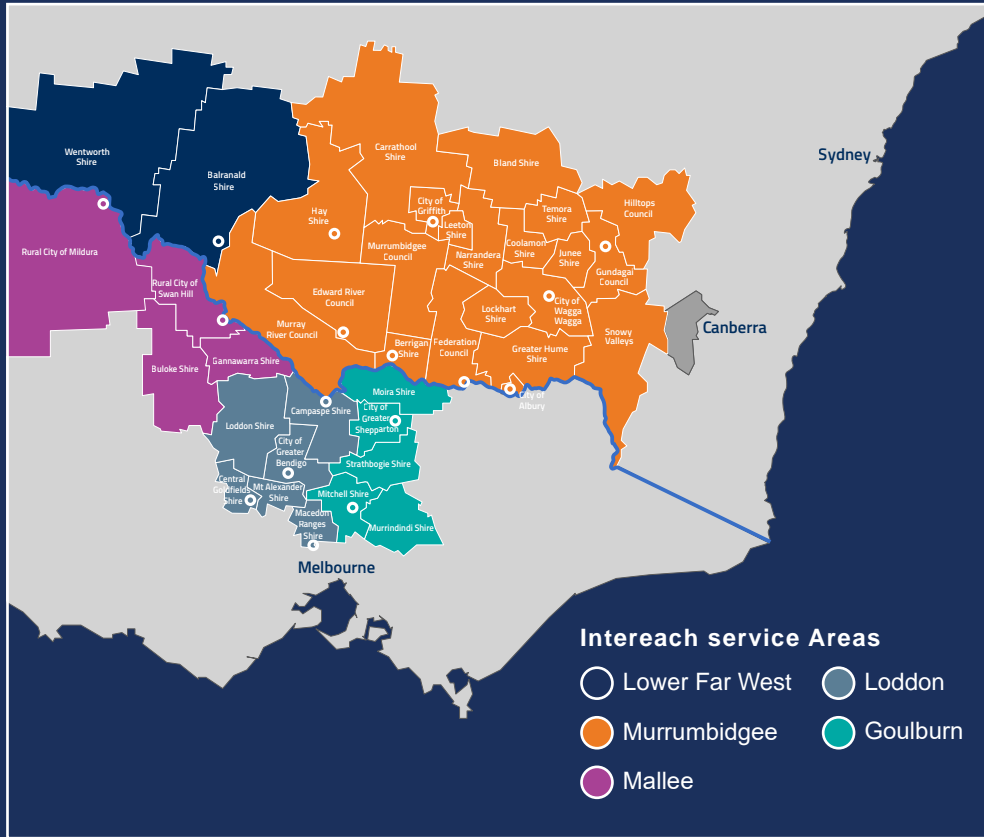




Annual Report 2025

Intereach is a not-for-profit community organisation that has been working across the Riverina-Murray region of NSW and central and northern Victoria for more than 50 years. We are committed to developing community infrastructure and supporting rural and regional communities.

Currently, we have 17 offices, which are located in Albury, Balranald, Bendigo, Cootamundra, Corowa, Deniliquin, Echuca, Finley, Gisborne, Griffith, Hay, Maryborough, Mildura, Seymour, Shepparton, Swan Hill and Wagga Wagga.



Delivering the NDIS in your community

Intereach is the National Disability Insurance Scheme Partner in the community across the Murrumbidgee region of NSW and Loddon, Goulburn and Mallee regions of Victoria.

OUR VISION

Strong connected communities

OUR VALUES

Leadership

We use our social influence to motivate others to reach their full potential.

Partnership

We work collectively with others toward a common goal of positive social and cultural change.

Social Justice

We protect and promote human rights by recognising that all people are free and equal in dignity and rights.

WHAT WE DO

Intereach offers a wide range of services, support and information for:

- Children and Families
- Community
- People with Disability
- Mental Health
- Older People
- Newly arrived Migrants and Refugees

Contents

Message from our Co-CEOs	4	Early Childhood	34
Welcome from the Board	6	Targeted Early Intervention (TEI)	36
Intereach Board Members	8	Aboriginal Community Worker	38
Intereach Leadership Team	11	Out Of School Hours Care (OOSH)	39
Staff Milestones	12	Family Day Care	40
Inclusion and Engagement	14	Settlement Engagement and Transition Support (SETS)	42
Staff Thank You Awards Winners	16	Reach out and Relax (ROAR)	44
Carers Reference Group	20	Family Mental Health	46
Learning and Development	22	Local Area Coordination (LAC)	47
Human Resources/People and Culture	24	Breaking the Mould: Anastasia’s Story	48
Work, Health, Safety and Sustainability	26	Community Transport	50
Quality and Risk	28	Aged Care Services	52
Marketing and Comms	29	Financials	54
Intereach in Numbers	30	Funding Partners	58

Intereach acknowledges the Traditional Owners and Custodians of the land and their strong spiritual connection to the land and the waterways. We pay our respects to their Elders both past and present and to those of the future, for they hold the memories, the traditions, the cultures and aspirations of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. We must always remember that despite major physical changes, this land is, was, and always will be Aboriginal land.

Intereach welcomes every person irrespective of gender or gender identity, age, Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander heritage, cultural background, physical or intellectual abilities, country of birth, religious beliefs, sexual identity and other real and perceived differences.



Message from Our CO-CEOs

This past year has been one of resilience, growth, and impact for Intereach. We continued to adapt in a changing environment, deliver on our purpose of building strong, connected communities, and achieve outcomes that matter deeply to the people we serve.

Our reach has been significant — we delivered services to more than 35,000 people through 18 programs across 38 local government areas. Behind these numbers are stories of resilience, inclusion, and meaningful change — families strengthened, older people supported to live with dignity, children encouraged to flourish, and communities connected.

This was also a year of future-shaping milestones. Our Board approved the Intereach Growth Strategy 2025–2030, a roadmap that charts a bold direction across aged care, education and care for children, disability and place-based services.

The growth strategy reflects principles that guide who we are: community-led, evidence-informed, and committed to both sustainability and social impact. As custodians of this organisation, we take our responsibility for long-term success seriously.

One of the highlights of the year was the rollout of our Settlement Engagement and Transition Support (SETS) program across several locations. In its first year, SETS supported 1097 people through group work, case management, and community events that break down barriers and foster inclusion — a clear example of our commitment to strong, connected communities.

Internally, we have laid strong foundations for the future through our system modernisation program. This includes scoping for a new Human Resource Management System, a centralised contact centre, and a new Quality Management System, alongside the implementation of a fit-for-purpose customer relationship management system. These investments are not simply about technology; they are about adopting innovative systems and practices that will improve efficiency, strengthen governance, and enhance the participant experience.

By modernising how we work, we are positioning Intereach to be more responsive, resilient, and future-ready.

It has also been a year of significant reform and change, particularly in aged care. Preparing for the introduction of Support at Home in November 2025 has required work across every part of our aged care program — from clinical governance and pricing, to workforce capability and participant engagement. This breadth of activity has been immense, and we acknowledge the dedication of our teams who have navigated this evolving space with resilience, professionalism, and a deep commitment to serving their clients. Their efforts ensure Intereach remains ready to deliver high quality services that meet the evolving needs of older Australians.

Collaboration has been another defining theme. We partnered with Greater Shepparton City Council and Mildura Rural City Council to advance our Environmental Strategy and support the One Tree Per Child program. We also affirmed our commitment to reconciliation with the launch of our third Innovate Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) in Mildura with the support of Mallee District Aboriginal Services.

The outcomes achieved through these initiatives show how collaboration can drive impact and affirm our dedication to working alongside our communities.

We welcomed a new face to our leadership team this year. Jason Stevens joined the Executive Team as Finance and Technology General Manager. He brings not only depth of experience and skill, but also a strong alignment to our purpose and values. Jason's leadership will play a key role in strengthening our financial and technology capability, while advancing our vision of building strong, connected communities.

Looking ahead, our 2025–2030 Strategic Plan will guide us to adapt, lead, and make a difference in the years to come. It focuses on three core pillars:

- **Transformative Social Impact**
- **Targeted Sustainable Solutions**
- **Becoming the Destination Employer**

This year saw the launch of our Gender Equality Strategy 2024–2026 and our Diversity and Inclusion Action Plan 2024–2027, which provide clear pathways to strengthen equity and representation across our organisation.

We also introduced the Purchased Leave initiative, giving staff the option to buy additional leave to support greater work–life balance. Together, these actions reflect our commitment to being an employer of choice and ensuring Intereach remains a place where people feel valued, supported, and able to thrive.

This year was not without sadness. In April, we lost a valued team member, Lynette Beard, who worked with us in Bendigo as a Local Area Coordinator for nine months. Lynette made a huge difference in her short time with us, and our thoughts remain with her family and loved ones.

The year ahead holds great promise. With a clear strategy, strong partnerships, and a dedicated team, Intereach is well-positioned to continue leading with courage and compassion - building strong, connected communities where everyone feels valued, supported, and empowered.

Michelle Tai
Co-CEO

Yvette Buhagiar
Co-CEO

Welcome from The Board

This past year has been one of resilience, growth, and future-shaping change for Intereach. As a Board, our role has been to ensure strong governance, provide strategic direction, and support the organisation to continue building strong, connected communities across our footprint.

A defining milestone was the development and approval of the Intereach Growth Strategy 2025–2030. This roadmap reflects the values that guide us – being community-led, evidence-informed, and committed to both sustainability and social impact. It positions Intereach to strengthen its role in aged care, disability, education and care for children, and place-based services - all vital services in the communities we serve.

The Board has endorsed significant investments in critical system modernisations, ensuring Intereach remains resilient and future-ready and thanks our Executives for

their efforts. Initiatives such as scoping a new Human Resource Management System, implementing new technologies to support participants better, and strengthening quality and governance frameworks will enhance efficiency, accountability, and ultimately the client experience.

We have also maintained close oversight of the significant aged care reforms, both past and the upcoming introduction of Support at Home in 2025. Preparing for this reform has required Board and Executive focus on clinical governance, workforce readiness, and sustainable pricing. The Board acknowledges the dedicated professionalism of our staff and leaders, whose efforts ensure Intereach remains ready to provide high-quality, person-centred services that meet the evolving needs of older Australians.

This year, we were also proud to see the rollout of the Settlement Engagement and Transition Support (SETS) program, which, in its first year, supported more than 1,000 people through case work, group programs, and community events. SETS is a clear example of our commitment to inclusion and belonging, as well as the outcomes that are possible when we partner with communities.

We strengthened our governance capability through the appointment of two new

Directors, Alison Maclean and Pamela Macdonald, both of whom bring extensive experience, fresh perspectives, and a deep commitment to equity and social impact. We were humbled by the number and quality of applicants and thank all those who applied. Alison and Pam’s appointments reflect our ongoing commitment to gender equity and diversity of voice at the highest levels of leadership – principles also embedded in our Gender Equality Strategy and Diversity and Inclusion Action Plan.

Collaboration has remained central to our work. The Board has been proud to see Intereach reaffirm its commitment to reconciliation through the launch of its third Innovate RAP, and to environmental sustainability through partnerships with councils and local organisations. These initiatives reflect our role as custodians of an organisation that not only delivers services but also strengthens community connections and builds collective capacity.

Looking forward, our Strategic Plan 2025–2030 will guide the next chapter, with its focus on *Transformative Social Impact*, *Targeted Sustainable Solutions*, and *Becoming the Destination Employer*. These are ambitious but also necessary objectives if we are to continue to meet our mission and support the people and communities we

serve. The Board is confident that with strong governance, a committed leadership team, and dedicated staff, Intereach is well-positioned to thrive in the years ahead.

On behalf of the Board, I extend my sincere thanks to our Co-CEOs, leadership team, staff, and volunteers for their unwavering dedication. All our board are in awe of the work, care and warmth of our client facing staff and volunteers, and equally, all those that bring together the necessary resources. I’d also like to thank our partners and communities for the trust they continue to place in Intereach. Together, we are continuing the journey of building stronger, more connected communities where everyone feels valued, supported, and empowered.

Rob Brown
Chairperson, Intereach Board



Intereach

Board Members

Intereach is guided by a passionate and committed Board of Directors who deeply care about the wellbeing of our communities.

With a shared dedication to our purpose, they provide thoughtful leadership and direction, helping us stay true to our values while ensuring we continue to deliver meaningful, high-quality services.

Their support is vital in shaping a strong, compassionate organisation that puts people first.



Rob Brown

Rob is Director Strategy at Peppin Family Consulting, a family-owned advisory business based in Deniliquin that works with families across eastern Australia assisting them to navigate financial and commercial plans and differences.

He has extensive career expertise in the circumstances and issues currently encountered by individual, families, and rural communities. Rob holds Certified Financial Planner and Family Business Adviser accreditations.

Rob is the chair of Deniliquin Newspapers P/L, past board member of NSW Rural Assistance Authority and also numerous local community organisations and is active in fostering strength based communities and leadership.



Andrew Johnstone

Deputy Chair

Andrew Johnstone is a retired Veterinarian in the Southern Riverina of NSW. He previously ran an extensive Veterinary practice covering southern NSW and northern Victoria.

Andrew has held various community, sporting, and educational roles over many years. Andrew is committed to social justice and raising the profile and awareness of rural and remote community services.



Pat Fogarty

Pat has a long involvement with the local community through her time as a Councillor and Mayor of Deniliquin, her service on a number of boards and her previous role as Southern NSW Regional Manager of Vinnies Services.

In 2007 Pat was awarded the NSW Premier's Community Services Award and in 2016 she was a finalist in the NSW Local Government 'Woman of the Year' Award. Pat has completed Australian Institute of Company Directors training



Noel Graham AM

Noel is a Director with experience in the Corporate, Government and Not for Profit sectors. Noel's corporate directorships have included board positions both international and domestic and cover both upstream and downstream supply chains, particularly related to Sunrice in the rice industry and Murray Irrigation in the water industry.

Noel's government experience incorporates knowledge of the Marketing of Primary Products Act in NSW. In the Not-for-Profit sector Noel's experience relates to NDIS, aged care, families, and children. Noel's expertise includes governance, finance, risk and Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG).



Annette Radford

Annette has had an extensive career in learning and development, working in secondary school and TAFEs as well as designing and developing training programs for animal and plant emergency response.

Annette has spent a large part of her career delivering project support services with the Victoria Government and is passionate about personal and professional growth.



Christine Grafitti

Christine Grafitti brings a wealth of experience in clinical governance, aged care and disability sectors with more than 30 years' working in primary and secondary health.

Christine has a passion for strong, connected communities and is committed to social justice in regional and rural settings. A business consultant and registered nurse, she has detailed knowledge of the health and community sectors and a broad understanding of public and community services policy direction and will continue to build community, government, and stakeholder relationships to serve our regions.

Christine has a Bachelor of Nursing, Diploma in Management and completed the Australian Institute of Company Directors Course (GAICD).



Hamish Bull

Hamish Bull is passionate about regional communities. Having grown up in regional NSW, he brings to Intereach professional skills in commercial and financial management.

He is a qualified Chartered Accountant, holds a business degree in economics and finance and a Bachelor of Agricultural Science. He has more than 20 years' experience across Asia-Pacific in business and professional service firms. His family has a love of travelling and community-based sport.



Pamela Macdonald

Pamela brings over 20 years of board-level experience spanning HR consulting, community services, non-profit, and government sectors. This includes serving as Chair of Bendigo Cemeteries Trust/Remembrance Parks Central Victoria, as well as holding positions on the Bendigo Regional Committee of the Australian Institute of Company Directors (AICD) and the National Executive Committee of the Career Development Association of Australia.

Pam has also been a State Committee member of the Australian HR Institute (AHRI) and the Career Development Association. Pam has lived in Bendigo since 2001 and her expertise includes change management, project management in utilities, consulting, executive HR and training roles in financial services across the government, NFP, and commercial sectors. In her executive capacity, Pam is the Director of BROADSPRING Consulting, providing coaching, training and strategic HR advice to CEOs and company owners since 2008.



Alison Maclean

Alison is a highly accomplished strategist and change agent with extensive experience in the government and community sectors. Alison is the Director of 3 Whitehorses and previously served as Principal Strategic Advisor at the Integrated Family Violence Executive Goulburn area for four years. She has held key leadership roles, including Chairs of Northeast Health Wangaratta; and Hume Region Board Chairs Forum (Health).

Alison has also been President of NESAY since 2015, driving the development and implementation of its 10-year vision strategy to deliver transformational change in supporting young people, their families, staff, stakeholders, and the wider community.

Intereach Leadership Team

At Intereach, our leadership team is united by a strong commitment to building inclusive, thriving communities.

Under the joint leadership of Co-CEOs Michelle Tai and Yvette Buhagiar, we take a collaborative approach that balances strategic direction with operational excellence.

They are supported by four outstanding General Managers who bring expertise and leadership to our core areas of work.



Michelle Tai
Co-CEO



Yvette Buhagiar
Co-CEO



Felicity Whorlow
General Manager of
People, Quality and
Risk



Jason Stevens
General Manager
Finance and
Technology



Sarah Matthews
General Manager
Operations



Kerri-Anne Hyde
General Manager
Operations

Staff Milestones

5 Years

Julie Burnett
Kevin Burnett
Jennifer Power
Kelly Crossing
Maddy Turner
Marilyn Salter
Janice Longmire
Brittney Johnson
Chiara Pasut
Josephine Wright
Megan Dixon Feldbauer
Kay McGrath (Pictured Right)
Frances O’Nial (Pictured Right)
Julieann Godfrey
Brent Corneille
Lynette Newton
Pamela Fitzpatrick
Jennifer Tenace
Margaret Smerdon
Tash Gage
Renee Duggan
Jessica Collins-Studniarczuk

Annita Dowdy
Chels Beddowes
Jaimarlee Atkinson-Sampson
Leanne Mccann
Mark Favell
Tania White
Maree Kelly
Abbey Jenkins
Lenny Castles
Danielle Reidy
Helen Tuntar
Alisha Turnbull
Melissa Elliott
Georgina Brown
Laura Wales
Rosemary Hancock
Layhnee Kearnes
Le-Anne Smith
Tahlia Hardy
Paige Pearsall
Emily Price
Sarah Matthews
Rebecca Wells
Leigh Kelly

Nerissa Anderson
Henry Jeffrey

10 Years

Robert Phillips
Walter Taranto
Sue Filipovich
Dalene Rooney
Ralph Baulch
Sarah Mackinnon
Jacinta Pollard
Timi Nawagamuwa

15 Years

Ronald Spencer
Debra Wright
Barry Macauley

20 Years

Nicole Tonta

25 Years

Libby Barker (Pictured)



Staff Milestone: Libby Barker pictured above with her 25 Year Service Award.



Staff Milestone: Kay McGrath (Left) and Fran O’Nial (Right) with their strength and balance group.

Inclusion and Engagement

Intereach's fourth Innovate Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) was launched in partnership with Mallee District Aboriginal Services (MDAS) at our Mildura office in March 2025.

Our RAP, endorsed by Reconciliation Australia, is a proactive step Intereach is continuing to take towards building stronger and more meaningful relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and contributing to reconciliation in Australia.

We congratulate our RAP Working Group members on the months of work they contributed to the development of the RAP as well as its successful launch to our wider community.

To read our RAP, go to www.intereach.com.au/reconciliation/

Diversity and Inclusion

This year, Intereach celebrated the rich diversity within our workforce and communities through a range of initiatives and events, including:

WEAR IT PURPLE DAY:

Staff embraced the challenge of dressing up to show support for rainbow young people.

R U OK? DAY + NATIONAL MENTAL HEALTH DAY:

Encouraging conversations and connections to support mental wellbeing.

NATIONAL RECONCILIATION WEEK:

Featuring a staff webinar with the First People's Assembly on the Treaty process in Victoria.

CULTURAL AWARENESS TRAINING:

A new SBS First Nations Cultural Awareness module was launched in SEEDHub.

HIDDEN DISABILITIES SUNFLOWER INITIATIVE:

Intereach became a corporate member, making Sunflower products available across offices to promote inclusivity and allyship.

Diversity and Inclusion Action Plan

Intereach's Diversity and Inclusion Action plan was released in October 2024.

The plan focuses on four main areas:

- **BUILD:** Developing inclusive spaces and strengthening relationships.
- **COMMIT:** Embedding diversity in our culture and values.
- **EDUCATE:** Offering learning opportunities on diversity and inclusion.
- **RECOGNISE:** Celebrating inclusion through events and engagement.

The Diversity and Inclusion Reference Group (DIRG) continues to drive these commitments by ensuring flexible work options, addressing accessibility needs, and supporting observance events across our footprint.

Inclusion symbols are on display at our office locations and Access at a Glance stickers are available at our Bendigo, Griffith and Mildura offices.



Intereach Child Family and Community worker Gerri Higgins (top left) with performers from Thuukalu Dancers and Kal Bysouth (digeridoo) and Intereach Co-CEO Yvette Buhagiar at the launch of the 2025-2027 Reconciliation Action Plan in Mildura in March

Staff Thank You Award Winners

Intereach has recognised the outstanding work of our workforce at the annual staff Thank You Awards.

Throughout the year, staff are nominated for the exceptional work they do in supporting their participants and clients as well as recognising their strong relationships and support across the organisation.



PARTNERSHIP

WE WORK COLLECTIVELY WITH OTHERS
TOWARD A COMMON GOAL OF POSITIVE
SOCIAL AND CULTURAL CHANGE

Fran Knight
*Inclusion and Engagement Coordinator,
Bendigo*

Fran encompasses the value of partnership in everything she does. Her professionalism, combined with her easy-going nature and can-do attitude, makes her a joy to work with. Her colleagues, community members, and stakeholders know they can rely on her to collaborate with energy, passion, and purpose.

While Fran's dedication to partnership shines every day, her extraordinary efforts during this year's NAIDOC Week deserve special recognition. She went above and beyond to ensure that Intereach was not only involved in but actively supporting local NAIDOC events.

Through her sponsorship proposals, she secured essential financial backing and showed a real commitment to community-led initiatives. In addition her dedication to Reconciliation, cultural awareness, and staff engagement has profoundly impacted Intereach's reputation within Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.

Her efforts strengthen the trust and relationships that help people access our services and foster a more inclusive and culturally safe workplace for everyone.

Fran's work continues to make a lasting difference. She leads by example, building bridges and creating opportunities that benefit both our organisation and the communities we serve.



LEADERSHIP

WE USE OUR SOCIAL INFLUENCE TO
MOTIVATE OTHERS TO REACH THEIR
FULL POTENTIAL

Cassandra Hunt
SETS Program Manager, Albury

Cass joined Intereach at a pivotal time, leading a new team and launching the SETS program. For many of her team members, it wasn't just a new program but also a new workplace and a new chapter in their careers.

Cass stepped into this role with humility, strength, and grace, determined to create a team that didn't just function but thrived.

Her colleagues describe her as **"NOTHING SHORT OF AMAZING"** in her ability to create a team environment that is enthusiastic, open, hopeful, and motivated.

Cass makes every team member feel valued and respected, ensuring their individual strengths are recognised and celebrated.

She leads by example, always ready to listen, provide guidance, and find solutions when answers aren't immediately clear.

One team member shared how Cass's leadership makes them proud to be part of Intereach and confident in projecting positivity about their work. That's the kind of ripple effect Cass has — not just within her team but across the wider organisation and beyond, into the communities we serve.

Cass has not only built a strong team but created a space where everyone feels they're part of something bigger, something meaningful.

As one colleague beautifully put it,

"WITH CASS AT THE HELM, THE SETS PROGRAM IS SETTING SAIL FOR AMAZING THINGS THAT WILL BENEFIT OUR COMMUNITIES".





SOCIAL JUSTICE

*WE PROTECT AND PROMOTE HUMAN RIGHTS
BY RECOGNISING THAT ALL PEOPLE ARE FREE
AND EQUAL IN DIGNITY AND RIGHTS*

Emma Reuss
LAC, Shepparton

In a few short months, Emma made an extraordinary impact on both her participants and her teammates.

Emma approaches her role as a local area coordinator with dedication, wisdom, and compassion that many of us aspire to develop over a lifetime.

Her Program Manager shared that numerous participants and colleagues have come forward to praise Emma's work. One particularly moving moment came when a participant reached out to share a deeply personal poem about living with autism.

This participant expressed profound gratitude, saying,

"YOU HAVE AN INCREDIBLE AURA AND WHAT SEEMS TO BE A VERY NATURAL ABILITY TO COMMUNICATE WITH NEURODIVERSE INDIVIDUALS. CONSIDERING MY LESS-THAN-THRIVING CIRCUMSTANCES AT THE MOMENT, YOU HAD A WONDERFUL WAY OF EASING MY NERVES".

In addition to the statement, the participant provided a poem expressing the way that Emma had connected and supported them in their journey. We have received permission from the participant to share this heartfelt poem with the NDIA and will be sharing it in our upcoming Intereach newsletter.

This heartfelt message and poem is a testament to Emma's exceptional ability to connect with participants on a meaningful level. It highlights her natural empathy and her commitment to ensuring that every person she works with feels heard, understood, and

supported.

Emma's efforts go beyond just **"DOING HER JOB"**. She takes the time to truly understand her participants' unique needs and advocates for the services that best support their goals.

Whether it's stepping up to tackle unexpected challenges or ensuring no-one falls through the cracks, Emma's dedication has already made her an integral part of the Goulburn team.

Her professionalism, problem-solving skills, and deep compassion have not only transformed the lives of her participants but have also set a standard of excellence for her colleagues.

Emma is already being recognised as someone who will go on to be a leader within Intereach — a champion for social justice who will continue to inspire us all.



Partnership Award Winner: Fran Knight (pictured left) and RAP artist Norm Stewart



Leadership Award Winner: Cassandra Hunt (Second from the left)

Carers Reference Group

The Intereach Carers Reference Group (CRG) continues to lead meaningful initiatives that support staff and communities, while enriching our organisational culture.

In the 2024 Your Opinion Matters survey, 31 per cent of respondents identified as carers for a family member with a disability, illness, or who is aged.

This reinforces our understanding that caring responsibilities are a reality for many, and that any one of us could become a carer at any time - for a short, medium or long period.

National Carers Week 2024

With one in three staff identifying as carers, National Carers Week was a chance to celebrate them and those who support our participants.

Our Carers Reference Group members made themselves available during the week for a cuppa and chat, or simply to listen and support staff with questions or concerns. This open-door approach helped foster connection and awareness; staff are always welcome to reach out to group members at any time.

"SO MANY IN MY OFFICE HAVE SUPPORTED ME THROUGH DIFFICULT TIMES MYSELF AND I STRONGLY BELIEVE WE ARE EACH OTHER'S GREATEST ALLIES AND SUPPORTS. THIS IS A LITTLE SOMETHING TO MAKE US ALL FEEL CARED FOR AND APPRECIATED," she shared.

Thank you day - Wagga Wagga

Thanks to a Carers NSW grant, we also hosted a thank you day in Wagga Wagga for local carers, who enjoyed an afternoon of Music Bingo. We also gave each carer a special "thank you" gift as a small token of our appreciation for the incredible work they do.

With Intereach's large geographic footprint, it's a unique strength that we can tailor activities to reflect the needs and character of each office or community.

New resources for carers

To further develop our commitment to being an inclusive workplace for carers, we were proud to join the new Australian Government Carer-Inclusive Workplace Initiative.

The fantastic resources on this website for employers and employees include eLearning courses, created with the help of lived experience carers and HR professionals.

We also collaborated with the Communications team to launch a dedicated intranet page featuring resources, policies, events, and member contacts.

Through these initiatives, the CRG continues to create space for carers to feel recognised, supported, and valued across our organisation and communities.



Carers week event Wagga Wagga

Learning and Development

At Intereach, we believe learning is not just a task - it's an opportunity to grow, connect, and create impact.

This year, our Learning and Development (L&D) team focused on strengthening systems, building workforce capability, and embedding a culture where learning is collaborative, relevant, and connected to the realities of service delivery.

Key initiatives included expanding training module development, enhancing induction delivery, and introducing a stronger feedback-informed training approach.

Study Leave – Empowering Career Development

Supporting staff to pursue formal learning is one of the most effective ways we can invest in both people and service outcomes. In 2024–25, 13 employees accessed Study Leave, allowing participation in external qualifications and accredited training.

The feedback received confirms that Study Leave is not only valued by staff but also contributes meaningfully to quality outcomes across the organisation.

" ACCESSING STUDY LEAVE HAS ALLOWED ME TO SEPARATE WORK AND STUDY. IT'S GIVEN ME THE OPPORTUNITY TO INVEST THE TIME NEEDED TO FOCUS ON MY STUDIES AND HAS BEEN ESSENTIAL FOR ME TO LEARN. THE COURSE GAVE ME THE TOOLS I NEEDED TO BE ABLE TO DEESCALATE HEIGHTENED CONVERSATIONS. "

Co-Design and Feedback – Strengthening Relevance and Engagement

We strengthened collaboration with programs to ensure learning was practical and relevant. For example, a partnership with the IT team delivered training on communication and emotional intelligence, which staff reported had an immediate, positive impact on their work.

Training Module Development – Growing Capability

It has been one of our most prolific years of content creation and renewal, strengthening the quality, compliance, and the culture of learning. More than 40 training modules were developed or updated, including new compliance content, program-specific learning, refreshed mandatory modules on SEEDHub and tailored team-based workshops.

Induction - Setting Staff Up for Success

A total of 128 new staff completed induction this year (65 via MS Teams and 63 through Aged Care Online Induction). Feedback was overwhelmingly positive:

" THE PRESENTERS' ENTHUSIASM WAS ENGAGING. HEARING FROM DIFFERENT BRANCHES WITHIN INTEREACH WAS A GREAT WAY TO LEARN ABOUT THE WIDER TEAM. THE VIDEO FROM THE CO-CEOs WAS A GREAT TOUCH. "

" I REALLY VALUE AND APPRECIATE THE EFFORT AND TIME L + D PUT INTO THIS INDUCTION – I HAVEN'T EXPERIENCED SUCH A THOROUGH ORIENTATION INTO A WORKPLACE BEFORE. "

A New Delivery Model

The redesigned Frontline Essentials Program (FEP) provides a structured, supportive onboarding experience for frontline staff. A unique feature of the program allows new starters to immediately shadow experienced colleagues, applying theory in real-life settings.

Looking Ahead

In the year ahead, Learning and Development will continue to embed the new Leadership Development Framework, expand evaluation, pilot accessible microlearning, and strengthen collaboration with programs to align training with service delivery.

Human Resources People and Culture

At Intereach, our Human Resources team is central to nurturing a workplace that truly reflects our values of Leadership, Partnership, and Social Justice. As we continue to grow and evolve, HR remains a guiding force - shaping our culture, supporting our people, and ensuring we stay grounded in what matters most.

Over the past financial year, we've accrued extra talent and put several exciting initiatives into play that strengthen our commitment to our greatest asset - **our people**. As we step into another inspiring year, that commitment continues to drive positive change across the organisation.



Image of Angela Hoffman (left) and Adam Goodes (right) at Intereach event.

Building a Stronger Team

In 2024–25, HR introduced a redesigned structure to better align with organisational priorities and strengthen support across our workforce. This restructure welcomed new roles and talented people to the team, including:

ANGELA HOFFMAN

Recruitment Officer, based in Albury

ADAM GOODES

Talent Acquisition Lead, based in Bendigo

MADELEINE HETHERINGTON

HR Business Partner, bringing her knowledge and passion to key initiatives

These appointments ensure we are equipped to meet the needs of a growing and diverse workforce.

Modernising Our Systems - Employment Hero

To improve efficiency and better meet the needs of our expanding organisation, Intereach made the decision to transition from Connx and Micropay to Employment Hero, a modern Human Resources Management System.

Implementation began in April 2025, with launch expected in October 2025. This change will deliver streamlined processes, greater flexibility, and improved user experience for all staff.

Supporting Our Staff

FLARE: Launched in November 2024, FLARE provides staff access to everyday savings, leasing options, and discounted gift cards - a practical way to support employees and ease day-to-day expenses.

FITNESS PASSPORT: Introduced in May 2025, Fitness Passport gives staff unlimited access to hundreds of gyms, pools, and fitness centres across NSW and Victoria at a significantly reduced cost. This initiative encourages active lifestyles, supports staff wellbeing, and strengthens our commitment to positive work-life balance.

FAMILY AND DOMESTIC VIOLENCE GUIDE:

A guide to assist employees experiencing family and domestic violence and equip managers and colleagues with resources to provide support. The guide reinforces Intereach's zero-tolerance stance on family and domestic violence and ensures staff feel supported in challenging circumstances.



Work, Health, Safety and Sustainability

The Work, Health and Safety team supports the psychological and physical safety of staff members and participants in the workplace, promotes wellbeing and ensures Intereach reduces it's carbon footprint on the environment.

This quarter, we welcomed two new team members: our Compliance, Safety and Risk Manager and a Work Health and Safety Advisor. Their expertise strengthens our capacity to support safe work practices across Intereach.

The WHS team actively engages with managers and staff to promote safety awareness and foster a proactive safety culture. In addition to consultation and advice, the team coordinates Return to Work and WorkCover processes to support staff recovering from injury, including those who may have been injured outside of work.

We are also preparing to transition from our current HowSafe incident management system to the CompliSpace QMS platform in the coming months. This move will enhance our ability to manage safety data, streamline reporting, and improve compliance visibility.

Mental Health and Wellbeing Initiatives

- Implementing a confidential psychosocial reporting tool to support early intervention and safe disclosure.
- Establishing Mental Health and Wellbeing Working Groups to guide the review of our Mental Health Framework.
- Drafting a comprehensive Mental Health and Wellbeing Action Plan and a new Wellbeing Policy.
- Introducing purchasable additional leave as a wellbeing initiative to support work-life balance.

- Delivering Black Dog Institute's 'Managing for Team Wellbeing' training in February, with 36 staff attending over two days. This foundational, interactive workshop equipped people leaders with essential skills to create mentally healthier workplaces.
- Our Mental Health First Aiders are now proudly listed on our intranet, making it easier for staff to access peer support when needed.
- Implementing Mental Health Fundamentals for Leaders & Mental Health Fundamentals for staff.

Employee Assistance and Support

The Acacia Employee Assistance Program (EAP) offers confidential, 24/7 support for staff and their immediate families, covering personal and work-related challenges like stress, relationships, and workplace issues. The program also includes holistic services such as financial coaching, nutritional advice, and legal referrals - helping you manage everyday life and enhance overall wellbeing, resilience, and peace of mind.

Wellbeing Champions and Local Initiatives

Our network of Wellbeing Champions played a vital role in fostering a positive and supportive workplace culture.

They recorded more than 20 activities a month across our offices, including some of the below:

- **Footy tipping competitions**
- **Pet photo wall**
- **EAP wellbeing office checks**
- **Wall of Wellness**
- **Compliment board**
- **Mindfulness and office attendance days**
- **Sip and paint sessions**
- **Jeans for Genes Day**

These initiatives have significantly contributed to staff connection, morale, and overall wellbeing.

New Employee Benefits and Inclusive Spaces

- Launch of Fitness Passport as a new employee benefit to support physical health and fitness.

- Progress on inclusive rooms for breastfeeding and prayer, including:

- Developing a room booking template
- Identifying five office locations for the initial rollout phase

Cultural and Community Engagement

We continued to foster an inclusive and culturally aware workplace through a range of initiatives and observances:

- Celebrated key observance days including: Seniors Week, International Women's Day and Harmony Week
- Successfully launched our fourth Innovate Reconciliation Action Plan in Mildura, proudly endorsed by Reconciliation Australia.
- Introduced the Hidden Disabilities Sunflower Project, establishing a support network for people with non-visible disabilities.
- Several offices actively participated in NAIDOC Week celebrations and Tree Planting Days, reinforcing our connection to community and environmental stewardship.

Quality and Risk

Over the past year, Intereach has strengthened its quality management systems and practices, laying a strong foundation for safe, reliable, and accountable services.

A new Quality Management System

A major milestone was the decision to introduce a new organisation-wide Quality Management System (QMS). Implementation began in August 2025 and is expected to be fully in place by January 2026 and is expected to be completed over approximately 12-18 months. Some components, such as the transition from our current incident management system to the new CompliSpace platform, will begin earlier.

The QMS will:

- Provide staff with easy access to up-to-date policies and procedures.

- Streamline incident reporting, complaints handling and audits.
- Give real-time oversight of compliance and risk across all programs.
- Strengthen accountability, transparency and continuous improvement.
- Support readiness for the new Aged Care Act coming into effect in November 2025.

The Quality team will champion the system, beginning with Aged Care before expanding across all Intereach services. A new corporate risk register will also be developed, giving clear oversight of organisational risks and priorities.

Continuous improvement

External audits were completed across Aged Care Services, Family Day Care and Out of School Hours (OOSH) services, with recommendations added to our Continuous Improvement Register.

Aged Care services are implementing a Continuous Improvement Plan and established a Consumer Advisory Body, ensuring the voices of older people inform service design.

Participant surveys in Home Care Packages (HCP), Commonwealth Home Support

Programme (CHSP), Local Area Coordination (LAC), Family Day Care (FDC) and Early Childhood (EC) provided valuable feedback to guide service improvements.

Listening to feedback

We continue to strengthen systems for recording complaints, compliments and improvement ideas. With the new QMS, this feedback will be easier to capture and respond to, ensuring greater visibility and accountability.

Strong governance

A number of key policies were reviewed and approved this year, including new or updated policies on Whistleblowing, Risk Management, Feedback and Complaints Policy, Psychosocial Safety, Abuse and Neglect, Domestic and Family Violence, and Flexible Working. These policies ensure Intereach is aligned with legislation and best practice, and that staff and participants are supported to raise concerns safely.

Building capability

Our Quality team completed Internal Auditor Training in mid-2025, boosting internal expertise to maintain compliance and support all programs.

Marketing and Comms

This year has seen significant progress for Marketing and Communications Engagement at Intereach, with major milestones achieved and the team expanding to strengthen our impact.

A highlight was the launch of Tree House, our new intranet platform. More than just a place for news and updates, Tree House has transformed the way our people connect, access information, and share resources. It provides a single source of truth for policies, forms, and program information, while also encouraging collaboration across locations.

The platform has been embraced by staff, improving accessibility, consistency, and engagement across the organisation. Tree House is already shaping a stronger internal culture and is central to our efforts to be

a destination employer. Our team has also grown, with the addition of a Marketing and Communications Officer, a Marketing Officer, and a Stakeholder Engagement and Public Relations Manager. Together, these roles round out our business function, increasing our ability to deliver consistent, strategic, and high-quality communications both internally and externally.

With this enhanced capacity, Marketing and Communications has moved beyond day-to-day activity to work more strategically in support of program delivery and organisational priorities. We have been a major contributor to the Intereach Growth Strategy 2025–2030, including leading the Aged Care Growth Campaign – **YOUR PLACE, YOUR PACE**. This campaign has reinforced our position as a trusted local provider, delivering tailored, person-centred care while building recognition of Intereach as both experts in the community and experts of the community.

Looking forward, Marketing and Communications will continue to focus on initiatives that strengthen program outcomes, raise awareness of our services, and support the delivery of Intereach’s long-term growth strategy.



Image from our Your Place, Your Pace campaign

Intereach in Numbers

CUSTOMER SUPPORT



Enquiries recorded: **68,141**
Website/email enquiries: **3,893**
Phone Calls: **54,996**
Face to Face: **9,046**
Internal Referrals: **64,894**
External referrals: **3,247**

EARLY CHILDHOOD



Early Childhood participants: **6740**
Children supported with Early Connections: **2472**

COMMUNICATIONS AND MARKETING



Facebook
Impressions: **1.5M**
Published posts: **241**
Followers: **7,827**
Instagram
Reach: **19,144**
Impressions: **28,145**
Likes: **1,177**

LOCAL AREA COORDINATION



New people helped: **1031**
Ongoing participants: **13,610**
Initial Support and Linkages (these participants may or may not become NDIS participants): **1,694**

HUMAN RESOURCES



Total staff: **571**
Newstarters: **130**
Volunteer Staff: **108**
External vacancies: **111**
Internal recruitment opportunities: **68**
Paid Parental Leave: **22**
Volunteer Leave (Hours): **205.80**
Staff that are students: **7**
Staff Identifying as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander: **1.92%**
Staff Identify as having a disability: **3.15%**

AGED CARE SERVICES



Total Services delivered: **164,341**
Total Commonwealth Home Support Programme clients: **2,382**
Total Commonwealth Home Support Programme hours: **205.80**
Total Home Care Package clients: **451**
Meals delivered: **41,553**
Home Care Package service hours: **48,670**
Total dollars spent on modifications: **314,870**

COMMUNITY TRANSPORT



Numbers of trips
Deniliquin: **5,457**
Griffith: **7,921**
Deniliquin: **212,855 KM**
Griffith: **125,437 KM**

QUALITY



External Audits completed:
AGED CARE: Audited in March 2024, with an additional check up audit conducted in October. The final report was released in December where all areas were assessed as compliant with the standards.

IMPROVEMENT AND FEEDBACK



Improvements identified from external feedback including participant surveys and complaints: **33**
Improvements implemented from external feedback including participant surveys and complaints: **31**
Total complaints recieved: **1,086**
Total compliments received from external source: **534**



Teddy Bear Picnic - Wagga Wagga



Early Childhood

Our Early Childhood (EC) team continues to deliver meaningful support, helping children and families thrive through early intervention, connection, and collaboration. This year, we are proud to share some highlights and good news stories.



Albury Supported Playgroup

Our Intereach Supported Playgroup continues to grow, with the Albury group now meeting at the Glenecho Community Centre. These playgroups provide families with opportunities to:

- Support child development
- Strengthen parent/child connections
- Encourage play and socialisation
- Build community networks

Families have particularly focused on developing social skills, sharing, and cooperative play. We have also seen wonderful improvements in children's speech and language development.



NAIDOC Family Day

The Early Childhood Loddon team proudly attended the Bendigo District Aboriginal Co-Operative NAIDOC Family Day, celebrating the culture, history, and achievements of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. The team engaged children and families with fun and educational activities including:

- Planting native seeds
- Colouring in Australian native animals
- 3D printed animal puzzles

This event highlighted the importance of connection, inclusion, and celebrating culture in the communities we serve.

Professional Development

Our Early Childhood team was delighted to host Denise Luscombe — an ECI Consultant, Paediatric Physiotherapist, and Chairperson of PRECI (Professionals & Researchers in Early Childhood Intervention) — to deliver training on the Routines-Based Interview (RBI) approach.

This evidence-based, family-centred method helps practitioners identify developmental needs in the context of everyday life and empowers families to set meaningful, functional goals. The training included both virtual and face-to-face sessions in Bendigo and Albury, with families actively participating to support the team's learning.

A Life-Changing Step Forward in Mildura

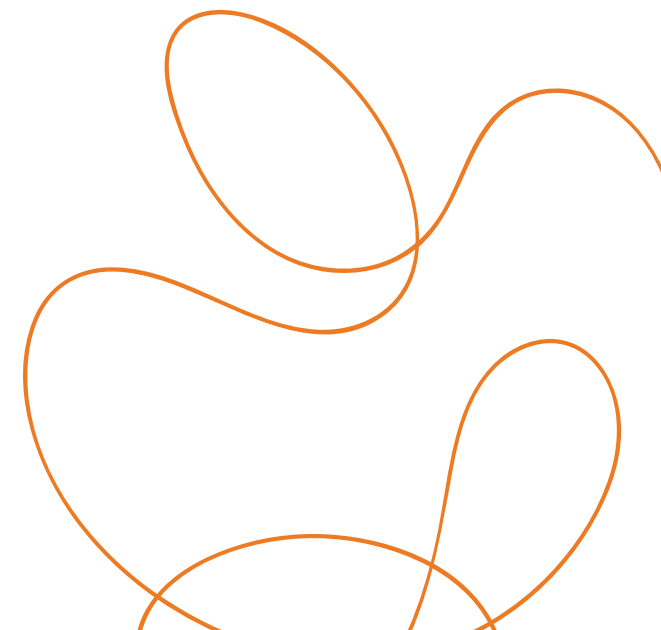
In Mildura, EC Coordinator Ebony Hodge shared a powerful example of collaboration creating better outcomes for children with complex needs.

A one-year-old child diagnosed with cerebral palsy required high-intensity support. After experiencing a difficult period where multiple services declined due to the complexity of care, the family finally received the support they needed.

Through a partnership between the Royal Children's Hospital (RCH) and a national disability and complex care agency, two support workers were recruited and given specialised training tailored to the child.

" SINCE HAVING FURTHER SUPPORTS IN PLACE, THIS CHILD HAS ALREADY BUILT LOTS OF STRENGTH AND IS TRYING HER VERY BEST TO STAND UNAIDED, WHILE WORKING CLOSELY WITH HER PHYSIO TRIALLING DIFFERENT AT SUPPORTS "

A shining example of what can be achieved when organisations work together.





Targeted Early Intervention (TEI)

Our Targeted Early Intervention Programs address specific challenges that people and families may be facing. We do this by providing timely support and tailored services to improve the wellbeing of individuals and families.

Our five Community Centres - located in Hay, Deniliquin, Finley, Corowa and Cootamundra - are welcoming hubs where families can access information, local services, and support.

In smaller communities, these centres play a vital role, often being the first place locals turn to when they need a hand with life's challenges.

Each Community Centre is shaped by its community, offering events, activities, and outreach services tailored to local needs. We encourage community members to connect with their local worker to find out what's happening in these small but powerful Intereach spaces.

Hay Community Centre

Started the year with a service provider expo, giving locals the chance to connect with a wide range of supports.

In April, we welcomed Chloe Deacon as the new Community Centre Worker, and she has been making a big impact ever since.

Programs include mums and bubs groups, school holiday Lego sessions, and an Intergenerational Program run in partnership with the high school and Haydays Retirement Hostel.

The centre also hosts visiting services such as employment providers, Services Australia, Rural Financial Counsellor, Flourish, Murrumbidgee Pathways and St Vinnies. Chloe is always on hand to provide information and referrals.

Finley Community Centre

Welcomed SETS worker Sharon Soule, who organised a Multicultural Expo in May that was a highlight for the local community.

Community Centre Worker June Madden continues to provide strong support through referrals, assistance, and coordination of the No Interest Loan Scheme (NILS) program.

The centre also hosted a well-attended Scams & Spams information session in March, delivered by Services Australia. Looking ahead, June is planning a creative Mocktails & Masterpieces event for Mental Health Month in October.

Corowa Community Centre

Remains a lively hub, with regular activities including Lego Group, Lego Masters, Wiggle & Giggle, mahjong, euchre and Grandparents/ Kinship Carers groups. The centre also provides space for visiting services such as the Anglicare financial counsellor, Hume Riverina Community Legal Service, and a mental health social worker.

Community Centre Worker Amber Murphy offers advocacy and referrals, and has hosted a series of popular Women's Breakfast events, which she hopes to continue in the future.

Deniliquin Community Centre

Is always buzzing, with ladies and men's, gardening, craft and women's cultural groups making it a vibrant meeting place.

The centre also welcomes a wide range of visiting services including Pathways, Hume Riverina Community Legal Service, Department of Communities & Justice, Charles Sturt University and Hope Serenity Therapy.

Community Centre Worker Helen Ford provides valuable support to locals, from helping with Work Development Orders (WDOs) to advocacy and referrals.

Over the past year, Helen has run or supported many activities, including:

- **A Scams & Spams workshop**
- **A Lego Masters day**
- **A new parents group**
- **A child car seat safety check**
- **NAIDOC Week Koori Markets**

Cootamundra Community Centre

Billie-Jo Johnson keeps the centre active and welcoming. She runs a weekly Wiggle & Giggle playgroup and a monthly dementia carers support group.

Billie-Jo also coordinates special events, such as:

- **A Scams & Spams awareness session with Service NSW**
- **A morning tea for Jeans for Genes Day**
- **A 'come and try week'**

Aboriginal Community Worker

Geraldine **"Gerri"** Higgins is Intereach's Aboriginal Community Worker, supporting the Leeton, Narrandera, and Wagga communities.

Based at the Leeton Aboriginal Land Council, Gerri provides advocacy, information, and referrals, while also building strong connections with local community members.

Over the past year, Gerri has actively participated in the Leeton Women's Group, supported community lunches and breakfasts at the Ashmont Resource Centre, and helped deliver the bi-monthly legal clinics in Narrandera.

Her commitment extends beyond direct community support, with Gerri contributing her knowledge and experience as a member of the Riverina Murray Regional Alliance and as a Board member of the Leeton & District Local Aboriginal Land Council. Through these roles, she ensures Aboriginal voices and priorities are represented in broader decision-making forums.

Gerri continues to be a trusted and approachable presence in her communities, fostering connection, advocacy, and culturally safe support for Aboriginal people and families.



Gerri Higgins and granddaughter Miah Wood from Parkview Public School take part in the Leeton Reconciliation Walk

Out of School Hours Care (OOSH)

Intereach Out Of School Hours care (OOSH) provides quality centre-based childcare for primary school-aged children in a safe and caring environment. After School Care operates during NSW school terms and Vacation Care operates during NSW school holidays.

In 2025, Intereach strengthened its commitment to accessible early education by establishing a second OOSH centre in Barham, complementing our long-running Deniliquin service.

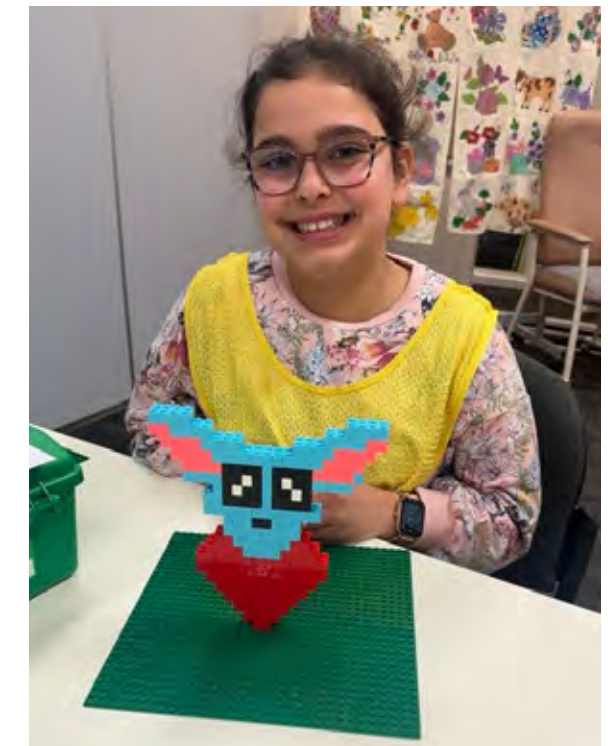
This expansion forms part of our broader Early Education Growth Strategy, which is focused on addressing gaps in childcare availability across rural and regional communities.

In response to strong community need, and with the advocacy and support of the Barham Public School P&C, Intereach opened the new OOSH service at Barham Public School, offering after school and holiday care.

The centre has already seen strong enrolments and growing demand, highlighting the importance of expanding childcare options in smaller regional towns.

Our OOSH services do more than provide care. They create environments where children thrive, families feel supported, and communities remain connected.

By expanding into Barham, we are helping to ease the strain on local families who previously faced limited care options.



Family Day Care

Intereach Family Day Care provides care and education to children aged 0-13 years in a home environment with a registered educator. Educators are trained and supported by the experienced and highly qualified Intereach Coordination Unit. Intereach FDC operates in NSW and Victoria, offering flexible childcare options for full-time, part-time, casual, overnight and weekend care.

This year, Intereach Family Day Care celebrated outstanding milestones and achievements that reflect the heart of our program — creating safe, nurturing, and culturally rich environments where children can thrive.

One highlight was Helen Armstrong of Finley, who marked 20 years as an Intereach Family Day Care educator. Since 2005, Helen has provided a caring, play-based learning space for generations of children, guiding many from babyhood through to school. Known for her warmth, patience, and passion, Helen instils respect, manners, and confidence while encouraging curiosity.

Helen acknowledged the vital role of the Intereach coordination unit, mentors, and fellow educators, especially colleague Vicki Smith, who also celebrated 20 years of service.

Family Day Care Manager, Rebecca Fitzpatrick, said Helen had made an incredible difference in the lives of children and families in the Finley community.

"EDUCATORS LIKE HELEN EMBODY THE HEART OF WHAT FAMILY DAY CARE IS ALL ABOUT," she said.

Our educators also received state and regional recognition this year: Kirsty Thomas (Deniliquin) was named NSW & ACT Family Day Care Educator of the Year at the 2024 FDCA Excellence Awards. A new educator in the sector, Kirsty has embraced community connections, embedded Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspectives into her program, and even introduced intergenerational play sessions with a local aged care facility.

Michelle Oellerman won the Mildura and Murray (Vic) regional award for the second consecutive year.

Celebrating Culture, Connection & Country

NAIDOC Week 2025 was another powerful highlight, with events in Leeton and Wagga bringing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture to life through storytelling, art, food, dance, and language. Children learned traditional face painting, cooked Johnny Cakes and damper, engaged in cultural dance with the Marrambidya Yurali Waga-dhaanys (Murrumbidgee Blossom Dancers), and explored Wiradjuri language through an interactive sound wall.

These experiences created joy, curiosity, and lasting cultural understanding while building strong community connections with local educators, Elders, and organisations.



Settlement Engagement and Transition Support (SETS)

In 2024, we launched our new Settlement Engagement and Transition Support (SETS) program to empower migrants and refugees across rural and regional Victoria and NSW.

The program equips humanitarian entrants and eligible permanent migrants with the tools and confidence to address settlement needs, fostering participation, independence, wellbeing, and community connection.

Through casework, information and referrals, advocacy, and capacity building, SETS helps individuals and families navigate life in Australia. Community workshops further build skills and connections, ensuring people feel supported in their new communities.

SETS operates across a large footprint, including Murray River, Griffith Murrumbidgee West, Upper Murray (excluding Albury), Lower Murray and Mildura, Loddon/Elmore, Moira, Campaspe and the Wagga/Cootamundra areas.

Our first year in numbers

In its first year, SETS supported:

- 232 participants through individual support (low and medium intensity)
- 482 participant sessions
- 744 group sessions

Ongoing groups have provided vital spaces for social connection and learning. Examples include:

- Men's and women's social groups (Swan Hill)
- Conversational English classes (Cootamundra)
- Walking group (Loddon)
- Swimming lessons for women and children (Swan Hill)
- Yarn & Chat and social sewing groups (Mildura)
- Cooking classes (Swan Hill)
- Music group (Mildura)
- Come and Try Soccer (Mildura)
- Living Library (Corowa)

SETS has also delivered sessions on road safety, water safety, women's health, fire safety, and domestic violence support. Five community consultations have shaped program priorities, ensuring activities reflect the needs of participants.

Voices from the community

Participants have shared heartfelt feedback:

"YOUR DEDICATION, PROFESSIONALISM AND GENUINE CARE HAVE MADE A SIGNIFICANT AND POSITIVE IMPACT ON ME AND MY FAMILY."

"MY SETS WORKER IS AN INCREDIBLE PERSON WHO PICKS UP HER PHONE, LISTENS AND SAYS LEAVE IT WITH ME, I'LL DEAL WITH IT. THANK YOU FOR EVERYTHING YOU DO, FOR CONNECTING US WITH THE RELEVANT AGENCIES AND ORGANISATIONS AND GIVING US RESOURCES."

"THANK YOU FOR YOUR GENEROSITY, TREMENDOUS EFFORTS AND VERY BIG HEART."

Looking ahead

Through SETS, Intereach is ensuring that migrants and refugees in regional Australia are not only supported through the challenges of resettlement but are empowered to thrive — building strong, connected communities for the future.

Alnajjar's story: refugee finds hope in Australia after fleeing war

After fleeing the war in Syria, Alnajjar arrived in Australia in 2023, alone and speaking only Arabic. She faced enormous challenges—finding housing, income, learning English, and adjusting to an unfamiliar society—while carrying the trauma of war and separation from her husband, still in Turkey.

"IT WAS VERY PAINFUL TO THINK ABOUT, EVEN YEARS LATER," ALNAJJAR SAID.

"THE LANGUAGE BARRIER WAS DIFFICULT, AND ADAPTING TO EVERYTHING WAS VERY CHALLENGING."

Her turning point came when she connected with SETS multicultural worker Sammi in Swan Hill.

Sammi, who migrated from Morocco in 2006, understands firsthand the struggles of settlement. Drawing from her personal experience and professional expertise, she helped Alnajjar secure housing, access financial support, connect with health services, and enrol in English classes.

She also supported her to gain her Learner's Permit, attend road safety courses, and participate in community activities such as swimming lessons and social outings.

"LEAVING EVERYTHING BEHIND WAS INCREDIBLY TOUGH, BUT SAMMI SHOWED SO MUCH COMPASSION AND UNDERSTANDING," ALNAJJAR SAID.

"SHE HELPED ME NAVIGATE MY NEW LIFE AND OVERCOME PERSONAL CHALLENGES. NOW I FEEL HAPPY AND CONFIDENT SPEAKING ENGLISH."

For Sammi, this work is deeply meaningful.

"THE MOST IMPORTANT PART OF MY ROLE IS SEEING FAMILIES BECOME INDEPENDENT, SECURE EMPLOYMENT, PURSUE EDUCATION, AND ACTIVELY PARTICIPATE IN THE COMMUNITY."

Alnajjar says she is no longer just surviving:

"I AM SO GRATEFUL FOR INTEREACH AND THE SETS PROGRAM. THE FIRST TIME I WALKED INTO INTEREACH, THEY GAVE ME A BIG, WARM WELCOME. THEY MADE ME FEEL LIKE I BELONGED."

She now looks to the future with hope and determination.

"KNOW THAT THERE ARE PEOPLE WHO CARE AND WANT TO HELP. I AM SO HAPPY TO BE HERE, AND I WANT TO CONTRIBUTE AND BE PART OF THIS WONDERFUL COMMUNITY."

Reach Out and Relax (ROAR)

ROAR aims to improve the emotional health and wellbeing of children and young people. It provides early intervention support to people up to the age of 18, and their families, who may be showing early signs of, or are at risk of developing a mental health issue.



Our Reach Out and Relax (ROAR) program has had an eventful year, delivering fun, meaningful and supportive activities that improve the emotional health and wellbeing of children, young people, and their families.

Operating across 18 local government areas in NSW, ROAR continues to make a positive difference in the lives of young people up to 18 years old, while strengthening community connections.

Mental Health Month 2024

To mark Mental Health Month, our team created safe and welcoming spaces where young people could connect, express themselves and learn strategies to support their wellbeing.

Thanks to funding from the NSW Government's Winter and Spring Holiday Break Program, school holiday experiences were offered in Cootamundra, Gundagai and Hay.

Young people enjoyed adventurous outings to the Vortex Centre in Wagga, complete with rock climbing, high ropes and bowling, along with mindfulness and yoga sessions in Hay in partnership with Saltbush Stretch.

Participants even received their own yoga mats and wellbeing journals from The Resilience Project to support their mental health beyond the sessions.

One parent shared:

"IT'S WONDERFUL TO HEAR MY CHILD RECOUNT THE DAY WITH SUCH HAPPINESS AND EXCITEMENT. HE FELT SAFE AND CONFIDENT, AND THIS WAS HIS FIRST SOLO TRIP WITHOUT US."

In Wagga Wagga, young people **"TALKED ABOUT IT THROUGH RHYTHM"** at a drumming workshop, using music to explore feelings and connect with peers.

One participant said, **"COPYING THE BEAT AS A GROUP WAS AWESOME AND I FELT SAFE AND HAPPY PARTICIPATING."**

Connecting through LEGO

With the support of Good360, our Cootamundra ROAR worker hosted a popular LEGO Club session. The creativity was endless, with children proudly building vehicles, Minecraft sets and even a dart gun. Parents praised the activity, with one noting:

"MY SON HAD NOTHING BUT GREAT THINGS TO SAY... HE'D BE VERY KEEN TO PARTICIPATE IN ANOTHER LEGO AFTERNOON."

Youth Week 2025

During Youth Week, ROAR workers visited high schools across the region under the theme **"WE ARE THE FUTURE, AND THE FUTURE IS NOW!"**

At Deniliquin High School, creative activities and open conversations gave students space to reflect on wellbeing, identity and their role as young leaders.

2024-25 Reflections

ROAR Program Manager Jayne Lang summed it up: **"CREATING FUN AND ENGAGING ACTIVITIES FOR OUR YOUNG PEOPLE IS VITAL. THEY NOT ONLY PROMOTE MENTAL WELLBEING BUT HELP TO REDUCE ISOLATION AND BUILD SOCIAL CONNECTIONS. BY PROVIDING THESE EXPERIENCES, WE'RE FOSTERING RESILIENCE AND WORKING TOWARDS STRONG, CONNECTED COMMUNITIES."**

We are grateful to the NSW Government, Good360 and our community partners for supporting another year of memorable experiences that build confidence, connection, and joy for young people in regional NSW.



Family Mental Health

Our Family and Mental Health programs work together so that your family gets the help and support you are looking for. We work with families one on one, in groups, and within the community.

The Families team continues to play an active role in supporting the next generation of social workers by regularly hosting students on placement. Each year, we welcome at least one student, and often two or three, across our program areas.

This year, we were pleased to welcome Rebecca Wignall, a Charles Sturt University student completing her placement with the Families and Mental Health team in our Corowa office. Balancing her studies, part-time work, and family life, Rebecca attends placement two days a week and will be with us until January. Another student, also named Rebecca, began placement in our Albury office in late August.

Placements provide students with valuable opportunities for hands-on learning, skill development, professional identity building, and networking. At the same time, Intereach benefits from the fresh perspectives, increased team capacity, and professional growth these students bring. Placements also encourage reflective practice and remind us of the importance of linking theory with real-world application — strengthening both our students and our teams.

Local Area Coordination (LAC)

Intereach provides Local Area Coordination (LAC) services on behalf of the National Disability Insurance Agency (NDIA) across the Goulburn, Loddon and Mallee NDIS regions of Victoria and the Murrumbidgee NDIS region in NSW. We have been providing LAC services for more than five years.

The NDIS is a national scheme to support people with disability to achieve their goals, participate in their communities and provide them, their families and carers with personalised, flexible care and support.



Breaking the mould

Anastasia's path to independence

Anastasia's lifelong love of animals, combined with the right support, has unlocked her confidence, independence, and career goals.

Once painfully shy, withdrawn, and reliant on her mother to speak for her, the 19-year-old from Wallan is now caring for animals at a wildlife zoo, studying at TAFE, making new friends, and looking forward to a bright future.

"BEFORE I GOT AN NDIS (NATIONAL DISABILITY INSURANCE SCHEME) PLAN, I FELT LOST. I HAD NO FRIENDS OR MOTIVATION TO TRY THINGS. IT'S GIVEN ME MY LIFE BACK, AND I AM EXCITED FOR WHAT LIES AHEAD." Anastasia said.

Diagnosed with autism in 2019, Anastasia found school and employment opportunities extremely difficult to navigate.

"I'VE ALWAYS STRUGGLED IN LIFE WITH THINGS LIKE TEXTURE, SOCIAL INTERACTION AND OTHER ISSUES THAT IMPACTED MY HEALTH AND ABILITY TO PARTICIPATE IN SCHOOL AND FIND A JOB."

When Anastasia connected with NDIA partner Intereach in 2021, Intereach local area coordinator Kathy began supporting Anastasia through her NDIS funding for Social, Economic and Community Participation.

During their conversations, Anastasia shared her lifelong love of animals and her dream of working with them.

"I USED TO DO A JUNIOR ZOOKEEPER PROGRAM ON THE HOLIDAYS WHEN I WAS YOUNGER AND ABSOLUTELY LOVED IT. WHEN KATHY HEARD I WANTED TO WORK WITH ANIMALS, SHE FOUND A PROGRAM THAT SOUNDED PERFECT FOR ME." Anastasia recalled.

That program was Chris Humfrey's Zoo Crew program, at Wild Action Zoo in Macedon, which Anastasia attends through her NDIS plan.

"I HAVE REGULAR HANDS-ON EXPERIENCE WITH ANIMALS AND HAVE EVEN BEEN FORTUNATE ENOUGH TO HAND-RAISE A SUGAR GLIDER AND A BRUSH-TAILED BETTONG. RAISING THEM FROM BABIES AND BUILDING A BOND WITH THEM IS REALLY SPECIAL."

Anastasia attends Wild Action's Zoo Crew program twice a week and her responsibilities include caring for baby animals, cleaning, food preparation, dietary care, and enrichment activities.

"I'M LEARNING ABOUT OUR NATIVE WILDLIFE, THE RISKS TO THEM AND HOW TO SAVE AN ANIMAL THROUGH EMERGENCY AND ROADSIDE CARE," she said.

One of Anastasia's most rewarding experiences has been her involvement in the zoo's important breeding program for the critically-endangered mountain pygmy possum, which helps protect one of Australia's most endangered species.

"THERE ARE ONLY ABOUT 2000 LEFT IN AUSTRALIA, AND THIS YEAR WE BRED 50. IT'S SUCH A GREAT OPPORTUNITY AND REALLY EYE-OPENING. WORKING WITH ANIMALS MAKES ME FEEL CALM – IF YOU'RE HAVING A BAD DAY, IT'S SO GOOD FOR YOUR SOUL."

"IT'S ALSO HELPED ME UNDERSTAND THEIR SOCIAL CUES, WHICH HAS HELPED ME IN MY OWN LIFE TOO."

Zoologist Chris Humfrey said he was hugely impressed with Anastasia's positive transformation and progress in working with wildlife.

Not only has Anastasia's confidence, aptitude and knowledge in caring for wildlife improved out of sight, but her sense of self-belief and communication skills have improved immensely.

"OUR ZOO CREW PROGRAM FOCUSES ON PARTICIPANTS' ABILITIES, NOT DISABILITIES, AND ANASTASIA HAS DEFINITELY DISCOVERED HER SUPER-POWER, WHICH IS HER LOVE FOR WILDLIFE," he said.

Encouraged by Chris, Anastasia has taken her passion further, enrolling in a Certificate III in Wildlife and Exhibited Animal Care through TAFE. She started the online course in October last year and is on track to finish early next year.

"I'M REALLY ENJOYING IT. IT'S A CHALLENGE, BUT IT'S MAKING ME MORE INDEPENDENT, AND IT'S SPARKED A PASSION FOR LEARNING IN ME," she said.

Anastasia said her journey hadn't just been about skills and knowledge – it had helped her grow personally.

"I'VE COME OUT OF MY SHELL, I PARTICIPATE MORE IN CLASSES, I TALK TO PEOPLE, AND I'VE MADE FRIENDS THROUGH THE ZOO CREW PROGRAM WITH LIKE-MINDED PEOPLE. IT'S GIVEN ME MOTIVATION FOR THE NEXT PART OF MY LIFE. I FEEL I CAN BE SUCCESSFUL, HAVE A JOB, AND FIND SOMETHING THAT MAKES ME HAPPY," she said.

Anastasia's goals now include further study, exploring vet-related training, and ultimately securing paid work in the animal care field.

To others with disability, Anastasia shared this advice: **"YOU DON'T HAVE TO FIT INTO A MOULD OR SOCIAL NORMS. WHEN I STOPPED THINKING THAT WAY AND CREATED A LIFE THAT SUPPORTED ME, I FOUND IT WAS POSSIBLE. I STEPPED OUT OF MY COMFORT ZONE, AND IT'S SHOWN ME WHAT'S POSSIBLE"**.



Community Transport

Intereach Community Transport supports older people, people living with disability, including children and their carers, people who are transport disadvantaged and Department of Veterans' Affairs support recipients, to stay independent and connected to their local community.

Our Community Transport program had a busy and rewarding year, helping older people stay independent, socially connected, and supported in their day-to-day lives.

Whether it's attending medical appointments, doing the weekly shopping, or visiting family and friends, Community Transport ensures people can maintain their independence and continue engaging with their community.



Sharing Experiences Together

Alongside individual transport, Community Transport also organised social trips throughout the year — offering older people the chance to experience outings to musical performances, light shows, museums, and local attractions.

One memorable highlight was the Winter Misery Mystery Tour, when participant Barb was reunited with a special piece of her past at Moroco West Station. She discovered the very same stove she had cooked on as a young volunteer with the Deniliquin Pony Club in the 1970s.

"IT BROUGHT BACK SO MANY MEMORIES. THANK YOU TO THE DENILIQVIN COMMUNITY TRANSPORT TEAM FOR SUCH A WONDERFUL DAY," Barb said.

These stories highlight the heart of Community Transport: helping people remain independent, connected, and active in their communities while creating moments of joy and meaning along the way.

Independence and connection - Laurie's Story

For Griffith participant **Laurie Sutcliff**, Community Transport is much more than a ride — it's the key to staying active, independent, and connected. Each week, Laurie uses the service to visit his brother in a nursing home, shop for groceries at Coles, check his mail at the post office, and attend GP appointments both in and out of town.

THE SERVICE PROVIDES LAURIE WITH PURPOSE, ROUTINE, AND SOMETHING TO LOOK FORWARD TO EACH WEEK.

Through these regular trips, Laurie is able to:

- Maintain independence by managing his own appointments, shopping, and errands.
- Stay socially connected through familiar faces and interactions in the community.
- Sustain family relationships with weekly visits to his brother.
- Prioritise his health and wellbeing by accessing medical care when needed.

Aged Care Services

With more than 240 employees and 100 volunteers across southern NSW, north and central Victoria, and the Mallee, our Aged Care Services team continues to provide vital support to thousands of older community members.

Services include care coordination, Meals on Wheels, Community Transport, Home and Community Care, and social support — all aimed at helping people live well, stay connected, and age safely in their own homes and communities.

Preparing for Support at Home

Much of 2024/25 was focused on preparing for the Support at Home transition, which takes effect in November 2025. Our teams have been working hard to ensure a smooth transition for our clients and their families, while continuing to deliver high-quality services.

Quality and Compliance

In October 2024, Aged Care Services underwent an accreditation audit, achieving compliance.

Community Transport also excelled, receiving 100 per cent results in program assurance audits in both Griffith and Deniliquin.

Supporting Healthy Ageing

Our Stepping On program was delivered in Corowa, helping people reduce their risk of falls and improve independence. Over seven weeks, participants engaged in strength and balance training and heard from guest speakers including an occupational therapist, pharmacist, nutritionist, and podiatrist — all while enjoying morning tea and community connection.

Client feedback

The difference Aged Care Services makes is best reflected in the words of our clients. These stories remind us that aged care is not just about services we deliver — it is about supporting independence, fostering wellbeing, and nurturing joy and connection at every stage of life.

"I WENT ON A TOUR OF THE SHEARING SHED AND SAW THE KITCHEN AND WOOL PRESS AT TUPPAL STATION. ROBERT SHOWED US A SEA EAGLE NEST UP IN THE TREE. I THOUGHT IT WAS GOOD BECAUSE I HAVEN'T SEEN A SEA EAGLE BEFORE."

"AFTER ALMOST 10 YEARS, ECHUCA'S STRENGTH AND BALANCE CLASSES CONTINUE TO BE AN IMPORTANT PART OF MY ACTIVITIES EACH WEEK. KAY AND FRAN ALWAYS MAKE THE CLASS FUN... MY MOTIVATION TO ATTEND COMES FROM THEM AND FROM WATCHING 80-93 YEAR-OLDS STILL ENTHUSIASTIC ABOUT KEEPING UP THEIR EXERCISE."



FINANCIALS			2025 \$	2024 \$				2025 \$	2024 \$				2025 \$	2024 \$
CURRENT ASSETS					NON-CURRENT LIABILITIES					CASH FLOWS FROM OPERATING ACTIVITIES				
Current assets	3,354,451	5,295,896	Lease liabilities	2,477,193	2,716,997	Receipts from customers (Inclusive of GST)	57,489,991	52,084,670						
Trade and other receivables	1,126,297	1,682,873	Borrowings	-	6,377	Payments to employees and suppliers (Inclusive of GST)	(58,079,947)	(54,794,183)						
Investments	5,264,274	5,029,086	Employee benefits	593,260	612,603	Interest received	421,339	633,246						
Other assets	1,565,368	1,716,912	Total non-current liabilities	3,070,453	3,335,977	Interest paid	(4,404)	(8,265)						
Total current assets	11,310,390	13,724,767	Total liabilities	9,945,002	12,465,569	Interest paid - leases	(212,984)	(219,912)						
NON-CURRENT ASSETS			NET ASSETS			Net cash used in operating activities	(386,005)	(2,304,444)						
Property, plant and equipment	3,259,521	3,655,635	EQUITY											
Right-of-use assets	3,246,994	3,241,142	Reserves	435,960	435,960	CASH FLOWS FROM INVESTING ACTIVITIES								
Intangibles	189,167	53,617	Retained surplus	7,625,110	7,773,632	Investment in terms deposits	(235,188)	(221,514)						
Total non-current assets	6,695,682	6,950,394	Total equity	8,061,070	8,209,592	Proceeds from sale of property, plant and equipment	43,842	-						
Total assets	18,006,072	20,675,161				Payment for property, plant and equipment	(41,108)	(426,121)						
CURRENT LIABILITIES						Payments for intangibles	(186,044)	(49,950)						
Trade and other payables	2,661,308	2,616,846				Net cash from investing activities	(418,498)	(697,585)						
Contract liabilities	26,976	2,407,304				CASH FLOWS FROM FINANCING ACTIVITIES								
Lease liabilities	1,183,742	959,085				Repayment of loans	(77,004)	(77,004)						
Borrowings	6,377	77,004				Repayment of lease liabilities	(1,059,938)	(982,321)						
Employee benefits	2,996,146	2,823,407				Net cash from financing activities	(1,136,942)	(1,059,325)						
Provisions	-	245,946				CASH EQUIVALENTS								
Total current liabilities	6,874,549	9,129,592				Net decrease in cash and cash equivalents	(1,941,445)	(4,061,354)						
						Cash and cash equivalents at the beginning of the financial year	5,295,896	9,357,250						
						Cash and cash equivalents at the end of the financial year	3,354,451	5,295,896						



Funding Partners

Through the funding we receive and our partnerships with a diverse range of community, non-profit, and government-funded organisations, we're able to make a meaningful difference in the communities where we live and work.

- National Disability Insurance Agency
- Murrumbidgee Primary Health Network
- Services Australia
- Good Shepherd
- Legal Aid NSW
- Transgrid
- Victorian Department of Health
- NSW Department of Communities and Justice
- NSW Department of Education
- NSW Health
- Transport for NSW
- Commonwealth Department of Industry, Science, Energy and Resources
- Department of Health and Aged Care
- Department of Social Services
- Department of Veterans' Affairs





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