



The Newsletter of Side By Side Advocacy

Winter 2025

This edition's contents:

- New film release: Moving Forward From Institutions
- Stories and opportunities from the Community for Everyone project
- Upcoming event Inclusive Governance: from theory to action
- Hear My Voice workshops on public speaking for people with intellectual disability
- Listening to People Rarely Heard workshop with Dr Jo Watson - practical strategies for inclusive communication
- Resources relating to community inclusion
- News updates
- Meet Community for Everyone Project Coordinator Evelyn Gyan
- Dates for your calendar - events and happenings
- Contact details for Side By Side Advocacy

A message from our Executive Officer

Welcome to the Winter edition of Side By Side!

Side By Side Advocacy approaches the end of the financial year with a great deal of activity. It is fantastic to have such fabulous team of staff, volunteers and other committed stakeholders! We have been active in our local community and across the country. We also have some great opportunities to share information and connect at some upcoming events.

At the same time, demand for advocacy is greater than ever and funding is not increasing to allow advocacy organisations to meet that demand. We know that people with disability experiencing serious issues are not getting the advocacy support they need to keep safe and uphold their human rights. This includes people with intellectual disability who experience particular barriers to having their voices heard and needs met.

Now there may be a chance to do something about this issue.

We have been told that the advocacy sector is under review and that a new advocacy program will be operating from mid-2026.

We will be reaching out in the coming months with opportunities for you to get involved and help us speak up for independent advocacy for people with intellectual disability.

Kim Roots
Executive Officer



Top row left: Kim with sector leader Meredith Coote and Minister for the NDIS, Jenny McAllister at the DSC Conference

Top row right: Community for Everyone project partners Leigh Creighton and Jenny Cush present a session facilitated by Chris Coombes at the DSC Conference

Bottom row left: Kim with the team from DANA at the the DSC Conference

Bottom row right: Zest Award nomination - Community for Everyone has been nominated in the Stronger Communities category

Moving Forward From Institutions in NSW

For decades, large numbers of people with intellectual disability lived in institutions across NSW, segregated away from society and denied the right to live fully included lives in the community. People had no real choice about where they lived or how they spent their lives.

Now that traditional institutions have closed, it is important to remember that this is not the end of the movement for inclusion and full citizenship.

As noted by Senior Side By Side Advocacy Advocate, Cathy Milne, 'So many people I know who survived institutions are still living with the impacts decades after they left the buildings behind.'

We must continue learning from the past, ensure institutional sites are used in ways that honour and remember those who lived there and acknowledge the harm so many people experienced. As the Disability Royal Commission has shown, there is still so much to do before people with intellectual disability have the same opportunities others take for granted.

Moving Forward From Institutions is a new film shares the voices of people who used to live in institutions and those who advocated for their closure.

The video features:

- Rob's story— Rob is a Peer leader with the Community for Everyone Project. Rob shares his experience in institutions and his journey forward.
- Jim Simpson - Jim is an advocate at the Council for Intellectual Disability (CID). Jim speaks about decades of advocacy to close institutions.
- A tribute to Kim Walker—Kim was a leading self-advocate who fought for the closure of institutions.

- Presented by Leigh Creighton—Leigh is a Peer Leader with the Community for Everyone Project and a long-time human rights advocate.

There is a link to the film below. Duration: 12:28 seconds.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YwRggkinJRY>

Community for Everyone

The Community for Everyone project continues to strive for opportunities for people with intellectual disability to connect with others around shared interests. Some great connections are underway.

Carole chose to get involved with Community for Everyone and says she is very happy to be part of the project. She has identified some interests that she has not had the chance to follow up including study, art and music.

"I feel really good in Side By Side because they have helped me a lot. I feel comfortable and I connect to other people and no one judges you. Learning to play my ukulele is good and I enjoy it, when the days are warm we go out and paint and when it's cold we play the ukulele inside."
Carole – Community for Everyone participant

Alma is a social connector who shares Carole's interests.

"My role as a social connector is to support Carole in building meaningful connections with our community. It's about providing opportunities for her to engage with others in a way that is empowering and authentic. But, in all honesty, I can't help but feel that she has enriched my life in ways I never anticipated. Working with Carole has reminded me that connection isn't just about facilitating interactions. It's about being present and truly listening, allowing space for people to show up as they are." Alma – Social Connector



Carole plays the ukulele while Alma holds the music

There are still opportunities to get involved with Community for Everyone.

We are seeking:

- a Korean speaker in the Marsfield or Eastwood area who can help a person reconnect with her Korean heritage
- a person interested in singing and/or who can help forge connections in the LGBTQI+ community
- a person who likes dancing, singing and listening to music in the Ryde area
- a person who enjoys craft, musicals and cooking in the Ryde area.

If that could be you, we would love to hear from you!

Contact us at evelyn@sidebysideadvocacy.org.au or call us on 9808 5500.

Inclusive Governance: from theory to action

Side By Side Advocacy has been thinking about, researching and implementing inclusive governance for over 5 years. We have been focused on the inclusion of people with intellectual disability in the decision making and governance of disability community organisations.

Now on Thursday 19 June 2025 we are hosting an event to explore how to move from thinking about inclusive governance to actioning inclusive governance.

We are delighted to note that along with Side By Side Advocacy, there will be presentations from the Council for Intellectual disability and the Centre for Disability Studies (Sydney University).

Attendance is free but registration is essential.

You can register with Humanitix via the link or QR code below.

Use this link to register here for the Inclusive Governance workshop:

<https://events.humanitix.com/inclusive-governance-from-theory-to-action>



You can also check out all the resources and articles created by Side By Side Advocacy's Inclusive Governance project on the webpage.

Resources about Inclusive Governance:

<https://sidebysideadvocacy.org.au/inclusive-governance-2/#resources>

Hear My Voice

Our public speaking workshops for people with intellectual disability have been well received.

Each session is facilitated by a person with intellectual disability who shares their experience.

So far Ryan Boyle and Shu Hua Chan have shared their insights.

We have also had a guest presentation from David Crisante who helped us all think about our audience. We tried a range of techniques to learn how our body language, our use of space, our tone of voice and the speed we talk impacts listeners.

Feedback has included:

“Thinking about the audience changes my body language.”

“I like writing about myself and learning about other participants”



The workshops are for people with intellectual disability who want to build their public speaking skills.

Participants have the chance to:

- Practice speaking in a safe and supportive environment
- Learn from others by sharing experiences and tips
- Think about the message you want to share and how you want to communicate it.

Participants also have the chance to make recordings of speeches to track progress.

The next workshop dates are listed below.

Workshops take place at Parramatta.

Contact Chris to register: chris@sidebysideadvocacy.org.au or phone the office 9808 5500

Public Speaking Workshops

Thursday, 12 June, 10:00 am-1:00 pm

- Topic: My voice — What is my voice and My tools to speak.

Friday, 25 July, 1:00 pm - 4:00 pm

- Topic: My voice — My audience, Planning, and Practice

Friday, 22 August, 1:00 pm - 4:00 pm

- Topic: Using media tools — Speaking up and Practice

Friday, 19 September, 1:00 pm - 4:00 pm

- Topic: My voice — Event Planning and Practice

Friday, 17 October, 1:00 pm - 4:00 pm

- Topic: My voice — Podcasts and Practice

Thursday, 20 November, 1:00 pm - 4:00 pm

- Topic: Participant presentations
-

Listening to people rarely heard

Everyone can communicate. Everyone can make decisions. These are fundamental human rights.

But too many people with disability — especially those who communicate without words — are still denied basic choices.

Some people still do not have the chance to choose:

- what they eat
- what they wear
- where they live
- who they live with
- who they build relationships with.

As an organisation that specialises in advocacy for people with intellectual disability, we are frequently confronted with, and working to counter, this reality.

That is why we are keen to host 'Listening to People Rarely Heard', a workshop presented by Dr Jo Watson — a leading advocate for people with complex communication support needs.

This workshop will give you practical strategies to better support decision-making for people who communicate informally.

The event is taking place on 2 July 2025 in Parramatta. Limited tickets are available.

You can register for the workshop by using the link or scanning the QR code below.

Use this link to register for 'Listening to people rarely heard':

<https://events.humanitix.com/listening-to-voices-rarely-heard-presented-by-dr-jo-watson>



Resources

Side By Side Advocacy and Hunter Circles has brought together some resources related to developing community connections. Below are some examples you may find useful.

Videos about loneliness made by Our Voice members in South Australia Our Voices: <https://www.ourvoicesa.org.au/our-work>

Friends – Connecting people with disabilities and community members – Angela Amado: https://ici-s.umn.edu/files/xYNhbx3pj_friends_connecting_people_with_disabilities_and_community_members

Videos featuring Janet Klees relating to developing relationships and connection

Strategies to help build relationships:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wOBMDQOVjpU>

Power of a positive introduction:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8ay0se7kwjU>

Why are relationships important:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ysXtuHn8aPw>

The Power of Community – Video featuring

Sue Swenson: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4KNQ7zBZbzA>

Feel free to reach out if you would like more resources on this topic.

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, Evelyn Gyan.



Evelyn Gyan

Kim: Could you tell me about yourself?

Evelyn: I'm a community focused disability professional with experience in both direct support and project coordination. My background also

includes leading innovation projects in an organization where I worked across teams with people with disability to improve quality of life for people who live in group homes.

Kim: What is your role at Side By Side Advocacy?

Evelyn: I am the new Co-ordinator for the Community for Everyone project. I lead a peer-driven initiative to reduce social isolation for people with intellectual disability.

Kim: Why did you want to get involved with Community for Everyone?

Evelyn: I'm passionate about inclusion, co-design, and helping people build meaningful community connections.

Kim: What do you do for fun?

Evelyn: Outside of work, I enjoy reading and going for long walks, it gives me the time to reflect, recharge, and stay grounded.

News items

NDIS Service Provision vs Independent Advocacy – what's the difference? | NDIS Quality and Safeguards Commission:

<https://www.ndiscommission.gov.au/media-centre/ndis-service-provision-vs-independent-advocacy-whats-difference>

Changes to rental laws: <https://www.tenants.org.au/resource/law-change#:~:text=Updated%2019%20May%202025,and%20how%20they%20affect%20renters>.

Changes to NDIS funding periods: <https://ndis.gov.au/news/10721-changes-ndis-funding-periods>

New NDIS Ministers Announced:

<https://teamdsc.com.au/resources/2025-new-ndis-ministers>

Dates for your calendar

There are lots of training opportunities and other dates for your calendar.

Contact the event organisers if you are interested in taking part.

King's Birthday public holiday - Monday 9 June

NDIS Discussion Series - hosted by Family Advocacy, 18 June 2025,
12-1pm : <https://family-advocacy.com/event/ndis-discussion-series-june2025/>

Inclusive Governance: from theory to action - free event hosted by Side By Side Advocacy, 19 June 2025, 2.30 - 5.30pm:
<https://events.humanitix.com/inclusive-governance-from-theory-to-action>

Thriving: Strategies to move from the margins to the heart of community - hosted by Resourcing Inclusive Communities, 23 June 2025 - 9:30am - 12:30pm: <https://www.ric.org.au/events/view/thriving-strategies-to-move-from-the-margins-to-the-heart-of-community-1>

Listening to people rarely heard - hosted by Side By Side Advocacy, Dr Jo Watson, (rescheduled) – now 2 July 2025, Phive, Parramatta:
<https://events.humanitix.com/listening-to-voices-rarely-heard-presented-by-dr-jo-watson>

National NAIDOC Week - 6 July – 13 July

Bank Holiday - Monday, 4 August - a public holiday in NSW

Side By Side Advocacy AGM – 5 Parramatta Square, Parramatta, 20 November, 6.30pm

Emergency contact numbers

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:

Emergency contacts:

<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: <https://sidebysideadvocacy.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2024/06/Citizen-Advocacy-Brochure-1.pdf>
- Individual Advocacy: <https://sidebysideadvocacy.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2024/06/Individual-Advocacy-Brochure-2.pdf>
- National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) Appeals: <https://sidebysideadvocacy.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2024/06/NDIS-Appeals-Support-1.pdf>
- Inclusive Governance Project Brochure: <https://sidebysideadvocacy.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2024/06/Inclusive-Governance-Project-1.pdf>

To view more information about the work we do at Side By Side Advocacy click here: [Side By Side Advocacy Brochure](#):

<https://sidebysideadvocacy.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2024/06/Side-By-Side-Advocacy-Brochure-1.pdf>



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.



Website: <https://sidebysideadvocacy.org.au/>

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/people/Side-By-Side-Advocacy/100091342617328/>

LinkedIn: https://au.linkedin.com/company/side-by-side-advocacy?trk=public_profile_experience-item_profile-section-card_image-click

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 Wallumedegal people, Traditional Custodians on the land on which we live and work. We pay respect to Elders past, present and emerging.

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