

2022 – 2023

# Annual Report



side by side advocacy

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# About Us

## Who we are

Side By Side Advocacy is an independent, community-based advocacy organisation that promotes and upholds the rights, needs and interests of people with intellectual disability to enable full and meaningful participation in the community.

## Our Vision

We envisage a world where people with disability are equal and valued; where diversity is celebrated, needs are fulfilled and opportunities realised.

## Advocacy is

Speaking, acting and or writing with a minimum conflict of interest on behalf of the sincerely perceived interest of a person with disability in order to promote, protect and defend their interests, rights and needs. Advocacy strives to be independent, empathic and vigorous and can be costly to advocates.

At Side By Side Advocacy, advocates are side by side with someone when they are facing challenging situations, navigating complex systems, dealing with uncertainty, or being treated unfairly.

The definition of advocacy has been adapted from the original definition of Wolf Wolfensberger (1992), in his 1992 presentation titled Social Advocacies on behalf of devalued and disadvantaged people.

## Our purpose

Side By Side Advocacy promotes and upholds the rights, needs and interests of people with disability to enable full and meaningful participation in the community.

We recognise that people with intellectual disability experience particular barriers in having their voices heard and needs met and for that reason we specialise in providing advocacy for people with intellectual disability.

## Our 5 Primary Focus Areas

- Citizen Advocacy
- Individual Advocacy
- National Disability Insurance Scheme Appeal Support
- Disability Royal Commission Advocacy
- Inclusive Governance Research



## Our Values

### Inclusive

We embrace diversity and treat everyone with dignity and respect



### Accountable

We are transparent and ethical in all we do



### Tenacious

We act with vigour and a determination to achieve the best results



## Our Way of Working

We are committed to providing high quality advocacy for people with disability. Our advocacy puts people with disability first and is not motivated by other interests. We strive to minimise conflicts of interests and our processes are fair and transparent. Our way of working affirms the dignity, independence, and autonomy of people with disability. We seek to maximise opportunities for people with disability to take control of their lives and live a good life as contributing members of their community. Our advocacy is tailored to suit the unique needs of each person seeking assistance. We work respectfully and sensitively with diverse cultural groups and with First Nations People and members of the LGBTQIA+ communities.



## Our Principles

Each person's life is of equal and inherent value and worth

People with disability have the right to advocacy and to protection from devaluation, neglect, abuse and the denial of human rights

People with disability have the right to be treated as individuals, and not in terms of their disability

All people are entitled to comprehensive and appropriate support to ensure full inclusion into the community

All people have the right to make decisions about their own lives

All people should be treated with dignity and respect

All people have the right to be safe, valued and accepted

All people have the potential to grow and develop and should be provided with opportunities

All people have the same human and legal rights regardless of age, race, disability, religious belief, sex, sexuality and gender identity

People with disability are to be treated in accordance to the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities

## Chairperson's Report

2022 – 23 has been a busy and challenging year for the Board of Management of Side By Side Advocacy. All members of the Board are volunteers – the goodwill, time and dedication of each member has made a positive impact on the efficacy of the Board. I would like to thank all members for the expertise, life experience and dedication that they have brought to their roles this year.



**Coralie Jensen**  
**Chair of Side By Side Advocacy Board**

In particular, I would like to acknowledge the dedication of Ruth Perram. Ruth joined the Board in 2013 and has served as secretary since 2014. Ruth contributed countless hundreds of hours attending to the often unrecognised but vital compliance tasks of the Board. Ruth has decided that it is time to pass the baton onto someone else. Ruth's generosity and attention to detail will be hard to match - although we are very fortunate to have identified a new member to take on the role of Secretary going forward. We will not lose Ruth's wisdom or knowledge as she will be continuing as an ordinary member. This expected change will occur after 2023 Annual General Meeting.

Every now and then something crops up that is not predictable requiring everyone in the association to dig deep, think outside the square and pull out all stops to ensure that challenges put before us are be treated as opportunities, rather than problems. Each February the Board holds a planning day. One of the issues identified during our risk management evaluation was the growing inadequacy of the premises in West Ryde.

While there were many positive attributes to current office space (15 year connection to community, access to transport and parking, pleasant setting in keeping with Social Role Valorisation values, affordable rental... to name a few)

the lack of space and absence of private offices to have confidential conversations and interviews was identified as a potential risk to the effective delivery of our advocacy. We undertook to keep a lookout for suitable premises that ticked all the boxes, while still being affordable.

Be careful what you wish for!

In April we were given notice by our landlords that we needed to vacate the premises. And so the hunt was on, now with urgency, for suitable yet affordable premises. It soon became clear that our wish list was not attainable on our budget. We could see this a problem or an opportunity – and with the positive attitude of the Executive Officer and staff the choice was easy. A suitable and affordable office was located in Parramatta.

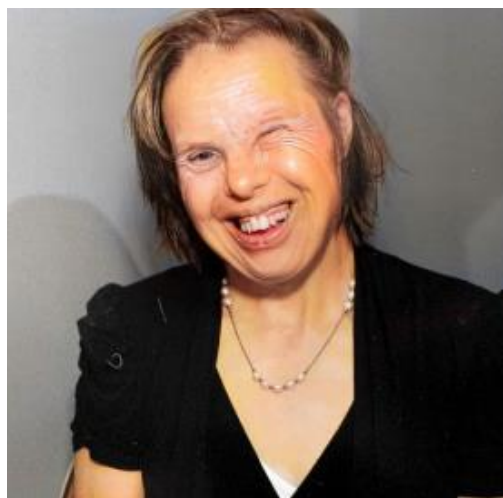
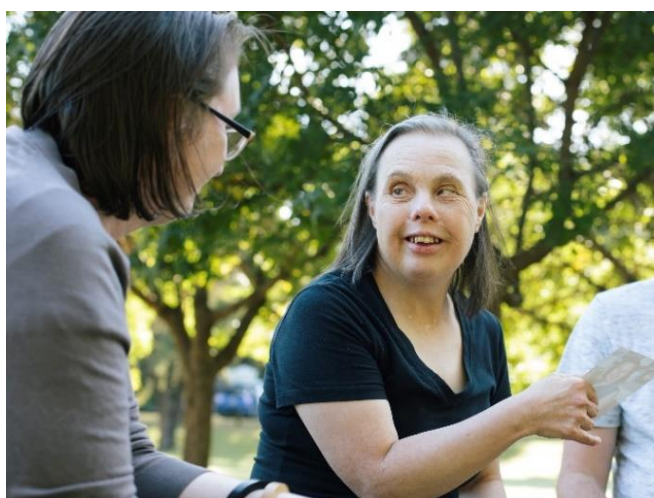


Our West Ryde office (left) and the location of our Parramatta Office (right)

Although moving outside Ryde Local Government Area for the first time in 30 years was a difficult call, it also meant an opportunity to develop and strengthen relationships in an area in which we already provided advocacy. Through an enormous amount of effort, cooperation and sheer hard work, the move took place seamlessly, with no downtime for clients and program participants. My heartfelt thanks everyone who made this happen so efficiently, and for the positivity that transformed a challenge into an opportunity.

While saying goodbye to Ryde was difficult, it was not our only significant farewell this year. After ten years in the role as Citizen Advocacy Coordinator, Deb Maio decided that it was time for her to retire, and her last day will be on 4 July 2023. Deb made a wonderful contribution to the Citizen Advocacy Program during her tenure matching, supporting and establishing citizen advocacy relationships. Deb's passion and enthusiasm were outstanding, as was her contribution to the organisation as a whole. We wish Deb all the best in her future ventures.

One of the participants in the Citizen Advocacy program passed away this year. Sarah had been part of the Citizen Advocacy program since 1997. Many of us knew Sarah well as she was a regular at the Side By Side Advocacy cocktail parties and other events of the association. Sarah will be missed and fondly remembered. Our condolences to her friends, family, work colleagues and Lisa, her citizen advocate.



Updating the constitution of Side By Side Advocacy is a project that the Board has been working on for the past two years, and this is certainly not a task that we considered to be a usual function of our day to day activities. Such a project involved copious amounts of reading, researching, drafting and redrafting. We undertook much consultation along the way with stakeholders and experts from inside and outside the organisation.

We believe that the version being presented to the membership at the Annual General Meeting in 2023 is compliant with all relevant legislation and supports the organisation into the future as we strive to model inclusive practises and provide a leadership in advocacy provision. Thank you to everyone who was involved in this major undertaking.

It is heartening indeed to see that our membership has grown over the past year. Some of these members have expressed an interest in joining our Board. This undoubtedly reflects the significant effort that has gone into promoting our association in the community. Our promotional materials, the new role of Communications and Information Officer, and the 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Citizen Advocacy celebration were just some of the ways that Side By Side Advocacy engaged with the wider community this year, with the aim of increasing awareness and understanding of our work. Our new, accessible website will continue to build on this work.

Through outreach associated with our role in supporting people considering making a submission to the Disability Royal Commission and through our many workshops and co-design activities, Side By Side Advocacy has grown in status and reputation – even taking out a Highly Commended Award at the Northern Districts Small Business Awards in November 2022.



I would like to commend and thank the staff for their skill, dedication, and tenacity again this year. The team, so ably led by Kim Roots, is a cohesive and collative group of professionals. They have shown flexibly, resilience, good humour, and good grace throughout the year. The staff do an amazing job and continue to make a difference, every day in the lives of people with disability. It is an honour and privilege for the Board to carry out its role of governance, so that the operational staff are supported to do their work in an inclusive, accountable, and tenacious way.

### **Chair of Board**

Coralie Jensen

## Executive Officer's Report

2022 – 2023 has been a year of both change and of continuity.

One thing that has continued is high demand for advocacy. Side By Side Advocacy's reputation as a specialist advocacy provider for people with intellectual disability continues to grow. This has resulted in more referrals and more people with disability seeking advocacy.

We continued to demonstrate our commitment to proactive advocacy as we celebrated more than 30+ years of Citizen Advocacy at Side By Side Advocacy.

We hosted an event that brought together colleagues, friends and allies who have played a part in the Side By Side Advocacy journey over those many years.

We also created a video about Citizen Advocacy to help people understand the way the program works and encourage local citizens to get involved.

It has been a year where there has been particular scrutiny of the life experiences of people with disability and the barriers to inclusion. Significantly, the Disability Royal Commission invited people with disability and their allies to share their experiences of abuse, neglect and exploitation and their suggestions for change.



**Kim Roots**  
**Executive Officer**

Side By Side Advocacy shared specialist expertise and insights to inform these enquiries. We supported people to make submissions and made a submission based on our experience. We also participated in consultations and contributed to papers.



We have acted locally, including participating in the City of Ryde Council Access and Inclusion Committee. We also acted nationally via our systemic advocacy and contributions to the work of the Disability Advocacy Network Australia (DANA).

As an organisation we continue to model inclusive practices. Our Inclusive Governance team has been sharing research findings about meaningfully including people with intellectual disability in organizational decision making – including on management committees and Boards. We have continued to develop a suite of plain English and Easy Read resources. We have new, accessible business cards. We use accessible fonts in our communications. We have a new website with accessibility features that is due to be launched soon.

There have also been big changes.

We increased the geographical area we provide individual advocacy (IA) to include Parramatta and surrounds. We have also expanded the areas we provide advocacy across the Hills and Ku-ring-gai. This allows us to provide advocacy to a greater number of people with disability.

In a significant change, we moved offices in June. We left West Ryde after 15 years at Herbert Street – and after more than 30 years in the local area. Our new office in Parramatta offers more space and is well located for a range of public transport.



We have also created and hosted new events. ‘My life, my way’ was one event co-designed and co-presented by people with intellectual disability. More events are planned. We hope these events will offer opportunities for skill development and peer networking.

I want to extend my appreciation to everyone who has contributed their time, skills, life experiences and commitment to the change making work of the organisation. This includes the fabulous Board, staff, co-designers, presenters, workshop attendees and sector allies.

In this time of sector change, the team at Side By Side Advocacy is looking forward to continuing our work to promote the rights, needs and interests of people with disability.

**Executive Officer**  
Kim Roots

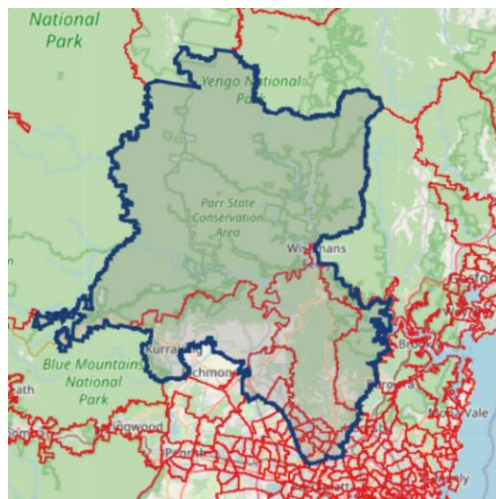
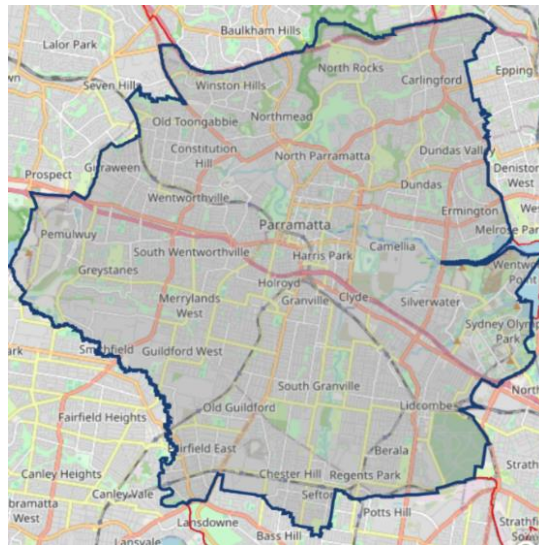
## Systemic Advocacy

Our systemic advocacy has involved multiple strategies.

- We made submissions to the Disability Royal Commission including about the importance specialist advocacy for people with intellectual disability and the preliminary findings of our research about inclusive governance.
- We contributed to a consultation by the Bureau of Crime Statistics and Research into support needs of people with complex support needs who engage with the criminal justice system in NSW.
- We shared insights with the NSW Department of Education about the impacts of Covid19 on students with disability.
- We provided feedback on the Intellectual Disability Health Capability Framework to the Department of Health and Aged Care.
- We are members of the Citizen Advocacy Trust Advisory Committee.
- Staff participated as Citizen Advocacy Program Evaluation (CAPE) team members of a Queensland Citizen Advocacy Program.
- We shared insights at the Quality and Safeguards Commission Advocacy Forum in Melbourne.
- We provided input to Zero Barriers about the inclusion of people with intellectual disability in community settings.
- We are members of the City of Ryde Inclusion and Access Working Group and provide insights about including people with disability.
- The Executive Officer is a Director of Disability Advocacy Network Australia (DANA) and attends meetings relating to sector issues.
- We are members of the NSW Disability Advocacy Network and contribute our insights to the systemic efforts of the network.
- We contributed to Disability Advocacy Network Australia's submission relating to Administrative Review Reform.
- We made an oral and written submission to the National Disability Insurance Scheme - Independent Expert Review.

## Side By Side Advocacy's expanded IA geographical coverage

Parramatta



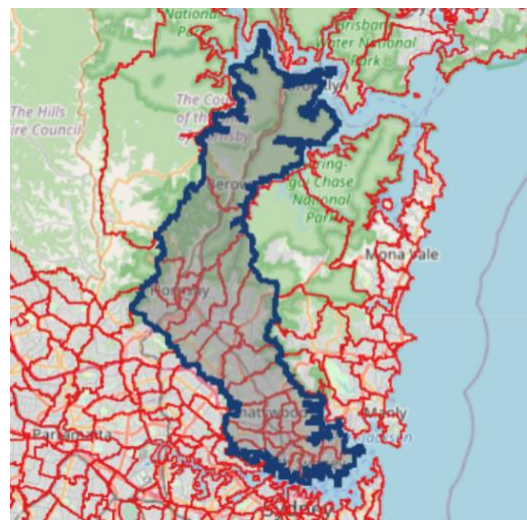
Baulkham Hills and Hawkesbury



Ryde



Northern Beaches



North Sydney

# Citizen Advocacy

Citizen Advocacy promotes and protects the rights, needs and interests of people with intellectual disability. It does this by connecting a person with intellectual disability who has unmet needs with a citizen who is interested in having a long-term connection with that person

Side By Side Advocacy started with a Citizen Advocacy Program and in 2022 we celebrated 30+ years of Citizen Advocacy.

The Citizen Advocacy Program began because of a recognition of the unmet needs of people with intellectual disability living in the Ryde and Hunter's Hill areas.

Unlike other forms of advocacy, citizen advocacy is proactive, ongoing and is provided by a person who is unpaid.



**Deb Maio**  
**Citizen Advocacy**  
**Coordinator**

For people with intellectual disability with few, if any, freely given relationships, having someone to do fun things with, to act as a sounding board and to help them to speak up about issues can be life changing.

Citizen advocates spoke up about a range of issues including:

- critical equipment that did not work
- the opportunity to do fun things rather than just stay at home
- significant health needs
- the opportunity to have a job
- people with disability experiencing neglect.

“I see it as a long term commitment. I always feel good after we meet.

### Reflections from a citizen advocate

There were also many birthday celebrations, catch-ups over coffee and reunions of long lost friends.

One highlight was the gathering to celebrate more than 30 years of Citizen Advocacy at Side By Side Advocacy.



The event brought together people who have made a fabulous contribution to the organisation over many years. There were people with disability, citizen advocates, former board members and a whole range of highly valued stakeholders.

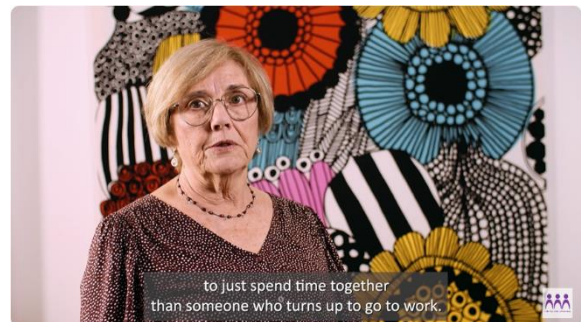
We appreciated that colleagues from other advocacy organisations and community groups attended to help us celebrate. The event was possible due to funding from City of Ryde Council.



Another highlight was the creation of a video to promote Citizen Advocacy. A big thanks to Max, David, Chris, Jeannette and Angela who participated in the video.



Make a difference in your local area as a citizen advocate



Make a difference in your local area as a citizen advocate



A coming change is the departure of our fabulous and highly respected Citizen Advocacy Coordinator, Deb Maio. In July 2023, Deb will be retiring after 10 years at Side By Side Advocacy - and many years before that in the disability sector. Her contribution has been enormous and she will be missed.

# Individual Advocacy

Individual Advocacy is one-to-one advocacy support for people with disability when they are in difficult situations or being treated unfairly. Side By Side Advocacy specializes in providing advocacy for people with intellectual disability.

2022 – 2023 has been a very busy year for the Individual Advocacy team. We have provided advocacy support in the way that best suits the needs of the person seeking advocacy.

This included supporting people to self-advocate where possible. Sometimes, people seeking advocacy have limited capacity to self-advocate due to their personal circumstances or support needs. Where self-advocacy was not possible, we worked alongside friends, allies and family members of people with disability, where appropriate. We also spoke up on behalf of people with disability.

## Advocacy included:

- Speaking up for people with disability to have safe, appropriate, accommodation
- Securing essential repairs in rental accommodation
- Ensuring children with disability to have the support they need at school
- Supporting people to get critical medical treatments
- Assisting people with disability to get the support they need to be included in their community
- Escalating complaints about poor service provider conduct
- Supporting people to access savings via the NSW Trustee and Guardian.

Assistance to make decisions is frequently an important aspect of advocacy support. This need arises for a range of reasons. For some people, it is due to their age or the nature of their disability.

Many people seeking advocacy have experienced barriers to community engagement and may have had limited life experiences. For this cohort, advocacy may include the chance to try out new things that are conceptually unfamiliar. It sometimes includes drawing images or showing photographs. It often includes multiple advocacy sessions to allow time to consider options.



**Preeti Thadani**  
**Senior Individual Advocate**

Our trauma informed approach includes advocates meeting with people in a location that suits them.

It could be our office, their home, a local café or other public space such as a library.

Throughout the year, we also introduced people seeking advocacy support to other professionals such as legal services, as appropriate. On occasion, we worked alongside these professionals to provide communication support.

**“...you have helped me so much, you always listen to me....and understand me.”**

**“Thank you for giving me a solution. You turned the problem around and saw something I didn’t see.”**

Individual Advocacy is available to people with disability in most locations in the Northern Region of Greater Sydney and in Parramatta and Cumberland Local Government Areas.



**“Your help is life changing and you’re there for me whenever I need you.... You were the one who held my hand, went through the darkest days of my life! I feel great after opening up, thanks for the opportunity”.**

# National Disability Insurance Scheme – Appeals Support

Appeals Support assists people with disability who want to have a review of a decision made by the National Disability Insurance Agency in the Administrative Appeals Tribunal (AAT).

This support can be: explaining the review process, including what is involved in appealing to the AAT; helping to prepare documents; and providing advice and skills so appellants can better represent themselves

NDIS Appeals Support is available for people with disability in Greater Sydney.

Features of the year are noted below.

- High demand for National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) appeals advocacy with requests throughout the year far outnumbering available supports.
- Advocacy organisations providing NDIS Appeals support across the state, were at capacity and largely not taking on any new clients making it challenging to make referrals.
- Wait-times for one-off advice sessions at Legal Aid and the Administrative Appeals Tribunal were also long, with people with disability often waiting months for a one hour advice session.
- In addition to these challenges, it was announced that the Administrative Appeals Tribunal would be shutting down. This caused considerable confusion as no clear information was available beyond stating that all cases would be heard.

In response to these challenging set of circumstances, Side By Side Advocacy offered information and guidance sessions for anyone seeking appeals support advocacy.

Providing one to one information sessions was a highly successful strategy in meeting advocacy need in the community and supporting individuals to self-advocate at the tribunal in lieu of on-going advocacy support.

Side By Side Advocacy has received excellent feedback with people reporting that the session empowered them to:

- engage in tribunal processes / procedures
- negotiate with agency representation
- prepare documents for appeal
- apply for legal services.



**Tina Huang**  
**Advocate**

We were frequently told that without the advice session, the person with disability would have made serious mistakes during hearings such as missed time-limits or failed to comply with directions.

Ongoing advocacy support has also been provided for people with disability who would have found it challenging to self-advocate or to access advocacy from a non-specialist organisation.

Advocates have also engaged in advocacy aimed at improving systems relating to appeals. For example, Side By Side Advocacy was invited to provide a submission to the NDIA Independent Expert Review Program Evaluation.

Information has also been shared with other organisations to enhance the capacity of others in the sector.

**“I would have been completely lost at the AAT without the one-off advice that Tina provided.”**

**“Tina is the reason we finally got the support for my son.”**

Jane (not her real name) is an example of a person with disability who received advocacy support to appeal a decision of the AAT.

Jane needed help to access the NDIS. The nature of her support needs made it unsafe for Jane to engage in self-care and daily living activities. On one occasion she experienced serious injuries while cleaning. She was seeking help with daily living tasks from the hospital. And yet, Jane had very low prospects of success according to the Legal Aid referral.

Jane had been trying to gain access to the NDIS for several years and had recently turned 65. People over 65 are not eligible to access the NDIS so this was her final opportunity. This made Jane’s circumstances more urgent.

Some ways the advocate worked with Jane were to:

- obtain evidence of her needs including from the hospital that had been helping with daily living tasks
- negotiating for the NDIS to pay for an independent assessment so that an Occupational Therapist could verify risks to Jane’s safety
- assist Jane to explain her situation including at the AAT.

Jane obtained the support she needs. Jane was deeply grateful for the advocacy of Side By Side Advocacy.

**“Tina helped me feel listened and heard.”**

## Disability Royal Commission Advocacy

The Disability Royal Commission looked into how to:

- stop people with disability experiencing violence, abuse, neglect and exploitation
- be better at reporting, investigating and responding when people with disability experience violence, abuse, neglect and exploitation
- work towards a more inclusive society.

Throughout the Disability Royal Commission, Side By Side Advocacy engaged with people characterised by the Disability Royal Commission as being from ‘hard to reach communities’. This included people living and working in disability specific contexts such as semi-devolved institutions and Australian Disability Enterprises.

One person summarised their experience of devaluation eloquently as follows:

**‘...my time isn’t worth anything, but if I keep them awaiting, I get in trouble.’**

We embraced trauma informed practices. We listened to the needs of the cohort we engaged with. We worked at the pace desired by the person considering their submission.

Key learnings were:

- Trust takes time to earn – same time, same place, same people
- Relationships are indispensable
- The seemingly trivial can be the most consequential
- Moving beyond purely reactive advocacy allows for lasting change
- Advocacy that meets people where they are at – literally and metaphorically – works.

Embracing and acting on these learnings allowed people with significant cognitive and/or communication support needs the time and space to move from the 'trivial' to the sophisticated articulation of their experiences, values and aspirations.

For some people, nurturing an ongoing advocacy relationship resulted in meaningful life outcomes that would not otherwise have been possible.

Some outcomes were:

- For one person, premature entry to a residential aged care facility was averted.
- For one person, it was the sense of having left the abuse behind that allowed them the chance to begin catching up on the life that had been taken from them.
- For one person, it was the opportunity to build a support network of their own choosing that allowed them to flourish.
- For another, it was being able to teach peers about their rights and what it means to have valued status.
- For a few people, it meant choosing where they lived for the first time in their life.
- For many people, it was re-establishing connections which had been severed by the actions of others.

Side By Side Advocate, Cathy Milne, gave evidence at Public Hearing 32 in Brisbane. She was one of four advocates selected by Kate Eastman AM SC, Counsel Assisting the Royal Commission. Cathy's invitation was issued following advocacy support to Public Hearing witness 'Charlotte' who gave evidence at the public hearing on Homelessness, and the work done to support 'Charlotte' build skills and supports to move on from abuse and violence.



**Cathy Milne**  
**Senior Disability Royal**  
**Commission Advocate**

**After giving evidence and moving on from the experiences of abuse: “I just want to live a life.”**

As the Royal Commission wound down, Side By Side Advocacy embraced additional strategies including hosting workshops for people with disability. The content of these workshops was informed by the information and ideas people with disability told us they needed throughout the Royal Commission. One workshop was called ‘My life, my way’. It was co-designed and co-presented by people with intellectual disability. The workshop was described by one participant as ‘life changing.’



The Disability Royal Commission has now come to an end. The final report is expected in October 2023.

## Inclusive Governance Project

**Inclusive governance is about people from many backgrounds and life experiences being involved in the management and decision making of organisations.**

**Side By Side Advocacy is researching the experience of inclusion of people with intellectual disability on management committees and boards.**



**Inclusive Governance Research Team –  
Dr Bernadette Curryer, Inclusive Governance Project Officer  
Will Harding, Co-researcher  
Katrina Sneath, Co-researcher**

The Inclusive Governance Project has continued to explore the experience of Board membership by people with intellectual disability. We are using what we have learnt to guide the development of resources to enable organisations to implement increased inclusion at a governance level.

An extension of funding from the Australian Government's Department of Social Services (DSS) was received, allowing the project to continue after the original end of February 2023, until mid-2024.

The research component of the project has now been completed with a total of 27 participants being interviewed. (5 Board members with intellectual disability, 5 Board members with a physical/sensory disability, 4 Board members without reported disability, 8 Executive Officers or other staff members, 4 Board support people and 1 Board Observer). These participants talked about their experience in 21 community organisations.

5 themes emerged from the interviews. These themes reported the impact of inclusive governance, pathways to Board membership, experiences that effect Board inclusion, support received and concerns that became barriers. The findings of the research informed the development of 5 Principles of Inclusive Governance:

1. Inclusion of people with intellectual disability in the decision-making and governance of community organisations is valued.
2. There are clear pathways to Board membership for people with intellectual disability.
3. Board meetings and activities are accessible, meeting the inclusion needs of people with intellectual disability.
4. Individualised, skilled support is provided.
5. There is a commitment to making Inclusive Governance work.

There were a number of activities undertaken that supported the project, to complete the research, create resources, and disseminate findings. People with lived experience were involved whenever possible.

## Snapshot of activities 2022/2023



30 interview transcriptions  
analysed



31 hours of audio recordings



3 Consultative Reference  
Group meetings



2 co-researchers



17 new organisational  
contacts



22 sector meetings



## 1 Disability Royal Commission submission

asid

### RESEARCH AND PRACTICE IN INTELLECTUAL AND DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES

INTELLECTUAL DISABILITY, RIGHTS, INCLUSION, PARTICIPATION, RELATIONSHIPS, PRAXIS, SERVICE, SYSTEMS, POLICY, PRACTICE, EQUALITY, DISCRIMINATION, PARTNERSHIPS, INDIVIDUALS, FAMILIES, ADULTS, CHILDREN, THEORY, PRACTICE, PERSON CENTRED, CHOICE, DECISION MAKING, ABUSE, ADVOCACY, REFORM, QUALITY OF LIFE, SUPPORT, CARE, INTERDEPENDENCE, INDIVIDUALISED, SELF DIRECTED, AUTONOMY, TRAINING, STAFFING, RESEARCH, MAINSTREAM, HEALTH, WELLBEING, SEXUALITY, FRIENDSHIPS

Taylor & Francis  
Taylor & Francis Group

## 1 publication in peer-reviewed journal



side by side advocacy

## 2 SBSA Inclusive Governance planning workshops



## 5 conference presentations, and webinars

- NDS Governance Summit, October 2022
- Possibility, October 2022
- ASID, November 2022
- Having a Say Conference, February 2023
- Inclusive Governance in theory and in practice

The project has been well supported by the co-researchers with lived experience of intellectual disability, Katrina Sneath and Will Harding, and the co-design team of Sarah Butler, Nathan Basha and Jeff Lui. Thanks also for the guidance given by the Consultative Reference Group - Kim Roots (Side By Side Advocacy Executive Officer), Michelle Donnelly (Side By Side Advocacy Board), Margaret Spencer (The University of Sydney) Ian Eddie (Excelsia College), Penny Pedersen (City of Ryde Council), Marian Onofomi (Multicultural Disability Advocacy Association), Nicole Lee (NSW Council for Intellectual Disability), and Shu-Hua Chan (self-advocate).

As we complete the analysis and prepare resources, we look forward to reaching as many people as possible with our message of inclusion of people with intellectual disability in the decision-making and governance of community organisations.

**“...to be properly informed...to be able to make sensible decisions...to do any kind of planning, you cannot do it without the full participation of people with lived experience.**

**It's a matter of moral coherence to have people involved in every level of the organisation who have lived experience. It deepens the whole endeavour [P11\_E].**

## Board of Management

### Chairperson – Coralie Jensen

Coralie has a professional background in education and management. She is passionate about social justice and inclusion for all people who are marginalised. As the mother and carer of a person with disability, Coralie has lived experience of disability and knowledge, experience and training in advocacy. After eleven years as a volunteer of Side By Side Advocacy, Coralie joined the Committee of Management in 2003, and has served in the position of Chairperson since 2007. Coralie has contributed to the organisation in many other ways including event management, policy writing, public speaking and lobbying for the organisation around funding and disability issues in general. Coralie continues her dedication to the work of Side By Side Advocacy as a memorial to her son Finley who passed away in 2012.

### Vice Chairperson – Michelle Donelly

Michelle is one of the founding members of Citizen Advocacy Ryde-Hunter's Hill (before the organisation became Side By Side Advocacy) and has been actively involved in the organisation for over thirty years. Michelle is committed to people with disability being included as valued members of the community as demonstrated by her roles as a foundation board member of Family Advocacy, her former role as a Board member NSW CID and her role as a citizen advocate. She has an academic, professional, and personal commitment to educating people about disability. Michelle is Adjunct Associate Professor of Occupational Therapy at Southern Cross University. She has also been Chief Investigator for multiple successful research grants.

# Board of Management

## Treasurer – Toni Ng

With over 15 years of experience across the not-for-profit sector, property and real estate, financial services, and the energy sector, Toni is a member of the Chartered Accountant ANZ with an extensive range of corporate and commercial skills. These include reporting, budgeting and forecasting, business partnering, commercial insight and people management. Toni grew up in Epping and Eastwood and is passionate about volunteering her time to the local communities and assisting the community in the capacity of a Justice of the Peace. Toni was elected to the Board in 2022.

## Secretary – Ruth Perram

Ruth has a background in psychology and education. She retired in 2013 after a twenty-two year career as a high school teacher. Ruth has a strong sense of community and speaks up and out on various issues when she feels that justice is not being served. She is the mother of three adult daughters, and the proud grandmother to three granddaughters. Ruth loves travel and lives in Eastwood with her husband. Ruth was elected to the Board in 2013 and became secretary in 2014.

## Board Member – Stephen MacDonald

Steve is originally from the UK and has lived and worked in Australia since 2004. He has twenty years' experience in various IT roles, including technical support, training, cybersecurity and project management. Steve's association with Side By Side Advocacy began in February 2008, when he answered a request for pro bono IT support. Steve first joined the Board in 2014. From 2014 -2017, Steve served as vice chairperson. Steve left Sydney in 2017 so did not renominate. Now settled back in Sydney, Steve re-joined the Board in May 2020.

## Board of Management

### Board Member – Belinda Henry

Belinda has a professional background in law, practising as a lawyer primarily in employment, anti-discrimination and work health and safety law. Belinda brings to the Board a particular interest and experience addressing the challenges faced by people with a disability in accessing advocacy, the justice system, transport and other government services and equal opportunity in employment. Belinda's particular interest is in ensuring people with a disability are heard in the justice system and working for systemic improvements to legal and policy frameworks, service delivery for people living with disability and, crucially, reliable funding for disability issues and services. Belinda is committed to promoting equal treatment, eliminating discrimination and working in a team to take tangible steps to address the marginalisation faced by people living with a disability.

## Staff

### Executive Officer – Kim Roots

Kim joined Side By Side Advocacy in July 2020. She brings a wealth of experience in not for profit, commercial and government contexts. This includes a long history in the advocacy sector, leadership development and as a lawyer. Kim has been a member of numerous advisory groups, has contributed to sector journals, participated on Boards and has provided feedback to government about matters that impact on the lives of people with disability. Kim has extensive experience in co-design of projects and resources. Kim believes that good communities are made up of all people and that advocacy can play a critical role in exposing abuse and neglect and in ensuring that people with disability have access to the ordinary good things in life.

### Senior Advocate, Individual Advocacy – Preeti Thadani

Preeti has an extensive work background in alternate dispute resolution. She completed her Masters in Dispute Resolution from the University of Technology Sydney in 2007. Preeti joined the Board of Management at Side By Side Advocacy in 2015 and became aware of the important work of the organisation. After resigning from the Board, Preeti commenced work in the Individual Advocacy team in March 2017. She is passionate about the protection and promotion of human rights and is committed to giving people with disability a 'fair go'. Preeti has developed strong networks including in culturally and linguistically diverse communities. She is a certified Workplace Trainer and shares her advocacy expertise with a wide range of groups including people with disability, their families, NGOs, schools and TAFE. Preeti and her family have strong ties in the community having lived locally since 1979.

## Staff

### Senior Advocate, Disability Royal Commission – Cathy Milne

Cathy joined Side By Side Advocacy in 2018 as part of the Individual Advocacy team. Cathy has been a passionate advocate in both a personal and professional capacity for people with disability, degenerative neurological conditions, and mental health issues for more than 20 years. Cathy has been working with people to navigate the NDIS and its complex intersections with health, education, housing, justice and aged care systems since the scheme's inception. During the last 10 years Cathy's advocacy has been particularly focused on working with people who grew up in institutionalised settings and people who communicate informally. Cathy draws on augmentative and alternative communication (AAC) and the principles of trauma informed practice to support people who communicate informally to assert their right to make decisions about their own lives. In addition to individual advocacy, Cathy has led multidisciplinary teams delivering information and referral, intensive family support and early intervention services. Cathy has a Masters in Bioethics from The University of Sydney and has contributed to published research projects, systemic advocacy projects and the development of multilingual resources and evidence-based consumer health publications.

### Citizen Advocacy Co-ordinator – Deb Maio

Deb joined Side By Side Advocacy in May 2013. Her experience in disability is as a parent, guardian and professional. She has worked in both Individual Advocacy and in Citizen Advocacy and spent many years in the education sector working to provide equal access to mainstream education for students with disability. Deb values the opportunity to support advocates to speak up for people with disability's right to a full and inclusive life in their community.

## Staff

### Individual Advocate and Disability Royal Commission Advocate – Tina Huang

Tina Huang commenced at Side By Side Advocacy in April 2020. Prior to joining Side By Side Advocacy, Tina worked in variety of roles at the NSW Tenants' Union. Tina has a Bachelor of Arts (Gender Studies) and Bachelor of Laws. Tina has assisted in a diverse range of advocacy matters related to the National Disability Insurance Scheme, NSW Trustee and Guardianship arrangements, and housing and tenancy. Tina is passionate about supporting the rights, needs and interests of people with disability.

### Individual Advocate, Disability Royal Commission – Sarah Mitchell

Sarah Mitchell joined Side By Side Advocacy in August 2021. Sarah has experience working with people with disability and is passionate about supporting people to lead ordinary lives that are meaningful to them, whatever that looks like. Sarah has completed a Bachelor of Communications (Social and Political Science) and a Bachelor of Creative Intelligence and Innovation and is excited to bring these skills to the area of advocacy.

### Individual Advocate, Disability Royal Commission – Melissa Simcoe

Melissa has held roles in both the government and private sector including as a senior policy officer at Aging Disability and Home Care and as a Senior Investigation Officer at the NSW Guardianship Tribunal. Melissa is passionate about striving for a society where people with disability have the same opportunities as everyone else. She has a commitment to innovation and a keen interest in improving systems and processes. Melissa has demonstrated her commitment to inclusion via volunteer roles in the disability sector. Melissa has a Masters in Disability Studies.

## Staff

### Inclusive Governance Project Officer – Bernadette Curryer

Bernadette has been involved with disability issues for many years, as a parent and worker in the disability advocacy sector. Her passion for research, particularly about intellectual disability, led her to undertake and complete a doctorate exploring self-determination of people with intellectual disability within family relationships. As an affiliate of the Centre for Research Policy and Practice (The University of Sydney) and vice president of the Australasian Society for Intellectual Disability (ASID), Bernadette strongly believes in the need for research to inform practice. She hopes that the Inclusive Governance Project will make it possible for more people with intellectual disability to have a real say in the decision-making of community organisations.

### Inclusive Governance Project Co-Researcher – Katrina Sneath

Katrina recently moved from New Zealand to Inner City Sydney to pursue her ambitions as a passionate advocate for people with disability. Katrina has been a student at The University of Sydney in the Uni2Beyond program for people with disability auditing classes. She joined the Inclusive Governance Project because she wants to understand how Boards are run and how they can be more accessible to people with intellectual disability. Her message is “Believe in yourself and don’t let your disability get in the way of anything”.

### Inclusive Governance Project Co-Researcher – Will Harding

Will was born in England and now lives on the Northern Beaches of Sydney. In addition to his role at Side By Side Advocacy, Will works to implement bush regeneration and is a member of the Consumer Representative Group at his workplace. He is also involved in the local cricket club, managing the 2nd grade team. Will is keen for his role in the Inclusive Governance Project to help more people with intellectual disability the chance to have a say in community organisations. His message is “Focus on your ability, not your disability”.

## Staff

### Communications and Information Officer – Karen Reyes

Karen joined Side By Side Advocacy in February 2023. Karen has a Bachelor of Communications in Media, Arts and Production. Karen is responsible for organising and facilitating events and creating accessible promotional material. She is also involved in the development of resources for the Inclusive Governance Project. Karen believes in the importance of being able to express yourself to others and strives to accurately present and represent the voices of people with disability in all of the organisation's media.

### Finance Officer – Kay Jones

Kay joined Side By Side Advocacy in December 2021. She has a Masters in Business Administration and is a Certified Practicing Accountant. For over 30 years she has worked in and/or managed finance departments in various small to medium-sized organisations, including 8 years in the higher education sector and 15 years in commercial industry. She is keen to use her skills and experience to provide support to the organization as it provides support to its community.

### Co-design Projects – Chris Faber-Morris

Chris is an experienced teacher and community facilitator and has spent all her working life working for and alongside people with a disability. She has facilitated conversations, meetings, information sessions, workshops, formal and accredited training and has adapted resources and tools to suit. She has facilitated the codesign of training materials and resources. Chris engages audiences by being respectful of everyone and their diversity. Chris has a Master of Arts, a Diploma of Education, a Diploma of Disability and an Advanced Diploma of Community Management.

## Volunteers

### Information Technology Support – Danny Yang

Danny joined Side By Side Advocacy in May 2020. Danny has a Masters in IT and has worked as a systems administrator. He also speaks Mandarin and has his own international trading business.

## Acknowledgements

Many people and organisations have supported the work of Side By Side Advocacy during the year.

We want to extend our thanks for your generous contributions of time, money or other resources.

You helped us to achieve everything we did during the year.

- Australian Government Department of Social Services – funded our core advocacy programs and projects
- City of Ryde Council – provided funding that allowed us to promote inclusion and accessibility – via events and resources.
- Southern Cross University – are ongoing research collaborators in relation to the Inclusive Governance Project
- Ben Pilipowski assisted us with workshop co-design and facilitation
- Danny Yang assisted us with technology
- Bob Lee shared expertise to support our Citizen Advocacy Program
- Alan Hough was a respected collaborator and supporter of our Inclusive Governance Project
- David Evans, Principal at Rydge Evans Lawyers provided legal expertise to assist us make a smooth transition to our new accommodation in Parramatta
- Roy McCormack assisted us with our set up in Parramatta

- Bachelor of Media and Communications students completed placements and contributed to our work:
  - Nicola Brayan
  - Nicole Alcantara
  
- Colleagues from other advocacy organisations assisted us on interview panels:
  - Shu Hua Chan – (Multicultural Disability Advocacy Association)
  - Cecile Sullivan Elder – (Family Advocacy)
  - Bharat Rai – (Multicultural Disability Advocacy Association)
  
- Consultative reference group members
  - Michelle Donelly (Side By Side Advocacy Board)
  - Margaret Spencer (The University of Sydney)
  - Ian Eddie (Excelsia College)
  - Penny Pedersen (City of Ryde Council)
  - Marian Onofomi (Multicultural Disability Advocacy Association)
  - Nicole Lee (NSW Council for Intellectual Disability)
  - Shu-Hua Chan (self-advocate)
  
- Co-design group members
  - Sarah Butler
  - Nathan Basha
  - Jeff Lui
  
- Siddharth Chandran for gifting Side By Side Advocacy with a copy of his book, 'An Unspoken Story: Living with autism'.

# Financial Reports

**SIDE BY SIDE ADVOCACY INCORPORATED**

**ABN 83 395 894 577**

**FINANCIAL STATEMENTS  
AS AT 30 JUNE 2023**

**SIDE BY SIDE ADVOCACY INCORPORATED**

**FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED  
30 JUNE 2023**

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## MANAGEMENT DECLARATION

### SIDE BY SIDE ADVOCACY INCORPORATED

The Board of Management of Side By Side Advocacy Incorporated declare in their opinion:

- (a) The attached financial statements in respect of the year ended 30 June 2023 and notes thereto comply with accounting standards
- (b) The attached financial statements and notes thereto give a true and fair view of the financial position and performance of the association
- (c) The attached financial statements and notes thereto are in accordance with the Associations Incorporation Act 2009
- (d) There are reasonable grounds to believe that the association will be able to pay its debts as and when they become due & payable.

This statement has been made in accordance with a resolution of the Management Committee and is signed for and on behalf of the Committee.

Chairperson



23 November 2023

Treasurer



Parramatta

#### Auditors Independence Declaration

To the Executive of the Side By Side Advocacy Incorporated

I declare that, to the best of my knowledge and belief, during the financial year ended 30 June 2023 there have been:

- (a) No contraventions of the auditors independence requirements as set out in the Corporations Act 2001 in relation to the audit; and
- (b) No contraventions of any applicable code of professional conduct in relation to the audit.



**Stephen Sproats**  
Registered Company Auditor  
7/288 Newline Road Dural

29 November 2023

**SIDE BY SIDE ADVOCACY INCORPORATED**

**STATEMENT OF COMPREHENSIVE INCOME  
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2023**

	2023	2022
<b>REVENUE</b>		
DSS Funding	848,370	915,170
Membership	101	73
Other Income	39	
Interest	7,895	1,066
<b>TOTAL REVENUE</b>	<b>856,405</b>	<b>916,309</b>
<b>EXPENDITURE</b>		
Accounting & Management	-	7,699
Advertising	-	9,458
Asset<2,000	12,576	8,670
Audit Fee	3,500	3,500
Cleaning	3,525	3,777
Computer	7,904	8,373
Consultants	8,400	4,850
Contract Labour	-	-
Depreciation	1,740	3,496
Electricity	2,513	2,265
General	15,534	3,259
Insurances	7,954	7,187
Memberships	1,946	2,397
Printing, Stationery & Postages	3,978	4,265
Provision for Employee Leave	56,443	15,800
Quality Assurance	7,119	618
Recruitment Costs	280	660
Rent	35,536	38,611
Repairs & Maintenance	3,322	385
Salaries & Wages	568,555	692,122
Strategic Planning	-	2,500
Superannuation	64,896	67,952
Telephone & Internet	7,671	8,614
Training	6,993	4,025
Travel & Accommodation	8,311	1,751
Workers Compensation	2,329	2,889
Workshop & Seminars	17,841	7,102
	<b>848,866</b>	<b>912,225</b>
<b>SURPLUS</b>	<b>7,539</b>	<b>4,084</b>
<b>NET SURPLUS FOR YEAR</b>	<b>7,539</b>	<b>4,084</b>
<b>TOTAL COMPREHENSIVE INCOME FOR YEAR</b>	<b>\$ 7,539</b>	<b>\$ 4,084</b>

**SIDE BY SIDE ADVOCACY INCORPORATED**

**STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION  
AS AT 30 JUNE 2023**

	<b>2023</b>	<b>2022</b>
<b>ACCUMULATED FUNDS</b>	<b>\$ 231,278</b>	<b>\$ 223,739</b>
<b>Represented by:-</b>		
<b>CURRENT ASSETS</b>		
Cash on Hand	0	0
Cash at Bank	437,465	459,395
Prepayments	6,699	8,270
Sundry Debtors	7,731	682
Rental Bond	12,000	3,833
Website	18,500	15,725
<b>TOTAL CURRENT ASSETS</b>	<b>482,395</b>	<b>487,905</b>
<b>FIXED ASSETS</b>		
Equipment – at cost	20,538	20,538
Accumulated Depreciation	-18,374	-16,634
<b>TOTAL FIXED ASSETS</b>	<b>2,164</b>	<b>3,904</b>
<b>TOTAL ASSETS</b>	<b>484,559</b>	<b>491,809</b>
Trade Creditors (Note 7)	35,844	36,327
Grants in Advance (Note 8)	123,526	142,027
Provision for Employee Entitlements (Note 9)	93,911	89,716
<b>TOTAL LIABILITIES</b>	<b>253,281</b>	<b>268,070</b>
<b>NET ASSETS</b>	<b>\$ 231,278</b>	<b>\$ 223,739</b>

**SIDE BY SIDE ADVOCACY INCORPORATED**

**STATEMENT OF CHANGES IN EQUITY  
FOR YEAR ENDING 30 JUNE 2023**

<b>Balance at 30 June 2021</b>	<b>219,655</b>
Net Surplus	4,084
Other comprehensive income	-
Total comprehensive income for the year	4,084
<b>Balance at 30 June 2022</b>	<b>223,739</b>
Net Surplus	7,539
Other comprehensive income	-
Total comprehensive income for the year	7,539
<b>Balance at 30 June 2023</b>	<b>\$ 231,278</b>

**SIDE BY SIDE ADVOCACY INCORPORATED**

**STATEMENT OF CASH FLOWS  
FOR YEAR ENDING 30 JUNE 2023**

	<b>2023</b>	<b>2022</b>
<b>Cash Flows from Operating Activities</b>		
Receipts from Funding Bodies & Clients	856,405	925,041
Payments to suppliers and employees	878,335	1,048,465
<b>Net Cash inflow from Operating Activities</b>	<b>-21,930</b>	<b>-123,424</b>
<b>Net Cash outflow from Equipment Purchases</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>
Net Increase (Decrease) in cash held	-21,930	-123,424
Cash at beginning of year	459,395	582,819
<b>Cash at End of Financial Year</b>	<b>\$ 437,465</b>	<b>\$ 459,395</b>
<b>Reconciliation of Operating Surplus after tax to Net Cash Inflow From Operations</b>		
Operating Surplus After Income Tax	7,539	4,084
Depreciation & Loss on Disposal	1,740	3,900
Bond	-8,167	0
Sundry Debtors	-7,049	-53
Prepayments	1,572	2,114
Website	-2,775	-3,180
Creditors	-484	18,413
Grants in Advance	-18,501	-164,502
Provision for Employee Benefits	4,195	15,800
	<b>-\$ 21,930</b>	<b>-\$ 123,424</b>

**SIDE BY SIDE ADVOCACY INCORPORATED**  
**NOTES TO AND FORMING PART OF THE ACCOUNTS**  
**FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2023**

**1. Corporate Information**

Side By Side Advocacy Incorporated operates under the Association Incorporation Act 2009 (NSW). Its business premises are located in Parramatta & operates across Greater Sydney.

**2. Summary of Significant Accounting Policies**

**a) Basis of Preparation**

This general purpose financial report has been prepared in accordance with Associations Incorporation Act 2009 (NSW), Australian Accounting Standards and other authoritative pronouncements of the AASB & Urgent issues group interpretations. The financial report has been prepared on the basis of historical cost and does not take into consideration changing values of money or current valuations of non-current assets. Cost is based on the fair values of the consideration given in exchange for assets.

**b) Significant accounting judgments, estimates & assumptions**

The preparation of financial statements requires management to make judgements, estimates & assumptions that affect the application of policies and reported amounts of assets, liabilities, income & expenses. The estimates and associated assumptions are based on historical experience and other factors that are believed to be reasonable under the circumstances, the results of which form the basis of making judgments. Actual results may differ from these estimates

The estimates & underlying assumptions are reviewed on an ongoing basis. Revisions to accounting estimates are recognised in the period in which the estimate is revised if the revision affects only that period or in the period of the revision and future periods if the revision affects both current & future periods.

**c) Revenue Recognition**

Revenue is recognised when the association is legally entitled to the income and the amount can be quantified with reasonable accuracy and is net of GST

**d) Expenditure**

All expenditure is accounted for on an accruals basis and has been classified under headings that aggregate all costs related to the category

**e) Cash**

Cash & Cash equivalents in the balance sheet comprise cash at bank and in hand and in short term deposits are stated at their nominal value

**f) Trade Debtors**

Trade Debtors are stated at original invoice amount less any Provision for doubtful debts where applicable. Normal trading terms are 7 to 30 days

**g) Plant & Equipment**

Fixed assets are depreciated over the expected useful life on a prime cost basis.

**h) Grants in Advance**

Grants in Advance are carried forward at their original amount and are to be provided subsequent to the balance date

**i) Employee Leave**

The liability for Annual & Long Service Leave is recognised and measured at the amount expected to be paid when liabilities are settled

**j) Provisions**

These are recognised when there is a present obligation as a result of past funding and it is probable that an outflow will be required using reasonable estimates

**k) Government Grants**

Grants are matched against expenditure in the year expenditure is incurred and in accordance with funding body requirements

**3. Income Tax**

No income tax is payable as the entity is exempt from taxation.

	2023	2022
<b>4. Contingent Liabilities</b>	<b>\$nil</b>	<b>\$nil</b>
<b>5. Capital Expenditure Commitments</b>	<b>\$nil</b>	<b>\$nil</b>
<b>6. Segment Information</b>		
The association operates predominantly in one industry, as it acts as sponsors for Government funded projects. The company operates in one geographical region, being Sydney, NSW		
<b>7. Trade Creditors</b>		
GST & PAYG	8,672	16,408
Accrued Expenses	6,190	5,628
Superannuation Payable	8,504	8,092
Trade Creditors	<u>12,478</u>	<u>6,199</u>
	<u>\$35,844</u>	<u>\$36,327</u>
<b>8. Grants in Advance</b>		
DSS – NDIS Appeals	27,739	3,829
DSS – Advocacy	44,363	0
DSS – DRC	0	21,528
DSS – IG	51,424	109,080
Other	<u>0</u>	<u>7,590</u>
	<u>\$123,526</u>	<u>\$142,027</u>
<b>9. Employee Entitlements</b>		
Provision for Annual Leave	79,066	77,310
Provision for Long Service Leave	<u>14,845</u>	<u>12,406</u>
	<u>\$93,911</u>	<u>\$89,716</u>

## INDEPENDENT AUDITORS REPORT

### TO MEMBERS OF SIDE BY SIDE ADVOCACY INCORPORATED

#### Opinion

I have audited the accompanying financial statement of Side by Side Advocacy Incorporated which comprises the Statement of Financial Position as at 30 June 2023, Statement of Changes in Equity, Statement of Comprehensive Income and Cash flow statement for the year ended on that date, notes comprising a summary of significant accounting policies and the executive assertion statement.

In my opinion, the accompanying financial statement of Side by Side Advocacy Incorporated is in accordance with the Associations Incorporation Act 2009, including:

- (a) giving a true and fair view of the associations financial position as at 30 June 2023 and of its financial performance for the year then ended on that date: and
- (b) complying with Australian Accounting Standards (including the Australian Accounting Interpretations) and Associations Incorporation Act 2009.

#### Basis for opinion

I conducted the audit in accordance with Australian Auditing Standards. My responsibilities under those standards are further described in the 'Auditors responsibilities for the Audit of the financial statement' section of my report. I am independent of the association in accordance with the ethic requirements of the Accounting Professional & Ethical Standards Board's APES 110 Code of Ethics for Professional Accountants (the code) that are relevant to my audit of the financial report in Australia, and I have fulfilled my other ethical responsibilities in accordance with the code.

I believe that the audit evidence we have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for my audit opinion.

#### Responsibilities of the Responsible Entities for the Financial Statement

The management of the Incorporated Association are responsible for the preparation and fair presentation of the financial report in accordance with Australian Accounting Standards and the Associations Incorporations Act 2009, and for such internal control as the management determine is necessary to enable the presentation of the financial report that is free of material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

In preparing the financial report, the responsible persons are responsible for assessing the association's ability to continue as a going concern, disclosing, as applicable, matters relating to going concern and using the going concern basis of accounting unless the responsible persons either intend to liquidate the association or to cease operations or have no realistic alternative but to do so.

Those charged with governance are responsible for overseeing the associations financial reporting process.

#### Auditors Responsibilities for the Audit of the Financial Statement

My objective is to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial report as a whole is free of material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error, and to issue an auditor's report that includes my opinion. Reasonable assurance is a high level of assurance but is not a guarantee that an audit conducted in accordance with the Australian Auditing Standards will always detect a material misstatement when it exists. Misstatements can arise from fraud or error and are considered material, if, individually or in aggregate, they could be reasonably be expected to influence the economic users taken on the basis of this report.

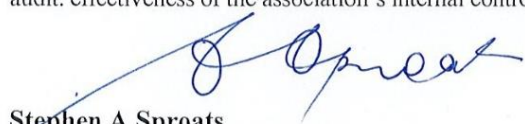
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As part of an audit in accordance with Australian Auditing Standards, we exercise professional judgement and maintain professional scepticism throughout the audit. I also

- Identify and assess the risks of material misstatement of the financial report whether due to fraud or error, design and perform audit procedures responsive to those risks and obtain audit evidence that is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for my opinion. The risk of not detecting a material misstatement resulting from fraud is higher than for one resulting from error, as fraud may involve collusion, forgery intentional omissions misrepresentations or the override of internal control
- Obtain an understanding of internal control relevant to the audit in order to design audit procedures that are appropriate in the circumstance, but not for the purpose of expressing an opinion on the effectiveness of the association's internal control.
- Evaluate the appropriateness of accounting policies used and the reasonableness of accounting estimates and related disclosures by the responsible persons.
- Conclude on the appropriateness of the responsible persons' use of the going concern basis of accounting and based on the audit evidence obtained, whether material uncertainty exists related to events or conditions that may cast significant doubt on the association ability to continue as a going concern. If I conclude that a material uncertainty exists, I am required to draw attention in the Auditors report to the related disclosures in the financial statement or if such disclosures are inadequate, to modify my opinion. My conclusions are based on the audit evidence obtained up to the date of the audit report. However, future events or conditions may cause the association to cease as a going concern.
- Evaluate the overall presentation, structure and content of the financial statement, including the disclosures, and whether the financial statement presents the underlying transactions and events in a manner that achieves fair presentation.

I communicate with the responsible persons regarding, among other matters, the planned scope and timing of the audit and significant audit findings, including any significant deficiencies in internal control I identify during the audit. effectiveness of the association's internal control

  
Stephen A Sproats  
Registered Company Auditor 3932

Dural  
29 November 2023



Side By Side Advocacy Incorporated

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