



Annual Report for the Advocacy National Director

AGM Wednesday 1st July 2020

Kia Ora Koutou,

The Greek Philosopher Heraclitus was the first to say that the “only constant in life is change,” and two and a half centuries later I think he may have been right.

The past year for The Personal Advocacy and Safeguarding Adults Trust has been somewhat of a whirlwind. We’ve experienced a pandemic; the world around us has drastically changed, and the organisation has evolved and will continue to evolve in response. We took several steps forward in expanding our reach and Safeguarding work, strengthening our Support for Decision Making work, and firmly staying the course with our advocacy work. Unfortunately, we have also reluctantly taken a few steps backwards as ongoing and sustainable funding pathways for the Safeguarding work have not yet been secured. The most notable of these setbacks happened in March of this year, with the loss of Sue Hobbs, our Safeguarding Adults Director.

Sue has been a perpetual pioneer of the Safeguarding Adults cause and work, and has lit a fire in the organisation and imparted a vision to change the status quo. Her loss is acutely felt.

Safeguarding Adults

Prior to her departure Sue employed and oversaw Safeguarding Coordinators in Auckland and Taranaki, with another trial in Mid-Central. The need for a Safeguarding Response for Adults at Risk however, is not bound only to these select regions of our Country. Throughout the year we have also received inquiries and referrals for Safeguarding work across the North and South Island. These have come from domestic and sexual violence services, concerned family members, neighbours, the Ministry of Health and the Office for Disability Issues to name a few. Our responses to these referrals have necessarily been limited by our funding and capacity, but have served to help connect Adults at Risk with relevant services, and ensure that those services are taking a coordinated and person directed approach. We are grateful to the IHC Foundation and Foundation North for grants received in the previous year which have continued to enable the Safeguarding work to this point.

Through a small grant from the Working Together More Fund, the Trust is now also starting to work with agencies in the Tauranga, Bay of Plenty area to build a community led response for Safeguarding Adults at Risk from the grassroots up.

Our work in this field is generating conversations with Ministries, the Royal Commission of Inquiry into Abuse in State Care, and service providers. We continue to push and hope for a government contract to recognise the importance and need for this work, and to give stability to the infrastructure we are trying to build and advances that we have already made.

Supported Decision Making

We continue to provide Support for Decision Making in the Mana Whaikaha Disability System prototype in the Mid-Central DHB. The work has concentrated on building relationships of trust to understand and support the enacting of disabled people’s will and preference, but coaching and

community education on supported decision making principles continues to be a significant component of the role.

The Trust has also participated on a Ministry of Social Development Working Group tasked with developing a simple Supported Decision-Making resource for disabled people, family, and professionals to use.

Short-Term Advocacy and the Rangatira Fund

In the 2019 calendar year the Trust supported 23 people who are not enrolled in the Trust with short term advocacy to resolve issues and crises they were experiencing. The support for 21 of these people was funded out of the Rangatira Fund. Given that individuals, whanau and professionals have been calling for funded advocacy consistently for some time, referrals were initially received slower than anticipated. We believe this is attributed to a delay in communicating and understanding the service. As awareness has grown we have received more referrals and experienced a very clear growth curve. 86.9% of the short-term advocacy support was delivered in the last six months of the 2019, with 58.6% of the total hours delivered in the last quarter alone.

This short-term advocacy support has included supporting disabled people to change service providers, find suitable accommodation, establish new routines after the passing of parents, obtain employment, challenge court orders, and in interactions with Oranga Tamariki to name a few.

We anticipate the service to continue to grow in response to need, and we welcome any further donations to the Rangatira Fund or the Trust to continue this work.

Lifetime Advocacy Delivery and Trust Administration

Lifelong advocacy continues to be the best form of advocacy. It facilitates the development of a long-term relationship of trust, the constancy of which plays a preventative role in keeping members safe, engaged and fulfilled.

At the closing of the financial year we had 378 members enrolled in the Trust, many of whom have been a member for over 45 years. While we bid farewell to several of our older members who have now past, we also welcomed 7 new enrolments for lifetime advocacy. These new enrolments were in the centres of Auckland, Hamilton and Wellington.

But we wish to reach more, to support more, to advocate for more. To try to achieve this we will continue to drive for enrolments and offer flexible fee payment options to parents. The newest of these options is the payment of 'actual advocacy hours used' on an annual basis from a Discretionary Trust.

Many of our members enjoy secure Discretionary Trust administration in addition to their advocacy support. Trustees administer funds with simple yet robust application procedures, ensuring that funds are available when needed.

Advocacy Training and Professional Development

Our staff from around the country gathered for training and team days in Wellington in April and October of 2019, but unfortunately our training scheduled for March of this year was postponed due to Covid-19. For staff that are spread around the country and largely work independently, these gatherings are extremely important in connecting as a team and learning together about shared advocacy topics. We also meet monthly online as a team to debrief and utilise online professional development platforms.

We look forward to meeting together in coming months to undertake Talking Mats training. Talking Mats is a tool to help people organise their thoughts and express their views. We are grateful for a Workforce Development Grant from Te Pou that has made this upcoming training possible.

Covid-19

Our most recent newsletter outlined the Trust's response to Covid-19. While it meant that temporarily our Advocates were unable to meet with their members, in the long term we hope the pandemic will mean safer practices and better utilisation of technology to encourage remote visiting when required. We also anticipate the pandemic will expedite the resolution of inequities that disabled people have long experienced, but which were highlighted under the circumstances of lockdown and the following weeks.

While the crisis is largely averted, the need for vigilance and caution remains. Our Advocates are taking a careful, individual and safe approach to re-engaging with each member.

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Speaking of our Advocates and staff, they are pretty wonderful. They are dedicated and skilled and work in challenging circumstances to help our members achieve safe and full lives. The Trust currently has 14 staff members, but are anticipating adding to that number within coming months.

Thank you to Emma Neilson, Gemma Claire, Kaeti Rigarfsford, Sally Hartley, Jennifer Shaw, Gail Bingham, Irene Glennie, Lynne King, Patrick Doherty, and Marion Bayley. Thanks also to staff who have moved on through the course of the year, with particular mention of Sue Hobbs, Dawn Coronno and Wendy Rattray.

Gail Bingham has also worked steadying the ship as our stalwart Team Leader, and Johanna Lloyd keeps everyone smiling and organised as our stellar Administrator.

Thank you also to our accountant Les Buttimore and our auditors Moore Markhams for their work in overseeing the Trust's financial statements. We also want to thank Bernie Higgins for his Actuarial analysis of the Trust.

Our Trustees and our Chair Barney Cooper bring incredible expertise and passion to their roles in governing the organisation. The members and staff are incredibly fortunate to have this oversight. I know we are in good hands.

So in this whirlwind of change and growth and change again that we have experienced, thank you last and not least to our membership and their families across the country for your continued and ongoing support.

Nga Manaakitanga,



Erika Butters
Advocacy National Director
The Personal Advocacy and Safeguarding Adults Trust