



ANNUAL REPORT 2020-21

DISABILITY RESOURCES CENTRE
NOVEMBER 2021

Acknowledgement of Country

Disability Resources Centre acknowledges the traditional owners of country throughout Australia, and their continuing connection to land, sea and community. We pay our respects to them, to their cultures, and to their elders both past and present.

In particular we acknowledge the Bangarang, the Yorta Yorta, the Ladji Ladji, the Gunditjmarra, the Kerrupjmarra, the Gunai Kurnai, the Watha Wurrung, the Widjbaluk, the Wemba Wemba, the Daung Wurrung, the Dja Dja Wurrung, the Wurundjeri and the Bunurong from the areas in which we live and work.

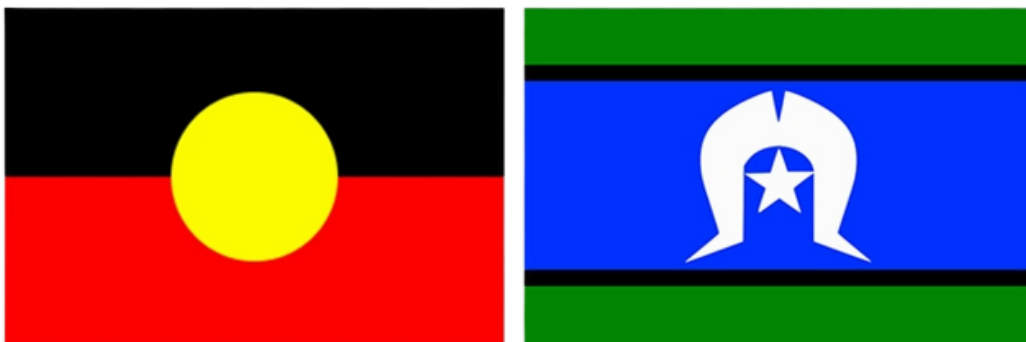


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Chairperson's Report

Martin Leckey

Forty years ago the Disability Resources Centre (DRC) was born. It was 1981, the “International Year of Disabled Persons”, and our current Secretary Frank Hall-Bentick and his sister Lesley Hall were determined that this would not be merely a token year for people with disabilities, but that it would have a continuing legacy. With this aim, they helped set up and run DRC, which has, through many ups and downs, continued at the vanguard of the struggle for our human rights. Who would have thought that so many years later, both the DRC and Frank would still be here together!

The staff (DRC Team) are the lifeblood of the DRC, and I would like to thank them for their work. All the Team members of the DRC have shown great resilience and adaptability during the pandemic. Although this report is supposed to cover only the 2020-2021 financial year, I would like to comment on significant changes to the Team that have occurred since then. It is with sadness I note the departure of our Executive Officer Kerri Cassidy, who has resigned for personal reasons. Kerri has provided outstanding leadership to the organisation. The DRC was in a vulnerable state when Kerri arrived in 2017, and she was instrumental in developing the DRC’s size and reach. Julie McNally (in December) and Sharon Granek (in July 2021), both in the position of Advocacy Team Leader, have also left us. Many thanks to the three of them. On a more positive note, we welcomed Cath Edwards as Intake Officer. At the time of writing, Gary Kerridge has just been appointed Advocacy Team Leader, and Phyllis Campbell-McRae is acting as Interim Executive Officer. Phyllis is helping with the recruitment of a new Executive Officer. Fortunately, our individual advocates Katrina Newman and Kim Collinson remain to continue the central task of the DRC: providing advocacy to individuals. Administration Officer Sinead Mooney also continues to play an invaluable role in assisting the Executive Officer.

As explained in the Transport report (page 6), in March we conducted a successful direct-action protest about the shamefully slow progress in building level-access tram stops. Also, a group of DRC committee members, team members and others with a disability met with the Honourable Ben Carroll, Minister for Public Transport, about this issue. Ably led by our Campaigns Officer Ally Scott, these actions highlight how the Committee, the DRC Team, DRC members and the wider community can successfully work together. At the same time Anja Homburg, our Communications Coordinator, has been helping to reach out to our members and to the wider community.



Chairperson's Report

Martin Leckey

The Committee of Management provides direction for the organisation, and thanks are due to all members. I would like to acknowledge the contribution of the committee members who have left the DRC this year: Mary Rispoli, Mary Henley-Collopy, and Karleen Plunkett. (Note that Karleen joined the committee earlier in the year.) I would particularly like to thank Mary Henley-Collopy for her dedication and energy as Chairperson from November 2019 to May 2021. In May I took over the role of Chairperson, Katherine Marshall became acting Vice-Chairperson while Anna Leyden is on leave, and Frank Hall-Bentick became Secretary in my place. Andrew Turner remains as Treasurer, and I would like to thank him for his expertise and thoroughness in this invaluable role. We also welcome the new committee members Amy Marks and Liz Wright, who have provided us with fresh perspectives. The other continuing committee members are Pradeep Hewavitharana, Emilio Savle and Graham Smith.

A major achievement for the year was developing the new DRC Strategic Plan 2021-24. Workshops with the DRC Team and Committee of Management were held with the guidance of consultant Nunzio Giunta, and DRC members were given the opportunity to give feedback – both in writing and at our 2020 AGM. As a result of this process, the Committee was able to update the DRC's Vision, Mission and Strategic Objectives. The refreshed strategic objectives have enabled the organisation to create a focused, values-driven workplan for 2021-22.

In addition, a review of DRC's Rules of Association (Constitution) was conducted thanks to pro bono legal support of Johnson Winter and Slattery. There will be a special resolution at the AGM this year for DRC members to review and vote on, in order to adopt the changes to the Constitution.

Finally, I would like to thank the organisations and individuals that provide our funding. We are grateful to the State Government (through the Office for Disability, now part of the Department of Families, Fairness and Housing) for their ongoing commitment to our individual Advocacy Services. We also appreciate the funding of projects and capacity building by the Federal Government through the National Disability Insurance Agency (NDIA). We are particularly grateful for a very generous bequest from the estate of an anonymous donor, which has enabled us to continue our campaigning in public transport, as well as expanding our campaigning into other areas vital to promoting the human rights of people with disabilities.

Martin Leckey, Chairperson



Executive Officer's Report

Kerri Cassidy

This year is one of celebration as we all reflect upon the 40 years that Disability Resources Centre has played an integral role in promoting the rights of people with disabilities, not only in Victoria but nationally and indeed globally.

Each annual report I've had a theme- from Firm Footings, Strengthening Foundations to Beginning the Build. Given the turbulent world we have been living in, it would seem fitting to label this past year as DRC Holding Strong. COVID-19 and its lockdowns continue to bring challenges in all areas of life and this is felt disproportionately by people with disabilities.

We have assisted people to access Covid-safe services, housing and income support. Loneliness and isolation has been amplified for many who, due to their greater risk of complications should they contract Covid, have spent a large proportion of the last year at home. Zoom events and meetings have enabled us to keep in contact to some degree, but as Emilio said at a recent DRC meeting; "it's just not the same as being together."

There were big things happening in the Disability Sector. DRC was involved in calling for a stop to 'Independent' NDIS Assessments, as well as demanding a Senate inquiry relating to the Disability Support Pension and review of the Impairment Tables. Finally, we took on a leading role on the Australian Federation of Disability Organisations (AFDO) submission to the Royal Commission relating to the systemic abuse and neglect of people claiming DSP.

These past few years, DRC's major campaign focus has been Transport for All led by our Campaign Officer Ally Scott. Read the Transport report on page XX for more about how DRC staged the tram stop action "Get on Track," met with Transport Minister Ben Carroll and much more.

In December we said farewell to Julie McNally and welcomed Sharon Granek as Advocacy Team Leader. Sharon, along with Advocates Katrina and Kim, implemented DRC's reviewed Advocacy Policy Framework. In April DRC introduced the role of Intake Officer and Cath Edwards joined the team.



Executive Officer's Report

Kerri Cassidy

In May this year a major piece of work was conducting DRC's Accreditation Audit with auditors SAI Global. This was an opportunity to review our services and governance against both the State and National Disability Services Standards. DRC received a glowing report with no non-conformance issues and we have confirmed accreditation for the next three years. Thanks to the DRC Team and Committee of Management for their contribution to this review.

Through an ILC Organisational Capacity Building Grant, DRC commenced a project focused on increasing our diversity and knowledge to include issues that are important to emerging generations of Victorians with disability. Led by Anja Homburg, this has involved building intentional connections with Youth Disability Advocacy Service (YDAS) and Children and Young people with Disability Australia (CYDA) and implementing a Youth Intern program. Anja has also continued to implement DRC's Communications Strategy ensuring that our members and supporters received regular news by email, newsletter and social media.

Thank you again to the Committee of Management for leading DRC throughout this 40th year, for your depth of experience, the generosity of your time and talents and for unwavering belief in a future where people with disabilities will experience ultimate inclusion.

Yours in solidarity,

Kerri Cassidy

Kerri Cassidy, Executive Officer



Individual Advocacy

Sharon Granek

This past year has provided new challenges for the Individual Advocacy Team. As COVID-19 continued to dominate our lives we were forced to make adjustments to ensure we could continue to deliver a quality advocacy service. The office closed when the state went into lockdown on a number of occasions. With the team working from home and engaging with clients remotely, we made the difficult decision to permanently close our Dandenong office.

At the end of the year, we farewelled Advocacy Team Leader Julie McNally and I stepped into the role in January. Sincere thanks to Julie who was instrumental in beginning to implement changes to enhance the Individual Advocacy service. The Advocacy team has grown once again and we are now a team of three advocates and an Intake Officer, having welcomed Cath Edwards into this new role in April. As the initial point of contact, the role involves screening and assessing all enquiries. Some enquiries are referred to more appropriate services, whilst others are forwarded to the Advocacy Team for further discussion and, where appropriate, allocated to an advocate. This is beginning to reduce the advocates' workload, better enabling us to focus on working with clients.

Demand for our service is constant and the number of people presenting with psychosocial disability is increasing. This financial year we received 287 enquiries and supported 75 clients. Unfortunately, we were once again forced to close our waiting list as numbers became too difficult to manage. Issues with accessing the Disability Support Pension and the National Disability Insurance Scheme continue to be the primary reasons people seek our support.

We have once again undergone an accreditation process with SAI Global, which happens on a three-yearly basis. I am very pleased to say that we received an excellent report and can continue to deliver our much-needed service. This is by no means a small feat, given the size of the organisation and our limited resources, complying with these standards can be challenging.

Finally, a big thank you to Kim and Katrina who continue to amaze me with their achievements. Many of the people we work with have complex needs and assisting them to navigate various systems to achieve favourable outcomes is not easy. The advocate's role is a challenging one and our clients don't always achieve the results they were looking for, but each member of the Advocacy Team ensures the clients' voice is heard and the best possible outcome is reached.

Case Study

Individual Advocacy

The issues below formed part of a submission to the Disability Royal Commission made by DRC Advocacy, AFDO etc.

Bill:

DRC helped Bill apply for the Disability Support Pension (DSP). Bill was offered a Job Capacity Assessment (JCA). At the beginning of the assessment, conducted by a psychotherapist, Bill was told he neither his Support Worker nor his DRC Advocate could attend. The JCA ran for over 30 minutes before the psychotherapist, who was not a registered clinical psychologist, phoned us to ask if we could offer any further information to the JCA. It clearly states in the correspondence requesting a person attend a JCA or Centrelink Contracted Doctors assessment that they can have a support person present, with Centrelink writing, "You can bring someone with you to this appointment, for example, your nominee or a friend, relative or support worker."

Centrelink Contracted Doctors

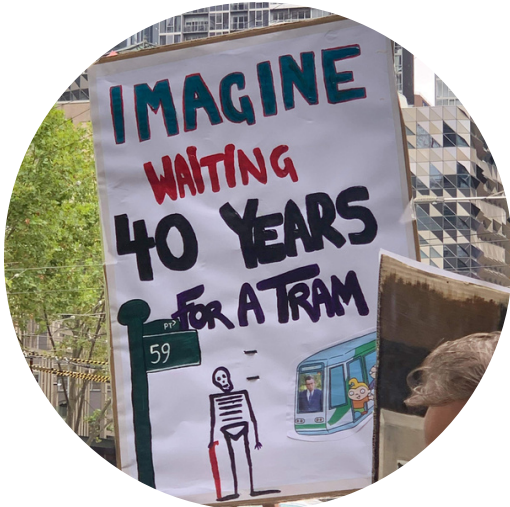
Some Centrelink Contracted Doctors are also refusing to allow applicants to have a support worker present at assessments since the outbreak of COVID-19. The only time that DRC advocates have been able to attend an appointment to support a client during this final stage of the DSP application process is when the advocate is involved with the making of the appointment and the assessment is with a Centrelink Contracted Clinical Psychologist. Since Covid all appointments for Job Capacity Assessment's and Centrelink Contracted Doctors assessments are held over the phone.

Supporting clients with Centrelink calls

During Covid lockdown DRC was assisting a CALD client with a call through an interpreter to Centrelink. Centrelink refused to engage with us and facilitate a three way conversation. I requested that this be raised with the Customer Service Officer's team leader who supported the CSO's position. DRC was asked to become the client's nominee before Centrelink would take any further conversations in this manner.

Public Transport Campaign

The COVID-19 era has delivered us an extraordinary context in which to fight for equal access to Public Transport. Not only has Public Transport felt unsafe for many people with disabilities, but Victoria's regular lockdowns have meant that travel of any kind is regularly prohibited. It is gratifying to reflect that, despite this, the Transport for All campaign has continued to grow.



Our progress was helped in large part by the Victoria Auditor General's Office report last year on the accessibility of the Melbourne Tram network. It concluded that the tram system was only 15% accessible and that at the current rate of progress all the platforms would have level access stops by 2066. It also stated that "the Department of Transport does not have conclusive plans for how it will create an accessible tram network, 18 years after DSAPT (Disability Standards for Accessible Public Transport) was established." It was deeply disheartening to see how just much this community has been neglected over the years, as well as a relief to see what we all know to be true right there in incontestable black and white.

Earlier this year DRC launched the Get on Track Campaign with a petition which urged the Hon Ben Carroll, Minister for Public Transport, to end the discrimination and deliver an accessible system that works for everyone. Over 15,000 people signed the petition, and a group of disability activists presented it to Minister Carroll. We also gathered outside the State Library in a tram-stopping direct action where we were joined in solidarity by our partners Friends of the Earth and RTBU.

In June DRC supported a group of members to lodge a complaint with the Victorian Civil and Administrative Tribunal (VCAT) against the government and Yarra Trams over the unacceptable delays that have occurred in overhauling the tram network to meet accessibility standards. The pandemic has slowed the progress of this case but we hope to hear more news soon.



Public Transport Campaign

Most recently, we joined with Friends of the Earth to meet with an advisor from Premier and Cabinet to make the case for the Andrews government committing to universal access as part of their re-election campaign. Those conversations continue.

We have also launched our 500 Days campaign which will steadily evolve over the next 18 months. It focuses on the stark fact that, according to the promises of previous governments, our transport should be fully accessible by the end of 2022 – under 500 days from now, a deadline that cannot possibly be met.

We have a series of demands that we hope will pave the way for major infrastructure work taking place in the next term of government. We also have a growing coalition of partners who share our objectives, and we have every reason to be positive.

But we can't do it without you. Please please join our campaign, sign and share as often as you can.

Together we can make this is a fairer world for everyone.





Treasurer's Report

Andrew Turner

On behalf of the Committee of Management, I am pleased to present the Treasurer's Report for the Disability Resources Centre (DRC) for the 2020/2021 financial year. DRC's financial performance in the past year reflects the dedication and hard work of our staff, volunteers, management, and Committee of Management members, led by our Chairperson.

Despite a slight decrease compared to the previous year, DRC achieved a net income of \$19,591, while significantly increasing total income to over \$494,000.

This income was sourced as follows:

66% from the Department of Health & Human Services, 24% from the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) Information, Linkages and Capacity Building Grant, and 10% from other sources.

Expenses were allocated as follows: 78% related to employment, 15% to operational expenses, and 6% to office expenses.

As indicated in the Balance Sheet on page 16 of the Annual Report, DRC's Total Equity as of June 30, 2020, stood at \$105,504.

Our auditors, JP Hardwick & Associates, have recognized our commitment to sound financial controls and policies. You can find all the Financial Reports below.

I would like to extend our Treasurer's gratitude to all staff, volunteers, management, fellow Committee members, and the Chairperson for their support, cooperation, and contributions to DRC throughout the year.

Andrew Turner, Treasurer

Financial Reports

DISABILITY RESOURCES CENTRE INC
ABN 78 577 549 329
INCOME AND EXPENDITURE STATEMENT FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2021

| | 2021 \$ | 2020 \$ |
|--|----------------|----------------|
| INCOME | | |
| Grant - Department of Human Services | 297,754 | 222,746 |
| NDIS - ILC Capacity Building | 150,563 | 118,000 |
| Transport Grant | 50,000 | 100,000 |
| General Grants Received | 10,000 | 10,000 |
| Other Income | 2,138 | 2,131 |
| Interest Income | 439 | 2,390 |
| Donations | 204,732 | 38,800 |
| COVID-19 government assistance payments: Cash Flow Boost | 12,902 | 12,902 |
| TOTAL INCOME | 728,528 | 506,969 |
| EXPENDITURE | | |
| ADIPEF/ACF Expenses | 23,377 | 23,450 |
| Advertising | 225 | 132 |
| AGM Expenses | 414 | 843 |
| Annual Registration | 1,211 | 3,148 |
| Audit | 1,600 | 1,500 |
| Board Expenses | 48 | 3,934 |
| Conferences & Memberships | 18 | 1,167 |
| Consultancy | 4,350 | 6,336 |
| CSO Network IT Expenses | 8,535 | 25,050 |
| Depreciation | - | 11,529 |
| Financial Services | 832 | 948 |
| Forums & Workshops | - | 2,932 |
| HDV-IR & A Expenses | 2,645 | 4,245 |
| IT - Website | 547 | 1,080 |
| Minor Equipment | 11,017 | - |
| Office Administration Costs | 2,206 | 512 |
| Other Employer Expenses | 1,921 | 2,168 |
| Printing Postage & Stationery | 1,506 | 3,832 |
| Rent, Rates & Occupancy Costs | 14,161 | 20,990 |
| Repair & Maintenance | 532 | 10 |
| Salaries & Wages | 338,746 | 316,646 |
| Software | 3,006 | 745 |
| Staff Training | 2,978 | 1,244 |
| Strategic Planning | 7,059 | - |
| Superannuation | 30,730 | 29,144 |
| Telephone | 5,678 | 3,951 |
| Travel & Accommodation | 1,097 | 4,132 |
| Workcover | 3,050 | 4,808 |
| TOTAL EXPENDITURE | 467,489 | 474,476 |
| NET SURPLUS/(DEFICIT) ATTRIBUTABLE TO THE ASSOCIATION | 261,039 | 32,493 |

Financial Reports

DISABILITY RESOURCES CENTRE INC
ABN 78 577 549 329
STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION AS AT 30 JUNE 2021

| | 2021 \$ | 2020 \$ |
|--|----------------|----------------|
| CURRENT ASSETS | | |
| Cash and Cash Equivalents | | |
| Cash at bank | 434,160 | 333,320 |
| Petty cash | 762 | 1,000 |
| | <u>434,922</u> | <u>334,320</u> |
| Trade and Other Receivables | | |
| Other receivables | - | 2,902 |
| | <u>-</u> | <u>2,902</u> |
| TOTAL CURRENT ASSETS | <u>434,922</u> | <u>337,222</u> |
| NON-CURRENT ASSETS | | |
| Property, Plant and Equipment | | |
| Office equipment - at cost | - | 33,918 |
| Less provision for depreciation | - | (33,918) |
| | <u>-</u> | <u>-</u> |
| TOTAL NON-CURRENT ASSETS | <u>-</u> | <u>-</u> |
| TOTAL ASSETS | <u>434,922</u> | <u>337,222</u> |
| CURRENT LIABILITIES | | |
| Trade and Other Payable | | |
| Accounts payable | 495 | 1,012 |
| Accrued expenses | - | - |
| GST payable | 7,961 | 9,423 |
| PAYG withholding tax payable | 7,828 | 6,864 |
| Superannuation payable | 5,407 | 40 |
| | <u>21,691</u> | <u>17,339</u> |
| Deferred Income | | |
| Grants received in advance | - | 178,672 |
| | <u>-</u> | <u>178,672</u> |
| Employment Entitlement Provisions | | |
| Provision for annual leave | 25,109 | 21,653 |
| Provision for long service leave | 8,676 | 1,151 |
| | <u>33,785</u> | <u>22,804</u> |
| TOTAL CURRENT LIABILITIES | <u>55,476</u> | <u>218,815</u> |
| TOTAL LIABILITIES | <u>55,476</u> | <u>218,815</u> |
| NET ASSETS | <u>379,446</u> | <u>118,407</u> |
| EQUITY | | |
| Accumulated funds | 379,446 | 118,407 |
| | <u>379,446</u> | <u>118,407</u> |

Financial Reports

DISABILITY RESOURCES CENTRE INC
ABN 78 577 549 329
STATEMENT OF CASH FLOWS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2021

| | Note | 2021 \$ | 2020 \$ |
|---|------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| CASH FLOWS FROM OPERATING ACTIVITIES | | | |
| Receipts from grants | | 329,645 | 439,003 |
| Receipts from customers and other sources | | 222,674 | 50,931 |
| Payments to suppliers and employees | | (452,156) | (470,687) |
| Interest received | | 439 | 2,390 |
| Net cash generated from/(used in) operating activities | (i) | <u>100,602</u> | <u>21,637</u> |
| CASH FLOWS FROM INVESTING ACTIVITIES | | | |
| Payments for property, plant and equipment | | - | (8,688) |
| Net cash (used in)/provided by investing activities | | <u>-</u> | <u>(8,688)</u> |
| Net increase/(decrease) in cash held | | 100,602 | 12,949 |
| Cash and cash equivalents at beginning of financial year | | 334,320 | 321,371 |
| Cash and cash equivalents at end of financial year | (ii) | <u>434,922</u> | <u>334,320</u> |

DISABILITY RESOURCES CENTRE INC
ABN 78 577 549 329
NOTES TO THE STATEMENT OF CASH FLOWS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2021

| | 2021 \$ | 2020 \$ |
|---|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| Note (i). Net cash generated from/(used in) operating activities | | |
| Net deficit for the year | 261,039 | 32,493 |
| Non-cash flow Item: depreciation | - | 11,529 |
| (Increase)/decrease in accounts and other receivables | 2,902 | (2,902) |
| Increase/(decrease) in trade and other payables | 4,352 | (13,731) |
| Increase/(decrease) in grants received in advance | (178,672) | (11,743) |
| Increase/(decrease) in provisions | 10,981 | 5,991 |
| | <u>100,602</u> | <u>21,637</u> |
| Note (ii). Cash and cash equivalents at end of financial year | | |
| Cash at bank | 434,160 | 333,320 |
| Term deposit | 762 | 1,000 |
| | <u>434,922</u> | <u>334,320</u> |

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 www.drc.org.au

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This publication is available in accessible formats on request.