

family

2018-2019

A D V O C A C Y

ANNUAL REPORT



family

2018-2019

A D V O C A C Y

ANNUAL REPORT

Published by Family Advocacy, October, 2019
1800 620 588 / 02 9869 0866
704/88-90 George Street, Hornsby NSW, 2077

Copyright statement © Family Advocacy 2019

Family Advocacy supports and encourages the dissemination and exchange of information. Information in this report is provided under a Creative Commons Attribution 3.0 Australia (CC BY 3.0) Licence, except for the Family Advocacy logo and images which remain the intellectual property of their creators.

An electronic version of this report is published on the Family Advocacy website www.family-advocacy.com

Cover image printed with permission from the Uncle family.

Contents

Overview

Vision, Mission, Goals and Objectives	4
Guiding Principles.....	5

Governance

Structure and Management	8
Management Committee 2018/2019.....	9
Chairperson's Report	10
Volunteers and Family Leaders.....	12

Accomplishments

Executive Officer's Report	14
Statewide Overview of All Events.....	16
Family Advocacy Events.....	17
Resourcing Inclusive Communities Events	18
Breakdown of Enquiries	18

Advocacy and Leadership Development

Manager's Report.....	20
-----------------------	----

Systems Advocacy

Manager's Report.....	25
-----------------------	----

Resourcing Inclusive Communities

Manager's Report.....	29
-----------------------	----

Finances

Financial Management.....	32
Treasurer's Report	33

Staying Connected

Communications Report.....	35
----------------------------	----

Operations and People

Quality Assurance and Risk Management	39
Internal Resources and Data Collection.....	39
WHS and Environmental Footprint.....	41
Staff	42
Acronyms and Abbreviations.....	43

Overview

“Being a part of Family Advocacy is all about being empowered to support our children.”

- Family Member

Vision, Mission, Goals and Objectives

Vision

Family Advocacy's vision is 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.

Mission

The mission is for people with developmental disability to attain socially valued roles within the community. This is accomplished through strengthening the knowledge, role and influence of families. Family Advocacy's focus is to encourage and support families to speak up and seek opportunities with and on behalf of their family members so as to enjoy the same environments, lifestyles and living conditions afforded to most Australians.

Goals and Objectives

The organisation's goals and objectives are determined by the Management Committee who represent Family Advocacy's membership.

Organisational goals

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.

Objectives

- 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
- To encourage the development and effectiveness of family-based advocacy groups
- To provide an avenue for the development of leadership amongst families
- To monitor and, where necessary, make representations about legislation, policies and practices which affect people with developmental disability and their families
- To disseminate information about legislation, policies and practices to families
- To encourage the involvement of people who have disability, families and friends, in the work of the organisation.

* Developmental disability includes but is not limited to: autism, intellectual disability, cerebral palsy, spina bifida and multiple disability.

Guiding Principles

In carrying out its mission, Family Advocacy recognises that families can find it difficult to affect the way 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 is on offer
- Isolation, vulnerability, extra pressures and financial costs
- Lack of opportunities for community members to get to know and value individuals with disability
- Diminished expectations by family about its role and influence in the life of the person with disability
- Lack of flexible, family-focused supports
- Segregated service systems which lessen opportunities for people with 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 with disability.

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 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 Objectives and Principles of the Commonwealth Disability Services Act 1986 and the Objectives, Principles and Applications of Principles of the Disability Inclusion Act 2014. Regulatory processes designed to ensure that direct services adhere to these principles are also critical.

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 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 with 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 with disability

Guiding Principles

- 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 in the interests of people with 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 evolve as a person grows, for all adults, the family continues to function 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 valued.

Principles about Community

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

Advocacy

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.

* Adapted from W. Wolfensberger to align to social advocacy for people with disability.

Governance

“Family Advocacy continues to be a recognised, respected, strong and consistent voice that promotes the rights of people with developmental disability across NSW.”

- Annette O’Sullivan, Chairperson

Structure and Management

Family Advocacy was incorporated in 19 June, 1991 under the Associations Incorporation Act 1984. It operates under a Constitution, is governed by a Management Committee that provides the direction of the organisation and is run by an Executive Officer who undertakes the day to day responsibilities and decisions to carry out the vision, goals and strategies set by the committee.

Through 28 years, Family Advocacy's vision and mission in advocating effectively on behalf of people with developmental disability in NSW remains relevant and the Committee is steady in its focus. Strategic planning meetings are held every three years to assess the current environment, the needs that are raised by families that access Family Advocacy and then to set the goals and strategies for the next three years, all within the consistent framework of its vision and mission. One such planning meeting occurred in March 2019 and with the collaboration of the management committee and staff, a new three-year Strategic Plan is underway to carry the organisation over the next few years to 2022.

The Committee, which comprises the Chairperson, Treasurer, Secretary and up to a maximum of 15 ordinary members, is elected each year at the time of the Annual General Meeting (AGM). In 2018/2019 there were seven committee members.

In fulfilling its primary role, the Committee meet at least six times a 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
- Risk and compliance
- 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.

On the operational side, the organisation operates under set policies and operational procedures, that are reviewed regularly by the membership and staff, respectively.

Membership

As an incorporated association with membership across NSW, Family Advocacy membership is open to individuals only and not organisations or individuals representing organisations.

The individuals that make up the membership of Family Advocacy believe in and support the vision and mission of the organisation and are committed to its goals of creating a genuinely inclusive society. Being a mission driven organisation rather than a membership driven organisation has served as a powerful safeguard to the core work of the organisation.

Family Advocacy nevertheless places high value on its members and the contributions they make to the organisation. Members actively participate by presenting at events, providing input into policy, involvement in systemic advocacy, strategic planning and becoming a Committee member. Family Advocacy acknowledges the important role of members and thanks them for their continued support throughout the 2018/2019 year.

Management Committee 2018/2019



Annette O'Sullivan
Chairperson



Di Samuels
Treasurer



Meg Sweeney
Secretary



Annette Bush
Committee Member



Jane Gilkes
Committee Member



Cathy Naing
Committee Member



Melissa Smith
Committee Member

Annual General Meeting

Members and guests had the opportunity to visit the new office premises of Family Advocacy when they attended the AGM held on Monday November 5, 2018 at Suite 704, 88-90 George St., Hornsby, NSW. The organisation had just moved to the new premises in July 2018 after more than 20 years in Epping.

Andrew Wilson, chairperson of the Management Committee 2017/2018 presided over the meeting and welcomed all who attended. In the AGM proceedings, the Chairperson's report, the Annual Report and the Treasurer's report were all presented respectively, followed by the nomination and election of the Management Committee. This was followed by the reappointment of Andrew Brak as Public Officer and Harley, Russel and Day Chartered Accountants as the Auditor for 2018/2019.

Chairperson's Report



Annette O'Sullivan

Family Advocacy continues to be a recognised, respected, strong and consistent voice that promotes the rights of people with developmental disability across NSW.

Acknowledging that families are the strongest advocate for their family member with disability, Family Advocacy works extensively to provide advocacy related information, leadership opportunities and workshop sessions throughout NSW. As a result, Family Advocacy is well placed to build the capacity of families to advocate in the best interests of their family member.

Over the past year the organisation has worked tirelessly in order to increase our visibility and relevance to local members of state parliament as yet again we aim to guarantee ongoing funding. We appreciate our members and allies who have approached their local members in order to ensure that future government policy continues to reflect the importance of advocacy.

The extensive work that the organisation has undertaken is highlighted in this annual report. We continue to reach

across the state to motivate and provide the support required to assist families to start or continue their journey of inclusion, removing barriers and encompassing a good life for their family member.

As we move into the next three-year Strategic Plan I am confident that the organisation is lead by skilled and committed staff and membership. Our goals over this period aim to strengthen Families, Communities and Advocacy in order to continue promoting and gaining a future for people with disability that sees them firmly embedded in the heart of their school, communities and neighbourhoods.

Unfortunately practices that promote segregation continue to remove our family members from their peers, friends and community. Family Advocacy's ongoing work aims to remove such practices and gain regular opportunities and relationships for our family members.

Our initiative, Resourcing inclusive Communities (RIC), continues to support people with disability, their families and the broader community to grow in knowledge and practice around the use of contemporary and innovative support arrangements. We received a small grant through Information, Linkages and Capacity Building to work with people with disability and families across NSW in the Self-management of NDIS funds. There is much work to be done in this space and we are excited about the future work undertaken through RIC.

As the NDIS continues to roll out and be accessed across the country we as an organisation will aim to ensure that our funders recognise the need for ongoing state-wide advocacy separate to the NDIS.

This year has seen the acquisition of technology that allows committee members and others to participate in meetings remotely via video link (Zoom Room) facility. This has been of great benefit for an organisation such as ours with a state wide committee and membership.

I would like to thank my fellow committee members for their expertise and commitment over the past year. For Family Advocacy to continue, it is necessary that our governance remains strong and ongoing. The strength of Family Advocacy has always been the wealth of experience and ability of our membership and its united vision and purpose.

Chairperson's Report

My thanks also for the professional and competent leadership of our Executive Officer Cecile Sullivan Elder. This year has seen both opportunities and challenges. Cecile has guided the organisation through these times with skill and careful consideration.

The skill and commitment of all our office staff is appreciated. Family Advocacy is a well regarded and effective organisation as a result of its professionalism and relevant work within the advocacy space. Our organisation is seen as the preeminent contact within NSW at a state and national level and for this we can be rightly proud.

As we move forward there is optimism that the NSW State Government is acknowledging the importance of state funded advocacy. We continue to lobby strongly to ensure that the State Government does not pass this responsibility onto their Federal counterparts.

Overall we can be assured that Family Advocacy is currently a well resourced and effective organisation that continues to do impressive and extensive work across all areas of NSW.

I have every confidence that this position of strength and relevance will continue well into the future with the support of our membership, staff and allies.

Annette O'Sullivan | Chairperson 2018/2019



Family Advocacy staff and supporters at the Stand By Me Rally in Martin Place, February 2019

Volunteers and Family Leaders

The work of Family Advocacy would not be possible if it were not for the families, leaders and volunteers who have generously contributed their time, insights and expertise to administration, advocacy, workshops and systemic advocacy in 2018/2019 in the following ways:

- Collaborations with Family Advocacy staff to develop resources and workshops
- Providing administrative support in the lead up to workshops and at other critical times
- Sharing stories and insights of lived experience with politicians, at events and online
- Connecting with and encouraging other families
- Providing assistance in the inventory of Family Advocacy's hard copy and digital resources, enabling the organisation to downsize its premises.

Families attending Family Advocacy events in 2018/2019 continued to indicate the importance of hearing from other families and we acknowledge those family leaders who travel substantial distances to connect, encourage, support, engage and mentor families on their respective journeys towards inclusion for their family member.

Thank you to the following for their generous and thoughtful efforts in 2018/2019:

- Yolande Cailly
- Vanessa Comiskey
- Jo Cross
- Philippa FitzPatrick
- Susan Hoffmann
- Catherine Hogan
- Linda Hughes
- Wendy Stroeve
- Alison Wilson
- Annette Bush, in addition to role as a Committee Member
- Jane Gilkes, in addition to role as a Committee Member
- Penny Graham, as a family leader, outside of her role as a staff member
- Di Samuels, in addition to her role as a Committee Member

We would also like to acknowledge our Same Classroom Same Opportunity Campaign Champion Advocates:

- Suzanne Biondo
- Shawn Burns
- Yolande Cailly
- Louise Conn
- Olivia Cooper
- Amanda Fletcher
- Penny Graham
- Jane Gilkes
- Sarah Harvey
- Janine Jenkins
- Chris Jones
- Joseph Naim
- Kim Marie Rigby
- Sarah Rikard-Bell
- Di Samuels
- Kathie Sayeed
- Melissa Smith
- Marion Trabe
- Andrew Uncle
- Gina Wilson-Burns



Accomplishments

“Through the knowledge that I have gained through Family Advocacy I am confident that I can speak with authority”

- Family Member

Executive Officer's Report



Cecile Sullivan Elder

Another year has passed with much going on over this 12-month period for people with disability across NSW and within the organisation in an attempt to counteract the significant issues and barriers experienced. This has been accomplished through both an advocacy and support perspective and more broadly from a systems change perspective. As we know there are many barriers and risks experienced by people with disability and our response to counteracting this can be limited particularly in relation to the inadequate levels of funding allocated.

Family Advocacy remains the only advocacy model in the country whose primary focus is on supporting the loved ones of people with disability to advocate with or on behalf of their family member with disability. We remain strong in our focus in relation to the clarity of our advocacy work being driven by the interests of people with disability and not the interests of the family member. We continue to identify that all relationships hold a potential conflict of interest including

the competing interest experienced within families. The potency of this model of advocacy continues to build with many more families strengthening their knowledge and skills in advocating with and for their family member's best interests. The long term nature of this relationship coupled with the heightened vulnerability of people with disability means that this advocacy model continues to create an important safeguard not just now, but well into the future.

We have continued to be informed by families across NSW that many barriers, risks and discriminatory practices still remain preventing their family member with disability from accessing the broader community and its mainstream services.

The NDIS continues to be a national system that is not working well for many people and this has been evidenced by a spike in the request for internal reviews and Administrative Appeals Tribunal (AAT) hearings. There remains ongoing work to do in this regard and we continue to support people with disability and their families to advocate for appropriate supports and enhancement to processes.

Of particular concern for the organisation is the ongoing reluctance from the NDIS in recognising individual arrangements for the person with disability. Advocacy calls from around the state have reinforced this stance, particularly around individualised living options, employment, community involvement and support considerations unique to the person. Although the principles of the NDIS speak strongly to people with disability having stronger links to their communities, there is still a clear determination for this funding body to coerce people into traditional programs and support arrangements. Both the skills and knowledge of NDIS employees and the processes within the agency fall extremely short in supporting a new way of thinking and being.

The education of students with disability within the NSW education system remains a key priority for the organisation with a continued spike in calls and contact from families experiencing many barriers in accessing their local school in an attempt to have their child educated. Many more families are pushing for their child to be educated in the regular class alongside their child's same aged peers and to be provided with all the opportunities that come along with this. Much advocacy is required to support this, and some families are reporting that as many as 10 schools can be approached before their child can find a school where they are

Executive Officer's Report

welcomed and supported appropriately by the school community. Once the child gains access, then many other significant concerns may present which make families reluctant to take on this usual pathway associated with a child's education. Families continue to have to make significant trade-offs in relation to what is in their child's interests and what is supported by best evidenced based practice.

These are unfortunately not new issues and in some cases span back decades in relation to the barriers and reluctance that many young children are met with in following the normative pathway of obtaining an education. Much work has been done over the last 12 months with the Department of Education (DoE) and our State Members of Parliament to raise the profile of this issue and highlight the urgency for change. Many NSW families have supported this work which has added great potency and understanding to the work being undertaken. Clarity and a clear vision of commitment is still lacking within the Department and we continue to advocate through multiple methods to support this much needed change. The change we are seeking is in line with the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD), ratified by the Australian government, which provides for this obligation in Article 24 (Inclusive Education). This is an issue concerning the whole nation and we are heartened to see that there are strong groups that are emerging across the country to support this change. We will continue in the coming year to build on this momentum and pressure to have each and every child with disability's place firmly cemented within this very important component of Australian society.

Family Advocacy has continued its work within the National Alliance of Capacity Building Organisations (NACBO) which is represented by Family Advocacy, Community Resource Unit (CRU), Imagine More, Valued Lives, Purple Orange and Belonging Matters. This national consortium of values based organisations has attempted to advocate for change at a national level in relation to working with the NDIA to rethink its processes and practice; particularly around creative individualised supports and the ability for people with disability and their families to self-manage their NDIS funds. This ongoing collaboration has also been a good opportunity to consider innovative models that support people with disability to live valued lives in the heart of their community. Much of this work contributes to the focus within our initiative Resourcing Inclusive Communities and forms a common thread that links to both national and international practice models. This national work continues to be important in attempting to reset the expectations through both individualised support arrangements and support models that are possible and achieve better outcomes for the person with disability.

The NSW Advocacy campaign continues and Family Advocacy remains a member of the steering committee for the NSW Disability Advocacy Alliance. Much work has been done to support our local members of parliament to acknowledge the critical safeguard that advocacy provides to people with disability. With NSW advocacy funding due to expire in July 2020 this still remains an ongoing campaign across NSW. Many people with disability and their families have participated in this campaign through attendance at rallies, meetings with the local member of parliament and through representation made to the Minister for Disability.

Family leadership remains an important cornerstone of the work of the organisation with many family members having participated in our advocacy and leadership development work. Families continue to be involved in both the advocacy and systems advocacy components of our work and support the representation to government on issues that are experienced by people with disability across NSW.

Cecile Sullivan Elder | Executive Officer

Statewide Overview of All Events



GREATER SYDNEY

Allambie
Bankstown
Blacktown
Campbelltown
Camden
Chatswood

Fairfield
Hornsby
Parramatta
Penrith
Mona Vale
Miranda

Redfern
Sydney
Smithfield
Turramurra
West Ryde

Map not to scale. Indicative only.

Family Advocacy Events

Date	Event	Location
August 6, 2018	North Nowra School Expo	Nowra
August 10, 2018	Information Session	Turrumurra
September 13, 2018	Information Session	Chatswood
October 17, 2018	The Time Is Now Parliamentary Forum	Sydney
October 18, 2018	Inclusion and the Curriculum	Parramatta
October 19, 2018	Consultations with Bob Jackson	Hornsby
October 25, 2018	Information Session	Penrith
November 29, 2018	Information Session	Fairfield
December 12, 2018	Information Session - Bankstown Interagency	Bankstown
February 12, 2019	Information Session	Mona Vale
February 19, 2019	One of the Kids	Ballina
February 21, 2019	Information Session	Miranda
February 21, 2019	One of the Kids	Tweed Heads
February 28, 2019	One of the Kids	Blacktown
March 1, 2019	One of the Kids	Smithfield
March 6, 2019	One of the Kids	Tamworth
March 7, 2019	Information Session	Paramatta
March 7, 2019	One of the Kids	Armidale
March 11, 2019	Let's Get Started	Maitland
March 13, 2019	One of the Kids	Penrith
March 14, 2019	Let's Get Started - Firstchance	Mayfield
March 20, 2019	One of the Kids	Parkes
March 21, 2019	One of the Kids	Orange
March 26, 2019	Information Session	Allambie
March 27, 2019	One of the Kids	Campbelltown
March 28, 2019	One of the Kids	West Ryde
April 1, 2019	One of the Kids	Charlestown
April 2, 2019	Information Session	Camden
April 2, 2019	One of the Kids	East Maitland
April 4, 2019	One of the Kids	Wollongong
May 3, 2019	Information Session - Carers	Redfern
May 16, 2019	Information Session	Orange
June 13, 2019	Schools and Community Connect Expo	Bankstown
June 26, 2019	Information Session	Mayfield



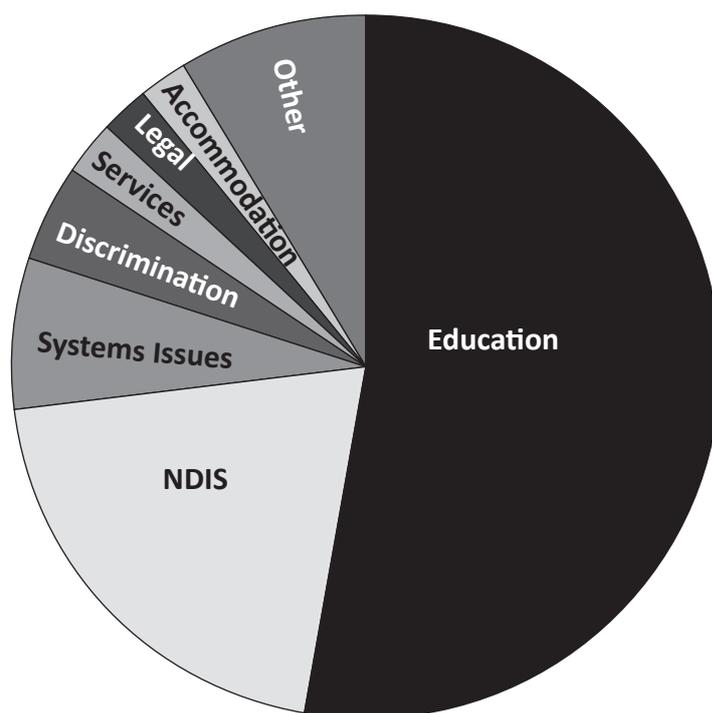
Inclusion and the Curriculum workshop, October 2018

Resourcing Inclusive Communities Events

Date	Event	Location
November 15, 2018	Circles of Support	Bega
November 29, 2018	Carers Information Session	Fairfield
February 19, 2019	Seven Steps to Self Direction	Newcastle
February 20, 2019	Seven Steps to Self Direction	West Ryde
February 21, 2019	Seven Steps to Self Direction	Wollongong
April 2, 2019	Seven Steps to Self Direction	Coffs Harbour
April 3, 2019	Seven Steps to Self Direction	Lismore
April 4, 2019	Seven Steps to Self Direction	Tweed Heads
June 5, 2019	Circles of Support	Ballina
June 6, 2019	Circles of Support	Tweed Heads
June 12, 2019	Jac's Place film launch	Newcastle

Breakdown of Enquiries 2018/2019

Education	53.0%
NDIS	20.3%
Systems Issues	6.8%
Discrimination	4.5%
Services	2.6%
Legal	2.1%
Accommodation	2.1%
Other (8.6%):	
Future Planning	1.3%
Independent Living Support	1.3%
Employment	1.1%
Recreation	1.1%
Abuse/Neglect	0.9%
Health	0.9%
Finances	0.6%
Post School Support	0.6%
Isolation	0.4%
Equipment	0.2%
Transport	0.2%



Advocacy and Leadership Development

*"I feel that through the workshops that
I have attended, I am empowered to be the
best advocate for our son."*

- Family Member

Advocacy and Leadership Development



Karen Tippett

Leadership

Family leadership development and training involves the encouragement and nurturing of parents to take on leadership roles. This robust and targeted strategy—in line with the mission and vision of Family Advocacy—has resulted in many confident and active family leaders connected to the organisation.

Family Advocacy's vision sees families as agents of positive social change so the inherent value of people with developmental disability can be recognised within a just and inclusive community.

The organisation 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 connections, awareness and the individual skills of family members.

Leadership Development and Training

In 2018/2019 there was a continued approach to reach younger families and build on connections to family leaders further along their inclusive education journeys. Family leaders shared their knowledge, on a broader level, within workshops and information sessions, as guest speakers and as part of workshop audiences.

Family Advocacy supported family members to:

- Attend events sponsored by Family Advocacy
- Enhance their skills and knowledge by undergoing specific training
- Experience values-based training for deeper understanding and community building
- Present and assist at Family Advocacy workshops
- Share their stories at events, through resources and social media platforms
- Contribute experiences and testimonies to the Family Advocacy library, resources and websites
- Attend and participate in meetings with politicians or senior bureaucrats.

Family Advocacy also encouraged individuals to become involved in presenting material and facilitating group work at workshops, information sessions and sometimes at conferences across the state so they could meet a wide and diverse range of people, expand their knowledge sets and share their experiences to increase their own skills, competencies and confidence in relation to their advocacy efforts and as a family leader.

Workshop materials were supplied and discussed in advance so family leaders were well prepared and comfortable contributing. Self-evaluation was encouraged and feedback offered.

Attending Events

As part of the leadership development program Family Advocacy provided sponsorship to members to attend events run by other organisations as well as Family Advocacy. This served to strengthen knowledge, facilitate networking and encourage idea generation.

Events families were supported to attend included:

Advocacy and Leadership Development

- Social Role Valorisation two-day training: Towards a Better Life, Foundations Forum, Sydney
- One of the Kids, inclusive education workshops
- The Inclusive Education two-day Summit, Melbourne
- Inclusion and the Curriculum event, Sydney
- Illume learning conference, Newcastle
- Australian Progress conference, Melbourne

Education

Getting off to a good start in life is vital for all children, particularly children with developmental disability. A good start means commencing a path that keeps the child embedded in their family and community. A 'special' or 'separate' path can lead to children and families feeling isolated, vulnerable and disconnected from the typical and ordinary environments other children and families enjoy.

Family Advocacy's aim is that all children are supported in age appropriate ways to be active members of their families and communities. This starts with being a valued member of regular classrooms. Education increasingly forms a large part of the organisation's contact with families and in 2018/2019 comprised close to half of all enquiries taken by Family Advocacy. Barriers families face in education continue to include:

- Unwelcoming culture of schools impeding the student from being fully included
- Suspending students without proper consideration of the impact of their disability and not putting better processes in place to counter this
- Limited parental involvement to contribute to setting goals and strategies for the student
- Coercing parents to consider segregated school settings
- Suggesting parents consider distance education and home schooling as alternatives
- Discouraging enrolments of students with disability and continuing to cite funding as being a reason to not have a student at the school
- Use of partial enrolment as a means of addressing apparent funding shortfalls.

Family Advocacy continues to assist families to advocate in a positive way with schools in order to manage the barriers listed above, and to create a good learning environment for their family member with disability. The insights and understanding we receive from families then informs the organisation's systemic work to effect broader change.

Family Advocacy gathers this information to highlight state-wide trends and enable responsive planning.

One of the Kids: Inclusive education workshops

The Advocacy and Leadership Development team travelled throughout NSW to present this core workshop on inclusive education to over 90 families across fourteen workshops. This workshop is relevant for families of preschool, primary and high school students looking to improve advocacy skills and strategies to assist them to achieve an inclusive education for their child/ren with disability, and covered topics such as:

- How the school years can lead to a meaningful life
- A brief history of disability education
- What an inclusive education looks like
- Evidence and support for inclusive education
- How inclusion can look in the classroom
- Building good school relations
- Education policies and supports that exist within schools and necessary advocacy tools and strategies for families.

Advocacy and Leadership Development

These workshops provided opportunities for robust and at times challenging discussions. Families made the most of networking and asking questions about their own specific issues. Evaluations indicated expectations were either met or exceeded.

Many resources were provided at the workshops and followed up with an email to continue the 'thought process' and encourage families to continue to develop their understanding of the subject. The education booklet, All Students Learning Together - Taking Action on Education, was distributed to all participants with extras provided for sharing with others.

Feedback from participants included:

'Very informative and professional presentation.'

'I now have a much better idea of what inclusion looks like and how to share this with the school. This has been the most helpful and practical workshop I attended in years.'

'Great ideas and empowerment. How to use the language and my vision, opened my eyes to a different world.'

Inclusion and the Curriculum guest speaker event with Dr Bob Jackson

In October 2018, Dr Bob Jackson presented this one-day workshop for both teachers and parents addressing the topic of including all students in the curriculum. 106 people attended with a split of approximately 70% families to 30% educators. Educators ranged in roles of regional teams, school executives, class teachers, support teachers and consultants. A few families encouraged educators from their schools to join them.

The evaluations received were extremely positive with a strong theme of how valuable it was to have the perspectives of families and teachers in the room together. All attendees have received follow-up material and educators received a certificate of attendance to go towards their professional development hours.

Consultations with Dr Bob Jackson

Families who attended the Inclusion and Curriculum event had the opportunity to meet with Dr Jackson for an individual consultation. This was well received and all spaces were allocated.

Let's Get Started: Inclusive education presentation

This two-hour presentation provides an overview of the content of our one-day One of the Kids workshops. Attendees are taken through the main considerations and benefits of inclusive education with an aim to increase their knowledge for an informed schooling choice for their family member planning to start school in the next two years. Early childhood workers and therapists are often in attendance which is important to broadening the inclusive education dialogue. We have spoken to over 100 families and workers through these presentations.

Inclusive education presentation

We were invited by Carers NSW to present a one-hour segment on inclusive education at their Moving Forward forums for families where information, articles and our resources were provided on the day. These presentations took place in regional and Sydney metropolitan locations and reached over 80 families.

School and Community Expos

Schools and councils often bring community organisations and families together at expos run in their area. Family Advocacy took the invited opportunity to hold a stall in two areas; one in the south coast of NSW and another in the inner west of Sydney. We were able to speak with families, workers and community organisations including schools about our work as well as share our resources and extend our reach. The combined expos had approximately 200 people in attendance.

Advocacy and Leadership Development

Collaborative Engagement Framework project

In April 2018, Family Advocacy received a one-off grant from the NSW Department of Education to undertake consultation with parents and educators to identify successful strategies and practices essential in student centred collaborative engagement. Through the course of 2018/2019, broad consultation (via survey) with them was undertaken at state level to draw out the most common challenges and successful practices and to develop a broad baseline understanding. A deeper dive into how to overcome the barriers and embed student centred parent and educator collaboration was then workshopped in parent and educator focus groups. There has been overwhelming buy-in from parents and educators and significant findings from the consultation.

The next phase of the project, to be completed in 2019/2020, will draw the learnings together to develop an ongoing online resource. The purpose of this resource is to provide a living, practical and accessible framework with supporting resources for all parents and teachers/schools that will promote the inclusive K-12 educational journey of students with disability.

Resources

In 2019 we launched Access: Symposium, a curated online resource inspired by the inaugural National Symposium on Inclusive Education created and facilitated by Family Advocacy. Featuring multiple voices, perspectives and experiences, Access: Symposium is an ever-growing online platform committed to challenge thinking, share examples and stimulate the necessary conversations to bring on change.

This platform, committed to taking the conversation about inclusive education from 'well-meaning' to 'well-doing', is dedicated to supporting the inclusive education community in all of its facets so we can collectively scale the conversation and drive momentum. By providing multiple perspectives in one place and fostering knowledge exchange within the sector, Access: Symposium is focused on closing the gap between policy and practice.

Karen Tippett | Advocacy and Leadership Development Manager



Parent Annette Bush presenting at the One of the Kids workshop, Ballina



Parent Alison Wilson presenting at the One of the Kids workshop, West Ryde

Systems Advocacy

“We are grateful for the advice we received from Family Advocacy as it has given us the confidence to voice our expectations of an inclusive education for our child.”

- Family Member

NDIS

Family Advocacy has undertaken extensive systems advocacy in relation to the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS). These include:

- Submission on Supported School Transport and the NDIS
- Submission for Inquiry into the Implementation of the NDIS and the Provision of Disability Services in NSW
- Attended and provided input into the NDIA's Employment Taskforce national forum
- Attended NDIS – Every Australian Counts workshops and provided direct input to the then Minister for the NDIS, Paul Fletcher
- Participated in the International Institute for Disability Leadership workshop investigating the future requirements for disability leadership with the NDIS in mind
- Created NDIS factsheets for families
- Multiple meetings were held with the NDIA concerning the Self-Management policy and practice and Individualised Living Options. Families contributed their insights experience to this process.



Leanne Varga

Education

Families continue to experience significant issues with their child obtaining a satisfactory education in regular classrooms at local schools.

There still remains a stark gap between policy and practice and much improvement is needed in setting a clear direction of inclusive practice within the NSW education system. Family Advocacy staff and families have been very active in the lead up to the 2019 State and Federal elections.

The Systems Advocacy team continues to place pressure on the NSW government and the NSW Department of Education to ensure accountability in relation to implementing the recommendations from the 2017 Parliamentary Inquiry into Students with a Disability or Special Needs in NSW.

Clear objectives were developed to instigate change and build momentum, with the actions noted below:

In 2018 Family Advocacy launched the **Same Classroom Same Opportunity** campaign for inclusive education. We created various platforms to engage our community of parents who want their child to attend the regular class at their local school such as a new webpage, a new Facebook group for Same Classroom advocates and champions, regular Twitter feeds, and an Instagram page. Families were invited to Take the Pledge, where they held our Same Classroom Same Opportunity logo and took a photo. To date we have approximately 500 photographic pledges on our Instagram page.

Family Advocacy also facilitated a parliamentary forum on Inclusive Education in NSW Parliament House called The Time is Now. This event highlighted our campaign and had bipartisan support and was co-hosted by the three major parties. It was attended by 70 family members and 15 Members of Parliament.

Also to support our Same Classroom Same Opportunity campaign, we engaged with a wide variety of stakeholders in the disability and education sectors such as Council for Intellectual Disability (CID), People

Systems Advocacy

with Disability Australia (PWDA), Physical Disability Council of NSW (PDCN), Australian Lawyers for Human Rights (ALHR), Disability Advocacy (DA), Information on Disability Education and Awareness Services (IDEAS), Australian Alliance for Inclusive Education: All Means All, Parents for ADHD Advocacy Australia (PAAA), Tasmanian Disability Reform Lobby, Queensland Collective for Inclusive Education and JFA Purple Orange.

As part of the Same Classroom Same Opportunity campaign, we attended meetings with relevant academics and researchers in Australia and internationally such as the Advocate for Children and Young People (ACYP), Australian Research Alliance for Children and Youth (ARACY), Public Schools Foundation, University of Technology Sydney's Centre for Social Justice and Inclusion, Sydney University Policy Lab, NSW Education Standards Authority (NESA), Department of Education at Macquarie University, Sydney University and University of NSW, Wayne Sailor and Elizabeth Kozleski from the University of Kansas.

In terms of meetings with Members of Parliament to raise the significant gap between policy and practice, and media engagement, we had two articles in the local paper, 35 meetings with State Members of Parliament (which includes attendance by our family members), and four Federal Members of Parliament.

We met with all of the major political parties, NSW Minister for Education and the NSW Shadow Minister for Education, plus the smaller parties such as the Shooters, Fishers and Farmers party, Animal Justice Party and the three Independents to push for an Inclusive Education Policy Statement in NSW. We are also pushing at the Federal level, to formulate a National Inclusive Education Policy.

We have developed various tools to help shift the narrative in civic society and the media, including AI's Story, a film documenting the inclusive education experience of one of our family member's son from Kindergarten to Year 12. The film will be launched later in 2019. We also:

- Prepared a written submission to the NSW Government's Education Standards Authority (NESA) NSW Curriculum Review
- Disseminated our key learnings from the New Brunswick Study Tour on Inclusive Education to relevant stakeholders and policymakers such as the Disability Discrimination Commissioner and the Parliamentary Secretary to the NSW Minister for Education
- Participated in five workshops for the Department of Education's Delivery Unit project "Improving the Outcomes for Children and Young People with Disability" as part of a stakeholder group



The Time is Now parliamentary forum on inclusive education, NSW Parliament House, October 2018

Systems Advocacy

- Attended meetings with the Secretary of the Department of Education to provide input into the Disability Strategy released in February, 2019
- Attended a meeting with the NSW Department of Education's newly established Disability Strategy Implementation Team (DSIT). We have been invited by DSIT to be part of their reference groups on various projects such as an innovation fund to explore resource models, create a one-stop online resource with information for families, a new resource to educate school and local communities about disability, and initiate an approach to track and report the learning progress of all students with disability
- Attended various talks and workshops on inclusive education such as Public Policy and Education with the Federal and State Shadow Ministers for Education.

Advocacy

Significant lobbying through the NSW Disability Advocacy Alliance's Stand By Me campaign was an ongoing exercise throughout 2018/2019 in relation to the future funding of individual and systemic advocacy. Family Advocacy is a founding member of the Alliance, which also includes the Council for Intellectual Disability (CID), People with Disability Australia (PWDA), the Physical Disability Council of NSW (PDCN), Disability Advocacy NSW (DA NSW), Information on Disability Education and Awareness Services (IDEAS) and Multicultural Disability Advocacy Association (MDAA). There were extensive discussions across NSW in relation to how best to work collectively to safeguard advocacy funding after June 2018. Largely as a result of the campaign, funding was extended to June 2020. In this regard, Family Advocacy attended meetings with many Members of Parliament including the NSW Minister for Disability Services, Gareth Ward, The Premier, Gladys Berejiklian and the Treasurer, Dominic Perrottet. The Alliance and the Stand By Me campaign will continue with a focus to secure a commitment from the NSW government to advocacy funding in perpetuity.

Additionally, Family Advocacy wrote a Submission to the NSW Legislative Council Standing Committee on Social Issues Inquiry into the provisions of the Ageing and Disability Commissioner Bill 2019. The new Commissioner is tasked with reviewing the Advocacy Sector and must provide the NSW Government with a report by the 31st of December 2019.

Leanne Varga | *Social Advocacy and Campaigns Manager*



Members of the NSW Disability Advocacy Alliance meeting with Gareth Ward MP, NSW Minister for Disability



With parent Joe Naim and Sarah Mitchell MLC, NSW Minister for Education

Resourcing Inclusive Communities

*“Before coming to this workshop
I thought I knew much of the material.
I have heard so many new tips and strategies
from the vast experience which Sharon has
brought to us today.”*

- Seven Steps to Self Direction workshop participant

Resourcing Inclusive Communities

Resourcing Inclusive Communities continues to support people with disability and their families to grow in their capacity to self direct and build meaningful lives embedded in their local communities. Events and resources aim to share real stories of people accomplishing important things with the right tailored support that enables them to contribute through valued roles in their daily lives.

Seven Steps to Self Direction workshops

In 2018 Resourcing Inclusive Communities published a resource book, *Seven Steps to Self Direction* written by Margaret Ward, Lesley Chenoweth and Sharon Bourke. This was part of a research project with Griffith University in Queensland. A workshop was also developed in conjunction with this resource and Sharon Bourke was engaged to present six workshops in NSW. Sharon is herself a parent of a person with disability and has worked through the seven step principles of self direction explored in the resource and workshop, for her son. These principles aim to put the person with disability and their life aspirations at the centre of all decision making and guide people with disability, their families, friends and paid support staff to work together effectively to fulfill a meaningful life for the person at the centre. Every workshop participant received a copy of the *Seven Steps to Self Direction* book to assist with the implementation of the principles into the future.



Emma Baxter

Circles of Support workshops

Three Circles of Support workshops were held in Bega, Ballina and Tweed Heads. All three workshops were at the request of organisations seeking information about circles of support to be presented to families in their local areas. The workshop in Bega was requested by Local Area Coordinators and was presented by Deb Rouget of Belonging Matters in Victoria. Di Samuels, a management committee member of Family Advocacy, shared her story of setting up a circle of support for her daughter. The workshops in Ballina and Tweed Heads were presented upon the request of Commonwealth Respite and Carelink Centre Far North Coast. Family Advocacy member Catherine Hogan shared her family story of setting up a circle of support for her sister. Very important conversations were held around the vulnerability of people with disability and the imperative to invite more people into the flow of their lives to build up strong support networks around the individual. These networks keep people safe and thriving into the future and beyond the time when parents or very close supporters are able to assist.

Jac's Place film

A film was made with Jacob Hughes, his family, friends and support staff sharing their journey from vision to action that enabled Jacob to live in his own home in the centre of his community. *Jac's Place* is a celebration of what is possible when expectations are set high for a person's good life, typical of what everyone values—a place of their own. Those around Jacob share how his new independence has contributed to his growing confidence and development of new skills. The film portrays an alternative choice to supported accommodation and a real pathway to ownership, control and personal sanctuary that only your own space can provide. The

Resourcing Inclusive Communities

film was launched in Newcastle and was well attended by friends and supporters of Jacob who rejoiced in the achievement of his move to independence. A heartfelt thank you to Jacob Hughes, Linda Hughes, Jac's team and friends whose enthusiasm and commitment made the project possible. The film is now on the Family Advocacy YouTube channel and the Resourcing Inclusive Communities website. There are captioned and audio described versions available.

Life Long Learners resource

A new resource was created in 2019 to showcase real stories of people learning new things at different stages of their lives. The people and families represented in the book chose to see beyond the deficits, limiting statements and low expectations set by experts, professionals, relatives and general commentators, and decided learning was an opportunity for everyone. The Life Long Learners booklet was created to acknowledge that learning is for life and everyone can learn in their own time and way with the right opportunity and encouragement. It is hoped that the book inspires others to raise their expectations of what people can achieve. It is also a call for people to never give up pursuing new things and expanding their learning experiences. Resourcing Inclusive Communities is indebted to all the individuals and their families who generously shared their stories and photos to make the resource possible. A digital version of the booklet is available on the Resourcing Inclusive Communities website. It is also available in hardcopy for distribution to spread the message of providing opportunities for people with disability to show competency and experience achievement.

Resourcing Inclusive Communities website

The Resourcing Inclusive Communities website has a new look, which was launched in late May 2019. The site is more visually appealing, user friendly and with better access to resources. We would like to thank all the people who contributed photos for the home page that reflect the connection and purpose that are central to building good lives for people in their communities.

Emma Baxter | Resourcing Inclusive Communities Manager



Seven Steps to Self Direction workshop participants (West Ryde) getting behind the Stand By Me campaign



Catherine Hogan presenting at the Circles of Support workshop (North Coast)

Finances

“They were a game changer for me and my child because they are true professionals.”

- Family Member

Financial Management

The Committee takes its fiscal responsibilities seriously and ensures the organisation is in a sound financial position at all times.

Internal financial training is included in the orientation of all new committee members and an annual financial audit is conducted by a qualified independent auditor, to ensure accounts are accurate and in accordance with the Australian Accounting Standards.

Audited statements are available to all members; see the Treasurer's Report for more specific details.

Recurring funding and One-off Grants			
	<i>ref.</i>	2018/2019	2017/2018
<i>Revenue from Commonwealth Government</i>			
Disability Advocacy	(1)	306,068	303,291
NDIS Appeals		0	161,250
<i>Revenue from NSW Government</i>			
Information Advocacy	(2)	316,116	304,133
Information Advocacy (supplementary)		0	28,054
Resourcing Inclusive Communities - Entity		0	207,880
Resourcing Inclusive Communities - Capacity Building	(3)	500,000	615,250
Grant in Aid from Department of Education	(4)	38,650	34,250
<i>Total</i>		\$1,160,834	\$1,654,108

Treasurer's Report

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

Family Advocacy is grateful for the funding provided by Government, both at federal and state levels for this financial year 2018/2019.

Federal Government Funding

(1) The Department of Social Services (DSS) continued to support the organisation through recurrent funding.

State Government Funding

NSW Department of Family and Community Services (FaCS) provided support through two streams of funding:

(2) Recurrent funding for advocacy and information work and ongoing operations of Family Advocacy.

(3) One-off grant for Resourcing Inclusive Communities.

NSW Department of Education Funding

(4) NSW Department of Education provided grant in aid.

The organisation's liabilities can be fully funded from its accumulated provisions and the organisation continues in a sound financial position. A budget for 2018/2019 has been ratified by the Management Committee.



Dianne Samuels

Donations and disclosure of interests

Donations

Family Advocacy would like to thank those who have provided financial support throughout the year through their donations to the organisation. A total of \$2,360 was received from the following givers: Pamela Morris, Jennifer Wilson, Sharon Williams, Olivia Cooper, Sarah Harvey, Jenny Fenton, Joe and Mary Naim, Joy Ho, Angela Kuo, Clara Maldonado, Julie Gay, Jeongmin Park and Marion Trabe.

Family Advocacy also acknowledges the following enterprises that have donated in kind:

- Salesforce Foundation: ten free licences of Salesforce Enterprise Edition, available for not-for-profit (NFP) organisations
- Connecting Up: discounted software and training for NFP organisations
- Microsoft: discounted software
- PC Quest: pro bono IT support.

Disclosure of Interests

I advise members of payments made to the following Committee Members: Jane Gilkes and Annette Bush received Honoraria during the year, at the standard rate set out in the Volunteer Session Leaders Policy, for their contribution towards the work of the organisation as Volunteer Session Leaders. Annette Bush also received the standard per diem travel allowance.

In accordance with the requirements of the Constitution, 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.

Dianne Samuels | Treasurer 2018/2019

Staying Connected

“Our dealings with Family Advocacy had a very big effect on our whole family and it is good to know that the answers to problems are only a phone call away.”

- Family Member

The communications role is crucial in supporting the technology, social media and media requirements as well as resource development projects of the organisation. Our communications aim to amplify the strength of families, community and advocacy, as well as connecting us with our stakeholders – people with disability, families, allies, other organisations and the general community – through resources, useful information and inspiring stories.

In 2018/2019, we utilised our own channels: websites, social media, publications, and electronic direct mail as well as external media coverage to attain the following:

- Spread awareness of our campaigns: Same Classroom Same Opportunity for an inclusive education policy in NSW and Stand By Me for ongoing funding for disability advocacy organisations in NSW
- Disseminate resources held in our three websites, YouTube channel and inclusion library
- Denounce systemic issues and call for changes to legislation, policy and services
- Share good news stories, particularly from our families
- Provide information on matters of interest to our families such as National Disability Strategy, NDIS and Royal Commission
- Provide advocacy tips, tools and strategies for families
- Promote our workshops and events.



Clara Maldonado

Websites

Family Advocacy has three websites, which are all managed internally.

Family Advocacy – www.family-advocacy.com

Our main website, which also comprises our searchable Inclusion Collection Library containing over 1,000 items, received 33.4% more page views than the previous financial year. Analytics reveal that users are mainly interested in finding out about Family Advocacy events, systemic advocacy issues, inclusive education, social role valorisation and the NDIS.

Resourcing Inclusive Communities – www.ric.org.au

This year we redeveloped the Resourcing Inclusive Communities website, which is key to providing capacity building information and resources. The new website, which was launched on 31 May, provides much easier navigation and access to tools, stories and resources. The main areas of interest for visitors are circles of support, valued roles, community connections and developing a vision.

Access: Symposium – access.family-advocacy.com

The Access: Symposium website, an interactive, content-rich inclusive education online resource developed in conjunction with the Advocacy and Leadership Development team, was completed early in 2019 and launched in social media (Facebook and Twitter) on 13 February. The launch post and tweet combined reached nearly

Communications

12,000 people, with the introductory video receiving over 4,000 views on Facebook. The actual website received 512 page views in the days following the soft launch.

Social Media

Our social media presence has grown significantly over the past 12 months. We now have two Facebook pages (Family Advocacy and Resourcing Inclusive Communities), an Instagram page dedicated to the Same Classroom Same Opportunity campaign, as well as our Twitter and YouTube channels.

In 2018/2019 our Family Advocacy Facebook page community grew from 1500 to 2100, and the posts reached nearly 200,000 people*. This is a 63% increase on the previous year (122,120 reach). 22% of traffic to our website came from Facebook posts.

We have also amplified our Twitter presence dramatically, using the channel mainly for systemic advocacy issues and campaigns. Our Twitter impressions for the year were 134,200**; a 304% increase on the previous year's reach of 33,139.

Email communications

Close to 50 mass emails were sent to our stakeholders, with approximately 80% promoting events and workshops, targeted by area. Other communications were aimed at encouraging participation in the NSW Disability Advocacy Alliance's Stand By Me Rally in February, and spreading awareness of the Same Classroom Same Opportunity campaign. There were three surveys: NSW inquiry into NDIS, NDIS supported transport and the collaborative engagement survey for parents and educators. Informative communications included Royal Commission terms of reference, changes to the NDIS portal, peer workers reclassification, every Australian Counts community forums, employment vacancies and office relocation.

Resources

A number of video and printed resources were produced this year, including seven video clips for Resourcing Inclusive Communities, which were edited in-house using footage from the 2018 Inspire conference. Jac's Place, the new Resourcing Inclusive Communities video documenting Jacob Hughes' move to live independently was captioned and uploaded to YouTube, receiving nearly 500 views following the launch in mid-June.

We also reprinted the Seven Steps to Self Direction and Developing Community Connection booklets, and produced a new booklet, Life Long Learners, comprising fifteen positive stories of people with disability. All of these resources are available online as well as hard copies.

Resources created for the Advocacy and Leadership Development team included an Access: Symposium branded USB containing a video trailer which will be used to promote the website; and a new look brochure outlining our vision, mission and services.

Media coverage

This year we reached out to media outlets – radio, newspapers and online publications on a number of occasions.

In December 2019 we sent out a media release promoting the stall we held at Hornsby Mall on International Day of People with Disabilities. The purpose of the stall was to raise awareness of the Same Classroom Same

* The total number of unique users who had any content from our page or about our page enter their screens.

** A total tally of all the times the Tweet has been seen.

Opportunity campaign and collect signatures and photo pledges. As a result, the local community radio station, Hornsby Ku-Ring-Gai Triple 100.1FM invited our Executive Officer to speak about Family Advocacy and the campaign. The interview was aired on Friday 30 November and also uploaded to their Facebook page. Also in response to the media release, the Hornsby Advocate published an article on 20 December, titled "Inclusive schools better for all", featuring parent advocate Penny Graham and her son Alex. The article mentioned the campaign and included quotes from our Executive Officer.

In the first half of 2019, we promoted the One of the Kids workshops widely. This involved sending out media releases to newspapers and community radio stations, and interviewing a parent, Joe Naim who shared his experience as a workshop participant. An article with Joe's story was published by the Fairfield City Champion ahead of the Smithfield workshop, and we also received free coverage in the Bankstown Advocate, ABC Radio New England, ABC Radio Wollongong, Ryde Regional Radio and Radio 2AD FM in Armidale. Some of the radio promotions included interviews with members of the ALD team.

Online coverage included an opinion piece by our Executive Officer, entitled "Inclusive education high in the NSW election agenda, but future of students with disabilities still unclear", which was published ahead of the NSW Elections in the Pro Bono News Australia website. The Educator online magazine included quotes from our Executive Officer on their piece "Government's Disability Strategy Called into Question" taken from a media release we sent out following the launch of the NSW Department of Education's Disability Strategy.

Clara Maldonado | Media and Digital Communications Manager



INCLUSIVE SCHOOLS BETTER FOR ALL

Maryanne Taouk

Alex Graham was riding high during his school formal. Like many others in his year group at Turramurra High School, he had spent the year studying hard, had made it through the tough HSC exams and was ready to let his hair down.

At 18, Alex, or "Al" to his friends, has lived his entire life with cerebral palsy. He cannot walk, stand or sit without help but just like his three older sisters, he spent each day in a mainstream class from his first day of kindergarten until his final graduation.

"Al had forged friendships in preschool and we wanted to continue that in primary school and later on in high school," his mother Penny Graham said.

"My daughter once told me, 'just because you have a brain tumour doesn't mean you should go to school with only children with brain tumours,' and that's what we've carried along with Al."

Ms Graham is advocating for inclusive schooling opportunities for more children with disabilities as part of Family Advocacy, a NSW organisation based in Hornsby. The group's latest campaign is, "same classroom, same opportunity".

"It has always been paramount for us that Al has a fully inclusive life and a fully inclusive education," Ms Graham said. "Our story shows that it can be a very positive experience not just for our son but also for his peer group, and his whole community."

Family Advocacy chief executive Cecile Sullivan Elder said families often felt like outcasts when their child was excluded from activities because of their disability.

"This segregation sends a clear message to that child that they are different, to be placed 'over there' and of lesser value than a child without a disability," Ms Sullivan Elder said. "In addition, this exclusion from the local school for children with disability is in conflict with the United Nations Convention on the Rights of People with Disability."

Penny and Alex Graham with Hornsby Mayor Phillip Ruddock. Picture: Tim Pascoe

Hornsby Advocate, 20 December 2019

Operations and People

“Family Advocacy is fortunate to have the staff that they have because they come across as being very creative in their approach.”

- Family Member

Quality Assurance

The quality of work of Family Advocacy was attested to by the Re-certification against the National Standards for Disability Services (2014) based on the audit conducted by our third party QA auditors.

Some of the feedback provided by the family members interviewed by the audit team can be found in the section headings throughout this report.

Risk Management

The Management Committee of Family Advocacy ensures that the organisation is functioning to a high standard in carrying out its vision and mission. As an organisation, Family Advocacy takes its responsibilities seriously and is committed to ensuring that it will be around for the long term to respond to and serve the needs of people with disability and their families.

In this view, the organisation covers itself against all forms of risk. Processes and measures are in place to minimise and/or address potential risk in the areas of finance, work health and safety, security, and legal as well as reputation, privacy and confidentiality. Risk is addressed on a governance as well as operational level.

Risk assessment and management is a regular agenda item in Management Committee meetings as well as staff meetings via the Work Health and Safety (WHS).

The appropriate types and levels of insurances are in place including business insurance, public liability (which includes personal accident insurance covering both staff and volunteers), motor vehicle insurance and worker's compensation policies. Last year, the organisation commenced a cyber-insurance policy to protect us from technology issues such as hacking and ransomware, which we had experienced the previous year. This new policy is now part of the standard insurance coverage that Family Advocacy will maintain.

Technical measures have been strengthened by our Information Technology (IT) contractors to provide a safety net for our technology and data resources. Policies and practices of the organisation are reviewed periodically to ensure relevance and address any risk factors. The policies that underpin Family Advocacy's actions are distributed to the membership bi-annually for review. The operational practices are also reviewed by staff so that they remain relevant and up to date. This is part of our commitment towards continuous improvement and sustainability.

Internal Resources and Data Collection

Family Advocacy has various resources to carry out its activities including human resources, Information and Communications Technology (ICT), its database, and the Inclusion Collection library.

Human Resources

The most valuable asset of the organisation is its human resources. Family Advocacy has operational and HR policies and procedures in place to ensure an environment conducive to staff working collectively, collaboratively and in harmony as they execute their individual and team functions. One year on from the move of the office premises to Hornsby, there is an on-going appreciation for the fresh new physical space, with amenities for personal fitness and wellness available for staff to take advantage of. There have been new opportunities for better collaboration and better ways of working. The organisation has endeavoured to provide staff with flexible working arrangements that allow them to maintain their commitment to their work as well as family priorities.

Family Advocacy's capacity to do good work with families of people with disability increased during the year with the increase in staff numbers corresponding with funding availability.

Operations and people

Through the years, we have always acknowledged the importance of ensuring that staff keep their knowledge and skills set up-to-date in order for them to carry out their duties effectively and efficiently. All staff are encouraged to develop their personal and professional skills. Training and workshops that support and enhance knowledge and insight into the foundational pillars of the organisation are encouraged, such as Social Role Valorisation (SRV) and PASSING workshops. This year, a number of staff, both long standing and new, undertook such training.

Opportunities include leadership workshops, attendance at relevant events, forums, public hearings and conferences, nationally and internationally.

Professional development benefits to Family Advocacy are:

- Nurturing of links with like-minded organisations and families
- Contributions to a dynamic and updated knowledge base that can be drawn upon when advising and informing families
- Opportunities to provide leadership in the industry and help families develop their own leadership skills
- Contributing to and informing policy input to government
- Attendance at the Human Rights Awards ceremony and a strengths-based internal workshop in December 2018 was a timely end of year activity for staff. It provided an interesting perspective of others working in the broader sector of human rights while the staff workshop provided insights on the strengths and attributes contributed by individual colleagues working within a team setting.

Information Communication Technology (ICT)

In the fast paced world of technology, it is important to keep updating this resource in the organisation. The way we work has changed by leaps and bounds over the past ten years. What used to be paper-heavy work and postal distribution is now online and digitally distributed. The use of social media has allowed us to reach more families in the remote and regional areas of NSW. With staff enabled to work remotely and offsite, as needed, we are always looking to improve both hardware and software. Through a grant, Family Advocacy recently installed an interactive whiteboard facility and Zoom video conferencing facility. It is now used extensively for meetings, internally and externally. We are looking forward to more opportunities for collaboration and other creative uses in reaching families.

Database and Data Collection

Our improvement processes also involve ensuring the quality of the data on our database. This is becoming increasingly important due to the fact that data reporting to the Federal government is being conducted through a data exchange portal. Much work has been undertaken over the past year to develop the database further to improve its current use and efficiencies, cater to the changing needs of the organisation and to move it to its new not for profit platform on Salesforce.

Inclusion Collection

Family Advocacy houses one of the largest collection of resources on inclusion in Australia. This is a collection from resources around the world, built up over the life of the organisation. Providing information on inclusion research, family experiences and discussions by experts is one of the core functions of the organisation.

Scanned articles and booklets of the Inclusion Collection library are now able to be emailed to those who request them. Our extensive range of books are also available for loan. The catalogue of all the resources in the Inclusion Collection sits on the Family Advocacy website under Resources.

WHS and Environmental Footprint

Work Health and Safety

Work Health and Safety (WHS) of the staff is an intrinsic responsibility of the organisation and is built into the roles, processes and considerations within the workplace.

Family Advocacy has a first aid trained staff member, with up-to-date qualifications, on the team. The appointment of a WHS Representative, currently the Office Manager, ensures WHS practices are implemented and issues are addressed. Regular inspections are conducted internally to assess possible hazards and safety issues within the premises.

WHS policies and practices are included in staff orientation and it is also part of the staff meeting agenda which will allow staff to raise any concerns around this. Needless to say, WHS issues and any incidents that occur within or outside of the Family Advocacy office, in the course of work, can be raised with and reported to the WHS Representative at any point in time. Incidents are recorded to ensure they are acted on appropriately.

Family Advocacy is committed to supporting the wellness of staff evidenced by the use of height adjustable desks at work as well as gym and pool facilities in the building for the benefit of staff.

Environmental footprint

As the organisation carries out its activities to improve the lives of people with disability, we also strive to consider the environment in our day-to-day operations. The move to the new premises pushed the organisation to reduce its hard copy resources as well as all its unnecessary paper copies. There is a concerted effort to internally work with and externally distribute digital copies over paper work where possible. Staff are individually and collectively conscious about printing unnecessarily. As such, there has been a large reduction in paper wastage.

The organisation continues to recycle paper, plastic, glass, and tin containers, as well as use environmentally friendly products.



Family Advocacy and Resourcing Inclusive Communities teams, December 2018

Staff 2018/2019



Cecile Sullivan Elder
Executive Officer



Karen Tippet
Advocacy and Leadership
Development Manager



Leanne Varga
Social Advocacy and
Campaigns Manager



Emma Baxter
Resourcing Inclusive
Communities Manager



Clara Maldonado
Communications Manager



Marybelle Ignacio
Office Manager



Paul Barrett
Accounts, Administration
and Events Coordinator



Jacqueline Currey
Advocacy and Leadership
Development Coordinator



Kim Becherand
Advocacy and Leadership
Development: Projects



Penny Graham
Capacity Development
Officer



Anxiu (Ashley) Liao
Work Experience Student
(April - June 2019)

Acronyms and Abbreviations

AAT	Administrative Appeals Tribunal
ACYP	Advocate for Children and Young People
ALD	Advocacy and Leadership Development
ALHR	Australian Lawyers for Human Rights
ARACY	Australian Research Alliance for Children and Youth
CID	Council for Intellectual Disability
CRU	Community Resource Unit
DA NSW	Disability Advocacy NSW
DoE	Department of Education
DSIT	Disability Strategy Implementation Team
DSS	Department of Social Services
FaCS	Department of Family and Community Services
ICT	Information Communication Technology
IDEAS	Information on Disability Education and Awareness Services
MDAA	Multicultural Disability Advocacy Association
NDIA	National Disability Insurance Agency
NDIS	National Disability Insurance Scheme
NACBO	National Alliance of Capacity Building Organisations
NESA	NSW Education Standards Authority
PAAA	Parents for ADHD Advocacy Australia
PDCN	Physical Disability Council NSW
PWDA	People with Disability Australia
RIC	Resourcing Inclusive Communities
SRV	Social Role Valorisation
WHS	Work Health and Safety



familyadvocacy



FamAdvocacyNSW



familyadvocacynsw



**02 9869 0866
1800 620 588**



www.family-advocacy.com