

# Australian Federation of Disability Organisations



Annual report 2018 – 2019



Australian Federation of  
Disability Organisations




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## Acronyms used in this report

**ADDC**

Australian Disability  
Development Consortium

**AFDO**

Australian Federation of  
Disability Organisations

**AGM**

Annual General Meeting

**CoSP**

Conference of States Parties

**DES**

Disability Employment Service

**DSS**

Department of Social Services

**DPI**

Disabled Persons International

**DPO**

Disabled Peoples Organisation

**GST**

Goods and Services Tax

**IDA**

International Disability Alliance

**NDIA**

National Disability Insurance  
Agency

**NDIS**

National Disability Insurance  
Scheme

**NGO**

Non Government Organisation

**UNCRPD**

United Nations Convention  
on the Rights of Persons with  
Disabilities

AFDO acknowledges people with disability living in institutional settings and in the community across Australia, who have suffered or are suffering from violence, abuse and neglect.

AFDO also proudly acknowledges Australia's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community and their rich culture and pays respect to their Elders past and present. We acknowledge Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as Australia's first peoples and as the Traditional Owners and custodians of the land and water on which we rely.



**Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are advised that this report may contain images of people who have passed away.**

# Table of Contents

About Australian Federation of Disability Organisations (AFDO).....	4
About Australians with Disability.....	6
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples Inclusion Statement.....	7
From our President & CEO .....	8
Strengthening Our Voice .....	12
AFDO Board .....	14
AFDO staff .....	19
AFDO Wins The 2019 Public Advocate Award .....	20
2018 – 2019 Policy Submissions.....	22
Advocacy and Policy .....	23
Advocacy .....	24
Employment – workforce participation.....	28
National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) .....	32
International Partnerships .....	34
International Activities .....	36
Media & Communications .....	38
A Note of Thanks to Frank .....	39
Vale Paul Cain – November 2018 .....	40
Directors Report .....	41
Financial Snapshot .....	43

# About Australian Federation of Disability Organisations (AFDO)

The Australian Federation of Disability Organisations (AFDO) is the peak cross disability organisation in the disability sector representing people with lived experience of disability and their families. AFDO and its member organisations are run by and for people with lived experience of disability with a total reach of over 1.7 million Australians. We work to develop a community where people with disability can participate in all aspects of social, economic, political and cultural life. This includes genuine participation in mainstream community life, the development of respectful and valued relationships, social and economic participation, and the opportunity to contribute as valued citizens.

## Our vision

That all people with disabilities must be involved equally in all aspects of social, economic, political and cultural life.

## Our mission

Using the strength of our membership-based organisations to harness the collective power of uniting people with disability to change society into a community where everyone is equal.





## Our strategic objectives

To represent the united voice of our members and people with disability in national initiatives and policy debate.

To enhance the profile, respect and reputation for AFDO through our members.

To build the capacity and sustainability of AFDO and our members.

To foster strong collaboration and engagement between our members and stakeholders.

To enhance AFDO's connection and influence in international disability initiatives, particularly in the Asia Pacific region, through policy, advocacy and engagement.



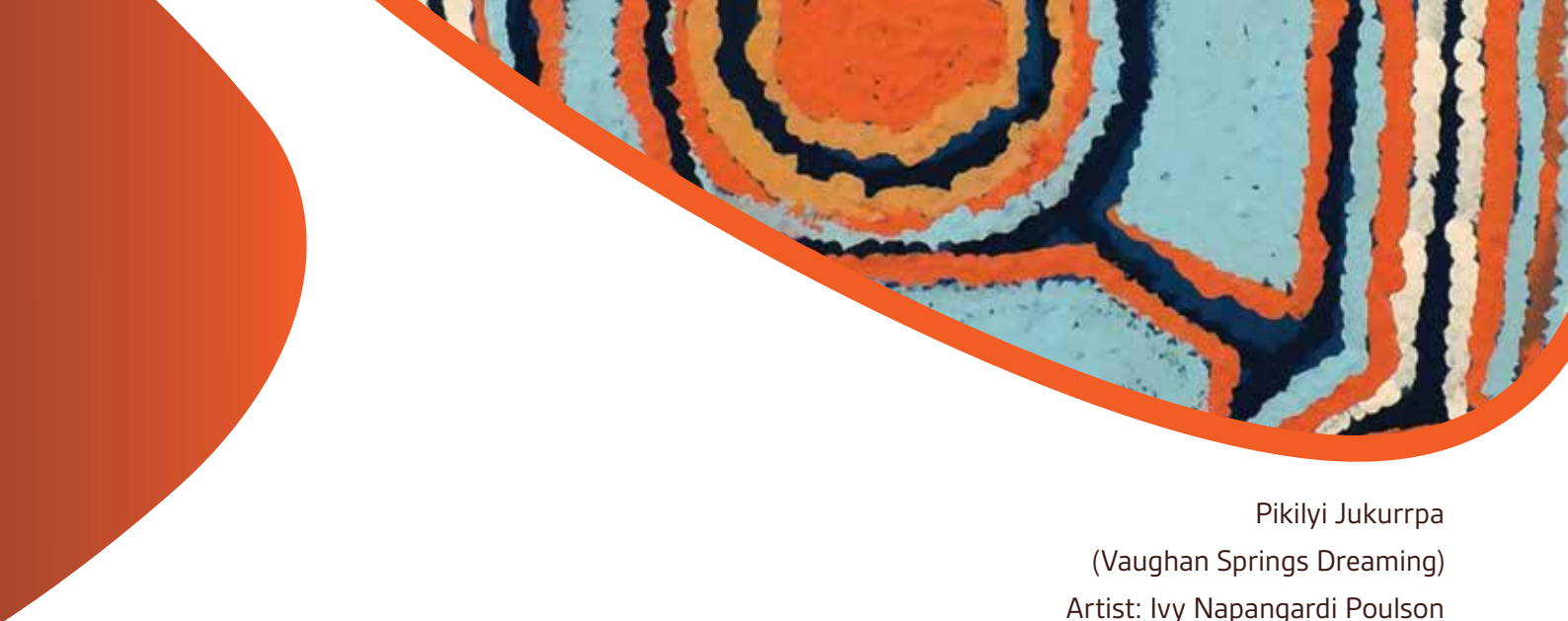
# About Australians with Disability

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD) aims to enhance opportunities for people with disability to participate in all aspects of social and economic life. While there have been many improvements in the lives of people with disability, significant barriers still remain.

## The facts

- Almost 1 in 5 Australians live with disability
- The likelihood of living with disability increases with age, 2 in 5 people with disability are 65 years or older
- Around 3 in 5 people with disability living in households needed assistance with at least one activity of daily life
- The weekly median income of people with disability is \$465, which was less than half of those with no reported disability
- 45% of those with a disability in Australia are living either near or below the poverty line, more than double the OECD average of 22%

Australian Bureau of Statistics 2015 Survey of Disability, Ageing and Carers; Voices Against Violence: Paper 2: Current Issues in Understanding and Responding to Violence Against Women with Disabilities, Women with Disabilities Victoria, 2013.



Pikilyi Jukurrpa  
(Vaughan Springs Dreaming)  
Artist: Ivy Napangardi Poulson

# Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples Inclusion Statement

## Our commitment to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people

The Australian Federation of Disability Organisations recognises Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as the First Peoples of this continent and the islands of the Torres Strait. In doing so, we acknowledge the importance of connection to and access to country for Australia's First Peoples and recognise our shared history that has had a devastating impact on Aboriginal Torres Strait Islander families and communities.

We acknowledge and respect the distinct Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural differences, beliefs, values and languages.

Through working together with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, AFDO will develop respectful and meaningful partnerships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities and organisations, and partnership development that is respectful and sustainable with long-term vision will be critical in meeting our commitment to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

# From our President & CEO

We are pleased to present our joint report covering AFDO's achievements over the 2018 – 2019 financial year in what has been a hectic, yet, very positive year for AFDO, our Members, their communities and the disability sector. It has been an extremely productive year for the Board with continued results for our organisation and our members.

The AFDO Board, Management and our Staff, acknowledge the importance of a supportive and collaborative organisational culture, with strong and respectful partnerships in delivering services for and with our members and community. We are committed to leading an organisation that recognises that positive behaviours and values are equally as important as our results.

When we started reflecting, there were so many highlights; we decided to select a few of the more significant ones which are outlined below;

- Board adoption of the AFDO Full Member Sustainability Strategy and funds allocated for its implementation
- Members voting at our Annual General Meeting, in favour of AFDO Constitutional changes which recognises the importance that the contribution of gender brings to a Board and encouraging nominating organisations to take this into account in their nominee selection, and a further change ensuring that only people with disability can hold the positions of President or the two Deputy Presidents roles for AFDO
- The AFDO Advocates Forum with over 100 people in attendance, including our members, people with disability and others interested from the wider community, who heard from a range of experienced sector speakers on the importance of advocacy and issues in its continuing role
- AFDO receiving the prestigious Victorian Public Advocates Award for 2019 for our continued service in improving lives and opportunities for people with disability





- Our AFDO 2019 Federal Election Strategy's success in raising awareness on key issues on behalf of our members with all Federal politicians and candidates for both the House of Representatives and Senate
- Success in obtaining the Royal Commission into Violence, Abuse, Neglect and Exploitation of People with Disability after over a decade of advocacy and pressure from all to achieve, which was also a key component in our Election Strategy 2019
- Significant funding of the Royal Commission by the Coalition Government and its start-up immediately following the Federal Election
- The Terms of Reference of the Commission being largely in line with the views of the sector
- The returned Coalition Government listened to the sector views and appointed a Minister for NDIS, the Hon. Stuart Robert, solely for resolving issues with the National Disability Insurance Scheme operation
- The Minister for NDIS is also in Cabinet, meaning a close relationship to the "inner circle" of the Government decision-makers and a real priority on this area
- The newly appointed Minister for Families and Social Services (which covers all things disability outside of the NDIS) the Hon. Anne Ruston is also a Cabinet member
- This is the first time we have had two Ministers covering the Disability Sector with both in Cabinet
- Federal Budget outcomes in April delivered an overall good result for our disability sector
- The NDIS Quality & Safeguards Commission launched in New South Wales and South Australia in July 2018 and by July 2019 will launch in all other States & Territories, with the exception of Western Australia which is still implementing the NDIS across the State. The Commission will provide service standards compliance and protections for people with disability participating in the NDIS

- The start of the review of the National Disability Strategy review, with the first plan ending in 2020 and the new one being planned for 2021 to 2030. Participation and advocacy by AFDO and its members through the consultative process and beyond
- The formation by AFDO of the National Inclusive Transport Advocacy Network (NITAN), the first of its kind ensuring that people with disability who have an interest in transport are able to network, learn and share issues across all States & Territories and ensure this is relayed to the Federal Government and all levels of relevant government for prioritising future action

Building from the Full Member Sustainability Strategy, which the AFDO Board agreed and adopted as part of this year's budget process, it was great to see a number of our members utilising the selected consultants. The Board put this in place, committing over \$205,000 for consultants engagement for use between our Full Members under this program. Most Full Members took this opportunity, with many obtaining funding in a variety of ways and from differing sources, which we believe was in part, due to the consultant support and training which AFDO provided during the year. A huge achievement for our Full Members and congratulations to all for the many successful outcomes.

Our Member Forums continued to be held over the year, providing another opportunity for everyone to network, contribute on or raise key issues, share their knowledge and expertise, as well as participate in a range of training to underpin their own and their organisations capacity to continue to represent the unique voice of their communities. Some of the training we undertook over the year included;

- Building our ILC readiness further – Developing sustainable business models, practical strategies by Spark Strategy
- Creating a Funding Plan & Developing a Grant Writing Framework by Non Profit Training
- Advanced Grant Writing by Non Profit Training
- Social Media Training by Non Profit Training
- Writing and Pitching a Media Release Training by AAP Media Training

AFDO staff continued to progress the organisation and ensure that our member policy and advocacy issues were advanced at every opportunity with the Federal Government, relevant Ministers and Assistants as well as key government departments, Shadow Ministry and cross-benchers. The staff have also continued to successfully deliver on a number of key projects and programs over the year with many of these actively involving our membership.

Internationally, as President, along with Director Trevor Carroll, I attended the Council of State Parties (CoSP) at the United Nations in New York, participating with the full Australian Delegation. We also took a number of colleagues with disability along as part of the AFDO delegation and sponsored a Side Event on Autism Internationally in relation to the experiences of women and girls. They all met and engaged with some remarkable people with disability from around the world and promoted AFDO and our work, including internationally, over this event.

As President, I would like to thank my fellow Board members, past and present, Ross, our CEO, all the AFDO staff and the volunteers for their continued enthusiasm, dedication, contribution and professionalism which they all bring to our unique organisation. I would particularly like to thank the members of the Executive; Trevor, Frank and Janine who meet regularly and monitor the work and performance of AFDO between the Board meetings, my sincere thanks to each of you.



Liz Reid  
President

As CEO, I'd like to thank our President, Liz, and all the Board for their continued determination, contribution, support and encouragement. It goes without saying that we have a fantastic team of dedicated staff and I want to provide my thanks to each of them for another successful year. AFDO wouldn't be anything without our members, and I acknowledge their incredible contribution and support for our organisation and the sector, it's always a pleasure working with each of you.

As shown by our achievements over this year, AFDO continues to grow and develop innovative ways of supporting our members in addition to delivering projects and programs in line with our Vision and Mission.

We look forward to continuing our support, our representation and working with, and on behalf of, all our membership.



Ross Joyce  
CEO

# Strengthening Our Voice

AFDO has been proactive in furthering the voice of people with disability over the past twelve months through our engagement with the National Disability Insurance Agency, Australian Government, national peak bodies, and by participating on committees and working groups.

## International representation

International Disability Alliance (IDA)  
Pacific Disability Forum (PDF)  
International Initiative for Disability Leadership  
Disabled People's International (DPI)  
Australian Disability and Development Consortium (ADDC)  
Conference of States Parties to the UNCRPD  
UNCRPD Civil Society Forum  
United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC)

## Australian representation

Aviation Access Forum  
Victorian Government - NDIS Implementation Taskforce Working Groups

- NDIS ITF Participant Needs and Mainstream Interface Working Group
- NDIS ITF Market Readiness Working Group

Australian Electoral Commission Disability Advisory Committee  
NDIA CEO Forum  
Disability Support IRC  
Not for profit Stewardship Group Australian Taxation Office  
DSS NDS Reform Steering Group  
State Trustees - Ageing, Disability and Mental Health Collaborative Panel – Victorian agencies

Innovative Workforce Fund  
NDIA Independent Advisory Council (IAC)  
Australian Public Service Commission Disability Employment Working Group  
NDIS Transitioning project (NDIS TSP)  
Dept. of Human Services Welfare Payment Infrastructure Transformation (WPIT) Civil Society Advisory Group (CSAG)  
Melbourne Social Equity Institute Advisory Board  
Australian Council of Social Service (ACOSS)  
National Assistive Technology Alliance  
Reducing Stigma and Discrimination Working Group  
UNSW School of Business / Centre for Research Excellence in Disability and Health  
VicRoads Disability Parking Permit Eligibility Reference Group  
VCOSS Disability Network Forum  
Civil Society UNCRPD Shadow Working Group  
National Disability and Carer Alliance

## National peak bodies

National Disability and Carer Alliance  
Mental Health Australia  
Carers Australia  
National Disability Services (NDS)  
Australian Council of Social Service (ACOSS)  
People with Disability Australia (PWDA)

Australian Communications Consumer Action Network (ACCAN)

First Peoples Disability Network Australia (FPDN)

Women With Disabilities Australia (WWDA)

National Ethnic Disability Alliance (NEDA)

Children and Young People with Disability Australia (CYDA)

## AFDO Members

AFDO is made up of member organisations who work together to contribute to the national policy agenda and address issues that impact the lives of people with disability in Australia. We understand that disability specific organisations play a key role in the provision of information and peer support to people with disability and their families. This role keeps them closely connected to their grass roots communities.

Each community has its peak organisation that uses its voice to advocate on issues. AFDO is the forum where these views are collected and coordinated to ensure Government is across issues impacting all people with disability in Australia.

We are proud to be the organisation that has brought together both cross-disability

organisations (representing the interests of people with all kinds of disability), and disability-specific organisations/peaks.

We understand that cross-disability groups are only successful when they have access to the specific expertise of disability-specific organisations as these are connected to their communities.

We understand that it is imperative that neither the voice of cross-disability groups or disability-specific groups is silenced in favour of the other.

## Member sustainability

The AFDO Board, in June 2018, approved a Member Sustainability Program for the 2018-19 financial year and committed \$140,000 from AFDO's equity to deliver the Sustainability Program.

The Member Sustainability Program included hiring a Membership Engagement Officer who liaised with members on their needs and organised a panel of consultants to be available to work with our members as needed in areas such as reviewing funding applications, providing governance expertise, strategic expertise, and sustainability planning.





# AFDO Board

## Liz Reid

### President



Liz Reid is an experienced professional with over 25 years' experience in the community, disability and social justice sectors. Her career has been dedicated to assisting others to seek equitable opportunities to participate fully in their communities. Liz has a passion for seeking demonstrated economic and social outcomes.

Liz is the Executive Officer of YouthWorX NT; a not for profit organisation committed to partnering with Territorians in supporting their lifelong social, economic and career success. Liz is responsible for the management of diverse programs including life and career coaching, and the delivery of services to support sustainable employment skills. Liz administers the overall operation, strategic development and corporate health of the organisation.

Liz is the current President of Physical Disability Australia (PDA); the PDA representative and President on the AFDO Board; a member of the City of Darwin Access and Inclusion Advisory Committee; and a member of the National Disability Insurance Agency Independent Advisory Council.

## Trevor Carroll

### Vice President & International Co-ordinator



Trevor Carroll is passionate about protecting and enhancing the human rights of people with disabilities.

Trevor acquired an incomplete spinal cord injury in the mid 1990's and has since acquired bi-lateral sensori-neural hearing loss and Meniere's disease.

Trevor is the CEO of Disability Justice Australia and he represents AFDO as an elected Director and Information Officer on the Board of Disabled Peoples International (DPI) as the Chair of the DPI Asia-Pacific Region, the Pacific Disability Forum and as a member of the Australian Electoral Commission Disability Advisory Committee.

Trevor wears many other hats including:

- Secretary and a founding member of the Friends of South Morang
- Director on the Board of Social Security Rights Victoria
- Australia Day Ambassador
- Trustee of an ASIC regulated superannuation fund
- Co-chair of the Victoria Police Disability Portfolio Reference Group
- Member of the Whittlesea Disability Network;
- Volunteer mentor with the Australian Quadriplegics Association



## Janine Neu

### Vice President

Janine Neu was 35 weeks pregnant when she experienced sudden onset of Acute Transverse Myelitis in 1996, rendering her quadriplegic. Following the birth of her son and 6 months of hospital rehabilitation, she returned home to her family to challenge the WA Government for essential funding to enable her family to stay together.

Following receipt of permanent funding, Janine could continue to lead her life in her community.

Janine has personally focused on health and physical rehabilitation since hospital discharge whilst navigating an opaque, complex and compartmentalized system of services for people with disabilities. Staying healthy and active has resulted in Janine never being admitted to hospital since her discharge from the Spinal Unit in 1997 as well as continuing wwtto achieve functional improvement.

She is passionate about maximising opportunities for people with disabilities as well as supporting individual and systemic advocacy. She serves as Treasurer of People with Disabilities WA and is a committee member of ACROD and Companion Card External Appeals in WA.



## Frank Hall-Bentick AM

### Treasurer

Frank Hall-Bentick AM has a life-long disability (familial peripheral neuropathy) and through his outstanding efforts has contributed to improving human rights for people with a disability. He lives in Melbourne and has been involved in disability empowerment for the last thirty-eight years.

During this time he has received a number of Awards for his work including;

- 1992 – International Plaque from DPI awarded for distinguished and unstinting service in the cause People with Disabilities in the Asia Pacific Region
- 2001 - Australian Centenary of Federation Award for long and outstanding service to disability organizations and People with Disabilities
- 2011 - Recipient, National Disability Award – Minister's Lifelong Achievement
- 2012 - Recipient, Order of Australia Award June 2012
- 2012 Selected by UN ESCAP as one of ten Asia Pacific Disability Champions to promote the Incheon Decade Strategy and Goals

Currently Frank continues to be involved at an international level through Disabled Peoples' International, Pacific Disability Forum and the International Disability Alliance Forums.



## Nick Rushworth

### Director

Nick Rushworth has been Executive Officer of Brain Injury Australia since 2008. He was also President of the Brain Injury Association of New South Wales between 2004 and 2008.

In 1996, Nick sustained a severe traumatic brain injury as a result of a bicycle accident. Before joining Brain Injury Australia, Nick worked for the Northern Territory Government setting up their new Office of Disability.

Formerly a producer with the Nine Television Network's "Sunday" program and ABC Radio National, Nick's journalism has won a number of awards, including a Silver World Medal at the New York Festival, a National Press Club and TV Week Logie Award.



## Debbie Kennewell

### Director

Debbie Kennewell is an Auslan user and was nominated to the AFDO Board by Deaf Australia.

Debbie previously served on the boards of Deaf Australia and Deaf Community and Sports SA. She currently works as a General Manager, Group Support Services with Can:Do Group in South Australia with oversight responsibility of Deaf Can:Do. When she is not working she is studying for her Bachelor in Early Childhood/Disability at Flinders University.

Debbie was born Deaf into a Deaf family which includes both parents being deaf. She primarily uses Auslan (Australian Sign Language), the language of the Deaf community in Australia.

Debbie currently represents AFDO on the Aviation Access Forum (AAF) and has worked on multiple national projects developing guidelines, resources, and training for stakeholders of the Deaf community. Debbie also has an interest in raising disability issues including the promotion of the Australian Deaf community.



## Richard Dent

### Director

Richard Dent was appointed by the Board for his governance expertise. Richard is the Chief Executive Officer of Leadership Victoria and a Fellow of the Australian Institute of Company Directors, Harvard Club and Disability Professionals Victoria.

Richard has been involved in disability services since 1993, working in a Uniting Care agency, then VCOSS and then 12 years as CEO of the E W Tipping Foundation.

Richard was a significant contributor to the campaign for the NDIS as part of the Premier's NDIS taskforce, Chair of the Victorian Every Australian Counts Campaign and as Victorian Chair of National Disability Services.

In Richard's current role as CEO of Leadership Victoria he helps develop leaders to make progress on complex issues, and helps broker skilled leaders to support social, economic and environmental causes. Richard maintains an ongoing involvement in disability issues.



## Felicity Crowther

### Director

Felicity Crowther is the Executive Director of the South Australian Council on Intellectual Disability (SACID), an organisation who works towards achieving a community inclusive of people with intellectual disability. Felicity is a qualified Developmental Educator having completed a Bachelor of Disability and Community Rehabilitation with Honours. Since completing her studies Felicity has worked in a range of positions in the disability sector including service development, project management and service management roles.

Felicity is passionate about supporting people with intellectual disability to have a voice within their community. In both a professional and voluntary capacity, Felicity has assisted with the development of self-advocacy programs and supported individual people with intellectual disability in their self-advocacy roles. This passion for supporting people with intellectual disability has led Felicity to undertake a PhD in the area of inclusive research.

Felicity also enjoys sharing her knowledge, experience and passion with students through tutoring at Flinders University in the Disability & Community Inclusion Unit.

## Christine Hunter

### Director



Christine Hunter is President of Hearing Matters Australia Inc (formerly SHHH Australia Inc), a volunteer based hearing support organisation for people with hearing loss. Although Christine has lived with hearing loss since early childhood, she worked as a secondary school teacher for 22 years, including as a Faculty Head for seven years, retiring in 2012.

In her role as President, Christine actively promotes the twin missions of Hearing Matters Australia through its advocacy, advisory and supporting roles to its members, consumers and others who seek assistance to best manage hearing loss. Her advocacy activities have included representations to Australian federal government bodies and the Transport for NSW Accessible Transport Committee (ATAC), with the objective of having hearing health recognised as a priority health issue.

In 2019 Christine has been involved in Community of Practice consultations with the National Disability Insurance Agency (NDIA), focusing on identifying the many hearing loss issues & barriers confronting those attempting to access the NDIS. She has also collaborated with hearing industry professionals & consumer representatives at the inaugural Person-Centered Cross-organisational Network seminar at the Ida Institute in Denmark, aimed at strengthening the quality of hearing care and promoting a global hearing care model focused on the needs of the individual.

Christine represents Deafness Forum on the AFDO Board and looks forward to actively contributing to AFDO's mission.

## Dan Stubbs

### Director



Dan Stubbs has been the CEO of Inner Melbourne Community Legal (IMCL) since June 2015. He has a passion for social justice, supporting and advocating for marginalised groups such as people with disabilities, marginalised women, and homeless people.

Having worked in social policy and human rights in government, as Director of the ACT Council of Social Service (ACTCOSS) and in developing countries in the pacific, Dan realised that one of the best places to make a difference for marginalised people is in community law. Prior to heading up IMCL Dan was the director of the Inner City Legal Centre in Kings Cross, Sydney.

Dan has a Diploma of Legal Practice, an Honours Degree in Law from Macquarie University, a Graduate Diploma in Development Economics from ANU, and an Honours Degree in Economics from the University of Melbourne.





## AFDO staff as at 30 June 2019

### **Ross Joyce**

Chief Executive Officer

### **Helen Cameron**

Personal & Executive Assistant to Ross Joyce

### **Patrick McGee**

National Manager – Policy, Advocacy & Research

### **Ramona Mandy**

NDIS & Special Projects Officer

### **Jim Valavanis**

Manager – Business Development & Engagement

### **Cheryl Gration**

Governance Coordinator & Communications

### **Leah Penny**

Diversity Field Officer

### **Steve Schreck**

Diversity Field Officer

Administrative Assistant

# AFDO Wins The 2019 Public Advocate Award

Each year, the Victorian Public Advocate formally recognises the achievements and bravery of advocates who have spoken out on sensitive and difficult issues, and thereby, contributed to improving the human rights of people.

In early 2019, the Victorian Public Advocate, Colleen Pearce recognised the outstanding achievements of the Australian Federation of Disability Organisations (AFDO) in effecting positive change through strong advocacy for the rights of people with disability.

"Each year, as Public Advocate, I formally recognise the achievements and bravery of advocates who have spoken out on sensitive and difficult issues and, thereby, contributed to improving the human rights of people with disability.

Today, I am very pleased to recognise the outstanding achievements of the Australian Federation of Disability Organisations in effecting positive changes through strong advocacy concerns for the rights of people with disability.

AFDO have been fearless in taking on major systemic issues that impact on the human rights and wellbeing of people with disability.

AFDO stands with people with disability on their key concerns. AFDO has spoken out on:

- the continuing violence, abuse and neglect impacting people with disability
- access to justice for people with a disability
- accessing the NDIS
- health issues



Image: L>R,  
Victorian Public Advocate – Colleen Pearce,  
AFDO Vice President – Trevor Carroll,  
AFDO CEO – Ross Joyce.

Action on these issues is critically important to the wellbeing and inclusion of people with disability. I have seen how AFDO has taken real and tireless action on these key issues, and achieved significant breakthroughs, despite the many hurdles and resource constraints.

AFDO constantly challenging the status quo for people with disability. It pushes organisations to engage and do something to make sure that organisations and decision-makers listen directly to the voice and experience of people with disability.

AFDO undertakes a huge variety of work to get its messages out and effect change. It has developed extensive networks across the sector to make sure it knows what's really going on for people, and has developed innovative campaigns and change platforms such as the Disability Loop website that is driving improved NDIS outcomes for participants.

Also, the Australian Government announced it would be significantly cut back prisoner's suspension period for receiving the Disability Support Pension (DSP). This would have been a serious setback for many people's wellbeing and rehabilitation when they leave prison after only a short-term incarceration. Some might have thought it would be too hard getting a budget decision changed.

However, AFDO took the lead on this issue when few other people even realised how detrimental the decision would be for this already extremely disadvantaged group.

To its great credit, AFDO's advocacy and leadership led to this decision being reversed. Well done and congratulations AFDO!

You set an example for all of us to follow."

**Colleen Pearce**

**Victorian Public Advocate**



Image: L>R, AFDO Director's – Christine Hunter & Nick Rushworth, AFDO CEO – Ross Joyce, AFDO Vice President – Trevor Carroll, Victorian Public Advocate – Colleen Pearce, AFDO Director – Felicity Crowther

This award was presented to AFDO at our recent Members Forum where we were fortunate enough to have several of our Board members in attendance.



# 2018 – 2019 Policy Submissions

- Joint submission by AFDO & CMHA to the Australian National Audit Office (ANAO) on the Disability Support Pension (DSP)
- Pre Federal Budget Submission 2019 – 2020, February 2019
- Review of the Disability Standards for Accessible Public Transport 2002
- AFDO Submission on Draft Terms of Reference for the Royal Commission into Violence, Abuse, Exploitation & Neglect of People with Disability
- AFDO met with the Productivity Commission – National Disability Agreement
- Joint Submission by AFDO, WWDDV and DJA on the Victorian Royal Commission into Mental Health



# Advocacy and Policy

AFDO has continued to focus on building our policy and advocacy framework, raising the profile of AFDO and our members on a national level, and building relationships with key stakeholders in the disability sector.

In 2017, AFDO members identified eight key policy areas to focus on for the next twelve-months.

These eight areas included:

1. Violence, Abuse and Neglect of people with disability
2. Access to Justice
3. People with disability in the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS)
4. Affordable Housing
5. Better Health for people with disability
6. Public Transport
7. Advocacy and Inclusion
8. Employment Workforce Participation

We have continued to meet regularly with our members over the past year to review these policy areas, and in 2018, we included a new policy area – the Disability Support Pension (DSP). This gave us a total of nine policy areas going into the 2018-19 financial year, and we have prioritised the four key areas listed below:

1. People with disability in the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS)
2. Access to Justice
3. Disability Support Pension
4. Public Transport





# Advocacy

## The National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS): Including the Voices of People with Disability in the COAG Interface Principles Negotiations and Reviewing the Complex Needs Support Pathway

### The Mainstream Interface Principles

Along with the Productivity Commission, AFDO is concerned about the number of people with disability who have been experiencing the negative impact of the separation between the NDIS and the state and territory mainstream service systems. These negative impacts include:

- Remaining in prison past the date of sentence (Justice)
- Remaining in a hospital past the date of medical discharge (Health)
- Children with disability in out of home care at risk of eviction from accommodation (Children in Out of Home Care)

We believe that as people with disability are impacted by any COAG sponsored negotiation, then people with disability must be involved in these negotiations.

Along with the Victorian Office of the Public Advocate (OPA) and Victorian Legal Aid (VLA), we developed a 'lived experience' discussion paper on issues facing people with disability who were transitioning out of custody and into the community. AFDO, OPA and the VLA met with the Justice Working Group to discuss the implications for people with disability arising from the Justice Interface Principles.

### Reviewing the Complex Needs Support Pathway

In December 2018, AFDO along with Inclusion Australia and the Disability Advocacy Network of Australia met with representatives of the National Disability Insurance Agency to discuss concerns about the Complex Needs Support Pathway.

Out of that meeting, and from work already underway with Inclusion Australia, the three organisations, Inclusion Australia, DANA and AFDO (The IA Project Group) formed a partnership and were engaged by the NDIA to evaluate the impact of the introduction of the Complex Needs Pathway for participants and their supporters, both formal and informal. The project work will also engage various stakeholders including government services partners and Specialist NDIS planners to seek their view and feedback on the Complex Needs Support Pathway.

### The Optional Protocol on the Convention Against Torture (OPCAT)

AFDO welcomes the ratification by the Australian Parliament of the Optional Protocol of the Convention Against Torture in 2017 which allows for independent monitoring of places of detention. However, we remain concerned about the overrepresentation of people with cognitive disability and psychosocial disability in Australia's places of detention.

In Partnership with Queensland Advocacy Incorporated (QAI) and with Churchill Fellow, Mr Steven Caruana, AFDO has been leading work on a discussion paper on two key aspects of the OPCAT that relate to disability:

- Describing the places where people with disability are detained, and
- Describing the people with disability who are detained in those places

## Disability Support Pension (DSP)

AFDO's position has always been that people with disability who need the Disability Support Pension (DSP) should be able to access the DSP.

We have been concerned for many years about the impact of government changes to the DSP as the Federal Government brought in new measures in 2014 to reduce the growth in the DSP population and since then the DSP population has started to decline.

Areas requiring urgent focus:

1. The onerous and burdensome nature of the eligibility process for people with disability
2. The decline in the number of successful applicants for the DSP
3. The significant number of people with disability transferred off the DSP and onto Newstart due to a perception that they have partial capacity to work

*"Even more fundamentally, the provision of adequate, accessible and disability-specific social security is necessary for the reduction and alleviation of poverty and promotion of the social inclusion and participation of persons with disabilities in Australia."<sup>1</sup>*

AFDO began working with disability and welfare rights advocates, policy makers and researchers to provide further support to our position.

Key actions included:

1. Supporting people with disability to provide strategic lived experience advice on the DSP to the Department of Social Services and the Department of Human Services
2. Regular representation to government on our concerns for people with disability, due to the changes to the DSP
3. Supporting research into the cost of living with disability

In October 2018 AFDO commissioned the National Centre for Social and Economic Modelling (NATSEM) to research and report on the economic cost of living with a disability. This report will be launched in September 2019 at Parliament House, Canberra.



1 Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, General Comment No 19 (2008): The Right to Social Security, 39th sess, UN Doc E/C.12/GC/19 (4 February 2008) para 3.

## Reducing the Period of Suspension of the DSP for people with disability in detention

In 2018 the Government introduced legislation that would reduce the period of time that a person with disability could suspend their Disability Support Pension (DSP) while they are detained in a prison from 104 weeks down to 13 weeks. This would mean that people with disability who were detained for longer than 13 weeks would have to reapply for the DSP when released from prison. We were concerned that this would result in many vulnerable Australians with disability being trapped in a cycle of poverty, homelessness, addiction and incarceration.

AFDO led a nation-wide advocacy campaign to have the Government reverse the budget decision to the Social Security Act and in December 2018, the Minister for Social Services withdrew the measure. This was a huge success for people with disability.

*"In relation to the 2018 – 2019 Budget Measure a number of other stakeholders and disability advocates have expressed their concerns about the impact of the measure. **After consideration the Government has decided to reverse the measure in the 2018 – 2019 Mid-Year Fiscal Outlook.** As a result the current policy is unchanged and the DSP suspension period before the imprisoned recipient has their payment cancelled will remain at 2 years"<sup>2</sup>*

2 Extract from Letter from Minister for Social Services Minister Fletcher dated 17/12/2018

## Transport

### National Inclusive Transport Advocacy Network (NITAN)

The National Inclusive Transport Advocacy Network was developed by AFDO as a national network of advocates who provide strategic advice on transport issues around Australia affecting people with disability. AFDO Provides secretariat support. NITAN is currently discussing its governance framework and the focus of its work. Likely issues for NITAN to consider include the state and territory Taxi Subsidy Scheme (TSS) and the Transport Interface Principles.

## United Nations CRPD Review

Australia signed up to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD) in 2008.

Australia has to report to the United Nations every four years, and be reviewed on what it has achieved. A committee of independent experts, the UN Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (the Committee) conducts this review. People with disability, through their representative organisations, can also report to the UN to help the Committee review Australia. This report is known as the **Civil Society Shadow Report**.



Australia was first reviewed in September 2013 and will be reviewed for the second time by the Committee in September 2019. A **Working Group** made up of disability organisations from around Australia compiled a report titled *Disability Rights Now 2019: Shadow Report to the UNCRPD* to provide the views of people with disability to the CRPD Committee.

AFDO was part of this Working Group and the Civil Society Shadow Report and 11 Fact Sheets were developed. The Shadow Report talked about the most important issues including the need to:

- Make stronger anti-discrimination laws
- Make sure CRPD rights are part of legislation, policies and programs for children and young people
- Make accessibility mandatory in housing and transport
- Make Auslan a national language
- Bring in laws to make sure people with disability, including Deaf people can be part of juries
- Change restrictions for the Disability Support Pension (DSP) and increase support payments (Newstart) to make sure everyone has a good standard of living

The Disability Rights Now 2019 Shadow Report and the 11 Fact Sheets are available on our website at [www.afdo.org.au/uncrpd/](http://www.afdo.org.au/uncrpd/) and [www.afdo.org.au/uncrpd/2019-shadow-report-fact-sheets/](http://www.afdo.org.au/uncrpd/2019-shadow-report-fact-sheets/)



## **Royal Commission into Violence, Abuse, Neglect and Exploitation of People with Disability.**

It was a long road to get the Disability Royal Commission, and it heated up in February 2019 when Green's Senator Jordon Steele-John put a motion to Parliament to establish a Royal Commission into violence, abuse, exploitation and neglect of people with disability in institutional and wider community settings across Australia.

The then, Opposition leader Bill Shorten had personally pledged his and the ALP's commitment to a Royal Commission back in 2017, and made an election promise of \$26 million to get the Commission going; the ALP also supported the Senate motion by Green's Senator Jordon Steele-John, as did others from the crossbench.

The Australian community and people with disability called on the Coalition Government to vote in favour of the Royal Commission, and we're pleased to say that the Royal Commission into Violence, Abuse, Neglect and Exploitation of People with Disability was established on 4 April 2019. AFDO and our members will be supporting the commission and people with disability to participate over the next three years.





# Employment – workforce participation

Access to sustainable employment remains out of reach for almost half of Australians with disability. Participating in the workforce is important for social inclusion and financial independence. Having a disability can impact on a person's ability and opportunities to participate in paid work.

## The facts

- **53% working-age people with disability participate in the labour force, compared to 83% working-age people without a disability ("participate in the workforce" means employed or actively looking for work)**
- 48% working-age people with disability are employed, compared with 79% without disability
- 51% of working-age men with disability are employed, compared with 84% without disability
- 23% of working-age men with severe or profound disability are employed
- 45% of working-age women with disability are employed, compared with 74% without disability
- 20% of working-age women with severe or profound disability are employed
- 37% of employees with severe or profound disability work full-time, compared to 58% of employees with other disability
- 63% of employees with severe or profound disability work part-time, compared to 41% of employees with other disability
- **Australia ranks 21 out of 29 OECD countries for labour force participation of people with a disability**

Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) 2016

## Advantages of employing people with disability

There are significant business benefits when employing someone with disability— benefits beyond just filling a job. These advantages have been confirmed in both Australian and international studies highlighting:

1. **Reliable** - people with disability take fewer days off, take less sick leave and have a higher retention rate than other workers. The costs to business of absenteeism and sick leave for employees with disability can be as low as 34 per cent of the cost incurred by their colleagues.
2. **Productive** - once in the right job, people with disability perform equally as well as other employees.
3. **Affordable** - recruitment, insurance cover and compensation costs are lower. People with disability have fewer compensation incidents and accidents at work in comparison to other employees.
4. **Good for business** - people with disability build strong relationships with customers and boost staff morale and loyalty by helping to create a diverse workforce. Teamwork is further enhanced. Real cost savings are realised through reduced turnover, recruitment and retraining costs. Hiring people with disability also enhances the company's image among its staff, community and customers with positive benefits to the employer's brand.



# Employment

Participation in employment for people with disabilities is central to achieving social inclusion, as well as contributing to good mental and physical health, personal well-being and self-worth.

## Barriers to employment

For people with disability, there are many barriers to finding employment. The barriers to employment for people with disabilities are linked to prejudice, stigma, stereotypes and discrimination.

Some of these barriers can include:

- Misinformed attitudes towards disability (i.e. people with disability are costly to employ and are less productive than people without disability)
- Employers' lack of understanding and confidence to talk about disability and its impact on those who work in their business
- Inaccessible workplaces
- Lack of visibility, with people with disability not well-represented in public roles, making it difficult to recognise their potential
- Lack of career development opportunities, including limited professional development and skills training, being passed over for promotion and higher duties, lack of job rotation etc.

Some of these barriers are real and some are perceived. Despite a very grim current picture, people with disability have significant potential that can be brought to the workforce in a wide range of industries and positions, from entry level to CEO.

## Discrimination in employment

A person with disability has a right to the same employment opportunities as a person without disability. If a person with disability can do the main activities or 'inherent requirements' of a job, then they should have an equal opportunity to do that job.

However, research shows that there is widespread discrimination against people with disability in employment, with 42% of complaints received by the Australian Human Rights Commission being disability discrimination complaints.

- 10% working-age people with disability are unemployed, compared to 5% working-age people without disability
- 30% working-age people with disability have been unemployed for at least 1 year, compared to 15% working-age people without disability



## Diversity Field Officer Service

The Diversity Field Officer Service (DFOS) is an initiative implemented by the Australian Federation of Disability Organisations (AFDO) operating since 2015, along with its appointed independent evaluation partner, Deakin University.

The DFOS aims to offer support to small and medium-sized businesses (SMEs) to increase the 'disability confidence' of these businesses to become more welcoming, confident, inclusive and accessible. Whilst we approach this from a disability lens it promotes wider diversity thinking and engagement by the business as a natural part of the program.

The DFOS works with businesses that are open to exploring the potential of a more diversified workforce and becoming more welcoming of customers, staff and stakeholders from diverse backgrounds. The service offering is customised for each business to meet its own objectives and also works to build capability within the business' leadership, with tailored support so that good practice becomes embedded throughout the business.

In May 2018, AFDO was provided additional funding by Regional Development Victoria for its 'Improving the Accessibility of Geelong and the Bellarine' project. This project is a collaboration between AFDO, Tourism Greater Geelong and the Bellarine (TGGB) and a large number of TGGB's member businesses.

This latest project targets SMEs to address both capability and workforce gaps in the Greater Geelong tourism and hospitality sectors with a focus on making it the most accessible tourist destination in Australia. It will continue to June 2020 and include the development and delivery of training and an accessibility toolkit for participating businesses.

## Passport 2 Employment

The Passport 2 Employment (P2E) program grew out of the Glenelg Transition Action Network (GTAN) supported by the Glenelg & Southern Grampians Local Learning & Employment Network (GSGLEN). This program provides pre-employment training to assist students with disability that have been identified as benefitting from extra transition education, preparation and support.

P2E is an 8 week experiential program designed to provide students with practical skills to prepare them for employment in a structured and safe learning environment and focusses on topics like employability, communication, presentation skills, health, nutrition, addressing systematic barriers to employment and/or further training and exploring pathways.

The overall aim is for participants to graduate from the program with positive aspirations and attitudes towards life after school and to support students as they become ready to join the workforce, enhancing their overall life skills and job readiness.

We are currently working with GSGLEN to reach a collaborative arrangement to also include this program as part of any new DFOS offering. AFDO has been the auspice for P2E in the Geelong region for the last 3½ years in collaboration with National Disability Coordination Officer (NDCO) and GRLEN with the project funded by Give Where You Live.

AFDO is very familiar with its operations and its results for the inclusion of young people with disability looking to enter open employment as the preferred option. We work closely with the program to achieve its objectives by organising DFOS businesses to participate in mock interviews, which can lead to tangible future pathways – be it further education, work experience or job prospects.

# DFOS – How we've been going

Worked with 45 businesses during the second evaluation period with a total of 105 businesses engaged



29% of businesses recruited people with disabilities at the end of the evaluation



38% have, or plan to, include welcoming wording in job advertisements and position descriptions



38% used more accessible recruitment and interview processes at the end of the evaluation



29% of businesses have improved flexibility for their employees (eg. working hours)



33% of businesses have improved physical access of their workplaces



38% of businesses have committed to improve mental health in their workplace



During the second evaluation period, 32 employment pathways were created for people with disability



100% of businesses indicated that there might be an opportunity to employ people with disability in the next 12 months



Source: Murfitt. K, et.al. Diversity Field Officer Service Second Evaluation, Deakin University, 2018.

# National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS)

The NDIS has now been in existence for six years and is supporting over 300,000 participants to access the supports they need to live the life they choose. AFDO continues to work with its members, government and community to ensure that the NDIS meets the needs of people with disability.

## The facts

- As at 30 June 2019, there are 298,816 Australians being supported by the NDIS
- Of the 298,816 participants being supported by the Scheme, almost 100,000 had never previously received supports before the NDIS
- 16,417 Australians being supported by the NDIS are Indigenous Australians
- 5,312 Australians being supported by the NDIS are children
- 24,023 Australian being supported by the NDIS are Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD)



## National Disability and Carer Alliance

The National Disability and Carer Alliance was established in 2009 by three peak organisations in the disability sector. These organisations included AFDO – representing people with disability; Carers Australia – representing families and carers; and National Disability Services (NDS) – representing disability service providers. The focus of the Alliance is public advocacy on behalf of the disability sector. The Alliance has recently welcomed the inclusion of an organisation with expertise in mental health – Mental Health Australia.

In its early years, this alliance of organisations created the Every Australian Counts (EAC) campaign. The campaign was one of the driving forces behind the increase in public and political support for the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS). Once the Federal and State governments committed to the NDIS, the Alliance began providing advice on how to put the scheme into place. It now works to maintain this bipartisan support for the NDIS.

## NDIS & Employment

49% of NDIS participants over the age of 25 are working in an Australian Disability Enterprise (ADE), whereas only 33% are working in open employment and receiving full award wages

41% of NDIS participants aged 15 – 25 years of age are working in open employment and receiving full award wages, compared to 35% who are working in an Australian Disability Enterprise (ADE)

## NDIS & the Disability Support Pension (DSP)

77% of NDIS participants receive the DSP.

88% of NDIS participants that receive the DSP are Australians with intellectual disability

## TSP Workshops

During 2017-2019, AFDO received funding from the Victorian Government through The Transition Support Package (TSP). This allowed us to undertake several activities under our AFDO Disability Loop platform, to improve the experiences of Victorians with disability and their families and carers transitioning to the NDIS. Disability Loop is AFDO's resources set for assisting people with disability to better understand the NDIS.

Our workshop, "Understanding the NDIS", gave people with disability, families and carers explanations of key NDIS principles and concepts in easy-to-understand language, using a wide range of inclusive, disability access supports. In this Reporting period, 21 workshops were conducted in nine NDIS Victorian roll out regions and attended by 153 people with disability, their families and carers.

Attendees valued the peer support connections made through face-to-face interactions and the fact that the presenter, Ramona Mandy, AFDO staff member, is a person with a disability who is an NDIS participant and independent from the NDIA or a service provider.

Workshop material is now available online and for purchase of hard copy print or braille with details at: [www.disabilityloop.org.au/resources/understandingthendisvideos](http://www.disabilityloop.org.au/resources/understandingthendisvideos)

Production of a fully accessible video package of the workshop uploaded to the AFDO YouTube channel (found by searching for AFDO 2012), enables those who could not attend the workshop to also benefit from the information.

Distribution of four issues of our Disability Loop e-News over the past year to approximately 4,200 subscribers, has provided easy-to-understand

news about the NDIS and newly developed NDIS-related resources. We also continued to interact with an increasing number (currently about 3000) who follow Disability Loop on social media through more than 120 posts. In addition, 22,477 people visited our AFDO Disability Loop web site, [www.disabilityloop.org.au](http://www.disabilityloop.org.au), to access NDIS news, events and resources.

We are now finding that many people have gone through the planning stages and have their NDIS plans but do not know what steps to take next. To address this, AFDO's TSP project objectives during 2019-2020 will consist of three components:

- Design and delivery of an information session which will help people with disability and their families and carers to get the most out of their NDIS plan
- Filming the information session for use as an open, online resource
- Disseminating 4 editions of our Disability Loop e-News newsletter to keep subscribers well informed and up-to-date



# International Partnerships

Over the past year, AFDO has participated in the United Nations 12th Conference of State Parties (CoSP) in New York. Our Director, Frank Hall-Bentick is our representative on the Australian Disability & Development Consortium (ADDC), and our Vice President and International Co-ordinator, Trevor Carroll is the Chair of the Disabled People's International (DPI) Asia-Pacific Executive, and the Information Officer on the DPI World Council Executive.

## Disabled People's International



Trevor Carroll is the Chair of the Disabled People's International (DPI) Asia-Pacific Executive, and the Information Officer on the DPI World Council Executive.

AFDO is a Full member of DPI, and is privileged to hold the sole Australian representative vote on DPI, which has national disability organisational members in over 130 countries, 31 in the Asia Pacific. DPI was established in 1981, the International Year of Disabled Persons. 37 years after it was formed, DPI continues to be the world's only cross-disability global Disabled People's Organization (DPO). It is in partnership with the United Nations.

[www.disabledpeoplesinternational.org](http://www.disabledpeoplesinternational.org)

## United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC)



AFDO has Special Consultative Status with the UN Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC), a status that gives us access to all of the UN bodies that are open to NGOs, including the General Assembly and the Human Rights Council.

ECOSOC, established under the United Nations Charter, is the principal organisation that coordinates economic, social, and related work of the 14 UN specialised agencies. It serves as the central forum for discussing international economic and social issues, and for formulating policy recommendations addressed to Member States and the United Nations system.

[www.un.org/ecosoc](http://www.un.org/ecosoc)



## Pacific Disability Forum



AFDO is a full member of the Pacific Disability Forum (PDF). The PDF is a regional peak body that works in partnership with Disabled Persons Organisations (DPOs) in the Pacific region.

As part of its mission to improve the situation of persons with disabilities, it runs programs for women and youth with disabilities, research, advocacy, capacity building and development.

[www.pacificdisability.org](http://www.pacificdisability.org)

## International Disability Alliance



International Disability Alliance (IDA) is an alliance of networks which brings together over 1,100 peak organisations of persons with disabilities and their families from across eight global and six regional networks including the Pacific Disability Forum of which AFDO is a full member.

Two of our AFDO member organisations have held the Chair role for IDA. Maryanne Diamond (Blind Citizens Australia), and Colin Allen (Deaf Australia).

[www.internationaldisabilityalliance.org](http://www.internationaldisabilityalliance.org)

## Australian Disability Development Consortium



Frank Hall-Bentick is our representative.

Australian Disability Development Consortium (ADDC) is an Australian based, international network focusing attention, expertise and action on disability issues in developing countries; building on a human rights platform for disability advocacy.

Its mission is to promote the rights and inclusion of persons with disabilities in development activities, advocating that disability be fully integrated into all Australian development programs and policies.

[www.addc.org.au](http://www.addc.org.au)

# International Activities

AFDO President, Liz Reid and AFDO International Representative, Trevor Carroll attended the 12th Session of the Conference of State Parties (CoSP) which was held at the UN Headquarters in New York from 11 – 13 June 2019.

## Conference of States Parties

AFDO was part of a larger Australian government and civil society delegation, which consisted of the Department of Social Services (DSS), the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT), and Disability Discrimination Commissioner, Ben Gauntlett, as well as representatives from First Peoples Disability Network (FPDN), NSW Council for Intellectual Disability (CID), People with Disability Australia (PWDA), Queensland Advocacy Incorporated (QAI), Speech Pathology Australia, Vision Australia, and Women With Disabilities Australia (WWDA).

Our delegation this year consisted of four people with disabilities:

- Liz Reid, AFDO President
- Trevor Carroll, AFDO Vice President and International Coordinator
- Monique Blakemore, Autism Aspergers Advocacy Australia (A4)
- Sam Drummond, Lawyer

The theme for CoSP was leaving no one behind through the full implementation of the CRPD. One subtheme was on public private partnerships, the second subtheme was on women and girls with disabilities, and the third subtheme was political participation and equal recognition before the law.

At this conference of state parties, Australian Rosemary Kayess was elected to the Committee which audits and monitors the implementation of the CRPD. Rosemary is an internationally respected lawyer and researcher specialising in discrimination and human rights law.

AFDO co-sponsored two side-events this year. One side-event was on Autism and Motherhood which included one of our delegates, Monique Blakemore from Autism Aspergers Advocacy Australia (A4). The second side-event we co-sponsored was with Disabled People's International (DPI) on Digital Accessibility, and included AFDO's Board Director and International Coordinator, Trevor Carroll on the panel.

While at CoSP, our delegates networked and met with many stakeholders from around the world, including meeting with over 45 key stakeholders face-to-face, attending a Reception hosted by H.E. Gillian Bird, Australian Ambassador and Permanent Representative to the UN.

Our President, Liz Reid and Vice President, Trevor Carroll also attended a dinner function with the Maltese Ambassador and the delegates to CoSP. Malta is one of the 1st countries to officially introduce an Autism Plan.



## Disabled Peoples' International (DPI)

Our International Coordinator, Trevor Carroll has been working with a Canadian Lawyer over the past twelve months on DPI Constitutional Reform. Amendments have been made to the existing DPI Constitution which have been accepted by the Board of Directors, and will be put to DPI members for a vote soon.

Trevor was also Australia's DPI representative (AFDO) at the Conference of States Parties (CoSP) in June 2019. DPI held and co-sponsored four side events and participated in the Civil Society Forum that was held prior to CoSP.

Trevor was a presenter on behalf of DPI Australia (AFDO) at the Digital Accessibility: Strategies for Disability Inclusion in E-Governance Platforms Side event. The focus of his presentation was on the DARE Index and Australia and AFDO's ICT inclusion strategies for people with disabilities at the governance level. The Index provides a

global benchmark for governments, advocates and private sector organisations to assess their progress and identify opportunities in promoting and implementing digital accessibility in relation to Article 7. Australia ranks 12th in the world.

At the end of each day of the conference, DPI held an open meeting with its members who were participating at CoSP, with most of the discussion around the upcoming World Assembly to be held in Peru in 2020.

Trevor is our representative on the four-person DPI Unification Coordination committee which met twice formally, and several other times informally in New York to continue the negotiations and discussions on unifying DPI.

A draft proposal on unifying DPI has been discussed, finalised, and put to the Boards of both groups and has since been ratified.

# Media & Communications

AFDO is often featured in the media following the distribution of media releases on current disability issues, as well as being interviewed on radio and with journalists in print and online media. Some of the issues we have addressed in the past year include calling for Royal Commission into the Abuse & Violence against People with Disability, fully funding the NDIS, public transport issues, access to the Disability Support Pension, and employment issues.

## Media releases

- Conference of States Parties (CoSP) to the CRPD, 11 – 13 June 2019
- AFDO calls for all political parties to make a commitment to people with disability this Federal Election
- Pre Federal Budget Submission 2019 – 2020
- Coalition Government supports a Royal Commission into Abuse & Violence against People with Disability
- Coalition Government must commit to a Royal Commission into Abuse & Violence against People with Disability
- Productivity Commission Review Nails Disability Agreements Reform for Australia
- Outstanding disability leaders recognised in National Awards
- Aged Care Royal Commission Misses Mark for People with Disability Suffering Violence, Abuse and Neglect
- People with disability at risk of being pigeon-holed by supported employment reform

## In the Media

- Australian Representation at CoSP - June 2019
  - AFDO eNews #4 – April 2019 Update
  - Key Areas Where Change is Needed for a Sustainable Disability Support Pension
  - Successful outcome for AFDO's campaign work for people with disability on the Disability Support Pension in prison or on remand
- AFDO has several social media channels, including a Twitter and Facebook presence dedicated to the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS). Our social media presence and regular eNewsletters help us reach more people with disability, community & disability organisations, government, as well as the general community.



**4,939**

**eNewsletters**



**8,917**

**Twitter**



**3,443**

**Facebook**



**1,024**

**Linked In**

To receive regular updates and media releases from AFDO, please subscribe to our newsletter at [www.afdo.org.au](http://www.afdo.org.au) and for NDIS newsletters, please subscribe at [www.disabilityloop.org.au](http://www.disabilityloop.org.au)



## A Note of Thanks to Frank

We would like to take this opportunity to thank Frank Hall-Bentick AM, a champion in the Australian and global disability rights movement, for his many years of service to AFDO, including over a decade of service representing AFDO at the international level and on the Australian Disability + Development Consortium (ADDC) Executive Committee.

Frank stepped down from his role as AFDO's International Coordinator in late 2018, and has recently stepped down as our representative on the ADDC Executive Committee.

Since the International Year of Disabled Persons in 1981, Frank has been at the forefront of disability rights in local, state, national (AFDO and ADDC), regional and world organisations, particularly through Disabled Peoples' International (DPI) and the International Disability Alliance (IDA). For 20 years he has worked closely with the United Nations in Bangkok as an invited expert, and he has received numerous awards in recognition of his valuable work including an Order of Australia Award in 2012.

He has lent a remarkable wealth of experience, knowledge and connections to AFDO nationally and internationally, and has created many opportunities for other people with disability in Australia to engage in international development.

We wish Frank all the very best in the future and wholeheartedly thank you for your years of service in developing and shaping AFDO.

**AFDO Board, Members and Staff**

# Vale Paul Cain – November 2018

On behalf of the Board of AFDO, the Executive and staff, we were saddened by the loss of a remarkable man whose pursuit was to ensure every Australian with an Intellectual Disability was afforded the same rights and freedoms as their peers.

I had the privilege of working with Paul on and off for almost twenty years in the national employment space, and I know that his contribution to Australia has changed many lives and families.

Paul worked diligently for 23 years with Inclusion Australia, previously known as the National Council on Intellectual Disability (NCID), his steadfast commitment to human rights is unsurpassed.

He will be remembered as a tireless advocate with an unwavering commitment to the rights of people with disability.

**Liz Reid**

**AFDO President**





# Directors Report

The Board is responsible for the governance of AFDO in accordance with the Corporations Act and the AFDO Constitution.

The Board was made up of the following Member nominated, or Board-appointed Directors throughout the 2018–2019 Financial Year:

## **Liz Reid**

**President**

Nominated by Physical Disability Australia  
Person with disability

## **Trevor Carroll**

**Vice President (appointed 22nd October 2018)**

Nominated by Disability Justice Advocacy  
Person with disability

## **Janine Neu**

**Vice President**

Nominated by People with Disabilities WA  
Person with disability

## **Frank Hall-Bentick**

**Treasurer**

Nominated by Disability Resources Centre  
Person with disability

## **Emilio Savle**

**Vice President (resigned 22nd October 2018)**

Nominated by Disability Justice Advocacy  
Person with disability

## **John Simpson**

**Director (resigned 27th May 2019)**

Nominated by Blind Citizens Australia  
Person with disability

## **Daniel Stubbs**

**Director (appointed 27th May 2019)**

Nominated by Blind Citizens Australia  
Person with disability

## **Nick Rushworth**

**Director**

Nominated by Brain Injury Australia  
Person with disability

## **Debbie Kennewell**

**Director**

Nominated by Deaf Australia  
Person with disability

## **Peter Miller**

**Director (resigned 22nd October 2018)**

Nominated by Deafness Forum of Australia  
Person with disability

## **Christine Hunter**

**Director (appointed 22nd October 2018)**

Nominated by Deafness Forum of Australia  
Person with disability

## **Kevin Stone**

**Director (resigned 22nd October 2018)**

Nominated by Inclusion Australia  
Person with lived experience of disability

## **Felicity Crowther**

**Director (appointed 22nd October 2018)**

Nominated by Inclusion Australia  
Person with lived experience of disability

## **Richard Dent**

**Director**

Board Appointed for  
Leadership and Governance expertise  
Person with lived experience of disability

## Business registrations

ACN: 105 510 898

ABN: 25 105 510 898

### National Office:

Level 1, The Realm, 18 National Circuit, Barton,  
ACT 2600

### Registered Business Office:

552 Victoria Street, North Melbourne VIC 3051

AFDO is a Public Benevolent Institution and  
a Registered Charity with the Australian Charities  
and Not for Profit Commission (ACNC)

## Board meetings and attendance

The Board met five times during the 2018-19  
Financial Year

16th July 2018

17th September 2018

23rd October 2018

18th March 2019

24th June 2019

## Executive Committee composition and attendance

The Executive is elected by the Board and  
comprised the President, Vice Presidents  
and Treasurer.

The Executive Committee met three times  
between Board meetings by Teleconference  
during the 2018-19 financial year.

19th November 2018

15th April 2019

23rd May 2019

## Finance, Audit & Risk Committee meetings

23rd August 2018

13th September 2018

7th March 2019

### Company Secretary

Ross Joyce



# Financial Snapshot

## 2018 - 2019 Results

Total Revenue.....\$1,985,557

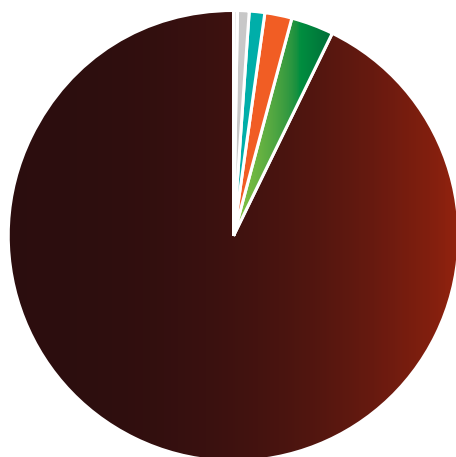
Total Expenditure.....\$2,256,309

**Result - Surplus or (Deficit).....(\$270,752)\***

Total Members Equity - 2017 – 2018.....\$712,935

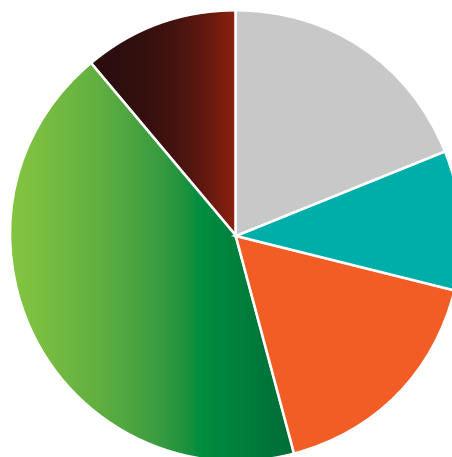
**Total Members Equity - 2018 – 2019.....\$442,183**

## Income 2018 – 2019



Donations.....	<1%
Membership fees.....	<1%
Investment interest.....	1%
Other income.....	2%
Department of Social Services.....	3%
Grants other sources.....	93%

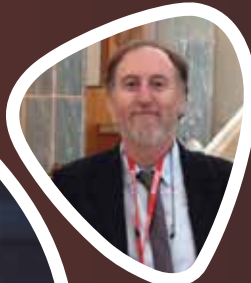
## Expenditure 2018 – 2019



Consultancy.....	19%
Operating expenses.....	10%
Office expenses.....	17%
Employment expenses.....	43%
Consortium distribution.....	11%

Consortium distribution refers to funding obtained by AFDO for projects or other funded activities and distributed to AFDO national Full members as part of undertaking these activities.

\* 2018-2019 was a planned deficit budget, adopted by the Board to undertake a member and AFDO Sustainability Strategy.



**Australian Federation of  
Disability Organisations**

Our vision is that all people with disabilities must be involved  
equally in all aspects of social, economic, political and cultural life.