



DANA

Disability Advocacy
Network Australia



ANNUAL REPORT 2021

Disability Advocacy Network Australia Limited (DANA)
ABN 53 136 792 884
For the Year ended 30 June 2021

The views and opinions expressed in this publication are those of Disability Advocacy Network Australia Limited (DANA) and not necessarily those of the funding body. All possible care has been taken in the preparation of the information contained in this document. DANA disclaims any liability for the accuracy and sufficiency of the information and under no circumstances shall be liable in negligence or otherwise in or arising out of the preparation or supply of any of the information aforesaid.

This work is copyright. Apart from any use as permitted under the Copyright Act 1968, no part may be reproduced without written permission from Disability Advocacy Network Australia Limited.

© 2021 Disability Advocacy Network Australia Limited

The national voice of independent advocacy

ANNUAL REPORT 2021

TABLE OF CONTENTS

3	Who We Are
4	Chair & CEO Reports
5	Meet The Team
6	DANA 21-24 Strategic Plan Focus Areas
7	DANA Program Reports
11	Media Highlights
12	Connection and Representation
13	Financial Report 2021
14	Independent Audit Report to the members of Disability Advocacy Network Australia Limited

Who We Are

DANA is the national representative body for a network of advocacy organisations throughout Australia.

» Vision

DANA's vision is of a nation that includes and values people with disabilities and respects human rights for all.

» Purpose

DANA's purpose is to strengthen and support disability advocacy organisations across Australia.

We achieve this end through:

- Promoting the role and value of independent advocacy
- Giving our members a collective voice
- Supporting communication and the sharing of information between advocacy organisations
- Promoting or undertaking research that supports our purpose
- Promoting the human rights, needs and values of people with disabilities

» Membership Structure

Our members are independent Australian community-based organisations that advocate for and with people with disability. We are governed by a Board of Directors, who are employees and office holders of member organisations. We have staff based in Hobart, Canberra and Melbourne and maintain strong links with each of the Australian state and territory advocacy networks and with the peak organisations for people with disabilities.





Chair Report

2021 has been yet another year without precedent for not only DANA, but the country as a whole. Moving in and out of lockdowns, working from home and navigating all things COVID has certainly changed the landscape in which we undertake our business.

However, the team at DANA has stepped up to all the challenges of the time and is going from strength to strength. We have been fortunate to once again post a surplus at the end of the financial year, in part due to government COVID tax exemptions, allowing us to build equity in the organisation and provide a small buffer for 'leaner times'.

We undertook a review of our Strategic Plan in the 2021 year and have set ourselves some 'lofty goals' for the next three years, not the least of which is to ensure the national advocacy sector is recognised as an imperative partner to the work governments undertake. We will also continue to call for recurrent, long term funding for the advocacy sector.

We undertook a review of our Strategic Plan in the 2021 year and have set ourselves some 'lofty goals' for the next three years, not the least of which is to ensure the national advocacy sector is recognised as an imperative partner to the work governments do call for recurrent funding for the important work they do.

We're also looking to deliver a more sustainable, well funded DANA – ensuring we remain able to lead the sector and champion the rights of people with disability into the longer term.

Thanks must go to my fellow Board for their leadership and guidance throughout the past year. To Mary – without her strong relationships within government, we would not have been anywhere near as successful in obtaining the funding we have to date. And of course, to the team on the ground – who are working diligently to bring about the amazing achievements and outcomes across our various programs to date, whilst navigating so much upheaval and change.

This is just a start, and we hope to have even bigger news to report in the upcoming year!



CEO Report

The 20-21 year began while all Australians and the advocacy sector were grappling with the many challenges caused by COVID-19. DANA received COVID-19 funding from DSS and we continued to liaise with the Depts. of Social Services and Health, sharing what advocates told us about the impacts of COVID on people with disability, and providing government information back to the advocacy sector. We did this through the AdvoKit website and newsletter and also the DANA eNewsletter.

In March 2021 DANA released their report "Lessons for Disaster Preparedness: Report on the impact of COVID-19 disaster management for people with disability and the advocacy sector, with preliminary advice for future disaster management." The report was based on a survey of disability advocacy organisations across the country and focused on the urgent issues for people with disability. Advocates helped by ensuring continuation of support services; interpreting and helping implement government guidelines and laws; ensuring increased support services; supporting people through isolation and living alone; ensuring safe housing and seeking adjustments to NDIS plans.

During the year, we also led extensive interaction between the Disability Royal Commission and disability advocates through a series of online forums run in each state and territory on segregated settings and restrictive practices, as well as focussed discussions on topics of interest. These culminated in some solutions-focused workshops. The transcripts have been submitted to the Royal Commission as submissions. Siobhan Clair, our DRC policy officer also set up Slack workspaces for DRC information and distributed regular editions of DANA DRC Advocacy eNews.

Much time was taken up with interactions with the NDIA and Minister Reynolds on the proposed Independent Assessments along with the national DROs and consultations for the National Disability Strategy were a continuing feature of the year as we tried to ensure that advocacy was prominent in the strategy (and succeeded in having an appendix on advocacy added).

DANA has received strong support from the advocacy organisations during this year and maintained strong connections with advocates on the ground, and the other national disability peak organisations.

We saw some long-standing advocacy managers retire and leave the sector, some of whom had been DANA Board members and others who had been long-standing active participants in the disability advocacy sector locally and nationally. Our best wishes to Di Toohey, who finished as CEO at Speaking Up for You in QLD, and Moss Politics at DRAS in SA.

Finally, my many thanks to the small but formidable DANA team, Siobhan, Sara and Tracey. They have worked hard, been flexible and above all continued to be fully committed to DANA and the disability advocacy sector, making my role a breeze!

meet the team

Board



Serena Ovens
Chairperson
(CEO Physical Disability Council of NSW)



Deborah Wilson
Deputy Chairperson
(CEO Independent Advocacy in the Tropics, QLD)



Geoff Southwell
Treasurer (from Dec 2020)
(CEO Leadership Plus, VIC)



David Petherick
Minutes Secretary (to May 2021)
(Deputy CEO VALID, Vic)



Adrian Terranova
Minutes Secretary (from June 2021)
(CEO Gippsland Disability Advocacy Inc, VIC)



Fiona Campbell
Director
(Manager, Independent Advocacy SA)



Terri-Ann Dwyer
Director
(Manager, Social Justice Services TASC National, QLD)



Jenny Hughes
Director
(CEO Advocacy for Disability Access and Inclusion Inc, SA)



Michael Bleasdale
Treasurer (to Nov 2020)

Staff



Mary Mallett
Chief Executive Officer



Siobhan Clair
Policy Officer, Disability Royal Commission



Sara Franzoni
Projects Officer



Tracey White
Administration Officer





DANA Program Reports

Disability Royal Commission Funding

Between October 2020 and March 2021, DANA collaborated with the Disability Royal Commission (DRC) Community Engagement team, to hold a series of virtual State/Territory focused workshops (one or two in every jurisdiction) on the topics of Restrictive Practices and Segregated Settings, with staff of the DRC in attendance.

These workshops were well attended by advocates and enabled the DRC to hear information and insights from advocates on what they see as the key problems and issues with regards to restrictive practices and segregated settings.

DANA then worked with the Engagement team to co-design 'Solutions Focused Workshops', bringing together senior and experienced advocates from all states and territories to draw out their ideas and recommendations for achieving positive change at a national, state and local level.

Twelve workshops held jointly with the DRC Community Engagement team to hear directly from advocates.



Advocates “Zoom In On”

Between October and December 2020, DANA ran the "Advocates Zoom In On..." series of weekly hour-long discussions via Zoom - creating an opportunity for interested advocates to take a closer look at and speak about a number of key topics emerging in the Royal Commission into Violence, Abuse, Neglect and Exploitation of People with Disability (Disability Royal Commission or DRC) and its examination of abuse, violence, exploitation and neglect.

Participants were encouraged to share their insights, observations, stories and case studies, and the discussion questions each week included opportunities to share perspectives on what recommendations advocates would like to see being made by the DRC, in relation to the topic in focus.

Discussion topics included:

- Access to Education
- Child Protection Systems
- Criminalisation
- Safeguarding
- Advocacy and Abuse Prevention

DANA, along with eight National organisations submitted a joint position paper to the DRC titled **Segregation of people with disability is discrimination and must end**. This submission has now been endorsed by over 50 organisations and 150 individuals.



DRC Blog
[click here](#)



DANA Program Reports

COVID 19 Responses

1. AdvoKit

Developed through a partnership between DANA and Inclusion Australia in early 2020, AdvoKit was designed to help people get the advocacy resources they need to support people with disability during the pandemic and beyond.

Information Access Group helped us create this simple, pop-up website and electronic newsletter with summaries of key resources to help advocates navigate government and community organisation supports for people with disability. The Advokit site also make recommendations on how you can use the information to help people get what they need.

2. Snapshot of COVID-19 Advocacy Demand

In response to the pandemic, DANA collaborated with researcher Polly Bennett to assess the impact on the disability advocacy sector, as well as examining future systemic preparedness.

Initial survey assessing the impact of COVID-19:

DANA conducted a 'snapshot survey' of disability advocacy organisations in April 2020, in order to gain a quick understanding of the shifting demands for advocacy services during the COVID-19 shutdown period. The survey received responses from 35 advocacy organisations. Results indicated that:

1. Demand for advocacy services increased significantly and in a short period of time.
2. Overall, capacity of organisations did not increase. In fact for some, capacity decreased.
3. Demand increased in the following areas:
 - a. Accessing existing support services in new ways
 - b. Accessing new support services
 - c. Requests for specific information around the law and shutdowns
 - d. Inquiries for assistance as a result of isolation from informal and unfunded support (family, friends, community)
 - e. Cases taking additional time as advocates adapt to providing services that are not face-to-face

These findings also confirmed the critical importance of advocacy for people with disability and their support networks. Many of the detailed comments provide strong evidence of how close many have been to being disconnected from essential income and support during the pandemic.

 *"We are not seeing clients face to face therefore the whole process of gaining consent, making a plan and getting the ball rolling is slower and therefore we can't get to as many people in a week as previously. Many clients don't have technology at home so Australia Post is used for document exchange and that can take a very long time. Sometimes people can't even get to a post office."*

 *"... the complexity of our work has increased. This is particularly for clients who do not have access to internet/devices."*

The findings from this survey are also consistent with the findings from other reports into the impact of COVID-19 on people with disability, for example the report produced by **People with Disability Australia (2020), People with Disability and COVID-19.**

Second survey examining future preparedness and disaster resilience March 21:

Lessons for Disaster Preparedness: Report on the impact of COVID-19 disaster management for people with disability and the advocacy sector, with preliminary advice for future disaster management.

In November 2020 DANA conducted a survey of disability advocacy organisations across the country. Thirty organisations responded to the survey, which is 39% of the DANA membership. Most responses were from Victoria and NSW.

Report findings - Urgent Issues for People with Disability

Nearly two thirds (61.5%) of comments in the survey detailed access issues for people with disability. The most often mentioned access issues were the following, starting with most mentioned:

1. difficulty accessing advocacy services (due to waitlists for example)
2. lack of access to support services
3. lack of access to technology
4. difficulty accessing the NDIS or changes to plans
5. inaccessible government communication; and
6. difficulty accessing basics such as food



DANA Program Reports

Second survey examining future preparedness and disaster resilience March 21 (continued)

This finding is matched by the most common additional issues requiring advocacy because of COVID-19 and associated lockdown measures. They were, in order:

1. ensuring continuation of support services
2. interpreting and helping implement government guidelines and laws
3. ensuring increased support services
4. supporting people through isolation and living alone
5. ensuring safe housing; and
6. adjustments to NDIS plans

In Victoria, the number of advocates assisting with adjustments to NDIS plans was significantly higher than for other states.



"Many of the issues people with disability faced were not the result of any one thing that could be 'fixed' in isolation, but an exacerbation of pre-existing issues, by emergency response programs that presumed a baseline that was mismatched with the lived experience of our clients."

Priorities for Future Disaster Planning

Of the 194 comments received in the survey, 182 contained a recommendation component. There was a very high (80%) response rate to the questions asking for recommendations.

The comments indicate a wealth of knowledge held within advocacy organisations. They advise the following priorities for future disaster planning:

- Priority One:** Accessible Government Communication
- Priority Two:** Consistent Access to Disability Services
- Priority Three:** Monitoring of Supported Accommodation
- Priority Four:** Consistently Applied Income Support
- Priority Five:** Improved Support for Advocacy
- Priority Six:** Greater Access to Technology
- Priority Seven:** Maintaining Community Connections

NDIA project 20-21

Throughout 2020 and the first half of 2021 DANA worked with the NDIA, project managing the development of a series of training resources to be used by NDIA and NDIS Partners to increase the capacity of NDIA and Partners in the Community staff, resulting in a better planning experience for people with disability and their families. The project involved developing a series of 7 fact sheets to provide 'snapshot' insights into different disability types.

DANA is a strong believer in the importance of user-led organisations in the development of information about the people they represent. This is because their work is informed and driven by the needs of their users, operating in a way which removes any barriers to participation.

Fact Sheets were developed on:

1. Foetal Alcohol Syndrome Disorder
2. Fragile X
3. Global Developmental Delay
4. Muscular Dystrophy
5. Physical Disability
6. Psychosocial Disability
7. Spinal Cord Injury





DANA Program Reports

NDIA project 20-21 (continued)

Disability snapshot videos

In December 2020, DANA received further funding to continue with a filming component to complement the fact sheets that were completed. Interviewees with lived experience of these disabilities were approached via their representative organisations. DANA's strong relationships with a broad range of user led-disability organisations led to the development of high-quality, fit for purpose resources, disability rights training content and authentic videos.

Key Messages

- Lived experience of disability
- How to use my strengths
- How to communicate with me

The videos were produced by **Robot Army Productions** on the following disabilities:

1. Foetal Alcohol Syndrome Disorder
2. Fragile X
3. Global Developmental Delay
4. Muscular Dystrophy
5. Physical Disability
6. Post Polio Syndrome
7. Psychosocial Disability

Our thanks go to the many disability organisations that worked with us to create these fabulous resources!



10

media highlights



837
FOLLOWERS ON
INSTAGRAM



10
eNEWS



5,238
FOLLOWERS ON
TWITTER



1,304 DANA eNEWS
SUBSCRIBERS



f 3,401 LIKES ON
FACEBOOK

5 MEDIA
MENTIONS



Connection and Representation

While COVID-19 lockdowns have meant in-person gatherings have often been impossible DANA has embraced online meetings and forums. Our workshops with DRC and 'Advocates Zoom In On...' discussions have allowed advocates to come together to share thoughts and hear perspectives from organisations all around Australia.

DANA also facilitated a specific issues forum in April 2021 focused on Quality and Safeguards and advocacy, which also included updates of relevance from DSS, InfoXchange and the sector. From this discussion and other input, DANA's CEO presented advocates' feedback at the NDIS Commission 2021 Disability Advocacy Forum.

Regular Advisory Committees

In addition to liaising and working with government agencies and sector colleagues on an adhoc basis, the DANA CEO and other staff participate in a broad range of committees, advisory or working groups, and attend regular sector updates to remain informed of developments relevant to the lives of people with disability and the work of advocates.

These regular committees include:

- Disability Gateway Reference Group
- National Disability Strategy Reform Steering Group
- CEO Forums with the National Disability Insurance Agency
- Quarterly meetings of Disability Discrimination Commissioner and CEOs of Disability Peak Organisations
- Disability Support Service Committee forums (DSS & Dept. of Health)
- COVID-19 Disability Roundtable updates
- NDIS Commission Disability Sector Consultative Committee
- Disability Employment Services (DES) Reference Group Meetings
- Services Australia and DSS – Disability Peak Bodies Meetings
- Stakeholder Advisory Group for DRC-commissioned 'Rapid Review' (DRC is the Disability Royal Commission)

- Trauma-informed guidelines Reference Group for Blue Knot
- DRC Support Services Meetings
- Your Story Disability Legal Support Advisory Group
- Quarterly meetings with DRC and Disability Representative Organisations (DROs)
- Fortnightly meetings with DROs

Additional ad hoc meetings/advice to government:

- Advice on advocacy sector capacity during COVID-19 and insights on unmet demand
- Liaison and collaboration with DSS and Info-Exchange to inform development of new Advocacy Finder
- NDIS Support for Decision Making Consultation Paper
- Participation of people with disability in the ABS Census
- National Disability Data Asset
- NDIS reforms
- Disability Support Pension reforms
- Disability Representative Organisation (DRO) advocacy and funding model reviews
- National Disability Research Partnership
- Liaison with JAS-ANZ and OPAN on audit, certification and standards issues





Financial Report 2021

Statement of Financial Position as at 30 June 2021

	NOTE	2021	2020
ASSETS			
CURRENT ASSETS		\$	\$
Cash and cash equivalents	3	957,679	423,953
Trade and other receivables	4	15,052	77,458
TOTAL CURRENT ASSETS		972,731	501,411
NON-CURRENT ASSETS			
Property, plant and equipment	5	-	-
TOTAL NON-CURRENT ASSETS		-	-
TOTAL ASSETS		972,731	501,411
LIABILITIES			
CURRENT LIABILITIES			
Trade and other payables	6	84,289	27,982
Other current liabilities	7	534,160	234,305
Employee provisions	8	18,720	9,262
TOTAL CURRENT LIABILITIES		737,169	271,549
TOTAL LIABILITIES		737,169	271,549
NET ASSETS		125,989	229,862
EQUITY			
Retained earnings		335,562	229,862
TOTAL EQUITY		335,562	229,862



Note the above data is an excerpt from the 2021 Financial Statement only.

For full audited financial statements [click here](#)



Independent Auditors Report

Independent Audit Report to the members of Disability Advocacy Network Australia Limited

Report on the Audit of the Financial Report

Opinion

I have audited the financial report of Disability Advocacy Network Australia Limited (the "Company"), which comprises the statement of profit or loss and other comprehensive income, the statement of financial position as at 30 June 2021, the statement of changes in equity and the statement of cash flows for the year then ended, and notes to the financial statements, including a summary of significant accounting policies, and the directors' declaration.

In my opinion, the financial report of the company is in accordance with the Corporations Act 2001 and Division 60 of the Australian Charities and Not for Profits Commission Act 2012, including:

- (i) Giving a true and fair view of the company's financial position as at 30 June 2021 and of its financial performance for the year then ended; and
- (ii) Complying with Australian Accounting Standards – Reduced Disclosure Requirements and the Corporations Regulations 2001.

Basis for Opinion

I have conducted my audit in accordance with Australian Auditing Standards. Our responsibilities under those standards are further described in the Auditor's Responsibilities for the Audit of the Financial Report section of our report. I am independent of the Company in accordance with the auditor independence requirements of the Corporations Act 2001, the Australian Charities and Not for Profits Commission Act 2012 and the ethical requirements of the Accounting Professional and Ethical Standards Board's APES 110 Code of Ethics for Professional Accountants (the Code) that are relevant to my audit of the financial report in Australia. I have also fulfilled my other responsibilities in accordance with the Code.

We confirm that the independence declaration required by the Corporations Act 2001, the Australian Charities and Not for Profits Commission Act 2012 which has been given to the directors of the company, would be in the same terms if given to the directors as at the time of this auditor's report.

We believe that the audit evidence we have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinion.

Other Information

The directors are responsible for the other information. The other information comprises the Director's report for the year ended 30 June 2021 but does not include the financial report and my auditor's report thereon.

My opinion on the financial report does not cover the other information and accordingly I do not express any form of assurance conclusion thereon.

In connection with my audit of the financial report, my responsibility is to read the other information and, in doing so, consider whether the other information is materially inconsistent with the financial report, or my knowledge obtained in the audit or otherwise appears to be materially misstated. If, based on the work we have performed, I conclude that there is a material misstatement of this other information, I am required to report that fact. I have nothing to report in this regard.

Responsibilities of Directors for the Financial Report

The responsible entities of the registered entity are responsible for the preparation and fair presentation of the financial report in accordance with Australian Accounting Standards and Division 60 of the Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission Act 2012 and for such internal control as management determines is necessary to enable the preparation of the financial report that gives a true and fair view that is free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

In preparing the financial report, management is responsible for assessing the registered entity's ability to continue as a going concern, disclosing, as applicable, matters related to going concern and using the going concern basis of accounting unless management either intends to liquidate the registered entity or to cease operations, or has no realistic alternative but to do so.

Auditor's Responsibilities for the Audit of the Financial Report

My objectives are to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial report as a whole is free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error, and to issue an auditor's report that includes our opinion. Reasonable assurance is a high level of assurance but is not a guarantee that an audit conducted in accordance with Australian Auditing Standards will always detect a material misstatement when it exists. Misstatements can arise from fraud or error and are considered material if, individually or in the aggregate, they could reasonably be expected to influence the economic decisions of users taken on the basis of the financial report.

As part of an audit in accordance with Australian Auditing Standards, I exercise professional judgement and maintain professional scepticism throughout the audit. I also:

- Identify and assess the risks of material misstatement of the financial report, whether due to fraud or error, design and perform audit procedures responsive to those risks, and obtain audit evidence that is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinion. The risk of not detecting a material misstatement resulting from fraud is higher than for one resulting from error, as fraud may involve collusion, forgery, intentional omissions, misrepresentations, or the override of internal control.
- Obtain an understanding of internal control relevant to the audit in order to design audit procedures that are appropriate in the circumstances, but not for the purpose of expressing an opinion on the effectiveness of the registered entity's internal control.
- Evaluate the appropriateness of accounting policies used and the reasonableness of accounting estimates and related disclosures made by management.
- Conclude on the appropriateness of management's use of the going concern basis of accounting and, based on the audit evidence obtained, whether a material uncertainty exists related to events or conditions that may cast significant doubt on the registered entity's ability to continue as a going concern. If we conclude that a material uncertainty exists, we are required to draw attention in our auditor's report to the related disclosures in the financial report or, if such disclosures are inadequate, to modify our opinion. Our conclusions are based on the audit evidence obtained up to the date of our auditor's report. However, future events or conditions may cause the registered entity to cease to continue as a going concern.
- Evaluate the overall presentation, structure, and content of the financial report, including the disclosures, and whether the financial report represents the underlying transactions and events in a manner that achieves fair presentation.

I communicate with responsible entities regarding, among other matters, the planned scope and timing of the audit and significant audit findings, including any significant deficiencies in internal control that we identify during my audit.

David Perceval, Fellow Chartered Accountant
Institute of Chartered Accountants Australia #45109

13 December 2021
Canberra ACT



DANA

Disability Advocacy
Network Australia



ANNUAL REPORT 2021

 www.dana.org.au

 PO Box 76, Moonah TAS 7009

 office@dana.org.au

The national voice
of independent
advocacy