

STAR VICTORIA INC

Board of Management

2010 - 2011

President

Gabrielle Dickinson

Vice President

Jane Hauser

Treasurer

Cynthia Pilli

Board Members

Alex Rowsell

Jenny Harrison

Philip Graves

Helen McFarlane

James Henry

Janice Slattery

Emmy Elbaum

Fiona Rowsell

Loretta Krelle

Executive Officer

Esther Harris

Administration Officer

Pam Geoghegan

Auditor

Barco and Associates

Public Officer

Esther Harris

STAR VICTORIA INC.

STAR is unique in Victoria in that it brings together people concerned with *all aspects* of intellectual disability, and works to support the interests and rights of people with an intellectual disability and their families throughout *all their lives*.

“Advocacy is never easy: it requires humility and anger and clarity of thoughts that can discern the long-term goals the implications of accepted practices and attitudes. It requires a capacity to translate the anger and the decisions from thinking into effective change in the best interests of persons with disabilities – the best interests as seen from their perspective and no other”

STAR was formed in 1970 when parents of people with an intellectual disability recognised that, whilst trying to improve the circumstances of their own sons and daughters, it was essential to change the community attitudes intellectual disability. Considerable change has been achieved and momentum maintained through consistent and targeted social action inherent in STAR’s work. In later years other organisations have been formed and have joined with STAR in strengthening the momentum.

STAR was then and remains today, the only statewide advocacy organisation with a specific focus on the rights of individuals with an intellectual disability, to participate in the community as an equal from birth throughout their entire life.

STAR works to achieve greater community awareness, attitude change and government and systemic responsiveness to the needs of people with an intellectual disability, to enable inclusion, equity, and participation.

STAR Victoria is valued in Victoria and nationally, and its assistance, views and input are sought from a diverse range of individuals, and organisations both government and non-government.

STAR has a proud 41 year history of empowering and resourcing people with an intellectual disability, their families and supporters, to speak up, be heard and make change.

STAR VICTORIA INC.

VISION STATEMENT

STAR believes in a society that lives by the principles of equity and social justice by

- Ensuring people with an intellectual disability have rights and access to the services in our community they need to participate fully in society.

*“Inclusion is
belonging to one
race,
Include is a basic
human right
Inclusion is
struggling to figure
out how to live with
one another
Inclusion is the
future”*

MISSION STATEMENT

STAR as a community organisation, advocates on a statewide basis for the rights of people with an intellectual disability and their families by

- changing community attitudes
- informing, assisting, advocating for and empowering people with an intellectual disability and their families
- working individually and collectively to influence the decision makers to bring about real inclusion and lasting change for people with intellectual disability

MINUTES OF ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING
STAR Victoria Inc.
15th December, 2010

Present: Colin Hiscoe, Alex Rowsell, Amanda Hiscoe, Cynthia Pilli, Gabrielle Dickinson, Loretta Krelle, Anthony Kolmus, Andrew Daly, James Henry, Heather Hindle, Emmy Elbaum, Fleur Campbell, David Banfield (late)

In attendance : Esther Harris and Pam Geoghegan

Apologies: Jane Hauser, Cynthia Pilli, John Slattery, Janice Slattery, Stacey Harris, Fofi Christou (OFD), Dean Dadson (OFD) Ethel Temby, Kelly Geoghegan, Viki Hain, Gail McHardy – (Parents Victoria), Heather Forsyth (VALID) Kevin Stone– (VALID), Marcia Hiatt, Carolyn Vimpini, John Gill, Fiona Rowsell, Pauline Williams – (AMIDA), Sharon Granek –(DARU), Dr Philip Graves

1 .President Gabrielle Dickinson opened the meeting and welcomed everyone. She asked Esther to read the apologies.

"That the apologies as read be accepted"

Moved: Amanda Hiscoe Seconded: Colin Hiscoe **Carried**

2. Allocation of Proxies

Esther informed the meeting that three proxies had been received which was then allocated as directed to the Chair.

3. Minutes of AGM 2nd December, 2009 were tabled

"That the Minutes as circulated be accepted"

Moved: Alex Rowsell Seconded: Colin Hiscoe **Carried**

4. Presentation of Annual Report

Gabrielle tabled the Annual Report which had been circulated to those present She and Esther spoke briefly to this and responded to several questions from the floor.

"That the Annual Report be received and accepted."

Moved: Heather Hindle Seconded: Loretta Krelle **Carried**

5.Treasurer's Report

In the Treasurer's absence, Esther referred to the meeting to Cynthia's written report and the Audited Financial Statements included in the Annual Report as circulated to those present.

"That the Financial Report for 2009/2010 be received and adopted"

Moved : Alex Rowsell Seconded : Heather Hindle **Carried**

6. Appointment of Auditor

“ That Barco and Associates be appointed as Auditor for 2010/11 ”

Moved : Amanda Hiscoe Seconded : James Henry **Carried.**

5. Election of Board Members

Gabrielle asked Esther as returning officer to present her report. Nominations to fill 4 of the 5 vacancies had been received by the due date and in accordance with the Constitution.

James Henry	nominated Gabrielle Dickinson	seconded Alex Rowsell
Helen McFarlane	nom. Emmy Elbaum	sec. Gabrielle Dickinson
Loretta Krelle	nom. Alex Rowsell	sec. Janice Slattery
Fiona Rowsell	nom. Amanda Hiscoe	sec. Colin Hiscoe

As the number of nominations did not exceed the number of vacancies there was no need for an election and they were declared elected.

Gabrielle then called for nominations from the floor to fill the remaining vacancy. Esther indicated that Philip Graves had provided written advice that he would accept nomination to the Board.

Philip Graves -nominated Heather Hindle seconded Emmy Elbaum **Carried**
Gabrielle declared Philip elected.

6. Presentation to Retiring Members

Gabrielle noted that David Banfield was standing down from the Board after serving two 3 year terms and John Slattery was also, having served one 3 year term. She thanked both David and John for their valued contributions to STAR over differing lengths of time.

7. Close of Meeting.

There being no other business Gabrielle declared the meeting closed at 1-30pm and invited those present to stay for refreshments

STAR Victoria Inc. President's Report

Since STAR's 40th Anniversary a year ago it has been 'nose to the grindstone' again, working on a variety of issues – but once again education advocacy takes much of the time and energies of STAR. Other important work has included: a submission on the Inquiry into Cognitive Impairment and the Justice System, a submission on the Review into the Guardianship Legislation, participation in Protecting Victoria's Vulnerable Children's Inquiry, response to the National Education Disability Standards Review, and we once again participated in the Monash Medical Students Tutorials. After the Productivity Commission's draft report into Disability Care and Support was released with recommendation for the introduction of a National Disability Insurance Scheme, STAR has signed up to the 'Every Australian Counts' national campaign.

This year we have new Board members, and everyone's varied experience, knowledge and expertise adds to STAR's capacity to advocate for people with an intellectual disability and their families, with the varied and individual needs that present on a weekly, or even daily basis.

I would like to thank each Board member for their continued endeavours on the part of people with an intellectual disability. The combined strength and consistency in their efforts over many years, and with their current contribution into STAR's work enables STAR to pursue its goals of justice and the best possible life for people with a disability and for their families. It never ceases to amaze me that each situation is individual, and requires different approaches and flexibility to attain the desired outcome. I am confident that STAR offers the experience, wisdom and flexibility that is required. I especially commend Esther Harris, Executive Officer, for her continued passion for STAR and its work, and for her management of the STAR office.

I also thank Pam Geoghegan for her work in the office, using her varied skills. I also note that Pam has taken on more advocacy which has proved a bonus.

Gabrielle Dickinson
President

Executive Officer's Report

Again this year the work of STAR has been directed and overseen by the STAR Board who have managed the organisation within the framework of STAR's principles and policies and the available resources and provided support and direction throughout the year for the staff and volunteers. With all positions on the Board filled there was a sense of renewed energy driven by our Board members who brought a diverse and valued range of skills, experiences and perspectives and fresh and innovative thinking and ideas to our discussions and deliberations throughout the year. STAR President, Gabrielle Dickinson again provided steadfast leadership, a collaborative and level headed approach and unstinting, practical support to the STAR office on a day to day basis. Thank you to all the Board members for your commitment and encouragement and for the knowledge and expertise you each bring to the organisation.

The office was again staffed 3 days a week, with the Executive Officer employed for 19hrs a week and the Administration Officer for 7hrs. The office was open Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday between 9-30a.m. and 4pm and the capacity for flexibility outside of usual hours when required was again in evidence during the year. As noted in the President's Report Pam has been able this year to take on some advocacy as part of her duties as have one or two Board members when appropriate.

The contribution during the year of volunteers - especially Kelly Geoghegan, David Banfield, Norrie Blythman and Jane Hauser, in particular their assistance with the Newsletter, AGM mail outs and the preparation and distribution of information brochures/materials for Conferences, Expos etc is much appreciated.

We had the pleasure of taking two students from Homes Glen TAFE on placement as part of their Work Experience Program. Both Jack Watson and Matthew Sheehan fitted well into the office team and routines, and made good use of their time with us, putting their skills into practice "at the coal face" as well as learning new ones. This proved to be of mutual benefit to all concerned and we wish them well for their future employment.

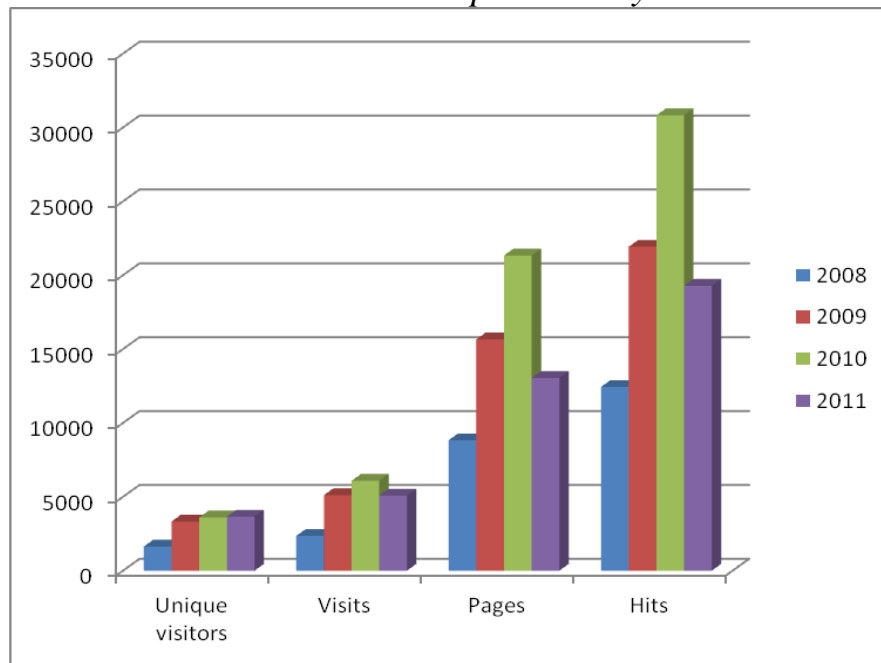
Individual advocacy and support is a key priority for our work. It also informs and focuses our systemic advocacy. This year 50 people received direct advocacy support either in a "one off" situation or ongoing over weeks or months until a satisfactory outcome for the person concerned was achieved. STAR's advocacy is firmly based on human rights and principles of social

justice with a particular focus and emphasis on the inclusion of people with an intellectual disability as equal and valued members of the community.

In addition we provided "secondary" advocacy where information and advice was provided to people with an intellectual disability and/or family members on a range of issues and for differing lengths of time to enable them to advocate on their own behalf or with or for a family member or friend. Workers from both generic and specialist services, in metro and rural areas have also been assisted in this way.

Students and people undertaking research have been given information or access to our library and other resource materials. We undertook presentations on various aspects of our work to a number of student and overseas groups who visited Ross House during the year. Whilst we are aware that increasingly people are using the Internet to obtain information there is still a need for information in print and other formats - we are very mindful of this and respond accordingly. Information about STAR was also accessed via a range of community data bases and websites and was made available at forums, conferences and Expos.

STAR WEBSITE STATISTICS provided by Rock:IT Consulting



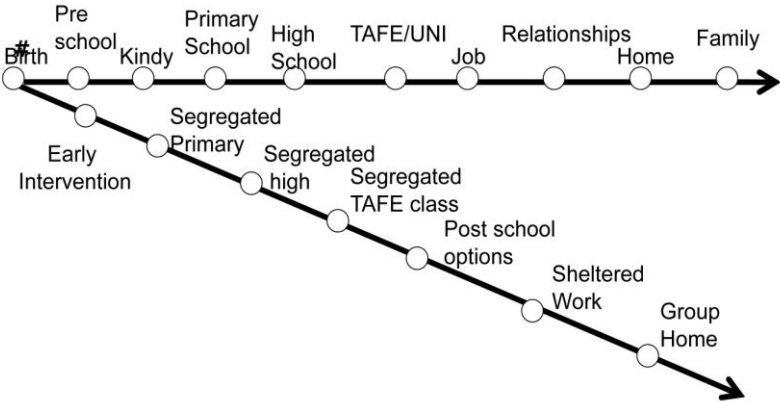
This year we had 3,656 visitors to the site who visited the site 5,083 times, looked at 13,047 pages and made approximately 19,282 hits. These statistics indicate that it is probably time to review and revamp our website – the Board will consider this as part of its Annual Planning day in February 2012.

Working with DARU (Disability Advocacy Resource Unit) we are currently trialling Browse Aloud, a software program from the UK that reads web pages aloud for people who find it difficult to read online. People with reading or sight difficulties can download the program to their computer so, when browsing our website, they can select sections of the site and the Browse Aloud program will then read the selected text to them. This software for the trial period of 12 months is free, after which time the usefulness of the program will be evaluated.

Requests for support and advocacy in relation to problems relating to access and inclusion in mainstream education for students with an intellectual disability constituted around 50% of our work whilst issues related to housing and support, accessible transport and buildings. Centrelink, the Child Protection System, Recreation and Respite and concerns with Service Providers accounted for the remainder.

At its first meeting this year the Board identified Inclusive Education as an area for significant targeted action to create the momentum for inclusive education by advancing and enhancing the general public’s understanding, knowledge and awareness of the benefits of an inclusive education, exposing the myths of segregated education and promoting the understanding that inclusive schooling underpins an inclusive society and is fundamental to achieving this.

TWO VISIONS OF THE FUTURE
An ordinary Life, or A Parallel Life



© R Jackson 2000 -- Include

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The Board’s Inclusive Education Working Group has been working on the ‘what, how, who and when’ to achieve this and this will be refined and progressed at our Planning Day in 2012. Staff, Board members and general members participated in forums, conferences and workshops, and represented STAR in consultations on key policy initiatives and issues, including the Review of the Guardianship Legislation, the

Parliamentary Inquiry into People with a Cognitive Impairment and the Criminal Justice System , the National Disability Insurance Scheme, the “Protecting Victoria’s Vulnerable Children’s Inquiry”, OPA’s 25th Anniversary Symposium the Victorian Equal Opportunity and Equal Rights Commission Stakeholders meeting on the provision of education to students with a disability and the VDAN forum on the Child Protection system. The President’s Report notes the areas where oral and/or written submissions were made.

Our membership of the Victorian Disability Advocacy Network, (VDAN) has enabled us to share information, develop agreed policy positions and take collective and effective action on current and emerging issues. This past year has seen VDAN continue the process of establishing itself as a peak body representing independent disability advocacy groups in Victoria

We are encouraged by the efforts of the Office for Disability in collaboration with the Advocacy sector to develop qualitative and quantitative data collection that will strengthen the capacity of individual organisations to provide effective and quality advocacy, and address systemic issues whilst not increasing their workload. STAR will be participating in the Data Base Project Reference Group where a consultant will be employed to scope and report on the data collection and data base requirements of organisations funded through the Victorian Disability Advocacy Program along with the requirements of the Office for Disability to collect and collate that data and to cost the installation and maintenance of an appropriate data base system for those organizations which do not currently have an appropriate data collection system in place.

Thanks to Chris Mathieson, Fofi Christou, Dean Dadson, Fleur Campbell and Shirana Nash from the OFD for their assistance during the year.

Esther Harris
Executive Officer

Treasurer's Report

Financial Year July 1st 2010 to June 30th 2011

STAR's financial position has remained secure, with our recurrent 3 year funding agreement taking us up to June 2012. It is envisaged that a new funding agreement for 2012-2015 will be signed by the beginning of the 2012-2013 financial year. With the change of Government our recurrent funding still comes through the Office For Disability which is now part of Department of Human Services.

We have also received a Department of Planning and Community Development Minor Works and Equipment grant of \$2182 which we have put towards backing up and upgrading our office computer networks.

Annual subscriptions and donations make a big difference to what can be achieved. Be assured it is put to good use and is very much appreciated.

My role as Treasurer has been greatly assisted by the effective day to day financial management and recording by Esther Harris. Sincere thanks Esther, on behalf of Board members and myself.

Cynthia Pilli
Treasurer