

# **ANNUAL REPORT 2014/15**



It is with pleasure that I present the annual report of the Australasian Society for Intellectual Disability Inc. (ASID).

### **Company Limited by Guarantee**

The reporting period 2014/15 has been a time of major transition for ASID. ASID has now completed the move from eight independent incorporated bodies to a single entity Company Limited by Guarantee (CLG) under the Australian Government legislation, the Corporations Act 2001. A CLG is widely recognised and accepted in Australia and New Zealand as the most appropriate corporate structure for not-for-profit organisations and charities whose business extends across multiple States and New Zealand. Under agreements between the New Zealand and Australian governments, a CLG registered in Australia can be easily recognised as a corporation in New Zealand and thus be an Australasian corporation.

In practical terms, the transition has meant that instead of being a member of a regional association everyone is a member of the Australasian entity itself – ASID Ltd. As a CLG, the membership interactions have stayed largely through local divisions.

While the transition to the CLG has taken longer than expected, the process overall has progressed without significant issues and remarkable goodwill. ASID utilised professional expertise to achieve what was a very complex process yet had very little direct impact on members. The outcomes of this significant restructure are already being seen and will increase rapidly over the next 12 – 18 months. Currently all the organisations by-laws are being reviewed and updated.

### **Board**

The Board has met 6 times throughout the reporting period. Discussion during the year indicated that the current approach of two face to face meetings per year was not proving effective to facilitate the level of activity required by the organisation. The other 4 other meetings are teleconferences and while business can be transacted, a two day face to face meeting is found to be far more effective. It has been decided that the Board each year will meet three times face to face - in February, June/July and at the ASID Conference.

### **Inclusion of People with Intellectual Disability in ASID Governance**

During 2015 an important decision was made to actively promote and include people with intellectual disability at all levels within ASID governance structures including the Board of Directors. ASID has now established a subcommittee of the Board to implement this direction. ASID is very aware that implementation needs to be undertaken carefully to facilitate success. This decision has a range of resourcing issues that need to be managed and supported.

### **Membership**

The Board have undertaken to review the organisational benefits for members. Membership benefits include access to two journals and the IDA newsletter, discounted access to conferences and events, and being part of strong networks. Recent changes to membership categories have provided increased flexibility for organisational members. One of the ongoing challenges that face ASID is maintaining membership numbers and ensuring that members are renewing across membership periods. Further work will be undertaken to improve the retention rates within the organisation. The Board is very conscious of keeping the current subscription rates to realistic levels being fully cognisant of the broad base of the people that are attracted to joining ASID.

### **Organisational Capacity**

One of the significant outcomes of the organisational restructure is the amalgamation of organisational financial resources. ASID now has significant financial reserves which will allow some more expansive thinking on how we can invest these resources to support the strategic objectives of the organisation. The volume of resources is identified in the Audited Accounts.

### **Presidential Executive Support**

The Board have approved the employment of executive capacity to support the President and Board in key functions. It has been identified that there is a need for ASID to be more responsive and nimble in what is becoming a far more dynamic environment. Given the voluntary nature of all key positions it has been agreed that the President will engage capacity to assist in a range of strategic tasks. This position will commence in early 2016 and is expected to make significant difference to the operations and effectiveness of the ASID Board.

### **Website**

ASID launched a new web site in early 2015. The site includes a public face, a member's only area and management tools such as membership renewal facilities and events bookings. With additional executive support ASID expects to see a greater functionality of the Website as its potential is further developed.

### **Secretariat**

ASID continues to contract NFP to conduct a range of secretariat roles for the organisation including membership services, telephone information, website maintenance and financial accounting services. Recent developments with the Website have improved systems and it is expected that current cost for secretariat services will not increase in the near future. At present this is the only paid support that ASID utilises. I would like to acknowledge the staff at NFP for the high quality support they have provided to ASID over the past 12 months.

### **Journals**

ASID owns two Journals - the Journal of Intellectual and Developmental Disability (JIDD), and the Research and Practice in Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (RAPIDD). Both Journals are published by Taylor and Francis. I would like to acknowledge and thank Associate Professor Michael Arthur Kelly and Professor Christine Bigby for their leadership as editors of JIDD and RAPID respectively. The role of editor is a significant voluntary position. Ongoing work on the improvement of the governance of Journals will continue in 2016.

### **IDA**

IDA continues to be the newsletter vehicle of the organisation. Over the last 12 months the decision was made to move IDA from a hard copy publication to being a fully on line magazine. While appreciating some members would have preferred to keep receiving hard copy in the mail it appears that most members have happily transitioned to the new format. An important outcome of this change was major cost saving that can be invested in other strategic activities in the organisation. Many thanks to Darryleen Wiggins in her role as Editor

### **Being an Active voice**

ASID will continue to strive to be an active evidenced based voice on current issues that are impacting on people with intellectual disabilities. A number of representations/submissions have

been made to the NDIA and ASID has participated in a full day workshop regarding safeguarding in the NDIS. ASID is also developing a range of evidence based position statements that will be made available publicly for use.

### **Conferences**

The Annual Board Conference continues to be one of the major public faces of ASID. I would like to thank and congratulate ASID WA under the leadership of Susan Peden, Conference Convenor, for a highly successful conference held in Perth, November 2014. This event has attracted excellent positive feedback. The conference also returned a substantial financial surplus.

I would like to acknowledge ASID Victoria under the leadership of their convenor Alice Nicolas, for the work and planning undertaken to bring us the Melbourne Conference. Melbourne 2015 is the 50<sup>th</sup> ASID conference. Following the first conference of the International Group for the Scientific Study of Mental Deficiency in Copenhagen in 1964, the fifteen Australian delegates to the conference held a meeting to establish the first Australian organisation of professionals in the field of developmental disability. Established as the Australian Group for the Scientific Study of Mental Deficiency (AGSOMD), the group had 41 founding members, and held their first conference and general meeting in Melbourne, during October 1965. Of course this was the beginning of what we now know as ASID

The Board of ASID have made the decision to not hold a regular conference in 2016 due to the IASSID Conference being held in Melbourne in August 2016. ASID is working in partnership with IASSID and the event is looking to be a major opportunity for Australian delegates to hear many excellent local and international speakers. ASID will be sharing information about this event with all members. As an alternative to a standard city based conference ASID has the opportunity to engage a series of speakers who will be travelling around Australia and New Zealand. Planning has commenced for the "Conference on the Move" and more information will follow shortly on this innovative event.

ASID Tasmania has commenced planning the Conference being held in Hobart in November 2017.

ASID is in a strong position to continue achieved and strengthen its strategic objectives. The next 12 months will be a critical time for the organisation as it now builds on the foundations that have been created over the past 2 years.

Lastly I would like to thank everyone who contributes to the outcomes of ASID. ASID is an organisation that relies on the contributions of many volunteers. I would especially like to thank all members who hold governance roles within Divisions and the Directors of the Board.

Angus Buchanan  
PRESIDENT ASID Inc.  
8 November 2015