



ANNUAL REPORT





**ALA** provides high quality disability and legal advocacy 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.

### **Acknowledgement of Country**

We acknowledge and pay our respect to the traditional custodians of the lands and waters of NSW, and all Aboriginal Elders, past, present and emerging.

We respectfully acknowledge the traditional custodians of the land and waters of New South Wales, and their continuing cultural, spiritual customs and practices. We celebrate Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples' unique cultural and spiritual relationship to Country and acknowledge the significance of their cultures in Australia.

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Mid North Coast Legal Centre



**ALA provides high quality disability and legal advocacy 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 Vision**

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

## **Our Mission**

ALA provides high quality social 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.

## **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**

Disability Advocacy Futures Program (DAFP)

#### **Legal Aid NSW**

Hunter Cooperative Legal Service Delivery Project (CLSD)

#### **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

NSW Department of Communities and Justice

Womens NSW

Healthy North Coast

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



1985

In Tamworth, a small group of locals set up an association to advocate for people with an intellectual disability called Citizen Advocacy Northwest. In Newcastle, a service called Self-Advocacy Newcastle began.

1992

Self-Advocacy Newcastle stops operating and a service called Newcastle Community Access forms an advocacy working group to prepare a tender for federal advocacy funding.

1994



Disability Advocacy Service Hunter (DASH) is officially established in Newcastle to advocate for all people with a disability.

DASH becomes a separate entity from Newcastle Community Access.

2006



DASH and Citizen Advocacy Northwest join forces to become Disability Advocacy NSW (DA) and gradually expand to cover the Mid North Coast region.

2007



DA establishes offices in Coffs Harbour and Armidale.

2008

Lobbying to establish a Community Legal Centre on the Mid North Coast begins as DA advocates find the region has no access to a community legal centre.

2010

Commonwealth and NSW governments offer funds to establish a community legal centre in Port Macquarie and DA successfully tenders.

2011



To reflect the diversity of the services it provides and the alliance between legal and social advocacy, DA changes its name to Advocacy Law Alliance and registers the business names Mid North Coast Community Legal Centre and Disability Advocacy NSW.

Mid North Coast Community Legal Centre opens its doors in Port Macquarie, with DA also opening an office in Port Macquarie.



NDIS legislation is passed and the Hunter region becomes a NDIS trial site. DA becomes one of the first services in Australia to establish a NDIS Appeals support program.



Disability Information and Advocacy Service in Bathurst joins to become DA's new Central West region.

DA opens 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.

The NDIS trial period ends and the scheme is rolled out across the rest of Australia. NDIS Appeals program grows beyond Newcastle to Sydney and other regions.



DA begins icare independent advocacy program.



DA begins federally funded Decision Support program for all of NSW.

DA successfully tenders to extend its National Disability Advocacy Program funding to further establish its work in Western Sydney and Nepean-Blue Mountains.



Mid North Coast Community Legal Centre receives additional state funding and opens a second office in Coffs Harbour, now covering six LGAs.

DA begins supporting people to tell their story at the Disability Royal Commission.



Mid North Coast Community Legal Centre employs a disability law specialist solicitor to assist DA clients in all DA regions across NSW. This service becomes known as Disability Law NSW.

MNCLC is funded to provide some specialised programs to assist with bushfire recovery and COVID-19.



On its 10th anniversary, Mid North Coast Community Legal Centre rebrands to become Mid North Coast Legal Centre (MNCLC).

Following the #StandByMe campaign (2016-2020) to retain state funding for disability advocacy services, the sector is restructured based on recommendations of the Ageing and Disability Commission.

The new NSW Disability Advocacy Futures Program begins, and ALA successfully tenders for regions it has a presence in. This outcome in late 2021 sees significant increase in staff numbers in 2022.



DA recruit staff in Ballina and Central Coast and increase numbers in other areas.

A new national pilot program Disability Advocacy Support Helpline (DASH) begins planning and recruiting.



## ALA Board

Our volunteer Board of Management oversees the governance of Advocacy Law Alliance to ensure it is financially stable, has a clear strategic direction and has the greatest impact possible for the communities we serve.

I worked as a Federal public servant for most of my career. During this time, I worked in several large Departments, in a range of senior administrative and managerial roles. I have a Law degree and a Master of Business Administration degree. As a retiree now I see my role on the Board is to contribute to Advocacy Law Alliance's important work using the skills and experience, I developed during my career.

**GAYLE BROWN**  
Chairperson

I have Diplomas in Nursing and Mental Health and a Certificate 4 in Governance. 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.

**TODD CRANDELL**  
Deputy Chairperson

Before retiring I worked for Port Macquarie-Hastings Council as the Group Manager Community Engagement and Planning and Group Manager Community Development. Prior this, I was a Senior Executive with Australian Government Departments with extensive experience in managing diverse operational teams to deliver outcomes. I hold a Bachelor of Commerce and a Master of Business Administration.

**JACLYNE FISHER**  
Secretary

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.

**HAYDEN ASPER**  
Treasurer



## Board Members

### JOSEPH POPOV

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I have Cerebral Palsy. I have graduated from a Bachelor of Social Science and am soon to finish a Bachelor of Laws/ Diploma of Legal Practice. I have also commenced a Graduate Certificate of Workforce Diversity and Inclusion. I am 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. My newest role is as an intern for Karen Ansen Consulting, where I deal with employment law and human resource matters.

### RACHEL 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.

### 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, and this experience has been profoundly rewarding. I studied a Bachelor of Arts and a Juris Doctor 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 more than 20 years in both NSW and Queensland. I have practised both as a private practitioner and 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 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 several boards 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.

### NICOLE GRGAS

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I hold a Social Science Degree, a Graduate Certificate in Adult Education and a Certificate in Community Services, Advocacy. I am the Manager of a small community organisation and have worked in the field of advocacy for more than 20 years. I have experience on Boards of both large and small community organisations and so have experience on both sides of the fence. I have a commitment to social justice and a particular passion about ensuring all our community members have access to the services they need.



# Chairperson's Report

The COVID-19 pandemic continued to deliver challenges for ALA's operations during the last year.

Despite these challenges, the organisation managed to continue to grow and find innovative ways to maintain quality service delivery. The unusual advent of the current relatively stable financial position has allowed ALA to make some strategic structural changes and policy decisions.

ALA has rightly devoted considerable attention to staff recruitment, training/development, supervision and wellbeing in the last few years and these efforts have resulted in a more productive, healthy and progressive organisation.

Like many organisations, recruiting new staff during the pandemic has presented some difficulties but these have not been insurmountable.

During the year, the organisation continued its work to focus on influencing government policy and practice in line with the client needs identified through our service delivery activities and research. Being proactive in this context will ultimately lead to more tailored service delivery, efficiencies in program delivery and improvement in the effectiveness of the services delivered.

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.

**Gayle Brown**  
Chairperson

# Treasurer's Report

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 2022.

The financial report was prepared and audited by Oracle Accounting. The audit did not identify any issues with the financial report. I make the following comments in respect to the financial report:

## > Income & Expenditure Statement

ALA received \$7,185,655 in grant income for the 2022 financial year, an increase of \$715,143 from the 2021 financial year. ALA also received some other income, primarily in the form of government subsidies. \$7,362,766 was incurred in expenses, resulting in an operating deficit of \$160,822. The largest increase in expenditure was in the category of wages, with a 14% increase from 2021.

I note that during the financial year several unexpected funding opportunities presented themselves. ALA originally forecast income of \$5,412,718 and expenses of \$6,354,760. Accordingly, the deficit of \$160,822 which is less than the originally budgeted deficit of \$942,042. I note that ALA was intentionally running a budgeted deficit for the 2022 financial year.

## > Balance Sheet

ALA's balance sheet identifies assets in the sum of \$2,779,561. 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 \$1,242,721.

I note that ALA's net asset position has decreased from the 2021 financial year, by an amount of \$160,822 to \$1,536,839. The net asset position indicates that ALA can 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 2022, ALA has a current ratio of 1.7, an increase from last financial year's current ratio of 1.47. This is a result of a decrease in the sum held in term deposits (a non-current asset) from the previous year as those funds were held on current account at 30 June 2022. I note that funds held in term deposit are still accessible at short notice if needed. Based on the financial statements, I am confident that ALA will be able to continue to operate as a going concern.

ALA's staff should be congratulated for their hard work and performance in the 2022 financial year as they have once again delivered an amazing service to all stakeholders and be a leader in their industry.

**Hayden Asper CA RITP**  
Treasurer

## CEO's Report

ALA continues to focus on staff wellbeing, culture and internal improvements. While our main efforts will always be towards the clients we serve, having happy, high performing staff is an essential part of providing quality social and legal advocacy.

We have adapted well to the challenges of the pandemic and moved to a hybrid work environment which gives staff greater flexibility and does not affect services to clients.

Both Disability Advocacy NSW (DA) and Mid North Coast Legal Centre (MNCLC) continue to grow and evolve after successful tenders to expand services in regional and rural NSW as well as the larger metropolitan centres. We are looking at a significant increase in staff numbers and have been busily recruiting in a tough job market.

The need for advocacy assistance is generally growing and many issues our clients face are common and relate to systemic problems. In response to this we employ a Policy Officer to coordinate with all in the organisation to seek to influence systemic change, underpinned by factual research including the coalface experience of staff and their clients. This year we have had significant policy input in our areas of expertise.

Disability Law NSW, which links DA and MNCLC operations, continues to operate at capacity in providing legal support to DA clients and advocates in complex legal matters.

ALA continues to develop a strong management team to support the work of teams across the business. This year some staff have stepped up to management roles and we have recruited some new faces to better support our employees.

Both MNCLC and DA undertake independent quality accreditation assessments and are fully compliant with the appropriate standards.

The ALA Board continues to have a strong mix of skills with financial, legal and management expertise, combined with service user knowledge and experience to oversee the strategic governance of ALA.

Thank you to all involved in ALA this year.

**Mark Grierson**  
*Chief Executive Officer*

## DCEO's Report

ALA, across the breadth of its services, supported more than 5,000 people with over 7,000 services.

ALA is dedicated to supporting people experiencing disadvantage on many fronts, including financial hardship, housing insecurity, discrimination and a range of other social and legal issues.

We are proud to offer a service with a committed, local presence in over two thirds of rural and regional NSW. From Broken Hill in the Far West to the Blue Mountains, and Ballina in the North Coast: our staff are there, on the ground, supporting communities, challenging injustice, and advocating for a fairer society.

2021-22 has been another eventful and purposeful year. We continue to provide high quality support through legal and social advocacy across the business for some of the most vulnerable members of our community. And through our commitment to continually review and deliver excellence, the 2021-22 year has seen many changes and improvements, with more to come in 2022-23.

One of the highlights for me has been our work prioritising a workplace culture that is driven by ALA values and proactively supports the wellbeing of our employees. Part of our wellbeing and culture strategy has been to introduce Wellbeing Champions across the Service. Wellbeing Champions are embedded in our teams and play a key role in creating and maintaining a workplace culture that promotes and encourages a respectful, de-stigmatising and supportive approach to the management of mental health and wellbeing. Our six Wellbeing Champions from across ALA focus on promoting general wellbeing within the organisation, facilitating the implementation of ALA's health and wellbeing policy/strategy, providing a listening ear when appropriate and sharing health and wellbeing resources and support options. We have also implemented a system wellbeing leave days over the year to support staff mental health and resilience.

My special thanks to the dedicated, resilient and professional staff across all aspects of the ALA business. You represent our clients and ALA with professionalism in everything you do, despite the many challenges that we were presented with this year.

Thanks also to the ALA Board for their continued stewardship and professionalism. We are lucky to boast a Board with diverse professional backgrounds, great passion and commitment. They invest their valuable time and energy in ensuring that ALA has a clear vision and strategy to meet our goals.

**Catherine Peek**  
*Deputy Chief Executive Officer*





# ALA Conference

In March 2022 the ALA team descended on Newcastle for the long-awaited annual ALA conference that had been postponed in 2021 due to COVID-19. There were some great staff training opportunities across the 2 days including training sessions on clear communication and adaptive leadership. The ALA conference is an opportunity for the teams from different regions to get together and this year we all enjoyed an afternoon of fun scavenger hunting across Newcastle followed by a great evening at a local restaurant, The Edwards.



## Scavenger Hunt

The whole ALA team went on a fun, immersive and challenging scavenger hunt in Newcastle. The team was randomly split into groups where their problem-solving skills were put to the test, as they battled their way through a series of unique challenges. The activity encouraged teamwork and allowed everyone to get outside.



# NEWCASTLE'S MOST WANTED



GER  
ANVILS

Luckiest  
person in  
NEWCASTLE



**Disability  
Advocacy  
NSW**

# Report



# Manager Advocacy Report

## Amanda Brickwood

It has been a busy 12 months for the DA team. We commenced the 2021-22 year with a degree of uncertainty with future state and federal funding news imminent but still unknown. Concurrently DA was also experiencing an ever-growing demand for advocacy support, a pressure commonly shared across the sector. We were confident of the commitment from both levels of government to support the advocacy sector, but we had some concerns that, even with this commitment, demand would continue to exceed capacity and people needing advocacy support would miss out.

In response to these concerns, DA decided to see the opportunity for innovation in the uncertainty. We spent time initially reflecting on what is important to DA to ensure our pursuit of innovation was aligned with our priorities - our clients, our staff and having a positive impact on our communities. With these priorities guiding us, we commenced a review of our systems and processes and developed plans for improvement across several areas including technology, resources, culture and leadership, learning and development and communications and impact.

In the middle of the 2021-22 period we received news of a commitment from both state and federal governments to fund advocacy for a 3-year period. This funding stability will support the work we are doing to improve our services and ensure people with disability across our regions can access quality advocacy support when needed.

During the second half of the 2021-22 year the DA team set to work with many working groups established to collaborate on various projects. In the 6-month period we have collectively achieved great progress across all key priority areas. Our improvement projects are continuing into the 2022-23 year.



# DA Project Overview 2022



PROJECTS	PHASE 1 (JAN-APR)	PHASE 1 (MAY-AUG)	PHASE 3 (SEPT-DEC)
<b>Culture and Leadership</b>	Recruitment - DA	90% COMPLETED	Recruitment - DASH 17% COMPLETED
	Team and Leadership Development		ONGOING
	Support and develop new roles - Wellbeing Champions and Specialist Disability Advocates		ONGOING
<b>Technology</b>	New CRM Development and implementation - Salesforce		GO LIVE 19 September
	Phone System roll out - 3CX	COMPLETED	
	Introduce new Employee Portal (HR System)		GO LIVE Late August
<b>Resources</b>	Template Development		ONGOING
	Resource Management System		ONGOING
	Service delivery policy review and update		TRIAL PERIOD COMMENCED
<b>Learning and Development</b>	Learning and Development - indication training guide		ONGOING
	Communications Strategy develop and implementation		COMPLETED 1 July
<b>Communications and Impact</b>	Branding - Website redesign/newlogo/promotional material		GO LIVE 5 September

# Some key project highlights:

## Technology

One of our priority areas this year was to look at opportunities to improve our IT systems. One of the major systems that need updating was our client records management system (CRM). We wanted to find a system that would help us work more efficiently by reducing administration time, improve our service access by introducing more online service capabilities and to improve our reporting and data analysis capabilities. We commenced the large project to custom build a new CRM for our service using Salesforce as a platform. The project build phase continues into the 2022-23 year with a system launch planned for Oct 2022.

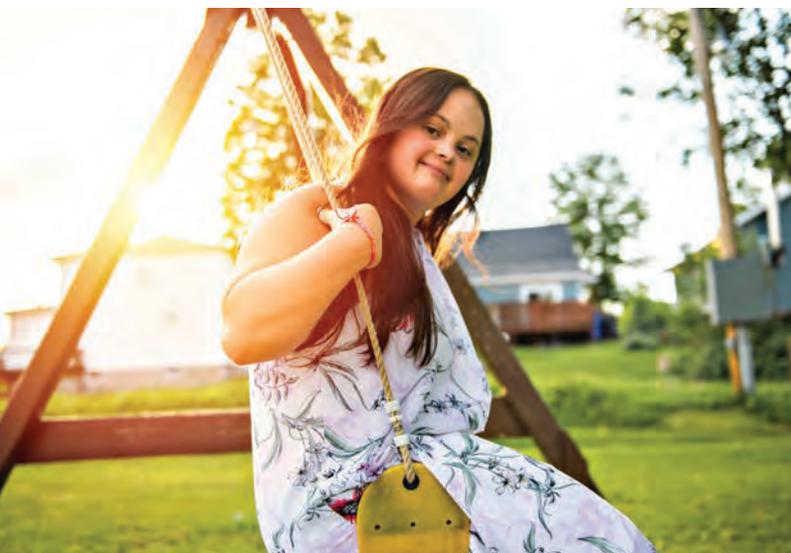
## Resources

### NDIS Appeals support project

In response to the high demand for NDIS Appeals support at the AAT we have dedicated significant internal resources to develop an new NDIS appeals policy framework and associated resources to support our delivery of individual advocacy and self-advocacy support to clients.

The objective of this service improvement work is to create a policy framework and resources that will:

- 1 Support staff undertake this complex work as non-legal advocates**
- 2 Set clearer service boundaries and improve service consistency**
- 3 Better manage limited resources and reduce waitlist timeframes and risk of closure**
- 4 Ensure fair and equitable access to services and help prioritise services to clients at greatest risk**
- 5 Support staff to promote self-advocacy with clients**
- 6 Influence external agencies and stakeholders to make the NDIS appeals process more accessible**



A set of client focused “non-legal” NDIS appeals templates are currently being developed to support the new policy framework. Once complete, these plain English templates will be available for advocates to use with clients to assist them to prepare and present their case at the AAT. We are also aiming to have some of the templates available to access on our website as a self-advocacy resource but need to proceed through a trial phase first to make sure they are fit for purpose.

Many staff have volunteered their time to work on this project and I would like to recognise the contribution of all members of the NDIS Appeals working group, collaborating with our colleagues at DLNSW and the team of Specialist Disability Advocates. This project would not be possible without your hard work and expertise.

## Communications

DA has been working with a communications company to help us develop clear and targeted communications and create a strong and consistent voice across DA. In the latter part of 2021-22 we finalised our communications strategy and commenced work on our new branding and website. The new brand will officially be launched along with the website towards the end of 2022.



## Acknowledgements

Collectively these improvements have required a significant amount of time and commitment from the DA team over and above their core work. I would like to take this opportunity to acknowledge and thank the whole DA team, for your valuable contributions, enthusiasm, commitment and patience. Our achievements are the result of our collective work. I look forward to finalising many of these project with you in the 2022-23 and observing the ensuing benefits we anticipate for the service – clients, staff, and our communities alike.

**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 2021-22 year.**



# Systemic Advocacy 2022

**This year DA integrated their evidence-based systemic advocacy plan. It builds on last year's scoping research findings, that revealed four key service system and systemic issues in regional, rural, and remote NSW (see figure 1).**



## Mini-systemic advocacy projects

Each region has buddied up with another region to develop specific systemic advocacy projects that are aligned with key focus areas. Some examples of these projects are:

- Information sessions for parents of children with a disability at school (New England and West/Far West)
- Housing info pop-up booth (Mid Coast and North Coast)
- NDIS education sessions for support coordinators (Nepean Blue Mountains/Sydney West)
- Information sessions about DA for education providers (Hunter North and South)

## Communications strategy

We have also developed a communications plan that will complement and raise the profile of DA and our systemic advocacy work. This will be informed by our systemic advocacy strategy and the communications strategy developed by Disruptive Media. Expect to see targeted communication in our digital media channels (e.g., social media and website), and news media that will address housing and education, as well as content that celebrates DA and the disability community.

## Housing and Education

With state issues at the forefront in with upcoming election, our focus has been on housing and education. These are areas where we can work collectively with other agencies to meaningfully contribute to agenda setting in law and policy reform.

To represent the experiences of people with disability who are living in both regional, rural, remote areas and metropolitan areas, our policy officer, Cherry Bayliss, and new communications

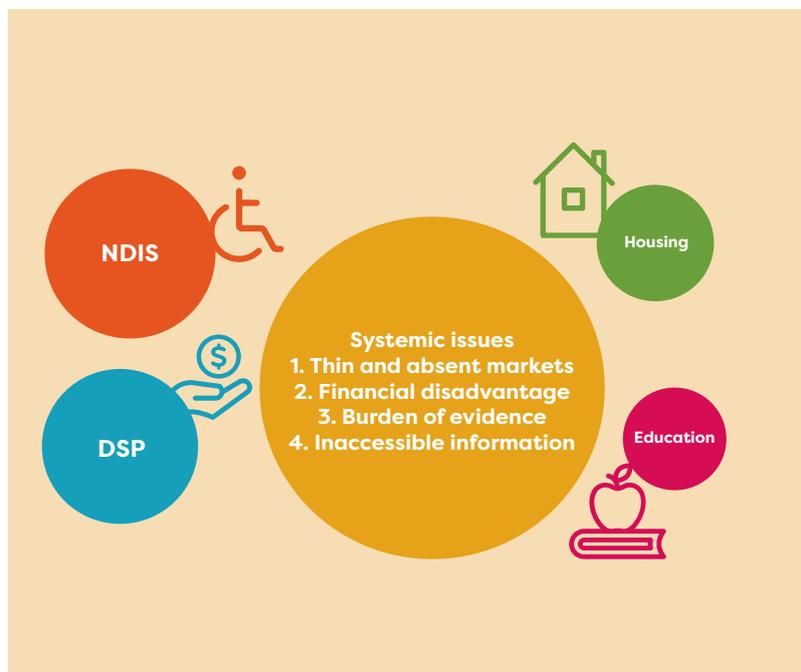
officer, Brendan O'Reilly, took to the road to meet and speak with people about their experiences with housing and education. They visited each of DA's offices (see Figure 2), meeting with ALA staff, and doing outreach with regional managers and local advocates. They spoke with a variety of service providers and service users to identify systemic issues, areas for reform and potential collaborations.

As part of this, we are circulating housing and education content

## NDIS and DSP

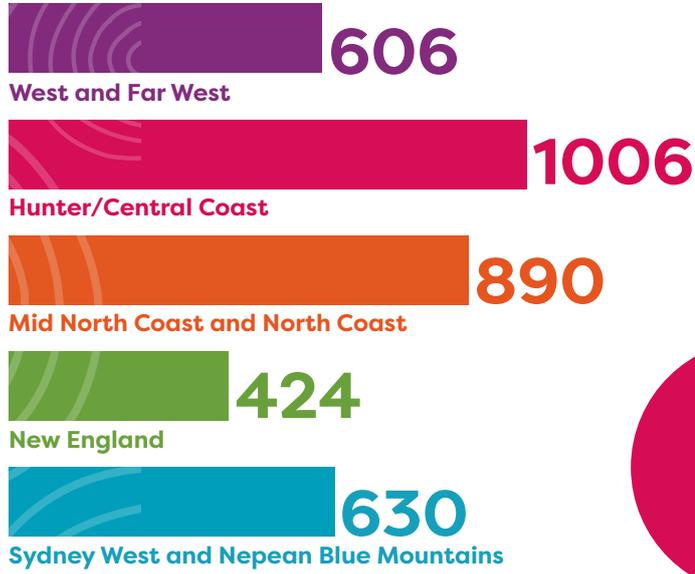
We are continuing our work in these spaces, leveraging off the systemic advocacy work we conducted last year. In particular, with the NDIS our focus has been on the internal/external reviews and the impacts these have on PWD who live in regional-rural areas. We've been working on a collaboration with Your Say Tas and Villamanta to lobby and campaign for improvements to review processes (see The NDIA and Model Litigant submission), and have made two submissions to the NDIS Joint Standing committee; one that addresses RRR trends in AAT matters, and another that draws attention to the systemic issues regarding the burden of evidence for PWD living in RRR areas.

Additionally, we have been building on last year's submission to The Senate Inquiry of the DSP, participating in AFDO roundtable, and repurposing our previous submission for the DRC, headed up by Disability Law's Kylie Hyde.

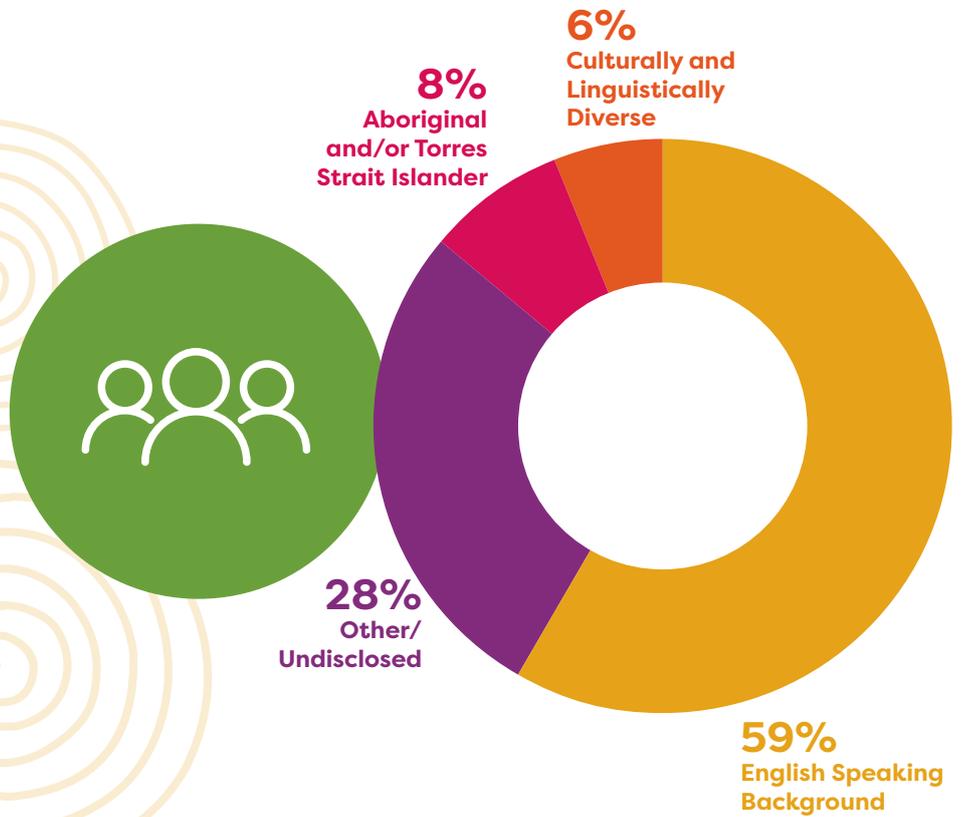


# Our clients

## Region/cases



## Cultural Background

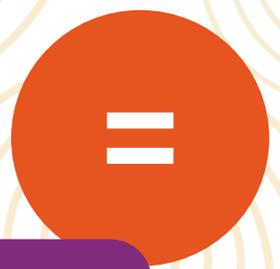


## Primary Disability



- **5%** Acquired Brain Injury
- **13%** Autism Spectrum Disorder
- **1%** Development Delay
- **11%** Intellectual Disability
- **7%** Disability
- **27%** Physical Disability
- **22%** Psychiatric Disability
- **3%** Sensory and Speech
- **2%** Specific Learning/ADD
- **9%** Other

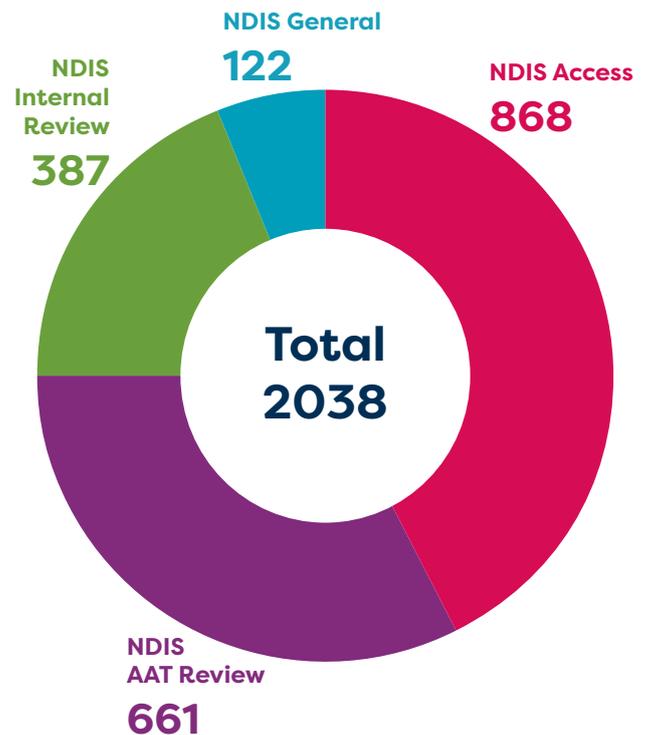
## Totals



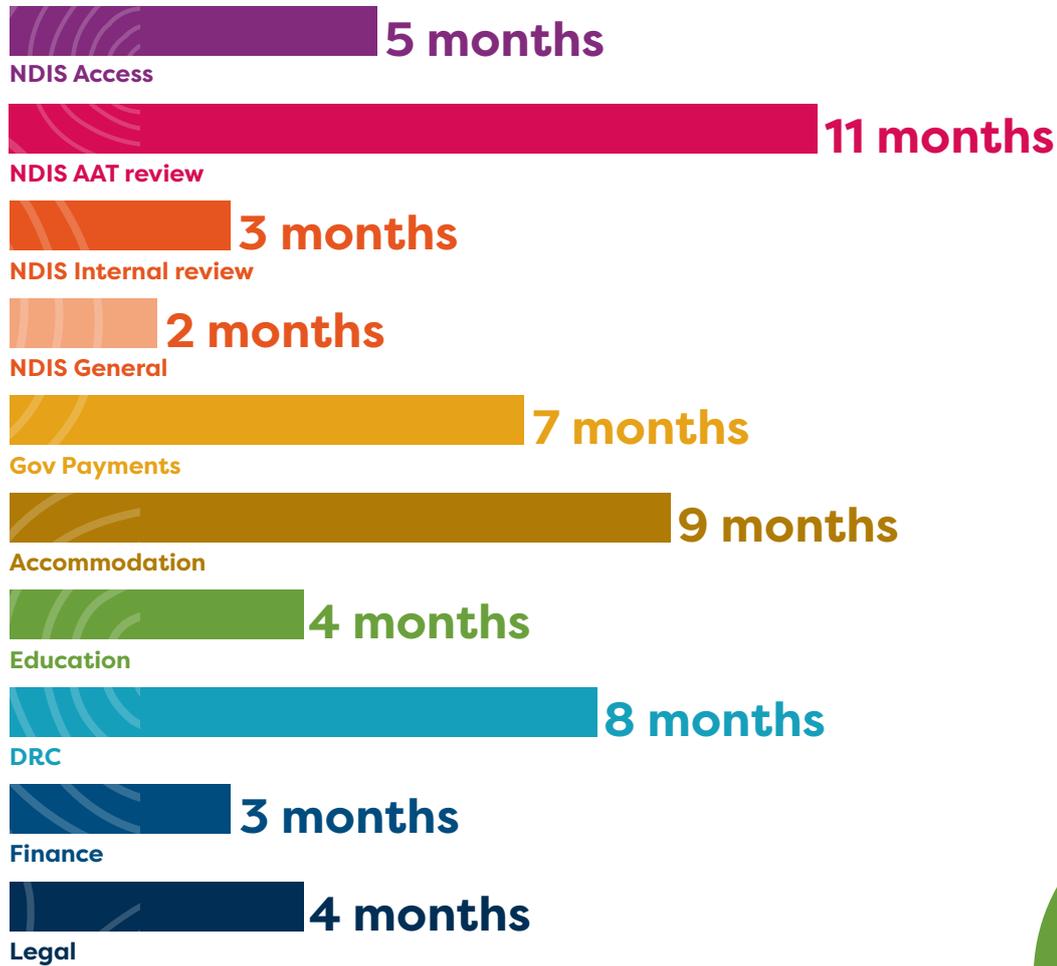
# Our Impact

Type of Matter	Totals
NDIS - Access / Planning	868
NDIS - AAT Appeals	661
Government Payments	508
NDIS - Internal Review	387
Legal	245
Accommodation	218
Finances (including subsidies/entitlements)	125
NDIS - General	122
Access to non-NDIS service	118
Discrimination or Rights	112
Disability Royal Commission	98
Disability services complaints	89
Education	83
Health	65
Abuse / Neglect	45
Child Protection	38
Services	37
Vulnerable and/or isolated	32
Community Inclusion - Social/Family	30
Employment	29
Independent Living Support	19
Equipment (and aids)	15
Transport	11
Physical Access	10
Recreation, social or family	1

## NDIS Related Advocacy



## Length of time to resolve (average for year)



## Feedback



## Compliments

“Thank you to DA for providing an exceptional advocate. I really appreciated my advocate’s kindness, work, and patience.”

“Thank you so much again for your support and for giving me the confidence to go through the process...I would not have been able to have the willpower to do this without you.”

Thank you for your never ending support and all the work you have done to gather all information and proof that they required. Without you I truly don’t know where I would be right now and I definitely would not have been able to navigate through all the red tape and bs that Centrelink put people through.

My advocate was there any time to answer my questions. She was supportive and patient and most of all helpful. I felt safe and supported with her on this application with me. My advocate went above and beyond.”

Thanks for your support and compassion during the (DRC) process, you were always available and I felt safe to share my experiences

Your knowledge, experience and professional nature made this extremely stressful and drawn out process achievable, even when I felt exhausted and the odds were stacked against us. As an advocate for my son you have truly gone above and beyond our expectations. The outcome from our conciliation meeting was such extremely surprising and such a relief! Your organisation is extremely lucky to have you on their team.



# Case Studies



## Case Study 1 – Disability Royal Commission

**Nature of case:** The client came to DA wanting to submit a DRC submission based on experiences in relation to healthcare for a psychosocial disability.

**Strategies Actioned:** Discussed options available to share experiences with the DRC and it was discovered that due to the client's experiences and disabilities the client felt very comfortable answering questions. The client and Advocate worked together on a list of questions to ask and then voice recorded the submission. The client felt supported as they were prepared and had support during the evidence part of the submission too.

**Outcome:** Client provided an audio submission to the DRC that detailed the client's experiences in various States. The process moved fast as the client felt she needed to have her say while she was able as there was the potential for a further involuntary committal.

## Case Study 2 – Child protection

**Nature of case:** Assist client with a family law case to regain custody of her daughter

### Strategies Actioned:

- Develop rapport with the client and family and understand stakeholders
- look at action steps client needed to take to regain custody of child
- liaise with legal aid lawyer assigned to our client
- develop a transition plan in conjunction with our client which outlines the support she must ensure the safety of the child and increase parenting skills, this will be presented to the court
- attend the court hearings with client
- assist to obtain support required for the client
- liaise with DCJ throughout the process

**Outcome:** A great result, the client had her daughter returned to her care with the appropriate support, this occurred four weeks ago, and things are seemingly going very well.



### Case Study 3 – Choice and Control and restrictive practices

**Nature of case:** Client was told by his Supported Independent Living provider that he was no longer allowed to ride his bike due to safety concerns.

**Strategies Actioned:** Advocate facilitated and attended a meeting with the client and service provider to discuss this restrictive practice, arranged for an Occupational Therapist to complete an assessment which was funded by the NDIA, discussed OT assessment with client, family and service provider and put plan a in place

**Outcome:** An OT assessment was completed which assessed the client as being able to ride his bike and detailed strategies to increase safety.

### Case Study 4 – Info Session Support – Applying for the DSP

**Nature of case:** 51-year-old woman from the Upper Hunter, living with conditions of intellectual disability, PTSD, anxiety, depression, Chronic Lymphedema, morbid obesity. Client had never applied for the Disability Support Pension (DSP) before and had minimal understanding of the claim process.

**Strategies Actioned:**

Information clinic appointment held with the following information provided to client:

- DSP medical evidence requirements and application of this to her current situation
- Overall application process
- Self-advocacy resources (e.g. template report request letter for GP/specialists)
- Letter of instruction summarising appointment info

**Outcome:** Client was happy with the info clinic and felt informed/empowered to make a claim.

# **Hunter Cooperative Legal Service Delivery (CLSD)**

Report





# Regional Coordinator Report

Seema Sanghi

**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 efforts to meet the needs of priority client groups. ALA has been operating the CLSD Program in the Hunter since 2007.**

2021/2022 was a vast improvement on tumultuous previous financial year. However, things weren't quite back to 'normal'.

Partners of the Hunter CLSD are a resilient bunch though and we ploughed on: we had two meetings online and two face to face; we devised a new Action Plan for 2022- 2024.

A highlight was the opportunity for the 12 CLSD coordinators from across NSW to meet for the annual CLSD conference in Newcastle.

## **Custody Training for Supporting Young People – postponed from 2021**

Training sessions have been well attended in 2022 – with people trained in Singleton, Edgeworth, Muswellbrook, Maitland, and Newcastle. With a new pool of volunteers for the police to call on to support a young person in custody, there have already been reports from two police stations in the Hunter saying the new volunteers have been very helpful.

## **Police Powers and Young People Workshop**

A call out for trainers to undertake workshops informing young people about their rights, police powers and responsibilities, and strategies that can improve interactions between young people and police in public spaces was put out in 2021.

A train the trainer session was held in October 2021 with large interest: youth workers, school teachers, support staff and police liaison officers. To date, seven sessions have been undertaken, in youth centres and schools, with positive feedback from both the trainers and participants, for example, *“I liked that she basically said there are lots of grey areas and that cops aren't always right, but that if you stay calm and do the right thing, it will usually be ok. She didn't make it scary but did tell us the truth about what can happen.”*



## Fines

ALA became a Work and Development Order (WDO) sponsor in April 2021 – a 3rd party referrer to allow for people to conduct a WDO when their activity was a service provider that was not a WDO sponsor. This pilot project comes to an end at the end of September and an evaluation of the scheme will be undertaken.

The results were overwhelmingly positive for many people across the state who would not have been able to clear their unpaid fines debt without this project:

**Total client applications submitted:**

**160**

**Dollar value of closed WDOs:**

**\$195,465.90**

**Total WDOs closed:**

**100**

**Total WDO credits applied:**

**\$228,750.98**

**Dollar value of active WDOs:**

**\$546,778.30**

(active cases will be transferred to Legal Aid NSW)

## Family and Domestic Violence

The pilot project working with barbers to better understand issues men are facing regarding mental health and the risks of using violence has been continually postponed since the 'Cut it Out' hairdressers' events last year.

The Barber Expo is an opportunity for the CLSD to team up with a Men's Behaviour Change specialist, however this was once again postponed due to COVID-19 restrictions. We have published an article in a Barbers' magazine until we can gather barbers together for training in Confident Conversations.

## Homelessness and Tenancy

The Hunter CLSD continues to be actively involved in lobbying the Newcastle and Lake Macquarie Mayors and Council, with the Hunter Community Alliance, to support actions to alleviate the impacts of the current housing crisis. We are still pushing for safe sleeping zones for rough sleepers; locker systems; broader data collection to include charities servicing people without any formal reports to funding bodies; making progress with the affordable housing contribution scheme, and ongoing training for council staff when dealing with people sleeping rough.



**MID NORTH COAST  
LEGAL CENTRE**

Report



# Principal Solicitor Report

Jane Titterington

## Getting back to business

**The past 12 months have seen a further easing of COVID-19 restrictions and as a result the MNCLC team has been working hard on reengaging with clients, local services across our catchment and each other. It is difficult working in isolation and staff have been keen to get back to the office and out in the community.**

It is great to be able to bounce ideas and issues off each other again and to be able to do that face to face. Returning to the office has had a positive effect on the team and their wellbeing. We have been able to come together at the ALA conference and the MNCLC mini conference both of which are instrumental in training and planning for the next 12 months and in reconnecting the whole service. Our team has all put their heads down and are getting on with the job of providing high quality legal services and assistance to people living on the mid north coast of NSW.

MNCLC has as a result of the easing of restrictions recommenced face to face appointments in our offices and returned to face to face appointments in our various outreach clinics. We have returned to our traffic programs in Macksville and Taree local courts and the team has been actively engaging in lots of community legal education and community engagement. While we continue to promote our services through various platforms, we are excited to be able to get back to visiting local services, attending local interagency meetings and community days face to face. Whilst we do things a little differently now as we continue to protect staff and community it feels good to reconnect with people, many of whom we have not seen

over the past couple of years except over Teams. Being on the ground in community is an integral part of our service as a community organisation.

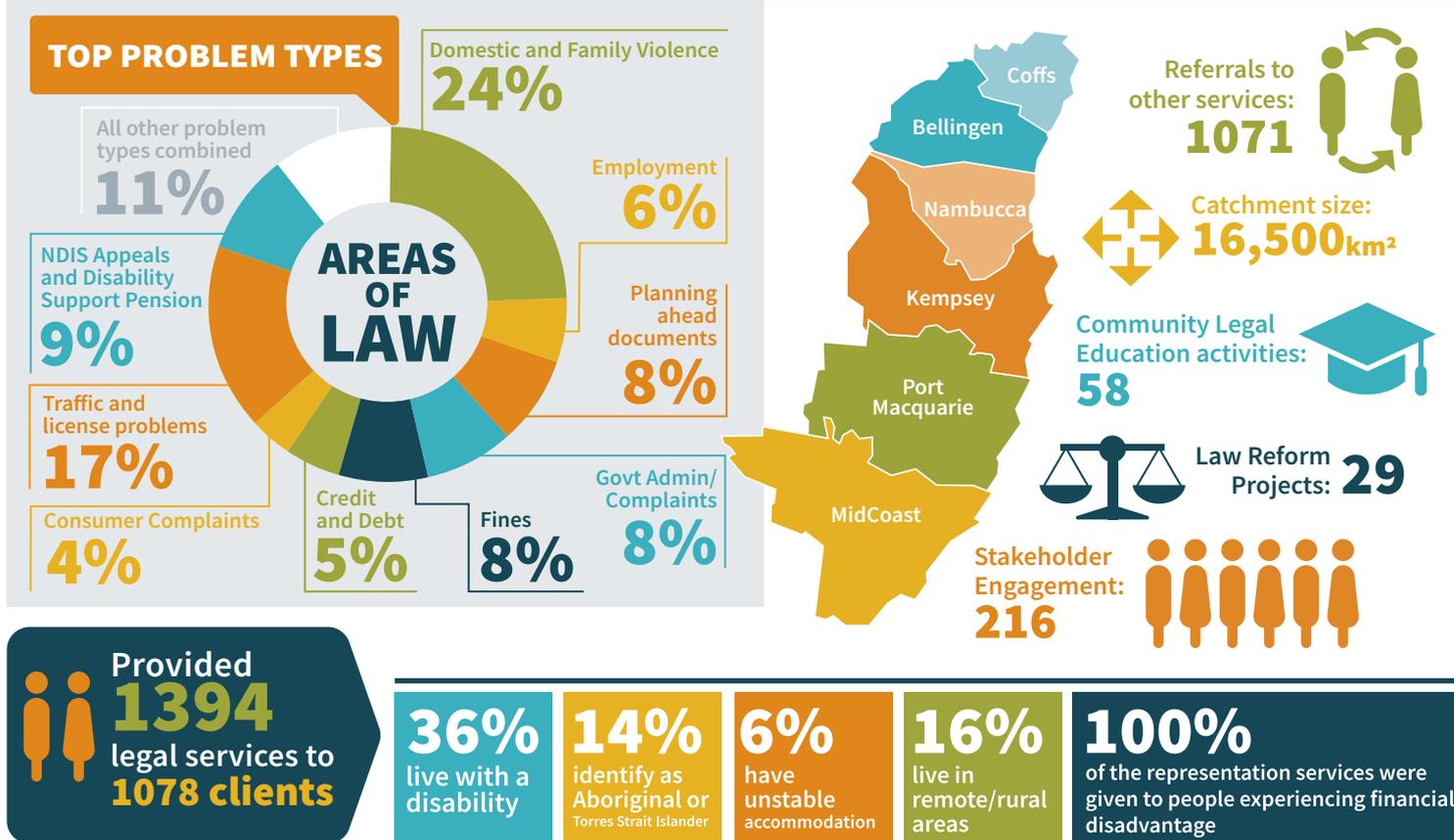
The team continues to achieve great results as we move onto our next 10 years of serving the local community. We have seen some changes over the last 12 months as COVID-19 and other funding has come to an end but we have also seen growth in our Centre. We have welcomed new staff and look forward to working with them in our new legal and mental health partnership (LAMP) program and in continuing the great work of our Disability Law program. We said goodbye to some wonderful team members such as Emma Smallwood and Latoya Smith who have moved on to other ventures.

MNCLC is waiting to hear about further funding opportunities, and we hope to see some further growth and consolidation of the great work we are doing as a Centre as a result. We have spent time in the last 12 months working on our ‘Theory of Change’, on our internal structures and policies to ensure we are in the best position to support our staff and community as we grow.

I am so grateful to work with a wonderful, caring and committed team and I thank each and every member of the team for caring about our communities and each other. And I thank the Board, Mark Grierson (CEO), Catherine Peek (DCEO) and the ALA team for all their support and for steering us in the right direction.

## Our Impact

# MID NORTH COAST LEGAL CENTRE 2021-22 FINANCIAL YEAR OVERVIEW



## 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 we had additional COVID-19 frontline and COVID-19 family law family violence funding and bushfire and flood funding which enabled us to do some great work. Whilst that funding has now ended, we are hopeful we will hear the result of further funding applications soon that will allow us to expand our services and continue others. We also received funding that allowed us to implement the LAMP program which will see us delivering services in partnership with health and mental health service providers across our catchment.



## Key Events and Achievements

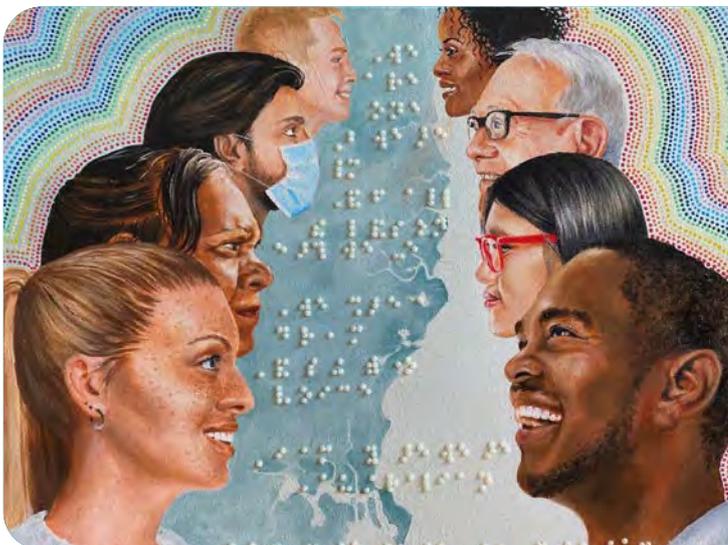


We held another extremely successful mini-Conference in Bellingen (Gumbayngirr Country) for all MNCLC staff and once again we were able to attend in person. The two-day conference delivered training and professional development for staff and provided an opportunity to review our strategic planning with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

This year saw the publishing of an article in the *Alternative Law Journal* on our LevelUp program. The article was co-authored by Holly Lawson, Stacey McMillan and Kath McFarlane. We hope the publishing of this article will assist in our quest to bring more attention to difficulties faced by young people transitioning from out of home care. The LevelUp program shows there is a great need for legal assistance to this group of young people and that our unique approach was valuable and much needed.



We continued work on the rebranding of the service and promotion of the rebranding throughout the community and on social media.



It was a little delayed, but we finally announced the winners of our 10th Anniversary Art Competition. Our judges selected a work by Stephanie Flowers as the winner of the competition and Jade Houston won the People's Choice Award. We now have two great additions to artwork in the office.

## Client and Stakeholder Feedback

Emma, thank you so much that has brought so many emotions that I don't know what to do with myself. I really truly appreciate the hard work you put in to help me. I will never know what to say but Thankyou because although it won't change everything it will help me a lot with getting a place of my own and financially relieved me a lot.

I found MNCLC to be a fantastic and very useful and informative service. I might have given up on lodging my documents without the service.

I would have gone into a deep depression, and I would not be in the stable position that I am today. Big thank you to Miss Haley. May God bless you all.

The number of hours of work everyone has done for me is amazing. The amount of compassion I was shown has made all the difference.

Great result for them, [she] was very grateful for your support with helping her prepare for the AAT with the Statement of Lived Experience and the advice as to the evidence needed. I said I would pass her thanks on to you. Thanks so much for supporting me through it too.

Holly didn't just answer my one question, she dug deeper than that to help me. She listened to me. Holly showed me the many ways I can get help, some of which I didn't even know about until speaking with her.

I don't know where I would be right now if I didn't speak to you guys.

Jane was absolutely wonderful, patient and understanding with our situation. Sadly, we couldn't follow through because of our family situation. We really appreciate all her help.

Elaine who answered the phone so was kind to me. She was even able to recognise my voice over the phone. She gave me a pocket heart with a beautiful message. This little gift meant so much to me and made all the difference. I want to thank everyone at MNCLC for their help.

Thank you for being so kind and supportive in the process of this. Sometimes anxiety make appointments for me daunting at times. The flexibility you offered helps so much.

Sarah is amazing and I am very grateful for what she has done for me so far.

## Legal Assistance – General Practice

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

This financial year MNCLC provided information and referral on at least 2580 different occasions. 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.

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 2021/22, MNCLC assisted 989 clients across a range of 1377 different “services”. Of these, 789 were new clients and 193 were repeat clients.

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

### Our clients

**30%**  
of clients identified as having a disability or mental illness.

**15%**  
of clients identified as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander

**2.5%**  
of clients used a language other than English or required an interpreter to access our service

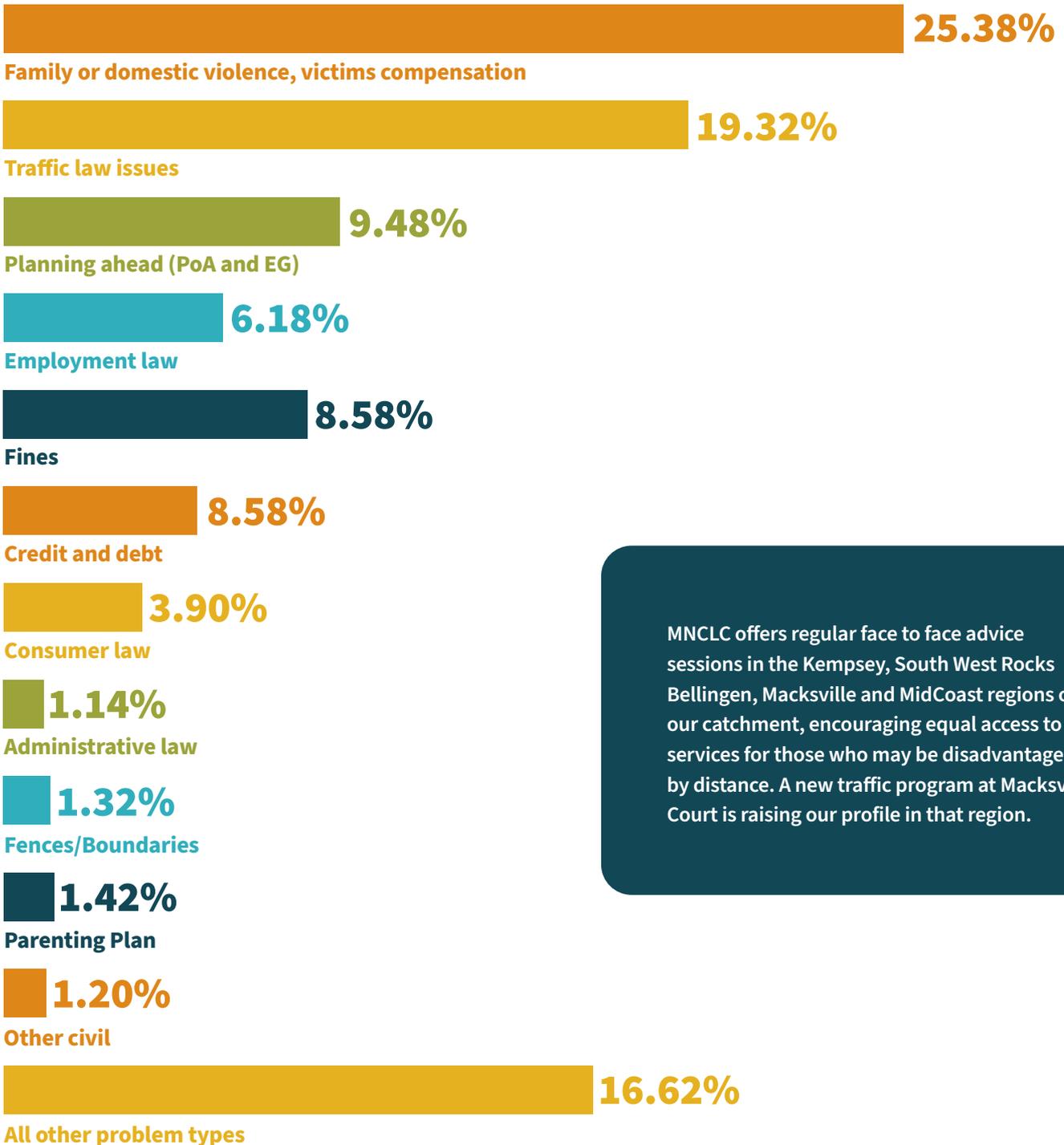
### Where do MNCLC clients live?



- Bellingen Shire Council 28
- Kempsey Shire Council 104
- Nambucca Shire Council 78
- Coffs Harbour City Council 153
- Mid-Coast Council 153
- Port Macquarie-Hastings Council 323
- Other 79

# Legal Advice

## Legal Problem Type



MNCLC offers regular face to face advice sessions in the Kempsey, South West Rocks Bellingen, Macksville and MidCoast regions of our catchment, encouraging equal access to legal services for those who may be disadvantaged by distance. 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 105 occasions. This is an 8% 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.

### Case Studies

#### Victims Services

We assisted a survivor of domestic violence obtain assistance through the Victims Support Scheme, lodging an application on behalf of the client which provided the client with a payment for immediate needs financial support. The client was fearful of the perpetrator and the funds allowed her to put in place security upgrades at her property to assist with safety of the client and her family.

We were also successful in obtaining a waiver of a restitution order. Restitution orders are pursued by Victims Services from a perpetrator where Victims Services has expended funds under the scheme to the survivor of domestic violence. There is a discretion to waive restitution but obtaining a waiver is rare. MNCLC provided submissions regarding the increased threat of retribution and the possibility of an escalation in violence should the perpetrator be asked to pay restitution. Based on the submissions provided the restitution was waived and the client as a result was extremely appreciative of the assistance and felt a little more secure regarding her safety.

#### Consumer Credit

We acted for a client in a responsible lending complaint in the Australian Financial Complaints Authority (AFCA). The client had extended their mortgage through a financial institution on a couple of occasions despite having the aged pension as their sole income. The client was in financial difficulty trying to service the loans from the aged pension. A complaint was lodged on the basis that the loans were in breach of responsible lending practices and the matter proceeded to conciliation. Submissions provided by MNCLC at conciliation resulted in a reduction of the amount owing to the financial institution by a significant amount. The client was able to manage the repayments of the reduced amount and as a result can retain their home rather than being forced to sell their only asset. The age of the client meant they did not have an opportunity to re-join the workforce and the result means they will not be forced to move to rental accommodation.

#### Domestic and Family Violence

We assisted a young woman who was referred to us on an urgent basis. She is a victim of domestic violence and had a complex history of mental health issues. MNCLC DFV solicitor was able to take urgent instructions from the client, draft and file her family law response within 48 hours. Our solicitor provided representation to at her first family law court mention and subsequent court events. The client was able to produce evidence of her connectedness with appropriate services and the Court made orders that she and her child should remain living together and spend supervised time with the father. This client had difficulty in connecting with legal help in this matter prior to this time (which contributed to the urgency of this matter) and MNCLC’s ability to respond to the urgent needs of this vulnerable victim of domestic violence resulted in greater access to justice and an improved legal outcome for mother and child.

## Legal Assistance - Disability Law NSW Program



**Disability Law NSW program is a collaboration between the two arms of Advocacy Law Alliance, Mid North Coast Legal Centre and Disability Advocacy NSW and has been in operation since July 2020 when we recruited Kylie Hyde.**

DLNSW is funded by Disability Advocacy NSW and Advocacy Law Alliance and 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.

We thank Kylie Hyde for the great work she has done in DLNSW since beginning with the MNCLC, achieving great outcomes and offering access to justice to clients with a disability that would otherwise have fallen through the gaps. We are excited to welcome a new junior solicitor to the program in the 2022-23 year.

LGA	Number of Clients
UNKNOWN	6
ARMIDALE REGIONAL COUNCIL	2
BATHURST REGIONAL COUNCIL	4
BLACKTOWN CITY COUNCIL	1
CABONNE SHIRE COUNCIL	2
CAMPBELLTOWN CITY COUNCIL	1
CANTERBURY-BANKSTOWN COUNCIL	2
CENTRAL COAST COUNCIL	2
CESSNOCK CITY COUNCIL	1
CITY OF PARRAMATTA COUNCIL	1
COFFS HARBOUR CITY COUNCIL	15
COWRA SHIRE COUNCIL	1
DUBBO REGIONAL COUNCIL	1
INVERELL SHIRE COUNCIL	3
KEMPSEY SHIRE COUNCIL	4

LGA	Number of Clients
KU-RING-GAI COUNCIL	1
LAKE MACQUARIE CITY COUNCIL	5
LIVERPOOL PLAINS SHIRE COUNCIL	1
MAITLAND CITY COUNCIL	6
MID-COAST COUNCIL	9
MID-WESTERN REGIONAL COUNCIL	2
NAMBUCCA SHIRE COUNCIL	2
NEWCASTLE CITY COUNCIL	6
PARKES SHIRE COUNCIL	1
PENRITH CITY COUNCIL	1
PORT MACQUARIE-HASTINGS COUNCIL	12
PORT STEPHENS COUNCIL	2
TAMWORTH REGIONAL COUNCIL	4
THE HILLS SHIRE COUNCIL	1
UNINCORPORATED FAR WEST	1
WOLLONDILLY SHIRE COUNCIL	1

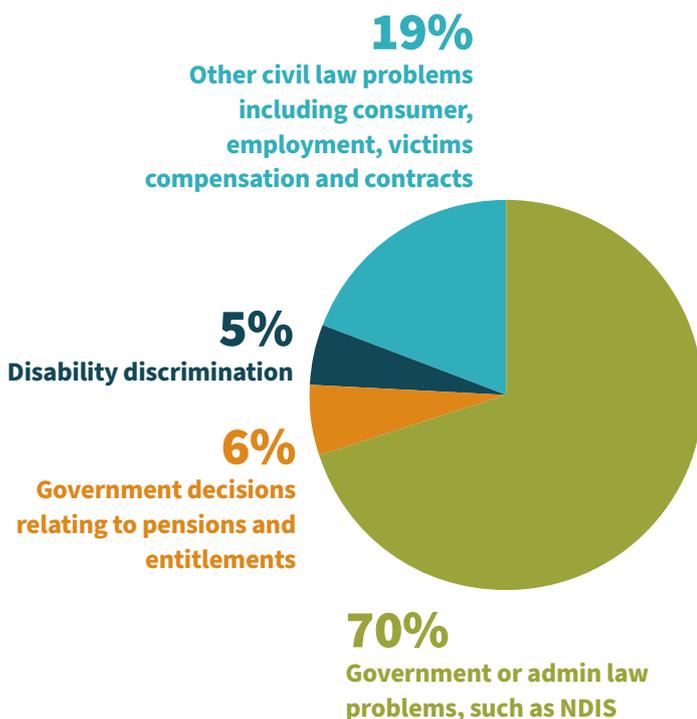


## Legal Advice

NDIS Administrative Appeals Tribunal appeals continue to provide the bulk of referrals to DLNSW but the legal health checks are revealing a large number of other legal issues experienced by the same clients. It is not uncommon to have a referral from DANSW for a NDIS AAT matter and also provide advice on DSP, Victims services, complaints, discrimination and warm referrals for housing etc within the same advice session.

DLNSW assisted 98 clients spread across the DA catchment area. Those 98 clients received 102 advices, 53 tasks and opened 19 representation services over the year.

### DLNSW Legal Problem Type



## Legal Task

The most common types of legal tasks are:

- Preparing Court documents (submissions, statements of lived experience, responses to Statements of Facts issues and contentions, chronologies, objections to summons)
- Drafting letters to be sent to third parties such as medical and allied health professionals, the NDIA, Centrelink, Health, Schools, Department of Education)

### Case Studies

#### Disability Support Pension (DSP)

We acted for a client who was looking to qualify for the disability support pension. Disability Law and Disability Advocacy worked together with the client to assist with obtaining reports and liaising with Centrelink. The client finally reported that access had been granted. A wonderful result and the client was extremely grateful and felt that it was an outcome that would not have been achieved without the dedicated support provided by DL and DA.

#### NDIS Appeal

We assisted a client with access to the NDIS. The client was facing significant difficulties with access and with his engagement with services as a result of his disability. Disability Advocacy and Disability Law assisted the client with a result that he was successful on his review for access and the client was extremely grateful for the assistance he received.

## Community Legal Education

We delivered 41 CLE activities and undertook 214 stakeholder engagement activities in the financial year. Some examples include -

- Holly delivered an “Emergence” webinar through CLCs Australia to lawyers about the LevelUP program. Holly also finalised an article for the Alternative Law Journal, covering the experiences of the LevelUP program.
- We developed a Car Accident Glovebox Guide and translated it into three community languages for CALD community members.
- Emma delivered two sessions on family law and domestic violence to the Blue Sky Online Domestic Family Violence Forum
- Holly and Madi delivered education on basic Planning Ahead and Family Law to Culturally and Linguistically Diverse community members at Taree TAFE.
- Emma provided community legal education online through the Family Law Pathways Network on small property pool settlements and debts in family law matters.



## Community Outreach and Engagement

We provided community legal outreach 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 Macksville Court. We continued our Embedded School Lawyer Program at Macleay Vocational College and provided increased assistance to the Mums and Bubs program at the College. This was made possible due to COVID-19 funding to assist clients with family law and domestic violence issues. We also began two new outreaches at Bellingen Youth Hub and Nambucca Senior Citizens Centre.

Outreach & Clinics	Location	Status
Kempsey Neighbourhood Centre	West Kempsey	Face to face resumed February 2022
Manning Uniting Church	Taree	Face to face resumed February 2022
Bellingen Youth Hub	Bellingen	Commenced February 2022
Nambucca Senior Citizens Centre	Nambucca	Commenced February 2022
Mid North Coast Correctional Centre	Aldavilla	By phone
South West Rocks Information Centre	South West Rocks	Face to face as required
Domestic and Family Violence Clinic	In office	Face to face and phone
Taree Traffic Program	Taree Court House	Face to face
Macksville Traffic Program	Macksville Court	Face to face
Lawyer in School	Macleay College Kempsey	Face to face resumed March 2022



We would like to thank our outreach partners – Kempsey Neighbourhood Centre (Kempsey and South West Rocks), Macleay Vocational College (Kempsey), Manning Uniting Church in Taree and Pete’s Place in Coffs Harbour, Bellingen Youth Hub (Bellingen), Nambucca Senior Citizens Centre (Nambucca) and the Mid North Coast Correctional Centre.

We also undertook some community legal engagement directly relating to the flood events on the Mid North Coast. We delivered 9 flood recovery community events, covering 34 different kinds of legal problem. Many of these were online events delivered in coordination with local council recovery groups. In some of these events, we offered legal advice to clients impacted by disasters. In others, we focussed on community legal education to support disaster preparedness.



# Engagement Story



At the Port Macquarie Hastings Homelessness Network on 31 May 2022 Theo from Community @ 3 provided an update on the work they are doing with homeless people living in Camden Haven. After the meeting Nat, a MNCLC community engagement worker, introduced herself to Theo and discussed the work they are doing with homelessness, DFV and seeking temporary housing accommodation solutions in Laurieton.

Nat followed up with an email to Theo on 21 June and provided more information about what MNCLC do -  
*“Hi Theo, We talked briefly at the last homelessness network meeting in Port Macquarie and loved hearing about what Camden Haven Community at 3 are doing. We are a free not-for-profit legal service on the Mid North Coast providing information and advice on civil law matters.*

*MNCLC are running a series of community legal education (CLE) sessions targeting legal issues that arise out of disasters, as part of a PHN Resilience and Wellbeing Grant. Do you think your volunteers would benefit from a session on how to spot a legal issue*

*when working with vulnerable community members? We will be rolling out our new mental health/justice partnership, LAMP, very soon. I will be working in this project as an engagement/outreach worker and would be interested in talking about ‘hanging out’ with your volunteers and the communities you serve.*

*Our solicitors can also provide free CLE on other areas of civil law including: Debts; consumer law; power of attorney and enduring guardianship; NDIS and DSP and other Government services; discrimination; employment; and family violence, victims compensation and AVOs. Happy to talk about any of this with you.”*

Theo replied the following day saying that he would be interested in CLE for the volunteers and a LAMP outreach worker ‘hanging out’. Theo suggested August would be a good time for the CLE and offered the Boardroom at Laurieton United Service Club, thinking that there would be approximately 15 attendees.

Nat forwarded the CLE request to Shaarn, MNCLC CLE Worker to follow up. Shaarn contacted Theo and the CLE was booked for 1 September.

MNCLC solicitor Matt and Shaarn attended Laurieton United Services Club and delivered Spotting a Legal Issue CLE to approximately 27 volunteers from Community @ 3. The volunteers had lots of questions and Matt mentioned the Law Health Check-Up tool and the volunteers were very interested in having access to the tool. Theo also said that they would value someone from MNCLC attending the Wednesday afternoon free BBQ on a regular basis. Shaarn forwarded the request to Nat.

Nat is working on developing a Legal Health Check Up Tool for Camden Haven Community @ 3 to use and is currently liaising with Theo to establish a regular outreach presence as part of our health justice partnership, LAMP.





**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.**

- Haley McEwen and Mel Kallmier appeared at the Joint Committee Inquiry into Adult Literacy
- Kylie Hyde and Amanda Brickwood appeared at the Senate Committee Inquiry into the Purpose, Intent and Adequacy of the DSP
- Sarah Dahlenburg worked extensively with Womens Legal Service in her role as co-chair of the Victims Support Network. She participated in the Law Reform process seeking amendments to the Victims Services Scheme through the Victims of Crime Interagency
- We assisted with a joint submission to the Victims Rights and Support Act review
- Mel Kallmier and Haley McEwen participated in a study of “Measuring Legal Need” done by Macquarie University

- We held meetings with State and Federal MPs including Natalie Ward, Leslie Williams, Natasha Maclaren-Jones, Gareth Ward and Gurmesh Singh.
- We provided a joint DA and DLNSW submission to the Disability Royal Commission on the Disability Support Pension
- Kylie Hyde from DLNSW participated (with DA) in the AFDO National Roundtable on Institutional Economic Neglect with the Disability Royal Commission
- Kylie worked on a systemic issue regarding lack of Guardian Ad Litem at the AAT, including attending a meeting of the Law Society’s Ethics Committee and answering questions about this issue

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.

## Reconciliation

We launched our first Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) on 4 April 2019 and it continues to provide us with a strong framework to support the national reconciliation movement. MNCLC's vision for reconciliation is a culture that embraces unity between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and other Australians as well as a culture that represents equality and equity, historical acceptance of our shared history and removal of negative race relations.

Despite the many challenges through the COVID-19 pandemic and multiple natural disasters, we have endeavoured to meet our RAP targets and continue engagement with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities through online forums. For example, our Aboriginal Engagement Officer and other staff participated in Aboriginal Interagency meetings virtually, Cultural Awareness training is arranged by our Aboriginal Engagement Officer for new staff.



## Pro Bono Partners

We would like to extend our appreciation for the support of our pro bono referral partners:

- Gilbert & Tobin (who support us by offering regular legal advice sessions for some clients)
- Hicksons (who have offered specific advice for people impacted by natural disasters)
- Hall & Wilcox (who provided a secondee, Andrew Banks, to assist with the work of Disability Law)
- HBL (Port Macquarie) (who consider referrals for pro bono advice for small business owners)
- Justice Connect (who assist by linking pro bono requests with firms that may be able to assist)



## Our 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.

We would like to thank our volunteers this year for the valuable contribution they made to the Service:

- Andrew Banks
- Stacey Coombes
- Callum Rigby
- Valbona Alexander
- Taylah Jones
- Karrin Clark
- Alice Jamieson



The Mid North Coast Legal Centre is a fantastic community organisation that provides excellent legal services to their clients, especially those who are in disadvantaged circumstances and would be otherwise unable to access justice.

Hall & Wilcox is proud to support the Mid North Coast Legal Centre. As a lawyer in the firm's Pro Bono & Community team – I had the opportunity to undertake a secondment with the Centre. This secondment was a great experience, and I am grateful to have worked with such a talented and passionate group of people.

The culture of the Centre is supportive, welcoming and highly collaborative. This clearly provides a strong foundation for the team to deliver the best possible outcomes for the community and reflects the strong leadership of the organisation.

There are challenging aspects of community legal work in regional areas, including the geographic distance to cover and the limited resources available, however everyone at the Centre works hard to assist their clients to a high standard.

Both Hall & Wilcox, and myself personally, look forward to continuing to work with the Centre into the future.

Seconded Lawyer - Andrew Banks, Hall & Wilcox

I found my time at the Mid North Coast Legal Centre to be highly engaging and rewarding. I have felt welcomed and a valued part of the team, particularly because the MNCLC staff have always been open to supporting my development and learning. The staff of the Centre have continually facilitated giving me exposure to new and interesting legal matters which I have thoroughly enjoyed and appreciated.

My time at the Centre has also given me an appreciation for how much the staff members care about their clients and providing them with positive outcomes. I would strongly encourage anyone who is seeking to gain experience in community-oriented generalist civil law to consider engaging with the Centre for their PLT.

Callum Rigby



Suite 1, Level 2, 408 King Street  
Newcastle West, NSW  
Australia 2302

**P:** 02 4924 3599  
**[advocacylaw.org.au](http://advocacylaw.org.au)**





# Annual Financial Statements

Advocacy Law Alliance Inc  
For the year ended 30 June 2022

Prepared by Oracle Accounting (Australia) Pty Ltd



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# Income and Expenditure Statement

## Advocacy Law Alliance Inc For the year ended 30 June 2022

	2022	2021
<b>Grant Income</b>		
Grant Income	7,185,655	6,470,512
<b>Total Grant Income</b>	<b>7,185,655</b>	<b>6,470,512</b>
<b>Gross Surplus</b>	<b>7,185,655</b>	<b>6,470,512</b>
<b>Other Income</b>		
Administration Income	-	30,000
Cash Flow Boost Income	-	50,000
Gain or (Loss) on sale of Non-Current Assets	(3,440)	57,081
Government Wage Subsidies	16,873	-
Interest Income	2,857	9,699
<b>Total Other Income</b>	<b>16,289</b>	<b>146,779</b>
<b>Expenditure</b>		
Administration Charge	-	30,000
Advertising & Promotion	11,355	5,454
Audit Fees	17,000	12,500
Bank Fees	2,143	2,239
Cleaning	13,284	10,584
Client Requisites	2,433	(478)
Computer Expenses	566,914	200,195
Depreciation	81,161	61,281
Employment Support and Supervision Costs	134,450	-
Filing Fees	-	80
Holiday Pay	56,612	32,639
Insurances	158,125	124,996
Long Service Leave	2,596	34,458
Merchandise	7,208	17,012
Motor Vehicles	49,660	52,930
Postage, Freight & Courier	8,819	7,265
Printing & Stationery	35,114	112,981
Quality Assurance	16,835	15,080
Recruitment Costs	254,136	10,038
Rent & Outgoings	359,893	385,913
Repairs & Maintenance	3,422	9,556
Salaries & Wages	4,746,273	4,163,570
Security	2,116	1,289
Staff Training & Development	237,175	78,922
Subscriptions	21,396	20,477

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



	2022	2021
Superannuation	461,035	390,208
Telephone & Internet	61,893	58,762
Travel and Accommodation	37,159	38,300
Volunteer Costs	14,561	8,988
<b>Total Expenditure</b>	<b>7,362,766</b>	<b>5,885,237</b>
<b>Current Year Surplus/ (Deficit)</b>	<b>(160,822)</b>	<b>732,055</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 2022

	NOTES	30 JUN 2022	30 JUN 2021
<b>Assets</b>			
<b>Current Assets</b>			
Cash and Cash Equivalents	3	1,962,154	1,000,110
Trade and Other Receivables	4	390	1,658
GST Receivable		749	-
Rental Bond		20,257	17,597
<b>Total Current Assets</b>		<b>1,983,549</b>	<b>1,019,365</b>
<b>Non-Current Assets</b>			
Term Deposits	3	505,047	1,168,728
Property, Plant & Equipment	5	290,964	273,578
<b>Total Non-Current Assets</b>		<b>796,012</b>	<b>1,442,306</b>
<b>Total Assets</b>		<b>2,779,561</b>	<b>2,461,671</b>
<b>Liabilities</b>			
<b>Current Liabilities</b>			
Trade and Other Payables	6	265,283	144,078
GST Payable		-	44,901
Employee Entitlements	8	496,867	458,295
Grants in Advance		387,200	44,000
<b>Total Current Liabilities</b>		<b>1,149,351</b>	<b>691,274</b>
<b>Non-Current Liabilities</b>			
Employee Entitlements	8	93,371	72,735
<b>Total Non-Current Liabilities</b>		<b>93,371</b>	<b>72,735</b>
<b>Total Liabilities</b>		<b>1,242,721</b>	<b>764,010</b>
<b>Net Assets</b>		<b>1,536,839</b>	<b>1,697,661</b>
<b>Member's Funds</b>			
Capital Reserve		1,536,839	1,697,661
<b>Total Member's Funds</b>		<b>1,536,839</b>	<b>1,697,661</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 2022



	NOTES	2022	2021
<b>Operating Activities</b>			
Receipts from funding authorities		7,545,728	6,583,512
Payemnts to suppliers and employees		(7,136,474)	(5,610,518)
Payments to Card Payable		(9,100)	-
Interest Received		2,857	9,699
<b>Total from Operating Activities</b>		<b>403,011</b>	<b>439,389</b>
<b>Investing Activities</b>			
Payments for Property, Plant & Equipment		(101,988)	(171,316)
Payments for Rental Bond		(2,660)	-
Proceeds from sale of Property, Plant & Equipment		-	107,024
<b>Total from Investing Activities</b>		<b>(104,648)</b>	<b>(43,687)</b>
<b>Cash Balance</b>			
Opening Cash Balance	3	2,168,838	1,250,437
Net increase or (decrease) in cash from operating and investing		298,363	918,401
<b>Closing Cash Balance</b>	3	<b>2,467,201</b>	<b>2,168,838</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 2022

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

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



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.

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.

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



## 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.

## 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.

	2022	2021
<b>3. Cash &amp; Cash Equivalents</b>		
<b>Cash on Hand</b>		
Petty Cash	150	150
<b>Total Cash on Hand</b>	<b>150</b>	<b>150</b>
<b>Deposit Accounts</b>		
Operating Account	790,144	299,240
High Interest Account	1,171,860	700,721
<b>Total Deposit Accounts</b>	<b>1,962,004</b>	<b>999,960</b>
<b>Term Deposits maturing in less than 12 months</b>		
Term Deposits	505,047	1,168,728
<b>Total Term Deposits maturing in less than 12 months</b>	<b>505,047</b>	<b>1,168,728</b>
<b>Total Cash &amp; Cash Equivalents</b>	<b>2,467,201</b>	<b>2,168,838</b>
	2022	2021

## 4. Trade and Other Receivables

### Trade Receivables

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



Accounts Receivable	390	1,658
<b>Total Trade Receivables</b>	<b>390</b>	<b>1,658</b>
<b>Total Trade and Other Receivables</b>	<b>390</b>	<b>1,658</b>
	2022	2021

## 5. Property, Plant & Equipment

### Leasehold Improvements

Leasehold Improvements	28,523	28,523
Less Accumulated Depreciation on Leasehold Improvements	(23,041)	(21,670)
<b>Total Leasehold Improvements</b>	<b>5,483</b>	<b>6,854</b>

### Plant and Equipment

#### Plant and Equipment at Cost

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>

#### Accumulated Depreciation of Plant and Equipment

Less Accumulated Depreciation on Plant & Equipment	(1,494)	(1,438)
Less Accumulated Depreciation on Computer Equipment	(19,119)	(18,898)
Less Accumulated Depreciation on Office Furniture & Equipment	(11,781)	(11,454)
<b>Total Accumulated Depreciation of Plant and Equipment</b>	<b>(32,394)</b>	<b>(31,790)</b>

<b>Total Plant and Equipment</b>	<b>1,203</b>	<b>1,808</b>
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### Motor Vehicles

Motor Vehicles at Cost	511,925	432,713
Less Accumulated Depreciation of Motor Vehicles	(227,647)	(167,797)
<b>Total Motor Vehicles</b>	<b>284,278</b>	<b>264,917</b>

<b>Total Property, Plant &amp; Equipment</b>	<b>290,964</b>	<b>273,578</b>
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2022 2021

## 6. Trade and Other Payables

### Trade Payables

Accounts Payable	249,385	25,706
<b>Total Trade Payables</b>	<b>249,385</b>	<b>25,706</b>

### Other Payables

PAYG Withholdings Payable	-	65,792
Superannuation Payable	15,694	52,376

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



Other Current Liabilities	205	205
<b>Total Other Payables</b>	<b>15,898</b>	<b>118,372</b>
<b>Total Trade and Other Payables</b>	<b>265,283</b>	<b>144,078</b>
	2022	2021

## 7. Deferred Income

<b>Deferred Income Government Grants</b>		
Grants in Advance	387,200	44,000
<b>Total Deferred Income Government Grants</b>	<b>387,200</b>	<b>44,000</b>
<b>Total Deferred Income</b>	<b>387,200</b>	<b>44,000</b>
	2022	2021

## 8. Employee Entitlements

<b>Current</b>		
Provision for Holiday Pay	353,735	297,123
Provision for Long Service Leave	143,132	161,172
<b>Total Current</b>	<b>496,867</b>	<b>458,295</b>
<b>Non-Current</b>		
Provision for Long Service Leave	93,371	72,735
<b>Total Non-Current</b>	<b>93,371</b>	<b>72,735</b>
<b>Total Employee Entitlements</b>	<b>590,238</b>	<b>531,030</b>
	2022	2021

## 9. Remuneration of the auditors of the Association

For audit or review of the financial report	17,000	12,500
<b>Total Remuneration of the auditors of the Association</b>	<b>17,000</b>	<b>12,500</b>

## 10. Contingencies

In the opinion of the Board, the Association had a contingent liability of \$NIL (2021: \$NIL).

## 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

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



408 King Street  
NEWCASTLE WEST NSW 2302.



# Statement by Members of the Board

## Advocacy Law Alliance Inc For the year ended 30 June 2022

### 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 Board 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 2022.

DocuSigned by:

*Gayle Brown*

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Gayle Brown

Dated: 7 October 2022

DocuSigned by:

*Asper*

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Hayden Asper

Dated: 7 October 2022



# Auditor's Report

## Advocacy Law Alliance Inc For the year ended 30 June 2022

### 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 2022, 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 2022 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.

DocuSigned by:

*Jeff Bell*

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Jeffrey Bell CPA

Oracle Accounting Solutions  
Certified Practising Accountants

Level 2, 240-244 Pacific Hwy,  
CHARLESTOWN NSW 2290

Dated: 7 October 2022



# Auditors' Independence Declaration

**Advocacy Law Alliance Inc**  
**For the year ended 30 June 2022**

## **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 2022 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*

46C87387EE3A4CD...

Jeffrey Bell CPA

Oracle Accounting  
Certified Practising Accountants

Level 2, 240-244 Pacific Hwy,  
CHARLESTOWN NSW 2290

Dated 7 October 2022



## Certificate By Members of the Board

### Advocacy Law Alliance Inc For the year ended 30 June 2022

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 27 October 2022.
2. The financial statements for the year ended 30 June 2022 were submitted to the members of the association at its annual general meeting.

DocuSigned by:

*Mark Grierson*

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Mr Mark Grierson

Dated: 27 October 2022



# Departmental / Grant Specific Profit & Loss Statements

**Advocacy Law Alliance Inc**  
**For the year ended 30 June 2022**

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.