

# DIVERSITY & DISABILITY ALLIANCE

ANNUAL REPORT

2022- 2023



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# WHO WE ARE:

**People from multicultural communities with disability leading change. Coming together. For ourselves. For our communities.**

Diversity and Disability Alliance is a user-led and peer-led disability support organisation, run by and for people with disability from diverse backgrounds with the support of families and allies.

We support people to live the lives they choose. We believe that each person with disability has the right to a genuine voice, choice, and control of their lives and participation in genuine and meaningful inclusion in the social, economic, cultural, and political life of the communities in which they choose to belong.

Our core business is peer support. We draw on our common lived experience and our diversity and use peer support to create change.

We are an independent, collective voice committed to diversity and full inclusion.

# OUR VISION:

**An inclusive, diverse, and just society where people with disability have a voice, choice, and control over their lives.**

# WHAT WE DO:

- Maximise and build the knowledge, skills, and capacity of people with disability, their families, and allies from diverse backgrounds
- Build the capacity of all communities to include people with disability
- Share our collective lived experiences
- Contribute to a society where the diversity of our communities is valued and our rights contained in principles and articles of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disability are upheld.

# PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

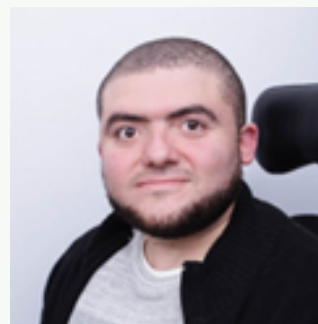


Image description: Photo of Abraham Darouiche

The year 2022–23 has been a busy year in the virtual space, as we continued to connect with different communities. We held our first ever peer-led conference. This was a great event and provided a benchmark to help us improve when we hold the next hybrid events. The work we do at DDAlliance always comes down to the hard work our peers, staff and allies do to continue its success and growth. We have found an office space in the heart of Parramatta, where it can be utilised for staff and peers to continue doing their work

The 2022–2023 financial year continues to hold opportunities for DDAlliance due to the incredible resources we have from ILC funding. We are continuing to support our current peer groups and develop new ones in the community and building the peer movement across NSW by developing resources and building the skills and knowledge of peers.

We are still operating in the online space and have now started to go in the hybrid space. We can be proud of the incredible resilience that the peer community continues to show by continuing to be there for each other in a hybrid world where some of our peers have actually met each other for the first time and will continue to do so in the future.

I'd like to also give thanks to all the staff members at DDA for their work in supporting the peers with our various projects. Every one of you have a role in this organisation and you have been amazing in the roles you play. I have been fortunate enough to work with you all in various projects at DDA, from peer mentoring to peer facilitation and everything in between

I would also like to thank our allies. You have continued to work with us in promoting and encouraging peers within our communities to continue building on their skills and knowledge; and continue sharing their lived experiences to be more involved in the community.

I would also like to give thanks to the Board members. You form part of the backbone of this organisation and so your involvement has been very valuable towards the operation and success of DDA. It is such an honour to be able to lead a group of amazing individuals, who each have their own set of skills and expertise that has added value to DDA. I am extremely proud to be President of DDAlliance and to work alongside our Board to support the excellent work of our Peer Workers, our Coordinator, Ace Boncato, and her staff. We continue to focus on our Strategic Action Plan 2021-2023 that prioritises what the peer community wants and needs and how we will meet it.

I couldn't have carried out my role without checking in with our incredible Vice President, Pauline, and our amazing Coordinator, Ace, who's worked tirelessly and compassionately, ensuring that we stick to the values of DDA.

As I come towards the end of an incredible journey as a Board member of Diversity and Disability Alliance (DDA), I wish to acknowledge all those members who have mentored me throughout my time on the Board. They have given me the confidence when it came to decision making and helped build my skills and work ethic. This confidence has helped me with engaging and connecting with individuals who have the same vision of DDA, that is, encouraging people with disability from diverse backgrounds to engage in peer support.

I hope that we as an organisation continue to grow and keep building on the peer movement within our communities. DDA has an amazing team. Whether you are a peer, Board member or staff member, you are all amazing individuals, who recognise the importance of having a voice, having choice and being in control of our lives and actions. It was such a privilege to be the President of DDA.

**Abraham Darouiche**  
**President**

# LIST OF BOARD MEMBERS 2022-2023

**President:** Abraham Darouiche

**Vice President:** Pauline David

**Secretary:** Mary Liang

**Treasurer:** Julie Magill

## **Board members:**

- David Daoud
- Hannen Abdallah
- Mirella Manna
- Nidhi Shekaran
- Qian Fang
- Sophon Neang

The Board held 9 meetings in 2022 – 2023



# COORDINATOR'S MESSAGE



Image description: Photo of Ace Boncato

Another amazing year has flown by! 2022-2023 has been full of transitions. After over two years working solidly online, we've started our transition to work under a hybrid model. We've taken the opportunities COVID-19 presented to us, to ensure we are able to maximise accessibility, inclusion and participation of all peers by maintaining our online interactions moving forward, but also coming back together in-person.

Our ILC funding has continued to provide us with opportunities to further grow our work, our communities and strengthen our organisation.

Through 'Connecting Peers Cross Culturally' we continue to further expand our diverse team of peer facilitators, grow as an organisation and work on the development of peer support structures within diverse communities.

The 'NSW Peer Learning Hub' has seen us continuing our work with our sister organisation, CDAH to take peer support to the regions and develop a Community of Practice. We also had the opportunity to host 'Together We Can', a first of its kind hybrid conference where peers led the discussions, worked with allies and together, explored numerous themes and topics with the goal to create positive change through peer support moving into the future.

The 'Powerful Peers' project has given us the opportunity to build on our strong foundations, grow our team of peer mentors while refining and further developing peer mentoring skills and get confident and providing support to fellow peers.

Our circles of support work continues to flourish. In this space, we continue to facilitate circles while further building awareness about circles of support in CALD communities.

In our evaluation project, our team of Lived Experience Researchers led our work in exploring and capturing our journeys in peer support.

This year, we have moved into our new home, an office space in vibrant Parramatta. Having the opportunity to start reconnecting with each other has given us a renewed sense of energy!

As we come into a new phase at DDAlliance, I would like to take this opportunity to thank each and every one of my peers. It is because of you, that our organisation is so rich in expertise and knowledge. I look forward to continuing to work with you, as we continue to build our networks within the peer support space, whilst challenging "the norm" and creating space for diversity.

To my staff, Joyce, Bill, Rhiannon, Catherine, Andrew and Tammy. You each have such an important role to play in our spaces. I thank you for working so tirelessly in supporting the team and our peers to achieve our project deliverables.

To Rhiannon and Catherine, I especially thank you both for filling in as Acting Coordinators and holding the fort in my absence. Along with the support of the rest of the team, you managed to ensure that we continue to thrive as an organisation in my absence (an absence that was unexpectedly extended).

To our incredible advisors and DDAlliance Board, led by our President, Abraham. I thank you for your ongoing support throughout the year. I truly appreciate the time and commitment you continue to put into our work, as we achieve the goals, which we had set in our Strategic Action Plan. I would like to especially thank Abraham, as you reach the end of your tenure as President. Working closely with you has been such a joy! While you've continued to perform your duties as President, you also continue to exemplify what it is to be a great peer supporter, always committed and always supportive in all areas of DDAlliance.

This year, I am so humbled and thrilled to share that DDAlliance was the recipient of the National Disability Leaders Award for the category 'Inclusion (Working Intersectionally)'. Additionally, for me to also be awarded the Lesley Hall Award for Lifetime Achievement, makes it a double win for our organisation. Getting to connect with peers and seeing some positive changes within our communities, big and small, is reward enough. But also being recognised through receiving such prestigious national awards, is such a great reminder of how lucky I am to be able to work in this space with such amazing people.

Thank you for another amazing year. I look forward to continuing to work through the trials and tribulations the next year has in store, as we continue to leave no one behind. And as we continue to embrace, support and celebrate diversity in our communities.

**Ace Boncato**

**Coordinator**



# OUR YEAR IN REVIEW

The main highlight was that we transitioned from working from home and online to working in the hybrid setting. We had gradually gone back in the community. As you can see from the photos below, we had meetings on Zoom as well as face to face. Rapid Antigen Tests (RATs) were required before entering the face to face work environment and continue to keep each other safe.

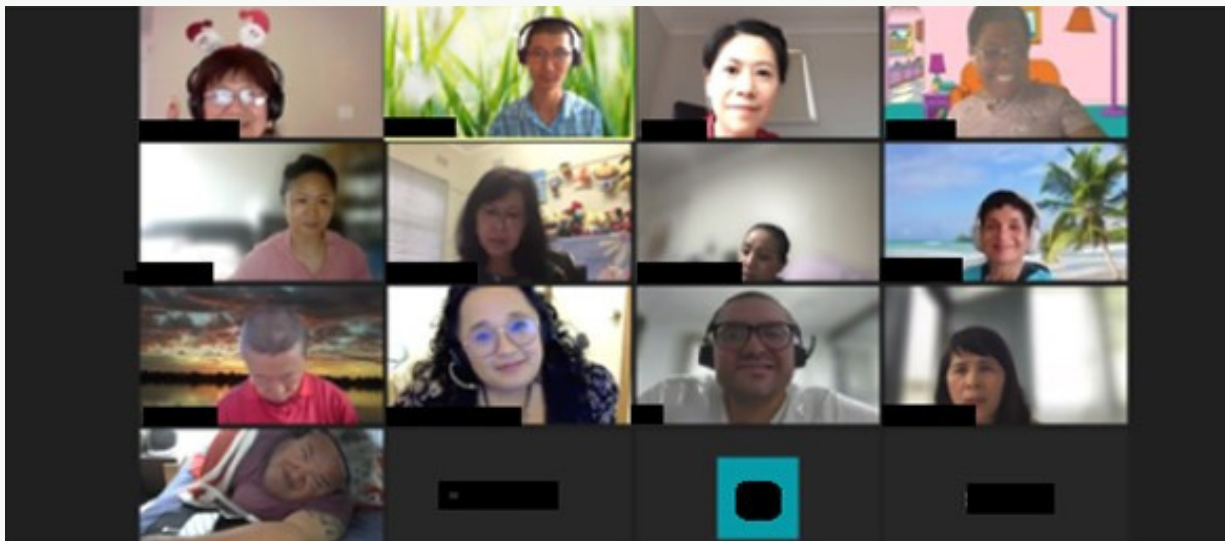


Image Description: This is a screenshot of an online meeting. There are 13 peers looking and smiling towards the camera. (Final Social change action group of 2022)



Image description: A screenshot of an online meeting of a Monday CALD Peer2Peer café. There are 8 peers looking and smiling towards the camera. This photo was taken before one of the peers went overseas.



Image description: 4 Peers sitting at a white desk. One peer has a laptop open. They're planning for Monday CALD Peer2Peer café.





Image description: A Khmer event at Bonnyrigg Community Centre. A peer speaks in front of the audience. Behind the speaker there is a screen showing a video about peer support.



Image description: At the 'Deaf Festival' 2022. There is a white stall with 'Diversity and Disability Alliance' written across the top, with five people smiling towards the camera. In front of them, there are brochures and flyers on the table, which is decorated with a dark blue tablecloth that says 'd+da Diversity and Disability Alliance'.





Image description: At DDAlliance Photoshoot in September 2022. There are 27 peers smiling towards the camera. Three people sitting in front of the group are holding the balloons that spell D-D-A.



Image description: At International Day People with Disability at Parramatta Park in 2022. There are 9 Peers smiling toward the camera, surrounded by the trees and nature. 6 people are in wheelchairs. One person is holding a cane sitting on the far left. 2 people are standing in the centre towards the back.



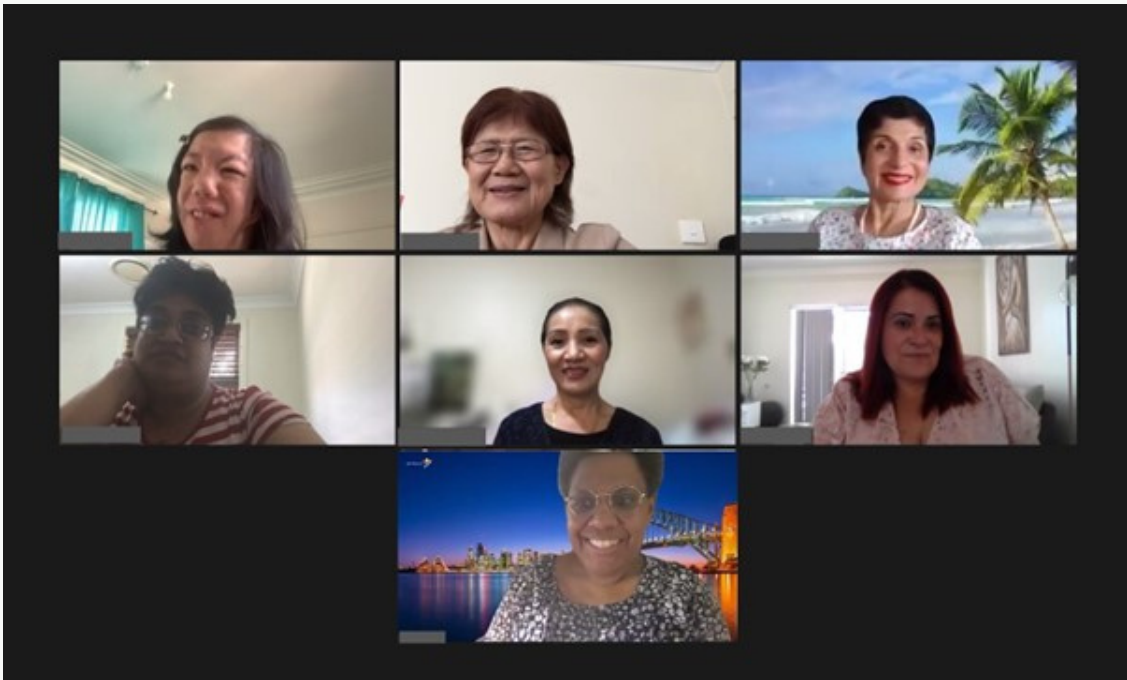


Image description: Image description: Screenshot of 7 women smiling towards the camera on International Women's Day.



Image description: At the workshop, 'Parents and Family as Allies'. 11 people are looking at the camera. 4 of them are wearing masks. Behind them is a projector screen says 'Be the change you want to see in the world. Gandhi'.



Image description: At the 'Western Sydney Employment, Life skills and Leisure Expo'. 2 DDAlliance team members looking at the camera smiling. They are standing behind a table that says 'd+da Diversity and Disability Alliance'. On the table there are brochures and flyers.



Image description: At the 'Western Sydney Employment, Life skills and Leisure Expo'. 3 peers are looking at the camera smiling. 2 of them are sitting, one of them is standing behind. In front of them there is a table says 'd+da Diversity and Disability Alliance'. On the table there are brochures and flyers.

# CONNECTING PEERS CROSS CULTURALLY

## Overview

Connecting Peers Cross Culturally is a project that supports peers in CALD communities to build and sustain peer support networks and access peer to peer learning opportunities. Through this project we are expanding peer support networks and building a confident, skilled peer workforce.

## Training

In December, peer workers and staff completed Ethical Storytelling training to develop our story-telling skills and awareness. Then, as we prepared to commence hybrid working in 2023, we held skills development and reflection sessions on hybrid working in January. We have continued to practice, debrief on, and refine our understanding of hybrid working and build skills in this area.

“With hybrid, we work together and we feel connected. After a very long time, we can see our peers in person. Peers are people who share common interests and lived experience. Peer2Peer Cafes are a way to share ideas, discuss problems and find solutions with people who understand each other. Peer2Peer Cafes lead to community and cooperation, and connect peers to the broader society.”

– Sophon Neang, Peer Facilitator and Peer Mentor

## Bringing peer support to new communities

We met and connected with new peers and allies in the Lao and Spanish-speaking communities. DDAlliance signed a Memorandum Of Understanding (MOU) with The NSW Spanish and Latin American Association for Social Assistance Inc. to set up peer support structures in these communities. We worked with peers, family members and allies to share information about peer support and build connections in new communities through the following events:

### Peer2Peer Cafes

Throughout this period we have consolidated and further developed our team, with an emphasis on skills development and transitioning to hybrid working. This was the first year that we've started in-person since the pandemic started. Peers have actively worked towards preparing and being confident to get out into the community again through conversations in Peer2Peer Cafes, debriefs, planning sessions, and check ins. We have worked on how to practically, emotionally and mentally get ourselves into in-person community spaces again during a time of social change and relaxed COVID-19 safety measures.

Staff supported peers to lead peer2peer cafes, with regular planning and debrief meetings and peer facilitator team meetings.

Our peer2peer cafes included our: CALD Peer Café, Young Adults Peer Café, Khmer Peer Café, Korean Peer Café, CALDeaf Peer Network, Eastern Suburbs Peer Café, Vietnamese Peer Café, Chinese Disability Peer Support Group, Women's Peer Café and Peers Action Group.



## Peer-led events

We held four peer-led community events:

- Floods and Changing Times: Our Experiences and Strategies for the Future
- International Day of People with Disability
- Family and Peers as Allies in the Vietnamese-speaking community

We have supported peers to actively contribute and take the lead in all aspects of this work:

- Reflection and Planning Day on 25 January 2023
- Reaching out to new peers by presenting at interagencies and meeting with services and stakeholders, promoting via Facebook and Instagram, inviting our friends etc.
- Training and skills sessions
- Developing accessible documents, including Text-Only versions
- Developing the Peer Connections project for peers to connect with buddies
- Participating in a team photo shoot to produce new photos for the website and promotions
- Supporting interpreters to effectively work with peers at our online events and meetings
- Website updates
- Running regular Tech Thursday sessions and brought back Our Space sessions
- Maintaining our monthly newsletter and our Facebook pages, as well as starting our Instagram page

# NSW PEER LEARNING HUB

## Overview

DDAlliance in partnership with CDAH have been undertaking the NSW Peer Learning Hub.

We have been building the capacity of peer leaders to increase the skills, knowledge, confidence and motivation of all peers involved. We are co-designing new learning resources and providing training and support to peers so that they can promote peer support in their communities and develop a stronger network of peers. We are creating an active community of practice, enabling peers to reflect together and learn from each other.

## Connecting with Peers/Family Members in Regional Areas

We continued to connect with peers, allies, services and community members in regional areas.

## Griffith

Continuing on from networking work that was done in the previous financial year, the DDAlliance team organised to go to Griffith run an Introduction to peer support training session. Julie, Maina, Andrew and Catherine went to Griffith on the 10th August 2022. For the training we were hosted by MDAA, 8 peers attended the training.



Image description: This is a photo of people sitting at a table, having food and the back is a television.

## Newcastle

The team continued networking with peers in Newcastle and are planning visiting in September 2023 to host an event and 'Introduction to Peer Support' training.

## Conference

On the 21st and 22nd March 2023 DDAlliance hosted the 'Together We Can' Peer Support Conference. This conference was hybrid, with the in-person portion held in Granville, Sydney. Over the 2-day hybrid peer conference there were 25 different presentations. There were 27 people with disability from CDAH and DDA who presented. There were an additional 10 people with disability from other organisations who presented, and an additional 7 people who were allies who presented. Altogether there were 119 people with disability and 18 allies who participated.

Topics covered included: peer support, the peer movement with updates from [queer peers], peer support in CALD communities, Deafblind group etc., the social model of disability, history and current disability rights, leadership, co-design research, Circles of Support, and being a great ally, disability pride and supported decision making.

**“At the Conference, I learnt a lot and made some excellent new connections, including one peer who I’m partnering with to write a book. Although there were areas for improvement, I found it was the most accessible and inclusive conference I’ve ever been to”.**

**Nidhi Shekaran, Board member and Peer mentor**





Image description: A group of photo and they are all wearing black shirts, in the shirt says 'CREW'.



Image description: This is a photo of an event with a lot of peers sitting on the table. This is a photo of an event with a lot of peers sitting on the table.

# POWERFUL PEERS

## Overview

The Powerful Peers project is a joint project in partnership with Community Disability Alliance Hunter which will continue to mid-2024.

The Powerful Peers Project's focus is to deliver training for people with disability in peer mentoring and develop opportunities for the trained mentors to provide peer mentoring supports to other fellow peers. DDA will work with peers from multicultural backgrounds in the Sydney region.

This project is unique as peer mentors bring their specific shared knowledge, cultural and lived experiences to the mentoring of their fellow peers.

## What we did

### Training

The year started with peer mentoring training of 9 trainees of whom 3 were family members. The trainees completed at first the Introduction to peer support before attending the 8 weeks online Peer mentoring training.

It was December 2022 when we celebrated with all 9 participants their completion of the training.

Outside of the training sessions all participants were given time to practice their mentoring skills with their fellow peers. These buddy mentoring opportunities became an essential part in the training and in furthering one's skill. It provided the mentors to reflect back on their practice.

The project now has a total of 32 trained peer mentors.

## **Skilling Up – through practice**

During the year we continued our fortnightly practice sessions. These sessions keep building skills and techniques as well provide critical feedback from fellow peers.

The sessions work on roleplay scenarios which are played out in the session and thereby allow peer mentors an opportunity to practice as if it was a real-life mentoring situation.

The roleplays are designed to simulate a real-life situation with a duration of 4 sessions. The facilitation team who run the practice sessions are peers mentors. They prepare and plan the session and set an agenda. The team works through the role play scenarios, makes adaptations and plans the agenda. Tasks are then divided into who of the team plays the mentee and who facilitates the sessions and the feedback. It is at the feedback that a lively discussion and exploration takes place.

During the year we noticed that most peer mentors attending were keen to show their mentoring skills in these sessions. With 14 or more attending in zoom we used the break out rooms to accommodate and give more a chance to be active participants. Members of the facilitation team set out to develop and add more roleplay scenarios. We now have a total of 9 role play scenarios to work through during the year. During the financial year 19 practice sessions were conducted. Regularly about 14 peer mentors attend.

## Promotion

Outside Interest in peer mentoring has been slow. We realised that we needed to seek opportunities to promote peer mentoring into the broader community. This was done through community events and Expos during the year.

Peer mentors worked together on these materials for promotion. They developed presentations outlining the benefits of peer mentoring which included a Q & A panel discussion.

Peer mentors have developed their Peer Mentor Profiles. 20 of these are currently displayed on our website .

During the year a total 27 mentoring relationships were held on:

- 7 mentoring relationships consisting of more than 30 sessions with CALD peers who contacted DDA for mentoring.
- Conference preparation and presentation on peer mentoring
- Preparation of presentations to a Khmer community event
- Panel preparation with mentors for Khmer community workshop

“We talked about how in Peer to Peer Mentoring you have a two-way exchange of experiences and expertise, while other services are less reciprocal.

- In Peer to Peer Mentoring we get to connect with a mentor who also is a person with disability and might have similar lived experience.
- In Peer to Peer Mentoring, we both bring our own experiences and expertise to the conversation, while in counseling, the expertise tends to lie solely with the professional counselor.
- As Peer Mentors, we also focus on continued learning –developing our skills in using our lived experience and knowledge to support mentees”

- Farhana Rahman, presenting at the Together We Can Conference

#### What we learned:

- As peer mentors and as a community we need a better understanding of the power of shared experience.
- We need to value the importance for a peer buddy who can walk along with you.
- We need to value that the conversation with another peer can let us explore our goals in life.
- We need to understand that our conversations can deal with social and cultural issues
- We need to understand that there are barriers that make goals so hard to reach and that we can explore plans to minimise the challenges.
- We need to understand that there are barriers that make goals so hard to reach and that we can explore plans to minimise the challenges.



## From a mentee perspective

“My mentor was very encouraging, and I stopped thinking negatively. When I felt I was unable to use an email she encouraged me to look at a different way of sending photos. Because of my peer mentor I now feel so much more confident in trying new things.”

– Sophon Neang, Peer Facilitator and Peer Mentor

## Mentor perspective

“During my mentor practice I found I still had many difficulties. Sometimes I deal with complicated family situations and I feel that I need more information and knowledge. These Practice sessions have helped me to gain more confidence, knowledge, and insight into how to be an effective mentor. I can practice the skills I learned in the training sessions.”

– Thi Phuong, Peer Mentor

## Mentor perspective

“From what I have learned over the years as a mentor is to built a relationship with your mentee, talk about hobbies, interest and similarities. Trust is very fragile at this point. You have to be open minded and consistent.”

– Kay, Peer Mentor



Image description: 2 photos, In the first, 2 peers and a translator sitting around a table talking. In the second, 2 peers having a conversation

# CIRCLES OF SUPPORT

## Overview

“Speaking the same language creates trust and that is a foundation for building Circles in our community. Trust creates an environment where we can share our life experience, learn and discuss options. Circles lay a foundation for a better life. Circles build confidence to reach out and connect socially. There will be no more isolation because people have access to useful information and are surrounded by love and support so that they make their own decisions for the life they choose.”

- Thi Phuong, Circles Facilitator

Circles of Support is now one of DDAlliance’s core programs. Five Circles are currently running, with peer facilitator supervision weekly. These sessions provide support and generate interesting discussions, including the importance of ‘intangible’ benefits (e.g. connectedness and self-esteem), sustainability of existing Circles, and widening Circle access to include those who do not have natural informal relationships in their lives. We are currently reflecting on our practice and planning for the next phase of work.

## Some Circle outcomes

“For one Circle participant, the goal was employment. His Circle worked to support him to explore options and gain freelance work. There’s also a social aspect, building community and supporting him to reach out to others. Part of the work of the Circle was to build alternative communication methods. He now works more closely with his support workers and is a more confident person.”

- **Abraham Darouiche, Circles Facilitator**

“One individual’s goal is to be more independent – to get out more, socialise and eventually live independently with support. He uses alternative communication devices and is on the autism spectrum, so his Circle is also providing a safety net.”

- **Julie Magill, Circles Facilitator**

Four young people involved in two Circles collaborated to make ‘The True Story of Cosplay, a short film about a shared passion. This project involved learning a variety of new skills, socially connecting with peers along the way.

An Unspoken Story: Living with autism , a book by Circle participant Sidharth Chandran, published.



## Highlights/achievements

- Involvement in a national Community of Practice , chairing meetings and championing the perspective of peer-led facilitation in CALD communities. As part of this COP, we contributed to 'A Submission to the NDIS Review Committee, Circles of Support and Microboards: Person-centred, efficient models for capacity building, supported decision making, and enfranchisement'. We have ongoing involvement in developing and co-design of a set of Guiding Principles for participants and funders.
- Creation of a Circles of Support 'Workbook' co-designed and delivered in easy read, both online and printed versions. The first (Vietnamese) of five language versions is available on our dedicated webpage.
- Presenting our work at the 'Together We Can' conference.
- Our Circle's team have presented at a number of community events, including the Western Sydney Employment Life Skills & Leisure Expo and Towards Inclusion: Northern Sydney Multicultural Disability Expo and Panel Discussion.
- Our work was featured with a panel discussion on CripChat Australia, a podcast produced and delivered by Australian Disability.
- Circles Team members have been invited (paid role) to co-deliver online training on the Circles model, run by Inclusion Melbourne.

## Awards:

- Our interpreter Han was awarded the PREMIER'S MULTICULTURAL COMMUNITY MEDAL (Winner 2023 All Graduates Interpreting and Translating Language Services Medal)
- Our Circles program is an Australian Disability Service Awards (for Best Community Program). Winner to be announced 23rd November.

## Last year

- Supporting peers from diverse backgrounds to build skills, knowledge, and capabilities, increase their confidence in speaking up, facilitating and supporting circles of support in their peer networks.
- Engagement of diverse communities on the benefits of Circles of Support for people with disability and their families from diverse backgrounds.
- Supporting the inclusion of people with disability from diverse backgrounds in their local community.

In June 2022, the Circles of Support Initiative won a ZEST Award which showcases innovation and excellence in the Community Sector, a significant recognition of impact of the Circles Widen project.

## Evaluation recommendations

That DDAlliance continue to build and promote Circles of Support in CALD communities, that builds capacity and the connections of people to circles of support.

This should include:

- Exploring options for philanthropic funding to attract ongoing funding;
- Exploring possibilities of using Circles of Support to attract NDIS funding for individual participants;
- That DDAlliance write an Easy Read summary of the outcomes of the project and promote this on the DDAlliance website.

# EVALUATION

## Overview

CDAH and DDAlliance continued their joint evaluation initiative: 'Exploring benefits and challenges of peer support for people with disability in peer support organisations: A co-production project'.

The evaluation team is composed of four lived experience researchers from CDAH and four from DDA: Julie Magill, David Yang, Julie Duong, Farhana Rahman.

## Participation and progress update

During this financial year the focus of the interviewing of round 2 participants, data analysis and writing of the final report. As of the 30th June 2022 the evaluation had recruited 43 people to the study, including:

- 16 peer leaders
- 20 people with disability
- 13 peers for the training survey
- 7 lived experienced researchers.

Of these 43 people, 23 of them were participants from a CALD background.

Overall the aim is to recruit and:

- Interview up to 60 people with disability to explore benefits and challenges of peer support, including 10 peer leaders
- hold 2 Focus group with 10 peer leaders
- Survey up to 100 participants who attend any training and education sessions on peer support and mentoring
- Interview lived experience researchers on their experiences

The team has almost completed the final report (expected completion date July 30th 2023). The report will be translated into Plain English/easy read and DDAlliance core languages before being shared in the CDAH and DDAlliance community and publicly.

The team also presented at two conferences, The Qualitative Report Conference, Florida University in America on the 17th February 2023. The team gave a 20 minutes presentation on Inclusion and diversity in a pre and post COVID world: The power of lived experience researchers in peer support. The team also gave 2 presentations at the 'Together We Can' Peer Support Conference in Sydney on 20th & 21st March 2023. The first presentation was a 45-minute panel discussion exploring the experience for lived experience researchers, The second was a 35 minute presentation on the findings of the research project so far. The evaluation team also wrote a Protocol paper which will be submitted to the British Medical Journal for consideration for publishing.

“My life has been transformed since joining the research team at DDA. Reading someone else's transcript and knowing their stories makes me emotional and eventually empowered as I learn how they are dealing with their lived experiences and making their lives better. After joining the organization and the research team, I get the identity, and I have a feeling for being a part of society; yes, I feel like I can do something like others that can add significant value to this society”

- Farhana Rahman, Lived Experience Researcher



Image description: 4 peers with one peer holding a microphone speaking. There is a screen behind them it with the messages.

# OUR OTHER WORK

## Parents and Family as Allies Workshop

Working with our long-time ally Barbel Winter, this workshop focused on the ways in which parents and family members can be supportive allies to people with disability and challenge social exclusion in their communities. A peer facilitator shared his lived experience with the group and talked about the importance of listening to the voices of people with disability. Participants learned about 'walking alongside' rather than leading. They reflected on stigma and shared their experiences as parents. Through playing out common everyday scenarios, they practiced their communication skills and discussed actions they can take to make a difference.

## NDIS CALD Strategy 2023 – 2027

DDAlliance and peers continue to be actively involved in numerous initiatives designed to increase participation and enhance outcomes of people from CALD background with disability in the NDIS. These have included the NDIS CALD Strategy External Advisory Group and the NDIS CALD Strategy summits.

## Involvement in community expos

DDAlliance team members have started connecting with communities through our involvement in various expos including:

- Deaf Festival Sydney
- Western Sydney Employment, Life skills and Leisure Expo

## NDIS Review

As part of the recent NDIS review, DDAlliance team members have been involved in a number of focus groups. Held by the National Ethnic Disability Alliance, these focus groups are aimed at better understanding how the NDIS Review can ensure culturally safe approaches are consistently delivered, the specific issues to accessing the NDIS, and what needs to happen to ensure appropriate information is available to navigate the NDIS.



# TREASURER'S MESSAGE



Image description: Photo of Julie Magill

I would like to thank the Board members for renominating me as Treasurer. During the 2022-2023 financial year, COVID-19 has continued to have a financial impact on the progress of DDAlliance's projects. We continued to work remotely, with most project related expenses and staff related costs being underspent. However, we started to slowly go into hybrid in the beginning of this year, but also remained online and so, we exhausted some of our funding to continue the work we do at DDA.

Office related expenses were reduced. We signed a lease agreement for a office space in Parramatta at the beginning of the 2022-23 financial year.

Despite the barriers presented by the pandemic, our team and projects remained very active. Our income decreased by 3.6% compared to the previous financial year and our expenses increased by 7.78% for project related costs.

Over the financial year, we received a total income of \$898,403, the vast majority of which came from our grants.

We spent \$953,076 most of which was spent on staff wages and salaries. It was also mostly spent on consultancy, rent and interpret expenses. At the end of June 2023, we had a deficit of \$54,673 which was a lower amount than last year. However, our total savings decreased from the previous financial year to \$217,706.

For more details, please refer to the financial report.

On behalf of the Board, I would like to thank Sylvia Chou (our accountant) for her ongoing support and advice, and Stephen Sproats (our auditor), for ensuring that our reports comply with the accounting rules and regulations. Finally, I want to thank all of our peers and allies for their ongoing commitment, hard work and support during the year. I look forward to working with you all again in the next year!

**Julie Magill**  
**Treasurer**

# FINANCIAL REPORT

**DIVERSITY & DISABILITY ALLIANCE INC**

ABN 34 756 597 466

**FINANCIAL STATEMENTS**

**AS AT 30 JUNE 2023**

**DIVERSITY & DISABILITY ALLIANCE INC**

**FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED  
30 JUNE 2023**

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## MANAGEMENT DECLARATION

### DIVERSITY & DISABILITY ALLIANCE INC

The Board of Management of Diversity & Disability Alliance Inc declare in their opinion:

- (a) The attached financial statements in respect of the year ended 30 June 2023 and notes thereto comply with accounting standards
- (b) The attached financial statements and notes thereto give a true and fair view of the financial position and performance of the association
- (c) The attached financial statements and notes thereto are in accordance with the Associations Incorporation Act 2009
- (d) There are reasonable grounds to believe that the association will be able to pay its debts as and when they become due & payable.

This statement has been made in accordance with a resolution of the Committee and is signed for on behalf of the Committee.

President



(Abraham Darouiche)

7 November 2023

Secretary



Parramatta

#### Auditors Independence Declaration

To the Executive of the Diversity & Disability Alliance Inc

I declare that, to the best of my knowledge and belief, during the financial year ended 30 June 2023 there have been:

(a) No contraventions of the auditors independence requirements as set out in the Corporations Act 2001 & Associations Incorporation Act 2009 in relation to the audit; and

(b) No contraventions of any applicable code of professional conduct in relation to the audit.



Stephen Sproats  
Registered Company Auditor  
7/288 Newline Road Dural

7 November 2023

**DIVERSITY & DISABILITY ALLIANCE INC**

**STATEMENT OF COMPREHENSIVE INCOME  
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2023**

	2023	2022
<b>REVENUE</b>		
Grants Income	887,289	929,662
Donation	-	20
Workshop	2,343	1,390
Interest	8,771	1,363
<b>TOTAL REVENUE</b>	<b>898,403</b>	<b>932,435</b>
<b>EXPENDITURE</b>		
Advertising	11,437	8,583
Audit Fees	-	3,840
Accounting	39,840	29,673
Bank Fees	449	437
Catering	17,277	1,581
Conference	1,630	
Consultancy	105,342	82,386
Evaluation	37,816	6,785
Freight	-	1,236
General	8,060	1,968
Insurance	2,458	2,464
Interest	94	-
Office Expenses	4,255	9,847
Participant Support	-	3,865
Printing & Stationery	314	87
Provision for Annual Leave	3,834	17,924
Provision for Annual LSL	3,394	15,389
Provision for TOIL	306	1,248
Rent	43,674	3,273
Superannuation	52,195	50,317
Subscriptions	5,507	4,029
Telephone	6,101	5,416
Interpret Expenses	76,610	92,542
Training	6,075	6,832
Travel	6,841	315
Wages & Salaries	507,459	527,053
Workers Compensation	12,108	9,710
	<b>953,076</b>	<b>884,304</b>
<b>SURPLUS</b>	<b>-54,673</b>	<b>48,131</b>
<b>NET SURPLUS (DEFICIT) FOR YEAR</b>	<b>- 54,673</b>	<b>48,131</b>
<b>TOTAL COMPREHENSIVE INCOME FOR YEAR</b>	<b>-\$ 54,673</b>	<b>\$ 48,131</b>



**DIVERSITY & DISABILITY ALLIANCE INC**

**STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION  
AS AT 30 JUNE 2023**

	2023	2022
<b>ACCUMULATED FUNDS</b>	<b>\$ 217,706</b>	<b>\$ 272,379</b>
<b>Represented by:-</b>		
<b>CURRENT ASSETS</b>		
Cash on Hand	58	58
Cash at Bank	1,376,210	1,197,858
Prepayments	7,952	9,135
Trade Debtors	86,314	1,220
Credit Card Deposit	5,193	5,193
Bond	1,516	0
<b>TOTAL CURRENT ASSETS</b>	<b>1,477,243</b>	<b>1,213,464</b>
<b>TOTAL ASSETS</b>	<b>1,477,243</b>	<b>1,213,464</b>
Trade Creditors (Note 7)	140,150	68,656
Grants in Advance (Note 8)	1,016,115	776,692
Provision for Employee Entitlements (Note 9)	103,272	95,737
<b>TOTAL LIABILITIES</b>	<b>1,259,537</b>	<b>941,085</b>
<b>NET ASSETS</b>	<b>\$ 217,706</b>	<b>\$ 272,379</b>

**DIVERSITY & DISABILITY ALLIANCE INC**

**STATEMENT OF CHANGES IN EQUITY  
FOR YEAR ENDING 30 JUNE 2023**

<b>Balance at 30 June 2021</b>	224,248
Net Surplus	48,131
Other comprehensive income	-
Total comprehensive income for the year	48,131
<b>Balance at 30 June 2022</b>	272,379
Net Surplus	-54,673
Other comprehensive income	-
Total comprehensive income for the year	-54,673
<b>Balance at 30 June 2023</b>	<b>\$ 217,706</b>

**DIVERSITY & DISABILITY ALLIANCE INC**

**STATEMENT OF CASH FLOWS  
FOR YEAR ENDING 30 JUNE 2023**

	2023	2022
<b>Cash Flows from Operating Activities</b>		
Receipts from Funding Bodies & Clients	898,403	859,198
Payments to suppliers and employees	664,729	964,586
<b>Net Cash inflow from Operating Activities</b>	<u>178,351</u>	<u>-105,388</u>
<b>Net Cash outflow from Equipment Purchases</b>	0	0
Net Increase (Decrease) in cash held	178,351	-105,388
Cash at beginning of year	1,197,917	1,303,305
<b>Cash at End of Financial Year</b>	<u>\$ 1,376,268</u>	<u>\$ 1,197,917</u>
<b>Reconciliation of Operating Surplus after tax to Net Cash Inflow From Operations</b>		
Operating Surplus After Income Tax	-54,673	48,132
Increase/Decrease		
Prepayments	1,183	-7,144
Sundry Debtors	-85,094	-1,220
Bond	-1,516	0
Creditors	71,494	-12,096
Grants in Advance	239,423	32,064
Provision for Employee Entitlements	7,534	-165,125
	<u>\$ 178,351</u>	<u>-\$ 105,389</u>

**DIVERSITY & DISABILITY ALLIANCE INC**  
**NOTES TO AND FORMING PART OF THE ACCOUNTS**  
**FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2023**

**1. Corporate Information**

Diversity & Disability Alliance Inc operates under the Association Incorporation Act 2009 (NSW). Its business premise is in Parramatta and operates throughout greater Sydney.

**2. Summary of Significant Accounting Policies**

**a) Basis of Preparation**

This general purpose financial report has been prepared in accordance with Associations Incorporation Act 2009 (NSW), Australian Accounting Standards and other authoritative pronouncements of the AASB & Urgent issues group interpretations. The financial report has been prepared on the basis of historical cost and does not take into consideration changing values of money or current valuations of non-current assets. Cost is based on the fair values of the consideration given in exchange for assets.

**b) Significant accounting judgments, estimates & assumptions**

The preparation of financial statements requires management to make judgements, estimates & assumptions that affect the application of policies and reported amounts of assets, liabilities, income & expenses. The estimates and associated assumptions are based on historical experience and other factors that are believed to be reasonable under the circumstances, the results of which form the basis of making judgments. Actual results may differ from these estimates

The estimates & underlying assumptions are reviewed on an ongoing basis. Revisions to accounting estimates are recognised in the period in which the estimate is revised if the revision affects only that period or in the period of the revision and future periods if the revision affects both current & future periods.

**c) Revenue Recognition**

Revenue is recognised when the association is legally entitled to the income and the amount can be quantified with reasonable accuracy and is net of GST

**d) Expenditure**

All expenditure is accounted for on an accruals basis and has been classified under headings that aggregate all costs related to the category

**e) Cash**

Cash & Cash equivalents in the balance sheet comprise cash at bank and in hand and in short term deposits are stated at their nominal value

**f) Trade Debtors**

Trade Debtors are stated at original invoice amount less any Provision for doubtful debts where applicable. Normal trading terms are 7 to 30 days

**g) Plant & Equipment**

Fixed assets are depreciated over the expected useful life on a reducing balance basis.

**h) Grants in Advance**

Grants in Advance are carried forward at their original amount and are to be provided subsequent to the balance date

**i) Employee Leave**

The liability for Annual & Long Service Leave is recognised and measured at the amount expected to be paid when liabilities are settled

**j) Provisions**

These are recognised when there is a present obligation as a result of past funding and it is probable that an outflow will be required using reasonable estimates

**k) Government Grants**

Grants are matched against expenditure in the year expenditure is incurred and in accordance with funding body requirements

**3. Income Tax**

No income tax is payable as the entity is exempt from taxation.

	2023	2022
<b>4. Contingent Liabilities</b>	<b>\$nil</b>	<b>\$nil</b>
<b>5. Capital Expenditure Commitments</b>	<b>\$nil</b>	<b>\$nil</b>
<b>6. Segment Information</b>		
The association operates predominantly in one industry, as it acts as sponsors for Government funded projects. The company operates in one geographical region, being Sydney, NSW		
<b>7. Trade Creditors</b>		
Credit Card	1,390	1,472
GST	66,155	(6,710)
PAYG	19,894	27,845
Superannuation Payable	10,980	14,244
Trade Creditors	28,169	18,869
Accruals	<u>13,562</u>	<u>12,936</u>
	<u>\$140,150</u>	<u>\$68,556</u>
<b>8. Grants in Advance</b>		
Department of Social Services	<u>1,016,115</u>	<u>776,692</u>
	<u>\$1,016,115</u>	<u>\$776,692</u>
<b>9. Employee Entitlements</b>		
Provision for Annual Leave	82,086	78,252
Provision for TOIL Leave	2,403	2,096
Provision for Long Service Leave	<u>18,783</u>	<u>15,389</u>
	<u>\$103,272</u>	<u>\$104,023</u>



## INDEPENDENT AUDITORS REPORT TO MEMBERS OF DIVERSITY & DISABILITY ALLIANCE INC

### Opinion

I have audited the accompanying financial statement of Diversity & Disability Alliance Inc which comprises the Statement of Financial Position as at 30 June 2023, Statement of Changes in Equity, Statement of Comprehensive Income and Cash flow statement for the year ended on that date, notes comprising a summary of significant accounting policies and the executive assertion statement.

In my opinion, the accompanying financial statement of Diversity & Disability Alliance Inc is in accordance with the Associations Incorporation Act 2009, including:

- (a) giving a true and fair view of the associations financial position as at 30 June 2023 and of its financial performance for the year then ended on that date: and
- (b) complying with Australian Accounting Standards (including the Australian Accounting Interpretations) and Associations Incorporation Act 2009.

### Basis for opinion

I conducted the audit in accordance with Australian Auditing Standards. My responsibilities under those standards are further described in the 'Auditors responsibilities for the Audit of the financial statement' section of my report. I am independent of the association in accordance with the ethic requirements of the Accounting Professional & 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, and I have fulfilled our other ethical responsibilities in accordance with the code.

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

### Responsibilities of the Responsible Entities for the Financial Statement

The management of the Incorporated Association are responsible for the preparation a financial report that gives a true and fair view and have determined the basis of preparation described in Note 1 to the financial statement is appropriate and in accordance with Australian Accounting Standards and the Associations Incorporations Act 2009 and for such internal control as the executive determine is necessary to enable the presentation of the financial report that is free of material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

In preparing the report the financial report, the responsible persons are responsible for assessing the association's ability to continue as a going concern, disclosing, as applicable, matters relating to going concern and using the going concern basis of accounting unless the responsible persons either intend to liquidate the association or to cease operations or have no realistic alternative but to do so.

Those charged with governance are responsible for overseeing the associations financial reporting process.

### Auditors Responsibilities for the Audit of the Financial Statement

My objective is to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial report as a whole is free of material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error, and to issue an auditor's report that includes my opinion. Reasonable assurance is a high level of assurance but is not a guarantee that an audit conducted in accordance with the 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 aggregate, they could be reasonably be expected to influence the economic users taken on the basis of this report.



As part of an audit in accordance with Australian Auditing Standards, we 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 my 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 circumstance, but not for the purpose of expressing an opinion on the effectiveness of the association's internal control.
- Evaluate the appropriateness of accounting policies used and the reasonableness of accounting estimates and related disclosures by the responsible persons.
- Conclude on the appropriateness of the responsible persons' use of the going concern basis of accounting and based on the audit evidence obtained, whether material uncertainty exists related to events or conditions that may cast significant doubt on the association ability to continue as a going concern. If I conclude that a material uncertainty exists, I am required to draw attention in the Auditors report to the related disclosures in the financial statement or if such disclosures are inadequate, to modify my opinion. My conclusions are based on the audit evidence obtained up to the date of the audit report. However, future events or conditions may cause the association to cease as a going concern.
- Evaluate the overall presentation, structure and content of the financial statement, including the disclosures, and whether the financial statement presents the underlying transactions and events in a manner that achieves fair presentation.

I communicate with the responsible persons regarding, among other matters, the planned scope and timing of the audit and significant audit findings, including any significant deficiencies in internal control I identify during the audit. effectiveness of the association's internal control

**Stephen A Sproats**  
**Registered Company Auditor 3932**

**Dural**  
**7 November 2023**