

# 2024 - 2025 ANNUAL REPORT



(08) 7122 6030  
admin@dacssa.org.au  
www.dacssa.org.au



## 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

This has been a year of change and growth. I would like to begin by thanking the outgoing Board, including Caroline Batty, Kara Birch, Antonia Mertiris and Harshal Dave, for their contribution and support during a time of transition.

DACSSA continues to deliver more individual advocacy than we are funded for. We know that we cannot meet all the unmet demand for support, particularly with the significant changes in how the NDIS operates and the impact it is having. We are not alone - this is a pressure being felt by all NDAPs across the country.

We are working hard to make our budget go further by finding new and practical ways to deliver services. This includes group sessions, and building partnerships that help us support more people in meaningful ways.

The next 12-24 months will be crucial as the Commonwealth reviews how NDAPs will be funded and operate. Consultations are already underway, and DACSSA will continue to play an active role in helping to shape the outcome.

While our focus is always on our clients, we achieve far more than our size and budget would suggest because of the commitment, skill, and energy of our staff. Their dedication sits at the heart of everything we do, and together we continue to make a real difference in the lives of people who seek our support during some of their most challenging times.

A special thank you to our talented Board Tania Hayward, Joanne Blessing, Luke Dale, Matt Fabri, Tiffany Allen and Natalie Morris who generously volunteer their time and skills, and our CEO, Jenny Karavolos whose leadership brings it all together.

I commend this Annual Report to you and thank you for your ongoing support.

Board: Peter Hoppo, Tania Hayward, Joanne Blesing, Luke Dale, Matt Fabri, Tiffany Allen and Natalie Morris



Peter Hoppo | Chairperson | DACSSA

## CEO REPORT

We are in unprecedented times. The environment in 2024/25 has shifted rapidly from the DRC and NDIS reviews into an intense period of short-turnaround consultations across the disability sector, alongside the introduction of new NDIS legislation. This has created considerable uncertainty, mistrust and fear, particularly as many of the systemic failures and accountability gaps identified in the reviews continue to affect people with disability.

The introduction of the new NDIS legislation in October 2024 has resulted in a staggering 300% increase in demand for NDIS Appeals—placing further pressure on our already under-resourced independent disability advocacy services. At the same time, we have seen marked increases in complaints related to education and employment, despite heightened awareness and commitments from the South Australian Government. This has been compounded by the rising complexity of cases, with more clients presenting with mental health concerns and facing systemic barriers tied to cost of living, housing and health.

These trends are expected to continue as major reforms—including the new NDIS Planning Framework and Thriving Kids initiative—progress towards implementation from July 2026. The scale and pace of change remind us how essential strong, independent advocacy is to ensuring that people with disability are both protected and heard during periods of transition.

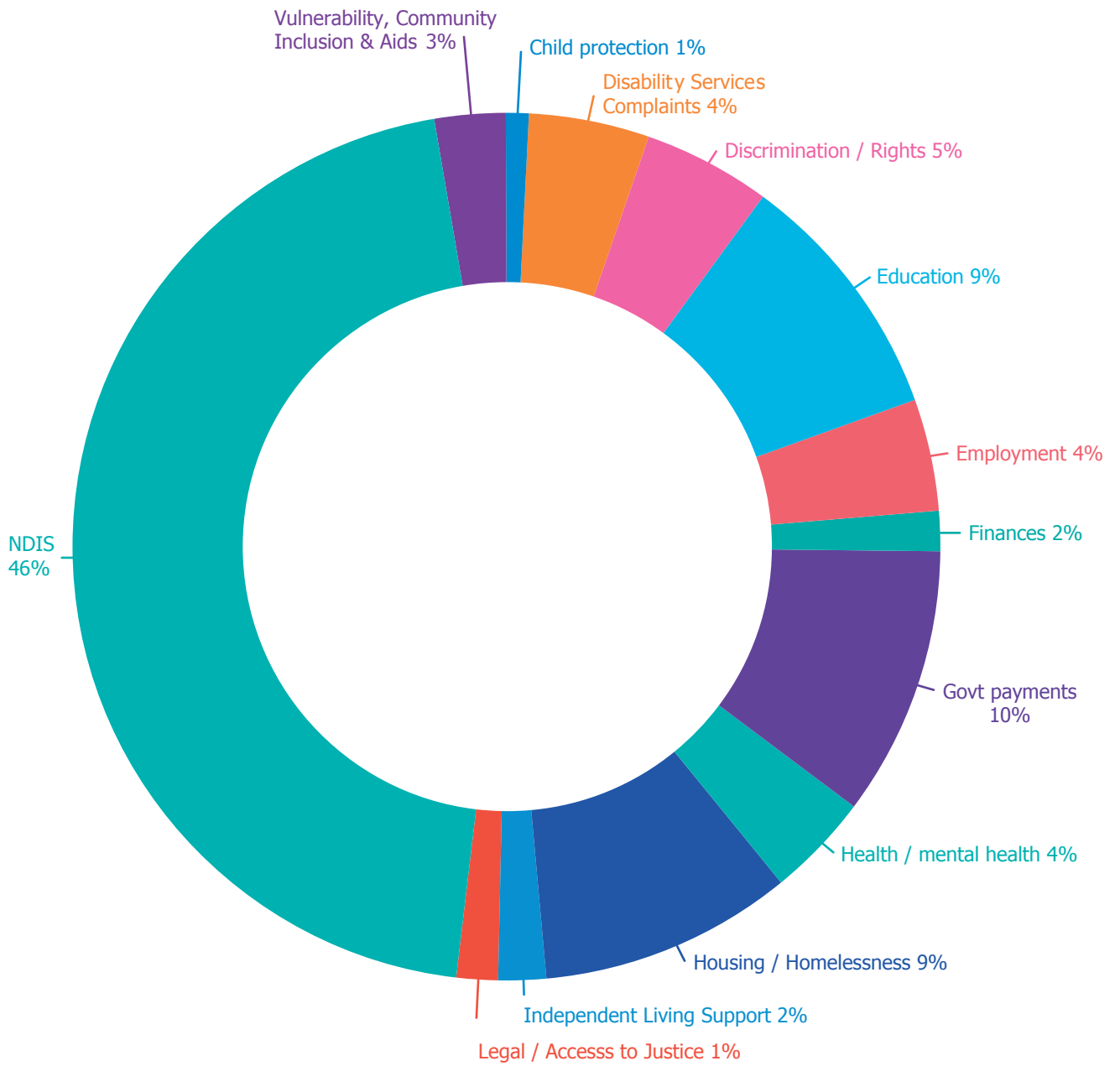
Throughout this uncertainty and amid significant leadership changes across government, the NDIA and the wider sector, DACSSA has remained grounded in its purpose. While the delay of Disability Royal Commission transition funding until 2026–27 has added further pressure, we have continued to operate with strong governance, financial stability and consistently high levels of client satisfaction.

We delivered and exceeded our commitments across both individual and systemic advocacy, contributing to national reform. Our major recertification audit, completed with no nonconformances, reaffirmed DACSSA's standing as a trusted, ethical and high-performing NDAP provider.

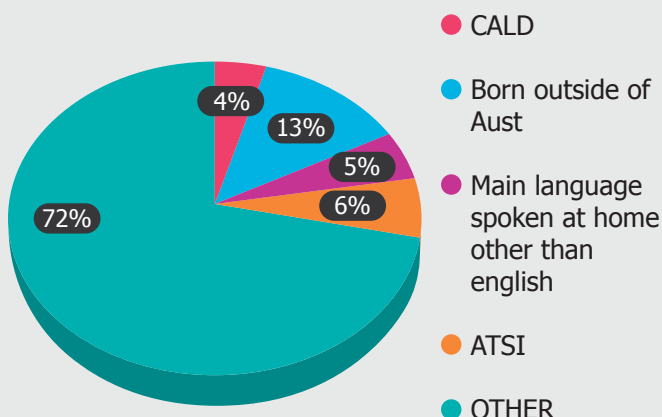
As we look ahead, DACSSA will continue to advocate for systems that uphold the rights, dignity and inclusion of people with disability. We will strengthen partnerships, invest in improvements that enhance our capacity and maintain a clear focus on ensuring advocacy remains accessible to those who need it most—particularly during this period of profound change.

I want to express my deepest appreciation to our staff, Board, funders, partners and, above all, our clients. Your courage, resilience, professionalism and trust are central to everything we do. In a time defined by sweeping reforms and limited resources, your unwavering commitment ensures DACSSA continues to stand as a strong, independent voice for people with disability—and remains ready to meet the challenges and opportunities the coming years will bring.

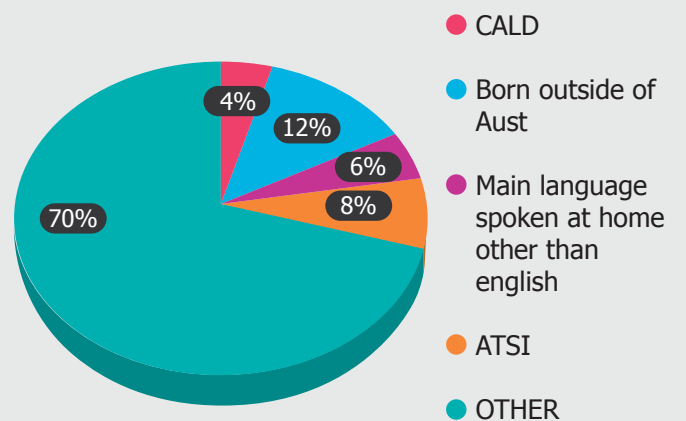
# SERVICE DELIVERY



**NDAP Client Profile**



**NDIS Appeals Client Profile**



# FINANCIAL SUMMARY

## Statement of Profit or Loss

<b>&amp; other Comprehensive Income for the year ended 30 June 2025</b>	<b>2025 \$</b>	<b>2024 \$</b>
Revenue	1,077,686	1,067,222
Employee Expenses	(737,875)	(759,501)
Depreciation Expense	(5,155)	(7,516)
Rent	(47,530)	(45,678)
Other Operating Costs	(208,950)	(173,576)
Surplus / (loss) for the year	78,177	80,950

*If you would like to view the full Financial Statements for the year ended 30 June 2025 please contact DACSSA or visit the ACNC website.*



# FINANCIAL SUMMARY

## Statement of Financial Position

30 June 2025 Assets	2025 \$	2024 \$
<b>Current Assets</b>		
Cash and cash equivalents	489,903	520,760
Debtors and other receivables		660
GST Receivable	6,666	8,564
Prepayments	16,643	15,230
<b>TOTAL CURRENT ASSETS</b>	<b>513,212</b>	<b>545,213</b>
<b>Non-Current Assets</b>		
Property, Plant and Equipment	21,868	27,022
<b>TOTAL NON-CURRENT ASSETS</b>	<b>21,868</b>	<b>27,022</b>
<b>TOTAL ASSETS</b>	<b>535,080</b>	<b>572,235</b>
<b>Liabilities</b>		
<b>Current Liabilities</b>		
Trade creditors & accruals	44,777	70,201
Provisions for long service leave	28,509	41,980
Income in Advance	88,331	159,505
<b>TOTAL CURRENT LIABILITIES</b>	<b>161,616</b>	<b>271,686</b>
<b>Non-Current Liabilities</b>		
Employee Provisions	14,506	19,770
<b>TOTAL NON-CURRENT LIABILITIES</b>	<b>14,506</b>	<b>19,770</b>
<b>TOTAL LIABILITIES</b>	<b>176,122</b>	<b>291,456</b>
<b>NET ASSETS</b>	<b>358,957</b>	<b>280,780</b>
Accumulated funds	358,957	280,780
<b>TOTAL MEMBER FUNDS</b>	<b>358,957</b>	<b>280,780</b>

If you would like to view the full Financial Statements for the year ended 30 June 2025 please contact DACSSA or visit the ACNC website.

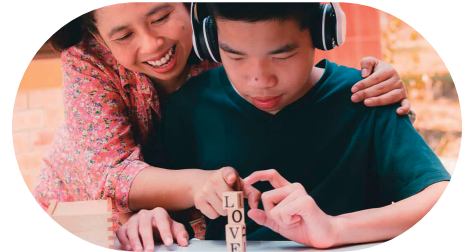
# TESTIMONIALS

"So grateful for all your help (for NDIS Access) the quality of advocacy provided was excellent. It was client-focused, respectful, progressive and done with integrity."



"I wanted to take a moment to express my appreciation for your support throughout this case. Your commitment to social justice and advocacy has been truly commendable."

"I was treated like a real human being. [Advocate] was very professional at their job, very courteous and went out of their way to help me."



"I wanted to thank you for your help and support along the way. You were truly amazing and I am very grateful."

"Incredibly helpful, I am literally breaking down both mentally and physically and [Advocate] saved my life. I still have a claim to fight but I know my rights much better now."



"The advocacy service is invaluable, was a saviour for me acting as a Guardian for my brother [Client]."

"When you feel that your voice is not heard, having DACSSA advocacy is like suddenly being given a megaphone and being heard. It also gives hope again."



# KEY ACHIEVEMENTS



- DACSSA's major **Recertification Audit was successfully completed with no nonconformances**. Key points reflected in the audit report included: participants/families interviewed said their advocate was "amazing", "engaged on every level to ensure they were supported" and "went above and beyond their expectations". The audit team acknowledged DACSSA's management of the waitlist and commended DACSSA's exceptional communication throughout the client experience. The presence of clients, the Board and the CEO at both the opening and closing meetings was noteworthy. The level of engagement demonstrated upholding the principles of transparency, accountability and continuous improvement within DACSSA.
- Continued **innovation and systemisation** of internal procedures to strengthen consistency, efficiency and outcomes.
- Maintained a **consistent level of monthly advocacy support**, despite significantly increased case complexity and time required per matter.
- Improved **service delivery with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander clients** through the Indigenous Community Advocacy program that enables the provision of culturally appropriate and effective support.
- Multiple external lawyers have complimented NDIS Appeals advocates on their knowledge, understanding, dedication and support of clients through the appeal process.
- Delivered **systemic advocacy** across multiple state and national reform agendas, highlighting the critical role of independent disability advocacy and the need for increased funding to meet growing unmet demand.
- CEO continued to serve as a **Board member and Treasurer of DANA**, contributing South Australian insights and expertise to national disability advocacy policy discussions.
- Board refresh and expansion to six members, enhancing governance capability, sector expertise and strategic oversight.

# 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.

- Aboriginal Legal Rights Movement
- Australian Federation of Disability Organisations (AFDO)
- Barossa Disability and Inclusion Planning (DIAP) Group
- Blue Knot Foundation
- Carers SA
- Community Health
- Consumers Courts Administration Authority
- Department of Social Services (Federal)
- Department of Human Services (DHS SA)
- Disability Advocacy Network Australia (DANA)
- First Peoples Disability Network
- Hutt St Centre
- Independent Disability Advocacy Collective of SA
- Joint Standing Committee NDIS Capability and Culture
- Justice and Equity Centre
- Law Society SA
- Legal Services Commission SA
- Multicultural Communities Council SA
- Natalie Wade NDIS Quality and Safeguards
- National Disability Services (NDS)
- Nunkuwarrin Yunti SA
- Office for Autism
- Office for Women
- Port Pirie Council
- Relationships Australia SA
- SA Law Reform Institute
- Social Development Committee of South Australian Parliament
- Human Rights Act
- The National Centre for Disability Advocacy
- Tiraapendi Wodli





Please note, most imagery is stock

(08) 7122 6030  
admin@dacssa.org.au  
www.dacssa.org.au

# 2024 - 2025 ANNUAL REPORT

