



ANNUAL REPORT 2023 - 2024



*Safeguarding and promoting the rights and interest of
People with Disabilities, their Families and Carers*

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY



We acknowledge this land that we meet on today is the traditional lands for the Kaurna people and that we respect their spiritual relationship with their country. We also acknowledge the Kaurna people as the custodians of the region and that their cultural and heritage beliefs are still important to the living Kaurna people today.

Ngadlu tampintheta yalaka ngadlu Kaurna yartangka inparrintheta. Ngadludlu tampintheta, parnaku tuwila yartangka. Kaurna Miyurna yaitya yarta-mathanya Wama Tarntanyaku, parnaku yaitya, parnaku tapa puru purruna. Kaurna Miyurna ithu yaitya purruna, yarta kuma puru martintheta, puru warri-apintheta, puru tangka martulayintheta.



Disability Rights Advocacy Service is funded by the Australian Government through the Department of Social Services

LOCATIONS



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230 Henley Beach Road
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Telephone: 08-83519500

Email: administration@dras.com.au



DISABILITY RIGHTS ADVOCACY SERVICE (Riverland)

2A Ahern Street
BERRI S.A. 5343

Telephone: 08-83519500

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DISABILITY RIGHTS ADVOCACY SERVICE (Mount Gambier)

44 Gray Street

MOUNT GAMBIER S.A. 5290

Telephone: 08-83519500

Email: administration@dras.com.au



DISABILITY RIGHTS ADVOCACY SERVICE (Port Augusta)

2A Stirling Road

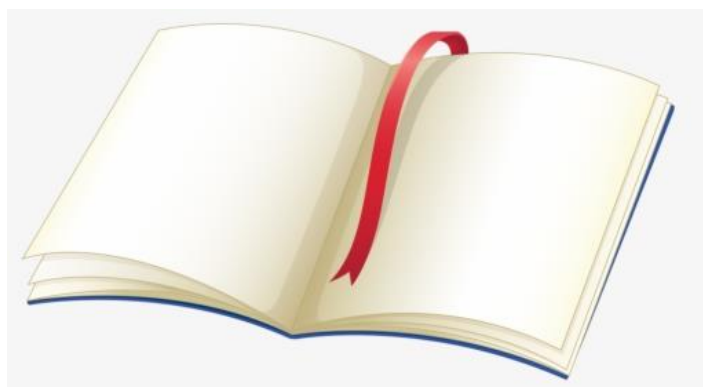
PORT AUGUSTA S.A. 5700

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

History of DRAS	6
Mission Statement	7
Board of Management	8
Leadership Team	9
Staff	10
Chairpersons Report	11
Service Access Achievements	12
National Disability Advocacy Program	14
NDIS Appeals Program	20
Systemic Advocacy	24
Individual Capacity Building Program	27
Financial Statements	30



HISTORY OF DRAS

Disability Rights Advocacy Service Incorporated is an independent advocacy service for people with a disability, their families, and carers. Across the organisation, DRAS is committed to providing individual advocacy to people irrespective of their disability type, ethnicity, cultural and linguistic background.

DRAS commenced operation in 1986 as the Migrant Liaison Workers Project established under the auspice of the Woodville Migrant Centre with a project that was a “*demonstration project*” to run for twelve months.

The primary aim of the Migrant Liaison Workers Project was:

“to alleviate and where possible, overcome the barriers created by language and cultural differences which hinder the effective access of people of migrant background to mainstream and general community services for the intellectually disabled. The primary focus of the Project is direct work with clients, individual advocacy”.

Thirty-six years later this remains one of the primary focuses of service delivery for DRAS advocates.

In 1995 DRAS, at that time still under the banner of MALSSA, established services in the Mount Gambier area and in 1999 services were established in the Riverland. The Riverland office opened in 2001 because of funding through a Commonwealth infrastructure grant and Riverland Advocacy Service opened in Berri. In 2003 the service was extended to include Waikerie.

In 2012 MALSSA changed its name to MALSSA Disability Rights Advocacy Service and in 2013 the name changed to Disability Rights Advocacy Service to reflect the organisation’s progressive transformation into a generic provider of advocacy to anyone who was a recipient of Commonwealth funded disability advocacy services.

On 5 June 2013 Disability Rights Advocacy Service was independently accredited as meeting the Australian Government’s Disability Advocacy Standards for individual and systemic advocacy. In 2022 DRAS were re-accredited under the Disability Advocacy Standards for a further two years.

As DRAS enters our 37th year of service provision we find that our client numbers are increasing across all programs and the requests for advocacy are exceeding the current funding levels. We have also extended the business with the opening of DRAS Legal, providing free legal advice to people with lived experience of disability.

Pride in the past

Passion for the present

Focus on the future

MISSION STATEMENT

Safeguarding and promoting the rights and interests of people with a disability, their families, and carers.

Disability Rights Advocacy Service's mission statement is a summary of four principles, which the Association is based upon:

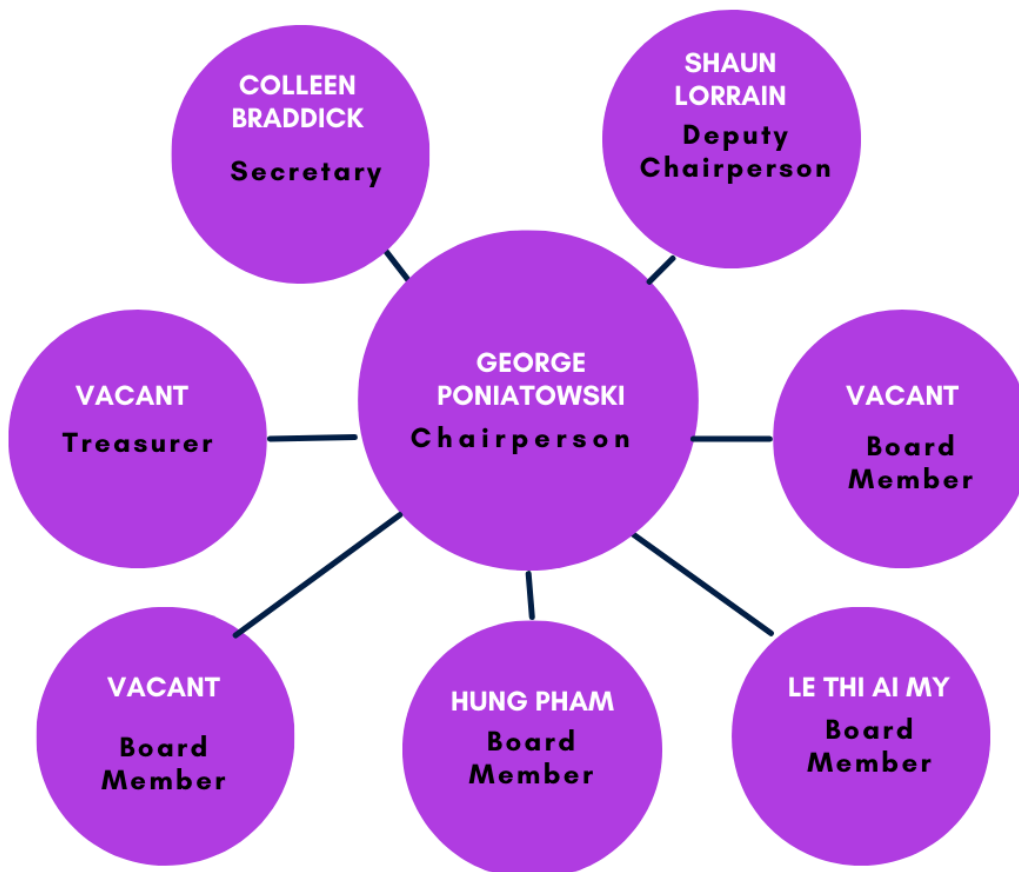
1. People with a disability have the same basic human rights as other members of Australian Society.
2. People with a disability should be able to maintain and develop their culture without prejudice or disadvantage and should be encouraged to understand and embrace other cultures.
3. People with a disability should be able to receive services necessary to enable them to achieve their maximum potential as members of the community.
4. People with a disability are entitled to participate in decisions that affect their lives and to receive services in a manner that results in the least restriction of their rights and opportunities.

ihca
supporting excellence

CERTIFICATION

National Standards for
Disability Services
**CERTIFIED DISABILITY
ADVOCACY
ORGANISATION**

DRAS BOARD OF MANAGEMENT

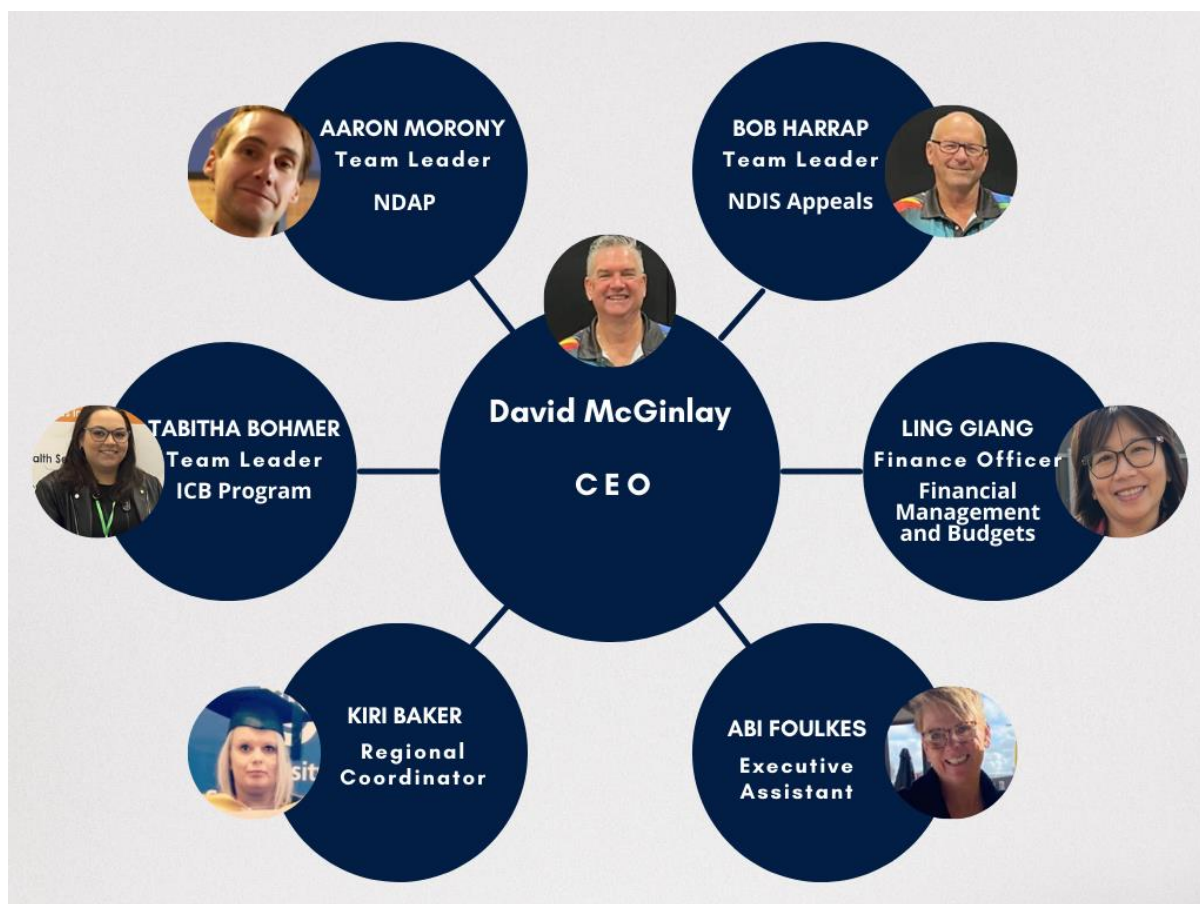


DRAS would like to thank the Board members who have completed another year of voluntary service to ensure the delivery of service by the organisation continues.

DRAS is grateful to all the volunteers who comprise the Board of Management and who freely give of their time to oversee the governance of the organisation. Their contribution ensures that DRAS can provide an ongoing service to people with disability.

*Thank
you!*

LEADERSHIP TEAM



As the CEO of DRAS I would like to thank the members of the Leadership Team for the work they have contributed over the past 12 months to ensure that DRAS maintains an elevated level of service delivery to people with disability and their families.

There have been changes to the team that will be reflected in future reporting and as this report is presented, Tabitha Bohmer has commenced in the role of ICB Team Leader for the new program that runs for three years, having commenced 1 July 2024. This program has resulted in the opening of the new office in Port Augusta.

There has also been a change to the Administration Team with the departure of Donna Crosbie. Abi Foulkes has taken on the administration duties together with the role of establishing DRAS Legal.

Other changes, effective outside of this reporting period will be addressed in future reporting.

STAFF

(as at 30 June 2024)

David McGinlay Chief Executive Officer,

Administration Team

Ling Giang Finance Officer
Abi Foulkes Executive Assistant DRAS and DRAS Legal
Sarah McInnes Intake Officer

NDIS Appeals Program

Bob Harrap Team Leader
Phoebe Dryden Advocate

National Disability Advocacy Program

Aaron Moroney Team Leader
Donna Tomczak Advocate
Kit Yuan Advocate
Chris Hansford - Advocate
Mark Biram Advocate (Riverland)
Kiri Baker Advocate (Mount Gambier)
Tess McDonald Advocate (Mount Gambier)
Kayla Dickeson - Systemic Advocacy



Individual Capacity Building Program

Tabitha Bohmer Team Leader
Tegan Cross Facilitator (Riverland)
Navita Facilitator (Port Augusta)
Kate Scicluna Facilitator (Port Augusta)
Vacant Facilitator (Mount Gambier)

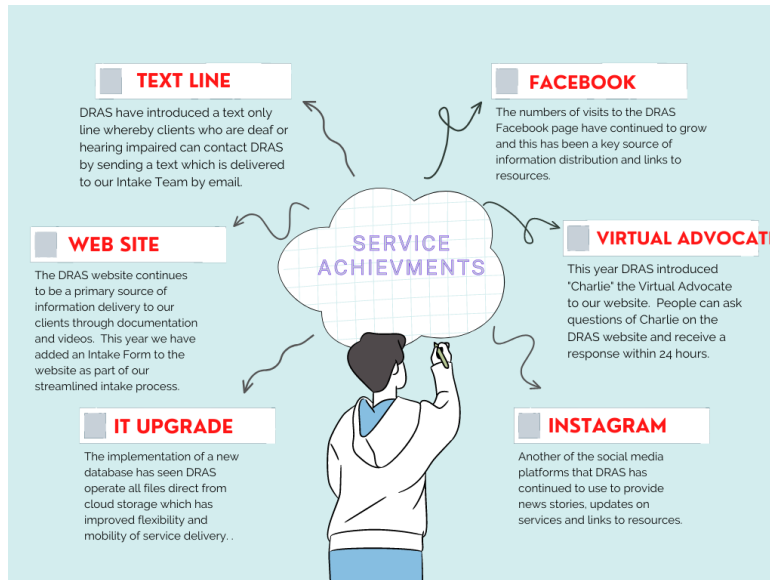
CHAIRPERSONS REPORT

The Chairpersons Report had not been provided prior to the Annual Report being published.

Changes to the DRAS Board of Management, including the position of Chairperson, will be reported in the next Annual Report.

SERVICE ACCESS ACHIEVEMENTS

Once again DRAS have continued to grow our social media presence, and this is utilised as a primary source of client communication and information distribution.



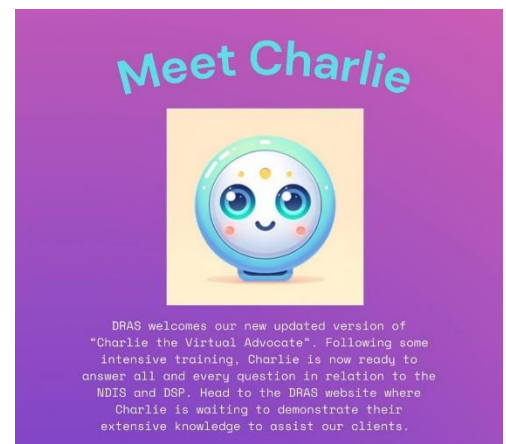
The following links are the examples of DRAS engagement and service delivery using these systems:

- DRAS Website - www.dras.com.au
- DRAS Facebook - <https://www.facebook.com/DisabilityRightsAdvocacyService>

DRAS WEBSITE

The DRAS website has been reviewed and reconstructed, and our new website has been released. There are new features and one, that has been added to the current website is the ability to change the language of the information on the website. We are currently trialling fourteen languages and will monitor the accuracy of the translation as the trial progresses. There is also an accessibility menu that includes screen reader and is dyslexia friendly.

The DRAS Virtual Advocate “chatbot” function specific to NDIS and DSP inquiries is now fully operational and able to provide quick responses to specific questions. This function has been well used and accessed by over 200 visitors to the DRAS website.

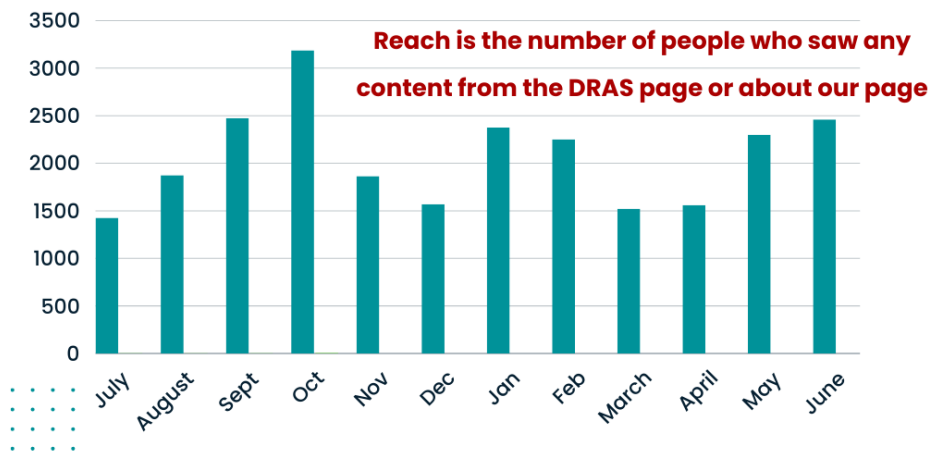


FACEBOOK & INSTAGRAM

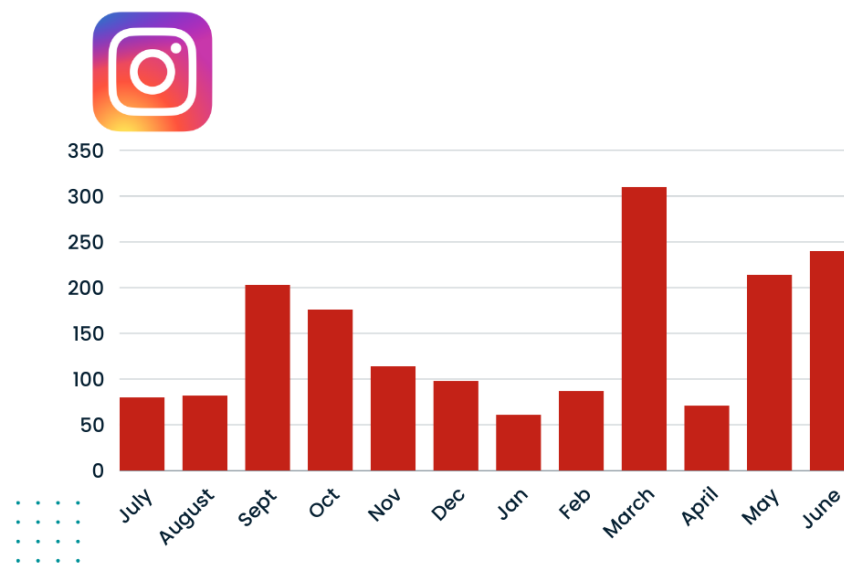
Facebook and Instagram are used to promote the programs run by DRAS, events we are running, events we are attending and any news or current affairs that is relevant to the disability community.

There is a KPI to post updates once a week and to keep the content relevant and informative. The graph below shows the number of reaches to the DRAS Facebook page. DRAS also maintain content on Twitter and LinkedIn platforms.

FACEBOOK REACH



INSTAGRAM REACH



NATIONAL DISABILITY ADVOCACY PROGRAM

NDAP Statement of Purpose

The National Disability Advocacy Program aims to promote and safeguard the rights and interests of individuals with a disability and their carers.

Funded through the Department of Social Services, the National Disability Advocacy Program provides people with disability with access to effective disability advocacy that promotes, protects, and ensures their full and equal enjoyment of all human rights enabling community participation. DRAS' Individual Advocacy Program (IAP) operates from three locations.

DRAS moved to an office in Brooklyn Park in June 2021 and in June 2024 moved to our current office at 230 Henley Beach Road, Torrensville. From this office DRAS provides service coverage to the whole of the Adelaide Statistical Division (which spreads from the City of Onkaparinga in the South to Mallala, Light and Barossa Councils in the North). DRAS provides a dedicated outreach service to people living in the Adelaide Hills, Murray Bridge RC, and surrounding areas. In total the area covered by the Torrensville office is over 10,832 square kilometres.



Established in 2001, the DRAS office located in Berri provides service coverage to people in the Riverland Statistical Sub-division (SSD). The Riverland SSD incorporates the four District Councils of Berri Barmera, Loxton Waikerie, Mid Murray, and Renmark Paringa, which covers approximately 26,515 square kilometres over an eastern strip of area adjoining Victoria. Outreach is also provided to people living in the Karoonda East and Southern Mallee District Councils. Combined, DRAS' total service coverage area is 36,930 square kilometres. Mark Biram is the DRAS NDAP Advocate and Tegan Cross is our ICB Facilitator.

The DRAS office in Mount Gambier has shown an increase in clientele who, since the opening of the office, now have a location to “drop in” and seek assistance from Kiri and Tess. DRAS has had a presence in this region since 2007 and provides individual advocacy to people throughout the South East region and the Coorong DC. The South East Statistical Division (SD) covers an area of approximately 21,310 square kilometres over the south-eastern corner of South Australia. This region includes the seven District Councils of Lacepede, Naracoorte and Lucindale, Robe, Tatiara, Grant, Wattle Range and Mount Gambier. DRAS also provides outreach to people living in the Coorong District Council; an additional area of 8,831 square kilometres.

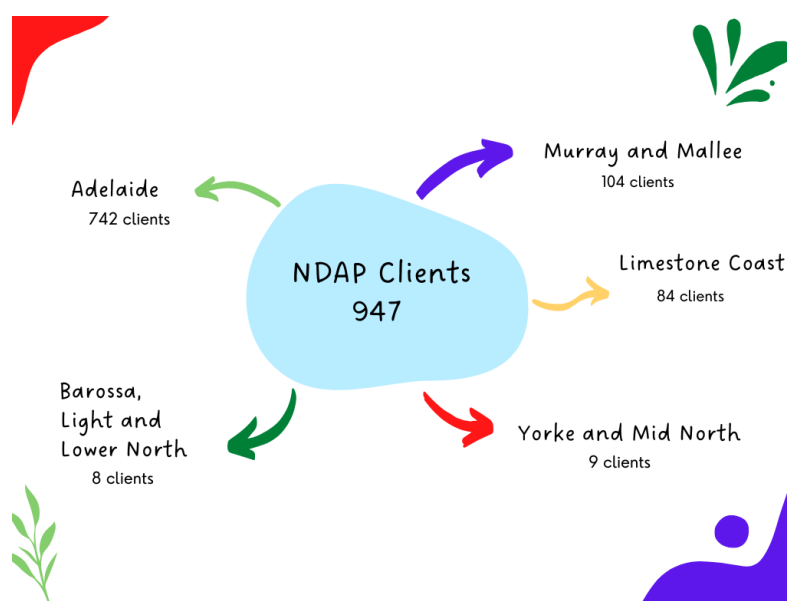


CLIENTS & CASES: 2023 – 2024

DRAS aims to ensure that all services are accessible to people with a disability and their families throughout its designated service catchment areas. A planned approach is undertaken each year to maximise intra-regional coverage with our service areas. DRAS has commenced an outreach service in regional areas with the first having been held in Bordertown and Naracoorte.

This year DRAS assisted 947 people through its National Disability. In addition, a waiting list of between one to two months applied to people seeking individual advocacy support during this reporting period. In addition, our Brooklyn Park office received 3518 calls for assistance or advice concerning disability related matters.

The following graphic indicates the number of advocacy cases undertaken for accepted clients of Disability Rights Advocacy Services' National Disability Advocacy Program.

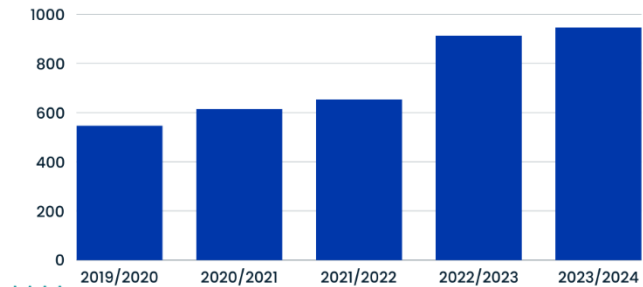


Nearly 20 percent of all NDAP clients in this reporting period were resident outside the greater Adelaide area.

Most of these clients were represented by DRAS' regionally based services in Berri and Mt Gambier and through our outreach program to people living in the Adelaide Hills, Murray Bridge (RC) and the Alexandrina Council region.

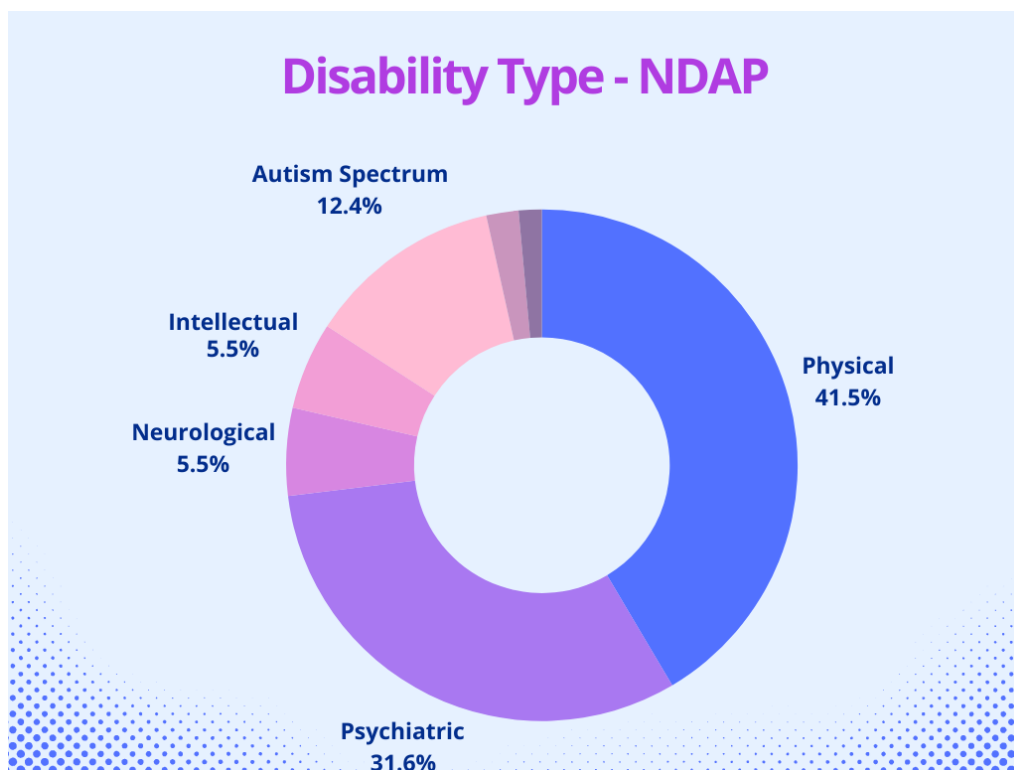
The number of clients seeking advocacy in relation to the NDAP has consistently high in the current fiscal year compared to last year and higher than the previous three years as seen in the graph. The graph clearly highlights the sharp increase in clients seeking advocacy from around 500 in 2019 to 913 in 2022/2023 and to 947 in the last fiscal year.

NDAP CLIENTS



CLIENT PROFILE

The following graphic indicates the range of people with various disability types to access DRAS' Individual Advocacy Program in 2023-2024. Generally, the type of disability has remained within a constant percentage for the last two financial years.



DISABILITY TYPE

Disability Rights Advocacy Service represents people regardless of their disability type. Our provision of individual advocacy is available to any eligible person as defined by the Commonwealth Disability Services Act (1986).

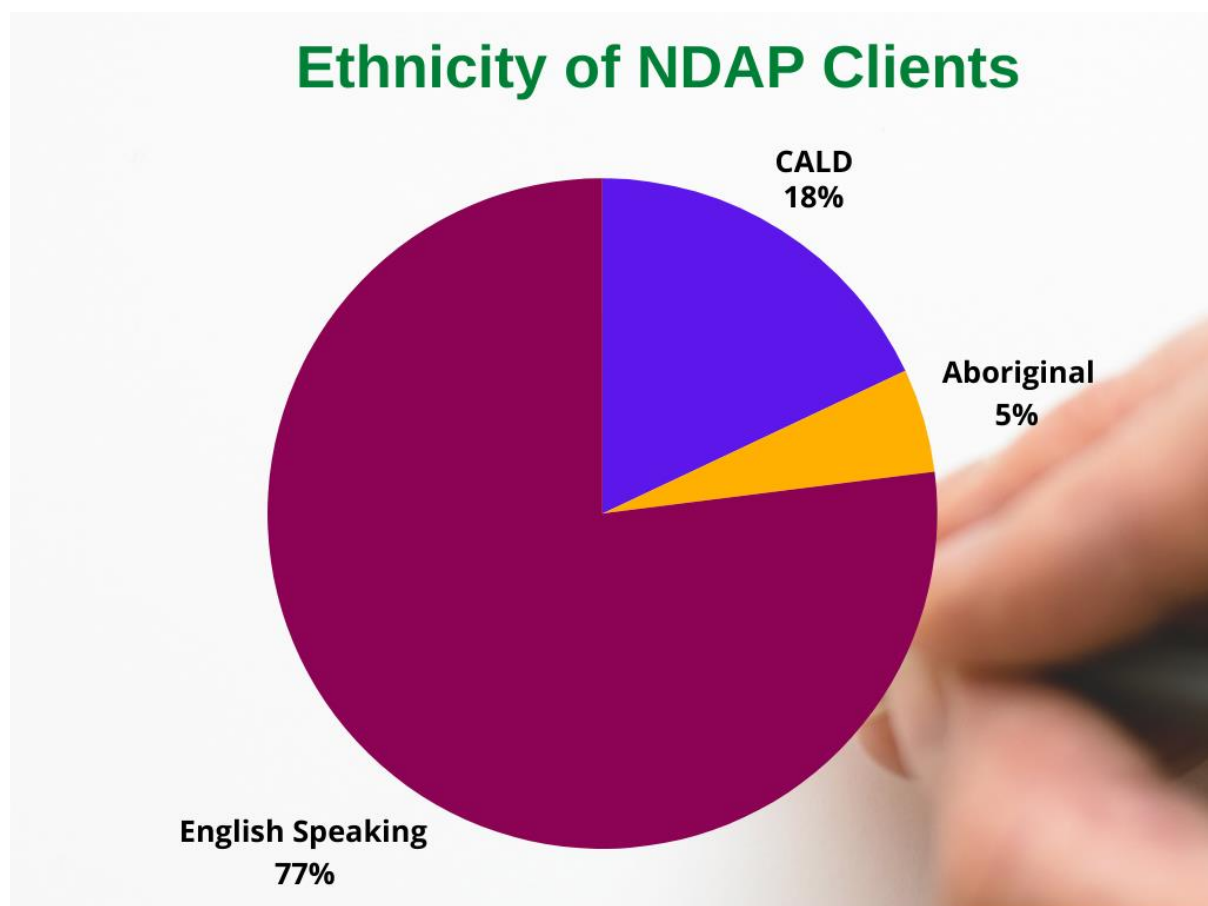
ANALYSIS/COMMENT:

People across the disability spectrum have accessed DRAS' National Disability Advocacy Program (NDAP) this year with physical and psychiatric disabilities being predominant.

However, over the last four reporting periods there has been a steady increase in the number of people with brain injury or autism (particularly children) seeking assistance.

ETHNICITY

DRAS aims to ensure that all potential clients, irrespective of their cultural, ethnic, or linguistic background, have equitable access to all DRAS advocacy programs and services. The following graph indicates the cultural diversity of DRAS clients for the 2022-2023 period with a slight increase in the number of CALD clients.



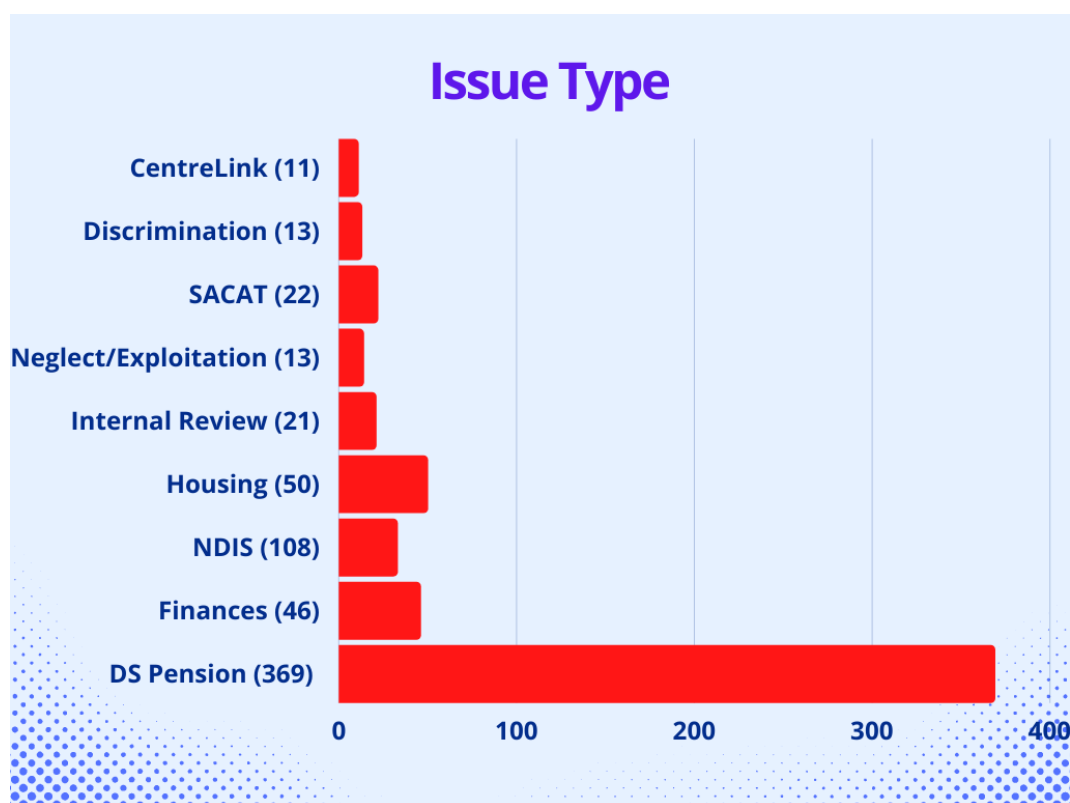
PROFILE OF ADVOCACY CASES

During 2023 - 2024 Disability Rights Advocacy Service, NDAP undertook 947 advocacy cases. This was a slight increase over the previous year but remains a considerable increase from just over 500 in 2021/2022.

Again, this year there has been an increase in requests for advocacy assistance by people wishing to formally review a Centrelink decision in relation to the Disability Support Pension. This has included both internal reviews and applications for review to the Administrative Appeals Tribunal.

There has also been a significant rise in the number of clients seeking a review of a NDIA decision and assistance with access. Complaints from clients have been focused on delays in the NDIS process, lack of communication from the NDIA and inconsistency in decision making, all of which have been recurrent themes.

The following graphic identifies the underlying issues to emerge through these cases.



CASE STUDY EXAMPLES

The following case studies are typical of the work that the NDAP Advocates have undertaken during the current fiscal year that has resulted in outcomes that are beneficial to the clients.

- Single mother of four children with Autism was finding it difficult to complete a self-referral for an Autism Assessment for herself. She had written 17 pages of notes to include, but the form was only 4 pages long. Together we were able to prioritise her notes, and utilising dot points get the most important aspects to make her application concise. The client was very pleased with this, as she had been waiting months prior to receiving assistance through DRAS Advocates.
- Client in her early 50s with mental health issues, physical injuries and acquired brain injury was receiving NDIS supports but facing numerous obstacles with NDIS communications, including supports that were cancelled. Advocacy involved working extensively with client and involved parties to implement better communication with the NDIS. After attending a planning meeting and ensuring the client was provided space to speak for herself, a suitable plan was created, and appropriate supports were put in place. The result was the client feeling in good spirits at the end of the meeting.

- CALD woman in her early sixties who has physical and psychosocial disability with English being her second language, came to DRAS for help with the cancellation of her DSP. Centrelink claimed that her DSP was cancelled because she never reported her income. Client claimed that she did report and had sent a lot of written correspondence to Centrelink where she didn't explicitly ask for a formal review but asked for her DSP to be reinstated.



Centrelink did not respond for over a year. DRAS Advocate attended Centrelink with the Client at which time Centrelink advised that there was no record of formal review commencing. DRAS Advocates supported the client to put together a formal review of decision application and supporting evidence and the client submitted this to Centrelink. A month later, Authorised Review Officer apologised for the error and restored her DSP and the client will receive two years of back payments.

- Young child with developmental delay and mum with two other children with autism spectrum disorder. Mum having had no response from the NDIS or the Local Area Coordinator/Early Childhood Partner for several months. DRAS assisted to communicate with the NDIS and was able to get the NDIS Plan approved + assisted to get planning meeting, child now has an NDIS Plan with needed supports.”

NDIS APPEALS PROGRAM

NDIS Appeals Statement of Purpose

To ensure that people with disability that are affected by the reviewable decisions of the National Disability Insurance Agency have access to independent assistance when seeking an internal or external review of those decisions.

NDIS APPEALS PROGRAM OVERVIEW

The *National Disability Insurance Scheme Act 2013 (Cth)* identifies where a decision made by the National Disability Insurance Agency (NDIA), including decisions about who is eligible to access the Scheme and supports provided under the Scheme can be reviewed. Where a person with a disability is dissatisfied with a decision made by the NDIA, that falls within the scope of Section 99 of the Act (a reviewable decision), they have a legislative right to request an internal review of that decision by the NDIA or further review at the Administrative Appeals Tribunal (AAT).

The NDIS Appeals Program has been established to ensure that people with disability, and other people affected by reviewable decisions of the NDIA, have access to support when seeking a review of those decisions.

DRAS is funded by the Department of Social Services to provide the NDIS Appeals Program as a state-wide service over 250 clients have been assisted with AAT related matters.

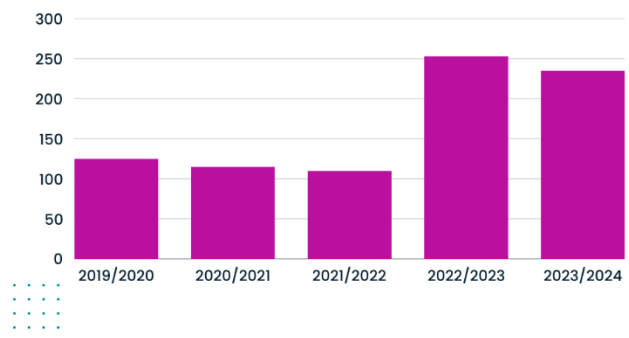
CLIENTS & CASES 2023-2024

During 2023 – 2024 the DRAS NDIS Appeals Program aided 235 individuals and their families seeking an internal review of a reviewable decision or progressing to review at the Administrative Appeals Tribunal.

DRAS are funded to service 150 clients in the fiscal year and this year we exceeded that number by over 57%. This year has seen a far greater demand for service to clients under this program.

Demand for this service continues to rise and has been and continues to be the subject of discussions with the Department of Social Services for additional funding.

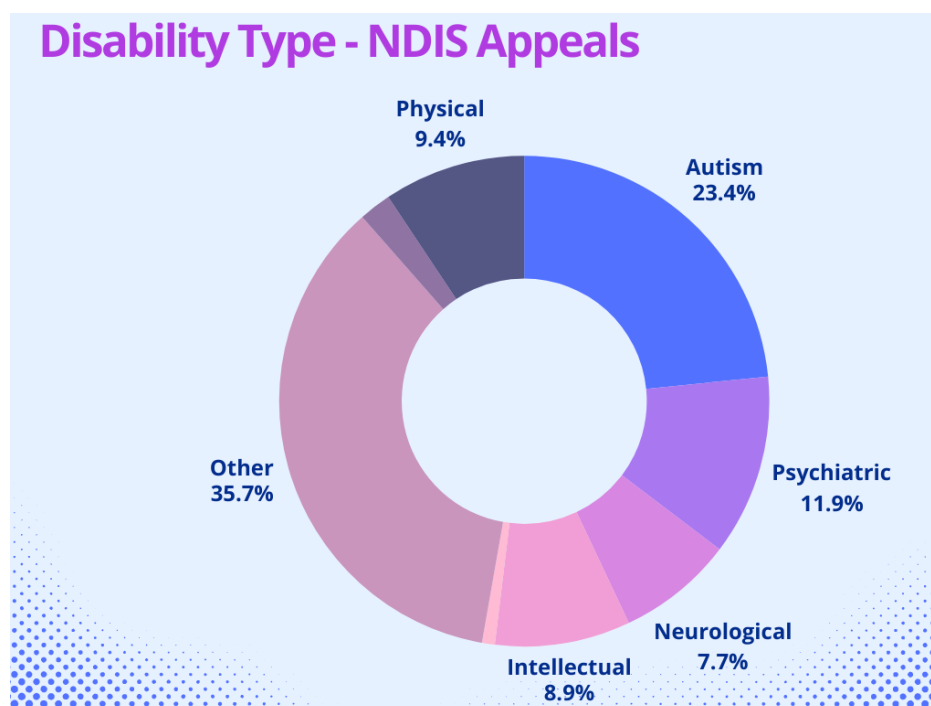
NDIS APPEALS CLIENTS



DISABILITY TYPE

The DRAS NDIS Appeals Program is accessible to all people with disability. As indicated by the following table the largest group to access the Program during this reporting period were people (predominately children) with autism followed by people with a physical disability.

The following graphic indicates the range of disability types the DRAS Advocates assisted through the NDIS Appeals Program.



ANALYSIS/COMMENT:

People across the disability spectrum have accessed support from DRAS through the NDIS Appeals Program. As in previous years, this year physical and psychiatric disabilities were dominant. However, as has been seen in the number of requests for support in the NDAP, there has been a steady increase in the number of people with brain injury or autism (particularly children) seeking assistance.

The DRAS NDIS Appeals Program engagement with both the NDIA Early Assessment Team and AAT Case Management Teams has been a major contributing factor to identifying obstacles for participants and achieving quicker outcomes and results that are acceptable to the DRAS client and the Agency.

During the reporting period client demand for advocacy service has remained high and has resulted in matters being placed on a wait list for assessment based on need, urgency and capacity.

There is an identified trend where clients are registering with multiple advocacy services and as part of the triage process, we will contact a client that has been

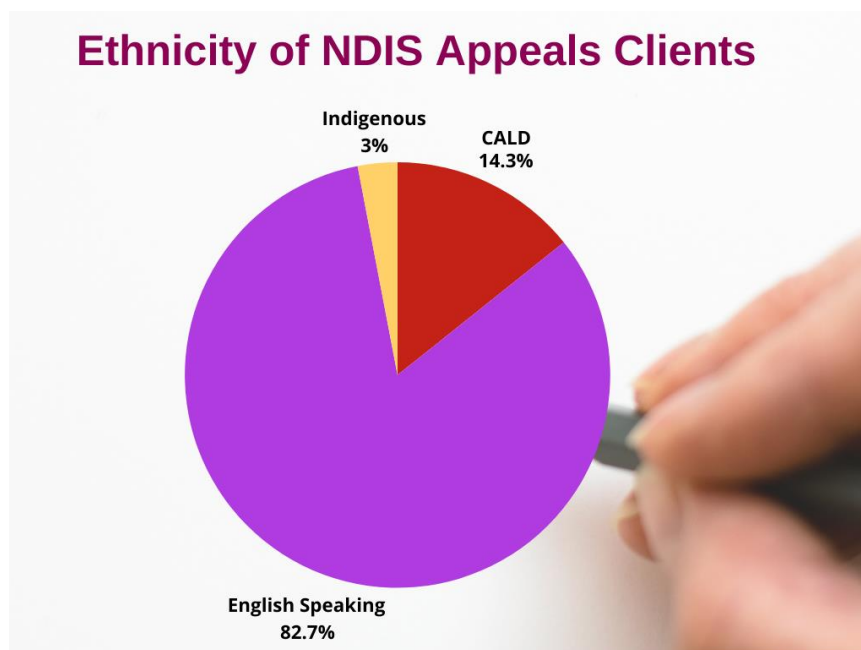
waitlisted every 14 days and if there is no response from the client they are removed from the waitlist after a further 14 days. At the time of reporting there are 26 matters on the NDAP/NDIS Appeals Waitlist with 14 days being the longest wait period. 75% of the matters on the waitlist have been on the list for less than 10 days and there are only 2 NDIS Appeals matters currently on the Waitlist

ETHNICITY

DRAS has a solid history in the provision of service to clients from cultural and linguistically diverse backgrounds. Historically, DRAS was established as an independent advocacy service for people with disability with a focus on providing advocacy to people from non-English speaking backgrounds.

DRAS aims to ensure that all potential clients, irrespective of their cultural, ethnic, or linguistic background, have equitable access to all DRAS advocacy programs and services. The following graph indicates the cultural diversity of DRAS clients for the 2023-2024 period.

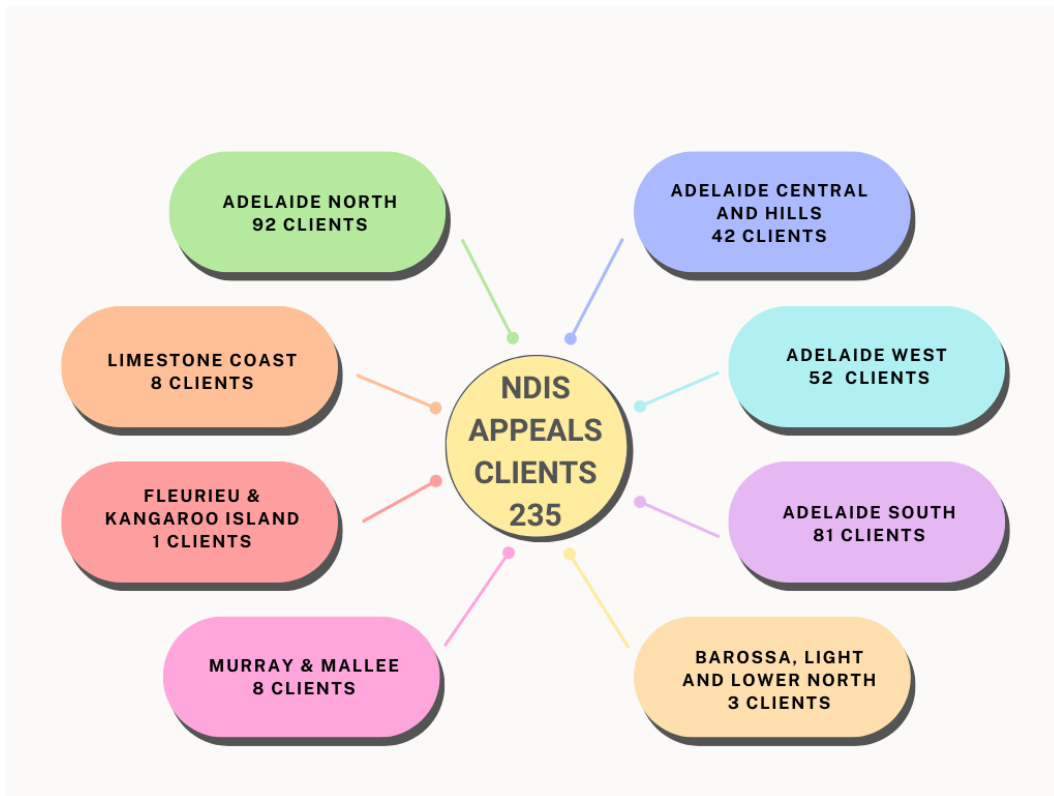
The following graphic indicates the cultural and linguistic backgrounds of people assisted by the DRAS NDIS Appeals Program in 2023-2024.



REGION

The DRAS NDIS Appeals Program is funded by DSS to provide a service across South Australia with no restrictions on location. During 2023-2024 there was an increase in the number of clients seeking support by the Program who reside outside of the greater Adelaide metropolitan area. DRAS has commenced a pilot outreach program to Kangaroo Island having attended KI to promote DRAS as an advocacy service and then attending the Parndana Show as an exhibitor.

The following graphic indicates by location, the number of advocacy cases undertaken for clients of the NDIS Appeals Program.

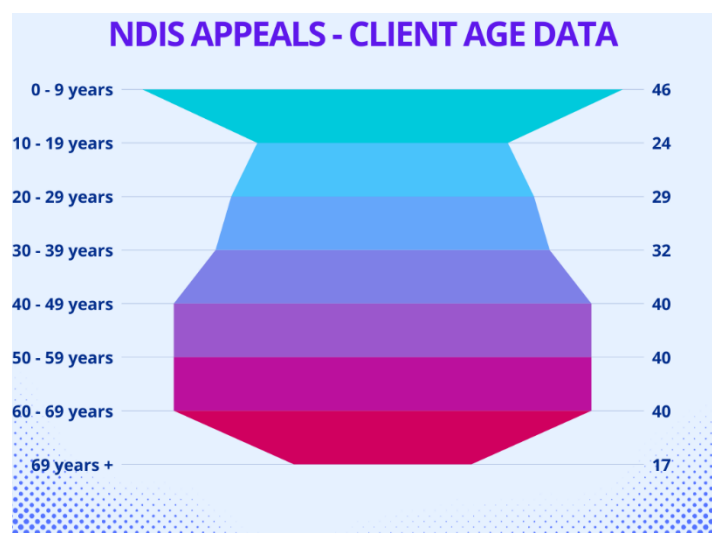


Over 20 percent of all NDIS Appeals clients in this reporting period were resident outside the greater Adelaide area. The majority of these clients were represented by DRAS' regionally based services in Berri and Mt Gambier and through our outreach program to people living in the Adelaide Hills, Murray Bridge (RC) and the Alexandrina Council region.

DRAS have now opened an office in Mount Gambier that provides us with a stand-alone office in the region to service clients and promote the organisation. This has become a necessity because of the increase in client numbers in this geographical area. The office officially opened in October 2022 and has seen a steady increase in foot traffic and drop-ins.

AGE DEMOGRAPHIC

The following graphic identifies the age groups of DRAS clients that have been assisted with NDIS Appeals matters in the previous fiscal year. The cohort aged between 0 – 9 years of age remains the highest client base for this program.



SYSTEMIC ADVOCACY PROGRAM

Systemic Advocacy Statement of Purpose

Systemic advocacy involves identifying, challenging, and changing the policies, legislation and structures that negatively impact upon the rights of people with a disability and their carers.

THE ROLE OF DRAS IN SYSTEMIC ADVOCACY:

Through the identification of Systemic Advocacy, a part of the National Disability Advocacy Program, DRAS actively seeks to promote the identification of issues that may impact on the rights and opportunities of more than one individual.

DRAS promotes changes to policies and practices of government departments and other services to ensure that people with a disability do not experience discrimination and disadvantage.

DRAS advocates to enhance services offered to people with a disability and their carers and for services to be person centred and advocates for people living with disability where there is an identified attitudinal and environmental barrier to full and effective participation.

DRAS have a historical focus of advocating for people with disabilities who are of CALD backgrounds and who also identify as LGBTQIA+. We have a strong engagement with NEDA and the Multicultural Communities Council of South Australia.

Participation on SACOSS Policy Council representing DRAS: DRAS Cloud Files - SACOSS Policy Council. The ongoing engagement with SACOSS has enabled DRAS to have direct input into social policy and to engage with key stakeholders within the social services community. Through this engagement DRAS have been able identify issues and to work collaboratively with the service providers facing the same issues to seek a change in policy or advocate for change. The Policy Council is a major asset to the DRAS Systemic Advocacy work as the Council has a focus on a broader picture approach to the delivery of service and the areas where need for change affects a broader part of the disability community.

During July-August 2023 DRAS Systemic focus was on consultation, drafting and submission of NDIS review feedback: DRAS, as part of our Systemic Advocacy role, provided submissions to the NDIS Review to identify what we have seen as the need for change in relation to service delivery of supports and the role of the NDIS. Our ongoing work through the delivery of the NDAP Program has placed DRAS to be well positioned to address the need for change.

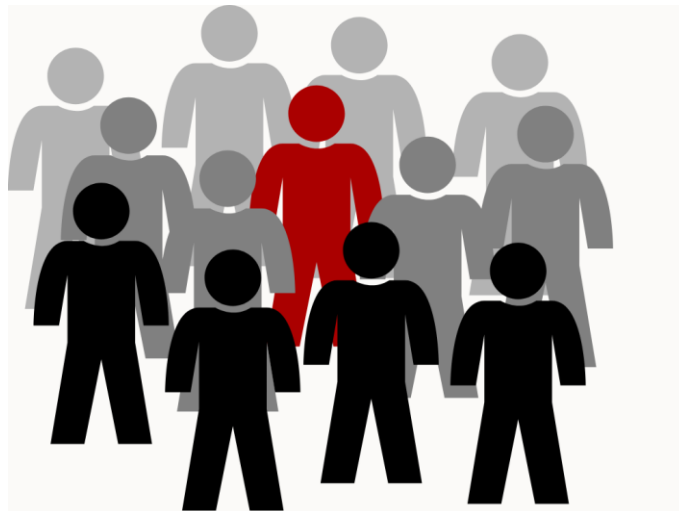
Throughout the reporting period DRAS were involved in quarterly meetings between DRAS and OPA to discuss systemic issues. DRAS has maintained an ongoing engagement with OPA to allow for the exchange of information relative to trends that have been identified by both organisations and which allow for strategic planning to

target specific issues. OPA refer clients direct to DRAS and this engagement has benefited OPA by seeing firsthand the types of issues that DRAS can assist OPA clients with for advocacy. It has enabled DRAS NDAP Advocates to identify and respond to systemic issues.

During the current fiscal year DRAS participated in the following:

- Signed onto joint statement calling for fairer rental laws: DRAS Cloud Files - Residential Tenancies Act SA
- Attended the National Housing and Homelessness Plan community forum.
- Response to Ministerial Correspondence - Criminal Law Consolidation Coercive Control Amendment Bill 2023; Attended Coercive Control Bill Information Session online 20/09/2023: DRAS Cloud Files - Coercive Control Bill.
- Supporting Australian Education Union national For Every Child Campaign: DRAS Cloud Files - AEU For Every Child campaign.
- DRAS representation at the E&F Committee Inquiry into availability of housing in SA based on our submission: DRAS Cloud Files - Inquiry into South Australian Housing Availability.
- NDIS participant experience in regional, remote or rural areas Submission to parliamentary inquiry: DRAS Cloud Files - NDIS participant experience in rural, regional and remote Australia.
- People's Health Voice community forum: DRAS Cloud Files - SACDOSS - The People's Health Voice.
- Attendance and contribution to NCDA forum, DRAS systemic work mentioned in NCDA report.
- Getting the NDIS Back on Track' Bill 2024 Attending town halls and community presentations; Preparing submission for the Senate Social Affairs Committee: DRAS Cloud Files - NDIS Bill - Getting the NDIS back on track

Systemic Advocacy remains an important focus of DRAS as this enables us to make positive changes for a group of people rather than on an individual basis. In this way we can respond to issues and barriers that continue to occur for individuals living with disability.



DRAS has undertaken extensive Systemic advocacy work in the past twelve months and made the following submissions:

- AEU 'For Every Child' campaign for fully funded public schools Campaign support letter to PM.
- Human Rights Act for SA Submission to parliamentary inquiry: DRAS Cloud Files - Human Rights Act SA
- Response to Ministerial Correspondence - Statutes Amendment Public Trustee Bill 2023: DRAS Cloud Files - Public Trustee Statutes Amendment (Public Trustee) Bill 2023. DRAS have maintained an ongoing position of responding to requests for submissions to government on legislative changes or policy reform. The submissions from DRAS are regularly referenced in the final reports from government and these submissions have resulted in identified changes.



INDIVIDUAL CAPACITY BUILDING PROGRAM

In June 2019 DRAS received a grant under the NDIS' Disabled Peoples and Families Organisations (DPFO) Information, Linkages and Capacity Building program. Funding for the program was due to finalise on 30 June 2022, however with the approval from the Minister for Social Services funding was extended from 1 January 2023 until 30 June 2024. In May 2024, prior to the end of this reporting period, we were successful in obtaining funding for the ICB Program to extend for three years until June 2027. This allowed us to open an office in Port Augusta and this will be reported on in the next Annual Report.

The goal of the ICB Program is to support and develop the self-advocacy skills and knowledge of people with lived experience of disability. We do this through working with people with disabilities, their families and carers who support them, by focusing on developing skills and increasing knowledge /that can be used to advocate for their own rights or to help others advocate for their rights. We also work with key stakeholder agencies and organisations who support people with disability with the aim of developing self-advocacy skills that empower members of the disability community. The goal of the program delivery is to create community capacity in the disability sector and the disability support communities through advocating for equality and rights.

ICB ACTIVITIES

The ICB Team is active in the Riverland and the South-East where there is ongoing stakeholder engagement to promote the regional outreach Clinics, the range of DRAS services and to promote ongoing engagement.

ICB are building engagement in the tertiary education sector with Adelaide University and Flinders University through their Disability Officers. ICB are also engaging with Local Government through the City of Unley, City of Marion, City of Burnside, and City of Charles Sturt councils.

Key stakeholder engagement involves meeting with staff from the Australian Refugee Association to provide them with information that will assist them to help clients to self-advocate. A workshop was conducted in May that provided updates on the DSP and the new Impairment Tables.



The Program Facilitators based in the Riverland and Mount Gambier undertake Outreach Clinics throughout their regions with clinics being held in Renmark, Pinaroo, Waikerie and Barmera in the Riverland and Bordertown, Naracoorte, Millicent, Keith, and Kingston SE in the South East of the State. At these clinics people with disability or their families or carers are provided with the opportunity to meet with an ICB staff member to discuss their issue and either receive support, information, and resources to assist them to self-advocate or referral for other services including advocacy if needed.

In the current reporting period, the DRAS ICB Team continued to liaise with local government councils in the regional areas to provide Outreach Clinics each fortnight. A total of twelve Outreach Clinics were held in the Riverland and in the Limestone Coast region at Naracoorte, Millicent, and Bordertown.

Liaison continued with many local government councils mainly through the personnel who have the role or responsibilities of Disability & Inclusion Officers. These include the Mid Murray Council, Southern Mallee District Council, Rural City of Murray Bridge, Berri Barmera Council, Renmark Paringa Council, District Council of Loxton Waikerie, District Council of Grant, Tatiara District Council, Wattle Range Council, Naracoorte Lucindate Council, City of Charles Sturt, City of Victor Harbor.

The DRAS ICB Team also attend expos and public forums which have included the Autistic & Autism Community Forum in Renmark, the two-day Source Kids Expo at the Adelaide Convention Centre, Sonder Closing the Gap Expo, the Riverland Special School Open Day with this activity being ongoing. These engagements are a valuable opportunity to meet with people with disabilities, their families and carers who support them and discuss the importance of developing self-advocacy skills and knowledge.



Expos also provide the opportunity to help create greater community capacity in the disability and disability support communities through liaison with other key stakeholders and service providers. It is through attendance at these events that information is obtained to identify key issues within the disability community.

Through the DRAS social media platforms, the provision of workshops, information sessions, and attendance at expos, resources have been provided to enable and encourage people with disability, their families and carers to self-advocate and promote self-advocacy. Fact Sheets on the DRAS Website have been reviewed and rewritten to include up to date and clear information for people with disabilities, their families and carers to self-advocate and promote self-advocacy.

Social media posts are regularly made on the DRAS Social media sites including Instagram and the DRAS Facebook page. The posts relate to the Outreach Clinics, the promotion of self-advocacy resources, and inspirational examples of how people with disability participate in their community.

CALD COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

DRAS continued our engagement with the Multicultural Communities Council SA (MCCSA) through focus groups and workshops. The focus groups were held with people with disability from a CALD background and another with CALD Community Leaders. The purpose of the jointly facilitated focus groups was to seek information, identify the needs of people with disabilities from a CALD background that can be addressed in a series of workshops and to promote DRAS as a disability advocacy service.

The members of the focus groups are people with lived experience of disability from a CALD background and Community Leaders within the CALD communities. The information obtained from the focus groups is analyzed with a view to delivering co-facilitated workshops tailored to these needs the success of which is attributed to the ongoing engagement between DRAS and MCCSA.

TERTIARY EDUCATION SECTOR

Engagement has occurred both with the Flinders University Student Association and the Disability Office Manager at Adelaide University. Information has been provided about self-advocacy to assist students and further engagement is continuing to determine how best to assist with the needs of students with disability.



FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

AUDITOR'S REPORT

The Board is pleased to present the financial statements for Disability Rights Advocacy Service for the year ended 30th June 2024. The audited financial statements contained in the Annual Report have been prepared by our Auditor, Mr Peter Hall from the financial data maintained by our bookkeeper, Ling Giang.

The financial report presents fairly the financial position of Disability Rights Advocacy Service Incorporated as of 30 June 2024 and its performance for the year ended on that date in accordance with applicable Accounting Standards.

The Board of Disability Rights Advocacy Service Incorporated are responsible for the preparation and fair presentation of the financial report in accordance with Australian Accounting Standards.

The Auditor's responsibility is to express an opinion on the financial report based on an audit conducted by the Auditor in accordance with Australian Auditing Standards. An audit involves performing procedures to obtain audit evidence about the amounts and disclosures in the financial report.

The Association Total Equity at the end of the 2023/2024 financial year is \$132,512.13. The Board has confirmed that following the AGM the Financial Reports prepared by Mr Hall will be reviewed for accuracy.

NOMINATION OF AUDITOR

Mr Hall was engaged by Disability Rights Advocacy Service to undertake this year's independent financial audit and the A/Chairperson of the DRAS Board would like to move that we **DO NOT** engage Mr Hall again for the 2024-2025 fiscal year.

The A/Chairperson moves that the Auditor for the 2024-2025 fiscal year is Ralph Asseton of Holdfast Accounting.

