



# ANNUAL REPORT

**2024-25**

**Advocare**  
Empowering older people in WA

## Our Services

SENIORS PEAK BODY WA



### HOW WE DO IT

Advocacy Individual and Systemic   Aged Care Volunteer Visitors Scheme   Care finder Service   Community Information Sessions   Elder Abuse Helpline

## Our Vision and Values



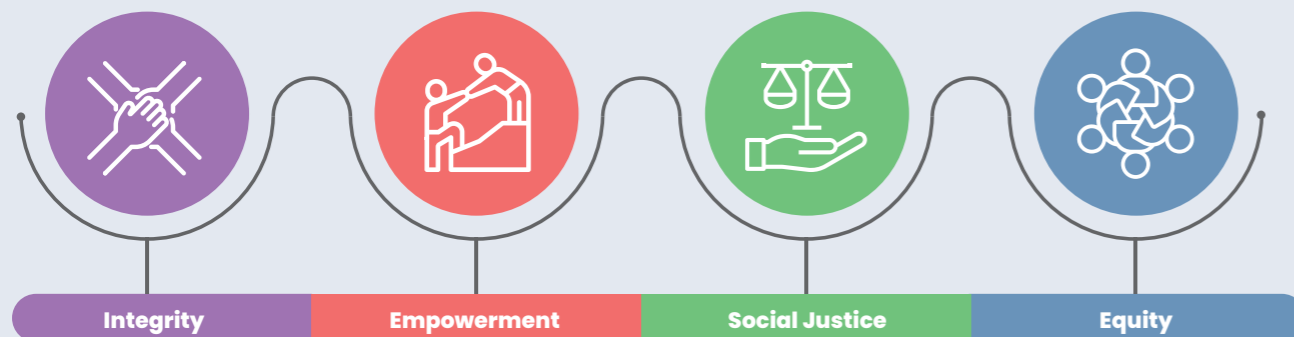
### OUR VISION

A society where older people are safe, empowered and cherished.



### OUR PURPOSE

To transform lives and communities through education, collaboration, and advocacy, supporting older Western Australians to live the lives of their choice.



We act with integrity to support an environment of honesty, confidentiality and mutual trust.

We work with our clients to ensure they are well informed to make choices and we will advocate with and for them.

We are here to protect the rights of older people. Human rights do not diminish with age.

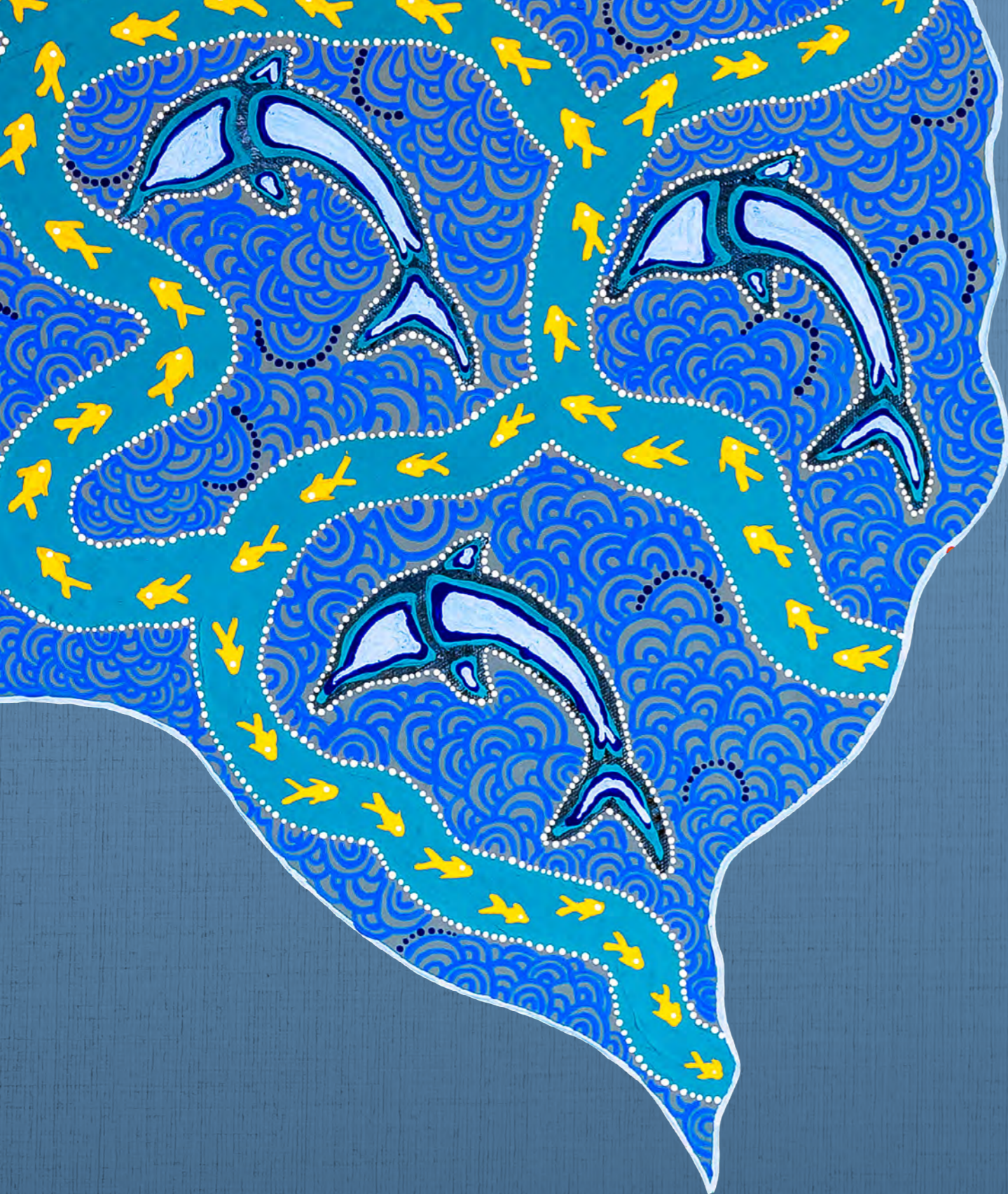
We support all older people, respecting the diversity of our community.

# CONTENTS

About Advocare	05
Acknowledgement of Country	05
Advocare leaders	06
Chairperson's report	07
Chief Executive Officer's report	08
Advocare Strategy 2025	10
Seniors Peak Body WA	12
Advocare key events	14
Strategic priorities and initiatives	
<b>REACH AND IMPACT</b>	20
Strategic priorities and initiatives	
<b>CULTURE AND SAFETY OVERVIEW</b>	26
Strategic priorities and initiatives	
<b>SUSTAINABLE GROWTH</b>	30
Financials	32

### Our cover image:

Thanks to our Mid West advocate, Karen Noble, who took this photo of Northhampton's iconic sheep.



## About Advocare

Advocare is a leader in addressing the rights of older people and elder abuse.

We fight proactively for the rights of older people. For nearly 30 years, we have proudly helped older Western Australians access the right supports, information and protections available to them.

We are a not-for-profit organisation, completely independent from aged care providers. Our support and services are free, confidential and unbiased.

Advocare aims to empower older people by giving them information and choice so they can make informed decisions to live the life they want on their terms. In 2024, we were proud to be appointed as custodians of WA's Seniors Peak Body by the Cook Government.

## Acknowledgement of Country

We at Advocare, who walk alongside older persons throughout Western Australia, would like to acknowledge and respect the Whadjuk people of the Noongar nation where our head office stands.

We also acknowledge and respect all older persons from other parts of this vast state who live and work in the regions.

We acknowledge the traditional custodians of this country and respect their connection to land, sea and community, and pay our respects to their culture and Elders past and present.

Advocare leaders

In February 2025, Advocare welcomed Harold Preston as Board Director and member of the Finance Investment and Risk Subcommittee; Vernon Thompson as a member of the Finance Investment and Risk Subcommittee (also elected as Subcommittee Chair); and B-K Tan joined Advocare as a member of the Governance and Compliance Committee.

Our thanks go to Director Chris Burton, who retired in September 2024; and Subcommittee Members, Anne Mullins and Rachel Beard, who retired in February 2025 for their contributions.



**Susan Barrera**  
Board Chair

11/11 Board meetings attended  
11/11 Committee meetings attended



**Arnold Wong**  
Vice Chair, Member Finance, Investment and Risk Committee

11/11 Board meetings attended  
5/5 Committee meetings attended



**Moira Aynsley**  
Director, Chair Governance and Compliance Committee

9/11 Board meetings attended  
6/6 Committee meetings attended



**Gail Green**  
Director, Interim Chair Finance, Investment and Risk Committee

11/11 Board meetings attended  
5/5 Committee meetings attended



**Alyce Martin**  
Director, Member Governance and Compliance Committee

10/11 Board meetings attended  
5/6 Committee meetings attended



**Chris Murphy**  
Director, Member Governance and Compliance Committee

9/11 Board meetings attended  
6/6 Committee meetings attended



**Surya Ambati**  
Director, Member Finance, Investment and Risk Committee

9/11 Board meetings attended  
4/5 Committee meetings attended



**Harold Preston**  
Director, Member Finance, Investment and Risk Committee

5/5 Board meetings attended  
3/3 Committee meetings attended



**Vernon Thompson**  
Chair Finance, Investment and Risk Committee

N/A Board meetings attended  
3/3 Committee meetings attended



**B-K Tan**  
Member Governance and Compliance Committee

N/A Board meetings attended  
4/4 Committee meetings attended

Chairperson's report

The last financial year has been one of consolidation and achievement, reflecting the hard work and dedication of the staff, with oversight and input from the Board.

This year, Advocare reached a significant milestone, becoming the recognised Seniors Peak Body in Western Australia. This recognition reflects the strength of our advocacy and the dedication of our staff and volunteers, while also reminding us of the responsibility this role carries. We remain committed to safeguarding the rights and wellbeing of older Western Australians.

A major highlight was the extension of our National Aged Care Advocacy Program (NACAP) contract for a further four years. The Board welcomed this decision, which affirms the value of our work and the strong outcomes achieved under the previous contract. It also gives confidence to continue building our support for older people to understand and exercise their rights in the aged care system.

The passing of the new Aged Care Act was another significant development, signalling major reform. Provisions enhancing the rights of older people may increase demand for Advocare’s services, and we are preparing to respond.

In line with our values and commitment to social justice, we established a Reconciliation Working Group to

guide our journey toward greater understanding, respect, and partnership with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.

During the year, we welcomed our new CEO, Bev Jowle, who took over the leadership of the organisation. The Board continued working with her to strengthen the organisation in new and innovative ways.

Membership of the Board remained stable, with the addition of Director Harold Preston and committee members Vernon Thompson and B-K Tan. I thank all Board and committee members for their dedication and contributions to the effective governance and operation of Advocare. The teamwork demonstrated by the Board ensures sound governance and collegial decision-making.

I particularly want to acknowledge the passion and commitment of our staff members. They are the backbone of our success. We look ahead with optimism, knowing Advocare is well-equipped to continue its vital mission in an evolving aged care landscape.

Susan Barrera

Click to meet our directors



# Chief Executive Officer's report

I joined Advocare late 2024 as the new CEO to carry on the great work of my predecessor, Louise Johnstone-Forster. The organisation has gone from strength to strength in the past 12 months including taking on the new Seniors Peak Body role.

We have continued work developing a Reflect Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) for Advocare with a small working group formed who are passionate advocates. Advocare also appointed a Seniors Peak Manager this year to drive the work and to amplify the voice of seniors in WA. The peak body is currently working on the development of reference groups made up of sector representatives and older people themselves to help direct our work.

On a sad note, the Home Care Check-in Program ended, after a very successful three-year pilot period and strong recommendations to expand this service nationally. The aim of the program was to reduce the potential risk of harm or neglect of older people through regular, meaningful contact. Despite exceeding performance goals, the program did not receive continued funding, and I take this opportunity to thank the staff for their dedication to this program and to recognise the difference they made to those people they supported.

We have been gearing up this year for the introduction of the new Aged Care Act, which was delayed from its original July launch. The Statement of Rights embedded in the Act will ensure older people are at the centre of the services they receive from the aged care sector. Advocare has invested resources this year to raise awareness about the new legislation and what it means for people in the future. We will continue to be independent advocates to ensure people's rights are upheld and their needs valued.

Advocare has also undertaken an internal review of its organisational structure this year to better align to our business functions and is now in the process of updating our Enterprise Agreement with staff. We have also started work on improving our internal data systems. These functions are necessary to ensure we have robust governance and compliance systems in place.

To the people who make it happen every day, I want to thank each and every one of the incredible staff at Advocare – from those in the regional areas who have welcomed me to their patch, to the staff located here at Victoria Park – your dedication and commitment to supporting and advocating for older people is outstanding. A huge thanks to you all for welcoming me and giving me such a well-rounded understanding of the organisation and the sector.

Finally, thank you to the dedicated Advocare Board of Directors, who attend meetings well prepared and have offered their wisdom and insight to me personally, and the team.

I look forward to what the new year brings as we continue to support, advocate and raise the collective and diverse voices of older West Australians.

**Bev Jowle**



[Click to meet our leadership team](#)

# Advocare Strategy 2025

This year we launched our 2024-27 Strategic Plan with a firm focus on growing Advocare's reach and impact in the community, securing and growing our funding, and creating a 'safety-first' culture.

## Key highlights from our first year:

- Roll out of the new WA Seniors Peak Body, ensuring representation of over 428,000 older Western Australians.
- Launch of our new website developed through a co-design process with older people, their supporters, service providers and volunteers.
- Extending our delivery of both the National Aged Care Advocacy Program and WA Elder Abuse Helpline and Information Service until 2029.
- Introduction of a new People and Safety Officer to proactively support staff safety, health and wellbeing.
- Further expanded place-based delivery of National Aged Care Advocacy Program into the Gascoyne region.



## Our strategic priorities and initiatives



### Reach and impact

Positively impact a larger portion of our society.

- ✓ Identify and measure the benefits of our service offering, leveraging the results to increase awareness of our value with stakeholders.
- ✓ Engage other stakeholders to leverage impact (toward vision).
- ✓ Contribute to policy development which creates age-friendly communities and society.



### Culture and safety

Provide a safe, engaging and rewarding environment for staff and volunteers.

- ✓ Embed a holistic safety-first culture across the organisation.
- ✓ Provide enhanced professional development opportunities in line with organisational need.
- ✓ Implement a recognition and reward program.



### Sustainable growth

Diversify funding in line with our core vision, values and purpose.

- ✓ Secure and build on existing funding contracts.
- ✓ Identify, assess and elect an opportunity to pursue an independent funding stream.
- ✓ Enhance operational systems and structure to improve outcomes for stakeholders and older people.



# Seniors Peak Body WA

As the custodian of the WA Seniors Peak Body role, Advocare provides a collective voice for older people and drives systemic change to foster safe and inclusive age-friendly communities. We independently advocate to improve the policies, services and support systems that impact the lives of older Western Australians.

The first year of operating in this capacity has been a busy one. The organisation reviewed and updated its communication themes and explored new avenues for engagement and promotion with older people. This included stakeholder mapping, and a strategy to strengthening referral pathways, and broadening outreach opportunities.

The official launch in November 2024 marked a significant milestone. It provided an opportunity to outline our purpose, raise awareness of our function, and begin building recognition as the representative body for older Western Australians.

We also marked International Women's Day by recognising the contributions of older women, including a thought-provoking address by Grandparents Rearing Grandchildren WA. The event celebrated the diverse achievements of older women and reinforced the importance of acknowledging their leadership within families and communities.

The inaugural Seniors Peak Sector Forum in June 2025 brought together seniors, local governments, community organisations, and academics. It enabled us to test our convening role, explore methods for capturing feedback, and begin shaping shared priorities. It confirmed strong interest in collaboration and identified key areas such as systems navigation, housing, and age-friendly community development.

With solid foundations now in place, the Seniors Peak Body enters its next phase with a clear commitment to partnership, progress, and ensuring every older person in WA is supported, connected and heard.

**Seniors Peak Body Forum**  
**50**  
attendees representing  
26 organisations



**Top 5 issues from enquiries to Seniors Peak Body:**



Wellbeing and lifestyle



Carer support



Systemic issues reporting  
for older people



Service referrals



Ageing and elder  
abuse information



## Meet Jenny

**Jenny\* was referred to the care finder service for help changing to a service provider that could better meet her needs. As a younger person not eligible for NDIS, Jenny had been approved for My Aged Care (MAC) services. Jenny lives with her husband who is also her carer. While he receives his own aged care services, these were recently reduced due to a debt the couple are repaying through a fortnightly payment plan.**

Initially, a referral was made to our Financial Advocate to support addressing the concerns of a price increase the clients were unaware of.

Jenny was particularly interested in self-managing her supports. She experiences high levels of anxiety, which are triggered by multiple people coming in and out of her home. She also struggled to maintain consistent relationships with her care coordinators due to their high turnover.

Working closely with Jenny, the care finder team member helped her explore a range of support options to meet her needs, such as attending assessments and liaising with other health professionals to strengthen her connection to the health and mental health system. They successfully advocated for a brokered domestic support, so only two regular workers would be providing direct care in her home – a change that greatly reduced Jenny's anxiety. In addition, Jenny was referred to various community supports, including financial counselling, the Taxi User Subsidy Scheme, Foodbank and legal services, and an Occupational Therapist (OT) to assess her mobility needs. The mobility equipment provided was nothing short of life-changing for Jenny. In her own words...

***"My life has completely changed... I'm no longer house bound. Now I can shop and pick my own things, I feel more confident to be out of the house and this has helped me a lot mentally. Now my husband has to try and keep up with me!"***

*\* name is changed to protect identity.*

# Advocare key events

## Age Friendly Australia National Conference 4-5 December 2024

### Crown Hotel Perth

As WA Seniors Peak Body, CEO Bev Jowle opened this national conference hosted by the Department of Communities and The World Health Organization. Attended by international delegates, the conference showcased successful age-friendly strategies and initiatives that have contributed to the success of age-friendly communities around the world.



## Ageing Well Expo 2-3 August 2024

### Perth Convention and Exhibition Centre, Perth

Advocare attended the Ageing Well Expo again in 2024, being the first stall at the entrance to the event. Visitors had the opportunity to speak with staff from all of the programs at Advocare. We provided information on connecting with aged care services, concerns with existing supports and how to access aged care and volunteering opportunities. More than 3000 people attended the event over 2 days.



## Have a Go Day 2024 13 November

### Burswood Park, Perth

Hosted by the Seniors Recreation Council of WA, this event is the largest annual event in WA dedicated to adults aged 55 and over, and features more than 200 stalls and activities. Our stall offered a welcoming and relaxed café-style environment where visitors could engage with helpful staff across all of Advocare's programs. More than 15,000 attendees visited the event.

## Elder Abuse Action Australia national 'Lunch & Learn' 17 February

### Online seminar

Shawnee Van Poeteren delivered the presentation, 'Death by a Thousand Cuts – Coercive Control and the Older Person.' This insightful webinar examined the 'who, what, and why' associated with coercive control and included topics such as the Pink Flags of Coercive Control, Silence and Bombing Techniques and a compelling case study. More than 500 people registered for this event.

 [Watch the presentation](#)

## Seniors Expo Kalgoorlie 6 May

### Kalgoorlie Town Hall

A very busy and exciting event held in the prestigious Kalgoorlie Town Hall attracted more than 200 older people from the Goldfields region. With 15 stall holders sharing their expertise, older people were provided information and resources that supported them in their ageing journey, to understand what was available to them and opportunities to stay connected and engaged in their hometowns. More than 200 people attended.



# World Elder Abuse Awareness Day (WEAAD)

To mark this day, Advocare was involved in multiple events statewide in the weeks leading up to and after the official day on 15 June.

## The Elephant in the Room: unpacking Elder Abuse 12 June

### The Hub, Bentley

Advocare's major event to mark World Elder Abuse Awareness Day (WEAAD) tackled the often-hidden issue of elder abuse that might be disclosed to volunteers and staff who work with older people. Advocates, David and Shawnee spoke about the impact of coercive control and abuse in later life. More than 80 people attended the event.

## World Elder Abuse Awareness Day Event (Christmas Island) 13 June

Hosted by Indian Oceans Territories Health Services, Pilbara advocate, Claire took part in this welcome event for the local community. She presented with the assistance of 2 interpreters (Chinese, Malaysian) to ensure all community members were included and able to receive vital information about elder abuse. The morning tea event was full of presentations, music and singing.



### Our WEAAD activities:



**37** events  
attended



**30** busback adverts  
campaign  
(for 3 months)



**13** bus stop  
adverts



**12** press adverts  
(print and digital)



**3** radio advert  
campaign



Christine



Almetra



Claire (top), Heidi

## Meet our place-based Advocates

**Advocare has five place-based Outreach Advocates who are making a substantial difference to the lives of older people and their families living in the regions.**

Christine Zambonetti – Great Southern

Almetra Bethlehem – Goldfields

Claire Tassone – Pilbara

Karen Noble – Mid West

Heidi Taylor – South West

### In their own words...

“Travelling throughout the South West region to visit with our clients, I have the joy of driving the sights of the Cape coast line maybe even spotting a whale along the way or dolphins in Augusta, through the incredible tall trees around Pemberton and Manjimup, the lush green paddocks filled with cows through to the Ferguson Valley and maybe the odd Emu family too. I also love the stunning views driving from Collie back to Bunbury and then returning to my home base of Busselton and our amazing foreshore area. I have the best office, driving through these incredible sights and then arriving in each town to meet with our clients and learn more about their regions too.”

– Heidi Taylor, South West region

“I love the people and the community spirit. In a small town, your friends become your family. My family and I have embraced the opportunity to live here in Newman and wouldn’t change it for the world. Like so many the red dirt sticks, gets under your skin.

And I couldn’t be happier to be empowering such a unique and vulnerable group of older people in the most beautiful landscape Australia has to offer.”

– Claire Tassone, Pilbara region



## Checking in as the Home Check-in Program checks out

**Launched in 2022, the Home Care Check-In (HCCI) Pilot aimed to support older Australians at risk by providing regular wellbeing check-ins in their homes. Led in Western Australia by Advocare, the program worked alongside our partners in New South Wales and South Australia to reduce the potential risk of harm or neglect among socially isolated older people.**

The pilot responded to growing concern for those “who had fallen through the cracks, even whilst receiving aged care services,” as Hazel McKenna, the program’s first Senior Project Officer for Advocare, reflects. In WA alone, 135 older clients were supported through over 2,100 check-ins, including 848 face-to-face visits, and more than 600 service connections were made. Every eligible client experienced a reduction in risk of harm or neglect.

What set the program apart was its deeply person-centred approach. Hazel explains, “What made this project so meaningful wasn’t just the referrals or the numbers, it was being there, genuinely listening without an agenda.” For many, the check-ins offered more than services, they offered human connection. One participant shared the program “made her feel human again,” highlighting the power of simply being heard.

The pilot demonstrated that consistent, compassionate contact could transform lives, creating trust, safety, and connection in a system that can sometimes feel impersonal.

As the program concludes, Advocare celebrates the dedication of Leigh Ann Ryan, Hazel McKenna, Bridget McCarney and Leanne Bodley (not pictured), and the wider national teams, whose commitment brought this life-changing initiative to the WA community.

## Our regional reach

### Outreach advocacy

Our outreach efforts continued to span the entire state, with coverage across the Great Southern, South West, Wheatbelt, Goldfields, Mid West, Gascoyne, Pilbara and Kimberley regions. This year, we extended our reach by visiting smaller, more isolated towns such as Jerramungup, Lake Grace, Meekatharra, Yalgoo and Wyndham, ensuring older people in remote areas have access to advocacy and support.

We were also invited to extend our outreach into remote Aboriginal communities, including Wakathuni, Jigalong, Bellary and Wunan, strengthening relationships and fostering trust through culturally respectful engagement.

Having Advocates based in, or regularly travelling to, regional areas enables meaningful connection with older people, service providers and local

agencies. This approach ensures our presence is not only consistent but deeply embedded within communities, allowing us to meet people where they are and better understand the unique challenges they face.



**303** Education sessions delivered



**1,531** Advocacy/information client cases in the regions



**85** Visits to regional towns/small communities

### North of Perth in-person connection

The Lancelin community and surrounding suburbs now have an opportunity to make an appointment to chat in person to a knowledgeable staff member, Hazel, about aged care rights, elder abuse and navigating the aged care system. Hazel can also connect people into any local support and refer people to our experienced advocates for more complex enquiries. The service is available most Wednesdays and Fridays from Lancelin’s Community Resource Centre (CRC).



Ebru, care finder Supportive Outreach Coordinator

### Care finder program

Our Care finder regional team have been active in their communities in the South West and in the Central Wheatbelt.

#### This year we celebrated highlights including:

- Our Noongar team members participating in a roundtable with Interim First Nations Aged Care Commissioner, Andrea Kelly, highlighting aged care-related challenges faced by older Aboriginal people.
- Our South West team continuing to expand the care finder service out into the wider region.
- Offering a monthly in-person opportunity to connect at Toodyay Library, supporting older isolated community members to access to aged care and other services.

These highlights reflect our team’s flexible, collaborative, hands on approach and commitment to the program and older vulnerable people improving access to aged care and other services for regional clients.

# Strategic priorities and initiatives

## Reach and impact



Positively impact a larger portion of our society.

- ✓ Identify and measure the benefits of our service offering, leveraging the results to increase awareness of our value with stakeholders.
- ✓ Engage other stakeholders to leverage impact (toward vision).
- ✓ Contribute to policy development which creates age-friendly communities and society.

### Program updates

#### Advocacy and awareness-raising activities

Our dedicated advocates continued to empower and support older people across Western Australia. Whether it is by providing information over the phone, equipping individuals with tools for self-advocacy, offering personalised advocacy support, or delivering interactive education sessions, our focus remains constant: to provide accurate, independent information that enables informed decision-making.

#### Advocacy

Our advocates help older people understand their rights, navigate aged care services with confidence, and resolve any issues they may face. We support older people to make choices that uphold their dignity, independence, and wellbeing.

No matter where an older person lives in WA, support is always within reach. The advocacy team is not only committed to supporting older adults, more importantly, they know how to listen.



#### NACAP Advocacy

Information and advocacy

6,492 cases

Advocacy

523 cases

Information provision

5,900 cases

Advocacy support to diverse groups

136 cases

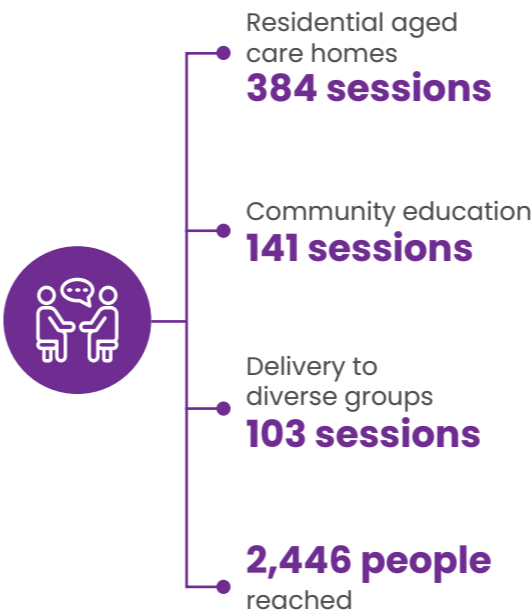
#### Education sessions

Knowledge is power. One way we share knowledge and seek to empower individuals is through education sessions delivered to older people, their relatives, aged care staff and other stakeholders who support those accessing or exploring aged care services.

Raising awareness of rights and informing care recipients and potential recipients about the services and supports available to them is a key component of the education sessions delivered by Advocare. We also provide education sessions to support individuals to identify and respond to concerns about aged care rights, elder abuse or the risk of abuse.

Our experienced advocates engage with aged care providers (residential and community-based) to arrange visits and speak with groups to ensure their awareness of the supports available. Providing sessions to staff is also an important step so they know how to support the older individuals they work with each day.

#### NACAP education sessions delivered:



### Gita and Charlie's story

**Gita's\* legal representative contacted Advocare seeking support with a financial issue involving her Home Care Package (HCP). Gita's provider had informed her son, Charlie,\* that the package was in overspend and asked him to personally repay the outstanding amount.**

Feeling pressured, Charlie made the first repayment toward the \$3,957.36, though he believed the issue stemmed from a provider error. He explained that, on the advice of the HCP coordinator, a one-to-one support worker had been added to Gita's Day Centre visits without any discussion about the financial impact.

Nearly a year later, son Charlie was told he was responsible for repaying the overspend.

Our Financial Advocacy Officer (FAO) provided information about the relevant guidelines on overspends and client contributions. With consent, our specialist advocate liaised directly with the provider, confirming there had been no prior agreement for Gita or her son, Charlie to contribute to costs. The FAO highlighted that seeking repayment after services had been delivered breached Home Care Package guidelines. After discussions with both the coordinator and manager, Advocare's FAO requested the debt be reviewed and resolved appropriately.

Following our advocate's involvement, the provider's manager acknowledged the overspend was due to an internal error and not the client's responsibility. The outstanding debt was waived, and the initial repayment made by Gita's son was refunded in full – and he also understood the aged care system better, too.

*\*names have changed to protect identity.*



## WA Elder Abuse Helpline

This year, 1,676 people reached out to the WA Elder Abuse Helpline operated by Advocare and funded by the Department of Communities. This included older people themselves, their families, neighbours and professionals. Behind every call was someone taking a brave step.

Older people made nearly a third of all calls (462), often describing situations of fear, control, or neglect. Families were the next biggest group – daughters (241) and sons (119) most often – but siblings, in-laws, and partners also stepped in.

Friends, neighbours, and professionals like doctors, carers, and police added their voices – a reminder that preventing harm is a shared responsibility.

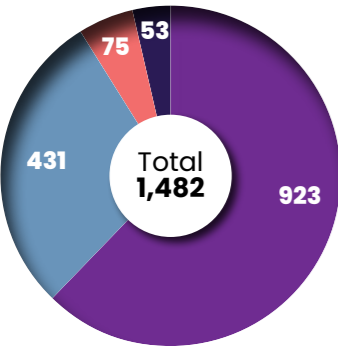
Stories heard reveal that abuse, harm and mistreatment most often come from those closest to the older person such as adult children or partners. The most commonly disclosed type of abuse was financial (768 cases), where money, assets, or property were taken or misused. Many also described psychological abuse (621) and breaches of trust (707) that stripped away independence and dignity. Neglect, isolation, and physical abuse were also present, however, it was less frequently revealed.

Behind many cases of abuse lay complex layers of risk like family conflict, financial stress, mental health challenges, and substance misuse among them. For older people, these deep-rooted cycles of harm can be incredibly difficult to escape without confidential support, trusted information, and referral pathways.

Once again, the WA Elder Abuse Helpline served as a vital bridge, connecting older people and their families with information and support to enhance safety, independence, and informed choice. Most referrals were directed to legal services, police, and advocacy agencies, alongside health, housing, aged care, and community supports.

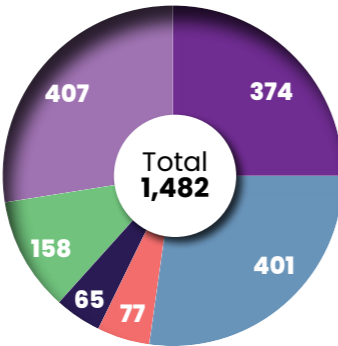
The WA Elder Abuse Helpline reassures older people they are not alone, and that when they reach out, their voices will be heard, respected, and validated.

Who's experiencing abuse



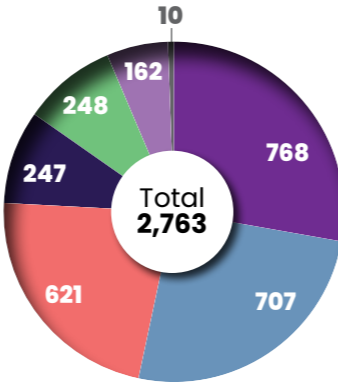
Women  
Men  
Couples  
Unknown

Who's causing harm



Sons  
Daughters  
Male partner  
Female partner  
Unknown  
Other relationship

What's the abuse experienced



Financial  
Psychological  
Neglect  
Exploitation of trust  
Social  
Physical  
Sexual

## Care finder service

The care finder service provides intensive support for older people to connect with aged care and other relevant services. Our team supports clients in the broader Perth area, the central Wheatbelt and the South West regions.

The service is trauma informed and flexibly delivered. We meet older people where they are and support them to achieve their goals. Our service is adaptive and responsive to the complex needs of our clients.

This year was the second full year of care finder operations at Advocare. Despite its relative infancy, the service has had incredible success integrating into the health and aged care systems. Our grass roots and 'boots on the ground' approach to service delivery has enabled our team to form deep connections into diverse communities to reach clients who would otherwise remain disconnected from support.

The success of this assertive outreach is reflected in the demand for our services which was at capacity with an active waitlist for the entire year. Referrals were received from a diverse range of stakeholders ranging from local governments through to police and real estate agents.

Advocare worked collaboratively with our care finder colleagues at other organisations making more than 75 additional referrals to ensure older people received care finder support as quickly as possible.

Housing remains a key challenge for the older people we support. In a clear example of the human rights of older people being breached, many of our clients prematurely moved into residential aged care because it was the only option for secure accommodation available to them.

**500+**  
Referrals

**362**  
Number of new cases

**1600**  
Face-to-face visits  
with older people

**27 hrs**  
Average time on  
a client case



## A beginning: Reflect Reconciliation Action Plan

**Advocare has begun its journey toward meaningful reconciliation with the Reflect Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP). This first phase focuses on engaging respectfully with Aboriginal communities and reflecting on the organisation's role in promoting equity and social justice.**

Guided by the 13-member Reflect RAP Committee, including a Board representative, the process encourages honest self-reflection, learning from Australia's post-colonisation history, and listening to Aboriginal voices.

Importantly, the Reflect RAP is not about ticking boxes, it's about creating conditions for accountability, humility, and transformative action across the organisation.

### Reflecting on 2024-25 highlights and activities:

- Introduction of flexible day of work for 26 January. For those who worked the CEO led an Aboriginal history discussion
- Formation of RAP Committee with Board member and CEO involvement
- Addition of RAP updates into board agendas and monthly staff meetings.
- Commemorated National Sorry Day with a staff breakfast on 26 May
- Introduction of CEO newsletter updates on 6 Noongar seasonal insights
- Participation in NAIDOC events and Walk for Reconciliation

# Aged Care Volunteer Visitors Scheme

The Aged Care Volunteer Visitors Scheme (ACVVS) has entered its second year of funding. Our primary focus continues to be on reducing social isolation and loneliness for older people living in residential aged care or who are on the waitlist or receiving an Aged Care Package.

Volunteers visit older people on a weekly or fortnightly basis of their choosing providing friendship, companionship and social engagement. Our diverse group of volunteers, aged between 19 and 87, visit across the Perth metropolitan area and the South West region of WA offering to share stories, life skills and the gift of time to brighten the day of the older person they visit.

In the past 12 months, we have seen an increase in student volunteers signing up to the program from a wide range of cultural backgrounds and learning disciplines. Their contribution has been an inspiring one.

The value students bring has enhanced the lives of clients giving them that intergenerational connection they often miss. In particular, we've noticed it has also helped the international students by somewhat alleviating their feelings of missing home and grandparents.

For all involved in the program – volunteers, clients and volunteer coordinators alike, seeing the benefits of such an intergenerational activity has provided a great learning opportunity and has given us firsthand experience of seeing the true value of empathic care.



157  
All volunteers



264  
All clients



4240  
Visits



# Advocacy Community Network Development (ACND)

The Community Development team has seen a successful year with attendance at 134 events both in the regions and the Perth metropolitan area. Our dedicated staff actively engage in community events to raise awareness about the rights of older people, their aged care services and to inform the community on how to identify and speak out about elder abuse allowing us to strengthen community ties throughout WA.

Community presentations and expos are an important part of engaging and connecting with older people and services in the community. The information we provide aims to empower audiences with valuable insights and avenues to finding assistance when and where it's needed.

Some of the groups visited and events attended included:

- Pharmacy 777 staff
- Wagin Happy Days Club
- Have a Go Day Expos in Burswood, Bunbury and Rockingham
- Positive Ageing Expo, Stirling
- Storm in a Teacup, Boyanup.

# Student volunteering shines

**An aspiring student studying Medicine at the University of WA (UWA), Rainah Zaheer joined the Aged Care Volunteer Visitor Scheme (ACVVS) over 18 months ago to research the impact of overcoming social isolation and loneliness. Welcoming Rainah was a result of engaging with UWA's Service-Learning Course for Doctorate of Medicine Students.**

Throughout her time at Advocare, Rainah interviewed both clients and volunteers on the experience of being part of the ACVVS program with a focus on measuring their feelings of social isolation and how this data could be applied to improve the program. She also spent time with our coordinators to interview and induct volunteers and assess clients who were being freshly introduced to the program.

# Reflections from Rainah

"I am deeply grateful for the opportunity to work with such a compassionate and dedicated organisation. These conversations not only deepened my understanding of the challenges faced by socially isolated older adults, but also highlighted the powerful, positive impact that volunteering has, both for the volunteer and the client. This experience has profoundly shaped my future practice as a doctor, reminding me of the importance of empathy, person-centred care, and the value of human connection.

I feel especially lucky to have worked closely with the wonderful ACCVS team, particularly Janet and Michelle... their unwavering commitment to volunteers was echoed in every interview I conducted." (Rainah Zaheer, UWA MD4)

Rainah's insightful research will definitely have an ongoing impact on our work. Advocare wishes her all the best with her new career. Any patients she meets will be in very capable and compassionate hands.



Janet, Community Development Coordinator

# Strategic priorities and initiatives

## Culture and safety



**Provide a safe, engaging and rewarding environment for staff and volunteers**

- ✓ Embed a holistic safety-first culture across the organisation.
- ✓ Provide enhanced professional development opportunities in line with organisational need.
- ✓ Implement a recognition and reward program.



**This year, Advocare built on its commitment to Culture and Safety, one of our new strategic pillars. A key step was recruiting a dedicated People and Safety Officer to lead work health and safety initiatives, strengthening processes that support our people.**

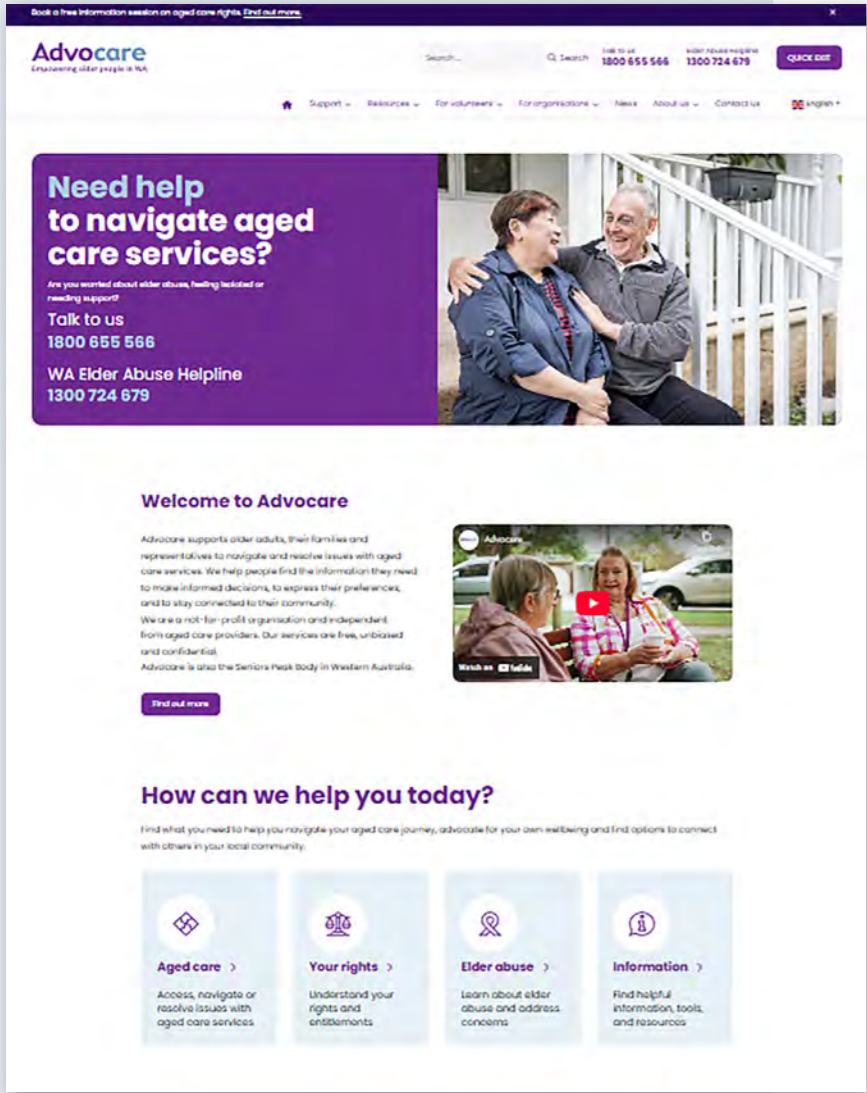
Our People and Culture team introduced several initiatives designed to enhance staff wellbeing and workplace safety, including:

- Transitioning professional clinical supervision services for client-facing staff from group to one-on-one sessions through our Employee Assistance Program (EAP) provider, following staff feedback for more tailored support.
- Implementing a new system to record and track safety incidents and hazards, providing greater visibility and accountability across the organisation.
- Delivering a psychosocial hazards education campaign, alongside new mandatory online training modules for leaders and staff to consolidate learning.

We also supported eligible staff to move from fixed-term contracts to permanent roles following the renewal of funding for key programs and in line with recent legislative changes. These initiatives reflect our ongoing focus on creating a safe, supportive, and sustainable workplace where staff can thrive.

Over the year, our workforce also became more diverse and regionally representative. Male staff numbers grew from three to eight, increasing overall representation from 6% to 13% of the workforce, while our regional team expanded from 6 to 10 staff, extending our presence into the Goldfields, Mid West and Wheatbelt regions of WA to provide stronger local support in key communities.





## Our new website

In March, Advocare launched a new website to the world with financial support from Lotterywest. Our site was built with a codesign ethos guiding the process to ensure visitors have a more intuitive and richer experience finding the information they need.

Its new features include an expanded and dedicated 'Resources' tab area with a 'Useful organisations' listing and a 'Glossary of terms' collection to help people better understand aged care jargon and those ever-changing acronyms. The 'Helpful Information' section also displays all of Advocare's publications and allows them to be downloaded or ordered.

Another helpful feature added is a 'Frequently Asked Questions' section at the bottom of most of our webpages. This was another aid suggested by the older people, volunteers and staff we consulted with during the valuable codesign process.

[Click here to visit our new website](#)

## Media engagement and promotion

Advocare carried out a mix of traditional and digital advertising, and received consistent free media coverage to promote its services over the year.



39

Media coverage and publications



29

Advertising and promotions



261

Social media posts and other digital content

(Facebook, LinkedIn, YouTube)



## Staff supporting people and culture

**When Bree Mills joined Advocare in this new role in November last year, she was drawn to the organisation's purpose and its genuine sense of care. Her role as the People and Safety Officer brings a focus on supporting staff wellbeing and building a safe, positive workplace culture.**

"What attracted me to Advocare was its strong commitment to justice and equity, and the opportunity to support the people who make that impact possible," she says.

Coming from another industry, Bree quickly noticed a different energy at Advocare. "There's a shared purpose here. Everyone is working toward the same goal, and that creates a really supportive environment," she explains. "I also felt Advocare was quite progressive in how it approached mental health – it felt genuine and actively supported."

## Making everyday improvements

In her role, Bree manages psychosocial risks, supports continuous improvement, and helps Advocare meet changing Work Health and Safety requirements. She also works closely with leaders and staff, offering guidance and practical tools to strengthen safety and to support the rollout of wellbeing initiatives.

On a bigger scale, Bree has also been integral to the development of a new Health and Safety Incident Management System in collaboration with our ICT business analyst, Nima.

## Respect is key

For Bree, the values that guide Advocare's work with older people also shape and reflect how the organisation supports its staff. "Older people deserve to be valued because they've contributed so much and continue to offer wisdom and perspective," she says. "It's about respect. And that's something we try to uphold every day, both in our work and in how we support each other."

# Strategic priorities and initiatives

## Sustainable growth



Diversify funding in line with our core vision, values and purpose.

- ✓ Secure and build on existing funding contracts.
- ✓ Identify, assess and elect an opportunity to pursue an independent funding stream.
- ✓ Enhance operational systems and structure to improve outcomes for stakeholders and older people.



**Advocare’s core focus this year has been on strengthening its cybersecurity, digital systems, and network infrastructure. We achieved Level 1 Maturity under the Australian Signals Directorate’s Essential Eight framework, tightening controls across passwords, hardware and software updates, backups, and approved applications within our network.**

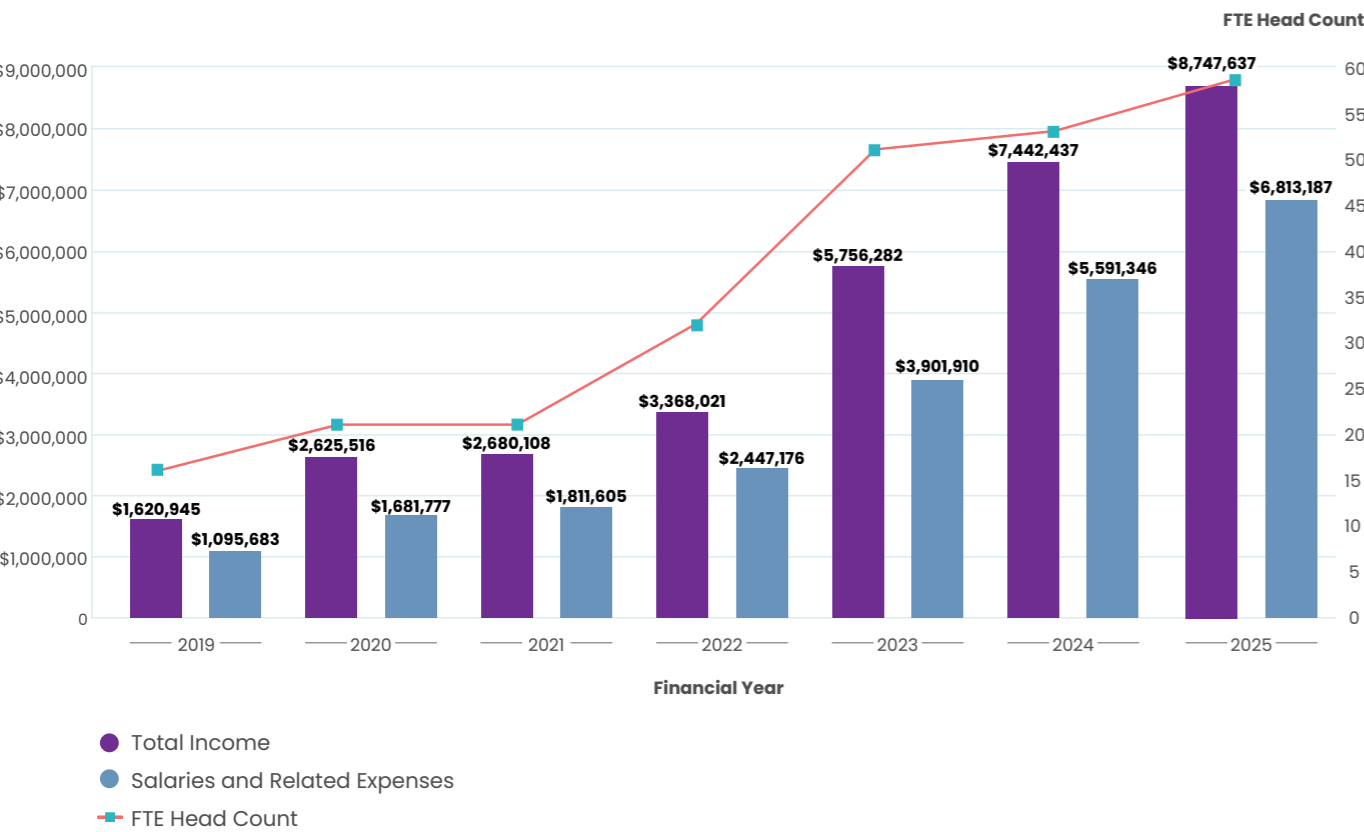
The project team, in collaboration with a staff working reference group, completed the design and implementation of a comprehensive Information Architecture to align our organisational structure with information permissions and document access across Advocare. This was a huge achievement that included a major clean-up of existing systems and data, followed by a migration to SharePoint where Advocare’s information is now housed within a central document library. The library is organised by business unit, with permissions applied based on staff roles and is easily accessible from anywhere via this new Intranet, greatly improving day-to-day work for staff travelling or working remotely. The project was an organisation-wide effort, and the launch was celebrated with a SharePoint Silly Hat Lunch and quiz.

We further leveraged Microsoft 365 tools to automate and centralise several processes. Digital ‘Request Hubs’ were developed within the Intranet to centralise and streamline staff administrative and marketing requests. Using these same tools, an Incident Management System was also designed, tested, and implemented to enable the central submission, tracking, and management of reportable incidents across the organisation.

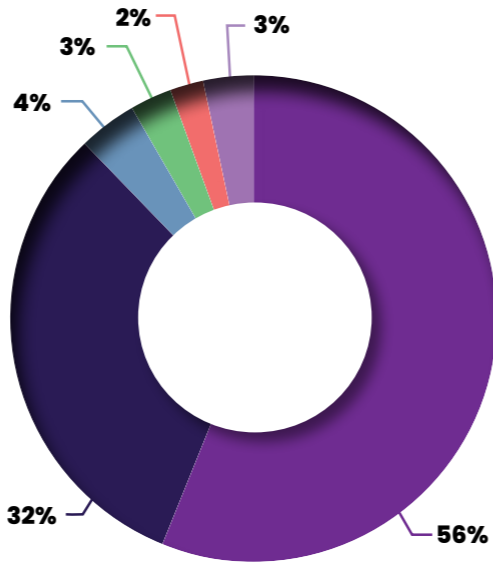
Finally, to support the organisation’s growth, our vehicle fleet was also expanded, including the addition of a much-anticipated events van, which the Community Development and Events teams eagerly look forward to using to make travelling easier between events during busy event seasons.

# Financials

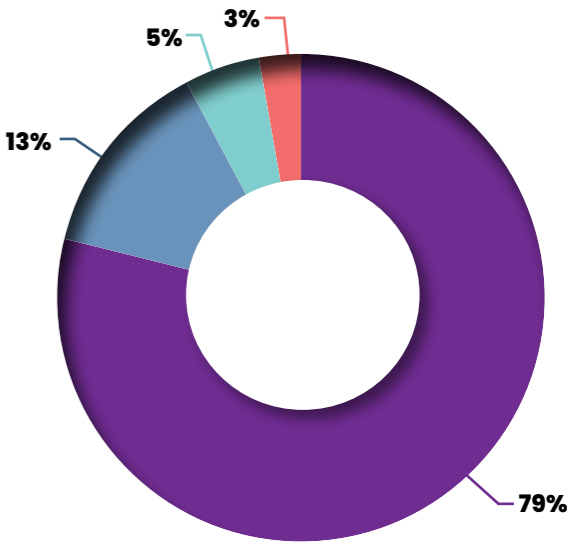
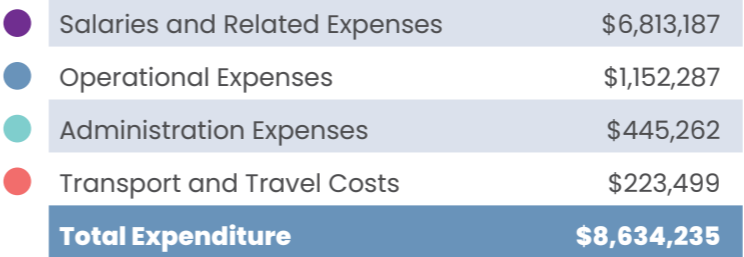
## Income Growth vs Salaries and Related Expenses



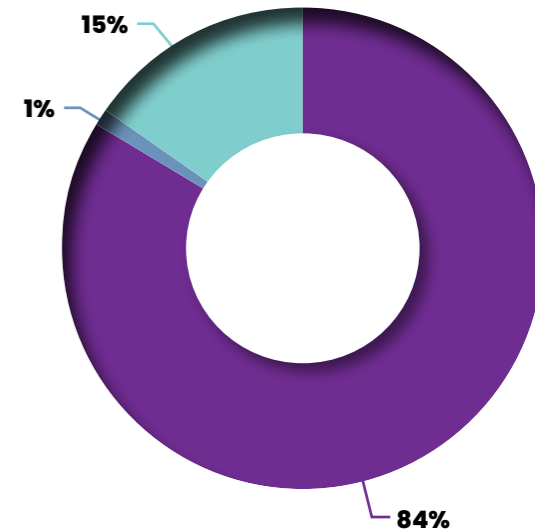
## 2025 Income



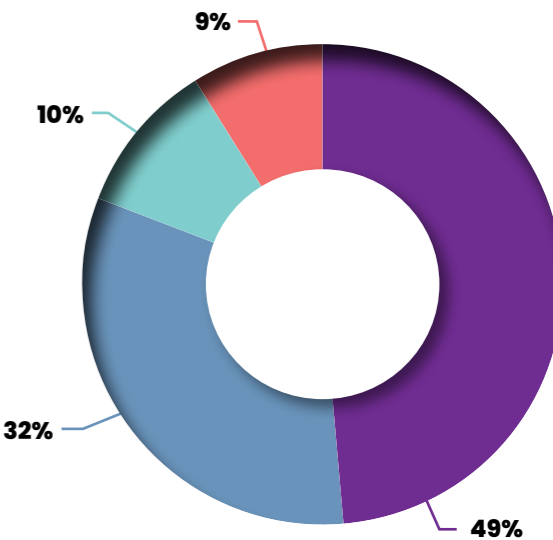
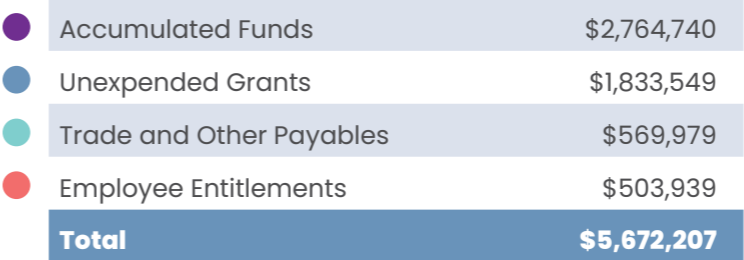
## 2025 Expenditure



## 2025 Assets



## 2025 Accumulated Funds and Liabilities





Advocare acknowledges and thanks all our generous program funders, sponsors and partners who share our commitment in the work we do with older West Australians.



Australian Government  
Department of Health and Aged Care



Government of **Western Australia**  
Department of **Communities**




Advocare's care finder service has been made possible through funding provided by the Australian Government Department of Health and Aged Care under the Primary Health Networks Program.

*thank  
you*

# Advocare

 Perron Place  
Suite 4/61 Kitchener Avenue  
Victoria Park WA 6100

 Phone: **08 9479 7566**  
Country Callers: **1800 655 566**  
WA Elder Abuse Helpline: **1300 724 679**  
Aged Care Advocacy Line: **1800 700 600**

 [rights@advocare.org.au](mailto:rights@advocare.org.au)

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