




ACT Disability, Aged and Carer Advocacy Service
Annual Report
2018-2019



ADACAS acknowledges the Traditional Owners of the land on which we live and work, the Ngunnawal people. We pay our respects to their Elders, past, present and emerging. We also acknowledge Elders from other Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.

ADACAS acknowledges the diversity of people and communities in Australia including people

- from LGBTIQ+ community
- from culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) communities
- with lived experience of disability
- with lived experience of mental ill health.



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Our work this year



We helped 534 people this year.



We helped with 753 inquiries this year.



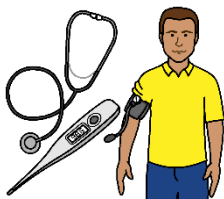
The biggest issues we helped with were



- NDIS
- housing
- support services



- abuse
- justice



- health

Chairperson's report

I am Stephen Still, the Chairperson of ADACAS.

This year has been a very good year for ADACAS.



Our new CEO Michael Bleasdale started in September 2018. Michael has lots of experience in the disability sector. He has brought a lot of skills and knowledge to ADACAS. We are lucky to have him as our CEO.

I would like to thank our Deputy CEO Sonia Di Mezza for leading ADACAS in the period before Michael started as CEO. She worked very hard and kept ADACAS running smoothly.

I want to welcome Greg Mahony to our Board. ADACAS said goodbye to Board members John Sands, Coleen Box and Cassandra Webeck. I want to thank them for supporting ADACAS.

Finally I want to thank the staff at ADACAS. They work very hard and provide a lot of support to people in the community.

CEO's report

I am Michael Bleasdale, CEO of ADACAS.

This year ADACAS has changed a lot. We did great advocacy work and worked on some exciting projects.



We started three new support areas. Now we are supporting people

- who live on the south coast of NSW
- to access the Redress Scheme
- to tell their story to the Royal Commission

We changed our organisation structure this year. We have six Team Leaders. This change will help us:

- support our staff
- support our clients
- manage our responsibilities
- improve our skills

This year we made our new Strategic Plan. Our staff and board worked together to come up with new goals and ideas. We will work very hard over the next four years to improve our services and help people in our community.

I would like to thank our Chairperson Stephen Still and our Board.

I would like to thank the ADACAS staff. They work very hard. They are very professional and kind.

Finally I would like to thank all the people we worked with this year. We learn a lot from the organisations and clients we work with and support.





Our advocacy work

NDIS

We provide support to lots of people who are having trouble with the NDIS. The NDIS is the National Disability Insurance Scheme. This year we helped over 200 people who had trouble with the NDIS.

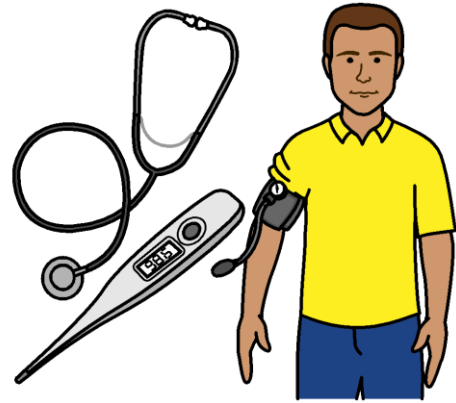
We help people

- apply to the NDIS
- ask for an internal review
- ask for a change of circumstance review
- go through the Administrative Appeals Tribunal.

We meet with someone from the NDIS every fortnight. We talk about problems our clients are having with the NDIS and work together to try and fix the issue. We make sure the client's voice is heard by the NDIS.

Health

Some people in the community find it hard to get the health support they need. We help people find the right support for them and to have their voice heard.



This year we provided a lot of support about discharge planning. We worked with our clients, their supporters and ACT Health. We helped our clients' to make sure they

- had their voices heard in the discharge decision
- had the right support when they left hospital.

We visited ACT Mental Health services 29 times this year. We spoke to them about

- how ADACAS can help people
- human rights
- supported decision making.

Housing

This year we helped over 100 people who were having trouble with their housing.



We helped people who live in Housing ACT homes to

- move to a different house
- ask for repairs
- make sure their house was accessible to them

It can be hard for people with mobility or support needs to find housing. We worked with other organisations to tell the government about this problem.

ADACAS worked very hard to find a house for our clients who had been living in hospital for over a year. There was nowhere in Canberra they could live because they need a lot of support. Disability Housing Solutions is building them a house that meets their needs. The house is called Alex's House. NDIS and ACT Health are paying for the support for our clients. It will be finished at the end of 2019.



This is Alex's House. It has been built for people with disability. It will enable people to live in their community rather than in hospital.

Justice

People with disability may be a part of the justice system as a victim, witness or offender. Sometimes the justice system does not properly support people with disability. We support people who may take part in the justice system.

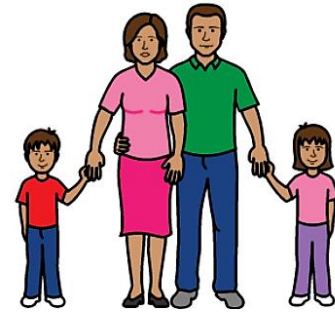
ADACAS helped come up with ideas for the ACT Disability Justice Strategy.

We would like to thank Olga McKinney- Smith from Proximity Lawyers for her time helping us with legal information. We would also like to thank the Law interns from the University of Canberra.

Children and families

ADACAS worked with people engaged with
CYPS this year.

CYPS is Child and Youth Protection Services.



ADACAS supported parents to talk about parenting with professionals like social workers and lawyers. We helped our clients find supports to help them care for their children.

CYPS can see the value of ADACAS support because we can help keep children with their birth families. They are sending more referrals asking ADACAS to support parents. With our support 5 children were able to stay with their families. 5 families were able to stay together with appropriate supports.



Older people

ADACAS is part of OPAN. OPAN is the Older Persons Advocacy Network.

We work together to support older people and advocate for their rights.

What we do

- support people to have their voices heard and get support
- letting people in nursing homes know about their rights
- talking about the abuse of older people and what we can do to help
- support people at guardianship or mental health tribunals
- support people to find housing that meets their needs.

This year we started the Navigator Trial. This project helps older people connect with aged care services.

We are helping people talk to the Royal Commission into Aged Care Quality and Safety. We are helping them tell their story.

ADACAS helps older people who are experiencing abuse. We help them

- to speak up
- to feel safe
- to get support
- to be a part of the community.



ADACAS staff attended a World Elder Abuse Day expo. We talked to people in the community about the abuse of older people and how ADACAS helps people.

New South Wales

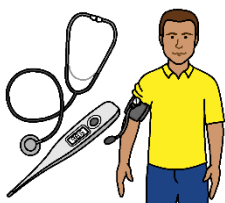
ADACAS supports people who live in New South Wales (NSW). We support people who live in the Shoalhaven and Eurobodalla Hinterland regions.

ADACAS travels to the south coast of NSW. We meet many people and services. We work hard to make new connections and to support people.

We help people to have their voice heard with



- education
- justice



- health



- employment
- transport



- NDIS



Systemic Advocacy

ADACAS works hard to change the way services provide support. When we do this we can help lots of people in the community.

We do this by:

- giving feedback to the government
- working together with:
 - community organisations
 - government
 - businesses.

This year ADACAS gave feedback about:

- Housing
- Mental Health
- Guardianship
- NDIS
- Schools
- Child Protection
- Prisons

We work with other organisations to create change. We have good relationships with lots of organisations in our community.

In April, we introduced our new Systemic Advocacy Team Leader. This will help ADACAS listen to our clients' stories and change the way services support people with disability, mental ill health, older people and carers.



ADACAS and other people in the community were at Parliament when government agreed to start a Royal Commission into Violence, Abuse, Neglect and Exploitation of People with Disability.



Supported Decision Making

We did lots of projects about supported decision making this year.

Supported decision making is a human right. Support looks different for everyone.

We talked to lots of people about why supported decision making is important. We talked to people like:

- doctors and nurses
- social workers
- teachers
- service providers
- carers
- peer workers.

We also supported people to make decisions. We worked with:

- people with disability
- people experiencing mental ill health
- older people who were experiencing abuse.

As part of our healthcare project we held a forum. Over 70 people attended. We talked about:

- duty of care
- dignity of risk
- informed consent.

We made an app to help people support decision making. It is called the Decision Support Toolkit. It has information and tips.



People talking about supported decision making at our forum event.

Support Coordination

Support coordination is a NDIS funded support. We help people use their NDIS plans and get the support they want. We use advocacy skills to support people to make decisions about how they use their plan.



This year we provided support coordination to 55 people.

ADACAS support coordination helps people by

- ensuring their NDIS plan is working for them
- supporting them to make decisions about NDIS services
- linking them in with providers that meet their needs.

ADACAS worked hard to tell the NDIA that it is important for people to get support with reviews. We support people at annual review meetings to talk to the planner.



What our clients say about us

"If it wasn't for ADACAS and the support we have been given, we would never have got this far."

"Thanks for your support...I could not have done all that talking without knowing you were there...Thank you for your care and concern, you gave me great courage."

"Thanks so much for being there yesterday – couldn't have done it without you...as you make me feel safe."

"We can't thank you enough for all your help and support. Everything you did was much appreciated".

"It has also been cup filling to come across folks like yourself who genuinely want the best for the people you support, who understand that real advocacy is not about foot stomping and squeaky wheels but rather mentoring and quiet guidance, and who understand the very challenges of handing over control to someone else, when we ourselves lack so very much control in our lives".

Awards and Conferences



Our Policy and Projects Manager Helen Connolly won the Inclusion Award for Excellence in Support Work. Helen has been helping people for 30 years. She is a champion of human rights and supported decision making.



Four ADACAS staff presented at the Australian Guardianship and Administration Conference in March. We spoke about decision making rights, the NDIS and abuse of older people.

Financial Summary 2018-2019

This page shows

- How much money we got this year
- How much money we spent this year
- How much money we have left over



Revenue

How much money
we got

\$2 382 058



Expenses

How much money
we spent

\$2 335 665



Surplus

How much money
we have left over
this year

\$46 393



Reserve

How much money
we have in the bank

\$550 119

To see the whole audit report please go to our website:
www.adacas.org.au/

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