

VALID

ANNUAL REPORT 2024 - 2025



Acknowledgement of Country

VALID acknowledges the Traditional Owners of Country and pays respect to their Elders, past and present. We extend the same respect to all First Nations people we are in contact with.

VALID's work is carried out on sovereign Aboriginal land that was never ceded. Our main office is on the land of the Wurundjeri, a people of the Kulin nation.



Acknowledgement of Lived and Living Experience

VALID acknowledges the lived and living experience of people with disability and their family members, carers and supporters.

We respect and honour their resilience and strength in challenging generations of discrimination, coercion and neglect to achieve inclusion, empowerment and rights.

We recognise the huge contribution people with lived and living experience make to VALID's work and disability advocacy in general.





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Our Board



Arthur Rogers
Chair



William Ward-Boas
Deputy Chair



Georgina Frost
Member



Stephanie Gunn
Member



Judy Kelly
Member



Graeme Russell
Member



Nicole Spehar
Member

Our Staff

Fionn Skiotis	CEO
Melanie Watson	Admin Manager
Kimberlee Pearce	Administration Assistant
Heather Forsyth	Senior Self Advocate
Tully Zygier	Communications Coordinator
Luke Nelson	Communications Officer
Frederikke Jensen	Individual Advocacy Manager
Sidonie Zagoda	Individual Advocate
Andrew Minge	Senior Advocate
Kamila Kopec	Individual Advocate
Michele Semmens	Community Development Manager
David Hanson	Community Development Regional Coordinator
Jana Hand	Community Development Regional Coordinator
Ann Hutchinson	Community Development Regional Coordinator
Liam Doyle	Community Development Project Assistant
Mark Thompson	Community Development Self Advocacy and Local Projects Leader
Sorgul Maho	Community Development Project Lead
Candace Bates	Community Development Project Assistant

Katy Gagliardi	Community Development Project Officer
Ahilan Croos Marian Jegathesan	Community Development Project Lead
Jon Slingsby	VALID Connect Manager
Zoe Broadway	VALID Connect Senior Project Officer
Rick Ruii	Self Advocacy Manager
Sara De Grandis	Self Advocacy Programs Team Leader
Anthony Risoli	Self Advocacy Programs Team Leader
Sandra Murphy	Self Advocacy Programs Senior Project Officer



Self Advocacy Project Workers

Jenny Bowden	Tarus Fiu	Hala Baksmaty
Raven Moore	Catherine Townsend	John O'Donnell
Nell Buchanan	Ariadne Ajani	Jonathan Riha
Kaliopi Karipidis	Celeste Rattray-Wood	Josef Crawford-Power
Joshua Burns	Katrina Welsby	Marcus Plush
Omar Muhammad	David West	Mark Walton
Madeleine Prasad	Cindy Rhodes	Mimari Hartono
Taj Murray	Greg Tucker	Timothy Lewis
Barry Robinson	David Inverarity	Tobias Ward-Boas

Our Voice representative

Sam Mouakkassa

Vision

A society where everyone is empowered to exercise their rights in line with:

- The Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR)
- Other human rights standards.



Purposes

1. To strengthen and promote the human rights of people with intellectual disability, including in relation to:
 - Inclusion
 - Access
 - Employment
 - Health
 - Education
 - Housing
2. To support family and carer networks of people with intellectual disability towards these goals.

Aims

VALID aims to empower people with intellectual disability to:

- Exert control and influence over the decisions and choices which affect their lives.

This means people will have a say about what happens in their own lives.

- Inform and influence the policies, processes and practices of disability service agencies, governments and other authorities.

This means people will have a say about what organisations connected to disability do.

- Exercise their human rights and citizenship status within their local communities.

This means, people with intellectual disability will be able to do the same things as anyone else.

Values

Respect

We accept and value people for who they are.

Collaboration

Working together.

Courage

Being brave and strong.

Humility

Understanding that we do not know everything.

Passion

Caring a lot about what we do.

Dedication

Not stopping until we live in a society where the human rights of people with intellectual disability are realised in practice.

Integrity

Doing what we say we will.

Being honest when we make mistakes.



Acting Chair's Report

Hello, my name is William Ward-Boas. I am a proud Autistic person with an intellectual disability and have worked in the disability sector for six years. My journey began with VALID – first as a participant in consultations with the Self Advocacy team, then as an employee for more than three years, and, from July 2023, as a member of VALID's Board of Management.

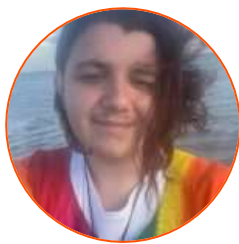
I want to thank my fellow Board members for their support and commitment to strengthening VALID's work. As a Board, we make sure that people's wellbeing is always front and centre, and that the lived experiences of people with disability guide our decisions. With the leadership of our CEO and fellow members, we continue to respect VALID's history and values while finding new ways to grow and expand opportunities for staff and participants.

This year, the Board reviewed the skills and experience we bring. I want to thank Nicole Spehar for her dedication as Deputy Chair. Nicole continues to make an important contribution as a valued Board member. Following nomination by the Board, I was honoured to be appointed as Deputy Chair – a role I have gratefully accepted. I have already had the privilege of chairing meetings and contributing to collaborative problem-solving through our diverse perspectives.

Over the past year, VALID has celebrated some significant achievements. We officially launched VALID Connect, moved into our new home at 144 Langridge Street in Collingwood and joined Disability Advocacy Victoria. We also strengthened our internal systems, policies and administration. These changes reflect our ongoing effort to ensure that people with intellectual disability and their families receive the best possible support.

The Board deeply appreciates the leadership of our CEO, Fionn Skiotis, whose dedication continues to drive innovation and successful new initiatives. We also thank VALID's passionate staff, members, friends, partners and funders for their continued commitment and belief in our mission.

Together, we are building on VALID's strong foundation to create new opportunities, strengthen voices, and support inclusion for people with intellectual disability across Victoria.



William Ward-Boas
Acting Chair



CEO's Report

VALID is a relatively small organisation with a big reputation and a proud record of achievement over almost all its 36 years in operation. The brief dip in confidence and impact that occurred before I started in 2022 has now been well and truly put behind us. VALID is once again a strong advocate for people with intellectual disability, a compassionate employer, a collaborative partner in the disability sector and a powerhouse of ideas and innovative projects and practices.

Like all disability organisations, and indeed people with disabilities across Australia, VALID must navigate uncertainty, lack of consultation and in some cases policy steps that seem to go backwards to places and times people with disabilities do not want to see again. Our response is the same as it always was to advocate, with evidence and logic but without fear or compromise, for the full realisation of the human rights of people with disabilities. We never do this alone, but together with people with disabilities, their families and carers, other advocacy organisations and a broad and growing list of partners.

VALID has done a lot of exciting and high-quality work over the past year – so much so that there is not enough space here for me to report on it properly. I urge you to read the other sections of this Annual Report in which VALID's managers discuss their teams' achievements in more detail.

While everyone has been hard at work implementing over 15 funded projects, we have also taken the time to move office, organise two conferences, regularly welcome people into our organisation through our Open Day and other events, and had some fun as a staff team along the way.

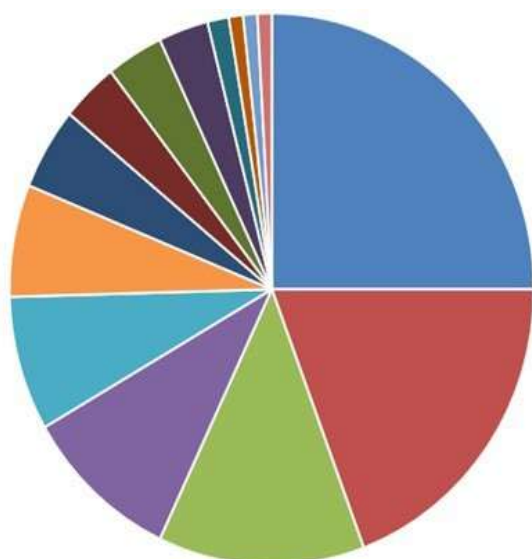
I thank all my colleagues for their commitment to VALID's work, which continues to produce great results. I also express my thanks to VALID's Board members, who serve in a voluntary capacity to provide vital stewardship and stability. Finally, I want to thank VALID's many members, friends, partners, funders and others, whose support remains a key element in VALID's overall success.



Fionn Skiotis
CEO

Individual Advocacy

Advocacy Problems



Our DFFH-funded Individual Advocacy service supported 195 people over the financial year, plus an average of 40 enquiries a month. There is no significant variance in the ranking of issues that people sought help with, compared to previous years.

NDIS continues to be the main issue on which people approached the Individual Advocacy service for support. Note this category includes a wide range of problems ranging from fraudulent and neglectful service delivery to responsible providers asking for advice and support to do the right thing by the person with a disability.

The cases of fraud we come across - preying on people with disabilities, draining their funding and not providing services - have increased in severity.

They often involve a provider luring the person with a disability with access to 'stable' housing.

We have seen a change in that more people are approaching VALID for support regarding the Administrative Review Tribunal (ART) due to NDIS funding cuts.

Being state funded means the Individual Advocacy team has been passing these requests on to appropriate services with funding to support people with ART cases.

The advocacy team have escalated a small number of cases in which clients were at high risk of injury to self or others and potentially death or severe neglect as a result of funding cuts.

Staff

Individual Advocacy operated during 2024-25 with Advocacy Manager Frederikke Jensen, Senior Advocate Andrew Minge and Individual Advocates Sidonie Zagoda and Kamila Kopec.

Partnerships and Networking

The Individual Advocacy Team collaborated with organisations such as RIAC, IFAS and STAR Victoria regarding parents with disabilities with child protection involvement.

Additionally, Individual Advocacy has contributed to the work of a steering committee for the Family Violence Disability Practice Leader in the Loddon Mallee area.

This is important systemic work given the high number of requests for support for family violence.

The team also contributed to Justice Forums and meetings with the Victorian Senior Practitioner.

Support for people with ABI – TAC project

The Individual Advocacy team also provided advocacy support for 44 people with Acquired Brain Injury (ABI).

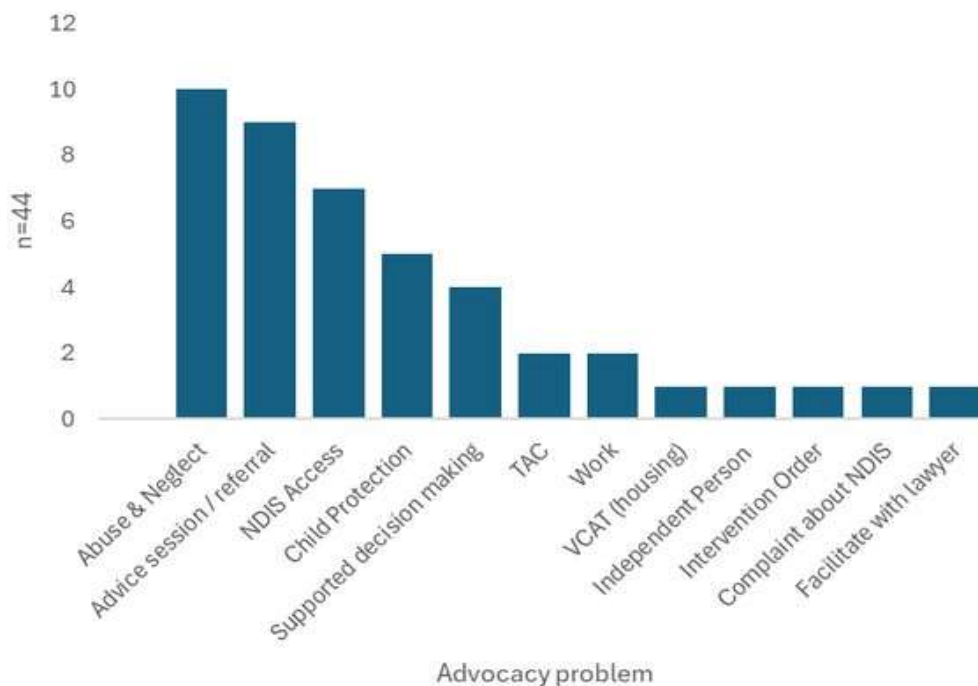
Funding for this project came from the Transport Accident Commission's (TAC) Small Research Program.

The aim of the funding was to meet a critical, unmet need in Victoria for individual advocacy support for people with ABI, including TAC clients.

Common threads were that people with ABI were alienated from services meant to support them, and they found it difficult to access services without advocacy support



Advocacy Problems – ABI project



Findings

- Mainstream system navigation is difficult and sometimes impossible without advocacy support.
- Mainstream systems are not reliable in ascertaining when people with ABI are at high risk at times of bereavement or discharge from hospital. There is a lack of proactive service delivery.
- People in regional areas are particularly vulnerable as there are fewer available services and transport.
- Any system or service working closely with people with ABI should factor in extra time to facilitate a psychologically safe and trauma-informed practice for both clients and staff. This could prevent disconnection and blacklisting by service providers.

Frederikke Jensen

Individual Advocacy Manager



Self Advocacy

Self advocacy means having the confidence and support to speak up, make choices and take control of your life, and is at the heart of VALID's mission.

Our self advocacy programs are co-designed, ensuring people with lived experience shape the support, information and opportunities they want and need.

In 2024–25, VALID's Self Advocacy team continued delivering a range of programs that reflect the voices and priorities of people with disabilities.

Our Self Advocacy Network meetings remain central, offering a space for peer connection and shared learning, while also informing VALID's broader advocacy work, including the Self Advocacy Forum.

We worked through several strong partnerships this year, including projects with Disability Homes Victoria (DHV), Inclusion Australia and Palliative Care Victoria.

Through the DHV collaboration, the team gathered input from people in Supported Disability Accommodation to inform the DFFH Vacancy Reform Project.

With Inclusion Australia, we began the 'Speaking Up in the Bush' project which aims to build confidence and self advocacy skills among people with intellectual disability in rural and regional communities.

Our work with Palliative Care Victoria focused on grief, loss and end-of-life care. The team co-developed resources for people in group homes and provided training to families and support workers, ensuring everyone involved has the tools and understanding to navigate these sensitive topics.

We also continued our 'My Housing Plan' project, running accessible workshops for NDIS participants and families across metro, regional and rural areas.

These sessions, delivered by people with lived experience, helped participants better understand housing and living options.

A major milestone this year was our success in securing funding from the NDIS Commission for the 'Speaking Out, Skilling Up' project.

Over the next two years, the team will co-design and deliver 100 workshops across Victoria. Topics will include:

- Understanding the National Disability Service Standards
- Making Complaints
- Fighting Abuse, Neglect and Exploitation

Highlight: VALID and the Cancer Council Victoria (CCV)

A highlight of the year was our partnership with the CCV to deliver the "Cancer Screening and Early Detection Saves Lives" project.

Co-designed and led by VALID team members with lived experience, this initiative focused on raising awareness about bowel and cervical cancer screening.

Presentations were meaningful, accessible and backed by easy-to-understand resources, reinforcing the power of peer-led education in health.

VALID8 and ACTIV8 Projects

The VALID8 project wrapped up on 30 June 2025 after six successful years. Funded by the Department of Families, Fairness and Housing (DFFH) the project empowered people with intellectual disability to lead reviews of disability group home supports across Victoria. The focus was on understanding how well self advocacy, choice and empowerment were being supported and where improvement was needed.

More than 30 people with intellectual disability were employed in meaningful properly paid roles as peer auditors. Through this work they built skills in communication, evaluation,

teamwork and leadership. Many said their confidence grew not only in conducting audits but also in speaking up for themselves and others

"I love advocating for myself and others, especially visiting group homes to ensure people are getting the support they need. The best part of my job is meeting new people and being a voice for those who need it."

- Hala, VALID8 Project Worker,

"I get to visit group homes with my awesome supervisors and interview residents using the VALID8 app on an iPad. We make sure all residents have a choice in their home and that staff are listening to them."

- Omar, VALID8 Project Worker

Over six years the VALID8 team visited 170 group homes. Using the VALID8 peer review framework they gathered feedback that helped many services create more inclusive and respectful environments. A major innovation was the VALID8 touchscreen app which supported residents to share their experiences safely and easily.

VALID held a special event to celebrate the project's achievements. A highlight was team members receiving letters of recognition from the Minister for Disability the Hon Lizzie Blandthorn MP. Argiri Alisandratos from DFFH presented the framed letters which acknowledged the team's impact and the difference their work made.

Although VALID8 has ended, its work continues through ACTIV8, a new project funded by the NDIS Commission. ACTIV8 builds on the VALID8 model and continues the co designed peer led approach that people with disability in leadership roles.

ACTIV8 expands the focus to other service areas including day programs, Australian Disability Enterprises (ADEs) and respite services. It will also broaden its reach beyond Victoria through partnerships with Inclusion Australia's member organisations.

By sharing what works and creating new opportunities for inclusion, the project will support a more inclusive and empowering disability service system that values lived experience.

With the ACTIV8 project, we are excited to support the next chapter of change, where self advocacy continues to shape more inclusive, responsive and empowering services for all NDIS participants.

Rick Ruiu
Self Advocacy Manager



 **Cancer Council** 

Bowel Cancer Screening Workshops

Too many people with disabilities are not doing bowel cancer screening test.

Cancer Council Victoria and VALID want to change this.

 VALID is doing a workshop to help people with disability to learn more about bowel cancer screening.



Where: VALID's Western Self Advocacy Network Meeting
Maldstone Community Centre,
21 Yardley Street, Maldstone

When: Tuesday 12th November

Time: 1:00 to 2:00pm





VALID Connect

This year marked the first full year of VALID Connect as a fee-for-service, not for profit company owned by VALID.

It has been a big step in growing VALID's capacity while supporting inclusive, accessible work with organisations, individuals and families.

VALID Connect delivered Easy Read projects, training and tailored consultations across a range of sectors, always grounded in lived experience.



We are proud of the strong relationships we have built and the practical, respectful support we have provided.

Major Projects

Mental Health and Wellbeing Local (MHWL) Capability Uplift Project

In partnership with National Disability Services (NDS), this project focused on making Victoria's new 'Local' mental health hubs more inclusive for people with disability across Geelong, Benalla / Wangaratta and Frankston.

VALID provided Easy Read translations and strategic advice and supported 17 people with disability and family members to participate in local co-design groups. The project wrapped up with a suite of practice tools, videos and co-designed resources to be shared across the sector.

Right Direction Project

This project saw VALID Connect partnering with Melbourne University to help Positive Behaviour Support Practitioners better involve people with disability in their own plans.

VALID Connect contributed Easy Read resources and this work was strengthened through our close collaboration with the team at Scope's CIRC.

It was a genuinely constructive and respectful working relationship, built on shared values, open communication and a real commitment to inclusion, which made the process smooth, enjoyable and more impactful.

Training and Consultations

VALID Connect delivered Easy Read training to organisations including Moonee Valley City Council, Summer Foundation, Cancer Council Victoria, DANA and P2P Queensland. We also facilitated tailored Keys to Success sessions featuring real-life tools and the voices of people with disability.

Consultations were held with a range of partners, including Possability (for the TAC consumer survey), Canberra University, DANA, Monash Health and the eSafety Commissioner, helping shape more inclusive services, websites, and materials.

Easy Read

VALID Connect created Easy Read content for more than 30 organisations, including ABC Four Corners, ABS, DSS, BreastScreen Victoria, Melbourne University, Quit, Victorian Legal Aid, Women's Health East and more. This work helps make important information easier to understand — and more inclusive for everyone.

Highlights of the Year

Growing recognition of Easy Read as essential, not optional.

Seeing lived experience at the centre of projects, and the practical tools created through partnerships like the NDS Mental Health Uplift, shows what good collaboration can achieve.

We are especially proud to welcome Naomi Chainey and Brigitte Stone to our team of Easy Read writers, strengthening our future impact.

Thank you to our VALID Connect clients, lived experience experts

and the broader VALID team, for your trust, humour and support. The VALID Connect team are excited to keep building on this work in 2025–26.

Jon Slingsby

VALID Connect Manager



Community

Development

2024-25 saw continued growth of the Community Development area and team with a range of new projects and staff members, increasing our reach across Victoria.

Our 'In This Together' project, with funding from DSS's Information, Linkages and Capacity Building (ILC) Social and Community Participation stream, promotes inclusion for people with intellectual disability in Drouin and Warragul (Baw Baw Shire) and the Surf Coast Shire, using a whole of community approach and co-designed programs and resources.

ITT works with all local community sectors and entities including local government, education, media, service providers and other local organisations to further inclusion for local people with an intellectual disability in these communities.

Building strong relationships with local communities and finding local people with an intellectual disability can be difficult in regional and rural communities, but has been crucial to the success of this project so far.



VALID also welcomed two new Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) projects working with multicultural communities. 'I Can Decide in My Language' and 'Power Through Knowledge' are both funded by the ILC's Individual Capacity Building stream.

'I Can Decide In My Language' is a three-year partnership project with the Council for Intellectual Disability in NSW, working with three communities in each state. VALID is working with the Chinese, Vietnamese and Tamil communities in Victoria to explore Supported Decision Making for people with intellectual disability and develop co-designed information and resources.

This is exciting work, in which individuals, families and communities talk - often for the first time - about their lived experience of disability in their specific community or culture, the challenges they face and more particularly what supported decision making looks like.

Focus groups held during the year are making valuable contributions to co-designed resources that will be further developed in the later part of this project.

The 'Power Through Knowledge' project (PTK) focuses on three municipalities: Yarra, Hobsons Bay and Maribyrnong. It too is a three-year partnership project with the Migrant Resource Centre North West and the Ethnic Communities Council of Victoria. The MRC and ECCV work with other municipalities across Victoria.

The focus of PTK is to offer co-designed support groups for people with intellectual disability, families and community leaders across multicultural communities, to explore disability rights, disability services, the NDIS and other areas of interest with learnings from the project culminating in new resources.

Another team initiative this year was the revival of VALID's LGBTQIA+ group, to support people with intellectual disability with this identity. VALID's 'Q Group', as it is known, developed strongly in 2025 and partnered with similar organisations such as Rainbow Rights.

It is exciting that CD's Diverse City publication continues to impact in the disability and wider community. This raw collection of personal stories and art by people with an intellectual disability is a powerful read and has been included in several libraries across Victoria and interstate and as a 'must read' item by a range of book clubs and organisations.

As we look forward to new ventures ahead, a big thank you to the committed, resourceful and creative Community Development team for their great work and outcomes over the past year.

Michele Semmens
CD Manager



Having a Say Conference

VALID's Having a Say Conference (HaS) returned to its three-day format in January 2025. The theme was Our Lives, Our Voices! Despite the early dates, and some venue changes, 974 people took part in some way in this event. The biggest day was the second with over 700 people attending!

Some highlights included:

- The sad task of honouring the late Sir Robert Martin KNZM, who rose as a self advocate to international levels.
- Recognising the achievements of Heather Forsyth, who received a Life Achievement award in the Victorian Disability Awards.
- The Hon Amanda Rishworth MP, the Federal Minister for Social Services, launched an updated Australia's Disability Strategy.
- The 'call to arms' by Zane McKenzie, President of Villamanta Disability Rights Legal Service, in his stirring speech at the Disco.

The Program included 112 people with lived experience performing or presenting about their achievements and the issues that are important to them.

Some of the other key topics discussed were:

- domestic violence
- housing
- changes to employment
- being safe online
- relationships and intimacy

Health for people with intellectual disability was again a key topic, including two presentations by VALID on bowel cancer screening and breast-screening.

This was complemented by presentations from some exhibitors on health including annual health checks, my health story (Council on Intellectual Disability) and the National Centre for Excellence in Intellectual Disability Health.

Other activities were well supported including the Expo, Art Competition and HaS's Got Talent.

We thank all conference sponsors, particularly our Platinum sponsors

VDWC (Disco), Melba (Expo) and DFFH, whose grants enabled 50 group home residents and their support staff to attend.



Advocacy in Action

Conference

In June 2025 VALID held its first winter conference, called Advocacy in Action. Over 250 people attended this two-day event, held at Novotel Preston.

Attendees came from a wide range of areas, including State and Federal Government departments, complaints bodies, Legal Aid, advocates, disability service providers and many others. Fees were kept low enough to enable

people with disabilities to attend, resulting in over 30% of attendees identifying as people with lived experience.

The first day was kicked off by Kevin Stone, VALID's Founder and former CEO, with a rousing presentation called Empowering Advocacy - Making Waves. In the conference feedback survey this was nominated as the most useful session by many attendees.



The program was made up of a mix of breakout sessions and plenaries on each day. The breakout sessions covered several issues putting pressure on advocacy services:

- funding for advocacy
- demand for advocacy by those in the justice and child protection systems
- confusion and worry about the impacts of changes to the NDIS
- concern and/or communication impairment

It was a valuable experience to be able to look at issues with participants, advocates, families, providers, government and non-government perspectives all contributing to the discussion.

VALID would like to thank all the speakers who gave their time to be involved and support people to gain information and knowledge on these issues. One person's feedback summed it up:

"I found the topics, speakers and presentations excellent. I learnt a lot."

Christine Scott

Events and Quality Manager

VALID's Financials in 2024-25

Information on VALID's financial position on 30 June 2025, and our financial performance during the 2024-25 financial year, is summarised below.

VALID's accounts are audited by In.Corp Audit & Assurance Pty Ltd and all figures below are taken from the 2024-25 audited financial statements.

Financial position at 30 June 2025:

Assets

Current assets	\$2,339,275
Non-current assets	<u>\$1,280,948</u>

Total assets	<u>\$3,620,223</u>
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Liabilities

Current liabilities	\$1,682,128
Non-current liabilities	<u>\$1,143,298</u>

Total liabilities	<u>\$2,825,426</u>
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Net assets (Equity)	<u>\$794,797</u>
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Financial performance during 2024-25:

Income

Grant income	\$2,843,290
Donations	\$6,225
Consultancy income	\$243
Conference & events	\$264,891
Other revenue	<u>\$510,619</u>

Total income	<u>\$3,625,268</u>
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Expenses

Employee expenses	\$2,432,124
Administration expenses	\$514,713
Depreciation expenses	\$140,097
Occupancy expenses	\$69,941
Project expenses	\$136,940
Finance expenses	\$41,000
Other expenses	<u>\$85,275</u>

Total expenses	<u>\$3,420,090</u>
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Total surplus for the year	<u>\$205,178</u>
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Financial position at 30 June 2024:

Assets

Current assets	\$1,267,266
Non-current assets	<u>\$84,087</u>

Total assets	<u>\$1,351,353</u>
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Liabilities

Current liabilities	\$748,903
Non-current liabilities	<u>\$12,831</u>

Total liabilities	<u>\$761,734</u>
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Net assets (Equity)	<u>\$589,619</u>
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Financial performance during 2023-24:

Income

Grant income	\$2,042,254
Donations	\$26,545
Consultancy income	\$88,745
Conference & events	\$265,711
Other revenue	<u>\$382,865</u>

Total income	<u>\$2,806,029</u>
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Expenses

Employee expenses	\$2,186,496
Administration expenses	\$470,970
Depreciation expenses	\$105,298
Occupancy expenses	\$12,608
Project expenses	\$123,360
Finance expenses	\$4,426
Other expenses	<u>\$99,667</u>

Total expenses	<u>\$3,002,825</u>
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Total loss for the year	<u>\$196,796</u>
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Inclusion Australia

In 2024-25 we continued to celebrate our 70th year. Thank you to everyone who shared memories and stories with us from over the years. Here is to another 70 years of advocacy!

We introduced a fresh new look as part of our birthday. The Inclusion Australia website and eNews got an update, and the Our Voice committee got a great new logo.

In August 2024 we launched 'It's Doctor Time'. The campaign encourages more people with an intellectual disability to see their GP for a yearly health check. It's Doctor Time! includes information and resources for people with intellectual disability, families, GPs and clinic staff, service providers and others. What special time of year will you choose to book your yearly health check?

The federal election was held in May 2025. Inclusion Australia is asking politicians to commit to a new working group. This group will help make sure all people with an intellectual disability get paid a fair wage. We call this group the Ministerial Implementation Working Group.

We want this group to give advice to the government on how to make the Disability Royal Commission's Recommendation 7.31 happen. This Recommendation is about stopping the sub-minimum wages that are paid to people with an intellectual disability.

Inclusion Australia had a great time at the 2025 Having a Say conference. We had an information stall and presented sessions on employment, earning money, governance, yearly health checks and more.

The Advocacy in Action conference was an important gathering of advocates. Inclusion Australia's Maeve Kennedy was on a panel on General Foundational Supports.

Inclusion Australia Policy Officer, Luke Nelson, who also works for VALID, went to the Conference of State Parties to the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) at the UN in New York. Inclusion Australia CEO Catherine McAlpine was there too. Luke talked about artificial intelligence (AI) and how it impacts

people with an intellectual disability.

"I would have never thought I would speak at the UN. I have ticked a huge career moment off my bucket list! I will encourage people to speak up for the rest of my life. That is my job. That is what I will always do."

- Luke Nelson

Catherine McAlpine

Inclusion Australia CEO



VALID

Address:

Level 1, 144 Langridge Street
Collingwood, VIC 3066

Phone:

(03) 9416 4003

www.valid.org.au