

CHAIRPERSON'S REPORT 2021-2022



AUSTRALIAN Advisory
Board on
Autism

2022 has been another eventful and challenging year for the disability sector, but also one of opportunity to unite and to influence policy for the better, both for the AABA and for its fledgling project, the Australian Autism Alliance (AAA / The Alliance).

We are very proud that the Alliance has now grown its wings and is about to leave home on 31 December 2022, as its own incorporated body. The AABA will continue to work with the Alliance for better outcomes for people with autism, their families and the service providers and communities who support them.

I was honoured to take on the role as Chair after the resignation of Joan McKenna-Kerr at the 2021 AGM. Joan has remained as the AABA's representative on the Minister's Autism Reference Group (ARG) throughout 2022, as she continues to work tirelessly for our purpose. Thank you, Joan.

The separation of the Alliance from the AABA gave rise to re-exploring the AABA's continued role and purpose, hence a new strategic planning period commenced. As a result, the AABA new Strategic Plan reaffirmed it as the national peak body for the not-for-profit sector serving the autistic and autism community.

Our purpose is to ensure that autistic people and their families receive the evidence informed services they deserve, and our vision is that they lead enriched and valued lives.

The federal election held in May saw a change in government and with it a new Minister for the NDIS, the Hon Bill Shorten, with a commitment to return the NDIS to its original intent to provide people with disability the reasonable and necessary supports to live an ordinary life.

As autism accounts for over 50% of children under six years, as well as 30% of overall participants, in the scheme, the AABA continues to have a significant role in ensuring our participants receive this support.

COVID continued to challenge service providers to keep our people safe and well, as new variants emerged, and shutdowns impacted significantly on service providers and their clients.

Another casualty of COVID was the AABA's Asia Pacific Autism Conference (APAC), however we look forward to re-staging APAC as a key driver of evidence informed supports for our community. We anticipate making an announcement on this in the coming year.

We farewelled Jenny Karavolos as CEO of Autism SA and as a Director of the AABA and thank her for her significant contribution to the AABA during her time as a director. We also welcomed her in an advisory role as Co-Chair of the Alliance to contribute to AABA Board meetings, and Helen Graham as the new CEO of Autism SA, as a new AABA Director.

I would like to thank my fellow directors, particularly Jacqui Borland as Treasurer and Company Secretary, Jim Mullan, Donna Blanchard, Helen Graham, Joan McKenna-Kerr, and Prof Cheryl Dissanayake for their ongoing support and commitment to the AABA.

I look forward to our collaboration and collegiality in ensuring a better outcome for autistic people, their families, and communities.



Pam Macrossan
Chair
30 November 2022