

2023 - 2024 ANNUAL REPORT



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Acknowledgements



Disability Advocacy and Complaints Service of South Australia Inc. ('DACSSA') acknowledges the traditional owners of country throughout Australia and their continuing connection to land, sea and community. DACSSA offices are situated on Kurna Land. We recognise that wherever we visit to provide advocacy, that we are on stolen land.

We pay our respects to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Elders past, present and future.

We sincerely thank Ochre Dawn Creative Industries for DACSSA's featured artwork.



DACSSA celebrates the value of diversity. We are accepting, inclusive and respectful of all individuals and would like to thank all those who engaged with our service throughout the year.

We acknowledge and thank the Australian Government Department of Social Services for its ongoing funding, allowing DACSSA to provide independent advocacy services to people living with disability through the National Disability Advocacy Program (NDAP), NDIS Appeals Program and Indigenous Community Advocacy (ICA).

Thank you also to the State Government of South Australia for its funding grant(s) contributions to DACSSA during this year.

PURPOSE

Disability Advocacy and Complaints Service of South Australia Incorporated (DACSSA) is a respectful, client-focused not-for-profit organisation, operating since 1999, providing independent individual and systemic advocacy for people with disabilities, their families and carers across the lifespan. DACSSA is accredited under the National Standards for Disability Services.

DACSSA seeks to build on the individual strengths of people with disability and enable community capacity building. Our effective advocacy services act to safeguard individuals, protect human rights, and resolve disability-related issues, while also strengthening systems and linkages with government agencies and community organisations. These services also inform systemic change that brings about confidence, improved outcomes and policy decisions for Australians with disability.

We believe that every South Australian with disability has the right to be heard. We advocate for inclusion, equality, choice and social justice.

VALUES

Guiding our culture and operations:

CLIENT FOCUSED

INTEGRITY

COURAGE

RESPECT

PROGRESSIVE



CHAIRPERSON REPORT

As a member of DACSSA's Board since 2015 I have been awed by the resilience of DACSSA's staff and people working in the disability sector more broadly. I continue to be heartened by the continuous strengthening of DACSSA service delivery and acknowledge and thank the staff for their skill, expertise and commitment to continuous improvement.

DACSSA has advocated for the recognition of the significant role truly independent- advocacy plays in ensuring the human rights of people living with disability. Significant barriers and hurdles exist for this advocacy to be heard and responded to, including the lack of definition of what quality advocacy looks like and the small size of most independent advocacy organisations. These barriers also inhibit the ability of the sector to create visibility of the repeated patterns of experience of people living with disability that require system wide changes to address.

As a Board we have been committed to doing our part to advocate and address these issues and 2024 has been no different. In September 2023 the Disability Royal Commission first handed down its long-awaited report. We are thankful that the Commission recognised the fundamental place of independent advocacy in the disability support system. A commitment by the Australian Government of increased funding to the sector would also be most welcomed. This will go part way to providing more people living with disability access to independent advocacy to ensure their basic human rights are met.

In 2023 we were joined by three new Board members, Joanne Blessing, Harshall Dave and Antonia Metris bringing new perspectives and skills into our volunteer Board.

I would like to acknowledge the outstanding contribution of Board member Kara Birch to DACSSA over the last 10 years. Kara's term on the DACSSA Board will come to an end in October 2024 and she has been a tireless and active contributor to DACSSA. Her expertise and commitment will not be easily replaced.

As I complete my term as Chairperson, also in October 2024, the value our community receives from the efforts of volunteer Boards for many not-for-profit organisations that deliver essential services could not be more visible. I will be forever thankful for my experience as the DACSSA Chairperson, and the opportunity to contribute to bringing about change for people living with disability.

Current Board: Caroline Batty, Kara Birch, Jo Blessing and Harshall Dave



Caroline Batty | Chairperson | DACSSA

CEO REPORT

It has been a year of anticipation— where we, along with the entire disability sector, have been waiting on government responses to the DRC recommendations and the NDIS review commensurate with the scale of violence, abuse, neglect and exploitation of people with disability reported in submissions. Both reviews identified a critical need for significant ecosystem reform involving a whole of government integrated response to improve the life outcomes of people with disability.

The importance of independent disability advocacy as part of the ecosystem was also recognised. This is very welcome –after many years of being underfunded and overstretched, with it being estimated that at least every second person is being turned away due to a lack of available funding to meet demand.

DACSSA is proud to have contributed to shaping the recommendations through various submissions, systemic advocacy at all levels of government, and being a Board member of Disability Advocacy Network Australia (DANA). 2023/24 also resulted in the formalisation of a collaboration of all the independent disability advocacy (IDA) organisations that are National Disability Advocacy Program (NDAP) funded and accredited in South Australia - referred to as the IDA Collective. The purpose is to enhance the focus on the unmet need for independent disability advocacy in South Australia.

At a service delivery level, there was a significant growth in complexities and challenges of providing support, both in terms of individual presentation (particularly an increase in mental health) and systemic issues such as housing, education, NDIS, and health. DACSSA's independent advocacy has required more intensive support and is taking longer to resolve than has been needed in the past. This is expected to continue into the 2024/25 financial year. Despite this, DACSSA has delivered over 80% client satisfaction across its programs and maintained its reputation as a high-performing, best-practice, and ethical NDAP provider with a highly successful maintenance audit.

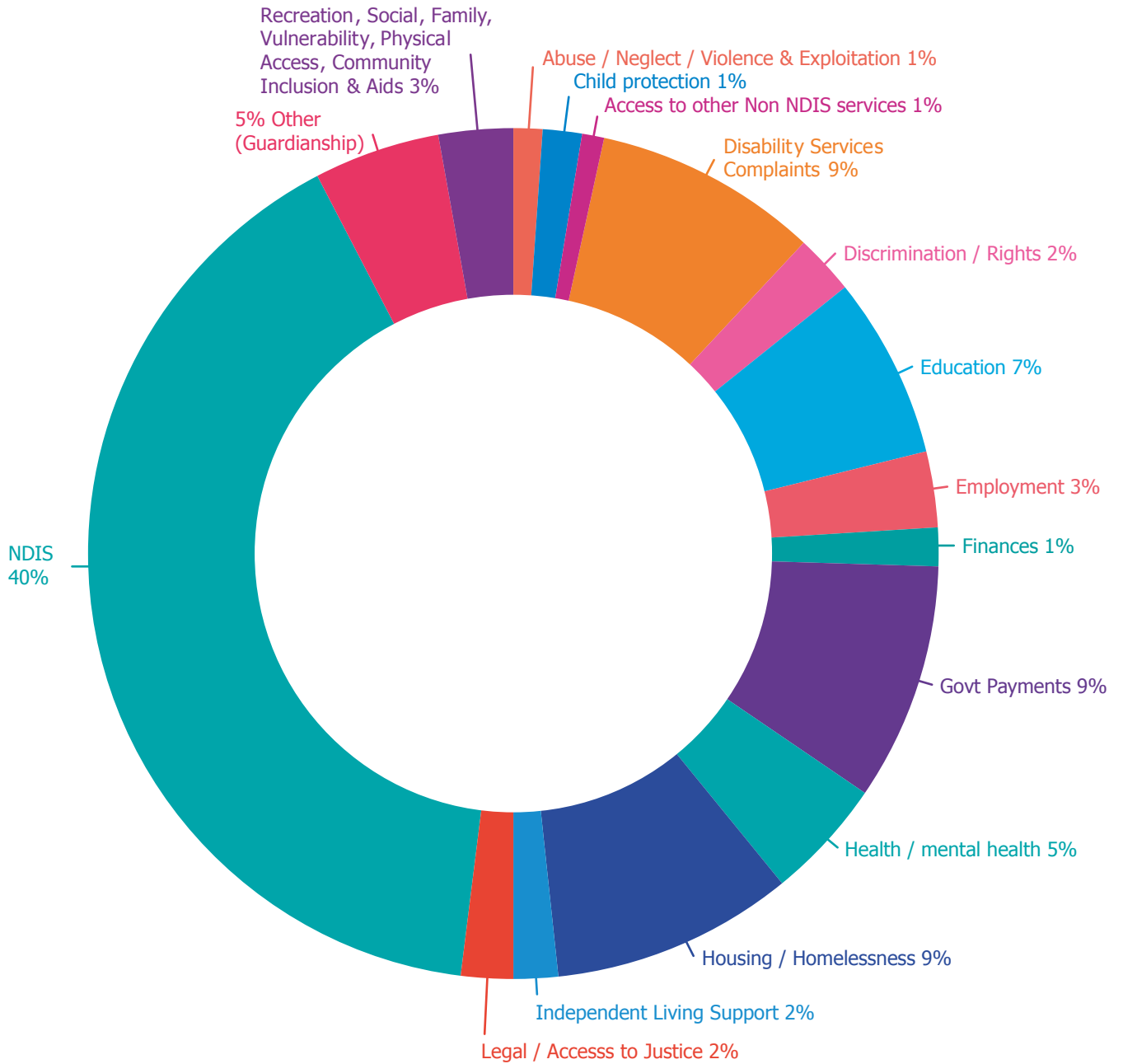
Another highlight was implementing the inaugural Indigenous Community Advocacy program funded by the Department of Social Services. This has improved how DACSSA engages with First Nations communities and related organisations. We look forward to continuing the program in 2024/25.

Our focus has been on continued internal restructuring and systemising processes to enable the majority of resources to be focused directly on advocacy activities and to be in a position to scale. Significant work occurred to maintain staff well-being and resilience to ensure that our level of quality support continues..

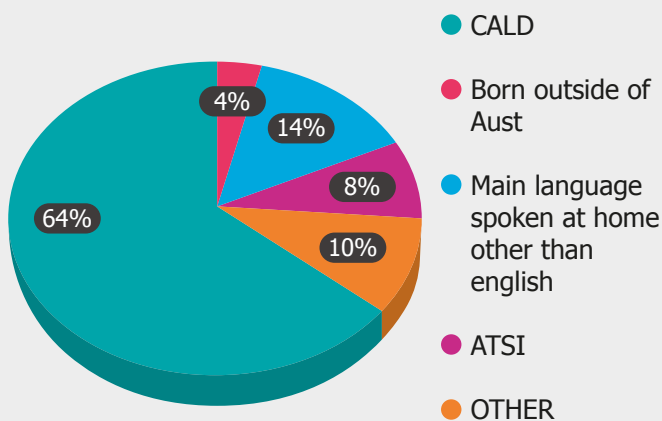
I extend my sincerest gratitude to all those who have contributed to achieving DACSSA's purpose - our funding body, the Department of Social Services, our grant provider, the Department of Human Services, our valued network of trusted stakeholders, our dedicated Board and the lifeblood of the organisation, our staff, for their professionalism, expertise and unwavering commitment. As always, exceptional thanks to our valued clients for inspiring us to continue to achieve.

I look forward to the announcements from government of what impactful reforms the new financial year should bring to support richly deserving people with disability to have better outcomes.

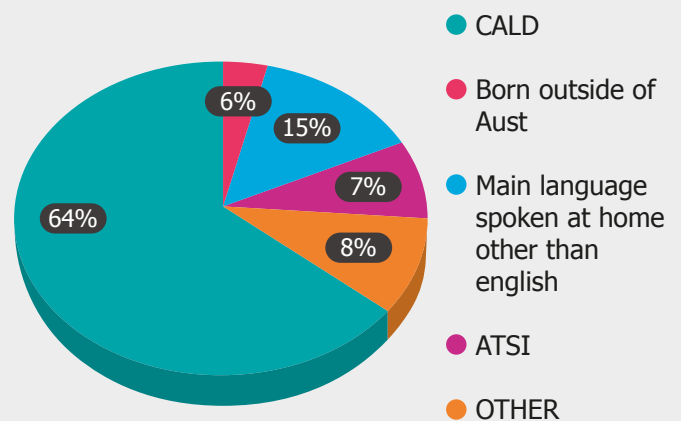
SERVICE DELIVERY



NDAP Client Profile



NDAP Appeals Client Profile



FINANCIAL SUMMARY

Statement of Profit or Loss

& other Comprehensive Income for the year ended 30 June 2024	Note	2024 \$	2023 \$
Revenue	2	1,067,222	1,028,023
Employee Benefits		(759,501)	(743,597)
Depreciation and Amortisation Expense		(7,516)	(9,218)
Rent		(45,678)	(45,038)
Motor Vehicle Expenses		(1,424)	(1,171)
Other Operating Costs		(172,152)	(164,570)
Surplus / (loss) for the year	3	80,950	64,429

*If you would like to view the full Financial Statements for the year ended 30 June 2024
please contact DACSSA or visit the ACNC website.*



FINANCIAL SUMMARY

Statement of Financial Position

30 June 2024	Note	2024 \$	2023 \$
Assets			
Current Assets			
Cash and other equivalents	4	520,760	565,741
Trade Debtors		660	3,850
GST Receivable		8,564	8,285
Prepayments		15,229	25,995
TOTAL CURRENT ASSETS		545,213	603,870
Non-Current Assets			
Property, Plant and Equipment	5	27,022	27,855
TOTAL NON-CURRENT ASSETS		27,022	27,855
TOTAL ASSETS		572,235	631,725
Liabilities			
Current Liabilities			
Trade and other payables	6	70,200	29,024
Employee Provisions	7	41,981	33,609
Income in Advance		159,505	355,188
TOTAL CURRENT LIABILITIES		271,685	417,821
Non-Current Liabilities			
Employee Provisions		19,770	14,075
Total Non-Current Liabilities		19,770	14,075
TOTAL LIABILITIES		291,456	431,896
NET ASSETS		280,779	199,830
Accumulated surplus		280,780	199,830
TOTAL MEMBER FUNDS		280,780	199,830

If you would like to view the full Financial Statements for the year ended 30 June 2024 please contact DACSSA or visit the ACNC website.

TESTIMONIALS

The advocate was sensitive to disability needs in general and had a great understanding of barriers people face every day.



I was never made to feel like I hadn't tried enough, or the problem was me/I was being unreasonable which is so often the case.

I really did appreciate the service. Having support meant a lot. I really felt heard and listened to. Thank you.



Having the advocate handle my case with understanding and compassion was such a relief as my journey that led me here was very disheartening & frustrating. Thank you.

The advocate helped my stress levels about self managing & made me feel more confident with their knowledge of it all. Things made more sense.



The advocate rapidly engaged with our issues which were time sensitive & quickly distilled how DACSSA could assist.

My advocate supported me through the process, was patient, compassionate & non-judgmental. I felt I could be honest & open.



KEY ACHIEVEMENTS



- Effective delivery of person-centered, culturally aware, trauma-informed advocacy services, despite the increase in complexity and time required per file due to the external environment, with a minimum 80% client satisfaction of positive completion of individual advocacy goals to:
 - Address issues of abuse towards individuals with disability.
 - Raise awareness and educate people with disability about access and rights to safety and crisis services.
 - Navigate complex systems and services to support in mitigating risk and preventing abuse and harm.
- Build and maintain strong stakeholder relationships to support raising community awareness and understanding around disability-related issues with a range of organisations and services.
- National and state-level systemic advocacy to shape social policy and law reform in domains such as Disability Royal Commission recommendations, Foundational Supports, Education, Natural Disasters Disability Act, NDIS Review, transport, and justice.
- Building a well-being and resilient diverse team of advocates.
- National and State level advocacy regarding the critical importance of Independent Disability Advocacy. This includes in the role as an elected Board member of Disability Advocacy Network Australia (DANA).
- Service delivery of the Indigenous Community Advocacy program improving how DACSSA engages with First Nations communities and related organisations.
- A highly successful maintenance audit retaining its reputation as a high-performing, best-practice, and ethical NDAP provider.
- NDIS Appeals Advocates have resolved all, bar one of the external reviews, without recourse to a final hearing.
- Formalisation and working with a collaboration of all the independent disability advocacy (IDA) organisations that are National Disability Advocacy Program (NDAP) funded and accredited in South Australia, referred to as the IDA Collective.
- Joint Submission with First People Disability Network of issues with SA Correctional Services.
- Submission to the Inquiry on a SA Human Rights Act outlining issues relating to DACSSA Clients.
- Presented at National Conference Disability Care – Quality, Safety and Reform (Melbourne) addressing Analysing the Future of the NDIS.

THANKS

We would like to thank you for your support over the past 12 months. Your support enables us to achieve our purpose of advocating for inclusion, equality, choice and social justice.

- Adult Safeguarding Unit
- Australian Federation of Disability Organisations
- Barossa Disability and Inclusion Planning (DIAP) Group
- Courts Administration Authority
- Department for Child Protection
- Department for Education
- Department for Infrastructure and Transport
- Department of Human Services
- Disability Advocacy National Australia
- Equality Lawyers
- Federal Government Department of Social Services
- First Peoples Disability Network
- Flinders University 'Growing Up Well' Advisory Group
- Justice and Equity Centre
- National Disability Insurance Agency
- NDIS Quality and Safeguards Commission
- NDIS Review Panel
- Office of the Public Advocate
- Public Trustee
- Reconciliation SA
- Relationships Australia
- SA Law Reform Institute
- South Australia Civil and Administrative Appeals Tribunal
- The Difava Group
- The Disability Royal Commission
- Tiraapendi Wodli





Please note, most imagery is stock

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