



Supporting big dreams
Building better lives

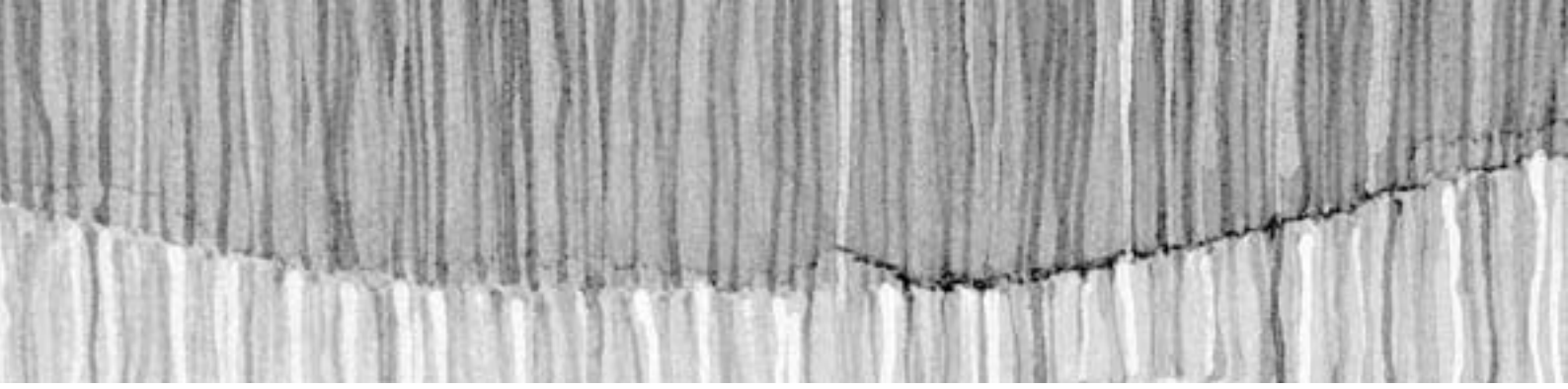
family

A D V O C A C Y

2011 - 2012 **ANNUAL REPORT**



Who We Are	2
Chairpersons Report	5
Highlights Of The Year	7
Family Advocacy at a Glance	9
Advocacy and Leadership Development	10
Resourcing Families at a Glance	19
Resourcing Families	20
Systems Advocacy	28
Communications	37
Management Committee	40
Staff and Allies	43
Membership	46
Internal Management,Accounts and Administration	47
Treasurer's Report	49



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.

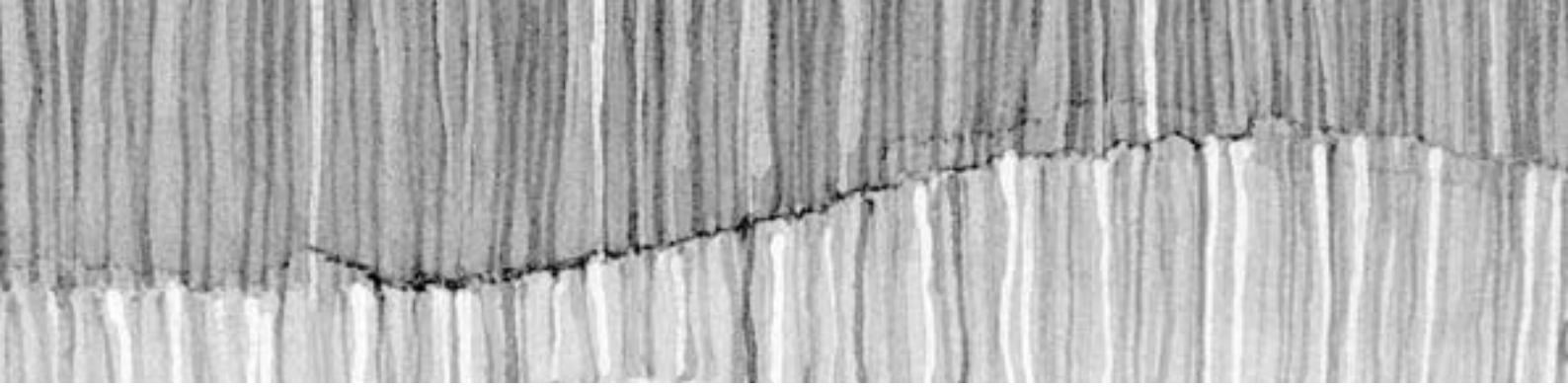
The family is the focus for the development of a range of relationships which lead to inclusion in the life of the community.

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.

Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world. Indeed it is the only thing that ever has. **Margaret Mead**

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 complement 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.



Amanda Fletcher
Chairperson

CHAIRPERSONS REPORT

For many years, Family Advocacy has remained unswerving in its commitment to protect and promote the rights and interests of people with developmental disability in NSW. Our advocacy upholds our Vision and Mission and is directed at strengthening the knowledge, role and influence of families to attain positive social roles for their family member. We believe that strengthening an individual's informal relationships is the most powerful way to maintain, develop and enhance their inclusion in their community.

The extensive work that the staff of Family Advocacy continues to undertake, is highlighted throughout this Annual Report. We continue to work tirelessly at changing the system, removing barriers and seeking opportunities for people with disability to lead good lives as active members of their community.

Family Advocacy is approaching its 21st Anniversary and the work achieved in this area over many years has endured many challenges and required persistent actions and commitment to achieving real change for people with disability. We value our longstanding working

relationships with our allies and supporters.

We are in the midst of progress and change that promises self-directed, personalised support that gives people with disability greater control, choice and flexibility over their support arrangements. Under *Stronger Together – The second phase*, there is a real possibility that services will be reshaped to be a tool that is used by people for the purpose of a good life, one person at a time, and for this to be realised Family Advocacy is speaking up for the need for decision support resources to be independent of government and service providers.

The work of Family Advocacy is guided by our Strategic Plan and Key Focus Areas. The Key Focus Area relating to Personalised Supports has driven a persistent and lengthy Supported Living Fund campaign. This has led the NSW Government to commit to new individualised funding over a three year period which will enable 300 people with disability to move into a home of their own with a combination of formal and informal support.

In this year, 2012, we are in a position to acknowledge and celebrate achievements, progress and change. It is a time of hope and possibility even though we realise that many people with disabilities continue to live in poverty, are homeless, and live disconnected and

isolated from their community. Many people remain isolated and vulnerable waiting for funding allocation. Whilst there has been transformation and change we recognise that there is so much more to be achieved.

In the last year, Family Advocacy has had a voice on Ministerial Reference groups, provided submissions to discussion papers and consultations and continued to work with allies, Ministers, advisors and key departmental personnel to influence and shape inclusive supports for people with disability.

Nationally, there has been much anticipation with the announcement of \$1 billion in the Federal budget dedicated to the National Disability Insurance Scheme. There is an opportunity for both state and federal governments to reform but it certainly requires consultation with and leadership by people with disability, their families, allies and organisations.

Through Advocacy and Development and the *Resourcing Families* initiative we continue to 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.

You must unite your constituents around a common cause and connect with them as human beings. **James Kouzes and Barry Posner**

Workshops are provided throughout the state including rural and remote areas as far afield as Broken Hill. We have recognised that the location and family commitments of many people has made it difficult for them to attend workshops and we have recently embraced webinars which have proved to be a huge success in opening up many new possibilities for families.

Much work has been completed in the preparation of our 2nd National Conference, *The Odyssey, celebrating achievements, progress and change*. We hope that people will be inspired by international and national speakers, and also by people sharing their stories about building informal supports to enable their family member to “get a real life”.

Specific to Governance, the Management Committee has completed an Annual Committee Self Assessment and also undertaken a Policy Review. Thank you to our members for your feedback that has resulted in an updated Policy document.

Several Committee members and the Director attended the Family and Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs Department Governance training. Additionally, a Committee Member and the Director attended Quality Assurance and Accreditation information sessions. Our Governance responsibility requires that we understand and

comply with the Quality Assurance and accreditation processes.

I would like to express my respect for and sincere appreciation to every staff member of Family Advocacy for their commitment and outstanding service to the organisation. You are a truly dynamic group of people who accomplish an exceptional amount of work. In particular, our warmest appreciation goes to Catherine Hogan for her outstanding work ethic, dedication and loyalty to Family Advocacy that has spanned more than 16 years. As many of you know, Catherine has given us extended notice regarding her future resignation and we certainly have appreciated the opportunity to develop a sound and well considered Succession Plan. By the time this report goes to print, we expect that Catherine will be starting a journey of new experiences and adventures. We wish Catherine a future of good health and much happiness.

Thank you to our loyal group of volunteers who give so generously of their time and in doing so play a vital role in maintaining and increasing the capacity of Family Advocacy. Thanks also goes to our Volunteer Session Leaders who present at workshops throughout NSW and share their lived experiences, which informs and inspires others.

Thank you to every Committee Member and especially to Alex Purvis* and Lyn Bruce. Alex has provided many years of repeated service to the Committee. He is stepping down after this recent stint of five years of service to the committee, which has included a year as Immediate Past Chairperson. Lyn Bruce has skilfully fulfilled the role of Treasurer. Thanks also to Alison Plant for collating the Committee's self assessment.

Family Advocacy will continue to safeguard its vision of families being agents of positive social change and remain vigilant in ensuring that the ground gained toward a just and inclusive society is retained and not compromised.

Thank you to all our members for your support.

Amanda Fletcher
Chairperson,
November 2011 - June 2012

**Alex Purvis served as Chairperson from July - October 2011*



Catherine Hogan
Director

HIGHLIGHTS OF THE YEAR

Highlights throughout 2011/2012 included a visit from families and advocates from Canada who have been self directing supports for people with disability for many years. An event called *Creating Inclusive Lives - Sharing the Canadian Experience*, hosted by *Resourcing Families* gave the opportunity for the Canadians to share with families in Australia their experience with self direction and how they create individualised supports around personal interests and aspirations.

Family Advocacy embraced a new way of communicating with people via webinars, an online communication device which enables us to present content through the internet. Family Advocacy presented, *After school - what then?* webinars and Dr Bob Jackson ran a series of inclusive education. Both were highly successful.

A number of events were held during the year where Family Advocacy drew on the expertise of international and national speakers. They included: Janet Klees from Canada; Dr Bob Jackson from Western Australia; and Jeremy Ward from Queensland.

Other highlights throughout the year included: the Supported Living Fund Capacity Building workshops held throughout February to June 2012, *More Choice and Control – NSW family stories of creating inclusive lives*, the continuation of *Resourcing Families* and a new workshop developed on *Circles of Support*.

Within the reporting period, 83 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

Very confident presentations with a lot of foresight and consideration of our experiences.

Exactly what I needed, I was one of those people not sure what I was coming to...not only did I learn about SLF, I reassessed the life of my daughter and what I need to do to enhance her life.

A great seminar. Lots of food for thought. I have learnt heaps from this workshop and I am sure we'll be going forward with a circle of support.

Thank you for a very informative day that empowers us.

Family Advocacy has offered me more learning and knowledge and support than any other agency or service I have encountered on my 16 year journey. I can now visualise roles for my daughter. Thank you.

About information sessions

Family Advocacy's passion for the cause – which we have never seen before with such vigour from any other organisation we have come in contact with. It really demonstrated how we individually can make a difference.

Thanks for a very thought provoking discussion last night. It was very helpful.

The information session was helpful raising questions and bringing forward new ideas.

There is nothing like a dream to create the future. **Victor Hugo**

About advocacy advice and information

Thank you so much for all this valuable information. It is so nice to have the information given to us rather than us having to forever chase what we should do...I am really happy to be connected to your advocacy agency.

Thank you for taking the time to chat to me yesterday and to sending me the information .

Your words encouraged me and your advice on how to approach the meeting made a huge difference to the outcome.

About resources

Great resources, thank you so much for sending them. I'll follow up the links you have included; I really appreciate your interest.

Thanks, you've been a great help. The resources you have sent are invaluable to the staff and organisation.

Thanks so much for the books and articles you sent. It's such a nice experience to ring an organisation and find someone who wants to help!

About our systems advocacy work

Thanks ... for arranging for Bruce and Ann to speak with us today. Would you please pass on my thanks to both ... for making themselves available to speak to us ... It was a great opportunity to hear from people who have been working in a system based on individualised funding for 40 years. The honesty of their reflections was appreciated and gave us much to think about and learn from.

New technology

WEBINARS:

I really commend you for using the idea, and commend the topic you covered today. I would love to hear of future webinars.

The webinars have been fantastic! Thank you to Family Advocacy for organising these! I would be very keen to be involved in others in the future.

FAMILY ADVOCACY AT A GLANCE

WHERE WE HELD FACE TO FACE EVENTS



SYDNEY:

West Ryde, Blacktown, Pennant Hills, Burwood, South Hurstville, Wentworthville, Kingsford, Hornsby, Liverpool, Campbelltown, Canley Vale, Rockdale, Penshurst, Strathfield.

Number of face to face events run	45
Number of people attending Family Advocacy face to face events	1, 496
Number of financial members	166
Pageviews on the website 2011/2012	24, 398
Number of webinars and teleconferences	19
Number of people joining Family Advocacy webinars and teleconferences*	164

*Webinar and teleconference participants joined from a number of regional and rural remote areas across NSW which have not been represented on the map.

ADVOCACY & LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT



Kim Roots

Advocacy Development Coordinator



Karen Tippet

Advocacy and Leadership Worker



Rick Hansen

Advocacy Development and Liaison Officer (until October 2011)

ADVOCACY DEVELOPMENT

2011/2012 has again been a busy period in the area of Advocacy and Leadership Development. Highlights have included providing information in new ways – such as via webinars – and presenting workshops for families about Supported Living to more than one thousand attendees.

The Advocacy and Leadership Development team provide families from across NSW with a range of opportunities to enhance their understanding of how to bring about positive change in the lives of their family member with developmental disability.

Given the diversity of people who make contact with Family Advocacy, the organisation has received feedback that families sometimes find it difficult to attend workshops because of their location

or commitments. Hosting webinars is one approach to making information available in another way that may make it more accessible for some. This form of communication allows for discussion of information and interaction. The type of webinar accessed by Family Advocacy involves use of a computer and/or phone so that people without internet access can also take part.

Family Advocacy has also attempted to make information available to more families by presenting workshops in rural and remote locations as well as hosting workshops with guest speakers (Dr Bob Jackson and Jeremy Ward) in multiple locations and/or locations outside of Sydney.

Family Advocacy also continues to receive feedback from families that it can be useful for them if professionals that are working with their family member attend Family Advocacy events. It is hoped that by opening events beyond

families, this may contribute to a shared understanding of what it takes to achieve meaningful inclusion. For this reason, where appropriate, events have been open to both families and professionals.

The work of the Advocacy and Leadership Development team is guided by Family Advocacy's Key Focus Areas, being:

- building solid foundations for children aged 0-6 years
- encouraging welcoming inclusive communities
- creating meaningful adult lives
- enhancing the advocacy skills of family members of people with disability.

The events and workshops pertaining to the Key Focus Areas are detailed below.

**KEY FOCUS AREA:
Solid foundations for
children 0-6**

**The Why and How of School
Inclusion**

PRESENTER – DR BOB JACKSON
NEWCASTLE, RYDE,
SOUTH HURSTVILLE, WOLLONGONG
(MARCH 2012)

Hosted by Dr Bob Jackson on 13 to
16 March, these events were
attended by 170 people.

Events included information about
developing a vision for the future
and the benefits of inclusion, a
number of resources were also
handed out in relation to this topic.

Families and professionals including
teachers and several representatives
from early childhood settings
attended the events.

A parent interested in progressing
her knowledge around education as
well as her presentation skills,
assisted with preparation for the
events and shared her insights
where relevant, Dr Jackson was
accompanied by Kim Roots.

Evaluations from the events were
positive and included:

- *He is absolutely inspiring. Thank
you so much for bringing him
to Newcastle. I am happy to say I
had my twin girls' IEP that same
afternoon as seeing Dr Jackson and
was more hopeful of true inclusion
than I have ever been.*

- *Dr Jackson's experience and
knowledge has prepared me for
the next stage in my daughters
education and from a parent's
perspective that is utterly
priceless.*



Dr Bob Jackson presenting at
The Why and How of School Inclusion,
March 2012

**Webinars – The Why and
How of School Inclusion and
Getting Ready for School.**

PRESENTER – DR BOB JACKSON
(MAY AND JUNE 2012)

As for the workshops presented by
Dr Jackson, these events explored
research about the benefits of
inclusion, what good school
inclusion involves and how schools
and families can work in partnership.
The webinars were exclusively
for families.

The information presented at The
Why and How of School Inclusion
was relevant for families of students
of all ages including those about to
start school and in the early years
of school.

Getting Ready For School was a
webinar for families with a family
member about to start school who
wanted hints for planning and a
better understanding of how
students with disability are supported
in mainstream schools.

Some of the comments from
participants are included below:

- *It gave good ideas for when I was
dealing with the school during
interviews, also validated why
I want main stream school for
my son.*
- *I enjoyed the opportunity to be
able to interact through the
webinars, ask questions and being
able to comment and speak
to others.*
- *Having a flexible web delivery
is excellent... this means people in
rural and remote areas can access
the presentation.*

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

KEY FOCUS AREA:
Welcoming, inclusive communities

Webinars - Getting ready for high school

PRESENTER – DR BOB JACKSON
(JUNE 2012)

Getting ready for high school was a webinar for families who have a family member approaching high school, and who want to gain a sense of the transition process, planning and what inclusion at high school looks like. The webinar aimed to better equip families to recognise and work with school communities.

Feedback from the webinar included the following comments:

- *It was great to be able to get this information and interact with others in the comfort of my home. Bob presented lots of practical suggestions on how to achieve inclusion for my child in high school.*
- *I really appreciated Bob's knowledge and experience... he has some very good practical advice and it helps to have some examples of what to say and how to say it.*

KEY FOCUS AREA:
Meaningful adult lives

After school – what then?

BROKEN HILL, COBAR, DUBBO, BURWOOD (AUG/SEPT 2011)
NEWCASTLE, GOSFORD, BLACKTOWN, BURWOOD (MARCH 2012)

After school - what then? is a workshop about post school possibilities – including the available 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 in a way that benefits the unique interests of their family member. It included specific material about post school programs and supports such as the Transition to Work Program (TTW) and the many ways to utilise the flexibility of the Community Participation Program (CP).

This workshop was facilitated by Kim Roots along with Volunteer Session Leaders Meg Sweeney and Annette Bush.

Feedback from workshop participants included:

- *I am pleased to obtain this info early enough so that our family can hopefully obtain a better outcome for my son.*

- *Family Advocacy have offered me more learning and knowledge and support than any other agency or service that I have encountered on my 16 year journey. I can now visualise roles for my daughter.*



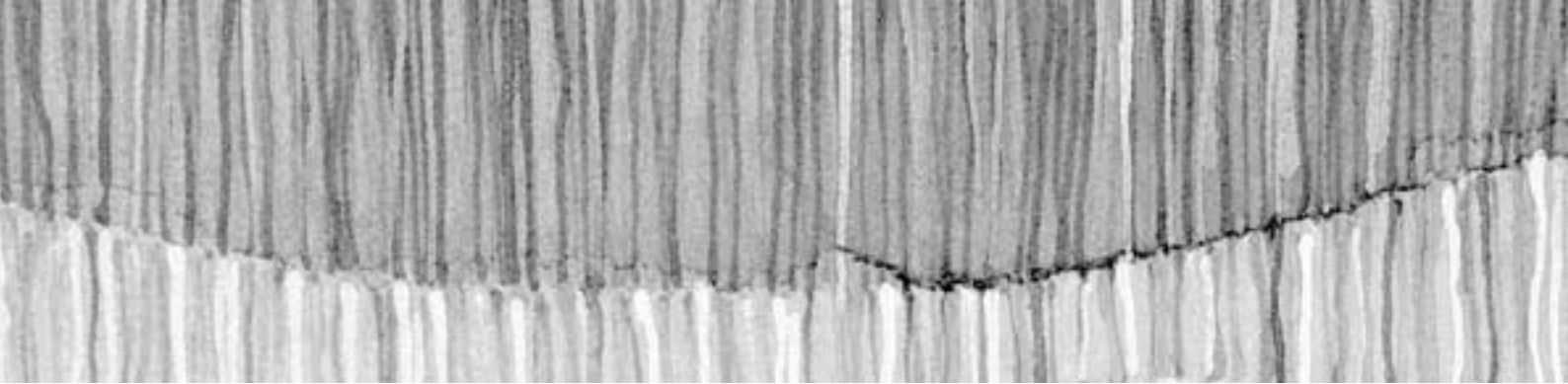
Participants at *After school - what then?* workshop, Burwood

Webinars -
After school – what then?
(22 AND 24 MAY 2012)

As for the workshops of the same title, the two hour webinars were intended to help families think and plan as the end of high school approaches for their family member with disability. Each webinar encouraged families to be well informed and provided information about self managed support options.

The content of the webinars was the same as for the workshops presented earlier in the year – just in a shortened format. Kim Roots and Catherine Hogan presented the material.

Since people connected via technology, those participating in each webinar were from locations



across the state including Newcastle, Redbank (near Port Macquarie), Swan Bay, Bateau Bay, Tamworth, Narrawallee, Batemans Bay, Cecil Park and Alstonville

In addition to the webinar content, resources were sent to participants via post and email. Some feedback from the webinars included:

- *Very good - the mechanisms seemed to work well and the presenters were good.*
- *I really love the idea of being able to participate in these in the convenience of my own home. No phone interruptions, no looking at 'how can I get to the venue?'... These have been issues that have prevented me a number of times from attending seminars and talks which would have been really crucial to me. I really commend you for using the idea, and commend the topic you covered today. I would love to hear of future webinars.*

Supported Living Teleconferences

(SEPTEMBER, OCTOBER, NOVEMBER, DECEMBER 2011)

Supported living teleconferences continued to be a popular way for people to gain information about supported living. The two hour teleconference covered material on supported living, stories of people living in their own home, the 10

building blocks of supported living and finished by providing people with suggested next steps on their journey.

Supported Living Fund (SLF) Information And Capacity Building Sessions

DUBBO, BATHURST, KINGSFORD, BLACKTOWN, BURWOOD, HORNSBY, LISMORE, COFFS HARBOUR, WOLLONGONG, LIVERPOOL, ARMIDALE, NEWCASTLE, WYONG, WAGGA WAGGA, CAMPBELLTOWN, KEMPSEY, CANLEY VALE, CANTERBURY, ROCKDALE (FEBRUARY AND MARCH 2012)

Funded by a grant from Ageing Disability and Home Care (ADHC), the Supported Living Fund (SLF) Information and Capacity Building Sessions aimed to assist people to understand and make application for the SLF.

Twenty-one seminars and seven teleconferences were held across NSW including targeted seminars for people from Aboriginal, Vietnamese and Arabic speaking communities. Eight hundred and ninety-one people attended the seminars and teleconferences representing 601 people with disability.

Material covered at the seminars included information about the SLF, information about supported living. It included stories that showcased people with differing support needs and differing living situations, and the building blocks of supported

living. The afternoon was spent assisting people to understand how to develop a proposal for the SLF. Information was also available about other current ADHC supported accommodation for people who decide that supported living does not meet their needs.

Comments from participants included:

- *The day was a real eye opener, thanks to the plethora of new ideas and information and great examples.*
- *Presenters were credited for organisation and professionalism, their flexibility and no question was ignored; everything was explained to the best of their knowledge and ability.*



Attendees at a Supported Living Fund Capacity Building Information Session

Weekend events for families of people who had received SLF packages

WAGGA WAGGA, COFFS HARBOUR, PARRAMATTA AND NEWCASTLE (MAY AND JUNE 2012)

Families of people who had received a SLF package were invited to a weekend event aimed at assisting them to prepare to turn their SLF proposal into a plan for community living. The seminars were funded by a grant from ADHC.

Four weekend events were held and attended by 135 people representing 79 people with disability. Material covered at the events included planning, building valued social roles, activating informal support, finding and keeping paid staff, negotiating with service providers and safeguards.

Participant comments included:

- *Today opened up many new ideas regarding new avenues for my son... I am overwhelmed by the future yet at the same time recognise what a wonderful opportunity we have and what a positive step this is.*
- *We can now refine and define the SLF application to make sure it truly does become real and realistic.*
- *We are empowered to make positive changes for ordinary life that takes our son away from the 'life sentence' of having a disability.*

During this period of time Family Advocacy employed a Project worker, Dani Frisch, to help organise and run

the Supported Living Fund capacity building information sessions and weekend events.

Planning for now, tomorrow and the future

PRESENTER – JEREMY WARD
NEWCASTLE (JUNE 2012)

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

Jeremy Ward presented this event in Newcastle on Saturday 9 June. Emma Baxter attended to assist Jeremy with facilitation of the presentation.

This workshop explored a range of issues and ideas around preparing and planning for the future and keeping a person with disability safe in the long term. As well as legal tools, participants had the opportunity to hear about strategies such as developing a vision and building networks of support. The workshop focused on whole of life planning not service planning, and discussed how the legal issues involved in planning for the future need to be integrated with the broader issues of developing a vision and planning for all aspects of life.

Sixty people attended which included one worker and 59 family members. The event was held on a weekend to enable couples, friends and extended family members to attend.

Some of the comments from participants are included below:

- *Congratulations, I thought it was well structured and for what can be a very complex and*

overwhelming topic it was presented in a very 'doable' format.

- *It exceeded my expectations. My son is 10 but I feel in a much better position now to ensure he is able to lead a fulfilling life particularly when I am no longer around.*

KEY FOCUS AREA: Advocacy for people with developmental disability

Making a Difference

WENTWORTHVILLE, HORNSBY, NEWCASTLE, GOSFORD (NOVEMBER 2011)

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.

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

These workshops were presented by Catherine Hogan and Kim Roots along with Volunteer Session Leader, Annette Bush.

Some of the comments from participants are included below:

- *I loved the day. I feel inspired and less afraid.*
- *It was good to have someone with a real life situation to share her story.*

ADVOCACY RELATED ADVICE AND INFORMATION



Participants at *Making a Difference* workshop, November 2011

Throughout 2011/2012 an important part of the work of Family Advocacy continues to be the provision of advocacy related information and advice to the families, friends and allies of people with disability. Family members and others have made contact to receive ideas and information to enable them to advocate around the rights and interests of the person with disability. People can receive advocacy related information and advice as often as they need to and this, varies according to the nature and the level of complexity of the topic.

Communication is most frequently via telephone and email, while some people have visited the Family Advocacy office. To ensure that people living outside the Sydney metropolitan area have access to information and advice offered by Family Advocacy there is a free 1800 telephone number available.

A wide variety of topics have been covered throughout the year – many of which reflect the particular challenges and opportunities being experienced. For example, with changes to the way people with disability can access support to move out of home, Family Advocacy has received a greater number of calls than in previous years from families keen to pursue opportunities around supported living and the Supported Living Fund. Other topics relating to key transition points continue to be focuses including; getting ready for school, moving between schools and moving from school to post school life. Other areas of interest were; preparing a vision for the future,

establishing a network or circle of support, developing a range of relationships, considering leisure options and making long term plans around the person with disability.

The response to each information request 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);*
- *linking the person seeking information to another family with insights to share;*
- *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

An ongoing approach to leadership development at Family Advocacy involves the encouragement and nurturing of parents, other relatives and friends to take on leadership roles.

Throughout 2011/12 this practice continued and took various forms. Recognising that all families are unique and have different interests, needs, skills and time constraints, the organisation has provided diverse opportunities to foster 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 workshops;
- contribute stories to be shared at events;
- contribute articles to the Family Advocacy library and web sites
- attend and participate in meetings with politicians or senior bureaucrats.

Leadership training Developing advocacy skills

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

Family Advocacy recognises families are in the best position to be effective advocates for their family member/s with disability and believes in the importance of events that develop the connections, awareness and individual skills of families.

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

Families can take on leadership roles and influence change within their own family; in their community; assisting with the work of Family Advocacy; and in broader arenas on behalf of people with disability. 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, information sessions and, sometimes, conferences run across the state. It is also a great way to meet a wide and diverse range of people to expand

knowledge and share experiences. Training for Volunteer Session Leaders is ongoing for those people who take on this role. Volunteer Session Leaders increase their level of participation at a rate and in a way that suits them. To ensure that they are as confident, prepared and professional as possible, relevant workshop materials are supplied and discussed in advance. Self evaluation is encouraged and feedback offered.

As well as contributing personal knowledge and experience at Family Advocacy workshops, Volunteer Session Leaders gain skills and strategies that are useful when advocating for the rights and interests of their own family member with disability and when planning for his or her future.

Leadership training Breaking down the barriers: Developing knowledge and skills for more effective advocacy PENNANT HILLS (JANUARY 2012)

Attendance at a Family Advocacy leadership event can be the catalyst for deepening knowledge about the importance of advocacy and broadening perspectives on what could be obstacles, barriers and opportunities.

The only way to discover the limits of the possible is to go beyond them, to the impossible. **Arthur C Clarke**

Networking is another excellent reason for families to participate. Families are reminded that they are not alone in dreaming big dreams for their family member and have the opportunity to gather ideas and learn from what other families are doing.

Family Advocacy invited a limited number of families from across NSW to be part of a family leadership event in January 2012.

The event was aimed at people who:

- want to be better at promoting the rights and interests of people with disability to participate and contribute, as valued members of their communities;
- want a better understanding of the policies and contexts that may help or hinder their advocacy efforts; and
- are eager to help their family member to have the best life possible and to share skills and information gained from attending the event.

Families discussed key advocacy elements, current advocacy challenges and how to be an effective advocate. There were opportunities for developing presenting skills and for networking. The workshop was presented by staff of Family Advocacy as well as Volunteer Session Leader, Meg Sweeney.

Resourcing Families participated in this Leadership and Development event by sharing information about:

- emerging self directed opportunities
- ideas for developing community connections
- the importance of having a positive vision for the future
- the need for developing support networks
- tools for achieving these networks
- resources available for all of these focus areas.

A Mentor and Mentee within the Mentoring Initiative shared their experience of what is involved and the benefits of their involvement.



Participants at Leadership Training, *Breaking down the Barriers*, January 2012

Attending Events

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

Social Role Valorisation Conference – Getting the Good life: From ideas to actions CANBERRA (SEPTEMBER 2011)

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.

Six family members were sponsored to attend this conference to deepen their understanding of SRV. A family member was also sponsored to speak at the event.

Other events which Family Advocacy supported families to attend included:

- *Making a Difference*
- *The Why and How of School Inclusion*
- *After school – what then?*

EVENTS WE HAVE RUN THIS YEAR

2011

AUGUST	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Family Advocacy Information Session • After school - what then? 	Penshurst Broken Hill
SEPTEMBER	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • After school - what then? • Supported Living Teleconference 	Cobar, Dubbo, Burwood Teleconference (2)
OCTOBER	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supported Living Teleconference • Family Advocacy Information Session 	Teleconference (2) Canley Vale
NOVEMBER	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Making a Difference • Family Advocacy Information Session • Supported Living Teleconference 	Wentworthville, Newcastle, Gosford Picton Teleconference (2)
DECEMBER	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supported Living Teleconference 	Teleconference

2012

JANUARY	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leadership event Breaking down the barriers 	Pennant Hills
FEBRUARY	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supported Living Fund (SLF) Information and Capacity Building Sessions 	Dubbo, Bathurst, Kingsford, Blacktown, Burwood, Hornsby, Lismore, Coffs Harbour, Wollongong, Liverpool
MARCH	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Family Advocacy Information Session • Supported Living Fund (SLF) Information and Capacity Building Sessions • Supported Living Fund (SLF) Information and Capacity Building Sessions for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders (ATSI) • Supported Living Fund (SLF) Information and Capacity Building Session for the Vietnamese community • Supported Living Fund (SLF) Information and Capacity Building Session for the Arabic speaking community • Supported Living Fund Teleconference • The Why and How of School Inclusion Presenter Dr Bob Jackson • After school - what then? 	Strathfield, Armidale, Newcastle, Wyong, Wagga Wagga, Campbelltown Kempsey, Campbelltown Canley Vale Canterbury, Rockdale Teleconference (4) Newcastle, Ryde, South Hurstville, Wollongong Newcastle, Gosford, Blacktown, Burwood
MAY	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Weekend events for families of people who had received a Supported Living Fund (SLF) Package • The Why and How of School Inclusion Presenter Dr Bob Jackson • After school - what then? 	Wagga Wagga, Coffs Harbour Webinar (2) Webinar (2)
JUNE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Weekend events for families of people who had received a Supported Living Fund (SLF) Package • Getting ready for school Presenter Dr Bob Jackson • Planning for now, tomorrow and the future Presenter Jeremy Ward • Getting ready for high school Presenter Dr Bob Jackson 	Parramatta, Newcastle Webinar (2) Newcastle Webinar (2)

RESOURCING FAMILIES AT A GLANCE

WHERE WE HELD FACE TO FACE EVENTS



SYDNEY:

Ryde, Brighton Le Sands, Hornsby, South Hurstville, Canley Vale, Wahroonga. Pennant Hills, Lilyfield, Gordon, Harbord, Marrickville, Cabramatta, Northmead, Eastwood

Number of face to face events run	38
Number of people attending <i>Resourcing Families</i> events	919
Hits on the website 2011/2012	305,140

RESOURCING FAMILIES



Kim Roots

Advocacy Development Coordinator

In 2011/12 *Resourcing Families* continues its focus on working with families around the skills, knowledge, strategies and confidence to support their family member with disability to take control of their lives and forge a life that is meaningful for them. It provides information and ideas about developing a vision or plan for the future, about building informal supports, facilitating community connections, establishing networks of support, and developing, implementing, directing and sustaining individualised, self managed supports.

Resourcing Families began as a Demonstration Project in late 2010 and in 2012 has been granted a continuation of its funding for a further two years until 2014. This time frame reflects reluctance on the part of the NSW Government to make commitments beyond this date given the shift in policy within Stronger Together – The second phase. With 2014 as the date set target for the availability of



Emma Baxter

Capacity Development Officer

individualised funding packages for anyone eligible who wishes to receive one in NSW.

Given that *Resourcing Families* exists to support families with resources and information necessary to have the confidence and knowledge to make the most of these emerging opportunities to self direct supports towards building meaningful, connected and valued lives, it is hoped that the commitment to be useful and relevant to families within these new developments will secure its continuation into the future.

A particular focus of *Resourcing Families* continues to be on facilitating the learning of families from each other. This included gathering family stories to inspire other families and celebrate the good life that people can be supported to achieve.

A number of exciting events were created or enhanced to assist families and allies of people with disability to support their family member in pursuit of an inclusive life based on their interests, aspirations and gifts.

Resourcing Families' commitment to be useful to families who identify themselves as being from Aboriginal, Torres Strait Islander (ATSI) and Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) backgrounds continues to be enhanced. There has been a clear focus on thinking about ways of making information and resources beneficial and accessible to these families.

I. WORKSHOPS AND OTHER EVENTS

Canadian Study Tour
NEWCASTLE, GRAFTON,
BATHURST, VINCENTIA
(AUGUST 2011)

In 2009 Family Advocacy participated in a study tour to observe, listen and learn from the Canadian experience of creating inclusive lives for people with disability. People from Canada with disability and their families have had the opportunity to direct their own funding for many years. Therefore in August 2011 *Resourcing Families*, with other Australian organisations, returned the invitation and hosted a consortium of Canadian advocates and family members to journey to Australia for a similar opportunity of sharing and learning. Participants were part of a two week study tour across the country in a number of different states. *Resourcing Families* hosted Trish Bowman and Barbara Nish who visited a number of families and advocates across NSW in a profitable experience of mutual exchange. Trish and Barbara were able to share experiences around developing networks, having high post school expectations – such as attending university and thinking about meaningful lives in a context of self directed funding.

Creating Inclusive Lives – Sharing the Canadian Experience

PRESENTERS – CANADIAN
ADVOCATES AND FAMILIES
INCLUDING; BRUCE UDITSKY,
ANNE HUGHSON, ROBIN AC-
TON AND WENDY MCDONALD

WEST RYDE (18 AUGUST 2011)

The 2011 study tour culminated in an event in Sydney, *Creating Inclusive Lives – Sharing the Canadian Experience*, hosted by *Resourcing Families*. The event was designed to provide people in NSW the opportunity to hear from Canadian families and advocates who have been self directing their supports for many years.

As self directed supports are becoming more available in NSW, the event was deemed as very timely for families and professionals to share ideas and lessons learnt.

130 people attended and feedback included:

- *Positive, upbeat, pro-active, sensible, real true stories, not platitudes alone.*
- *The workshop more than met my expectations. The stories and possibilities are inspiring. Thank you for a very worthwhile day.*
- *The workshop was a great distillation of experiences that point to so many positive directions that families can take.*



Participants at the Australian and Canadian families' collective leadership and action — reflection and renewal event, August 2011

Australian and Canadian families collective leadership and action - reflection & renewal

WEST RYDE (19 AUGUST 2011)

This forum was a day for further information exchange between Canadian families and advocates and families and allies from NSW and interstate who had participated in the 2009 study tour. *Resourcing Families* hosted the day which was funded by Lifestyle Solutions and facilitated by Bruce Uditsky and Anne Hughson. Fifty-two people came together for group discussion and reflection intended to advance advocacy efforts in both Australia and Canada.

Positive Directions for Lives of Meaning and Fulfilment

HORNSBY AND SOUTH
HURSTVILLE (5, 7 SEPTEMBER 2011)

Many families have said that they would like their family member with disability to enjoy the same, ordinary opportunities as their other children but that they find this difficult to achieve.

The workshop considers why this is difficulty occurs and explores strategies for helping a person with disability to have a good life as part of the community. It was created to help families think through the importance of valued social roles for enhancing image, developing skills

and forging community connections. 17 family members attended and some comments were:

- *Best workshop I have attended. Expertise was in abundance (sic).*
- *Very insightful and thought provoking.*
- *I know 'the vision' but how to get there? Now I have a path.*

Conference - Social Work: Tools and Trends

RYDE (15 SEPTEMBER 2011)

Resourcing Families was invited to present at the Social Work: Tools and Trends Conference. Emma Baxter, along with Mentor, Amanda Fletcher, spoke about the importance of families having a positive vision for the future as well as how *Resourcing Families* is working with families. Amanda presented from a parent's perspective which was very well received. 70 people attended.

Feedback from the presentation included:

- *Your talk was so powerful, and Amanda's story was so perfect. It is certainly impacting the way many of us are approaching our work already.*
- *I have already told several people since that "people keep people safe" and to "think in terms of roles"...*

To assist in the consolidation of information, attendees were supplied with brochures about

Resourcing Families as well as a follow up email with links to information to the web site and about the initiative, more broadly.

Relationships: from being there to belonging PRESENTER – JANET KLEES

WEST RYDE (6 OCTOBER 2011)

Janet Klees is an author, speaker and coordinator with the family-governed Deohaeko Support Network in Ontario, Canada. Janet shared her experience, knowledge and strategy for working with families to create contexts in which community connections and the possibility of relationships can develop for their family members. All of Janet's work focuses on individually-designed arrangements and she shared her learning's with families so they are equipped to think through practical and principled ways to ensure that their family members live meaningful, involved and secure lives within their communities.

76 people attended and some of the feedback was:

- *Janet spoke wonderfully! Very easy to follow, well set-out practical and theory applied. Also loved photos, made it more personal and good to see practice in action.*
- *I thoroughly enjoyed this workshop, Janet is a fabulous presenter, full of wisdom and knowledge.*



Janet Klees, Kim Roots and Penny Graham at Relationships: from being there to belonging, October 2011

Early Childhood Intervention Australia Conference

CONFERENCE: BUILDING CAPACITY IN EARLY CHILDHOOD INTERVENTION PRACTICE.

BRIGHTON BEACH
(28 OCTOBER 2011)

Resourcing Families presented a paper at the 24th Annual Early Childhood Intervention Australia Conference. The topic of the paper was Making a Difference: the importance of embracing the ordinary in encouraging lives of meaning and connection. Kim Roots and Mentor, Marianne Brazier, presented.

Approximately 60 people attended the session.

Feedback on the day was positive. Emails were received asking if *Resourcing Families* could run information sessions. In addition, the following email that praised the power of Marianne's story about her son, Gerard:

- *The speaker at the 2011 Early Intervention Conference at Brighton-Le-Sands, Marianne from Guyra, was a very inspiring mother and person. This was the workshop I enjoyed the most.*

More Choice and Control – NSW family stories of creating inclusive lives

WEST RYDE (9 MARCH 2012)

Feedback from families who attended *Creating Inclusive Lives – Sharing the Canadian Experience*, included a desire to hear from NSW families who are also accomplishing inclusive lives for their family members in an Australian context.



Presenters at More Choice and Control, March 2011. Left to right: Alex Purvis, Sharon Williams, Robyn Dennett, Catherine Hogan and Wendy Stroeve

Family members from NSW were invited to share their story about how they are supporting their family member to build meaningful and fulfilling lives.

The workshop involved an interview format and each presenter was interviewed with opportunities for questions from the audience. There was also a forum at the end of day for further questions to each of the speakers.

130 people attended and feedback was very positive:

- *It exceeded my expectations – real stories, give a real picture.*
- *Very well structured and facilitated format. Very informative, practical information, presenting a good range of ideas, ages, lifestages, etc.*
- *All excellent, well run and managed. Great speakers and questions by hosts. It made a huge difference as the hosts questions gave the answers that I wanted from the speakers.*

Circles of Support – How to get started and keep it going!

NOWRA, WOLLONGONG,
SOUTH HURSTVILLE AND
HARBORD
(2, 3, 4, 5 APRIL 2012)

Families have expressed the concern that as their family members move into adulthood, they become increasingly isolated with few people in their lives. Others have noted that it would be helpful to have more people to assist in thinking and planning. This new workshop for families was created to assist families in the practicalities of how to start a circle of support. The workshop provides ideas and information about who and how to invite people into a circle, possible formats and tools for meetings and how to maintain the momentum into the future. Lots of examples of materials such as invitations, agendas, action sheets and minutes of meetings from families made the workshop both practical and accessible. Many of these materials were placed on the *Resourcing Families* website for families to use and emulate if needed.

35 people attended the workshops.

Resourcing Families was invited to return to Wollongong to repeat the workshop in June for families who could not attend the April workshop and 25 people attended.

Comments from the workshops included:

- *A lot of information, ideas. It was interesting to hear someone that has a circle going and how it is going and what the focus person has gotten out of it towards a good life.*
- *Very useful – especially the actual examples of setting up and working in developing circles of support. I'm sure the website will be a very useful resource in setting up a circle of support for my son.*

Networks, Teams and Circles of Support: What I wish we had known when we got started

LIDCOMBE (JUNE 2012)

Resourcing Families was invited to present at this event about circles

of support what they are, how they can be useful and how *Resourcing Families* can provide information and strategies. 40 families attended.

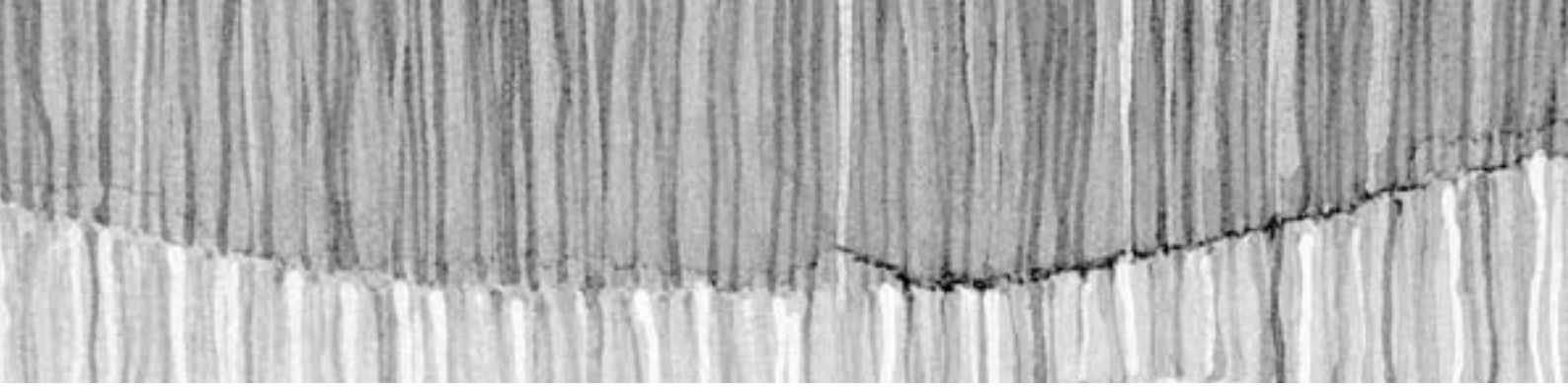
Information Sessions

Resourcing Families continued to present information sessions around the state. Requests from professionals, parent groups and organisations increased as *Resourcing Families* became better known.

Many requests to present information sessions to families with preschool children came from Early Intervention organisations and many others included families of very young children. To assist these families, a new information session was developed that focused particularly on the importance of developing a positive vision and the power of a positive introduction for their family member in building an inclusive life.



Emma Baxter and Rhiannon Brodie with Participants at an information session



Information sessions were held with a translator where the majority of families identified as being from culturally and linguistically diverse back-grounds. At one information session, presented for the Vietnamese Parents with Disabled Children Support Group in NSW Inc., parents commented that it was the first time they had heard about changes to NSW policy in *Stronger Together – the second phase*, the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS), as well as the information *Resourcing Families* can provide. 29 parents attended the session.

Feedback from the support group included:

- *...for parents who don't speak English well, they are at risk of not keeping up with new developments in disability matters. The Support Group really appreciated what Resourcing Families has done for us, with your easy to understand presentation and delivered in a friendly manner. The workshop gave parents clear directions of how to proceed in creating a better life for their children, especially now when they've understood the importance of having a vision, the necessity of having circles of support and valued roles.*

2. WEBSITE

The *Resourcing Families* website continues to be a useful tool for sharing information with people with disability and their families across the state. People can access information in a range of formats when and where they need it. The website is updated regularly and new resources added. One of the most notable additions is a new webpage that focuses on Community Connections, and that provides information, strategies and ideas for forging connections in the community - particularly through valued social roles and natural supports. As well as articles, film extracts and family stories, there are also exercise sheets that were created to help families map their community and consider the quality of their family member's participation in their community.

Gathering family stories to inspire other families and celebrate the good life that people can be supported to achieve remains a key focus of *Resourcing Families* with many new personal stories added to the website in the last year.

3. MENTORING

An important element of *Resourcing Families* that facilitates families learning from each other is mentoring. Within the context of *Resourcing Families*, this generally involves a parent speaking with

another parent about their experiences so that they are better able to advance the interests of their family member.

Families could connect in an ongoing way over 12 months or around one off issues.

Nine 12-month mentoring matches were supported and have now come to the end of their formal existence. Some Mentors and Mentees have chosen to keep in contact on a less regular basis. Everyone who participated found the 12 month match a positive experience and could report some positive outcomes for their family members.

The "one off" mentoring matches continue to take place. Parents phoning in for information and advice have appreciated being able to speak to a parent Mentor who has had experience around the issue or topic about which they have been provided information. Topics discussed by Mentors have included: having a vision or plan for the future and what this can entail; future planning; accessing self managed funds and starting a circle of support.

“*Dreams are the touchstones of our character*”. Henry David Thoreau

A great strength of the Mentoring Initiative was that Mentors were willing to share their journey and family story with other parents. Their openness and generosity to share their experiences and lessons learnt in supporting others to find or stay on the path toward a good life for their family member, is greatly appreciated and a valuable asset to *Resourcing Families*.

4. CIRCLES OF SUPPORT – ACTION RESEARCH PROJECT

In addition to mentoring, *Resourcing Families* has commenced a new initiative – the Circles Project - that maintains a link with families in an ongoing way. The aim of the Circles Project is to help families grapple with any barriers to getting a circle started and to have knowledge, confidence and skills to take action. In return, the families will share their experiences so that others can learn from them. The Circles Project is a strategy to encourage families to get a circle started and to gather stories to inspire.

Practical support is provided during the stages of preparation and set-up. Three families in Sydney have participated and received support and advice over the phone when needed. As the families reside in Sydney a *Resourcing Families* staff member has been able to visit their home to present an information session about circles of support for people the family invited as potential circle members. All three families have started their circles and have begun regular meetings.

5. INFORMATION AND ADVICE

Families and allies who wish to explore their thinking and planning around their family member with disability can contact *Resourcing Families* to do so. This can take place face to face, by phone and by email. This individual contact allows for an individual approach to information provision. Families can make contact as often as they need to and in a way that suits them.

The free call 1800 number continues to make this accessible to people across NSW.

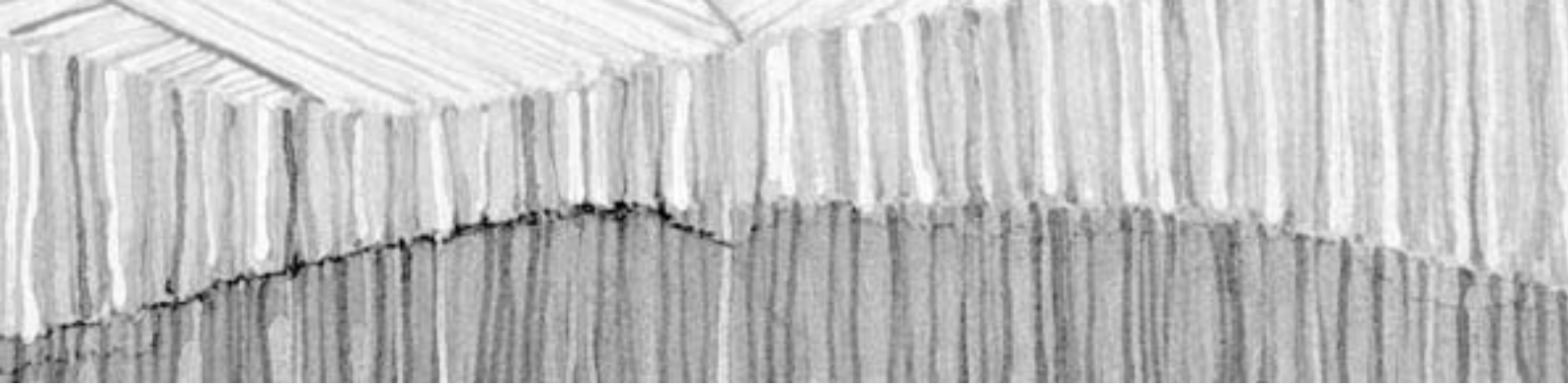
EVENTS WE HAVE RUN THIS YEAR

2011

JULY	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Resourcing Families</i> Information Sessions 	Warren, Dubbo (2), Mudgee
AUGUST	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Canadian Study Tour • Creating Inclusive Lives - Sharing the Canadian Experience • Australian and Canadian families collective leadership and action - reflection and renewal 	Newcastle, Grafton, Bathurst, Vincentia Ryde Ryde
SEPTEMBER	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Resourcing Families</i> Information Sessions • Positive Directions for Lives of Meaning and Fulfilment • Social Workers in Disability Conference - Presentation by <i>Resourcing Families</i> 	Queanbeyan (2) Hornsby, South Hurstville Ryde
OCTOBER	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Relationships: from being there to belonging Presenter Janet Klees • Early Childhood Intervention Australia Conference Paper presented by <i>Resourcing Families</i> 	Ryde Brighton Le Sands
NOVEMBER	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Resourcing Families</i> Information Session for Vietnamese Parents • Circles of Support Information Session 	Canley Vale Wahroonga

2012

JANUARY	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Breaking Down the Barriers a time to share learn and reflect • Circles of Support Information Session 	Pennant Hills Lilyfield
FEBRUARY	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Resourcing Families</i> Information Session 	Gordon
MARCH	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More Choice and Control NSW family stories of creating inclusive lives • Circles of Support Information Session 	Ryde Lilyfield
APRIL	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Circles of Support all you need to know to get started and keep going! • <i>Resourcing Families</i> Information Sessions 	Nowra, Wollongong, South Hurstville, Harbord Marrickville
MAY	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Resourcing Families</i> Information Sessions • Circles of Support Information Session • <i>Resourcing Families</i> Information Session 	Cabramatta (4) Northmead Eastwood
JUNE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Resourcing Families</i> Information Session • Circles of Support all you need to know to get started and keep going! • Networks, Teams and Circles of Support: What I wish we had known when we got started • Presentation by <i>Resourcing Families</i> 	Springwood Wollongong Lidcombe



SYSTEMS ADVOCACY



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

This area has been a particular focus of Family Advocacy in 2011/12. The year has been one of progress and change as both the NSW and Federal Governments continue to take steps towards implementing self-directed, personalised support that gives people with disability greater control, choice and flexibility over their support arrangements.

Under Stronger Together – The second phase, the NSW Government committed that by July 2014 anyone receiving disability services will have the option of using an individualised and portable funding arrangement. To prepare for the significant changes that this commitment heralds, the Department of Ageing, Disability and Home Care (ADHC) undertook two rounds of *Living Life My Way* consultations with people with disability, their families, allies and service providers to inform the design of the new individualised system.

Nationally, there was much excitement with the announcement of \$1 billion in the federal budget dedicated to the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS), with four launch sites to be established by mid-2013. Discussion about the National Disability Strategy provided the opportunity for whole of government reform.

Concern

Family Advocacy has been concerned that the high ideals for a person centred self directed system would not be met because of a lack of deep understanding of the crucial elements that are required and the emerging conflicts of interest that would detract from the centrality of people with disability. This concern has been exacerbated by the omission of independent community based advocacy in government discussion of the landscape of an individualised person centred system.

Strategies

In order to influence the design of ADHC's transition to an individualised system, Family Advocacy has been engaged in active dialogue with senior staff of ADHC. A member of staff sits on the Ministerial Reference Group on Person Centred Approaches and Family Advocacy contributed to the development and provision of feedback on the two stages of *Living Life My Way* discussion papers and consultations.

Family Advocacy joined with colleagues in In Control Australia to engage in direct discussion with senior ADHC staff. In addition, Family Advocacy led the In Control Australia work on a series of seminars about Resource Allocation Systems in the UK, featuring the Director of Research and Evaluation at In Control UK, an expert who has assisted local authorities in the UK to implement personal budgets. In total, four seminars and meetings were conducted with attendees including the Minister for Disability, members of the Premier's office and Treasury, senior staff from ADHC, members of the Ministerial Reference Group on Person Centred Approaches and people with disability, families and service providers.

Outcome

ADHC has an increased understanding of the crucial elements of a personalised system.

Concern

People with disability and families would not be adequately supported to participate and provide feedback at the *Living Life My Way* consultations.

Strategy

Family Advocacy worked closely with In Control Australia to develop two documents which explained the coming changes and used statements and questions as guiding prompts to stimulate thinking.

Outcome

People with disability and families were assisted to provide feedback at the *Living Life My Way* consultations.

Concern

Stronger Together – The second phase introduced the concept of ‘decision support resources’ which assist people via information, planning, advocacy, case management, service brokerage and support coordination. Family Advocacy was concerned that ADHC did not understand the importance of minimising conflict of interest by ensuring that decision support resources are independent of government and service providers.

Strategies

A member of staff facilitated significant discussion in the sector to formulate ideas about what government should fund in the non government sector in this area. This included four meetings with the senior ADHC staff leading the work for government, a meeting with advocacy organisations and a meeting with In Control Australia using a UK expert as a facilitator.

Family Advocacy worked with In Control Australia to produce a discussion paper on Decision Support Resources to clearly demarcate the unique roles and functions of non-government and government in this area. This paper was submitted as a formal submission to the consultation on personalised supports and to the Minister of Disability. A member of staff presented the paper alongside a member of the Council of Intellectual Disability at the National Disability Services Conference.

Family Advocacy contributed to national discussion of these issues in relation to the Productivity Commission Report into the long term care and support scheme, the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) at a meeting of state and national advocacy agencies held in Melbourne.

Outcome

ADHC has an increased understanding of the importance of Decision Support Resources.

Concern

ADHC has developed a new program, ‘Ability Links’ to replace Local Support Coordinators as a major resource to assist people with disability and families to make decisions. While these new coordinators have a useful place in the sector, Family Advocacy was concerned that their functions are limited and they have limited capacity to assist people with complex and high support needs.

Strategy

Family Advocacy held discussions with the ADHC staff member leading the development and implementation of Ability Links to raise concerns. In addition, a member of staff sits on the Ability Links NSW Advisory Group.

Concern

The National Disability Strategy (NDS) is a ten year national plan (2010-2020) for improving the lives of people disability and their families and was endorsed by the Council of Australian Governments (COAG) in 2011.

“It represents a commitment by all levels of government, industry and the community to a unified, national approach to policy and program development and a shared vision for an inclusive Australian society that enables people with disability to fulfil their potential as equal citizens.”

Family Advocacy is concerned that if the NDS merely implements the small incremental steps that are identified in the current plan, the 10 year reform will not achieve: *a shared vision for an inclusive Australian society that enables people with disability to fulfil their potential as equal citizens.*

In addition the current plan reflects a top down approach by government indentifying current modest initiatives and does not involve genuine consultation, with and leadership by, people with disability, their families, allies and organisations.

Family Advocacy argues that a forward planning process must be enacted in which people with disability, families and advocates are engaged to determine long term goals and the plans that need to be put in place to reach these goals. Family Advocacy believes that within the next two years, ADHC and the Commonwealth Government must develop processes to ensure that the next stage of the plan addresses real issues to keep Australia on track to achieve the 10 year vision.

Strategies

A member of staff worked with the Disability Network Forum to broaden the basis of consultation to set the priorities for the NDS. A letter was sent to Minister Constance, (Minister for Ageing and Disability Services NSW) seeking invitation to provide input into priorities submitted by NSW Government to COAG. Subsequently the Disability Network Forum was invited to provide feedback. Through this channel as well as through membership of the ADHC Expert Advisory Group on Children Young People and their Families, Family Advocacy was able to critique the inadequate plans put forward by government and the inadequate processes of consultation.

Outcome

ADHC and the Commonwealth government has a clear understanding of the inadequacy of the first draft of the NDS.

Key Focus Area: Solid Foundations for Children 0 – 6

A staff member is a member of ADHC Expert Advisory Committee on Children and Young People with disability and their families that provides the opportunity to discuss high level policy reform.

Concern

Federal early childhood intervention initiative *Better Start for Children with Disability* only entitles children, with a select number of diagnosis to funding, excluding many others who are in great need of support. Additionally, families that are eligible are not supported to make decisions about how to use and manage funds.

Strategy

Family Advocacy submitted feedback to the Parliamentary Secretary for Disabilities and Carers (Jan McLucas) in response to the release of an independent report of the *Better Start* initiative. Family Advocacy recommended that: diagnostic assessment is replaced with functional assessment (thus expanding eligibility beyond diagnosis); funding is used to complement existing State services - especially those that are delivered in children's everyday environments like universal child care and at home; and there is investment in localised decision support workers who can help families to understand and best utilise their funding.

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.

Concern

Students with disability are not provided with adequate support and planning in times of transition between educational settings.

Strategy

Family Advocacy responded to a Parliamentary Inquiry into transition support in education. The submission drew upon the experiences of over 40 families who provided feedback to questions posed by Family Advocacy. The main themes covered in the submission were: early planning and preparation; building ongoing partnerships with families; accessing information and resources; IQ testing; transport to and from school; and preparing for adult life.

Family Advocacy was invited to provide further evidence to the Parliamentary Committee at which two members of staff and a parent gave evidence. The final Committee report and recommendations referenced a number of points put forward by Family Advocacy.

Concern

Family Advocacy had been very supportive of the School Learning and Support Program (SLSP) which was trialled in South-East NSW in 2010-11 and aimed to:

- equip teachers with the knowledge and skills to teach all children in their classrooms;
- locate specialist teachers within schools so they can provide timely support to both teachers and students; and
- provide support to students with low level support needs without the requirement of a disability diagnosis.

In the second half of 2011 a meeting with the Minister for Education, Adrian Piccoli, indicated that the Government was not intending to roll out the SLSP following negative feedback from the Teachers Federation.

Strategies

In response to this indication by Government, Family Advocacy arranged a meeting with the senior policy advisor to the Minister, the Federation of Parents and Citizens, and the Primary and Secondary Principals Council – all of whom were highly supportive of the SLSP. This led to Ministerial commitment to the state wide roll out of the SLSP as part of their national partnership bid to the Commonwealth for funding under *More Support for Students with Disability*.

The Greens and the Teachers Federation expressed strong opposition to the new State-Federal partnership, entitled *Every Student Every School*. Family Advocacy distributed fact sheets to families that explained the elements that Family Advocacy supported and addressed concerns and misunderstandings that had been voiced by others.

In response to the release of the *Review of Funding for Schooling Report* (Gonski Report) Family Advocacy provided feedback to the Federal Minister for Education, Peter Garret, advocating for initiatives like the SLSP to be considered at a national level. A member of staff participated in a small discussion forum hosted by Children with Disability Australia that included Jan McLucas, Parliamentary Secretary for Disability, Jacinta Collins, Parliamentary Secretary for School Education and Workplace Relations and David Gonski to discuss the implications of the Gonski Report in relation to students with disability.

Outcome

Students with disability with low level support needs have more potential to receive the support they need to be included and active members of their classrooms in a timely fashion and without the need for diagnosis.

Concern

Families did not have adequate access to information about inclusive education and schooling in NSW.

Strategy

An education section was developed for the Family Advocacy website - www.family-advocacy.com

Outcome

Families are able to access information about schooling in NSW including information about what support is available in different school settings, how to choose a school and introduce a new student to a school.

Key Focus Area: Meaningful Adult Lives

Supported Living

A lengthy campaign by Family Advocacy and allies spanning over a number of years, led the NSW Government to commit to establish a Supported Living Fund (SLF). This new individualised funding will enable 300 people with disability to move into a home of their own with a combination of formal and informal support.

Strategy

Family Advocacy won a select tender to provide seminars for families interested in the SLF as well as two day events for families of the 100 people with disability who received the first packages.

Family Advocacy had argued that such seminars were essential to provide families with the necessary knowledge, understanding and tools to positively use SLF funds.

The Supported Living website, developed by Family Advocacy, was revitalised and promoted to disseminate stories, examples and other useful resources about Supported Living:
www.supportedliving.org.au

Outcome

Families are well informed about the Supported Living Fund and are empowered to take up the opportunities offered therein.

Strategy

A member of staff is a member of the Supported Living Fund Working Group.

Outcome

Policy and guidelines around the operation of the SLF have been strengthened through the involvement of Family Advocacy

Strategy

Through the Supported Living Fund Working Group, a member of staff facilitated discussions with ADHC about employing Dr Michael Kendrick to run *Optimal Individualised Service Design* workshops for SLF support planners. These workshops took place in May 2012 and were attended by a member of staff who reported they were extremely worthwhile.

Outcome

SLF Support Planners, who assist people with disability and their families in planning for supported living, have increased knowledge and skills.

Concern

Family Advocacy was concerned that the regional assessment panels that decide who receives an SLF package would not have a full understanding about supported living to inform their decisions.

Strategy

Through the Supported Living Fund Working Group, Family Advocacy offered to provide training for the assessment panels or at least the family representatives of assessment panels. ADHC did not take up this offer.

Affordable Housing

Concern

People with disability are often prevented from being tenants in their own right in social housing - the main form of income for most people with disability is the DSP and hence they are poorly placed to afford the private rental market. Barriers relate to: the lack of availability of social housing; people with disability moving out of the family home are unlikely to be high priority clients for social housing; and targeted housing for people with disability is tied to targeted funding for support so those who miss out on targeted funding, also miss out on housing. In addition, the rental policy of Housing NSW requires people with significant disability who live with a carer to pay rent beyond their capacity, i.e. 25% of the total household income which includes the income of the non disabled co-tenant.

Strategy

Family Advocacy made representations to the Minister for Disability Services and wrote to the Minister for Housing seeking additional social housing for people with disability and a review of rental policy. The representations were unsuccessful.

Family Advocacy took up the issues with the Deputy Ombudsman who indicated he would take up the issues on behalf of people with disability when the opportunity arose.

Commonwealth Supported Accommodation Innovation Fund

Concern

The Commonwealth Supported Accommodation Fund (SAIF) exposure draft indicated that funds (\$60 million) could be used to build traditional, congregate models of accommodation such as group homes and villas. Family Advocacy is concerned that these models are being invested in and reframed as 'innovative', contravening The United Nations (UN) Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) and stifling truly innovative uses of funding.

Strategy

Family Advocacy made a submission in response to the exposure draft, arguing that the SAIF should be used to fund evidence based approaches to supported accommodation that take a 'one person at a time' approach and empower people with disability to have control over the what, where and by whom of support.

Key Focus Area: Advocacy for people with developmental disability

Voluntary out of home care (VOOHC)

Once a child or young person has received 90 days of respite in one year, ADHC is required to supervise the service provider under the VOOHC provisions of the Children and Young Persons' (Care and Protection) Act 1988. This is intended to monitor the respite service providers to ensure the child or young person is properly cared for.

Concern

A distressed family made contact with Family Advocacy to report that ADHC had begun to monitor and supervise them instead of supervising the service provider: conducting monthly house inspections and exerting pressure on the parents to sign 'responsibility' agreements stating that if the parents did not adhere to certain responsibilities, they relinquish decision making about their child.

Strategy

A member of staff pursued the issue with the Office of the Children's Guardian and the Director of VOOHC in ADHC.

Outcome

ADHC acknowledged that their regional office had been wrongly administering the VOOHC supervision. Development work on the use of materials and administration of VOOHC was undertaken by ADHC with the 'inexperienced case manager'.

Thanks to the efforts of the young man's family who reported the incident to a number of Parliamentarians including the Minister for Disability, the agreements were discarded.

Closing institutions and preventing the redevelopment of existing institutions

Strategy

Family Advocacy is a member of the Shut In campaign that aims to close all residential institutions accommodating people with disability and lobby for the resources necessary for people to move to individualised community based housing and support options that will support their inclusion and participation in the general community.

When ADHC showcased a new group home developed for children with disability, Family Advocacy forcibly advocated for its closure with the Minister and senior staff of ADHC.

Change has considerable psychological impact on the human mind. To the fearful it is threatening because it means that things may get worse. To the hopeful it is encouraging because things may get better. To the confident it is inspiring because the challenge exists to make things better King Whitney Jr.



Rhianon Brodie
Communications Officer

The Communications Officers role

As the Communications Officer, Rhianon is responsible for the management of the three websites; www.family-advocacy.com, www.resourcingfamilies.org.au and www.suportedliving.org.au and also the organisations interactive technologies. i.e webinars and videos. The position also manages all of the organisations resources which include the Inclusion Collection Library, development and purchasing of new resources and newsletters.

Rhianon also conducts information sessions to varied audiences and provides event support to other areas of the organisation.

Information Sessions

About Family Advocacy

The information session functions as a means of introducing attendees to our work and our vision for persons with disability. The purpose of the

COMMUNICATIONS

information session is to encourage those attendees interested in our organisation to join our mailing list as well as contact us directly for assistance and information of relevance to their family member. The information sessions are often tailored to meet the needs of the attendees so the information is relevant to their age demographic of the family member wherever possible.

Throughout 2011/2012 Family Advocacy ran four information sessions for a variety of groups and organisations.

2011

In August 2011 Family Advocacy were asked to speak to a Support group for older parents at Pole Depot Community Centre in Penshurst, about 10 families attended. The information session was well received with a particular emphasis on Supported Living and considering options to gain greater independence for their family member.

My Time Parent Group invited Family Advocacy to speak at their October meeting in Canley Vale, 20 people attended. The group consisted of Vietnamese families with younger children. The focus for the information session was around having a vision, preparing for starting school and the importance of the school years.

Family Advocacy presented at the 'YourVoice' Forum hosted by the National Disability Coordination Officer (NDCO) and Wollondilly Shire Council on 30 November 2011 in Picton. The audience of approximately 100 people consisted of families and workers from a range of organisations, schools and services in the local area. The forum was organised to discuss the importance of education, information about funding and resources as well as exploration of possibilities in future direction. The purpose of the session presented by Family Advocacy was for the audience to gain a greater understanding of who we are and how we can be helpful to families particularly talking about education and the importance of a whole of life vision for their family member.

2012

We presented an information session to a group of students studying at the Australian Catholic University in March 2012. The purpose of the information session was to provide the students with greater knowledge about who Family Advocacy is, the type of advocacy we undertake and who it is we support. We also talked about the good life and success stories of inclusive education.



Information session for a support group for older parents at Pole Depot Community Centre in Penshurst, August 2011

The students asked some insightful questions and followed up with more queries after the day.

Resources developed throughout the year

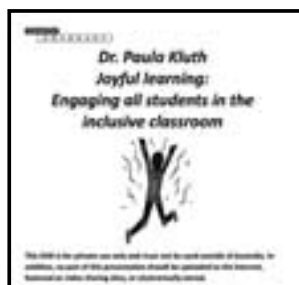


Communiqué, which is published quarterly, provides up to date information about the issues that affect people with disability and the quest for inclusive lives. It highlights developments in Family Advocacy's systemic advocacy efforts, new additions to the Inclusion Collection, coming events, interesting snippets from around the state, as well as

drawing attention to issues that require long term planning and focus.

In 2011/2012 *Communiqué* was sent by post and email to approximately 2,942 families and allies, an increase of 642 readers since last financial year.

Dr. Paula Kluth Joyful learning: Engaging all students in the inclusive classroom - DVD set



In March 2011 Family Advocacy hosted a workshop called *Joyful Learning* which was presented by Dr Paula Kluth from America.

This two two day workshop was filmed so Family Advocacy could develop a DVD resource.

This DVD resource aims to encompass the main teachings from the workshop and contains specific ideas about inclusive classroom practices as well as general ideas about developing inclusive schools, thus being a resource for both teaching professionals and families.

General enquiries and resource provision

Providing information and resources to families and workers is a fundamental role of the organisation. Family Advocacy received approximately 1200 individual requests for books, articles, videos and information packs during the past 12 months.

The Inclusion Collection Library

During 2010/2011 over 9,500 resources were accessed or borrowed from the library. Families were the main users, but students and workers also accessed information.

The Inclusion Collection 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 Inclusion Collection Library through our website, workshops, info sessions and promotional material.

Websites

The three websites; www.family-advocacy.com, www.resourcingfamilies.org.au www.supportedliving.org.au continue to be updated so people can access up to date and relevant information, resources and what events are running.

We don't receive wisdom; we must discover it for ourselves after a journey that no one can take for us or spare us. **Marcel Proust**

All three websites are managed internally while maintaining their individual identities.

In December 2011, the Supported Living website was relaunched to a new layout and content is now managed by Family Advocacy. Prior to this, the Supported Living website was managed externally and Family Advocacy were unable to update content. The website is now easier to navigate around and also provides up to date information, including information on the Supported Living Fund. Since the relaunch the website has had 11,839 page views.

New Technology



The year 2011/2012 has seen significant changes in the way Family Advocacy communicates with families by introducing new technology mediums such as webinars, more video content available on line and an increase in communicating with people via email and online surveys.

The webinars which were held during May and June were a great success and it was pleasing to see a lot of people take up the opportunity of embracing new ways to communicate with Family Advocacy. A range of technical support was provided for people registering and the majority of people registering found the process easy and user friendly. We will continue to embrace webinars and factor these in when running future events.

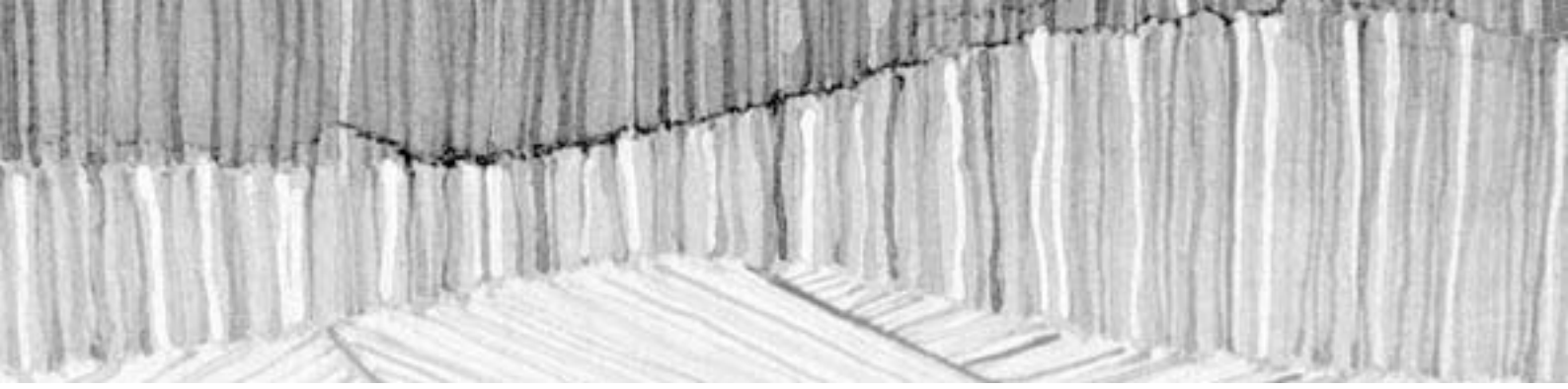
Communications feedback survey

In May 2012 a Communications Feedback survey was emailed to people who are on our mailing list to get feedback on a number of topics including:

- About and Access
- Website
- Inclusion Collection
- Communiqué
- Technology
- Advocacy Standards

193 people responded to the survey and the results were positive. The survey results have provided an insight to Family Advocacy on areas where the organisation can improve the way in which we communicate with people and provide information to them.

As a result of the feedback provided Family Advocacy will begin to update and review the content on the Family Advocacy website, along with improving the accessibility of the Inclusion Collection and strategy's on how Family Advocacy can continue to embrace new technology.



MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

Governance Statement

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

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

The Committee, which comprises the Chairperson, Immediate Past Chairperson, Treasurer, Secretary and up to a maximum of 12 ordinary members, is elected each year at the time of the annual general meeting (AGM). 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 AGM. At the AGM the annual report, which includes the audited financial report for the year just ended, is presented to members.

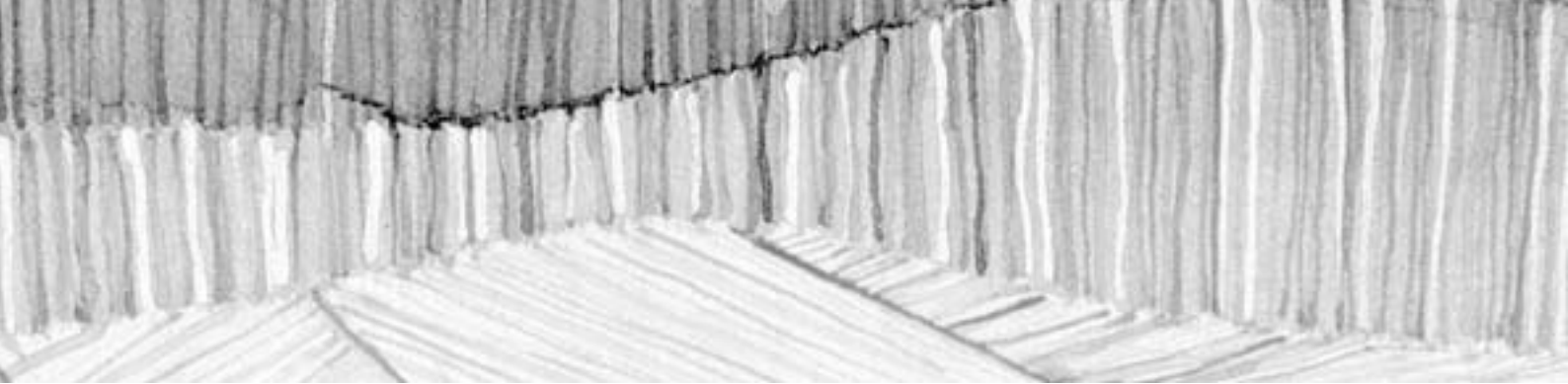
Annual General Meeting

Family Advocacy held its AGM on Friday 21st October 2011 at the Ryde/Eastwood Leagues Club in West Ryde. 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. Quite a lot of business needed to be conducted at this AGM as, due to

changes to the *Incorporated Associations Act*, a number of Resolutions had to be put to the members.

The AGM was followed by two guest speakers: Alex Purvis, a parent from Grafton speaking about the life he and his family have crafted for his son Dan and the Hon. Andrew Constance, Minister for Disability Services, speaking on his Government's vision for people with disability in NSW.

An orientation for Committee Members re-elected and new, was conducted in the Epping office of Family Advocacy on the 9th December 2011.



Committee members



Amanda Fletcher
Chairperson

Amanda lives in Sydney with her partner and two children, aged six and three. 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!



Alex Purvis
Immediate past Chairperson

Alex is a father of four 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

Lynette 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. She was recently CEO in a Catholic organisation for Aged Care. Lynette 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.



Catherine Hogan
Public Officer

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



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.



Margaret Curry

Margaret lives with her husband in Epping and has three daughters. One of her daughters is thirty-four years old and works in open employment in a childcare centre. She 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 and 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 (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.



Jill Ahoy

Jill lives in Armidale with her husband Malcolm, sons Charlie and Zac who is 16 and has a disability. Jill has worked with a government department for the last 9 years while also raising Zac and her other children. Jill and her family have tried over the years to give Zac as normal a life as possible, involving him in all family outings and functions and sporting events. Jill is involved in her community: the local Aboriginal football club, Aboriginal Land Council, Aboriginal Education Committee and church group.



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.

STAFF & ALLIES

Staff & Volunteers

Full time:

Director **Catherine Hogan**
Administration Support **Philippa FitzPatrick**
Advocacy Development Coordinator **Kim Roots**
Communications Officer **Rhiannon Brodie**
Capacity Development Officer **Emma Baxter**
Advocacy Development Liaison Officer **Rick Hansen**

Length of Service

16 years (7 years as Director)
9 years
7 years
1 year
1 year
(until October 2011)

Part time:

Systems Advocacy **Belinda Epstein-Frisch**
Administration Coordinator **Marybelle Ignacio**
Advocacy and Leadership Worker **Karen Tippett**
Systems Advocacy **Nadia Samperi**
Accounts and Administration Officer **Reno Philips**

Length of Service

17 years
5 years
4 years
1 year
1 year

Consultants

Governance

Alison Plant

Supported Living

Judith Ellis, MacRae & Associates

Data Management System

Nick Moriatis, Director, Make Believe
Anna Rose, Senior Campaigning Specialist, Make Believe
Ian Ryder, Director, appiChar
Leon Flatters-Wright, Chief Operations Officer, appiChar
Al de Guzman, Implementation Consultant, appiChar

Volunteers



Margaret Hardman
Volunteer

Family Advocacy wish to thank all the people who give extra time, commitment and dedication by volunteering to assist and thus support the work of the organisation.

Varied tasks such as: helping with the smooth running of various events and workshops; coming into the office to help with large mailouts; providing local knowledge of organisations and people in their networks who we can approach to let families know of workshops we are running in the area; 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 2011/2012.

Andrew Brak
Margaret Curry
Paivi Russanen
Keith Curry
Rebecca Elston
Jo Cross
Sharon Williams

Wendy McGlynn
Margaret Hardman

Volunteer Session Leaders

When running our workshops there is always good feedback from participants that they appreciate the contribution of the parent volunteer who often 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.

In this past year some of these volunteer session leaders also took the opportunity to meet with key community leaders whilst they were in rural locations. This assists our future relationships with these communities and their understanding of the work of Family Advocacy. 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.

Volunteers Session Leaders for 2011/2012:

Annette Bush
Amanda Fletcher
Meg Sweeney
Cassie Gardner
Shari Raymond

Volunteer Speakers

Many Family Advocacy events and presentations included the sharing of family stories.

Alex Purvis shared a powerful story about his son Dan, at the Family Advocacy AGM in October, and how he enjoys a meaningful life welcomed in his community.

Thank you Alex.

A leadership development event was held in January where a number of parents helped contribute to the learning by adding a personal understanding to the theory. This enriched the content and was very well received by all the participants. Several *Resourcing Families* events featured family stories - most notable 'More Choice and Control'.

Volunteer Speakers for 2011/2012 included:

Di Samuels
Shari Raymond
Marion Trabe
Penny Graham
Amanda Fletcher
Sharon Williams
Wendy McGlynn
Wendy Stroeve
Robyn Dennett
Marianne Brazier



Staff Photo

Volunteers during the Canadian Study tour

In August 2011 a group of Canadians travelled around Australia participating in a study tour and sharing of information. To enable this to happen in an effective and conciliatory way we were very fortunate to have a group of friendly and willing volunteers. These volunteers either welcomed people into their homes to stay for a few nights, sharing ideas and stories with their families or invited people into their communities in a mutual exchange process.

So a very big thank you to the following volunteers and their families who helped ensure this study tour was so successful and beneficial.

Marion Trabe
Wendy Stroeve
Amanda Fletcher
Alex Purvis
Wilma Reed
Gina Wilson-Burn
Helen Hooper
Meg Sweeney
Wendy McGlynn
Linda Hughes
Jo Basha
Nathan Basha

Additional Supports

Accounting and Finance

We thank Gary Jones of Gee Jay Computer Services, who came in and supported our Accounts and Administration Officer.

IT Support

We are grateful to Andrew Kerr, who responded to our plea for help when our website experienced externally initiated trouble from a malicious visitor.

Jodie Were addressed *Resourcing Families* website requirements.

Chris Bryant and Ben Newman from OPMC, supported and provided us advice around the three websites.

Patrick Hasbani and his team at PCQuest have continued to provide prompt IT and computer maintenance support.

Media Productions, Publications and Technology

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 Jon Watkins 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.

Redback Conferencing provided us advice and support with running our webinars.

Stakeholders & 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

Michael Kendrick Foundations Forum

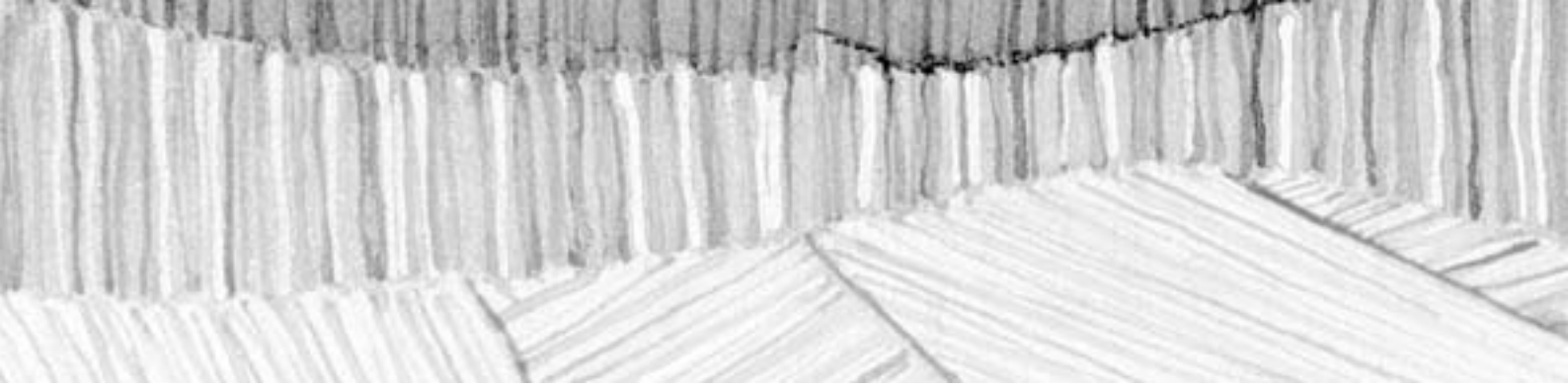
ADHC Local Support Coordinators

NSW Council on Intellectual Disability (NSWCID)

Disability Advocacy Network Australia (DANA)

NSW Disability Advocacy Network (NDAN)

People with Disability Australia



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 2011/2012 financial year. Family Advocacy has 166 financial members throughout NSW, from Broken Hill 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:

- provide input into the policies of Family Advocacy; and
- the ability to nominate to become a member of the Management Committee and participate in the strategic planning for the organisation.

LOCATION OF MEMBERS



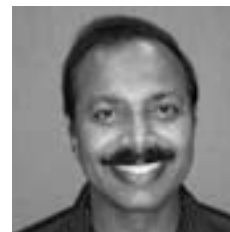
INTERNAL MANAGEMENT, ACCOUNTS & ADMINISTRATION



Marybelle Ignacio
Office Administrator



Philippa Fitzpatrick
Administrative Support Worker



Reno Philip
Accounts and Administration Officer

The Internal Management, Accounts and Administration team support the Management Committee, Director and staff in implementing the organisation's vision and mission.

The team ensures that there are enough staff to carry out the organisation's core activities and new ventures, enough physical resources and tools to implement them efficiently, and adequate knowledge and experience to ensure they are done effectively. The team also works to ensure that the organisation's most valuable asset, its human resource is content, happy and taken care of.

Personnel and Networks

Efficient and competent personnel are a resource Family Advocacy can boast of. The organisation ensures that staff is provided with on-going training that enhances and

continues to develop their skills and experience. Communication and teamwork are highly prized at the workplace and evident through the regular meetings conducted.

Amendments to what is now called the Constitution of Family Advocacy were made during the 2011 AGM.

This is reflective of the organisation's ability to keep up to date with changes in legislation and address the impact on the organisation's operations and administration. Industrial relation and modern award changes were also areas that Family Advocacy kept up to date with through industry seminars and training.

Resources

Within its limited financial capabilities, Family Advocacy ensures that its resources are adequate in addressing the changing needs of the organisation, whether it is human resources, technological and equipment requirements or through new systems and protocols.

Equipment was purchased and new staff members were temporarily hired to facilitate the back-end support in the implementation of the Supported Living Fund Information Sessions and weekend seminars. For other events and activities, the expertise of Consultants and generous assistance from volunteers are utilised to supplement and support the organisation's existing capacity.

The best way to predict the future is to invent it. **Alan Kay**

Information Technology

Database

For 2011/2012, there are a total of 11,726 entries in our database, up by 862 from the previous year.

With the move towards Quality Assurance in the industry, Family Advocacy endeavours to improve administration, reporting and operational functions. One way to do this is to upgrade the current database system into a comprehensive online system that will allow staff easy access to contacts and generate mailing lists for their respective purposes. This system will also incorporate online registration for events and facilitate reporting through a collection of data that is progressively entered by staff. This will enable an assessment of relevant statistics at any point of time.

An assessment of Family Advocacy's requirements was conducted by the consultant, Make Believe in July 2011. The project to develop the system in accordance with the recommendations of the consultant was awarded to appiChar. In early 2012, appiChar undertook to customise the Salesforce online database program to address Family Advocacy's requirements. As of June 2012, steps were being taken to test the system and launch and final

implementation is scheduled in the second half of 2012.

Work Health and Safety

Family Advocacy places importance on the health and safety of its staff, volunteers and visitors. The organisation has appointed two staff as the Fire Wardens, representing the office on the Emergency Evacuation Team of the building. Training is conducted twice a year. Internal training is likewise conducted and every staff member is trained in the use of the evacuation chair, which in the event of an emergency may be used by a person requiring mobility assistance. Regular safety inspections are likewise implemented.

Data Collection and Census

The organisation regularly provides data on its client demographics and advocacy activities to its Federal and State funders, as part of its compliance to contract requirements. Information will be gathered more efficiently and be more accessible as necessary in the coming year with the use of the new online database system.

Environmental Consciousness

As part of its contributions to reducing its environmental footprint, Family Advocacy consciously implements environmentally-friendly measures in its day to day activities. The building provides for recycling of paper and cardboard. Recycled paper is utilised for internal documents and whenever possible.

Sending out articles and materials, such as Communiqué, event promotions, pre and post workshop communications and reaching out to volunteers, in digital form has been the predominant format in the past few years. The reduction in the use of paper has been significant, cut in half by the use of digital format. 26,000 sheets of paper have been saved from Communiqué alone. By gathering more specific information about our mailing recipients, Family Advocacy has been able to utilise a more targeted approach with sending relevant information thus reducing paper wastage.



Lyn Bruce
Treasurer

TREASURER'S REPORT

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

The financial year 2011/2012 saw the *Resourcing Families* Project continue to be supported through Ageing, Disability and Home Care (ADHC). We are currently funded till 2014, and are aiming for this funding to become recurrent.

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

With Family Advocacy now being deemed a 'preserved service' with NSW FACS and such services being reviewed, we await the minister's decision as to what the future holds for this funding.

The Commonwealth funded National Disability Advocacy Program (NDAP) through 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 \$15,000 to assist with the process of preparing for the changes that are coming.

Recurrent funding and One off Grants

	2011/2012	2010/2011
Revenue from Commonwealth Government	242,990.00	239,399.00
*One off grant from Commonwealth Government	15,000.00	7,000.00
Revenue from State Government	250,862.00	244,601.00
*One off grant from State Government	21,600.00	15,000.00
Project funding from ADHC for <i>Resourcing Families</i>	210,227.00	205,000.00
From ADHC(Capacity Building Project Seminar)	181,818.00	
One off grant from DEC	32,000.00	32,000.00
Donations	1,355.00	365.00
Total	\$955,852.00	\$743,365.00

The organisation's liabilities can be fully funded from its accumulated provisions and the organisation continues in a sound financial position.

A budget for 2012/2013 has been ratified by the Management Committee.

There is a difference between following a dream and never unleashing it.

Michael Kendrick

Donations

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

L Prince

Virginia Hewit

Seekamp

Marjorie Allen

Sharon & Mark Williams

Dr Naseem J Chowdhury

M & N Chowdhury

Cathy Brinkman

Pat Faggotter

Wilma Reibel

Fiona Dorrian

Margaret Hetherton

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.

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.

Lynette Bruce

Treasurer

family

A D V O C A C Y

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