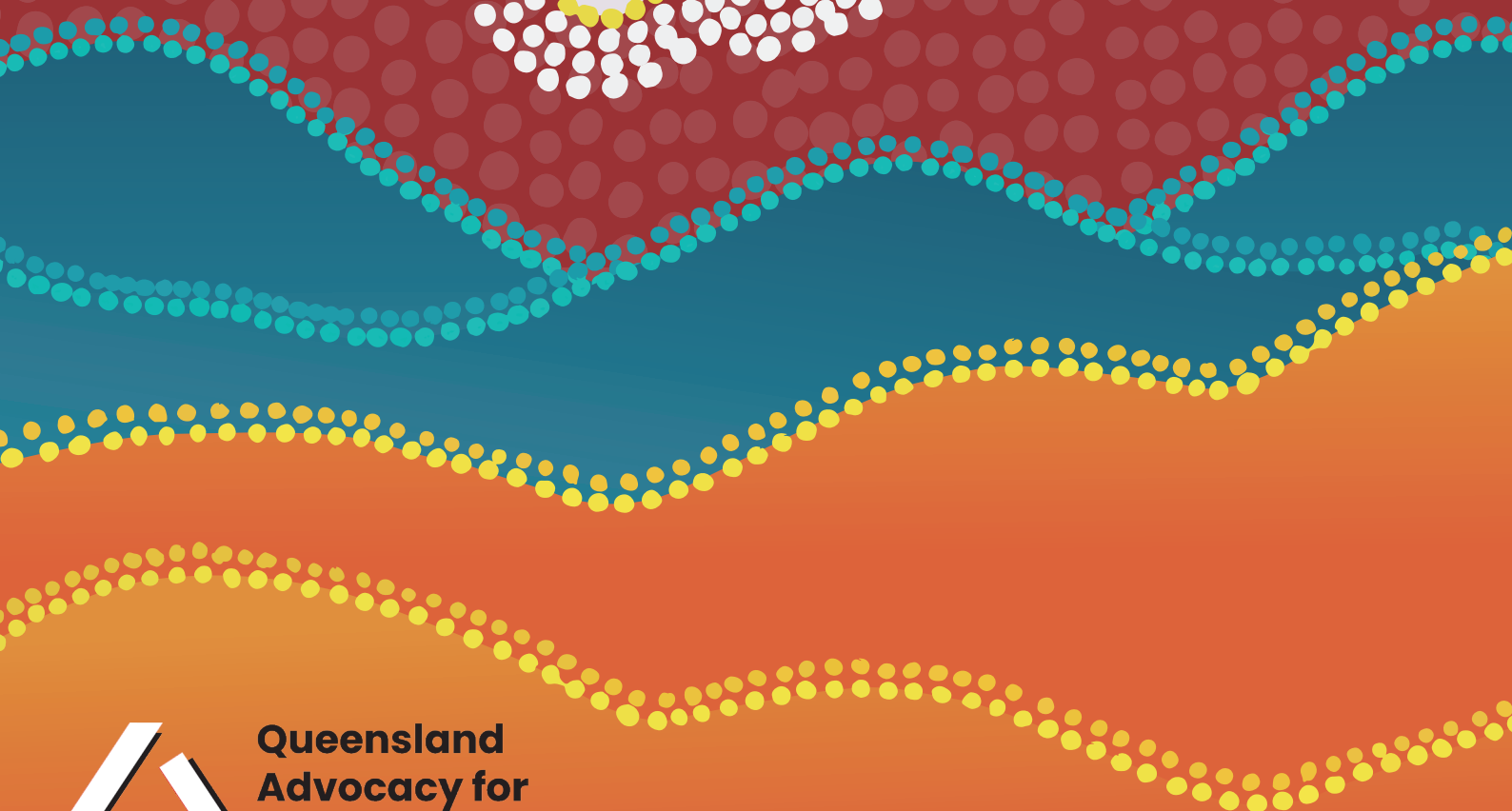


Annual Report 2021-2022



**Queensland
Advocacy for
Inclusion**

Our Vision

Inclusive communities where all people are equally valued and enjoy human rights.

Our Purpose

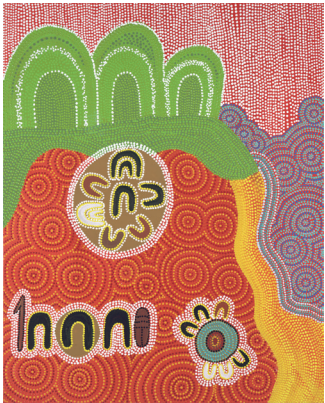
To advocate for the protection and advancement of the needs, rights and lives of people with disability in Queensland.

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Artist acknowledgement

The artwork used throughout this report is derived from the artwork by Uncle Paul Calcott which was commissioned by QAI in 2021. You can listen to Uncle Paul explain the story of the artwork on our YouTube channel.



Acknowledgement of Country

Queensland Advocacy for Inclusion (QAI) respectfully acknowledges First Nations people as the Traditional Custodians of this land and recognises their role in our work, in the disability community and in society. QAI acknowledges the impact of colonisation and the continual social, emotional, and physical consequences it has for First Nations people and commits to building a brighter future together.



About us

Established in 1987 by a small group of passionate Queenslanders with and parents of people with disability, QAI is an independent not-for-profit advocacy organisation and specialist community legal centre for people with disability. We are first and foremost a systems advocacy organisation focused on changing attitudes and policy to improve the lives of the most vulnerable people with disability. We started with a small team of three staff and a Management Committee run by a majority of people with disability and have always been an organisation that champions the expression nothing about us, without us.

Having grown immensely since 1987, we are now an accredited community legal centre, have accredited Economic and Social Council status with the United Nations and run eleven advocacy services with around 35 staff. In 2020, QAI became the first organisation in Queensland to voluntarily opt-in to be bound by the Human Rights Act 2019 (Qld). In the face of our expansion, we have worked hard to ensure our systems advocacy remains at the core of our organisation and we are now not only guided and informed by the wisdom and lived experiences of our Management Committee, but of our many individual clients as well.

Vale Jeremy Ward

QAI acknowledges with sadness the passing of Jeremy Ward, who was a founding visionary for our organisation. Jeremy was the founding director of QAI and led our organisation until 1998, his commitment to the work, mission, vision, principles and values of QAI is undeniable. In an editorial to our Annual Report in 1997 he said “QAI has always set its own priorities. A lot of what we do is not done by any other group in Queensland, and in some respects, Australia. Yet in times when community and government demands on advocacy are more and more to meet their agendas and priorities, we need to be more resolute in setting our own agenda”.



This brave approach meant Jeremy was a leader in systems advocacy resulting in radical change for people with disability. In the late 1990s he established the Closure of Institutions Reference Group at QAI and lead the campaign to close archaic and oppressive institutions for people with disability such as the Challinor Centre and Basil Stafford Centre. He campaigned for the introduction of modern guardianship laws which continue to uphold human rights for people with disability and form a large part of the work of our contemporary human rights advocacy practice. He was also an author, with published books about his daughter and mother.

Staff and management committee of QAI remember Jeremy as someone who had a huge impact on the history of QAI and who was a strong advocate for human rights and people with disability. As one staff member said, “he had a huge impact on my life in so many ways, and definitely shaped many of my views on life, human behaviour and choosing advocacy as both a personal and professional pathway”.

QAI pays our respects to this great leader and offers condolences to his friends and family. We strive to continue his legacy of deinstitutionalisation and human rights for people with disability.

Our people

Management Committee		
President	Byron Albury	
Vice President	Fiona Kennedy	
Treasurer	Meriel Stanger (to 30 March)	Ted Cole (from 30 March)
Secretary	Donna Best	
Committee Members	Brendon Donohue	Ted Cole (to 30 March)
	Deborah Jones	Trevor Boone
	Niki Edwards	

Staff as of 30 June 2022		
Chief Executive Officer	Matilda Alexander	
Chief Operating Officer	Megan Pearce	
Chief Financial Officer	Bill Kyle	
Deputy CEO & Principal Solicitor	Emma Phillips	
Principal Solicitors	Carly Dennis	Andrea de Smidt
	Sian Thomas	
Network Coordinator	Caitlin De Cocq Van Delwijnen	
Senior Solicitors	David Wenitong	Vinay Veerabhadra
	Dayne Kingsford	
Solicitors	Alex Ladd	Kerryn Luppi
	Alzena Mariani	Saibal Kar
	Jess Park	
Indigenous Advocate	David Wenitong	
Systems Advocates	Sophie Wiggans	
	Courtney Wolf	

Staff as of 30 June 2022 continued		
Advocates	Chloe de Almeida	Ridmi Ambalanduwa
	Elizabeth Francis	Sara Martin
	Gabrielle Hill	Sarah Thompson
	Jennifer Smith	Tania Steinmuller
	Louise Martin	Zubair Nomani
Information & Referral Officers	Paula Herlihen	
	Courtney Wolf	Linda Earley
Paralegals & Graduate Solicitors	Joel Lago	
	Brianna Bell	Neve Fraser
	Dona Munasinghe	Sonia Oki
Administrative Officers	Eva Thelander	Tara Seiffert-Smith
	Cate Sudbury	Rebecca Howes
Communications & Admin Officer	Shannon Bell	
Bookkeeper	Helen Della-Ricca	

Our volunteers

We would like to thank our invaluable volunteers, pro bono legal support and the students who chose to complete their placements with us for their time, energy and support.

Universities and students: University of Queensland Pro Bono Centre. QUT Social Work & Human Services Placements Yasmin Kaya, Kenta Holmes, Luke Howe and Jane Mulcahy. Bond University Law Students Maddison Anderson and Preet Deol.

Pathways Volunteers: Andrew Wiltshire, Angie Cappelli, Douglas Anderson, Georgia Mackie, Isabella Douglas, Luke Howes and Paris Sinclair.

Barristers: Benedict Coyne, David Cormack, Joshua Creamer and Samuel Lane.

Law firms: Allens, Barry.Nilsson. Lawyers, Hall & Wilcox and MinterEllison.

Our services

QAI has four Advocacy Practices which provide a total of eleven services across various areas of need for people with disability.

Human Rights Advocacy Practice

- Disability Royal Commission Advocacy
- Human Rights Law
- Indigenous Advocacy
- Justice Support Program

Mental Health Advocacy Practice

- Mental Health Law
- LAQ appointed matters

NDIS Advocacy Practice

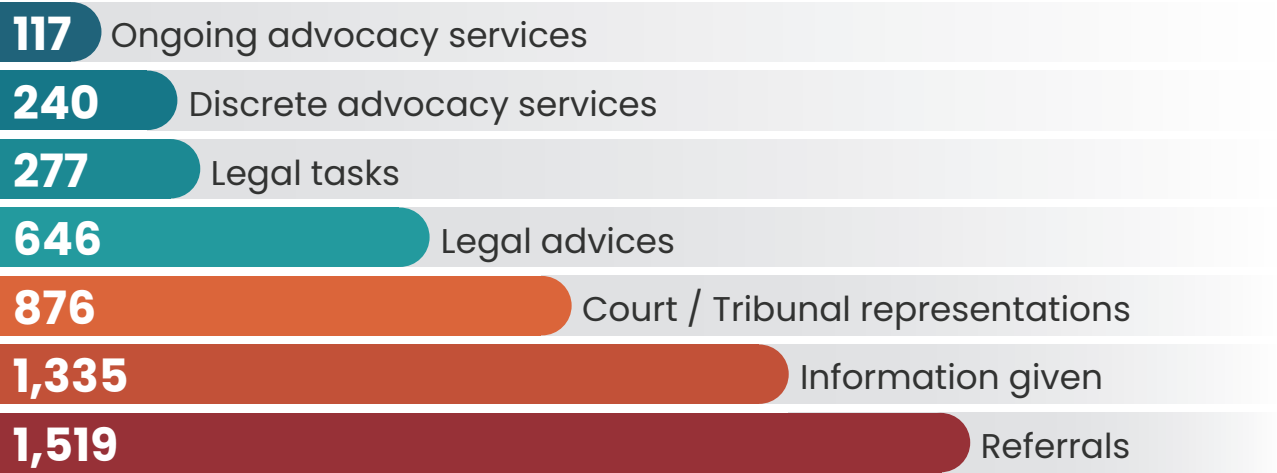
- NDIS Appeals Support
- NDIS Decision Support

Disability Advocacy Practice

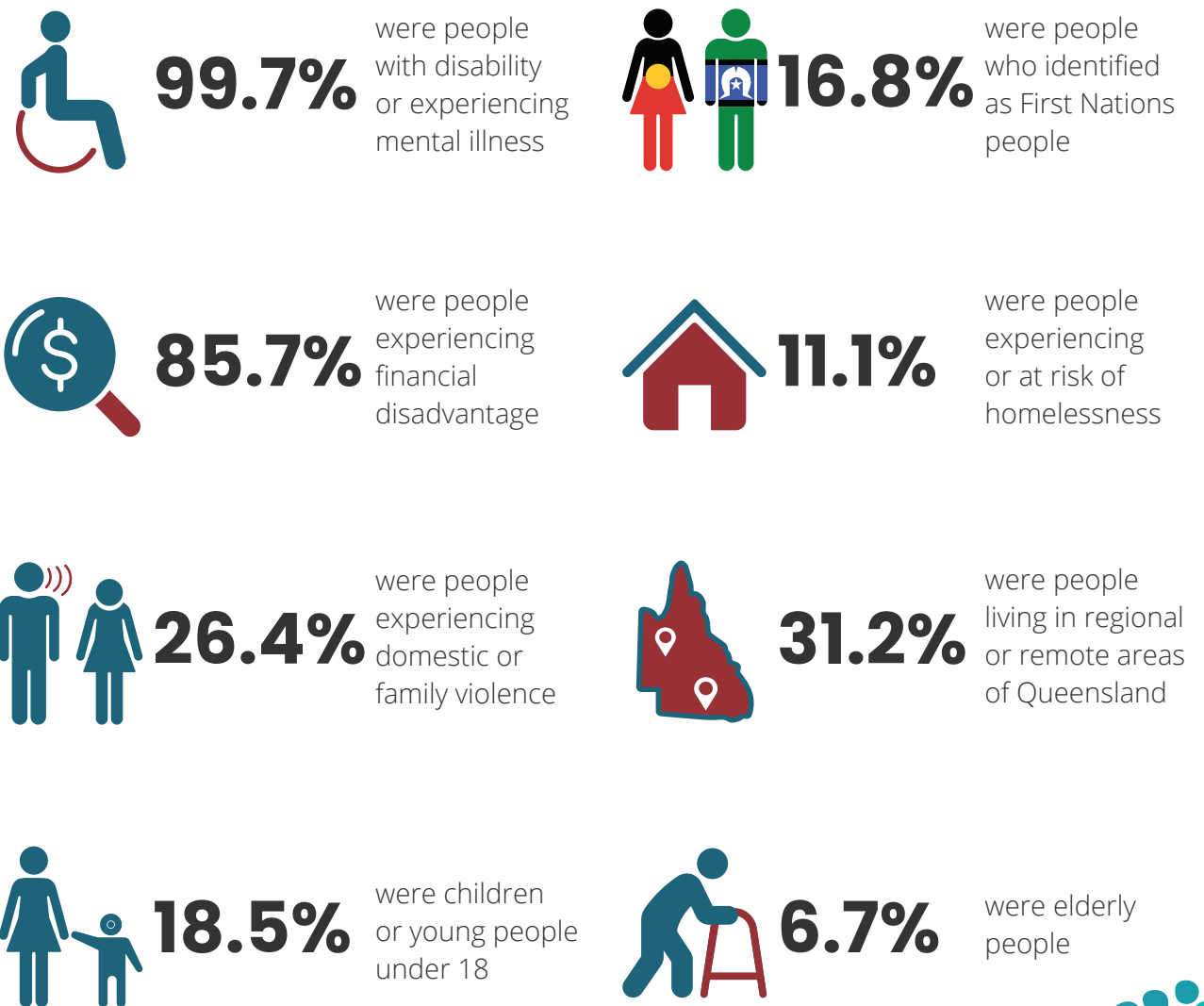
- Young Peoples Program
- Education Advocacy
- Pathways



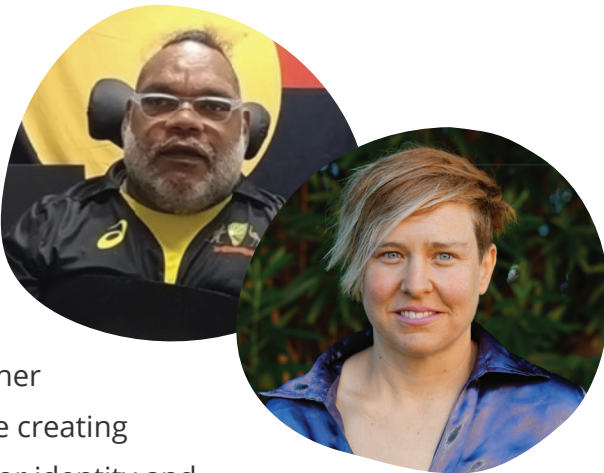
*Includes referrals and information we gave due to capacity or when the issue was outside of our scope.



Who we helped



President & CEO report



The changes we advocate for create greater accountability in the law, the government and in our communities. But this greater accountability can only be realised with vigilance and determination to shine a light on threats to human rights. This is what we do at QAI, working alongside our clients to ensure no one is left behind and forgotten and we all can fully realise our human rights.

This year we have seen the Disability Royal Commission continue its work and much of our individual and systems advocacy has focused on this unique opportunity to draw attention to the violence abuse and neglect of people with disability, especially where this is supported by systems of ableist oppression.

This year QAI has taken on a new leadership role in the disability advocacy community. With the support of many other disability advocacy organisations we won a tender to become the Principal Advocate for independent disability advocacy in Queensland.

Together we are creating a sector identity and community of practice for this important work. As the Principal Advocate, we coordinate the Queensland Independent Disability Advocacy Network (QIDAN) which brings together disability advocacy organisations to work together for the advancement of the needs, rights and lives of people with disability.

QAI has engaged in proactive advocacy to challenge systemic barriers, including raising awareness and resources around disability aware models of monitoring places of detention for torture and cruel, inhumane and degrading treatment. QAI was selected to present this work to the United Nations in New York and our resources have been well received overseas and at home. The time is overdue for a full implementation of the Optional Protocol to the UN Convention Against Torture in Australia and QAI champions doing this

QAI also led the way with a proactive campaign to stop the disproportionate use of school disciplinary absences for young people with disability. Our right to information request showed nearly half of school disciplinary absences were for young people with disability. QAI calls on the Queensland parliament to conduct an inquiry into school disciplinary absences immediately so that our vulnerable young people can have true equality of opportunity. Keeping our young people in schools right now will improve life outcomes for generations to come.

Guardianship and administration were also a focus of our systems and case work, with an emphasis on promoting personal autonomy and freedom for people with disability. We met with the Attorney General and QCAT President to make recommendations for changes to laws and processes.

An important focus of this year was on ensuring accountability of QAI to First Nations people with disability, launching our Reconciliation Action Plan and increasing our First Nations staff. We created a targeted role of Indigenous advocate and welcomed David Wenitong to this role.

Thank you to all staff, management committee and members for your hard work throughout the year and congratulations on fantastic outcomes and successes. A particular thank you to QAI's Deputy CEO, Emma Phillips whose contribution to QAI over many years has held the organisation together and maintained a strong human rights focus. We were sad to say goodbye at the end of the financial year and wish her well in her new job.

Byron Albury & Matilda Alexander

Systems advocacy

The 2021-22 financial year was another busy year for our systems advocacy work. All staff at QAI support and participate in systems advocacy and we believe systems advocacy is the most powerful way to effect long term change in society.

QAI has put people with disability at the centre of government decision making. We successfully advocated for vilification on the basis of disability to be included in our hate speech prevention laws. It is not OK to vilify and incite hatred against someone because of their disability and this was recognised in the recommendations of the parliamentary inquiry into Vilification.

We responded to a parliamentary inquiry into the Voluntary Assisted Dying Bill 2021, highlighting the risks for people with disability in schemes that legalise voluntary assisted dying without sufficient safeguards. We asserted that schemes which permit access to voluntary assisted dying on the basis of disability are extremely dangerous, as are schemes without robust mechanisms to identify abuse by family, carers or service providers. Voluntary assisted dying must never be a substitute for access to appropriate medical care, disability support services or palliative care, or indeed any other measure that would support the inclusion of a person with disability in

society. Schemes that seek to legalise voluntary assisted dying must accordingly contain unassailable safeguards that identify and protect against coercion, and which ensure the full, free, and informed consent of all people with disability seeking to access them.

Last year also saw our systems advocacy work continue to focus on the experiences of people with disability under the control of the Public Trustee and Public Guardian. QAI has long held significant concerns about the rights of Queenslanders who are subject to substituted decision-making arrangements. As we saw on the Four Corners report in March, the system is in dire need of substantial reform. QAI holds particular concerns about the lack of legal representation at guardianship and administration hearings before QCAT and the inappropriate use of interim orders. We raised these concerns directly with the Attorney General. QAI also reiterated our support for the recommendations made by the Public Advocate in their 'Preserving futures' report, which revealed a range of Public Trustee fees, policies and practices that suggest the Public Trustee is breaching some of its legal and fiduciary duties, and not acting in the interests of its clients. For example, QAI provided a submission to the Public Trustee's Fees and Charges review and gave evidence at the inquiry into the

Public Trustee (Advisory and Monitoring) Board Amendment Bill 2021.

Perhaps our most significant piece of systems advocacy, however, was our proactive report on the overrepresentation of students with disability and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students in school disciplinary absence statistics at Queensland state schools.



QAI partnered with the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Service Ltd (ATSILS) to highlight our concerns that students with disability and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students are being suspended and excluded from school more frequently than their peers. Under the Human Rights Act 2019 (Qld), the Department of Education has a legal obligation to uphold every child's right to access a primary and secondary education that is appropriate to their needs. However, figures obtained

through a Right to Information request show an unjustifiable and disproportionate use of school disciplinary absences among certain groups of students.

QAI and ATSILS released a report in February and publicly called upon the Queensland Human Rights Commissioner to conduct an inquiry into the use of school disciplinary absences in Queensland state schools. In response, QHRC Commissioner, Scott McDougall publicly agreed there is

“a pressing need to examine whether inappropriate suspension and expulsion practices are occurring in Queensland without adequate safeguards and protections”.

He said he was considering the request, including the “potential for an alternative option such as a parliamentary committee inquiry”.

The report was endorsed by other community organisations, including the Youth Advocacy Centre (YAC), Community Resource Unit (CRU) and

PeakCare, and received regular media coverage in the Courier Mail which published a series of articles documenting the issue.

QAI is currently examining data obtained via a second Right to Information request, which delves even deeper into the use of school disciplinary absences among students with backgrounds of disadvantage. The data obtained considers the rates of school disciplinary absences among students with disability and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students who live in out of home care. We want to maintain the momentum created by our report and will continue to push for a public inquiry into this critical issue. We need alternative, evidenced-based solutions to discipline that will successfully reduce behaviours of concern, whilst keeping students safe and engaged at school. We know that when school disciplinary absences are used sparingly alongside supportive interventions, there are better outcomes for students, families and teachers.

Another highlight of the year was QAI's attendance at the United Nations 15th Conference of States Parties (CoSP) to the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) in June 2021. CoSP is an annual gathering of governments, Disabled Peoples Organisations and civil society members who come together to share ideas and discuss the implementation of the CRPD around the world. QAI's CEO Matilda Alexander, Systems Advocate Sophie Wiggans, and youth delegate Naraja Clay, travelled to the United Nations as part of the broader Australian Civil Society delegation.

It was a wonderful week, with many new relationships formed and key learnings made.



Feedback on our UN side event and OPCAT resources

"Fantastic resources, thank you"

"Thank you for this presentation it was really informative"

"Thanks QAI for a powerful presentation - and congrats on the resources - so important and accessible in design"

Highlights included:

- Learning about the CRPD Committee's Draft Guidelines on Deinstitutionalization, including in Emergencies, and co-authoring a submission with People with Disability Australia (PWDA) in response to the guidelines following consultation with the broader Australian Civil Society delegation.
- Issuing a joint media release with the Australian Civil Society delegation in response to comments made by the Disability Royal Commission's chair, Ronald Sackville. The comments seemingly referred to advocacy for the adoption of accepted international human rights principles, such as inclusive education and supported decision-making, as 'binary thinking' that results in 'simple answers' to difficult questions.
- Hosting a side event, 'Disability Aware OPCAT monitoring: A Covid imperative' where QAI launched new resources that will aim to bring disability awareness to the implementation of the Convention Against Torture.
- Meeting Rosemary Kayess, Chairperson of the CRPD Committee and globally respected lawyer and academic who has tirelessly advocated for a socially inclusive society and for the advancement of the human rights of people with disability.
- Making a written intervention to the General Debate outlining our concerns about the risks to people with disability in closed environments and the inherent inability of closed environments to keep people safe from the spread of Covid-19.



QAI is particularly concerned that the proposal to monitor for torture in places of detention in the Inspector of Detention Services Bill 2021 does not extend to disability specific places of detention. We have made submissions to the Queensland parliament calling for disability aware monitoring for torture in Queensland and we will continue to focus on this issue as it continues to evolve.

Submissions

Topic	Submitted to
Voluntary Assisted Dying Bill 2021	Health and Environment Committee July 2021
NDIS Amendment Bill	Senate Community Affairs Committee July 2021
Coercive Control	Women’s Safety and Justice Taskforce July 2021
Purpose, Intent and Adequacy of the Disability Support Pension	Senate Community Affairs Committee July 2021
Vilification and people with disability	Legal Affairs and Safety Committee July 2021
National Register of Enduring Powers of Attorney	the Attorney General July 2021
Fees and Charges Review	Public Trustee of Queensland August 2021
Inspector of Detention Services Bill	Department of Attorney General August 2021
Supporting you to make your own decisions	National Disability Insurance Agency September 2021
Criminal Justice System Issues Paper	Disability Royal Commission September 2021
Inspector of Detention Services Bill	Legal Affairs and Safety Committee November 2021
Public Trustee (Advisory and Monitoring Board) Bill 2021	Community Support and Services Committee November 2021

Topic	Submitted to
NDIS 2021 – 2022 Annual Pricing Review	National Disability Insurance Agency November 2021
NDIS Amendment (Participant Service Guarantee and Other Measures) Bill 2021	Senate Community Affairs Committee November 2021
Institutional Economic Neglect	Disability Royal Commission December 2021
Religious Discrimination Bill 2021	Joint Committee on Human Rights December 2021
Reforming Queensland’s authorisation framework for the use of Restrictive Practices	Department of Seniors, Disability Services and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships, January 2021
The need for inquiry into school disciplinary absences in Queensland state schools	Queensland Human Rights Commissioner February 2021
Review of the Queensland Anti-Discrimination Act 1991	Queensland Human Rights Commission March 2021
A framework for a decriminalised sex work industry in Queensland	Queensland Law Reform Commission June 2022
Criminal Procedure Review – Magistrates Court	Criminal Procedure Review Team June 2021
Draft Guidelines on Deinstitutionalization	United Nations CRPD Committee June 2021

Feedback from key sector stakeholder

“QAI has been a hugely valuable contributor to legislative reform and systemic reform, in Queensland and nationally, aimed at improving the lives of people with disability”

QIDAN

In January 2022 QAI was funded to coordinate the Queensland Independent Disability Advocacy Network (QIDAN). QIDAN is comprised of core member organisations who deliver individual advocacy services to Queenslanders living with disability. These organisations are the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Disability Network Queensland, Aged and Disability Advocacy; Amparo Advocacy Inc., Capricorn Citizen Advocacy, Independent Advocacy in the Tropics, Mackay Advocacy Inc., People with Disability Australia, Queensland Advocacy for Inclusion, Rights in Action, Speaking Up For You, and TASC.

QIDAN has three aims:

Systemic advocacy

to take coordinated action to address systemic issues experienced by people with disability.

Member support

to provide a collaborative space for the exchange of information, resources and issues affecting disability advocacy organisations.

Sector advocacy

to promote the importance and value of independent disability advocacy on a local, state and national basis.

Since its official launch by Minister Craig Crawford on 01 April 2022, QIDAN has:

- Established regular meetings with both the NDIA and NDIS Quality & Safeguards Commission to raise concerns and provide recommendations based on advocate and client experiences
- Participated in the Queensland Disability Alliance to present key asks to the Federal election candidates
- Provided advice to State and Federal governments around the key issues experienced by disability advocates including advocacy funding



Presentations & Events

Presentations

Topic	Presented to
Connecting and reconnecting with the global disability advocacy community – The opportunities created by the UN Conference of States Parties to the CRPD	Australian Society for Intellectual Disability (ASID) Conference 2021
Human Rights in Action	Queensland Council of Social Service (QCOSS) Forum 2022
NDIS Appeals	Webinar facilitated by Community Legal Centres Queensland 2022
Inclusive and accessible Community Legal Education (CLE) materials	Community Legal Centres Queensland Conference 2022

Events



QAI hosted a side event to the 15th United Nations Conference of State Parties to the CRPD. The topic was “Disability aware OPCAT monitoring” and was used to launch a new suite of resources including Easy Read guides.

During Reconciliation Action Week for 2022, QAI released our new Reconciliation Action Plan for 2022 to 2026, featuring the artwork by Uncle Paul Calcott. We look forward to working on reconciliation and our key themes of Relationships, Respect and Accountability across all areas of our work.



QAI also partnered with a group of other disability organisations to hold an online election forum leading up to the federal election, which focused on the candidate’s disability policies.

Human Rights Advocacy Practice

QAI's Human Rights Advocacy Practice is a broad Practice comprised of a legal service, three non-legal advocacy services, and systems advocacy. These diverse services are united by the strong human rights focus which underpins all of the Practice's work. The service areas work separately and collaboratively, with internal referrals frequently made between services, to provide clients with wraparound support where appropriate. There is a strong, positive relationship between our individual and systems advocacy work, with insights gained through our individual advocacy informing our prioritisation and understanding of systemic issues. Unfortunately, due to funding, QAI's Social Work service concluded in 2021.

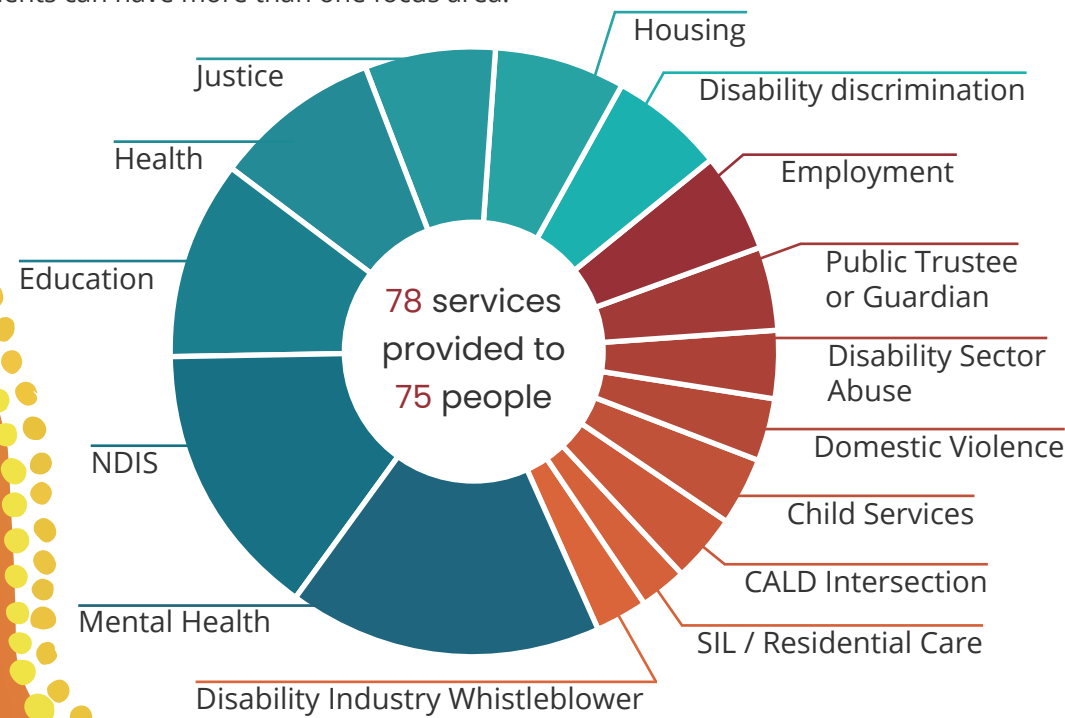
Disability Royal Commission Advocacy

What we do

Disability Royal Commission Advocacy provides advocacy support for people who wish to engage with the Disability Royal Commission and need help planning how best to tell their story, communicating their support needs to the Commission and engaging in a session. The Disability Royal Commission Advocacy team has conducted outreach to central Queensland, with QAI's Indigenous Advocate, as well as by visiting Level 3 support accommodation sites and having regular attendance at AMPARO Advocacy Inc.

Client focus areas

Please note clients can have more than one focus area.



"I really appreciated your support through the private session"

Case study - Heath

Heath* lives with Autism and has two school-aged daughters with disability. He bravely shared his story with the Commission via Private Session, recounting the terrible incidents of neglect and mistreatment experienced by his daughters at their primary school. One of Heath's daughters lives with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) and ADHD and was repeatedly subjected to suspensions, imposed isolation, segregation and physical restraint. For over twelve months she was separated from her peers.

The level of trauma Heath's daughter endured, resulted in her being deemed medically unfit to attend school. These incidents had a devastating effect on her mental health and resulted in multiple suicide attempts. Heath felt he had no other option, other than to pull her out of school.

Heath's other daughter lives with multiple disabilities and requires a specialist wheelchair to mobilise. The same school would not allow her to use her wheelchair, specifically designed for her needs, on school grounds and would use unauthorised equipment to transport her while at school. This resulted in Heath's daughter incurring injuries.

Despite Heath's numerous and escalated complaints, no resolution was forthcoming. Heath admitted that he got used to being ignored. Heath highlighted how cruel and punitive the education system is for children with disability. Heath believes that his daughters have been failed by the education system and acknowledged that the impacts will affect them both for the rest of their lives.

Heath was grateful for the opportunity to share his family's story and shine a light on these systemic failings. At the end of his Session, Heath informed the Commissioner that he felt listened to for the very first time.

*Name has been changed

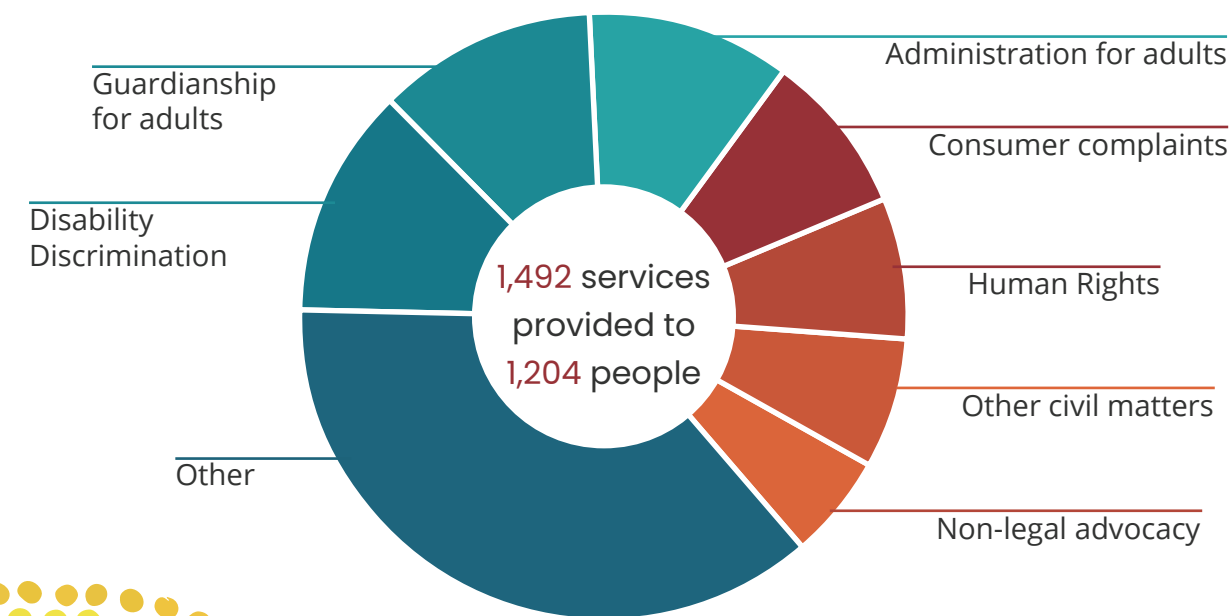
"Just wanted to say thank you so much for all your support over the past few years. You are such an amazing Advocate and were very inspiring to work with - making some real change"

Human Rights Law

What we do

Human Rights Law provides legal advice and representation for people with disability who need legal assistance to protect their human rights and covers, guardianship and administration, restrictive practices, forensic orders disability, discrimination, and human rights violations.

How we assisted



"I would like to thank you again for the effort time and everything else you have done for me throughout this long process I believe absolutely that you have done everything humanly possible in advocating for me and explaining different aspects involved in the overall process along the way. I would also like to thank you sincerely for treating me with such a high level of respect, dignity and understanding I could not have asked for any person with greater integrity. Thank you so much, I wish you all the best in your future."

Case study - Martin

Martin* is a 5-year-old boy who enjoys horse riding and has thrived while being engaged in this activity, in which he can participate in an ordinary and active way. Martin lives with significant disability, including Autism Spectrum, mild palsy and epilepsy and experiences significant social communication delays and is non-verbal. Horse riding has, to date, been the activity in which his disabilities create no impediment, and he was able to engage in horse riding lessons at his local equestrian centre with no additional support.

Some weeks after Martin commenced riding lessons at his local equestrian centre, he pinched his riding instructor on the elbow as part of an attempted communication. At the conclusion of that lesson, Martin's parents were advised that his lessons would not be able to be continued as the centre was "not equipped to deal with disabled people".

Martin's parents apologised and offered to provide additional supports should that be considered helpful for the centre (although it was not considered necessary), but the centre did not alter their position. Martin's parents made a complaint alleging that the centre had engaged in unlawful discrimination and approached QAI for assistance when the matter was scheduled for conciliation. On Martin's behalf, QAI engaged in extensive pre-conciliation negotiations and ultimately settled the matters on the terms sought by Martin's parents, which included a monetary donation made anonymously to a non-for-profit organisation supporting people with disability, the requirement that all staff of the centre undergo disability inclusion training and provision of an apology.

*Name has been changed

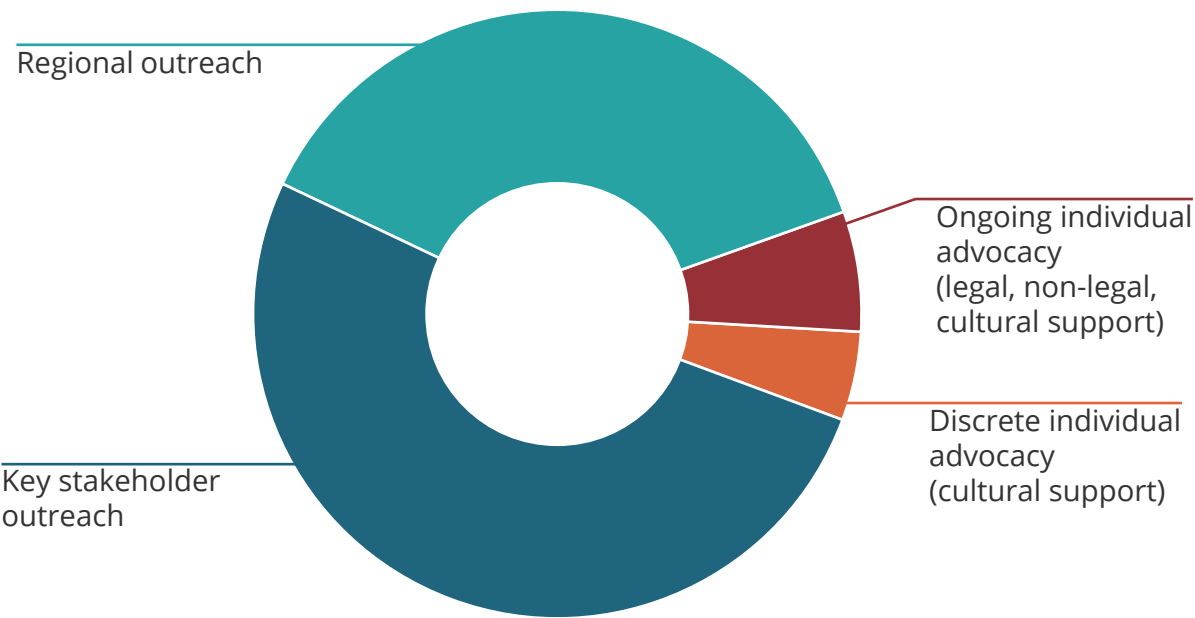
"I am very grateful for QAI. I finally felt that I was being listened to and it made me feel much less stressed knowing what my options are."

Indigenous Advocacy

What we do

QAI's Indigenous Advocate is a new role within QAI and acts as an internal consultant to build cultural competency within QAI and to improve QAI's relationship with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander clients, communities, and accessibility to QAI's services. Our Indigenous Advocate is a state-wide service with a focus on regional and remote areas. A primary role of QAI's Indigenous Advocate is engaging in community outreach. Since the Indigenous Advocate's roll commenced in 2021, the Advocate has engaged in regular outreach trips to Emerald and Woorabinda, as well as a significant outreach trip to Longreach, Winton, Cloncurry, and Mt Isa.

How we assisted



Case study – Alex

QAI assisted Alex* to appeal a decision of the MHRT to confirm his Forensic Order (Disability). Alex is a young Aboriginal man living in regional Queensland. To apply for a grant of aid for Counsel at the Mental Health Court, Legal Aid Queensland (LAQ) requires people to fill out a lengthy application form and provide financial details, court details and other relevant material as outlined on their checklist.

Without assistance, this can be quite a challenging task for our clients, particularly in Alex's case as he can't read or write and has an intellectual disability. We submitted the LAQ application without the Centrelink documents and bank statements as usually required with the application. We outlined in our application why Alex did not have the documents and would not be able to access the documents, so they could not be provided with the application.

When the LAQ grants team followed up to request the documents, we again advised Alex could not access them and advocated for the application to be processed without them. Our advocacy was successful when, despite the odds, Alex was given a grant of aid for his hearing. Alex's Forensic Order (Disability) was revoked by the Mental Health Court.

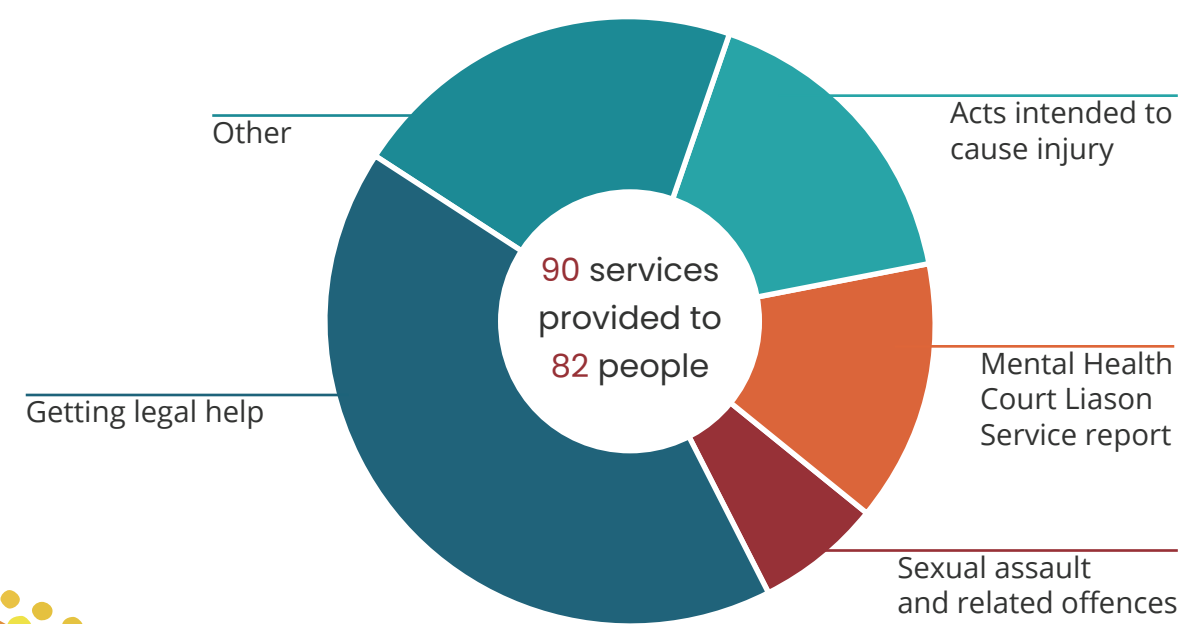
*Name has been changed

Justice Support Program

What we do

Justice Support Program (JSP) provides non-legal advocacy support for people with cognitive impairment who are involved in the criminal justice system. We help clients to understand and navigate the system, achieve a fair outcome, and address social and personal causes.

How we assisted



Case study – Taylor

Our advocate successfully assisted Taylor* to apply for Legal Aid under their Special Circumstances Policy. Taylor was asset rich but not able to access the considerable equity in her property except to take out a high interest-bearing loan.

Case study – Peter

Peter* had been accused of sexual assault of a co-worker at a supported employment workplace. Our advocate assisted Peter’s sister to engage a private lawyer to liaise with the Investigating Officer and resolve the matter. At the advocate’s recommendation his sister arranged for Peter to access targeted counselling about relationships, consent and appropriate behaviour.

Case study – Oliver

Last year Oliver* entered a plea to an offence which would have had to be referred to the Mental Health Court to clarify if he was fit for trial. He re-offended soon after but was only charged with a simple offence. This time JSP successfully advocated that his lawyer should refer the charge to the Court Liaison Service to fully explore whether he was fit for trial, as well as informing the Court about the extent of his chronic mental illness and cognitive disfunction and how these affected his behaviour.

*Names have been changed

“I would like to express our heartfelt gratitude to you for all the care and concern you have shown us, and for working tirelessly to ensure that the law worked in our favour. If it weren’t for your knowledge, the matter wouldn’t have been settled by now.”

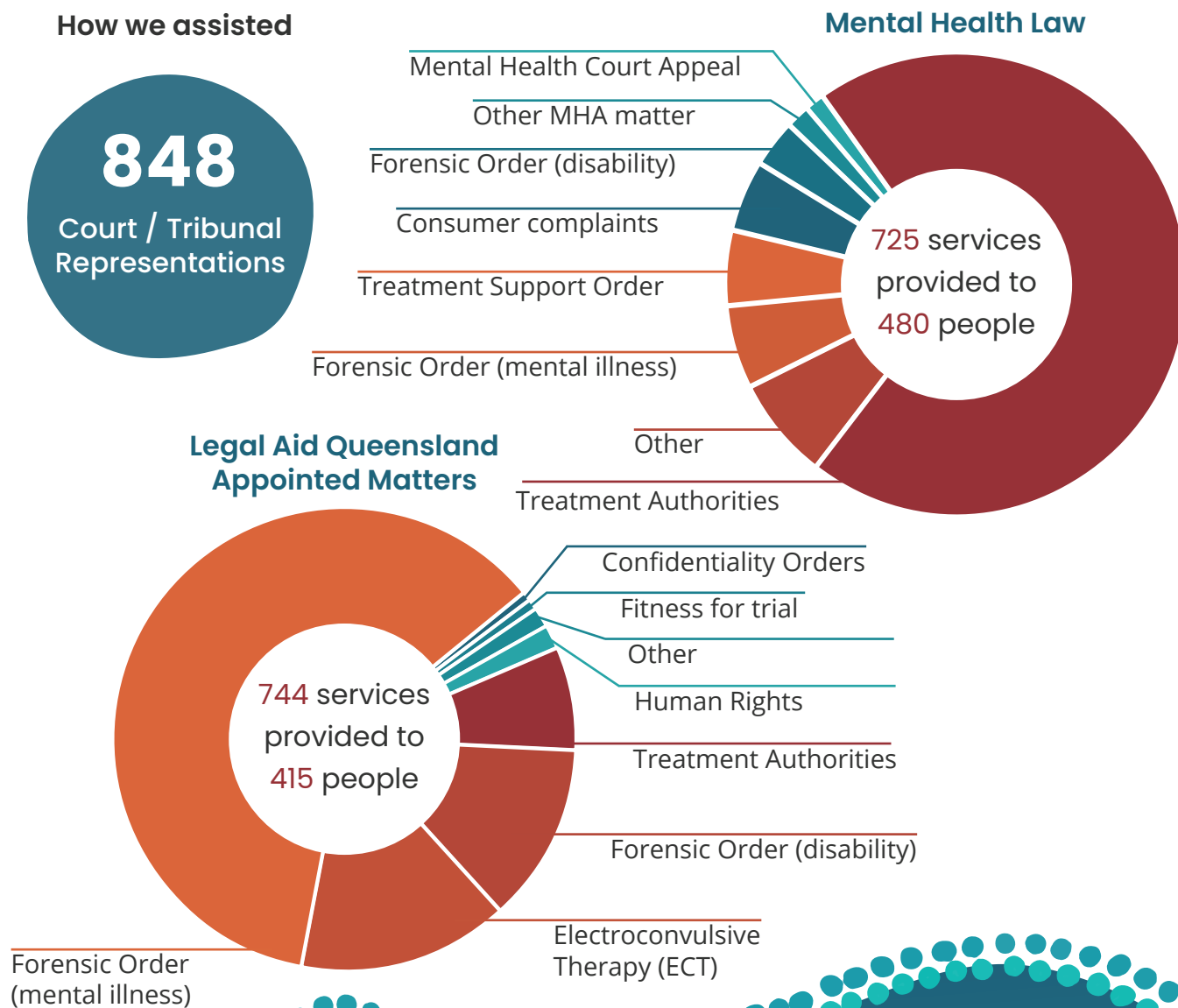
“Am very grateful for all your help and support yesterday through this most harrowing TRIAL I’m just keeping you up to date, am very grateful for your help Liz. I am feeling a lot more confident about things, am feeling a lot better within myself, thanks to you :)”

Mental Health Advocacy Practice

What we do

QAI's Mental Health Advocacy Practice helps individuals with disability receiving involuntary treatment in Queensland. Our mental health lawyers provide legal advice for matters arising under the Mental Health Act 2016 (Qld) and representation before the Mental Health Review Tribunal (MHRT) for people subject to Treatment Authorities, Forensic Orders (mental health and disability), Treatment Support Orders, Fitness for Trial Reviews, Confidentiality Order Applications, Applications for Electroconvulsive Therapy and Applications for Transfers to other authorised mental health services. Our team assist clients across Queensland providing both in person, telephone and video conference assistance as required.

How we assisted



"I have to say that I have never seen a consumers needs and wants reflected so well and presented to the MHRT"

Case study – Michael

We assisted Michael* who was subject to a Forensic Order (Mental Health) (FO) following offences of a prescribed nature when he was suffering from an acute episode of psychosis. Michael had been subject to involuntary treatment under an FO for several years and was an inpatient at an authorised mental health facility when he became our client. We assisted Michael for a period of nearly eight years in relation to reviews of his FO by the Mental Health Review Tribunal (MHRT).

Michael was discharged from hospital into the community in 2017, due to ongoing mental state stability and significant progress he had made in his rehabilitation including demonstrated compliance with all aspects of his treatment. Given Michael's progress, including gaining a well-developed understanding of his illness and what was required to keep him well, he wanted to manage his treatment and care more independently and expressed his wish for his FO to be revoked and a less restrictive order, a Treatment Support Order (TSO) to be made instead. Michael's treating team formed the view based on the excellent progress demonstrated by Michael over the years, that his FO could be revoked and his treatment and care could be managed under a TSO moving forward. Any risk Michael posed to the community were well managed and this had been the case for a significant period. Given the nature of the offending, the MHRT ordered an Independent Psychiatrist report to assess Michael's ability to be managed less restrictively. The independent report supported both Michael's and the treating teams view that it was appropriate to revoke the FO and make a TSO instead.

At a scheduled review of Michael's FO, we advocated for him by representing his views, wishes and preferences at the hearing. We made submissions on Michael's behalf illustrating his exemplary engagement with mental health services over a significant period. Reference was made to Michael's risks remaining low for many years, supporting that a TSO would be the least restrictive way to manage Michael's treatment. Further evidence supported that Michael had remained stable for several years and complied with all aspects of his treatment. Michael also demonstrated good proactive engagement in the community which was a protective factor. Based on the evidence the MHRT revoked Michael's FO and made a TSO for his continued treatment. We also assisted Michael in making submissions to remove certain conditions attached to the FO which were unnecessary and no longer required to manage risk and the MHRT made the decision to remove those conditions.

Michael was very pleased that his FO was revoked based on the progress he had demonstrated.

*Name has been changed

NDIS Advocacy Practice

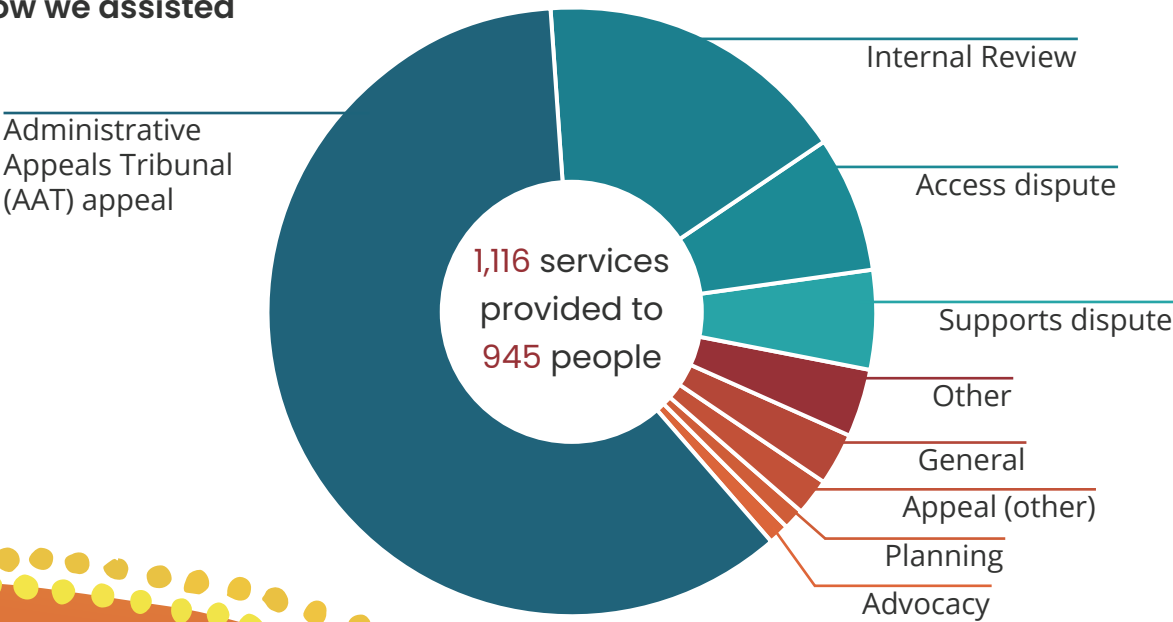
Our NDIS Advocacy Practice comprises two advocacy services - NDIS Appeals Support and Decision Support. While these services are separate, our team members work collaboratively, making internal referrals for wraparound support for our most vulnerable clients, and using insights and experiences from individual advocacy to inform a joint approach to systems advocacy. A key achievement of the team this year was the publication of an [analysis and report on NDIS Appeals](#). We were commissioned to undertake this report by the Queensland Department responsible for disability services. The report is assisting us with our advice service, the development of our online resources and our templates.

NDIS Appeals Support

What we do

NDIS Appeals Support supports people with disability impacted by a decision of the NDIA to review that decision. The decisions relate to the funding for key supports and those seeking access. The majority of our work is in the Administrative Appeals Tribunal. The demand for our services has increased exponentially since 1 July 2021 – and this was demonstrated by our report.

How we assisted



“Thanks so much for all your hard work, reading through the material has provided me with a renewed sense of hope this application may have a positive outcome”

Case study – Jane

Jane* applied for access to the NDIA in October 2019, when she was 64. The NDIA refused her access and took the view that her impairment was not ‘permanent’ and that it did not result in a substantially reduced functional capacity. QAI supported her to appeal to the AAT in April 2020 and supported her to obtain a number of additional medical reports. The NDIA organised an independent occupational therapist (OT) to perform a full functional assessment with the client. The report produced from the assessment contained some information which had been misinterpreted which Jane was not happy with. Despite all the other clear evidence, including clarification of statements in the OT report, the NDIA were not satisfied that the Jane’s impairments were permanent and resulted in a substantially reduced functional capacity.

The NDIA argued that a treatment mentioned by Jane’s treating specialists, which would reduce her symptoms by 25%, was considered an ‘available’ treatment, therefore she hadn’t tried all treatments available. The NDIA was also arguing that because she could ‘cope’ for days without assistance, she didn’t usually need assistance. The matter appeared to be heading to a hearing, when we successfully engaged a barrister to represent the client on a pro bono basis. In preparation for the next steps, the barrister identified that a supplementary OT report may assist the matter further.

QAI then applied for the LawRight Disbursement Fund requesting a total of \$2,249 as quoted by the OT to perform a supplementary assessment. LawRight granted \$1,000 and the client was able to contribute a small amount to have the assessment done. The OT then agreed to perform the assessment for a reduced fee. In December 2021, we provided the final evidence, in January 2022 we filed our final submissions and hearing certificate, and in February 2022 the NDIA agreed the medical/expert evidence was sufficient to demonstrate that the client met the disability requirements as per section 24 of the NDIS Act and granted access to Jane when she was 66.

The client has been approved for an NDIS 2-year plan. This is a case of team effort and perseverance as well as a perfect example that clients can be granted access even after the age of 65 (as long as their application is submitted while they are under the age of 65).

*Name has been changed

“Your ‘templates’ are outstanding work”

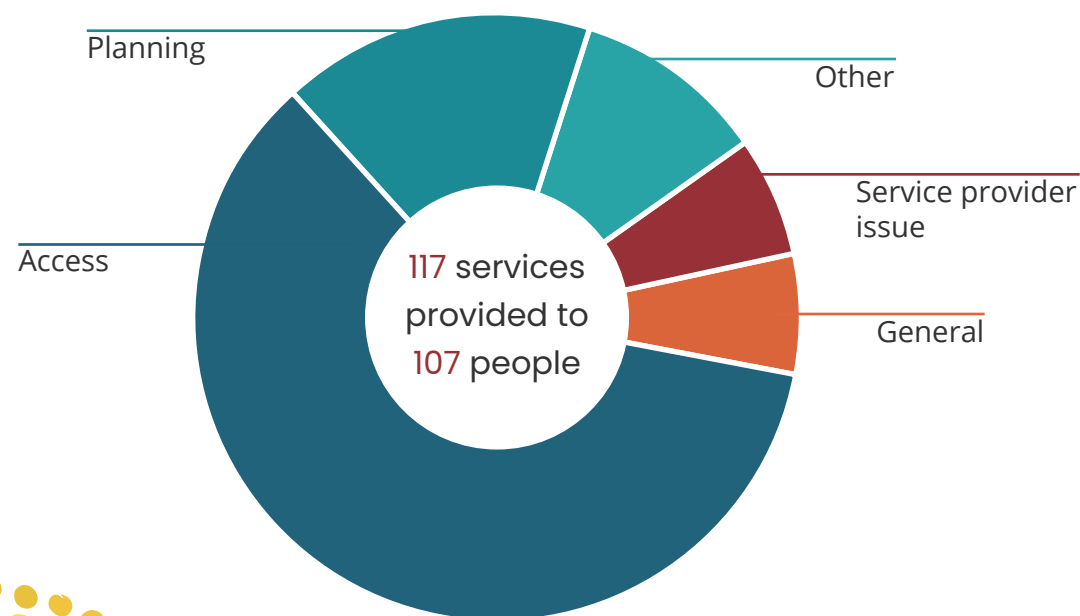
“Thank you so very much your time and knowledge[,] Your information was invaluable”

NDIS Decision Support

What we do

NDIS Decision Support helps people with disability who have no-one else in their lives able to support them to engage with the NDIS to secure the funded supports they need. Our advocates provide help within a supported decision-making framework, recognising that people with disability have the right to make decisions and can expect to access appropriate support in doing so.

How we assisted



Case study – Mark

Mark* came to QAI after attempting access for over 3 years, when he came to QAI he had made an access application just before his 65th birthday. This was his last attempt. The advocate engaged with the NDIA to request more time to lodge further evidence. Mark had complex PTSD and had a history of conflict with other service providers and allied health professionals.

The advocate built trust with Mark and assisted him to prepare a statement of lived experience which covered his significant past trauma his challenges in everyday life. She reached out to various allied health professionals who had previously seen Mark to help fill in the gaps. She also collected his text messages to her which demonstrated Mark's thought process. Once all the documents were together, she submitted them to the Agency. Mark was successful and access was met. Following the decision, the advocate continued to support Mark with his first planning meeting, carefully completing the planning books and preparing him for the plan meeting.

The team were extremely pleased for Mark as in our recent experience it has become more difficult people with psychosocial disabilities to gain access.

*Name has been changed

“Thank you for your conscientious skills, and authentic assistance. Your help with the initial interview. The OT, the follow ups..etc, that’s a huge process so wouldn’t have the plan I have without you. Yes, I am a challenge, I am glad you are patient and open to new perspectives, even if we locked horns occasionally. But we did it together so I really appreciate that. I rarely have had assistance before so it truly means a lot for the ‘supporter/advocate’ to receive some ‘support/advocacy”

“I [...] wish to thank you and QAI for all the help and support that you provided. There aren’t words for my appreciation and gratitude for your assistance”

The help I received by QAI was fantastic to the upmost. The advocate was a great help in support and the amount of work was not small by any means [...] I very much appreciate this. Seriously I’d be in a much different place without you.

Disability Advocacy Practice

Young Peoples Program

What we do

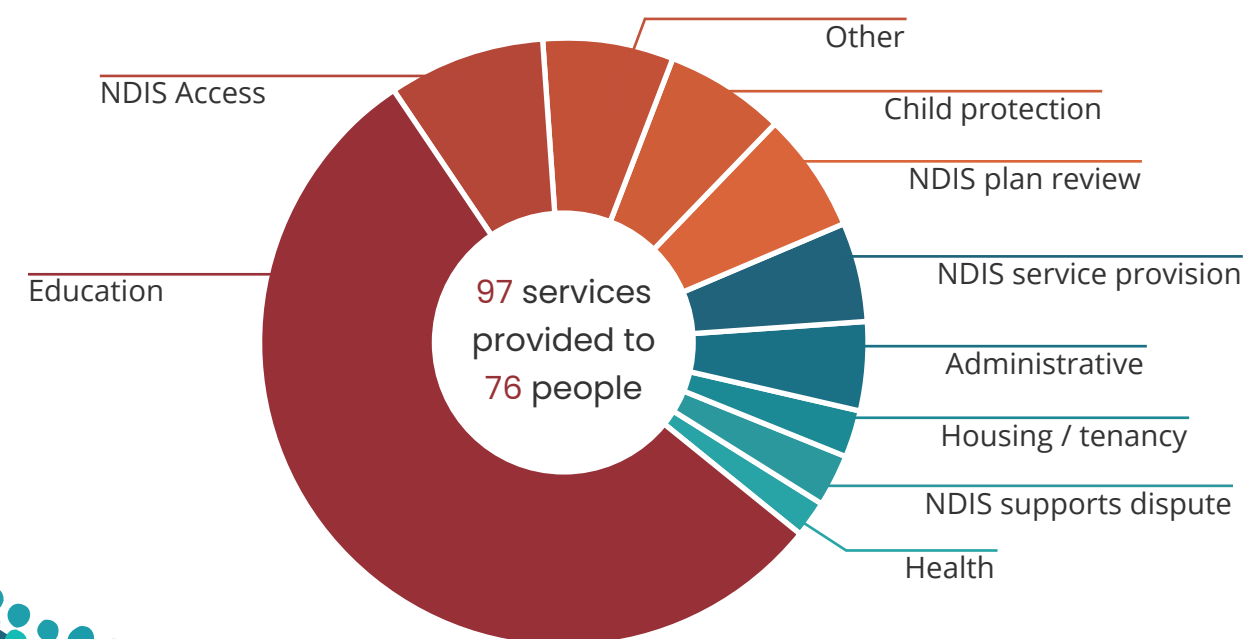
QAI's Young Peoples Program was established in January 2022 and provides individual advocacy for children and young people (from birth to 18 years) with disability to support them to uphold their rights, interests and increase control over their lives.

We assist with:

- Navigating systems including: education, child safety, NDIS, justice, health
- Experiences of discrimination, conflict and unfair treatment
- Seeking community inclusion, participation, and access

Advocates have connected with young people state-wide including outreach trips to Emerald and Rockhampton.

How we assisted



“You both did such a fantastic job breaking everything down in a digestible way, and painting a clear picture of the precise steps we should take in order to move forward in accessing some of the many programs you were so kind to share with us”

Case study – Ashley

Ashley* and their family moved from interstate a few weeks before school returned for 2022. Ashley is a young person living with neurodiverse disabilities. Ashley's parents were having difficulties finding housing and as a result were living in motels and hotels.

Ashley's parents contacted Pathways one week before school began, looking for any assistance as there was an unintended consequence of not having a permanent address; Ashley was unable to enrol in a school. With consent, a warm referral was made to QAI's Young People Program. The Program made contact with Ashley and their parents and found out they had already approached five schools, all rejecting Ashley's enrolment due to a lack of a fixed address. Ashley and their parents were very concerned that Ashley was not going to be able to start the school year on time.

The advocate began by approaching schools in the desired locations and was advised that they were unable to enrol Ashley as they had no fixed address. The advocate was able to identify points of escalation through the Department of Education and, with our young peoples advocate, Ashley, and their parents, they worked collaboratively with the Department of Education's Regional Principal Education Officers to identify schools in the appropriate areas and to assist with enrolment. Through this collaboration, an appropriate school was identified, and the advocate supported Ashley and their parents to attend the enrolment interview and ensure that reasonable adjustments would be made to meet their needs. The school agreed to implement the reasonable adjustments and Ashley started school in the second week of the term.

While this was occurring, Ashley and their family expressed concern about funds to purchase school uniforms, a laptop, schoolbooks and resources. The advocate was able to link Ashley in with a community group which provided a voucher for uniforms and the required school resources.

After a couple of weeks at school, the advocate checked in with Ashley and their family and all report that Ashley has never been happier, is making friends and doing very well at school. The family have now found a permanent home and feel safe and secure in their lives.

*Name has been changed

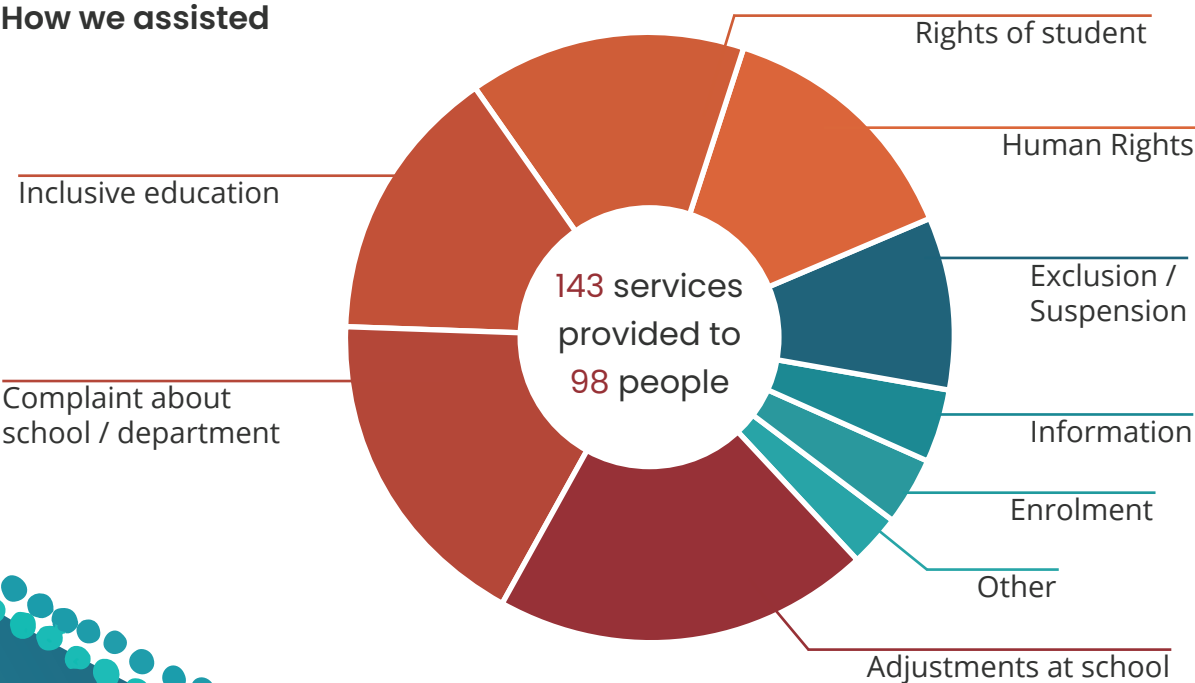
To be blunt, [the advocate] was our saviour! Without her intervention we know for sure we would not have received the outcome we so sorely needed”

Education Advocacy

What we do

QAI's Education Advocacy service provides independent individual advocacy to students with disabilities with the resolution of complex and escalated complaints. The Education Advocacy Services assists with complaints related to the access, participation and/ or achievements of students with disability in Queensland State Schools (and home schooling).

How we assisted



"In all interactions with staff from QAI I have found that we have been able to come together around a shared goal of supporting our families and students. I have had several interactions and in all of these, staff have been positive and solution focused" - feedback provided by a Department of Education Employee

"Without QAI my child and our family would have been forced out of the state mainstream primary school my child is enrolled at. Thank all the powers that be that make QAI possible."

Case study – Dean and Ava

Dean* and Ava* moved to Queensland with their parents at the end of 2020. Both children have disabilities and identify as culturally and linguistically diverse. In 2021 they started attending their local primary school. However, by May there were serious concerns about the lack of support for Dean and Ava.

Dean had been placed on a part time education program and was not allowed to attend school for any more than 1.5 hours per day due to behavior incidents, as a result of his disability. Deans 'OneSchool' records were inconsistent and framed Dean in a negative light rather than attempting to identify why the incidents were occurring - many of which were not reported to his parents.

Ava was not receiving any support in class and on one occasion left the school grounds with another student. The school did not provide an incident report or properly report this to her parents.

Dean and Ava's parents contacted QAI for advice around making a complaint. After making the complaint, the Regional Office provided a very quick, however minimal, response that assumed the 'school were doing everything they could'. Dean and Ava's parents again approached QAI for additional support. QAI contacted the Autism Hub who provided a direct contact for the director of education services at the Regional Office. QAI met with thier parents, the Director from the Regional Office and an Autism Advisor to discuss enrolment in another local school. Their parents had already applied at many other local schools which had declined enrolment due to enrolment management plans. The Autism Advisor was able to work with the parents to find a new school that would be appropriate, despite an enrolment management plan.

QAI continued to work with the parents and the Autism Advisor to ensure a smooth transition and appropriate supports at the new school. Dean is now attending full time with appropriate supports and no behavior incidents. Ava is also well supported and enjoying school. Dean and Ava have even asked their parents if they could go to school on the weekends!

*Name has been changed

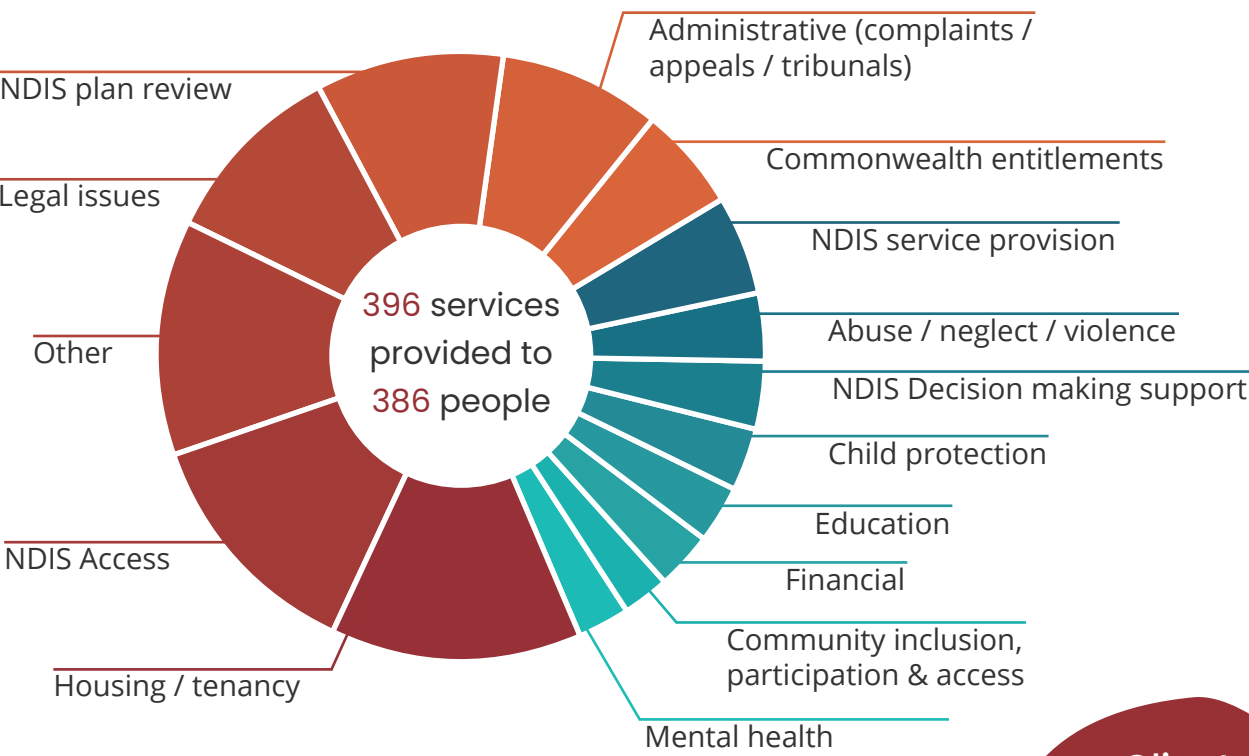
"QAI is an incredible resource providing advocacy, strength, understanding and compassion."

Pathways

What we do

Disability Advocacy Pathways (Pathways), was established in January 2022, as the ‘hub’ funded by the Department of Seniors, Disability Services and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships. Pathways provides information and referrals to Queenslanders with disability, their families and supports, for any assistance they may need across all fundamental aspects of their lives.

How we assisted



“Thank you so much for our conversation just before. Your genuine receptiveness & assistance really made all the difference [...] your grounded words made a meaningful contribution to helping keep me motivated in my goal”

76% of people said they got the support they needed from their Pathways referral

Client satisfaction
4.68
out of 5

Effective & clear communication
4.72
out of 5

Case study – Stacey

Stacey* was given Pathways’ phone number with a bundle of brochures and called through looking for an advocate. Unfortunately, the advocacy organisation funded in Stacey’s region was at capacity. Stacey explained she had some legal matters coming up within the next month and was looking for assistance. We identified the type of matters Stacey required assistance with were covered by Legal Aid Queensland (LAQ). Stacey advised she had tried to call LAQ quite a few times to apply for a grant of aid, however due to her disabilities, she was having difficulty understanding what was needed and had not made any progress.

Pathways had previously created a referral relationship with LAQ for people who need more assistance, and were able to put Stacey in touch with a team at LAQ that specialises in supporting vulnerable people. They completed intake with Stacey and connected her to more specialist teams within LAQ as it came to light she had multiple legal issues. Stacey was very thankful for the Pathways service connecting her to a legal service she had been trying to engage with.

*Name has been changed

92% of people said the service provided by Pathways met their expectations

“You’re awesome and I would love to be able to tell people because of you there’s hope still in this world.”

Treasurer report

2021-22 saw a continued expansion of the services provided by QAI with overall income increasing by 40% over the previous year to \$4.16M.

This increase in delivery included:

- One-off funding of over \$460,000 in May 2020 which was carried forward to increase capacity in the NDIS Appeals and Disability Royal Commission services for the year.
- Full funding for the Education Advocacy service to operate a full-time Advocate throughout the year.
- The first six months of a new eighteen month funded Young People’s Program through the Dept. of Seniors, Disability Services and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships (DSDSATSIP).
- The first six months of a new eighteen month Systemic Advocacy and Information Referral Service through DSDSATSIP. This program funds a State-wide centralised phone support program as well as QAI establishing, chairing and taking a lead advocacy role in the new Queensland Independent Disability Advocacy Network.

QAI’s continued viability was also strengthened with the signing of new three

year funding agreements for 2022-2025 with the Department of Social Services for the NDIS Appeals and Systems Advocacy Programs and one year extensions to the Disability Royal Commission and NDIS Decision Support services.

One area of focus in 2021-22 was cyber security and related business continuity planning. During the year QAI implemented upgraded security reviews, procedures and support with our computer support providers and worked proactively in developing an extensive business continuity plan for the organisation. We also engaged with our insurers around best practice regarding potential threats and risk mitigation. This environment is becoming increasingly challenging with business continuity planning remaining a priority. We will also be mindful of the possible effect on future strategic planning and budgeting considerations.

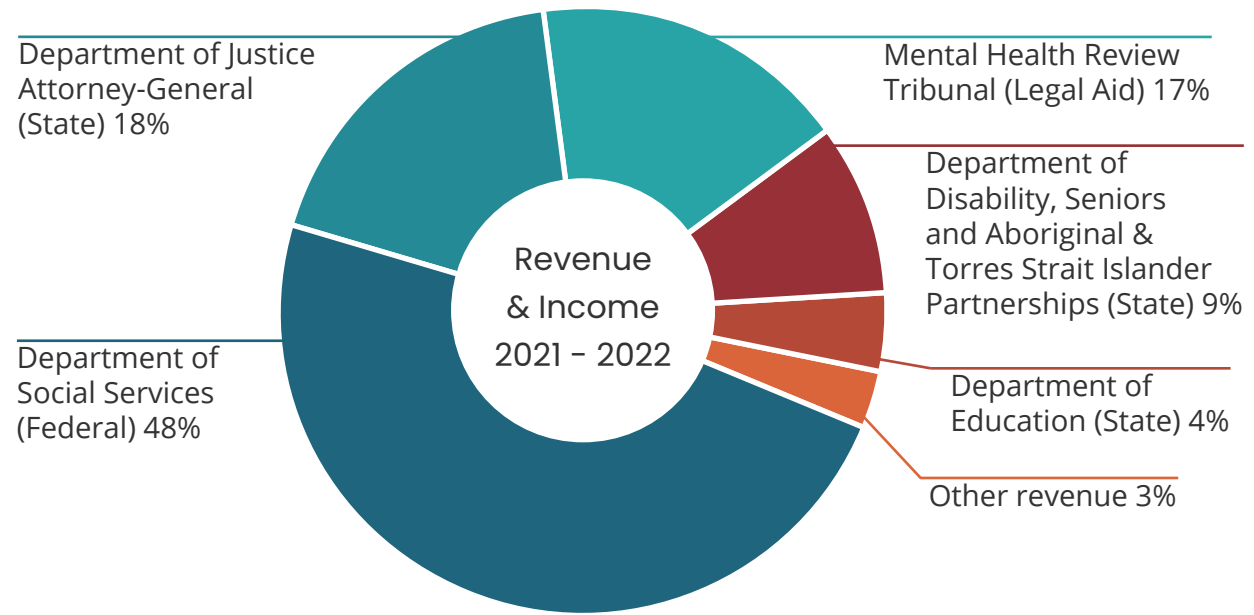
QAI continued to endeavor to maximise direct service delivery in the year with around 77% of income being spent on staffing. The year was completed with a surplus of around of 6% of revenue (compared to 2% last year), and our financial position remains healthy.

I am confident the organisation is well placed to meet its ongoing cash flow and other commitments and continue to deliver high quality services to people with disability in Queensland.

I would like to thank DJAG, DSS, DSDSATSIP and the Queensland Department of Education for their continued program support and other one-off projects.

Ted Cole

Financial summary



Profit and loss summary

Total revenue	\$4,047,010.20
Other income	\$120,899.35
Total expenses	- \$3,903,396.49
Net surplus	\$264,513.06

The full audited financial report is available upon request.

Funding bodies



Queensland Government



Australian Government



**Queensland
Advocacy for
Inclusion**

Advocacy for people with disability



9am-4:30pm Monday-Friday



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