



The Newsletter of Side By Side Advocacy

Summer 2023

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A message from our Executive Officer

Welcome to the Summer edition of Side By Side!

As the year comes to an end there is a great deal happening. There are still more people seeking advocates than there are advocates to provide much needed support. Side By Side Advocacy continues to raise awareness about the potential consequences for people with disability.

Side By Side Advocacy was interviewed by ABC radio about the value of advocacy. We talked about how complex systems can be hard to navigate. We shared some ways we provide specialist advocacy for people with intellectual disability.

We have also been hosting workshops that are co-designed and co-presented by people with intellectual disability. We have been speaking at conferences, writing submissions and contributing to consultations.

If you are curious about our work, there is still time to tell us you would like to attend our Annual General Meeting (AGM) on 7 December in Parramatta. The AGM will take place downstairs from our new Parramatta office and is a chance to hear more about what we have been up to and meet the staff and Board. You can also join us online. There is more information in the AGM flier.

This newsletter includes a range of ways you can support the work of Side By Side Advocacy or get more involved in 2024!

The team at Side By Side Advocacy will be taking a short break over the holiday season with the office closing from 5pm on 22 December 2023 and reopening on 2 January 2024.

The Side By Side Advocacy team wishes you a peaceful and relaxing holiday season.

Kim Roots, Executive Officer

Side By Side Advocacy Annual General Meeting (AGM)

We are excited to be hosting the AGM of Side By Side Advocacy downstairs from our new office at 34 Charles Street, Parramatta.

We are particularly pleased to welcome new members. Some of you have told us that this will be the first time you have attended an AGM.

This year we are focusing on discussing our achievements and challenges and our plans for the future. The drinks and light supper following the AGM will provide a chance to chat with the newly elected Board, with staff and with others interested in advocacy.

Date: Thursday 7 December 2023 at 6.30pm to 8.30pm
Address: Riverside Central, 34 Charles Street, Parramatta

There is still time to register. You can call us, email us, use this link or the QR code below to register online.

Phone: 02 9808 5500

Email: info@sidebysideadvocacy.org.au

Visit here to register: <https://bit.ly/3uGvlzX>

Or scan the QR code to register:

Visit here to view the AGM flier: <https://bit.ly/3T5bhB9>



Events for 2024: Making decisions at home

In 2023 Side By Side Advocacy received a grant to create resources and events about making decisions as part of a group.

We have also received funding to run training and make resources to enable people with intellectual disability to make decisions at or relating to home.

We got a grant from Council for Intellectual Disability to support this work. The grant is part of a project about supported decision making called My Rights Matter.

Stay posted for more information about workshop dates in the new year!

We will keep you posted about other events throughout the year.



Opportunities to get more involved with Side By Side Advocacy in 2024

Do you want to live in a world where all people are equal and valued, where diversity is celebrated, needs fulfilled, and opportunities realised?

If you answered yes, you may consider supporting the work of Side By Side Advocacy in 2024!

There are lots of ways you can get involved. 3 ways are:

1. Becoming a member
2. Becoming a volunteer
3. Becoming a citizen advocate.

- Becoming a member of Side By Side Advocacy

As a member of Side By Side Advocacy, you will be kept informed about the organisation and have a say about what happens.

You will be asked each year if you want to continue being a member.

You can check out our website and Facebook page to get more of an idea about our work.

You can also arrange to have a chat.

- Volunteering

As a volunteer, you can contribute to the work of Side By Side Advocacy by sharing your knowledge, skills and experience.

At the moment, we are seeking volunteers with skills and experience writing funding submissions and with promotional experience – including via technology.

If that sounds like you, we would love to hear from you!

- Citizen Advocacy

Side By Side Advocacy has the only funded Citizen Advocacy Program in NSW.

Citizen Advocacy involves a community member being matched with a person with intellectual disability who is seeking an advocate. What the role involves depends on needs of the person with intellectual disability.

We are keen to identify community members who may want to make a difference as a citizen advocate.

If you or someone you know may be interested, make contact and we can explain more.

There are always more people with intellectual disability seeking a citizen advocate than there are citizen advocates and we want to change that!

Here is more information about Citizen Advocacy:

A brochure about Citizen Advocacy: <https://bit.ly/3Rp1vsG>

A video about Citizen Advocacy: <https://bit.ly/3RpV6NT>

The section of our website about Citizen Advocacy:
<https://bit.ly/3N35KYk>

Promoting the value of advocacy

Side By Side Advocacy spoke with ABC radio journalist Flint Duxfield about what advocates do and how they help people with disability navigate complex systems.

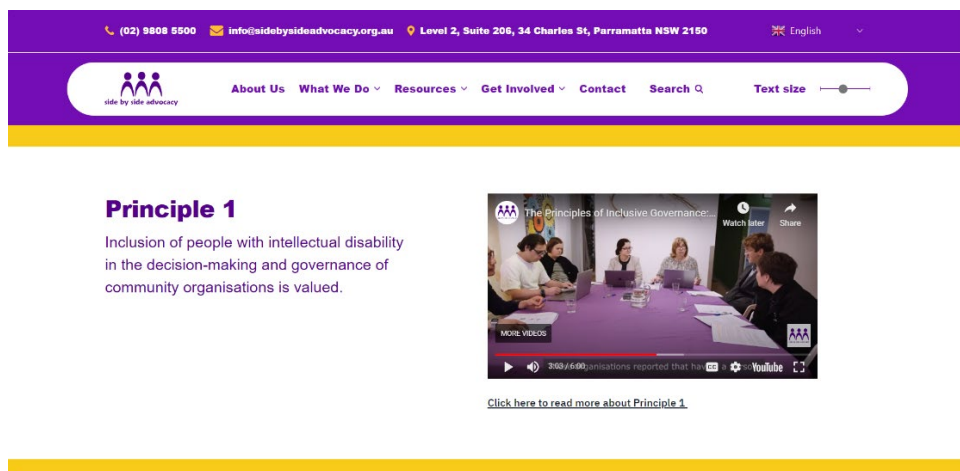
We explained how some issues faced by people with disability can take years to resolve and can require complex knowledge of multiple intersecting systems.

The segment featured Side By Side Advocacy Senior Advocate, Cathy Milne, and Side By Side member, Rajni. Also featured were El Gibbs, director of policy and advocacy, Disability Advocacy Network Australia and Margaret Smith, chairperson, NPY Women's Council.

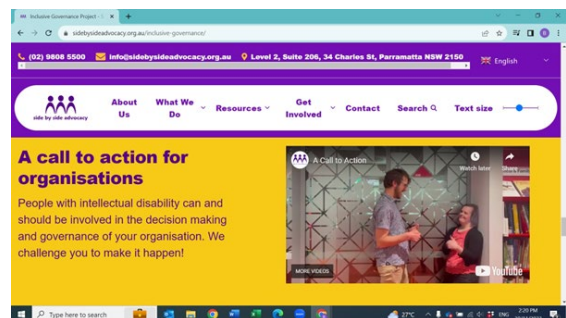
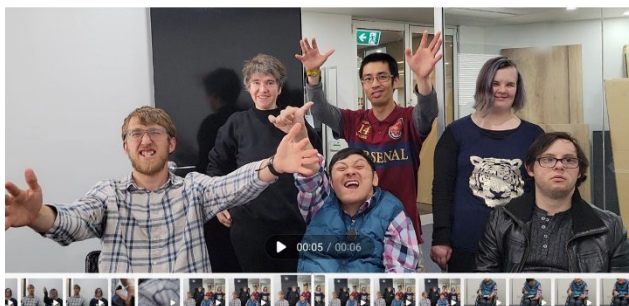
Here is a link to the segment that was on ABC radio, The World Today
<https://www.abc.net.au/listen/programs/worldtoday/disability-advocates-warn-1-in-2-turned-away/103171404>

Inclusive Governance Project - Nothing about us without us

Great news! Videos about the Inclusive Governance Project are now on our website. 6 of the videos explain the Principles of Inclusive Governance. These principles can be used to guide organisations towards real inclusion of people with intellectual disability in the decision-making of community organisations.



Will and Katrina, our co-researchers, starred in a short video challenging organisations to make the changes needed. This video, called 'A call to action' is also on the website. This video came from the work done with our co-design group of Sarah, Nathan, Jeff and Quang. It was filmed and edited by our Communications Officer, Karen.



ASID 2023 Conference

The Australasian Society for Intellectual Disability (ASID) held its 2023 conference in Melbourne on 22 to 24 November 2023. This conference provides an opportunity for people with intellectual disability to come together with researchers, government staff, service providers, health practitioners, and families to talk about issues of importance to people with intellectual disability.

Inclusive Governance Researcher, Bernadette Curryer, was joined by Co-researcher, Will Harding, to present the findings of the Inclusive Governance Project. Bernadette and Will spoke about what we have learnt from the research and how organisations can use these findings to guide the changes needed to include people with intellectual disability in decision-making and governance of disability focused organisations.

Will did a wonderful job, speaking about our project.



Will and Bernadette attending and presenting at the ASID 2023 Conference in Melbourne, November 2023

If you would like to find out more about the findings of the study and how to support the inclusion of people with intellectual disability in the decision-making and governance of community organisations, please contact Bernadette on 0411 952 974 or igp@sidebysideadvocacy.org.au

Disability Royal Commission Findings - have your say

The Disability Royal Commission has published its findings.

The Australian Government has said that addressing the issues raised will require '... a national coordinated effort. This includes all governments and all members of the community.'

They have said they will '...engage and consult with people with disability, their families, carers, representative organisations, service providers, unions and the broader community to inform Government decision making on reform and change.'

If you would like to stay informed about this consultation process, or share your views about the Royal Commission findings that matter to you, there is a link below.

<https://engage.dss.gov.au/drcausgovresponse/>

Inclusive Research - at University of New South Wales

GeneEQUAL is an inclusive research team, based at University of New South Wales, Sydney.

They want to make a genetic health care more inclusive, person-centred and respectful for people with intellectual disability.

This starts with hearing from people with intellectual disability about their experiences and advice about genetic health care and health care in general.

People with intellectual disability also asked GeneEQUAL to speak to their families to support people. This is important so we can work together to improve health care.

More information about this study is on the GeneEQUAL website. They have short video with their team talking about the study, and how you can contact the team if you are interested, or have any questions.

Senior Advocate, Cathy Milne, is contributing her insights.

You can also email us on geneequal@unsw.edu.au or l.strnadova@unsw.edu.au or call us on 0426 959 172.

Below are links to GeneEQUAL studies.

Study for people with intellectual disability:

<https://geneequal.com/current-news/interviews-with-people-with-intellectual-disability/>

Study for families and support people:

<https://geneequal.com/current-news/families-and-support-worker-recruitment/>

News Updates and Information

Call for assistance: <https://bit.ly/3uFd8mb>

Disability Royal Commission Easy Read Reports from Inclusion Australia:

<https://www.inclusionaustralia.org.au/resource/disability-royal-commission-easy-read-reports/>

The Disability Royal Commission is ending, here are the main

takeaways: <https://www.msn.com/en-au/news/australia/the-disability-royal-commission-is-over-and-the-recommendations-are-in-here-are-the-main-takeaways/ar-AA1hqROm>

Digital accessibility podcasts

<https://www.tpgi.com/digital-accessibility-podcasts/>

Easy Read: Inclusive mental health services for all

<https://www.3dn.unsw.edu.au/news/easy-read-inclusive-mental-health-services-all>

Learn more about ableism and what it looks like with our quiz on disability discrimination

<https://ab.co/3uJ12ss>

COVID-19 cases are again on the rise, so how long should you self-isolate no there are no requirements?

<https://ab.co/47OGXiI>

Meet the people of Side By Side Advocacy

In each edition of Side By Side we get to know someone from the Side By Side Advocacy community. This month, Kim spoke with team member, Tina Huang.

Kim: Tell me about yourself?

Tina: I became interested in advocacy when I was studying law. I wanted a role that recognised that some community members experience barriers to having an ordinary, good life. While I was still studying, I started volunteering at the Tenants' Union and discovered advocacy. Later, I heard about Side By Side Advocacy and started my role here more than 3 years ago.



Kim: What does your role as an advocate involve?

Tina: Generally, my day involves helping people with disability work through a range of advocacy issues. I might, for example, help a person put in an appeal for an NDIS plan which has been inadequately funded. Or challenge a guardian or trustee appointment because a person wants their decision-making capacity restored. Or help someone apply for social housing. A large part of my role involves supporting people to appeal decisions made by the National Disability Insurance Agency.

Kim: Are many people seeking support to appeal decisions?

Tina: Yes, there is very high demand for appeals support advocacy. More people are seeking support than Side By Side Advocacy can provide. Many advocacy organisations have closed their books. To try to assist as many people as possible, we offer everyone who calls an opportunity to discuss the process of appealing to the Administrative Appeals Tribunal (known as the AAT) and guidance about how to prepare in their circumstances. A conversation like this can require hours of preparation. There are often lots of long documents to read.

Kim: What do you find most challenging and most rewarding?

Tina: Supporting people to have the skills and confidence to speak up for themselves is both the most challenging and rewarding part of my job. It can involve many things including providing guidance about *how* to ask for help when issues arise. This might include a person learning who they can ask for help, how to communicate their desires / preferences, how to say 'no,' or how to ask for a second opinion.

Kim: Do you have tips for removing communication barriers for people with intellectual disability?

Tina: One tip would be to avoid jargon. Another would be to consider the accessibility of written materials. The Council for Intellectual Disability provides guidelines to ensure communication is in an Easy Read format. This can include straight forward things like using a 14 point font as a

minimum, line spacing at 1.5 or double and the use of images to help explain meaning.

Kim: What would you say to people who need advocacy assistance?

Tina: Side By Side Advocacy is an advocacy organisation that specialises in advocacy for people with intellectual disability. We try to make contacting us as easy as possible. We will also do our best to assist you or to point you in the right direction.

Dates for your calendar

2 December – 11:00am - 4:00pm – Rhodes – Canada Bay Council 2023 International Day of People with Disability. There will be art, music and dance by people with disability. They will provide information about disability job training and employment opportunities.

Click here for more information:

<https://www.idpwd.com.au/event/1697460791/>

3 December – UN International Day of People with Disability

4 December 2023 – Side By Side Advocacy is joining City of Ryde in celebrating International Day of Persons with Disability by hosting an event on Monday 4 December at Ryde Library.

The Mini-Expo will focus on 6-8 local community groups/organisations that help to support members of the community who have a lived experience of disability and/or their supporters. The aim is to build connections and awareness of available supports.

Time: 10am - 1pm

Place: Ryde Library - 1 Pope Street Ryde

4 December 2023 – ‘You can ask that’ is a panel discussion taking place in Bankstown. There will be speakers talking about how to safeguard adults with disability from abuse and raise awareness about how a range of services can provide support.

View the event details and register here:

<https://www.eventbrite.com.au/e/you-can-ask-that-tickets-744796084137>

7 December – The AGM of Side By Side Advocacy – 34 Charles Street, Parramatta – or online. There is still time to register for our AGM! If you are curious about our work, we would love to see you at the AGM. There is more information in the AGM flier here: <https://bit.ly/3T5bhB9>

22 December 2023 at 5pm – Side By Side Advocacy Office closes. The office will reopen on 2 January 2024

25 December 2023– Christmas Day – public holiday

26 December 2023 – Boxing Day – public holiday

1 January 2024 – New Year’s Day – public holiday

26 January 2024 – Australia Day - public holiday

5 and 6 February 2024 – Having a say conference– presented by VALID in Geelong, Victoria or online.

Here is more information about the conference: <https://valid.org.au/valid-events/having-a-say-conference/>

Here is a link to the flier: <https://valid.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2023/07/HaS-2024-first-notice-June-23.pdf>

10 February 2024 – Lunar New Year

13 February 2024 – Anniversary of National Apology Day

Emergency contact numbers

Emergencies sometimes arise over the holiday season.

In case of fire, medical or police emergency, dial **000**.

Blue Knott's counselling service will be open on public holidays: 1800 421 468.

Here is a link to some other emergency contacts that may be useful:
<https://www.health.nsw.gov.au/Pages/emergency.aspx>

Have your say!

Do you have any suggestions about how we could do things better or differently at Side By Side Advocacy?

If you do, we would love to hear from you! You can use the contact information below to tell us.

Information about Side By Side Advocacy

Links to Side By Side Advocacy brochures for you to print, download and/or share:

Citizen Advocacy:

Individual Advocacy

National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) Appeals

Inclusive Governance Project Brochure

To view more information about the work we do at Side By Side Advocacy click here:

Contact details for Side By Side Advocacy

Phone: (02) 9808 5500

Email: info@sidebysideadvocacy.org.au

Website: www.sidebysideadvocacy.org.au

Address: Level 2, Suite 206, 34 Charles Street Parramatta, NSW, 2150

Office hours: 9am to 5pm

The closest railway station is Parramatta Railway Station

The bus stop for the Parramatta loop bus is approximately 20 metres from our front door. The bus is free.

The Parramatta Ferry Terminal is next to the office.

There are accessible parking spots nearby.

There is metred, time-limited on-street parking.

There is a parking station across the road on Charles Street.

Contact us before you come if you need more information about getting to the office.



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.

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Side By Side Advocacy acknowledges the Dharug people, Traditional Custodians on the land on which we live and work. We pay respect to Elders past, present and emerging.

Side By Side Advocacy is funded by the Australian Government Department of Social Services.

For more information, visit: www.dss.gov.au