



The Advocate



Advocacy for Inclusion

June 2012

INCLUDED IN THIS ISSUE...

- **General Manager's Report**
- **Vale Roxanne Le Cornu**
- **Disability Response to ACT Budget 2012**
- **Federal Budget**
- **Specialist Roundtable on Women with Disabilities**
- **Safe Futures Foundation**
- **Supported Decision Making workshop**
- **DANA Conference**
- **Disability Policy and the ACT Election**
- **ACT Election Forum**
- **Peer Network**
- **New Team Member**

General Manager's Report

It has been an exceptionally busy few months at Advocacy for Inclusion with some significant work undertaken alongside our regular volume of advocacy and training.

In April we were invited to participate in a roundtable on violence against women with disabilities. This was hosted by the Australian Human Rights Commission to coincide with a visit to Australia by the United Nations Special Rapporteur on Violence against Women, Ms Rashida Manjoo.

The Disability Advocacy Network Australia held its conference in Canberra on 30 April and 1 May. All Advocacy for Inclusion staff attended for the two days, alongside Board members Jane Thomson and Vincent McCormick. I would like to personally thank the whole team for their hard work at the conference. Apart from having someone at every session, they worked hard behind the scenes to support DANA to make sure the conference ran smoothly. It was a sterling effort all round.

In early May we worked with the Supported Decision Making working group to bring Cher Nicholson to Canberra. Cher provided three whirlwind days of workshops, information sessions, and expert advice about supported decision making in her role as the Project Officer for the South Australia supported decision making trial. The SDM working group is now discussing how to keep the conversation going in the ACT and how to implement SDM here.

The ACT Disability Advocacy Network will host an ACT election forum on Thursday 30 August. We have invited the disability spokespeople from the major parties, and hope that you can come along to the Hellenic Club in Woden to ask your questions. With so many major reforms in the disability sector this is a good time to identify what the various parties are planning and how well they support the voice of people with disabilities.

Both the Federal and ACT budgets have now come down. While it was terrific to see the commitment to an National Disability Insurance Scheme in the Federal Budget, neither the Federal or ACT Budget committed any funding to prepare people with disabilities for individualised funding and exercising greater control and choice about their services and supports. The ACT Budget was particularly disappointing, with a

stagnation in disability services funding. There were some solid education and transport commitments, but so much more is needed to ensure people with disabilities have a life of dignity and engagement in the community. See highlights from our analysis later in this newsletter and the full analysis on our website.

Our new strategic plan 2012-15 is now finished and we shall be launching it in time for its commencement in July. Watch the website for a full version of the plan.

I'd like to welcome Jacqueline Gibbs to our team. We were sad to lose Courtney Sloane just before Easter but were very fortunate to have Jacqui step straight into the work on supported decision making and the implementation of Article 12 of the *Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities*. Jacqui will be with us until the end of June. While it's been a short stay with us, we have enjoyed having her on the team.

Finally, we were very sad to hear of the death of our team member Roxanne Le Cornu on 31 May. Roxy had been with us for two and a half years and contributed enormously to our self advocacy work. She has been a very loved and valued team member and we shall miss her terribly. Roxy was a future leader for the disability movement and I am sad to see that opportunity lost. All current and former staff and current and former Board members send condolences to Roxy's family. We shall remember her with great fondness and respect.

Christina Ryan
General Manager

Vale
Roxanne Le Cornu
18 January 1988 – 31 May 2012

Advocacy for Inclusion salutes our colleague Roxy who died on 31 May 2012. Roxy joined us two years ago as a student from the Canberra Institute of Technology and quickly became a valuable and loved member of our team.

Roxy's contribution to our self-advocacy and training work has been significant and will remain with us for a long time. She envisaged the development of a self-advocacy kit to reduce the pressure on our individual advocacy work, and to ensure that people with disabilities are able to speak for themselves. She was close to finishing this kit when she became too unwell to continue. We shall now complete it in her name.

Roxy made a strong contribution to our self-advocacy training. She attended many training sessions and led exercises and discussions on numerous occasions. Her insights and connection with our students provided a quality of training that many benefited from and appreciated. Roxy also contributed to our self-advocacy documentary.

Our team remember her for an infectious good humour, her sense of partying, and her dedication to her work. Roxy was fast emerging as a future leader in disability rights activism and is a substantial loss to that future.

Roxy took many of the photos of our training, important events and parties over recent years and these will stay with us forever. Fortunately we also have some photos of her and we will treasure these.

Thank you Roxy for being a part of our team and for the enormous contribution you have made to our work and our lives. We shall miss you. We send our sincere condolences to her family: Peter, Amie and Melissa at this very difficult time. Thank you for sharing Roxy with us.

Roxy Le Cornu and Mary Durkin at the graduation ceremony for our women's self-advocacy course October 2010.



Disability Response to the ACT Budget 2012

Overall this budget is very disappointing for people with disabilities and lacks any vision or sense of proactive involvement in the work to build an NDIS. It feels like the ACT government is lying back and waiting for the federal government to do all the work when they should be actively working with people with disabilities to develop community capacity to adopt the NDIS. There must be work done to prepare people with disabilities to control their own funding, make their own choices, understand their options, and exercise autonomy in line with the expectations of the Productivity Commission in its vision for the Scheme.

While a drip feed of footpaths and bus stops is important, people with disabilities actually want real change, real support and real autonomy to be a part of this community.

Major concerns with this Budget 2012 include:

- Missed opportunity for NDIS preparatory work.
- The unclear model of the Community Visitors Scheme. The *ACT Disability Advocacy Network* has very real concerns about the use of the word “informal” and the reliance on existing advocacy services to support this scheme, given that the ACT government is one of only two jurisdictions that does NOT fund individual advocacy for people with disabilities. There is currently very high unmet demand for advocacy services. (*This area is now overtaken by the Official Visitors Legislation which passed the Assembly on 6 June 2012.*)
- Individual Learning Plans for students with disabilities - while a 100% goal for ILP's is maintained in Budget 2012, the money allocated is reduced in forward estimates, how will this outcome be achieved?

- A missed opportunity for disability in the initiative to Strengthen Care and Protection Services. While cultural awareness training is an excellent and important initiative, disability awareness training for Care & Protection staff is not included despite consistent recommendations over several years.
- The complete lack of growth for disability services, when the unmet demand is high.

Major initiatives to note are:

- A community visitors scheme to provide independent and informal service for identifying, resolving or referring matters of concern for people with disabilities. This will complement existing advocacy services. \$495,000 over 3 years.
- Purpose built dual occupancy properties allowing people with complex disabilities appropriate care and accommodation support. \$2.9 million over 2 years from 2013.
- Education:
 - Funding to support the CIT to meet demand for students with disabilities \$3.2 million over 4 years.
 - Funding to maintain school transport for students with disabilities \$1.5 million for 1 year.
 - Support therapy in schools for students with disabilities, \$1 million for 2 years
 - Funding for non-government schools to support students with disabilities, \$2 million for 1 year
- Infrastructure:
 - Bus stop upgrades to disability standard, \$440,000 over 4 years
 - Continue to upgrade the ACTION bus fleet to be fully accessible, \$40 million over 4 years
 - Improvement to footpaths in Garran, Latham, Fisher, Griffith and other suburbs, \$600,000 for 1 year

The ACT Disability Advocacy Network analysis was undertaken by Advocacy for Inclusion, ADACAS, and Women with Disabilities ACT.

Federal Budget

The Federal Budget in early May provided a commitment to establishing the National Disability Insurance Scheme. This is welcome news, but there remains a concern that, apart from individual packages, funding has been largely allocated to services to adapt and prepare for the Scheme.

People with disabilities continue to be ignored in planning for the Scheme particularly the need to train and support people around exercising choice and making decisions about their lives. This critical work must be undertaken urgently to ensure the NDIS will be a success for the many people who are desperate for a better model than the existing one.

Funding the first stage of the National Disability Insurance Scheme Date: 8/05/2012

Joint Media Release: Julia Gillard, Jenny Macklin

The Gillard Government will deliver \$1 billion over four years to start rolling out the first stage of a National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS).

The first stage of an NDIS will begin in mid-2013 and will provide care and support to around 10,000 people with significant and permanent disabilities in up to four locations across the country.

From mid-2014, the reach of an NDIS will be expanded to bring the total number of eligible people up to 20,000. These individuals will have their needs assessed and be supported to develop individual plans to deliver ongoing

personalised care and support over their lifetimes.

The Government's commitment includes:

- \$342.5 million over three years from July next year for individually funded packages for people with significant and permanent disability.
- \$154.8 million over three years from July next year to employ Local Area Coordinators to provide an individualised approach to delivering care and support to people with a disability.
- \$58.6 million over three years from July next year to assess the needs of people with a disability in the launch locations.
- \$122.6 million over four years to start preparing the disability sector for the new way of delivering disability services. Building the capacity of disability organisations to adjust to an NDIS is critical to success, particularly in the launch locations in the first stage of roll out.
- \$240.3 million over four years to build and operate an NDIS information technology system.
- \$53 million over four years to establish a new National Disability Launch Transition Agency to coordinate implementation and manage the delivery of care and support to people with a disability and their carers in launch locations from 2013–14.

The Australian Government's initial investment will cover the total administration and running costs for the first stage of an NDIS. States and territories that host the initial locations will also be required to contribute to the cost of personal care and support for people with disability.

Our commitment means this Labor Government will start delivering an NDIS a year ahead of the timetable set out by the Productivity Commission.

We want Australians with disability, their families and carers to start benefiting from this fundamental reform as quickly as possible.

Key Features of NDIS

The scheme will:

- provide eligible individuals with the care and support they need when they need it;
- give individuals decision making power, including being able to choose their service provider;
- provide high quality, evidence-based services which manage life-time costs of care;
- be simple to navigate and link to mainstream and community services;
- recognise the essential care and support of families and carers and support them in that role;
- facilitate each individual's community participation, access to education and employment opportunities; and
- be managed on an insurance basis.

Specialist Roundtable on Women with Disabilities Melbourne April 2012

In April Advocacy for Inclusion received an invitation to attend the Specialist Roundtable on Women with Disabilities with the United Nations Special Rapporteur on Violence against Women, Ms Rashida Manjoo.

Ms Manjoo was in Australia for a study trip and asked specifically to meet with women with disabilities and Indigenous women. Roundtables

were organised with both of these groups as a result. During her stay Ms Manjoo also met with women, government representatives, service providers, specialist agencies and NGOs and visited shelters and crisis centres. Her visit was supported by the Australian Human Rights Commission.

We were invited to be a part of the specialist roundtable on women with disabilities because of our work to raise awareness about violence in the lives of people with disabilities and our campaign for legislative reform.



left to right: Deputy Sex Discrimination Commissioner, Andrea Durbach; Special Rapporteur Rashida Manjoo; Fiona McCormack, CEO, Domestic Violence Victoria.

The roundtable was held on 18 April in Melbourne and was attended by women with disabilities from around Australia, women's services, academics and others. I was specifically invited and took Michelle Lee with me to Melbourne. Michelle is a survivor of violence and was keen to use this opportunity to contribute to raising awareness, developing strategies, and identifying mechanisms to use for making change.

Participants at the roundtable were asked to make a short 3 minute presentation. We spoke about the places where violence occurs, who the

perpetrators can be, and what violence looks like for women with disabilities. We also raised concerns that many of these locations, types of violence, and perpetrators are not recognised as such under existing Domestic Violence legislation in most jurisdictions in Australia, including in the ACT. Her presentation is on the Advocacy for Inclusion website under www.advocacyforinclusion.org/publications

Michelle made a very powerful presentation saying “I should be safe in my own home”. She went on to explain the ways that services respond to violence and outline some of the ways that she thinks improvements could be made in supports for women with disabilities.



Christina and Michelle deliver their presentations

Under current domestic violence law in most jurisdictions, including the ACT, Michelle’s home is not actually recognised as a home. The only option available to her and many others is to use criminal assault laws, which place an onus of proof on the victim. Speakers at the roundtable who had researched this area highlighted how this onus is creating a barrier to justice for people with disabilities which results in a lack of positive outcomes.

Some key messages from other participants were:

- that there need to be more public interest legal cases to provide precedents;
- more pressure needs to be applied to Australian governments to implement United Nations recommendations;
- that there is no national perspective on what violence against women with disabilities looks like, so research is needed;
- that women with disabilities often don’t get follow up supports after experiencing violence, for example to address long term trauma;
- people are forced to stay in violent situations because of a lack of housing options for people with disabilities;
- that we must stop grouping people with disabilities in congregate living environments;
- that getting away from current accommodation is difficult due to funding models being used;
- that the use of chemical and physical restraint must be stopped; and,
- while violence happens in the lives of people with disabilities more so than others, that gender based violence against women with disabilities is not well recognised in Australia.

While it was challenging to listen to some very confronting stories it was also invigorating to gain a consolidated view of what is happening and what might be done to address it. Ms Manjoo particularly encouraged Australian women with disabilities to continue to use the United Nations as we have done over the last few years, and to use domestic mechanisms like legal processes and the Human Rights Commission to ensure a body of legal precedent is developed. This may

assist in law reform and better government policy.

*Advocacy for Inclusion thanks the **Australian Human Rights Commission and Disability ACT** for providing funding to attend the roundtable. Without this support it would have been impossible for Christina and Michelle, and their 3 support people, to attend.*



Christina Ryan and Michelle Lee following the roundtable

Michelle's Report:

Melbourne was really good, especially the conference because it was all about woman against violence and everyone got to have a say.

It was nice to meet the lady from the UN, she talked about the laws and how they were not right. This lady told a story about what is happening in her country and how she was against it. She was very determined to try and balance the laws so that everyone was equal.

We were all encouraged to speak up and express our point of view against violence. Some of us talked about our horrific stories, about what we knew and had heard and some talked about how the law can be changed.

If a conference came up again I would definitely attend it. It was an experience of a life time. It

was also great to be in a room full of powerful women, who all had a voice and were not afraid to use it.

Safe Futures Foundation

Janine Mahoney
CEO

Safe Futures Foundation (formerly known as Brenda House and Maroondah Halfway House) is a Regional and State Wide organisation providing an early intervention support response, and emergency, crisis and transitional accommodation and support response to women and children who have experienced family violence. SFF provide an integrated response and a range of options that promote safety, healing and empowerment for women and children experiencing family violence. The service encompasses policy and practice that reflects their strong commitment to a holistic approach to the provision of support for individual women and children.

Stabilising housing, health, social connection and safety issues are the primary focus of case management that is client focussed and client driven for each individual woman and child. Access and equity is of paramount importance to the organisation: all women have access to the service regardless of age, race, ethnic origin, political or religious beliefs, disability or disadvantage.

Women with disabilities continue to be at risk of being assaulted, raped and abused at a rate of at least twice that of non-disabled women. Research identified that family violence agencies needed to improve physical access to their services for women with disabilities. Specifically, there was an urgent need for secure, affordable, accessible, supported emergency and crisis accommodation.

Until Safe Futures Foundation (SFF) addressed this alarming situation, Victorian women and children with disability and experiencing family violence had no access at all to such responses. SFF have developed the first integrated state-wide emergency and crisis accommodation and support family violence / disability response.

This comprehensive response provides early intervention, emergency and crisis responses to women and children with a disability at risk of or experiencing homeless due to family violence. Comprehensive assessment of risk and needs, safety planning, intensive case management and case co-ordination, and referrals all form part of a continuum of response that looks to provide safety, individual outcomes, community connection and the most appropriate accommodation available.

SFF was successful in lobbying government for building modifications that have now provided 3 emergency response universal access units, with multi use options for small and large families, and 2 3BR crisis houses for a longer support period. Features of the some of the units include independent access, lowered kitchen facilities, modified bathrooms, front loading washing machine and access to communication technologies. The demand for this response is very high and has enabled intensive support to women and children who otherwise would not have had access to family violence support. Staff at the services have received specialist training in working with women with disabilities through DVRCV.

SFF also employs a project officer to:

- Develop a Disability Action Plan template for specialist family violence crisis accommodation and support services
- Build relationships and referral pathways across Disability, Family Violence, Homelessness, Family Services, and Home and Community Care sectors.

- Develop policy and practice guidelines for both service sectors to ensure appropriate and consistent responses are provided to clients.
- Identifying training requirements and opportunities for staff across the service systems.
- Participate in relevant Regional and State wide networks.

Most recently SFF have identified that the majority of women with disability experiencing family violence could possibly have stayed in their own home. With early intervention the perpetrator can be excluded, safety strategies implemented, and appropriate community supports put in place whereby the woman is able to stay in her own home and her own community.

The organisation, along with the CEOs from Women's Disability Victoria and Domestic Violence Victoria regularly met with the Director of Disability Services to address concerns regarding immediate access to aids and equipment, transport and attendant care families with a disability require often require when needing to escape a situation of violence. The resulting Disability and Family Violence Crisis Response Initiative, providing \$9,000 over 12 weeks, has been launched state-wide. This is the first joint service delivery initiative of the family violence/homelessness/disability sectors.

The packages now provide women with a disability experiencing family violence the choice to leave violence confident in the knowledge they will have their basic care needs immediately met SFF is a member of Women with Disabilities Victoria and a key partner in their lobbying and advocacy role. This collaborative work recently resulted in a 2012 National Homelessness Services Achievement Award for 'Excellence or innovation in addressing homelessness by an organisation' for SFF.

Supported Decision Making workshops in Canberra – May 2012

Early this year a group of community and government sector people came together to progress the use of supported decision making (SDM) in the ACT. This group has now become the SDM working group and includes: Advocacy for Inclusion, ADACAS, the Mental Health Community Coalition, Public Advocate, Disability ACT, and ACT Mental Health.

As part of Australia's obligations under the *Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities* (article 12) we are required to ensure that people with disabilities enjoy legal capacity on an equal basis with others in all aspects of life. Additionally, appropriate measures must be taken to provide access by people with disabilities to the support they may require to exercise their legal capacity.¹

Effectively, people with disabilities are people and should be supported to make decisions like everyone else. Where someone is unable to make a decision independently they should be supported to make that decision. This is a complex and challenging area of disability rights which may take many years to implement fully. It will demand a large turnaround in community attitudes which have assumed for centuries that people with disabilities are not capable independent beings.

South Australia is currently undertaking a trial in SDM:

“Supported Decision Making is for people who may need help with decision-making because of

¹ Australia has expressed a reservation to the implementation of Article 12 of the CRPD specifically to retain substitute decision making or guardianship arrangements. It is hoped that this reservation will be removed once mechanisms for SDM are more widely available.

a disability. The South Australian trial aims to study supported decision making when it is offered to people who have had a brain injury, stroke, intellectual disability or a neurological condition affecting decision making.

“The United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities expects that people should make their own decisions wherever possible, and that if they need help, they should get the support that they need to make decisions. The aim is to provide support, instead of appointing another person to make decisions for them.

“The South Australia project is trialling an approach to Supported Decision Making, in which a person nominates one or more people that they know, to act as a supporter. An extra person “a monitor” helps with the process, and identifies problems if they occur.

“The supporter can be a trusted family member or friend.

“The supporter can then assist a person make their decisions about health care, where they live, support services, work, leisure and lifestyle matters.” (<http://www.opa.sa.gov.au>)

The South Australian project officer is Cher Nicholson. Cher came to Canberra to speak at the DANA conference (see elsewhere in this newsletter) and was invited by the SDM working group to stay and present some workshops and information sessions.

A disability focussed workshop on SDM was held on Thursday 3 May 2012 and attended by several consumer organisations, advocacy organisations and service providers. The workshop was a vibrant and interactive discussion about what SDM is, how it might be done, and what some of the hurdles might be.

A follow up strategy discussion, hosted by the SDM working group, was held the next morning to identify what we could be doing in the ACT to progress SDM now and into the future. One of the key outcomes of this discussion was recognition that the SDM working group has a role to play for some time in supporting / facilitating community discussion, and working to progress the right of people with disabilities to speak for themselves.

Further work continues including: seeking funding for a trial in the ACT, looking at how skills development can be used to embed SDM abilities within our organisations, and identifying ways to foster a community conversation over coming years.

Advocacy for Inclusion has been undertaking some research into SDM and how the ACT might transition towards full legal equality for people with disabilities. The first phase of this research will be completed at the end of June and will be published on our website and distributed to key stakeholders.

Christina Ryan

Training Report Women's Self-Advocacy

Our new women's self-advocacy course started in early May. With overwhelming interest in the course we have 6 keen participants.

It has been a fabulous course so far for the group, talking about being assertive and rights for women with disabilities. Lynnette Dickinson from A Spark of Splendour visited to show the group some yoga and relaxation techniques. We all felt very calm by the time Lynnette left!

Coming up we have a visit to the Legislative Assembly to learn more about the forthcoming ACT election, several guest speakers, and the chance to learn about topics such as relationships and sexuality, being healthy and goal setting.

The group are learning skills which can help them be stronger self-advocates, make decisions and take more control of their lives.

With thanks to Disability ACT (Community Services Directorate) and Narrangullen Pty Ltd for funding to support this course, provided free to women with disabilities.

We also thank the Mental Health Community Coalition for the generous use of their meeting room.

Karen Hedley
Training Officer

Disability Advocacy Network Australia Conference

4th National Disability Advocacy Conference,
Advocating for Inclusion
Advocacy strategies for achieving community

Jane Thomson (Chair):

Attending the DANA conference was a great chance for me to find out about the current activities in the advocacy sector, to network with people from a range of organisations and to really appreciate the commitment, skills and tenacity of the people working in the advocacy field. As a board member it is often difficult to get information about the overall work in the field and to fully appreciate the work that advocates do. Attending the conference has given me a renewed understanding and appreciation of the

need for advocacy for people with disabilities, and the often tireless work that is done in the advocacy sector with minimal funding.

While I did not get the chance to attend all of the conference, the quality of the speakers that I heard and experienced was impressive and made me wish I was able to attend more. Congratulations to the staff of DANA and Advocacy for Inclusion for putting on such a well-run and professional conference. I know this is not an easy task.

On a personal note it was a great experience for me to mix with the staff from Advocacy for Inclusion and to get to know them better. Advocacy for Inclusion clearly has a great team of dedicated and skilled employees.

Jamelle Boettcher:

DAY 1 Society, Culture, Recreation

In conclusion of the day's seminar it was recognised that there is still a barrier for people with disabilities accessing recreation and being active members of society.

People with disabilities are seldom given opportunities and choices on how they would like to live their lives. Friendships are often limited and manufactured through support agencies. For many people with disabilities their only source of companionship is from their support workers and support workers do not count as friends.

Other barriers that restrict a person with disabilities making choices and having options regarding their recreational life is funding; segregated 'activities' and groups; and the lack of opportunities to form organic friendships.

OH&S and risk assessments have also put a negative connotation on recreation for people with disabilities as services place a higher

significance on insurance costs than supporting a person to engage in a recreation of their choice.

DAY 2. Community Living

People with disabilities have the right to live independently in the community on an equal basis with everyone else and have the right to have the supports needed to do so.

I was very inspired by some of the speakers who shared their life experiences of being forced to live in institutions because they had a disability and the poor treatment they received while living there: "we were told what to do, when and how to do it".

Their lives were controlled and they were segregated from the community like they were criminals. These people now live independently in the community and are now strong advocates campaigning to have institutions closed down and for people with disabilities to live independently in the community with whatever support is needed to do so: "I don't have rules now. I can please myself. If I want to go out with friends I do".

What constitutes an institution? An institution is any place where a person with disability is forced to live in order to receive supports. A small group home can be classified as an institution if practices from institutions are followed; therefore it doesn't matter where they live.

The Shut In Campaign is advocating hard to have all institutions closed and for the government to recognise that people with disabilities have the right to live in the community; have choice in where they want to live and who they want to live with; and be included in the community as stated under Article 19 of the United Nations *Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disability*. For more information on the Shut In Campaign, to endorse

the campaign and to hear people's experiences of living in institutions go to www.shutin.org.au

Karen Hedley:

Society, Culture and Recreation
The Arts – Veronica Pardoe, Arts Access
Victoria:
Spoke about disability and the arts – positive effect on inclusion.

Highlight was hearing about Joceline Lee, who is a Victorian artist with disabilities. She was one of only a few artists awarded an artist residency (not specifically for people with disabilities). She completed her residency at the Melbourne museum, studying palaeontology. -
<http://artsaccess.com.au/artistic-program/artist-profiles/joceline-lee/>

Fighting the 'War on Fun' – Craig Wallace, NICAN:
Spoke about the Know before you go project
See Kate's report for more!

Friendship and Social Connections – Marlena Katene, journalist, small business owner and motivational speaker:
Spoke about her personal journey and the importance of others in her life. She has a large social network and has had little interaction with service providers as her friends and family have met most of her support and care needs. In her businesses she does what she is able to, and hires people to do what she can't.

Life Long Learning
Early Childhood – Elizabeth McGarry, Association for Children with Disability
Discussion of issues for children and parents in early childhood education. Funding, support programs etc.

Child care centres not covered by disability education standards.

Inclusion support and early intervention services available.

Individual advocacy tips:

- Know your stuff, have accurate information
- Understand the desired outcome & its importance to the family
- Help prioritise concerns
- Seek the person with power
- Agree on accountability – who, what, when
- Have an open mind to alternate solutions
- And remember it's the family's journey, not yours

Post School Adult Education – Dr Patricia O'Brien, University of Sydney:
Previously worked at Dublin's Trinity College where they set up a program to encourage students with disabilities to attend.

Students attended mainstream classes but in a way suited to their needs eg: possibly easing into a full workload. Students and teachers reported classes being enriched by the presence of students with disabilities. The program also had a focus on ensuring this education was not 'wasted' after completion, but that students went on to worthwhile employment or further studies, rather than supported workshops etc.
<http://www.tcd.ie/disability/>

How the Disability Education Standards affect Primary and Secondary school education –
Kairsty Wilson, AED Legal Centre:
Discussion of reasonable adjustment & legal framework eg: *Disability Discrimination Act*, relevant state / territory acts, Disability Education Standards

Standards aim to give all students the same rights to access and education, and freedom from harassment. Done mainly through reasonable adjustment.
Standards: <http://www.ddaedustandards.info/>

Libby Grant:

The DANA conference brought a fantastic and inspirational bunch of folk to Canberra for some very interesting discussion. Christy Lynch gave a very interesting and motivational presentation about inclusive employment, and I enjoyed hearing about his experiences in Ireland and the success of KARE in securing meaningful employment for people with intellectual disabilities in local and mainstream businesses.

Christy's dinner speech had some useful ideas for engaging with politicians and decision makers, including the importance of speaking directly and in unity about what you are trying to achieve, to present solutions to problems, and to be confident in your role as the expert about the issue.

It was great to hear personal stories and learn from conference presenters about their experiences with disability, their participation in the community in different areas, and about the barriers and challenges that society places between them and successful and meaningful community engagement. Like Christy mentioned hearing stories helps to humanise issues and makes them more real, especially for people who have little or no experience with disability in the community. I got a sense of 'inclusivity' from the conference, and am hopeful that the ideas and issues that were discussed will help to inspire, guide and justify a more inclusive and meaningful society for everyone.

Someone spoke about whether advocacy actually holds up "the system", in that by doing individual advocacy it addresses the problems of the individuals so that they can continue to exist in a broken system. I think this idea makes it very important that the systemic advocacy work of Advocacy for Inclusion continues.

Kate Stevens:

I was able to join the 'Society, Culture & Recreation' session in time to hear Craig Wallace from NICAN discuss the importance of meaningful recreation and leisure for people with disabilities.

Craig gave some pretty confronting statistics on the high levels of social isolation of people with disabilities in Australia, and stressed the importance of recreation and leisure activities for increased social connectivity and wellbeing.

There are countless barriers that block people with disabilities from participating in recreation activities, ranging from lack of funding to pervading social attitudes. Often when people do become involved in recreation, it is for a small amount of time and choice of activities is very limited.

To me this contradicts the benefits of being involved in recreation in the first place – choosing which activities to be involved in is so valuable because it means that you get to decide what would benefit you and your life the most. Therefore, for many people with disabilities 'choosing' to be involved in the one leisure option on offer is not exercising choice at all. The physical and emotional benefits of recreation and leisure are so important and it is vital that choice and flexibility in leisure is available for all people, not just those without disability.

Jacqui Gibbs:

This was my first time attending the DANA conference and I really enjoyed the program.

I participated in the Supported Decision Making stream, which looked at two important aspects of implementing supported decision making in Australia. Ian Parsons spoke about legislative review of guardianship laws in Victoria, while Cher Nicholson and Heather Linton discussed

the trial of supported decision making in South Australia. I thought this was a great balance between the legislative changes we must make, and practical ways that we could use, supported decision making in the ACT. The role of advocacy was really highlighted – as even with legislation for supported decision making in place, it will be up to individuals, their advocates and their supporters to help build good supported decision making practice.

I also attended the Right to Family and Relationships stream, where Dr Margaret Spencer, Rebecca Medcalf, Charole Chahine, Madeline Sobb and Carl Thompson talked about the significant rights violations which face some people with disabilities when it comes to having relationships and families. While this stream introduced some harrowing material, each presentation demonstrated the importance of protecting human rights within the areas of reproduction, sexuality and family, and the strength and determination of those who face social, political and legal discrimination to maintain those rights.

As a newcomer, I was enthused by the amount of human rights work taking place across Australia in the area of disability advocacy. It was lovely to meet and discuss issues with so many dedicated, forward thinking individuals and realise how many are on the same page when it comes to ensuring human rights for people with disabilities.

Ellen Read:

The DANA conference had an atmosphere full of energy, passion and best of all high aspirations for people with disabilities. As the days went on I appreciated more and more the importance of these aspirations – an attitude that does not know the upper limits of a person's ability.

Employment and parenting were the two issues that impacted me most. They are completely

different from each other yet had some amazing parallels. In both sessions I heard over and over again “no one thought I could ever achieve that, but I did” or “I never thought my son could ever have a job and look at him now! He is great at what he does.”

For the people that were surrounded by those attitudes their biggest hurdle was not their disability, it was “managing the doubters” as worded by one of the speakers. I heard stories of people finding meaningful jobs that they love, where their colleagues value the work they do. I heard about a parent who was encouraged to have an abortion and then had another child taken away after birth. This parent has had her child returned and now proves herself to be a loving and capable mother; all of the scrutiny on her misplaced and leaving permanent scars.

These stories are not dissimilar to the stories we hear through our work at Advocacy for Inclusion. The people that succeeded were those that had at least one person in their life that believed in their ability. Imagine if they were surrounded by everyone who believes in them!

The “doubters” do not just exist at the individual level. They also exist at a systemic level. For example, funding is not allocated to disability employment services to assist people who are already employed. Most of us change jobs, but it seems that the doubters at the policy level think that people with disabilities will not change or advance their careers. When I heard a CEO of an employment service speak about the progress in Ireland I realised that other countries are doing much better than this. The difference is a focus on what people with disabilities CAN do instead of what they can't do.

Tehmi Mukadam:

I spent much of my early first day helping out with the registration for the delegates and assisting them with finding the right rooms etc.

There were lots of questions about various aspects of the conference, which I answered to the best of my knowledge, where I did not know I undertook to check and get back to them with a response. It was a great opportunity to talk to people who deal with people with disabilities on a first hand basis.

I attended a workshop on the first day which was quite interesting – firstly to get to the root of the ‘issue’ and secondly to find the funding and the workforce to take on the new options. Coming from an admin background it was heartening to see that the passion of the grass root works having to cope with the paperwork and the myriad of governance that had to be followed to do their jobs right.

The conference dinner was a wonderful chance to meet colleagues and to get to know them outside the work environment. With two Board members at our table, there was no shortage of conversation or differing views.

On the second day I attend a segment on Right to Family and Relationships. I found the session quite daunting. It’s hard to believe how cruel the government policies can be all in the name of doing good for the child. I found some of the speakers who had gone through such trauma to be incredibly brave. My heart went out to them and also to the advocates who face this day in and day out as part of their job. It’s not surprising that the burn out rate for them is high. All in all it was a pleasant eye opener!

Christina Ryan:

The DANA conference was a blur, so many people and organisations, plus a full program to try and get to. I was part of the conference organising committee so on the second day my focus was on our stream on the right to family and relationships.

For day 1 the excitement was with the supported decision making stream, hearing about the South Australian trial and the Victorian Law Reform Commission study. This provided advocates with a good opportunity to stretch our thinking about what we can do to support people with disabilities into greater autonomy and independence. I found it riveting.

Later on day 1 I participated in a panel on the Future of Advocacy. More challenging ideas on how advocates can play our part in ensuring the rights of people with disabilities are supported. One thought that cut through for me was: “if we advocate to improve existing faulty systems are we tacitly supporting them to continue?” Very thought provoking.

The right to family and relationships stream was a wonderful part of the conference. We heard from several excellent speakers including Margaret Spencer from the Intellectual Disability Rights Service in Sydney, Charole and Rebecca (parents who have experiences with Care and Protection Services), and Carl Thomson and Madeleine Sobb from the Victorian Youth Disability Advocacy Service talking about sexuality and expressing it. Later that day the stream became a workshop on how we can address the barriers to having relationships, being parents, and having families that are experienced by people with disabilities. The workshop could have gone all day and everyone felt that it covered a lot of ground. This key area exemplifies how community attitudes still limit the lives of people with disabilities.

Apart from the formal program it was great to be with so many advocates from around the country and to share stories about how we approach our work and the various issues that we are currently absorbed by. I was very pleased to have the opportunity to hear Christy Lynch from KARE in Ireland speak about closing the sheltered

workshops that his organisation had run for many years. We have some serious work to do in Australia in this area.

Disability Policy and the ACT Election

Advocacy for Inclusion expects significant political and legislative attention to be given to people with disabilities in the ACT election. We are looking forward to strong election policies which reflect the implementation of Australia's human rights obligations. *Advocacy for Inclusion* hopes to see election policies about:

1. People with disabilities should be engaged and supported to be engaged in election and voting processes.
 2. The voices and opinions of people with disabilities should be the focus of discussion and policy that relates specifically to their health and wellbeing.
 3. That the implementation of the NDIS is not considered a 'fix-all' for the exclusion experienced by people with disabilities, and that ACT Disability Advocacy Network members are consulted and included in developing NDIS and inclusion projects.
 4. The ACT moves now towards models that will support the introduction of the NDIS in 2013, such as individualised funding schemes, and training and support for people to transition to the NDIS model.
 5. Funding for ongoing self-advocacy and supporting self-advocacy training programs and supported decision making training, particularly in preparation for the NDIS rollout.
 6. The ACT government pursue supported decision making models through training and educative public, consumer and carer campaigns and seminars.
 7. That a review of guardianship in the ACT is undertaken. We would expect to see a move away from full guardianship, and the introduction of laws which will allow for supported decision making trials and practices.
 8. The right to be a parent and be in a relationship is recognised and supported. Care and Protection workers and other relevant ACT government employees should be trained to recognise these rights.
 9. A review of the *Domestic Violence and Protection Orders Act*. In particular, the definition of "household" of must be corrected to give protection and legal recognition for people with disabilities who are experiencing violence in accommodation, and through means, not typically recognised as 'domestic'.
 10. That the inequalities in housing for people with disabilities are addressed. These relate to access, ACT housing procedure, staff training, housing design and rights protections.
-

New Team Member

Hi, my name is Jacqui and I have been working as the Policy Officer at Advocacy for Inclusion from March this year. I am here researching supported decision making and guardianship in the ACT.

Before working for Advocacy, I completed a degree in Sociology at the ANU. I am really

interested in social research and considering ways we can improve social inclusion in Australia.

I have really enjoyed my time working with the Advocacy team!

ACT Election Forum 2012 on Disability

Come along to hear about disability policies and commitments made at this major time for disability reform.

There will be time for your questions.

Disability spokespeople for all the major parties and groupings have been invited.

Where:

The Aegean Room,
Hellenic Club
Matilda Street
Woden

This venue has a hearing loop.

When:

Thursday 30 August 2012
4.30 pm to 6.30 pm

RSVP to Advocacy for Inclusion: 6257 4005 or info@advocacyforinclusion.org – please let us know if you have access requirements.

Peer Network

During the peer network meetings this term we have looked at assertiveness, inclusion and goal setting.

We have watched a few episodes of “Pete and Annie’s Dinner Party”, the DVD that was made as part of the Nutrition Project, and revisited some of the ideas and activities covered during the Self-Advocacy course.

We have also had some discussion about human rights, and participants have been keen to share their ideas about how our new human rights training should look. It has been great getting feedback from everyone about the improvements we can make to our training, and what we do well.

Over the next few meetings we will be looking at a range of topics, including more about goal setting, budgeting and community activities. Any of our Self-Advocacy graduates are welcome to come along and join in!

For more information please contact Libby at the office.

To register for any of our courses and workshops please go to our website www.advocacyforinclusion.org to download a registration form and then send the completed form to libby@advocacyforinclusion.org or fax to 6257 4006.

Articles we read recently

The video links from t Christy Lynch who is the CEO KARE about what they have done and how they approach their work now.

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=z0c90hzjillo&feature=relmfu> employment part 1

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=f3TBQ0JBnXE> employment part 2

Irish Association of Supported Employment
<http://www.youtube.com/user/IASEmployment>

Funding Acknowledgement

Advocacy for Inclusion is currently funded by the:

- Australian Government Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs
- the ACT Government – Community Services Directorate
- the ACT Government under the ACT Health Promotion Grants Program; and
- Australian Government Attorney-General's Department

Order your Advocacy for Inclusion cards today!!!



“In my thoughts I have many friends”

Artist Andrew Delaney

Andrew grew up watching his Grandfather doing art and has always wanted to have a go. He has been doing art classes at Hands on Studio since October 2009 and loves to paint; in particular he loves to paint tractors and farms.

\$10 per pack of 10 cards

All cards are Post Office preferred size.

To order yours today, please fill in this form and return it to the address below.

Please make your cheque or money order payable to Advocacy for Inclusion Inc.

Advocacy for Inclusion
Suite 2.02, 20 Genge Street,
Canberra ACT 2601

Name _____

Address _____

Post Code _____

Number of packs _____ x \$10.00
per pack = \$ _____ Total Due



MAKE A DONATION

Advocacy for Inclusion is a registered charity. All donations over \$2 are tax deductible.

We welcome your support.

All donations support our self-advocacy training for people with disabilities. You will help to buy materials, ensure accessible venues are used, or assist with interpreters or other supports.

All donations directly empower people with disabilities.

To make a donation, please fill in this form and return it to the address below.

*Please make your donation, cheque or money order payable to
Advocacy for Inclusion Inc.*

Advocacy for Inclusion
Suite 2.02, 20 Genge Street,
Canberra ACT 2601

Name for receipt

Address

Post Code

\$

Donation amount



MEMBER APPLICATION FORM

Name

Address

Post Code

Phone

Email

Contact Person (Organisations only)

Full Membership

Associate
Membership

Please tick if you have a disability (free
membership)

To become a member, please fill in this form and
return it to the address below.

*Please make your donation, cheque or money order payable to
Advocacy for Inclusion Inc.*

Advocacy for Inclusion
2.02/20 Genge Street
Canberra City ACT 2601

Membership includes:

- Quarterly newsletter
- Policy consultation on key issues
- Representative opportunities
- Connection with local and national networks
- Right to nominate for our Board
- Membership rates for training

Membership Categories:

- *Full Membership - Individuals*
 - \$10
 - Free for people with disability
- *Associate Membership - Organisations*
 - \$25