

2024-2025 Annual Report

Providing **connected services**
for more people in need.



WINDANA
Life. Changing.

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About Windana

Windana provides services across Victoria for adults and young people experiencing alcohol and other drug harms, family violence, mental health challenges and social disadvantage.

Our Model of Care puts clients at the centre of what we do to create positive change in people's lives. We work with families, communities and other organisations to deliver trauma informed, equitable, culturally safe and integrated services based on evidence and practice wisdom.

By intervening early and creating purposeful partnerships, we help clients achieve improved outcomes while reducing demand on acute services. And we are influencing policy, practice and research to help shape better systems for clients.

Together, we influence the broader system for a more positive and connected future.

Our Mission

Helping people
to rebuild their lives

Our Values

Acting with
integrity

Showing
respect
for each other

Being
authentic
and honest

Fostering
connection
and collaboration

Pursuing
growth
and learning

Chair's report

I am proud to present Windana's 2024-25 Annual Report. It highlights Windana's dedication to providing life-changing connected services to more people in need.



Our services are needed now more than ever. The ongoing impact of stigma, the cost-of-living crisis, and under resourced early intervention services are having a huge impact on individuals and communities.

Organisations like Windana are lifelines for people who might otherwise fall through the gaps, and in 2024-25 Windana supported over 5,000 clients across our suite of services.

Following our merger with TaskForce, significant effort was dedicated to articulating how we deliver our newly expanded range of services in a consistent way. Windana's Model of Care was launched in February, bringing together the values, approaches, principles, commitments and initiatives that guide how we deliver our connected services (page 14).

This foundational document reflects Windana's commitment to delivering services that empower individuals and support recovery through lasting positive change.

Championing diversity and lived and living experience

As an organisation representing some of the most marginalised communities, we recognise the important role we play in being a place that welcomes and celebrates everyone's uniqueness. This year we were incredibly proud to launch our Innovate Reconciliation Action Plan (page 8-9) and achieve Rainbow Tick Accreditation on our first attempt (page 10-11). This certification is an independent, rigorous validation that our services and workplace are safe, inclusive, and affirming for the LGBTIQ+ community. It affirms our commitment to not just serving our whole community, but doing so with the highest standard of cultural safety and sensitivity.

Windana is committed to supporting and developing the Lived and Living Experience (LLE) workforce and expanding its impact across the organisation. A comprehensive review reaffirmed Windana's LLE Workforce's positive impact and identified 56 recommendations to strengthen the LLE Workforce. Windana has committed to implement all these recommendations via a 5-year action plan (page 12-13).

Windana also received QIC accreditation for another three years, having met all the QIC standards in areas such as service delivery, consumer and community engagement and governance. This is the seventh consecutive time Windana has received this accreditation.

Responding to external factors

Windana continues to respond to the external factors impacting on how we work. In the face of a tightening funding environment and a cost-of-living crisis, I am pleased to report that in 2024-25 Windana maintained a small operating surplus, and overall expenses increased by only 3.6% in line with CPI.

Advocating for better outcomes in our sectors and for the community remains a key focus for Windana. We have worked closely with the Department of Health and our sector partners to help shape the Victorian Government's new 10-year alcohol and other drug strategy, and strengthen cross-sector systems to better respond to intersectional family violence. We also take an active role in the local communities we work in. We are proud to participate in the City of Port Phillip's Community Safety Roundtable, the Bayside Peninsula Integrated Family Violence Partnership, and other place-based partnerships, influencing positive change at a local level.

Looking ahead

We extend our thanks to our funders, donors, and partners, whose contributions make our life-changing work possible, particularly the Victorian Government and the South Eastern Melbourne Primary Health Network. I am also pleased to welcome Shaymaa Elkadi, Derek Madden, Serge Sardo and Cath Whelan to the Windana Board. Their leadership will help shape Windana's bright future. Thanks to all Directors who have demonstrated the highest standard of governance during the year.

The dedication of the Windana team to the provision of high-quality services and support has been steadfast throughout the changes in CEO leadership this year. This is a clear demonstration of what it means to be a values-led organisation united by a single purpose. I thank the entire Windana team – staff and volunteers – for living our shared values and for the vital work you do.

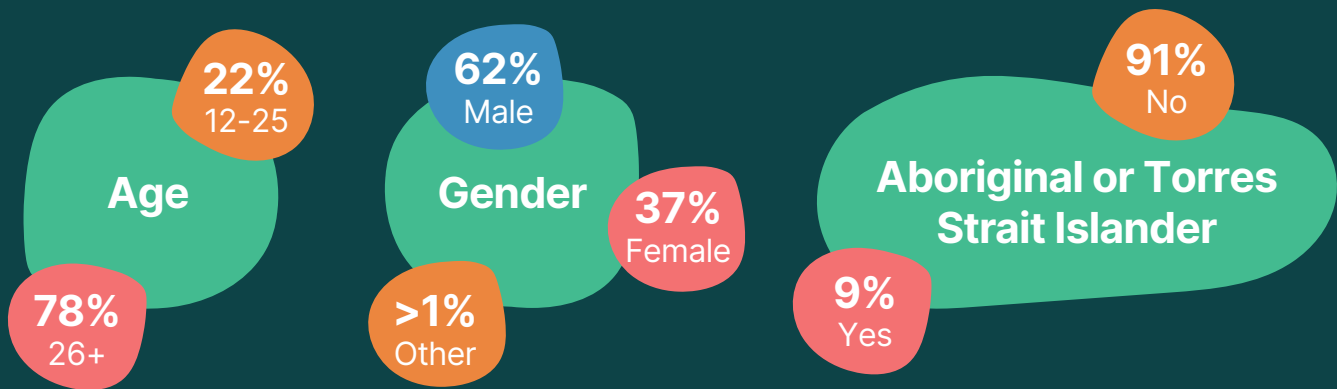
Windana is well placed to respond to the rapidly shifting needs and issues facing local communities and individuals who need our services. We are excited by the possibilities of the next phase of Windana's story with a new CEO and Strategic Plan. We are capable and ready to work with our partners and communities to increase our impact and change more lives for the better.



Robyn Batten AM
Windana Board Chair

Who we support

Client demographic data from the 2024-25 financial year



Diagnosed mental health conditon	73% Yes	27% No	
Family Violence	14% Person who uses violence	21% Victim survivor	65% No family violence
Homeless	13% Yes	87% No	
Acquired brain injury	11% Yes	89% No	
Principle drug of concern	40% Alcoholic beverages	32% Methamphetamines	
	16% Cannabis	4% Non-prescribed opiods	
	3% GHB	1% Cocaine	4% Other

Windana’s Client Satisfaction Survey

Windana’s Client Satisfaction Survey gives every client the opportunity to provide feedback on their experience accessing our services. The scores below are the averaged results for 2024-25.

94% of clients felt they were (always or often) treated with dignity and respect

91% of clients felt comfortable to be themselves with staff and other clients

86 Net promoter score
a service user satisfaction measure rating from -100 (no one would recommend the service) to 100 (every person would recommend the service)

Enhancing Outcomes Data Collection

Windana’s services are designed to deliver measurable impact in people’s lives. The collection and analysis of client outcomes data is essential to ensure that our services have a positive impact – both while people are accessing our services, and over the longer term.

Since merging with TaskForce, we have been building a system that captures the longitudinal outcomes for clients as they transition between different service types, and after they no longer access services at Windana. In late 2024, we received a generous grant via the Victorian Government’s Empowerment Grant Fund to bridge the data gap between what we do and how this positively impacts clients across Windana’s suite of connected services.

We anticipate this new system will be fully implemented by the end of 2025. We look forward to using this exciting dataset to enhance the client experience and demonstrate the positive impact of Windana’s connected services.



Images from the Launch of Windana's Innovate Reconciliation Action Plan at Maryknoll TC



Windana's Innovate Reconciliation Action Plan

Windana's vision for reconciliation is a society continuously and increasingly shaped by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander knowledge, histories and voices – in all their diversity.

For the sectors and systems that Windana operates in, reconciliation means that community responses to alcohol and other drug harms, family violence, mental health challenges and social disadvantage are informed by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander voices, and that services make ongoing improvements to increase cultural safety.

This year, we were proud to launch our new Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) at our Maryknoll site, on the unceded lands of the Bunurong and Boonwurrung people. Windana's second RAP is at the Innovate level, building on the momentum of our Reflect RAP. It introduces new commitments that deepen our understanding of Windana's sphere of influence and guide our efforts to advance reconciliation.

This achievement marks a huge step in Windana's ongoing commitment to reconciliation, grounded in the principles of relationships, respect and opportunities. Endorsed by Reconciliation Australia on 29 April 2025, this plan outlines actions and deliverables to be achieved over a two-year period, concluding in January 2027. Our new RAP acts as a guide to how every person at Windana can support First Nations clients, colleagues and community members to achieve safer, healthier and more fulfilling lives.

Our RAP will see us strengthening existing relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, organisations and communities and fostering new connections. We will improve service experiences through respecting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, rights, histories, knowledge and languages, embedding opportunities across our People and Culture practices and engage with First Nations Suppliers.

The RAP is already leading to concrete actions, including:

- The delivery of Aboriginal Cultural Awareness Training across the organisation. These sessions create a valuable space for connection and collaboration, enabling staff to explore shared challenges and opportunities in delivering culturally safe and responsive services, supporting us to embed cultural safety into everyday practice.
- A Healing Plant Garden at our St Kilda site, in partnership with Ngwala Willumbong and Willum Warrain, where Windana, Ngwala and Winja Ulupna clients and other community members can visit to connect with nature and each other.
- Two days of paid leave for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff to participate in cultural activities.

We look forward to implementing all the actions in our Innovate RAP over the coming year. You can download a copy from [Windana's website here](#).



What is Rainbow Tick Accreditation?

The Rainbow Tick is a national accreditation program for organisations that are committed to safe and inclusive practice and service delivery for LGBTIQ+ people.

The six Rainbow Tick Standards are:

- ✓ Organisational capability
- ✓ Workforce development
- ✓ Consumer participation
- ✓ A welcoming and accessible organisation
- ✓ Disclosure and documentation, and
- ✓ Culturally safe and acceptable services

Rainbow Tick Accreditation

“Everyone is welcome at Windana, and diversity and inclusion are the foundations of the welcoming and safe services we provide.

We want to do our part to make racism, homophobia, ageism, sexism and other forms of discrimination a thing of the past, and are committed to providing a service and workplace that embraces and values diversity and inclusion.”

Excerpt from Windana's Diversity and Inclusion statement.

In October 2025, Windana was proud to become a Rainbow Tick Accredited organisation.

After making a commitment in our Strategic Plan to become a Rainbow Tick Accredited organisation, we spent two years looking at every corner of our organisation to see how we could become a more inclusive and safer place for LGBTIQ+ people.

“It was an incredibly proud moment for Windana to receive Rainbow Tick Accreditation on our first attempt,” said Adam Miller, Chief Communications Officer and Executive Sponsor of the Rainbow Tick.

“Inclusivity is an inherent part of how we work in the AOD sector, but this process forced us to look critically at how we do things – from policies, to how we deliver our services, to how we create welcoming spaces – everything was on the table. It has been incredibly heartening to see everyone across Windana embrace this work and strive to make sure Windana is as welcoming and safe for LGBTIQ+ people as possible.”

Key achievements highlighted by our Rainbow Tick assessment include:

- Creation of the True Colours Community of Practice, made up of client-facing and back-of-house staff from across Windana. The aim of this group is to enhance Windana's collective understanding and capability in providing culturally safe and affirming services and support for LGBTIQ+ people and communities.
- 86% of Windana staff have completed the LGBTIQ+ Inclusion training
- 7 staff have completed Rainbow Health Australia's HOW2 Training
- 6 staff have completed the LGBTIQ+ Mental Health and AOD Workforce Development Train the Trainer program, delivered by Thorne Harbour Health
- Marching in 2025 Pride March. This was the second time Windana has participated in the march.

This accreditation means that LGBTIQ+ clients can access any Windana service with confidence knowing they are entering a welcoming environment and will be supported by staff who deliver culturally appropriate services. For current and future LGBTIQ+ staff, this accreditation is a demonstration that diversity and inclusion are more than just words on a page – it is something that is celebrated at Windana, and you will be part of positive and safe culture. And for Windana as a whole, it is a demonstration of our values in action.

But the work doesn't stop here.

“Rainbow Tick accreditation is just the beginning. LGBTIQ+ communities still face unacceptable barriers to accessing health services. And despite how far we've come as a society, harmful and unacceptable rhetoric towards LGBTIQ+ communities still exists and has significant impacts on health and wellbeing outcomes.”

“Windana is committed to further enhancing our safe and inclusive practice and service delivery, and to be an organisation that celebrates and stands with LGBTIQ+ people and communities,” Adam said.

Lived and Living Experience Workforce Review

Windana continues to champion the vital role of lived and living experience in supporting individuals affected by alcohol and other drug use, mental health challenges, family violence, and social disadvantage.

The insights of lived experience inform how we design programs, make decisions and build an inclusive organisation. Elevating the voices of lived experience is a cornerstone of our Strategic Plan and reflects our commitment to inclusion, equity and person-centred care.

This year we undertook a comprehensive review of our Lived and Living Experience Workforce (LLEW), engaging with more than 100 people across Windana, and drawing on sector-wide best practice from alcohol and other drug, mental health and broader health sectors. The review allows us to better understand the current state of the workforce, identify areas for improvement, and guide future development.

Recommendations

Windana is committed to implementing all 56 recommendations across these 8 domains.

- 1

Role clarity and skill utilisation
Define consistent LLEW roles and onboarding processes, ensuring Peer Workers are well-integrated and have access to necessary tools and information.
- 2

Professional development and career pathways
Create clear career progression and training options for LLEW, including leadership roles, and advocating for sector-supported initiatives like Peer Cadet programs.
- 3

Supervision, support and psychological safety
Provide regular peer-informed supervision and wellness support, and foster an inclusive, trauma-informed workplace that prioritises psychological safety.
- 4

Peer connection
Facilitate structured opportunities for Peer Workers to connect, collaborate, and learn across sites and external networks.
- 5

Organisational readiness and inclusion
Embed LLE perspectives in governance and strategy, train leaders in inclusive practice, and co-design the LLE Framework.
- 6

Evaluation and impact
Implement systems to measure LLEW impact using client feedback and peer-led evaluation, combining data and stories to inform planning and advocacy.
- 7

Workforce sustainability and growth
Develop a long-term strategy to grow and support LLEW, expand roles for carers and other forms of LLE and review contract models for sustainability.
- 8

Sector leadership and advocacy
Position Windana as a sector leader by sharing insights, influencing policy, and advocating for fair pay, training, and career pathways for LLE roles.

Our response

What we've done

- Lachlan Preece has commenced in the revamped **Lived Experience Strategic Lead** position, driving the integration of lived experience across Windana, mentoring staff, and leading systemic change through advocacy and inclusive collaboration.
- Promoting access to **study leave and financial support** to help LLEW staff to pursue further qualifications and training, aligned to their career goals.
- We have **reviewed and updated the Peer Worker interview questions** to support more inclusive and effective recruitment practice.
- We have **removed the automatic 18-month contract limit** for Peer Worker roles. Going forward, Peer Workers will be recruited on contracts that align with the other staffing groups and the needs of the programs.
- The **Lived Experience Community of Practice** has commenced monthly meetings to foster connection, share learning, and support professional growth among LLE workers.

Next steps



Connected services highlights



The U-Turn team delivering a session



Entrance to Windana Youth Community House, where we now deliver Life Skills for Recovery

U-Turn expansion across residential sites

While substance use does not cause family violence, the two frequently co-occur, and drugs and alcohol can impact on family violence risk. Despite this, traditional men's behaviour change programs often do not address substance use.

Windana's U-Turn program is an innovative men's behaviour change program that operates at the intersection of family violence and alcohol and drug use. Typically delivered in a group setting for men in the community, this year we were able to expand the U-Turn program into the program at our Maryknoll and Barwon rehabilitation facilities.

This provides an opportunity for residents to engage in behaviour change work as part of their Individual Care Plan. The residential setting removes many of the barriers that previously added to the complexity of service delivery - such as transport, inconsistent attendance, or crisis management needs.

An evaluation found that men who complete U-Turn reduce their AOD use, improve their emotional regulation, have a better understanding of family violence and, crucially, reduce their use of violence. With more men able to complete the program, more women and families can live safer, healthier lives.

"I have learnt that responsibility is a massive part of healing and being accountable for your actions."

— Maryknoll U-Turn participant

Empowering recovery through connected learning

Our Adult Community and Further Education (ACFE) Board-funded education programs help vulnerable and disengaged adults build confidence, develop practical skills, and create pathways to further education, employment or community participation.

The merger with TaskForce in 2023 created the opportunity to embed these pre-accredited training programs across therapeutic, residential, and community settings, meeting the education needs of clients and ensuring that learning is accessible, relevant, and transformative.

At Windana Youth Community House (WYCH) we deliver Life Skills for Recovery, a foundational program that supports young people in developing essential life skills such as budgeting, communication, and self-care.

At Maryknoll, residents participate in hands-on work readiness programs integrated into the daily rhythm of therapeutic life, offering participants the opportunity to grow food, prepare meals, and develop customer service skills, all while building routine, confidence, and transferable work capabilities.

This connected approach reflects Windana's belief that recovery and learning go hand in hand.



Bel's Story

When Bel first engaged with Windana at 39, she had reached a turning point. She had been using drugs for 20 years and was asked to leave the family home by child protection services.

Seven months before her recovery journey began, she gave birth to her fourth child, a baby girl, in an abandoned house.

Severely ill, and initially reluctant to engage with services, Bel got permission from child protective services to spend the night of her son's eighth birthday at home so she could attend Windana's detox program at St Kilda the very next day.

"My mum said this was the end of the road for me, otherwise I was going to end up dead," she recalled.

After withdrawal treatment and receiving care for an injury, Bel entered the residential program at Maryknoll. Windana's person-centred model of care, which integrates therapeutic support with community living, helped Bel find stability and purpose.

She developed a routine – breakfast, works program, group sessions – and joined the Family Program with her case worker, Mary. Bel's children remained a central part of her recovery. She spoke with them daily and welcomed their visits, helping them understand that Windana was "mum's home for the meantime."

Over time, Bel stepped into leadership, becoming a Resident Manager and taking on responsibilities that challenged and empowered her – a role she described as "scaring the daylights out of her." She found strength in community discussions, outdoor activities and the bonds she formed with staff.

"I wouldn't be here without Michelle," she said, referring to Residential Client Services Officer Michelle, who was among the many staff members who supported her to reach her goals.

With Windana's flexible approach to services, Bel continued to reach milestones despite some challenging days. "I had a really good clinician, he basically gave me the hard truth when I thought that I'd had enough," she said.

"They gave me a push when I needed it, they held my hand when I needed it. They were right by my side every step of the way."

After completing the program at Maryknoll, Bel continued counselling and transitioned to the Integration House, an optional post-care facility for residents to gain independence in a less-structured program. Using a collaborative approach, Mary worked with Bel through the family reunification process from family meetings to court hearings.

Now, nearly a year since completing treatment, Bel maintains her abstinence and has stopped using drugs for almost two and a half years.

"I learned that my recovery means I need to stay safe, sober and aware of my surroundings," Bel said.

She lives with her children and has rebuilt relationships with her family. "My parents used to lock all their bedroom doors when I was using drugs. Now, the house is wide open to me."

In August 2025, Bel's resilience and growth were recognised at the Anglicare Chairperson's Awards, where she received the Inspirational Outcome Award.

"It's something I realised I should have done a long, long time ago," she said. "If I can do it, anyone can."

Connected services highlights



Lachlan, Lived Experience Strategic Lead
and David, AOD Peer Worker

Expansion of evidence-based group programs

Windana's increased catchment area has allowed us to bring our popular St Kilda-based peer support group – where people with similar histories of substance use issues use their experiences to help each other – to Frankston, based on an unmet need identified by clinicians and clients in the area.

Increased demand has also allowed us to host an expanded five SMART Recovery groups for young people and adults, up from just two groups in 2023. SMART Recovery supports participants with practical tools and recovery techniques, such as understanding triggers, managing cravings and emotional regulation.

The expansion of these groups allow more people across Melbourne to access services that support their recovery journeys.



Bloom and Thrive clinicians at our Rosebud site

New group programs supporting clients' ongoing recovery

Every Wednesday in Rosebud, a group of women at all stages of their alcohol and other drug recovery journeys gather. They discuss challenges and achievements over the last week, with each participant sharing their own experiences with alcohol and other drugs, as well as struggles with mental health and experiences of family violence. In that room, participants' social connections – and their self-confidence – flourish as relationships grow and they set goals for the future.

This is Bloom, a mutual support group running at Rosebud, the only group of its kind on the Mornington Peninsula.

Alongside Bloom runs Thrive, held each Tuesday at Frankston for clients of all genders. Topics covered in the groups include understanding addiction, triggers and cravings, relapse prevention, emotional regulation, healthy relationships and boundaries, stress management, mindfulness, as well as lifestyle and wellness.

Meanwhile in St Kilda, our Rise group is providing clients with the practical tools and skills they need to manage emotions, handle cravings and prevent relapse. With its unique focus on emotional regulation, Rise adds an extra dimension to the support we provide.

Each of these have been developed this year by Windana's expert clinicians, demonstrating our commitment to using the expertise of staff to ensure our services respond to the needs of clients and communities.

"ResetLife was the hardest and the best decision I've made."



Stella's Story

Windana's youth services have expanded significantly over the past two years, allowing us to provide stronger, more integrated supports to young people.

From youth outreach and the ResetLife non-residential rehabilitation program, to our Windana Youth Community House (WYCH) residential detox program, young people have a range of options when they choose to seek treatment and support.

Supporting this, the pathways between these programs have been streamlined. For example, people accessing youth outreach can easily visit WYCH for a tour, and if it's right for them, they'll continue receiving support from their worker while they prepare for admission.

Others coming out of WYCH looking for a structured approach to recovery can go directly into ResetLife for a supported transition and longer-term supports.

These strengthened pathways are evident in Stella's story. When detox didn't work out for her, Windana was able to quickly transition her into the ResetLife program to better meet her needs. Stella remains with ResetLife, now as a volunteer team member rather than a client, supporting other young people with their own journeys. The following text has been written by Stella.

"ResetLife was the hardest and the best decision I've made. I came to them because I needed to quit for health reasons – they helped me not only tackle my substance use but also cope with the mental side of that health battle.

Prior to seeking help, I had spent many years trying to quit and get my shit together but just kept getting stuck in the cycle. I had always held a job and been quite busy so I didn't realise how my addiction was affecting me. I was working full time

and trying to juggle my mental health, and then my physical health, and it was honestly too much to do all together. I found myself quitting my job and feeling quite lost. Knowing I had to quit drugs but not wanting to quit was a hard thing to digest and do.

I sought help through my GP, who then directed me to FAMDAS [the intake and referral service for Frankston and the Mornington Peninsula] who then referred me to Windana. I started off in the youth detox facility but found it was not for me, before moving onto ResetLife.

I felt supported and understood, instead of [feeling] judged.

What stood out was the structure, the coursework and three sessions a week gave me something steady to hold onto, which felt very different from other services where you might only see someone fortnightly or monthly. That regular rhythm, combined with staff who genuinely cared, really helped. The program didn't just help me reduce my use; it gave me tools to manage stress, recognise triggers, and start rebuilding confidence and relationships. Over time my sleep improved, cravings eased, and I began to feel like myself again.

I have begun studying and have now commenced as a volunteer Support Worker in the ResetLife program. I intend to be working in an environment one day that could be as supportive and human as ResetLife has been."

*Name changed for privacy purposes.

Connected services highlights



The new music room at Windana's Youth Hub

Music room supports young people to build skills and confidence

A new music room at Windana's Youth Hub has supported over 70 young people this year to be creative, express themselves, connect with others, build self-esteem and confidence, uncover new talents and have fun.

Supported by a grant from Community Bank Highett, the professionally-equipped space can be booked by young people in Windana and beyond and is already having an impact. It provides a fun and creative entry point to Windana to young people who might otherwise not engage with our services, and improves therapeutic outcomes through increasing engagement and building soft skills.



The Windana and wayss teams at Cranbourne

Expanding access to services with wayss co-location

Windana has strengthened its partnership with wayss with two new co-location arrangements.

wayss now co-locates at Windana's Cranbourne site, where we deliver our ResetLife Adult program for alcohol and other drug recovery, and Navigator program to help young people reconnect with education. Together with wayss, who provide family violence, housing and homelessness services across Dandenong, Casey and Cardinia, people in the South East now have greater access to the supports they need.

This builds on a strong foundation established in June 2025, when our SECADA team co-located with wayss at their Dandenong office. By bringing our services together, we've already seen improvements in communication, coordination and accessibility for clients in the region.



Deb's Story

For people living outside of large metropolitan centres, accessing drug and alcohol treatment can be daunting.

"Having a specific support group for women created a safe space where we can express ourselves freely."

Without access to a car, it can be almost impossible. This is the position Deb found herself in when she lost her licence. Deb says she "had a big problem with alcohol" and was "drinking everyday." A three-kilometre walk from the nearest bus stop, Deb had tried to access support at Frankston Hospital, but just getting there was a big barrier. "When I heard that Windana had a site in Rosebud I jumped at that because I thought that was fantastic," Deb said.

At Windana, Deb was connected to Kylie, an alcohol and other drug counsellor with her own lived experience of recovery. "I found her [Kylie] to be very receptive, totally easy to speak to, and we found out that we had a lot in common so that made a big difference."

After poor experiences with health professionals and other drug and alcohol workers in the past, Deb appreciated the perspective of a worker with lived experience that she could empathise with.

"I was able to learn different things from that experience and appreciated being able to talk to someone understood where I was coming from."

As well as attending counselling appointments, Deb joined the new Bloom group running in Rosebud, a weekly support group for women where participants learn and draw from others' lived experience and are empowered with the tools to make positive changes in their lives. She is now a regular attendee.

"I greatly appreciated meeting the ladies and having the chance to chat about like-minded scenarios privately. Having a specific support group for women created a safe space where we can express ourselves freely."

Although she initially felt "a bit guarded" about sharing her own experiences in the group, Deb found that "everybody was very open, and it did give you a chance to explore possibilities, taking on other people's ideas about how to cope with what's going on."

Deb found herself building new connections through the group and plans to start attending our Frankston art therapy program too.

Deb is currently "abstaining from alcohol", working towards getting her licence back, and has started volunteering at local op shops on the Mornington Peninsula.

"At the moment I am travelling well on my journey and am proud of what I've accomplished."

Deb's advice to other people who might need support is to "talk to people and be open about the situation, so you're not hiding away from it."

"Many people are impacted when a person is alcohol affected and taking control and responsibility for the situation is key to success," she says.

Connected services highlights



Christine and Deidre, members of the True Colours Community of Practice

Encouraging collaboration with Communities of Practice

Our newly established Communities of Practice have quickly become a powerful force for connection, collaboration and growth. These include groups focused on Lived and Living Experience, AOD Early Career, Nurses, Clinicians, Emerging Leaders, Emerging Senior Leaders, and True Colours (LGBTIQ+).

These groups provide a space to explore how we can do better together, allowing insights and practices to flow more freely across teams and roles.

With regular meetings, Communities of Practice have fostered stronger cross-disciplinary relationships, helped teams learn from each other's strengths and created new opportunities to celebrate and share practice achievements.



Model of Care workshop at a Windana Connected Leadership Day

Introducing our new Model of Care

This year we launched our inaugural Model of Care, an overarching framework that brings together the values, approaches, principles, commitments and initiatives that guide how we deliver our connected services.

The Model of Care outlines the best ways to support clients, families, carers, supporters and communities, and aims to ensure that support is tailored to each person's needs and circumstances, no matter how they engage with Windana.

The Model of Care helps us to formalise and build on what we already do well and embed a shared approach across all current and future programs, guiding continual service improvement to deliver strong outcomes for clients and the community.

Will's story

Before Will's journey with Windana began, guns, substances and negative influences were part of his daily reality.

Although he spent a brief period in prison, this experience was not effective in providing the support or intervention he needed to make lasting changes in his lifestyle.

"You get numb to that kind of way of life, it was 14 years for me," he recalled. "It took hitting rock bottom for me to even realise something had to change."

His first step toward recovery began at Windana's detox unit in St Kilda. The structured, safe environment offered a contrast to years of turbulence. "Detox was just... calm," he said. "There was no danger, there was no sleeping with a gun under my bed. I could just rest."

Coming in with an open mind, the care he received allowed him to begin processing his past while focusing on recovery and stability. After completing detox, Will moved into Windana's Grampians residential rehabilitation site.

Here, Will engaged in therapeutic support and daily routines designed to build resilience and self-awareness. "Everything was new and I was dealing with a lot of stuff from outside, but the program gave me space to figure stuff out," he said.

Will's clinician, Daniel, encouraged him to face difficult truths. "He [Daniel] would always challenge me, which was a big thing because I'd gone unchallenged for 14 years of my life," he said.

"I questioned a lot of my principles and behaviours. Being able to process things in this environment was probably the best thing that I could do — before I'd just pick up and use to get by."

Peer connections also played a vital role in his recovery. Sharing experiences, supporting one another and holding each other accountable created a sense of community. "We had a really good culture that really allowed me to have a voice and contribute," he said.

Completing the residential program marked the start of a new chapter rather than the end of support. Will transitioned to Integration House, Windana's post-care facility, where he could apply the skills he had learned in a less-structured environment. "It's a good stepping stone. I had a bit more independence but still had this place to come back to."

Now, more than a year after leaving residential care, Will has maintained his abstinence from drugs and continues to attend aftercare sessions and psychotherapy. He's also returned to work, taking on the responsibility of managing a butcher shop.

"Having an open mind helps you realise that all the things you learn at Windana have a purpose. Small things like stopping and taking a look at your situation and being grounded can make the biggest difference."

*Name changed for privacy purposes

Connected services highlights

“The ability to just be there for someone taking those initial first steps, it’s empowering to know you could make a difference in someone’s life. I’m excited to continue to expand my knowledge and learn from people’s lived experiences.”

— Kristy Holwerda
(AOD Clinician Trainee)

Creating pathways into AOD careers: Windana’s traineeships program

Windana’s Alcohol and Other Drugs (AOD) traineeships program has provided vital hands-on experience to four trainees in the early stages of their careers, across our residential withdrawal, youth services and community programs.

Established following Windana’s successful application to be part of the Victorian Government’s AOD Traineeships Project, this initiative directly contributes to the development of the future AOD workforce – a key objective of our Strategic Plan. By providing paid, structured placements, this program removes barriers to entry and ensures the next generation of AOD workers are skilled, supported and ready to help people rebuild their lives.

For the duration of their 12-month program, each trainee completed four, 13-week placements across Windana services: Drug Withdrawal House (St Kilda), Youth Hub (Moorabbin) and Adult Community Services (Frankston and Moorabbin).

They gained experience in screening, intake, assessment, case management, care planning and service navigation. Guided by some of the sector’s most experienced practitioners, trainees have been well-equipped to provide high-quality, person-centred AOD and have all successfully completed the relevant qualifications for their specialisation.

Sustainable Development Goals

In 2023 we prioritised the following Sustainable Development Goals for Windana. These were chosen as our work and strategy have the biggest potential impacts on these goals.

1. **No poverty**
2. **Good health and wellbeing**
3. **Decent work and economic growth**
4. **Reduced inequalities**

Windana has committed to reporting against the following three key actions that demonstrate our continued and measured contribution to the Sustainable Development Goals.

Commitment Progress

- **Enhanced data collection around health and wellbeing, access to housing, reductions in rates of poverty and access to services** - Windana is in the final stages of implementing a new outcomes data collection system, thanks to a Victorian Government Empowerment Grant. Once fully implemented, this system will collect outcomes data across all of Windana’s connected services.
- **Establishment of a roadmap to Net Zero certification** - Windana has achieved significant carbon emission reductions with 55% of Windana’s fleet now hybrid models. Work continues to explore other reductions, such as carbon emissions from electricity-offset. We will continue to identify achievable targets within current budget and resource allocations.
- **Supporting social and economic inclusion for clients is a priority, including facilitating increased social connection, access to community services and employment** - Increasing Windana’s positive impact in the community remains a core focus. For example, the establishment of a number of new community-based groups and drop-in Music Room at our Youth Hub (page 16-18) has increased access to community services along and opportunities for social connection.



Hamish, Millie and Mirella, three of Windana’s AOD Trainees

Windana Board



Robyn Batten AM
Director and Board Chair
Chair Remuneration and Nominations Committee Member Finance, Risk and Audit Committee
Year joined Board: 2024



Anthony Boffa
Director and Public Officer
Chair Finance, Risk and Audit Committee
Year joined Board: 2022



Deborah Dobbie
Director
Member Remuneration and Nominations Committee
Year joined Board: 2023



Shaymaa Elkadi
Director
Member Quality and Safety Committee
Year joined Board: 2025



Derek Madden
Director
Member Finance, Risk and Audit Committee
Year joined Board: 2025



Jen Riley
Director
Member Remuneration and Nominations Committee
Year joined Board: 2021



Serge Sardo
Director
Member Quality and Safety Committee
Year joined Board: 2025



Marita Scott
Director
Chair Quality and Safety Committee
Year joined Board: 2021



Cathy Whelan
Director
Member Remuneration and Nominations Committee
Year joined Board: 2025

Executive Team



Joanne Caruso
Chief People Officer



Trevor Irwin
CFO



Adam Miller
Chief Communications Officer



Di Nally
Chief Impact Officer



Mel Thomson
Chief Operating Officer



You can see details of our current Board and Executive Team, and read their profiles, at:
www.windana.org.au/our-people/

Financial report

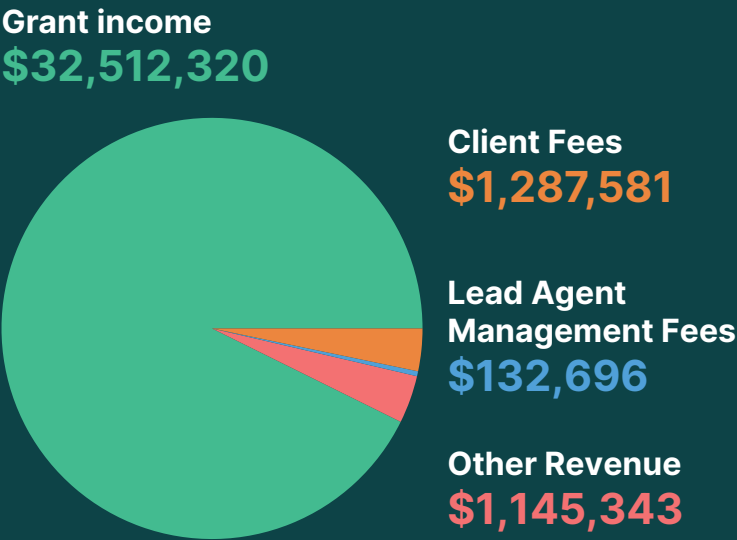
We are grateful for the support we receive for the work we do.



Windana’s revenue from Grant Income, Client Fees and Lead Management Fees increased by a healthy **6.8% to \$33,932,597** for the 2024-25 financial year driven by strong contract funding growth and indexation on Government grants primarily.

Windana’s Other Revenue made up of interest income, donation and contributions and dividends-received also experienced strong growth of 64% to \$1,145,343.

Revenue breakdown



Operating expenditure increased by a modest 4% to \$34,520,134 driven largely by significant reductions in contractor expenses and consulting fees.

Windana has reported an operating surplus \$557,806 as compared to the operating deficit of \$832,818 reported for 2023-24.

While yet to fully recover the 2023-24 deficit, this positive turnaround in operating surplus year-on-year is attributable to improvement in grant income received, absence of one-off merger costs, and targeted expense management. Strong management action ensured Windana's overall expenses increased by only 3.6% in line with CPI for 2024-25.

As custodians of community funds, we remain committed to ensure the responsible and sustainable use of resources.

For Windana’s full audited financial report please visit: www.windana.org.au/corporate-publications



Windana acknowledges the Traditional Owners of the lands we work on – the Bunurong People, Wadawurrung People and Wurundjeri People. We also acknowledge the diverse Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and communities across this continent and recognise their continuing connection to land and waters. We pay our respects to Elders past and present, and extend that respect to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

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