Annual Report
2026

North Eastern
COMMUNITY HOSPITAL
AND AGED CARE

Contents

Vision, Mission and Values	3
Chairman's Report	4
CEO's Report	6
Financial Performance	8
Hospital – Clinical and Service Highlights	10
Aged Care – Care and Service Highlights	14
Staffing and Human Resources	20
Corporate Services	22
Allied Health	24
Visiting Specialists and Consultants	25
The Board	26
Committees	27
Social Media	27

Mission

North Eastern Community Hospital provides health and aged care services for our local community.

Investment in comprehensive sustainable healthcare services ensures we continue to achieve service excellence with highly skilled, professional and caring staff.

Values

Vision

“To be a premier provider of health care excellence to meet the evolving needs of our community”

Chairman's Report

It is with a mix of pride and reflection that I present my first report as Chairman of North Eastern Community Hospital and Aged Care (NECH). I take on the role following the retirement of Michael Auciello, who served the Board for 21 years, including 5 as Chairman.

Thanking Michael Auciello

Michael's contribution to NECH is difficult to summarise in a few short paragraphs. Across two decades of service, he guided the organisation through extraordinary change – from significant capital works and service reform, through to the challenges of a global pandemic and the financial pressures that have reshaped the health and aged care sector more broadly. As Chairman, Michael's steady hand and clear focus on both strategic direction and financial sustainability positioned NECH to enter this next chapter from a position of genuine strength, not simply survival.

Perhaps Michael's greatest legacy is the Board he leaves behind. His deliberate work to renew and diversify the Board's skillset – welcoming directors with deep expertise in asset management, law, finance and risk, and healthcare advisory – has left NECH with the governance capability it needs to navigate the years ahead. He also championed a more structured, evolved committee framework, laying the foundations for the Board's renewal and governance improvements that have continued into this year.

On behalf of the Board, the executive team, staff and volunteers, I extend our sincere thanks to Michael for his unwavering commitment to NECH and to our community.

Jack Snelling
Chairman

Board Changes

This year has seen further renewal of our Board membership. We farewelled Dr Cathy Reid and Melissa Oors-L'Estrange, both of whom gave generously of their time and expertise, and we thank them sincerely for their contribution to NECH's governance and strategic direction. In particular, over her nine years of tenure Dr Reid has stewarded clinical leadership, and as Chair of the Clinical Adverse Events and Medical Executive Advisory Committee has given significant commitment to ensuring our services meet the standards expected by our Visiting Medical Officers and their patients.

We were pleased to welcome Paul Flynn and Peter Mendo to the Board, bringing new perspectives and skills that further strengthen our collective capability. We were equally pleased to welcome back Julie-Anne Burgess, who has rejoined the Board, bringing with her valuable prior experience with NECH alongside fresh insight.

This ongoing cycle of renewal reflects a deliberate and considered approach to Board composition – ensuring we retain institutional knowledge while continuing to bring in the skills our organisation needs as the sector evolves. I thank all current and former Board members for their contribution to the stewardship of NECH.

Governance Improvements

Building on the reforms of recent years, the Board has continued to strengthen its governance structure, with the Governance Committee and Capital Investment Committee now well embedded. This year we have gone further, establishing additional committees to ensure the Board's oversight keeps pace with the expectations placed on NECH as an organisation.

Alongside this committee structure, the Board has moved to a more disciplined approach to strategic planning, ensuring our meetings and papers are focused on the long-term direction of the organisation, not solely on operational reporting. This shift allows the Board to spend its time where it adds the most value – setting direction, managing risk, and holding the executive to account.

Financial Performance

I am pleased to report a positive financial result in FY26. Revenue growth was underpinned by the expansion of our SA Health contract arrangements with both the Central Adelaide Local Health Network (CALHN) and the Northern Adelaide Local Health Network (NALHN), reflecting the strength of the relationships NECH has built with our public health partners. This growth was complemented by increased surgical and gastroenterology activity, and by strong, sustained occupancy across our aged care service.

This performance is a credit to the executive team and staff, whose work in a genuinely difficult operating environment for the sector continues to position NECH as a trusted and financially sustainable provider for our community.

Looking Ahead

NECH stands on strong foundations as we look to the year ahead. The Board's task now is to build on the governance and financial discipline established under Michael's leadership, while continuing to evolve to meet the challenges facing our sector – from workforce pressures through to the funding environment. I look forward to working closely with my fellow Board members and with CEO Cara Miller and her executive team, as we continue this journey together.

On behalf of the Board, I thank our staff, volunteers, Visiting Medical Officers, and the executive team for their dedication over the past year. I also thank my fellow Directors, both past and present, for their voluntary contribution to the stewardship of NECH.

CEO's Report

FY2025/26 has been a year of transformation, innovation and continued resilience at North Eastern Community Hospital and Aged Care (NECH). Across every area of the organisation we have committed to our reform agenda, deepened both our public and private health partnerships, invested in our people, and advanced our digital journey – all while remaining true to our mission of providing excellent health and aged care services for our local community.

Cara Miller
Chief Executive Officer

Investing in our Services

FY2025/26 has been a year of transformation, innovation and continued resilience at North Eastern Community Hospital and Aged Care (NECH). Across every area of the organisation we have committed to our reform agenda, deepened both our public and private health partnerships, invested in our people, and advanced our digital journey – all while remaining true to our mission of providing excellent health and aged care services for our local community.

Our investment highlights include:

- Installation of two new Stryker theatre camera stacks, a new pass-through CSSD steriliser ('Gorilla') and a new low-temperature steriliser ('Dragon'), replacing end-of-life equipment and providing ongoing assurance for surgical activity
- New anaesthetic machines installed in both gastroenterology procedure rooms, ending the practice of using second-hand systems passed down from theatre
- New kitchen combi-oven and Bratt pan, replacing ageing, frequently repaired equipment.

Equipment was not the only investment in our clinical spaces. Ageing carpet in our gastroenterology department was replaced with modern vinyl flooring, and in our aged care Campbell ward – where decades-old carpet had reached the point of no repair – we installed a commercial-grade, non-slip woodgrain floating floor. Over a thousand square metres of flooring were replaced across both projects over four weeks.

We also prioritised safety oversight, replacing our ageing CCTV systems across the hospital and aged care with a single, contemporary and secure platform covering all major internal and external public spaces. In response to consumer feedback on our signage, we also began an exterior signage upgrade, including a new LED pylon

sign on Lower North East Road to improve visibility and lift our profile as a local health and aged care provider. Approvals were finalised by the end of the financial year, with works due for completion by the end of the 2026 calendar year.

Since commencing this work in FY23, we have continued our commitment to systems that support efficiency and oversight. FY26 saw the introduction of two key platforms:

- DOX, our clinical records digitisation platform, went live on 13 April 2026 designed to reduce paper wastage, eliminate physical case note storage, and support compliance with My Health Record uploads
- Fydo, our patient administration system, links directly to our patient-facing admission portal, Personify Care.

Partnerships

NECH continues to work closely with our stakeholders to deliver on our mission, and our public health partnerships remain strong.

Our CPAC program, which supports transition-of-care patients on Glynde ward, grew to 26 beds this year, extending capacity to both CALHN and NALHN. NECH's location between the two networks creates real synergy in how we support the community.

The program also marked its second anniversary, having supported over 800 patients and freed up more than 21,000 bed days for the public health system. Our commitment to public general medical patients also grew, with a return to a 12-bed agreement with CALHN on Steele ward. Beyond ward-based support, NECH has also supported our public hospitals with surgical capacity, in our strength of gynaecology and orthopaedics.

Building our local reputation for private surgery remains a major focus, strengthened this year by the appointment of a Business Development Manager, Tracy Dietz. Tracy brings significant experience building relationships in healthcare, and has already helped onboard new orthopaedic, gynaecology, vascular and gastroenterology specialists. A key part of her role is connecting with our GP community to understand what services matter locally – reflected in well-attended GP lunches and in-house updates. Looking ahead, Tracy and the team will focus on building our surgeons' local profiles and bringing new clinical services to NECH.

Our people remain at the heart of everything we do, and this year we welcomed new roles including a Clinical Nurse Educator and a Procurement Manager – part of our ongoing commitment to building the capability we need to grow.

As CEO, I look for new ways to stay connected to the work happening across the organisation – much of which is not always visible. This year I began delivering a weekly video update for staff, sharing successes and keeping the team informed on our strategy and the challenges we are navigating together.

FY26 has been another year of growth and maturity for NECH, built on continued investment in our organisation and our people. Thank you to our staff, volunteers, Visiting Medical Officers, patients, residents and their families for your ongoing support. The year ahead holds real opportunity, and I look forward to continued success – and to meeting the challenges ahead with the same commitment.

Financial Performance

Sound financial stewardship remains central to NECH's operations, enabling continued investment in equipment and infrastructure in support of high-quality care for our community.

NECH recorded revenue of $41 million in FY26 (FY25: $39 million), an increase of 5.6%, driven by expanded SA Health contracts with CALHN and NALHN across both CPAC and acute medical beds, together with growth in gastroenterology and private surgical activity.

Expenditure grew at a more moderate 4.5% to $39 million (FY25: $37 million), primarily reflecting higher employee costs – continued discipline in managing operational expenditure meant cost growth remained below revenue growth for the year.

Capital investment of $1.71 million (FY25: $563,000) exceeded budget for the year. This included $1.02 million in medical equipment – covering new theatre camera stacks, sterilisers, anaesthetic machines and kitchen equipment – and $150,000 in deposits for new lifts, alongside continued investment in digital infrastructure including DOX, CCTV and Hospital Dietary Solutions (HDS).

Kajal Kothari
Director of Finance & Corporate Services

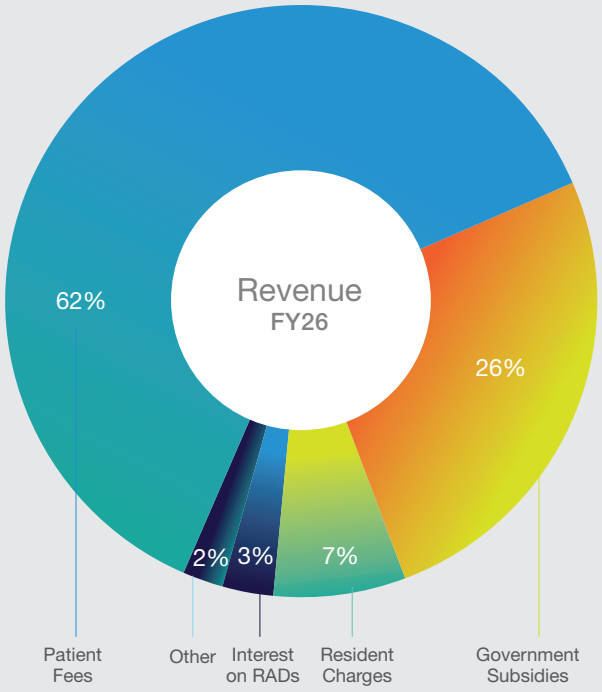
REVENUE	EXPENDITURE	INVESTMENT
$41m	$39m	$1.71m
↑5.6%	↑4.5%	↑202%

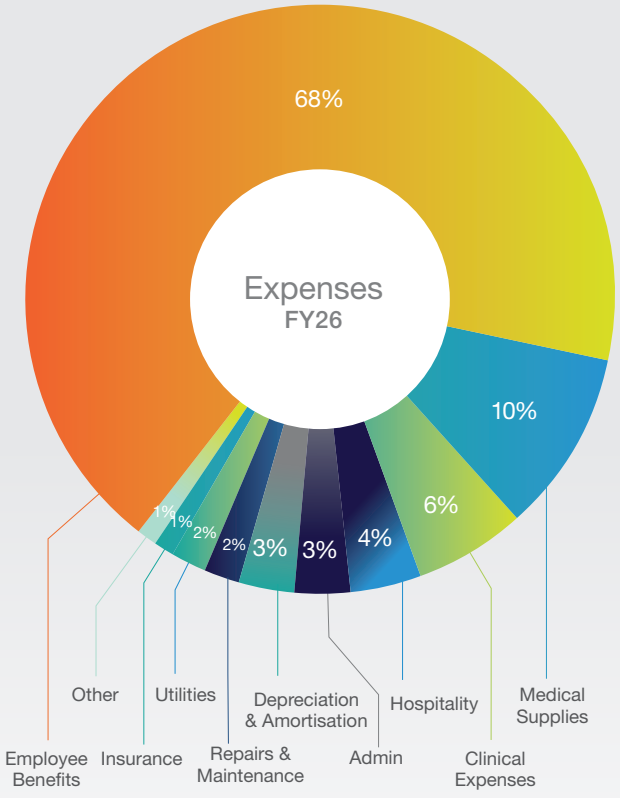
Financial Position

as of 30 June 2026	2026 $'000	2025 $'000
Total assets	**65,265**	50,951
Total liabilities	**20,310**	19,965
Net Equity	**44,955**	30,986

Financial Performance

for the year ending 30 June 2026	2026 $'000	2025 $'000
Revenue	**39,145**	37,078
Imputed income on RADs	**1,097**	1,132
Other Income	**1,040**	868
Total revenue	**41,282**	39,078
Employee benefits	**(25,762)**	(24,421)
Imputed interest on RADs	**(1,097)**	(1,132)
Other expenses	**(11,831)**	(11,486)
Total expenses	**(38,690)**	(37,039)
	2,592	2,039
Net finance cost	**359**	233
Net surplus	**2,951**	2,272





Hospital – Clinical and Service Highlights

It has been a productive year across the hospital, with investment in our clinical equipment, digital solutions and our staff. In FY26 we purchased a range of new equipment for our theatre and gastroenterology departments and continued to grow and develop our nursing and care workforce, from graduate programs through to our more experienced staff. We have also expanded our clinical expertise with new specialist roles, further supporting our focus on quality and safety in patient care delivery.

Sue Pilkington
Director of Clinical Services

Our commitment to quality assurance continues, ensuring we deliver high-quality, consumer-focused care. This includes drawing on consumer feedback and other quality indicators to drive positive change and continuing to involve our consumers and their families or networks in our services and their clinical care. Our Personify system encourages and collates this feedback, giving consumers the opportunity to share their experiences at North Eastern Community Hospital immediately and again after discharge. Consumers are also encouraged to share feedback directly with the care team during their stay, or to connect with the hospital by email or letter. We use this feedback to make measurable, meaningful improvements to how we plan care, from admission to discharge.

> *"All of the staff at NECH are wonderful and professional. I've stayed at NECH four times this year, I always feel safe and I know I'm in great care"*

As a team, we never stand still – we continue to look ahead, exploring innovative solutions that benefit our consumers, staff and service delivery. The organisation has invested in expanding our digital platforms, reflecting our focus on using digital solutions to improve the consumer experience, create efficiencies, and support clinical care delivery. This includes a new catering system and accompanying menu, offering expanded functionality to support our food services. We embrace new ways of working and opportunities to benchmark our practices – our housekeeping leadership team attended an interstate conference to review environmental cleaning systems.

Operations

Our theatre suite and gastroenterology unit continued to deliver a broad range of procedures throughout FY26. Several new Visiting Medical Officers joined the team, including gastroenterologists and surgeons, expanding our clinical capability and utilisation.

A new day surgery working group was established, with representatives from wards, theatre and gastroenterology, to improve patient flow and experience. This group continues to inform our planning as we progress towards our strategic objectives.

New gastroenterologists

Dr Christopher Hyrcek

Dr Fadak Mohammadi

Dr Luigi Sposato

Dr Yvonne Low

Dr Arvind Rajagopalan

New surgeons

Dr Afsana Hasan

Dr JC Wong

Dr V. Prasantha Gange

Dr Sarah Linthwaite

SA Health Contracts – Glynde and Steele Wards

The Comprehensive Pathway to Aged Care (CPAC) program on Glynde Ward celebrated its two-year anniversary in March 2026, having cared for over 800 patients and freed up 21,224 bed days for the public hospital system. The program maintains an average length of stay of 19 calendar days. The CALHN acute medical bed agreement on Steele Ward expanded from 8 to 12 beds, effective 1 December 2025. A new NALHN contract for maintenance-type patients expanded Glynde Ward to 26 beds, from February 2026. A second Patient Flow Coordinator was recruited to optimise bed management across our public contracts, complementing the existing team who coordinate transfers and support patients with discharge planning and next steps.

New Clinical Roles

The year saw significant investment in new clinical roles to support quality and safety:

- **Clinical Pharmacist** – providing on-site weekly pharmacy support including medication chart audits, psychotropic reviews, National Antibiotic Stewardship participation and medication reconciliation
- **Clinical Nurse Educator** – driving mandatory training compliance, a revised two-day induction program and competency frameworks
- **Patient Flow Coordinator** – supporting admissions and discharge coordination for public contract patients.

Quality Management and Accreditation

NECH successfully achieved NSQHS accreditation and ISO 9001 certification, reflecting the growth and improvement we have driven across our systems and processes. Our internal audit program provides local assurance, supplemented by external audits that enable measurement against national and peer benchmarks, including:

- **National Hand Hygiene Audit** (Period 3): 94.7% total compliance, with Allied Health and Housekeeping achieving 100% and 86% respectively
- **Australian Council on Healthcare Standards** (ACHS) audits: submitted, demonstrating general alignment with peer and national organisations.

> *"Compared to previous recent admissions at other major hospitals both private and public this admission was the most efficient, positive experience I have had (especially considering I work in a hospital myself). You are doing something right as a hospital and the staff you employ. Well done."*

Hospital – Clinical and Service Highlights

Major Clinical Upgrades

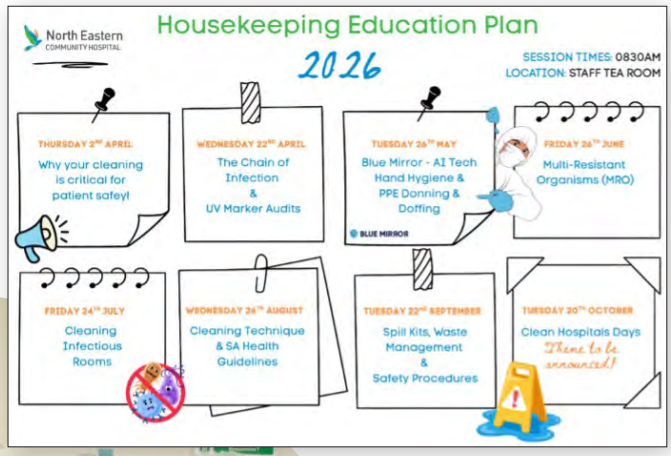
- 2 new Stryker theatre camera stacks (installed December 2025/January 2026)
- New pass-through CSSD steriliser ('Gorilla') and low-temperature steriliser ('Dragon'), installed and operational
- New anaesthetic machines in both gastroenterology procedure rooms
- 6 new day surgery chairs, purchased and due for delivery in October 2026, to enable full use of the day surgery lounge for surgical lists
- New diathermy and reprocessing equipment introduced in the gastroenterology department
- Sterile storage stock room upgrades to meet compliance standards.

> *"Every staff member I encountered was wonderfully kind, engaging and personable"*

Resident Representative

Workforce and Education

Over 40 new staff joined our clinical teams this year. We were pleased to grow our Graduate Nurse Program to its largest cohort yet, with all graduates offered ongoing employment at the conclusion of their 12-month placement. We also maintained our commitment to workforce development through work experience placements for local high school students and clinical training placements for university nursing students. A new two-day employee orientation program was introduced in January, combining mandatory training, immunisation screening and organisational induction to provide new staff with a solid foundation and early networking opportunities.



Infection Control

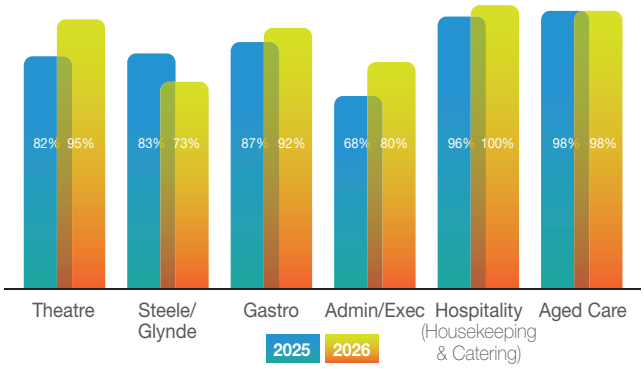
Infection Prevention and Control plays a critical role in ensuring safe, high-quality care for our patients, staff and visitors – reducing the risk of healthcare-associated infections, supporting antimicrobial stewardship, and contributing to compliance with our accreditation standards.

Our program focuses on surveillance, education, policy development and collaboration with clinical teams to strengthen safe clinical practice across both hospital and aged care.

Infection control achievement highlights in FY26 included:

- 2026 mobile flu clinic saw 323 vaccines administered, an increase from 254 in 2025.
- Hospital staff influenza vaccination rate: 84%
- Aged care staff influenza vaccination rate: 99%
- Hand hygiene compliance improved to 86.5% in June FY26, based on 200 audited moments per quarter
- Blue Mirror, our AI-powered hand hygiene training platform, launched in May 2026, with over 68 hours of staff training completed to date
- Environmental cleaning audit compliance (measured using Ecolab glow dots) increased by 40.15% following housekeeping education and training
- Housekeeping and IPC leadership teams attended the iClean Conference to build knowledge of cleaning standards, product use and risk-based approaches
- World Hand Hygiene Day (May 2026) featured practical awareness activities for staff and consumers across hospital and aged care
- IPC mandatory training for aged care staff reached 99.51% compliance in early 2026, focused on UTI clinical care standards and infection prevention basics
- The IPC Newsletter's Autumn and Winter editions – covering audit results, quality improvements, awareness campaigns, bug spotlights and education – are available to consumers in admissions and waiting rooms
- The hospital's National Antimicrobial Prescribing Survey (NAPS) was finalised in late 2025, supported by a new AMS working group (clinical pharmacy, ID physician Dr PC Lee and the IPC manager) that will continue to drive evidence-based improvements in antimicrobial prescribing.

Influenza vaccination:
2025/26 comparison via department



Aged Care – Care and Service Highlights

FY26 was a year of continued focus on quality, compliance and connection across our aged care service. Our team maintained strong occupancy and consumer confidence, embraced new technology to strengthen communication with families, and invested heavily in education and training to support our workforce through an evolving regulatory environment. The following highlights reflect the dedication of our aged care team in delivering safe, high-quality care to our residents and their families.

Assessment Contact Visits and Compliance

NECH's aged care team continued to focus on compliance with the **Aged Care Quality and Safety Commission's** (ACQSC) Accreditation Standards throughout FY26. The team is preparing for re-accreditation, due 17 November 2026, through a comprehensive program of compliance audits, policy reviews and targeted education. Multiple evidence-mapping audits conducted throughout the year demonstrated consistently improving compliance results across all standard areas.

The new Aged Care Act 2024 (strengthened Aged Care Quality Standards) became operational on 1 November 2025. NECH's management and clinical teams undertook extensive preparation, including staff education, audit programs, policy reviews and consumer communications via newsletters and the CareApp platform.

Star Ratings

NECH maintained its overall 3-star rating throughout FY26, reflecting stability and commitment to quality.

The reduction in our staffing star rating from 3 to 2 stars in April 2026 highlights the increasingly complex balance between workforce availability, regulatory requirements and financial sustainability. From 1 October 2025, changes to the star rating methodology placed greater emphasis on meeting both total care-minute and registered nurse care-minute targets. NECH will continue to monitor its workforce requirements closely, with a focus on sustainable staffing models, recruitment and retention, efficient rostering, and ensuring that workforce investment supports both quality care and long-term sustainability.

Sarah Dobrota
Care and Quality Manager

Wendy McCabe
Clinical Manager

Technology and Communication – Brenna

The Brenna communication platform was launched on 15 July 2025 – a real-time family communication tool enabling nurses to share timely updates on residents' health and wellbeing, fostering transparency and trust with family members. Brenna makes communication between staff and family members simple, freeing up nurses to focus more time on caring for residents. Staff and family feedback has been overwhelmingly positive, citing improved communication, collaboration and connection.

Aged Care Onsite Pharmacist (ACOP) Model

From 11 August 2025, NECH has benefited from the Australian Government's ACOP measure, providing dedicated access to a credentialed Clinical Pharmacist for two days per week.

The ACOP has strengthened our approach to medication management and safety, providing timely access to pharmacist advice, medication reviews, and identification of medication-related risks. The pharmacist also supports our clinical team with complex medication decisions, including attendance at our weekly high-risk resident meeting – further enhancing our multidisciplinary approach to clinical and care risk for residents.

The ACOP program has been a valuable addition to our team, strengthening medication safety, supporting our clinical workforce and, most importantly, improving outcomes for our residents.

> *"I am in awe of aged care staff for the care they provide and their patience on an everyday basis"*
>
> *Resident Representative*

Occupancy

Aged care occupancy remained strong throughout FY26, with an overall 12-month average of 98.48% for both Campbell and Payneham. The lowest average month was December 2025 at 96.35%, with 5 months above 99%.

Our Payneham memory support unit saw the highest average occupancy at 99.04%, with 100% occupancy for 5 months in a row.

The average duration of stay for our permanent residents in FY26 was 2.8 years, down from 3.2 years in FY25 – reflecting the higher acuity of residents being admitted.

The high average occupancy reflects ongoing consumer confidence in NECH's quality of care, with a constant stream of interest and requests for tours and admissions into our facility.

Education and Training

Throughout FY26, education and training have been a high priority for the team. Training highlights have included:

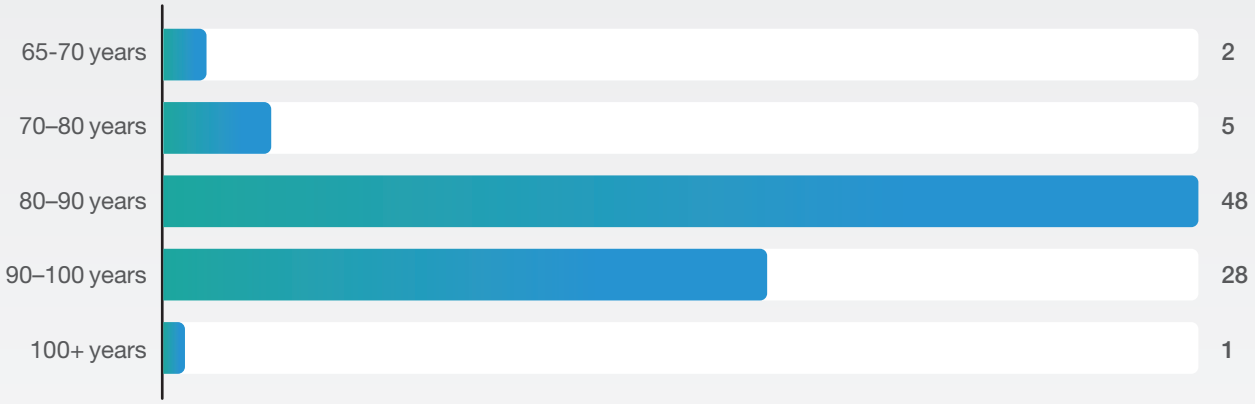
- **Dementia Australia's Achieving Purposeful Engagement** workshops, held throughout the year and attended by 35 team members, to build staff knowledge and confidence in engaging with residents living with dementia
- **Australian College of Nursing Wound Management** Course (2 days, December 2025) – attended by our Wound Care RN and Clinical Manager, to support best-practice wound care
- **St John's Mental Health First Aid** (2 days, March 2026) – attended by our Care & Quality Manager, now one of two mental health first aiders across the organisation
- **Preventing Harm Initiative (PHI) Defensive Documentation** Workshop (April 2026) – attended by 15 team members, building nurses' skills in accurate, legally defensible documentation that improves outcomes for residents

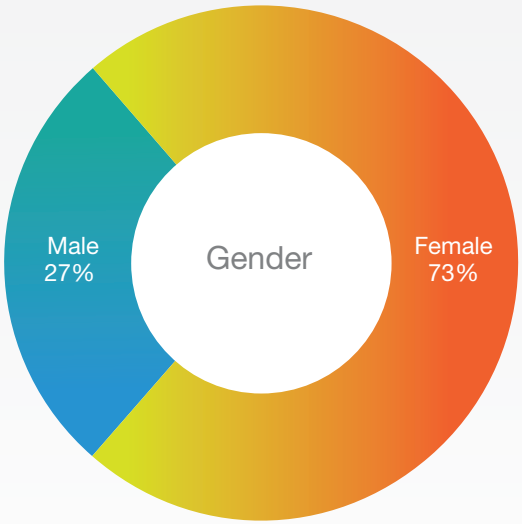
- **ACN ACTTP Program** – as part of our commitment to developing the capability and leadership of our nursing workforce, we are supporting one of our junior Registered Nurses (RN) in the Australian College of Nursing's Aged Care Transition to Practice (ACTTP) Program, a government-funded initiative providing structured education and support for nurses building careers in aged care. Since starting in November 2025, our Junior RN has had monthly opportunities to network with ACN tutors and other aged care nurses, developing clinical knowledge, confidence and leadership. We look forward to her graduation in September 2026

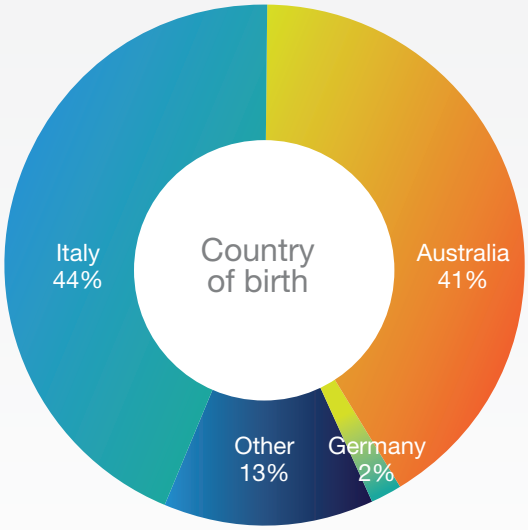
- **Training Needs Analysis** (TNA) – we conducted a TNA in February 2026 to guide training priorities for our aged care workforce. Of the 87 staff who completed it, the top requests were dementia care, palliative care, wound care and code of conduct training. We continue to provide online education via the Ausmed platform, alongside external presenters at our facility. Staff also rated 2025's training an average of 8.3 out of 10 for meeting their needs.

Resident Diversity

Our residents come from a diverse range of cultural, linguistic and religious backgrounds, reflecting the diversity of our wider community.







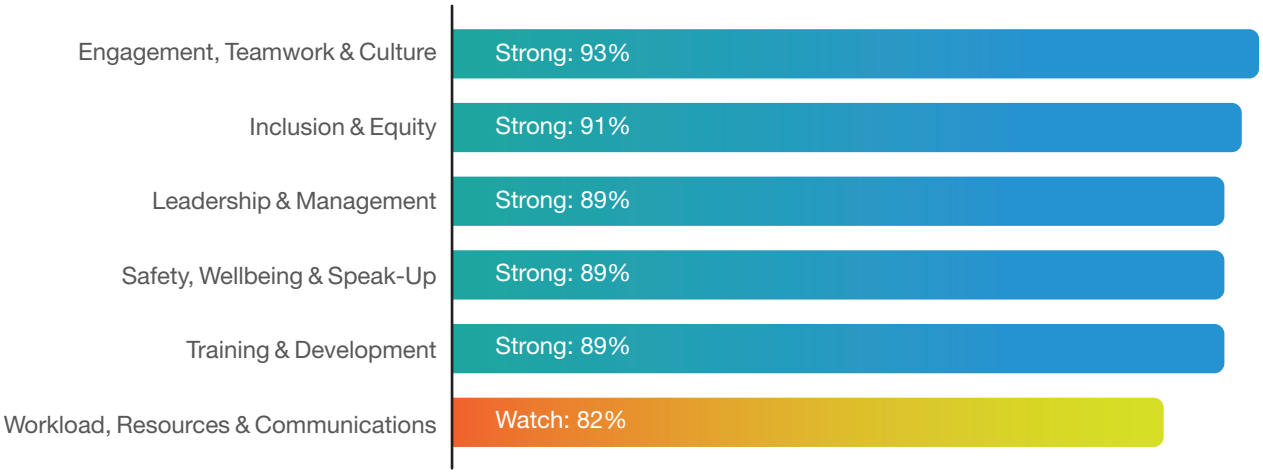
> *My husband's time at NECH was very short, but he and my family were shown so much support which did not go unnoticed*

Resident Representative

Staff Survey Highlights

The NECH Staff Experience and Culture Survey was launched on 30 March 2026. Aged care results showed a clear strength and with 58 respondents, by far the most statistically reliable department result within the organisation. Training & Development (93%) and Inclusion & Equity (91%) are standouts and set an internal NECH benchmark.

Overall Status	Average Score	Favourable	Unfavourable
Strong	4.2 / 5	89%	4%
Rank 2 of 8	Org avg 4.1 / 5	Org 84%	Org 5%



> *I have never seen my mother so well cared for in years; I am so happy with the care my mum receives at NECH*

Resident Representative

> *The carers always try to understand me, they are beautiful, welcoming and supportive*

Resident

Resident Feedback

NECH continued to receive heartfelt feedback from residents and their families throughout FY26.

Annual Residents Experience Survey (RES) - September 2025

On 17 September 2025, 16 residents at NECH were surveyed by an independent external visitor for the annual survey implemented in response to the recommendations made by the Royal Commission into Aged Care Quality and Safety. This survey contributes to a 33% weighting of NECH's overall star rating. The survey includes 12 questions, and in 2025, 10 of the 12 improved on 2024 results.

The top 5 improvements included:

		Residents answered	2025	2026	Change
Q1	Do staff treat you with respect?	Always/Most of the time	57%	94%	+37
Q10	Are staff kind and caring?	Always/Most of the time	58%	88%	+31
Q3	Is this place well run?	Always/Most of the time	72%	94%	+30
Q9	Do staff follow up when you raise things with them?	Always/Most of the time	57%	88%	+22
Q2	Do you feel safe here?	Always/Most of the time	86%	**100%**	+14

Staffing and Human Resources

Since joining NECH as HR Manager during FY26, I have focused on strengthening our approach to HR compliance, employee relations, workforce development and performance management.

Ileana Nadu
HR Manager

Revised Employment Contracts

During the year, we completed a comprehensive review and organisation-wide implementation of updated employment contracts, following the identification of compliance gaps through an external legal review. The project strengthened alignment with the Fair Work Act 2009, modern Award requirements and contemporary employment practices. We delivered the rollout through a structured and consultative approach across all workforce groups, including Nursing, Personal Care Workers, CSSD, Housekeeping, Catering and Administration, incorporating employee information sessions, updated position descriptions and award classification reviews. All phases were completed within planned timeframes, significantly improving contractual compliance, reducing organisational risk and supporting consistency across the workforce.

Improved Orientation Program

During the year we introduced a revised staff induction model, incorporating a two-day orientation program and a manager-led local induction. This approach provides new employees with a more structured onboarding experience, supporting engagement, role readiness and a smoother transition into the organisation.

Workforce Stability and Retention

We achieved a significant improvement in workforce stability during the reporting period, with employee turnover reducing from 37% to 22% across the majority of service areas – reflecting the positive impact of strengthened employee relations practices, workforce planning initiatives and organisational culture improvements. Importantly, turnover rates remained stable throughout 2026, indicating a sustained improvement in workforce retention and organisational engagement.

Recruitment and Workforce Sustainability

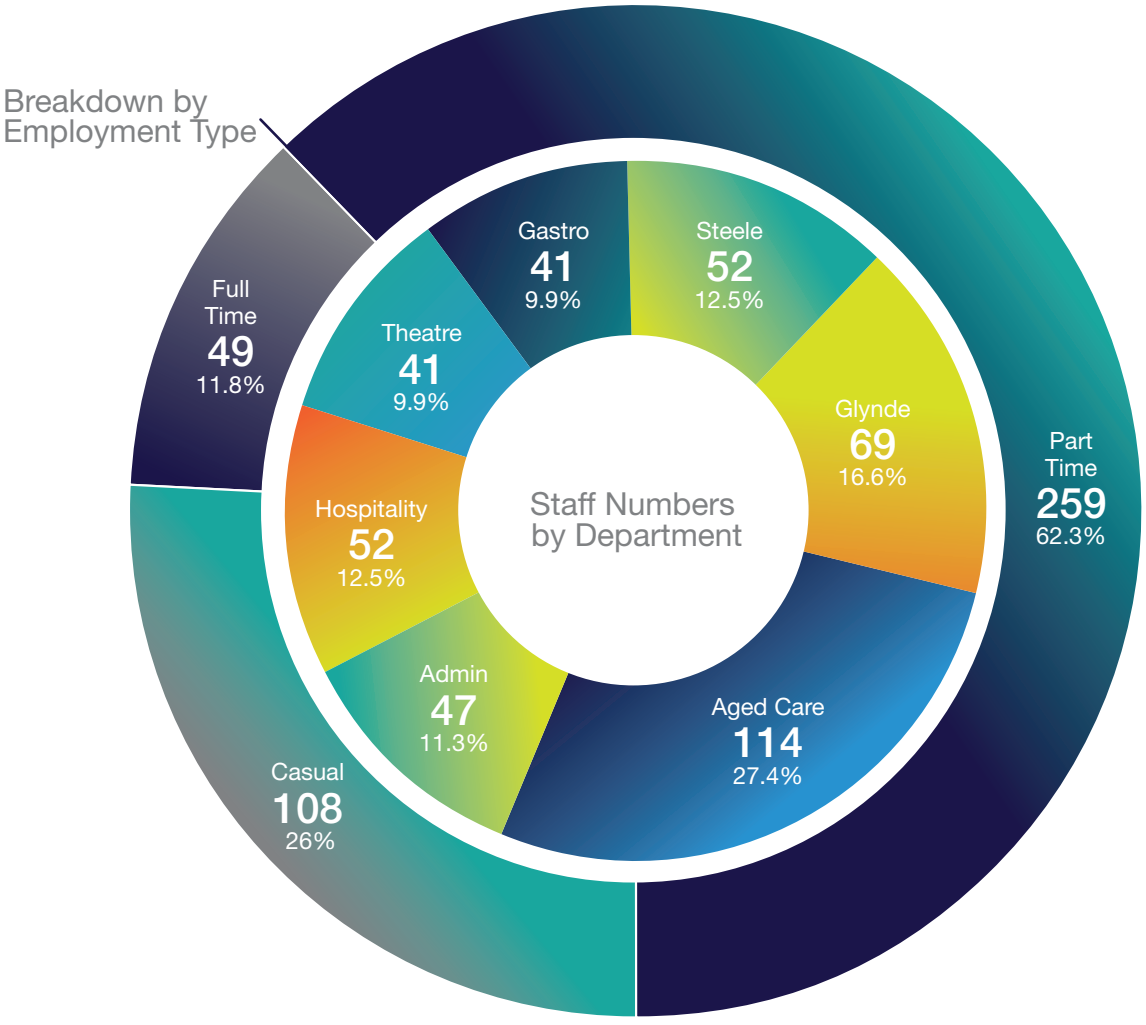
Our recruitment efforts remained focused on attracting and retaining skilled employees across clinical, allied health and support services, particularly in high-demand areas, with cost-effective recruitment strategies continuing to deliver strong outcomes. Our investment in future workforce capability included the continued growth of the Graduate Nurse Program and the establishment of a Clinical Nurse Educator position, strengthening succession planning and supporting a capable, sustainable workforce for the future.

Work Health and Safety (WHS) Governance

We strengthened WHS governance through the establishment of a formal WHS Committee, providing an organisation-wide structure for consultation, risk management and continuous improvement, with regular meetings supporting ongoing monitoring of safety performance, incident trends and corrective actions. We further improved employee wellbeing and safety awareness through new WHS and Wellness resources across all service areas, and timely access to counselling and psychology support remains a priority through our ongoing commitment to the EAP. Mental Health First Aid training was again provided this year, with two managers now credentialed.

Staff Engagement and Culture

Our 2026 Staff Experience and Culture Survey returned positive results, with an overall favourable response rate of 84% and the majority of departments demonstrating strong cultural outcomes. Survey feedback is informing targeted action on workload management, communication and workforce resourcing.



Corporate Services

Catering

Travo George leads leads a committed catering team that retained its 5-star food safety rating throughout the year. Key highlights include:

- New kitchen combi-oven, Bratt pan and stove top installed, replacing ageing equipment that required ongoing repairs
- Replacement of grease arrestor and insinkerator as part of SA Water compliance requirements
- Green waste initiative commenced, aligned with the ESG Committee's sustainability focus
- HDS catering software system implemented in Aged Care
- New winter and summer menus developed, incorporating resident feedback
- All NECH staff – including catering, carers, nurses and lifestyle staff – complete food safety training annually as a mandatory compliance requirement.

Travo George
Catering Manager

Procurement

A dedicated Procurement Manager, Bhavik Shah, was appointed in FY26, providing independent oversight of stock ordering, controls and supplier negotiations. Early outcomes include reduced bespoke ordering, consolidated storage management and improved inventory control, with savings anticipated to grow over time.

Maintenance and Infrastructure

FY26 was another year of significant activity for our maintenance team, as NECH's building – now approaching 55 years of age – continued to require ongoing investment alongside a number of refurbishment projects. Key highlights include:

- Reception renovation project completed and operational (opened 19 May 2025)
- CCTV replacement strategy rolled out, bringing all cameras to a single cloud-based platform
- Building Management System (BMS) upgrade
- Lift replacement – after identifying significant risk in our ageing lift infrastructure (50+ years old, with failed parts), quotes were obtained to replace all lifts, with a 6-month lead time being carefully managed
- Water filtration – the detection of Legionella in an ice machine, together with recurring filter replacement needs in gastroenterology medivators, led to specialist consultant engagement. A chlorine dioxide flush and solenoid system have been installed, and a longer-term strategy – including potential replacement of ageing copper header tanks – is being developed
- Chiller (15-year-old compressor) and air-handler components replaced
- A parapet capping defect was identified in the 2019 consulting area extension, and architects and the original contractor have been engaged.
- FMI maintenance management system fully rolled out, enhancing contractor governance and service schedule accountability
- Flooring upgrades – vinyl installed in aged care rooms, corridors and gastroenterology, replacing carpet
- Surgeons' break room in theatre refurbished during Christmas shutdown
- Exterior window cleaning program established (bi-annual)
- Exterior signage replacement underway (planning consent obtained for pylon sign).

Trent Pukallus
Maintenance Manager

Allied Health

The Allied Health team continued to grow and expand access to essential services across both hospital and aged care throughout FY26.

A significant highlight this year was the transition of **physiotherapy services** from an outsourced contractor model to a dedicated on-site permanent team. This shift has transformed the scope and consistency of care, with physiotherapists now embedded within the clinical environment. Their permanent presence supports regular patient reviews, active participation in multidisciplinary meetings, and real-time collaboration with nursing, medical and allied health colleagues – enabling earlier intervention and a continuity of care that a rotating contractor workforce cannot match. This growth was further supported by the recruitment of three experienced physiotherapists, strengthening the team's capacity to manage more complex cases and a wider range of patient acuity.

To complement this expanded team, a strategic investment of over $60,000 in capital equipment was made during the year, ensuring patients and residents have access to the most appropriate equipment to support their independence and participation in daily activities.

Staff education and training were a strong area of focus. The internal manual handling program was further refined to ensure appropriate clinical oversight of high-risk tasks, and Allied Health Manager **Alex Heys** produced a professional education video on manual handling, published through AusMed – extending the reach of this training beyond NECH to a national healthcare audience. Complementing this, a dedicated falls prevention toolbox video and a comprehensive pressure injury prevention and care education module were developed and launched, giving staff consistent, accessible and clinically grounded resources aligned with current guidelines and the organisation's own Pressure Care Mattress Decision Flowchart. These formal resources were further reinforced by a suite of educational posters placed throughout the hospital, covering staff wellbeing, ergonomic workstation set-up, and correct equipment set-up for air mattresses and patient sensors.

On Glynde Ward, the team introduced the **Sunflower Tool** to gather personalised social information from patients, helping staff better understand individual preferences and life histories to support de-escalation during moments of distress. This was complemented by new diversional activity programs and a structured activity calendar, giving patients meaningful daily engagement to support their cognitive stimulation, emotional wellbeing and social connection.

The Allied Health team also supported an **incubator grant program** in partnership with Flinders University to develop an IDDSI-compliant cutting tool, reflecting the team's ongoing contribution to innovation in the sector.

Alexandra Heys
Allied Health Manager

Visiting Specialists and Consultants

Gastroenterology / General Surgery

Dr Naveen Agarwal

Dr Jeevinesh Aplanaidu

Dr John Argyrides

Dr Robert Bryant

Dr James Fon

Dr Damian Harding

Dr Dep Huynh

Dr Jonathan Yong

Dr Sze Yeap

Dr Philip Worley

Dr Edmund Tse

Dr Nainoor Thakore

Dr Marcus Teo

Dr William Tam

Dr James Roberts

Dr Tsai-Wing Ow

Dr Vinh-An Phan

Dr Nam Nguyen

Dr Ryan Mathias

Dr Fadak Mohammadi

Dr Paul Kuo

Dr Marc Le Mire

Dr Ilmars Lidums

Dr Biju George

Dr Arvind Rajagopalan

Dr It Wen (Yvonne) Low

Dr Luigi Sposato

Dr Christopher Hrycek

General Physicians / Medicine

Dr Rassam Badbess

Dr Boon Woo

Dr Sudheer Puthiyaveetil

Dr Sujith Hattotuwa

Dr Raj Kumar

Dr Satish Pillai

Ophthalmology

Dr Jaz Aujla

Dr Adam Rudkin

Orthopaedics

Prof Gregory Bain

Dr David Hermann

Dr Justin Webb

Dr Aman Sood

Vascular Surgeon

Dr Abhilash Chandra

Gynaecology

Dr Fatima Ashrafi

Dr Alexandra Carey

Dr Vipulajith Gange

Dr Preetam Ganu

Dr Kati King

Dr Anna Limgenco

Dr Sarah Linthwaite

Dr Valerie Thompson

Dr Neil Tamlin

Dr Angelique Swart

Dr Majid Rasekhi

Dr Ellen Raghoudi

Dr Priti Pradhan

Dr Tran Nguyen

Dr Hanan Maghazaji

Plastic Surgery

Dr Marcus Wagstaff

Dr Edward Gibson

The Board

Board Members FY 25/26

Michael Auciello

Board Chair
Resigned October 2025

Jack Snelling

Board Chair, October 2025
Deputy Chair, Resigned October 2025

Virginia Deegan

Deputy Chair
October 2025

Professor Guy Maddern

Sonia Bolzon

Richard Amato

Peter Mendo

New member
April 2025

Paul Flynn

New member
October 2025

Julie-Ann Burgess

New member
October 2025

Committees

The Board introduced two new committees in FY26:

- The Governance Committee
- The Capital Investment Committee.

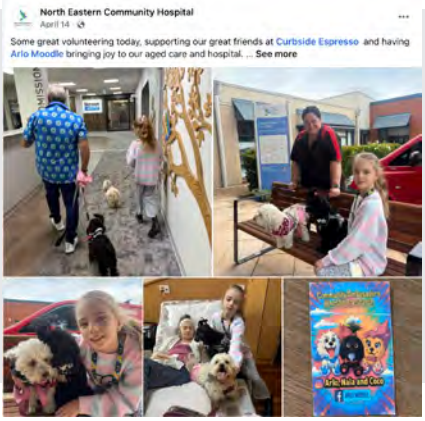
Committees continuing from FY25

- The ESG Committee
- WHS Committee.

The Consumer Advisory Committee

In progress, with members being finalised for a first meeting scheduled in August 2026.

Social Media



Follow us: www.facebook.com/NorthEasternCommunityHospital
www.linkedin.com/company/north-eastern-community-hospital/

North Eastern
COMMUNITY HOSPITAL
AND AGED CARE

www.northeasternhospital.com.au
exec@nech.com.au

HOSPITAL

580 Lower North East Road
Campbelltown, South Australia 5074

(08) 8366 8111 (08) 8365 1139

AGED CARE

Cnr Lennox Street & 580 Lower North East Road
Campbelltown, South Australia 5074

(08) 8366 8111 → 338 (08) 8366 8260