

Community Disability Alliance Hunter

# Annual Report

2022





Community Disability Alliance  
Hunter stands in solidarity with  
the traditional custodians of the  
land. We pay our respects to  
Elders past present and  
emerging. We acknowledge that  
this land always was and always  
will be Aboriginal land.



## **President's Report**

Dear Members and Allies,

It has been a big year for CDAH and I am so proud of our team for the wonderful work they have undertaken to ensure that CDAH is viable into the future so that we can help as many people as possible in our area.

CDAH is all about making connection and establishing networks and we have done that as an organisation in ensuring that CDAH had ongoing funding to continue operating and we have made representations to our local parliamentarians to make sure that they keep CDAH and the peer mentoring movement front of mind.

I would like to thank members and staff for their efforts to support CDAH. Without you we would not have been able to make the gains we have so far. We are strong because our members and staff believe in us and work so hard to achieve our goals.

Kristy Trajcevski

# Report from the Executive Officer

What an amazing and often challenging year 2021-22 was. We managed to work and support our members and the wider disability community through two COVID lockdowns.

I would like to express my sincere gratitude to all who worked to stay in touch through our Connection Tree and for trying to work and connect as a team in a ZOOM world.

(I think we all learned a lot about communication, tolerance and flexibility through this period of time.)

During the year, we commenced planning for a more sustainable CDAH beyond the life of our current ILC grants. It is important to point out that the projects which have been funded through these grants, have had an enormous influence in shaping our future core business.

The Hunter Inclusion Project has begun to provide community connections for peers living in group homes who have transitioned from Large Residential Centres (LRCs). This project is also supporting ongoing growth and development of our peer groups.



# Report from the Executive Officer

The Peer Learning Hub and Powerful Peers projects have provided great support for the development and facilitation of our Introduction to Peer Work, Facilitation and Mentoring programs. This powerful and unique training provides a solid foundation for CDAH peers to confidently engage in supporting other PWD and the wider community towards inclusivity and genuine citizenship. This training shapes what it takes to engage in a community of practice and to undertake effective and genuine peer work.

Hunter Deafblind Connect has created an amazing platform and space for deafblind people to connect, communicate and socialise together. Support for this community of practice is undoubtedly a main part of CDAHs core business now and into the future.

In order to continue supporting our core business into the future, we asked for the support of Dan and Michael from the Astrolabe Group. These highly skilled change managers gave their considerable time and experience freely and in June, facilitated a Planning Day workshop for CDAH. The Planning Cafe style workshop was held at the University of Newcastle's I2N Hub in Honeysuckle. Thank you to the team at Astrolabe and to the 17 CDAH peers and allies who actively participated on the day.

# Report from the Executive Officer

As with all things, CDAH is growing and changing all the time. Although we rely on support from governments and allies in the wider community for support, It is our members who will the most in shaping our organisation. As a peer led organisation, our priorities will be shaped through our involvement in peer groups, the Members Action Group and through mentoring, facilitation and other peer work.

I wish to conclude by thanking the Kristy and the CDAH Board for their support, time and effort during the year, our members, volunteers and staff for all that they have collectively done to keep CDAH going in such a positive direction during what has been a most challenging year. Also, thank you to all of the family members, allies and community supporters for your continued support and interest in this amazing organisation.

Andrew Vodic

# CDAH Training

We have run 3 face to face and 2 Intro to peer support course this year via zoom and 1 peer mentoring and 1 peer facilitation training. It has been great for new Facilitators to join the facilitation team, and thank you for all the CDAH peers for welcoming the new peers who have completed the training and joined the peer movement. We have seen so much growth in confidence. There were some fabulous genuine connections built among the peers during the course. we are excited for what next year has in store. If you'd like to know more about peer training please contact suzy at [suzy@cdah.org.au](mailto:suzy@cdah.org.au)



# Hunter Deafblind Project

Hunter Deafblind Project is in full swing. Many fabulous events have been organised and attended during the last 12 months despite the challenges of Covid.

- A fortnightly drop-in space has been operating over the 12 months with 434 people attending during that time.
- Hunter Deafblind Ball with 126 people attending funded through donations and fundraising.
- Hunter Deafblind Group were the NSW hub to host the livestream of the 11th National Deafblind Conference happening in Western Australia.
- Hunter Deafblind members contributed short films to a National Film to be shown at multiple events with the theme “What is important to me”.
- A Fair Day in collaboration with CDAH peer groups saw over 100 people attend in Devonshire Lane to celebrate Deafblind Awareness Week.

Much work has been done to engage deafblind people living in group homes to be part of the deafblind community. This has been met with many challenges and is an important part of the project work that needs to continue.

# Peer2Peer Project

Throughout the year the Peer2Peer team have been working hard welcoming new CDAH members with Welcome packs, support with peer groups and assisting members to explore their work and education experiences with skills audits.

The project now has moved into the business end where the team will support a select few people to complete a qualification on the way to become peer workers themselves.



# Community Connections Project

The Community Connections project works with people who have moved out of institutions into group homes around the Hunter. We believe that relationships are what makes a difference, and that we all must work together to ensure people can take their rightful place in their communities.

COVID didn't stop us. Well... that's what we used to say. But it did. For a while COVID stopped us seeing our peers regularly and a lot of our team meetings were online, but all of us were determined to make it work!

It is so nice it is to be out of lock down and to see our peers as often as we can! We also recruited two new peer workers, Chelsie and Leonie, which has been fantastic as we could offer our support to more peers who used to live in LRCs. We love this! All together we see thirteen peers regularly. We are very busy!

# Community Connections Project

To have time to get to know our peers well is something we don't take for granted. We make sure every time we see a peer it is meaningful and they can gain something out of it whether it be another way they are able to be connected to their community, or just strengthening the relationship between peers.

It has been pretty powerful to see peers opening up as they start to feel more comfortable around us. Every Friday Morning Jarrod spends time with one of his peers, and their connection is strengthening more each time, so much so he now welcomes Jarrod by name and confides in him even if he makes a mistake!

Leonie has done some fantastic work alongside her peer who is a Deaf man. Every week they get together and work on Auslan skills, to connect with the Deaf community more. His confidence has grown, and he now goes along to the Hunter Deaf Community Social. He's becoming well known there, everyone knows him for his big, beaming smile. Leonie gave him a sign name, which reflects that famous big smile. Everyone knows it and greets him by his sign name and have been learning more and more about how to communicate well with him.

# Community Connections Project

Overall, there's been a lot of walks in the sun, many laughs and even a couple of birthday celebrations including a grand 70th. We have loved every moment. Thank you to all of the fantastic people who have made a contribution to the Community Connections project as peer workers over this time; Cayt Weir, Jarrod Sandell-Hay, Leonie Slade, Leigh Creighton, Chelsie Sandell-Hay, Shaylie Prior, Cath Mahoney and Deb Hamilton as our Peer Researcher. Thank you to everyone who has supported the work that the Community Connections team do in every way, from asking questions and talking about it, to sharing ideas and welcoming people into your peer groups.

Lucy Biddle

# Community Connections Project

Some words from Cayt about her time with one of her peers: **“I’ve loved being a peer worker and the peer leader on the Community Connections project. I’ve especially enjoyed my time in getting to know one of my peers; spending time together is what I really look forward to. Each time we meet, it is different and we usually uncover something new about her and who she is as a person. One of my favourite days we’ve spent together so far was the afternoon we had at Hunter Wetlands. I’ve been told that she is quite the bird woman, so I wanted to see the magic for myself. Going birdwatching together helped me learn more about what she likes about it and how she likes to do it; really important information so we can start building connections with the bird watching community in Newcastle. I can’t wait to work together to take this further.”**



# CDAH Peer groups

## **Women first peer group**

Women first peer group has been meeting for 3+ years now and we are continually meeting via zoom on the last Friday of every month at 1:30 pm

this has been a very exciting year for the women first peer group, as we have been contacted by other women's groups to collaborate to make places more accessible for women with disability who are leaving violence or at risk of homelessness

we have also been asked to participate in the organising committee for the Reclaim The Night March which will be in October 28. Starting at 5:30 pm from Gregson Park (in Hamilton). This has been an amazing opportunity for the women in this group to voice how important it is to acknowledge women with disability, and how important it is for women to have a voice and be heard and talk about accessibility needs.

2023. Looks like it will be full of new opportunities for our group and I look forward to continuing being part of the womens first peer group and starting next year, Julie Clifton, will be co-facilitating this group. If you would like to join them in first peer group or find out any more information please contact [Suzy@cдах.org.au](mailto:Suzy@cдах.org.au)

# CDAH Peer groups

## **Queer Peer group**

Queer peers had an excellent year this year with new members joining our peer group. We were able to have a stall at the disability expo, network and get other organisations and peers on board with what we do. We also celebrated and had a stall at the Newcastle disability pride expo.

We look forward to another year of growth and inviting new members into our safe space.

Shaylie Pryer

# CDAH Peer groups

## The Hive

The Hive is a Mental Health Support and Advocacy group that was formed in 2017. We have had a good year and thank the management and staff of CDAH for the support. We will soon celebrate our 5th birthday.

The Hive is open to anyone who identifies as having some type of mental health issue, whether it be someone who finds life hard and stressful to someone who is living with psychosis (eg feeling paranoid or hearing voices etc). We are peers with lived experience. We meet to contribute, give and receive support, share experiences and information, and help and hear each other.

We have continued to meet monthly with steady attendance via zoom throughout the period of Covid and will continue to do so for the time being. Occasionally we meet in person for a social gathering like a picnic.

We welcome new members. Contact :  
[thehive@cдах.org.au](mailto:thehive@cдах.org.au)

-Cedar Whelan

# CDAH Peer groups

## **Peer Housing group**

Home Sweet Home is a new group that meet from three to four pm on the second Thursday of each month. The goals of the group are:

- 1) Enable members to find the housing that suits their needs
- 2) Advocate for more accessible housing, especially for disabled people

The group is still small but is growing. Housing is one of the most important issues facing many of us right now and we expect to be working toward systemic improvements for a long time to come.

-Catherine Caine

# CDAH Peer groups

## Members' Action Group

The Members Action Group (MAG) met monthly until March 2021. The MAG has been interrupted by Covid-19 restrictions.

We promote the aims of CDAH to make a stronger peer movement and a more inclusive Hunter community, building our capacity to learn, grow and gain support from each other.

This is a volunteer group of CDAH peers with lived experience of disability.

Our current projects include:

- The Royal Commission into Violence, Abuse, Neglect and Exploitation of People with Disability.
- The History Project - the history of the Peer Led Disability Movement in Newcastle and the Hunter region. Some members are working on a podcast including CDAH history.
- Citizenship and inclusivity through representation at local councils by CDAH members.
- Making CDAH information accessible for everyone.
- Developing the Members Action Group Terms of Reference

Douglas Holmes

# CDAH Peer groups

## Peer Mentor Network

"Peer Mentorship is a core part of what CDAH does. It underpins our values and informs our practice. Many of our Peer Mentors this year have been working alongside new peers to induct them into CDAH, our Peer Groups and the value of their lived experienced.

We have met many new peers and seen one new group of Peer Mentors come through and become part of the Peer Mentor Network. Although, we have seen few one-on-one Peer Mentor relationships happen this year, we have seen a lot of Peer Mentors stepping up into the space to support one another to develop governance skills, peer support skills and access job opportunities.

Peer Mentoring will be integrated into all projects at CDAH going forward and be implemented into our policies and procedures to maintain that it is a Peer-led space."

Peer Mentor Coordinator  
Sinead Lewis

# CDAH Peer groups

## **Speak Up Hunter**

Speak up Hunter has been meeting regularly, every month and our number have grown a little bit.

This year Speak up Hunter has participated in “Count us In” where we hosted two social nights.

We were also involved in the DeafBlind Connect Fair Day.

We also have been planning an event called Shifting the Line, which is scheduled for December 9th, which we are very excited about!

We are looking forward to seeing what 2023 brings!

Sarah and Arron

# CDAH Peer groups

## **Catch up crew**

Our social catch up crew has been on zoom for most of this year which was different, but still a great way for us to still connect in a social way.

The past three months we have been able to come back together in person at the Wickham hotel in Hamilton which has been fantastic, and we have had a lot of new peers and family members turning up. We will still meet in person in November and then in December. Catch up crew will be our Christmas party.

# Statement of Financial Position as of 31 June 2022

## **Current Assets:**

How much money CDAH has: \$1,541,611

## **Total Assets:**

Dollar amount of all the things we own and money we have: \$1,592,952

## **Total Liabilities:**

What we owe to others: \$1,225,053

## **Equity:**

This is how much we have at the end of the year if we sell everything we own and pay all the money we owe to others: \$371,623

# Statement of profit and loss for the year 31 June 2022

## **Revenue**

How much money we got in this year: \$1,635,676

## **Expenses**

How much money we spent this year: \$1,524,765

## **Profit for the year**

How much money we have left over this year: \$110,911