

# Directions

Annual Report 2024-25



DIRECTIONS  
HEALTH SERVICES



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# our organisation



Kingston, ACT

## our Values

- I:ntegrity
- C:ompassion
- A:ccptance
- R:espect
- E:xcellence

## 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.

Pathways Murrumbidgee  
Griffith, NSW

Leeton

Narrandera

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

Directions also acknowledges the valuable contributions people with lived experience and other diverse cultures, identities and lifestyles make to our services and our communities.

# New South Wales



Directions Health Services is a not-for-profit organisation delivering integrated, evidence-based programs to individuals, families, carers and communities affected by alcohol, tobacco and other drug use, mental health challenges, and other complex health and social issues. For almost 50 years, Directions has provided person-centered, respectful, and non-judgmental care, working from a harm reduction framework that supports people at all stages in their journey.

Operating across the ACT and regional NSW – including the Murrumbidgee, Goulburn, Eurobodalla, Monaro and Bega Valley regions – Directions offers a comprehensive range of flexible and complementary programs, including early intervention, primary and specialist treatment and support, health and drug checking, needle and syringe programs and a range of other harm reduction services.

In 2024–25, Directions continued to expand and adapt our services in response to the growing needs of our communities. This included strengthening programs for young people and families, enhancing co-occurring mental health and AOD support, and continuing to lead the way in Australia-first harm reduction programs.

Our work remains grounded in collaboration, with clients, communities and sector partners, and driven by a vision for a compassionate society that takes an informed, health-first approach to alcohol and other drug use. Our strong advocacy continues to focus on reducing stigma, improving service access, and addressing systemic barriers for marginalised populations.



Directions Health Services Chair  
the Hon Richard Refshauge AM SC FAAL

# Chair's Report

I am pleased to report on another impactful and forward-looking year for Directions Health Services (Directions).

This year marked significant progress in both the continuation and expansion of our services across the ACT and regional NSW.

As we continue to grow, our leadership, compassion and resilience remain central to supporting people across these regions.



We continued to deliver to the community the essential marks of respect for our clients and a commitment to advocate for a society based on the evidence that our work delivers in the path towards better outcomes for every member of our community.

Through successful commissioning outcomes, we strengthened our long-standing programmes, including Treatment & Support Services, Arcadia House, our primary health clinic, Althea Wellness Centre and the Needle Exchange Program, affirming the quality, impact of our work and the trust that we have gratefully received and which, through the work of all members of Directions, successfully earned. We also expanded our Primary Health Services for Young People, securing funding to grow the rebranded T25 Clinic across the ACT and NSW. In our NSW operations, our full range of innovative services has been implemented successfully, achieving strong outcomes and reaching communities in greatest need, including people leaving custody, young people and LGBTQIA+ communities. In the Bega region, a newly funded Men's Cultural Group and the service supporting families, carers and friends have been warmly welcomed and actively utilised by the community.

This year, Directions participated in both the regional NSW Drug Summit in Griffith and the main Summit in Sydney. Key priorities, including decriminalisation of drug use and implementing drug checking, remain central to our advocacy. We know that these reduce harm to the whole community and are evidence based. As the ACT nears two years of implementing drug decriminalisation, we aim to share insights with other jurisdictions and continue advocating for a health-first approach to drug use which the evidence of this reform has delivered.

Our strategic partnerships also continued to deepen and expand, ensuring that people in regional areas have access to essential,

coordinated care. Looking ahead, we are keen to embrace more strategic opportunities that support Directions' goals to contribute meaningfully to the community within our areas of focussed service delivery.

In response to our significant growth, we commissioned an external review of our corporate and management needs. The findings, which we are in the process of implementing, will strengthen our foundations and help us manage the expanding programmes and partnerships remaining committed to our core values. We are also updating our five-year Strategic plan to align our future direction with emerging needs in the alcohol and other drugs sector but also the more broader health sectors. I thank the members of the Board and the staff who have contributed most helpfully to this process.

On behalf of the board, I extend my sincere thanks to our thoughtful and successful CEO, Bronwyn Hendry, and her wonderful executive team for their strong leadership and strategic vision. I also thank our dedicated and amazing staff, each of whom delivers high-quality services that reflect our values and of which the Board is so proud.

I thank each of the members of our Board of Directors, who have given generously of their time, expertise and thoughtful guidance. It has been really valuable and contributed to the success of the organisation. I thank, too, the members of our Finance, Audit and Risk Committee, Community Advisory Group and Youth Advisory Group, who have helped us to ensure we have sound governance and, essentially, keep lived experience central to our work.

As we look forward to the future, we do so with optimism, purpose and a deep commitment to shaping policy, driving systemic change, and delivering innovative, client-centred care while providing excellent support to the communities we serve.



Directions Health Services CEO  
Bronwyn Hendry

# CEO's Report

This has been a momentous year for Directions. We were very pleased to have the opportunity to expand our services across our NSW footprint, with a number of innovative programs implemented that better meet the needs of specific population groups, including young people, people with co-occurring needs, people exiting custodial settings and people with access barriers outside the main population centres.





Our drop-in primary health services for young people, T25 Clinic, which also provides more intensive, wrap around support for young people as needed, was established in four new locations across Canberra, with additional pop-up clinics at a number of schools.

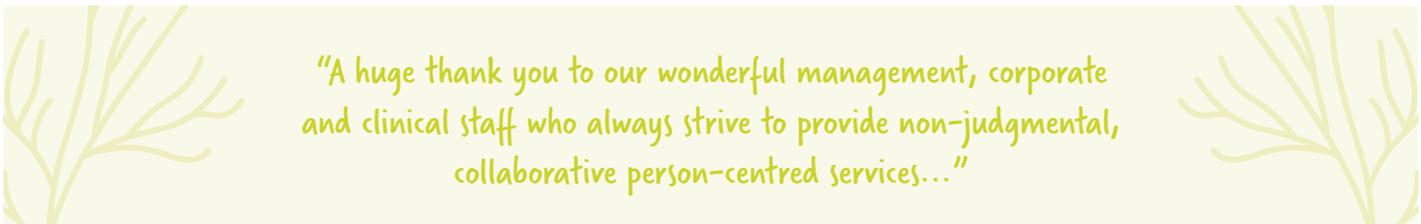
We were also fortunate to successfully secure funding to continue our treatment and support, rehabilitation and harm reduction services in the ACT, and we appreciate the certainty that seven-year grant funding provides for our staff and our clients.

The corporate and service delivery teams worked hard to ensure everything went as smoothly as possible, ensuring rapid access for clients to the new services. In recognition of our continued growth, we undertook a review of our corporate and

In addition to funding from government agencies and primary health networks across ACT and NSW, we also benefited from the generosity of philanthropic organisations and individuals in the ACT. This funding enables us to maintain our core services whilst also piloting new programs that can better respond to the needs of the communities in which we work.

A huge thank you to our wonderful management, corporate and clinical staff who share our goal of providing non-judgmental, collaborative person-centred services that support our clients to improve their health and well-being, and achieve their goals.

Thank you also to our Board Chair, Richard Refshauge and Board Directors, whose commitment, good governance, support and sage advice provides the stable platform from which we can innovate and continually improve our services.



*“A huge thank you to our wonderful management, corporate and clinical staff who always strive to provide non-judgmental, collaborative person-centred services...”*

management structures to determine how we could best deploy our resources to support our service delivery teams. We look forward to progressively implementing the review recommendations in 2025/26, alongside the implementation of our new Strategic Plan 2026 – 2030 and our Stretch RAP.

We couldn't have achieved all this without our many service partners, and the valuable input from people with lived experience, including our Community Advisory and Youth Advisory Groups, our staff with lived experience and our partnership with Canberra Alliance for Harm Minimisation and Advocacy (CAHMA).

We take heart from the positive outcomes from the health-first drug policy approach in the ACT, including the implementation of health and drug checking services and decriminalization of personal drug. We look forward to the two year evaluation, and hope this will guide the way for implementation of more progressive drug policies in other Australian jurisdictions. We also look forward to ACT Government Commissioning of Mental Health Services in 2026, and the potential for improved responses for people with co-occurring needs.

# Finance & ICT



## Finance

In the 2024/25 financial year, Directions continued to grow, with overall funding income and other revenue increasing by \$4.3 million, representing a 27.8% rise compared to the previous year. Despite this growth in funding and services, overhead costs as a proportion of total expenditure have remained relatively low. Directions maintains a strong focus on reviewing overhead expenditures to ensure value for money and impact when utilising funds. Long-term financial sustainability remains a key priority, underpinning our ability to deliver high-quality services into the future. We continue to aim to build modest financial reserves to safeguard the organisation's long-term stability.

## ICT

As the organisation continues to grow, the ICT team has played a pivotal role in supporting the launch of new programs and services, training staff on the effective use of systems, and leveraging organisational data to deliver meaningful insights for service delivery and business development.

The team is progressing several major initiatives, including the implementation of a new intranet designed to enhance collaboration across teams and strengthen internal communication. In parallel, the organisation's file server is being migrated to Microsoft 365, offering benefits such as improved accessibility, enhanced data security and seamless integration with everyday productivity tools.



 Snow Gums, Cooma, NSW

In addition, the team has begun strengthening the organisation's cybersecurity posture by achieving Level 2 compliance with the Australian Government's Essential Eight Framework. The ICT team are also supporting the transition to Health Connect — a tailored application used by clinical staff to conduct client assessments, record outcome measures and support clients to achieve their goals. These projects are ongoing while the team continues to provide responsive support to staff across all our clinics and outreach sites to ensure the smooth operation of the organisation's digital systems.



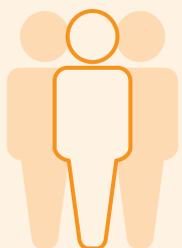
## Funding sources

- 36% ACT Health
- 32% NSW Health
- 9% Coordinaire PHN
- 12% Capital Health PHN
- 9% Other Income
- 2% Murrumbidgee PHN



## Where did our funds go

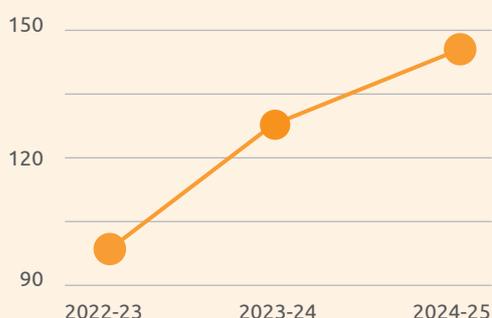
- 74% Employment
- 16% Office and program running
- 6% Accommodation
- 4% NSP and medical equipment and supplies



# 99%

2024-25 staff believed that Directions' work positively impacts lives

## Total number of staff



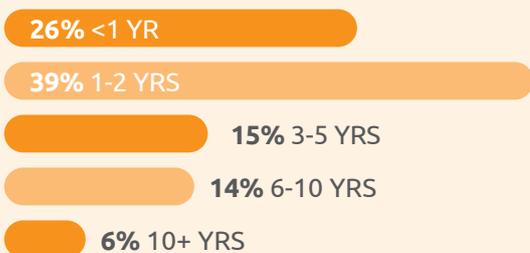
## Total Employees

by percent %



## Staff Tenure

by percent %



# Our People

Directions' growing workforce is located across 13 sites in the ACT and the surrounding Southern and Southeast NSW regions. Staff also provide regular outreach services to numerous locations in ACT and across regional NSW.

Directions supported a total of 9 student placements this year across our programs and services, undertaking medical, social work, counselling and AOD studies.

Professional development has been a key focus this year, with four Directions Team Leaders supported to complete a Diploma of Leadership and Management, and additional team members undertaking the course in 2025/26. Many staff across all areas also utilised Directions' generous study leave to advance their practice and skills this year.

Staff across all regions were supported to complete a wide variety of trainings and professional development opportunities across the following categories;

- Professional conduct, communication and leadership
- Cultural competency and diversity
- Mental health, trauma and wellbeing
- AOD and comorbidity trainings, including Train the Trainer
- Evidence based interventions
- Family and domestic violence
- Safety, risk and crisis response
- Practice development and supervision
- Health and wellbeing



Pathways Murrumbidgee staff at the Medicare Mental Health Centre opening day in Wagga Wagga

## Diversity & inclusion

Directions continues to ensure services are inclusive by developing a workforce that represents the communities we serve. In 2024/25:

- 11% of staff identified as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander;
- 11% identified as culturally and/or linguistically diverse;
- 19% identified as LGBTQIA+;
- 8% reported that they live with disability; and,
- 6% reported neurodiversity.

Our staff feel supported in their diversity. Staff reported this year that “Directions is the most inclusive and diverse organisation that I have had the pleasure of working with - all staff (are able) to feel comfortable showcasing their authenticity.”

Our inclusive approach ensures that diverse clients feel comfortable accessing our services. In the 2024/25 Client Satisfaction Questionnaire (CSQ):

- 13% reported Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander heritage
- 3% identified as culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD)
- 11% identified as LGBTQAI+
- 46% reported that they lived with a disability

100% of our Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander clients and 94% of our other diverse clients reported that they were satisfied with the services they received from Directions, and would come back to Directions in the future if they needed assistance.

We continued our Reconciliation initiatives and drafted our new STRETCH Reconciliation Action Plan this year, including increased provisions for Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander staff.

# Quality





In line with our strategic objective to maintain robust systems and processes, Directions has embarked on a number of extensive quality improvement (QI) initiatives throughout 2024/2025, to:

- improve our internal service delivery and corporate processes;
- streamline our approach to assessing our clients' needs, identifying their service goals and measuring their outcomes;
- enhance our data collection and reporting capabilities; and,
- broaden our capacity to manage and share information and collaborate internally.

Directions' staff have been integral to these developments, proactively identifying areas for improvement and providing valuable insights to inform both systems design and functionality, ultimately resulting in better care for clients.

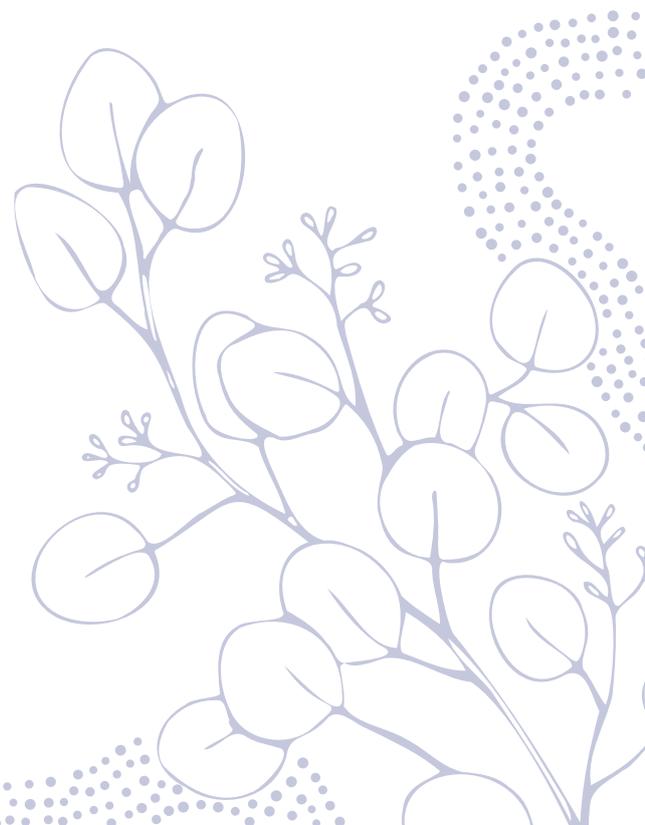
Of particular note, is the review and enhancement project undertaken to streamline and upgrade our ATOM (assessment tool and outcome measure). The rapid expansion of our services over the past few years has resulted in a much broader and more diverse service offering across a range of co-occurring issues. This has required capability in data collection, analysis and reporting. The changes entailed detailed scoping to identify the right host system; extensive consultation to ensure that our assessments are fit-for-purpose for both clients and clinicians and facilitate the delivery of holistic services; and reflect a healthy appetite for innovation.

The ATOM enhancement project will enable us to:

- better meet the clinical needs of our clients and staff;
- improve the service experience of clients;
- better understand the outcomes experienced by clients;
- undertake robust evaluation of our services; and,
- future-proof our organisational capabilities.

As we move from the development phase to implementation, we are progressively migrating our programs to these new systems.

Since achieving accreditations against five (5) industry-specific standards during 2024 (QIP, Mental Health, RACGP, ATCA & Suicide Prevention), we have continued progressing QI initiatives that will further strengthen our quality improvement processes. We have also focused on progressing development of our Child Safety Framework, in line with the National Principles for Child Safe Organisations.



# ACT Programs



🌳 Lake Burley Griffin, Canberra, ACT

## Althea Wellness Centre

Althea Wellness Centre is Directions' primary and specialist health service, providing comprehensive integrated care for people whose health is impacted by current or past alcohol or drug use, mental health and other complex health and social issues. The multidisciplinary team is comprised of GPs, nurses, mental health clinicians, psychiatrist, AOD practitioners and non-dispensing pharmacist. Althea's services are integrated with other



specialist AOD programs and health services to ensure clients receive coordinated care. The team is dedicated to delivering respectful, non-judgmental and supportive healthcare to our clients and their families.

Althea's services are provided at our Woden clinic, in addition to several outreach locations in the ACT, including the Civic Needle & Syringe Program and Canberra Alliance for Harm Minimisation and Advocacy (CAHMA) in Belconnen, as well as via our Chat to PAT Mobile Health clinics, which reduce barriers to health care and better engage vulnerable and hard to reach population groups in our region.

This year, Althea was one of a select group of general practices that participated in the ACT Primary Healthcare Pilot (PCP), actively referring clients with complex needs who were eligible and would benefit from more timely access to additional clinical and/or specialist services. The pilot aimed to support people with complex needs to manage their health in the community and access the services they need free of charge, reducing the need for emergency department presentations and hospital admissions.

As we move into 2026, Althea is focused on reaching more people through our outreach programs and continuing to grow our treatment options to better support the diverse needs of our clients. We're finding new ways to make care easier to access, especially for marginalized members of our community, ensuring they can access comprehensive non-judgmental primary healthcare that is equivalent to that provided in mainstream general practices.



**"Without Directions I don't think I would have a life"**

*Client feedback*



**100%**  
**survey respondents**

(2024 Client Satisfaction Questionnaire) were satisfied with their health care



**1323**  
**Individuals**

received primary health care



**887**  
**Vaccinations**

provided by Althea

**Althea Wellness Centre** is funded by the Capital Health Network and ACT Health.



T25 Clinic staff with "Mini PAT"

## Chat to Pat

Directions' custom built mobile health clinic, PAT (Pathways to Assistance and Treatment), continues to deliver integrated specialist AOD and primary health care to vulnerable and marginalized population groups across Canberra.

Chat to PAT operates across six sites, including Ainslie Village, Oaks Estate, Kanangra Court, Watson, Veteran's Park and the Early Morning Centre. PAT offers a multidisciplinary approach, staffed by a team of GPs, nurses, AOD counsellors and mental health professionals. Demand for PAT's services increased this year, with many vulnerable population groups in our region finding it increasingly difficult to access free primary healthcare, exacerbated by the reduction in bulk billing practices in the ACT and cost of living increases.

Many of our clients who utilise PAT service have complex psychosocial and health needs, and PAT provides a non-judgmental and trustworthy space to support clients to engage with a health system they have often previously found stigmatising and difficult to navigate.

PAT continues to play an important role in public health efforts in our area, providing vaccinations for COVID-19, flu, Hepatitis B, Mpox and other preventable diseases. Additionally, bloodborne virus screenings, Hepatitis B and C treatment, harm reduction advice, Naloxone and sterile injecting equipment are also available at all PAT outreach locations.

This year, we introduced a second custom-built mobile health clinic, "Mini PAT", to our fleet. Mini PAT has provided important back-up to our main vehicle across our regular outreach sites, as well as servicing our T25 Clinic outreach locations.

Our partners help facilitate PAT services across the ACT, including CAHMA, The Early Morning Centre, Vinnies, ACT Cancer Council, Argyle Housing, ACT Housing, ReLink and ACT Pathology.

Partnership and in kind support from a range a range of other health and community services enable clients to receive holistic integrated care and crisis support, including Legal Aid ACT, Orange Sky Laundry, Meridian ACT, CHS Mental Health and Drug and Alcohol Services, Canberra Sexual Health Services, headspace Canberra and Tuggeranong, Interchange Co-op Tuggeranong and The Junction.

**Chat to PAT services are funded** by ACT Health and Capital Health Network PHN, with support provided by John James Foundation and CDC Data Centre.



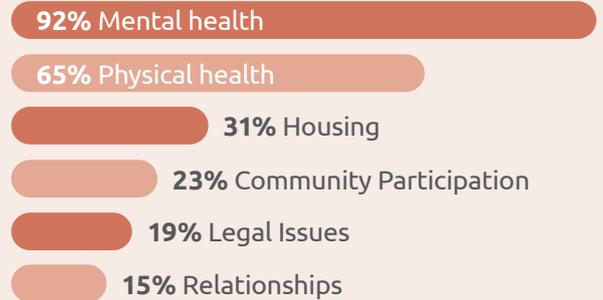
**6351** Total client presentations to Chat to PAT  
**18** Average no. of client seen per clinic



**>2000** total naloxone distributed across Directions services

### Chat to Pat – Holistic Care

in addition to AOD, clients received support with the following issues:



Client-reported 2024 CSQ





🌿 *Autumn in Canberra, ACT*

## T25 Clinic

T25 Clinic is a free nurse-led health and wellbeing service. Previously known as Teen Clinic, this year the service extended the age range to 25 years. T25 Clinic is delivered in partnership with Woden Community Service, providing a local and trusted primary health and wellbeing service that meets young people where they are at and helps them get where they want to be.

The service is free and operates on a walk-in basis at 5 fixed locations each week, with additional pop-up school and community outreach locations during each school term, including Jerrabomberra High School, Erindale College and Galilee School. The tier one team includes nurses and GPs who provide primary health care. The tier two team includes alcohol and other drug (AOD) practitioner, mental health clinicians, peer support worker and youth worker who provide additional mental health and wellbeing support for young people.



 T25 Clinic Team



**107**  
Individuals

### Main Interventions Provided

**32%** Mental Health Support

**27%** General Primary Care

**18%** Case Management



**840**  
Encounters

T25 Clinic is supported by the ACT Government under the Primary Health Services for young people program and works closely with The Junction, Mura Lanyon Youth and Community Centre, Belconnen Youth Centre, Woden Youth Services, CIT, Meridian ACT and Street Uni. Additional funding support is provided by Snow Foundation, John James Foundation, Aspen Medical Foundation and Aurora Gungahlin, Belconnen, Gungahlin, Hall and Tuggeranong Rotary Clubs. The team are looking forward to implementing a group program for young people in 2025/26, funded by Maddocks.



**64**  
**Individuals**  
were admitted to  
Arcadia House  
programs this year

## Arcadia House

Arcadia House is a Therapeutic Community located within the grounds of the North Canberra Hospital in Bruce, ACT. Arcadia provides Withdrawal, Day and Residential Rehabilitation programs utilising 'Community as Method' approach to support clients in the development of life skills and sustainable positive behaviour change as the foundation for continued recovery.



 Arcadia House Team

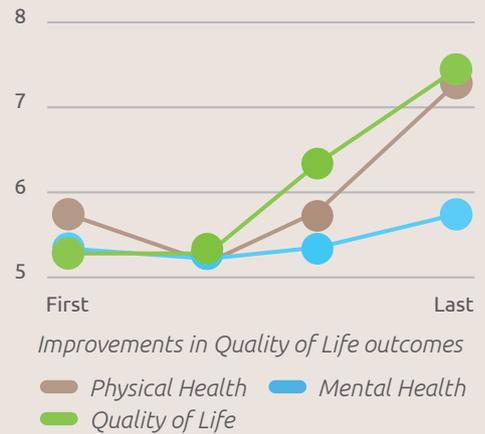
Clients are supported through all phases of their recovery journey – before, during and after admission – with case management, brief interventions, counselling and participation in educational and therapeutic groups. Each client works collaboratively with their case manager, creating an individual treatment plan based on their personal goals and strategies to achieve them, with discharge planning incorporated throughout the treatment journey. Arcadia’s team work collaboratively with primary and mental health services, Drug and Alcohol Sentencing List and other community services to ensure wrap-around support is provided at all stages.

In response to valuable input from our Community Advisory Group (CAG), Arcadia House expanded its suite of structured physical activity programs. These additions offer residents further opportunities to engage their bodies, support their mental wellbeing, and cultivate a sense of community through shared, health-promoting activities.

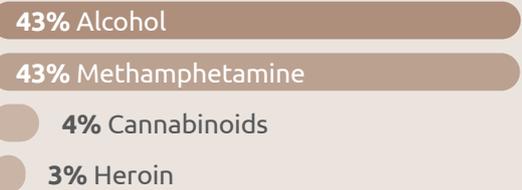
We also deepened our interagency collaboration, most notably through a new partnership with Canberra Alliance for Harm Minimisation and Advocacy (CAHMA), which now delivers on-site support services at Arcadia. This integration brings complementary care closer to our clients, allowing for a more seamless continuum of support.



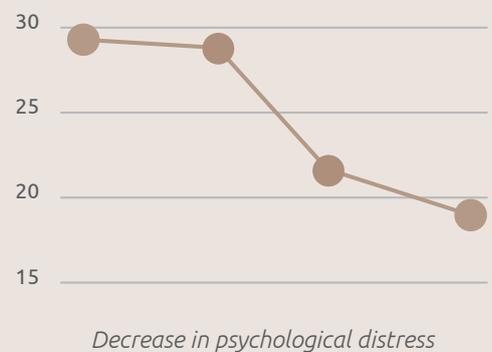
## Wellbeing Measures



## Primary drug of concern



## Arcadia K-10 outcomes



Arcadia House programs are funded by ACT Health and Capital Health Network PHN.

## CanTEST Health and Drug Checking Service

In 2024–25, CanTEST completed its third year of service, continuing to provide free, confidential, and non-judgmental health and drug checking services to the community. CanTEST has tested over 5,000 samples, marking a significant contribution to harm reduction and public health in the ACT and wider region.

As awareness of drug checking continues to grow, CanTEST has remained active in community engagement and education. The team conducted tours of the facility for a range of professionals, student groups, government officials and members of parliament.

CanTEST also maintained a strong presence at key community events, including ANU Market Day and Respect@Uni Day at the University of Canberra. These events created valuable opportunities to engage with students, many of whom were previously unaware of drug checking as a harm reduction strategy.

In response to seasonal demand and community need, extended service hours were offered ahead of major events such as Spilt Milk, Digifest and the Easter/ANZAC Day long weekend, ensuring increased access during high-risk periods.

Community awareness was further supported through 21 yellow community notices throughout the year and 7 red community notices (many of which related to the increase in novel nitazenes and counterfeit benzodiazepines seen this year). The service also continued its leadership role in the harm reduction space, with interest across Australia and the team presented at several conferences, sharing insights from CanTEST's innovative model and its impact to date.

With a continued focus on accessibility, education, and harm reduction, CanTEST remains a vital frontline service supporting informed decision-making and safer practices for people who use drugs, as well as providing real time insights to the illicit drug market.



**2006**  
total samples  
tested



**1899**  
AOD interventions  
provided

**721**  
health interventions  
provided

Scan the **QR Code** to access  
the CanTEST Report.



# Needle and Syringe Program

The Needle and Syringe Program (NSP) continues to play a vital role in promoting harm reduction, health equity, and community connection across the ACT.

The NSP team actively participated in key public health and awareness events, including World Hepatitis Day, International Overdose Awareness Day, and the Illicit Drug Reporting System (IDRS) Surveys. These events provided important opportunities to engage clients, distribute health information and promote safer practices.

A key focus this year was building capacity across the sector. The team provided training and education sessions on harm reduction and safer use to Directions NSW Pathways staff, Meridian ACT, Hepatitis ACT, Winnunga Nimmityjah Aboriginal Health and Community Services, Canberra Alliance for Harm Minimisation and Advocacy (CAHMA) and Belconnen and Phillip Health Centres, supporting consistent, informed service delivery across the region.

The NSP also benefited from generous community donations, with support from Share the Dignity, Circle of Women Canberra, GIVIT, Pinchapoo, Good360 and OzHarvest. These contributions have enabled the distribution of essential items, such as hygiene products, clothing and food, helping to meet the broader wellbeing needs of program participants. Clients were also able to access free frozen nutritious meals prepared by Arcadia House residents and staff.

NSP clients were able to access drop-in nurse-led health care at Civic NSP, which included general health checks, blood-borne virus screening, treatment for a variety of acute and chronic health conditions and referral to other health services.

Through ongoing community engagement, partnerships, and education, the NSP continues to be a cornerstone of Directions' harm reduction work, reducing health risks and building trust with some of the most marginalised members of our community.



 NSP Team supporting the community through Share the Dignity



15.4%

Growth

in client visits



11,489

NSP attendances



593

Naloxone

distributed 2024-25



100% of clients said that TSS helped them to deal more effectively with issues associated with their alcohol or drug use and with their mental health and wellbeing



“The staff are knowledgeable, responsible, respectful and caring. They go above and beyond in the most non-judgemental and supportive way”

2024 Client Satisfaction Questionnaire

## Treatment & Support Services

ACT Treatment & Support Services continued to expand its reach and diversify its offerings this year, providing meaningful, specialist support to individuals across Canberra, with a strong focus on accessibility, trauma-informed practice and community connection.

A highlight was the piloting of Art Therapy groups, which quickly became a valued addition to the therapeutic program. In the first three months alone, over 100 participants attended the group, reflecting the strong community demand for creative approaches to healing and self-expression.

 Canberra viewed from Mount Ainslie at sunset

The team also facilitated several other group programs to support emotional regulation, skill-building, and behaviour change. These included SMART Recovery, Mindfulness & Meditation, Dialectical Behaviour Therapy (DBT) Skills, and ADAPT, which was delivered both in the community at Woden and within the Alexander Maconochie Centre (AMC), supporting continuity of care across custodial and community settings.

TSS continued its commitment to meeting people where they are, with regular weekly outreach provided to key locations including Veterans Park, Ainslie Village, Kanangra, and headspace Canberra and Tuggeranong. These outreach efforts reduce barriers to access and provide early support and connection for individuals.

## Alongside

The Alongside psychosocial support program is a non-clinical program, providing psychosocial supports to clients experiencing co-occurring mental illness, substance use and other comorbidities. The program targets people with psychosocial disability who do not have access to NDIS.

The objectives of the Alongside program are to provide clients with capacity-building services to further their recovery goals. The program works closely with Directions' multidisciplinary teams and external agencies to ensure coordinated, holistic support, including for AOD, mental health and other co-occurring health and wellbeing needs.

We have recently secured ongoing funding to continue this vital, integrated service.

## Reduction in Psychological Distress (K10)



Decrease in psychological distress



1217

individuals

accessed TSS and  
Alongside services

1656

Group  
attendances

## Primary Drug of Concern

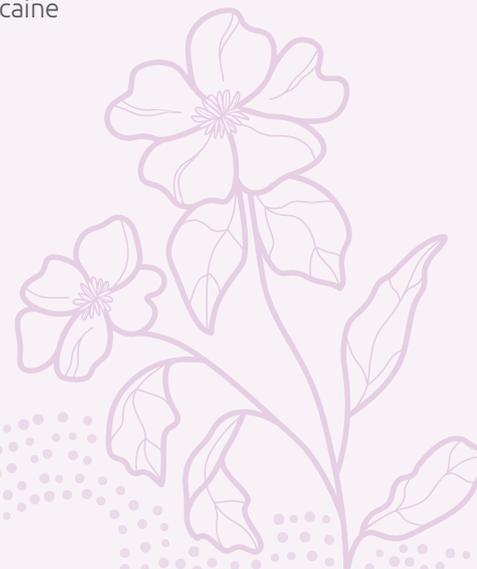
49.4% Alcohol

21% Methamphetamine

14.6% Cannabinoids

6.5% Heroin

3.1% Cocaine



# NSW Programs



Black Duck artwork at Merrimans LALC/Wallaga Lake Hall. The black duck is the totem of the Yuin people of the South Coast of NSW.

## Bega Mental Health Hub (BMHH)

This year, BMHH marked its first anniversary of operations. To compliment the existing team of Mental Health Peer Workers, Clinicians and Counsellors, the staffing profile now includes an Aboriginal Social and Emotional Wellbeing Worker. They have been very well received by the local community, providing invaluable group and outreach support to women and men in Wallaga Lake, Cobargo, Bega and Eden areas.



Over the past year, the team have continued to strengthen their presence across the Bega Valley. Regular outreach to Eden, Cobargo and Bermagui has ensured individuals in smaller and more remote communities have access to consistent care.

In partnership with the local health district (LHD), BMHH provided input into the development and rollout of the Adult Survivor Program, a vital initiative for clients with experiences of childhood sexual assault.

Another innovative group introduced during the year was Mindful Movement, a gentle, trauma-informed group that combines physical movement and mindfulness techniques to support emotional regulation and wellbeing.

## SHaWS AOD Hub

In addition to their integrated AOD, mental health and primary health services, SHaWS has lead a range of youth-focused and priority population initiatives across the region.

Expanding youth activities has been a focus this year, including:

- Love Bites delivered to students at Pambula Beach Flexible Learning Centre, promoting respectful relationships and violence prevention
- First Nations Boys' Group in Eden, delivered in partnership with Campbell Page
- Vaping Awareness Program at Bega High School
- Presentations on SHaWS' youth work delivered at both the AddictionZ Conference and NADA Conference, showcasing innovation and lived experience-informed practice.

The SHaWS team have also continued to provide assertive outreach to our priority populations particularly in harder to reach locations. This has included regular outreach to Eden, Cobargo and Bermagui to support consistent access to support and care.



• SHaWS Team at Wallage Lake:  
Community Postvention Support



1388

BMHH

primary mental health  
service contacts

148

BMHH

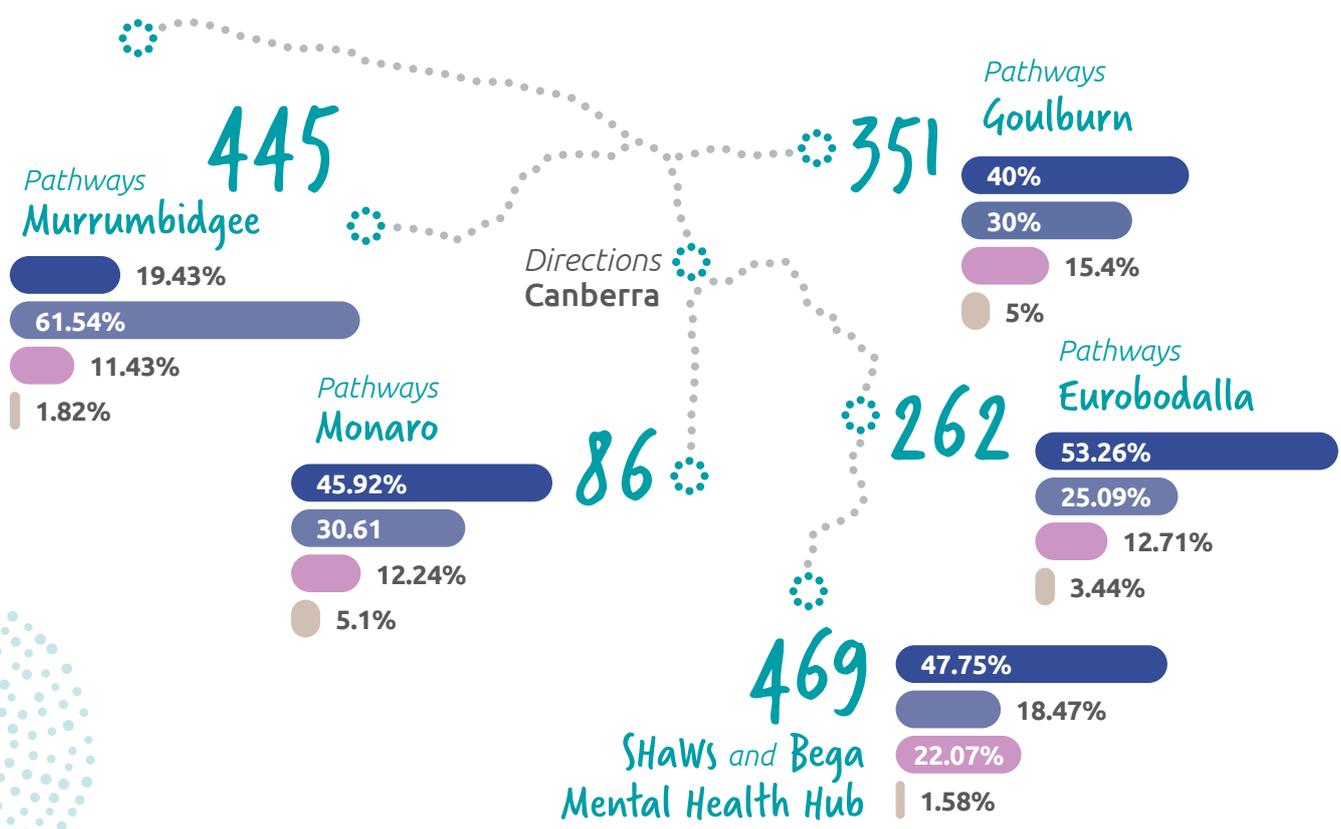
total individuals

100% of clients said that they feel welcome at SHaWS, that they feel valued as an individual, that they have a say in what happens with their care and support and that they are supported to achieve their wellbeing goals.

Client Feedback 2024 CSQ

# Number of clients & primary drug of concern

■ Alcohol      ■ Methamphetamine  
■ Cannabinoids      ■ Other drugs



SHaWS' outreach to young people in Bega has included regular weekly drop-in sessions delivered in partnership with local stakeholders. A major achievement was the co-development and delivery of a culturally safe Safe Driver Program - "Think Before You Drive" in collaboration with Bega Local Aboriginal Land Council and NSW Police.

For priority populations, SHaWS facilitated an Aboriginal Men's Group, whose participants and facilitators were invited to host a stall at the Giiyong Festival, showcasing and selling cultural artifacts including clapping sticks. SHaWS has been invited to attend the long-standing Women's Group at Wallaga Lake, delivered by Merriman's Local Aboriginal Lands Council, after providing

outreach services to the community for the past two years. Support is now being provided to the women's group by both SHaWS and BMHH teams, focusing on cultural connection, social and emotional wellbeing and preventative healthcare.

Community engagement activities included:

- Joint World No Tobacco Day campaign with Southern NSW LHD, promoting free Nicotine Replacement Therapy
- Establishment of a Needle and Syringe Program (NSP) at Bega, increasing access to harm reduction services
- Participation in community events such as the Rainbow Wave Festival and Mitre 10 Tradie's Breakfast.

Both SHaWS and BMHH contributed to Overdose Prevention Day in partnership with the Local Health District's Community Drug and Alcohol Team and Bega Community Corrections, delivering a community event focused on education, harm reduction, and connection.

The teams have also been active in regional suicide prevention initiatives, partnering with the Bega Valley and Eurobodalla Suicide Prevention Collaborative to provide targeted outreach and support to Bermagui and Cobargo.

Another important service enhancement this year was the launch of Dried Blood Spot (DBS) Testing. This innovative testing method offers a simple, minimally invasive way to screen for blood-borne viruses like Hepatitis C. To stay current with best practice and research developments, team members attended the APSAD 2025 conference, bringing back valuable insights and new approaches.

## Pathways Eurobodalla

In 2024–25, Pathways Eurobodalla expanded its local presence and enhanced service delivery through the establishment of a second office in Batemans Bay. This has increased accessibility for clients across the region and supported the delivery of targeted programs, particularly for young people.

Directions's NSW-based Youth AOD Support program extended into the Eurobodalla region, expanding the team's reach and improving engagement with young people experiencing challenges related to alcohol and other drug use.

Group-based support remains central to Pathways Eurobodalla's holistic approach. The Strong Sistas-Wise Mind DBT groups, a strengths based group for women, a strengths-based group for women, was launched this year, and which was met with strong community interest and participation.



 Pathways Eurobodalla Team

The team also continues to prioritise outreach and collaboration. Regular outreach is conducted with Community Corrections, helping to support individuals transitioning from the justice system back into the community.

Pathways Eurobodalla staff maintain active participation in the Youth Action Meetings alongside NSW Police, ensuring coordinated responses to local youth issues. This year, the team also had the opportunity to present the post-custodial support program at both the South Coast Correctional Centre and WAMINDA in Nowra, strengthening connections with key stakeholders in the justice and Aboriginal health sectors.

Through community engagement, interagency collaboration, and the expansion of location-based and youth-specific services, Pathways Eurobodalla continues to provide accessible, client-centered support across the region.

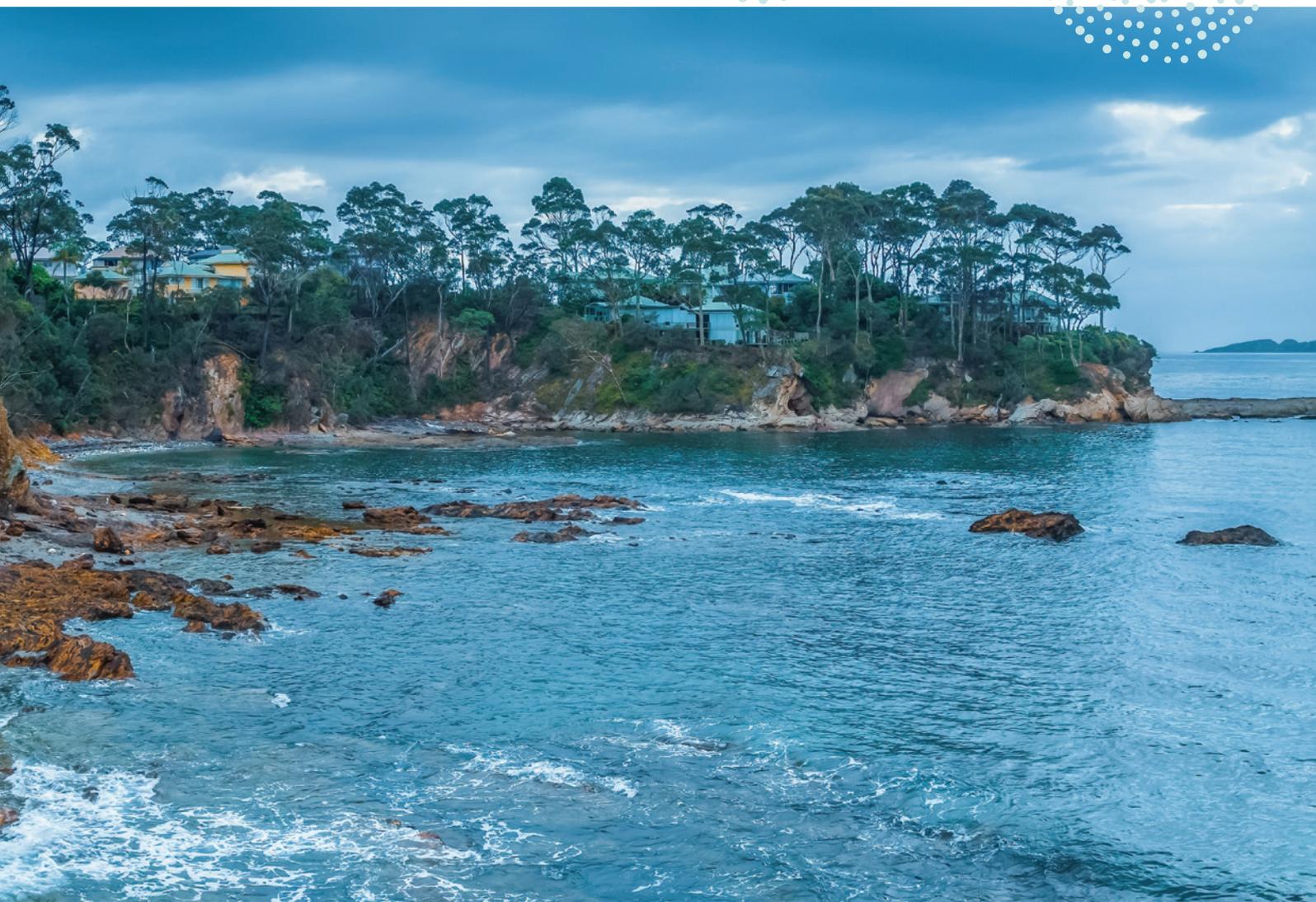
Our partnership with Grand Pacific Health at the Moruya Mental Health Hub has enabled more integrated care for clients with co-occurring needs. In addition, the Women's Domestic and Family Violence Court Advocacy Service (WDVCAS) regularly meets with mutual clients at our office, providing a safe and familiar environment for women affected by domestic and family violence.



## Pathways Goulburn

Pathways Goulburn continued to strengthen its local presence and expand service delivery to meet community need over the past year.

The launch of the Nicotine Replacement Therapy (NRT) program in partnership with Blooms Chemist, providing improved access to nicotine support for clients seeking to reduce or quit smoking has been well received by clients.



Safe Injecting and Vein Care training was delivered to staff by Directions NSP program. This training strengthens harm reduction practices across the service and ensures clients receive informed, non-judgmental care around safer use.

In response to increased demand and service growth, Pathways Goulburn expanded its office space, allowing for greater flexibility in service delivery and improved client access to onsite support. The team also continue to provide regular outreach support services to Braidwood, Boorowa, Cowra, Crookwell, Taralga, Tuena and Yass.

In response to community need, group-based support provided this year was expanded to include a focused Samoan SMART Group. Pathways Goulburn also partnered with the NSW Council of The Pacific to strengthen service access for CALD clients in the region, and facilitated “Wise Mind” groups, a DBT skills based group focusing on mindfulness, distress tolerance, emotion regulation, and interpersonal effectiveness.



 *Poplars in Cooma, NSW*



## Pathways Monaro

The past year has marked a period of strong progress, community connection, and program expansion for Pathways Monaro. Through a combination of outreach, education, harm reduction, and therapeutic support, the team has continued to deliver impactful services across the Monaro region, responding to both emerging and ongoing community needs.



The Post-Custodial Support Program, which included coverage of the Monaro area, provided additional supports for people transitioning from correctional settings back into the community, enabling crucial continuity of care, stability, and reintegration support. Existing partnerships with local Corrections and justice services, ensuring streamlined referrals and wraparound

support. Referrals and collaboration with Cooma Mental Health and Corrections remained strong, supporting integrated service delivery and positive client outcomes. They are also commencing SMART Inside Out Groups in the Cooma Correctional Centre to support people managing substance use on their exit from prison.

Youth engagement has also been a central focus, with Pathways Monaro delivering a series of vaping education sessions across local high schools in Bombala, Cooma, and Jindabyne. These sessions aimed to increase health literacy, promote early intervention, and equip young people with the tools to make informed choices about their health. Additional targeted youth education was delivered at Bombala High School through the Vaping Awareness and Education Program.

To support clients managing nicotine dependence, Nicotine Replacement Therapy (NRT) has been made available in partnership with Hooks Pharmacy in Cooma, increasing access to effective cessation support within the community.

A broad suite of support groups was delivered throughout the year, including “Wise Mind” Dialectical Behaviour Therapy (DBT) Skills Groups and SMART Recovery Groups. These were offered both in community settings and within Corrections facilities, providing structured support for emotional regulation, harm reduction, and relapse prevention. These groups are especially valuable for individuals managing complex needs or reintegrating into the community.

Recognising the importance of access in regional areas, the team provided regular outreach services to Berridale, Bombala and Jindabyne, engaging priority populations and ensuring people living in smaller communities receive consistent care.

Pathways Monaro continues to grow its impact through collaboration, client-focused care, and a strong presence across the region.



Pathways Murrumbidgee Team Members

## Pathways Murrumbidgee

The Pathways Murrumbidgee program continues to deliver vital alcohol and other drug (AOD) support across the Murrumbidgee region, with teams based in both Wagga Wagga and Griffith. This year marked a period of growth, including the relocation of both teams to new office spaces to better meet local needs and expand service delivery.

Staff across both locations were involved in the establishment of bi-monthly AOD Sector Afternoon Teas in Wagga and Griffith, a regional networking initiative that fosters collaboration, knowledge-sharing and feedback among professionals working in the AOD and allied sectors.

Pathways Murrumbidgee introduced Dry Blood Spot (DBS) testing at both Wagga Wagga and Griffith sites, enhancing access to Hepatitis C screening and timely referral to treatment services.

Pathways Murrumbidgee staff and clients represented Directions at the NSW Drug Summit in Griffith, contributing to important sector-wide discussions that continue to push for reform that improves outcomes for individuals, their families and communities, impacted by AOD use. Group-based supports continued to play a central role in the program. Key offerings included SMART

Recovery groups, and ADAPT Group, with the team also supporting the Murrumbidgee Men's Group, creating opportunities for peer support and personal growth.

### Wagga Wagga Highlights

The Wagga Wagga team expanded services to headspace Wagga Wagga, allowing for more integrated support for young people experiencing co-occurring mental health and AOD issues.

The team built and maintained strong relationships with key stakeholders, including Clinical Mental Health & Drug and Alcohol Services services across Wagga, Young, Tumut and Deniliquin, as well as Mission Australia, Relationships Australia, Karralika, the Wagga Recovery Hub, NSW Users & Aids Association (NUAA), and Canberra Alliance for Harm Minimisation and Advocacy (CAHMA).

A significant development this year was the team's participation in Circle Sentencing—an alternative sentencing process for eligible First Nations adults. Circle Sentencing involves First Nations community members, the offender's family, victims and a Local Court Magistrate working collaboratively to determine an appropriate sentence. The process aims to reduce recidivism, improve community trust in the justice system, and deliver culturally appropriate outcomes.

The team also actively participates in Wagga Aboriginal Interagency and Mawang Gaway Community Meetings, ensuring ongoing engagement with local First Nations communities and service networks.

Directions' Online Day Program was launched in the Murrumbidgee region in February 2025, with the aim to provide accessible structured AOD support for people who face barriers to attending traditional or abstinence-based programs in-person. Many participants live in rural areas, are parents or carers, have physical or mental health challenges, or have been excluded from services because of legal status or risk. The program provides a safe, flexible and inclusive way for people to engage in meaningful recovery work from home and is offered online 3 days a week.

Client feedback on the Online Day Program:

- One client described Murrumbidgee's Online Day Program as more beneficial for them than any other form of AOD treatment that they'd tried. As someone living rurally with autism, they said the structure, content and accountability was a good fit for them
- Another described it as ideal for them as a mother living rurally, and better than a previous residential stay. The accountability throughout the week helped them to make and maintain the changes they were looking to achieve. They said they felt truly heard and understood by Directions staff.

### Griffith Highlights

Community engagement was a major focus for the Griffith team in 2024–25. The team led and participated in numerous local initiatives, for example:

- Coordinating regular BBQs in Leeton and Griffith
- Presenting on overdose awareness and the Take Home Naloxone Program to community groups such as Rotary and the Prostate Cancer Group
- Attending the Community Services Expo and headspace Hype events
- Hosting a BBQ and yarning circle for the Leeton Aboriginal Men's Group
- Delivering presentations to a local veterinary practice on mental health, resilience, and when to seek help

The Griffith team participated in over a dozen community events, significantly increasing the visibility of AOD services and strengthening local connections.

The introduction of an AOD/Withdrawal Nurse to the Griffith team has been a significant development, enabling home-based withdrawal support, which was previously unavailable in the region.

Murrumbidgee remains committed to culturally safe, community-informed, and recovery-oriented support, with a strong emphasis on collaborative partnerships and tailored care across the region.



## Queanbeyan AOD Hub

The Queanbeyan Alcohol and Other Drugs (AOD) Hub opened in October 2024, with Grand Pacific Health as the lead, in partnership with Directions and Katungul. The Queanbeyan AOD Hub provides a safe, welcoming, and inclusive space where individuals feel heard, seen, and supported. Based on the SHaWS AOD Hub model, it is staffed by a multidisciplinary team comprising drug and alcohol workers and mental health professionals, the Hub recognises the complex and often interconnected nature of substance use and mental health challenges. This integrated approach ensures clients can access holistic, co-occurring care with as few barriers as possible.

A key strength of the Queanbeyan AOD Hub lies in its strong interagency and stakeholder relationships, which facilitate warm and effective referrals to a wide range of complementary services. The team has developed and maintained active partnerships with other community services including MERIT, Community Corrections, Ted Noffs Foundation, Southern Youth and Family Services (SYFS) Queanbeyan Youth Crisis Refuge, Woden Community Service, the T25 Clinic, Queanbeyan Community Mental Health, Department of Communities and Justice (DCJ) Youth Justice, and EveryMan. The team also contributes regularly to the QPRC Youth Interagency Network Meetings and Monaro Child & Youth Interagency Meetings.

A particularly impactful collaboration with the Killard Centre has streamlined access to the Opioid Treatment Program (OTP), improving pathways for clients seeking support with opioid dependence. The Hub also supports clients in accessing online



 Celebrating 12 months of Queanbeyan AOD Hub.

psychiatry services through Dokotela, enhancing treatment options for those with co-occurring mental health conditions.

Additional supports provided by the Hub include access to Nicotine Replacement Therapy, Dry Blood Spot (DBS) testing, and close coordination with the Queanbeyan HARP Unit to ensure timely access to Hepatitis C treatment.

Group-based interventions are a vital component of the Hub's support. Regular programs such as SMART Recovery and Dialectical Behaviour Therapy (DBT) Skills Groups provide clients with peer support and practical strategies for recovery. Looking ahead, the team is preparing to launch a Youth SMART Recovery Group and expand its outreach partnership with Directions' T25 Clinic team.

Through collaboration, innovation and compassion, the Queanbeyan AOD Hub continues to be a vital service for the local community, providing integrated support for those navigating the challenges of substance use and mental health.



# Engaging Community

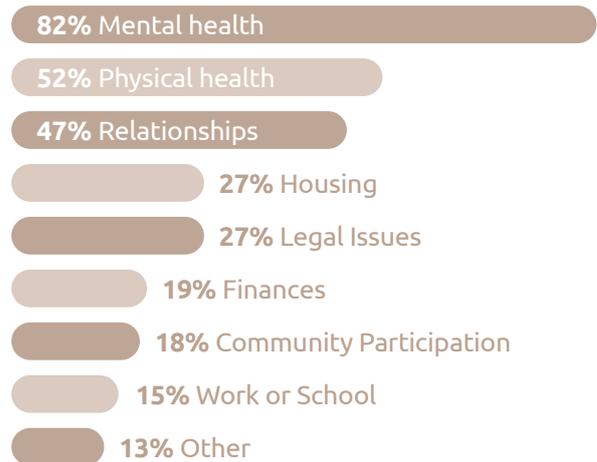


Pathways Murrumbidgee staff at Koorinal Kicks and Tricks

## Client satisfaction

Directions again offered our clients the opportunity to provide unfiltered feedback about their experience of our services via our annual Client Satisfaction Questionnaire (CSQ). 98% of all clients who responded were satisfied with the services they received. 92% reported that our services helped them to deal more effectively with their substance use issues.

Clients continue to appreciate the holistic care and support that Directions offers. Directions understands that the AOD issues experienced by our clients exist in the context of other life circumstances, and cannot be effectively addressed in isolation. In 2024/25, 92% of clients indicated that Directions had helped them with difficulties in other key areas of their lives, aside from their substance use:



*"It has seriously felt like a warm hug and like I've been amongst very wise friends with the greatest support."*



In 2024/25 we also introduced brief client-reported experience measures (PREMS), encouraging our clients to provide continual and opportunistic feedback about their service experience throughout the year. 94% of respondents reported feeling valued as an individual when they access our services and feeling supported to achieve their wellbeing goals. 95% felt that they were treated like a person, not like a problem.

Clients reported that Directions:

- go above and beyond in the most non-judgmental and supportive way
- help people see what life really is
- help us find a purpose within ourselves

## Community Advisory Group (CAG)

Directions' CAG continues to offer the wisdom of their experience and feedback from other clients to inform the way we deliver our services. Welcoming several new members this year, and with an increased regional voice, Directions' CAG members were proactive in providing their honest assessment of client experiences; frank feedback about proposed initiatives; and nuanced contributions to organisational consultations. CAG members draw from their very specific lived experiences and understanding of the client journey to provide clear guidance to Directions' management team and Board, contribute to our accreditations and support organisational initiatives.

We thank our CAG for their commitment to supporting Directions to continue to improve our services.

## Youth Advisory Group (YAG)

Directions introduced our Youth Advisory Group (YAG) in 2025, providing young people accessing our services with the opportunity to:

- provide feedback and advice
- identify unmet needs in their communities
- contribute to service development
- ensure that Directions is youth-friendly and inclusive

Our YAG has drawn on the unique insights of young people aged 12 to 24 who access our youth services in both ACT and NSW to shape the way that we engage with young people and the supports and activities that we offer. The introduction of our T25 Clinic youth groups is a direct result of suggestions offered by our YAG.

## Community NAIDOC Week Events

All of our services attend and support NAIDOC and Reconciliation Week activities and events in their regions.

Directions is proud to continue participating in the planning and hosting of the ACT Community Sector NAIDOC Week event, in partnership with a range of other ACT community sector organisations. Promoting the uniqueness of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, this annual event continues to bring people and community together to celebrate the richness of our First Nations communities.

# 2026 Annual Calendar

## January

Sun	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
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## February

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## September

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## October

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### January

- 1 New Year's Day
- 26 Australia Day Public Holiday

### February

- 20 World Day of Social Justice

### March

- 9 Canberra Day (ACT)
- 21 Harmony Day

### April

- 3 Good Friday
- 6 Easter Monday
- 7 World Health Day
- 25 ANZAC Day

### May

- 12 International Nurses Day
- 26 National Sorry Day
- 27 Reconciliation Week starts

### June

- 1 Reconciliation Day (ACT)
- 8 King's Birthday

### July

- 6 NAIDOC Week starts

### August

- 12 International Youth Day
- 28 Wear It Purple Day

## March

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## August

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## November

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## December

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## September

- 10 World Suicide Prevention Day
- 11 R U OK? Day

## October

- 5 Labour Day
- 10 World Mental Health Day
- 10 World Homeless Day

## December

- 3 International Day of Persons with Disabilities
- 25 Christmas Day
- 26 Boxing Day



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