



**Regional
Alliance
West**

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MEDIA RELEASE

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GERALDTON AND MIDWEST / GASCOYNE LOSE INDEPENDENT DISABILITY ADVOCACY SERVICE

The **Independent Disability Advocacy Service (IDAS)** is an essential support service for people with disabilities and their families to help them to understand their rights and options, access services, and have a voice in their lives and communities. As of **31 July 2025**, this service will unfortunately be limited within the **Midwest, Murchison and Gascoyne communities**.

Sussex Street Community Law Service (SSCLS), based in Perth, is funded to provide these services to the Midwest, Murchison and Gascoyne regions. For 2 1/2 years they provided these services remotely from Perth, severely limiting the ability of people with disabilities living in our regions to access this service.

From February 2024, local agency **Regional Alliance West (RAW)** was contracted by SSCLS, to provide place-based IDAS services in our regions. Providing face to face appointments has been extremely important to people. RAW has worked tirelessly over the last 18 months to build trust in the IDAS service locally and to provide high quality, responsive, face to face support that understands the needs and issues of people with disabilities within our communities.

RAW assisted 190 clients with 433 problems over the last 18 months which shows the absolute need for a face to face service. The work has included a range of issues faced by people with disabilities, including how to apply for Disability Support Pensions and NDIS, challenging adverse decisions, addressing discrimination or exclusion such as in housing, education and access to services and navigating complaints processes.

RAW was immensely disappointed when SSCLS advised us on 10 June that they will no longer be providing funding to RAW to continue this service in our regions beyond 31 July.

We have received no information from SSCLS how they intend to continue to deliver the IDAS service in our regions, therefore any questions or concerns about future access to the IDAS service, will need to be directed to SSCLS on (08) 6235 9500.

Quote from **IDAS client Susan Dhu**: *"I was referred to IDAS at RAW by SSCLC who immediately advocated, supported and comforted me through the daunting Tribunal/NDIS grievance. The IDAS Advocate successfully got me onto the NDIS. Prior to this I was struggling for 18 months, at my wits end and becoming increasingly down emotionally. I immediately felt safe and heard. I have continued to use the service going on 12 months now, whenever I needed help or guidance. I'm very happy and grateful to RAW, and I'm concerned what is going to happen now for my fellow community members. I've currently helped someone else with a referral to IDAS and where will they go now? To Perth?? I am very concerned for my community. I don't understand why it's not being funded, there is such a need for this important role."*

RAW's Operations Manager, Chris Gabelish said: *"At a time where people with disabilities need to navigate systems that able-bodied people would find incredibly complex, the removal of funding to support those in need of advocacy is not only a tragedy, it means that people's lives will become sicker, more isolated and less able to see a pathway toward a healthy and productive future".*

For any complaints about the withdrawal of place-based IDAS services in our regions, please contact your local State and Federal Members of Parliament and the relevant State and Federal Disability Services Ministers:

State

Hannah Beazley (also the Minister for the Gascoyne)
Dumas House, 2 Havelock Street, WEST PERTH WA 6005
(08) 6552 6700
Minister.Beazley@dpc.wa.gov.au

Federal

Mark Butler
PO Box 6022
House of Representatives
Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600
(02) 6277 7220 or (08) 8241 0190
minister.butler@health.gov.au

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