



# ANNUAL REPORT

23  
24



**HOPE.**  
**RESILIENCE.**  
**RECOVERY.**



## OUR MISSION

To facilitate  
**hope and recovery**  
 for all people affected  
 by eating disorders.

## OUR VISION

A world  
**free** from eating  
 disorders.

## OUR VALUES



### Nurture

Creating an inclusive, connected community that inspires hope and passion.



### Empower

Fostering a safe environment where people have the power to lead recovery.



### Integrity

Working with deep respect, embracing honesty, trust and empathy.



### Innovate

Creating together to provide high-quality responsive programs, services and initiatives.



### Collaborate

Valuing diversity through sharing learning among people with eating disorders, carers and sector partners.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

We respectfully acknowledge the Traditional Owners of the land on which Eating Disorders Queensland operate, the Jagera and Turrbal People, and pay our respects to Elders past and present. We honour the women elders in diverse communities of which we are a part, and we celebrate the extraordinary diversity of bodies, genders, sexualities, capacities and relationships that we all represent. We pay our respects to all the people with a lived experience, carers / key supports and loved ones who have shared their recovery wisdom with us.

**Artist:** Kalika Link, Kabi Kabi artist

**Year:** 2024

**Medium:** acrylic on canvas

**Title:** Beautiful in all her creation

**Story:** The white crane symbolises inner and outer beauty, the leaves represent evergreen leaves that bloom in formidable times. The white crane is with grace as she rests on the billabong with confidence.



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# ABOUT EDQ



**EDQ is a statewide, community based not-for-profit organisation, with locations in Brisbane and Cairns. We support both individuals who are living with an eating disorder; and their carers, loved ones, and key support people.**

Eating Disorders Queensland (EDQ) understands that individuals, families, carers and loved ones recover at their own pace. We value the important role that Medical and Psychiatric services can have in recovery from an eating disorder and offer our services as a partner as well as alternative to the medical model, depending on client need. We are an eating disorder service located in Brisbane and Cairns. EDQ is a statewide, community-based not-for-profit organisation.

We support both individuals who are living with an eating disorder; their carers, loved ones, and key support people.

Support options include therapeutic and psychosocial support for individuals, and coaching and community connection for carers. EDQ also provides early intervention opportunities with community education events focused on creating healthy relationships with food and our bodies. We are passionate about eradicating weight stigma and diet culture.

## CEO AND CHAIRPERSON'S REPORT

*Over the past few years, we have experienced significant growth and transformation, and have strategically embraced these changes to further advance our mission and reach.*

*"Heraclitus, I believe, says that all things pass, and nothing stays, and comparing existing things to the flow of a river, he says you could not step twice into the same river."*

— Plato

In an increasingly competitive landscape, where the demand for mental health services is more pressing than ever, EDQ continues to evolve, adapt, and expand. Like a river that is ever-changing, we recognise the importance of moving forward, consistently transforming and innovating to meet the evolving needs of our clients.

We have evolved significantly from the small, grassroots community organisation we were five years ago— or even just a year ago. The needs of the Queensland Eating Disorders community have grown, requiring services that

are more accessible and that can provide a broader range of choices, and personalised support that meets individuals where they are. Just as a river cannot remain still, we understand that in order to fulfil our mission, we must embrace this momentum of change. We recognised the need to remain agile, innovative, and responsive to the evolving demands of the community we serve.

The last year brought significant challenges but also fantastic outcomes that reflect our commitment to progress.

### CHALLENGES

This year, we experienced a phase of organisational attrition, with a number of our long-term staff members moving on and taking up new opportunities in their careers. With job mobility on the rise nationally, it's encouraging to see some of our valued staff exploring and achieving new opportunities that align with their career goals. We celebrate their ambition and look forward to supporting their journeys! At the same time, we warmly welcome new, enthusiastic staff who bring fresh perspectives and energy to our team!"

## OUTCOMES

We have celebrated remarkable outcomes this year.

These are just a few of the highlights from a year filled with meaningful engagements with stakeholders, colleagues, and media. We proudly amplified our advocacy efforts, and our work continues to make a lasting impact on the eating disorder sector.

### HIGHLIGHTS

**Non-clinical training rollout:**

Our non-clinical training programs generated significant interest and filled a critical gap in the sector, allowing us to expand our reach.

**Queensland's Better Care Together funding:**

With this additional support, we expanded our lived experience services across the state, broadening our reach and impact.

**bITE program funding:**

We were honoured to secure a four-year grant for our Brief Intervention Therapy (bITE) program, which will enable us to address waitlists and provide crucial early intervention.

**Regional expansion:**

We opened our first regional office in Cairns, a monumental step in delivering services to remote and rural areas, made possible by additional funding.

### INITIATIVES

This year, we were also privileged to be part of significant national initiatives:

**Launch of the National Eating Disorder Strategy 2023-2033:**

With Federal Health Minister Mark Butler's support, we played a key role in this pivotal strategy launch.

**Body Image and Social Media Round Table:**

Zoe Daniel MP invited us, and we collaborated with other sector leaders to propose urgent recommendations to protect young people on social media.

**Key visits and media engagements:**

Queensland Minister Shannon Fentiman MP and ABC News highlighted our ED Passport initiative and new funding secured for enhanced services in Queensland.

**Advocacy successes:**

Thanks to our strengthened partnership with the Eating Disorder Alliance of Australia, we celebrated a major outcome with the ban on compounded GLP-1 receptor agonists.

In reflecting on this year, I am reminded that EDQ, much like Heraclitus' river, is constantly moving forward. We have faced challenges, but in each one, we found opportunities for growth. Our commitment to our clients, our mission, and our vision is unwavering. Through the flow of change, we remain adaptable, resilient, and determined to create the best possible outcomes for those we serve.

Thank you to our Board, staff, clients, and partners for being part of this incredible journey. Together, we will continue to grow, evolve, and move with the river of change.

Belinda Chelius



Chief Executive Officer

Karen Dare



Board Chair

# TREASURER'S REPORT



**KAROLINA PEMBERTON**  
Treasurer

The statement of Comprehensive Income for Eating Disorders Qld Limited (EDQ) shows a profit of \$410,469 this is due to increased revenue and the late receipt of funding revenue for BTE (\$713,536) and BCT (\$600,000).

EDQ received a 5.63% funding increase on the 1st of July 2023 from Queensland Health as part of its annual indexation review. Rollover requests granted for funding received in FY24 to be used in FY25 were as follows:

- » BTE - \$150,000
- » BCT - \$200,000
- » PHN - North - \$79,000



STATEMENT OF COMPREHENSIVE INCOME FY24	FY24	FY23	Growth
Revenue	3,108,971	2,002,211	55.28%
Other Income	16,343	37,082	
Employee Expenses	(2,131,495)	(1,573,504)	
Program support services	(14,751)	(20,142)	
EDA Sub contract expenses	(34,928)	(92,527)	
Audit Fees	(13,596)	(6,996)	
Depreciation	(91,692)	(88,740)	
Administrative expenses	(362,692)	(177,230)	
Sundry Expenses	(65,691)	(36,351)	
Current year surplus/(deficit) before income tax	410,469	43,803	
Income tax expense	0	0	
Net current year surplus/(deficit)	410,469	43,803	

ASSETS & LIABILITIES	FY24	FY23	Movement
Current Assets	1,885,141	1,481,400	403,741
Non Current Assets	292,947	7,395	285,552
Current Liabilities	985,708	921,298	64,410
Non Current Liabilities	225,586	132,399	93,187
Net Assets	966,794	556,325	410,469

# OUR PEOPLE



## Belinda Chelius

### Chief Executive Officer

Belinda is a skilled, dedicated, culturally sensitive and passionate feminist Senior Social Work Clinician, who holds a BA (Health Sc & Soc. Services), MSocWK degree. She has practiced in the field of complex mental health, dual-diagnosis (alcohol and/or other drugs), trauma (sexual assault, domestic violence), and eating issues for over 19 years in the not-for-profit sector.



### EDQ Leadership Team

Nat Scales, Poppy-Louise Batts, Sarah Larsen, Mandy Long and Vanessa Cardillo.

### EDQ bITE Team

Sophie Zammit, Elise Chatterton, Clancy G, Marion Battig-Franks and Romina Vella.

### EDQ Clinical Team

Kayla L, Amira Hassan, Chloe L, Laura S and Amy D.

### EDQ Carer & Key Support Team

Mary-Ann Kissane, Felicity Electricity and Rachel Jones (lived experience).

### EDQ Lived Experience Support Workers

Alex Rodriguez, Michelle Van Eps, Olja Hadzi-Andonova and Sharday Price.

### EDQ Public Health Team

Stella Taylor, Jess Tone, Hannah Kirby and Victoria Dunn.

# OUR BOARD

### KAREN DARE – Chairperson, Director • Expertise: Community Sector

Karen has a social sciences background and over 35 years of experience in the community sector, working with Communitify since 1994. She works with a strong community development focus and has extensive experience as a board member for prominent community and other organisations. Karen is recipient of the 2001 Centenary Medal and the Brisbane Australia Day Award for her contribution to the community sector.

### KAROLINA PEMBERTON – Treasurer, Director • Expertise: Finance

Karolina is a qualified accountant with over 17 years of experience across a range of sectors and specialities, including Financial and Management accounting, Budgeting and Forecasting, and not-for-profits. Outside her professional life, Karolina has a love of family, cooking and tennis.

### SUZANNAH D’JULIET – Secretary, Director • Expertise: Legal

Suzannah is a commercial lawyer who works in Executive Management in the Resources Industry. She has special interests in insurance, risk and compliance and has experience as a Non-Executive Director in the private sector. Suzannah has a lived experience of eating disorders and is passionate about EDQ’s quality, client centered care and service delivery model.

### MARC BRYANT – Director • Expertise: Carer, IT

Marc is a current member of the Qld Government Advisory Group (Eating Disorders), and also has more than 20 years’ experience in State Government public service, including various expert panels and consulting groups, with special interest in IT systems and information management. Marc has had approximately 6 years’ lived experience with eating disorders as a carer and has mentored other carers.

### DR WARREN WARD – Director • Expertise: Eating Disorder Treatment

Associate Professor Warren Ward is Director of the Ramsay Clinic New Farm Eating Disorders Program and Medical Director of Wandi Nerida, Australia’s first residential program for eating disorders. Previous roles include Director of the Queensland Eating Disorders Service (QuEDS), Chair of the Qld Health Eating Disorders Advisory Group (EDAG), and co-author of the RANZCP Clinical Practice Guidelines for Eating Disorders. In 2017 he received the ANZAED Distinguished Achievement Award for his contributions to the field, and in 2018 he was made a Fellow of the Academy for Eating Disorders. He has published more than 20 articles and 2 book chapters on eating disorders and is regularly invited to speak to audiences throughout Australia about eating disorders and their treatment.

### SUSAN GOBBART – Director • Expertise: Psychology/Service Delivery

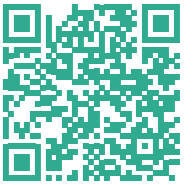
Susan is a psychologist with a special interest in complex trauma, co-occurring AOD and mental health concerns, and Clinical Governance, particularly program evaluation and service/client outcome measures. She is currently working with an Indigenous Birthing program as a Perinatal and Parenting Psychologist as well as in Private Practice providing Psychological Therapy to people in rural and remote locations around Australia. She has over 30 years of professional experience across a range of areas in the mental health field.

### ZOE CUNNINGHAM – Director • Expertise: Lived-Living Experience, Community Sector

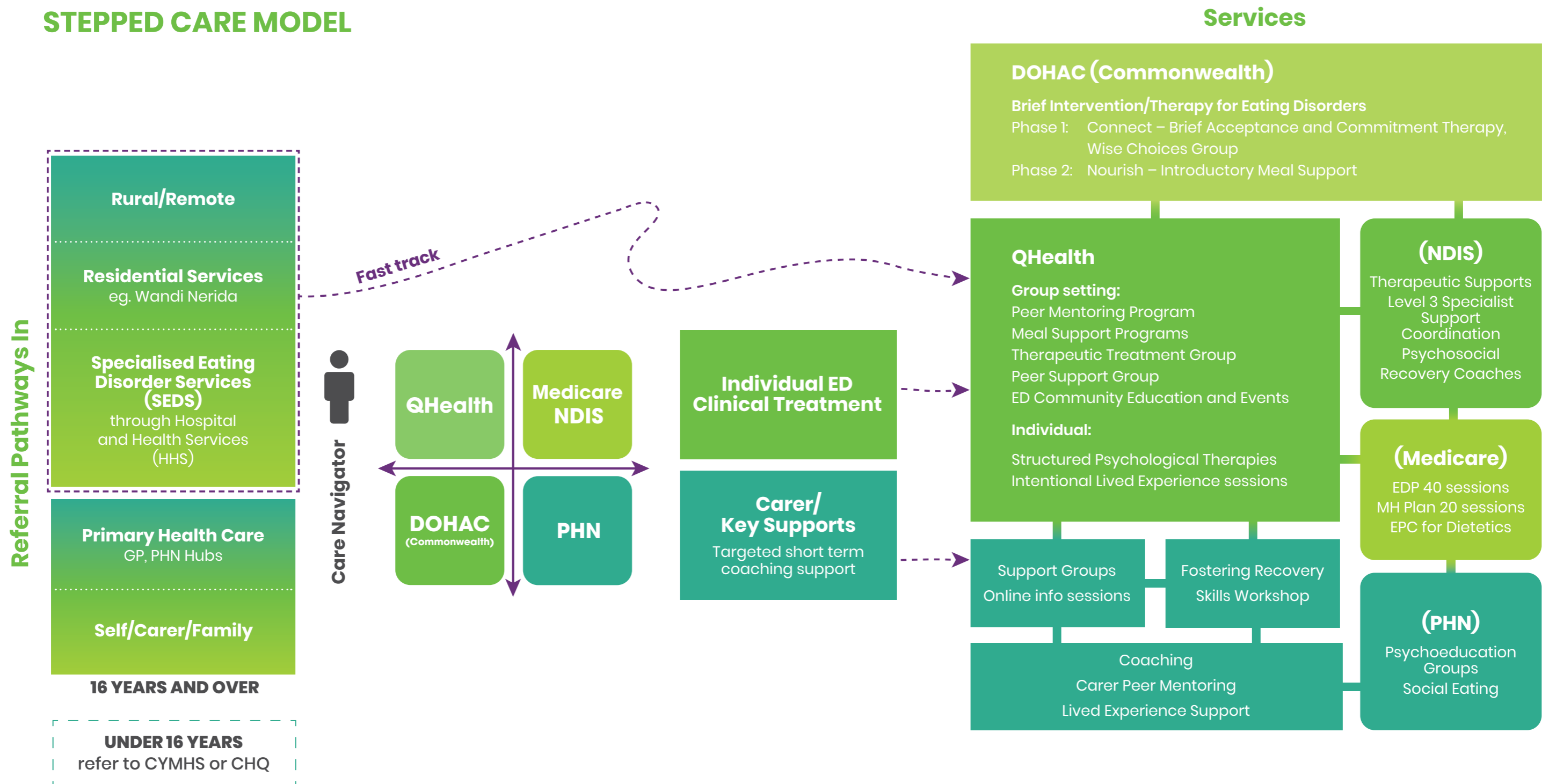
Zoe has nearly 10 years experience as a carer in eating disorder and direct lived-living experience in mental ill-health and suicidality since she was a teenager. She has a psychology background and has worked in the mental health sector for over 20 years across government and non-government organisations. Zoe recently managed the Mental Health Lived Experience Peak Queensland establishment project and is passionate in systemic changes.

# COMMUNITY BIOPSYCHOSOCIAL

QLD Care Pathways  
mymentalhealth.org.au



## STEPPED CARE MODEL



# STRATEGIC PLAN 2021-2024

## 1. Leader

### To be a leader in lived experience service design and delivery

- Co-design services for best practice.
- Support and strengthen lived experience leadership.
- Continuous improvement of service delivery through consultation and feedback with key stakeholders.

## 2. Champion

### Champion equitable access and system response

- Advocate for investment in prevention, health promotion and early intervention.
- Influence National and State policy on accessible and equitable treatment options.
- Drive an early identification and intervention response for eating disorders, at a systemic level.

## 3. Sustainable

### To promote growth, reach and service delivery

- Establish formal partnerships with aligned services.
- Diversify income streams.
- Extend the reach of service delivery across Queensland.

## 4. Recognised

### To be recognised as the leading Eating Disorder service organisation

- Increase brand awareness.
- Develop an external communication strategy.
- Represented on all International, National and State bodies.

EDQ's Strategic Plan will be in review October 2024 to continue to focus on organisational growth and client accessibility. This will be updated for the 2024-2025 Annual Report.

# PROGRAM OVERVIEW

## Individual Clinical Treatment & Support

### QLD Health Funding

- Group Support and Rehabilitation
- Individual Lived Experience (peer) Work
- Group Based Lived Experience (peer) Work
- Individual Carer Support/Coaching
- Group Carer Support
- Structured psychological therapies
- Brief Intervention/Therapy
- Trauma - Informed Yoga Group (6-week program)
- Community Practice Yoga (monthly)

### Recovery & Discovery Hub

#### Funded by Brisbane North PHN

- Recovery Warriors group (Psychosocial support)
- Wise Choices group (Psychosocial support)

#### Funded by Brisbane South PHN

- Intentional Peer Support sessions

## Carer, Families & Key Support People

### QLD Health Funding

- Information and referrals
- Single Session Coaching
- Single Session Family Coaching
- Carer Connect Group
- Carer Reconnect Group
- Fostering Recovery Workshop
- Carer Peer Mentor Program (CPMP)
- Emotion Focused Skills Training (Collaboration with CYMHS and QuEDS)

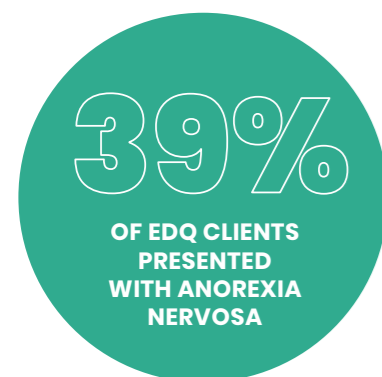
# CLIENT DEMOGRAPHICS

## Snapshot of Clients

Age	Structure Psychological Therapies	Individual Lived Experience Work	Individual Carer Support	bITE
Under 18	8 (1%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	4 (4%)
18-24	201 (20%)	39 (20%)	0 (0%)	31 (30%)
25-34	216 (21%)	55 (28%)	7 (2%)	33 (32%)
35-44	100 (10%)	35 (18%)	16 (4%)	17 (17%)
45-54	53 (5%)	14 (7%)	82 (20%)	10 (10%)
55-64	25 (2%)	4 (2%)	30 (7%)	5 (5%)
65 +	8 (1%)	3 (2%)	7 (2%)	2 (2%)
Not stated	410 (40%)	50 (25%)	263 (65%)	0 (0%)
<b>Gender Identity</b>				
Female	548 (54%)	134 (67%)	221 (55%)	84 (82%)
Male	41 (4%)	8 (4%)	48 (12%)	11 (11%)
Other	27 (3%)	6 (3%)	4 (1%)	6 (6%)
Not stated	405 (40%)	52 (26%)	132 (33%)	1 (1%)
<b>Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander Identification</b>				
Yes, Aboriginal	25 (2%)	5 (3%)	1 (0.2%)	4 (4%)
Yes, Torres Strait Islander	2 (0.2%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	1 (1%)
Yes, both Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander	2 (0.2%)	1 (1%)	1 (0.2%)	0 (0%)
No	565 (55%)	137 (69%)	125 (31%)	63 (62%)
Not stated	427 (42%)	57 (29%)	278 (69%)	34 (33%)

## Eating Disorder Presentations\*

\*Clients may have more than one diagnostic impression; therefore, the total client count will be less than the number of responses.



Diagnosis	%
Anorexia Nervosa	39.4%
Avoidant/Restrictive Food Intake Disorder (ARFID)	6.3%
Binge Eating Disorder	15.5%
Bulimia Nervosa	16.4%
Diabulimia	0.1%
Orthorexia	0.6%
Other Specified Feeding or Eating Disorder	17.4%
Unspecified Feeding or Eating Disorder	4.3%

# SERVICES DELIVERED

	2022/23	2023/24	% Change
<b>Queensland Health Funding</b>			
<b>Clients</b>			
Structured Psychological Therapies	614	830	35
Structured Psychological Therapies – Bilateral agreement funding	75	191	155
Group Support & Rehabilitation	409	460	12
Individual Lived Experience Work	218	141	-35
Individual Lived Experience Work – Better Care together funding	N/A	59	N/A
Group-Based Lived Experience Work	557	789	42
Individual Carer Support	356	405	14
Group Carer Support	244	182	-25
<b>Sessions/contacts</b>			
Structured Psychological Therapies	2311	2096	-9
Structured Psychological Therapies – Bilateral agreement funding	262	850	224
Group Support & Rehabilitation	67	66	-1
Individual Lived Experience Work	2248	1788	-20
Individual Lived Experience Work – Better Care together funding	N/A	298	N/A
Group-Based Lived Experience Work	65	79	22
<b>Hours</b>			
Structured Psychological Therapies	3605	2703	-25
Structured Psychological Therapies – Bilateral agreement funding	426	1288	202
Group Support & Rehabilitation	273	234	-14
Individual Lived Experience Work	1357	956	-30
Individual Lived Experience Work – Better Care together funding	N/A	518	N/A
Group-Based Lived Experience Work	136	169	24
Individual Carer Support	794	911	15
Group Carer Support	240	163	-32
<b>Department of Health and Aged Care Funding (bITE)</b>			
Clients	N/A	102	N/A
Sessions/contacts	N/A	619	N/A
Hours	N/A	789	N/A



# STRUCTURED PSYCHOLOGICAL THERAPIES

*Eating Disorders Queensland is dedicated to providing quality therapeutic services to individuals seeking assistance in their journey toward recovery from eating disorders.*

EDQ continues to respond to the widespread demand since the COVID-19 pandemic to ensure services are accessible and available statewide.

As part of EDQ's comprehensive support services, EDQ provides fully funded Structured Psychological Therapy, available to individuals aged 16 and over across Queensland. Clients can engage in up to 20 sessions, which can be conducted in person or via telehealth.

These individual sessions are grounded in evidence-based approaches and interventions guided by feminist practice framework. They are trauma-informed, client-led, recovery orientated and focused on building insight and skills to manage their eating disorder while addressing underlying causes.

Our skilled practitioners are professionals with qualifications in Counselling, Psychotherapy, Psychology, Mental Health Social Work and Social Work.

The team works holistically, continuously striving to cultivate a safe, confidential and supportive

environment for clients, while collaborating closely with treatment teams. Our practitioners actively work with clients to expand and enhance their support networks, facilitating connections with lived experience mentors and peer workers whenever possible.

Our team is dedicated to continuous improvement and the delivery of high-quality services. Practitioners from different streams regularly engage in clinical supervision both internally and externally. They are proactive in keeping themselves updated with the latest research by participating in national and international conferences, professional development opportunities, and sharing knowledge through various team meetings.

We had challenges recruiting appropriately suited clinical workers due to workforce challenges.

However even with these challenges we have reached or exceeded our contracted outcomes.

# MEDICARE & NDIS

Our service's Medicare and NDIS streams are popular options for individual counselling clients. Clients with a Mental Health Care Plan, Eating Disorder Care Plan (introduced November 2019), and Enhanced Primary Care Plan can access Medicare-subsidised individual counselling or dietetic sessions.

Clients with NDIS funding for Capacity Building – Choice and Control or Daily Living can access Recovery Coaching, Therapeutic, or Dietetic Sessions.



## MEDICARE

**In 2019, the Australian Government made significant enhancements to Medicare to deliver evidence-based treatment for eating disorders in the community. This was the first-time specific item codes covered mental illness.**

Clients have been able to access Medicare services at EDQ through an Eating Disorder Plan (EDP), which provides up to 40 sessions of therapeutic interventions and up to 20 dietetic sessions. In comparison to national reports, where only 6.5% of clients with an EDP reached the 20th session (Maguire et al., 2022), our observations indicate that Medicare clients at EDQ usually continue with longer-term therapeutic support (>20 sessions).

**However, the 20th session psychiatrist review (EDP requirement) remains a barrier for many clients due to a lack of available psychiatrists specialising in eating disorders, wait times, and out-of-pocket costs.**

Through this past year EDQ has observed the economic hardship clients are experiencing creating an additional barrier to access supports. EDQ has observed its impact on client's mental health by raising levels of stress and psychological distress. EDQ strives to support our clients through continuing to provide funded supports to ensure accessibility for those experiencing economic hardship, advocating and supporting clients connect with additional supports and services to ensure their immediate needs are supported.

This past year there has been changes to the Medicare and NDIS staffing team at EDQ, with Christophe Langlassé (Accredited Mental

Health Social Worker) finishing up to move into private practice. Christophe joined the contractor team at the beginning of 2023 working 2 days per week. He utilised a person-centred, trauma-informed approach to create an authentic therapeutic relationship with his clients that allowed them to work collaboratively together through their treatment. At the start of 2024 contractor and dietician Sarah Why left EDQ to take maternity leave. Sarah provided a non-diet approach to navigating nutrition and restoring health, tailoring evidence-based nutrition to an individual's health, lifestyle and overall well-being. Christophe and Sarah have both been valuable members of the contractor team.

# PSYCHOSOCIAL RECOVERY COACHING

**Client Story**  
(anonymous)



Mandy Long works with NDIS clients through Psychosocial Recovery Coaching. Mandy states that this "is very close to my heart as client's Service Agreements often allow for long term session numbers. This enables the worker and client to build deep connection, trust and enjoy life stories over the years in a reciprocal approach.

**"It is my experience with NDIS clients that I continually learn and am reminded of the resilience and determination of humanity."**

**"I have been part of the Eating Disorders Qld Lived Experience NDIS Psychosocial Recovery Coaching for approximately 3 years. My worker and I talk each week, and I value and look forward to her time greatly.**

*She does not counsel me, however, she will share her experiences in her recovery journey and onwards which gives me hope that one day, I may get to a place like her.*

*Living with an eating disorder can be very lonely, especially as I do not have any family support in Australia, however talking to her each week, even if we barely touch on ED issues, reminds me that I am not alone, no matter how isolated I feel.*

*I am so appreciative that she has the lived experience, because unless you have lived this, you really do not understand what it is like. To people who don't get it, it is just a stupid diet, but it is so much more, and so much harder to work through. I have had ED in my life for almost 30 years, so no, it is not a stupid diet that I can just stop. I don't know who I am without it. That is scary. With my EDQ worker and my other professional support people walking alongside me though, maybe, just maybe....."*

Gifts from a NDIS client for the Cairns office





# LIVED EXPERIENCE WORK

Enhancement funding through Better Care Together

**EDQ Lived Experience workers have been celebrating the extraordinary in the everyday ordinary life.**

For us as Lived Experience workers, this means cheering on clients having coffee at a café, planting a garden, eating popcorn at the movies or simply walking in the park. The 'ordinary' things that can be taken for granted, are the 'extraordinary' in our client's journeys. We have found this lens helps break down barriers to recovery.

Lived experience support connects clients with a worker who has recovered from an eating disorder, providing a safe space for authentic connection while fostering hope and reducing shame and stigma.

EDQ now offers 10 fully funded lived experience sessions to all clients, increasing from 5 sessions in 2022-23, enhancing support by helping build stronger, more trusting relationships. Sessions may include sharing examples of overcoming adversity, validating

challenges and exploring a meaningful life outside the eating disorder.

Additionally, lived experience workers facilitate an expanding number of groups alongside practitioners, including Community Table, Recovery Warriors and Plug-In, as well as the lived experience-led Peer Support Group.

EDQ maintains its position as a leader in the eating disorder lived experience workforce. In line with increased funding from the Better Care Together initiative and to help meet growing client demand for lived experience sessions, the team has expanded from four Lived Experience Workers in 2022-23 to a team of six in 2024, with two workers now in Cairns, Far North Queensland.

Such growth also allows for expanding diversity, enabling strong connections that reduce shame with a broader range of clients.

## Service provider experiences of Lived Experience work

**“Working alongside lived-experience workers has enabled me to connect better with clients.**

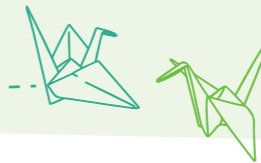
*I recently received feedback from a client who engaged with an LE worker who expressed that they 'had never felt more seen and understood in a mental health context'. When I have collaborated with LE workers, I have found their insight and perspectives invaluable, and it ensures that my work is individual-focused and client-led”*

– Eating Disorder Practitioner

**“Collaborating with lived experience workers when sharing a client has always enriched any therapeutic intervention I implement.**

*Approaching these interactions as a team provides cohesive and reinforcing care for the client, who can feel the wrap-around support. Additionally, I always benefit from hearing the lived experience workers' invaluable perspective and incorporating this into my work with the client”*

– Eating Disorder Practitioner



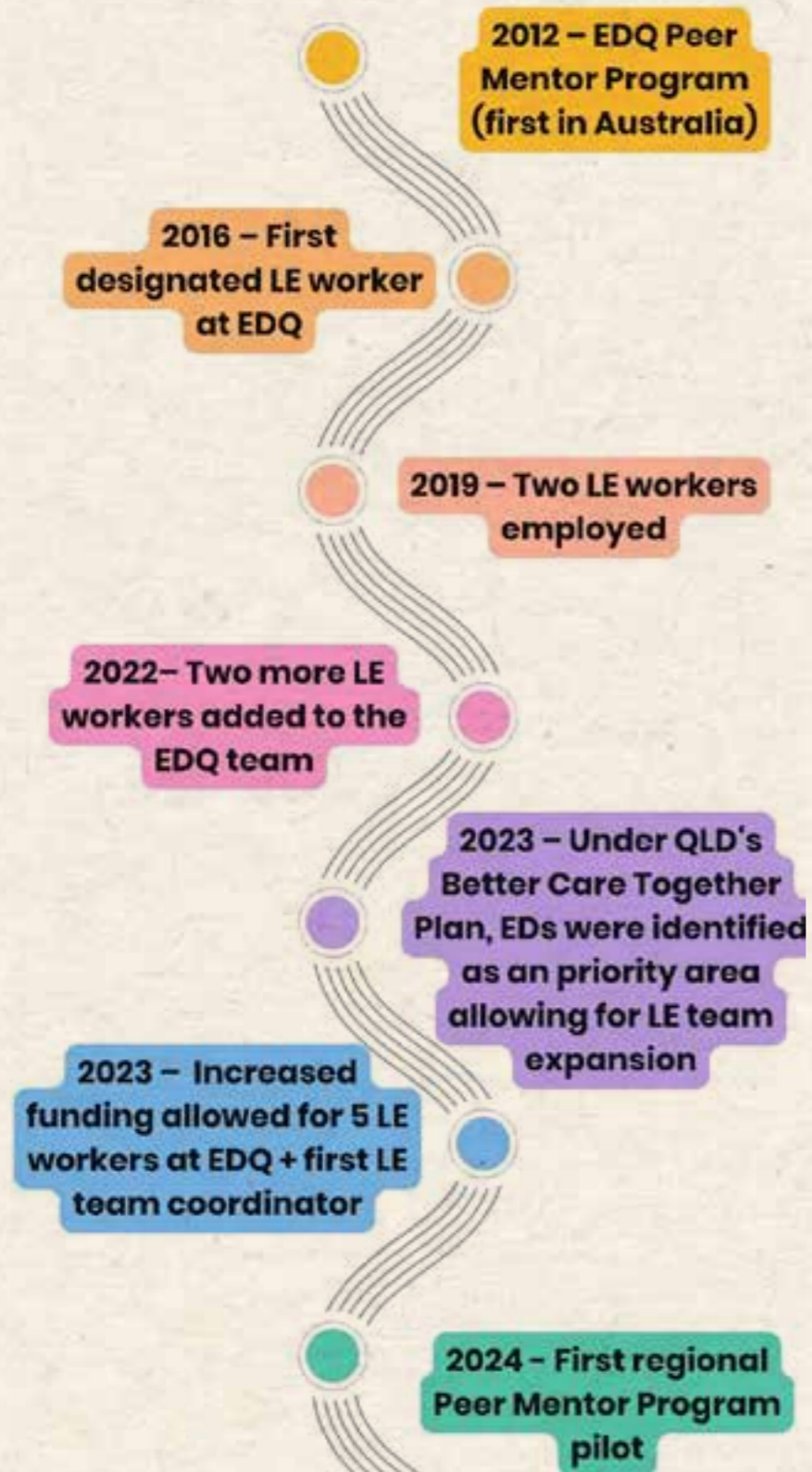
### Client Story (anonymous)

**“I have found our sessions together in peer support to be highly beneficial for me and my recovery.**

*As someone who has had many traumatic and hurtful experiences with healthcare systems and with healthcare professionals, I have always found it incredibly difficult to build the trust and rapport necessary for a beneficial therapeutic relationship. This is part of the reason why I have found lived experience support so beneficial, because I feel as though there is an implicit trust and understanding with someone that has walked a similar path.*

*In our sessions, I feel as though I can be open and honest without needing to worry about judgement and stigma. Our time together has provided a safe space to access support and guidance. I'm so grateful for all you've done for me and shared with me so far, I appreciate it immensely.”*

# LIVED EXPERIENCE TIMELINE



# SPEAKER PROGRAM

## LIVED EXPERIENCE WORK

"I found the EDQ speaker program helpful. The trainers were phenomenal, it helped me open my eyes to the power of different words."  
- Zoey, 2024

*The speaker program empowers both the individual and the community to challenge shame and stigma around eating disorders, hold hope for eating disorder recovery and bring insight and understanding to the human experience of an eating disorder.*

The EDQ Speaker program was developed in 2016 in response to the Royal Brisbane and Women's Hospitals' request for recovery stories to be part of client experience as they transition back into the community.

In 2024, the program has been facilitated by lived experience workers Mandy and Michelle who have significant experience in sharing their own recovery stories with a diversity of audiences.

Mandatory speaker training is conducted in a small group setting over three nights and includes story construction, language and content guidelines, speaking to a variety of audiences, public speaking tips and self-care. Speakers give voice to their recovery stories within this safe, supportive group space providing feedback to each other. New speakers engage in individual story workshopping to prepare for their first speaking event. This training was facilitated on three occasions in the 2023/24 year.

Speaker Connect groups offer regular connection with other EDQ speakers around this unique experience and is one way that EDQ provides ongoing support. Speakers are

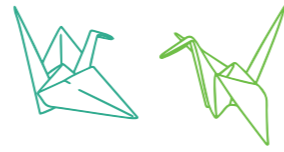
offered preparation and debrief sessions around speaking events, annual check-ins and feedback and skillset development.

Our speakers have shared their recovery wisdom and passion within EDQ groups, at eating disorder forums and health professional education events. We welcome feedback and aim to optimise the powerful experience of sharing recovery stories.

As part of our speaker program, we have noticed:

- The speaker program **positively benefits both the speaker and the community.**
- Giving words and voice to a recovery story is often unexpectedly emotional and empowering. **Speakers value safe space for reflection and support.**
- **Considering the time and space in both the speaker and audience's life journeys** is important to how we share recovery stories.

# DUAL ROLE OF SPEAKER PROGRAM



## FOR THE SPEAKER

### Reduces shame around eating disorder journey and allows vital space for reflections about recovery itself

*"Becoming a speaker with EDQ has given me the chance to offer support to those who might be struggling with their recovery, showing them that it's possible to find recovery and healing. It has also allowed me to reflect on how my own recovery journey has positively transformed me."*

- Chloe, 2024

### Empowering and healing

*"The speaker programme is the most transformational experience especially coming from a space where I'm not actively having an ED. It's another level of healing and growth, where vulnerability is held and supported by the staff at EDQ."*

- Janey, 2024

### Positive reframing and repurposing of eating disorder journey to one that is altruistic and contributing to positive reflection and change in eating disorder sector

*"I was lucky enough to share my story to nurses and I cannot explain how empowering this experience was. Not only did they ask beautiful questions that showed the level of care for their patients, but I was able to express myself and be listened to fully."*

- Zoey, 2024

## FOR THE COMMUNITY

### Challenges societal stigma around ED and provides hope for recovery

*"Each person's path to recovery is different, but EDQ has created a welcoming, supportive and secure space where everyone can find their own path to healing, during recovery and post recovery."*

- Chloe, 2024

### Increases insight, empathy, validation and understanding into the human experience of an eating disorder

*"A group member spoke to how listening to a lived experience speaker inspired hope for recovery for themselves but also appreciated how the speaker spoke to the challenges in recovery honestly, which felt validating to their own challenges."*

- Feedback from clients at 10-week group, 2024

### Promotes the voice and value of lived experience creating hope for recovery

*"The lived experience aspect of the training day continues to be identified as the highlight of the training for attendees."*

- QuEDS Nurse Educator, 2024

# SPEAKER PROFILE

## Bonnie Killip

*"In my professional life I am a health consultant (dietitian and clinical hypnotherapist). I work with people in recovery from eating disorders to help them create and enjoy a full life beyond the eating disorder. Outside of work you can find me in the ocean, enjoying time with my friends and family and playing with our dog."*



### Why did you first join the speaker program?

"I first heard about the EDQs speaker program in 2018 from my dietetics mentor at the time.

I decided to join the speaker program because when I was living with anorexia nervosa I remember it was while sitting in a hospital bed feeling utterly broken, lost and alone that I thought there has to be another way (that we can treat people with eating disorders that is more successful than this).

*I went on to learn there was another way. I learnt how to work with, instead of against, my mind and after fifteen years of living with an eating disorder, I recovered.*

I wanted to be a part of helping people living with eating disorders to get their lives back. Sharing my experience of living with and recovering from an eating disorder felt like a valuable contribution to this goal. It felt like an opportunity to help those involved in the treatment of people living with eating disorders to understand eating disorders better and therefore offer more effective help. It is also an opportunity to connect with those struggling to recover and lift some of the shame and the isolation that often comes with living with an eating disorder."

### What do you wish someone had told you about recovery?

"I wish someone had told me it was possible.

For many years I was told anorexia nervosa was something I would have to learn to manage for the rest of my life.

I was told it would always be something I'd have to "be aware of" and "stay on top of".

When I was sick, I never got to see or hear the side of positivity and hope. It was all darkness and shame."

### What have you learnt about yourself in recovery?

"I learnt so much in recovery and life after an eating disorder that there is no way I can condense it into a couple of sentences.

One thing that stands out to me is - I learned I was much stronger than I believed.

But most importantly I learned that just because I was "strong" it didn't mean that I had to be "strong".

It didn't mean I had to do everything, get everything "right" or be everything to everyone all the time.

I learnt I had a choice. I learnt it was ok to choose to not do it all. I learnt I was human, and I learnt to be content with that."

### What has it felt like to share your story?

"Above all it has felt valuable to share my story.

I am always grateful when people ask questions such as what I found useful and not useful in my treatment because I know it shows they want to improve their treatment skills. Which has been a big motivating factor in sharing my story. So that people in the position to treat people living with eating disorders are equipped to deliver the best treatment possible.

If I am honest there are times it has made me feel sad too. Sad for the younger me who was doing the best she could do but who was feeling so stuck and confused. It also makes me feel sad for my family who went through all that with me.

Most of all I have a sense of having contributed to improving people's understanding of eating disorders, helping people to see (often for the first time) that full and complete recovery from eating disorders is possible. And therefore, helping them to change the way they treat those wanting to recover and to me that will always be worth it."

# PEER SUPPORT GROUP (PSG)

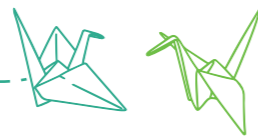
**Peer Support group (PSG) is run in person and online.**

PSG is facilitated by a Lived Experience Worker and a Speaker from our Speaker Pool; therefore, all people attending group share the common bond of lived experience.

The topics discussed in group are client led and it is enlightening to watch clients offer their experiences to other clients in a genuinely encouraging way both to navigate challenges and hold hope.



'Enough' by Mandi



## Client Story (anonymous)

**"I started attending PSG last year and it's not been easy for me I am pretty quiet and don't find it easy to share in a group setting but over time it has helped me gain some confidence maybe not every time but some."**

*This year has been hard with a couple of new diagnosis and struggling to manage and accept it but I have tried my hardest to stay engaged with PSG and the support that I feel is so encouraging and helps me through some really hard times.*

*The thing with PSG even on days I don't feel like I can do it I still show up, I may not always contribute but there is always insight and learning that I take away. There is a very supportive community vibe that draws me back. I really believe that lived experience is extremely undervalued and I know in my journey I would not have still been travelling it wasn't for the amazing support from lived experience mentors and PSG.*

*The writing above is not easy for me to put out there; I really don't like showing vulnerability and I can 100% say if it was not for peer support and others with lived experience I would haven given up by now."*

## PSG Facilitator feedback

*"I feel part of a community, like I am at home, the group is a space I can open up about things to do we my eating disorder journey, that I have not found the space to do so out there in the broader world, where I carried a lot of shame and guilt about my eating disorder and could not trust anyone with disclosure. **It was from seeing other brave people share their stories of recovery that I found the strength to open up and be vulnerable about mine.** It is a two-way street being a facilitator of PSG, as we are lived experience workers that share our journey to help others, but help for recovery is reciprocated in our own journey as we are impacted by the vulnerability of other group members in just the same way."*

– Lived Experience Worker

*"Facilitating for PSG is a super rewarding process. I find the groups easy to navigate and more often than not **the participants will bounce of each other's energy and connect with one another.** It's nice to know that there is a safe and welcoming space for all participants that helps create a community."*

– Lived Experience Worker

*"Challenge in managing groups of smaller numbers; therapeutic dynamic more so than a peer group relationship."*

– Lived Experience Worker

*"Peer support group is an honour to be a part of. I am always inspired by the participants' wisdom, warmth, authentic connection and unwavering support of one another."*

– Lived Experience Worker

*"Challenge + practice in maintaining a balance between safety/boundaries/containment and vulnerability."*

– Lived Experience Worker

*"Highly rewarding hearing group members mutually support each other and recognise their strengths to support themselves & others through group reflection."*

– Lived Experience Worker

*"Highly rewarding seeing group members mutually validate each other and recognise they are not alone in their experiences."*

– Lived Experience Worker

# bITE PROGRAM



The brief Intervention/Therapy for Eating disorders (bITE) program funded by the Commonwealth Government, began in the 2023-2024 financial year period.

The bITE program is a 15 week community based program that focusses on connection and nourishment. bITE is tailored to individual client needs and preferences across a continuum of care, regardless of ED type, severity or geographical accessibility.

The bITE program objectives are to offer clients earlier access to support whilst they may be on the waitlist for QLD health, Medicare or NDIS funded service options. The bITE program provides a great introduction into EDQ and ED therapeutic work.

There are 2 phases in the bITE program: **connect and nourish**. In Connect, clients access 6 skills-based therapy sessions, utilizing Focused Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (FACT), and an 11-week wise choices group. The Wise Choices group allows clients to expand on skills learnt in the individual sessions. In Nourish, clients engage in a 4-week introductory meal support group called one bITE at a time. This group creates a supportive environment for clients to navigate the challenges associated with mealtimes, as well as engage in skills learnt in the first phase of the program.



This program has brought me hope in my personal journey and I am sure many others."

"[I] left listened to and validated, felt understood - significantly more than any other support I've ever engaged with. I liked having real exercises to take home and try."

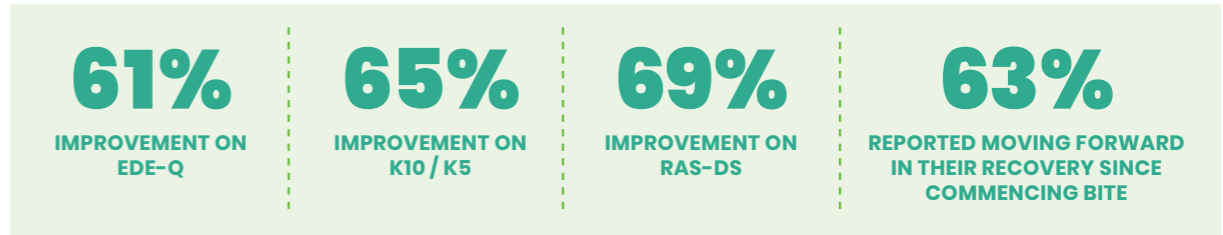
# bITE EVALUATION



taken from the AWP report

101 clients have received a service in the bITE program in this reporting period. The total number of sessions delivered was 619 (789 hours), averaging 6 sessions per client.

Of the clients who had a pre- and post-outcome measure or completed a feedback form:



Not tested for statistical significance.

**CLIENT OUTCOME** The client, who has a diagnosis of ARFID, has managed to increase the variety of foods they eat, and a new 'safe' food has been discovered. The client has also been able to use coping strategies developed in session to manage distress around trying new food.



## Experience with the EDQ bITE program:

- The clients first enquiry (to EDQ) was on **March 1st 2024**
- Intake was completed with an EDQ practitioner on **12th April 2024**
- A bITE practitioner was allocated the client on **3rd May 2024**
- The bITE practitioner first contacted the client on **7th May 2024**
- The first session was held via Telehealth on **16th May 2024**

At the time of writing this report, the client was nearing completion of the six FACT sessions in the bITE program. This is the only service they have accessed at EDQ so far.

The client stated that these individual sessions have worked well as they have helped **"keep them accountable"**.

**Client Story**  
(anonymous)

## Client feedback

"I have found engaging with [bITE practitioner] and EDQ an overall very positive experience. I've had 38 years of living with this eating disorder and didn't actually think I would ever be able to get any help with it. I've found the sessions really helpful in getting me to finally take the first steps in trying new foods and breaking it down into something that is manageable for me.

One of the biggest things for me, is I'm not blaming myself so much now for my eating disorder. Most people seem to believe that I choose to be a "fussy" eater and hearing that all your life makes you start to believe it. I had never heard about neurodivergence and ARFID before, but I have looked into it since it came up in our sessions and it is like it has clicked into place and makes sense to me now why I have the relationship I do with food.

In relation to areas for improvement, the main thing would be for more information gathering so professionals have a better understanding of ARFID and hopefully in turn, ways to treat it."

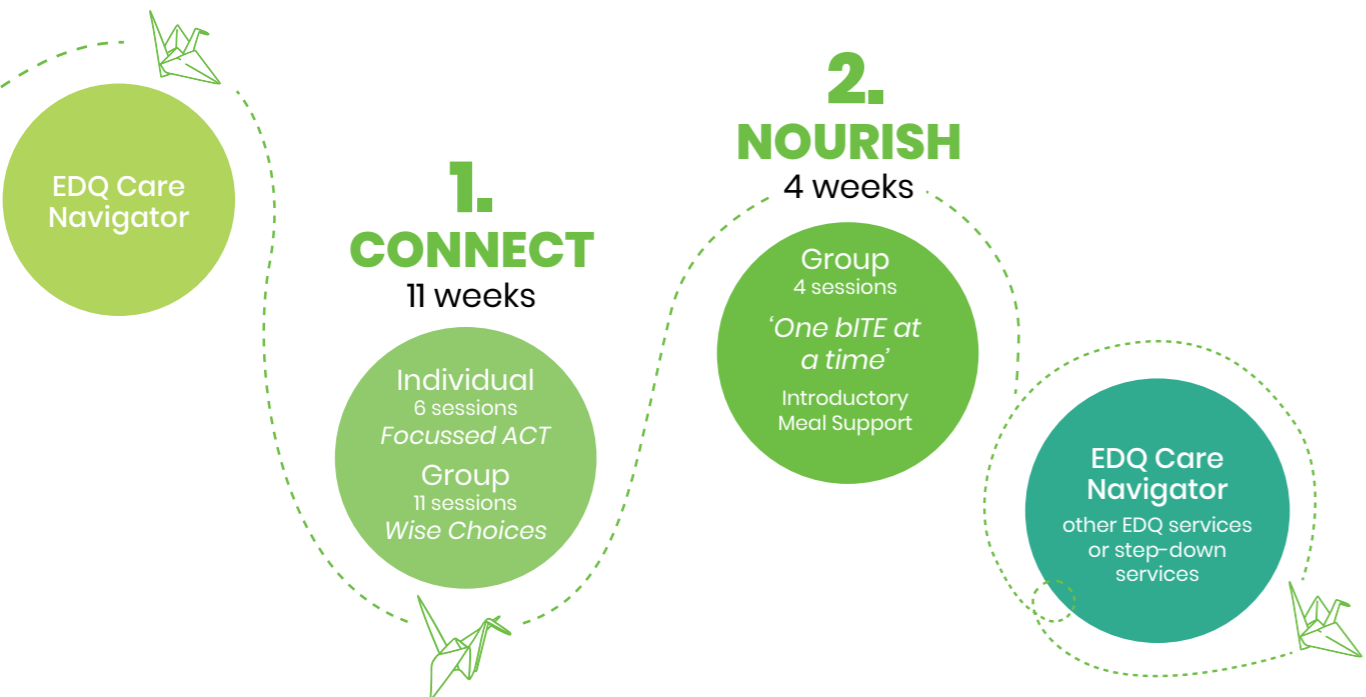


Sarah BITE Program Coordinator

### Following completion of the bITE program, clients are referred into other EDQ support options including:

- Longer term counselling support (20 sessions)
- Lived experience peer work (10 sessions)
- Community Table (community-based meal support program)
- Other EDQ groups

Referral options are based on clients' goals and support needs. This is a collaborative decision between bITE practitioner and clients to determine pathway of continued support.



# FACT SESSIONS

"Without [FACT sessions] I definitely would have moved backwards in my eating disorder."

"I was able to continue my journey to recovery with support while waiting for a more long-term treatment option."

## The 6 skills-based sessions within the bITE program utilised the framework Focused-ACT (FACT)

The aim of these sessions is to work with clients to identify what is getting in the way of the life they want to lead, understand these barriers, and develop skills and strategies to overcome them. The 6 sessions draw on the tri-flex within FACT which are: 'opening up', 'being present' and 'doing what matters'. Sessions are structured based on clients' goals. This service is often what most clients will begin with, and it could be the first time they have sort support for their ED.

FACT sessions can be delivered via Telehealth (video call or over the phone) or in-person at the EDQ office in South Brisbane or Cairns.

Practitioners have noticed clients engaging in the FACT model and coming into the sessions motivated due to short wait time between Intake and FACT sessions. Practitioners have reflected on the connection they develop with their clients throughout the program as the same practitioners who deliver the 6 FACT sessions also run the groups.

The Choice Point - Brief Intervention Therapy for Eating Disorder

Naming the Radio Station Eating Disorders

Brief Intervention for Eating Disorder Program Introduction

You can now view bITE videos on YouTube [www.youtube.com/@EatingDisordersQueensland](https://www.youtube.com/@EatingDisordersQueensland)



# WISE CHOICES

Wise Choices is a manualised psychoeducation group that is based on acceptance and commitment therapy. Wise choices support clients to increase psychological flexibility, learn new approaches to navigating challenging emotions and introduce mindfulness skills. The group is designed to complement the 6 individual FACT sessions. While this group is focused on practical skills and tools clients can incorporate into their lives, the group also fosters a sense of comradery and connection among participants.

## Over the 11 weeks participants learn the below:

- Introduction to mindfulness skills
- Awareness of thoughts and 'unhooking' skills
- The costs of trying to fight or avoid challenging thoughts and emotions
- Awareness of emotions, sensations and urges
- Values and the significance of taking values-based action

October 2023 round: 6 participants  
 February 2024 round: 10 participants  
 June 2024 round: 11 participants  
 27 clients were involved in the program in total

Facilitators of the group noticed this year that the two elements of the program; the individual FACT sessions and the Wise Choices group are coming together to give clients an opportunity to dive deeper into the concepts of acceptance and commitment therapy. Having this continuity meant that many clients were able to articulate the ways that they are implementing ACT strategies into their everyday life, and how this has been supporting them in their recovery.



*One client commented that they utilised post it notes around the house to remind them to the diffusion techniques discussed in the group. They also commented that using the passengers on the bus metaphor had been a "huge turning point" for them, in being able to separate themselves from their passengers. Clients unanimously agreed that the group fostered a sense of connection which helped reduce stigma and the isolation.*

Other group members reflected that they liked engaging in values work. In addition, focusing on progress goals which align with values, rather than the pressure of outcomes goals was also useful.

One client shared that they were not aiming for "recovery" at the beginning of the group, and only wanted to lessen some symptoms of the eating disorder. Throughout the weeks this member often shared that they considered not turning up to the group but was compelled to attend because of the connection they felt with other group members.

*"I found all the subjects and skills covered to be helpful."*

The client reflected each week the usefulness of the content, and the comradery they felt through the other members sharing openly. During the second to last week, the client stated that they were beginning to feel as though recovery was possible. Using the values work we had completed in the prior weeks, the client realised that attending a drug and alcohol rehabilitation was the best action for them, despite this being a difficult decision that they had been avoiding for some time.

*"I don't feel alone. I felt validated and valued. I learnt new things and enjoyed the positivity of it all."*

*"[what was most helpful] was the range of other [group] members sharing their experience which validated my own."*

# ONE bITE AT A TIME

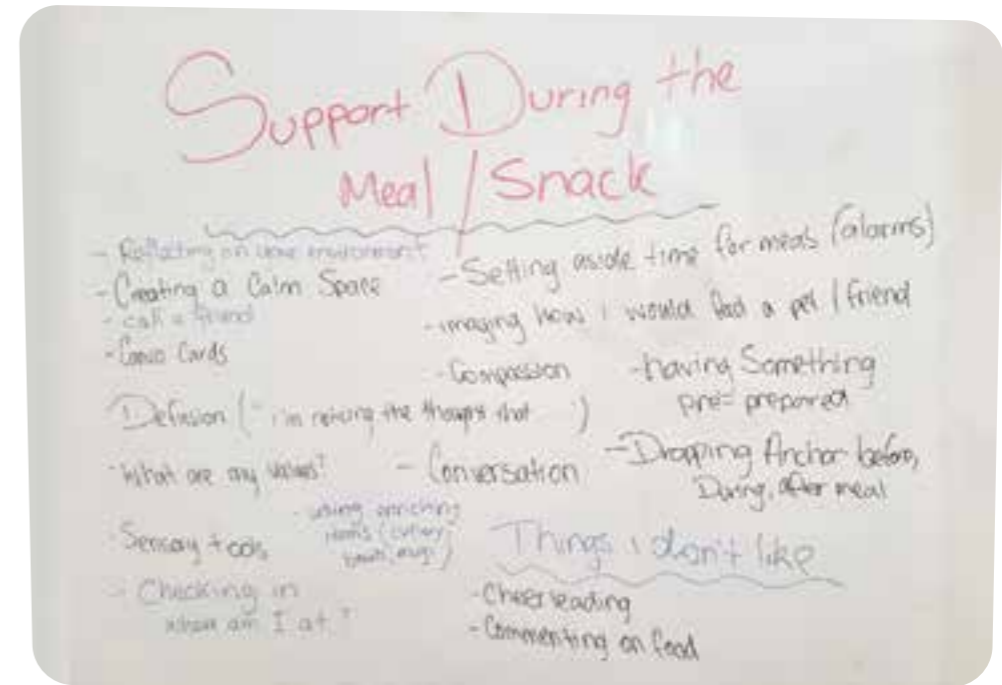
*In late June 2024 we saw the introduction of the One bITE At A Time group which sits within Nourish/second phase of the bITE program.*

One bITE At A Time is a 4-week introduction meal support group program, manualised a registered eating disorder dietician, and EDQs Lived Experience workers. In this group clients get the opportunity to utilise ACT skills they have learnt in phase 1 of the bITE program to support themselves at mealtimes. The first round of One bITE At a

Time ran in between June–July 2024, with 7 clients commencing the group and 5 clients completing the group. With support from the brief intervention facilitators, clients brought nutritionally adequate snacks for the first three weeks of group, and in the final week participants shared a lunch meal together provided by EDQ.

## The below is covered in One bITE at a time:

- Exploring the RAVES model and meeting nutritional needs
- Tools to support themselves before, during and after a meal
- Navigating triggers around mealtimes (ie. Social media)
- Using creativity to help ground after a meal



Whiteboard during the One Bite At A Time group

*When not talking about coping strategies or RAVES clients enjoyed engaging in art projects, getting to know each other and discussing Taylor Swift. Clients provided positive feedback about the experience within the group, reflecting the different challenges related to mealtimes that the group enabled them to focus on (e.g social eating, meal preparation).*

Facilitators, who had worked with many of these clients personally in other aspects of the bITE program, noticed how much each of them had connected with the ACT model and naturally utilised skills. Clients reflected on the helpfulness of learning more about food and RAVES, and the helpfulness of moving towards application of emotional regulation skills to a challenging aspect of their eating disorder. Facilitators also noticed the benefit of particular clients who had done Wise Choices together experiencing continuity with fellow group participants as well as facilitators.

It is hoped that clients who found the group helpful will consider progressing to the more structured Community Table meal support group program at EDQ. One of the facilitators of Community Table, dropped into the final session of this round of One bITE At A Time to introduce themselves to participants and talk a bit about Community Table. This ensures clients are feeling supported to step up into a more intensive meal support program after the completion of one bITE at a time.

# 10-WEEK THERAPEUTIC GROUP



*The 10-week Therapeutic Group enables clients to connect with others in recovery while exploring various topics and themes related to eating disorders.*



Within this group we explore a wide range of topics related to eating disorders, such as values, emotions, needs, communication, and body acceptance. What has happened as we've delved into these areas is a heightened awareness of how external influences—like gender roles, cultural expectations, family dynamics, and societal pressures—affect individuals' relationships with food and body image.

What we've noticed these conversations have brought to light is how diet culture and patriarchal values perpetuate eating disorders and participants have become more conscious of the hidden forces at play and their impact on personal experiences with eating disorders.

*"I never realized how much societal expectations were affecting my eating habits. Through our discussions, I've started to see the bigger picture and understand why I feel pressured to look a certain way. It's been eye-opening and empowering."*

*"Participating in the group has helped me build my confidence. The supportive environment has allowed me to voice my struggles and celebrate my small wins. I'm starting to believe in my ability to overcome this."*



*Through our approach, which acknowledges our feminist foundations, we've seen participants gain valuable insights into their unique experiences, develop and strengthen their support networks, skills, and internal resources. What has become evident is that these therapeutic activities facilitate both personal discovery and practical support.*

*"Challenge + practice in maintaining a balance between safety/boundaries/containment and vulnerability."*

Story sharing is a core component of this group, and we've noticed that while clients often begin with apprehension about sharing their personal experiences, over time, these sessions build a supportive community. This process helps diminish feelings of shame, guilt, and isolation. The supportive atmosphere fosters a sense of belonging and validation that has proven to be profoundly beneficial for recovery.

Alongside client story sharing, we invite two guest speakers from the EDQ community who bring lived experience with eating disorders. What has emerged from these interactions is a powerful source of inspiration and practical guidance. Clients can ask questions about their recovery journeys, gaining insights and encouragement from those who have successfully navigated similar challenges. This aspect of the program has noticeably enhanced clients' hope and motivation, reinforcing the belief that recovery is attainable.



## Client Story (anonymous)

*"This group has really helped me learn to be kinder to myself by using my inner nurturer."*

*I'm getting better at challenging the inner critic thoughts that come with my eating disorder and replacing them with more supportive ones. It's not just about being nice to myself but also about recognizing my own worth and celebrating my progress, even the small stuff. It's all helping me build a better relationship with myself and is becoming a key part of my recovery."*



# COMMUNITY TABLE



*Community Table is a meal-support group program where individuals recovering from eating disorders gather to share a meal in a safe and non-threatening environment, supported by eating disorder professionals.*

The program runs for 3 hours once a week over a 5-week period in a progressive learning format. The group allows clients to explore the concept of 'Soul Food' (Costin & Grabb, 2017), access support, and learn activities/ strategies to manage meal-related anxiety and distress. Clients learn distress tolerance and sensory modulation strategies through creative activities to manage meal-related distress, and ways to incorporate these learnings into meals outside Community Table.

**Creative activities include sensory and mindfulness-based activities e.g. gardening, art activities, cooking and creating sensory toolkits.**

Community Table aims to provide clients with the opportunity to establish relationships with others in a recovery-focused environment, engage in eating behaviours aligned with the RAVES model that support a positive relationship with food, work toward nutritional goals, especially adequacy and social eating and to engage in different activities to manage meal-related anxiety and distress in the moment.

Participants expand on this by exploring how these new skills and activities may fit into their recovery journey outside of the group setting. Finally, Community Table provides participants an opportunity to be supported by their peers and staff while exploring soul food principles. This year participating staff noticed the power of lived experience in this space, with each round hosting a lived experienced speaker to share their story. Participants expressed feeling empowered, inspired, seen and connected during these conversations.



# PEER MENTORING PROGRAM

*EDQ's Peer Mentor Program (PMP) connects mentees (clients currently in recovery from an eating disorder) with mentors (volunteers who have been through recovery from an eating disorder) for a 5-month journey together. The intention of the program is to provide lived experience understanding, connection and support as well as hope that recovery is possible!*



## ABOUT THE PROGRAM

PMP runs twice per year. Mentors and mentees agree to regular contact throughout the program in accordance with program expectations and their own needs and preferences. All mentors and mentees also come together throughout the 5-months for online events to feel a greater sense of community, and to offer points of reflection and skills-building opportunities. Mentors are provided different forms of support throughout the program, including pre-group training, monthly supervision with the program coordinator and access to a WhatsApp group facilitated by a Senior Mentor.

*"Amazing, incredibly enlightening and provided me with new insights to my own recovery. I love the opportunity to connect with another person and provide some level of support."*

- Mentor

### Client Story

- Mentee

*"I'm forever grateful for the Peer Mentor Program and the countless ways it has changed my life for the better."*

*It is amazing opportunity to be able to connect with another person who's been through it and truly understands some of the niche aspects of the recovery journey. The staff go above and beyond to ensure that both mentors and mentees feel safe, comfortable and connected. The passion that mentors have in wanting to be able to give back and celebrate our wins and become involved in our lives is really so inspiring and so admirable."*

# PEER MENTORING PROGRAM

## PROGRAM GROWTH

PMP began in 2012 and has continued to run over the past decade, in response to continued positive feedback from participants of the usefulness and uniqueness of this program. Throughout this decade, PMP has adapted to meet client changing needs. Over the last year or so, it has been anecdotally observed that PMP has seen an increase in both mentors and mentees identifying as neurodivergent, those experiencing ARFID, presenting with different

health conditions and identifying along the gender spectrum. As such, adaptations have been made to ensure that clients continue to feel well supported within PMP, included the introduction of a 'Physical Health Safety Plan' form so that those with physical health conditions unrelated to their eating disorder can safely participate in the program. We have also preserved the process of offering flexibility in terms of contact methods used between pairs, and goals for mentees, aiming to respond to different preferences and needs.

*"I really enjoyed the opportunity to engage with a community of people who really understood where I was coming from, were kind and compassionate, and were real cheerleaders of my recovery. I had the opportunity to connect with a couple of really good peer mentors which I am forever grateful for as they offered me so much support and were just there for me throughout everything. Importantly, I didn't feel judged. I highly recommend EDQ for helping anyone with eating issues of any kind." - Mentee*

As of August 2024, EDQ will be running the first Regional PMP. Within the next annual report, we will have data to report on the success of this new program which hopes to expand the reach of EDQ peer mentor supports across QLD.



Whiteboard image made collaboratively at PMP final celebration with reflections [participants made about their changing thoughts and feelings throughout the course of the program.

# TRAUMA-INFORMED YOGA



*Yoga at EDQ has continued to be a great support in recovery, providing that option for people to reconnect back with movement and explore body connection with compassion and gentleness.*

The balance of the 6-week program and Community Practice has allowed those that have never tried Yoga to feel supported during a 6-week program and then to stay connected to fellow participants, other likeminded people, and yoga practice through the monthly classes.

Through Yoga practice, the philosophy and themes that underpin classes help participants explore processes through Yoga that parallel other practices in recovery such as willingness, consistency, acceptance, spontaneity and self-compassion. People are not only learning practices that can help support their well-being but also learning more about themselves.



We are seeing more people access Yoga or reaching out about Yoga as their first service at EDQ which allows that connection to be experienced with the service in a different way while still be able to be referred into other supports if they wish.

A long-term participant in Yoga that recently moved locations and can no longer attend quoted: The compassion and support are deeply touching and I am grateful to have had the opportunity to be a part of the yoga community at EDQ.

*"Yoga at EDQ lets me experience the benefits of yoga and mindfulness in a space that is safe for me as it's free from judgment. Love attending when I have the opportunity to!"*





"Plug-In is an amazing community vibe that I love coming to each month. Good chats, activities, people and food!"



## PLUG IN

Plug-In Group allows participants to 'Plug-In' to EDQ by connecting with peers while they donate their time, skills, and energy to EDQ.

Participants have ranged in terms of where they are in their recovery journey (some currently in treatment and those who have finished their treatment), contributing to such a safe and welcoming environment.

In 2024 the Plug-In group moved into the recording stages of their original 'Voices of Recovery' song, with musicians visiting the SAE Institute Brisbane to professionally record their parts. The final recording is scheduled for early 2025 and will be a moment of significant celebration for all participants involved. Stay tuned for more news in this space!

With the exciting recording stages underway outside of Plug-In hours, the group has transitioned their focus to creating art pieces for the new EDQ Cairns office! Again, this group has come together creatively and collaborated on some extraordinary pieces of art depicting hope, life, recovery and their individual journeys. For participants, the group is a chance to engage with others in a non-therapeutic manner, access support in a creative context and have a lot of fun whilst doing so.

"I look eagerly forward to Plug-In every month, and it is often the highlight of my month. It has been quite lifechanging for me in providing a safe and welcoming place to be myself for some of the first times in my life."

"Plug-In gives me an opportunity to express myself in unique ways outside a clinical setting, while connecting with people who understand what I am going through."

# RECOVERY WARRIORS

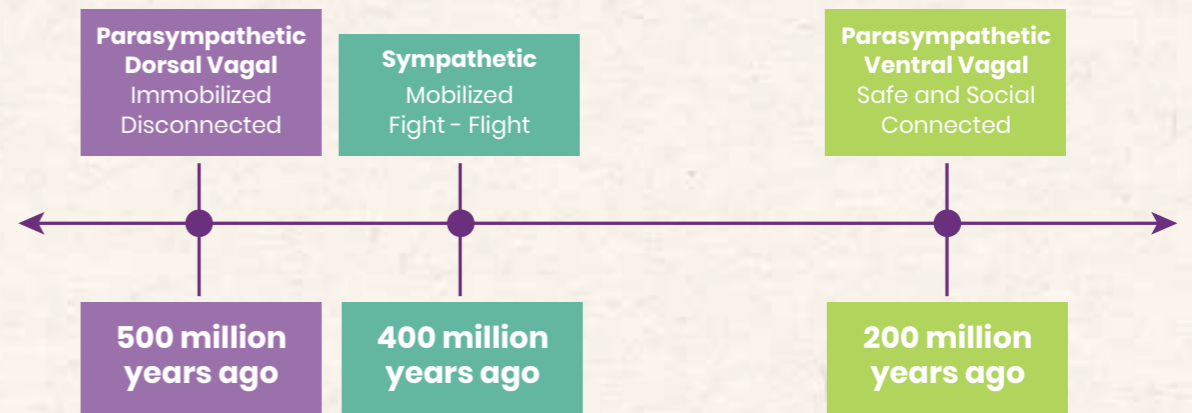
Our Recovery Warriors program is a monthly psycho-education skills-based group funded by Brisbane North PHN.

Each month a different topic is explored with the idea of gaining knowledge and skill to help with eating disorder recovery.



This year due to some staffing changes, Recovery Warriors has shifted to a daytime group. This has seen the establishment of some regular participants coming to most of the groups which has enabled topics to be aligned more to client need as expressed from regular participants to the group, as well as a range of topics which can be inviting to those that haven't come to the group before. It has also enabled at times a topic being covered over two consecutive groups, building upon the previous learning while still addressing new concepts and skills.

- Some of the topics that have been explored this year include:
- Bringing self-compassion into recovery
  - Body relationship and recovery
  - Understanding and learning from Polyvagal theory to support our nervous system
  - Recognising diet culture and strategies for challenging messages and systems
  - Understanding the skills of diffusion and practicing this in the context of unhelpful thoughts.



The Autonomic Timeline

# CARER/KEY SUPPORTS

## Coaching

Throughout 2023/2024, Eating Disorders Queensland continued to provide coaching services to families, carers and key support people. In the past year, our dedicated carer and family team has been diligently ensuring the delivery of our services across Queensland, both in person and through telehealth platforms.

The team have continued to promote our coaching services on social media, in EDQ's newsletter, and in the Carer Help Kit. Additionally, it is promoted directly to CYMHS Greenslopes carers and QuEDS Day Program carers during the CYMHS 'Strong Foundations' sessions and QuEDS 'Participant & Supports Information Session', which the Carer Team presents at regularly. The carer and family team have continued to maintain relationships with other service providers, including Carers Queensland,

Arafmi, and Wandí Nerida to promote our coaching support services. Our coaching service aims to work collaboratively with carers and key support individuals to identify the primary challenges they face when supporting their loved ones through eating disorder recovery. Sessions are centered around developing practical skills, strategies, and action plans to empower carers and key support individuals in providing effective support to their loved ones.

EDQ now has a new offering for carers and key supports wanting coaching with a lived experience carer. Rachel Jones is our first lived experience carer coach, who will be seeing clients and coaching them using her lived experience of being a carer for someone with an eating disorder.

Feedback has been provided by clients who have accessed the coaching service:

"Open listening and experienced, caring advice. Incredibly helpful and a reassuring resource. Forever grateful." - KZ

"My coach gives me more confidence and self-belief and ability to trust in my own caring capabilities." - DM

## Fostering Recovery

Our long running Fostering Recovery Skills-Based Workshop is open to family members and carers across Queensland.

The workshop is based on Professor Janet Treasure's evidence-informed work, which focuses on a collaborative approach to supporting a loved one. In the past year, our dedicated carer and family team has been diligently ensuring the delivery of our services across Queensland, both in person and through telehealth platforms.

The workshop has been co-facilitated by a Carer & Key Supports Coach and Lived Experience Worker.

Feedback by clients who have attended the workshop: 

"What did you like the most?"

"Time to reflect and hearing from Michelle and her lived experience."

"Coming together with a shared goal and shared concerns/challenges. Learning tips."

"Learning new techniques and listening to others who are also in the same situation."



# CARER PEER MENTOR PROGRAM

*The EDQ Carer Peer Mentor Program (CPMP) aims to connect carers in Queensland who are currently providing support to a loved one, with individuals who have previously supported a loved one on their journey to recovery. Two programs were run during the past financial year (2023-2024) and four mentors volunteered their time across the two programs.*

Two mentors had mentored in previous rounds and two mentors mentored for the first time. All mentors completed comprehensive training before the program and attended ongoing one-on-one supervision with EDQ CPMP Coordinator throughout the program. Whereas four mentees connected in for mentoring and were able to access one-on-one support by the program facilitators during the program.



Mentors and mentees attended group events to foster connection and peer support, including a meet and greet and midpoint review. The meet and greet allows for mentees and mentors to connect for the first time and establish hopes and expectations for the program. The midpoint meeting allows for a review of the program's first half. The final celebration is a review of the whole program, and the formal ending

of the mentor-mentee matches. The final celebration in round 1 of the program did not proceed due to mentee illnesses. The final celebration in round 2 of the program was held with each mentor/mentee pair separately due to a delayed start for one of the pairs. Mentoring pairs are expected to connect for up to two hours per fortnight, with face-to-face, phone or telehealth contact options.

*"This is a truly important work done by EDQ to connect carers and encourage support and hope in what is a very difficult journey for all. I have been humbled to be a part of this program again and am always impressed by how well it is organised by the team at EDQ." - CPMP mentor*

# CARER CONNECT

*Carer Connect offers a safe space for carers and key support individuals to connect and engage in discussions about their experiences in supporting a loved one through eating disorder recovery.*

An EDQ Carer and Key Support Coach and a Lived Experience Worker facilitates the group to provide all participants the opportunity to engage in discussion. The facilitators contribute to the discussion by identifying themes and a lived experience perspective.

This financial year there were 11 Carer Connect Support Groups, run on a monthly basis. Due to the demand for online delivery, 8 of those groups were run online via Zoom and 3 in person at EDQ. Throughout 2023-24, Carer Connect has run monthly, alternating between in-person and online via Zoom.

**Themes included:**

- Supporting your loved one during the holiday season
- Caring for yourself whilst supporting a loved one
- Social media and the role in eating disorders and recovery
- Navigating diet culture whilst supporting a loved one.
- The role of an exercise physiologist in eating disorder recovery – guest speaker
- Recovery stories
- Boundary setting
- Stages of Change



**Feedback by clients who have been a part of Carer Connect:**

*"The respectful and encouraging support we received. Being small it was easier to feel involved and less overwhelming from a carers point of view."*

*"The feeling of connection with others going through a similar journey. The chance to show support and empathy for others. Learning tips on various areas of concern."*

*"Different insights that people gave."*

*"Meeting other carers with similar ED experiences."*

*"Caring Compassionate Open Honest."*



## CARER RECONNECT

**Carer Reconnect offers an opportunity for carers and key support individuals to establish connections with both EDQ and one another.**

In the past financial year 23/24, EDQ has run two Carer Reconnect events. One event was held at the recently launched Arafmi respite accommodation and included an EDQ carer lived experience guest speaker. The other event was held at Carers Queensland, North Lakes and included EDQ Carer Coach presenting information about carer services and facilitating a segment on Professor Janet Treasure's 'Caring Styles'.

**Feedback by clients who have been a part of Carer Reconnect:**

"It was helpful, respectful and well facilitated. Facilitators did a good job and hearing from a carer support person and learning about the ARAFMI facility was very helpful especially learning what resources are available for carers."



## EMOTION FOCUSED SKILLS TRAINING

EDQ has partnered with The Child and Youth Mental Health Service (CYMHS) Eating Disorder Program and Queensland Eating Disorder Service (QuEDS), to deliver a two-day training for carer and key support people of those supporting a loved one with an eating disorder.

The Emotion Focused Skills Training was run online via Microsoft Teams and saw 13 carer and key support people attend. It was co-facilitated by three CYMHS practitioners, two QuEDS practitioners, and one EDQ Carer and Key Supports Coach.

**Workshop Aims & Highlights:**

- To help carers & key support people navigate with emotions, learning how to support their loved one through all different stages of eating disorder recovery.
- Decrease resistance to support by increasing awareness and understanding, as encouraging their loved one's ability to cope with their emotions.
- Focus on a range of key processes and highlight the loved ones' motivation towards their recovery.
- Learn communication skills, setting boundaries, understanding expectations and values.
- Accepting carer support and understanding the importance of self-care during this time.
- Connection with other carers and key support people on a similar journey to their own.

# CAIRNS LOCATION

## 2023 - August/September

- Funding acquired bITE + BCT (Better Care Together)
- Belinda (CEO) and Emma (Treatment Team Lead) scouted region for location
- Employed Lived Experience + North QLD Coordinator



## 2023 - December

- Employed two bITE workers



## 2024 - January

- Cairns office opens/co-locating with Mind Australia
- The first time EDQ is place based outside of Brisbane
- Offering regional clients both telehealth + F2F and bITE lived experience work
- Commence community engagement



## 2024 - February - May

- Service presentations QLD Health, NQueeds, local community organisations, dietitian practices
- First in-person client
- Wise Choices + Peer Support Group (PSG) run over telehealth from Cairns office
- Continue community services presentations and engagement



## 2024 - June

- Preparations to commence pilot programs - Regional Peer Mentor Program in August
- Additional lived experience worker employed



# OPENING OF CAIRNS EDQ

By North Queensland Coordinator

## The unfolding of a vision

On 2 January 2024, our first day in the Cairns office, we were greeted by a pair of very protective Curlew birds and their chick. Every morning, they wait by the front door and move aside only at the last minute! Over the months we have fondly watched the baby chick grow into an adult and just recently after 6 months move on, leaving us with the original pair. We took this as a sign of new birth and growth – symbolising the birth and growth of EDQ's first regional service.

In 1996 when EDQ was established (founded as ISIS, after the Egyptian goddess of rebirth, growth, nourishment) the foundations of what we see today in Cairns was born. Many people over the previous 27 years have worked hard to continue that original vision and the opening of the Cairns office pays testament to both staff and volunteers.

In summary, the analogy of the foundations of the Egyptian goddess of rebirth and our current local bird family, is representative of our team, building a safe space for clients not just therapeutically but environmentally.



# OPENING OF CAIRNS EDQ

By North Queensland Coordinator

## The Importance of Regional Services



Clients have fed back to the Cairns team their surprise and gratitude that Eating Disorders Queensland has a local based Cairns office. People in regional areas can be left behind when it comes to services, particularly specialised mental health organisations. While Telehealth offers a great alternative where face to face is not available, being able to offer clients a physical place to come also offers a sense of community, a safe space to feel seen, hopeful and included. Clients often report their appreciation when their practitioner understands the region that they live in, as it is often closely tied to their identity.

This sentiment has been expressed by other mental health organisations, who have expressed relief at having somewhere suitable to refer patients who were previously missed in the gap of existing services or were experiencing extended wait times.

## Connection to community services – adding to the options of support for clients



At the beginning of 2024, as EDQ expanded its place-based services with a new office in Cairns, it was recognized that collaborating with established community services in the area was crucial. Although EDQ had previously supported clients across Queensland, including those in Cairns via telehealth, this marked their first office opening outside of Brisbane. By connecting with various community services (both government and non-government), EDQ ensure that clients receive coordinated and holistic care rather than fragmented or isolated support which can be common in regional spaces. This approach reduces gaps in treatment, avoids duplicative efforts and enhances the overall effectiveness of the support provided. By fostering a network of interconnected services, EDQ aims to help individuals achieve better outcomes, promote long-term recovery and support overall well-being. Such a unified approach not only addresses immediate needs but also empowers individuals to build a healthier and more balanced life within their local community.

# FIRST STEPS TO EATING DISORDERS TRAINING

In 2024 we launched our First Steps to Eating Disorders Training for non-clinical workers. This training is aimed to support workers in non-clinical roles who are NOT providing medical, clinical or therapeutic eating disorder treatment.

Research has shown us that early identification and treatment are important factors in eating disorder recovery: leading to faster recovery, a higher likelihood of long-term recovery, and greater symptom reduction. However, it's common for people with eating disorders to delay seeking help, or even not to seek help at all. Often when a person does seek help, it's for other problems or concerns, and it's unlikely to be from an eating disorder-specific professional or organisation.

**Workers in non-clinical and first-contact roles, including support workers, support coordinators, peer workers, community engagement workers, education staff, and administrative staff, are often the first point of contact, which means you play an important role in:**

- Identifying that someone might be experiencing an eating disorder and supporting them to access treatment.
- Providing clients with helpful and research-supported information about eating disorders and treatment options
- Breaking down the eating disorder stigma.
- Assisting clients to find the right treatment options for them or providing information about what treatment options are available

### After completing this training, we think you will:

- Have a better understanding of eating disorders
- Have gained the knowledge and skills to support clients with an eating disorder through early identification and appropriate referrals
- Have the appropriate language to assist clients
- Be able to break down eating disorder stigma in the community

Since the launch on May 7th, 2024, EDQ has delivered this training to 6 organisations and workplaces, with more on the horizon



Scan to visit page  
[edqfirststepstosupport.com.au](http://edqfirststepstosupport.com.au)



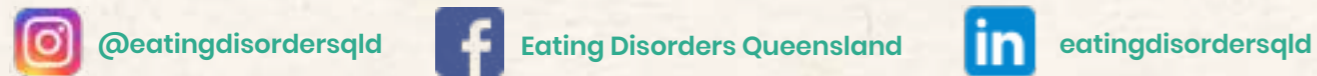
# COMMUNITY EDUCATION & EVENTS

## SOCIAL MEDIA

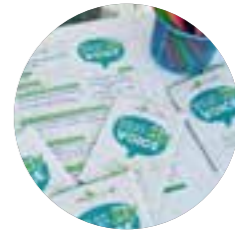


EDQ runs an Instagram Account, Facebook page and LinkedIn account.

Our social media channels are where we post about upcoming groups, updates on current groups, images of staff and events, reshares from other organisations or advocacy campaigns, CEO updates and advocacy, important days of recognition, and employment/volunteer opportunities at EDQ.



# EVENTS



Scan to download Eating Disorder Passport



**BIEDAW 2023**  
September 2023

MP Shannon Fentiman visited EDQ and shared that they would be boosting our funding with an additional \$2.4 million. Fentiman shared "eating disorders can be devastating for individuals and families impacted, but a full recovery is possible with the right support, care and treatment. Eating Disorders Queensland do such important work to support individuals & families impacted by eating disorders and this funding will mean they can support even more Queenslanders who need it."



**National Carers Week**  
October 2023

In October 2023, for National Carers Week, our Carer and Key Support Coaches Mary-Ann and Victoria attended the annual ARAFMI Carers Forum. At EDQ, we celebrate the work that our carers do, and acknowledge that they need support too.



**EveryBODY Welcome Collaboration**  
Early 2024

EDQ joined the EveryBODY! Welcome campaign. We joined Australia's seven national eating disorder organisations that formed the everyBODYwelcome! collaboration- to raise awareness, reduce stigma, and promote access to intersectional, person-centred, gender-affirming care for members of the LGBTQIA+SB community affected by body dissatisfaction, disordered eating or an eating disorder.



**International Women's Day & QLD Women's Health Week**  
3rd - 10th March 2024

This year's theme was "Count Her In", highlighting the critical importance of women's economic empowerment as central to realising women's rights and gender equality. The EDQ team celebrated this day in our Cairns and Brisbane offices by participating in a yoga and meditation session, enabling us with time to reflect on what the day means to us individually and as an organisation. EDQ CEO Belinda was invited by QLD State Premier Steven Miles to attend an International Women's Day event at QLD Parliament.



**Kalika - NAIDOC week**  
7th - 14th July 2024

During NAIDOC week 2024, Kalika Link came to EDQ to describe to us what her artwork means, going into detail about the meaning and representations. 'Beautiful in all her creation' can be seen proudly displayed at EDQ's Brisbane office. This year, we are working on turning Kalika's artwork digital, so it can be integrated within our branding and organisation.

Find out more about the artist: Kalika Link | kb1s.1506@gmail.com | @kalibeat

# CLIENT JOURNEY

## ANONYMOUS

*"I had hidden my eating disorder for over 20 years."*

I had hidden my eating disorder for over 20 years. I had to work through a lot of shame and anxiety just to reach out for help and show up to my first group session with EDQ. In the very first group session on zoom, I was too afraid to turn my camera on until I saw everybody's face and heard them speak. After the first few minutes in that call, I turned my camera on, and this felt like a significant moment for me. I found that to be quite a profound healing moment within itself, even though I had not verbally said anything at all.

*"It was like I was saying I'm here, and I have an eating disorder too and I'm ready to stop hiding."*

What followed was a great 10 weeks or so of weekly sessions connecting with and supporting other people having similar struggles and learning coping skills. I was fairly quiet in the group but it was nice to see I was not alone in this and I felt safe to keep coming along. Each week someone had the opportunity to share their story, and I waited until the very last week to do so, I found it very hard to find the courage but with the patience and support of the lovely facilitators, it meant I could open up and tell my story in the end.

I did two support group blocks, and I then moved on to private sessions with [EDQ Practitioner] which were incredible. Although sometimes I had really tough time logging in at the agreed time, I knew that I could show up in any state of mind and I'd be fully supported and heard. Having a monthly, fortnightly or even weekly check in, depending on how I was doing was so valuable to help me recognise and work through the patterns of my eating disorder.

I recognise eating disorders are complex and I needed a lot of time to explore this. It's something I could of never of afforded to do otherwise and it has made a significant impact on how I cope with my eating disorder today. Reflecting on how far I have come since contacting EDQ, it has been life changing. I know I can reach out to EDQ at any time for a range of support and be treated dignity and respect

# CARE PATHWAY

## My Mental Health

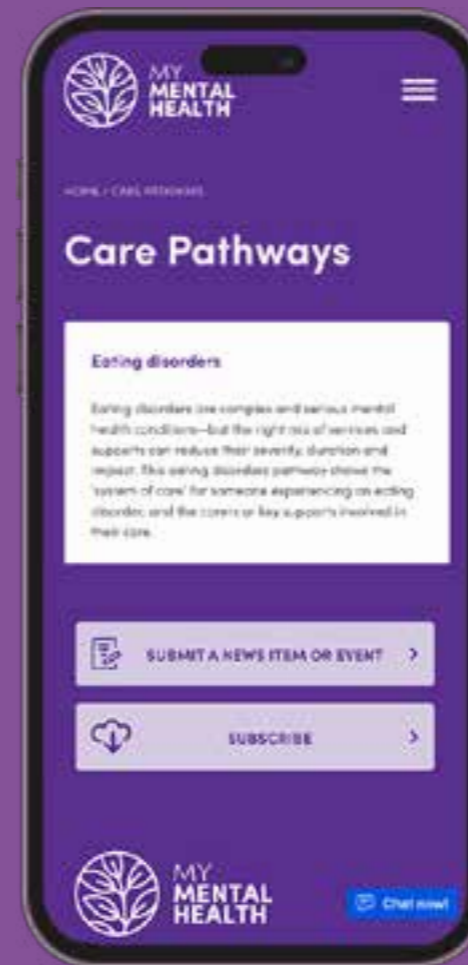


My Mental Health is a resource for consumers, carers, service providers and health professionals which provides information about mental health, alcohol and other drugs and suicide prevention services in the PHN region.



My Mental Health has a section within their Care Pathway navigation specific to eating disorders. Here is provides individuals, carers, health professionals and other service providers information on where to access help.

EDQ is proudly within thin this support service, which hopes to make seeking help and support within the PHN region more accessible.

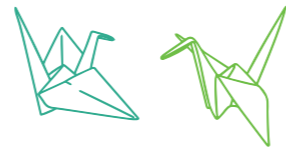


Scan to visit the My Mental Health website



# ADVOCACY

## Ban on Weight Loss Drugs



The Eating Disorder Alliance (EDA), comprised of Butterfly Foundation, Eating Disorders Families Australia, the Australia and New Zealand Academy for Eating Disorders, Eating Disorders Queensland, Eating Disorders Victoria, and The Eating Disorders Association of New Zealand has welcomed the potential ban of compounded weight loss drugs, saying such a move would help to protect those vulnerable to eating disorders.

The EDA has presented 5 recommendations to the Therapeutic Goods Administration (TGA), aiming to mitigate the potential harms associated with weight loss medications and improve the overall well-being of individuals, particularly those affected by eating disorders.

The EDA also raised significant concerns about young people using medically unapproved weight-loss products and the influence of social media on targeted marketing of these medications to this vulnerable demographic.

There are currently 1.1 million Australians living with an eating disorder with women and girls twice as likely than other genders to be affected.

*With these weight loss drugs aimed mainly at women, the lack of consultation and appropriate regulation around the use and distribution of these medications could have particularly disastrous consequences.*

May 2023, the EDA were heartened by Minister Butler's announcement that due to increased safety concerns, "from October, compounding these similar weight-loss products ... will be banned."

The EDA will continue its efforts to advocate for policies and regulations that protect the well-being of those impacted by eating disorders.



# PAYING THE PRICE REPORT 2024

29th of February 2024, The Butterfly Foundation, in partnership with Deloitte, released the Paying the Price Report. The report reveals the alarming prevalence rates and economic costs of eating disorders in Australia and calls for increased awareness, intervention and policy reform for this public health crisis.

EDQ's CEO Belinda attended the launch at Parliament House, alongside other organisations, government officials and lived experience representatives.

Below are some statistics taken from the Paying the Price Report:



WOMEN ARE **TWICE** AS LIKELY AS MEN TO EXPERIENCE AN EATING DISORDER

**1.1m** AUSTRALIANS ARE NOW LIVING WITH AN EATING DISORDER

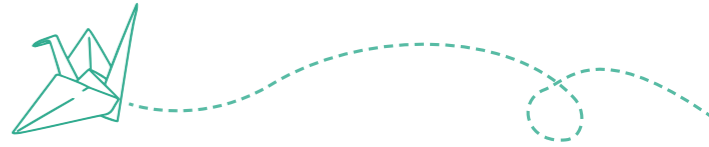
**30%** OF PEOPLE AFFECTED REACH OUT FOR HELP

**1,273** DEATHS DUE TO EATING DISORDERS IN 2023

THE ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COST OF EATING DISORDERS GREW TO **\$67B**

**27%** ARE AGED UNDER 19

PEOPLE WITH AN EATING DISORDER LOSE AN ADDITIONAL **10** DAYS OF WORK PER YEAR



# WORLD EATING DISORDERS ACTING DAY (WEDAD)

World Eating Disorders Action Day (WEDAD), is a grassroots movement designed by and for those affected by eating disorders and their supporters, holds an important place in EDQ's annual calendar during June.

June 2024, EDQ hosted a Queensland Parliamentary event for WEDAD, coinciding with the release of the state Budget 2025 and the upcoming state election in October 2024. With this event, we aimed to educate, advocate for, and highlight the ongoing funding needs for weight stigma eradication and expand research on the harmful effects of diet culture.

*Queensland's Health Minister Shannon Fentiman spoke at the event highlighting the Better Care Together Funding.*



# RESEARCH & CONFERENCES



## ANZAED 2023

At the 2023 ANZAED Conference held on the Gold Coast our Research Officer Jess Tone received the 2023 Peter Beaumont ANZAED Early Career Investigator Research Award for her presentation, Brief Intervention/Therapy for Eating Disorders (bITE): Case Series Evaluation of a Pilot Program Aimed at Individuals Waitlisted for Therapeutic Interventions. This research evaluated the implementation and outcomes from EDQ's bITE pilot program (funded by Brisbane South PHN) and was co-authored by Belinda Chelius and Yvette Miller. EDQ was elated with the announcement. Thank you to South Brisbane PHN for funding this pilot of 6 sessions FOCUS ACT.

## QuEDS Forum 2024

The Queensland Eating Disorder Service (QuEDS) Annual Forum 2024 was held on 1st May 2024 and was themed around early intervention in eating disorders. Our Research Officer, Jess, presented EDQ's newly launched 'First Steps to Eating Disorder Support: A Training for Non-Clinical Workers'. This training was developed to support the early identification of eating disorders in the community and increase access to timely treatment and support.

# EVENTS TIMELINE



## ANZAED 2023 Conference

August 2023

This year's conference was held in QLD, on the Gold Coast.



## The Eating Disorders Alliance (EDA) met in person

August 2023

The Eating Disorders Alliance met in person, after the ANZAED conference. They redefined some important objectives and outcomes for our collective communities and as an Alliance.

## The National Eating Disorders Strategy 2023-2033 was released

August 2023

The National Strategy is a call to action and a roadmap to building the eating disorder system of care. It is a tool to help people at all levels and in all settings to work in a coordinated and sustained way to achieve a full and coordinated system of care for all.



## Body Image and Social Media Roundtable at Parliament House

September 2023

EDQ CEO attended the Body Image and Social Media Roundtable event at Parliament House, co-hosted by Zoe Daniel MP and The Butterfly Foundation.

## Launch of My Passport

September 2023

EDQ My Passport launched! This is a resource for those with an eating disorder self-advocating for themselves in the medical system.



## Body Image and Eating Disorder Awareness Week (BIEDAW)

September 2023

Queensland's Health Minister, Shannon Fentiman, made the announcement while visiting Eating Disorders Queensland, who are receiving \$2.4 million in additional funding as part of the announcement.



## Pride Fair Day

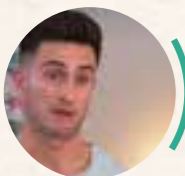
September 2023

EDQ had a stall at Brisbane's Fair Day which celebrates the LGTBQIA+ community.

## National Carer's Week

October 2023

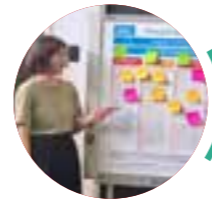
To celebrate, Carer coaches Mary-Ann and Victoria attended ARAFMI Carers Forum to spread awareness about EDQ carer supports.



## Social Media and Eating Disorders Report on Channel 7 News

October 2023

One of our lived experience workers, Alex, made the Channel 7 News. Alex spoke about the effects on eating disorders, sharing his perspective that "social media perpetuates the thin ideal and diet culture."



## Operational Planning Day

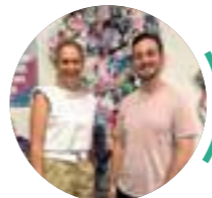
November 2023

EDQ plans service delivery and other health promotion activities around our strategic plan. This year we also used the NEDC Stepped Care Model and analysed where we sit within the system.

## Belinda Features on Let's Talk Podcast

November 2023

Let's Talk is Butterfly Foundations podcast, and featured EDQ CEO on an episode highlighting the importance of including lived experience practitioners in eating disorder treatment.



## Visit from Stephen Bates MP

November 2023

Stephen Bates MP visited EDQ Brisbane to discuss the role of mental health and eating disorders in the lives of young people and LGTBQIA+ individuals.

## EDQ Christmas and End of Year Celebrations

December 2023

EDQ had an end of year celebration, where we all enjoyed some time at the beach and then a team lunch.



## Cairns Office Opens

January 2024

EDQ is now operational in Far North QLD, based in Cairns. We are co-locating with Mind Australia and feel so welcomed and embraced by the Mind Team. Looking forward to our ongoing partnership and EDQ rolling out our services place based.



## EDQ Joined the EveryBODY Welcome Collaboration

February 2024

This collaboration consists of seven other major eating disorder organisations in Australia. It aims to raise awareness, reduce stigma and promote access to eating disorder support of the LGTBQIA+ community.

## Paying the Price Report

February 2024

The Butterfly Foundation released the Paying the Price report, revealing prevalence rates and economic costs of eating disorders in Australia. The findings were alarming and called for immediate action. EDQ CEO Belinda attended the launch at Parliament House.



## EDQ joined NQuEDS to present to the Senior Mental Health Doctors

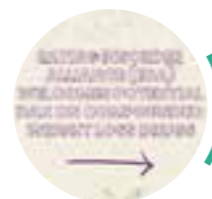
March 2024

EDQ is the main step-down from hospital and health services for the newly established Specialists Eating Disorders Services. We are so excited to now have an office in Cairns to provide community place-based eating disorder support in collaboration with our partners from Hospital and Health Services.

## International Women's Day & QLD Women's Health Week

March 2024

This year's theme was "Count Her In", highlighting the critical importance of women's economic empowerment as central to realising women's rights and gender equality.



## Eating Disorder Alliance met with the TGA to ban Weight Loss Drugs

March 2024

See may 2024 for an update on this progression



## EVENTS TIMELINE CONT'D



### EDQ Cairns presented to the Nutrition and Dietetics team

March 2024

EDQ presented to the Nutrition and Dietetics team at the Cairns Hospital today, sharing information about EDQ, the bITE Program, and Lived Experience Work.

### EDQ attended the Redland's Bay Community Event

March 2024

It was great to share information about the support and services we offer to the residents of the Bay Island community.



### EDQ launches our First Steps to Eating Disorder Support

April 2024

The training comprises of 4 modules and can be delivered in-person or online and is a training for non-clinical workers.



### EDQ CEO on Brisbane Drive Radio

May 2024

It was great to share information about the support and services we offer to the residents of the Bay Island community.

### QuEDS Harm Reduction Training

May 2024

EDQ staff members heard from Sally at QuEDS who presented a Harm Reduction Training for Eating Disorders.



### EDA Welcomes Ban on Compounding Weight Loss Drugs

May 2024

EDQ and the EDA were heartened to hear Minister Butler's announcement that due to increased safety concerns, "from October 2024, compounding these similar weight loss products will be banned."



### World Eating Disorder Action Day (WEDAD)

June 2024

On WEDAD, EDQ joins a global movement to educate and raise awareness about eating disorders. This year's event, EDQ called on the QLD government to maintain our funding to bITE program post 2026, crucial for early intervention and managing waitlists.



### Kalika Link's Artwork

June 2024

Kalika Link is a Kabi Kabi artist who has created a piece of art for the EDQ Brisbane Office. We are currently working on making the artwork digital to then be integrated within or branding.

### EDQ Cairns team participated in NQuEDS training day

November 2023

Mandy shared her inspiring journey and introduced EDQ services in Cairns, highlighting our bITE program and referral pathways from the Hospital and Health Services teams.

# STUDENT/VOLUNTEERS CONTRIBUTORS

Rashi

## Experience at EDQ:

My time at EDQ has been profoundly enriching, offering me valuable learning opportunities and significantly boosting my confidence. I had the chance to engage in various aspects of the organization's work, which helped me develop a well-rounded understanding of eating disorders and the therapeutic process.

## Involvement:

### 10-Week Group Co-Facilitating:

Leading and co-facilitating a 10-week group program was instrumental in enhancing my confidence and deepening my understanding of eating disorders. This experience allowed me to observe diverse manifestations of these issues in different individuals and practice micro-counseling skills during client check-ins. It was rewarding to engage with clients and support their journeys.

### Shadowing bITE Sessions:

Observing the bITE program sessions was particularly impactful. I saw firsthand how six weeks of skills-based sessions equipped clients with practical tools, fostering a sense of independence and autonomy. Witnessing the effectiveness of Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT) in empowering clients was truly inspiring.

### Shadowing and Conducting Intake Sessions:

Shadowing intake sessions provided me with a solid foundation in understanding clients' needs. Eventually, conducting intake sessions myself allowed me to refine my skills, introduce them to the various programs EDQ offers and gain a comprehensive overview of each client's situation.

### Plug-In Sessions:

The creative nature of the plug-in sessions enabled me to build rapport with clients in a more informal setting. This experience was valuable for developing interpersonal skills and establishing connections.

Overall, my placement at EDQ offered a holistic learning experience. The supportive and welcoming environment, combined with the diverse opportunities to engage in various aspects of client care, made my journey both educational and fulfilling.

# VOLUNTEER CONTRIBUTORS

Eliza

*Eliza is one of our amazing cooking volunteers. Through her volunteering, she aims to contribute to mitigating eating disorders and hopes for a world free from eating disorders. Eliza wishes families affected by eating disorders to have hope for recovery and to live a full, beautiful life.*

With eating disorders prevalent in ballet and Eliza having two teenage daughters who are elite ballerinas, she has heard the impacts eating disorders have which has been a main motivator to volunteer at EDQ. **She loves the positive energy everyone brings into the workplace and enjoys meeting like-minded volunteers** from different walks of life. Furthermore, she values teamwork with the other volunteers and hearing their diverse ideas.



## HIGHLIGHT

A highlight of Eliza's volunteering experience occurred after Community Table (CT) clients finished their meals prepared by herself and other volunteers. She remembers seeing the beam on the CT facilitator's face while recalling the food was well-received. Eliza felt a sense of joy knowing her cooking was assisting someone experiencing an eating disorder to move toward recovery.

# STAFF PROFILES

## Hannah

*Hannah serves as a pivotal member of our team at EDQ, often being one of the first points of contact for those seeking our services.*



Her role is instrumental in guiding individuals to the appropriate supports and ensuring they promptly receive the care they need.

With a double degree in Nursing and Behavioural Science (Psychology), Hannah brings a wealth of experience from both hospital and community settings to her role. Hannah manages all referrals into the service, conducts intakes with new clients, and manages waitlists and client allocations.

Hannah is dedicated to fostering a collaborative team culture and actively participates in reflective

practice and professional development at EDQ. She is skilled in managing client information with care and supports innovative service delivery across the state. Her role also involves representing EDQ at relevant networking events, building valuable relationships with key stakeholders in the human services sector.

Outside of work, Hannah is passionate about the outdoors, enjoys playing touch footy, and is currently learning Spanish. Her diverse interests and commitment to personal growth reflect her holistic approach to her professional role.

## Stella

*Stella is a Warumungu woman from Mparntwe (Alice Springs). She has a Bachelor of Public Health, and has a passion for nutrition and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People's health and wellbeing.*



This year Stella's role transitioned from Practice Administrator to Indigenous Liaison Officer and Practice Administrator. The Indigenous Liaison Officer supports Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples to access EDQ services and support; and ensures EDQ provides culturally appropriate approaches to clients. The role leads initiatives that raise awareness for

Indigenous health equity, fosters community engagement and partnerships, and cultivates a diverse and inclusive environment for workers and clients. Stella is currently working on EDQ's Reconciliation Commitment which aims to improve the access and equity of our support services for clients who identify as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander.

# CLIENT JOURNEY

## ANONYMOUS

*"EDQ has genuinely saved and changed my life"*

Almost three years ago, my life as I knew it changed right before my eyes with a referral to QuEDS and what I call 'an adventure walk' down to the emergency department in a hospital for the first time. For the next two years, trips to the emergency department became all too frequent and my family and friends were at a loss on how to help me, as I continued to spiral into to a person they no longer knew and love. I was constant tossed from service to service and my interactions with these services were desperately inadequate and quite frankly left me with trauma that I still struggle with today.

*"For the first time in my life, I wasn't seen as my diagnoses."*

To them I was a number, a checklist, someone who was attention seeking because she couldn't find love and connection elsewhere in her life – a far cry from the truth.

I have suffered blatant discrimination and refused lifesaving medical and mental health treatment because the clinician who spoke with me for less than an hour disagreed with one of my diagnosis' given by two specialists in the field. As a result, they called my GP and told him that I would never receive treatment from that hospital again, forcing me to travel an hour away from home in order to receive said treatment.

My life genuinely felt like an ongoing, never-ending merry-go-round. The merry-go-round never stopped spinning and I could not stop it, get off it, or change it.

While the road has been very rocky, the last nine months I have made incredible progress in my recovery journey. I am a strong believer in the fact that everyone has a story and as such I am so grateful for the opportunities I get in my line of work to share bits and pieces of mine. As part of this, I often get asked what made this attempt at recovery so radically different to all my previous attempts. With every fibre of my being, my answer is always resolute and unchanging. While there were some circumstantial changes which have contributed, the driving factor behind it all was discovering and engaging with EDQ. For the first time in my life, I wasn't seen as my diagnoses. When difficulties arose due to my neurodiversity, I wasn't crumpled up like a piece of paper, chunked into the too hard basket and booted from the service – like I had experienced in the past.

EDQ, as an organisation, has genuinely saved and changed my life. There have been many influential programs and staff, however, a large portion does have to be accredited to my individual counsellor. Over my time, I have met many mental health clinicians and I do have to say there are very few clinicians who can do what she can do. Words cannot begin to describe the impact (so positive) that individual counselling has had on my life.

Through our time together, I have been able to find the much deeper roots to my mental health challenges, and then learn how to attack it from the inside. To feel trapped in a tornado but be able to come out the other side. Even when challenges arose in my physical health, other EDQ staff and my individual counsellor went above and beyond to advocate for me and support me in returning to the programs I was engaging in.

I will forever remain a fierce advocate for the validity, importance and influential impact of the work that EDQ does and how the service continues to break down societal impacts surrounding eating disorders in the healthcare system and wider society. EDQ and its staff have played a major role in healing some of the medical trauma and systematic discrimination that I have experienced, and I will forever be indebted for all that have worked so tirelessly with me."



**Artwork Title:** 'Malaya'  
**Medium:** Graphite on Paper  
**Date:** 2024  
**Dimension:** 21cm x 29.7cm  
**Description by Artist (anonymous):**  
*Filipino for free/freedom. The name Malaya is given as a physical reminder to always remember that your destiny is only yours to decide. Maybe you thought your path would not cross these valleys or be led up these mountains. But this, your past, your history, your story, does not have to be what defines you. As long as you are still breathing, there is hope for change ... set yourself free ...*

# CLIENT JOURNEY

I've been in treatment with EDQ for a year now and the team have helped me immensely with recovery from my eating disorder.

*From the moment I first walked in, I felt welcomed and safe, almost like I'd been there before. The staff there have created an environment that is full of warmth that I've not felt anywhere else, healthcare or otherwise.*

The individual and group sessions are invaluable to me as they have helped me realise that it is possible to have a healthier relationship with food. The practitioners have taught me how to be compassionate to myself which I have previously found very difficult, this has benefited me with challenging the ED but also in every facet of my life.

I genuinely do not know where I'd be without the wonderful team at EDQ and they are an invaluable part of our healthcare system. Thank you to everyone at EDQ for their help, words cannot capture the appreciation I have for the team."

**MICHAEL**

"EDQ has allowed me to heal more than I ever thought possible. The space has got to be hands down the most supportive and accepting place I have ever seen before. Being allowed the opportunity to come in to this community is so special. The amount of support that you can receive at EDQ is mind boggling, at every stage of recovery there are people and activities to help guide and encourage you. I know that seeking help can be so overwhelming, scary and sometimes you can be unsure if you are deserving but I would encourage anyone who is struggling with food and body image to make that leap of faith and seek help with EDQ.

*I think what I love most about the individual counselling is the holistic approach that is taken. I think this can easily be overlooked for so many reasons, but I have found it the most important in my recovery journey".*

**ANONYMOUS**

# MISSION MOMENTS

**One client and their Lived Experience Worker at EDQ shared many points of connection in relation to their lived and living eating disorder experiences.**

During lived experience work, the client embraced the open, non-judgemental space to be able to share past and present difficulties which they had felt unable to share or be understood by others previously. They explained lived experience sessions at EDQ helped them to feel deeply heard and understood, to feel less shame about their eating disorder experience, to learn about the factors which contributed to the development of their eating disorder, and to for the first time consider what life may look like after recovery from their eating disorder.

*"[EDQ Lived Experience Worker] has enabled me to take more ownership of my recovery and has made me feel empowered and able to make decisions which support wellness.*

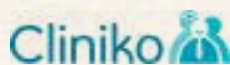
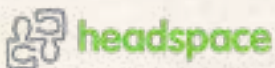
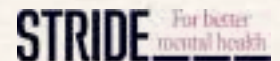
*[EDQ Lived Experience Worker] has also helped me to start to look at what life could look like outside of the eating disorder, it's both terrifying but also very exciting. I think being able to speak to someone who has recovered does make me feel positive and excited about the future."*

*"Lived experience therapy has been a game changer for me. I still have a long way to go but for the first time in my 20-year battle with my eating disorder I feel hopeful that I will be able to change, but also realistic that I will be working on this for a long time. At times I have been confronted and shameful about my behaviours and [EDQ Lived Experience Worker] has never made me feel judged.*

*He holds space for me to ramble and provides honest answers to my questions. I would recommend lived experience therapy to anyone trying to recover from an eating disorder."*

# OUR SUPPORTERS

To our supporters and the community, without each and every one of you we wouldn't be able to do what we do. So thank you!



## Other supporters

Dr. Leanne Barron  
Dr. Mark McGrath  
Queensland Eating Disorder Service

NQueDS  
Eating Disorder Action Group  
Jayden Chen Consulting Accountant  
All the Specialist Eating Disorder Services



[edq.org.au](http://edq.org.au)