



Oh what a year.

Annual Report 2022–23

neaminational.org.au

 **neami
national**
Improving Mental Health
and Wellbeing



Peer and lived experience – at the heart of our work

We strive to place lived and living experience at the heart of what we do. We foster designated lived experience and peer work roles and value staff bringing their lived experience into the workplace.

Our Annual Report aims to highlight how – through listening to lived experience and through co-design and collaboration with consumers and community – we are designing services that meet the needs of the communities in which we work.

Acknowledgements



We acknowledge Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples and communities as the Traditional Custodians of the land we work on and pay our respects to Elders past, present and emerging. We recognise that their sovereignty was never ceded and the impact of structural inequality that resulted from invasion continues to this day.



We are committed to cultivating inclusive environments for staff, consumers and carers. We celebrate, value and include people of all backgrounds, genders, sexualities, cultures, bodies and abilities.

Acknowledgement of those with lived experience

We acknowledge the contribution of our lived experience colleagues, consumers and carers who share their wisdom and contribute to the design and delivery of our mental health services.



We are committed to providing accessible services to people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds. If you have difficulty understanding this report, please phone us on 03 8691 5300 and we will arrange an interpreter or translation of this publication.



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Hello. We're Neami.

We're big believers in everyone having the opportunity to live a full life – and we give our all to support people to achieve the wellbeing and mental health outcomes that matter to them.

For some people, this means having a stronger sense of self. For others, it might mean nurturing relationships, and for others, it could be building the confidence to tackle tomorrow. Everyone has different goals for their own life, and at Neami, we walk alongside people to help improve their quality of life, on their terms.

We are proud to support 38,000 people living with mental health challenges across Australia and offer more than 70 services over 49 different Indigenous lands across the nation. These include mental health and wellbeing supports, housing and suicide prevention services.



Vision

Full citizenship for all people living with mental health challenges in Australia.

Purpose

To assist people experiencing the impacts of mental health challenges to achieve the outcomes they value.

Strategic intent

To build on our strengths in evidence-based, consumer informed services. This means further enhancing experiences of us, as well as codesigning broader and deeper services.

To take a more active outward looking view. This means working more with others, being a leading voice in changing the system and becoming a more sustainable and resilient national organisation.



CEO's message

Tom Dalton
Chief Executive, Neami National



This year has been an incredible one for Neami. We have supported 38,000 people living with mental health challenges and we have done it in 38,000 different ways. In ways that matter to them.

In this report, we celebrate and recognise our staff, the amazing workforce that makes what we do possible. Our staff show up every day with care, dedication, professionalism and an unshakeable belief that everyone should have the opportunity to live a full life.

Throughout the year we have spent time listening and learning from lived experience colleagues and community. We have been intentional in taking time to stop, reflect and collaborate to do things differently. Neami's lived experience workforce has continued to grow, this year we now have 19% of our workforce in designated lived experience roles.

Neami is evolving, we see this as we roll-out innovative transdisciplinary services like Head to Health centres, embed our values-led framework for practice and look at how we organise ourselves for the greatest impact.

Our Future State initiative is moving us to a function-based operational structure from a state-based structure. This change will strengthen our service delivery and impact with consumers, ensure evidence-based, best practice service is delivered consistently and will allow us to focus on service-specific innovation.

This year we marked one year since the release of Neami's 2022-2024 Innovate Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP). Since its launch, we've strengthened and developed new Indigenous

partnerships and our efforts to embed the Indigenous Governance Framework has made First Nations engagement an integral and ongoing organisational focus.

When it comes to supporting consumers, our advocacy approach is another vital pillar of our work. This year we have worked with our Australian Psychosocial Alliance peers to contribute to the NDIS review. We continue to advocate for psychosocial supports in the NDIS, with the goal of removing the systemic gaps and barriers faced by people with enduring mental health issues.

Our culture is about learning and improving, and this has continued to be a strong priority this year. By listening carefully and asking the right questions, we continue to learn and do better. From our Head to Health research to our Health Justice Partnership, our research is looking to understand how we can best support consumers.

I am also proud of our work to embed Collaborative Relational Practice (CRP) in our work. CRP has been designed to guide our approach across our diverse services and programs. At the heart of CRP is an understanding that relationships involving care and connection matter. We use the term 'walking alongside' to represent the spirit of our approach.

We have had many people and organisations walk alongside us this year. We express our sincere thanks and gratitude to our staff, funders, organisational partners and collaborators and of course the consumers we are privileged to work with every single day.



Chair's message

Tony Nippard
Chair, Neami National



It's been another significant year for Neami, and we are proud of what we have achieved. We have established a number of new services and programs around the country, made significant progress towards our new operational structure, and built on our expertise as a leader in recovery-oriented services.

We continue to operate in challenging conditions. Australia is in the midst of a cost-of-living and housing crisis and we know the impact this is having on the wellbeing of our nation and our current and prospective consumers. The need to strive for a more comprehensive system that is easy to access and can effectively support people across the mental health continuum is more important than ever.

The National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) has been an important policy innovation. However, after some years of operation, it is clear that it is in urgent need of major reform, particularly to address the unmet needs of people with a psychosocial disability and to be viable and sustainable for all concerned. It is notable that there are many people who need ongoing, long-term mental health support who are not eligible for the NDIS.

Neami was an active participant in the NDIS over a number of years, committing millions of dollars, around 100 dedicated direct service staff, large amounts of senior management and board resources and trialling a number of service models. It was a difficult decision to finally withdraw service provision under the NDIS, but Neami could no longer afford to commit its limited financial and people resources to the scheme as it was then configured.

While we no longer provide NDIS services, Neami has been actively advocating with other services for reform of the NDIS and providing potential solutions to the Federal Government's Review Panel to enable the scheme to better meet the needs of people with mental health challenges and be able to be resourced by capable, expert and ethical providers.

We also continue to advocate for a better system outside the NDIS with the Commonwealth and States, particularly through the joint work they are doing under the National Mental Health and Suicide Prevention Plan.

Neami welcomes the significant investment into mental health, but we have a long road to achieving a mental health system where people can access the help they need, when and where they need it. We remain committed to advocating on these important issues and we will continue to work with government decision-makers to be a productive partner in this ongoing reform.

This year we were pleased to welcome new directors to the Neami Board to enhance our diversity and capability. Dr Shaymaa Elkadi, Ms Leesa Chessier and Mr Rick Callaghan are bringing important governance experience and expertise, as well as social, geographic, and personal backgrounds that have strengthened the Neami Board.

All our achievements this year would not be possible without our dedicated staff, our terrific partners and the consumers who trust us to be part of their journey to better mental health and wellbeing.

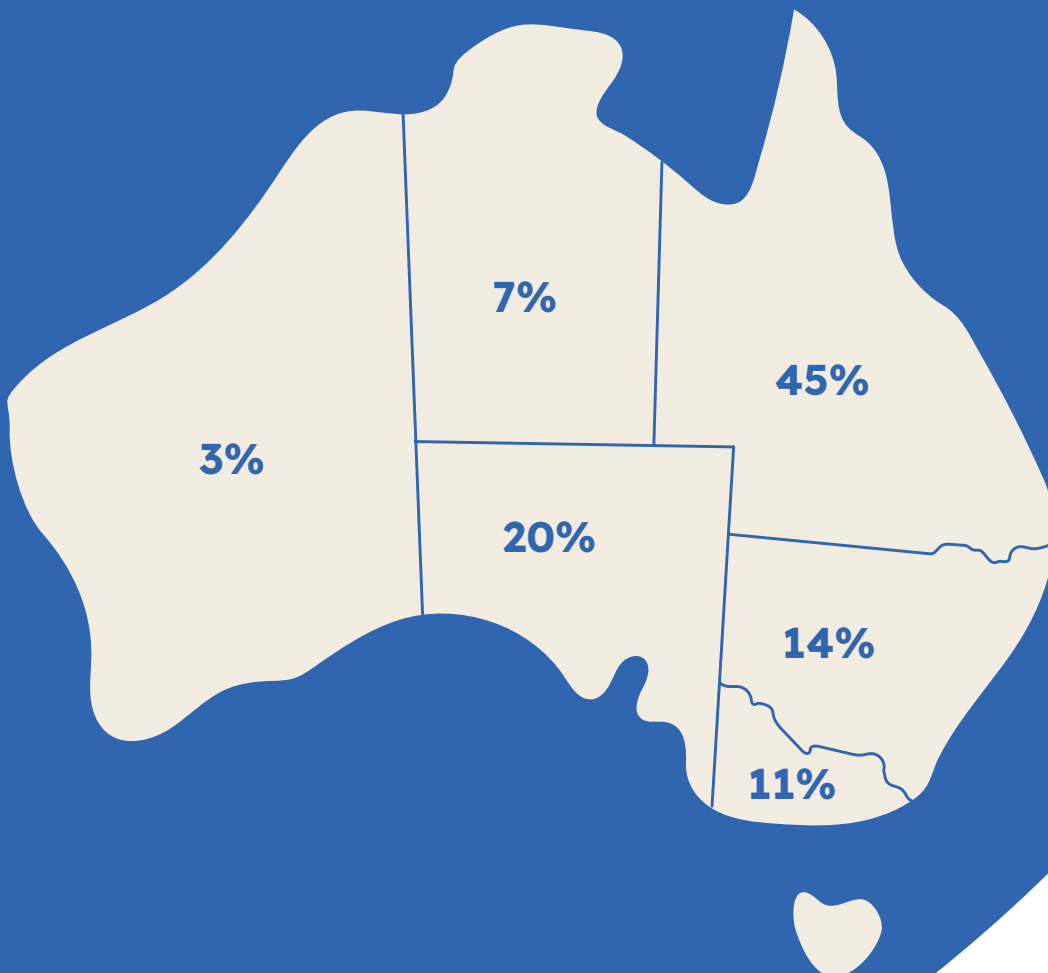
Neami National snapshot

In 2022-23, we supported

38,000 people

**in metropolitan, regional and remote
communities across Australia.**

The figures below show the breakdown of the number of people we support by state. Due to the diversity of our services, the depth and duration of engagement with each consumer varies depending on the program or service.



Our services

We provide support across five key areas, and deliver many of these services and programs in conjunction with partner organisations.

Statistics are rounded to the nearest whole number



60%

Community-based mental health support



27%

Recovery-oriented clinical mental health services



8%

Housing/homelessness



3%

Specialist community supports



2%

Suicide prevention

Research and Evaluation

We ask important questions about how well our programs have worked and – even when they have worked well – how we can make them better. We support high-quality, ethical research and evaluation that translates knowledge into improved services and better outcomes for people.

9

Internally led projects

2

Publications

12

Externally led projects

30

Partnerships with universities and NGO's and individual academics and researchers

Financial Position

REVENUE

\$148,143,221

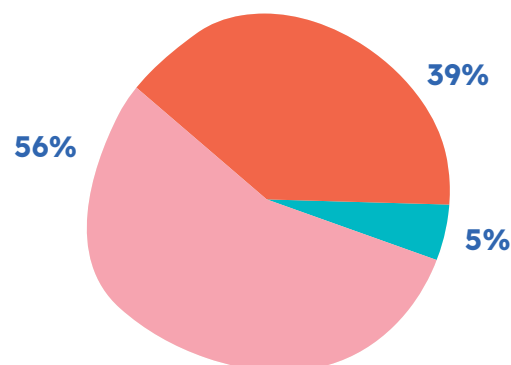
SURPLUS

\$3,270,005

EQUITY

\$28,464,785

Sources of Revenue



- STATE GOVERNMENTS
- PRIMARY HEALTH NETWORKS
- OTHER

Across the states and territories



New South Wales

In late 2022, we were pleased to work with Nepean Blue Mountains Local Health District and Nepean Blue Mountains Primary Health Network to launch SafeHaven for people experiencing a suicidal crisis. SafeHaven operates out of our existing Head to Health Penrith service.

With the Australian Government's continued investment and expansion of Head to Health, this year we've extended our support in local communities. We're expanding our Head to Health services to include Richmond and Liverpool and we've delivered the Head to Health phone service across Sydney and parts of New South Wales.

As well as celebrating new services we also acknowledge the impact of long-running services, such as the Housing and Accommodation Support Initiative (HASI) and Community Living Supports (CLS). For 21 years, Neami has provided meaningful psychosocial support to people living in the community, through HASI and CLS programs. In 2022, the NSW Ministry of Health commissioned an evaluation of the HASI and CLS programs. Broadly, the evaluation found the programs to be cost-effective, reduce hospital admissions, increase opportunities for social inclusion and improve the health and wellbeing of participants.



Queensland and the Northern Territory

This year we've seen the growth of our peer and lived experience workforce, with 26% of staff in Queensland in designated lived experience roles.

Examples of our multidisciplinary, high engagement approach to support can be seen in our SafeSpaces service, funded by Brisbane North PHN, and in our Townsville Head to Health service, funded by North Queensland PHN. In both cases, people in emotional distress are supported by peer workers and clinical staff, amongst others. Bringing together this diversity in knowledge, experience and expertise can support improved outcomes.

In the Northern Territory, we launched the Individual Placement Support pilot program, which runs through our Darwin Head to Health centre. The program offers people with enduring mental health challenges specialist vocational support to engage with employment or training and education opportunities that align with their goals.

SA

South Australia

In early 2023, when South Australians were impacted by a flooding emergency, Neami's Murray Bridge team provided free mental health support to the local community. Working in partnership with community and service providers, we provided short-term support for those whose mental health was impacted by the devastating floods, as well as individual recovery support for people experiencing ongoing mental health challenges over the longer term.

This year, we were pleased to roll-out Aboriginal Mental Health First Aid training for staff across South Australia. Facilitated by cultural consultant Jodus Madrid, the two-day course provided 65 staff with culturally responsive, strengths-based training grounded in understandings of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander social and emotional wellbeing.

VIC

Victoria

This year we've been proud to continue building an exceptional team who bring a diversity of skills and experience. In Victoria, 18% of staff work in clinical roles and 28% work in designated lived experience roles. Our emphasis on transdisciplinary teams – including roles such as social and emotional wellbeing workers, alcohol and other drug case workers and LGBTIQ+ rainbow workers, lived experience, clinical and medical roles – enables us to provide quality wrap-around support that acknowledges the diverse and intersectional needs of the people we support.

We know that when we work in purposeful partnerships with specialist and expert organisations we create better outcomes. This year in Victoria 16% of staff working in Neami services are employed by partner organisations and work with us to deliver our Victorian services. Welcome all the new staff who have joined us this year and recognise and thank staff who have been with us for many years.

WA

Western Australia

The launch of RightByYou.org.au was a highlight this year in Western Australia. Designed by young people, for young people, RightByYou provides practical and best-practice resources to help young people support friends who are experiencing a suicidal crisis. Collaboration was vital to this project, with Neami coordinating the team which included a steering committee of young people and project partners ImaginedFutures, 20talk, zero2her, Swan City Youth Service, Draw History and headspace.

This year, we also produced Ngaanyatjarra Talking Boards in collaboration with the Goldfields Aboriginal Language Centre in Kalgoorlie-Boulder. As a resource for Ngaanyatjarra speakers experiencing a mental health event, the Talking Boards translate words and phrases into English. Having to translate feelings into English when under stress is difficult and can result in miscommunication or avoidance of seeking help. The boards help people describe their feelings for faster and more effective communication with health practitioners. We are excited to donate eight of these boards to local communities.



Looking to the future

“This new framework for practice has been designed to centre and guide our purpose and approach across the whole range of services we provide. It reflects the best of what people say they value about Neami and our approach, and acts as a connection point for us when we think about how we sustain our culture and values.”

Tom Dalton – Neami CEO

We are proud to deliver a diverse range of impactful services, including therapeutic supports and wellbeing services as well as community connection, safety and homelessness programs.

Neami's Future State

To ensure we are best placed to continue delivering the highest quality support to consumers, we are moving to a new operational structure.

In the 2023-2024 financial year, the Future State project will see Neami change from a state-based operational structure to a function-based operational structure.

The new structure will:

- strengthen our service delivery and impact with consumers
- enable us to partner, continuously improve our services and innovate more effectively
- elevate and strengthen lived experience leadership
- maintain high-quality consumer experiences by ensuring evidence-based best practice is consistently delivered
- increase our focus on service-specific innovation, clinical governance and continuous improvement.

Two operating networks will be established with a Service Excellence Hub at the heart. We are undergoing a detailed organisational design process to support these new networks and hub. A project team has been established to oversee and deliver this work.

We look forward to establishing Neami's Future State and are excited to continue supporting

positive outcomes for consumers, staff, stakeholders and funders through this new structure.

Neami's new framework for practice

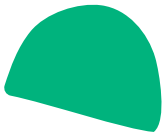
The reasons people access support from Neami are diverse, often complex and usually without ready-made solutions.

In 2022, we began implementing Collaborative Relational Practice (CRP) as our new framework for practice. The aim is for CRP to act as a touchstone for practice, ensuring everything we do is guided by a person-centred, collaborative and contextualised stance. CRP responds to gaps and demands in the sector for trauma-informed, culturally responsive, diversity appreciative and recovery-oriented practices.

Collaborative Relational Practice:

- is a transdisciplinary approach bringing together theory and evidence from a broad range of disciplines and perspectives.
- draws on an ecological systems perspective, recognising the interconnected nature of mental health and wellbeing to many other aspects of life.
- recognises the diverse reasons people may access Neami services so that our responses are matched to what people need.
- draws attention to the significant role of connection and care because the way we respond and interact with people makes a difference.

Neami will embody the CRP as a way of knowing, being, doing and seeing. How the CRP supports service delivery and positive outcomes for our consumers will look different in the different contexts and service settings. We will continue to monitor and evaluate CRP in differing settings, respond to emerging contexts and knowledge, and prioritise continuous improvement.



Understanding what matters

Our culture is about learning and improving. We strive to deliver support that people want in the way they want it. By listening carefully and asking the right questions, we continue to learn how we can better meet people's needs through improvements and innovation.

STEP-Link evaluation

A review into the STEP-Link program (Supported Transition and Engagement Program) was commissioned by the NSW State Department of Communities and Justice. The review aimed to articulate the service model and understand consumer outcomes and the key activities that impact positive outcomes.

STEP-Link supported people experiencing homelessness and in temporary accommodation because of the COVID-19 pandemic, helping them to obtain permanent, safe, and affordable housing. The program operated across the Southwestern Sydney, Western Sydney and Nepean and Blue Mountains districts.

The review was delivered by an independent evaluation consultant and Neami's research and evaluation team.

Despite being delivered by a small team of just five staff, the STEP-Link program housed 433 people – almost 60% of referrals – achieving a rate of 36 housing outcomes per month.

The primary learning from the review was the value of relationships in supporting positive outcomes. Collaborative relationships between Neami and NSW State Department of Communities and Justice, as program partners was critical to program success. Warm and positive relationships between front-line workers and consumers were shown to be key, particularly for those consumers who have a heightened fear of rejection or being disregarded.

Lived experience leadership

A project was undertaken to understand the learning and support needs of leaders supervising staff in designated lived experience roles at Neami.

This project drew on the experiential expertise of lived experience staff and leaders, as well as published literature, to build a picture of what is currently happening within Neami – and what is needed – to assist leaders to support lived experience staff and practice.

Using a trauma-informed lens, the inquiry extended beyond training needs, to understand what conditions cultivate a sense of understanding, relationships, accountability, safety, and opportunity for leaders, teams, and lived experience staff.

Outcomes of the project included new understandings about how a lack of role clarity can perpetuate stigma, as well as how understanding grounded in recognition and valuing of lived experience roles can promote safety. The importance of training spaces to lay consistent foundations was highlighted, and how this must be complemented by other learning spaces that promote reflection, adaptation, and a deepening of practice.

The outcomes of the report aim to help build a clearer picture of current strengths and challenges, and opportunities for positive change.



Partnerships for impact

We know that when we work together, we can support better outcomes for people. We work closely with our partners to explore opportunities to extend our impact and provide more holistic support.

Addressing rough sleeping in Geelong

In October 2022, Neami launched Geelong Zero with local community partners to provide rapid, safe and sustainable housing to rough sleepers. The goal of this program is to reduce homelessness and end rough sleeping in central Geelong, Victoria, by 2025.

Local services have been working together to develop a list of people sleeping rough in central Geelong and, with their permission, share this information with support organisations. People on the list are linked with the appropriate support they need with the aim of ultimately moving each person into a home.

There are 54 rough sleepers on the By-Name-List to date, 93% identify as having a mental health condition and 80% identify as having a history of substance use. The average time people have been living on the streets or in emergency accommodation is 7.5 years.

The initiative is based on the international methodology Advance to Zero, which focuses on a person-centred, Housing First model in communities. It puts community-owned, real-time data about individual's needs at the centre of decision making and the system itself.

Understanding the unmet legal needs of consumers

This year, Neami partnered with Health Justice Australia to provide legal help to Neami consumers and increase our staff's capabilities to respond when legal issues arise.

Through Health Justice Partnership, we are aiming to address the legal factors affecting consumers and improve outcomes for their mental health journey.

To lay the foundations for this work, an in-depth analysis across three Neami sites gained insights into the legal needs likely to arise for consumers of each service and the challenges they face in accessing legal assistance.

This analysis informed a partnership brokerage process between the three Neami sites and the locally-based legal services, allowing each partnership to be informed by the unique legal issues arising and the local context in which the services are delivered.

Alongside this work, Neami and Health Justice Australia are undertaking research to understand how Health Justice Partnership may complement and support the work of Neami staff, looking at the existing capability of Neami staff to identify and respond to legal issues affecting consumer health and how Health Justice Partnerships can build staff capability.

“I felt a sense of self-empowerment from the opportunity to co-present with Narissa. Exploring the principles and practicalities of making rights real provided me with a better awareness and insight. Helping me feel more confidence and safe exploring a more authentic me.”

Joy Wells

Investing in learning what works

We have partnered with the ALIVE National Centre for Mental Health Research Translation on a co-evaluation to sit alongside the implementation of five Neami Head to Health sites.

The research is revealing the intricacies of implementation of new service models at scale and helping us understand the needs of different communities and their unique service systems and service gaps. It's giving us important insights into how individuals, communities and local service systems understand what the Head to Health centres might offer. We are learning how different staffing models – such as employing more lived experience staff – can provide a different experience for guests and staff.

We are already drawing on the learnings to improve the way we do things at our services and look forward to sharing these learnings with the sector.

Joy, Neami consumer, with Narissa Doumani, Neami Stakeholder and Engagement Officer at TheMHS Conference to present on the work of the Lived Experience Engagement Project Group.





Learning from lived experience

We strive to place lived and living experience at the heart of what we do.

When we say that lived experience informs our work, what we mean is that we aspire to learn from personal and collective experiences of mental health and/or adversity so we can design better programs and services.

Listening to lived experience helps us to understand what things are like for people living with challenges that we ourselves may not have experienced. Similarly, we can better understand the needs of those caring for people with mental health challenges when we listen to carer lived experience.

Lived experience as a discipline uses the consumer movement as a foundation and has its own values, principles, and theories. This practice is also informed by personal experiences of distress and struggle.

We foster designated lived experience and peer work roles and value staff bringing their lived experience into the workplace. Through co-design and collaboration with consumers and their communities, we design services that meet the needs of the communities in which we work.

Implementing a Peer Work Vision

We are on a long-term journey towards implementing the Peer Work Vision for Transformative Change, a collective vision to expand and elevate Peer Practice and a Lived Experience approach at Neami. This transformative vision, created through a process of deep dialogue, outlines the opportunities and conditions necessary to expand, elevate and embed peer practice and lived experience approaches at Neami. This work is lived experience-led and the recent appointment of two lived experience transformation implementation coordinators provides dedicated space and resourcing for bringing the vision to life.

We also hired a lived experience participation and inclusion leader to bring an intersectional lens to how Neami approaches diversity, inclusion, and consumer and carer participation. The role was collaboratively designed and developed, with recruitment co-led by senior managers and lived experience leaders. This process brought significant learnings around processes and organisational conditions that prepare, support, and enable lived experience roles and recruitment to occur across the organisation.



Zak Critsilis
and Youn Lee
at the Peer
Cadet Program.

Creating safe spaces for support

Neami's Safe Space service in Strathpine, Queensland is a peer-led service supporting people of all ages experiencing distress. The service provides an alternative to arriving at an emergency department.

Drawing on their own lived experience of mental health challenges and working from a peer practice discipline, peer workers assist guests at the service to feel safe and welcome.

Peer workers provide support to help reduce distress, review or create a safety plan and problem solve. Prior to departure, guests are supported to connect with other services as needed and are offered a check-in 24 and 72 hours after their visit to Safe Space. The service provides an environment for guests to feel heard, supported and safe.

Supporting and growing Victoria's lived experience workforce

Neami is proud to be participating in the Victorian Government's Peer Cadet Program for a second year. The program was a recommendation of the Royal Commission into Victoria's Mental Health system, which identified the need for people with lived experience to have supported entry into the workforce.

Cadets in the program participate in on-the-job vocational training with semi-structured workplace learning that applies theory to practice. Cadets are paired with Neami staff mentors so they feel supported to learn and grow their practice. In turn, mentors are supported to learn new skills through the program as emerging leaders.

In our first cohort, three cadets successfully completed the program, with one cadet obtaining a position at Neami's North Western Victoria Primary Health Network Psychosocial Support service.

Earlier this year, we welcomed five new cadets to the program, which will run until March 2024. We are working closely with the eight other community mental health organisations participating, recruiting collaboratively and coming together several times a week to share resources and learnings.



A unique approach to mental health support

Neami has an innovative, sector-leading and trauma-informed approach to operating the Commonwealth Government's Head to Health model across Australia.

Head to Health services are welcoming, safe and inclusive spaces that offer immediate and short-term to medium-term support to reduce distress and connect people with ongoing support if required.

The services are established and maintained through co-design and collaboration with people with a living experience of mental health challenges, local communities and Primary Health Networks (PHNs). Service delivery is underpinned by our Collaborative Relational Practice, which recognises that relationships involving care and connection matter. Our Head to Health services create and sustain relationships that are genuine, authentic and compassionate, and put guests at the centre of everything we do.

We take a trauma-informed approach, which creates physical and social environments that support recovery from trauma and prevent re-traumatisation. Our teams also take a transdisciplinary approach, which means making a commitment to collaboration and respect for diverse knowledge and practices and conceding that the team may have overlapping knowledge and practice (and overlapping gaps).

Staff with lived or living experience are central to Neami's Head to Health model. Guests benefit from the shared wisdom of lived experience workers at key points in their Head to Health journey. Our peer-first, peer-last approach ensures a person's first and last contact with the service is with a lived experience worker where possible.

Head to Health phone service

Neami has recently started delivering the Head to Health phone service in Adelaide, adding to a range of Head to Health phone services. The Head to Health Phone Service is a free, confidential, and friendly referral service for people seeking support for their mental and emotional wellbeing.

Our phone services support communities in:

- Adelaide
- New South Wales (Central and Eastern Sydney, Western Sydney, South Western Sydney, South Eastern NSW, Western NSW, Hunter New England Central Coast, North Coast and Murrumbidgee)
- Northern Territory
- Queensland (Northern Queensland, Brisbane South, Darling Downs and West Moreton).

The service is available to people who want to improve their sense of wellbeing, are looking for help with something that's worrying them, or are helping someone they care about. When someone calls a Head to Health phone service, our experienced teams of clinicians and those with lived and living experience of mental health challenges will work with them to find the best support for their needs.

The Head to Health phone service also accepts referrals from general practitioners, mental health services and community services.

Working collaboratively to support local communities

Head to Health services are designed collaboratively. In the pre-establishment phase, community consultation and co-design are critical to help establish a positive, supportive service with solid connections to the community it serves.

When establishing a Head to Health service, we take the time to understand the local mental health, community services, and justice systems. If a similar service exists, we want to avoid duplication and enhance both services, including referral pathways.

The priority stakeholder groups that we involve in the co-design are:

- people with a lived experience of mental health challenges
- First Nations people, elders and local organisations
- culturally and linguistically diverse communities
- faith representatives
- the public mental health service (emergency departments)
- police
- ambulance

- key PHN stakeholder groups, such as general practitioners and guest advisory groups
- mental health guest and carer representative groups
- mental health, alcohol and other drug and welfare organisations
- local council.

We plan long-term engagement with stakeholders to ensure co-design is an iterative process and functions as a feedback loop.

We are uniquely positioned as one of the leading providers of the Head to Health phone service and Head to Health centres (including the Urgent Mental Health Care Centre (UMHCC) in Adelaide). This puts us in a great position to test, learn and help shape the future of these essential services and contribute to mental health system change. See page 13 of this report to see how we are evaluating the implementation of our Head to Health services across Australia.

WVPHN chief CEO Rowena Clift, Assistant Minister for Mental Health and Suicide Prevention Emma McBride and Neami National CEO Tom Dalton at the launch of Geelong Head to Health.





Advocating for change

We want to influence policy decisions, raise awareness of system challenges, propose solutions, shift attitudes and advocate for change that will improve the mental health and wellbeing of all Australians.

This year, we sharpened our focus on advocacy at Neami, developing our first National Advocacy Strategy to guide our efforts in this space and building our internal capability.

We increased our engagement with Commonwealth and State Ministers and other government decision-makers to highlight successes, challenges and gaps in the system as well as ensuring the voices of lived and living experience were represented at every opportunity. We've been continuing to work with relevant peak bodies, peers and partners to illuminate and advocate on issues across housing and homelessness, suicide prevention and community mental health.

Advocacy highlights this year

This year, we worked closely with the Australian Psychosocial Alliance (APA) to advocate on a range of issues of collective importance. This included a Commonwealth budget submission outlining priorities to ensure the sustainability of the psychosocial sector and a submission to the NDIS review panel. The NDIS submission, developed in consultation with sector and lived experience representatives, outlined a range of opportunities to implement new and improved approaches to better support the needs of people living with a psychosocial disability within the NDIS.

We joined collective efforts including the Melbourne Zero Network calling for change to make zero homelessness a reality in the City of Melbourne; the Suicide Prevention Australia member network to call for accelerated implementation of the National Suicide

Joint APA submission to the NDIA review panel



Prevention Adviser's Final Advice; and joined ACOSS' pre-election advocacy to raise the rate of income support payments.

We also drew on our service expertise and the experiences of our consumers to contribute to a range of inquiries and reviews. This included the South Australian Law Reform Institute's review of the Mental Health Act 2009 (SA), where we highlighted the impact the Act is having on consumers visiting our Urgent Mental Health Care Centre (UMHCC) in Adelaide and their ability to make informed decisions and exercise choice and control over decision-making.

We contributed evidence to the Productivity Commission's review of the National Housing and Homelessness Agreement, to advocate for the need for homelessness models that support the unique needs of people living with serious and persistent mental health issues, which was heavily referenced in the final report.

We also provided the Queensland Alliance for Mental Health with important evidence from our peer programs and our broader workforce, around workforce issues affecting our sector, particularly highlighting the barriers people experiencing mental health challenges face in seeking support in the workplace.



“Working as a peer support worker at the Urgent Mental Health Care Centre (UMHCC) has been an awesome experience. Bringing the lived experience lens into our approach cuts down on stigma and helps normalise and validate the distress guests can experience. It’s a unique approach that helps guests feel welcome and supported.

The fusion model allows us to support our guests meaningfully – coming together collaboratively for their best interests. Lainey and I work closely and appreciate what each of us can offer. We’re a multi-disciplinary team, all working for a common goal. We offer non-judgemental support to provide hope, respect and understanding and I’m proud of how far we’ve come since opening the doors a couple of years ago.”

Shaun McNamara

Peer Support Lead – UMHCC

“Having worked in the mental health sector as a clinician for over 20 years, most of the work you do, including the assessment, interventions and outcomes, is in isolation. At the Urgent Mental Health Care Centre (UMHCC) I work from a framework called the fusion model, a collaborative approach that brings together expertise from multiple disciplines. In working from this approach, I’ve seen how guests are offered more holistic support, with the team working towards supporting the best outcomes for people.

Lainey Reynolds

Clinical Services Manager – UMHCC



Our reconciliation journey

Neami is committed to addressing the current level of disadvantage faced by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples within Australia through meaningful actions of power-sharing and representation.

More than a year on from the release of [Neami's 2022-2024 Innovate Reconciliation Action Plan \(RAP\)](#), we're reflecting on our achievements and our Reconciliation journey so far.

The Innovate RAP 2022-2024 takes a more complete and holistic view of what Reconciliation truly embodies. Our RAP aims to ensure that the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities we work with are represented and prioritised and that power imbalances are addressed.

We are proud to be the first non-Indigenous organisation in Australia to be embedding Indigenous governance principles across all facets of our organisation.

The Indigenous Governance approach sees First Nations engagement and localised community integration as an essential part of the organisation's focus. The benefit of this localised engagement and integration is better relationships between our service sites and local First Nations organisations, groups, and communities. It also ensures that each site can work towards a local governance model with oversight of the service's progress, wants, needs and practice. The historical divide between First Nations communities and a predominately white Australian community has meant that there are significant barriers and hurdles to overcome.

Our growing Indigenous partnerships across Australia include: the Aboriginal Housing Office (NSW); Wathaurong Aboriginal Co-operative; Bega Garnbirringu; Danila Dilba; Derbarl Yerrigan; Gandangara Aboriginal Land Council and Medical Service; Gindaja Treatment and

Healing Centre; InvolveGen; Kambu; Kurakula Aboriginal Corporation; Mad Mob; Moorditj Koort; Noongar Mia Mia; Oonah; Ramahyuck; Raukkan; Sydney Region Aboriginal Corporation; Tharawal Aboriginal Corporation; The Institute for Urban and Indigenous Health; Thrilli; Victorian Aboriginal Child Care Agency; Victorian Aboriginal Health Service; Wingecarribee and Liverpool Elders; Yunggorendi Mande; and Yungorrendi.

Workforce

We strive to create pathways for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples to address the vast inequalities many experience when engaging with employment opportunities. With 52 Neami staff identifying as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people, we seek to further increase representation across our organisation including, but not limited to, the introduction of more identified roles.

Neami continues to provide a safe, caring and inviting workspace for Indigenous participation, as well as opportunities for Indigenous Peoples to rise in the social service sector and have an impact across their region, state, and country.

A commitment was made within our RAP to ensure Neami is creating employment and career pathways for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People that address the vast inequalities many are subject to when seeking employment.

We work to improve our current Staff Development and Support Framework, Professional Mentoring Policy and People



Jo Miller-Robinson's artwork 'Connection' was the winner of the SA RAP Committee Emerging Artist Competition. (L-R) Vass Hay, Jo Miller-Robinson, Helene Nielsen.

Strategy, with the creation of an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Workforce Development and Retention Strategy.

The National First Nations Strategy and Impact Leads have worked, in conjunction with the People, Capability and Culture team and Indigenous staff to develop agreed inclusions in Neami's new Enterprise Agreement. These include access to additional paid cultural and ceremonial leave and the provision for ongoing cultural mentoring for all First Nations employees.

As we continue to reflect on the critical insights from our RAP journey, there is always something new to learn and new ways of doing and being.

The experience of Reconciliation 'in action' is working through a process of integrating Aboriginal ways of 'doing and being,' (that are focused on relationships, narrative, community and the collective), with non-Indigenous ways of working (that have a greater focus on structure, deliverables, and the individual).

We recognise that Reconciliation is a journey, and that our organisation will stand as an ally beside Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples across Australia (including consumers, staff, communities, families, organisations, Traditional Owners, Elders and Respected Persons).

Each of us at Neami has a vital part to play in ensuring the success of Neami's Innovate RAP and the implementation of Indigenous governance principles, recognising that Reconciliation is the responsibility of us all.

The Voice

The referendum on Indigenous Constitutional Recognition and the enshrinement of a consultative voice to Parliament was a major milestone in the history of the Australian State. The Board and Executive of Neami National publicly supported a YES vote as we believe a body enshrined in the constitution would ensure Indigenous representatives could voice a viewpoint that takes into consideration First Nations people's perspectives, needs, concerns and aspirations.

Neami stands with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities across the country in supporting Indigenous self-determination and empowerment. The outcome of the referendum provides further motivation for Neami to continue to grow its action and commitment in this area.

Neami reiterates its support of all First Nations communities to create pathways towards a future in which Indigenous peoples have a 'key seat at the table' to determine the future of the Australian State and all its peoples.

"If we stay apathetic and silent trusting in the "goodwill" of departments, systems and politicians we will slowly be chained and buried until our self-determination becomes their self-determination. This is why it has never been more important to step on stage and raise our voices ensuring that "nothing about us without us" is practiced, not only preached".

Jesse Martin and Rachel Harris

National First Nations Strategy & Impact Leads



A holistic approach to homelessness

Securing long-term housing is an essential foundation for health, wellbeing and a universal human right.

Our wrap-around support services bring staff with discipline-specific expertise together to offer coordinated and meaningful support. As well as supporting improved outcomes for people, this approach aims to help people feel they belong, are safe, connected and can do the things that matter in their lives.

We work to prevent homelessness and support people experiencing homelessness by helping people obtain and sustain long-term and safe housing through street outreach programs and wrap-around housing support. The physical, financial and emotional care we provide is holistic and personalised and helps address many of the challenges that come with homelessness.

Around the country, Neami is working towards a coordinated national approach to ending homelessness. The STEP and Homelessness to a Home programs outlined below are just two examples of the services we deliver across Australia.

Supporting people sleeping rough in New South Wales

The Supported Transition and Engagement Program (STEP) assists people sleeping rough in inner Sydney to secure long-term housing and access support to remain housed.

Partnering with Bridge Housing, Women's Housing Company Limited and Metro Housing, we offer post-crisis support focusing on helping people access and maintain long-term housing. We work in partnership with health services, general practitioners and other community services to address the needs of people with complex health needs and long histories of sleeping rough.

We are pleased that the NSW Department of Communities and Justice has extended the STEP contract until 30 June 2025.

Celebrating the Homelessness to a Home program

In June 2023, the Homelessness to a Home program ended. Funded by the Victorian Government and serving the areas of Hume, Moreland and North-Eastern Melbourne, our Homelessness to a Home team worked collaboratively with our partners to support people to find and maintain a home and deliver targeted holistic support.

Adopting a 'housing first' approach, once housed, the multidisciplinary team consisting of a Bolton Clarke community health nurse, a Neami community rehabilitation and support worker, a Merri Health mental health worker, and a Uniting Vic Tas alcohol and other drugs support worker helped people to remain housed.

When the program began in April 2021, Neami was allocated 34 packages. All consumers were assigned to a Homelessness to a Home worker and continued to receive support to work towards goal maintaining their housing and wellbeing. All consumers who accessed this program were housed in short-term and long-term accommodation, which is an incredible outcome considering consumer's complex challenges and distrust of the system.

"There were times that I slept under the bridge or slept in the park. You don't know if you're going to be in a safe place or not if you don't get the emergency accommodation. I've been living in my home now for three years. It's like Neami were sent by my guardian angels. If it weren't for Neami, I'd probably be homeless."

Mary Morris – Neami consumer – NSW



Building capacity to prevent and respond to suicide



We support people who've been impacted by suicide with comprehensive after-care support in addition to big-picture, community-focused suicide prevention services. Included here is a selection of the work happening across Neami in the area of suicide prevention and postvention.

Supporting young people to help friends in distress

In April 2023, Neami launched RightByYou, a website designed by young people to inform and empower other young Australians to reach out and support a friend showing thoughts of suicide. RightByYou brings together Australia's best-practice, evidence-based youth suicide prevention resources within one accessible online web tool. Resources include educational articles and videos on how to identify warning signs, and what to do if something does occur with a friend. The hub includes tailored information for people with a disability, parents and carers, LGBTQIA+ and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People.

The web tool launched in Perth as a trial for 2023 and can be visited at rightbyyou.org.au.

Engaging in conversations that can save a life

Since its launch in 2019, LifeConnect in Melbourne's east has earned a solid reputation for delivering insightful, relevant and high-quality training and workshops containing expert, evidence-informed content designed to challenge, inspire, and strengthen our shared response to suicide and suicidality. The unique offering of LifeConnect is the team – all team members have their own direct lived experience of the impacts of suicide and/or suicidality. All service delivery staff are in a designated

“Suicide is a sensitive topic, so much so that we avoid talking about it and many young people aren't sure how to identify the signs or don't know how to act if they do. Many young Australians have limited knowledge of suicide indicators or are fearful of making things worse. With RightByYou we are empowering their friends with the knowledge and tools to help take preventative action.”

Neeka Zand – Suicide Prevention Coordinator at Neami National and RightByYou Project Lead

lived experience role and possess a profound understanding of the messaging of the LifeConnect content.

Feedback on a recent LifeConnect session indicated that 100% of participants found it helpful and gave them a greater understanding of suicide. In the sessions, statistics, trends, understandings and current suicide theory are shared and then contextualised through the profound and compelling sharing of the facilitator's own lived experience.

The LifeConnect team's collective lived experiences of the impact of suicide and suicidality were shared with nearly 2,500 people last financial year. Though the precise impact of the sharing is impossible to quantify and measure, we do know that the sharing of the stories is deeply appreciated by participants.

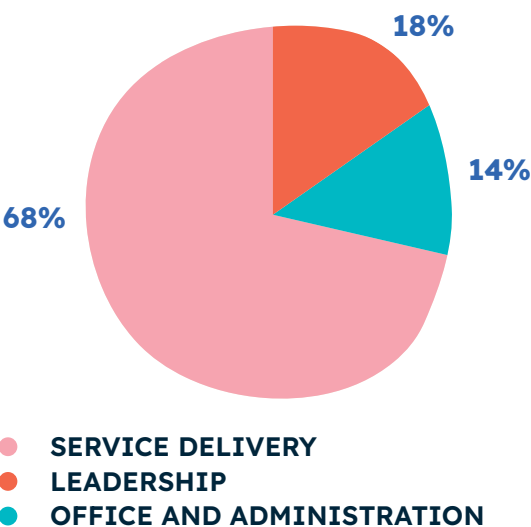
What could be a barrage of uncomfortable facts and challenges, through the power of shared lived experience, becomes a compelling invitation to move through the discomfort and engage in conversations that can save a life.

Diverse and skilled workforce

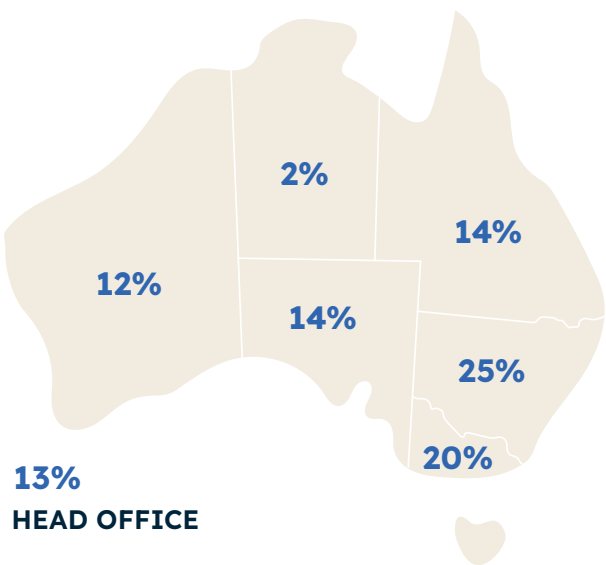
Neami staff come from many walks of life and bring diverse skills and experience. What our teams do share, however, are our values and connection to our purpose to support people experiencing mental health challenges to achieve the outcomes they value.

The below snapshot highlights the composition of our incredible workforce.

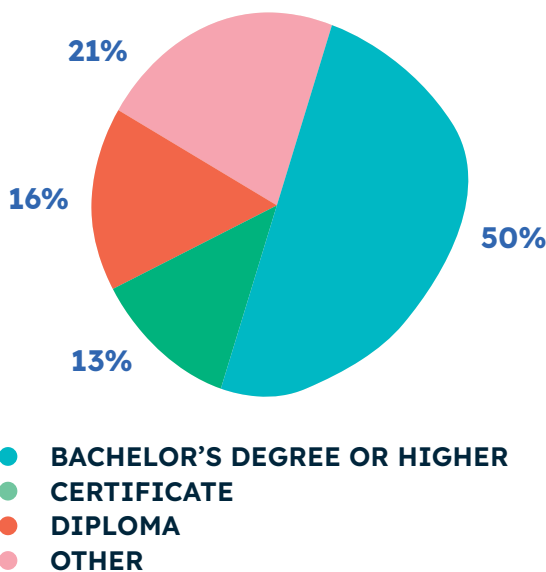
Roles



Locations



Qualifications



Diversity

3%

of staff identify as
Aboriginal or Torres
Strait Islander

16%

of staff speak a
language other than
English

Percentage of staff in designated Lived Experience roles

Head Office	9%
NSW	17%
NT	44%
QLD	26%
SA	19%
VIC	28%
WA	9%
Nationally	19%



Collaboration and communication, enablement and work-life blend

Our 2023 Employee Engagement Survey, conducted in early 2023, revealed several positive areas, including:

- 91% favourable response to team members making a good effort to consult
- 88% favourable response to staff feeling part of a team
- 88% favourable response to Neami providing a culturally safe and inclusive working environment
- 86% of staff recommend Neami as a great place to work
- 85% of staff surveyed are proud to work for Neami.

This year's survey gave us a chance to reflect on our strengths as an organisation and indicated what we need to focus on.

A great workforce, great place to work

This year, we developed the Neami People Strategy, which outlines people-related projects and initiatives that enhance the value of our work, who we are as an organisation and our

culture. It will ensure that, as an organisation, we have the workforce and capability to deliver high-quality services now and into the future.

The strategy is designed to enable Neami to lead, foster and nourish our workforce to achieve priorities outlined in our Strategic Directions, including having a great workforce and being a great place to work.

Culturally safe environments for staff

There are a range of activities taking place across the country to build and nurture culturally safe environments. In the Northern Territory, Darwin Head to Health works collaboratively with local Aboriginal community-controlled health organisation Danila Dilba and Aboriginal Elder Dr Mick Adams. Uncle Mick provides mentoring and supervision to our Aboriginal staff and provides support, supervision, and advice to all staff to ensure we appropriately engage and support the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people who use our services. Uncle Mick's open-door approach and his generosity with knowledge mean that staff can reach him when they need advice or have questions. Uncle Mick's support and guidance assists us in shaping the services we deliver to try and ensure we do not repeat the mistakes of the past.



"I am fortunate enough to have found peer work while completing a Mental Health Certificate IV. I did my work placement at Neami while also working part-time as a peer worker. My role has always meant a great deal to me in walking beside others in their journey and supporting them to see more purpose and meaning in their lives, despite having mental health challenges. I have always been a great advocate for focusing on the person's self-worth and knowing that their illness doesn't define them. Despite all the hard times our mental health challenges can cause us, we can overcome them and be a stronger, more resilient version of ourselves."

Lisa Mitchell
Peer Practice Leader - NSW



Neami Board of Directors



Anthony (Tony) Nippard **Chair**

BCom (Hons), BA, MA, FGIA, FCIS, FCHSM, FAICD

Tony was elected to the Neami Board in 2014 and appointed Chair in October 2019. Tony chairs the Nominations and Remuneration Committee. He is an experienced company director in the not-for-profit and public sectors and has previously occupied senior positions in the Victorian public service. Tony is a Principal at Thoughtpost Governance.



Ruth Faulkner **Vice Chair**

BSc (Hons), CA, GAICD, CA Risk Specialist

Ruth was elected to the Neami Board in March 2017 and chairs the Audit and Risk Committee. She is a Chartered Accountant and a Chartered Accountant Risk Specialist, with more than 20 years' experience working in governance, finance, audit and risk in the not-for-profit, government and commercial sectors. Ruth is a Partner of Conus Business Consultancy Services located in Far North Queensland.



Richard (Rick) Callaghan

**B MGT, Postgrad Dip Gov (Fraud),
Fellow – Governors Leaders Foundation,
MAICD, MAIMC**

Rick was elected to the Neami Board in July 2022 and is on the Finance and Performance Committee and Strategy, Oversight and Futures Committee. He is an experienced company director in the not-for-profit and for-profit sectors and is an experienced and certified management consultant and managing director. Rick is the Chair of the Yaran Business Group.



Leesa Chesser

MAICD

Leesa was elected to the Board of Neami in July 2022. She is an Adelaide-based non-executive Director with the Australian Physiotherapy Association, Community Options Australia and a mentor. She is an alum of the Australian Institute of Company Directors Chair's Mentoring Programme and a fellow with the Salzburg Global Seminar.



Dr Shaymaa Elkadi

Exec Master PA, PhD (Psychology)

Dr Shaymaa was elected to the Neami Board in July 2022 and chairs the Strategy Oversight and Futures Committee. Dr Shaymaa is a skilled strategist with more than 15 years of expertise in leading organisational and service transformation and reform. She is Executive Manager, Strategy and Program Integration at Foundation House.



Lorraine Powell

Cert IV MH (Peer Work), GAICD

Lorraine was elected to the Neami Board in 2014. She has 21 years of experience as a mental health lived experience (consumer) representative and consultant at local, state and national levels. She is a director and the WA Coordinator of Lived Experience Australia and a member of the National Register of Mental Health Consumer and Carer Representatives with Mental Health Australia.



Fiona Nicholls

BA Welfare Studies, MHSS, GAICD

Fiona was elected to the Neami Board in 2016 and chairs the Finance and Performance Committee. Fiona has 31 years of Commonwealth Government experience in health and social welfare policy, project management and administration, including nine years in the Senior Executive Service focussing on quality and accountability in aged care and system reform in mental health services.



Silvio Pontonio

BA (Hons), BSW, MASc, MAASW, AFCHSM

Silvio was elected to the Neami Board in February 2019 and appointed Quality, Safety and Clinical Governance Chair in October 2020. Silvio has extensive experience as a health service program lead and executive director across Australia and the NHS in the UK. Silvio has worked extensively in developing new and substitution programs in public, private and mental health settings. He is currently the Director of Health Nexus Consulting.



Sonia Law

BA, LLB (Hons), DipEd, PGradDipTESL

Sonia was elected to the Board in 2012. She was Chair of the Board from 2016 to 2019. Sonia retired from the Neami Board in October 2022.



Dr Tim Smyth

MBBS, LLB, MBA

Dr Tim was elected to the Neami Board in July 2022. Dr Tim resigned from the Board in December 2022.

Financial report

Consolidated Statement of Profit or Loss and Other Comprehensive Income

For the year ended 30 June 2023

	Notes	2023 \$	2022 \$
Revenue	4	148,143,221	126,792,115
Other income	4	1,477,783	1,036,409
Fair value gain (loss) on financial assets at fair value through profit or loss	4,7	849,386	(3,553,980)
Employee benefits expenses	14.1	(114,985,018)	(97,176,742)
Office and occupancy expenses		(9,125,353)	(8,418,640)
Consortium expenses	21	(8,439,709)	(6,774,181)
Interest payment	12.1	(171,639)	(150,861)
Other expenses		(7,918,835)	(7,062,373)
Depreciation and amortisation expenses	9-11	(6,559,831)	(5,478,008)
Surplus/(Deficit)		3,270,005	(786,261)
Other comprehensive income			
Other comprehensive income/(loss) for the period		-	-
Total comprehensive income/(loss) for the period		3,270,005	(786,261)

This statement should be read in conjunction with the notes to the financial statements.

Consolidated Statement of Financial Position

As at 30 June 2023

	Notes	2023 \$	2022 \$
Assets			
Current Assets			
Cash and cash equivalent	5	39,763,490	28,435,416
Investments	7	20,498,137	33,506,038
Trade and other receivables	6	5,640,306	9,884,993
Total Current Assets		65,901,933	71,826,447
Non-Current Assets			
Investments	7	16,103,779	-
Property, plant and equipment	9	3,291,797	3,662,257
Right of Use Assets	10	6,504,858	5,399,614
Intangible Assets	11	135,018	-
Total Non-Current Assets		26,035,452	9,061,871
Total Assets		91,937,385	80,888,318
Liabilities			
Current Liabilities			
Trade and Other Payables	13	7,960,889	7,162,870
Deferred Income	16	33,222,607	31,034,981
Leasing Liabilities	12	3,593,288	3,308,752
Provisions	15	13,235,032	10,105,016
Total Current Liabilities		58,011,816	51,611,619
Non-Current Liabilities			
Leasing Liabilities	12	3,071,429	2,198,815
Provisions	15	2,389,355	1,883,104
Total Non-Current Liabilities		5,460,784	4,081,919
Total Liabilities		63,472,600	55,693,538
Net Assets		28,464,785	25,194,780
Equity			
Retained Earnings		27,604,005	24,334,000
Reserve		860,780	860,780
Total Equity		28,464,785	25,194,780

This statement should be read in conjunction with the notes to the financial statements.



Neami National

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October 2023