
Kylie Standing

Tamara Marczak



Tamara Marczak





## Volunteers



Margaret Hardman, volunteer

Much of the work of Family Advocacy is greatly assisted by an enthusiastic group of volunteers. There are many varied ways to support the work of the organisation including helping with the smooth running of various events and conferences, coming into the Epping office to help with large mailouts for upcoming events, providing local knowledge of organisations and people in your networks who we can approach to let families know of workshops we are running in the area as well as one off tasks like collating survey data or attending a local expo. All these tasks – and more – assist Family Advocacy to be professional and effective in all that we do.

Thank you for your contributions in 2010/2011

Andrew Brak

Shari Raymond

Margaret Curry

Di Samuels

Paivi Russanen

Sharon Williams

Wendy McGlynn

Lee-Anne Whitten

Margaret Hardman

Alex Purvis

Anne Chaffey

The journal of *Family Advocacy Families for Change* received valuable contributions from people who shared their story or experiences. Thank you to the following contributors;

Matthew Kelly

Bob Lee

Maree Salzano

Kirsty MacDonald

Therese Sands

## Volunteer Session Leaders

When we run our workshops there is always good feedback from participants that they appreciate the contribution of the parent volunteer who helps present the workshop and share their stories. This really does add a layer of expertise and knowledge that both families who attended and Family Advocacy really do appreciate. So thank you for your generosity of time, personal stories and effort. We also understand that it would not be possible for you to take this time to assist without

the support of your family, so we extend our thanks to your families as well.

Many thanks to these wonderful Volunteer Session Leaders 2010/2011.

Annette Bush

Amanda Fletcher

Shari Raymond

Sharon Williams

Meg Sweeney

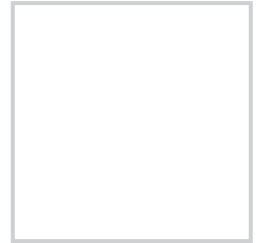
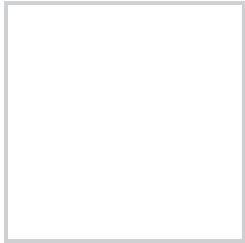
Amber Paisley-Topp

## Volunteer Guest Speakers

Several guest speakers gave their time to share their expertise with attendees at both our *Shaping the future* and *Entering the maze* live in events. This certainly adds a valuable and relevant learning experience for all attendees.

Thanks go to James Whelan (The Change Agency), Glenn Klatovsky (Community activist), Judith Ellis (Ellis Macrae consulting) and Adele Horin (Sydney Morning Herald reporter) for their time and enthusiasm at *Shaping the Future*.

Many thanks as well to those who spoke at *Entering the Maze*, Nathan and Jo Basha (mother and son), Professor Phil Foreman (University of Newcastle), Neale Waddy and Anne Stewart (Department of Education and Communities), Annette Bush (parent) and Meg Sweeney (parent).



### **Additional Supports**

#### **Accounting and Finance**

We value the professional expertise provided by Gary Jones of Gee Jay Computer Services, who supported our Accounting and Finance activities.

#### **IT Support**

We thank Andrew Kerr and Jodie Were who addressed our Family Advocacy and *Resourcing Families* website requirements. Also to Michelle Colenso who established the data collection system for the *Resourcing Families* initiative. We have relied on Patrick Hasbani and his team at

PCQuest for IT and computer maintenance support.

#### **Media Productions and Publications**

We appreciate the service we received from Jon Gallimore and his staff at BEE Printmail 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 and Bernard Percel of Rich Media Consultancy for the videoing of our special events and production of DVD's.

### **Stakeholder and Allies**

Thank you to our colleagues and friends within these other important organisations. Family Advocacy does not function in isolation. Much of what we do and achieve is supported or aligned to the work of others in the sector:

The Australian and New Zealand SRV Group

The Alberta Association for Community Living, Canada

Dr Michael Kendrick

Foundations Forum

ADHC Local Support Coordinators

NSW Council on Intellectual Disability (NSWCID)

Disability Advocacy Network Australia (DANA)

NSW Disability Advocacy Network (NDAN)

People with Disability Australia

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



#### **Family Advocacy Staff**

Back row (left to right): Belinda Epstein-Frisch, Reno Phillip, Catherine Hogan, Nadia Samperi, Kim Roots and Rhiannon Brodie

Front Row (left to right): Karen Tippett, Rick Hansen, Philippa FitzPatrick, Emma Baxter and Marybelle Ignacio

# 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 2010/2011 financial year. Family Advocacy has 160 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 and our Management Committee is drawn from our membership base.

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, Accounts and Administration



*From left to right:*

*Marybelle Ignacio, Office Administrator*

*Philippa ., Administrative Support Worker*

*Reno Phillip, Accounts and Administration Officer*

*Sally Goh, Accounts and Administration Officer (until November 2010)*

Family Advocacy acknowledges that in order to carry out its mission and vision to advocate and support others, it needs to invest in its social and physical assets. It's social assets are its personnel, the relationships internally and externally to the organisation and the networks it sets up to reach others. The physical assets are the equipment and technology needed to carry out the activities effectively and efficiently.

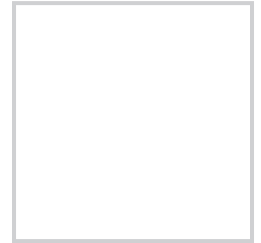
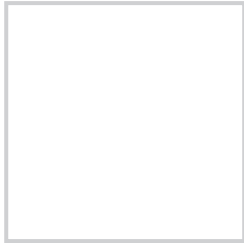
## **Personnel and Networks**

With the *Resourcing Families* events and activities in full swing concurrent with that of Family Advocacy, additional equipment and personnel were provided to support the project.

Family Advocacy went through a number of staff movements in order to build what is a solid team of professionals undertaking the various activity and support areas of the organisation, in Advocacy and Leadership Development, in Systems Advocacy, in Information and

Communication, and in the Accounts and Administration areas. Systems, policies and procedures are in place, regularly assessed and improved and new ones established to ensure that relevant information is captured appropriately and work proceeds effectively. Training is provided to ensure that personnel skills and information are current and up to date. Regular communication and harmonious cooperation is encouraged in the workplace.

In a broader context, the organisation is constantly searching for innovative ways to reach more families, including the use of social media. A Supported Living Fund Campaign page was set up on Facebook, to provide a medium for discussion and sharing of information and experiences among a network of people engaged in this common concern. This coming year, Family Advocacy is looking to use Webinars as a new vehicle for engaging families, who are unable to attend our workshops in person.



### **Equipment/Space**

New equipment was purchased, others upgraded and additional car spaces provided to cope with volume and efficiency requirements, as well as to address personnel needs.

### **Information Technology**

#### **Database**

For 2010/2011, there are a total of 10,858 entries in our database, up by 182 from the previous year.

An assessment of the database is currently being undertaken to determine how it can best address the changing needs of the organization, as Family Advocacy reaches more families, increasingly addresses systemic issues, and provides statistical and financial feedback to its stakeholders. It is looking at how best to utilise 21st century technology in order to improve its data management processes.

### **Occupational Health and Safety**

The health and safety of staff, volunteers and visitors to the workplace is of paramount importance to Family Advocacy. The organisation conducts regular safety inspections, workstation assessments and evacuation drills. The organisation is represented on the building emergency committee by a Fire Warden and a Deputy Fire Warden, who are regularly trained by an external party. Every staff member is trained in the use of the evacuation chair, which may be used by a person requiring mobility assistance, in the event of an emergency.

#### **Data Collection and Census**

The organisation complies with its Federal and State reporting requirements by providing data on the organisation, its advocacy activities, and client demographics.

### **Environmental Consciousness**

Family Advocacy has for many years now, established and implemented practices that would help minimise its environmental impact. Documents for internal reference are printed on recycled paper and all other paper and cardboard are collected for recycling.

There is a conscious effort to utilise email as the preferred form of communication with members, stakeholders and families, whenever possible and practicable. The distribution of the Journal and Communiqué, event promotions, pre and post workshop communications and reaching out to volunteers, have been via email. People are encouraged to access the website to obtain further information. Targeted mailouts, where the relevance of information to specific recipients have been considered, have also reduced paper wastage significantly.

# Treasurer's Report



Lyn Bruce, Treasurer

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

The financial year 2010/2011 saw a consolidation of the *Resourcing Families* Project supported by a non recurrent grant from Ageing, Disability and Home Care (ADHC). Negotiations are underway with ADHC to secure funding beyond the life of the demonstration project which comes to fruition in June 2012.

Recurrent funding grants from the Commonwealth Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs (FaHCSIA) and the NSW Government, Family and Community Services are supporting the ongoing advocacy function and ongoing operations of Family Advocacy.

The State Government funding program has undergone a significant review over the past few years and organisations have been given a one off grant of \$15,000 to assist with transition arrangements.

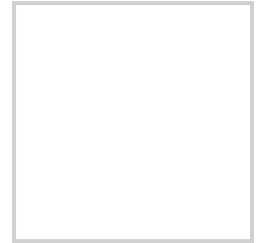
The Commonwealth funded National Disability Advocacy Program (NDAP) via which Family Advocacy receives its Commonwealth funding, is engaged in a process of Quality Assurance and Accreditation. Each organisation was given a one off grant of \$7,000 to assist with the process of preparing for the changes that are coming.

Both these one off grants can be rolled over into the coming financial year and acquitted by 30th June 2012.

## RECURRENT FUNDING AND ONE OFF GRANTS

|  | 2010/2011         | 2009/2010         |
|--|-------------------|-------------------|
| Revenue from Commonwealth Government                     | \$ 239,399        | \$ 232,399        |
| *One off grant from Commonwealth Government              | \$ 7,000          |                   |
| Revenue from State Government                            | \$ 244,601        | \$ 238,635        |
| *One off grant from State Government                     | \$ 15,000         |                   |
| Project funding from ADHC for <i>Resourcing Families</i> | \$ 205,000        | \$ 200,000        |
| One off grant from ADHC                                  | \$ 0.00           | \$ 25,800         |
| One off grant from DEC                                   | \$ 32,000         | \$ 30,900         |
| Donations  | \$ 365            | \$ 1,428          |
| <b>Total</b>   | <b>\$ 743,365</b> | <b>\$ 729,162</b> |

\* Note: The two one off grants above have been rolled over into the coming financial year.



This year, Family Advocacy received a one off grant from the NSW Department of Education and Communities (DEC) to contribute towards the cost of running events with an education focus for families in NSW.

The organisation's liabilities can be fully funded from its accumulated provisions and the organisation continues in a sound financial position. A budget for 2011/2012 has been ratified by the Management Committee.

### **Donations**

We would like to thank those who have provided their financial support throughout the year through their donations to the organisation:

Kathryn Bruce  
Stephanie & Peter Cohen  
Christine Dawson  
Clare Falzon  
John Kellerher  
Sharon Kirkwood  
Margaret & Tony Little  
Jenny & Marcus McMahon  
Laurel Prince  
Wilma Reibel  
Di Samuels & Ken Connell  
Mara Varga  
Dianne Ward  
Linda & Dean Wetherill

### **Disclosure of Interests**

I advise members that committee members Meg Sweeney and Amanda Fletcher received Honorariums during the year, at the standard rate set out in the Volunteer Session Leaders Policy, for their contribution towards the work of the organisation as Volunteer Session Leaders.

In accordance with the requirements of the Rules of the Association, I advise members that no other 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.

**Lyn Bruce**  
**Treasurer**

*family*

A D V O C A C Y

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