



Annual Report 2022–23



ADACAS
Advocacy

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Acknowledgment of Country

We acknowledge the Traditional Owners and Custodians of the land on which ADACAS works: the Ngunnawal, Ngambri, Yuin and Dharawal, Wiradjuri peoples of Canberra and NSW South Coast, Illawarra–Shoalhaven and Murrumbidgee regions. We pay our respects to Elders past, present and emerging, and to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples across our communities.

Acknowledgement of Community Diversity

We acknowledge the diversity of our community. We acknowledge LGBTIQ+ people's right to self-expression and self-determination.

We celebrate the rich diversity of people's bodies, genders, sexualities and relationships. We recognise the needs and contribution of people from culturally, ethnically and linguistically diverse backgrounds for our society. We value and strongly support the inclusion and participation of people with lived experience of disability and mental ill-health, and Carers in every part of community life. We offer our respect to older persons and recognise the life experience and wisdom they provide.

Our Commitment

ADACAS is committed to having a workforce that represents our local community providing a safe and ethical work environment that supports and embraces diversity which in turn we know will provide the best outcomes for our clients. This includes our commitment to the Carers Act.



Message from the Chair



This has been a very positive year for ADACAS, with 1,810 people using our independent advocacy services and 111 people accessing our Redress and NDIS Appeals support. This means that more older people, people with disability and people with mental ill health were supported to understand and exercise their rights. We are proud that we have grown in breadth of service and are financially stable.

This is first and foremost a credit to our staff, who are tireless in their commitment to our clients and to building more just and inclusive communities.

I am hugely appreciative of our CEO, Wendy Prowse, for her enthusiasm and leadership, and my fellow volunteer Board directors. In addition to regular Board meetings, two full day workshops allowed us to develop our forward strategy. Our core focus continues to be on enabling more people to access advocacy and exercise their rights.

This year we developed new cyber security policies and plans to ensure the sensitive data we collect is kept secure. A new system has allowed us to collect and analyse the information we are now able to collect. Importantly, we will use this to improve our services, client experience and outcomes, and to inform our systemic advocacy work.

The Board wishes to thank Margot Harker, Chris Potter and Jessica White who left the Board during the year. We welcomed two new Board members, Giang Tan and Raechel Johns. I thank all directors for their insights, commitment and support.

We acknowledge the support of our funding partners – the Commonwealth, ACT and NSW governments – and the leadership of our peak bodies, OPAN and DANA. We look forward to continuing our partnerships into the future.

A handwritten signature in white ink, appearing to be 'Helen McDevitt'.

Helen McDevitt PSAM, GAICD
Board Chair

Message from the CEO



The last year has seen ADACAS' services increase to better address the needs of our clients in Canberra, the Capital Region, Murrumbidgee, Illawarra, and the South Coast.

The demand for individual advocacy for people with disability in Canberra continues to grow in demand with requests for support to deal with issues such as housing, child protection, the justice system, education, employment and the NDIS. Our individual advocacy has expanded across regional and rural NSW, as our team supports people with disability experiencing many of the same issues in these locations. We have also grown our individual advocacy for older Canberrans to meet the demand for help across the Aged Care system and elder abuse. This has also allowed ADACAS to branch out into specific niche areas to better support our clients.

I would like to acknowledge the amazing team that work at ADACAS and thank them for their tireless efforts over the last year. Their support for clients either directly via advocacy, projects and service delivery; or through all the tasks required behind the scenes which has allowed the organisation to focus on data integrity, the wellbeing of staff, continuous improvement and sustainability. We have continued to invest in our client management system and are now in a position to more clearly articulate systemic issues that we are seeing through our individual advocacy.

We are also on a journey to better capture client feedback and will be focusing more on an outcomes framework in 2024.

Management has also collaborated with government and other NGOs to engage in a range of systemic matters such as development of the ACT Disability Strategy, Disability Justice Strategy, Office for Women Action Plan, the Age-Friendly City Plan, Voluntary Assisted Dying Bill, Growth & Renewal Housing Program, NSW Disability Advocacy Outcomes framework and network, ACT Corrective Services Expert Disability Panel, Mental Health Act Governance Group and Capital Health Network Community Advisory Group.

Participating in these forums is critically important to ensure that the issues that our clients are dealing with are shared and the intersectionality, complexity and increasing incidence of issues that impact their lives is well understood.

We are seeing more than ever before that people with disability and older people are unable to get their basic needs met within a reasonable timeframe, and sometimes not at all.

We have seen an increase of 29% in advocacy hours supporting people with disability and across the organisation. ADACAS has provided over 12,000 hours of advocacy in the last financial year.

ADACAS also saw an 80% increase in individual advocacy for people experiencing mental ill-health, supporting 200 people over the last year.

I note with a heavy heart that there has been a series of significant issues which has impacted the wellbeing and personal dignity of our clients and the community at large. The limited supply of affordable and accessible housing and there is a desperate need for Tier 2 services (personal and domestic service, transport and gardening), and there are still significant barriers for people to access the NDIS or have plans that meet their needs year on year. We have also witnessed extensive wait times for people to be assessed for My Aged Care and the ability to receive services so they can remain at home and out of hospital.

On a more positive note, I would like to thank the ADACAS Board for their continued support, strategic insights and ongoing commitment to the staff and organisation. The last year has seen continued investment in our infrastructure, systems and capability, allowing for a sustained focus on foundational strengths needed for an organisation doing such important work for our community.



Wendy Prowse
Chief Executive Officer



The year in review

Our impact made in 2022/23

Advocacy with
First Nations people
increased this year by

42%

Advocacy with culturally
& Linguistically Diverse
clients increased this year by

82%

69%

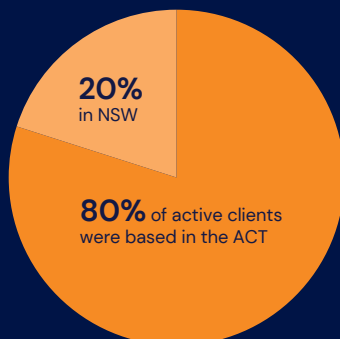
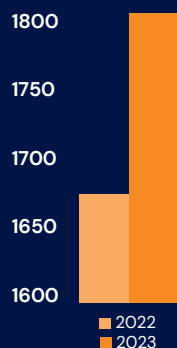
are new clients



Advocacy with LGBTIQ+
clients increased in
2023 by more than

180%

Clients



12,139
hours



2,371
active cases



Source of referral

50%

of cases were support for people with
Disability – Majority referred from Community
Services Agency, Family, or Self-Referral

28%

of cases were support for Older Persons –
Majority were self-referral or referred by
family member/carer

10%

of cases were support for people with
Mental Health Issue – Majority self-referral



560

Provide
information, advice
or referral to other
services

Top 5 issues



Most common issues

Older Persons

32%

Interacting with the Aged Care system

31%

Addressing concerns about Aged Care services

11%

Aged care fees and charges advocacy

Disability

35%

Interacting with NDIS

17%

Emergency accommodation, housing applications, and maintenance issues

11%

Accessing Justice, Support at court, ACAT and with CYPS matters

Mental Health

33%

Emergency accommodation, housing applications, and maintenance issues

27%

Accessing Justice Support at court, ACAT and with CYPS matters

11%

Interacting with Allied Health, Hospitals and GPs



Education and events

NSW Disability Advocacy

299
events



70%

were interactions with stakeholders
in organisations

14%

were arranged events to promote the
services that we offer to many stakeholders

Older Person's Team

124
events



34%

as part of our
Navigator Program

24%

across Residential and
Community Care Centres

33%

at Public Stalls completed to help raise
awareness of the benefits and value of
advocacy to the general community

There was also a number of education sessions and events undertaken with a range of organisations

Mental Health Consumer Advocacy

During the year, the ACT Disability Team began outreach sessions with Step Up, Step Down, and the Canberra Mental Health Unit, and this is something we will continue to do. We are able to promote the services we offer, the issues we can support with, and also provide the opportunity for an informal chat to provide information or advice, provide short-term support as well as advocacy

Redress

19

outreach events
were held.

The team were proactive in developing relationships and collaborating with organisations, such as Knowmore throughout the year. Presentations were provided to the community and key stakeholders in the ACT and across the South Coast of NSW. The team also attended a number of networking events with other Redress Support Services.

Disability

ADACAS is proud to deliver a range of supports for people with disability – advocating for their rights and empowering them with the tools and confidence to make the decisions that are right for them.

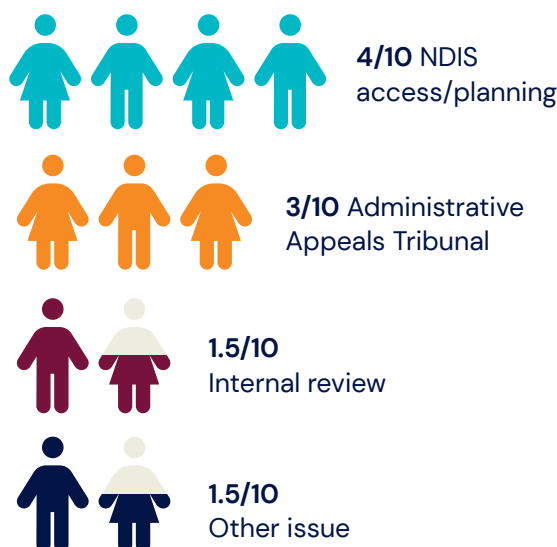
NDIS

There were many changes in the NDIS space this year, with a change of Federal Government; a new Minister, Hon. Bill Shorten; and reviews into the NDIS and the Administrative Appeals Tribunal (AAT). Despite this, the number of clients coming to ADACAS for support with their appeal remained steady.

ADACAS advocates bring a unique skill set to their work when assisting clients with an appeal at the AAT. Not only do they need to understand the whole process, but our advocates also support the client using a trauma-informed approach ensuring their psychological safety throughout. This is work that we do in Canberra as well as areas across NSW.

Going through the AAT appeal process can be incredibly lengthy and daunting for our clients and our advocates have the expertise to support clients to navigate the appeal process, to translate legalese, and to facilitate reasonable adjustments should it be needed.

This year, we managed 295 issues relating to the NDIS.



Disability Royal Commission

This year we saw the conclusion of the Disability Royal Commission (DRC) with the final reports released in October 2023.

Over the four years of the Commission, ADACAS supported clients with disability and carers to make submissions to inform the findings. Our team was careful to take each person's needs and culture into consideration, supporting submissions in the form of a voice recording, a painting, a poem, or a conventional document transcribed by an advocate.

We also had some clients take up an offer for a private session with a commissioner, with our advocates providing trauma informed support to the client as they navigated remote sessions and pandemic restrictions.

Following the final reports, ADACAS and our clients strongly support the recommendation to introduce an Australian Human Rights Act. Our work also reflected the common thread identified in the recommendations, that there is a need for education for support for frontline workers, such as the police and emergency service personnel, so they could better understand mental ill-health and trauma.

Many of our clients reported that services did not understand that they were, for example, having an Autistic meltdown or a trauma response such as disassociating; instead, they were seen as being aggressive or 'difficult'.

We also note disability inclusion and reasonable adjustments were common issues for people in education, employment and health care.

In the first 6 months of the 22-23 Financial Year, we were still conducting outreach and working with people to make submissions, however after the submissions closing date, we continued to support people via the partnership approach. We were pleased to be able to attend the DRC reflection Day hosted by Knowmore and Family Advocacy NSW to reflect and honour the stories and learnings from clients who participated.

With the conclusion of the DRC and the 222 recommendations, we hope that ADACAS' vision for a community where everyone may exercise their rights and

responsibilities, lead lives of dignity and value, and pursue their dreams and aspirations will begin to be realised. While there were some gaps in the final reports, such as a report on women and children with disability, there are already some examples of positive change that are the result of the DRC reports.

ADACAS will continue to support people on a systemic level through our day-to-day advocacy and provide further advice to governments at all levels to help improve outcomes for people with disability.

Individual Advocacy

ADACAS provides individual advocacy for people with disability and mental ill-health across the ACT, Canberra Region, Shoalhaven, Illawarra and Murrumbidgee regions. We appreciate the funding received from the Department of Social Services, NSW Government and ACT Government to provide individual advocacy, information and advice to the community ensuring they have their voices heard, human rights upheld as well as building their capacity through their interaction with us. The demand for services has increased over the last year with many people requiring an advocate to assist them with a range of different issues, many of which are relating to the education, justice, health and housing. Across the financial year ADACAS has supported 1,118 clients with 1,598 issues across the ACT and NSW.

Over the lifetime of the DRC program, we helped:

120

clients over the four years

13%

were culturally and linguistically diverse

5%

identified as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander

82%

of the issues related to abuse or discrimination

Hi, I'm John

I have a permanent disability,
I'm a student and I work part-time.

Housing has been an issue for John

There was a water leak and structural defects at his home that lasted for more than one year. John requested repairs but was *ignored* and John doesn't like conflict.

"A friend recommended I get in touch with ADACAS, so I called and spoke with their Intake Team. After a couple of weeks an advocate called me and said that they would help me with my issue."

John told the advocate he was overwhelmed, and he struggled to understand and process information. The advocate said that they could call the housing manager together and John agreed.

They were unable to reach the housing manager, so the advocate using SDM helped John understand his rights and his options to resolve this issue. John decided to take his complaint to the ACAT.

"I felt *overwhelmed*, dehumanised and suicidal living in a hovel."

How we helped John...



We travelled to John's home



Helped John prepare to phone ACT Housing and stood by him as he did



Helped him submit paperwork to ACAT



Attended the ACAT hearing with him



Reviewed, analysed and translated complex documents and responses



Helped walk John through a decision making process

ACT Housing, ACT Civil and Administrative Tribunal (ACAT), legal services, support workers and family members were all involved in this process.

"My advocate helped me understand my options and met with me in person to help me understand the information and what the ACAT would need of me."

"I felt so relieved that after a year my home would be fixed. For the first time I could see a light at the end of the tunnel."

We achieved a great outcome for John!

After hearing both sides, the ACAT made orders that Housing ACT had to do the repairs and maintenance within a defined timeline and John was given financial compensation for the year of living in a sub-standard house. While they did the repairs and maintenance Housing ACT provided John with transitional housing.

Advocates support the client and their expressed wishes by using supported decision making (SDM) principles. advocates help clients to navigate systems, they translate information into Easy English and facilitate conversations that amplify the voice of the client.

"I wouldn't have had the personal strength to attend the ACAT Hearing without the presence of my advocate."

Aged care

ADACAS has supported hundreds of people, and their families and carers who have faced issues with Aged Care Services, particularly the Commonwealth Home Support Program and the service provision of Home Care Packages through My Aged Care.

Our team have supported clients navigating a complex system and ensuring their individual needs are met through quality Aged Care and their human rights are upheld. We have provided independent, confidential advocacy support for those with issues or facing abuse.

The number of requests we receive has continued to grow, and this year we supported 521 clients through 658 cases, dedicating more than 2,150 hours to get them the result they need. With the growth of the Older Person's team, we have been able to strengthen our engagement and increase the number of education sessions by 100% to Aged Care Residential and Community Care Centre. This has improved the awareness of ADACAS, our advocacy services and the Aged Care Charter of Rights. In the past year, we received 386 referrals from 22 different referral sources, with 50% of those being self-referrals.

To help build awareness of the services we offer to older people we also conduct outreach and education services, which our team deliver in residential Aged

Care facilities and to Aged Care service providers. Throughout the year, we delivered 28 education sessions relating to Aged Care, and 50 relating to the Navigator Program. The sessions have been valued by the residents and staff working in these facilities. We welcome the opportunity to expand upon this in the coming year.

With this growing demand on services, the team has several specialised positions, including:

Financial Advocate Officer – primarily focused on home care, this team member helps people who are starting, transitioning or reviewing residential Aged Care. This year the advocate participated as a panel member for the nationwide live OPAN webinar, "Home Care Packages – What's Changed" where they discussed recent changes and highlighted issues based on client feedback.

Community Engagement Officer – holding over 50 events and pop-ups on-site at Aged Care facilities and in the community this year, this position helps to drive better awareness of ADACAS and our advocacy. We were able to increase the number of education sessions by 100% to Aged Care Residential and Community Care Centres.

Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) Advocate – our CALD advocate has supported 93 clients this year, utilising their relationships with the CALD community to provide individual advocacy and education sessions. This support and advocacy can be delivered in a way that is translated into a relevant language, and culturally relevant.

The Aged Care Navigator Program

After 4 very successful years and multiple years of funding extensions, the Navigator Program came to a close in December 2022. The purpose of the Navigator Program was to inform and equip people with the skills and knowledge to be able to navigate the complexities of the Aged Care System. Over the duration of the 4 years of the Navigator Program, ADACAS supported 243 clients across 363 issues, and completed 70 Education Sessions to raise awareness of the Program.

The Navigator Program was very much a community-led and co-designed program, to ensure that the program built capacity with people who needed support in navigating the Aged Care System.

As the Navigator Program came to a close, ADACAS secured Care Finder funding, and now offers this program in lieu of the Navigator Program, so we can continue to offer this important and in demand service to older people in Canberra.



Care Finder Program

Navigating and accessing Aged Care services can be overwhelming, especially for vulnerable clients. The Care Finder Program was set up to provide access to Care Finder specialists, who support elderly people who may need assistance with communication, reading documents, engaging with stakeholders (government services) get access to Aged Care services across Australia.

January 2023

The Care Finder Program went live with ADACAS

We assisted

32

clients



The first 6 months

We were able to successfully connect or re-connect the majority of Care Finder clients with Aged Care service providers and assisted them to start receiving much needed services which enabled them to remain living at home as independently as possible.



Hi, I'm Mary

Like most of our clients, Mary came to us because she found the process of understanding and signing service agreements and arranging services with providers very confusing.

We are proud to have been able to support Mary and our clients to do something they would otherwise not have tackled on their own.

All clients we assisted via the Care Finder Program have reported being pleased with the service we provide, and one even stopped by at one of our stalls at a local shopping mall to thank us personally, highlighting the importance of human connection which we bring to everything we do.

In addition to working hard every day to produce positive client outcomes, our Care Finder also actively participates in continuing education sessions and governance activities by attending Community of Practice meetings, Aged Care community networking events and other collective opportunities to provide feedback to the Public Health Network as well as to the Department of Health, advocating for systemic change needed to improve program initiatives and outcomes, helping to ensure the Care Finder Program is able to continuously improve and evolve.

supported

32

active clients

supported

40

active cases

460

hours



Hi, I'm Fatima






I am in my 80s, living at home with a Level 2 Home Care Package. I am unhappy with a service I'm receiving. My service provider is not listening to me.

Feeling heard has been an issue for Fatima

Fatima asked her cleaning service provider to send female cleaners, as it made her feel more comfortable. Fatima had contacted the services provider several times to ask if they could send a female cleaner. They continued to send male cleaners who she would turn away.

"Not being listened to was so frustrating. The stress and anxiety I was feeling meant that I couldn't sleep."

How we helped Fatima...

-  Fatima shared her distress and the impact it was having on her sleep
-  The advocate discussed Fatima's options – such as changing service providers or making a formal complaint to the Aged Care Quality and Safety Commission
-  Fatima decided she wanted support from an advocate to help her voice be heard and address this communication issue
-  The advocate helped Fatima write to the service provider to articulate her needs for female workers
-  Fatima was able to call the advocate when she had questions about the service provider's reply

"My advocate listened to me and was able to give me several clear ways forward."

"I'm sleeping better, less anxious and I feel supported again."

We achieved a great outcome for Fatima!

Fatima now has female gardener and cleaner, and she feels heard.

She is relieved that she was able to address the problem in a way that made her feel comfortable and safe.

Fatima contacted ADACAS to see what her options were, and how advocacy could assist her to resolve this issue.

A female advocate from ADACAS visited Fatima and listened to her concerns, gained an understanding of how she had tried to self advocate, and then offered suggestions as to what she could consider to address the issue.

"I saw an ADACAS stall at my shopping centre and wondered whether they might be able to help. I also remembered hearing their advertisement on the radio"

"ADACAS helped me do what I felt would be best for me.

Informed me about my rights and helped me to resolve this problem."

The Manager of the service provider, and the ADACAS advocate were central to setting a good outcome for Fatima.



Mental ill-health

ADACAS has seen a significant increase in the demand for advocacy services to support people experiencing mental ill-health. The team regularly visit a number of the mental health facilities across Canberra ensuring the people residing in these facilities are able to seek the support of an advocate who can assist them to address an issue or concern in their life.

The team has witnessed the ongoing need and demand for community mental health services and the challenge that many people face to access psychiatrists and psychologists in a timely and affordable manner to be a growing concern. Ongoing support to people who exit a mental health facility is also a key reason why people are reaching out to ADACAS for an advocate to help them navigate a system that is complex and appears to have limited resources.

The advocates have achieved some incredible outcomes for many people experiencing mental ill-health and we continue to work closely with all staff associated with the mental health system to achieve the best outcomes for our clients.

1,272
hours

244
active cases

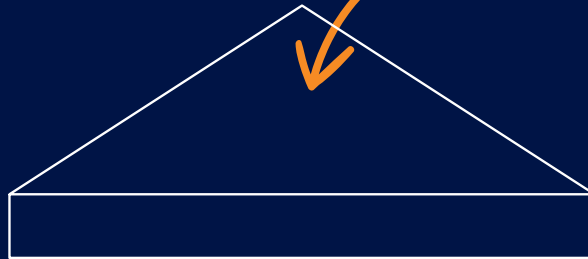
92
cases were advocating against
a Government Agency – 42 of
which were Housing ACT

199
active clients



Hi, I'm Peter

I have mental ill-health and ASD level 2; I am from a CALD background, and I am on the NDIS.



Peter had a court date to attend to answer charges and he was feeling anxious and uncertain about what would happen to him.



Peter told the advocate he was frightened that he was going to go to jail if he went to court; he said that he struggled to understand the legal language and what they were saying. The advocate said that they could call a lawyer together and get some advice. Peter said that he was happy with that approach.

The advocate and Peter got some legal advice and information. The advocate used SDM to support Peter to decide about his appearance at court and they discussed what strategies he would need to feel safe to participate at court.

"I felt frightened that I'd go to jail".

"A friend recommended I get in touch with ADACAS, so I called and spoke with their Intake Team. After a couple of weeks an advocate called me and said that they would help me with my issue."

How we helped Peter...



Peter came to the ADACAS office where he met with his advocate



The advocate discussed with Peter what he could expect at court and what would be expected of him



The advocate helped Peter get a letter of support from the GP



The advocate made a phone call to get legal advice and attended the appointment with Peter



The advocate translated the lawyer's legalese into plain English for Peter



The advocate discussed strategies to support Peter's attendance at court, for instance whether Peter wanted to use a Support Worker on the day, but after discussing the pros and cons, Peter decided that he only wanted the advocate's support



The advocate supported Peter at court and debriefed with him afterwards

Legal Aid, NDIS supports, ADACAS advocates and a GP were all involved in this process.

"My advocate helped me understand my options and met with me in person to help me understand the information and what the court would need of me".

"I couldn't believe that the court listened to me and understood me, and it wouldn't have happened without my advocate supporting me throughout the whole process."

We achieved a great outcome for Peter!

Peter's advocate was able to explain to the court how Peter's autism and mental ill-health contributed to the misunderstanding with the police.

After hearing both sides, the court Magistrate dismissed the charges.

The advocate supported Peter to navigate a complex legal issue and worked alongside him to get a good outcome.

"I would never have been able to go there without the help and support of my advocate. Even though I was scared I felt reassured by my advocate and the strategies really worked".

Supported Decision Making

ADACAS thanks the Office for Disability for providing funding that supports our work to provide Supported Decision Making with young people with disability. This initiative is specifically tailored for young people with disabilities, in schools, aged between 14–17 years. The primary objective of the program is to enhance the capacity of a young person with disabilities to make decisions and to find the right people to support their decision making.

Within this age group, many young people with disability have limited opportunities for decision-making, leading to under-developed decision-making skills. In addition they may not have wide support networks for navigating decisions. This can result in feelings of a lack of empowerment and little confidence in their decision-making skills. Consequently, individuals within this cohort often struggle to define their choices, consider their options and make informed decisions.

To provide practical avenues for young people with disability to strengthen their decision-making abilities, we collaborated with Black Mountain School and The Woden School. We conducted seminars with young people, facilitated parent and supporter education, and assisted young people and their supporters to develop supported decision making plans.

Throughout the program, participants engaged in activities that involved promoting independent living skills and practicing decision-making in relationships.

This approach allowed them to develop crucial skills, including:

- Conducting option and risk analysis
- Actively considering safeguards and understanding the impacts of their decisions
- Increasing their overall independence

Outcomes of the Program

The outcomes from the program this year included:

- Increased confidence in making a diverse range of decisions by all the students involved
- A sense of empowerment to make decisions affecting their future, thereby improving their lives and increasing their independence
- Enhanced capability to assert their value in their community
- Capacity building of family members to continue to encourage supported decision making in day to day activities

The parents observed significant growth in their child's decision-making capacity, surpassing their initial expectations. This experience led parents to gain a deeper understanding of the importance of encouraging their young individuals to make decisions regularly and assume greater control over their lives.

In the past financial year, our achievements include:

- Providing support for 11 participants to create 29 supported decision making plans
- Mentoring 7 participants to significantly develop their decision making skills

This is a critically important program particularly with the change in the ACT Governments legislation that requires people to utilise Supported Decision Making prior to seeking the need for guardianship. ADACAS is well versed in supporting people around Supported Decision Making, building the confidence and skills so that substitute decision making is either not required or limited.



Redress

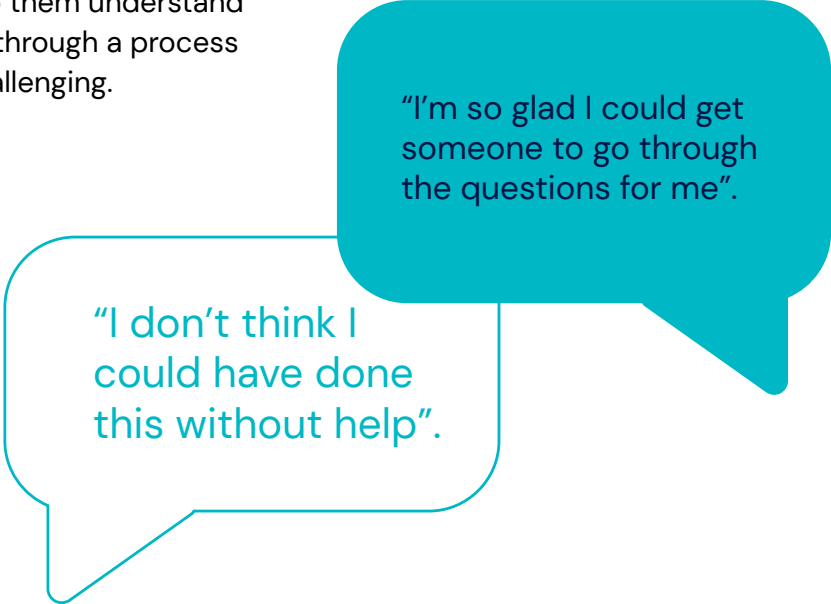
Our team have provided high quality, trauma-informed support for those entering the National Redress Scheme. Survivors can often be overwhelmed or confused by the Scheme and our advocates have helped clients:

- Clarify their eligibility
- Maintain privacy
- Understand their rights
- Coordinate and manage legal services
- Submit applications to the Scheme
- Gather and submit relevant documentation
- Access counselling or other support services

For Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander survivors, we also provide culturally appropriate care and help them understand their rights as they move through a process that can be extremely challenging.

This financial year we have had:

- **19** Education Outreach sessions
- **31** active clients supporting 35 Cases
- **Lodged 8** applications to the scheme
- **220 day** average case closing time (down from 344 days)



"I don't think I could have done this without help".

"I'm so glad I could get someone to go through the questions for me".

Employer Confidence

Our newest program, Employer Confidence was launched to support workplaces to be more ambitious and effective in their inclusivity with an overarching aim of more people with disability able to engage in mainstream employment.

Aiming to drive awareness and change, the team is delivering capacity building for local businesses and professionals, while promoting the value of workplaces where inclusion and accessibility are the norm.

ADACAS will conduct a public information campaign to dispel myths around the cost of making physical spaces accessible, and help people understand the benefits of employing people with disability – which includes greater loyalty, unique perspectives on issues and problem solving, and improved morale across the broader workforce.

At this early stage, we have established connections with 11 ACT employers and a leading recruitment agency, and will continue to focus on the priority industries of hospitality, automotive and retail.





Reconciliation Action Plan

ADACAS is dedicated to Reconciliation and we are pleased that over the last year to have progressed from a Reflect Reconciliation Action Plan to an Innovate Reconciliation Action Plan.

✓ **Reflect: Scoping capacity for reconciliation**

➔ **Innovate: Implementing reconciliation initiatives**

Our team is working to have a mindset that is constantly focused on reconciliation and building initiatives that will be embedded across ADACAS. We are proud to have established new as well as being focused on enhancing existing relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, organisations, and communities.

ADACAS strives to be a culturally safe and respectful source of support and we commit to always listening to how we can improve.

We are proud that around 6% of our client work supports Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander clients, and welcome the opportunity to support more members of the community who can benefit from our advocacy and services.

Out of 1,810 clients that ADACAS supported in Financial Year 2023, we actively supported 115 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander clients, 6.4% of our total clients, an increase from 4.8% the previous financial year.

Our Board

Helen McDevitt (Chairperson)

Andrew Cameron (Treasurer)

Dr Andrew Mathieson (Board Member)

Greg Mahony (Board Member)

Christine Bruce (Board Member)

Chris Potter (Board Member) – Resigned 6/12/2022

Margot Harker (Board Member) – Resigned 13/12/2022

Dr Raechel Jones (Board Member) – Appointed 8/11/2022

Giang Khanh Hong Tan (Board Member) – Appointed 8/11/2022

Jessica White (Board Member) – Resigned in 08/2023

Wendy Prowse (CEO)

Carolyn Murphy (Company Secretary)



Acknowledgements

ADACAS would also like to acknowledge our supporters and collaborators:

The Commonwealth and ACT governments who have supported us for thirty-one years.

The NSW Government for their support of our services across regional and South Coast NSW.

The Older Persons Advocacy Network (OPAN) – our membership has contributed to a strong national voice for older people, and an efficient channelling of resources to national projects and to the local level to allow ADACAS to provide advocacy for older people.

The Disability Advocacy Network Australia (DANA) – our membership enables us to reflect our clients' voice on national advocacy and the ongoing challenge for improved rights and services for people with disability.

Proximity Advisory Services, who have been generous in their expert pro bono legal work with the Board.

Justice Connect, who provide valuable guidance and assistance.

Capital Chemist for their kind donations to co-brand tote bags to promote our services to Older Canberrans.

Hands Across Canberra for the support they provided to ADACAS and the wider community through their Canberra Day Appeal.

Vincents who have provided an efficient and professional service through their auditing services over the year, and for providing support and assistance to our team.

OPC IT who have been instrumental in supporting us to have a continuity of service for our clients and prompt assistance with staff IT support.

DCA Migration again, for their assistance with migrating legacy client data into Salesforce.

SalesFix for their ongoing consultative work in building and developing the Salesforce infrastructure.

A special thank you is reserved for our cultural mentor **Deborah Eades**, who provides ongoing guidance to us with wisdom and knowledge, as we implement our first Reconciliation Action Plan.

To our many community partners – the ongoing collaboration and camaraderie we share is instrumental to achieving significant positive change. A special thanks to:

- ACTCOSS
- Advocacy for Inclusion
- Carers ACT
- COTA ACT
- Gugan Gulwan
- Mental Health Community Coalition
- National Disability Service
- Women with Disability ACT

Thank you to all the organisations and individuals who have worked with us across 2022–2023. We look forward to seeing what we can achieve together over the coming years.



Financials

Below is a summary of the financial performance of ADACAS

Revenue	How much money ADACAS got \$4,630,607
Expenses	How much money ADACAS spent \$4,191,373
Surplus	How much money ADACAS has left over \$439,234
Reserve	How much money ADACAS has in the bank \$1,763,704
ADACAS Revenue Contributions	Commonwealth \$3,023,580
	ACT Government Funding \$896,805
	NSW Government Funding \$625,919
	Other ADACAS Income \$84,303
ADACAS Expenses	Staff Salaries and benefits \$3,276,083
	Other Administrative Expenses \$775,111





ADACAS
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