



Australian Federation of
Disability Organisations

2022/23 ANNUAL REPORT

AUSTRALIAN
FEDERATION OF
DISABILITY ORGANISATIONS

SUPPORT OUR WORK

If you would like to make a donation to support the work that AFDO does in both the national and international sector, please visit [AFDO Donate now](#).



WHERE TO FIND US



www.afdo.org.au



[1800 219 969](tel:1800219969)



office@afdo.org.au



[@AFDO](https://www.facebook.com/AFDO)



[@AfdoOffice](https://twitter.com/AfdoOffice)



[@AFDO2012](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCv3v3v3v3v3v3v3v3v3v3v3)



[AFDO LinkedIn](https://www.linkedin.com/company/afdo)



AFDO OFFICES

National Office

02 6198 3361
Level 1, The Realm
18 National Circuit
Barton ACT 2600

Melbourne Office

(Registered Business
Office)
552 Victoria Street
North Melbourne
VIC 3051

Brisbane Office

Suite 902/ Level 9
Toowong Tower, 9
Sherwood Road
Toowong QLD 4066

Sydney Office

Level 14, 3
Parramatta Square,
153 Macquarie St
Parramatta NSW
2150



SUPPORT OUR WORK

If you would like to make a donation to support the work that AFDO does in both the national and international sector, please visit [AFDO Donate now.](#)



ACRONYMS & ABBREVIATIONS

ADDC	Australian Disability Development Consortium
AFDO	Australian Federation of Disability Organisations
AGM	Annual General Meeting
ADS	Australia's Disability Strategy
BIDS	Business Inclusion & Diversity Services
CoSP	Conference of States Parties
DES	Disability Employment Service
DPI	Disabled Peoples' International
DPO	Disabled Peoples Organisations
DSS	Department of Social Services
DRC	Disability Royal Commission
DRO	Disability Representative Organisations
FPVC	Fire-Proofing Vulnerable Communities
GST	Goods and Services Tax
IDA	International Disability Alliance
LLEN	Local Learning and Employment Network
NDIA	National Disability Insurance Agency
NDIS	National Disability Insurance Scheme
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
NITAN	National Inclusive Transport Advocacy Network
P2E	Passport 2 Employment
TESS	Technical Experts Social Security
UNCRPD	United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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

AFDO also proudly acknowledges Australia's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community and their rich culture and pays respect to their Elders past, present and emerging. 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.

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 and 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.



TABLE OF CONTENTS

About AFDO and Our Members	7
A Message from Our Chair	13
CEO's Message	14
History of Disability Rights in Australia	15
Vale Frank Hall-Bentick	16
Our Sector Voice	18
Our Board	20
Our Team	24
Social Impact	26
Policy, Advocacy & Projects	27
Policy Submissions	34
Projects & Programs	32
Fee for Service	36
National Disability Insurance Scheme and Our Members	40
National Disability Carers Alliance & Every Australian Counts(EAC)	41
National Inclusive Transport Advocacy Network (NITAN)	42
International Partnerships and Engagement	43
Media & Communications	46
Director's Report	47
Financial Snapshot	49



ABOUT AFDO & OUR MEMBERS

The Australian Federation of Disability Organisations (AFDO) is a Disabled People's Organisation (DPO) and the national voice representing people with disability in Australia.

To achieve our mission and vision, we provide policy advice and representation to government and organisations on matters that impact the lives of people with disability. We also inform and educate the general community about disability, and 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.



**Australian Federation of
Disability Organisations**



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 2-22-2025

1.

To represent the interests and united voice of our members and people with disability at a national and international level in all relevant forums.

2.

To build the capacity, profile, reputation and sustainability of AFDO through the strength of our member organisations.

3.

To enhance the connection and influence in international disability initiatives by policy, advocacy and engagement, focused on the Asia Pacific region.





OUR 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 or other representative organisations that uses its voice to advocate on issues.

AFDO is the forum where these views are collected and co-ordinated 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 disability-specific groups 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.

FULL MEMBERS OF AFDO



Advocacy for Inclusion



Arts Access Australia



Autism Aspergers Advocacy Australia



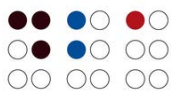
Blind Citizens Australia



Brain Injury Australia



Deaf Australia



Deafblind Australia



Deafness Forum Australia



Disability Advocacy Network Australia



Disability Justice Australia



FULL MEMBERS OF AFDO



Disability Resources Centre



Down Syndrome Australia



Enhanced Lifestyles



National Mental Health Consumer & Carer Forum



People with Disabilities WA



Physical Disability Australia



Polio Australia



Women with Disabilities ACT



Women with Disabilities Victoria

ASSOCIATE MEMBERS OF AFDO



AED Legal Centre



All Means All



Amaze



Aspergers Victoria



Disability Advocacy and Complaints Service of South Australia



Disability Voices Tasmania



Explorability Inc



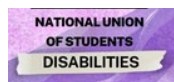
Leadership Plus



Multiple Sclerosis Australia



National Organisation for Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder



National Union of Students- Disabilities Department



Star Victoria



TASC National Limited



Youth Disability Advocacy Service

A MESSAGE FROM OUR CHAIR



AFDO continues to undertake significant systemic advocacy, to listen to what the membership says and wants, and responds to significant issues that impact people with disability and their families, here and internationally. All this is undertaken in an incredibly challenging and uncertain financial environment.

I am proud of AFDO's achievements and that it continues to punch above its weight. A strong Board, nominated by our membership, with a keen strategic eye ensures that management has continued to develop the organisation while focused on our strategic goals. Further details are in this report, however I want to recognise a few areas that contribute to the depth and spread of AFDO's work.

Firstly, AFDO couldn't undertake any of its roles without the ongoing support and contributions from our extensive member organisations. It is these thirty-five organisations, that work ceaselessly representing both specific and population-based people with disability, along with a range of family-led organisations, that make up the fabric and strength of AFDO. We thank each of them, their hard-working, dedicated staff and volunteers, for their commitment and passion.

Secondly, I couldn't undertake my role without the commitment of my fellow Directors, who provide their experience and insight in considering the strategic issues that are a priority for our members and the organisation. I thank them for their support and dedication. It has been another enjoyable year working with you and I value your contribution commitment to AFDO and the disability community more broadly.

Thirdly, we have incredibly focused and capable staff undertaking the day-to-day work to ensure that people with disability and their families have the best representation available. In addition, they contribute to substantial projects and programs in line with our Vision and Mission, that truly make a difference to advancing the rights and inclusion of people with disability in society.

I thank our CEO, Ross, his Management Team, Tracylee, Jim and Amy, and all AFDO Staff, for their commitment and for all the work they have undertaken over this trying period. They managed multiple changes and financial challenges while still producing solid outcomes and significant results.

I look forward to continuing to lead the work with our Board and members to ensure that AFDO continues to deliver on its Vision for all people with disability.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, consisting of a large 'G' and 'L' followed by a horizontal line.

Grant Lindsay
President & Chair

CEO REPORT



A huge year for AFDO with the Board agreeing to increase our staff compliment to provide us with the largest team in policy and advocacy since we started nearly twenty years ago. The increased capacity is clearly demonstrated by the volume of submissions we have made, our increased member engagement and our significant sector wide focus on issues that are a priority to our members.

The team we have worked since January and are currently completing our internal Policy & Advocacy Masterplan which, along with results from a survey of all our members on priorities, will assist us in direction setting and further engagement in pursuing member informed policy and advocacy campaigns. We have a range of Policy Position Statements due to be released and will continue to work more through with member input. We have also further developed our international area and have formed an International Engagement Committee with representatives from the Board along with three representatives from interested members and sector.

AFDO is underpinned by the significant funded project work we win, which financially sustains the organisation, and develops additional resources, capacity building, further engagement, participation and inclusion of people with disability in all aspects of community. Along with changes and new staff to our team it has been a tough year financially with a lack of overall larger grants or other opportunities in alternative funding areas for new projects which are the lifeblood for AFDO's operation. That said, we managed to undertake a rapid budget review and changes that returned a small surplus for the financial year and added this to our equity position.

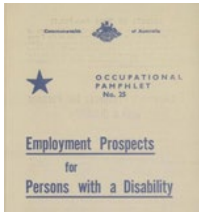
I'd like to acknowledge and thank all our member organisations for their ongoing support and commitment to our work, and for their important work across community, it is greatly appreciated. My thanks need to go to Grant and the AFDO Board for their input, support and collective thinking without which AFDO wouldn't operate at the level it does.

A tough year and a growth year, all handled and achieved through the tremendous work of our Management, Tracylee, Jim and Amy along with the important work of each of our Team, my thanks for all your efforts and dedication.

Ross Joyce
Chief Executive Officer

HISTORY OF DISABILITY RIGHTS IN AUSTRALIA

1800-1970s: Institutionalisation and segregation of PWD is the norm; dominance of medical model



Post-WW1 and WW2: returning soldiers with impairments result in increased number of PWD, making institutionalisation less feasible

1950s/60s: civil rights movement in the USA



1980: PWD protest their exclusion at Rehabilitation International's world congress meeting; Disabled Peoples International is founded

1986: Disability rights advocacy is funded under the Disability Services Act



1992: Disability Discrimination Act passed; states begin passing legislation to close institutions and transition PWD to community-based living

2002: Disability Standards for Public Transport (2005-6 The Australasian Railways Authority applied for an exemption – AFDO took part in the discussions/negotiations)

2006: Howard government introduces Welfare to Work reforms, further restricting DSP eligibility and redirecting PWD to general unemployment benefits



2013: Introduction of the NDIS and removal of state-based supports

1908: Introduction of the Invalid Pension gives PWDs a small measure of independence and recognition

1941: Commonwealth Rehabilitation Service established to provide rehabilitation and employment services



1970s: shift to normalisation of disability/deinstitutionalisation; shift towards PWD being involved in their own treatment and service provision

1981: UN International Year of Disabled Persons; begin transition from medical model to social model



1991: Invalid Pension is replaced with the Disability Support Pension; neoliberal reform of social security encourages labour market activation of PWD through more stringent eligibility criteria

2000s: Deinstitutionalisation continues; PWD incorporated into mainstream services

2005: Disability Standards for Education introduced, however, few public education initiatives were undertaken to support this change

2008: Australian Government adopts the United Nations Convention for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD)



2019: Royal Commission into Violence, Abuse, Neglect and Exploitation of People with Disability



VALE FRANK HALL-BENTICK

Our Board, Staff, Members and the disability sector in Australia and around the world, were saddened to learn that Frank Hall-Bentick, our long-time supporter, director, colleague and staunch friend of AFDO, had passed away in May 2023. Frank was highly regarded as one of Australia's most prolific and celebrated disability advocates and campaigners and had been at the forefront of disability rights since 1981.

In 1982 Frank, with his sister Lesley Hall, co-founded and ran the Disability Resources Centre (DRC), and individual advocacy and campaigning organisation. He continued in an active role with DRC as a non-executive director until his death. Among other things, he also established and chaired the Australian Disability and Indigenous Peoples Education Fund (ADIPEF). AFDO lent its support to Frank's work through distribution of the scholarships each year and will continue to do so, with the Trustees, in Frank's honour.

Frank was a tireless advocate and contributed much across his more than forty years of disability rights work. A key highlight was his engagement, in the early 2000s, in the drafting of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of People with Disabilities (UNCRPD). This was a mammoth piece of work and an incredible contribution to the rights of all people with disability.

For a number of years Frank served as the International Coordinator for AFFO, as well as on the AFDO Board from 2016 until 2019. He was a well-known figure internationally, providing support to and engagement with global disability movements, particularly through his work with Disabled Peoples' International (DPI). In 2004 Frank was instrumental in ensuring that AFDO took over the sole Australian vote for DPI, becoming the representative voice, and forming Disabled Peoples International - Australia.

Frank was awarded both the Order of Australia and an Australian Centenary of Federation Award for in recognition of his extensive and uncompromising work in disability advocacy.

We have lost a passionate disability rights advocate, mentor and friend who fought to make Australia, and the world a truly inclusive and better place for all.



What I've learned after many years of being involved in disability advocacy is that you need to be persistent and tenacious. It's not a short campaign. There may be some wins that we get quickly, but most of it's going to take people's lifetimes.

[Frank in 'A Patient Man'](#)

Grant Lindsay
President & Chair

Trevor Carroll
Vice President &
International Coordinator

OUR SECTOR VOICE



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

National peak bodies engagement

- Every Australia Counts (EAC)
- Mental Health Australia
- Carers Australia
- National Disability Services (NDS)
- Inclusion Australia
- Australian Communications Consumer Action Network (ACCAN)
- People with Disability Australia (PWDA)
- First Peoples Disability Network Australia (FPDN)
- Women With Disabilities Australia (WWDA)
- National Ethnic Disability Alliance (NEDA)
- Children and Young People with Disability Australia (CYDA)

International representation

- Australian Disability and Development Consortium (ADDC)
- Disabled Peoples' International (DPI)
- International Disability Alliance (IDA)
- The Global Initiative for Inclusive ICTs (G3ict)
- Pacific Disability Forum (PDF)
- SustainedAbility Disability & Climate Network / Disability Caucus
- United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC)

OUR SECTOR VOICE



Australian representation

- Assistive Technology for All (ATFA)
- Aviation Access Forum (AAF)
- Australian Electoral Commission Disability Advisory Committee
- NDIA CEO Forum
- Dept. of Human Services Welfare Payment Infrastructure Transformation (WPIT) Services Australia
- Disability Support IRC
- Disability Gateway Reference Group
- Not-for-profit Stewardship Group - Australian Taxation Office
- DSS National Disability Strategy Reform Steering Group
- NDIS Quality & Safeguard Commission – Disability Sector Consultative Committee
- National Inclusive Transport Advocacy Network (NITAN)
- Australian Public Service Commission Disability Employment Working Group
- Services Australia Civil Society Advisory Group (CSAG)
- NDIS Utilisation Project - Victoria
- National Assistive Technology Alliance (NATA)
- VicRoads Disability Parking Permit Eligibility Reference Group
- Civil Society UNCRPD Shadow Working Group
- Services Australia Disability Peaks DSP Working Group
- Technical Experts Social Security (TESS) Working Group
- Public Interest Advocacy Centre (PIAC) Working Group
- Advisory Group for National Disability Research Agenda (NDRA)
- Australian Research Council (ARC) Linkages Project
- Disability Act Review Advisory Group
- Western Sydney University Autonomy, Diversity & Disability: Everyday Practices of Technology Project Advisory Committee

OUR BOARD



Grant Lindsay

President (Chair)

Nominated by Down Syndrome Australia

Grant has been a Director of Down Syndrome Australia since its inception in 2011 and was the Deputy Chair until September 2023. He was President of Down Syndrome Australia (NT) for thirteen years. Grant has been on the Board of Carpentaria Disability Services since 2005 and is currently the President and Board Chair.

He is also the Past President of the Rotary Club of Darwin, and is currently the Club's International Service, National Projects and Rotary Foundation Director. He is also the Global Grants Sub-Committee Chair for Rotary District 9560 (Northern Australia and Timor Leste). Grant is a Director and Senior Consultant of Creative TEAMS, as well as a Director of Living Edge Enterprise P/L. Grant and his wife Tammy have two children. Their daughter, Alishia, has Down Syndrome and is 25 years of age. Grant is a strong advocate for people with intellectual disability, promoting inclusion and equality in all things.



Trevor Carroll OAM

Vice President & International Coordinator

Nominated by Disability Justice Australia

Trevor is passionate about protecting and enhancing the human rights of people with disabilities, having acquired an incomplete spinal cord injury in the mid-1990s and a bi-lateral sensorineural hearing loss and Meniere's disease. He was recognised for his service to people with disability in the 2022 Queens Birthday Honours List with the award of the Order of Australia Medal (OAM). He has been a member of the AFDO Board since 2012, serving as Treasurer, President, and Vice President respectively. Trevor has been CEO at Disability Justice Australia (DJA) since 2009 and represents AFDO as:

- Elected Director and Information Officer on the Board of Disabled Peoples' International (DPI)
- Chair of the DPI Asia-Pacific Region
- Member of the Pacific Disability Forum (PDF)
- Member of the Australian Electoral Commission Disability Advisory Committee
- Executive of the Australian Disability and Development Consortium (ADDC).

OUR BOARD



Chris Hunter

Vice President and Treasurer

Nominated by Deafness Forum Australia

Chris is an Adviser to Deafness Forum Australia (DFA) and its representative on the AFDO Board. Although she has lived with hearing loss since childhood, she pursued a successful and rewarding school-teaching career until her retirement in 2012.

Chris has since served as president of Hearing Matters Australia for six years and is an honorary Life Member of the organisation. She is a staunch advocate for people living with hearing loss and has made representations on their behalf to Australian federal and state government agencies and on consultation panels. She is also an active participant on the Transport for NSW Accessible Transport Committee (ATAC), again as DFA's representative.

Chris collaborates with hearing care professionals, academic researchers, consumer representatives and international organisations, with the aim of having hearing loss recognised as a priority health issue. She advocates for a global best practice model focused on the needs of the individual and on strengthening the quality of hearing loss management.



Nick Rushworth

Director (Leave of Absence July 2022-June 2023)

Nominated by Brain Injury Australia

Nick 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.

Nick has a journalist background and 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.

He was formerly a producer with the Nine Television Network's "Sunday" program and ABC Radio National.

OUR BOARD



Andrew Fairbain

Independent Director

Nominated by Physical Disability Australia

Andrew is a Left Trans Tibial, (below knee) amputee of 8 years. He has many years of experience both on the inside, and the outside, of disability systems, on boards and committees, and has strong networks across the disability sector with disabled people, family members, and the not-for-profit and government sectors.

Andrew is qualified as an Assistive Technology Mentor with experience of the NDIS, assistive technologies, and home modifications. As a Project Coordinator with Limbs 4 Life, Andrew builds sustainable Peer Support groups for amputees and delivers national training to Limbs 4 Life training peer support volunteers.

Andrew is the WA representative on the Limbs 4 Life National Amputee Advisory Council, and President and WA State Director of Physical Disability Australia, the peak national body for people with physical disability.



Izzy Moss

Independent Director

Nominated by Women with Disabilities ACT

Izzy is the chair of Women with Disability ACT and a young queer person with disability. Izzy has extensive experience in disability policy, serving as a member of the Executive Committee of Health Care Consumers ACT and having previously worked for Advocacy for Inclusion. She is currently the Disability Justice Liaison Officer at Canberra Community Law.

Izzy has completed degrees from the Australian National University in Cell and Molecular Biology and Genetics, and Sociology, and is passionate about the achievement of human rights for people with disability, especially in justice settings, health and medicine.

OUR BOARD



Debbie Kennewell

Director

Nominated by Deaf Australia

Debbie is an Auslan user and is a current board member at Deaf Australia. She 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 resides in Darwin and works for Deaf Services/the Deaf Society in connecting Deaf and Hard of Hearing individuals to needed supports across the Northern Territory.

With an interest in raising disability issues, Debbie ensures that the needs of the Australian Deaf community is promoted and included in conversations elsewhere.



Richard Dent

Independent Director

Richard was appointed by the Board for his governance and leadership expertise. He is a Fellow of the Australian Institute of Company Directors, and has been active in the disability field for more than 25 years. He contributed to the leadership of the NDIS campaign, and he has held CEO, Executive and Board member roles within UnitingCare, the E W Tipping Foundation (now Aruma), National Disability Services, and multiple other organisations.

Richard has been active in Australia's civic life for almost three decades, including as Leadership Victoria's Chief Executive Officer, where he implemented multiple programs and initiatives for equity in disability, gender, multiculturalism and LGBTIQ+. He is a specialist international consultant in leadership, strategy and NFP governance and has advised governments and contributed to public policy through VCOSS, NDS and other peak bodies.

Richard is active in a wide range of community organisations and academic institutions, and his contributions have included making progress on economic wellbeing, fostering social fairness, upholding animal welfare rights, fostering leadership in rural, regional and remote communities, building the relationship between Australia and Aotearoa, maintaining a sustainable global environment and upholding global human rights, particularly in multicultural communities and with a particular focus on rights of all people with disability.

OUR TEAM



Ross Joyce
Chief Executive
Officer



Tracylee Arestides
National Manager: Policy,
Sustainability & Projects



Amy Simmons
Manager:
Operations



Jim Valavanis
Manager: Business
Development & Sustainability



Lara Need
Coordinator: Board &
Governance Coordinator



Lauren Henley
& Guide Dog Valentina
Senior Systemic Advocate



Duncan Steward
Coordinator: Business
Sustainability



Rebecca (Bec) Rudd
Coordinator:
Policy & Submissions



Ainslie Whitburn
Project Coordinator:
FPVC & BIDS Support



Melissa Morgan
Coordinator: BIDS Hunter
Valley



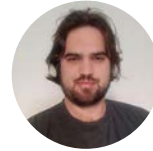
Nicci Richman
Coordinator: BIDS
Hunter Valley



Angie Elphick
Coordinator: BIDS ACT



Tanya Hupatz
Administration Officer



Nick Wilson
Policy & Advocacy Officer



Kirra (Kiz) Jackson
Projects Coordinator



Amber Freeman
Project Officer: FPVC



Jo-Ann Mitchell
Project Officer:
BIDS Hunter



Siming Chen
Project Officer:
BIDS ACT



Mark Sarosi
Project Officer:
BIDS ACT

Annette Fale - Administration Officer (until Dec 2023)

Ella Meredith - Administration Officer (until May 2023)

Samantha Collins - Executive Assistant to CEO (until November 2022)

Helen Cameron - Executive Assistant to CEO (December - June 2023)

Jo Muscat - Coordinator - Board & Governance (June 2023)

AFDO CONSULTANTS & CONTRACTORS



Sandra Quinlan- Culture and Remote Work Consultant



Carol Lewis- HR Principal Consultant



Nunzio Giunta- Chief Financial Officer



Simon Coope- Consultant CFO



David Latham- First Tier Media - Media & Communications Consultant



Mary Henley-Collopy- Expert Adviser - NDIS & Australia's Disability Strategy



Jessica Zammit- Expert Adviser- Inclusive Employment & Policy



Richard Witbreuk (from March 2023)- Expert Adviser- Transport- NITAN Chairperson



Natasha Thomson- Expert Adviser- Social Security- TESS Working Group



Eva Sifis- Expert Adviser - Inclusion in the Arts

Natalie Wade (until January 2023)- Expert Adviser - Disability Royal Commission

Jody Barney (until July 2022)- Expert Adviser - First Nations Disability & Culture

Geoff Trappett OAM (until February 2023)- Expert Adviser - Transport - NITAN Chairperson



SOCIAL IMPACT

The result of AFDO's recent strategic realignment and refresh is a more targeted approach to contemporary issues affecting people with disability. This extends to re-evaluating how we gauge the impact of our actions. Measuring our social impact tracks any significant, positive changes that our work in advocacy and engaging with government and other bodies, has in addressing the inequalities and challenges facing Australians with disability.

In October 2022 AFDO produced its first report dealing with the social impact of our activities over a five-year period from 2017. AFDO's activities were evaluated for the report using a measurement criterion centred around the inputs, activities and outputs of engagement. It is anticipated that the AFDO Social Impact report will now be produced annually.

As part of the social impact measurement activity being undertaken across AFDO, we now review each report arising from our submissions to government and other bodies, either as a sole peak body or in coalition with our Members. This review tracks the timing of reports released after submissions have been made, the number of unique mentions of the AFDO submission in the report, and any direct findings or recommendations related to, or consistent with, submitted AFDO recommendations.

For example, in the Australian Human Rights Commission enquiry into the application by the City of Ryde to be exempt from the Disability Discrimination ACT, the final report noted that the AFDO co-ordinated submissions from NITAN, Physical Disability Australia (PDA) and Blind Citizens Australia (BCA) had "considerable force" in preliminary decision making against granting an exemption. The request for exemption was denied.

In June 2023 the AFDO Members forum was dedicated to the role of social impact and its measurement in enhancing the effectiveness of disability advocacy organisations. Presenting on the program were:

- Andrea Comastri, Hotel Etico on Measuring Social Impact and Using the Results,
- Anna Bowden, Royal Far West on The Journey to Including Social Impact and the Changes for Staff, Management and Board,
- Rachel Bertram, University of Technology Sydney, co-creator of the Social Impact Toolbox, a free resource for NFPs.

POLICY, ADVOCACY & PROJECTS

For the first time in our 20-year history, we now have a dedicated Policy and Advocacy Team. This has enabled us to be more strategic and proactive in how we approach our policy and advocacy work. As such, we have dedicated a significant amount of time to strategy and planning during this financial year.

We are in the process of finalising a comprehensive Policy and Advocacy Master Plan to outline:

- How we will decide which issues to focus on
- How we will encourage greater collaboration between members
- How we will influence public policy
- How we will undertake proactive advocacy work around our agreed priorities
- How we will promote our work
- How we will measure our influence and impact

The new approach to policy and advocacy has involved developing two new survey tools. One of these will be used to periodically check in with our members around current policy priorities. Given resources are limited, it is critical that we are allocating resources to the issues that are of most concern to our members.

The second survey tool will be distributed to member organisations on an annual basis. It will help us gather:

- Contact details for current policy and systemic advocacy-related staff working for the organisation
- List of current policy priorities the organisation is working on
- List of external committees the organisation is currently represented on.

We will use this information to develop and maintain an “advocacy matrix”, which will be shared with members. This will let us easily identify which organisations are working on which particular issues. It is also designed to encourage greater collaboration across the membership by encouraging organisations to join forces to tackle issues together, rather than separately.

As part of the revamped approach to Policy and Advocacy, we also wanted a mechanism in place to coordinate policy-related activities across the membership. To fulfil this need, we established the AFDO Policy Network.

POLICY, ADVOCACY & PROJECTS

The Policy Network consists of policy and systemic advocacy staff working across each of our member organisations. CEOs and other staff are also welcome to get involved. It is envisaged that the majority of policy and systemic advocacy work will be undertaken at this level. This will free up CEOs to review and sign off on materials and deal with broader organisational issues as required.

We currently use the AFDO Policy Network in the following ways:

- We regularly disseminate an updated copy of our submission spreadsheet to keep members put-to-date on relevant consultation processes.
- We engage with the Policy Network to request feedback or input on important pieces of work.
- We convene a 1.5-hour Policy Network Forum every two months to discuss issues of most concern to members. All meetings are captioned an Auslan interpreted, with a recording being provided after each meeting for the benefit of those who could not attend.

At AFDO, we know that good policy work is about more than just writing submissions. When it comes to submission-writing though, we always like to consider which approach will be most impactful. In January 2023, for example, we coordinated the development of a joint sector submission on the proposed framework for the new assistive technology and home modifications scheme for the aged care system. While we had a lot to say on this topic, we considered that there was benefit in approaching this issue with a united voice. As such, we worked with other members of the National Assistive Technology Alliance (NATA) to prepare a response that ended up being endorsed by more than 20 organisations.

We approached the review of the Commonwealth Disability Services Act in a similar fashion. This was the first time the Act had been looked at since its inception and this reflected a huge reform for the disability sector. As such, we decided it was best for the sector to speak with one voice about what needed to be included in the new Act. This influenced our decision to contribute to a joint sector submission rather than preparing our own.



POLICY, ADVOCACY & PROJECTS

AFDO also aims to be a thought leader on a range of important policy issues, this year, we have:

- Presented a session entitled, "The Long and Winding Road to Audio Description on Australian Television: Lessons in Systemic Advocacy" at the Round Table Conference on Information Access for People with a Print Disability.
- Presented a session entitled, "The role of assistive technology in safeguarding against violence, abuse and neglect" at the Safer Spaces for People with a Disability conference.

We have also partnered with the Older Persons Advocacy Network (OPAN) to prepare a joint paper on the provision of services and supports to older people with disability who are not eligible for the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS). We are mindful that this issue still hasn't received a lot of attention. As such, we hope this joint paper will help us to:

- Educate governments, service providers and advocacy organisations on key issues and statistics relating to ageing with a disability or obtaining a disability later in life.
- Promote the rights and needs of people ageing with a disability or who acquire a disability later in life.
- Improve the quality of the discussion around meeting the needs of older people with disability through the current aged care reforms, National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS), and other federal, state and territory programs.
- Help AFDO to develop a policy position that will inform future advocacy work in this area.



Finally, we have started proactively tracking our policy work to determine our impact, and ensure we carry on our advocacy efforts beyond the mere act of making a submission to a public inquiry. The following two case studies demonstrate how we are doing this.



CASE STUDY ONE

Opposing an exemption to the Transport Standards

Last year, the City of Ryde sought a temporary exemption under section 55(1) of the Disability Discrimination Act 1992 (Cth) and section 33A.1 of the Disability Standards for Accessible Public Transport 2002 (Cth). They were seeking a further 5-year extension to the requirement for all bus stops located within their municipality to be fully accessible by 31st December 2022.

We lodged a submission with the Australian Human Rights Commission (AHRC) opposing the City of Ryde's request. We prepared this submission in partnership with the National Inclusive Transport Advocacy Network (NITAN), who we established and continue to auspice. Separate submissions were also made by our members, Blind Citizens Australia and Physical Disability Australia.

Following our strong representation, the AHRC has now overturned the request for an extension and requires the City of Ryde to comply with the accessibility requirements as set out in the Disability Standards for Accessible Public Transport 2002 (Cth). The decision is available on the Commission's website and has been published in the Commonwealth Gazette.

This is an important decision which will have broader implications. Along with NITAN and other member organisations we will now seek clarification from the City of Ryde as to when it will comply with the standards for all bus stops.



CASE STUDY TWO

Improving access to social security for Australians with Disability

Changes to the Disability Support Pension and the broader social security system that have occurred over the last two decades have created a range of barriers for people with disability. These barriers continue to impact upon the health, wellbeing and quality of life of many people with disability across Australia. They are also placing increased demand on advocacy and information services, as each case needs to be addressed at an individual level. These barriers would be most effectively overcome by addressing the root problems with Australia's social security system. As such, our members have consistently endorsed our policy and advocacy work in relation to social security and specifically, the Disability Support Pension.

In 2022, we made a submission to the Inquiry into the Purpose, Intent and Adequacy of the Disability Support Pension. The final report from this Inquiry mentioned AFDO 55 times, and 21 of the 30 recommendations included in the final report were consistent with recommendations put forward in our submission. A further four recommendations were consistent with commentary that appeared in the body of our submission.[i]

While we are pleased with this level of influence, we now need to wait for the Government to respond to the final report. This will provide us with an understanding of which recommendations the Government has accepted either in part or in full. Based on this information, we will be able to develop an advocacy strategy to hold Government accountable. In doing so, we will advocate for the implementation of changes that will ensure Australia is meeting its obligations to people with disability under Article 28 of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (Adequate standard of living and social protection).

At the same time, we are driving positive change around access to social security for people with disability by:

- Convening regular meetings of the Technical Experts on Social Security group (TESS). This is an AFDO formed group comprising a number of experts across the country who come together to discuss necessary reforms relating to particular aspects of the social security system for people with disability.
- Representing the needs of people with disability at meetings of the Welfare Payment Infrastructure Transformation Civil Society Advisory Group, convened by Services Australia.
- Making submissions to other relevant inquiries, such as the 2022-23 Inquiry into the Cost of Living, the 2022-2023 Inquiry into the Extent and Nature of Poverty in Australia and the Royal Commission into Robodebt.

[i] Commonwealth of Australia, Senate Affairs Community References Committee (2022) 'Final Report from the Inquiry into the Purpose, Intent and Adequacy of the Disability Support Pension', ISBN: 978-1-76093-349-4.

POLICY SUBMISSIONS

AFDO has engaged in policy work across a range of subject areas in the last financial year.

Our work with the Royal Commission into Violence, Abuse, Neglect, and Exploitation of People with Disability is nearing its end, with a final submission outlining AFDO's recommendations made in December 2022. In addition to our continuing work with the DRC, AFDO has made submissions and contributed to policy work over a number of other areas, including public transport, the COVID-19 pandemic, Australia's Disability Strategy (ADS), and the Robodebt Royal Commission, among many others. A full list of completed submissions is provided below.

Submissions, July 2022 – June 2023

- Submission to the review of the National Disability Advocacy Framework 2022-2025 (July 2022)
- Joint Submission (AFDO & NITAN) Stage 2 Reform of the Disability Standards for Accessible Public Transport 2002 (August 2022)
- Submission to the Select Committee on Work and Care (September 2022)
- Inquiry into Long COVID and Repeated COVID Infections (November 2022)
- Submission to the Treasury Employment White Paper (December 2022)
- Submission to the Joint Standing Committee Capability and Culture of the NDIA (December 2022)
- Submission to the Disability Inclusion Bill Exposure Draft (December 2022)
- Australia's Disability Strategy 2021-2031: Consultation to inform the Strategy Guides (December 2022)
- Submission to the Department of Health and Aged Care, Consultation Discussion Paper on designing the Australian Centre for Disease Control (December 2022)
- Submission to the Disability Royal Commission– Final recommendations
- Joint Submission (AFDO & DANA) Pre-budget Submission (January 2023)
- Submission to the National Dementia Action Plan (January 2023)
- Submission to the Royal Commission into the Robodebt Scheme (February 2023)
- A New Act to Replace the Disability Services Act 1986 (February 2023)
- Submission to the Inquiry into the extent and nature of poverty in Australia (February 2023)

POLICY SUBMISSIONS

- Joint Submission (AFDO & NATA) to the DHAC, Assistive Technologies and Home Modifications Scheme for in-home aged care (February 2023)
- A draft Quality Framework for the Disability Employment Services Program (March 2023)
- Submission to the Select Committee Cost of Living Inquiry (March 2023)
- Submission to the Productivity Commission Inquiry into Carer Leave (March 2023)
- Review of the Impact of COVID-19 on School Students with Disability (April 2023)
- Article 4 of Optional Protocol Convention Against Torture, etc. Treatment or Punishment (April 2023)
- Australia Post Modernisation Consultation (April 2023)
- Submission to the Productivity Commission, Review of Philanthropy (May 2023)
- Joint Submission A new system of federal administrative review (May 2023)
- Joint submission – Inquiry into the Provision of and Access to Dental Care, June 2023 (June 2023)
- Joint Submission (AFDO & NITAN) 2022 Review of the Disability Standards for Accessible Public Transport (June 2023)

For further details, please visit www.afdo.org.au/our-work/policy-work/





PROJECTS & PROGRAMS

Funding and Projects undertaken in line with our Vision, Mission, Goals and supporting our membership capacity/capability include the following:

ILC ICB (Events/CRM)

March 2020 to 30 June 2024

This project is funded by the Commonwealth government as part of the Information, Linkages and Capacity Building (ILC) Program – Individual Capacity Building (ICB) stream. Originally, it was a 3-year project working with 10 member organisations as consortium partners with AFDO as the lead partner. The objectives are to:

- Build the capacity of consortium members by selecting, modifying, and training consortium members with a fully accessible Customer Relationship Management (CRM) system.
- Develop peer networks and training activities co-designed by and for people with disability. Between 155 and 165 activities will be delivered through a mix of face-to-face, peer-to-peer and online strategies.

Fireproofing Vulnerable Communities (FPVC)

September 2022 to June 2024

Fire Proofing Vulnerable Communities (FPVC) is a state-wide risk reduction education and training initiative aimed at engaging firefighters and vulnerable communities of people with disabilities (PwD) to decrease fire injuries and fatalities.

The FPVC Project has the following objectives:

- To build the capacity of PwD to engage with fire and disaster risk reduction and to better understand and communicate with firefighters and other emergency responders.
- Develop and deliver educational resources and training programs for emergency services staff in regional, rural, and metropolitan areas.
- Long term reduction in the disproportionately high number of PwD sustaining harm in fire events such as house and bush fires.

Our partners include:

- Fire and Rescue NSW – Primary Delivery Partner
- NSW Rural Fire Service – Resource Delivery Partner
- University of Sydney – Research and Evaluation Partner

The project is funded by the Disaster Risk Reduction Fund, a program jointly funded by the Australian and New South Wales Governments

PROJECTS & PROGRAMS

Business Inclusion & Diversity Service Hunter Region

November 2022 to November 2024

BIDS-Hunter is a free service provided to 4 LGAs in the Hunter (Newcastle, Lake Macquarie, Maitland and Port Stephens) offering practical assistance and expertise to support employers become more confident, inclusive and accessible for both their employees and customers.

BIDS is a customised approach to explore and understand each business, build leaders' capabilities, undertakes a disability friendly check, deliver a detailed recommendation report, and links businesses to relevant providers.

Business Inclusion & Diversity Service, Canberra ACT Region

November 2022 to November 2024

Offering practical assistance and expertise to support employers to become more confident, inclusive and accessible for both their employees and customers.

BIDS Provides a customised approach to explore and understand each business, builds leaders capabilities, undertakes a disability friendly check, delivers a detailed recommendation report, and links businesses to relevant providers.

Building Disability Confidence in Small to Medium Enterprises

October 2022 to October 2023

Create and deliver at least 30 workshops to small to medium enterprises with the goal of education around disability, increased disability-friendly workplaces, and increased employment of people with disability.

Funded by the Victorian Transport Accident Commission (TAC)

Increasing the Financial Literacy of NDIS Self-Managed Participants

This project has been funded by the Ecstra Foundation to increase the confidence and capability of people who are self-managed on the NDIS around their budget and funding.

It is the second phase of the project which involves the development of resources, creation and presentation of several webinars, and a series of educational modules.



FEE FOR SERVICE

AFDO's deep connection to organisations and individuals in the disability sector enables us to offer a wide range of services directly connecting people with disability and their expertise to organisations seeking training and consultation.

Our dedicated AFDO Amplify database ensures the input of people with disability into a variety of projects including design, technology, financial literacy and product development.

As an organisation run by, and for people with disability, AFDO understands the barriers that hinder the participation of people with disabilities, as well as the practical steps that businesses, organisations, government, and communities can take to become more welcoming, confident and accessible.

Services on offer from AFDO include:

Focus Groups Recruitment and Management

Focus groups provide insightful information through guided group discussion, where participants share their thoughts, feelings, attitudes and ideas on various topics. AFDO has recruited people with disabilities to participate in a wide variety of focus groups in the last twelve months.

Depending on the client brief, AFDO focus groups can include people with a wide range of disabilities, or can be made up of people with a specific disability. For example, when working with La Trobe University Centre for Technology Infusion, AFDO was able to recruit 36 people with disabilities ranging from vision and mobility impairment to intellectual disability and neurodivergence to take part in an onsite trial of a driverless bus at Sydney's Olympic Park over a three day period.

'AFDO has been our principled and close partner representing the point of view of people with disability. They have recruited and managed a wide variety and large number of people with lived experience of disability to participate in discussions or trials ... Their professionalism in conducting their activities contributed significantly to the success of these projects. It allowed us to focus on our strengths, the development of the input to people with disability and on incorporating their feedback.'

- Erik Van Vulpen, Deputy Director, Centre for Technology Infusion, La Trobe University

Engagement and Training Sessions - Face-to-Face and Online

The best way to drive organisational change is by banishing the myths and stigma surrounding disability. AFDO engages experienced facilitators and trainers, living with disability, to deliver training to a wide variety of organisations to assist them to become both disability confident and more accessible to people with disabilities. Training modules available from AFDO have been developed and reviewed by people with disability.

FEE FOR SERVICE

Disability Friendly Check

The Disability Friendly Check has been developed by AFDO to review the current practices of organisations and identify practical improvements that can be made.

The Disability Friendly Check is made up of two parts.

Part A includes:

- Current views of disability in the workplace (for example perceived prevalence of disability within the organisation, views about disclosure and adjustments etc)
- Current comfort with disability (knowledge of language and communication and previous experience with people with disability etc)
- Workplace culture, health and wellbeing
- Workplace flexibility and adjustments
- Policies and practices, including disclosure
- Awareness of existing resources and supports
- Recruitment practices

Part B provides physical access considerations for organisations to improve the experience of customers and employees. This includes:

- Arrival to the business (accessibility to entry, car parks etc)
- Potential improvements to internal accessibility such as lifts, stairs, ramps, lighting, ambient sound, reception considerations etc
- Workplace considerations
- Customer considerations
- Accessibility of communications and systems

BIDS Licensing Agreements - Spinal Life Australia

In 2022 Spinal Life Australia (SLA), based in Queensland, entered a licensing agreement with AFDO to utilise and implement the Business Inclusion & Diversity Services (BIDS) program in the Moreton Bay region.

AFDO and a consultant trained SLA's BIDS Officer via Teams and in person.

AFDO's BIDS Support Officer, has then met weekly online with SLA's BIDS officer for four months and from now until September 2023 they will meet fortnightly via MS Teams.

The BIDS Support Officer provides advice and information to the BIDS officer to assist in addressing any barriers they may be facing or to talk through any changes needed to the program to ensure its success.

SLA's BIDS Officer provides quarterly reports with data on any deliverables they need to meet for their funding body and includes the number and types of business approached, those entering the program, any employment outcomes for people with disability and inclusive practices implemented by small to medium businesses.





NATIONAL DISABILITY INSURANCE SCHEME & OUR MEMBERS

The NDIS started on 1st July 2013 in the Barwon Region of Victoria and is currently supporting over 592,059 participants* to access the supports they need to live the life they choose. AFDO continues to work with its members, government, NDIA, and community to ensure that the NDIS meets the needs of people with disability.

The Facts:

*As of the 31st March 2023:

- 592,059 Australians are being actively supported by the NDIS, with 404,336 of those participants (68%) located in major cities.
- Over the last twelve months, there have been 21,209 new participants join the NDIS, with 2,492 participants leaving the scheme.
- There were approximately 82,863 children receiving supports in the Early Childhood Early Intervention (ECEI) gateway 95,773
- 44,689 Australians (7%) being supported by the NDIS are Indigenous Australians
- 54,201 Australians (9%) being supported by the NDIS are from Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) communities
- 207,385 participants (35%) have Autism as their primary disability
- 88,132 participants (14%) have Intellectual disability as their primary disability
- 61,999 participants (10%) have Developmental Delay as their primary disability
- 60,864 participants (10%) have Psychosocial disability as their primary disability

NATIONAL DISABILITY CARERS ALLIANCE (EAC)

The National Disability and Carer Alliance (the Alliance) established the Every Australian Counts (EAC) campaign as a "whole of community" campaign which was effective in driving support for the creation and implementation of the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS).

This national campaign was devised and spearheaded in early 2011 by the three key sector organisations covering Disability Advocacy, Carers Advocacy and Disability Services & Supports, sharing a common interest in transforming disability services and supports.

The Alliance comprised the Australian Federation of Disability Representative Organisations, Carers Australia and National Disability Services. In early 2018 it expanded its membership to include Mental Health Australia in recognition of the unmet support needs with mental health and particularly those with psychosocial disability and the NDIS.

The EAC campaign, driven by the Alliance and its ever-growing grass roots supporters, aimed to mobilise and persuade Australia, including the Australian Government, to transform the way disability services were delivered, to benefit people with disability and their families/carers. Following EACs successful campaigning and adoption by governments, the NDIS commenced operation on 1st July 2013 to the benefit of people with disability and their families.

In 2022 the Alliance determined that it was timely for the organisations to work towards the EAC campaign, ultimately operating in its own right as an independent legal entity. This must be with the continuing input, direction and response of its "grassroots supporters".

The Alliance established an agreement and Terms of Reference which set out a process via an initial Steering Committee to establish the legal entity and its structure. Both NDS and AFDO, as founding member organisations, would continue to have an ongoing role in the Steering Committee and ultimately on the Board or Committee of Management of EAC.

With its significant supporter base across Australia, EAC continues to effectively influence and push for change to ensure the NDIS delivers on its promise to people with disability. Something that AFDO continues to reinforce with its long-term engagement and rich history in proudly establishing Every Australian Counts.



NATIONAL INCLUSIVE TRANSPORT ADVOCACY NETWORK (NITAN)

NITAN was formed by AFDO in recognition that there wasn't one national voice focused on inclusive transport and that many issues which were systemic and affecting people with disability in all regions were not receiving sufficient attention and remained unaddressed by governments.

AFDO and NITAN wish to acknowledge the work of Mr. Geoff Trappett OAM who was instrumental in assisting in the establishment of NITAN, he was the inaugural Chairperson and continued his strong advocacy for people with disability in the public transport space. On behalf of all we want to thank you Geoff for your hard work and commitment to ensuring public transport is accessible for all.



**Australian Federation of
Disability Organisations**

A highlight of our work this year is noted in the refusal by the Australian Human Rights Commission of the City of Ryde's application for an exemption for bus stops not being compliant by the legislated deadline. NITAN and AFDO lodged a joint submission opposing the application along with other key sector representative organisations. This is a significant decision as it demonstrates that organisations have to be accountable and responsible for compliance with the Disability Standards Accessible Public Transport standards. It illustrates that our voice matters.

NITAN lodged a submission into the DSAPT modernisation process. At the time of writing, we are currently awaiting the federal and state governments' positions on this matter. This area will require ongoing advocacy, especially in the area of reporting and compliance.

We would like to thank all our NITAN member organisations for their invaluable contributions throughout the year. Without your contributions NITAN would not be able to work effectively in advocating for equitable, accessible national public transport. At the start of 2023 Richard Witbreuk from Hobart, stepped into the role as Chairperson of NITAN. Richard brings a wealth of experience to the role as an Accessible Tourism Officer along with significant experience as urban planning and landscape design.

-Rich Witbreuk



INTERNATIONAL PARTNERSHIPS

The AFDO International Working Group (IWG) Terms of Reference were prepared for endorsement and were adopted by the AFDO Board on the 27 June 2023. However, at its meeting on the 11 April 2023, members renamed the IWG as the International Engagement Committee (IEC).

Its members are Vice President & International Coordinator, Trevor Carroll OAM, Treasurer, Chris Hunter, and the following three new members were recruited through an Expression of Interest during March and April 2023:

- Helen Freris - Chair, Blind Citizens Australia
- Jen Blyth - CEO, Deaf Australia
- Clare Gibellini – Individual Advocate

The IEC networks with, and also has direct links with other national disability organisations in countries as well as regional bodies across the Asia-Pacific region to support their members and fellow citizens with disability to have full participation in mainstream life, through the promotion and protection of their human rights.

It has direct engagement in the international disability movement as well through its membership and partnerships which include:

Disabled Peoples International (DPI)

DPI was established in 1981, the International Year of Disabled Persons. 40 years after it was formed, DPI continues to be the world's only cross-disability global Disabled Peoples' Organisation (DPO). It is in partnership with the United Nations. DPI has national disability organisational members in 139 countries, 31 in the Asia-Pacific region.

AFDO is the Australian representative for DPI and holds the sole national vote. Trevor Carroll from the AFDO Board, is on the DPI Executive as is also Information Officer for the Board of Directors with DPI currently registered in Canada.

Trevor was elected Chairperson of the Asia-Pacific region in April 2023. He is also a member of the Unification Coordination Committee which has been working on a new Constitution to register DPI since the Canadian NFP Association legislation changed causing many members to be disenfranchised. In November 2022 members from all regions met in South Korea and reached agreement on the principles which will underpin the new Constitution expected to be completed later in 2023. www.disabledpeoplesinternational.org

INTERNATIONAL PARTNERSHIPS

United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC)

AFDO was granted Special Consultative Status on the 23rd of July 2019 by the ECOSOC Coordination and Management Committee in recognition of our:

- Specialized competence and knowledge,
- Hands-on experience,
- Flexibility; and
- Capacity to influence the work of ECOSOC



ECOSOC is the principal UN 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. Our Quadrennial Report, a requirement of registration, was completed and submitted in June 2023. www.un.org/ecosoc/en

International Disability Alliance

International Disability Alliance (IDA) is an alliance of networks funded largely by the Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) and the New Zealand Governments equivalent. It represents over 1,100 international 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. www.internationaldisabilityalliance.org

Pacific Disability Forum

AFDO is a full voting member of the Pacific Disability Forum (PDF). The PDF is a regional peak body that works in partnership with 22 Disabled Persons Organisations (DPOs) in the Pacific region. It is funded by DFAT.

Trevor Carroll is AFDO's representative on the Executive and attended the Annual General Meeting and 7th Pacific Regional Conference on Disability in Fiji in February 2023. The theme was "NOTHING WITHOUT US: Deepening partnership for an inclusive and Equitable Blue Pacific Continent for Persons with Disabilities." PDF CEO, Setareki Macanawai, announced his intention to retire in 2023 after over 20 years in the role since its establishment in 2002.

www.pacificdisability.org

G3ict – The Global Initiative for Inclusive Information Communication Technologies (ICTs)

AFDO is a partners with G3ict through Disabled Peoples' International. The G3ict Research Committee collects data via a survey completed every 18 months by Trevor Carroll on behalf of Australia and AFDO in relation to article 9 of the UNCRPD. This is then collated into the Digital Accessibility Rights Evaluation (DARE) index on which Australia ranks second in the world.

See <https://g3ict.org/country-profile>

INTERNATIONAL PARTNERSHIPS

The ZERO Project

The Zero Project's mission is working for a world with zero barriers. Worldwide, it finds and shares solutions that improve the daily lives and legal rights of all persons with disabilities. Every year, the Zero Project publishes a report on the innovative solutions that have been identified in the extensive annual peer-reviewed research. In the current 4-year-cycle Education, Employment, Independent Living, Accessibility, and ICT are priorities.

IEC Member Trevor Carroll is a member of the Annual judging panel. It will present awards in the fields of Inclusive Education, and ICT in 2023.

<https://zeroproject.org/publications/annual-reports>



Asia-Pacific Ministerial Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction

This was held in Brisbane from the 19-22 September 2022 and was attended by CEO Ross Joyce and IEC Chair Trevor Carroll. The Theme was: Transforming the Asia-Pacific Region's future through disaster risk reduction. Australia partnered with the United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNDRR) to host the Conference. A major gap in Disaster Risk Reduction Management in Australia was identified by Trevor and Ross in terms of there being no database with the contact details of persons with disabilities and other vulnerable persons who require evacuation in advance during a natural disaster. <https://apmcdrr.undrr.org/2022/>

Australian Disability Development Consortium (ADDC)

Trevor Carroll is the AFDO representative on the Executive which meets monthly. The 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. It is funded and auspiced by the Christian Blind Mission (CBM) which is an international Christian development organisation, committed to improving the quality of life of persons with disabilities in the poorest countries of the world.

The ADDC 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 funded by DFAT and Australia Aid.

www.addc.org.au





MEDIA & COMMUNICATIONS

AFDO raises awareness of issues impacting people with disability. We do this through a variety of media formats including media interviews and media releases, as well as through our newsletters and social media channels.

Newsletters

You can subscribe to our newsletters here:

- [Subscribe to AFDO eNews](#)
- [Subscribe to Disability Loop eNews](#)

Newsletter subscribers

- Total 6,760 subscribers

X followers

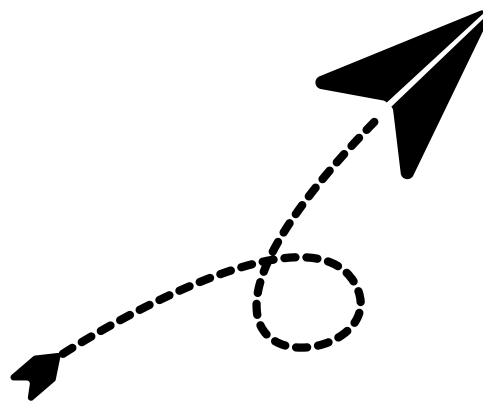
- Total 7,984 followers

Facebook followers

- Total 4,763 followers
- Total Likes 2,928

LinkedIn followers

- Total 1,792 followers



DIRECTORS REPORT

The Board is responsible for the governance of AFDO in accordance with the Corporations Act, the Australian Charities & Not-For-Profit Commission Regulations and the AFDO Constitution.

The Board was made up of the following Member nominated, or Board-appointed Directors throughout the 2022 – 2023 Financial Year:

Grant Lindsay

President

Nominated by Down Syndrome Australia

Person with disability

Nick Rushworth

Director

Nominated by Brain Injury Australia

Person with disability

Trevor Carroll OAM

Vice President, Treasurer & International Coordinator

Nominated by Disability Justice Australia

Person with disability

Debbie Kennewell

Director

Nominated by Deaf Australia

Person with disability

Chris Hunter

Vice President and Treasurer

Nominated by Deafness Forum Australia

Person with disability

Richard Dent OAM, FAICD

Director

Board Appointed for

Leadership and Governance expertise

Person with lived experience of disability

Izzy Moss

Independent Director

Nominated by Women with Disabilities ACT

Person with disability

Andrew Fairbairn

Independent Director

Nominated by Physical Disability Australia

Person with disability

Janine Neu (until 3rd October 2022)

BOARD MEETINGS

The Board met six times during the 2022-23 Financial Year

27th September 2022

17th October 2022

18th October 2022

20th February 2023

21st February 2023

2nd June 2023

Executive Committee composition and meetings

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

The Executive Committee meet in between Board meetings, to ensure governance matters are addressed and continuity of AFDO operations. The Executive met one time between Board meetings by video conference during the 2022-2023 financial year;

22nd August 2022

Finance Risk Audit & Governance Committee composition and meetings

The Finance Risk Audit & Governance Committee is comprised of the President and Treasurer, resourced by the CEO & CFO, and all Directors are able to attend any meetings. It met twice by videoconference during the 2022-23 financial year;

14th December 2022

4th April 2023

International Engagement Committee

The International Engagement Committee, formerly the International Working Group, is comprised of the Deputy & International Coordinator, Treasurer, along with three independent members with an interest in international work and resourced by the CEO & CFO. It met three times by videoconference during the 2022-23 financial year;

19th July 2022

17th November 2022

15th May 2023



Company Secretary

Ross Joyce

FINANCIAL SNAPSHOT

2022-2023 Results

Total Revenue \$4,551,705

Total Expenses \$4,546,851

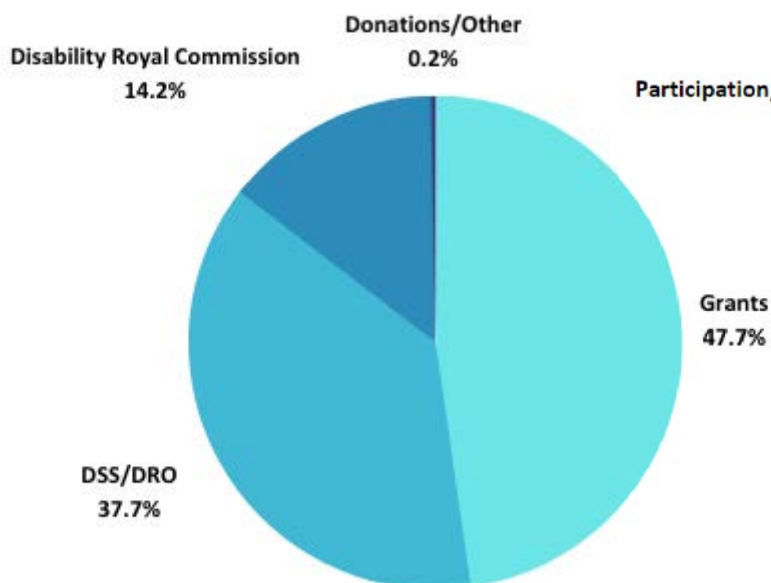
Result - Surplus or (Deficit) \$4,854

Total Members Equity - Current \$653,128

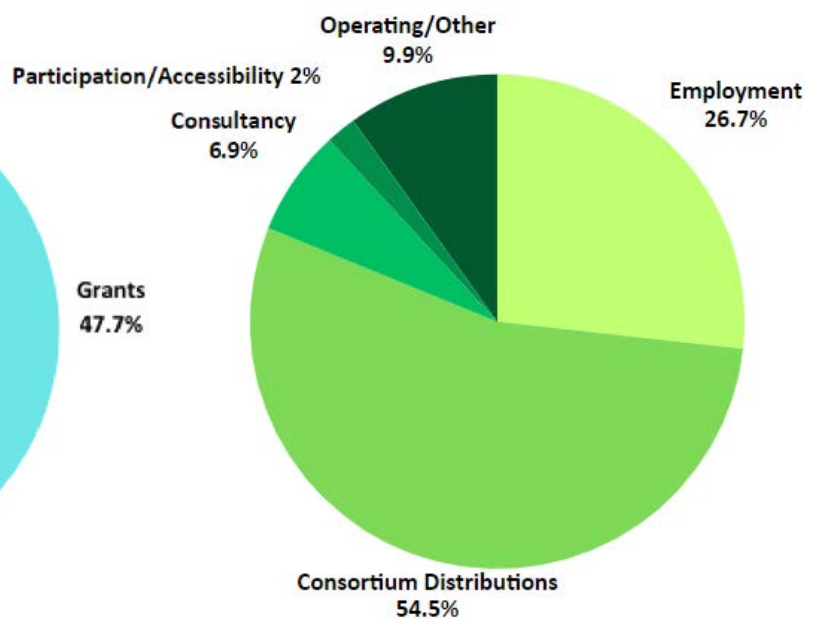
Previous Year \$648,274

Result - Increase or (Decrease) \$4,854

Income



Expenditure





**Australian Federation of
Disability Organisations**

*We look forward to celebrating
AFDO's 20th Anniversary
next financial year!*

AFDO OFFICES

National Office

02 6198 3361
Level 1, The Realm
18 National Circuit
Barton ACT 2600

Melbourne Office

(Registered Business
Office)
552 Victoria Street
North Melbourne
VIC 3051

Brisbane Office

Suite 902/ Level 9
Toowong Tower, 9
Sherwood Road
Toowong QLD 4066

Sydney Office

Level 14, 3
Parramatta Square,
153 Macquarie St
Parramatta NSW
2150

ACN: 105 510 898

ABN: 25 105 510 898



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