



Association for
Children with a
Disability

Annual Report 2019

About ACD

ACD is the leading advocacy organisation for children with disability and their families in Victoria.

Our vision is for children with disability and their families to have the same rights and opportunities as other children and families. We are a not-for-profit organisation led by, and for, families of children with disability.

Our work

- We **empower** families with knowledge, skills and confidence to achieve the best for their children.
- We **advocate** for children with disability and their families.
- We **educate** service providers, professionals and the community to be inclusive of children with disability and to work in partnership with families.
- We **influence** government and public policy to advance the rights of children with disability and their families.

ACD supports all families in Victoria with children with disability aged 0 to 18 years old.

Our services

For families and professionals we offer:

- Support Line
- Workshops and peer support
- Information and resources

For more information visit www.acd.org.au





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President's report

Over the past 12 months, ACD has been a strong voice for children with disability.

We take every opportunity to make sure the experiences and needs of children with disability are highlighted in consultations, submissions to government reviews and parliamentary inquiries.

We have welcomed a number of significant announcements that we have been calling for, including:

- The establishment of the **Disability Royal Commission**. Over the next three years we will make a number of submissions and support families to raise issues relating to children.
- The establishment of the **NDIS Participant Service Guarantee** with timeframes for each step of the NDIS process, which will come into effect from July 2020.
- A **reduction in waiting times for children accessing Early Childhood Early Intervention (ECEI)**. Interim Plans are now available for children who have waited more than 50 days for an ECEI planning meeting.

ACD's partnerships with other organisations reflect our expertise in engaging with families and advocating for children with disability.

We were delighted this year to work with:

- The Australian Government to review and update the Parent Guide which forms part of the Nationally Consistent Collection of Data on School Students with Disability.
- The Centre for Excellence in Child and Family Welfare, delivering professional development workshops on 'Working with the NDIS to support families at risk' to more than 700 child and family workers across Victoria.

- Dr Helen Bourke-Taylor and Monash University delivering Healthy Mothers Healthy Families workshops across Victoria.
- Zoos Victoria on another magical Dream Night at Melbourne Zoo.

The ACD Rules of Governance embed our approach of being led by families of children with disability and people with disability.

More than half of our Committee of Management are people with disability or parents who have children with disability. This year, we welcomed three new Committee members who each bring a range of professional expertise and personal lived experience: Catherine Devine, Susan Stork-Finlay and Erica Hussien.

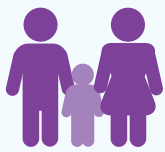
I would like to thank all of the Committee of Management members. Your focus on ACD's strategy, financial health and management of risk makes this a stronger organisation.

I also sincerely thank our CEO Karen Dimmock and all ACD staff for their dedication and continued commitment to empowering families of children with disability.

Georgina Frost
President

Our impact

Thanks to our funders, partners and supporters, here's how we had a positive impact on the lives of children with disability and their families:



5,000

families supported



999

families called our Support Line

2,034



families and professionals attended our workshops and peer support groups

5,000



families accessed our information and resources



25% of families were from a CALD background

18% of families were from regional Victoria

2% were Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families



92%

of families reported an improvement in their situation



98%

of people who used our services said they would recommend ACD to others



CEO's report

ACD offers families of children with disability in Victoria a unique service.

It doesn't matter what disability a child has, we provide families with the knowledge, skills and confidence to achieve the best for their child.

In my first year as CEO, I have seen over and over again the important role that families play in advocating for their children, and the passion and skill of the ACD team in supporting families to speak up.

It is from our direct work with families that we are able to advocate for big picture change.

This year we reached more families than ever before:

- We provided over-the-phone advocacy support to **999 families** through our Support Line.
- More than **1,123 families** attended our workshops and peer support groups.
- **911 professionals** attended our professional development sessions.
- **5,000 families** accessed our information and resources.

The families we supported reflect the diverse face of our Victorian community:

- **18%** live in regional Victoria
- **25%** are from a Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) background
- **2%** are Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander

We work to have a positive impact on the life of their child and family as a whole.

We have a consistent approach to monitoring and evaluation of our services and impact.

Over the past 12 months:

- **92%** of families reported an improvement in their child's situation as a result of their increased self-advocacy skills.
- **100%** of families reported an increase in their confidence in preparing for the NDIS.
- **100%** of families reported an increase in their aspirations for their child's future.
- **95%** of families reported an improvement in their well-being.

Our work is only possible through the investment of the Victorian Government Department of Health and Human Services; the Department of Education and Training; the Australian Government through the NDIA; and our philanthropic partners: John T Reid Charitable Trusts, Equity Trustees, and Perpetual Trustees.

Finally, I would like to thank the Committee of Management and ACD staff. Your professionalism and passion for achieving the best for children with disability and their families is what gives ACD its heart and voice.

Karen Dimmock
CEO

Support Line

Our Support Line provided advocacy and information support to 999 families of children with disability across Victoria.

This was a **19% increase** compared with the previous year. The **top issue for callers was education**, closely followed by the **NDIS**.

Families have reported that receiving timely and accurate information from ACD has assisted them to confidently advocate for their child's needs.

Feedback from families also highlighted the empathy, understanding and depth of knowledge provided by ACD Support Advisors.

This year, with the support of the Victorian Government, we were able to trial a number of innovative approaches to engaging with new families:

- We developed a range of testimonial videos to share via our social media channels.
- We commenced a text call-back service.
- We undertook outreach in Gippsland to child and family services.

The success of these approaches can be seen in the increase in demand for advocacy support.

Strengthening Parent Support Program

ACD also convenes the network of the Strengthening Parent Support Program (SPSP). With 13 coordinators across Victoria, this program connects families who have children with disability with information and other families in their local area.

"I called seeking advice ahead of my child's NDIS meeting. After talking to a Support Advisor, I felt more confident and clearer about the steps I needed to take to prepare."
- Parent



999

families called our Support Line

Positive impact



92% reported an improvement in their child's situation

Satisfaction



99% said they would recommend the Support Line

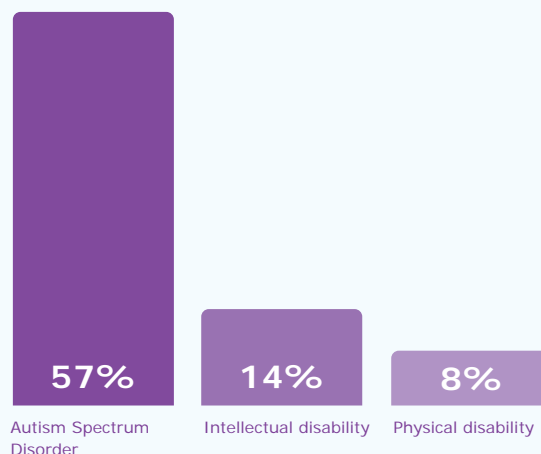
Who we reached

25% were from Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) backgrounds

18% of families came from rural or regional Victoria

2% were Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families

Primary disability of children of callers to the Support Line



Workshops & peer support

This year ACD delivered more than **179 workshops and peer support groups across Victoria, reaching more than 2,034 families and professionals.**

Preparing families and professionals for the NDIS continued to be the main focus of our community education work this year. In addition, we were delighted to offer two new workshops: Healthy Mothers Healthy Families and Talking about the Future.

Ensuring accessibility for those in regional Victoria is a priority for ACD. Over the past 12 months we delivered **33% of our workshops in regional Victoria**, including Shepparton, Geelong, Ballarat, Wodonga, Gippsland and Horsham.

"Thank you so much for your informative workshop. I feel a lot better to tackle the whole process." - Parent



179
workshops and peer support groups

Workshop attendees

1,123
families

911
professionals

Positive impact



100% of families reported an increase in their confidence in preparing for the NDIS



95% of mothers reported positive changes in their lives after six weeks



100% of families reported an increase in aspirations for their child's future

Satisfaction



98% would recommend ACD workshops to others

Who we reached



33% of workshops were held in regional Victoria

Preparing families and professionals for the NDIS

We delivered more than 66 workshops and peer support groups for families of children with disability, to explain the NDIS and build the confidence of families as their child entered the scheme. With support from the Victorian Government and the Transition Support Program, we had a particular focus on families in the western suburbs of Melbourne and in outer Gippsland.

In partnership with the Centre for Excellence in Child and Family Welfare, we supported the professional development of more than 700 child and family workers around working with the NDIS to support families at risk.

"Walking step by step through what the NDIS is and the planning and managing process was just invaluable." - Parent

"Really great to hear from someone with personal experience." - Professional

Healthy Mothers Healthy Families workshops

Improving the health and well-being of mothers has a positive impact on the whole family. Healthy Mothers Healthy Families is a workshop specifically tailored to the health needs of mothers of children with disability.

Developed by Dr Helen Bourke-Taylor at Monash University, the workshop enables mothers to connect with one another, reflect on their challenges and supports, and set personal health goals. Through the support of the NDIA, Dr Bourke-Taylor trained six ACD facilitators to deliver this workshop across Victoria from 2018 to 2020.

Talking about the Future workshops

Young people with disability rate their families as their most important support as they transition from education to employment.

This innovative workshop was developed in partnership with the Department of Education and Training to offer families of secondary school students the latest information about career planning. The workshop explored parent and child aspirations, the role of families in career education and how schools support the transition to work.

"I wasn't sure if this workshop would be relevant to my son with high support needs, but it opened my eyes to some options I hadn't previously thought about. I left feeling quite energised. Thanks ACD." - Parent



Information & resources

Our information and resources are designed to help families through the maze that is part of parenting a child with disability.

All our information is written by families, for families. This year, we focused on making our information and resources more accessible.

Website

We updated our website so that it meets **Level AA of the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 2.0 (WCAG 2.0)**. Families can now more easily access our resources, information about our workshops, and subscribe to our monthly online newsletter.

Fact sheets

We developed fact sheets in plain English that cover five main areas to help families quickly find the information they need: NDIS, school, early years, teenage years, and general support.

Fact sheet topics included: Getting respite under the NDIS, 10 Tips for effective Student Support Group meetings, Supporting your child with decision-making, and Financial assistance. These can be easily viewed online or printed out, and are mobile-friendly for busy families.



22 fact sheets developed for families



5,000 subscribers to our online newsletter



10,000 website visitors



3,000 Facebook followers

Newsletter

We moved from a quarterly print magazine to a monthly online newsletter. This meant we could share timely information with families. Subscriptions reached **5,000** and includes families and professionals.

Social media

We increased our presence on Facebook with posts that included tips and links to key information and resources. This gave families faster access to information to positively impact outcomes for their child.

Dream Night

We were delighted to partner with Zoos Victoria for the second year of Dream Night at Melbourne Zoo. Over **400 families** enjoyed a magical night of entertainment and accessible fun, with many families travelling from regional Victoria.

This inclusive family event showcases Zoos Victoria's commitment to accessibility and inclusion all year round. **97% of families** who attended this year reported they felt more confident to attend recreational venues and events after their experience at Dream Night.

Advocacy

Our direct work with families helps us to identify issues for children and families and informs our systemic advocacy.

This year we have taken every opportunity to speak up for children and families, particularly in relation to the **NDIS** and the **education of students with disability**.

We met with a number of state and federal MPs to discuss education and the needs of students with disability, as well as children and the NDIS.

We sit on a number of reference groups and we make written submissions and presentations to ensure the voices of children are heard.

Key issues

We highlighted issues relating to:

- Delays for children getting ECEI plans
- Delays in Assistive Technology and Home Modification approvals
- Lack of respite for families
- How key procedures such as Student Support Groups, Individual Education Plans and Behaviour Support Plans are not consistently implemented across all schools

We welcomed a number of positive announcements that will benefit children with disability and their families:

- The establishment of the Disability Royal Commission, and the inclusion of schools in the terms of reference.
- The establishment of the NDIS Participant Service Guarantee with timeframes for each step of the NDIS process which will come into effect on 1 July 2020.
- The introduction of Interim Plans for children who have waited more than 50 days for an Early Childhood Early Intervention planning meeting.

Reference groups

- NDIS Implementation Taskforce
- CALD NDIS Disability Reference Group
- DET Education Reference Group
- DET Early Childhood Reference Group
- DET Learning Difficulties Reference Group
- Victorian Autism Plan Advisory Group
- Victorian Safeguarding Reference Group

Presentations

- Joint Parliamentary Committee on the NDIS
- National Youth Transitions Commission
- Career Education for Students with Disability Conference

Submissions

- Disability Royal Commission terms of reference to include schools
- Joint Parliamentary Committee on the NDIS
- NDIS rollout in regional and rural Victoria
- Safeguarding children and the Disability Act
- Review of Child Safety Standards
- Roadmap to Reform
- Accessible City of Melbourne
- Student Attitudes to School Survey

Monitoring & evaluation

We have enhanced our monitoring and evaluation capability.

We assessed our current processes and identified existing frameworks, such as the UK National Development Team for Inclusion Framework. These provided a good model on which to build our approach.

Objectives

We identified four key objectives which encompass all our work:

1. Efficiently deliver as many services as possible
2. Ensure our reach reflects the diversity of Victorian families
3. Offer a service that is welcoming, understanding and knowledgeable
4. Positively impact the lives of children with disability and their families

We have developed and implemented a monitoring and evaluation methodology to assess how we perform against these objectives:

How much we do

Keeping data on all of our service delivery, including:

- Number of families and professionals assisted via the Support Line
- Number of families and professionals who attend workshops
- Number of families and professionals who access information and resources via our website
- Number of submissions made, meetings attended with key decision makers, and forums to raise systemic advocacy issues

Who we reach

Ensuring we are accessible and reflect the diversity of the Victorian community in terms of reaching families in regional Victoria, families from Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) backgrounds, and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander (ATSI) families.

Providing a welcoming service

Providing services that are welcoming, understanding and knowledgeable. We ask families and professionals to rate our service delivery and we ask if they would recommend our service to others. Our goal is to have a 98% recommendation rate.

Having a positive impact

We measure changes to knowledge, skills and confidence. We also collect data to assess if the situation for children has changed.

We seek to measure our impact based on whether:

- Families report increased knowledge and confidence
- Families report their child's situation has improved
- Families report increased well-being
- Families report increased aspirations for their child
- Changes to government policy are in line with our systemic advocacy

Data is collected through anonymous self-assessment surveys. We report on our outcome measures to the Committee of Management, funders and in our Annual Report.

Committee of Management

Our Committee of Management is responsible for the governance of ACD. The Committee establishes our Strategic Plan and undertakes financial oversight and risk management. In line with ACD's Constitution, **at least 60% of Committee members are family members of children with disability or people with lived experience of disability.**



Georgina Frost is a lawyer with more than 20 years' experience in dispute resolution and as a board member in the legal, education and disability sectors. As the mother of a young woman with learning disability, she understands the complexity and challenges of navigating the education and disability systems. Georgina has been a Committee member since 2011 and President from 2013.



Matthew Holland has cerebral palsy which affects his movement and balance. He works full-time as a communications graduate at the Level Crossing Removal Project and is captain of the Victorian Paralympic Football Team. A Committee member since 2017, Matt is Vice President.



Liz Ellis is a qualified social worker, currently working part-time as a Customer Experience Officer within the disability sector. Liz has lived experience of disability, and extensive experience in various roles within the advocacy sector. Liz has been a Committee member since 2013 and Secretary since 2017.



Nicole Butera is a chartered accountant with over 15 years of experience. Nicole is an experienced foster carer who has provided a home to many children with disability over the past seven years. Nicole has been a Committee member since 2012 and is Treasurer.

Committee of Management continued



Sarah Mitchell is an experienced sales and marketing leader who has been a Committee Member since 2017. Sarah is also Chair of the Marketing Sub-Committee.



Mathew Hilakari has been working in the public sector for the last decade, and brings professional experience in government and communications. He has been a Committee member since 2012 and is on the Policy Sub-committee.



Alison Polyik brings professional experience in funding, partnerships and marketing across the corporate and philanthropic sectors. She has been a Committee member since 2017 and is on the Marketing Sub-committee.

New Committee members

Catherine Devine is the mother of three young boys. Her second son has a complex medical history and disability. Catherine's professional background is in marketing, communications and events in the corporate sector. In recent years, Catherine has used her professional experience to support charities related to her son's condition.

Erica Hussien has a background in administration and hospitality. With two of her three children having disability, she has experience that encompasses both early childhood and late teens, as one starts their final year of school and the other starts their first year of kindergarten.

Susan Stork-Finlay is as an occupational therapist, the mother of two children with disability and also has a disability herself. An active disability advocate, Susan has contributed to many reference groups and consultations to advance the rights of children with disability and their families. Susan brings experience in governance, policy, finance and administration.

Balance Sheet

As at 30 June 2019

	<u>2019</u>	<u>2018</u>
ASSETS		
Current Assets		
Cash and cash equivalents	1,566,904	1,787,420
Trade and other receivables	118,000	2,250
Total Current Assets	1,684,904	1,789,670
Non-current Assets		
Property, plant and equipment	59,055	72,840
Total Non-current Assets	59,055	72,840
TOTAL ASSETS	<u>1,743,959</u>	<u>1,862,510</u>
LIABILITIES		
Current Liabilities		
Trade and other payables	90,067	145,456
Provisions	74,143	146,913
Deferred revenue	808,027	842,928
Total Current Liabilities	972,277	1,135,297
Non-Current Liabilities		
Provisions	6,617	5,650
Total Non-Current Liabilities	6,617	5,650
TOTAL LIABILITIES	<u>979,394</u>	<u>1,140,947</u>
NET ASSETS	<u>764,565</u>	<u>721,563</u>

Profit & Loss

For the year ended 30 June 2019

	<u>2019</u>	<u>2018</u>
INCOME		
Changing Places	—	152,225
Fees for service	50,068	7,350
Government grants	805,557	617,365
Interest	8,984	9,172
NDIA	392,002	126,436
Transition grants to NDIS	260,815	432,742
Philanthropic	84,545	55,000
Donations	7,131	9,982
Memberships	3,841	7,424
CALD income	—	149,256
Sundry income	1,643	1,480
TOTAL INCOME	<u>1,614,586</u>	<u>1,568,432</u>
EXPENDITURE		
ACD Connect	—	8,961
Auditing	4,200	2,745
Bank charges	1,313	1,250
Bookkeeping	18,681	13,617
Committee meetings	2,269	2,920
Committee reimbursements	407	467
Compliance and quality	25,584	19,972
Depreciation	24,312	15,016
Gas and electricity	5,842	4,272
Gifts	2,106	1,399
Information resource production	3,446	17,364
Insurance	2,401	1,547
IT development/maintenance	44,316	43,584
Lease - photocopier	4,295	3,221
Marketing	2,826	41,939
Office restructure	—	14,384
Parent workshops/consultations	5,949	5,371
Postage	1,566	7,787
Product development	261,368	78,350
Rates	2,456	2,001
Rent	68,602	66,653
Repairs and maintenance	7,691	8,485
Assets written-off	833	18,735
Security	271	372
Staff amenities	4,602	5,563
Staff development	15,520	5,728
Stationery	12,658	21,993
Subscriptions	4,765	3,840
Telephone	12,577	15,954
Travel and accommodation	7,273	4,272
Wages and staffing costs	1,023,455	1,078,424
TOTAL EXPENDITURE	<u>1,571,584</u>	<u>1,516,186</u>
NET CURRENT YEAR SURPLUS	<u>43,002</u>	<u>52,246</u>

Audit opinion

We have audited the accompanying financial report, being a special purpose financial report, of the Association for Children with a Disability Inc. (the Association), which comprises the assets and liabilities statement as at 30 June 2019, the income and expenditure statement for the year then ended, the cash flow statement, notes comprising a summary of significant accounting policies and other explanatory information, and the certification by members of the committee on the annual statements giving a true and fair view of the financial position and performance of the Association.

Committee's Responsibility for the Financial Report

The Committee of the Association is responsible for the preparation and fair presentation of the financial report, and has determined that the basis of preparation described in Note 1 is appropriate to meet the requirements of the Associations Incorporation Reform Act 2012 and is appropriate to meet the needs of the members. The Committee's responsibility also includes such internal control as the Committee determines is necessary to enable the preparation and fair presentation of a financial report that is free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

Auditor's Responsibility

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

An audit involves performing procedures to obtain audit evidence about the amounts and disclosures in the financial report. The procedures selected depend on the auditor's judgement, including the assessment of the risks of material misstatement of the financial report, whether due to fraud or error.

In making those risk assessments, the auditor considers internal control relevant to the Association's preparation and fair presentation of the financial report in order to design audit procedures that are appropriate in the circumstances, but not for the purpose of expressing an opinion on the effectiveness of the Association's internal control. An audit also includes evaluating the appropriateness of accounting policies used and the reasonableness of accounting estimates made by the Committee, as well as evaluating the overall presentation of the financial report.

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

Opinion

In our opinion, the financial report gives a true and fair view of the financial position of the Association for Children with a Disability Inc. as at 30 June 2019 and its financial performance for the year then ended in accordance with the accounting policies described in Note 1 to the financial statements, and the requirements of the Associations Incorporation Reform Act 2012.

Basis of Accounting

Without modifying our opinion, we draw attention to Note 1 to the financial report, which describes the basis of accounting. The financial report has been prepared to assist the Association for Children with a Disability Inc. to meet the requirements of the Associations Incorporation Reform Act 2012. As a result, the financial report may not be suitable for another purpose.

Graham Morris

Level 2, 33 Bank Street
South Melbourne, Victoria

Dated this 23 day of October 2019

Partners

ACD collaborates with organisations across Victoria for the best outcomes for children and families:

Amaze	Monash University
Brimbank City Council	Moonee Valley City Council
Carers Victoria	Noah's Ark
Central Gippsland Health	Parenting Research Centre
Centre for Excellence in Child and Family Welfare	Playgroup Victoria
Cerebral Palsy Education Centre	RMIT
Cerebral Palsy Support Network	Royal Children's Hospital
Children and Young People with Disability Australia	The Hemispherectomy Foundation Australia
Deakin University	Tweddle Child and Family Health Service
Gippsland Lakes Community Health	UnitingCare
Holmesglen TAFE	VALID
Inspired Carers	Wellington Shire Council
Mackillop Family Services	Wyndham City Council
Maribyrnong City Council	Yarra Ranges Shire
Maroondah City Council	Zoos Victoria
Melbourne City Council	
Melton City Council	

Supporters

Thank you to the following organisations for their support:

Department of Education and Training	John T. Reid Charitable Trusts
Department of Health and Human Services	Anna White Trust (via Perpetual Trustees)
National Disability Insurance Agency (NDIA)	Estate Of The Late Harry Leslie Howden Bequest Trust (via Perpetual Trustees)
Equity Trustees	





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