











Annual Report 2025-2026

Side By Side Advocacy

side by side advocacy

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About us

Who we are

Side By Side Advocacy is an independent, community-based advocacy organisation. Our purpose is to promote and uphold the rights, needs, and interests of people with disability to enable full and meaningful participation in the community. We provide advocacy in a way that suits the needs of the person with disability.

Our vision

A world where all people are equal and valued, where diversity is celebrated, needs are fulfilled, and opportunities realised.

Our purpose

To promote and uphold 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 values

The following values guide our work:



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 principles

1. Each person's life is of equal and inherent value and worth.
2. People with disability have the right to advocacy and to protection from devaluation, neglect, abuse and the denial of human rights.
3. People with disability have the right to be treated as individuals, and not in terms of their disability.
4. All people are entitled to comprehensive and appropriate support to ensure full inclusion into the community.
5. All people have the right to make decisions about their own lives.
6. All people should be treated with dignity and respect.
7. All people have the right to be safe, valued and accepted.
8. All people have the potential to grow and develop and should be provided with opportunities.
9. All people have the same human and legal rights regardless of age, race, disability, religious belief, sex, sexuality and gender identity.
10. People with disability are to be treated in accordance with the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

Chairperson's report



Michelle Donelly
Chairperson

This year, we were in the remarkable position of having the most staff and funding in the history of the organisation, while also experiencing the greatest uncertainty regarding our future funding. We welcomed many new staff members over the last year. They have made an important contribution to how we address many advocacy needs. Thanks to peer leaders Jeff Lai and Shu Hua Chan for your role in recruitment. Our growth has meant we needed to extend our office space.

Our reach was extended in important ways. Side By Side Advocacy was awarded funding for the NSW individual advocacy component of the Supported Employment Advocacy Project, which will continue until mid-2027. Our work on this national project has been assisted by efforts of peer leaders Terry Whitehouse, Ryan Boyle and Carol Argent who connected us with present and former workplaces and the co-design efforts of peer leaders Ryan Boyle, Shu Hua Chan, and Jeff Lai led by Cathy Milne. The project has expanded our geographical reach, improved statewide connections, and demonstrated the value of specialised advocacy for people with intellectual disability, and of inclusive practices and inclusive governance.

We were also successful in applying for the NSW State Government funding through the Disability Advocacy Futures Program. This is the first time we have received State Government funding. Many thanks to Kim and Kay Jones for the highly effective way they prepared these detailed funding applications.

We also continued to receive funding to support our critically important individual advocacy efforts as part of the National Disability Advocacy Program with the Inclusive Governance Project and Community for Everyone funding also continuing via Information Linkages and Capacity Building funding.
Our growth has led to changes to the way we manage our organisation. We have drawn on the extensive expertise of Cathy Milne and David Briggs in taking up leadership responsibilities. In these roles, they have demonstrated the depth of their knowledge of the needs and interests of people with intellectual disability, and the complexities of navigating embedded and worsening structural disadvantage.

Changes to the Board

We appointed four new Board members in the 2025-2026 financial year. They were selected through a rigorous, transparent process. Board members reflect the diversity of our community, and include people with disability, including intellectual disability, professionals qualified in governance, and people with a history of advocacy experience. We have Board members with deep understanding of the needs of people with intellectual disability, financial management, cybersecurity, the human service system, and more. Marian Casey, Moitri Pal (Secretary) , Nivi Subramanian and Vicki Winfield have joined Ben Pilipowski (Vice Chair), Toni Ng (Treasurer), Steve McDonald (Cybersecurity) and Faz Hares and have already demonstrated their dedication and effectiveness. It is great to have you as part of Side By Side Advocacy. Many thanks to Ben and Faz for your role in recruitment.

We are also in the process of recruiting two people with intellectual disability for Board Observerships consistent with our research findings on the many pathways to Inclusive Governance.

Board transparency

We have evaluated our Board processes and confirmed that our policies meet the demands we face in a changing advocacy landscape. We receive comprehensive financial reports each month, which we use to inform our decisions. Our accounts, operational reports, and the Board's work are independently audited. We have created and reviewed a range of new policies to ensure that our governance processes continue to be robust.

Leadership opportunities

An Advisory Group made up of people with intellectual disability was appointed at the beginning of 2026. It has been a privilege to have the insight and perspectives of the Advisory Group over every funding initiative and proposal considered by Side By Side Advocacy. Thank you so much Ryan Boyle, Shannon Lalor, Sarah Butler, Anna Curryer, Carole Argent and Jack Stewart. Leadership opportunities are being supported and grown via a range of co-designed and presented workshops. These included 'Hear My Voice' led by Chris Faber-Morris with co-presenters Anna Curryer, Sid Chandran, Ryan Boyle and Leigh Creighton and the 'Speak with Confidence' workshops led by Nicola Brayan and Ryan Boyle.

Challenges

This past year has seen great challenges in the sector. Questions and debates about the NDIS result in immense stress over extended periods of time for people with intellectual disability. This context increases both the demand for and intensity of advocacy support.

Despite this, as a result of the work of Side By Side Advocacy, people have had the courage to escape serious abuse and neglect, secure more meaningful employment, lifesaving healthcare, and escape the threat of homelessness. We have assisted people to successfully navigate complex appeals processes and speak up to secure their rights, and their place in decision making. People have made community connections for the first time after decades of social isolation and loneliness.

For all of these hard won and important achievements I would like to thank our exceptionally skilled and dedicated team whose collective experience, knowledge and commitment make this important work possible. Our advocacy team, made up of Cathy Milne, Ishika Shakya, David Briggs, Lil Paterson, Andrew Boerma, Nicola Taylor and Nikki Cummins; our appeals support team of David, Ishika and Nicola Taylor; our Inclusive Governance Team of Bernadette Curryer, Shu Hua Chan, Jeff Lai and Sophia Liauw; our Community for Everyone team of Evelyn Gyan and Bernadette; and our Supported Employment team of Cathy, Nicola Brayan, Andrew and Nikki. You would be correct in noticing that some people wear multiple hats, but none more so than Kim Roots, who oversees all teams.

The work of Side By Side Advocacy requires a distinctive combination of skills: from complex individual and systemic advocacy, navigating legal, government and service systems, and supporting people through NDIS appeals, to building inclusive communities, developing genuine leadership opportunities and ensuring people with intellectual disability have a meaningful voice in organisational decision-making. Our team brings together professional expertise, research capability, lived experience, deep knowledge of disability rights and a particular ability to listen, build trust and provide highly individualised support.

Community building

People who have been profoundly socially isolated have established meaningful connections. Successful connections rely on knowing the person really well and deliberate, skilled facilitation demonstrating that meaningful social change requires both thoughtfulness and expertise. We are indebted to our collaborators at Hunters Circles, Jen Cush, Leigh Creighton and Robert King for their enthusiasm and insight in this work. We also benefit from the dedication and rigour of peer leaders Jeff Lai and Shu Hua Chan, and the systematic rigour of Evelyn Gyan and Kim Roots, in creating and supporting these meaningful connections.

Similarly, the thoroughness and faithfulness of Lil Paterson in sustaining and creating Citizen Advocacy matches that address a wide range of fundamental needs was detailed in her annual comprehensive report against the Citizen Advocacy Program evaluation standards.

Individual Advocacy

Individual advocacy can involve working alongside people through some of the most difficult and challenging circumstances in their lives. Issues are rarely straightforward and may involve years of accumulated disadvantage, multiple services and agencies, complex family or personal circumstances, and decisions with profound consequences for a person's safety, independence, and quality of life. Advocacy can require sustained engagement, careful relationship building, persistence in the face of resistance, and finding ways forward when systems are difficult to navigate or have failed to respond. Each person's situation is different, and our work starts with understanding what matters to them and staying alongside them as they work towards change.





Systemic work

This year has also been marked by invitations and opportunities for our advocacy and inclusion work to inform the wider sector. We have hosted workshops and events for local, state and national audiences including those led by Dr Angela Amado and Dr Jo Watson.

Our Executive Officer and senior advocates have informed State and Federal politicians and officials, the National Disability Insurance Scheme Independent Advisory Council, national conferences of advocacy, research and disability services organisations and strategic planning groups and parliamentary inquiries.

Side By Side Advocacy has been a driving force behind a key agenda of the Sydney Alliance in the lead up to the NSW State election next year focusing on Social Isolation. Jeff Lai had a key role in initiating this and Kim Roots in informing this Agenda.

Online events on Inclusive Governance, such as From theory to practice, and the establishment of an Inclusive Governance Community of Practice meeting since September 2025 have attracted a wide range of organisations and service providers engaging in candid and informative discussions to promote the inclusion of people with intellectual disability in governance.

Looking ahead

There has been uncertainty regarding the future national funding program for disability advocacy. The future of our funding is unclear. We have submitted a grant applications and await the result.

The incredible thought and work that went into these applications, which of course had overlapping deadlines, were undertaken in consultation with the Advisory Group by Kim, Bernadette, Cathy, David and Kay, also with contributions by Jen Cush at Hunter Circles.

At the time of writing, we anxiously await the outcomes of these applications. We remain indebted to our Executive Officer Kim Roots for her thorough research and networking in preparing Side By Side to address the future advocacy needs of people with intellectual disability, whatever the outcome of the grant applications currently under review.

Michelle Donelly
Chair of the Board

Executive Officer's report



Kim Roots
Executive Officer

2025–2026 has been a tough year for people with disability. There has been considerable uncertainty, with significant changes underway to the NDIS, disability supports and advocacy funding. More people asked for help from advocates than there were advocates available. This high demand was not just experienced at Side By Side Advocacy but across the country.

At the same time, 2025 - 2026 was a year of change for Side By Side Advocacy. We welcomed new staff, developed new areas of advocacy and continued to provide specialised advocacy support.

Throughout this change and these challenges, our purpose has remained clear: to support people with intellectual disability to exercise their rights and have influence over the decisions, systems and communities that affect their lives.

The advocacy team have used their sophisticated skills and knowledge to work in a way that is trauma informed and impactful. The team provides advocacy in the way that suits the individuals, whether that is in hospital, in home, or in community.

People with intellectual disability are at the heart of Side By Side Advocacy and contribute to our organisation in many different ways – as board members, advisors, members, advocates, speakers, project participants, researchers, colleagues and leaders. Their knowledge, experience and perspectives shape our work and challenge us to continually improve the way we advocate.

This contribution has kept us on track during these challenging times during which the team not only works locally with individuals but seeks to bring about positive sector change.

Our Inclusive Governance Project was extended, continuing our work to understand and support meaningful participation by people with intellectual disability in the governance of organisations. The team has been sharing our co-designed research and resources with organisations keen to embrace inclusive governance.

Our Community for Everyone project continued its collaboration with Hunter Circles, supporting people to strengthen connections and relationships within their communities. Beyond local community change, we are attempting to share resources and project learnings. The interim report from the project has been released that sets out project ambitions, challenges and learnings.

We were also pleased to host an event at Parramatta Town Hall with international expert Dr Angela Amado, whose work on social networks and community connection has contributed to international thinking about how people can build rich and meaningful lives with others.

Our Hear My Voice project, funded by City of Parramatta, continued to support people with intellectual disability to develop public speaking skills and share their experiences and ideas. The new Speak with Confidence workshops built on this work, with a focus on communication skills relevant to employment and community engagement. These projects create spaces where people communicate in a way of their choosing whether that be gestures, images, technology, words - or some other way.

All of this work has been co-designed by people with intellectual disability.
We also commenced a new Supported Employment Advocacy Project, working alongside other disability advocacy organisations in NSW. Our advocacy in this area is grounded in the right of people with intellectual disability to make their own choices about work and to have those choices respected. The team has been exploring a range of work related issues as they travel around the state.

Supported decision-making continued to be an important part of our work. For many people with intellectual disability, an independent Side By Side Advocate ensures they can exercise their right to make informed decisions with support from people they trust. We shared our experience through a community of practice and contributed to the NSW Parliamentary inquiry into supported decision-making. Our advocacy continues to emphasise the importance of listening to people, respecting their will and preferences, and providing the time and relationships necessary for meaningful decision-making.

We also joined with Sydney Alliance to raise awareness of loneliness and social isolation. Connection and belonging are fundamental to a good life, and our efforts in this area are focused on ensuring people with intellectual disability have the opportunity to be known, valued and able to contribute. Peer Leaders have shared their experiences and insights to inform this collaboration.

We were also pleased to share our work and perspectives more broadly during the year, including presentations at the Australian Society for Intellectual Disability and Victorian Advocacy League for Individuals with Intellectual Disability conferences. Again, peer leaders led the way with this sharing aimed to ensure that life experience of people with intellectual disability, including those who are profoundly isolated are known and considered.

Looking ahead

The uncertainty facing the disability sector makes independent advocacy more important than ever. As systems change, many people with intellectual disability will benefit from access to advocacy support that is independent, rights-based and grounded in their own experiences and priorities.

We are particularly pleased that Side By Side Advocacy has secured funding through the Disability Advocacy Futures Program. This is the first time we have received this type of NSW Government funding as a disability representative organisation, and it provides an important opportunity to strengthen our advocacy across the state.

Over the next five years, we will use this funding to build relationships with people with intellectual disability and communities across NSW, hear directly about the issues that matter to them and strengthen opportunities for people to influence the systems that affect their lives. We will build on the relationships, knowledge and experience already present within Side By Side, while making sure that people with intellectual disability continue to shape the direction of our work.

At a time of significant change, Side By Side Advocacy will continue to strive to protect rights, challenge barriers and create a society in which people with intellectual disability are recognised as equal citizens, with the same rights, opportunities and expectation of being heard as everyone else.

It is an honour to work alongside Side By Side Advocacy's dedicated staff and Board of management as well as, volunteers, supporters, partners and the many people with intellectual disability who contribute to Side By Side Advocacy. Their knowledge, leadership, determination and lived experience are central to who we are and to the work we do.

Kim Roots
Executive Officer

Highlights

Strengthening advocacy projects and programs
Continued to provide specialist advocacy for people with intellectual disability, supporting people to understand and exercise their rights, make decisions and have their wishes respected.

Responded to increasing demand for advocacy at a time of significant uncertainty and change across the disability sector, including proposed changes to disability advocacy funding and the NDIS.

Commenced the Supported Employment Advocacy Project, providing individual advocacy for people with high support needs to make informed decisions about employment and understand and exercise their rights at work. The project provides advocacy to people across NSW and does not require a NDIS plan.

Strengthened partnerships across the disability and community sectors, recognising that lasting change requires collaboration and the combined knowledge and experience of people with disability, families, advocates and allies. This included working with colleagues as part of Supported Employment Advocacy.







People with intellectual disability leading and shaping our work
Strengthened the involvement and leadership of people with intellectual disability throughout Side By Side, including as Board members, members, staff, peer leaders, advisory group members, co-designers, co-presenters, project participants and systemic advocacy partners.



Continued the Inclusive Governance Project, continuing resource creation and information dissemination to support meaningful participation by people with intellectual disability in organisational governance. This included launching a new Inclusive Governance podcast series, sharing ideas and experiences about inclusive governance and creating more opportunities for people to contribute to conversations about leadership and decision-making.



Continued Community for Everyone, working with Hunter Circles to support people to build relationships, connections and a stronger sense of belonging in their communities. We increased the number of people aware of project insights by hosting international expert Dr Angela Amado, who brought international knowledge and experience about social relationships and community connection into our work on belonging and inclusion.



Continued the Hear My Voice project, funded by City of Parramatta, supporting people with intellectual disability to strengthen public speaking skills and share their experiences and ideas. This innovative project supported people to speak up with and without words.



Commenced Speak with Confidence workshops, providing opportunities for people with intellectual disability to develop communication and public speaking skills connected to employment, community participation and other areas of life.

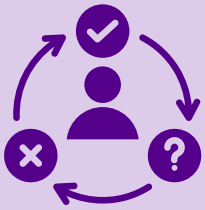


Strengthened Side By Side's profile as an organisation led by rights, inclusion and participation, with people with intellectual disability contributing to many aspects of our work and helping shape the organisation's priorities.

Sharing experience and leading change



Participated in sector consultations about the future of disability advocacy, working with other advocacy organisations to highlight the importance of independent, specialist advocacy for people with intellectual disability.



Strengthened our work in supported decision-making, sharing Side By Side's experience through a community of practice and contributing to the NSW Parliamentary inquiry into supported decision-making.



Worked with Sydney Alliance to raise concerns about loneliness and social isolation, highlighting the importance of relationships, connection and belonging for people with disability.



Continued to build community awareness about disability rights and advocacy, sharing information and resources with community groups, families, supporters and other organisations.



Presented at major disability sector conferences, including the ASID and VALID conferences, sharing Side By Side's experience and perspectives on advocacy, inclusion and the rights of people with intellectual disability.



Continued to promote Citizen Advocacy, creating opportunities for community members to become involved in supporting the rights and interests of people with intellectual disability.



Expanded opportunities for people to become involved with Side By Side, as Social Connectors as part of Community for Everyone. Social Connectors received an induction, ongoing mentoring and had the chance to attend additional training and regular meet ups.



Continued to develop practical resources and information to help people with disability, families, supporters and community organisations understand rights and access advocacy.

A strong and accountable organisation

Welcomed new members and Board members to the Side By Side team with extensive community and disability sector experience.

Maintained a strong focus on quality and the experience of people using our services. External feedback during the year highlighted the respectful, caring and responsive approach of Side By Side advocates and the trust that people with disability and families have developed with the organisation.

Continued to strengthen partnerships across the disability and community sectors, recognising that lasting change requires collaboration and the combined knowledge and experience of people with disability, families, advocates and allies.

Continued to build an organisation that is inclusive, accountable and tenacious, working alongside people with intellectual disability to challenge discrimination, address barriers and promote full and meaningful participation in community life.




Friend
Doctor








1 You are the




FILA




side by side advocacy


Connecting with
Community
with Dr Angela Amado

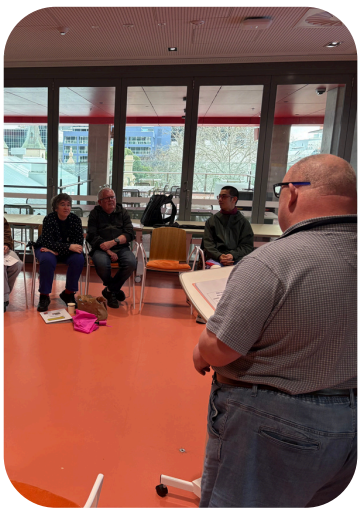


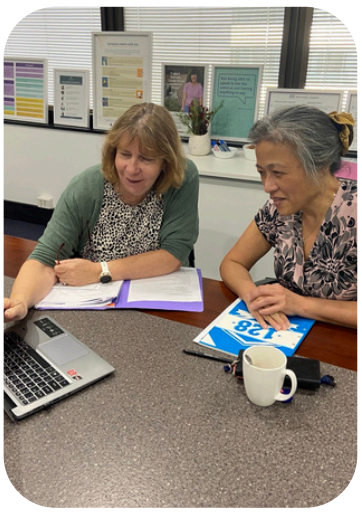





When you ask for something, you can follow
these steps.
1. Introduce yourself.
2. Explain the issue
3. Why is it important?
4. What action do you want?







Speak with Confidence workshops



Nicola Brayan
Communications and inclusion support officer

We started running Speak with Confidence workshops in May 2026. These workshops are co-designed and co-presented with people with intellectual disability. So far, most of the workshops have been designed and presented by Ryan Boyle, a member of the Advisory Group, and Nicola Brayan, a Communications and Inclusion Support Officer at Side By Side Advocacy.

Each workshop focuses on a different part of communicating with confidence. We have run workshops about introducing yourself to different people and asking for things. We have also run online workshops so that more people can participate.

The workshops are a great chance to become more comfortable speaking in front of a group. People who attend can be a part of role plays, activities, and open discussions. We talk about how to communicate confidently using different styles of communication. Some people who attend use words, some use communication devices, and some use gestures. We talk about communicating at home, in the community, at work, and in work-like settings.

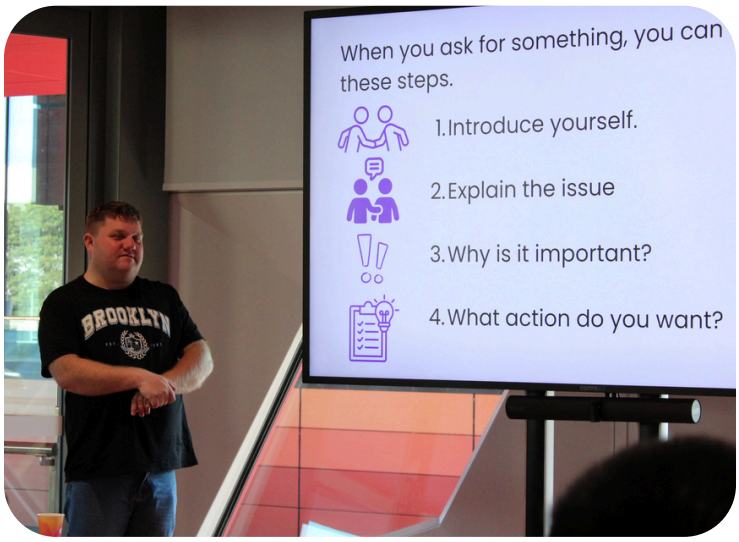
It is great to have so many people – familiar and new – be a part of each workshop.

Some people use words to communicate. Some people use communication tools. Everyone has a voice.
- Ryan Boyle, co-designer and -presenter

I'm loving the Speak with Confidence workshops. They are so beneficial. I have learnt about how speaking can help me and the right people who can help me.
- Workshop participant






When you ask for something, you can these steps.
1.Introduce yourself.
2.Explain the issue
3.Why is it important?
4.What action do you want?



Citizen Advocacy



Lil Paterson
Citizen Advocacy Coordinator

Citizen advocacy connects people with intellectual disability with another member of the local community in a 1:1 long-term match. Citizen advocates take the time to get to know their match and commit to strengthening their voice and ensuring their rights and interests are upheld. For some profoundly isolated people with intellectual disability, a citizen advocate may be the only person in their life that is not paid to be there.

The citizen advocacy program was established over 30 years ago and remains at the heart of Side By Side Advocacy's vision and purpose. Through careful matching and support from the office, the program provides proactive advocacy for people who are at risk of abuse, have limited opportunities to make their own decisions, and often have no unpaid people in their lives.

This year, the program has continued to support existing matches, while establishing and strengthening new connections. Citizen advocates navigated complex systems including the NDIS, service provision, housing, health and finances.

One long-term citizen advocate worked with their match to recruit and train a team of new support workers focused on balancing their health needs and preferences and exploring opportunities to pursue their interests.

Another citizen advocate contributed to improvements in their match's health by encouraging support staff to consistently follow the dietician's recommendations and monitoring weight changes during regular visits.

The Citizen Advocacy coordinator supported matches through regular catch ups, check in phone calls and by connecting citizen advocates with an individual advocate with subject matter expertise when needed to address specific issues.

The program established new matches through active recruitment and outreach. The coordinator attended events in the Ryde and Parramatta areas, met with well-connected people and engaged with Sydney Alliance. The program received many expressions of interest from potential citizen advocates and provided training on topics including barriers faced by people with intellectual disability, supported decision making and facilitating community connections. The coordinator encouraged and guided new citizen advocates in the early stages of their match and addressed issues or questions around getting to know the person, dealing with triggers, exploring new activities, and more.

People with intellectual disability in the citizen advocacy program became more involved in other Side by Side Advocacy programs and projects. Some became members of the organisation while others attended events and workshops. This has created opportunities for people to meet peers and staff, develop self-advocacy skills, and speak up on issues important to them .

Social isolation is increasing across our local communities, with people with intellectual disability facing compounding barriers to connection and belonging. Citizen advocacy is one way for ordinary people to help address these barriers and build stronger, more inclusive communities. With so much uncertainty surrounding recent NDIS changes, freely given relationships are increasingly important in supporting people with disability to have a good life.





Individual Advocacy



Cathy Milne
Senior Advocate



Andrew Boerma
Advocate



Ishika Shakya
Advocate



Nikki Cummins
Advocate



Nicola Taylor
Advocacy and Office Coordinator

Advancing the rights and needs of people with disability is a core part of our work. We continue to provide advocacy support to people with intellectual disability, including through individual advocacy, support for self-advocacy, family advocacy, and systemic advocacy. Over the last year, we have travelled throughout Sydney to meet with people, stand with people who wanted to speak up for themselves. The team has used our experiences and expertise to support positive change in people's lives.

Thank you so much for your ongoing advocacy and support ... Your commitment, particularly during times of complex transition and challenges, has made a significant difference in ensuring Linda*'s voice has been heard and their rights upheld.

- feedback (name changed)



We completed
9,715
advocacy sessions

Advocates supported people through a range of different situations. Some key issues include

- Understanding changes to the NDIS
- Family and domestic violence
- Interactions with Trustee and Guardian
- Understanding financial management orders
- Insufficient medical care or support.

In a time of great uncertainty across the disability sector, it is more important than ever that people have access to independent advocates. We continue to support people with intellectual disability to speak up for meaningful change in the way that suits them. That could be in their home, in hospital, in a community setting, in the office, or somewhere else. Most people benefit from face to face communication.

One important way we support meaningful advocacy engagement is via supported decision making. In May, Senior Advocate Cathy Milne and Executive Officer Kim Roots gave evidence before the Committee on Ageing and Disability in its inquiry into supported decision making for adults with disability and older people in NSW. In June, we supported Carole Argent, a long-time member of Side By Side Advocacy, to participate in the NSW Parliament supported decision making roundtable.

Cathy says,
"We all have capacity to make some decisions independently, but not others. Most of us make big decisions with support - we are supported by family, friends, therapists, doctors, accountants, lawyers. People with intellectual disability sometimes need more support than others, sometimes they don't. Needing support with decisions doesn't mean you don't have a right to make decisions about your own life and it should not mean that you do not get the same presumption of capacity we are all entitled to."

If I didn't have Side By Side Advocacy, there would be no one to help me.
When I needed help, I got it.
My life is a lot different.
Cathy has shown me that I can speak up for myself.

- Carole Argent







Supported Employment Advocacy



Cathy Milne
Senior Advocate



Andrew Boerma
Advocate



Nikki Cummins
Advocate



Nicola Brayan
Communications and inclusion support officer

The Supported Employment Advocacy project strives to bring about informed employment choices, and access to individual advocacy. The project helps people with high support needs to make informed decisions about employment. Side By Side Advocacy is one of many partner organisations around Australia who are a part of this project. We are the organisation providing individual advocacy support in NSW.

Over the last year, we met with people around New South Wales to talk about employment. We have spoken to people working in Australian Disability Enterprises (ADEs), people with disability who want to know more about their employment options, parents of school leavers with disability, and more.



We have met with people from Sydney, the Illawarra, the Northern Rivers, the Central Coast, Bathurst, and other places around the state. More travel is planned in the following financial year.

Many people we have spoken to in our outreach were not aware that independent advocacy existed and was an option for them. After getting to meet with advocates, many ADEs invited us back to provide information for staff and engage with supported employees. People with disability also initiated some of our visits to ADEs, working with us through co-design and co-delivery to further their professional goals.









In the last year, we completed **over 400** advocacy sessions relating to employment

Alongside our travel, we have provided individual advocacy support for people across the state around employment issues. We assisted people with finding a job that is right for them, knowing their rights, accessing Centrelink, and more.

Common themes

During our visits to sites around the state and our advocacy sessions, several themes came up repeatedly.

· Coercive workplace practices
· Working conditions below supported employment award
· Low awareness of advocacy and its role in a safe workspace
· Relief that there is a project that provides skilled advocacy support for people with high support needs that have been unable to identify supports that meet their needs
· Finding employment and good quality employment services and supports can be hard

The Supported Employment Advocacy project is due to finish in July 2027. We are grateful for the work of our project partners.





Administrative Review Tribunal Advocacy



David Briggs
Senior Advocate



Nicola Taylor
Advocacy and Office Coordinator



Ishika Shakya
Advocate

Throughout the reporting year, Side By Side Advocacy continued to assist people with disability to challenge decisions made by the National Disability Insurance Agency (NDIA) through the Administrative Review Tribunal (ART).

Our advocacy aims to promote access to justice by ensuring people with disability understand their rights, can participate meaningfully in the appeals process and have the opportunity to challenge decisions that affect their lives.

During this reporting period, our advocacy team:
· Delivered **1089** advocacy sessions.
· Supported **190** people involved in ART appeals.
· Provided information, guidance and individual advocacy to strengthen people's ability to understand and exercise their rights.

Demand for appeals advocacy increased again this period, continuing to pressure our limited advocacy resources. To respond to this demand, we maintained a flexible approach to providing self-advocacy support, offering different levels of assistance based on individual circumstances, support needs and available resources.

Our bespoke, one on one ART information sessions remained an important part of this approach, enabling us to reach more people and provide practical guidance about the review process, preparing evidence and participating in Tribunal proceedings. These sessions also created opportunities for follow-up assistance, helping individuals build the knowledge and confidence to progress their appeals independently where possible.

For people requiring more intensive assistance, we provided ongoing individual representation and support throughout the appeals process. This included advocacy with and for them during complex Tribunal procedures, gathering relevant evidence, preparing submissions, and participating in Tribunal conferences and hearings. Where appropriate, we also facilitated referrals to legal and other community services.

Our appeals advocacy contributed to a range of positive outcomes, including:
· Securing access to essential disability supports through successful appeals
· Supporting people to develop greater confidence and skills in self-advocacy
· Assisting individuals to understand their rights and navigate complex government and service systems
· Ensuring people had meaningful opportunities to present their circumstances, support needs and evidence during Tribunal proceedings
· Informing people about additional services and assistance beyond the NDIS and providing support to access them.

While these outcomes demonstrate the importance of independent advocacy, significant barriers remain. The complexity of the NDIS and Tribunal processes, difficulties obtaining appropriate evidence and the limited availability of independent advocates continue to disadvantage people with disability. These challenges can be particularly significant for people with intellectual disability and those without strong informal support networks.

Independent advocacy plays an essential role in addressing these inequalities and ensuring that people are not excluded from seeking a fair review simply because they lack the knowledge, resources or support to navigate the system.

Side By Side Advocacy remains committed to protecting and promoting the rights of people with intellectual disability. Our work extends beyond achieving individual appeal outcomes. We seek to promote self-determination, challenge systemic barriers and ensure people with disability are recognised, respected and heard as equal members of our community.

I cannot thank you enough for the work you did... we have a very good outcome that should help Jack* going forward thanks to those efforts...
I have greatly appreciated your professionalism, approachability and timely advice, it made an otherwise daunting task much less so.

- feedback (name changed)



Inclusive Governance Project



Bernadette Curryer
Research Officer



Sophia Liauw
Communications and inclusion support officer



Shu Hua Chan
Peer leader



Jeff Lai
Peer leader

The Inclusive Governance Project continues to promote and support the inclusion of people with intellectual disability in the decision-making and governance of disability and other community organisations.

Our work is based on the 5 Principles of Inclusive Governance that were identified from our research. These principles are:
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.

During this year we have focused on supporting organisations to think about inclusive governance and what they need to do to become an inclusive organisation. To do this we have undertaken a number of activities:

1. Online Inclusive Governance workshop August – 33 people registered to hear about inclusive governance.

2. Facilitation of an Inclusive Governance Community of Practice commenced in September 2025. This is a vibrant learning community, meeting every 6 weeks, to develop a better practice of inclusion in organisational decision-making and governance. Shu Hua Chan is a peer leader, providing lived experience of board membership.

3. The need to hear the voice of all people, including people with complex support needs, was promoted through a panel presentation at the 2025 ASID Conference in Sydney. The panel included Kim Roots and Shu Hua Chan (Side By Side Advocacy), Jen Cush and Leigh Creighton (Hunter Circles) and Michelle King (University of Queensland). The theme was “Join us to help ensure that everyone's voice counts – especially those seldom heard”.

4. We are currently developing a series of online training modules to assist people with intellectual disability to understand the roles and responsibilities of board membership. Modules will also provide training to supporters to ensure effective, skilled support and accessibility accommodations are provided. The planned modules, due for public release next year, are:

- Easy to understand governance training
- Board support person training
- Working together - understanding the relationship between board members with intellectual disability and board support people
- Inclusive organisations - ideas for boards and senior staff to increase their inclusion and accessibility practices

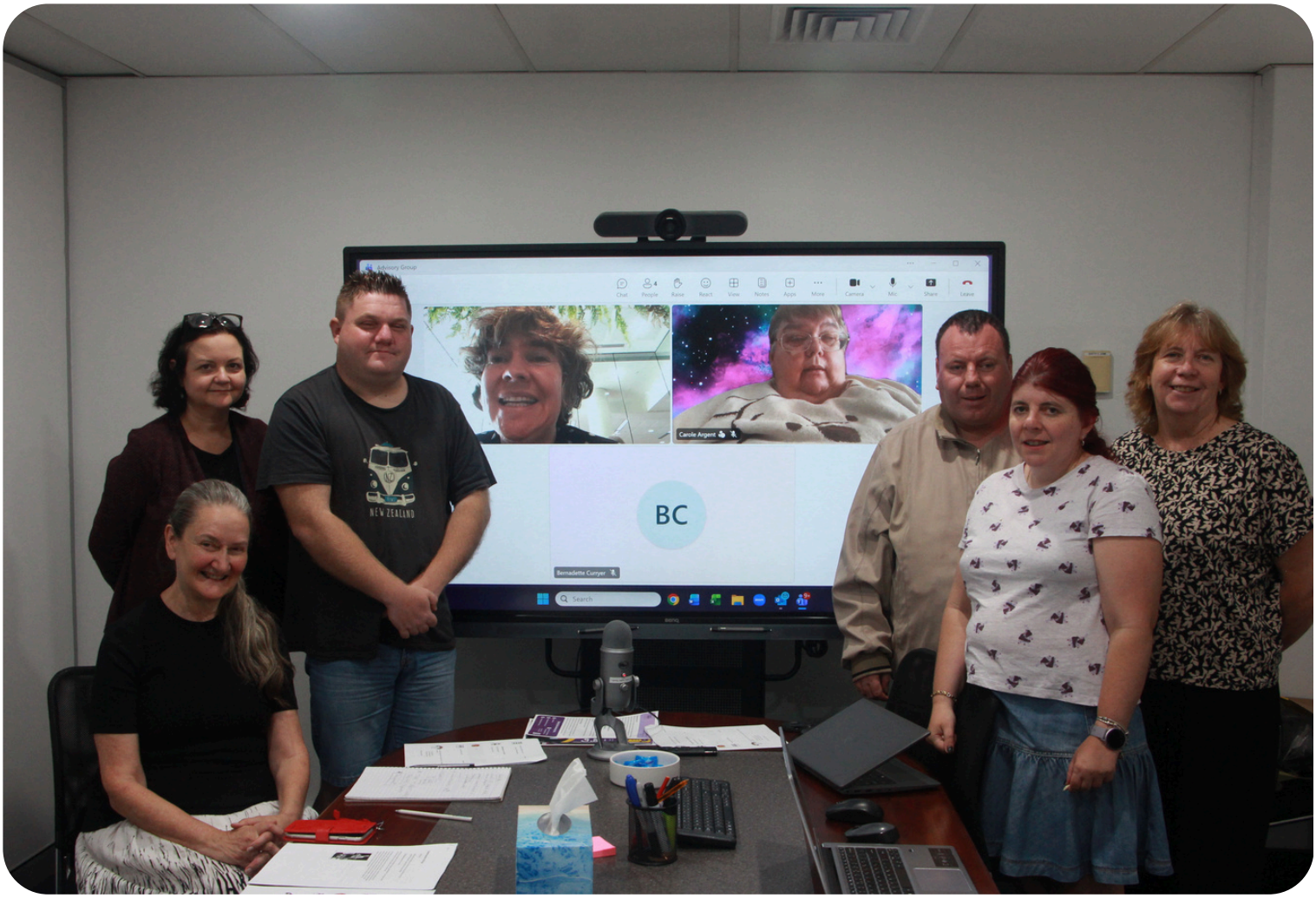
5. We also worked with other organisations, in advisory roles, on projects about inclusive governance and leadership. These included:

- Respect Our Ability - Speak Out Advocacy Tasmania and SACID
- Young Leaders Project- NSW Council for Intellectual Disability

6. Side By Side Advocacy Advisory Group
This year saw the start of the Side By Side Advocacy Advisory Group – a group of people with lived experience of intellectual disability that provide advice to the board and senior management. The group meets monthly, and the meetings are very lively and thought-provoking. The foundational group members are Carole Argent, Ryan Boyle, Sarah Butler Anna Curryer, Shannon Lalor and Jack Stewart. The board is represented at these meetings by the chair Michelle Donelly, with the Executive Officer Kim Roots ensuring staff and management are involved and communication is open and transparent.

We appreciate the continued guidance from the Consultative Reference Group - Kim Roots (SBSA EO), Michelle Donelly (SBSA Board), Margaret Spencer (Sydney University), Ian Eddie (Excelsia College), Penny Pedersen (Ryde City Council), Nicole Lee (NSW Council for Intellectual Disability), and Shu-Hua Chan (self-advocate).

The funding for this project was provided by the Australian Government's Department of Health, Disability and Ageing. We have received a fourth 12-month funding extension, allowing the project to continue until the end of June 2027.


BC







Community for Everyone



Evelyn Gyan
Community for Everyone
Project Coordinator



Shu Hua Chan
Peer leader
Community for Everyone



Jeff Lai
Peer leader
Community for Everyone

Community for Everyone is a partnership between Side By Side Advocacy and Hunter Circles. The project works alongside people with intellectual disability who experience profound social isolation. For many of the people involved, paid support workers are the main people in their lives. Peer Leaders help guide the project by sharing their experiences and insights.

Everyone's life and relationships are different. Community for Everyone recognises that people with intellectual disability, like everyone else, should have opportunities to develop friendships, pursue shared interests and build relationships beyond the formal support arrangements that are part of their lives.

Through Community for Everyone, people with intellectual disability are supported to explore their interests, meet other people and develop relationships within their local communities.

We have taken time to get to know each person and learn what matters to them. One person had a lifelong dream to continue her education. Another wanted to reconnect with her Korean culture. One man loves helping people and has volunteered at a community garden. Another wanted to deepen her sense of belonging in her faith community. Others wanted to try things that they had always wanted – craft, bird watching, music. People are engaging in their local community, meeting new people who share their interests and becoming known, valued members of their community.





The project also works with community members and organisations to encourage more inclusive and welcoming communities.

A central feature of the project is the involvement of volunteer Social Connectors, who are supported to develop relationships with participants around shared interests and activities. These relationships offer opportunities for people to get to know one another beyond the formal roles and responsibilities associated with paid support. We share information, offer mentoring and ongoing meet ups for social connectors to grapple with any barriers to community inclusion that are being experienced.

Community for Everyone also recognises that meaningful inclusion requires change within communities. People with intellectual disability should not have to fit into existing structures that were not designed with them in mind. Community organisations, groups and individuals all have a role in creating opportunities for people to participate, contribute and belong. To that end, Community for Everyone has hosted a range of information sessions and workshops that engaged with people in the local community. These included Listening to voices rarely heard – a workshop hosted by Professor Jo Watson of Deakin University and Connecting with Community hosted by international expert, Dr Angela Amado, from the United States.

We also gathered and shared what we have learned during the project. We created videos that shared insights from the project, life experiences of people involved, and guidance from experts. The project is being researched by an inclusive research team led by Professor Karen Fisher of University of New South Wales and Professor Sally Robinson from Flinders University. An interim report is currently available, and the final report will be available soon. We have shared insights at conferences including the VALID Conference in Victoria and the ASID Conference in Sydney.



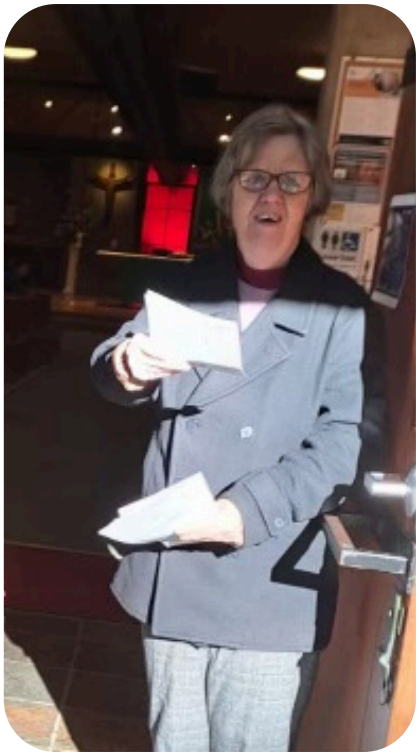






These are significant and meaningful stepping stones for genuine connections, for people to feel like they truly belong in their communities. These relationships are transformative for people who have had very few opportunities for the kinds of connections that most people take for granted.

- independent evaluation of Community for Everyone





Thank you

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.

- The Federal Government's Department of Health and Aged Care provided funding for our core advocacy programs and projects
- City of Ryde Council and Parramatta Council provided support for our events and projects
- Southern Cross University are ongoing research collaborators in relation to the Inclusive Governance Project
- Danny Yang assisted us with IT support
- Roy McCormack provided us with ongoing support with our office
- Community for Everyone and Citizen Advocacy depend on the involvement of Social Connectors and citizen advocates
- We had multiple students complete placements
  - Emily Wilcox (University of New South Wales)
  - Tina Tran (University of Sydney)
  - Aspen Yi (University of Sydney)
  - Lachlan Stevens (Australian College of Applied Professions)
  - Anathea Lam (University of Sydney)
  - Alyssa Chum (University of Sydney)
  - Neekita (Excelsia University College)
  - Tiffany Yen (Western Sydney University)
  - Keona Lozada (Western Sydney University)
  - Alma Campero (Western Sydney University)

- Inclusive Governance Project Consultative reference group members included
  - Michelle Donelly (Side By Side Advocacy Board)
  - Margaret Spencer (the University of Sydney)
  - Ian Eddie (Excelsia College)
  - Penny Pederson (City of Ryde Council)
  - Marian Onofomi (Multicultural Disability Advocacy Association)
  - Nicole Lee (NSW Council for Intellectual Disability)
  - Shu Hua Chan (Side By Side Advocacy)
- Community for Everyone Advisory Group Members
  - Professor Jo Watson
  - Dr Michelle King
  - Leigh Creighton (Hunter Circles Peer Leader)
  - Robert King (Hunter Circles Peer Leader)
  - Jen Cush (Hunter Circles Project Lead)
  - Michelle Donelly (Side By Side Advocacy Board)
- Hear My Voice was co-designed by
  - Anna Curryer
  - Sid Chandran
  - Ryan Boyle
  - Leigh Creighton
- Our Advisory Group included
  - Carole Argent
  - Ryan Boyle
  - Sarah Butler
  - Anna Curryer
  - Shannon Lalor
  - Jack Stewart
- We received a generous donation from Paula McNamara
- Hayley Brown assisted with the 2024-2025 Annual Report

Our team in 2025–2026

We are also grateful for the efforts of every staff member over the last year. Team members remained committed to our vision, purpose, and values, which we carry into all the work we do.



Andrew Boerma
Advocate
Begun in 2025



Nicola Brayan
Communications and inclusion support officer
Begun in 2026



David Briggs
Senior Advocate



Shu Hua Chan
Peer leader Community for Everyone



Nikki Cummins
Advocate
Begun in 2026



Bernadette Curryer
Research Officer



Evelyn Gyan
Community for Everyone Project Coordinator



Kay Jones
Finance Officer



Jeff Lai
Peer leader Community for Everyone



Sophia Liauw
Communications and inclusion support officer
Begun in 2026



Cathy Milne
Senior Advocate



Chris Morris
Project Lead
Left in 2025



Lil Paterson
Citizen Advocacy Coordinator



Kim Roots
Executive Officer



Ishika Shakya
Advocate
Begun in 2026



Nicola Taylor
Advocacy and Office Coordinator
Begun in 2026



Preeti Thadani
Senior Advocate
Left in 2025



Kriti Thapa
Advocacy and Office Coordinator
Left in 2025

Advisory Group



Anna Curryer



Carole Argent



Ryan Boyle



Sarah Butler



Shannon Lalor



Jack Stewart

Board



Michelle Donelly
Chairperson



Ben Pilipowski
Vice chairperson



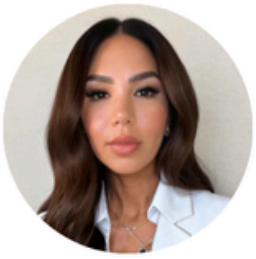
Moitri Pal
Secretary



Toni Ng
Treasurer



Marian Casey
Member



Faz Hares
Member



Vicki Winfield
Member



Nivi Subramaniyan
Member



Steve MacDonald
Member

SIDE BY SIDE ADVOCACY INCORPORATED

ABN 83 395 894 577

FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
AS AT 30 JUNE 2026

SIDE BY SIDE ADVOCACY INCORPORATED

FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2026

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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 2026 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 and 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 11 November 2026

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 2026 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 11 November 2026
7/288 Newline Road Dural

SIDE BY SIDE ADVOCACY INCORPORATED

STATEMENT OF COMPREHENSIVE INCOME
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2026

	2026	2025
REVENUE		
Commonwealth Grants Program	1,197,888	1,110,421
Other Grant	313,154	23,159
Other Income	6,591	850
Interest	31,746	18,793
TOTAL REVENUE	1,549,379	1,153,223
EXPENDITURE		
Asset<2,000	49,353	7,468
Audit Fee	3,576	3,500
Cleaning	2,244	2,384
Computer	17,822	8,385
Contractors	70,000	30,000
Depreciation	4,884	5,308
Electricity	2,328	1,947
General	12,771	5,706
Governance	17,209	
Insurances	8,425	8,302
Long Service Levy	13,353	
Memberships	2,683	1,664
Printing, Stationery & Postages	19,219	6,895
Project Partner	161,206	205,802
Provision for Employee Leave	83,418	74,059
Quality Assurance	5,127	9,740
Recruitment Costs	1,485	1,034
Rent	62,400	37,565
Repairs & Maintenance	656	680
Salaries & Wages	793,567	609,232
Superannuation	110,314	80,510
Telephone & Internet	9,961	7,838
Training	14,700	1,737
Travel & Accommodation	17,221	6,308
Video & Resource creation	51	6,800
Workers Compensation	4,625	3,060
Workshop & Seminars	28,485	7,656
	1,517,083	1,133,580
SURPLUS	32,296	19,643
NET SURPLUS FOR YEAR	32,296	19,643
TOTAL COMPREHENSIVE INCOME FOR YEAR	$ 32,296	$ 19,643

SIDE BY SIDE ADVOCACY INCORPORATED

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION
AS AT 30 JUNE 2026

	2026	2025
ACCUMULATED FUNDS	**$ 299,113**	**$ 266,817**
Represented by:-		
CURRENT ASSETS		
Cash at Bank	799,740	535,519
Prepayments	18,247	16,545
Sundry Debtors	19,997	7,465
Rental Bond	20,750	12,000
TOTAL CURRENT ASSETS	**858,734**	**571,529**
FIXED ASSETS		
Office Resources - at cost	43,687	40,194
Accumulated Depreciation	-35,326	-30,442
TOTAL FIXED ASSETS	**8,361**	**9,752**
TOTAL ASSETS	867,095	581,281
Trade Creditors (Note 7)	120,013	85,930
Grants in Advance (Note 8)	342,432	142,749
Provision for Employee Entitlements (Note 9)	105,537	85,785
TOTAL LIABILITIES	**567,982**	**314,464**
NET ASSETS	**$ 299,113**	**$ 266,817**

SIDE BY SIDE ADVOCACY INCORPORATED

STATEMENT OF CHANGES IN EQUITY
FOR YEAR ENDING 30 JUNE 2026

Balance at 30 June 2024	247,174
Net Surplus	19,643
Other comprehensive income	-
Total comprehensive income for the year	19,643
Balance at 30 June 2025	266,817
Net Surplus	32,296
Other comprehensive income	-
Total comprehensive income for the year	32,296
Balance at 30 June 2026	$ 299,113

SIDE BY SIDE ADVOCACY INCORPORATED

STATEMENT OF CASH FLOWS
FOR YEAR ENDING 30 JUNE 2026

	2026	2025
Cash Flows from Operating Activities		
Receipts from Funding Bodies & Clients	1,919,261	1,209,125
Payments to suppliers and employees	1,651,547	1,088,483
Net Cash Inflow from Operating Activities	267,714	120,642
Net Cash outflow from Equipment Purchases	-3,493	0
Net Increase (Decrease) in cash held	264,221	120,642
Cash at beginning of year	535,519	414,877
Cash at End of Financial Year	$ 799,740	$ 535,519
Reconciliation of Operating Surplus after tax to Net Cash Inflow From Operations		
Operating Surplus After Income Tax	32,296	19,643
Depreciation & Loss on Disposal	4,884	5,308
Sundry Debtors	-12,532	1,105
Prepayments	-1,702	-9,921
Bond	-8,750	
Creditors	34,083	32,324
Grants in Advance	199,683	55,802
Provision for Employee Benefits	19,752	16,381
	$ 267,714	$ 120,642

SIDE BY SIDE ADVOCACY INCORPORATED

NOTES TO AND FORMING PART OF THE ACCOUNTS

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2026

1. Corporate Information

Side By Side Advocacy Incorporated operates under the Association Incorporation Act 2009 (NSW). Its business premises are located in Parramatta and 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 and assumptions

The preparation of financial statements requires management to make judgements, estimates and assumptions that affect the application of policies and reported amounts of assets, liabilities, income and 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 and 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 and future periods.

c) Revenue Recognition

Revenue is recognised when the entity 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 and 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 and 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 Leave is recognised and measured at the amount expected to be paid when the liability is settled.The liability for Long Service leave is recognised up to 30 June 2025 and is measured at the amount expected to be paid when the liability is settled.

From 1 July 2025 the entity was registered in the community services industry portable long service leave scheme administered by the NSW Long Service Corporation (LSC).

The entity pays levy contributions to the scheme each quarter, which will be used to pay long service leave to workers when they meet eligibility criteria.

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 recognised in accordance with program, project and funding body requirements

3. Income Tax

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

	2026	2025
4. Contingent Liabilities	**$nil**	**$nil**
5. Capital Expenditure Commitments	**$nil**	**$nil**

6. Segment Information

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

7. Trade Creditors

GST and PAYG	4,008	10,738
Accrued Expenses	16,325	23,523
Superannuation Payable	0	9,749
Trade Creditors	99,680	9,596
	$120,013	$53,606

8. Grants in Advance

	Commonwealth Government Grants by Program				Other Grants DANA	Total Grants
	National Disability Advocacy	NDIS Appeals	Inclusive Governance	Community for Everyone		
Grants Brought Forward 1 July 2024	14,808	14,498	0	42,898	14,743	86,947
Grants Received 2025	464,442	155,361	115,655	434,290	19,634	1,189,382
Grants Expensed 2025	(463580)	(156,091)	(105,864)	(384,886)	(23,159)	(1,133,580)
Grants Carrried Forward at 30 June 2025	15,670	13,768	9,791	92,302	11,218	142,749
Grants Received 2026	463,284	154,718	120,882	386,842	585,000	1,710,726
Grants Expensed 2026	(430,329)	(165,678)	(126,939)	(474,943)	(313,154)	(1,511,043)
Grants Carried Forward ta 30 June 2026	$48,625	$ 2,808	$ 3,734	$ 4,201	$283,064	$ 342,432

9. Employee Entitlements

Provision for Annual Leave	77,028	48,123
Provision for Long Service Leave	28,509	37,662
	$105,537	$85,785

STEPHEN A. SPROATS ACCOUNTANT

Unit 7, Dural Business Park
286-288 New Line Road, Dural
Mail: PO Box 95 Round Corner NSW 2158

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F: 02 9651 4971
M: 0416 215 377

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 2026, 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 2026 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.

STEPHEN A. SPROATS ACCOUNTANT

Unit 7, Dural Business Park
286-288 New Line Road, Dural
Mail: PO Box 95 Round Corner NSW 2158

T: 02 9651 3685
F: 02 9651 4971
M: 0416 215 377

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

S A Sproats

Stephen A Sproats **Dural**
Registered Company Auditor 3932 **11 November 2026**

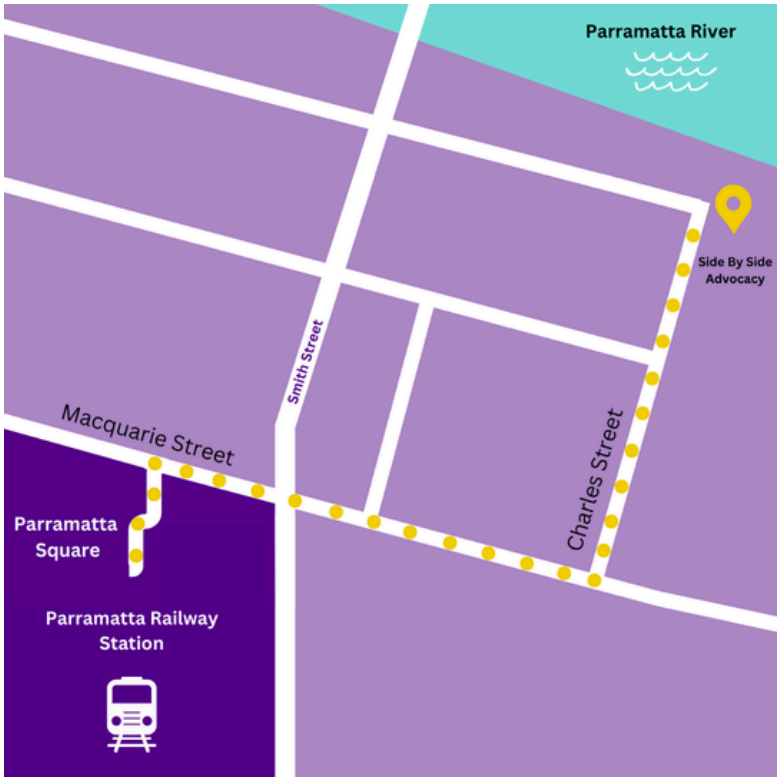
Contact us

9808 5500

info@sidebysideadvocacy.org.au

www.sidebysideadvocacy.org.au

Our office is Level 2, Suite 206, 34 Charles Street, Parramatta 2150



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.

Side By Side Advocacy (ABN: 83 395 894 577) is an Incorporated Association. We are primarily funded by the Federal Government's Department of Health and Aged Care and the NSW State Government's Department of Communities and Justice.