

Aboriginal Elders & Community Care Services

2024-2025 Annual Report



Aboriginal
Community Services

Who We Are

Aboriginal Community Services is a leading not-for-profit aged care provider supporting more than 530 Elders across metropolitan Adelaide and regional South Australia. We offer culturally safe, compassionate care at every stage of ageing — from in-home support services that help Elders age well for longer in their own communities to 24/7 residential aged care at our Aboriginal Elders Village.

Our Vision and Values

Our vision is to be a trusted aged care provider, known for quality care, cultural and professional integrity and unwavering commitment to self-determination of Aboriginal Elders, their loved ones and future generations.

We work toward this vision with a skilled, dedicated workforce and partnerships across government and Aboriginal-led organisations.

Our key values include:



Connection to Community

Nurturing meaningful relationships and promoting social inclusion by supporting Elders to engage through their interests, activities and the wider community.



Self-determination

Honouring the rights of Elders to make informed choices and maintain control over their lives, supporting independence and dignity.



Respect

Treating every individual with compassion and dignity, valuing their unique experiences, preferences and cultural backgrounds.



Continuous Improvement

Commitment to learning and evolving, consistently seeking better ways to provide high-quality, person-centred care.



Honesty and Transparency

Communicating openly and clearly, building trust through integrity and sharing accurate, timely information.



Accountability

Taking responsibility for our actions and decisions, ensuring we deliver on our commitments and learn from our outcomes.



Sustainability

Planning and operating responsibly, making choices that support long-term wellbeing for our Elders, staff and the environment.



Efficiency

Delivering care and services that are both effective and efficient, ensuring resources are used wisely to maximise positive outcomes for Elders.

Cultural Integrity

At Aboriginal Community Services, our decisions and actions are grounded in our cultural obligations to uphold, protect and honour First Nations peoples, customs and practices. These responsibilities shape every part of our work — from how we care for Elders and engage with communities, to how we deliver services, build partnerships and advocate with integrity. Cultural integrity is not a principle we follow — it is who we are.

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Chairperson's Report



Judith Lovegrove

What a time to become the chairperson of Aboriginal Community Services! In the midst of intense aged care reforms and business restructures, I have entered this role with a strong vision to provide support and advice for the sustainable future of the organisation and, though the government's reform will sadly disadvantage First Nations People in this country, we are on the precipice of change, which is something that can also offer opportunity.

This Financial Year has been the chance for our board to examine what is working for Elders and what is not in terms of Aboriginal Community Services' (ACS) service delivery, to reimagine what our organisation looks like, and how we can not only maintain our cultural integrity but intensify it, bringing our culturally appropriate care practices to the forefront.

This Financial Year we said hello to many new members of our board. We welcomed Daniel Motlop, Hayley Newchurch, Sharon Gollan, Graeme Smith, Marie Gould, Zi Lic Low (Daniel Low), Marissa Williams, Natasha Chisholm and myself. After valued contributions, we also said our farewells to Sharon Gollan and Graeme Smith in 2025. We are pleased with the diverse skills, knowledge and lived experience that each of our board members bring, and endeavour to work together and make informed decisions that centre the Elders we support.

The Board has taken strides in upskilling and ensuring we are fully informed when making decisions that impact Elders. Members completed Australian Charities and Non-For-Profits Commission Governance Standards Training and Enkindle Reform and Risk Management training. They also participated in programs one, two and three of Aged Care Learning Information Solution (Alis) training which included Governing for Reform in Aged Care (modules 1 to 4), Strengthened Aged Care Quality Standards (module 1), and Financial and Prudential Standards (module 1). This has meant we are better equipped to tackle the challenges that come with leading during reform.

The Quality Care Advisory Board Committee was an initiative we were particularly excited about this Financial Year. The committee is comprised of ACS staff and board members and focuses on examining quality and improvements based on feedback and incidents reported by Elders and staff. The committee has made several helpful recommendations to the Board that have helped us identify key areas for improvement in the organisation.

I would like to thank the Elders we support for putting their trust in us as their aged care providers. We know the role of Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations in the lives of Elders goes beyond service provision, and we hope to contribute to the overall prosperity and wellbeing of Aboriginal community in South Australia.

Thank you to the staff who have worked and continue to work hard to carry the organisation through this period of reforms and restructures. You have provided the Board with valuable insights and promoted faith in the success of day-to-day operations at ACS.

As ACS changes structure, with the farewell of the APY Lands and refining of service provision throughout the regions, the next period will see an improvement in quality of care and a sustainable business model to continue supporting Aboriginal Elders beyond current generations. I hope this Annual Report provides you with insight into the areas of growth for ACS and how we are maintaining and enhancing the cultural integrity of the organisation and the care we provide to the knowledge holders, trailblazers, and teachers of our community, our Elders.



Graham Aitken

Chief Executive Officer's Report

Welcome to our Annual Report for the 2024–2025 Financial Year. We are pleased to present a vibrant account of our year filled with change, adaptation, refinement, and community building. This time, we want to take you on a journey through the key themes of the period, the challenges we faced, our ongoing improvements, significant achievements, and our love and care for the community throughout it all.

On 12 September 2024, the Australian Government announced it would deliver “once-in-a-generation aged care reforms.” These included a new Aged Care Act and the transition from the Commonwealth Home Support Program to the Support at Home Program. Initially set to be implemented on 1 July 2025, the transition was delayed to October 2025, following advocacy from aged care providers who raised concerns about the limited time allowed to implement the organisational changes required.

Throughout the 2024–2025 Financial Year, we looked to the future, examining the restructures necessary for our organisation to thrive and continue providing culturally appropriate care under these reforms.

We continue to adapt to the changing aged care landscape and refine our services to reflect a culturally appropriate approach. Our objective remains: to be a service provider recognised for our cultural and professional integrity and our commitment to the self-determination of current and future generations of Aboriginal communities, families, and individuals.

This financial year was about redefining our priorities and directing our resources toward what would most effectively support Elders. The reinvigoration of our Adelaide Metro Community Program has strengthened the sense of community among Aboriginal Community Services clients and staff alike, contributing to the overall health and wellbeing of our community.

Sadly, we said goodbye to the APY Lands in June 2025, after nine years as the service provider. The Department of Health and Aged Care (DOHAC) advised that this decision had been carefully considered, noting the increasing viability pressures Aboriginal Community Services was facing in delivering National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Flexible Aged Care (NATSIFAC) funded services in the APY Lands and Flinders and Far North. The APY Lands will always hold a special place in our hearts - many members of our organisation have family ties to the region or have called it home.

We are excited to be designing new and refined services that are culturally appropriate and specific to our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. We have seen success in service provision in the Adelaide Metro area and continue to play a key role in the lives of Elders living regionally. The Aboriginal Elders Village in Davoren Park has been celebrated nationally and recognised by the media and sector as an industry leader and holder of knowledge in culturally appropriate care.

I would like to acknowledge our staff who 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 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.

I hope you enjoy reading more about what Aboriginal Community Services has achieved this year, and how this organisation - born from grassroots beginnings - continues to positively impact the lives of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Elders across South Australia. Let us look to the future with hope, innovation, and the guiding wisdom of our Elders.

Our People



Governance

The Board of Aboriginal Community Services provides strategic leadership for delivering high-quality, culturally appropriate aged care to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. The Board contains multiple subcommittees that oversee particular areas of the Organisation and advise the Board. Although subcommittees are not mandatory, it is best practice and helps maintain a well-informed governance body.

Quality and Clinical Subcommittee

This subcommittee has oversight of the systems and processes that support timely assessments, with the development of care and service plans being tailored to consumer needs and preferences, consistent with their assessed level of need and funding packages. The subcommittee will provide expertise and oversight of quality and clinical governance on behalf of the Board and ensure the clinical governance framework is effective.

Finance and Audit Subcommittee

The Finance and Audit Subcommittee is responsible for overseeing the financial performance of the organisation, ensuring there are effective controls in place to manage financial risk and facilitate the annual external financial audit.

The Finance and Audit Subcommittee acts within the delegation of the Board and is responsible for reporting to the Board in relation to financial and audit matters.

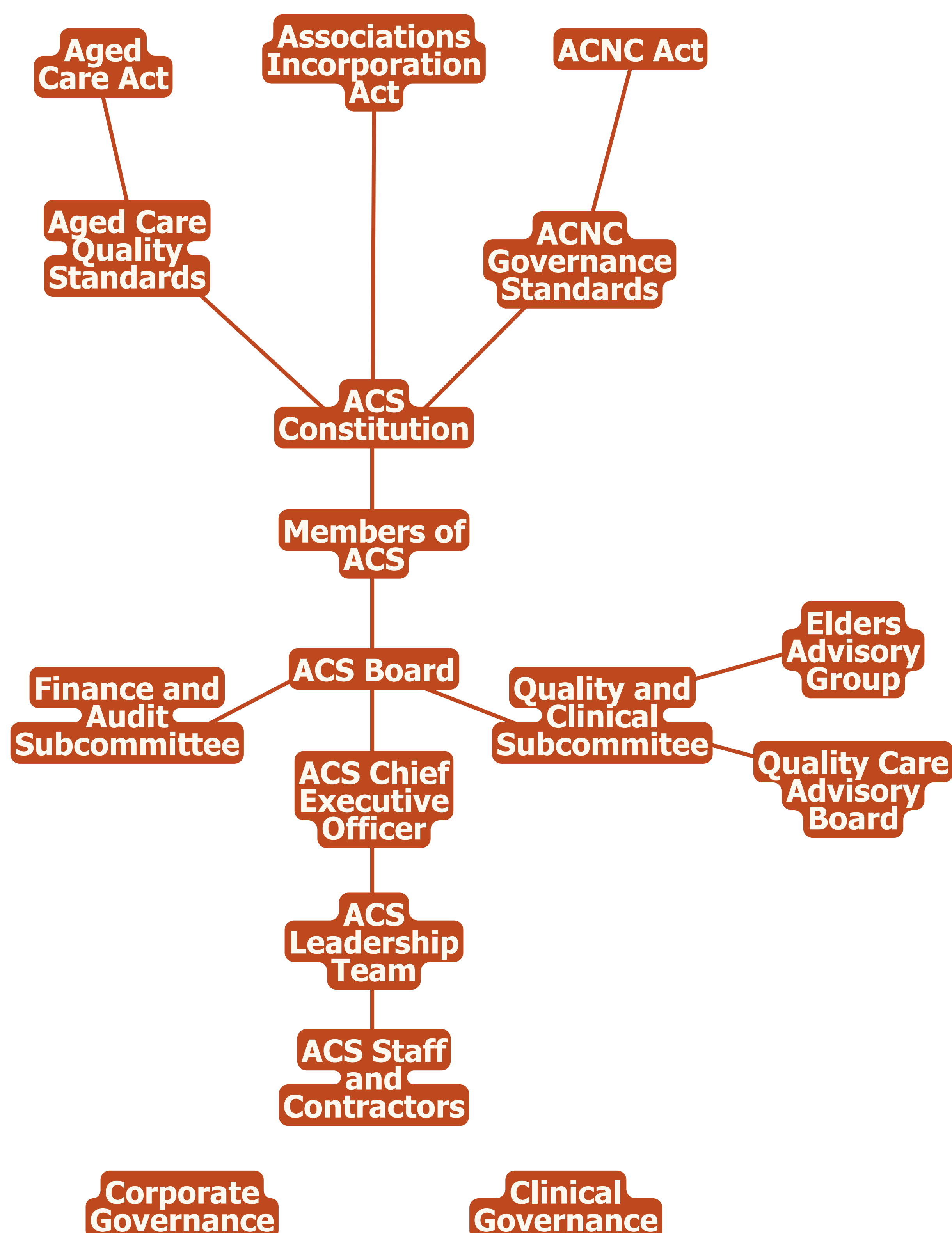
Governance Framework

In the 2023-24 Financial Year, the Board created its internal Governance Framework to enrich its organisation structure to adhere to the aged care reform and regulatory requirements, and revised its organisation structure.

The framework was approved on 28 February 2024.

Governance Support

Providing secretariat and governance support, our Board Governance Secretary, Marie Maiolo, works closely with the Board to strengthen Board processes and capability, ensuring compliance with legal, regulatory and governance frameworks.



ACS Board Members



Judith Lovegrove
Board Chairperson
Appointed November 2024



Sharon Gollan
Deputy Chairperson
Appointed November 2024



Cath McGee
Board Secretary
Appointed November 2014



Zi Lic Low (Daniel Low)
Board Treasurer
Appointed January 2025



Graham Aitken
Public Officer
Appointed November 2010



Marie Gould
Board Member (Clinical)
Appointed January 2025



Marie Maiolo
Board Governance Secretary
Appointed September 2024



Hayley Newchurch
Board Member
Appointed October 2024



Daniel Motlop
Board Member
Appointed October 2024



Natasha Chisholm
Board Member
Appointed June 2025



Marissa Williams
Board Member
Appointed June 2025

Former Board Members

We extend our deepest gratitude to our former Board members for their unwavering commitment, leadership, and invaluable contributions to our organisation throughout their tenure. Their strategic guidance has been instrumental to our ongoing success:

Malcolm Gollan | Chairperson, Community Representative | November 2021-July 2024
Dr Senthil Govindasamy | Member co-opted for expertise | November 2019-September 2024
James Black | Treasurer co-opted for expertise | February 2024-November 2024
Graeme Smith | Member, Community Representative | November 2024-February 2025
Maria Stewart | Member, Community Representative | November 2021-March 2025

Our Association Members

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

ACS Leadership Team



Graham Aitken
Chief Executive Officer/
Public Officer



Segaran Murugeson
General Manager, Finance
and Corporate Services



**Lauren Aitken, General
Manager, Service
Development**



Marie Maiolo
Board Governance
Secretary



**Joni McArthur, General
Manager, Client Services
Metro**



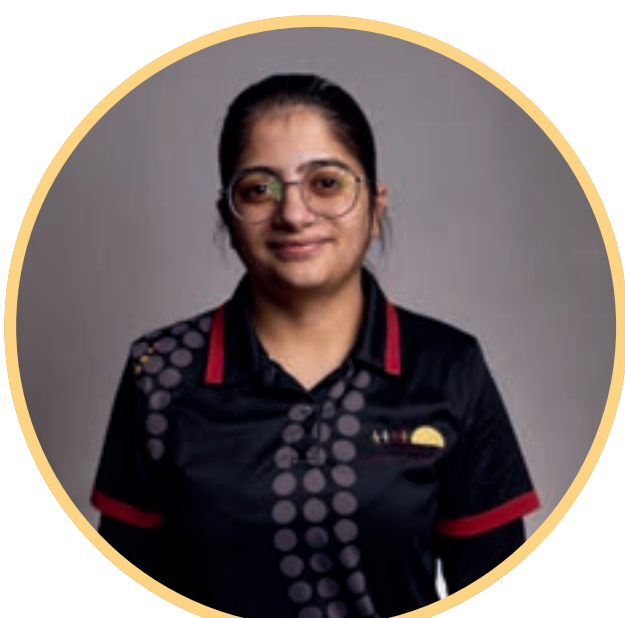
**Harry Harun, General
Manager, Regional
Services**



Maggie Njoroge
Community Clinical
Services Lead



**Ingrid Coad, Site Manager,
Aboriginal Elders Village**



**Priya Priya, Clinical
Lead, Aboriginal Elders
Village**



**Anuj Taneja, Human
Resources Advisor**



**Maggie Balodis, Quality
and Risk Advisor**



**Marilena Tripodi, Policy
and Standards Advisor**

Former Leadership Member

This year, we farewelled our General Manager, Residential Services, Warren Hall. We extend our deepest gratitude for his dedicated service from February 2018-March 2025.

Our Leadership Team

The role of the Leadership Team is to provide operational direction and leadership to ensure Aboriginal Community Services (ACS) meets the organisational purpose and vision set out in the ACS Strategic Plan.

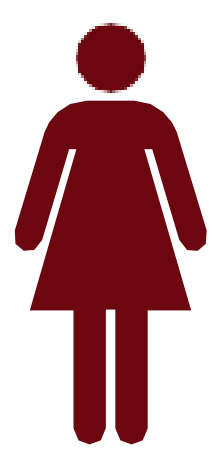
Workforce



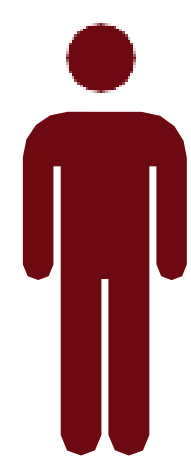
178
Total
Staff



43
Average
Staff Age

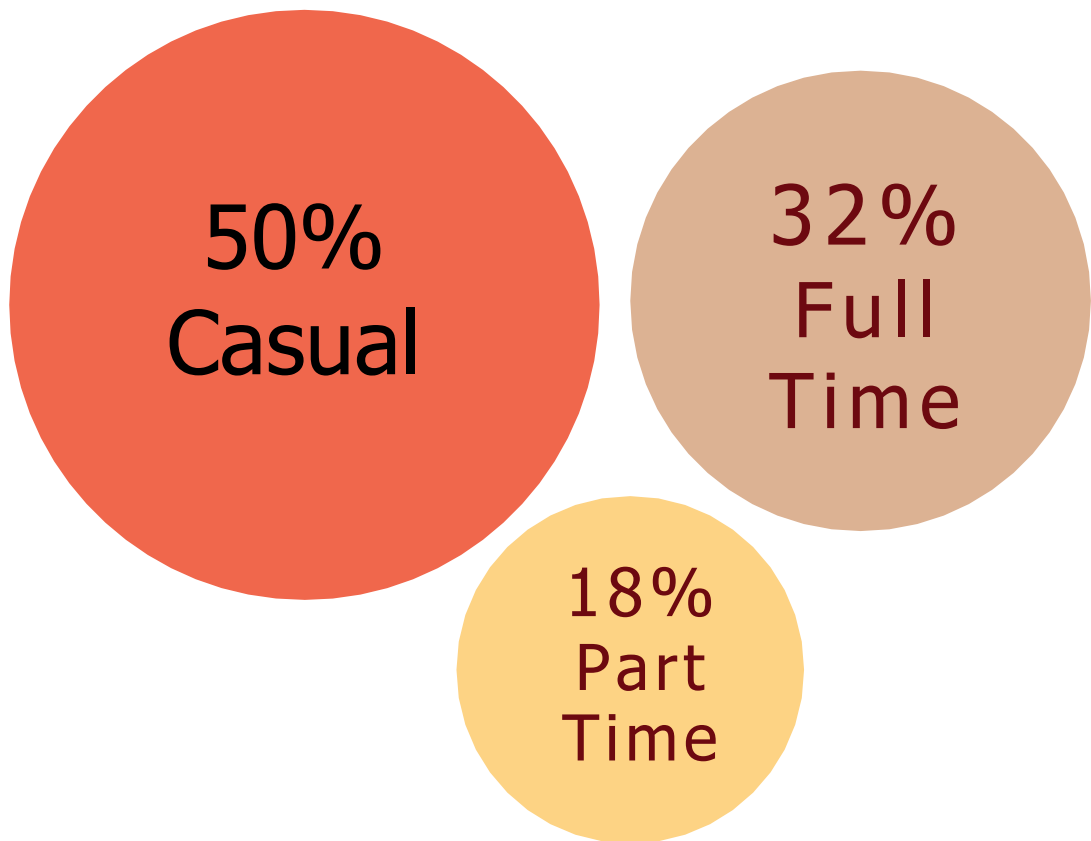


76%
Female
Staff

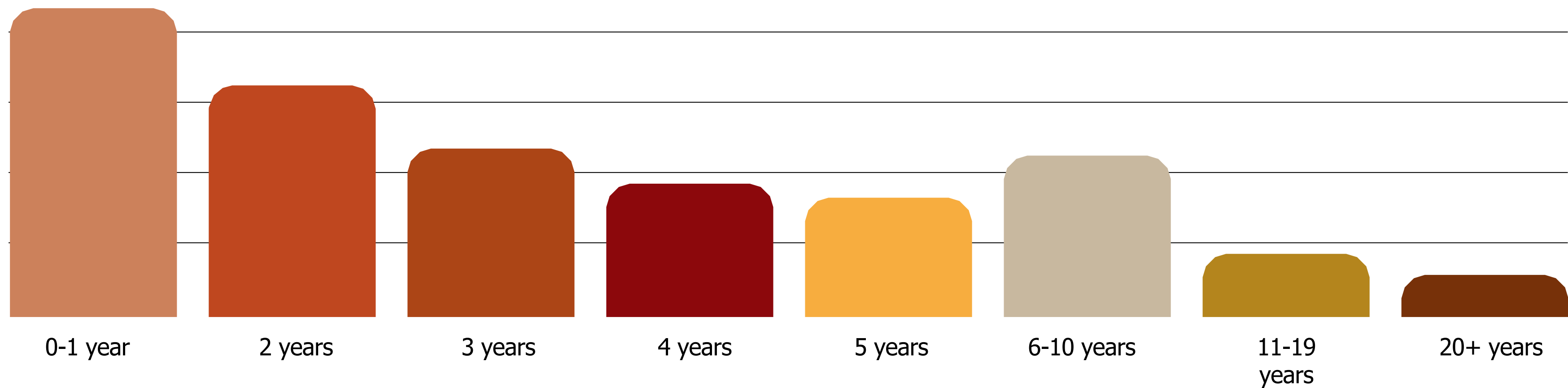


24%
Male
Staff

Employment Type



Length of Service



Stronger Together: Our Diverse Workforce

Our workforce is made up of a diverse range of people from different cultural backgrounds and lived experiences who come together to play their role here at ACS. We employ people across community support, clinical, corporate, care coordination, kitchen, and management roles. This Financial Year, we set the foundation for what will be a key focus in the coming years: diversity and inclusion. We established the Diversity and Inclusion Working Party comprised of staff from various business units.

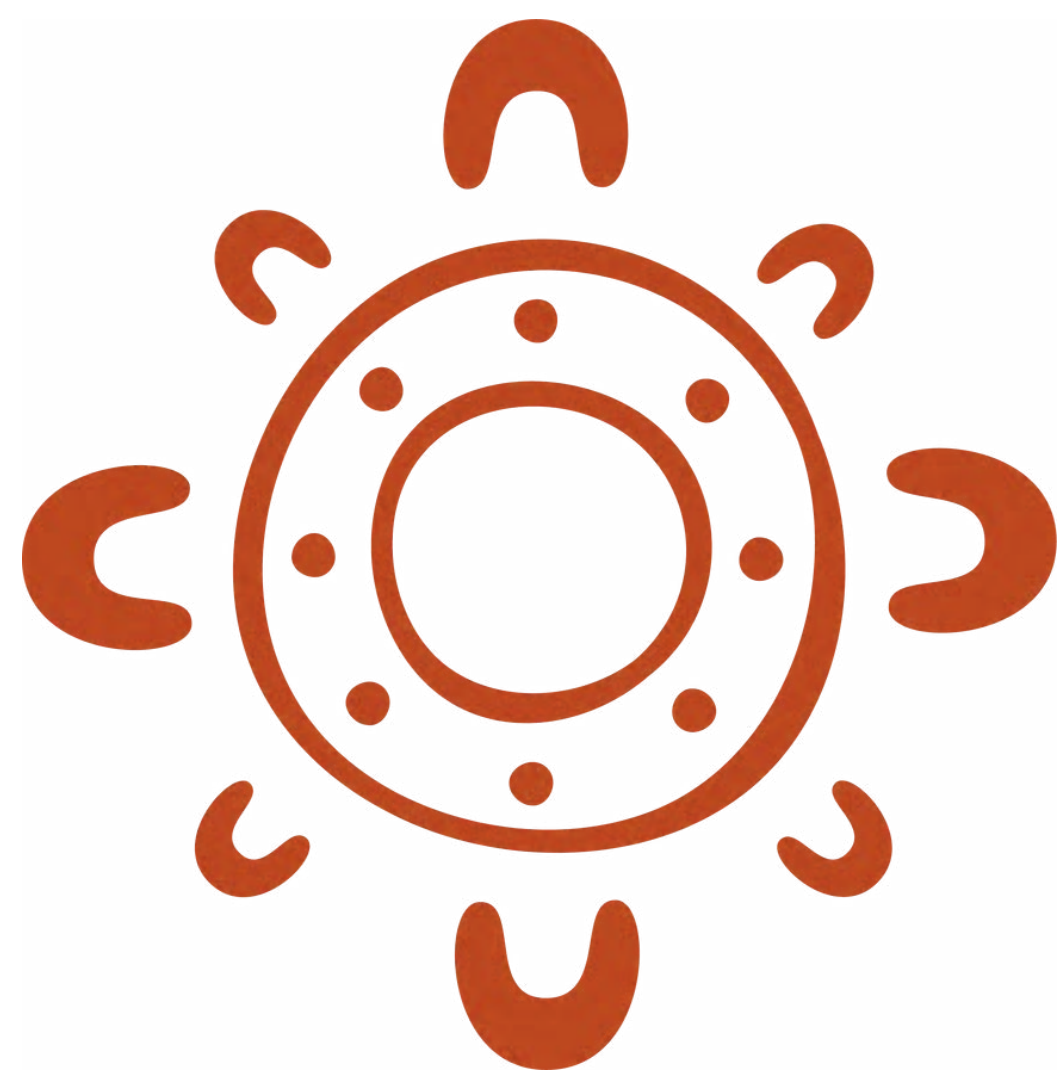
The working party developed a Diversity and Inclusion Survey that found that 83% of staff feel safe and accepted for who they are at ACS.

87% of staff believe that diversity and inclusion is very important, and over one in three staff perceive diversity and inclusion training as an area that ACS could act on.



Aboriginal Recruitment Strategy

Our Aboriginal Recruitment Strategy was updated in May 2025 and aims to attract, recruit and retain qualified Aboriginal staff across business units. The strategy seeks to position ACS as an employer of choice for Aboriginal people. We are working to improve effective recruitment processes, culturally safe and supportive work environment, opportunities for professional development and mentoring, recognising and respect the skills and perspectives of Aboriginal employees. With our Diversity and Inclusion Working Party's staff further empowering us to improve our workplace for Aboriginal people, this will be a key priority in the coming Financial Year.



Upskilling Our Team

A crucial contributor to quality care for Elders, and the sustainability of an organisation is the continuous upskilling of staff. This year, upskilling and training was prioritised across business units, with 4117 training program titles undertaken by 105 employees.

Upskilling enables ACS to continue providing high quality care to our Elders in a changing aged care landscape through training related to medication management, food and nutrition, Diversity and Inclusion, wound care, foot health, diabetes, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander mental health first aid, respectful conversations, dementia, palliative care, and more.

ACS aimed to strengthen our internal capabilities, increasing our capacity for culturally safe care. Community Support Workers received training including medication management, to deliver additional services they were not previously responsible for delivering, strengthening bonds with Elders they support.

All staff undergo mandatory training yearly, and are offered opportunities for additional training and career progression. This contributes to staff retention, with 41 of our 178 staff having been with us for over 5 years.

In our efforts towards continuous improvement, we are also in the process of redesigning our mandatory training for new staff to better suit the new Strengthened Aged Care Quality Standards and aged care programs, and promote cultural awareness. Our emphasis on mandatory cultural awareness training for all staff equips us to provide culturally appropriate services across all areas of the organisation.

Types of Training

Cultural Safety and Person-Centred Wellbeing

Clinical Excellence and Specialised Care

Quality, Governance and Compliance

Health, Safety and Infection Control

Organisational Capability and Standards

Adapting to change: Learning the Strengthened Quality Standards

Our organisation-wide approach to Strengthened Aged Care Quality Standards training allowed our workforce to familiarise themselves with the new aged care standards in a supportive and enthusiastic environment. We highlighted a 'standard of the week' and each business unit set up their own display, and won a prize if they were the first to complete their training for that specific standard. Managers also completed a gap analysis to ensure that their business unit adequately met the new strengthened standards. It is vital that we are across all changes in our industry and continue to position ourselves as leaders in the field of culturally appropriate aged care. Developing engaging and inclusive training programs for staff helps us reach this goal, ensuring we are up to date and educated on the framework we operate within.

The 5 Moments of Hand Hygiene: A training highlight

Hand hygiene was an organisation-wide training program led by our Clinical Team and completed by all staff. The purpose of the training was to improve hand hygiene practices that play a fundamental part of preventing the spread of infections and contamination in a healthcare environment. The competency will enable staff to deliver care and services safely by minimising infection risk by using the 5 moments of hand hygiene.

Community Clinical Services Lead Maggie explains the two key aims: Enhance clinical outcomes, decrease infection rates, promote infection awareness and a safer environment for staff and individuals, and minimise infections related to providing care. Infection management, such as isolating infectious causes or consumers and applying standards and precautions to prevent transmission, minimises the risk of transmission.



Our Community

Client Experience

Enhancing Client Experience

Social and Emotional Wellbeing (SEWB) is vital to our overall health, and as a provider for First Nations people, we know that feeling connected and culturally supported is important. This is why we have developed a range of initiatives to support the SEWB of Elders, and continued to improve the overall client experience at ACS.

Our Metro Social Program has been a true highlight of the year, strengthening not only our connection with the community, but also forming new friendships between clients. On top of this, our storytelling project 'There I Was, Here I Am', as well as the various interviews and story spotlights we have produced throughout the year, have contributed to Elders feeling valued and celebrated by our organisation.

We have also developed multiple advisory bodies to ensure self-determination in the care of Elders. The Quality Care Advisory Body collaborates with our Quality Team, providing feedback and solutions to issues that arise and improvements they have identified. The Elders Advisory Group, comprised of home care recipients, works with the Metro Team, making recommendations and providing insight into community needs and preferences.

The establishment of a Research and Innovation role here at ACS has meant significantly more effort can go into examining client experience and developing solutions to help us appropriately support the needs of Elders, and grow our range of services.

Maggie Beer Foundation Mentoring Program

A highlight of this Financial Year was the success of our application to be involved in the Maggie Beer Foundation mentoring program at the Aboriginal Elders Village (AEV). Chef Cam, from the Maggie Beer Foundation, is now working closely with our kitchen staff to elevate the dining experience of our residents. Together, they will focus on enhancing our chefs' and cooks' skills to create delicious, nutritious meals that bring joy and goodness to every bite. Our team at the AEV showed Chef Cam our edible native plant garden and advised him on cultural needs and connection to land and food. We are so excited for this opportunity to upskill and be inspired when it comes to delicious meals for our residents.

Fostering Community through Annual Events

Our annual major events, celebrating NAIDOC and Christmas, offer our Elders the opportunity to connect with their friends, family and community. Often a highlight of our staff calendars, the various ACS business units come together to support our clients.

This year, the NAIDOC theme "Keep the Fire Burning! Blak, Loud and Proud" inspired our Strategic Projects team to spotlight Elders' meaningful contribution to communities throughout their lives.

Our Elders Christmas Lunch gave our Elders the opportunity to start the festive season in style, celebrating our community and the year that had been.



Home Care sees boost in Social Program, Clinical Support and more...

Home Care at ACS provides Elders with appropriate care that allows them to age well in their homes. We are a provider of the Commonwealth Home Support Program, as well as Home Care Packages. Along with all other providers we are now transitioning from the Home Care Package to the new Support At Home Program. Most of our clients have been with us before 12 September 2024 meaning that they will maintain their funding level, with service options and care management processes adhering to the rules of the Support at Home Program instead. Our Home Care teams across Adelaide Metro and Regional South Australia have been working hard to become familiar with the new program, and we are very proud of their dedication to continue providing quality care for Elders. Highlights of our Home Care this year have been the reintroduction of the Adelaide Metro Social Program, the organisation-wide contribution of our Clinical Team that has significantly boosted our quality of care and ability to help Elders, and the establishment of our Quality Care Advisory Committee.

This year we reinstated our social groups in Home Care, providing Elders with the opportunity to connect and enjoy fun-filled and diverse activities. From monthly yarnning groups in the northern, southern, and central suburbs, to cooking and craft activities, and exciting day trips, our social program has been making lovely memories with Elders. The feedback we have received has been incredibly encouraging, with many Elders saying that the groups have made a big impact on their lives. Members of the groups have been able to form friendships that continue outside the organised events. The social program is a shining example of what kind of role an aged care organisation can play in an individual's life, with many attendees looking forward to the group as an important pillar of their week.

"I finally found my comfort zone." – Wendy, event attendee

"I am becoming quite the social butterfly ... I used to sign myself as 'Nigella no friends' since I had virtually no contact with the outside world but your yarnning and craft get togethers are something to really look forward to ... Your new project is yet another example of the huge amount of work being undertaken by ACS staff to provide a service that offers the opportunity for Elders to connect and enjoy each other's company" – Dianne, event attendee



The Aboriginal Elders Village Leads the Way

We deliver residential aged care under the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Flexible Aged Care Program at the Aboriginal Elders Village at Davoren Park. There are 33 beds at the Village, and it is home to Aboriginal Elders from a range of mobs. Our culturally appropriate aged care facility has a dynamic lifestyle program that offers a plethora of activities often incorporating culture.

This year our Elders Village had many exciting successes, including participating in the Maggie Beer Foundation training program focused on enhancing the taste and nutrition of the delicious meals served to Elders. The Village team was also involved in the My Journey Needs project, run by the Northern Adelaide Local Health Network, which saw the collection of insights from Elders and families on how to provide palliative care that is more culturally appropriate. We are excited that the project was selected as a finalist in the SA Health Awards.

We also introduced MediMap in the village, which is a digital medication management solution that has significantly improved our processes and safety around the management of medication for residents. Of course, a major highlight has been our Marra Elders Playgroup, an intergenerational playgroup at the Village created in collaboration with Playgroups SA and Marra Dreaming.

Our Intergenerational Playgroup

This year, the Aboriginal Elders Village (AEV) commenced a very exciting initiative in collaboration with Marra Dreaming and Playgroups SA, fostering meaningful connection between First Nations Elders and local children through an intergenerational playgroup. More than just play, the Marra Elders Playgroup is where Dreaming stories are passed on, language is heard, and the deep role of Elders in teaching and guiding is honoured. Every fortnight, Elders from the AEV in Davoren Park are joined by local children aged 0 to five years old and their carers. It's the only playgroup in South Australia hosted in a First Nations-specific aged care home and offers a rare opportunity for children to learn directly from cultural custodians, fostering respect, identity and belonging from an early age. The playgroup was featured as a good news story on Adelaide ABC Breakfast and in news outlets around the state. We couldn't be prouder of what has been a true highlight of the financial year.



Storytelling with Elders

There I Was, Here I Am

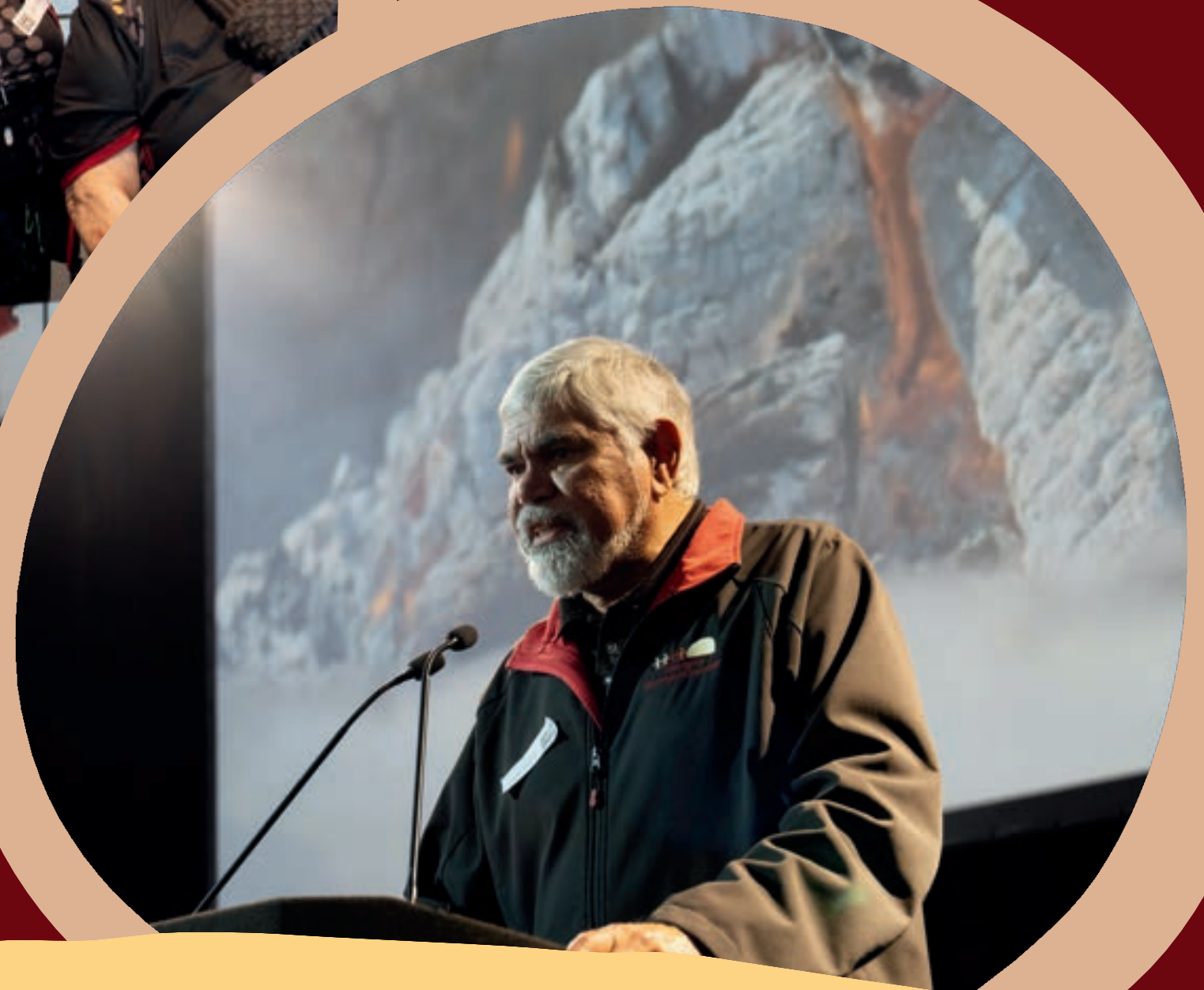
At our annual NAIDOC Lunch in 2024, we screened our 'There I Was, Here I Am' documentary featuring Elders Mulla Sumner, Frances Chantrill and Craig Dodd. Funded by the National Indigenous Australians Agency, the heartwarming documentary acts as a digital record-keeping project to preserve the stories of South Australian Elders through oral storytelling. The project gained a lot of media attention with 63 media items across radio, online and print news in SA and nationally. We hope to reach new viewers of this short documentary over the coming years through further distribution efforts. The project offered an opportunity for Elders to share their messages and have their stories and lives celebrated by many.



Uncle Mulla's Story

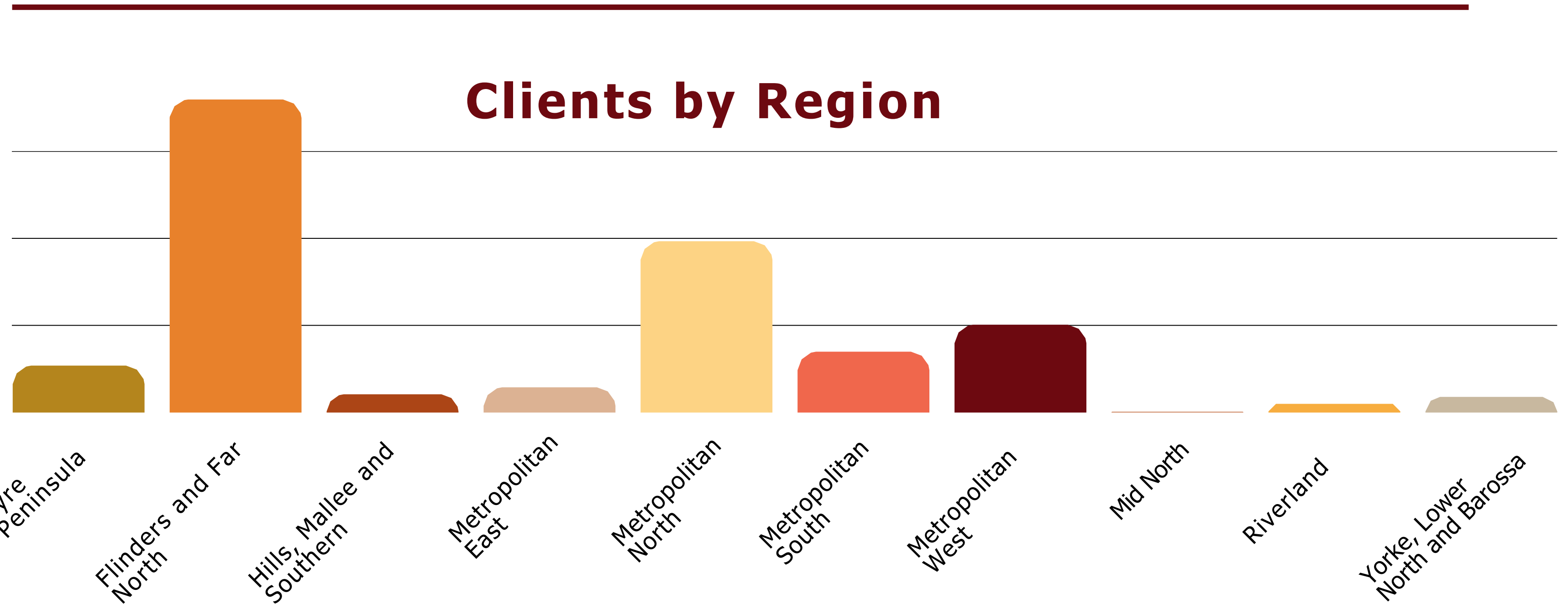
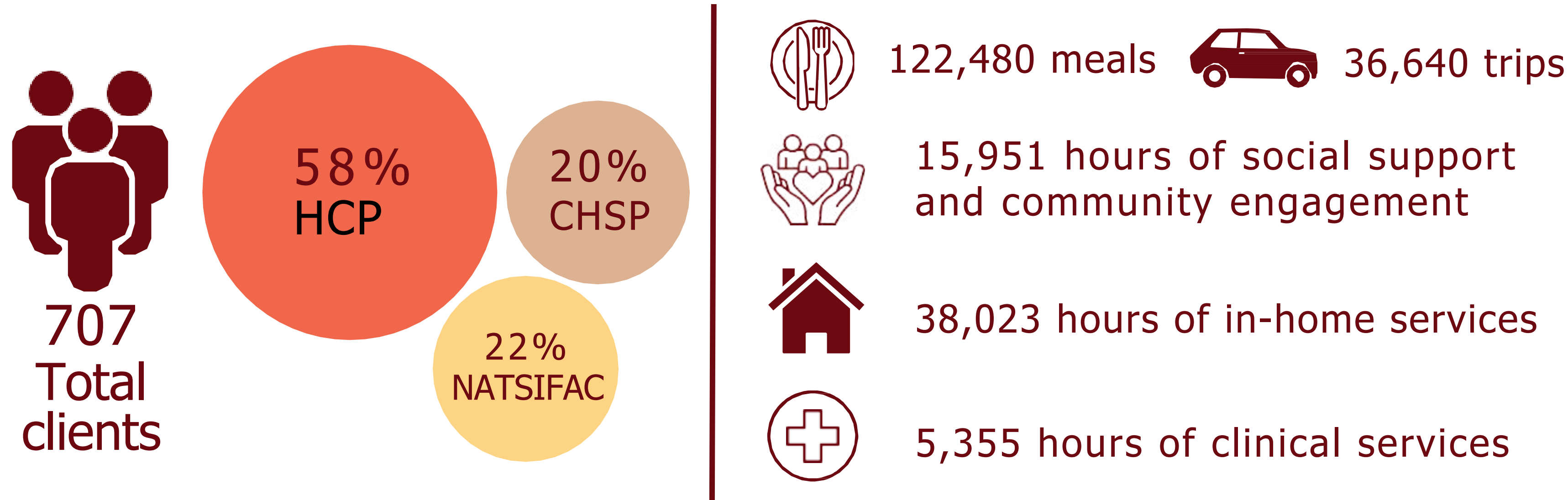
Uncle Mulla starred in our documentary, sharing the inspiring story of how he turned his life around and dedicated it to helping community. He recalled his early life suffering from alcohol addiction, including sleeping rough in the Adelaide Parklands. His journey to sobriety later saw him head the organisation he credits with saving many lives, the Aboriginal Sobriety Group (ASG). The former CEO of ASG also chaired the state's biggest Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisation - Nunkuwarrin Yunti of South Australia Inc for two decades. His dedication to helping community continues with his passion for motorbikes. Uncle Mulla proudly leads and rides with Black Death – a group that stands in solidarity with those impacted by Aboriginal deaths in custody.





Our Organisation

Our community programs at a glance



Aged Care Reforms

The new Aged Care Act will be implemented on November 1, 2025, and will bring with it a plethora of changes to how we operate and provide care. Preparing for these reforms is a massive feat, and we are so proud of our team who are working diligently and being adaptable in the face of change. At a strategic level, we have been developing a more sustainable business model so we can continue to provide care for generations to come. We have looked in depth at our service footprint – mapping clients, staff and contractors to ensure we are effectively and efficiently responding to client care needs while minimising the administrative costs due to the increased financial pressures placed on providers under the new system. This includes realigning our staff and their caseloads, particularly those involved in client support.

Financially, we are set to run impact analyses and scenario modelling, update budgeting frameworks, customise client budget templates, and update new service codes, bill codes and pricing structures. In addition, we are preparing to update all our policies and processes to align with the new Act.

It is important to us that we communicate with Elders exactly how their aged care would change from 1 November. We released a blog post, a letter to clients, and a newsletter article that outlined key changes and directed people to the appropriate government documents that included detailed rules.

While the reforms will create many challenges for providers and unfortunately place Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Elders at a disadvantage, there are some opportunities we are particularly excited about. With the detailed examination of our business that has taken place, we are keen to grow our range of services and come up with new innovations that will further support and foster the growth of prosperous Aboriginal Communities.

The Costs of Compliance

Our Compliance Journey and Dedication to Continuous Improvement

Like any Aged Care Provider, it was vital that we dedicate time and resources to compliance. Major efforts were put towards our journey to compliance in the APY Lands before we said farewell to the region. Our business restructure will help us to remain viable and maintain the health of our business following these major expenses.

We have been preparing for compliance under the new Act by discussing requirements, rules and standards in reform meetings, and establishing a quality and clinical risk management subcommittee on our Board to maintain better oversight.

Compliance isn't where our improvements stop. Continuous improvement is a core value at ACS, and our work is guided by the Aged Care Quality Standards, ensuring we meet and exceed regulatory requirements while maintaining the highest levels of safety, accountability, and cultural respect. We foster a strong culture of continuous improvement, using feedback, audits, and reflective practice to continually enhance the quality of our care and services. Through this ongoing commitment, ACS continues to strengthen trust, improve outcomes, and ensure our care remains responsive, person-centred, and aligned with best practice. This year, our key improvements include the reintroduction of our Adelaide Metro Social Program and growth in our Clinical Care Team.



Financial Challenges as a Regional and Remote Provider

Our financial results this year show a \$1.9m deficit, despite the \$2m surplus predicted. The major costs we faced included the expenses required for us to become fully compliant as a regional and remote provider. The cost of service provision in the APY Lands far surpassed the grant funding from the government. We advocated across many years for a major increase in funding for remote providers; however a slight increase was only implemented after we handed over services in the APY Lands to the new provider. In the coming year, we are focused on sustainable business models so we are able to provide high-quality care to Elders at the most affordable price.

ACS invested in our compliance across the organisation, working with Standards Wise Australia. The majority of this investment went towards a demonstration project to show our organisation and the Department of Health and Aged Care (DOHAC) the viability of delivering aged care services to Elders in the remote communities of the APY Lands. We saw a sudden influx of approximately 100 Home Care Packages assigned to Elders, increasing the complexity of care required, especially aged care clinical and nursing services.

The demonstration project was presented to ACS and DOHAC, showing that an increase in funding was required to deliver aged care services under the NATSIFAC Community and Residential programs, as well as the Home Care Packages Program that was both financially viable and compliant with the Aged Care Quality Standards. It also highlighted the need for additional infrastructure funding support to effectively respond to the unique geographic challenges of the APY Lands.

Celebrating 9 Years in the APY Lands

Aboriginal Community Services would like to reflect on the 9 wonderful years we have been providing care to the APY Lands communities. With centres across Indulkana, Fregon, Mimili, Amata, Pipalyatjara and a residential facility in Pukatja, we are so grateful to have been embedded in community life and allow Elders to age on country. ACS ceased our services on the APY Lands on the 1st of July 2025, with the Department of Health and Aged Care having advised that the grant agreement for the APY Lands would not be renewed.

They cited “This decision has been carefully considered in the context of our understanding that AECCS is experiencing increased viability pressures in providing NATSIFAC funded services in the APY Lands and Flinders and Far North”. This statement is true, as ACS was paying for the shortfall in funding from our reserves.

Throughout our time in the APY Lands beginning in 2016, we navigated the complexities of remote service delivery, and highlighted to governments the unique context of Aboriginal aged care in remote areas. We performed the delivery of the Commonwealth Home Support Program and transitioned communities to the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Flexible Aged Care Program.

When COVID-19 came along with all of its ‘unprecedented’ implications, we were able to adapt and continue to support the overall health and wellbeing of Elders.

Even in more recent times, we are proud of how we have supported community and are inclined to reflect on what we learnt from Elders in the APY Lands. The lives of our staff will be forever impacted by the wisdom generously shared with them by Elders they supported.

Supporting Elders to age on their country is an incredibly important job – and we are honoured to have been trusted by the community for these 9 years. Being able to stay on country is key to the social and emotional wellbeing and overall health of Elders, but not just that, to have Elders present means a more prosperous community as a whole, no matter the generation.

The APY Lands will always have a home in our hearts – many members of our organisation have family ties to the APY Lands, or have at one point called it home. The Department has appointed Australian Regional and Remote Community Services as the new provider. ACS is working with the Department to support employees’ transition to a new provider wherever possible.

Despite this change, ACS remains a leading not-for-profit aged care provider in South Australia, and will continue to serve and support more than 530 Elders across regional and metropolitan SA.





Treasurer's Report

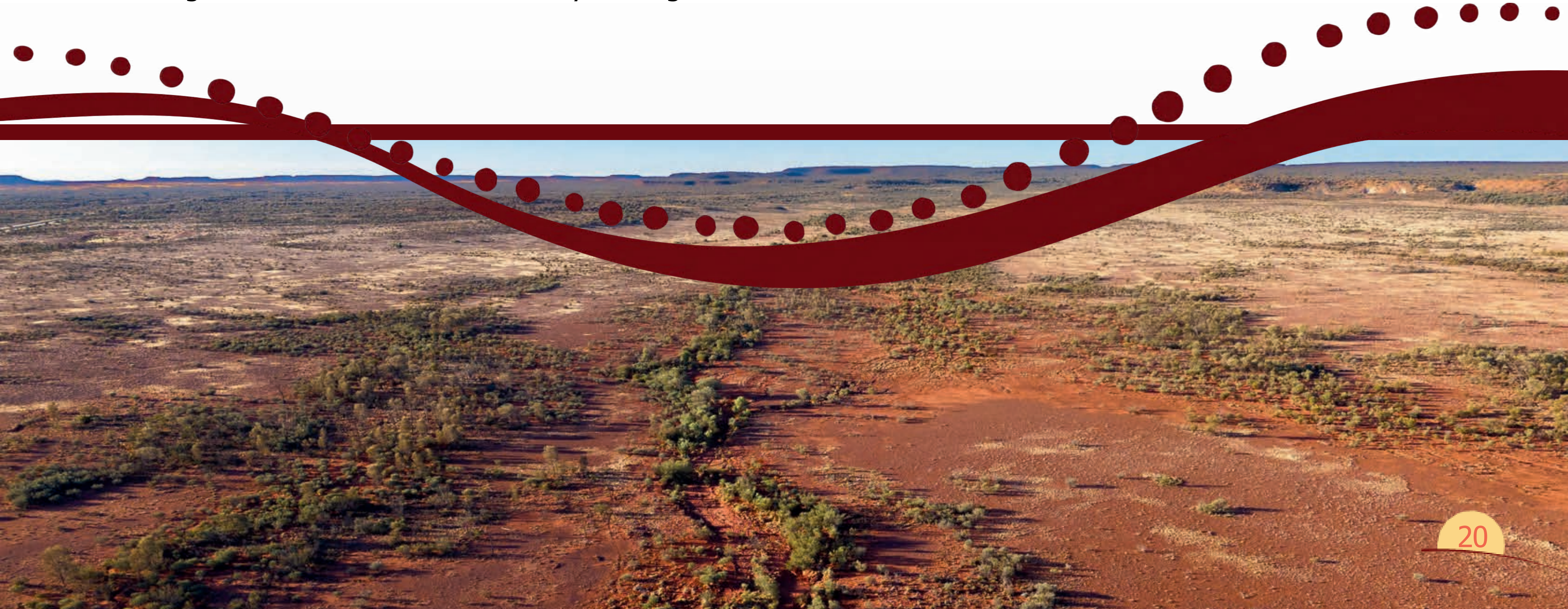
Zi Lic Low (Daniel Low)

In what has been an incredibly challenging operating environment for the aged care sector, Aboriginal Community Services (ACS) and the communities we serve, I present the Treasurer's Report for the financial year ending 30 June 2025.

Despite challenges including sector-wide reform, cost inflation, and the conclusion of several major funding streams, ACS ended the year with \$4.7m in cash reserves and a strong balance sheet, placing us in a stable position heading into the 2025-26 Financial Year. Compared to the prior year, income increased by \$3.5m (+13.6%), reflecting growth across core community programs. However, this was offset by an increase in operating expenditure of \$5.4m (+21.1%), driven primarily by \$4.2m in non-recurring consulting and compliance costs. These were necessary investments to implement recommendations from the Aged Care Quality and Safety Commission (ACQSC) and ensure ACS meets its obligations under the new Aged Care Act. Importantly, this year also marked the loss of government funding for aged care services in the APY Lands and Flinders Far North regions, which contributed to organisational restructuring and transition efforts.

Excluding these one-off costs, the underlying operating performance of ACS remained sound. Prudent cash flow management and strong governance have enabled us to absorb this year's exceptional expenditure while maintaining liquidity and sustainability. I am confident that ACS is well placed to manage the rollout of Aged Care Reforms, supported by a capable leadership team, dedicated staff, and the commitment of the Board.

The external audit for the 2024-25 Financial Year was completed and signed without qualification, reaffirming our commitment to strong financial governance. I would like to sincerely thank our Chief Executive Officer, Graham Aitken, and the General Manager, Finance and Corporate Services, Segaran Murugeson, for their leadership, collaboration, and transparency throughout the year. Their efforts have been instrumental in ensuring the organisation remains financially strong and mission-focused.



AECCS Financial Report 2024-2025

Simplified Statement of Financial Performance for the year ended 30 June 2025

Income	2025 \$	2024 \$
Subsidies and Fees	14,318,682	13,765,700
Resident Fees	0	667,406
Home Care Packages Fees	14,120,761	10,585,369
Other Income	748,940	428,865
Grant Income	0	0
Investment Income	92,979	120,540
Total Income	29,281,362	25,567,879

Expenditure	2025 \$	2024 \$
Employee Expenses	13,186,537	11,005,869
Agency Expenses	2,109,730	2,109,255
Administration Expenses	5,985,248	4,571,639
Domestic Expenses	1,695,762	882,397
Food Supplies	1,742,023	1,343,254
Property Expenses	1,210,709	699,865
Repairs and Maintenance Expenses	191,888	1,581,096
Light and Power	253,488	228,146
Medical Supplies	230,556	214,575
Motor Vehicle Expenses	824,134	597,489
Resident/Client Expenses	3,556,759	2,125,143
Grant Expenses	82,267	32,974
Depreciation Expenses	119,346	156,651

	2025 \$	2024 \$
Total Expenditure	31,188,446	25,548,353
Profit/Loss from ordinary Activities	-1,907,084	19,526
Profit/Loss from Asset Sales	0	0
Net Profit	-1,907,084	19,526

Simplified Statement of Financial Position for the year ended 30 June 2025

Assets	2025 \$	2024 \$
Property, Plant and Equipment	4,164,402	4,106,619
Cash and Cash Equivalent	4,673,018	6,112,252
Trade and Receivables	3,242,087	2,410,721
Prepayments	141,112	91,258
Total Assets	12,220,619	12,720,850

Liabilities	2025 \$	2024 \$
Creditors and Accruals	3,939,912	2,469,289
Provisions	1,023,226	1,086,997
Loans	1,556,000	1,556,000
Total Liabilities	6,519,138	5,112,286
Leaving what the organisation has built up over the years:		
Equity	5,701,481	7,608,564

Simplified Statement of Cash Flows for the year ended 30 June 2025

Cash Flows from Operating Activities	2025 \$	2024 \$
Receipts	28,307,163	24,193,035
Payments to suppliers and employees	-29,557,624	-25,036,270
Interest received	92,979	120,540
Interest paid	-104,621	-96,994
Net cash provided by/used in operating activities	-1,262,103	-819,689

Cash Flows from Investing Activities	2025 \$	2024 \$
Purchase of property, plant and equipment	-177,130	-142,432
Net cash provided by/used in operating activities	-177,130	-142,432

Cash Flows from Financing Activities	2025 \$	2024 \$
Proceeds from borrowing	0	0
Net cash provided by/used in financing activities	0	0
Net increase/decrease in cash held	-1,439,233	-962,121

Cash on Hand	2025 \$	2024 \$
Cash on hand at the beginning of the Financial	6,112,252	7,074,373
Cash on hand at the end of the Financial Year	4,673,019	6,112,252

Ian G McDonald FCA



Aboriginal Elders & Community Care Services Inc

Annual Financial Statements

for the year ended 30 June 2025

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 2025, 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).

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Ian McDonald'.

Ian G McDonald FCA

Date: 5 August 2025

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

To the members of Aboriginal Elders & Community Care Services Inc

Opinion

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

- a) Giving a true and fair view of the financial position of the Association as at the 30 June 2025 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 objectives are to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial report as a whole is free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error, and to issue an auditor's report that includes our opinion. Reasonable assurance is a high level of assurance, but is not a guarantee that an audit conducted in accordance with Australian Auditing Standards will always detect a material misstatement when it exists. Misstatements can arise from fraud or error and are considered material if, individually or in the aggregate, they could reasonably be expected to influence the economic decisions of users taken on the basis of this financial report.

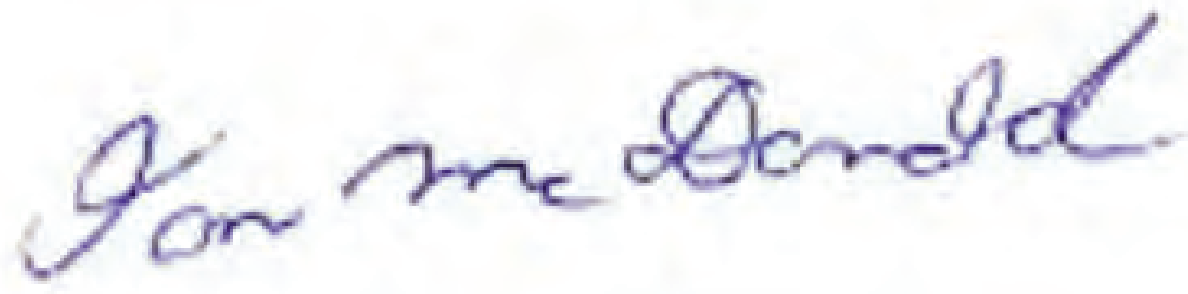
As part of an audit of the financial report in accordance with Australian Auditing Standards, we exercise professional judgement and maintain professional scepticism throughout the audit. We also:

- Identify and assess the risks of material misstatement of the financial report, whether due to fraud or error, design and perform audit procedures responsive to those risks, and obtain audit evidence that is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinion. The risk of not detecting a material misstatement resulting from fraud is higher than for one resulting from error, as fraud may involve collusion, forgery, intentional omissions, misrepresentations, or the override of internal control.
- Obtain an understanding of internal control relevant to the audit 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 Registered Entity's internal control.
- Evaluate the appropriateness of accounting policies used and the reasonableness of accounting estimates and related disclosures made by management.
- Conclude on the appropriateness of Registered Entity's use of the going concern basis of accounting and, based on the audit evidence obtained, whether a material uncertainty exists related to events or conditions that may cast significant doubt on the Registered Entity's ability to continue as a going

concern. If we conclude that a material uncertainty exists, we are required to draw attention in our auditor's report to the related disclosures in the financial report or, if such disclosures are inadequate, to modify our opinion. Our conclusions are based on the audit evidence obtained up to the date of our auditor's report. However, future events or conditions may cause the Registered Entity to cease to continue as a going concern.

- Evaluate the overall presentation, structure and content of the financial report, including the disclosures, and whether the financial report represents the underlying transactions and events in a manner that achieves fair presentation.

We communicate with those charged with governance regarding, among other matters, the planned scope and timing of the audit and significant audit findings, including any significant deficiencies in internal control that we identify during our audit.



Ian G McDonaldFCA
Registered Company Auditor

Dated at Grange, 28 August 2025

Aerial view of Tjilpiku Pampaku Ngura Aged Care Facility in Pukatja, APY Lands





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