



Annual Report

2024-25



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Our People

Board of Directors

The Board are accountable for the performance of Focal. Their efforts are supported by meaningful engagement with our community, instilling a culture that supports our purpose. Directors participate in up to 16 Board and Sub-Committee meetings annually. They generously contribute their time and expertise to steer the organization in the right direction.



Rob Newman
Chairperson



Zane Ali
Treasurer



Osman Bahemia
Board Member



Bob Hair
Board Member
(Retired)



Brianna Barry
Board Member
(Retired)

Senior Leadership Team

Our senior management team brings a wealth of experience to the table, enabling us to make informed decisions and deliver quality services.



Tanya Miller
Chief Executive Officer



Toni Schaumberg
People and Culture



Patty Hitchenor
Client Services



Scott Thomson
Support Coordination



Kerri Siebenhausen
Client Services



Riddhi Devia
Corporate Services

Who We Are

For more than fifty years, Focal Community Services has been part of the Ipswich community – walking alongside people of all abilities, all ages, and all backgrounds to create opportunities that lead to independence, inclusion, and growth.

Founded in 1974 by a group of local families, Focal began with a shared belief that everyone deserves the chance to live a full and meaningful life. From those early beginnings, we have grown into one of Ipswich's longest-serving disability support providers, proudly supporting people across South East Queensland.

Today, Focal offers a wide range of individual and group supports designed to help people shape their own path. Every service is guided by our values of collaboration, growth, responsiveness, safety, connection, and commitment.

As we look to the future, we remain dedicated to building stronger, more connected communities where everyone belongs. By working together with individuals, families, carers, and partners, Focal continues to celebrate ability, encourage belonging, and support each person to thrive in their own way.

Our Vision

Create endless opportunities for all.

Our Mission

Focal empowers a life of choice by listening and working alongside you towards your goals.

Our Values



Growth

We help people achieve goals



Responsiveness

We are flexible and innovative



Safety

We take safety seriously



Collaboration

We ask, we listen and we find ways to support choice



Commitment

We make it about you



Connection

We connect with community

Message from the Chairperson

This past year, our work at Focal has been defined by both dedicated attention to the needs and aspirations of clients and disciplined yet practical steps to manage financial challenges and the evolving NDIS market. This Annual Report highlights our key achievements in strengthening our business, supporting clients, and building community partnerships.

Strengthening Business Foundations

Like all NDIS providers, we face pricing limitations and rising costs. Our core focus for the past few years has been on financial diligence and making decisions that secure our long-term sustainability. We've had to be resilient and practical in navigating these challenges.

Drawing on our financial reserves has allowed us to maintain core client services while we work to adapt our operations. Our dedication to quality was validated by a successful NDIS Quality audit with zero non-conformities—an unusual achievement in the sector.

We've further strengthened our operational systems by formalising leadership roles and implementing technology that matches staff skills precisely to client needs, improving both efficiency and service quality.



Rob Newman
Chairperson

Dedication, Service and Discipline: Building a Sustainable Future

Protecting and Supporting Clients

Our workforce is our greatest asset. This year we invested in their capability, delivering 1,165 hours of professional development with a 98% completion rate for mandatory training.

Our people's professionalism shone during Tropical Cyclone Alfred, when our Business Continuity Plan was successfully activated. We mapped where vulnerable clients lived, checked on them proactively, and ensured all our clients and staff were safe.



Collaboration that Creates Change

Client and family feedback drove real improvements this year. Their input led to refinements in programs such as our Horizons Day Service, creating more flexible scheduling and expanded community activities. We maintained strong community connections, including our partnership with West Bremer Radio for the All-Abilities Hour, reinforcing our role as a responsive community partner.

Learning and Growing Together

Focal's true success is measured in the growth and independence of the people we support. We celebrated remarkable client achievements this year, including stories like Performing Arts and Dance Troupe members developing confidence on stage through performances at major events such as the Fresh Futures Market and Springfield Festival. Similarly, the opening of our renovated respite service at 7 Canning Street is providing crucial support for carers and enhanced social opportunities for clients.



Next Steps

Without a doubt, this was another challenging year for Focal, and while our management team and staff demonstrated discipline and have strengthened our foundation, challenges remain. As a Board we remain committed to making considered and at times difficult decisions to ensure our community is best served.



I would personally like to thank our Board members, management and staff for their dedication and our clients and community for their ongoing support. We understand the legacy that is Focal and will continue to focus on ensuring that the needs of people with a disability, their families and carers are met, supporting aspirations, and creating tangible, positive change for all.

A Year in Review



648

Individuals
accessed Focal
for support



335

Incoming and outgoing
calls averaged weekly
by Client Connect



\$40K

Grant funds
successfully
awarded



400

Incoming and outgoing
emails averaged weekly
by Client Connect

178,222

Hours of support
were provided

Support Coverage Map



Disability Support



Support Coordination



Both

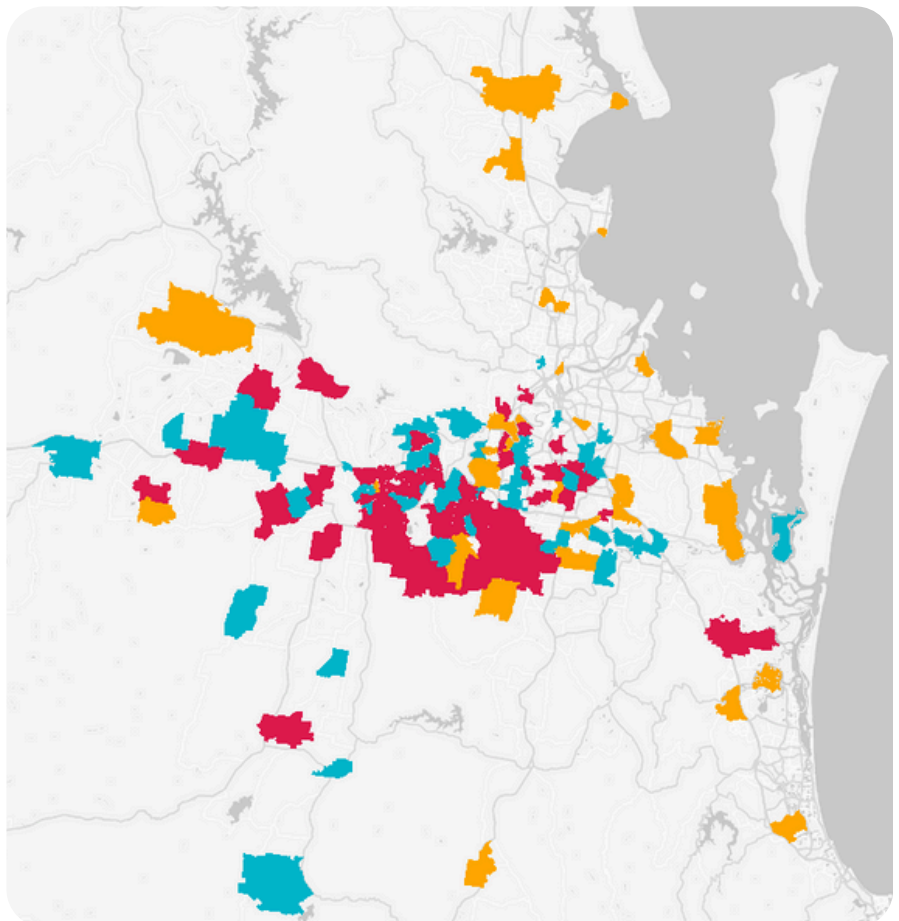


117

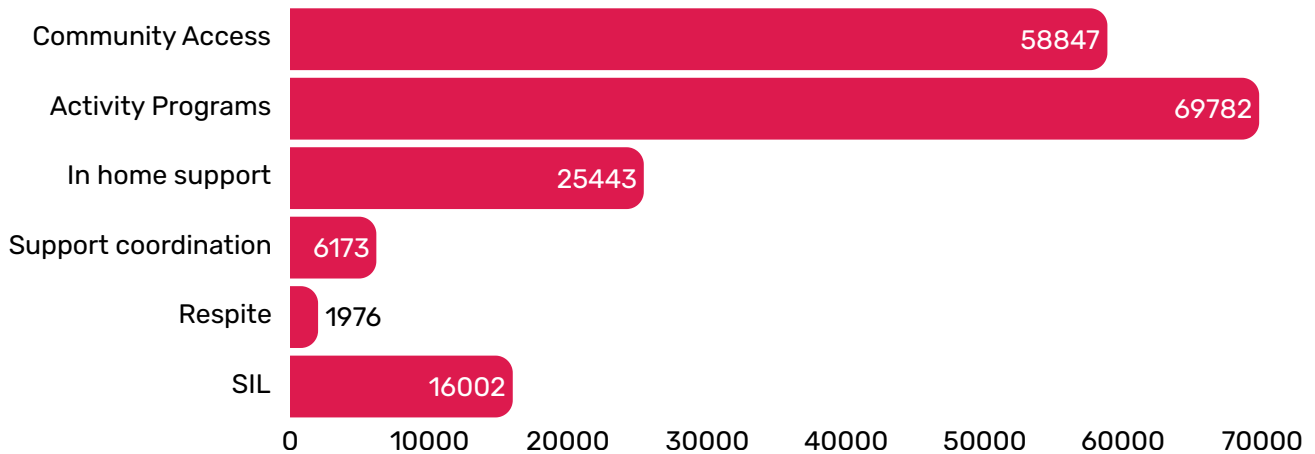
Nights of respite
provided

4,010

Average shifts
managed per month



Hours of Support Provided



2,375

Group activity sessions held



8 out of every **10**

staff are direct
Support Workers or
Support Coordinators.

367

Individuals accessed
group activities
(adults and children)



298

Individuals
accessed support
coordination

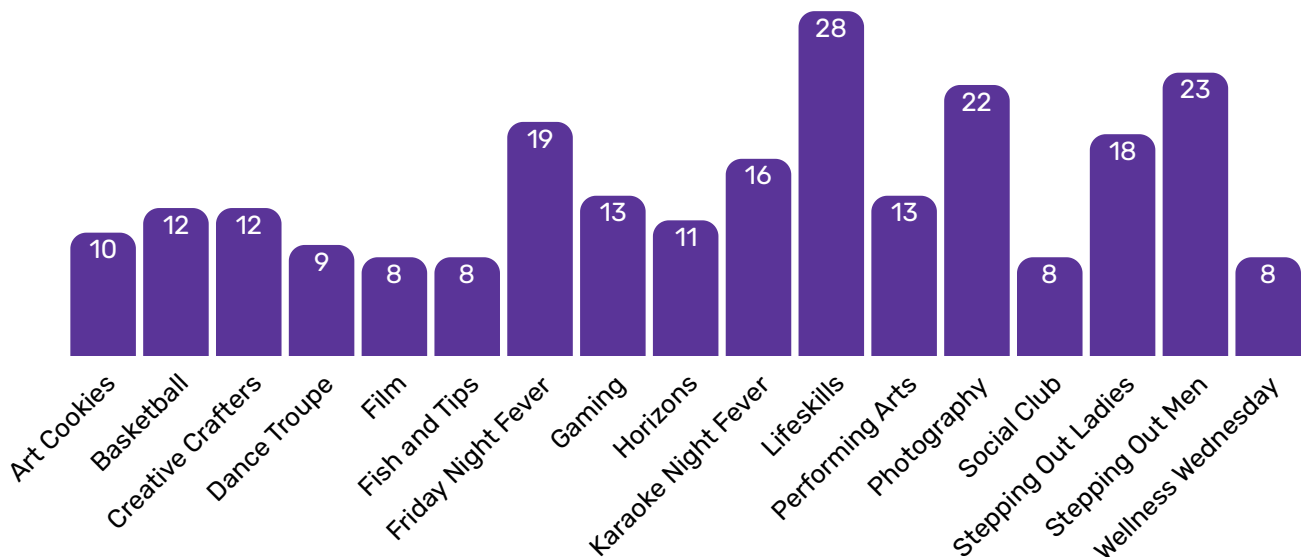
350

Individuals
received disability
support work



Total Individuals by Activity Program

(Adults)



Message from the Chief Executive Officer

While there has been much to celebrate this year, once again it has been an extremely challenging one from a financial sustainability perspective. Focal along with many community organisations struggle to be viable in the NDIS market and we have again drawn from our reserves to continue our operations while we work to reshape and adapt.

So where have been our wins? The pages of this report are full of examples where we have continued to streamline our teams and operations, lifting capability and quality in line with our Strategic Plan.

The 2024-25 year started with our NDIS Quality Audit and we were pleased to receive our provider re-certification without any non-conformities.

This year also saw important rejuvenation and optimisation of our spaces. 7 Canning St was repurposed as a Respite House allowing delivery of home like respite within Ipswich. We were also fortunate to secure a grant from Queensland Government to allow the start of much needed repairs and maintenance at our North Ipswich Hub at 6 Canning St.

As part of striving for sustainability, we made the tough decision to exit Booval Hub when our lease ended this August. Overheads such as those are not funded through NDIS and we continue to adapt our services and supports to use public spaces and places wherever possible.



Tanya Miller

Chief Executive Officer

We have continued to streamline our teams and operations, lifting capability and quality.

We know there is still much to do and as always we seek to do that as part of our community not outside of it.

Our support workers make an everyday difference in the lives of those they engage with alongside our operational team who work in the background to ensure over 3000 hours of direct support is delivered every week whenever and wherever possible. This commitment was incredibly apparent during the uncertain projected weather event in March which, although downgraded, still created a major disruption and flooding in our communities. Whether it was phone support or in-person, the teams worked to ensure no-one was left isolated or unsupported.

Finally, I want to thank and acknowledge the professionalism and dedication of our volunteers, many of whom are also part of our paid workforce. They give so much to caring for our spaces and resourcing events and extra activities. This includes our Board to whom I would like to express my deep appreciation for their sound governance and commitment to working through our challenges with such consideration.



Delivering Safe and Effective Supports

Every Person, Every Time

Building Strong Foundations

Strong roles.
Simple processes.
Reliable support for
staff and families.

Systems and Structure

Delivering safe, effective, and high-quality support to every person, every time is a commitment that has defined our continuous improvement work over the past year.

At Focal, quality service delivery begins with strong systems, clear processes, and the right infrastructure. This year, we invested significantly in building the foundations that keep our services safe, consistent, and responsive to the needs of those we support.

What we strengthened this year:

Leadership clarity

We formalised the activity leader role to lift accountability and avoid knowledge gaps during staff absences, while opening growth opportunities for emerging leaders.

Operations

Operational teams have been reworked so that every team contributes directly to better outcomes. Co-location has strengthened teamwork and improved how information moves between people.

Support consistency

Client services and rosters began using a daily huddle to share updates, risks and priorities. The huddle enables the early identification of staffing or client changes that may potentially impact the quality and consistency of support delivered.

Client Information Management

Maintaining accurate client information ensures teams can respond quickly to changes, supports continuity across all programs, and ultimately contributes to safer, more effective service delivery. Our team introduced a tool to support the annual review of client documentation, ensuring records remains accurate, relevant, and reflective of each person's current needs and goals. The 'fresh-eyes' approach involves:



Routine documentation reviews



Staff feedback loops



Discussions with clients, families and carers



Proactive communication with wider support networks

Alongside improved NDIS compliance, this shift toward a proactive method allows the team to identify needs, gaps, and risks before they escalate into incidents or emergencies.

Respite Renovation Project

In January 2025, we proudly opened our newly renovated respite service at 7 Canning Street. This modern, welcoming space has become a second home for clients who regularly access the service.

During their stay people can focus on developing key life skills, including cooking, laundry, and personal hygiene. The service has also fostered vital social skills, with two clients attending together to gain valuable experience in living with a housemate.



Respite Outcomes

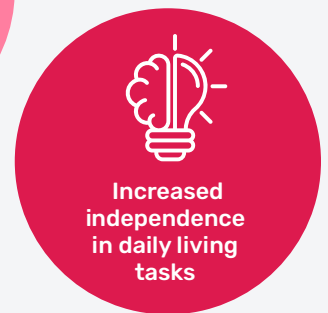
identified through client, family and carer feedback



Enhanced social connection and sense of belonging



Boosted confidence and self-assurance



Increased independence in daily living tasks

Growth



Technology That Enables

The People and Culture team expanded the functionality of our client management system to use warnings and blocks for any skills gaps. This ensures employees are only matched with a client if they possess the right skills and experience and the nature of the shift fits within the scope of their abilities.

Mandatory cyber aware training was introduced for all staff to improve awareness of digital risks and appropriate responses to suspicious activity. Focal collaborated with our IT support provider to build a safer IT environment. These efforts reflect our commitment to upholding the privacy and protection of sensitive information.

Protecting and Supporting Our People

Protecting the physical, emotional, and psychological safety of those we support, and our workforce, guides the decisions we make and services we provide. This past year, we have demonstrated this commitment through a focus on wellbeing initiatives, proactive planning and the creation of environments where individuals can thrive and achieve their personal goals.

Workforce Health, Safety and Wellbeing

We recognise that our ability to support clients effectively depends on a workforce that feels safe, valued, and well-supported. This year, the People and Culture team facilitated targeted initiatives focused on the safety and wellbeing of our workforce as part of the commitment to foster a psychologically safe workplace.

Actions This Year

Wellbeing Committee

A Wellbeing Committee was formed to embed wellbeing into policies and culture.

- EAP Ambassador Program to promote and increase uptake of EAP services
- Long lunch workforce event promoting mental health awareness and self-care.

Sexual Harassment Prevention

In response to emerging psychosocial risks and changes in WHS legislation:



Operational staff completed online sexual harassment training by the Queensland Human Rights Commission.



Implemented a Sexual Harassment Prevention Plan to safeguard our workforce.



Anonymous sexual harassment survey to understand risks



480+

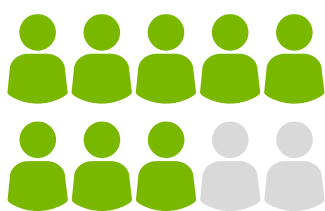
Workforce wellbeing calls placed by Employee Assist



Employee Assist

Focal's Employee Assist team remains an essential resource for our workforce, with a dedicated Return to Work Officer assigned to effectively oversee the return-to-work process for employees who are ill or injured.

The positive effects of these initiatives are evident in our wellbeing pulse survey, where:



8 OUT OF 10

staff agree or strongly agree that their work supports flexibility and their daily needs.



surveyed agree or strongly agree that the organisation demonstrates a commitment to workforce wellbeing



Commitment

Emergency Readiness and Response

When Tropical Cyclone Alfred posed a significant threat to our region, our team's disaster preparedness was put to the test. The successful activation of the Business Continuity Plan (BCP) was a critical demonstration of our commitment to ensuring the safety and wellbeing of our people.

Proactive strategies included the geographical mapping of clients and staff to identify high-risk zones, enabling targeted support and early communication. Our rostering team supported a coordinated response by adapting services based on local conditions and workforce availability.

Specific emergency readiness measures were implemented for clients identified as at-risk due to health, mobility or environmental factors. Prior contingency planning enabled rapid response collaboration with support networks and daily welfare checks for those in impacted areas.

The post event review identified that we had maintained essential supports with no reported adverse outcomes for at-risk clients. We have incorporated learnings from this event into our readiness planning and recognise the need for continued partnerships with clients, carers and other providers.



100%

of at-risk clients safely supported through TC Alfred

Collaboration That Creates Change

Strong partnerships drive quality outcomes

This year, we deepened our engagement with clients, families, carers, stakeholders, and community partners through proactive communication, collaborative advocacy, and sustained relationships. These connections ensure our services remain responsive, person-centered, and embedded within a supportive network that extends far beyond our organisation.

Client, Family and Carer Engagement

In May 2025, as part of our commitment to person-centered practice, Focal undertook a program review of the Horizons Day Service.

The review aimed to ensure that programs continue to reflect the goals, interests, and aspirations of participants. Families and clients were invited to contribute via surveys and informal conversations. Although formal survey responses were limited, valuable insights were gathered through direct discussions, highlighting the importance of varied consultation methods.

As a result of the feedback, we implemented program enhancements, such as more flexible scheduling, an increase in community-based activities, and additional sensory and creative experiences.

In May 2025, we also surveyed clients, families and carers to better understand their communication preferences and information needs. The results provided clear direction on content priorities:

73% Want updates on Focal services



58% Value disability-related news and NDIS updates



58% Want information about upcoming Focal events



Indicated that our communications over the past year have been very easy or easy to understand





Stakeholder Engagement

We actively strengthen trust and collaboration through regular informal updates and check-ins, collaborative planning meetings to align supports with changing client needs, and stakeholder meetings to maintain communication between all engaged services. This has resulted in much more open communication and greater outcomes for clients.



Community Partnerships

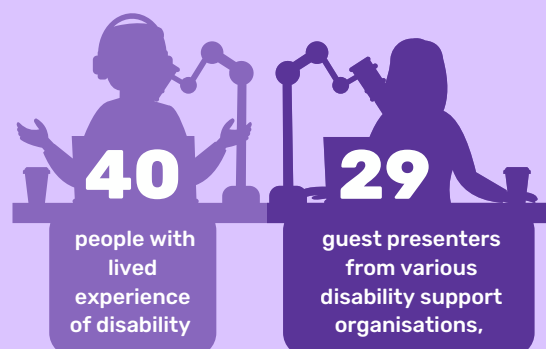
Focal has focused on building its community presence, engagement, and partnerships, creating meaningful connections that extend far beyond service delivery.

Our sustained partnerships with local schools, service providers, and community organisations have strengthened pathways for young people and enhanced inclusion across the region.

COLLABORATION: WORKING TOWARDS A NEW HOME

The Adult Services Team demonstrated exceptional collaboration engaging with the Support Coordinator, Office of the Public Guardian, and family members when it became clear that a person's disability and health needs had significantly changed, requiring a higher level of support. Capturing and providing records and reports as part of evidence compilation all supported a successful application for Supported Independent Living (SIL) funding and the start of life in a new home.

This year, through our partnership with West Bremer Radio, the All Abilities Hour we brought together



Key Partnerships

- **Fresh Futures Market Committee** active participation in the planning and delivery of this annual Ipswich event.

14 Ongoing Networking Meetings were attended as sector and interagency participation

- **School Transition Expos** engaged with students and families to support pathways beyond school ensuring they have access to resources appropriate for their life stage.

4 Local Schools completed drop-in days for school leaver transition planning



Learning and Growing Together


At Focal, we believe that when our staff grow, our clients thrive. This year, we invested heavily in professional development, introduced new models of practice, embedded quality assurance mechanisms, and celebrated the growth of those we support.

Client Growth and Transformation

Our Performing Arts and Dance Troupe delivered performances at significant community events. At the Fresh Futures Market, our clients took leadership roles including delivering the Acknowledgement of Country.

At the Springfield Festival, they performed before an audience of hundreds, earning praise from the Mayor, councillors, and Members of Parliament. These public platforms have provided our clients with opportunities to shine, build confidence, and demonstrate their talents to the wider community.

- Fresh Futures Market (September 2024)
- Client and Community Christmas Party (December 2024)
- Springfield Festival (May 2025)
- Rosewood Show (June 2025)
- Focal Talent Show (June 2024, July 2025)



Every moment has potential



Building Skills for Safety and Support

The focus on enhancing support worker capability through comprehensive core training has been a defining characteristic of our commitment to delivering safe and effective supports over the past twelve months.

Mandatory Core Competency Training

The People and Culture team ensured the end-to-end coordination of core competency training throughout the year. These skill-building programs covered critical safety areas including:

- CPI (Crisis Prevention Intervention)
- Maybo
- Meal Time Management
- Waste Management
- Infection Prevention and Control training
- Frontline Practice Leadership



764

Hours of Core Competency Training



366

Instances of Core Competency Training



402

Hours of client specific training



98%

Mandatory training completed on time

Suicidal Ideation Training

Support Coordinators completed suicidal ideation training, given their regular interactions with clients facing mental health issues that may lead to depression or self-harm. It has proven beneficial in managing crises, enabling staff to respond quickly and refer participants to suitable support services.

Responsiveness



RESPONSIVENESS IN ACTION: FROM CRISIS TO STABILITY

When a support coordinator received a call from a participant facing homelessness, complications related to pregnancy, and thoughts of self-harm, the coordinator implemented their training and initiated the react and respond protocol, assessing the participant's current thoughts on self-harm.

With the person's consent an emergency mental health assessment was arranged with paramedics responding within three hours and providing the initial stabilising supports. The support coordinator could then action the search for safe temporary accommodation.

Ensuring team members are equipped to respond skillfully to challenging situations with confidence ensures positive outcomes for those we support.



Adapting to a Changing Landscape

The disability sector is one of constant evolution, and our ability to adapt is key. In response to meeting NDIA standards, a process for developing an emergency support plan was introduced with each client, ensuring the team can respond accordingly in a disaster. Our Finance Team also demonstrated agility by restructuring to better manage invoicing and debtor management. When the NDIS introduced changes regarding group activity fees, the team responded proactively, communicating clearly and supporting clients through the transition.

Workforce Capability and Leadership

The People and Culture team implemented two evidence-based models of practice into the organisation as part of a broader learning and development program. Both models designed by La Trobe University create a structured and fit-for-purpose approach to improving service delivery and supervision of frontline workers:



Safety

EMBEDDING BEST-PRACTICE MODELS AND SKILLS

To ensure our training translates into consistently high-quality support, we introduced the Observing Practice Quality (OPQ) tool. This new feedback mechanism allows leaders to evaluate a support worker's quality of practice during on-the-job interactions. The OPQ serves as a powerful quality and safeguarding tool, reinforcing the principles learned in the 'Skills for Active Support' model and providing clear, constructive feedback to support ongoing professional development.

	Skills for Active Support	Frontline Practice Leadership	
Who	Support Workers	Leadership Roles	
Focus	Choice and Control Every Moment has Potential Graded Assistance Little and Often	Coaching skills Team development Quality of life outcomes Practice supervision	Observing Quality Practice Tool
Impact	Build client independence	Strengthen team performance	Ensuring training translates to practice

Message from the Treasurer

I am pleased to present the Treasurer's Report for the year ended 30 June 2025. This year has been one of both challenge and resilience as we continue to navigate the complexities of the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) environment while maintaining our steadfast commitment to the people we support.

Sector Context and Customer First

The NDIS sector continues to be a challenging environment for disability service providers, with the Stewart Brown Disability Services Financial Benchmark Report (June 2024) indicating that 67.1% of organisations reported an operating loss. This year, like many other organisations in the sector, our commitment to the customers we serve has required us to make difficult but necessary decisions such as the non-renewal of the Booval Hub Lease to ensure long-term viability.

Despite these headwinds, in FY25 Focal remained steadfast in our commitment to delivering high-quality, person-centred services to our customers. Our strategic focus on quality continues and has been demonstrated through re-certification, the introduction of active support skill training for our workforce, and enhanced practice leadership for our operational support team.



Zane Ali
Treasurer

**Dedication, Service and Discipline:
Building a Sustainable Future**

Financial Performance

Our financial performance was representative of another challenging year for Focal and more broadly the sector, with an operating deficit of - \$670,200 compared to the deficit of -\$969,757 in the previous year. This marked improvement reflects the disciplined Management action taken to improve financial performance and prudent cost control management.

Our revenue for the year was \$12,598,483, a decrease of \$1,281,999 from the \$13,880,482 received in 2023-24. A number of factors influenced this reduction with most notable being the strategic decision to "right size" the organisation in pursuit of sustainability. As can be seen revenue and profitability are not linked in the NDIS landscape and our aim for viability has meant strategically evaluating costs and benefits behind our geographic footprint and breadth of service offerings.

Despite consecutive deficit years, Focal's financial position remains viable, with net assets of \$1,765,312 and a good cash position of \$854,348. The liquidity ratio (current ratio) at year-end was 1.3, indicating sound financial health. These indicators confirm that the organisation retains sufficient resources to meet its obligations while continuing to invest in service quality.

*We are proud of
the progress
made ensuring
every dollar we
spend supports
participant
outcomes*

Looking Ahead

The year ahead will be shaped by several intersecting challenges that continue to test the viability of providers across the NDIS landscape. We face increased compliance obligations, a continued need to modernise our digital systems and applications, and real constraints on our ability to invest in innovation due to capped funding. As we have seen over the last couple of years, there has been, and will continue to be a wave of providers looking to exit the sector, merge or consolidate, seeking scale as a way to absorb costs and survive through pooling back-office resources, spreading risk and gaining negotiating power.

Our workforce remains both our greatest asset and our greatest risk. Like the broader sector, we are experiencing rising recruitment costs, high turnover, and strong competition for skilled support staff. This is exacerbated in regional areas and for participants with complex needs.

We continue to focus on internal development, support for frontline teams, and exploring ways to improve staff retention despite systemic wage and funding constraints.

On the infrastructure front, while many of our core assets are ageing, we have been fortunate enough to secure minor grant funding assisting in an asset refresh program at our Canning Street properties to ensure a comfortable, collaborative, accessible, and safe spaces for our people and the participants we serve.

In this climate of uncertainty, we are proud of the progress made in FY25 ensuring every dollar we spend supports participant outcomes, while we continue to serve our community with integrity and grounded by clarity of purpose. Our people, our culture, and our commitment to those we serve continue to be our greatest assets. With measured optimism, we step into the next year focused on sustainability, capability, and delivering on our mission with confidence.

Acknowledgements

We acknowledge the support received from each individual, business and stakeholder. Focal is grateful for support received in the form of donations, grants and funding, partners in the community, volunteers and our members. We extend our thanks to everyone who provides us with support.

- Ipswich City Council
- Cleanaway
- Russell Swinton
- Wendy Bourne MP
- Jennifer Howard MP
- Claremont Special School
- Ipswich Special School
- Sunnybank Special School
- Mount Ommaney Special School
- Goodna Special School
- Ipswich Basketball
- Performance Plus Dance Centre
- Ipswich Show Society
- West Bremer Radio
- Patty Hitchenor's Just Singing
- Ulysses Bike Club
- Footsteps Community Service
- Accord Care
- Konnectfest
- In Person Creative
- Brighter Living
- Everhomes
- STAR Community Services
- Mpower You
- First2Care Plan Management
- AIIM Choices
- Hiya Health
- Aussie Angels Nursing Services
- Tursa Employment and Training
- Ewaste Connection
- Adaptable Support Services
- Carelief
- Plan Partners
- Dignity and Transition Support Services
- Bertram Physiotherapy
- Get Picked Up
- Ipswich Holistic Community Care

Employee Recognition of Service

15 Years of service

Janelle Lind

10 Years of service

Alisha Ericksson

Matthew Hirsch

Melvin Glay

5 Years of service

Tony Coto
Wendy Jackson
Carlos Meza-Quezada
Rebecca Hutcheson

Stella Ainsworth
Keri Graham
Teeca Mullins
Lisa Torrens


Jayden Spall
Jeleea Johannessen
Finda Massaquoi
Maria Perez

Zowi Shaw
Anna Schaefer
Sacha Rolleston



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