

Annual Report

2024-25





Contents

| | |
|--------------------------------|----|
| About Northcott | 4 |
| Message from our Chair and CEO | 6 |
| Our Strategic Direction | 8 |
| Our community in FY2024-25 | 9 |
| Our services | 10 |
| Do More | 12 |
| Be More | 24 |
| Reach More | 34 |
| Early Childhood Services | 42 |
| Financial summary | 48 |
| Our Members | 49 |
| Acknowledgements | 50 |

Northcott acknowledges the Traditional Custodians of the lands upon which we work. We pay our respects to their Elders – past, present and emerging – and extend that respect to other Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. We also pay tribute to their ongoing connection to land, water and community.

In everything that we do we strive to enable Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to discover, unlock and unleash their potential. We recognise the challenges faced by those with disability and are committed to supporting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to overcome these so they remain connected to their communities and broader society.

We aim to achieve this goal through working in partnership with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities in a respectful, committed and professional manner.



About Northcott

Founded in 1929 by the Rotary Club of Sydney, Northcott began by supporting children affected by polio and other diseases. Today, the organisation is a leading disability services provider supporting children and adults with disability in New South Wales (NSW), the Australian Capital Territory and Queensland (QLD).

Northcott is one of the top 5 disability providers of supported living services in NSW. We also have respite homes in NSW and QLD.

As an NDIS Partner in the Community in 5 regions of NSW, our Early Childhood Service delivers support to families with children aged 0-9 years with developmental delay and/or disability and their communities.

From our offices, centres and in the community, we provide core services including Therapy, Life Skills, Work & Study, Recreation, Respite, Social Outings, Behaviour Support and Sexuality and Relationship Education.

Our purpose

Northcott is a not-for-profit disability service provider that works with customers to realise their potential.

We are striving to build an inclusive society where people can live the life they choose.

We support people with disability to reach their full potential by providing services and support to promote a genuinely inclusive society.

Our vision

Our vision is to be an inclusive organisation, growing support and connection where everyone thrives.

Our values

Northcott is a values-driven organisation. We are:

- **INNOVATIVE** – because we develop new ideas and solutions with creativity in anticipation of changing needs.
- **RESPECTFUL** – because we believe that everyone's voice is unique and that they have the right to be heard.
- **BRAVE** – because we have the courage to stand up for people with all abilities, even in the face of adversity.



From the Chair and CEO

In a year of significant transition and transformation for Northcott, supporting children and adults with disability to reach their full potential has remained central to everything we do.

At Northcott, our activities in 2024-25 were driven by our new Strategic Direction and Vision: *to be an inclusive organisation, growing support and connection where everyone thrives*. With our strategic priorities to 'Do More, Be More and Reach More', this vision reinforces our commitment to delivering services that make a real difference in the lives of children and adults with disability, while also positioning Northcott for growth and sustainability.

Over the past year, we have made meaningful progress in aligning our operations with this strategy. Highlights include the development of our first Customer Voice framework to ensure we listen more closely to our customers and genuinely involve them in shaping our services. We have also advanced our digital transformation journey significantly, with the full implementation of a new customer management system and other tools to support greater efficiency and productivity across the organisation and a simpler, more consistent experience for customers. Understanding that fostering diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) within Northcott strengthens our impact in the wider community, we have also maintained our focus in this area and developed a refreshed DEI Strategy.



Kirsten Armstrong



Liz Forsyth

Through all this evolution, our core activity of delivering services under the NDIS has continued to present challenges. Reforms have been slower than expected and the current pricing model continues to fall short of covering the real cost of delivering quality services. As a result, overall, Northcott reported a loss. However, because we have enough assets and investments, our balance sheet remains strong, and we are continuing to deliver high quality services. We have also taken proactive steps to strengthen Northcott — consolidating operations, restructuring where necessary, and identifying new opportunities to diversify and grow.

While these changes are helping Northcott become a more sustainable and resilient organisation, much more work is needed by government to create a more viable and fairer system for participants and providers.

In the services space, our focus this year has remained firmly on supporting our customers to achieve their goals while improving our service delivery. We have prioritised consistency across locations, and we were proud to see that 78% of customers surveyed told us their Northcott team understands them and their needs. This result is a strong endorsement of Northcott's person-centred approach. We have also continued to look to community partners and funders to help us develop and deliver innovative programs outside the NDIS framework. We thank these organisations and individuals for their shared commitment to improving the quality of life for people with disability.

Our NDIS Early Childhood team has continued to exceed expectations, reaching more families and children than ever before. We are incredibly proud of the work of the Community Capacity Building team. This year, the team developed a range of resources to strengthen inclusion in local communities and support early childhood services to better welcome and support young children with disability.

Looking ahead, we are actively pursuing growth opportunities to expand our reach and impact. Examples include forming new partnerships with Specialist Disability Accommodation providers to create more disability housing options, and expanding our clinical services through new, non-NDIS pathways. We will also continue to work with government and sector partners to build a better NDIS that delivers for people with disability and ensures long term sustainability for quality providers like Northcott.

Finally, we would like to thank our Board, Executive and staff for their commitment and resilience during a time of significant change. This dedication ensures Northcott continues to support people with disability to realise their potential.



**Kirsten
Armstrong**
Chair



**Liz
Forsyth**
CEO

Strategic Direction

Our new Strategic Direction sets out a clear roadmap and action plan for Northcott over the coming years. With more than 150 points of engagement with staff, customers and their families, this new direction is built on input and insights from our broad-ranging stakeholder base. It is future-focused and ambitious, but achievable. To help guide our work and activities in alignment with the Strategic Direction, we also developed a Horizon 1 planning document. With the disability sector in the early stages of significant reform following recommendations from the NDIS Review, this new Strategic Direction aims to ensure Northcott is ready to respond as changes roll out.

Our Strategic Direction 2024



VISION

Our vision: To be an inclusive organisation, growing support and connection where everyone thrives.

Do More, Be More, Reach More

Northcott's new strategic direction and vision explain how we want Northcott to develop in the future. Our plans have been developed in consultation with customers, families and staff.

DO MORE



- * **Active Support with all customers that improves engagement and outcomes.**
We want you to be able to participate in meaningful activities and social relationships of your own choosing.
- * **Business and service models that promote integration.**
We want our services to be more connected to the community.
- * **Active and purposeful presence in community.**
We want to help you fully take part in your communities.

BE MORE



- * **Actions that deliver an inclusive and diverse organisation.**
Northcott team members are supported to bring their best selves to work.
- * **Inclusive governance and customer voice.**
You help us make decisions.
- * **Advocacy at all levels.**
Northcott promotes the inclusion of people with disability in our community and beyond.

REACH MORE



- * **Growth plans to move into new areas and sectors.**
We want to innovatively support existing and new customers, including expanding NDIS services and developing more non-NDIS services.
- * **Alliances and partnerships that help us achieve our scale and impact.**
We want to work with others to achieve more and have a greater impact.
- * **Technology that delivers innovation in services and support.**
We will keep improving our systems and technology to better support you.

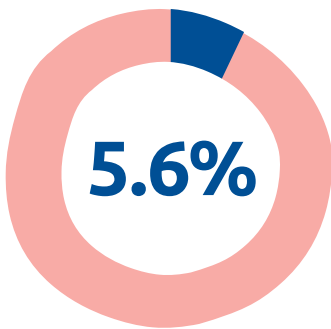
Our community in FY2024-25



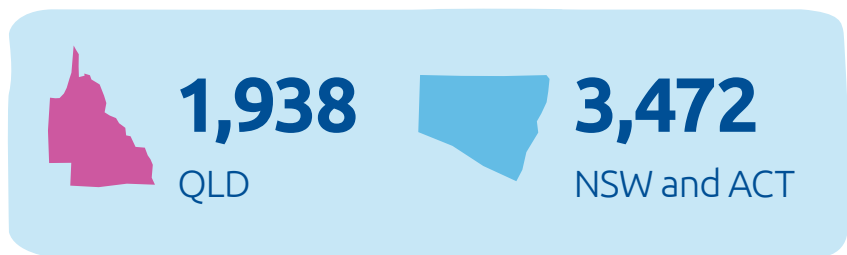
5,410

people with disability* provided with support and services by Northcott.

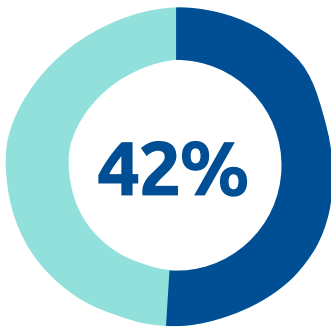
* excluding children supported by Northcott's Early Childhood Services as a NDIS Partner in the Community. See page 42 for more on this.



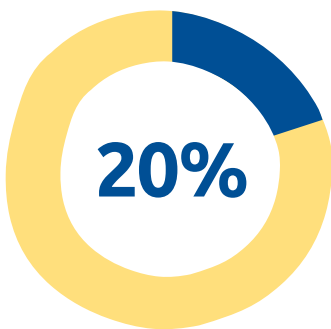
told us they are Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander



Our workplace profile



accessed more than one Northcott service



used Northcott for the first time

2,448
staff members

41%
work part-time

29%
are male

33%
identify as culturally and linguistically diverse

4 of 11
Board members are female

4 of 6
leaders are female

94%
work in Support and Therapy roles

Our services

Allied Health and Clinical Services

Our fully accredited speech pathologists, occupational therapists, physiotherapists, social workers and dieticians support the physical and mental health of people with disability. We partner with aged care providers and others to provide Allied Health services for people aged over 65 years.



Early Childhood Services

Tailored support meeting the needs of children aged 0-9 with developmental delay or disability, delivered through our role as a NDIS Early Childhood Partner in the Community.



Group Services

These are services where customers with similar goals and interests come together in a group setting at a Northcott Centre or in the community. Our offerings include Life Skills, Skills 4 Life, Recreation, Work & Study, Short Stays and more.



Housing and Supported Independent Living

With more than 120 properties, including shared homes and individual villas, we support people with disability to find a place to call home with the support they need.



Individual Services

To increase customers' independence, we work one-to-one by assisting them to take part in their community or by providing assistance in the home.



Sexuality and Relationship Education

A human-rights based clinical service, offering therapeutic support, assessment, training and education, to holistically achieve sexuality goals and needs.



Positive Behavioural Support

Our experienced practitioners support the management of behaviours of concern and create positive behavioural outcomes.





DO MORE

This priority area is focused on Northcott's actions to support customers to reach their potential. Central to this is delivering high quality services in inclusive and accessible settings with partners who share our values of creating a more inclusive society for all.

Through this pillar, customers will have choices about the activities and relationships that are important to them, and we will promote inclusion through active and purposeful presence in community.



Rebecca with her support worker Ghaydaa

Our Do More priority area puts a spotlight on active support. This is a best practice framework that empowers customers to be actively involved in making decisions and participating in meaningful activities. Our staff work alongside customers, providing just the right support so individuals can build skills, make choices and take part in activities of their own choosing.

Active support is already in use across Northcott. In 2024–25, we began strengthening how it is embedded across the organisation. In this early stage, we began reviewing our current practices and resources to lay the groundwork for a refreshed organisation-wide approach.



Tracy

When our housing customer Tracy told her Northcott support workers she was engaged, our team did everything they could to make her commitment ceremony a success. From assisting with preparations to getting Tracy to the ceremony on time, our team worked alongside Tracy supporting her decisions.



Watch Tracy's wedding video here



Jack

19-year-old Jack is working hard to achieve his goal of finding a job. Through our Work & Study service in Dapto, Jack is being supported to build his confidence and independence, while learning skills that will help him land that crucial first job. At this important stage of life, support from Northcott is setting Jack up to succeed.

Linda

Our support worker Linda is a talented artist who loves to share her passion with customers. In the past year, she worked with Wagga Wagga Life Skills customers Mary and Shane to explore their creative side by supporting them to be involved in painting a mural for our newly renovated buildings.



Bec

In September 2024, our North Rocks customer Bec celebrated 10 years in her dream job. With Northcott's support, Bec works two days a week at Only About Children Concord, running lessons and activities for pre-school aged children. Our team has been with Bec every step of her employment journey. Read Bec's story on **page 16**.



Xavier

Xavier attends Northcott's Skills 4 Life program in Toowoomba. This fun and engaging group encourages independence by giving participants like Xavier the opportunity to take on tasks and responsibilities, guided by our team of support workers. Working with his Northcott Therapists, Xavier is also working towards his therapy goals in the program. Read more about Xavier on **page 40**.

Case Study

Supporting Bec in her dream job

In 2014, Bec was part of a group of customers from our Parramatta Life Skills service who told us they were interested in working with children.

To support them to achieve this goal, Northcott partnered with childcare organisation Only About Children to develop a supported employment program for people with disability. It was the start of a dream career for Bec, who celebrated 10 years with Only About Children in September 2024.

“With my Northcott support worker, I did 6 weeks of training before starting the job,” Bec explains. “I started working one day a week, then moved to two days.”

Bec is supported by two Northcott staff, Monica and Ghaydaa, who attend work with her, assisting her to interact with the children. On her days off, Bec is supported by other Northcott support workers to plan and prepare her lessons.

Bec’s lessons focus on teaching the kids about her disability. “I’m proud to tell the kids about my disability to educate them. They are quite curious and ask me questions about how I do things,” she says.



“My favourite thing to do is play games. Sometimes I read to them, using a storybook printed onto A4 paper and my iPad.”

Northcott Speech Therapist, Ashleigh Belic, has also been heavily involved in supporting Bec at work. Together they have found suitable communication tools to help Bec interact with the children.

Bec is enormously proud of achieving her goal of working in childcare.

“Most relatives and friends don’t believe it!” she says. “I always thought that I could do it, but I didn’t know for how long, or what I would do with the kids.”

Other Northcott staff who have supported her along the way are equally gratified.

“

“I feel more confident, and I think I love my job even more because I now know what I am doing!”

says Bec

When Lei Zhao started as a support worker for Northcott in 2015, one of her favourite days was supporting Bec during her childcare shifts. Lei now supports Bec to plan her lessons.

“Bec and I been working together for 10 years,” Lei says. “Working at Only About Children has given Bec more confidence. Before she would always ask herself, ‘can I do that?’. Now she is more confident and likes to try new things.”

Bec is extremely grateful to Northcott and Only About Children for supporting her.

“I would like to say thank you very much to Only About Children for letting me come to work with you. I am also thankful to my Northcott support workers for their help supporting me,” Bec says.

Reflecting on the past 10 years, she says, “I feel more confident, and I think I love my job even more because I now know what I am doing!”



Improving facilities and service delivery

In FY2025, Northcott invested in improving some of its sites. This included opening new facilities, moving to more accessible premises and completing renovations.

Dapto Community Hub

In October 2024, our purpose-built Dapto Community Hub officially opened. This is now where we deliver all our Illawarra regional services. Customers were a huge part of the design and construction process for the facility, contributing input to ensure the centre was designed to meet the needs of people with disability.

The building features spacious rooms to accommodate our Work & Study, Life Skills and Recreation Group Services, as well as smaller break-out rooms to allow for one-on-one support when required. Recognising that customers with neurodiverse conditions may require spaces to relax and decompress, we created 'chill-out' rooms and recreation spaces, including making a pool table and indoor basketball hoop available for customers. For our Work & Study customers, grant funding allowed us to set up 'Café-Thanks-A-Latte' where customers can learn barista and hospitality skills.



Citi Foundation Work & Study Partnership



In October, our three-year Work & Study project funded by Citi Foundation wrapped up.

Over the life of the program, 162 young people with disability were supported to build skills, gain work experience, and take steps toward employment or further study. Across 10 of our locations, 103 customers completed nearly 200 work placements and 58 participants completed or enrolled in vocational training. Participants also benefited from tailored mentoring support.

Partnerships with major employers, including Bunnings and David Jones, expanded inclusive job opportunities and strengthened employer confidence in hiring young people with disability. The program also delivered long-term impact through the development of comprehensive Work & Study Service Guidelines, new staff training, and employer engagement resources that will ensure quality and consistency across all future services.

In a separate project funded by Woodend Foundation, we also created an online resource hub for our staff running the Work & Study service. From a single location, staff can now access and download shared guides, worksheets and other useful resources. Thanks to support from Citi Foundation and Woodend Foundation, Northcott is now better placed to help young people with disability transition successfully into work and study pathways.

Wagga Wagga

After months of refurbishment work, in late 2024 we were delighted to move our Wagga Wagga Group Services and Clinical Services into the historic Old Federal Brewery. Northcott invested in renovations to make the facility more accessible for customers with wide-ranging abilities, and to ensure the spaces are suitable for delivering quality services.

New Penrith location

We relocated to a new location in Penrith to better meet the needs of customers. The new centre, which was enhanced with refurbishments, is better equipped to deliver our Group Services and enable staff to work with the Penrith community to promote inclusion and support customers to build connections.



Enhancing services and supports



Consistent, quality Group Services

This year, our Operations team focused on ensuring we are delivering our services and supports more consistently across all locations, with shared processes and practice frameworks. We also started to implement greater sharing of resources and tools across locations for increased productivity and efficiencies. This is freeing up our staff to spend more time directly supporting customers, ultimately providing them with a better experience from Northcott.



Therapy+ model

In Queensland, our Clinical Services team introduced Therapy+, a new collaborative approach to support customers to achieve their therapy goals. For customers accessing both Clinical and Group Services from Northcott, therapists now work closely with support staff to embed therapy strategies into group programs. This is reinforcing learning, building skills and supporting participation through functional tasks and shared activities.

Local enablement

A key focus of our new strategic direction is to improve engagement with our local communities. We know that through local partnerships and collaboration, we can enhance our service delivery while also driving greater inclusion for people with disability in the broader community. Over several months, we implemented an organisation-wide restructure with locally-based sales teams established to foster closer collaboration between local management and teams and their communities.

27 Tertiary Scholarships

This year, in partnership with our subsidiary The SpineCare Foundation and several longstanding Trusts and Foundations, Northcott was proud to support 27 students with disability to pursue tertiary education opportunities. Through this Scholarship program, people with disability receive financial assistance to help cover the cost of study expenses such as transport, computer equipment, library and internet charges, on-campus accommodation, personal care, scribes and tutors.



SpineCare
Foundation

Athletics Carnival fun!

More than 100 primary school students with disability took part in our annual Athletics Carnival, made possible with funding support from a 2023 CommBank Staff Foundation Community Grant and Northcott's Neon November Giving Month donations. Events such as 50m and 100m races, shot put and long jump gave children with disability the chance to compete against peers with similar abilities in a supported and fun environment. We are grateful to corporate volunteers from Baresque and Made by Holiday, and Northcott staff who joined to help make the day a success.



Quality, Risk and Safeguarding

Northcott places a strong emphasis on delivering high quality and safe services and supports to customers. We have welcomed the government's focus on strengthening provider regulation and strive for continuous improvement of our services, systems and practices.

This year, our Quality and Risk team was integrated into the Safeguarding and Clinical Services portfolio for better alignment and improved outcomes for customers. With a focus on safeguarding and investigations, healthcare and restrictive practices, the team works closely with Operations to embed a culture of vigilance, clinical governance and practice support across all our services.

We were pleased to achieve 100% compliance reporting to the NDIS Commission and other key agencies, including the Ageing Disability Commission, Department of Communities and Justice and the Office of the Children's Guardian.



Complex Health Clinic

To enhance our healthcare capabilities, we expanded our dedicated Complex Health Coordination Clinic to provide customers with chronic health conditions and co-morbidities with better access to specialised, coordinated medical care.

The clinic is delivered in partnership with Dr Richard Chan, Consultant General Physician and Specialist Geriatrician. It brings together a customer's General Practitioner, Northcott's Clinical Governance Team and a broader network of medical and allied health professionals to improve their health outcomes.

Customers accessing the clinic have received comprehensive medical reviews, assessment of health vulnerabilities, medication reviews and geriatric evaluations, if applicable. Each customer has been given a tailored action plan which is shared with their primary care physician and nominated responsible person for implementation and continuity of care.



46

customers supported



Dental care for customers

In August, in partnership with the University of Sydney School of Dentistry, we launched a free dental clinic for customers aged 18 years and over. Since launching, 65 customers have attended face-to-face appointments at the clinic held at our Parramatta office. Early in 2025, to expand the reach of the clinic, we introduced online consultations. Four customers have accessed the clinic in this way so far. This online approach offers a cost-effective and accessible alternative to traditional fixed-chair clinics. Going forward, we are committed to further expanding the dental clinic's reach and impact and are actively seeking philanthropic and grant funding to support continued growth and accessibility.



Restrictive Practice Authorisations

We are committed to delivering safe and quality customer experiences in a person-centred way that actively minimises or eliminates the restriction of a customer's human rights or freedom of movement. Our goal is to use restrictive practices only as a last resort. Where required, we try to use the least restrictive option available, based on the risk posed by the behaviour. When we review a customer's restrictive practices, we involve our Restrictive Authorisation Panel and include guardians, allied health professionals, behaviour support practitioners and customers themselves.

In FY2025, we convened 40 panels, with a 96% authorisation rate. This indicates that restrictive practices are being requested when genuinely needed, and that staff are meeting the necessary safeguarding standards.



BE MORE

Through this priority area, we will strengthen Northcott as an inclusive, diverse and representative organisation, championing inclusion through advocacy. Our workplace will support staff to thrive, and our governance and decision-making will reflect the voices and perspectives of our customers and all people with disability.



Shane with support worker, Linda

Our team

This year, Northcott's workforce reduced by 15% (11.5% in FTE terms), reflecting a more efficient and effective use of resources.

Our permanent staff attrition rate rose to 21% (up from 16.6% last year), with turnover concentrated in May and June. While this is below the sector average of 26.2% (AON Hewitt Remuneration Report), our casual frontline turnover exceeded industry benchmarks. In contrast, permanent frontline turnover was 15%, well below the industry average of 32%.

To attract and retain staff, we continued to provide flexible work practices, a range of benefits and access to learning and development opportunities.



Enhancing staff capability

We provide staff with access to skills development, training, mentoring and other opportunities so they can upskill and continue their professional development journey. These range from onboarding training and leadership development programs to online learning courses, new software implementation tutorials and other internal projects. Our goal is to support people to not only be compliant with mandatory training requirements but to excel at their jobs, ultimately resulting in better outcomes for our customers. This year, we increased the types of training on offer, ensuring both face-to-face and online formats are available so we meet the needs of all employees. For our support staff, we updated our Safe Swallowing training and are reviewing the Manual Handling training we offer with the aim of streamlining this offering.

For the first time since the pandemic, we held a face-to-face People Leaders Forum, bringing all these staff together to learn, reflect and set personal leadership goals for the year ahead.

Managing learning

We launched My Learning Hub, a new learning management system that helps staff to manage the training they need to do and options available to them. For support workers, this new system makes it easier to track their progress in completing core and essential training as well as keeping their training records up to date.



We provide staff with access to skills development, training, mentoring and other opportunities so they can upskill and continue their professional development journey.

Support from subject matter experts

Our Quality, Risk and Safeguarding teams play an important role in supporting frontline staff to have the skills and confidence to support customers, while meeting stringent regulatory service standards. Staff in these teams contributed to 'Lead and Learn' sessions as subject matter experts to enhance the capability of staff to recognise and manage professional boundaries across our workforce. Practice Guides were also developed to support operational staff in contributing to improved compliance with NDIS standards and enhanced service quality.

Safeguarding rotation program

We also continued our successful Safeguarding rotation program where senior operational leaders complete a 6-month tenure with the Safeguarding team. This strategic initiative builds understanding and confidence in managing complex, real-world safeguarding challenges. Being fully immersed in the Safeguarding team provides participants with greater awareness and understanding of the legislative reporting requirements Northcott must comply with as a disability service provider. Participants develop skills to better mitigate risk, manage complex incidents and meet reporting commitments, all which can be passed onto their teams to improve the operational readiness of their service provision in line with NDIS Practice Standards.

Amplifying the voices of people with disability

At Northcott, we are committed to improving our services and supports through hearing the voices and lived experiences of customers and their families and carers.

Customer Voice

This financial year, we developed a Customer Voice Framework to strengthen how we listen to and act on the voices of customers. The Framework outlines clear pathways and activities for meaningful engagement with customers at both local and organisational levels.

As part of this work, we have set up Local Customer Voice Committees at several sites to engage directly with customers about projects, services and matters that directly impact them. Currently running as a pilot at our Dapto, Casula and Seven Hills sites, these committees give customers regular opportunities to provide feedback, raise concerns and contribute ideas to improve our services. The committees are also a great opportunity for customers to build their confidence and learn new skills to grow their independence and advocate for themselves.

Minister hears directly from our customers

In May, we were pleased to welcome Senator the Hon Jenny McAllister, Minister for the NDIS, to our Parramatta Life Skills service to meet customers, hear about their experiences and learn more about how the NDIS is supporting them. The Minister spent time with four customers, learning about the activities they are involved in and answering questions.



Samil



Samil is an active and enthusiastic member of our Dapto Local Customer Voice Committee. As a long-term Northcott customer in the Illawarra, Samil accesses our Individual Services, Recreation Groups and Dapto Sports program.

“I wanted to be part of the Customer Voice Committee to help make Northcott better and improve productivity and efficiency. I think it’s important for Northcott to hear directly from customers because we have expectations. I like the problem-solving parts of our meetings as we talk about strategy and the plans to work on certain problems. In one meeting, we talked about communication between customers and the organisation. I think that has improved in the last few months. We are proud to see it being dealt with.

As a member of the Committee, I just want to be a voice and help Northcott be able to make sure it provides the best service possible. I want to thank the people behind the scenes for letting us deliberate, and for listening to our comments, providing information and executing the plans that we set out.”

Customer Survey

Every year we survey our customers to better understand what matters most to them. Their feedback helps us to develop improvements to ensure we can deliver the highest quality services and supports to meet their needs.

Our latest survey was made available in multiple accessible formats and languages to ensure all customers had the opportunity to participate and share their feedback. This resulted in 16% more customers being able to complete the survey independently.

The survey, which was answered by more than 600 customers, family members and carers, sought feedback on satisfaction with our services, relationships with staff and experiences in the community. While we learnt that 75% of respondents feel satisfied with our service, areas such as communication, service availability and consistent staff support, matter most to customers and have room for improvement.



75%
feel satisfied
with our service



69%
find our services
easy to access



76%
are happy with
service quality



78%
feel Northcott
understands
them and their
needs



77%
feel supported
to achieve
their goals



78%
said Northcott
respects diversity
in gender, sex and
sexuality

BE MORE

Advocacy for people with disability



The Love Rights project

Our Sexuality and Relationships Education team completed the *Love Rights* project, an initiative funded by the NSW Department of Communities and Justice aimed at reducing sexual violence against people with disability. As part of the project, Northcott collaborated and listened to people with disability to tailor training and educational materials to their needs. The project delivered practical early intervention tools for Northcott staff, people with disability and the broader community. This included face-to-face training and an induction e-learning module for Northcott staff, as well as publicly available educational resources to empower people with disability in supported decision-making.

Resources created in the project, including two short films, are available from Northcott's website. Northcott is committed to continuing to work with the sector to reduce sexual violence against people with disability.



250



Disability workers trained to create safe spaces and respond proactively to acts of sexual violence against people with disability.



Essential training created for Northcott's existing staff and new starters.

2



Short films (made with Bus Stop Films) and an education guide produced to help people with disability learn about relationships, intimacy and sexual health.

Intellectual Disability Health My Way

Northcott is a key partner in *Intellectual Disability Health My Way*, a multi-institutional project led by the Department of Developmental Disability Neuropsychiatry (3DN) at the University of New South Wales. Now in its fourth year, this national collaboration brings together leading disability service providers, health organisations, academic institutions and peak bodies to tackle long-standing health inequities faced by people with intellectual disability.

Funded by the National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC), the project is supported by \$5.6 million in combined cash and in-kind contributions. Its goal is to develop a scalable, evidence-based model of preventive healthcare tailored to the needs of people with intellectual disability. Northcott will soon begin piloting the project's new resources, as well as contributing to co-design of the model and participating in the national steering committee.

Feel the Vibe and Mardi Gras

In November, we were excited to host our popular Feel the Vibe expo in Coffs Harbour. More than 100 people, including customers, other people with disability, their support networks and disability professionals attended. Feel the Vibe is a key advocacy initiative for Northcott, creating a safe platform for people with disability to speak up about their right to intimacy and relationships. The expo also plays an important role in challenging stigma and breaking down barriers to sexual fulfilment for people with disability.

In partnership with Afford and Cerebral Palsy Alliance we were proud to support Northcott's LGBTQIA+ community and their allies at the 2025 Mardi Gras Parade. The theme for our float was "Free to Fly". This was an opportunity to remind the public of Northcott's commitment to inclusivity and celebrating diversity, while also amplifying our message of equality for all.



Watch our
Feel the
Vibe video

Delivering an inclusive and diverse organisation

Northcott strives to foster a workplace culture that is supportive and inclusive.

Our actions are guided by our Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) Strategy and our Stretch Reconciliation Action Plan. Our DEI Specialist drives initiatives to make Northcott more accessible and inclusive. We also work with the Australian Network on Disability to advance initiatives and evolve our disability access and inclusion maturity.

This financial year, a new DEI Strategy was developed and approved, and a DEI Working Group and Steering Committee were established. Our next Stretch RAP also received conditional approval from Reconciliation Australia.

Memberships and accreditations

To demonstrate our commitment to provide safe, inclusive and affirming services and workplaces for the LGBTQIA+ community, Northcott achieved Rainbow Tick accreditation, meeting standards developed by Rainbow Health Australia.

We also became members of the Hidden Disability Sunflower Network to signify we are supportive and welcoming towards people who may have a disability that is invisible or difficult to recognise. Lanyards were provided to staff and employee training on hidden disabilities will be rolled out in the coming year.



Employee Networks

To support staff from diverse communities to feel welcomed and supported at work, we facilitate four employee networks where like-minded people and their allies can come together to share experiences, form friendships and be involved in initiatives to improve equity at Northcott.



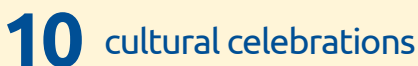
Workplace adjustments

Northcott supports changes to a work process, practice, procedure or environment to lessen barriers and support staff to work to the best of their abilities. This year, the majority of these were to accommodate flexible working hours and the need for accessible software.



Celebrating culture

Around one third of staff have shared they come from a culturally diverse background, with Indian, Nepalese, Nigerian, Filipino, and Kenyan some of the top cultural groups represented by staff. To celebrate this rich cultural diversity, a range of cultural celebrations and awareness events were hosted for staff.



Wellbeing for staff

Our Wellbeing Program continues to support staff who are dealing with mental health issues or who may be involved in confronting, stressful or upsetting incidences. We have a team of Mental Health First Aid Champions who make wellbeing calls to staff facing difficult situations. These compassionate staff members have all participated in Mental Health First Aid training and a further two-day training session with Northcott Wellbeing Leads and Safeguarding Leaders.

Additionally, staff can access our confidential Employee Assistance Program as well as mental health and wellbeing resources available through our staff rewards platform, Perkbox.



Inclusion Fest 2025

In June, a record number of staff participated in our week-long Inclusion Fest celebrating 'Inclusion in Action'. Through five events held in five of our locations, staff came together in person and online to learn about diversity and inclusion and reflect on how we can all contribute to a more inclusive workplace and community. In each event participants heard directly from people with different lived experiences of diversity.

We thank the following guests and staff members for their contributions.

Uncle Raymond, who shared powerful First Nations storytelling and reflections on truth-telling, cultural strength and ongoing connection to Country.

Northcott Sexuality and Relationships Education (SRE) counsellor Pat Hukins, who ran a webinar on LGBTQIA+ pride in the workplace, challenging staff to explore ways (other than flying the rainbow flag and using hashtags) to contribute to safe, more affirming spaces for LGBTQIA+ colleagues and customers.

The Northcott Logan office team, who helped to run our Cultural Fusion Virtual Gameshow, which celebrated the rich cultural diversity of Northcott, while teaching participants fun facts about the many and varied cultures we have.

Comedian and disability advocate, Rose Callaghan, who presented a hilarious and thought-provoking webinar session on ADHD in the workplace.

We also used the week to announce winners of our 2025 Inclusion Superstar Awards, celebrating individuals and teams who make our workplace more inclusive, welcoming and supportive.



Congratulations to Sarah Khalid, Behaviour Support Practitioner who was named Inclusion Advocate of the Year for her leadership and involvement in multiple employee networks. Sarah is part of our VIVID disability employee network, a member of Cultural Connect and is participating in our Neuro-affirming Practice working group.



Congratulations to the Ballina Life Skills team who won the Allyship in Action Award for creating a truly inclusive, sensory-friendly environment and going above and beyond for staff and customers.



REACH MORE

Our third strategic priority area is Reach More. We will find ways to better meet the needs of people with disability, through continuing to evolve our services, forming partnerships and alliances and harnessing technology and innovation to enhance customer experiences, outcomes and organisational efficiency.



Dapto customer Terri

Housing

We were excited to open purpose-built disability housing in Taree in December 2024. This innovative model is made up of two 3-bedroom units on the one block. In the first half of 2025, we supported three people with disability to move into the property.

In line with NDIS recommendations, we began to transition from larger-style disability homes

to smaller, more manageable properties with no more than 3-bedrooms. Through partnerships, we have new developments in the pipeline or under consideration in several new locations in Queensland, as well as plans to acquire properties to meet the needs of new and existing customers.

Vindya



Vindya's new home

Vindya has been living with Northcott since 2020 in Supported Independent Living at Old Bar near Taree in NSW. When it became clear that she would benefit from living in Specialist Disability Accommodation (SDA), purpose-built to meet her complex physical needs, our Northcott Taree team did everything it could to secure the right NDIS funding and home for Vindya.

Early in 2025, the team supported Vindya to move into a brand-new SDA home in Taree, built for Northcott by SDA partner Vera Living. The fully accessible three-bedroom house, which is one of two SDA homes on the block, has been thoughtfully designed for people with disability. It features wider hallways for wheelchair access, spacious rooms and assistive technologies such as height adjustable benches, making it a safe environment for Vindya over the long term. With 24 hour support from Northcott – and friends just next door - Vindya is blossoming in her home.



See Vindya
in her new
home!

Services

Clinical Services

This year we expanded our allied health support in Queensland to offer multidisciplinary therapy services to Australians aged 65 years and over. We have partnered with aged care providers, Home Care Package coordinators, retirement villages, and health organisations to deliver Aged Care therapy support that promotes wellbeing, reablement and independence of older adults. To support this growth, Northcott signed a new two-year agreement with independent disability, mental health and aged care support agency, Allinto. Over the coming years, we plan to expand our aged care services into new regions.

This financial year, we expanded our telehealth therapy services to include the delivery of virtual Functional Capacity Assessments (FCA) for people with disability living in rural and remote locations.

We also opened an office in Bundaberg in Queensland to meet demand for therapy services in that region. Additionally, we expanded the outreach service we offer from Toowoomba, Queensland to visit communities including Mungundi, Gympie, St George and Ballina (NSW).



Early Years

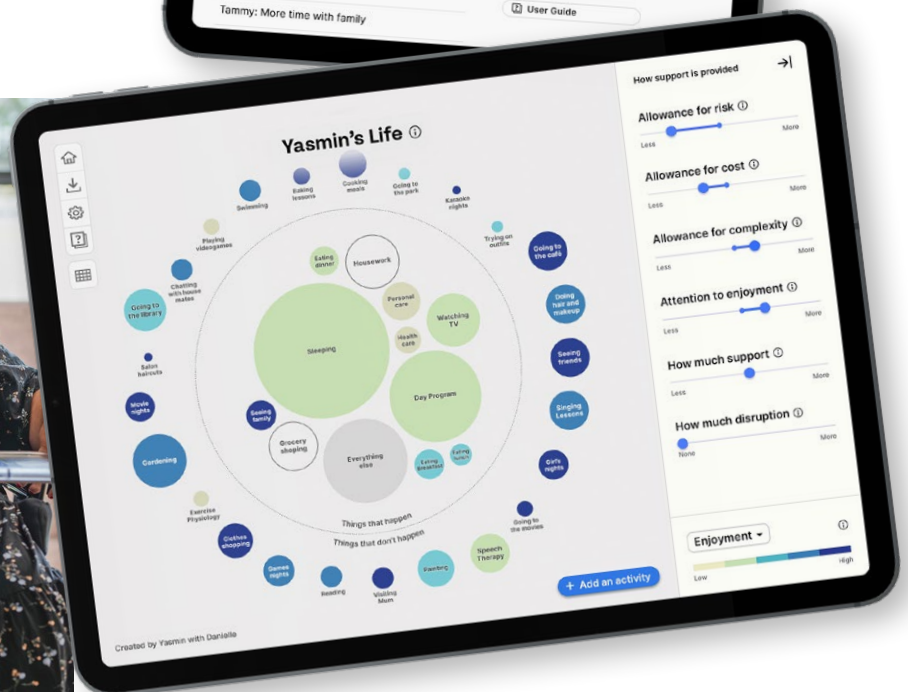
A Child, Youth & Family Strategy has been developed to better position Northcott for the rollout of Foundational Supports and increase our capacity to acquire early years and family support grant funding. This is in line with our goal to deliver more non-NDIS services and supports.



Partnerships for shared goals

A Good Life

Northcott subsidiary, Northcott Innovation was a 2024 Good Design Award winner for its 'A Good Life' visualisation tool, which helps people with disability have more choice and control over their daily activities. Designed in collaboration with UTS School of Design and Parallel Lines, A Good Life is focused on the question, "Are we supporting you to have a good life?". Through providing a visual portrait of someone's life, the tool provides a clear understanding of a person's lived experience and allows users to better understand the balance between cost, complexity, risk and quality of life in support and care contexts. The tool enables decision-makers to focus on quality of life to enable people with disability to lead richer, more rewarding lives. To further enhance the tool, Northcott Innovation has been testing it with customers living in a Northcott Supported Independent Living (SIL) home, with the view to developing it in conjunction with Northcott's active support work.



Technology and innovation

Digital transformation

In our biggest technology transformation, we completed the roll-out of a new connected system to manage all stages of the customer journey. Comprised of apps that perform tasks at each stage of a customer's interactions with Northcott, the new platform supports a simpler, more consistent experience for customers. It ensures we can consistently manage relationships with our customers, track their goals and support needs, and roster our staff to shifts – all in the one, connected system.

To support the roll-out of the new technology, hundreds of hours of training were delivered, along with hundreds of pages of work instructions and guides. This also included specific training for frontline workers on how to use the new mobile Skedulo app to manage their roster, sign in and out of shifts, complete shift notes, and understand customer support needs. As with all significant IT projects, implementation is just the first step. We are continuing to make improvements to the system to address issues and deliver enhanced capabilities.



nest
gonest.com.au

Nest

Northcott Innovation's home matching website, Nest continued to grow in FY2024-25, with more people with disability, carers, agents, housing providers and property listings on the platform. Enhancements this year included geographic searching, suburb-based listings and improved property details, giving users better insights into dwelling types, facilities and local amenities

7,855 ▲ 13%
people with disability
seeking a home

4,004 ▲ 9%
carers/agents

2,326 ▲ 24%
housing suppliers

8,266 ▲ 38%
properties listed



Case Study

New confidence for Xavier

Therapy+ is an innovative model of therapy support where Northcott therapists work collaboratively with support staff in our Group Services to build on a customer's therapy goals in the community setting.

When Group Services were introduced to Northcott Toowoomba, Xavier joined the Skills 4 Life service to grow his confidence. For his Northcott therapist, this was also a chance to get staff in the service involved in supporting Xavier to work towards his therapy goals.

Xavier has autism spectrum disorder and selective mutism. He started accessing therapy services at the Toowoomba centre back in 2017 when Northcott operated as Montrose. He's made steady progress over the years, but his most impressive development has come since Group Services were introduced to the centre.

His mum Shanna says Xavier looks forward to Skills 4 Life every week. In this service for teenagers, participants learn how to express their opinions, make decisions and respect others while building their confidence and self-esteem.

"The group is particularly beneficial for us because Xavier has a younger sister who is also on the spectrum so our time and attention are often divided. These programs give him more individual time where the focus is on him," says Shanna.

"His confidence has skyrocketed in the last two years. He used to just sit and watch from the sidelines, but since he's been doing Skills 4 Life, everyone wants to be his friend. He can't communicate – he's not verbal at the groups, but he still has a way of interacting with people," she says.

Skills 4 Life also encourages independence by giving participants like Xavier the opportunity to take on tasks and responsibilities. One of Xavier's favourite activities is cooking, where he's begun taking on a leadership role.

Reflecting on the early days, Shanna remembers how far they've come. "Therapy was often difficult because Xavier was not able to communicate. They had to work hard to build rapport by playing games. But it was never a chore to go – the team always made us feel welcome."

Xavier's growing confidence is opening up new possibilities for the future. With Northcott's help, he is beginning to explore new interests and opportunities.

"Northcott is offering driver education and job readiness programs. With Northcott's support, we're starting to think about what types of job roles might suit Xavier and who we could approach.

"I'm really excited by this. Xavier's still undecided on what he wants to do and whether he wants to study or get a job. But having possibilities and hope, that's the important thing!" says Shanna.



Xavier

“

“Xavier’s still undecided on what he wants to do and whether he wants to study or get a job. But having possibilities and hope, that’s the important thing!”

Shanna, Xavier’s mum.

Early Childhood

As an NDIS Early Childhood Partner in the Community, Northcott works closely with families and carers of children aged 0-9 years.

23,571

Children and families
supported across 5 regions in NSW

1,073

Children from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander backgrounds

2,084

Children from Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) backgrounds



Type of support provided:

6,279 Early Connections

7,188 Plan Reassessments

1,002 Early Supports

8,999 Plan implementation

6,202 Scheme Access Support

7,960 Check-ins



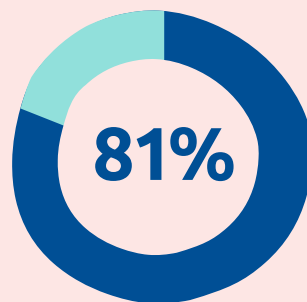
Our focus is on supporting children to develop the skills they need to participate in everyday activities and reach their full potential throughout life. Since 2018, our Early Childhood team has supported tens of thousands of children and their families in Western and Northern Sydney, the Hunter New England area, Mid North Coast and Northern NSW.

This financial year, our contract to deliver early intervention support was extended for a further two years until June 2027. This extension is testament to the unwavering commitment of our Early Childhood team towards the children and families they support.

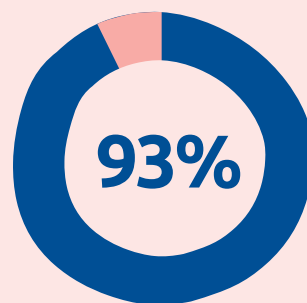
Our performance

Since 2018, Northcott has achieved “high” performance ratings against measures set by the NDIS. In FY2024-25, our team was recognised for consistently strong results across all five service regions. This performance reflects the team’s excellence in service delivery and Northcott’s commitment to achieving positive outcomes for children and families.

Key highlights from our FY2024-25 performance include:



of families were satisfied with the service they have received from Northcott.



of families were connected with at least one service in their local community, strengthening supports for children outside of the NDIS.

Supporting our Early Childhood team

We are committed to providing professional development for all staff to support ongoing excellence in our service. This commitment ensures we continue to deliver high-quality services and remain aligned with evolving best practices and reforms in early intervention.

In FY2024-25, all Early Childhood staff completed training in *The Common Approach*, developed by the Australian Research Alliance for Children and Youth (ARACY). This evidence-based course equips staff with tools to work collaboratively with families, supporting each child's wellbeing through strength-based and family-centred approaches.

Our Early Childhood leadership team also attended *The Leaders Mindset Program* training with renowned coach and speaker, Cathy Burke. The program focused on the power of mindset in leadership, helping our leaders strengthen their ability to lead with resilience and vision.

In the coming year, we will continue to build the capabilities of our team through targeted training opportunities including access to Hanen's *SPARK Communication* training, focused on coaching parents to support communication, and the *Bringing Up Great Kids* program developed by the Australian Childhood Foundation to support families to build their confidence and improve relationships with their children. By equipping our team with these valuable skills and resources, we ensure Northcott remains a leader in early childhood intervention, supporting positive outcomes for children, families and communities.



Community Capacity Building

As an NDIS Early Childhood Partner, Northcott plays a key role in building community capacity to support children with developmental delays or disability. This includes working with community and mainstream services to increase their awareness, skills and resources to create more inclusive environments and improve outcomes for all children.

In FY2024–25, our Early Childhood Community Capacity Building team delivered three impactful projects aimed at improving inclusion for children with developmental delay, development concerns or disability. These projects (detailed below) reflect Northcott's commitment to inclusion and building a society where everyone can thrive.

Under our new contract, there will be a shift in focus from community-based support to individual capacity building. As a result, Community Capacity Building activities concluded on 30 June 2025.

Supporting Aboriginal playgroups

The team collaborated with Playgroup NSW, families, playgroup facilitators and cultural leaders to support Aboriginal communities to create more inclusive playgroups. With a focus on addressing barriers to inclusion such as traditional beliefs, socio-economic factors, language and education, the team developed culturally appropriate resources and strategies to support Aboriginal-specific playgroups. Positive interactions with playgroups and community leaders resulted in more children with developmental delay attending playgroups, and facilitators and families reporting growing confidence and engagement.

Partnering with ECEC services

In response to data showing that many children start school without early support, Northcott worked with early childhood education and care (ECEC) services to improve their understanding of available resources and referral pathways. Through training and knowledge sharing, 75% of participating services reported more frequent and effective developmental conversations with families. Additionally, 80% introduced ongoing processes and tools to strengthen inclusion regardless of staff turnover.

66

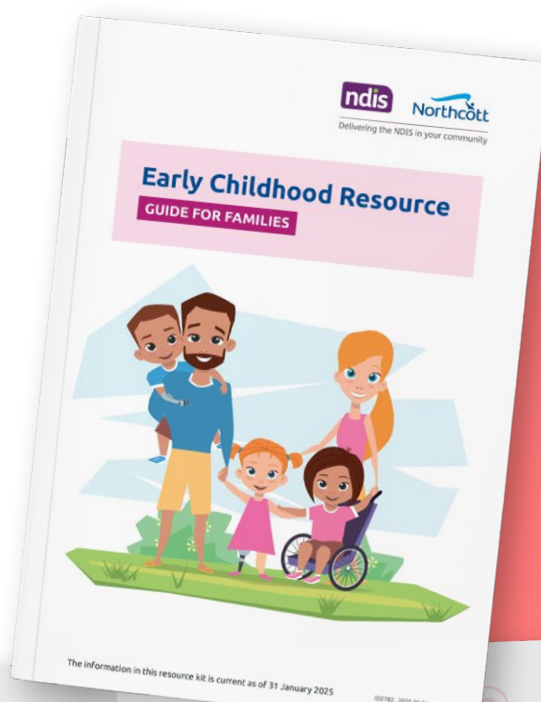
As an NDIS Early Childhood Partner, Northcott plays a key role in building community capacity to support children with developmental delays or disability.

Inclusive community sport

Through sharing resources and knowledge, Northcott supported local sporting clubs and councils to build their capacity and confidence to create inclusive spaces for children with developmental delays and concerns. The team fostered relationships with peak sporting bodies and local organisations to help clubs become more welcoming and confident in supporting all children. As a result of this project, parents of children with disability reported feeling more included, and clubs saw increased registrations from children with developmental concerns.



Download the Early Childhood Resource Families Guide here.



Case Study

Early support to prepare Chloe for school

Thanks to support from Northcott's NDIS Early Childhood Service in Northern Sydney, Chloe had a positive start to school.

Chloe's parents were referred to Northcott's NDIS Early Childhood team when she started displaying disruptive behaviours at preschool.

"Chloe is a natural born leader. She loves to take control and charge," says her mum, Sarah. "She's very creative and very articulate. Before she went to preschool, her daycare centre never had any issues, and we didn't see anything at home. That's why it was quite a surprise when the preschool spoke to us."

Chloe started having issues at preschool, particularly at drop-off and between activities.

"She would get upset once we left, and then it would be hard to regulate her emotions. She's also a perfectionist so when she thought she couldn't do something well, she would get really upset," Sarah explains.

The Inclusion Officer at Chloe's preschool referred Sarah to Northcott where she connected to Ruth Griffin, one of our Early Childhood Coordinators.

With just a few months until Chloe was due to start school Ruth worked with Sarah to put a tailored Early Supports program in place that would give Chloe the skills she needed to get the best start at school. Northcott completed assessments with Chloe's preschool teachers and arranged for an occupational therapist to evaluate her social and physical skills.

"The occupational therapist worked with Chloe on skills such as her pencil grip to give her better control of her hands and make writing easier. She helped her learn ways to be able to colour-in that would build her confidence," Sarah says. "She also gave us strategies we could use at home."

Sarah and Chloe worked with Ruth on role playing to practice social skills like negotiating, turn taking and sharing. Ruth also gave Sarah recommendations for paediatricians in the area and connected her with a local school readiness program.

"Participating in the Transition to School program with other kids allowed Chloe to work on social skills as well as build her confidence in cutting, pasting and how to use her schoolbook. The kids also played games that involved turn taking and leadership," Sarah recalls.

When the first day at school rolled around, Sarah said Chloe was confident right from the start.

"She's doing really well and is engaged in the classroom. She has a good relationship with her teacher, and we've been able to work closely with the school to make sure we are all using the same language," Sarah says.

"The support that Northcott was able to give was so helpful. I really appreciate it. It has been useful in building my husband and I's confidence in how we can help Chloe with different tools and techniques. We're so proud of how she is progressing."



“

“The support that Northcott was able to give was so helpful. I really appreciate it.”

Sarah, Chloe’s mum.



Chloe



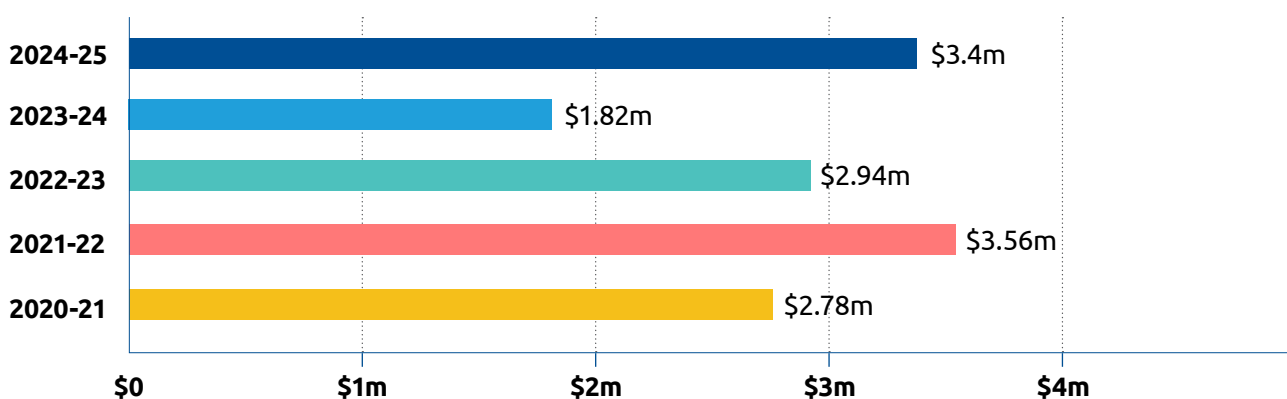
Financial summary

Five Year Financial Summary

| | 2024-25 (\$'000) | 2023-24 (\$'000) | 2022-23 (\$'000) | 2021-22 (\$'000) | 2020-21 (\$'000) |
|---|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------|
| Income & Expenditure | | | | | |
| Operating Revenue** | 225,547 | 228,087 | 217,402 | 216,942 | 216,864 |
| Operating Expenditure | (246,536) | (249,128) | (236,864) | (223,642) | (212,370) |
| Operating Surplus/(Deficit) | (20,989) | (21,041) | (19,462) | (6,700) | 4,494 |
| Financial Income/(Loss) | 3,475 | 4,130 | 3,779 | (5,045) | 9,130 |
| Capital Grants Income | - | - | - | - | - |
| Estates and Bequests | 2,538 | 325 | 656 | 354 | 322 |
| Other Non operating Income/(Loss) | 669 | 43 | 2,788 | 393 | 627 |
| Net Surplus/(Deficit) | (14,307) | (16,543) | (12,239) | (10,998) | 14,573 |
| Assets & Liabilities | | | | | |
| Total Assets | 92,765 | 100,998 | 112,167 | 123,662 | 133,930 |
| Total Liabilities | 64,359 | 58,285 | 52,911 | 52,167 | 51,436 |
| Total Equity | 28,406 | 42,713 | 59,256 | 71,495 | 82,494 |
| Cash Flows | | | | | |
| Net Cash(used in)/ from Operating Activities | (15,392) | (9,149) | (6,773) | (6,729) | (15,012) |
| Net Cash (used in)/ from Investing Activities | 8,355 | (11,981) | 39,465 | 5,283 | 14,610 |
| Net Cash (used in)/ from Financing Activities | 2,044 | (4,469) | (4,698) | - | - |
| 'Cash and Cash equivalents at 30 June | 5,426 | 10,419 | 36,018 | 8,024 | 9,470 |
| Ratios | | | | | |
| Current Assets/Current Liabilities | 1.06:1 | 1.22:1 | 1.57:1 | 1.93:1 | 2.25:1 |
| Total Cost of Services/Total Expenditure | 86% | 87% | 87% | 88% | 88% |

**Operating revenue excludes Revenue from Capital Grant income

Total Fundraising Revenue (including bequests) (\$)



Total fundraising revenue shows all funds (cash) received within the year.

92%

of our total
income comes
from Government
funding (includes
capital grants)

91%

of our total
income is spent on
delivering services

See www.northcott.com.au for the full Financial Report 2024-25.

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Life Governor

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Acknowledgements

Northcott is grateful to receive donations, financial assistance, sponsorships, in-kind and pro bono gifts, support and advocacy from our members, other organisations, individuals and communities. This support enables Northcott to provide the services and supports children and adults with disability need to achieve their goals. While we cannot acknowledge all contributions here, we greatly appreciate all the support we receive.

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Clubs

Brighton-Le-Sands RSL Club

Dapto Leagues Club

Dooleys Lidcombe Catholic Club

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St Marys Rugby League Club

The Galston Club

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Cater Charitable Trust

Doris Louise Waraker Charitable Trust

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Estate of the late Arlene Ethel Hogno

Estate of the late Daniel-
Francois Jean Lemesle

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Estate of the late Ray Leslie
Wright Blencowe

Estate of the late Wang Yeh Leng

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Lions Club of Winston Hills

The Lions Club of Jervis Bay

Western Sydney University

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