



Information on Disability  
& Education Awareness Services

*Getting information has never been easier*

| *Annual Report 2011*





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Information on Disability  
& Education Awareness Services

# The Organisation

IDEAS NSW provides a range of high quality information products and services for people with disability, people with age related disability and their families, carers and supporters.

## Our Mission

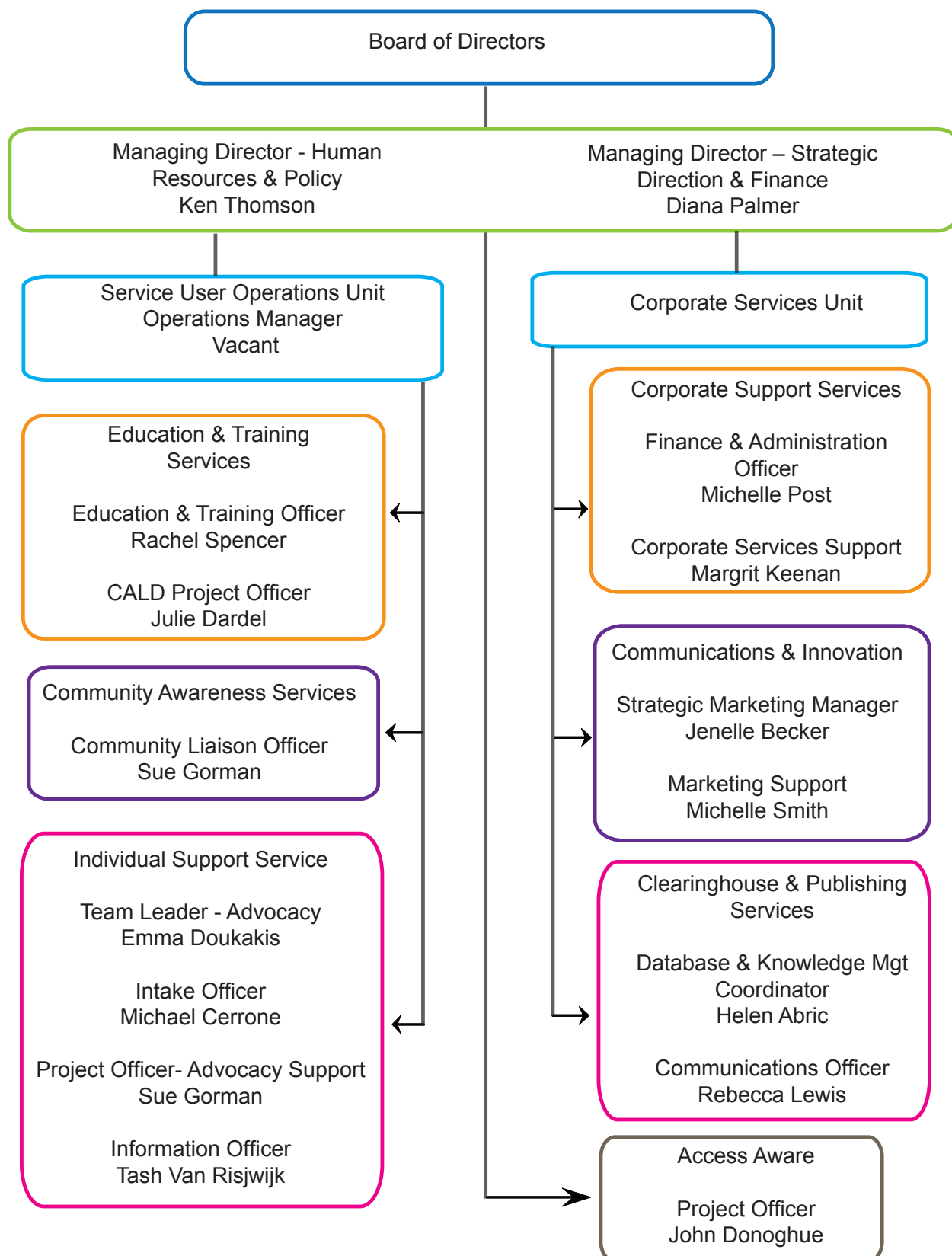
To provide sustainable information on disability that supports inclusive communities.

## Our Vision

A world where people with disability live full, independent lives of their own choosing.

***“IDEAS is the lifeline to information for frustrated carers, parents and consumers. This is and always has been the only answer to questions for us.”***

## Organisation Structure at June 2011



## *The IDEAS Team*



Back row L to R: Jenelle, Rachel, Helen, Michael, Sue  
Front row L to R: Rebecca, Michelle, Julie, Tash, Diana

Absent: Margaret, Michelle and Brenda

***“The help was marvellous and on the spot.”***



## *Board Members*



Alana Yap



Joanna Nicol



Jacki Campisi



Kathryn Brookes



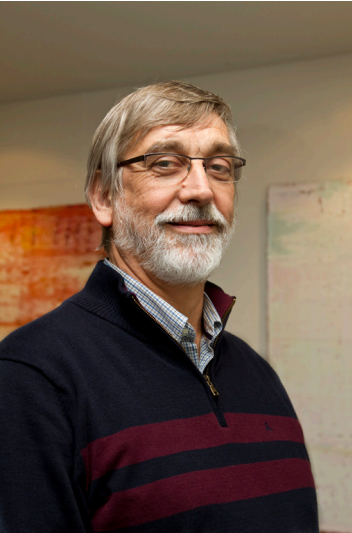
Robert Gilhome



Teresa McMullen

Absent: Chris Fallon and Patricia Liang

## Chairperson's Report



It gives me great pleasure to present the Chairman's Report for IDEAS – Information on Disability & Education Awareness Services Incorporated for the year to 30 June 2011.

In the previous two years I have spoken of the growth of IDEAS and, last year, I indicated that the organisation had reached a point where it had achieved a certain critical mass which would enable it to flourish.

In identifying that growth I referred to two indicators, income and staff numbers, both of which had shown significant growth. This year I can say that neither of these indicators reflects growth of any consequence. I can, and will, however, list our achievements in our program delivery and highlight initiatives we have introduced in the year as examples of the flourishing of IDEAS.

Our progress can be likened to a pot of water on a stove, a lot of heat goes into the pot for what looks like very little change and then, suddenly, it starts to boil. IDEAS has absorbed the "heat" for the past several years and now, it to, has started to "boil".

2010/11 has definitely been a year of program consolidation.

You will find much greater detail of these programs in the body of the report but I would like to highlight two activities we have been involved with.

The organization was involved in two very exciting, high profile activities during the year that not only lifted our profile but also demonstrated our ability to effectively disseminate information to target groups.

- The first Sencity Dance Party to be held in Australia attracted over 500 people from the Deaf community to a nightclub in Darling Harbour. The event featured the only Signing Hip Hop artist in the world, a vibrating dance floor and aromatherapy rooms.



- The Access All Areas Film Festival was a major event in which IDEAS provided access information prior to the event in regard to the venues to be used. We then provided assistance where necessary to audience members at the events. The festival was a great success and this coming years event has grown from four to ten venues across NSW with IDEAS again being involved.

As always, there are great challenges ahead for our country, our state, our sector and our organisation. Members of IDEAS staff and Board recently attended the National Disability and Carers Congress in Melbourne to learn more about these challenges and the current thinking on how to meet them.

One such challenge has been the new State Government's focus on developing a person centred approach to service provision. This is an exciting development which the Government hopes to introduce in a very short timeframe when considered in terms of what is required to be done for it to become a reality.

The first hurdle is the dissemination of an enormous amount of information to the key stakeholders to enable informed discussion to take place. To this end IDEAS is the perfect vehicle to deliver this information and we have already had discussions at the highest levels around our ability to assist in this exercise.

There are many groups and individuals that need to be thanked for their input into IDEAS, input that has contributed to IDEAS being in a "state of readiness" no matter what the future holds. Our thanks are extended to:

- Minister Constance and his staff and before that, Minister Primrose;
- The Department of Ageing, Disability and Home Care and the officers we deal with on a regular basis;

The companies and individuals that give generously of their time and expertise on a pro bono basis;

- Rod Sharples and Data Diction and all the supporters of Access Aware;
- The dedicated staff of IDEAS in our metropolitan, regional and Wollongong offices; and
- The Board members, who also give generously of their time and expertise.

## *Chairperson's Report con't...*

Personally, I would like to thank our Co-Managing Directors, Diana Palmer and Ken Thomson, for their outstanding contribution to IDEAS over the past twelve months. They have provided us with a sound, practical management and yet have always had an eye to the future to ensure we are abreast of all the relevant issues and positioned to address them as they impact on us.

I advise that Ken, who was an integral driving force in the establishment of IDEAS and has been in the joint management role with Diana from day one, has decided to explore career opportunities outside IDEAS and left our organisation in June. Ken leaves with our very best wishes for the future and our extreme gratitude for his involvement with IDEAS from conception to date.

I am pleased to advise also that Diana was considered an outstanding candidate for the newly created senior position of Executive Officer in the restructured organisation following Ken's resignation.

In closing, I am confident in stating that IDEAS is an innovative, relevant and effective organisation within the disability sector with the potential to seize more and more opportunities that present themselves as technology overcomes the tyranny of time and distance.



Robert Gilholme  
Chairman  
IDEAS Inc

# Financial Report

## Income and Expenditure Statement

The total income for the 2010/11 year was \$1.234 million, an increase of \$124,000 over the 2009/10 year. This is almost exclusively as a result of increases in our program funding from ADHC to cover normal consumer price index increments. An examination by income sources attributes the variations to the following categories:

	Grant Income - ADHC	\$133,000
	All Other Categories	2,000
	Sub Total	135,000
Less:	Other Income	\$6,000
	HACC Centre Reimbursements	5,000
	<b>Total</b>	<b>\$124,000</b>

The expenditure of \$1.219 million was \$98,000 more than the previous year with the main variations being:

Less:	Staff Training and Development	\$36,000
	Repairs and Maintenance	9,000
	Computer Expenses	8,000
	All Other Categories	7,000
	<b>Total</b>	<b>\$98,000</b>

As would be expected in a labour intensive service the significant cost increases were related to employment costs such as Wages, Superannuation and Client Support Services.

The increase in Insurance costs not an indication of an increase in either total coverage or premium charges but a timing issue with two years premiums being charged into the 2010/11 financial year.

## *Financial Report con't...*

Staff Training and Development costs for the year were \$9,000 which is an appropriate level of expenditure in the period.

The saving over the previous year of \$36,000 reflects the investment IDEAS made in its staff in the 2009/10 year when it introduced an initiative to ensure a base qualification for all staff which saw a significant number of staff participate in training programs.

The full year result is a surplus of \$15,000 (2009/10 deficit \$11,000). This is a pleasing result and is a quantifiable indicator of the responsible management of the organizations affairs.

### **Balance Sheet**

The Balance Sheet shows Current Assets of \$325,000 which compares with Current Liabilities of \$211,000. The excess of Current Assets over Current Liabilities of \$114,000 indicates a satisfactory liquidity position.

Net Assets at 30 June 2011 were \$206,000 which included Plant and Equipment with a net value of \$127,000.

I would like to thank our Auditor, Steven Walker, and his staff for their input into the 2010/11 Financial Statements and IDEAS own administration staff for their continued diligence in managing and reporting our financial performance throughout the year.

I thank you for your attention and invite any questions.



Robert Gilholme  
On behalf of Patricia Liang  
Treasurer.

## Executive Officer's Report



### Highlights of the year

2010-2011 has been an extremely busy year of program consolidation and activity development across the organisation, with each program and function stretching its capacity to deliver above and beyond expectations.

Strategically, the team at IDEAS NSW continued to work effectively at positioning ourselves as the leading information provider for people with disability in NSW. Strong focus was retained on implementing the annual business plan which forms part of our 3 year strategic plan 2009-2012.

Reaching the half way point of the strategic plan has been a good point to reflect on achievements to date and refocus work towards the final year and to consider our success at completing the strategic plan as proposed. Some areas of work have been more difficult to implement than others due to external challenges such as uncertainty in future funding (due to lack of three year funding contracts from our funding department in NSW) and the focus in the last year on developments in NSW Government policy direction and the proposed National Disability Insurance Scheme.

### Organisational Capability

#### Governance

During the last year the Board developed a Board succession plan and accepted 3 additional Board members.

The organisation endorsed transitioning to a Company Limited by Guarantee at the AGM held in November 2010 and this will be implemented later in 2011.

The Board engaged in two planning sessions for Access Aware and undertook some professional development with plans in place to participate in a Governance training session later in the year.



## *Executive Officer's Report con't...*

### **Management Systems and Processes**

Internal reporting mechanisms have been refined during the year and preparation began to move our client record management system to Data Diction's product called CM5. Record management systems within the organisation are continually reviewed and preparations are currently underway to upgrade the organisation wide ICT network to ensure that internal communications and record storage are as effective as possible.

### **Workforce Development**

Learning and development of our employees has always been a high priority for the organisation. This last year saw all frontline advocacy and Information team members complete a Certificate IV Community Services – Advocacy and Certificate IV Community Services – Information and Referral. This ensures our staff have the appropriate qualifications along with their extensive experience to be a highly developed team whose members are able to assist meet the service users needs where required.

In March 2011 the Board endorsed an internal restructure which refines some of the roles and positions within the organisation. As opportunities present we will move to realign our roles and positions within the organisation to meet the new structure by 2013. As at June 2011 this included the implementation of a Knowledge Management and Database Coordinator; Operations Manager and Executive Officer.

### **Providing Programs and Services**

#### **Service Access**

During 2010-2011 we have seen access to our services diversify due to the broader range of services we are providing. Increase in our attendance at community education events and more proactive means has seen an increase in the membership and newsletter subscriptions.

Access to the Infoline has resulted in conversion of some Infoline callers to individual advocacy or self advocacy development and people accessing the self advocacy projects are also accessing the information service as their knowledge and awareness of our services grows. Consolidation of our online presence particularly in social media activity of Facebook and Twitter has seen the beginning of a change in the demographics of people accessing our services.

## **Quality Assurance**

IDEAS completed all IMF Requirements in August 2010.

## **Capacity Building**

### **Strategic Positioning**

Throughout 2010-2011 IDEAS finetuned our communication processes to ensure we communicated systematically with our various stakeholders so they have a better understanding of our organisation and activities. Targeted communications with major stakeholders occurred throughout the year. These included parliamentarians, government departments, and peak organisations from within and outside the disability sector and consumer groups.

During this year a number of key events that IDEAS presented at; exhibited at or attended were held ensuring we remained informed and up to date with key developments. Included in our activities were presentations at the Inaugural Accessible Tourism Conference in New Zealand in October and the Print Round Table in Melbourne in May; exhibits at the National HACC Conference in April 2011 and Disability and Carers Congress in May 2011 and participation in the National Accessible Tourism Roundtable in June 2011.

## **Service Development**

Innovation in our delivery of services to meet our vision and mission is a constant cycle of renewal to improve the effectiveness and relevance of our service provision for people with disability. Throughout the year our team constantly review and consider improvements of current services and products and consider the addition of new processes and services to meet peoples changing needs.

2010-2012 saw us undertake new sponsorship activities: participation in SENCITY in August 2010 resulted in the addition of SMS access to our Infoline and increased access to our services by the deaf community.

Pilots for Access Aware were completed in December 2010. Reviews have since been conducted and a Business Plan for Access Aware is to be developed.

## **Networking and Partnerships**

Membership of networks and organisations we participate in include the Disability Network Forum which formed late in the year; NSW Disability Advocacy Network;

## *Executive Officer's Report con't...*

associate membership of AFDO and membership of The European Network of Accessible Tourism.

Finally, I would like to thank the IDEAS team - all our employees who have worked for IDEAS in the last 12 months - for their support and contribution, without whom we would be unable to achieve any of the goals and plans we have set.

I would also like to acknowledge the years of service Ken Thomson provided to the organisation, his knowledge and expertise played a pivotal role in the development of the organisation and assisted us to the position we are in today.

The last year has seen a number of changes in people working for the organisation, and I would like to take the opportunity to thank those staff who left the organisation during the year, for their contribution at such a vital time in our history.

I would like to pay particular respect and acknowledge the years given by Mia Toppin. Mia left IDEAS in November 2010 after giving over 15 years of service to pursue a career in teaching. Her name has been synonymous with the Newsletter of IDEAS and E-News to many thousands of people over the years across NSW and beyond. The organisation will miss her for a long time.

I would also like to acknowledge the new employees who have joined us in the last 12 months and thank them for their contribution to date. We hope they are enjoying being a part of the IDEAS team and that they will stay with us to enjoy the successes of the organisation as we continue to strive to be the leading disability information provider for people with disability. Lastly, I would also like to thank the Board for their dedication and time given to support the visions and mission of the organisation; support the work of the team and especially their support for the Executive Officer.



Diana Palmer  
Executive Officer

## Programs

### Access Aware

IDEAS is building a national comprehensive online database of accessible businesses and community facilities called Access Aware, which promotes participation in community life for people who experience access difficulties. One in four Australians have a disability or age related disability, and adding to that mix parents with prams you will find many of these people find it difficult to participate in community life due to the access barriers they face when trying to go about their daily life.

Access Aware will inform people by providing free accurate information for accessible living, business, tourism, shopping and other experiences. Directory listings will provide information on environmental access as well as facilities, parking and toilets relevant to each business, tourist attraction or community facility. Proximity to local public toilets and parking information is also available.

People seeking access information can search the Access Aware database by location, keyword or category by logging onto the IDEAS website or they can phone the IDEAS free call Disability Info Line.

During 2010-2011 IDEAS spent considerable time and effort on consolidating the directories developed for our three piloted local government areas – Waverley Council, Wagga Wagga City Council and Marrickville Council as well as conducting an evaluation and review of the pilot regions. Feedback from people with disability has been invaluable in determining the future directions for Access Aware. The outcome of the review conducted in 2011 has lead to a period of refining and further development of the database software and directory development processes.

2011-2012 will see the implementation of a new business plan taking into account the recommendations made from the reviews conducted during 2010-2011.

### Advocacy

IDEAS received funds from the NSW Government – Department of Family and Community Services – Ageing Disability and Homecare during 2010-2011 to support our advocacy program which is conducted through the Southern Highlands, Illawarra, South West Sydney and South East Sydney regions of NSW.

## Programs con't...

Our advocacy program is active in or developing a range of advocacy supports throughout these regions including:

### Brokerage for individual Advocacy

Our experienced Information and Advocacy Intake Officers on our Disability Infoline listen to the individual's issue and assess whether an independent advocate is required to resolve the issue. A number of advocacy organisations have been engaged as advocacy provider partners and are brokered for assistance when required.

Considerable effort by the Advocacy Team Leader in relation to the promotion and consolidation of the advocacy brokerage program throughout the year has increased the awareness of the programs and enabled continued negotiations with advocacy provider partners.

During 2010-2011 a total of 58 advocacy issues were brokered and 47 resolved, with 11 individual issues ongoing at the end of the year.

Advocacy Partners include PWD Australia; Multicultural Disability Advocacy Association; City and Inner West Disability Advocacy and the ACT Ageing Disability and Carer Advocacy Service.

### Self Advocacy Development – “Speak Up”

From our Wollongong office which opened in May 2010 we have begun developing a range of self advocacy development programs to support the capacity building of people with disability to enable them to speak up for themselves.

Late in 2010 we determined to ensure that our staff were appropriately qualified and experienced to assist people accessing this program. A project was developed with The Centre for Disability Studies to develop an education toolkit which could be utilised by our staff to support the facilitation of rights based workshops.





This project developed over a period of 6 months and utilised the support of a pilot self advocacy group to assist us develop the toolkit. The result has been the formation of a self advocacy group in South East Sydney called “Speak UP” which had its first meeting in June 2010.

One off rights based education sessions have been held in Yass, Wollongong and Cooma in 2010. These were developed on a client specific basis to respond to needs identified in particular communities or groups.

#### Self Advocacy Development – Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Specific

Access to our services by Aboriginal people has increased 200% during the last 12 months. During the year we have expanded our knowledge and cultural awareness by conducting cultural research and awareness training within our organisation. We engaged well known aboriginal artist Bronwyn Bancroft to design our aboriginal specific marketing collateral and developed a brochure in conjunction with advice from Uncle Lester Bostock (2010 NAIDOC Elder of the Year) and others from the Aboriginal Disability Network.

To support the dissemination of these materials and to raise awareness about our services amongst aboriginal communities we partnered with the Aboriginal Disability Network to visit a number of aboriginal communities in the Western and North Western regions of NSW.

In addition we have participated in the NSW Department of Premier and Cabinet’s Community Assistance days at a number of locations throughout NSW which has allowed us to raise awareness in the community of disability and the services available for aboriginal people with disability.

#### Self Advocacy Development-Culturally and linguistically Diverse – “Learn to Speak Up”.

In 2010-2011 we began research and development for a project to support advocacy development in a culturally and linguistically diverse community. After detailed research, the Assyrian community was identified as one of a number of emerging communities that could benefit from an advocacy development support project. The project has focussed on the Fairfield area of Western Sydney. Our Project Officer has developed effective relationships in the Assyrian community and conducted considerable planning and research for the development of a self advocacy group

## *Programs con't...*

in this community. In late June 2011 an information session was held at which 30 people from the Assyrian community attended to understand the scope of the project. Plans for the coming year include a Disability Awareness education session for Community leaders and the development of a Self Advocacy Group.

### **Community Education**

Community Education activities during 2010-2011 were numerous and varied across a range of mainstream and disability specific events.

Highlight events of the year in which we participated include:

- SENCITY – Darling Harbour August 2010
- Henty Field Day – Henty September 2010
- Nepean Disability Expo – Penrith October 2010
- International Day People with Disability Expo – Parramatta December 2010
- Disability and Carers Congress – Melbourne May 2011
- IRSA – Rosehill May 2011
- ACT Retirement and Lifestyle Expo – May 2011

We exhibited at 38 events and connected with over 3,000 individuals during the year. These connections are sincere and engaging and the individual is encouraged to talk with the IDEAS staff member in attendance about their story, their issue or their need and through active listening we can determine what assistance, support and/or information we will be able to provide.

During 2010-2011 we have seen a 30% increase in membership of IDEAS and 40% increase in Newsletter subscriptions (2200 subscribers at year end) by ensuring staff focus on the individual, their needs and the organisation's goals.

During 2010-2011 we have attended or presented at a number of forums and community events to increase the awareness of the products and services available to people with disability.

Attendance at:

- ASSID Conference – September 2010
- HACC National Conference – April 2011
- Disability and Carers Congress – May 2011
- NSW Government Live Life My Way Summit – June 2010

Presentations to:

- Inaugural New Zealand Accessible Tourism Conference – October 2010
- Riverina-Murray Regional HACC Conference – March 2011
- HACC National Conference – April 2011
- City and Inner West Consumer Forum – April 2011
- Bridging the Gap – Print Disability Roundtable – May 2011

## Information Provision

People with disability need access to accurate and relevant information to allow them to make informed decisions about matters of importance to them. The team at IDEAS is very passionate and dedicated in the role they play of enabling people with disability to have choice and control in their decision making.

The IDEAS Clearinghouse has a number of functions supporting our role as a major disability information provider in NSW. The Clearinghouse collects relevant information; collates this as accurate and accessible resources and disseminates this information through a variety of means ie our Toll free Disability Infoline; IDEAS online website; IDEAS specialist hard copy directories; IDEAS E-news and the Newsletter of IDEAS.

All Information Officers now have (or are working towards) the base qualification of Certificate IV in Community Services Information and Referral as well as Cert IV in Community Services Advocacy.

With three locations in NSW, IDEAS responds to individuals and their enquiries at their nearest location, our team have access to internal centralised databases to ensure they utilise the most up to date and comprehensive resources to respond to individuals.

The paradox of global versus local is seen keenly through our information provision. Often an individual will contact us and to enable us to respond to their query appropriately, we will need to access information that is not restricted in location or topic to their local geographic area.

Ensuring accuracy and currency of the information resources held occurs in a systematic manner and all records are checked at least annually.

## Programs con't...

The Clearinghouse team currently maintain:

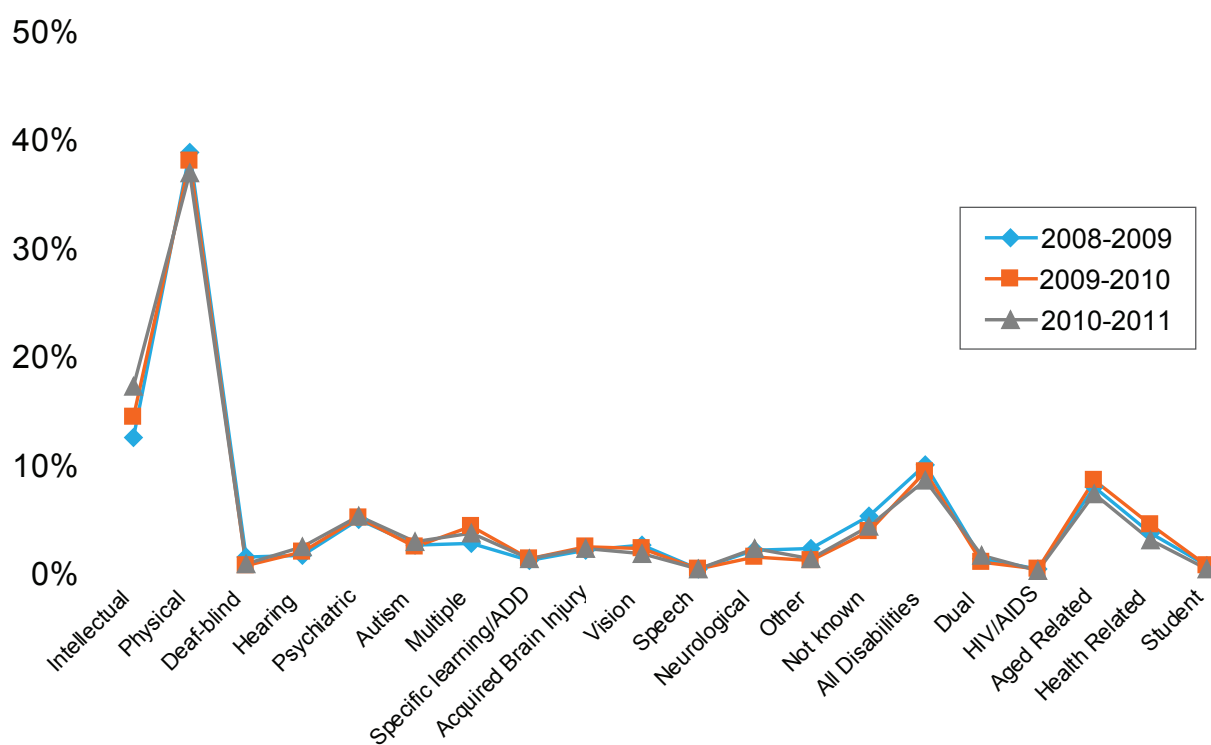
- 624 records of national equipment suppliers
- 750 records of accessible travel options
- 4,545 records of organisations providing support for people with disability

These databases are available online at [www.ideas.org.au](http://www.ideas.org.au) for people to search directly. In addition we maintain a library with a catalogue of 5,000 items.

These resources are maintained for use by our team when responding to individual's enquiries. Access to our information service has come from all our channels including social media, targeted direct mail, community education and public relations activities as well as the traditional forms of telephone, email and letter.

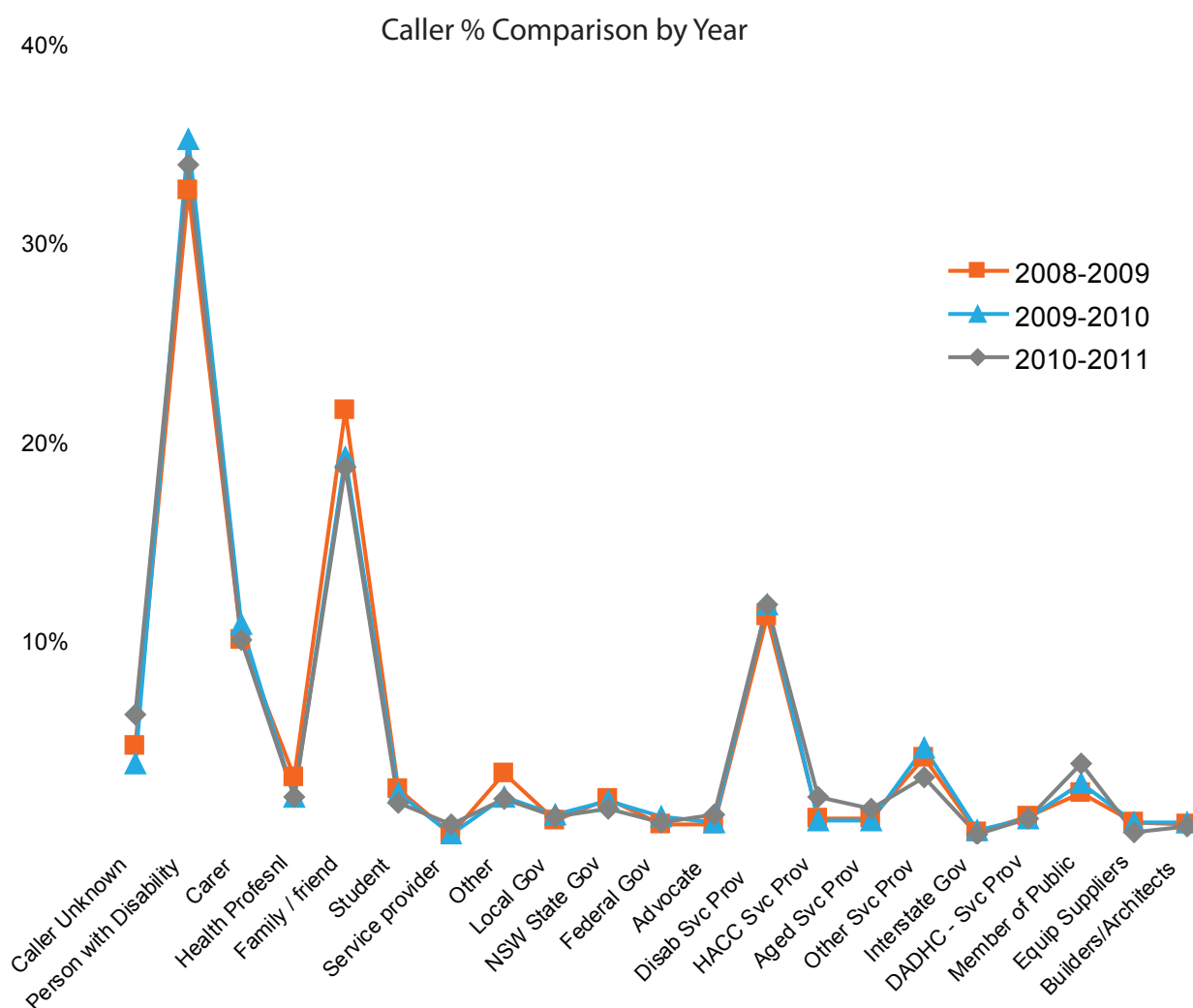
Changes in ways of accessing this information and the changing needs identified by people with disability have lead to a need to update our client management systems in order to ensure the statistics we are collecting reflect accurately the needs and demands from people with disability.

Service Users by Target Groups



“We have responded to over 12,000 enquiries from people with disability, their family, and other supporters during the course of the year. 78% being people accessing our databases online. We have responded to over 2,500 enquiries via our Disability Infoline and some 25 enquiries have arrived and been answered via our SMS line which was implemented during the year.”

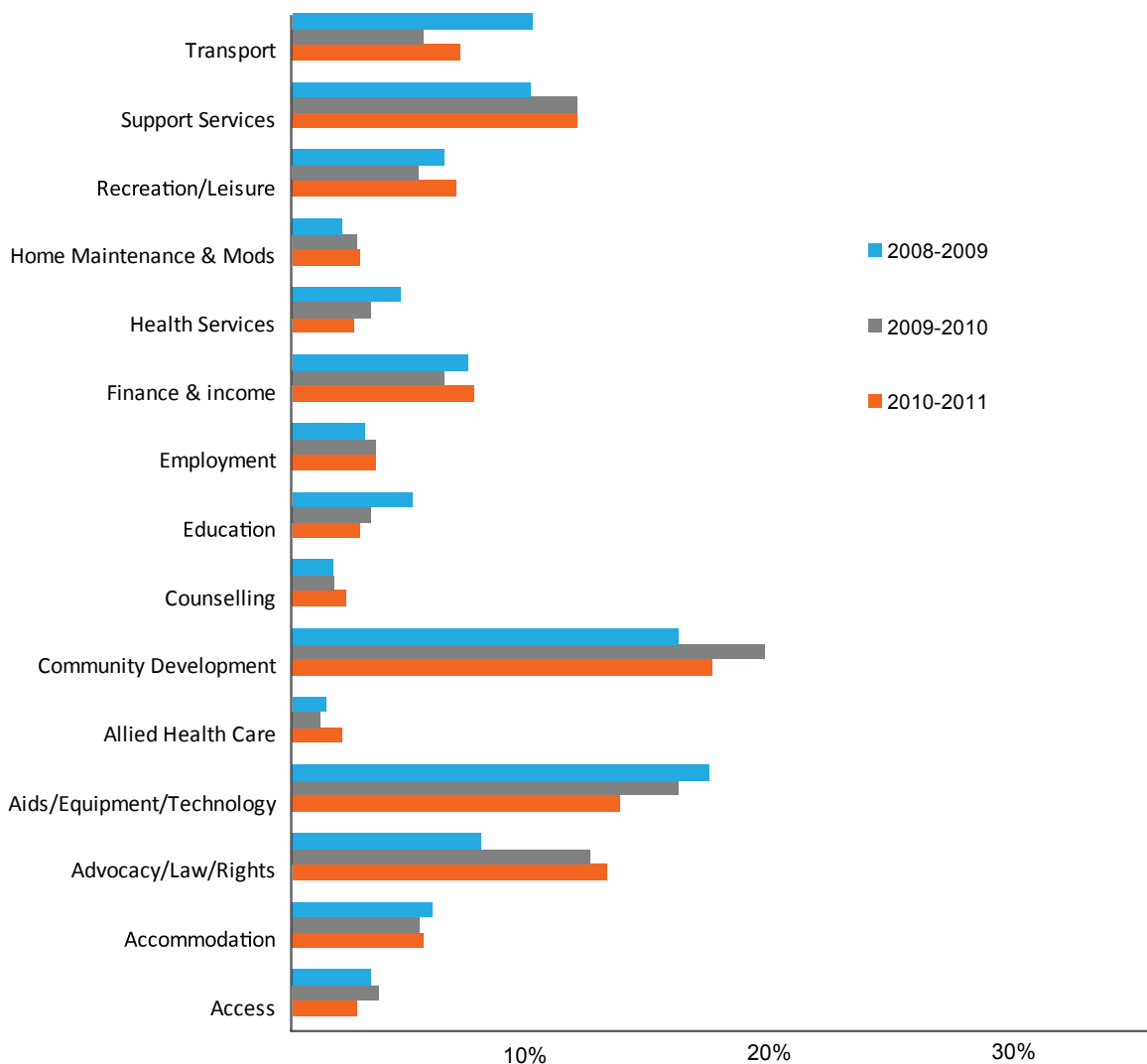
The majority of people accessing our services are people with disability looking for a range of assistance types.





## Programs con't...

Assistance Types by % Comparison



## Dissemination Activities

The provision of information is a dynamic and multi faceted process. Both reactive (eg responding to enquiries) and proactive (eg disseminating information via newsletters) processes are utilised as people access and respond to information in many different ways.

Throughout 2010-2011 we have continued to grow our interaction with and integration of social media activities into our communications and information dissemination role.

At the end of June 2011 we include in our daily routines updating access to and interaction with our Facebook page, Twitter account and Blog.

The IDEAS website has had a strong online presence for a number of years. Statistics have shown this year that through better promotion there has been an increase in people accessing the pages of our site. In the coming year we will rebuild the website in order to maintain its currency and conformity to the latest accessibility standards. In 2010-2011 we had over 69,000 unique visitors to our site.

***“The most professional / best information supplier anywhere. IDEAS has given me information support many times. Thank you.”***

## Our Supporters

Our organisation relies on generous support from a variety of people and organisations throughout each year. During 2010-2011 we would particularly like to thank the following people for their contributions to IDEAS.



### **Data Diction**

Rod Sharples, Director of Data Diction Pty Ltd and IDEAS NSW Community Business Partner. Rod's donation of funds has further supported the development of Access Aware during the last year and provided for green power at both our Tumut and Ultimo offices. Rod's in kind donation of software development has been as always of great benefit to our services.

The logo for Blake Dawson, consisting of the name 'Blake Dawson' in white serif font on a black rectangular background.

**Blake Dawson**

### **Blake Dawson**

For pro bono legal advice and provision of meeting space during the year.



### **Katopra Design and Print**

Support from Katie Clee for design and printing has been invaluable. Katie has assisted whenever needed and quite often at short notice.



*Getting information has never been easier*

**Administration**

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