



Expanding Ideas; Creating Change

Annual Report 2024 - 2025



IN MEMORIAM

In January 2025, CRU staff member, Kathleen Fleming, passed away following a short illness.

Kath worked at CRU as a part time administration assistant since 2007 and was CRU's longest serving current employee. As part of the admin team, she assisted with event preparation and helped to keep the office running. She faithfully provided valuable administration support to CRU over many organisational changes, working at three different office locations and under four different Directors/CEOs. Kath presented for CRU with her mother Gayle, generously sharing her story to inspire others - talking about her art, her work, and her life as part of CRU's NDIS participant readiness work.

Kath was a talented and expressive artist, who had exhibited her work and contributed to community art projects. Kath's art decorated CRU conference banners, thank you cards and the CRU office. Receiving a piece of Kath's artwork as a gift was highly coveted, though any gift from Kath was always creative and thoughtful and treasured by the recipient.

Kath faced significant challenges in life but was an incredibly strong and resilient woman. She was fun, an enthusiastic dancer, karaoke singer and performer who was always up for a celebration. Kath brought an open and authentic presence, a warm and caring heart, much joy and laughter, and genuine concern for her colleagues. She was a leader and role model in what it takes to pursue a good life and how to persist through challenge. She was so loved by her family, friends, and CRU colleagues.

The impact of Kath's life on past and present CRU team members and her legacy within CRU cannot be overstated. She is and will remain greatly missed.



Acknowledgement of Country



We acknowledge the traditional owners of all the lands on which we meet, work and live and recognise this land always was and always will be Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander land.

We recognise the significant contributions of First Nations people, their continuing connection to land, water, and community. We seek relationships based on recognition, reconciliation and justice and pay our respects to elders past and present.

Governance and Management of CRU

The direction and management of Community Resource Unit is vested in the Board of Directors that is elected annually. The implementation of CRU programs is the responsibility of the CEO and the staff team.

Board

Josey McMahon, Chairperson
Matt Stone, Secretary & Finance Chair
Jim Haywood (until March 2025)
Karin Swift
Leanne Burke (from Nov 2024)
Kelly Harrison (from Nov 2024)
Jo Walters (from Nov 2024 to March 2025)

Stewardship Group

Leanne Burke (until Nov 2024)
Lyn Farrell
Hazel Lloyd
Bobby Noone
Pam Spelling
Tony Swords

Strategic Goals 2024-2025

1. Improve CRU's sustainability through increased funding from a wider variety of sources.
2. Expand CRU's Fee for Service work to generate a stable independent income for CRU while building momentum towards our Vision.
3. Expand CRU's reach, visibility and influence.
4. Deliver a high-quality program of projects and events which further CRU's vision.
5. Sustain a strong, clear, committed and consistent team including staff, Board and membership.

CRU Vision and Mission

our vision

full and meaningful lives for people living with disability.

our mission

we inspire, challenge and equip people to embrace ideas, to take action and to build a movement for change.

This Annual Report covers our activities and performance
for the period 1 July 2024 to 30 June 2025

Staff

CEO, Margaret Rodgers

Facilitators

Gina Barwell (until Aug 2024)
Lindie Brengman
Sonja Elliott (until Dec 2024)
Meegan Hardaker
Catherine Laherty
Danielle Mason
Chelsea Nickels (until Jul 2024)
Kyla Ranger (until Aug '24, from Feb '25)
Ainsley Robertson
Sabrina Stokes (from June 2024)

Administration

Kim Jensen (until Mar 2025)
Kathleen Fleming (until Jan 2025)
Tracey Foley
Jessica Rodgers
Emily Thompson

Finance

Trudy Ganderton
Jen Upton

Casuals & Contractors

Rebecca Altaffer (from Oct 2024)
Sharon Bourke
Sue Duncan-Kemp
Katrina Dunks (from Sept 2024)
Nellie Godwin-Welch (Oct '24-May '25)
Shalee Gregson-Quinn
Diana Kerr
Bronwyn Moloney
Trish Murdoch
Jo Walters

Presenters

Robyn Adams
John Armstrong*
Bruce Bonyhady*
Lisa Bridle*
Aaron Brown*
Lyla Brown**
Renee Brown*
Michelle Browning
Leanne Burke*
John Chesterman
Jenny Crosbie
Luke Cowan**
Mark Edmonds
Ricky Esterquest
Bec Feldman**
Katrina Fredberg
Ann Greer*
Dan Habib*
Samuel Habib**
Lorna Hallahan**
Jess Healy**
Tracey Healy*
Jill Hole*
Katie Hodges
Dr Robert Jackson
Hazel Lloyd*
Taylor Lloyd**
Thomas Mayo
Fiona McIntosh*
Rodney Mills**
Bronwyn Moloney
Helen Neale*
Jenni Pidgeon*
Rohan Pidgeon**
Rodolf Poinsonnet*
Dan Read**
Deb Rouget
Jane Sherwin
Jenny Smith
Joyce-Lyn Smith
Dale Speed**
Anita Speed*
Matt Stone
Milton Tyree
Casey van den Brink**
Roschelle van den Brink*
Bridget Wickert

*Family member

**Person with disability

Director's Report

On behalf of CRU, it is my absolute pleasure to welcome you here today, those present and those of you who are connecting online; and to report to you, members and friends, on the work of the CRU Board for the year 2024 – 2025. It has been another big year for CRU.

I would like to begin by acknowledging the traditional custodians of the land on which we meet today. I pay my respects to both the Jagera people and the Turrbal people and their Elders, past, present and emerging. They hold the hopes, dreams, traditions and culture of Aboriginal Australia.

I also would like to dedicate this report to Kathleen Fleming who sadly passed on very suddenly in early 2025. This was indeed very sad news to hear. Kathleen had been a member of the administration team for seventeen years. Kathleen, you have been missed.

I will now speak very generally about the accomplishments and the challenges of the year and leave CRU's CEO, Lisa Bridle, to speak in more detail about the work of CRU. Matt will speak to the Financial Report.

The Board and team at CRU are still holding onto the Vision Statement, which was developed in 2022 for the following decade, to guide CRU and its work with people with disability, their family and supporters. While I recognised this was ambitious, upon reflection, it was braver than I had first grasped considering the external challenges which confront CRU and many organisations like CRU in the increasingly complex disability and NFP environment. We are not alone, and it is great that CRU has strong relationships with the five NACBO organisations and other local organisations. It would be exceedingly difficult to navigate the disability system alone.

We believe that having a strong vision and stated values for the organisation and for the work of CRU is the glue that holds us together when challenges come our way.

CRU's **Vision for Society** is that people with disability are valued and are living full and meaningful lives.

CRU'S **Organisational Vision** is for 'a vibrant change movement that ignites, challenges and equips people to embrace ideas and take action to build inclusive communities.'

CRU's values of inclusion, diversity, relationships, courage, creativity, wisdom and choice remain at the heart of the day-to-day work and the work of the Board of Directors. The values guide the way in which CRU carries out its work with people with disability and their families. It is the Vision and Values that keep CRU grounded in its day-to-day work and the decisions made at Board level.

Inclusion: We believe people living with disability are active and valued contributors to family, community, and economic life, which benefits everyone.

Diversity: We celebrate that people have equal worth and respect each person's different culture, life choices, abilities, preferences, and aspirations. We are better together.

Relationships: We believe we are not isolated individuals and that people living with disability are entitled to opportunities to engage in the same range of personalised relationships as anyone else.

Courage: We hold firm to our vision and support others to do so, even when that is not popular.

Creativity: We encourage people to dream of and create what could be, not be limited by what is.

Wisdom: We know that solutions to issues for people living with disability are not simple and require careful thought, research, leadership, and action.

Choice: We nurture and encourage practices which enable people living with disability to discern genuine, valued options and support them to make informed decisions.

Strategic planning took place in early 2025 with Jon Eastgate as facilitator. Jon has travelled the journey with CRU for several years now and has a skill of challenging us to reflect on the year past, identify gaps, and set goals for the coming year both in our core work with people with disability and their families, and at board level. This at times stretches us in our thinking and encourages us to be creative when setting priorities. This year the Board joined with the Leadership Team to develop the Strategic Plan. This brought a richness and greater clarity as we had the opportunity to listen to the team who are doing the work at the grassroots level.

From the Strategic Planning Day, the following goals were devised:

1. Ensure CRU's sustainability through maintaining and nurturing existing funding sources while being open to select new opportunities.
2. Invest in CRU's Fee for Service work to generate a stable independent income for CRU's core functions.
3. Ensure a high-quality program of projects and events are available to a broad audience.
4. Sustain a knowledgeable, clear, committed, and consistent team including staff, Board, and membership.

This year we also developed targets for CRU which include.

1. People with disability trust CRU to advocate, include and listen to them.
2. Families trust CRU to provide information, advice and listen to them.
3. Workers express confidence in CRU's resources.
4. We listen deeply to the insights of people who are at the heart of our work.
5. We operate from the place that is well known and welcoming. We are confident in the sustainability of our core funding model.
6. Possible partners come to us with a strong desire to work with us.
7. Our data contributes to the story of inclusiveness and well-being in Australia.

CRU receives funding from various sources at federal and state levels and from our fee for service work – all of which have different demands with funding timelines and acquittal processes. Funding continues to be a challenging issue for CRU due to the complexities in dealing with the funding

sources, where things appear to be much more ad hoc and unpredictable as to when funding rounds will occur. CRU may hear of approvals, however when we receive the money can be another story. Work plans need to be submitted to funding bodies, and these can be held up for extraordinary amounts of time waiting on agreements from funding bodies. This can impact the contracts CRU has with individual staff members.

Relationships are important in the work CRU does and in the way we work. In times past CRU would have had a strong relationship with the funding body who knew the work of CRU and the positive impact of the work being carried out, however this knowledge of CRU's work and these relationships are more difficult to establish. We can also experience a lack of meaningful feedback on our submissions and funding outcomes. CRU has concerns about trends which might preference content free management and preferences to fund larger organisations for "scale" rather than organisations which bring depth, quality, and relationships over time. These challenges continue to be ones we must take seriously. I will leave the detail of the funding streams to be reported on in the financial report.

CRU continues to work on projects for Fee for Service – the main one being Crucial Training Options (CTO) which is a joint venture with Staffing Options. Despite this project taking more resources than anticipated in getting it established it has been a pleasure to work alongside Staffing Options, and we are grateful for the support provided to CRU. We can report that the end of 2024 saw our first graduates. The graduating students would recommend completing the Cert 3 in Disability through CTO given the depth of wisdom, knowledge, skill, and evidence-based learning. Students found it a very practical course and were able to put into practice their learnings as they completed the course.

As Chairperson of CRU, I continued to participate in NACBO (National Alliance of Capacity Building Organisations) meetings. Meetings continued to be held in Melbourne. This alliance has been going now for 10 years and our membership to this group has not only strengthened the work of CRU but has provided an avenue where both CEOs and Chairpersons can come together to discuss pertinent issues that impact our organisations.

The Board of Directors continued the practice of having on-line monthly board meetings with one meeting a quarter being held face to face. On-line board meetings provided the opportunity to attract people from the regions as opposed to having Brisbane based board directors. The Directors voted to the Board at the last AGM were Matt Stone, Leanne Burke, Kelly Harrison, Jim Hayward, Karin Swift, Jo Walters and Josey McMahon. Unfortunately, both Jim and Jo resigned earlier in year due to personal demands. Matt took on the responsibilities of both chairing the Finance and Business Development Sub-committee and the Secretary role.

Due to the challenge of taking minutes and wanting all Board members to fully contribute and engage in discussions at Board meetings we deliberated on creating a role for a minute secretary. This has now been instigated, and Clair Sykes was appointed to this role to commence in the 2025-26 year and we look forward to working with Clair. I would like to take this opportunity to thank those who have served on the Board during the past year - Matt, Karin, Leanne, Kelly, Jim and Jo who have remained and done the hard yards. Your unwavering support to CRU is greatly appreciated.

The Board continued with the two sub-committees - Finance and Business Development and the Quality and Risk. Both of these sub-committees play a vital role in the work of CRU and how it conducts its business. The sub-committees provide an opportunity for board and staff members to work together. I am continually impressed with the wisdom, skills, knowledge and expertise that people bring to these meetings. Many thanks to Danielle, Marg, Leanne, Kim and Trudy who were on

Quality and Risk sub-committee. Trudy joined this committee after the resignation of Kim. I would also like to say thanks to Matt, Karin, Marg and Trudy who were on the Finance and Development sub-committee. Your time and commitment are greatly appreciated.

The Stewardship Group, which was established in 2013, continued to provide the much-needed wisdom and guidance to the CEO and Board of Directors during such times of complexities and turbulence. This group met twice during the reporting period. I would like to thank all of the Board and CEO as well as Tony Swords, Lyn Farrell, Bobby Noone, Hazel Lloyd and Pam Spelling for your contribution to CRU. We appreciate the time you give and your wisdom and considered conversation when we meet. Many members have lived experience of disability whether as a person with disability or family member and all of you have worked in a sector that often limits the lives of people with disability. You have a sound understanding and appreciation of the difficulties and challenges facing people with disability in their attempts to live meaningful, fulfilling, inclusive and rich lives. We also trust what you bring to the table and know that you are strong supporters of CRU.

One of the big challenges for the Board was when we heard the news that long-term CEO, Margaret Rodgers, was tendering her resignation. This news wasn't entirely new for me as Marg had mentioned this to me some 18 months or so before. Once we got over the initial shock, we immediately went into planning mode for a new CEO. This gave us an opportunity to stop, take a breath, reflect and think through what CRU needed at this crucial time in terms of skill, knowledge, commitment, experience and wisdom. All board members were involved in some aspect of the recruitment process, whether it was reviewing and developing a new job description with KPI's, short-listing and then interviewing. The calibre of a number of applicants was high and so the difficult task was discerning who was the right person for the CEO position at this time.

There were tears at Marg's departure and I'm sure there was much concern as to what may happen to CRU at her leaving. Many people were asking 'Is everything alright'; and personally asking Marg why she was leaving. Marg felt that it was the right time for her to leave and believed that CRU would be in 'safe keeping'. Thank-you Marg for the faith and trust that you had in the Board and staff team. Marg, many thanks for your hard work, your contribution in so many ways, your commitment, your skill and wisdom in guiding CRU for the sixteen years of your tenure at CRU. Best wishes for your future endeavours. We know that you will not be far away!

There was much relief and elation when we announced that we had chosen Lisa Bridle for the CEO position. Lisa is not new to CRU and has been here twice before. Lisa, welcome back. The Board and staff team look forward to working with you.

This year saw three long term people leave CRU. On visits their faces were always familiar and welcoming. As well as Marg and Kath's departures from CRU, Kim who had been at CRU for fourteen years also moved on to pursue some of her other interests. Kim made an exceptional contribution to CRU's operations and team culture during her long-term service. We also wish her well.

Despite the challenges facing CRU during the past year there have been many highlights. One of which was the two-day gathering held in March 2025. The stories told were ever so inspiring and it is these stories that pave the way for new thinking in the minds of people who attend such CRU events. I always come away from a CRU event with more questions than answers, which I'm told is a 'good thing'. There was such a buzz and excitement in the room. Occasions like these help remind us how important the work of CRU is and the difference that is made in the lives of people with disability when they have workers/supporters who have an intentionality about their work. I look forward to more of these wonderful occasions.

In closing, thank you to Marg and the staff team who worked at CRU during the 2024 – 2025 year. You are a committed group of people who work tirelessly to make a difference in the lives of people with disability and their families. I know this is not just about getting a pay packet at the end of the fortnight. The Board of Directors are proud of the work that you do. This year I have had the opportunity of participating in workshops with some of you and it has been a privilege to be with you either as presenters or participants in the workshops.

Many thanks to the Board of Directors – Matt, Leanne, Karin and Kelly. I know that you are also committed to CRU and work tirelessly without expecting anything in return. You just want the best for CRU and the people whose lives are touched through the work of CRU. Karin is stepping down but has decided to join the Stewardship Group which we were delighted to hear that she wasn't leaving CRU altogether. A very wise decision Karin. We are sorry to hear that Kelly will not be re-joining the Board due to personal commitments. We understand that at times life gets in the way of you doing the things that you'd like to do. We appreciate the time that you have given to CRU this year. Your wisdom and thoughtful contributions have been greatly appreciated. Best wishes in your future endeavours and I also have a sense that you will not be too far away and will be back in the future.

Finally, but not least thank you to the members and allies who support CRU. The Board of Directors appreciate your support and the time and contributions that you provide to CRU in many different ways. Thank you for your time today as I know that you are all very busy people. I look forward to seeing you at a CRU event sometime in the future and don't forget the difference that you also make to CRU.

You are all appreciated. Thank you.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'JM', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Josey McMahon
Chairperson 2024 – 2025

Finance Report

On behalf of the Board of Directors I report on the financial activities of CRU, and table the financial statements that represent the year end 30th June 2025.

During this financial year we maintained diversification of government funding across projects, as well as across federal and state government. Our revenue continues to be predominantly government grants; this year totalling \$1,930 858.00; with additional revenue from fee-for-service work, donations and interest.

CRU's grant revenue has increasingly become short-term.

You will recall CRU was unsuccessful in a federal funding grant round in May 2024. Many of you here, and other members and supporters, were quick to act in support of CRU. In early June 2024 CRU received notification there would be a one-year ad hoc continuation of the Information, Linkages and Capacity Building (ILC) funding of \$843,000. Not all organisations that lobbied the Government received additional funding and the Board are so grateful to everyone who took action.

Confirmation of this funding meant CRU did not have to reduce any staff positions, but it did have to reduce hours. Reduced hours for staff commenced early in the 2024 – 2025 financial year, with CRU closing on Mondays. The Board of Directors remain cognisant of the impact the reduction in hours has had on some staff. While some staff are returning to fulltime hours, the office remains closed on Mondays.

In April 2025 we received a 'letter of comfort' for our funders to extend this ad hoc grant for another 12 months to 30 June 2026.

When we received the letter of comfort, no deeds of variation were signed. A federal election was looming, which meant the funds were "at risk" if the government entered caretaker mode with the deeds unsigned. This was a time of serious decisions regarding staff contracts, possible redundancies, and what financial risk CRU would take-on to keep staff for 12 months if the funding did not eventuate. Thankfully the deed arrived in mid-June 2025. Again, the Board acknowledges the stress and uncertainty on the staff team during these difficult times.

Funding for the School to Work project, led by our NACBO partner Family Advocacy, was subject to the same funding situation with one-year ad hoc funding received in June 2024, and another 12-month extension provided to 30 June 2026.

Department of Education funding for the Families for Inclusive Education (FFIE) project received a 6-month extension to June 2025, with another 6-month extension granted in March 2025. This project is currently funded to December 2025.

Other funded projects include My Home My Way; our work with regional councils; and a new grant received in March 2025: Safeguarding Good Lives. Funding to continue the co-design work was awarded to QDN. CRU submitted an EOI to work with QDN and received funding in March 2025.

NACBO made a successful submission to the Centre of Excellence in Employment at Swinburne University.

We developed our 2025 FY budget and budget narrative in two six-monthly parts due to the level of uncertainty and the ad hoc nature of funding rounds. Our full year budget (July 2024 to June 2025) was tabled at a board meeting in late November 2024.

Budgeting, planning, recruitment and expense management have become more challenging due to uncertainty about project funding and duration.

The net result of our activities for the year is presented as a surplus on the financial statements for the year ended 30th June 2025 of \$228 664. The surplus is due to:

- Lower expenses on project deliverables
- Management of expenses when things seem so uncertain
- Delayed start dates for all three (3) main projects
- Staffing vacancies left open and delays to recruitment
- Complexities in balancing the requirements of the accounting standards with the requirements for the various contractual funding agreements.

The Finance & Business Development Subcommittee met eight (8) times during the 2024 -2025 financial year:

- July 2024
- August 2024
- September 2024
- November 2024 (two meetings that month)
- March 2025
- April 2025
- June 2025

Sincere thanks go to the Finance staff: Trudy Ganderton and Jen Upton and the CEO during last financial year, Margaret Rodgers. Thanks also to the Finance & Business development subcommittee members Marg, Trudy, Karin, Josey, and Raj Gohain (Advisor).

Thanks also to Jenny Fenner from Total Audit Services for the audited financial statements.



Matt Stone

Chair, Finance & Business Development Sub-committee 2024 – 2025

COMMUNITY RESOURCE UNIT LTD
STATEMENT OF PROFIT AND LOSS
YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2025

	Note	<u>2025</u> \$	<u>2024</u> \$
INCOME			
Revenue	2	2,151,544	2,298,996
TOTAL INCOME	1(f)	<u>2,151,544</u>	<u>2,298,996</u>
EXPENDITURE			
Cost of Sales	5	3,455	5,362
GROSS PROFIT		<u>2,148,089</u>	<u>2,293,635</u>
Administration Costs	4	134,253	134,383
Amortisation Expense		120,133	130,656
Bad Debts		1,145	1,155
Deliverables		270,255	223,900
Depreciation		6,530	14,734
Employee Benefits Expenses		1,325,589	1,638,162
Motor Vehicle Expense		-	1,885
Interest Expense		9,278	7,809
Other Expenses		30,849	39,063
Occupancy Expenses		21,392	11,693
Share in loss in Crucial Training Options Pty Ltd		-	26,964
TOTAL EXPENDITURE		<u>1,919,425</u>	<u>2,230,404</u>
SURPLUS BEFORE INCOME TAX		228,664	63,231
Income tax expense	1(b)	-	-
SURPLUS AFTER INCOME TAX		<u>228,664</u>	<u>63,231</u>

COMMUNITY RESOURCE UNIT LTD
STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION
AS AT 30 JUNE 2025

	Note	<u>2025</u> \$	<u>2024</u> \$
ASSETS			
CURRENT ASSETS			
Cash Assets	6	1,375,521	643,788
Trade Debtors		7,356	83,614
Inventory		5,907	8,403
Other assets		16,677	13,470
TOTAL CURRENT ASSETS		<u>1,405,461</u>	<u>749,275</u>
NON-CURRENT ASSETS			
Investment - Crucial Training Options	7	-	-
Plant and equipment	8	766	7,296
Right of Use Assets	8	391,854	120,133
TOTAL NON-CURRENT ASSETS		<u>392,620</u>	<u>127,429</u>
<u>TOTAL ASSETS</u>		<u><u>1,798,081</u></u>	<u><u>876,704</u></u>
LIABILITIES			
CURRENT LIABILITIES			
Trade and other payables	9	610,570	170,296
Provisions	10	167,177	187,653
Lease Liability	11	121,021	118,939
TOTAL CURRENT LIABILITIES		<u>898,768</u>	<u>476,888</u>
NON-CURRENT LIABILITIES			
Provisions	10	-	-
Lease Liability	11	270,833	-
TOTAL NON-CURRENT LIABILITIES		<u>270,833</u>	<u>-</u>
<u>TOTAL LIABILITIES</u>		<u><u>1,169,601</u></u>	<u><u>476,888</u></u>
NET ASSETS		<u><u>628,480</u></u>	<u><u>399,816</u></u>
MEMBERS' FUNDS			
Accumulated surplus brought forward		160,054	96,824
Capital Reserve		236,029	236,029
Reserves		3,733	3,733
Surplus/(Loss) for the year		228,664	63,231
TOTAL MEMBERS' FUNDS		<u><u>628,480</u></u>	<u><u>399,816</u></u>

CEO Report

Introduction

Our mission remains as relevant and critical as ever:

To inspire, challenge and equip people to embrace ideas, to take action and build a movement for change so that people with disabilities will have full and meaningful lives.

The start of the 2024-2025 year marked the beginning of another busy and uncertain year for CRU. While grateful to have received ad-hoc funding to cover another year of our core work, it did not bring an end to the uncertainty and confusion that had so marked the previous year. One year funding grants bring their own difficulties such as recruiting to fill vacancies, operating understaffed, wasting disproportionate amounts of time on strategic and operational planning and replanning, budgeting, lease negotiations etc. In the 2024-2025 year we also sought legal advice on redrafting staff contracts to ensure that both staff and the organisation were well covered for worst case scenarios.

While difficult, recruitment was essential and so a limited recruitment round was conducted in August 2024, and Rebecca, Katrina, and Nellie joined us as contractors. Over time we were able to offer them more secure working arrangements. In May 2025 we ran an open recruitment round for a one-year maximum term contract and through that brought in Dianne, Deb and Sabrina in part-time roles. Throughout the duration of this report, CRU opened the office four days per week to ensure that our limited resources and part-time workforce were not stretched too thin.

For CRU, the amount of funding for the 2024 and 2025 years was not as much the problem as the uncertainty, the short and unpredictable timelines, the long delays in announcements, and the lack of flexibility in how we use the funding we do receive.

It is important to acknowledge the commitment and generosity of the staff during the year. Some staff worked reduced hours and therefore on reduced income. When the ability to recruit was constrained by uncertainty and very short timelines, there were significant impacts on the remaining staff. The CRU team graciously rose to the challenge to ensure all commitments were met. The members of the leadership team deserve particular acknowledgement for leading the induction of the new staff in the ways of CRU. CRU was grateful for the generosity of Catherine and Danielle, who took on the additional responsibility of sharing the CEO role for seven weeks over the summer, allowing Marg to take a long and rejuvenating holiday.

This report will cover the five goals set by the Board of Directors in late 2022.

1. Improve CRU's sustainability through increased funding from a wider variety of sources

Government funding

Across the year, CRU was engaged in four Information, Linkages and Capacity Building funding grants (ILC), two individually and two as part of consortia. These are administered by the Federal

Department of Social Services. CRU was successful in a NDIA-administered Peer Support and Capacity Building grant. There was also one contract with Queensland Government.

The grants in 2024-2025 were as follows:

Scope of activity	Name of Project	CRU/ Partnership	Grant details
Information Provision	My Home, My Way	Consortia	DSS: Limited activity funded until June 2026.
Individual Capacity Building with broad scope	Information, Linkages and Capacity Building	CRU specific	DSS: Funded to June 2026.
Economic Participation	School to Work Project	Consortia	DSS: Funded to June 2026.
Inclusive Education	Families for Inclusive Education	CRU specific	Qld DoE: Funded to December 2025.
Social and Economic Participation	Inclusive Councils: Inclusive Communities.	CRU specific	DSS: Funded to June 2026.
Peer Support and Individual Capacity Building	Shaping Great Lives	CRU specific	NDIA: Funded to December 2026. Possible extension.

While this reflects an increased range of revenue streams compared to previous years, we note that a major challenge is that all those grants have been short term, even if conducted over many years. This short-term funding has been because of extensions rather than beginning with, for example, a 5-year funding term. CRU has certainly focussed this last 12 months on lobbying government both individually and collectively (through NACBO) for longer funding terms, which would provide both organisational certainty and efficiencies, as well as allowing more solid developmental approaches.

2. Expand CRU's Fee for Service work to generate a stable independent income for CRU while building momentum towards our Vision

CRU has continued to develop our fee for service arm, with the long-term vision to fund the core functions of CRU and therefore reduce our dependence on government funding. Based on the same values and priorities of CRU, this work complements what CRU offers and is described later.

Our work to resource and support paid workers does not currently receive government funding but is offered by CRU on a fee for service basis. Indeed, the focus of the fee for service arm of CRU has been on developing and delivering initiatives to resource paid workers.

This year, Crucial Training Options (CTO), the RTO developed in partnership with Staffing Options, continued to offer the Certificate III in Individualised Support (Disability), First Aid and CPR.

Across the year we continued trying to navigate and establish ourselves in a new sector, which involved lobbying, meetings and many conversations. This also included the submission of a funding proposal directly to the Minister, which was favourably received, however unsuccessful. Operating on a fee for service basis and competing against free TAFE and highly subsidised training providers has been challenging, so CTO worked towards meeting the criteria to apply for Qld Government funding that would allow us to offer subsidised places in the Certificate III in Individual Support.

We were relieved to pass a critical audit in late 2023, achieving registration for seven years. While then eligible to apply for Queensland Government subsidy, the pathways were closed until late 2024.

In early 2025 we heard our application and appeal were unsuccessful due to the small number of CTO graduates. In a bid to grow enrolments and be better prepared for future funding rounds, early in 2025, CTO announced a reduction in course length and price which successfully brought a group of new students to start with CTO at the end of May. We have had eleven new enrolments in the year. The students have made excellent progress, and we receive consistent positive feedback about the course.

Understanding that our point of difference was the training needs of self-managers and small to medium-sized organisations, we also convened an industry reference group which met twice during the year.

CRU acknowledges Carol Brosi from Staffing Options who has been a wonderful partner, as well as thanking Danielle Mason and Kendall Bridges – the ‘behind the scenes’ team that keeps CTO running. I also want to thank our terrific trainers: Debbie Goninon, Diana Kerr, Jessica Le Lievre, and David Lemalu (as well as Carol & Danielle who also deliver training with CTO).

3. Expand CRU’s reach, visibility, and influence

The CRU team are involved in a number of ongoing partnerships:

The National Alliance of Capacity Building Organisations (NACBO) has been operating for ten years; NACBO continues to be a pivotal vehicle for collaboration and for safeguarding values-based change and leadership work with people and their families, particularly in these times of upheaval. The group met face to face in November 2024 and in February and June 2025, with regular meetings online.

During this year, NACBO built on the NACBO Evaluation report by the Social Policy Research Centre to develop a paper on Foundational Supports, and NACBO’s model. This attempts to capture the essential elements of effective capacity building and the distinctive approaches NACBO member organisations have adopted. We are aware that in times of “reform”, there are risks that funders may not understand the critical infrastructure that organisations like CRU have provided to the sector, let alone the life changing impacts of our work on people and families.

NACBO also developed a partnership with the Centre for Inclusive Employment and is represented on the Centre’s Advisory Committee by Cecile Sullivan Elder from Family Advocacy. NACBO’s role in the Centre is to contribute to projects in relation to family and supporters, to keep a focus on people with higher support needs and to contribute our expertise on transitions (including School to Work).

CRU remains a member of the International Initiative for Disability Leadership (IIDL), now Global Leadership Exchange.

In August 2024, CRU was invited to be on the advisory group of the Knowledge Exchange Hub (KEH) Advisory Group for the National Centre of Excellence in Intellectual Disability Health. Lindie is representing CRU in this group.

CRU is a member of the Australian Coalition for Inclusive Education (ACIE), convened by Children and Young People with Disability Australia (CYDA). CRU has continued as a member of ACIE’s steering committee, Ainsley is CRU’s representative. In this reporting period notable contributions by CRU include:

- Contributing to the content of ACIE’s ‘Therapy Supports for Children in Schools’ position paper.
- Contributing to the drafting of ACIE’s website ‘Resources’ page (yet to be finalised).
- Endorsing of an ACIE statement calling for a national roadmap on inclusive education.

CRU has continued to support and promote Social Role Valorisation (SRV) as a foundational framework. Two CRU team members achieved accreditation as SRV teachers in late 2024; we offered 2-day training for people with disabilities and their families this year; and provided some practical support to the local group Values in Action Association. We meet annually with the Australian SRV Association.

As a small organisation we are always concerned about how visible we are. Throughout the year, an internal working group has focused on improving our communications with those currently engaged, increasing our reach and improving our processes. We held stalls at the Aspley Special School expo and provided resources for the conference of the Isolated Children's Parents' organisation.



Photos from CRU 2-day event Building Capacity for Lifelong Inclusion. Top left: registration and resource tables. Top right: Bruce Bonyhady presentation. Bottom left: Ainsley Robertson introduces Samuel and Dan Habib. Bottom right: Staff group photo.

Our two-day conference, Building Capacity for Lifelong Inclusion (BCLI) attracted people from across Queensland and other states and territories, helping to strengthen collaboration and networks. CRU's profile was raised through this event, assisted by high-profile presenters included Emmy-winning documentary makers Dan and Samuel Habib; Bruce Bonyhady, Chair of the NDIS Review; Lorna Hallahan of the NDIS Independent Advisory Council; and recognised leaders in their fields Thomas Mayo; Queensland Public Advocate John Chesterman; Michelle Browning and Jenny Crosbie.

This year we had a steady increase in Facebook followers to 4800 and increased our use of Instagram and LinkedIn. Email remains our strongest medium with over 7000 individuals and 750 organisations receiving emails from CRU.

We participated in a range of consultations and meetings:

- Back to Work TAFE program meeting regarding having CRU deliver training to students.
- Carers Qld – Community LACs provide services to Councils in their service region. Discussed overlaps and opportunities for collaboration.
- CheckUP - Workforce needs in the disability sector meeting.
- Community Living Project meeting at CRU, May 2025.
- Conversation with Isolated Children's Parents' Association.
- The Growing Space meeting regarding changes to NDIS rules.
- Optimal Individual Service Design (OISD) international steering group meetings.
- Outback Independent Living (OIL) – a peak body for people with disability in Central West and Outback Qld. Discussed opportunities to collaborate.
- National Disability Research Partnership (NDRP) meeting.
- QCIE Strategic Planning Feb 2025.
- Redcliffe Hospital and Hummingbird House regarding inclusive education for families (July).
- Review of SRV training with AMPARO Advocacy to ensure examples are culturally appropriate.
- UQ research interviews (commissioned by Qld Dept of Education). Contributing to 'Quality Systems and Practices for Behaviour' – development of two self-assessment inventories for state schools to address discipline inequity for students with disability and other marginalised groups.

We gave presentations to:

- Imagine More
- Longreach radio
- North Coast region AVT network meeting
- International SRV Conference, Halifax Canada
- Values in Action Association (ViAA)
- Qld Advocacy for Inclusion (QAI)
- Queenslanders with Disability Network (QDN)
- Queensland University of Technology (QUT)
- 4ZZZ Community Radio Brisbane

Evaluating our Work

In addition to event feedback forms, CRU has sought feedback in other ways:

- 99 Consulting has been engaged by the School to Work consortia to evaluate the initiative. By tracking the impact of the project over time, the evaluation has shown the benefit of the strategy, as more respondents either had work or had made positive steps towards getting work.
- 99 Consulting is completing an external evaluation of the Inclusive Councils, Inclusive Communities project. The first-year evaluation showed that the initiative has led to council staff and community members taking observable actions to welcome and include people with disability better.
- Suzanne Carrington evaluation of Families for Inclusive Education project including interviews and data review (completed late 2024).

We have maintained our accreditation under ISO 2015.

4. Deliver a high-quality program of projects and events which further CRU's vision

Inclusive Education

Our main strategy to further Inclusive Education continued to be the Families for Inclusive Education project funded by the Qld Dept of Education. This involved the delivery of workshops across the state; peer network development; webinars and development and provision of resources to build the capacity of families to advocate for, nurture, and sustain their child's successful participation in inclusive education.

Resources developed this year included a 'Vox Pop' form of video, capturing the opinions of 23 individuals, including students with disability, their parents, teachers and professionals, on 'Why Inclusive Education Matters'.

A fact sheet in the more accessible format of Plain English was developed to add to the bank of inclusive education factsheets available to families and community members. A 'Transition to Secondary School' booklet was produced to address barriers for families navigating transitions from primary to inclusive secondary school settings. I want to thank the facilitators Lindie and Ainsley, with assistance from Shalee and Katrina, and support by Jess and Kyla. Unfortunately, the delivery of regional workshops to school personnel has not been continued due to constraints around the Department's new in-house professional development initiative. The team worked hard to invest in family leadership through the Inclusive Education peer support training which was held in conjunction with the BCLI in Brisbane in March 2025; and we continue to connect with and resource these family leaders online and while visiting their regions to deliver workshops.

Finding a job

This year, CRU resourced people on finding or creating employment primarily through the School to Work initiative. This project aims to support high school students with disability and their families to engage with employment. CRU has offered webinars and workshops to resource students and their families, as well as a number of peer working groups to help families bring their ideas to reality.

We met with interstate consortia partners, Resourcing Inclusive Communities (NSW) and Imagine More (ACT) in Sydney twice during the year to share ideas and resources. I want to thank Gina Barwell and Sonja Elliott for their work on this project prior to their resignations, and more recently, thank-you to Nellie Godwin-Welch and Katrina Dunks.

In addition to School to Work, this year CRU has also offered a well-received face-to-face workshop on employment for jobseekers of all ages.

Other activities included:

- A conference workshop on Customised Employment, developed and presented by Imagine More and Resourcing Inclusive Communities.
- A conference workshop of stories of employment featuring people with disability and their families from regional Queensland, South Australia and Brisbane, and academic Jenny Crosbie.
- Inclusive employment resource webpage on the CRU website.
- Updated employment factsheets were translated into Vietnamese, Chinese and Arabic.
- Workshops for people with disability, their families and supporters in South East Queensland, Cairns, Charleville and Toowoomba.

- Workshop for year 11 students and their families at a special school in regional Qld (FFS).
- With our consortia partners, two online sessions with representatives from the NDIA on changes to the scheme relating to employment supports.
- Individual consultations around employment.
- A four-part series of short videos on Customised Employment with Milton Tyree.

A home of your own

CRU has continued its involvement in the My Home My Way project as part of a consortium with NACBO, led by Belonging Matters. We delivered the My Home, My Way workshop face to face and online. We continue to provide some individual consultations to families to assist them to take steps towards their family member living in a home of their own. One conference workshop on a Home of Your Own presented by Deb Rouget and Bec Feldman from Belonging Matters focused on assisting people to share their homes with housemates. A CRUcial Conversation brought people with disability and families together around facing the challenges of moving into home and finding a way forward.

Shaping great lives

To assist people to shape great lives we offered workshops on advocacy skills; supported decision making; understanding intellectual disability; responding well to challenging behaviour; connecting to community; and co-design training. These skills and frameworks are critical to ensure people are safely and deeply embedded in community.

We have tried to offer events that would appeal to people new to this sector and events that can deepen the understanding of people who have been journeying with us for a long time. The large, two-day event Building Capacity for Lifelong Inclusion in March brought together almost 300 people and allowed for deeper exploration on key topics through 11 workshops. This included supported decision making, sensory and movement differences and behaviour, friendships and relationships and respectful support. These workshops and the large plenary sessions gave a platform to 35 presenters, 10 of whom live with disability and 12 who were family members.

I thank Catherine for her strong lead as the majority of this work was funded through the capacity building project. Throughout the year, the talented team of Diana, Sonja, Tracey, Shalee, Dianne, Deb and Sabrina supported her.

Fee for service

CRU took on a broad range of projects and initiatives during the year on a fee for service basis for individuals and families as well as service providers and schools. Examples of this work include delivering training on employment, SRV, 'challenging behaviours', and planning. I thank Danielle and Megan for their flexibility as this work has shifted through the year.

The Getting to the Heart of What Matters workshop was offered by CRU 3 times, including twice online with 56 support workers attending. Five individuals and nine organisations also engaged CRU to provide training for their teams. Support workers were also resourced through a partnership with the TAFE Qld Back to Work Program, in which CRU designed and delivered short, accredited courses designed as an induction to disability support. These units of competency were delivered online to meet the needs of people living in regional parts of Qld.

In March 2022, CRU began an update of the Optimal Individual Service Design course which was developed by Michael Kendrick. CRU has had two roles, including convening an international

governance group to safeguard the delivery of the course in the future. The second role is to work with the governance group to update the presentation materials and make them accessible to a group of trainers. The updated OISD Course was trialled in Nova Scotia, Canada in late 2024, delivered by Lorna Sullivan and Janet Klees.

Inclusive Communities

As part of the *Inclusive Councils, Inclusive Communities* project, CRU delivered our workshop, 'Welcoming People Well' (disability awareness training) on 13 occasions across 6 different regional Local Government areas, reaching 123 council staff and community members. The project has been well received in these locations; our first-year evaluation showed that attendees have made modest, practical changes towards greater inclusion in their day-to-day lives as a result of attending. My thanks to the 'councils' team – Danielle Mason and Shalee Gregson-Quinn and the presenters: Sue Duncan-Kemp, Nellie Godwin-Welch, Bronwyn Moloney and Danial Read.

We also continued work with Logan City Council, delivering two workshops to council staff during the year. This work, which is evaluated by the Council has been very well received and I thank Sue Duncan-Kemp for her presentation of the workshops.

Local Government Area	Location	Number
Gladstone Reginal Council	Gladstone (1)	18
	Gladstone (2)	12
	Gladstone (3)	15
Banana Shire Council	Biloela (1)	18
	Biloela (2)	16
Longreach Regional Council	Longreach (1)	10
	Longreach (2)	1
Blackall-Tambo Regional Council	Blackall	11
	Tambo	2
Maranoa Regional Council	Roma (1)	5
	Roma (2)	5
Murweh Shire Council	Charleville	8
All areas	Online	2
	Total	123

Using Support Well

An important safeguard in this time of increased funding and resources is for people and their families to use their support well. We delivered workshops on this topic and invited Mark Edmonds from the NDIA to speak at an online session about changes to the NDIS Act. A number of the peer networks focused on this, and a conference workshop on Respectful Support explored this from both a smaller service perspective and service user perspective.

Leadership Development

CRU has still not been successful in securing dedicated funding for leadership development. We keep leadership development on the agenda through ensuring that there are opportunities for deeper challenges, conversation and learning alongside our more introductory events.

The CRU conference, Building Capacity for Lifelong Inclusion provided a platform for established and emerging leaders and an opportunity to both foster new connections and relationships and strengthen existing connections. Through this large event, CRU could offer several deeper events on a range of topics. Experienced presenters like Danial Read and Rodney Mills continued their influence and leadership, and first-time presenters like Taylor Lloyd, Jess Healy and Casey van den Brink stepped into this form of leadership. Plenary presentations deepened understanding of inclusion in school, higher education, community and work, of the risks of commodification of people with disability, and the barriers and enablers of significant social change, from the NDIS to recognition and justice for First Nations peoples.

CRU's Inclusive Education two-day peer gathering has been one initiative which has an intentional focus on leadership development and the customised employment working groups supported two small groups of families to learn together through monthly sessions. There were also opportunities for leaders to share their stories in webinars, workshops and publications. CRU hosted the international online premier of Rodney Mills' film, *Run Rodney Run*, followed by a live Q&A with Rodney. There were opportunities to contribute to thinking via focus groups on several topics and CRU was able to financially subsidise some travel and accommodation to assist the participation of regional people with disabilities and their families.

Following on from last year's work developing a Co-Design workshop, CRU has partnered with QDN as part of their Stakeholder Engagement and Co-Design Strategy, funded by the Department of Families, Seniors, Disability Services and Child Safety. CRU represents family members of people with disability on the Project Partners group and is delivering some capacity building Co-Design workshops for family members of people with disability. This work commenced in May 2025 and will continue until June 2026.

Given CRU's long history of leadership development, we grasp the small opportunities we can find but know that the funding gap of no designated leadership dollars does hamper what is possible and has implications for maintaining strong grassroots change.

How we worked – our strategies for change:

Through our work we want to provide people with disability, their families and supporters with information, both through workshops and resources. We are keen to provide opportunities for people to deepen their learning through individual conversations and connecting and linking with each other. CRU can assist with the development of people who go on to become leaders, resourcing others and creating change. This reflects the model designed, used and evaluated by NACBO.

Events

We delivered 82 events during the year with >3700 registrations. Please note this does not equate to 3700 individuals, as many people attend more than one event. Of these participants, 269 were people with disabilities; 1081 were family members and 995 were workers.

Of these events, 27 were online either as webinars or more interactive online workshops or conversations and 55 were face to face.

25 of the face-to-face events were held in Brisbane and 30 in regional Queensland.

We were able to visit the major coastal cities and regional centres at least once this year including Sunshine Coast, Gold Coast, Townsville, Gladstone and Cairns. CRU staff also visited regional centres including Longreach, Barcaldine, Quilpie, Charleville, Roma, Moranbah, Biloela, Blackall, Tambo, Ipswich and Toowoomba.

The fee for service events included a combination of:

- Open workshops advertised to our mailing list, including support worker training and Ann Greer's workshop on behaviour
- Requests from families and individuals to deliver training for small teams of support workers
- Requests from organisations to deliver a range of events including – training for support workers, training for council staff, SRV training for an organisation, workshops on employment for young people with disability and their family members, webinars for school professionals, training for council staff, and two large webinars for Mable on 'Understanding Challenging Behaviour' (for support workers) and Preparing for your NDIS Plan Review for people with disability and family members.

See table over page for more information on events and numbers of attendees.

We note that while many of our funded projects target people with disability and families, we had, for example, a high number of workers in the Families for Inclusive Education project due to a number of workshops specifically for school leaders (noted ** on the report).

Funding Stream or Event Event	Number of events	Online	Face to Face	Brisbane	Regional	Number of regos	Attendees People with disability	Attendees Family members	Attendees Workers
ICB	15	3	12	5	7	738	101	370	311*
Building Capacity for Lifelong Inclusion (event)	3	n/a	3	3	n/a	343	56	156	136
SGL	1	0	1	1	0	13	3	10	3
Families for Inclusive Education	18	6	12	4	8	702	13	256	148**
School to Work	11	8	3	3	0	309	22	167	118
Inclusive Councils, Inclusive Communities	12	1	11	0	11	133	0	4	129
My Home, My Way	2	1	1	1	0	56	9	29	16
Fee for Service – open events	4	2	2	2	0	95	1	5	90
Fee for Service by request – families	5	1	4	3	1	38	1	2	35
Fee for Service by request – organisations	11	5	6	3	3	1282	63	82	320
Totals	82	27	55	25	30	3709	269	1081	995

Resource development and distribution

CRU continued to strengthen its communications and resource sharing, ensuring that people with disabilities, families, allies, workers and supporters across Queensland and beyond could access high-quality information. Through video storytelling, online learning, written publications, websites and social media engagement, CRU has expanded its reach and following.

- We launched 7 new webpages hosting a collection of digital resources on the CRU website around Inclusive Employment, co-designed with people with disability and family members.
- We developed and released the *Why Inclusive Education Matters* video, an 8.5-minute film featuring students, parents, teachers, professionals, and people with disability sharing their perspectives on the importance of inclusive education.
- We developed 4 videos on Customised Employment featuring Milton Tyree exploring how families and support workers can assist people with disability to achieve meaningful employment through a Customised Employment approach.
- We filmed 16 presentations including key plenary speakers and covered 3 workshop sessions from *Building Capacity for Lifelong Inclusion 2-Day Event*.

The two websites play a key role in our communications and resource sharing. www.cru.org.au and thegoodlife.cru.org.au combined had approximately 4000 page views per month.

Online communities including Facebook, Instagram and LinkedIn have collectively grown by approximately 700 new followers with steady increases in page views and content reach analytics.

Efforts have also been made to ensure ongoing access and distribution of longstanding CRU resources such as the CRUcial Conversations Podcast which is now hosted on new streaming platforms and has seen an increase in listeners since.

Thank you to everyone who shared their stories and helped bring these resources and recordings to life. I thank Kyla and the admin team for taking a lead on this work. We would also like to thank Cinta Graves and Dan Holman for their behind-the-scenes work on our websites, and Brendon Donohue for his thoughtful guidance on accessibility.

Individual conversations and consultations

There were 256 requests for information during the year via phone calls, emails and visits to the CRU office, of these 121 were individual consultations conducted by the inclusive education team, with a range of other issues across the 145 other consultations. Some of the calls are short just seeking some information, while others welcome the opportunity to talk through their own situation at more depth. We have sought and secured funding to provide this, through two of our funded projects, for people who are not NDIS participants or who are agency-managed and we also offer it on a fee for service basis. Callers included teachers, professionals, workers, and friends.

Connecting and linking

CRU played a role in bringing people together. Sometimes this was through peer support strategies where people were linked in a semi-formal way, some facilitated by CRU and others started by CRU but now operating more independently. Apart from these semi-formal networks, CRU also continued to connect people in more individualised ways.

Reaching out

Across CRU we have tried to reach out to families and organisations in communities that are unlikely to just respond to a CRU event flyer. For example, we have offered individual consultations and follow up to families from CALD backgrounds and developed videos and fact sheets in Vietnamese, Chinese and Arabic, and worked to share these with local multicultural organisations.

I want to express a huge thank you to the people who worked within and alongside CRU to do this work. Some team members were engaged on projects, while others worked across the whole organisation, responding as needed to an ever-changing workplace. I want to thank all the staff (regardless of how they are engaged by CRU); those who are still with us and those who have left us during the year, for their careful thoughtful work, flexibility and commitment during the 2024/2025 year.

Photo of Kath, Marg and Kim.

Our funding situation meant that we faced more instability than other years and that was a contributing factor to the 5 staff resignations over the period. We thank all of those staff members who made an impactful contribution during their time at CRU and wish them well for the future.



The administration and finance team are less visible but no less critical to the work of CRU. Kim Jensen who had first worked at CRU in 2011 resigned in March 2025. Kim's commitment to CRU over so many years and her calm attention to detail and to ensuring workable CRU systems was outstanding. Kim was a gracious and loyal employee and colleague, and she led a spirit of hospitality and care within the admin team, even with a challenging workload. She has been missed.

It was difficult to imagine how she could be replaced, but we were lucky to have Trudy Ganderton step into an extended role of Finance and Office Manager which allowed for a seamless transition.

I want to thank Kim and Trudy their leadership of the Administration team and Em, Kath, Jess, and Tracey for their flexibility and responsiveness. I also want to thank Trudy and Jen for their commitment to CRU's finance operations.

I have not tried to list in this report the many people who worked with us this year – these are the people who join our steering groups, share their stories and experience, respond to our requests to support others, to trial and co-design and who promote our work. They are a critical part of what makes CRU work, and I want to thank them for their important contribution.

5. Sustain a strong, clear, committed, and consistent team including staff, Board and membership.

Training and Development

CRU gathered all the facilitators, including casuals and contractors together three times this year for a development day in the office. These days are an important time for sharing and learning and building relationships.

During the 2024-25 financial year, members of the team attended training and development including:

- The Illume online conference.
- First Aid, CPR, General Emergency, First Response Training and evacuation training. Staff also attended training on accessibility in design, copyright and NFP financial literacy.
- Training on the new transitional NDIS rules.
- Attendance at various workshops at CRU's Building Capacity for Lifelong Inclusion event.
- 8th International SRV Conference held in Nova Scotia in May 2025. CRU provided some support for one staff member and a person with disability to attend.

Throughout the year CRU has continued to invest in the development of the leadership and management group as a safeguard for succession. Jon Eastgate worked with the CEO, senior staff and the Board to design a workable, affordable, consistent structure and assist with the resulting changes to position descriptions, delegations etc. Kim Jensen, Catherine Laherty, Danielle Mason and Lindie Brengman make up the group with each taking greater responsibility for managing an area of work in CRU. We are fortunate to have more leaders than positions and others took up roles of facilitating consultant days, joining the Quality and Risk subcommittee and representing CRU in stakeholder groups.

In November, CRU participated in the Project Management Day of Service which was an opportunity for members of the leadership team to be involved in fruitful, evidence-based conversations on models of leadership and succession.

The Board

Apart from monthly Board meetings, the Directors of CRU are actively engaged in additional sub-committee work, stewardship group meetings, National Alliance meetings and planning. This is a very significant contribution of time and expertise that underpins CRU.

The Stewardship group met in November and June. This group, Leanne Burke, Lyn Farrell, Hazel Lloyd, Tony Swords, Bobby Noone and Pam Spelling bring great ideas and suggestions and provide ongoing support as a sounding board to the Directors and to me as CEO.

Staffing

As a small organisation, for many years we have relied on external contractors and professionals to assist CRU to function. Our model has been to have most of the team based in the CRU office and to have casual staff and contractors that we can call on to expand our work as needed. Until this year these casual staff were located in Southeast Qld and in driving distance of the CRU office. Shalee Gregson Quinn from Yeppoon joined our team early in the new year and has helped us understand what it takes to have staff based further afield. Since then, Beck Altaffer has stretched CRU's reach further as Beck works primarily from her home office in Cairns.

Due to being a small team, often juggling multiple projects and priorities, we are fortunate to have committed and reliable contacts that we trust to present CRU workshops and represent CRU, and I want to thank Bronwyn, Sue, Sharon, Trish, Diana, and Dan for their work on behalf of CRU. Another group of important people present their own material for CRU, and many have been doing this for some time. Ann Greer, John Armstrong, Rod Mills, Joyce-Lyn Smith, Jenny Smith, Milton Tyree and Jane Sherwin all presented workshops for us during the year.

Less visible are our contractors who develop and safeguard CRU behind the scenes and I want to thank Pauline Heaney, Jon Eastgate, Mark O'Reilly, Cinta Graves, Greg and the team at Greenfield IT, Elissa Farrow and Brendon Donohue.

Conclusion

While CRU's resilience was tested during this year, it has also been strengthened by the people that we meet, the change we see and the incredible privilege of being part of making inclusion real.

This report started with some of the organisational challenges that CRU is experiencing in a sector that is also very challenged. I want to ensure that that story does not overshadow the depth and breadth of the work that the CRU team carried out across Queensland in 2024-2025.

2024-2025 also needs to be remembered as the year that CRU:

- For the 10th consecutive year, travelled to regional towns in central and southwest Queensland as well as the larger coastal cities.
- Invested in co-design skills of 29 people so that the voice and experience of people with disabilities and their families is incorporated into new models
- Produced numerous high-quality resources – videos, booklets, fact sheets - that have been shared widely
- Captured the stories and wisdom of people with disabilities and their families
- And took the 'courageous' step of combining its potential leadership events to make one large event in March 2025 in Brisbane entitled 'Building our Capacity for Lifelong Inclusion'. 250 people from across Australia responded to our invitation to spend two days reflecting on the foundational topics of what inclusion in community means and what it takes. People told us that they left feeling stronger, inspired, more hopeful and appreciative of the opportunity to reflect and learn with allies and friends.

This was also the year that CRU's long-term CEO, Margaret Rodgers, notified the board of her intention to resign from CRU. While Marg did not leave CRU until end of July 2025, it is worth noting here the immense contribution which Marg made to CRU.

Marg was already a well-known and respected disability leader known for her strong relationships and exemplary vision and leadership skills when she re-joined CRU in 2009. Over the 16 years of her leadership, CRU grew its influence and navigated many uncertainties. Marg personally stood beside and supported many people with disability and their families to make significant change towards full and meaningful lives, and she was a significant force for collaboration and values-based leadership both nationally and internationally. Her legacy is deep and her mark on the culture, people and work of CRU is indelible. The movement for inclusive lives and inclusive communities is stronger for her vision, leadership and commitment.

In closing, CRU has much to celebrate in terms of the achievements of the past twelve months – not just surviving but excelling in relation to the sheer output of workshops, resources, peer support activities, rich conversations, and other change efforts.

Despite the threats and vulnerabilities, CRU has continued to produce not just "quantity" but high-quality work which continues to inspire, strengthen and send ripples into the world.

Our messages that every person has inherent value and dignity, belongs at the heart of our community, contributes to the world, and deserves recognition as an equal citizen are messages our world desperately needs. And our focus on assisting people, families and supporters to keep seeking a good inclusive life has not wavered.

The words of bell hooks remind us:

“To be truly visionary, we have to root our imagination in our concrete reality while simultaneously imagining possibilities beyond that reality”.

During these times when our concrete realities could shake us, we thank you for your support of CRU’s work, the Board and team, as we keep imagining and working determinedly towards a shared vision of full and meaningful lives for people with disability.

Together we are better.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Lisa Bridle". The script is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Lisa" and last name "Bridle" clearly distinguishable.

Lisa Bridle (CRU CEO)
31 October 2025

In preparing this, I acknowledge the support and input from outgoing CEO, Margaret Rodgers, and the 2024-2025 CRU Leadership team, Catherine, Danielle, and Lindie.



Expanding Ideas; Creating Change

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