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Improving Mental Health and Wellbeing



At Neami National (Neami), we put consumers at the heart of everything we do.

Our Annual Report aims to explore Neami's impact and outcomes this year. It showcases how we have been setting ourselves up for success so we can make a difference for consumers long into the future.

Acknowledgments



We acknowledge Aboriginal and/or 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.

Recognition of those with lived experience

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



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Safety and Homelessness

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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 may mean having a stronger sense of self. For others, it's nurturing relationships or building the confidence to tackle tomorrow. Everyone has different life goals, and we walk alongside people to help improve their quality of life on their terms.

This year we're proud to have supported 34,000 people in Australia living with mental health challenges. We offer services across more than 40 different Indigenous lands, including mental health and wellbeing, housing and homelessness, and suicide prevention services.

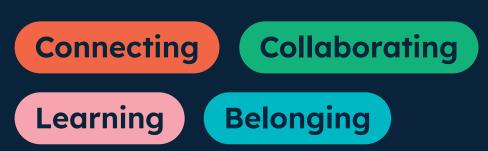
Vision

For all people in Australia living with mental health and wellbeing challenges to live a life that is meaningful to them.

Purpose

To support people to achieve mental health and wellbeing outcomes that matter to them, through access to the resources and opportunities they need.

Values



CEO's message Tom Dalton

This year we have supported 34,000 people to achieve the mental health and wellbeing outcomes that matter to them. In this report, we share a snapshot of our collective effort and impact in communities across Australia.

An engaged and diverse Neami workforce is key to how we achieve our vision and purpose. Neami's transdisciplinary practice approach allows us to make sense of, and respond to, the diversity, complexity and the changing nature of people's needs. This approach involves combining the perspectives, knowledge and skills of our teams to explore and understand what matters in each unique context.

Neami aspires to be an innovative, sectorleading employer of choice that brings people from all walks of life together with a shared purpose. In Neami's 2024 Employee Engagement Survey, staff told us they are proud to work for Neami. We heard that Neami staff feel supported by their teams, local leaders and by the flexible working arrangements we provide. Survey results also spoke to an opportunity to address how Neami builds on its commitment to sustainability. In response, in June 2024, Neami's Social Impact Strategy was launched. The strategy provides a 10-year framework for how Neami will contribute to long-term social, economic, and environmental change. In December 2023, Neami transitioned to a new operational structure. Neami services are now grouped in four 'streams' of similar services, rather than in a state-based geographic structure. This shift to a stream-based model is supporting Neami to share and implement learnings more seamlessly. It means we can leverage the benefits of our national scale to provide the best possible experience and outcomes for consumers. This change was informed by significant contributions from staff across Neami. I would like to acknowledge everyone involved in helping to shape our future through this work.

This year, we said farewell to several successful and long-running Neami services. We celebrate the impact of these services in local communities across Australia and thank the staff for their dedication and passion for supporting people to achieve the mental health and wellbeing outcomes they value.

We were pleased to expand our impact this year with new services launched in collaboration with funders and partners. In Victoria, we launched two new Mental Health and Wellbeing Local services in Whittlesea and Latrobe. We also had the opportunity to work in partnership with Windana Drug and Alcohol Recovery, Drummond Street Services and Wathaurong Aboriginal Co-operative to deliver the Step Thru Care service in Geelong. This new service provides combined supports in one place for people experiencing mental health and alcohol and substance use challenges. In NSW, we expanded our work with new Medicare Mental Health Centres (formerly Head to Health Centres), opening in Liverpool and Hawkesbury.

Neami's impact is truly the result of a collaboration with many, who bring diverse experiences, perspectives and expertise. We thank Neami staff, our funders and the organisational partners we had the pleasure of working with this year. Thank you especially to the people we had the privilege of supporting and for the opportunity to share in part of your journey.

Chair's message Ruth Faulkner

Neami's impact reaches beyond individual services. It extends to the impact we have with communities, systems, the sector and the environment. This year, we've focused on setting goals and roadmaps to guide our work, with the launch of Neami's 2024–2028 Strategic Directions, Social Impact Strategy, and a new articulation of our values.

Our Strategic Directions have been informed by consultation with Neami staff, the communities we support and our partners. This development process means our strategy is aligned with the needs of consumers and reflects the contexts we are working in. At the heart of our Strategic Directions are our values of connecting, collaborating, learning, and belonging. They shape our approach and guide our decisions and actions.

Neami has continued to advocate for wholeof-government commitment and investment in the mental health sector, with a submission to Treasury's pre-budget consultation process ahead of the 2024-25 federal budget. Neami outlined four key priorities, including investment in psychosocial supports, expanding evidencebased homelessness support programs for people with serious mental ill-health, investing in the development of a high-quality national psychosocial workforce, and the reform of commissioning for a sustainable mental health system. These recommendations seek to create a future in which all Australians have access to the support they need when they need it.

Late in 2023, we welcomed recommendations in the Final Report of the Independent Review into the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) to better support people with psychosocial disability. We support the report's call for a whole-of-sector approach to reform, acknowledging an effective NDIS is only one element crucial to a robust, sustainable disability support system. In my first Annual Report as Chair, I'd like to acknowledge Tony Nippard for his leadership as Chair of the Neami Board over the past four years. Tony supported a smooth transition and I'm delighted to embrace this new role. I'd also like to welcome three new Board members – Ryan D'Lima, Fiona Bennett and Jane Stanton. These new Directors bring a wealth of professional and lived experience, skilled expertise, and diversity to Neami. The Board also thanks Lorraine Powell and Richard Callaghan for their directorship service to Neami as we bid them farewell in October 2023 and March 2024 respectively.

In addition to enhanced lived experience expertise on the Board, this year we've also focused on expanding and elevating lived experience across Neami. The Lived Experience Transformation Implementation project has supported Neami to introduce disciplinespecific supervision for Lived Experience leaders, adopt the National Lived Experience Workforce Guidelines and develop a Lived Experience Leadership structure. Embedding lived experience takes a whole of organisation approach, and I thank those who have guided and led this priority for Neami.

On behalf of the Neami Board, I would like to thank our organisational partners and funders who've worked with us this year to support thousands of individuals and create a positive impact. You can find more details about these partnerships on page 30 of this report. And finally, thank you to our exceptional staff for their ongoing commitment to making a positive difference to the lives of our consumers.

Neami National snapshot

In 2023–24, we supported

34,000 people

in metropolitan, regional and remote communities across Australia. The figures below show the breakdown of the 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.

9%

26%

Our services

We provide support across four streams and deliver many of these services and programs in conjunction with partner organisations.



Statistics rounded to nearest whole number.

22% Mental Health Hubs

27%

QLD

27%

7% Community Connection and Wellbeing

7% Safety and Homelessness

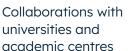
Research and evaluation

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.











Financial position

For more detail, see the financial report on pages 34 and 35

<u>\$160,673,773</u> Revenue

\$36,203,120

Equity

Source of revenue

State Governments



41% Primary Health Networks

Other

Looking to the future

This year we've set frameworks, goals and roadmaps to continue supporting people to achieve the outcomes that matter to them.

Establishing Neami's 'Future State'

Over recent years, we have significantly evolved to offer a diverse range of services to thousands of people across the country. In December 2023, we transitioned to a new operational structure to better support this diversity. Services are now grouped into four streams of similar services, instead of a state-based structure. This streambased approach leverages our national scale. At the same time, it draws on the knowledge and excellent work happening in local services and communities. This helps us improve the way we support our consumers. The design of our new structure involved staff from across our organisation.

A Service Excellence Hub will support our new structure. The Service Excellence Hub will sit at the heart of our services and drive national collaboration, learning and innovation in our practice. This will be up and running in 2025.

Our vision for the future

The development of our Strategic Directions 2024–2028 and our first Social Impact Strategy (2024–2034) set our strategic goals and roadmap for impact over the coming years.

As a national not-for-profit, we have a responsibility to understand and improve how we play our part in long-term social, economic, and environmental change. Our Social Impact Strategy outlines the difference we want to make in the world — it's our 10-year ambition for impact.

The Social Impact Strategy was informed by extensive consultation with staff. This included First Nations and Lived Experience leaders, as well as consumers and carers. Teresa Hall, a Lived Experience participant, said "Being part of this project was a meaningful experience ... It was an opportunity to express my views and be a part of something impactful."

After more than six months of development, Neami's refreshed Strategic Directions commenced in July 2024. We spoke to people across Neami, the communities we serve and external partners to understand what truly matters to them.

The four strategic themes in the refreshed strategy are:

- Great Consumer Experiences
- Building Collective Knowledge and Partnerships
- Sustainable and Resilient Organisation
- Capable and Diverse Workforce.

These themes will help us focus our efforts and decision making as we consider opportunities and develop projects over the next four years. Our refreshed Strategic Directions set a clear and inspiring vision for the organisation as we move forward.

A better way to get to know us

In November 2023 we proudly launched our new Neami website. The aim was to create a website that is intuitive and easy-to-navigate, with a focus on improving accessibility and usability, particularly on mobile devices.

Our refreshed website is more than a cosmetic update, it is a consumer-centred transformation. The redesigned structure and layout provide an improved user experience, supporting people to easily explore and connect with our services. We are pleased to see that it's already making a difference. In the first half of 2024, the number of website users increased by 50% compared with the same period in the previous year.

Our new website was also a finalist in the Australian Web Awards in May 2024. It was nominated in the not-for-profit and health and wellbeing categories, recognising our commitment to providing high-quality experiences for consumers.



Check out the new website at neaminational.org.au

Mental Health Hubs

Our Mental Health Hub services offer free place-based support for people experiencing distress or mental health challenges, as well as their families and carers.

Located across Australia, Mental Health Hubs (Hubs) are a welcoming, safe and inclusive space available to all adults. This year, we supported 7,510 guests through our Hubs, where transdisciplinary teams of mental health professionals deliver friendly and caring mental health and wellbeing support over extended opening hours. Hub guests don't need an appointment, referral or Medicare card to get support, and the services are available to people who are not Australian citizens or residents.

Supporting communities across Australia

We proudly launched four new Hubs in Victoria and New South Wales (NSW) this financial year, adding to a growing national network. These included:

- two Mental Health and Wellbeing Locals in Latrobe and the City of Whittlesea, Victoria
- two Medicare Mental Health Centres (formerly Head to Health) in Hawkesbury and Liverpool, NSW.

We also continued our support in local communities with the delivery of:

- the Urgent Mental Health Care Centre (UMHCC) in Adelaide
- four Medicare Mental Health Centres in Geelong, Townsville, Darwin and Penrith.

We will open a new Medicare Mental Health Centre in Port Pirie in late 2024. Our Hubs work together closely, sharing learnings that help individual services and the broader network to develop, grow and provide high-quality support to guests.

Offering diverse expertise

All Hubs use a transdisciplinary staffing model that allows guests to access high-quality, evidence-based clinical care and highengagement peer support in one place.

We aim to staff our Hubs with 50% clinical staff and 50% Lived Experience staff. Our aim is to achieve a collaborative way of working where all team members' and guests' views are valued.

Staff with lived and living experience of mental health challenges are a vital component of the transdisciplinary service model, with guests benefiting from the understanding, connection and shared wisdom of peer support workers.

Our peer-first, peer-last approach ensures a Lived Experience staff member supports and greets each guest from the moment they arrive to when they're ready to leave.

A diverse range of clinical expertise including social workers, psychologists, general practitioners, nurses and occupational therapists work across the Hubs. This year we've also appointed a psychiatrist to a national role, who supports all nine services.

Workforces are tailored to meet the needs of local communities with specialist staffing. Multicultural, family, LGBTQIA+ and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander workers support guests who face a range of additional barriers.

Doing things differently

Hubs are there when people need them most. The Urgent Mental Health Care Centre (UMHCC) offers a much-needed alternative to hospital emergency departments for people experiencing a mental health crisis, paving the way for mental health sector transformation.

Based on Recovery Innovation's model and the first of its kind in Australia, the service offers tailored and non-judgemental crisis support 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

Providing trauma-informed mental health care in an environment that looks and feels very different to hospital settings improves guests' experiences and outcomes. The service supported 3,192 guests this year, meaning we have supported 15,411 guests since opening in March 2021, with demand significantly increasing over time.

The UMHCC is supporting diversion from South Australia's busy emergency departments and supporting people who wouldn't have sought help elsewhere. When asked where they would have accessed support if it wasn't for the UMHCC, 42% of guests said the emergency department and 47% said they would not have sought any help at all.

The UMHCC also reduces some of the pressure placed on police and ambulance services when people cannot access the mental health care they need.

"The first support I had at the service was from a Wellbeing Coach. I was really struggling with suicidal thoughts, and she really cared about me. I had never had that much support from a worker before.

If you're in a distressed state, the hospital can be a frightening experience. Here I feel the opposite. It is calm, it is welcoming. You can relax and go and make yourself a coffee.

We have long needed a service like this in the Northern Territory. It has been a breath of fresh air."

> Vicki, former consumer and member of the Darwin Medicare Mental Health Centre Lived Experience Advisory Group

Integrated Support



Our Integrated Support services provide one-to-one and group support for people experiencing mental health challenges. They are delivered in residential settings, centre-based services and via tele-based and phone support.

Providing primary mental health with care

In July 2023, we opened the Southern Wellbeing Hub in Adelaide with a diverse team of mental health clinicians, mental health coaches, peer support workers and psychiatrists. The service provides individual and group supports that help people achieve the outcomes they value for living well. This may include support to manage challenging or distressing emotions, support with relationships, or family-focused services. In its first year of operation, the Southern Wellbeing Hub supported nearly 1,000 consumers across all programs.

This year, we opened Step Thru Care in Geelong, Victoria to support people experiencing mental health challenges, alcohol and other drug challenges, or a combination of the two. We run this essential service in partnership with Wathaurong Aboriginal Co-op, Windana Drug and Alcohol Recovery, and Drummond Street Services, and it is funded by the Western Victoria Primary Health Network. The service places people at the centre of the process and offers them a team of health professionals to help guide them towards a better future. As we approach the one-year anniversary of this service, we are proud to have supported nearly 1,000 consumers along with our partners.

Making support more accessible

We provide a range of quality telehealth services, which are an easy and accessible way for people to receive a mental health assessment, access the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) and be referred to suitable support. We are making investments in our telehealth offerings as we believe that over time, these services will assist more people.

Funded by the Australian Government, the Head to Health Phone Service (HTHPS) offers a free, confidential, and friendly referral phone service for people seeking support for their mental and emotional wellbeing. We deliver the HTHPS in:

- Brisbane South, Darling Downs and West Moreton in Queensland
- Darwin, Northern Territory
- Adelaide and country South Australia (from July 2024).

"I find it rewarding to use a recovery-oriented approach. This means working with consumers to identify their own goals for feeling better, rather than focusing solely on traditional clinical recovery. This empowers them to take charge of their own wellbeing."

Karl Devine, Neami Mental Health Clinician

"My experience of service has been incredibly positive. From the very start, the first contact there was a feeling of warmth and acceptance.

The consistency and the rapport that I've built with staff, such as having the same key worker all along, helps me feel that I can tell her anything. I know that I trust her."

Kerry, Neami consumer



Over the financial year, our HTHPS supported 13,350 people to connect with the mental health support they need. This included long-running services across Northern Queensland and New South Wales, which wrapped up at the end of the financial year. We were sad to say goodbye to some of our valued colleagues and we thank them for the dedication and commitment they showed for the wellbeing of our consumers.

Co-locating for success

In Brisbane South, we deliver the HTHPS in collaboration with Metro South Health Service and the Brisbane South Primary Health Network. The service is located at Metro South Health's offices alongside the Metro South MH CALL service. The co-location of two mental health intake services is aimed to streamline referral pathways and provide integrated mental health support across clinical and non-clinical services.

In September 2023, we published a research report on the implementation of this HTHPS with external researcher Abigail O'Hara. It showed that setting up a co-located service is complex. While the partnership between clinical and non-clinical teams has been beneficial, it hasn't been without its challenges. The success of this partnership is attributed to a dedicated leadership team with a shared vision, who can work across different practice models and solve issues and conflicts fairly. Sharing a workspace has fostered greater understanding and empathy, helping to break down the "us vs. them" mentality often seen in the broader mental health system.

Helping preserve Indigenous language

Step Up / Step Down services provide short-term residential mental health support for people who are either becoming unwell and are at risk of being admitted to hospital ('step up' support) or leaving hospital but in need of extra support to transition back into the community ('step down' support). We currently provide the service in Western Australia in Geraldton, Joondalup and Kalgoorlie and in Queensland in Nundah.

In May 2024, our Kalgoorlie Step Up / Step Down service won an award from the Goldfields Aboriginal Language Centre Aboriginal Corporation for their work creating the Ngaanyatjarra Talking Boards.

The Talking Boards are designed to help Ngaanyatjarra speakers express their mental health experiences in their own language. When they present to a health practitioner, they can push the buttons of a word or phrase that helps them describe their feelings, which is then translated to English for the practitioner.

Sue Hanson from the Language Centre collaborated with Ngaanyatjarra Elders and community members to develop the boards. They discussed the words and phrases to feature on the boards, ensured accurate translations, designed the artwork and created the voice recordings.

Community Connection and Wellbeing

Everyone's mental health and wellbeing journey is different. Our community connection and wellbeing services help people to understand what's important to them for living well in their community. We provide holistic support tailored to the needs and goals of each person.

Advocating for psychosocial support

Psychosocial support plays an integral role in helping people to achieve wellness, live with dignity and exercise choice and control in all aspects of life.

Psychosocial support assists people to identify and address signs of distress and overcome the barriers that impact their participation and function in their community. This support also works with people to build the skills, knowledge and confidence to manage their mental health and wellbeing and achieve a life of choice and meaning.

Evidence tells us that Australia needs community-embedded, psychosocial supports. These supports must be flexible and respond to the immediate and longer-term needs of people, their families and carers.

This year, we contributed to submissions advocating for more government investment in psychosocial supports. In January 2024, we contributed to Treasury's pre-budget consultation process by highlighting the priorities outlined below.

 Investment is needed to develop a national program of psychosocial supports outside the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS). We see the need to provide support in the form of prevention and early intervention through to long-term support for people living with mental health challenges. Investment is needed in the development of a high-quality national psychosocial workforce. Psychosocial support is a highly skilled, transdisciplinary practice. It comprises a wide range of evidence-based supports that can improve holistic wellbeing, social connection and engagement in employment and education. It can also reduce costs associated with inpatient treatment and other high-cost or avoidable interventions across the health, justice and welfare sectors.

We're a proud member of the Australian Psychosocial Alliance (APA). We were pleased to contribute to the APA's submission to the National Disability Insurance Agency Review Panel in 2023. In December, we welcomed recommendations in the Final Report of the Independent Review into the NDIS, to better support people with psychosocial disability and to acknowledge that an effective NDIS is only one element of a sustainable disability support system.

Recognition of the Neami Port Macquarie team

Our Port Macquarie team was recognised in the 2024 Australia Day Awards for their dedicated efforts as part of the Port Macquarie Hastings Collective 'Our Place'.

The Port Macquarie Hastings Council presented the Collective with the 'Community Group of the Year' award.

Service Manager, Cherie Caltabiano, said, "It was such a great feeling for all involved to be acknowledged for their commitment and dedication to creating a safe space for those doing it tough in our community."

In addition, Cherie was nominated for a Citizen of the Year award for her efforts and leadership at 'Our Place'. Cherie has been a driving force to help locals get the support they need while maintaining their dignity through personal care and attention.

"A big part of what I do involves holding hope for others when they don't have hope for themselves. Hope is something that guides us in the darkest of times. I am very passionate about working in our community and believe that by working together we can create change."

Cherie Caltabiano, Neami Port Macquarie Service Manager



Safety and Homelessness

Through our safety and homelessness services, we focus on understanding the specific needs of consumers and building connections.

We work to prevent homelessness by helping people find and keep long-term and safe housing. We do this through street outreach programs and housing support services that work together to meet the needs of the people we support.

We provide services to support people and communities in responding to distress and suicide. We strengthen community resilience through education around suicide prevention and support people after a suicide attempt or during a suicidal crisis.

We help women and their children experiencing family violence by providing a safe and confidential space to receive trauma-informed counselling, coaching and transitional accommodation support.

We provide tools and support to people aged 16–25 years through programs and services. We also offer mental health residential rehabilitation programs and online web tools.

Another three years of trusted outreach and support

Our Wadamba Wilam service has been supporting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples in Melbourne's north for the past decade. We help consumers find and sustain housing and get culturally appropriate support for their mental health and wellbeing. Wadamba Wilam (Renew Shelter) runs in partnership with the Victorian Aboriginal Health Service, Uniting Vic Tas and the Northern Area Mental Health Service.

The service has made a significant and positive



impact on the community it serves. It has been a turning point for many who have been let down and left behind by mainstream services.

Of consumers who engaged with Wadamba Wilam over the last year:

are now housed in stable accommodation

63% of those with a history of psychiatric hospital admissions have had a substantial reduction

78% have had a reduction in offending

in hospitalisation

70% who experience poor physical health are now engaged with a culturally appropriate GP and allied health services

80% who have experienced forcible child removal were reunited with their children, through consistent advocacy and long-term, intensive support

70% who have not used an alcohol and other drug service before accessed detox, rehab and counselling services to address their substance use with support from the program.

We are thrilled that Wadamba Wilam's funding from the Victorian Department of Health has been extended for another three years. We are looking forward to the service's continued success supporting the Victorian Government to meet its strategic priorities in Balit Murrup, the Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Action Plan and the Department of Health's Strategic Plan. "I'm here because I want to support people who are going through similar circumstances that I've gone through. I want to show that change is possible and bring hope and guidance."

Rhiannon Jones, proud Boorooberongal woman of the Darug nation and Neami Peer Support Worker



Helping the people of Sydney with stable and secure housing

Far too many people are evicted from social housing into homelessness or insecure housing situations. Stable housing is crucial to people's mental wellbeing. Evictions also cause major flow-on costs for government in rehousing, transitional accommodation and associated health and social costs.

To help prevent people from being evicted from social housing, we run the Sustaining Tenancies in Social Housing (STSH) program across three districts in Sydney.

STSH was developed by the NSW Department of Communities and Justice to respond to a critical need and is delivering strong outcomes. The program supports improved quality of life for tenants and the communities in which they live. Since launching in 2019, our STSH services have supported 2,100 people at risk of losing tenancies. STSH has had a direct impact on reducing homelessness, with high rates of sustained tenancies in all three districts.

Healing and recovery for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples

We are excited to begin working in partnership with Aboriginal community-controlled organisation Danila Dilba Health Service to deliver its Healing and Recovery Service in Darwin. The service supports healing and recovery for people and their chosen families after a suicide attempt, or experiences of distress and/or suicidal crisis. Non-clinical, psychosocial support and care coordination is designed for people aged 15 years and over in the Greater Darwin area. The Healing and Recovery Service adheres to the principles of the Gayaa Dhuwi (Proud Spirit) Declaration. It will work to develop and deliver culturally safe services for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples.

We look forward to rolling out this important service together with Danila Dilba over 2024–25.

A different way for the people of Logan to access crisis support

We have been preparing for the official opening of the new Logan Crisis Support Space.

The service provides mental health crisis support in a welcoming, home-like environment. Staffed by peer workers and clinicians, the service is part of a state-wide strategy to reform the crisis system and support suicide prevention.

Run in partnership with the Queensland Metro South Health and Hospital Service, it is located on the hospital grounds, through the emergency department.

Reconciliation beyond our Reconciliation Action Plan



We're committed to addressing the disadvantage faced by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples in Australia. We believe in meaningful actions of power-sharing with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities and embedding Indigenous Governance principles throughout all levels of Neami. We're proud to offer services across more than 40 Indigenous lands.

Our Indigenous Governance approach means that First Nations engagement and local community integration are key to our approach to reconciliation. This means better relationships and partnerships between our service sites and local First Nations organisations, groups and communities. Each Neami site is encouraged to work towards a local governance model, with oversight of the service's progress, wants, needs and practice. This helps bridge the historical divide between First Nations communities and a predominately non-Indigenous community. We're proud to have partnerships with Thirrili nationally, Danila Dilba in the Northern Territory, Tharawal Aboriginal Corporation in New South Wales, Crocs United in Queensland and the Victorian Aboriginal Health Service and Wathaurong Aboriginal Co-operative in Victoria just to name a few.

Our 2022–2024 Innovate Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) is drawing to a close. We are reflecting on our achievements and the next phase of our Reconciliation journey. There are still significant barriers and hurdles to overcome.

Councils for impact

The First Nations Community Impact Advisory Council (FNCIAC) met in Far North Queensland in April 2024. The council members provide direction, guidance, advice, and community analysis, along with recommendations on local site operations, engagement, impact, and community connection. Local Elders and leaders of different ages, genders, lived experience and professional fields sit on the council.

The council is an advisory body independent from our organisational structure. Keeping community direction at the forefront is how impact is achieved.

Looking ahead

We are proud of the impact of our 2022–2024 Innovate RAP, but acknowledge that we still have a long way to go to completely embed Indigenous ways of knowing and doing within our organisation.

The outcome of the referendum on the Indigenous Voice to Parliament has given us pause to reflect as an organisation on the validity of a Reconciliation Action Plan. The pathways to Reconciliation are now at a standstill. Many Indigenous leaders, organisations, communities and peak bodies are seeking national truth-telling and education campaigns. This is needed before concepts such as Reconciliation can be considered. Our work within this space will complement and mirror a greater national push around truth telling.

The country has not addressed structural inequality under national Closing the Gap targets. This is due to underlying systemic problems that inform policy and provisions that impact the lives of First Nations Peoples. The symptoms and targets we seek to address around mental health, incarceration and poor health outcomes are a priority. Through our actions we aim to support First Nations Peoples' right to self-determination.

Indigenous Governance principles are now part of our Board Charter, People Strategy and 2024–2028 Strategic Directions. We aim to better support Indigenous communities and Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations moving forward. Working together to improve better health outcomes for First Nations peoples.

"The introduction of Indigenous Governance allows us to rewrite the narrative in terms of what meaningful action in relation to self-determination really entails. It is very easy to speak on change. However, to provide the mechanism and power for local communities to determine their own direction begins to reset the standard by which we operate nationally."

Jesse Martin, Neami National First Nations Strategy and Impact Lead

Left to right: Jesse Martin and Rachel Harris, Neami National First Nations Strategy and Impact Leads

Lived and living experience

Neami learns from personal and collective lived experiences of mental health and/or adversity, diverse perspectives and ways of working. A collective vision expands and elevates peer practice and a lived experience approach across everything we do. This results in designing better programs and services, better experiences and outcomes for the people we work with.

We foster designated Lived Experience roles, and we value staff bringing their lived experience into their work. Through co-design and collaboration with consumers and their communities, we design services that meet their needs.

Embedding and supporting lived experience expertise

Neami's Lived Experience leaders have been focused on implementing the recommendations in the Peer Work Vision for Transformative Change over the past 18 months. This is a collective vision to expand and elevate peer practice and a Lived Experience approach at Neami.

One of the recommendations out of the vision was that we establish national Lived Experience roles to inform both practice and strategic leadership. This has led to the appointment of Lived Experience Lead roles in all four streams of service delivery. These roles support the integration of lived experience perspectives at a senior leadership level and provide specialist leadership in the peer work discipline, continuous improvement and practice. Lived Experience Leads aim to ensure that practice support is relevant to the unique contexts and workforces in each stream.

We also began the recruitment process for a National Lived Experience Practice Lead. The recruitment of this role follows through on our commitment to resource and support Lived Experience workforce development. Their role will be crucial in helping embed and support lived experience expertise.

We endorsed the National Lived Experience Workforce Development Guidelines as the framework for our approach and this influences and gives direction to our work elevating and embedding lived experience, along with peer principles and practice. This ensures decisionmaking and strategic planning are informed by lived experience at all levels of the organisation.

Implementing lived experience discipline-specific supervision

Lived experience discipline-specific supervision (LEDSS) is essential for supporting Lived Experience roles. LEDSS contributes to a strong and sustainable Lived Experience workforce and ensures fidelity to lived experience practice.

We are committed to ensuring all Neami staff in designated roles are supported to access LEDSS. This year we implemented access to supervision in stages, starting with leadership roles. Alana Istanto, Neami Lived Experience Service Manager

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Alana's career progression with Neami spans six years and includes Peer Support Worker, Senior Practice Lead, and Victorian Peer Lead prior to her current role.

Alana reflects, "I was really nurtured by my leads and my managers at the time to get me to where I am now. I (successfully) advocated to have my lived experience acknowledged in every position description, so I could formally work from that practice. It was important to me that there are opportunities for progression."

"Leadership with my lived experience hat on looks different to when I was a Peer Support Worker. Lived experience is my lens when thinking about processes, engagement, and participation with the people we are supporting. Now my lived experience is used in a sense of supporting leadership to support Peer Workers, what those experiences are, and how my values as a Lived Experience Worker influence the way I support people.

"Drawing on values like mutuality, growing together, shared responsibility and relationships is such a big part of my practice. That positive impact is the way I'm supporting the Peer Leads, who support the Peer Workers, who support the people we work with."

"My aspiration is to see a growing, safe and sustainable workforce. Workforce development is such a passion for me because that's where it starts. Healing, and having spaces to safely explore lived experience practice."

We're curious to understand what matters

We base our practice on research and the wisdom of people with lived and living experience of mental health challenges. We undertake research projects and gather data to understand our strengths, opportunities and what matters most to the people we support.

Evaluating Neami's Medicare Mental Health Centres

Medicare Mental Health Centres (formerly Head to Health Centres) provide a safe and welcoming place for adults experiencing distress to seek support. The centres are staffed by a multidisciplinary workforce that aims to have around 50% clinicians and 50% Lived Experience staff. We deliver eight of the 26 Medicare Mental Health Centres funded by the Australian Government.

In partnership with the ALIVE National Centre for Mental Health Research Translation, we have undertaken a co-evaluation research project to understand how the Medicare Mental Health Centres (including the Urgent Mental Health Care Centre in Adelaide) are operating within their local communities. A co-design process was undertaken to help design how the project would be conducted, and the research team involved many Lived Experience researchers. The co-evaluation involved our Medicare Mental Health Centre staff, guests and other stakeholders as participants in the project, collecting data through in-depth interviews, focus groups and surveys.

The aims of the co-evaluation were to answer the following questions.

- Who is using the centres, why and how?
- How are the services integrating into the local service ecosystem?
- How was the implementation experience?

Findings from the co-evaluation will be shared later in 2024.

Celebrating the impact of Neami's LifeConnect service

We were funded by the Eastern Melbourne Primary Health Network to deliver the LifeConnect service from 2019–2024. In 2023–24, we completed a process evaluation to understand how the service evolved over time and what key elements supported its success.

LifeConnect provided compassionate support to those impacted by suicide, as well as activities to build people's capacity to respond to suicidality with connection, curiosity, and empathy. During its operation, LifeConnect supported more than 9,300 people across wellbeing activities, suicide awareness workshops and bereavement counselling and groups.

The staffing model of LifeConnect evolved over time. Prior to closing in June 2024, LifeConnect was mostly staffed by designated Lived Experience staff. The evaluation showed how the role of lived experience became more pronounced over time, helping the team to welcome people into different conversations about suicide and gently ushering people to discover how stigma can play out in their understanding and response to suicidality.

The key success factors for this service were its passionate staff — who were committed to learning and held strong connections with the broader lived experience community — along with the clear service model.



Understanding the legal needs of people experiencing mental health challenges

In 2021, we started working with Health Justice Australia to set the foundations for and pilot health justice partnerships in three of our services. Health Justice Partnerships bring relevant legal help into services that support people's health and wellbeing, providing comprehensive support for people with intersecting health and legal issues.

In June 2024, we published a paper on Assessing legal needs and capability for health justice partnership: the experience at Neami National. It summarises the research done to understand the potential for Health Justice Partnerships in our services.

The research drew on findings from two projects. The first was a survey of nearly 1,000 frontline staff working in our 70 mental health and wellbeing services across Australia. The survey examined the types of legal issues and support needed by consumers. The second was a project involving in-depth legal needs assessments at three of our services.

Staff identified a wide range of legal issues experienced by consumers. Most common were credit, debt and social security issues, housing, family law and family violence. Two-thirds (67%) of staff who responded to the survey said that they spent at least half of their time responding to these types of legal issues. Staff identified that to assist consumers with these challenges they need more knowledge of other services, connections with professionals in other organisations and connections with community – the kind of connections a Health Justice Partnership offers.



You can find the **full report** on the Neami website.

Left to right: Shaun McNamara, Neami Peer Support Lead; Danny McCulloch, Neami Senior Manager Operations – Mental Health Hubs; Nadia Clancy, South Australian Premier's Advocate for Suicide Prevention; and Elisabeth Tuckey, Neami Executive Director – Research Engagement and Advocacy

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Advocating for change

As our profile grows, so do our opportunities to advocate for critical service funding and system reform to improve people's lives. Our policy and advocacy priorities are informed by insights from consumers, service delivery staff, our research team and sector partners.

Building on strong foundations

This year, our policy and advocacy function went from strength to strength, with our foundational Advocacy Strategy 2023–2025 guiding the issues we focus on and how we approach our work.

We leveraged existing relationships with federal and state government stakeholders and cultivated new ones, enabling us to communicate directly to decision-makers about what's working well and offer effective solutions to ongoing issues.

Several politicians and departmental officials launched and visited our services across the country, including:

- Deputy Prime Minister, the Hon Richard Marles, at Geelong Medicare Mental Health Centre
- Assistant Minister for Mental Health and Suicide Prevention, the Hon Emma McBride, at the Urgent Mental Health Care Centre, Liverpool and Hawkesbury Medicare Mental Health Centres
- Western Australia Minister for Health and Mental Health, the Hon Amber-Jade Sanderson, at Albany Mental Health Step Up / Step Down Service.



We also collaborated with peak bodies and other organisations whose values and priorities align with ours, to amplify our voice and — by extension — the voice of consumers.

Key submissions advocating for change

We presented eight submissions to government departments and agencies, parliamentary committees and other inquiry bodies. The submissions related to four of the priority domains identified in our Advocacy Strategy: system reform, lived experience involvement and leadership, mental health workforce, and housing and homelessness.

Our pre-budget submission called on the Commonwealth to:

- invest in a national program of psychosocial supports outside the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS)
- expand evidence-based homelessness support programs for people living with serious and persistent mental ill-health
- invest in the development of a high-quality national psychosocial workforce
- reform commissioning and funding approaches for a sustainable mental health and wellbeing system.

We raised our voice to address housing and homelessness challenges faced by many Australians through our:

- submissions to the Inquiry into the Rental and Affordability Crisis in Victoria and National Housing and Homelessness Plan
- survey response to the Everybody's Home campaign's People's Commission into the Housing Crisis.

Left to right: Lizz Reay, Wentworth Healthcare CEO; Tom Dalton, Neami CEO; the Hon Emma McBride; and Susan Templeman MP at the Hawkesbury Medicare Mental Health Centre launch

Partnering for impact

We partnered with trusted sector organisations on the public campaigns and advocacy activities listed below.

- We joined fellow Australian Psychosocial Alliance members on the NDIS Recovery Plan campaign, calling on decision makers to support people experiencing psychosocial disability through the NDIS. We contributed multiple quality case studies to support this advocacy.
- We worked with 12 organisations, including Mission Australia and the Salvation Army, on a joint letter to the Premier of New South Wales highlighting the challenges faced by non-residents experiencing homelessness.
- Along with 15 community sector peak bodies, led by the Victorian Mental Illness Awareness Council and Self Help Addiction Resource Centre, we co-signed a letter to the Victorian Government. The letter called on the government to commit to a timeline and plan to establish a Consumer Leadership Agency, as per Recommendation 29 of the Royal Commission into Victoria's Mental Health System.
- We partnered with the Australian Alliance to End Homelessness on *Advance to Zero* demonstrating that ending homelessness is possible.
- We worked with the Australian Council of Social Service on *Raise the Rate* — calling on the Commonwealth to raise the rate of income support payments.

Diverse and skilled workforce

Our staff are essential to the delivery of our services. An engaged and empowered workforce is vital for supporting people to achieve the mental health and wellbeing outcomes that matter to them and making a positive social impact.

Diversity 3% 16% of staff identify as of staff speak a Aboriginal or Torres language other Strait Islander than English Location Percentage of staff in each location 16% Head 3% office 10% NT QLD 12% 13% WA 23% SA NSW 23% VIC **Roles**

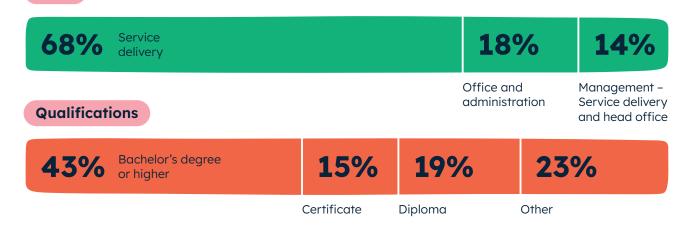
Our workforce is made up of people in many roles. From clinical to non-clinical staff, Lived Experience staff and the peer workforce, to designated First Nations staff, to our culturally and linguistically diverse workforce and those in administrative and support functions – each and every person contributes to our vision and to delivering meaningful outcomes for consumers and the community.

The below snapshot provides an overview of our workforce.

Lived Experience

Percentage of staff in designated Lived Experience roles (see page 22 to find out more about our Lived Experience workforce)

21%
9%
9%
30%
24%
37%
38%
17%



A collaborative and flexible environment

Our Employee Engagement Survey provides meaningful insights into how we are supporting our teams and where we can continue to improve. In 2024, survey results suggested that our staff feel supported by their local managers and teams. For example:

- 90% of staff said they have enough autonomy to perform their job effectively
- 90% of staff said they have the work flexibility to arrange time out from work when they need to
- 91% of staff said people in their team make a good effort to consult with others
- we also heard that 83% of staff would recommend our organisation as a great place to work.

Providing leading conditions for our valued staff

In late 2023, Enterprise Agreement-covered (EA) staff voted in our organisation's new EA. We believe that the conditions in the new EA truly reflect our values as an organisation and commitment to delivering leading conditions for our valued staff. Here are just some of the additional benefits:

- gender affirmation leave
- 16 weeks of paid parental leave for primary carers and six weeks partner leave (up from 13 weeks) and superannuation paid on all periods of paid and unpaid parental leave (up to 12 months)
- additional mental health and wellbeing leave for designated Lived Experience and Peer roles
- increased access to First Nations leave and ongoing access to First Nations mentoring for all First Nations employees
- family and domestic violence leave.

"The most rewarding thing about the work I do is knowing that someone saw something in me that I couldn't see in myself and gave me an opportunity. Now every day I get to come to work and see something in our consumers that they are currently unable to see in themselves. I support their journey and hopefully give them the same sense of hope and belief in themselves that I felt."

Haley Wilson, Neami Service Manager

"I love that my role as a Peer Support Worker allows me to use my knowledge and skills to help consumers to grow and realise they can make a positive pivot to their lives. I am excited that every day I get to be part of a team driving change and providing support to my local community."

Dylan Della Vedova, Neami Peer Support Worker

Left to right: Haley and Dylan

Acknowledging our partners and funders

We thank our funders and service partners for their ongoing support and for working collaboratively to support people to achieve the mental health and wellbeing outcomes that matter to them.



Adelaide Primary Health Network

Brisbane North Primary Health Network

Brisbane South Primary Health Network

Central and Eastern Sydney Primary Health Network

City of Sydney

Community Housing Limited

COORDINARE – South Eastern NSW Primary Health Network

Country SA Primary Health Network

Darling Downs West Moreton Primary Health Network

Department of Families, Fairness and Housing, Victoria

Department of Health, Victoria

Eastern Melbourne Primary Health Network

Federal Department of Health and Aged Care

Federal Department of Social Services

Home in Place

Housing Trust

Nepean Blue Mountains Primary Health Network

North Western Melbourne Primary Health Network Northern Queensland Primary Health Network

Northern Territory Primary Health Network

NSW Department of Communities and Justice

NSW Ministry of Health

Office for Women (SA)

Pacific Link Housing

Queensland Department of Justice and Attorney-General

Queensland Health Mental Health Alcohol and Other Drugs

Queensland Heath Metro North Mental Health

Queensland Metro South Hospital And Health Service

Queensland Office for Women and Violence Prevention

SA Health

SA Health Department for Health and Wellbeing

South Western Sydney Primary Health Network

WA Primary Health Alliance

WentWest (Western Sydney Primary Health Network)

Western Australian Mental Health Commission

Western Victoria Primary Health Network

Western NSW Primary Health Network



Auburn Community Mental Health Team

Australian Community Support Organisation

Bolton Clarke

Cairns Alcohol and Other Drug services

Cairns and Hinterland Prison Mental Health Services

Cairns Primary Health Care services

Cohealth

Community Access and Services SA

Connect and Thrive

Crocs United

Cumberland Hospital Social Work Department

Danila Dilba

Dokotela

Drummond Street Services

EACH

End Street Sleeping Collaboration

Flourish Australia

Granville Community Assertive Response Team

Guthrie House

Hills Community Mental Health Team

Homelessness NSW

Homes NSW

Hope Community Services

Launch Housing

Life Without Barriers

Lives Lived Well

Lotus Glen Correctional Centre Psychological Services

Melbourne City Mission

Mind Australia

Mission Australia

Northern Area Mental Health Service

NSW Local Implementation and Coordination Committee

Parramatta Community Mental Health Team

Parramatta Koori Interagency

Primary Health Care services

Queensland Metro North Hospital and Health Service

Queensland Metro South Hospital and Health Service

Recovery Innovations

Richmond Fellowship Queensland

Skylight Mental Health

St George Community Mental Health Team

Tharawal Aboriginal Corporation

Thirrili

Townsville Alcohol and Other Drug services

Townsville Correctional Centre Psychological Services

Townsville Hospital and Health Service

Townsville Multicultural Support Group

Townsville Prison Mental Health Services

Uniting Vic Tas

Victorian Aboriginal Health Service

Wathaurong Aboriginal Co-operative

Wellways Australia

Western Australia Country Health Service

Windana Drug and Alcohol Recovery

Board of Directors



Ruth Faulkner Chair

The Board elected Ruth as Chair in 2023. She is a Chartered Accountant (CA) and a CA Risk Specialist. Ruth has more than 20 years of experience working in governance, finance, audit and risk across the not-for-profit, government and commercial sectors.

Ruth is Principal of Conus Business Consultancy Services.



Tony Nippard Vice Chair

Tony is an experienced company director in the not-for-profit and public sectors. He has held senior positions in the Victorian public service.

Tony is Principal at Thoughtpost Governance.



Leesa Chesser Director

Leesa is a skilled senior leader who has worked across state and federal government, advocacy, public policy and governance for more than 25 years. Leesa has worked across the not-for-profit, public works, membership-based and start-up sectors.

Leesa is a Director at Blue Sky Consulting Australia.



Dr Shaymaa Elkadi Director

Dr Shaymaa is a skilled strategist. She has more than 15 years of experience leading transformation and reform of organisations and services.

Dr Shaymaa is Executive Manager, Strategy and Program Integration at Foundation House.









Fiona Nicholls Director

Fiona has 31 years of federal government experience across health and social welfare policy, project management and administration. This includes nine years in the senior executive service, where one of her focuses was system reform in mental health services.

Silvio Pontonio Director

Silvio has extensive experience as a health service program lead and executive director, both in Australia and with the National Health Service in the UK. He has a strong background in developing new and substitution programs across public, private and mental health settings.

Silvio is Director of Health Nexus Consulting.

Ryan D'Lima Director

Ryan has delivered a decade of dedicated service in the consumer and lived experience sector across private mental health hospitals, frontline peer roles and public mental health. This experience is at both state and national levels.

Ryan is Lived Experience Coordinator at Southern NSW Local Health District.

Fiona Bennett Director

Fiona is a Certified Practising Accountant. She has extensive experience in financial management, governance, audit, and risk management across listed companies, NSW Government and banking.

Fiona is Chair of Australian Mutual Bank and Deputy Chair of the Western NSW Local Health District.

Jane Stanton Director

Jane is a Fellow and Past President of Chartered Accountants Australia and New Zealand. She has extensive experience in risk management, governance, audit, and finance from her more than 25 years' experience in professional services and financial services.

Jane is Partner in Grant Thornton's Risk Consulting practice.

Financial report

Consolidated Statement of Profit or Loss and Other Comprehensive Income

For the year ended 30 June 2024

	2024 \$	2023 \$
Revenue	160,673,773	148,143,221
Other income	1,540,050	1,477,783
Unrealised gain on movement of investment	2,154,226	849,386
Employee benefits expenses	(124,009,418)	(114,985,018)
Office and occupancy expenses	(9,637,861)	(9,125,353)
Consortium expenses	(8,221,286)	(8,439,709)
Interest expenses	(425,466)	(171,639)
Other expenses	(7,694,035)	(7,918,835)
Depreciation and amortisation expenses	(7,114,659)	(6,559,831)
Surplus/(Deficit)	7,265,324	3,270,005
Other comprehensive income Items that will not be reclassified to profit or loss		
Revaluation of land and building	473,011	-
Other comprehensive income/(loss) for the period	473,011	-
Total comprehensive income/(loss) for the period	7,738,335	3,270,005

Consolidated Statement of Financial Position

As at 30 June 2024

	2024 \$	2023 \$
Assets		
Current Assets		
Cash and cash equivalent	34,082,471	39,763,490
Investments	16,947,559	20,498,137
Trade and other receivables	9,884,861	5,640,306
Total Current Assets	60,914,891	65,901,933
Non-Current Assets		
Investments	22,569,184	16,103,779
Property, plant and equipment	7,162,011	3,291,797
Right of use assets	7,959,424	6,504,858
Intangible assets	94,643	135,018
Total Non-Current Assets	37,785,262	26,035,452
Total Assets	98,700,153	91,937,385
Liabilities		
Current Liabilities		
Trade and other payables	8,284,594	7,960,889
Deferred income	30,292,494	33,222,607
Leasing liabilities	4,580,993	3,593,288
Provisions	12,980,644	13,235,032
Total Current Liabilities	56,138,725	58,011,816
Non-Current Liabilities		
Leasing liabilities	3,743,765	3,071,429
Provisions	2,614,543	2,389,355
Total Non-Current Liabilities	6,358,308	5,460,784
Total Liabilities	62,497,033	63,472,600
Net Assets	36,203,120	28,464,785
Equity		
Retained earnings	34,869,329	27,604,005
Reserve	1,333,791	860,780
Total Equity	36,203,120	28,464,785

For more detail, see the 2023–24 Annual Financial Statement available at <u>neaminational.org.au/annual-report</u>



and Wellbeing



Neami National Head office 4–8 Water Road Preston VIC 3072 03 8691 5300 hello@neaminational.org.au neaminational.org.au

