

Annual Report 2024



A R A F M I

you are not alone







The artwork featured on the cover and throughout this report was created by a group of mental health carers during a retreat on the Sunshine Coast. Made during an evening session, the piece was designed to bring carers together to connect and share their hopes and visions.



Thank you to Leticia Collins, who facilitated the retreat and led art workshops.

For more information, visit leticiacollins.com

 [leticia_collins_art](https://www.instagram.com/leticia_collins_art)

 [leticia collins artist](https://www.facebook.com/leticia.collins.artist)

Arafmi would like to recognise the efforts of those with Lived/Living Experience of mental health challenges and the families, kin and other carers who support them, who have used their voices to bring about change and who continue to do so.

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Arafmi acknowledges Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander peoples as the First Nations peoples of Australia and recognises their continuing connection to country, waters, kin, and communities. We pay our respect to Elders past, present and future and are committed to ensuring that Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander peoples voices are heard and respected across Queensland.

Foreword



It is with great pleasure that I write this foreword for the Arafmi Annual Report for 2023/2024.

Queensland Health has had a funding relationship with Arafmi for over 12 years but Arafmi has been at the cornerstone of support for carers and families of people with a mental illness for decades.

There have been several highlights for Queensland Health's relationship with Arafmi in 2023/2024.

Queensland Health provided funding to Arafmi and World Wellness Group for a joint project to develop and implement a multicultural mental health carer support program working with families, carers and community elders. This aims to address a gap in carer support for multicultural communities. I can't wait to see the benefits of this wonderful collaboration.

I was very also pleased to present at the Arafmi Annual Carers and Families Forum in October 2023 and meet all the wonderful people providing support to Queensland mental health consumers.

At the forum, I noted *Better Care Together: a plan for Queensland's state-funded mental health, alcohol and other drug services to 2027*, Queensland Health's five-year plan for state-funded mental health services, sets the strategic directions and priorities across the state-funded mental health alcohol and other drug system.

As we all work together as a mental health alcohol and other drugs sector to implement

Better Care Together, it is essential that people with a lived experience of mental illness, their carers and families are actively involved in state-wide and local service review, policy development, and planning processes.

This is why Queensland Health's funding to Arafmi in 2023/24 to begin establishment of a statewide policy and systemic advocacy function has been so critically important – the reforms being driven through Better Care Together can only be achieved by working together with our partners—including families, carers and significant others. The public mental health alcohol and other drugs system needs to hear the voice of carers and families to continue to refine and improve the way we provide services. Further expansion of this statewide policy and systemic advocacy function is planned for 2024/2025 – watch this space!

Genuine reform and change happens when there is a willingness from all partners to work towards a shared vision, shared values and equality in partnerships and collaboration.

Queensland Health is very proud of Arafmi and looks forward to a productive and meaningful policy relationship into the future.

Sandra Eyre
Senior Director, Mental Health Alcohol and Other Drugs Strategy and Planning Branch, Queensland Health

“Genuine reform and change happens when there is a willingness from all partners to work towards a shared vision, shared values and equality in partnerships and collaboration.”

Chairperson's Report



I want to thank members, supporters and friends of Arafmi for your ongoing interest and involvement in the work of Arafmi over 2023-2024. As many of you are mental health carers yourselves, your support is incredibly important and meaningful to all of us at Arafmi - indeed it is our very foundation.

“This year we have been able to increase our support services to mental health carers, most significantly through offering a person-led respite service in inner-city Brisbane – the only carer respite service in Australia that simply provides what individual carers request.”

This year we have been able to increase our support services to mental health carers, most significantly through offering a person-led respite service in inner-city Brisbane – the only carer respite service in Australia that simply provides what individual carers request. Our efforts to increase the number of carer support groups is also reaping rewards, with more groups starting up in regional areas.

Arafmi's incredible carer support team has grown with those services and I thank them for their dedication to improving the quality of life of mental health carers.

Mental health carers also need representation in the corridors of power, working to ensure decision-makers are aware of the unique challenges and needs of someone caring for a person experiencing mental ill-health. That's where Arafmi's growing role as the Peak Body for mental health carers comes in. This past year, we have secured funding from Queensland Health Mental Health and Other Drugs Branch to build a team to tackle systemic advocacy – putting forward reforms to the mental health and other systems which would ease some of those challenges and meet some of those needs.

The efforts of Arafmi's advocacy team are already showing great promise, with the release of the *At What Cost?* report.

The report is the result of targeted interactions with mental health carers, through surveys and focus groups, and is now forming the basis for Arafmi's systemic advocacy. State and federal MPs have been sent the report, and the advocacy team, led by CEO Irene Clelland, is following up with meetings to reiterate the messages it contains.

I would like to sincerely thank Irene for her leadership of Arafmi and congratulate her on these achievements. Securing official recognition along with funding for Arafmi to fully live up to its role as peak body for mental health carers, has also allowed the organisation to pursue an innovative strategic plan. This will eventually provide a distinct image for Arafmi's community mental health and wellbeing service, stemming any potential confusion regarding the organisation's priorities. Of course, I extend this gratitude to Arafmi's leadership team and staff, as it has required flexibility and resilience.

I would also like to thank our hardworking board members and farewell Rebecca Medway and Nikki Edwards, who resigned from their positions as a board directors. We wish them luck in their future endeavours.

I hope you enjoy learning about the work of Arafmi in these pages, as much as I have enjoyed reflecting on the year that was.

Denise Buckby
Chair, Arafmi Board



Farewell Ailsa

In 2024, Arafmi farewellled Ailsa Whitehead, a founding member whose impact shaped the organisation and Queensland's mental health support services for decades. Ailsa's dedication to carers and families led to the creation of the Arafmi Carer Support Line, a crucial 24-hour helpline that continues to support many.

As President of the Arafmi Management Committee for 17 years, Ailsa guided the organisation's growth and co-founded Carers Queensland in 1988. Her advocacy earned her recognition, including the Order of Australia in 1993 and the Queensland Mental Health Commission's Lifetime Achievement Award in 2021.

Ailsa's passing marks the end of an era, but her legacy of compassion and leadership will continue to inspire and guide Arafmi's work in supporting mental health carers.



CEO'S Report



It's my pleasure to present Arafmi's Annual Report for 2023-2024.

There is a lot for Arafmi to celebrate in this period, including:

 **growth in the carer program**

 **a new plan for systemic advocacy to improve the quality of life for mental health carers**

 **a new strategy for Arafmi's NDIS-funded community mental health and wellbeing service**

These positive changes have brought additional staff, fresh energy and their fair share of challenges, so it's no wonder we're celebrating!

For mental health carers, Arafmi's support program has continued to evolve and grow. A highlight has been the opening of the Carer Respite Hub in central Brisbane in October 2023. Close to 100 carers from all over Queensland have since used this service, which is an Australian-first in its carer-led approach. We have held carer retreats and workshops around the state, supported a growing number of carer peer groups and continued to provide the 24-hour Carer Support Line, the only such service in the nation that offers telephone support 24 hours a day.

Importantly, we have partnered with World Wellness Group, to provide programs for people who have culturally diverse ancestry, connections and languages. Culture Care is just beginning to show its full potential, reaching carers that we have previously not been able to.

For many years, Arafmi's leadership and staff have known that to fully provide the best quality of life for mental health carers, the systems we live and work in need to change. The experiences of mental health carers who came to Arafmi for support and respite informed our advocacy to government and other stakeholders in these systems.

But representing mental health carers was never a formal role for Arafmi- just a natural fit that we embraced.

In 2023-2024, it is still very much a natural fit, but it is also now a formally designated role, with recognition and funding from Queensland Health's Mental Health Alcohol and Other Drugs Branch and the Queensland Mental Health Commission. Arafmi is now the official peak body for mental health carers, charged with representing the concerns and needs of mental health carers in Queensland to government, the mental health sector, stakeholders and the broader community.

This has allowed us to contribute to many areas of system design and reform, but it has also enabled us to conduct our first, statewide consultation process with mental health carers. This process resulted in another first - our "At What Cost" report, which details the challenges and experiences of people caring for someone with mental ill-health. This gives us evidence to argue for reforms, i.e. changes for the better!

Complementing our work for mental health carers, Arafmi also provides a community mental health and wellbeing service for people experiencing psychosocial disability. Funded through the National Disability Insurance Scheme, this service is well-placed to adapt to the changing policy environment, under the experienced leadership of Arafmi's new Deputy-CEO, Jennifer Pouwer.

To better distinguish this work from Arafmi's carer programs and advocacy, the Board of Arafmi has decided to rename and reposition the NDIS-funded service, a process which we hope to finalise in the 2024-2025 financial year. These changes will be outward facing to provide clarity to those who would like to access any of our services.

Of course, our work is strengthened by the partnerships and the relationships Arafmi continues to build and I would like to thank all the organisations involved - you can find a full list on page 41.

My gratitude to our Board, led by Chair Denise Buckby, for providing values-based leadership, while also encouraging innovation.

I would also like to thank Arafmi's leadership team and our entire staff, who all contribute to our uplifting and professional culture.

Most importantly, I extend the greatest regard and respect to mental health carers - without whom, the world stops.

Irene Clelland
Arafmi CEO

“Most importantly, I extend the greatest regard and respect to mental health carers - without whom, the world stops.”

Policy and Advocacy Report



Lived Experience is leading the way in Arafmi's new Policy and Advocacy team.

There has been an increasing focus by both government and non-government organisations in recent years on ensuring that people with lived experience help to shape mental health policy and service delivery. Lived Experience in the mental health sector generally refers to "someone with personal experience of mental-ill health and recovery or a family member and or carer who has experience in supporting a person living with mental-ill health and recovery".

This year, with the support of funding from the Queensland Mental Health Commission and the Arafmi Board, Arafmi joined the growing number of organisations employing people in designated Lived Experience roles. Such roles require people to use their lived experience to benefit others. In Arafmi's case, these roles were created to benefit other mental health carers, to promote the rights of mental health carers and the people they care for and to be a catalyst for change. These roles also bring with them an authority to participate in the design and reform of service systems that impact the lives of mental health carers and those they care for.

This year, this Lived Experience voice has already informed statewide policy discussions around restrictive practices, community wellbeing, human rights and digital transformation within Queensland's mental health system.

“ These roles were created to benefit other mental health carers, promote their rights, and be a catalyst for change.”

Highlights from the year included:

- Publication of Arafmi's first ever statewide consultation report (see further details on page 12)
 - Consultations with members of First Nations communities and service providers who work with community, to better understand First Nation concepts of caring and the challenges faced in supporting people experiencing mental ill-health
 - Collaboration with Arafmi's Carer Advisory Committee to design an approach to establishment of a new Lived Experience Leadership Group that will advise Arafmi's peak body on systemic advocacy issues for mental health carers
 - Participation in advocacy and lived experience leadership opportunities with Queensland Health and the Queensland Mental Health Commission
 - Making submissions to the Qld House of Representatives Standing Committee on Social Policy and Legal Affairs Inquiry into the recognition of unpaid carers and the provisions and operation of the Carer Recognition Act 2010, as well as the Independent Review of Queensland's Human Rights Act
- Continuing to grow relationships with:
 - Queensland Mental Health Commission
 - Queensland Health
 - Mental Health Lived Experience Peak Queensland
 - Queensland Alliance for Mental Health
 - Tandem Carers (Victoria)
 - Independent Patient Rights Advisors Network
 - Queensland Lived Experience Workforce Network
 - Wellways Carer Gateway
 - World Wellness Group
 - Carer Peer Workers.

This year's work has laid a strong foundation for partnerships and initiatives that will tackle some of the many challenges identified in our consultations and continue to grow the influence of lived experience on service and system reform for the benefit of mental health carers across Queensland.

Sue Goodwin
Lived Experience Advocacy Team Lead



Arafmi's Advocacy Team, from left to right: Sue Goodwin (Lived Experience Advocacy Team Lead), Tim Johnston (Carer Engagement Consultant) and Emma Griffiths, (Senior Advisor-Policy and Advocacy).

Arafmi's First Statewide Consultation Report

A significant achievement this year for Arafmi and the new Policy and Advocacy team was a series of consultations with mental health carers across Queensland to get a better understanding of their current experiences and needs. We spoke with carers from as far north as Rockhampton, as far south as the Gold Coast and as far west as Charleville and Emerald, and surveyed carers from around the State.

The consultation findings have been captured in the report *At what cost? The experiences of unpaid mental health carers in Queensland 2023-2024*.

Whilst most of the issues raised in the consultations were not new to Arafmi – we've been hearing them from the carers we've worked with over decades and writing about them in submissions to government inquiries and reviews in recent years – this report provides a strong evidence base to advocate for the needs of mental health carers.

As the peak body for mental health carers in Queensland, we are using the report to raise awareness amongst decision-makers, service providers and the broader community of who mental health carers are, what they do, the challenges they face and what would help them most.

The consultation findings are also informing the peak body's planning for the next couple of years and beyond and enabling us to do policy and advocacy work that targets the priorities of Queensland's mental health carers.

Respondents to the survey identified a wide range of elements that would make a difference to them in their caring role. For example:



Personal and practical support



Financial assistance



Information, education and training



Improvements to the mental health system



Recognition by the mental health system and wider community



Support to balance work and caregiving

In light of the consultation findings, Arafmi has identified six areas for action that will guide our advocacy work over the next two years:

1

Raise awareness of mental health carers so that they can be better recognised and supported

2

Advocate for physical, emotional, social, mental health and practical support for mental health carers

3

Facilitate access to relevant information and training for mental health carers

4

Promote carer inclusion in mental health treatment planning and implementation

5

Increase financial assistance for carers

6

Advocate for inclusion of the voices of mental health carers in mental health reform

126
Carers completed a short questionnaire in these same locations, as well as in Charleville and at last year's Annual Carer Forum

83
Carers participated in focus groups across the Sunshine Coast, Brisbane, Logan, Gold Coast, Gympie, Emerald, Rockhampton

305
Carers completed an online survey

Carer Program Report



This year has seen many significant changes to the Carer Program, to expand the reach of supports and meet the needs of diverse carers in Queensland. We acknowledge the partnerships with carers, key stakeholders and organisations that made this possible. We also thank the dedicated and skilled volunteers who ensure the 24hr Carer Support Line is always there to support carers when most needed.

Alex Tyson
General Manager, Carer Program and Advocacy





“I am relatively new to the carer journey – only about six years in.

I spent the first year in some sort of traumatic shock. And the thing that’s made the biggest difference is coming here to the peer support.

There’s a lot of misunderstanding in the world, and to come somewhere where everybody gets you, and everyone hears you – I remember leaving [feeling] just so much lighter and thinking ‘how can there be something as good as this in the world?’ It’s really special to me.

Everything that this place offers is doing good for some carer and that has a direct impact on the people that we care about.”

Helen, Mental Health Carer



Carer Advisory Committee

Arafmi would like to thank the members of the Carer Advisory Committee for sharing their wisdom, insights and time in guiding the organisation’s services for mental health carers. In its final meeting, the Committee agreed to disband to form a new Lived Experience Leadership Group. This group will assist Arafmi’s work as the Peak Body for Mental Health Carers to engage with, give voice to, and advocate for, the diverse range of mental health carers across Queensland. Committee members came together to help design principles and processes for the establishment of the new group, due to be completed later in 2024.



The last meeting of the Carer Advisory Committee and Arafmi. Pictured from left: Emma, Robert, Irene, Sue, Chan, Karen, Margaret, Carol and Alex.



“For 22 years I’ve been coming along here and if I wasn’t...I don’t think I would be surviving.

I just need the time to come along and debrief and to get rid of that anxiety, because the anxiety is quite serious for carers.

If you don’t look after your health, you’re in [for some] problems.

If it wasn’t for Arafmi I would be stumbling.”

Stephanie, Mental Health Carer



Arafmi’s volunteers during National Volunteer Week celebrating Louise Dutton, who has been a volunteer with Arafmi for 27 years, (far right).

24hr Carer Support Line

A team of 27 trained volunteers worked with Arafmi’s Carer Support Team to provide this service every day of the year, ensuring mental health carers across Queensland could access emotional support, information and referrals at any time of the day. For many, calling the support line is the first step they have taken in seeking support.

“You have given me a seed to plant that I have wanted to buy but didn’t know who sold it. Thankyou. I feel so supported.”



Carer Education

Caring for someone experiencing mental ill-health can require a whole new set of skills, new information and resources. Arafmi supports carers through workshops and information sessions in areas such as understanding mental illness, navigating services, developing support networks and enhancing communication skills. In consultation with carers, two new workshops were also developed, focusing on self-care and the journey of a carer.

Workshops are held in-person and online, to ensure people in regional, rural and remote Queensland and others who cannot attend in-person, can also participate.

Arafmi partnered with several other organisations to provide workshops, including Carers Qld, Wellways Carer Gateway, Wesley Mission Queensland and Queensland Health Community Mental Health Services, including the Adolescent Day Program in Robina.

Young carers have also been a focus of Arafmi's education workshops, with a course developed in Youth e-CPR (emotional CPR) with Anna Armstrong and Dr. Suzanne Armstrong. Arafmi is sincerely grateful for their significant contribution to meeting the needs of young carers with this course, which is the first to be designed and piloted in Australia. Two members of Arafmi's Carer Support Team have successfully completed their training as e-CPR facilitators, giving Arafmi the capacity to train young carers to become co-facilitators.



Cairns self-care workshop

What carers are saying:

“Really grateful for the wonderful session today... shared so much wonderful knowledge. The dialogue gave me a number of possibilities to explore new relationships with my son, and other family members - so I thank you deeply for stretching my thinking. Your depth of sharing was uplifting and inspiring.”

“I felt so encouraged today. Not so alone with tangible 'hope' that I can learn and grow more.”



Individual Supports

Carers often need support to reflect on their situation and focus on issues that are important to them. Arafmi provides personalised, one-on-one sessions, in person, online or on the phone. The support can focus on developing a recovery plan, building communication skills and confidence, developing carer statements for NDIS access applications and other personal and practical challenges.



Carer Support Groups

Carer Support Groups continue to be the bedrock of Arafmi’s services for mental health carers. They are provided in person and online, giving carers safe spaces to connect, share their experiences, offer and receive peer support and develop skills.

Although the majority of face-to-face groups were facilitated by Arafmi staff in South East Queensland, two face-to-face groups were also held in Mackay and Cairns and a new group was co-designed in the Southern Downs.

New groups were also established for carers of multicultural backgrounds and carers wanting to practise setting boundaries.

Volunteers are also crucial to support groups. Seven carers were recruited and trained to be

Support Group Facilitators. They completed a two-day training course to build their skills, knowledge and confidence. The training covered a range of topics including the steps to form and maintain a new group, trauma informed practice and managing challenging topics, conversations and group dynamics.

These new volunteer facilitators are now working with Arafmi to set up support groups in the Brisbane Bayside area, Beaudesert, Murrumba Downs, the Northern Sunshine Coast and the Atherton Tablelands. They will participate in a regular Community of Practice group to support them in their roles and skill development.



Feedback from this training included:

“a worthwhile undertaking and most inspirational”



Julie (centre), pictured with two of Arafmi’s retiring phone volunteers Gloria (left) and Robyn (right).

Meet Julie Arafmi Carer Support Team

Bringing empathy and a keen listening ear to mental health carers has sustained Julie through twenty years of working with Arafmi. Julie has lived/living experience of being a mental health carer and knows that sometimes carers just need to talk.

“I consider myself to be a good listener over the phone, because I’m actually able to hone in and hear their story,” Julie says.

“After all these years, I’m still surprised that sometimes you can do very little other than just listen, but people need to be heard.”

“I always like to give them hope. [There are] so many stories where in the end it’s okay. It’s not great, but that’s how life is sometimes.”

Julie works in the Carer Support Team, which at times involves answering calls to the 24-hour Carer Support Line. She began volunteering in October 2004 and secured paid work with Arafmi the following May, answering support calls, working on reception and doing some book-keeping.

At the time, a family member had recently been diagnosed with a mental illness. Like

many other staff, members and supporters of Arafmi, Julie was drawn to the organisation because of her own mental health carer role.

“It’s a journey that I have empathy for, because I’m going through it,” she says.

To support her own mental wellbeing, Julie likes reading and doing jigsaw puzzles – “it’s a sense of relaxation”. Spending much of her free time with her husband of 47 years, her four children and three “delightful” grandchildren also helps.

And enjoying time in nature is soothing.

“I enjoy walks in the bush and also looking out the windows and seeing the Jacaranda trees in the street. I find that very rejuvenating”, she says.

“We’ve also got these cute little dancing ladies orchids out the front, and they’re flowering. “They gladden my heart.”



Mental Health Week and Carers Week October 2023

These two weeks of the year are often the busiest for Arafmi, as they provide many opportunities to increase awareness of mental health carers and promote Arafmi's support services. At the many events held around the state, Arafmi's leadership team and staff are often able to connect with mental health carers who are just beginning their carer journey. It also allows Arafmi to strengthen connections with other stakeholders across the mental health system.



Arafmi's CEO, Irene Clelland (centre), spoke at Parliament House about the importance of amplifying the voices of lived experience of mental health carers in policy, planning and service delivery. Pictured with Shannon Fentiman, Fmr Minister for Health, Mental Health and Ambulance Services and Minister for Women (left) and Brittany Lauga (right) Fmr Qld MP for Keppel, Asst Minister for Health & Regional Health Infrastructure.



Arafmi participated in The Walk for Awareness during Mental Health week. Pictured from left, Jorgen Gullestrup, CEO MHLEPQ and Irene Clelland, CEO Arafmi.

Carer Forum 2023

A highlight each year is Arafmi's Carer Forum. More than 85 carers attended this event at Victoria Park and had the opportunity to meet key leaders and stakeholders in the mental health sector. The forum included a welcome message via video from the Hon. Shannon Fentiman MP (then Minister for Health, Mental Health and Ambulance Services and Minister for Women) and presentations that focused on systems advocacy, research, consumer and carer rights and updates about Arafmi carer services. The presenters were:

- Amelia Callaghan, Executive Director, Queensland Mental Health Commission
- Sandra Eyre, Senior Director, Mental Health Alcohol and Other Drugs Strategy and Planning Branch
- Katie Acheson, Executive Manager - Policy and Advocacy, Arafmi
- Jorgen Gullestrup, CEO, Mental Health Lived Experience Peak Qld
- Scott James, Statewide Coordinator, Independent Patients Rights Advisors
- Viviana Jimenez, Cultural Care Coordinator, World Wellness Group
- Dr James Kesby, Advanced Researcher, Queensland Centre for Mental Health Research; Senior Research Fellow, Queensland Brain Institute UQ; Senior Lecturer, School of Biomedical Sciences, UQ
- Arafmi Carer Team.

Arafmi thanks the Queensland Mental Health Commission for its generous sponsorship of this event.



Culture Care

World Wellness Group and Arafmi have been jointly funded by the Queensland Health Mental Health Alcohol and Other Drugs Branch to provide Culture Care. This is a program for mental health carers of diverse cultural connections in Queensland. This initiative has already enhanced referral pathways to ensure carers are identified and linked with appropriate supports, allowing access to Arafmi's services.



Carer Collaborations

Arafmi has collaborated with Carers Qld and Wellways Carer Gateway to ensure carers are identified, assisted to access programs, supports and events and provided with opportunities to connect and build their capacity and skills. Joint events and workshops have also been held, the most significant of which was the first Carer Gala Dinner at Victoria Park. 135 carers attended and the feedback was overwhelmingly positive, giving carers a break from their caring role, an opportunity to simply have fun, reduce isolation and connect with other carers.



Young Carer Network

There are a significant number of young carers across Queensland who are often not identified and supported, which can lead to life-long emotional, social and financial impacts.

In response to this need Arafmi initiated and developed a statewide Young Carer Network to assist with changing the future of young carers. The network has brought organisations together to discuss young carer needs, share information and consider how to raise awareness of young carers and increase access to programs and supports. Carers Qld, Wellways Carer Gateway, Little Dreamers Australia, Eating Disorders Queensland, Children of Parents with a Mental Illness and Kookaburra Kids are valuable members of this network.



Anyur and Alex from Arafmi, pictured with Drew and Alison from World Wellness Group.



“I was able to bring my husband, meeting other carers and sharing our stories to have a relaxed, fun night out at a great venue. Also feeling supported by the staff members, feeling recognition for 34 years of caring.”



Carer Retreats

Arafmi's Day Retreats offer a range of activities, an enjoyable meal and a break from caring responsibilities.

Arafmi held Inner City Mini Retreats over three days to bring carers together at the Respite Accommodation. The retreats offer wellbeing activities, a Self Care Workshop, a Creative Workshop, and time for carers to relax and focus on themselves. Four Inner City Mini Retreats have been provided, including one designed specifically for multicultural carers. We send a heartfelt thank you to Adelle, a mental health carer who shared her beautician skills to give carers a make-over before going out to dinner at one of the retreats.

“Words just don't seem enough to say how grateful I am to have had this experience... it was the ultimate CARE experience. I will definitely take some very valuable lessons home with me after this joyful time – No. 1 being put aside time for the care I need to keep going!”



What carers are saying about the CALD retreat and workshop:

“I wanted to let you know how much I enjoyed the retreat and your workshops. It was so perfect to learn from you and I appreciate you bringing me in and welcoming me.”



Sunshine Coast

Arafmi also held a Mini Retreat for carers on the Sunshine Coast, designed to give carers a break and build their capacity and connections. We thank Leticia Collins and team and the Glass House Mountains Ec Lodge for an incredible experience. Carers enjoyed the opportunity to connect with others in similar situations, participate in art therapy and relax in nature while feeling “100 per cent supported” by Arafmi staff.



Arafmi Carer Respite Accommodation – 8 months on



The above painting "Safe Space" was done by the first guest to stay at the Carer Respite Accommodation. It symbolises women coming together, reaching out to those on the outskirts and creating a place to just be!



We all need the chance to unwind, but for many mental health carers it can be extremely difficult, if not impossible, to find the space, time and resources to do so. In consultation with carers, Arafmi has developed this Australian-first Carer Respite Accommodation, providing an individualised experience for mental health carers. Since opening in November 2023, the accommodation has provided an essential break for 79 carers of diverse backgrounds and connections and in a variety of caring situations.

Guests generally stay for two to three nights, enjoying the entire 3-bedroom upper-level space to themselves or with friends and family, depending on their preference. Some carers have used the time to celebrate birthdays, anniversaries and other important milestones. Some have used it to spend time with other family members, particularly children, to build connections with loved ones who are not the focus of their caring role. Carers can engage with a range of wellbeing activities, access one-on-one support, attend workshops, or simply enjoy time to themselves.

Wellways Carer Gateway has provided additional funding to create a role to increase referrals to the accommodation.



“I used the time here to plan my life (or begin to) for the next 5 years... The first step has been taken... Included (in the plan) is nurturing and healing for me. I am so grateful for this opportunity.”

“I absolutely still can't believe such a place exists for those of us carers who are thought of last if at all...I am incredibly floored by not only the beauty of the house but more so by the finishing touches, the small things like a basket of goodies, providing some gluten free options for my friend. The level of thought and care that has gone into this place is incredible. I made a point of trying new things on offer and was pleasantly surprised. I enjoyed the range of teas, puzzles, art, books, yoga. My mind, body and soul feel refreshed, recharged and rejuvenated. I hope many more carers get a chance to experience this wonderful place for many years to come.”



Community Mental Health and Wellbeing Services Report



In June 2024, I was afforded the privilege of joining Arafmi as Deputy CEO and General Manager Community Services. During my years of working in the mental health sector, I have long admired Arafmi’s mission and purpose, and this new role will allow me to actively contribute.

I arrived at an important juncture in the organisation’s history. A review of its community mental health and wellbeing services had been prompted by Arafmi’s new strategic plan. This review resulted in my position being created to oversee all current and emerging services that are not directly related to family, carer and kin support. In coming months, there will also be a new name and brand for these services, and a new Practice Framework to guide them. We are also exploring new service options, to ensure we remain focused on quality services that benefit mental health carers, including indirectly.

These changes have, in part, been brought about in response to broader policy and legislative reforms eventuating from the 2023 Disability Royal Commission Final Report, the 2023 NDIS Review Final Report, and the Federal Government’s response to both.

Despite this significant uncertainty in the operating environment, it is important to highlight that Arafmi’s community mental health and wellbeing service has continued to operate with diligence and compassion throughout 2023–2024.

We have supported our clients by understanding individual needs and wants, by continually improving our services, and by seeking to be proactive in overcoming challenges. Our Supported Independent Living, Core Supports, Short Term Accommodation and Support

Coordination services have continued to support people experiencing psychosocial disability.

The resilience of Arafmi’s community mental health and wellbeing services is testament to the dedication of staff, who are putting Arafmi’s core values of diligence, respect, compassion, integrity and service into action every day.

In particular, I would like to acknowledge Arafmi’s People and Culture Business Partner Ross Mountford, who has taken on the temporary role of Integrated Service Manager, providing stability and consistency to Client Care Coordinators and the Rostering team.

For the people we support, our clients and their carers, it means reliable services, of high quality. And it is only because of this solid foundation that Arafmi is now well-placed to adapt and explore opportunities to grow.

Jennifer Pouwer
Deputy CEO and General Manager
Community Services

“The resilience of Arafmi’s community mental health and wellbeing services is testament to the dedication of staff, who are putting Arafmi’s core values of diligence, respect, compassion, integrity and service into action every day.”

Our Services





Meet Leanne Arafmi Support Worker

Arafmi Support Worker Leanne Willian says witnessing improvement and recovery in her clients is the best part of her job.

"Seeing their progression can be really rewarding," she says. "You get to know them, and they get to know you. You know their stories."

Leanne began as a volunteer with Arafmi's program at Camp Hill in Brisbane in 2004 but shortly after began paid work as a trainee and remembers that it was a very small organisation then.

"In the early days we had respite to support clients so their carers could have a break", Leanne explains, and says supporting carers is still one of the side benefits of her job.

"It's not easy for some of the carers. It's quite difficult at times, especially if you've got people that become unwell."

Leanne provides both Community Access and Home and Living Supports to clients through Arafmi's community mental health and wellbeing service.

She has been working one-on-one with some clients for as long as 15 years and even has personalised music lists to play for each of them.

"I do believe in recovery; I have seen people get well and have periods of a lot of wellness."

Leanne adds that the work can be challenging and even heartbreaking, but she has developed strategies to take care of her own mental health.

"It's important to look after yourself. You've just got to step out of it sometimes, and I make sure I go for a walk, read, and do things that slow my mind."

"Seeing their progression can be really rewarding, you get to know them, and they get to know you. You know their stories."

Meet some participants

Victoria - Brisbane

Victoria has embarked on a transformational journey over the past few years since receiving social work support for her complex psychosocial challenges.

A graduate architect, Victoria has worked hard to achieve her goals of engaging with the community and 'giving back', particularly in addressing homelessness. She has designed accommodation specifically for vulnerable communities, which she was invited to present at a housing conference hosted by advocacy organisation QShelter.

Through working on a range of skills, Victoria's independence has grown along with her community connections and her general wellbeing.



Participant - Toowoomba

This participant is exploring greater independence in his life and living arrangements after working with Arafmi to build his confidence and capacity. He has been living independently for the past six months, following several years of living in a hospital-run residential Community Care Unit. He has worked with his Arafmi team to adjust to the challenges of living independently, including managing household necessities such as cooking, cleaning and planning ahead. He has also developed further skills in communicating his needs, engaging in hobbies and working through problem solving.

Meet the Board

Directors at time of publishing - December 2024



Denise Buckby
Chairperson



Oddur Thomas Augustsson
Director



Professor Robert Bland AM
Director



Melanie Mayne-Wilson
Director



Muralee Siva
Director



Simon Moore
Company Secretary

Meet the Senior Leadership Team



Irene Clelland
Chief Executive Officer



Jennifer Pouwer
Deputy Chief Executive Officer
General Manager Community Services



Puji Astuti
General Manager
Corporate Services (CFO)



Ross Mountford
People and Culture
Business Partner

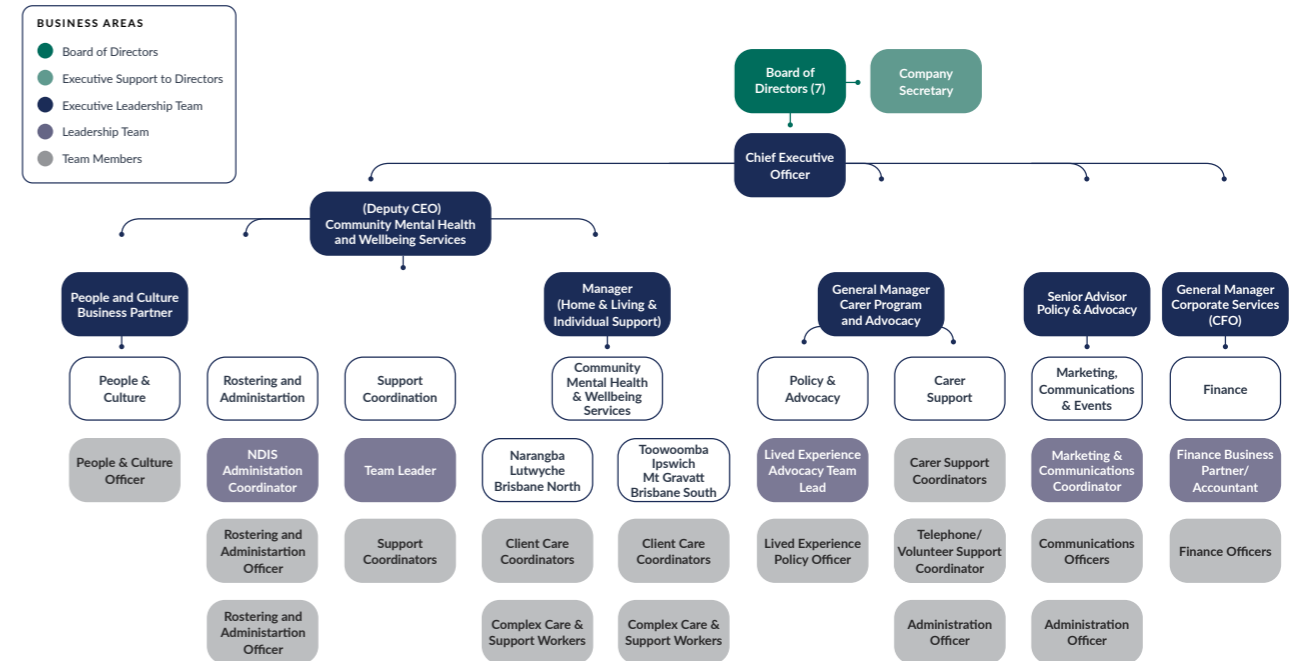


Alex Tyson
General Manager
Carer Program and Advocacy



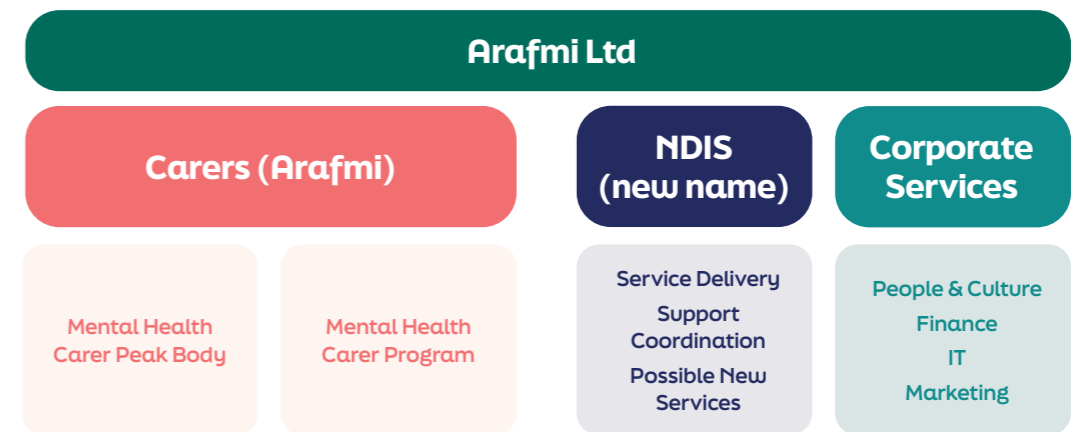
Emma Griffiths
Senior Advisor
Policy and Advocacy

Organisational Chart



Strategic Direction 2024-2027

Arafmi is now the peak body for mental health carers, advising government on system changes. Over the next three years we will start to clarify the distinct roles of our Carer Program and Peak Body and our Community Mental Health and Wellbeing Services (NDIS), separating them by 2027.



General Manager Corporate Services (CFO) Report



Arafmi has demonstrated financial strength and resilience in 2023-2024, closing the financial year with a small surplus of \$10,949.

We take great pride in managing our finances to ensure the operation is funded effectively, while allowing for continued investment and growth in our Carer Support Program. Notably, this investment has included funding the redevelopment of Arafmi's Teneriffe property to provide Carer Respite Accommodation.

This redevelopment was conducted with support from the Queensland Government through its Community Infrastructure Investment Partnership Initiative and was completed in late August 2023. Arafmi also formed a partnership with the not-for-profit World Wellness Group, to expand our offering in the Carer Program to mental health carers from diverse backgrounds.

To address the needs of Queensland's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, Arafmi is also investing in research. Toward the end of the 2023-2024 financial year, the Arafmi Board reviewed its financial results and approved a \$100,000 investment in the Ipswich Hospital Foundation. This funding will support a partnership with the Queensland Centre for Mental Health Research to develop a co-design process aimed at understanding the needs of First Nations mental health carers in the West Moreton area.

A significant increase in our grant revenue from the Queensland Government was secured, allowing Arafmi to increase its statewide reach.

Arafmi's Community Mental Health and Wellbeing Service has consolidated its work as a psychosocial disability provider, maintaining its presence while withstanding significant changes to the operations of the National Disability Insurance Scheme and ongoing negotiations over government-funded services.

Puji Astuti
Chief Operating Officer

Arafmi's Revenue Statistics



Operating Surplus
\$10,949



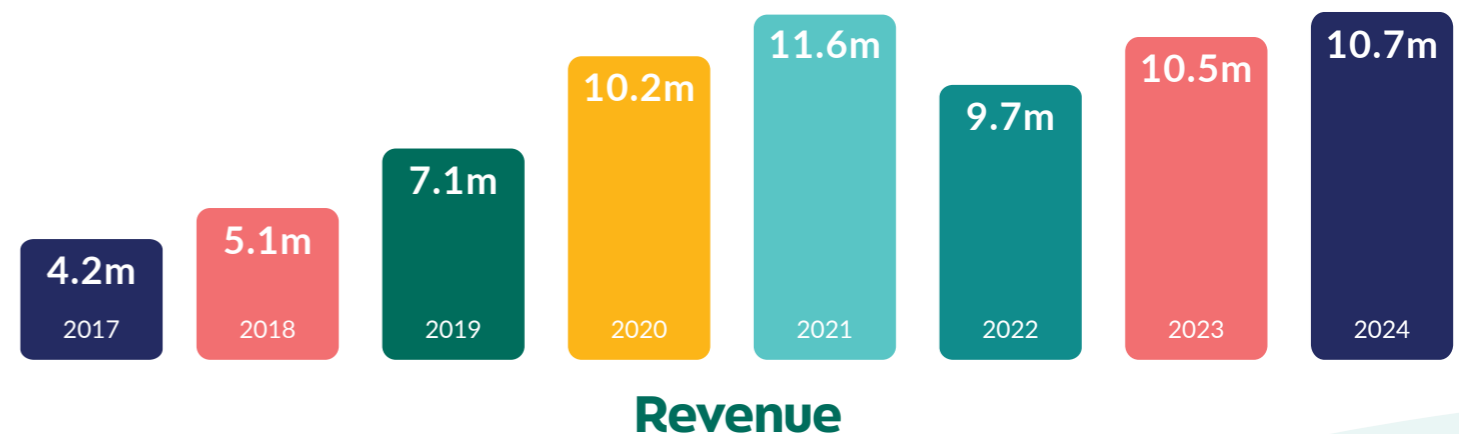
Assets
\$8.3m



Liabilities
\$1.1m



Equity
\$7.2m



Statement of Profit or Loss and Other Comprehensive Income

Arafmi Limited For the year ended 30 June 2024

	2024	2023
Revenue and other income	10,742,485	10,487,556
Employee benefit expenses	(9,091,325)	(8,274,037)
Depreciation and amortisation expense	(272,903)	(347,529)
Finance costs	(12,532)	(63,541)
Rental expenses	(143,552)	(44,898)
Audit, legal and consultancy expenses	(300,690)	(297,857)
Client expenses	(105,896)	(112,764)
General office expenses	(104,658)	(84,303)
Communication expenses	(175,266)	(167,223)
Other expenses	(565,211)	(508,958)
Doubtful debts recovered/(expense)	40,497	9,572
Results from operating activities	10,949	596,018
Tax expense	-	-
Profit from continuing operations	10,949	596,018
Profit for the year	10,949	596,018
Total comprehensive income for the year	10,949	596,018

Statement of Financial Position

Arafmi Limited As at 30 June 2024

	2024	2023
Assets		
Cash and cash equivalents	1,176,022	1,866,635
Trade and other receivables	300,394	310,231
Short term deposits	3,155,450	2,696,393
Other current assets	78,466	61,583
Total current assets	4,710,332	4,934,842
Financial assets	105,467	98,648
Other non-current assets	38,290	39,110
Property, plant and equipment	3,211,365	3,193,085
Rights-of-use assets	226,267	376,231
Total non-current assets	3,581,389	3,707,074
Total assets	8,291,721	8,641,916
Liabilities		
Trade and other payables	266,319	540,497
Provisions	475,970	422,612
Deferred revenue	61,377	51,000
Lease Liabilities	102,014	146,094
Total current liabilities	905,680	1,160,203
Provisions	57,836	59,534
Lease Liabilities	150,767	255,690
Total non-current liabilities	208,603	315,224
Total liabilities	1,114,283	1,475,427
Net assets	7,177,438	7,166,489
Equity		
Reserves	230,000	230,000
Retained earnings	6,947,438	6,936,489
Total equity	7,177,438	7,166,489

Statement of Cash Flows

Arafmi Limited For the year ended 30 June 2024

	2024	2023
Cash flows from operating activities		
Receipts from customers and funding bodies	10,634,353	10,636,330
Payments to suppliers and employees	(10,704,865)	(9,564,970)
Cash generated from operating activities	(70,512)	1,071,360
Interest received	147,709	73,278
Interest paid	(1,238)	(72,163)
Net cash from operating activities	75,959	1,072,475
Cash flows from investing activities		
Proceeds from sales of property plant and equipment	-	877,601
Acquisition of property, plant and equipment	(141,219)	(981,742)
Acquisition of other financial assets	-	-
Investment in terms deposits	(465,056)	(67,143)
Net cash used in investing activities	(606,275)	(171,284)
Cash flows from financing activities		
Repayment of borrowings	-	(381,711)
Payment of finance lease liabilities	(160,297)	(233,789)
Net cash used in financing activities	(160,297)	(615,500)
Net (decrease) / increase in cash and cash equivalents	(690,613)	285,691
Cash and cash equivalents at beginning of year	1,866,635	1,580,944
Cash and cash equivalents at end of year	1,176,022	1,866,635

Partnerships & Acknowledgements

We would like to thank all our partners, in particular:



The Arafmi Team

We would like to acknowledge the entire Arafmi team for their dedication and hard work over the past year. Your commitment to supporting mental health carers and working with participants has been invaluable. Through your efforts, we have made significant progress toward our goals, and we are grateful for your ongoing passion, collaboration, and expertise.



Contact Us

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