



SUFY protects and defends the human rights of vulnerable people with disability through individual advocacy to address injustices and to make a positive and sustainable difference to their lives.

ANNUAL REPORT 2018/2019

Speaking Up For You Inc.

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SUFY REMEMBERS

SUFY remembers many people who have been part of our journey during the last thirty years. We acknowledge and appreciate the contributions and insights individuals have made to our SUFY work.

Over the past year, two people have died and we remember them -

Peter Robinson

Gary Wheeler

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ABOUT US

OUR MISSION

“Speaking Up For You Inc. (SUFY) protects and defends the human rights of vulnerable people with disability through individual advocacy to address injustices and make a positive and sustainable difference to their lives.”

OUR PRINCIPLES

Human Rights: SUFY will promote, protect and defend the lives and the human rights of each person with disability whom we support in the advocacy relationship.

Social Justice: SUFY will operate in ways that support the achievement of rights, equity, access, participation and equality in our advocacy work with each person.

Inclusion in Community Life: SUFY will operate in ways that value and support the inclusion of people with disability in the life of their diverse communities.



OUR INDIVIDUAL ADVOCACY

SUFY provides a combination of individual advocacy, self-advocacy and systems advocacy that is consultative and collaborative with each individual and with families / guardians where appropriate. Self-advocacy underpins the essence of our work, as we enable individuals to gain confidence, understand information and then act on their own behalf. We stand beside and with vulnerable people with disability so that they can feel confident that their voice is heard. Our advocacy work with them is often long term, creating positive, real and sustainable differences to each person’s well-being and lifestyle over time. This work is informed by the principles and elements of social advocacy.

WHERE WE WORK

In the greater Brisbane and Moreton Bay areas including Redlands.

THE PEOPLE WE WORK WITH

Vulnerable people with disability who are at risk with;

- Fundamental needs not met (adequate food and clothing, housing, health and well-being, safety and freedom from harm, having someone who cares)
- Least able to represent or defend their own interests
- Diverse mix of people who differ in age, disability, culture, living arrangements, relationships and complexity of life situations.

MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE AND STAFF

There were six management committee members elected at the AGM in 2017/2018 and another committee member joined during the year to oversee the work of SUFY for the financial year 2018/2019.

Management Committee

- Chairperson**
Terry Fisher
- Vice Chairperson**
Hugh Rose-Miller
- Secretary**
David Haxton
- Treasurer**
Michael Barwick
- Committee**
Madonna Nicoll
Willie Prince
Alison Maclean

SUFY Staff

- Manager**
Dianne Toohey (full time)
- NDIS Appeals Workers**
Anna Vega (part-time)
Fiona Campbell (part-time) (commenced 29th May 2019)
Anita Page (part-time) (resigned 9th April 2019)
Courtney Wolf (part-time) (resigned 28th December 2018)
- Advocacy worker**
Neal Lakshman (full time)
Kathy Kendell (full time)
- Advocacy Resource Worker**
Mary Kenny (resigned January 2019)
- Advocacy Administration and Support Worker**
Kelly Beckitt (part-time)(commenced 30th April 2019)
- Certified Bookkeeper**
Lucia Forman (part-time)



OUR WORK



Also I want to acknowledge that you always endeavoured to put my brother's needs and interests first regardless of how complex the situation is. We thank you for being so supportive and a wonderful advocate for my brother for all those years



NATIONAL DISABILITY ADVOCACY PROGRAM

SUFY is accredited under the National Disability Service Standards. Our focus:

- 1** To provide individual advocacy on behalf of vulnerable people with disability whose fundamental needs are not met and/or whose human rights are being denied.
To assist some people to advocate on behalf of a vulnerable person with disability;
Restrictive practices are repealed and the Convention on Rights of Persons with Disability is implemented.
- 2** Independent social advocacy is embedded in the local community and responsive to people with disability in their community.
- 3** Vulnerable people are supported with independent advocacy throughout the NDIS processes
Includes people who will not be considered under the NDIS
- 4** SUFY is a principled, effective, accountable and sustainable social advocacy organisation.

SOCIAL MEDIA

SUFY has maintained expertise and coverage with a website; www.sufy.org.au and also using Facebook to reach people with disability, families and allies more effectively.

NDIS EXTERNAL APPEALS

According to the last quarterly report from the NDIA, they have had a 50% roll out over Queensland implementing the NDIS. Caboolture was the last of SUFY's areas to be rolled out which was in January this year. We are yet to see any Tribunal cases from Caboolture. Although NDIA has stated that there has been a 50% rollout, some areas of Queensland came on line quite a bit before Brisbane. Therefore the areas SUFY advocates for clients, have not seen the same percentage of implementation.

In the financial year, 2018-2019, SUFY has supported participants with internal reviews and external merit reviews through the Administrative Appeals Tribunal. The feedback has consistently been positive regarding the support the NDIS Appeals Advocates have been providing to individuals, families and the community alike.

“

I really can't thank you and SUFY enough for your continued support over the years to my family. I am absolutely certain we would not have got the outcome we did with the NDIA without your advice, oversight and guidance

”

INDIVIDUAL ADVOCACY

SUFY provided individual advocacy to 167 individuals during the financial year, 1st July 2018 over the past year.

Advocates completed advocacy for 43 individuals and their files were closed. The majority of the 167 individuals SUFY advocated for had multiple issues for which they required advocacy. The total number of issues that SUFY advocated for totalled 255.

Some individuals require long-term advocacy and a commitment over a number of years.

SUFY has managed to fully or partially resolve many of these issues, however many individuals have ongoing issues which require advocacy.

SUFY provided advocacy support to many family members to assist with strategies and letter writing, negotiating with the Department and service providers on behalf of their family members.

- Restrictive Practices
- Abuse/neglect
- Accommodation
- Discrimination or rights
- Equipment
- Financial matters
- Health
- Independent living support
- Legal issues
- Recreational, social or family issues
- Service gaps, access, policy, reduction in service or complaints
- Vulnerability/isolation
- Forced co-tenancy
- Lack of recognition, fulfilment or protection of human rights
- Impact of block funding and institutionalised practices
- Impact for people who are involved with the Disability Services Forensic Unit
- Transition to the NDIS

SYSTEMS ADVOCACY WORK

SUFY's systems advocacy work focused on the experience of people with a disability living in institutional and residential settings who are receiving funding under the Supported Independent Living (SIL) model of support.

167

PEOPLE RECEIVED
ADVOCACY FROM SUFY

255

ISSUES WERE
ADVOCATED FOR BY SUFY

PRESENTATIONS AND TRAINING

SUFY staff have been involved in

- Values in Action – Social Role Valorisation (SRV) Training (2 staff)
- NDIS Reviews and Appeals (2 staff)
- Universal Design Conference (2 staff)
- Fire Safety Training (1 staff)
- NDIS Self-Management Webinar (1 staff)
- NDIS Make It Work Forum Brisbane (2 staff)
- Annual Positive Practices Symposium (1 staff)
- QCOSS Event: A Human Rights Act for Queensland (1 staff)
- Data Exchange System Enhancements (3 staff)
- Working with NDIS (1 staff)
- ICB-Payroll (1 staff)
- ATO Open Forum (1 staff)
- Incite 2019 – MYOB (1 staff)
- Data Exchange Overview (4 staff)
- ICB Annual Conference (1 staff)
- ATO Fringe Benefits Tax Webinar (1 staff)
- The Adequacy of Current Legal Protections in Protection the rights of children (1 staff)
- NDIS Psychosocial Disability Forum (1 staff)
- ICB End of FY Workshop (1 staff)

NETWORKING AND ALLIES

- Met with NDIS Safeguards Coalition and Queensland Housing
- Met with Queenslanders with Disability Network (QDN) regarding NDIS Getting on the Grid Project
- Met with Queensland Advocacy Incorporated (QAI) and spoke about funding they received under the Kinship Program
- NDIA Quality Complaint Consultation
- Inala Community Legal Services
- NDIS Complex Coordination Consultation
- Qld NDIS Appeals Teleconference
- NDIA Transport Forum
- Moreton Bay Regional Interagency Networking

MEETING WITH DEPARTMENT REPRESENTATIVES

- Met with Minister Coralee O'Rourke as part of the Collective Action Group (CAGQ) about issues arising with the introduction of the NDIS.
- Met with Department Representatives Christine Ledger and Ric Pafumi

REPORTING TO FUNDING BODIES

SUFY completed the following:

1

Department of Social Services - Families, Housing, Community Services

- Annual Australian Government Disability Services Census;
- Australian Government Disability Program Information Collection service outlet form in relation to our Funding Agreement Schedule;
- Six monthly performance reports
- Self-Assessment and accreditation under the NDAP standards

2

Disability Services Queensland

- Quarterly CSTDA National Minimum Data Sets;
- Director's Certification Certificates
- Annual Service Performance Report;
- Annual Financial Report

“

SUFY have supported my family on and off for many years. Dianne Toohey and her team have been a god sent.

”



JOINT REPORT FROM MANAGER & CHAIRPERSON

FAREWELL TO MARY KENNY

Mary Kenny held the position of Advocacy Resource Worker at SUFY for 10 years and resigned from SUFY in January, 2019. Mary was a mainstay of SUFY and would be familiar to many people as the informed and helpful voice that answered the phone as the first point of contact. Mary's knowledge of advocacy stretched back to its beginning in Queensland in the eighties. As an advocacy pioneer Mary has forgotten more about advocacy than most people know. Whether it was self-advocacy, citizen advocacy, individual advocacy or "Hot Topics", Mary had a wealth of knowledge that she was always willing to share. Mary's commitment to SUFY over a 10 year period has been exceptional I would like to thank Mary for her contribution to the development of advocacy in Queensland and wish her the very best in her retirement.



Whenever you visit I learn a great deal of valuable information, plus by the end you have me motivated to keep up the fight.



INDIVIDUAL ADVOCACY

In 2018/2019 SUFY advocated for 167 people with a disability whose fundamental needs were unmet. Our advocacy focused on:

Supporting individuals to access the NDIS.

Advocacy has an important role in ensuring choice and control, the aims of the NDIS, is realised for all people with a disability. Despite the fact that there are growing calls to phase out the practice of placing people with a disability together in group homes amid growing reports of abuse and neglect, this quarter 2,449 people were approved to have Supported Independent Living (SIL) payments in their plan. There are now 19,329 participants approved under SIL. There is now \$5,254 billion committed to SIL funding

Supporting Individuals to access housing.

Many people with a disability are not able to access housing and are then placed into aged care facilities, hostels, group home or become homeless. For people with a disability to have real choice and control over where and with whom they live there needs to be:

- An increase in rent assistance for people on income support such as the Disability Support Pension.
- More social housing
- Changes to Specialist Disability Accommodation (SDA) policy and funding to ensure people with a disability are not forced into congregate housing options that non-disabled people don't have to live in.
- Mandatory accessibility features in all new housing, through the National Construction Code.

Advocating for highly vulnerable people with a disability to ensure they have access to services.

SUFY has advocated for several individuals who have been left without services when providers have refused to engage with them. These people are often hospitalised as emergency admissions as there is no crisis accommodation or service provider who will take them on. They are at risk of entering the Criminal Justice System and becoming homeless.

SYSTEMS ADVOCACY WORK

SUFY's systems advocacy work focused on the experience of people with a disability living in institutional and residential settings who are receiving funding under the Supported Independent Living (SIL) model of support.

Issues we have identified include:

- The difficulties for individuals living in group situations to move from shared support to individual arrangements.
- Tenancy rights especially when the service provider is the landlord
- Lack of accountability as to how core supports are distributed to each member of the household
- Limited or no choice of service provider.
- Limited or no choice about who lives with you
- Limited or no information available to inform residents of their rights under the SIL model of support.
- People funded under SIL are not able to self- manage their supports

Our Systems advocacy work has included a submission to the Joint Standing Committee on the National Disability Insurance Scheme into Supported Independent Living

- Collecting stories from people with a disability who are funded under SIL
- Informing the Minister for the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) Hon Stuart Robert MP of the issues people with a disability have identifies with SIL
- Working with the NDIS Safeguards Coalition on issues for people in SIL funded settings
- Meeting with Qld Housing regarding their Principled based policy which is around choice of who one lives with and separation of landlord and Service Provider

FUNDING & GRANTS

NDIS funding

SUFY has supported 124 number of people who were having difficulty accessing the NDIS and assisting them through the NDIA review process. In December, 2018 Courtney Wolf resigned and was replaced by Anita Page and then Fiona Campbell.

ILC Grant

SUFY was successful in receiving a grant through the NDIA Information Linkage and Capacity Building (ILC) round focused on Disabled Persons and Family Organisations. The grant has two components which include: Increasing the capacity of potential committee members who have a disability, to lead and govern the organisation. The 2nd component is to empower people with a disability who are funded under supported Independent Living (SIL) to understand their tenancy rights.

Funding Summary

SUFY as at October 2019, receives funding from five different grants from both Federal and Queensland Governments. We would like to thank them for making this funding available. Unfortunately these grants, listed below, have differing agreement end dates which presents issues for SUFY in forward planning for budgeting and the future. These grants all have different reporting criteria. The uncertainty of the funding for NDAP Agreement makes long term planning difficult.

Federal Government –

- National Disability Advocacy Program (NDAP) - Agreement End Date June, 2020
- National Disability Insurance Scheme Appeals (NDIS Appeals) - Agreement End Date June, 2020
- Information Linkages and Capacity Building (ILC) - Agreement End Date May, 2020
- Disability Royal Commission Advocacy Support (DRC) – Agreement End Date June, 2022

Queensland Government –

- Department of Communities, Disability Services and Seniors - Agreement End Date June, 2021

SUFY STAFF NEWS

Thank you to Courtney Wolf and Anita Page

Courtney held the position of NDIS Appeals worker from April to December, 2018. Courtney came to SUFY with a wealth of knowledge about the NDIS and was a valued staff member. I would like to thank Courtney for her contribution to the NDIS Appeals work that she undertook while at SUFY.

Anita Page was employed as an NDIS Appeals Worker and was with us only briefly. Anita moved on for personal reasons and we thank her for her time at SUFY.

Welcome New Staff

During the financial year we gained two new employees at Speaking Up For You. Kelly Beckett commenced work as the Advocacy Administration and Support Worker on the 30th of April, 2019 and Fiona Campbell was a welcomed addition to our NDIS Appeals Team commencing on the 29th of May, 2019. I would like to welcome you both to the SUFY team and look forward to working together in the future.



SNAPSHOT OF SUFY'S WORK FOR THE YEAR

HOSTEL AND BOARDING HOUSES

“

I cannot thank SUFY enough for the help they have provided my family over the years. I truly think we would not have survived without them.

”

SUFY visits individuals who have ended up in boarding houses and hostels and nursing home. People end up in these residential services not as a personal choice but because hospitals, their guardians and support services feel that hostels are appropriate places for people with a disability who have no options or housing. Hostels are inappropriate places for people with complex disabilities for many reasons.

Hostels place people with a disability in poverty as the hostel takes 85% percent of their disability support pension (DSP) leaving them with maybe \$40 leftover. Most hostels will charge extra for washing or cleaning. Having no money, many hostel residents congregate in public places or lie in public areas of the hostel.

Whilst hostels provide three meals per day they are not nutritious and an evening meal may be only sandwiches and a piece of fruit. Hostels, which are generally owned by private individuals save money by providing very basic meals. Every person gets the same meals so there is no provision for dietary requirements or personal tastes.

Drug use is prevalent in many hostels and drug raids by police are not unusual. Individuals often report to us that they have been assaulted in hostels by other residents. They state that when they report these matters to the police they are often ignored. Individuals state that when they report these issues to the hostel operators they are also ignored.

Hostels and boarding houses are regulated by The State Government but the standards being assessed are so limited that regulation provides no real protection for the people that live there. Buildings appear to be old and in disrepair, privacy is limited, hostel support workers are not visible rather out of sight in locked office areas (which are the only areas with air conditioning). For the purposes of the Australian Bureau of Statistics people in hostels and boarding houses are classified as being in a state of homelessness. So when State Government officers accredit and audit them what is the standard they actually passing? Certainly not a standard that takes into account a person's human rights.

Such conditions would be challenging for a person with the capacity to make their own decisions. For a person with an intellectual disability or a chronic psychosis it is disorienting, frustrating and unsafe. Why government agencies would choose to place vulnerable people with a disability in such an environments is a question that many advocates find hard to understand. People with impaired capacity have little capacity to complain as complaint can lead to immediate eviction. Whilst there are tenancy rights that people can access they may have little ability to negotiate these processes due to their disability.

“

In the past week two separate people I am working with have talked about how SUFY have helped advocate for their loved one to successfully find suitable housing and support which has had a profound positive effect on their lives

”

Regardless of any tenancy rights the hostel owner can immediately remove an individual if they

significantly interfered with the reasonable peace, comfort or privacy of another resident or another resident's appropriate use of the other resident's room or common areas.

Residential Tenancies and Rooming Accommodation Act 2008 s 370 (1) (b) (iii)

This clause of the relevant act that regulates hostels and boarding houses would be difficult for many people with a disability to comply with if unwell or frustrated by their environment. Unscrupulous hostel owners may use this provision to immediately exit a person with a disability that was problematic or too demanding. Lack of legislative safeguards for people with a disability living in boarding houses makes many individuals loathe to complain about poor services when it could result in them being placed on the streets immediately.

Fearing eviction people with a disability live in fear of the hostel workers and normally don't complain about the poor quality of their care or accommodation. If this is the case, why does National Disability Insurance Agency (NDIA) allow hostels and boarding houses to register as NDIA registered service providers for many aspects of person support? The NDIA should cease this practice as individuals may feel pressured to have the hostel owners providing NDIA services. Non-hostel service providers NDIA service providers are also providing services to people residing in hostels. This may include therapy service, personal support services or community access services. One must ask what the effectiveness of such costly services is, when individuals with complex psychiatric or intellectual disabilities are residing in homelessness and poverty with 40 other similar persons.

At the heart of the problem of people with a disability in hostels is the lack of Public Housing available from the state government. Public Housing is the only financially viable option for people on the DSP as it only costs 25% of their welfare benefit. With adequate support from the NDIA funded services many disabled hostel residents could reside in the community living either on their own or with other people. The clear lack of public housing means that many people wait years in hostels for housing. In many cases public housing is never offered to them. As some lack assistance to respond to Department of Housing correspondence (maybe they can't read or write), they are taken off the housing list. The hostel has no incentive to assist the residents to access public housing as this interferes with their revenue stream. At the core of the problem is both the State and the Commonwealths lack of commitment to funding and building public housing.

Whereas historically many people with complex intellectual or psychiatric disabilities lived in government run institutions, now these have been closed, many hundreds now live in private hostels and boarding houses in Queensland. Both scenarios are a violation of the human rights of people with a disability. And whilst the marginalisation and neglect of people with a disability in hostels is not widely known to the general populace, it is widely known to government agencies and department. Public Hospitals, Public Guardians, The Public Trustee, The Public Advocate, The NDIA, NDIA Registered Services and The Department of Housing all know of and facilitate the congregation, poverty and homelessness of disabled people in hostels. Their silence on this matter is a damning indictment of organisations whose goal is to protect vulnerable disabled people.

NDIS STILL NOT MEETING THE SUPPORT REQUIREMENTS OF THOSE WITH VERY COMPLEX NEEDS

We have observed concerning changes to the system, which expose people with disability to a situation where they may be left vulnerable and unsupported. Previously, before a funded service provider could relinquish a person's support, they were required to provide the Department of Communities Child Safety and Disabilities Services with three months' notice, along with a detailed handover, to ensure the person received a smooth transition to their new service provider.

Currently, the NDIS Code of Conduct for service providers and the NDIS Standards Practice Rules are silent in relation to any requirement for a transition process, such as that mentioned above. It is now the responsibility of the participant or their guardian to locate and engage a new service. Of issue is the time gap that can exist between the old service provider ending its support and the new service provider commencing provision of support.

Since the roll out of the NDIS, SUFY has become aware of an increasing number of services that have stopped providing support to clients with little or no forewarning.

It is not easy to find suitable replacement services for those with mental health issues, complex needs and very challenging behaviours. These people are the most vulnerable NDIS participants requiring varying supports.

Some of the consequences of services ending client supports without adequate time for replacement services to be engaged are:

- homelessness;
- people with disability entering the hospital system to receive State funded supports;
- contact with the criminal justice system; and
- inappropriate re-housing in aged care facilities and boarding houses, or with elderly parents or family members not equipped to provide appropriate levels of support.

The gap in service provision results in a series of crises and severe trauma and harm to health and safety for participants and their families; increased costs and resources burdens across all types of services; and ultimately higher tax payer costs.

We are finding attitudes at hospitals are becoming aggressive and negative when people with disability who have complex behaviours or their supports have stopped, are attending Emergency Units in crisis situations, with nowhere else to go. Even when people require medical treatment, hospitals have refused to admit them, resulting in them returning to the community untreated and unsupported.

There has been a significant decrease in the number of days available for both crises and respite care, on short notice. The result is that there is virtually no respite care available for those who have challenging behaviours, on short notice.

Although there have been long standing calls for a Provider of Last Resort for people with complex support needs, this has not eventuated.

While NDIS participants now have more choice over the services they choose, it is also becoming very clear that services also have more choice over the individual clients they choose to provide their service to. With so much money available in the NDIS system for service providers, providers "cherry picking" the easiest clients who come with the most lucrative packages.

This may also be a funding adequacy issue, with some providers saying that for clients with high needs and behaviour challenges, the NDIS packages are insufficient to provide adequate supports and to meet the clients needs.

Adequately supporting individuals with complex behaviour support needs is expensive. The market is still quite thin around services required for people whose issues are complex and current NDIS funding models are not flexible enough.

Without a doubt, funding models must become more flexible and involve interventions that are more far reaching than the ordinary line items of current plans under the "Improved Relationships" category which focus on specialist intervention, staff training or social skill development.

For example, one participant SUFY advocates for requires robust housing and cannot live in high density urban areas. She requires a rural block where she can engage with the land and be cared for in an environment resembling a normal family life. Unfortunately Queensland Housing do not have low density housing stock in rural areas where she has chosen to live. She cannot cope with a service model where different carers come and go each day. She is most successful when she has regular contact with family members

There is some hope that the new Pathway for People with Complex Needs Team will go part of the way to addressing some of the problems outlined. But as of to date SUFY has seen little evidence of this team at work. It remains a case of too little too late.

The NDIS was founded on the principle that the lives of all people with disabilities have value. This principle must apply equally to those with very complex needs, as those who are easy to support; and regardless of whether it is expensive or difficult to fund and provide their required supports.

SUPPORTED INDEPENDENT LIVING AND THE IMPLICATIONS FOR PEOPLE WITH A DISABILITY

As an advocacy group, our information is compiled on the experiences of people with a disability who are funded under Supported Independent Living

SIL is meant to help with and/or supervise tasks to develop the skills of an individual to live as independently as possible. SIL supports are provided to a participant in their home, regardless of property ownership, and can be in a shared or individual arrangement.

Assistance provided to a participant is included as part of their plan depending on the level of support they require to live independently in the housing option of their choice.

The reality is that many people with a disability are forced to live in group homes under SIL funding with other people with a disability in order to receive supports. This is due to the limited availability of accessible and affordable housing, and reflects the belief that some people with a disability require special purpose care arrangements rather than genuine community living options.

There is very little information available to people with a disability who are funded under a SIL arrangement to help them gain an understanding of the program. This is possibly because SIL actually facilitates a mechanism for block funding that enforces people into shared care settings that are organized and controlled by the NDIS system and the service provider.

There is limited information available to people with a disability that explains who and how a vacancy is filled in a shared arrangement. No policy is available from the NDIA that requires service providers or the NDIS to assist people to make informed choices by providing honest information, advice and support about the short coming of SIL.

These short comings include limited choice of service provider. One person was asked to sign a service agreement that stated 'You may withdraw from your SIL agreement for any reason by providing 90 days written notice of your intention to terminate this agreement.' The person was a tenant of Queensland Housing and had no intention of leaving his home, he just wanted to change service providers. When asked what would happen if he gave notice of his intention to leave. The service provider said he could take his funding and look for a vacancy in another SIL. It appears that if he wanted to continue living in his home he would have to forgo having a choice of service provider. Individuals also have to give up the notion of self-directing if they are in a SIL arrangement as funding under SIL is agency managed.

The NDIA will contact the service provider and ask them to put in a SIL quote without informing the individuals that will be placed in this arrangement that this has occurred. In most instances, the avoidance of truthful information has reinforced the misconception that a person with high support needs or complex support needs can only receive support under a SIL arrangement. This misconception is spread by service providers, supports coordinators, guardians and NDIA planners.

Many people with a disability have been subjected to abuse and neglect while living in shared arrangements as is evident in the following case studies.

Case study

Jack lives in a Queensland Housing residence with one other person. This was the result of funding caps placed on individual support arrangements and Disability Services vacancy coordination policy. Jack and his family have been waiting for the introduction of the NDIS in Queensland in the belief that he would be able to choose his service provider, self-direct his funding and consequently have real choice and control over his supports and living arrangement.

Jack's parents attended his planning meeting and explained that it was important that Jack's plan be self-managed. It was understood that they as Jack's nominees could manage the funding for supports for Jack. They heavily emphasized at the planning meeting concerns they had with the current service provider and their inability to understand or provide the support Jack required. This was putting Jack at risk.

Despite this when Jack's plan came through it was approved as Supported Independent living (SIL) and the self-managed request was not approved. It was clear from initial conversations with the service provider that they were not prepared to allow another service provider in the house to provide Jack's personal care.

Jack has been informed that he can leave the house and take his funding to another provider. Jack was not provided with the appropriate level of funding so that he could live on his own. The only option he has is to move into a vacancy in another SIL funded group home.

Case Study

Jan lived at home until 2007 then moved into care when she turned 18. Over this time she lived in 10 different homes and has been subjected to ongoing physical and verbal abuse from a string of mismatched cotenant's and inappropriate support workers that she was forced to live with. At one time the situation became unbearable for Jan and she started to "abscond" from her residence as she felt safer sleeping in parks then in her home. During this time she was placed on medication for anxiety and developed some self-harming behaviors. The last assault occurred in April 2019 when Jan's cotenant put his arms around her neck and squeezed her tightly. Despite this horrific history Jan was funded under a SIL arrangement and is requesting a review so that she can live on her own.

Case Study

Morgan's family had put years of planning and lobbying government departments to develop a service model that would provide appropriate housing and support so that he could live on his own and be supported by people who he felt safe with and who understood his support needs. Morgan as with many people with a disability had been subjected to physical, emotional and verbal abuse from previous cotenants. Morgan's service provider contacted SUFY and said that Morgan's NDIS planner had stated that this model of support was not sustainable under the NDIS and that it was highly unlikely that Morgan would get the same level of funding in their next plan. When it was explained that the SIL arrangement would probably cost the same the planner agreed but stated that it was the way of the system. The planner said that some of Morgan's funding could be used to explore SIL options as this was the expectation of the plan.

While the Independent Living Scheme is in place people with a disability living in Australia will not be able to fulfill their human right under Article 19 of the CRPD to choose freely where and with whom they will live. The SIL is in breach of the National Disability Insurance Scheme Act 2013. The objectives and general principles of this act aim for people with a disability to have choice and control in the supports they require.

THE NATIONAL DISABILITY INSURANCE SCHEME COMPLAINT SYSTEM

Any complaints about the National Disability Insurance Agency (NDIA) relating to how they treat National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) Applicants or Participants should first be made to the (NDIA feedback@ndis.gov.au or 1800 800 110). Complaints about NDIS service providers or support should be made to the relevant provider and if not resolved by doing this, a complaint can be made to the NDIS Quality and Safeguards Commission (contactcentre@ndiscommission.gov.au or 1800 035 544).

If the NDIA decides that a person is not eligible for the NDIS and the person disagrees with the decision, or if a person has an NDIS plan and it does not include everything they need, a review application should be made to NDIA, not a complaint.

On receiving a complaint, the NDIA decides if it is something they deal with, they then contact the person who made the complaint and try to resolve it within 21 days. If unsatisfied with the NDIA's response, a complaint can be made to the Office of the Commonwealth Ombudsman (OCO). The OCO can make sure that the NDIA acts in a fair and responsible way when handling complaints or conducting investigations. The OCO cannot take over the NDIA's decision making. The OCO also investigates systemic issues.

As the NDIS has been rolled out across Australia, complaints have increased, with 38,046 complaints made up to the end of March 2019.¹ A number of complaints were made to the OCO regarding the NDIA, in particular the NDIA's handling of requests to review its decisions. Between July 2016 and January 2018 the OCO received 1,231 complaints, of which 400 were at least in part about how the NDIA conducts reviews of its decisions. Following its investigations, the OCO in a publicly available report, made a number of recommendations to assist the NDIA improve its processes.²

SUFY's experience in making complaints to the NDIA on behalf of people

A number of people who contacted or were assisted by SUFY in relation to the NDIS, complained to SUFY about NDIA's processes, delays and treatment of them by NDIA staff. When informed by SUFY staff of the NDIA complaint process, the response was of concern in relation to potential consequences of a complaint (this has especially been the case when it involves NDIA staff behaviour, or delays in deciding internal reviews), or distrust in the complaint handling process. This indicates that there may be a far higher level of dissatisfaction with NDIA processes than is understood by looking at existing complaints data.

While SUFY staff have assisted clients with complaints to the NDIA, there remains a high level of dissatisfaction with the NDIA's complaint handling process. In saying this, it remains important to complain, to try to both be heard and to gain the correct result.

¹ ndis, 'COAG Disability Reform Council Quarterly Report', 20 June 2019, Fig E.13, p. 93.

² Commonwealth Ombudsman, 'Administration of reviews under the National Disability Insurance Scheme Act 2013, Report on the National Disability Insurance Agency's Handling of Reviews', May 2018.

NDIS APPEALS

The NDIS Appeals process is an important process as it helps ensure NDIA decisions are fair and robust. Cases brought to the Administrative Appeals Tribunal (AAT) influence how the NDIS is implemented and operationalised. The review process ensures the NDIA decisions are correct and preferable.

With the NDIS not yet rolled out in the Brisbane and Moreton Bay Regions the primary focus of SUFY's work has been education and awareness.

SUFY has and will continue to use different formats to ensure people are aware of their right to appeal a NDIA decision that directly impacts upon them which they feel is wrong and that there is support available to do this.

HOW CAN SUFY HELP?

SUFY's NDIS Appeals Officer can provide a range of supports and help a person understand their rights. Supports can include assisting the applicant to understand their NDIA plan, navigate the appeals process, assist with preparation of required documents, attend AAT conferences and hearings with applicant or supporting applicant to put their own cases before the AAT. This support is free and independent.

SUFY assisted 18 people with their NDIS appeals at the Administrative Appeals Tribunal (AAT) in 2018/2019, at its busiest juggling 13 cases concurrently.

SUFY successfully completed 9 appeals during the year, while 7 remain active at the time of writing. Two people withdrew their appeals before the process was finalised.

Of the matters settled, 5 concerned NDIS eligibility for applicants with disabilities ranging from ASD, psychosocial disorders, a type of Functional Neurological Disorder (FND) and the relatively unknown, Post-Polio Syndrome.

A further 3 resolved cases related to participants' NDIS plans - two for whom funded supports had been drastically reduced in their NDIS package with no explanation or justification given, and no change in their circumstances, to warrant such cuts. One case concerned a man with very high care needs whose supports inexplicably halved on NDIS compared with previous state-funded supports, which he had relied on for 20-odd years. In another case, insufficient funding disrupted the adult man's existing support arrangements, necessitating his mother to step in and provide significant personal care. Reduced supports further threatened to upend the relatively stable living situation he had enjoyed for 8 years, which had taken much effort to initially put in place. To make matters worse, during the AAT appeal itself, NDIA staff started contacting the man's service providers to discuss Supported Independent Living (SIL) for the man, without consulting him or his mother first to find out what his needs and wishes were.

SUFY's current AAT appeals include 3 regarding eligibility. One is for a combination of psychosocial and physical impairments. The individual's two diagnoses each manifest differently from person to person and as such are on NDIS's List B - requiring robust medical evidence to prove that ensuing functional impairments are substantial enough to satisfy Section 24(1)(c) of the NDIA Act. Both conditions are also of a fluctuating nature adding another challenge to the mix. The real difficulty this person continues to face is getting the evidence that's missing. It is currently piecemeal due to not having funds to pay for more extensive specialist reports. Being under the care of the state health system for disease management presents a great stumbling block in getting more elaborate evidence than a hand-written letter by the treating hospital doctor. There is also no-one who can comment on how these two severe conditions then interact and the impact that has on daily life.

A recent AAT submission was for a person who has been on SUFY's books for some time, with a complex set of rare diagnoses and physical impairments which are difficult for anyone to readily grasp the impacts of. One of these is hereditary and thus was passed on to her 2 children. Both are now NDIS participants, after lengthy and involved review processes, but with arguably less substantial functional impairments than those of their mother. Being the only one not have made the grade, she has started her AAT journey. This case illustrates the inconsistency of the NDIA frequently cited by so many, as problematic when accessing the scheme and requesting its supports.

NDIS & THE ROLE OF ADVOCACY

Independent individual advocacy has an important role in ensuring choice and control, the aims of the NDIA, is realised for all individuals with a disability.

People with disabilities throughout the NDIS consultation were very clear that there would be an ongoing need for independent advocacy to ensure people were well positioned to maximise the opportunities the NDIS presents.

Advocates can assist people to navigate through the complex choices and decision making that would come through the NDIS system.

Strong independent advocacy is important to all people with disabilities who experience or are vulnerable to discrimination, neglect, abuse and exploitation and whose human rights are commonly ignored.



Three other AAT matters in progress are disputes over Reasonable and Necessary (R&N) supports. One is in relation to Assistive Technology for a device which could be seen as an everyday and discretionary item for most people, but not for our Applicant. Their use directly relates to managing the functional impairments they experience as a result of their disability and as such they are completely dependent on its use.

SUFY witnessed additional, unnecessary work being brought to the Tribunal as a result of NDIA internal procedural issues. In 4 cases, participants contacted us when stuck in what appeared to be a 'planning loop' – with NDIA issuing multiple, inadequate plans in seemingly knee-jerk responses to requests for proper internal reviews. Review outcomes were therefore never communicated. This effectively prevented them applying for an external appeal if they so wished as there was no decision, as such, to appeal. Participants had tried very hard over several months to properly engage NDIA to specifically address their issues with clear answers, to no avail. The Tribunal then had to establish whether it had jurisdiction to hear these matters with extensive input from us and Legal Aid Queensland. A cumbersome and wasteful drain on resources overall, and frustratingly repetitive for participants to get themselves out of.

ISSUES THIS YEAR

Denied Rights, Changing Operational Guidelines and Lack of transparency

2019 had barely got off to a start when new 'updates' to NDIA's Operational Guidelines randomly started appearing on NDIS's website. One of the updates read: "The NDIA is not a party to the Intergovernmental Agreement and the principle of no disadvantage is not a specific obligation imposed on the NDIA under the NDIS Act."

This contentious stance was re-iterated pretty much verbatim by an NDIA legal representative in case conference later that month, for a person who had half his supports pulled like a rug from under his wheelchair. It took another 6 months to effectively get supports back. This through multiple Case conferences where the same NDIA representative always attended unprepared and uninstructed, each time asking for evidence either already submitted or entirely new (at conference number 3!), which clearly breached both the Tribunal's procedural guidelines and Government 'model litigant' rules. Pointing this out at 5 months, when an NDIA response that was due didn't arrive, we were told the representative had left the agency and a new one was yet to be found.

NDIA delays and inefficiencies were, sadly, so common and unsurprising they were to a large degree tolerated silently in a kind of hopeful anticipation (that progress would surely come).

Hence the unexpected, real blow in April's budget announcement – not only had the Government spent less on the NDIS again, but it was a key factor in achieving the budget balance (later on in the year, a surplus even). Federal Budget papers revealed that in 2018/2019, the Government had spent \$3.4b less on the NDIS than forecasted, and was set to decrease spending by a further \$3b in 2019/2020 compared to previously allocated amounts. Therefore, **\$6.5 billion less was being spent on the NDIS over the 2 years.**

There's more actually, September's final Budget figures show NDIS spending would fall even more, by \$4.6b instead of \$3bn...but let's leave it at that. What the real issue is, it's an affront not just due to continuously dwindling amounts being invested when the opposite is clearly needed for the NDIA to function, but also that it gleefully is reported as the result of 'responsible economic management'.

Worse, cuts are blamed on 'slower than expected' transition of participants...and worse still, the NDIS Minister Stuart Robert saying 'no participant had received less money as a result' during question time. Which SUFY can attest to, is simply not the case. And a slower transition would have to reasonably take into account some of the many procedural stuff-ups that actually lead to delays.

What is plainly evident is the NDIA was and is under-resourced, and not satisfactorily equipped, rather than there being some kind of excess workforce capacity where NDIA staff don't have enough to do, as a trickling of applications come through, therefore justifying the non-stop snipping away of funds.

At a recent AAT conciliation, SUFY had to defend the wishes of the appellant (which were in line with specified AAT guidelines) that the conciliation be in person with a decision maker present rather than appearing via video link. Being blind and hard of hearing the participant had reason enough to request this. The NDIA argued it was more cost effective to do the video link. Why, one would have to ask, did they not apply that same logic when appointing the NDIA representative to the case in the first place? Outsourced from a big law firm and based in Canberra rather than Brisbane where the participant and Tribunal are both located?

In 2018/19, we witnessed some worrying trends – long delays, denied rights, support cuts for high needs people (what was potentially happening to those who couldn't appeal?), NDIA representatives acting adversarial – but these seem to have abated. The standard of the agency's legal team seems markedly improved, and we are not hearing as many stories of drastic support cuts. Furthermore, the AAT has increasingly resolved cases at hearing to the benefit of participants, with Tribunal figures showing the proportion of decisions under review changed by the AAT increasing to 59% in 2018-2019, from 42% in 2017-2018 (and by even more in this first quarter of 2019/2020, to 65%). Which is how it should be. The problem is that these hearings only represent around 2.5% of all the cases that even make it to the Tribunal. A substantial number of total appeals lodged are withdrawn. While the number has reduced to 31.4% in 2018/2019, from 38.7% in 2017/2018, this is still an issue of major concern. Why are people withdrawing? And what are they withdrawing?

What undoubtedly remains one of the most significant problems is the NDIA's lack of transparency, generally but also especially pertaining to published data on outcomes which don't make it to hearing. More than half (58.7%) of all cases are settled by consent before hearing, according to the AAT's Annual Report 2018/2019. This is where the NDIA's original decision is *Not Affirmed*, thus either proving entirely wrong or to some degree wrong (in which case the decision is 'varied'.) But this is all we know. Not what type of decisions the NDIA is getting wrong, nor how frequently they are getting them wrong. That the NDIA continues to exert a large degree of influence even at the external appeals stage, is clear.

An October news release published on the DSS Ministers website announced incoming NDIA CEO Hoffman, and at the bottom of this release there is a time line, which indicates that the 500,000 rollout will only be completed in 5 years' time. The rollout was meant to be *finished* by mid-next year. The Every Australian Counts website still reads "Everyone who needs the NDIS will have access by 2020".

NDIS Minister Stuart Robert is also quoted, on the DSS Ministers website, as saying 100,000 records of would-be participants are 'unactionable', as people have "either passed away, don't exist, or have been double counted". What does this actually mean? That only 400,000 are to get access to the scheme now? Don't we all deserve to know?

Latest official figures from June, 2019 are that nationwide, 298,816 people have NDIS access – that's 200,000 more to go. By all accounts, the Queensland NDIS marathon has just passed the half-way mark, with 52,249 participants added which means there remains another 50k to go. Are some of these would-be participants not likely to be 'found' in Queensland?

It's about time both the NDIA and Government step up and provide NDIS participants with some transparency about the organisation administering the scheme which expects nothing less from its own participants.

Want to know more about the NDIS Appeals process and what your rights are? Would you like to access some of SUFY's resources? **Contact us.**



TREASURER'S REPORT

FINANCIAL YEAR 1ST JULY 2018 TO 30TH JUNE 2019

All aspects of the financial control of SUFY are conducted in accordance with legislation covering financial governance of incorporated associations and SUFY's policies.

I can report that all SUFY's monetary obligations are met as and when required. SUFY's financial obligations to staff for annual leave, sick leave, long service leave and redundancy are covered with sufficient secured funds available to meet these costs.

The Audited Financial Statements for 2018/2019 financial year show a small operating profit. Administrative expenses were in line with budget, but Employment Expenses were a little below budget due to a period where SUFY were understaffed for 3 months due to existing staff leaving and suitable replacements taking time to engage. As of 30 June 2019 SUFY, were back to full staffing and expenses more closely aligning with budgets.

SUFY's financial position remains viable and the organisation will be able to continue operations until the end of the current funding round in June 2020. New funding streams have been approved beyond this period relating to the Royal Commission and it is anticipated most current funding streams will also be renewed.

SUFY maintains a standard of excellence during ever changing times. With all the issues of uncertainty with government funding, the staff of SUFY are to be commended for the advocacy support they provide to persons with disability in our community. My congratulations to all SUFY staff who have pulled together to overcome significant challenges during the past 12 months and consistently delivered quality service to those people who seek our services.

I recommend that the Audited Financial Statements for the year 1st July 2018 to 30th June 2019 be accepted by the Annual General Meeting of Speaking Up for You Inc.

Mike Barwick
TREASURER

FINANCIAL REPORT

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This financial report covers Speaking Up For You Incorporated. as an individual entity. The financial report is presented in the Australian currency.

**Principal place of business is:
Speaking Up For You Inc (SUFY)
The Precinct
Unit F2 1st Floor
12 Browning Street
West End, QLD 4101**

INCOME STATEMENT

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2019

	Note	2019 \$	2018 \$
Income			
Grant funding	2	693,506.34	606,833.31
Interest received		7,834.23	8,776.52
Donations		200.00	1,969.08
Membership fees		260.00	300.00
Gain on sale of assets		7,861.00	-
Other income		120.01	1,450.00
Total income		709,781.58	619,328.91
Expenditure			
Administration and overhead expenses		(110,317.64)	(120,916.98)
Depreciation		(5,390.28)	(12,374.30)
Employee expenses		(554,716.51)	(492,836.32)
Finance costs		(258.02)	(318.65)
Individual advocacy		(3,205.63)	(4,559.28)
Travel expenses		(25,348.78)	(8,869.59)
Total expenditure		(699,236.86)	(639,875.12)
Surplus/(deficit) for the year		10,544.72	(20,546.21)

BALANCE SHEET

AS AT 30 JUNE 2019

	Note	2019 \$	2018 \$
Assets			
Current assets			
Cash and cash equivalents	3	476,695.32	271,284.80
Trade and other receivables		332.76	11,283.32
Total current assets		477,028.08	282,568.12
Non-current assets			
Plant and equipment	4	25,887.12	33,086.75
Total non-current assets		25,887.12	33,086.75
Total assets		502,915.20	315,654.87
Liabilities			
Current liabilities			
Trade and other payables	5	193,649.31	18,857.26
Provisions	6	121,105.19	119,181.63
Total current liabilities		314,754.50	138,038.89
Total liabilities		314,754.50	138,038.89
Net assets		188,160.70	177,615.98
Equity			
Retained earnings		188,160.70	177,615.98
Total equity		188,160.70	177,615.98

CASHFLOW STATEMENT

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2019

	2019 \$	2018 \$
Cash flows from operating activities		
Grants received	931,053.74	621,034.75
Other receipts	580.01	3,419.08
Payments to suppliers and employees	(743,469.79)	(714,032.49)
Interest received	7,834.23	8,776.52
Borrowing costs	(258.02)	(318.65)
Net cash provided by operating activities	195,740.17	(81,120.79)
Cash flows from investing activities		
Proceeds from sale of property, plant and equipment	16,363.64	-
Payments for property, plant and equipment	(6,693.29)	(7,140.85)
Net cash used in investing activities	9,670.35	(7,140.85)
Cash flows from financing activities		
Net cash used in financing activities	-	-
Net increase/(decrease) in cash held	205,410.52	(88,261.64)
Cash at the beginning of the financial year	271,284.80	359,546.44
Cash at the end of the financial year	476,695.32	271,284.80

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2019

NOTE 1: STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANT ACCOUNTING POLICIES

This financial report is a special purpose financial report prepared in order to satisfy the financial reporting requirements of Speaking Up For You Inc.

The Management Committee has determined that the association is not a reporting entity, except for the purpose of reporting to the grant funding bodies. The financial report has been prepared in accordance with the requirements of the following Australian Accounting Standards:

AASB 108 Accounting Policies, Changes in Accounting Estimates and Errors

AASB 1048 Interpretation of Standards

No other Australian Accounting Standards or other authoritative pronouncements of the Australian Accounting Standards Board have been applied.

The financial report has been prepared on accrual basis and is based on historic costs. Amounts have been rounded to the nearest dollar.

The following material accounting policies, which are consistent with the previous period unless otherwise stated, have been adopted in the preparation of this financial report:

(a) Income tax

The association is exempt from income tax in accordance with the provisions of Section 50 of the *Income Tax Assessment Act 1997* accordingly no liability is recognised.

(b) Goods and Services Tax (GST)

Revenues, expenses and assets are recognised net of the amount of GST, except where the amount of GST incurred is not recoverable from the Australian Taxation Office. In these circumstances the GST is recognised as part of the cost of acquisition of the asset or as part of an item of expense. Receivables and payables in the Balance Sheet are shown inclusive of GST.

(c) Revenue

As is common for organisations of this size and type, it is not practicable for the Association to maintain an effective system of internal control over income until their initial entry into the accounting records. Accordingly, income recorded in the financial report, with the exception of grants, is limited to the amounts banked and recorded in the bank accounts of the association.

Donations are recognised as revenue when received unless they are designed for a specific purpose, where they are carried forward as a liability on the balance sheet until they satisfy the specific purpose.

Grants are recorded as a liability upon the receipt until the grant is expended in accordance with the grant agreement.

All revenue is stated net of the amount of goods and services tax (GST).

(d) Plant and equipment

Plant and equipment is stated at historical cost less accumulated depreciation and impairment. Historical cost includes expenditure that is directly attributable to the acquisition of the items.

Depreciation

Depreciation on plant and equipment is calculated on a straight-line basis to write off the net cost of each item of plant and equipment over their expected useful lives.

Depreciation on motor vehicles is calculated on a diminishing value basis to write off the net cost of each item of plant and equipment over their expected useful lives.

(e) Employee entitlements

Provision is made for the organisation's liability for employee entitlements arising from services rendered by employees to balance date. Employee entitlements expected to be settled within one year together with entitlements arising from wages and salaries and annual leave which will be settled after one year, have been measured at their nominal amount. Other employee entitlements payable later than one year have been measured at the present value of the estimated future cash outflows to be made for those entitlements.

(f) Mortgages, charges and securities

There are no mortgages, charges or securities held over the assets of the Association.

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2018

	2019 \$	2018 \$
NOTE 2: GRANT FUNDING		
Department of Social Services	423,933.86	358,813.69
Department of Communities, Child Safety and Disability Services	110,730.35	110,501.17
Job Access	-	4,960.00
NDIS	158,842.13	132,558.45
	693,506.34	606,833.31
NOTE 3: CASH AND CASH EQUIVALENTS		
Cash on hand	114.35	121.77
Cash at bank	221,033.25	219,577.08
Cash at bank - short term deposit	255,547.72	51,585.95
	476,695.32	271,284.80
NOTE 4: PLANT AND EQUIPMENT		
Leasehold improvements		
Office fitout	16,694.18	15,363.63
Office fitout accumulated depreciation	(3,395.19)	(1,725.77)
	13,298.99	13,637.86
Motor vehicles		
Motor vehicles at cost	-	39,049.46
Motor vehicles accumulated depreciation	-	(27,362.24)
	-	11,687.22
Office equipment		
Office equipment at cost	52,119.87	46,757.14
Office equipment accumulated depreciation	(39,531.74)	(38,995.47)
	12,588.13	7,761.67
Total plant and equipment	25,887.12	33,086.75
NOTE 5: TRADE AND OTHER PAYABLES		
Trade payables	30,508.42	7,888.06
Accruals	10,234.74	10,969.20
Unexpended grants	152,906.15	-
	193,649.31	18,857.26
NOTE 6: PROVISIONS		
Current		
Provision for employee entitlements	121,105.19	119,181.63
	121,105.19	119,181.63

STATEMENT BY MEMBERS OF COMMITTEE

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2019

The Management Committee has determined that the association is not a reporting entity and that this special purpose financial report should be prepared in accordance with the accounting policies outlined in Note 1 to the financial statements.

In the opinion of the Management Committee the Income Statement, Balance Sheet and Notes to the Financial Statements:

1. Presents fairly the financial position of Speaking Up For You Inc. as at 30 June 2019 and its performance for the year ended on that date; and
2. At the date of this statement, there are reasonable grounds to believe that the association will be able to pay its debts as and when they fall due.

This statement is made in accordance with a resolution of the Management Committee and is signed for and on behalf of the Board of Management by:



President



Treasurer

Dated 9 October 2019.

INDEPENDENT AUDIT REPORT TO THE MEMBERS OF SPEAKING UP FOR YOU INC.

Report on the Financial Report

Opinion

We have audited the accompanying financial report of the Speaking Up for You Inc., which comprises the balance sheet as at 30 June 2019, the income statement and cashflow statement for the period then ended, notes comprising a summary of significant accounting policies and other explanatory information, and the statement by the members of the committee.

In our opinion, the accompanying financial report of Speaking Up for You Inc. gives a true and fair view of the financial position of the Association as at 30 June 2019, and of its financial performance for the year then ended in accordance with the accounting policies described in Note 1 to the financial statements.

Basis for Opinion

Our responsibility is to express an opinion on the financial report based on our audit. We conducted our audit in accordance with Australian Auditing Standards. Those standards require that we comply with relevant ethical requirements relating to audit engagements and plan and perform the audit to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial report is free from material misstatement.

An audit involves performing procedures to obtain audit evidence about the amounts and disclosures in the financial report. The procedures selected depend on the auditor's judgement, including the assessment of the risks of material misstatement of the financial report, whether due to fraud or error. In making those risk assessments, the auditor considers internal control relevant to the entity's preparation and fair presentation of the financial report in order to design audit procedures that are appropriate in the circumstances, but not for the purpose of expressing an opinion on the effectiveness of the entity's internal control. An audit also includes evaluating the appropriateness of accounting policies used and the reasonableness of accounting estimates made by management, as well as evaluating the overall presentation of the financial report.

We believe that the audit evidence we have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our audit opinion.

Emphasis of Matter – Basis of Accounting

Without modifying our opinion, we draw attention to the basis of accounting. The financial report has been prepared for the purpose of fulfilling the management committees' financial reporting responsibilities to their members. As a result, the financial report may not be suitable for another purpose.

Committee's Responsibility for the Financial Report

The Management Committee is responsible for the preparation and fair presentation of the financial report and for such internal control as the Committee determines is necessary to enable the preparation and fair presentation of the financial report that is free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

In preparing the financial statements, the Management Committee is responsible for assessing the Association's ability to continue as a going concern, disclosing, as applicable, matters related to going concern and using the going concern basis of accounting unless management either intends to liquidate the Association or to cease operations, or has no realistic alternative but to do so. Those charged with governance are responsible for overseeing the Association's financial reporting process.

Auditor's Responsibilities for the Audit of the Financial Report

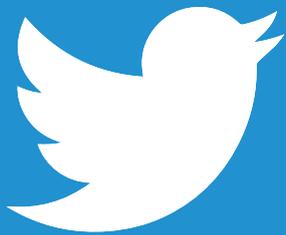
Our objectives are to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial report as a whole is free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error, and to issue an auditor's report that includes our opinion. Reasonable assurance is a high level of assurance, but is not a guarantee that 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 the aggregate, they could reasonably be expected to influence the economic decisions of users taken on the basis of this financial report.

A further description of our responsibilities for the audit of the financial report is located at the Auditing and Assurance Standards Board website at: <http://www.auasb.gov.au/Home.aspx>. This description forms part of our auditor's report.



Paul Smith CA

Dated this 9th day of October 2019.



#AdvocacyMatters

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