ANNUAL REPORT
2025–2026

Spinal Life
AUSTRALIA

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CHAIR'S REPORT

BUILDING FOR SUCCESS

As we reflect on the 2025–26 financial year, I am proud of the progress Spinal Life Australia has made in an environment that continues to present significant challenges for organisations like ours.

Throughout the year, the Board has remained focused on maintaining our organisation's financially stability, and ensuring we are positioned to respond to the current economic landscape and the needs of our community.

Importantly, we have strived to make all decisions with our mission at heart – supporting people with disability to live accessible, equitable and empowered lives.

A sustainable future

Despite the pressures facing our sector, I am pleased to report that Spinal Life achieved a positive financial result for the year.

This reflects careful management across the organisation, with our staff working hard to deliver on our strategy to grow and diversify our services and revenue streams.

Our investment in Move Mobility, which continues to perform strongly, is one example of how we are strengthening our financial position while creating opportunities to deliver greater value for our community.

At a time when many disability organisations are reducing services or leaving the sector altogether, we remain committed to sustainable growth across Queensland and Western Australia.

Investing in our success

One of the most exciting developments this year has been the progress of our new Brisbane Healthy Living Precinct.

We secured a site close to the Princess Alexandra Hospital, where we plan to build a fully accessible destination for people with spinal cord damage and other physical disabilities.

During the financial year, we appointed a project manager and continued to explore opportunities with potential partners and collaborators to bring this important vision to life.

The Precinct will bring together accessible accommodation, rehabilitation and health services, a fitness hub, hydrotherapy pool and more – all in one location. This will better support people transitioning from hospital, those living locally and people travelling to Brisbane to access specialist services.

A significant milestone

The sale of our existing premises at 109 Logan Road, Woolloongabba for $21 million represents another important step towards realising our long-term strategic goals.

Spinal Life will lease the property from its new owners for the coming years, allowing our Brisbane services to continue operating from our existing location while the new Precinct is constructed.

The sale puts us in a strong position to reinvest in the future of our organisation and develop a Precinct designed to meet the needs of our community for decades to come.

Thank you to members

It was an honour to be re-elected to the Board at our Annual General Meeting in November 2025, and I am grateful to our members for their continued trust and support.

I also extend my thanks to my fellow Board members, our Chief Executive Officer, Executive team, employees, volunteers, members and supporters. The progress we have made this year is the result of many people working towards a shared purpose.

There is much more ahead of us, and I'm looking forward to building on our goals over the 2026–27 year. We approach that future from a position of strength, with a clear direction and an unwavering commitment to the people and communities we serve.

GYL STACEY

"THE DECISIONS WE MAKE TODAY ARE HELPING CREATE A STRONGER, MORE SUSTAINABLE SPINAL LIFE AUSTRALIA FOR THE FUTURE."

GROWING TOGETHER

The 2025–26 financial year has brought both important achievements and significant challenges. Across the disability sector, rising costs, workforce pressures and ongoing policy and funding changes continue to reshape the environment in which we operate.

Through it all, Spinal Life Australia has remained focused on what matters most – supporting our members and customers to live accessible, equitable and empowered lives.

I'm incredibly proud of what we have achieved together. The commitment of our Board, Executive and staff, combined with the trust and support of our community, has enabled us to expand our services and continue building for the future.

Responding to change

We delivered almost 5,000 additional hours of Allied Health services compared with the previous financial year, reflecting continued demand for our multidisciplinary team's services. While we saw a small decrease in Personal Support hours, our teams remained focused on delivering high-quality, tailored support and responding to the needs of our customers.

We also strengthened our presence in regional communities. Our Peer Support programs have continued to grow in Cairns, Perth and Townsville, while the opening of a new Move Mobility showroom in Rockhampton has created further opportunities for collaboration with our local Spinal Life team. A Mackay showroom opened in October 2026, as this report goes to print.

Navigating industry reforms

The NDIS continues to undergo significant reform, creating uncertainty for participants and providers alike. At the same time, rising operating costs and funding arrangements are placing further pressure on service sustainability.

We continue to engage with government and other sector stakeholders to advocate for a fairer and more sustainable system for all. This includes advocating for appropriate funding, better participant outcomes and recognition of the important role that health, rehabilitation and physical activities play in people's lives.

We are also closely following aged care reforms, including the introduction of Support at Home and continuing the Commonwealth Home Support Program, to ensure the needs of older Australians with disability are recognised and appropriately supported.

Speaking up for inclusion

Advocacy remains a priority for Spinal Life. This year, we continued to speak up on issues affecting our community, from the accessibility of housing and transport to much-needed improvements in disability funding and support systems.

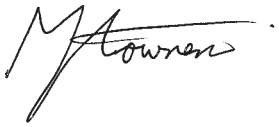
In Queensland, we successfully advocated to protect the revised National Construction Code, when the introduction of new accessibility requirements came under scrutiny; recognising that housing is essential to creating inclusive communities now and into the future.

Looking ahead

Partnership and innovation will continue to play an important role in our future. We are building relationships that support more holistic services and better rehabilitation outcomes, while continuing our strong research collaborations with The Hopkins Centre, Griffith University and other industry leaders.

In 2025–26, we were involved in research projects exploring virtual reality wheelchair simulators, AI-supported wound assessment tools and sleep health, demonstrating the possibilities that emerge when research, clinical expertise and lived experience come together. We also began a new partnership to deliver some of the most advanced rehabilitation equipment available in Queensland for our customers to use at the Healthy Living Centre in Brisbane.

There will undoubtedly be further change ahead. However, our purpose remains clear. We will continue to listen to and learn from our members, expand access to health and rehabilitation services, and use our collective voice to drive meaningful change across the community.



MARK TOWNEND

"BY WORKING TOGETHER AS A TEAM, WE CONTINUE TO STRENGTHEN OUR ORGANISATION TO CREATE BETTER OUTCOMES FOR PEOPLE WITH DISABILITY."

A WAY FORWARD
HALEY'S STORY

After Haley Richardson sustained an incomplete spinal cord injury in 2022, one of her biggest concerns was whether she would be able to work or study again.

While still in hospital, Haley met Spinal Life Back2Work Vocational Rehabilitation Counsellor Belinda McLeod – a connection that helped change her outlook on life after injury.

"Belinda and the Back2Work team gave me hope. They told me 'yes' when everybody else was saying 'no' or 'wait a bit'. They gave me a way forward when I really needed it."

Just six months after her accident, Haley joined Back2Work in an administration role, with support from the Australian Government's JobAccess program for work-related equipment. Supported and encouraged by the team, she discovered a passion for helping others return to work following injury.

"Through my experience with Back2Work, I discovered this whole world of helping people return to work. Seeing other people's success gives me so much joy and I love being able to pass on the help that I was given," she says.

Back2Work also supported Haley as she returned to university, helping her access student support, accessible parking, and ergonomic equipment. Inspired by her experience, she transferred to a Bachelor of Psychological Science, with plans to complete a Master of Rehabilitation Counselling.

Now working with Spinal Life's Customer Care team, Haley has found a career path shaped by her lived experience.

"It's helped me find my purpose," she says. "The Back2Work team knows that when I finish my master's, I want to come back and join them permanently!"

Photo supplied by JobAccess

STRONGER VOICES, STRONGER COMMUNITIES

Spinal Life Australia was founded by people with disability, for people with disability. We continue to recognise those early beginnings by ensuring lived experience remains at the heart of our organisation – guiding our advocacy efforts and creating key connections in the community.

Our members

Our members played an important role throughout the 2025–26 financial year, voting at our Annual General Meeting, participating in events, sharing feedback and lending their voices to advocacy efforts.

Our 2025 Member Engagement Survey achieved positive results, with *The Advocate* remaining the most valued membership benefit, closely followed by our monthly member emails. Members were most engaged with our advocacy work to improve accessible housing, while Peer Support Catch-Ups continued to be recognised as one of our most valued member services.

We also undertook an extensive campaign encouraging members to update their details on our Member Register, to ensure they would continue to receive essential information about key activities.

Advocating for change

During the financial year, we provided individual advocacy support to our community, alongside our systemic advocacy for greater accessibility, inclusion and equity.

NDIS changes remained a significant focus, advocating to improve access to funding and reduce unnecessary legal disputes.

Our advocacy presence also grew in Western Australia, where we worked with local governments, tourism operators and businesses to identify accessibility barriers and practical improvements.

Creating connections

Our Peer Support program continued to bring people together through shared lived experience. Across Queensland and Western Australia, we held regular catch-ups to provide an opportunity to build friendships and share invaluable advice and information.

Our regional presence expanded with new team members in Cairns, Townsville and Perth, alongside specialised support for people with Spina Bifida and Hydrocephalus. Peer Support Officers supported people with newly acquired spinal cord damage and their families at the Princess Alexandra Hospital and in the community.

We also maintained active online communities through closed Facebook groups, including Peer Support, Spinal Chatter (WA) and Accessible Australia, creating further opportunities to connect and share information.

Amplifying voices

Throughout the year, we generated more than 1,932 media stories across television, radio, print and online, raising awareness of issues including NDIS improvements, accessible housing and tourism, our Peer Support program, rehabilitation and inclusive sport.

2,273
Spinal Life Members*

100+
Peer Support Catch-Ups

1,932
Media items

10,926
Facebook followers

**In July 2026, 723 members were removed from the Member Register following an extensive campaign asking members to confirm their membership and update their details. This followed a Constitution update approved at the 2025 Annual General Meeting, enabling the organisation to remove members who did not respond to requests to confirm their membership.*

OUR CUSTOMERS

PROVIDING EXCEPTIONAL SUPPORT

Delivering high-quality, person-centred services remained at the core of our work throughout the 2025–26 financial year. By listening to our customers and continually improving our services, we supported more people with disability to pursue their goals with confidence.

Listening to customers

In October 2025, we surveyed customers across Personal Support and Home Care, Allied Health, Support Coordination and Plan Management.

This feedback continues to shape improvements to our systems, processes and service delivery, helping make it easier for people to access support, communicate with our teams and receive services responsive to their individual needs.

We also realigned our Customer Care team to provide a more consistent experience across Spinal Life Australia and Sporting Wheelies, helping customers navigate the services and opportunities available across our organisation.

Personal Support

Across Queensland and Western Australia, our highly-trained Personal Support Workers continued providing tailored support to individuals, delivering 612,898 hours of service in 2025–26.

We strengthened customer onboarding and service establishment processes, along with workforce capability and clinical governance, including our approach to supporting people with complex and high-intensity needs. Our continued focus is on closer collaboration with allied health professionals, families and advocates, while safeguarding, quality and sustainability remain key priorities.

Allied Health

Our Allied Health team delivered 30,288 hours of services across Occupational Therapy, Nursing, Physiotherapy and Exercise Physiology, with our Allied Health Assistants helping customers continue working towards their goals.

We also finalised an agreement to host more than $1.8 million of advanced rehabilitation equipment at our Healthy Living Centre in Brisbane, in partnership with the Accelerated Recovery Centre. This will provide access to the latest rehabilitation technologies including robotics and virtual reality, Functional Electrical Stimulation (FES), AI and more.

NDIS services

Support Coordination grew to 348 participants, while Plan Management assisted 289 customers nationally, including through the Careview Advantage app, which provides greater visibility of funding and budgets.

At the end of the financial year, we reviewed our Support Coordination activities amid staff recruitment challenges. As a result, we made the difficult decision to reduce client numbers where appropriate, to ensure we could continue delivering high-quality services.

Back2Work

Our Back2Work program continued helping people with spinal cord injury pursue employment, education and training.

Back2Work secured funding to provide in-hospital assistance for another year, thanks to the generous ongoing support of the Motor Accident Insurance Commission (MAIC). The program also expanded beyond its traditional hospital setting to eligible NDIS and NIISQ participants and others in the community.

Participants returned to diverse industries including mining, construction, health, education, technology, manufacturing, community services and corporate roles – demonstrating the opportunities that tailored vocational support can help create.

612,898
Personal Support hours

348
Support Coordination clients

30,288
Allied Health hours

289
Plan Management clients

1,557
Nights stayed at the Healthy Living Centre Cairns

89
Back2Work referrals

SUPPORTING OUR TEAM

1,121 Employees

869 Personal Support Workers

Creating a safe, supportive and rewarding workplace remained an important priority throughout 2025–26. Across recruitment, learning and development, employee engagement, wellbeing and governance, we continued to improve support for our team while building the workforce capability needed to deliver high-quality services.

Attracting new talent

During the year, our Recruitment team onboarded 489 new Personal Support Workers (PSWs), strengthening our workforce and capacity to deliver quality services.

Working closely with our Learning and Development and Personal Support and Home Care Services teams, we streamlined recruitment processes, almost halving the time to hire and enabling new employees to commence sooner.

We also improved candidate profiling and information sharing across departments to support workforce planning, onboarding and timely placements. Enhancements to our employee referral program encouraged existing staff to help attract new talent, supporting the development of strong, capable teams.

Learning and development

Our Learning and Development team delivered a significant volume of training, often facilitating three or four sessions in a day, with most training delivered internally. This includes extended competency skills for complex support needs, as well as first aid and CPR and a range of professional development workshops.

We also updated our PSW onboarding to grow the skills, knowledge and confidence of new employees from the beginning of their journey with Spinal Life.

Our expertise continued to be recognised externally, with more than 10 organisations engaging Spinal Life for ongoing training, and new organisations approaching us through referrals.

Engaging our people

Following our Employee Engagement Survey, PSWs were invited to dedicated feedback webinars, helping us understand what we are doing well and identify opportunities for improvement.

We focused on employee benefits through our renewed relationship with Bupa private health and began working more closely with CareSuper to increase access to superannuation information for our team through webinars and one-on-one consultations.

In addition, we continued to offer our PSWs the opportunity to convert from casual to permanent part-time as we work to build a strong, stable workforce.

Our employees and their families were also able to access Sonder for free, confidential mental health, medical and safety support.

Wellbeing and safety

Our proactive approach to employee health and injury management contributed to a reduction in workplace injuries and associated workers' compensation claim costs.

Pre-employment screening, work capacity monitoring, proactive injury and claims management, and education about physical and psychological health have helped create a more preventative approach to workplace wellbeing.

Stronger governance

We strengthened our approach to industrial relations and Award compliance, including pay rates, overtime, sleepovers, meal allowances and ongoing Award changes. This work has moved beyond responding to individual matters towards a more systematic approach to compliance and risk management.

More broadly, Spinal Life maintained full certification with the NDIS Quality and Safeguards Commission while responding to changing aged care, child safety, reportable conduct and NDIS requirements.

CREATING POSSIBILITIES THROUGH INNOVATION

Partnerships, research and innovation are helping our organisation explore new ways to improve health, independence and quality of life for people with disability.

Throughout the 2025–26 financial year, we continued to collaborate with universities, researchers, clinicians, industry partners and people with lived experience.

These relationships allowed us to contribute to emerging research while ensuring the experiences and priorities of people with disability help shape new technologies and approaches.

Supporting groundbreaking research

We continued our strong relationship with The Hopkins Centre, Griffith University and other leading research institutions on projects with the potential to improve rehabilitation and long-term health outcomes.

Griffith University's Clem Jones Centre for Neurobiology and Stem Cell Research reached an important milestone, beginning a world-first clinical trial investigating whether transplantation of olfactory ensheathing cells from the nose, combined with intensive rehabilitation, could help repair damaged pathways in the spinal cord. We're excited to see the progress of this trial over the coming year.

Harnessing new technology

Technology is also creating opportunities to support people to better manage their health.

Through The Hopkins Centre, in collaboration with Spinal Life and the Queensland Spinal Cord Injuries Service, researchers are working on an artificial intelligence-powered smartphone app to help identify pressure injuries earlier.

Virtual Reality (VR) is another exciting area of research. Spinal Life is supporting projects exploring how VR can help people practise wheelchair skills, experience different power wheelchair drive systems and safely build confidence in realistic environments.

One project, delivered with the University of Queensland's RECOVER Injury Research Centre, is being led by Spinal Life member JJ Hitchens (pictured), inspired by his own experience choosing a power wheelchair. The prototype has been co-designed with people with lived experience, including members of our Peer Support team, helping ensure the technology responds to real-world needs.

Partnerships that deliver

Our partnerships extend beyond research. We continue to explore opportunities to provide more holistic support, bringing together rehabilitation, health, wellbeing and practical services that help people pursue their individual goals.

As part-owner of Move Mobility, Spinal Life also has a direct connection to the assistive technology sector, creating opportunities to share the experiences and feedback of our community and help improve equipment solutions and support.

Move Mobility continued to expand its presence across Queensland, with a new location in Rockhampton joining Robina, Logan Hyperdome, Bundaberg – and Mackay opening in October 2026. The Move Mobility team also provided regular equipment repair and servicing sessions at our Healthy Living Centre in Brisbane during 2025–26.

The Move team was also named Dealer of the Year at the ATSA Independent Living Expo for the second consecutive year, recognising their commitment to quality equipment, customer service and after-sales support.

"I HAD THE IDEA OF USING VR, PAIRED WITH A SPECIALISED CONTROLLER, THAT SIMULATES DRIVING WHEELCHAIRS IN A VIRTUAL REALITY WORLD."

- JJ HITCHENS, SPINAL LIFE MEMBER.

SPORTING WHEELIES

CREATING OPPORTUNITIES THROUGH SPORT

Sporting Wheelies continued to create more opportunities for people with disability to be active, healthy and connected during 2025–26. From sports programs and exercise therapy to schools and community education, our focus remained on making inclusion part of everyday life across Queensland.

$1million
Bequests Pledged

$15,500
Raised in Tax and Christmas Appeals

4,750 Hours of Exercise Physiology
112 Social Sport participants
16 Volunteers
44 Education Seminars
263 Event participants
161 School visits
34 Coaches and Officials
13 Game Changers

Key achievements

Our reach continued to grow beyond Brisbane, with programs and activities delivered across Brisbane, Gold Coast, Ipswich, Hervey Bay, Logan, Mackay, Moreton Bay and Toowoomba. Partnerships with councils, universities, sporting bodies and community organisations helped us reach new communities and strengthen pathways between health, rehabilitation, sport and recreation.

We also contributed our expertise to government and sector advisory groups, helping influence disability sport participation, inclusive infrastructure and planning for the Brisbane 2032 Olympic and Paralympic Games.

This included sharing our expertise as part of the Empower project, the first Brisbane 2032 Legacy initiative, and contributed to discussions around a proposed Paralympic Centre of Excellence in Queensland.

Exercise therapy

Our Exercise Physiology services continued to help people with disability improve their health, fitness, confidence and independence.

In Ipswich and Logan, our EverActive program for people aged over 60 brought inclusive exercise into the community, helping focus on key areas like falls prevention.

Our partnership with the Queensland University of Technology (QUT) continued through Adaptive Aquatics at its accessible Gardens Point pool, providing tailored swimming opportunities for people with physical and intellectual disabilities.

We also continued to build relationships with other tertiary institutions including the University of the Sunshine Coast, where we held a symposium that brought together more than 40 stakeholders to explore opportunities for better outcomes in disability sport.

SPORTING WHEELIES

CREATING OPPORTUNITIES THROUGH SPORT

"STUDENTS CAN SEE THAT WE'RE NOT DEFINED BY OUR DISABILITY – WE HAVE THE SAME INTERESTS, AMBITIONS, PERSONALITIES AND DREAMS AS ANYONE ELSE."

- JACOB LAKE, GAME CHANGER (PICTURED BELOW)

Sport and events

From trying a sport for the first time to progressing through competition, Sporting Wheelies continued to create pathways for people of different ages, abilities and experience levels.

With support from the Department of Sport, Racing and Olympic and Paralympic Games, our established programs were joined by growing opportunities including Wheelchair Cricket, Wheelchair Fencing and Adaptive Pickleball.

A new Boccia League model provided a more structured and accessible competition pathway, with regional rounds in Springfield and Hervey Bay demonstrating how competitions can be delivered in partnership with local communities.

We held nine key sports events with 263 participants including the Boccia Invitational Championship, the Wheelchair Basketball Ipswich Challenge and Classics, to give athletes valuable competition experience while also developing the skills of coaches, referees, officials and volunteers.

Through our partnership with Disability Sports Australia, we also supported Abilities Unleashed events across three regional locations, further increasing our reach in the community.

Schools and workplaces

Education remained one of the most powerful ways Sporting Wheelies influenced attitudes towards disability and inclusion.

Through Raising the Bar, our Game Changers – people with lived experience of disability – visited schools to share their stories, answer questions and give students first-hand experience of inclusive sports including Wheelchair Basketball, Boccia and Goalball.

During the year, we reached 117 schools through 161 visits, including schools in Townsville, Rockhampton and Cairns. We also delivered corporate sessions, university programs and activities with Paralympics Australia, while introducing our Realistic RACE workshops into schools through our new Pathways to Inclusion program.

Our team presented at the State School Principals Conference and ACHPER Conference, and continued to build relationships with universities, including repeat programs with the University of Queensland and QUT.

CREATING OPPORTUNITIES THROUGH SPORT

Fundraising and partnerships

The generosity of our donors, sponsors and partners continued to play an important role in helping Sporting Wheelies deliver our programs and services.

Our Tax Appeal raised funds to support grassroots sport and recreation programs across Queensland, while our Christmas Appeal focused on expanding inclusive sport education through Raising the Bar. The Sporting Wheelies Art Union also provided another important way for our community to support our work.

We were proud to strengthen our relationships with corporate partners who share our commitment to inclusion:

- *HECSA* supported both Para Squad and Adaptive Aquatics as naming rights sponsor, helping provide inclusive opportunities for participants to develop skills, confidence and a lifelong connection with physical activity.
- *Lalapanzi Consulting* also supported Para Squad as a naming rights sponsor, contributing to a program that gives young people with disability opportunities to experience different sports in an inclusive and supportive environment.
- *Charter Care Services* became naming rights sponsor of the Boccia League, supporting the growth of a more structured competition pathway and helping players develop their skills and experience.
- *M Devices* supported Wheelchair Fundamentals as naming rights sponsor, helping participants build practical wheelchair skills and greater confidence and independence in everyday life.
- *ConocoPhillips* supported four social events during 2025–26, bringing together our community for pizza, movies, pickleball and fun.

A new sporting passion

Through accessible exercise, ongoing support and the opportunity to discover a new sport, Sporting Wheelies has helped Mitchell McCracken build his strength and find a new competitive passion.

Mitch has been training at Sporting Wheelies for years, working with Exercise Physiologist Nathan McCarthy to build his strength following a spinal cord injury and subsequent tendon transfer surgeries.

“It’s been huge for me,” he says. “I’ve worked with other trainers, but Nathan’s been my main trainer the whole time – we get on so well.”

It was at the Sporting Wheelies Clubhouse that another athlete suggested Mitch try boccia. That casual invitation sparked a new passion.

“That’s when I found Boccia. It gave me a new drive, and it reminded me of ten pin bowling, which I love. The more I played, the more I wanted to improve,” he says.

Mitch now attends Sporting Wheelies three times a week, combining cardio, weights and Boccia training in an environment that provides both accessible facilities and a strong sense of community.

“There’s such a good atmosphere,” he says. “You’ve got music playing, you’re working out, and you can have a bit of banter with everyone. It’s kind of like a social club – but a social club with really great accessible equipment.”

Within months of beginning competitive Boccia, Mitch was winning medals and competing against some of Australia’s best players. Now, he has his sights set on an even bigger goal – the Paralympics.

“That would be the dream,” he says. “That’s what I’m pushing for.”

SHAPING ACCESSIBLE COMMUNITIES

Our Access Consulting services continued to grow during 2025–26, combining lived experience with specialist accessibility, inclusion and para-sport expertise to help create places, services and experiences that work better for everyone.

Throughout the year, our work expanded across major infrastructure, local government, sport and tourism. Increasingly, our role goes beyond meeting minimum accessibility standards to consider how people with different disabilities actually experience and use environments, programs and services.

Shaping major projects

In 2025–26, Sporting Wheelies was appointed to provide Paralympic Alternative Solutions Advisory Services for the Brisbane Stadium project – one of Queensland's major Brisbane 2032 infrastructure investments.

For our members, this can mean practical improvements that make attending a major event easier and more enjoyable – from navigating the venue independently and finding suitable seating with good sightlines, to accessing appropriate amenities and moving safely through busy spaces.

Work also commenced on the Queensland Tennis Centre redevelopment in June 2026, complementing legislative access advice with a focus on the complete experience for people with disability during everyday community use, major events and Olympic and Paralympic operations.

Inclusive communities

Our expertise also supported local governments to make inclusion part of everyday community life.

We worked with Broken Hill City Council to develop its Disability Inclusion Action Plan 2026–2030, translating community experiences and consultation into practical priorities for services, facilities and participation.

Planning also commenced with Kyogle Council on its Disability Inclusion Action Plan and Inclusive Infrastructure Project, with consultation, staff capability-building and on-ground work continuing into 2026–27.

Beyond infrastructure, our Inclusive Sport Kickstart initiative with QSport helped sporting organisations consider accessibility across governance, communications, programs and participant experiences. For Sporting Wheelies members and other people with disability, this means working towards sporting environments where inclusion extends from arriving at a venue to participating, competing, volunteering or supporting others.

We also strengthened our contribution to accessible tourism through our partnership with the Australian Tourism Industry Council, advocating for greater consideration of accessibility across the visitor economy – helping make it easier for people with disability to confidently plan and enjoy travel experiences.

Lasting impact

Ultimately, Access Consulting is about turning lived experience into practical change. By contributing early in planning and design, we can help prevent barriers before they arise.

Whether it's attending a major sporting event, joining a local sports club, visiting a community facility or enjoying a holiday, our goal is simple – to help create places and experiences where our members and the wider disability community can participate freely without barriers.

OUR BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Throughout 2025–26, Spinal Life Australia's Board of Directors provided strong governance and financial oversight, helping guide our organisation through a challenging economic environment. Bringing together diverse professional expertise and lived experience of disability, our Directors ensured our decisions remained aligned with our purpose, values and commitment to our community.

GYL STACEY, CHAIR – ELECTED DIRECTOR

Appointed to the Board in 2016 and first elected Chair in 2019, Gyl brings more than 35 years of executive experience and serves on the Audit, Finance and Risk Committee. Her leadership and lived experience of Transverse Myelitis bring an important perspective to Spinal Life's strategic direction, helping ensure the needs and experiences of people with spinal cord damage remain central to our decision-making.

GERARD O'BRIEN, DEPUTY CHAIR – APPOINTED DIRECTOR

Gerard joined the Board in 2019 and chairs the Governance and Remuneration Committee. His extensive leadership and governance experience helps Spinal Life strengthen its governance, organisational capability and long-term planning. As President of Surf Life Saving Queensland and a Director of Surf Life Saving Australia, Gerard brings valuable insight into leading large, purpose-driven organisations.

PROFESSOR PHILLIP MORRIS – ELECTED DIRECTOR

With a 50-year career in medical and biomedical research, more than 180 scientific publications and extensive university teaching experience, Phillip brings significant research and health expertise to the Board. Combined with his lived experience of spinal cord injury, his knowledge supports Spinal Life's focus on evidence-based services, research partnerships and emerging clinical innovations.

CAROL TAYLOR – ELECTED DIRECTOR

Carol is an award-winning lawyer, artist and disability advocate, and the world's first fashion designer with quadriplegia. With more than 20 years of lived experience of spinal cord injury, Carol brings a strong understanding of the barriers people with disability can face. Her legal expertise, creativity and advocacy experience help strengthen Spinal Life's work to challenge those barriers and create greater inclusion, accessibility and opportunity.

REBECCA TWEEDY – ELECTED DIRECTOR

Rebecca is a Musculoskeletal Physiotherapist with experience across public and private healthcare, as well as state and national committees of the Australian Physiotherapy Association. She was also part of the medical team for the Sydney 2000 Paralympic Games. Her clinical expertise and personal experience as the mother of a child with a spinal injury provide valuable insight into rehabilitation, health services and the experiences of individuals and families navigating life after spinal cord injury.

CATHY RUSSO – APPOINTED DIRECTOR

Cathy brings extensive commercial law expertise across corporate governance, compliance and contracts. Her experience advising boards and serving in senior governance roles helps Spinal Life navigate an increasingly complex regulatory environment, manage organisational risk and maintain strong governance practices. This expertise supports responsible decision-making and helps protect the long-term interests of our organisation, members and customers.

MARK FENTON – APPOINTED DIRECTOR

With more than 25 years of finance experience across disability, aged care, housing and the arts, Mark brings valuable financial and sector expertise to Spinal Life. His experience as a Non-Executive Director across several organisations strengthens our focus on financial sustainability, innovation and responsible growth – helping ensure Spinal Life can continue investing in services, facilities and opportunities that benefit our members and customers well into the future.

OUR 2025 ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

At our Annual General Meeting on 27 November 2025, Spinal Life members re-elected Gyl Stacey as a Director, with Gyl continuing in her role as Board Chair.

Members also approved an amendment to Spinal Life Australia's Constitution, allowing the Board to remove members from our Member Register if they do not respond within 60 days to official requests to update or verify their contact and membership details.

The change ensures our database is up-to-date and accurate, particularly ahead of Annual General Meetings when members are invited to vote, provide feedback and help shape the future of our organisation.

OUR EXECUTIVE MANAGERS

Throughout 2025–26, our Executive Management Team led Spinal Life Australia's day-to-day operations while keeping a clear focus on our longer-term direction. Together, they worked to strengthen our services, manage budgets responsibly and respond to changes across the disability sector. Here, our Executive Team shares some of their highlights from the year.

MARK TOWNEND AM
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

"Despite a challenging and changing environment, Spinal Life continued to grow our impact, strengthen services and advocate for better outcomes for people with disability. As we continued to progress plans for our new Brisbane Healthy Living Precinct, we're focused on building a stronger, sustainable organisation for the future."

DANIELLE READY
CHIEF FINANCE OFFICER

"This financial year brought some of the most significant changes to our operating environment since the introduction of the NDIS. We navigated these challenges well and remain prepared for further funding, financial and legislative change, while continuing to evolve our organisation and deliver high-quality services for our customers."

RICHARD LITTLER
CHIEF OPERATIONS OFFICER

"One of my personal highlights this year has been gaining a deeper understanding of the critical role Spinal Life plays across Queensland and Western Australia. Listening to clients, families and staff has highlighted the challenges of reforms and reinforced the importance of preparing for the future to support people's needs."

KEVIN PRENDERGAST
CHIEF HUMAN RESOURCE OFFICER

"The People and Culture Team have had a highly productive year, progressing to a new HR Business Partner Model which is better aligned and more supportive of the business. This provides direct expertise in all aspects of HR from Industrial Relations to Employee Retention, Wellbeing, Recruitment, Learning and Development and Governance, so that we can guide and support our people across all areas of the organisation."

ROSS DUNCAN
EXECUTIVE MANAGER, MARKETING, MEMBER AND CUSTOMER SERVICES

"This has been another productive financial year, with success coming in many forms. We have supported members and customers through expanded Allied Health services, helped people navigate reductions to their NDIS plans, and grown our Peer Support programs in several regions. Continuing to provide high-quality services in a turbulent environment has been very fulfilling."

DANE CROSS
CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER, SPORTING WHEELIES

"My highlight was seeing Sporting Wheelies increasingly recognised for the breadth of expertise we bring beyond program delivery. Across sport, education, allied health, local government and infrastructure, we were invited to shape thinking, build capability and support better outcomes for people with disability across Queensland, including preparations for Brisbane 2032."

THANK YOU, JOHN

After more than 32 years with Spinal Life Australia, Chief Advisor – Government John Mayo announced his retirement. Joining the organisation in 1994, John became a respected and influential advocate for accessibility, equity and inclusion.

His work contributed to landmark improvements across accessible transport, housing, infrastructure and disability policy. Generous with his knowledge and genuinely committed to our members, John leaves a legacy of steadfast advocacy and lasting change. We thank him for his remarkable contribution and wish him well in the future.

CONNECTING WITH OUR COMMUNITY

Throughout 2025–26, Spinal Life Australia continued to bring people together through community events, education sessions, industry conferences and expos across Queensland. These opportunities allowed us to share knowledge, build partnerships and connect people with key services and information.

Sharing knowledge

We were proud to sponsor the Australian and New Zealand Spinal Cord Society (ANZSCoS) Annual Scientific Meeting, held in Brisbane in November 2025.

The conference brought together clinicians, researchers, people with lived experience and service providers to share knowledge and explore the latest approaches to spinal cord injury care and rehabilitation. Our Back2Work team hosted a workshop, sharing their expertise and contributing to the national conversation about vocational rehabilitation.

Our Brisbane Healthy Living Centre hosted a range of information and education sessions throughout the year. Topics included shoulder health, accessible travel and nutrition, providing practical information to support attendees to improve their health, wellness and independence.

Out and about

Our teams connected with thousands of people at events and expos throughout the year, strengthening our presence and relationships across the community.

Spinal Life attended expos in Brisbane, Bundaberg, Cairns, the Gold Coast, Perth, Rockhampton, Toowoomba and Townsville, providing opportunities for people with disability, families, carers and other organisations to meet our teams and learn more about the services and support available.

At the ATSA Independent Living Expo in Brisbane, we joined Sporting Wheelies and Move Mobility to showcase the breadth of support available across our organisations. Sporting Wheelies also brought inclusive sport to life through demonstrations in the Sports Zone, giving visitors the opportunity to see adaptive sport in action.

Inclusion in action

In Cairns, our Come ‘n’ Try Inclusive Lagoon Day gave people of all ages and abilities the opportunity to experience the accessible facilities at the Cairns Esplanade Lagoon.

Hosted by Spinal Life with support from CQUniversity, Surf Life Saving Queensland and Independent Living Specialists, the free community event featured inclusive games and activities, along with opportunities to try lagoon access equipment, including an aquatic wheelchair.

OUR PATRON

We were honoured to welcome our Patron, Her Excellency the Honourable Dr Jeannette Young AC PSM, Governor of Queensland, to the Sporting Wheelies Clubhouse in Milton during Disability Action Week in November.

During her visit, Her Excellency experienced some of the inclusive sports offered by Sporting Wheelies, including Wheelchair Fencing, Wheelchair Cricket and Boccia. She also visited the gym and spent time meeting clients and staff.

The visit was a wonderful opportunity to share the energy of the Sporting Wheelies community and demonstrate the important role inclusive sport plays in creating opportunities for people with disability to participate, connect and achieve their goals.

STRONGER TOGETHER
TIM SKELLY

For more than a decade, Tim Skelly relied on exercises he devised himself to maintain his strength following an incomplete spinal cord injury.

That changed in 2024, when a referral through the Princess Alexandra Hospital brought Tim to the Spinal Life Healthy Living Centre in Brisbane – his first professional support in years.

With a personalised program and guidance from Spinal Life's Physiotherapists, Exercise Physiologists and Allied Health Assistants, Tim began rebuilding his strength and confidence. Exercises that once felt impossible gradually became achievable.

"I owe them all so much," says Tim.

Today, Tim is a familiar face at the Healthy Living Centre, often arriving by 6am to complete the program developed by his therapists. Even when funding challenges temporarily interrupted his physiotherapy, he continued training three or four mornings a week, with support from his Spinal Life Plan Manager to help navigate his funding.

Just as importantly, Tim has found a community. Between sessions, he connects with other members over tea and coffee, sharing stories, advice and plenty of laughs.

"We're all in the same boat. We have a laugh and good conversations, and no one sits around feeling sorry for themselves – it's like being at a pub or a café and having a yarn with mates," he says.

"And then there's the staff – I appreciate them so much," he says. "Everyone's so professional and welcoming, and they genuinely want to help people get better. I love the Healthy Living Centre, it's a fantastic place."

FINANCIAL SUMMARY

The 2025–26 financial year presented ongoing challenges for disability service providers, with NDIS funding pressures, rising costs and changing service demands continuing to impact the sector.

Despite these challenges, Spinal Life Australia remained focused on improving operational performance, managing costs responsibly and investing in services and initiatives that make a meaningful difference to our members, clients and community.

Our financial approach continues to balance responsible management with investment in our purpose, ensuring we remain well positioned to respond to change and support people with disability to live the life they choose.

Financial performance

Spinal Life maintained a positive financial position, with the Group's net assets increasing by approximately 1.3% to $42.6 million, compared with $42.1 million in 2025.

Total comprehensive income was $493,000, compared with $739,000 the previous year, reflecting the ongoing financial pressures facing our sector.

Group revenue increased by 1.7% to $63.7 million, up from $62.6 million in 2025.

These results reflect our continued focus on financial discipline, operational efficiency and sustainable service delivery, providing a strong foundation for future investment.

Investing in our purpose

Financial sustainability enables us to deliver more than essential services. It also allows us to invest in advocacy, innovation and initiatives that create lasting benefits for people with disability.

During 2026, we invested $753,000 in non-funded advocacy activities, compared with $560,000 in 2025. This supports our ongoing work to influence policy, improve accessibility and ensure the voices of people with disability are heard.

We also continued investing in cyber security, technology and infrastructure, including improvements to our telephone and customer contact systems to make it easier for people to connect with us.

Planning for the future

A major focus has been progressing plans for our new Brisbane Healthy Living Precinct, representing a significant investment in the future of our services and community.

The project has already secured $30 million in grant funding, helping reduce future financing requirements.

In April 2026, we entered into an agreement to sell our existing property at 109 Logan Road for $21 million, with settlement scheduled for April 2027. The agreement includes a two-year leaseback, with options to extend, allowing services to continue while the new facility is developed.

Looking ahead

Our priorities for the coming year include progressing the Brisbane Healthy Living Precinct, improving service delivery efficiency, investing in innovation and research, and advocating for NDIS pricing that reflects the true cost of delivering quality services.

We will also maintain a strong focus on financial and risk management to support long-term financial success.

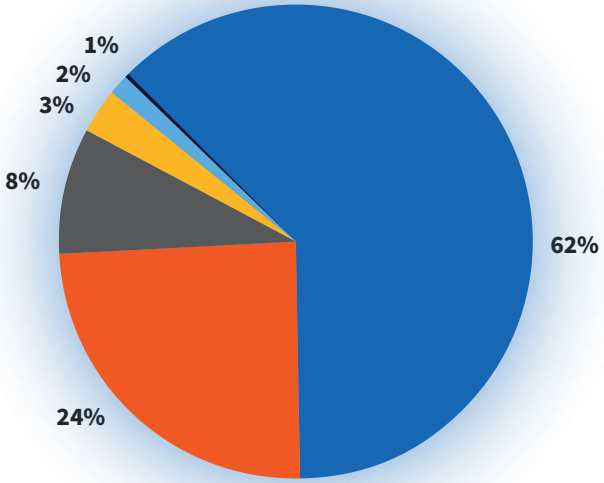
While challenges remain, our financial position and strategic direction provide confidence for the future.

Through responsible management and considered investment, we will continue building a sustainable organisation that delivers meaningful outcomes for our members, clients and community.

DANIELLE READY
CHIEF FINANCE OFFICER

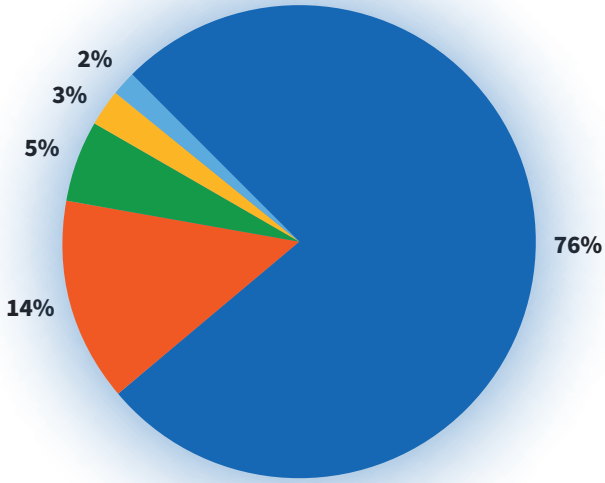
FINANCIAL HIGHLIGHTS

Where the money comes from



	$'000
Fee for NDIS Services	39,912
Fee for Other Services	15,759
Grants and Subsidies	5,514
Investment Income	1,852
Fundraising Income	1,075
Other Income Sources	475
TOTAL	**64,587**

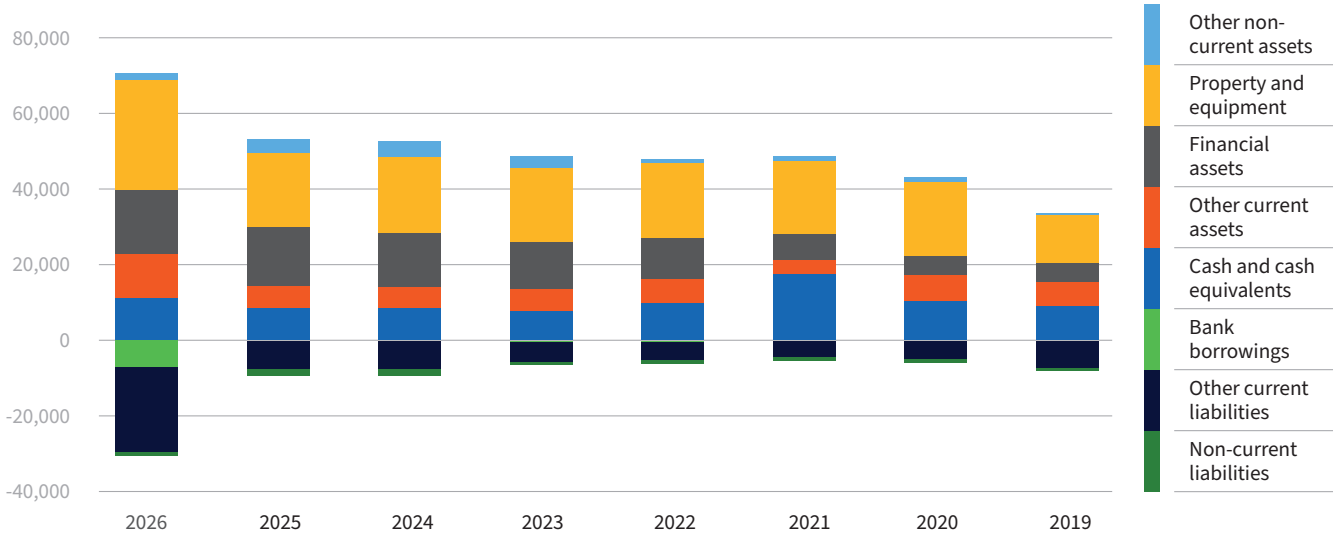
Where the money is spent



	$'000
Commercial Services	48,833
Corporate Services	8,978
Sporting Wheelies	3,545
Business Development	1,664
Member Services and Advocacy	1,074
TOTAL	**64,094**

These are extracted from the full set of Consolidated Financials. Full sets of Consolidated Financials are available on request.

Equity ($'000)



As disclosed in the financial statements, the organisation's group net assets have increased by 1.2% to $42.6M (2025: $42.1M). The total comprehensive income for the financial year, as shown in the Consolidated Statement of Profit or Loss and Other Comprehensive Income, was $493K (2025: $739K).

Consolidated Statement of Profit or Loss and Other Comprehensive Income

For the year ended 30 June 2026

	2026	2025
	$'000	$'000
REVENUE	**63,659**	**62,577**
EXPENSES		
Salaries and on-costs	55,102	53,516
Staff related costs	941	972
Client support costs	756	737
Depreciation and amortisation	1,405	1,431
Information technology & telecommunication expenses	2,103	1,886
Motor vehicle expenses	225	208
Occupancy costs	888	860
Other expenses	2,583	2,676
TOTAL EXPENSES	**64,003**	**62,286**
NET OPERATING (LOSS)/INCOME	**(344)**	**291**
FINANCE COSTS	**(92)**	**(132)**
OTHER INCOME		
Share of profit from associates, net of tax	83	76
TOTAL OTHER INCOME	83	76
NET (LOSS)/ PROFIT	**(353)**	**235**
OTHER COMPREHENSIVE INCOME		
ITEMS THAT MAY BE RECLASSIFIED TO PROFIT OR LOSS		
Changes in the fair value of debt instruments at fair value through other comprehensive income	-	(4)
ITEMS THAT WILL NOT BE RECLASSIFIED TO PROFIT OR LOSS		
Changes in the fair value of equity instruments at fair value through other comprehensive income	846	508
TOTAL OTHER COMPREHENSIVE INCOME	846	504
TOTAL COMPREHENSIVE INCOME	**493**	**739**

Consolidated Statement of Financial Position

For the year ended 30 June 2026

	2026	2025
	$'000	$'000
ASSETS		
CURRENT ASSETS		
Cash and cash equivalents	10,859	8,251
Trade and other receivables	2,297	1,257
Term deposits	431	739
Asset held for sale	5,003	-
Other current assets	2,943	3,506
TOTAL CURRENT ASSETS	**21,533**	**13,753**
NON-CURRENT ASSETS		
Financial assets at fair value through other comprehensive income	7,085	6,648
Financial assets at fair value through profit or loss	9,268	8,523
Investment in associates	993	980
Property and equipment	28,511	18,693
Right-of-use assets	596	1,008
Intangible assets	1,666	1,524
Other non-current assets	14	13
TOTAL NON-CURRENT ASSETS	**48,133**	**37,389**
TOTAL ASSETS	**69,666**	**51,142**
LIABILITIES		
CURRENT LIABILITIES		
Trade and other payables	4,907	2,636
Unexpended grant funds	11,205	1,591
Lease liabilities	422	419
Borrowings	6,349	-
Provisions	3,157	2,774
TOTAL CURRENT LIABILITIES	**26,040**	**7,420**
NON-CURRENT LIABILITIES		
Lease liabilities	228	645
Other liabilities	30	30
Provisions	736	908
TOTAL NON-CURRENT LIABILITIES	**994**	**1,583**
TOTAL LIABILITIES	**27,034**	**9,003**
NET ASSETS	**42,632**	**42,139**
MEMBERS' FUNDS (EQUITY)		
Other reserves	2,600	1,754
Accumulated surplus	40,032	40,385
TOTAL MEMBERS' FUNDS (EQUITY)	**42,632**	**42,139**

Consolidated Statement of Cash Flows

For the year ended 30 June 2026

	2026	2025
	$'000	$'000
CASH FLOWS FROM OPERATING ACTIVITIES		
Receipts from government and customers	74,139	62,951
Payments to employees and suppliers	(63,511)	(62,167)
Dividends and distributions received	844	684
GST received/(paid), net	454	(382)
Cash generated from operating activities	11,926	1,086
Interest received	174	235
Interest paid	(92)	(132)
NET CASH INFLOW FROM OPERATING ACTIVITIES	**12,008**	**1,189**
CASH FLOWS FROM INVESTING ACTIVITIES		
Proceeds on sale of financial assets, net	2,869	3,771
Proceeds from deposit on property sale	1,050	-
Payments for costs associated with property sale	(504)	-
Cash required on business combination	-	42
Payment for formation expenses	(3)	(34)
Acquisition of financial assets	(2,716)	(4,044)
Acquisition of property and equipment	(15,766)	(164)
Payments for intangible assets	(191)	(59)
NET CASH OUTFLOW FROM INVESTING ACTIVITIES	**(15,261)**	**(488)**
CASH FLOWS FROM FINANCING ACTIVITIES		
Principal elements of lease payments	(488)	(470)
Proceeds from borrowings	11,675	1,667
Repayments from borrowings	(5,326)	(1,667)
NET CASH INFLOW/(OUTFLOW) FROM FINANCING ACTIVITIES	**5,861**	**(470)**
Net increase in cash and cash equivalents	2,608	231
Cash and cash equivalents, beginning of year	8,251	8,020
CASH AND CASH EQUIVALENTS END OF YEAR	**10,859**	**8,251**

OUR THANKS

We are deeply grateful to our funding partners, key partners, supporters and major donors whose generosity and commitment make our work possible.

Our funding partners

Australian Government:

- Department of Health, Disability and Ageing
- Department of Social Services
- Department of Veterans Affairs

icare: Insurance and Care NSW

Motor Accident Insurance Commission (Queensland)

National Injury Insurance Scheme Queensland (NIISQ)

Queensland Government:

- Department of Families, Seniors, Disability Services and Child Safety
- Department of Justice (Gambling Community Benefit Fund)
- Department of Sport, Racing and Olympic and Paralympic Games
- Department of Trade, Employment and Training

Our key partners and supporters

Australian Catholic University

Blind Sports Australia

Brisbane City Council

Central Queensland University

Chapter 1 Employment

Coloplast

ConocoPhillips

Disability Sports Australia

GIVIT

Griffith University

Health, Equipment & Consumable Supplies Australia (HECSA)

Ipswich City Council

James Cook University

Jamieson Trauma Institute, Metro North Health – Empower Project

Lalapanzi Consulting

Logan City Council

Logan Hospital

Mylestones Employment

North Queensland Games

Paralympics Australia

Polio Australia

QSport

Queensland Academy of Sport

Queensland Children's Hospital

Queensland Cricket

Queensland Spinal Cord Injuries Service

Queensland University of Technology

Queenslanders With Disability Network

Seqwater

Skate Advantage

Tennis Queensland

The Hopkins Centre

The Sharing Shed

TransitCare

University of Queensland

University of the Sunshine Coast

Variety Queensland

Major donors and in-kind contributors

Followmont Transport

JJ's Waste and Recycling

Pimpama Trust

Rix Developments

Rosemary Locke

Rotary Club of Cairns Sunrise

The Hall Trust

VRC Printing

Committees, networks and reference groups

Aus-InSCI Translation Project

Australasian Early Intervention Vocational Rehabilitation Network

Australian Sports Commission – Disability Sport Advisory Group

Children's Health Queensland – SHARE (Supporting Health, Adjustment, Recovery and Empowerment for children and adolescents with brain or spinal cord injuries) ECHO Program

Cross River Rail Accessibility Reference Group

Expert Disability Housing Advisory Panel (EDHAP)

National Assistive Technology Alliance

Queensland Government Sport Portfolio Para Reference Panel

Queensland Rehabilitation Clinical Network

Queensland Train Manufacturing Program

Zero Emission Bus Program

Spinal Life AUSTRALIA

enquiries@spinal.com.au
1300 774 625

spinal.com.au