



ANNUAL REPORT

2017 - 2018



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THE ORGANISATION

AMPARO Advocacy is a non-profit community organisation which provides independent individual and systemic advocacy with and on behalf of people from culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) backgrounds with disability. AMPARO Advocacy is governed by a voluntary Management Committee, the majority of whom are people from a CALD background with disability. AMPARO is funded by the Department of Communities, Disability Services and Seniors.

AMPARO Advocacy believes that people from a CALD background with disability have the same right to live valued lives that are comparable to other citizens, however societal responses to vulnerable people can be inadequate and harmful, making independent social advocacy on their behalf often needed.

THIS ANNUAL REPORT PROVIDES AN OVERVIEW OF THE WORK THAT HAS BEEN CARRIED OUT FROM OCTOBER 2017 - OCTOBER 2018.

Mission Statement

AMPARO Advocacy defends protects and promotes the rights and interests of vulnerable people from a culturally and linguistically diverse background with disability.

Vision

AMPARO Advocacy's vision for people from a CALD background with disability to be accepted and respected as part of the diversity of Australian society, with access to information, services and benefits, so that they can be included, participate and contribute in family and community life.

The Objects of AMPARO Advocacy Inc.

1. To provide individual advocacy for vulnerable people from a CALD background who have a disability to defend, protect and promote their rights and interests so that their fundamental needs are met.
2. To influence positive sustainable change to attitudes, policies, practices and resources within governments and communities.
3. To develop links with others who can strengthen our advocacy efforts.
4. To be an effective, accountable social advocacy organisation.
5. To undertake activities that further the objects of the Association and social advocacy.

*Human rights are inherent, inalienable, indivisible and universal.
They are the birthright of all people and cannot be lost or taken away.*

*They are all of equal importance and apply to all people whatever
their race, gender, disability, language, religion, political or other opinion,
national or social origin, age, property or other status.*

(United Nations)

AMPARO Advocacy believes:

People from a CALD background with disability have a rightful place in community where they:

- are respected and valued
- can experience valued relationships with friends and family
- have access to qualified interpreters and information in their preferred language
- have supports and services provided in a culturally sensitive and responsive way;
- have their gifts and strengths recognised
- have the natural authority to influence the direction of their own lives, or where they have limited capacity, that their family where possible retains this authority
- are welcomed and have opportunities to live an ordinary life
- are participating and contributing members in the social, economic and political life of broader Australian society.

AMPARO's Mandate

AMPARO Advocacy takes our mandate from important United Nation declarations, Federal and State antidiscrimination laws and principles which promote the rights of all people as well as expectations for the lives of people from a CALD background with disability.

*The **Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities** in particular provides advocates with a mandate to assert the rights of people with disability to education, health, work, adequate living conditions, freedom of movement, freedom from exploitation and equal recognitions before the law.*

Advocacy Principles

Independent advocacy is provided in a way that respects and meets the language, cultural and religious needs of the person and group and is guided by a strong commitment to the following principles of:

- Human Rights
- Social Justice and
- Inclusive Living

Strategic Goals 2017-2019

1. Provide vigorous individual advocacy.
2. Engage in strategic systemic advocacy.
3. Undertake community engagement and development that furthers the social advocacy work.
4. Be an effective, sustainable and independent advocacy organisation.

Management Committee

2017- 2018

President	<i>Don Dias-Jayasingha</i>
Vice President	<i>Ignacio Correa-Velez</i>
Secretary	<i>Karin Swift</i>
Treasurer	<i>Ludmila Doneman</i>
Committee Member	<i>Abebe Fekadu</i>
Committee Member	<i>Jennifer Barrkman</i>
Committee Member	<i>Shahram Jazan</i>



Staff

2017-2018

Manager	<i>Maureen Fordyce</i>
Advocate	<i>Liz Martyn-Johns</i>
Advocate	<i>Murka Smiechowski</i>
Multicultural Project Officers	<i>Lalita Lakshmi</i>
	<i>Jo-Ann Cochran</i>
Administration Officers	<i>Tamara Kenyon</i>
	<i>Linda Mullaly</i>
	<i>Hereadae Fenton-Smith</i>
Bookkeeper	<i>Lucia Forman</i>

PRESIDENT'S REPORT



Ladies and gentlemen, I have pleasure in presenting my report for the period 2017-18. This has been a very busy and successful year at AMPARO. Here are a few highlights that I bring to your notice. In November 2017 Minister O'Rouke announced the continuation of funding for individual advocacy post the NDIS transition. I am pleased to advise our members that our core funding will be maintained until June 2021.

However, this means more hard work to convince future state governments to continue funding for independent advocacy for Queenslanders with disability. An important piece of work completed by a sub-committee this year was the development of a decision making framework to guide us when making decisions about future partnerships and funding opportunities. This tool will help to safeguard our core business of providing independent advocacy.

AMPARO has a strong commitment to continuous improvement and as such maintains an effective internal quality management system to ensure we meet all legal, regulatory and contractual arrangements.

In June we were successful in obtaining a small grant from Multicultural Affairs Qld. This work will commence shortly and aims to link individuals from refugee backgrounds with disability and their families, to other well-resourced families in their local communities.

In terms of our staff, last November we were very sorry to lose Tamara Kenyon, our Admin officer. I am happy to report that we employed Linda Mullaly in this position and she has settled in well. In May this year we welcomed Benita Bierzynski to relieve Murka whilst on annual leave. Fortunately she has been able to continue to work with us to help individuals with access to the NDIS.

Also in June this year, due to the completion of the Participant Readiness work AMPARO farewelled Lalita Lakshmi our project officer and Hereadae Fenton-Smith our admin assistant. I would like to thank them both for the work they contributed to AMPARO with great success. My sincere thanks to these ladies.

This year we are losing a dedicated and devoted member of our management committee, at the end of this AGM. Ignacio Correa-Velez has served on the committee for the past eleven years. We will miss his insight, skills and friendship. I wish you well in your new position as joint CEO with QPASTT. My thanks also to our staff Maureen, Murka, Liz, Jo, Lucia, Benita and Linda in your pursuit of excellence.

My sincere thanks also to our management committee who have helped me along the way and thus, making my job easier to manage. Thanks too for the extra work you undertake to ensure we leave no stone unturned to make us the best possible organization.

Finally friends, thank you for your attendance and attention.

Don Dias-Jayasingha
PRESIDENT

GOAL 1: Provide vigorous individual advocacy in the Brisbane area

AMPARO Advocacy speaks, acts and writes on behalf of and with vulnerable people from a CALD background with disability to defend, protect and promote their rights and interests so that their fundamental needs are met and they can actively participate, engage and contribute to family and community life as equal members of society. The people AMPARO advocates for are most likely to be at risk and are least able to represent or defend their own rights and interests.

AMPARO represents the rights and interests of vulnerable people from a CALD background with disability who do not have a voice, or close family or friends who can support their aspirations, or speak on their behalf.

The independent advocacy efforts address issues of social and economic isolation, unfair treatment and discrimination.

The majority of individuals with disability and their families that AMPARO works with have been supported to come to Australia under the Humanitarian Program for refugees and require intensive support and advocacy to address multiple and complex layers of disadvantage. Many individuals are not active within their own communities and lack information about disability and the rights of people with disability in the Australian context. In addition, when seeking assistance they can confront service systems that have not been designed to meet their language and cultural needs. Subsequently many are missing out on important information, services, benefits and supports.

Over the past twelve months, AMPARO's one individual advocacy position, has provided independent advocacy to **35 individuals with disability** living in the Brisbane area. Whilst the focus of our individual advocacy is on the rights, wellbeing and best interests of the individual with disability, it is because of this, that we also directly assisted an additional **52 family members** to access essential information, services, and supports that they otherwise would not have received.

Over the past year independent advocacy has been provided to individuals from a broad range of cultural and linguistic backgrounds including: Vietnamese, Greek, Sudanese, Rohingya, Burmese, Karen, Eritrean, Colombian, Afghan, Rohingya, Japanese, Congolese, Chinese, Burundi, Iranian, Liberian, Somali, Nepalese, and Iraqi.

Of the individuals who have received direct advocacy:

- 69% required the assistance of a credentialed interpreter to assist with communication.
- 68.5% were from refugee backgrounds, where they or their family were forced to flee their homes to escape war and violence.
- 45% have required long-term advocacy, over 12 months, to address the myriad of complex and serious issues they and their families were experiencing.

Independent social advocacy is a crucial form of early intervention that:

- Supports vulnerable people with disability, and challenges poor responses from large and complex systems that are difficult to navigate such as Dept. Education, Housing and Health.
- Represents the rights and interests of the most vulnerable in our community, who do not have a voice, or close family or friends who can support their aspirations or speak on their behalf.
- Addresses serious issues of discrimination, violence, abuse and neglect of people with disability.
- Enables the individuals to access important information, supports and assistance they need so they are able to actively participate, engage and contribute to family and the broader community
- Prevents an escalation of the person's issues and vulnerability and in the long term saves government and public resources.
- Supports timely access to essential mainstream and disability specialist services, including early intervention supports for children.
- Builds the capacity of individuals with disability and their family members to understand their rights and to speak up about what is important to them.
- Seeks to build and repair close relationships around the person, an important safeguard for people with disability.
- Encourages services to work in ways that are culturally responsive, and supports the engagement of professional interpreters to ensure services effectively engage with individuals and their families from CALD backgrounds.
- Sometimes is needed to save the lives of people with disability.
- Supports the Queensland Government to meet its National Disability Agreement (NDA) obligations as part of the National Disability Strategy (2010-2020).

Stories of Individual Advocacy Work

The following individual advocacy stories provide insight into some of the complex issues experienced by people from a CALD BACKGROUND with disability. Real names have not been used and details that may identify the individual have been changed.

Story 1.

Appropriate level and culturally competent Support Coordination within an NDIS plan is key to CALD individuals receiving appropriate access and support

The National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) introduces a significant shift in the way support for people with disability is funded, a shift from a system of support based on the needs of service providers to an approach that focuses on people with disability having control and choice over their support needs and life. In theory the NDIS emphasises social and economic inclusion for people with disability and assistance for them to improve their long-term outcomes and ability to live an ordinary and meaningful life. However, the advocate's experience assisting people with disability to access the NDIS has not been consistent with the theory.

People from CALD backgrounds face obstacles at every level of transition to the NDIS; access, plan development and plan implementation. Those from a culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) background may experience additional language barriers and very often have complex life circumstances. More time, understanding and intensive support is required for them to access the NDIS, develop their goals, and develop and implement support plans which meet their complex support needs.

AMPARO Advocacy commenced advocating on behalf of Lin in 2016. Lin lives with her extended family who arrived in Australia in 2015 as recognised refugees under Australia's Humanitarian Entrance Program. The family had spent over 20 years in a refugee camp prior to coming to Australia and experienced significant trauma throughout their lives. Since 2016 AMPARO has also advocated on behalf of three other members of the family who also have disability, mental health issues and serious chronic health problems. All family members have limited proficiency in English. AMPARO considers this family to have complex needs and to be extremely vulnerable.

Lin has an intellectual impairment from birth; her family also report she sustained a head injury in her childhood, which has had a significant impact on her cognitive function. Lin is a very shy young girl who shows signs of depression. Lin's uncle is the only person supporting the extended family which includes five members who have very complex needs. He supports his extended family in a range of day to day living activities and decision making, and also provides transport since most of the family members are not able to access public transport independently.

The level of support he provides does not allow him to work so he receives a carer's pension. Unfortunately due to a lack of interpreters in Lin's preferred dialect, her uncle is at times required to provide assistance with communication. In addition, Lin's uncle has his immediate family needs to attend to. One of his own children has recently been diagnosed with an intellectual impairment, which has further compromised his already fragile mental health.

Lin's family reports that she likes going out into the community and exploring new activities and places of interest. However, for the past two years she has only received two hours per week of support to do this. Lin is unable to communicate very well with her worker during their outings, as the service has not provided a bilingual worker that can speak her language. The lack of support for Lin to develop and participate in meaningful activities, including work, and to build and maintain relationships, means that she is bored most of the time and lacks friends. This situation also impacts negatively on her mental health and wellbeing.

Due to safety concerns Lin needs to be supported on all outings; she does not have sufficient awareness of traffic or location to find her way home independently. Lin has not had any formal education and is illiterate in her own language and English, and requires support to navigate the public transport system. Unfortunately, with so many family members having complex needs, the capacity of Lin's family to support her is extremely limited. The NDIS is a great opportunity for Lin to improve her quality of life and be more included and actively involved in the community.

According to the NDIS each participant will develop their plan with a skilled and experienced planner who understands their situation. The AMPARO advocate attended the NDIS planning session with Lin and her family and prepared an information letter highlighting the extent of Lin's support needs and her family circumstances, to ensure the planner had a thorough understanding of the complexity of Lin's situation.

An occupational therapy assessment report was also provided to the planner which added more detailed information about Lin's current support needs and a list of goals that she and her family had discussed and agreed upon. Based on Lin's goals the AMPARO advocate requested that Lin receives sufficient funding to allow her to:

- Receive one-to-one community-based support, provided by a culturally competent service that would commit to employing skilled bicultural workers in order to support Lin to develop new skills, friendships, and connections within her local community,
- Engage a culturally competent service provider that is aware of how to access and work effectively with interpreting services available through TIS National to her to implement her plan and exercise choice and control.
- Access transport support so that she can access and participate in community activities, build her self-confidence and level of independence.
- Access allied health therapy, including speech therapy to assist with her communication and purchase relevant aids and equipment if needed.

Once an NDIS plan has been developed and approved, the role of support coordination is to work with the participant to implement their plan, connect them to their preferred and suitable service provider, and ensure a high quality of service delivery that will assist the participant to meet their goals. There are three levels of support coordination depending on the complexity of the participant's support needs and circumstances, and their capacity to understand, coordinate and implement the support themselves. Due to the complexity of Lin's needs and her family circumstances, AMPARO Advocacy strongly requested that Lin be provided with Specialist Support Coordination. This is the highest level of support coordination which is:

'...time limited and focuses on addressing barriers and reducing complexity in the support environment, while assisting the participant to connect with supports and build capacity and resilience'. (NDIS: Support Coordination).

Disappointingly, the NDIA planner advised the advocate a few weeks later that Lin had been allocated one hour per month of support coordination, which is the lowest level of the support coordination. Considering Lin's complex circumstances, the allocated one hour per month of support coordination will not be enough to achieve its purpose, namely:

'Assistance to strengthen participant's abilities to coordinate and implement supports and participate more fully in the community. It can include initial assistance with linking participants with the right providers to meet their needs, assistance to source providers, coordinating a range of support both funded and mainstream and building on informal support, resolving points of crisis, parenting training and developing participants resilience in their own network and community' (NDIS: Support Coordination).

Although the planner had a good understanding of Lin's circumstances and support needs, she had not been able to participate in Lin's final plan development. She advised the advocate that the NDIS has no clear guidelines or procedures for determining whether a planner is actively involved in a participant's plan development. Rather, the planner's involvement varies depending on the complexity of the participant's situation.

The planner assured the advocate that she had passed on all the information provided by AMPARO Advocacy to the plan development team as well as her own notes and recommendations. She was not sure why this information had been disregarded by the plan development team, when they decided the level of support coordination in Lin's plan.

On a positive note, it was clearly evident to the planner that Lin's plan was inadequate, so applied for a plan review even before contacting the advocate to advise of the outcome. Lin's case highlights the importance of planners being fully involved through the whole process of finalising plans and making recommendations for levels of support. Lin and her family are currently waiting for the plan to be reviewed and approved; hoping that this time the plan will reflect Lin's complex needs.

Story 2.

Appropriate support provided until NDIS transition is completed

AMPARO advocates for people with disability experiencing multiples layers of disadvantage, including having to navigate systems that fails to respond to their language and cultural needs. Cara is one of three children living in a single parent family; she has an intellectual disability and at times when she is feeling emotionally vulnerable expresses behaviours that can put her at risk.

Cara's father experienced significant unresolved grief, loss and trauma as a result of growing up during the civil war in his country of origin. The family is extremely socially isolated, even though there is some contact with the parent's extended family and their ethnic community, these contacts are unreliable and inconsistent. Furthermore, her father faces judgement about the way he parents and his capacity to support Cara from his community and is dealing with his own mental health issues. Responses to his requests for help from his extended family and community have often left him feeling unsupported and hurt, reinforcing his experience of social and cultural disconnection and isolation.

Cara's support needs are significant, her language delay and difficulties in communication making it difficult for her to express herself, which causes her much frustration. Cara attends a Special School and unfortunately has often been threatened with suspension. Additionally, Cara's father is concerned that his other younger children are modelling some concerning behaviours which add to his stress and anxiety.

In late 2017 Department of Communities, Child Safety and Disability Services became involved with the family and referred the family to AMPARO Advocacy. Advocacy was needed to secure appropriate supports through the Department and as a result the Clinical Services Team were engaged to provide intensive multi-disciplinary support including psychology, occupational therapy, speech therapy, case management and practical supports from a Resource Officer.

The Department also provided time limited emergency response funding for additional vocational care and individualised support for Cara. Partners in Recovery had been involved but had experienced some difficulties in staying engaged with Cara's father. AMPARO advocated for regular stakeholders meetings to ensure services involved worked together to provide culturally appropriate and effective support and so that Cara's father's voice, concerns and opinions were heard by all involved.

AMPARO's involvement meant greater collaboration between stakeholders and more effective engagement with this family. The intensive support and therapy in place for Cara and her family was beneficial to the family and their situation started to improve very slowly. Cara's father became more articulate about his own needs and better able to meet the needs of all his children.

He started to create some positive goals for the future and discuss how to achieve them. The school also reported Cara was more settled and the teacher was now able to assist Cara to apply some problem-solving techniques that she could follow. Cara could acknowledge when she made good choices and she was more involved with the school curriculum. It was clear that, long term intensive support was necessary to address Cara's needs and those of her family.

With the roll out of the NDIS in Brisbane, and the withdrawal of the Department of Communities, Child Safety and Disability Services from supporting individuals and families, a decision was made to remove the intensive clinical support for Cara and her family, prior to an NDIS plan being implemented. The Department ceased all support apart from a small amount of community access and vocational support for Cara. The Department's psychologist ensured the advocate that Cara's situation had been escalated to the Regional Management level and she has been prioritised, so a NDIS plan will be developed and approved quickly.

The Department's psychologist and the advocate arranged the NDIS pre-planning session together with Cara's father and input from the Department's clinical team to ensure a thorough understanding of Cara's support needs would be incorporated into an NDIS plan. The advocate ensured cultural considerations would be incorporated into the plan and requests were made to the NDIS for a planning meeting. Unfortunately Cara and her family were not approached by the NDIS to develop a plan in a timely manner and they were left without adequate support from the Department for 3 months.

Without support the family's situation deteriorated rapidly. The school reported a decline in Cara's participation at school and an increased number of school suspensions. Cara's father's reported a deterioration in his own mental health and his ability to support Cara and his other young children. AMPARO advocated for the Department to re-establish their involvement with this family, however were advised that this was not possible due to legislative requirements with the transition to the NDIS. However the advocate was able to re-establish the involvement of the Department Resource Officer for few hours per week of practical assistance and a small amount of case management.

The advocate recontacted the NDIA and advocated vigorously for an immediate planning meeting to develop an NDIS plan for Cara. A meeting was called quickly and a plan is being developed by the NDIS.

Cara's story is evidence that appropriate, regular support which addresses people's needs can stabilise even very complex situations and assist people to improve their quality of life. However without continuity of that most needed intervention, all the good work that has been done unravels, leaving the most vulnerable people in the community even more vulnerable. Moreover for many refugees it is difficult to trust people and services due to past experiences. Trust is built when a person feels supported and the support is consistent. When support is disrupted and discontinued and problems remain unaddressed and unresolved, trust decreases and becomes an issue again. As a result, efforts to re-establish a trusting relationship need to start from the beginning again; which takes considerable time.

AMPARO recognises that the transition from State funded support for people with disability and their families to NDIS is complex. However without timely transition and appropriate support in the interim, the result can be devastating for people with disabilities and their families.

The NDIS: Access and Implementation Issues

While the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) has resulted in increased funding for the majority of people for whom we advocate, the NDIS implementation process has brought a significant number of challenges for many. Much of AMPARO's advocacy work since the beginning of 2018 has involved ensuring people have access to the NDIS, are assisted with the pre-planning and planning processes, and are supported through the plan implementation process to ensure good supports are put in place and maintained.

AMPARO's work in advocating for individuals to receive appropriate funding to meet their needs through the NDIS, has revealed many shortcomings in these early stages of NDIS implementation in Brisbane. Through our systems advocacy work we have been able to feed back our concerns to the National Disability Insurance Agency (NDIA) at both National and State level. Although it is good to see some of concerns being acted upon, many individuals continue to struggle at each stage of the NDIS application process. Outlined below is an account of the issues that we have come across within our advocacy work.

Access

Disability Services Approved Applicants: Defined and Non-Defined

The majority of those people who were receiving state funded supports directly from Disability Services were seen as 'defined', and for these people the process of meeting the access requirements for the NDIS, although not without its trials, was comparatively simple. However, there are a number who have been through the lengthy assessment process and approved for Disability Services' support, but due to not having ever received direct supports, were deemed 'undefined', and required to undertake a whole new assessment process for the NDIS. One young man, although approved for Disability Services supports, had remained on the Departments' waitlist for many years and was therefore deemed 'undefined' by the NDIA, and had to start the NDIS access process from scratch. Disability Services no longer had records of his earlier assessment or the reports on which this assessment was based, and so new psychiatric and functional assessments had to be organised.

Phone Requests for Access

For many months, due to a high volumes of calls and insufficient staff numbers within the NDIA national access team, the initial process of phoning the NDIA to commence the access process was highly problematic, and for those non-English speakers requiring interpreting services it was impossible. Wait times were known to be up to 40 minutes or more, and TIS interpreters were only permitted to hold for 10 minutes. AMPARO knows of people who, after multiple attempts at calling, had given up.

Timing of Access Request Form Submissions

Once potential NDIS participants receive a request for further supporting evidence they have 28 days in which to provide the evidence, before the application process is cancelled. Many of those with limited English do not understand the information provided by the NDIA and are not aware of the cut off period. For those who have assessment reports on file 28 days may be adequate, but most do not have copies of previous assessments and / or are required to undertake new assessments. This is often a lengthy and costly process, and can rarely be completed within the given timeframe.

GP Functional Assessments

Applicants are encouraged to get the Access Request Form completed by their GP. We have found that many GPs appear to have little understanding of the functional support needs of their patients. As the functional assessment is critical to gain access to the NDIS, where there is a reliance solely on GP assessments many are unsuccessful. AMPARO Advocacy has therefore been advocating for people to have a functional assessment by an Occupational Therapist (OT) who are aware of the NDIA's requirements and can provide the necessary information.

Diagnoses and Assessments

Few of the families with whom AMPARO works have copies of existing medical reports and allied health assessments. Intensive support is required to follow up with GPs, allied health workers, services, schools, and hospitals to establish whether assessments have been done and whether there are reports on file that can assist with the NDIS Access process. Where people are known to be receiving a Disability Support Pension, Centrelink has been a useful source of diagnostic and allied health reports.

For people who do not have a formal diagnosis or have not had allied health assessments, access to these through the public health system can be a lengthy process; private practitioners can be very costly. Disability Services, Mater at Home and a number of volunteer OTs have been helpful in conducting OT functional assessments for some, for others if they have existing psychiatrists or specialists we have been able to ask them for letters to confirm diagnoses. However, for those from a CALD background with limited English proficiency who are not receiving the necessary intensive support and advocacy, acquiring sufficient documentation to ensure NDIS access can be an extremely difficult and sometimes impossible process.

Pre-Planning

Critical to a good NDIS plan is the pre-planning process, and for people and their families to have thought through what their goals are and what supports would be needed to achieve these goals. AMPARO has developed information materials and booklets in a number of different languages to assist with the pre-planning processes. We have worked through interpreters with individuals and their families, services, allied health workers and Disability Services to assist individuals to develop their goals and explore strategies for meeting these goals, and ensured that people have the information documented and available to take to their planning meetings.

Planning

Engagement of Qualified Interpreters

NDIS Guidelines clearly state that on-site interpreters can be requested for planning meetings, however the ability of participants to access on-site interpreters varies considerably between NDIA offices. When our advocate requested an on-site interpreter for a highly vulnerable family with limited English and significant health concerns, they were informed that on-site interpreters were only available to "those who had suffered trauma" and the application for an on-site interpreter was turned down.

Location of Planning Meetings

Many planning meetings have taken place in temporary offices, with little or no roadside or external signage to indicate where the offices are. Temporary computer networks had been established, which frequently dropped out throughout the assessment process. As the NDIA was not willing to conduct planning meetings in people's homes, some people with significant disabilities had to travel long distances to their planning meetings.

Planning Process

The planning process is a question and answer session, conducted over a two hour period, at the end of which the Plan is written and mailed in its final format to the participant, with no opportunity to provide feedback before the Plan is finalised. In AMPARO's experience it usually takes weeks to get to know a person well, and to gain a good understanding of their disability, support needs and aspirations for a good life. Advocacy goals are developed with individuals and their families over several meetings and produced in draft format, to be discussed and agreed at a follow up meeting, to ensure that the information that we have is accurate.

Questioning techniques vary considerably between planners, often with yes / no options, such as 'Do you have the ability to go to a festival?' and 'Are you fine with reading and writing?' Little understanding is gained as to how much support someone would need to attend a festival, or whether someone has a good understanding of a simple or complex text.

Advocates have attended a number of planning meetings where unfortunately the planner who conducted the interview did not go on to develop the final plan. At one planning meeting the vulnerability of the individual and their family was highly evident to the planner, with the person having significant support needs being supported by elderly and infirm parents, with very limited English language skills. Their plan was then developed by a different planner from notes provided. The result is a plan which provides significant funding for the individual, but has next to no funding for support coordination to support the family to put the necessary supports and services in place.

Approved Plans

Issuing of Plans

Despite planners being aware of families having little or no understanding of English, approved Plans have been mailed out in English to participants, with instructions in English for how the Plan should be implemented. Participants are not informed of the NDIA policy for having plans translated if needed.

Plan Implementation

Assistance with plan implementation varies considerably between NDIA offices. Some offer workshops to discuss the process, others do not. One individual was informed of them and told that a telephone interpreter would be provided for her, although no clarification could be given as to how a phone interpreter could operate in a workshop situation.

For many participants no assistance has been offered with implementation, the first NDIS contact following the planning meeting has been when their Plan has arrived by post or by email. For them there has been no follow-up by phone or in person to assist the participant to understand the content of their plan or what assistance there may be to implement the Plan. This has led to considerable delay in the implementation of the Plan or to the Plan not being implemented at all.

For others, this lack of implementation support has led to vulnerable individuals being contacted by, and signed up for supports with providers that appear to have little experience or understanding of the needs of people with disability and unable to provide the necessary supports. Service contracts have been signed without the family member being able to fully understand these documents, as qualified interpreters at not being engaged in this process.

Access to NDIS Portal

There is an assumption within the NDIS that all participants or their families will have access to their NDIS Portal through their on-line myGov account, and an ability to monitor Plan income and expenditure through their NDIS Portal. However, the majority of people for whom AMPARO advocates are not computer literate and have no access to the internet. Despite being informed of this at planning meetings, at no time has anyone from the NDIA offered another suggestion as to how expenditure can be monitored by those without access to the Portal.

Support Coordination

'Assistance to strengthen participant's abilities to coordinate and implement supports and participate more fully in the community. It can include initial assistance with linking participants with the right providers to meet their needs, assistance to source providers, coordinating a range of support both funded and mainstream and building on informal support, resolving points of crisis, parenting training and developing participants resilience in their own network and community' (NDIS: Support Coordination).

AMPARO Advocacy considers high levels of Support Coordination are essential for those from a CALD backgrounds and particularly for those with limited English proficiency, however many non-English speakers are being issued with Plans with no such funding. Without assistance to understand what support organisations are available, and assistance to link to the right providers which can meet their needs and someone to coordinate a range of formal and informal supports, many participants from a CALD background and their families are not able to utilise their allocated funding or exercise real choice and control.

It is vital that sufficient funds are provided for the life of the participants plan to assist individuals and their families resolve 'points of crisis' and issues as they arise, respond to changing needs and assist with pre planning for the following year.

The fact that the people for whom we advocate have an advocate in their lives confirms the need that the individual requires assistance to secure and maintain supports. Despite clarification of this, and vigorous advocacy for significant levels of support coordination at planning meetings, a number of people for whom we advocate have been offered no or very limited funding for support coordination. For those without an advocate at their meeting, and who may not know to request such supports, the chance of receiving adequate funding for support coordination is unlikely.

For those who have been offered funding for Support Coordination there has been little guidance as to how to select or link to an appropriate Support Coordinator. Often people are called by the NDIA and asked who they wish to appoint. The list of Support Coordinators operating in Queensland is lengthy and it is difficult for the advocates to determine where they are operating and who may be suitable for a given person. For those with no or little English, without access to the internet, and with no prior knowledge of who may be offering Support Coordination services the selection of an appropriate Support Coordinator would be an impossible task.

Many organisations are taking on the Support Coordination role for the first time and are interpreting the role in a variety of ways. Those who view it as a capacity building role have turned down requests from those requiring significant levels of support. Contracts with some registered providers have been signed without clear clarification of their role, leaving families unsure of the funding allocation process and vulnerable to unforeseen personal costs.

Plan Management

Many individuals and families are keen to have the flexibility of Plan Management, to allow them to access services from businesses/agencies that are not registered with the NDIA. An example of this is where a person with disability may have been receiving domestic support from someone they know and trust who is a sole-trader or operates a small business and who can provide the service at a more competitive rate than a registered NDIS provider. That agency or business may also not wish to go through the complex NDIS registration process or have to comply with other obligations that registration entails.

AMPARO Advocacy has experienced considerable obstacles in finding appropriate Plan Managers for people with limited English or who do not have access to email. Due to the limited funding provided for Plan Management, several Plan Managers are insisting that invoices must be checked and approved prior to being forwarded by email to them for processing, as there is insufficient funding for them to do more than pay invoices, and no funding for following up disputed claims.

Plans Reviews

A number of advocacy agencies in Queensland, including Speaking Up for You Inc, Queensland Advocacy Inc and Rights in Action, have received funding to assist people with NDIS Appeals. AMPARO Advocacy has therefore referred requests for such assistance from people new to AMPARO to these organisations. However where we are advocating for the person, and they or their family have not been happy with their Plan, we have been assisting with submitting plan reviews, including several requests for a significant increase in support coordination hours.

Due to the NDIA having to deal with a large number of review requests, the wait time for a response can be very lengthy. Those whose plans are inadequate, can be left for months without sufficient funding. One such participant has had their funding cut to below pre NDIS levels, and are unable to continue to attend services that they accessed prior to the NDIS being implemented. This is causing significant stress to both her and her highly vulnerable family.

GOAL 2: Engage in strategic systemic advocacy

This goal focuses on priorities identified for state-wide systemic advocacy and aims to influence positive sustainable change to attitudes, policies, practices and resources within government and communities.

AMPARO's systemic advocacy has been informed by our work with people from CALD backgrounds with disability, their families and communities through the individual advocacy and Participant Readiness work. Once again the primary focus of AMPARO's systemic advocacy has been raising key issues in relation to the National Disability Insurance Scheme, with the state and federal government and with the NDIA.

AMPARO has consistently supported the potential for the NDIS to improve the lives of all Queenslanders with disability and advocated for the NDIS to be designed and delivered in a way that would meet the needs of CALD participants.

However through our work we have found that Queenslanders from CALD backgrounds with disability and their families continue to experience many obstacles to equitable access and effective participation in the NDIS.

NDIS Participation Rates - June 2018 Quarterly Reports to COAG

The following data is reflective of the additional barriers people from CALD backgrounds with disability are experiencing in accessing the NDIS:

- In Queensland 2.6% of participants are from CALD backgrounds, however this figure should be at least 12.5%
- Nationally 7.2% of participants are from a CALD background, at full roll out the NDIS estimates this figures should be at least 20%.
- Most participants from a CALD background in Queensland will fall into the 'new' clients' category, which is less than 30% of those currently accessing the NDIS.

Queensland's NDIS Transition and Advisory Group (QTAG)

AMPARO Advocacy continued to actively participate in QTAG, to bring to the attention of the State government the specific challenges and issues that people from CALD backgrounds with disability and their families experience in accessing and participating in the NDIS.

Participation in QTAG provides an important opportunity to seek support from the State government to present to the NDIA, what is working for CALD participants and what changes are necessary to improve their engagement with the NDIS.

During this year AMPARO has attended 4 meetings and raised a number of key issues with further meetings and discussions held with representatives of the Department of Communities, Disability Services and Seniors regarding the following issues:

- Unpreparedness of the Queensland market, as no data or information has been released on the expected numbers of CALD participants in the NDIS or what their needs may be. First data released by the NDIS after 12 months was the September 2017 Quarterly Report to COAG.
- Failure by the NDIA to release a Cultural and Linguistic Diversity Strategy until mid-May 2018 means that the NDIS has largely been designed and is being delivered without adequate consideration of needs of people from CALD backgrounds with disability and their families.
- The NDIS did not implement processes for CALD participants and registered service providers to access language services to implement NDIS Participant's plans until 1 September 2017. This information has not reflected best practices in the provision of language services. As a result people with disability and their family members who have difficulties speaking English have found it much more difficult to make access requests to the NDIS and have not always been able to effectively communicate their needs, make informed decisions and exercise 'choice and control' over the implementation of their NDIS supports.
- The information and working instructions provided to the NDIA, Community Partners and registered service providers has meant poor practice is common in relation to the provision of language services.
- Whilst the NDIS Cultural and Linguistic Diversity Strategy 2018 cites a commitment to implement the Federal Government's Multicultural Language Service Guidelines, information developed by the NDIA and current practices by the NDIS and Community Partners, are not consistent with these guidelines.
- The low participation levels of NDIS participants from CALD backgrounds and reasons for this. Including the need for additional support through each step of the process to access the NDIS.
- Sought support from the State Government for a letter written by AMPARO to the CEO of the NDIS in June 2018, to raise concerns regarding the provision of language services. This letter had the support of 11 Queensland agencies, and the National Accreditation Authority for Translators and Interpreters (NAATI) and The Australian Institute of Interpreters and Translators (AUSIT).

AMPARO Advocacy would like to acknowledge and thank the Minister Coralee O'Rourke and the Department of Communities, Disability Services for their response to concerns raised throughout the year and for taking up important issues brought to their attention at QTG meetings, with the NDIA and the Transition Steering Committee.

National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS)

NDIS Cultural and Linguistic Diversity Strategy 2018

AMPARO has a commitment to ensuring people from CALD backgrounds with disability, who have traditionally missed out on accessing vital services and supports, will have the same opportunities for a good life that the NDIS offers.

AMPARO welcomed the release of the ***NDIS Cultural and Linguistic Diversity Strategy 2018*** in May this year. It is clear that the delay in implementing a comprehensive CALD strategy, has meant the NDIS has been designed without due consideration of the needs of people from CALD backgrounds with disability. The Strategy has some positive broad commitments by the NDIA that we commend, and that is to build their understanding of the interests and needs of people with disability from CALD backgrounds and embed this understanding in the design, planning and development of the NDIA.

It is unfortunate that the Strategy does not include a detailed action plan, to detail how broad goals and priorities will be implemented by the NDIA. The Strategy provides little in the way of practical direction to NDIA and their Community Partners staff on the ground and there is little to hold the NDIS accountable to individuals from CALD backgrounds, their families and advocates.

AMPARO was pleased to see a commitment to give effect to Australia's obligations under United National international human rights conventions, including most importantly the CRPD. The Strategy 2018 also refers to the obligation to implement the ***Multicultural Language Service Guidelines***, of particular significance given our concerns in relation to the provision of language services by the NDIS.

The current NDIS Pathway does not meet the needs of CALD participants.

AMPARO has been advocating for the NDIA to develop a Pathway that truly meets the needs of CALD participants and their families for some time. The review of the NDIS Participant Pathway in relation to people from CALD backgrounds, presented an opportunity to highlight current barriers in the design and delivery of the NDIS.

In April this year, AMPARO was invited to attend a workshop in the ACT on the Cultural and Linguistically Diverse Pathway Design. Lalita Lakshmi attended this meeting and provided feedback on the many obstacles people from CALD backgrounds with disability and their families are experiencing in accessing and participating in the NDIS.

In July AMPARO was invited to meet with the Executive Leadership Team of the NDIA and provided feedback on the experiences of people from CALD background with disability accessing and participating in the NDIS. Then in August, AMPARO was able to provide further feedback to the NDIA on the CALD Participant Pathway Engagement Report.

Further feedback included:

- Lack of direct support for individuals from CALD backgrounds with disability to undertake preplanning, to make an access request to the NDIS, gather evidence of diagnosis and impact of disability and support to access timely and affordable assessments. LACs have advised AMPARO they are not able to provide this level of direct assistance.
- The failure of the NDIA, Community Partners and registered services providers to implement best practice in relation to the provision of language services

- Many individuals from CALD backgrounds are receiving inadequate levels of supports coordination or no support coordination and the NDIS is not providing the individuals and their families with the support they need to link to an appropriate support coordination service.
- There is an assumption by the NDIS that people are connected to services prior to receiving their NDIS Plan, however many are not. And the NDIA state they cannot be seen to be making recommendations or showing preferences to services.
- NDIS planners who meet with the individual with disability, their family and advocate hear firsthand what supports the person requires and are made aware of the complexities that need to be considered by the NDIA in developing their NDIS plan. However these same planners are not always involved in developing the final participant's plan, the results being plans are inadequate to meet the person's needs.

Given the low numbers of Queenslanders accessing the NDIS, we hope that the final Pathway for CALD Participants will address the significant design issues and concerns raised by AMPARO and that it be implemented without delay as a high priority by the NDIA.

Agencies funded to assist with reviews and appeals in relation to the NDIS are being inundated with requests for assistance by new participants and their families. This is concerning on two levels, firstly why are so many participants plans requiring a review and secondly this is early in the roll out in Brisbane and referring individuals for reviews.

- Support coordination services are generally confused about how to access and provide interpreting services. We are aware of agreements being signed without the engagement of qualified interpreters.

These issues have been taken up with the NDIA and with state and federal levels of governments. AMPARO continues to advocate for important changes in the design and delivery of the NDIS and the need for a pathway that addresses the needs of CALD participants.

The provision of language services

The AMPARO considers it critical that people from CALD backgrounds with disability and their families have access to NAATI certified interpreters in a timely manner, to ensure effective access and participation in the NDIS.



Whilst the NDIS Cultural and Linguistic Diversity Strategy acknowledges the commitment to implementing the Federal government's Multicultural Language Service Guidelines, information developed by the NDIA and practices being implemented by the NDIS and Community Partners, are not consistent with these guidelines.

Unfortunately current systems are not responding appropriately to the linguistic needs of people from CALD backgrounds with disability and their families and because of this they are experiencing further disadvantage and not able to engage with the NDIS on an equal basis.

This is despite a commitment in the **NDIS Act 2013, Section 7 (1)** and the **Operational Guidelines: Communicating with people with disability**, which support the need for information to be provided in the “language and mode of communicate and terms which the person with disability is most likely to understand.”

And regardless of the fact that State and Federal policies have established clear protocols for engaging qualified interpreters, and specify practices to be avoided. These policies could assist the NDIA in developing clear and comprehensive language service policies and procedures that reflect best practice.

- **Queensland's Language Service Guidelines**

<https://www.communities.qld.gov.au/resources/multicultural/policy-governance/lsp-guidelines.pdf>

- **Multicultural Language Services Guidelines Agencies**

https://www.dss.gov.au/sites/default/files/files/foi_disclosure_log/12-12-13/multicultural-lang-services-guidelines.pdf

In late June 2018, AMPARO, with the support of 11 Queensland agencies, and the National Accreditation Authority for Translators and Interpreters (NAATI) and The Australian Institute of Interpreters and Translators (AUSIT), wrote to the NDIA to raise concerns regarding the provision of language services under the NDIS.

AMPARO called on the NDIA and TIS National to work together to review the systems, processes and available information on the provision of language services for people from CALD backgrounds and their families, to ensure consistency with best practices principles and guidelines in the provision of language services.

The response from the NDIA has been positive and we have verbal confirmation that they are working with TIS National to review their current information and processes, to reflect best practice in the provision of language services. However, it is crucial that improvements to policy and practice in this area receive the urgent attention required.

In summary concerns raised with the CEO of the NDIS included the following:

- The NDIS *Translation and Interpreting Services (TIS)* fact sheet for Participants from CALD backgrounds is does not reflect best practice.
- Some NDIA Planners and LACs are advising they are not able to arrange on-site, face to face interpreting and insisting they can only arrange telephone interpreters.
- NDIA Planners and LACS are often unaware they are able to engage specific interpreters when this is requested by individuals, family members or their advocates. Often displaying a strong reluctance to do so, even when requested by the individual or advocate.
- The NDIA and their Community Partners needing training to develop and ensure high levels of cultural competency in their responses.

- TIS National fact sheet: *Interpreting Support for NDIS Participants* not available on the TIS National Website.
- TIS National Interactive Voice Response system not working well for non-English speakers.
- Confusion over whether individuals with disability, their family member or other person assisting the family, should call TIS first or the NDIA first.

AMPARO recommend the following to the NDIA:

1. The NDIA must develop a clear and comprehensive policy on the use of translation and interpreting services to ensure people from CALD backgrounds with disability have the same choice and control as other NDIS participants. This policy must also provide guidelines on the different roles to be performed by a bilingual work and that of an interpreter.
2. The NDIA and TIS National must simplify processes to accessing NAATI Certified Interpreters and Translators.
3. The NDIA and their Community Partners to receive training to develop high levels of cultural competence, which includes building their skills, knowledge and confidence, to understand how to effectively engage qualified interpreters and how to determine the most appropriate form of interpreting.

Feedback to TIS National

In April this year, AMPARO contacted TIS National with a number of concerns and wrote to and met with the Hon. Jane Prentice MP Assistant Minister for Social Service and Disability Services around these same issues.

- TIS National Interactive Voice Response system is not working well for non-English speakers

People who experience difficulties speaking English are finding the new process to access interpreters to communicate with the NDIA, much more difficult. In order to access an interpreter, a non-English speaker must navigate a number of prompts in English first, which can be problematic. The new system appears to be designed to meet the needs of English speakers and service providers rather than the needs of people who are not proficient in English.

- People contacting TIS National and asking to be put through to NDIS were being disconnected before this could happen.

There is confusion over whether individuals with disability, their family member or other person assisting the family, should call TIS National first or the NDIA first. Early this year when non-English speakers called the NDIA directly, call staff were not competent in the process to connect to an interpreter through TIS to communicate with the person. NDIA would advise the person after holding for significant amounts of time to hang up and call TIS National.

However, when calling TIS directly to connect with an interpreter to contact the NDIA, similarly there were significant problems. Of most concern was that once TIS had located an interpreter, they will only keep the interpreter on hold for 10 minutes, whilst trying to connect through to the NDIS. For a number of months our experience was that NDIS would rarely answer the call before TIS disconnected the non-English speaker and the interpreter. We were contacted by one mother who had called 3 times during one day with no success to be connected to the NDIS.

Feedback from TIS National was that they were aware this was occurring more often and that they had approached the NDIA about this to look at improving the system. AMPARO was pleased to receive a response from the Hon Jane Prentice emphasizing improvements in this area, which we have also experienced:

"I acknowledge that the NDIS participants and providers may have experienced extended wait times from January to April 2018 when calling the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIA) National Contact Centre. It is regrettable that the long wait times may have delayed some people from Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) backgrounds accessing translation services."

The NDIA has been working to improve contact centre wait times particularly in relation to staff resourcing to meet demand. Extensive recruitment exercise have been conducted since January 2018 to improve contact centre staffing capacity and as a result, wait times have reduced in May 2018. These improvements have also improved the experience of callers who require translation services."

Information Linking and Capacity Building (ILC): Grant Guidelines to be improved.

It is important that agencies applying for ILC funding are informed of their obligations under the Federal government's **Multicultural Access and Equity Policy: Respecting diversity**.

Improving responsiveness under this policy means that agencies receiving Australian Government funding must ensure that cultural and linguistic diversity is not a barrier for people who need to access their services. This means, for example, that appropriate language services should be provided.

Grant Applicants must consider whether professional translating or interpreting services may be needed to deliver services, projects, activities or events to non-English speakers. All ILC activities must be accessible to all people with disability, including people from CALD backgrounds. This means at the very minimum ILC applicants need to budget for including the costs of translating and interpreting services in their applications.

Unfortunately reference to the Multicultural Access and Equity Policy has not appeared in the grant guidelines since January 2017. AMPARO was raised a number of times with the NDIA, AMPARO hopes to see this information in guidelines for the next ILC round. AMPARO believe this requirement should be incorporated into:

Criterion 2. Demonstrated methodology to achieve outcomes for people with disability to live an ordinary life and /or for community to facilitate opportunities for inclusion.

Multicultural Access and Equity Policy is available on the website:

<https://www.homeaffairs.gov.au/LifeinAustralia/Documents/MulticulturalAffairs/multicultural-access-equity-policy-guide.pdf>

GOAL 3: Undertake community development and engagement that supports social advocacy.

This goal focuses on engaging with diverse communities, and undertaking community development work that furthers the objects of social advocacy. The activities this includes increases AMPARO's understanding of the challenges and issues experienced by people from CALD backgrounds with disability and their families, and provides a sound basis for education and awareness raising and the systemic advocacy undertaken by the organisation.

Participant Readiness Initiative (PRI)

AMPARO Advocacy's Participant Readiness Initiative project was completed at the 30 June after three and a half years. AMPARO's PRI work throughout 2017-2018 continued to outreach to people from CALD backgrounds with disability, their families and communities to provide them with culturally appropriate information to help prepare them for the NDIS.

AMPARO has worked from a flexible, community development approach which has included engaging with community leaders, multicultural workers and bicultural community educators, to access vulnerable and isolated individuals with disability and their families.

The work during this period has been undertaken in Brisbane, Sunshine Coast and Gold Coast and has included:

- Group information sessions and workshops: Attended by people with disability, family members, community members and leaders, bicultural and multicultural workers.
- Individual information sessions in people's homes, with the assistance of bicultural workers and interpreters
- Developing further translated resources, based on feedback, to include three additional languages in audio and written formats to explain both what disability in Australia is, and what the NDIS is.
- Trialled new approaches, including utilising ethnic community radio.

1. NDIS information sessions for CALD individuals, families and communities

- Seven NDIS information sessions were held for ethno-specific communities through interpreters or bicultural workers. These were held in Arabic, Japanese, Vietnamese, Spanish, Iranian and one general CALD community workshop in English and 98 people attended these sessions.

All participants who completed evaluations responded that they were better informed about the NDIS. However when asked if they felt prepared to develop a plan with the NDIS, most reported 'not much' or 'a little'.

The majority reported they would need assistance to contact the NDIA to ask for an Access Request Form and complete it, and would need a face to face planning conversation with an interpreter with the NDIA.

It is AMPARO's view that this reflects the complexity of the process and in order to increase workshop participant's confidence to prepare a plan and access the NDIA, most would require much more intensive and ongoing support to do this.

- Thirteen NDIS information sessions, forums and workshops were held for multicultural workers, community leaders, bicultural workers, interpreters, and community and disability workers. Information was provided about how to support potential NDIS participants to access and participate in the NDIS and the particular needs of people from CALD backgrounds. **These sessions were attended by 392 people.**

All participants who completed evaluations responded that they were better informed about the NDIS, most responded that they understood more about how to access the NDIS and the majority indicated that they understood more about the planning process with the NDIS.

Feedback from these sessions included:

- *It was a good workshop to gain knowledge and strategies to work for people with NDIS.*
- *It made me realise how important it is to really understand the term "disability" and respect people with disability.*
- *Thank you for providing a very informative and engaging and mind opening session.*
- *Helped me a lot with different jargons.*
- *Thank you for the workshop. I loved the discussion part where I learnt from others.*
- *Useful and explicit. Very well organised. Thank you.*
- *Great training. Thanks. Really enjoyed the workshop. Very informative and educative.*
- *It's a really good seminar. I've learned a lot from the presenter and other practitioners. Very helpful!*

2. Individual conversations and sessions

- **32** Individual conversations and home visits were held with CALD individuals and families with **57** people participating.

All participants who completed evaluations reported being better informed about the NDIS and understanding more about how to access the NDIS. However half of these participants indicated that they lacked confidence to develop a plan with the NDIS and most felt they would need assistance to contact the NDIA to ask for and complete an Access Request Form. All reported needing a face to face planning conversation with an interpreter with the NDIA.

3. Translated materials and resources

AMPARO'S translations and resources funded through PRI have targeted key language groups of significance in Queensland, including smaller, more isolated and vulnerable CALD communities. This is a different approach from the NDIA, which has selected the languages of the highest populations rather than the most in need communities.

We believe the translations have been important because they do not just discuss the NDIA, but seek to increase CALD community's understandings of disability, and help to address issues around stigma of disability in some communities.

AMPARO has received positive feedback from many agencies and individuals saying there is nothing as extensive or relevant for emerging communities anywhere else in Australia.

Challenges in developing useful translations and audio materials

One of our most recent translations has been an audio version of Fact Sheet 2 - What is the NDIS? into Rohingya. This has been our most challenging translations to date, as there is no written Rohingya language, moreover, the language is incomplete and missing many words, and the community has been dispersed from Burma due to persecution so language also varies depending where the community members settles in the interim before arriving in Australia.

To undertake the translation three Rohingya interpreters needed to meet and work together to decide on the most appropriate, accurate and current language. Whilst other languages have shared similar challenges, for example Hazaragi and Swahili, this was the first time that they were recording audio versions without a written translation in language (it needed to be translated into a second language, and then spoken into Rohingya).

AMPARO continued to seek and respond to feedback from service providers that use our fact sheets. For example, when we were informed that Bhutanese families that speak Nepali are unable to read it, we worked with a Nepali interpreter to create an audio format of this translation. When informed that many Rohingya speak Bengali, as they have lived in Bangladesh, we worked with a Bengali interpreter of Rohingya background to translate the factsheets. These additional resources are available on AMPARO's website. www.amparo.org.au

Examples of the distribution breadth of translated materials include the following:

- Vietnamese translated materials were provided through the Inala Children's Moon Festival in over 1000 gift bags.
- AMPARO's NDIS factsheet for interpreters was distributed through AUSIT (Australian Institute of Interpreters and Translators), NAATI (National Accreditation Authority for Translators and Interpreters) and TIS through email distribution lists of over 37,000.
- Digital stories and video formats of translations have been viewed 2,410 in total, this includes "Esperance's Story" which was created in this 12 month period and viewed on YouTube over 400 times.

- Anecdotally, we have been contacted by teachers, LAC's, health and disability staff who have informed AMPARO that they regularly use these resources to assist in explaining the NDIS and disability to their CALD clients.

"What a wonderful resource to help explain the complexities of the NDIS and add some cultural context to Australian views of disability." Early Childhood Practitioner

"The resources have been fantastic to help explain how the NDIS will work to our refugee families." School Guidance Officer

4. Ethnic Community Radio

This year AMPARO trialled the use of ethnic community radio as a communication strategy to reach isolated members of specific CALD communities. This work would not have been successful without the support of AMPARO's bicultural community educators, as accessing specific ethnic community program convenors can be extremely difficult without having the cultural connections and language to speak with them. Our bicultural workers were able to secure very generous amounts of program time. They negotiated with program presenters and convenors to develop a suitable approach and these varied between communities.

- **Community Radio Programs in Arabic, Spanish and Mandarin** - explaining the NDIS were aired on 4EB Radio between December 2017 and April 2018 and are available on the website. They can be heard via- www.amparo.org.au/publications-reports/ndis-community-radio-interviews/
- Membership and audience for these three communities are considerable, according to 4EB, there are over 1000 Arabic listeners for the Arabic program, 800-900 listeners for the Spanish program and 1000 listeners for the Mandarin program.

5. Sharing PRI learnings in our work with CALD communities

▪ Multicultural and NDIA sector network meetings

In previous PRI work AMPARO had organised a meeting to connect multicultural workers, LACs, ECEI and NDIA representatives in the Ipswich/Scenic Rim areas close to roll out. The aim was to facilitate the development of an ongoing working relationships between the multicultural sector and NDIA in this area, particularly as AMPARO's work in that location had to finish.

AMPARO had hoped that ongoing meetings between these two sectors might achieve the following:

- Assist to identify the individuals from CALD backgrounds with disability and their families who require NDIS support,
- Highlight some of the significant issues and concerns for this cohort, and
- Provide an opportunity to share best methods of engagement and inclusion.

The meeting was well attended and group members agreed to meet on a regular basis. Given the success of this meeting and approach, AMPARO had proposed to undertake a similar strategy in 3 other Brisbane, Logan and Cairns in the lead up to the NDIA roll out- in Brisbane, Logan, and Cairns.

However the very late announcement of NDIA Community Partners meant LACs and ECEI organisations were not in place as intended and without them the meetings would not be of benefit. AMPARO believes it is important that the NDIS and their Community Partners engage and connect with multicultural workers and agencies supporting people from CALD communities once operational in these areas.

AMPARO undertook a range of alternative strategies to help support CALD in rollout areas including meeting and sharing our learning with NDIA community engagement managers for Central Queensland and Queensland South, presenting at a NDIA forum in Logan, assisting key organisations in the Cairns region to connect to CALD communities, and meeting with NDIA staff in Brisbane to share our learnings regarding the best strategies and practice when working with CALD communities.

Throughout the 12 month period, AMPARO continued to share the learning from our PRI work with the NDIA and relevant state government agencies, including Multicultural Affairs Queensland.

As discussed in previous PRI reports, information and intensive pre-planning support to people from CALD backgrounds with disability and their families would be extremely beneficial leading up to, during and after NDIS roll out.

Many people, particularly those from new and emerging communities are telling AMPARO that they need additional support to:

- Understand their rights and to know what a 'good life' for people with disability can look like.
- Gather eligibility "evidence", including evidence of disability and impact of impairment on their functional capacity
- Access timely, affordable assessments if needed, such as cognitive assessments. There is no referral pathway to link people from CALD backgrounds to clinicians that are confident in conducting culturally appropriate assessments, and/or who require the assistance of interpreters. And there are lengthy delays in accessing Queensland's public health system.
- Complete preplanning to understand and take advantage of the opportunities available to them and to effectively access and participate in the NDIS
- Make the phone call to request the Access Request form, and complete this form as it is only in English.
- Respond to requests from the NDIA for additional information.

AMPARO Advocacy's Translated Resources

These resources have been developed as part of the Participant Readiness work and are available on our website: www.amparo.org.au

- **Fact sheet 1 - *Understanding Disability in Australia***
- **Fact sheet 2 - *What is the National Disability Insurance Scheme?***

These fact sheets have been translated into 38 languages, and available now in 12 audio visual formats. www.amparo.org.au/factsheets/

- **New translation:**
 - **Kurdish Kurmanji:** Fact Sheet 2 Only (AMPARO's information was translated with our permission by Carers QLD/NDIS Toowoomba Office)
- **Fact sheet 3 - NDIS information for interpreters and translators - *National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS): How does it work? How can I prepare?***

This fact sheet provides information for interpreters and translators to assist them prepare for NDIS related phone calls and face-to-face meetings. www.amparo.org.au/factsheets/
- **Digital stories** – Individuals with disability and families from refugee backgrounds speak in their own language about their lives, hopes and goals for the future.
- **Five videos** - Kirundi, Farsi, Burmese, Vietnamese, and Swahili with English subtitles. www.amparo.org.au/videos/
- **Community Radio Programs in Arabic, Spanish and Mandarin** - explaining the NDIS were aired on 4EB Radio between December 2017 and April 2018 and are available on the website. www.amparo.org.au/publications-reports/ndis-community-radio-interviews/
- **NDIS information kits** - some of which have been translated in language.
- **New translations and audios available in other languages include:**
 - **Nepali:** Fact Sheet 1 & 2
 - **Bengali:** Fact Sheet 1 & 2
 - **Rohingya:** Fact Sheet 2 Only
 - **Kurdish Kurmanji:** Fact Sheet 2 Only (AMPARO's information was translated with our permission by Carers QLD/NDIS Toowoomba Office)

AMPARO would like to acknowledge and sincerely thank Lalita Lakshmi for her dedication and hard work in organising the development of these extensive translated resources during her work on the Participant Readiness Project over the past three and half years.

CALD Targeted Strategies Participant Readiness Program Project Model

AMPARO Advocacy's CALD Targeted Strategies Participant Readiness Program aimed to assist people from CALD backgrounds with disability and their families to access meaningful information about the NDIS in Queensland, including what it is, how it works, and the ways that they can prepare for it.

The central design of this program was to undertake culturally appropriate, responsive and flexible processes that would support the effective engagement and the provision of information to this hard to reach cohort.

Through this project AMPARO was able to train and support a team of **18 Bicultural Community Educators** (BCE's) to seek out isolated people with disability in their particular communities, to inform them about: disability, the rights of people with disability in the Australian context and the opportunities that the NDIS can provide.

18 Bicultural Community Educators were employed from the following ethnicities: Hazaragi, Somalian, Columbian, Iraqi, Mad, Burundi, Eritrean, Rohingya, Karen, Vietnamese, Chinese, Indian, Persian, Filipino, Dinka, Nuer Liberian and Ethiopian.

Information was provided to individuals and their families using the following strategies

- Targeted engagement with bicultural community educators
- Conducting workshops and information sessions
- Providing one on one Information sessions for individuals and families in first language
- Engaging community leaders, multicultural workers, disability services and government to assist with information dissemination
- Delivering information sessions at other community forums/events
- Stalls at various venues, including, shopping centres, festivals, expos, and cultural celebrations
- Incorporating translated materials in our information kits
- Making use of audio visual translations and digital stories to provide information to families

Through this work AMPARO has identified and met with over 222 individuals with disability and their families in their own homes, a majority of whom are not connected with disability services, and have missed out on important supports, including early intervention. Most will be eligible to access support via the NDIS.

AMPARO conducted over 39 workshops and presentations for CALD communities were held with 929 attendees, which includes people with disability, family members, community members and leaders, bicultural and multicultural workers

Benefits and Outcomes

AMPARO considers that this work has provided significant benefits to people from CALD backgrounds with disability, their families and diverse communities and that our reach has been extensive. Evidence of this has been collected through the completion of evaluations by individuals, and feedback provided by participants and bicultural community educators.

For many there is a lack of basic understanding of some types of disability especially non-physical disabilities. Some types of mental disability symptoms are not considered as signs of disability in our home countries (eg. Some autism disorders and intellectual disability).

The stigma associated with disability prevents some people to accept the disability and/or to discuss with others. This prevents some people with disability or/and their families to see the need of discussing about their disability and/or NDIS.

The family will be worried that if others know about their family member with disability and then people will avoid them and the future opportunity for that person will be limited eg. no one will marry them. This can also extend to the rest of the family members as it might be seen that the family has bad genetics.

Some religious people think that recognising some types of disability shows a lack of faith in God, and/or accepting disability support other than prayer does not believe in God's power. They assume that a mental or intellectual disability is about bad spirits and this can be healed by prayer only. These people say for example: "I know I am fine/my child is fine because we are praying."

The feedback from community members has consistently highlighted the appreciation by families of a home visit by a Bicultural Community Educator.

Home visits Feedback – Vietnamese Bicultural Community Educator

This approach was greatly appreciated by all families as it was conducted in a place that the family felt more relaxed and comfortable environment. It allowed the family to have more time to be engaged in the session rather than travelling to the workshop, having to have someone to care for their disability person and rushing back home when caring time is up. Also, it allows us to see a small window of how their family is structured with caring for their disability person to help them later on.

Home visits Feedback – Peruvian community member

The information was very relevant and quite useful for my circumstances. I appreciate the fact of having a home visit. Many thanks, God bless you.

Feedback regarding resources developed through previous PRI work

Having resources translated in my community language was very appreciated by my community members and made my job much easier. (Iraqi Bicultural Community Educator).

The result of the evaluations completed with individuals with disability and their families show that has been increased awareness and understanding of the NDIS process:

- 76.2% stated that they understood all or most of the information provided about the NDIS
- 73.5% stated they understood all or most about the information on how to **access** the NDIS
- 60% stated they understood all or most of the information on how to **prepare** to develop a plan for the NDIS.

Feedback from individuals

We were really informed well about NDIS. This will go a long way to help us to have our son being given more support, to help him in his future life. (Indian family).

I understand that I have the rights to get support and I understood much better about NDIS. AMPARO supported me a lot and I would love more support from AMPARO. (Eritrean family).

More understanding about disability in Australia. It's our first time hearing about this kind of services. More clear. (Karen family).

I am thankful to know about the NDIS project. I am hoping to get help for my disability. I am feeling very hopeless for not being cared about. (Burundian community member)

Our learnings from the project highlight the following supports are necessary:

- More information to understand their rights and to know what a 'good life' for people with disability can look like.
- Assistance to contact the NDIA to make an access request and complete documentation.
- Assistance to gather eligibility "evidence", including evidence of disability and impact of impairment on their functional capacity and to access to timely, affordable assessments if needed, such as cognitive assessments
- Help completing preplanning to understand and take advantage of the opportunities available to them under the NDIS
- Advocacy support to ensure interpreters and the most appropriate method of interpreting is provided to communicate with the NDIA.
- Help to respond to requests from the NDIA for additional information

Individuals and families stated that:

English barriers in speaking, writing, reading & understanding, had no ideas where to get help, no idea how things going in Australia/everything is hard for me (Karen family)

Limited English. Need help with referral, communication and connect with services (Vietnamese community member)

Don't know how to access the system. I don't know how to implement my plan. I don't know what services are out there so won't engage. Withdraw. Too overwhelmed.

AMPARO would like to thank the Department of Communities, Disability Services and Seniors for the opportunity to undertake this important work. AMPARO will continue to advocate strongly, that much more work needs to be done to ensure Queenslanders from CALD backgrounds with disability and their families are provided equality of opportunity to services and supports, including the NDIS.

GOAL 4: Be an effective, sustainable and independent social advocacy organisation

This goal focuses on the quality of our work and ensuring AMPARO operates as an effective, accountable, publicly funded independent advocacy organisation. The organisation is governed by a voluntary management committee, the majority of whom are people from a CALD background with disability. This is a requirement of AMPARO's constitution and ensures the organisation is led by people with a lived experience of disability and an understanding of the additional barriers that can be experienced when you are new to Australia, and have language and cultural differences.

Over the past year the Management Committee have ensured the organisation fulfils its mission and remained faithful to the intent of AMPARO Advocacy's Constitution through the following:

- Holding four management committee meetings.
- Implementing the strategic plan for 2017-2019.
- Attending a reflection meeting: Management Committee Members and staff attended one advocacy reflections meeting to discuss the individual advocacy work in greater depth to develop a collective understanding of the real-life challenges and experiences of people from a CALD background with disability.
- Planning for succession of Management Committee members to ensure strong governance by skilled and committed individuals.
- Continued work by 2 subcommittees: to develop key principles to guide decision making around future alliances/partnerships and funding opportunities.
- Explored possible ILC activities that would complement the objects of the association.

Staff recruitment, training and development

This year the organisation recruited one new casual staff person and two staff working on Participant Readiness left the organisation as funding for this work was expended. All staff undergo annual professional development planning and access training opportunities within the budget and include the following:

- Website development training (2 staff)
- Team Building Activities: (8 staff)
- *What You Always Needed to Know about Intellectual Impairment but were Mostly Never Told* - CRU (3 staff)
- *Investing in the Future: What one person can do.* (1 staff)
- Introductory SRV – Towards a Better Life - CRU (3 staff)
- *My Housing Matters* - QDN (1 staff)



Comply with legislative, constitutional, funding and industrial requirements by:

- **Implementing efficient and effective systems to manage finances, assets and risk**
This year AMPARO commenced the move to a paperless and more efficient financial system, which has reduced administration costs. The risk management plan is reviewed regularly and the organisation identified and managers risks in a systemic and cost-effective manner. All insurances are kept current and relevant. An independent financial audit is conducted annually and provided to the members of the Association at the Annual General Meeting.
- **Implementing an effective Human Services Quality Framework**
A quality management system strengthens the work of AMPARO through continuous improvement and by maintaining accreditation under the Human Service Quality Framework.
- **Reporting to Department of Communities, Child Safety and Disability Services**
 - Quarterly NMDS reports and Directors Certification Reports
 - Audited Financial Reports 2016/2017
 - Criminal history checks for all staff / volunteers
 - Annual Service Performance Report for 2018
- **Meeting Industrial Relations and Other Requirements**
 - Monitored and implemented changes to awards and pay scales with support of the Queensland Community Services Employers Association.
 - Reviewed and updated all insurance policies, including WorkCover

Support the need for a strong social advocacy movement in Queensland

AMPARO Advocacy is a member of the **Combined Advocacy Groups of Queensland** (CAGQ), a state-wide network of Federal and State funded advocacy agencies that have a commitment to the provision of independent social advocacy for Queenslanders with disability.

- **# Advocacy Matters**

AMPARO participated in collective action with members of the Combined Advocacy Groups of Qld (CAGQ) to convince the State Government to reverse its decision to cease funding independent advocacy for Queenslanders with disability, post June 2019.

In the lead up to the 2017 State Election CAGQ launched the **#Advocacy Matters** campaign and with the support of many local State politicians know that **advocacy does matter to Queenslanders**.



AMPARO will continue to work with the State government and parties on both sides of politics, to ensure an ongoing commitment by future state governments to the rights of Queenslanders to have access to independent advocacy.

AMPARO understands the importance of this as we see firsthand the difference advocacy makes in the lives of people from CALD background with disability.

CAGQ used the **#Advocacy Matters** with a website of the same name to highlight the importance of independent social advocacy for Queenslanders with disability. <https://www.advocacymatters.org/>

The exciting outcome of this work was the announcement by the Hon. Minister O'Rourke, prior to the State Election that if re-elected the State government would continue to fund advocacy for vulnerable Queenslanders with disability. State funded advocacy agencies were formally advised by Minister O'Rourke early this year that funding will be maintained until 30 June 2021.

- **Presentations about the importance of independent advocacy and the work of AMPARO Advocacy to the following:**

- Social work students at University of Qld
- Synapse Network Meeting
- Cert III Disability students

- **Luminous Lantern Parade**

Staff and Management Committee members attended the Luminous Lantern Parade organised by MDA in June at South Bank, to welcome people who have recently arrived to Queensland. This is always a wonderful display of community coming together and celebrating our diversity.

TREASURER'S REPORT



As the Treasurer of AMPARO Advocacy, I am happy to confirm that the Management Committee have acted to conduct the financial business of the organisation in accordance with the Association and Incorporation Act of 1981 and organisational policies. On behalf of the management committee I am pleased to present AMPARO Advocacy's Financial Report for the year ended 30 June 2018.

On behalf of AMPARO I would like to thank Jason O'Connor Registered Company Auditor for his generous support over the past year and for his diligence in the preparation of the Independent Audit Report, which includes the statement of the financial position of AMPARO Advocacy as at the 30 June 2018.

AMPARO Advocacy has had another successful and extremely productive year and we can advise members that the Audited Financial Statements for 2017/2018 shows a small surplus. I can confirm that AMPARO has effectively managed our expenditure and made full provision for all liabilities, including staff entitlements such as annual leave, personal leave and long service leave.

AMPARO Advocacy would like to thank the State government for honouring their election commitment to continue to fund independent advocacy to safeguard the rights and interests of vulnerable Queenslanders with disability, until the 30 June 2021. AMPARO will continue our discussions with the current and any future state governments to ensure Queenslanders with disability continue to have access to independent advocacy.

We would like to thank the Department of Communities, Disability Services and Seniors for income for 2017-2018 which has enabled AMPARO to continue with our core business of providing independent social advocacy and to continue our Participant Readiness work.

I would also like to thank our bookkeeper Lucia Forman, for her careful and professional preparation of financial reports throughout the year and to all the staff of AMPARO Advocacy for their strong commitment to the individuals and families we assist and the work that we do.

I would like to propose that the *Audited 2017/2018 Balance Sheet and Annual Statement of Receipts and Expenditure be adopted, and the Auditors' Report be received.*

Ludmila Doneman
TREASURER

AMPARO Advocacy Inc.

MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Tuesday 24th October 2017

1. Acknowledgement to Traditional Owners

Don acknowledged Traditional Owners of the land and the elders past and present.

2. Welcome

Don welcomed everyone and thanked them for attending.

Present: Don Dias-Jayasingha (President), Jen Barrkman, Sajida Batool, Benita Bierzynski, Naomi Brown, Elijah Buol, Mary Burgess, Jonty Bush, Jo-Ann Cochran, Ignacio Correa-Velez, Ludmila Doneman, Abebe Fekadu, Hereadae Fenton-Smith, Maureen Fordyce, Gustav Gebels, Julie Granger, Kalpalata Iyer, Sharam Jazan, Esperance Kalonji, Mary Kenny, Tamara Kenyon, Lesley Kirmsse, Lalita Lakshmi, Liz Martyn-Johns, Julie McDougall, Peter McQuoid, Raman Nikzad, Bobby Noone, Margaret Rogers, Murka Smiechowski, Meriel Stanger, Karin Swift, David Swift, Dianne Toohey, Lynne Venczel.

3. Apologies

Hana Alraman, Paige Armstrong, Claire Brolan, Phillip McCallum, Bikash Chapagain, Dennis Foreman, Lucia Foreman, Anne Fraser, David Isitt, Josey McMahon, Shawn Phua, Margaret Pidgeon, Diana Qian, Elvia Ramirez, Jenny Smith, Sam Takada, Daly Westmore, Patricia Wilson, Jos Woollett.

4. Tabling of proxies

Proxy nomination received from Margot Pidgeon.

5. Approval of Minutes of the previous meeting (AGM 2016)

It was proposed that the minutes of the 2016 AGM be confirmed as a true and accurate record.

PROPOSED: Karin Swift SECONDED: Ludmila Doneman CARRIED

6. Business arising from previous meeting

None

7. President's Report

Don Dias-Jayasingha presented the President's report. He thanked the Management Committee members, including the outgoing members, staff and members and guests of AMPARO for their continuing support of the organisation.

Don also paid tribute to Regina Mukok Chitumb who sadly passed away in August.

8. Treasurer's Report

Ludmila Doneman presented the financial report. She proposed that the Audited 2016/2017 Balance Sheet and Annual Statement of Receipts and Expenditure be adopted and the Auditors' Report be received.

PROPOSED: Ludmila Doneman SECONDED: Ignacio Correa-Velez CARRIED

9. Report on the work over the past year

9.1. Maureen Fordyce presented the Manager's report, highlighting AMPARO's work, achievements and challenges over the past year. This included continuing individual and systemic advocacy on behalf of people from non-English speaking backgrounds with disability, and working with partners to enable equitable levels of participation in NDIS of people from CALD backgrounds.

9.2. Lalita Lakshmi played an extract from the Regina's story in her memory, and paid tribute to her dedication and enthusiasm about AMPARO's work. Lalita also showed a video of Esperance's story and thanked all those who contributed to AMPARO's community engagement work.

10. Special resolution

10.1. Don introduced the Management Committee's proposal to amend AMPARO Advocacy's Constitution from references to people from NESB (non-English speaking background) to people from CALD (culturally and linguistically diverse) background.

10.2. Ignacio Correa-Velez presented the rationale for the change.

10.3. Members undertook a vote by a show of hands. Resolution was passed with 17 'for' and 1 'against' votes by those members entitled to vote.

11. Thanks to Management Committee members

Don thanked the Management Committee members for their work over the past year. He advised that Bikash Chapagain did not re-nominate to the Management Committee for the year 2017/18. Don thanked him for his contribution during the year.

12. Introduction of Returning Officer

Don introduced Elijah Buol as Returning Officer who took over the proceedings of the meeting.

13. Election of Management Committee Members for 2017/2018

13.1. Elijah asked and Karin confirmed that there was a quorum.

13.2. Elijah declared all positions on the management committee vacant and asked that the committee step down.

13.3. Elijah announced that the Management Committee had asked that the number of members on the Management Committee remained seven. He invited the members to move a motion to maintain the number of Committee members at seven.

PROPOSED: Karin Swift

SECONDED: Gustav Gebels

CARRIED

13.4. Elijah read out the list of nominations received by the secretary by 10 October 2017 and posted on the noticeboard in the AMPARO Advocacy office.

Position	Nominee
President	Don Dias-Jayasingha
Vice President	Ignacio Correa-Velez
Treasurer	Ludmila Doneman
Committee Members	Karin Swift Jen Barrkman Shahram Jazan Abebe Fekadu

13.5. Elijah confirmed that AMPARO Advocacy received one completed nomination for each management committee position, so there was no need to take nominations from the floor.

13.6. Elijah said he was pleased to declare

- Don Dias-Jayasingha the President of AMPARO Advocacy Inc. for 2017/2018;
- Ignacio Correa-Velez the Vice-President of AMPARO Advocacy for 2017/2018;
- Ludmila Doneman the Treasurer of AMPARO Advocacy 2017/2018;
- Karin Swift, Jen Barrkman, Shahram Jazan and Abebe Fekadu the Committee Members of AMPARO Advocacy for 2017/18

13.7. Elijah welcomed Abebe and Shahram to the Management Committee, and handed the meeting back to the President to chair.

13.8. Don thanked Elijah for his kind support and gave him a gift.

13.9. Don confirmed that Karin agreed to be nominated at the next Management Committee meeting to the office of secretary.

14. Appointment of the Auditor for 2017/2018

Ludmila proposed that Jason O'Connor from J O'Connor Pty Ltd, PO Box 5480, Brendale DC Qld 4500 be appointed as Auditors for 2017/2018

PROPOSED: Ludmila Doneman SECONDED: Don Dias-Jayasingha CARRIED

15. Confirmation of Public Liability Insurance

Karin confirmed that AMPARO Advocacy has Public Liability Insurance cover for \$40 million.

16. General Business

16.1. Don presented Ignacio a Certificate of Appreciation for his 10 years' contribution to the work of AMPARO Advocacy.

16.2. Lalita presented a Certificate of Appreciation to Esperance Kalonji for her contribution to AMPARO's community engagement work.

16.3. Don enquired whether there was any other business, and as there was none he handed the meeting to Maureen.

16.4. Maureen thanked the Management Committee for their support of the staff over the past year and gave all Committee members a gift.

16.5. Don thanked all members and guests for attending the meeting and supporting the work of AMPARO Advocacy over the past year, and invited everyone to join in for some refreshments.

17. Close of Meeting

Meeting closed at 6.10pm.

AUDITOR'S REPORT



phone 07 3369 2500
Interpreter Service 13 14 50

ABN 56 876 279 925

FINANCIAL STATEMENTS 30 JUNE 2018

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We stand up for....

people from a non-English speaking background with a disability
who are being treated unfairly, abused or discriminated against.

We speak, act and write on your behalf to protect your most basic
needs.

Auditor:
Jason O'Connor CA
www.joconnorptyltd.com.au



phone 07 3369 2500
Interpreter Service 13 14 50

ABN 56 876 279 925

STATEMENT OF COMPREHENSIVE INCOME AS AT 30 JUNE 2018

	Note	2018 \$	2017 \$
INCOME			
Grants	3	550,791.32	470,514.94
Other income		17,056.24	21,400.99
Total Income		567,847.56	491,915.93
EXPENDITURE			
Audit fees		773.64	773.64
Asset purchase less than \$5,000		122.73	7,064.00
Bank charges		127.89	109.17
Computer repairs and software		2,009.47	7,522.66
Consultancy fees		9,026.76	16,534.52
Depreciation		-	1,296.00
Fees and permits		422.50	298.75
Interpreting services		545.44	515.00
Information resources		317.02	10,923.80
Membership fees		428.18	669.55
Other expenses		2,590.67	3,231.59
Printing and stationery		6,553.29	7,509.45
Postage, freight and courier		901.49	971.00
Rent		22,337.16	22,407.23
Repairs and maintenance		4.54	2.50
Telephone, fax and internet		4,061.79	6,787.82
Training and development		3,172.54	4,686.93
Insurance - general		5,998.11	4,886.99
Meeting expenses		3,317.61	4,864.36
Motor vehicle expenses		2,993.90	2,633.06
Travel and accommodation		14,012.18	10,103.46
Employment entitlements		488,090.65	376,608.14
Total Expenditure		567,807.56	490,399.62
Surplus / (Deficit) before income tax expense		40.00	1,516.31
Income tax expense	1	-	-
Surplus / (Deficit) after income tax expense for the year attributable to the members		40.00	1,516.31
Other comprehensive income for the year, net of tax		-	-
Total comprehensive income for the year attributable to the members.		40.00	1,516.31

The accompanying notes form part of these financial statements.

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STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION
AS AT 30 JUNE 2018

	2018 Note	2017 \$
CURRENT ASSETS		
Cheque account	144,674.84	123,595.73
Donation account	692.47	691.52
Debit card account	783.35	-
Debit visa card account	1,890.58	837.47
Premier investment account	72,075.99	45,990.49
Other receivables	29,397.97	35,775.44
Petty cash float	337.00	301.50
Total Current Assets	249,852.20	207,192.15
NON-CURRENT ASSETS		
Motor vehicles at cost	21,747.09	21,747.09
less accumulated depreciation	(21,747.09)	(21,747.09)
Total Non-Current Assets	-	-
TOTAL ASSETS	249,852.20	207,192.15
CURRENT LIABILITIES		
Accounts payable	932.78	37,273.66
Unexpended Grant - recurrent operating	5 19,041.68	1,188.22
Unexpended Grant - quality assurance	5 2,372.53	1,872.89
Unexpended Grant - Multicultural Affairs Queensland	5 22,000.00	-
Unexpended Grant - Sector Development - PRI	5 71,955.73	50,186.83
Committed funds - Combined Advocacy Groups Queensland	5 2,360.70	-
Income received in advance - Participant Readiness Program	-	13,735.82
GST liabilities	15,747.22	2,454.00
PAYG withholding payable	4,475.00	-
Provision for personal leave	25,850.40	25,646.98
Provision for annual leave	28,869.27	25,280.60
Total Current Liabilities	193,605.31	157,639.00
NON-CURRENT LIABILITIES		
Provision for long service leave	33,266.92	26,613.18
Total Non-Current Liabilities	33,266.92	26,613.18
TOTAL LIABILITIES	226,872.23	184,252.18
NET ASSETS	22,979.97	22,939.97
EQUITY		
Accumulated surplus	22,979.97	22,939.97
Total Equity	22,979.97	22,939.97

The accompanying notes form part of these financial statements.

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STATEMENT OF CHANGES IN EQUITY FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2018

	Accumulated Surplus \$	TOTAL \$
Opening balance 1 July 2016	21,423.66	21,423.66
Surplus/(Deficit)	1,516.31	1,516.31
Closing Balance 30 June 2017	22,939.97	22,939.97
Opening balance 1 July 2017	22,939.97	22,939.97
Surplus/(Deficit)	40.00	40.00
Closing Balance 30 June 2018	22,979.97	22,979.97

STATEMENT OF CASH FLOWS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2018

	Note	2018 \$	2017 \$
CASH FLOWS FROM OPERATING ACTIVITIES			
Receipts from customers		623,673.06	496,337.45
Payments to suppliers and employees		(575,934.39)	(450,917.97)
Interest received		1,298.85	1,055.29
Net Cash Provided by Operating Activities	4	49,037.52	46,474.77
CASH FLOWS FROM INVESTING ACTIVITIES			
Net Cash Used In Investing Activities		-	-
CASH FLOWS FROM FINANCING ACTIVITIES			
Net Cash Used in Financing Activities		-	-
Net Increase in Cash Held		49,037.52	46,474.77
Cash at the beginning of the year		171,416.71	124,941.94
Cash at the end of the year	4	220,454.23	171,416.71

The accompanying notes form part of these financial statements.

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NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

NOTE 1: STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANT ACCOUNTING POLICIES

The principal accounting policies adopted in the preparation of the financial statements are set out below. These policies have been consistently applied to all the years presented, unless otherwise stated.

Basis of preparation

These general purpose financial statements have been prepared in accordance with Australian Accounting Standards - Reduced Disclosure Requirements and Interpretations issued by the Australian Accounting Standards Board ('AASB'), the Associations Incorporation Act 1981 and regulations, section 60.40 of the Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission Regulation 2013 (ACNC Regulation), and associated regulations, as appropriate for not-for-profit oriented entities. These financial statements do not comply with International Financial Reporting Standards as issued by the International Accounting Standards Board ('IASB').

Historical cost convention

The financial statements have been prepared under the historical cost convention.

Critical accounting estimates

The preparation of the financial statements requires the use of certain critical accounting estimates. It also requires management to exercise its judgement in the process of applying the incorporated association's accounting policies. The areas involving a higher degree of judgement or complexity, or areas where assumptions and estimates are significant to the financial statements, are disclosed in note 2.

Revenue recognition

Revenue is recognised when it is probable that the economic benefit will flow to the incorporated association and the revenue can be reliably measured. Revenue is measured at the fair value of the consideration received or receivable.

Donations

Donations are recognised at the time the pledge is made.

Interest

Interest revenue is recognised as interest accrues using the effective interest method. This is a method of calculating the amortised cost of a financial asset and allocating the interest income over the relevant period using the effective interest rate, which is the rate that exactly discounts estimated future cash receipts through the expected life of the financial asset to the net carrying amount of the financial asset.

Grants

Grants are recognised at their fair value where there is a reasonable assurance that the grant will be received and all attached conditions will be complied with.

Other revenue

Other revenue is recognised when it is received or when the right to receive payment is established.

Income tax

As the incorporated association is a non-profit institution in terms of subsection 50-5 of the Income Tax Assessment Act 1997, as amended, it is exempt from paying income tax.

Cash and cash equivalents

Cash and cash equivalents includes cash on hand, deposits held at call with financial institutions, other short-term, highly liquid investments with original maturities of three months or less that are readily convertible to known amounts of cash and which are subject to an insignificant risk of changes in value.

Trade and other receivables

Other receivables are recognised at amortised cost, less any provision for impairment.

Property, plant and equipment

Plant and equipment is stated at historical cost less accumulated depreciation and impairment. Historical cost includes expenditure that is directly attributable to the acquisition of the items.

Depreciation is calculated on a straight-line basis to write off the net cost of each item of property, plant and equipment (excluding land) over their expected useful lives as follows:

Class of Fixed Asset	Depreciation Rate
Motor Vehicles at cost	20% Prime Cost

The residual values, useful lives and depreciation methods are reviewed, and adjusted if appropriate, at each reporting date. An item of property, plant and equipment is derecognised upon disposal or when there is no future economic benefit to the incorporated association. Gains and losses between the carrying amount and the disposal proceeds are taken to profit or loss.

Impairment of non-financial assets

Non-financial assets are reviewed for impairment whenever events or changes in circumstances indicate that the carrying amount may not be recoverable. An impairment loss is recognised for the amount by which the asset's carrying amount exceeds its recoverable amount. Recoverable amount is the higher of an asset's fair value less costs to sell and value-in-use. The value-in-use is the present value of the estimated future cash flows relating to the asset using a pre-tax discount rate specific to the asset or cash-generating unit to which the asset belongs. Assets that do not have independent cash flows are grouped together to form a cash-generating unit.

Trade and other payables

These amounts represent liabilities for goods and services provided to the incorporated association prior to the end of the financial year and which are unpaid. Due to their short-term nature they are measured at amortised cost and are not discounted. The amounts are unsecured and are usually paid within 30 days of recognition.

Employee benefits

Wages and salaries and annual leave

Liabilities for wages and salaries, including non-monetary benefits, and annual leave expected to be settled within 12 months of the reporting date are recognised in current liabilities in respect of employees' services up to the reporting date and are measured at the amounts expected to be paid when the liabilities are settled.

Long service leave

The liability for long service leave is recognised in current and non-current liabilities, depending on the unconditional right to defer settlement of the liability for at least 12 months after the reporting date. The liability is measured as the present value of expected future payments to be made in respect of services provided by employees up to the reporting date using the projected unit credit method. Consideration is given to expected future wage and salary levels, experience of employee departures and periods of service. Expected future payments are discounted using market yields at the reporting date on national government bonds with terms to maturity and currency that match, as closely as possible, the estimated future cash outflows.

Goods and Services Tax ('GST') and other similar taxes

Revenues, expenses and assets are recognised net of the amount of associated GST, unless the GST incurred is not recoverable from the tax authority. In this case it is recognised as part of the cost of the acquisition of the asset or as part of the expense. Receivables and payables are stated inclusive of the amount of GST receivable or payable. The net amount of GST recoverable from, or payable to, the tax authority is included in other receivables or other payables in the statement of financial position.

Cash flows are presented on a gross basis. The GST components of cash flows arising from investing or financing activities, which are recoverable from, or payable to the tax authority, are presented as operating cash flows. Commitments and contingencies are disclosed net of the amount of GST recoverable from, or payable to, the tax authority.

NOTE 2: CRITICAL ACCOUNTING JUDGEMENTS, ESTIMATES AND ASSUMPTIONS

The preparation of the financial statements requires management to make judgements, estimates and assumptions that affect the reported amounts in the financial statements. Management continually evaluates its judgements and estimates in relation to assets, liabilities, contingent liabilities, revenue and expenses. Management bases its judgements, estimates and assumptions on historical experience and on other various factors, including expectations of future events; management believes to be reasonable under the circumstances. The resulting accounting judgements and estimates will seldom equal the related actual results. The judgements, estimates and assumptions that have a significant risk of causing a material adjustment to the carrying amounts of assets and liabilities within the next financial year are discussed below.

Estimation of useful lives of assets

The incorporated association determines the estimated useful lives and related depreciation and amortisation charges for its property, plant and equipment and finite life intangible assets. The useful lives could change significantly as a result of technical innovations or some other event. The depreciation and amortisation charge will increase where the useful lives are less than previously estimated lives, or technically obsolete or non-strategic assets that have been abandoned or sold will be written off or written down.

Long service leave provision

As discussed in note 1, the liability for long service leave is recognised and measured at the present value of the estimated future cash flows to be made in respect of all employees at the reporting date. In determining the present value of the liability, estimates of attrition rates and pay increases through promotion and inflation have been taken into account.

	2018	2017
	\$	\$

NOTE 3: GRANTS

DCCSDS Recurrent Operating	284,855.59	275,077.56
DCCSDS Quality Assurance	3,200.00	-
DOC Multicultural Affairs	22,000.00	-
DCCSDS PRI Funds	100,000.00	230,000.00
DCCSDS Targeted PRI Funding	200,000.00	-
Grants carried forward as unexpended	(117,730.64)	(58,466.37)
Grants carried forward from last year	58,466.37	23,903.75
Total Grants	550,791.32	470,514.94

2018	2017
\$	\$

NOTE 4: CASH FLOW INFORMATION

a. reconciliation of cash flows from surplus

Surplus / (Deficit) attributable to members	40.00	1,516.31
Non Cash flows in surplus		
Depreciation	-	1,296.00
Changes in assets and liabilities		
(Increase) / decrease in receivables	6,377.47	(29,085.81)
Increase / (decrease) in payables & grants	32,174.22	53,771.35
Increase / (decrease) in provisions	10,445.83	18,976.92
	49,037.52	46,474.77

NOTE 4: CASH FLOW INFORMATION (Continued)

b. reconciliation of cash

Petty Cash Float	337.00	301.50
Cheque account	144,674.84	123,595.73
Donation account	692.47	691.52
Debit card account	783.35	-
Debit visa card account	1,890.58	837.47
Premier investment account	72,075.99	45,990.49
Less bank overdraft	-	-
Total Cash	220,454.23	171,416.71

NOTE 5: UNEXPENDED GRANTS

Unexpended Grant - quality assurance:

Opening balance - unexpended	1,872.89	3,771.34
Plus grant income	3,200.00	-
Less Expenditure	(2,700.36)	(1,898.45)
	2,372.53	1,872.89
Closing balance - unexpended	(2,372.53)	(1,872.89)
Net Surplus / (Deficit)	-	-

Unexpended Grants - recurrent

Opening balance - unexpended	1,188.22	-
Plus grant income	284,855.59	276,448.43
Plus association contributions	2,817.03	-
Less Expenditure	(269,819.16)	(275,260.21)
	19,041.68	1,188.22
Closing balance - unexpended	(19,041.68)	(1,188.22)
Net Surplus / (Deficit)	-	-

2018	2017
\$	\$

NOTE 5: UNEXPENDED GRANTS

Unexpended Grant - Multicultural Affairs Queensland

Opening balance - unexpended	-	20,132.41
Plus grant income	22,000.00	-
Less Expenditure	-	(20,132.41)
	22,000.00	-
Closing balance - unexpended	(22,000.00)	-
Net Surplus / (Deficit)	-	-

Unexpended Grant - Sector Development - PRI

Opening balance - unexpended	50,186.83	-
Plus grant income	200,000.00	100,000.00
Less Expenditure	(178,231.10)	(49,813.17)
	71,955.73	50,186.83
Closing balance - unexpended	(71,955.73)	(50,186.83)
Net Surplus / (Deficit)	-	-

Committed Funds - Combined Advocacy Groups Queensland

Opening balance - unexpended	-	-
Plus income	5,681.82	-
Less Expenditure	(3,321.12)	-
	2,360.70	-
Closing balance - unexpended	(2,360.70)	-
Net Surplus / (Deficit)	-	-

NOTE 6: FINANCIAL INSTRUMENTS

Market risk

Interest rate risk

The incorporated association is not exposed to any significant interest rate risk.

NOTE 7: CONTINGENT LIABILITIES

The incorporated association had no contingent liabilities as at 30 June 2018 and 30 June 2017.

NOTE 8: COMMITMENTS

The incorporated association had no commitments for expenditure as at 30 June 2018 and 30 June 2017.



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NOTE 9: RELATED PARTY TRANSACTIONS

Key management personnel – Committee Members

There were no remuneration paid to any Committee Member for positions held, all Committee Members hold an honorary position.

Transactions with related parties

There were no transactions with related parties during the current and previous financial year.

Receivable from and payable to related parties

There were no trade receivables from or trade payables to related parties at the current and previous reporting date.

Loans to/from related parties

There were no loans to or from related parties at the current and previous reporting date.

NOTE 10: EVENTS AFTER THE REPORTING PERIOD

There are no other matters or circumstances that have arisen since 30 June 2018 that has significantly affected, or may significantly affect the incorporated association's operations, the results of those operations, or the incorporated association's state of affairs in future financial years.

**STATEMENT BY MEMBERS OF COMMITTEE
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2018**

In the members of the committee opinion:

1. the attached financial statements and notes thereto comply with the Australian Accounting Standards - Reduced Disclosure Requirements;
2. the attached financial statements and notes thereto give a true and fair view of the incorporated association's financial position as at 30 June 2018 and of its performance for the financial year ended on that date; and
3. there are reasonable grounds to believe that the incorporated association will be able to pay its debts as and when they become due and payable.
4. complying with Division 60 of the Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission Regulation 2013.

On behalf of the management committee



Chairperson



Treasurer

Dated this 2nd day of October 2018.

INDEPENDENT AUDIT REPORT

To the members of Amparo Advocacy Incorporated

Opinion

We have audited the accompanying financial report of **Amparo Advocacy Incorporated**, which comprises the statement of financial position as at **30 June 2018**, the statement of comprehensive income, statement of changes in equity and statement of cash flows for the period then ended, notes comprising a summary of significant accounting policies and other explanatory information, and the directors' declaration.

In our opinion, the accompanying financial report of **Amparo Advocacy Incorporated**, is in accordance with the Associations Incorporation Act 1981 and the Australian Charities and Non-for-Profit Commission Act 2013, including:

- (i) giving a true and fair view of the company's financial position as at **30 June 2018** and of its financial performance for the period ended on that date; and
- (ii) complying with Australian Accounting Standards – Reduced Disclosure Requirements.
- (iii) Complying with Division 60 of the Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission Regulation 2013.

Committee Members' Responsibility for the Financial Report

The Committee Members' of the Association are responsible for the preparation of the financial report that gives a true and fair view in accordance with Australian Accounting Standards – Reduced Disclosure Requirements, the Associations Incorporation Act 1981 and Australian Charities and Non-for-Profit Commission Act 2013 and for such internal control as the directors determine is necessary to enable the preparation of the financial report that is free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

In preparing the financial report, the Committee Members' are responsible for assessing the Associations ability to continue as a going concern, disclosing, as applicable, matters related to going concern and using the going concern basis of accounting unless the directors either intend to liquidate the Association or to cease operations, or have no realistic alternative but to do so.

Auditor's Responsibilities for the Audit of the Financial Report

Our objectives are to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial report as a whole is free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error, and to issue an auditor's report that includes our opinion. Reasonable assurance is a high level of assurance, but is not a guarantee that an audit conducted in accordance with Australian Standards on Auditing will always detect a material misstatement when it exists. Misstatements can arise from fraud or error and are considered material if, individually or in the aggregate, they could reasonably be expected to influence the economic decisions of users taken on the basis of this financial report. A further description of our responsibilities for the audit of the financial report is located at the Auditing and Assurance Standards Board website at: <http://www.auasb.gov.au/Home.aspx> This description forms part of our auditor's report.

Independence

In conducting our audit, we followed applicable independence requirements of Australian professional ethical pronouncements.


Jason O'Connor CA
Registered Company Auditor (No. 353931)

Liability limited by a scheme approved under Professional Standards Legislation

Dated this 8th day of October 2018.

Jason O'Connor CA
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