



ANNUAL REPORT

23 -

24



ALA provides high quality social and legal advocacy to people in need. We are committed to servicing regional, rural and remote communities as well as metropolitan communities and we focus on empowering clients to navigate the legal and social systems to achieve fair outcomes.

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.

Annual Report

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Mid North Coast Legal Centre



Our Vision

All people should have the right to equity and fairness.

Our Mission

To provide high quality social and legal advocacy to people in need. We are committed to servicing regional, rural and remote communities as well as metropolitan communities and we focus on empowering clients to navigate the legal and social systems to achieve fair outcomes.

Our Values



Courageous:

We have the courage to do what's right.



Caring:

We care about our people and the work we do.



Creative:

We use innovation, evidence and curiosity to continually strive to improve.



Connected:

We are better together.

Our Strategic Goals (2023-26):

1. Deliver high quality, targeted services that meet our clients' needs.
2. Maintain positive workplace culture that is flexible, safe and diverse.
3. Capitalise on funding opportunities to improve access to our services.
4. Continue to enhance our leadership and management support capabilities.
5. Utilise our influence to inform government priorities on disability and law reform.
6. Practice excellent organisational governance.

Funding

Disability Advocacy NSW:

Department of Social Services (DSS)

National Disability Advocacy Program, NDIS Appeals, Disability Advocacy Support Helpline

NSW Department of Community and Justice

Disability Advocacy Futures Program (DAFP), NSW Department of Education

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

Women NSW

ALA THANKS 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.



2017

DA begins icare independent advocacy program.

2018

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.



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 little access to free legal help.

2019

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.



2020

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.



2010

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

2011

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.



2021

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.



2022

DA recruit staff in Ballina and Central Coast and increase numbers in other areas. A new national pilot program Disability Advocacy Support Helpline (The Helpline) begins planning and recruiting.

A pilot program funded by Department of Education via the Disability Advocacy Futures Program is launched to improve individual advocacy in education settings.



2013

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.



2016

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 and 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.



2023

The Helpline continues to grow and receives further funding to expand its capacity.

ALA implements some big internal changes including moving to Employment Hero and launching the ALA Intranet to streamline processes and improve communication. ALA's Strategic Plan is reviewed, and new values are launched: Courageous, Caring, Connected, Creative.

2024

Confirmation that the Education Advocacy pilot funding will be continued for a further 2 years.

After two years of development and testing, DA completes the improved Outcomes Measurement Framework project.





ALA People



ALA Board

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

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
Chairperson

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.

NICOLE GRGAS
Deputy Chairperson

As someone born with a low vision condition called Achromatopsia, I am acutely aware of the challenges associated 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 at University and currently work in London with global investment consulting firm WTW. Volunteering for the ALA Board combines two key personal passions of mine, namely, advocating for people with disabilities, and ensuring fairness before the law.

TOBY THOMAS
Treasurer

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.

JACK LINDGREN
Secretary

Board Members

RACHEL SOWDEN

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

I 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.

ROSS CASEY

I worked for Disability Advocacy NSW in Broken Hill between 2017 and 2020, as the organisation's first advocate in the Far West NSW region. I hold Bachelor of Laws and Bachelor of Justice degrees. I currently work in the public service for the Federal regulator of NDIS supports and services. I am excited to be back involved with ALA and to again contribute to the valuable work of the organisation.

NDI RUPPERT

Ndi obtained her Bachelor of Business and Law with a Diploma of Legal Practice from the University of Newcastle in 2010 and was admitted to the Supreme Court of New South Wales as a solicitor in 2011. In 2017, she obtained her Master of Laws from the University of Newcastle, majoring in Human Rights and International Business; her master thesis was published in the African Journal of International and Comparative Law. Ndi worked for Disability Advocacy NSW for approximately 8 years before commencing work in immigration law. Ndi is the Principal Solicitor & Founder of the law practice, Ruppert Legal. She has significant experience with the Australian Migration system, both personally and professionally and was honoured by being listed on the 2021, 2022 and 2023 Doyles list of leading New South Wales Immigration Lawyers. Until recently, Ndi used her immigration expertise to assist refugee clients one day a week through a local NGO called Mosaic Multicultural Connections. She now offers a limited pro bono service within her practice, focusing on assisting victims of domestic and family violence whose perpetrators are their visa sponsors. Ndi is also on the Board of Advocacy Law Alliance Inc. and is part of the executive leadership team of the Centre for African Research, Engagement & Partnerships at the University of Newcastle.



Chairperson's Report

During my time on the Board ALA has continually been a dynamic organisation. ALA has constantly sought to adopt the best practices and systems. Where those practices are found to be wanting it has developed its own. ALA continues to kick goals and raise the standard across the NFP sector in terms of its advocacy, staff wellbeing and efficiencies.

On a KPI basis, the organisation has assisted thousands of people and smashed its own targets this year. Those results can be attributed to the drive of its leadership team and the passion of its staff, who are making real differences in people's lives every day.

From an organisational standpoint ALA has transitioned to an Australian Public Company Limited by Guarantee on 1 July 2024. The effort and attention to detail required by the change shouldn't be understated, as the CEO and Financial Manager worked hard to make sure the change went as smoothly as possible. The change in structure ensures that ALA can operate smoothly into the future without worrying about the statutory restrictions of its former structure.

On a Board level, we have introduced our own accountability framework to ensure that we are attending a minimum number of meetings and not doing the organisation a disservice.

ALA will continue to look for opportunities that align with its values and core strategies in the 2025 Financial Year and I look forward to seeing where those opportunities take the organisation.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank Board for their ongoing work in supporting the organisation during the year. In my opinion it's a privilege to contribute to the organisation in some capacity.

On behalf of the Board, I thank the staff, volunteers and leadership team for another year of hard work and changing people's lives for the better.

Hayden Asper
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 2024.

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:

Key Financial Information

> Income & Expenditure Statement

ALA received \$11,432,853 in grant income for the 2024 financial year, an increase of \$897,582 from the 2023 financial year. ALA also received some other income, primarily in the form of government subsidies and interest income. \$11,632,027 was incurred in expenses, resulting in an operating surplus of \$67,420. The largest increase in expenditure was in the category of wages, with a 17% increase from 2023.

I note that during the financial year several unexpected funding opportunities presented themselves. ALA originally forecasted income of \$11,369,772 and expenses of \$11,417,692. Accordingly, the surplus of \$67,420 is more than the originally budgeted deficit of \$-47,920. This has been pleasing to see in light of the challenging macroeconomic environment and persistent inflationary pressures seen across FY24.

> Balance Sheet

ALA's balance sheet identifies assets in the sum of \$4,456,104. 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 \$2,844,920.

I note that ALA's net asset position has increased relative to the 2023 financial year, by an amount of \$67,420 to \$1,611,184. 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 2024, ALA has a current ratio of 1.61, an increase from last financial year's current ratio of 1.32. This improvement in liquidity available to ALA (which the Current Ratio measures) is a result of a decrease in current liabilities, particularly in the "Other Current Liabilities" account held in comparison to the previous year, and is pleasing to see. 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 2024 financial year as they have once again delivered an amazing service to all stakeholders and be a leader in their industry.

Toby Thomas
Treasurer



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

ALA has again progressed productivity advances that are crucial to a service with such wide geographic coverage by using available information technology to improve experiences for clients and staff. These improvements include embedding a modern client records management system, staff learning systems, human resources record keeping and communication system with integrated payroll, capable IT managed service provider, improved IT security, ALA intranet and virtual debit card systems.

While developments in IT keep us connected, we are still committed to having local solicitors and disability advocates complemented by the Australia wide Disability Advocacy Support Helpline which provides phone support for people who cannot access local advocacy services.

This year both social and legal advocacy programs have been consolidating growth and managing some of the common fluctuations in government funding to ensure we still provide a consistent service.

Many issues our client's face are common and relate to systemic problems. In response to this we employ staff to coordinate with all at ALA and like-minded advocacy services to seek to influence systemic change in our area of expertise. Our policy approach is underpinned by factual research including the coalface experience of clients and staff.

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.

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 the knowledge and experience of people with lived experience of disability to oversee the strategic governance of ALA.

During the last year we have prepared for a move to a company structure which better suits our size and Australia-wide coverage for some programs. This change occurred on 1 July 2024. Therefore, in next year's annual report the organisation will be reporting as Advocacy Law Alliance Ltd. The name has changed slightly but the same "for purpose" objectives and values remain.

Thank you to all involved in ALA this year.

Mark Grierson
Chief Executive Officer

I am proud to reflect on the progress we've made this year in our mission to support and advocate for those facing difficulties in our communities. The 2023-24 year has been one of growth, resilience, and transformation for ALA, and I am honoured to work alongside such a dedicated and passionate team.

This year, we expanded our reach, providing essential services to more than 6,000 individuals across rural and regional NSW. Our commitment to being a strong, local presence in these communities is central to who we are as an organisation. We also assisted over 1400 people with disability nationwide through the Disability Advocacy Support Helpline.

At the heart of our work is our commitment to offering an accessible service that puts clients at the centre of everything we do. We understand that the individuals and families we serve often face complex challenges, and we strive to meet them with empathy, respect, and tailored support. Our services are designed to be inclusive and responsive, ensuring that each person who comes to us receives professional service and attention they deserve.

We are also deeply committed to continuous improvement. This year we have made significant strides in refining our processes and expanding our capabilities, always with the goal of providing the best possible service to our clients. Whether through staff training, new technologies, or enhanced client feedback mechanisms, we are constantly evolving.

As we look ahead, I am excited about the opportunities and challenges that lie before us. We will continue to build on the solid foundation we've established, seeking innovative ways to improve our services and expand our impact. Our commitment to excellence, equity, and justice remains unwavering, and I have no doubt that the year ahead will bring even more significant achievements.

To our incredible staff, thank you for your tireless efforts and dedication. Your work makes a tangible difference in the lives of so many, and it is a privilege to lead alongside you.

To our Board, thank you for your strategic vision and guidance. Your support ensures that ALA continues to navigate the complexities of our sector with confidence and purpose.

Catherine Peek
Deputy Chief Executive Officer





In November 2023 the ALA team gathered in Newcastle.

- Keynote Speaker - Marty Wilson – about resilience
- Values in Action - bringing ALA's Four "C" Values to life
- Communications & Social Media
- Skildare HR - WHS Toolkit
- ALA Wellbeing Champions presentation
- New ALA intranet showcase
- Essentials of Feedback: Giving and Receiving - Dr. Sacha Muller Botti
- Helpline Team Sessions

The ALA conference is a chance to get all staff together from across NSW to network and share their work story.



**Disability
Advocacy**
NSW

Report



DA Leaders Report

Amanda Brickwood

Executive Officer

Charlotte Rider

Manager Advocacy

This year, the DA team has continued to build on the momentum established in previous years, focusing on continuous improvement, professional development, and strengthening our advocacy services both individually and systemically. At the heart of our efforts is a commitment to developing a supportive work environment that nurtures professional advocacy practice and staff wellbeing. We are dedicated to equipping our team with the tools, knowledge, and clear frameworks that define and support our approach to advocacy, ensuring a strong and coherent identity.

This approach allows our advocates to not only provide high-quality, client-focused support but also foster resilience, self-care, and clarity in managing the challenges of their roles. By establishing defined boundaries and a shared understanding of our work, we aim to strengthen our team's capacity to navigate the complexities of an ever-evolving advocacy landscape—marked by high demand, intricate service systems, and diverse client needs. Every initiative this year has been designed to bolster our team's ability to meet these challenges while upholding the core principles that guide our advocacy work.

A major highlight this year has been the successful completion of our **Outcomes Measurement Framework**, a critical tool that will allow us to assess and communicate the impact of our advocacy work more effectively. Alongside this, the launch of our **Advocacy Foundations framework**, the development of the **Supported Decision-Making Communities of Practice (CoP)**, and the evolution of our **Advocate Induction Program** are key initiatives ensuring our team is equipped with the skills and knowledge needed to navigate the complexities of the advocacy landscape.

One of our new pilot programs, the **Disability Advocacy Support Helpline (The Helpline)**, continues to grow and thrive. Now in its final year of a three-year pilot, The Helpline has matured

into a stable and effective service, progressing over 2,000 advocacy cases across the pilot period to date and delivering timely remote support across Australia.

Beyond individual advocacy, we are committed to driving society-wide change. This year, we have reflected on how we, as an individual advocacy service, can best contribute to systemic change. We decided to align our systemic advocacy more closely with our advocacy team, ensuring it is informed by the real-world experiences of our clients. This shift allows us to leverage our strengths as a service to address broader systemic issues, influencing disability policies and government priorities.

Looking ahead, we are excited to build on the progress we've made in 2024. With our team's dedication and the strong foundation built through continuous improvement and professional development, we are confident we will keep contributing to positive outcomes for the clients and communities we serve while expanding the reach and impact of our systemic advocacy efforts.



Key Highlights:

Outcomes Measurement Framework:

The completion of our Outcomes Measurement Framework marks a major milestone for DA, providing us with the tools to systematically assess the impact of our advocacy work. This year, we finalised our Theory of Change, developed program logic models, and designed a flexible outcomes measurement tool. Following extensive consultations and testing with our team, we are now set to launch this tool across the service.

This framework will not only help us measure individual and systemic advocacy outcomes but also enable us to communicate our impact more effectively to stakeholders, guide strategic decisions and ensure that our service continues to evolve in response to the needs of our clients and communities.

Our Theory of Change



Training & Professional Development

Training and development have been essential in strengthening the DA team this year, with a key focus on enhancing professional advocacy skills. We've concentrated on fostering effective, human rights-based advocacy that is person-directed, trauma-informed, and centred around a supported decision-making approach.

Practice development is an ongoing process, and by providing opportunities to learn, grow, and refine their practice approach, we ensure that our team is well-prepared and supported to deliver consistently high-quality advocacy services while navigating and managing the inherent complexities and pressures that present in our work.



Advocacy Guiding Principles



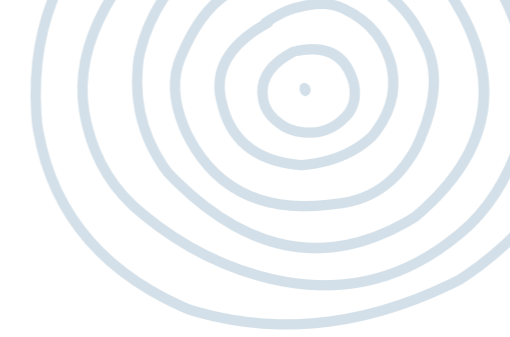
Acknowledgements

We want to take a moment to thank the DA team for their hard work and commitment across the 2023/24 year. Whether you're supporting clients, leading a team, helping colleagues, out in the community delivering education or engagement activities, or contributing to improvement projects and systemic advocacy initiatives—every action is making a difference. Each of these contributions, no matter their focus, is essential to advancing our goals, supporting people with disability to get a fair go, and ultimately contributing to a more inclusive and equitable society.

As we move ahead, we are confident that by continuing to work together, we'll keep making a positive impact for the clients and communities we support.

A special thank you to our CEO, Mark Grierson, Deputy CEO, Catherine Peek, the ALA staff, and our volunteer Board members for their steadfast support and guidance throughout the 2023-24 year. Your leadership has been invaluable in helping us achieve our goals and pursue new opportunities for growth.

Finally, thank you all for your outstanding contributions and commitment to making a difference in the lives of those we serve.



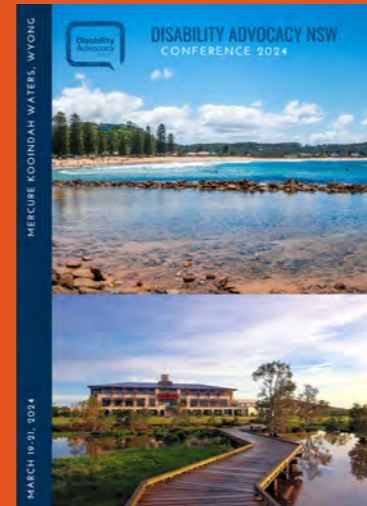
Supported Decision Making Communities of Practice:

This year, we introduced a Supported Decision-Making Framework as part of our ongoing focus on enhancing professional capabilities. A key part of our commitment to Advocacy Foundations is the newly established Supported Decision-Making Communities of Practice (CoP). The CoP provides a reflective structure within our service, ensuring consistency in our approach and enabling us to walk alongside our clients, offering them the best opportunities to have a fair go and ensure their voices are heard throughout the advocacy process. These sessions provide regular opportunities for DA managers and advocates to refine their skills in supported decision-making, continually improving our advocacy practices.

Innovating Learning - Induction Program Development

As part of our efforts to strengthen professional development, we successfully launched the first version of our comprehensive Advocate Induction Program. This was well received by new advocates, who appreciated the self-paced learning approach and practical activities but noted room for improvement in the format. We have incorporated their feedback to enhance the program.

We have now commenced Phase 2, which involves transitioning the induction content from a PDF booklet into a digital format through our Learning Management System (LMS). This phase aims to enhance accessibility, engagement, and consistency across the service by creating interactive e-learning modules that present the content in a clear and engaging way. These modules will facilitate easier navigation and better comprehension, empowering learners to effectively absorb and apply the material in their work.



Annual DA Conference

Our annual DA Conference, a key event in our professional development calendar, provided a valuable opportunity for the team from all our regions across NSW to come together, share knowledge, and build on our collective expertise. Held on the NSW Central Coast, the conference centred around the practical application of our Advocacy Foundations framework, with a strong emphasis on implementing supported decision-making in real-world scenarios.

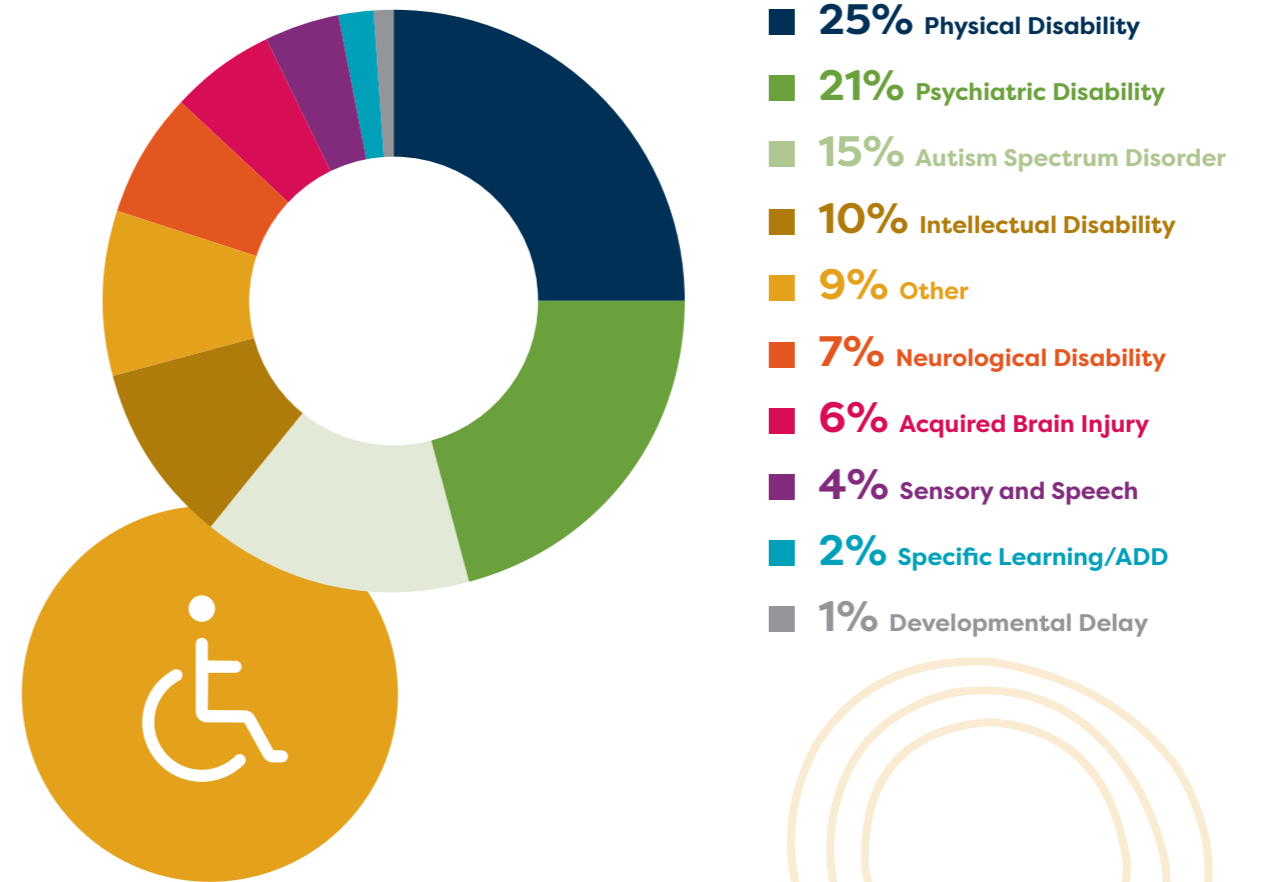
The event featured a series of targeted sessions designed to enhance skills and knowledge, including:

- Dr Joanne Watson from Deakin University discussed the role of supported decision-making in advocacy for those rarely heard.
- Alex Elliot, a project worker from the Council for Intellectual Disability, shared firsthand insights and expertise on supported decision-making, drawing from his lived experience as a person with disability.
- Dr Michelle Browning, from the Decision Agency led a workshop on the ten strategies advocates can use to incorporate a supported decision-making approach in their work.
- The DA management team collaborated to run a workshop on embedding supported decision-making in DA advocacy practice.
- Our Disability Law NSW team shared insights into the work they do and how legal and advocacy services can work together to help clients achieve positive outcomes.

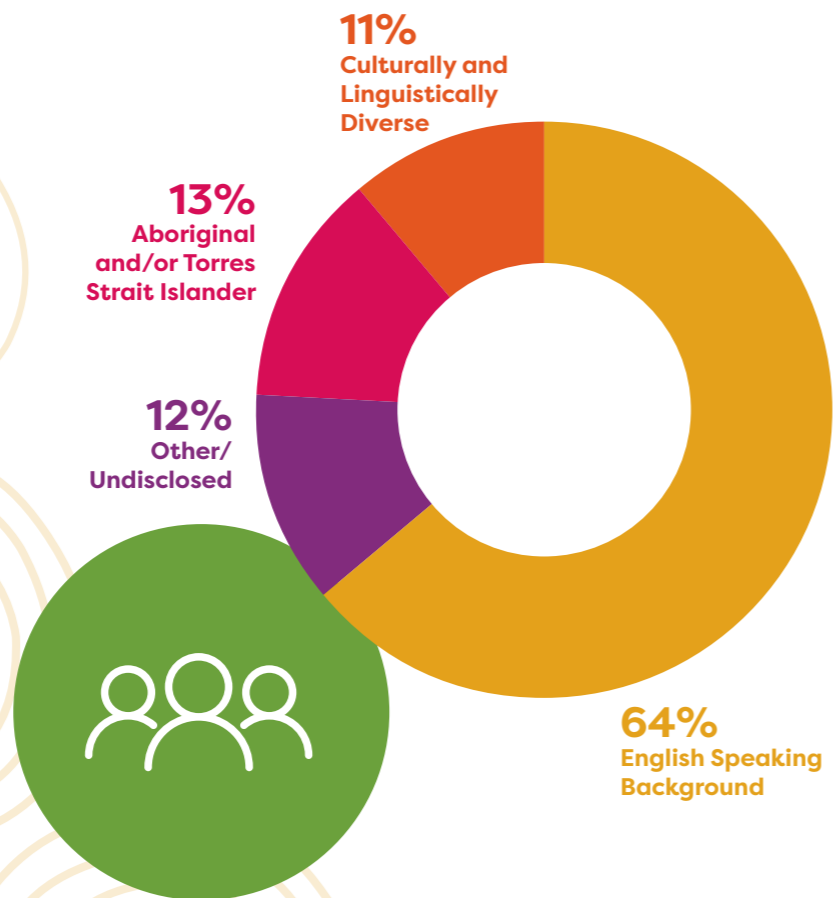
Our clients



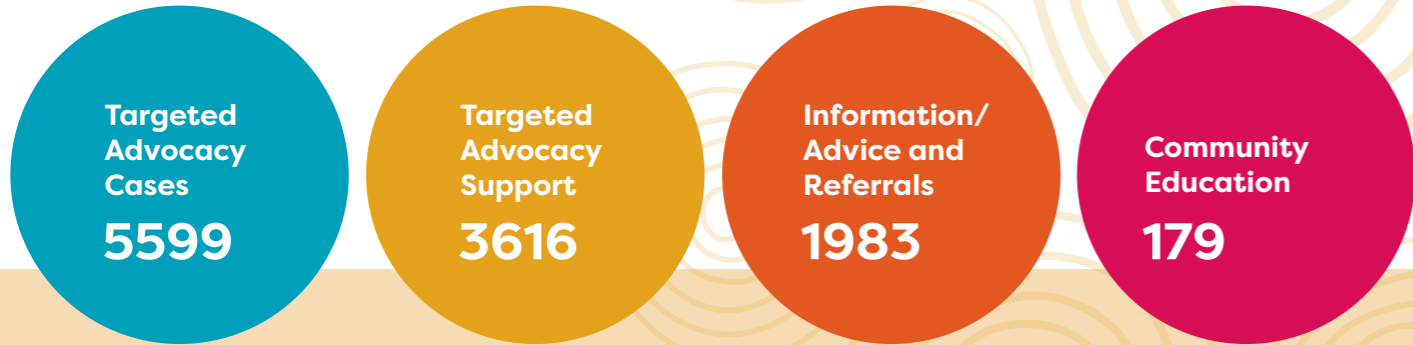
Primary Disability



Cultural Background



Our Impact



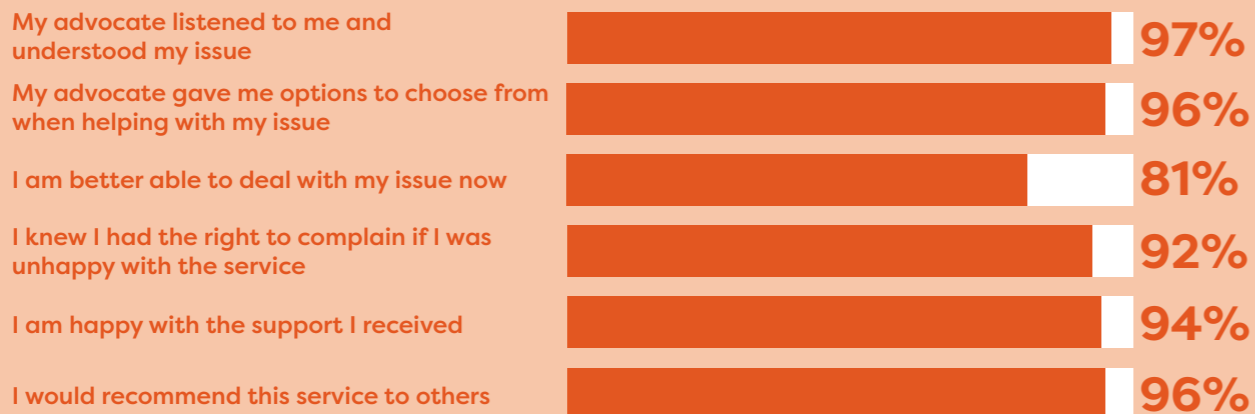
Targeted Advocacy case timeframes



→ For 81% of matters the advocacy outcome was achieved



Feedback



Top Advocacy Issues



We also provide advocacy support across a diverse range of other issues

- Disability services complaints
- Finances
- Discrimination/rights
- Health/Mental Health
- Abuse/Neglect/Violence
- Access to non NDIS services
- Employment
- Child Protection
- Vulnerable/isolated
- Community Inclusion - Social/Family
- Equipment/aids
- Transport
- Physical access



Compliments

My advocate was instrumental during my time with DA. Not only was my advocate kind, very helpful, never rushed her appointments spoke to me with passion, explained everything in detail, made me feel secure that I had someone there on my side every time I needed her regardless of my limitations, outbursts & frustrations.

I can not explain how supportive and essential your service is. My life has for ever been devastated by my disabilities but now I have some help and support I can see a light at the end of a very dark tunnel.

Thank you for help with my circumstances from Disability Advocate. She was really helpful and caring with my case. So I could become Independent again and free from Trustee and Guardian.

My advocate was an absolutely amazing advocate, she always made sure I understood my options and possible outcomes. I never had to chase her up as she was always on the ball and more than I could have asked for.

My advocate was amazing she had so much patience with me and explained everything to me . She always made my daughter case feel important and did everything she could to help. My experience in working with her was so helpful in navigating ndis requirements and there changing criteria. I would gladly recommend your services. Thank you.



Case Studies



Case Study 1 – NDIS planning and supported decision making

Nature of case: A person self-referred to our service seeking support to make decisions around the NDIS supports they need and then communicate this at their NDIS planning meeting. The person was previously supported by family however this support is no longer able to assist. The person wanted to continue to make their own decisions however needed some support to do so.

Advocacy plan:

- The advocate assisted the person to work through and complete the NDIS planning preparation booklet.
- The advocate assisted the person to gather the evidence they needed to support the requested support items.
- The advocate assisted the person to prepare questions for the planner.
- The advocate supported the person at the NDIS planning meeting.
- The advocate supported the person to explain to the planner why they needed a support coordinator.
- The advocate provided a list of local Support Coordinators for person to consider and supported them to make an informed decision.

Outcome: The person said that they felt confident to speak during the meeting because of the preparation work beforehand. Support coordinators are often not funded even when needed however in this instance the person was able to clearly articulate the need and this was funded accordingly. The person received a plan that met their needs and was supported to connect with a support coordinator for ongoing decision-making support.

Case Study 2 – Guardianship

Nature of case: A person self-referred to our service to our service requesting advocacy assistance at an upcoming NCAT hearing. The person wanted their application for NSW Trustee Financial Management Order to be revoked and changes made to the Guardianship Order currently in place.

Advocacy plan:

- The advocate clarified the desired outcome they were seeking and what role the person wanted the advocate to take in the hearing. Different options were presented and discussed to determine the persons preferences.
- The advocate provided information about what to expect at the hearing (formalities and process).
- The advocate supported the person to review the evidence that would be presented at the hearing and prepare for questions that may be asked by the member on the day.
- The advocate worked with the person to plan how the advocate can best support them on the hearing day if they became distressed or overwhelmed during the hearing.
- The advocate attended the hearing.
- The advocate supported the person to communicate their views at the hearing.

Outcome: The person answered the Tribunal's questions independently at the hearing. The NSW Trustee Financial Management Order was revoked, and the Tribunal agreed to the requested amendments to the Guardianship Order.

Case Study 3 – Employment

Nature of case: A person self-referred requesting support to communicate with their employer who had not implemented their requested reasonable adjustments in the workplace. The person had advised their employer of their disabilities and support requirements at the beginning of their employment which had been acknowledged and agreed upon, however the requested adjustments had not been implemented.

Advocacy plan:

- The advocate met with the client to discuss the outcome the person was seeking. The person requested for their mother to be involved in the initial and ongoing conversations to assist with supported decision-making.
- The advocate reviewed and discussed a GP report relating to the client's workplace requirements.
- The person was provided with information and resources on reasonable adjustments in the workplace and rights at work.
- The advocate worked in collaboration with the person and their mother to prepare for the meeting with the employer.
- The advocate attended the scheduled meeting at the person's workplace to assist them to navigate the complex process around workplace adjustments and to support their rights to be upheld.

Outcome: The workplace advised that they would implement the reasonable adjustments and advised that the person would be able to work alternative duties if there was written support from a treating professional.

New Opportunities



Disability Advocacy Support Helpline (The Helpline)

Now entering its final year of a three-year pilot, the Disability Advocacy Support Helpline (The Helpline) has continued to grow and perform exceptionally well across all key measures of success.

Launched as part of Australia's Disability Strategy 2021-2031, The Helpline provides short-term advocacy and referral support for people with disability, their families, and carers, accessible through the Disability Gateway. Over the past year, the program has matured into a stable and effective service, reaching several important milestones and expanding its capacity to meet growing demand.

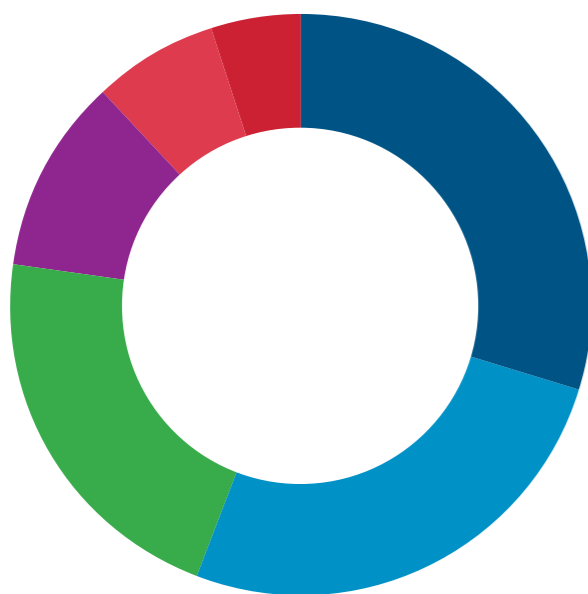
Since its launch, The Helpline has assisted in progressing over 2,000 cases, with new cases now averaging 200 per month. This represents significant growth from the first year of the pilot, when the team was assisting with 40-50 cases per month.

The Helpline continues to meet performance benchmarks, with most clients being connected to a senior advocate within two business days. Advocacy outcomes and client satisfaction remain high, thanks to the dedication and hard work of the team.

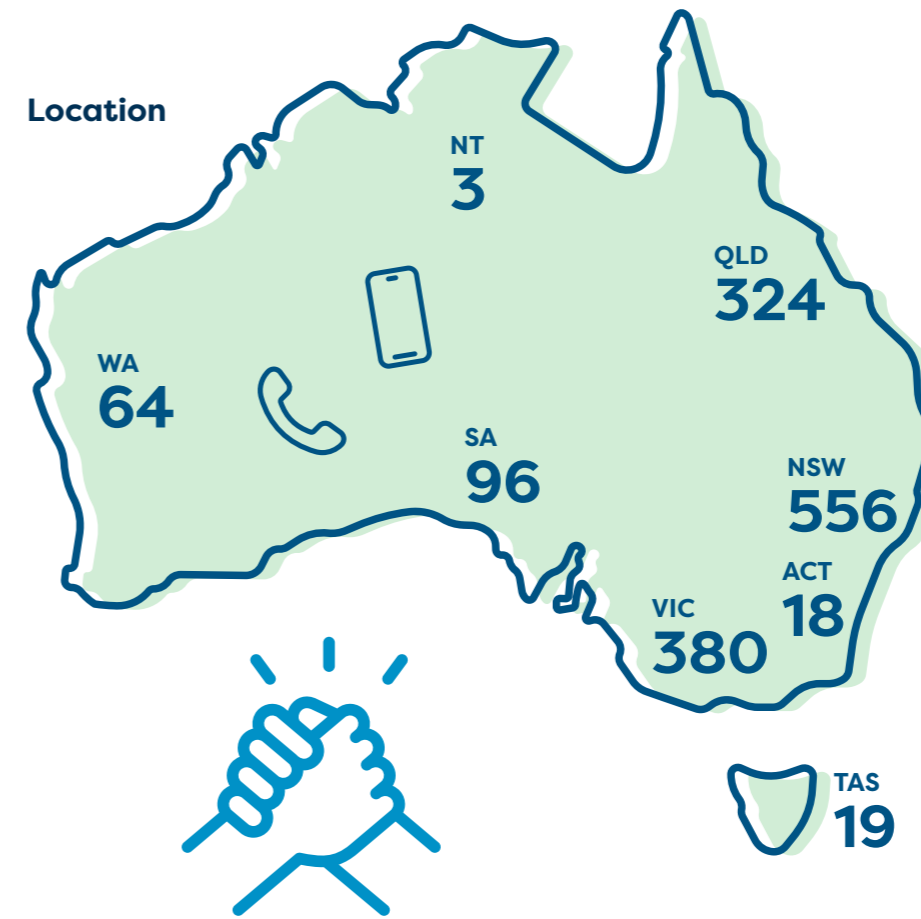
Looking ahead, The Helpline is preparing to enter the next phase of the pilot, with Phase 3 set to launch in the 2024-25 year. This phase will introduce direct referrals from the National Disability Advocacy Program (NDAP) providers to help manage demand for advocacy. The rollout will occur in stages across four geographical areas, beginning with NSW.

As the pilot progresses, the focus will remain on maintaining service quality while managing capacity and refining processes to ensure the program's long-term success and sustainability.

Primary Disability



- 22% Physical Disability
- 25% Psychiatric Disability
- 18% Autism Spectrum Disorder
- 9% Intellectual Disability
- 6% Neurological Disability
- 4% Acquired Brain Injury



Clients

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Representation: 5.96%

Culturally & Linguistically Diverse Backgrounds: 13.12%

Top 5 Issues

- 1 NDIS
- 2 Government Payments
- 3 Housing/Homelessness
- 4 Legal/Access to Justice
- 5 Discrimination/Rights

Impact

1.17 days response timeframe

13.2 days to close

1433 people supported

367 referrals made

5 hours to close



Systemic Advocacy

One of our strategic goals is to inform government priorities on disability. We aim to achieve this through our core individual advocacy work and targeted systemic initiatives. We strive to complement the work of organisations specifically focused on systemic advocacy and seek opportunities to collaborate with them where possible. Whether through joint initiatives or those we lead independently, our focus remains on contributing to broader society-wide change while ensuring that the voices and lived experiences of people with disability, particularly those in regional, rural, and remote NSW, are at the forefront of our efforts.

Key systemic initiatives in 2023-24

Law Reform Council's Inquiry into the NSW Anti-Discrimination Act: We highlighted the limitations of the Act in preventing discrimination, particularly in education, and called for stronger protections for people with disability.

NSW Rental Reforms Submission: Our submission addressed proposed amendments to the Residential Tenancy Act, focusing on the potential impact on people with disability.

NDIS Review Submission: We contributed both a written report and a video submission to the NDIS review, highlighting the challenges of "thin markets" in regional areas and the impact of unethical provider practices.

National Housing and Homelessness Plan (NHHP) Submission: This submission advocated for policies to ensure accessible, affordable housing for people with disability, with an emphasis on increasing choice and control.

Mini-Systemic Projects in Education: Our regional teams worked on advocacy initiatives aimed at raising awareness of the role of advocacy in education. These projects strengthened connections with schools and education stakeholders, resulting in a 35% increase in education-related matters.

In 2023-24, our systemic advocacy efforts focused on the implementation of the Disability Royal Commission (DRC) and NDIS review recommendations, as well as advancing key legislative changes such as the Administrative Review Tribunal Bill. We have also continued to build connections and partnerships with key government stakeholders, raising awareness of the experiences of people with disability and influencing priority areas such as education and NDIS-related issues.

NDIS Bill and Associated Rules: We submitted two detailed submissions to the Senate Legislative Committee for Community Affairs on the proposed NDIS Bill and are actively preparing a submission on the proposed 'NDIS support list.'

Administrative Review Tribunal (ART) Bill: We advocated for changes in the new tribunal body, engaging with the Attorney General's Task Force to ensure the process is trauma-informed and proposing an Independent Expert Review model for a less adversarial approach. Additionally, we have been consulting on ART Rules, advocating for NDIS-specific guidelines.

Systemic Feedback to NDIA: We raised concerns with the NDIA on improving ADR processes to be less adversarial, ensuring compliance with model litigant obligations, and addressing delays in implementing new plans following resolutions.

Other Issues Raised: We addressed concerns about NDIS participants aged 65+ being wrongly advised to transition out, corrected misinformation about LACs limiting access applications, and helped expedite the process for participants receiving new plans.

Looking ahead

This year, we reflected on our priorities and strengths as a service and how we can best contribute to society-wide change. As a result, we have decided to shift our approach and align our systemic advocacy more closely with our mission and core strengths. By embedding this work within our advocacy team, we aim to capitalise on what we do best, ensuring it remains closely connected to our direct work with clients and better reflects the issues they face.

Moving forward, our Specialist Disability Advocate (SDA) team will take on a role specifically focused on systemic projects and partnerships. This role will be crucial in coordinating and driving our efforts to influence society-wide change. By raising systemic issues observed in our advocacy work and leveraging on-the-ground experiences, this role will help amplify the voices and experiences of those we serve. Our goal is to drive positive change that enhances the lives of people with disability, particularly in regional, rural, and remote areas.





MID NORTH COAST LEGAL CENTRE

Report



Principal Solicitor Report

Jane Titterington

The past year at the Mid North Coast Legal Centre (MNCLC) has been marked by significant activity and growth. We have provided assistance to our community over 5,000 times. This impressive figure encompasses not only the legal advice and representation we've delivered in courts, tribunals, and various casework, but also the critical information and referrals we've provided to other services, ensuring our clients receive comprehensive support tailored to their needs.

Our commitment to community legal education has never been stronger. We've successfully extended our reach across six local government areas within our catchment, delivering educational programs that empower our communities with knowledge of their rights and legal options. A highlight of these efforts has been our embedded health justice partnership outreaches under the Mental Health/Justice legal partnership project, which have allowed us to integrate legal assistance directly into healthcare settings, providing a more holistic approach to client care.

As our team continues to grow, we are making necessary changes to accommodate this expansion. We've been preparing for some renovations in our Port Macquarie office, and we're excited to announce that we will be moving to a larger office in Coffs Harbour in the new financial year. These changes will better support our increasing team size and improve our capacity to serve the community. Additionally, we remain committed to

our hybrid working policy, which offers our staff the flexibility to work both from home and in the office. This approach not only enhances work-life balance but also contributes to a more engaged and productive team.

Despite our successes, this year has also brought challenges, particularly in securing the necessary funding to sustain and expand our services. Unfortunately, our advocacy efforts with local members and government officials have yet to yield the increased funding that the community legal sector desperately needs. The recent Federal and State budgets fell short of meeting our sector's requirements, but we remain steadfast in our advocacy. We are hopeful that the recommendations from the Independent Review of the National Legal Partnership by Dr. Warren Mundy will be implemented, and that the government will recognise the urgent need for increased funding. This is especially crucial as the National Legal Assistance Partnership (NLAP), which provides the majority of our funding, is set to end on 30 June 2025. The sector is now bracing for an intensified period of advocacy, spearheaded by our state and national peak bodies, as we push for sustainable funding solutions that address wage parity and the unique challenges faced by regional, rural, and remote (RRR) legal centres.

Amid these challenges, we've also celebrated significant milestones. Our attendance at the Advocacy Law Alliance Conference in Newcastle in November 2023 and our own annual MNCLC mini conference in Bellingen in March 2024 were standout events of the year. Both provided valuable opportunities for professional development, training, and strategic planning, contributing to the ongoing growth and effectiveness of our team.

Finally, I want to extend my gratitude to the dedicated and hardworking team at the Mid North Coast Legal Centre. Their unwavering commitment to supporting our community and each other is truly remarkable, and I feel incredibly fortunate to lead such a passionate group. I also want to thank our Board, Mark Grierson (CEO), Catherine Peek (Deputy CEO), and the Advocacy Law Alliance team in Newcastle for their unwavering support throughout the year.

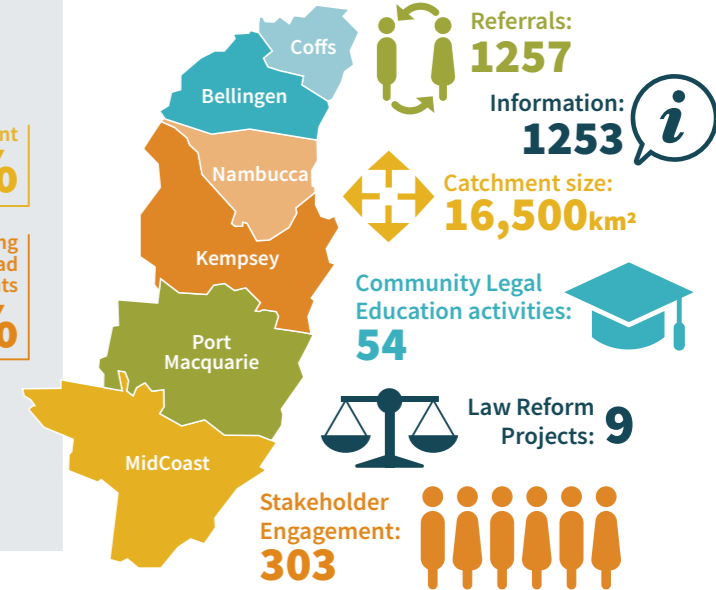
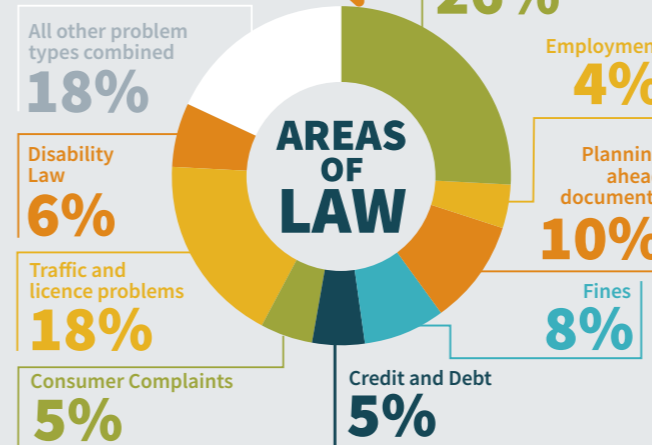


Our Impact

MID NORTH COAST LEGAL CENTRE 2023-24 FINANCIAL YEAR OVERVIEW



TOP PROBLEM TYPES



Provided **1878** legal services to **1232** clients

- 45% live with a disability
- 16% identify as First Nations
- 8% have unstable accommodation
- 17% live in remote/rural areas
- 100% of the representation services were given to people experiencing financial disadvantage

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 finalised expending additional Family, Sexual and Domestic Violence funding through Womens NSW which enabled us to do some great work over the life of the grant. We continued with our health justice partnership called LAMP (Legal and Mental Health Partnership) where we delivered services in partnership with health and mental health service providers across our catchment. We have also continued our work in the Disasters space with Federal funding to assist communities still reeling from the impact of natural disasters over the past few years.

Key Events and Achievements



We held another extremely successful mini-Conference in Bellingen (Gumbayngirr Country) for all MNCLC staff. The two-day conference brings both offices together and covers off mandatory professional development for staff. We also had some difficult “Taskmaster” type challenges which displayed the MNCLC competitive spirit with everyone competing fiercely to be awarded points by our CEO Mark Grierson who proved to be a very hard Taskmaster.



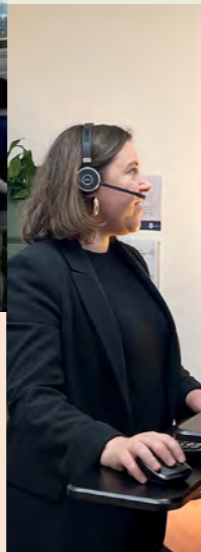
We commenced a new outreach for our LAMP program through Macksville Medical Centre, extending our opportunities to support clients living with mental health barriers in the northern part of our catchment. Medical Centre staff have been supportive and engaged with this new service, and we are excited about ongoing collaborations with them.



We celebrated Principal Solicitor Jane Titterington’s 10-year anniversary with the service with a lovely surprise lunch in Port Macquarie. Jane has made such a huge contribution to the service over the past decade and continues to lead it with passion, integrity and kindness.



We undertook a cultural training “walkshop”, delivered by Birpai service Ngarranga. This was a wonderful experience and chance to think about language, country and flavours of Birpai land.



We are continuing to learn from each other through Internal CPD opportunities, organised and supported by our CLE worker, Shaarn. Included in some of the topics we have covered are:

- “Drafting Deeds of Settlement” (Zac Keizer)
- “Court Advocacy Skills” (Pat Hourigan)
- “Lessons Learned supporting LAMP clients” (Meggie Molony)

Client and Stakeholder Feedback

That young girl Bella was helpful, kind, and polite. She never thought any less of me and it was wonderful. It was difficult to call but she made it easy.

I had a client come in this morning to pick up paperwork. He shared that the solicitor made the whole process incredibly easy for them, he was lovely and offered great service! He couldn’t speak highly enough of Zac, saying he was excellent!

With everything you have done, if I had to pay you I reckon it would be well over \$100,000. You are the only one that has ever done anything for me.

I just wanted to say thank you for everything in regard to your legal advice and with taking the time to help me. Your advice was deeply appreciated and really made me feel much more grounded and gave me a better understanding about my choices in the situation... your patience and compassion was truly felt ...It means more to me than u know. And am truly grateful. Thank you, Patrick.

Please accept my sincere thanks for the assistance provided by Holly and Mid North Coast Legal Centre. Payments have been made to my bank account.

I remembered all your wise tips. I don’t know where we go from here but I want to take the opportunity to thank you for your input. It helped tremendously.

Thank you, Elaine. You are such a lovely person. Every time I call, you listen to me. It is nice to speak with someone on the phone who listens to me and takes the time with me.

Your organisation has been getting around. I follow you on Facebook and you have been going to lots of things. It’s good.

Thank you [LAMP team] for everything you have done to help me. It has made things a lot easier. If it weren’t for you, I would have given up a long time ago.

Legal Assistance – General Practice

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

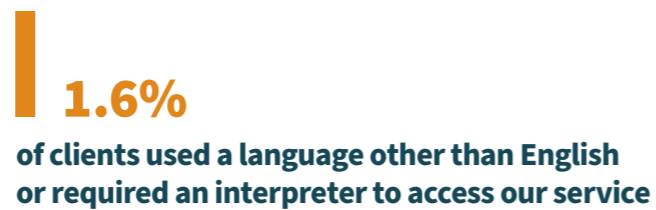
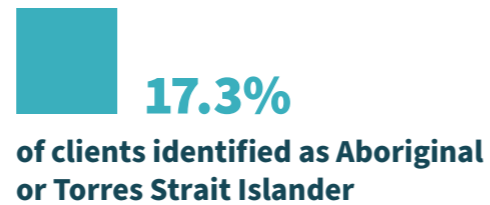
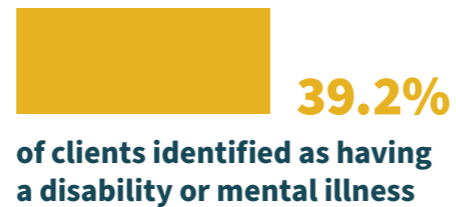
This financial year MNCLC provided information and referral on at least 2442 different occasions. This includes referrals made as part of other advice or casework services and highlights our commitment to ensuring wrap around service delivery for our clients.

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 2023/24, MNCLC assisted 1114 clients across a range of 1711 different “services”. Of these, 833 were new clients.

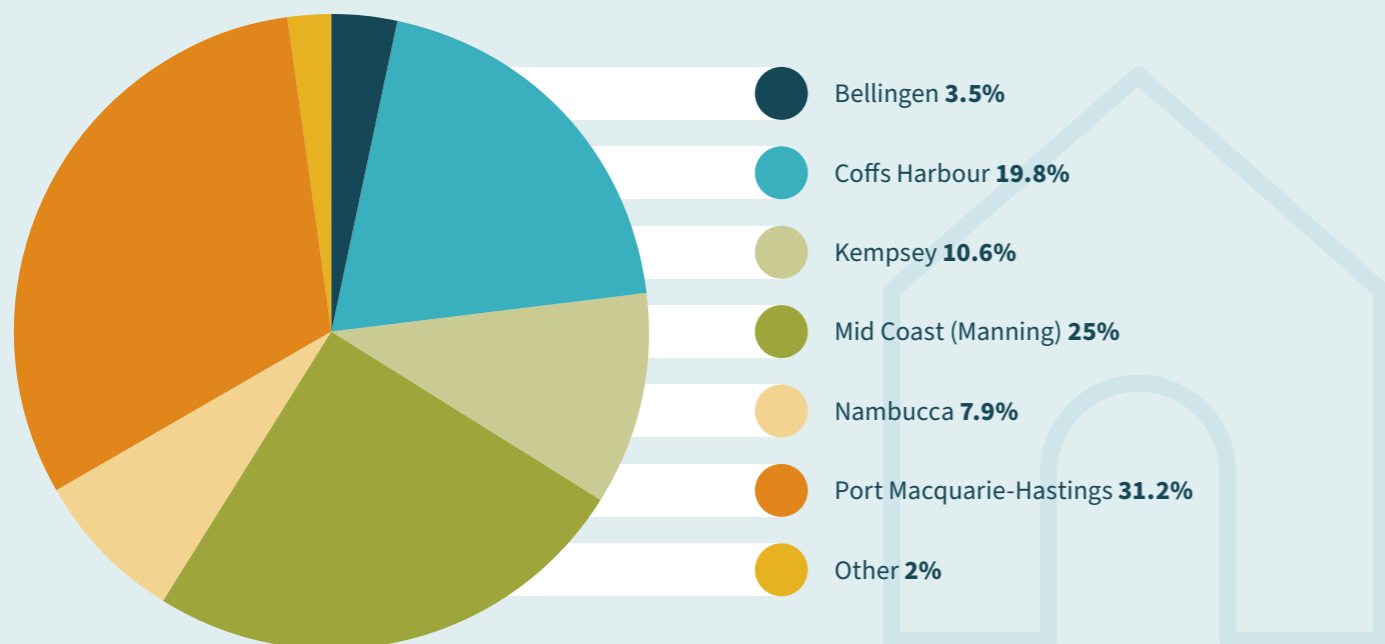
Clients were distributed throughout our catchment area as represented in the figures below.

MNCLC offers regular face to face advice sessions in the Kempsey, Bellingen, Nambucca and MidCoast regions of our catchment, encouraging equal access to legal services for those who may be disadvantaged by distance.

Our clients



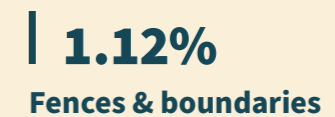
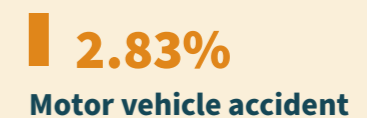
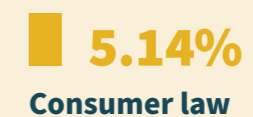
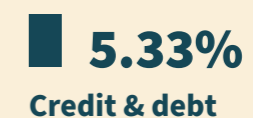
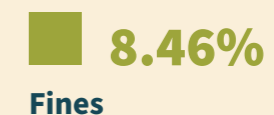
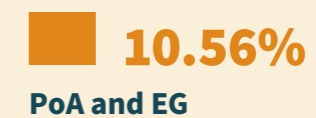
Where do MNCLC clients live?



Legal Advice

A total of 1051 legal advice services were given in the last financial year. Legal advice is defined in CLASS as “the provision of fact specific legal advice to a person (a client) in response to a request for assistance to resolve specific legal problems.”

Legal Problem Type



Legal Task

This financial year MNCLC provided legal task assistance on 234 occasions. 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”.



Case Studies

Victims Services/Domestic Violence

We assisted a client with a review of two administrative decisions. The client had lodged an application for recognition relating to acts of violence perpetrated against the client. The decisions were made to pay the client at the lower category of injury. MNCLC assisted the client with detailed submissions. The client was successful in obtaining compensation for both applications at the highest category under the scheme. The client was extremely grateful for the assistance of MNCLC.

Employment

We recently assisted a client with an employment issue. The client had been dismissed from their employment without any notice and without sufficient reason as it was not a case of serious misconduct. MNCLC assisted the client with advice and in a subsequent Fair Work conciliation after filing for unfair dismissal. There were some technical arguments raised which would have been difficult for the client to navigate without legal representation. Our assistance in giving advice and at the conciliation resulted in the client receiving all of their entitlements and an additional payout which was on the higher side for matters of this nature. A great result for the client.

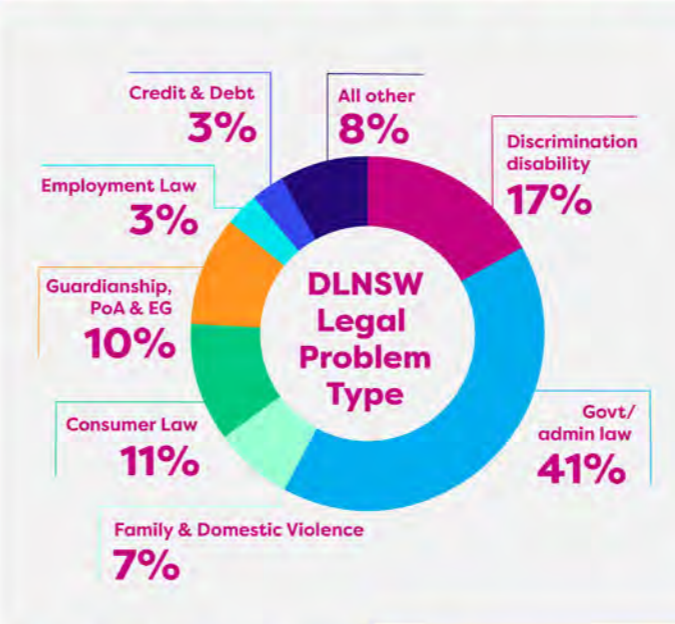
Discrimination

We conducted a successful mediation in NCAT regarding an alleged breach of the Anti-Discrimination Act in an employment context. The client’s employment was allegedly terminated based on disability.

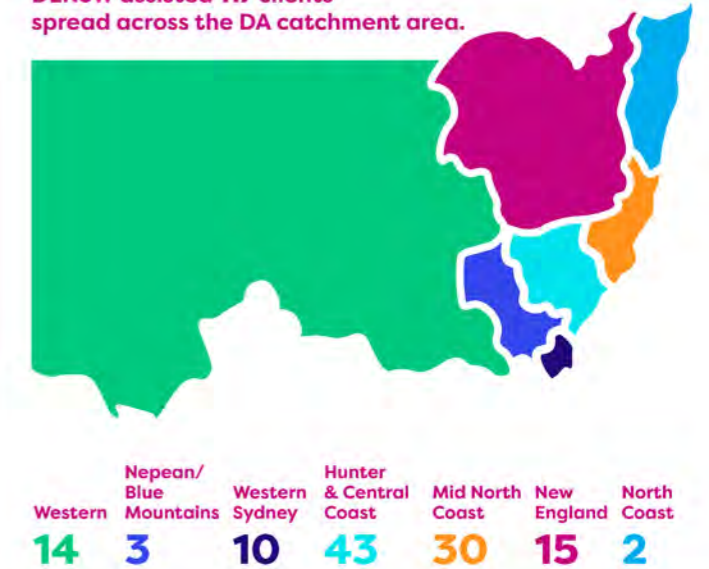
The client came to MNCLC for assistance, and we acted as legal representative for the client at the Tribunal. After significant delays caused by the other party, the matter finally settled via mediation. There were some complexities which made getting a result at hearing problematic. With assistance from MNCLC the client settled the matter and received compensation.

Legal Assistance - Disability Law NSW Program

DLNSW 2023-2024



DLNSW assisted 117 clients spread across the DA catchment area.



57 Male 61 Female

12% identify as First Nations



Over the year, 117 clients received:



Disability Law NSW (DLNSW) 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.

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.

We thank all staff that worked in the DLNSW team this financial year including Anita Jones, Madi Taylor and Sarah Dahlenburg.



Legal Advice

DLNSW has had another successful year of growth, with a general increase overall in services provided.

51
Information

17
Referral

144
Legal Advice

15
Legal Task

2
Ongoing Legal Support

15
Total Rep Services

0
Court Tribunal

15
Other Rep

2
CLE Activities

3
CLE Resources

12
Stakeholder Engagement

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

MNCLC (including DLNSW) delivered 54 CLE activities and undertook 303 stakeholder engagement activities in the financial year.

Some examples include:

- Education sessions on the legal assistance available to clients of DA through DLNSW. These were delivered face to face through the DL “Roadshow” in June.
- Delivering CLE on Police Powers to community workers in the Coffs Harbour area
- Online education to community workers about e-Safety for clients
- Education sessions on “Planning Ahead” to support older people to minimise the risks of abuse and exploitation.
- Education sessions to aged care workers on Family & Domestic Violence, and Victims Compensation, in collaboration with local support services Liberty and Warrina.



Community Outreach and Engagement

We provide community legal outreach at Taree, Kempsey, Nambucca, Macksville and the Mid North Coast Correctional Centre. We attended our traffic programs at Taree Court and Macksville Court. We continued our Embedded School Lawyer Program at Macleay Vocational College.

Outreach & Clinics	Location	When
Kempsey Neighbourhood Centre	West Kempsey	Wednesday, fortnightly
Manning Uniting Church	Taree	Wednesday, fortnightly
Nambucca School of Arts	Nambucca	Tuesday, fortnightly
Mid North Coast Correctional Centre	Aldavilla	Thursday, fortnightly
Taree Traffic Program	Taree Court House	Tuesday, weekly
Macksville Traffic Program	Macksville Court	Thursday, fortnightly
Lawyer in School	Macleay College Kempsey	Monday, fortnightly during term
LAMP Health Justice Partnership	Taree Headspace	Monday, fortnightly
LAMP Health Justice Partnership	Kempsey Headspace	Monday, fortnightly
LAMP Health Justice Partnership	Taree Samaritans	Monday, fortnightly
LAMP Health Justice Partnership	Macksville Medical Centre	Tuesdays, fortnightly

We would like to thank our outreach partners – Kempsey Neighbourhood Centre (Kempsey), Macleay Vocational College (Kempsey), Manning Uniting Church in Taree, Nambucca School of Arts, Macksville Medical Centre, Headspace (Taree and Kempsey) and Samaritans (Taree) and the Mid North Coast Correctional Centre.



Law Reform

The MNCLC Law Reform Committee meets monthly to discuss issues and upcoming opportunities for law reform work. The Committee has been active and has had participation from a number of different staff within the Centre. MNCLC was involved in 9 law reform activities this year across the Centre.

- Sarah and Mel coordinated a submission to the Australian Law Reform Commission Inquiry into Justice Responses to Sexual Violence
- Matt and Pat coordinated a submission to the NSW Government's Inquiry into the Regulation of Cannabis
- Haley, Mel and Jane contributed to the CLCNSW "National Legal Assistance Partnership Review".



Pro Bono Partners

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

- Gilbert & Tobin
- Hall & Wilcox
- Justice Connect (who assist by linking pro bono requests with firms that may be able to assist)
- Lander & Rogers (who assisted with the development of a factsheet on consumer law for caravan owners).



Reconciliation

This year we consulted with community and developed an updated Innovate Reconciliation Action Plan reflecting our increased catchment and continued commitment to reconciliation. The new RAP will be launched in September 2024. Our previous RAP provided the MNCLC with a strong framework to support the national reconciliation movement and our vision for reconciliation.



Our Volunteers

MNCLC relies on the support of volunteers to deliver an effective and accessible legal service. The volunteers also bring different outlooks and experiences and we are enriched by their association with our Centre.

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

- Hannah Dixon
- Julia Ros
- Joshua Martin
- Maree Ioane
- Zachary Armytage
- Safia Manwarring

Volunteers Report

Zachary Armytage, PLT student

"My PLT experience at Mid North Coast Legal Centre vastly exceeds my expectations. The team is generous with their knowledge and time. I'm treated as a valued team member. My supervisor, and the centre, are supportive of my interests and ignorance, and provide me with challenging work and edifying interactions. The day-to-day tasks include drafting advice, letters, legal research, and community legal education materials; assisting in administration; doing intakes on Court list days and observing court proceedings; participating in client meetings, as well as; a range of activities particular to community legal centres - like law reform and community work. I also really enjoyed participating in the MNCLC mini conference in Bellingen particularly due to the camaraderie, values, respect, intellect, and insightfulness of all the people that are the MNCLC team. These attributes are supported by the culture of the Mid North Coast Legal Centre."



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Annual Financial Statements

Advocacy Law Alliance Inc
For the year ended 30 June 2024

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Income and Expenditure Statement

Advocacy Law Alliance Inc

For the year ended 30 June 2024

	2024	2023
Income		
Administration Income	189,117	152,488
Grants Received	11,243,736	10,382,783
Total Income	11,432,853	10,535,271
Gross Surplus	11,432,853	10,535,271
Other Income		
Interest Income	252,365	69,156
Gain on Sale of Assets	-	65,965
Government Wage Subsidies	14,230	-
Total Other Income	266,594	135,121
Expenditure		
Administration Charge	189,117	152,488
Advertising & Promotion	5,685	21,153
Audit Fees	20,112	20,594
Bank Fees	847	2,260
Cleaning	23,941	19,329
Client Requisites	469	1,087
Computer Maintenance	175,145	205,147
Computer Supplies	328,759	410,499
Depreciation	90,711	94,948
Employment Support and Supervision Costs	82,380	104,510
Equipment Hire or Lease	383	268
Filing Fees	196	431
Holiday Pay	102,669	70,841
Insurance	15,131	20,567
Long Service Leave	238,367	123,393
Merchandise	28,814	43,138
Motor Vehicle Expenses	80,479	78,708
Office Expense	22,212	45,998
Postage, Freight & Courier	6,820	5,983
Printing & Stationery	21,546	31,950
Quality Assurance	620	10,480
Repairs & Maintenance	8,149	25,173
Recruitment Costs	38,739	245,905
Rent	467,020	555,847
Salaries & Wages	8,126,391	6,896,479
Security	1,992	3,153
Staff Training & Development	311,009	389,003
S&W Superannuation	886,966	716,588
S&W Workers Compensation	151,906	171,305

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

Income and Expenditure Statement

	2024	2023
Subscriptions	24,589	22,884
Telephone & Internet	109,835	86,112
Travel Expenses	55,917	63,833
Volunteer Costs	15,109	23,414
Total Expenditure	11,632,027	10,663,467
Current Year Surplus/ (Deficit)	67,420	6,925

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

Assets and Liabilities Statement

Advocacy Law Alliance Inc

As at 30 June 2024

	NOTES	30 JUNE 2024	30 JUNE 2023
Assets			
Current Assets			
Cash and Cash Equivalents	2	1,325,578	1,671,372
Term Deposits	2	2,770,371	3,530,298
Trade and Other Receivables	3	74,025	29,517
Total Current Assets		4,169,973	5,231,187
Non-Current Assets			
Plant and Equipment and Vehicles	4	286,132	363,206
Total Non-Current Assets		286,132	363,206
Total Assets		4,456,104	5,594,393
Liabilities			
Current Liabilities			
Employee Entitlements	6	865,083	679,721
GST Payable		34,801	-
Other Current Liabilities		1,521,050	3,005,637
Trade and Other Payables	5	164,285	260,519
Total Current Liabilities		2,585,219	3,945,877
Non-Current Liabilities			
Other Non-Current Liabilities			
Employee Entitlements	6	259,701	104,751
Total Other Non-Current Liabilities		259,701	104,751
Total Non-Current Liabilities		259,701	104,751
Total Liabilities		2,844,920	4,050,629
Net Assets		1,611,184	1,543,764
Member's Funds			
Capital Reserve		1,611,184	1,543,764
Total Member's Funds		1,611,184	1,543,764

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

Cashflow Statement

Advocacy Law Alliance Inc

For the year ended 30 June 2024

	NOTES	2024	2023
Operating Activities			
Receipts from funding authorities		10,910,267	11,412,128
Payments to suppliers and employees		(12,254,717)	(8,643,525)
Interest Received		252,365	69,156
Total from Operating Activities		(1,092,085)	2,837,759
Investing Activities			
Payments for Property, Plant & Equipment		(13,636)	(216,336)
Payments for Rental Bond		-	(2,065)
Proceeds from sale of Property, Plant & Equipment		-	115,111
Proceeds from / (Investments to) Term Deposits		759,927	(3,025,251)
Total from Investing Activities		746,291	(3,128,541)
Cash Balance			
Opening Cash Balance	2	1,671,372	1,962,154
Net increase or (decrease) in cash from operating and investing		(345,794)	(290,782)
Closing Cash Balance	2	1,325,578	1,671,372

Movements in Equity

Advocacy Law Alliance Inc

For the year ended 30 June 2024

	2024	2023
Members Funds		
Opening Balance	1,543,764	1,536,839
Movements from Trading		
Surplus/(Deficit) for the Period	67,420	6,925
Total Movements from Trading	67,420	6,925
Total Members Funds	1,611,184	1,543,764

Notes to the Financial Statements

Advocacy Law Alliance Inc

For the year ended 30 June 2024

1. Basis of Preparation & Summary of Material Accounting Policies

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.

The financial statements are special purpose financial statements prepared in order to satisfy the financial reporting requirements of the Australian Charities and Not-For-Profit Commissions Act 2012.

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 report has been prepared in accordance with the requirements of the Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission Act 2012 and the following Australian Accounting Standards:

AASB 101 Presentation of Financial Statements

AASB 107 Statement of Cash Flows

AASB 108 Accounting Policies, Changes in Accounting Estimates and Errors

AASB 124 Related Party Disclosures

AASB 1048 Interpretation of Standards AASB 1054 Australian Additional Disclosures

Material accounting policies adopted in the preparation of these financial statements are presented below and are consistent with prior reporting periods unless otherwise stated.

The Association has adopted the amendments to AASB 101 Presentation of Financial Statements which require only the disclosure of material accounting policy information rather than significant accounting policies and therefore policy information which does not satisfy one of the following requirements has been removed from these financial statements:

- Relates to change in accounting policy;
- Policy has been developed in the absence of an explicit accounting standard requirement;
- Documents an accounting policy choice;
- Relates to an area of significant judgement or estimation; and
- Relates to a complex transaction and is required to explain the treatment to the user.

Property, Plant and Equipment (PPE)

Leasehold improvements, motor vehicles, plant and office equipment 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.

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

Impairment of Assets

At the end of each reporting period, the committee reviews the carrying amounts of its tangible and intangible assets to determine whether there is any indication that those assets have been impaired.

If such an indication exists, an impairment test is carried out on the asset by comparing the recoverable amount of the asset, being the higher of the asset's fair value less costs to sell and value in use, to the asset's carrying amount. Any excess of the asset's carrying amount over its recoverable amount is recognised in the income and expenditure statement.

Employee Provisions

Provision is made for the association's liability for employee benefits arising from services rendered 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. 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.

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.

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.

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.

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

	2024	2023
2. Cash & Cash Equivalents		
Cash at Bank		
Operating Account	364,802	305,621
High Interest Account	903,334	1,365,750
Weel Expenses Account	57,442	-
Total Cash at Bank	1,325,578	1,671,372
Term Deposits Maturing <12 months		
Cash at Bank - Term Deposit 9053	1,049,042	1,017,652
Cash at Bank- Term Deposit 1420	1,000,000	-
Cash at Bank - Term Deposit 9282	521,328	504,145
Cash at Bank - Term Deposit 2514	200,000	2,008,502
Total Term Deposits Maturing <12 months	2,770,371	3,530,298
Total Cash & Cash Equivalents	4,095,948	5,201,669
	2024	2023

3. Trade and Other Receivables

Accounts Receivable	891	6,729
Sundry Debtors	50,811	-
Rental Bond	22,322	22,322
Total Trade and Other Receivables	74,025	29,051
	2024	2023

4. Plant and Equipment, Motor Vehicles

Plant and Equipment		
Plant and Equipment at Cost	29,749	16,113
Accumulated Depreciation of Plant and Equipment	(13,995)	(13,410)
Total Plant and Equipment	15,754	2,704
Motor Vehicles		
Motor Vehicles at Cost	572,458	572,458
Accumulated Depreciation of Motor Vehicles	(302,081)	(211,955)
Total Motor Vehicles	270,377	360,503
Total Plant and Equipment, Motor Vehicles	286,132	363,206
	2024	2023

5. Trade and Other Payables

Trade Payables		
Accounts Payable	11,680	230,809
Total Trade Payables	11,680	230,809
Other Payables		
Credit Cards Payable	-	14,277

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

PAYG Withholdings Payable	138,183	-
Superannuation Payable	14,422	15,433
Total Other Payables	152,605	29,710
Total Trade and Other Payables	164,285	260,519
	2024	2023

6. Employee Entitlements

Current

Provision for Long Service Leave	337,837	255,145
Provision for Holiday Pay	527,246	424,576
Total Current	865,083	679,721

Non Current

Provision for Long Service Leave	259,701	104,751
Total Non Current	259,701	104,751

Total Employee Entitlements	1,124,784	784,472
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7. Adoption of new and revised accounting standards

The Association has adopted all standards which became effective for the first time at 30 June 2024, the adoption of these standards has not caused any material adjustments to the reported financial position, performance or cash flow of the Association.

8. Critical Accounting Estimates and Judgements Disclosure

The Committee members make estimates and judgements during the preparation of these financial statements regarding assumptions about current and future events affecting transactions and balances.

These estimates and judgements are based on the best information available at the time of preparing the financial statements, however as additional information is known then the actual results may differ from the estimates.

9. Related Parties

Other related parties include close family members of key management personnel and entities that are controlled or significantly influenced by those key management personnel or their close family members.

There were no related party transactions in the financial year ended 30 June 2024 (2023: nil).

10. Key Management Personnel Disclosures

Key management personnel have not received any remuneration for their services during the year ended 30 June 2024 (2023: None).

11. Auditors Remuneration

Remuneration paid for the audit of the financial report was \$20,112 (2023: \$20,594).

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

12. Contingencies

In the opinion of the Board, the Association has no contingent liabilities (2023: \$NIL).

13. Subsequent Events

The Association ceased trading effective 1 July 2024 and transitioned to a Company limited by Guarantee. The assets and liabilities of Advocacy Law Alliance Incorporated were transferred to Advocacy Law Alliance Ltd at fair value effective 1 July 2024. Remaining settlement of transactions after this date were transferred to Advocacy Law Alliance Ltd.

14. Association Details

The registered office of the Association is:
Advocacy Law Alliance Inc.
Suite 1, Level 2
408 King Street
NEWCASTLE WEST NSW 2302.

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

Statement by members of the Board

Advocacy Law Alliance Inc

For the year ended 30 June 2024

The Board Members of the Association declare that in the Board's opinion:

(a) there are reasonable grounds to believe that the Association is able to pay all of its debts, as and when they become due and payable; and

(b) the financial statements and notes satisfy the requirements of the Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission Act 2012.

Signed in accordance with subsection 60.15(2) of the *Australian Charities and Not-for-profit Commission Regulations 2022*.

Board Member



Board Member



Date 22nd August 2024

Certificate By Members of the Board

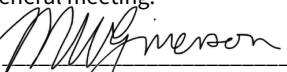
Advocacy Law Alliance Inc

For the year ended 30 June 2024

I, Mr Mark Grierson of Suite 1, Level 2, 408 King St, NEWCASTLE WEST, NSW, Australia, 2302 certify that:

1. I attended the annual general meeting of the association held on [24 / 10 / 2024].
2. The financial statements for the year ended 30 June 2024 were submitted to the members of the association at its annual general meeting.

Signed:



Mr Mark Grierson

Dated: 24/ 10 / 2024

Advocacy Law Alliance Inc
Independent Audit Report to the members of
For the Year Ended 30 June 2024

Report on the Financial Report

Opinion

We have audited the financial report of Advocacy Law Alliance Inc. (the Association), which comprises the statement of financial position as at 30 June 2024, the statement of profit or loss and other comprehensive income and the statement of changes in equity and notes to the financial statements, including a summary of material accounting policies, and the statement by members of the Committee .

In our opinion, the financial report of Advocacy Law Alliance Inc. has been prepared in accordance with *Division 60 of the Australian Charities and Not-for-Profits Commission Act 2012* including:

- i) giving a true and fair view of the entity's financial position as at 30 June 2024 and of its financial performance for the year ended; and
- (ii) complying with Australian Accounting Standards, and Division 60 of the *Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission Regulations 2022*.

Basis for Opinion

We conducted our audit in accordance with Australian Auditing Standards. Our responsibilities under those standards are further described in the Auditor's Responsibilities for the Audit of the Financial Report section of our report. We are independent of the Association in accordance with the auditor independence requirements of the ethical requirements of the Accounting Professional and Ethical Standards Board's APES 110 Code of Ethics for Professional Accountants (the Code) that are relevant to our audit of the financial report in Australia. We have also fulfilled our other ethical responsibilities in accordance with the Code.

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

**Advocacy Law Alliance Inc
Independent Audit Report to the members of
For the Year Ended 30 June 2024**

Emphasis of Matter – Basis of accounting

We draw attention to Note 1 to the financial report which describes the basis of accounting. The financial report has been prepared for the purpose of fulfilling Advocacy Law Alliance Inc's financial reporting responsibilities under the *Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission Act 2012 'ACNC Act'*. As a result, the financial report may not be suitable for another purpose. Our opinion is not modified in respect of this matter.

Responsibilities of Management and Those Charged with Governance

Management is responsible for the preparation and fair presentation of the financial report that gives a true and fair view and have determined that the basis of preparation described in Note 1 to the financial report is appropriate to meet the requirements of the ACNC Act. The Management's responsibility also includes such internal control as the Management determine is necessary to enable the preparation of a financial report that gives a true and fair view and is free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

In preparing the financial report, management is responsible for assessing the Association's ability to continue as a going concern, disclosing, as applicable, matters related to going concern and using the going concern basis of accounting unless management either intends to liquidate the Association or to cease operations, or has no realistic alternative but to do so.

Those charged with governance are responsible for overseeing the Association's financial reporting process.

Auditor's Responsibilities for the Audit of the Financial Report

Our objectives are to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial report as a whole is free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error, and to issue an auditor's report that includes our opinion. Reasonable assurance is a high level of assurance, but is not a guarantee that an audit conducted in accordance with the Australian Auditing Standards will always detect a material misstatement when it exists. Misstatements can arise from fraud or error and are considered material if, individually or in the aggregate, they could reasonably be expected to influence the economic decisions of users taken on the basis of this financial report.

Advocacy Law Alliance Inc
Independent Audit Report to the members of
For the Year Ended 30 June 2024

Independence

In conducting our audit, we have complied with the independence requirements of Section 60.40 of the *Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission Act 2012*.

KLM ACCOUNTANTS



Joshua Comyns
Partner

Charlestown, NSW
Dated 22 August 2024

Advocacy Law Alliance Incorporated

Auditor's Independence Declaration under Section 60-40 of the Charities and Not-for-profits Commission Act 2012 to the Committee of Advocacy Law Alliance Inc.

I declare that, to the best of my knowledge and belief, during the year ended 30 June 2024, there have been:

- (i) no contraventions of the auditor independence requirements as set out in section 60-40 of the *Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission Act 2012* in relation to the audit; and
- (ii) no contraventions of any applicable code of professional conduct in relation to the audit.



Joshua Comyns
Partner
KLM Accountants
RCA No. 532802

22 August 2024

Charlestown, NSW