

IA

INDEPENDENT ADVOCACY
SA INC

ANNUAL REPORT
2016/17

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***Promoting Valued Lives for
People with Intellectual Disability***

Our Values and Policies are available on request

***We stand alongside the people we advocate for, challenging abuses of
their vulnerability and safeguarding improvements in their lives.***

***We strive to emphatically promote, protect and defend the
welfare of the individuals for whom we advocate
by engaging in advocacy which is: -***

***Functioning (speaking, acting, writing,) with minimum conflict of interest
on behalf of the sincerely perceived interests of a person in order to
promote, protect and defend the welfare of, and justice for, the individual.
Advocacy strives to be emphatic and vigorous, and is actually, or is very
likely to be, costly to the advocate.
(W Wolfensberger)***

Independent Advocacy SA Inc
MINUTES OF AGM
Held 18th October 2016 at 6.15 pm
at 6 Milne Street Vale Park

Meeting opened at 6.15 pm

1. Welcome: Fiona welcomed everyone to the AGM. She told the meeting that there were 10 or more members present or by proxy so there was a quorum and the meeting could proceed.

2. Present: Jade Standish, Robyn Byrne, Stephen Holt, Fiona Campbell, Gavin Haese, David Gant, Valerie Fraser, Emily Gore, Silvana Gant, Andrea Sainsbury, Deb Phillis, Kylie Phillis, Tony McArthur, Alison Hankinson, David Elder, Elsie Smith (arrived late) **By Proxy:** Terry Miller, Veronica Miller, Peter Button.

Apologies: Mel Jackman, Terry Miller, Veronica Miller, Peter Button, Ryan Horton

3. Acknowledgement: Emily acknowledged that we meet and work on the land of the Kurna people and acknowledged respect for their elders past and present.

4. Minutes from the last Annual General Meeting: 20th October 2015

Emily asked those present at the last AGM to review the minutes in the annual report for approval. Silvana Gant moved that the minutes of the 2015 AGM be accepted, seconded by Gavin Haese. Minutes approved.

5. Chairperson Report: –

Emily told the meeting that there was a copy of her chairperson's report in the annual report. She indicated that it was hard to believe it has been a year. Since the last AGM a Financial Sub-Committee was created and met as frequently as the Management Committee. On the mention of the Finance Sub Committee Robyn interrupted Emily's presentation to inform the meeting, on behalf of the Finance Sub-Committee, that a letter had been received from the Minister for Communities and Social Inclusion Zoe Bettison informing IA that it had been successful in getting a grant to fund a new motor vehicle. There was much celebration. The Ford Focus will be traded in for a hybrid car that will lower our petrol costs. The new purchase will also increase our assets. Emily thanked the Financial Sub Committee for all their work. Tony acknowledged that the other Finance Sub Committee action, a sausage sizzle at Bunnings, was postponed due to poor weather. No further comment.

6. Treasurer Report: –

Fiona presented the Treasurers report on David's behalf. She asked members to read the report. A deficit was brought forward from last year. There has been much discussion about IA's Redundancy Provision. The funding body has not

permitted a redundancy expense since 2012 and the current provision is an historical liability that has sat in the accounts for many years. There has been a lot of work done on whether this provision was required. Consultation with an industrial lawyer advised that, while not legally required, it is still advisable to have this provision. In the 2015-16 financial statements the Redundancy Provision has been moved from across the ledger from a liability to an asset. Andrea advised that the Federal Government has a Redundancy provision for small organisations that may cover Redundancy in the event IA closes. Getting a legal opinion on this provision was the reason that the audit report did not get signed before the AGM and why it wasn't in the annual report. It will be added as an insert once audit report is signed.

Wages continue to make up the majority of IA's expenses. In 2015-16 there was an increase in wage costs, now making up 77.5% of the total, while Administration costs accounted for 22.5%. The wage expense is a considerable cost that has to be addressed.

Fiona thanked staff and Management Committee members for their contribution during the year. Fiona, on David's behalf commended the auditor's report to this our 23rd Annual General Meeting and invited people to take a few minutes to read the financial statements. Fiona asked that the financial statements for 2015/16 be accepted. Moved by David Gant, seconded by Andrea Sainsbury, financial statements adopted.

7. Nomination of Auditor:

David nominated VM Accounting as auditor, seconded by Andrea Sainsbury. VM Accounting adopted as auditor for 2016-17.

8. Election of Committee Members:

Robyn Byrne was the returning officer and declared all positions vacant. There was no need for an election as there were not more than ten nominees. Nominations by the following people were accepted onto the Management Committee for the next year: Silvana Gant, David Gant, Tony McArthur, Elsie Smith, Andrea Sainsbury, Emily Gore and Gavin Haese. No more than 10 nominations so Robyn declared that all nominees now formed the new Management Committee and asked them to meet briefly to organise the first meeting.

Fiona indicated to the meeting that Peter Button was stepping down from the committee due to other commitments. Silvana proposed that his contribution to the IA MC over many years be acknowledged. All present agreed.

9. Other Business:

Constitution - Fiona asked if MC will consider an amendment to the IA Constitution that changes the rules around the number of members needed for a quorum at the AGM. Currently 10 members are required to be present, either in person or by proxy, to make a quorum. With a small membership this number is proving harder and harder to meet. No discussion.

Fiona thanked Andrea for her kind hospitality in offering IA the use of her home for the AGM.

10. Guest Speakers:

No guest speaker

Meeting closed 6.25 pm

11. Staff and MC Members then shared in Andrea's incredible cooking.

Chairperson's Report

2017 AGM

'Everyone is entitled to be actively included in society and to experience a reasonable quality of life'

- 'Our Values', Independent Advocacy

This year the Independent Advocacy staff and Management Committee have continued to be busy, working with purpose, value and mindfulness.

The Management Committee has met our governance responsibilities, maintained detailed and close consideration of our financial position and consistently reviewed our internal processes. For example, at several meetings we have assessed how IA compares to one of the Australian Government National Disability Service Standards, and we have devoted time to finding ways to reduce financial expenditure.

In exciting finance news, we were successful in our application for a grant for a new car. We have purchased a hybrid vehicle to minimise ongoing costs.

The Department of Social Services also provided funding to Independent Advocacy under a trial arrangement as an NDIS appeals support organisation, which in addition to a successful fundraising barbeque held at Bunnings, has expanded the financial capacity of our organisation. These actions have certainly helped the budget bottom line, allowed us to upgrade the printer and computers, and enable IA to better support vulnerable people. The Management Committee may look for similar opportunities for funding in the future.

The Committee welcomes a new staff member in Rachael Harris who started in May and has made a great start to her work at IA. Once again, this organisation would not function without the dedication of the staff and volunteers. Thank you for all that you do.

Emily Gore

Chairperson Program Report

Organisation Structure

Independent Advocacy SA Inc. (IA) remains funded by the Department of Social Services (DSS) under the National Disability Advocacy Program (NDAP). IA continues to respond to situations of extreme vulnerability and complexity in undertaking Social Advocacy for individuals with intellectual disability who are particularly vulnerable and at risk of abuse, neglect and discrimination.

In this period, along with other NDAP funded advocacy organisations, IA was offered and accepted a twelve month NDIS Appeals funding grant. NDIS Appeals funding assists people with disability to appeal reviewable decisions in relation to the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS)

As required IA is registered with the Australian Charities and Not-for-profit Commission (ACNC) and is incorporated under the Associations Incorporation Act.

The Management Committee of IA is elected annually from the general membership at the Annual General Meeting. The Management Committee is responsible for overseeing the effective running of the organisation.

General membership of IA is open to individuals who support and agree to the values and objects of the organisation and who are free from actual or perceived conflicts of interest. However, membership of the Management Committee cannot be taken up by people who provide services specific to individuals that we are in, or likely to be in, advocacy relationships with.

The Coordinator is responsible for the overall management and day to day running of the organisation with assistance from the Office Manager and the Senior Advocate. The Coordinator is also responsible for supervision of staff and is accountable directly to the Management Committee.

Advocates are responsible for advocacy relationships and are accountable to the Coordinator for all core work activity and to the Management Committee for overall conduct and commitment to the work. The Office Manager is responsible for general administration and payroll duties and provides integral support to other staff and the Management Committee. As a valued member of staff the Office Cleaner takes responsibility for the overall cleaning of the organisation's offices and equipment.

Management Committee

The Committee sets the broad direction and develops strategies to safeguard the work of advocacy. The members of the Management Committee oversee and are responsible for the financial and other management decisions of the organisation.

In this period the Management Committee have once again worked diligently to manage income and expense considerations.

Members of the Management Committee identify and participate in training and development sessions that support them in their management roles and in better understanding Social Advocacy and Social Role Valorization. Individual members assist in recruitment of staff, resolution of complaints and the conduct of staff performance and other processes as necessary and appropriate. In this period they participated in the review of work performance and the successful recruitment of a new advocate.

The Management Committee formally met 7 times in 2016/17 to conduct the usual business of financial and organisational management and related decision making.

As at June 2017 our Management Committee comprised the following people:

Office Bearers:

Chairperson	Emily Gore
Treasurer	David Gant
Secretary	Andrea Sainsbury

Members:

Silvana Gant
Tony McArthur
Peter Button
Gavin Haese
Elsie Smith

Staffing

During this period staff have continued to meet the advocacy needs of vulnerable individuals and strived to make a positive impact on their day to day lives. We said goodbye to Mel Jackman who took up a training position elsewhere and welcomed Rachael Harris to the team.

At 30 June 2017 staffing was as follows:

Coordinator	Fiona Campbell	Per fortnight (63 hrs)
Senior Advocate	Robyn Byrne	(56 hrs)
Individual Advocates	Ryan Horton	(56 hrs)
	Jade Standish	(56 hrs)
	Rachael Harris	(36 hrs)
Office Manager	Stephen Holt	(32 hrs)
Cleaner	Deb Phillis	(4 hrs)

Funding

Under the National Disability Advocacy Program (NDAP) IA continues to receive funding through the Commonwealth Department of Social Services (DSS). While

government continues to determine the ongoing funding structure for programs within DSS NDAP organisations have recently been advised that funding will continue through until 2020. Like most other NDAP organisations IA was offered and accepted 12 months funding for NDIS Appeals for the period December 2016 to December 2017.

We report statistically to DSS in relation to advocacy activity for each 12 month period as a requirement of our funding agreement. Statistical information does not identify or include identifying details of vulnerable persons.

Advocates and the organisation continue to pursue special purpose grants offered through philanthropic organisations in order to fund projects, and socially valued opportunities, and services and material items for individuals if appropriate; these are limited and specific.

Submissions

As an individual advocacy only organisation It is not the focus of advocacy work at IA to take up systemic issues, however, in striving to address the advocacy needs of vulnerable individuals with intellectual disability we will speak to our understanding of the affect of systemic issues on individual people as appropriate. Where possible and appropriate, IA will respond to other opportunities.

Submissions to consultations, discussion papers, meetings and forums are opportunities to bring issues that commonly affect people with intellectual disability to the attention of policy and decision makers.

Staff continue to add their voice to overall concerns for vulnerable people where possible and appropriate in the conduct of advocacy and organisational management.

Representations/contributions made this year include:

- National Disability Insurance Scheme forums
- National Disability Insurance Scheme survey
- Unmet Need for Disability Advocacy survey
- Health and Community Services Complaints Commission
- Office of the Public Advocate
- Department for Child Protection

Training and Development

IA remains committed to core training and development for staff through Social Role Valorisation (SRV) and Program Analysis of Services Systems' Implementation of Normalization Goals (P.A.S.S.I.N.G.) events. These 2 and 5 day events are fundamental in developing and deepening staff understanding of the lived experience of vulnerable and devalued individuals. SRV training is also offered to Management Committee where possible.

Staff and Management Committee members also take up other training and development opportunities as necessary or needed. These are primarily focussed on building personal skills and deepening a general or specific understanding. All are relevant to good governance, the work of advocates, and the organisation.

Staff and Management Committee variously attended training and development opportunities including:

- Performance Management & Courageous Conversations
- Self-directed Support
- NDIS Workshops
- NDIS Forum
- Bi-Cultural Awareness, Safety and Inclusion
- SRV Valuing Lives event
- SRV Restrictive Practices event

Advocacy

To ensure the privacy and confidentiality of the individuals we advocate for we do not report on the details of advocacy efforts.

Advocacy continues to respond to the long term problem and common lack of appropriate service and support to extremely vulnerable people with disability who rely upon paid service provision to meet their daily needs. People with disability continue to be forced to accept poorly skilled, neglectful and inadequate support. Organisations who repeatedly demonstrate lack of care and willingness to meet the essential needs of vulnerable persons continue to be funded, while their service workers are refused or refuse training to improve their capacity to serve vulnerable persons well.

“Choice” is often claimed as a measure of service and support but the reality is often **no** choice. No choice in where you live, no choice in who you live with, no choice in how you spend your days or nights or weekends, no choice in when you can come or go, no choice of doctor baker candlestick maker, no choice in who touches your naked body when bathing, no choice in who or how you are touched. No choice in where you live, no choice to stay in the home you signed a lease for if you refuse to be poorly served. Like a deck chair on the Titanic you are moved without choice to a different congregated/segregated service. And no choice in seeking a Royal Commission to be protected from further harm.

There is little tangible commitment to, or evidence of, providing real homes for vulnerable people. Those most reliant on support are commonly congregated and/or segregated into group homes and clusters where “Person Centered Planning” becomes dominated by service needs and constraints, and where failure to meet the PCP is met with ‘we are doing our best but s/he is difficult/dangerous/chose not to engage.”

For some the NDIS will offer relief from institutionalized practices – for many others there will be no measurable change.

Independent Advocacy continues as in previous years to raise concerns and advocate for appropriate support and service for parents with intellectual disability to further the opportunity for them to take up the meaningful role of parent in their children's lives. The advocacy effort must at all times be mindful of the more vulnerable party, the minor child/ren, in seeking meaningful and long term positive relationship between the parent/s and child, including a return to the care of the parent, shared care and/or regular contact.

IA assisted 60 individuals during the 2016/17 year through active advocacy efforts, referral investigations and *Strategic Conversations*. We remain in active advocacy relationship with 40 individuals. In this period 4 of the 60 individuals we assisted identified as being of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander origin, and 11 come from Culturally and/or Linguistically Diverse backgrounds. We assisted 7 individuals under the age of 24, 22 individuals aged between 25 and 39, 24 individuals aged between 40 and 54 and 7 were 55 or older.

An *active* advocacy relationship is one in which the allocated advocate is proactively involved in the life of the vulnerable person. The person is typically at risk of ongoing abuse, neglect and discrimination and has minimal or no freely given relationships. In these active advocacy relationships the advocacy effort is focused on protecting the person from further harm, responding to issues of concern and striving to ensure the person receives appropriate service and support.

Over time, and dependent upon individual circumstances, an active advocacy relationship may become a *watching brief* where the presenting or primary issues have been resolved or fallen away but where the person remains particularly vulnerable. In these situations the advocate may check in with the person and/or services from time to time to observe or assess how things are going. In this situation the advocacy relationship remains with the allocated advocate who will respond as needed. There is no further referral/eligibility type process if the person needs active advocacy in the future.

Advocacy efforts may be subject to an exit process, however this will depend upon a range of factors; including the stability of a person's situation, the level of positive change in their life and confidence in a decrease in the person's vulnerability. If we receive future contact in relation to the person we will respond and reallocate an advocate as necessary, the same advocate where possible. Our commitment is to the vulnerable person and the existing or previous advocacy relationship.

Referral investigation is a process in which some additional time is spent in assessing a referral, particularly where the information is not clear or we perceive there to be more risk than is obvious from the presenting issue; this may include a single advocacy effort or conversation to prompt attention to the issue by an appropriate third party/person.

From time to time, in situations where we do not take up a referral, Independent Advocacy may offer a *Strategic Conversation*. This is an opportunity for the person

and/or allies, family members or services to draw on the experience of advocacy to explore the concerns affecting the vulnerable person and to offer ideas and suggestions which may assist in resolving, or progressing an issue. This is most appropriate where the person has capacity and/or a strong ally to follow up on suggested strategies.

We do not have a waiting list and strive to respond in some way to each referral and contact received. This may be through conversation, providing information and contact details of other organisations or relevant services that may be able to assist, or referral to another advocacy organisation. It may also be by making direct first contact with an organisation or service on behalf of the vulnerable person.

National Disability Advocacy Program

The Department for Social Services (DSS) continues to be responsible for the National Disability Advocacy Program (NDAP). For your interest the following information in regard to the NDAP is from the DSS website.

Specialisation

NDAP agencies may be categorised into generalist or specialist agencies:

- *Generalist agencies provide advocacy support to people with any type of disability or cultural background.*
- *Specialist agencies may provide advocacy support to people with disability:*
 - *with a specific type of disability;*
 - *from Diverse Cultural and Linguistic backgrounds; or*
 - *from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander backgrounds.*

Target Group

The target group for advocacy support provided by NDAP agencies, as required under section 8 of the DSA, consists of people with disability that:

- a. *'is attributable to an intellectual, psychiatric, sensory or physical impairment or a combination of such impairments;*
 - b. *is permanent or likely to be permanent; and*
 - c. *results in:*
 - i. *a substantially reduced capacity of the person for communication, learning or mobility; and*
 - ii. *the need for ongoing support services.*
-

Thank you to the people we advocate for and staff and Management Committee for their positive work and contribution to the organisation.

Fiona Campbell
Coordinator

Treasurer's Report

We began the 2016/17 financial year with a \$2,547.38 deficit brought forward from last year's close. Our surplus at the close of this year is \$13,440.46 which is a significant turn around in our financial position from previous years.

Revenue

Independent Advocacy continues to be funded through a grant from the Department of Social Services. I take this opportunity to thank the Federal Government for its continuing commitment to Advocacy. The base grant amount for the 2016/17 financial year was \$315,253.71. SACS supplementation was \$29,303.46. During the year Independent Advocacy was also allocated \$59,000 in NDIS Appeals funding by the Department of Social Services. Only \$18,298.13 in NDIS Appeals Funding was expended in 2016/17, the rest of this income has been carried forward to 2017/18. Interest income was again less than last year at \$1,881.86. Independent Advocacy was also fortunate enough to receive a Community Benefits Grant for \$21,104. This grant was used to purchase a hybrid car that will result in reduced operating expenditure in the future. Finally, the Management Committee organised a Sausage Sizzle in April that raised \$1,123.45. I'd like to take this opportunity to thank those Management Committee members who organised and participated in this fundraising event.

Expenses

Total expenses for 2016/17 were \$374,117.15. Wages continue to account for the greater share of total expenses at 76%, while administration accounted for 24%. There was an overall increase in expenses from the previous year. Staff hours went up to cater for NDIS Appeals. Administration, Insurance, Printing and Stationery, Repairs and Maintenance and Telephone and Internet all significantly increased. Independent Advocacy also invested in new computers and two new office chairs. Some decreases were evident in Electricity and Motor Vehicle expenses. It is pleasing that we are already seeing the benefit of buying a hybrid vehicle.

An increase in funding has allowed Independent Advocacy to keep the vulnerable individuals for whom we advocate at the forefront of all the decisions we make. A new car, new computers, new chairs allow us to provide more direct advocacy support. We also continue to explore ways to keep our finances at a manageable level. I thank the Financial Sub-Committee and staff for their efforts in this regard and for their continuing commitment to the vulnerable people for whom we advocate. With that I commend the Auditor's report to our 24th Annual General Meeting.

David K Gant OAM
Treasurer