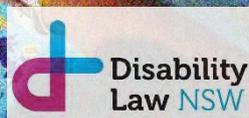


# ANNUAL REPORT

2020/2021



## Advocacy Law Alliance Inc.

Head Office: 408 King Newcastle West NSW Australia 2302  
phone: +61 (0)2 4924 3599  
email: [ala@advocacylaw.org.au](mailto:ala@advocacylaw.org.au)  
[www.advocacylaw.org.au](http://www.advocacylaw.org.au)

ALA provides high quality disability and legal advocacy and support to people in need across NSW, with a commitment to servicing regional and remote communities. Our focus is to empower clients to navigate the legal and social systems and achieve fair outcomes in the pursuit of their goals.

## **Contents**

<b>Advocacy Law Alliance People</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>Chairperson's Report</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>Treasurer's Report</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>CEO's Report</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>Disability Advocacy NSW</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>Mid North Coast Legal Centre</b>	<b>29</b>
<b>Disability Law NSW</b>	<b>48</b>

## Background of the Organisation

### The story of Advocacy Law Alliance began in Tamworth and Newcastle NSW Australia in 1985.

In Tamworth a small group of locals set up an association to advocate for people with an intellectual disability (Citizen Advocacy Northwest). At the same time in Newcastle a self-advocacy association started in Newcastle. In 1994, Disability Advocacy Service Hunter (DASH) was established in Newcastle to advocate for all people with a disability and mental illness. In 2006, DASH and Advocacy Northwest joined forces to become Disability Advocacy NSW (DA) and gradually expanded to cover the Mid North Coast region.

Mid North Coast advocates found that the region was one of the few in NSW that did not have a community legal centre that could ensure disadvantaged people (including people with a disability) get fair access to justice. DA advocates worked over several years with local groups to research legal needs and gather relevant evidence to show that a community legal centre should be based on the Mid North Coast. In 2010 the Commonwealth and NSW governments offered funds to establish a community legal centre in Port Macquarie. Mid North Coast Legal (MNCLC) Centre opened in 2011.



To reflect the diversity of the services it provided and the alliance between legal and social advocacy, Disability Advocacy NSW changed its name to Advocacy Law Alliance Inc. and registered the business names *Mid North Coast Community Legal Centre* and *Disability Advocacy NSW*.

In 2016 Disability Information and Advocacy Service (Bathurst) joined to become DA's new Central West region. About the same time, DA opened a new office in Parramatta and Lower Blue Mountains to service the Sydney West region. DA also established offices in Dubbo and Broken Hill to better service remote regional populations.

In 2019 Mid North Coast Legal Centre received additional state funding and opened a second office in Coffs Harbour. It now covers MidCoast (Taree), Port Macquarie-Hastings, Kempsey, Nambucca, Bellingen and Coffs Harbour (to Woolgoolga) local government areas.

In 2019 DA began supporting people to be involved in the Disability Royal Commission and in 2020 MNCLC employed a disability law specialist solicitor to assist DA clients in all DA regions across NSW. This service has grown to become Disability Law NSW [www.dlnsw.org.au](http://www.dlnsw.org.au)

*We acknowledge all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as the traditional custodians of the land and pay our respects to Elders past, present and emerging.*



## Our Vision

All people experiencing disadvantage have a right to equality, fairness, and a good quality of life.

## Our Mission

ALA provides high quality social/legal advocacy and support to people in need across NSW, with a commitment to servicing regional and remote communities. Our focus is to empower clients to navigate the legal and social systems and achieve fair outcomes in the pursuit of their goals.

## Our Values



**Trustworthy** - we are committed to an independent, professional and ethical approach in all our dealings with clients and stakeholders.



**Persistent** – we are committed to strong advocacy and support for those in need and recognise this involves persistence when navigating the system.



**Empathic** – we acknowledge that people experience difficult times in their lives and recognise support can have a positive impact.



**Innovative** – we believe in continually striving to improve.

## Our Strategic Goals (2020/23):

1. Deliver consistently high standards of client service.

2. Strengthen workplace culture and ensure a safe and culturally diverse workplace.
3. Capitalise on funding opportunities to better meet client needs.
4. Continue to strengthen collaboration between internal service arms.
5. Enhance our leadership and management capabilities.
6. Utilise our influence as a lead agency to inform government priorities on disability and legal advocacy.

## Funding

### Disability Advocacy NSW

*Department of Social Services (DSS) – Advocacy, NDIS Appeals, Disability Royal Commission and Decision Support*

*NSW Department of Community and Justice - Advocacy*

*Legal Aid NSW - Hunter – Cooperative Legal Service Delivery Project*

*icare – advocacy for people in the lifetime care and support scheme*

### Mid North Coast Legal Centre

*Commonwealth Attorney General's Department  
Community Legal Centres Program, Legal Aid NSW  
Multicultural NSW  
Womens NSW*

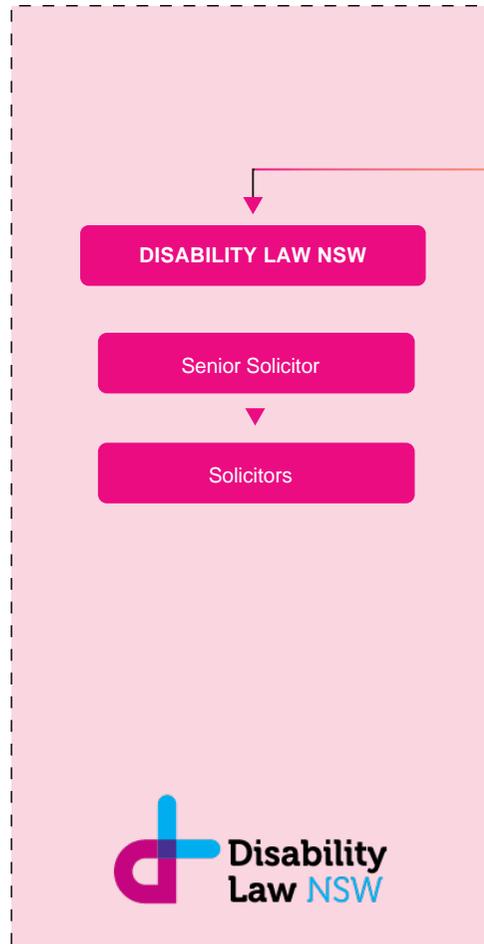
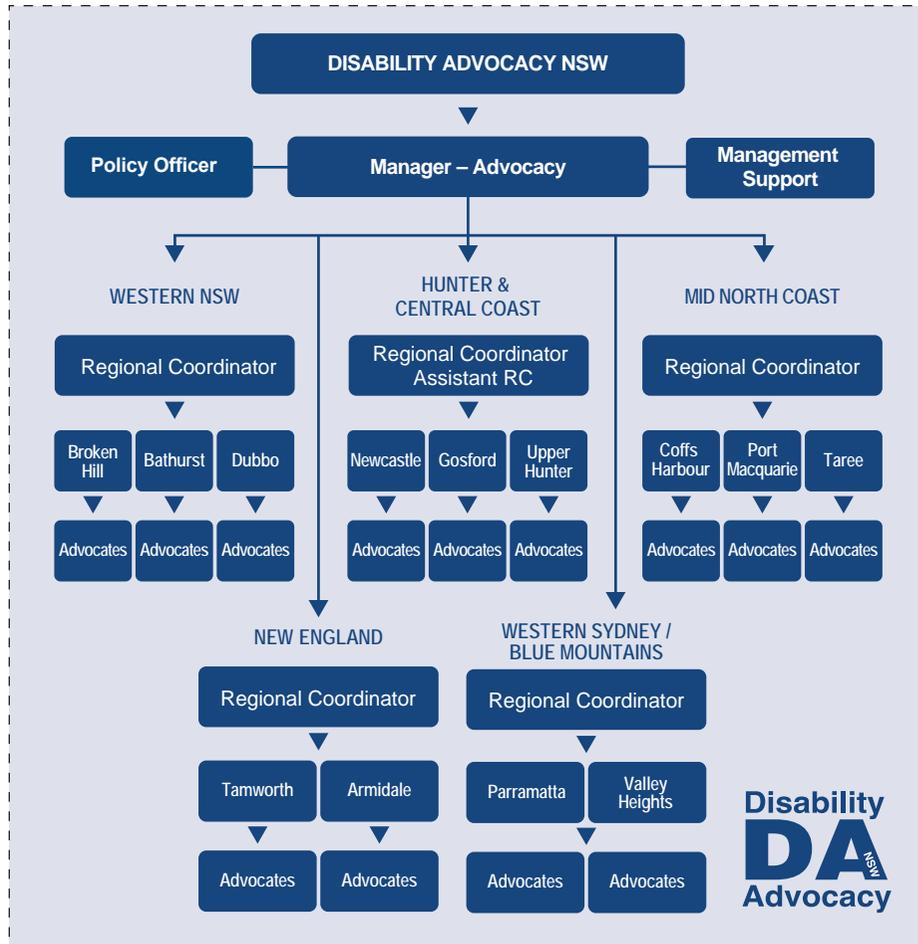
**ALA THANKS ALL OF THESE ORGANISATIONS FOR THEIR SUPPORT THIS YEAR.**



# Organisational Overview

## Advocacy Law Alliance Inc.

2021



# ALA People

## ALA Board



**GAYLE BROWN**  
Chairperson

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I retired in March 2012 after over 41 years as a Federal public servant, the last 20 as a Senior Executive. During this time, I worked in several Departments, in a range of administrative and managerial roles, in Melbourne, Sydney and Canberra. My last position involved managing over 1,000 staff in five different locations, and an annual budget of over \$85 million. I have a Law degree from Macquarie University and a Master of Business Administration degree from Monash University. As a retiree now living in Port Stephens, I see my role on the Board as providing me with the opportunity to contribute to ALA's important work using the skills and experience, I developed during my career.



**TODD CRANDELL**  
Deputy Chairperson

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I have Diplomas in Nursing and Mental Health and also a Certificate 4 in Governance plus other fields. Whilst I work as an Enrolled Nurse in Mental Health in Tamworth, I also have an adult son with special needs and have developed a thorough understanding of the NDIS process and the frustration people can experience. Living with a child with disability has given me insights to the issues faced by parents, carers, and the people themselves both in society and from the community. I have a strong motivation for advocacy and equal rights for those with a disability.



**JACLYNE FISHER**  
Secretary

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I retired from fulltime work at Port Macquarie-Hastings Council in October 2014.

During my five years with Council I worked as the Group Manager Community Engagement and Planning for two years and the Group Manager Community Development for three years. These responsibilities included developing and implementing the integrated planning and reporting framework at Council, implementing community engagement, communications and customer service as well as managing the libraries, community grants program, social planning and a range of community development functions for Council. Prior to working at Council, I was a Senior Executive with the Australian Customs and Border Protection Service for over 10 years working in various regions in Australia, as well as working with the Australian Taxation Office for two years with extensive experience in managing diverse operational teams to deliver outcomes. I also worked with Ernst and Young as an indirect taxation senior manager. I hold a Bachelor of Commerce from the UNSW and a Masters of Business Administration from the University of Queensland/Mt Eliza Business School. I have also undertaken training in social planning at the University of Technology NSW and community engagement with IAP2.



**HAYDEN ASPER**  
Treasurer

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I am a professional member of the Chartered Accountants Australia & New Zealand and the Australian Restructuring and Turnaround Association, and hold a Bachelor of Commerce, majoring in financial and management accounting. I place great value on the work ALA does and feel privileged to be part of that work.

## Board Members

### Joseph Popov

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I am 25 years old and have Cerebral Palsy. I have just graduated from a Bachelor of Social Science (majoring in Human Services) and am in my penultimate year of a Bachelor of Laws/Diploma of Legal Practice. I have also commenced a Graduate Certificate of Workforce Diversity and Inclusion. Currently, I have interned with DANSW since 2018, making me more aware of the issues facing people with disabilities. I am also the Vice President and peer mentor of Community Disability Alliance Hunter (CDAH), a peer led disability organisation that aims to help people with disabilities achieve their goals. As a CDAH representative, I have represented the organisation on the City of Newcastle's Access and Inclusion Advisory Committee to help adopt and evaluate the Disability Inclusion Action Plan. My newest role is as an intern for Karen Ansen Consulting, where I deal with employment law and Human Resource matters.

### RACHAEL SOWDEN

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I have four children who are Aboriginal, two who have autism and three who have mental health diagnoses. I am determined that all people in NSW regardless of postcode have access to supports required to live a full life with choice and voice. Having lived the past 23 years in rural and remote locations across NSW, I am familiar with the challenges of obtaining equitable access to services and supports outside of metropolitan locations. I have long held advocacy roles in education and mental health particularly in rural settings, with a focus on young people and people with invisible disabilities. I am currently a member of the Disability Council of NSW.

### Toby Thomas

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As someone born with a Low Vision condition called Achromatopsia, I am acutely aware of the challenges associated with living with a disability. This was my primary motivation for joining the ALA Board in early 2021, and so far this experience has been profoundly rewarding, despite being a steep learning curve! I am a recent graduate from the University of Sydney, where I studied a Bachelor of Arts (majoring in History, Government & International Relations), and a Juris Doctor (postgraduate Law), and work full-time for the NSW Government at Investment NSW. Volunteering for the ALA Board combines two key personal passions of mine, namely, advocating for and promoting the rights of people with disabilities, and ensuring equitable access and fairness before the law.

### MARIETTE CURCURUTO

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I am a lawyer, having practised law for in excess of 20 years in both NSW and Queensland. I hold an LL.B. (Hons) and an LL.M. I started practise as a generalist, later streaming into commercial litigation, then child protection, family law and assisting women and children affected by domestic violence with a multitude of legal issues. I have practised both as a private practitioner and also in the Community Legal Sector, most notably as a solicitor at the Aboriginal Family Violence Unit and Principal Solicitor at the Far West Community Legal Centre in Broken Hill.

I believe that people who are disadvantaged before the law - be it by virtue of financial disadvantage, ethnicity, disability, sex or otherwise deserve excellent representation and access to fearless advocacy.

As the mother of a child with an intellectual disability and ASD who is navigating the brave new world of the NDIS, education and health systems, I know firsthand the need for strong disability advocacy services to assist people engaging with these systems. I have served on a number of boards, several in disability and health related organisations.

**JACK LINDGREN**

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I am a practicing Solicitor based in Newcastle, NSW. I hold a Bachelor of Laws and am an Accredited Specialist in Commercial Litigation. I am proud to be able to contribute to the important work done by ALA using my skills and experience as a Solicitor, and look forward to continuing to do so.



**Advocacy Law Alliance Board June 2021**

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# Chairperson's Report

**Gayle Brown**

During the year ALA continued to confront a range of challenges presented by the COVID-19 pandemic.



During the year ALA continued to confront a range of challenges presented by the COVID-19 pandemic.

The resilience and ongoing commitment to clients demonstrated by the management team, staff and volunteers have been a feature of the last twelve months. These qualities have ensured that we continue to deliver quality client service.

The ongoing organisational focus on strengthening our management framework and policies and addressing the structural and Human Resources-related elements flowing from our significant growth have already made quite a difference. This focus is assisting to mature the organisation in the context of its growth.

There were two developments during the year that I would like to highlight.

Firstly, the development of a program and employment of a Policy Officer to identify, research and pursue 'systemic' issues in relation to Disability Advocacy has been a very positive initiative. This means that ALA can now attempt to proactively bring about changes in government policy and practice that cause unnecessary work and/or delays for Advocates in assisting clients. These issues are often also a cause of considerable stress for our clients.

The second development is the creation of a dedicated 'disability lawyer' role (now Disability Law NSW) that has provided a bridge between the two arms of ALA in a manner that has provided significant support for Advocates. This initiative has provided a unique opportunity for collaborative client servicing and a better appreciation for staff of the two organisational roles. The increasing complexity in dealing with client matters requires such dedicated and particular support.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the Board for their ongoing work in supporting the organisation during the year.

Finally, on behalf of the Board, I thank the management team and the staff and volunteers for their continued commitment to making a positive difference for our clients.

# Treasurer's Report

Hayden Asper



This is the Treasurer's report, which is in respect to the Advocacy Law Alliance's ("ALA") financial report for the financial year ended 30 June 2021. The financial report was prepared and audited by BeLLCORP Accountants. The audit did not identify any issues with the financial report.

I make the following comments in respect to the financial report:

## Income Statement

ALA received \$6,470,512 in grant income for the 2021 financial year, an increase of \$ 1,136,948 from the 2020 financial year. ALA also received some other income, primarily in the form of government subsidies. \$5,883,127 was incurred in expenses, resulting in an operating surplus of \$734,165. The largest increase in expenditure was in the category of wages, with a 13% increase from 2020.

I note that during the course of the financial year a number of unexpected funding opportunities presented themselves. ALA originally forecasted income of \$5,520,692 and expenses of \$5,454,194. There is a lag between the receipt of new funding and being able to allocate and

expend it (especially when that funding is an unexpected windfall). Accordingly, the greater than budgeted for income resulted in a greater surplus than budgeted for.

## Balance Sheet

ALA's balance sheet identifies assets in the sum of \$2,455,341. Total assets are primarily comprised of cash and cash equivalents, being money held in bank accounts and term deposits. Other assets include amounts for property, plant and equipment, debtor amounts and rental bonds. The balance sheet also identifies total liabilities in the amount of \$764,010.

I note that ALA's net asset position has increased from the 2020 financial year, by an amount of \$734,165 to \$1,691,331. The net asset position indicates that ALA is able to pay all of its debts as and when they fall due.

## Overview

ALA continues to operate in a financially sound manner. As at 30 June 2021, ALA has a current ratio of 1.47, a decrease from last financial year's current ratio of 2.61. This is a result of increasing the sum held in term deposits (a non-current asset) from the previous year. I note that these funds are still accessible at short notice if they were needed. Based on the financial statements, I am confident that ALA will be able to continue to operate as a going concern.

Amid another tough and turbulent year, ALA's management and staff should be congratulated for their hard work and performance in the 2021 financial year.

Hayden Asper CA RITP  
Treasurer

# Chief Executive Officer's Report

Mark Grierson



An important focus of ALA's year continues to be staff wellbeing and internal improvements. While our main effort will always be towards the clients we serve, having happy, high performing advocates and lawyers are an essential part of providing quality services.

The focus on positive staff experience held us in good stead during the continuing COVID pandemic. Most of our staff began working from home at the beginning of the pandemic before gradually moving back to the workplace in a hybrid model with some days working at home and some in the office. However, with the Delta outbreak and lockdowns, we have returned to working from home. Helping clients has been more complex, yet our staff have continued to find ways to provide excellent advocacy and legal support.

We remain committed to continually improving staff and client experience over the coming years.



Mid North Coast Legal Centre (MNCLC) celebrated its 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary this year and has celebrated with the new logo above. MNCLC staff have been strongly involved in providing legal advice to people affected by bushfires, floods, domestic violence and COVID as well as its normal work.

DA is now the largest individual advocacy service in the country, in terms of advocates employed, clients assisted, and geographical area covered. DA is proud that advocacy services are offered via 9 regional offices in NSW staffed by local advocates, rather than via one metropolitan location.

The requests for advocacy assistance particularly related to the NDIS has continued to grow strongly as people with disability seek to navigate this complex program.

The need for advocacy assistance is generally growing and many issues that people with disability face are common and relate to systemic problems. In response to this DA has employed a Policy Officer to seek to influence systemic change, underpinned by factual research including the coalface experience of disability advocates and their clients.



This year DA and MNCLC worked together to officially establish a new program called Disability Law NSW (DL) [www.dlnsw.org.au](http://www.dlnsw.org.au). This program, which sits within the legal practice, employs specialist disability law solicitors who support DA clients and advocates in complex matters.

ALA has developed a strong management team to support the work of our advocates and lawyers. I especially pay tribute to Catherine Peek (Deputy CEO) and Amanda Brickwood (Manager Advocacy). We have been assisted greatly by Amanda's maternity leave replacement Charlotte Rider, Principal Solicitor Jane Titterington and Finance Officer Maureen Bloemers.

NSW Government funding of disability advocacy services has been in contention for the last 4 years. Following a review of the Ageing and Disability Commissioner there appears a way ahead. This independent review stressed the importance for the NSW government to continue funding advocacy and offered recommendations for restructuring and improving the sector. We expect a restructure to take place via an open tender later this year and we look forward to taking part in this tender.

My role is made considerably easier by virtue of the ALA Board having a strong mix of skills with financial, legal and management expertise, combined with service user knowledge and experience. The ALA Board is also drawn from across NSW, which mirrors ALA's service areas.

**Accreditation**



MNCLC: National NACLC Accreditation



DA NSW: National Standards for Disability Services

DA was re-accredited for compliance against the National Standards for Disability Services in

September 2020. The most recent audit was fully compliant and completed in September 2021.

MNCLC was also re-accredited by the National Association of Community Legal Centres in September 2019 which is for a 3-year period until September 2022.

ALA has put a lot of effort into ensuring that people who use our services can openly provide feedback about their experiences. The feedback received has been positive thanks to the professionalism and dedication of our staff. However, when we receive negative feedback or input from clients or stakeholders, we are always keen to examine our practices and look for improvements.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank all staff, board members and volunteers for their work this year.

ALA Staff at an Online Meeting





Disability  
**DA**<sup>NSW</sup>  
Advocacy

# DANSW SERVICE REPORT

Disability Advocacy NSW (DANSW) helps people of all ages with any type of disability or mental illness get fair treatment in New South Wales, Australia. An Advocate can provide individual advocacy and help get fair treatment from government departments, disability services, other services and businesses, at work, university, school or TAFE, with accommodation, transport and access, healthcare or money issues, the Disability Royal Commission and with the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS). We also assist with systemic advocacy issues and provide education sessions.

DA NSW is funded by the New South Wales and Australian governments to carry out a range of advocacy services for people with a disability. This report looks at the number of people we have assisted, and the types of advocacy assistance provided. For a view of what clients think about the service, please see survey results at the end of this report.

Additional information can also be found on our website [www.da.org.au](http://www.da.org.au)



DANSW SERVICE MAP

# 2020-21 YEAR IN REVIEW

*A year of challenges, opportunities with a solid commitment to continuous improvement*



Amanda Brickwood  
Manager Advocacy

The extraordinary events of the past year coupled with ever growing demand for advocacy support and imminent sector growth possibilities presented DANSW with many challenges and opportunities.

We commenced the year by focusing on our strategic goals and working with the board to confirm our vision and direction for the service going forward. With our strategic goals for 2020-23 established, DANSW invested time in creating a business plan to give life to these strategic goals and guide us as we work towards achieving our short and long term goals.

During our business planning consultations held in early 2021, staff had some brilliant service improvement ideas including introducing an "information session" model of service delivery, investing in more self-advocacy resources, better communication and collaboration with community and stakeholders, increasing our systemic advocacy work and improving our internal resource development and management. Many of these ideas have been included in our 2020-23 business plan and we will continue to invest in operationalising these strategies together over the next year.

The input provided by staff across all regions was invaluable and I would like to thank everyone for their thoughtful and practical insights and ideas.

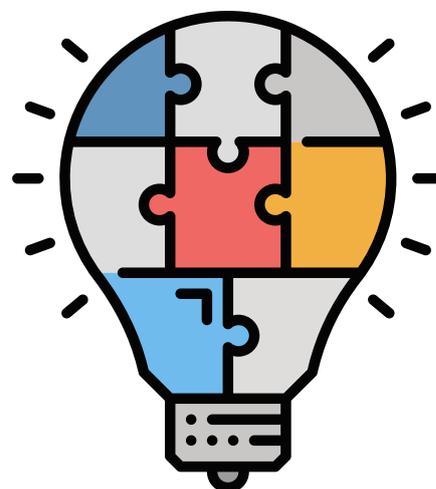


Business Planning Session with the Sydney West team - March 2021

# 2020-21 YEAR IN REVIEW

## COVID-19 UPDATE

It is hard to reflect on the past year without considering the impact of COVID-19 on the service, clients and communities we work with. The pandemic has certainly been an unprecedented challenge for DANSW but fortunately we were able to quickly and effectively adjust our operations to ensure that our important individual advocacy work could continue remotely across the regions. Our staff have done an amazing job under challenging circumstances to maintain a high standard of service delivery by employing innovative strategies with the use of technology and “out of the box” thinking. This success in the face of adversity is a testimony to the commitment and ability of our staff and their leaders. Moving forward, staff, client, and community safety will continue to be front of mind as we make plans to return to face to face service delivery and community engagement.



## SERVICE DELIVERY

Resource scarcity is continuing to challenge our service and the sector as a whole. DANSW operates a robust waitlist system which helps us manage and prioritise our resources, however, in several regions, waitlists have reached unmanageable levels resulting in periods of intake closure. The mounting pressure on resources relates primarily to increased demand for service but is further exacerbated by increased advocacy matter complexity and protracted appeals/complaints processes. DANSW has been exploring innovative service delivery options to help us work more efficiently. The focus for the year ahead is to work on implementing these ideas and evaluating their impact on client outcomes and our capacity to manage demand



# 2020-21 YEAR IN REVIEW

## INFORMATION SESSIONS

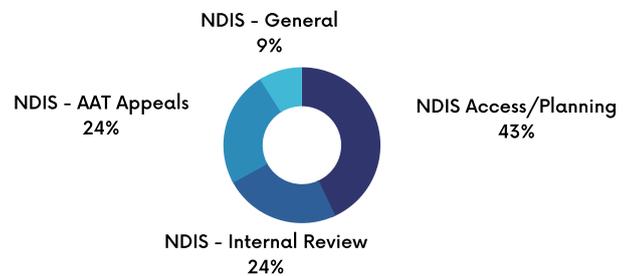
We are currently trialling an ‘info-session’ model where clients with DSP and NDIS related matters can receive time-limited support from an advocate for their advocacy matter. This support involves a one-hour phone call OR face to face session with an advocate to discuss the advocacy issue, review evidence and provide advice, direction and resources to a client to self-advocate. At the session it may be apparent that more comprehensive advocacy support is required, in this case the client would be offered a place on the waitlist for allocation to an advocate when capacity allow..

## NDIS APPEALS

DANSW continues to support a high volume of clients requesting NDIS advocacy support, spanning over issues such as:

- Gaining access to the NDIS, involving liaison with health professions and clients to gather evidence appropriate to address legislative criteria.
- Reviewing decisions that the NDIA have made, both internally, and externally at the AAT.
- Assisting clients to understand their NDIS participant rights, and ensuring clients are informed of the NDIA’s processes and supports available to them.
- Assisting clients to establish to the NDIA that a support is reasonable and necessary.

NDIS-related matters make up 55% of all advocacy support provided. Our Advocates reported increasing complexity in the types of issues referred, resulting in matters taking longer to resolve. Advocates continue to utilise our NDIS Toolkit with clients, a self-advocacy resource we developed last period to assist in managing demand, however, clients often require a higher level of support and cannot rely on this resource alone due to the complexity of their matter.



DANSW NDIS-related matters breakdown 2020-21

### Length of time to resolve advocacy matter types 2020-21 (average).

#### NDIS Appeals - AAT



#### NDIS Access/Internal Reviews / Planning



#### Non-NDIS Matters (legal, education etc.)



# 2020-21 YEAR IN REVIEW

## NDIS APPEALS - AAT: UNREPRESENTED CLIENTS



With legal services under pressure due to high demand, our advocates have found it increasingly challenging to secure legal representation for our clients appealing an NDIS decision at the AAT. This places extra pressure on advocates to help clients navigate legally complex issues against a respondent (NDIA) with access to legal representation and unlimited resources to argue their case.

Despite the high level of experience and skills our advocates bring, access to legal representation for NDIS matters provides a client with additional resources including technical expertise and access to funding for reports and other costs associated with an appeal. The disadvantage for self-represented clients is most evident at the hearing stage where the process moves away from a “dispute resolution” style and becomes more formal, complex and legalistic.

Our advocates have access to a Disability Law Specialist through Disability Law NSW (DLNSW), another program of Advocacy Law Alliance, to assist advocates in their work with unrepresented clients at the AAT. DLNSW is not designed to replace Legal Aid in NDIS Appeals cases but has proven to be an invaluable support for clients when legal aid is unable to support. There are many other areas of law that DLNSW solicitors help with in the cases our disability advocates’ encounter. A key part of the principle behind DLNSW is to work with local advocates and their expertise across NSW to get the best outcomes for clients and it seems to be working.



# 2020-21 YEAR IN REVIEW

## TEAM CULTURE AND MORALE

Throughout 2020 and 2021 we have continued work towards our goals around staff wellbeing and fostering a positive work culture. Staff were invited to participate in the Advocacy Law Alliance Staff Survey and given the opportunity to provide honest feedback and opinions about our performance, culture, relationships, how we go about our work and where we are headed in the future. The results have provided us with the opportunity to seek ways to continually improve and develop a range of short- and long-term solutions to address key feedback raised.



To energise our remote teams, inspire interactions and reduce stress we participated in a fun team building event facilitated by Urban Quest!

The All-DA Conference took place in June, with DA staff members travelling from vast areas of NSW to our head office in Newcastle. The conference was held over two days and included external training and NDIS and Centrelink training by our very own Senior Disability Law Specialist, Kylie Hyde. We encouraged information sharing between regions and each region was responsible for leading a discussion about an advocacy issue or topic that they were interested in. Everyone enjoyed a team building 'escape room' activity to finish off an enjoyable and informative two days. Everyone's participation and enthusiasm ensured the conference was a great success.



Senior Solicitor Kylie Hyde providing Centrelink and NDIS training at the All-DA conference - June 2021

# 2020-21 YEAR IN REVIEW

## COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

DANSW has engaged a communications agency to strengthen the organisation's identity, profile and consolidate our communications and messaging. We hope to better connect with our clients and networks and gain an increased awareness and understanding of the characteristics of the communities we service, by taking a deep dive to understand the unique demographics and needs of these communities. An overarching communications strategy will be developed to ensure internal and external communications, branding and messaging are integrated and aligned for maximum impact and influence. It is a priority of ours to implement a strategy that supports people to meaningfully engage and share their story with the Disability Royal Commission, to help inform its findings and recommendations.



*DA Advocates and the DRC First Nations Engagement Team during an outreach trip in Broken Hill*

DA advocates joined the DRC First Nations Engagement Team whilst they travelled throughout Western NSW and New England, providing Information Sessions to build trust, facilitate connections and promote ongoing awareness of the work of the DRC to First Nations services and community members.

# 2020-21 YEAR IN REVIEW



## CULTURALLY RESPONSIVE PRACTICE

We have continued our work towards developing a workplace and service provision, that is culturally responsive and inclusive. DANSW leaders and advocates attended a two-day tailored workshop provided by Settlement Services International (SSI) focused on the modules 'Fundamentals of Culturally Responsive Practice in a Disability Context' and 'Engaging Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) Communities.'

The interactive workshops engaged us in a reflective process to gain an insight into our own culture, behaviours and organisational practices and better understand how other people's culture informs their world view and therefore their understanding of disability and the service systems. We did this by unpacking 'culture' and finding the common ground to work collaboratively with our clients, discussing the intersection of living with a disability and coming from a CALD background and how to incorporate person centred principles and culturally responsive practice into our work. After going through this reflective process, the regional teams went into breakout rooms to discuss targeted strategies to enhance DANSW service accessibility and minimise barriers experienced by CALD individuals and families.

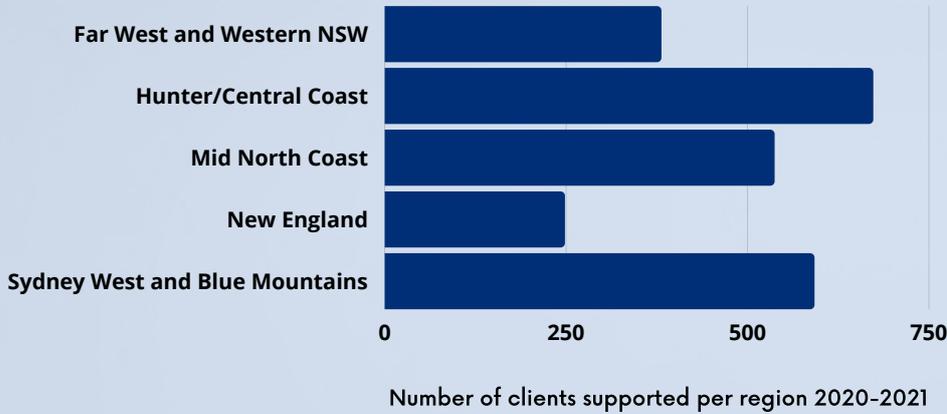
## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Despite the challenges this year presented, DA NSW has consistently and diligently worked to deliver an exceptional service to clients across all our regions. Our capacity to achieve this is ultimately a reflection of the hard work and dedication of our advocates, intake advocates, support staff and the DA NSW leadership team. I wholeheartedly thank the team for their enthusiasm and professionalism throughout the 2020-21 year. Special thank you also to Charlotte Rider for stepping up into the Acting Manager Advocacy Role this year to support me during my maternity leave period.

I would also like to take this opportunity to thank our CEO, Mark Grierson, Deputy CEO, Catherine Peek, ALA staff and all the volunteer Board members for their ongoing support and guidance throughout the year.

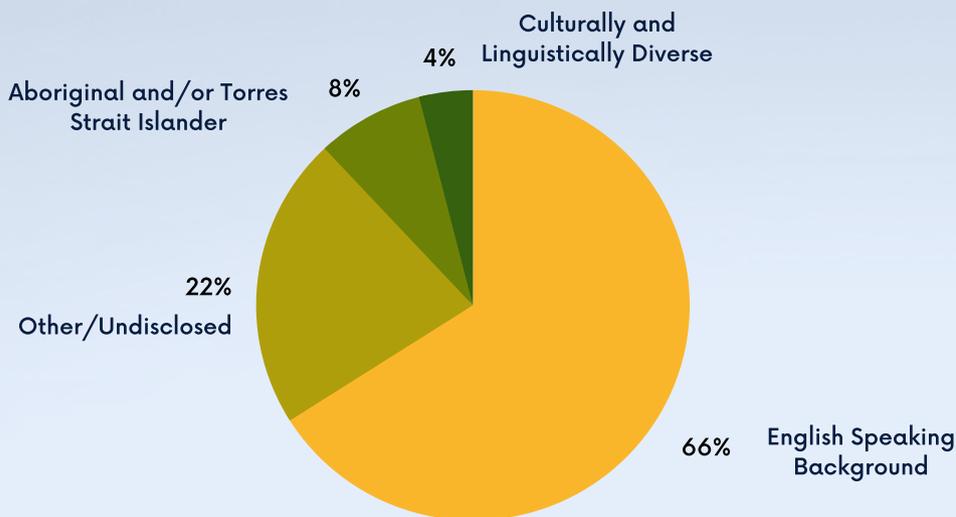
# OUR CLIENTS

IN THE 2020/2021 FINANCIAL YEAR WE SUPPORTED:



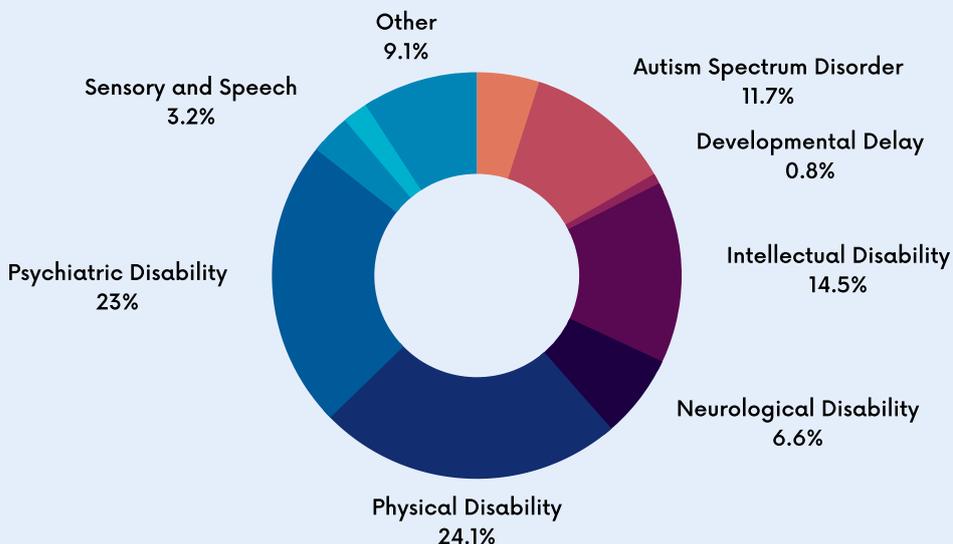
## GEOGRAPHICAL LOCATION

DANSW has 42 individual advocates providing face to face support for clients across a large geographical area including regional, rural, remote, and metropolitan areas of NSW.



## CULTURAL BACKGROUND

DANSW's cultural cohort comprises mostly of individuals who identify from English speaking backgrounds. DANSW continues to aim our focus towards First Nations and culturally and linguistically diverse individuals.

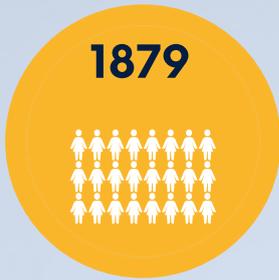


## PRIMARY DISABILITY

DANSW values the opportunity to provide support to people with all disability types across NSW. The majority of DANSW clients are people with a range of physical, intellectual, psychosocial, and cognitive disabilities.

# OUR IMPACT

ACROSS THE 2020/2021 FINANCIAL YEAR:



Advocacy Matters



Information Advice & Referrals



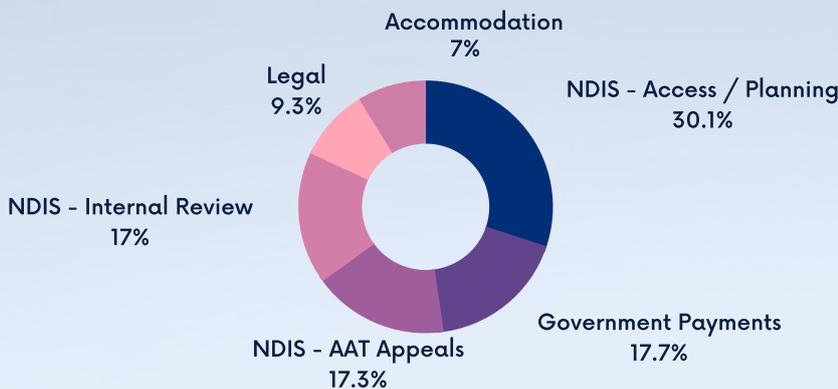
Community Education Sessions



Systemic Projects

## ADVOCACY ISSUES

### TOP ADVOCACY ISSUES 2021-2022

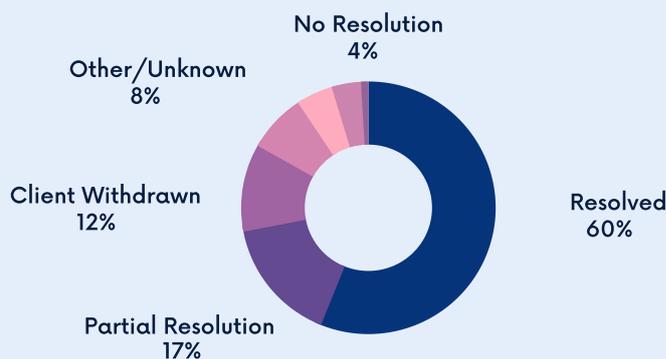


DANSW continues to provide advocacy support to people with disabilities across a diverse range of issues

Access to non-NDIS service	14
Accommodation	104
Child Protection	20
Community Inclusion - Social/Family	11
Disability Service Complaints	38
Disability Royal Commission	48
Discrimination or Rights	60
Education	50
Employment	19
Equipment (and aids)	12
Finances	77
Government Payments	210
Health	17
Independent Living Support	13
Legal	110
NDIS - Access / Planning	357
NDIS - AAT Appeals	205
NDIS - Internal Review	202
NDIS - General	74
Physical Access	2
Recreation, social or family	4
Services	24
Transport	6
Vulnerable and/or isolated	16
Ongoing citizenship	241

## ADVOCACY OUTCOMES

DANSW has a high standard in resolving matters for clients. Despite the complex nature of several matters, 77% of matters were resolved or partially resolved for clients within the period.



## EDUCATION DISCRIMINATION

**Nature of case:** A client, diagnosed with ASD and Tourette's Syndrome, was referred by their caregivers for assistance with an Education issue (suspensions, detentions, inappropriate use of restrictive practices).

**Strategies Actioned:** The Advocate assisted the family to link in with a Behavioural Therapist to develop a support plan to assist the school. The Advocate supported the family to liaise with the school to discuss the client's education accommodations and needs.

**Outcome:** Support was successfully implemented by the school and communication with the family improved. The support needs are being reviewed regularly, and the client has recently achieved awards for positive behaviour.

## GOVERNMENT PAYMENTS

**Nature of case:** The client was referred with a diagnosis of fibromyalgia (condition marked by pain and fatigue) and was seeking access to the DSP after being unable to work for several years.

**Strategies Actioned:** After the clients first application, Centrelink determined that fibromyalgia did not meet impairment thresholds. The client was supported to review the decision and provide additional evidence. The Advocate assisted the client to engage legal support and obtain advice regarding evidence required. The Advocate assisted the client to obtain additional evidence from health professionals.

**Outcome:** After a lengthy process, Centrelink determined that the client met the DSP requirements.

## NDIS APPEALS

**Nature of case:** NDIS access matter that progressed through initial access, internal and external (AAT) review processes.

**Strategies Actioned:** The client was assisted to gather evidence relating to a spinal injury from the workplace >20 years ago. The client did not have any new evidence, with all records dated from the initial workplace claim. The Advocate assisted the client to gather updated evidence, with the NDIA requesting increasingly more detailed information as the case progressed. The client was supported to seek legal assistance, who assisted in funding an additional medical report. The case progressed to hearing, however, the NDIA conceded, and the client was granted access.

**Outcome:** The client was granted access to the NDIS and was supported during their first planning meeting.

Our systemic advocacy policy officer, Dr. Cherry Baylosis, commenced with the service at the beginning of April and has already made some significant progress in developing the new role and DANSW’s contributions in the systemic advocacy space.

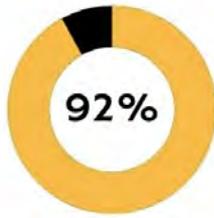
To define the focus of DANSW’s systemic advocacy work:

- Cherry took to the road and visited all 11 DANSW regional offices to talk with advocates about the recurring advocacy issues they encounter. The prominent themes that emerged from these consultations were used as the basis to develop a survey and conduct discussions with people with disability and their families.
- Cherry recently established a DANSW Systemic Advocacy Advisory Board (SAAB), that consists of people with disability and carers from the geographical areas and target groups we assist. The key responsibilities of the advisory board are to help set the direction for the DANSW’s systemic advocacy work, to help inform and provide feedback on this work.

Once the scoping work has been completed, we’ll begin to think through short, mid, and long terms goals for systemic advocacy

	<b>NDIS Performance and Implementation submission to the NDIS Jointed Standing Committee</b>	This submission discussed the NDIS rural and remote strategy and key policy developments (e.g., changes to pricing guidelines) in relation to the survey findings gained from the scoping work.
	<b>'Unreasonable and unnecessary harms' joint submission to the NDIS Joint Standing Committee</b>	This submission addressed the harms and inefficiencies of NDIS reviews and appeals processes. This was a collaborative effort among the NDIS Interagency Appeals Network.
	<b>DRC inquiry into promoting inclusion</b>	This submission discussed some of the barriers to inclusion in regional, rural and remote areas, where they have limited access to services.
	<b>NDIS Bill submission</b>	This submission discussed both strengths and issues concerning people with a disability living in regional, rural and remote areas, in relation to the NDIS Bill.
	<b>Upcoming DRC submission (December 2021)</b>	The findings of the scoping work will form the basis for an organisational submission to the DRC.

# CLIENT FEEDBACK



DANSW aims to continually improve our service by seeking client feedback on the support received. In the period, 92% of clients who participated in the survey reported that they were happy with the support they received from their Advocate. Further, 91% of clients reported they felt their issue was resolved.

## CLIENT FEEDBACK EXIST SURVEY - 2020-21

Overall, DANSW received great feedback from our clients in our exit surveys. This year we introduced a new question, *"I am better able to deal with my issue now"*, to measure if our service delivery approach was helping to build our clients capacity and self-advocacy skills. With 82% of client's responding yes, we are achieving our objective but continue to build on this strength to see this percentage increase in future.



"My Advocate treated me with compassion and managed to coordinate all my support workers and has made it possible to make positive change in my life. I will always be grateful."

"My Advocate provided unwavering support to me & my family with achieving an amazing win! NDIA ultimately listened to us. Thank you! Recommend this service to everyone needing help."

"I have a difficult case that many people have ignored. My advocate persisted and helped me achieve my goals. I am very grateful. I would certainly recommend Disability Advocacy NSW."

"I cannot speak highly enough of my advocate. They was always there for me if I needed them. Always courteous, polite and ready to help with advice and actions. I would not have succeeded without them."

# Hunter Cooperative Legal Service Delivery (CLSD) Report

Seema Sanghi Coordinator

**CLSD Program partnerships are coalitions of legal and non-legal services. Partnerships work collaboratively to identify and address unmet legal and related needs of vulnerable and disadvantaged people by making better referrals, devising new services and coordinating their efforts to meet the needs of priority client groups. ALA has been operating the CLSD Program in the Hunter since 2007.**

As almost everyone says about the past year, it's been challenging. Not only in organising the Hunter CLSD meetings to bring together partners online, but also the needs of the community being identified: homelessness, tenancy issues, family violence and fines. While not new, the prevalence of these issues appears to be widening during the pandemic.

As a result, the Hunter CLSD in the past 12 months has focussed on contributing to advocacy pieces and community legal education in these areas and calling upon CLSD partners' expertise to assist in various projects:

## **Homelessness and Tenancy**

The Hunter CLSD participated in the Lake Macquarie Homelessness Forum; attended the Newcastle City Council's 'Unpacking Local Vulnerability' forum; continues to work with lawyers and tenancy advocates to build better referral pathways and relationships with community housing providers, and is actively involved in lobbying the Newcastle Council with the Hunter Community Alliance to support actions to alleviate the short and long-term impacts on Newcastle residents affected by the current housing crisis, which include: piloting safe rough sleeping zones on council property and developing an affordable housing contribution scheme, to name a few. It was also decided at the annual CLSD Conference in Dubbo that the CLSD program would consider a state-wide housing advocacy piece as many of the 12 CLSD regions' partners were reporting similar problems

## **Family and Domestic Violence**

A remote Safe Room has been created by WDVCS, Newcastle, and they have requested support from the Hunter CLSD to assist with a DV-Service mapping project and to collaborate on some community legal education for DV services to learn more about the legal issues their clients are facing and the changes to relevant legislation.

As a follow up to the Hairdresser session last year, Hunter CLSD is developing a pilot project working with barbers to better understand the issues men are facing regarding mental health and the risks of using violence and the best ways for barbers to respond when dealing with clients experiencing these issues.

## **Fines**

Hunter CLSD is supporting the CLSD program to create social media tiles in response to the Revenue NSW data which reveals that a significant number of fines issued across all 12 CLSD regions are for not voting in local government and legislative assembly elections, and not having a ticket, or having an incorrect ticket on public transport.

The ALA has also become a WDO sponsor in April 2021 – a 3<sup>rd</sup> party referrer to allow for people to conduct a WDO even though their activity may be with an organisation that is not a WDO sponsor. This often occurs in regional and rural areas where the number of WDO sponsors is relatively low compared to metro areas.



IARC  
Domestic and Family Violence  
and Immigration Law  
MNCLC - Bellingen presentation



# Mid North Coast Legal Centre Service Report

## MNCLC

Mid North Coast Legal Centre (MNCLC) is located on the Mid North Coast of NSW with offices in Port Macquarie and Coffs Harbour. MNCLC provides legal information, education and advice and advocacy to people living and working in the local government areas of Port Macquarie – Hastings, Kempsey Shire, MidCoast (Manning Region), Nambucca Shire, Bellingen Shire and Coffs Harbour (to South of Woolgoolga). MNCLC believes that improving access to justice for people who experience economic and/or social disadvantage is fundamental to a fair and equitable society.



# Deputy CEO

Catherine Peek

The 2020-21 year has demonstrated the incredible resilience of the Mid North Coast community that we are privileged to form part of.

This year the Mid North Coast Legal Centre turns 10. A proud member of the NSW community legal centres, we strive for excellence and prioritise professionalism and innovation. The Centre has evolved greatly over the past decade to achieve our goals. We would like to thank everyone who has been part of this journey and cannot wait to see what the next 10 years will bring.

To mark this exciting milestone and in response to community and stakeholder feedback, we have updated our logo and shortened our name, from Mid North Coast Community Legal Centre to Mid North Coast Legal Centre.

The new logo is a stylised representation of the coastline of the northern half of NSW, pinpointing the Mid North Coast with a large dot. This dot represents the legal centre, encased in lines which represent the sand and the sea. This protective barrier helps to portray the centre as a safe, approachable, and friendly place. A series of green dots represent the six local government areas that we service.



*New logo design and announcement*

The Mid North Coast community has faced many challenges in the past few years. As the community began to repair the damage from the devastating bushfires of 2019 and deal with the ongoing COVID-19 global pandemic, the region was hit by devastating floods in March this year.

The physical and psychological trauma caused by these catastrophes is ongoing. The disruptions to daily life only magnify the social, economic and health inequalities and injustices which are deeply embedded in our communities.

Rather than focus on the many extraordinary challenges we have all had to deal with over the past year, I would like to focus on the amazing resilience of our community, our organisation, our staff and our volunteers. They have risen to the challenge at every turn and as their resilience has increased, so has the magnitude of what has been accomplished.

Despite these challenges we have made great progress, achieved great things and continue to connect with our community and stakeholders in a sincere and meaningful way. You will see many examples of this in our Service Report.

It is a great privilege to provide a service which enables people to have a voice. We are proud to stand alongside each of our clients who have been wronged, in order to help them tell their story and fight for justice. Access to free legal advice and education has never been more important.

Throughout COVID-19, MNCLC has responded by prioritising the health and welfare of our staff, supporting our clients and community and taking the necessary steps to ensure continuity of vital legal assistance. We are proud of the way our staff have adapted to the changed operating environment, moving from working in an office to working remotely. This move has been achieved seamlessly and with little interruption to client service.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank and congratulate the entire MNCLC team across both offices for their hard work and dedication. Persistence, empathy, professionalism and innovation are the reasons we continue to grow from strength to strength. Jane Titterington (Principal Solicitor), Melanie Kallmier (Centre Coordinator) and Sarah Dahlenburg (Assistant Principal Solicitor) provide steadfast leadership for the Centre as it continues to grow.

# CELEBRATING 10 YEARS: 2011-2021



## TOP PROBLEM TYPES

All other problem types combined  
**35%**

Car accidents  
**2%**

Fines  
**3%**

Consumer Law  
**5%**

### AREAS OF LAW

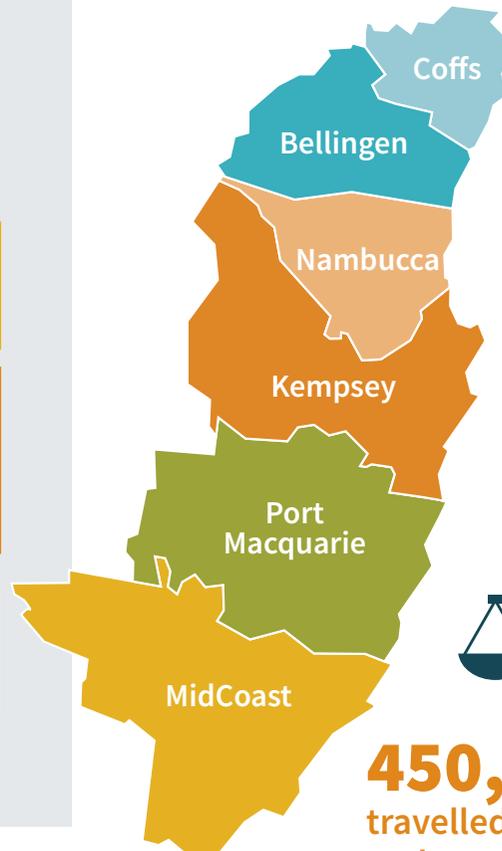
Employment  
**8%**

Credit and debt  
**9%**

Traffic and driving license problems  
**18%**

Domestic and family violence  
**10%**

Planning ahead documents  
**10%**



Referrals to other services:  
**9,812**



Catchment size:  
**16,500km<sup>2</sup>**

Community Legal Education activities:  
**1504**



Law Reform Projects: **36**

**450,000kms** travelled to provide outreach and support to the community



Provided over  
**13,000** legal services to  
**7810 clients**  
[ from 2011-2021 ]

**26%** live with a disability

**15%** identify as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander

**9%** have unstable accommodation

**10%** live in remote/rural areas

**98%** of the representation services were given to people experiencing financial disadvantage

# Principal Solicitor

Jane Titterington

## Strength and resilience and 10 years of service to the community

The past 12 months have been a demonstration of the strength and resilience of the Mid North Coast Legal Centre team and the communities in our region. The team at MNCLC and the Mid North Coast communities have shown they can work together to provide high quality legal services and assistance to people living on the mid north coast of NSW against a backdrop of bushfire recovery, a global pandemic and devastating floods.

MNCLC has continued to connect with the people of the Mid North Coast through different means and platforms and has continued to adapt its service delivery as the region has gone in and out of lockdowns, opened and closed outreach partners and dealt with restricted access to aged care facilities, courthouses, and correctional centres. The MNCLC team has travelled around the region to bushfire hubs, disaster recovery centres and outreach locations when they have been able to and on occasion driven to flood affected areas to deliver documents where phone lines have been cut or found ways to connect to clients cut off through road closures and lockdowns. Again, this year the MNCLC team have relied on telephone and video conferencing services to connect to each other, clients, and community services where face to face interactions were not possible.

I am proud to work with my unstoppable team and proud of the results that have been achieved in the past year and over the 10 years. As we celebrate 10 years since the centre opened, it is a wonderful opportunity to reflect on the hard work done to establish MNCLC which has seen MNCLC become a trusted part of our community, seen growth in the Centre, the opening of our Coffs Harbour office, the addition of another three local government areas to our catchment and the establishment of the Disability Law service.

MNCLC is looking forward to eased restrictions in the coming months which will give us the opportunity to get back out in our communities and face to face with each other, our clients and community partners to continue to provide access to legal services on the Mid North Coast. Thank you to the MNCLC team for your support and dedication to each other and to the members of our local communities, thank you to Mark Grierson (CEO), Catherine Peek (DCEO) and the ALA team for your support and guidance as the Centre looks forward to the next 10 years.



The

*MNCLC team at our conference in Bellingen - March 2021*

## MNCLC continues to be funded through Commonwealth and State Government grants administered by Legal Aid NSW.

### Funding

MNCLC's main funding sources are the Commonwealth and State Governments, administered through the Community Legal Services Program by Legal Aid NSW. During this financial year MNCLC also utilised special grants for Bushfire relief, COVID relief, Family and Domestic Violence and a small grant from Multicultural NSW.

MNCLC provides legal information and referrals, legal advice, and legal casework to community in 6 local government areas - Midcoast (Manning region), Port Macquarie-Hastings, Kempsey Shire, Bellingen Shire, Nambucca Shire and Coffs Harbour (to south of Woolgoolga). MNCLC also undertakes extensive community legal education across our catchment and engages in law and policy submission activities. MNCLC provides services by telephone and face to face appointments in Port Macquarie and Coffs Harbour and various outreach locations including Taree, Kempsey and South West Rocks. MNCLC also provides a clinic to the Mid North Coast Correctional Centre at Aldavilla, a Lawyer in School program in Kempsey and runs traffic programs at Taree and Macksville courts.

Additional funding has enabled us to provide access and assistance to victims of bushfires and re-engagement with communities struggling with the impact of the COVID pandemic. We have been fortunate to have received much needed funding to assist victims of Family and Domestic violence with family law and other legal issues. We have also been able to develop resources to assist with engagement with our CALD communities, particularly in the Coffs Harbour region.

### MNCLC Mini Conference - Bellingen

We held an extremely successful and informative inaugural mini-Conference in Bellingen (Gumbayngirr Country) for all MNCLC staff and we were able to attend in person. The two-day conference delivered training and professional development for staff and provided an opportunity to review our strategic planning with input from everyone at MNCLC.

Marrickville Community Legal Centre and Immigration Advice and Rights Centre presented sessions at the conference via AVL and in person. Both Legal Aid and the Law Society of NSW provided valuable presentations on AAT practice and legal ethics. Magistrate Erin Kennedy give staff the benefit of her experience in a session on Court Advocacy. We held breakout sessions for non-legal staff and received a presentation on cultural awareness from a Gumbayngirr local.

It was not all work. Staff had opportunities to participate in some fun and games, meet new staff members, chat with our ALA CEO Mark Grierson and DCEO Catherine Peek and sample delicious local food. We were lucky the stars aligned to allow this event to proceed. Thank you to Catherine, Melanie, Jacque and others whose hard work made it such a success.

### Outreach

We continued to attend outreaches at Taree, Kempsey, South West Rocks, Coffs Harbour and the Mid North Coast Correctional Centre when restrictions allowed over the last 12 months. We attended our traffic program at Taree Court and commenced our new traffic program at Macksville Court when restrictions permitted. On occasions the traffic programs were provided via AVL and the outreaches were done via telephone. We continued our Embedded School Lawyer Program at Macleay Vocational College when we could and provided increased assistance to the Mums and Bubs program at the College. This was made possible due to COVID funding to assist clients with family law and domestic violence issues.

We discontinued our outreach to Pete’s Place in Coffs Harbour recently as other outreaches were established/re-established. Strong connections and referral pathways were established through the period of this outreach, and we continue to assist clients of Pete’s Place on a regular basis through face to face to appointments at our office and at Pete’s Place.

We would like to thank our outreach partners – Kempsey Neighbourhood Centre (Kempsey and South West Rocks), Macleay Vocational College (Kempsey), Uniting Church in Taree and Pete’s Place in Coffs Harbour.

MNCLC staff also attended many bushfire and flood hubs and disaster recovery centres across our whole region to assist clients impacted by ongoing natural disasters.



*Providing outreach services to bushfire and flood affected communities in our region.*

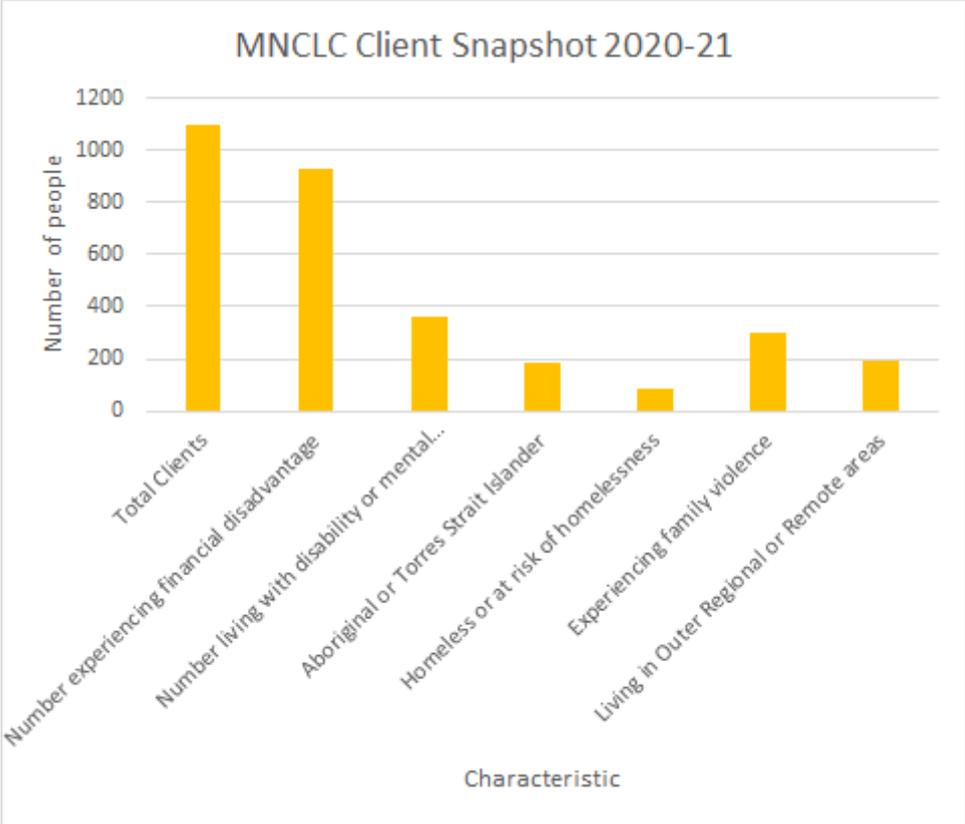
**Statistics**

MNCLC records statistics in the CLASS database utilised by all Community Legal Centres.

This financial year MNCLC provided information and referral on at least 2338 different legal topics. This includes referrals made as part of other advice or casework services and highlights our commitment to ensuring wrap around service delivery for our clients.

**Clients**

CLASS allows MNCLC to record characteristics of either the kinds of people we assist or the areas of law in which we provide help. In 2020/21, MNCLC assisted 1096 clients across a range of 1535 different “services”. Of these 870 were new clients and 166 were repeat clients. Clients had different characteristics as represented in the chart below:



**Number and location of clients 2020-21**

Clients were distributed throughout our catchment area as represented in the figures below.

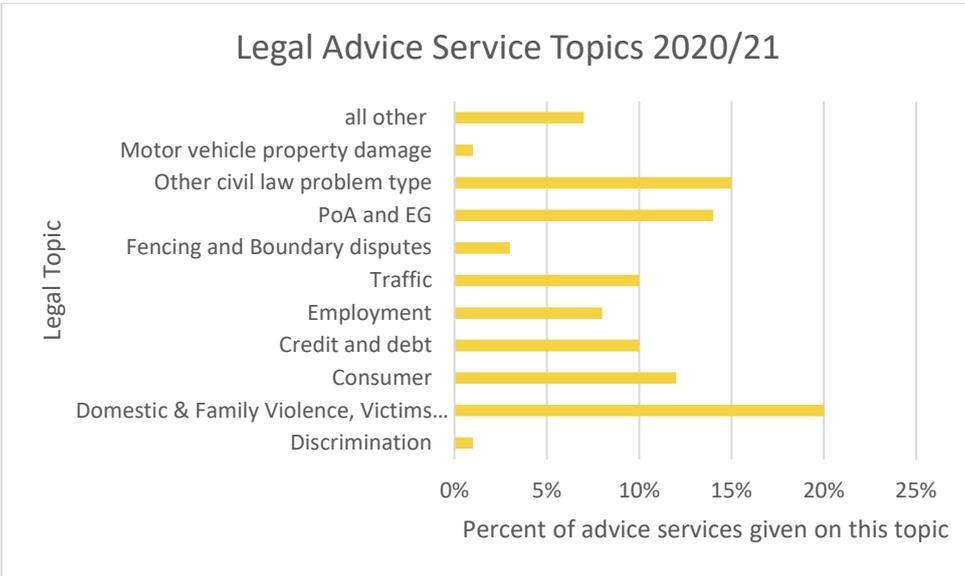


The impact of COVID-19 and other natural disasters meant outreaches, offices and services opened and closed during this financial year and that had an impact on the distribution of our clients across our catchments. We look forward to easing of restrictions to allow us to focus on more face-to-face outreach and community engagement to ensure equitable access for more remote communities and a return to our usual mode of service delivery.

**Legal Advice**

A total of 955 legal advice services were given in the last financial year. Legal advice is defined in CLASS as “the provision of fact specific legal advice to a person (a client) in response to a request for assistance to resolve specific legal problems.”

The graph below identifies the top problem types that arose during advice sessions at MNCLC during 2020/21.



MNCLC has a policy of offering regular face to face advice sessions in the Kempsey, South West Rocks and MidCoast regions of our catchment, to encourage equal access to legal services for those who may be disadvantaged by distance. Our outreach in Coffs Harbour has been discontinued but we continue to look at opportunities to provide outreach in Coffs Harbour and other locations in our northern catchment. A new traffic program at Macksville Court is raising our profile in that region.

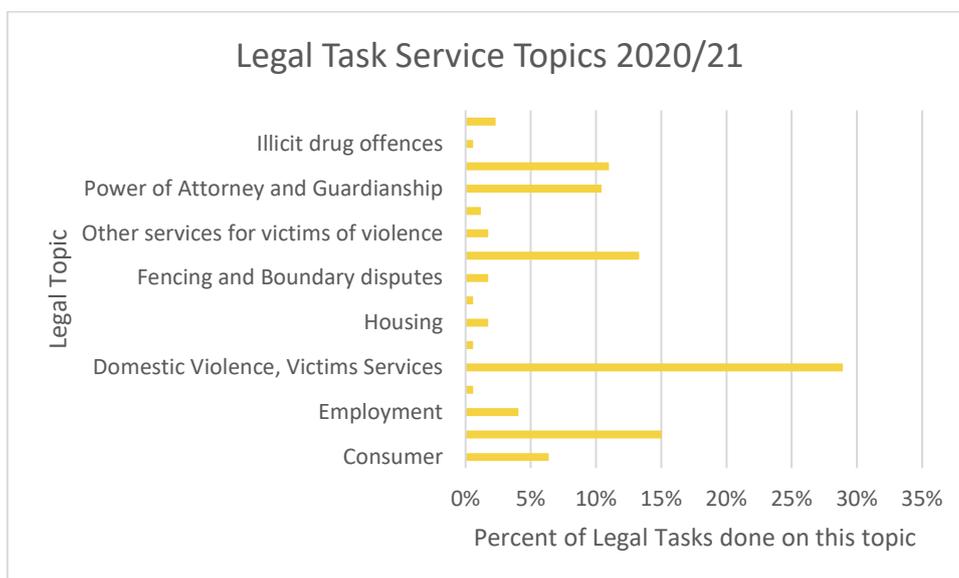
**Legal Task**

This financial year MNCLC provided legal task assistance on 137 occasions. This is a 25% decrease in the number of legal tasks as compared to last year and reflects the interruption to service delivery caused by COVID-19 and our ability to assist clients face to face on a regular basis. Legal task work is often undertaken during outreach and is defined as “where a Centre completes a discrete, one-off piece of legal work, to assist a person in their own efforts attempting to resolve a problem or a particular stage of a problem”. The decrease in Legal Tasks was balanced by an increase in representative services as MNCLC took on more of this work as we found it was the best way to assist clients where face to face appointments and outreach could not be facilitated.

The following figure shows the proportion of legal issues that arose in Legal Task work during 2020/21.

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## Legal issues that arose in Legal Task work



## Discrete Non-Legal Support Service

Discrete Non-Legal Support Service is defined in CLASS as “a discrete, one off, point in time nonlegal service provided by a Centre to assist and support a person to resolve specific, non-legal problems.” In 2020/21, MNCCLC provided discrete non-legal support on 14 occasions.

The following table shows the types of issues that arose in Discrete Non-Legal support work.

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### Types of issues that arose in Discrete Non-Legal support work

Problem Type	% of Services
Credit and Debt	7%
Guardianship for Adults	14.25%
Victims Services	14.25%
Power of Attorney	21.5%
Other Civil	43%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>100%</b>

## Duty Lawyer

Duty Lawyer refers to “legal services provided by a duty lawyer or advocate to a client at a court or tribunal.”

MNCLC provided Duty Lawyer services to clients on 130 occasions. Of those services, all were for Road & Traffic & other offences. Although we exceeded our targets, this number was lower than in

previous years and was impacted by COVID closures and courthouse renovations. We have recommenced our Taree traffic program and added a new traffic program at Macksville Court in the north of our catchment and look forward to increased assistance as restrictions ease.

### Representation Services

Representation Services are where a Service Provider takes carriage of a matter in an ongoing, representative capacity. They are divided into three separate types of service in CLASS. In line with our funding guidelines, 100% of our Representation Services in 2020/21 were delivered to people experiencing financial disadvantage.

### Dispute Resolution Service

This service is the legal representation of a Service User in a Facilitated Resolution Process, or an alternative dispute resolution process. This service type does not include Court/Tribunal based alternative dispute resolution, which is incorporated in the definition of Court/Tribunal Services.

High Level Problem Type	Dispute Resolution Services 2020-21		
	Open at Start	Opened During Period	Closed During Period
Consumer		2	1
Credit and debt	2	1	3
Motor Vehicle Damage	1	0	1
Employment	2	1	2
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>7</b>

### Court/Tribunal

Court/Tribunal work is defined as “an ongoing representation of a client by a Centre for any matter that has commenced in a court, tribunal or inquiry, where a Centre takes carriage of a matter in an ongoing, representative capacity”. MNCLC opened 75 and closed 32 court/tribunal services within the 2020/21 financial year. This number reflects the reopening of Taree court following renovations and COVID impacts in the latter part of the financial year.

The following table shows the proportion of legal issues that arose in Court/Tribunal work, noting that some files related to work across more than one legal issue.

### Legal issues that arose in Court/Tribunal work

High Level Problem Type	Court/Tribunal Services 2020-21		
	Open at Start	Opened During Period	Closed During Period
Domestic Violence and Victims Compensation		2	2
Other civil (including driving license issues)	5	11	8
Social Security	1	0	1
Employment	2	0	2
Traffic and driving offences	10	69	20
Illicit Drug Offences	0	1	0
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>83</b>	<b>33</b>

## Other Representation

“Other Representation” is defined as a service where “the Centre takes carriage of a legal matter in an *ongoing, representative capacity*, but where the Service does not fit within the definition of a Court/Tribunal Representation Service or a Dispute Resolution Service”.

Other Representation Services 2020/21 (number)		
Open at Start	Opened during Period	Closed During Period
171	145	138

The following table shows the proportion of legal issues which arose in Other Representation work, for cases opened during 2020/21. We continue to see a large proportion of work done related to domestic & family violence and planning ahead matters.

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### Legal issues which arose in Other Representation work opened during 2020/21

Other Representation Services Opened during 2020/21 by Legal Problem Type	
Problem Type	% of total cases
Discrimination	1%
Power of Attorney and Enduring Guardianship	44%
Domestic/Family violence and Victims Compensation	44%
Other civil law problem type	2%
Credit and debt	1%
Family law	2%
Social Security	1%
Consumer	4%
Motor vehicle property damage	1%
Criminal Law	1%
Traffic and vehicle regulatory offences	1%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>100.00%</b>

Some examples of cases MNCLC has assisted with are shown below:

<p><b>Case Example 1 - Consumer Law</b></p>	<p><b>Case Example 2 - Domestic and Family Violence</b></p>	<p><b>Case Example 3 - NDIS</b></p>
<p>MNCLC assisted a young client who was being pursued for a debt owing on a gym membership. The client who has a disability did not understand the terms of the contract signed and the ongoing nature of the payments. The client was receiving a Centrelink payment and could not afford the ongoing fees. The client's attempt to stop deduction of the payments was unsuccessful. MNCLC assisted the client in negotiations with the gym/debt collector with the result that the contract was terminated and the debt waived.</p>	<p>We assisted a young mother with advice on family law and with a Victims Services application. She and her children had been the victims on ongoing domestic violence. The successful immediate needs application made by MNCLC on her behalf enabled her to relocate with her children, purchase essential household items and install security cameras in her new location for her protection. The client also received a recognition payment. MNCLC also successfully argued against Victims Services seeking restitution from the perpetrator due to concerns about the ongoing safety of this young woman and the fear of retribution by the perpetrator should he have been approached to make restitution for payments made under the scheme. Waiving of restitution is discretionary and difficult to obtain so this is a good outcome for the client and her family.</p>	<p>We assisted a client through our Disability Law Service who was had been denied funding for home modifications.</p> <p>We provided advice and assistance in conjunction with Disability Advocacy which resulted in a successful application and funding was granted for the required home modifications.</p>

## What our clients said



## Mid North Coast Reconciliation Action Plan - Innovate

Mid North Coast Legal Centre launched its first Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) on 4 April 2019. A RAP provides a framework for organisations to support the national reconciliation movement. MNCLC's Innovate RAP focuses on developing and strengthening relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, engaging staff and stakeholders in reconciliation and developing and piloting innovative strategies to empower Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

We continue to build and nurture stronger working relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander service providers and communities, embed cultural safety and appropriateness in our work and culture and advocate against policies and laws that inherently discriminate against these communities. We stand with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and communities and urge governments to heed the Uluru Statement.

Through our collaboration with the Aurora Foundation, we had the opportunity to host an Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander intern at our Centre. We were fortunate to host Bianca Wilkins for 4 weeks in April/May 2021.

*"The staff are an amazing group of people who are committed and passionate about the work they do. I received a warm welcome right from the beginning... the workplace culture is supportive and positive, and I quickly became part of the team,"* Bianca Wilkins, Aurora Foundation Intern



### **Community Legal Education and Community Engagement**

MNCLC provided Community Legal Education (CLE) in a variety of formats and across a range of legal issues during this financial year. The main focus continues to be connecting with local service providers and the wider community in each of the LGAs covered by MNCLC. During the COVID-19 pandemic we have continued to provide CLE where possible via remote methods and face to face.

To give some examples, we participated in a 'Bring your Bills Day' (which was conducted virtually), conducted two sessions of "Conversations in the Chair" in Laurieton and Coffs Harbour (CLE to community workers in the hairdressing and beauty industry on recognising signs of domestic violence), facilitated sessions of the 'Lovebites' program to schools and conducted sessions on 'Planning Ahead' across the catchment. Our Disability Law service in collaboration with Disability Advocacy conducted sessions to health professionals and workers in correctional centre settings on accessing the National Disability Insurance Scheme and the Disability Support Pension. We delivered the legal content of the Traffic Offenders Program through the PCYC in Kempsey.

Our key focus areas for CLE remain:

#### **Community workers**

- General information about MNCLC
- Legal Health Checks – how to know whether the issues your client is facing may have a legal resolution
- Employment law
- Traffic law
- Planning ahead law (Powers of Attorney and Enduring Guardianship)
- Accessing the DSP and the NDIS

#### **Community members and the public**

- General information about MNCCLC and the help we can offer

- Employment law
- Traffic law
- Planning ahead law (Powers of Attorney and Enduring Guardianship)
- Consumer law (including consumer credit)
- Police powers
- Legal issues for individuals experiencing domestic and family violence
- Issues which have a specific impact on Aboriginal people

We have continued to attend bushfire hubs to assist people impacted by the bushfires in late 2019. We also attended many disaster recovery hubs when the region was impacted by devastating floods. We also stepped-up community engagement targeted at reaching communities impacted by COVID 19 which resulted in increased referrals and assistance to clients across our catchment.



*International Women's Day, 8 March 2021 #ChooseToChallenge*

MNCLC actively participates in many inter-agencies, to ensure that referral pathways to our service are being constantly promoted. We are regular attendees and active members of key inter-agencies in all the areas we service. This allows us to maintain active involvement in several community networks. Due to the impact of COVID events for NAIDOC, Family Fun Days, Law Week, Closing the Gap Day and others were postponed, cancelled or held online. MNCLC attended and contributed to these where possible via online platforms and social media and inhouse participation.

Some examples:

- Hosted a staff event with a local elder for Reconciliation Week.
- Participated online in "Seeing Red" to raise awareness of domestic and family violence.
- Posted recorded messages on social media about our services to keep our community informed when COVID-19 restrictions stopped us from travelling through our communities.
- Made use of a brief window of opportunity to attend TAFE classes in Community Services and Advocacy, to educate and promote our service to future community workers.
- We attended Harmony Day events in the Manning Valley
- Collaborated with TAFE in Coffs Harbour in presenting at the CALD law expo.
- In addition to solicitors attending bushfire and flood hubs to provide advice as we had significant community engagement all across our catchment through the work of our community engagement

staff who jumped in our cars and travelled to many communities providing packages of information and assistance before hubs were established and continued this work for many months.

- Attended the Port Macquarie Aboriginal Womens' Festival to promote access to our service for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women.

## Law Reform

The MNCLC Law Reform Committee meets monthly to discuss issues and upcoming opportunities for law reform work. The Committee has been quite active and has had participation from a number of different staff within the Centre.

We engaged with the ongoing process of review for the NSW AVO scheme, particularly in highlighting the issues faced by regional women in relation to domestic and family violence. Our Solicitor, Emma Smallwood, has led very valuable contributions to the understanding of government that draw on her experiences to compare jurisdictional responses in NSW and Victoria. This was information she was able to present to the Attorney General, Mark Speakman, when he visited the Centre in early 2021. We also provided a submission to the Federal Parliamentary Inquiry into Family, Domestic and Sexual Violence, again highlighting the issues faced by regional women and women with disabilities in complex situations.

We provided a submission to the NSW Government's Inquiry into the Child Protection and Social Services System, in the form of our LevelUP report. This report looked at the experiences of young people leaving the OOHC system and offered a valuable perspective to the Inquiry members.

We joined with the Cooperative Legal Service Delivery Network in Taree/Forster to support their call for more equitable and transparent local government hardship policies.

We participated in the DA-led work around systemic advocacy to identify the underlying structural issues leading to the barriers that people with disabilities had in accessing systems such as the NDIS and DSP. This led on to our provision of a submission to the Federal Senate Parliamentary Inquiry into the DSP in collaboration with DA highlighting some of the issues our clients are regularly facing.

In April 2021 we finalised a submission to the Federal Parliamentary Inquiry into Adult Literacy, noting that literacy levels are a matter which have a substantial effect on a persons' legal matter and asking the Government to consider the impacts of low literacy on all the ways a legal matter may progress.

Our Law Reform Committee continues to gather input from across our Centre and we greatly value the involvement of a diverse group of people, commenting on a wide range of topics.



*AG visit - The Hon Mark Speakman, SC MP, the Hon Leslie Williams MP and staff*

## Pro Bono Support

MNCLC deeply values the contribution and support of our Pro Bono partners. In 2020/21 we were able to access the resources and skills of Gilbert & Tobin (in particular, their Pro Bono Partner Anne Cregan) and Hicksons Lawyers (in particular, lawyer Mia Lewin). These partners were able to provide assistance with:

- CPD training for our staff
- Accepting referrals for matters outside MNCLC scope
- Clients with legal issues arising from the bushfires which impacted our region

We would like to extend our sincere thanks to Gilbert & Tobin and to Hicksons for their support during the year.



Mia Lewin from Hicksons Lawyers

## Volunteers

MNCLC relies on the support of volunteers to deliver an effective and accessible legal service. The volunteers also bring different outlooks and experience to MNCLC and we are enriched by their association with our Centre and endlessly appreciative of their efforts on behalf of our Centre and the local community.

Uncertainty around COVID closures and lockdowns restricted our ability to host volunteers so we had quality rather than quantity this year. We would like to thank Taylor Kennedy – PLT Placement, Sean Guerin - PLT Placement and Bianca Wilkins - Social Work Placement who volunteered their time with MNCLC this year:

### Volunteer Voices:

"I found the legal centre to be incredible supportive and welcoming while doing my practical legal training (PLT). I found that every staff member was more than happy to help me and teach me as much as they could in my time there."

*PLT placement – Sean Guerin*

"A great opportunity for me to identify the strengths of social work and law and how they work together... the staff are an amazing group of people who are committed and passionate about the work they do. I received a warm welcome right from the beginning and quickly became part of the team. The staff go above and beyond in the services they provide. It's a very welcoming centre that I've very much enjoyed being a part of.

At MNCLC the workplace culture is supportive and positive with everyone working towards the same goal...it's easy to see why there are many long-term staff at the centre.

The last month has gone so quickly. I've thoroughly enjoyed my time...I would highly recommend placement at the Community Legal Centre. I started my placement not knowing what to expect but finished with a rewarding sense of accomplishment and a newfound respect for the staff and the work that they do."

*Social work placement - Bianca Wilkins*



# Service Report



## Disability Law NSW

[www.dlnsw.org.au](http://www.dlnsw.org.au)

Mid North Coast Legal Centre is excited to announce its new program, Disability Law NSW [www.dlnsw.org.au](http://www.dlnsw.org.au)

Disability Law NSW officially commenced operation this year. The service is a collaboration between the two arms of Advocacy Law Alliance, Mid North Coast Legal Centre and Disability Advocacy NSW.

MNCLC and DA planned and then trialled the idea by employing a senior disability specialist lawyer, Kylie Hyde, in July 2020. Kylie's position is funded by Disability Advocacy NSW and Advocacy Law Alliance. Disability Law NSW has a strong focus on people with disability in regional, rural and remote communities where it is often more difficult to access legal assistance.

The referral pathway for DLNSW is through DA intake. Clients must first engage with DA as an advocacy service so that they have access to face-to-face support for their matters with one of our local advocates. It is our experience that many clients with a disability need a face-to-face contact so they can access and engage with the legal process. People with a disability are often drawn to DA due to its broad coverage, especially in regional NSW. DA has offices and local advocates in the Hunter, Central Coast, Mid North Coast, New England, Central West, Western and Far West NSW, Sydney West and Blue Mountains.

Given this broad RRR coverage, advocates can effectively link clients with disability to the legal assistance needed, while providing expertise in local services and a "face" the client can trust and built rapport with. DLNSW's wrap-around model is designed to assist people with all types of disability, including mental illness, especially those a long way from the metropolitan area with a local advocate who can engage with the client face-to-face and assist them to interact with our solicitors.

Disability Advocates working with DA provide non-legal assistance to clients on a broad range of issues such as the NDIS, Disability Royal Commission, health, education, services, discrimination, etc. Disability Advocates develop a plan in collaboration with the client and based on the client's preferred outcome, then work towards this goal, negotiating on the side of the client. Advocates are not caseworkers but usually have a medium-term relationship with a client and expertise working with a wide range of disabilities. Based on a firm foundation of understanding the different roles, we have found that the skills of disability advocates and lawyers can complement each other and get improved outcomes for clients.

DLNSW aims to complement existing providers in the disability law space. Part of the referral process from DA to DLNSW is first to refer to existing providers where appropriate and

available. Kylie has developed strong referral networks across the sector and continues to facilitate referrals to other CLCs (both specialist and generalist) and pro bono partners.

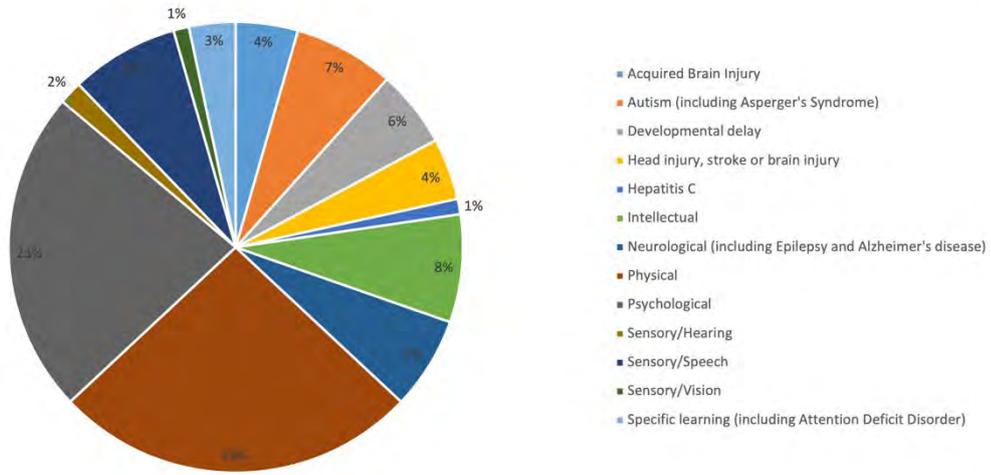
Donna Flood is a social security solicitor from Welfare Rights Centre. Donna and Kylie have developed clear and rapid referral pathways between the two services and have found many opportunities to share knowledge and resources. Welfare Rights Centre has been available when advice is needed on unfamiliar areas of social security law and has also been partnering with DLNSW and the Mid North Coast Legal Centre to develop community education for local community workers. Donna explains, *"the sessions combine both Services' experience and expertise in the disability space and will be of significant value to the community as compared to those we may run alone."*

Feedback from clients and advocates about Kylie's role has been overwhelmingly positive. One client said, *"It was great to talk to you [and the advocate] today. We appreciate your expertise and compassion in this issue and look forward to further communication"*. Another client said, *"it was Kylie's knowledge that informed both myself and DA about how Centrelink reviews their 20 point system. This information helped in the AAT appeal and ultimately lead to a positive outcome at the appeal."* Due to the positive response to Kylie's role MNCLC will soon employ a second solicitor under the DLNSW program.

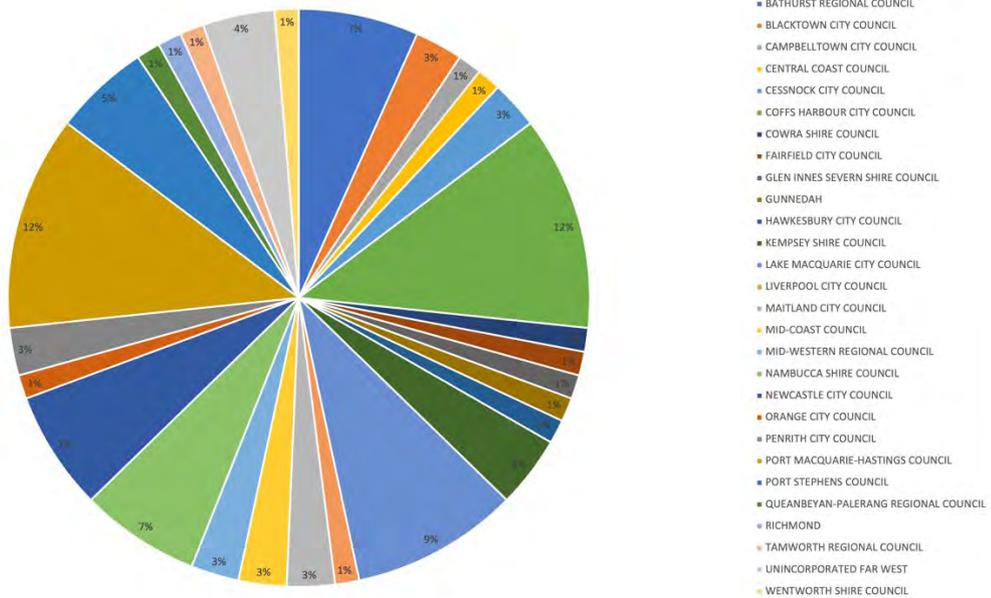
For Advocacy Law Alliance, the governing and support organisation for DA and MNCLC, people with disability have a right to equality, fairness, and a good quality of life. Disability Law NSW puts this vision into practice by combining the expertise of different professions such as lawyers, disability advocates and social workers to achieve the best possible outcome for clients.

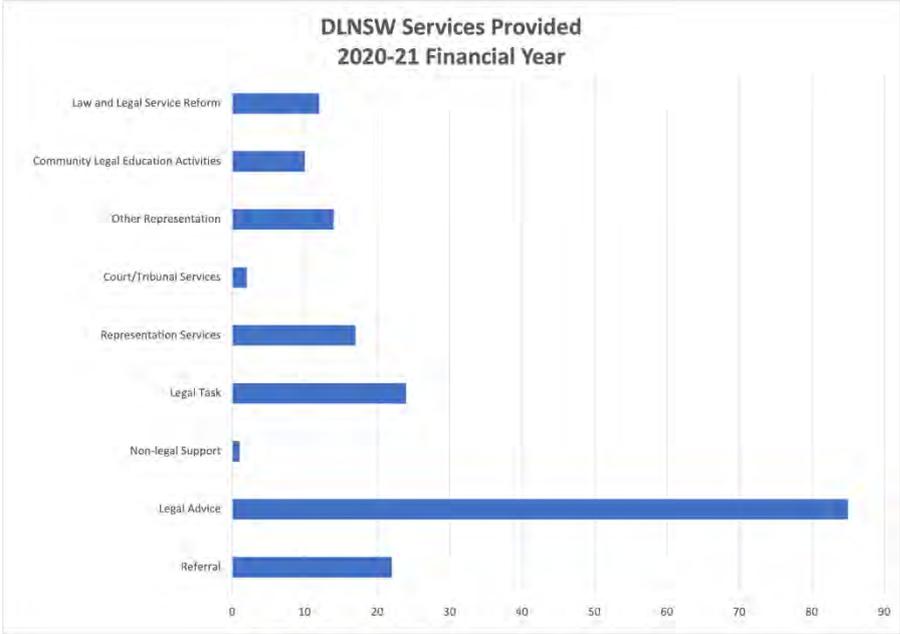
- 68% were Government/Admin law
- 14% Disability Discrimination,
- 4% Employment Law
- 4% Consumer Complaints
- 2% Sexual Assault
- 8% Other Civil

DLNSW Client Disability Status  
2020-21 Financial Year



DLNSW Service by LGA  
2020-21 Financial Year







# Annual Financial Statements

Advocacy Law Alliance Inc  
For the year ended 30 June 2021

Prepared by BeLLCORP Accountants

## Contents

3	Income and Expenditure Statement
5	Balance Sheet
6	Statement of Cash Flows
7	Notes to the Financial Statements
12	Statement by Members of the Board
13	Auditor's Report
15	Auditors' Independence Declaration
16	Certificate By Members of the Board
17	Departmental / Grant Specific Profit & Loss Statements

## Income and Expenditure Statement

### Advocacy Law Alliance Inc For the year ended 30 June 2021

	2021	2020
<b>Grant Income</b>		
Grant Income	6,470,512	5,333,564
<b>Total Grant Income</b>	<b>6,470,512</b>	<b>5,333,564</b>
<b>Gross Surplus</b>	<b>6,470,512</b>	<b>5,333,564</b>
<b>Other Income</b>		
Administration Income	30,000	-
Interest Income	9,699	29,109
Government Wage Subsidies	-	33,052
Cash Flow Boost Income	50,000	50,000
Gain on sale of Non-Current Assets	57,081	1,124
<b>Total Other Income</b>	<b>146,779</b>	<b>113,285</b>
<b>Expenditure</b>		
Administration Charge	30,000	-
Advertising & Promotion	5,454	7,787
Audit Fees	12,500	11,200
Bank Fees	2,239	1,729
Cleaning	10,584	7,092
Client Requisites	(478)	1,035
Computer Expenses	200,195	199,310
Depreciation	59,171	64,810
Filing Fees	80	159
Holiday Pay	32,639	72,932
Insurances	124,996	78,023
Long Service Leave	34,458	25,290
Loss on disposal of Non-Current Assets	-	1,074
Merchandise	17,012	12,077
Motor Vehicles	52,930	56,373
Postage, Freight & Courier	7,265	7,715
Printing & Stationery	112,981	46,057
Quality Assurance	15,080	600
Rent & Outgoings	385,913	191,958
Repairs & Maintenance	9,556	5,156
Salaries & Wages	4,163,570	3,677,796
Security	1,289	925
Staff Training & Development	88,959	207,472
Subscriptions	20,477	13,343
Superannuation	390,208	339,972
Telephone & Internet	58,762	54,626
Travel and Accommodation	38,300	36,205

The accompanying notes form part of these financial statements. These statements should be read in conjunction with the attached audit report.

## Income and Expenditure Statement



	2021	2020
Volunteer Costs	8,988	8,366
<b>Total Expenditure</b>	<b>5,883,127</b>	<b>5,129,083</b>
<b>Current Year Surplus/ (Deficit)</b>	<b>734,165</b>	<b>317,766</b>

The accompanying notes form part of these financial statements. These statements should be read in conjunction with the attached audit report.

## Balance Sheet

### Advocacy Law Alliance Inc As at 30 June 2021

	NOTES	30 JUN 2021	30 JUN 2020
<b>Assets</b>			
<b>Current Assets</b>			
Cash and Cash Equivalents	3	1,000,110	1,088,987
Trade and Other Receivables	4	1,658	1,225
GST Receivable		-	39,613
Rental Bond		17,597	17,237
<b>Total Current Assets</b>		<b>1,019,365</b>	<b>1,147,061</b>
<b>Non-Current Assets</b>			
Term Deposits	3	1,168,728	161,451
Property, Plant & Equipment	5	267,248	205,047
<b>Total Non-Current Assets</b>		<b>1,435,976</b>	<b>366,498</b>
<b>Total Assets</b>		<b>2,455,341</b>	<b>1,513,559</b>
<b>Liabilities</b>			
<b>Current Liabilities</b>			
Trade and Other Payables	6	144,078	81,459
GST Payable		44,901	-
Employee Entitlements	8	458,295	409,206
Grants in Advance		44,000	11,000
<b>Total Current Liabilities</b>		<b>691,274</b>	<b>501,665</b>
<b>Non-Current Liabilities</b>			
Employee Entitlements	8	72,735	54,727
<b>Total Non-Current Liabilities</b>		<b>72,735</b>	<b>54,727</b>
<b>Total Liabilities</b>		<b>764,010</b>	<b>556,393</b>
<b>Net Assets</b>		<b>1,691,331</b>	<b>957,166</b>
<b>Member's Funds</b>			
Capital Reserve		1,691,331	957,166
<b>Total Member's Funds</b>		<b>1,691,331</b>	<b>957,166</b>

The accompanying notes form part of these financial statements. These statements should be read in conjunction with the attached audit report.



## Statement of Cash Flows

**Advocacy Law Alliance Inc**  
**For the year ended 30 June 2021**

	NOTES	2021	2020
<b>Operating Activities</b>			
Receipts from funding authorities		6,583,512	5,429,808
Payemnts to suppliers and employees		(5,610,518)	(5,019,528)
Interest Received		9,699	29,109
<b>Total from Operating Activities</b>		<b>982,693</b>	<b>439,389</b>
<b>Investing Activities</b>			
Payments for Property, Plant & Equipment		(171,316)	(70,909)
Proceeds from sale of Property, Plant & Equipment		107,024	27,222
<b>Total from Investing Activities</b>		<b>(64,292)</b>	<b>(43,687)</b>
<b>Cash Balance</b>			
Opening Cash Balance	3	1,250,437	854,735
Net increase or (decrease) in cash from operating and investing		918,401	395,702
<b>Closing Cash Balance</b>	3	<b>2,168,838</b>	<b>1,250,437</b>

The accompanying notes form part of these financial statements. These statements should be read in conjunction with the attached audit report.

# Notes to the Financial Statements

## Advocacy Law Alliance Inc For the year ended 30 June 2021

The financial statements cover Advocacy Law Alliance Inc. (the association) as an individual entity. Advocacy Law Alliance Inc. is a not for profit association incorporated in NSW under the Associations Incorporation Act NSW.

The functional and presentation currency of the association is Australian dollars.

Comparatives are consistent with prior years, unless otherwise stated.

### 1. Basis of Preparation

This financial report is a special purpose financial report prepared in order to satisfy the financial reporting requirements of the Associations Incorporation Act NSW. The Board has determined that the association is not a reporting entity since there are unlikely to exist users of the financial report who are not able to command the preparation of reports tailored so as to satisfy specifically all of their information needs.

The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the recognition and measurement requirements of the Australian Accounting Standards & Accounting Interpretations, and the disclosure requirements of AASB 101 Presentation of Financial Statements, AASB 107 Statement of Cash Flows, AASB 108 Accounting Policies, Changes in Accounting Estimates & Errors, and AASB 1054 Australian Additional Disclosures.

### 2. Summary of Significant Accounting Policies

The financial statements have been prepared on an accruals basis and are based on historic costs and do not take into account changing money values or, except where stated specifically, current valuations of non-current assets.

The following significant accounting policies, which are consistent with the previous period unless stated otherwise, have been adopted in the preparation of these financial statements.

#### Property, Plant and Equipment (PPE)

Leasehold improvements, office equipment motor vehicles and all other plant are carried at cost less, where applicable, any accumulated depreciation.

The depreciable amount of all PPE is depreciated over the useful lives of the assets to the association commencing from the time the asset is held ready for use.

Leasehold improvements are amortised over the shorter of either the unexpired period of the lease or the estimated useful lives of the improvements.

#### Impairment of Assets

At the end of each reporting period, the committee reviews the carrying amounts of its tangible and intangible assets to determine whether there is any indication that those assets have been impaired. If such an indication exists, an impairment test is carried out on the asset by comparing the recoverable amount of the asset, being the higher of the asset's fair value less costs to sell and value in use, to the asset's carrying amount. Any excess of the asset's carrying amount over its recoverable amount is recognised in the income and expenditure statement.

#### Employee Provisions

Provision is made for the association's liability for employee benefits arising from services rendered by employees to the end of the reporting period. Employee provisions have been measured at the amounts expected to be paid when the liability is settled.

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These notes should be read in conjunction with the attached compilation report.

Employee benefits expected to be settled more than one year after the end of the reporting period have been measured at the present value of the estimated future cash flows to be made for those benefits. Consideration is given to the probability that the employee may satisfy vesting requirements.

## Provisions

Provisions are recognised when the association has a legal or constructive obligation, as a result of past events, for which it is probable that an outflow of economic benefits will result and that outflow can be reliably measured. Provisions are measured at the best estimate of the amounts required to settle the obligation at the end of the reporting period.

## Cash and Cash Equivalents

Cash and Cash Equivalents includes cash on hand, deposits held at call with banks, and other short-term highly liquid investments with original maturities of three months or less. Cash & Cash Equivalents also includes term deposits held at call with banks, with a maturity date less than 12 months from the reporting date.

## Accounts Receivable and Other Debtors

Accounts receivable and other debtors include amounts due from members as well as amounts receivable from donors. Receivables expected to be collected within 12 months of the end of the reporting period are classified as current assets. All other receivables are classified as non-current assets.

## Revenue and Other Income

Revenue is measured at the fair value of the consideration received or receivable after taking into account any trade discounts and volume rebates allowed. For this purpose, deferred consideration is not discounted to present values when recognising revenue.

Interest revenue is recognised using the effective interest method, which for floating rate financial assets is the rate inherent in the instrument. Dividend revenue is recognised when the right to receive a dividend has been established.

Grant and donation income is recognised when the entity obtains control over the funds, which is generally at the time of receipt, unless the grant agreement confirms otherwise.

If conditions are attached to the grant that must be satisfied before the association is eligible to receive the contribution, recognition of the grant as revenue will be deferred until those conditions are satisfied.

All revenue is stated net of the amount of goods and services tax.

## Goods and Services Tax (GST)

Revenues, expenses and assets are recognised net of the amount of GST, except where the amount of GST incurred is not recoverable from the Australian Taxation Office (ATO). Receivables and payables are stated inclusive of the amount of GST receivable or payable. The net amount of GST recoverable from, or payable to, the ATO is included with other receivables or payables in the assets and liabilities statement.

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These notes should be read in conjunction with the attached compilation report.

## Financial Assets

Investments in financial assets are initially recognised at cost, which includes transaction costs, and are subsequently measured at fair value, which is equivalent to their market bid price at the end of the reporting period. Movements in fair value are recognised through an equity reserve.

## Accounts Payable and Other Payables

Accounts payable and other payables represent the liability outstanding at the end of the reporting period for goods and services received by the association during the reporting period that remain unpaid. The balance is recognised as a current liability with the amounts normally paid within 30 days of recognition of the liability.

	2021	2020
<b>3. Cash &amp; Cash Equivalents</b>		
<b>Cash on Hand</b>		
Petty Cash	150	-
<b>Total Cash on Hand</b>	<b>150</b>	<b>-</b>
<b>Deposit Accounts</b>		
Operating Account	299,240	70,813
High Interest Account	700,721	1,018,174
<b>Total Deposit Accounts</b>	<b>999,960</b>	<b>1,088,987</b>
<b>Term Deposits maturing in less than 12 months</b>		
Term Deposits	1,168,728	161,451
<b>Total Term Deposits maturing in less than 12 months</b>	<b>1,168,728</b>	<b>161,451</b>
<b>Total Cash &amp; Cash Equivalents</b>	<b>2,168,838</b>	<b>1,250,437</b>
	2021	2020

## 4. Trade and Other Receivables

<b>Trade Receivables</b>		
Accounts Receivable	1,658	1,225
<b>Total Trade Receivables</b>	<b>1,658</b>	<b>1,225</b>
<b>Total Trade and Other Receivables</b>	<b>1,658</b>	<b>1,225</b>
	2021	2020

## 5. Property, Plant & Equipment

<b>Leasehold Improvements</b>		
Leasehold Improvements	28,523	28,523
Less Accumulated Depreciation on Leasehold Improvements	(21,670)	(19,956)
<b>Total Leasehold Improvements</b>	<b>6,854</b>	<b>8,567</b>
<b>Plant and Equipment</b>		
<b>Plant and Equipment at Cost</b>		

These notes should be read in conjunction with the attached compilation report.

	2021	2020
Plant & Equipment	1,627	1,627
Computer Equipment	19,428	19,428
Office Furniture & Equipment	12,542	12,542
<b>Total Plant and Equipment at Cost</b>	<b>33,597</b>	<b>33,597</b>
<b>Accumulated Depreciation of Plant and Equipment</b>		
Less Accumulated Depreciation on Plant & Equipment	(1,438)	(1,356)
Less Accumulated Depreciation on Computer Equipment	(18,898)	(18,505)
Less Accumulated Depreciation on Office Furniture & Equipment	(11,454)	(10,988)
<b>Total Accumulated Depreciation of Plant and Equipment</b>	<b>(31,790)</b>	<b>(30,849)</b>
<b>Total Plant and Equipment</b>	<b>1,808</b>	<b>2,748</b>
<b>Motor Vehicles</b>		
Motor Vehicles at Cost	413,893	389,329
Less Accumulated Depreciation of Motor Vehicles	(155,307)	(195,597)
<b>Total Motor Vehicles</b>	<b>258,587</b>	<b>193,732</b>
<b>Total Property, Plant &amp; Equipment</b>	<b>267,248</b>	<b>205,047</b>
	2021	2020

## 6. Trade and Other Payables

<b>Trade Payables</b>		
Accounts Payable	25,706	4,526
<b>Total Trade Payables</b>	<b>25,706</b>	<b>4,526</b>
<b>Other Payables</b>		
PAYG Withholdings Payable	65,792	61,125
Superannuation Payable	52,376	15,604
Other Current Liabilities	205	205
<b>Total Other Payables</b>	<b>118,372</b>	<b>76,933</b>
<b>Total Trade and Other Payables</b>	<b>144,078</b>	<b>81,459</b>
	2021	2020

## 7. Deferred Income

<b>Deferred Income Government Grants</b>		
Grants in Advance	44,000	11,000
<b>Total Deferred Income Government Grants</b>	<b>44,000</b>	<b>11,000</b>
<b>Total Deferred Income</b>	<b>44,000</b>	<b>11,000</b>
	2021	2020

## 8. Employee Entitlements

<b>Current</b>		
Provision for Holiday Pay	297,123	264,484
Provision for Long Service Leave	161,172	144,722
<b>Total Current</b>	<b>458,295</b>	<b>409,206</b>

These notes should be read in conjunction with the attached compilation report.

	2021	2020
<b>Non-Current</b>		
Provision for Long Service Leave	72,735	54,727
<b>Total Non-Current</b>	<b>72,735</b>	<b>54,727</b>
<b>Total Employee Entitlements</b>	<b>531,030</b>	<b>463,934</b>
	2021	2020
<b>9. Remuneration of the auditors of the Association</b>		
For audit or review of the financial report	12,500	11,200
<b>Total Remuneration of the auditors of the Association</b>	<b>12,500</b>	<b>11,200</b>

## 10. Contingencies

In the opinion of the Board, the Association had a contingent liability of \$NIL (2020: \$9,132), being for surplus funds carried forward from prior and current year Mid North Coast CLC Grants received. Under the terms of the CLC funding agreement, the Association may carry forward up to 15% of the annual funds received in the current financial year without seeking written approval. The contingent liability above represents funds held in excess of the 15% carried forward CLC surplus funds from prior financial years. The Association may be called, at any point in time, to return a surplus in excess of the 15% to the funding body.

## 11. Events Occuring After the Reporting Date

At date of authorisation of this financial report, no matters or circumstances have arisen since the end of the financial year which significantly affect or may significantly affect the operations of the Association, the results of those operations or the state of affairs of the Association in future financial years

## 12. Association Details

The registered office of the Association is:

Advocacy Law Alliance Inc.  
Suite 1, Level 2  
408 King Street  
NEWCASTLE WEST NSW 2302.

These notes should be read in conjunction with the attached compilation report.

## Statement by Members of the Board

### Advocacy Law Alliance Inc For the year ended 30 June 2021

#### Annual Statements Give True and Fair View of Financial Position and Performance of the Association

We, Gayle Brown (Chair)

and, Hayden Asper (Treasurer)

being members of the committee of Advocacy Law Alliance Inc, certify that –

The statements attached to this certificate give a true and fair view of the financial position and performance of Advocacy Law Alliance Inc during and at the end of the financial year of the association ending on 30 June 2021.

DocuSigned by:

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Gayle Brown".

3626B24F798A4ED...

Dated: 30 September 2021

DocuSigned by:

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Asper".

A30533948D7D471...

Dated: 30 September 2021

## Auditor's Report

### Advocacy Law Alliance Inc For the year ended 30 June 2021

#### Independent Auditors Report to the members of the Association

We have audited the accompanying financial report, being a special purpose financial report, of Advocacy Law Alliance Inc (the Association), which comprises the committee's report, the assets and liabilities statement as at 30 June 2021, the income and expenditure statement for the year then ended, cash flow statement, notes comprising a summary of significant accounting policies and other explanatory information, and the certification by members of the Board on the annual statements giving a true and fair view of the financial position and performance of the association.

#### Board's Responsibility for the Financial Report

The Board of Advocacy Law Alliance Inc is responsible for the preparation and fair presentation of the financial report, and has determined that the basis of preparation described in Note 1 is appropriate to meet the requirements of the Associations Incorporation Act 2009 (NSW) and is appropriate to meet the needs of the members. The Board's responsibility also includes such internal control as the Board determines is necessary to enable the preparation and fair presentation of a financial report that is free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

#### Auditor's Responsibility

Our responsibility is to express an opinion on the financial report based on our audit. We have conducted our audit in accordance with Australian Auditing Standards. Those standards require that we comply with relevant ethical requirements relating to audit engagements and plan and perform the audit to obtain reasonable assurance whether the financial report is free from material misstatement.

An audit involves performing procedures to obtain audit evidence about the amounts and disclosures in the financial report. The procedures selected depend on the auditor's judgment, including the assessment of the risks of material misstatement of the financial report, whether due to fraud or error. In making those risk assessments, the auditor considers internal control relevant to the association's preparation and fair presentation of the financial report, in order to design audit procedures that are appropriate in the circumstances, but not for the purpose of expressing an opinion on the effectiveness of the association's internal control. An audit also includes evaluating the appropriateness of accounting policies used and the reasonableness of accounting estimates made by the committee, as well as evaluating the overall presentation of the financial report.

We believe that the audit evidence we have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our audit opinion.

#### Opinion

In our opinion, the financial report presents fairly, in all material respects, the financial position of Advocacy Law Alliance Inc as at 30 June 2021 and its financial performance for the year then ended in accordance with the accounting policies described in Note 1 to the financial statements, and the requirements of the Associations Incorporation Act 2009 (NSW).

#### Basis of Accounting and Restriction on Distribution

Without modifying our opinion, we draw attention to Note 1 to the financial statements, which describes the basis of accounting. The financial report has been prepared to assist Advocacy Law Alliance Inc to meet the requirements of the Associations Incorporation Act 2009 (NSW). As a result, the financial report may not be suitable for another purpose.

Auditor's Report



DocuSigned by:

*Jeff Bell*

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Jeffrey Bell CPA

**BeLLCORP Accountants**

Certified Practising Accountants

Level 1, 142 Union Street, The Junction NSW 2291

Dated 30 September 2021

## Auditors' Independence Declaration

**Advocacy Law Alliance Inc**  
**For the year ended 30 June 2021**

### **Auditors' Independence Declaration under section 307C of the Corporations Act 2001**

We declare that, to the best of our knowledge and belief, during the year ended 30 June 2021 that there have been:

- No contraventions of the auditor independence requirements as set out in the Corporations Act 2001; and
- No contraventions of any applicable code of professional conduct in relation to the audit.

DocuSigned by:

*Jeff Bell*

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Jeffrey Bell CPA

**BeLLCORP Accountants**  
Certified Practising Accountants  
Level 1, 142 Union Street, The Junction NSW 2291

Dated 30 September 2021

## Certificate By Members of the Board

### Advocacy Law Alliance Inc For the year ended 30 June 2021

I, Mr Mark Grierson of Suite 1, Level 2, 408 King Street, Newcastle West New South Wales 2302 certify that:

1. I attended the annual general meeting of the association held on 28 October 2021.
2. The financial statements for the year ended 30 June 2021 were submitted to the members of the association at its annual general meeting.

DocuSigned by:

*Mark Grierson*

ACFOAP805A154F3  
Mr Mark Grierson

Dated: 28 October 2021



## Departmental / Grant Specific Profit & Loss Statements

**Advocacy Law Alliance Inc**  
**For the year ended 30 June 2021**

Please refer to the following pages for departmental profit and loss reporting. The reports should be read in conjunction with the Notes to the Financial Statements.