



Impact Report 2024–25

aspenmedical
foundation

1 July 2025



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From the Chair

“It is with great pride that I present the Chair’s foreword for the 2024–25 Aspen Medical Foundation Impact Report.”

Sian Keys
Aspen Medical Foundation Chair



It has been an incredible honour to step into the position and work alongside such a passionate team, committed Board and dedicated network of partners and supporters.

This year has been one of sharpening our focus, strengthening our partnerships and deepening our alignment with the communities and regions where Aspen Medical operates. As Chair, I've seen firsthand the value of bringing clarity to our purpose and alignment across all that we do.

We have focused intently on the Foundation's core focus: building capacity in healthcare workers, supporting leaders in systems and policy change, and expanding the involvement of our employees, customers, and alumni in meaningful community impact.

One of the most rewarding developments this year has been aligning our efforts more closely with Aspen Medical's operational footprint. This not only deepens our connection to First Nations communities but also encourages greater employee engagement, empowering Aspen Medical staff to be part of the change we're working to create.

In our commitment to influence systemic change, we've supported not-for-profit organisations working at the policy level, offering access to Aspen Medical's networks and expertise to help amplify their voice and grow their impact.

I would like to sincerely thank my fellow Board members, Amelda Keys, Glenn Keys, Paul Bird and employee representative Dayle Mathews, for their support and leadership during this important year. Special thanks to Melissa Broers, our Social Impact Manager and Craig Fitzgerald, our CEO, for their relentless energy and drive.

Our focus for the upcoming year is to harness Aspen Medical's relationships to bring on new partners and collaborators, helping to create scalable, lasting change in the communities we serve.

As I reflect on my first year as Chair, I am filled with gratitude and optimism. The path ahead is clear and our potential to deliver meaningful, community-led healthcare change is stronger than ever.

2008

**Foundation
established**

61

Programs funded

31

**Health scholarships
for First Nations
students since 2008**

5

**Health scholarships in
the Pacific**

\$2.1 million

Total giving

CEO point of view

“I am thrilled to present our Impact Report for 2024–25. This past year has been one of focus, momentum and meaningful progress as we continue to build on the Aspen Medical Foundation’s mission to improve healthcare outcomes in underserved communities.”

Craig Fitzgerald
Aspen Medical Foundation CEO



This year, we refined our efforts across our four strategic focus areas:

- Supporting communities where Aspen Medical operates.
- Identifying and backing policy and systems-change leaders.
- Building healthcare workforce capacity.
- Engaging our team, alumni and customers in lasting impact.

One of the clearest examples of our momentum is the growth of our scholarship program. We awarded 12 scholarships to First Nations recipients, strengthening our commitment to building a culturally safe and community-led health workforce in Australia. We proudly supported two returning scholars: one now pursuing a Doctor of Medicine, the other advancing into paediatric nursing after graduating as a registered nurse in 2023.

This year also marked our expansion of the scholarship program into Fiji, awarding four postgraduate scholarships in Fiji to nurses undertaking advanced training in peri-operative care, emergency care and neonatal care. These professionals are now helping to address workforce shortages in critical areas of the Pacific.



We also began aligning the Foundation's initiatives more closely with Aspen Medical's operational footprint, enabling more meaningful staff involvement and helping us engage our customers and partners, many of whom share our values, in creating scalable and sustained impact.

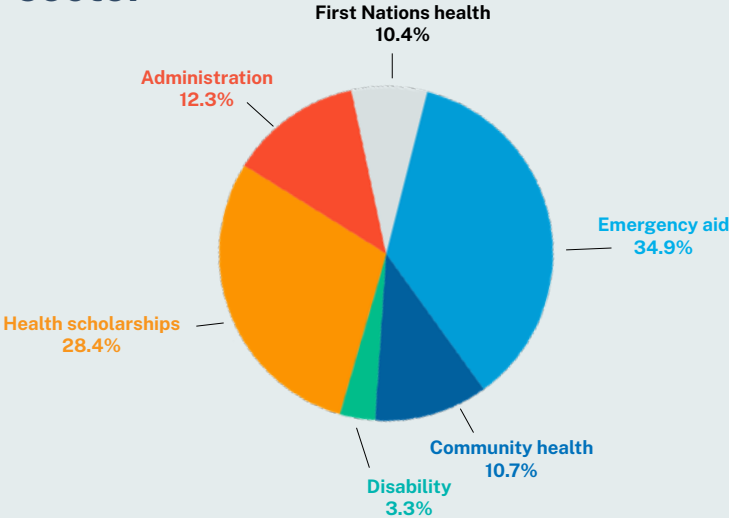
A special mention must also go to our work in Ukraine, led by our Aspen Medical USA team. Partnering with the Alcoa Foundation and Ukraine's First Medical Union to support the people of Ukraine has been a truly humbling experience. Importantly, we leveraged Aspen Medical's internal expertise to support not-for-profit partners in communication, government relations and strategic introductions, opening doors for policy influence and systems-level change.

Looking ahead, our goal is ambitious: to double our scholarship program in the next two years, whilst deepening our partnerships and extending our support to more communities across Australia and the Pacific.

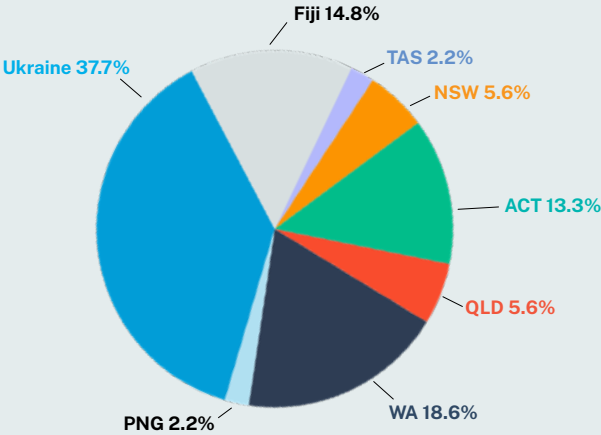
I would like to thank Chair Sian Keys, the Aspen Medical Foundation Board and our Social Impact Manager, Melissa Broers, for their unwavering dedication. Together, we are realising a vision that began in 2008, to make a difference and to do so with purpose and impact.

Funding breakdown

By sector



By location

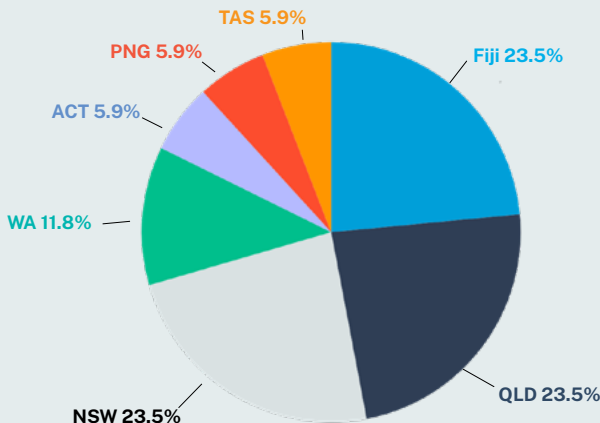


Grants and donations 87.2%

Administration 12.8%

Scholarships

By location



By qualification studied



By gender

Female 76.5%

Male 23.5%

Programs funded 2024–25

Community



Hands Across Canberra

In 2024 Hands Across Canberra, Canberra Foundations Collaborative grants round, the Aspen Medical Foundation funded:

- Humour Foundation, Clown Doctors Canberra Hospital - \$13,000
- NextSense, tympanometer for Canberra Centre - \$12,583
- Directions Teen Clinic, Lanyon - \$14,000



Mental Illness Education ACT (MIEACT)

Three year partnership - \$13,750 per year

In 2023, the Aspen Medical Foundation signed a three year partnership with MIEACT.

MIEACT is the primary local mental health and wellbeing education provider for workplaces, community groups and secondary schools across Canberra and the surrounding region.



Fearless Women

\$5,000

In 2024, the Aspen Medical Foundation supported Fearless Women. Fearless Women is dedicated to helping girls and young women in the ACT live fear less and with confidence, courage, resilience and hope.



Centre for Women's Safety and Wellbeing

\$6,320

The Aspen Medical Foundation proudly partnered with the Centre for Women's Safety and Wellbeing to sponsor eight female health clinicians from remote Western Australia to attend the 2024 Women's Health Conference in Perth. These professionals serve First Nations communities through non-profit medical services. Supporting health capacity in remote areas is a key priority, and we are committed to fostering their continued education and growth.





First Nations health



Indigenous Marathon Foundation (IMF)

\$21,500

In 2024, Aspen Medical Foundation partnered with IMF to deliver the I-CAN program in Karratha. This eight-week initiative promotes health and fitness in remote Indigenous schools through screenings, activities, equipment installation and training for local teachers and community leaders.



Malpa - Young Doctors for Life

\$23,000

Building on the success of Malpa's Young Doctors program in WA's Peel region, the Aspen Medical Foundation will fund two new programs in the Pilbara over the next two financial years, beginning in early 2026. This initiative combines traditional Ngangkari healing with contemporary health education, empowering children to become health leaders in their schools and communities.



University of Newcastle - SPEIRS

Three year partnership - \$15,000 per year

The Speech Pathology in Early Intervention and Regional Settings (SPEIRS) Program, co-funded by the Aspen Medical Foundation and the Vonwiller Foundation through the University of Newcastle, is making a significant difference in early childhood development. Led by speech pathology lecturer Gwendalyn Webb, the program engages fourth-year speech pathology students to attend regional playgroups, where they identify and support children aged 0–3 with communication delays. Students also work alongside parents, carers and educators to share strategies that encourage language growth at home and in the community. Many of the regions supported have large Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander populations, ensuring the program addresses critical equity needs.

Emergency response



First Medical Union - Unbroken

\$170,000

With Alcoa Foundation support, the Aspen Medical Foundation partnered with Ukraine's First Medical Union to enhance prosthetics and trauma care. \$US120,000 supported a US study tour to forge partnerships with Harvard University, Wake Forest Institute for Regenerative Medicine and Shirley Ryan AbilityLab. An additional \$US40,000 provided prosthetics for 55 war survivors.

Prosthetic limb

\$16,500

The Aspen Medical Foundation in partnership with the Alcoa Foundation funded a prosthetic arm for a nine-year-old girl that lost her arm in a bus crash in Fiji.



Programs funded in years prior

Delivered or updated in 24–25

Not all impact happens within a single financial year. Several key programs funded in previous years reached important milestones or were successfully delivered in 2024–25, demonstrating the Foundation's long-term commitment to community health, research and innovation.



Australian Cancer Research Foundation – Mobile lung cancer screening

Funding year: 2023 | Launch expected: late 2025
\$90,000

Co-funded by the Aspen Medical Foundation, this world-first mobile lung cancer screening unit — led by ACRF and Professor Kwun Fong — is designed to reach rural and remote Queensland communities. Housed in a converted semi-trailer, it will provide life-saving early detection services and reduce health inequities across Australia.



Malpa – Young Doctors for Life

Funding year: 2023 (via Alcoa Foundation grant)
\$106,000

Six Young Doctors for Life programs were funded in WA's Peel region. Three were delivered in late 2024, two in early 2025, with the final scheduled for semester two 2025. These culturally grounded programs empower children as health leaders, strengthening community ownership, cultural continuity and youth engagement in preventive healthcare.



UNSW
SYDNEY

Professor Julian Trollor, Down Syndrome and mental health

Funding year: 2021 | Published: April 2025
\$30,000

The Aspen Medical Foundation funded a sub-analysis of 4,103 individuals with Down Syndrome, led by Professor Julian Trollor at the University of NSW. Published in 2025, the research revealed significantly higher and earlier onset dementia rates, now shaping advocacy for tailored mental health services for people with intellectual disabilities.





15

**First Nations
scholarships were
awarded in 2024–25.**



Julie O'Brien: Leading with culture and purpose

Julie O'Brien is a proud Aboriginal woman from the Yulluna People of Northwest Queensland and is currently studying for a degree in social work.

Raised on her ancestral country by her mother, grandmother and great-grandmother, Julie's early life was grounded in cultural connection, family and community. These years, surrounded by her uncles, aunties and cousins, remain a treasured memory. "My mum supported and managed to keep together her six brothers and two sisters in a period of intense uncertainty," she says.

At age 10, Julie moved to Maryborough to be with her father's family and later relocated to Mackay in 1998, where she still lives today on Yuwi Country. Her mothers upbringing, especially during a time of government assimilation policies in the 1950s and 60s, shaped her deep commitment to supporting her community.

Julie began her healthcare career in 1988, graduating as an enrolled nurse. Over the past 35 years with Queensland Health, she has worked tirelessly in clinical and leadership roles and currently serves as Acting Director of Operations for the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Unit at Mackay Hospital and Health Services.

Despite her senior position, Julie found herself yearning to make more direct change at the grassroots level, particularly in improving health outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander patients. In 2022, she enrolled full-time in a Bachelor of Social Work at the University of the Sunshine Coast whilst continuing to work full-time. Balancing three subjects per semester and a demanding job, she has thrived, currently holding a GPA of 6.03.

"The care our mob receives is often inadequate and lacking cultural perspective," Julie says. "That leads to poorer outcomes and repeated hospital visits. I want to change that."

Julie's goal is to integrate her management experience and policy knowledge with front-line social work to better advocate for culturally safe care. Her upcoming third-year placement with the Department of Youth Justice and Victim Support in Mackay is another step toward that vision.

According to Julie, the scholarship she received from the Aspen Medical Foundation has been critical. "It eased the financial pressure and allowed me to focus on study. I feel incredibly privileged."

Julie's passion for culturally safe healthcare, grounded in her identity and community, continues to drive her forward. She is not just studying to complete a degree, she is helping lead lasting change for her people.

Sera Metai: Championing compassionate surgical care in Fiji

In 2025, Sera Metai was awarded an Aspen Medical Foundation scholarship to pursue a Postgraduate Diploma in Peri-Operative Nursing at Fiji National University. A proud islander from Taveuni, a dedicated peri-operative nurse and a mother of two, Sera exemplifies resilience, compassion and professional excellence.

Supported by the Aspen Medical Foundation, Sera is entering a transformative phase of her nursing career. She is determined to raise surgical care standards and mentor the next generation of theatre nurses in Fiji.

“Just as midwives specialise to protect life with dignity, I aim to elevate peri-operative practice for the wellbeing of every patient entrusted to us,” she shares.

In the year ahead, Sera’s studies will focus on strengthening intraoperative protocols, refining medication management and improving recovery outcomes, ensuring every patient receives safe, dignified and empathetic care.

Balancing full-time nursing and motherhood, Sera says the scholarship has lifted a financial burden and allowed her to focus wholeheartedly on her academic and clinical development.

“This opportunity reignited my commitment to the operating theatre, not just as a workplace, but as a space where patient dignity and safety begin with expert care,” she says.

The scholarship, Sera adds, bridged the gap between her duties and dreams.

“It’s more than financial aid, it’s a gesture of belief in what I do and why I do it. That kind of encouragement stays with you and I carry it with pride every day.”

Thanks to her drive and the support of the Aspen Medical Foundation, Sera is not only building a brighter future for herself and her family, but also contributing to stronger, safer surgical care across Fiji.





Scholarships in the Pacific

Fiji

- 1 x Postgraduate Scholarship in Emergency Care at Fiji National University.
- 1 x Postgraduate Scholarship in Peri-Operative Nursing at Fiji National University.
- 2 x Postgraduate Scholarships in Neo-natal Care at the Australian College of Nursing.

Papua New Guinea

- 1 x Diploma of Nursing at Lutheran School of Nursing, through The Australia Awards.

Empowering voices: Expanding speech pathology support through the SPEIRS Program

In partnership with the University of Newcastle and the Vonwiller Foundation.

The Aspen Medical Foundation is proud to support the University of Newcastle's transformative SPEIRS Program, a groundbreaking initiative delivering early intervention speech pathology services directly into rural and regional communities across New South Wales. Co-funded with the Vonwiller Foundation, SPEIRS exemplifies how targeted philanthropy can address health inequities, empower families and train the next generation of allied health professionals.

In 2024, the Aspen Medical Foundation committed \$45,000 over three years to support the SPEIRS Program. This funding enables final year speech pathology students from the University of Newcastle to undertake supervised clinical placements in community-based playgroups throughout the greater Hunter region. These playgroups serve communities with high numbers of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children groups at increased risk of speech and language delays due to reduced access to early healthcare.

Children in rural and regional areas are more than twice as likely to be developmentally vulnerable than their metropolitan peers. Yet only 11 per cent of certified speech pathologists work outside urban centres. Long waitlists, high costs and geographic isolation mean many children miss out on critical early intervention.

SPEIRS responds by placing services where they're needed most in playgroups where families already gather. Children aged 0–3, in their most crucial developmental years, are screened, supported and referred by student clinicians working under professional supervision.

Each semester, two final year students are placed in regional playgroups for eight weeks. They conduct developmental checks, provide strategies to parents and gather data on speech and language development. Students receive cultural training and trauma informed practice education to ensure their work is culturally safe and respectful.

Fourth-year student Shayla shared:

"In a previous placement, I supported children facing trauma, family instability and language delays. That experience sparked my passion for early intervention. SPEIRS allowed me to take that passion further especially in communities that really need it."



Families report the SPEIRS program has made a big difference:

“The most significant change is that more people can access speech pathology. There are such long waitlists it was great to get help.”

“Last year, I was so worried. My daughter wasn’t talking at all. Then she suddenly started using words now she’s confident, just shy with new people.”

Educators echo this positive impact:

“It lightened the load for carers and gave them a safe space to ask questions.”

“Having speech support so accessible made a real difference.”

SPEIRS not only delivers services, it builds capacity. Parents, carers and educators learn how to recognise early signs of difficulty and how to support communication every day. Students, meanwhile, gain hands-on experience in rural health and become better equipped to navigate complex service barriers.

As one student put it:

“This placement deepened my understanding of the challenges regional families face. I now know how to guide families to practical solutions like telehealth or community services.”

The University of Newcastle is expanding SPEIRS, securing new partnerships and evaluating outcomes to embed speech pathology as a permanent feature of early childhood support.

By investing in this program, the Aspen Medical Foundation is helping to create a future where no child is left behind due to postcode or background and where aspiring health professionals are inspired and equipped to serve where the need is greatest.

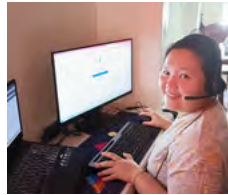
Empowering children, supporting families and strengthening communities one word at a time.



Thank you to our Aspen Medical champions

The Aspen Medical Foundation thrives thanks to the incredible efforts of our people. This year, we're proud to acknowledge a few standout contributions:

- **Susan Pacey** collects bottles at our office in Brisbane and donates the proceeds to the Foundation, generously matched by Aspen Medical.
- **Lesley Rawlings** and team sold surplus office furniture after an office refit and donated all profits to the Foundation.
- **Ching Ching Loh** and **Rene Mandap** have provided vital financial support, ensuring smooth Foundation operations.
- **Eamonn Quinn** has been key in continuing to raise the Foundation's profile across the organisation.
- Our Technology and Innovation and Corporate Support teams teamed up to sell pre-loved laptops and phones, donating all proceeds to the Foundation.
- **Casey Wilson** has been instrumental in supporting the Foundation's marketing efforts throughout the year.
- **Petri Austin** has been key in creating forms that have streamlined the Foundations processes.
- And in Ukraine, **Terry Rauch** worked tirelessly with the team at Unbroken, coordinating prosthetics and providing first class training.



Thank you to our partners



The Aspen Medical Foundation gratefully acknowledges the generous support of the Alcoa Foundation, which made several key initiatives possible:

- Ukraine hosted its first-ever Advancing Pain Relief and Rehabilitation symposium.
- 55 victims of the Ukraine war received prosthetics, regaining mobility and independence.
- The Unbroken executive team undertook a two-week training visit to the USA, leading to new partnerships and medical insights.
- 77 Malpa Young Doctors were trained in Western Australia.

Thank you, Alcoa Foundation, for your commitment to advancing global healthcare and rehabilitation.

Thank you to our generous supporters. At the Aspen Medical Foundation, we strive to keep administration costs low by leveraging the in-kind support of Aspen Medical's trusted providers, ensuring that more of every dollar goes directly to the communities and causes that need it most.



wherever you need us

CONTACT

2 King Street Deakin,
ACT 2600 Australia

Phone +61 (0)2 6203 9500

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