

Directions

Annual Report 2022-23



DIRECTIONS
HEALTH SERVICES



🌀 'Unknown' by Sarah Richards

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our organisation



Pathways Murrumbidgee
Griffith, NSW

● Leeton

Narrandera ●



● Gibraltar Falls, Tidbinbilla ACT

Our Vision

A compassionate society that takes an informed, health-first approach to alcohol and other drug use.

Our Purpose

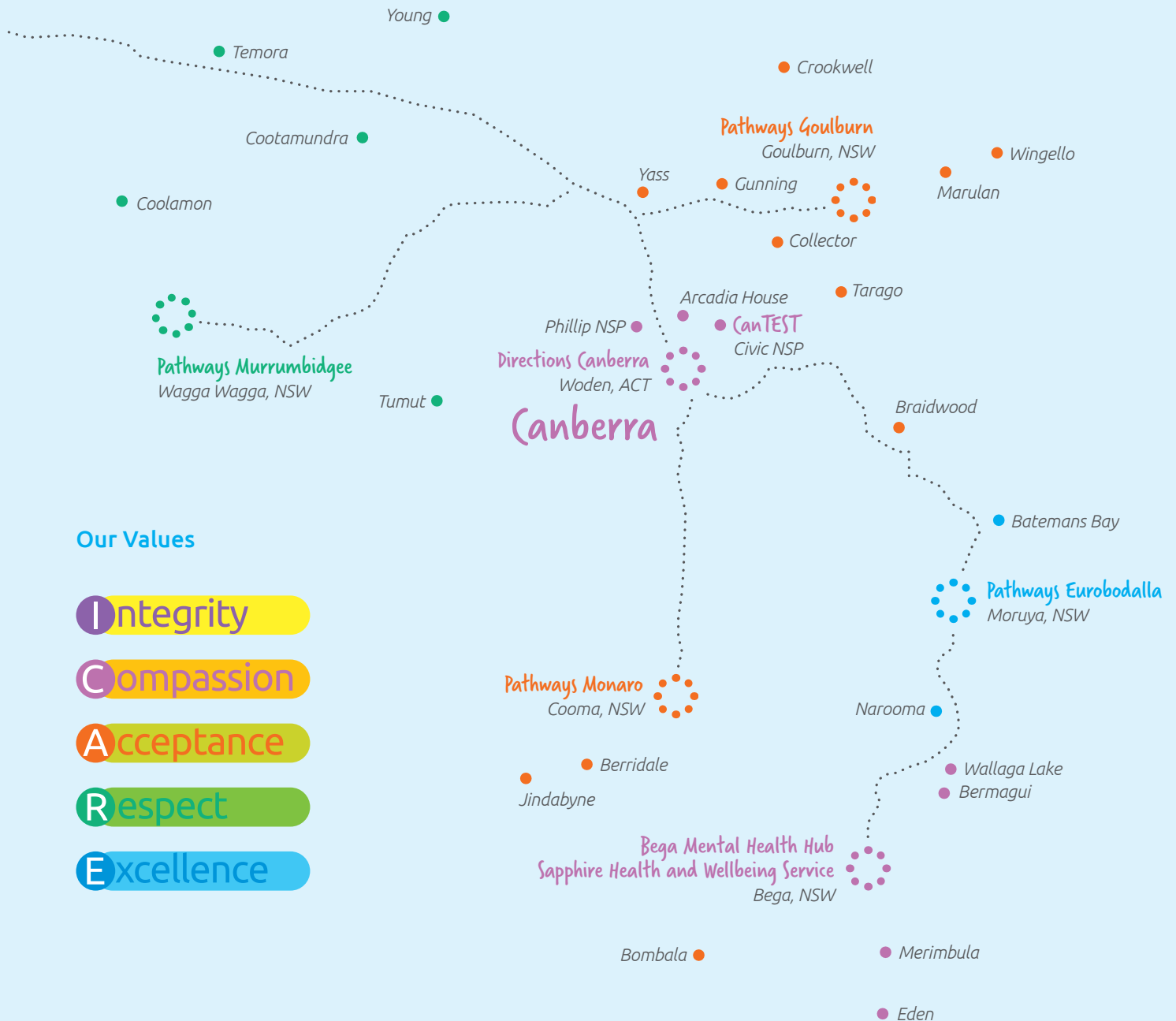
To empower individuals, families and communities by working in partnership, without judgement, to maximise health and wellbeing.

Directions Health Services acknowledges the traditional owners and custodians of the lands upon which we serve, their ancestors and elders both past and present, and other represented Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander nations. We are committed to actions that promote reconciliation and a positive future for all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.

Directions Health Services is a not-for-profit organisation which provides integrated services and programs to individuals, families, carers and friends impacted by alcohol, tobacco, other drug use, mental health and other complex health and wellbeing issues in the ACT and NSW.

Directions has been providing specialist alcohol and other drug (AOD) treatment, support and associated health and wellbeing services to individuals and

New South Wales



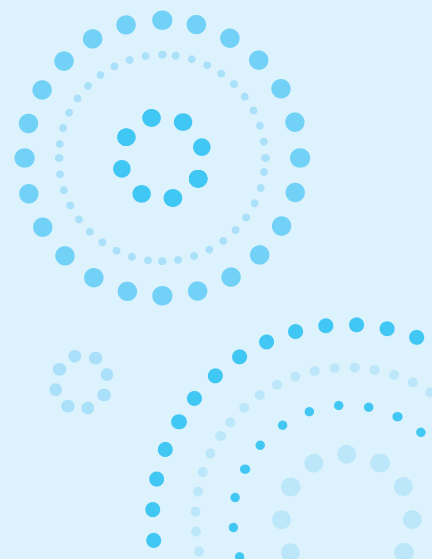
Our Values

- I**ntegrity
- C**ompassion
- A**cceptance
- R**espect
- E**xcellence

families for over 45 years, taking an innovative, collaborative approach to care that can respond to individual needs.

Directions works within a harm reduction approach, with a strong reputation for providing client-centred, respectful, non-judgmental care – working with each person regardless of where they are in the change process, and with family members and friends concerned about someone else’s AOD use.

Our evidence-based programs in the ACT and surrounding regions of NSW continue to evolve and expand to meet the diverse needs of the communities in which we work, including establishment of CanTEST, Australia’s first fixed-site Health and Drug Checking Service, and Directions Teen Clinic, a nurse-led drop-in health service for young people.





“Biggiebila” by Buddy Martin



Directions Health Services Chair
Justice Richard Refshaug

Chair's Report

As I reflect on the past year, I am filled with a profound sense of gratitude and accomplishment. We embarked together on a challenging journey that has been nothing short of remarkable and I am honoured to share with you the highlights and achievements of the 2022-23 financial year in this annual report.

CHAIR



Our collective efforts have not only met but exceeded expectations, illustrating the incredible power of innovation and collaboration within our community. This year stands as a testament to the dedication, passion, and resilience of each member involved, from everyone in our hardworking team to our valued partners and supporters.

A number of important initiatives showcased Directions' capacity to lead innovative health projects, mitigating the harms of drug use in our communities. These included the launch of CanTEST, Australia's inaugural fixed site drug checking service in July 2022, establishment of our nurse-led Teen Clinic service for youth and the Board's commitment to invest in enhancing services for individuals impacted by substance use disorders (AOD), mental illness and psychosocial disability.

In advocacy, Directions played a pivotal role in championing progressive policies, such as the decriminalisation of drugs in the ACT and advocating for improved health outcomes for individuals with complex needs, particularly addressing the challenges faced by people experiencing homelessness, all major impediments to harm minimisation and a just drug program.

March 2023 marked a comprehensive mid-review of Directions' Strategic Plan 2020-25 by our Board. This review confirmed that we are on track to achieving our objectives and served as a valuable platform to identify new strategies for enhancing

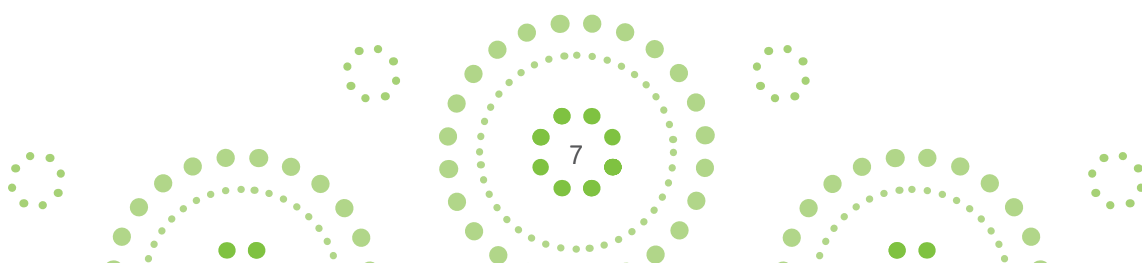
service delivery and exploring new business avenues.

In the face of challenges, we stood resilient, turning obstacles into opportunities, and forged ahead with our shared vision. I extend my deepest appreciation to our CEO, Bronwyn Hendry, whose unwavering commitment has propelled us to reach milestones that will change many lives, leave a lasting impact, and to all our staff for your passion and dedication in achieving our shared purpose.

I give special thanks to our Board Directors and dedicated subcommittees, notably our Community Advisory Group and the Finance, Audit and Risk Committee. Our Directors and subcommittees members have generously invested their time, skills, and resources to make Directions a force for positive change. I also express sincere thanks to Susan Helyar, our outgoing Board Director, for her valuable insights and contributions and wish her success in her future endeavours. We look forward to Kristen Connell joining us in the next financial year.

Thank you to everyone involved for being an integral part of this incredible journey of hope, success and massive value to the community. I am truly grateful for the opportunity to lead such an extraordinary organisation.

Here's to another year of growth, impact, and shared success!



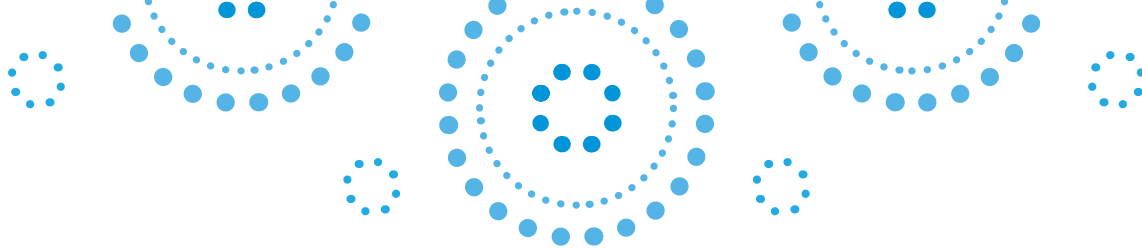


 Directions Health Services CEO
Bronwyn Hendry

CEO's Report

2022/23 has been another year when I can truly express how privileged I am to work for an incredible organisation that has continued to grow and innovate, and to work with such a capable and dedicated executive and staff team who never cease to amaze me in what they can achieve. The following are just a few of the highlights from this year.

CEO



We established Australia's First Health and Drug Checking Service, CanTEST with our partners Pill Testing Australia (PTA) and the Canberra Alliance Harm Minimisation and Advocacy (CAHMA), and successfully demonstrated that fixed-site drug checking services can reduce harms experienced by people who use illicit substances and save lives. CanTEST has been warmly welcomed by the community, and the information provided has not only benefited people in our region but also across Australia.

In partnership with YWCA, we also established Teen Clinic at Mura Youth and Community Centre

Chat to PAT added the Early Morning Centre (EMC) to the list of communities receiving outreach health care, funded by ACT Health, further increasing access to free health care for disadvantaged Canberrans.

We also have exciting new services on the horizon. We're looking forward to establishing a Mental Health Hub in Bega Valley, and expanding all our NSW services, with outreach to additional locations and increased access to treatment and support for people and with co-occurring conditions, young people and people exiting custody.

We are fortunate to be based in a jurisdiction that

"This service has helped the morale and health of the whole village immeasurably"

2022 Directions Health Services Client Satisfaction Questionnaire

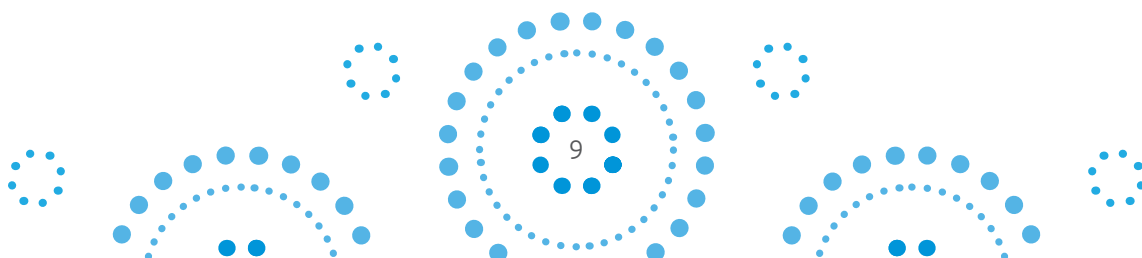
in Lanyon, providing an innovative and much needed free health service for young people, with links to local providers. We are very thankful of the support we received from Synergy Group, Snow Foundation and John James Foundation to sustain and expand Teen Clinic to other sites in our region in the coming year.

Our plans to expand services for people with co-occurring mental illness, substance use and other complex needs came to fruition this year. We established a community-based specialist psychiatry and psychosocial service, funded by Capital Health Network and Coordinare PHN, and adjusted our model of care at Arcadia House to increase access for people with co-occurring conditions.

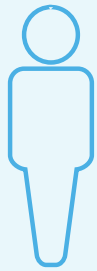
supports evidence-based drug policy and takes a health first approach to drug use. We are looking forward to implementation of decriminalisation in the ACT on 28 October 2023.

We couldn't do the work we do without the support of our funders, partners and local communities. We also really appreciate the wisdom provided by our Community Advisory Group and our staff with lived experience in developing new programs and continually improving our existing services.

A special thank you to our Board Chair A/Justice Richard Refshauge and our Directors for all their guidance and support to invest in new services and ways of working that can better meet the needs of our communities.



ACT Programs



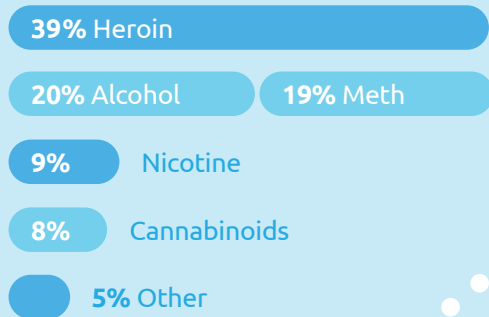
981
Individuals
received Althea
healthcare

Althea Wellness Centre

Althea Wellness Centre, funded by Capital Health Network and ACT Health, is a specialist primary health clinic providing GP, nursing, psychiatry, psychology, pharmacology and counselling services for individuals and their families impacted by current or past alcohol and other drug use, mental health and other complex health and wellbeing issues.

Althea's primary care services are provided from our clinic in Woden, ACT, as well as on outreach to the Needle & Syringe Program in Civic and Canberra Alliance for Harm Minimisation and Advocacy (CAHMA) in Belconnen. Althea staff also provide outreach services via Chat to PAT mobile clinic for people who have difficulty accessing mainstream health care at six different locations across Canberra.

Primary drug of concern



Butt it out

All clients undertaking an assessment with Directions undertake routine screening for nicotine. For people wanting to reduce or cease their nicotine use, counselling support and free Nicotine Replacement Therapy are provided. The Butt it Out Program is funded by ACT Health and supported by Cancer Council ACT.



100%

of clients surveyed were satisfied
with the service they received from
Althea Wellness Centre

2022 Client Satisfaction Questionnaire



6634

Total client
presentations

16 average client
presentations
per clinic



'Chat to PAT' is a purpose-built mobile clinic that provides wrap around health services and support to marginalised Canberrans who have difficulty accessing health services, including people who are homeless or experiencing significant disadvantage.

The service is provided by Directions' multi-disciplinary team which includes GPs, nurses, AOD practitioners and counsellors and mental health practitioners. The team provides primary health, mental health, drug and alcohol support and case management.

Overall, PAT provides a safe and trustworthy place for people to access care across the ACT, five days a week at six different locations, including large public housing complexes, Veterans Park and most recently, the Early Morning Centre, which was added in January 2023.

All clinics provided by PAT continue to receive strong community support and are well attended by PAT's target population – with demand continuing to increase as people find it increasingly difficult to access other primary health care in Canberra. The cohort of clients utilising PAT's services have complex health needs, with many having a disability, chronic health and mental health concerns alongside substance dependence, relationship issues, legal and housing issues.

This financial year, Capital Health Network (CHN) provided funding to enable Directions to establish a psychiatry service for people with cooccurring mental health and AOD issues. The psychiatrist visits one PAT outreach site each fortnight, extending specialist mental health care to a range of clients who would otherwise be unable to access it.

PAT continues to provide COVID, flu, Hepatitis B, Monkeypox and a range of other vaccinations to clients through regular service locations and through targeted pop-up vaccination clinics. PAT also provides screening for blood borne viruses, Hep C treatment, harm reduction information and advice, Naloxone and access to sterile injecting equipment and disposal bins. PAT provides access to the full range of Opioid Dependence Treatments and mental health treatments.

In 2022, the ACT Health Directorate (ACTHD) engaged the Australian National University to conduct an independent evaluation of the service. Overall, satisfaction of the service was extremely high, with the PAT team being the first contact that many respondents had with a GP in over 5 years, often due to cost and previous experiences of stigma and discrimination in mainstream care. Most survey respondents and interviewees stated they would not go elsewhere for health services if PAT was not available.

PAT is funded by Capital Health Network and ACT Government, and is supported by John James Foundation and a range of service partners.

24%

of clients surveyed identify as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander

"Staff in the PAT van are first class professionals providing excellent service and support"

67% **of clients** said having access to PAT reduced the need for them to go to the ED

72% **of clients** reported their health had improved since they started using PAT

63% **of clients** stated they would not attend another health service

83% **of clients** for whom substance use was relevant said PAT helped them better manage their alcohol and other drug use

2022 independent evaluation of 'Chat to PAT' conducted by Australian National University engaged by ACT Health Directorate



teen
clinic
Your clinic

Directions Teen Clinic Lanyon, ACT

Teen Clinic is a free nurse-led health and wellbeing service for young people provided in a safe and confidential space. The nurses who operate Teen Clinic provide teens the opportunity to talk about any health and wellbeing concerns they have, without judgement.

The service operated on a walk-in basis every Thursday afternoon during school terms. Teen Clinic's local partners include YWCA Mura Lanyon Youth and Community Centre, local GP practices, psychologists, pharmacies and Rotary Tuggeranong. Teen Clinic will be expanding to Tuggeranong College and Queanbeyan in the new financial year.

Teen Clinic is supported by the Snow Foundation, John James Foundation and Synergy Group.

.....
52 Individuals
over 192 visits
accessed service
.....

Main issues included:

- mental health support
- sexuality and gender
- contraception
- drugs and alcohol

Interventions offered:

- STI screening
- information about vaping
- pregnancy care
- family problems



Teen Clinic Practice Nurse Sandy Lendrum, Directions CEO Bronwyn Hendry, Minister for Health Rachel Stephen-Smith and YWCA Mura Lanyon Centre Manager Pip Northam

Arcadia House

Arcadia House is Directions' 12-bed Therapeutic Community nestled in a bushland setting within the grounds of North Canberra Hospital in Bruce, ACT. As a Therapeutic Community, the community itself, through self-help and mutual support, is the principle means for promoting personal change.

Arcadia offers a range of rehabilitation programs, including a 1-2 week withdrawal program, a 12 week day program and a 12 week residential program with additional 'step-down' 4 week day program.

Arcadia supports clients to abstain from alcohol, tobacco and other drugs and develop positive life skills that can be utilised to achieve personal goals and maintain a healthy lifestyle. Clients at Arcadia engage in individual case management and counselling, therapeutic groups and relapse prevention, with the therapeutic community providing opportunities for personal growth and peer support.

Arcadia House is accredited against the Australian Therapeutic Community Association Standards for Therapeutic Communities and Residential Rehabilitation Services, in addition to Directions' organisation-wide QIC accreditation. The programs are collectively funded by ACT Health, Capital Health Network PHN and Coordinare NSW PHN.

Primary drug of concern Arcadia clients



CanTEST Health & Drug Checking Service

CanTEST

HEALTH AND DRUG CHECKING SERVICE

70% of surveyed CanTEST users reported never previously accessing a healthcare worker for information or advice about drug use

1153 Total samples tested by CanTEST in its first year of operation

66% of CanTEST attendances an AOD and/or general health intervention was accepted



MDMA/ecstasy was the most common expected drug, followed by cocaine and ketamine

CanTEST provided free Naloxone to over 100 service users to take away

QR code link to final evaluation report

Demographics of clients

39%	aged <24	70%	identified as man or male
30%	aged 25-34	27%	as woman or female
17%	aged 35-44	3%	as non-binary or other term
14%	aged 45+		

"I think it's a really beneficial service...it just seems like the fact that it's easy and free and in a non-judgemental environment, it's kind of like, why wouldn't you find out what you're about to put in your body?"

"I didn't feel bad at all for doing that, but they also weren't endorsing it. It was a very...neutral education approach to it, which I really appreciated"

"It felt like a group conversation that was very safe"

Client quotes



CanTEST Health & Drug Checking Service opened in July 2022, funded by ACT Health. Directions operates the service in partnership with Canberra Alliance for Harm Minimisation and Advocacy (CAHMA) and Pill Testing Australia (PTA).

CanTEST's free services include chemical analysis of illicit substances, as well as tailored harm reduction advice and counselling based on the test results, and support with any other AOD or health related issues. The service is staffed by chemical analysts, harm reduction workers, peer workers and nurses.

CanTEST was initially established as a six month pilot. Independent evaluation was undertaken by ANU School of Medicine and Psychology. The evaluation demonstrated the benefits of

CanTEST in reducing the risk of actual and potential harms, including overdose and death, for people accessing the service. CanTEST test results and harm reduction information is also widely promulgated throughout Australia, extending the potential benefits to other people in the community intent on consuming illicit substances. The ACT Government has extended funding for the service to December 2024.

CanTEST's free and confidential services are available 3pm to 6pm each Thursday and 6pm to 9pm each Friday, with extended hours in the lead up to major festivals/events.

Needle & Syringe Program



NSP Peer Educator Kerrie McKenzie, Directions' CEO Bronwyn Hendry and NSP Coordinator Tammy Waters at NSP Civic

9555 Total attendances

98% of survey respondents felt that their needs were met by the Needle & Syringe Program

37 clients accessed free on-site primary health services

"They're non-judgemental, friendly and an essential service"

"Very very grateful to Directions. They saved my life."

Client quotes from 2022 Client Satisfaction Questionnaire

The Needle & Syringe Program (NSP), funded by ACT Health, is a public health measure that provides sterile injecting equipment to improve health outcomes for people who inject drugs and reduce the spread of blood borne viruses in our community.

The primary NSPs are located in Civic and Phillip in the ACT and supply a full range of free injecting equipment and condoms, information on safe injecting practices, harm reduction and health protection measures, healthcare and support.

Althea Wellness Centre provide outreach services to the NSP Civic location, offering free health checks, blood borne screening, and treatment & referral for a range of acute and chronic health conditions. Free frozen meals are available at both Civic and Phillip NSPs through the Directions Healthy Food Healthy Me program, with support from Arcadia House staff and clients.

In partnership with CAHMA, the NSP provided free life-saving naloxone nasal spray (Nyxoid) and training on how to recognise and respond to a possible overdose.

Free sterile injecting equipment can also be obtained from over 30 secondary sites around the ACT, purchased from over 40 participating pharmacies and from vending machines throughout Canberra.

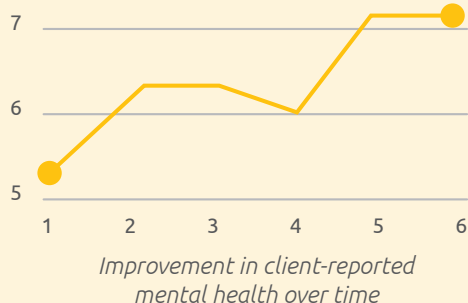
Treatment & Support Services



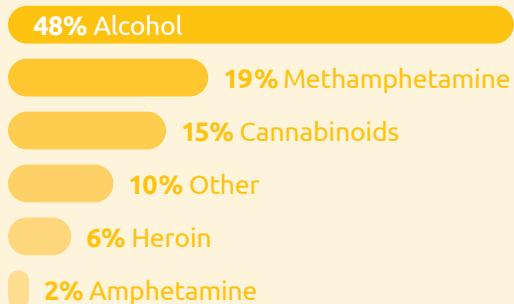
'River Dreaming' by Karen Lee

1783 individuals

TSS Improvements in Mental Health



Primary drug of concern TSS clients



Directions' ACT Treatment & Support Services (TSS) include a range of community-based services for individuals, families and friends impacted by alcohol, tobacco and other drug issues. Funded primarily by ACT Health, TSS offers clients at all stages of change a range of harm-minimisation-based interventions, therapeutic treatment and supports.

TSS utilises a stepped model of care, with a focus on treatment matching and 'right place, right time' support options for individuals wishing to address their substance use, or other issues and for family members and friends affected by another person's use.

TSS offers in-person services from our office in Woden, ACT. In addition, the team provide outreach services to multiple sites throughout the ACT each week including large public housing complexes, Veterans Park, the Early Morning Centre, Adult Mental Health Unit (AMHU) Canberra Hospital, headspace Canberra, headspace Tuggeranong and Meridian.

A range of therapeutic support and self-help groups are facilitated from our office in Woden, with the addition of a weekly Meditation and Mindfulness Group this year.

TSS established Alongside psychosocial support services for people with co-occurring mental illness and substance use this financial year, funded by Capital Health Network.

NSW Programs

The Pathways and SHaWS programs in NSW use an intensive, community-based case management and counselling model, underpinned by harm minimisation, with services offering tailored support for clients in all stages of change.

The services work closely with Local Health District Mental Health and Drug and Alcohol services, Department of Communities and Justice, local GPs and other NGO services in their regions.

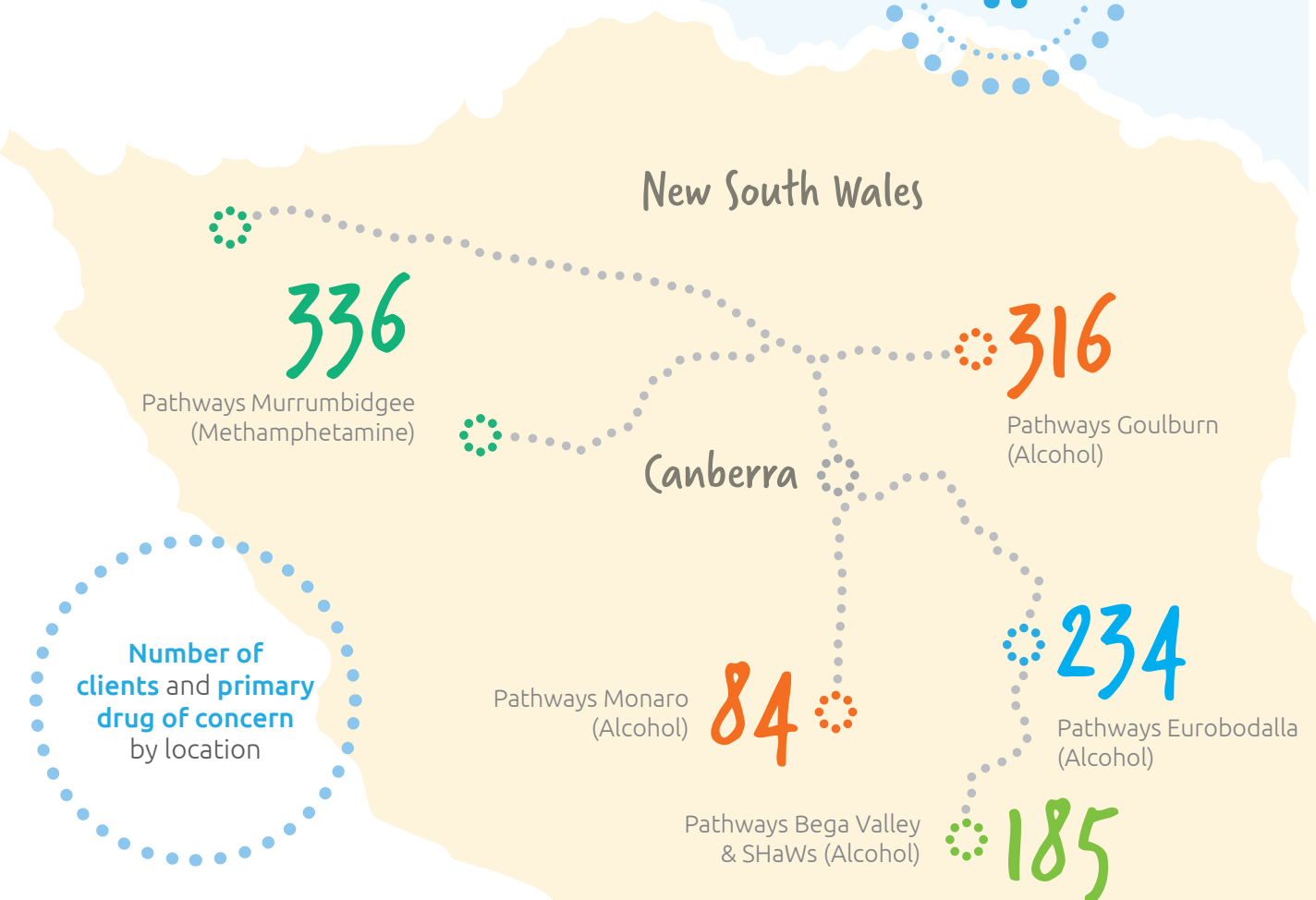


100%

of clients surveyed would come back to Pathways if they needed to seek help in the future

22%

of clients identify as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander





 Pathways Eurobodalla Team, South Coast, NSW

Pathways Eurobodalla

Pathways Eurobodalla is funded by Coordinare – South Eastern NSW PHN.

Pathways Eurobodalla is based in Moruya and provides services to surrounding towns, including Batemans Bay, Narooma and Wallaga Lake. Throughout this year, our team provided support to 234 people and have continue to provide online SMART Recovery groups.

The team have worked hard to maintain strong connections with both government and non-government community services, building a strong relationship with the LHD, NSW Corrections, Campbell page (local Drug Action Group), South Coast Aboriginal Medical Service, Women’s Domestic Violence Advocacy Service, Waminda, Justice Health and PCYC. We have also actively participated in the Community Alliance Meetings facilitated by Narooma Police and maintaining a trusted presence in the local community.

Pathways Goulburn Region

Pathways Goulburn, delivered in partnership with Ted Noffs Foundation, is unded by NSW Ministry of Health and Coordinare PHN.

Staff provide outreach and visiting services to surrounding towns, including Yass, Braidwood, Gunning and Crookwell. This year the Pathways Goulburn team have been facilitating SMART Recovery and Methamphetamine Awareness & Prevention Groups on a regular basis.

The Pathways Goulburn dices underwent renovations which increased disability accessibility and improved counselling spaces, including a designated child-friendly space for clients attending appointments.

Pathways Monaro

Pathways Monaro is funded by Coordinare PHN.

Pathways Monaro is based in Cooma, with sta providing outreach to surrounding towns, including Jindabyne, Berridale and Bombala.

This year the Pathways Monaro team have been working hard to respond to the increasing demand across the region and develop great relationships with key services such as GPH, Wellways, MCAS, LHD and NSW Corrections.

Pathways Murrumbidgee

Pathways Murrumbidgee is funded by Murrumbidgee PHN, NSW Ministry of Health and the NSW Government Department of Regional NSW.

Pathways Murrumbidgee have primary locations in Wagga Wagga and Griffith, with staff providing outreach to surrounding towns, including Tumut, Young, Cootamundra, Temora, Narrandera and Leeton.



 *Burrill Lake bridge, South Coast, NSW*

This year Pathways Murrumbidgee received a Stronger Country Communities grant targeting Griffith and Leeton townships, with a focus on community intervention and early education. The team have been providing regular AOD Harm Reduction presentations in local high schools which have been well received and continue to be in high demand.

The Pathways Murrumbidgee teams in Wagga Wagga and Griffith have introduced ADAPT (Alcohol Drug Awareness Harm Prevention Training) Groups on a weekly basis, which offers a three-session program open to anyone thinking of changing or adapting their alcohol or drug use.

Sapphire Health & Wellbeing Service

Sapphire Health & Wellbeing Service (SHaWS) is funded by Coordinare PHN.

SHaWS is an innovative program delivered by a consortium, led by Directions Health Services, in collaboration with Grand Pacific Health, Katungul Aboriginal Corporation Health and Community

Service and partner GP practices Bega Valley Medical Practice, Curalo Medical Clinic (Eden), Bermagui Medical Centre and Cobargo Doctors.

SHaWS is based in Bega, with staff providing outreach to surrounding towns, including Eden, Bermagui, Cobargo and Wallaga Lake.

The focus is now on looking at innovative ways to engage hard-to-reach populations in these communities. The Team are facilitating SMART Recovery groups and are connecting with the Eden Aboriginal community through activities such as fishing groups.

SHaWS participated in the Mental Health Capacity Building Project run by The Matilda Centre, University of Sydney. The feedback was very positive, and the service was assessed as 'Dual Diagnosis Capable'.



🌀 'Healing Ceremony' by Julianne Williams

Our People

(HR & operations)

During 2022-23, Directions strong leadership and positive culture provided a solid foundation to successfully steer the organisation through another busy year of growth. Our amazing and dedicated staff continue to go above and beyond in supporting our clients and community. They are by far, our greatest asset.

Flexible working arrangements

Directions continues to provide staff with access to a variety of flexible working options, assisting them in balancing their professional and personal commitments, and study options that support their professional development. Following the COVID-19 pandemic in 2021-22, staff have transitioned back to the workplace, some under a hybrid work model, which offers the ability to combine office-based and remote work. Building staff capability and providing them with the tools to work efficiently, effectively, and collaboratively, regardless of physical location, has been an important priority.

Workforce Inclusivity and Diversity

Directions is committed to and respects the importance of workplace diversity and inclusion and how it enriches our workplace to help deliver the best health outcomes for our clients.

To improve our workplace cultural competency, staff are required to complete cultural awareness and strengths-based training which is offered frequently each year.

In addition to National Reconciliation Week and NAIDOC Week activities, all staff were encouraged to take assertive action to advance reconciliation throughout the year.

"There is a very healthy team dynamic, all staff have been flexible and adapt well to changing situations. Knowledge and expertise is shared between members of the team and there is always support readily available".

2022 Staff Satisfaction Survey

We continued to make sure all our workspaces are safe and welcoming places for LGBTIQ+ staff and community members. Positive feedback was received from clients and family members, staff, and stakeholders about the feeling of inclusion created.

Directions staff were also offered the option of having their personal pronouns included in their email signatures and participating in celebrating important dates such as Wear it Purple Day to show LGBTIQ+ and young people that we see them, we appreciate them, and that they can feel very proud of who they are.

"The work environment and culture is fantastic"

2022 Staff Satisfaction Survey

Work Health and Safety (WHS)

As staff welfare is a key priority for Directions, we have embedded an organisational culture that effectively manages work health and safety risks and fosters behaviours to sustain healthy and safe workplaces.

“Senior management genuinely want to see me do well not just within our organisation, but my overall life”

2022 Staff Satisfaction Survey

We consider WHS in all our operational decision making. We have a range of policies, procedures, and practices to appropriately protect staff from and respond to potential hazards and we have enhanced our incident reporting, which is now available on-line.

We provide opportunities for external clinical supervision for all client facing staff to assist staff with debriefing and managing complex and stressful situations, further develop our capacity to provide high quality client services. We also provide access to all staff to the Employee Assistance Program (EAP).

Initiatives we implemented to ensure the safety of our staff included:

- Access to free on-site flu and COVID vaccinations for all staff
- Tailored support to staff with reasonable adjustments
- Risk assessments tailored to individual needs for working safely in the office or remotely
- A staged approach to transitioning staff to working back in the office

100 Employees at
30 June 2023

39% full time

32% part time

29% casuals

Staff Tenure

by percent %

25% <1yr

23% 1-2yrs

29% 3-5yrs

16% 6-10yrs

7% >10yrs



7% Staff





Directions' CEO Bronwyn Hendry and COO Stephanie Stephens presenting at the 27th Harm Reduction International Conference

Quality

Directions has maintained a focus on developing robust systems and processes to support the delivery of our services. We challenge ourselves to continually improve - to scaffold our staff, to support our clients and to maintain best practice.

Directions is driving service innovation with the expansion of our program scope to more richly integrate mental health services with AOD treatment and support – including the introduction of our ACT Psychiatric and psychosocial support program, Alongside; our successful bid to deliver the Bega Mental Health Hub, and recently funded and soon to be implemented expansions of our regional NSW Pathways programs to expand our multidisciplinary model of care for people with co-occurring substance use, mental health and primary health needs. We are also refining our systems to accommodate the needs of a more complex client group. Our quality processes have needed to develop along with this growth and innovation, particularly our processes and tools, and our ATOM (Assessment, Treatment and Outcome Measure) has been customised to meet the needs of these new services.

During 2023, Directions' innovative, multi-disciplinary SHaWS model of care for people with co-occurring substance use and mental health needs (as well as the internal frameworks and processes guiding and supporting this model)

were audited and validated by The Matilda Centre for Research in Mental Health and Substance Use. Directions was one of only four (4) organisations selected to participate in this project to identify the capability needs of the AOD sector to work with people with co-occurring needs, and the only community-based service participating in the project. Directions achieved a rating of Dual Diagnosis Capable, the only participating organisation to do so.

In rating Directions as Dual Diagnosis Capable, the Matilda Centre particularly noted the strengths of our 'organisational culture of social inclusion and respect for clients', and our 'strong focus on the provision of holistic, client-centred care that directly addresses both a client's substance use as well as their mental health'. This speaks directly to Directions' fundamental organisational priorities, which in turn underpin the development of our quality processes – ensuring that our services are accessible and inclusive; and supporting our clients holistically, recognising that their substance use does not occur in isolation from their other life systems. Directions is preparing to undertake re-accreditation in 2024 against the three sets of industry quality standards that we currently hold (QIP, AGPAL and ATCA) as well as introducing two mental health-oriented standards to our accreditation portfolio – the National Standards for Mental Health Services and the Suicide Prevention Australia Standards for Quality Improvement.



Finance & ICT

Finance

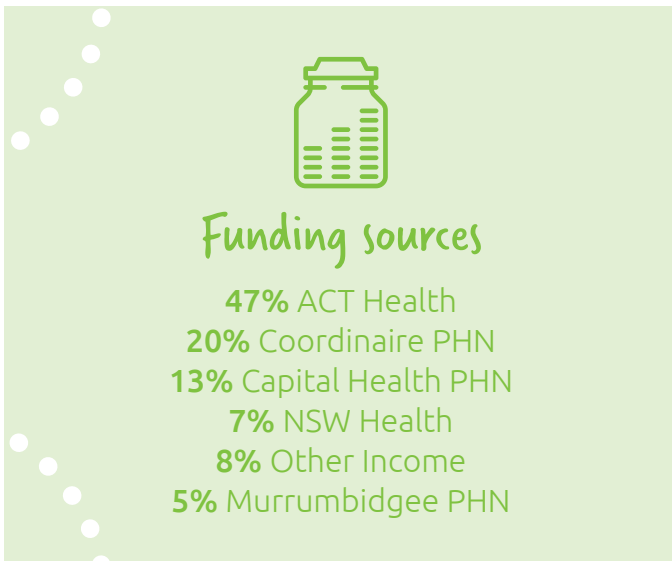
Total funding income and other revenue for 2022/23 increased by \$840,638 and \$192,028 respectively, compared to the previous financial year. **This 10% increase resulted in total revenues of \$11,664,178.**

Despite the growth in funding and services over the past year, overhead costs as a proportion of total costs have largely remained constant. Directions

continues to review its overhead expenses to ensure it receives maximum value for every dollar spent.

Directions recognises that long-term financial sustainability is essential to ensure quality services are provided well into the future. Continuous efforts are made to build reserves to secure the organisation’s long-term viability. However, due to one-off unbudgeted expenditure for insurance and wages that were incurred during the year, Directions made a small deficit of \$59,377.

This resulted in total accumulated reserves of \$1,224,434 as at 30 June 2023.



ICT

2022/23 was the year in which normal service delivery resumed after almost three years of COVID-19 affected operations, when working from home became the exception rather than the norm. The Information and Communications Technology (ICT) team continued to assist the teams returning to work to ensure the smooth transition to working from the office.

Continuous improvements were made to ATOM, the organisation’s inhouse developed data gathering and outcome reporting software to ensure it's compatibility with the diverse programs that use it.

The ICT team also implemented Best Practice, a new practice management software. This software will assist GPs working in Althea to provide Care Plans and better manage patient information.

The ICT team met all its mandatory reporting obligations for new and existing programs and continues to be provide prompt and uninterrupted support to the organisation.



Engaging Community

The value of our client's voices

Directions invites feedback from our clients across a range of mechanisms, including via our annual Client Satisfaction Survey, our Feedback and Complaints process and through our Community Advisory Group (CAG).

Client participation in Directions 2022 Client Satisfaction Survey (CSQ) exceeded expectations, with a 37% increase on 2021. 99% of all clients who participated were satisfied with the services they received from Directions, whilst 88% of respondents reported that Directions helped them with difficulties in other areas of their life, apart from their substance use – such as mental and physical health and wellbeing, everyday living, relationships, housing and, legal issues. Mental health continued to be the most significant issue for CSQ respondents, with 77% indicating that Directions had provided assistance with their mental health.

Directions' committed CAG continues to represent the perspectives and experiences of our clients to our Executive team and our Board of Directors. CAG members are individuals and family members who have accessed Directions' services. They draw from their lived experience to provide feedback on Directions' services and guidance around the needs of our clients, to inform service development and improvement. CAG's insights are invaluable to Directions, enabling us to continually improve the ways in which we support people and to tailor our services to meet client need.

The Arcadia Graduates Aftercare Program (AGAP) provides social connection for Arcadia House graduates and a forum in which to bring ideas and thoughts on recovery. The AGAP aims to offer hope and support to new graduates and current residents, especially in the early days, and to have a network that is responsive and supportive.

The value of partnerships

For the 7th year, Directions co-hosted the ACT Community Sector NAIDOC Week event, in partnership with 11 other community sector organisations, to celebrate Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures. This has become a key event in the NAIDOC Week calendar, with the event growing significantly year on year and increasing numbers of community members attending. The ACT Community Sector NAIDOC Week event is a medium through which we cultivate and nurture our relationships with First Nations communities. This is particularly significant for Directions, as we progress the development of our Stretch RAP. This year our partners across our programs and services have included:

- ACT Cancer Council
- ACT Pathology
- Argyle ACT Housing
- CAHMA
- Canberra Sexual Health Services
- CHA Mental Health & Drug & Alcohol Services
- Early Morning Centre
- Grand Pacific Health
- headspace Canberra & Tuggeranong
- Interchange Co-op Tuggeranong
- The Junction
- Katungul Aboriginal Corporation Regional Health & Community Services
- Legal Aid
- Meridian
- Northside Community Services
- Onelink
- Orange Sky Laundry
- Pill Testing Australia
- Reclink
- Vinnies
- YWCA

The value of community support

Directions has again been fortunate to receive support from the community throughout 2022/23, with donations received from:

- Synergy
- Givit
- Hands Across Canberra
- John James Foundation
- Pinchapoo
- Good 360
- Ozharvest
- Share the Dignity



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