



ANNUAL REPORT
2023/24

Employment POWERING Australia



About Us

NESA is the peak body for the Australian employment services sector. We drive excellence in employment services through representation, development, support and connection

Our role in the employment sector

NESA works to promote the best interests of job seekers across Australia.

We work collaboratively with Australia's public employment service providers to support them in meeting this aim, and we advocate on their behalf to government and non-government stakeholders to support the delivery of labour market assistance and social policy that transforms lives of individual job seekers, their families and communities.

Acknowledgment of Country

NESA acknowledges First Nations Peoples as the Traditional Owners and Custodians of this nation and we pay our respects to their Elders past, present, and emerging. We celebrate the cultures and wisdom of First Nations peoples and acknowledge 65,000 years of custodianship and connection to lands, sea and country. NESA also celebrates the wisdom and lived experience of First Nations communities and their valued contribution in shaping NESA's work.

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Message from the Chair

2023-24 has been another significant year for our members and sector. Despite the ongoing uncertainty about future policy and service settings for Australian public employment services, the year again highlighted our sector's incredible strength, resilience and commitment to those experiencing disadvantage in our society.

NESA has continued to provide strong advocacy and sector representation across all employment programs and key Australian Government agencies, with a record number of submissions and representations to Government. All NESA's recommendations to the House Select Committee into Workforce Australia Employment Services were reflected in whole or in part in the final report of the Committee.

2023 saw one of our most successful NESA annual conferences and Gala Awards nights with over 400 participants and a record number of award nominations. NESA also held a very successful First Nations Employment conference with around 90 participants in Cairns in June 2024 with NESA Board Director, Kenny Bedford, as Master of Ceremonies. Our final leadership forum for 2023 reached maximum capacity with presenter, Workforce Australian Inquiry Committee Chair, Julian Hill MP in attendance.

Like many sectors, the employment services sector is focused on ensuring sound workforce capability, attraction, and retention practices and strategies are embedded within their organisations. During 2023 NESA, instigated a review of its professional development service offering to members to ensure our sector is equipped with the support and training it needs to support its workforce.

2023-24 saw development of a new Strategic Plan for NESA designed to equip NESA to tackle emerging challenges and retain its position as Australia's leading peak body for the employment services sector in Australia. NESA's Mission was strengthened by the introduction of four pillars to drive excellence in employment services; namely, Representation, Development, Support and Connection reflecting our four core goals in serving our members. NESA also strengthened the performance framework underpinning the Strategic Plan 2024-27, to ensure greater accountability to members. The NESA Board also commenced a review of the NESA Ltd Constitution to ensure it firmly supports NESA for future success.

NESA hosted a very successful international innovation tour to Canada and the United States in March 2024 with a great cross section of members participating. Opportunities to promote the talent and capability of our member organisations to United States' governments and regional Workforce Boards and build strategic networks was provided with the tour coinciding with the United States Workforce Boards National Forum in Washington DC.



Finally, I congratulate NESA, our members and the thousands of front-line practitioners for their incredible contributions and collaboration to support our country achieve the vision of opportunity for everyone through economic inclusion and employment. Commencing the role as Chair of the NESA Ltd Board in November 2023 has provided the great privilege of experiencing the transformational work of our sector and its peak body.

It has been an absolute honour to play a part in setting the new strategy and direction for NESA as we face the challenges of the future with strength and unity.

Rebecca Nicholls

**Rebecca Nicholls,
Chair of NESA Board**

Message from the CEO

The resolute vision of NESA, opportunity for everyone through economic inclusion and employment, remained our north star throughout the year. Amidst a backdrop of heightened uncertainty and challenging policy and service settings, NESA advocated strongly on multiple fronts to better enable job seekers to realise this opportunity.

We challenged the Australian Government to rethink punitive and inefficient public policy and service settings and move to a new compact with the sector based on co-design, mutual responsibility and good stewardship. At the heart of our advocacy and representation was putting the best interests of job seekers first and freeing up employment service providers to focus on quality frontline services to Australia's most disadvantaged.

The 2023-24 financial year saw a sector in hiatus, notwithstanding the release of high-level national policy and Inquiry papers. The Australian Government released its long-awaited policy paper on employment, Working Future: The Australian Government's White Paper on Jobs and Opportunities in September 2023. In November 2023, the Australian Parliament's House Select Committee Inquiry into Workforce Australia Employment Services tabled its final report on 30 November 2023. Both reports proposed major transformational changes

to Australia's employment services system which are yet to be realised with no firm commitments signalled in federal Budget 2024 or the Australian Government's response to the Inquiry.

The 2024 federal Budget, however, did take some small steps towards larger scale reform, including an initial response to immediate issues identified through the Select Committee on Workforce Australia Employment Services.

Of note, the Budget explicitly stated its commitment to working closely with stakeholders and the broader community to improve employment services in the longer term signalling that change won't happen quickly.

Government-controlled operational policy and service settings continued to challenge our sector in delivery of employment services across Australia.

NESA's advocacy included strong representation on achieving basic functionality in the Australian Government's IT system for public employment service providers delivering its largest national employment program, Workforce Australia. We brought to Government's attention the 20% increase in administrative burden for providers arising, largely but not solely, from loss of system functionality with the transition

from jobactive to Workforce Australia. We also advocated for reduction in administrative burden imposed on the sector in areas relating to payments, compliance and assurance, and performance, and for better settings to sustain provider financial viability. We joined with other representative bodies to advocate for fair and timely compensation for Disability Employment Program providers impacted by Government-generated errors in performance results.

We worked with Government and our remote providers to advocate for, and facilitate, greater opportunities for genuine co-design in the development of a new remote employment program.

In the midst of challenging social and economic conditions, however, the employment services sector continues to rise to and surmount new and increasing challenges, buoyed by the unwavering commitment and calibre of our workforce and their leaders.

NESA will continue to support and advocate for them in all our endeavours to ensure they have the resources and settings needed to deliver world class employment services.



Kathryn Mandla,
CEO NESA





Meet our board

From left to right: Mark Hoffman-Davis, Kenny Bedford, Kieren Kearney, Rebecca Nicholls, Karen Rainbow, Kathryn Mandla, Ron Maxwell. Absent: Karena Newland.

Governance

Our Board is a dedicated and dynamic group of professionals who have extensive experience working in the employment services sector and other related services. NESA's Board is committed to ensuring a strong governance framework that supports achievement of goals, objectives, and strategic directions.

Rebecca Nicholls

Chair of NESA Board,
Convenor of NESA Succession
and Remuneration Committee

Rebecca has 21 years of experience working in government funded employment services, 7 years' experience in Occupational Rehabilitation, and 3 years' experience in private recruitment. Rebecca is the Managing Director of Global Skills.

Kenny Bedford

Board Member, Member
of the Audit and Risk
Management Committee

Kenny is a proud Meuram man from Erub. He has broad knowledge and a depth of experience working with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities in a range of settings, from the most remote locations to urban environments. He has diverse Board and governance experience. Kenny is a Director on the My Pathway Board.

Mark Hoffman-Davis

Board Member, Convenor
of NESA Audit and Risk
Management Committee

Mark has over 25 years' experience as an influential leader, executive and company director across multiple industries. Mark is the CEO of SYC, who provide employment, training, housing and disability services nationally.

Kieren Kearney

Board Member, Member
of NESA Succession and
Remuneration Committee

Kieren has over 20 years' experience delivering employment services in every state and territory of Australia with both private and not-for-profit providers. Kieren is the CEO of Workways, who provide employment and environmental services up the East Coast from Gippsland to Cairns.

Ron Maxwell

Board Member, Member
of the Audit and Risk
Management Committee

Ron has over 20 years' experience in the commercial sector and has held several senior level management positions in the not-for-profit sector. Ron has been the CEO of VERTO since 2014. Ron has served on various boards and is currently Deputy Chair at the Independent Tertiary Education Council Australia (ITECA) and is also a member of the New South Wales Skills Board Reference Group as well as the New South Wales Smart and Skilled Reference Group.

Karena Newland

Board Member, Member
of NESA Succession and
Remuneration Committee

Karena has over 20 years' Executive level experience in Employment Services, in both not-for-profit and commercial organisations. Karena's operational management roles include Chief Operating Officer, National Operations Manager and General Manager, and her executive roles include People and Culture, and Quality, Audit and Compliance. Karena is the CEO of Jobfind and ULaunch.

Karen Rainbow

Board Member, Member
of the Audit and Risk
Management Committee

Karen has over 30 years' experience in employment services including Workforce Australia, and Disability Employment Services. Karen's roles include over 8 years as CEO, Employment Services at APM.

Governance

Our team during 2023-24:

- ◆ Kathryn Mandla, CEO
- ◆ Dr Marion Byrne, Head of Advocacy, Communications and Media
- ◆ Julia Fenech, Head of Corporate Services
- ◆ Prateek Pahwa, Company Accountant
- ◆ Shirley Fisher, Executive Assistant to CEO, Company Secretary and Member Services Coordinator
- ◆ Damien Opolski, Senior Policy Advisor
- ◆ Wendy Linsen, Training Coordinator
- ◆ Bec Game, Events and Administration Officer
- ◆ Su Vashisth, Finance and Administration Support Officer
- ◆ Max Croft, Professional Development Coordinator

In 2023-24 our team was also supported by consultants/contractors:

- ◆ Ingrid Cucchi
- ◆ Annette Gill
- ◆ Margaret Lourey
- ◆ Paul Maguire, Maguire Legal
- ◆ Moores Lawyers



Our Impact

71

member
organisations

370+

individual
engagements
with members

10

formal meetings
with Members
of Parliament
or their advisors

37

formal
meetings with
Departmental
representatives

72+

members' issues
raised with
Departmental
representatives

100%

member
satisfaction
with NESA's
advocacy in NESA
Members' Survey

700+

participants at
NESA Events

800+

participants
across 26 NESA
Special Interest
Group sessions

95%

of members
rated NESA
events as High
Quality

500+

attendees at
NESA/DEWR
Provider forums

6,150

participants in
professional
development
training sessions

115

professional
development
training webinars

90

participants at
the First Nations
Employment
Conference in
June 2024

91+

CEO engagements
with stakeholders
from other
Peaks, Academia
and industry

243%

increase in NESA
website users
from 2022-23

NESA's Strategic Plan 2024-27

Our Plan

NESA is dedicated to a vision of opportunity for everyone through employment and inclusion. In the second half of 2023, our CEO completed her inaugural meetings with all NESA members, capturing their feedback on employment services issues, NESA's offerings, and their expectations. This informed NESA's new strategic plan for the next three years to reflect what matters most to members, ensuring NESA's ongoing impact is measurable. NESA's Strategic Plan 2024-27 provides a more focused mission, with four key strategic goals to guide NESA's work moving forward over the next three years.

Our Mission

Driving excellence in employment services through:

- ◆ Representation
- ◆ Development
- ◆ Support
- ◆ Connection

Our Values

- ◆ Authenticity
- ◆ Trust
- ◆ Integrity
- ◆ Respect
- ◆ Professionalism

Our Goals

Our Goals for 2024-27 are to ensure that Australia's employment services sector is:

- ◆ **Represented:** that the voice of our sector has impact and is reflected in government policy and service design
- ◆ **World Class:** Our sector accesses leading professional development aligned to their needs and future growth
- ◆ **Supported:** Our sector has access to timely and effective support to help them thrive
- ◆ **Connected:** Our sector shares knowledge and collaborates to forge its strategic direction.

Scan the QR Code to visit
NESA's Strategic Plan 2024-27



Goal 1 / A Sector Represented

Our members told us that they wanted NESA to be a strong advocate and ensure their best interests were represented to government. Central to this mandate is ensuring that NESA's advocacy is co-designed with, and directly informed by, member needs and concerns.

As part of NESA's commitment to enhancing our advocacy offer, NESA appointed a permanent, full-time Head of Advocacy in February 2024, Dr Marion Byrne, to oversee development and delivery of NESA's advocacy service offer to members.

NESA's advocacy in 2023-24 has been both proactive in engaging with members and Government in co-design meetings and discussions on best practice, policies and services, as well as being reactive through timely representations to government decision-makers on issues impacting NESA members. With multiple reforms being progressed across all employment programs in 2023-24, NESA adopted a dual focus of advocating for 'urgent' changes to existing employment services programs, as well as in advocacy to shape longer term policy directions.

Some of the key advocacy activities undertaken in 2023-24 on behalf of members include:

- ◆ Significant formal and informal engagement with Ministers' offices, Shadow Ministers, Government, and the House Select Committee on Workforce Australia Employment Services (Committee) on employment services reform, including appearing before the Committee on 20 September 2023
- ◆ Urgent advocacy on more than 72 issues facing members across the Department of Employment and Workplace Relations (DEWR), Department of Social Services (DSS), and the National Indigenous Australians Agency (NIAA) portfolios
- ◆ 7 co-design workshops for members (including workshops to inform responses to the Workforce Australia Inquiry report; Disability Royal Commission; new specialist disability program, DES performance framework; Remote Jobs and Economic Development Program; and advocacy service offer for community development program (CDP) members)
- ◆ Enhanced engagement with the NIAA and remote providers, with regular monthly meetings established with the NIAA, and CDP providers, and
- ◆ Advocacy with Ministers, Shadow Ministers and Government regarding the need for improved government stewardship across the entire employment services system.



95% NESA Representation across relevant* government working or advisory groups

4 formal submissions/appearances at Parliamentary Committee hearings

100% member satisfaction** with NESA's advocacy

6 occasions of formal joint advocacy with other representative bodies

* NESA is represented on all government working or advisory groups on employment except the Government's engagement with the Indigenous Coalition of Peaks on issues relating to employment

** Annual NESA Members' Survey

Goal 1 / A Sector Represented

10

formal meetings
with Members
of Parliament
or advisors

37

formal
meetings with
Departmental
representatives

72+

members' issues
raised with
Departmental
representatives



Some of the top issues advocated for in 2023-24 include:

- ◆ Sector productivity losses due to excessive government administrative burden and ineffective IT support systems, particularly the need to urgently fix IT functionality
- ◆ Removal of Declared Hours information from the DEWR IT system, and successful restoration following NESA advocacy
- ◆ Performance framework issues, including timeliness in release of performance results and sufficient feedback to providers to enable them to improve
- ◆ The Disability Employment Services (DES) Star Ratings errors and timely resolution of claims for damages, and communication to impacted providers
- ◆ Delays in contract reviews and renewals across all Government employment portfolios, and financial impacts on business operations and workforce retention
- ◆ Sector wide concerns regarding financial viability and the need for fairer funding models to match government wages, indexation aligned with CPI, and longer contracts
- ◆ New program models, design, and tender processes particularly in relation to the Parent Pathways program, remote employment service, and specialist disability employment program
- ◆ Lack of clarity on eligibility and evidentiary requirements for Workforce Australia progress payments
- ◆ Funding for safety for employment services staff, and essential policy changes needed to safely manage clients with challenging behaviours
- ◆ Community Development Program issues, including: constant changes to the program, timeliness and lack of communication and negative impact upon business operations, financial viability, staff health, wellbeing, and retention; the high cost of implementing right fit for risk in remote regions; and the proposed model and tendering process for the new remote employment service
- ◆ Advocacy against Government expanding insourced employment services; as well as the need for greater transparency, and competitive neutrality in the operation of Government led sites or pilots
- ◆ Impact on businesses following suspension of referrals as a result of exceeding tolerance levels, and market share issues regarding under utilisation
- ◆ Application of industrial changes to the Fair Work Act 2009 relating to 'fixed-term' contracts beyond 2 years and impacts upon employment service providers
- ◆ Ongoing issues raised by the Australian National Audit Office in their reports on the Establishment of the WFA Services Panel; and Remote Employment programs
- ◆ MYEFO Better Targeting Employment Services, and the lack of information on the impact on providers, and consistent communication across all Departments, and
- ◆ Need for ministerial engagement with the employment services sector.

NESA also commenced working with members in 2023-24 on identifying and refining NESA's key policy issues to drive NESA's advocacy campaign for the 2025 Australian Federal election.

Kathryn Mandla, CEO,
Parliament House, Canberra



Kathryn Mandla, CEO and Board Members:
Kenny Bedford, and Rebecca Nicholls



Goal 2 / A World-Class Sector

Key statistics from
the Workforce survey

63%

of members deliver
Workforce Australia
and DES

72%

of our workforce
are women

16%

of our workforce are
aged 55 and over

55%

of organisations
experienced staff turnover
of more than 40% in the
12 months to June 2023

61%

of our people are
full-time employees



Our members told us that they wanted to build the capability of their workforce to provide world-class employment and related support services and attract and retain people within their organisations and companies.

Professional Development

NESA is dedicated to the professional development and upskilling of frontline employment services staff, ensuring they are equipped to meet the evolving needs of job seekers and employers. Through a comprehensive suite of training programs, in 2023-24 NESA provided members with access to high-quality professional development opportunities that covered essential skills and emerging best practices in employment services. Our offerings included workshops, webinars, and tailored training sessions focused on areas such as culturally responsive and trauma-informed practices, dealing with high conflict, collaborative approaches, and co-design, aligning with both industry needs and government priorities. By continually enhancing our training portfolio, NESA is empowering frontline staff to deliver impactful, effective services, fostering excellence, confidence and resilience within the employment services and related sectors.

Some of NESA's achievements in 2023-24 include:

- ◆ 6,150 participants trained through 115 training webinars
- ◆ 605 survey responses to NESA's professional development survey
- ◆ Delivery of NESA's biennial Remuneration and Human Resources Management Survey Report. Providers can access the survey results to analyse remuneration benchmarks and trends for core positions across the sector and understand workforce issues facing the employment services sector. Evidence gathered also supported NESA's advocacy, including advocacy regarding fairer funding agreements, and workforce safety and retention
- ◆ Virtual webinars and face to face sessions at the NESA First Nations Employment Conference in Cairns in June 2024 for CDP providers to strengthen their tendering and professional development capability.
- ◆ Reviewed NESA's professional development service offering and commenced development of the model for the NESA Academy to be launched in November 2024 to update and reinvigorate NESA's professional development and training offer to members.

Megan Hunter High Conflict Masterclass Cairns – June 2024



Goal 2 / A World-Class Sector

NESA Innovation Tour Canada and USA – March 2024



International impact

European Union Conference, Barcelona, October 2023

NESA CEO, Kathryn Mandla was invited to present at the European Union conference in Barcelona in October 2023 by host country Spain, as the incumbent President of the European Union. Attendees, including EU country Ministers, and Secretaries of employment departments, heard from Ms Mandla on the current transformation and cultural shifts in employment services in Australia; in particular, the changes outlined in the Government's White Paper "Working Futures", the Disability Royal Commission Inquiry; and the House Select Committee Inquiry into Workforce Australia. The visit was partially funded under an Austrade Grant.

European Union Conference, Barcelona – October 2023



European Union Conference, Barcelona – October 2023



NESA 2024 Innovation Tour

In March 2024, NESA held its Overseas Innovation Tour partially funded under an Austrade grant to Canada and the United States (US), with 14 participants from member organisations attending. The tour theme was 'Client-centred employment services for First Nation job seekers and vulnerable groups'. The tour met with national, state and local government officials and other employment services and labour market stakeholders in Canada and the US, culminating in attendance at the US National Association of Workforce Boards Forum in Washington DC. A NESA webinar on learnings from the tour was held for all members in June 2024, with attendees sharing their respective insights and takeaways from the tour.

NESA also briefed DEWR policy executives on learnings and has facilitated international connections between the federal government and US and Flemish Governments. Key contacts from NESA overseas innovation tour will be invited to present at NESA's 2024 annual conference with NESA also facilitating side meetings with Australian Government executives.

16%

increase in professional development registrations from 2022-23

94%

of post webinar surveys provided positive feedback on quality of Webinars

100%

of post event surveys provided positive feedback on quality of speakers at NESA events

100%

satisfaction with NESA's professional development registration process

Goal 3 / A Sector Supported

Our members told us that they value being able to send NESAs a text or email or being able to pick up the phone about an issue they are dealing with to inform our advocacy focus. We also received positive feedback on the helpfulness of our Special Interest Groups, and the support and guidance that they provide on operational issues. We also received positive feedback about the services provided through our industry partners.

Annual member survey

As part of NESAs ongoing commitment to serving members better and ensuring that our service offerings are aligned to member needs and interests, NESAs launched its Annual Member Survey in April of 2024. Throughout the survey, members were invited to provide feedback on, and rate NESAs advocacy, events, and professional development service offerings. Feedback from members has helped shape the future direction of NESAs, ensuring that our initiatives remain responsive to member's evolving needs within the ever-changing employment services context.

Special Interest Groups

NESAs Special Interest Groups (SIGs) offer members the opportunity to collaborate online and exchange experiences and perspectives about the various issues, trends and challenges facing the implementation and delivery of employment services across multiple programs.

In 2023-24 NESAs delivered 26 SIG sessions, with more than 800 attendees. With over 70% of member organisations having a representative on one or more of these groups, they provide members with the opportunity to engage directly with relevant Government agencies to highlight key concerns, share frontline experiences of implementing government policy and co-design practical solutions.

In 2023-24 NESAs established three new special interest groups (SIGs) bringing the total number of SIGs to eight. The three new SIGs created in 2023-24 were established to deal specifically with issues relating to Workforce Australia Online for Providers, First Nations Employment, and Capability concerns within the sector, with all new SIGs having met by April 2024.

SIGs in 2023-24 were:

**Employability Skills Training/
Career Transition Assistance**

ParentsNext

Transition to Work

Data and Reporting

Cyber Security

**Workforce Australia Online
for Providers (WAOP)**

**First Nations
Employment Services**

**Professional Development
and Workforce Development.**

Goal 3 / A Sector Supported

Other Forums

NESA/DEWR Provider Forums

In 2023-24 NESA collaborated with DEWR to deliver provider forums on Financial Viability/Caseload Tolerances, Activation and Activities, and the Workforce Australia Service Provider Performance Framework. More than 500 people attended these sessions.

Supporting remote providers

In 2023 our members who operate in remote areas of Australia told us they needed more support and contact given the challenges in delivering employment services in remote communities, and that NESA could play a greater role in providing more practical assistance. NESA worked with Community Development Program providers to identify key priorities for professional development and advocacy support, tailoring NESA's professional development offering to meet the needs of remote providers. In addition to this, NESA held a First Nations Employment Conference in Cairns in June 2024, which attracted 90 participants.

First Nations Conference Cairns – June 2024



Over

70%

of members have
representatives
on a Special
Interest Group

200

Special Interest Group
sessions held with
800+
participants

3

new Special
Interest Groups
established

95%

of members rated
NESA Events as
High Quality

500+

attendees at
NESA/DEWR
Provider forums

90

participants at
the First Nations
Employment
Conference in
June 2024

Goal 4 / A Sector Connected

91+

CEO engagements
with stakeholders
from other Peaks,
Academia and
industry

700+

participants
at NESA Events

9

industry partners
and sponsors



Our members told us that they wanted to come together at high quality NESA events and build networks and connections with their peers, sector supporters, researchers, and government. Members also told us that they wanted NESA to provide regular sector communications, and keep them up to date on government reports, trends, inquiries and reviews, and funding announcements that impact their work.

Connecting Members

NESA Annual Conference – October 2023

In October 2023, NESA delivered one of its most successful annual conferences and award nights in over 5 years. The 2023 Conference theme was Employment Services Transformed and former Australian Olympian Gold medallist, Natalie Cook, was our high energy and motivating MC setting the mood for success for both the conference and Sector Gala Awards.

There were over 400 participants with the venue reaching maximum capacity. Our annual conference also reached maximum floor capacity with 22 exhibitors. The pre-conference Leaders Masterclass and Community Development Provider forum also attracted maximum venue capacity with around 50 participants for each, with our Sector Gala Awards dinner again proving to be the highlight of the year for our talented and hardworking sector.

CEO Leadership forum – December 2023

NESA held a Stocktake and Strategy Leadership Forum in Melbourne on 13 December 2023 with speakers including the Chair of the House Select Committee Inquiry into Workforce Australia, the Hon Julian Hill MP, the newly appointed DEWR Deputy Secretary, Tania Rishniw, and Deputy Secretary of DSS, Robyn Shannon. With over 90 leaders from across the sector attending, we heard some invaluable insights into the Select Committee on Workforce Australia Employment Services' final report and what it means for the sector. There were also insights into the implications of the Government's White Paper on employment, the final report of the Disability Royal Commission, the Poverty Inquiry, outcome of the Voice Referendum, and other government policies impacting the sector moving forward.

Natalie Cook, MC NESA Annual Conference 2023



Hon Julian Hill MP, Keynote speaker NESA Annual Conference 2023



Finalists NESA Awards for Excellence 2023



Goal 4 / A Sector Connected

Leadership Forum – December 2023



Masterclass on High Conflict Resolution – June 2024

With so many members having shared with NESAs their deep concerns regarding the safety and wellbeing of staff facing and responding to challenging behaviour, NESAs brought the internationally renowned expert, Megan Hunter CEO of the High Conflict Institute from the USA to deliver a series of Masterclasses on High Conflict Resolution.

In June 2024, NESAs held four High Conflict masterclass sessions in Melbourne, Sydney, Brisbane, and Cairns with over 154 attendees. The Masterclass was designed to support attendees to understand and tackle the most challenging behaviours and human interactions head-on, empowering attendees to understand the dynamics at play, and respond effectively to defuse conflicts and foster positive outcomes. Attendees not only walked away with new understandings, but they also left the Masterclass with a comprehensive toolkit to enable them to calmly navigate high-conflict scenarios with confidence.

First Nations Employment Conference – June 2024

The theme of the Conference was 'Better Together' and nothing more clearly demonstrated the collaboration and connectedness than the forging of strong relationships and connections that occurred at NESAs first, First Nations Conference. 90 participants from across remote Australia and government met together and heard from some of Australia's leading Indigenous policy thinkers, entrepreneurs and academics. Delegates also heard from operational business experts and emerging leaders.

Megan Hunter delivered a condensed Masterclass on High Conflict Resolution to all delegates. We also heard from government leaders, and yarned about potential policy positions for the 2025 Federal Election as NESAs galvanised its efforts to influentially advocate for the policy and service settings needed to support First Nations job seekers, and the providers who support them.

Speaking at First Nations Conference Cairns – June 2024



Connecting with Industry

Jobs and Skills Australia

NESAs committed to forging stronger relationships with Jobs and Skills Australia (JSA) in 2024. One of the key areas of interest is growing the role of providers in servicing clients beyond those on income support and working with local stakeholders to source talent to address regional market skills and capability gaps. JSA committed to deliver a free webinar in 2024-25 to NESAs members on latest labour market jobs and skills data and work closely with NESAs in exploring a greater market role for providers.

New First Nations Partnership – The Nahri Institute

In 2023-24, NESAs established a new partnership with The Nahri Institute, a leading First Nations provider of cultural awareness, consultancy and education services. NESAs is working closely with The Nahri Institute to boost capability of frontline staff working in remote parts of Australia and provide more cultural immersion training to the broader employment services workforce.

Workshop – NESAs National Conference 2023



NESA Membership

Our Valued Members

Members are the backbone of NESA and central to everything we do as their peak body. Their insights, experiences, and feedback drive our advocacy efforts, shape our training programs, and guide our strategic priorities, ensuring that NESA remains aligned with the challenges and needs of the employment services sector. Through active engagement with our members, we gain invaluable perspectives that enable us to represent them effectively at a national level and to advocate for policies and reforms that reflect their interests. Our members' commitment to delivering high-quality employment services fuels our purpose, and their ongoing support strengthens NESA's capacity to influence, innovate, and lead within the sector.

NESA is proud to represent this sector and our extensive, diverse, and inclusive membership.

NESA's members include not-for-profit, charities, for-profit, and public providers. Members include small, medium and large organisations with a mix of national, state-based or locally focused services. In addition, many members are engaged in the delivery of state and territory employment and training programs as well as a range of social and health services to disadvantaged Australians.

Membership

Interested in becoming a member?

If your organisation is engaged in the delivery of employment services or related services, then consider joining NESA. By joining NESA, you become part of the largest network of Australian employment services providers and will receive strong representation and advocacy, professional support and capacity building services.



Financial Performance

2023-24 saw a strong focus on financial stewardship and stability to ensure NESAs financial sustainability, delivering a consolidated net profit of \$226,394 and cash reserves of \$915,084.

This outcome represented a significant improvement when compared to the prior year profit of \$38,860 and closing cash reserves of \$615,186. NESAs achieved this through diversifying its income streams and focusing on consolidating its costs, resulting in a 5% growth in income and a corresponding 4% reduction in expenditure when compared to the prior year.

Aligned with our strategic plan priorities, this financial result has positioned NESAs to undertake an investment program to review and enhance its professional development service offering to members and the broader employment services sector; and to strengthen and modernise its governance and operating systems and processes, from 2024-25 to boost its productivity and capacity to service member needs. Leveraging these enhancements, NESAs aims to expand its reach and offerings to deliver increased benefits to our members and employees.

Retention of membership has emerged as a risk for NESAs, with the consolidation of providers, the provision of government funding for new peak bodies and the ongoing financial viability challenges associated with government models for employment services having significant impacts on the sector, resulting in budgetary constraints and shrinkage of member numbers.

Mindful of such effects within the sector, NESAs has ensured we strengthen our approach and support for members, providing an array of opportunities for all stakeholders to connect through a series of events. These include our Annual National Conference and Awards Gala Dinner, the First Nations Forum, Leadership Forums, Masterclasses and an International Tour to USA and Canada.

Additionally, NESAs continues to offer professional development training. Increasing and diversifying these offerings have been highly successful, having been well-supported and well-attended, demonstrating their value to our members and non-members alike.

Financial Performance

Consolidated Statement of Profit or Loss and other Comprehensive Income

For the year ended 30 June 2024

	2024	2023
	\$	\$
Revenue	2,175,884	2,071,860
Employee benefits expense	897,831	858,080
Other expenses	1,047,676	1,174,920
Depreciation and amortisation	3,983	-
Profit for the year	226,394	38,860

Consolidated Statement of Financial Position As at 30 June 2024

	2024	2023
	\$	\$
ASSETS		
CURRENT ASSETS		
Cash and cash equivalents	915,084	615,186
Trade and other receivables	741,673	71,366
Other financial assets	38,398	38,398
Other assets	44,425	28,269
TOTAL CURRENT ASSETS	1,739,580	753,219

	2024	2023
	\$	\$
ASSETS		
NON-CURRENT ASSETS		
Property, plant and equipment	7,967	-
TOTAL NON-CURRENT ASSETS	7,967	-
TOTAL ASSETS	1,747,547	753,219
LIABILITIES		
CURRENT LIABILITIES		
Trade and other payables	240,140	133,511
Employee benefits	78,214	50,126
Other liabilities	735,623	86,193
TOTAL CURRENT LIABILITIES	1,053,977	269,830
NON-CURRENT LIABILITIES		
Trade and other payables	-	18,182
Employee benefits	3,688	1,719
TOTAL NON-CURRENT LIABILITIES	3,688	19,901
TOTAL LIABILITIES	1,057,665	289,731
NET ASSETS	689,882	463,488

Recognition and Awards

Celebrating our Industry Excellence Award Winners

Since their implementation in 2004, the NESA Awards for Excellence announced at NESA's annual conference, have highlighted the commitment the employment services sector has made to improve individuals, families and our communities' economic and social wellbeing through employment and inclusion. These Awards provide an opportunity for the sector to showcase excellence in employment services providers' service delivery strategies and innovation, and the real impacts resulting from this work. In 2023, NESA received a record number of nominations for all Award categories which is testament to the strong partnership between Australia's employment services providers, the dedication and commitment of their frontline staff, and those employers committed to an inclusive and diverse workforce.

In 2023, the Award Winners were:

Joseph Paley,
Achiever of the Year Award
(sponsored by Jobscan)

Nominated by Workskil Australia

Mr Paley is an outstanding achiever who overcame extraordinary barriers to secure a job. 12 months before achieving this award, Mr Paley was unemployed, sleeping rough, recently released from prison, and estranged from his support network. After a freezing night huddled next to a wall at a train station, Mr Paley decided things had to change and that day, he walked to the nearest office of employment service provider, Workskil Australia, where staff found him waiting the next morning. Within 24 hours, Workskil Australia had connected Mr Paley to temporary accommodation, equipped him with a new set of clothes and resume, and organised an interview with a supportive employer to get him off the streets as soon as possible. In the words of Mr Paley "Today, my life is dramatically different – I have a car, I've moved from shared housing into a stable home and I love coming home knowing I've done a good day's work. I'm in the best financial, physical and mental position of my life".

Hafez Zamani,
Employment Consultant of the Year
(sponsored by Aware Super)

Nominated by APM

Mr Zamani was a former refugee, who has achieved a remarkable 25 years of experience in employment services within the Adelaide North Region. In 2023, Mr Zamani was the Business Development Manager for global health working for employment services provider, APM, overseeing 33 employment consultants across 13 sites and servicing a culturally and ethnically diverse demographic.

Mr Zamani is an outstanding example of someone who invests in people's potential, and connects job seekers not just to any job, but the right job to ensure ongoing sustainable employment.

NESA would like to thank our much-valued Award sponsors (Aware Super, Jobscan and Readytech) for their continued support of NESA and the great people who make up our employment services sector.

Joseph Paley – Achiever of the Year



Hafez Zamani – Employment Consultant of the Year



Recognition and Awards

Fruit2Work, Champion Employer of the Year (sponsored by Readytech)

Nominated by WISE Employment

Fruit2Work is a Victorian employer that is founded on the belief that everyone deserves a second chance, providing employment to people who have been incarcerated. Servicing more than 1000 customers in the Greater Melbourne area, Geelong and Ballarat, Fruit2Work is a certified social enterprise that is underpinned by a flexible employment model that accommodates employees' release conditions and personal circumstances, enabling parole obligations and other appointments to be met alongside of work commitments. They build vocational skills for their employees, and open pathways to broader opportunities, actively promoting talent from within. They are dedicated to getting these workers back on their feet, and reconnecting them with family, ongoing employment and helping them to contribute to society in a meaningful way.

Fruit2Work – Champion Employer of the Year



Recognition and Awards

Acknowledging our industry partners and sponsors in 2023-24

Industry partners and sponsors play a vital role in the success of the employment services sector, and NESAs deeply values their contributions, collaboration and support. These partnerships bring diverse expertise, resources, and innovative practices that enhance service delivery and support our members in meeting the complex needs of job seekers and employers. By working closely with industry, NESAs can drive impactful initiatives, facilitate professional development, and advance sector-wide improvements.

We are profoundly grateful for our industry partners and sponsors and want to thank them for their ongoing commitment to our sector.

We look forward to strengthening these relationships as we continue to build a dynamic and responsive employment services sector.



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ANNUAL REPORT
2023/24