Annual Report

2025—26



ARC DISABILITY

More Than Just Support...

COLLABORATION | RESPECT | INTEGRITY | BELONGING | SAFETY

Celebrating 50 years of ARC

2026 marks an extraordinary milestone for ARC – 50 years of providing *more than just support* to the Cairns community.

While much has changed over five decades, the heart of ARC has remained the same. ARC continues to be the same person and family led organisation it was when it was first established 50 years ago. Today, that commitment is captured in our purpose: more than just support – working alongside people with disability and their families to create opportunities, choice and belonging.'

Our 50th anniversary gave us an opportunity to pause and recognise the many people who have shaped ARC's story: participants and families, team members, board and life members, community partners, supporters and generations of people who have contributed along the way. ARC's journey has always been shaped by the voices, stories and experiences of the people at the centre of our community.

ARC's fifty years represents countless relationships, experiences and moments that together have made ARC what it is today. As we celebrate our history, we also look forward with the same commitment that has guided ARC for five decades.

Cheers to 50 years!

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Chair Report



Lorraine Carroll
B.App.Sc(Sp.Path), MBA, GAICD, CPSP
Chair

On behalf of the Board of Directors, I am pleased to present ARC Disability Ltd Chair's Report for the 2025-2026 financial year.

The role of the Board is fundamentally different from the role of management. While the Executive Team is responsible for the day-to-day leadership and operation of ARC, the Board's responsibility is to provide governance, strategic direction and stewardship on behalf of the organisation and the communities we serve.

This year represented a significant period of governance maturity for ARC. The Board's focus remained on ensuring the organisation was well-positioned to navigate ongoing change within the disability sector while maintaining strong accountability, financial sustainability and strategic discipline.

Governance and Board Oversight

A key achievement during the year was the successful completion of ARC's transition from an Incorporated Association to a Company Limited by Guarantee. This important reform marks the culmination of many years of planning and positions the organisation with a contemporary corporate governance structure that reflects both its scale and future aspirations while strengthening the foundations to deliver safe, sustainable and person-centred support for people with disability.

The Board extends its appreciation to management and professional advisors who supported this significant undertaking.

The Board continued to strengthen its governance framework through the operation of its committee structures and regular review of key governance policies, delegations and oversight mechanisms. Directors undertook their responsibilities with a strong focus on accountability, transparency and sound decision-making.

Throughout the year the Board actively monitored organisational performance, strategic risks, financial results, regulatory developments and compliance obligations. Directors remained committed to ensuring the organisation maintained strong governance during a period of considerable sector reform and increasing regulatory expectations.

Strategic Leadership

One of the Board's primary activities this year was the development and endorsement of ARC Disability Ltd's Strategic Plan 2026-2030.

The Board worked extensively with the Executive Leadership Team to examine participant outcomes, demographic trends, funding environments, workforce challenges and long-term sustainability.

This process ensured ARC's future direction is evidence-based, informed by stakeholder engagement and aligned with the organisation's purpose, values and commitment to people with disability.

The Strategic Plan provides a clear framework for the next five years, with measurable objectives for participant outcomes, workforce capability, governance maturity, organisational resilience, financial sustainability and community impact. It will guide Board decision-making and investment over the coming years.

Risk and Assurance

Effective risk oversight remains one of the Board's most important responsibilities.

During the year, Directors continued to receive regular reporting regarding organisational risk, quality assurance activities, financial controls, participant safeguarding and regulatory compliance. Particular attention was given to the evolving NDIS regulatory environment and ensuring ARC's systems and processes remained aligned with best practice governance expectations.

The Board recognises that strong governance is not simply about compliance. It is about creating confidence that the organisation can continue to achieve its purpose while responding effectively to emerging opportunities and challenges. As a result, ongoing work was undertaken to further strengthen ARC's risk management capability and organisational resilience.

Financial Stewardship

The Board maintained close oversight of ARC's financial position throughout the year.

The disability services sector continues to face increasing financial pressures associated with rising workforce costs, changing funding arrangements and broader economic conditions. Against this backdrop, the Board remained focused on ensuring ARC maintained financial integrity, appropriate reserves and disciplined resource allocation.

Directors worked closely with management to understand emerging financial risks and ensure long-term sustainability remained central to strategic decision-making. This stewardship role is essential in ensuring ARC remains capable of serving future generations of people with disability and their families.

Board and CEO Partnership

The Board acknowledges the leadership provided by CEO Benjamin Keast and the Executive Leadership Team throughout a year of significant organisational and sector change.

One of the Board's key responsibilities is the oversight, support and evaluation of the Chief Executive Officer. Throughout the year the Board worked collaboratively with the CEO to ensure strategic priorities remained on track while maintaining appropriate governance separation between management and oversight responsibilities.

The Board appreciates the transparency, professionalism and commitment demonstrated by management in supporting informed governance and strategic decision-making.

Looking Forward

As ARC enters the first year of its 2026-2030 Strategic Plan, the Board's focus will increasingly shift towards implementation oversight, performance monitoring and ensuring organisational accountability against agreed strategic objectives.

The Board remains confident that ARC has the governance foundations, leadership capability and organisational culture necessary to continue supporting people with disability while responding proactively to future sector changes.

Acknowledgements

On behalf of the Board, I would like to thank my fellow Directors for their commitment, expertise and stewardship throughout the year. I also thank ARC's employees, volunteers and leadership team whose dedication makes a meaningful difference in the lives of the people we support every day.

Most importantly, we acknowledge the participants, families and communities who place their trust in ARC. It is a privilege to serve alongside you as we continue pursuing a future where people with disability are empowered to live lives of choice, inclusion and belonging.



Our Board



Lorraine Carroll
Chair
Board meetings attended: 10/12



Elizabeth Brown
Board meetings attended: 8/8



Graham Caldwell
Board meetings attended: 6/8



Megan Edwards
Board meetings attended: 7/8



Lino Bruno
Board meetings attended: 8/8



Aidan Lang
Board meetings attended: 8/8



Robin Giason
Board meetings attended: 8/8



Megan Shipley
Board meetings attended: 4/8
Joined November 2025



Asher Meadows
Board meetings attended: 6/8
Joined November 2025

CEO Report



Benjamin Keast
Chief Executive Officer

As we reflect on the 2025-2026 financial year, I am proud of what ARC Disability Ltd has achieved during a year of significant organisational change and sector-wide uncertainty. Across Australia, disability service providers continued to navigate evolving NDIS reforms, workforce shortages, increasing service complexity and rising operating costs. Despite these challenges, ARC remained focused on delivering quality services, strengthening organisational capability and ensuring we are well-positioned for the future.

Throughout the year, our priority was to ensure ARC remained a strong, sustainable and responsive organisation capable of meeting the changing needs of participants, families and communities across Far North Queensland. This required not only maintaining high-quality services but also investing in the people, systems, infrastructure and processes that support long-term success.

ARC at a Glance

Throughout 2025-2026, ARC continued to grow its impact across our community:

533
participants supported

445
employees

$37.8
million annual revenue

600k +
hours in direct service delivery

6k +
hours in training and development for ARC's Disability Support Team

5
service locations – addition of 480 Mulgrave Road

81%
workforce retention rate

91.5%
participant satisfaction

100%
compliance against quality and safeguarding requirements – maintaining our registration recommendation from ARC's mid-term audit.

These figures reflect both the scale of ARC's operations and the commitment of our people to delivering meaningful outcomes every day.

Building a Stronger Organisation

The past year saw ARC undertake a significant review of its organisational structure, leadership arrangements and business operations. These changes were designed to ensure the organisation remains fit-for-purpose in an increasingly complex operating environment and capable of delivering on its strategic ambitions over the coming years. Leadership transitions and organisational redesign were carefully managed to maintain continuity of services while strengthening accountability, responsiveness and organisational effectiveness.

A major milestone during the year was the acquisition of ARC's new site at 480 Mulgrave Road. This investment represents more than a change of location. It reflects ARC's commitment to establishing a permanent and visible presence within the Cairns community, while providing a modern and sustainable base from which to support future growth. The transition from our leased premises along Aumuller Street has created opportunities for greater collaboration, improved operational efficiency and stronger community engagement.

Strengthening Financial Sustainability

Maintaining financial sustainability remains one of the most important responsibilities of organisational leadership. While the disability sector continues to face increasing financial pressures, ARC concluded the year from a position of stability and resilience. Ongoing financial planning, disciplined resource management and robust reporting processes have helped ensure the organisation remains well placed to respond to future challenges and opportunities.

Like many providers, ARC experienced increasing workforce costs and higher operating expenses throughout the year. These pressures reinforce the importance of continuous improvement, innovation and careful stewardship of organisational resources. In response, we continued investing in financial reporting capability, business improvement initiatives and planning processes that will support long-term sustainability.

Investing in People and Culture

The success of ARC is built upon the dedication, professionalism and compassion of our employees. Every day, our workforce supports people with disability to pursue their goals, participate in their communities and live fulfilling lives. Their commitment remains the foundation of everything we achieve as an organisation.

Throughout the year, ARC continued investing in workforce capability, leadership development and employee engagement. Despite the significant workforce challenges experienced across the disability and community services sectors, ARC remained focused on retaining talented employees, strengthening organisational culture and building future leadership capability. These investments are critical to ensuring we continue delivering high-quality services in an increasingly competitive labour market.

Preparing for the Future

The year concluded with the endorsement of ARC's Strategic Plan 2026-2030, providing a clear roadmap for the next phase of the organisation's development. The strategy focuses on strengthening participant outcomes, building workforce capability, enhancing organisational resilience, maintaining financial sustainability and modernising systems and business processes.

While the strategy establishes our long-term direction, our immediate focus is on implementation. Over the coming year we will continue investing in workforce planning, business process improvement, financial capability, technology and outcome measurement to ensure ARC remains a strong and sustainable organisation for the future.

Acknowledgements

I would like to sincerely thank ARC's participants, families, volunteers, employees, managers, Executive Leadership Team and Board of Directors for their commitment throughout the year. The achievements outlined in this report are the result of collective effort, shared purpose and an unwavering belief in the potential of people with disability.

As ARC commences its 50th year, we do so with confidence, optimism and a clear sense of purpose. We have strengthened our organisation, invested in our future and remain committed to creating opportunities for people with disability to live lives of choice, inclusion and belonging.



Deputy CEO Report



Natasha Rivett
Deputy CEO

The 2025-2026 year was another year of growth, determination and achievement for ARC.

While the disability sector continued to experience significant change and uncertainty, ARC remained focused on what matters most, supporting people with disability to live meaningful lives, build relationships, develop skills, achieve goals and be active members of their communities.

Across all areas of the organisation, we saw participants achieve incredible things. Whether it was learning new independent living skills, gaining confidence to participate in community activities, developing friendships, pursuing employment and volunteering opportunities, advocating for themselves, or simply trying something new, these achievements remind us why our work matters.

Participant voice continued to be a strong focus throughout the year. Through the Participant Voice Representative Group, participant recognition initiatives and regular engagement opportunities, participants shared their experiences, celebrated successes and helped shape the services they receive.

Their voices continue to guide ARC's improvement journey and ensure that the people we support remain at the centre of decision-making.

Our Programs teams delivered a diverse range of opportunities that promoted inclusion, creativity and social connection. Participants were involved in creative arts projects, performances, exhibitions and community activities that showcased their talents and demonstrated what is possible when people are given opportunities to shine. Several projects received grant funding and external recognition, creating meaningful opportunities for participants to tell their stories, learn new skills and connect with the broader community.

The Inclusive Education Resource Centre continued to make a positive impact across Cairns and the surrounding region. The service expanded its connections with schools, kindergartens and educators, providing resources and support that help create more inclusive learning environments for children and young people. New resources, outreach activities and partnerships strengthened ARC's ability to support inclusion beyond our direct services.

Throughout the year, ARC continued to advocate alongside participants and families as they navigated ongoing NDIS reforms and changes to planning and funding processes. Many families experienced uncertainty as funding models evolved and evidence requirements increased. Our teams worked alongside participants to ensure their voices were heard and that they received the support needed to navigate these changes.

The year also brought challenges. The increasing complexity of participant needs, changing NDIS requirements and pressures across the disability sector required flexibility, creativity and persistence from staff across every service area. Despite these challenges, our teams remained committed to delivering safe, high-quality supports and ensuring participants continued to receive the services they needed.

What stands out most from this year is the kindness, determination and resilience shown by the people we support. Every day we witnessed participants achieving personal goals, trying new experiences, overcoming barriers and supporting one another. These successes may not always make headlines, but they are life-changing for the individuals and families involved.

I hope you will also take a moment to read the wonderful reflections shared throughout this Annual Report by our managers and teams. Their stories bring to life the impact of our services far better than any report can. From group achievements and community participation through to individual milestones and personal successes, these reflections celebrate the people at the heart of ARC and the incredible journeys that have occurred throughout the year.

I would like to sincerely thank ARC's participants, families, carers, volunteers, Board members and staff for their continued trust, commitment and support. It is a privilege to be part of an organisation that continues to make such a positive difference in the lives of people with disability and their families.

As we commence ARC's 50th year, I remain incredibly proud of what has been achieved together and excited about the opportunities that lie ahead.

Until next time, ARC, *more than just support*.



CFO Report



Seranie Eecen
Chief Financial Officer

Financial Report for 2025/2026

ARC Disability Ltd delivered a positive financial result for FY2025/26, recording revenue of $37.9 million and a surplus of $785k. While profitability remained positive, the year was characterised by increasing cost pressures across the disability sector.

Scan to view
the Financial Reports

Revenue grew by 5.8% compared with the previous year; however, ongoing wage growth, higher operating costs and continued pressure on NDIS funding resulted in a lower surplus than the prior year.

The organisation continued to operate within budget and maintained a strong financial position throughout the year. Growth in Child Safety and NIIQS services contributed significantly to revenue and continues to reduce ARC's reliance on a single funding source.

Although margins have tightened, the result reflects a financially stable organisation that continues to invest in service quality, workforce capability, governance and infrastructure while navigating a challenging operating environment.

Financial Performance Overview

Total revenue increased by approximately $2.1 million to $37.9 million for the year. NDIS funding remains ARC's primary revenue source and continues to underpin most service delivery activities. Consistent with broader sector trends, growth in NDIS revenue was constrained by participant budget pressures, utilisation challenges and pricing limitations. Encouragingly, non-NDIS programs continued to expand. Child Safety Services generated more than $3.8 million during the year and NIIS revenue also increased significantly, providing valuable diversification and strengthening the organisation's long-term sustainability.

Cost Performance

Employee-related costs remain the most significant component of ARC's expenditure structure. Salary and wage costs totalled $33.8 million and represented approximately 89% of revenue. While workforce expenditure remained below budget, it increased significantly compared with the previous year and continues to place pressure on operating margins.

Additional investment was also directed towards governance, workforce development, technology platforms and organisational infrastructure with the purchase and refurbishment of our new locations at 480 Mulgrave Road. These initiatives are considered important in supporting service quality, compliance requirements and future growth opportunities.

Depreciation and asset maintenance costs increased during the year, reflecting ARC's ongoing investment in its facilities, systems and operational infrastructure.

Key Observations

Several themes emerged from the FY2025/26 result:

- Revenue growth remained solid despite a difficult funding environment.
- Child Safety and NIIS services continue to provide valuable diversification and are becoming increasingly important contributors to overall financial performance.
- Workforce costs remain the single largest factor influencing profitability.
- Continued investment in systems, governance and organisational capability is strengthening ARC's long-term position.
- Margin compression remains an ongoing challenge and will require continued focus on utilisation, rostering efficiency and service sustainability.

Conclusion

Considering the operating environment, FY2025/26 represents a sound financial outcome for ARC.
The organisation remained profitable, maintained strong financial discipline and continued to invest in the people, systems and infrastructure required to support future service delivery. Although the lower operating margin reflects sector-wide challenges, ARC remains financially sustainable and well positioned to respond to upcoming funding and regulatory changes. Maintaining this position will require continued attention to workforce efficiency, service utilisation, revenue diversification and prudent cost management. Overall, the result demonstrates the resilience of the organisation and its ability to adapt to an increasingly complex and constrained fiscal environment.



HR Report



Kat Caplick
Human Resources Manager

During 2025-2026, ARC continued to invest in building a capable and connected workforce. As workforce pressures across the sector continued to grow, efforts were directed towards workforce planning, professional development, employee wellbeing, attraction and retention initiatives, and preparing for future sector reforms. Through these initiatives, ARC has continued to strengthen its position as an employer of choice while enhancing the quality and sustainability of support provided to participants.

Workforce Planning and Future Readiness

This year saw investment in workforce planning to better understand our workforce demographics, skills, qualifications, career aspirations and future workforce requirements. ARC strengthened relationships with schools, employment agencies, training organisations and community groups to support future workforce pipelines and create greater awareness of careers within the disability sector.

Recruitment processes also continued to evolve, with improved recruitment videos, enhanced screening processes through Referoo, strengthened workforce data collection, and greater engagement with students, culturally diverse communities, visa holders and underrepresented workforce groups. These initiatives are helping ARC build a sustainable workforce capable of supporting future growth.

As part of preparations for the new Strategic Plan and upcoming SCHADS Award reforms, considerable work was undertaken to better understand workforce capability, qualifications, career pathways and succession opportunities across the organisation.

Learning, Development and Professional Growth

This year was the rollout of ARC's Continuing Professional Development (CPD) Framework. The framework provides a structured approach to professional learning, helping employees maintain and develop the skills required to deliver safe, person-centred and high-quality supports. CPD has now become an important part of supervision, performance development discussions and future career planning across the organisation.

Significant work was also undertaken to improve ARC's learning and development systems. Training pathways were reviewed and learning modules upgraded to align with updated NDIS Practice Standards, legislation compliance requirements and operational best practice. These improvements ensure employees have access to more relevant, engaging and contemporary training.

Strengthening Supervision, Mentoring and Career Development

Throughout the year, ARC continued strengthening its Supervision Framework, moving conversations towards meaningful discussions about capability, wellbeing, performance, career aspirations and professional growth. Updated supervision agreements now better connect an employee's role responsibilities with demonstrated capabilities, development goals and measurable outcomes.

A key enhancement has been the introduction of the Assigned Mentor concept. While supervisors continue to provide operational oversight and accountability, ARC recognised that employees also need someone focused on supporting their growth, confidence and career development.

The Assigned Mentor model will form an important part of ARC's evolving Employee Value Proposition. It reinforces our commitment that employment at ARC is more than simply completing shifts or fulfilling a role. Employees are supported to build capability, explore career opportunities, identify development goals and receive ongoing coaching throughout their employment. Whether an employee is commencing their first role in disability support or preparing for future leadership opportunities, the mentor relationship provides additional guidance, encouragement and support

Student Placements and Emerging Talent

ARC continued investing in the next generation of disability support professionals through its student placement program. During the year, 32 students completed placements across ARC services. Several placement students successfully transitioned into employment with ARC following completion of their studies.

We welcomed a secondary school work experience student, with a Year 10 student from VPG completing a one-week placement in our Programs service. We hope this will be one of many school-based placements as we continue to build stronger connections with schools and inspire the next generation of disability support professionals.

ARC also increased its investment in workforce pathways through the expansion of traineeship opportunities across the organisation, including both Disability Support Worker and Administration streams. These traineeships provide practical on-the-job experience, structured learning and a clear pathway into long-term employment, helping develop future talent while supporting workforce sustainability.

We also commenced work on introducing a Senior Support Worker pathway into our workforce structure. The role provides a clear progression opportunity for experienced Disability Support Workers who wish to develop their professional skills while continuing to provide active, person-centred support on the frontline. The pathway forms part of ARC's commitment to creating meaningful career opportunities, recognising experience and supporting employees to grow their careers.

Employee Engagement and Culture

Building a connected and engaged workforce remained an important focus throughout the year.

The Employee Representative Group (ERG) continued to provide employees with opportunities to share ideas, provide feedback and contribute to workplace initiatives. Throughout the year, the group supported staff engagement activities, promoted wellbeing initiatives and assisted with community fundraising efforts, including Containers for Change raising money for Yaps and the Daffodil Day Morning Tea raising money for Cancer Research.

The Cairns Disability Conference and the Staff Development Days proved to be a highlight of the year, bringing ARC employees and people from within the sector for learning, networking, recognition and shared experiences. With more than 150 people attending, the events reinforced ARC's commitment to professional development, connection and celebrating employee contributions.

Communication and employee engagement channels also continued to evolve throughout the year. Recognising that frontline employees need access to timely, relevant and accessible information that could not wait for the monthly newsletter cycle, system notifications were implemented within the Akuety dashboard, ensuring important information could be communicated directly to employees in a timely manner through a platform they already access as part of their day-to-day work.



Robbie – ARC's Business Administration Trainee

“Since joining ARC, I have been exposed to many different areas of the organisation, including reception, administration, workforce support, document management, customer service and office systems. This has helped me build confidence, develop new skills and gain a much better understanding of how a large organisation operates behind the scenes.

One of the things I value most about ARC is the support I have received to complete my studies. They have provided me with dedicated time to undertake my work while applying what I am learning directly in the workplace. Being able to connect my studies with practical experience has helped me develop both personally and professionally.

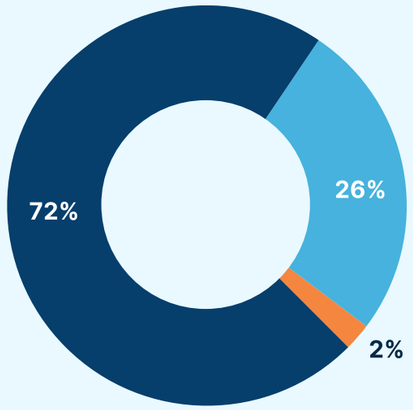
The traineeship has also provided opportunities to work alongside experienced staff who have shared their knowledge, encouraged my development and given me the confidence to take on new tasks and responsibilities.

I am grateful for the opportunity ARC has provided and would encourage anyone considering a Business Administration Traineeship to explore the pathway. It is a great way to gain practical experience, develop valuable workplace skills and build a foundation for future career opportunities while studying”

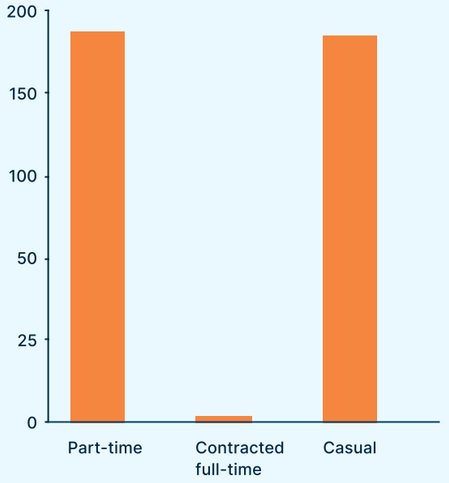
Workforce composition stats as of 30th June 2026

Our workforce continues to reflect the diversity of the communities we support. Employees come from a wide range of age groups, backgrounds and life experiences, bringing valuable perspectives and skills to ARC. Approximately 30% of our workforce identifies as culturally and linguistically diverse, contributing to a rich and inclusive workplace culture. The workforce continues to be female dominated, with women representing 72% of ARC's workforce, consistent with broader industry trends. ARC's operational workforce maintains a balance of permanent part-time and casual employees, providing the flexibility required to support a diverse range of participant needs while continuing to create opportunities for greater workforce stability through permanent employment pathways.

Employee Gender Distribution 2025/2026



Operational Workforce Distribution





Years of recognition 1st July 2025 – 30th June 2026

The dedication and commitment of our employees continue to be one of ARC's greatest strengths. Our workforce includes many long-serving team members whose experience and organisational knowledge provide stability and continuity, as well as newer employees who are contributing fresh perspectives and helping shape our future. This combination of experience and growth supports a positive workplace culture and strong outcomes for the people we support. The following chart provides an overview of employee years of service across the organisation from 1st July 2025 – 30th June 2026.

5 Years

- Aska Hill
- Estelle Plant
- John Thackray
- Brett Claxton
- Bubba Tou
- Hanna Anderson
- Kat Inumaru
- Lewis Bowden
- Eilish Judd
- Emily Rossi
- Jose Mantecon Van Santen
- Satomi Ishitobi
- Vanessa Brady
- Katherine Caplick
- Mayami Keating
- Sylvia Turner
- Matthew Edwards
- Cheryl Abel
- Jo Saunders
- Nyna Keneally
- Tania Herasymets
- Ashlee Crocker
- Lucy Perry
- Hayley Kuehn
- Taylah Daly
- Stephen Bradstreet
- Dee Beaulieu
- Keelie Roberts
- Tim Dwyer
- Dulcie Harris
- Hathaiporn Di Francesco

10 Years

- Jenny Mackenzie
- Lynne Jack
- Manjeet Kaur
- Anson Flitcroft
- Gail Meston
- Prabhu Khaling
- Becca George
- Jacob Puthooran
- Lorraine Oates
- Satoko Ogo

15 Years

- Terry Bigeni
- Darren O'Leary
- Penny Balog

20 Years

- Susan Howard - Retired
- Verena Arnold-Barmet

25 Years

- David Lee

Every achievement this year reflects the professionalism, commitment and passion of ARC's employees. Whether supporting participants, mentoring colleagues, welcoming new team members, strengthening systems or driving innovation, our workforce remains at the heart of everything we do.

More than just a job, more than just support.

Direct Services Report



Nicole Brown
Direct Services Manager

During the 2025-2026 financial year, Direct Supports continued to grow and adapt in response to participant feedback, changing support needs, and an evolving disability services environment. The service remained committed to delivering flexible, person-centred supports that empower participants to live the lives they choose.

Direct Supports provided services to an average of more than 200 participants, with average monthly support hours increasing to approximately 11,750 hours across the year. This growth reflects both the increasing demand for personalised supports and our commitment to ensuring participants receive assistance tailored to their individual goals, preferences and aspirations.

A key focus throughout the year has been supporting participants to build independence and exercise greater choice and control.

Participants have been encouraged to have more input into how, when and where their supports are delivered, with services designed to be responsive and adaptable as individual circumstances change. Regular feedback and supported decision-making continue to play an important role in shaping service delivery and ensuring participant voices remain at the centre of everything we do.

Participants were supported to attend community events, reconnect with family and friends, participate in social and recreational activities, attend family gatherings, and enjoy overnight trips and short holidays. For many participants, these experiences provided opportunities to develop confidence, strengthen social connections, build life skills and achieve personal goals. Participants were also supported within their own homes to increase their independence, develop everyday living skills and work towards goals that are meaningful to them.

Through ongoing review, proactive planning and continuous improvement, the service has remained focused on delivering supports that are safe, responsive and aligned with best practice.

We look forward to the year ahead and to continuing to support participants to achieve their goals, strengthen their independence, and remain active and connected members of their communities.



Home & Living Report





Renee Bell & Liam Melder
Home & Living Managers

At ARC, we are privileged to be chosen to support individuals through our Home and Living Services, where we believe a home is much more than a house. It is where people build confidence, friendships can grow, and individuals have the freedom to shape a life that feels right for them.

Over the past year, our Home & Living team has shared this journey, walking alongside 50 Participants across 29 home settings. Every individual and every experience have been unique, bringing its own moments of growth and achievement.

Our Coordinators and Disability Support Workers have continued to provide support that is centred on what matters most to each person. Whether this has involved building skills for greater independence, creating opportunities within the community, exploring new interests, or creating stability and comfort at home, we have seen individuals embrace new experiences and accomplish things they once thought were not possible.

Some successes have been significant milestones, while others have been the quieter achievements that deserve equal recognition. While these moments look different for everyone, together they tell a story of confidence, determination and progress.

Alongside the continued implementation of the Supported Independent Living Practice Standards, ARC's values are helping shape the way we work every day. We have also continued to strengthen our commitment to Child Safety, embedding Child Safe Standards and Universal Principles across our service to ensure the safety, wellbeing and rights of children and young people remain central to everything we do. This remains an important area of focus for ARC, with growing opportunities to extend our impact and respond to the emerging needs across the community. We remain committed to listening, evolving, and positioning ourselves to walk alongside those we support, ensuring they can access safe, inclusive and responsive supports.

None of these achievements happen in isolation. They are made possible by a team who bring kindness, patience, encouragement and consistency to the individuals they support each day. Beyond the plans, meetings, paperwork and daily routines, it is the people behind our service who make the difference. The relationships they build and the trust they earn are at the heart of the support we provide, and we value their contributions.

The year ahead will bring new challenges and new possibilities that we look forward to. If the past year has shown us anything, it is that every new experience begins with a single step. There is much to look forward to, and we are excited to see where this leads.

This year has provided many reasons to celebrate, and we are proud to share just some of the highlights from the past 12 months:



Mathew

This year, I reached an important milestone when I moved into my new home. More than just a change of address, it has given me a place where I feel safe, comfortable and happy.

I love it because it feels right for me and I have quickly settled into routines I enjoy, spending time with my family and the people around me, and I like to make the most of each day.

Looking back, the biggest achievement hasn't just been moving in, it's the confidence and independence that have come with it and I am excited for the all the new memories I will get to make.



Matthew

Hi, my name is Matthew. I like watching basketball. But watching is only half the fun. In my spare time I like to go and practice the game myself. Last week I was able to play on the main court at Marlin Stadium. Walking on the polished floor, the bright lights, and the tall hoops made my training special. I trained hard, practiced dribbling, foot work and of course shooting at the tall hoops. I had lots of fun!



In memory of
Nelda

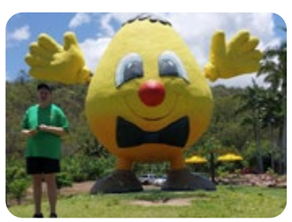
This year I celebrated my 70th birthday with my family and travelled over 4 hours to spend time with my loved ones surrounded by sunshine, sea breezes and love. It was so special to have my sisters, nieces, nephews, and great-nieces and nephews all together, sharing stories, laughs, and many happy moments. (*Nelda's milestone birthday was less about the number and more about the legacy she has built. Seventy years of stories, laughter, resilience and love and what better way to spend it than with the people she loves and that have been there through decades of shared memories and mischief!)



Greg

While this year has presented some new challenges, I've concentrated on what matters most to me: enjoying life with family and friends!

Whether it's going out to my favourite places, taking part in activities I enjoy, or spending quality time with people I care about, these experiences bring me happiness and help me make the most of every day doing the things I love.



Scott

One of the best parts of my year was going on a holiday to Townsville with my mum.

I got the opportunity to spend quality time with her - enjoy a change of scenery and create new memories. I enjoyed getting out and about, experiencing new places and taking a break from my normal routine.

Being able to spend this time with my mum meant a lot.



Shayne

This year I attended the ANZAC parade. After the parade, I headed to Copperlode Dam, where I took some time to enjoy the peaceful surroundings and admire the beautiful views. It was a relaxing and enjoyable day as I love to get out and about and appreciate spending time in nature.



Sam

Visiting the Aquarium is something I really look forward to. I enjoy watching the fish and other sea animals, and I find it relaxing to spend time there. I always look forward to my visits and have a good time exploring the different exhibits. Going to the Aquarium helps me feel calm, happy, and gives me something enjoyable to do in my week.



Georgia and Delphine

Two friends – one adventure. We love planning a weekend away, and this time we had the chance to explore another beautiful part of the world we call home, right on our doorstep. It's so fun packing our bags and heading off to discover new places.



Rob

Game, set, match... well, maybe not just yet! I've recently dusted off the tennis racquet and stepped back onto the court after playing in my younger years. My coach says my backhand is one of my strongest shots, and I've decided not to argue with a professional! Tennis is helping me stay active, improve my balance, and have plenty of fun along the way.



Adam

I love a night out in town celebrating – 007 shaken, not stirred and dressed to impress.



Gavin

My green thumbs were put to good use, resulting in this sweet potato success story!



Mona, Sonja and Judy

Licensed to Grill!
When there's a barbecue involved, you can count us in. Throw another shrimp on the barbie and let the good times roll!



George

Routine is important and a huge accomplishment this year for me was celebrating 20 years at work. My favourite thing is working on the shredder.



Gino

I love celebrating Christmas – it's one of my favourite times of the year. This year was particularly special as I enjoyed my first Christmas in my new home, surrounded by heaps of festivities, decorations and looking forward to all the fun the new year would bring.



Solly

One of my best experiences this year was getting to pass on my knowledge to school-based trainees and teach them everything I know about radio broadcasting through my job with BBM. I have loved this!



Deb

I am very artistic and creative. I designed and made this dress myself and created something both stylish and practical. This is just some of the artwork I have created, and I am proud of what I have been able to achieve.



Michael

One of my favourite things this year has been to get out and about and spend time in the community. It's fun being able to try new things and having the encouragement and support to explore what's important to me and what I want to do. Here I am just enjoying dinner and loving life.



Michael

They say age is just a number, but 25 feels like an impressive one. A whole quarter of a century deserves cake, celebrations and quality time with the people who have been part of the journey. Luckily, I got all three!



Nicholas

Independence is built one step at a time. Preparing my own lunch might seem like a small task, but for me, it's an important skill that gives me confidence and a sense of achievement. Every bit of progress is worth celebrating, because it's helping me reach my goals.



Trent

I love animals and this was one of my very favourite moments this year – I wish I could have taken them all home with me!



Simmie

One thing I really value is friendship. I love this picture of me and my friend.



Glen

This year, I lost around 20kg, reducing my weight from 96kg to 71kg through healthy eating, consistency and determination. The weight loss has given me more energy, confidence and happiness, enjoy my volunteer work and spend more time doing the things I love. I'm very proud of what I've achieved and the positive changes it has made to my life.



Emma

Going to work is an important part of my week and I look forward to it. I love getting stuck into work in the lab as I love to learn new things and being part of a great team.

Short Term Accommodation Report



Michele Townson
Short Term Accommodation Coordinator

1,123
overnight stays at 1:3

96
nights spent at the flat 1:1

The Holiday House continues to be much more than just a place to stay. For many participants and families, it provides opportunities for connection, independence, friendships and new experiences in a safe and supportive environment.

Throughout the year, we welcomed new participants to the Holiday House, with many starting with a trial stay before building the confidence to enjoy regular overnight visits. It was wonderful to see participants coming from across Far North Queensland, including Cairns, Kuranda, Innisfail, Mission Beach and Thursday Island, to spend time with friends, participate in community activities and enjoy all that Cairns has to offer.

The Holiday House team continued to support participants to develop practical daily living skills such as meal preparation, household tasks and building confidence in shared living environments. These may seem like small things, but they are often important stepping stones towards greater independence and achieving future goals.

Like many services across the disability sector, the Holiday House experienced challenges throughout the year, including changing participant needs, weather-related disruptions and the impact of NDIS pricing and funding changes. Despite this, occupancy remained strong overall, and the team continued to respond with flexibility and creativity to ensure participants could access the support they needed, including providing emergency accommodation when required.

What stands out most is the sense of belonging that the Holiday House creates. Whether it is sharing a meal, learning a new skill, catching up with friends or enjoying a weekend away from home, the Holiday House continues to provide opportunities for participants to grow in confidence, build independence and create lasting memories.

Thank you to our participants, families and dedicated Holiday House team for making the service such a welcoming and valued part of ARC. Together, you continue to demonstrate that the Holiday House is much more than accommodation, it is a place where people can connect, learn and thrive.

Coordination of Supports Report



The Coordination of Supports (COS) team have had a busy year. Over the past 12 months, we have continued to support over 250 participants with 6 full-time coordinators. Our role has continued to support participants, plan nominees and stakeholders in understanding and implementing the ongoing NDIS changes inclusive of utilising budgets in line with funding periods; this will continue into the next 12 months, and our team will be more active than ever.

ARC continues to support participants with level 2 and level 3 support coordination and continue to remain a provider of choice within the community.

The COS team's service delivery continues to be informed by the NDIS legislation, compliance and guidelines. As we transition into a new chapter of the NDIS, we will remain focussed on participant outcomes, building participants capacity and educating and supporting participants and nominees through the upcoming changes.

Scott's Story

Scott became an NDIS participant in 2025 following a spinal injury that significantly impacted his life and functional capacity. After receiving his first NDIS Plan in September 2025, Scott engaged ARC's Coordination of Supports team to assist him in navigating the NDIS and planning for his future.

Throughout an incredibly challenging period, Scott and his wife, Lorrae, demonstrated remarkable resilience as they worked towards returning home to Cairns after an extended hospital stay. With support from his Coordination of Supports team, Scott successfully transitioned from Brisbane Hospital back to Cairns and began planning for life beyond hospital.

One of Scott's greatest achievements during this time was securing a new accessible home where he could live with Lorrae and their beloved dogs. The Coordination of Supports team assisted by connecting Scott with housing options, equipment, therapies and supports, helping him work towards his goal of returning home and rebuilding his independence.

After almost 12 months in hospital, Scott moved into his new home in November 2025. Since then, he has continued to make significant progress, demonstrating determination and commitment to his recovery. Most recently, Scott reached an important milestone by standing independently, an achievement that reflects the hard work, perseverance and positive outlook he has shown throughout his journey.

ARC's Coordination of Supports team remains alongside Scott as he continues to pursue his goals, assisting him to access therapies and supports, navigate NDIS funding and understand any changes that may impact him. While there is still a journey ahead, Scott's progress to date is a testament to his resilience, determination and the strong support network surrounding him.

Programs Report



Mehadi Uddin
Programs Manager

The 2025–26 year has been a year of growth, creativity, change and achievement across ARC Programs.

Guided by ARC's purpose of "More than just support – working alongside people with disability and their families to create opportunities, choice and belonging," Programs has continued to provide participants with diverse opportunities to develop skills, explore their interests, build friendships, increase independence and participate meaningfully within the community.

Across our program sites, participants have continued to achieve their goals whether this is big or small. From learning to safely prepare a meal or developing confidence within a social setting, through to exhibiting artwork, becoming a published author, performing on stage or participating in major community events, every achievement is important.

Our work throughout the year has reflected ARC's values of Collaboration, Respect, Integrity, Belonging and Safety, while continuing to Innovate, Influence and Improve.

Much of the meaningful work within Programs happens every day across our sites. Each week, participants are supported to make choices, explore their interests and work towards their individual goals through a diverse range of activities, including cooking, gardening, maintenance, creative arts, sewing, computers, sport and recreation, self-care, social activities and community outings.

These structured programs provide participants with opportunities to develop practical everyday skills, build confidence and independence, form meaningful relationships and, importantly, enjoy spending time with others.

ARC Hub has continued to provide a broad range of activities including yoga, bike riding, sewing, painting and drawing, interactive games, cooking, computers, relaxation and massage, Movie & Memory and many other participant-led activities.

ARC480 sewing group has celebrated some particularly exciting achievements, with participants creating quilts that were entered into the Annual Cairns Show 2026 and proudly received prizes. Interactive Games has also grown in popularity. Games such as Connect Four and Jenga provide an enjoyable environment while supporting participants to practise turn-taking, communication, problem-solving and positive social interaction.

The Beauty & Hygiene program continues to support participants to develop practical self-care skills and greater confidence in looking after themselves.

Cooking has produced some significant individual achievements. Participants who began with limited experience in the kitchen have progressively developed greater confidence and independence. For some, this has included learning to safely prepare and cut fruit using adapted equipment, use a hot stove and develop an understanding of food safety.

These everyday milestones demonstrate the importance of providing people with the time, appropriate support and opportunities to learn at their own pace.

The Maintenance Group from ARC 51 worked alongside the Garden Group at ARC Hall to develop and install a new sprinkler system for the garden beds. Participants have been actively involved in maintaining and caring for the gardens, contributing to flourishing and productive garden areas across the site.

The project demonstrates Collaboration in a practical way while providing participants with opportunities to work together, develop practical skills, take responsibility and see the results of their contribution.

School Holiday Program

The School Holiday Program has continued to grow, with increasing participant numbers and positive outcomes for both long-term and newer participants.

Participants who have attended over a number of years have demonstrated considerable development, with some now preparing for the important transition from school into ARC's adult day programs.

At the same time, younger participants are joining the program and beginning to develop social connections and essential group participation skills.

Through cooking, independent living activities, creative arts and crafts and community experiences, participants have opportunities to develop practical and social skills in an enjoyable and supportive environment.

Social Groups

ARC's Social Groups continue to provide meaningful opportunities for participants to develop friendships, make choices and enjoy experiences together within the wider FNQ community.

Our Under 18s and Over 18s groups have enjoyed activities including beach BBQs, mini golf, cooking sessions and preparation for community events. These experiences naturally encourage teamwork, communication, decision-making and confidence within social settings.

An exciting addition to our Social Groups program, 'Fantastic Fridays', continues to provide opportunities for adults to enjoy evenings out with friends, build relationships, and increase their confidence and independence in the community. Friendships developed through these groups are an important outcome in themselves, with connections extending beyond ARC and into participants' everyday lives. These relationships have created a genuine sense of belonging and community, supporting participants to build social networks that are not limited to their time within Programs.

Innovate – Creating Future Opportunities in 2026

During 2025–26, ARC secured grant funding to support two exciting developments within Programs — Mini Woolies at ARC 51 and the renovation grants to upgrade ARC Café at the ARC Community Hall.

These projects will create practical learning environments where participants can build skills in retail, hospitality, communication, teamwork and customer service. The funding secured this year provides the foundation for these initiatives to be developed and implemented in 2026–27, creating new opportunities for participants to build confidence, independence and practical skills.

ARC Creatives

Creative Arts has continued to be a standout area of achievement, providing participants with opportunities to be recognised as artists, authors, illustrators and performers.

A major development during 2026 was ARC's partnership with JUTE Theatre Company through the Stories Alive – Books to Stage Project. The project is adapting two ARC-published children's books — Jack the Singing Dog by Mel Egan and Lucky the Little Bird by Imogen Lambeth — into original theatre works for audiences. A week-long creative development was held in April 2026, bringing ARC authors, illustrators and actors together with theatre professionals including a director and projection designer. The project created opportunities for ARC participants to work alongside industry professionals and experience the process of transforming an original story from page to stage.



The Magnificent Danny & Dazzle

Another significant achievement was the development of The Magnificent Danny & Dazzle into a complete theatre production. Participants were involved throughout the creative process, including performance, rehearsals, costumes, props and staging. Opportunities are now being explored to take Danny & Dazzle further into the community through potential performances at schools, kindergartens and other community locations.

Celebrating ARC Authors and Artists

The 2026 ARC Creatives Book Launch and Exhibition provided another opportunity to celebrate the creative achievements of participants and recognise them as authors, illustrators and artists demonstrating how a Programs activity can become the beginning of a much larger journey for our participants.

Influence – Connecting With Our Community

Community partnerships have long been an important part of ARC Programs. Throughout 2025–26, Programs continued to strengthen relationships with community organisations, businesses, sporting clubs and arts organisations, creating meaningful opportunities for participants to build connections, develop skills and participate in the broader community.

All Abilities Rugby

Our ongoing partnership with Brothers Rugby League through All Abilities Rugby continues to provide participants with opportunities to develop sporting skills, fitness, teamwork, confidence and friendships.

Events With Purpose

Throughout the year, Programs also participated in and hosted a range of events that brought participants, families, staff and the community together.

These included Daffodil Day and the Biggest Morning Tea, providing opportunities for participants and families to socialise, contribute and support causes that are important within the wider community.

Improve – A Year of Change and Development

The year has also brought significant change across Programs, including the transition from the former City Hub to 480 Mulgrave Road (ARC 480). This required considerable planning and collaboration from participants and staff while ensuring regular Programs services continued to operate.

Our Team

The achievements of Programs throughout 2025–26 have been made possible by the collective contribution of our participants, Coordinators, Senior Support Workers, and Disability Support Workers.

Throughout a year of change, new initiatives and exciting opportunities, our team has continued to support the everyday achievements that sit at the heart of Programs — whether that is helping someone try something new, develop a skill, make a choice, build a friendship or build greater confidence in their abilities.

Most importantly, our participants have continued to shape Programs through their interests, achievements and contributions. Their growth and success are what make the work of Programs meaningful.

Looking Ahead

As we look towards 2026–27, Programs will continue to build on the achievements and opportunities created throughout this year. We look forward to further developing the community-based partnerships like ARC/JUTE Stories Alive partnership, progressing the filming of Do's & Don'ts on Holidays, delivering the Brave, Willing & Able 2027 art exhibition project at the Tanks Centre, and expanding opportunities through ARC Creatives, Mini Woolies and Café Collect.

We will also continue to strengthen our community partnerships and explore new ways for participants to develop skills, express their creativity, connect with others and play an active role in the community.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DISABILITY
More Than Just Support...