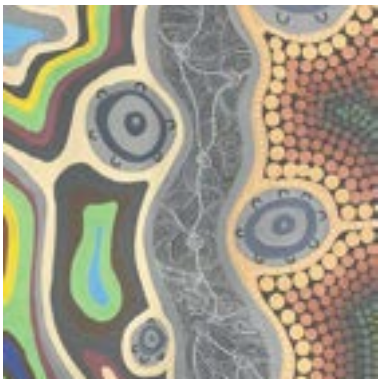


SANDAS
South Australian
Network of Drug & Alcohol Services

2025 ANNUAL REPORT

2025

> Our focus on advocacy, collaboration, and sector development has ensured that the voices of our member organisations, and the people and communities they serve, remain at the forefront of public policy and service design.

Alex Ingleton
SANDAS, Board Chair

2026

chair's report

It is my pleasure to present the Chair's Report for the 2024–25 South Australian Network of Drug and Alcohol Services (SANDAS) Annual Report. This year has been a significant one for the organisation, marked by both continued progress in our advocacy and capacity-building work, and the announcement of an important leadership transition.

SANDAS has continued to strengthen its role as the peak body for the alcohol and other drugs (AOD) sector in South Australia. Our focus on advocacy, collaboration, and sector development has ensured that the voices of our member organisations, and the people and communities they serve, remain at the forefront of public policy and service design. Over the past year, we have worked with government and sector partners to highlight the need for sustainable funding, workforce development, and system reform that reflects the realities of frontline service delivery.

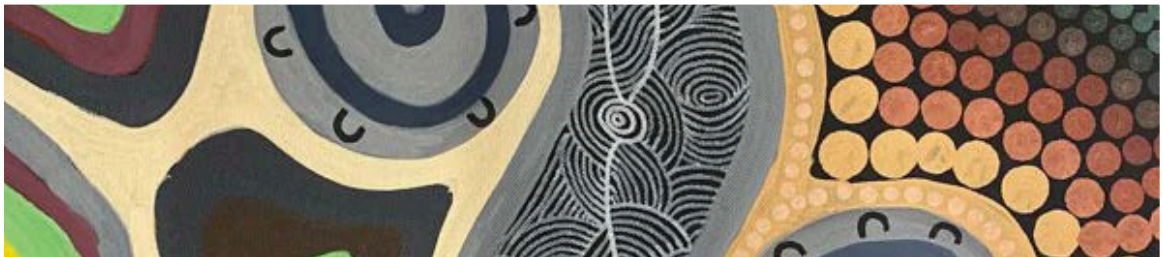
Capacity building has remained a key focus, with SANDAS providing professional development, training, and opportunities for collaboration across the sector. These initiatives support organisations of all sizes to strengthen their workforce, embed evidence-based practice, and deliver the best possible outcomes for South Australians affected by alcohol and drug use. The feedback we continue to receive demonstrates that SANDAS is valued as both a leader and a connector, bringing together diverse voices to work towards shared goals.

As an organisation, we have also invested in strengthening our governance, strategic direction, and partnerships. This ensures that SANDAS is well-positioned to respond to emerging challenges while continuing to deliver tangible benefits for our members. The commitment of our Board, staff, and member organisations has been central to this work, and I extend my thanks to all who have contributed throughout the year.

This year also brings change, as we farewell our Executive Officer, Michael White, who will step down at the end of November after more than a decade in the role. Michael's leadership since 2014 has played a significant part in building the strong and respected organisation that SANDAS is today. Under his guidance, SANDAS has developed its advocacy voice, expanded its support for members, and deepened its impact across the sector. On behalf of the Board, I thank Michael for his dedication and vision, and wish him and his family well as they move into the next stage of their lives.

Looking ahead, the Board is committed to ensuring a smooth transition as we recruit a new Chief Executive Officer to continue building on these foundations. We remain focused on our mission: to support the AOD sector, advocate for effective policy and resources, and work towards improved health and wellbeing outcomes for all South Australians.

Alex Ingleton (She/Her)
Chair, SANDAS



executive officer's report

The 2024 AGM was held in November. This was our 20th AGM and we celebrated the significant achievements of the organisation and the sector over the last two decades. We had over 60 guests join us for dinner, including the Minister for Health and Wellbeing, the Hon Chris Picton, to celebrate the inaugural SANDAS Awards for Excellence in Alcohol and Other Drugs.

Awards were presented to:

Runners Up:

- Excellence in AOD - Worker Award: **Melissa Shee, Uniting Communities**
- Excellence in Treatment and Support Award: **The Next Steps Assertive Outreach Team – Metro, Life Without Barriers**
- First Australians Award: **Next Steps Assertive Outreach Program in Port Augusta – Life Without Barriers**
- Outstanding Contribution in Peer/Lived/Living Experience Award: **Nicole Bowering – Mission Australia**

Award winners:

- Outstanding Contribution in Peer/Lived/Living Experience Award: **Carol Holly – Hepatitis SA**
- Excellence in Treatment and Support Award: **Sonder In-Home Withdrawal Service**
- First Australians Award: **Scott Wilson- ADAC**
- Excellence in AOD - Worker Award: **Jimmy Perry, ADAC**

We hope that these awards will become a bi-annual event which will highlight the sector's work and recognise those who make a significant contribution to the lives of people affected by substance use.

Work on the development of a representative body for people who use drugs has progressed over the year. SA is still one of the only jurisdictions without such a body. We have worked with Hepatitis SA's Harm Reduction Peer Service (SAhrps), AIVL, the Sexworker Information Network and DASSA to support a scoping exercise being led by Hepatitis SA throughout the year. Consultations were held with people who access needle and syringe services, people engaged by treatment services and through a public consultation process. A final report of the consultation will be made available to the sector in 2025/2026. We look forward to the outcome of this important project which will give a voice to people who use drugs.

We were able to continue our engagement with rural and remote services thanks to support from Country SA PHN and the services themselves. We travelled to rural and remote SA and met workers from the AOD, mental health, community and primary health sectors in Murray Bridge, Ceduna, Port Augusta, Berri, Mount Gambier, Port Lincoln and Coober Pedy. Each location has unique strengths and challenges, and it is critical that we can support services outside the metro area through site visits and workshops. These visits inform our advocacy to state and federal governments. I would like to thank the services that hosted us and spent time sharing information on the issues they face.

executive officer's report

Our Senior Policy and Project Officer, Sam Raven, has again led a great program of workforce development activities on topics identified by the sector creating significant opportunities for workers and organisations to address some of the gaps we have in professional development as a sector.

This year saw a deepening of our relationship with the National Peaks Network and the Australian Alcohol and Drug Council (AADC) working on a wide range of issues. This has included major submissions at national level, and advocating for federal cost of service, wage case indexation and Drug and Alcohol Treatment Services Maintenance (DATSM) funding. AADC's development as a powerful sector voice has significantly our national advocacy.

We continued our program of supporting students from the University of South Australia School of Social Work to undertake research based projects. Two projects were completed this year, Awareness of Fetal Alcohol Syndrome Disorder in Social Work and Pill Testing in South Australia: A Necessary Step in the Right Direction Against Drug Related Harm. Both are on our AOD Resources website. This program has engaged students who would not receive much, if any content on AOD in a deep dive into the work of the sector.

We have had a number of changes in the Board over the year and I would like to thank the resigning members, Josie Cajipe, Matthew Seals, Leisha Olliver and welcome Carman Wilson, who joined as an individual member and taken a role as our Treasurer. Orla Matthews replaced Leisha as the representative of Uniting Communities. I would also like to thank the current and incoming Board members for their support throughout the year.

I would also like to thank Sam, Nicole and Jodi for their work this year. Sam has led a significant program of workforce development, Nicole has led our quality and communications strategies, and Jodi has kept our finances in tip top shape. Finally, I would like to thank the many members who have shared their time and expertise with us over the year, attending consultations and meetings.

Finally, as this is my last Annual Report, I would like to acknowledge the many friendships, and the support I have received from members and others with a commitment to the sector. This includes the staff I have worked with, especially Sam who has been a significant support and sounding board. I would also like to acknowledge the Ministers and Shadow Ministers, the Cross Bench and their advisors, and colleagues from across government departments, especially current and past staff at DASSA and the PHN's. Colleagues in the wider community sector have also been incredibly supportive, and I would especially like to thank the staff, Board and Policy Council members from SACOSS. I have also been very lucky to have worked with supportive colleagues at national level, from the other jurisdictional peaks especially Melanie Walker and James Dunne from the Australian Alcohol & other Drugs Council (AADC).

Michael White (He/ Him)
Executive Officer, SANDAS

Member Engagement Across South Australia

Throughout the year, SANDAS met with a diverse range of members across metropolitan, rural, and remote areas, providing valuable insight into the challenges and opportunities faced by services across South Australia. Our visits to Ceduna, Port Lincoln, Coober Pedy, and Mount Gambier offered first-hand understanding of the unique issues in each region.

As South Australia remains highly metro-centric, it is vital for our advocacy that we visit, listen, and learn directly from the people and services working in regional and remote communities. These engagements ensure our policy and advocacy work genuinely reflects the experiences of those delivering services on the ground.

First Australians Award - Runner Up
Next Steps Assertive Outreach Program in Port Augusta – Life Without BarriersL-R: Alex Ingleton, Trina Yarran, Jarmin Khan, Michael White

Advocacy and Parliamentary Engagement

Engagement with parliamentarians has been strong this year, reflecting our ongoing commitment to represent the interests of the AOD sector at all levels of government. We held meetings with:

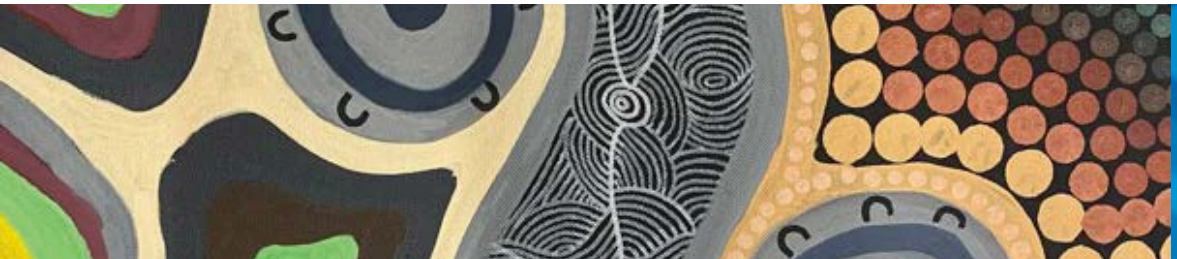
- Minister Chris Picton - to discuss health-related issues
- Minister Andrea Michaels - regarding liquor licensing reform
- Robert Simms MLC - on matters of drug law reform
- Minister Nat Cook - on the intersection between mental health, homelessness, drug law reform and AOD
- Tammy Franks MLC - on social justice and drug law reform issues

As well as a number of backbenchers across multiple portfolios related to AOD, health, and community wellbeing.

These ongoing discussions continue to strengthen our advocacy work and ensure that SANDAS remains a respected and informed voice within the policy and decision-making landscape.

Collaboration with DASSA and Workforce Development

In partnership with Drug and Alcohol Services South Australia (DASSA), we contributed to the development and finalisation of the South Australian Alcohol and Other Drug Workforce Development Framework. This significant document



provides a roadmap for the future planning and funding of workforce initiatives including recruitment, retention, training, professional development, and staff wellbeing across both government and non-government AOD services.

The Framework represents a major step forward in ensuring South Australia's AOD workforce is supported, skilled, and sustainable into the future.

Policy and Law Reform Submissions

SANDAS worked closely with members particularly the Alcohol and Drug Foundation (ADF) to prepare written and verbal submissions to the Royal Commission into Domestic and Family Violence, meeting with Commissioner Natasha Stott Despoja. Our collaboration extended to several key sector partners, including Embolden, FARE, SACOSS, and the Public Health Association of South Australia.

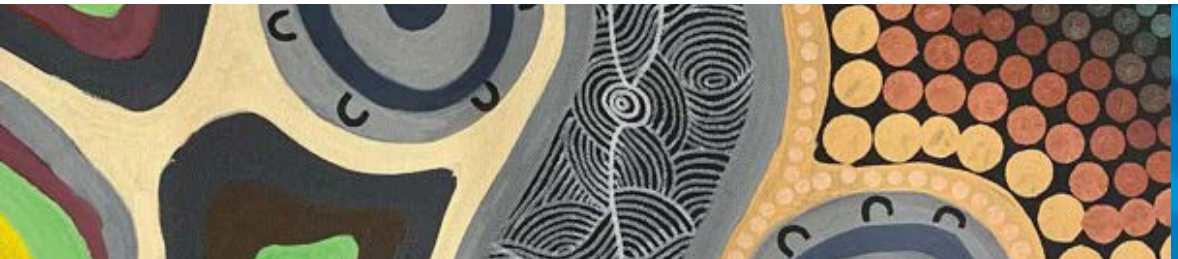
We were pleased to see that many of our collective recommendations were reflected in the Commission's final report, and we now await the government's response and implementation of these critical reforms, especially the recommended liquor licencing changes.

SANDAS also made a detailed written submission to the Chief Psychiatrist as part of the review of the South Australian Mental Health Act, advocating for improved support and protections for individuals experiencing co-occurring AOD and mental health challenges.

At a national level, we contributed to a range of government reviews across the AOD, justice, health, and community sectors. Many of these submissions were completed in collaboration with the Australian Alcohol and Drug Council (AADC) and our sibling jurisdictional peak bodies. This collaborative approach enhances our capacity to respond comprehensively to complex inquiries and amplifies the impact of our advocacy at a national scale.

Sector Collaboration and Forums

A major highlight of the year was our joint Symposium with the Mental Health Coalition of South Australia, exploring how the AOD and mental health sectors can work together more effectively. Discussions highlighted the shared challenges both sectors face - particularly around workforce capacity and access to treatment and support for individuals with complex needs.



The event was so successful that we will extend this collaborative model into 2025, co-hosting a Symposium with YACSA (Youth Affairs Council of South Australia) focusing on AOD initiatives for young people.

SANDAS also hosted our Annual State Forum, which brought the sector together to hear updates from funders, presentations on drug trends and new professional development opportunities, as well as consulting attendees on the development of SANDAS projects.

Responding to the South Australian AOD Strategy 2024–2030

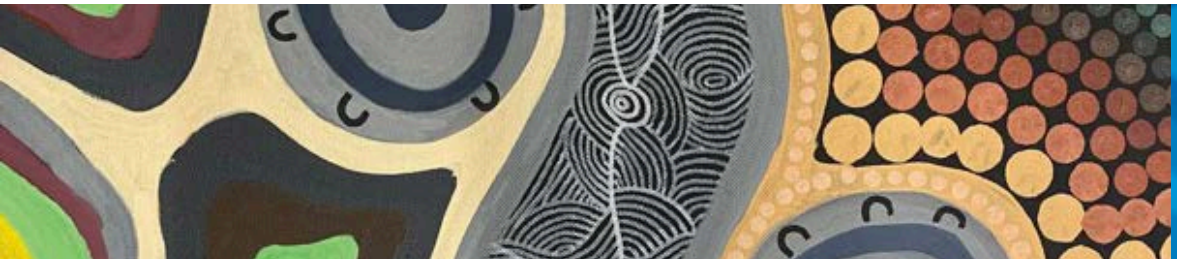
The release of the South Australian Alcohol and Other Drug Strategy 2024 - 2030 prompted strong engagement from SANDAS and our members. While we welcomed aspects of the Strategy, we expressed significant concern about its heavy focus on justice responses, limited attention to alcohol-related issues, and the absence of a robust commitment to harm reduction. In response, SANDAS coordinated a joint letter - signed by many of our members - outlining these concerns and advocating for a more balanced, evidence-based approach to AOD policy in South Australia.

Workforce Development and National Representation

Under the leadership of Sam Raven, our Senior Policy and Project Officer, SANDAS delivered a range of high-quality training opportunities, including workshops, online seminars, and networking events designed to strengthen the capacity and professionalism of the South Australian AOD workforce.

SANDAS was represented on the national stage with attendance and chairing sessions at the APSAD 2024 Conference in Canberra. The conference provided an invaluable opportunity to engage with national and international experts, share ideas, and stay informed on the latest developments in AOD treatment, policy, and research.

Of note was the conference's strong emphasis on lived and living experience and First Nations engagement, highlighting the growing recognition of these perspectives in shaping effective AOD services.



Research and Student Engagement

SANDAS continued its commitment to student learning through its partnership with the University of South Australia, hosting Master of Social Work students on research placements. This year's projects focused on:

- Exploring pill testing models suitable for South Australia, and
- Raising awareness of Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD) within social work practice.

This partnership offers students - who often receive limited AOD content in their formal studies - valuable, hands-on experience in AOD research and advocacy. It not only strengthens future sector capacity but has also inspired several students to pursue careers in AOD-related roles.

Peer Representation for People Who Use Drugs

In collaboration with Hepatitis SA, AIVL, SIN, and with funding support from DASSA, SANDAS commenced work on the development of a peer-led representative body for people who use drugs in South Australia. Our state remains one of the few jurisdictions in Australia without such a body.

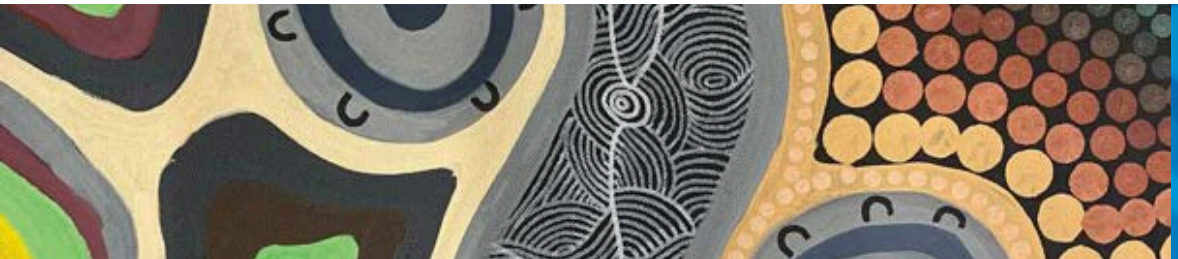
Hepatitis SA led initial consultations with people who use drugs, and a plan is now being developed to establish a sustainable and effective model of representation. This initiative represents a vital step towards ensuring that lived and living experience informs AOD policy and service design in South Australia.

Looking Ahead

This year has been one of collaboration, growth, and impact. The strength of SANDAS lies in our partnerships - with our members, the broader AOD and health sectors, government, and community organisations. Together, we have achieved significant progress in advocacy, workforce development, and policy reform.

On behalf of the SANDAS team, I extend my sincere thanks to all members, partners, and supporters who continue to contribute their time, expertise, and passion to this important work. Your engagement ensures that SANDAS remains a strong and credible voice for the AOD sector in South Australia.

Michael White (He/ Him)
Executive Officer, SANDAS



workforce development highlights

SANDAS Symposium 2024

The SANDAS Symposium was held in September 2024 and was presented in partnership with the Mental Health Coalition of South Australia. The program was developed by a working group comprising of people from both the AOD and mental health sectors and featured:

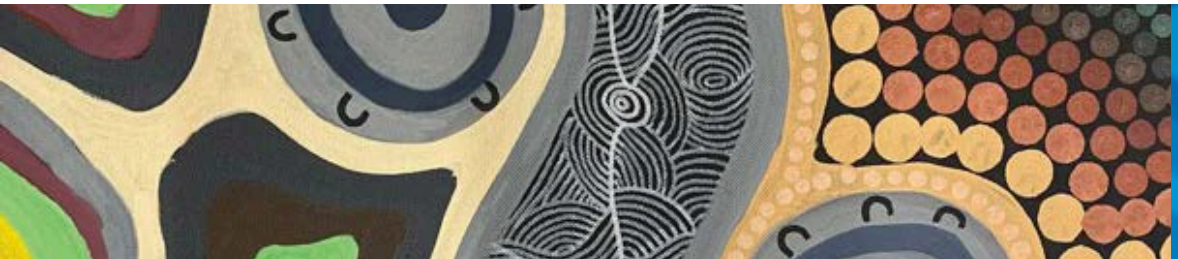
- Paula Ross – Head of Workforce Development, 360Edge
- Commissioner Taimi Allen – SA Mental Health Commissioner
- Lizzie Graham and Molly Springhall, Lived Experience Workforce Project, MHCSA
- Relationships SA Gambling Lived Experience Panel
- Vita Berghout, Comorbidity Specialist, SA Health
- Dr Vicky Cock, Drug and Alcohol Services SA
- Sam Raven, Senior Policy and Project Officer, SANDAS
- Kim Formosa, YourLINC Mental Health Program, Centacare

Comorbidity Workshops

- Comorbidity workshops were delivered to 5
- regional areas in SA, funded by Country SA PHN. The workshop was delivered by Sam Raven, our Senior Policy & Project Officer and covered the fundamentals of AOD issues, Mental Health disorders, and approaches that have evidence for effectiveness when working with clients who are experiencing both.

Approved Treatment Programs Webinar

SANDAS presented an online seminar in partnership with DASSA and the SA Fines Enforcement Unit to raise awareness in the sector of the Approved Treatment Programs Scheme which enables clients of AOD services to reduce the amount of money they owe through fines by achieving consistent attendance at an approved AOD program.



workforce development highlights

SA AOD Peer Network

Four AOD Peer Network forums were held in 2024/25. These forums are an opportunity for Lived and Living Experience workers to connect and support each other in their work and to share information on the programs they support. This included the provision of a workshop on the 'Art of Wellbeing' delivered by 360Edge's Paula Ross. This project receives kind support from Adelaide PHN.

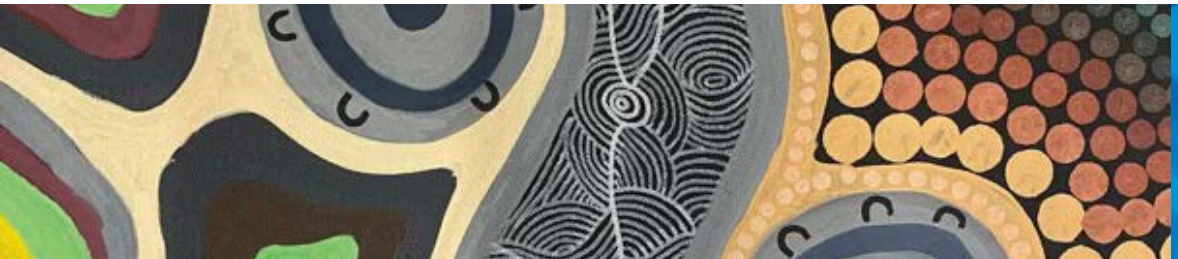
SANDAS Seminar Series

The SANDAS Seminar Series was run in February/March 2025. This series of lunchtime seminars offered over a few weeks and recorded for later online access. This year's seminars included:

- Michele Campbell and Jennifer Uzabeaga (NADA) on Gender Responsive Care in AOD
- Mehak Khandeparkar & Noha Elnahas (STTARS) on Mental Health support for refugee and asylum seekers
- Representatives from Dept of Health and Aged Care and Anglicare on how to get aged care support for AOD clients
- Sam Raven (SANDAS) on Data Collection for the AODTS National Minimum Data Set

SA State AOD Treatment Sector Forum 2025

The 2025 SA State AOD Treatment Services Forum was held in May, which included guest speakers Dina Haifawi from DASSA, Dora Oliva from Preventive Health SA, Allan Trifonoff from APHN and Lana Dulic from Centacare, Carol Holly from SAhrps and Dr Kate Senior. This event was also an opportunity for AOD workers to network and provide input into the development of future SANDAS projects.



treasurer's report

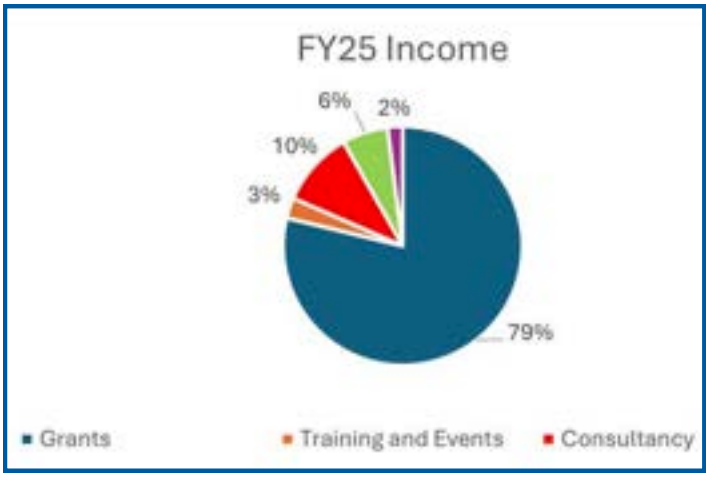
I am pleased to present the Treasurer's report on behalf of the Board of SANDAS for FY24/25.

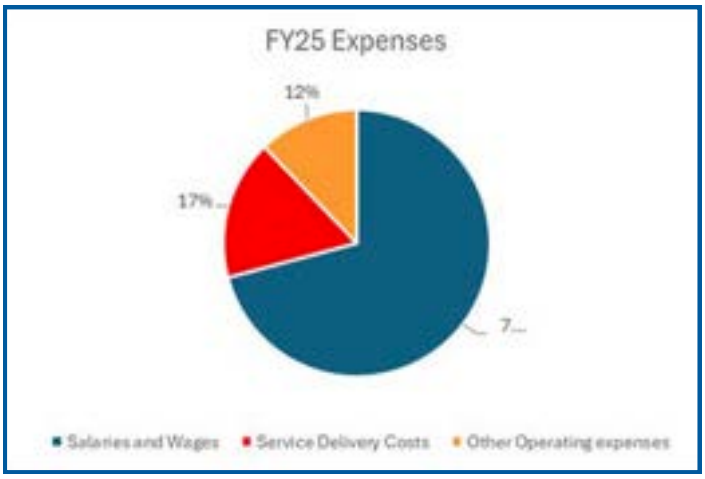
Income Statement

SANDAS had a net profit of $19,292 in FY24/25, a decrease of nearly 60% from FY23/24's $47,177, mainly due to an increase in service delivery costs associated with increased grant income and lower consultancy fees. Total net profit for FY24/25 was 3% of the total income compared to 8% in FY23/24. The major source of income came from grants, representing 87% of total income whilst the other 13% came from member contributions, consultancy service fees, workshops, forums, and interest income. Grant funding includes $259,592 from the Commonwealth Department of Health and $199,854 from SA Health. Salaries and Wages represent 72% of the total expenses which is lower than the FY23/24 78%.

Balance Sheet

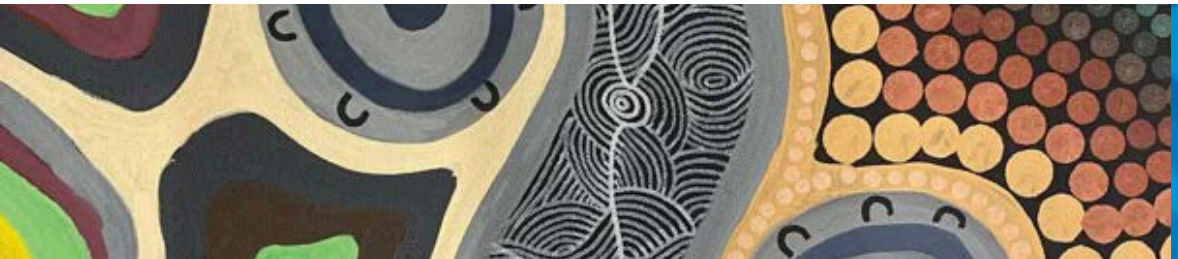
Members' funds increased by a modest 2.7% from FY23/24, but continue to remain a strong with a balance of $440,401 as of 30 June 2025. This puts SANDAS in a stable financial position to continue to deliver and achieve its objectives serving the South Australian Alcohol and Other Drug sector.





The cash balance at 30 June 2024 was $547,966, giving SANDAS strong liquidity, with a current ratio of 4.76. Auditor Letizia Palmer (Chartered Accountants) were contracted as auditors and provided accounting and audit services to SANDAS. An unqualified audit opinion has been issued on the financial statements showing full confidence in SANDAS being able to meet its reporting, legal and regularity. SANDAS has finished the year in a strong financial position, and is continuing to grow its cash balance through generating additional income from minor grants, fee for service work and investments. However, the lack of increases in grant income to fully cover annual wage indexation and rising operating costs continues to place pressure on the financial position of the organisation.

Carman Wilson (She/ Her)
Treasurer, SANDAS



board and secretariat

SANDAS Board Members as at 30.06.2025

Alexandra Ingleton
Mission Australia - Chair
Michelle Edmondson
Life Without Barriers - Secretary/ Deputy Chair
Carman Wilson
Individual Member - Treasurer
Sophie Bourchier
Substance Misuse Limestone Coast
Damien Chalmers
Centacare
Kim Herbert
Salvation Army
My Phuong Sramek
Community Access and Support SA
Sally Underdown
Alcohol & Drug Foundation
Debby Kadarusman
Sonder

Board Members resigned during 2024/2025

Josie Cajipe
Individual Member
Leisha Olliver
Uniting Communities
Matthew Seals
Psychmed

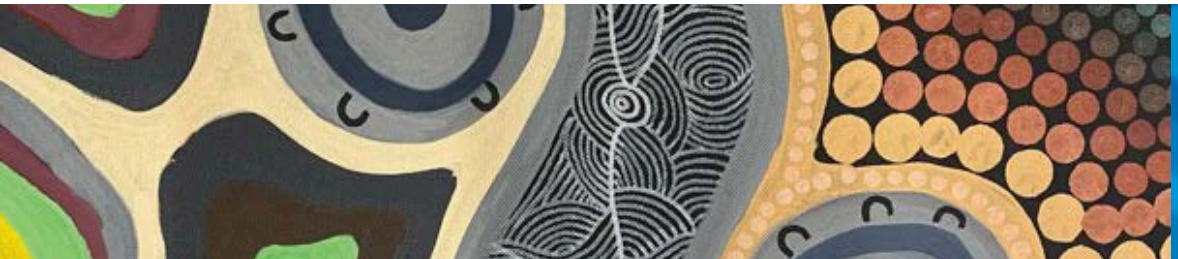
SANDAS Executive Committee Members as at 30.06.2025

Alexandra Ingleton
Mission Australia
Michelle Edmondson
Life Without Barriers
Carman Wilson
Individual Member

SANDAS Secretariat as at 30.06.2025

Michael White - Executive Officer
Sam Raven - Senior Policy and Project Officer
Nicole Spurr - Quality and Communications Project Officer (0.6 FTE)
Jodi Tasker - Finance and Administration Officer (0.4 FTE)

No staff resignations in 2024-2025



representation and submissions

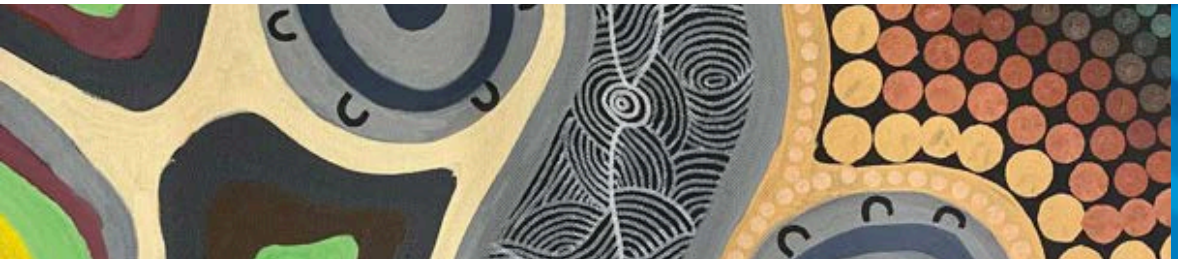
Submissions

SANDAS provided the following submissions and consultations:

- Submission to SA AOD Strategy 2024-2030 after discussions with a number of members about their response and provided significant input to a SACOSS response.
- Submission to SA Royal Commission on Domestic and Family Violence and met with Commissioner Stott Despoja in collaboration with the Alcohol and Drug Foundation.
- Consultation on Review of the Mental Health Act, met with Chief Psychiatrist on how the Act could be improved for people with comorbid AOD and Mental Health issues.
- Consultation with SALHN on future clinical service planning including demands on the SA AOD sector to inform a state wide plan to address AOD issues, working with DASSA as the delivery agency.
- Submission to Department of Health and Aged Care on the Review of Primary Health Network Business Model & Mental Health Flexible Funding Model. This work was informed by an invitation to members to provide feedback on their experiences.
- Provided input into a national evaluation of Drug and Alcohol Programs being undertaken by UQ and KPMG for DoHAC.
- Submission on Youth Treatment Orders provided to the Attorney General's Department
- Submission - Inquiry into the health impacts of alcohol and other drugs in Australia
- Submission - Adelaide PHN Alcohol and Other Drugs Needs Assessment Survey
- Response to the South Australian Alcohol and Other Drug Sector Workforce Development Framework 2024-2032
- Submission - Electoral reform and banning political donations
- Submissions to the Social Work registration Board
- Consulted on Supported Residential Facilities and Boarding House Regulations
- SANDAS has also contributed to the many submissions developed by the Australian Alcohol and Drug Council on sector governance, funding, sector reform, human rights, commissioning and related matters.

Ministerial/Parliamentary meetings and correspondence

- Minister for Health and Wellbeing Hon Chris Picton
- Minister for Human Services Hon Nat Cook
- Minister for Small Business Hon Andrea Michaels
- Minister for Domestic, Family and Sexual Violence Hon Katrine Hildyard
- Attorney General Hon Kyam Maher
- Robert Simms, MLC
- Nadia Clancy, MP
- Tammy Franks, MLC
- Sarah Andrews, MP



committees and media

State Representation included:

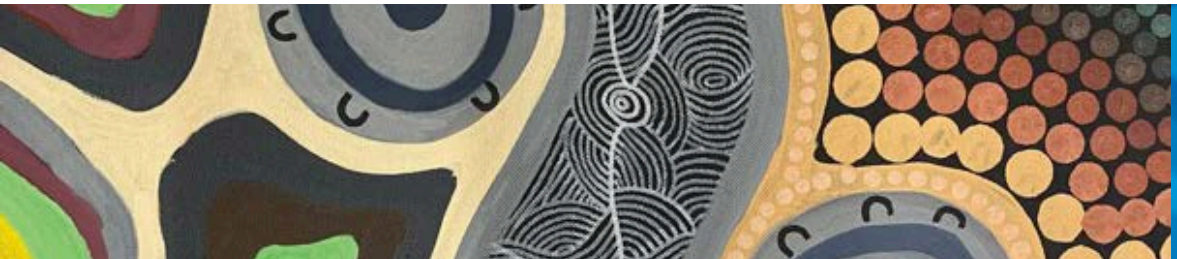
- SACOSS Policy Council
- SA Human Rights Network
- Hoi Sinh Committee (CAASSA)
- Not for Profit Community of Practice – Department of Treasury
- Courts Community Reference Group
- Department of Correctional Services AOD Strategic Framework Governance Group
- Murray Bridge AOD Sector Network meeting
- Police Drug Diversion State Reference and Operational Group
- DASSA Workforce Development Advisory Group
- SANDAS Comorbidity Network
- SANDAS Peer/Lived Experience Network
- UniSA School of Justice and Society Curriculum Advisory Panel Psychology

National Representation included:

- Australian Alcohol and Drugs Council including AADC Policy Officers Network
- National AOD Peaks Network
- HumanAbility Industry Advisory Committee (Community Services and Health)
- 2024 APSAD International Conference and APSAD Scientific Program Committee – 2024 and 2025 Conferences
- National Centre for Education and Training on Addiction, Flinders University, Advisory Board
- National AOD Peaks Capacity Building Network
- HumanAbility MHAOD Technical Committee

Media Releases and Interviews

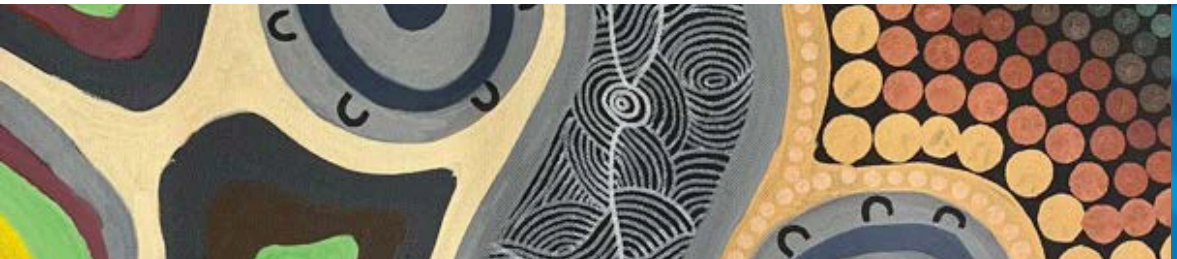
- Media release: Calls for Drug Checking in SA in response to NSW implementation 19/02/2025
- SANDAS Response to the 2025 State Budget on its failure to allocate any funding to AOD 06/06/2025
- Community and health leaders welcome draft alcohol laws in South Australia to prevent gendered violence (with FARE, SACOSS, NCETA, ADAC, ADF) 24/06/2025
- Community and health leaders welcome draft alcohol laws in South Australia to prevent gendered violence (with FARE, SACOSS, NCETA, ADAC, ADF) 19/12/2025
- Lawyers, children's advocates, call for SA's Youth Treatment Orders program to be scrapped 23/06/2025
- Interview – ABC – SA AOD Strategy strengths and weaknesses discussion 30/04/2025
- ABC Media Watch - Overdose of inaccuracy – Advertiser misrepresentation of opioid issues in aged care 16/09/2025
- Media release - Advertiser Special Investigation again falls short of the media's own guidelines 22/10/2024
- SA Draft Alcohol Laws Tackle Gendered Violence, Mirage News 19/12/2024



membership 2024-2025

SANDAS Member Organisations

Aboriginal Drug and Alcohol Council
Aboriginal Sobriety Group Indigenous Corporation
Alcohol and Drug Foundation
Baptist Care SA
Catherine House
Centacare Catholic Family Services
Community Access and Services SA
Country and Outback Health
Drug Arm
Encounter Youth
Family Drug Support
FocusOne Health
Hepatitis SA Inc
genU Training
iReach Rural Health
Junction Australia
Life Without Barriers
Mission Australia
Moorundi ACCHS Inc
Neami National
NOFASD Australia
Nunkuwarrin Yunti of South Australia
OARS Community Transitions
Pangula Mannamurna Aboriginal Corporation
Port Lincoln Aboriginal Health Service Inc
PsychMed
Relationships Australia
Salvation Army Towards Independence
SMART Recovery Australia
Sonder
Substance Misuse Limestone Coast
Teen Challenge SA Inc
Thorne Harbour Health
Umoona Tjutagku Health Service Aboriginal Corporation
Uniting Communities
Wellness & Healing Psychology and Counselling Centre
West Coast Youth and Community Support



2024 - 2027 Strategic Goals

1.
Elevate the voices of our members.

2.
Developing and supporting our workforce.

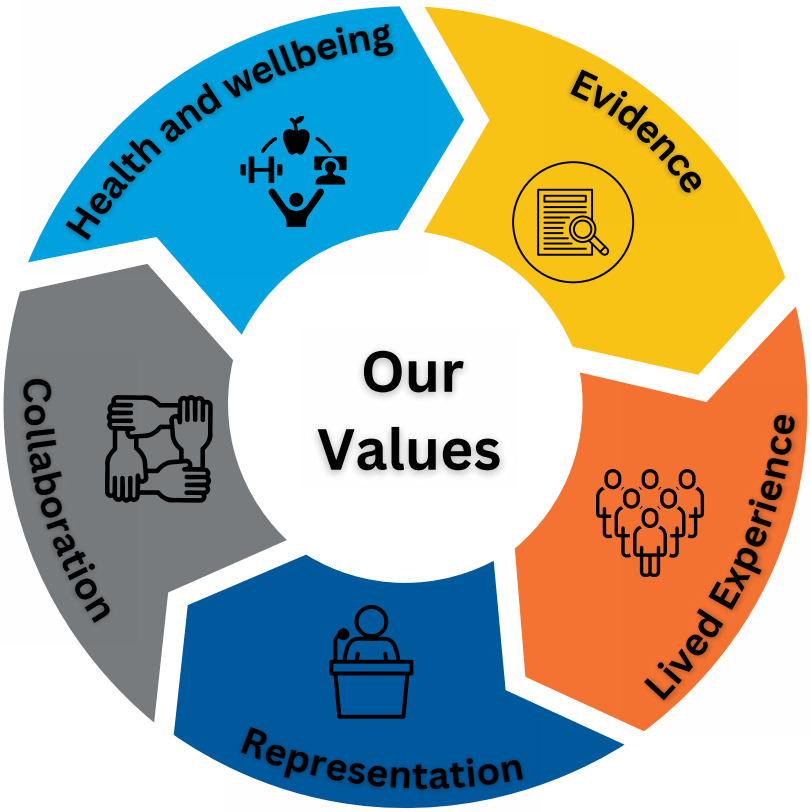
3.
Driving growth and continuous improvement.

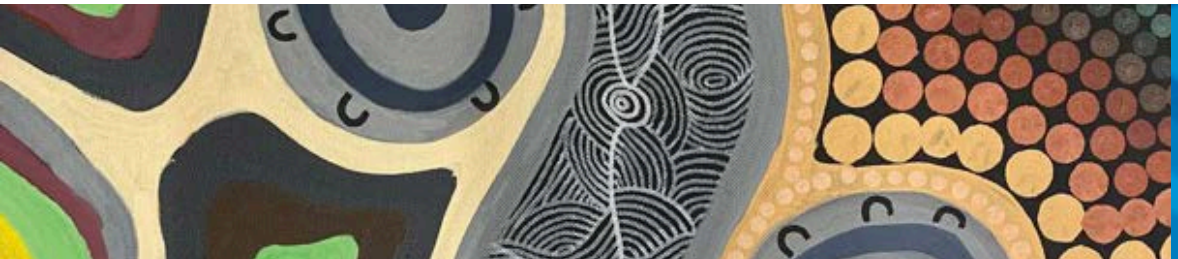
Formed in 2004, SANDAS is the peak body representing South Australia's Non-Government Organisations (NGO) working in the Alcohol and Other Drugs (AOD) sector.

SANDAS acknowledges and appreciates ongoing support from:

- Commonwealth Department of Health and Aged Care
- SA Department for Health and Wellbeing – Drug and Alcohol Services SA (DASSA)

SANDAS acknowledges the Kaurna Peoples and recognises their continued relationship to and custodianship over the lands and waters of the Adelaide Plains where we are based, and acknowledges all the First Nation's peoples on whose land we work. We pay our respects to Elders past, present, and future.





SANDAS

South Australian
Network of Drug & Alcohol Services

Contact

www.sandas.org.au
Email: sandasinfo@sandas.org.au
Phone: 08 8231 8818
204 Wright St, Adelaide SA 5000
ABN: 88 963 018 438

Aboriginal Artwork by: Phillip (Phil) Allen