

DJA Board of Management

Sue Whiting Chairperson

Dennis De Pianto Treasurer

Glenn Lott

Pat Meehan

Michael Crockford

Mission Statement

To provide quality advocacy to people having higher support needs who are in greater need in order to protect and advance their well-being, rights and interests, both individually and collectively.

Chairpersons Report

By

Sue Whiting

Disability Justice Advocacy didn't know what the future held this time last year. The Federal Government wanted and is still looking at big changes to the advocacy sector they provide funding for. We are pleased at DJA that we have been given funding until March 2009. The work for DJA isn't over as we need to show the government that our work must continue beyond 2009.

DJA is a unique organization as it provides advocacy support to people with high and complex needs with a physical disability. DJA supports these people to enhance their lives; otherwise they may have been lost and forgotten in the system.

As Chairperson of the Board, together with Kerry Potter and the staff team we will endeavour to give it our best shot to get over that line.

At a member's forum a couple of years ago, you asked us to do some investigating into the AIDS and EQUIPMENT program. By you, the members raising your concerns there have been a number of things that have happened. DJA were involved in joining together people with disabilities, parents, organizations to start to look at the Aides and Equipment Program. The Department of Human Services has done a review of the AIDS and EQUIPMENT Program, you may have had input into it at some stage. The review is still to be acted upon by the Department.

An Alliance has been formed, with members from various organizations, people with disabilities, physiotherapists, occupational therapists etc. These people have shown a concern with the program and meet regularly. A worker has been employed to pull everything together. For further information or if you want to get involved in the alliance, contact DJA office Monday to Friday.

I would like to thank Kerry Potter and the team for another good year for DJA work. Also thanks for the support in what has been a difficult year for some at DJA. Keep the humour coming!!!!!!!!!!

Sue Whiting
Chairperson

November 2007

Executive Officer's Report

By

Kerry Potter

Who could have predicted the change of events that would create such a diversity of outcomes in a twelve month period.

We began the financial year with a six month contract through FACSIA that would see us working towards a possible closure of DJA at the end of 2006.

With moments to spare before the AGM in October 2006 we found out that we would be offered a new funding contract until June 2008.

However, to keep that contract we were asked to change the way we do things with no extra dollars offered to carry out the tasks.

The requests were not unreasonable but the lack of understanding from our funding body about how we would make those changes was. We were being asked to increase our capacity to provide advocacy to very specific groups. These groups included people from a CALD background and people from Indigenous communities and to also increase advocacy in rural areas.

To change the way you work, to access new communities etc needs a strong and dedicated community development strategy. A difficult task with no extra dollars.

We have risen to the challenge and with the recent employment of two new advocates we have built in some extra activities in their role to respond to the departments requests. This Community Development work will be an ongoing component of our advocacy efforts.

We have also responded to the identified need for a dedicated worker to look at the issues in relation to the present Aides and Equipment Program. The Alliance formed out of a need for a response has requested in kind or cash pledges to employ a Project Worker. DJA in partnership with other Alliance members now have a worker based at DJA who continues to foster relationships with all of the partners in the Alliance whilst preparing submissions for Trusts to fund an ongoing Project Worker.

The next financial year will see a consolidation of all our efforts and new directions set during 2006 – 2007.

I am very excited with the work the wonderful team have been carrying out with the individual advocacy and the systemic work.

Advocates Report

By
Richard Sherman

When I think about the past year at DJA, change and uncertainty are the two themes that dominate.

Firstly, Troy Johnson has left the staff team and Rachelle Porter has taken leave after the birth of her second child, Liela. Rachelle plans to return to work next year. In their absence, two new staff have joined DJA, Michelle Brunsmann and Junelle Rhodes. Both have now been at DJA for a number of months and are proving valued additions to the team.

There have also been a few changes to the Board of Management. Sadly, as has previously been acknowledged, Graeme Richards passed away this year, after a number of years serving on the board. His ever-present smile and sense of humour is much missed. A number of board members have also had to take leave at various times, due to ill health. We all hope that they are able to return soon. On a brighter note, Margaret Vandoros joined the Board in an interim role..

I think it is fair to say that uncertainty surrounds the future of the service. As most of you probably know, the Department of Family and Community Services and Indigenous Affairs undertook a review of all federally funded advocacy services. The main outcome for DJA is that it is likely to have to be part of a competitive tendering process in the future. At this point (although this may change if there is a change of government), it's expected that tenders will need to be submitted by September 2008. I don't believe that compulsory tendering is necessarily a bad thing, but it has certainly consumed much of our time and that of other advocacy services. Time that could have been better spent providing advocacy support.

In addition to the funding challenge ahead, DJA will be moving to new premises in Northcote some time next year. Our existing lease expires in January 2008, so in the interim we expect to move into Advocacy House, also in Northcote. This logistical challenge will further eat into valuable advocacy time.

In spite of these challenges, one of the great things about the year is how well the group has worked together. It has strengthened our resolve to maintain DJA's identity and continue to provide effective advocacy to people with high support needs. Particular acknowledgement must be extended to Kerry Potter, for her leadership and openness, chairperson Sue Whiting, and Chris Spanidis.

DJA TRAINING UNIT NEWS

Targets

The DJ A training unit has had a quieter year than either DJA or the team of David Brant and Sue Whiting would have liked -very few organizations have approached us to train their staff in advocacy!

The purpose of the largely self funded unit (no contracted work no pay) is to provide training to the sector about how we advocate and about how others in the community can advocate for a more inclusive community. We had lined up a series of training sessions for one of the states largest independent providers of supported accommodation and we had hopes of extending this training to other providers.

This means we have to sell our selves better so this year we will advertise in a variety of places like the VCOSS news letter.

The good news!

We have had a meeting with the Federal Minister for disability who gave us a good hearing and David spent two days in Canberra lobbying politicians regarding the CSTDA and the proposed new disability advocacy framework. While in Sydney on other business David represented us at a rally presented by people With a Disability and AFDO at which both Labor, Greens and Democrats spoke. So for a very little organization our voice is being heard in high places!

Community Sector Futures Task Force

Our Board has been forward thinking in supporting David to work on this VCOSS committee. We all know how hard it is to plan even a year ahead, this group is looking 5 and 10 years into the future so we can all have at least a glimpse of what the future holds. Again DJA is standing out and speaking up!

Number of people contacting DJA during the 2006-2007 financial year

Total number of people supported with advocacy 97

Gender: Male: 45 Females: 52

Age groups:

16 -19 = 1	20 -24 = 3	25 -29 = 6	30 -39 = 21
40 -49 = 32	50 -59 = 25	60 -64 = 7	65& over = 2

New: 94 **Continuing:** 5

Cultural Background

Culturally & Linguistically Diverse: 17

English Speaking Background: 80

Accommodation

Institutional:

Nursing home: 7

Other institutional accommodation: 12

Community:

Lives alone: 25

Lives with family and/or spouse: 23

Special purpose (supported) community accommodation: 26

Hospital: 4

Information & referral:

2006-2007 financial year DJA received 144 requests for information and referral. Of the 144 people there were:

Individual: 37	Family/friend: 20
Advocacy agencies: 7	Disability agencies: 20
Government agencies: 7	Non government agencies: 3
Local government agencies: 1	Phonebook: 2

**Breakdown of the presenting advocacy issues.
Many people we support have more than one issue.**

<i>Issue presenting</i>	<i>Number</i>	<i>Issue presenting</i>	<i>Number</i>
Abuse	4	Physical access	0
Aids/equipment	11	Recreation/social	13
Accommodation	52	Reduction in services	3
Crisis situation	3	Respite	3
Employment	5	Rights	1
Discrimination	4	Service access	3
Family/social support	12	Service gaps	2
Financial	9	Service provider policy/practice	3
Health	11	Subsidies/entitlements	3
Independent living	9	Transport	2
Lack of information	2	Vulnerable and/or isolated	12
Legal issues	4	Waiting list/urgent needs	0
Neglect	6	Other	33
Personal care	26	Total issues 2006-2007	236

Resolution of Issues:

Fully Resolved	50
Partially Resolved	28
Not Resolved	19

Acknowledgements

Lease Plan for their continued generosity in providing two Vehicles for DJA to use in their advocacy role.

Angleton's Office Supplies for their continued discounted prices.

Goodcompany for their assistance in providing solutions to a wide range of issues here at DJA through the support of the following people:

Elaine Gan a graphic artist who replied to our wish on the Goodcompany site. Elaine devoted her spare time to develop our logo in 2005 and has also designed the front cover of our AGM report. We appreciate her continued support.

Airlie Morris for his assistance in relation to legal matters concerning DJA. Airlie is a solicitor who has replied to our wish on the Goodcompany web site and has devoted his time free of charge. We appreciate his continued support.

Dennis Grimwood from Enterprise Excellence for his preparation of our Policies and Procedures Manual. Dennis spent many hours looking at the manual and advising appropriate changes. We appreciate his support.

Harvey Norman for discounted IT products.

Office Works for discounted IT products and

The Good Guys Preston for donations of kitchen appliances.

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The views and practices of DJA expressed in DJA publications, position statements, policies and advocacy are not necessarily the views of the Commonwealth Government.

Disability Justice Advocacy Inc is an independent advocacy organisation that represents people with disability.

DJA is an incorporated association registered with the office of fair trading and business affairs.

The registered number is A0019972B.

The Deductible Gift Recipient (DGR), Income Tax Charity (ITEC) and Public Benevolent Institution (PBI) status of DJA is registered with the Australian Taxation Office. Donations of \$2.00 or more are an allowable income tax deduction.

ABN: 95 702 434 250

DJA Staff Members

Executive Officer Kerry Potter

Advocates Richard Sherman
 Junelle Rhodes
 Michelle

 Brunsmann
 Rachelle Porter
 (on Maternity
 Leave)

Administration Officer Chris Spanidis

Training Unit David Brant
 Sue Whiting

Aides and Equipment Alliance Meredith Mayes