
ANNUAL REPORT 2024-25

DISABILITY RIGHTS &
CULTURE



Acknowledgement of Country

Disability Rights and Culture works on stolen and unceded land. We pay our respects to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as the first inhabitants and the traditional custodians of the lands and join their calls for justice, truth, and Treaty.

In particular we acknowledge the Bangarang, the Yorta Yorta, the Ladji Ladji, the Gunditjmara, the Kerrupjmara, the Gunai Kurnai, the Watha Wurrung, the Widjbaluk, the Wemba Wemba, the Daung Wurrung, the Dja Dja Wurrung, the Wurundjeri, and the Boonwurrung people. Our community is committed to honouring the unique cultural and spiritual relationship Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples have with the land and waters, and their rich contribution to society.

Treaty

In a first for so called Australia, after a decade of work, the First People's Assembly of Victoria have established a Treaty with Aboriginal people and the Victorian Government. The DRC is proud and supportive of the decades long journey to Treaty for Victoria. The Treaty recognises that Aboriginal people are the experts when it comes to Country, culture, and communities, and will ensure their local knowledge will be used to deliver practical solutions to improve health, education, and housing outcomes for First Nation's communities.



Our vision:

A world where Disability Justice and Disability Pride are embraced and celebrated by all.

Our purpose:

Together we strive to eliminate all forms of disability oppression and realise our human rights.

“We do this ‘til we free us.” (Mariame Kaba, 2021)

Radical Inclusion

As a cross-disability organisation, we embrace diversity in all its forms. All people with disability are respected, valued and included regardless of our disability experience, Aboriginality, race, culture, class, age sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, sex characteristics, or location.

Disability Justice

We are committed to the principles of Disability Justice which centres intersectionality and recognises the ways that different systems of oppression overlap and reinforce one another. Disability Justice prioritises the needs of those most historically excluded groups, such as First Nations people, women and gender diverse people, people of colour, incarcerated peoples, refugees and migrants, children and young people, older people, and people who are LGBTIQ+.

Disability Pride and Culture

We are proud of our disability identity and celebrate disability as an integral part of who we are. Disability Pride is a celebration of human diversity, of every body and every mind. We celebrate disability culture, and acknowledge our elders and forbears in the disability movement.

DRC Team

BOARD

Co-Chairs	Larissa MacFarlane and Alison Brown de Moreno
Vice Chair	Daniel Munter
Treasurer	Victor Nieto
Secretary	Kiz Fitzpatrick
Directors	Martin Leckey, Pradeep Hewavitharana, Julie Philips, Justin Li, Laura Pettenuzzo, Sarah Curtis

STAFF

Executive Officer	Ally Scott
Advocates	Jackie Breasley, Neysha Machnig, Kendall Foster, Jarrod Sandell-Hay
Admin and Communications Coordinator	Sinead Mooney, Emma Robinson
Belong Engagement and Communication Coordinators	Robyn Reynolds, Zoe Simmons, Finnley Greet



Chairperson's Report



This year at DRC has been one of growth, visibility, and new energy. After a few big transitions, we have come into our own again, recharged, rebranded, and ready for what's next.

Our rebrand, completed in July through a generous pro bono partnership with The Edison Agency, feels like a turning point. It captures who we are: connected to our elders and forebears, grounded in culture, and focused on bringing together Victoria's Disabled People's Organisations. It is a look and a message that finally feel like home. The rebrand also set the stage for GRIT, our new blog that gives space for stories of lived experience, advocacy, and disability pride.

The launch of Victoria's first Disability Pride flag raising, initiated by Larissa and supported by Brimbank City Council, was another defining moment. It made history as a powerful show of unity and visibility for our community, and it helped position DRC as a key voice in strengthening Disability Pride across the state. The event showed what can happen when visibility meets purpose, and it is only the beginning.

We are grateful to the funders and partners who helped make this year's work possible:

- NDIS Peer Support and Capacity Building Grant
- DFFH and the Office for Disability, for their ongoing partnership
- Melbourne City Council, for supporting the Disability Pride Celebration

Heartfelt thanks to Anasina Grey-Barberio and the Accessible Victorian Greens for their thoughtful and generous contributions that made it possible for community members to take part in the disability pride celebrations. We would also like to extend our sincere appreciation to the wonderful allies and community members, you know who you are, whose donations continue to make our work possible. Your kindness and solidarity mean the world to us.

We also welcomed an amazing new team, each bringing energy and passion to their roles:

Emma Robinson (Communications and Administration Coordinator), Kendall Foster (Individual Advocate), Robyn Reynolds, Finnley Greet and Zoe Simmons (Belong Engagement and Communications Coordinators), Jarrod Sandell Hay (Specialist Advocate: Communication Support Needs).

To our board, Victor Nieto (Treasurer), Daniel Munter (Vice Chair), Kiz Blanca-Jackson (Secretary), Julie Phillips, Justin Li, Martin Leckey, Pradeep Hewavitharana, Sarah Curtis and Laura Pettenuzzo, thank you for your time, insight and ongoing commitment. DRC continues to be strong because of the people who keep showing up and shaping its direction.

Between the rebrand, GRIT, and the incredible work of our team and partners, this has been a year that reminded us why DRC exists: to build connection, amplify voices, and lead with pride. We have built something solid and full of heart, and the best part is we are just getting started.

Larissa MacFarlane & Alison Brown De Moreno
Co-Chairs





Executive Officer's Report

The financial year 2024-25 brought enormous challenges for the disability community, yet the Disability Movement continued to grow.

One year on from the delivery of the Disability Royal Commission's final report, it became clear that there was little political appetite to embrace the recommendations and implement the important reforms our community urgently needs.

Discrimination, restraint and seclusion, exploitation, and abuse persist. Meanwhile, disability policy remains fixated on the NDIS, framed by government as burdensome and unsustainable. Broader and pressing issues affecting the daily lives of disabled people receive little attention. We continue to call for decisive action on these fronts and urge the Victorian Government to uphold its obligations under the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. Meaningful engagement with the disability community through its representative organisations is essential to achieving genuine progress.

We are particularly concerned by the government's drive to close independent, disability specific regulators. We continue to lobby to save both the Victorian Disability Workers Commission and the Disability Services Commission.

This year, DRC entered the second year of its five-year strategic plan, successfully completing the first phase of our objectives towards becoming a leading voice for Disability Justice and Disability Pride. We focused on strengthening collaboration across Disabled People's Organisations in Victoria, working to build a unified and cohesive voice that strengthens our collective impact.

We also completed our rebranding, moving from "Disability Resources Centre" to "Disability Rights and Culture", preserving our DRC initials. This was only possible thanks to the extraordinary creativity, resourcefulness, patience and support of The Edison Agency and their Design for Good program. We loved working with Liz Archer- Fisher and remain deeply grateful to her and her team.

Belong was supported this year by the NDIS Peer Support and Capacity Building grant, enabling us to recruit a fantastic team to boost member recruitment, strengthen our social presence, and elevate Disability Pride and Culture through the GRIT blog. I extend great thanks to Robyn Reynolds, Finnley Greet, and Zoe Simmons for their flexibility, ingenuity, and resilience.

Belong has also been supported by City of Melbourne to launch Medical Mates and Support Circles. These are mutual aid streams of work devised by the community to enable the community to better support itself.

I want to particularly acknowledge the work of the Belong facilitation team. These are highly skilled members who give up their time to hold space for others, and their commitment is the heartbeat of this community. Without them Belong simply would not exist.

We also experience two farewells this year. We said goodbye to Jackie Breasley, our brilliant and tenacious Individual Advocate, and to Sinead Mooney, our ever-organised Administration and Grants Officer. Both made significant contributions to DRC, and we wish them all the very best.

Finally, a heartfelt thank you to our dedicated Board for their guidance across governance, finances, and campaigns—and to all DRC and Belong members for their sharing, solidarity, and ongoing support.

Ally Scott
Executive Officer

Individual Advocacy

DRC's individual advocacy program continues to evolve, staying responsive to policy changes while remaining committed to meeting people where they are. Our focus is on fostering personal agency and strengthening community connection wherever possible. As a Disabled Peoples Organisation, our advocacy work is grounded in the lived experience of disability and the belief that genuine inclusion and justice are achieved when people are connected to community and empowered with the tools to act for themselves.

Over the past year, the advocacy team has worked intensively with individuals facing barriers to accessing the Disability Support Pension (DSP) and the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS). Our advocates have supported clients to gather required evidence, understand their rights, and navigate review processes. Increasingly, the team has integrated skill-building into information sessions, so that people leave the process not only with a resolved issue but with the capacity to better advocate for themselves in future interactions with service systems.

A major issue this year has been medical professionals charging excessive fees for NDIS and Centrelink reports, with some costing up to \$5,000. Advocates have spent considerable time negotiating fees, arranging payment plans, and supporting clients under financial stress, delaying applications, and creating inequities. DRC has conducted systemic work to address this issue, but we are relieved to see that the imminent I-CAN tool is intended to streamline evidence collection and remove the need for costly medical reports. We will be closely monitoring the development of this tool.

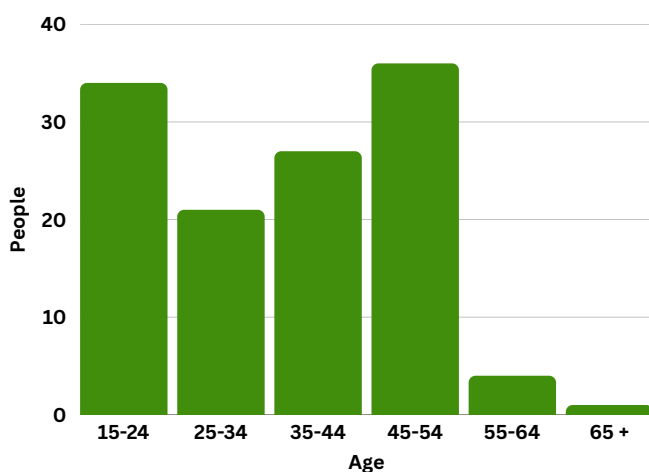
Internally, the individual advocacy team has focused on improving systems and procedures to make our support more effective and sustainable. New tools and templates help clients progress aspects of their own cases, enabling them to act independently with guidance from advocates. This approach increases our reach, allowing the team to assist more people across a wider range of complex issues.

Externally, the team has strengthened connections across the advocacy and community sectors. Regular cross-agency meetings with organisations such as Leadership Plus, VALID, and Elder Rights Victoria have deepened mutual understanding of referral pathways and service gaps. These relationships are essential for holistic advocacy, ensuring clients are supported across every stage of their journey.

DRC has also worked to address recurring struggles, for example by supporting Villamanta Legal Service to host discussion forums addressing the challenges of managing support workers. We have also drawn on the invaluable services of the Victorian Disability Workers Commission to address concerns about poor standards of support from workers.

DRC also worked with Disability Advocacy Victoria and our Co-Chair, Alison Brown de Moreno, to create a report reflecting the advocacy experience from the perspective of community members. The key aim of the report is to help government and other agencies better understand the role and impact of professional independent advocacy. The report presents case studies illustrating the challenges, successes, and barriers encountered by people with disability, providing insight into systemic inequities, as well as the time and cost incurred in achieving outcomes.

Total advocacy clients: 198
Total advocacy cases: 185
Total enquiries: 251
Total advocacy hours: 908



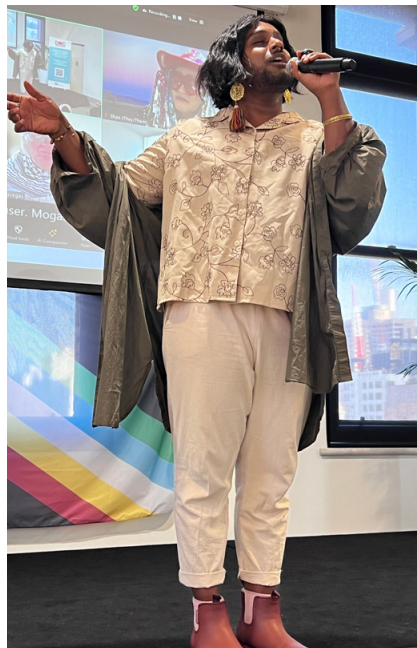
Belong:

Bringing our Community Together

Belong is a community run by and for people with disability, fostering connection, creativity, and pride. Belong is cross disability and radically inclusive. Regardless of disability experience, age, culture, location, gender identity and expression, everyone is welcome here. The community celebrates diversity and disability culture, and practices deep listening, respect, and kindness.

Over the 2024–25 financial year, Belong has demonstrated steady growth in membership, participation, and community impact. Belong has expanded its schedule of meetings, and specialised groups include fortnightly meetings for neurodivergent members and a monthly online games session. It has also enabled the community to come together to campaign and prepare joint submissions. Fortnightly community drop-ins at Ross House continue, offering informal spaces for discussion, idea generation, and mutual support.

The year started with our annual Disability Pride celebration, this time held in the Queen Victoria Women's Centre. Hosted by Naavrikaran, the afternoon was full of joy, bringing together nearly 100 members for music, speakers, disability pride badge making, and a bedazzling booth.



Belong in the West is a face-to-face hub for members in the greater western suburbs of Melbourne, providing opportunities for members to reflect, connect, and share experiences with food, tea, and collaborative art. Over time that morphed into a very successful fortnightly Board Games group, initiated and hosted by Nikki with formidable resourcefulness and tenacity.

Online engagement through Discord and WhatsApp has been particularly valuable, allowing members to communicate and build relationships between meetings and through the quiet zone hours. These digital connections have contributed to the growth of a supportive, inclusive community.

“Belong has created a unique supportive and empathetic community. I feel safe, understood and completely accepted.”

“Nobody in my life understood when I became significantly disabled. Belong has given me a community of people who get it. I feel seen and understood. It’s helped me regain agency and joy in my life.”

In 2025 Belong has been able to bring together three outstanding team members to help grow of the community. Robyn Reynolds, Finnley Greet, and Zoe Simmons have come together with humour, resourcefulness, and creativity. We are very excited about what we can achieve together in the coming months.

Belong has also developed two new mutual aid programs, Medical Mates and Support Circles. These are designed to provide much needed opportunities to debrief in small groups, and share knowledge and experience around medical or any other life issues.

“Belong is important to me because it gives me a sense of belonging and connection with others who understand the challenges and strengths that come with having a disability. I value how it goes beyond just support – it’s about fighting for justice, building pride in who we are, and making sure our voices are not only heard but celebrated. Being part of this community reminds me that I’m not alone, and that together we can create real change.

“I only found out about DRC last week from a health professional. I had my meet and greet with Belong, the social arm of DRC today. Even just knowing this place and these people exist and that I can now access the support and inspiration of the various groups, connections and activities means that I actually feel like living again.”

Most importantly, we want to acknowledge and thank our Belong Facilitators, whose dedication, care and generosity bring Belong to life. They give their freely to create spaces where people feel seen, heard and valued. Without them Belong simply wouldn’t exist.

Total number of Belong meetings held: 215

Number of Community Drop Ins hosted: 22

Number of induction workshops hosted for new members: 44

Current membership: 171



Treasurer's Report

The financial year ending 30 June 2025 reflects a strong and stable financial position for the organization.

Total income amounted to \$500,391.68, and closing cash balance stood at \$327,000.11, demonstrating effective cash flow management.

The organisation maintains a robust liquidity position, ensuring its ability to meet short-term obligations and support ongoing operations.

Income

- Total Trading Income: \$500,391.68
- Grants and Donations: Significant contributions were received from various sources including DFFH, Melbourne City Council, and other community grants.
- Interest Income: \$10,496.39
- Other Income: Includes sale of assets and miscellaneous receipts.

Expenses

- Total Operating Expenses: \$412,706.40
- Major expense categories included:
- Salaries and Wages: \$303,638.43
 - Rent, Repairs and Maintenance: \$19,281.73
 - Software Subscriptions and IT: \$1,669.19
 - Staff Amenities and Training: \$1,572.38
 - Marketing and Promotions: \$1,995.91

The organisation maintains a strong liquidity position with a current ratio of over 2:1, ensuring financial stability and the ability to meet short-term obligations.

Key Financial Ratios

1. Gross Profit Margin: 100%
2. Net Profit Margin: 17.52%
3. Return on Investment: 29.70%

The financial year 2024–2025 has been marked by prudent financial management, effective cost control, and successful grant acquisition. The organisation is well-positioned to continue delivering its mission and expanding its impact in the community.

I extend my gratitude to the finance team and all the DRC Board members for their continued support and commitment.

Victor Nieto, Treasurer

DISABILITY RESOURCES CENTRE INC
ABN 78 577 549 329
INCOME AND EXPENDITURE STATEMENT FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2025

	2025 \$	2024 \$
INCOME		
Grant - Department of Fairness, Family and Housing	359,110	389,384
NDIS - ILC Capacity Building	12,157	36,471
NDIS - Peer Support and Capacity Building	53,549	-
General Grants Received	63,179	46,101
Interest Income	10,496	9,764
Donations	1,000	5,000
Gain on Disposal of Assets	900	-
TOTAL INCOME	500,391	486,720
EXPENDITURE		
Advertising	590	18
AGM Expenses	1,299	1,983
Audit	1,700	1,650
Belong Expenses	1,698	-
Board Expenses	-	68
Conferences & Memberships	244	785
Consultancy	3,900	1,816
Depreciation	-	-
Financial Services	9,479	8,608
Forums & Workshops	195	708
Frank Hall Bentick Award	1,105	-
IT and Network Expenses	1,996	4,121
IT - Website	195	279
Meeting Expenses	524	253
Memberships	927	-
Minor Equipment	1,241	666
Office Administration Costs	54	319
Portable Long Service Benefits Scheme Levies - 01.07.19 to 30.06.2023	6,592	2,351
Pride Event	5,396	-
Printing Postage & Stationery	574	546
Project Expenses	596	6,316
Rent, Rates & Occupancy Costs	19,282	16,836
Room Hire	1,705	-
Salaries & Wages	303,638	377,672
Software	3,241	3,604
Staff Amenities	41	218
Staff Expenses	772	-
Staff Training	-	2,125
Strategic Planning	-	6,000
Superannuation	34,418	41,508
Telephone	1,390	1,169
Travel & Accommodation	708	473
Workcover	9,206	7,080
	412,706	487,172
TOTAL EXPENDITURE	412,706	487,172
NET SURPLUS/(DEFICIT) FOR THE YEAR	87,685	(452)

DISABILITY RESOURCES CENTRE INC
ABN 78 577 549 329
STATEMENT OF COMPREHENSIVE INCOME FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2025

	2025 \$	2024 \$
NET SURPLUS/(DEFICIT) FOR THE YEAR	87,685	(452)
Total Comprehensive Income for the Year	-	-
NET SURPLUS/(DEFICIT) ATTRIBUTABLE TO THE ASSOCIATION	87,685	(452)

DISABILITY RESOURCES CENTRE INC
ABN 78 577 549 329
STATEMENT OF CASH FLOWS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2025

	Note	2025 \$	2024 \$
CASH FLOWS FROM OPERATING ACTIVITIES			
Receipts from grants		615,212	463,071
Receipts from customers and other sources		12,814	(8,437)
Payments to suppliers and employees		(408,704)	(503,475)
Interest received		10,496	9,764
Net cash generated from/(used in) operating activities	(i)	229,818	(39,077)
CASH FLOWS FROM INVESTING ACTIVITIES			
Payments for property, plant and equipment		-	-
Proceeds from disposal of property, plant and equipment		900	-
Net cash (used in)/provided by investing activities		900	-
Net increase/(decrease) in cash held		230,718	(39,077)
Cash and cash equivalents at beginning of financial year		281,810	320,887
Cash and cash equivalents at end of financial year	(ii)	512,528	281,810

DISABILITY RESOURCES CENTRE INC
ABN 78 577 549 329
NOTES TO THE STATEMENT OF CASH FLOWS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2025

	2025 \$	2024 \$
Note (i). Net cash generated from/(used in) operating activities		
Net deficit for the year	87,685	(452)
Non-cash flow item: gain on disposal of assets	(900)	-
(Increase)/decrease in accounts and other receivables	11,814	(13,437)
Increase/(decrease) in trade and other payables	2,253	(12,405)
Increase/(decrease) in grants received in advance	127,217	(8,885)
Increase/(decrease) in provisions	1,749	(3,898)
	229,818	(39,077)
Note (ii). Cash and cash equivalents at end of financial year		
Cash at bank	326,307	104,338
Cash on term deposits	185,528	176,823
Petty cash	693	649
	512,528	281,810

DISABILITY RESOURCES CENTRE INC
ABN 78 577 549 329
STATEMENT OF CHANGES IN EQUITY FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2025

	Accumulated funds \$	Total \$
Balance as at 1 July 2022	208,017	208,017
Surplus/ (Deficit) attributable to the Association	(452)	(452)
Balance as at 30 June 2023	207,565	207,565
Surplus/ (Deficit) attributable to the Association	87,685	87,685
Balance as at 30 June 2024	295,250	295,250



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This publication is available in accessible formats on request.