

1.0 Introduction

This Annual Report covers the period from 1 July 1997 until 30 June 1998. It describes in detail the efforts of QAI to be a strong and effective systems advocacy organisation, committed to its mission of promoting, protecting and defending, through advocacy, the fundamental needs and rights and lives of the most vulnerable people with disability in Queensland.

Reports from the President and Treasurer are followed by separate accounts of QAI's systems advocacy work, which over the year included campaigns around specific issues, research and writing on complex bio-ethical issues and a development project aimed at the legal profession in Queensland.

This report also describes QAI's work on advocacy development and support, including its sponsoring of advocacy development projects.

2.0 QAI's Mission and Objects

QAI'S MISSION IS:

To promote, protect and defend, through advocacy, the fundamental needs and rights and lives of the most vulnerable people with disability in Queensland.

QAI'S OBJECTS ARE:

1. To affirm and put first people with disability in Queensland
2. To do systems advocacy that strives to promote, protect and defend the fundamental needs and rights and lives of the most vulnerable people with disability in Queensland
3. To do legal advocacy that strives to promote, protect and defend the fundamental needs and rights and lives of the most vulnerable people with disability in Queensland
4. To take an active leadership role in advocating for the fundamental needs and rights and lives of the most vulnerable people with disability in Queensland
5. To support, promote and protect the development of advocacy initiatives for the most vulnerable people with disability in Queensland

6. To be accountable to the most vulnerable people with disability in Queensland
7. To conduct an efficient and accountable organisation
8. To adhere to and constantly reaffirm the following beliefs and principles:
 - All human life has intrinsic dignity and worth
 - People with disability must positively and actively be accorded worth, dignity, meaning and purpose through being included in and with their community
 - Social Advocacy is functioning (speaking, acting, writing) with minimum conflict of interest on behalf of the sincerely perceived interests of a person or group, in order to promote, protect and defend the welfare of, and justice for, either individuals or groups, in a fashion which strives to be emphatic and vigorous, and/or which is actually, or very likely to be, "costly" to the actor, eg in terms of:
 - . time or other resources
 - . emotional stress
 - . bodily demands
 - . social opprobrium, rejection, ridicule
 - . self-esteem, self certainty
 - . socio-economic security, livelihood
 - . physical safety, life

and the essential elements of Social Advocacy are

 - . strict partiality
 - . minimal conflict of interest
 - . emphasis on fundamental needs and issues
 - . vigorous action
 - . cost to the advocate
 - . fidelity
 - . being mindful of the most vulnerable person
 - Systems advocacy is a particular advocacy form that focuses on influencing and changing 'the system' (as in the whole of society and the various systems operating within) in ways that will benefit people with disability as a group within society. Systems advocacy includes, but is not limited to, policy and law reform activities.

3.0 President's Report - Doug Eldridge

This report was presented at the eleventh Annual General Meeting of QAI which took place on Saturday 19 September 1998.

As President of QAI I welcome you all to the eleventh Annual General Meeting of Queensland Advocacy Incorporated.

In this my third year as QAI President, I can report that the last year has once again been extremely busy and fruitful for QAI. In times of increasing challenge to people with disability, QAI members, management committee, staff and other supporters have good reason to be proud of the organisation's work in the past year. You will hear highlights of the year shortly and will be able to read about them in more detail in the Annual Report circulated to QAI members, supporters and interested others in the next few weeks.

Thank you

I would like to take the opportunity to thank all those people who support QAI in its work. Without this support QAI Committee members and staff would feel very lonely at times! With our particular focus on those people with disability who are presently, or at risk of being isolated, segregated, neglected and abused, there are many out there who appear challenged by our work.

The QAI Committee and staff rely on members and others to keep us informed of what is happening to people with disability, and we thank those who bring information to us. Because we have to set priorities we cannot always respond in the way others would want us to, but we need input to ensure we are not missing out on vital issues. This year we have begun an exercise of contacting key people throughout Queensland on a regular basis to seek input on local and Statewide issues. I thank those who gave the time to talk to us and hope you will continue to assist us in this way.

I also want to thank QAI's extremely hard working Management Committee. Each year seems to be a "big one" for some reason and this year was certainly that. With the Wolfensberger event in July, followed by the visit of the QAI evaluation external review team, the year began on a very demanding note. Subsequent planning days, post-evaluation workshops and meetings of a number of sub-committees have added to the regular demands of monthly Committee meetings. I thank you all for supporting me in my role of President and for the individual effort everyone has made.

One member, Jac Saxvik, will not be renominating this year. Jac, a lawyer, joined the Committee to replace John Stannard who took up a job on the QAI staff. I thank Jac for her commitment to the Committee this year and I hope she will continue to stay involved with QAI in other ways.

Staff changes

This year has been one of significant staff changes. As reported in the last Annual Report, Jennifer Fitzgerald and Alison Colvin resigned in the early part of the 1997/98 year. Jennifer had been the bioethics worker and Alison the individual legal advice lawyer.

John Stannard who commenced work at QAI at the end of February 1998 replaced Alison. John is a solicitor who had been a QAI member for a number of years, culminating with a short period on the QAI Committee. David Turnbull replaced Jennifer in March 1998, following a period of review of the project in light of recommendations made by the evaluation external review team. David came to QAI following a period in government and having just completed post-graduate studies in applied ethics. Both John and David have quickly become valued members of the QAI staff and I welcome them both to their first AGM in that capacity.

As you all know, QAI Director, Jeremy Ward, has recently tendered his resignation and will leave QAI on 9 October 1998.

The Committee is currently engaged in the selection process to find a suitable replacement.

QAI Evaluation

Beginning at the end of 1996, QAI's second major evaluation moved into its external phase. An external review team from all around Australia visited QAI in August 1997. The external team's written report was delivered in late 1997 and the Committee has made it publicly available. The QAI Committee and staff have spent much time in the second half of the 1997/98 year processing the many comments and recommendations, and will continue to do so for the remainder of 1998. A particularly large commitment involved Committee and staff spending four days developing and clarifying a statement of values for QAI, which will be available in the near future.

Like all evaluations this has proved to be challenging and time consuming for all the staff and Committee. I thank all Committee members and staff for their commitment to this important task which QAI sees as an essential safeguard to its work. I would also like to thank again all those who contributed to the evaluation, and in particular, the members of the external team.

Broadening QAI's Income Base

QAI has continued this year with a number of strategies to broaden its income base beyond almost complete reliance on government funding. While the details of these strategies will be reported elsewhere, I wish to acknowledge the assistance and support provided to QAI in this area over the last year.

QAI's funding consultant, John Rigby, has worked most energetically and enthusiastically to assist QAI to develop a number of strategies. These have been to initiate a continuous

program of grant applications, commence an annual giving plan, the QAI Annual Fund, and to work towards the development of a Foundation and other forms of alternative income generation.

John was successful in obtaining a grant to enable QAI to employ another consultant, Peter Weightman, to develop an extremely comprehensive strategic plan which John is now using as the basis to a wider range of grant submissions. The strategic plan draws together a wide range of information about QAI and advocacy never before collected in one place and will be of great ongoing assistance to QAI as a document we can use internally and externally.

At the end of 1997 John Rigby assisted QAI with its first attempt at an annual giving plan, the QAI Annual Fund. This had modest success and formed the basis to the Fund's development this year.

QAI is extremely fortunate to have the assistance of solicitor, Sean Reidy, as the Chairperson of the Annual Fund Committee this year. Sean Reidy and John Rigby are planning a launch of the 1998 Annual Fund in November and we hope that the Fund will attract considerable support this year. I would like to thank all those who had faith in QAI taking this new step last year by contributing to the Annual Fund. Walking the fine line between appealing to our supporters to contribute financially to the work of QAI when they can, in times when reliance on government funding is far from assured, and appearing to be just another "charity" begging for money, has not been easy! This move by QAI has brought its own risks and I thank those who have been prepared to come with us in sharing that risk.

I would like to thank John Rigby and Peter Weightman for their assistance with this work. In particular, I thank Sean Reidy for giving his time to QAI so generously by agreeing to be Annual Fund Chairperson this year.

Thank you

Doug Eldridge
President



4.0 Treasurer's Report – Donna Best

I take great pleasure in presenting my first treasurer's report for QAI for the financial year 1997/98. I would like to thank Jeremy Ward and Sharyn Pacey for assisting me, answering my many questions about the role of Treasurer and helping me to understand the way the grant money is used to fund the various projects and work of QAI.

QAI's audited financial statements were prepared by Hayward, Gesch & Dorge, chartered accountants.

In the financial year 1997/98, QAI continued to auspice the Action for Advocacy Development Project. This project was funded by the Department of Health and Family Services until December 1997 when the funding was expended. The project became the Advocacy Development Network and moved to the SUFY offices in Spring Hill.

QAI completed the external phase of its evaluation in 1997. The evaluation went significantly over budget; the shortfall coming from QAI's own funds.

QAI has continued its efforts to secure alternative sources of funding. The income generation plan started in June 1997 has continued throughout the 1997/98 financial year, with the consultant, John Rigby submitting numerous applications for funding to trusts and charities and funding was received from the Gaming Machine Community Benefit Fund to prepare a Business Plan for QAI. November 1997 saw the launch of the QAI Annual Fund, an annual giving program, which generated a modest income in its first year.

The Legal Advocacy Development Project was funded until May 1998. QAI was not successful in securing alternative funding for this project, but will continue to seek funding to continue particular elements of this important work. The work of the project will continue as part of the Law Project.

The *Social Advocacies Event* in July 1997 provided QAI with a small profit, which it will use to fund advocacy development and support.

INCOME

In the past financial year, QAI received our recurrent operating grant from the Commonwealth Department of Health and Family Services. Total Funds available to QAI in 1997/98 were as follows:

QAI Operating Grant(DHFS)	\$ 319 333
QAI Legal Advocacy Project (DHFS)(unexpended from 96/97)	\$ 34 412
Action for Advocacy Development Project (DHFS) (unexpended from 96/97)	\$ 43 898
Community Benefit Gaming Machine Fund	\$ 7 000
Evaluation (DHFS)(unexpended from 1996/97)	\$ 4 345

In addition to the grants, QAI received income from the following sources:

Book Sales	\$ 1 915
Interest	\$ 6 136
Membership & Donations	\$ 1 032
Sundry	\$ 2 016
Annual Fund	\$ 2 353
<i>A Social Advocacies Event (received in 1997/98)</i>	\$ 18 226
<i>(received in 1996/97)</i>	\$ 73 557
Funding from DHFS for A Social Advocacies Event bursaries (\$5340 received in 1996/97)	\$ 6 090

EXPENDITURE

QAI used our income in the following projects:

QAI Operating Grant	\$ 334 620
QAI Legal Advocacy Project	\$ 34 673
Action for Advocacy Development Project	\$ 42 273
(\$ 1624 unexpended at end of 1997/98 paid to ADN)	
Evaluation	\$ 12 992

The *Statement of Income & Expenditure* prepared by QAI's auditors details the combined expenses incurred by all the projects throughout the year.

Major expenses for the year were:

Consultancy	\$ 23 331
Library	\$ 6 119
Postage Printing & Stationery	\$ 14 646
Office Occupancy Costs	\$ 34 008
Salaries	\$ 245 236
Telephone	\$ 12 497
Travel & Conferences	\$ 28 364
<i>A Social Advocacies Event</i>	\$ 87 356

Expenditure for *A Social Advocacies Event* (\$ 13 636) was also incurred in the 1996/97 financial year.

I would like to thank Peter Gesch from Hayward, Gesch and Dorge Chartered Accountants for auditing QAI's books and for his helpful advice throughout the year.

Donna Best
Treasurer

5.0 QAI Organisation

QAI is an incorporated association with members and a management committee. QAI must abide by its rules of association and certain regulations set out by the State. These require that:

- restrictions be placed on the activities that an incorporated association can carry out
- an annual meeting for members must be held every year and the QAI committee must meet at least every month
- proper records of members and minutes must be kept
- the accounts of the association must be open to public scrutiny and audited annually.

5.1 Members

QAI has a membership of 450 individuals, not all of whom are currently financial. Members are asked to join QAI because they endorse the organisation's values and principles and believe in QAI's Mission and Objects. During the past year members have supported QAI's work by:

- paying a membership fee and electing a committee at the Annual General Meeting on 27 September 1997
- attending a celebration of QAI's ten years of operation on 27 September 1997
- attending parliamentary debates throughout the year on issues around the *Powers of Attorney Act* (guardianship), closure of institutions, funding
- assisting in the work of the organisation by participating in sub-committees and in campaigns on issues such as institutional reform and guardianship.
- assisting in QAI's work around the State election and lobbying their local politicians
- participating in workshops with committee and staff to increase the understanding and application of QAI's philosophical base,
- participating in the External Evaluation of QAI
- attending *A Social Advocacies Event* in July 1997

- assisting QAI to be accountable by attending the presentation describing QAI's work at the AGM and by reading the Annual Report - subsequently questioning and commenting on some of QAI's actions
- becoming informed about QAI's policies and work and talking about QAI to family, friends, neighbours - thus raising the profile of the most vulnerable people with disability and their issues
- recruiting new members to add to the voice of people supporting QAI's values and work
- keeping QAI informed about happenings in local communities eg by sending in newspaper articles and by contacting QAI staff and committee and discussing situations with them.

Members of QAI do not receive any special services from QAI. However, QAI has endeavoured to keep members informed of the issues via the Newsletter and Annual Report. Four editions of the Queensland Advocacy Incorporated *NEWSLETTER* were produced in 1997/98 and sent to over 850 individuals and organisations. Audiotapes were available to those members who requested them.

5.2 Management Committee

There were eight people elected to the management committee at the AGM on 27 September 1997. One person resigned during the year and another person was co-opted onto the committee. Committee members attended and participated in numerous meetings and workshops throughout the year.

The committee and staff met 12 times for formal management meetings. Two special meetings of the management committee were held to discuss budget and goal priorities and recruitment issues. Three induction workshops for the new committee were held. A two-day facilitated planning workshop, attended by staff and committee was held in March 1998, at which goals and priorities for July to July 1999 were reviewed and set. Committee and staff also met with the external evaluation team twice.

In addition to formal meetings of the committee, various sub-committees consisting of staff and management committee met regularly throughout the year to discuss issues and undertake any planning around these issues. These included:

policy sub-committee (4 meetings), staff selection sub-committee (2 meetings), evaluation organising group (2 meetings), AGM sub-committee (5 meetings), *a Social Advocacies Event* sub-committee (1 meeting), post-evaluation sub-committee (3 meetings), positive image sub-committee (3 meetings) and the SACS sub-committee (4 meetings).

Committee members attended various workshops throughout the year. These included:

Leadership workshops, Ethics workshops and *A Social Advocacies Event*. QAI's President met at least weekly with the Director, to deal with any issues that came up in between meetings of the committee, to discuss and sign correspondence and to set agendas for meetings. Other staff met with the President as required to discuss issues relevant to their particular projects. The Treasurer met fortnightly with the Administrator to authorise payments, sign cheques and check budgets.

The committee (along with staff) met with the Department of Health and Family Services project officers in the past year to discuss funding issues, current work of QAI, standards and the self-assessment process and the *Social Advocacies Event*.

The committee was informed about the work of staff via monthly written or oral reports from each staff person and by informal meetings with staff at the office. Staff reports were discussed in some detail at committee meetings. At least one (and sometimes more than one) committee member read over any submissions and written material prepared by QAI, and had input into the final drafts.

Committee members also took part in reference groups and in organising events around QAI's work. Committee members accompanied staff to meetings with Government Ministers and on most occasions to meetings with senior bureaucrats. Committee members also participated in teleconferences of the funded advocacy groups in Queensland, and attended consultations such as those relating to the Commonwealth Advocacy Program Review.

5.3. Staff

Jenny Fitzgerald, QAI's bioethics worker resigned in October 1997. QAI then undertook to review the direction of the project and to develop and set new goals and priorities for the bioethics work. A report was prepared for the committee which recommended the purpose and aims of QAI's work in the bioethics area. These recommendations were accepted by the committee and in May 1998, David Turnbull was employed as the new bioethics advocacy worker, working three and a half days per week.

Alison Colvin resigned her position as QAI's individual legal advocacy worker in September 1997. In line with QAI's decision to merge the legal advocacy with the Legal Advocacy Development Project (LADP) work to form the Law Project, expressions of interest were sought for the three day per week position of individual legal advocacy worker. John Stannard was employed in March 1998 to continue QAI's legal advocacy work.

QAI also lost the services of Nic Geard in January 1998 who during his two years of casual work for QAI provided all the staff with advice and assistance on computer matters, as well as excellent typing and administrative support. Nic has finished his degree and is now travelling overseas.

At 30 June 1998, full time staff employed were:

Director	Jeremy Ward
Administrator	Sharyn Pacey

Part time staff were:

Systems advocacy worker (9 days/fortnight)	Christine Douglas
Bioethics Systems advocacy worker (3.5 days/week)	David Turnbull
Individual legal advocacy worker (3 days/week)	John Stannard
Legal advocacy development project worker (3 days/week)	Kathleen Dare
Administration assistant (22 hours /week)	Julie Granger

Additional staff were employed for:

Cleaning	Josie Nolan
Filing - legal library, personal assistance at meetings and interpreting:	various people

5.4. Funding

QAI continued to be funded by the Department of Health and Family Services (DH&FS).

Apart from interest from investment of funds, book sales, donations and membership fees, in 1997/98 QAI raised additional income through grants, the *Social Advocacies Event*, and the Annual Fund.

5.5. Complaints about QAI

No formal complaints against QAI were received during 1997/98.

In 1994/95 a commitment was made by the committee that an independent person would examine the operation and outcomes of the QAI Complaints System each year, after the Annual General Meeting. The independent person who was appointed to examine the Complaints System after the AGM in September 1997 was Lex Weddell who has agreed to continue this function after the AGM in September 1998.

5.6. Planning, Review and Evaluation

In 1997/98, the following process of planning, review and evaluation was undertaken by QAI committee and staff:

5.6.1. Review of priorities

3 March 1998 - Meeting of committee and staff to review budget and goal priorities for 1998/99.

5.6.2. Strategic Planning

18 and 26 November 1997 - two-day planning workshop with external facilitator

to develop strategic plan for January 1998 – July 1999 (planning was for eighteen months)

5.6.3. *Development of Strategic Plan*

March – June 1998 – Development of strategic plan for QAI

5.6.4. *Staff selection, induction, appraisal and support*

March 1998 – Staff selection for the individual legal advocacy worker

April 1998 – Staff selection for bioethics advocacy worker

April/May 1998 - Staff Performance Appraisal carried out, involving all staff meeting with Director to develop assessment and training needs.

5.6.5. *Evaluation*

31 July 1997 – 3 August 1997 External Evaluation Team

5.7 QAI Office and Equipment

QAI agreed to offer office space to the Queensland Association of Independent Legal Services (QAILS) for its office administration and Angela Darch, the QAILS worker moved into the office recently vacated by AAD's Mary Kenny in March 1998. This has proved to be a happy union between QAI and QAILS, largely due to the outgoing and likeable Angela Darch.

In March 1998 QAI set aside a small amount of funds to develop strategies for the management of the 'Millenium Bug'. QAI replaced three older 486 personal computers in June 1998.

The reception area of QAI was improved in June 1998 with the addition of a reception desk and cupboard.

6.0 QAI Evaluation 1997-1998

QAI conducted its second Evaluation with the external team's visit to Brisbane in August 1997. QAI's first evaluation was held in 1992.

The many-sided evaluation process began in early 1996 with a report entitled *The Evaluation for QAI – A Paper Outlining a Many Sided Evaluation Process (Version 2 1995)*. The evaluation reference group was formed to plan the evaluation and funding from the Department of Health & Family Services was received. The evaluation coordinator was appointed and together with the evaluation reference group, met regularly to work out the process and prepare the organisation for the evaluation.

From December 1996 to June 1997, QAI conducted five internal appraisal workshops with the management committee and QAI staff. A report from these workshops along

with work carried out by the evaluation reference group was prepared for the external team.

In August 1997 the external team visited QAI and carried out the evaluation. At the end of the team's visit to Brisbane, a verbal report was delivered to the staff and management committee.

QAI is most appreciative of the commitment the external team made in carrying out the evaluation and assisting QAI to grapple with the complex issues surrounding the event. The comments and insights of the external team will greatly assist QAI as it moves into the next period of its development. We sincerely thank the external team for their work and dedication to QAI and advocacy.

In December 1997 the *Report of an External Review of Queensland Advocacy Incorporated* was received and the management committee agreed to release the document for public viewing.

In early 1998 the QAI staff and management committee studied the report and agreed to appoint a sub-committee to look at the report in detail. By the end of 1997/98 staff and management committee members were preparing a series of workshops throughout the remainder of 1998 to work through recommendations from the report that could not be implemented without further discussion.

Looking back over the evaluation process, it is evident that the management committee and staff, the external team, allies and others in the community have invested many hours in looking at what it is that QAI aims to do and what the organisation is actually doing. QAI hopes that the evaluation process has been beneficial for all participants, and as Lorna Hallahan says in her paper *The Evaluation for QAI – A Paper Outlining a Many Sided Evaluation Process (Version 2 1995)*:

“This evaluation is part of QAI’s search for integrity and excellence in all its work. It entrenches the culture of evaluation by asserting that reflection, criticism and vigilance are essential in the preservation of the united purpose that arises from our partnership with people with disability.”



7.0 Closure Of Institutions/ Community Living Campaign:

QAI's Closure of Institutions campaign took on a slightly different flavour this year from previous years. It was not galvanised around any major events such as the public rallies and parliamentary Notices of Motion of 1996 and early 1997, but rather assumed a more "behind the scenes" approach. For all of the 12 months under consideration, the Borbidge government was in power, which, for many people with disability, their families and advocacy groups proved to be an extremely difficult period.

It was a period characterised by virtually no additional funding to the sector, unpredictable and inconsistent departmental practices, a marked resistance toward advocacy groups and individuals and a government policy position based on the nebulous concept of "choice". The morale of the sector was at an all time low and many families and people with disability had a sense that all the efforts and achievements of the past were slipping away. From QAI's perspective it was important to assume a "holding" position and continue to say what needed to be said in spite of the overwhelming odds. A number of key areas of work emerged and are as follows.

Closure of the Challinor Centre

QAI's systems advocacy work around the closure of Challinor took on a variety of activities. Chief amongst them was challenging the department's flawed position on choice, questioning the quality and level of safeguards in community based relocation arrangements, criticising the failure of the department to reinstate the independent family support project in November 1997 and repeatedly highlighting the overall lack of co-ordination that has plagued the relocation process from the outset.

The closure process of the Challinor Centre at Ipswich, which was due to be finalised in June 1998, (now September 1998) met a major hurdle when the department's tendering process for two residential centres – for the 40 or so residents whose families chose centre based care - became embarrassingly unstuck. Prior to that event occurring, QAI had been in correspondence with the Minister, Mr Lingard, and then Mrs Wilson, outlining our objections and belief that the interests of people with disability could not be served by simply transferring them from one institutionalised setting to another.

QAI continued to pursue the matter, via correspondence and the media, when it came to light that the competitive tendering process had delivered a 20 year contract to a newly created company that had no previous track record in the disability sector anywhere in Australia! The site itself (located at Chuwar) did not meet tender criteria and local residents knew nothing of its development. Chuwar was finally laid to rest when the Labor Shadow Minister Anna Bligh revealed that a departmental officer connected to the Chuwar project shared a house with the Director of the selected company. (A detailed account of the "Chuwar Debacle" is feature in QAI's April 1998 edition of the Newsletter)

Although this particular Chuwar project will not proceed and neither will the contract for Logan, centre based care will still be provided for the residents in 12 months time, by the new Labor government. In the interim period the remaining residents of Challinor will be scattered throughout a number of alternate accommodation options, including the Basil Stafford Centre until the centres are built. QAI will attempt to monitor this process and keep raising the uncomfortable questions.

Basil Stafford Centre:

QAI resolved this year to play a more visible role at the centre by going on site on a regular basis. Although this aim was not achieved as often as desired, a number of visits were made. QAI attended the Basil Stafford Parents & Friends Association's AGM, and two of its morning teas throughout the year. In March of 1998 QAI addressed the Association on the subject of advocacy and the work of QAI. A number of villas were visited and meetings were held with Basil Stafford Centre management where Justice Stewart's CJC Inquiry Report recommendations were discussed.

A Basil Stafford Citizen Action Group was formed late in June 1998, based along similar lines as the Maryborough DPW Citizen Action Group. It is early days for the fledgling group and anyone interested in becoming part of it, is encouraged to contact QAI. It has been important for the group to acknowledge the historical, political and physical differences of the Basil Stafford Centre and carve out a unique approach to its ultimate aims of creating community around the remaining residents and working towards the centre's eventual closure.

Queensland Children's Commission

QAI made an approach to the Children's Commissioner, Mr Norm Alford, in October 1997 in response to his intention to set up an Official Visitors Program. It was an opportunity to introduce the Commission to the overall work of QAI and draw their attention to the submission QAI had done around the Official Visitor Scheme in relation to the Basil Stafford CJC Inquiry. This was followed by an invitation from the Commission to speak to the subsequently appointed Official Visitors. QAI took this occasion to highlight the vulnerability of people with disability in care and to identify the hidden, subtle indicators of abuse and neglect. The prospect of future interaction with, and action by, the Commission in related abuse and neglect issues that QAI may deal with is encouraging.

State Budget Activities

Each year QAI has grown more aware of the strategic importance of the State Budget process, particularly the Parliamentary Budget Estimates Committee meetings held after each State budget. This year was no exception, and in June 1997 QAI attended the Department of Families, Youth & Community Care Budget Estimates Committee session. In the following months QAI wrote to the Coalition members of parliament on that committee pointing out, amongst other things, the failure of their government to allocate monies to fulfil the parliament's Notice of Motion commitment to fund an independent Family Support project to the Basil Stafford families. QAI also wrote to every major

department questioning its figures in relation to disability allocations and how, in reality, they did nothing to alleviate the fundamental and urgent needs of people with disability and their families.

Closure of Institutions Reference Group

In December 1997 QAI extended an invitation to a small number of key people in the community to become part of a QAI reference group to assist and support QAI in exploring and analysing the various complex issues and dilemmas that the Closure of Institutions campaign embraces. The group held its first meeting in April 1998 and intends to meet bi monthly throughout the year.

Community Living and Family Support Position Paper

One of the issues demanding greater reflection by QAI as a whole and offered to the reference group for input, has been how to better incorporate the pressing issues of community living and family support, which are integral to a process of closure. QAI has always been aware of the broader issues inherent in advocating for the closure of institutions in Queensland, and has repeatedly conducted its closure work in tandem with arguments for a rich and varied community services infrastructure and the urgent need for family support. This has not always been recognised and acknowledged by some sections of the community who have accused QAI of being irresponsible and radical. In order to place greater emphasis on this important aspect, QAI has broadened the title of its campaign to include this aspect and is in the process of releasing a position paper on the subject. It is due to be launched sometime in October 1998.

Work with the Opposition

QAI continued its work with the Opposition in line with previous years. In particular QAI made a number of important representations to the Labor Party's Social Justice Committee, while they were in the process of formulating Labor's Disability Policy. QAI supported the policy, which was launched in December 1997, and is prepared to engage with all parties to support and assume a similar policy position.

With Labor's election to government in June 1998 this policy is, and will be, an important strategic tool for QAI in advocating for the changes that are needed to bring about better lives for people with disability. The months following this annual report will be of enormous significance to people with disability and their families, as Labor seeks to implement its policy in terms of a new Disability Services Agency and additional monies to fund unmet need in Queensland. There are a number of crucial points to be made about these events and the issue of funding for advocacy. These will be addressed in QAI's forthcoming Position Paper.

Work with other advocacy groups

QAI's Closure of Institutions project worker continued to be a part of QPPD's Accommodation Network that conducts a monthly local meeting, followed by a telephone

link up with other QPPD members throughout the state. This is a useful occasion for QAI to become familiar with the issues facing people with disability, their families and communities across the state, and conversely to inform them of QAI's work and to garner support where required.

QAI also participated on SUFY's Reference Group throughout the year, until SUFY's Evaluation Group superseded it.

Freedom of Information Applications

During this period QAI made two FOI applications to the Health and Family Services departments respectively, in relation to the Maryborough Disabled Person's Ward (DPW). For some time QAI has been attempting to obtain a grant, with the view to writing an analytical history of the ward, and exploring the various advocacy strategies that QAI used in its efforts to increase the ward's profile and bring about its eventual closure. The material gained under these applications will be of enormous benefit in complementing the oral history QAI is hoping to collect from a wide range of individuals. Anyone who has information about the ward, going back to its inception in 1969, is encouraged to contact QAI.

Earlier this year QAI was invited by the Community Resource Unit (CRU) to give a presentation on DPW at the conference in July 1998. The work assumed around this event will form the basis of a future, more detailed production. (At the time of writing this report QAI had received confirmation that its DPW grant had been successful. QAI will begin this exciting project in the very near future).

QAI also worked in conjunction with SUFY around an FOI application to the Department of Families, Youth & Community Care about a departmental Health Needs survey conducted within the Challinor and Basil Stafford Centres in November 1996. Family members and workers of the two centres were asked to complete a questionnaire based on their knowledge of the health needs of the residents and the various health practices conducted at the centres. Under the anonymity of the survey many responses revealed a less than satisfactory situation, some of which had quite serious implications. In terms of the Basil Stafford Centre it confirmed that the health improvements sought under the CJC Inquiry, had not occurred.



8.0 Guardianship

By the end of 1997/98 Queensland was still without decent, comprehensive adult guardianship legislation. The election of a State Labor Government in June brought with it a promise for the reform needed, but so did the election of the Goss Labor Government in 1989. This time, however, QAI is more hopeful and we expect legislation to be introduced into State parliament by the end of 1998.

The year began with the previous Government introducing the Powers of Attorney Bill. This was in answer to the recommendations handed to the Government by the Queensland Law Reform Commission, complete with draft legislation, in 1996. The Powers of Attorney Bill included changes to enduring powers of attorney, introduced advance directives (which, contrary to advice from the Law Reform Commission, would cover end of life decisions) and brought in statutory health care decision making. A new position of Adult Guardian was also introduced.

The Bill ignored changes needed by those people unable to make decisions for themselves. It did not include the central feature of the recommended reforms, a Guardianship Tribunal, nor did it include a Public Advocate or Community Visitors' Scheme. Further, without the Tribunal, the only mechanism in the Bill to resolve disputes or otherwise monitor attorneys or decision-makers was the Supreme Court, with all its associated expense and inaccessibility. The Government claimed that this Bill was only the first part of a "two-phase" reform package, but, at least initially, was vague about the detail and scope of subsequent reform.

It was obvious to QAI that the people who most need proper guardianship provisions in Queensland, those unable to sign powers of attorney and advance directives, were offered very little by this Bill. With no guarantee that the government would ever introduce phase two, and with the likelihood that a two phase approach would result in even more confusion and incoherence in this area, QAI decided that we should oppose the Powers of Attorney Bill and call for the introduction of the Law Reform Commission's recommendations in full. We found that we had little support in the community on this, with many people taking the approach that this Bill was at least better than nothing.

QAI had prepared and distributed a commentary on the Bill, to assist members and others to understand the changes and to make representations to their elected representatives. We also had meetings with the Attorney General's Department and the Opposition, and the independent member for Gladstone, Liz Cunningham, who held the balance of power in Parliament.

The Powers of Attorney Bill was introduced into parliament in October 1997 but was not debated until April 1998. This delay was largely due to conservative members of the government, and Liz Cunningham, complaining about the advance directives provisions. QAI also opposed advanced directives but for different reasons. In the meantime, QAI met with the Opposition who agreed to move amendments to the Government's Bill to bring in all the reforms omitted from the Law Reform Commission's recommendations. While less satisfactory than the Law Reform Commission draft legislation, the outcome

would have been acceptable.

With an election not far away, and with Liz Cunningham apparently insisting on the second phase reforms being brought in before the election, the government circulated a draft Guardianship and Administration Bill. This contained most of the other reforms needed, including a Tribunal, but had some major deficits. QAI made submissions to the Government but this Bill was never introduced to Parliament before the election and subsequent change of Government.

The Powers of Attorney Bill was finally passed on 12 May 1998 a week before the State election was called. It received royal assent on 14 May. The appointment of the Adult Guardian was made on 14 May with the person appointed being Mr Jim Cockerill who had been seconded from the Public Trust Office two years earlier to work on the development of the Bill. The QAI July 1998 Newsletter contains a detailed analysis of the new legislation, including its confusing interplay with the Intellectually Disabled Citizens Act, the Legal Friend and the Intellectually Disabled Citizens Council,

With Labor in Government at the end of the 1997/98 year, the prospects of the remaining reforms being introduced appeared high. The introduction of comprehensive adult guardianship legislation had been part of Labor's disability policy. The Attorney General, Matt Foley, had also promised, if Labor won government, to introduce the amendments he moved unsuccessfully while in Opposition. QAI has since written to the new Attorney, had discussions with the Department of Attorney-General and Justice, and has also written to the new independent member for Nicklin, Mr Peter Wellington, seeking the introduction of the reforms as soon as possible.



9.0 State Election Shenanigans

In the build up to the June 1998 Queensland state elections, QAI went into full election mode, by opting to canvass the views of 340 candidates across six contending parties on issues seriously impacting on the lives and families of people with disability.

QAI prioritised five burning issues, wrote a brief position on each, with accompanying recommendations, and called on all candidates to indicate their level of support by ticking a yes or no box and returning the survey sheet by the due date. QAI noted that their participation would be useful in guiding the voting deliberations of our many members and allies.

The survey attracted a 2% response from Liberal candidates, 2% National, 11% One Nation, 7% Labor, 36% Greens and 31% Democrats. The Coalition party's response to the survey was appalling, and although some individual One Nation candidates responded positively, this was not backed up by One Nation's overall policies and disturbing attitudes towards those who are marginalised in our society. The response from the Greens and Democrats was pleasing, as almost all the candidates who replied supported all the issues raised by QAI. Labor's poor response was offset by its strong, and positive disability policy statement.

QAI has included the entire State Election Position Statement in an appendix for readers to refer to throughout the year, to use in any discussions with their local members of parliament, and in lobbying the Labor Party who made it to Government.



10.0 QAI Bioethics Project

QAI's bioethics project is into its fourth year. For most of the 1997/98 year QAI was without a worker in this area, following the resignation of Jennifer Fitzgerald in September 1997, after she had taken a period of long service leave. Jennifer's contribution to QAI through her work in bioethics, and prior to that in writing QAI's book *Include Me In*, was outstanding and her presence has been greatly missed.

Following Jennifer's resignation, and in view of feedback from QAI's Evaluation External Review Team that a clearer advocacy focus in this work should be adopted, QAI decided to take the opportunity to review the direction of this work. The Committee appointed Mary Kenny to talk to all Committee members, staff and a few QAI members with particular interest in this issue and report to the Committee on future directions for the project. Mary had an understanding of the issues through her close association with QAI while working with Action for Advocacy Development and the Advocacy Development Project.

Mary Kenny reported to the QAI Committee in early February 1998. In her report, which drew also on the Evaluation External Review Team's report, Mary recommended that the purpose of QAI's work in the area of bioethics be

“To influence legislation, policies and practices pertaining to Bioethics so that the lives of people with disability are safe, valued and protected”.

The aim of the project should be two-fold:

to undertake focused advocacy through stimulating, influencing and informing political debate and shaping legislation, policies and practices around bioethical issues

to foster the development of the networks in Queensland and the rest of Australia which will activate the involvement of interested and committed strategic allies to take bioethics issues into the future.

The QAI Management Committee accepted these recommendations and set in place a selection process for a new worker. That process resulted in the appointment of David Turnbull as the new project worker. David took up his new position in May 1998.

For David, the initial task has been threefold. Firstly, to make a thorough personal connection with the previous stage of the work; secondly to begin networking with potential allies; thirdly to give the current stage of the work a focus on specific issues. These issues have begun to emerge, giving the project a direction for the immediate future.

People and issues are closely intertwined. There are so many issues of bioethical importance to people with disability that it is impossible to say which are the most important, and which to select as the ones on which to focus. It all depends on your point of view, and your own circumstances! Fortunately for the bioethics project, a number of

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people have come forward to offer their perspectives, their experience, and their assistance as allies.

From the discussions David has had over his first three months, two clear foci for the project have begun to emerge. They are firstly, pre-natal testing and selective abortion, and secondly, withholding of medical treatment. These are both issues, which may result in the death of people with disability. By the end of the 1997/98 year David was working towards putting firm proposals to the QAI Committee on whether these are issues to which QAI should give immediate priority.

Work in this area has shown that there is still a long way to go in dealing with these issues. There is still only a trickle of information coming in, although the information that QAI has already is significant, and will enable the drawing of important conclusions. More collection and dissemination of information, the offering of forums for discussion, and time set aside for deliberation about courses of action with allies and concerned people all need to occur in the coming year.

During this period David Turnbull has also been writing a number of discussion papers, which could become the focus for a series of workshops and seminars. One of the papers is based on research done by Associate Professor Nick Lennox from the Developmental Disability Unit, Department of Social and Preventative Medicine, University of Queensland. It is entitled *The Health Care of People with Intellectual Disability: GP – Carer Relationships*. Another paper is entitled *Values and Power in Disability Bioethics*. Both of these papers will be made available in the near future, along with previously undistributed work of Jennifer Fitzgerald. David will also attend a bioethics conference in Hobart later in 1998.

QAI remains strongly committed to this area of work. QAI's attempts to attract alternative funding for work in bioethics continue to be unsuccessful. In the mean time, QAI hopes and expects that this important work will continue to attract the support of our funding department.



11.0 Advocacy Development and Support

During 1997/1998 QAI advocacy development and support remained an area of priority for QAI. This work came within the role of QAI Director, Jeremy Ward, though a number of other staff assisted with different tasks.

Information on Advocacy

QAI continued to receive numerous requests for information on advocacy. Copies of the advocacy information sheets produced by the Action for Advocacy Development were made available to anyone seeking information on advocacy without cost, as was the chapter on advocacy in QAI's book *Include Me In*. QAI also provided access to the QAI library.

Dr Wolfensberger's "A Social Advocacies Event"

In July 1997 Queensland Advocacy Incorporated and Action for Advocacy Development (AAD) hosted a seven day Social Advocacies Event at the Brisbane Hilton. The workshop was attended by over 200 participants from all states of Australia, NZ, USA and UK and was very successful and challenging for the participants. The workshop was conducted by Dr Wolf Wolfensberger from Syracuse University, assisted by Susan Thomas, Carolyn Bardwell Wheeler, Peter Millier, Anne Cross and Oxana Metiuk.

Dr Wolfensberger and the other presenters cover a wide range of difficult and complex issues including clarifying different kinds of advocacy and protection, why advocacy is needed, principles of advocacy, important concepts, threats to advocacy and how best to safeguard advocacy.

Many people at the workshop took the opportunity to make connections with others and to continue to build a strong network of people interested in exploring and talking about advocacy and advocacy practice across Australia and the world. While everyone was challenged and not all agreed with everything said or the way it was said, QAI believes it will prove to be extremely timely in the development of advocacy in Queensland and around the country.

QAI and Action for Advocacy Development received no funding for this event, except a small Commonwealth Department of Health and Family Services grant to assist people with disability and parents from outside Brisbane to attend. AAD supported 15 people and a number of others were offered bursaries from the income from the event, so that everyone who asked for assistance prior to the final cut-off date was assisted to attend.

Action for Advocacy Development

QAI continued to auspice Action for Advocacy Development (AAD), the second advocacy development project auspiced by QAI in the last four years. AAD was jointly funded by the Commonwealth and Queensland Governments to run for 12-15 months, from late 1996 to December 1997.

With staff located in QAI's office, the project was guided by an independent steering committee convened by QAI Director, Jeremy Ward. The Steering Committee had representatives from funded and unfunded advocacy groups across Queensland. Mary Kenny, who had worked on the earlier Advocacy Development Project, continued as AAD Project Coordinator, and Jenni Barrkman was employed to work on information materials and training.

During the last six months of the project, from July to December 1997, AAD continued with workshops in Brisbane and Cairns, finalised a number of advocacy information sheets and began an advocacy study guide designed as part of a proposed Advocacy Workbook. The project Convenor also developed a proposal for an ongoing structure for Action for Advocacy Development in the event of no further funding, and assisted with the organising of the Social Advocacies Event in July.

Towards the end of the project period, the Steering committee decided not to seek further funding. The proposal was that those committed to the work of the project continue as an unfunded network which would seek funds and income for specific tasks but not funding as a project. This decision was made with the view to long term growth as a network of people committed to advocacy development in Queensland, rather than a project dependent on government funding alone. QAI had already agreed to contribute half the funds recovered from the Wolfensberger workshops to the future network to assist with its ongoing work.

In February 1998, the Steering Committee resolved to become the Focus Group of the new network, which would be known as the Advocacy Development Network. Applications were made for grant monies to continue the development of an Advocacy Workbook. Success came shortly after the conclusion of the 1997/98 year when the Queensland Gaming Fund funded ADN to complete the Advocacy Workbook.

The Focus Group also completed policies and strategies to carry out "fee for service" training and consultancy work. By the end of the year the new network had also obtained sufficient resources to pay a convenor for one day a week. Mary Kenny continued her previous advocacy development work by agreeing to be the ADN convenor. ADN is now auspiced by SUFY (Speaking Up For You), an individual advocacy organisation in Brisbane. A formal launch of the Advocacy Workbook and of the Advocacy Development Network was planned for 1998/99.

4. National Advocacy Program Review

Early in the 1996/97 year, the then Federal Minister for Family Services, Judi Moylan, announced a Review of the Government's Disability Advocacy Program. Anticipated to take a few months only, this review continued throughout the 1997/98 year and was still not concluded by July 1998.

Early in the year the Disability Advocacy Program Review Steering Committee called for submissions. QAI spent considerable time responding at a number of levels. We wrote our own submission, we participated in public consultation meetings, we contributed to a submission by the Combined Advocacy Groups Queensland and we supported the submission by the Australian Advocacy Network, particularly its six-point plan for advocacy in Australia.

QAI experienced considerable difficulty in attempting to respond to the Steering Committee's discussion paper. In QAI's view, it contained a number of serious yet unsubstantiated allegations about advocacy, it referred to government policy which was not spelt out, and it lacked overall clarity and depth.

Following a change of Minister and a lengthy delay, the new Minister, Warwick Smith, announced in March 1998 that he would release an "exposure draft" of the Advocacy Review Report in June 1998. By the end of the 1997/98 year this report had not surfaced and was not expected for some months.

QAI always accepted that the Federal Government had the right to review the advocacy program. The time taken by QAI in attempting to respond to the Review, however, has been most regrettable. The lengthy delay in finalising the Review is of equal concern. QAI hopes that the Report is released early in the 1998/99 year and that the Minister gives priority to making decisions about the future direction of the program. QAI and its many members and supporters are concerned to know whether QAI's future is at risk.

National Advocacy Alliances

During the year, QAI continued to support the Australian Advocacy Network. This covered a small financial contribution from QAI funds, some "in kind" assistance such as photocopying and postage, and the involvement by the QAI director on the AAN Core Group.

This involvement proved of great assistance to QAI during a difficult year, when our funding from the Department of Health and Family Services began to look extremely precarious through the Federal Government's review of the Advocacy Program.

AAN's energies have been directed largely to this Review throughout the year with information proving extremely difficult to obtain. AAN wrote a submission to the Review Steering Committee and assisted others to do so through its information kit to AAN supporters. With the delay in the release of the Review Report, AAN kept pressing the department and the Minister for information. At the end of the 1997/98 year, AAN had

planned a meeting of the AAN Core Group in Adelaide in late July and was hoping that the First Assistant Secretary, Disability Programs, Barry Wight, would attend.

State Advocacy Alliances

QAI also continued to participate in an alliance of funded advocacy groups in Queensland, the Combined Advocacy Groups Queensland (CAGQ), which now includes nine groups plus the Advocacy Development Network. This alliance met approximately every six weeks via teleconference, to discuss issues of common concern such as the advocacy review and the 1998 State elections. CAGQ wrote a joint submission to the Advocacy Program Review.

QAI staff also provided advice to other Queensland advocacy groups on a range of legal and non legal matters.

12.0 Legal Advocacy Development Project

In the financial year 1997/98, the funding for the Legal Advocacy Development Project terminated, resulting in the decision of QAI to continue with the work of legal advocacy development as part of a wider project, which QAI has called the Law Project. The Law Project maintains the original aims and focus of the legal advocacy development work and includes the individual legal advice work. For most of the last financial year, the Legal Advocacy Development Project focused on the development and provision of training.

The impact of the Law Project

When Alison Colvin, the Individual Legal Advocacy Lawyer resigned last year and the Legal Advocacy Development Project funding came to an end, plus the timely receipt of the Evaluation Report, a rethink of these two positions took place resulting in the formation of the Law Project.

The Law Project enables more sharing of ideas, skills and resources by enabling the project workers, Kathleen Dare and John Stannard, to do legal advice and also legal advocacy development whilst maintaining a defined separation of roles and primary responsibilities. This means that the Legal Advocacy Development worker, Kathleen Dare, will assist with the provision of urgent legal advice when the Individual Legal Advocacy worker is not available and the Individual Legal Advocacy worker, John Stannard, will assist in the development and provision of training and other aspects of the Legal Advocacy Development work. By maintaining links with the practice of law, it enables the Legal Advocacy Development work to remain informed as well as extending the case work potential; additionally, each worker will develop skills and expertise within the area of work for which they have a secondary responsibility under the Law Project.

The Legal Advocacy Development Project worker filled the position of Individual Legal Advocacy worker for a period of three months, until a new worker was appointed in March. This meant that some of the proposed work planned for the 1997-1998 financial year was suspended during that period.

Training

Telephone call centre staff – Legal Aid Queensland

2 pilot training sessions with Legal Aid Queensland (LAQ) where a number of solicitors from private practice also attended

Women's Legal Service

Tenants' Union of Queensland Inc.

Caxton Legal Service

Sunshine Coast District Law Association

Presented some training at the National Community Legal Centres Conference

Two pilot training sessions were given to staff of LAQ, after which a decision was made by LAQ not to continue with the training. Consequently, much of the original planning for this financial year had to be redeveloped as LAQ was to be the device through which training throughout Queensland was to occur and this included training with members of the private profession and community legal centres.

Planned Training (occurred in July/August 1998)

Cairns Community Legal Centre

Tenant's Union of Queensland Inc. – Cairns

Townsville Community Legal Centre

North Queensland Women's Legal Service – Townsville

North Queensland Women's Legal Service - Cairns

Training in Cairns and Townsville took place in the 1998-1999 financial year. This training involved a number of solicitors from private practice.

Consultations with Legal Aid Queensland

Over the last two years Legal Aid Queensland (LAQ) has been under tremendous pressure with the Commonwealth Government's announcement of its massive cuts to funding. This has resulted in the Commonwealth agreeing to only funding legal matters which strictly fall within Commonwealth laws. Despite the artificial distinction the Commonwealth has attempted to make, it has been successful in largely dictating to State legal aid offices how guidelines for grants of aid should look.

The combination of massive funding cuts to LAQ alongside the loss of power to design its own guidelines suggested that people with disability would be even less likely to secure legal aid. Our previous research indicated that in 1994 people with disability were already being under represented by the LAQ by approximately 28%. QAI submitted to LAQ that this increased the need to ensure that guidelines for grants of aid made special provisions

for people with disability, particularly where people were unlikely to be able to adequately represent themselves because of a cognitive or communication disability. LAQ agreed to take the matter back to the Commonwealth and a significant change to its most recent guidelines is apparent. In nearly every category for grants of aid, specific provision has been made for disability. The guidelines are by no means perfect, however this is a significant improvement, given the fact that disability in the past has only ever been mentioned in the context of criminal matters.

Writings/Submissions

Developing a proposal around reform of the Coroners' Act
Assisted with the developing and writing of a submission on the Guardianship and Administration Bill

Seminars, Workshops and Conferences

People with Intellectual Disability in the Criminal Justice System
Legal Aid Forum
Social Advocacies Event
Queensland Community Legal Centres Conference
National Community Legal Centres Conference
ASSID Conference
Workshop on Bioethics
Litigation Update – The New Civil Procedure Rules

12.0 Individual Legal Advocacy

QAI continued to employ one part-time worker in 1997-98 to undertake individual legal advocacy. For approximately three months when QAI had no worker employed in this position, this work was carried out by QAI Director, Jeremy Ward and Kathleen Dare, the Legal Advocacy Development Worker.

Alison Colvin did an excellent job as Legal Advocacy Worker before moving to the Native Title Tribunal in November 1997. Alison had been with QAI since June 1995, beginning her involvement with work on a major anti-discrimination case over inclusive education. Towards the end of her time at QAI Alison moved to full-time work for a number of months to assist with QAI's campaign for adult guardianship legislation.

Following Alison's departure, QAI took the opportunity to review the legal component of QAI's work. The separate funding for legal advocacy development had almost finished yet QAI saw the need to continue with that work. The decision was made to combine the individual legal advocacy with legal advocacy development to form one Law Project. While staffed by two part-time workers with discreet areas of work, the advantage was that both lawyers would support and supplement each other. By reducing the hours of each, QAI was able to continue to employ a legal advocacy development worker even

though no additional funding was available.

With this decision made, a new legal advocacy lawyer was employed for three days per week. John Stannard, previously a QAI Committee member for a short period, began work on 18 February 1998.

Despite the period without a legal advocacy lawyer, QAI was able to provide free legal advice, assistance and referral for people with disability in accordance with the QAI legal advice guidelines almost continuously. QAI provided advice and assistance in 275 instances.

A major point of inquiry for legal advice and assistance has been around accountability. Accountability of government and non-government service providers has a different focus but a common thread of a need for open and transparent processes that include families and which include the necessary safeguards.

Two matters that the individual legal advocate has pursued demonstrate the area of concern. In one, QAI received a complaint about the quality of a service. The service provider, supported by a Department of Family Services staff member, saw fit to deny a QAI solicitor access to the premises to obtain instructions or even to verify that there was an issue to complain about. In another, the legal advocacy worker undertook to support a client of the Department in a grievance matter and quickly discovered the difference between accountability in theory and in practice. Serious issues of institutional abuse and neglect have arisen in several cases. These we have referred to appropriate authorities and private solicitors.

Towards the end of the 1997/98 year, the legal advocacy worker assisted other staff with submissions over the draft Guardianship and Administration Bill and the Coroner's Act and assisted with the QAI campaign around the Queensland election.

By June 1998 it was becoming clear that the hours allowed for this position were not quite meeting demands and the legal advocacy development worker and QAI Director have both filled in when the workload has required it. The demand on time from administrative and training needs has been strong, especially with regular meetings to work through the recommendations of the report of the external review team.

