edfa
Eating Disorders Families Australia

Annual Report

2025 / 2026













Acknowledgement of Country

Eating Disorders Families Australia (EDFA) would like to acknowledge the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as Australia's First People and Traditional Custodians. We value their cultures, identities, and continuing connection to country, waters, kin, and community. We pay our respects to elders past and present. Storytelling plays an important role in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture as a way of passing on knowledge and learning. This resonates strongly with us at EDFA as we believe in the power of storytelling to reduce stigma and generate a greater understanding of the family experience of eating disorders. EDFA is committed to providing a culturally safe workplace for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

Recognition of Lived Experience

EDFA would like recognise all people with a lived or living experience of mental ill-health as well as those who are caring or have cared for those with mental ill-health.



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About EDFA and Our Offering

About EDFA

EDFA is the only national organisation providing support, education, advocacy, and counselling **SOLELY** for carers and families impacted by an eating disorder.

EDFA is a registered Australian mental health charity established in 2016 by a group of parents who were caring for a child with an eating disorder. Our focus is now national and our definition of eating disorder carer is broad: it includes all those who are walking alongside an individual in eating disorder recovery such as partners, siblings, grandparents, colleagues, and friends.

EDFA is proud to be the national voice of those caring for someone with an eating disorder. We believe in the power of lived experience and sharing knowledge with others to reduce the distress the whole family endures. Lived experience is the foundation for all four of our services – support, education, advocacy, and counselling – and we believe families and carers should be recognised for their role as the front line of the recovery team.

At EDFA, we take an unbiased approach to treatment, clinicians, and pathways of care, knowing that every recovery journey is different and what may work for one family may not work for another. Through research and our support, education, and evidence-based counselling services, grounded in the lived experience of those who have been through it before, we help families navigate a complex system to improve recovery outcomes.

Our Offering

Through its nationwide offering, EDFA empowers families and carers to advocate for their loved ones' needs and and the carer's role role in the recovery journey.

- **Fill The Gap Counselling Service:**
  Free, one-on-one, online counselling delivered by qualified counsellors with lived experience. No waitlists or referrals are required.
- **National Online Support Groups:**
  Frequent general and targeted support groups for adult carers and siblings facilitated by trained, lived experience carers.
- **Online Support Forum:**
  Private Facebook group, providing online lived experience peer support and daily connection with other carers.
- **Hospital Liaison Officer Service:**
  Providing in-person, lived experience support to families and carers while their loved one is admitted to hospital for inpatient care.
- **Information Sessions:**
  Two information sessions each month presented by eating disorder experts and lived experience speakers.
- **Nourish, Nurture, Notice:**
  A prevention and early intervention service helping parents of school-aged children to recognise disordered eating and the early signs of an eating disorder.
- **Podcasts:**
  Regular *Strong Enough* podcasts featuring lived-experience carers, leaders in the field of research, and specialists in education, advocacy, and self-care.
- **Advocacy:**
  EDFA advocates for eating disorder carers by representing carers in important government and organisational meetings and public hearings. We also provide carers with information and opportunities to share their voices in important advocacy campaigns and encourage them to participate in shaping important policies.

To access EDFA's information sessions, insights, resources and more, EDFA offers annual memberships for a small fee:

- **Annual Membership:**
  Individual membership ($35 p.a.) or Family members ($55 p.a.). Membership provides the support and resources needed to care for your loved one including: a Welcome Pack; access to over 120 support groups and 24 information sessions per year; access to more than 180 hours of webinar recordings in our digital library; access to digital educational resources, Australian services, and more.

Thanks to support from the South Australian and Queensland Governments as well as Carers NT and Carer Gateway in regional Victoria, carers in these parts of Australia were able to access free membership in 2025-26.

The Eating Disorder Landscape

Eating Disorders

Eating disorders encompass a range of serious and complex mental illnesses that are the most life-threatening of all psychiatric conditions. They are typically characterised by significant disturbances in a person's relationship with food, eating, and their own body, including how they think, feel, and behave in relation to weight and shape. The consequences extend across every dimension of a person's life, with serious medical, psychiatric, and psychosocial impacts. Research consistently shows those closest to the person with an eating disorder, including parents, partners, siblings, and friends, are also significantly affected, experiencing their own emotional, physical, and financial burdens as a result of their caring role.[1]

Eating disorders affect people at every stage of life. The most recent national estimates indicate 1.1 million Australians are currently living with an eating disorder and a further 2.67 million are expected to receive a diagnosis at some point during their lives.[2] While women are disproportionately represented, accounting for around two-thirds of diagnoses, boys and men are significantly underdiagnosed due to persistent stigma and gender stereotypes.[2] Young people are particularly vulnerable, with 27% of eating disorder cases occurring among those aged 10 to 19, a proportion that has nearly doubled since 2012.[2]

Eating disorders do not discriminate: they occur across all cultural and linguistic backgrounds, socioeconomic groups, body types, and geographic locations. Research increasingly recognises many people experiencing an eating disorder also experience co-occurring mental health, neurodevelopmental, or physical health conditions, which can influence symptom presentation, treatment engagement and recovery outcomes.[3, 4, 5] The presence of these co-occurring challenges contributes to the growing recognition that effective treatment often requires flexible, individualised, and multidisciplinary models of care. This clinical complexity significantly increases the challenges faced by individuals and their families.

Australia's eating disorder sector continues to evolve as governments, researchers, clinicians and advocacy organisations work towards implementing the National Eating Disorders Strategy 2023-2033. The Strategy has established a shared vision for a more coordinated, equitable, and evidence-based system of care, with an emphasis on prevention, early intervention, treatment, recovery support, and workforce development.[6] While this represents an important step forward, significant gaps remain in service availability, particularly for people living in regional and rural areas, those with complex presentations, and families navigating care across multiple providers.[6]

At the same time, evidence continues to highlight the substantial economic, social and personal burden associated with eating disorders. In 2023, the total economic and social cost of eating disorders in Australia was estimated at $66.9 billion, underscoring the importance of continued investment in prevention, treatment, and recovery support.[2] The impact extends well beyond the individual experiencing the illness, affecting families, workplaces, communities, and the broader health system.[1, 2]

Growing Recognition of Complexity

One of the most significant developments in the field in recent years has been growing recognition of the complexity of eating disorder presentations and treatment needs. Research published in 2026 found individuals with more complex presentations often experience greater psychological distress and functional impairment, contributing to poorer outcomes when care is not sufficiently tailored to their needs.[4] These findings have strengthened calls for more personalised, flexible, and person-centred approaches to care that recognise individual differences and adapt treatment accordingly. Increasingly, clinicians, researchers, and lived experience advocates are emphasising that effective treatment requires consideration of the whole person rather than focusing solely on the eating disorder diagnosis.[4, 5]

Families and Carers as Essential Partners

Alongside these developments has been growing recognition of the vital role families and carers play throughout the recovery journey. The National Eating Disorders Strategy identifies families, supporters and communities as essential components of an effective system of care and highlights the importance of ensuring they are informed, supported, and meaningfully included in treatment and recovery processes.[6]

Research continues to demonstrate the considerable impact of caring for someone with an eating disorder, with families and carers reporting effects on their mental health, physical health, relationships, employment and financial wellbeing.[1, 3, 7] The responsibilities assumed by families and carers are often extensive, ranging from coordinating treatment and supporting meal supervision to managing risk, navigating complex service systems, and providing day-to-day emotional support. Despite this, carers often report feeling overlooked within treatment settings and insufficiently supported in their own right.[1, 3, 7]

Greater recognition of carers is increasingly reflected in both policy and research. There is growing acknowledgement that supporting carers is not only important for their own wellbeing, but also plays a critical role in improving outcomes for people experiencing eating disorders. Ensuring families and carers have access to evidence-based information, peer support, counselling, and meaningful inclusion in care will remain essential as Australia continues to strengthen its eating disorder system of care.[6, 7]

Public Investment

Despite growing policy attention and continued investment in eating disorder reform, demand for support continued to intensify during FY26. The Butterfly Foundation reported its National Helpline was supporting more than 22,000 people each year, with individuals, families, and carers seeking assistance approximately every 24 minutes.[8] This demand reflects a broader pattern observed across the sector. Since 2012, enquiries to the Butterfly Helpline have increased by 275%, while eating disorders among Australians aged 10-19 have risen by 86%, highlighting the growing pressure placed on support services, healthcare providers and families.[2] The increasing demand for information, support and care navigation suggests that, despite greater awareness and ongoing system reform, many individuals and families continue to experience challenges identifying, accessing, and coordinating appropriate care.[2, 8]

Responding to this growing demand remains a key challenge for policymakers and service providers. Implementation of the National Eating Disorders Strategy 2023-2033 continued throughout FY26, supported by government investment in national services, workforce development, research and system reform initiatives.[6, 9] While these efforts are helping to strengthen Australia's eating disorder system of care, demand for support continues to rise. The increasing use of services such as the Butterfly National Helpline highlights the ongoing challenges many individuals and families face in accessing information, support and timely pathways to care.

Families and carers remain one of the most important, yet often overlooked, parts of the eating disorder support system. They provide much of the support that makes recovery possible, often coordinating care, navigating services and supporting their loved one beyond formal treatment settings. Yet this role can come at a considerable personal cost, affecting carers' mental health, relationships, employment and financial wellbeing.[1, 7] As Australia continues to strengthen its eating disorder system of care, investment in services that support carers will remain essential to ensuring families have the knowledge, skills, and support needed to sustain recovery over the long term.[1, 6, 7]

Refer to page 45 for references.



Eating Disorders Families Australia (EDFA) Executive Director Jane Rowan with Taryn Brumfitt, 2023 Australian of the Year and Co-Founder of The Embrace Collective.

Message from the Executive Director

What a year it's been for our community of carers, families, and loved ones.

Over the past 12 months, EDFA has grown from strength to strength, expanding our reach into every corner of the country - from remote roundtables in Darwin to forums in Perth, Adelaide, and Canberra. We've stood alongside carers at Parliament House, at the United Nations, and in the quiet, ordinary moments of a Carer Catchup or counselling session - each equally important to the families we serve.

This year also brought hard-fought progress for our sector: a landmark extension of funding for our Fill The Gap counselling service and Support Program through to 2028, the extension of interpreter services to that service to make support more accessible, and a united voice alongside our sector colleagues calling for the sustained investment carers and families deserve.

We welcomed new faces to our team and Board, acknowledged those who have given so much, and shared the stories of 11 remarkable families in *Strong Enough* - a book that reminds us why this work matters.

None of this would be possible without the carers, families, clinicians, donors, partners, and volunteers, who walk this journey with us. Thank you for your trust, your generosity, and your unwavering belief that no one should face an eating disorder alone.

The following pages capture just some of the milestones from a year defined by connection, advocacy, and always, hope.

Jane Rowan
Executive Director

2025/26 Highlights

July 2025



EDFA confirms it raised $47,000 through its annual Recharge 4 Recovery fundraising campaign.

Executive Director Jane Rowan speaks at the InsideOut Institute's launch of its SupportED program for carers in Canberra on July 24, saying there is no such thing as too much support for eating disorder carers.



August 2025

EDFA attends the National Allied Health Conference in Adelaide.





EDFA presents results from the first 16 months of the Fill The Gap counselling service at the Australia and New Zealand Academy for Eating Disorders (ANZAED) Conference in Melbourne. It also presented a poster on carer perceptions of social media's influence on their loved one's eating disorder.

September 2025

The Eating Disorder Alliance, a collaboration of Australia's major eating disorder sector organisations, unveils its One Voice Ask, calling for $20.7 million in ongoing annual funding to support vital work in the sector on September 4.



EDFA coordinates a landmark Northern Territory Eating Disorder Roundtable in Darwin on September 11.



The Hospital Liaison Officer service commences at Gold Coast University Hospital.

Executive Director Jane Rowan attends the United Nations in New York where Prime Minister Anthony Albanese highlighted Australia's world-leading reforms to protect children from social media harms.



October 2025

The Hospital Liaison Officer service commences at Queensland Children's Hospital.



Executive Director Jane Rowan joins a panel of community care providers to discuss collaboration in the carer industry at Holstep Health's inaugural Carer Industry Forum in Melbourne on October 8.

EDFA's Annual Clinician Subscription for its webinar library is launched on October 14.



Carer Catchups are held across Australia to mark National Carers Week.



EDFA attends the Rural Medicine Australia Conference in Perth, connecting with rural GPs from around the country

November 2025

EDFA attends the GP25 Conference in Brisbane.



December 2025

Former EDFA Acting Board Chair David Quilty is welcomed as an EDFA Life Member, recognising his significant contribution to the organisation and to eating disorder carers over many years.





On December 7, EDFA announces interpreter services are now available for its counselling sessions.



Australia's social media restrictions become law on December 10. Executive Director Jane Rowan attends the launch at Kirribilli House in Sydney, accompanied by her daughter, Charley, who has recovered from an eating disorder.

EDFA launches its social media survey to understand how social media is impacting young people's mental health, connection, concentration and family life.





January 2026

Matthew Cheal joins EDFA on January 5 as its inaugural Head of Programs as part of an organisational restructure.

February 2026



Former Federal Assistant Minister to the Prime Minister for Mental Health and Suicide Prevention David Coleman is welcomed as an EDFA Ambassador.

EDFA joins the Eating Disorder Alliance in its call for greater scrutiny regarding the prescribing of the GLP-1 weight loss medications to those at risk of developing an eating disorder or those already with an eating disorder.

March 2026

The Hospital Liaison Officer service further expands into Robina Private Hospital.

EDFA launches *Strong Enough: 11 Stories of Caring for a Loved One with an Eating Disorder* at an event hosted by the Speaker of the House of Representatives, the Hon. Milton Dick MP, at Parliament House in Canberra on March 25.







April 2026

Executive Director Jane Rowan delivers a guest lecture to psychology students at the University of Queensland on April 29, highlighting the challenges carers face and how clinicians can work with eating disorder carers to achieve better outcomes.



May 2026



Executive Director Jane Rowan attends the Mental Health Australia Policy Forum in Canberra, joining with eating disorder sector colleagues to ensure eating disorders remain a focus of national mental health policy.



Dr Beth Shelton steps down as Chair of the EDFA Board. Dr Palmyra De Banks is appointed Chair and Kathryn Hutchins is elected as the new Deputy Chair of the Board on May 18.

Perth carers and clinicians attend EDFA's WA Carer Connection Forum, hosted in collaboration with Luma, in Perth on May 23.





June 2026

EDFA marks World Eating Disorders Action Day with an event at Parliament House in Adelaide, hosted by South Australian Minister for Health and Wellbeing, the Hon. Blair Boyer MP, on June 2.



EDFA attends the 2026 International Mental Health Conference on the Gold Coast from June 23-24.

New Partnership Announcement
SISTERHOOD FOUNDATION
edfa
EDFA is proud to be partnering with Sisterhood Foundation

The Sisterhood Foundation announces EDFA as a new charity partner on June 2.



Executive Director Jane Rowan, National Partnerships Manager Amy Efstathis, and *Strong Enough* author Teresa Orth undertake a tour of several South Australian regions to raise awareness of EDFA's services.



Executive Director Jane Rowan joins a panel discussion at the National headspace Forum in Brisbane on June 18, encouraging clinicians to view families and carers as their greatest allies in the recovery journey.

EDFA attends the Queensland Eating Disorder Service (QuEDS) Forum in Brisbane on June 24.



Message from the Chair

The 2025–26 financial year has been a landmark year for Eating Disorders Families Australia, filled with growth, strengthened leadership and increasing national influence as we continued our commitment to ensure families and carers are recognised, supported, and heard within Australia's eating disorder system of care.

As demand for EDFA's services and knowledge continues to grow, so too has our capacity to respond. Throughout the year, we have strengthened our organisation, expanded our reach, and deepened our partnerships, while remaining firmly focused on the needs of the families and carers who are at the heart of everything we do.

Organisational maturity

This year marked an important stage in EDFA's organisational maturity. We have strengthened our governance, leadership, and long-term sustainability to ensure the organisation is well positioned for the future.

A significant milestone was the introduction of an Executive Leadership Team, creating greater organisational capability and positioning EDFA to respond to increased opportunities and demand. Alongside this, the Board clarified its roles and processes and established a new People and Culture Committee to provide dedicated oversight of organisational culture, workforce wellbeing, and strategic people initiatives.

Recently, we were delighted to receive significant support from the Sisterhood Foundation, whose investment will help support sustainability for EDFA's work.

These developments provide a strong foundation for sustainable growth and reinforce EDFA's commitment to excellence in governance and organisational leadership.

Growing national impact

EDFA's national influence continued to grow throughout the year through strong and consistent advocacy and expanded strategic partnerships. Notable collaborative initiatives include EDFA's significant role in fostering sector collaboration in EDA One Voice, in the Northern Territory Eating Disorders Roundtable, and in the generation and publication of *Strong Enough* – stories of caring for a loved one with an eating disorder.

EDFA is now an established, unique, and respected part of the system of care and a key voice in national conversations about policy, service development, and lived experience.

Supporting families

While our advocacy creates system-wide impact, our core purpose remains supporting families and carers.

During the year we were pleased to secure extensions to funding for our counselling and support programs, to ensure these services can continue to assist families navigating some of life's most challenging circumstances. We also celebrated the expansion of the Hospital Liaison Officer program, enabling more families to access practical guidance, connection, and support during hospital admissions and transitions. These achievements reflect the growing recognition of the critical role families play in recovery and the importance of ensuring they have access to timely, evidence-informed support.

Thanks

On behalf of the Board, I extend my warmest thanks to Executive Director Jane Rowan for her dynamic and committed leadership, and EDFA's exceptional staff, whose dedication, professionalism and compassion make EDFA's work possible every day.

I want to acknowledge and thank our volunteers for their invaluable role in EDFA's work. I also acknowledge my fellow Board Directors for their commitment, strategic leadership, and generous contribution throughout the year. I extend EDFA's enduring gratitude to the many partners, collaborators, and funders who share our vision and strengthen our impact.

Most importantly, I thank the families and carers who place their trust in EDFA and who continue to share their lived experience with courage and generosity. Your voices shape EDFA's work and inspire our advocacy.

Looking forward

EDFA can look to the future with confidence. While I have resigned as Chair after a rich and enjoyable year, I welcome Dr Palmyra de Banks as EDFA's Chair and know that she will provide exceptional leadership for the Board and the organisation.

EDFA has never been better positioned to influence national policy, expand support for families, and continue to help build a stronger, more connected eating disorder sector. We have strengthened our foundations, broadened our partnerships, and increased our capacity to create lasting change.

While significant challenges remain for families affected by eating disorders, we enter the coming year with optimism, purpose, and determination. EDFA will continue working towards a future where every family has access to the support, understanding, and care they need, and where the voices of families are recognised as essential in improving outcomes for all Australians affected by eating disorders.

Beth Shelton
Chair





Our Organisation

Board of Directors

EDFA is governed by a Board of Directors, the majority of whom have lived experience as a carer. The Board is committed to supporting families and carers of people with an eating disorder.

- Dr Beth Shelton, Chair
- Dr Palmyra De Banks, Deputy Chair
- Jane Rowan, Executive Director
- Fiona Mitchell, Director
- Prof Genevieve Pepin, Director
- Janis Carren, Director
- Kathryn Hutchins, Director
- Kate Parsons, Director
- Amanda Neave, Director
- Liza Nadolski, Company Secretary
- Sandra Cox, Treasurer

EDFA Team

The organisation is supported by a largely part-time workforce equating to 11.5 full-time equivalent staff, assisted by a small army of volunteers.

Our Leaders

- Jane Rowan, Executive Director
- Matthew Cheal, Head of Programs
- Sarah Warner, Finance Manager
- Tracey Adamson, National Marketing and Communications Manager
- Amy Efstathis, National Partnerships Manager

Team

- Marianne Edmonds, Acting Support Program Coordinator and Hospital Liaison Officer
- Amy Hill, Volunteer Coordinator
- Coran Johnson, Education Program Coordinator
- Dr Leah Dudley, Fill The Gap Program Manager
- Alexis Caddy, Marketing and Communications Coordinator
- Mark Hill, Fill The Gap Counsellor
- Belinda Horton, Fill The Gap Counsellor
- Bailey Wightman, Fill the Gap Administration Assistant
- Dr Elena Konovalov, Research and Evaluation Coordinator
- Penny Scarce, Evaluation Support Officer

EDFA Committees

At June 30, 2026, EDFA had four committees comprising Finance, Risk and Audit, Research, Grants, and People and Culture.

Finance, Risk and Audit Committee

The Finance, Risk and Audit Committee supports the Board in fulfilling its responsibilities for financial oversight, risk management, governance, and organisational accountability. During the year, the Committee continued to oversee EDFA's financial sustainability, while supporting the organisation's commitment to strong governance and continuous improvement.

A significant achievement during the year was the development and implementation of EDFA's Risk Appetite Statement and enhanced risk reporting framework. Establishing a clear articulation of the Board's appetite for risk is an important milestone in the organisation's governance maturity, providing greater clarity for decision-making and enabling more consistent monitoring of strategic, operational, and financial risks. The Committee has welcomed the increased visibility this framework provides and recognises that fostering a positive risk culture, where risk and opportunity are considered as part of everyday decision-making, is critical to EDFA's ongoing success.

The Committee monitored EDFA's financial performance throughout the year, reviewed budgets and financial reporting, and maintained oversight of compliance, internal controls and organisational risks. In an increasingly complex operating environment, the Committee's focus extends beyond traditional financial oversight to include consideration of the strategic risks and opportunities that may influence EDFA's ability to achieve its purpose and maximise its impact for individuals and families affected by eating disorders.

As a not-for-profit organisation, EDFA operates within a funding environment that can be both competitive and uncertain. Reliance on grant funding requires a high degree of agility, with management often needing to adapt programs, services, and organisational priorities in response to changing funding opportunities and community needs. The Committee acknowledges the challenges this presents and commends the Executive and staff for their ability to remain responsive while continuing to deliver high-quality services and support to the communities they serve. Despite the challenges associated with a constrained and often uncertain funding environment, EDFA has continued to deliver meaningful outcomes for the individuals and families it serves, reflecting both the resilience of the organisation and the dedication of its Board, staff, and volunteers.

Recognising the volatility that can accompany grant-funded operations, the Committee continues to consider opportunities to diversify revenue sources and strengthen EDFA's long-term financial sustainability. While grant funding remains fundamental to the organisation's operations, it is recognised that a diversified funding base has the potential to improve financial resilience, reduce exposure to funding fluctuations, and provide greater certainty to support long-term planning, capability development and service delivery.

The Committee also recognises the responsibility that accompanies the stewardship of public, philanthropic, and donor funding. Throughout the year, careful attention was given to ensuring that resources were managed efficiently, transparently, and in a manner that maximises the impact of every dollar entrusted to the organisation. Maintaining community and stakeholder confidence through strong governance and financial accountability remains a key priority of both the Committee and the Board.

On behalf of the Committee, I would like to extend my sincere thanks to Jane and the EDFA team for their professionalism, dedication, and commitment throughout the year. Their careful stewardship of the organisation's finances, proactive approach to risk management, and ongoing pursuit of improved governance practices have been instrumental in supporting EDFA's sustainability and effectiveness. In particular, I acknowledge the significant work undertaken to implement the new risk management framework, strengthen organisational oversight, and support the Board in fulfilling its governance responsibilities.

I would also like to acknowledge and thank my fellow Committee members for their valuable contribution during the year. Their expertise, diligence, and commitment to good governance have strengthened the quality of the Committee's deliberations and oversight. The willingness of members to provide constructive challenge, strategic insight, and informed advice has been invaluable in supporting both the Board and management.

The Committee recognises today's not-for-profit health sector requires organisations to balance strong governance and prudent financial management with responsiveness, innovation, and impact. As EDFA continues to mature, our focus remains on ensuring the organisation is financially sustainable, appropriately governed, and well positioned to respond to the evolving needs of the communities it serves.

As Committee Chair, I am pleased with the progress made during the year and remain confident the strong financial management, risk oversight, and governance foundations established by the organisation will continue to support EDFA's important work into the future.



Janis Carren
EDFA Finance, Risk, and Audit Committee Chair





Finance, Risk and Audit Committee Members

- Janis Carren
- Sandra Cox
- Amanda Neave
- Jonathan Sleeman
- Sarah Warner
- Jane Rowan



Research Committee

EDFA's Research Committee supports, guides, and oversees research activities that align with EDFA's mission to support and advocate for families and carers of individuals living with eating disorders. The Committee ensures that research undertaken or supported by EDFA is ethically sound, methodologically rigorous, relevant to families and carers, and contributes meaningfully to improved understanding, treatment, and support systems.

FY26 has been a meaningful year for the Research Committee, marked by stronger foundations and growing contributions to the evidence base that underpins EDFA's work. We said farewell to Research and Evaluation Coordinator Laura McCosker and welcomed Dr Elena Konovalov to that position. Elena takes over Laura's excellent work and will continue to advance EDFA's research and evaluation agenda.

Early in the year, the Committee revised and finalised its Terms of Reference for Board approval and implementation, which then provided a clear framework to guide our work in the years ahead.

Two significant research projects in FY26 highlight the breadth of inquiry the Committee has supported this year. A University of Melbourne honours student, Edwina Williams, supervised by Research Committee members Associate Professor Isabel Krug and Dr Liza Norton, explored the experiences of carers supporting loved ones with Avoidant/Restrictive Food Intake Disorder (ARFID) within a peer-led support group. The study, published in the *European Eating Disorders Review*, found carers face high daily burdens, significant emotional distress, and a notable lack of professional awareness. Encouragingly, peer support was shown to reduce isolation, validate carers' strategies, and improve family functioning.

In the second study, Deakin University honours student Katie Yates, supervised by Research Committee member Professor Genevieve Pepin and Dr Rachel Knight, presented her work at the International Conference on Eating Disorders in The Hague in June 2026. Katie's research examined the long-term impact of caring for someone with an eating disorder and found 55% of participants showed active Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) symptoms, with many reporting a compromised ability to engage in meaningful roles - a striking reminder of the toll that caring can take.

Data collected from the biannual Carer Experience Survey generated important learnings and supported the development of further projects. Data exploring the experiences and perceptions of carers about the impact of engagement with social media revealed important concerns. Results were presented in a poster format at the 2025 Australia and New Zealand Academy for Eating Disorders (ANZAED) Conference. The title of the poster was *"Keep it away from kids – Eating disorder carers' perceptions of social media and mandatory minimum age restrictions on social media in Australia"* and the authors were Laura McCosker, Jane Rowan, and Professor Genevieve Pepin.

Looking ahead, our social media survey study, supported by results from the Carer Experience Survey, which examines carers' experiences in the context of Australia's social media age restrictions for young people under 16, continues to generate important data. Preliminary findings will be presented at the 2026 ANZAED conference in August, alongside a second accepted abstract exploring co-morbidities and eating disorders.

Evaluation of EDFA's innovative Fill The Gap lived-experience counselling program has been ongoing for nearly three years with a comprehensive report due for submission to the Federal Government in FY27. This report will be used as the foundation for a research paper with plans for publication in FY27. The evaluation of the first 28 months of Fill The Gap was presented at 2025 ANZAED conference. The presentation was titled *"Fill the Gap – An Australian-first online counselling program for the carers of people with an eating disorder: Longitudinal, mixed-methods results from the first nine months."* The authors were Laura McCosker, Chris Fowler, Elise Wales, Rowena Brookes, Alisha Armstrong, Angie Sloan, Jane Rowan, and Genevieve Pepin.

The Committee is grateful to the researchers, students, and supervisors who have given their expertise in service of EDFA's mission. Their work directly strengthens our ability to advocate for families and carers across Australia.

FY26 Research Committee Highlights

- A Melbourne University honours student, Edwina Williams, supervised by Research Committee members Associate Professor Isabel Krug and Dr Liza Norton explored the experiences of carers of people with Avoidant/Restrictive Food Intake Disorder (ARFID) who participated in a peer-led support group.
- The social media survey study, examining experiences of carers in light of the social media ban for young people under 16 years old was launched in December.
- In June 2026, the work of Deakin honours student Katie Yates, supervised by Research Committee member Professor Genevieve Pepin, and Deakin academic staff member Dr. Rachel Knight was presented at the International Conference on Eating Disorders in The Hague, The Netherlands.



Professor Genevieve Pepin
EDFA Research Committee Chair

Research Committee Members

- Prof Genevieve Pepin, Deakin University (Chair)
- Associate Prof Isabel Krug, The University of Melbourne
- Dr Lyza Norton, Western Sydney University
- Prof Simon Wilksch, Flinders University
- Associate Prof Marianne Wyder, Metro South Health
- Dr Elena Konovalov
- Penny Scarce
- Jane Rowan

Grants Committee

Following a highly successful period of grant acquisition in the previous financial year, the Grants Committee's focus during 2025-26 shifted from identifying new funding opportunities to supporting the implementation of funded projects and ensuring EDFA met its obligations to funding partners.

This period provided an important opportunity for EDFA to embed these initiatives, maximise the impact of the funding secured, and demonstrate strong stewardship of philanthropic and government investment. The Committee remained available to provide strategic advice where required, while recognising that organisational resources were appropriately directed towards successful project delivery.

As EDFA enters the 2026-27 financial year, the Grants Committee has reconvened to identify and pursue new funding opportunities that align with the organisation's strategic priorities and support continued growth in services for families and carers affected by eating disorders.

I would like to thank Committee members Vesna Stefanovski and Lynn Sweeney for their ongoing commitment, expertise, and support. Their contribution continues to strengthen EDFA's capacity to secure and deliver funding that makes a meaningful difference to the families and communities we serve.



Fiona Mitchell
EDFA Grants Committee Chair

Grants Committee Members

- Fiona Mitchell (Chair)
- Jane Rowan
- Vesna Stefanovski
- Lynn Sweeney
- Amy Efstathis

People & Culture Committee

During the year, EDFA strengthened its people and culture foundations to better support its staff, volunteers, and the broader carer community.

Specific actions included:

- The establishment of the People and Culture Committee provided dedicated Board oversight of workplace relations, employee and volunteer engagement, organisational culture, wellbeing and people-related risk. This work reflects EDFA's commitment to creating a safe, supportive, and values-led environment for those who contribute to its mission of supporting carers of people experiencing eating disorders.
- Rolled out and completed the 2026 Employee Engagement Survey, receiving positive feedback and developing an action plan with the Leadership Team to respond to key themes and opportunities identified through the survey.
- Strengthened EDFA's culture and engagement practices by introducing regular pulse surveys and inviting ongoing feedback from employees and volunteers.
- Focused on recruiting and supporting volunteers to help expand EDFA's capacity to assist carers and families, while continuing to build the structures needed for volunteer engagement, training, recognition and retention.



Kathryn Hutchins
EDFA People & Culture Committee Chair

People & Culture Committee Members

- Kathryn Hutchins (Chair)
- Amy Rixon
- Jane Rowan
- Dr Palmyra De Banks
- Prof Genevieve Pepin
- Liza Nadolski



Operational Effectiveness and Service Excellence

FY26 was a year of deliberate investment in the systems, leadership, and organisational foundations EDFA needs to deliver high-quality services now and into the future. As demand for our programs continued to grow, we focused on strengthening quality, accountability, and sustainability in line with our 2024-2028 Strategic Plan.

Following our accreditation to the National Safety and Quality Digital Mental Health Standards in December 2024, we continued to embed the Standards across our operations and service delivery. Quality and safety remained central to the way we designed, delivered, and reviewed our programs, supported by strong information security practices, ongoing cybersecurity awareness, and strengthened IT governance.

We also continued to use evidence and lived experience to guide improvement. Feedback gathered through our Carer Experience Survey, regular program evaluation, and engagement with carers and stakeholders helped us better understand emerging needs and refine our services. Improved research and evaluation expertise strengthened our capacity to measure outcomes, demonstrate impact, and ensure future program development is informed by robust evidence.

During the year, EDFA reshaped its leadership and program structures to support a larger, more complex national organisation. The appointment of a Head of Programs and additional research and evaluation capacity improved program oversight and consistency across service delivery. We also secured significant multi-year philanthropic investment to build our executive capacity and commenced an organisational restructure designed to support EDFA's long-term sustainability, deepen stakeholder engagement, and strengthen operational leadership.

Governance and organisational practice were another important focus. EDFA introduced a Responsible Use of Artificial Intelligence Policy, strengthened recruitment and delegation frameworks, developed and implemented a comprehensive Risk Appetite Statement, reviewed and revised the Risk Register, and continued to review internal systems and processes as the organisation grew. In February, we established an Indigenous Engagement Working Group to guide the review of our policies, practices and resources, ensuring they are culturally safe and responsive for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander carers.

Our people remain central to service excellence. Following staff consultation, EDFA developed a Workplace Culture Framework built around trust, flexibility and accountability. Monthly Pulse Checks provided a regular way to understand staff experience, identify pressure points and respond to feedback, supporting a workplace in which people feel valued, connected, and able to do their best work.

Accessibility and inclusion also remained priorities. Interpreter support continued to be available across EDFA's Support and Education Programs, helping carers from culturally and linguistically diverse communities access information and support. Our national online delivery model continued to connect families across metropolitan, regional and remote Australia, helping ensure geography was not a barrier to participation.

Together, these initiatives have strengthened EDFA's operational foundations and positioned the organisation to grow responsibly, while maintaining the quality, safety, and carer focus that underpin everything we do.

Our Purpose

Through leadership, education, and research, EDFA improves the lives of eating disorder carers. We work to create stigma-free communities where eating disorder carers are recognised for their vital role and receive the support they need. We achieve better outcomes for those with eating disorders by equipping and empowering their carers to navigate the complex healthcare system with confidence.

Our Mission

To enable families and carers to be effective supports and recognised as central members of the recovery team for a loved one with an eating disorder.

Our Vision

Families and carers impacted by an eating disorder are recognised, supported, educated, and empowered.

Our Values

EDFA's values are not aspirational statements - they are the lived foundation of how we work. They reflect the long-standing core values of our community, the most important of which is Hope, and they continue to guide the delivery of our 2024-2028 Strategic Plan.

Hope

Underpinning everything we do is a strong belief we can make a difference to the lives of carers. We know recovery is possible for those living with eating disorders.

Innovation

We are focused on continuous improvement - in our activities, in supporting carers, and in evidence-informed services for those living with eating disorders.

Collaboration

We collaborate with stakeholders, we are inclusive, we embrace the value of diversity, and we create and faithfully represent our constituency.

Empathy

We are best placed to support families and carers guided by our own lived experience journeys.

Respect

We are member and carer-focused, respectful, and compassionate.

Integrity

We are credible, a sound investment, honest, transparent, and reliable. We embrace research-informed, quality methods.

Strategic Plan

Three years into our 2024-2028 Strategic Plan, that vision is no longer simply something we are working toward - it is something we can see taking shape. The ground has shifted. EDFA is no longer asking to be at the table; we are leading conversations, shaping policy, and reaching more families than at any other point in our history.

By 2028, we want eating disorder families to receive timely and effective support from all facets of our community - health care professionals, government, and the public. We expect families and carers to be placed at the centre of the treatment and recovery team, regardless of the age of their loved one, and to be valued as an essential partner on this journey. That expectation is now backed by a growing body of evidence, and by EDFA's own presence in rooms where decisions are made.

EDFA remains committed to seeing the National Eating Disorders Strategy fully implemented, with every aspect of its stepped system of care providing the services and support that people with eating disorders and their families need for lasting recovery. We will continue to work collaboratively across the eating disorder sector to drive that implementation, reduce duplication of effort, and maximise outcomes for all impacted by eating disorders. This philosophy underpins everything we do.



EDFA Strong Enough authors and eating disorder carers *Alanna McInerney and Leah Ward.*

Organisational Goals by 2028

Skilled and Resilient Carers

- EDFA services well-established and actively used across all Australian states and territories
- Prevention and early intervention programs in place to help families reduce the time it takes to navigate toward recovery
- Sustained advocacy at state and national levels for broader carer support during treatment and recovery
- Resources and services that enable carers to quickly and confidently navigate the healthcare system

The National Peak Organisation for Eating Disorder Carers

- EDFA recognised and sought out by carers, clinicians, researchers, government, and the public as the authoritative voice for eating disorder families
- Deep and productive collaboration with national and state eating disorder organisations

Improve Treatment and Support

- Active contribution to research addressing carers' lived experience and role in treatment and recovery
- Continued advocacy for the closure of treatment gaps and the inclusion of carers in the treatment team regardless of the loved one's age
- Community education campaigns that shift public understanding of what eating disorder families experience
- Meaningful translation of innovative research into practice, with carer and family input at its core

Strategic Approach

We are building toward a future where families and carers receive comprehensive support throughout the eating disorder recovery journey - and where their role as the front line of that recovery is not just acknowledged by clinicians, but embedded in how our systems, our communities, and our culture respond to eating disorders.

That recognition must extend in both directions: to the wellbeing of the person being cared for, and to the wellbeing of the carer and their family. One cannot be separated from the other.

EDFA's approach to this strategy is structured, measured, and deliberate. We track our progress rigorously, reflect honestly on what is working, and adapt where we need to. The ambition has not changed. What has changed is our capacity to deliver on it.

Strategic Pillars

These pillars underpin and guide all we do to fulfil our purpose to improve the lives of eating disorder carers:

- **Impact**
  Investing in essential, scalable programs and services that make a real difference to the ability of carers and families to support a loved one through eating disorder recovery - and to sustain themselves through that journey.
- **Influence**
  Building and exercising EDFA's position as a leading and trusted voice - shaping the systems, policies, and relationships that determine whether carers can effectively fulfil their vital role as the frontline of the recovery team.
- **Sustainability**
  Strengthening the organisational foundations - financial, structural, and cultural - that will allow EDFA to grow its impact well beyond 2028 and ensure no family is left without support.



The Communities We Serve

Eating Disorder Carers

EDFA recognises that every eating disorder caring situation is unique. No two people - those giving care or those receiving it - share the same experience, and the support needed at any given moment can look very different from one family to the next.

A carer or support person is anyone who provides personal care, practical assistance, or emotional support to someone living with an eating disorder. Carers reflect the full diversity of the Australian community, spanning different ages, genders, cultural backgrounds, and socioeconomic circumstances, and living in metropolitan, regional, and rural locations alike. Caring relationships may be ongoing, short-term, episodic, or shaped by the changing needs of the person they support.

EDFA also recognises many people do not identify with the term ‘carer’ - even when they are providing significant, sustained support to someone with an eating disorder. Whether or not someone uses that label, their contribution is real, and their need for information, connection, and support matters equally to us.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People

Research continues to highlight Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people experience eating disorders and body image concerns at significant rates. A landmark study found that approximately 27% of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander survey respondents met the diagnostic criteria for an eating disorder - broadly consistent with prevalence among the broader Australian population, and a finding that has since been reinforced by more recent research.[1] A 2025 policy scoping review also confirmed Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in Australia may experience a higher burden of eating disorders than the broader population, while identifying a critical need for culturally responsive, First Nations-specific approaches to prevention and care.[2]

EDFA recognises the importance of culturally appropriate eating disorder carer support and services for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people - services that increase access and engagement and ultimately, contribute to improved health outcomes.

During FY26, EDFA continued to take active steps to ensure our offering was accessible and appropriate for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people:

- All services are available online, making them accessible to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people living in rural, regional, and metropolitan areas across Australia.
- Our entire offering, aside from annual membership, remains free, including our Fill The Gap counselling service.
- All EDFA staff have undertaken cultural training, ensuring we understand the key cultural considerations for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and that our offering is culturally appropriate.
- In February, EDFA established a small Indigenous Engagement Working Group to strengthen our organisational practices and ensure our services and resources are culturally safe for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander carers.

A Service Provider of Choice

EDFA is working to position itself as the service provider of choice for state and federal governments. We are focused on demonstrating we always deliver measurable, high-quality outcomes, through the provision of evidence-informed services and supports to eating disorder carers. We work within strong governance frameworks and internal control processes that ensure transparency, efficiency, and accountability. We aim to be recognised not only for our ability to execute, but for our ability to deliver real impact for carers and value for public investment, making us a trusted partner in implementing workable solutions at the population and system level that meet the complex needs of families and carers supporting a person experiencing an eating disorder.



The Programs Team

As the service delivery arm of EDFA, the Programs team of staff and volunteers bring a wealth of experience and knowledge to our service offerings. As a lived experience organisation, 100% of our carer-facing service delivery staff and volunteers bring lived experience as a carer of a person with an eating disorder. We believe this gives us a unique connection to our carers and unspoken understanding of their experiences and challenges.

Matthew Cheal joined EDFA in a newly created role as the Head of Programs in January 2026. Matthew brings with him an extensive executive skill set along with lived experience as a carer and a depth of experience in program operations, strategy development and execution, risk and people leadership across not-for-profit and commercial environments. Matthew is working with the programs team to strengthen EDFA's carer-centric and outcomes-focused service delivery.

5 female staff
3 male staff
4 QLD staff
1 VIC staff
1 WA staff
3 full time staff
5 part time staff

Support Program

Support Groups

EDFA's carer support groups are the backbone of EDFA and play a vital role in for our carers walking an eating disorder recovery journey. Facilitated by a fabulous group of volunteers who all have lived experience as a carer of a person with an eating disorder, our support groups are a safe and welcoming space where carers can find comfort, validation, and connection from others walking the same path. Importantly, our groups offer a safe place for our carers to share their emotions and experiences and find hope and understanding that recovery is possible.

Carer support groups are structured to serve different cohorts of carers at different places in their eating disorder journey. There are General and Newbie groups that cater for everyone as well as diagnosis-specific groups for Anorexia, Avoidant/Restrictive Foor Intake Disorder (ARFID), Longstanding Eating Disorders (LED), Bulimia and Binge Eating alongside specific groups for men, partners, adult siblings, and grandparents. Acting on feedback from our carers, we have commenced two new carer support groups - for carers of an adult with an eating disorder and a second group for single parents. Both these new groups have been enthusiastically received by the EDFA community.

120 carer support groups
658 carers attended
15 different groups

Facebook Forum

The EDFA private Facebook community is a growing and vital part of EDFA's services. Membership of the group increased 14% over the course of the year to 2,666 members at June 30. The group is extremely active across all days and times with carers posting, commenting, or interacting 42,675 times across the year.

The group is moderated daily by a team of dedicated volunteers who ensure the space is safe for all regardless of where they are on their caring journey. The forum continues to be a beautiful community of carers who support each other and lift each other up when a member of the community is struggling. It is a place where carers can share their experiences, struggles, and find hope through the stories of other carers.

2,666 Facebook carers
42,675 interactions

Hospital Liaison Officer

The Hospital Liaison Officer pilot program, funded through a generous donation from Women & Change, has delivered outcomes above expectations for carers supporting a loved one through a hospital admission. For many, the experience of a first hospital admission related to an eating disorder can be devastating, isolating, and confusing. Having a kind and understanding lived-experience Hospital Liaison Officer to lean on has been an invaluable resource for many. The Hospital Liaison Officer provides a wrap-around service strengthening carers' understanding of their situation and assisting in connecting them to essential support services during the hospital stay and in the critical period following discharge.

EDFA is currently seeking support from all levels of Government to continue and expand this vital service into hospitals with eating disorder treatment services across Australia.

287 carers suported
16,200 minutes on ward
4 hospitals

EDucation

Information Sessions

EDFA's Information Sessions (webinars) provide insightful and valuable content on a wide range of topics for EDFA members. Across the year, we held 23 information sessions attended by 383 carers and covered such topics as:

> *Navigating FBT as a family: two mums who have been through it!*
>
> *Stories of Hope: Dad Rodney on supporting his teenage daughter through an eating disorder*
>
> *Integrating sensory approaches in eating disorder treatment - with Professor Genevieve Pepin*

Information sessions play an important part in distilling information to EDFA carers in a safe, accessible, and non-judgmental format. More importantly, they include stories of hope with lived-experience carers telling their stories and demonstrating that recovery is possible.

EDFA has also established a Clinicians' Subscription Service that has 11 hours of clinical webinar content and eight hours of lived experience presentations from EDFA carers. This resource provided valuable insights into the clinical management of eating disorders across a range of topics and most importantly provides clinicians with the humanistic side of managing this illness in a family setting.

23 information sessions conducted

383 carers attended

Nourish, Nurture, Notice

A collaborative project between EDFA and The Embrace Collective and proudly supported by the Queensland Government, *Nourish, Nurture, Notice* is Australia's first free, online prevention program that helps parents and carers to identify the early signs of disordered eating in young people before it progresses into an acute eating disorder. The program consists of a 30-minute Masterclass providing a synopsis on disordered eating and eating disorder progression, followed by a free Drop-In Session with EDFA's paediatric dietitian where parents and carers can discuss their concerns and receive guidance on next steps from an experienced clinician.

269 masterclass views

64 drop-in sessions





EDFA's Hospital Liasion Officer Marianne Edmonds and EDFA Strong Enough author and eating disorder carer, Kelley Robertson.

Counselling

The Fill The Gap (FTG) counselling service continued into its third year of operations, delivering a valuable and professional lived-experience counselling service to eating disorder carers right across Australia.

The model, based on a 100% remote online service, allows counsellors to meet with carers from anywhere and on any device at times and locations that align with carer needs and availabilities. Across FY26, 76 carers, or 19.8% of those who accessed the service, identified as living in regional and remote locations across all states of Australia.

Fill The Gap has continued to prioritise listening to carers and adapting to their feedback. A prime example of that is the roll-out of the Collaborative Care Skills Workshop (CCSW) as a result of carers asking for more structured carer skills development. Fill The Gap conducted two CCSW programs across the year, delivering 201 skills development sessions to 37 carer participants. Carer feedback also informs evaluation of the program and its continuous improvement processes. Feedback is sought through surveys that are sent to FTG carers at regular time points across their service user journey and the information is used to evaluate the effectiveness of the program in supporting carers to become stronger more resilient carers and through them support their loved ones' eating disorder recovery. Survey data across the year clearly shows carers who access Fill The Gap show meaningful improvements in carer skills and a marked reduction in their emotional burden, resulting in greater family stability and less disruptive home environments.

Carer also report their loved ones' experience reductions in food avoidance behaviours and lower anxiety levels related to weight and body image.

1889 counselling sessions

432 individual carers

6 states **2** territories

312 metro carers

76 regional / remote carers

352 female carers

79 male carers

1 other carer

349 new to service carers

Advocacy

FY26 marked EDFA's emergence as a recognised policy and advocacy leader, ensuring the lived experience of families and carers helped shape eating disorder reform - from local service planning in the Northern Territory, to national sector advocacy in Canberra, and international discussions on online safety at the United Nations.

In September 2025, EDFA Executive Director Jane Rowan joined Prime Minister Anthony Albanese and Australia's delegation to New York to observe a United Nations event focused on protecting children online. The event highlighted Australia's world-leading social media reforms, with leaders from around the world acknowledging Australia's leadership in addressing online harms affecting young people. During the visit, EDFA also met with Federal Minister for Communications, the Hon. Anika Wells MP, to discuss the implementation of the reforms and the importance of ensuring they provide meaningful protection for young people vulnerable to eating disorders and other online harms.

Following the introduction of Australia's social media reforms, EDFA continued to advocate for their effective implementation, recognising that legislative change must translate into meaningful protection for young people and families. Drawing on the experiences of hundreds of carers, EDFA has continued to contribute to the national conversation on online safety while monitoring the impact of the reforms on eating disorder prevention and recovery.

Also in September 2025, EDFA joined other eating disorder sector organisations in Canberra to advocate for greater investment in eating disorder prevention, treatment and recovery through the One Voice campaign. Together, the sector called on the Australian Government to provide ongoing funding to strengthen support for people living with eating disorders, their families and carers, and the community organisations that provide essential services. EDFA carer and advocate Kelley Robertson moved policymakers with her powerful account of caring for her daughter, reinforcing the importance of ensuring lived experience remains central to national reform.

In March 2026, EDFA further elevated the voices of carers with the launch of *Strong Enough: 11 Stories of Caring for a Loved One with an Eating Disorder* at Parliament House in Canberra. Hosted by the Speaker of the House of Representatives, the Hon. Milton Dick MP, the launch brought together parliamentarians, sector leaders, and carers to hear firsthand accounts of the challenges families face throughout the recovery journey. The book has become an important advocacy resource, helping decision-makers better understand the realities of caring for a loved one with an eating disorder while reinforcing the essential role families play in recovery.

EDFA also continued to advocate for improved services for families and carers across Australia. In September 2025, EDFA convened the Northern Territory Eating Disorder Roundtable, bringing together carers, clinicians, researchers, service providers, and government representatives to identify priorities for improving eating disorder care across the Territory. The Roundtable highlighted the significant challenges faced by families living in rural and remote communities and reinforced the need for greater collaboration, family-inclusive practice and equitable access to specialist support regardless of where a person lives.

Throughout the year, EDFA also represented the interests of eating disorder carers through national policy forums, government consultations, strategic partnerships, and presentations to clinicians and future health professionals. These opportunities ensured the voices of families remained central to policy reform, service design and workforce development, while continuing to build understanding that carers are essential partners in recovery.

As the only national organisation providing support, education, advocacy and counselling solely to families and carers impacted by an eating disorder, EDFA remains committed to ensuring carers are recognised, included, and supported as an essential part of every person's recovery journey.



Our Impact

In 2025/26, EDFA provided care, services, and support to more than 4,000 carers of people experiencing an eating disorder.



120
Carer Support Groups

EDFA delivered 120 Carer Support Groups across the year, supporting 658 carers. Two new cohort-specific carer support groups were added during the year in response to feedback from our carers. Further, two existing cohort-specific carer support groups underwent re-positioning and content transformation to ensure they stayed relevant for their intended attendees.

EDFA has conducted 528 Carer Support Groups since they went online in 2020.

23
Education Information Sessions

EDFA's Education sessions have continued to build their reputation as a primary source for carers to hear current information on the latest research and work being undertaken by clinicians around Australia and the world on eating disorders. In addition, we also hosted eight 'stories of hope' with EDFA carers courageously sharing their stories to remind us all that recovery is possible.

EDFA has hosted a total of 131 Education Information session since their inception in 2020.

1,889
Counselling Sessions

EDFA's Fill The Gap counselling service supported 432 individual carers through the provision of 1,889 individual one-on-one counselling sessions with our professional lived-experience counsellors. Of these carers, 76 identified as being from regional and remote locations across Australia where access to such services is challenging. Fill The Gap's online service model ensures equal access for all carers, including those located outside major metropolitan centres.

2,666
Facebook Forum Members

EDFA hosts and moderates a private Facebook forum for eating disorder carers. The forum provides a safe and supportive community of carers where members can ask questions, seek support, advice or just feel less alone.

Facebook Forum carers interacted with the forum 42,675 times across the FY26 year.

8
Strong Enough Podcasts

The *Strong Enough* podcast was published regularly, delivering eight episodes during 2025-26 and strengthening EDFA's national reach and impact. Each episode amplified carer voices, showcased innovation, and highlighted education and advocacy leadership, alongside practical self-care and guidance for families living with eating disorders.

1,075
Members

EDFA's membership base grew 23% to 1,075 carers from around Australia by June 30, 2026.

A Partner of Choice

Organisations partner with EDFA to make a meaningful and measurable difference for eating disorder carers and their families. Our strong advocacy, sector expertise, and authentic connection to the communities we serve ensure our partnerships are grounded in lived experience, shared purpose, and impact.

We bring a collaborative, responsive, and values-led approach to every partnership, underpinned by a deep commitment to the families and carers at the heart of our work. Our partners can also rely on EDFA to deliver with professionalism and accountability, manage resources responsibly, deliver projects and initiatives on time and within agreed budgets. This combination of authenticity, expertise, and dependable execution makes EDFA a trusted partner for organisations seeking to create lasting social impact.

EDFA's ability to provide meaningful, accessible, and life-changing support to eating disorder carers across Australia is strengthened by the commitment of our valued partners and supporters. We extend our sincere thanks to the funders, philanthropic foundations, corporate partners, donors, supporters, sector organisations, and suppliers who contributed to our work throughout 2025/26.

Whether through financial contributions, operational and in-kind support, shared expertise or advocacy, these partnerships enable EDFA to strengthen existing services, extend our reach, and respond to the evolving needs of eating disorder carers and their families across Australia.

Partnership Highlights

FY26 brought several partnerships that strengthened EDFA's capacity, amplified carer voices, and supported deeper engagement with communities across Australia.

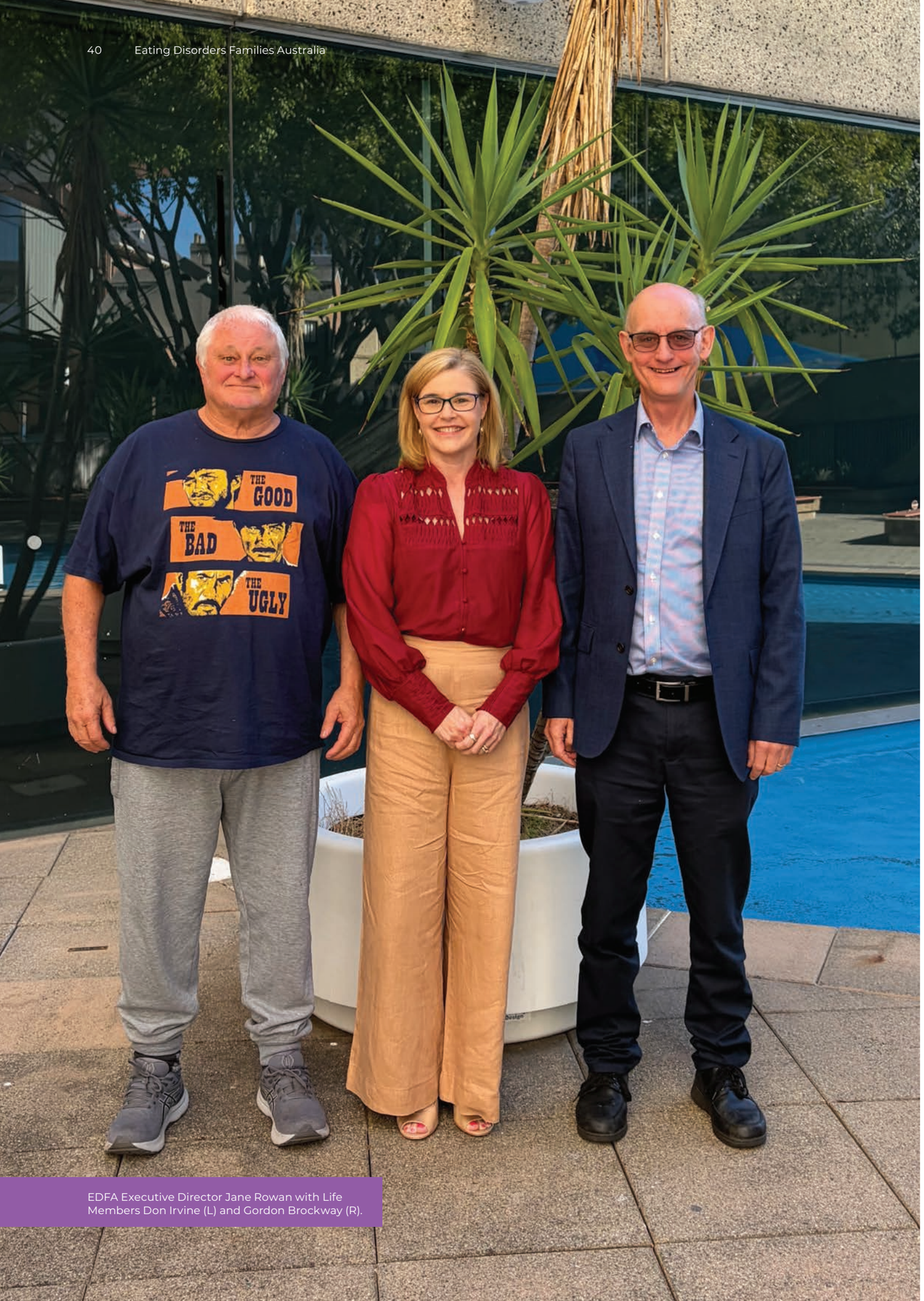
A landmark commitment of $750,000 over three years from the Sisterhood Foundation will enable EDFA to build its executive and organisational capacity. This investment will help establish the strong leadership foundations needed to support the organisation's continued growth and long-term sustainability.

With the support of the Helen and David Hains Foundation, EDFA published *Strong Enough*, sharing the stories of 11 families whose lives have been impacted by an eating disorder. The book was launched at Parliament House in Canberra and distributed to every federal parliamentarian, creating a powerful platform for carer voices within national advocacy.

In South Australia, government support enabled EDFA to connect directly with carers, healthcare professionals, and sector partners through a regional tour encompassing Mount Gambier, the Copper Coast, and Clare. These visits strengthened local relationships, increased awareness of available support, and deepened EDFA's understanding of the experiences of regional carers.

Each of these partnerships contributed in a different way - building EDFA's capacity, elevating lived experience, and strengthening connections with the communities we serve.





EDFA Executive Director Jane Rowan with Life Members Don Irvine (L) and Gordon Brockway (R).

Our Funders, Donors, and Supporters

EDFA would like to acknowledge the generous contributions received in FY 2026 from our funders, donors, and supporters. Their assistance ensures EDFA can provide life changing and vital services to more carers across Australia.

Government Funders

- Australian Government
- Queensland Government
- South Australian Government
- West Australian Mental Health Commission

Philanthropic Foundations

- Phil Taylor Foundation
- Pressroom Partners
- Helen and David Hains Foundation
- Women & Change
- Jasper Foundation
- Cooper Investors Philanthropy
- Veith Foundation

Corporate Partners and Sponsors

We are proud to partner with Australian businesses that are passionate about EDFA's mission. Thank you to our 2026 Recharge 4 Recovery Silver Sponsor Fred IT and Bronze Sponsor ForHealth. We could not do the work without your support!

EDFA would also like to acknowledge Spotlight Foundation for their in-kind support in 2025.

Donors

Seasons three and four of our *Strong Enough* podcast series were made possible through a generous donation from Liptember Foundation. We sincerely thank the Foundation for their support. Seasons five and six of the series were made possible due to a generous gift. Our heartfelt thanks also to this donor who wishes to remain anonymous.

EDFA is deeply grateful for the exceptional support received from generous individuals who contributed $1,000 or more this year. Private philanthropy is vital to our mission, enabling EDFA to continue supporting and upholding eating disorder carers across Australia.

EDFA received support from the following individual donors and fundraisers in FY26 including:

- Cameron & Shirley Dare
- Susan Donovan
- Kelley Robertson
- Sarah McWilliams
- Susan Cheal
- Leah Ward
- Hayley Narunsky
- Jane Rowan
- Matthew Cheal
- Helen Branch
- Shannon McGlinchey

Volunteers

Our 21 volunteers gave generously of their time this year, facilitating monthly online support groups and moderating our Facebook forum to ensure it remained a safe, welcoming space for carers to connect. Their dedication reached carers who might otherwise have faced this year alone and their contribution remains the cornerstone of our support program. We extend our sincere thanks and deep appreciation to each of them.

Financial Summary

Financial Overview

The 2025/26 financial year was another significant year for EDFA, reflecting continued growth in both our impact and financial capacity. Total income increased by 22% to $1,781,213 (from $1,461,000 in 2024/25), providing a strong foundation to support the organisation's strategic priorities and the ongoing delivery of services to carers of those affected by eating disorders.

Revenue and Expense Highlights

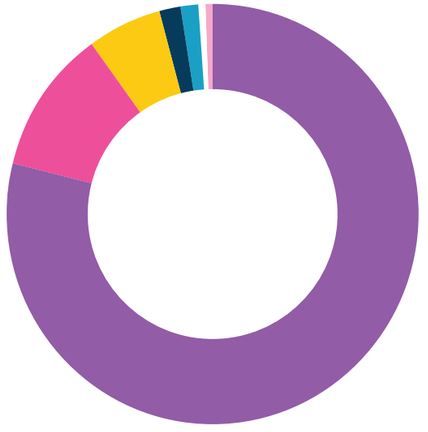
Government grants continued to be the primary source of funding, accounting for approximately 80% of total income. While this funding remains essential to the delivery of EDFA's programs and services, the organisation recognises the importance of building a more diversified and sustainable funding model.

With ongoing support from our community, we generated Membership income of $25,261, Donations and Fundraising income of $158,845, and interest income of $11,659. Throughout the year, we continued to strengthen relationships with non-government grant providers and philanthropic partners, supporting our long-term strategy of broadening revenue sources and reducing reliance on government funding over time.



EDFA Strong Enough author and eating disorder carer *Shannon McGlinchey*





EDFA Revenue FY26

- 78.97% Government Grants
- 11.11% Donations and Fundraisers
- 5.77% Non-Government Grants
- 1.77% Sponsorships
- 1.41% Memberships
- 0.67% Interest Income
- 0.3% Other Revenue

Revenue

	2025/26	2024/25
Government Grants	1,406,213	1,176,471
Non-Government Grants	102,796	7,205
Donations and fundraising	198,556	223,148
Memberships	25,261	24,040
Sponsorship	31,596	0
Education portfolio	0	2,050
Interest income	11,659	19,373
Other revenue	5,134	8,713
Gross profit	1,781,215	1,461,000

Expenses

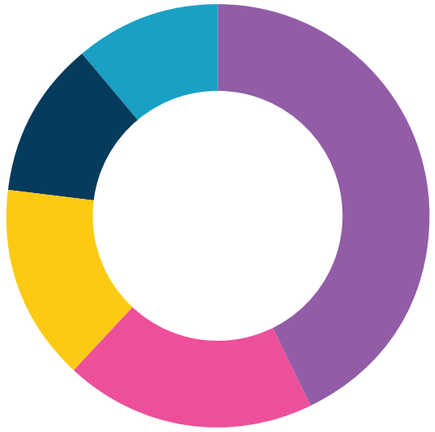
	2025/26	2024/25
Travel and conferences	(98,728)	(34,962)
Insurance	(24,789)	(13,031)
Education portfolio	(75,238)	(92,863)
Wages and salaries	(1,301,211)	(1,037,299)
Consulting	(44,960)	(44,269)
IT Expenses	(82,968)	(82,796)
Other expenses	(159,782)	(67,522)
Total operating expenses	(1,787,676)	(1,372,742)
Net Surplus/(deficit)	(6,461)	88,258

Strategic Investment in Programs

Total expenditure for the 2025/26 financial year was $1,784,166, reflecting EDFA's continued investment in delivering high-quality support, education, advocacy, and organisational capacity. Employee expenses remained the organisation's largest investment, representing over 80% of total expenditure, demonstrating EDFA's commitment to maintaining a skilled workforce capable of meeting the growing demand for services.

Throughout the year, EDFA also invested in technology, professional services, marketing, conferences, travel, and operational infrastructure to strengthen service delivery, enhance stakeholder engagement, and support continued organisational growth. Expenditure was carefully managed to ensure resources were directed towards activities that deliver the greatest impact for individuals and families affected by eating disorders.

While the organisation recorded a modest operating deficit of $2,953 for the year, this result reflects strategic investment in service delivery and organisational capability. EDFA remains committed to maintaining strong financial stewardship while continuing to diversify revenue streams and build long-term financial sustainability.



Total Expenses by Program Area

- 43% Fill The Gap
- 19% Education
- 15% Support
- 12% Operational
- 11% Advocacy





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How You Can Help

Donate to EDFA

As a registered charity, EDFA relies on the generosity of our supporters to continue providing vital support, education, advocacy, and counselling to families and carers impacted by an eating disorder. Every donation, regardless of size, helps us ensure carers have access to the information, connection, and support they need when they need it most.

Scan here to donate to EDFA

There are many ways to support EDFA beyond making a direct donation. If you live in Queensland, Western Australia, or New South Wales, you can nominate EDFA as your chosen charity when recycling eligible containers through Containers for Change (Queensland and Western Australia) or Return and Earn (New South Wales). By encouraging family, friends and colleagues to do the same, you can help turn everyday recycling into meaningful support for eating disorder carers across Australia.

A gift in your Will is a lasting investment in the future of eating disorder families and carers. By remembering EDFA in your estate planning, you will help ensure future generations have access to the support, education, advocacy, and counselling they need, creating a legacy of hope and impact that will endure for years to come.

You can find out more here

Corporate Support

EDFA is proud to partner with businesses and organisations that share our commitment to improving the lives of families and carers impacted by an eating disorder. Together, we are expanding access to support, education, advocacy and counselling, ensuring more carers receive the help they need.

We are deeply grateful to our corporate partners for their generosity, collaboration, and shared commitment to our mission. Their support enables us to strengthen existing programs, develop new initiatives, and extend our reach to more families across Australia.

If your organisation is interested in partnering with EDFA to create meaningful social impact, we would welcome the opportunity to start a conversation, so please contact us today!

Volunteer with EDFA

EDFA offers a range of rewarding volunteer opportunities for people who want to make a meaningful difference. By sharing your skills, experience and passion, you can help support families and carers impacted by an eating disorder while becoming part of a dedicated national community.

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Eating Disorders Families Australia



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