



Sydney **Drug Education & Counselling** Centre

# Annual Report 2024

## **Acknowledgment of Country**

SDECC acknowledges Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people as Australia's First People and The Traditional Custodians. We value their cultures, identities, and their continuing connection to country, waters, kin and community. We pay our respects to Elders, past and present. SDECC is committed to making a positive contribution to the wellbeing of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people and families by providing services that are welcoming, safe, culturally appropriate and inclusive.

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## OUR CHAIRPERSON



This year has been another busy and productive one at SDECC.

Clients are of course at the heart of everything we do, and we have continued to see the magnificent impact all our team has in the community. Feedback and gratitude continue to be very strong.

The Board would like to acknowledge our CEO, Kathryn, for all her dedication and achievements this past year and indeed since taking on the role in 2021. We are sad to see Kathryn leave early next year but she leaves the organisation in a better place than when she arrived, with important progress for example in articulating our model of care, working with our funders towards improved KPI frameworks, launching a value -based culture and enhancing our employee value proposition with a well-being focus and new remuneration structure. This last year the initiatives around community engagement and data and research have set us up well for the future,

Thank you also to our funding agencies and our partners in the community. The PHN has been particularly helpful this year in being open to new ideas and supporting them.

As a board we welcomed Tony Kutra to the Board at the last AGM. Tony's background in the corporate sector and his experience with several not for profits will be invaluable, and Tony took on the role of Treasurer at the last AGM. Two long serving board members, Merrianne Sinclair and Sarah Mercer, will be stepping down from the board in early 2025, and I want to thank both on behalf of our clients and SDECC for the immense contribution they have both made over many years. A special shout out to Merrianne who has been on the board for over 20 years and has supported much change in the organisation over that time.

Finally, and most importantly a huge thank you from the Board and on behalf of our clients for the unique and inspiring work of all our team.

Ian Farmer

CHAIRPERSON

## OUR TREASURER

The 2024 financial year has again been challenging with high inflation increasing costs across the organisation. SDECC is principally funded through grants from government sources, which is mainly unindexed, and was only \$33k higher than the previous year. At the same time, there were major increases in employee costs, with an award increase and increases in superannuation and workers compensation premiums being approximately \$200k higher than the previous year.

Overall, revenue increased marginally to \$1,940,492, whilst expenditure increased more strongly to \$2,075,779 resulting in a deficit of (\$135,287). The CEO and senior management team contained costs where possible, whilst maintaining the high quality of SDECC services within the community.

Important investments were made for the future, including the new website development, the new employee remuneration framework, including additional wellbeing initiatives, and the new lease at St Leonards

The Directors note that SDECC is solvent as at 30th June 2024 and the total equity position has increased strongly to \$4,520,564, following the updated independent property valuation of the Manly office. The annual audit has noted no abnormal items, and confirms that SDECC complies with all of the ACNC requirements, and is presented to the AGM with a resolution of the SDECC Board of Directors.

Tony Kutra,  
TREASURER



## OUR CEO

It has been a big and exciting year for SDECC.

Firstly, I want to acknowledge all the young people and families that have come to us for support over the past 12 months. We have seen hundreds of individuals for counselling, run over 10 Paving Ways Groups for parents, and multiple Elevate Groups for young people. We are grateful to have had the opportunity to work with each of you who have come to us for support.

Secondly, I would like to extend my heartfelt thanks to our incredible team for their unwavering commitment and dedication. I wish to also extend a warm welcome to Elischa, Nick, and Simon who joined us in the past year. Your contributions are already making a significant impact.

In addition, I express my sincere gratitude to our board members, who volunteer their time, skills, and commitment. A special welcome to Tony, our new treasurer, and a particular acknowledgment to Ian for his dedicated work as the Chairperson.

I would like to highlight some of our significant achievements this year: the successful launch of Parents Prepared in Mandarin and an expansion broadly of our work with culturally and linguistically diverse families; our co-locations in Hornsby, Ryde, and Avalon, the introduction of the Elevate group for young people, the implementation of an employee wellbeing framework, and a dedicated focus on research and evaluation. Furthermore, we developed and launched our new model of care. Each person's contribution has been vital to the success of these initiatives, and your effort is deeply appreciated.

A special thank you to our funders: the Northern Sydney Primary Health Network, the Northern Sydney LHD, and the Ministry of Health. Your support has been the cornerstone of our work and success. Without your help, none of our achievements would have been possible.

Lastly, I want to share that I will be moving on from SDECC in the new year. Leading this organisation has been a profound privilege, and being part of a team so dedicated to the wellbeing of young people, families, and the community has been an honor. I am grateful for all that I have learned from you, and I will carry these lessons with me into the future.

Thank you all for your continued support and dedication.

Kathryn Key

CEO



# ‘sdecc’

Sydney Drug Education & Counselling Centre

## OUR VISION

A society that supports people with problematic use of alcohol and other drugs together with any related mental health concerns, minimises related harms and empowers those people to live a fulfilling and healthy life.

## OUR PURPOSE

To empower young people, their families and their communities to minimise the harms associated with their problematic use of alcohol and other drugs.

## WHAT WE DO

- We provide outcome focused counselling and support services for young people aged 12-25 with problematic use of alcohol and other drugs, and their families.
- Our model of care is trauma informed, evidence-based and acknowledges the complexity of co-occurring mental health and substance use issues
- We help communities to build the capacity to support young people and their families facing these issues.

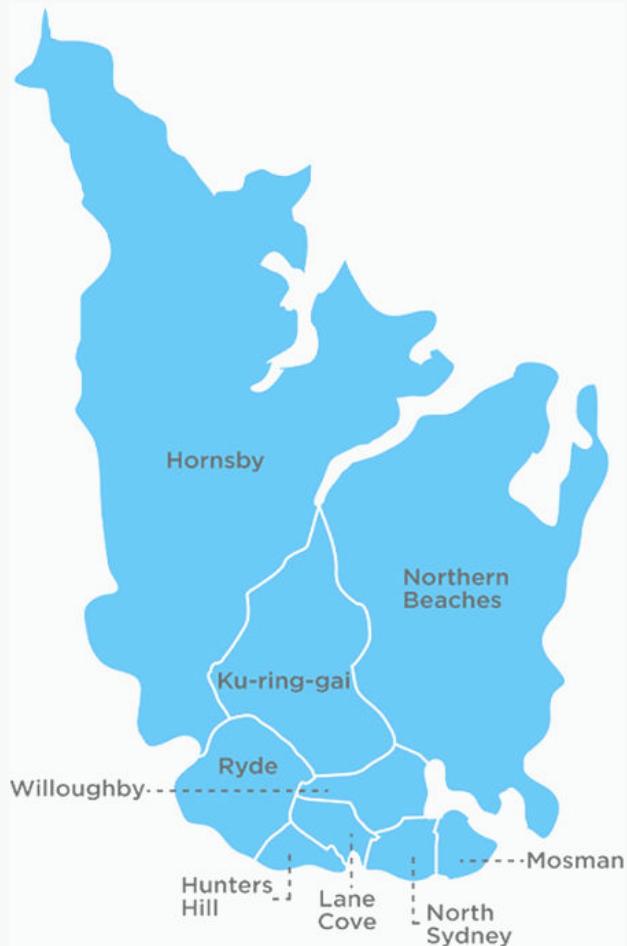
## OUR STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

- Develop our model of care through clarity, research, evidence and evaluation of outcomes
- Create a values based professional culture that enables our people to give their best
- Prioritise our counselling work by focusing our community and advocacy activities to those that have a meaningful impact
- Forming partnerships and alliances that enhance referral pathways and enhance our operating effectiveness
- Embrace telehealth in a sustainable delivery model and leverage digital evolution
- Maximise our impact in the Northern Sydney area and lay the foundations toward supporting young people elsewhere.

**SDECC** is a not-for-profit, charitable organisation specialising in providing free counselling and support for young people aged 12 -25 with problematic alcohol and other drugs (AOD) use and their families across the Northern Sydney Region.

**The services we offer include:**

- Counselling
- Parenting groups
- Groups for young people
- Mental health assessment
- Case management
- Research
- Drug and alcohol education



## OUR TEAM



## A FEW HIGHLIGHTS OF 2024

Starting the Elevate Group

622 episodes of clinical treatment

APSAD presentation

Providing support for parents in Mandarin

10 Paving Ways groups

New Research Data Analyst position

Presence in Social Media

Starting 3 co-location sites

New Website

Organising a Chinese Professionals Networking Meeting

“My counsellor went all out above & beyond!!! Her knowledge, expertise and experience is absolutely outstanding!! She is very approachable and her warmth and compassion was very welcoming during my very grim and dark journey. I could not have got through my trauma without her genuine support. There should be more services like this available. What a better place the world would be if there were more counselors like her!!! She is a credit to her industry and SDECC!!”

“I have been incredibly grateful for all of the help and support thus far. I have been offered additional help (which I will gratefully receive) at the completion of the Paving Ways course”

“...the whole team at SDECC in Manly have been an incredible help for me and my son. I have been feeling really helpless and they have given me skills and confidence and hope.”

“Very good counselling”

## What do Clients say about SDECC?

“I am so grateful I found SDECC and I tell people I know about it who are in similar situations as I was. It's the most resourceful place I have ever come across & it's overall accessible helps remove obstacles of young people accessing mental health support & addiction support.

Has helped me so much over the past 4 or so years, has really changed my life for the better.”

“SDECC provide a valuable, much needed service for young people and families. I can't rate it highly enough. The counsellors are very knowledgeable and very understanding.”



James (15 years old) was referred to SDECC by Juvenile Justice as part of his Outcome Plan following a brief incarceration in a Juvenile Justice facility. At the time James was in a pattern of offending whilst under the influence of alcohol. James was having difficulty managing his anger in both the home environment and

in the community. He was also experiencing symptoms of anxiety, low mood and significant stress due to frequent conflict in the home environment as a result of his behaviour when using alcohol. James' school attendance had been poor for some time. James was motivated to work towards a goal of abstaining from alcohol to avoid the consequences of incarceration and frequent conflict with his family.

Over the course of six months, James worked on his plan towards abstaining from alcohol, using harm reduction strategies to minimise the risks to himself and others when using alcohol. James was able to identify his anger triggers and started to implement coping strategies to help him self-regulate when feeling distressed. James was referred to SDECC's consulting Psychiatrist and since commencing medication and continuing his engagement in counselling, James has maintained alcohol abstinence for four months, is attending school full time and has ceased offending. James continues to develop strategies to avoid using alcohol and manage his mental health.

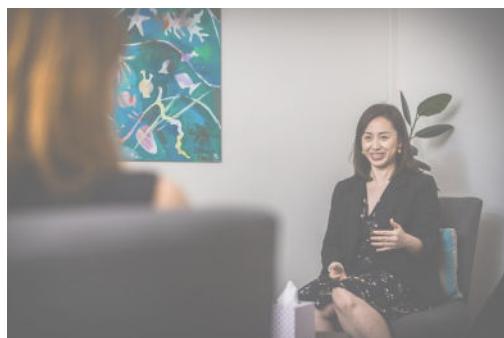
At the time of James' initial engagement with SDECC, his parents self-referred to SDECC and completed the 6 week Paving Ways program. After completing the program and attending 2 follow-up sessions with an SDECC Clinician, James' parents reported feeling more confident in managing James' behavior in the home and supporting him to increase his school attendance.

Henry\* and Vera\* reached out to SDECC after attending an online family support webinar where an SDECC counsellor spoke about the service. They had been stressed and upset after discovering that their 16-year-old son was using cannabis at home and at times selling cannabis to other young people.

The couple had immigrated from China to Australia with their children in 2017. They found it difficult to navigate the process of getting support as parents and make sense of their son's substance use. Hearing the SDECC counsellor speak about support that was available in Chinese motivated the couple to reach out to SDECC.

They completed the 6-week Paving Ways program and then started to receive post-group support from a Chinese speaking counsellor at SDECC. In the counselling sessions they explored topics such as their cultural expectations of parenting and how they see responsibility, communication approaches with adolescences, and examining different approaches between China and Australia when it comes to drug and alcohol use among young people. The SDECC counsellor used the Family Systems approach to cultivate the unique strengths of the family to help with repairing the family relationships, set culturally appropriate boundaries and this empowered both Vera and Henry to become more confident as parents.

At the time that they finished counselling at SDECC, their son was no longer using cannabis at home, Vera and Henry's relationship had strengthened and they were communicating better around parenting, and there were less arguments and conflict between them and their son. Both parents expressed that the services they received at SDECC had exceeded their expectations and counselling provided in Chinese had given them an opportunity to work through a difficult situation in a culturally appropriate, strengths based way.



## A PARENTS EXPERIENCE

I am not sure how we as a family first heard of SDECC but I am very glad we did.

My daughter was first referred to Manly with cigarette and drug issues in about 2019, but as her parents, we didn't really have any involvement till early 2022 when we attended Paving Ways when my daughter's issues with alcohol became out of control.

In this course, we learnt to understand the many problems leading to drug/alcohol issues and their links to Mental health. How to look after ourselves as parents whilst supporting our loved ones by learning coping skills and strategies to help manage our own stress and behaviour as well as our children. We also met an incredible group of people going through the same issues as we were and who understood how difficult it can be, how life changing, and all-consuming it can be.

My husband and I are still in regular contact with the people we met in the group and we all have become good friends,

After the course, I jumped at the idea of continued individual support and still go on a regular basis now. Through these sessions, we have received not only support and advice for our daughter but also for our son who is facing Mental Health issues. SDECC helped with referrals to rehab (Triple Care Farm run by Mission Australia) for our daughter whilst also advising me on how to wade through the process of helping my daughter get out of an abusive relationship by recommending various organisations including the police and legal services.

There are so many things that I am grateful for over the years it's hard to put in a few paragraphs.

I have learned that I need to take care of myself, live my own life and that no matter how hard it is to witness, I have to let my children live their own lives, make their own mistakes and hopefully ask for help themselves, as I cannot do it for them.

It has been and continues to be a bumpy ride, but without the support from SDECC, I don't know how our family would have managed and highly recommend this service to any parents of children with alcohol/addiction issues.

Angela Brown

## OUR FINANCES

**The Association of Drug Referral Centres Ltd (Trading as SDECC)**  
**Statement of profit or loss and other comprehensive income**  
**For the year ended 30 June 2024**



	Note	2024 \$	2023 \$
<b>Revenue</b>			
Total revenue	3	1,940,492	1,855,147
		<u>1,940,492</u>	<u>1,855,147</u>
<b>Expenses</b>			
Accounting fees		(20,018)	(13,702)
Consultancy fees		(33,575)	(39,269)
Depreciation and amortisation expense	4	(97,351)	(95,091)
Employee benefits expense		(1,662,355)	(1,441,434)
Finance costs	4	(4,433)	(3,532)
Insurance		(15,574)	(13,311)
Office supplies/equipment		(10,488)	(13,226)
Other expenses		(46,608)	(47,314)
Repairs & maintenance		(11,120)	(22,621)
Staff professional development & related costs		(29,605)	(42,623)
Subscriptions		(27,015)	(44,028)
Supervision/mentoring		(20,418)	(29,082)
Telephone & IT expenses		(34,468)	(33,386)
Website development		(17,494)	-
Workers compensation		(45,257)	(25,713)
Total expenses		<u>(2,075,779)</u>	<u>(1,864,332)</u>
<b>Deficit for the year</b>		(135,287)	(9,185)
Other comprehensive income for the year		<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>
<b>Total comprehensive income for the year</b>		<u>(135,287)</u>	<u>(9,185)</u>

**Note:** Abridged version of financial statements. For a full copy of the report, please contact us on (02) 9977 0711 or email [admin@sdecc.org.au](mailto:admin@sdecc.org.au)

**The Association of Drug Referral Centres Ltd (Trading as SDECC)**  
**Statement of financial position**  
**As at 30 June 2024**



	Note	2024 \$	2023 \$
<b>Assets</b>			
<b>Current assets</b>			
Cash and cash equivalents	5	235,609	667,455
Trade and other receivables		10,575	314
Other financial assets - Term deposits	6	555,290	537,778
Other assets	7	27,638	42,685
<b>Total current assets</b>		<b>829,112</b>	<b>1,248,232</b>
<b>Non-current assets</b>			
Property, plant and equipment	8	4,001,537	2,856,982
Right-of-use assets	9	211,760	41,260
<b>Total non-current assets</b>		<b>4,213,297</b>	<b>2,898,242</b>
<b>Total assets</b>		<b>5,042,409</b>	<b>4,146,474</b>
<b>Liabilities</b>			
<b>Current liabilities</b>			
Trade and other payables	10	170,157	200,986
Contract liabilities	11	-	266,750
Lease liabilities	12	81,039	42,266
Employee benefits	13	115,160	91,462
<b>Total current liabilities</b>		<b>366,356</b>	<b>601,464</b>
<b>Non-current liabilities</b>			
Lease liabilities	12	133,408	1,090
Employee benefits	13	22,081	46,069
<b>Total non-current liabilities</b>		<b>155,489</b>	<b>47,159</b>
<b>Total liabilities</b>		<b>521,845</b>	<b>648,623</b>
<b>Net assets</b>		<b>4,520,564</b>	<b>3,497,851</b>
<b>Equity</b>			
Reserves		4,046,619	2,888,619
Retained surpluses		473,945	609,232
<b>Total equity</b>		<b>4,520,564</b>	<b>3,497,851</b>

## OUR BOARD



### **Ian Farmer, FCA, ICAEW— Chairman**

Ian has had a 30 year career in professional services, including 20 years as a partner with a major global accounting firm in a range of local and international client serving and leadership roles. Ian is on a number of not-for-profit boards in Sydney, including as chairman of Lifeline Northern Beaches Inc. where he is also a volunteer telephone crisis supporter.

### **Tony Kutra, BEc(Hons) MBA MAICD—Treasurer**

Tony is an experienced non-executive director with over 15 years of board experience covering public, private and non-profit organisations, with the latter being focused upon child and family services. His expertise includes strategic planning, corporate development, mergers and acquisitions, operations and corporate governance. Tony is SDECC Treasurer and Chair of the Finance and Risk Committee.



### **Tushna Moddie, B. International Business**

Tushna is a senior Human Resources Leader with over 16 years' experience in people strategy, change management, culture, leadership development, organisational development and strategic HR business partnering working. Tushna's experience has been in a range of industries including medical devices, FMCG, Financial Services and Healthcare. Tushna is a member of the Finance and Risk Sub-Committee.

### **Merrianne Sinclair, BSW, Grad Dip VET, Cert IV TAE10**

Merrianne is a social worker who has worked for both Government and non-Government organisations and, has also had a private counselling practice. Merrianne currently works as a teacher and workplace trainer and assessor for TAFE NSW at Northern Beaches Campus. Merrianne is the Secretary and Chair of The Governance Sub-Committee.





### **Will Adames, BSC Hons**

Will is a communications professional with a wide range of experience gained in private and public sector roles. He currently works in local government specialising in community and business engagement. Will has a degree in Environmental Engineering and diplomas in Management and Government.

### **Nick Dillenbeck, B. Comm. (Liberal Studies)**

Nick is a management consultant, helping ASX-listed, private and government organisations develop strategies and deliver performance improvement projects.



### **Paul Hogan, B.Comm.**

Paul works in the Executive and Ministerial Support branch, NSW Ministry of Health. He has a local government background, having worked for a number of councils in social planning and youth services roles. He has also worked extensively in the non-

### **Sarah Mercer, BSc(Psychol),HONS, MClinPsych, MAPS**

Sarah is a Clinical Psychologist who has worked for Government and non-Government organisations and in private practice. Sarah's focus has been on working with children, young people and their families. Sarah currently works as the Student Wellbeing Manager for a local not for profit organisation, Stewart House.

Sarah is a member for the Governance Sub-Committee



## **DONATIONS**

Are welcomed and will contribute to further enhancing our services:

### **Online**

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

or

### **Directly into our account below:**

Account name: Association of Drug Referral Centres

BSB: 633 000

Account 187 345 046



THANK YOU TO OUR FUNDING PARTNERS



Communities  
& Justice



SDECC would also like to thank Family and Community members who generously donate to support our work.



**www.sdecc.org.au**

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