



# Annual Report

2024/25



# Acknowledgement of Country

Berry Street Yooralla is committed to the principles of social justice. Berry Street Yooralla acknowledges Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as the Traditional Custodians of the lands, skies and waterways across Australia.

We pay our respects to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Elders past and present. We acknowledge Elders as holders, protectors and educators of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures. We pay respect to the emerging Elders and support the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, young people and people with disability in our care to connect to their cultures, countries and communities.

Berry Street Yooralla recognises that sovereignty was never ceded and acknowledges the continuing impact colonisation has had on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to date. We commit to ensuring all staff understand our true history, as an organisation and country, and recognise the importance of acknowledging the Traditional Custodians of the lands in which we operate.

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# A message from the Chair and CEO

This year sees us celebrate the beginning of a new chapter, with Berry Street and Yooralla combining their strengths to achieve even greater impact, building on the significant impact each organisation has made in the lives of children, young people, families and people with disability.

When the Boards began merger discussions in April 2024, both had already recognised the intersections between the cohorts we serve – partnering with other providers or recruiting specialist positions to address gaps in support.

By bringing the expertise of our highly skilled workforces together as a merged organisation of Berry Street Yooralla, we can enrich existing services, develop new innovative services for people with disability and those experiencing trauma, violence and abuse to create a lasting legacy of impact.

We were proud to officially merge on 2 December 2024.

## Stronger together

Developing a new Vision, Mission and set of Strategic Objectives was an exciting opportunity to create a bold and unifying direction that reflects our shared values and positions us as an innovative leader in our sector.

Through a collaborative process combining analysis and staff insights, we launched our new strategy in June 2025 – a pivotal moment in our journey forward.

We're realising this through initiatives such as Bridges, where the combined expertise of disability and child, youth and family services ensures children in out-of-home care with complex needs receive the right support.

We're also fostering knowledge sharing and co-locating teams to strengthen collaboration and connection.

## Celebrating Berry Street and Yooralla

While we move forward as one organisation, we also celebrate the lasting positive impact of each organisation this year.

In 2025, **Berry Street** supported nearly 40,000 people, continuing to grow and deepen impact. Residential care services continued to move towards therapeutic models, supporting young people to be safe, reset and recover.

More than 25,000 victim survivors were supported to live safely and free from violence, while addressing emotional and practical needs and issues arising from violence – through our Specialist Family Violence Services and partnership with the Orange Door.

Education and training remained a key focus, with the Berry Street Education Model (BSEM) expanding nationally, building the capacity of thousands of educators to support students through trauma-informed practice. At the Berry Street School, young people were supported to re-engage in learning and achieve positive outcomes, including successful completions of senior secondary pathways.

**Yooralla** continued to create meaningful pathways to independence, inclusion and opportunity for almost 2,500 people with disability.

Employment remained central, with social enterprises providing real jobs, fair wages and the chance for people with disability to contribute their skills in valued roles.

We also supported Supported Employees to explore open employment and, through programs like Foundation and Impact, helped young people build confidence and workplace skills.

Community Hubs across Melbourne and regional Victoria remained vibrant spaces where more than 500 people with disability could connect, pursue their interests and be part of their local community. Through school holiday and social programs, people with disability were supported to stay active, social and engaged, fostering friendships and confidence.

Yooralla continued its vital role in early intervention through the Kindergarten Inclusion Support Service (KISS) and Inclusion Support Program (ISP), working alongside educators and families to ensure children with disability and developmental delay were included and supported from the very beginning of their learning journey.

## Lived Experience

We remain committed to working alongside our clients, service users, their families and the wider community to ensure their voices lead our approach.

Our partnership with the Disability Leadership Institute on the Executive Internship program continued, embedding the voice of leaders with disability across the organisation. Thank you to Vicki-Anh Winfield and Shevonne Joyce for sharing their invaluable insights and experience with us as co-Chief Development Officer and co-CEO interns respectively.

Lived and Living Experience (LLE) is vital in shaping how we design and deliver services, grounding decisions in the real experiences of the people we support. We've established the LLE Advisory Group to provide a safe, supportive space for staff with LLE to share their perspectives and shape the practice of the merged organisation.

Our Y-Change team plays a pivotal role in embedding lived experience across our work. Made up of young people aged 18–30 with lived experience of socioeconomic disadvantage, the team drive systemic change through training, leadership development and advocacy – ensuring that decisions and reforms are informed by the real experiences of young people.

## Self-determination

As a merged organisation, we are steadfast in our commitment to Treaty and Reconciliation in Australia, recognising Aboriginal people as the experts of their Country, culture and community. We continue to support self-determination for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, transferring services to Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations (ACCOs) wherever possible. In FY25, 25 Aboriginal children moved to local ACCOs across residential care, foster care and Take Two services.



## Financial results

Like many in the sector, it was another challenging year financially for both Berry Street and Yooralla. To ensure our ongoing legacy as a merged organisation, our three-year strategy focuses on financial sustainability, ensuring services are well-targeted and funded, and finding new income streams while strengthening our workforce.

We're working with sector partners to advocate strongly for a sustainable NDIS and will continue to collaborate with governments and sector partners to influence policy and practice – advocating for the best possible outcomes for the people and communities we support.

## Acknowledgement and thanks

We warmly thank our donors, supporters, and corporate partners for their generosity and commitment. Their contributions enable us to deliver transformative programs, expand opportunities for people with disability, and strengthen services for children, young people, and families. Their ongoing partnership and trust play a vital role in helping us achieve our mission and make a meaningful difference in the communities we serve.

We would like to express our sincere gratitude to the Board members, Executive team, and leaders who have concluded their roles due to the merger, particularly Jennifer Williams AM, retiring Chair of Yooralla. Their vision, dedication, and leadership over many years have been instrumental in shaping both organisations and leave a lasting legacy for Berry Street Yooralla.



A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Jo Flynn'.

**Dr Jo Flynn AM**  
Chair



A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Terry Symonds'.

**Terry Symonds**  
Chief Executive Officer

# Our leadership

## Board of Directors



**Dr Jo Flynn – Chair**

AM MBBS, MPH, HonDMedSc,  
FRACGP, FAICD



**John Brown – Deputy Chair**

FCPA, BBus (Accounting), GAICD



**Lynn Glover**

BSW



**Joshua Grace-Ware**

BA & MA of Management (ER/IR),  
GAICD



**Associate Professor  
Cate Kelly**

BSc (Hons), MBBS, MHA,  
GAICD, FRACMA



**Mandy McCracken**



**Susie Quirk**

BA & Grad Dip (Education)



**Felix Walsh**

BA, JD



**Anthony Wood**

LLB, BCom  
(University of Melbourne)

## Outgoing

Jennifer Williams AM (Board Chair),  
Sandra Beanham, Tim Cartwright,  
Morven Fulton, Dr Karen McLean, Kym Peake,  
Lavinia Podolak, Cath Stone, Mark Tucker,  
Michael Vanderheide.

## Executive Team



### Terry Symonds

Chief Executive Officer  
BA, Grad Cert MH, M.Health  
Studies, GAICD



### Jenny McNaughton

Deputy CEO  
BSW, MSW, DipBu



### Tom Bowerman

Executive Director, Child and  
Family Services  
BA (Hons), PG Dip Social Work



### Melissa Cofre

Executive Director,  
Disability Services  
MHHS, BSc (Psychology)



### Dr Jane Daniels

Executive Director, Strategy,  
Technology and Analytics  
BA (Hons), PhD (Critical Theory)



### Di Francois

Chief People Officer  
BA, Grad Dip Ed



### Jenny Zahara

Executive Director, Finance  
and Property  
BCom/BSc, FCPA GAICD

### Outgoing

Georgie Dwyer, Elouise Holmes,  
Dr Annette Jackson, Tom Pennicott,  
Heidi Reid, Craig Tucker, Matt Warren.

# Becoming Berry Street Yooralla

## Our story so far

For over 240 years combined, Berry Street and Yooralla have been at the forefront of supporting Australians with disability and those experiencing poverty, violence and abuse.

Our story begins in 1877, with the establishment of Berry Street by a group of courageous women, who defied the social norms of the day to care for mothers and babies in need of support.

Then, in 1918 the discovery of a child with disability led Sister Evangeline Ireland (Sister Faith) to establish what we know today as Yooralla. Both organisations have continually evolved and adapted to meet changing community needs, which is why we're still here today, creating a legacy of impact for the people we support.



## The next chapter

We recognise that things have not been improving for many of the people we are here to serve. Across our services, we're seeing:

- Child removal rates at an all-time high
- Increased youth disengagement from education
- Escalating youth mental health concerns
- A significant proportion of children in out-of-home care affected by disability
- Women with disability facing higher rates of intimate partner violence, typically experiencing more severe forms of violence and face greater barriers to accessing supports
- Many people with disability experiencing the effects of trauma, whether as a result of abuse, discrimination or social stigma.

The best ways to support people with disability and those impacted by violence and abuse require new ways of thinking about the future. Which has led us to our next chapter, where the merger of Berry Street and Yooralla means we can continue to evolve and lead a new path for wrap around services to better meet the needs of the people we serve.

## Disability and Child Services: Understanding the overlap

Research shows that disability is far more common among children and young people in contact with child protection than in the general population.

While around 10% of children live with disability overall, studies consistently report rates of 30–67% among children and young people in out-of-home care.

Despite the clear overlap between disability and child protection, service systems often fail to work together in supporting this cohort. Children and young people fall through gaps created by fragmented eligibility rules, funding siloes, and poorly coordinated care. At Berry Street Yooralla, we're working with government, philanthropy, people with lived experience, and research partners to build a better response. As a merged organisation with deep expertise in both trauma and disability, we are uniquely positioned to design, test and scale solutions that bridge systems and improve outcomes.

# A new way forward

As we start our next chapter as Berry Street Yooralla, we've established our Vision and Mission to show what we're working towards, and our path to get there.

## Our Vision

Everyone feels safe, included and supported to lead their best lives.

## Our Mission

To foster wellbeing through the strength of relationships and communities by providing support, education and pathways to home.

## What does this mean for those we work with?

- That people with **disability** have a home and supports of their choice to enable their independence.
- **Families and carers** get early and effective support.
- **Children and young people** in out-of-home-care services feel safe and are supported to thrive.
- All those we work with have connections to **education, employment, and community life**.
- We will support self-determination for **First Nations peoples**.
- **Students** are engaged in their education and supported to achieve.
- **Victim survivors of family violence** are safe and empowered to recover.



## Realising our Vision and Mission

How we will realise our Vision and Mission in our everyday work is guided by six Strategic Themes. These themes are all interlinked to lead us to the lasting impact we want to make.



**Each theme is underpinned by specific objectives and initiatives that will guide and orient our work over the next three years.**

**1 Sustained Positive Outcomes** – Delivering integrated, contemporary support across disability, education, family, and employment services to promote inclusion, improve outcomes, and strengthen families through early intervention.

**2 My Home** – Provide safe, sustainable, and trauma-informed housing supports that promote independent living, stability, and recovery. While we expect to deliver sustained positive outcomes for these services too, My Home was pulled out as its own theme because it is so critical and complex.

**3 Strong Partnerships** – As a collaborative partner, we advocate for systemic change to reduce trauma and disability barriers, share knowledge, and actively support First Nations self-determination.

**4 Financial Sustainability** – Build responsive, efficient, and sustainable services by meeting demand, strengthening the workforce, optimising operations, and leveraging expertise to drive growth and impact for the next 150 years.

**5 Equity and Inclusion** – Embed lived experience and deliver inclusive, culturally safe, and identity-affirming care that reflects the diversity of the people we support.

**6 Thriving Teams** – Strengthen our organisation through a shared identity, consistent quality practice, inclusive culture, and skilled, accountable leadership.

# The merger in action

**We're beginning to realise the benefits of becoming a merged organisation, with initiatives both underway and planned for the future, to better support the needs of the communities we serve.**

## Bridges program

Children and young people in contact with child protection are far more likely to live with disability than their peers. This means many children living with complex needs don't always have the right support which further compounds their disadvantage.

Yooralla worked in partnership over three years with a residential care provider to address the gaps in support for children and young people in out-of-home care. Through the merger, we're now able to extend this existing model of care to Berry Street Yooralla service users, through the Bridges program.

In the early days of the program, Bridges has supported children and families through 20 referrals, including 26 Specialist Support Coordination and 24 Positive Behaviour Support consults. Referrals have come from the West (5) and the North (15) regions, and training has also been delivered to child and family teams to strengthen their understanding of disability and Positive Behaviour Support.

Feedback shows the program is making a real difference for children, families and carers. With capacity still available, we are preparing to expand Bridges statewide, reaching more children and young people in the South East and Hume regions.

To ensure a smooth transition from care, an NDIS application was submitted for Charlie\*, a 17-year-old with a diagnosis of Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) Level 2, to support his transition to independent living and adulthood.

Through Bridges, Charlie has had access to a Positive Behaviour Support (PBS) practitioner who was actively involved in weekly care team meetings, providing input on a number of complex issues to ensure Charlie was receiving the support he needs.

The NDIS planning meeting was attended by both the PBS Practitioner and the Specialist Support Coordinator, who advocated strongly for a comprehensive NDIS plan tailored to Charlie's complex needs and future goals, which include employment and independent living.

Thanks to Bridges, Charlie now has the right support to secure the funding he needs, ensuring he can access the appropriate level of care and achieve sustained positive outcomes.



## Knowledge sharing and upskilling

Staff have begun to benefit from shared knowledge and expanded training opportunities as a result of the merger. Through the Berry Street Education Model (BSEM) training, Kindergarten Inclusion Support (KIS) additional assistants gained practical strategies to improve classroom engagement, particularly for children with complex learning needs.

Disability Operations staff accessed family violence training and drop-in sessions, while Children, Youth and Families staff undertook training in autism, intellectual disability, trauma, ADHD, positive behaviour support and communication strategies.

We have also scheduled basic NDIS navigation training for our Northern teams, strengthening their ability to support families. These initiatives reflect the depth of expertise across our merged organisation and the opportunities now available to learn from one another to better meet the needs of our services users and clients.

## Collaboration and co-location

As a merged organisation, we are building a shared foundation for how we work together. We are developing a joint practice framework that combines the strengths of Disability and Child, Youth and Family services to ensure the highest standards of support.

Staff are already learning from each other through shared forums, such as the Berry Street Nurturing Beginnings forum, and we are collaborating on a joint Early Years strategy to give children the best start in life.

Our co-location across offices in Morwell, Yarraville, Richmond and Melbourne is further strengthening connections, improving communication, and fostering a culture of shared expertise.

## Future initiatives

Several other initiatives are already underway to leverage the strengths of our combined expertise. We aim to strengthen our workforce and increase stability for clients and service users by introducing joint staffing models, where staff from both disability and family services sides of the organisation are appropriately trained and supported to work across both settings.

We are also looking to provide more accommodation options for victim survivors by growing the Short-Term Accommodation and Response (STAR) family violence program by repurposing a vacant Specialist Disability Accommodation (SDA) property.

A new 'Bridges to Home' transitional housing proposal is also in development, which seeks to provide accommodation options for service users, to reduce the risk of homelessness and other risks that come with ageing out of residential care.

Together, these initiatives demonstrate the breadth of expertise now available and the potential we can continue to unlock through partnership.

# Our year in review

## Berry Street



1,512  
Staff



4 years 7 months  
Average length of staff service



4  
School campuses



11  
Residential care homes - non -TFM



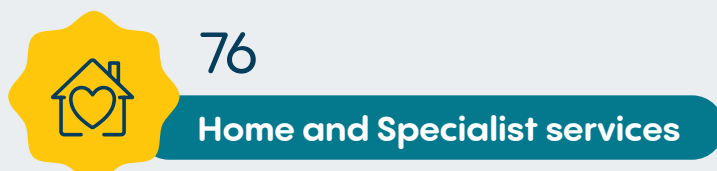
332  
Foster/Kinship carers



14  
Residential care homes - TFM

Berry Street service users	
Case Management	321
Community Programs	3,564
Education Services	1,550
Family Violence Support Services	3,254
Orange Door Support and Safety Hubs	22,815
Out-of-Home Care	1,067
Parenting and Family Services	2,868
Post Care Support	474
Young People	1,005
Take Two	2,453
<b>Total</b>	<b>39,371</b>

# Yooralla



## Yooralla services and clients

Home and Specialist Services residents	315
Applications for Kindergarten Inclusion Support Services (KISS)	822
Inclusion Support Program (ISP) service delivery visits	4,409
Pieces of equipment loaned through the Specialist Equipment Library Victorian Inclusion Agency-ISP (SEL)	487
Allied Health clients	987
Support Coordination clients	826
Specialist Support Coordination clients	42



# Our impact

## Access to the community

Yooralla's Social and Community Participation programs support people with disability to get involved in the local community, learn new skills, build confidence and stay active and social, through a wide range of individual and group activities and recreational outings.

### Community Hubs and Supports

Our Hubs focus on learning and development and getting out into the community. Clients can get involved in a range of stimulating activities and learn new skills - from educational, recreational and creative activities to social and workplace skills. Programs aim to build confidence in a learning environment and can be a stepping stone to TAFE courses or open employment.

Community Hubs	17
Community Hub clients	502
Assistance with Daily Living clients	191
Social group clients	34
School holiday program participants	40



### Tomatoes, togetherness, and a taste of community!

Clients from Yooralla's Drouin Community Hub have been spending their time at the local community garden in Warragul, contributing to the upkeep of the garden, tending the garden beds, watering plants and more. These occasions are always looked forward to by clients, especially when they finish with a morning tea that provides the opportunity to connect with each other, as well as the other gardening group members.

On a very special day, the clients got to taste the fruits of their labour, gathering to make passata and diced tomatoes from the tomatoes grown in the garden. The rich aroma of simmering tomatoes filled the air as everyone worked together, crushing the tomatoes through special contraptions, while others carefully diced fresh tomatoes or took on the important job of sealing the jars. The garden, usually a place of quiet growth, buzzed with energy and chatter.

By the afternoon, each client proudly took home a jar of their homemade sauce - a delicious reminder of their day's work.

More than just a gardening program, their time at the community garden has become a place of connection, belonging, and shared experiences.



# Healing trauma



**Berry Street’s trauma services support children, young people and families to heal from the impacts of abuse, neglect and other adverse experiences. Using evidence-based, trauma-informed approaches, we help people make sense of their past, build resilience and strengthen relationships, restoring safety, belonging and hope for the future.**

## Take Two

Berry Street’s Take Two program is a Victoria-wide therapeutic service helping to address the mental health impacts on children of the trauma they have experienced from abuse, neglect or adverse experiences. The program uses clinical frameworks, neurobiological research and evidence-informed approaches to understand adverse childhood experiences.

Take Two	Families worked with	2,345
	Average length of engagement	4 months
Child-Parent Psychotherapy	Families worked with	32
	Clinicians supported	80+

### A story of healing between mother and son

In his short five-years of life, Jasper\* had already witnessed extensive family violence before he was referred to Berry Street’s Take Two program. Jasper was anxious and withdrawn, struggled with stomach aches, bed-wetting, and clung desperately to his mum, Rachel\*, seemingly worried for her safety. He insisted on staying close to protect her, even during the night. Jasper struggled to attend kindergarten and often waited by the window for his mum to return.

During initial sessions with his mother and Take Two clinician Jodie\*, Jasper was very serious and withdrawn, rejecting Jodie’s attempts to play and expressing themes of aggression through play with Rachel. Jodie also recognised that Rachel was having trouble understanding what Jasper was showing through his play, confusing expressing themes of aggression with being aggressive.

This led to the use of the evidence-based approach, Child-Parent Psychotherapy (CPP), to help Jasper and Rachel understand each other better. Rachel disclosed that she had also experienced family violence in her childhood. She became more aware of how her own experiences were impacting her parenting and relationship with her son, and came to understand that Jasper’s healing relied on her being there to support his recovery.

While realising her own experiences were valid, Rachel wanted Jasper to know that it was okay for him to express what he had been through. She didn’t want him to carry his pain alone inside anymore. As the weeks passed, Jasper began to trust that it was safe to relay his painful experiences to his mum through play.

Over the months Jasper’s behaviour became more settled and regulated and his outbursts reduced. Rachel said childcare drop offs were smoother, and he had stopped waiting by the window. Rachel said that Jasper’s mood and confidence had also improved, along with his social skills, and he was excited to start school next year. Rachel began to see a psychologist to help her heal her own experiences of family violence. While she reflected that therapy sessions with Jasper sometimes felt slow going, she realised small steps were adding up to real progress.

*“My little boy trusts me again.” Rachel*



## Therapeutic Life Story Work

Therapeutic Life Story Work (TLSW) supports children in out-of-home care to work through the developmental trauma that they've experienced. TLSW practitioners draw on a range of creative tools, concepts, and play-based activities to support children and young people to understand or make sense of their story and of significant events that happened in their lives.

Practitioners	2
Service users	24
Average length of support	9 months

**“ If I ever won the lottery, I would pay for every child and young person in out-of-home care to receive TLSW.” – Foster carer**

### In their words – Connection through life story work

Ryan\* is a 9-year-old proud Aboriginal boy who was referred to Berry Street's Therapeutic Life Story Work (TLSW) program to support him to build a clearer picture of his life experiences and support his transition into permanent care. From the beginning, Ryan was keen to do TLSW and was particularly interested in understanding more about his father, someone he'd never met but often wondered about. Ryan reflects on his TLSW journey here. "During my Life Story work, one of my biggest hopes was to learn more about my dad. I'd never met him before, and I always wondered what he was like as a person and what kind of things he liked.

My TLSW worker worked really hard to find my birth dad but did not have a lot of luck at first, as my dad did not have his own phone and moved around a lot. She did get to meet with his family and community members to learn more about him. In life story work, my TLSW worker helped me understand some of the challenges my birth dad has faced and how those challenges might affect his day-to-day life.

Later, my TLSW worker found some information about my dad, but she didn't get to connect with him until almost the very end of the life story work. When she finally set up a call with him, she helped me prepare for how I might feel. I told her I was nervous because I wasn't sure if he would answer, but I was also excited to talk to him. We made a safety plan just in case things didn't go the way I hoped and I named things to support me after the call, like holding my dog, playing on the trampoline, or shooting some hoops with a basketball.

And then...The day of the call finally arrived! We finished our TLSW session and together with my foster dad, we prepared for the call. My TLSW worker helped us think about some questions and made sure everything was ready. When my TLSW worker made the call, I was really nervous.

But then she put it on loudspeaker, and my dad answered. I was in shock and didn't know what to say at first. My birth dad, said, "Hello mate, it's good to speak with you." I replied, "Yeah," in a kind of shy way, but I looked really happy. He asked if I had any questions, and I took a moment to think and asked him some of my most burning questions, like his favourite colour ("blue"), his favourite foods, and his footy team. He also knew some things about me from his workers and showed lots of interest in some of the things I had been up to over the years!

After we had talked some more, my TLSW worker introduced my foster dad, and he got on the phone and introduced himself, and they got to meet each other. They were nice to each other! My foster dad said he'd love to set up another call and maybe a visit one day. Dad also said to my foster dad how much he appreciates my foster parents for supporting my connection with my family and culture. He said, "thank you mate from the bottom of my heart, thank you for all the love and respect you have shown since my boy has been in your care, and for stepping up when he couldn't". My foster dad said "thank you" too and had watery eyes.

My TLSW worker recorded the call for me with dad's permission and sent it to me to refer back to when I want. That call was so special for me. I felt nervous at first, but it turned out to be a really cool. I'm happy I got to talk to my dad and meet him as I never thought I would."

# Trauma-informed education

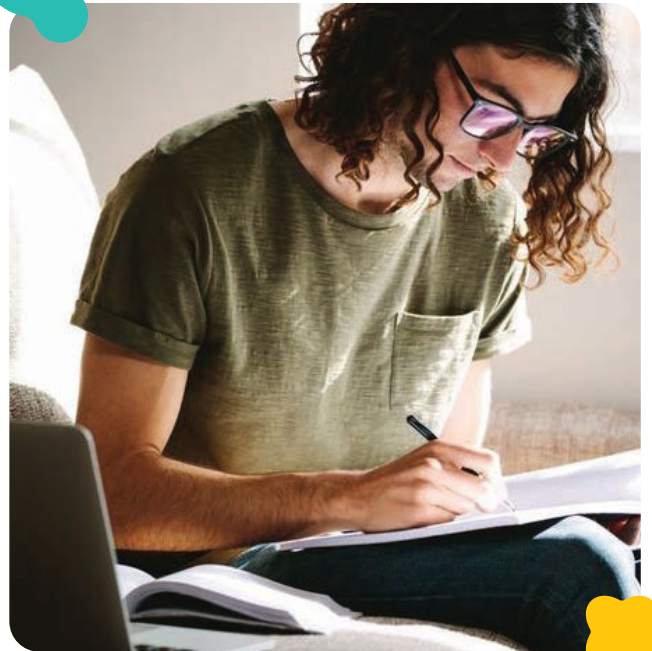


**Berry Street's innovative approach to education serves as the foundation for the multi-campus Berry Street School and has positively impacted teacher practice in mainstream and specialist schools right across Australia and beyond.**

## Berry Street Education Model

The Berry Street Education Model (BSEM) offers a suite of professional development, consultation, and mentoring opportunities for school leaders and teachers. Through evidence-informed strategies, educators gain the tools to meet diverse learning needs, enhancing student engagement, self-regulation, relationships, wellbeing, and academic achievement.

Schools undertaking whole-of-school course	591
Training sessions delivered as part of whole-of-school course	987
Public courses run	90
Individual educators undertaking training	20,430



## Showing what's possible through BSEM

At Churchill Primary School in south-eastern Victoria, a clear principle guides every classroom: meet students' wellbeing needs when supporting them to learn. This approach, grounded in the trauma-informed, wellbeing-focused strategies from Berry Street Education Model (BSEM) and explicit direct instruction, is helping students thrive academically, socially, and emotionally.

Principal Jacquie Burrows and her team have created a school culture where trauma-informed wellbeing strategies and high-impact teaching are not competing priorities, but compatible and mutually reinforcing.

"Educators often feel they have to choose between wellbeing and academic rigour," Jacquie says. "But here, they work together."

By embedding BSEM into their daily practice and pairing it with strong instruction, the school is showing what's possible when we meet students where they are, believe in where they can go, and provide systems of support to help them get there. "We do explicit teaching really well," Jacquie says.

"Strong instructional routines, consistency, and repetition help our students succeed. And those routines also support their wellbeing."

Since implementing BSEM, Churchill Primary School has observed significant improvements in student behaviour, engagement, and academic performance.

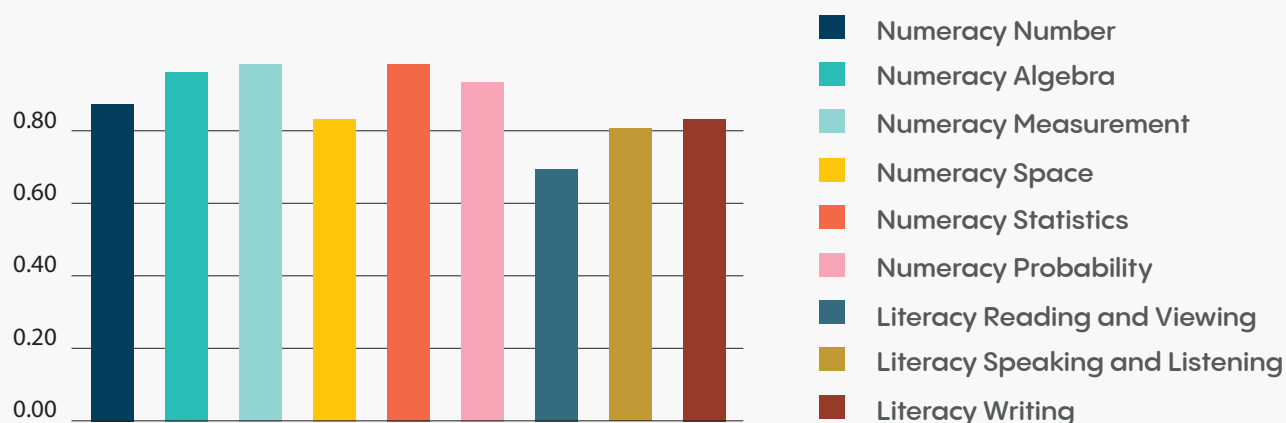
The trauma-informed approach has created a supportive learning environment where students feel safe and valued, leading to enhanced self-regulation and a stronger school culture.

## Berry Street School

The Berry Street School provides a highly specialised learning environment and long-term option for students whose needs have not been met by mainstream schools or short-term programs. The School operates to educate children with a history of adverse childhood experiences who are at risk of disengaging from their education, adopting a trauma-informed approach to teaching and learning that puts the needs of students at the centre of everything.

Students across each campus	214
Students enrolled in VCE VM or VPC (across Year 10-12)	84
Successfully completing VCE VM or VPC	6
Students supported by people not in paid work in last 12 months	43%
Students supported by people who have not finished Year 12 or equivalent	22%
Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander children	~25%
Children in out-of-home care	~25%

### Average student growth in literacy and numeracy in 2024



### Thriving at Berry Street School: Crystal's story

Crystal commenced Year 11 at Berry Street School's Ballarat campus in 2023, following a difficult experience at her previous school where large class sizes, bullying, and limited support had deeply affected her confidence and mental health. She often hid in the classroom and rarely sought help. Her dream was simple but powerful: to finish school. Yet, Crystal had been told by others that she would never be able to "properly" achieve that goal.

At Berry Street School, Crystal found the supportive, tailored environment she needed to thrive. She developed her strengths of bravery, creativity, and perseverance, forming strong relationships with teachers and learning to self-regulate.

Gradually, she stepped out of her comfort zone to work independently and in small groups, while showing kindness and empathy towards her peers. Academically, Crystal achieved significant growth, graduating with the Victorian Pathways Certificate and completing three nationally accredited TAFE units in Business Services. She also participated in the MacqLit reading program, gaining confidence and new skills in literacy.

Beyond the classroom, Crystal embraced leadership opportunities: she MC'd her first public speaking event, established the Ballarat Pride Group, coordinated inclusive events such as Wear it Purple Day and IDAHOBIT Day, and helped plan the inaugural school formal.

Crystal's determination to finish school, something once said to be out of her reach, never wavered. Her journey highlights the transformative impact of Berry Street School's tailored support. She overcame barriers, embraced leadership opportunities, and developed the skills and confidence to live independently, with plans to commence vocational study in 2025.



# Supporting employment for people with disability



Yooralla's Job Skills and Employment Pathways programs provide job skills training and build pathways into open and customised employment for people with disability, to support them to achieve their employment goals.

Customised Employment clients	39
Foundation program clients	18
Impact program clients	14
Supported Employees	142
Social Enterprises	4
Social Enterprise Employees	28
Clients transitioning to open employment	9
Clients in open employment	4

° Includes clients currently transitioning

## Foundation and Impact

Yooralla's Impact program empowers young people with intellectual disability to build job-ready skills through a unique blend of classroom learning and real-world work experience.

By partnering with inclusive employers and providing tailored support, the program creates meaningful pathways to long-term employment and independence, transforming lives and workplace cultures alike.

The Foundation program was developed as an introductory program for those not yet ready for Impact. Foundation focuses on personal skill-building and developing independence, before transitioning to job readiness.



### Impact program participants and the Australian Open are a perfect match!

As part of Yooralla's Impact program, Akna, Rainer, Owen, Sophie, and Alex had a ball at the Australian Open (AO), working in customer experience and at the AO retail store.

The participants have gained valuable experience in customer service and retail through this work experience placement. The Customer Experience team were the friendly first face of the Open, greeting guests, handing out maps and assisting with directions, making every moment a grand slam for guests.

"I like the tennis, it's good!" said Owen. "I like working here, I love my uniform. I like working in the information booth," Akna added.

Sophie and Alex have been practising their money handling and customer service skills, while helping customers ace their style game with the exclusive gear on offer at the AO retail store. "I love working at the Australian Open! I did a good job with customers. I like the towels and tidying the products," Sophie said.

This partnership with AO is just one of the many exciting work experience opportunities that are on offer to Impact program participants, with the goal of future employment.

## Customised Employment

Yooralla's Customised Employment program supports people with disability to find meaningful work that matches their strengths and interests. With guidance from job coaches, participants build confidence, learn workplace skills, and receive tailored support, from exploring their goals to finding or creating roles, and settling into employment – paving the way for greater independence and inclusion.



### Building skills and confidence at McDonald's

Richard and Shavaun had their first work experience taster at quintessential favourite, McDonald's!

Both Richard and Shavaun are Supported Employees at Yooralla's Business Enterprise, who are being supported to explore employment in mainstream settings (open employment) through the Customised Employment program.

Participants initially undergo the 'Discovery Phase', where job coaches take the time to understand the person with disability, exploring their strengths, interests, preferences, and the supports they may require to succeed in their role.

This information helps the coaches to identify or shape roles that align with those strengths and interests, and negotiate with employers to make modifications as needed. Part of this is supporting participants with work experience placements, like Richard and Shavaun's placement at McDonald's.

These work experience placements are essential in providing firsthand exposure to the workplace and supporting participants to explore different roles and assess their interests and skills in real workplace settings.

Supported on the day by Sau, Yooralla Job Coach, and Codey, Disability Support Navigator, Richard and Shavaun were shown the ropes of all the different tasks that staff are responsible for in store. They learnt the tasks of all trainees

on their first day at McDonald's, including mopping and cleaning of the dining area – which was left in an immaculate state after Shavaun was finished with it!

She also developed an excellent system to not mix up the cloths for wiping tables and chairs, before progressing on to the most important task – learning how to make coffee!

Kaleb, the Store Manager, who generously donated his time to support Richard and Shavaun on their work experience shift, showed Shavaun how to make the coffee at the McCafe – demonstrating first, before Shavaun completed the task with his assistance.

Codey was the lucky recipient of this first coffee, reporting that it "tasted delicious!"

This was a very important first step in Richard and Shavaun's employment journey, with reports sharing that they greatly enjoyed the experience.

The job coaches will keep working with the pair, to continue to grow and develop their skills as they work toward open employment.



# Addressing family violence



Berry Street’s Specialist Family Violence Services support victim survivors to live safely in their communities, addressing both their practical and emotional needs. Central to our approach is ensuring people are listened to, believed and treated with respect, while empowering them to draw on their strengths and make their own decisions about their lives.

## The Orange Door and Specialist Family Violence Services

Berry Street provides free specialist family violence services and after-hours crisis support for people who have experienced family and domestic violence.

These services are delivered through The Orange Door network in the Northern Metropolitan and Central Highlands regions, as well as via our Northern and Western Specialist Family Violence Services (SFVS).



<b>SFVS – North</b>	Families given intensive case management response	<b>2,482</b>
	Victim survivors given support through the North East High Risk Management Panel	<b>45</b>
	Victim survivors given support through the Hume Merri Bek High Risk Management Panel	<b>62</b>
	Therapeutic responses to victim survivors of family violence	<b>467</b>
	Households with personal safety assistance including personal/home security	<b>195</b>
<b>SFVS – West</b>	Nights of specialist family violence accommodation to victim survivor family groups	<b>367</b>
	Case management responses to victim survivors’ family groups	<b>559</b>
	Victim survivors given support through the Central Highlands High Risk Management Panel	<b>45</b>
	Crisis after hours responses to victim survivor family groups	<b>178</b>
	Case management responses to people causing harm	<b>130</b>
	Victim survivor households provided with personal safety assistance including personal/home security	<b>64</b>

Lauren\* escaped a family violence situation with the support of Berry Street's Specialist Family Violence Services. After a period of time in short-term accommodation with her son, Tom\*, the pair are now thriving in permanent accommodation and looking forward to the future. Lauren reflects on her journey below.

### **In their words – A story of courage, healing and new beginnings**

"After making the life-changing decision to leave a situation of family domestic violence, not knowing what the future held for me and my son, I was overwhelmed, lost, and scared. I had already reached out to many support lines for months and years before, and eventually, was guided to Berry Street. That was the turning point in our journey, and I have been forever grateful since.

From the very first phone conversation with Emma\*, I felt heard, seen, and most importantly, supported. She gave me hope when I had none. Her patience, compassion, and ability to listen to every word and every tear made a lasting impact on me. Then came Zoe\*, who followed up with the same warmth and support. Both laid the foundation of trust that helped me take that terrifying first step forward.

On the day of my scheduled appointment with Berry Street, my situation at home had escalated. I met Leah\*, whose empathy and professionalism were extraordinary. She listened attentively and, despite the looming holiday season and pressure of the moment, she ensured that I had a safe place to go.

I was hesitant, uncertain, scared, but her guidance helped me make the hardest but safest decision of my life. Leaving home that day, not knowing what the future held, the world seemed to stop. But Berry Street was there to hold my hand. The next day, Sarah\* contacted me and began assisting with paperwork, practical matters, and emotional support. It was overwhelming, but I had someone walking me through it.



When we moved to a short-term support accommodation, we were welcomed and supported by an incredible team who treated us with dignity, respect, and kindness. The team provided ongoing support, accompanying me through difficult appointments, reporting breaches, and organising helpful and healing activities like yoga, art sessions, and morning teas.

You helped me feel safe, seen, and cared for. We stayed for a number of months that were filled with healing, learning, growing, and most importantly, support.

Nearly a month ago, I secured permanent accommodation. At first, the idea of living in a new home felt unfamiliar and uncomfortable, but now, it feels like home. There is peace, happiness, and stability. Tom\* is happy, and that alone fills my heart with joy. He started a new school who have put protections in place to support our safety and confidentiality. Although it was hard for him at first, he is now making friends and settling in well. I have just started a new job.

There are still small challenges...but I know how far we've come. The fact that we've made it here is a testament to Berry Street's unwavering support. You have changed our lives. I keep asking myself: who and where would I be today without your help? The answer is difficult to imagine."



## Providing safe homes

When it's not safe for children to remain with their families, we provide safe and nurturing homes through foster, kinship and residential care.

For children and young people who have experienced significant and repeated trauma, we deliver therapeutic residential care, grounded in evidence-based approaches, to ensure young people can start to recover and thrive.

Teaching Family Model homes	13
% participants transitioned to lower-level care	43%
% CANS progress experiencing meaningful positive change <sup>^</sup>	58%
% consistent family connection	58%
% increased family connection	39%
% engaged with education/employment	77%
% reengaged with education/employment	55%

<sup>^</sup> Child and Adolescent Needs and Strengths tool

## Taylor's journey of growth

When Taylor\* joined residential care in a Berry Street home, she had already faced significant hurdles. She couldn't live safely at home, and after a challenging kinship placement, Taylor was grappling with big emotions, difficulties at school, struggles connecting with others, and everyday tasks that felt overwhelming. Social situations were especially hard—she lacked confidence to make friends and felt anxious about things many take for granted, like catching public transport.

With consistent support and the strong relationships she built with her carers, Taylor began setting small, achievable goals. By breaking challenges into micro-skills, such as starting conversations, setting boundaries, and using public transport, she gradually built her confidence.

Taylor began attending school regularly, formed friendships, and started a positive relationship. Today, she is thriving in her own private rental, travelling independently, and equipped with the skills and belief in herself to live confidently. Her journey is a powerful reminder of what's possible when young people are surrounded by care, structure, and belief in their potential.

# Celebrating our staff and carers

**At Berry Street Yooralla, our people are at the heart of everything we do. Across homes, hubs, classrooms, communities, and more, our dedicated workforce brings skill, compassion, and commitment to supporting children, young people, adults and families every day. We're celebrating their incredible efforts, the difference they make, and the passion they bring to their roles.**

## Toni Pavia is "single-handedly changing lives"

Transitioning a loved one into supported accommodation can be challenging, but for Liz and her family, Toni, Service Manager at Clarendon Street, made the process transformative. Toni's calmness, compassion, and unwavering commitment helped Liz settle into Yooralla's Young Onset Dementia accommodation, providing a safe, loving environment where she could thrive.

Her exceptional support and dedication were recognised with both the Client Choice and Values Awards at the 2024 Excellence Awards, honouring her efforts to uphold clients' rights and goals and exemplify Yooralla's values in action.

Liz's family speak warmly of Toni's care: her ability to build trust, support independence, and create a sense of dignity for Liz has been remarkable. They also highlighted how Toni extends her support to families, helping them navigate difficult moments with reassurance and empathy.

Thanks to Toni's leadership, Liz is now thriving, and her family are confident she is living a safe, fulfilled, and happy life.

Her story is a powerful example of the impact of compassion, skill, and commitment in supporting people with dementia and their families.



## Celebrating our foster carers

While our foster carers are not formal employees of Berry Street Yooralla, their dedication, compassion, and commitment make them an indispensable part of our workforce, helping children and young people thrive every day. We're celebrating foster carers like Simon, who reached out to Berry Street eight years ago after quietly considering foster care for many years, opening the door to a life-changing experience.

"I've always enjoyed the company of children, and figured I had a spare room and could fit respite care into my schedule," he says.

Over the years, Simon fostered on his own before his partner, Hamish, became an accredited carer. Together, they now share the joys and challenges of providing a safe, nurturing home for children in need. Passionate about challenging misconceptions, Simon highlights the important role of LGBTIQA+ carers. "Rainbow families provide incredible environments for kids to feel safe and secure," he says. "Children just need love and care, and families come in all shapes, sizes, and colours. LGBTIQA+ people are absolutely welcome to foster."

Foster care comes in many forms, and Simon and Hamish have found ways to balance their busy professional lives with caring responsibilities. With support from Berry Street, including practical help with transport, resources, and guidance, they ensure children in their care thrive.

"Signing up to be a foster carer has a real and genuine impact and is one of the best decisions I've ever made," Simon reflects. Their story is a powerful reminder that with love, dedication, and support, foster carers can transform lives and create safe, happy spaces where children



## Celebrating our staff at Resi ROCKS

We were so thrilled that two Berry Street Yooralla staff members received awards, with another team also receiving an honourable mention, at ResiROCKS - an annual celebration and award ceremony for Victorian residential care workers. The awards were presented by the Hon. Lizzie Blandthorn, Minister for Children, and the Centre of Excellence in Child and Family Welfare CEO, Deb Tsorbaris. Marking the 20th anniversary of ResiRocks, the event was built around the theme of 'Belong, Believe, Become', acknowledging the three core concepts residential carers weave into their work with young people every day.

Berry Street Yooralla staff were the well-deserved recipients of two of the awards, an amazing recognition of their hard work. We congratulate: Lesley Turnbull, Education Support worker for children in residential care (CIRC) was a joint winner of the Education Award. The award highlights Lesley as a "fierce advocate" who goes above and beyond to help young people who have been discouraged by traditional education. She persists, listens deeply, and builds trust with young people - even if that means sitting patiently outside a bedroom door to demonstrate how much she cares for a young person.

Rebecca Domotor, Residential Care Team Leader, was inducted into the Hall of Fame, an award that honours an individual with over ten years of service who has demonstrated outstanding dedication and commitment to the sector. Rebecca was the first to pilot the Teaching Family Model (TFM) in Gippsland, and her colleagues describe her as the backbone of the program, and her young people know her as someone who never gives up.

For the Cultural Engagement Award, our Balit Ngulu Residential Care home team also received an honourable mention. This award is given to a team who demonstrates commitment to providing best practice and culturally appropriate care to young people. Congratulations to all the award winners and nominees, we are so proud of our commitment to the children and young people we support.



# Your support

## Philanthropy and corporate partners

The generosity of Berry Street and Yooralla's philanthropic and corporate supporters continues to make a profound impact in 2025. Together, our donors, partners, and funders are helping to create opportunities and deliver initiatives that bring lasting, meaningful change for children, young people, families, and people with disability across both organisations.

Every gift plays a vital role in ensuring our programs directly support those we serve addressing individual needs and tackling broader systemic barriers. Whether it's creating safer futures for children and young people, or empowering people with disability to live with greater independence and dignity, your support is at the heart of this work. Many of the achievements highlighted in this report were made possible through this collective generosity. We are deeply grateful for your continued trust and commitment

### Programs underway include:

- **Farm to Table** – establishing garden beds across 14 Home and Specialist Services, giving clients the opportunity to grow vegetables, fruit and herbs for use in their homes and to share with others. These gardens promote healthy eating, connection and participation in everyday life.
- **Thrive** – developing tailored online learning materials to help people with disability build new skills and confidence for independent living and employment.

In FY25, our fundraising efforts focused on supporting children with disability who are ineligible for the NDIS due to their visa status. Through the compassion and generosity of our community, we raised \$324,725 and have already begun providing supports to these children, ensuring they can access therapies, equipment, and support they need.

We extend our heartfelt thanks to our donors, especially those who give through our Regular Giving program, and to the many who have chosen to leave a lasting legacy by including Yooralla in their Will.

We also acknowledge our trusts and foundations partners, whose grant funding continues to make specific initiatives possible.

### Yooralla's fundraising and philanthropy results

Total revenue for FY2024–25 was \$1.112 million, which includes \$88,000 in bequests received (excluding \$69,000 in Special Trusts interests). Total administration expenses were \$416,000, representing a 37% cost of fundraising (or 41% excluding bequest revenue).

### The Yooralla Foundation

By the end of FY2024–25, the Yooralla Foundation balance was \$3.803 million, with \$2.495 million committed to specific initiatives that will be delivered to meet Yooralla's purpose of supporting people with disability to live the lives they choose. To adopt a consistent approach to fundraising and philanthropy across Berry Street Yooralla programs, the Board has resolved to wind up the Yooralla Foundation in July 2025. We would like to thank members of the Foundation Committee for their commitment to raising funds for people with disability.



### Thank you

We would like to acknowledge and thank the following who have generously donated and provided philanthropic support to Yooralla in the 2024/25 Financial Year.

### Trusts and foundations

- Arthur and Doris Clayton Fund
- Catherine Gray Trust
- Clifford Ward Trust Fund
- Dimmick Foundation
- Estate of Arthur Leonard Raper
- Estate of Lindsay James Baldy
- Frank and Sybil Richardson Charitable Trust
- Ivy Jean Anderson Charitable Trust, managed by Equity Trustees
- John Murphy Charitable Trust
- Katherine Farnsworth Legh-Cavendish Trust
- S.T.A.F. – Ronald Frank Jackson Donation
- The George Lewin Foundation
- The Peter Isaacson Foundation
- The Ruth Louvain Pryce Trust

### Special Trust Funds

- Hampton Trust Fund
- Hemmingway Trust Fund
- Hilltops Trust Fund
- Katherine Bourke Fund
- Jean Chambers Trust Fund

### Bequests

- Estate of Annemaree Foley
- Estate of Ida Helena Van Leeuwen
- Estate of Jennifer Joy Luntz
- Estate of Marjorie Dawn Bridgman
- Estate of Mary Eleanor Winter Cooke
- Estate of Mary Flora Orr West

### Key supporters

- Mr Douglas Farch
- Ms Linda Herd
- Mr Campbell Johnston
- Mr John Molloy
- Mrs Winifred Peart
- Mr John Ralph & Mrs Barbara Ralph
- Mrs June Smith
- Mr Terry Symonds

### Community fundraising

- Mansfield American Motorbike Club

### Australian Government grants

- Department of Social Services (Structural Adjustment Fund)



## Leadership, legacy and lasting change: Campbell Johnston's 35-year commitment to Yooralla

For more than three decades, Campbell Johnston has been a steadfast supporter of Yooralla and of its role in helping people with disabilities. Since first becoming involved in 1990, Campbell has played a vital role in championing inclusion and opportunity – including, more recently, his time as Chair of the Yooralla Foundation Committee. His commitment continues today through a multi-year pledge supporting Yooralla's Leadership Program.

Campbell's connection to giving began early. Growing up, his parents instilled in him a belief that those who can, should give back – donating a portion of their income each year to help others.



After graduating in law and commerce, Campbell followed their example, supporting charities across sectors that mattered to him – his church, medical research, education, the arts, and importantly, organisations helping disadvantaged and disabled people.

"Berry Street and St John's Homes for Boys and Girls were among the first I supported," he recalls. "Over time, I found myself drawn to other causes that weren't well funded – that's when I added Yooralla."

Seeing Yooralla's growth and the impact of its work has been deeply rewarding for Campbell. "It's been wonderful to see the organisation help people – both young and old – to live fuller, more independent lives," he says.

His ongoing support for the Leadership Program reflects his belief in the power of investing in people. "By developing strong leaders, Yooralla can strengthen the whole organisation and multiply its impact across the community."

Looking ahead, Campbell is enthusiastic about the merger between Yooralla and Berry Street. "Together, they bring greater scale, expertise and opportunity – allowing even more people to be supported and empowered.

## Berry Street

### Thank you

We would like to acknowledge and thank the following who have generously donated and provided philanthropic support to Berry Street in the 2024/25 Financial Year.

### Philanthropic partners

- Adrian & Candice Field
- Barbara and Ralph Ward–Ambler
- Brown Family Foundation
- Diana Mayne
- Fade to Black Foundation
- Fiona Crosby
- Jo Grigg
- Malcolm and Pat Chestney
- Mark Boughey
- Nicholas Sims, Goldman Sachs Gives
- Nigel & Patricia Peck Foundation
- Parker Foundation
- RobMeree Foundation
- Rose Robertson
- Senn Family
- Springboard Endowment
- Susan Esselmont
- The Antipodean Family Foundation
- The Charles Pellegrino Foundation
- The Hoffman Foundation
- The King Family Foundation
- Veith Foundation

### Gift in wills

- Estate of Henry Herbert Yoffa
- Estate of Kathryn Anne Hely
- Estate of Marie Mutch
- Estate of Patricia Holdenson
- Estate of William Patrick Caven

### Corporate partners

- 101 Collins
- ANZ – Community Relations (Australia)
- EnergyAustralia
- Goldman Sachs
- HESTA
- Holly & Co.
- Infolio
- KIA
- Mentholatum Pty. Ltd.
- Nelson Alexander
- Smart
- The Good Guys
- Vanguard
- Windsor Management Insurance Brokers.



## Trusts and foundations

- Eirene Lucas Foundation
- Jacobsen Family Foundation
- Joe White Bequest
- The Flora & Frank Leith Charitable Trust
- The Spencer Gibson Foundation
- The William Angliss (Victoria) Charitable Fund

## Groups and organisations

- 5 Star Locksmiths
- 13 CABS
- 3081 Angels
- Banksia Gardens Community Services & Northern Centre for Excellence in School Engagement
- Better Health Network
- Big Group Hug
- Care First Supports
- Child Welfare League Foundation, Taiwan
- City of Darebin
- Corrs
- Flemington Apartments
- HSF Kramer
- ICYMHS –Northern Infant Child and Youth Mental Health
- IVE
- inTouch Multicultural Centre Against Family Violence
- Jessica Kingsley Publishers
- Kids First
- Laptops 4 Melbourne Students
- Mallee Accommodation and Support Program
- Mallee and District Aboriginal Service
- Mallee Family Care
- McAuley House
- Meli
- Mindful
- Nelson Alexander
- New South Wales Department of Education
- New South Wales Primary Principals Association NSWPPA



- New South Wales Deputy Principals Association NSWSDPA
- Nucleous3 corporate partners
- Our Place
- Quest Burwood East and Mont Albert
- Queensland Department of Education
- QSPA- Queensland Secondary Principals Association
- QASSP- Queensland Association of State School Principals
- Rubix Support
- School Focussed Youth Services (SFYS)
- Social Ventures Australia
- South Australia Department for Education
- Steiner Education Australia
- Sunbury and Cobaw Community Health
- Teach For Australia
- Uniting Vic Tas
- Victorian Aboriginal Childcare Agency
- Victoria Department of Education
- Victoria Department of Treasury
- You Matter

## Schools, universities & institutional partners

- Associate Professor Helen Stokes and the University of Melbourne Graduate School of Education
- Associate Professor Judith Howard and Queensland University of Technology
- Australian Association for Flexible and Inclusive Education
- Catholic Education Diocese of Rockhampton
- Catholic Education South Australia
- Catholic Education Western Australia
- Child Trauma Research Program
- Deakin University
- Dr Ali Fogarty, Intergenerational Health, Murdoch Children's Research Institute
- Dr Bruce Perry and the Neurosequential Network
- Emeritus Professor Margarita Frederico and La Trobe University
- Griffith University School of Education
- Independent Schools Victoria
- La Trobe University Nexus Programme
- The South Australian Branch, Australian Association for Infant Mental Health
- The Tulane Parenting Education Program, Tulane University, New Orleans
- University of California San Francisco
- Open Book Howden
- Professor Alessandra Radovini and the Mindful Centre University of Melbourne
- Professor Rebecca Giallo, SEED Centre for Lifespan Research, Deakin University
- Royal Children's Hospital Centre for Community Child Health
- Victoria University

## Community fundraisers

- Berry Long Run



## A family business built on second chances

### How Holly & Co. turned personal experience into a purposeful partnership with Berry Street

When Jonathan and Bridget Clayton welcomed five-month-old Holly into their home in 2004, they couldn't have known she would one day become the face of their thriving family business. But perhaps more remarkably, they couldn't have predicted how their journey together would inspire them to help countless other young people find their own path forward. Today, Holly & Co. isn't just a successful enterprise - it's a testament to what's possible when opportunity meets determination. And through their partnership with Berry Street, the Claytons are working to ensure more young people get that same chance.

### More than just a donation

For Jonathan Clayton, partnering with Berry Street goes far beyond writing a cheque. Having experienced firsthand the impact of foster care, he understands that investing in vulnerable young people isn't charity, it's investing in society's foundation. "We fundamentally believe in young people as the cornerstone of society," Jonathan explains. "We're lucky that we had a lovely family and our kids were blessed. We've got the capacity to do a bit more, so we did just that." Their involvement with Berry Street serves a dual purpose that makes it particularly meaningful. On one hand, Holly, now a proud Aboriginal woman and disability advocate, actively challenges workplace stigma simply by being herself. "It's two dimensional," Jonathan notes. "Holly, being a woman with a disability, gets to engage with the wider community. We get to showcase that people with disability can be in the workforce too." On the other hand, their support enables Berry Street to continue its vital work supporting children and young people in need - the very kind of support that helped shape Holly's own journey.

### The business case for heart

When asked what he'd tell other businesses considering similar partnerships, Jonathan's response is refreshingly pragmatic. It's not just about doing good; it's about doing well by doing good.

"Getting involved with an organisation like Berry Street is fundamentally helping one of the best grassroots causes in society," he says. But he's quick to point out the benefits to other organisations like his own too: "Companies need to take a big picture view that if you do something with a charity, and you get your people engaged and involved in it, that it's a really good thing for the entire organisation. It engages staff in the sense that they feel like they're genuinely giving back to the community."

### Holly's voice

For Holly herself, her role at Holly & Co. represents something profound, the opportunity to create connections and contribute meaningfully to the workforce alongside her father. As the company's Founder, she's clear about her passion: "I get to create relationships with people, it allows me to go out and enjoy the workforce with my dad. I am the Founder, and I love doing what I do!" Her presence in the business doesn't just defy stereotypes—it demolishes them, proving that disability and success aren't mutually exclusive.

### Supporting critical transitions

Holly & Co. have chosen to direct their support toward Berry Street's GOALS program, which helps young people navigate one of life's most challenging periods: the transition to adulthood. It's a choice that reflects their understanding of how crucial support systems are during pivotal moments. "We really believe that the transition to adulthood is significant, and everyone should have the support to move forward," Jonathan explains. "It's been so rewarding, and we'll continue to support Berry Street in the future."

In conversation with Berry Street Corporate Partnerships Manager Stacey Joson, Holly & Co.'s message comes through clearly: supporting vulnerable young people isn't just the right thing to do, it's transformative for everyone involved. From the young people who receive support, to the businesses that partner with organisations like Berry Street, to society as a whole, investing in youth creates ripples of positive change that extend far beyond any single transaction. For Holly & Co, it's personal, purposeful, and proof that business success and social impact can go hand in hand.

# Diversity, equity and inclusion

## Berry Street achieves Rainbow Tick accreditation

In September 2024, Berry Street was proudly awarded Rainbow Tick accreditation, recognising our commitment to creating a safe, welcoming, and inclusive environment for LGBTIQ+ staff and service users.

This milestone reflects over three years of dedicated work, including the development of policies supporting LGBTIQ+ children and young people and the review of our Staff Gender Affirmation Policy with input from a trans and gender-diverse working group.

Over three and a half days, auditors met with more than 140 staff, Board members, service users, carers, and external stakeholders, and reviewed over 700 pieces of evidence. Feedback was overwhelmingly positive, highlighting our genuine leadership commitment, the value of lived experience, and the way inclusive practices are woven into every part of our organisation.

The assessors also praised the Rainbow Tick Steering Committee, Pride Advisory Group, staff training, and strong sector connections.

This achievement is a celebration of four years of dedication and passion from Berry Street staff. It sends a powerful message to the young people we support: you are safe, celebrated, and truly welcome here.

## Championing accessibility

Yooralla's Systemic Disability Employment Network (DEN) brings together employees with disability and allies to make the workplace more inclusive, supportive, and welcoming for everyone. Over the past year, the DEN has met monthly, driving meaningful changes while also creating a safe space for employees with disability to share their experiences and concerns, especially during times of change, such as the merger.

The DEN has led to practical improvements across the Collins Street head office, including removing swipe card access for internal doors, providing accessible cutlery, food trolleys, and purchasing assistive technology to make the guest check-in iPad at reception fully accessible.

Three members of the DEN have also participated in a storytelling project, to help colleagues understand the lived experiences of staff with disability.

The project focused on key themes of understanding the importance of lived experience, workplace inclusion and some of the barriers people with disability face in their career journey. These initiatives show how small, thoughtful changes can have a big impact, reflecting Yooralla's commitment to ensuring all employees feel valued, supported, and able to thrive in their work.



## Strengthening Reconciliation in education

Berry Street School officially launched their third Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) through Reconciliation Australia's Narragunnawali program. The RAP is a result of months of planning and consultation by the RAP Working Group, who reflected on the journey through the previous two RAPs and reviewed current practices and next steps alongside the Strengthening Aboriginal Self-Determination in Education report commissioned by the Department of Education.

This third RAP has an increased focus on the voice and self-determination of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, connection to Country through local community, and embedding

reconciliation in all areas of the Berry Street School. In practice, this commitment means creating a reconciled learning environment that honours Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures in the classroom and community.

Each campus works to maintain genuine, long-lasting relationships with local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, welcoming Elders and community members to participate in school life, inviting Aboriginal educators to share language and art, and joining with community for flag-raising ceremonies and cultural celebrations on significant days such as Sorry Day and NAIDOC Week.



# Financial reports

## Yooralla

The 2025 financial year was a transitional year for Yooralla, as the organisation continued to deliver a range of services to people with a disability, while building capability across the workforce and structuring our operations to better align to our revenue streams.

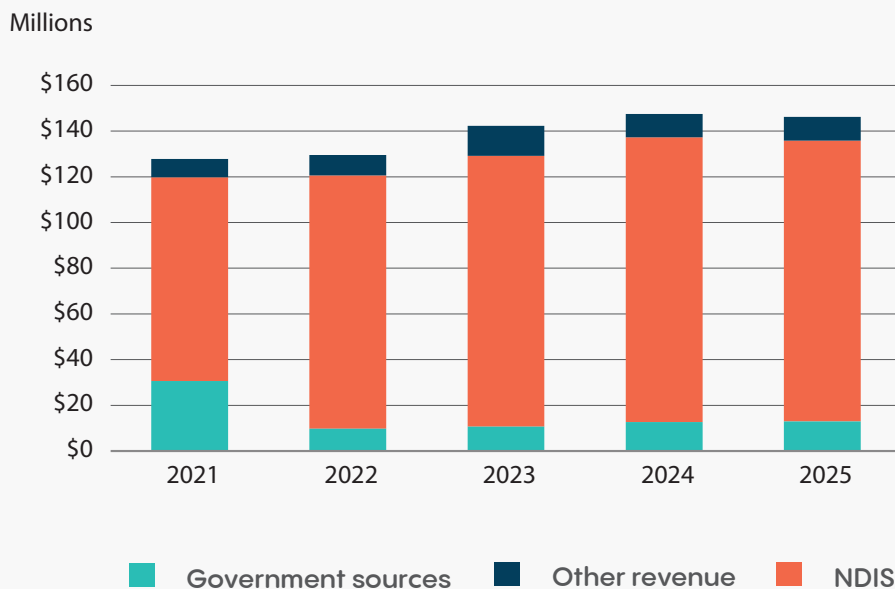
During the 2025 financial year, total revenue fell by 1% to \$153.0m. In addition to the 1% fall in operating revenue, there was also a nearly 40% reduction in fundraising and bequests received by Yooralla, noting that bequest revenue is often variable from year to year. Over this time there was also a reduction in total expenses of 2.1% to \$161.2m, resulting in a loss of \$8.2m (2024: loss of \$9.4m).

### Revenue

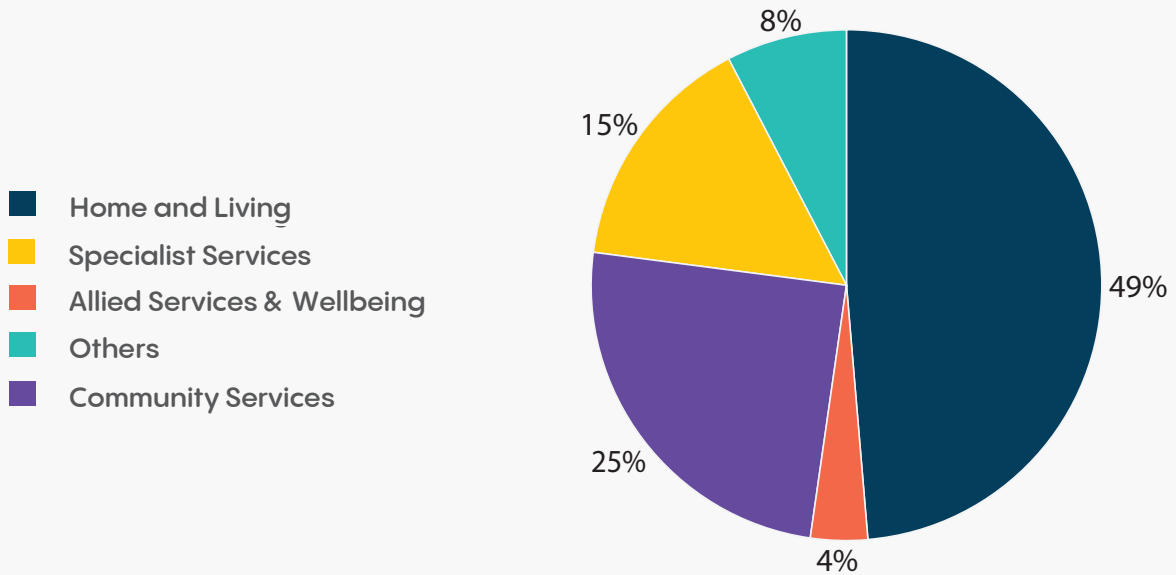
During the 2025 financial year (2025), revenue from operating activities fell by 1% to \$146.2m. This fall was largely in NDIA revenue, and attributable to clients having their funding reduced as part of routine plan reviews, a freeze on NDIS funding rates for Allied Health and the removal of all remaining subsidies from the transition to the NDIS, partially offset by indexation rates applied to the Disability Support Worker (DSW) hourly rate.

Operating revenue was lower than in the 2024 financial year (2024), despite maintaining occupancy levels in the Home and Living Division throughout the year, with an ongoing focus to reduce vacancies.

### Revenue from Operating Activities



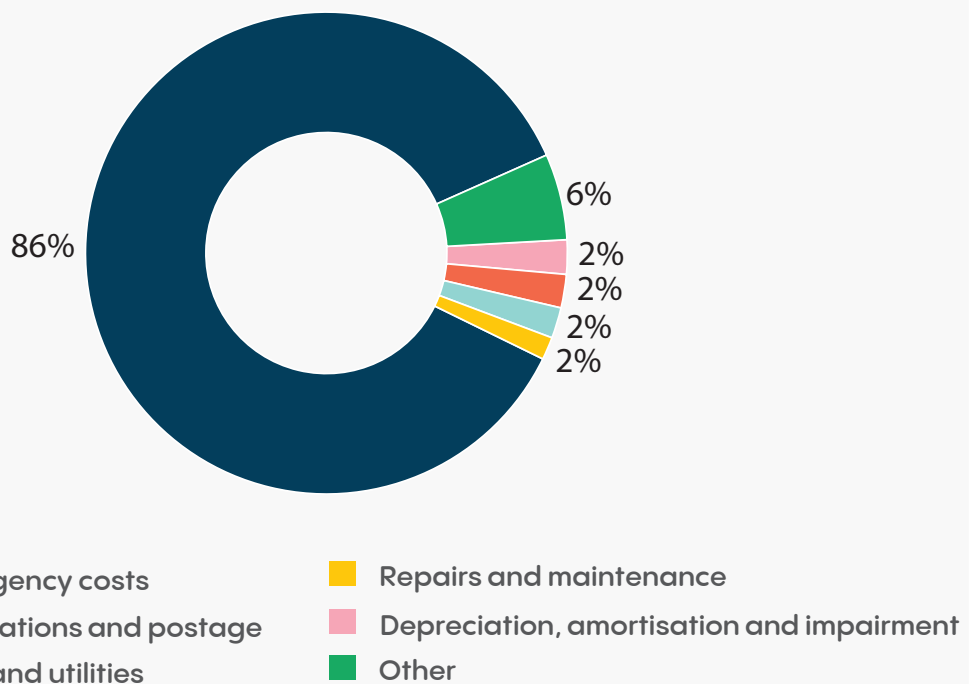
### Revenue by Service Type



### Expenses

Combined with internal reviews of the Allied Health and Shared Services Divisions to ensure operational efficiency, these changes have led to reductions in labour expenses from 2024 of 3% to \$138.8m and non-labour expenses of 4% to \$22.4m. Labour expenses (both direct and indirect) made up 86% of Yooralla’s expenses in 2025, making labour utilisation a key area of focus which will continue over coming years.

### Breakdown of Expenditure



# Berry Street

The 2025 financial year has been a year of challenges and opportunities for Berry Street. Financially, Berry Street has reported a loss of \$14.9m for the year which is nearly \$4m more than the previous. The operating deficit resulted from a similar operating environment to the prior year, with increasing expenditures while revenue remained stable.

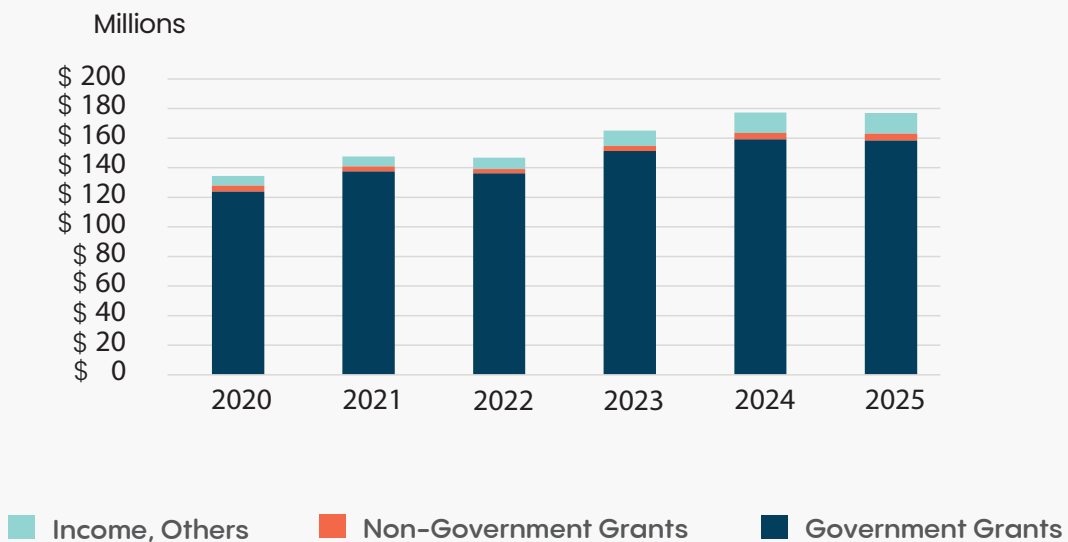
The organisation is taking active steps to strengthen our long-term sustainability and focus resources where they have the greatest impact. We're streamlining how we work, especially in management and in corporate services. We are advocating for fair funding in areas of greatest need, and reviewing programs to ensure they are sustainable and deliver strong outcomes. We're also building a more stable workforce by reducing reliance on agency staff. Our priority for the 2026 financial year is improving quality and safety of our care while also ensuring long term sustainability.

## Revenue

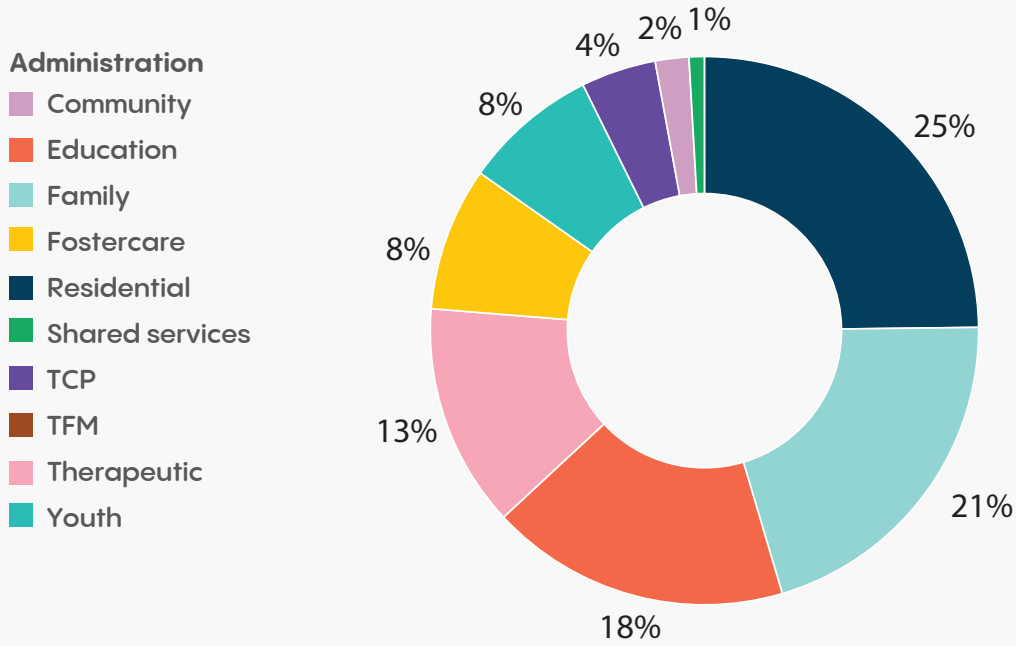
During 2025, revenue from operating activities remained at the same level as the 2024 Financial Year, with only slight growth of 0.3% to \$176.8m. This came from a combination of \$1.1m (12.5%) increase in training and events income, and a \$0.3m (8%) increase in non-governmental grants, partially offset by a decrease of \$1.2m (-0.8%) in

recurrent grants which was due to the ending of fixed-term contracts and some recoupment of funding by the Department of Families, Fairness and Housing (DFFH) for under attainment of targets. There was also a reduction in fundraising revenue of approximately \$2m.

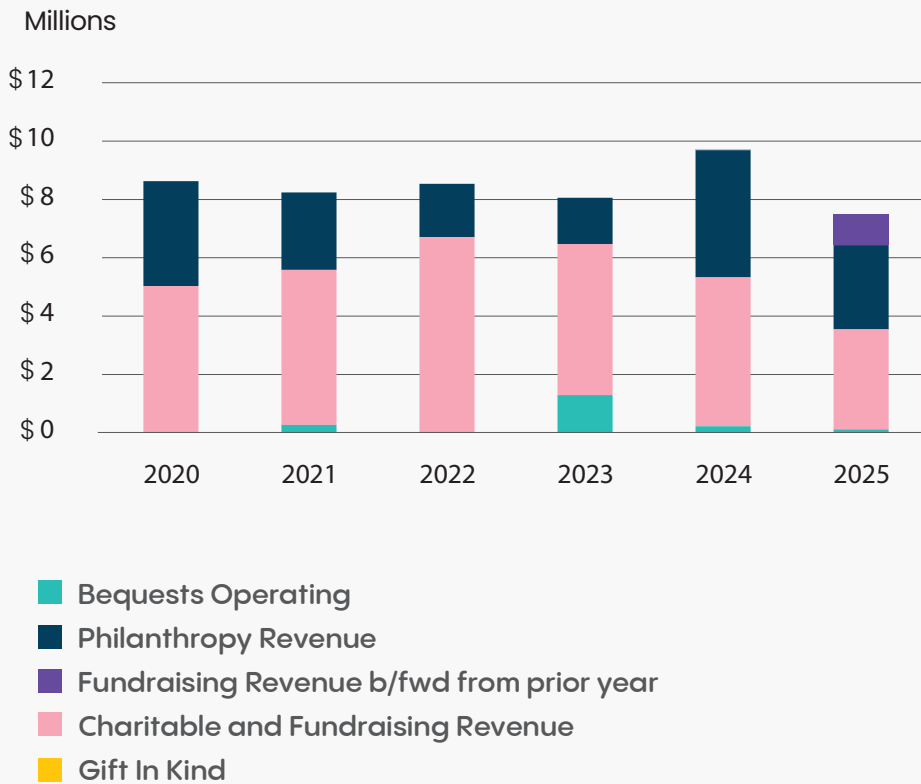
### Revenue from Operating Activities



### FY25 Operating Revenue by Program Type



### Fundraising Revenue



## Expenses

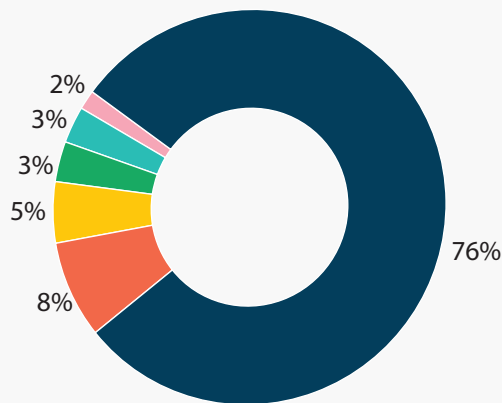
While operating revenue remained stable, expenditure increased across several categories including; \$2.1m in salaries, \$1.4m in client costs and \$2.5m in other expenses.

Our focus over coming years will be more efficient labour utilisation and better cost control without compromising on the quality and safety of the services we deliver to our clients or the wellbeing of our staff.

Reducing use of agency staff across all relevant service lines, especially in residential care is also a major focus. Residential homes have experienced high agency use in the past year due to unfilled core shifts.

A program of targeted staff recruitment aimed at addressing these vacancies is already underway. A committee has been set up to monitor this and improvement is already being seen early in the 2026 Financial Year (2026).

FY25 Expenditure Breakdown



Salaries Expense  
Client Expenses  
Vehicle Expenses

Administration Expenses  
Depreciation Expense  
Other Expenses

**“The best ways to support people with disability and those impacted by violence and abuse require new ways of thinking about the future.”**

**Terry Symonds, CEO**





## Acknowledgement of Lived Experience

At Berry Street Yooralla, we acknowledge and pay our sincere respect to people with lived experience of disability, and to victim survivors of family violence and trauma.

We recognise the strength, resilience and courage of those who share their stories, often in the face of ongoing challenges and systemic barriers. Your lived experiences bring vital insight and wisdom that guide our work, shape our services, and strengthen our commitment to inclusion, safety and respect.

We are deeply grateful for your contributions, which continue to inspire us to create a community where every person can feel valued, supported and empowered to thrive.

\*Names have been changed throughout this Annual Report for privacy reasons.

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[berrystreet.org.au](http://berrystreet.org.au) | [yooralla.com.au](http://yooralla.com.au)



We respectfully acknowledge the traditional custodians of the lands, skies and waterways of Australia.



Berry Street Yooralla is committed to the principles of social justice. Berry Street Yooralla supports the LGBTIQ+ community and celebrates diversity.