



Aboriginal Community Services

Aboriginal Elders & Community Care Services

Annual Report 2023-2024



Bidy Muffler in Indulkana

This Report may contain images of
people who have passed away.



Our Purpose

Aboriginal Community Services supports the growth of progressive and prosperous Aboriginal communities that are built on a foundation of respect, self-determination and accountability. The lives of our clients are enriched through the delivery of culturally appropriate services that are continually improved and represent value for money. By empowering individuals, families and communities through choice and control of their needs, we connect our expertise, knowledge, passion, corporate and governance structures to build sustainable programs.

Our Vision

Our vision is to be a national service provider, recognised for cultural and professional integrity and commitment to the self-determination of current and future generations of Aboriginal communities, families and individuals.

Cultural Integrity

ACS is guided by our obligations and responsibilities in our decision making and activities to maintain, protect, preserve, promote, and adhere to First Nations cultural practices, lore and customs.

These obligations and responsibilities underpin our policies, service delivery and practices in the way we conduct ourselves when engaging with the consumers we serve and the communities we operate in. This extends to our business practices and advocacy with our partners, stakeholders and agencies we work with.



Continuous Improvement

Always seeking ways to do better.



Respect

Having regards for others' feelings, choices, decisions and culture.



Connection to Community

Fostering close connections and maintaining social interaction, interests and activities.



Self-determination

Our clients have the right to choice and control over their lives.



Value for money

Where efficiency and effectiveness are balanced.



Accountability

Accepting our decisions have consequences.



Honesty & transparency

Being open with all the facts.



Sustainability

What we do will stand the test of time.

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Our Board

Aboriginal Community Services Board of Management “the Board” consists of dedicated professionals with a wealth of experience and expertise in business and First Nations communities. We are united to ensure that our aged care services provided to our First Nations communities are of high quality, culturally safe and value for money.



Chairperson
Malcolm Gollan



Secretary
Catherine McGee



Treasurer
James Black



Board Member
Dr Senthil
Govindasamy



Board Member
Maria Stewart



Public Officer - CEO
Graham Aitken



General Manager Finance
and Corporate Services
Segaran Murugeson



Board Governance
Secretary
Marie Maiolo

Garth Dodd
Board Chairperson
November 2019 -
November 2023

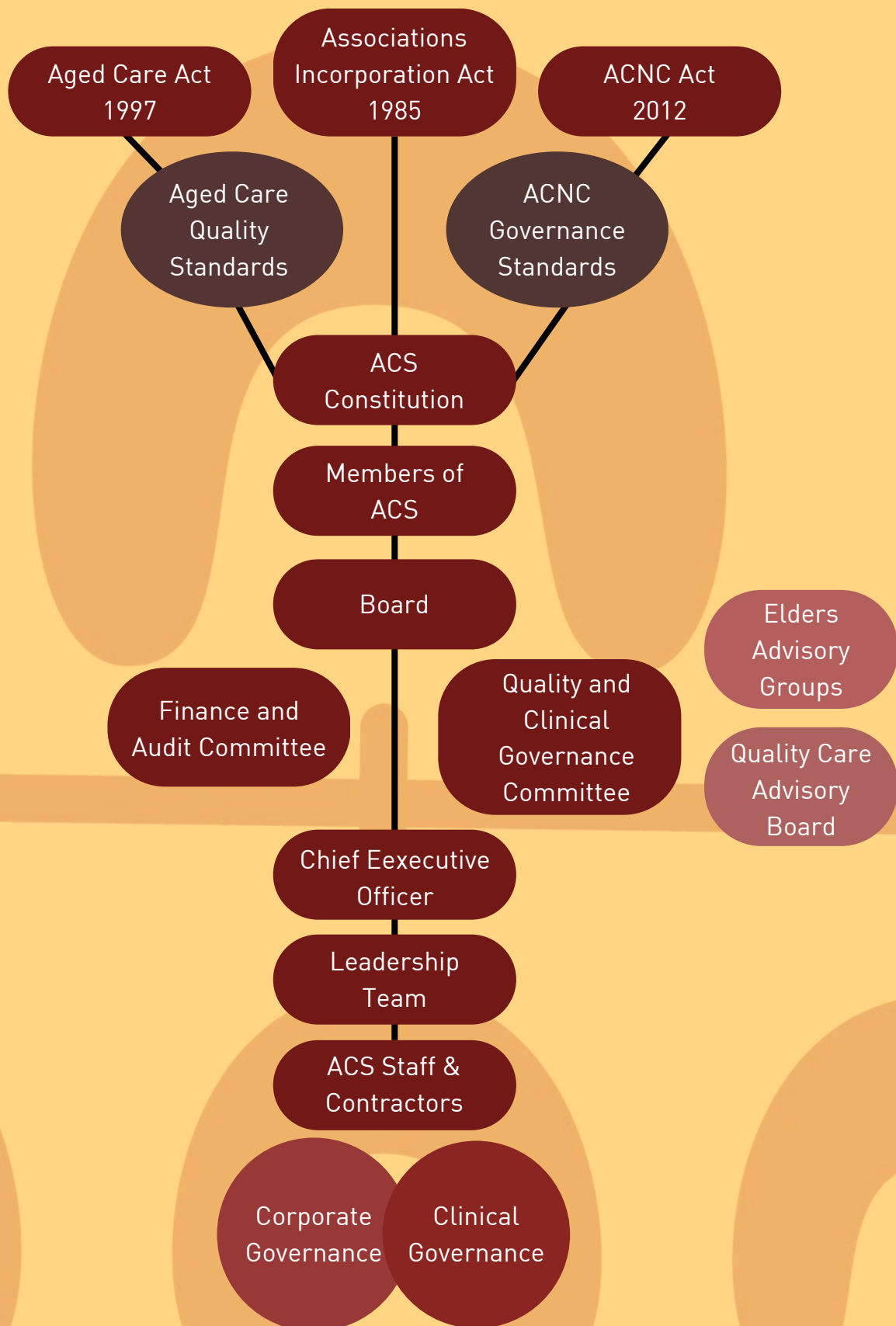
Hitesh Goel
Board Treasurer
December 2019 -
November 2023

Our members

We would like to acknowledge the members of the association for their contribution throughout the year.

ACS Governance Framework

In 2023-24, the Board created its new internal Governance Framework to enrich its organisation's structure to adhere to the Aged Care reform and regulatory requirements, and revised its organisation structure. The new framework was approved on the 28th of February 2024.





John Boxer at the Aboriginal Elders Village, Davoren Park



Interim Chairperson's Report

Cath McGee – Secretary, Interim Chair on behalf of Malcolm Gollan – Chairperson

Following the 2023 Annual General Meeting, Malcolm Gollan accepted the role of Interim Chair while a new Aboriginal Chair was recruited. Sadly, Malcolm passed away unexpectedly on his 69th birthday, 17 July 2024. He has been laid to rest at Raukkan.

Malcolm stepped up to the role of Chair with dignity, integrity, wit and diligence at a time of great change and scrutiny for the organisation. His quiet listening to all and wisdom led to options, pathways and futures. His leadership is much appreciated.

Elders are who this organisation is all about. There are of course the many family and community members that also benefit from the services and support contributed by committed staff. Although less of an issue than in previous years, COVID19 continued to provide challenges, but not enough to stop social events and celebrations happening for Elders to gather, have a great time, and voice their views.

The new Aged Care Act was yet to pass at the end of 2023-24. It is a necessary and much awaited response to the increasing needs and pressures on the aged care system for older Australians, and funding options. It will always be a challenge for organisations that serve Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Elders to juggle the experiences, needs, and choices of existing, waiting and potential clients. And the reality of actual costs of providing quality services in diverse and challenging locations and circumstances to those most at risk.



As the only Aboriginal organisation in Australia to provide a continuum of services across aged care, AECCS has been invaluable in contributing to the Australian Aged Care Royal Commission, which in turn informed the updating of the Aged Care Act.

Aged Care Reforms nevertheless continue at pace, and AECCS is responding across many areas, and at all levels. New Aged Care Quality Standards have provided new challenges to all aged care providers.

AECCS has been working with reviews by, and commissioned by, the Commonwealth, and ourselves, to improve our service to Elders and most importantly to develop our model of care for the future. The Board and staff have been very much involved. We are doing well. We have all undergone further training, focussing on risks and compliance, and addressing recruitment for our future.

Accountability is crucial to our funders, the Australian Government, which of course means Australian taxpayers, and most particularly to Elders and Aboriginal people, as we face the key questions of how we best support our Elders:

- what do we **do** best?
- what **can** we do best?
- **how** can we best fit with key others?

We acknowledge the Australian Government, Department of Health and Aged Care, for their on-going funding and support for our organisation, and look forward to further improvement in responses to older Australians' support, particularly those of Elders.

The recruitment of a new Chair is on-going as I write. In the interim, a new Treasurer and new Aboriginal Board members have been recruited and will be proposed for endorsement at the 2024 Annual General Meeting.

And finally, a month after Malcolm passed, Aunty Shirley Peisley passed away unexpectedly. Aunty Shirley contributed enormously to Aboriginal rights, people, communities and services across her life, including many years on the AECCS Board. She is very respected and appreciated, and missed by so many. Rest in Peace.



Chief Executive Officer's Report

Graham Aitken

It is with pleasure that I present this report for what has been a big year for ACS, full of improvements in our quality of care and in the growth of our workforce.

Our organisation is unique in that we deliver the full continuum of aged care services and supports from;

- Low level Commonwealth Home Support Programme
- Community services under the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Flexible Aged Care program
- Home Care Packages, and
- Residential Aged Care.

This means we can support Elders who require different levels of assistance, whether it is a few services here and there, allowing them to live at home, or caring for Elders who reside in our Residential facilities in Pukatja or Davoren Park. Our model of service means Elders do not need to move to another aged care provider as their aged care needs increase. In addition, our aged care services follow Elders should they need to move to another location in South Australia.

We are also unique in that our aged care services are delivered in urban, regional and remote locations. The providing of services across these locations gives our organisation insight into the differences of providing care regionally and remotely as opposed to in the metro area. It can be more difficult to provide specialised services in regional areas, and staffing can be a challenge.



We continue to become strong advocates for equity in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Aged Care, and through a range of channels, urge governments to listen to Elders and consider the unique contexts of Elders living remotely when developing aged care policy and legislation.

Our team considers it a privilege to be welcomed and able to work with regional and remote communities, supporting Elders to remain on their country and with their community, a crucial factor in their social and emotional wellbeing. It is important that our work continues to break down geographical barriers, and that all Elders, no matter where they live, are receiving the care they deserve and are entitled to.

As an organisation, this financial year has been about growing and upskilling our workforce, to build our capacity as an organisation who already supports over 800 Elders, and consistently provide quality care throughout our compliance journey, and in the face of Aged Care Reforms.

Aged Care Reforms

Through our previous annual reports, newsletters and other channels, we have informed Elders about the Australian Government's Aged Care Reforms which have been implemented due to Australia's growing population of older people and the challenges facing the aged care sector.

The reforms seek to create a better aged care service system to give older people more choice, more control and easier access to a full range of services.

The Government are changing the three main pillars of the aged care sector including changing the Aged Care Act, Aged Care Regulation and implementing the new Support at Home service. The full details of the changes have not been fully developed and/or released, however the sector will need to adapt and change accordingly.

Our organisation has invested time and resources preparing for these changes and we have provided advice and information to the Government about how these changes may impact our Elders and our organisation.

The Board and our staff have participated in many webinars and updates from Government around the aged care reforms to assist our organisation develop a new model of aged care service.

We will continue to provide updates to our Elders about these changes as more information becomes available from the Government and our organisation will take a business-as-usual approach to our services.

Aged Care Quality and Safety Commission

Throughout the year, our organisation has worked with the Aged Care Quality and Safety Commission to improve our compliance to the national aged care standards. This has been a very good process as we have implemented new policies and processes, governance structure and our staff have undertaken significant training. We have seen positive outcomes for our Elders and improvement in our compliance with the national standards.

The investment in preparing for the aged care reforms and the cost of compliance has been significant and has been a major factor in our financial performance for the year. I would like to acknowledge our General Manager, Finance and Corporate Services, for his expertise in managing our finances and still recording a surplus for the year. The enthusiasm with which our organisation has tackled non-compliances, is reflective of our dedication to continuous improvement.

Acknowledgements and Thanks

I would like to acknowledge our growing number of staff that I am very proud of, and who demonstrate commitment to our Elders and to the organisation.

I would also like to acknowledge the Board members who volunteer their time, provide me with support, and give the organisation clear directions on how we operate and where we want to be in the future.

Our organisation has established many partnerships and linkages and I would like to acknowledge those organisations that work with us in a changing and complex service system environment.

Here's to navigating the future of Aged Care and continuing to advocate for our Elders.



Leadership Team

Our Leadership Team has grown in 2023-24. This year ACS introduced Clinical Services to support and advise our General Managers and Executive to achieve better outcomes for our organisation that align with our values and strategic goals.



Graham Aitken
Chief Executive Officer



Lauren Aitken
General Manager,
Service Development



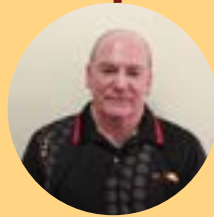
Segaran Murugeson
General Manager,
Finance and
Corporate Services



Joni McArthur
General Manager,
Client Services
Metro



Harry Harun
General Manager,
Regional Services



Warren Hall
General Manager,
Residential Services



Maggie Njoroge
Senior Community
Nurse



Maggie Balodis
Quality and Risk
Advisor



Marilena Tripodi
Policy and
Standards Advisor



Anuj Taneja
Human Resources
Advisor

Treasurer's Report

James Black | Treasurer

In an incredibly challenging operating environment for the aged care industry and for Aboriginal Community Services (ACS), I present the Treasurer's report for FY2024.

Despite the challenges, ACS maintains a strong financial position holding more than \$6.11M in cash reserves at year end. During the year we generated a revenue of \$25.77M and incurred operational expenses of \$25.75M resulting in a small net surplus after depreciation of \$19,526. The underlying operating performance of ACS has been strong with increased income of \$3.59M (+16.2%) on prior year, but this has been more than offset by an increase in expenditure of \$5.85M (+29.4%) over the period. Whilst an increase in expenditure can be expected due to the increased income activity, \$2.85M of the increased expenditure are extraordinary "one-off" consulting costs attributed to meeting the Aged Care Quality and Safety Commission (ACQSC) recommendations. These are costs that fall outside our normal course of business and are not reflective of the underlying financial performance of ACS.

Whilst the last 12 months have been incredibly challenging and we expect some of these challenges to continue through FY2025, diligent management of the ACS financial position over a long period of time has ACS well positioned to face these challenges and come through the other side with a strong balance sheet and cash position intact. The ACS Leadership Team need to be commended for their prudent financial management.

We have completed the external audit for the year ended 30 June 2024. The auditors have provided an audit report and was signed without qualification. I would like to take this opportunity to personally thank the Chief Executive Officer, Graham Aitken and the General Manager, Finance and Corporate Services, Segaran Murugeson for all their support and effort during the year.

REGIONAL SERVICES

478 Elders

54% Female

44% Male

44% NATSiFAC

56% HCP

Average age: 64



Regional Services

No Elder Left Behind | Harry Harun

The demand of our services in regional areas continue to rise. Though providing Aged Care in remote locations comes with unique challenges, our staff work together to ensure all Elders receive appropriate care and are able to age at home, on their country. During this period, we prioritised the professional development of our Regional Services Team. We aimed to upskill our staff and empower the local workforce. While the APY Lands did not meet all compliance standards in the most recent Quality Audit, our team is actively collaborating to address these areas and ensure a successful result for the next audit. Despite challenges, we were heartened by the strong bond between our staff and Elders in each community. This connection is a testament to our commitment to fostering relationships that support the wellbeing of Elders, and we are dedicated to enhancing services to build on this foundation.

6,435 Hours of Services

151,075 Meals

917 Hours of Social Support

250,474 Trips (Transport)



Metropolitan Services

Ensuring Person-Centred Care | Joni McArthur

This reporting period we were happy to support many Elders to be assessed and re-assessed by My Aged Care to grant them the best care they are eligible for. Many Elders transitioned from the Commonwealth Home Support Programme (CHSP), onto the Home Care Package Program, and are also now receiving additional funding supports through the CHSP where needed. Metro have reassessed caseloads and capacities of staff and from this have grown the team to ensure a more person-centred care approach and to build capacity to begin onboarding more Elder's into our programs and ultimately re-open our referral portals.

Workload capacities and meeting compliance standards were certainly the biggest challenge our team faced this year, and I am impressed at how well the coordinators were able to handle extra responsibilities, and the way our team restructures have helped us improve and will continue to do so along with training and building knowledge amongst our staff.

An important thing to recognise and look back on every year is the hard work and dedication from our community support workers who attend the homes of Elders day in day out and support with all aspects of people's lives which can often be well beyond their roles and they do so without complaint. The care they provide is integral and is appreciated not only by our Elder's but all staff.

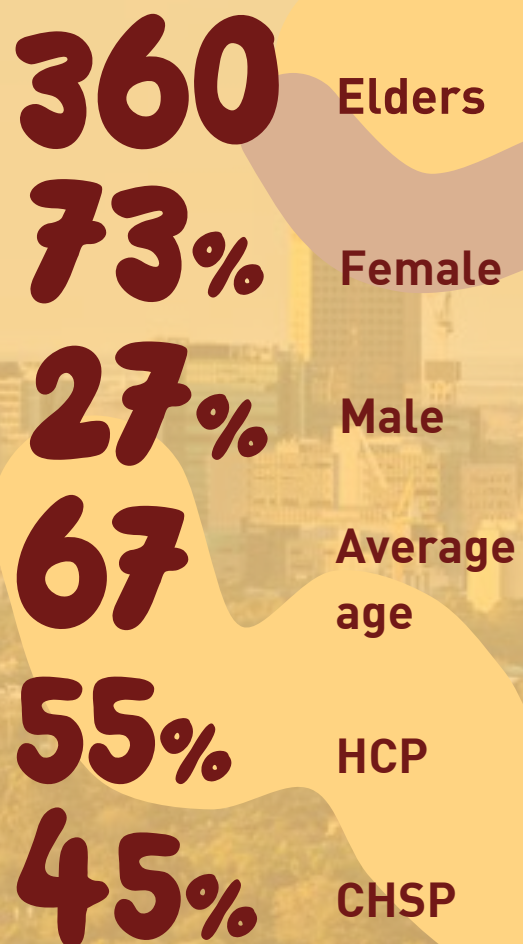
A major achievement for the Adelaide Metro team was meeting the Notice to Agree governed by the Aged Care Quality and Safety Commission. This could not have been achieved without the hard work and dedication of the Metro staff, leadership, external consultants and the support of our Elders while navigating this.

A key achievement in this past year was in regard to the management of brokered services and internal processes to ensure compliance is met and contractors are delivering safe and quality services. Through this we have been able to achieve better oversight and control of services being delivered to Elder's by a third party contractor through surveys, reporting requirements of contractors, new technology and also feedback from Elders.

As part of our journey to meet compliance and deliver safe and quality services ACS has incorporated internal clinical care services as part of our service delivery model. A suite of Registered Nurses have been working hard to assess and support many Elders on their health and aged care journey's. Clinical staff are working in unison with coordination staff to guide, advise and support to achieve a holistic care approach and through this we have seen many positive outcomes for Elders.

“ACS have made every effort to understand my cultural and traditional needs in my aged service journey. I am very grateful”
Metro Elder feedback

“would just like to say that I have no complaints about Aboriginal Community Services and am very happy and my coordinator is excellent, very very excellent, and the staff are also good at their jobs always friendly. No complaints at all. “
Metro Elder feedback



Metropolitan Services



30,307 Hours of Services

245,205 Meals

8,797 Hours of Social Support

375,092 Trips (Transport)





Glen Wanganeen and David Dudley in Port Lincoln

Residential Services

29

residents across the two facilities, 21 at Aboriginal Elders Village and 8 at Tjilpiku Pampaku Ngura.

5

Elders stayed at Aboriginal Elders Village for Respite.

73

was the average age of Elders at our facilities.

66% Female, 34% Male residents



Residential Services

Secure and Flexible Living | Warren Hall

The Aboriginal Elders Village (AEV) in Davoren Park has 17 residents, and Tjilpiku Pampaku Ngura (TPN) is home to 8. Our Davoren Park location allows residents to age alongside other Aboriginal people, fostering a sense of cultural safety and understanding. Our APY Lands location means Elders are able to stay on their country, a crucial element to their social and emotional wellbeing.

Aboriginal Elders Village

Significant maintenance has been done at the Aboriginal Elders Village in Davoren Park. The outdoor walkways that were paved have been replaced with concrete paths, after their deteriorating condition had created hazards. Other necessary additions included a new roof, new security cameras, and a new card entry system for the doors leading to outdoor units.

The residents at AEV have enjoyed many visitors this year including social opportunities with Regis Aged Care, arts and crafts with Mara Dreaming, and school visits from Swallowcliffe and Kaurana Plains primary schools.

On two occasions AEV facilitated the return to country of Elders, for different reasons. One Elder simply wanted to be closer to family, AEV liaised with Umoona aged care in Coober Pedy, when a room became available, we assisted with transporting the Elder home. Another Elder with a terminal illness, wished to pass away on country. AEV assisted with training family members in care techniques to allow their mother to live in the community home until her passing.

The lifestyle program at the AEV continues to flourish with many baking, art, and cultural based events that also engage Elders with the celebrations and happenings of the wider community. For example, Olympics themed games, NAIDOC celebrations, and more.



Tjilpiku Pampaku Ngura

Staffing has always been a challenge in regional and remote areas, and this struggle was felt during the financial year. We have been proactive in attracting staff working with HR and Strategic Projects to promote the benefits of regional work. Our GM has signed an agreement with the Department of Immigration to recruit overseas workers through the DAMA scheme (Designated area migration agreement). This has allowed AEV and TPN to retain valuable workers who were subject to visa conditions. It's rewarding to know that ACS has played a role in ensuring families don't have to leave Australia against their wishes, and that there are enough staff to facilitate quality care for Aboriginal Elders.

TPN has introduced new ways of enhancing quality of life for its residents and promoting social and emotional wellbeing. We obtained a 4x4 bus which has been used for social outings and picnics, excursions to the art centre, and out bush to collect Mingkulpa. We were also given three guitars, a key board and a harmonica, for residents who are keen musicians. A staff member has been designated to oversee the rejuvenation of our orchard. Since the rejuvenation, the orchard is producing several types of stone fruit and citrus.

The safety of Elders has been carefully considered this year with the addition of a Safe Room, with reinforced windows, internal/external monitoring, electrified fencing and a roof mounted Duress siren. This was added to decrease the risk that arises in the case of intruders. Staff have also joined the Community Fire Service which has not only prepared them at length should the village be threatened by a fire, but has also lead to further community integration of ACS into Pukatja.

We are excited to continue developing our capacity in the coming year to meet new compliance regulations, so we can continue to provide Elders with culturally appropriate care and a sense of belonging and community within their aged care facility.



Community Engagement

Beyond the Mainstream



This Financial Year the Community Engagement Team, previously known as the Outreach Team, continued to provide integral, outcome-driven support to Elders in crisis situations outside the scope of coordinators. The team fill a large gap in service provision where factors like housing, disputes, legal troubles and mental health could be impacting the wellbeing of Elders. Community Engagement, with their personal connections to community and culture, work with a variety of stakeholders until a win-win situation has been achieved. Their objective is to provide support that isn't limited to the individual, and instead acknowledges the importance of family and other factors in the wellbeing of an Elder and wider community.

“I am writing to express my appreciation for the committee of these two wonderful uncles who have gone above and beyond to support, advise, encourage and action with positive outcomes for my parent.”

Elder feedback

The feedback the Community Engagement Team received tells us how valuable this type of support is to Elders. Positive outcomes that were achieved this financial year include finding emergency housing, liaising with Housing SA to maintain tenancy, successful mediation and de-escalation of disputes, advising and advocating during court cases to achieve a just outcome, and supporting families in dealing with government agencies.

The team advised many Elders on the process of getting reassessed with ACAT and acted as advocates during assessments. Cultural awareness training was also held by the team in-house and delivered to outside agencies.

The team receive referrals from all business units including regional and remote, and often travel to regional locations to help Elders in crisis. The team also assisted families in times of grief to organise funerals. The Community Engagement Team form a crucial element of our culturally appropriate care, catering to the unique context of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Elders.







Strategic Projects

Lauren Aitken | General Manager, Service Development

Throughout the 2023-24 Financial Year ACS expanded their storytelling and communications abilities, resulting in an increased newsletter output and social media following, the launch of a new website, a funded storytelling project, the production of multiple videos about our services, and more community engagement through our media platforms. These outcomes spoke to strategic goals under our Community, Culture, Capability and Corporate pillars.

We also engaged with South Australian Health and Medical Research Institute's (SAHMRI) Wardliparingga, Aboriginal Health Equity theme to conduct important research into the Aged Care needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Elders and helped to develop new Aged Care training.

Keep The Fire Burning

ACS won a small grant of \$6,500 from the National NAIDOC Local Grants to produce a record-keeping project we titled 'There I Was, Here I Am.' The result was a 25 minute documentary featuring Elders we support including Mulla Sumner, Frances Chantrill, and Craig Dodd. Through sharing their stories they inspire viewers to keep the fire burning and continue advocating for First Nations Justice.

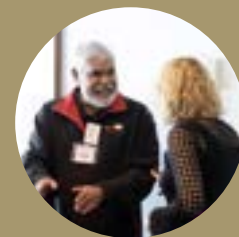
Truth-Telling

The documentary project aligns with national goals of reconciliation, and meant the Aunties and Uncles featured can share the film with friends and family. The activation of media platforms and media production has helped ACS find new ways to celebrate and advocate for Elders and appeal to governments and legislators.





Our Chief Executive Officer, Graham Aitken is on the board of directors for the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Ageing and Aged Care Council, through which he has advocated for appropriate care by making multiple submissions to the government. Graham has also met with a range of prospective funders to seek support in improving our services. We are particularly working to advocate for equity in Aged Care for those living remotely.



World-First Aged Care Training

In partnership with the South Australian Health and Medical Research Institute's (SAHMRI) Wardliparinga, Aboriginal Health equity theme, ACS conducted research into the aged care needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Elders. The need for further cultural safety in aged care was identified and we responded by working with SAHMRI to begin developing world-first aged care training centred around culturally appropriate and trauma informed care.

Responding to Reform

The Royal Commission into Aged Care Quality and Safety Final Report made 148 recommendations to reform the aged care sector. With this, amongst other reform actions, the sector will have a new Aged Care Act, Strengthened Aged Care Quality Standards and will introduce the new Support at Home Program, which will be replacing the Home Care Packages Program, Short-Term Restorative Care Programme, and eventually the Commonwealth Home Support Programme. ACS has invested in responding to the reform through establishing a role to lead the development and the implementation of strategies to develop, improve, and expand services provided by ACS and increase the organisation's capability through workforce and leadership training to deliver the new and improved organisational model for service provision. While there are still so many uncertainties within the sector, I am working through reform updates and project planning to ensure ACS is able to transition to the new systems efficiently when the reforms come into effect.

The Power of Data

ACS is harnessing the power of data by upgrading our Client Management System (CMS) to AlayaCare, allowing for greater capabilities in the data space. Our use of data extends beyond our reporting requirements for CHSP and NATSIFAC, as we utilise it to inform business practices, including workforce requirements, responding to community needs, and informing our reform projects.

Coming Together

Our 2023 Christmas and NAIDOC events saw the gathering of hundreds of Elders from across South Australia. Our annual lunches took place at the Adelaide Convention Centre where Elders enjoyed delicious food and live music. Some of our regional locations including Whyalla put on their own functions where our community could come together and celebrate. Our annual events are much anticipated by Elders and every year we are looking for new ways to improve and enhance the functions.



Kath Rinaldi and Dianne Slape



Denise Boulter and Phillip Boulter



Dwayne Watts

Quality

Our Commitment to Continuous Improvement | Maggie Balodis

The last 12 months has been one of the most challenging periods experienced for ACS from a quality assurance and compliance perspective. The majority of our business has been impacted due to noncompliance against the Aged Care Standards, which has required significant response, resources and has had far reaching consequences for ACS.

However, this has also been the most rewarding experience seeing ACS pull together as a team to address gaps and issues identified with the Aged Care Quality and Safety Commission agreeing to complete and close off the Notice to Agree on the 29 April 2024 due to the number of improvements implemented into practice.

Looking back at the 2023 Financial Year a number of milestones and improvements come to mind including closing off of the Notice to Agree, establishment of a formal process for brokered agencies, launch of Quality Care Advisory Committee and review of ACS Client Survey. The most significant highlight is the continuous quality improvement processes and work completed by ACS to improve and deliver quality care and services to our clients and family members.

ACS has undergone a significant amount of change to address and resolve non compliances against the aged care standard in Metro, Regional and APY client services. ACS has made improvements to its systems, process, policies, work practices, resources and staffing. Governance and Clinical frameworks, systems and process have been strengthened with ACS now having a fully complimented Clinical Team.

Getting Accredited

ACS is working towards being compliant with Aged Care Standards after findings from assessment reviews conducted across Metro, Regional and APY Lands. ACS has secured the services of Standard Wise Australia who is helping guide and provide support to ACS throughout this time.

Aboriginal Elders Village underwent an assessment contact review in January 2024. The assessment team from the Commission found them to be fully compliant with the Aged Care Standards.

Launch of Quality Care Advisory Committee

The ACS Quality Care Advisory Committee was established in November 2023 in line with our commitment to consumer engagement and partnership. Membership includes consumers and ACS staff ensuring consumer needs, preferences and feedback are at the forefront of service planning and improvements to established systems. The committee meets quarterly to discuss a range of topics relevant to ACS. The committee has proven to be a great source of knowledge and has shared many valuable insights which ACS uses to help improve services and inform future development.

Establishment of Brokerage Committee

ACS has made significant improvement to its brokered services processes to strengthen our oversight of these services. Policy, procedures and process have been improved and a brokerage committee established. The Brokerage Committee meets monthly to monitor and review brokered services compliance against contractual agreements. A Business Support Officer has been recruited to monitor day to day requirements and to ensure all compliance requirements are met.

Conducting Consumer Survey

As part of the work of the Quality Care Advisory Committee and from feedback received, the committee reviewed the current consumer survey, questions and format used. Improvements were made to make the process more inclusive for all ACS clients. The survey is now called "Have Your Say". The survey is being translated into language and ACS exploring how this will be distributed to clients in remote areas. The client survey has been sent out to Metro, Regional and Residential consumers.

Introducing Clinical Team

Clinical governance was established in January 2024 to provide better oversight, trending, monitoring and analysis of clinical incidents. ACS now has an in-house Clinical Team, which comprises of 3 registered nurses and a Senior Community Nurse who provides care, oversight and monitoring of clinical activities. The Clinical Care Advisory Committee meets on a monthly basis to monitor and trend clinical incidents.

Policy and Standards

Marilena Tripodi

This year ACS embarked on a continuous improvement project to enhance the quality of our policies and processes to make them more accessible for staff while ensuring compliance with relevant legislation. During this time over 60 policies and their associated processes were reviewed. This has been a significant task and I want to thank all staff involved in this process for their commitment and knowledgeable input.

Significant governance documents were reviewed including the Clinical Framework, Quality Management Framework and Risk Framework. These important documents guide the governing body and staff in how to deliver culturally safe and effective care and services while empowering clients and supporting the principles of self-determination.

Throughout the year there has been significant legislation changes that have impacted Aged Care, and these have been reflected in our policies and processes. We have seen updates to the Fair Work Act, a change to the Social, Community, Home Care and Disability Services (SCHADS) Industry Award and updates through SafeWork SA. The Department of Health and Aged Care has also made significant changes as a result of the current aged care reform activity, including the appointment of an Interim First Nations Aged Care Commissioner, tasked at advocating for culturally safe aged care for First Nations people across Australia.

As we look ahead the work continues to ensure ACS has a complete suite of documents. The introduction of Support at Home on 1 July 2025 will require ACS to further assess the way we do things and our processes will be updated to suit. New Strengthened Quality Standards will come into effect when the new Aged Care Act is implemented, and these changes will further require ACS to be proactive in ensuring our processes are robust and our staff are trained accordingly.

I look forward to another successful year collaborating with colleagues as we continually improve what we do, so we can improve the lives of Elders.



Clinical Services

Growing Clinical Capacity | Maggie Njoroge

This year, I am pleased to introduce our in-house Clinical Team, our first nurse commenced in February 2024 and by August in the same year, we had a complete team.

The Clinical Team comprises of three Registered Nurses and one Senior Nurse who provides care oversight and monitoring in clinical activities. In the Metro service area, nurses focus on expert client-centred consultancy, practice participating in direct client care provision, promote nursing services, provide education on complex clinical issues, identify, and adopt innovative clinical practice models by implementation and evaluation of new treatments, technologies, and therapeutic techniques.

The Registered Nurses have all come together from different nursing backgrounds including GP surgery, forensic and residential aged care. We have all come together as one unit to provide clinical care to our Elders in the community who are under the Home Care Package.

So far, we have successfully completed clinical assessments and care planning in consultation with the Elders and their coordinators who reside in the Metropolitan and Regional area, and we are now working towards re-assessment as the year progresses.

We work closely with our Elders, their GPs (health services), local hospitals and other allied health professionals such as physiotherapist, occupational therapist, dietitians, and speech pathologist to ensure person-centred care has been provided.



“I am excited to introduce clinical aspects to ACS clients including diabetes education, wound care and most importantly learning more about First Nations culture & languages”

Maggie Njoroge, Senior Community Nurse

We have also partnered with Diabetes South Australia for better management of diabetes, Wounds Australia and Hartmann's Moli Care and Tena for best practice clinical resources and management.

Our nurses have all attended relevant training including but not limited to: Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation (CPR), suicide prevention, wounds training and workshops in promotion of Wound Awareness Week and finally Mental Health First Aid for Aboriginal and Torres Strait islanders.

Clinical Reporting and Monitoring

Clinical Governance was established in January and implemented in February 2024 to provide better oversight, analysis, trending, and monitoring of clinical incidents and to help address and resolve these incidents.

In addition to this, we have ongoing monthly audit and clinical summary report that monitors key clinical metrics and trends within ACS community services. It supports the framework in ensuring the provision of safe, effective, and high-quality clinical outcomes for our clients. This aims to ensure that appropriate investigation is conducted in consultation with the client/representative and that preventative strategies are identified to reduce the likelihood of the same incident occurring.

The report encompasses a detailed analysis, trending, and investigation of root cause for all clinical incidents. ACS tracks and compares incident data to identify trends and gaps and delves into a detailed analysis and rigour investigation of root cause analysis.

“Clinical staff are doing a good job and very pleasant”

Consumer feedback

“RN does an amazing job, making her comfortable during services and helping her with her appointments”

Consumer feedback

525
hours of nursing

862
Clinical Care
Plans Completed





Human Resources

Our Team Grows to Meet Demand | Anuj Taneja

The past year has been a period of significant growth, change, development, and also a bit of flux for Human Resources at Aboriginal Community Services. We had a new HR Advisor starting around the middle of the financial year. The HR unit worked tirelessly to support our expanding workforce, ensure compliance with evolving regulations, and foster a culture of professional development and employee engagement.

A key focus for HR this year was strengthening our workforce to meet the demands of ACS's growing service footprint as we endeavoured to reduce reliance on brokered services and serve our Elders through our own teams. In this FY, we successfully, for the first time, onboarded a Clinical Team of three Registered Nurses led by a Senior Community Nurse, tasked with providing care and healing to our Elders on HCPs all over Metropolitan Adelaide, and fostering connection to keep us in the know regarding clinical needs of Elders.

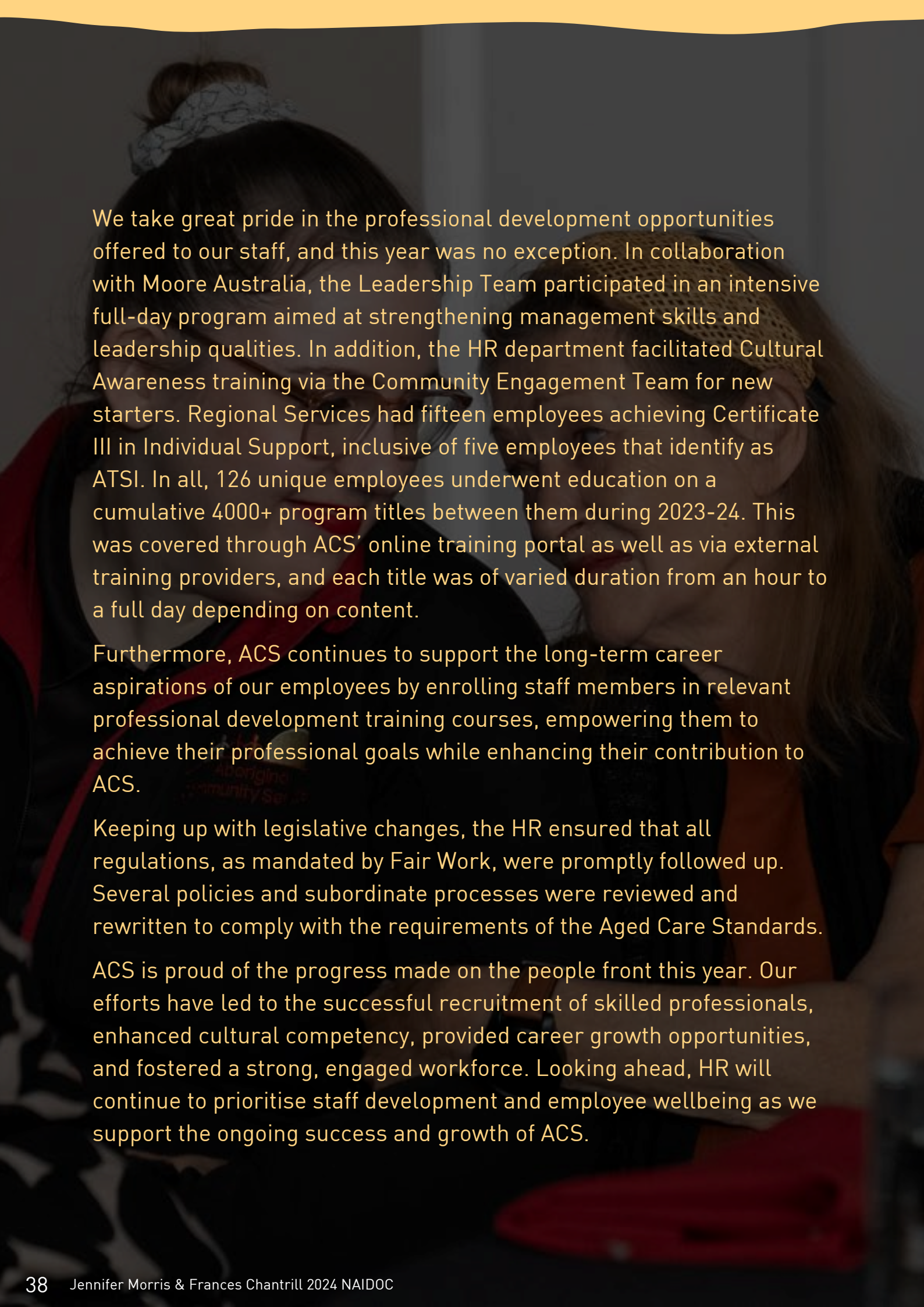
The HR Advisor also invested considerable time and resources in filling key positions across various units. After extensive and arduous searches, we were delighted to appoint a total of sixty-nine employees, including ten registered nurses across Pukatja, AEV and Adelaide Metro, five Aged Care Advisors, twenty-nine Community Support Workers (or PCWs), a handyman and Cook in Pukatja and many more. Regional Services expanded with three new Regional Coordinators and six existing staff entrusted with higher duties to undertake intake and assessment for HCPs on APY Lands.

174 employees

79% female

24% identify as First Nations

21% Male



We take great pride in the professional development opportunities offered to our staff, and this year was no exception. In collaboration with Moore Australia, the Leadership Team participated in an intensive full-day program aimed at strengthening management skills and leadership qualities. In addition, the HR department facilitated Cultural Awareness training via the Community Engagement Team for new starters. Regional Services had fifteen employees achieving Certificate III in Individual Support, inclusive of five employees that identify as ATSI. In all, 126 unique employees underwent education on a cumulative 4000+ program titles between them during 2023-24. This was covered through ACS' online training portal as well as via external training providers, and each title was of varied duration from an hour to a full day depending on content.

Furthermore, ACS continues to support the long-term career aspirations of our employees by enrolling staff members in relevant professional development training courses, empowering them to achieve their professional goals while enhancing their contribution to ACS.

Keeping up with legislative changes, the HR ensured that all regulations, as mandated by Fair Work, were promptly followed up. Several policies and subordinate processes were reviewed and rewritten to comply with the requirements of the Aged Care Standards.

ACS is proud of the progress made on the people front this year. Our efforts have led to the successful recruitment of skilled professionals, enhanced cultural competency, provided career growth opportunities, and fostered a strong, engaged workforce. Looking ahead, HR will continue to prioritise staff development and employee wellbeing as we support the ongoing success and growth of ACS.



"i feel so rewarded when i see how much our support services, and package coordination helps our Elder's everyday lives and supports them to stay safely in home, in community."

Zoe, Regional Coordinator, Whyalla

"i've learnt skills that i didn't know i could do (...) i definitely wouldn't be doing this job if i didn't have [my manager] behind me (...) You can go to him for anything (...) He's always at the end of the phone."

Beth, Residential Care Manager, Pukatja, APY Lands



Finance

AECCS Financial Report 2023-24

Simplified Statement of Financial Performance
and Financial Position for the year ended 30 June 2024

	2024	2023
	\$	\$
Income		
Subsidies & Fees	13,765,700	11,482,609
Resident Fees	667,406	686,439
Home Care Package Fees	10,585,369	8,914,029
Other Income	428,865	451,996
Grant Income	0	607,218
Investment Income	120,540	37,325
Total Income	25,567,879	22,179,617

Expenditure		
Employee Expenses	11,005,869	9,099,941
Agency Expenses	2,109,255	1,797,815
Administration Expenses	4,571,639	1,777,735
Domestic Expenses	882,397	116,364
Food Supplies	1,343,254	1,102,835
Property Expenses	699,865	590,960
Repairs & Maintenance Expenses	1,581,096	1,525,523
Light & Power	228,146	207,087
Medical Supplies	214,575	1,322,526
Motor Vehicle Expenses	597,489	681,866
Resident/Client Expenses	2,125,143	1,211,901
Grant Expenses	32,974	338,475
Depreciation Expense	156,651	133,29
Total Expenditure	25,548,353	19,906,322
Profit/(Loss) from ordinary activities	19,526	2,273,295
Profit/(Loss) from asset sales	0	0
Net profit	19,526	2,273,295

AECCS Financial Report 2023-24

Simplified Statement of Financial Performance
and Financial Position for the year ended 30 June 2024

	2024	2023
	\$	\$
Assets		
Property, Plant and Equipment	4,106,619	4,120,838
Cash and Cash Equivalents	6,112,252	7,074,374
Trade and Other Receivables	1,461,581	43,445
Prepayments	91,258	50,863
Total Assets	11,771,710	11,289,520
Liabilities		
Creditors and Accruals	1,520,148	1,206,889
Provisions	1,086,997	937,593
Loan	1,556,000	1,556,000
Total Liabilities	4,163,146	3,700,482
Leaving what the organisation has built up over the year		
Equity	7,608,564	7,589,038

A word from Finance

General Manager, Finance & Corporate Services | Segaran Murugeson

The Finance Team at ACS are some of the unsung heroes of our organisation, helping us to operate by keeping track of and fulfilling all financial related tasks and transactions. This year the team worked hard to implement new processes and systems and have been adapting to new financial models. ACS has seen a relatively high surplus in previous years, and this year was the time to invest in the growth of our organisation. Our major investments have been the implementation of Alayacare software and the strengthening of our Quality and Compliance Framework which will enable us to meet future challenges.





Keith Aitken

Trevor Buzzacott

Aboriginal
Community Serv

Saying goodbye



Malcolm Gollan 1955-2024

Aboriginal Community Services mourns the passing of another legend who inspired 'vision for reconciliation' through passion, dedication and commitment - who played a key role to making a difference to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders communities.

Malcolm Gollan (1955-2024) was instrumental to (Aboriginal Community Services) as a dedicated Board member from 2021 and as Interim Chairperson following the 2023 AGM until his passing.

Malcolm has a proud history of working for the Aboriginal community of South Australia as State Lead for "Life Without Barriers" both in employment and voluntary capacity, with the key focus for everyone to be part of a community and feel inclusive.

Malcolm's contribution towards improving the lives of Aboriginal people has been showcased through the advocacy of his outcomes and achievements - starting his journey with the Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) in South Australia in 2007. His tireless efforts and work saw the launch of the 2016-2019 Stretch Reconciliation Action Plan.

Aboriginal Community Services sends its deepest condolences to the Gollan family, siblings and extended families and friends of Malcolm. From all of us at Aboriginal Community Services. Thank you.



Aunty Shirley Peisley 1941-2024

Aboriginal Community Services mourns the passing of another legend who shaped history with the Aboriginal movement for her services to the community. Aunty Shirley Peisley AM (1941-2024) was instrumental in establishing this organisation [Aboriginal Community Services] made an immeasurable contribution to the success of the organisation and was a Board member for many years, and Chairperson in 2017 and 2018. Her contribution towards improving the lives of Aboriginal people is well known by the community and she is very highly respected by the Aboriginal community in South Australia. Her tireless efforts and work in the early years saw her actively supporting the 1967 referendum. Our Aunty Shirley has had a long and proud history of working for the Aboriginal community of South Australia, both in employment and volunteering her time for membership of various Boards. Among Aunty Shirley's passions is the acknowledgment and recognition of Aboriginal women as Patron of the Gladys Elphick Awards. In 2000 she was awarded an Australia Medal (AM) for services to the Aboriginal Community in the areas of culture, heritage, legal, health, welfare, library services, the church and Reconciliation. In 2010 she received a Papal Blessing from Pope Benedict XVI for services to the Catholic Church. On 26 November 2021 the Board Room at ACS Head Office in Mile End was named "The Aunty Shirley Peisley AM Board Room" in honour of the hard work, commitment, and dedication by Aunty Shirley to ACS' growth and prosperity over many years. An honour well deserved. She is the official Patron of ACS. Aboriginal Community Services sends its deepest condolences to the Peisley family, siblings and extended families and friends of Aunty Shirley. From all of us at Aboriginal Community Services. Thank you.

Ian G McDonald FCA



Aboriginal Elders & Community Care Services Inc
Annual Financial Statements
for the year ended 30 June 2024

Audit Certificate of Audit Independence under section 60-40 of the Australian Charities and Not For Profits Commission Act 2012

We confirm that, for the audit of the financial statements of Aboriginal Elders & Community Care Services Inc. for the year ended 30 June 2024, we have maintained our independence in accordance with the requirements of APES 110 – Code of Ethics for Professional Accountants, Section 290, published by the Accounting Professional and Ethical Standards Board and the Australian Charities and Not for Profits Commission Act 2012 (ACNC Act).

Ian G McDonald FCA

Date: 5 August 2024

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Ian G McDonald FCA



Aboriginal Elders & Community Care Services Inc. Independent Auditor's Report

We have audited the attached financial statements, being a special purpose financial report, of Aboriginal Elders & Community Care Services Inc. (Association), for the year ended 30 June 2024.

Opinion

In our opinion, the financial statements of the Association are properly drawn up:

- a) to present fairly the financial position of the Association as at the 30 June 2024 and the results of its operations for the period then ended, and;
- b) according to applicable Australian Accounting Standards.

Basis for Opinion

For the audit of the Association we have maintained our independence in accordance with the relevant ethical requirements of APES 110 Section 290. We believe that the audit evidence that we have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinion.

Other Information – Basis of Accounting and Restriction on Distribution

Without modifying our opinion, we draw attention to Note 1 to the financial report, which describes the basis of accounting. The financial report is prepared to assist the association to meet the requirements of Associations Incorporation Act (SA) 1985 and the requirements of the Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission Act 2012. As a result, the financial report may not be suitable for another purpose. Our report is intended solely for the members.

Responsibilities of Management for the Financial Report

The Board of Management is responsible for the preparation of the financial report in accordance with Associations Incorporation Act (SA) 1985 and the requirements of the Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission Act 2012 and for such internal control as management determines is necessary to enable the preparation of a financial report that is free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

Auditor's Responsibilities for the Audit of the Financial Report

Our responsibility is to express an opinion on the financial report based on our audit. We conducted our audit in accordance with Australian Auditing Standards. Those standards require that we comply with relevant ethical requirements and plan and perform the audit to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the schedule is free from material misstatement.

An audit involves performing procedures to obtain audit evidence about the amounts and disclosures in the financial report. The procedures selected depend on the auditor's judgment, including the assessment of the risks of material misstatement in the financial report, whether due to fraud or error. In making those risk assessments, the auditor considers internal control relevant to the association's preparation of the financial report in order to design audit procedures that are appropriate in the circumstances, but not for the purpose of expressing an opinion on the effectiveness of the association's internal control. An audit also includes evaluating the appropriateness of accounting policies used and the reasonableness of accounting estimates made by management, as well as evaluating the overall presentation of the financial report.

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

Ian G McDonald FCA
Registered Company Auditor

Dated at Grange, 20 August 2024

www.creativeauditing.com.au



Aboriginal
Community Services

Aboriginal Community Services
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