



# ANNUAL REPORT 2022-23

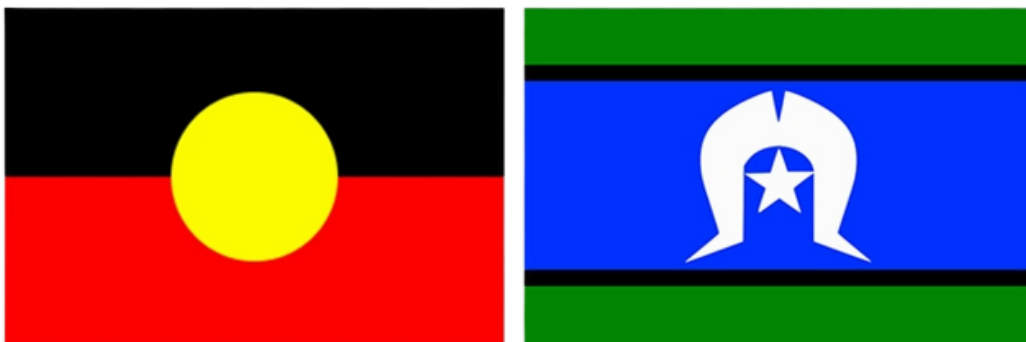
DISABILITY RESOURCES CENTRE  
OCTOBER 2023

**DRC**  
advocacy

# 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.



# DRC Team

## COMMITTEE OF MANAGEMENT

Chairperson	Andrew Turner / Martin Leckey
Treasurer	Pradeep Hewavitharana
Secretary	Frank Hall-Bentick / Lara MacFarlane
Members	Emilio Salve, Kiz Jackson & Jessica Kapuschinski-Evans

## STAFF

Executive Officer	Greg Ferrington
Advocates	Neysha Machnig & Jackie Breasley
Projects Manager	Ally Scott
Program Officer	Nimo Hersi
Administration Officer	Sinead Mooney

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# Chairperson's Report

## Martin Leckey

It has been a year of great change once again at Disability Resources Centre, and I remain extremely proud of the robustness and tenacity of our team. Together we continue to develop new pathways to support people with disabilities, to campaign for equity and inclusion, and to foster community and pride.

A key focus for the Committee of Management of course has been the sustainability and growth of the organisation. We were pleased to see that the increase in advocacy funding from DFFH, implemented during the pandemic, remained in place. DRC applied for, and continues to apply for, further funding opportunities to enable the growth of the organisation and we are very grateful this year for the support of year the Department of Health and State Trustees.

Our projects continue to go from strength to strength. Belong, an online network connecting people with disabilities across Victoria, is growing rapidly. We are very appreciative of the careful monitoring and evaluation of the pilot project conducted by the University of Melbourne, which has helped inform the growth of the program. UpNext, a youth advisory committee, has brought valuable insights to the Committee of Management, and we look forward to weaving those into the organisational strategic plans early in the New Year.

I want to express my gratitude to each member of the DRC Team. I would like to thank Greg Ferrington for his stewardship in the role of Executive Officer this year; his knowledge, experience and hard work have been invaluable. Special acknowledgment also goes to Ally Scott, our Projects Manager, our advocates Neysha Machnig and Jackie Breasley, Belong Program Officer Nimo Hersi, and Administration Officer Sinead Mooney.

Project Coordinator Anja Homburg left DRC earlier in the year and I would like to acknowledge the extent to which her exquisite writing, her creativity, and her keen eye for design has impacted our communications and campaigns.

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I would like to thank Andrew Turner, who took on the role of Chairperson at the last AGM and did a fine job in that role until he resigned a few months ago. Previously Vice-Chairperson, I have been acting in the role of chair since then. I would also like to thank the Committee of Management for their invaluable assistance this year, in particular Treasurer Pradeep Hewavitharana and Secretary Larissa MacFarlane. To our Committee Members Kiz Fitzpatrick and Jessica Kapuschinski-Evans, your expertise is greatly appreciated. To our retiring Committee Members Emilio Savle and Andrew Turner, who have provided exceptional service to DRC over many years, a deep and heartfelt thank-you.

It was with great sadness that we learnt of the passing of first Graham Smith and then Frank Hall-Bentick during the year. I would like to take this opportunity on behalf of the Committee of Management and DRC staff to pay tribute to Graham and Frank for their contributions to DRC and the disability sector more broadly. Frank was one of the founders of the DRC in 1981 and served on the committee ever since. We will have more to say in relation to Frank's contribution at our Annual General Meeting.

Martin Leckey, Chairperson



# Executive Officer's Report

## Greg Ferrington

I am pleased to present the Executive Officer's Report for the fiscal year ending 2023. It has been a transformative year for DRC as we have made significant strides in multiple areas to enhance efficiency, foster collaboration, and build a stronger foundation for future growth.

I took over the role of Executive Officer in late August 2022 and set about gaining an understanding of the advocacy sector and the challenges facing DRC as an organisation. I also took time getting to know the skills of the team and what they could bring to the wider organisation's future. There have been some staff changes and this has resulted in a more streamlined team with a Projects Manager and two full time advocates.

One of the first achievements of this year was our decision to move our office and co-locate with STAR Victoria. This strategic move has proven to be instrumental in fostering collaboration and synergy between our organizations. The physical proximity has facilitated increased communication, knowledge sharing, and joint initiatives.

Collectively with the governance team we recognised the importance of a robust framework to govern our operations. To that end, we embarked on a comprehensive review and implementation of policies and procedures. These policies serve as a foundation for ensuring consistency, compliance, and accountability moving forward. We are committed to upholding the highest standards of governance, and this initiative is a significant step in that direction. This is an ongoing process and will be a feature of the next financial year.

Efficiency in human resources management is crucial for our continued growth. Over the past year, I have worked diligently to streamline our HR processes which included developing relevant forms and procedures to reflect the needs of the team. To further streamline our financial operations, we introduced the XERO system for payroll and accounts management. This cloud-based solution has not only simplified financial transactions but has also provided us with real-time insights into our financial health. The implementation of XERO has significantly reduced the complexity of our financial operations, allowing us to allocate more resources to strategic initiatives.

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In line with our growth strategy, we actively pursued partnerships that align with our mission and vision. We have made substantial progress in building key partnerships with organisations that complement our strengths and contribute to our long-term success. This has included pursuing large grant applications in a consortium partnership with STAR Victoria and Neighbourhood Houses Victoria.

As we reflect on the achievements of the past year, we are excited about the opportunities that lie ahead. Our commitment to innovation, collaboration, and operational excellence will remain at the core of our strategy. We are grateful for the dedication of our team, and the support of our stakeholders.

Thank you for your continued support, and we look forward to another year of growth and success.

Greg Ferrington, Executive Officer



# Individual Advocacy

The 2022-2023 year continued the theme of change for our Individual Advocacy service. In November 2022 we welcomed Advocate Jackie Breasley to the team. Together our advocates worked to strengthen our outreach efforts and accept a more diverse portfolio of client issues. We have continued to evolve our Disability Support Pension Training, so it is now available for service providers as well as people who are in the process of applying. One highlight included presenting a Disability Support Pension workshop at the Neighbourhood Houses Victoria Annual Conference.

We were also extremely pleased that that level of funding for individual advocacy was maintained in the recent State Budget.

Individual advocacy is, at times, difficult and frustrating work. It is also deeply rewarding when we achieve the outcomes our clients want. Below is a statistical representation of our year and achievements (it should be noted that DRC had one advocate for the period July-October 2022)



1056.27 hours  
of advocacy  
support



119 cases



117 clients



198 short term  
issues  
addressed



Eighty five percent of advocacy  
cases reached the objectives set  
by the client.

# Case Study

## Individual Advocacy

Jenny, a 24-year-old woman, sought advocacy support from the Individual Advocacy team to address concerns related to accessing assessments for Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) and Attention Deficit Hyperactive Disorder (ADHD). Additionally, she required assistance in navigating the application process for the Disability Support Pension.

Jenny faced persistent challenges throughout her early education and adulthood, struggling with academic pursuits, maintaining a stable income, fostering social relationships, and prioritising personal well-being. Despite multiple medical recommendations for ASD and ADHD assessments, the financial burden associated with these evaluations rendered her unable to proceed, placing her at risk of homelessness due to a lack of income and support.

The DRC advocacy team, recognising the urgency of Jenny's situation, collaborated with Support Pathway, an organisation specialising in mental health services for regional and low socioeconomic areas. Despite a six-to-nine-month waitlist for assessments, Individual Advocacy team member Neysha successfully advocated for Jenny's prioritised placement.

Through DRC's advocacy efforts, Jenny underwent psychometric screening and assessment for ASD and ADHD. The subsequent diagnoses empowered Jenny, supported by Advocate Neysha, to initiate the application process for the Disability Support Pension.

This case study exemplifies the impactful collaboration between Jenny, DRC's Individual Advocacy team, and Support Pathway, ensuring timely access to crucial assessments and support services. The successful outcome underscores the importance of advocacy in addressing complex challenges faced by individuals seeking essential resources and diagnoses.

\*Name changed to protect client privacy.

Neysha Machnig and Jackie Breasley, Advocates

# Projects:

## Belong: Bringing our Community Together

Launched in January 2022 as the Buddy Network, Belong is a dynamic disability-led network aimed at building community, connection and pride.

The project was monitored through its initial year by researchers from the University of Melbourne Assessment and Evaluation Research Centre. They helped us to establish effective monitoring processes and to develop pre and post evaluation tools. The researchers also conducted qualitative interviews that enabled us to understand what was going well, and what we needed to improve.

Over the later months of 2022, guided by participant feedback and our steering group of members, the network morphed and was relaunched as Belong in February 2023. We are deeply grateful for the wonderful pro bono work conducted by Bright, the Sydney-based creative agency, who renamed and designed a logo set for the network.

In March 2023, Nimo Hersi joined us as Program Officer with a recruitment and project development brief, bringing with her invaluable lived experience and a raft of valuable connections. We explored a few different ways to introduce new members to the values and processes of the network before introducing monthly two-part induction workshops from May. We also began to distribute bi-monthly newsletters which included a schedule of meetings together with other information and opportunities.

Through the efforts and energies of Belong's wonderful members, other targeted groups have begun to form alongside the general meetings and the campaigns and advocacy sessions. A group of members who manage chronic pain meet fortnightly, and a WhatsApp group for people who live with insomnia is extremely active through the night hours.

The membership continues to grow steadily and is now fantastically diverse in culture, age, gender identity, geography and disability experience. Meaningful relationships grow through our regular meetings, and together we have begun to build campaigns and deliver group submissions on issues that impact us all. The future of the network is bright. We have some exciting plans ahead to increase the membership's engagement in systemic advocacy and expand the way we share self advocacy skills and experience.

Ally Scott, Projects Manager

# UpNext:

## Youth Advisory Council

UpNext Advisory Council is a committee of young disabled advocates working together to ensure that DRC is well appraised of the needs and issues facing our emerging generation, and for these perspectives to inform the strategic direction of the organisation.

Aoife Ryall and Tegan Hartley joined DRC to lead the project and were ably steered by Project Coordinator Anja Homburg. Their first tasks were to define the scope of UpNext, publicise the opportunity to join and recruit a diverse group of council members. The UpNext Council attracted a large number of impressive applicants, and the team faced some difficult decisions when selecting the final nine members.

Tegan and Aoife also evolved the values of the group and devised three online training sessions before beginning to co-facilitate the council meetings. Starting each meeting with a broad and flexible agenda, the group explores shared systemic barriers and potential pathways for improving DRC's reach, inclusivity and impact. An UpNext member then reports back to each Committee of Management meeting and is available for follow up questions. Key themes emerging from these meetings include the lack of accessible emergency housing, the need to tackle discrimination and exclusion in further education settings, the potential for a social app for the disability community and improved digital inclusion.

We sincerely thank Tegan and Aoife for their skilful work in both forming and nurturing this group. Thanks are also due to the nine members for their thoughtful and ongoing participation. We very much look forward to hearing more from UpNext in the coming year, and to exploring how to support these issues going forward.

Ally Scott, Projects Manager



# Treasurer's Report

On behalf of the Committee of Management it is my pleasure to present to you the Treasurer's Report for the year ended 30 June 2023.

I would like to thank my fellow committee members, the Executive Officer, the DRC team, and our bookkeeper for their efforts during the year. Over the past year, we have made significant strides in strengthening our financial foundation and improving our financial management practices.

One of the major accomplishments of the year was the successful transition from cash accounting to accrual accounting. This shift has provided us with a more accurate picture of our financial health, enabling us to more effectively plan for the future, make informed decisions, and align our financial reporting with industry standards.

In the previous fiscal year ended 30 June 2022, we faced a challenging deficit of \$71,249. Through prudent financial management, cost-saving measures, and increased revenue generation, I am pleased to report that we have successfully reduced the deficit to approximately \$28,632 by the end of this fiscal year ended 30 June 2023. This achievement reflects our commitment to fiscal responsibility and our dedication to maintaining a sustainable financial position.

The total sum of income that DRC received for the fiscal year ended 30 June 2023 was \$572,797.

During this fiscal year the main items of income received by DRC were:

- Grant from the Department of Families Fairness and House of \$423,052 (2022 income was \$314,664) which accounts for 73% of the income, and allows DRC to maintain services to its clients
- ILC Grant from the NDIS of \$69,270 (12% of total income received)
- General Grant: \$83,968 (14%) comprising:

DANA DRC Grant :	10,000
Disability Self Help (Belong, previously Buddy Network)	5,000
MHWD (Belong, previously Buddy Network)	68,968
Total Trading Income:	83,968
- Interest Received \$426

DRC's total expenditure for the fiscal year ended 30 June 2023 is \$601,429.

This is highlighted by:

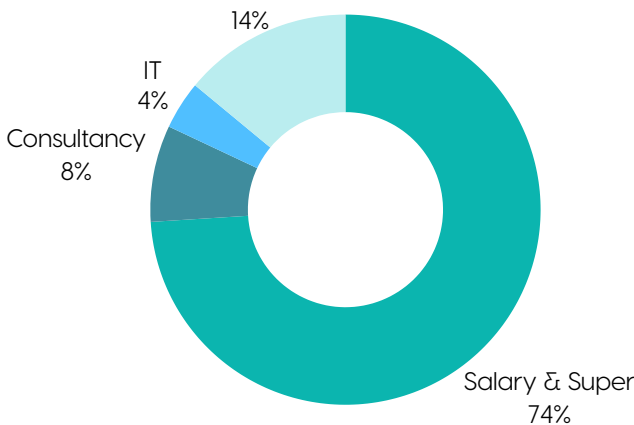
Salary & Superannuation at \$447,169 (74% of total expenditure)

Consultancy at \$49,619 (8% of total expenditure)

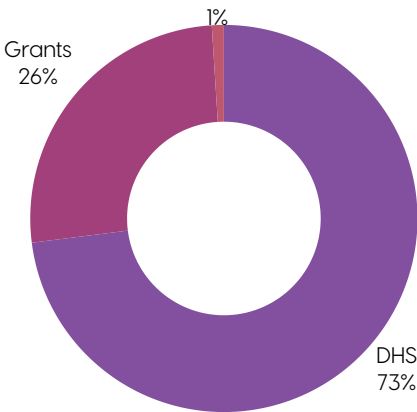
IT & Network expenses at \$24,030 (4% of total expenditure)

While we have made substantial progress in addressing our financial challenges, we remain focused on continuous improvement and sustainable financial practices. As we move forward, we are committed to maintaining our financial discipline, building on our successes, and ensuring the long-term financial health of DRC.

Expenditure



Income



Pradeep Hewavitharana, Treasurer

**DISABILITY RESOURCES CENTRE INC**  
**ABN 78 577 549 329**  
**INCOME AND EXPENDITURE STATEMENT FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2023**

	2023 \$	2022 \$
<b>INCOME</b>		
Grant - Department of Fairness, Family and Housing	423,052	314,664
Australian Disability and Indigenous Peoples' Education Fund (ADIPEF)	-	15,000
NDIS - ILC Capacity Building	69,270	29,714
General Grants Received	83,968	105,435
Interest Income	426	384
Donations	(3,919)	9,265
<b>TOTAL INCOME</b>	<b>572,797</b>	<b>474,462</b>
<b>EXPENDITURE</b>		
ADIPEF/ACF Expenses	-	21,850
Advertising	7,295	1,207
AGM Expenses	207	-
Audit	6,100	1,500
Board Expenses	356	-
Conferences & Memberships	564	530
Consultancy	49,619	89,145
CSO Network IT Expenses	-	16,436
Financial Services	11,125	597
Forums & Workshops	68	5,663
HDV-IR & A Expenses	-	2,710
IT and Network Expenses	24,030	-
IT - Website	357	-
Meeting Expenses	544	-
Minor Equipment	247	1,232
Office Administration Costs	1,582	-
Other Employer Expenses	-	13,045
Portable Long Service Benefits Scheme Levies - 01.07.19 to 30.06.2022	21,861	15,546
Printing Postage & Stationery	1,060	481
Project Expenses	1,036	-
Rent, Rates & Occupancy Costs	15,006	14,527
Repair & Maintenance	98	-
Salaries & Wages	406,569	314,434
Software	3,263	6,572
Staff Training	2,801	789
Superannuation	40,600	32,345
Telephone	1,159	2,450
Travel & Accommodation	270	401
Workcover	5,612	4,251
	<b>601,429</b>	<b>545,711</b>
<b>TOTAL EXPENDITURE</b>	<b>601,429</b>	<b>545,711</b>
<b>NET SURPLUS/(DEFICIT) FOR THE YEAR</b>	<b>(28,632)</b>	<b>(71,249)</b>

**DISABILITY RESOURCES CENTRE INC**  
**ABN 78 577 549 329**  
**STATEMENT OF COMPREHENSIVE INCOME FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2023**

	2023 \$	2022 \$
<b>NET SURPLUS/(DEFICIT) FOR THE YEAR</b>	<b>(28,632)</b>	<b>(71,249)</b>
Total Comprehensive Income for the Year	-	-
<b>NET SURPLUS/(DEFICIT) ATTRIBUTABLE TO THE ASSOCIATION</b>	<b>(28,632)</b>	<b>(71,249)</b>

**DISABILITY RESOURCES CENTRE INC**  
**ABN 78 577 549 329**  
**STATEMENT OF CASH FLOWS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2023**

	Note	2023 \$	2022 \$
<b>CASH FLOWS FROM OPERATING ACTIVITIES</b>			
Receipts from grants		511,860	516,958
Receipts from customers and other sources		(5,487)	9,265
Payments to suppliers and employees		(618,592)	(528,849)
Interest received		426	384
<b>Net cash generated from/(used in) operating activities</b>	<b>(i)</b>	<b><u>(111,793)</u></b>	<b><u>(2,242)</u></b>
<b>CASH FLOWS FROM INVESTING ACTIVITIES</b>			
Payments for property, plant and equipment		-	-
<b>Net cash (used in)/provided by investing activities</b>		<b><u>-</u></b>	<b><u>-</u></b>
Net increase/(decrease) in cash held		(111,793)	(2,242)
Cash and cash equivalents at beginning of financial year		432,680	434,922
<b>Cash and cash equivalents at end of financial year</b>	<b>(ii)</b>	<b><u><u>320,887</u></u></b>	<b><u><u>432,680</u></u></b>

**DISABILITY RESOURCES CENTRE INC**  
**ABN 78 577 549 329**  
**NOTES TO THE STATEMENT OF CASH FLOWS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2023**

	2023 \$	2022 \$
<b>Note (i). Net cash generated from/(used in) operating activities</b>		
Net deficit for the year	(28,632)	(71,249)
Non-cash flow item: depreciation	-	-
(Increase)/decrease in accounts and other receivables	(1,568)	-
Increase/(decrease) in trade and other payables	(16,889)	31,385
Increase/(decrease) in grants received in advance	(64,430)	52,145
Increase/(decrease) in provisions	(274)	(14,523)
	<b><u>(111,793)</u></b>	<b><u>(2,242)</u></b>
<b>Note (ii). Cash and cash equivalents at end of financial year</b>		
Cash at bank	319,621	432,121
Petty cash	1,266	559
	<b><u><u>320,887</u></u></b>	<b><u><u>432,680</u></u></b>



**DISABILITY RESOURCES CENTRE INC**  
**ABN 78 577 549 329**  
**STATEMENT OF CHANGES IN EQUITY FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2023**

	Accumulated funds \$	Total \$
<b>Balance as at 1 July 2021</b>	<b>307,898</b>	<b>307,898</b>
Surplus/ (Deficit) attributable to the Association	(71,249)	(71,249)
<b>Balance as at 30 June 2022</b>	<u><b>236,649</b></u>	<u><b>236,649</b></u>
Surplus/ (Deficit) attributable to the Association	(28,632)	(28,632)
<b>Balance as at 30 June 2023</b>	<u><u><b>208,017</b></u></u>	<u><u><b>208,017</b></u></u>

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