



**Disability Advocacy Service Inc.**

*“Making Connections”*

**ANNUAL REPORT**

**2017 – 2018**

# CONTENTS

**03** Our History

**04** DAS Today

**05** Organisation Structure

**07** Chairperson Report

**08** CEO Report

**11** Advocate Report

**14** Treasurer Report

**15** DAS Financials

## Disability Advocacy Service Inc.

### Our History

The Disability Advocacy Service was initially established by and for a group of Alice Springs residences who had various disabilities and felt unable to effectively communicate to have input into community development, activities and issues that affected their quality of life. It was their perception that their legitimate concerns about issues of rights and access were not considered by community and governments. They needed a voice that could speak up, lobby the various levels of government and be considered equally ensuring their basic human rights were supported.

Through the Disability Information Group (DIGAS), representations were made to Federal and Territory Governments at the time for funding to establish an Advocacy Service to meet the needs of people with a disability.

Initial grants were received from both governments, and in 1992 the Disability Advocacy Service (DAS) commenced operations with an interim management committee, a full-time advocate and a part-time administration assistant.



*Photo from DAS archives - DAS office situated in Railway Terrace.*

This funding was provided to enable the service to deliver advocacy and related services in line with the Disability Service Standards of February 1999 to people with disabilities in Alice Springs. Their commitment as an organisation was to ensure that all resources were used to accomplish the goals and aspirations of the organisation.



## **DAS Today**

Disability Advocacy Service Inc. remains a key provider of community based, individual and systemic advocacy services within the municipalities of Alice Springs, Amounguna and Tennant Creek.

DAS offers a free, confidential advocacy service to persons with disability, their families and carers defending the rights of all to ensure equal treatment in the community. Individuals are supported and empowered to exercise their own rights in accordance with the NT Disability Advocacy Standards inclusive of the Disability Service Act and Standards.

Membership of DAS is open to people with a disability, family, carers and community members who agree with the vision and mission statements of the organisation, recognise, respect and support the provision of access for persons with disabilities for an inclusive community.

## **Where to Find Us**



### **Office Location - Alice Springs**

*4 / 54 Reg Harris Lane Alice Springs*

*PO Box 8267 Alice Springs NT 0870*

*Phone: (08) 8953 1422*

*Email: [ceo@das.org.au](mailto:ceo@das.org.au)*

### **Office Location - Tennant Creek**

*Andrews Estate Agents Building*

*1 / 29 Paterson St. Tennant Creek 0860*

*Phone: (08) 8962 1412*

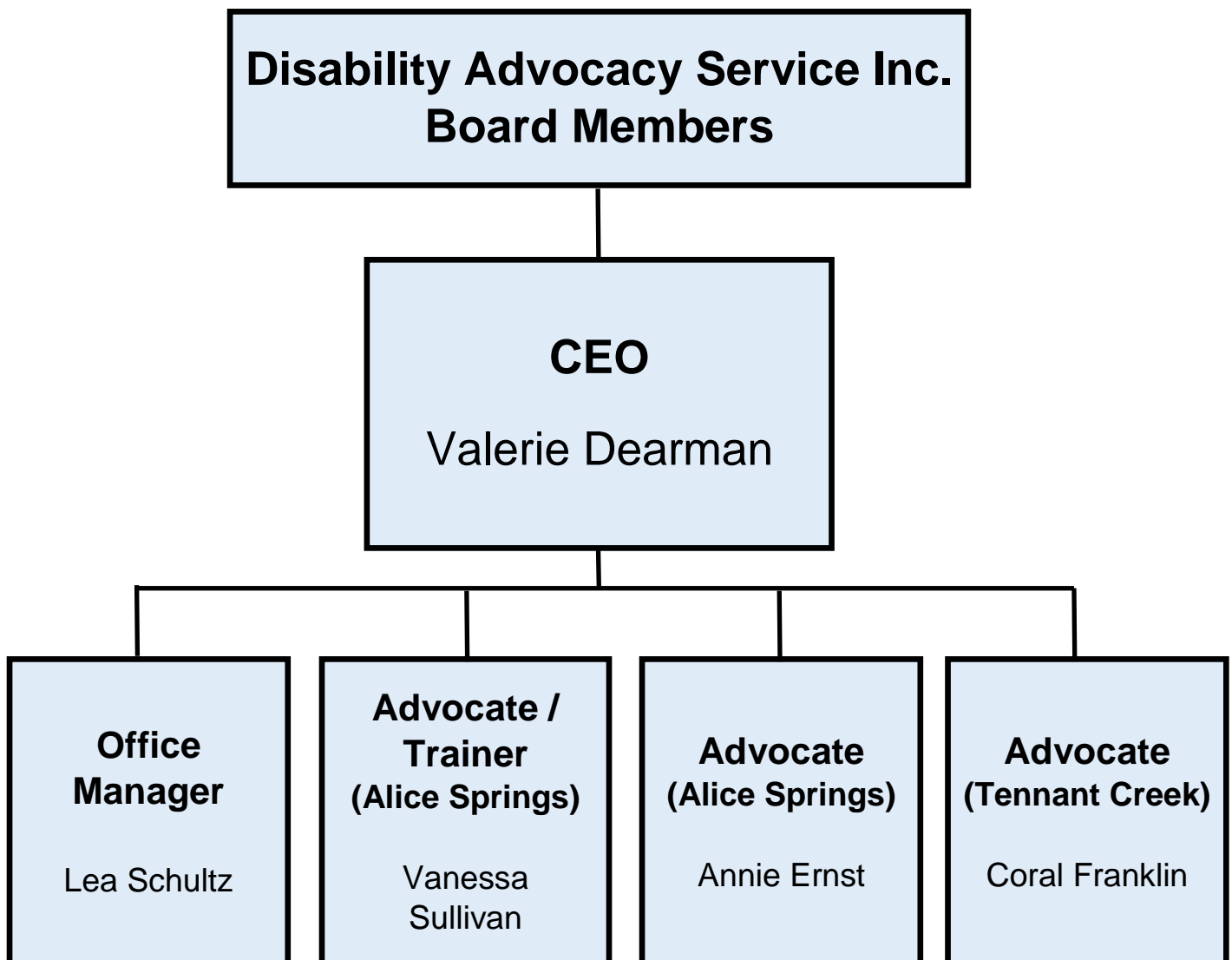
*Email: [advocatetc@das.org.au](mailto:advocatetc@das.org.au)*





Disability Advocacy Service Inc.  
*"Making Connections"*

## DAS Organisational Chart Board and Staff



## **Board and Governance**

Our Board of Directors consists of:

**Chairperson & Nominated Public Officer:** Heather Jensen

*Heather is an Occupational Therapist with extensive experience in Central Australia; currently working part-time in Centre for Remote Health and private practice.*

**Vice Chairperson:** Dr John Gilroy, Ba: Hons PhD - Adjunct, Flinders' University

*Dr Gilroy is a Koori man from the Yuin nation and an indigenous health sociologist specialising in disability and community care research.*

**Treasurer:** Janet Wright

*Janet is the CEO of Alice Springs Youth Accommodation Support Service (ASYASS)*

**Secretary:** Susan Burns

*Susan currently works for NDS (National Disability Services) in Industry Development*

*The Board meet at least 6 times within the 12 months to discuss the activities of DAS. Meetings are conducted at the DAS Office, by teleconference facilities and Skype.*



## **Chairperson Report 2017 - 2018**

**By Dr John Gilroy**

### Acknowledgement of country

Disability Advocacy Service Inc (DAS) has achieved a lot since its external review. We have restructured the agency to reflect the current, modern community of Central Australia. Many people talk about the NDIS, as though that is the only legislative system that matters. Unlike some disability service agencies, we focused on resembling the diversity that makes our community. All people with disability are members of their community, and therefore can have their human rights of citizenship breached by many sectors, such as business, government, community and individuals. Reflecting this point, our board and staff reflect the diversity of our community: we have people who experience disability, carers of loved ones, diverse ages, and genders, aboriginal, and skilled backgrounds.

DAS restructure has seen a full-time office manager, position descriptions for advocacy roles to be flexible and a new CEO. We have a larger board, with diversity of skills. This current structure has fostered service and program growth. I want to stress that point: this agency focused on program and service growth, rather than focus on financial growth. DAS public profile has improved, such as the news media and relations with government and nongovernment bodies. DAS has built upon existing and new external partnerships. For example, we now partner with the tertiary community - it is a partner on a 1.1 million dollar Australian Research Council (ARC) project submission. Further, DAS has partnered with two universities to attract and train students. We are working with next generation advocates for human rights. We are also continually updating our database and training the DAS staff and board. Knowledge is power.

To our CEO, Val - we knew you would make a good CEO since the first interview. The moment you started you reviewed policy and procedures to ensure DAS is up to date with its government obligations. You then worked to ensure your team is happy and looks to you for leadership. We know that leadership is a culture, not an activity or personality. You are being awesome.

As you know I have fulfilled my term as chairperson. I have worked with our board to restructure the agency. This I think is our board's biggest achievement. Today I would like someone else to take this role. I will remain on the board, as I love this NGO and what it stands for. I cannot continue as chairperson as I need to support my wife over the next 6 months.

Dr JOHN GILROY (PhD)  
ARC Indigenous Research Fellow (DAATSIA)  
The University Of Sydney  
Faculty of Health Sciences





## **CEO Report 2017 - 2018**

**By Valerie Dearman**

### **Staff**

Our staff consists of:

CEO, 1 part-time Advocate, 1 full-time Advocate/Trainer and a full time Office Manager.

I would like to record my thanks to the staff for their support in assisting my engagement with DAS and I appreciate the way we can all work together to support each other and share resources.

We have regular staff meetings and opportunities for staff training. I have been to Tennant Creek once and hope to go again before Christmas.

Staff have been consulted about the Christmas break, and I would like the Board to clarify past arrangements regarding pay and use of leave.

### **Advocacy**

I have asked the advocates to compile a report from their perspective which is attached as *Appendix 1*.

### **Training**

We welcome Vanessa on board as part-time Advocate and part-time Trainer. We have already achieved self advocacy training in collaboration with MHACA and VALID and are working on a plan for the next phase for next year.

Staff are encouraged to consider options for professional development.

DAS will host a Health Services student from University of Sydney from 19<sup>th</sup> November for 4 weeks. She will not be working clinically with clients, but will have the opportunity to learn about a service and how it engages with the community. I have previously supervised social work students so looking forward to the mentoring opportunity.

### **Clients**

Attached to this report as **Appendix 2** is a report on current clients and issues.

### **Systemic Advocacy**

Accommodation and Housing

- NT Shelter Accommodation Access Group
- Enabled participation in forums on accommodation
- Meeting with Jaimie Chalker CEO of NT Housing
- Participation in Supported Living Forum through NDS



## Employment

- Participated in Consultation for Employment Strategy at National level
- Made connections with employment agencies with a focus on Disability Employment options

## Transport

Member of the Point to Point advisory committee (NT Government Planning and Infrastructure

- Working party on raising concerns in Point to Point Transport
- Discussion with Alice Springs Taxis about collaborative working environment

## Access

- Member of Alice Springs Town Council Access Advisory Committee
- Brokered contact between Council and complainants

## **NDIS**

Staff have attended a consultation with local NDIS to become informed about the local office and service.

We have been building resources to strengthen DAS knowledge of NDIS

DAS staff work collaboratively with Office of Disability and maintain open communication with their office to ensure clients have the best outcomes.

## **Information**

We continue to network where possible and have had a number of new providers and Coordinators of Services come in and introduce themselves.

We are members of NTCOSS, NDS, NT Shelter, AFDO and VALiD all of whom are valuable sources of information for our work.

The Centralian Advocate has been generous in providing us with a fortnightly opinion space which has been great to use to promote disability services. We encourage other services and clients to have the opportunity to have a say

## **Support Groups**

Encouragement is being given to host support groups for people with disabilities. The first Parkinson's Group will be held on the 22<sup>nd</sup> of November and looks likely to be allied to Parkinson's SA.

I believe there will be an opportunity to foster other groups in this way.

## **Self Advocacy**

Initial contacts have been made through Susan to establish a Central Australian Self Advocacy group, initial training for clients has happened and has the potential to also be a "community Advisory group for DAS, or have a function that will address the current gap with the wider client group and DAS.

## **Events**

We have attended a number of events throughout the year including Stress Less in the Park, community forums, NDS Essential Briefings, NDS Inclusion Conference, NT Disability Awards, and Annie is on the local Town Council Disability Awards planning committee. And has recently been asked to join me on the Access committee.

## **Office forms**

The pamphlet has been updated and freshened to reflect support for NDIS

We will be conducting an audit of all resource material to ensure we have easy access to up to date resources and will archive relevant material and destroy all out of date material. This will occur as we have the time to put towards it and will have it completed by the end of January 2019. This will include a register of what is available, what can be photocopied for clients etc.

Intake forms have been updated and permission forms are to include permission to have copies of NDIS plans on file

## **Visions for DAS at Strategic Planning**

I have a future vision for DAS that will be presented at the Strategic Plan which includes opportunities for growth

## **Recommendation re data**

All staff recently attended a workshop on DEX Data which was extremely useful and has reinforced the difficulties we have been having with what data is being transferred over from IVO to DEX. I would like to recommend that we explore some other options for data collection which I wish to discuss at the Strategic Plan.

Finally, I would like to thank the Board for their support in undertaking the role as CEO. I believe there is a lot of potential for growth as an advocacy service and excited for the coming year.





## **Advocate Report 2017 - 2018**

**By Annie Ernst, Vanessa Sullivan, and Coral Franklin**

### **National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS)**

- The NDIS started to service clients in Alice Springs and Central Australia on 1 July 2018; this has seen change in the number and type of enquiries that DAS has been receiving. There have been many people wanting more information on the NDIS and requesting everything from help to apply for an NDIS plan, to what happens when the initial application is rejected, to appeals when plans do not match expectations. DAS continues to assist clients to sort out any problems that have arisen with their Plan process and content and the number of clients requesting help with the NDIS continues to grow both in Alice Springs and the Barkly.

### **Service Providers**

- As the NDIS becomes more established in Alice Springs, so to are we finding more service providers commencing work here – some are established names elsewhere and others are locals who are registering as NDIS providers. DAS has ongoing communication with service providers both to ensure that clients' needs are represented, and that there is access to, availability and quality of service from their relevant service provider for all our clients.

### **Housing**

- Reading the Advocate's report from two years ago sadly shows no improvement in the availability of housing in Alice Springs or Tennant Creek. As Anna Martin wrote in 2016: "There remains a paucity of housing for people that require specific environmental factors met for their way of life in Alice Springs – waiting lists in excess of 2 years exist at all services – Department of Housing, Central Australian Affordable Housing Company, Anglicare and Mission Australia Transitional Housing Programs, as well as supported accommodation." In the last few months there has been a slight reduction in the number of DAS clients seeking advocacy support with accessing safe, secure, long term housing in Alice Springs– I seek to clarify the statistics by noting that this drop has come about not by the acquisition of housing but by one client returning to a remote community, another choosing to move to Western Australia and a third passing away.

DAS continues to undertake both individual and systemic advocacy in this arena.

### ***Tennant Creek***

- Meeting with Advocate based in Tennant Creek, Coral Franklin, via telephone link-up weekly, to share information and caseload

## **International Day of People with a Disability (IDPWD)**

- DAS continues its close involvement with IDPWD by representation on the Mayoral Awards Committee and promotion of the IDPWD Mayoral Awards through the fortnightly article in the Centralian Advocate.

## **Training**

- Recently, DAS facilitated the inclusion of 5 people in Victorian Advocacy League for Individuals with Disability Inc (VALID) Keys to Success- Self Advocacy training program in Alice Springs. All 5 participants currently reside in supported accommodation with local disability service providers. The training was held by Mental Health Association of Central Australia (MHACA) and delivered by Valid's Self Advocacy Co-ordinator Jon Slingsby. It was delivered over 4 days and included the Staying Safe session. The training was well received by all participants. In 2019 DAS plans to deliver self-advocacy training for people with disability and provide in-services on advocacy principles and advocacy skills to carers, family and people working in the disability sector so as they can better support, assist or represent people with disability. Initial contact with local service providers to gauge interest in self-advocacy and advocacy training has received positive feedback including that this type of training would fit in with their organisational values and way of thinking.

## **Staff Personal Development**

- All DAS staff attended Valid's To Stand Beside two-day program on advocacy for inclusion held in early November and DSS training which covered recording outcomes on Data Exchange and accessing and using data in the partnership approach reports. In addition, DAS staff participated in the Make It Work NDIS forum which looked at local issues with the NDIS and what needs to change.
- Other Staff Development opportunities that have been given to DAS Advocates include:
  - o Family & Community Services Cross Sector Orientation Workshop, Alice Springs
  - o Building communication skills of staff working with Aboriginal NDIS clients with hearing loss, Alice Springs
  - o Disability Advocacy Resource Unit (DARU): Strengthening Disability Advocacy Conference: Doing Disability Differently, Melbourne
  - o Big Thinking on Inclusion Conference and the NT Disability and Inclusion Awards, Darwin

There are three part-time Advocates working DAS – Coral Franklin in Tennant Creek, Vanessa Sullivan and Annie Ernst in Alice Springs.

Coral Franklin in Tennant Creek has been working with DAS as an Advocate since 2016; as a long-term resident of Tennant Creek, her networks within the Barkly and beyond are an asset to her work as an Advocate.

Vanessa Sullivan started with DAS in Alice Springs in September 2018 as an Advocate and a Trainer (devoting half her time to each role) and hit the ground running both in her Advocacy and Training roles.

Annie Ernst joined DAS as a part-time Advocate in Alice Springs in April 2018; she has previous experience with DAS both as a DAS client (as a carer for her late partner) in 2007 and serving on the DAS Board from 2009 – 2014.

Anna Martin returned to the role of Advocate from May - September 2018 when she took up a job with Children's Ground – DAS's loss is Children's Ground's gain. We wish Anna well in her future ventures and thank her for her valuable work with DAS.

The Advocates would like to thank the DAS clients – without you there would be no Disability Advocacy Service.

Thank you to Val Dearman (CEO), Lea Schultz (Office Manager) for their ongoing support (in so many ways!) for our roles. Thanks also to Noeline Laurie (former Manager) for her guidance and support up until the end of June.

Thanks to the DAS Board for their support and enthusiasm for the work that we do.

Coral Franklin, Vanessa Sullivan and Annie Ernst  
Disability Advocates, Disability Advocacy Service  
November 2018







## **Treasurer Report 2017 - 2018**

**By Janet Wright**

Overall, I am very happy with the end of financial year results in what was a year with new funding and many changes in staffing.

Nicole Reedman, the Accountant will cover the financial reports in detail.

The highs were completion of the 360 review which lead to some very positive progress in governance, funding possibilities and a revitalisation of the organisation.

DAS is in a favourable financial position and is prepared to assist and create advocacy opportunities with the NDIS, and other funding.

Thank you,

Janet Wright  
Treasurer, DAS 2017/2018



# **Disability Advocacy Service Inc.**

## **Financials**

Nicole Reedman

## Agenda

- Audit / Accounting Services
- End of Financial Year Audit Process
- Financial Report
- Sign off on 2017/2018 Financial Statements

## **Audit / Accounting Services**

- Continued with auditors MacLeod Corporation Pty Ltd for 2017-2018 financial year.
- CaPAble Accounting and Bookkeeping Service currently have a contract until 30 June 2020.

## **EOFY Audit Process**

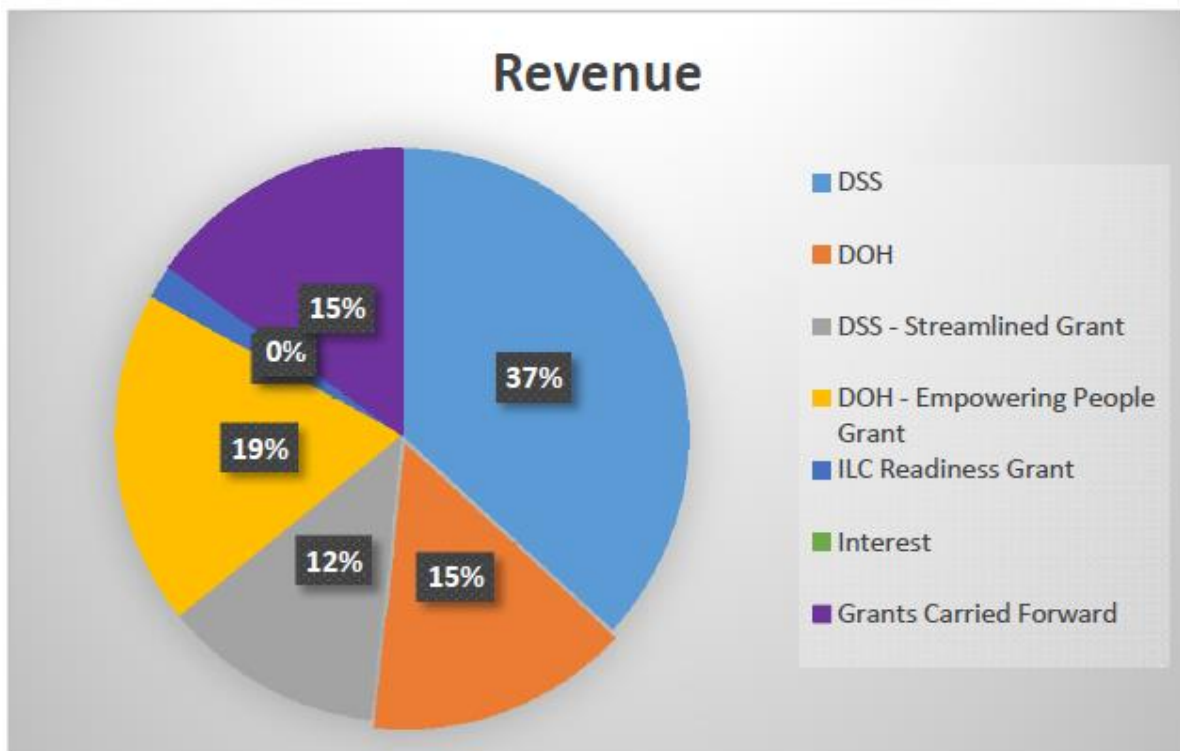
- **Appointed auditor:**
  - MaCleod Corporation Pty Ltd in Albany WA
- **Audit Process:**
  - Ensure all transactions for 2017/2018 are entered into the accounting package
  - Audit file preparation
  - Financial Statement Preparation - GPFR
  - Audit Liaison and further testing
  - Board Sign Financial Statements for DAS, Dept of Health (DOH) and Dept of Social Services (DSS)
  - Auditor issues audit report
  - Financial Statements are issued to DOH, DSS and Department of Business by deadline



# Financial Report 2017 - 2018

- Grant Income

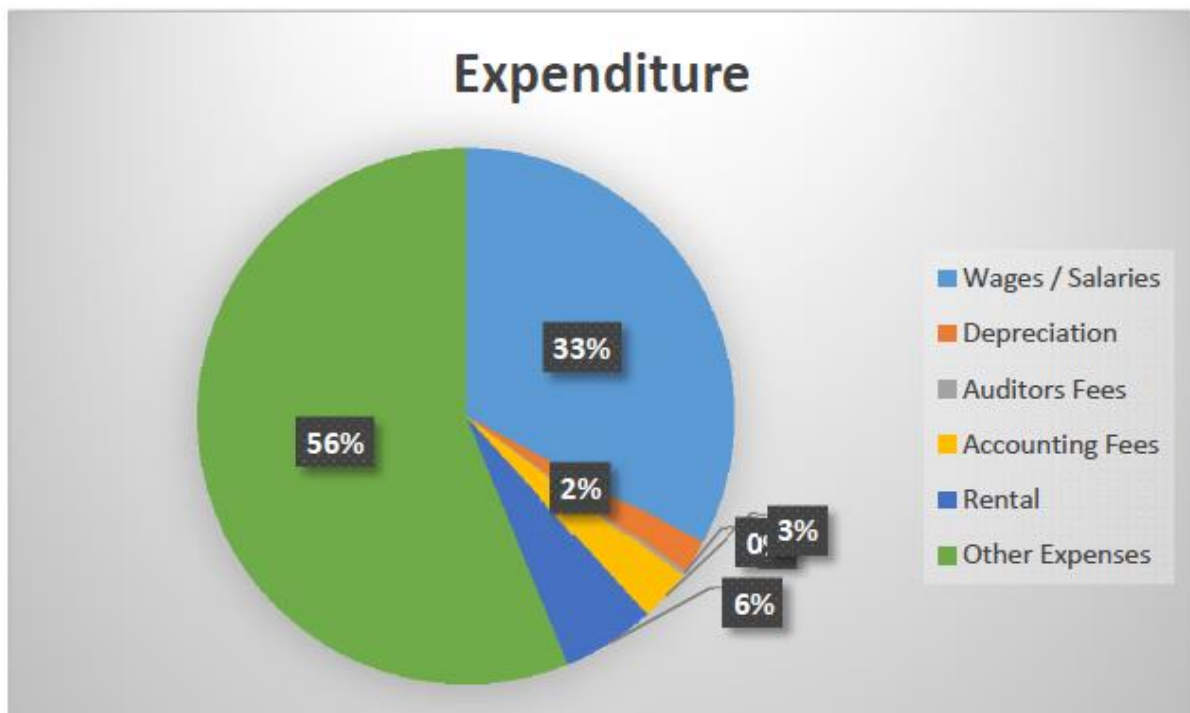
Revenue	Amount
DSS	195,081
DOH	78,562
DSS - Streamlined Grant	65,435
DOH - Empowering People Grant	100,000
ILC Readiness Grant	10,000
Interest	278
Grants Carried Forward	79,535
	528,891



# Financial Report 2017 - 2018

- Expenditure

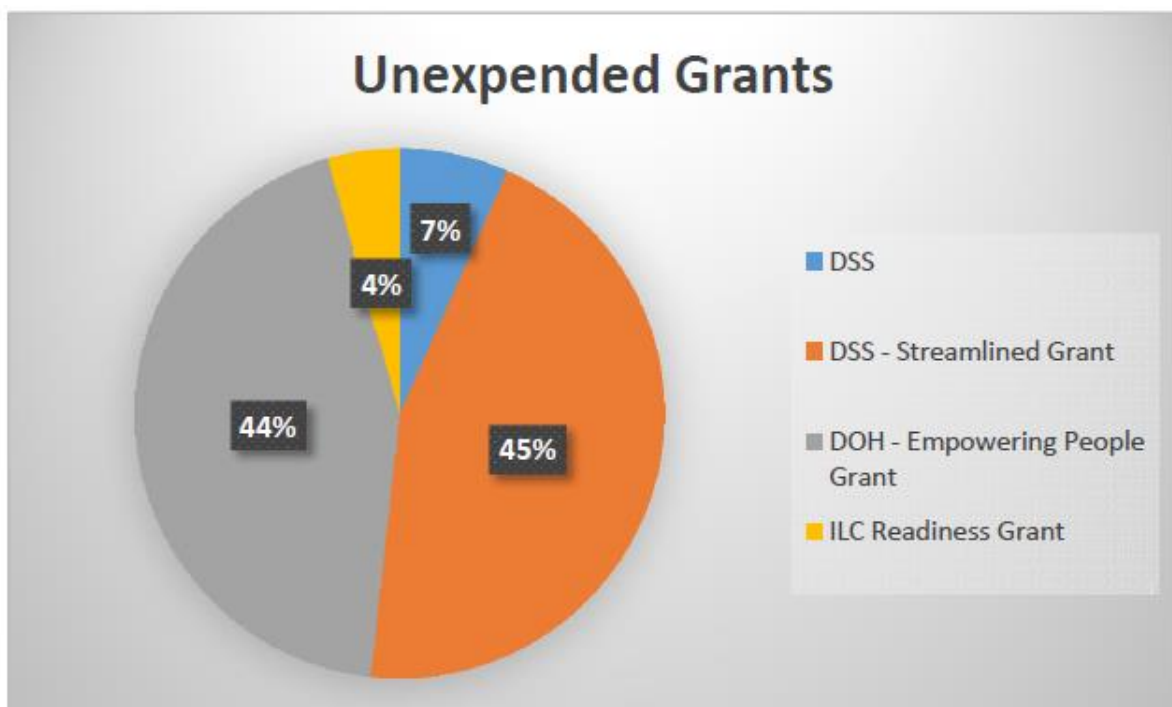
Expenditure	Amount
Wages / Salaries	172,867
Depreciation	10,440
Auditors Fees	1,500
Accounting Fees	16,620
Rental	29,532
Other Expenses	296,121
	527,080



# Financial Report 2017 - 2018

- Unexpended Grants

Unexpended Grants	Amount
DSS	15,192
DSS - Streamlined Grant	102,743
DOH - Empowering People Grant	100,000
ILC Readiness Grant	10,000
	227,935



## **Financial Report 2017-2018**

- Result for 2017-2018 – Profit \$1,811
- Cash at bank - \$344,488
- Assets acquired and disposed of in 2017-2018 - NIL

## **Financial Statement Sign Off**

- Disability Advocacy Service Inc.
- Department of Health
- Department of Social Services

A full copy of the General Purpose Financial Report for the year ending 30 June 2018 can be obtained from the Disability Advocacy Service office - please ring the CEO on (08) 8953 1422.