



2025

Annual Report



COMMUNITY SERVICES #1



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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Our supporters:

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





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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, aged care services, venue hire and 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.

Who We Are

Our Mission:

Together with our communities, we will create lasting social impact by empowering individuals, upholding dignity, and building strong connections to deliver innovative, inclusive care, education, and support.

Our Vision:

Working collaboratively to build stronger communities to create lasting impact.

Our Values:

*Enable
Enhance
Enrich*

Board of Directors

Board Chair	Jason Duarte
Deputy-Chair	Nichola Perry
Ordinary Member	Rhonda Maher
Ordinary Member	David Maywald
Ordinary Member	Jim Roy

Stepped down November 2024

Ordinary Member	David Cullen
Ordinary Member	John Dicer

Appointed November 2024

Ordinary Member	Sonya Blondinau
Ordinary Member	Gill Savage



Report from the Chair of the Board

Jason Duarte

On behalf of the Board, it is my privilege to write this year's Chair's update for the annual report, reflecting a challenging year marked by change, transformation, and opportunity.

Significant regulatory changes have impacted the Aged Care industry, including funding, standards, and service delivery. Despite successfully implementing a new CRM, uplifting staff capability, and confirming full compliance with Aged Care Standards, regulatory uncertainty and financial pressures led the Board to make the difficult decision to exit the Home Care Package space. Aged Care remains central to Community Services #1's Strategic Plan, and we continue to provide services and meaningful community engagement in this area.

Amid cost-of-living pressures, low productivity, and two elections, our 2024-25 end-of-year position was a deficit of -\$168K. This result also included start-up costs for 3 new (unbudgeted) programs, as well as revenue reduction and additional expenses associated with program closures (HCP). Organisational revenue for the 2024-25 financial year came in at \$18.8million, up by nearly \$900 thousand from the 2023-24 financial year.

This is the second year that Hardwickes have audited the accounts, and following a comprehensive review,

the financial processes and outcomes were affirmed as sound and reliable.

Board stability with seven members, and a consultative Strategic Planning Process, has positioned CS#1 for growth.

Children's Services grew with the opening of Watson Early Childhood Education and Care and was celebrated with media, the Chief Minister, and Minister for Early Education. Marketing campaigns and OSHC programs have expanded our reach, with positive family feedback.

I would like to make special mention of our important partners OzHarvest and The Rotary Club of Canberra Sundowners. Both organisations delivered significant and ongoing assistance across the organisation to help us deliver better outcomes for our clients.

Importantly I would like to recognise and thank staff across CS#1 based in the ACT and the Murrumbidgee and Southern NSW areas.

It has been a privilege to serve as Chair and at the conclusion of the 2024/2025 financial year I passed the baton to Nichola Perry, with Jim Roy and Gillian Savage as Co-Deputy Chairs. I commend CEO Simon Bennett and his leadership team and thank the

Board, Mel Pretorius, and Nichola for their support. CS#1 continues to expand children's and community services, enhance aged care sustainability while growing revenue and reach. I'm pleased to say that the organisation is in great hands.

I would like to recognise and thank staff across CS#1 based in the ACT, and in the Murrumbidgee and Southern NSW areas.

Jason Duarte

Board Chair | Community Services #1



Message from the CEO

Simon Bennett

The past financial year has presented both significant challenges and meaningful achievements for Community Services #1.

A key challenge we faced was ensuring the financial sustainability of our Aged Care services. Despite our ongoing efforts, the Home Care Packages program continued to operate at a deficit. After careful consideration, the Board and Executive made the difficult decision to cease delivering Home Care Packages, effective 30 June 2025. We remain deeply committed to providing high-quality, client-focused care through our Commonwealth Home Support Program (CHSP), senior support groups, and community transport services.

On a more positive note, our early childhood services have expanded with the addition of two new Out of School Hours Care (OSHC) programs at schools within the Catholic Education Archdiocese of Canberra and Goulburn: Rosary at Watson and St Peter and Paul's in Garren and an additional centre-based services with the opening of the Watson Early Childhood Education and Care Centre. The launch at Watson was made even more special with a warm Welcome to Country delivered by Auntie Caroline, alongside ACT Chief Minister Andrew Barr MLA and Deputy Chief Minister Yvette Berry MLA.

Significant Achievements and Partnerships

Throughout the year, we celebrated significant achievements across multiple areas. Our partnerships have continued to strengthen, enabling us to expand and enhance the support we provide to our community.

We would like to extend our sincere thanks to Julie Tongs, CEO of Winnunga Nimmityjah Aboriginal Health. Her leadership and collaboration have been invaluable as we work together to build and enhance culturally appropriate support across our services.

It was a great honour to welcome Her Excellency the Governor-General of Australia during her visit to our Community Services #1 offices in Narrabundah. Her Excellency took the time to engage with many of our clients who access a variety of services, including aged care, support groups, and the food pantry. She also spent considerable time connecting with our dedicated volunteers and staff, recognizing their vital contributions.

Strategic Direction 2025–2028

Throughout the year, the Board, Executive, and staff collaborated extensively to develop the 2025–2028 Strategic Plan. Following months of workshops and consultation, we have refreshed our Vision and Mission statements and identified four key outcome areas that will guide our work moving forward.

Looking ahead to 2025–2028, we remain focused on strengthening our core services, enhancing community engagement, and ensuring sustainability to meet the evolving needs of those we serve.

Vision

Working collaboratively to build stronger communities to create lasting impact.

Mission

Together with our communities, we will create lasting social impact by empowering individuals, upholding dignity, and building strong connections to deliver innovative, inclusive care.

Strategic Outcome Areas:

1. A Stronger & Empowered Community
2. Increased Social Impact through Collaboration & Partnerships
3. Enhanced Wellbeing for Our Community
4. Sustainable Growth & Development

Our 2025–2028 Strategic Plan will be formally launched in November.

We look forward to continuing this important work in partnership with our community.

Simon Bennett

CEO | Community Services #1

Case study - Volunteer

Stephen O'Shea



Steve has been working in CS#1's Community Food Pantry for over four years and is one of the most respected members of the volunteering team. The thoughtfulness and kindness he shows to clients resonates across the organisation.

Steve grew up across Australia and Southeast Asia in a Defence Force family, moving often and adapting to new schools and communities. His upbringing fostered resilience, adaptability, and a deep respect for service, shaping his belief that belonging is grounded in values and contribution rather than place.

A lifelong learner, Steve has pursued studies in business, law, policy, humanitarianism, community

development, and the creative industries—bringing together leadership with compassion, structure with creativity. He has also held public service roles with the Commonwealth and ACT Governments, balancing policy, community engagement, and practical outcomes. His community work includes time in remote Indigenous communities, while internationally he has contributed to peace building efforts in Northern Ireland.

Steve has been volunteering for most of his life—sometimes through formal roles, other times by simply showing up where help was needed. For him, service is not just a duty but a way of being. Volunteering offers perspective and purpose, reminding him that

connection, kindness, and shared effort are what truly matter. It is a quiet kind of leadership, rooted in empathy and presence, affirming dignity and shared humanity.

Beyond volunteering, Steve is passionate about health and wellbeing, with a focus on nutrition and exercise. He also enjoys creative writing and self-publishing, exploring how stories can connect, heal, and inspire.

We would like to take this opportunity to thank Steve for his dedication to volunteering with CS#1, and for his ongoing support of our food pantry clients.



Community Services

The NSW Health Out of Hospital Care (OHC) Program continues to provide vital non-clinical care for patients transitioning from hospital to home. By supporting recovery in a familiar environment, the program helps reduce unnecessary readmissions and ensures continuity of care. Our work remains an important part of the health landscape across the Southern and Murrumbidgee regions, in partnership with multiple local health district hospitals.

The Community and Temporary Supports (CATS) Program, funded by ACT Health, offers short-term

assistance with daily living for people affected by illness, injury, or disability. CATS fills a critical gap for those who may not yet qualify for long-term services such as the NDIS, or who require immediate support during periods of transition.

Together, these programs enable individuals to remain safely at home, maintain independence, and ease pressure on hospitals and health services — outcomes that remain central to our commitment to community wellbeing.

Out of Hospital Care



38 staff

across both NSW health districts

**Southern NSW
Local Health District:**



1425 clients



8 hospitals



44,534 km²

**Murrumbidgee NSW
Local Health District:**



2901 clients



33 hospitals



125,243 km²

Testimonial - Family of OHC Client

'Mum and Dad never wanted anyone to come into their home. Steven has supported them to a point they are now willing to accept further help. I cannot thank Steven or Julie enough for their help and input they made the process so easy. May was great at getting the services in place quickly and checking all was well. This is a great service with local staff the whole team are amazing.'

Testimonial - CATS Clients

Mr. A and his wife expressed profound gratitude for the assistance provided during this challenging time. They noted that without CS1 intervention, they would have struggled immensely to navigate the complex aged care system and access the necessary supports for their continued recovery.

Community and Temporary Supports



534 clients



Outcomes

The participant was overjoyed and relieved when her NDIS application was approved. She commended Community Services 1 for their assistance. With the domestic assistance provided, the participant was able to achieve her goals, thanks to the dedicated support from our staff.

CS#1 was able to engage the 2 social workers to work cooperatively to keep the client on track with her NDIS application with just one provider (CS#1) while they simultaneously assisted her with gaining access to psychological and medical support as well as providing some limited social access.



Community Food Pantry

Through the dedication of our staff, volunteers, and generous community contributions, the Food Pantry provided vital support to households in need. Alongside thousands of food items such as fresh milk, meat, and pantry staples, families received essential hampers, back-to-school packs, and Christmas support. Community members not only accessed food assistance but also contributed time and energy through our pantry point card system and weekly volunteering which aided in strengthening client engagement and community connections.

2322

Food Pantry
visits



109

New Pantry
clients

73

Emergency food
relief hampers



220

Christmas hampers with
94 visits to Xmas shop



235

Active pantry
clients



The Food Pantry

35+

Community
Donations



35

volunteers provided
1040 hours of assistance
in the pantry

20

Back to school
packs for students

29

Referrals to
other services



Children's Services

Over the past year, Community Services #1 has continued to strengthen its commitment to early childhood and school-age care through its Children's Services programs. Increasing the footprint to include the newly opened Watson Early Childhood Education & Care, and two new Out of School

Hours Care programs, Sts Peter & Paul - Garran and Rosary-Watson. CS#1 supports children with a curriculum built around inquiry, play, social-emotional development and school readiness.

Testimonial - Parent from Sts Peter and Paul

'I like that the staff have a good connection with the kids and engaging with the activities... my daughter does not want to go home when it's pick up time. I also appreciate that the staff are approachable and accommodating in times of parents needs as well.'

Testimonial - ECEC Client

'To all the incredible staff at Cottage. Thank you for the love, patience, and dedication you show each day. Your guidance is helping shape curious minds and kind hearts, and we are so grateful for all that you do. Much love and a heartfelt thank you.'



Children's Services



4977

attendances at school holiday programs



57

children accessed 7656
hours of 3 yr old preschool

350

children in ECEC

933

children in OSHC



982

families accessed CS#1
ECEC & OSHC services

300

families in ECEC

682

families in OSHC

Testimonial - ECEC Client

'Our son has been attending for 1.5 years now, and it's been beautiful to watch his bond with the educators grow. The consistency and great care provided is a testament to the wonderful team and great culture at the centre. Thank you for all the effort and energy'



Partnerships

Partnerships allow CS#1 to provide vital programs which help us serve our community better.

We would like to acknowledge the ongoing assistance from Ozharvest and Food Bank who continue to deliver quality food and groceries for our community food pantry every week. Without your support we would not be able to provide vital food supplies for hundreds of individuals and families.

The Rotary Club of Canberra Sundowners continue to provide ongoing financial and practical support for services across the organisation including

the Community Food Pantry and Community Development initiatives. We appreciate the dedication and support that The Rotary Sundowners continue to deliver, combined with their continued efforts to look for new ways to support CS#1.

Thank you to Winnunga Nimmityjah Aboriginal Health Service for their ongoing support and willingness to collaborate to build the lives of individuals and families across the community. We recognise that organisations can have a significantly larger impact when they work together.



CS#1 remains deeply committed to building inclusive, person-centred services that make a meaningful difference, that supports and maintains older people across our community to live independently in their own home.



Aged Care Services

The 2024–2025 year was one of growth, change, and resilience for the Community Services #1 (CS#1) Aged Care team. Across the year, we proudly supported more than 358 Commonwealth Home Support Program (CHSP) clients, 93 Home Care Package clients, and 34 Care Finder clients, delivering over 163 hours of essential care and support.

In May 2025, the CS#1 Board made the difficult decision to step away from delivering Home Care Packages, effective 30 June 2025, in response to the ongoing uncertainty surrounding the Support at Home reforms. While this was a challenging moment, our team remained focused on what mattered most - our clients. With care and dedication, we supported every Home Care Package client to transition

smoothly to a provider of their choice by 1 July 2025. This achievement highlights the professionalism, compassion, and unwavering commitment of our Aged Care team.

Looking ahead, our focus now turns to strengthening the quality and impact of the Commonwealth Home Support Program. CHSP services are a lifeline for older Canberrans, assisting people aged 65 years and over (or 45 years or older for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people) to remain independent, connected, and supported in their daily lives. These services include community transport, domestic assistance, personal care, hoarding and squalor support, goods and equipment provision, and social support (individual and groups), as well as home maintenance.

Case study - Volunteer

Jeanette & Roy



Roy and Jeanette are clients of the CS#1 and use the Community Food Pantry with Roy belonging to the Ukulele social group. They started coming to CS#1 around 4 years ago when they joined the chair yoga group but stopped due to a couple of health challenges.

The pair first met in Sydney's Sutherland Shire at a local dance when they were just 15 and 17 years old. They married 5 years later and went on to have 3 daughters and now have 5 grandchildren and 5 great grandchildren.

Roy and Jeanette moved to Canberra in 1986 with Roy's work and settled around corner from CS#1's head office in Narrabundah, ACT. Roy says he enjoys coming to the Ukulele group each week and that it has given him the chance to connect socially and to learn a new skill - having started ukulele from scratch when he joined.

Both Jeanette and Roy say the Community Food pantry has been a blessing for them financially and in her words, Jeanette says it 'kept them afloat' in tough times.

The couple say they enjoy their weekly visits to CS#1 and that they appreciate the warm welcome they receive when they arrive.

Corporate Services

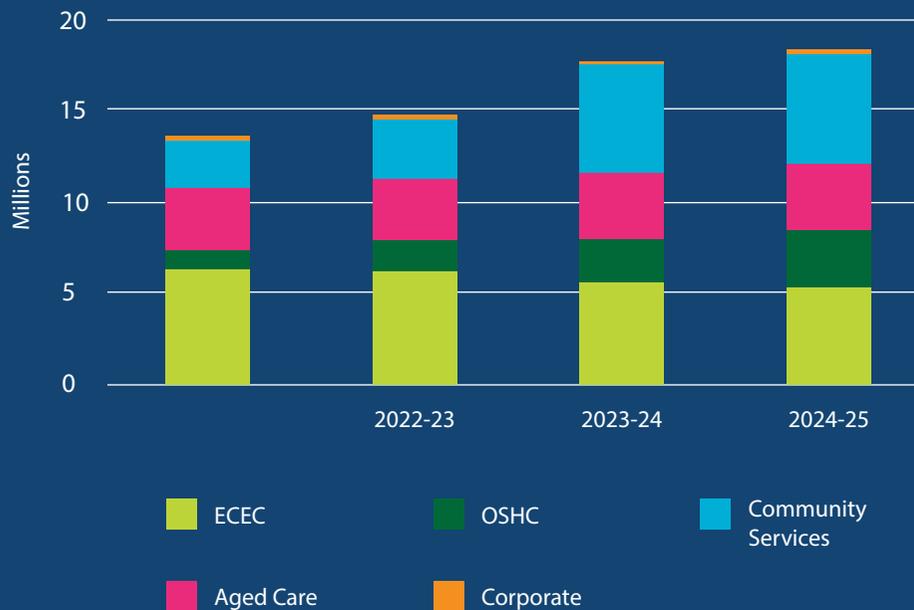
The diverse business/program base of Community Services#1 requires careful allocation of resources – which is often challenging when there are competing priorities. The upgrade of a number of supporting systems has allowed the organisation to be proactive with managing both opportunities and challenges that presented in the 2024-25 financial year – thus allowing our revenue growth to continue its positive trajectory.

The table indicates the strong revenue growth in the Community Services sector – a path which is expected to continue.

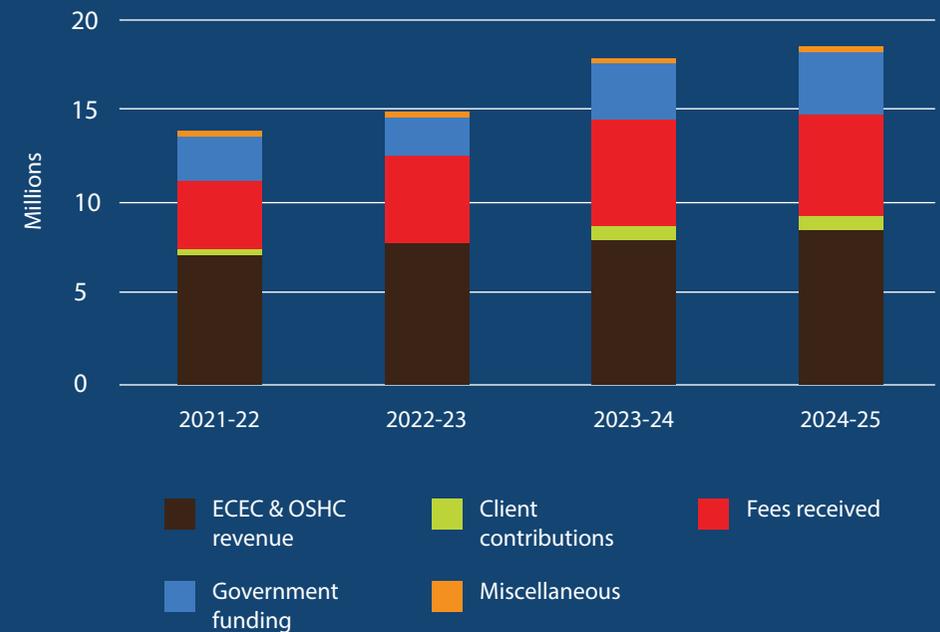
Challenges in the occupancy levels of the centre-based Early Education Centres led to a smaller than expected revenue growth in this area – but this drop was mitigated by the introduction of new OSHC programs, which, when combined with strong cost controls – resulted in a minimal impact to the bottom line.

Uncertainties in the Aged Care sector led to the difficult decision to not continue with the Support at Home initiative, and the Home Care package program began to wind up in May 2025. It was the drop in revenue, combined with program closure costs that lead to the small deficit.

Annual revenue growth (by department)



Annual revenue growth (by type)





ICT & Systems

The newly formed IT team have driven significant system upgrades to improve CS1's operations. Notably, 10 existing systems were consolidated into 3 efficient systems. Consolidation has improved operations, provided annual cost savings more than \$20,000 and estimated time savings of ~80 hours per week. Changes primarily include implementation of new Financial ERP system and an industry relevant CRM.

In addition to this, there has been a strong focus on cyber security, with increased awareness training, phishing simulations, improved internal controls, system access management and migration from server based to cloud-based applications.

The above work demonstrates clear financial and operational benefits, indicating the investment into our systems have been worthwhile and impactful.



ICT & Systems: The Year Ahead

1 Develop dashboards to track / manage KPI's developed in line with the 2025 to 2028 Strategic Plan.

2 Improve financial modeling and budgeting, using improved data to model business operations.

3 Continue to focus on incremental improvements, cyber awareness, and AI's role in operations.

The focus for ICT and Systems is primarily around using data from newly implemented systems to inform operational decisions.

Attendance Report

Key: Attended • Apology ○ N/A x Optional ~

Board and Sub-committee Meetings 2024-2025

Risk and Finance Subcommittee

	29/7	26/8	28/10	2/12	8/1	3/2	24/2	31/3	22/4	28/4	3/6
Jim Roy	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
Jason Duarte	~	~	•	•	•	•	~	~	~	•	~
Sonya Blondinau	x	x	x	x	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
David Cullen	•	•	○	○	x	x	x	x	x	x	x

Governance Subcommittee

	2/09	20/2
David Maywald	•	•
Gill Savage	x	•
Nichola Perry	•	•
Jason Duarte	•	x

Community Services Subcommittee

	25/7	7/2	4/4	23/5
Nichola Perry	•	•	•	•
Jim Roy	•	•	•	•

Aged Care Subcommittee

	19/8	25/9	2/4	30/4
Rhonda Maher	•	•	•	○
Sonya Blondinau	x	x	•	•
Gill Savage	x	x	•	•
David Cullen	•	•	x	x
John Dicer	•	•	x	x

Board meeting attendance - 1 July 2024 to 30 June 2025

	Appointment	Resignation	30/8	22/11	AGM	28/2	2/5	27/6
Nichola Perry	26/11/21	-	•	•	•	•	•	•
Jim Roy	8/11/22	-	•	•	•	•	•	•
Gill Savage	22/11/24	-	x	x	•	•	○	•
Jason Duarte	24/11/16	-	•	•	•	•	•	•
Sonya Blondinau	22/11/24	-	x	x	•	•	•	•
David Maywald	8/2/22	-	•	•	•	•	•	•
Rhonda Maher	27/11/20	-	•	•	•	•	○	•
David Cullen	2/11/22	22/11/24	•	○	○	x	x	x
John Dicer	8/11/22	22/11/24	○	○	○	x	x	x

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

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 these individuals, services and organisations.

Allison Norris
Amani Abdelmageed
Andrew Harcan
Anne Hasting
Catherine Stafford
Charlie Drummond
Chris Van Reyk
Crystal Rose
David Cullen
David Maywald
David Smith
Dragica Nestic
Gill Savage
Hannah Chew
Jane Smyth
Jason Duarte
Jen Lynch
John Dicer
Jim Roy

Junjing Guo
Kane Lawson
Louise Keightley
Mark Goina Junior
Morgan Eyles
Nichola Perry
Ray Bushbe
Rick Smyth
Rhonda Maher
Robyn Rutherford
Ru Wang
Sandra Agostino
Shumin Song
Sonya Blondinau
Stephen O'shea
Tony LoPilato
Tyson Allen
Wadu Sumathip
Zoe Wang



Volunteers

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



COMMUNITY
SERVICES #1

2025

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