



COMMUNITY SERVICES #1

2024 ANNUAL REPORT



CS#1 Volunteer Thank you lunch May 2024.

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Our supporters

Community Services #1 is incredibly grateful for the support from our sponsorship partners.



Acknowledgment of Country

Community Services #1 acknowledges Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people as traditional custodians of the land on which we meet, work, live and play. We honour their continuous connection to country, water, sky, and communities. We celebrate Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stories, traditions and living cultures and pay our respects to elders past and present.

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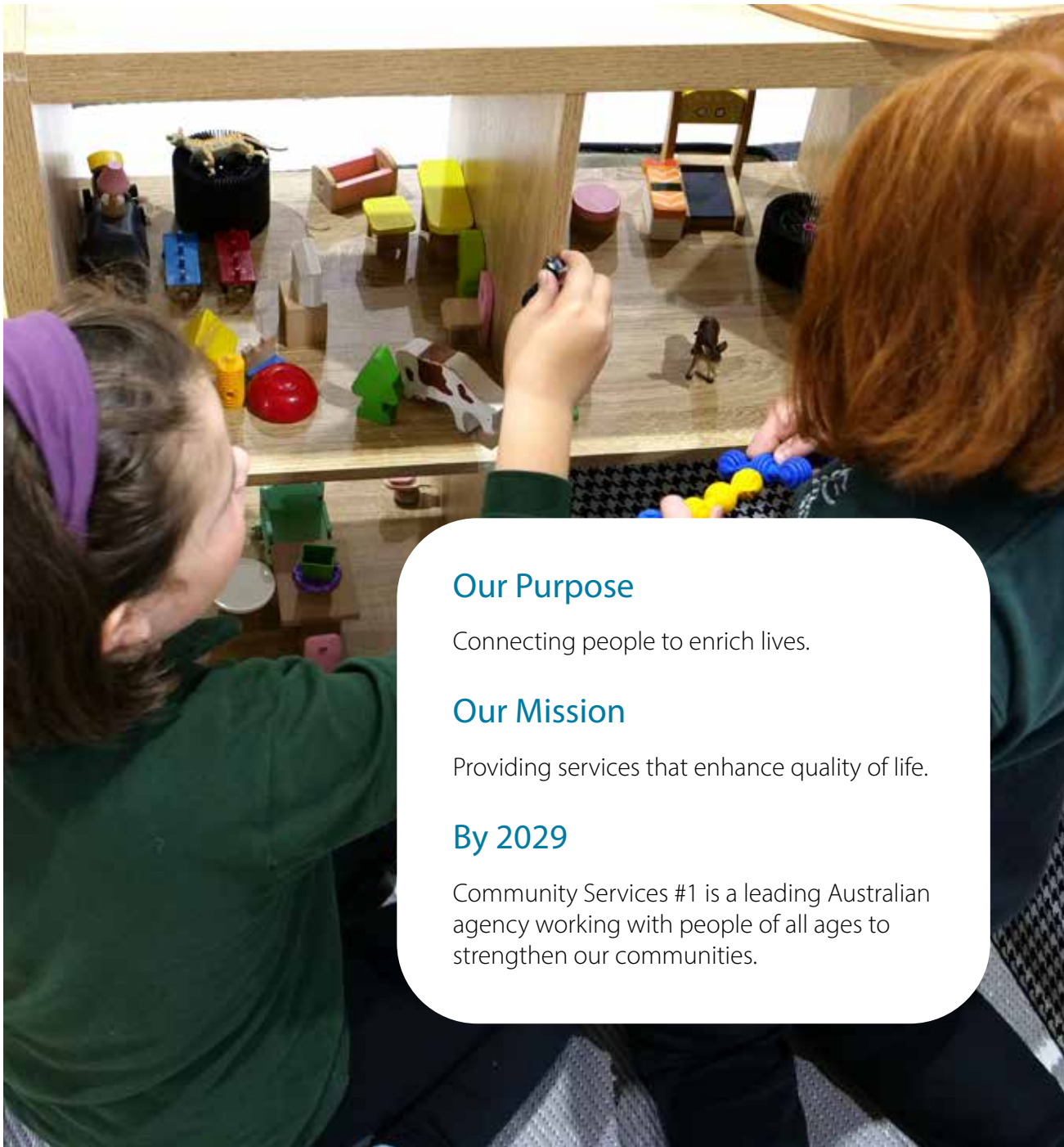
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Overview of Services

Community Services #1 (CS#1) is a community-based, profit for purpose company, limited by guarantee that has been providing a wide range of services to families and individuals living in the local area and wider ACT region for more than 30 years. We manage and deliver a range of services including: early childhood education and care, out of school hours care, school holiday programs, transport services, social support groups, a food pantry, community development, home care packages, out of hospital care, aged care services and venue hire. For the past three years we have been delivering Out of Hospital Care Services in the Murrumbidgee and Southern NSW regions.

Our services are designed to meet community needs and are partly or wholly funded by Commonwealth and ACT Government grants, the NSW Government, client contributions, sponsor funding and donations.





Our Purpose

Connecting people to enrich lives.

Our Mission

Providing services that enhance quality of life.

By 2029

Community Services #1 is a leading Australian agency working with people of all ages to strengthen our communities.

Board of Directors

Board Chair **Jason Duarte**

Deputy-Chair **Nichola Perry**

Ordinary Member **Rhonda Maher**

Ordinary Member **David Maywald**

Ordinary Member **David Cullen**

Ordinary Member **Jim Roy**

Ordinary Member **John Dicer**

Stepped down November 2023

Deputy-Chair **Maria Magro**

Ordinary Member **Nadine White**

Report from the Chair of the Board

Jason Duarte



Financial year 2023/2024 was a transformative year for Community Services #1 under new CEO Simon Bennett, who completed his first full year of service. This time last year the Board was reflecting on a volatile year which had concluded with a successive deficit and was projecting a third for the 2023/2024 financial year. The organisation was faced with post-COVID challenges including: a new regulatory environment resulting in increased compliance measures, high staff turnover, the closure of two Early Childhood Education and Care Centres, and multiple internal systems challenges.

The 2023/24 financial year commenced with our new Chief Executive, only two weeks into the role and a Board Strategic Planning Day that determined to move the organisation back to a sustainable

position. It is with great pleasure that the Board can announce that the Executive at CS#1 stepped up to the challenge and made significant changes to end the 2023-2024 financial year with surplus. The Board acknowledges the great work undertaken by the Senior Leadership Team who each undertook 'deep dives' into their areas to deliver significant structural change.

Aged Care continued to be a challenge for the organisation as The Commonwealth continued to delay necessary reforms following the Aged Care Royal Commission. CS#1 took swift action to move towards compliance with the Aged Care Standards and a focus on core strengths. This included ceasing some services in NSW with a focus on compliance and viability for our ACT aged care services. The recruitment of Juliette Spurrett, Executive Director of Aged Care Services, in February 2024 delivered a new way forward for Aged Care Services at CS#1. Juliette has brought with her a wealth of experience and the Board have been delighted to work with her.

Notable successes in the year include, winning an important RFT - the Community Assistance and Temporary Support program tender in partnership

with Capital Region Community Services (CRCS) through ACT Health. In addition, CS#1 was awarded the new Early Childhood Centre at Watson which is due to open late 2024 or early 2025, and which has already received strong community interest from families. A new Workforce Plan was endorsed and implemented and resulted in increased staff retention rates lifting them to their highest rate in a decade.

CS#1 said farewell to Deputy CEO Leanne Barnes who departed after nearly nine years having worked tirelessly in several roles across the organisation. At a Board level we said farewell to long serving Director and Deputy Chair Maria Magro who stepped down in November 2023. Nichola Perry stepped into the Deputy Chair role while chairing a combined ECEC and Community Sub Committee. David Cullen took the reins as Chair of the Risk, Audit and Finance Committee. And lastly, Nadine White stepped down in November 2023 after accepting a Director role at Goodwin Aged Care.

June 2024 saw the end of the five-year Strategic Plan and presents an opportunity for the current Board and Executive to revisit CS#1's purpose

// I look forward to the next financial year as CS#1 moves to consolidate its strong financial position and continues to develop an even stronger workforce and increase our impact across the communities we serve. //

and to build a mission for a sustainable future. In the 2024/2025 financial year we expect to be impacted by further regulatory change with both a local and Federal election taking place, a new ERP and Finance System to be implemented and a real modernisation of CS#1 as an increasingly client focused, dynamic organisation. I sense the best is yet to come and am excited about the future.

Finally, I'd like to offer a special thanks on behalf of the Board to Melanie Pretorius who, in addition to her role as Executive Assistant to the CEO has stepped in as Corporate Secretary and minute taker for the Board and has undertaken that role with enthusiasm and professionalism.

Jason Duarte

Board Chair | Community Services #1



Mingle Family Expo at Margaret Hendry School.

Message from the CEO

Simon Bennett



My first year as CEO focused on stabilisation within Aged Care Services and growth across the Early Childhood and Community Service portfolios.

Within my first two weeks as CEO, I was honored to help launch the NAIDOC Community Art Exhibition 2023 in which artwork from detainees from the Alexander Maconachie Centre (AMC) were displayed at head office in Narrabundah, Canberra. Many of the artists spoke about the positive impact the art program has had on their mental health and how it has kept them connected to their culture.

Our aged care services went through a restructure to ensure a focus on both quality and viability. This started with the creation of a new position and being able to recruit a highly experienced Executive Director across the aged care portfolio.

We saw growth in our community service portfolio in partnership with Capital Region Community Services (CRCS) in which we were successful and now provide Care Coordination and Bridging Supports through the Community Assistance and Temporary Supports (CATS) program funded by ACT Health.

Early 2024 we added a new Out of School Hours Care (OSHC) service to the early childhood portfolio with the opening of St Michaels Out of School Hours Care program, marking this our first contract with the Catholic Education of Canberra and Goulburn. Located at St Michaels Primary School in Kaleen, Canberra, the program caters to up to 60 children, offering quality care and enriching activities for students outside regular school hours. This partnership represents an important expansion of our services and a strong collaboration with the Catholic Education sector, supporting the Kaleen community and meeting the needs of working families.

The previous two financial years ended in deficits for CS#1, but in 2023/24 we saw a return to surplus. This solid financial position will allow us to focus on staff retention and new systems moving into the 2024/25 financial year.

Communication to staff was another focus during 2023/24, and the commencement of the bi-monthly staff newsletter ensured staff were updated on news from across the organisation and gave us the opportunity to share many success stories.

CS#1 continued to provide quality services within Riverina and Southern NSW through the Out of Hospital Care Program in partnership with Yourside Australia.

In the coming year, we will continue to focus on partnerships with other organisations to ensure we meet community needs and provide valuable quality services.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank all the CS#1 teams for welcoming me to my new role. I would also like to thank the Board and Executives for the support they provided for me in my first full year as CEO.

Simon Bennett

CEO | Community Services #1

Case study - Volunteer

Dragica Nesic

Dragica was born in Croatia, married in Bosnia and came to Australia 30 years ago with her husband, following behind her children who had left to get away from a war-torn country that she says was still unsafe. They entered Australia under the refugee program having lost everything in their home country and lived with her daughter in Canberra until the government settled them into a unit.

For many years Dragica's husband was unwell and she cared for him through his illness until he passed away – that was 17 years ago. Wanting more social connection Dragica started volunteering at CS#1 and has been assisting with the Seniors social groups for over 15 years. She is closely connected with several groups including bingo, shopping and the Croatian group. At 87 years of age, she is older than many of the members in her groups.

Dragica says the reason she has dedicated so many years to volunteering with the organisation is that she wanted 'to say thank you to Australia' for everything the country has given her. Dragica has no plans to stop volunteering.



Volunteer Dragica
with Simon Bennett.



Community Support Services

The NSW Health Out of Hospital Care (OHC) Program supports people transitioning from hospital to home by providing non-clinical care, helping reduce avoidable hospital readmissions, and ensuring continuity of care. This program is in partnership with Yourside Australia as the lead organisation, and the program plays a key role in the Southern and Murrumbidgee regions, supporting multiple local health district hospitals.

The Community and Temporary Supports (CATS) Program, funded by ACT Health, provides short-term, non-clinical support to individuals requiring assistance with daily living activities due to illness, injury, or disability. This program primarily serves people who may not yet be eligible for long-term services like the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) or those in a transitional period needing immediate support.

Both programs play an essential role in supporting individuals to remain safely at home while ensuring they receive the necessary care and reducing the demand on healthcare facilities.



Community Development

In 2023/24 the Community Development Team continued to use the Asset-Based Community Development (ABCD) approach, focusing on leveraging community strengths to address identified needs and gaps. This approach enabled the creation of sustainable improvements in the quality of life for many community members.

One of the key programs, the Volunteer Program, played a significant role in supporting a range of social and wellbeing groups. Volunteers assisted our clients combat social isolation, foster connections, and create safe spaces for self-expression, learning, and skill-sharing. A highlight of the year was

the Volunteer Appreciation Lunch held during Volunteer Week to collectively celebrate their invaluable contributions.

The Food Security Program provided critical emergency food relief through hampers and the CS#1 pantry, supported by volunteers and community partnerships. The community garden, which grew fresh produce for the pantry, also offered clients the opportunity to earn pantry points by contributing to the garden's upkeep.

The Southside Initiative, a partnership with Woden Community Service and YWCA Canberra, focused

on improving early childhood development outcomes. Various expos and parenting sessions were held to address cost-of-living challenges and family dynamics. Additionally, CS#1's Community Development Officer worked in local primary schools, supporting the co-location of services under the 'Schools as a Community Hub' model.

Furthermore, CS#1's Community Development Officer mentored high school students in launching an intergenerational program that connected seniors with youth to share skills and knowledge.



2600

Food Pantry Bookings



93

New Pantry clients



177

Emergency food relief hampers



242

Active pantry clients



The Food Pantry



35

Referrals to other services

10

Halal meat pack for Muslim clients celebrating EID (end of Ramadan)



22

Back to school packs for students

280

Christmas hampers



Aged Care Services

Aged Care Services continued to provide services and activities to almost 600 clients in the ACT and NSW communities through the Home Care Package (HCP), the Commonwealth Home Support Program (CHSP) and Care Finder Programs.

These services include:

Case management, delivering domestic assistance, personal care, nursing services, transport, goods and equipment, social support individual as well as hosting wellbeing activities and groups.

Highlights from the past year include:

- Successful outcome of meeting all compliance requirements from the Aged Care Quality Review with the Aged Care Quality Commission.
- Restructure of the Aged Care team and review of HCP and CHSP program operations.

- Establishment of a Clinical Governance Framework and CS#1 recruitment of clinical staff.
- Establishment of a Client Advisory Group. Establishment of an internal Quality Advisory Group.
- Increase in CS#1 service provision for domestic assistance, personal care, nursing services, transport, and social support individual.
- The commencement of a Reporting and Compliance Coordinator to develop key Aged Care operational processes, policies, and procedures.

These achievements are thanks to the dedicated and skilled Aged Care team including staff and volunteers. Without their ongoing contributions and commitment, these achievements would not have been possible.



Client Deb with Home Care Support Worker Giovanni.

Case study - Client

Alma Stephenson

Alma is a long-time client who first became aware of Community Services #1 (CS#1) when helping her elderly mother get to senior's social groups at the CS#1 head office in Narrabundah, ACT.

After her mother passed away, Alma continued her association and began to volunteer, assisting coordinate trips and lunches for clients.

Years later Alma decided she would benefit from joining the groups herself and now takes part in chair yoga, cooking groups and the intergenerational project all of which she says have a positive impact on her wellbeing. In addition to being a member of multiple groups, Alma uses the community food pantry which allows her to prepare meals with ingredients she says she could not usually afford.

Alma is a great example of how CS#1's services can help people in many different facets of their life. She is endlessly positive with an amazing attitude to life. She says she helps her friends whenever possible and has encouraged many of them to join several CS#1 social support and senior's groups.



| CS#1 client, Alma.

Children's Services

CS#1's Early Childhood Education & Care Services (ECEC) continue to be recognised across the ACT for delivering high-quality programs that support children and their families. We remain committed to providing exceptional outcomes for children, achieved through our four Early Childhood Education and Care Centres and three Out of School Hours Care (OSHC) Programs.

In February, we were proud to open the St Michaels Out of School Hours Care program-our first contract with Catholic Education of Canberra and Goulburn. This program, located at St Michaels Primary School in Kaleen, caters for up to 60 children and has been a great addition to our OSHC services, expanding our reach and supporting more working families in the community.

A significant milestone this year was the rollout of free preschool for 3-year-olds, an ACT Government initiative that has greatly benefited families by reducing the financial barriers to early childhood education. CS#1 fully embraced this opportunity, ensuring that our programs are accessible to all children, providing a strong foundation for their future learning and development.

Our Early Childhood Education and Care Centres continue to maintain a minimum rating of 'Meeting National Quality Standards' across seven key quality areas, which demonstrates our commitment to excellence. This year, we continued to invest in our educators through targeted professional development and collaborative partnerships that encourage and support their career growth.

CS#1 would like to thank our families, the local community, the ACT Government, and our dedicated educators for their ongoing commitment and resilience. Their efforts made a tangible difference in the lives of children and families, and their dedication to delivering quality programs continues to enrich our community.



Family Feedback

"In just a few short weeks our daughter became happier, learning more knowledge, manners, and better ways to interact with others... we never expected to gain so many unexpected benefits from Acacia. Every day, we can see photos of our daughter on the OWNA app, and from those photos, she is genuinely happy. As a child, our daughter has received boundless love and professional care. [Acacia Parent]"

"I highly recommend Forrest Early Education and Care Centre. The onboarding process was smooth and thorough ensuring that both my son and I felt welcomed and informed. Communication from the staff is excellent. My son absolutely enjoys his time there, and I've noticed significant growth in his development since he started. It's reassuring to know he's in such a nurturing and engaging environment." [Forrest Parent]"

"At a time when we needed help the most, Acacia offered us the utmost professionalism and immense patience, providing the kindest support, which enabled our daughter to quickly recover from her previous unpleasant experiences and once again become a positive, optimistic, and joyful child." [Acacia Parent]"

381

Children attended
After School Care



196

Children attended
School Holiday
Programs



364

Children attended
Early Childhood
Education & Care



556

Children attended
Out of School
Hours Care

149

Children attended
Before School Care

764

Families supported
across Children's
Services

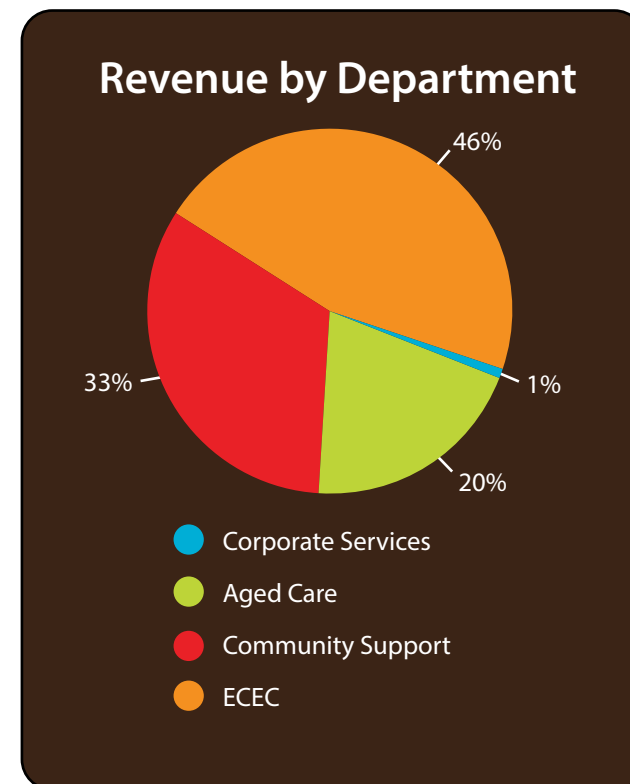
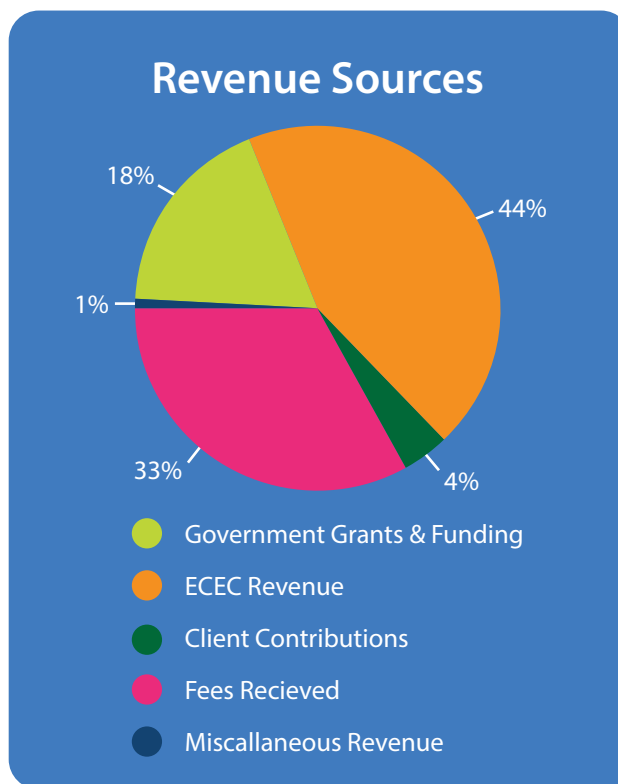
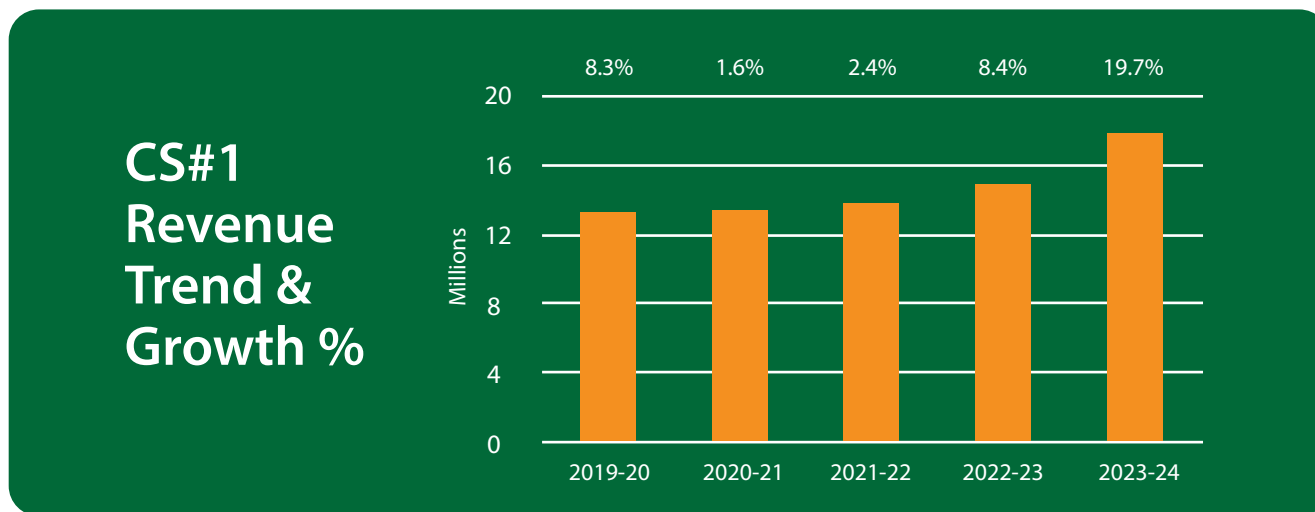
Corporate Services

2023/24 Finance

CS#1 finished the 2023-24 financial year with a positive financial result, which is testament to the responsible stewardship and strong focus applied to process improvement and risk management across all areas of the business.

Stabilisation was achieved across program operations, primarily through the streamlining of procedures and the improved collaboration across all Departments – all of which contributed to the organisation’s improved bottom line. This, in addition to new programs being added to Community Services #1’s portfolio – saw the largest revenue increase the organisation has experienced over the last 5 years.

The improved financial performance and enhanced governance has placed Community Services #1 in an ideal position for growth – with a number of tenders and program additions already in the pipeline.



Information Communication and Technology Systems (ICT)

Thank you to the ICT Strategic Working Group – whose efforts have been instrumental with identifying system shortfalls – as well as providing recommendations that take us down the path of continuous improvement. A comprehensive system health check and organisational mapping and has been undertaken, and the transformation of financial technology components is underway.

Work has also ramped up in the cyber security area – with the upgrading of our Microsoft licences and our Managed Service Provider being proactive with the provision of IT dashboards and the rollout of user awareness training sessions. The improvements will help us comply with industry standards as well as ensuring the maintenance of data integrity and security.



The Year Ahead

1

Continue with the development of the ICT Strategy Framework and embark on the second stage of system transformations.

2

Continue toward best practice by working to automate processes, strengthen compliance, and build efficiencies into Corporate Services operations.

3

Promote financial awareness across the organisation and empower business decisions by the provision of 'real-time' and accurate financial and non-financial data.



| Emerging Leaders 2024.

Acknowledgements

We are grateful for the support and contributions we have received this year from our funding bodies, individuals, businesses and the community.

On behalf of CS#1 and the community, we would like to thank and acknowledge the following individuals, services and organisations:

Thank You

ACT Children's First Alliance	Canberra Girls Grammar School	Hands Across Canberra	Rotary Club of Canberra Sundowners
ACT Council of Social Service	Canberra Period Project	Hardwicks Partners	Roundabout Canberra
ACT Education Directorate	Canberra Seedsavers	Helping ACT	SeeChange Canberra
ACT Government - Chief Minister, Treasury & Economic Development Directorate	Capital Region Community Services	HESTA Superannuation	Share the Dignity
ACT Government - Community Services Directorate	Care Inc. Financial Services	Kingston Community Garden	Southside Initiative
ACT Government - Corrective Services	Carers ACT	Les Eclaireurs and Eclaireuses de Canberra de Canberra (French Scouts)	Stephanie Bates
ACT Government - Health Directorate	Catholic Education - Canberra, Goulburn	Marymead	St Michael's Primary School
ACT Government - Healthier Work	Communities@Work	Mawson Primary School	St Pauls Church
ACT Government - Territory & Municipal Services Directorate	Converge International	Narrabundah Early Childhood School	St Vincent de Paul Society
ACT Property Group	Department of Education and Training	Nerds Eye View	Throsby School
Anglicare NSW South, NSW West & ACT	Department of Health	Northside Community Services	Tony LoPilato
Attorney-General's Department	Early Childhood Australia	NSW Government Murrumbidgee LHD	Toshiba
Australian Red Cross - ACT/SE NSW	Early Childhood Australia ACT Branch	NSW Government Southern NSW LHD	Tuggeranong Link
Brindabella Insurance	Emergency Linen Cupboard	Old Narrabundah Community Council	Volunteering and Contact ACT
Bunnings Fyshwick	Every Chance to Play	Oz Harvest	Wesley Church (Forrest)
Canberra Baptist Church	FINDEX	Pam's Pantry	Woden Community Services
	Foodbank	Rainbow Paws Program	YMCA Canberra
	Forrest Primary School	Richardson Primary School	Your Side Australia
	GIVIT		YWCA Canberra

Volunteers

A very big thank you to our volunteers – it is your work that makes several of our programs and services possible.

Thank You

Amani Abdelmageed

Andrew Harcan

Andrew Wilson

Anne Hasting

Annette Lescinky

Charlie Drummond

Chris Van Reyk

Christelle Despois

Crystal Rose

David Smith

Dragica Nesic

Ella McCarthy

Francis Teresa Bale

Gabrielle Morgan

Geoff Conn

Jane Smyth

Jen Lynch

Joanne Horan

Junjing Guo

Karen Cook

Kim Locker

Louise Keightley

Lynda Campbell

Mark Goina Junior

Morgan Eyles

Patricia Fu

Ray Bushbe

Rick Smyth

Ru Wang

Sally Reay-Young

Sandra Agostino

Sharon Fuller

Sofia Atreya

Stephen O'shea

Tyson Allen

Usha Venkata

Wadu Sumathip





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