

Specialist
Disability
Accommodation
Alliance

Annual Report 2024

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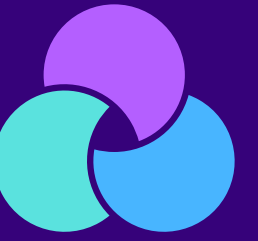


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In the spirit of reconciliation, the SDA Alliance **acknowledges the Traditional Custodians of Country throughout Australia** and their connections to land, sea and community.

We pay our respect to their Elders past and present and extend that respect to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples today.

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Message from our Board Chair + CEO

The past year has been momentous. The disability sector underwent significant review, with two landmark reports being delivered to government: the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) Review Final Report and the Disability Royal Commission Final Report.

The Specialist Disability Accommodation (SDA) Alliance actively participated in these reviews through submissions and participated in extensive consultation processes brought about as a result of these two landmark reports.

Our collective strength as an Alliance has continued to grow enabling us to deliver deep impact. This year, we have experienced significant membership growth: an increase of 13% on the prior year. This enhances our ability to influence government – both state and federal – and the NDIA through harnessing the collective expertise of our members to influence policy and develop solutions to complex challenges.

The SDA Alliance now represents approximately 40% of the SDA market – this means close to half the sector is dedicated to delivering SDA that focuses on quality housing that meets the needs of participants. Without a strong lens on the needs and aspirations of participants, the SDA sector cannot deliver on its commitments to improving the lives of people with disability.

Looking ahead, there is a tremendous amount of work to do to sustain a thriving SDA market that builds homes where people feel safe and can live more independently than ever before. Together, through the power of our Alliance, we can work to achieve our ambitious goals in line with our 2023-2025 strategic plan.

In this Report we highlight some of our impacts over the last year. To all who played a part – our dedicated board & staff, our members & sponsors, partners, and the SDA participants we serve – we extend our gratitude. We couldn't achieve what we do without you.



Michael Lynch, Board Chair



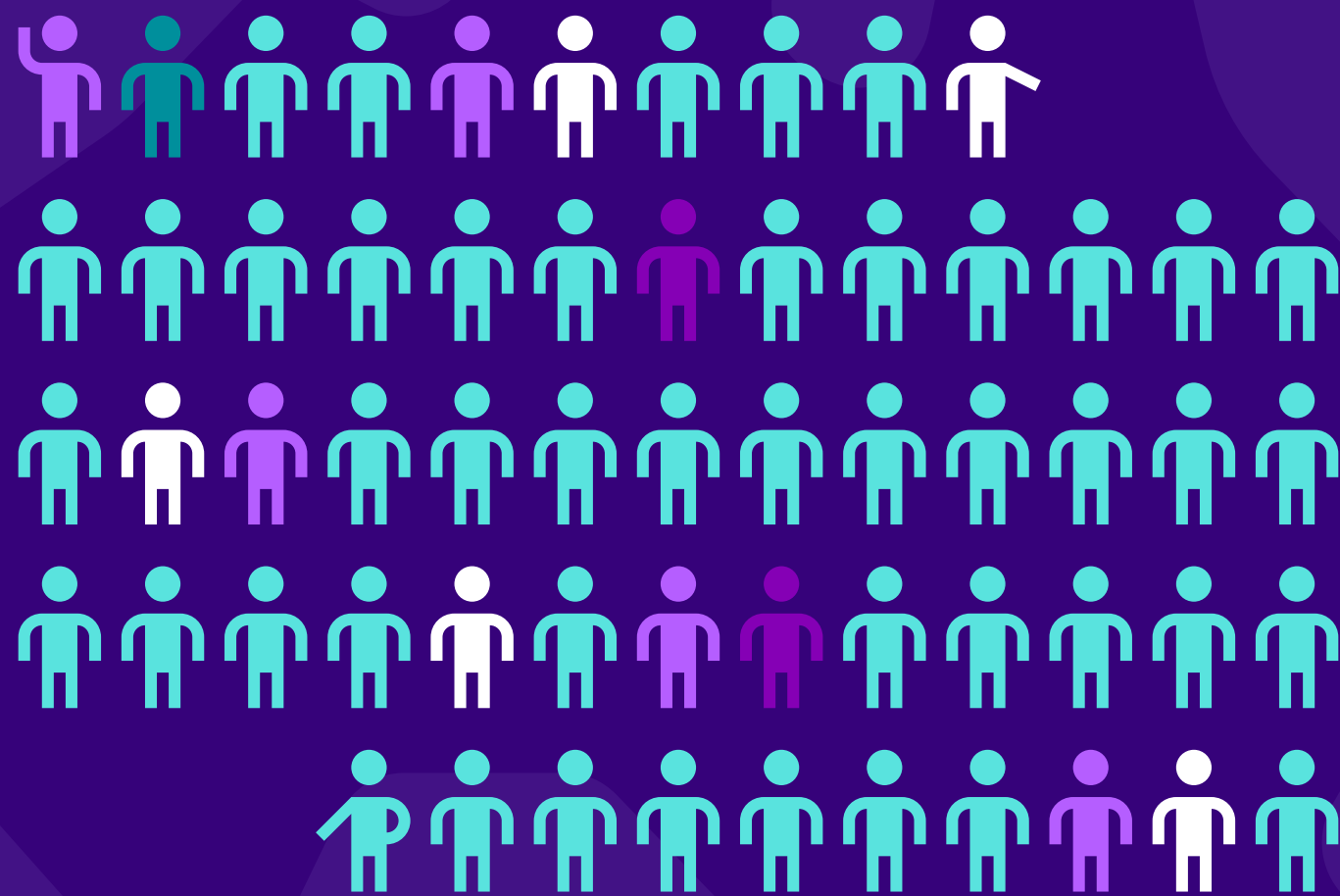
Jeremy Hope, CEO



Our Impact

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We have **72** members Australia-wide.



\$1.5 billion
Investments Represented

72
Australian Members

4700
People Housed

Together, **we:**

- Represent approximately \$1.5 billion of committed institutional investment in specialist disability accommodation
- Have delivered over 2900 homes with a further 1119 under development
- Will provide housing to over 4700 people with disability

2932
homes delivered

1119
homes under development

4051
total SDA homes*

*built and underdevelopment





About the **SDA Alliance**

As a national peak body, we represent SDA market participants across the country. Our members include SDA providers, institutional investors, developers, builders, financial institutions, allied health professionals and industry consultants.

Our members make a significant impact on the lives of people with disability – by providing housing that is safe, innovative and designed to serve the needs of SDA participants.

By collaborating and engaging with governments, the NDIA and other key stakeholders, we seek to improve standards and regulations and promote the provision of excellence in SDA.

Ensuring people with disabilities can exercise choice and control in relation to their housing and supports and thrive in their communities, lies at the heart of our work.

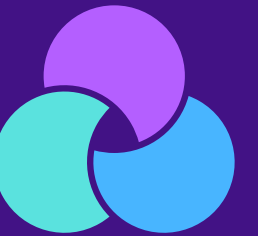


Policy & advocacy



This year, we **worked with the NDIA, government and other stakeholders** to address a range of issues which impact the SDA sector.

- We have played an active role in advocating for the SDA Design Standards to be flexible, clear and forward thinking in order to support innovation. We are continuing our efforts in this regard
- We wrote submissions and participated in consultation processes regarding the NDIS Review and Disability Royal Commission
- We prepared submissions with regards to the National Housing and Homelessness Plan, NDIS Provider and Worker Registration Taskforce, and the National Disability Insurance Scheme Amendment (Getting the NDIS Back on Track No. 1) Bill 2024.
- Together with our partners, Disability Advocacy Network Australia (DANA) and People with Disability Australia, we spoke out about the critical importance of mandating the separation of the provision of housing and support: this is fundamental to ensuring people with disability are afforded appropriate protections from abuse, neglect and exploitation. Our joint [position statement](#) was widely disseminated to, and discussed directly with, government and politicians across the country.
- We have engaged regularly with the NDIA working collaboratively to address key issues including efficiencies around SDA provider claims and payments (particularly in relation to their new system, PACE).
- We spoke out about the need to offer tax exemptions for specialist disability accommodation. Offering tax incentives, including a consistent national exemption from stamp duty and land tax for SDA dwellings, would trigger additional investment into the SDA market and drive better housing outcomes for Australians. We developed a [position statement](#) on this issue which was widely disseminated to state and federal politicians as well as government.
- In partnership with Home Fire Sprinkler Coalition Australia, we advocated for participant safety – highlighting the importance of fire sprinklers being installed in specialist disability accommodation. Our [FAQs: Home and Residential Fire Sprinklers](#) document offers important information on this issue.
- We advocated for onsite shared support to be as accessible and impactful as possible for people with disability. An innovative support model, onsite shared support offers people with disability the opportunity to make choices about their housing that would otherwise not be possible. Our widely disseminated [position statement](#) offers more details on this issue.



Class 1C - a new building classification for SDA

Working with partners across the sector, we have been advocating for a clear and 'fit for purpose' building classification for SDA under the National Construction Code.

We have proposed a new building class - Class 1c - be adopted in the National Construction Code. This solution would result in:

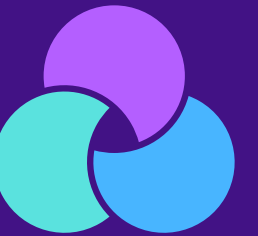
- Greater safety for people with disability
- Residential accommodation that is more 'home-like' than institution: this new class will ensure dwellings are more 'home-like' and fit in with neighbourhood character.
- Improved clarity and efficiency for practitioners and regulators on the appropriate building classification for SDA.
- Construction being more cost-effective leading to savings for the SDA sector.

Working with state governments across the country

This year, we engaged in advocacy with state government (including politicians) on a range of SDA issues including transitioning SDA participants from state-owned basic SDA properties to new build SDA. We also spoke out on the urgency of meeting the needs of participants that require Robust homes - a population which are currently underserved. We have met with government representatives from SA, NSW, QLD, Victoria, Tasmania and WA.

In NSW, we are part of the NSW Disability Stakeholder Forum: together with partners across the sector, we are contributing to conversations which aim to influence the direction and priorities of the next NSW Disability Inclusion Plan.





Investor Subcommittee

This year, we established the SDA Alliance investor subcommittee. Comprised of some of the country's largest and most experienced institutional investors in SDA and two of Australia's largest banks – the SDA Alliance investor subcommittee provides insights into the SDA market including industry trends and investor needs.

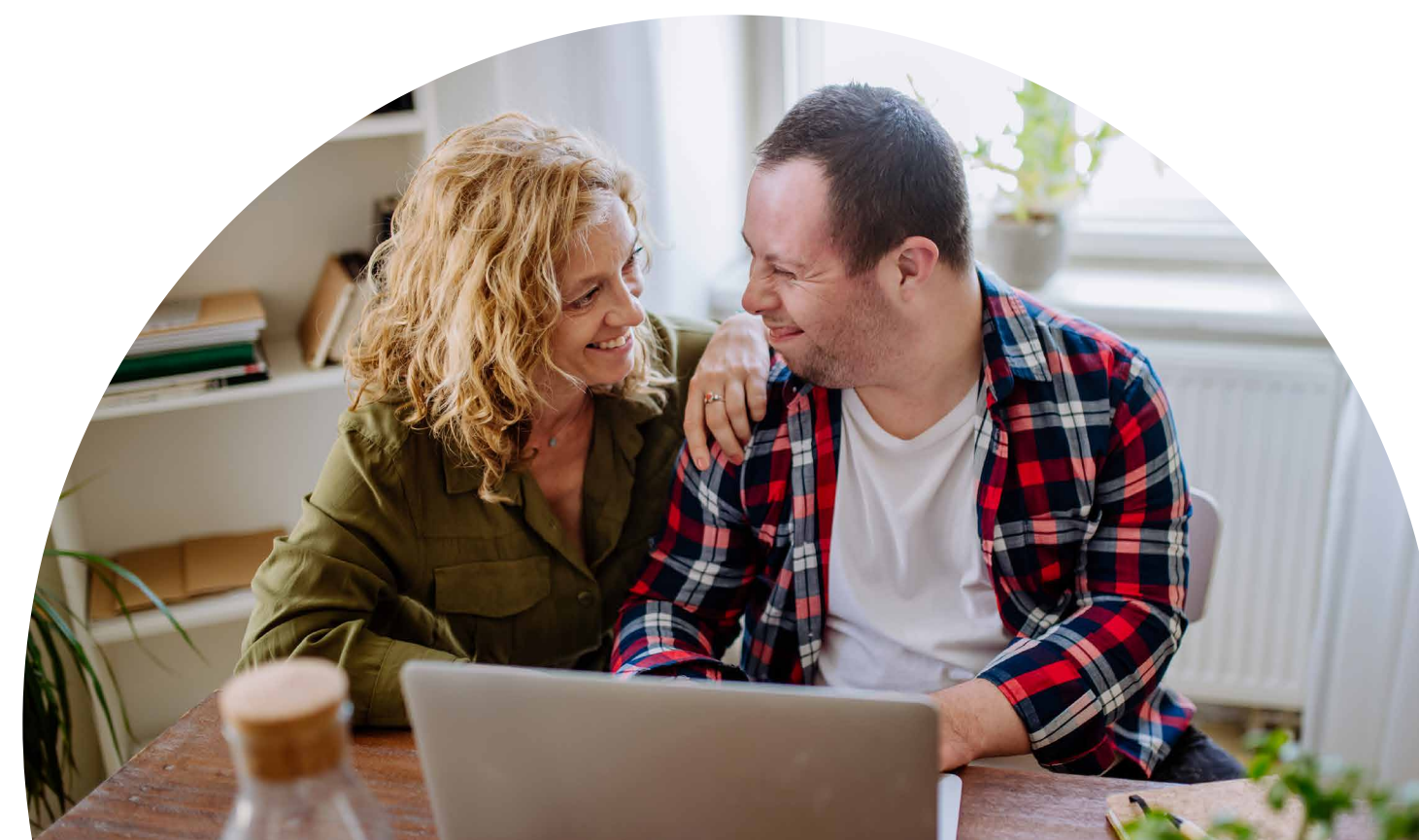
Our investor subcommittee interacts directly with the NDIA and government to influence decision making and raise issues that impact the flow of capital into the SDA market. The subcommittee has actively raised areas where opportunities exist to improve capital flows, including:

- Addressing market failures (e.g., unevenness of location factors; insufficient funding for robust properties)
- Operational frictions to investing
- Tax exemptions for SDA
- Key attributes of the NDIA's market stewardship role (to ensure market success), including the provision of quality data to better inform decision making

Subcommittee on State-Owned Existing Stock

We have established a Subcommittee on State-Owned Existing Stock. This subcommittee comprises sector experts and SDA Alliance members with experience working nation-wide and at scale on disability housing: it is dedicated to working together to support existing stock SDA participants through change and improve the overall SDA system.

The expertise of the subcommittee informs our state and national level advocacy on state-owned existing stock.



National Assistive Technology Alliance: collaborating with partners to change lives

We are a proud member of the [National Assistive Technology Alliance](#) (NATA) - an initiative of the assistive technology sector in Australia. NATA's vision is to ensure a positive future for all assistive technology stakeholders by working collaboratively to influence policy and industry standards and practice for the assistive technology sector.

NATA was initiated in 2017 by several Independent Living Centres and the Australian Rehabilitation and Assistive Technology Association (ARATA), collaborating and connecting with the assistive technology sector in response to rapid policy change. NATA is now a community of practice of over 25 peak national stakeholders.



Liam's Story

Liam (name changed) **was on the verge of losing his home.**

A young man in his twenties, Liam was renting a private property in Adelaide for two years. However, without essential accessible features, the house was unsafe for his needs, especially as a wheelchair user.

To make matters worse, rising rents made the home unaffordable – and Liam's past experiences with discrimination in the rental market limited his options.

Liam faced the very real threat of homelessness. When Liam and his family were introduced to [Access 2 Place](#), the urgency of his situation was clear.

Access 2 Place began working with Liam and his family to co-design a purpose-built home that catered to his specific disability needs.

The three-bedroom home was designed with accessibility features throughout and provided space for his family to live with him, ensuring 24-hour support when needed.

"We loved collaborating with the team at Access 2 Place and watching this [home] materialise," Liam's mum says.

Liam's new home provides stability and long-term security. With 24-hour care and the ability to choose and control his support services, Liam now lives with greater autonomy in a home that supports both his current and future needs.

"Liam no longer needs to grapple with the private rental market and all the challenges that come with it," his mother says. "We are so grateful that he now has a space where he can live with dignity and independence, surrounded by family."



Best Practice Guide: Specialist Disability Accommodation

This year, we released our **Best Practice Guide: SDA.** It was developed based on deep engagement with SDA Alliance members, including people with disability.

The purpose of the best practice guide is to offer guidance and recommendations on several major areas of SDA including:

- Design best practice + innovation in design
- Thin markets
- Participant engagement: design + build process
- Conflict of interest + rights and responsibilities
- Separation of housing and care supports
- Service agreements with participants
- Tenancy management
- Safety and complaints process
- Choice and control + participant safety
- Diversity + inclusion
- Quality providers – staffing, organisational culture

This resource has been designed for SDA market players including SDA providers, government, institutional investors, developers, builders, allied health professionals and support coordinators.

This is our inaugural guide on best practice SDA – while it is comprehensive it does not encapsulate all areas of SDA.

We will continue to develop additional best practice resources to support the delivery of a sustainable SDA market that delivers genuine housing choices for people with disability.

In line with our 2023-2025 strategic plan, we aim to begin developing an accreditation program for SDA providers which highlights the delivery of best practice SDA across the sector -this work will begin in 2025.





Safeguarding SDA participants

We have continued to report poor practices in the SDA market directly to the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission (ACCC), NDIA and NDIS Quality and Safeguards Commission. Our monthly reports provide the government agencies with evidence pertaining to unethical and poor practices which have detrimental effects on the market and potentially cause harm to SDA participants.

Without appropriate safeguards, the SDA market will be incapable of delivering high quality, contemporary housing for people with disability.

This year, we have reported entities regarding the following concerns:

- Inappropriate or misleading advertising
- Claims of inflated investment returns
- Claims of guaranteed investment
- Misleading claims in relation to investing
- Unethical and profiteering behaviour

Noah's Story



Noah (name changed) is **16 years old** and **lives in an SDA home in QLD** with his family.

Prior to moving into the SDA home, Noah and his family lived in a private rental property. This property was far from ideal for Noah: the cramped space made it very challenging for him to navigate the house without causing damage to the doors and hallways (given his mobility equipment).

When the [Vera Living](#) team met the family, they worked swiftly to help them find a home that catered to Noah's needs.

Since moving into their new SDA home, the family's living conditions have significantly improved. The spacious layout of their new home means that each family member now has their own space, ensuring comfort and privacy for all.

The home is close to Noah's school and friends, allowing him to continue his academic pursuits and benefit from his friendships without disruption. This continuity in his routine has been a source of stability and support for Noah.

Noah's new home has provided the family with security and peace of mind: they no longer have the burden of searching for a suitable rental property. Their new home, tailored to Noah's needs, provides a safe, fit-for-purpose and nurturing environment where the entire family can thrive in the long term.



Member engagement

Member meetings:

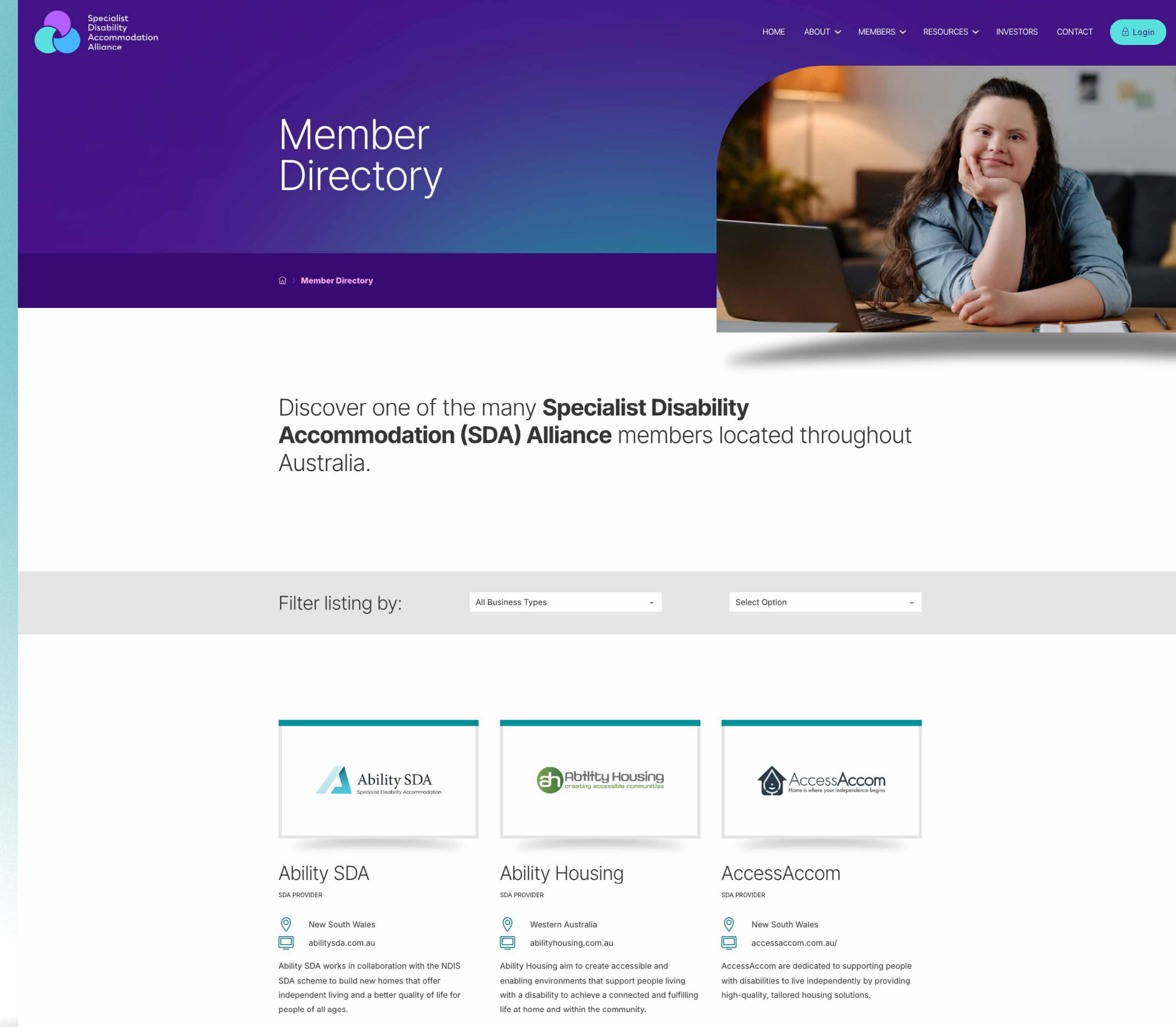
This year, we held in-person member meetings in Sydney and for the first time, in Melbourne (with record attendance numbers). We have had a wonderful line up of speakers, including Minister Bill Shorten, NDIA representatives, NDIS Quality and Safeguards Commission representatives, academics, policy and legal specialists and sector experts. We are grateful to all our speakers for sharing their insights and expertise.

We extend our thanks to our sponsor, National Australia Bank, our member, DLA Piper and our partner, Corrs Chambers Westgarth, for generously hosting our meetings.

We have established our inaugural online meetings for members – which take place in between our in-person member events (every six weeks). These events offer market insights, timely sector information and the opportunity to engage with guest presenters. We look forward to continuing to engage with our members and welcoming guest presenters to these events.

Member networking events (across the states)

This year, we organised our inaugural state-based networking events. We held networking events in SA, WA, NSW, VIC and QLD. These events were a great opportunity for members to get to know each other, discover opportunities for collaboration, and foster sector connections.



Member directory

We are currently designing a member directory that will be a feature of our new website which will be launched in late 2024. Our searchable member directory will make it easy for our members to search for and connect with other members; it will also allow the public to easily find and connect with SDA Alliance members.

We would also like to thank our members, Synergis Fund and Australian Unity, for hosting SDA Alliance Board Meetings in Sydney and Melbourne over the past year.

With Thanks

We are deeply grateful for the continued support of all our sponsors – their generosity make our work possible.

Over the past year, our sponsors have engaged in our work in various ways – from hosting member engagement events to using their expertise to assist us to address complex policy challenges.

Our sponsors strengthen our work as an Alliance – helping us to achieve the ambitious goals we are working towards to drive good housing outcomes for people with disability.

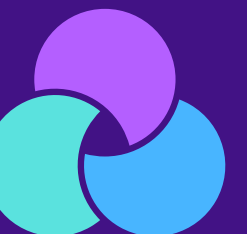


Financial report: Summary





	2022	2023	2024
Interest Received	146	1,564	5,587
Associate Fees	12,000	13,500	13,388
Membership Fees	212,500	256,500	289,895
Grant Funding Received	-	-	7,851
Other Revenue	22,950	1,250	2,567
Sponsorship Received	50,000	65,000	80,500
Supporters Fees	17,000	38,500	32,975
Total Revenue	314,596	376,314	432,763

"In 2023-2024, we have experienced significant membership growth, an increase of 13% on the prior year. We have also experienced considerable growth in sponsorship and grants, an increase of 36% on the previous year. Our overall revenue increased by 15% in 2023-2024 (in comparison to the previous year): this robust financial result has enabled us to increase our advocacy impact and drive positive outcomes for participants."

Jacob Edwards, Board Treasurer



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