

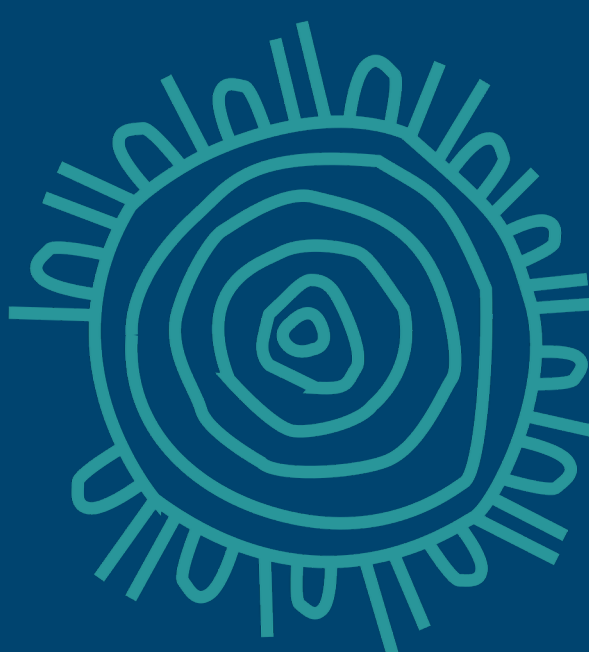


*Relationships
Australia*[®]
NORTHERN TERRITORY

50 YEARS

ANNUAL REPORT

2023 - 2024



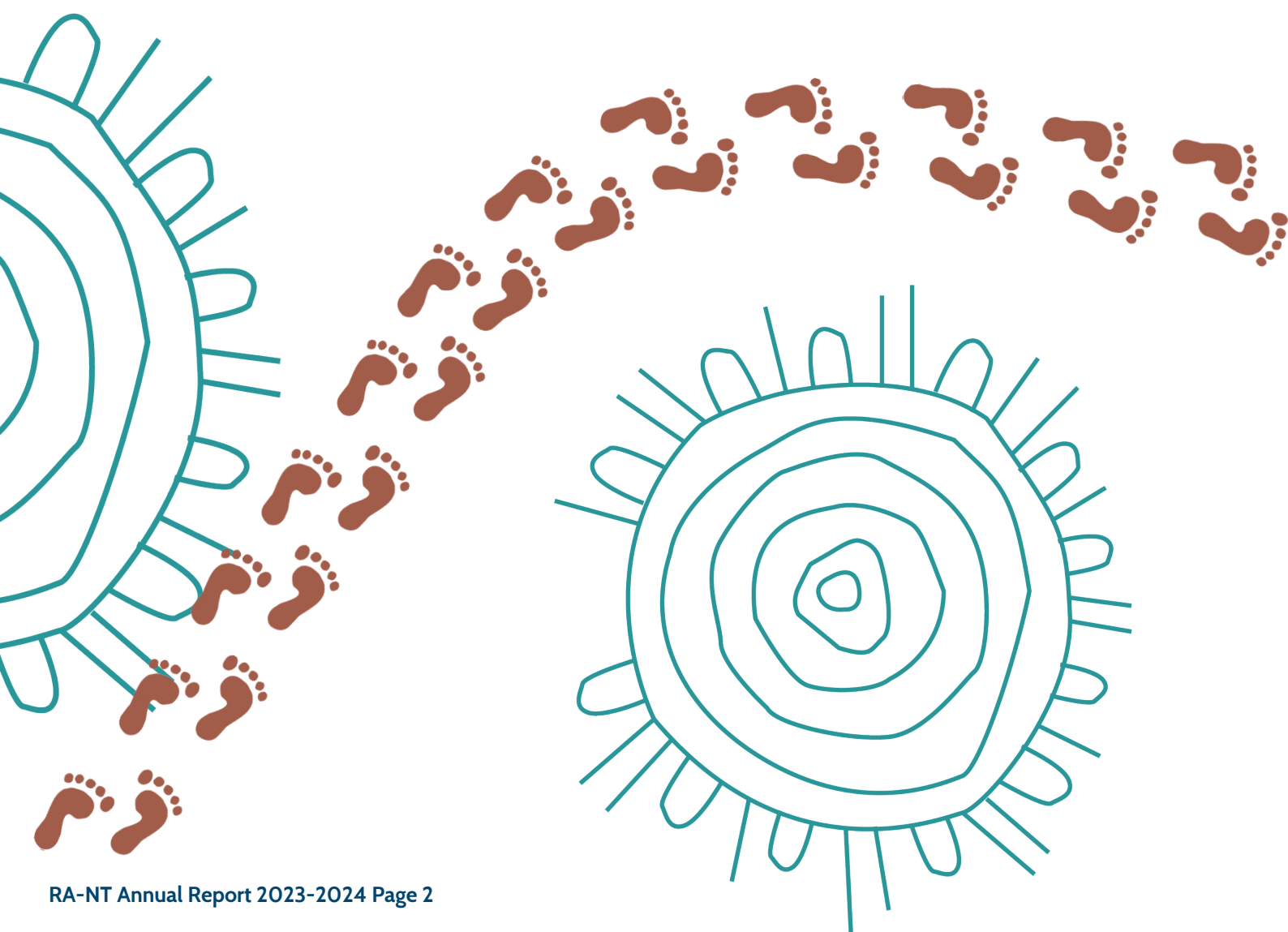
Annual Report

2023-2024

Relationships Australia - Northern Territory (RA-NT) acknowledges the Aboriginal Traditional Owners of the lands throughout the Northern Territory on whose country we have the privilege to live and work. We pay our respects to their Elders past, present and emerging.

We also acknowledge the funding provided by Australian, State and non-government providers which underpins the services we deliver.

We particularly thank the Commonwealth Department of Social Services and Attorney-General's Department for the ongoing trust they place in RA-NT to deliver crucial services in support of Northern Territory families and communities, and extend that thanks to our other funders.



Message from the Chair



It's an honour to provide my final report with Relationships Australia – Northern Territory before stepping down at the AGM.

Since joining the Board in 2018, and being elected Chairperson in 2022, I'm very proud of the work and contributions we've made at RA-NT, both at Board and staff levels, which have seen the organisation go from strength to strength and continue to be a well-respected organisation, playing a vital role in supporting individuals, families and communities across the NT. I also feel grateful and privileged to have worked with such a professional and inspiring team over this period.

Building upon our 50th Anniversary in 2023, the Board completed a number of priorities this past financial year that has included a new strategic plan, the reinvigoration of Board committees, the updating of the Constitution and the recruitment of 2 new Board members.

In late 2023, the Board recognised that it was time for a refreshment of the strategic plan and supported the engagement of Social Ventures Australia to work with the Board, Executive and Staff. Earlier this year, the Board signed off on the RA-NT Strategic Plan 2024-2026, and one of the Board priorities this year has been to continue to focus and support the work to drive this new plan.

To support the work of the new strategic plan, this year has also seen the reinvigoration of 2 committees: the Governance Committee and the Practice Quality and Risk Committee. I would like to acknowledge the support and work done by the Board members in these committees, as well as the Finance Committee.

RA-NT's Governance Committee has worked closely with an external consultant to review and update our Constitution based on the NT Inc Association's Model Constitution. This new Constitution will be an important agenda item at the AGM and sees many improvements including reducing the risk of members all stepping down at once.

It is also important to acknowledge the strength of Relationships Australia as a Federation and the strong collaboration amongst all States and Territories. I have been privileged as Chairperson to also be a part of changes over the past few years to the structure of the Federation with the newly formed Council. Collaboration between members remains critical to our approach across the country, sharing national knowledge and expertise, and applying it locally to provide solutions on the ground, and best possible services and support for children, adults, families and communities.

I would like to take this opportunity to acknowledge and thank Sue Coombs and Fay Gurr who have also chosen to step down from the Board this year, both after significant terms with RA-NT. For many years Sue worked tirelessly as our Treasurer, and Fay as our Vice Chairperson. Their dedication and commitment to RA-NT is to be commended.

With Sue's intent to leave, the Board held a recruitment drive in Darwin and was incredibly pleased to announce the appointment of Bernard Ho as the new Treasurer in June. Bernard's knowledge and skills have already proven to be of great benefit to the Finance Committee and the Board in general.

After a lengthy recruitment process, the Board was also thrilled to recently fill the 2 vacant positions in Alice Springs. We welcome Kudzai Mutsunge and Alex Craig to the Board and look forward to benefitting from their local knowledge, insight and connections in Central Australia.

To the current, exiting and new Board members, thank you for your significant contribution over this period – your commitment, energy and support is greatly appreciated.

Finally, on behalf of the Board, I would like to acknowledge and say a special thank you to the CEO and RA-NT staff for their ongoing and tremendous support and effort as they work, day in, day out to strengthen the relationships of all Territorians.

I wish you all the best going forward, and no doubt will see RA-NT continue to grow and thrive in achieving strategic goals and serving the NT community.

Meghan Bailey
Chairperson

Message from the CEO



Our 50th Anniversary milestone, acknowledged and celebrated in July 2023, really gave us the opportunity to recognise the pivotal work Relationships Australia – Northern Territory (RA-NT) plays within our community.

This milestone also gave us an opportunity to really shift the focus to looking ahead - no doubt to another 50 years providing services for supporting and empowering individuals to thrive within their families and communities.

The focus throughout the 2023-2024 financial year was to work closely with the Board to position RA-NT for a sustainable future. Key pieces of work to support this vision were the development of a new Strategic Plan, new structural realignment, an inaugural Practice Quality Forum, embedding the strengths-based approach, an extended Project Refresh to Alice Springs, investment in ICT, and the introduction of new Cultural Fitness program.

With 3,059 clients over 20 programs, our reach is far and wide. This period saw a greater emphasis on community engagement and outreach services. I look forward to providing a much greater snapshot of each program in our new initiative *2024 Our Impact Report* early next year.

Strategic Plan

Throughout July-October 2023, all staff were invited to participate in stakeholder engagement sessions with Social Ventures Australia for the development of the new Strategic Plan, and the Board signed off on the new Strategic Plan 2024-26 in January 2024.

The Strategic Plan is forward-facing, ambitious and designed to position RA-NT for growth - to meet the needs of the community and our clients. I am delighted to share our new **purpose** as follows:

We empower individuals, families and communities to grow through a rich culture of belonging, connection and respectful relationships

More details about the Strategic Plan can be seen on page 7 and Our Values on page 8.

Message from the CEO continued

Cultural Fitness

Key elements of our Strategic Plan include a First Nations focus underpinning our priorities, enablers and the development of growth principles and strategic horizons.

Throughout this period, we also recognised the difficult time experienced by our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities following the Voice Referendum. We remain committed to walking together with our First Nations staff to strengthen our efforts.

I particularly want to thank our Senior Cultural Adviser Warren Smith throughout this period for his support and willingness to assist staff understand the process, conduct some yarning sessions and provide information.

We are also very fortunate, as a Federation, to have a very strong network of First Nations leaders through the Relationships Australia – Indigenous Network (RAIN).

Post the referendum, Warren took the lead in reviewing our cultural fitness foundational knowledge and, with the support from other First Nation staff, did extensive research and made a recommendation to trial a new approach with the introduction a new program for all staff to complete. In May we rolled out the new Cultural Competence Course to all staff which is run through the Centre for Cultural Competence Australia (CCCA). CCCA is an organisation dedicated to the training and development of individuals and organisations in the field of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural competence.

Warren supplemented the course by running regular cultural training support/yarning sessions where staff could meet up to discuss any learnings or issues raised from the course.

Practice Quality

Our newly developed Practice Quality Framework, led by our Director of Practice Quality, Nathalia Perez Alfonso, aims to enhance the consistency, effectiveness and overall quality of practices across the organisation.

As part of the framework implementation process, all practitioners participated in a face-to-face, two-day Practice Quality Forum held in Darwin in June. The primary goal of the forum was to launch the framework and to create unified standards across all practices and programs, specifically focusing on risk assessments, serious matters reports and client records. The forum provided an invaluable opportunity for knowledge sharing, collaboration and professional development, ensuring that all practitioners are aligned with the new standards and are equipped to deliver high-quality services.

The feedback from a post-forum survey carried out with staff showed that there was a great increase in all aspects of Practice Quality including knowledge in mandatory reporting, confidence in assessing client risk and awareness of the importance of data collection. The feedback also showed an increase in the understanding of the Practice Quality Framework and of RA-NT's strategic direction.

Completion of the Disability Royal Commission Support Services Program

Late 2023 saw the completion of the Disability Royal Commission Support Services (DRCCS) Program.

Despite RA National's best efforts to advocate at all levels of government for an extension of our services, the program concluded on 31 December 2023.

In Darwin, the DRCCS team held a function for clients who had used, and were highly appreciative of our support services. Following the completion of this program, we successfully redeployed 90% of our staff to other areas of the organisation.

To leverage the insights gained from the concluded program, the National office took the initiative to convene a meeting for all RAs in December 2023. The objective was to collaboratively develop a Disability Strategy, mirroring the structure of the existing RAIN plan on a page.

During this meeting, all RAs pledged their commitment to ongoing enhancements in both employment and the provision of services for individuals with disabilities.



Above: RA-NT staff at the inaugural Practice Quality Forum.

Message from the CEO continued

This period also unfortunately saw increased gendered-based violence and mental health issues within our community. RA-NT participated in two key reviews by the Attorney-General's Department for Family and Relationship Services programs. Overall, both reviews demonstrated the strong current need, and recognised the complexities of working with families at risk. We hope the recommendations to government will see more wrap-around services for individuals and families at such a time in need.

A special thank you

I would like to thank the Board members, who as volunteers give their time so generously throughout the year. I would like to acknowledge Meghan, Fay and Sue who are all stepping down in 2024 after many years with RA-NT. In key roles as Chairperson, Vice Chairperson and Treasurer respectively they have been tireless in their dedication to RA-NT.

I would in particular like to recognise the significant contribution and leadership of Meghan Bailey as our Chairperson over the past couple of years. Your support for RA, not only in the NT but also the National Federation, is greatly appreciated. After 6 years on the Board, you have certainly positioned us well for the future. I personally would like to thank you for your ongoing support, guidance and honesty. I will miss our catch-ups.

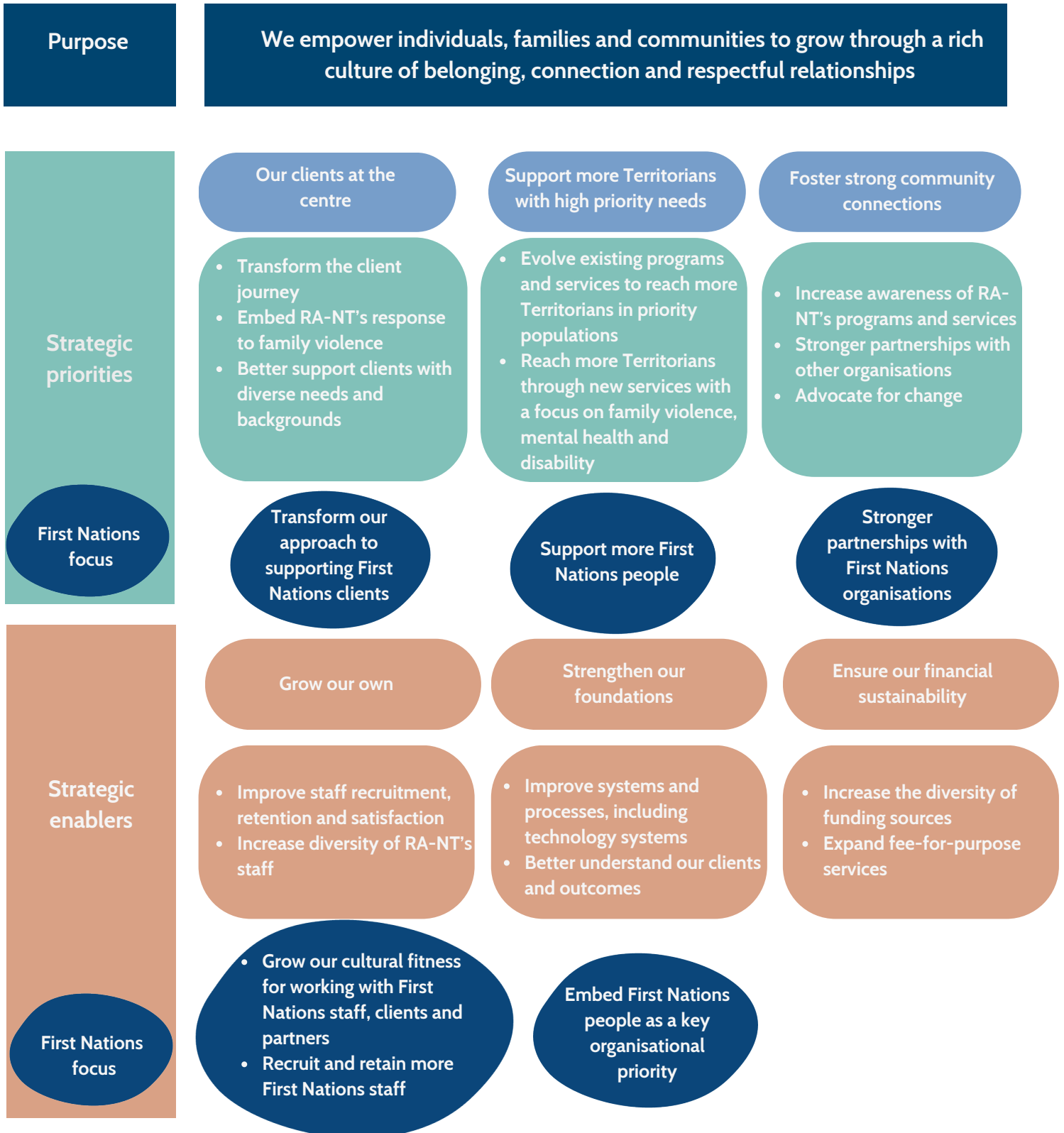
I would also like to pay special thanks to Sue Coombs for all that she has brought to the RA-NT Board in approximately 15 years of service, many as our Treasurer with valuable financial skills and insight. It is a significant amount of time as a volunteer and one that we are truly thankful to Sue for. I am also thankful for the many years of service that our Vice Chairperson Fay Gurr has given to RA-NT, especially in this past year with the reinvigorated Governance Committee where Fay took on the position of Chair. Thank you for your steady guidance and insights, Fay.

Thank you to the Senior Executive Team members for your support and dedication over the past year and finally the BIGGEST THANK YOU to the amazing team at RA-NT. You all contribute so much and inspire me greatly to work harder to provide a supportive and welcoming environment.

Terri-ann Maney

CEO

Strategic Plan 2024-2026



Our Values

RA-NT's new values bring together different elements of our approach to working together and with our clients

Listen with
compassion

We care deeply for each other and our clients. We are committed to listening with curiosity and empathy, and to providing a space for people to feel safe and supported.

Work
together with
respect

Relationships and the way we connect with each other are our lifeblood and are core to building each other up and working towards growth and healing.

Celebrate
difference
and promote
fairness

We embrace diversity and prioritise inclusion, equity and self-determination. We are strong in our commitment to social justice across ages, gender, cultural and financial differences.

Strive for quality
and trust

We value honesty and truth, and we do what we say we will do with a commitment to quality and professionalism. We are always learning about our clients, ourselves and best practice, to deliver the best services and programs that we can.

Practice Quality Forum

The inaugural Practice Quality Forum held in June 2024, brought together practitioners from Alice Springs and Darwin. The forum was held to further implement our Practice Quality Framework which is a comprehensive system put in place by RA-NT to ensure the delivery of high-quality, safe and effective services to individuals, couples and families in the Northern Territory.

It serves as a guiding structure for all aspects of service delivery, from leadership and governance to risk management, data-driven decision-making, and cultural responsiveness.

Huge congratulations to Nathalia Perez Alfonso, Director of Practice Quality for leading this forum. Our post-forum evaluation demonstrated a substantial increase in knowledge across all areas as follows:

Question	Pre (Number of Very High)	Post (Number of Very High)	Increase/decrease on Very High
Your awareness of RA-NT strategic direction	2	11	↑ 5.5x
Your awareness and understanding of "practice quality" and what that means as a practitioner	3	13	↑ 4.3x
Your awareness of the importance of data collection	7	17	↑ 2.42x
Your knowledge on when a Mandatory Report of DFV and child abuse is required	5	12	↑ 2.4x
Your confidence in assessing client risk and responding appropriately	2	10	↑ 5x
Your knowledge on what documentation is required when responding to client risk at RA-NT	2	10	↑ 5x
Your knowledge on what constitutes as a "Serious Matter"	2	11	↑ 5.5x
Your knowledge of why RA-NT requires completion of Serious Matters forms	5	11	↑ 2.2x
Your knowledge on how to complete a CRAT	3	10	↑ 3.33x
Your confidence in completing a CRAT	2	9	↑ 4.5x
Your knowledge on why RA-NT required service record completion	3	13	↑ 4.33x
Your awareness of what is expected of you as a practitioner regarding the completion of service records and event notes	2	11	↑ 5.5x

RA-NT staff feedback on things that worked well at the Practice Quality Forum



Our Services



Individual and family counselling



Family law counselling, mediation and dispute resolution



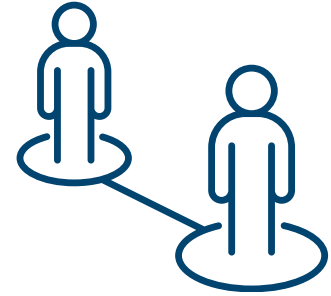
Employee Assistance Program



Open Arms to members and families of Defence



Services for older Australians including relationship, mediation and elder abuse case management



Outreach services



Drumbeat for children



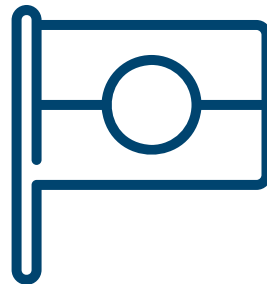
Specialised family violence services



Workplace mediation



Children's counselling



First Nation's services



Services for Forgotten Australians, Forced Adoption Support Services, Intercountry Adoptee Family Support Service, Post Adoption Support Services and Redress Support Services

Our clients



3,059
Total clients



14,797
Total sessions



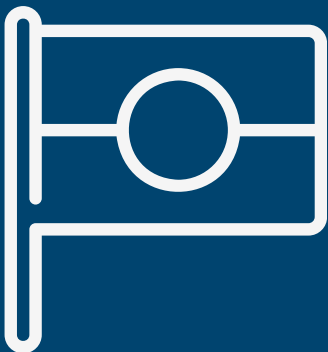
11.2%
Culturally diverse



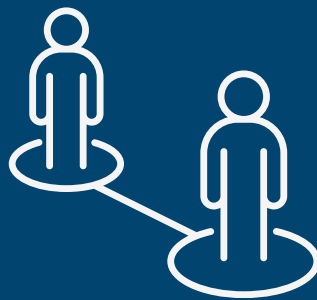
7%
Under 18 years



7%
Over 60 years



22.7%
Aboriginal &
Torres Strait Islander



13
Remote community
services



3
Offices in Alice Springs,
Darwin & Katherine

Our People

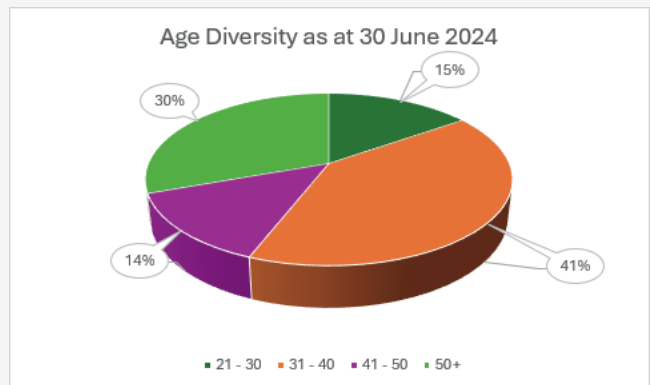
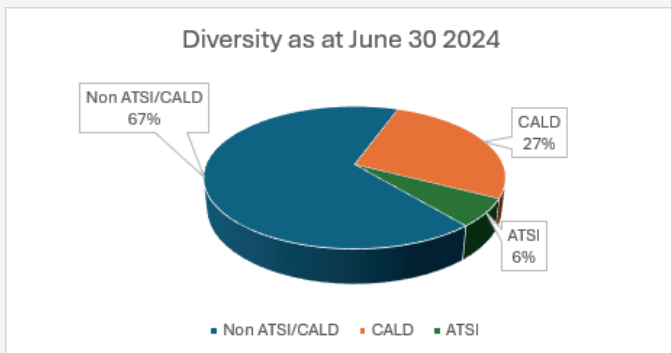
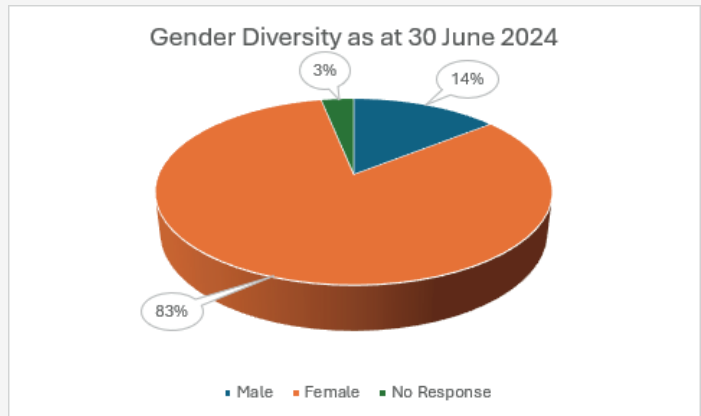
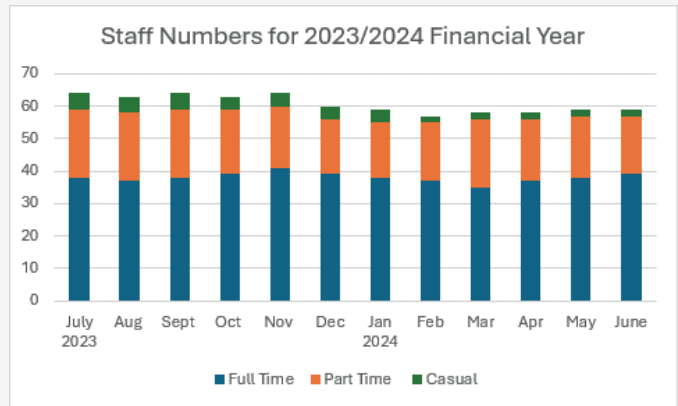
RA-NT's staff numbers across the year have sat around the 60 mark, with the full-time contingent being the largest, averaging around 60% of the workforce.

In percentage terms, the full-time contingent has increased slightly as some fixed-term contracts have been converted to ongoing contracts in line with legislation.

Part-time numbers initially took up close to 33% of the workforce and finished out the year at 30.5%.

RA-NT continues to enjoy a diverse team with the majority of staff aged between 31 and 40 years with 6% identifying as ATSI and 27% as culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD).

These figures have continued to increase since June with the recruitment of a number of staff who identify as CALD.



Staff Milestones



5 years
Jonathan Mogridge



5 years
Louise Crawley



5 years
Maddy Schipper

Values Champion Award Winners 2023-2024

2023

July - Kelly Rioli
August - Matthew Martin
September - Lindy Morgan
October - Celia Gurr



2024

February - Jonathan Mogridge
March - Kelsey Cornish
April - Alex Baxendale
May - Barry Sullivan and Holly Meegan
June - Warren Smith

Our Board

NAME	POSITION	MEETINGS ATTENDED 23/24
Meghan Bailey	Chairperson	5 (retiring AGM 2024)
Fay Gurr	Vice Chairperson	4 (retiring AGM 2024)
Esteban Cox	Treasurer	2 (retired AGM 2023)
Denise Casey	Board Member	1 (retired AGM 2023)
Sue Coombs	Treasurer	5 (retired June 2024)
David Smith	Public Officer	3
Rachel Buckley	Board Member	4
Robert McIntosh	Board Member	3
Kwame Selormey	Board Member	4
Bernard Ho	Treasurer	1 (appointed June 2024)
Kudzai Mutsunge	Board Member	Appointed October 2024
Alexandra Craig	Board Member	Appointed October 2024

Thank you to our retiring Board members in 2023-2024



Meghan Bailey



Fay Gurr



Sue Coombs



Denise Casey



Esteban Cox



1300 458 600

rantreception@ra-nt.org.au | nt.relationships.org.au

Darwin
5 Shepherd Street
Darwin 0800

Katherine
6 Katherine Arcade
15 Katherine Terrace
Katherine 0850

Alice Springs
2 Parsons Street
Alice Springs 0870

*Relationships
Australia*[®]
NORTHERN TERRITORY

50 YEARS