

# Neami National

ANNUAL REPORT 2020-21



Improving Mental Health  
and Wellbeing



We acknowledge Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander peoples and communities as the Traditional Custodians of the land we work on and pay our respects to Elders past, present and emerging.

We recognise that their sovereignty was never ceded and the impact of structural inequality that resulted from invasion continues to this day.



Neami is committed to cultivating inclusive environments for staff, consumers and carers. We celebrate, value and include people of all backgrounds, genders, sexualities, cultures, bodies and abilities.

We believe our commitment to diversity and inclusion makes our teams, services and organisation stronger and more effective.



Neami National is committed to providing accessible services to people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds.

If you have difficulty understanding this report, phone us on 03 8691 5300, and we will arrange an interpreter or translation for this publication.

Thank you to the consumers, staff and others who contributed to the content and design of this report.

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# CEO and Chair Report

Neami is a values-based, not-for-profit organisation providing mental health, homelessness and suicide prevention services.

Through our recovery-orientated approach, we deliver a range of evidence-informed services around the country to improve mental health and wellbeing in local communities.

## Vision

Full citizenship for all people living with mental health issues in Australian society.

## Purpose

To enable people aged 16 to 65 living with mental health issues to achieve outcomes that they value.

## Strategic intent

To build on our strengths in evidence-based, consumer informed services. This means further enhancing consumer experiences of us and co-designing broader and deeper services.

To take a more active outward-looking view. This means working more with others, being a leading voice in changing the system and becoming a more sustainable and resilient national organisation.

This year we implemented our new 2020-2023 Strategic Directions. Developed through an in-depth collaboration with our staff, board, consumers, carers and sector partners, the 2020-2023 Strategic Directions emphasise great consumer experiences, strong partnerships, building a sustainable and resilient organisation, and influencing system reform. To bolster our ability to successfully deliver on these strategic directions, we've made changes to our teams, most notably at Head Office. We've realigned our executive leadership team, and appointed new positions including the Executive Director Research, Engagement and Advocacy.

The Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic continues to impact consumers, participants, staff and communities. We appreciate the additional support made available by our funders to ensure continuity of support wherever possible. To provide a rapid response to local need, we've worked in partnership with organisations across our sector and beyond. In New South Wales, South Australia and Victoria, we supported people in emergency accommodation as a result of the pandemic, to secure safe and sustainable housing. In Queensland and Victoria, we've delivered Wellbeing Link and Partners in Wellbeing, both services supporting people impacted by COVID-19 to improve their mental health and wellbeing.

To successfully support local communities, we know that we must first support our staff. We committed to maintaining the safety and wellbeing of our staff while providing the highest quality support for consumers and customers. A COVID-19 National Working Group was formed to continually review communications across Australia and monitor advice from commonwealth and state health departments, our peak bodies and funders.

After six years of successfully delivering NDIS services through our subsidiary Me Well, in June 2021 the Neami Group made the strategic decision to transition out of NDIS service provision. While Me Well's positive impact with individual participants was clear, there was a gap between the emerging direction of the NDIS and the reality for providers. Having invested significantly in Me Well since entering the NDIS market, the Board determined to focus on alternative approaches to investment in service delivery that are more strongly aligned with the Neami Strategic

Directions. We are working to transition Me Well to another not-for-profit service provider. Continuity of support for Me Well participants, and the ongoing employment of our valued staff, is our first priority through this process.

In March we launched the Urgent Mental Health Care Centre (UMHCC) in Adelaide. The first of its kind in Australia, the UMHCC provides an alternative to a hospital emergency department for people experiencing a mental health crisis. The UMHCC fuses the best of a peer recovery model and the clinical-medical model to provide a unique, high-quality care service.

The UMHCC is the first of eight Head to Health centres funded by the Australian Government as part of a trial. In May, the Northern Territory Primary Health Network (NTPHN), announced Neami National as the lead for the Darwin Head to Health centre, in partnership with Larrakia Nation. To ensure the service is culturally appropriate and reflects the needs of local people and community, we're working closely with Larrakia Nation, Top End Health, NTPHN and undertaking an in-depth co-design process.

During a difficult year filled with uncertainty for many, we are proud of what we have achieved together. Thank you to our funders, partners, staff and communities, and to the consumers who've trusted us to walk alongside them.



**Tom Dalton**  
CEO, NEAMI NATIONAL

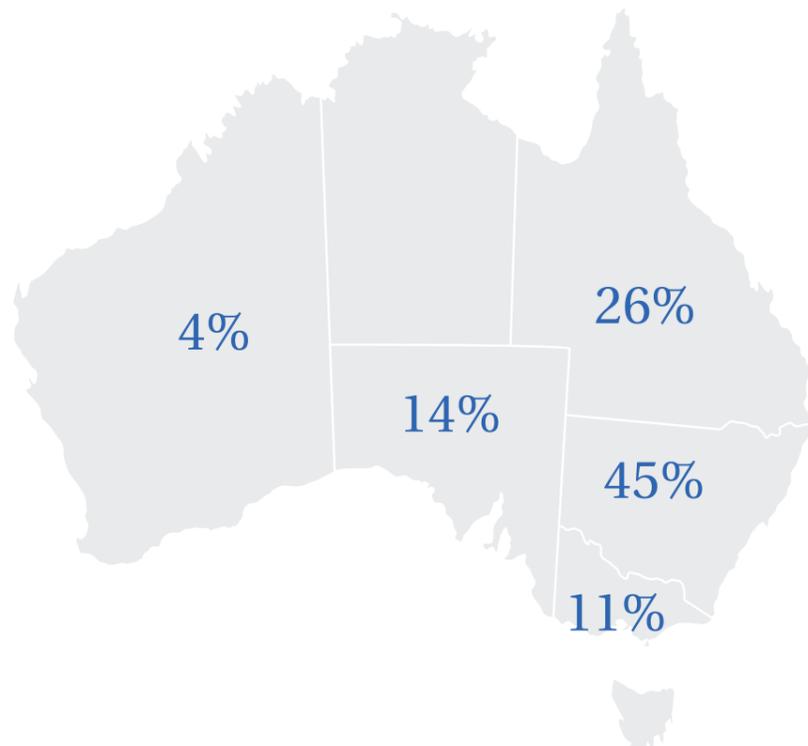


**Tony Nippard**  
CHAIR, NEAMI NATIONAL

# Neami Group snapshot

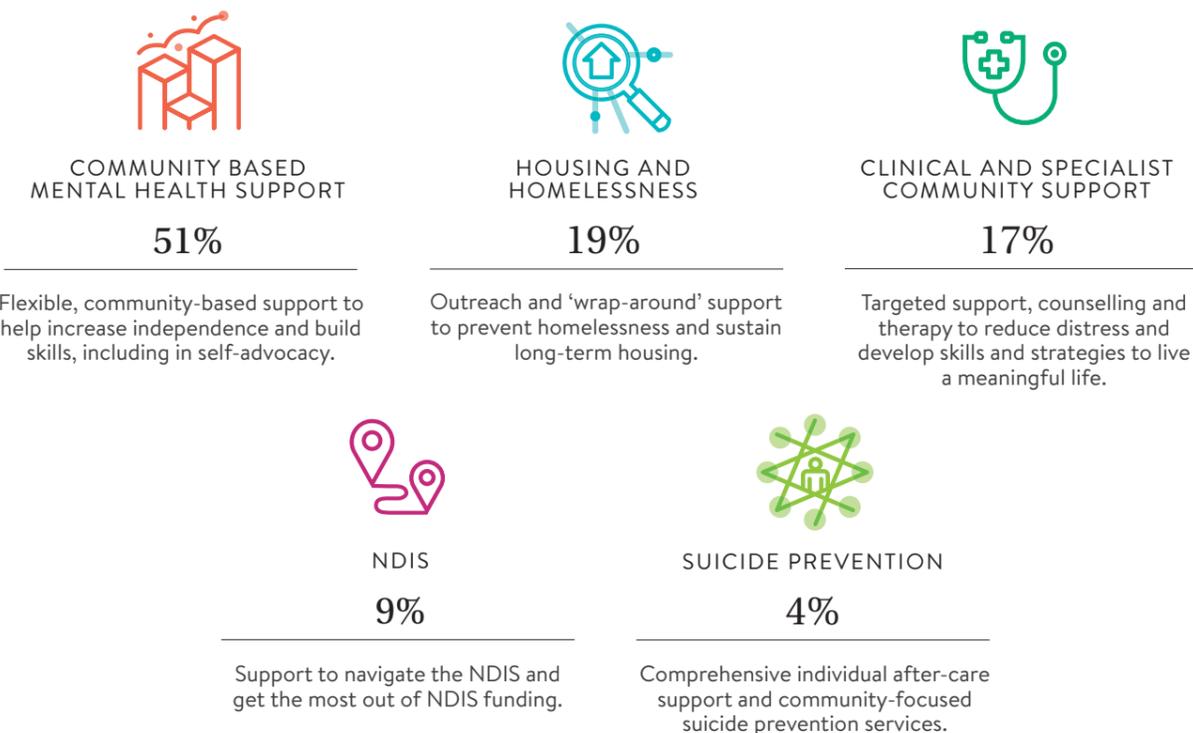
## CONSUMER NUMBERS AND LOCATION

We supported  
**27,588**  
 PEOPLE  
 across metropolitan, regional and remote communities across Australia.



## TYPES OF SUPPORT

27,588 people received support from Neami and Me Well across the five key domains below.



## RESEARCH AND EVALUATION

We supported high-quality, ethical research and evaluation that translates knowledge into improved services and better outcomes for consumers.

**7**  
 NEAMI-LED PROJECTS

**18**  
 EXTERNALLY LED PROJECTS

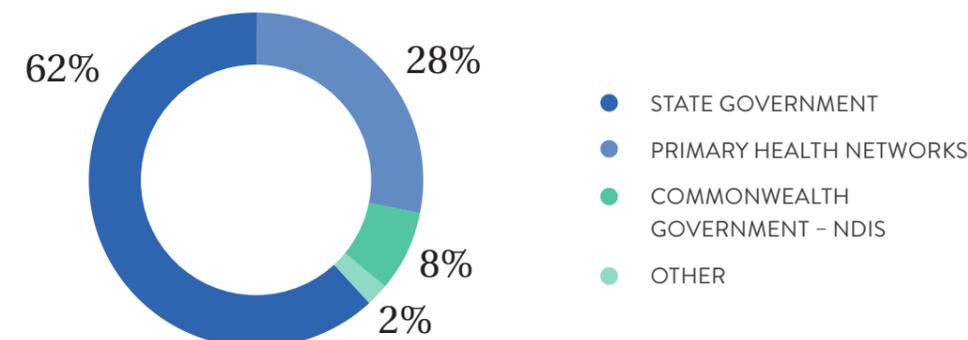
**12**  
 PROJECT OUTCOMES PUBLISHED / JOURNAL ARTICLES

**39**  
 UNIVERSITY AND NGO PARTNERS

## FINANCIAL POSITION

TOTAL REVENUE	SURPLUS	EQUITY
\$106,655,523	\$772,281	\$25,981,041

## SOURCE OF INCOME



# State and Me Well Reports



## Victoria

“We’re proud of our partnerships with organisations across the breadth of our services. We each bring to the partnership unique strengths, expertise and experience, and we collaborate to build services tailored to local and individual need. Successfully partnering with and integrating clinical services alongside recovery focused psychosocial support, has enabled us to provide positive outcomes for people with some of the most complex needs.”

**Glen Tobias**  
VICTORIAN STATE MANAGER



## New South Wales

“In a year that has seen our teams and communities face the challenges presented by floods and the COVID-19 pandemic, we’ve worked together to enable the rapid establishment of much-needed services and a tailored response to local need. We’ve delivered services that have the opportunity to provide generational change for people with histories of homelessness and complex health needs, and we’ve led innovative programs that are providing holistic support.”

**Peter Gianfrancesco**  
NSW STATE MANAGER



## Queensland

“Over the past year, we’ve strengthened our partnerships and welcomed opportunities to work in new collaborations on innovative services that are enabling better mental health and wellbeing in diverse communities. Our team members have demonstrated their ability to respond quickly and provide meaningful support for people with a range of needs.”

**Karen Thomas**  
STATE & TERRITORY MANAGER  
(QLD & NT)



## South Australia

“We’ve focused on embedding lived experience across our services, developing our lived experience workforce and delivering collective impact by working together. This year we celebrated the launch of the Urgent Mental Health Care Centre, leading the way in providing an alternative to hospital presentation for people in crisis. We said farewell to our Street to Home service that has supported some of the state’s most vulnerable people for four years, and we welcomed opportunities to contribute to the future of the mental health sector.”

**Kim Holmes**  
SOUTH AUSTRALIA  
STATE MANAGER



## Western Australia

“We’ve expanded our support, particularly in regional communities across Western Australia, and worked with consumers, communities and the sector to design, deliver and evaluate our services. Purposeful partnerships have enabled us to deliver specialist workforce training in regional WA, and embed specialist residential mental health services in Kalgoorlie and Geraldton.”

**Nicole Jolly**  
WESTERN AUSTRALIA  
STATE MANAGER



## Me Well

“This year has been one of transformation for Me Well. The Me Well team has worked together to advocate for participants, champion lived experience voices and support positive change for participants. In June 2021, we announced that the Neami Group has made the strategic decision to transition out of NDIS service provision.”

**Tom Baxter**  
ME WELL CEO

# Embedding lived experience

Integrating lived experience across our services and approach has enabled improved service design, delivery and outcomes.



## LIVED EXPERIENCE AT THE FOREFRONT OF ADELAIDE'S URGENT MENTAL HEALTH CARE CENTRE

Opened in March 2021, the Urgent Mental Health Care Centre (UMHCC) provides an alternative to a hospital Emergency Department for people experiencing a mental health crisis.

Delivered by a team of peer support workers, medical officers, nurses and clinical staff, the UMHCC puts lived experience of recovery at the centre of its approach. The UMHCC model draws from the Crisis Now movement, a leading lived experience, high-engagement, multi-disciplinary crisis model offering an alternative to Emergency Department presentations. The UMHCC fuses the best of a peer-recovery model and the clinical-medical model to provide a unique, high-quality care service.

In delivering the Crisis Now model, Neami National has partnered with RI International, a US-based organisation with 30 years of experience in the design and delivery of best-practice crisis intervention services.

The UMHCC offers a very different experience to an Emergency Department, with a calm and welcoming environment built on the "living room model" that RI International has successfully implemented across the US.

People can self-refer to the UMHCC by walking in or calling the service. As an alternative to hospital, referrals are also received from SA Mental Health triage, SA Ambulance and SA Police. In June 2021, 66% of referrals were from people engaging directly with the service.

The UMHCC is the first of its kind in Australia, with eight similar services planned across Australia as part of a trial funded by the Australian Government. The UMHCC is funded by the Federal Government and commissioned by SA Health. More about the UMHCC at [umhcc.org.au](http://umhcc.org.au).

## PUTTING LIVED EXPERIENCE AT THE HEART OF NDIS SERVICES

Understanding the value and need for a meaningful and supported peer workforce in the NDIS environment, in 2020 Me Well undertook a robust process to design a peer work pilot program and Peer Work Framework.

Me Well worked alongside The Australian Centre for Social Innovation (TACSI) to facilitate co-design workshops with Me Well participants, staff and people with a lived experience of mental ill health. The co-design participants drew on their own expertise to provide insights that would form the foundations of a strong Me Well peer work framework.

Building on the insights from the co-design workshops, a peer work pilot program was implemented to test three co-designed peer work roles and to assess organisational readiness for peer work at Me Well.

Concurrently, the outcomes from the co-design process and pilot supported the development of Me Well's Peer Work Framework and building organisational capacity for and knowledge of peer work.

A co-design process was also utilised to develop resources aimed at reducing the distress experienced by NDIS participants trying to navigate the complexity and uncertainty of NDIS support. Mapping out the challenges that people commonly faced, the co-design project looked for opportunities to make improvements in areas that Me Well could influence, landing on the development of a set of conversation cards that enable better conversations on the pathways to NDIS support. The cards use recovery-oriented, reflective language to support participants and workers to have conversations that aim to build capacity, share power and enable agency.

## NEAMI'S QUALITY, SAFETY AND CLINICAL GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE

Recognising the value of embedding lived experience not only in consumer-facing roles, but across the organisation, in June 2021, a lived experience role was added to our Quality, Safety and Clinical Governance Committee. We were pleased to appoint Cory Haugh to the position.

The committee includes several board members, members of the Neami National executive team, and other staff. The committee feeds recommendations to the Neami Board of Directors and to the National Leadership Team to support the delivery of safe and high-quality services.

Jane Halteh, Quality and Consumer Experience National Lead, says the committee has been elevating its focus to a more quality based discussion.

"The way to do that well is to have the right people around the table, and that includes lived experience representation," Jane says.

"Having lived experience representation is crucial to positively influencing the work of the Committee and supporting meaningful quality improvement."

Reflecting on the appointment of the lived experience role to the Committee, Cory reflected, "Including lived experience voices on our Quality, Safety and Clinical Governance Committee means that from individual and governance perspectives you don't make decisions without consideration of the people you are there to keep safe and whose wellbeing you are supporting.

There is a unique perspective that comes with lived experience, an ability to empathise about the impact of our decisions and practices on people using our services.

It's important for people to put their hand up and say 'here I am'. It's the concept called direct positive contact – when I see people succeeding, I believe I can too, and that my condition doesn't limit who I can be. Being on the Quality, Safety and Clinical Governance Committee is about respecting who I am, and Neami is encouraging my growth and professional understanding too."

“ We are a peer-led service with people who really understand what it's like to go through a hard time. When you do have a lived experience it's a powerful space to hold with somebody, and when you share even that little bit of lived experience there's a huge sigh of relief from the person you're helping, like 'somebody knows, somebody understands'.”

FIONA, UMHCC PEER SUPPORT WORKER

# Recovery oriented clinical support

Providing recovery-focused psychosocial support in partnership with integrated clinical care enabled the delivery of tailored and holistic support.

## UMHCC BECOMES FIRST NGO TO RECEIVE THE HIGHEST CLINICAL ACCREDITATION IN AUSTRALIA

Adelaide's Urgent Mental Health Care Centre (UMHCC) has achieved interim accreditation under one of the most rigorous accreditation frameworks for clinical practice in Australia.

Jacklyn Whybrow, Neami's National Clinical Lead, says the National Safety and Quality Health Services (NSQHS) Standards usually take a year to complete but Neami achieved the accreditation in just three months.

The NSQHS Standards provide a nationally consistent statement of the level of care consumers can expect from health service organisations. It is usually reserved for clinical health services such as hospitals, day theatres and acute care teams, with the UMHCC the first non-government organisation to have undergone accreditation.

Jacklyn says the wonderful thing about the achievement is that it endorses Neami's way of working with the collaborative recovery model.

"The NSQHS accreditation really validates that we can operate with a strong point of difference and still be seen as clinically on point," she says.

"We know we are very different to other services that are accredited under the NSQHS but we did it the Neami way – with a consumer focus on each standard."



“ It was just being able to sit down with people that understood and have the background of knowing what to ask and how to talk to me. They rang me the next day and the day after that. That was fantastic someone was checking up on me.”

TODD, UMHCC CONSUMER

## INTEGRATING PSYCHOSOCIAL AND CLINICAL SUPPORT AT THE LIVING AND LEARNING CENTRE

Integrating clinical and psychosocial services in the one location has provided value for consumers at Neami's Living and Learning Centre (LLC) in Brisbane.

The integrated service, which operates from a comfortable, homely space, takes a holistic approach to treatment.

Nicole Colligan, LLC Clinical Service Manager, says, "The support we offer is 'wrap-around' in that we have the non-clinical and the clinical working together in the one physical space.

"Feedback we receive from consumers is that they genuinely feel understood and listened to. We build a solid sense of trust and that provides an excellent foundation for treatment."

The LLC has around 180 active consumers at any one time, who are supported by a team of staff including wellbeing and peer workers, psychologists, mental health nurses and allied health roles.

LLC offers one-on-one peer wellbeing coaching, care coordination, short-term therapeutic programs, and group supports that aim to help consumers connect to their community, build a sense of belonging and improve quality of life.

## MACNI'S MULTIDISCIPLINARY TEAM SUPPORTING COMPLEX NEEDS

Neami's Multiple and Complex Needs Initiative (MaCNI) supports people in Melbourne with complex needs to build capacity and minimise risks. People often present with a combination of needs including mental illness, alcohol and substance use, intellectual impairments, acquired brain injuries and involvement in the justice system.

Providing care plan assessment and development and care plan coordination, MaCNI aims to increase positive connections with support systems in local communities.

Reece McHale, MaCNI Service Manager, says, "One of our primary functions is to meet the needs of the clients, identify the gaps in their support, improve their quality of life and lower the risk to everyone."

The MaCNI team includes psychiatric nurses, occupational therapists, social workers and disability workers. All staff have experience working with and supporting people with complex needs and challenging behaviours.

The team must balance the dignity and privacy of the client with providing appropriate, targeted support and managing the risk involved.

MaCNI provides holistic care to people who have exhausted all other avenues, in the hope of preventing further escalation of need.

## EARLY INTERVENTION FOR YOUNG PEOPLE IN MELBOURNE'S OUTER NORTH

YFlex caters to the mental health needs of young people aged 12-25 years, meeting them where they are on their recovery journey.

YFlex operates in Melbourne's outer north, an area that has seen rapid population growth and high service demand. Helping young people who face barriers to accessing mental health services, YFlex supports those who fall in the gap between mainstream services such as GP-issued mental health plans and tertiary services. After support from YFlex 75 per cent of consumers have improved Kessler Psychological Distress Scale (K10).

YFlex has a multi-disciplinary team including allied health workers, a psychiatrist, peer support workers, and community rehabilitation and support workers.

YFlex provides support in the young person's comfort zone, which is one of the reasons it's so successful.

Emma Storen, YFlex Service Manager says, "We meet people where they are most comfortable – that could be the home or at school. We are really flexible, which helps us reach young people who need help but who might not come to us and make an appointment themselves."

# Providing an alternative to hospital admission

Effective community-based support offers a meaningful alternative to hospital admission and crisis-based care that's embedded within the local community.

## SPECIALIST MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES SUPPORTING REGIONAL COMMUNITIES

Opened in October 2020, Neami's Mental Health Step Up/Step Down services (SUSD) in Kalgoorlie and Geraldton are providing communities with local specialist mental health support and an alternative to hospital admission.

Funded by the WA Mental Health Commission and delivered in partnership with the WA Country Health Service and Hope Community Services, the SUSD facilities provide short-term residential mental health support for people who are either becoming unwell and at risk of being admitted to hospital ("step up" support), or who are leaving hospital and need support to transition back into the community ("step down").

The 10-bed purpose-built facilities provide safe, welcoming spaces that reduce distress and promote recovery. On-site amenities include bush tucker and vegetable gardens, a recreation room and quiet areas.

Residents have 24-hour support and access to a range of group and individual programs to build confidence and skills, identify personal goals, and develop wellbeing plans.

Together with Mental Health Step Up/Step Down services in Albany and Joondalup, Neami National now operates four Step Up/Step Down services in Western Australia.

## DEVELOPING A TOOLKIT FOR CLINICIANS REFERRING TO COMMUNITY MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES

Nundah House in Brisbane's north-eastern suburbs is a 10-bed facility that provides an alternative to hospital admission and additional support for those leaving acute care.

Nundah House integrates clinical and psychosocial support with a clinical team including a nurse and psychiatrist on site with Neami National staff members providing psychosocial support through Health Matters and Flourish groups, Community Rehabilitation Workers, Peer Support Workers and Senior Practice Leaders.

This year, Nundah House completed participation in the three-year, the Referring for a Community Support Activity in Mental Health (RCSAiMH) project, that produced a toolkit for clinicians referring people with mental health needs to community services such as Neami.

Coordinated by the Allied Health Professions' Office of Queensland in partnership with Neami National and Mind Australia, RCSAiMH provides a service model to enhance allied health workforce capability and scope of practice. A guideline and toolkit are now being piloted to facilitate referrals and provide support for hospital and health service staff wanting to refer people.

## RELATIONSHIPS KEY TO INTENSIVE HOME-BASED SUPPORT SERVICE

Nurturing strong relationships and building capacity are key to how the Intensive Home-Based Support Service (IHBS) supports consumers to avoid hospitalisation.

The 12-week program provides psychosocial support for people who have experienced acute episodes of mental illness requiring hospitalisation, or those who are at risk of being admitted to hospital.

The program works flexibly with consumers, providing a variety of supports such as developing a safety plan, enabling insight around recovery and managing or regulating emotions.

Emma Spratt, Community Rehabilitation and Support Worker, says the biggest success factor is building relationships that empower people to seek help before reaching the point of hospitalisation.

"That is the fundamental difference with our service," she explains.

"Some consumers feel that working with IHBS Support Workers is the first time they've felt truly understood."

The IHBS links consumers to other programs and services that can sustain their recovery long after they have completed the program.



Neami Regional Manager Naomi Beare, Deputy Premier, Minister for Mental Health Hon. Roger Cook, WA Premier Hon. Mark McGowan, Neami WA State Manager Nicole Jolly launching the Geraldton Mental Health Step Up/Step Down service.

# By working together, we amplify what's possible

We work in partnership to make positive changes in the lives of those we support. This means broadening the scope of our partnerships to include those that will enhance our knowledge, expertise and collective impact.

## PARTNERSHIP KEY TO DEVELOPMENT OF DARWIN HEAD TO HEALTH CENTRE

In March, the Northern Territory Primary Health Network (NTPHN) announced Neami National, in partnership with Larrakia Nation, as the lead provider for the new Darwin Head to Health Centre.

During the initial service establishment phase, Neami National has been working closely with Larrakia Nation, Top End Health, the NTPHN and many other partners to ensure that upon opening (late in 2021), the Darwin Head to Health Centre will provide people with the right support at the right time.

A co-design process and deep engagement with the local community is being undertaken to develop and deliver a service that best meets the needs of the Darwin community.

Gill Yearsley, NTPHN Chief Executive Officer, says, "In the Territory, it's important that the services are culturally appropriate and safe and that's where the partnership between Larrakia Nation and Neami is critical."

Funded through the Australian Government, the Darwin Head to Health Centre is one of eight trial sites across Australia for the Head to Health Centres.

## SUPPORTING BETTER HEALTH AND JUSTICE THROUGH PARTNERSHIP

Legal issues - including family law issues, money issues, housing and employment - are among the challenges that have been found to affect and be affected by mental health (Nagy and Forell, 2020).

Neami National and Health Justice Australia are partnering to broaden the range of assistance available to consumers at Neami services. By embedding legal help in healthcare settings, such as Neami National, the initiative aims to meet the needs of those experiencing disadvantage, and of those who have intersecting and unmet health, legal and other needs.

The partnership will extend to conducting research with staff and consumers, extending Health Justice's understanding of the contexts where Neami works and the legal issues of most importance to people with mental health, distress and housing issues. We aim to contribute to the broader knowledge of practices that improve legal outcomes for people.

## SUPPORTING PEOPLE TO MAINTAIN A HOME

In New South Wales, Neami is working with partner organisations across the state to address the needs of people at risk of or experiencing homelessness.

People living in social housing, whose tenancies are at risk, are being supported with focused interventions to assist them to maintain their housing and avoid homelessness, through the Sustaining Tenancies in Social Housing program funded by the Department of Communities and Justice. A partnership with Tharawal Aboriginal Corporation is integral to the Sustaining Tenancies in Social Housing program, opening up a space of trust with the local community. The program's success has led to its expansion this year from Campbelltown into Sydney City, Penrith and Blacktown. This year, the program has supported 178 households, with a 99% tenancy retention rate.

Also delivered through Sustaining Tenancies funding this year, was the Together Home program, which has provided access to safe, secure and affordable housing and support to sustain housing. The program is delivered through a partnership between Neami and local community-housing providers to transition people onto a trajectory away from homelessness and into long-term, stable housing, whilst improving overall personal wellbeing.



Announcing the partnership to launch the Darwin Head to Health.

# Understanding what matters

To provide improved services and better outcomes for consumers, we evaluated, collaborated and generated knowledge about our services and approach.

## EXAMINING THE SUCCESS OF WADAMBA WILAM'S PRACTICE APPROACH

Since 2013, Wadamba Wilam has provided intensive outreach support for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people experiencing homelessness and enduring mental illness. People supported by Wadamba Wilam have been chronically left behind by systems and services that haven't reached them effectively or provided culturally safe support to improve social and emotional wellbeing.

For many people, accessing support with Wadamba Wilam has been the turning point from which their lives have begun to transform. People who have engaged with Wadamba Wilam have experienced vastly improved physical and mental health, enjoyed stable accommodation and an overall increase in their social and emotional wellbeing.

In 2021, the Wadamba Wilam Practice Approach Report was published to provide insight and share the wisdom from the success of this long-running program.

The report unpacks the practice approach, including the importance of trauma-informed care, intensive assertive-outreach, culturally safe practices, inter-agency collaboration and long-term support that allows trust and rapport to be meaningfully established.

In his foreward to the report, Dr Graham Gee, Clinical Psychologist and Senior Research Fellow Murdoch Children's Institute, said, "I highly recommend this report to practitioners, researchers and those involved in policy related to Aboriginal mental health and social and emotional wellbeing services. Thank you Wadamba Wilam for your commitment to getting it right and for not taking short cuts."

The Wadamba Wilam Practice Approach report is available via the Neami National website.

## CONNECT TO WELLBEING PROVIDES DATA ON MENTAL HEALTH SERVICE REFERRAL HUBS

Connect to Wellbeing is a central intake, assessment and triage service helping connect people with mental health services across northern Queensland.

The lack of empirical data in this area prompted a partnership between Neami, the Northern Queensland Primary Health Network (NQPHN) and researchers from The Cairns Institute at James Cook University and University of Technology Sydney, to evaluate the service.

The evaluation explored barriers, enablers and service effectiveness measures as well as outcome measures the service can collect to help future evaluation.

The evaluation revealed that Connect to Wellbeing achieved its objective of ensuring that the right people receive the right service at the right time. The data gathered will help Neami implement the next steps, which include integrating outcome measures and conducting an economic and effectiveness analysis.

## UNDERSTANDING WHAT MATTERS IN YOUTH RESIDENTIAL RECOVERY SERVICES

The What Matters project aimed to better understand the priorities and expectations of young people (16-25 years) living in Neami's four Youth Residential Recovery Services (YRRS).

While departmental funding and reporting guidelines determine some output and outcome measures, little is known about what matters from the perspectives of young people and staff.

Adopting a co-design approach, the research project aimed to deepen understanding of the essential components of a recovery focused, trauma-informed, residential model of care.

Fundamental to this approach was a steering group of six residents, two YRRS staff, two Orygen researchers, and two Neami researchers. Co-design ensured that youth voices were central to research design, delivery, analysis and dissemination, shifting typical power relationships.



Andrew, Wadamba Wilam consumer and the Hon Gabrielle Williams, Minister for Aboriginal Affairs, launching the Wadamba Wilam Practice Approach Report.

“ I’m supported by Wadamba Wilam, the organisation that saved my life. I would have died as I was literally in a ‘mental institution’ and going crazy in my life until they came along and gave me a house, furniture and everything that I could possibly need. My mental health is not so good now but it was terrible back then. I have support with workers seeing me a lot and helping me out with my mental health and everything that I need to live a proper life. I am very grateful and now I have a future.”

ANDREW, WADAMBA WILAM CONSUMER

# Tackling the impact of COVID-19

## STEP-LINK

STEP-Link supported people in temporary accommodation, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, to obtain permanent, safe and affordable housing. Funded by the NSW Government Department of Communities and Justice, STEP-Link works in partnership with health services, general practitioners and other community services to address the needs of people with complex health needs and long histories of sleeping rough. Between May 2020 and June 2021, STEP-Link supported 822 consumers, with 373 people moved into long-term housing.

## CEARS

In South Australia, the COVID-19 Emergency Accommodation Response for Rough Sleepers (CEARS) linked 500 people with emergency accommodation in hotels and provided intensive support during this period. CEARS was made possible through the joint effort of the South Australian Housing Authority, partner agencies Baptist Care, Hutt Street Centre, Neami's Street to Home, Service to Youth Council and many other organisations. A rapid allocation and housing system enabled people to successfully move from emergency accommodation to longer-term housing and receive support to address longer-term needs, such as improving health outcomes and strengthening community connections.

## PARTNERS IN WELLBEING

To support Victorians feeling distressed and anxious as a result of impacts of COVID-19, Partners in Wellbeing offered one-on-one wellbeing support. Funded by the Victorian Government and delivered by EACH, ACSO and Neami National, the collaboration saw partners share experience and knowledge, to broaden the impact and provide meaningful support to Victorians.

## HOMELESSNESS TO HOMES

In Victoria, the From Homelessness to a Home (H2H) initiative funded by the Department of Families, Fairness and Housing, is providing access to suitable and stable medium-to-long term housing for people living in emergency accommodation as a result of COVID-19. Run in partnership with Housing Choices Australia, Uniting, Bolton Clarke and Merri Health, the multi-disciplinary team provides wrap-around support to 34 clients in receipt of a H2H support package.

## WELLBEING LINK

Wellbeing Link provided peer-led support to people affected by COVID-19 across Queensland, through free phone and video sessions. Drawing on their own lived experience, Peer Wellbeing Coaches assisted consumers to identify need and goals, and support strategies to improve wellbeing.



# Advocacy for system reform

Neami's collaborations, partnerships and approach to evidence is utilised to advocate for change that empowers consumers and carers, raises awareness of their needs, and informs the solutions that can address them.

## APPOINTMENT OF EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, RESEARCH, ENGAGEMENT AND ADVOCACY

In 2020, Neami implemented the 2020-23 Strategic Directions, which highlight 'influence system reform' as a priority for the organisation over the coming years. To support this area of focus, in June 2021 Neami appointed Elisabeth Tuckey to the newly created role of Executive Director, Research, Engagement and Advocacy.

In this role, Elisabeth is driving Neami's approach to ensuring the voices of people living with mental health challenges, and the evidence that underpins their experience, is heard broadly and continues to inform system reform.

## LOBBYING THE NDIA TO DELAY DECISION ON SUPPORT COORDINATION

In February 2021, Neami and Me Well joined with Mind Australia, Open Minds, Flourish Australia, One Door, Stride and Wellways Australia to call on the National Disability Insurance Agency (NDIA) to delay a decision that almost immediately cut Support Coordination funding from NDIS participants.

The NDIA announced it would withdraw Support Coordination line items under its core supports budget in NDIS plans, an additional line item that was established during the Covid-19 pandemic to better support participants. The announcement would give participants and providers just two days' notice of this change.

In a media release calling attention to this issue, the group highlighted concerns about the impact of the NDIA's decision on people with serious mental health concerns, leaving those already vulnerable, disconnected from an important support at short notice.

The group raised concerns and reflected its disappointment that the NDIA had not consulted with or given advance notice of the change to NDIS participants, disability peak bodies or NDIS providers.

## UNDERSTANDING THE IMPACTS OF COVID-19 AND ISOLATION ON MENTAL HEALTH

Understanding how COVID-19 has impacted people accessing mental health support services and what people need most to support their wellbeing, was the focus of the report *Resilience in Isolation: the impact of COVID-19 on Australians with a lived experience of mental ill health*.

Neami National was one of seven community managed mental health organisations (along with Flourish Australia, MIND Australia, One Door Mental Health, Open Minds, Stride and Wellways), who surveyed consumers and contributed to the report.

The survey and subsequent report were co-designed and co-produced with people with lived experience of a mental health issue or psychosocial disability, with 738 responses received from people across Australia.

More than half of respondents reported a decline in their mental health since COVID-19, with 70 per cent reporting isolation as a contributing factor in the deterioration of their mental health.

In response to the report, Tom Dalton, Neami National CEO, said: "The current system is overstretched and underfunded and not everyone who could benefit from support is receiving it. Now more than ever, we need greater investment in support services which help people to build on their skills so that they can stay well, thrive in the community and be resilient, even in isolation."



Jesse Martin, National RAP Coordinator,  
Rachel Harris, National RAP Coordinator

## OUR JOURNEY TO RECONCILIATION...

Neami's first Innovate Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) 2019 – 2021, has shown our deep commitment to change and reflects our belief that all Australians will be enriched by acknowledging, celebrating, and preserving the unique culture, language and identities of our First Nations people.

Neami's RAP Development Steering Committee comprised of both Aboriginal identified staff and non-identified staff including clients from Victoria, New South Wales, and Queensland. Coordination was provided by Neami's Senior Manager Innovation and Projects and guidance from external Aboriginal consultant, Karen Milward.

The members of the RAP Development Steering Committee included Nerida Ulapna, Yorta Yorta Woman (Consumer Representative); Tamara Lovett, Aboriginal woman from Gunditjmara (Lake Condah, Portland) and Gunai/Kurnai (Lakes Entrance, Gippsland) who works as a Social and Emotional Wellbeing Worker at Wadamba Wilam (Neami, VIC); Uncle Colin Hunter, Wurundjeri Elder and Community Planner (City of Yarra, Vic); Rhonda Clark, Project Officer – Aboriginal Health Council of WA; Inessa Lane, Project Officer of Outreach Services – Aboriginal Health Council of WA and Baunah Saul "Roy" Alick, Community Worker at Mental Illness Fellowship of South Australia.

We began our reconciliation journey in 2017 with a deep commitment to building the cultural competency of our organisation to better support Indigenous consumers and community. Neami management and service staff have forged deep relationships with our Indigenous partners, organisations and communities and have learnt much about the history, rich culture, and traditions of our First Nations people.

Neami have put into action our belief that we will achieve more together, with true power sharing partnerships with local Indigenous communities to build the capability and capacity of Indigenous Australia towards self-determination, and the cultural competency of non-Indigenous Australia.

Our next Innovate Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) will set out the organisation's aspirations to achieve greater equality for Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people. The Innovate RAP will outline practical actions that the organisation will take to build strong relationships and enhance respect between Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people and non-Indigenous Australians.

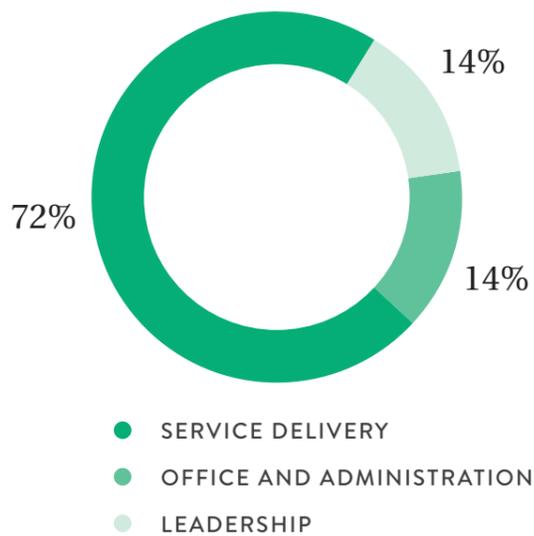
The RAP reflects our reconciliation journey – a journey of which we are immensely proud.

# Diverse and skilled workforce

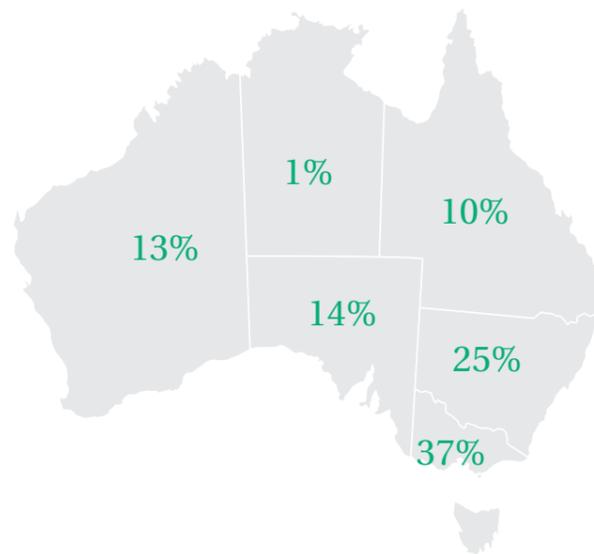
Our team is optimistic, enthusiastic and engaged, helping to build a great workforce and a great place to work.

Our workplace honours the diversity of lived experience and respects the value of evidence-informed practice, continuous learning and reflective practice.

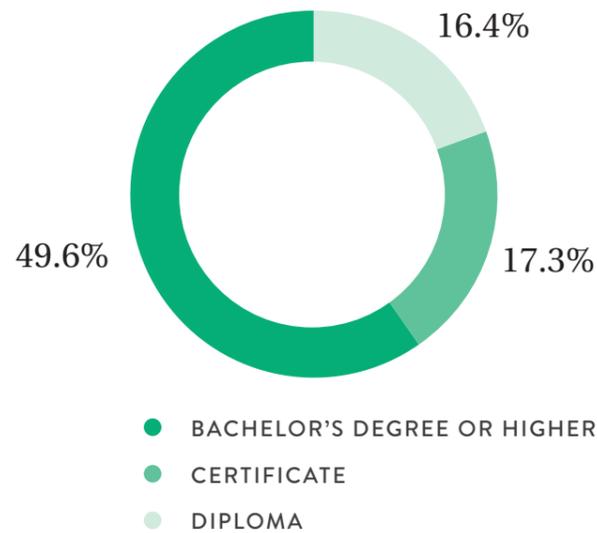
## ROLES



## STAFF LOCATION BREAKDOWN



## QUALIFICATIONS



## DIVERSITY

**5.5%**

OF STAFF ARE IN A PEER SUPPORT WORKER ROLE

**4.15%**

OF STAFF IDENTIFY AS ABORIGINAL OR TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER

**16.98%**

OF STAFF SPEAK A LANGUAGE OTHER THAN ENGLISH

## REVIEWING NEAMI'S APPROACH TO PEER WORK AND LIVED EXPERIENCE

A project is underway to review how we embed and support peer work roles and lived experience across Neami.

The project team is made up of staff with diverse identities, skills and perspectives, including consumer representatives, staff in designated and non-designated lived experience roles, and staff in leadership positions.

The project adopts a co-design approach that seeks to remove power imbalances and bring together stakeholders to collectively contribute. The project offers a safe space to explore ideas and encourage frank discussions.

The project is due to be completed late in 2021 and will offer recommendations to implement cultural and practical changes to ensure designated and non-designated lived experience roles are well supported, empowered and equipped to make a meaningful impact to how Neami supports better mental health and wellbeing.

## SUPPORTING REGIONAL WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

Neami partnered with complex care specialists Our Curious Minds to deliver a series of workforce development training sessions across metropolitan and regional cities around Australia.

Facilitated by Brett Bridges, a practicing psychiatric nurse, qualified trainer and complex care specialist, the sessions provided mental health practitioners with training to build confidence in responding effectively in crisis situations and strategies to support consumer-centred outcomes in challenging situations.

The partnership between Neami and Our Curious Minds enabled the workshops to be delivered at no cost for participants. In total 115 mental health professionals attended the training workshops, with 90% of attendees self-reporting an increase in knowledge following the training.

Neami National WA State Manager Nicole Jolly said: "We hope that by offering training at no cost, we can support communities, especially regional communities, who sometimes lack access to the training and development opportunities that are more readily available in the city."

## MAINTAINING STAFF SAFETY DURING COVID-19

Ensuring the safety and wellbeing of staff, while providing the highest quality support, was more important than ever this year in response to the challenges of COVID-19.

A COVID-19 National Working Group was formed to monitor advice from Commonwealth and State Health departments, our peak bodies and funders. The team assesses, implements, and where required, adapts our COVID-19 response plan.

A workplace flexibility project was rolled out to assess workplace flexibility requirements, consult with staff and management and arrive at informed decisions that would ensure better support for staff in delivering services and operations.

The Neami workforce continues to adjust to the changes in the external environment while supporting the needs of our consumers and organisation. At times, this has meant less face-to-face engagement with consumers in certain areas, and a significant number of staff continue to work from home, however this has not hindered the provision of high-quality and effective services.

# Board of Directors

The Board of Directors have an overriding responsibility to ensure that Neami is appropriately managed for the benefit of all stakeholders.



**Anthony (Tony) Nippard  
(Chair)**

BCom(Hons), BA, MA, FGIA, FCIS, FCHSM, FAICD

Tony was elected to the Neami Board in 2014 and appointed Chair of the Neami Board in October 2019. He is an experienced company director in the not-for-profit and public sectors and has previously occupied senior positions in the Victorian public service. Tony is a Principal at Thoughtpost Governance.



**Fiona Nicholls  
(Deputy Chair of Neami)**

BA Welfare Studies, MHSS, GAICD

Fiona was elected to the Neami Board in 2016, and appointed Board Deputy Chair and Chair of the Governance Review Committee in October 2019. Fiona has 31 years' Commonwealth Government experience in health and social welfare policy, project management and administration, including nine years in the Senior Executive Service focussing on quality and accountability in aged care and system reform in mental health services.



**Silvio Pontonio**

BA(Hons), BSW, MASc, MAASW, AFCCHSM

Silvio was elected to the Neami Board in February 2019 and appointed Quality, Safety and Clinical Governance Chair in October 2020. He is Executive Director, Strategy at Spectrum MRC. Silvio has extensive experience as a health executive, including in public health, mental health and aged care. He brings experience as an advisor and strategist gained as a consultant in the health and mental health sectors.



**Ruth Faulkner**

BSc (Hons), CA, GAICD

Ruth was elected to the Neami Board in March 2017 and appointed as Chair of the Finance, Audit and Risk Management Committee in October 2019. She is a Partner at Conus Business Consultancy Services in Far North Queensland. Ruth is a Chartered Accountant and has 20+ years' experience in governance, finance, audit and risk in the not-for-profit, government and commercial sectors.



**Brad Wynter**

BAPsych, MBA, CertIV Mgt, GAICD

Brad was elected to the Neami Board in 2011 and was Me Well Chair from April 2019 to November 2020. He is currently the CEO of Infestation Tracking Systems Pty Ltd. Prior to this, he was Organisation Improvement Manager and Smart City Innovator at the City of Whittlesea for 18 years, and Deputy Director Citizen Access and Transformation in the State Government for one year. Brad is also on the advisory board of technology start-up Human Centred Innovations.



**James Meares**

BEng(Chem), GAICD

James was a Director on the Neami Board from February 2019 to June 2021. He has an executive background leading major multinational industrial and service corporations, operating throughout Asia Pacific. He has held board positions in health, superannuation, FMCG, child and family service organisations, and corporate entities. He is currently Chair of TRY Australia.



**Sonia Law**

BA, LLB(Hons), DipEd, PGradDipTESL

Sonia was elected to the Neami Board in 2012 and was Chair of the Neami Board from December 2016 to December 2019. Sonia has been a lawyer since 2000. She is currently the Manager of the Mental Health and Disability Advocacy Program at Victoria Legal Aid. Prior to this, she was Corporate Counsel at Forensicare for seven years.



**Jacinta Carboon**

BBus, GAICD

Jacinta was elected to the Neami Board in February 2019. She is a Non-Executive Director at RSPCA Victoria and and The Melbourne Market Authority. She has held an executive career with top ASX 200 companies for 30+ years. Jacinta is an entrepreneurial thinker and innovator with professional expertise in strategy, sales, marketing and business development.



**Lorraine Powell**

CertIV MH (Peer Work), GAICD

Lorraine was elected to the Neami Board in 2014. She has 18 years' experience as a consumer representative and consultant. Lorraine is an experienced clinical governance reviewer. She is WA Coordinator of Lived Experience Australia and a member of the National Register of Mental Health Consumer and Carer Representatives with Mental Health Australia.



**Graeme Doidge**

BA, DipAppSci, DipBus, Cert IV T&E, RPN, GAICD

Graeme was elected to the Neami Board in 2011 and was appointed as Chair of the Quality, Safety and Clinical Governance Committee in December 2016. Graeme retired from the Board in October 2020.

# Financial Report

## CONSOLIDATED STATEMENT OF PROFIT OR LOSS AND OTHER COMPREHENSIVE INCOME

For the year ended 30 June 2021

	2021	2020
	\$	\$
Revenue	106,655,523	96,437,252
Other income	2,511,023	2,096,923
Fair value gain (loss) on financial assets at fair value through profit or loss	714,461	(265,093)
Employee benefit expenses	(85,446,971)	(77,924,530)
Office and occupancy expenses	(7,395,591)	(6,036,360)
Consortium expenses	(5,423,851)	(4,608,735)
Interest payment	(116,157)	(141,608)
Other expenses	(6,664,004)	(5,956,189)
Depreciation and amortisation expenses	(4,062,152)	(3,393,952)
<b>Surplus</b>	<b>772,281</b>	<b>207,708</b>
<b>Other comprehensive income</b>		
Other comprehensive income for the period	-	-
<b>Total comprehensive income for the period</b>	<b>772,281</b>	<b>207,708</b>

## CONSOLIDATED STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION

As at 30 June 2021

	2021	2020
	\$	\$
<b>ASSETS</b>		
<b>Current assets</b>		
Cash and cash equivalents	22,130,323	25,037,250
Investments	28,373,739	12,905,343
Trade and other receivables	6,838,853	5,469,284
<b>Total current assets</b>	<b>57,342,915</b>	<b>43,411,877</b>
<b>Non-current assets</b>		
Investments	9,919,906	8,077,463
Property, plant and equipment	2,150,889	3,216,134
Right of Use assets	2,949,454	2,136,059
Total non-current assets	15,020,249	13,429,656
<b>Total current assets</b>	<b>72,363,164</b>	<b>56,841,533</b>
<b>LIABILITIES</b>		
<b>Current liabilities</b>		
Trade and other payables	8,715,133	7,688,682
Deferred income	23,185,256	11,777,184
Leasing liabilities	1,852,173	1,350,461
Provisions	9,315,148	8,035,679
<b>Total current liabilities</b>	<b>43,067,710</b>	<b>28,852,006</b>
<b>Non-current liabilities</b>		
Leasing Liabilities	1,242,384	831,999
Provisions	2,072,029	1,948,768
<b>Total non-current liabilities</b>	<b>3,314,413</b>	<b>2,780,767</b>
<b>Total Liabilities</b>	<b>46,382,123</b>	<b>31,632,773</b>
<b>Net Assets</b>	<b>25,981,041</b>	<b>25,208,760</b>
<b>EQUITY</b>		
Retained earnings	25,120,261	24,334,380
Reserves	860,780	874,380
<b>Total Equity</b>	<b>25,981,041</b>	<b>25,208,760</b>



# Neami National

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[www.neaminational.org.au](http://www.neaminational.org.au)