



**Independent Community
Living Australia**
Everyday life changing

Annual Report

2023 - 2024

EVERYDAY LIFE CHANGING:
Helping people live
independent lives
since 1986





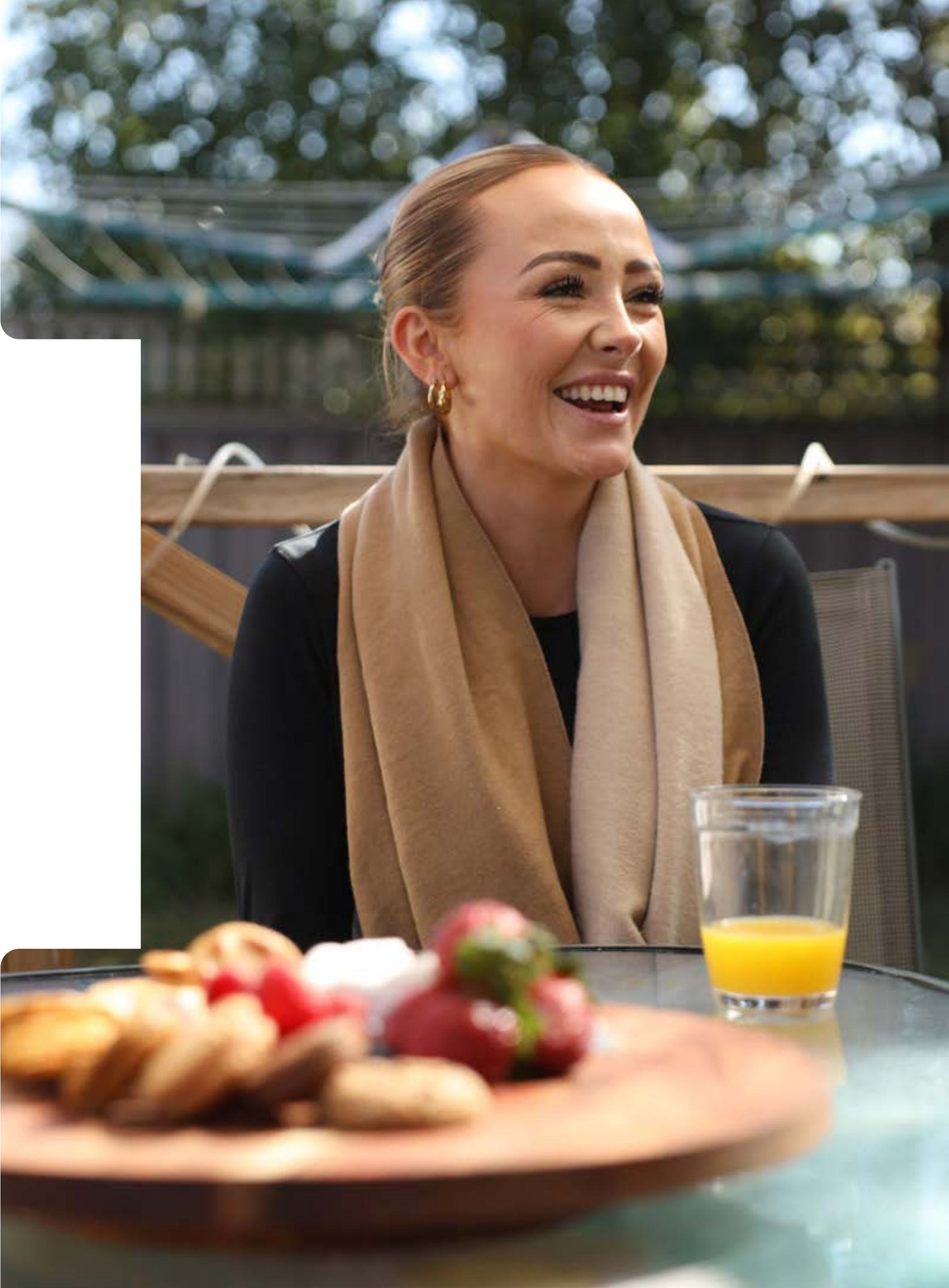
ACKNOWLEDGING COUNTRY with our Australian First Nations counterparts

ICLA is committed to demonstrating understanding of the Uluru Statement from the Heart and Makarrata, a word from the language of the Yolngu people in Arnhem Land. The Yolngu concept of Makarrata captures the idea of two parties coming together after a struggle, healing the divisions of the past.

As an organization we value the principles of makarrata which are akin with ICLA's theme of: Connectedness, Hope, Identity, Meaning & Empowerment (CHIME). We look forward to our work being guided by the process outlined in the below framework, which will provide culturally safe and effective support to First Nations community members and staff that we serve.

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Our VISION

The people we support, our staff
& the organisation, all **THRIVE**.

Our MISSION

Deliver **PERSONALIZED** support enabling
individual choice to **IMPROVE** people's lives.

Our PURPOSE

and **ROLE** is to promote people's independence,
active participation, and inclusion in the
community to live a **VALUED LIFE**.

Our VALUES

- **RESPECT** for all.
- **INTEGRITY** in all we do.
- **RESULTS** for those we serve.
- **ACCOUNTABLE** in all we do.

What we WILL DO

- Provide **INNOVATIVE** Peer Support.
- **CHAMPION** Psychosocial Recovery.
- **CREATE** pathways, homes, and communities.
- **IMPROVE** connection, coordination, and choice.



WHO we are

Independent Community Living Australia is an experienced not for profit, community managed organisation with close to 40 years of history. Our core focus is to support people in need, with the ability to deliver personalised quality services and advocate for people who are marginalised, disadvantaged, and vulnerable in creating positive change.

We are NDIS (National Disability Insurance Scheme) accredited service provider, and community housing provider, specialising in mental health, suicide prevention, homelessness, and psychosocial disability with a dedicated and strong lived experience peer workforce.

A key cultural ingredient of ICLA is to create hope and optimism by utilising the CHIME framework in supporting people with mental health needs in their local communities. Our motto is “everyday life changing” to focus on supporting small changes every day, creating big opportunities and life changing transformations.

WHAT we offer

Our services are person-centered, ensuring people receive support as individual as they are. We work with the individual’s strengths, values, and goals, whatever they may be. Our model of support puts people at the centre of the service they receive.

At ICLA we understand that recovery is a personal process which includes stable housing, supports to live independently and opportunities to learn new recovery-oriented behaviours where you are on your recovery journey, ICLA can offer you support in a number of areas, including:

HOMES AND HOUSING:

Having somewhere safe to live is critical in stabilising mental health and supporting your recovery journey.

PEER SUPPORT PROGRAMS:

Provides an opportunity for you to connect with peer workers who have a lived experience of mental health recovery.

NDIS FUNDED SUPPORTS:

Helps you access Supported Independent Living, NDIS Core Supports and Support Coordination.

PSYCHOSOCIAL RECOVERY PROGRAMS:

Support you in your mental health recovery.

Our *STRATEGIC AIMS*

1

IMAGINE

ICLA co-design
with the people
we support.

2

DEFINE

our point of
difference.

3

CONNECT

with our cultural
DNA.

4

POSITION

ICLA for greater
growth and
impact.

5

FRESHEN

our approach
to dynamic
governance and
leadership.

6

BUILD

our approach to
creating better
homes.

Message from the **CHAIR – NIGEL HARVEY**



Once again please let me draw you into the pages ahead reporting on yet another year of challenge and achievement for the people here at ICLA.

Ever since its creation in 1986 to house and care for people being evicted from a boarding house in Bondi, ICLA has practised and been continually improving a person centred and evidence-based approach to its care, binding into that in more recent years the insights from relevant lived experience whether from our staff, specific programmes, senior executives, closer ties with family members, or indeed Directors.

These traditions continue to drive us to build our operational businesses focused around supporting people with complex mental health, psychosocial and intellectual disabilities. Our consumer focus, our commitment to diversity and inclusion and indeed to sustainability are core to ICLA.

You will see in the pages ahead that the NDIS remains our dominant business financially particularly SIL (Supported Independent Living). This spectacular federal government initiative of the last half decade or so has allowed us to evolve providing proper support and service from prior inadequately state funded operations.

SIL accommodation, predominantly homes for a few people with necessary support staff rostered on hand, continues to be the ICLA mainstay. We look forward to the challenges and especially opportunities NDIS' forthcoming next evolutionary steps will provide given our experience and expertise.

Unfortunately, one casualty from those forthcoming changes has been the cessation of

NSW state funding for our Embark programme. Nonetheless, we look back with immense pride at having helped – both directly and by supporting partner organisations - literally hundreds of homeless people across NSW to access the NDIS and receive packages from it essential to their wellbeing. The new mix of state funded Foundation supports, and the NDIS must be worked to create even better opportunities for this most disadvantaged community.

Also, within NDIS our support coordination team has been specialised and blossoming and our core supports to people not within our accommodation will also continue to grow.

Since inception housing has been integral to ICLA's ability to help people. We wear our responsibilities as a formally registered housing provider proudly with an attractive portfolio of houses and flats owned variously by the state, private landlords and indeed a couple of homes ourselves. These provide long term homes like the SILs mentioned above as well as shorter term accommodation. Our latter, "Pathways" programme is proving so adept at screening for and then supporting potential occupants into permanent public housing that its high turnover is proving challenging for the limited but excellent staffing that constrained low rents allow the programme to afford.

Beyond NDIS, our pioneering digital peer support service eFriend has been finding new life with its venture with West Australian GPs and psychologists in a programme with MindSpot. This is a fascinating and promising bridge between peer-based skills and services and more

conventional medical services. Our prevention and recovery centre in Bondi in conjunction with the southeast Sydney health authority is another key, award winning programme combining peer and conventional support. It documents strong results and very substantial cost benefits to conventional practice - let alone appalling lack of support many suffer. ICLA would love to see and is working for both to expand strongly and widely.

All these programmes remain utterly dependent on the continuing dedication to excellence and to the people we serve from all our staff whether house workers or executives or administrators - or indeed Directors. This culture is one that we believe helps ICLA guide itself forward in pursuit of its missions and values. It will certainly drive us in the next few months as we are due to review those statements and our longer-term planning.

We must thank our staff as well as the people who continue to choose us to serve them -without these key people ICLA would become a mere historical footnote. Please may we also thank and acknowledge all those funders and partner organisations mentioned elsewhere which make it possible for us to continue doing our important work.

Finally, it is pleasing to acknowledge that that after last year's AGM, Jeanette Meagher accepted the ICLA's invitation to become a Life Member. It is a modest honour but one we are delighted to have offered to someone who has been so helpful to ICLA in recent years after a lifetime of service to the sector.

Mr Nigel Harvey
ICLA Board Chairperson



Message from the CEO – WILLIAM (BILL) CAMPOS



A YEAR OF COMPASSION AND COMMITMENT

As we reflect on the past year, I am filled with immense gratitude for the unwavering commitment of our staff in supporting individuals with complex mental health needs and psychosocial disability. Our teams have consistently demonstrated a deep understanding of and compassion for the unique challenges faced by those in our care and in the communities we support.

This year we have further enhanced the quality of care provided to the people we support who are the most vulnerable in our communities. Across all our programs and services, we have provided exceptional care, personalised support and a safe, supportive environment.

CULTIVATING COMPASSION

Cultivating compassion is one of ICLA's key values. The ability to understand and share the feelings of others, put ourselves in their shoes and respond with kindness is the driving force behind our work. It requires us all to be mindful, connect with empathy, and commit to understanding the human experience.

This year we created a promotional video (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NafT3d_562E) to reflect ICLA's values and mission. We consulted with all our people, to capture the essence of who we are, our focus, commitment, and our deep understanding of the people we support.

By demonstrating empathy and understanding, we create a more humane, supportive, and effective organisation. Something of which, we are enormously proud.

COMMITMENT: THE FOUNDATION OF OUR SUCCESS

ICLA is committed to being a positive force in our community. We strive to build strong partnerships with local organizations, advocate for the rights of individuals with mental health needs and promote awareness of mental health issues. Our commitment to our community reflects our belief that we have a responsibility to contribute to the well-being of all.

ICLA is committed to building trusting relationships with people we support, understanding their unique challenges, and empowering them to achieve their goals. This commitment is reflected in our unwavering dedication to providing a safe, supportive, and inclusive environment for all people at ICLA, including staff, networks and stakeholders.

By prioritizing commitment, we build a strong and resilient ICLA that is dedicated to "everyday life changing".





HIGHLIGHTS:

NSW parliamentary inquiry to Mental Health: Equity, accessibility and appropriate delivery of outpatient and community mental health care in New South Wales

ICLA was privileged to participate in and contribute to this inquiry. As the CEO, I was consulted to provide evidence associated with the complexities and challenges of delivering community mental health care in NSW. This was a great opportunity to highlight some of the great programs such as PARC and Pathways, to illustrate how ICLA can close the gaps and provide a more responsive and equitable service in support of individuals with complex mental health needs in our communities.

MINDSPOT GP + EFRIEND

One of the highlights of the year was the successful partnership of MindSpot GP and eFriend digital mental health initiatives.

This is a first in Australia whereby an online lived experience peer service is provided alongside an online clinical service. We are showing clear evidence that lived experience workforce has a place in the journey of care for people experiencing mental health challenges. Importantly the ability for people to seek and receive, clinical, therapy and lived experience support during one seamless journey of care can provide much better outcomes for people with various mental health needs.



SUPPORTED INDEPENDENT LIVING (SIL)

This is an exciting time for ICLA and our ability to enhance the NDIS Supported Independent Living service, with a focus on creating communities across the homes we support.

This has enabled us to provide more comprehensive support to individuals experiencing mental health challenges to access support in their own homes and communities, fostering a sense of belonging and independence. Our staff have worked tirelessly to build strong relationships with local partners, ensuring that individuals have access to the resources and services they need to thrive.

ICLA STAFF

We have also made significant strides in improving the mental health and well-being of our own staff. Recognizing that their emotional health is essential to providing high-quality care, we have invested in professional development opportunities, stress management programs, and employee support services. By prioritizing the well-being of our team, we have created a positive and supportive work environment that fosters innovation and collaboration.

I am particularly proud of the work we have done to raise awareness about mental health and reduce stigma. Our staff have participated in numerous community events, workshops, and presentations, sharing their knowledge and expertise. By challenging negative stereotypes and promoting understanding, we have helped to create a more inclusive and supportive community for individuals with mental health needs.

THE PEOPLE WE SUPPORT + THEIR FAMILY AND CARERS

I want to thank every person that received care and support from ICLA. Each person has their own path to recovery, with its own challenges and rewards. It is a privilege that so many people chose ICLA program and services

Lastly, I want to acknowledge and thank the carers, whose own journey of care of their loved ones requires faith, a strong relationship with ICLA and trust in our duty of care. We are very honoured to be involved and in partnership with you and your family.

LOOKING AHEAD

As we prepare for the coming year, we remain committed to providing exceptional care to the people we support. We will continue to invest in evidence-based practices, expand our reach into underserved communities, and strengthen our partnerships with local organisations.

We will continue to strive to provide excellent care and services, to prioritize the well-being of all our people, recognizing that their dedication and compassion are the cornerstone of our success.

As we close the chapter on this financial year, thanks to our board of directors, key partners, families and carers, and most importantly the people we support. It is partnerships that make the ICLA community and this allows us all to strive to provide excellent care. Thank you.

Kind Regards

William (Bill) Campos
CEO

Our SERVICES

At ICLA we understand that recovery is a personal process which includes stable housing, supports to live independently and opportunities to learn new recovery-oriented behaviours. Depending on where you are on your recovery journey, ICLA can offer you support in several areas, including:

HOMES AND HOUSING as having somewhere safe to live is critical in stabilising mental health and supporting your recovery journey.

PEER SUPPORT PROGRAMS which provide an opportunity for you to connect with peer workers who have a lived experience of mental health recovery.

NDIS FUNDED SUPPORTS to help you access Supported Independent Living, NDIS Core Supports and Support Coordination.

PSYCHOSOCIAL RECOVERY PROGRAMS to support you in your mental health recovery.

OUR SERVICES: IN DETAIL

We have the following programs and supports available:

- 1. Supported Independent Living (SIL):** Long term accommodation and support for everyday life for people living with psychosocial disabilities.
- 2. Short Term Accommodation (STA), including NDIS respite care,** is funding for support and accommodation for a short time away from a participant's usual home.
- 3. NDIS Core Supports:** A service that provides personalised and skill-based support to people living in our SIL homes to promote their independence and help them gain access to the community.
- 4. Support Coordination:** A service that provides personalised support to people to manage and fully utilise their NDIS funding package to ensure that they get all the support they need.
- 5. Pathways:** Short-term transitional accommodation for people who are at risk of homelessness to stabilise their recovery and work towards living independently.
- 6. eFriend:** eFriend is a peer support program enabling people feeling low, lonely, or isolated to access virtual peer support sessions via video call, phone call or chat. Our Peer Support Workers have their own lived experience of recovery from mental health challenges and utilise this experience to provide a sense of empathy, connection, and hope.
- 7. Prevention and Recovery Centre (PARC):** PARC supports people who wish to focus on their mental health recovery with a short stay in a homely environment with the support of a team of people with lived experience and mental health nurses.



ICLA **RECOGNITION**

In September 2023 our chair Mr Nigel Harvey was one of 5 finalists in the Third Sector Awards Board Director of the Year across Australia. This is a great testament to the ongoing commitment and expertise our board of directors bring to ICLA.



ICLA has committed board members with a dedication to supporting and strengthening the organization into the future. The Board of directors has been pivotal in assisting and encouraging best practice in all that ICLA is involved in.

International **RECOGNITION**



In October 2023 we welcomed Mr Moses Lee, Chairman and Mr Ron Loh, Assistant Chief Executive as well as 3 other delegates from the Singapore department of disability known as SG enable. It was an honour to meet and showcase ICLA, as well as learn from international perspectives around service delivery models.



In January 2024 we were also fortunate to have a visit from Dr. Seonmee Hong from Hanshin University in Korea with a team of academics and allied health professional to visit and exchange our knowledge of how-to best support people with Psychosocial disability.

We are privileged to be recommended by the University of Sydney as a preferred organisations to showcase great service delivery in the Psychosocial disability area.

Lived experience **PEER WORKER**

ICLA recognizes the strength of our services by embracing the contribution of someone with a lived experience of mental health condition. This unique perspective is a cornerstone of good practice and allows a more familiar and personal approach to care for people who may be unwell.

A lived experience mental health workforce plays a crucial role in assisting individuals with complex mental health issues on their journey to recovery. The peer support workers, sharing their unique perspective and empathy allowing them to connect with and support those facing similar struggles in a way that traditional healthcare professionals may not always be able to achieve.

Peer support workers offer a sense of hope and empowerment to individuals with complex mental health issues. We serve as living examples that recovery is possible, demonstrating that one can not only manage but thrive despite their mental health challenges. This personal connection and

shared experience can instil confidence in those receiving support, inspiring them to take the necessary steps toward their own recovery journey.

People with complex mental health issues often face stigma and discrimination, but peer support workers can relate to their experiences, reducing feelings of isolation and promoting self-acceptance. This practical wisdom can significantly enhance a person's ability to navigate the complex mental health system and make informed decisions about their care.

ICLA's collaborative approach, combining the expertise of traditional healthcare professionals with the unique insights of peer support workers, fosters a more holistic and effective approach to mental health care and contributes to improved outcomes for those on the path to recovery.

For more information about becoming a peer support worker, or support worker visit our site www.icla.org.au

“

The connection I felt with my Peer helped me get through one of the most difficult times in my life both mentally and physically. Honestly, the process helped me believe in the power of connection with another with shared experienced as way to heal and move forward. Being understood and having a such a good listener was also invaluable at my point in recovery. I am especially grateful for the wisdom and kindness and that I received, and I will carry that with me.

eFriend Participant

“

My daughter's Support Coordinator is amazing. I have no words to express how much I appreciate their help and support. Now I'm not alone, I can go on holiday because I have them and rest of the Support Coordination team, knowing my daughter is not alone.

Carer of Support Coordination Participant



VIRTUAL ENGAGEMENT



Engagement rate increased by

5.22%



Impressions increased to

17,506%
from 11,757



Engagement rate increased to

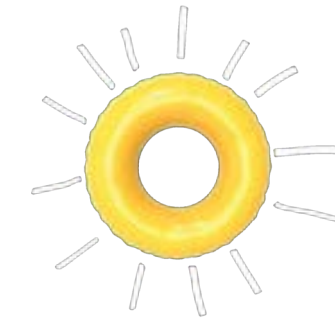
11.91% from 5.82%



Followers increased to

1,909

SUPPORTED INDEPENDENT Living



OUR SERVICES + ACHIEVEMENTS

Supported Independent Living is a NDIS funded support where a person with a disability lives in a group setting and receives support from trained staff for everyday tasks. ICLA is a specialist provider of SIL for people living with a psychosocial disability.

HIGHLIGHTS INCLUDE:

- The successful implementation of a restructuring of 2 SIL properties resulting in consumers residing in more appropriate dwellings. This restructure has fostered sustainable and thriving homes which is allowing for positive outcomes for staff and consumers.
- Successfully transitioned a new consumer into our newest property – Hunter Street, where they are living in the granny flat working towards goals of living independently. Consumers have been supported to work towards and reach goals particularly in their life skills, development goals along with their community activities. Examples of this include consumers accessing basketball and football games, discos, attending theatres, studying for drivers' licence, consumers accessing relationship services, and events. Additionally, consumers have been supported to build and maintain family and friendship relationships resulting in happier and more engaged consumer cohort.
- Consumers have thrived in the workforce in getting and maintaining jobs, along with completing studies at university. This has encouraged independence in their community and encouraged activity and structure throughout their weeks.
- The SIL team have continued to ensure that our consumers have the 24/7 support they need and are expanding their experience in working with consumers from different properties with different support needs. This has included continuing to recruit skilled and experienced staff along with providing specialised training reducing the need for agency workers therefore providing consistency of support and service excellence to consumers.
- The SIL team has had multiple opportunities for acting-up placements which staff members have jumped at, embraced the learning opportunity and thrived in new and exciting environments.

ICLA supported **34** Consumers
over the course of the year, providing care
24 hours a day **7** days a week **365** days of the year
across **11** homes around Sydney.



PATHWAYS

Our Pathways housing program continues to provide critical transitional housing support for people experiencing homelessness, offering a safe and stable environment where residents can focus on recovery and explore long-term housing options.

Pathways plays a vital role in addressing homelessness by offering individuals a safe and supportive space to stabilize their lives. It serves as a crucial bridge between crisis and permanent housing, providing residents with time to recover, access essential services, and work towards long-term stability. By offering this critical support, Pathways helps break the cycle of homelessness, enabling people to regain their independence and move towards sustainable living solutions.



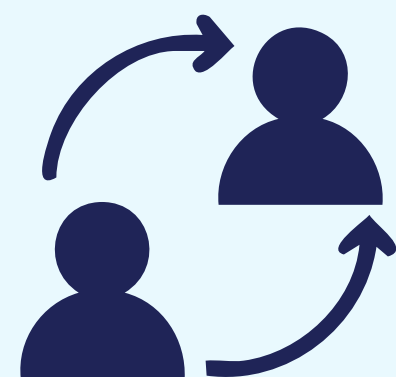
8

Properties



16

months
- Average
length of stay



120

number of referrals



11

individuals
supported to
permanent housing



PREVENTION AND RECOVERY CENTRE (PARC) – Bondi

The Bondi Prevention and Recovery Centre (PARC) is a partnership between the South Eastern Sydney Local Health District Mental Health Service (SESLHD MHS) and ICLA. PARC aims to facilitate early intervention and recovery promotion to provide more intensive community support or avoid hospital admissions (step up), as well as providing residential support services following discharge from hospital (step down) supporting people to maintain and improve their wellbeing applying least restrictive care in a home like environment.

The vision, philosophies and principles of care are driven by evidence guided treatment, peer support, trauma informed and recovery focused care. It is an eight-bedroom residential home in Bondi staffed 24 hours a day, 7 days a week by a mix of peer workers, mental health support workers and clinical nurse specialists.

PARC's achievements last year underscore the success of PARC, and further demonstrates that step up/step down models are a critical component of the future mental health system in NSW.

Bondi PARC was awarded the "Excellence in Community Service Delivery" at the Central & Eastern Sydney Primary Health Awards in September 2023 and received a Highly Commended in the SESLHD Consumers Choice Person-Centred Care Awards in December 2023. Additionally, ICLA and SESLHD secured an NMHDARC Innovation Grant to fund an independent evaluation of the service, partnering with the University of New South Wales Social Policy Research Centre to complete the evaluation by the end of 2024.

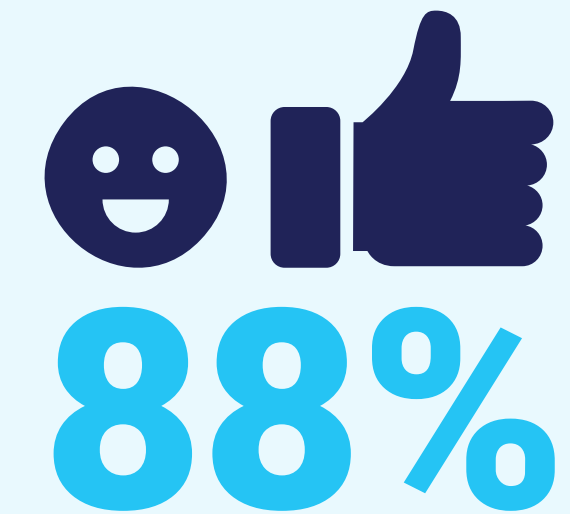
ICLA will continue to advocate for increased investment in this space to expand the capacity and impact PARC services in NSW.

PARC is dedicated to fostering positive outcomes and guest satisfaction.

PARC GUEST SATISFACTION and Recovery Outcomes

OVERALL SATISFACTION RATE:

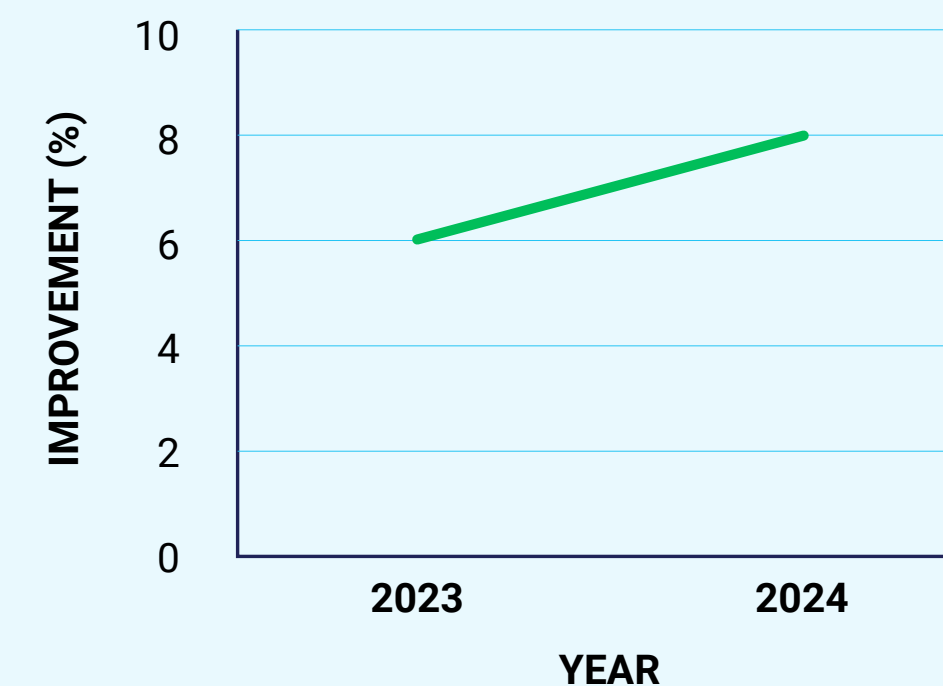
88% of guests rated their satisfaction with PARC at the highest level.



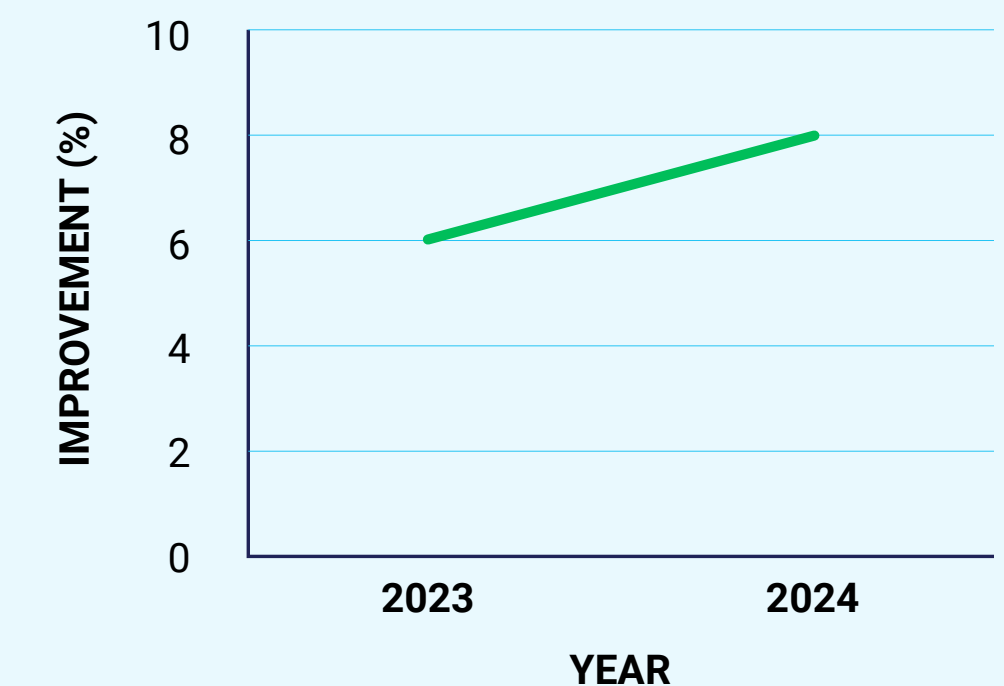
RECOVERY + WELLBEING IMPROVEMENT:

Guests reported a 6-8% improvement in recovery and wellbeing following the program.

RECOVERY



WELLBEING



A YEAR IN REVIEW:

Here's how PARC has supported the community over the past year.

SUPPORT STATISTICS:

PARC supported 61 guests over 68 stays this year.



61

Total guests supported



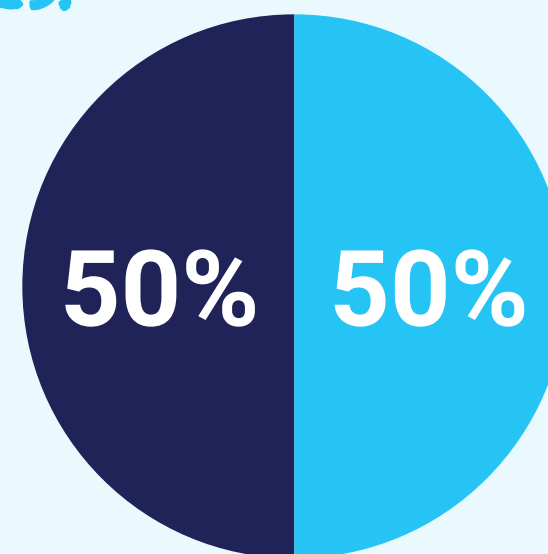
68

Total stays supported

AGE DEMOGRAPHICS:

Nearly half of PARC's guests were younger adults (ages 25-34).

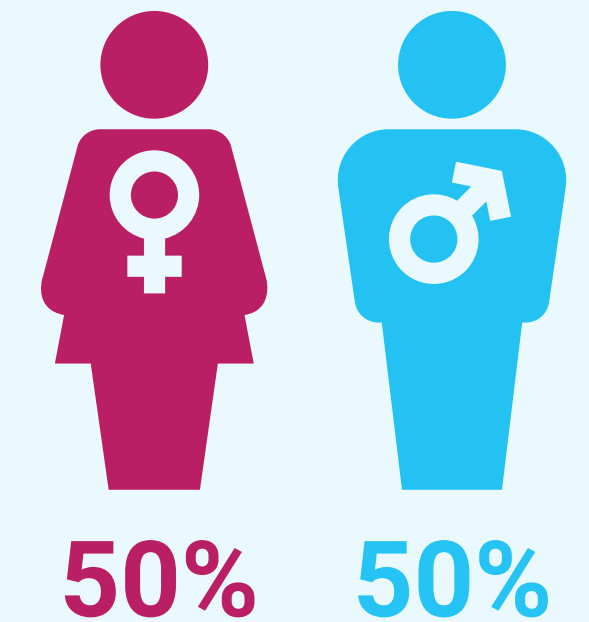
- 25-34 years old
- 34+ years old



PARC is committed to inclusive, diverse, and accessible support for all community members.

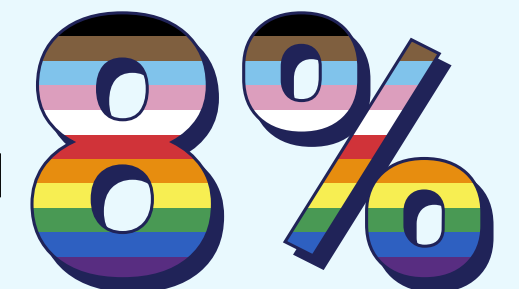
GENDER BREAKDOWN:

Guests were evenly split between male and female.



LGBTIQA+ REPRESENTATION:

8% of guests identified as LGBTIQA+.



CULTURAL REPRESENTATION:

PARC supported guests from diverse cultural backgrounds.



10%
Aboriginal



15%
culturally and linguistically diverse

SUPPORT Coordination

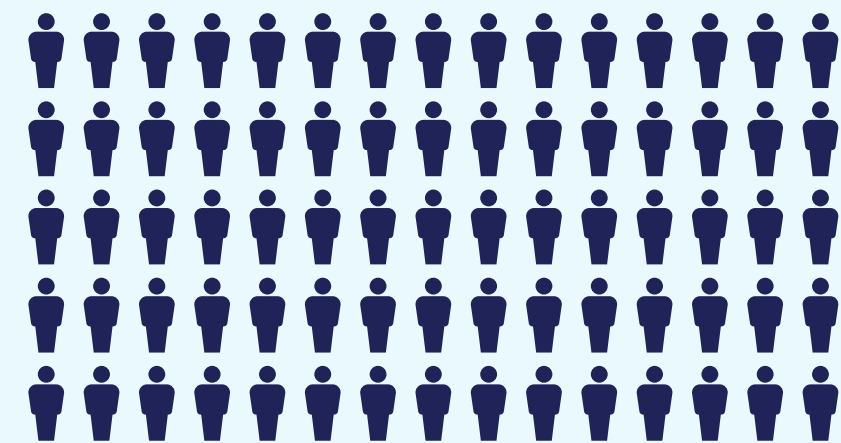
ICLA's Support Coordination team assists NDIS participants to build their capacity to understand and implement their NDIS plans. Our team, specializing in supporting individuals with lived experience of mental illness and complex needs, plays a crucial role in empowering participants to navigate the NDIS and access the services they need. With deep understanding and empathy, the team provides tailored support, helping individuals manage their unique challenges, achieve personal goals, and build resilience.

By fostering strong, person-centred relationships, our coordinators make a significant impact in improving participants' quality of life, promoting independence, and enhancing long-term outcomes.

Over the year, the team supported 75 individuals and received 37 new referrals, further enhancing our capacity to assist people in navigating the NDIS.

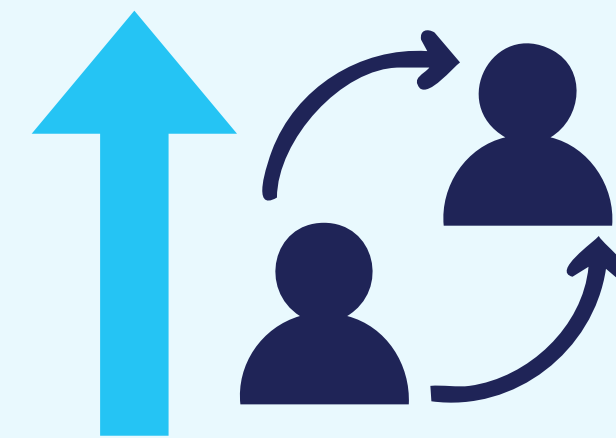
EXPANDING SUPPORT for NDIS Navigation

TOTAL INDIVIDUALS SUPPORTED



75 Individuals supported
Over the year, our team provided guidance to 75 people navigating the NDIS.

NEW REFERRALS



37 new referrals
this year, strengthening our capacity to assist more individuals.

Committed to supporting individuals in their NDIS journey.



EMBARK – Looking back on our legacy

Embark was an outreach program designed to support people experiencing homelessness and psychosocial disability in accessing the NDIS. The program had two key streams: Embark Access, which assisted individuals and their support networks in preparing and submitting successful NDIS applications, and Embark Upskill, which helped build sector capacity through workshops and webinars focused on supporting individuals with NDIS applications.

In June 2024, ICLA bid farewell to the Embark program, offering a moment to reflect on its legacy.

The story of Embark began in 2018, just a few years into the complex rollout of the NDIS. A conversation among ICLA staff, born from their experiences transitioning ICLA consumers onto the NDIS, highlighted a troubling gap in the system - people with lived experience of homelessness were being excluded from support. What began as an informal discussion soon evolved into a formal project pitch.

In 2019, ICLA proposed a project to the NSW Ministry of Health to address these barriers, leading to the launch of Embark 1.0. The team hit the streets of Sydney, engaging with homeless communities to raise awareness about the NDIS and document stories of systemic exclusion. Their final report offered 10 recommendations, two of which formed the foundation of Embark 2.0, the program's final design.

From 2020 to 2024, Embark 2.0 achieved significant milestones. The program supported over 650 people with lived experience navigating the NDIS Access process and submitted more than 400 NDIS applications. Over 80% of these applications were approved, and the team provided critical support to over 250 individuals at their first NDIS planning meetings. Additionally, more than 500 people from the community services sector were upskilled through workshops, with over 100 organizations engaged in the process.

One participant reflected on their experience, saying, "Such a joy to be listened to fully and treated with so much respect. I really felt for many years there would be no chance of me getting NDIS approval. [My NDIS Navigator] made this dream a reality for me." This sentiment encapsulates the impact Embark had on the lives of those it served.

We recognize that more must be done to address the critical intersection of homelessness and disability, especially given rising cost-of-living pressures and the lack of alternative funding to address this area of need. ICLA will remain a strong advocate for those affected by multiple layers of disadvantage, ensuring they receive the necessary funding and support to improve their circumstances.



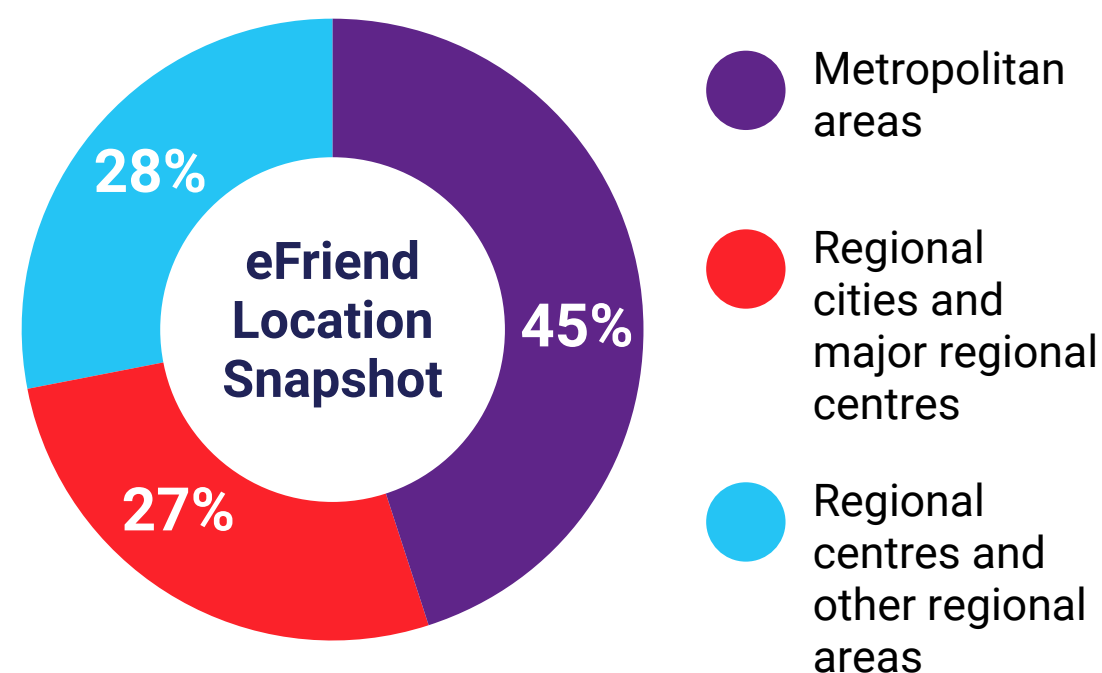
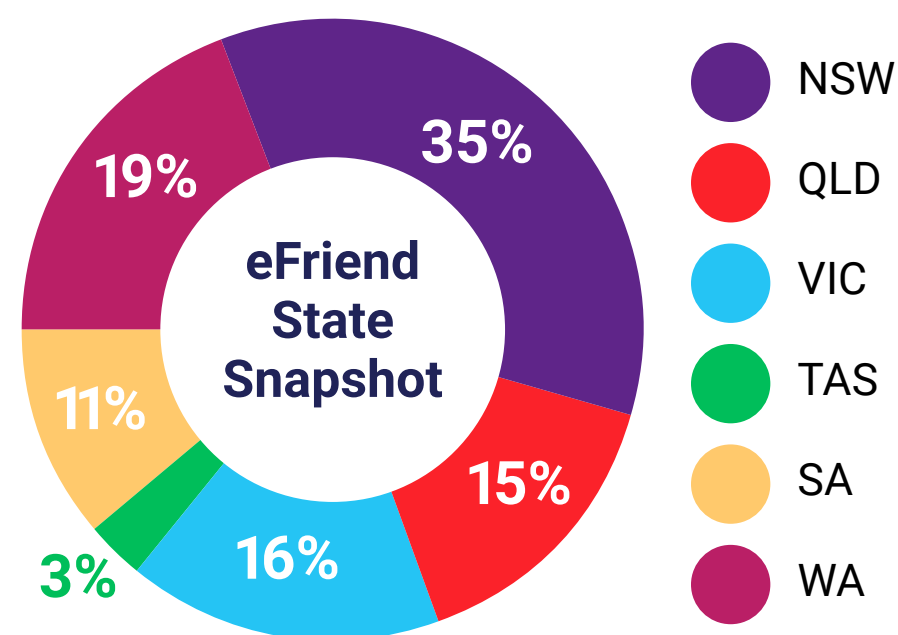


eFriend is a FREE service that allows people who are feeling low, lonely or isolated to access virtual peer support sessions via video or phone call. Our peer workers can offer insight, provide hope, and empathise from their own lived experience – whether you’re looking for support or just want someone to chat to.

In an exciting first for Australia, ICLA and MindSpot have partnered to enhance mental health care by fusing virtual peer support with clinical services. Officially launched in early 2024, this enhancement to MindSpot GP allows patients to connect with an eFriend peer for emotional support during their treatment. Proudly funded by the Western Australian Primary Health

Alliance (WAPHA) through the Australian Government’s PHN Program, this partnership acknowledges the powerful combination of peer support and clinical care in supporting mental health recovery. This innovative fusion is designed to bridge the gap between lived experience and clinical expertise, empowering consumers to take full advantage of both support systems.

This collaboration sets the stage for a new era of integrated digital mental health care. We are excited to evaluate the impact of this program and look forward to sharing results in 2025, as we continue to demonstrate how virtual services can work together for the benefit of the community.



EFRIEND SUPPORT IMPACT 2023 Overview

TOTAL CALLS COMPLETED



NEW CALLERS WELCOMED



PARTICIPANT SATISFACTION



RECOVERY + WELLBEING IMPROVEMENT



**eFriend remains dedicated to uplifting wellbeing
and providing impactful peer support.**

PEOPLE + CULTURE

Working in the Mental Health Sector comes with challenges and changes in the NDIS add to people feeling under pressure. What is our approach to supporting Psychological Safety at ICLA? Where are we and what else can we do? Understanding and enhancing Psychological Safety for all staff was a guiding principle for the People & Culture activities.

To assess the current state the People & Culture team engaged in Workplace Mental Health Coaching with an external organisation. Together, we evaluated ICLA's people approaches and identified areas for improvement. The learnings informed the set-up of our bespoke leadership training aiming at equipping our leaders with relevant knowledge and skills to support the psychological safety of their teams. Relevant and practical training for all staff is now also available through the webinars UPRISE, our new EAP provider, offers monthly.

In the leadership training, we partnered with our leadership team to continue building skills and culture aligned with our ICLA values of **Respect** for all, **Integrity** in what we do, **Results** for those we serve, and **Accountability** for all we do. Many of our leaders have worked with ICLA in front-line positions before moving into leadership roles, bringing relevant sector- and organisational expertise to build on.

The tailored feedback enabled our leaders to implement actions relevant to the needs of their team while developing their individual leadership styles, drawing from their own and their team's diversity of strengths, needs, and skills. People & Culture supported with coaching and enhanced our HR leader toolbox, e.g., with supervision templates or creating a rhythm for learning or coaching.

To enhance role clarity, we implemented **Let's Grow**, a nimble goal setting and review process, supporting alignment in why, how, and what each staff member aims to achieve and our overarching organisational and consumer goals. This process combines performance, development, and well-being by evaluating job demands, creating clarity and control over day-to-day activities, and ensuring relevant training is available for each member of staff.

To respond more flexibly to training needs we moved to a new LMS. The new system is integrated with our HR management system. It enables us to work with courses from different providers and develop ICLA-specific content tailored to staff and organisational needs.



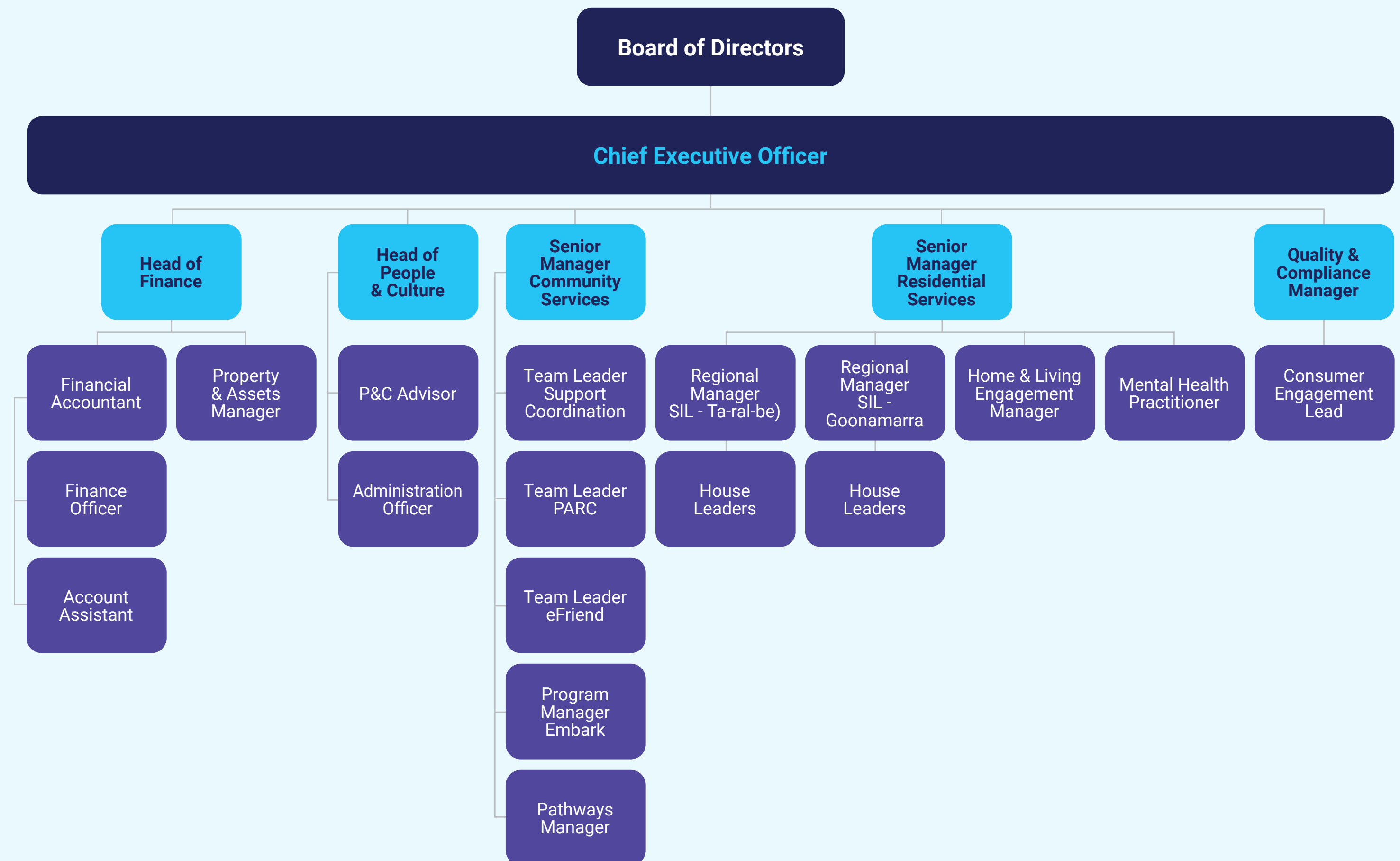
The HR MANAGEMENT SYSTEM

Employment Hero was implemented in September 2023, moving from a highly customisable but complex to a simpler and easier-to-use HR-tform. Operational people management tasks are now as accessible and seamless as possible while enhancing the employee experience from recruitment throughout the employee life cycle with ICLA. Partnering with this new platform allowed us to access competitive benefits offered for our staff, comparable with what big organisations can provide.

Finally, we streamlined the recruitment process creating a seamless candidate experience and communication, with clear roles and responsibilities for each step on our side, training and coaching for all recruiting leaders, and ensuring single-point accountability for each area. The changes were reviewed and the time between job advertising and filling of a vacancy significantly reduced.

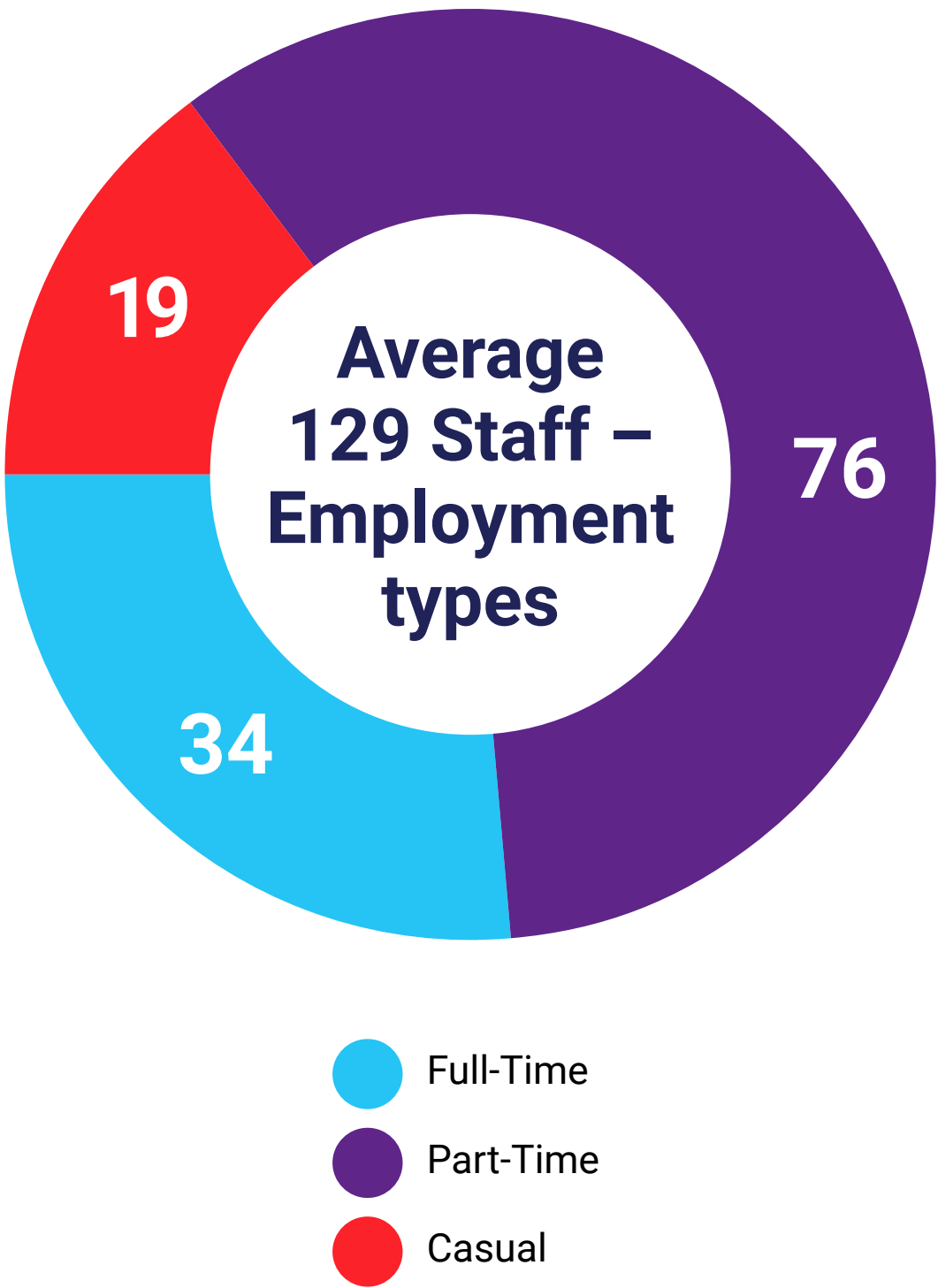
Psychological Safety will remain a focus area for People & Culture and we will continue to work on trust and providing space for our people to have a voice and learn from their feedback.

ORGANISATIONAL CHART

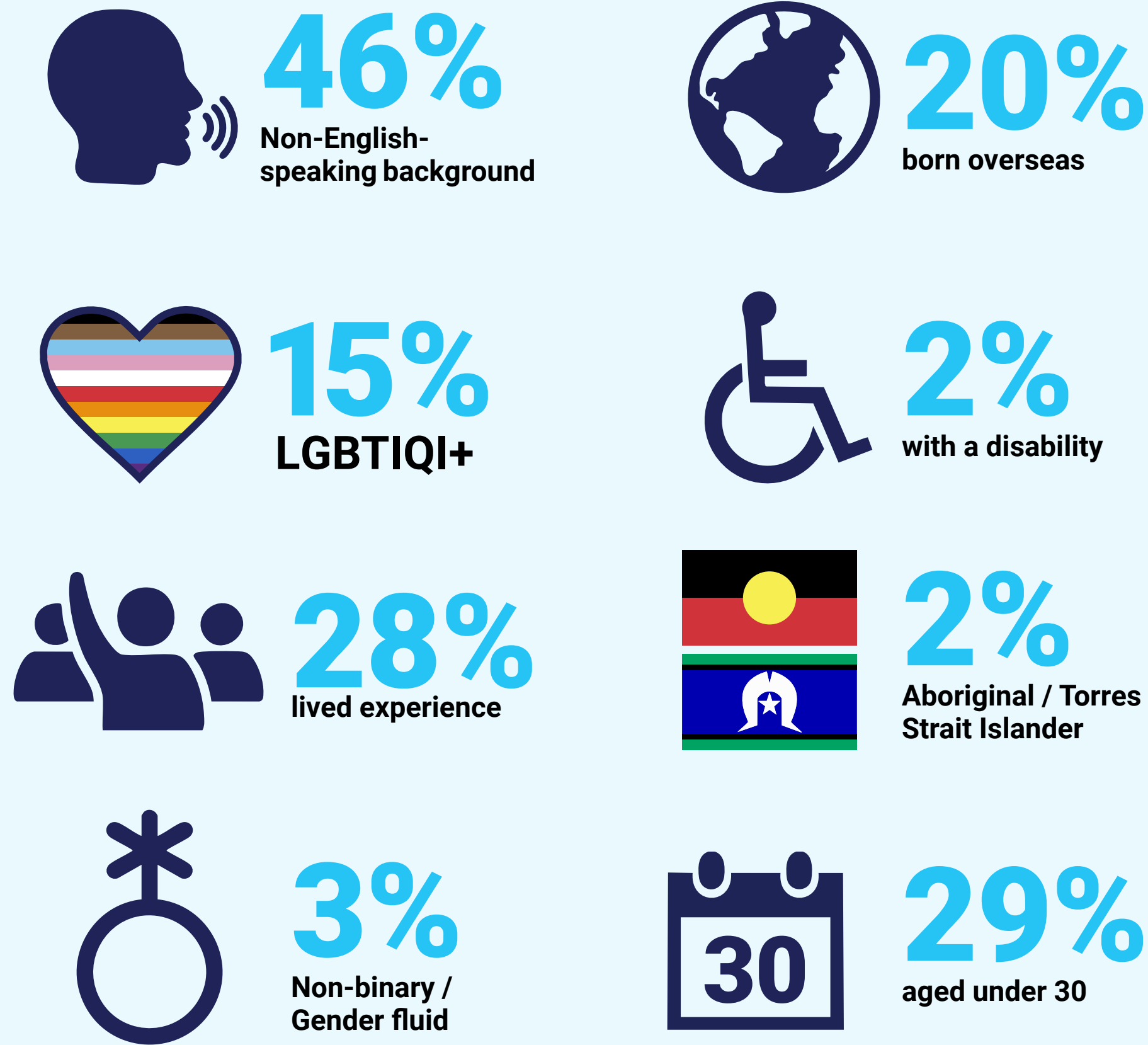


Workforce *PROFILE + DIVERSITY OVERVIEW*

STAFF COMPOSITION BY EMPLOYMENT TYPE



CURRENT DIVERSITY SNAPSHOT



PEER WORKERS



TURNOVER RATE



Committed to a diverse and supportive workplace.

QUALITY, COMPLIANCE and Systems

NDIS REGISTRATION RENEWAL AUDIT

ICLA is proud to announce the successful completion of our NDIS Registration Renewal audit with no non-conformances, a remarkable achievement that highlights our unwavering commitment to delivering exceptional, person-centered services to people with disabilities. This result reflects the dedication and professionalism of our team, as well as our adherence to the highest standards set by the NDIS Quality and Safeguards Commission.

The audit process involved a thorough evaluation of our systems, processes, and service delivery, confirming that ICLA not only meets but exceeds national compliance requirements. Achieving zero non-conformances underscores our ongoing commitment to safeguarding the rights, safety, and well-being of our participants while maintaining a culture of continuous improvement.

This accomplishment strengthens ICLA's position as a trusted provider, empowering individuals to achieve their goals and lead more independent, meaningful lives under the NDIS. We remain dedicated to evolving and innovating, ensuring that our services continue to meet the diverse and evolving needs of those we support.

LIVING AT ICLA – CONSUMER + CARER ENGAGEMENT INITIATIVES FOR OUR PEOPLE

Since stepping into her role this year, our Consumer Engagement Team conducted numerous interviews with the people we support, their families and our staff. These discussions aimed to identify key initiatives focused on enhancing individual abilities, fostering self-worth, and encouraging shared experiences within each home. Our goal is to cultivate a sense of belonging and community, building an ICLA family where support is most needed.

As a result, we have developed a Social Event Calendar for Our People that spans the next 12 months,.. This initiative not only fosters community ties but also strengthens relationships among participants. Additionally, it offers families a chance to become more actively involved.

Through this initiative, we aim to keep families informed about our engagement initiatives while welcoming their valuable feedback and suggestions. We understand that many families are eager to get involved, and this email will serve as a channel for us to explore how we can collaborate to make that happen.

We also developed and trialled a Happiness Survey to measure emotional well-being and assess the success of our initiatives. This survey is designed to capture the emotional state of

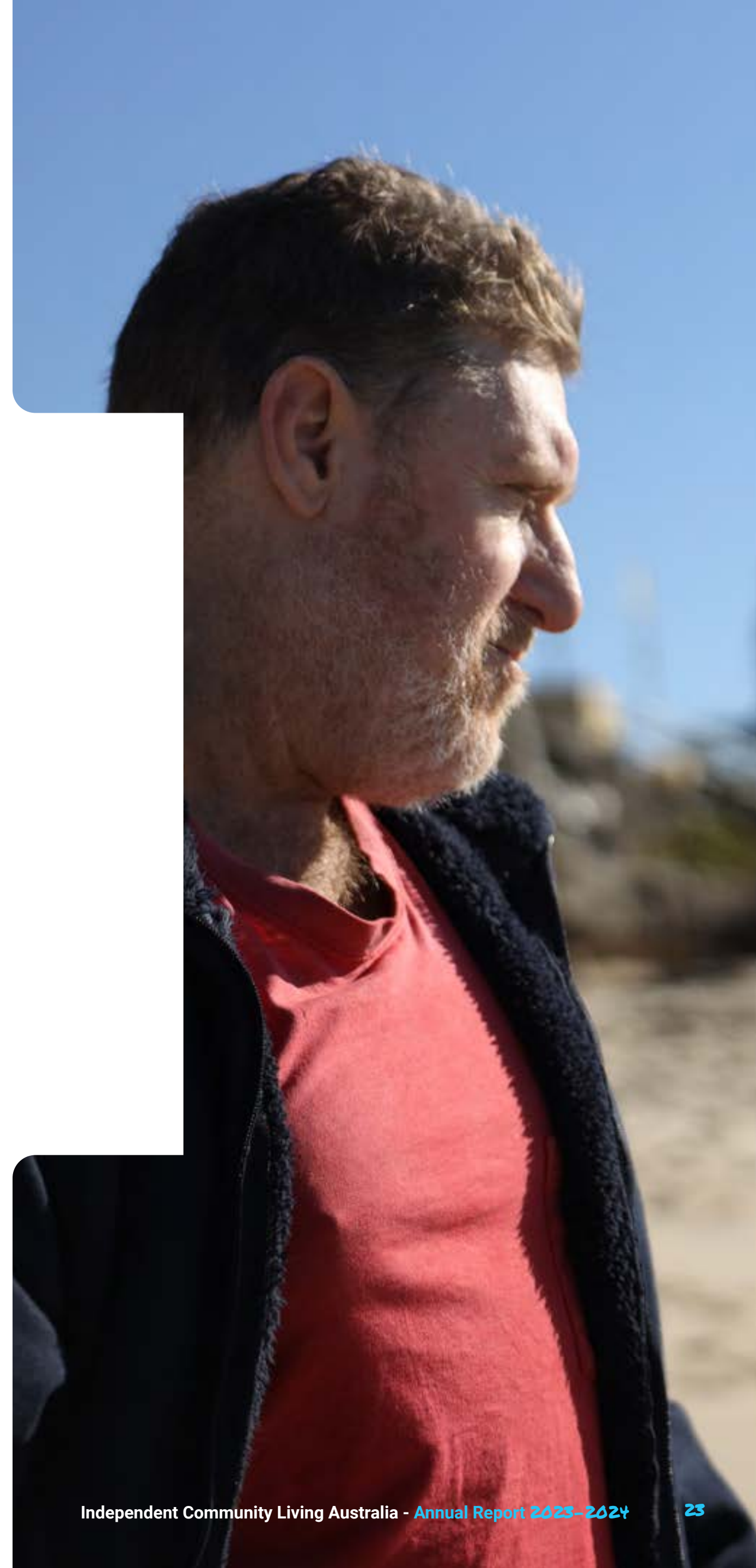
those who may struggle to express themselves, while also offering supplementary questions for individuals with stronger communication skills. Completely emoji-based, the survey has yielded promising initial results, and we look forward to sharing more insights on this next year.

OUR COMMITMENT TO FEEDBACK

At ICLA, we value every piece of feedback we receive from our participants and stakeholders. It plays a crucial role in helping us continually improve the quality of our services and ensure that we meet the needs of those we support. Throughout this fiscal year, we have wholeheartedly embraced 32 instances of consumer feedback, which have been invaluable in guiding our efforts to enhance and refine the services we provide. Whether it's a complaint, a suggestion, or positive feedback, each response provides us with the opportunity to reflect, adapt, and enhance the way we deliver support.

Overall, our shift toward evidence-based decision-making is driven by our Practice Governance Framework. This approach ensures that all our programs, are continually informed by consumer experiences, outcomes data, and ongoing feedback, enabling us to deliver responsive and impactful services that meet the evolving needs of the communities we serve.

This commitment to continuous improvement is at the heart of our mission to empower individuals to live more fulfilling, independent lives.



FINANCIAL Overview

In common with many organisations in the sector, FY24 was a challenging year for ICLA financially, with a reported deficit for the first time in our history.

SUMMARY FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

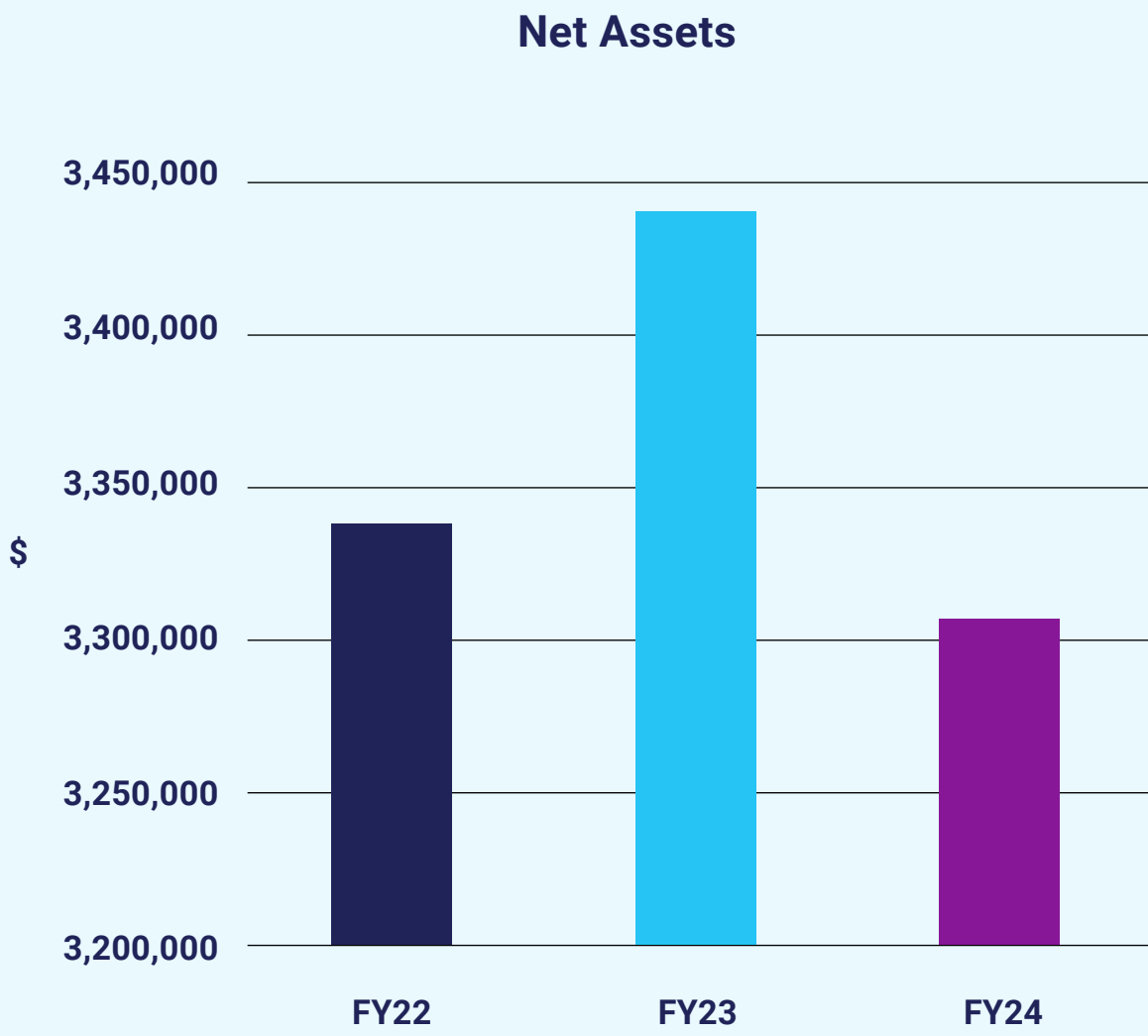
	FY24	FY23	FY22
	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000
Revenue			
NDIS	9,323	8,684	8,277
Residents	1,098	1,072	1,001
Federal Grants		488	664
State Grants	2,105	1,936	1,532
Other Grants	20	0	18
Other	108	66	18
	12,653	12,246	11,511
Expenses			
Staff	10,832	10,117	9,675
Property	827	859	713
Administration	594	547	448
Residential & operational	467	535	424
Vehicle & travel	67	85	88
	12,787	12,143	11,349
Surplus	-134	103	162

Once the impact of annual increases in NDIS rates is deducted, revenue was similar to FY23, reflecting the removal of Federal Government for the eFriend peer support service.

All costs increased, but we were successful in managing overhead costs to keep the overall impact to a minimum.

ICLA’s full audited Financial Statements are available from the Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission at www.acnc.gov.au.

Net assets decreased slightly during the year due to the deficit, but ICLA still has sufficient cash reserves to enable it to cover any unexpected fluctuations in funding or unforeseen costs, as well as to take advantage of any future opportunities to add additional services as they arise.

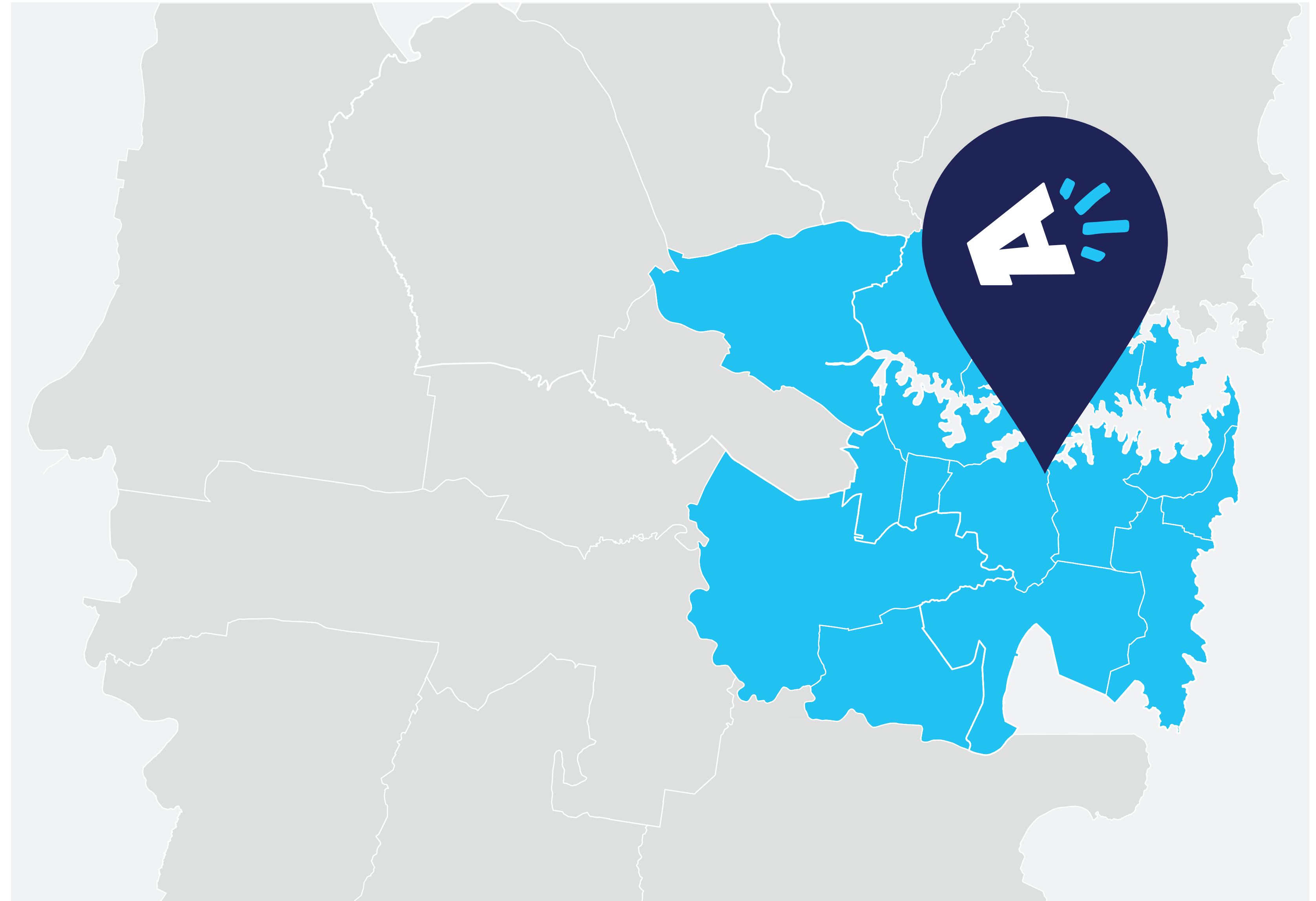


PROPERTY + ASSETS

Although the overall number of properties did not change, 2023/24 was a busy year for the Property & Assets team.

Outside of business as usual, highlights included:

- Managing \$260,000 of refurbishment to our Pathways properties, funded by NSW Land and Housing Commission (now Homes NSW)
- Successful applications for funding to install solar panels on three more of our buildings, thereby reducing ICLA's future environmental impact. We should especially acknowledge the contribution of Pingala (www.pingala.org.au) who contributed 100% of the costs on our Roscoe St property
- Managing changes in our SIL property portfolio, including finalising the move of two consumers to a larger property and planning for the move out from another one. Both events proved to be positive changes for all concerned.



Our *PARTNERS + SUPPORTERS*

ICLA would like to thank our supported and network. Specifically, ICLA partnership organisations has meant that we have achieved much better outcomes for the consumers and communities we serve. It has been a pleasure to work and partner with so many likeminded agencies and organisations.

South Eastern Sydney Local Health District	Mental Health Australia	Bank Australia
Sydney Local Health District	NSW Mental Health Commission	Westpac
University of Sydney	Mental Health Coordinating Council	Commonwealth Bank
Western Sydney University	City of Sydney	Hymans Feitelberg Chartered Accountants
University of Melbourne	Australian Digital Health Agency	Homes NSW
Macquarie University	Central Eastern Sydney Primary Health Network (CESPHN)	Western Australia Primary Health Alliance (WAPHA)
National Disability Insurance Agency	Western Sydney Local Health District	Australians for Mental Health
The Commonwealth Department of Health	Transcultural Mental Health Centre	St Vincent’s Hospital Network
The NSW Ministry of Health	GUIR (Gamarada Universal Indigenous Resources) - Gamarada Universal Indigenous Resources	St George Housing
Sparke Helmore Lawyers	MindSpot & MindSpot GP	Pingala
Black Dog Institute	University of NSW	DKO architects
National Mental Health Commission		Hume Community Housing



SPECIAL MENTION:

Janet Meagher AM, who continues to be ICLA patron and supporter has been awarded a lifetime member of ICLA. Her contribution, assistance and areas of expertise have enriched the Strategic direction of ICLA.

SUPPORT Us

ICLA is a not-for-profit organisation committed to supporting people living with mental health issues and psychosocial disability.

Your support and donation help us to develop innovative services and models of care that promote wellbeing, recovery, and independence. Our mission is to deliver personalised support, enabling individual choice to improve people's lives.

DONATE:

All donations to ICLA are tax deductible and your funds go directly to our services including enhancing our ability to strive towards better mental health care and create better, sustainable future.

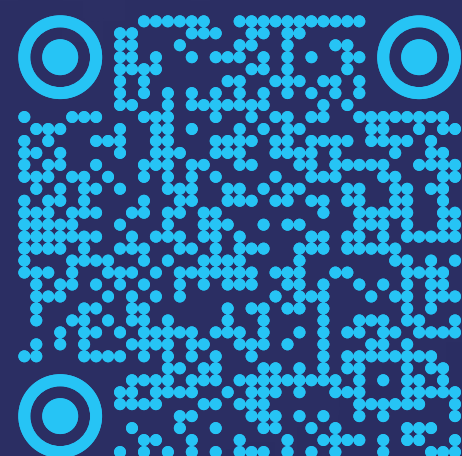
Donate on our website.

Follow us online:

 www.linkedin.com/company/3821063/admin/

 www.facebook.com/independentcommunitylivingaustralia

 [@everydaylifechanging](https://www.instagram.com/everydaylifechanging)



**Independent Community
Living Australia**
Everyday life changing

ICLA.ORG.AU