

ARAFMI

you are not alone

Annual Report

2024-25

arafmi.com.au





About Arafmi

Arafmi is the peak body for unpaid mental health carers in Queensland, advocating for systemic reforms to government and service providers.

Arafmi also provides support services to family members, kin, young carers, friends and other individuals who support someone experiencing mental ill-health. These free services and programs include a 24-hour Carer Support Line, individual and group support, workshops and respite accommodation.

Cover Photos

This year's Annual Report features photos from our Carer End-of-Year Activity in 2024. A restorative nature bathing experience, inspired by the Japanese practice of Shinrin-yoku, nature bathing invites us to slow down, connect with the natural world, and ease the stresses of modern life. Guided by certified Nature and Forest Therapy Guide, Monique Ross from Heartwood Nature Bathing, carers wandered through Brisbane/Meanjin's Botanic Gardens at Mt Coot-tha, taking mindful moments to notice the small details, breathe deeply, and reconnect with themselves.

The cover captures carers immersed in this peaceful walk—present, grounded, and appreciating the beauty around them.

Photo credits: Mirrillienne Provenzano

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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 a privilege to contribute to the Arafmi Annual Report for 2024/2025 and reflect on the evolving and valued partnership between Queensland Health and Arafmi. For more than a decade, this collaboration has supported the important role carers play through every stage of treatment and recovery.

Carers, families and kin play a vital role in supporting people experiencing mental challenges, and their contribution is essential to the strength and effectiveness of Queensland’s mental health system. Arafmi’s estimate that over 500,000 mental health carers contribute up to \$4 billion annually to the Queensland economy is a powerful reminder of the scale and significance of the role of carers and their strategic relevance to the sustainability of our health system.

This year, the Arafmi Mental Health Carer Forum 2024 stood out as a key moment for connection, learning and advocacy. The forum brought together carers from across Queensland to hear from leaders in the mental health system, share experiences, and explore how their Lived-Living Experience can be a powerful tool for change. Members of my team were delighted to attend and engage with delegates.

Through Queensland Health funding, Arafmi has been able to expand its statewide footprint, strengthen partnerships with other peak bodies, and continue to lead culturally responsive support for carers from diverse backgrounds. This funding supports Arafmi to build on existing services and reflects a strategic shift toward deeper engagement, broader advocacy, and inclusive reform.

Arafmi’s submission to the National Carer Strategy consultation highlighted the importance of taking a whole of government approach to reform, bringing together sectors like health, education, disability and aged care to better support carers. This advocacy for legislative consistency and enforceable rights for carers aligns with Queensland Health’s commitment to inclusive, person-centred care.

The implementation of Better Care Together, Queensland Health’s five-year plan for mental health, alcohol and other drug services, continues to be guided by co-design with people with Lived-Living Experience, their families and carers. The expansion of Arafmi’s advocacy efforts is a critical step in ensuring that carers have a stronger voice in shaping how mental health services are planned, implemented and delivered across Queensland.

Queensland Health remains committed to working alongside Arafmi to ensure carers have access to the support they need, including respite, peer connection, crisis assistance and planning for future care. Real change happens when we work together with a shared sense of purpose, mutual respect and a commitment to equality and sustainability.

We’re proud of the work Arafmi continues to lead and look forward to building on our partnership in the years to come.

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

“We’re proud of the work Arafmi continues to lead and look forward to building on our partnership in the years to come.”



Chairperson's Report



Dear Members, Supporters and Friends of Arafmi,

This message is my fond farewell as Chair of the Board of Arafmi, as I have reached the maximum term under our constitution of nine years as a Director. It has been a period of great change and achievement in the organisation, with sustained dedication to our mission of supporting and representing mental health carers in Queensland.

During my time as a Director, Arafmi has sought to fulfill this mission by adapting to changing external circumstances. The most significant of these was the introduction of the NDIS, which resulted in states 'cashing in' some aspects of funding for carer-focused services. In response, Arafmi established its own NDIS service, supporting people living with psychosocial disability.

While this was important, rewarding work, the Board had to make the challenging decision to wind up the NDIS service towards the end of the 2024-2025 financial year. The increasing complexity of the funding, standards and training requirements made it unsustainable as a business – even as a not-for-profit. Another factor in this decision, was Arafmi's success in July 2024 in securing funding from Queensland Health's Mental Health, Alcohol and Other Drugs Branch, to officially become the state's peak body for mental health carers. Holding peak body status, while also running an NDIS service, also presented the potential for a perception – at least – of a conflict of interest. These factors converged and led the Board to the necessary conclusion to refocus purely on mental health carers.

As a result of this decision, and Arafmi's new funding arrangements, I am confident Arafmi can move forward with real clarity of purpose, to improve the lives of mental health carers through direct support, and by working to change the systems carers are impacted by.

I would like to sincerely thank Arafmi's executive team for its leadership and support through the nine years of my tenure, but particularly in the context of this report, for managing the closure of the NDIS service in accordance with our values of respect, diligence, service, integrity and compassion.

CEO Irene Clelland, supported by the rest of the Executive Team - General Manager Alex Tyson, Chief Operating Officer Puji Astuti, People and Culture Manager Jonathan Butler-White and Senior Advisor – Policy and Advocacy Emma Griffiths – have shown great care and professionalism in this difficult process. Equally, I thank and acknowledge the NDIS team who were impacted by the closure. They maintained dignity, compassion and professionalism through the process.

I would also like to thank the members of the Board for their support and advice, and extend my sincere thanks to Simon Moore for his service as Board Secretary. I would also like to welcome back Professor Robert Bland AM, who had temporarily stepped away from his Board position to lead Queensland Health's review of the historical operations at Wolston Park Hospital.

The support of Queensland Health's Mental Health, Alcohol and Other Drugs Branch this year has been critical to positioning Arafmi as a peak body, building our Advocacy team, and raising the voices of mental health carers, so I extend my wholehearted gratitude to Sandra Eyre and the team there, too.

I wish Arafmi's new Chair, the Board, the Executive Team and all of its dedicated staff and volunteers all the very best in each of their roles, doing the crucial work of supporting mental health carers. There is much to be done, reaching more mental health carers, extending our services to regional and rural areas, supporting young carers and carers in families and communities with First Nations ancestry, or culturally and racially marginalised carers. I know the Arafmi team shares these ambitions and has the skills and energy to get it done.

I look forward to watching Arafmi's work, now as a fervent supporter.

All the best,

Denise Buckby
Chair, Arafmi Board

“I am confident Arafmi can move forward with real clarity of purpose, to improve the lives of mental health carers through direct support, and by working to change the systems carers are impacted by.”

CEO's Report



Dear mental health carers, members and supporters,

It's my pleasure to present Arafmi's Annual Report for 2024 – 2025.

Reading through the following pages, I hope you find evidence – as I do – of the thoughtfulness and diligence Arafmi's staff and volunteers put into our work supporting carers.

In the past year, Arafmi has provided more support for mental health carers than ever before, whether it be through our 24-hour Carer Support Line, workshops, support groups, coaching, retreats, respite accommodation, forums or annual galas. We know there's much more to do, but this past year has set a new benchmark.

Building on our state-wide carer consultations in 2023, Arafmi has also opened new avenues for carers to tell us what they need, forming new groups which gather each month to keep us informed. Advice from carers guide both our services to them and our advocacy for them to decision-makers, funders and other stakeholders.

An important example of this, is the work Arafmi is doing to try to improve communication between health services and carers at the critical points of intake and discharge. This work has been spurred on by the many carers who have told us that often they have no information of what's happening to the person they care for, nor receiving any guidance on how to best support them when they come home.

Ongoing consultation has also led us to a greater understanding of the stress and worry carers experience about what will happen to the person they care for, when they are no longer able to provide that care. In response, Arafmi has developed a Future Planning Project in collaboration with a small, unfunded but formidable group of mental health carers in Canada, a country with very similar systems to ours.

These are just a couple of the complex issues that dominate our advocacy work, standing up for positive change by raising awareness and building relationships.

This year Arafmi has also had to navigate a difficult but necessary internal change, farewelling our NDIS participants, families and dedicated staff members, following the Board decision to wind down our NDIS service. You can read more about the background in the Chair's report and on pages 6 and 7, but I am satisfied we did whatever we reasonably could to ensure the transition was as smooth as possible for everyone involved.

We took time to find new providers for each participant, guaranteeing no gaps in service, and I would like to acknowledge Karakan, RFQ and Anchored Care for their support in this. I'm also pleased that every employee who wanted to remain in the NDIS sector was offered a job interview with a new provider, and the great majority have been successful in finding new employment. My best wishes and wholehearted gratitude to everyone involved for their professionalism, care and resilience. Personally, I am so grateful for the support of my colleagues in Arafmi's senior leadership team, who guided and supported this process, while continuing to build our services for carers.

We now have a renewed focus for Arafmi in our work to support mental health carers.

We have big ambitions underpinning a growing list of work that we know we have to do, including reaching mental health carers in rural, remote and regional Queensland, young carers, and carers from all the diverse communities in our state.

With continuing advice from carers, and the support of Queensland Health's Mental Health, Alcohol and Other Drugs Branch, our Board, Executive Team, staff and volunteers, Arafmi is well-placed to make significant progress in the coming years.

I would like to thank our outgoing Chair Denise Buckby, for her steadfast support and values-based leadership throughout this year, and for the past 9 years she has been a Board member. On a personal note, I have appreciated Denise's guidance, support, challenge and reflection in her time as Chair. Denise is the epitome of values in action, in particular 'service'. Despite working full time and being a proud grandmother Denise commits herself to many volunteer committees and endeavours and exemplifies true community service. In her commitment to us, Denise leaves Arafmi in a very healthy position.

I would also like to thank Arafmi's leadership team and all members of staff, in particular a special Gold Star to those team members and volunteers who ensured our 24-hour Support Line didn't miss a beat, even as Cyclone Alfred blew a gale over the south-east.

Of course, our work is strengthened by the partnerships Arafmi continues to build and I would like to thank all of the organisations involved – you can find a full list on page 45.

And, as always, I extend the greatest respect and thanks to mental health carers. Without whom, the world stops.

Irene Clelland
Arafmi CEO

Policy and Advocacy



Sue Goodwin
Lived Experience Advocacy Team Lead

In July 2024, with funding from Queensland Health, Arafmi officially became the Peak Body for Mental Health Carers in Queensland. This was recognition of an advocacy role Arafmi had been filling for many years, and the accompanying funding gave Arafmi the resources to begin addressing the systemic issues identified in its report, *At what cost? The experiences of unpaid mental health carers in Queensland 2023-2024*. This report was the result of Arafmi's first statewide consultations, conducted with support from the Queensland Mental Health Commission.

Arafmi has made solid progress on all six priorities, including:

- **1.**
Raise awareness of mental health carers
- **2.**
Advocate for physical, emotional, social and 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

1. Raise awareness of mental health carers

- Presentations at conferences
- Participation in the national Family and Carer Research and Advocacy Network
- Meetings with State and Federal Members of Parliament
- Relationship building with a wide range of stakeholders.

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

- Budget submission to Qld Government
- Submission and meeting with National Productivity Commissioners as part of the National Mental Health and Suicide Prevention Agreement review
- Input to review of Models for Youth Mental Health care
- Commencement of the Future Planning Project in collaboration with MICA, Canada
- Contribution to the Qld Carers Action Plan 2024-26.

3. Facilitate access to relevant information and training for mental health carers

- Begin co-design of a new online Resource Hub for families and carers
- Commencement of the Systems Advocacy Capability Building Program for carers.

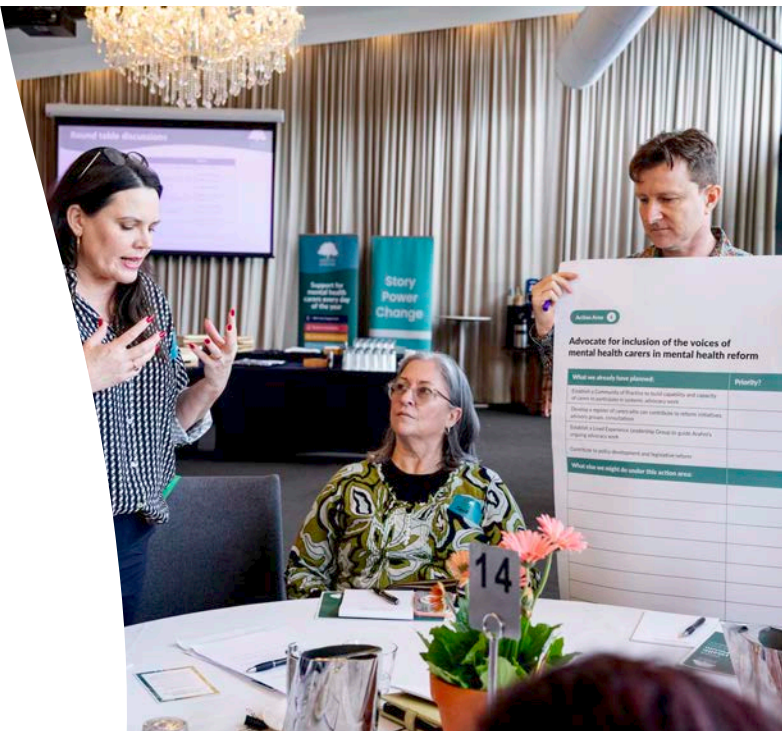
4. Promote carer inclusion in mental health treatment planning and implementation

- Commencement of a project to improve mental health carers' experiences of hospital admission and discharge processes
- Development of a guide for healthcare professionals - Working with Carers, Family and Kin.

Top: Carers and Arafmi staff at the Queensland Lived Experience Workforce Summit

Middle: Arafmi's Mental Health Carer Forum

Bottom: Arafmi's Sue and Alex met with Stephen King and Selwyn Button from the Productivity Commission



5. Increase financial assistance for carers

- Promotion of Carers Australia campaign for superannuation to be paid on Carer Payments.

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

- Establishment of a Carer Consultative Group and a Systems Advocacy Community of Practice
- Representation on the Queensland Health MHAOD Digital Transformation Lived and Living Experience Advisory Group.

More consultation with people who provide care occurred at Arafmi's Mental Health Carer Forum in October 2024, where participants identified their priorities, based on the statewide consultation report's six areas for action.

We combined this information with feedback from other carer and stakeholder conversations to further develop four policy and advocacy priorities:

1. Raising awareness of mental health carers, so that:

- people providing unpaid care recognise the role that they are playing
- health professionals, service providers and government agencies identify mental health carers and refer them to appropriate supports and services
- policy-makers and decision-makers consider the needs of mental health carers in planning and decision-making processes.

2. Raising awareness of the supports and resources available to mental health carers and identifying solutions to fill the gaps.

3. Addressing the issue of planning for what happens when carers can no longer care.

4. Improving mental health carers' experiences of hospital admission and discharge processes, including addressing the challenges faced by regional and rural carers.

Carer Consultative Group

Building upon the work of Arafmi's former Carer Advisory Group, a new Carer Consultative Group was launched this year. The aim was to bring together a small group of people with diverse experiences of caring for someone experiencing mental ill-health, to provide feedback and critical reflection on Arafmi's policy and advocacy work.

An experienced and skilled group of nine mental health carers from across Queensland were selected through an Expression of Interest process, with the first meeting taking place in April 2025. The group has been meeting online every month, and is playing a significant role in the co-design of a new Carer Resource Hub, as well as contributing to the development of Arafmi's new website and carer awareness strategy.

Systems Advocacy Community of Practice

Arafmi's first ever Community of Practice (CoP) was established in 2024-2025 to:

- Foster a collaborative learning environment that empowers family, kin and other unpaid carers
- Enhance the skills and knowledge of members in systems advocacy
- Share best practices, resources, and strategies for effective advocacy.

The CoP also meets online monthly and members have identified advocacy issues they would like to explore, including the way carer information is recorded and stored within mental health services and the ways in which first responders deal with people experiencing mental distress. They are also contributing to Arafmi's project to improve mental health carers' experiences of hospital admission and discharge processes.

A group of CoP members have taken up the opportunity to participate in a six-month advocacy skills building program delivered by Lived Experience Australia, and two members were sponsored to attend the Qld Lived Experience Workforce Summit in February 2025. These activities are equipping members with the knowledge and skills required to participate in systemic advocacy.

A review by an external evaluator found that CoP participants describe the experience as "empowering and transformative."

They felt:

- **Less alone and more capable in their roles**
- **Validated in their emotions and efforts**
- **Equipped with practical tools, strategies and peer support**

Some carers reported that the group helped them move from feeling overwhelmed to a position where they could now support others. Exposure to different perspectives, including guest speakers, was appreciated for expanding thinking and enhancing confidence."

Anne-Louise McCawley, Community Engagement and Education Leader at Caxton Community Legal Centre spoke to carers at Arafmi's first Future Planning Event, about legal considerations.

Future Planning Project

Concern about what will happen to the person they care for when they can no longer care has long been an issue for mental health carers who engage with Arafmi's services, and the issue was again raised in Arafmi's statewide consultations in 2023.

The question of "what happens when I can no longer care?" is also an issue of concern for families and other caregivers in Canada. Arafmi and Mental Illness Caregivers Association (MICA) (a non-for-profit organisation supporting caregivers of people experiencing mental illness and/or problematic substance use in Ontario, Canada) have embarked on a collaborative international effort to map out and develop solutions aimed at addressing this pressing concern.

This year we have conducted focus groups with carers to identify the challenges and possible solutions to planning for the future and conducted an environmental scan of existing models of support. This has informed the development of a carer survey and series of activities to be conducted over the next year.



Carer Program Report



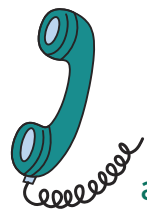
Arafmi's individual and group Carer Support Programs have continued to evolve and grow across Queensland. There has been a focus on strengthening partnerships and expanding services, particularly for people who may not already identify as carers, and have therefore not accessed any assistance.

Key to this has been a new partnership with Wellways Carer Gateway, to enhance opportunities for mental health carers, including increased respite and phone support.

Young people with caring responsibilities have also been a priority group for Arafmi, leading to the development of several initiatives to raise awareness and increase services, including establishing the Queensland Young Carers Network and co-designing a Young Carer Fact sheet.

Thank you to all partners, allies and volunteers, who have worked with us to be there with, and for, carers throughout the year.

Alex Tyson
General Manager, Carer Program and Advocacy



2,151
Phone calls
and Individual
Supports

Arafmi planned and facilitated:

256
Workshops and
information sessions



5 x 2 day
Mental Health First Aid
training workshops



3
Emotional CPR
Training workshops



4 days
of Support Group Facilitator
training for volunteers and
community partners

Support Groups



18
monthly face-to-face



8
monthly online

7
monthly support groups
for regional carers



266
support groups
in the year



2
Family
Connections
programs

Volunteers



26
Phone
volunteers

7
Support group
volunteers



153
Carer respite
stays over

350
nights

Carer Retreats



10
Mini inner-city retreats



1
Wellbeing retreat on
the Sunshine Coast

6
Day retreats
(Cairns, Stanthorpe,
Toowoomba, Sunshine
Coast and Gold Coast)



5 Policy submissions



1
Systems Advocacy
Community of Practice
group established for carers



1
Carer Consultative
Group launched

Some facts about carers

Mental Health Carers are everywhere, but many people do not see themselves as 'carers'

Carers may see themselves as simply family members or friends, but in many cases, the support they give goes beyond what other families and friends do for people they care about. That's what makes them mental health carers.

Some of the things mental health carers do:

- provide emotional support and manage crises
- navigate the mental health system
- advocate for the person they care for

The work can be unpredictable and long term, because mental ill-health is variable, usually presents at a younger age, and recovery is likely to be a long process.

For carers, this can mean:

- It can be very difficult to find and keep paid work, or stay and succeed in school
- Budgets can be stretched to cover living costs and mental health expenses
- Carers can experience chronic stress, anxiety and depression, and physical health issues too
- Stigma about mental ill-health can lead to social isolation
- Relationships can be strained, affecting everyone in the household.

At least
971,000
Australians are
mental health carers

(based on the latest figures from the ABS, 2020)

Children as young as
4 can be
providing
mental
health care



Most
mental health
carers are
women



Learn about the realities of unpaid mental health care

Scan the QR code to read our report:

At What Cost? The experiences of unpaid mental health carers in Queensland.



The carer experience

Anonymous

How long have you had caring responsibilities?

I would say probably since I was five. I could see that a parent was unwell. Emotionally, I was there for them, even though they were able to do other things I couldn't.

What would you say has been one of the most rewarding parts of being a carer?

Learning how to connect with people in their pain.

What are some of the challenges you've faced?

When my sibling was very unwell, there were countless hospital admissions. It was confronting and traumatic for the whole family. The next generation has also been impacted by witnessing that, and it shows how trauma can ripple forward. In those days, help wasn't available or we didn't know how to access it.

What has changed since you accessed support?

Now I talk about it. I never identified as a carer before, even though it shaped my whole life. With support, I learned about recovery and that I was allowed to leave when I didn't feel safe. I didn't know that before.

Is there anything you'd like other carers to know?

That caring affects the entire family, across generations. It can take you to breaking point if you don't have support. It's a cycle — the pain and shame of mental health challenges can pass between family members, and carers must be careful to protect their own mental health.

What self-care helps you now?

I've started painting again, meditating, and walking. Attending the Arafmi Respite Hub made the biggest difference — being in a safe, kind environment, supported by people who show empathy. It helped me remember that we can't always carry it all ourselves.

Is there a message of hope that's helped you?

Hope came from meeting others with lived experience on the carer support team. They understood, not only because of their training, but because they'd lived through it. That gave me solutions, not just space to talk. Things like respite felt like a gift, and I realised I didn't always have to be the one creating care for others — I could receive it too.

24hr Carer Support Line

Arafmi has the only Carer Support Line in Australia which operates around the clock, 24 hours, 7 days a week. This is only possible because of the dedicated team of 26 trained volunteers working alongside the Carer Support Team. Volunteers play a vital role after-hours, on weekends and public holidays, making sure mental health carers across Queensland always have someone to talk to, gaining emotional support and helpful information.

The skills, confidence and capacity of volunteers have been enhanced this year through individual mentoring sessions, regular training, and opportunities to debrief after calls. The new training included a Mental Health First Aid course and a Culture Care session with World Wellness Group, which increased the skills of volunteers to better assist people in Queensland's diverse communities.

Arafmi's valued partnership with Wellways Carer Gateway has helped strengthen the Support Line service and improve referral pathways, and helped fund an additional Carer Support Facilitator role.

Arafmi has continued to work closely with the Queensland Police Service, receiving many referrals that often connected carers with our services for the first time. In November 2024, staff attended the Police Recruits Induction Day, meeting more than 500 new police officers, raising awareness of Arafmi and mental health carers as they embark on their careers.

Carer Education

Arafmi delivered more than 250 education and training sessions across Queensland in 2024-2025, giving mental health carers the chance to learn new skills, better understand their caring role, find helpful resources and connect with other carers. Sessions were held in person and online, with times and topics rotated to make them easier to access for carers, including those in regional, rural and remote areas.

Workshops were developed to reflect the different experiences and needs of carers. New carers learned more about their role, the mental health system and how to build coping skills, while experienced carers focused on boundaries, self-care and communication.

Practical tools such as safety plans and communication checklists helped carers feel more confident and prepared in times of crisis.

This year, a new two-hour workshop on grief and loss was developed and successfully piloted in Brisbane and the Sunshine Coast, to explore the impact of changing relationships, self-confidence, health and finances.

In an Australian first, Arafmi also developed and delivered a Youth eCPR course, to help participants aged 18-25 learn how to support themselves and others through an emotional crisis.



Participants at Arafmi's Youth eCPR course with Tanya from the Carer Support Team

Arafmi also partnered with organisations across Queensland, including Queensland Health, Carers QLD, Headspace, Lifeline, Family Connections and Wellways Carer Gateway, to deliver workshops for parents, families and carers.

Regular sessions were established with programs such as the Adolescent Day Program (supporting parents) and Crossing Paths (supporting parents of someone with suicidal ideation or at risk of suicide) on the Gold Coast. Additional sessions included communication and boundaries workshops with Wellways Carer Gateway, 12-week Family Connections courses, and Queensland Health AODS (Alcohol and Other Drugs Services) programs on the Sunshine Coast.

To complement these sessions, Arafmi delivered five Mental Health First Aid (MHFA) and five Emotional CPR (eCPR) courses to more than 80 participants, helping carers build practical skills in responding to mental health crises and recovery.

A young carer's experience with the eCPR program in April 2025

“A powerful experience that left me feeling more grounded, connected, and inspired to uplift others through genuine emotional support. Both presenters beautifully showed us that emotions are not problems to fix, but truths to honour. Each soul carries a story only they can fully know. Instead of offering answers, we're called to offer presence. Walk beside them, listen with our hearts, and hold space as they rediscover their own strength, one feeling at a time.”

Leah and Marieke, Arafmi's Respite Coordinators, with carers at the Carer Hub

Individual Carer Support

Individual support (or coaching) is one of the most requested types of support for people with caring responsibilities and is particularly valuable for people who are new to the role and feeling overwhelmed and those with complex caring situations.

The new Carer Support Facilitator role funded by Wellways Carer Gateway, allowed Arafmi to provide more of these one-on-one sessions. These short-term sessions helped carers set goals, build skills and confidence and make gradual positive changes. Sessions explored a range of topics, such as reflecting on their experiences of caring, linking with community services, gaining practical tips and emotional support, and improving health and wellbeing. Other topics included understanding the carer journey, inclusion and advocacy, work, study and volunteering, everyday life, coping with emotions, and managing finances.

Each session was personalised to their situation, giving them space to reflect and plan for the future. After receiving this individual coaching, many carers continue engaging with Arafmi services, including attending workshops and joining their local Carer Support Group.



Carer Support Groups

The number of support groups, particularly in regional areas, and the range of topics covered by groups has significantly increased in 2024-2025. This expansion stemmed from Arafmi's outreach to carers throughout the state, who identified the need for these services. Carer Support Groups are at the core of Arafmi's services to people providing care to someone experiencing a mental health challenge. They are held in person or online, facilitated by trained peer volunteers, staff or partner organisations, providing carers with emotional validation, practical information and resources. The groups cover diverse topics, including self-care strategies and coping skills, communication strategies, setting boundaries and understanding mental health systems. Guest speakers also regularly join the sessions to share information about local services and resources. Arafmi responded to these calls for more support groups, first by recognising that new volunteer group facilitators were needed throughout the state. Arafmi invited peer volunteers and community workers from Bundaberg, Ipswich, Maryborough, Hervey Bay, Mackay, Warwick, Southern Moreton Bay Islands, Atherton, Charleville and Cunnamulla to special two-day group facilitator training sessions. This training focused on understanding the needs of mental health carers and building the skills necessary to lead and organise Arafmi support groups.

As a result, volunteers and community workers with Lived/Living Experience helped establish new groups in Brisbane's Bayside, Murrumba Downs, Cooroy and Townsville (with Neami National). All facilitators received ongoing guidance from Arafmi staff, including training updates, debriefing and online community of practice sessions.

Additionally, through a new partnership with Torres and Cape Hospital and Health Service (TCHHS), Arafmi delivered training to local organisations such as the suicide prevention initiative Talk About it Tuesday, the Royal

Flying Doctor Service and Lived Experience staff working in remote locations like Weipa and Thursday Island.

Online groups are also an essential part of this network, meeting during the day and evening, focusing on carers of young people, partners and people with specific mental health concerns. A new Boundaries Practice Group experienced strong growth and community connection.

Support groups are now established in Brisbane, Redcliffe, Bayside, the Gold Coast, Sunshine Coast and Ipswich, with regional groups in Atherton, Cairns, Townsville, Mackay, Cooroy, Toowoomba and the Southern Downs. More groups are in the process of being established in other areas.

In Arafmi's annual carer survey, 95 per cent of group attendees said they felt supported and able to share openly. Carers most valued talking about their experiences, learning from others and feeling less isolated.

Feedback on Support Groups

“Thank you so much for all that you've been doing for us! Really appreciate it. I remember being very emotional when I attended my first group session. Having that space helped me at the time when I needed it. It feels good to know that we have this organisation to turn to when needed.”

“I am really looking forward to attending more support services, as I have felt so grateful for the way the Arafmi staff create such a safe, supportive and compassionate space. It means so much to be somewhere where everyone feels free to share openly, connect and be truly vulnerable without fear of judgment.”



Meet Helen

Arafmi Volunteer Support Group Facilitator

What motivated you to become a support group facilitator at Arafmi?

I had been attending support groups for five to six years, participating in a group as a carer myself. I observed the facilitators during this time, and had a lot of admiration for them, they were so clever and kind, navigating the sharing across some big groups and often with people in trauma. When a fellow carer and I decided we would like to co-facilitate a group in our own areas, I talked to Arafmi about the possibility of some training and when that opportunity arose, I put my hand up.

Can you describe what typical support group sessions look like?

The people vary in age, gender and circumstance. Every support group session has an informal welcome, a check in for newbies and then the more practical things like name badges. We do an acknowledgment of country and spend a little time explaining the guidelines to ensure safety, so that everyone knows each person who wants to share can do so without interruption. We listen and perhaps offer a comment of support or something from our own experience that seems relevant. Once everyone has had a chance to talk, we will wrap up and maybe reflect on the themes that have emerged. At the end, we always talk about self care and we try to finish on a positive note.

How do you create a safe space for mental health carers?

We try by really welcoming people who are new or newish and reminding that they don't need to share; that there's no pressure but if they do wish to talk that we are here to listen. We share our hope that just by being there, they feel seen and less alone.

How do you look after your own wellbeing, while holding space for others?

I participate like the others, even when I'm facilitating the sessions. It's about giving and receiving. I find both sides of my involvement add to my wellbeing in different ways, they both feel like self-care to me.

What do you think makes peer support so powerful for carers?

By being peers, we remove the expert/non expert dynamic and power imbalance that can exist with health professionals. It's about collaborating and sharing our perspectives. There's an equality in being peers, where there's no judgment and where trust develops really easily.

What have you learned from carers who attend your group?

Patience, tolerance of uncertainty, stamina and that things could always be worse and things could always be better. I think I have learned to be more realistic and real in my journey.

Can you share one moment that has really stayed with you?

Yes, in the early days, as a participant in the support group, I once was listening to all the caring experience in the room and it dawned on me there was over 200 years of collective caring experience. Most catch ups, we have someone in the room who has 50 or 40 years so I know when I'm walking into a room I am confident that there's already many years of experience in there and someone waiting to share some wisdom and encouragement. I am blessed and fortunate to be in the same room as them and know I can always be learning, even after 50 years of caring.

Culture Care

People providing care in culturally and linguistically diverse communities are the focus of the Culture Care Program, a joint initiative between Arafmi and community mental health service World Wellness Group (WWG). Funded by Queensland Health, the program aims to provide culturally responsive assistance for mental health carers, through individual and group support and education workshops.

In 2024-2025 services in this program also expanded, developing new workshops, retreats, support groups and events.

Two monthly support groups offered a warm and inclusive space for carers to connect, share experiences and learn new coping skills. Carers from Brazilian, Italian, Greek, Bosnian, Pakistani, Lebanese and Indian backgrounds attended these groups. They formed friendships, built confidence and explored challenges such as intergenerational trauma in migrant families.

Culture Care also successfully designed and delivered inner-city retreats in Brisbane, including one retreat specifically for men.

The team has adapted and developed new workshops in understanding and navigating the mental health system, understanding the carer journey and the importance of self care.

Importantly, workshops have also been held for community leaders, as they were identified as key carers within their networks, and often the first point of contact for people seeking support. The workshops sought to build their understanding of who in their communities are providing care, and sharing knowledge and tools to assist carers.

Attending community events, has also enabled Culture Care to reach more carers, raising awareness of the challenges facing mental health carers and the services available for them.



Above: From Arafmi, Alex, General Manager - Carer Program and Advocacy and Aynur, Arafmi's CALD Carer Support Coordinator and Viviana our partner from World Wellness Group, at the Community Leaders Workshop in Inala.

Below: Culture Care inner-city retreat attendees with Tanya, Leah, Aynur and Tina from Arafmi's Carer Support Team.



Feedback on Culture Care Support Groups

“Culture Care has been an excellent resource for me. It has been informative, nurturing and helped me to take care of my mind. Lots of self care advice and great conversations. Aynur has been amazing and very supportive each step of the way. What mental health needs is more sunlight, more laughter and more conversations.”

“It was such a refreshing and meaningful time, and I truly appreciate all the effort that went into making it special.”

“After thirteen months of life in pain and distress, I got this chance to relax and learn so much about self-care.”

“Thank you for creating such a sacred and memorable space for us men to gather, connect and heal... I feel more grounded and open.”

Top: Culture Care at the Luminous Festival
Middle: Aynur at the Global Fair with the Filipino Community
Bottom: A Multicultural Leaders event in Logan





**DO YOU KNOW A
YOUNG PERSON LOOKING
AFTER SOMEONE WHO
NEEDS EXTRA HELP?**

**IT'S LIKELY THEY
ARE A YOUNG CARER**

**THE FACT IS, YOU PROBABLY
ALREADY KNOW A YOUNG CARER**

4 YEARS OLD → 25 YEARS OLD
A Young Carer could be as young as four years old and is considered to be a Young Carer until they are 25

On average there are
2 YOUNG CARERS
in every Australian classroom

Young Carers can
SHARE
the caring responsibilities
or can be a primary carer

**THEY MIGHT
BE A FRIEND**
Many young people with
mental health challenges turn
to a friend. That friend can
become a Young Carer.

Young Carers support people with:

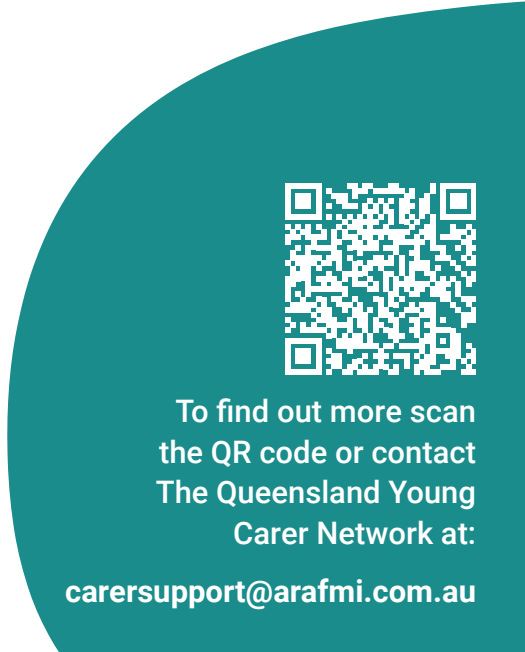
- ✓ **MENTAL HEALTH CHALLENGES**
- ✓ **DISABILITIES**
- ✓ **CHRONIC ILLNESSES**
- ✓ **AGE-RELATED CONDITIONS**
- ✓ **SUBSTANCE USE ISSUES**

They help with:

- ✓ **PERSONAL CARE**
- ✓ **MEDICATION & APPOINTMENTS**
- ✓ **MANAGING HOUSEHOLDS**
- ✓ **TRANSLATING**
- ✓ **WELLBEING & SAFETY**

FREE SUPPORT FOR YOUNG CARERS

These organisations support carers



To find out more scan
the QR code or contact
The Queensland Young
Carer Network at:

carersupport@arafmi.com.au

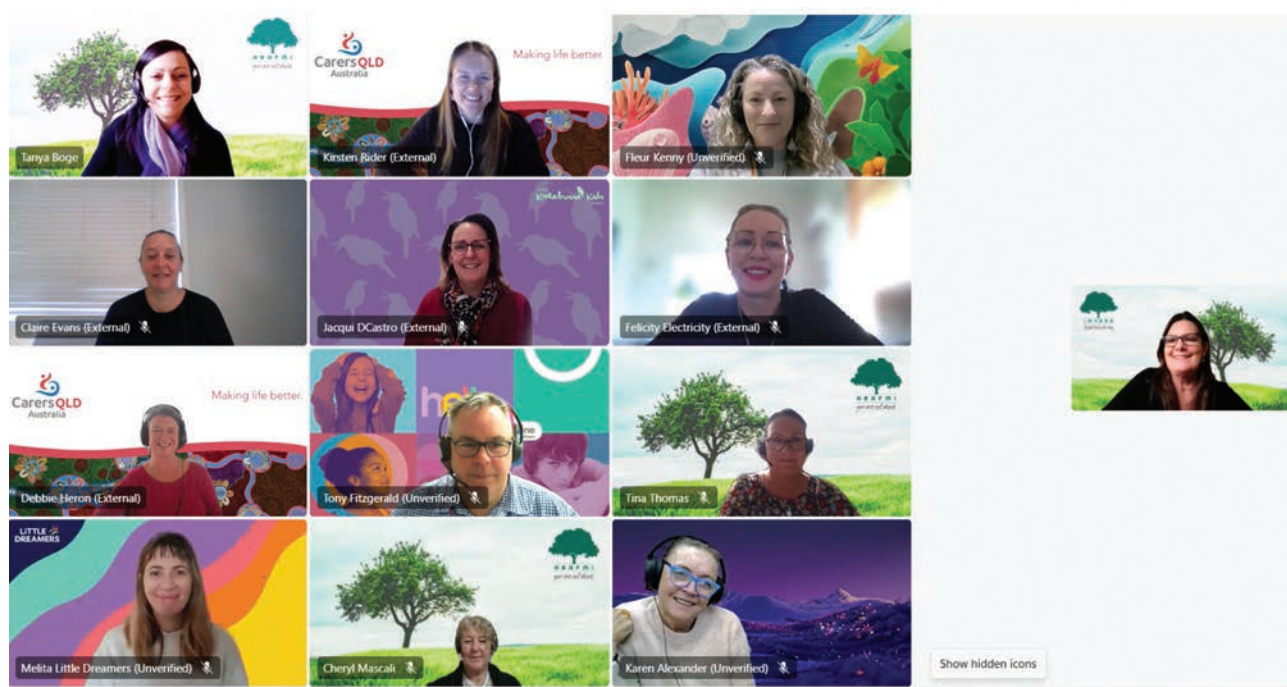
Queensland Young Carer Network

Many of the carers Arafmi supports began caring for someone when they were a child or a teenager, and this experience continues to impact their lives through adulthood. For Arafmi, that has led to a burgeoning focus on Young Carers, hoping to assist people early and build stronger futures for them.

As part of this commitment, Arafmi established the Queensland Young Carer Network, bringing together more than 12 organisations that work with and for young carers across the state. The network's goal is to raise awareness, share knowledge, and collaborate to improve young carers' wellbeing.

The network meets every three months, to share their work, discuss challenges and identify new opportunities to highlight the needs of younger people with caring responsibilities. Together, the group developed a Young Carer fact sheet, outlining both what it's like to be a young carer and the range of assistance available, helping professionals recognise young carers and refer them to the right services.

The network also took part in Youth Week activities in April, strengthening partnerships and continuing to advocate for better recognition and support of young carers across Queensland.



The Queensland Young Carer Network meets online and includes members from Wellways Carer Gateway, Carers QLD, Eating Disorders Queensland, Headspace, Kids Helpline, Kookaburra Kids, Little Dreamers, Children of Parents with a Mental Illness and MindBlank.

The Queensland Young Carer Network collaborated to create awareness-raising materials, including the poster opposite.



Meet the team

Ben Tisserand
Carer Support Coordinator

What led you to work in the carer support space?

I first started working in the mental health sector because of my own lived experience. I became a peer worker and spent nearly ten years supporting people experiencing mental health challenges. Over time I realised how much support families were giving behind the scenes and how little recognition or resourcing they received. In most services, support for families was minimal or almost non-existent.

I'd always enjoyed working with families in the programs where I was allowed to, and when a role opened up at Arafmi, I thought, "Why not try something new?" Around the same time, my partner developed her own mental health difficulties, and I suddenly became a caregiver myself. That lived experience now plays a central role in how I show up in this work.

What do you love most about working with people who provide care?

Caregivers contribute so much to someone's recovery, but they're often overlooked by the mental-health system. I love being able to give them space, support and validation, because their experiences matter. And one message I come back to constantly, drawn from my own experience, is that you can't fix another person. What you can do is walk beside them, support them and hold space for them.

What's one thing you wish more of us understood about carers' experiences?

The grief. It's a type of grief that's often misunderstood because the person they care for hasn't passed away. Instead, it's grief for the relationship as it once was, grief for the changes that weren't chosen, and grief for the emotional load they carry, often without recognition. This grief is very real, and it deserves to be acknowledged.

How do you and your team hold space for carers during difficult moments?

With empathy, curiosity, compassion and no judgment. We don't try to "fix" caregivers any more than we tell caregivers to try to fix their loved one. We're there to listen, respect their experiences and support them as they navigate their own emotions.

What message would you like to share with people who have caring roles?

I want to acknowledge how difficult it can be. As caregivers, we play an important role, but the outcome of someone else's recovery can never rest solely on our shoulders. Taking on all that responsibility often comes from fear or guilt, but it becomes an impossible weight.

Instead of focusing on achieving a specific outcome, focus on how you relate to the person you're supporting. Being present, validating their experience and maintaining connection often has far more impact than trying to control the situation. Your emotions, whatever they are, are valid, and they shape how you show up. Be gentle with yourself!

Partnering for Impact: Expanding Support for Mental Health Carers

Collaboration and partnerships are central to Arafmi's work with and for mental health carers in Queensland. We worked closely with Wellways Carer Gateway and Carers Queensland, jointly planning and funding events that offered carers programs, support and skill-building opportunities. The Brisbane Carer Gala Dinner was also co-organised for the second year, giving carers a rare opportunity to enjoy a fun night out.

Arafmi's Carer Support Team contributed to initiatives, training sessions and community meetings across regional Queensland, including Charleville, Toowoomba, Townsville and Cairns, as well as Ipswich and the Bayside area. We hosted stalls at World Suicide Prevention Day and the Baywave Youth Festival and strengthened connections at the Regional and Remote Mental Health Conference in Cairns.

Across the state, Arafmi delivered collaborative events that helped carers connect, learn and recharge. Highlights included an International Women's Day event at Mt Coot-tha Botanical Gardens with De Backman-Hoyle from Mental Health Carers Australia, and an end-of-year celebration featuring a meditative nature walk for more than 50 carers.

We also partnered with Headspace Capalaba and Wellways Carer Gateway to deliver family workshops, and joined Education and Youth Justice Minister Di Farmer at a Youth Mental Health Forum, providing emotional support. Arafmi hosted 20 peer support workers from rural and regional areas at the Carer Respite Hub and co-sponsored the PTSD Love Stories film premiere for First Responders Day, raising awareness of carers' experiences and services available to them.

Top: Morning Tea for Peer Workers from across Queensland at the Carer Hub

Middle: De Backman-Hoyle from Mental Health Carers Australia speaking at Arafmi's International Women's Day event

Bottom: PTSD Love Stories premiere



Carer Retreats

Arafmi's retreats gave carers the chance to take a break from their caring responsibilities, recharge and practice self-care alongside others who understand their experiences. Each retreat focused on wellbeing, creativity and relaxation through activities such as art, yoga, nature walks and shared meals. These off-site retreats expand opportunities available for carers.

Some of the retreats in 2024-2025 included:

The Sunshine Coast Retreat at the Glasshouse Mountains – Eleven carers stayed overnight and nine attended the day session, with one driving from the Whitsundays to attend. The retreat focused on mindfulness, connection and creativity through guided, mindfulness walks and watercolour painting inspired by the landscape. Carers enjoyed the calm surroundings, walks to the base of Mt Tibrogargan and through the orchard, and time to connect with other carers.

Stanthorpe Carers Day Retreat – this was held in partnership with Wellways Carer Gateway at Balancing Hearts Vineyard. Thirteen carers experienced a relaxing day participating in an art and conversation session with a local art therapist, a drumming activity and connection with the Arafmi Carer Support Team.

Caloundra Self-Care Retreat - yoga, self-care workshops and relaxation activities were held for almost 20 carers.

Monthly inner city Brisbane retreats – These are now a successful part of the program designed to provide opportunities for three carers with similar situations to stay for two nights and participate in a range of educational and supportive experiences. These include wellness activities, individual support and discussion about planning for the future. People on these retreats don't necessarily know each other and have valued the opportunity to connect with other carers and reduce their feelings of isolation.

What carers enjoy the most about retreats

“The ambience and location with the beautiful surroundings; the healthy and well-prepared lunch enjoyed on the one day retreat.”

“Peaceful, the accommodation was amazing. Loved being able to walk through the orchard and the walk below the retreat.”

“Enjoyed the bush walk; we were lucky to enjoy a beautiful sunny day and the painting.”

“I loved meeting and connecting with other carers, finding a lot in common and picking up lots of tips and different ways of doing things. Realising I am not alone and there are ways and techniques to use. Fantastic facilitators – very nurturing and caring and they really listened. My wellbeing was probably about a 2/10 on arrival, but I'm probably about an 8-9 now and looking forward to new beginnings.”



Carers taking time to rest, recharge and connect at Arafmi's retreats.

Arafmi Carer Respite Accommodation

Finding time and opportunities to rest can be one of the biggest challenges for mental health carers. Arafmi's Carer Respite Accommodation in Brisbane's Teneriffe is Queensland's only dedicated mental health carer respite home. It has provided a peaceful space where a growing number of carers, families and friends can take a much-needed break, reconnect with themselves and each other and restore their wellbeing.

Arafmi's respite model is completely guided by the needs and wants of the individual carer, so carers choose how they spend their time. Some use their stay to sleep and recharge or enjoy a quiet walk along the river, others take part in support groups, workshops or one-on-one sessions with staff. Each stay provides essential rest, rejuvenation and attention to personal needs—helping prevent burnout and protect the carer's health and relationships.

Arafmi has two dedicated Coordinators tailoring the respite service. One of these roles is funded by Wellways Carer Gateway which has expanded respite opportunities for mental health carers.

Demand for respite remains high, with bookings made weeks or sometimes months in advance. Additional day retreats and off-site retreats have been held to ensure more carers can benefit from this vital program.

People sometimes travel long distances to access this respite. This has included guests from areas such as Biggenden, Mackay, Allora, Hervey Bay and Stanthorpe. This has led Arafmi to begin examining how more respite hubs could be established in regional Queensland, and work on this is ongoing.

The number of men using the service has nearly tripled, with many sharing that self-care activities and connection with other men helped reduce isolation and normalise their experiences.

In September 2024, the then Queensland Health Minister Shannon Fentiman officially launched the hub, describing how, "when you walk upstairs you just feel a sense of calm and I can imagine just how special that is to some of our carers." Carers consistently rate their stay five stars, often requesting to return, highlighting the accommodation's profound impact on wellbeing, resilience and connection.



Donna Kirkland, Assistant Minister for Mental Health, Drug and Alcohol Treatment, Families and Seniors, and Central Queensland, visits the Carer Hub (fifth from left), pictured with the Arafmi team.

What carers told us about their stay

“We have felt cared for and supported in a way that we have not experienced before.”

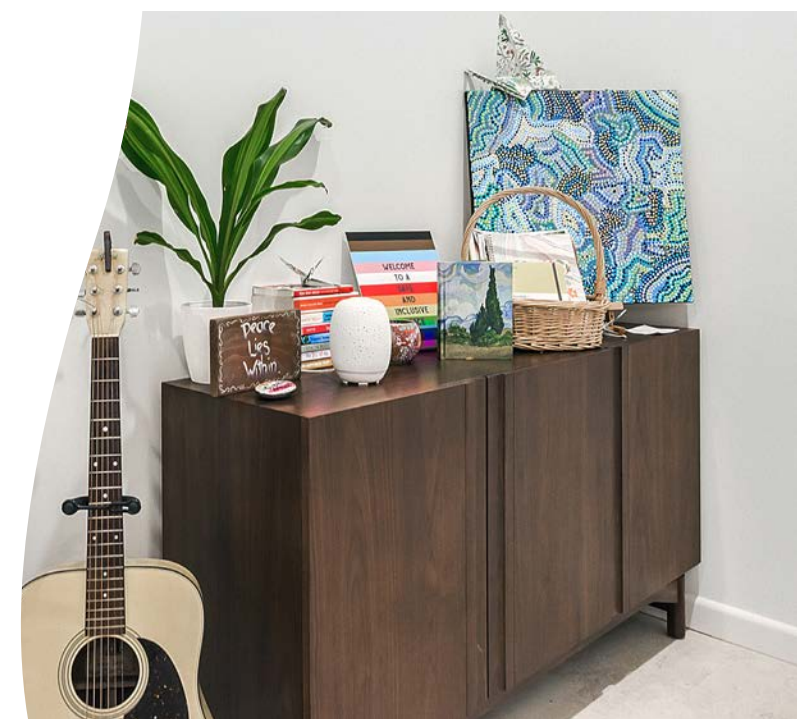
“It's so hard to put into words the feelings I have about my respite here (but I'll try!)...

The extraordinary attention to detail has truly amazed me... I have wanted for nothing.

My biggest challenge has been believing that I deserve to be here. I eventually took the time to just stop. The quietness and privacy here allow you to do so. I'll be leaving today feeling more relaxed than I have in years and ready for whenever/however the next acute mental health episode presents for my son. I'll try to set better boundaries and find myself again.”

“From the moment I walked up the stairs I was taken aback by how beautiful and grand this house is...the amount of weight lifted immediately.. I wanted to cry, coming from a place where home and life as I know it is making me so very sick. To feel every stress lifted was such a relief.”

“I did not want for anything and felt safe and cared for. I was able to hear myself think and settle my nervous system.”





Meet the team

Marieke Langelaar
Carer Gateway Respite Coordinator

What led you to work in the carer support space?

Carers do so much without expecting anything in return, and I really believe in what Arafmi stands for—supporting them and helping them shine. I wanted to be part of something that uplifts those who are so often in the background, and helps them rediscover their own value, beyond the caring role.

What do you love most about working with carers?

One of the most rewarding parts of working with carers is arranging their personalised breaks and witnessing the transformation that happens when they're finally able to step away from their caring role—even if just for a short while.

There's something truly special about seeing the change in their faces. It's like watching a weight lift, even temporarily, and glimpsing the person underneath the responsibilities. In those moments, you can see joy, relief, and sometimes even hope start to return. It's a powerful reminder of why this work matters.

What's one thing you wish more people understood about the carer experience?

Becoming a carer is rarely a path someone chooses—it's a role many step into out of love, duty, or necessity. Often, it begins quietly: helping a loved one with small tasks, attending appointments, or offering emotional support. Over time, these responsibilities grow, and what was once a part of life becomes life itself.

Many carers lose their sense of self in the process. Their own needs, dreams, and identities are quietly set aside as the needs of the person they care for take centre stage. It's a quiet kind of sacrifice, often unseen and unspoken, and it can lead to burnout, isolation, and a deep sense of being lost.

At Arafmi, we understand this journey. That's why we're here—not just to support carers in their roles, but to help them reconnect with themselves. Through education, support groups, and personalised guidance, we work with carers to build healthy boundaries, find space for self-care, and rediscover who they are outside of the caring role. Because caring for someone shouldn't mean losing yourself. With the right support, carers can find balance, reclaim their joy, and live fulfilling lives—while continuing to provide the care and compassion the person they care for relies on.

How do you and your team hold space for carers during difficult moments?

We listen without judgment, and we acknowledge their experience. Holding space is not about doing—it's about being. Being present. Being patient. Being compassionate.

What message would you like to share with carers reading this?

You are not alone. We walk alongside carers every step of the way—helping them not just survive but thrive.

Mental Health and Carers Week 2024

In October 2024, Arafmi delivered 19 events across Queensland to celebrate Queensland Mental Health Week and National Carers Week, recognising the vital role of mental health carers. These activities raised awareness of carers' needs and offered opportunities for connection, learning, and self-care.

Arafmi hosted and joined events that brought carers, community, health, and government organisations together to share experiences and strengthen networks. Local activities included day retreats in Caloundra, Burleigh Heads, Toowoomba, Stanthorpe, Cairns, and the Atherton Tablelands and the launch of the Townsville Carer Support Group with Neami National. Each event focused on relaxation, wellbeing, and practical self-care strategies.

The program featured the Culture Care Multicultural Community Leaders Connection morning, co-facilitated with the World Wellness Group, raising awareness of carer roles, the mental health system, and the Culture Care program. Arafmi's Upbeat Beats and Eats gathering at the Teneriffe Carer Hub offered respite guests and prospective guests a chance to reconnect over food, music, and conversation.

Staff also took part in external events to promote carer awareness and Arafmi's services, including the Mental Health Walk for Awareness, Little Dreamers Young Carer Festival, Thrive by the Bay, mental health expos in Ipswich, Gympie, and Nambour, We Care Charleville, Anti-Poverty Week, and networking events hosted by Wellways Carer Gateway and Carers Queensland.

Arafmi also delivered sector events such as the Queensland Mental Health Carer Forum and the Carer Gala Dinner in partnership with Carers Queensland and Wellways Carer Gateway.

These activities showcased Arafmi's ongoing commitment to recognising, supporting, and celebrating mental health carers across Queensland.



Walk for Awareness



Upbeat Beats and Eats



Townsville Carer Support Group with Neami National



Carer Gala Dinner 2024

Arafmi, in partnership with Carers Queensland and Wellways Carer Gateway, hosted the second annual Carer Gala Dinner on 11 October 2024 at The Emporium, South Bank in Brisbane. The evening brought together around 150 carers from across South East Queensland for a well-deserved night of celebration, connection and joy. Ticket priority was given to carers attending for the first time, ensuring new participants could share in the experience.

For many, it was their first opportunity in years to dress up, relax and enjoy an evening out. Guests were treated to a three-course meal, live music from the popular band Sweet Souls, and plenty of laughter on the dance floor. The photo booth, a favourite feature from the previous year, returned and proved a hit, with carers taking home fun keepsakes from the night.

Carers shared how valuable it felt to take a break, reconnect and celebrate alongside others who understand their experiences. Events like the Carer Gala provide more than a night of entertainment, they recognise carers' immense contributions and remind them they are valued, appreciated and never alone.



Feedback from carers at the Gala

“I heard so many stories tonight of how people are caring for others and the severeness and complexities are huge. But the other very simple thing I kept hearing from the table I was sitting at and on the dance floor, was how desperately nights like this are needed. I kept hearing it over and over.”

“I needed a night away from everyone and everything.”



Mental Health Carer Forum Brisbane October 2024

Every year, Arafmi brings mental health carers together with sector leaders, decision-makers, and service providers at the Mental Health Carers Forum. It's an invaluable opportunity to not only share and learn information about caring, but also a chance to relax among others who best understand the experiences of people providing care.

The 2024 Forum focused on building skills to plan for the future, featuring a keynote address and Q&A session with legal expert Brian Herd.

Queensland's Mental Health Commissioner Ivan Frkovic also spoke, along with Shanon Cooper, who began her career with Queensland Health as a carer peer worker, and shared her Lived Experience as a mental health carer.

The Forum was also an ideal opportunity to listen to the concerns of people with caring responsibilities, who identified their key priorities:

- educating GPs and health professionals about carers
- promoting available carer supports and distinguishing between crisis support and ongoing support
- increasing support for young carers (aged 4–25), including training for schools on how to identify, refer, and assist them.

We loved seeing everyone up and dancing with social enterprise dance company, Bring A Plate, and the feedback from attendees was overwhelmingly positive.

Our sincere thanks to the Queensland Mental Health Commission for its ongoing support of the event.



Farewell NDIS Services

Winding down the organisation’s community mental health and wellbeing services, funded by the National Disability Insurance Scheme, was a major change for Arafmi.

For eight years, Arafmi had offered NDIS-funded services throughout South-East Queensland, including support coordination, supported independent living, community access and short-term accommodation.

The services focused on participants with psychosocial disability and mental health conditions and had been established to complement the support Arafmi provides for mental health carers.

Our thanks and best wishes to all participants, families, and friends for their understanding. Immense gratitude to the staff, who embodied Arafmi’s values to the very end of their time with us, showing dedication in serving the participants. We wish them all the very best.



8 Years



135 Staff



350 Participants



7 Supported Independent Living Homes



4 Short Term Accommodation Sites



Meet the Board

Arafmi is guided by a dedicated board of professionals who volunteer their expertise to provide strong governance and strategic direction, ensuring we continue to deliver quality support to mental health carers.



Denise Buckby
Chairperson



Oddur Thomas Augustsson
Director



Melanie Mayne-Wilson
Director



Simon Moore
Company Secretary



Rebecca Medway
Director



Muralee Siva
Director



Nancy Spencer
Director

Meet the Senior Leadership Team



Irene Clelland
Chief Executive Officer



Puji Astuti
General Manager
Corporate Services (CFO)

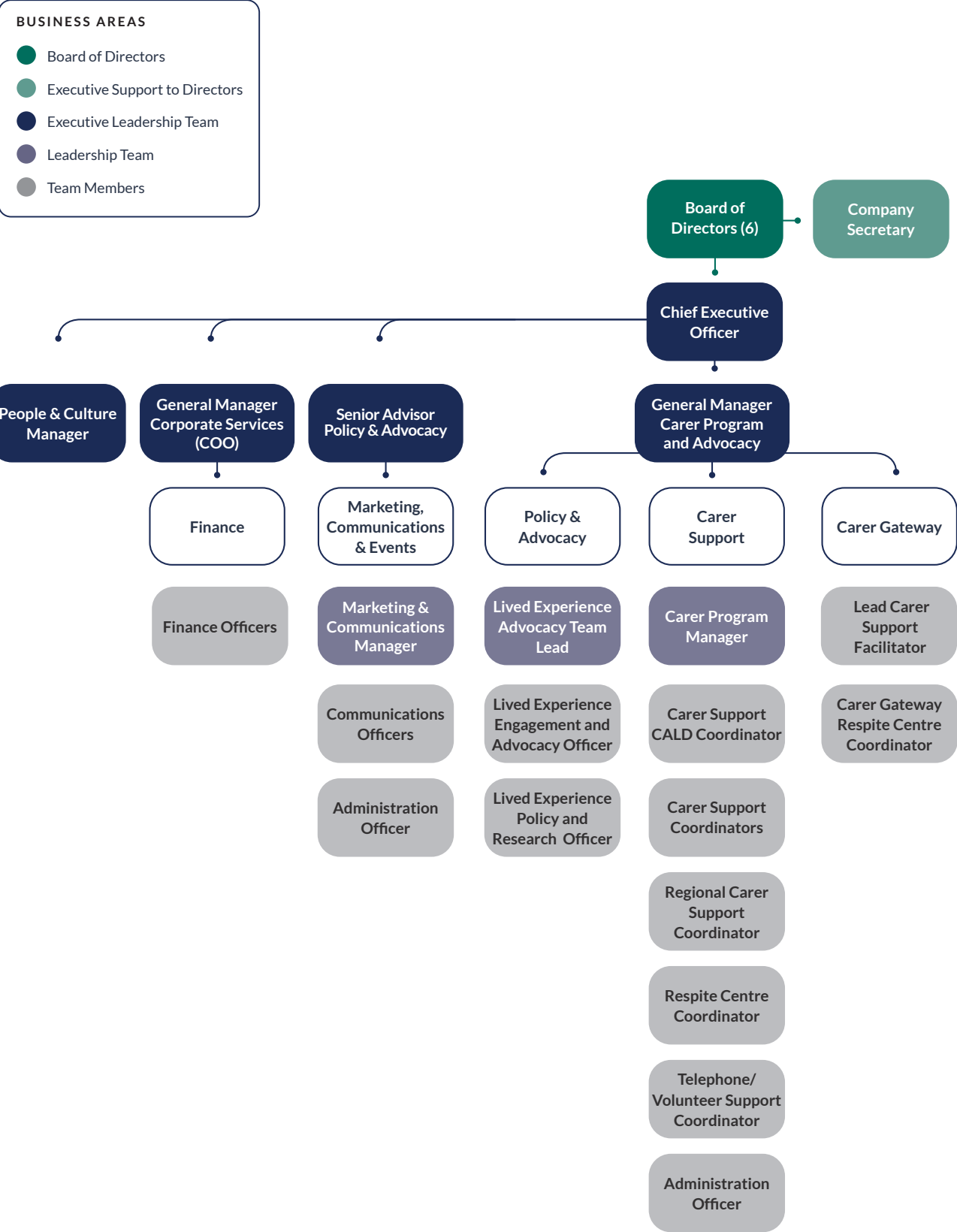


Alex Tyson
General Manager
Carer Program and Advocacy



Emma Griffiths
Senior Advisor
Policy and Advocacy

Organisational Chart



General Manager Corporate Services (CFO) Report



The strategic decision to transition out of NDIS Services to focus on Arafmi’s core mission of supporting mental health carers is reflected in the 2024-2025 financial results. Overall, our continuing programs remain strong, and our financial position is sound.

In 2024-2025, Arafmi experienced significant growth in its Carer Support Services offering. This growth reflects both the increasing demand for our services and the strength of our team’s capability. Focusing on this ensures that we can sustainably continue to deliver meaningful, long-term outcomes for people providing care.

In accordance with Australian Accounting Standards, Arafmi’s NDIS-funded community mental health service has been classified as a “discontinued operation”. As a result, the financial statements and comparative figures presented in this Annual Report have been adjusted to reflect income and expenditure from continuing operations only. This adjustment has the effect of making the organisation’s overall turnover appear smaller than in previous years, even though our core programs have continued to perform strongly.

In line with Australian Accounting Standards Board requirements, a provision of \$600k has also been recognised in this financial year for expected costs associated with the NDIS closure. While these costs will be incurred in the next financial year, accounting standards require recognition of the obligation when it is identified. This has resulted in a reported deficit for the year, however this does not reflect a deterioration in the organisation’s financial health or operating capacity.

We have managed our resources responsibly, supporting our teams through these significant changes, and ensuring the organisation remains well-placed to deliver on its mission in the year ahead.

I would like to thank Arafmi staff for their hard work and professionalism during this period of adjustment, and for their ongoing commitment to transparency and good governance.

Puji Astuti
Chief Operating Officer

Arafmi's Revenue Statistics



Operating Deficit

\$445,886



Assets

\$8.6m



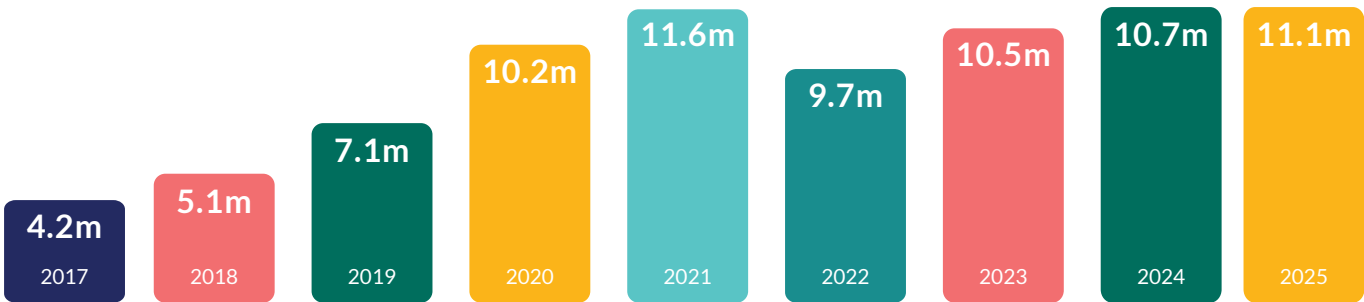
Liabilities

\$1.9m



Equity

\$6.7m



Revenue

Statement of Profit or Loss and Other Comprehensive Income

Arafmi Limited *For the year ended 30 June 2025*

	2025	2024
Revenue and other income	3,653,155	2,463,414
Employee benefit expenses	(2,358,786)	(1,609,423)
Depreciation and amortisation expense	(248,560)	(223,395)
Finance costs	(15,941)	(11,823)
Rental expenses	(116,103)	-
Audit, legal and consultancy expenses	(204,052)	(280,505)
Client expenses	(11,885)	(5,122)
General office expenses	(76,058)	(46,390)
Communication expenses	(147,348)	(165,394)
Other expenses	(406,945)	(444,855)
Results from continuing operations	67,477	(323,493)
Tax expense	-	-
Discontinued operations (Deficit)/Surplus from discontinued operation	(513,363)	334,442
Total (Deficit)/Surplus for the year	(445,886)	10,949
Total comprehensive (Deficit)/Surplus for the year	(445,886)	10,949

Statement of Financial Position

Arafmi Limited *As at 30 June 2025*

	2025	2024
Assets		
Cash and cash equivalents	1,106,026	1,176,022
Trade and other receivables	389,861	300,394
Short term deposits	3,304,045	3,155,450
Other current assets	104,299	78,466
Total current assets	4,904,231	4,710,332
Financial assets	117,129	105,467
Other non-current assets	51,997	38,290
Property, plant and equipment	3,218,518	3,211,365
Rights-of-use assets	334,111	226,267
Total non-current assets	3,721,755	3,581,389
Total assets	8,625,986	8,291,721
Liabilities		
Trade and other payables	391,875	266,319
Provisions	1,078,035	475,970
Deferred revenue	16,884	61,377
Lease Liabilities	110,696	102,014
Total current liabilities	1,597,490	905,680
Provisions	39,796	57,836
Lease Liabilities	257,148	150,767
Total non-current liabilities	296,944	208,603
Total liabilities	1,894,434	1,114,283
Net assets	6,731,552	7,177,438
Equity		
Reserves	230,000	230,000
Retained earnings	6,501,552	6,947,438
Total equity	6,731,552	7,177,438

Statement of Cash Flows

Arafmi Limited For the year ended 30 June 2025

	2025	2024
Cash flows from operating activities		
Receipts from customers and funding bodies	10,824,268	10,634,353
Payments to suppliers and employees	(10,585,931)	(10,704,865)
Cash generated from operating activities	238,337	(70,512)
Interest received	155,591	147,709
Interest paid	(784)	(1,238)
Net cash from operating activities	393,144	75,959
Cash flows from investing activities		
Acquisition of property, plant and equipment	(116,219)	(141,219)
Investment in terms deposits	(173,964)	(465,056)
Net cash used in investing activities	290,183	(606,275)
Cash flows from financing activities		
Payment of finance lease liabilities	172,957)	(160,297)
Net cash used in financing activities	(172,957)	(160,297)
Net (decrease) / increase in cash and cash equivalents	(69,996)	(690,613)
Cash and cash equivalents at beginning of year	1,176,022	1,866,635
Cash and cash equivalents at end of year	1,106,026	1,176,022

Partnerships & Acknowledgments

We would like to thank all the following organisations:



The Arafmi Team

We want to extend our heartfelt appreciation to the whole Arafmi team for your ongoing dedication and exceptional work throughout the year. Your commitment to supporting mental health carers and engaging with participants has made a meaningful impact.





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