

CHAIRPERSON'S REPORT TO ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

July 1st 2019 to 30th June 2020

Although I am writing this in retrospect of the financial year gone by it is hard not to acknowledge what a challenging year 2020 has been and who would have predicted that a pandemic would become part of our daily lives and routines. This has had impact on everyone across the world in some way and even more so, for people who are already disadvantaged and marginalised.

Loneliness, isolation, fear, rejection, despair, hopelessness are just a number of feelings I know many people are experiencing or have experienced throughout this year especially as people's lives have become smaller and smaller with restrictions in place and limited opportunities for interacting with their community and with familiar relationships and connections. For many it has meant a loss of a valued role or being inactive in their familiar roles such as a job, volunteering, being part of community group, even being an active grandparent that has had a big impact to people's lives.

It has been an important reminder as to what keeps us grounded and connected during this time and that sense of purpose, identity, belonging and connection that a valued role can bring to a person's life certainly helps.

Which really leads into the work Foundations Forum provide and still how relevant the power of a having a valued social role can be in transforming the lives of people who are marginalised.

Pre Covid times, in August 2019, Foundations Forum hosted a one-day workshop *Living well through valued roles* presented by Accredited Teacher of SRV Jane Sherwin. This popular workshop gave families and workers key strategies on how to develop valued roles so that new opportunities are opened for people with disability or for someone who is ageing.

In October, we invited Jane Sherwin back to present the two day *Towards a Better Life Workshops an Introduction to Social Role Valorisation* and we had the pleasure of Meg Sweeney, and Heejin Kim presenting some parts of this workshop. The workshop was well attended by families, direct support workers, advocates and people working in larger organisations. Feedback from participants was overwhelming positive and made reference to how powerful, relevant and useful the content and learnings were.

In December 2019 we received notification from the National Disability Insurance Agency that we were successful in our grant submission project *Pursuing Ordinary Lives through Valued*

Roles. Receiving this news was an exciting moment for Foundations Forum with us being a voluntary organisation to have received some funding we are now able to pursue some of our objectives in increasing our ability to reach and support more people to build their capacity to self-advocate and influence change. It is also important we are supporting them in their SRV journey and leadership efforts.

Part of the project was to be able to employ a Project Coordinator to help us implement and in late July 2020, we welcomed Rosita Sunna to this position. Despite the impact, COVID has had on our ability to host face-to-face workshops we have started planning for the year ahead and thinking about different ways, we can start to connect in with people both face-to-face and online. It has also been a great opportunity to increase our connections with a new database tool to support this and also revamping the website to be able to offer more SRV resources, and information to people.

As challenging as this past year has been, the Foundations Committee has been able to adapt and continue to meet regularly on a monthly basis and I would like to thank each of the committee members, Alison, Judith, Karen and Neil for their ongoing commitment and support. We may only be a very small committee with often very busy lives or competing priorities but with a deep commitment to SRV and improving the lives of people who are marginalised I feel like we have achieved quite a lot these past 12 months. Big thanks also to our members and allies who share our passion and commitment.

We are very much looking forward to connecting with you and others in the year ahead.

Rhiannon Brodie
Chairperson