



2024 - 2025 **CEDA** **IMPACT** **REPORT**

Committee for Economic Development of Australia



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CHAIR AND CEO STATEMENT

Christine Bartlett Melinda Cilento

The 2024–25 year has been one of purpose, progress and partnership for CEDA.

One of our proudest achievements this year was the launch of Progress 2050 — CEDA's long-term agenda for prosperity for all Australians. Unveiled in March 2025, Progress 2050 sets out a bold vision for inclusive, sustainable and productive growth. Developed in conjunction with our members, it has already shaped national debate, informed public policy and inspired conversation across sectors.

CEDA's research continues to drive impact. Our analysis of economic conditions, labour markets and productivity has supported numerous government briefings and generated significant media coverage. This engagement reflects our enduring commitment to ensure that policy decisions are grounded in evidence and focused on outcomes that benefit all Australians.

Our powerful convening program continues to drive revenue, as well as influence and engagement on the issues shaping Australian public policy. This year, CEDA convened more than 85 public events across the country, bringing together leaders and experts to explore the challenges and opportunities defining our nation's future.

This year also marked a new chapter in CEDA's history. For the first time, we have sought to expand our impact through philanthropic partnerships. Philanthropy plays a critical role in enabling independent institutions like CEDA to deliver systemic change and long-term policy impact. We invite individuals and organisations who share our vision to join us in this important work and help drive lasting progress.

As we look to the year ahead, our focus remains clear: to advance thoughtful, evidence-based research, conversations and actions that contribute to effective long-term public policy in support of prosperity for all Australians.

We are deeply grateful to our members, whose commitment and engagement underpin everything we do. Your insights and support enable CEDA to inform, influence and connect leaders across business, government, academia and the broader community in pursuit of a stronger Australia.

Thank you to our members, partners, supporters and advisors — in particular the CEDA Board — for making this impact possible. Together we are building the foundations for long-term prosperity for all Australians.

Christine Bartlett, Chair
Melinda Cilento, CEO



Meet Christine Bartlett, CEDA's new Chair

Experienced company director and advisor Christine Bartlett joined CEDA as Chair in March 2025, taking over from WA-based business leader Diane Smith-Gander AO.

Christine's depth of experience across both the business and non-profit sectors has quickly proven invaluable to CEDA as it embarks on Progress 2050.

In addition to Chairing CEDA, Christine is currently a non-executive director of Mirvac, Australian Clinical Labs, TAL and Reliance Worldwide. She was a director of the children's charity The Smith Family for 12 years, serving as Chair from 2016-2019, and has been a director of Sigma Healthcare, GBST, PropertyLook, and icare.

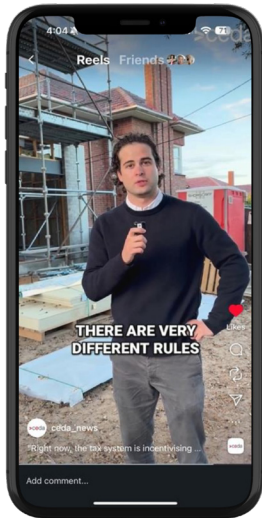
Christine said she is honoured to lead CEDA: "At a time of growing political polarisation, fraying social cohesion and geoeconomic uncertainty, it is critical to foster an environment that allows for healthy and open debate – just what CEDA does best."

"I am pleased to have joined at this important moment, and I'm looking forward to continuing to work with CEDA's members and team to drive public policy in support of prosperity, for all Australians."

Christine Bartlett

OUR REACH

CEDA's influence and reach continue to grow year on year, reflecting the impact of our work and dedication of our team.



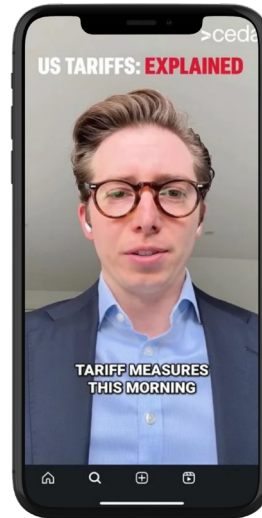
46,000
SOCIAL MEDIA
FOLLOWERS

46
OPINION
ARTICLES



780,000
WEBPAGE
VIEWS

6,500
MEDIA
MENTIONS



170,000
VIDEO VIEWS

21
RESEARCH
PIECES



OUR INFLUENCE

CEDA's events program continued to grow in scale and influence in 2024–25. Our sold-out **AI Leadership Summit**, in partnership with the **National AI Centre**, brought together leaders from across business, government and technology. In South Australia, we hosted our **largest-ever State of the State**.

We also launched two new national flagship events, **Human Cities Summit** in Sydney and **Climate and Energy Summit** in Melbourne.

Across the year, we welcomed some of **Australia's most influential speakers and leaders** to our stage, providing a trusted platform for ideas and debate that shape the nation's agenda.

In total, CEDA hosted **150 events** attended by **19,500 participants**, across the country.

58

PUBLIC
EVENTS

18

LIVESTREAMS

50

TRUSTEE
EVENTS

VIC

26 EVENTS

NSW

25 EVENTS

SA

18 EVENTS

QLD

23 EVENTS

WA

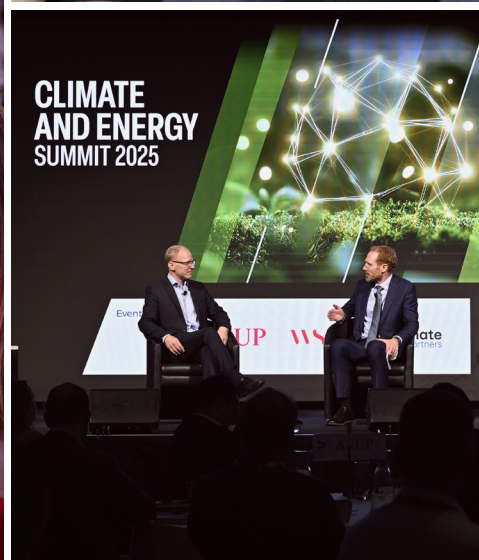
22 EVENTS

ACT

3 EVENTS

TAS

8 EVENTS



OUR POLICY IMPACT

This section summarises the policy recommendations made during 2024-25 and highlights the impact of our ongoing work on policy discourse and advocacy for reform.

In 2024-25, our research team was involved in advisory bodies and research groups including,

- ACCC Performance Consultative Committee
- Amplify Australia Research Committee
- Australian Circular Economy Hub Advisory Board
- Australian Statistics Advisory Council
- Curtin University Economics Discipline Advisory Group
- Deakin University Economics Advisory Board
- Economic Inclusion Advisory Committee
- Expert Council on University Governance
- GovAI CoLab
- Melbourne Institute Advisory Board
- Ministerial Advisory Council on Skilled Migration
- OECD Economic Survey of Australia
- Parliamentary Panel of Expert Advisors (PBO)
- Responsible Artificial Intelligence at Scale
- Poverty Research Network
- Universities Studies Centre
- WA Economics Society Council
- WA Women in Economics Network Committee

1 PRODUCTIVITY FUNDING POOL

Recommendation: CEDA called for a funded state reform model to lift productivity.

Impact: Federal Government created a \$900 million National Productivity Fund, enabling states to bid for productivity-enhancing reforms. Read more on page 9.

3 VISAS FOR SKILLER WORKERS IN CLEAN ENERGY

Recommendation: CEDA recommended fast-track visas and intra-company transfers for net-zero roles.

Impact: The Skills in Demand visa includes some clean-energy specialists but excludes key trades and ICT roles. Read more on page 14.

5 FAST-TRACKED VISA FOR HIGHLY SKILLED WORKERS

Recommendation: CEDA advocated for streamlined migration pathways for high-earning specialists.

Impact: A Specialist Skills Pathway was introduced, allowing faster processing for workers earning above \$145,000.

7 FOUNDATIONAL SKILLS

Recommendation: CEDA identified literacy, numeracy and digital capability gaps limiting workforce participation.

Impact: The Skills for Education and Employment (SEE) program was expanded and a National Foundation Skills Strategy launched.

9 INCREASE IN RENT ASSISTANCE

Recommendation: CEDA called for a review of Commonwealth Rent Assistance to address affordability.

Impact: Payments increased by 15% in 2023 and 10% in 2024, with further reform still needed. Read more on page 19.

2 REVIEW OCCUPATIONAL LICENSING

Recommendation: CEDA sought a comprehensive review to improve skill recognition and mobility.

Impact: The Productivity Commission is reviewing licensing under National Competition Policy. Read more on page 12.

4 SUPPORTING AGED-CARE WAGE INCREASES

Recommendation: CEDA called for wage rises to address workforce shortages and improve care quality.

Impact: The Fair Work Commission delivered significant pay increases for 400,000 aged-care workers. Read more on page 17.

6 BETTER USE OF MIGRANTS SKILLS

Recommendation: CEDA urged stronger protections and permanent residency pathways for skilled migrants.

Impact: The 2024 Skills in Demand visa created defined PR pathways and limited “visa hopping”. Read more on page 21.

8 CLEAN-ENERGY PRECINCT FRAMEWORK

Recommendation: CEDA proposed clear criteria for precinct investment to attract global projects.

Impact: National Interest Framework now aligns investment with emissions, security and economic priorities.

10 RECOGNITION OF INTERNATIONAL QUALIFICATIONS

Recommendation: CEDA pushed to fast-track recognition of overseas qualifications to fill skill gaps.

Impact: In 2025, expedited recognition began for internationally qualified nurses, starting with the health sector.

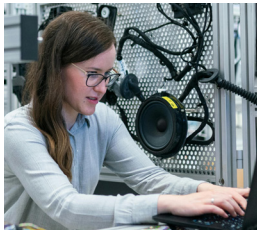
PROGRESS 2050

Progress 2050 is our vision of long-term prosperity for all Australians. Launched in 2024–25, it responds to growing global challenges and the call from our members for bold, people-centred action.

At its core, Progress 2050 recognises that an economy is about people. It is built on two connected pillars - a strong economy and a strong social compact, because one cannot thrive without the other. Together they create a target for Australia's future: a nation that is innovative, inclusive and resilient.

These pillars are supported by six strategic goals developed through extensive consultation and research, guiding how we measure and drive real progress. In the following pages you can read more about our work towards the goals of a strong economy and a strong social compact.

Strong Economy



**PRODUCTIVITY,
INVESTMENT AND
INNOVATION**



**KNOWLEDGE,
SKILLS AND
WORKFORCE**



**ENERGY TRANSITION
AND CLIMATE
ADAPTATION**

Goal 1: Australia's businesses are amongst the most competitive and dynamic in the world.

Goal 2: Australia's skills, knowledge and ideas are valued, invested in and sought after – locally and globally.

Goal 3: Australian businesses and communities lead climate adaptation and the transition to affordable, reliable and secure clean energy.

Strong Social Compact



**WELLBEING,
SECURITY AND
PARTICIPATION**



**DISADVANTAGE AND
OPPORTUNITY**



**INCLUSION AND
EQUITY**

Goal 4: All Australians have access to the education, housing and care they need to thrive.

Goal 5: All Australians have the opportunities and support to live a productive, connected and meaningful life.

Goal 6: Australia's success is characterised by the vibrancy and diversity of our workplaces and society.



GOAL 1 - PRODUCTIVITY, INVESTMENT AND INNOVATION

WHAT IF AUSTRALIA'S BUSINESSES LED THE WAY GLOBALLY?

Productivity, innovation and investment are key drivers of prosperity and living standards.

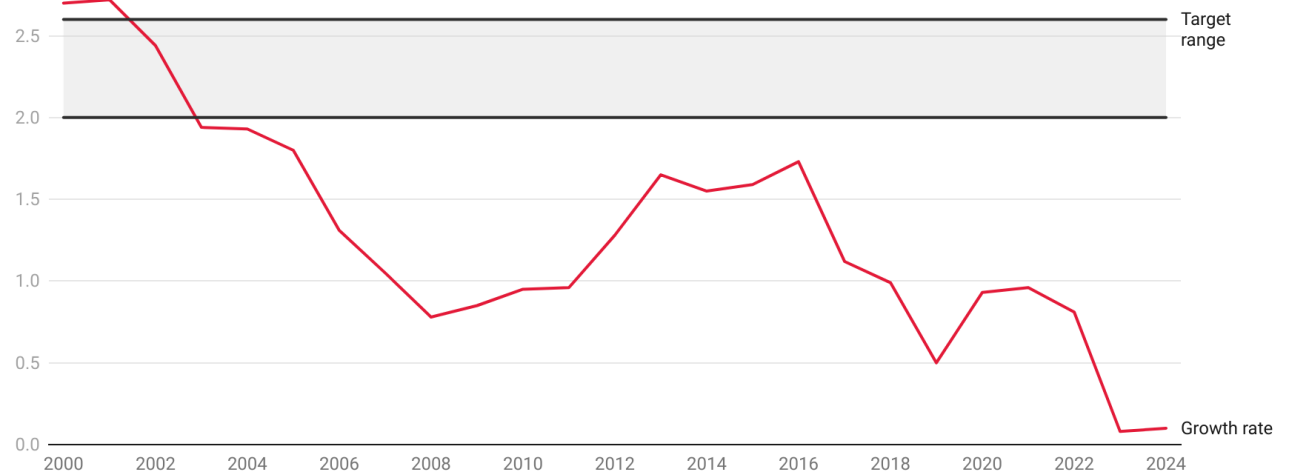
However, as our Progress 2050 goal tracker shows, labour productivity in Australia has been weak for two decades, business investment as a share of GDP remains well below pre-GFC levels, and it has been almost 15 years since Australia ranked among the top 10 most competitive countries.

CEDA focused on these key issues in research, events and advocacy throughout the year, with a key recommendation – a national productivity fund – adopted as Federal Government policy.

In a survey on the most pressing tax reforms, our members suggested broadening the tax base to reduce reliance on personal income tax, taxing high earners and corporations more to address intergenerational fairness and closing corporate tax loopholes.

Once again, CEDA was the exclusive Australian partner for the *IMD World Competitiveness Yearbook 2025*, in which Australia dropped five places to 18th, highlighting the need for measures to strengthen the economy and revive the nation's flagging productivity.

Labour productivity growth



Source: ABS National Accounts • Created with Datawrapper



POLICY IN PERSON

UNIVERSITY STUDENTS TACKLE PRODUCTIVITY DECLINE

Each year, the Economic Student Society of Australia holds a Public Policy Case Competition, inviting student teams to innovate and collaborate on Australia's most pressing challenges.

In the 2025 national final, the top four teams from a record 500 applications were asked to help solve the decline in Australia's productivity.

University of Melbourne students Angela Tang, Julia Zhu, Sanjay Ravichandran and Thomas Wong took the honours and were invited to attend CEDA's State of the Nation conference in Canberra.

CEDA is a proud supporter of the competition. CEDA Senior Economist Liam Dillon served on the expert panel of judges.

BOOSTING CONSTRUCTION PRODUCTIVITY

Construction is one of Australia's largest industries and has a critical role in meeting our housing needs, delivering the nation's infrastructure pipeline and supporting the energy transition.

Our report, *Size matters: Why construction productivity is so weak*, found Australia is building half as many homes per construction worker as in the 1970s.

A key factor is the dominance of very small businesses in the sector, with 98.5 per cent of Australian construction companies having fewer than 20 employees. This has more than doubled from 43 per cent in the late 1980s.

The report found the sector could generate an extra 12 per cent, or \$54 billion in revenue, per year if building firms were similar in size to manufacturing firms – the equivalent to gaining an extra 150,000 construction workers.

To increase construction productivity, we recommend streamlining land-use regulation across all levels of government, adjusting the relative tax settings for individuals and small and large businesses, and a more predictable pipeline of government work.



"I think there is an important need for the nation to be increasingly innovative so that we can sustain the higher wages that Australians deserve in a way that is sustainable in the long term."

The Hon. Peter Malinauskas, Premier of South Australia, speaking at SA State of the State 2025

CEDA LEADS AUSTRALIA'S AI POLICY DEBATE

CEDA prides itself on being at the forefront of emerging policy issues, as demonstrated by our ground-breaking work in AI.

Our focus sharpened in 2020, as the AI landscape expanded during the COVID-19 pandemic.

We convened members to explore the development and use of technology like AI in the public interest and presented evidence-based solutions through our research.

In 2022, our report, *Artificial Intelligence: Principles to Practice*, highlighted a chronic skilled workforce shortage, and we partnered with Microsoft on the *Science X Tech* report, calling for strong leadership to capture the benefits of technical advances.

Over the past three years, we have partnered with the National AI Centre (NAIC) to deliver the AI Leadership Summit, Australia's most influential AI conference, enabling leaders to explore ways to drive real impact for their organisations and the nation's long-term prosperity.

Our work with NAIC on promoting responsible and safe practices across Australia led to the release of AI safety standards by NAIC in 2024.



GOAL 2 - KNOWLEDGE, SKILLS AND WORKFORCE

WHAT IF AUSTRALIAN INGENUITY AND INNOVATION WERE PRIZED AT HOME AND AFAR?

The global competition for talent is intense and becoming more so.

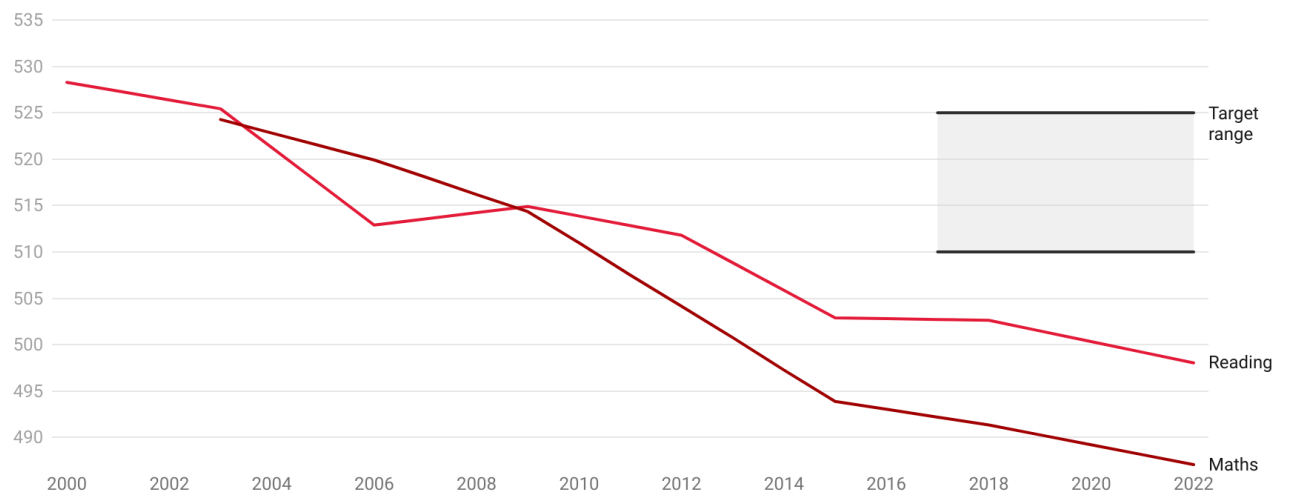
As a nation, we need to ensure we have a strong pool of talent to draw from and that there are sufficient opportunities for people to build their careers in Australia.

CEDA's Progress 2050 goal is for Australia's skills, knowledge and ideas to be valued, invested in and sought after, locally and globally.

This means building strong foundations in literacy, numeracy, digital and communication skills. We have also identified wages growth and research and development spending as areas for improvement.

During the year, our calls to develop stronger base skills were reflected in the development of the National Foundation Skills Strategy and the expansion of the Skills for Education and Employment Program.

Foundation skills proficiency



Source: OECD, PISA results • Created with Datawrapper



POLICY IN PERSON

ELECTRICIANS BENEFIT FROM NATIONAL STANDARDS

In May 2025, the Federal Government has partially heeded CEDA's long-standing recommendation for standardised occupational licensing requirements.

The introduction of national licensing for electrical tradespeople means electricians can work across state borders without obtaining multiple licences, saving up to \$9000 in fees and increasing worker mobility.

Nick Sheather from NRS Electrical says "Each time I take on work interstate, I have to navigate different electrical and contractor licensing processes. It slows projects down, reduces productivity and adds cost for everyone, all for the same skills and standards. Electricians operate under national standards but don't have access to a national licence."

Our 2022 submission to the Federal Government's Employment White Paper called for a review of occupational licensing, now being undertaken by the Productivity Commission. We argued that improving the recognition of existing skills would relieve skill shortages and deliver an economic gain for Australia of up to \$5 billion a year.

CALL TO BOOST WORK-RELATED TRAINING

CEDA research shows work-related training has fallen in Australia, despite clear links to higher incomes and productivity, as well as job satisfaction and staff retention.

Our report, *Learning curve: Why Australia needs a training boost*, found firms and employees invest more than \$12 billion in training annually.

However, the proportion of people undertaking work-related training has dropped by 14 per cent since 2007, while the average time participants spent in training is down 17 per cent.

In a survey of CEDA members, 75 per cent of respondents indicated that time and workload were key barriers to the delivery and take-up of training.

We recommend that firms should build a learning culture, measure success and better target compliance training to maximise the benefit of their training investment.



"I was particularly struck by the use cases looking at the healthcare and education industry. And even more exciting to see the innovation emerging from Australian entrepreneurs as well. Now is the time to start using AI. It's no longer theory, it's happening now."

Beth Worrall, Responsible AI Program Manager, National AI Centre at the AI Leadership Summit 2024

THRIVING COMMUNITIES OF BEST PRACTICE

In 2024-25, CEDA established a second Community of Best Practice (CoBP) to boost members' AI capabilities, joining our ESG CoBP.

We believe that by lifting performance and improving outcomes across ESG and the adoption of responsible AI, we will contribute to a better future for all Australians.

The communities give members access to forums and workshops with expert speakers, as well as the opportunity to learn from respected professionals in these fields and to be part of a collective voice that shapes the future of AI and ESG. More than 200 members have joined our Communities of Best Practice since inception.

"Building capabilities across developers and users of AI as well as an understanding of community and stakeholder expectations is fundamental to creating a sustainable and competitive future industry," says CEDA Chief Executive Melinda Cilento.



GOAL 3 - ENERGY TRANSITION AND CLIMATE ADAPTATION

WHAT IF AUSTRALIA WAS THE WORLD'S **CLEAN ENERGY SUPERPOWER?**

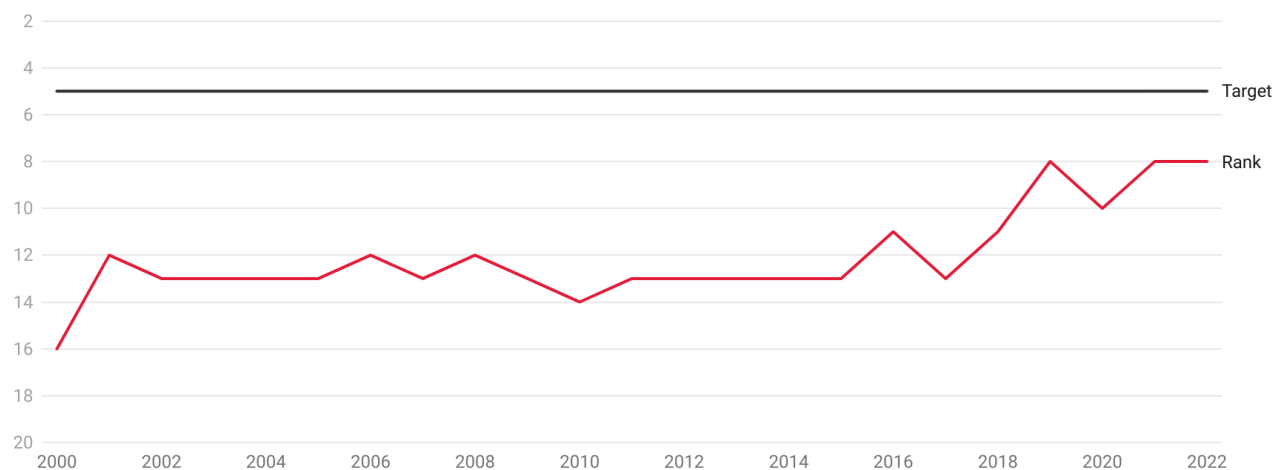
The energy and climate transition presents an imperative for change, as well as a generational opportunity for Australia to lead global decarbonisation efforts and open significant new export markets.

CEDA's Progress 2050 goal is for Australia's businesses and communities to lead climate adaptation and the transition to affordable, reliable and secure clean energy.

In 2024-25, we convened the Climate and Energy Summit to explore how Australia can meet its net-zero targets and capture the wider benefits of the energy transition to strengthen our position on the global stage.

We also continued to activate our research on clean energy precincts.

Global rank in climate adaptation preparedness



Source: Notre Dame Global Adaptation Initiative • Created with Datawrapper



POLICY IN PERSON

MAKING CITIES MORE HUMAN

Jeremy McLeod, founder and design director at Breathe, has spent two decades re-imagining how cities are built, and for whom.

“What if architects could change the city in a generation?” he asked the audience at CEDA’s Human Cities Summit.

His answer began in Brunswick with The Commons, a sustainable, affordable building with no car parks and strong community focus. Its success led to Nightingale One and, eventually, a new housing model. “If the system was broken, we had to design a new system. We couldn’t just design a building in a broken system,” he said.

By removing profit from the equation, McLeod’s team has delivered housing “at cost, 100 per cent electric, powered by 100 per cent renewables.” His work demonstrates how bold ideas and community-led design can build cities that serve people first.

VISAS FOR SKILLED WORKERS IN CLEAN ENERGY

CEDA’s Powering the transition: The net-zero workforce challenge, called for reforms to the temporary migration system to enable fast, simple pathways for highly skilled clean energy workers, including intra-company transfers.

The 2023 report noted the energy-efficiency and demand-management workforce would need to grow from just over 200,000 workers to as many as 400,000 by 2030, with a strong reliance on skills acquired internationally.

The new Skills in Demand visa partially answers our call, allowing entry for some specialists.

CEDA will continue to advocate for the inclusion of trade and machinery operators and the implementation of a formal fast-track intra-company visa.



“Australia can put competitiveness and productivity at the centre of a pro-growth climate agenda which delivers for people and businesses, as well as the environment.”

Brad Archer, CEO, Climate Change Authority speaking at Climate and Energy Summit 2025

CLEAN ENERGY PRECINCT FRAMEWORK ESTABLISHED

In our 2024 report, *Clean energy precincts: How to seize the green export opportunity*, CEDA introduced a framework to prioritise government support for clean energy precincts and build new export markets.

The report, compiled with strong input from CEDA members, cited multiple export opportunities that could be harnessed by grouping together businesses, research institutions and education providers, similar to innovation precincts.

The 2024-25 Federal Budget announced a new National Interest Framework, which defines criteria for identifying sectors that will be key to the net zero transformation and where Australia could have a genuine comparative advantage.

The framework aligns strongly with CEDA’s advocacy, particularly in terms of setting clear, consistent criteria for government support.



SPOTLIGHT: THE CEDA ROUNDTABLE - **INFLUENCE** IN ACTION

CEDA's roundtables are one of the most valuable spaces for Australia's leaders to share, listen and learn. Designed as a closed forum, these events allow senior decision-makers the rare opportunity to discuss the big issues shaping our economy and society with peers.

Our Roundtable Program offers around 50 events each year across the country, and access to roundtables is restricted to CEDA members. What makes these forums so effective is both the calibre of participants, and the spirit of openness they bring to these conversations.

Trustees consistently describe these sessions as a rare chance to engage openly with contemporaries from across business, government and community, to test ideas and learn from each other's perspectives.

Our Roundtable Program has become a cornerstone of the CEDA experience for Trustees like Brenton Anderson, Business Development and Marketing Director at Dentons.

"Partnering with CEDA on their roundtable program delivers real value. These focused, intimate sessions provide the opportunity to connect with peers around important issues that are impacting their businesses. The roundtables are an excellent forum for sharing ideas and building relationships."

What is a Trustee? Each CEDA member organisation nominates a number of Trustees – generally from the organisation's C-suite or other senior executive ranks. The Roundtables are free to attend for Trustees.



"CEDA events provide access to the most senior levels of Tasmania's business community. The events are run very professionally by CEDA, and we are able to complement our expertise in the Tasmanian economy with CEDA's access to a wide array of national experts."

Mark Bowles, Dean and Head of School, Tasmanian School of Business and Economics, University of Tasmania.



GOAL 4 - WELLBEING, SECURITY AND PARTICIPATION

WHAT IF ALL AUSTRALIANS HAD THE **CORE FOUNDATIONS TO THRIVE?**

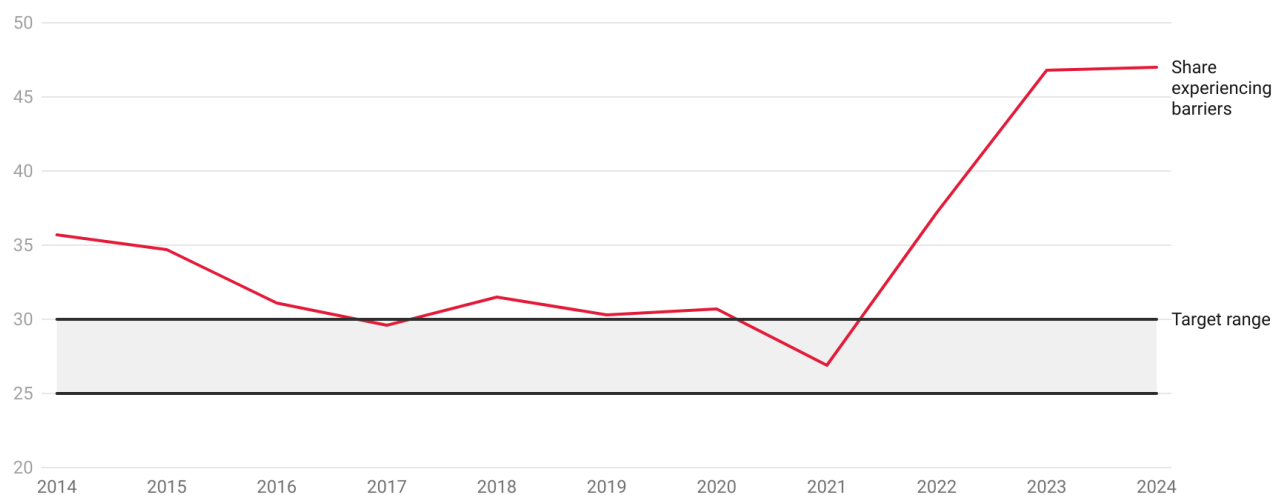
The economy and society are interdependent. CEDA's members believe all Australians should have access to education, housing, care and meaningful work so they can meet their full potential.

As part of our Progress 2050 goals, CEDA has established a number of targets to ensure people can thrive now and into the future.

Meeting these targets would lower the share of household expenditure on housing, address the rental market imbalance that has prevailed since the pandemic, reduce aged care wait times and barriers to health care, and boost educational attainment.

Housing was a focus of our first Human Cities Summit, which also discussed the future of transport, data-driven cities, community safety, regional cities and the importance of green spaces.

Frequency of cost or waiting time barriers to health care



Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics, Patient Experiences • Created with Datawrapper



POLICY IN PERSON

GETTING WOMEN SAFELY TO THEIR DESTINATIONS

Shining the spotlight on transport safety for women, Shebah Rideshare Chief Executive Officer Sarra Stewart told the Human Cities Summit one-in-three women were affected by harassment, ranging from a wolf whistle in the street to life-threatening violence.

“Women’s safety in all cities – not just in Australia but all around the world – it’s a huge problem that needs to be addressed,” she said.

Shebah is Australia’s leading all-women rideshare service, providing safe transport to women across the country and bridging the gap in transport inequality.

It also creates economic empowerment opportunities for its all-women drivers, who keep 85 per cent of the fare so they can generate a real income.

SUPPORTING AGED CARE WAGE INCREASES

CEDA has been a vocal advocate for increasing wages for aged care workers to address workforce shortages that threaten the quality of care provided to older Australians.

In our 2022 report, *Duty of care: Aged care sector in crisis*, we pointed to an annual shortfall of up to 35,000 direct care workers needed to meet basic standards of care, with a further 8000 workers a year needed to provide care at an international best practice standard.

Our main recommendation was for unions, employers and the Federal Government to collaborate to substantially increase award wages in the sector in the Fair Work Commission’s work value case.

Other CEDA research has consistently reinforced the case to boost aged care sector pay.

In a series of decisions in recent years, the Fair Work Commission has increased award wages for approximately 400,000 aged care workers.



“When the sprawl happens, how can we accommodate these different lifestyles, different communities? I think our biggest challenge is to maintain that and create equitable, accessible, enjoyable city spaces that are not confined just to the centre but an expanded space.”

Asanga Lokusooriya, Partner, Financial Services Sector Leader, IBM Australia 17 at Human Cities 2025

WORKING FROM HOME HERE TO STAY

Despite return-to-office mandates from some employers, more than a third of Australians are still working from home on a regular basis.

In 2024-25, CEDA released three short papers looking at the economic impacts of these working arrangements.

Our analysis shows working from home and hybrid arrangements have increased workforce participation for women with young children, carers and people with a disability or health condition.

This gives employers access to a broader talent pool and potentially better skills matches.

The evidence also shows hybrid workers are just as productive as full-time office workers, while also benefiting from significant household savings.

In *Australians are taking a pay cut to work from home*, we calculate that a worker on the average annual pay who works from home earns around \$4400 less than someone who does not.

In *Working from home is saving Australians time and money*, we estimate that people are commuting on average 15 per cent less than before the COVID-19 pandemic, saving \$5308 a year on public transport fares and fuel costs, more than offsetting the lower earnings experienced by those who work from home.



GOAL 5 - DISADVANTAGE AND OPPORTUNITY

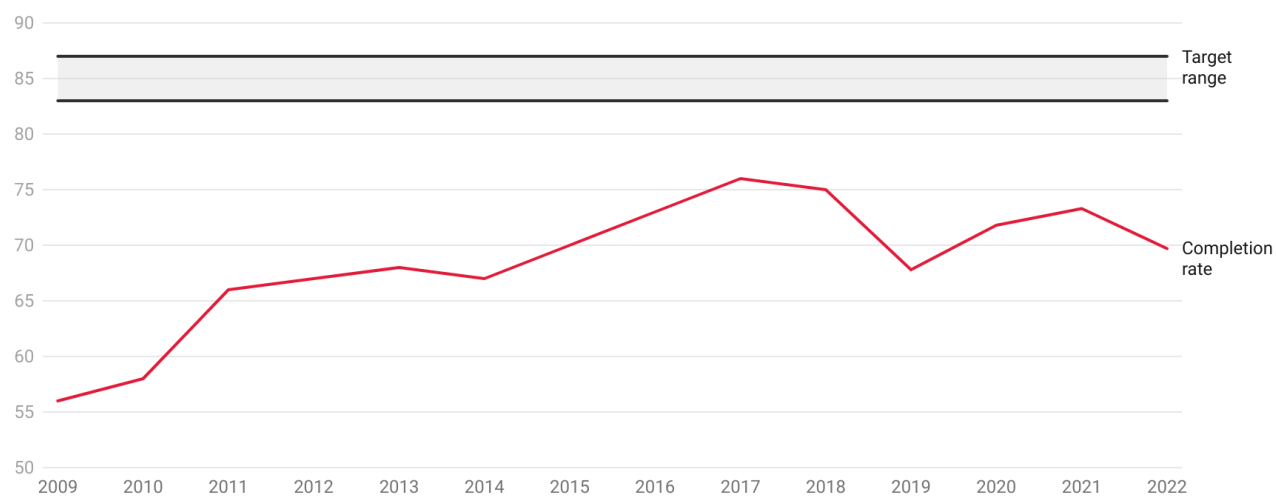
WHAT IF THE POSTCODE YOU WERE BORN IN DID NOT DETERMINE YOUR FUTURE?

CEDA's aim is for all Australians to have the opportunities and support to live a productive, connected and meaningful life.

This means addressing the impacts of disadvantage and opportunity on issues such as school completion in vulnerable regions, indigenous life expectancy, poverty rates, and life satisfaction in regional Australia.

Under Progress 2050, and in consultation with our members, we have set a range of targets to improve outcomes in these areas.

Year 12 completion rate in low socioeconomic status areas



Source: ACARA • Created with Datawrapper



POLICY IN PERSON

CAPTURING THE MIGRATION OPPORTUNITY

CEDA's Migration Update 2025 event explored global migration trends, recent changes to Australia's migration system and the opportunities for Australia that lie in skilled migration.

It also heard from refugee Fahima Mohammed, who fled Afghanistan with her family and two daughters in August 2021 when the government fell and the Taliban took control.

"The women and girls were not allowed to study and go to work and they were prohibited from their very basic rights," she said. "That was the reason me and my family decided to migrate to another country."

Fahima discovered Talent Beyond Boundaries through LinkedIn, which connected her with her current employer, Culture Amp, where she works as a software engineer.

"The one thing that really surprised me and my family was the great culture that we have here in Australia about accepting different people from different countries."

RESEARCH SHOWS GENERATIONAL INEQUITY

CEDA analysis highlighted a decline in financial comfort for Australian households since the COVID-19 pandemic, with housing affordability a critical driver of disadvantage.

Australians' financial wellbeing has improved, but not everyone is benefiting found renters and younger Australians were far more likely to struggle financially compared to outright homeowners.

It attributes the weaker financial wellbeing of renters, who are predominantly younger Australians, to the cumulative impact of rising rents and living costs, with limited opportunities for wealth accumulation through home ownership.

The paper concluded that without targeted policy intervention, we risk entrenching a system where financial security is increasingly dependent on home ownership and inherited generational wealth.



"Youth are often the most impacted by long-term policy decisions, yet too rarely are they included in shaping the solutions. Our partnership with CEDA has provided invaluable networks and opportunities for young aspiring policy makers to be in the room where these discussions happen."

Elly Hanrahan, CEO at CEDA member, Global Voices

INCREASE IN RENT ASSISTANCE

CEDA's 2022 submission to the Employment White Paper highlighted multiple issues affecting housing affordability for both renters and homeowners.

The report noted renting was becoming more common for many Australians and stressed the need to provide security of tenure for an increasingly diverse cohort of renters in Australian society.

One recommended measure was an increase in Commonwealth Rent Assistance to help those in greatest need accommodate recent rent increases.

Rent assistance was increased by 15 per cent in the 2023 Budget and a further 10 per cent in 2024.

The increases reflect a broader political debate around housing affordability, with CEDA to press for further reform of the Commonwealth Rent Assistance scheme around issues of eligibility and adequacy.



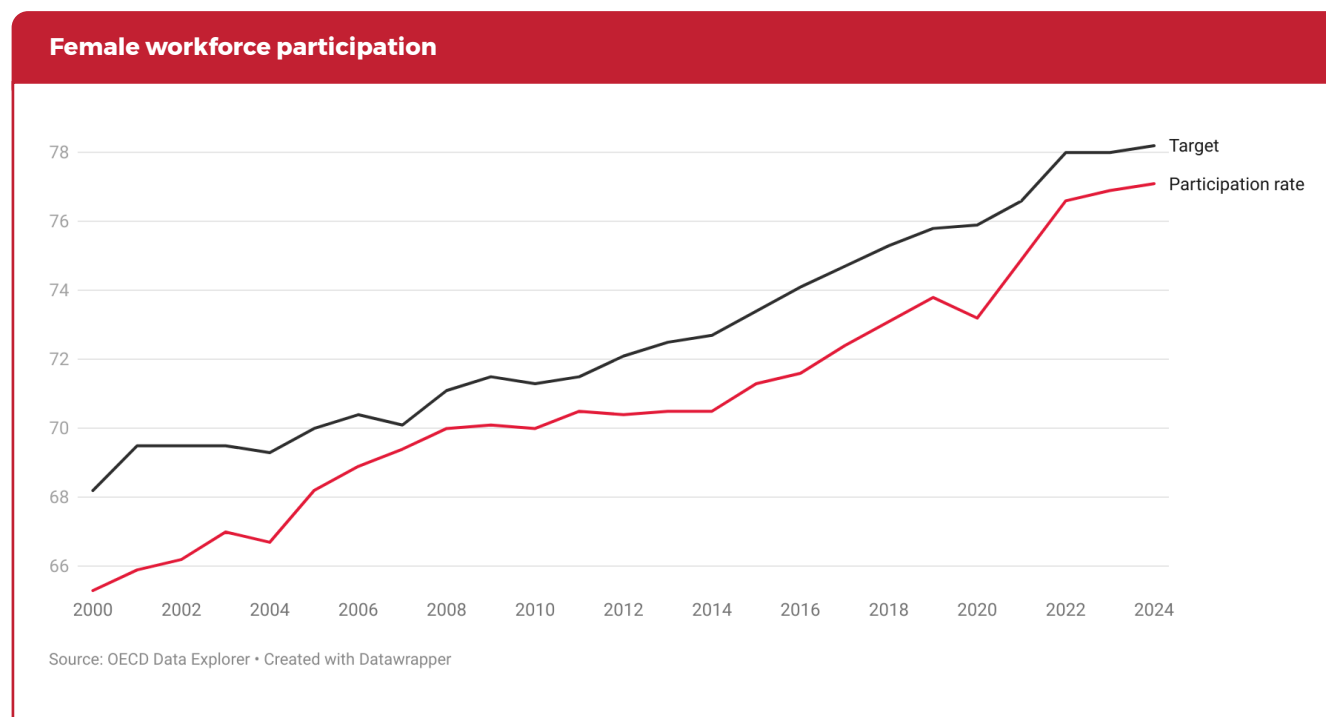
GOAL 6 - INCLUSION AND EQUITY

WHAT IF AUSTRALIA'S DIVERSITY WAS ITS COMPETITIVE ADVANTAGE?

People have the opportunity to contribute to their fullest potential in a society that embraces inclusion and equity.

Our Progress 2050 goal is for Australia's success to be characterised by the vibrancy and diversity of our workplaces and society.

To achieve this, we must address the number of migrants working in jobs beneath their skill level, continue boosting female workforce participation and address the decline in social inclusion since the pandemic.





POLICY IN PERSON

THE EXPECTATION OF UNPAID WORK PLACEMENT

CEDA Digital Marketing Strategist, Archana Heenpella, has experienced the challenges faced by tertiary students completing unpaid work placements or work-related training as part of their studies.

As she completed her master's degree this year, Archana worked in an unpaid placement for over a month and found the lack of financial recognition challenging.

She found many of her classmates juggled additional pressures, including parenting, caregiving, health issues and work.

"Seeing that first-hand really drove home how structural inequities can show up even in a well-meaning education system," she said.

Archana has called for greater financial support for placements, beyond the Commonwealth Prac Payments program, which reach only a certain portion of students.

"True equity means recognising that anyone who undertakes professional placements deserves to have their time and contribution valued," she says.

FAIRER AGED CARE FUNDING

CEDA's 2023 report *Duty of care: Aged-care sector running on empty* called for the introduction of co-contributions from older Australians who can afford to pay for their care, to help ensure the long-term viability of the sector.

This recommendation was reflected in the Federal Government's aged care reform package announced in late 2024, which introduces a means-tested user-pays model.

The new system should help to secure the financial sustainability of the sector and encourage much-needed investment and new construction to support an ageing population.

Our research found that despite long waiting lists, some residential homes are sitting at just 50 per cent capacity and people are being held in hospital due to a lack of aged care beds.

"The argument by some that 'I've paid my dues' through a lifetime of paying tax ignores the fundamental social compact of our system – taxes are a collective investment in our society." - CEDA Chief Economist Cassandra Winzar.



"The question that we ask young people: what kind of ancestor do you want to be? Even though you're young, you're born with a set of obligations and responsibilities. So the litmus test is, will future generations recognise you?"

Haley McQuire, Co-founder & CEO, National Indigenous Youth Education Coalition at Progress 2050 launch event

BETTER USE OF MIGRANT SKILLS

CEDA has long focused on the need to make better use of migrants' skills to improve outcomes for workers and support economic growth.

In 2022's *Australia's future migration system*, we highlighted the need to create clearer migration pathways to permanent residency for skilled workers.

The new Skills in Demand visa introduced in 2024 allowing skilled workers to live and work in Australia for a sponsoring employer for up to four years.

In 2024's *Making better use of migrants' skills*, we recommended measures to improve recognition of international qualifications and work experience.

This followed 2021 research showing nearly a quarter of permanent skilled migrants in Australia were working in a job beneath their skill level.

Further CEDA research in 2024 found recent migrants earn more than 10 per cent less than the Australian-born population – and the wage gap has worsened over time.

The Federal Government has since implemented measures in the health sector, with a scheme launched in March 2025 to fast-track internationally qualified nurses from eligible countries to work in Australia, reducing the assessment process by up to six to 12 months.



OUR MELBOURNE TEAM DAY, FEBRUARY 2025

OUR PEOPLE

The dedication and curiosity of our people continue to drive CEDA's success and impact.

Our most recent engagement survey reflected strong pride in our mission and a deep sense of fulfilment in the work we do.

As we look ahead, our commitment is to foster an environment where every voice is valued, and every team member is empowered to contribute to our shared vision of building a more prosperous and inclusive Australia.

95%
SAY THEY ARE
ENCOURAGED
TO BE CURIOUS
AND INNOVATIVE

92%
SAY THEY ARE
PROUD OF
CEDA'S PURPOSE
AND PASSION

89%
SAY THEY
CAN BE THEIR
AUTHENTIC
SELF AT WORK



SHARON BRAUN, CENTRE, WITH COLLEAGUES AT A CEDA EVENT THIS YEAR

SHARON BRAUN: 35 YEARS OF LEADERSHIP AND DEDICATION

This year, we're celebrating Sharon Braun's 35 years at CEDA. Sharon began her career with us welcoming guests and answering calls as a Sydney office receptionist. She is now our Associate Director of Program and Delivery, and continues to be a fantastic leader, mentor, and role model for the whole organisation.

Sharon has programmed CEDA's flagship events including the annual State of the Nation conference at Parliament House, convened with world leaders, and continues to contribute to CEDA with brilliant intelligence, kindness, curiosity and passion - a true reflection of our values.

We congratulate and celebrate this significant milestone. Here's to more wonderful years ahead.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

CEDA's Board is made up of prominent leaders from business, government and academia who work to guide and govern the organisation.

Thank you to all of our Board members who served in 2024-25.



Diane Smith-Gander AO[^]

Chair, CEDA



Christine Bartlett^{^^}

Chair, CEDA



Melinda Cilento

Chief Executive, CEDA



Robert Breunig

Director, Tax and Transfer
Policy Institute



Paddy Carney

Director, PwC
International Limited



Dharma Chandran

Chief People Officer,
Toll Group



Professor Carolyn Evans[^]

Vice Chancellor and President
of Griffith University



Justin Jamieson

Chairman of Partners,
South Australia, KPMG



Ming Long AM

Chair, CSIRO



Sam Nickless

Partner and CEO,
Gilbert + Tobin



Dr Pradeep Philip

Lead Partner, Deloitte
Access Economics



Vanessa Torres

Chief Operating
Officer, South32



Richard Yetsenga

ANZ Group Chief
Economist, ANZ

[^] Denotes people who retired
from a position during 2024-25

^{^^} Denotes person who took
up a position during 2024-25

NEW SOUTH WALES / ACT



Sam Nickless
Partner and CEO,
Gilbert + Tobin



Pat Bustamante
Senior Economist,
Westpac



David Forman
Director, Federal
Government
Relations, TechnologyOne



Prof. Richard Holden
Professor of Economics,
UNSW



George Karagiannakis
Executive Manager
of Government & Industry
Affairs, AIG



Yasmin King
Chief Executive Officer,
SkillsIQ



Sarah Lau
Energy Policy
Manager,
Ausgrid



Eliza Owen
Head of Residential
Research, CoreLogic
Australia



Shanti Rama
General Counsel,
Indigenous Business
Australia



Euan Robertson
General Manager
Government and Industry
Affairs, Commonwealth
Bank of Australia

QUEENSLAND



Rob Fox
Marketing Manager,
Arup



Tanya Hornick
Strategic Partnership
Manager, Australian Bureau
of Statistics



Kerry McGowan
General Manager, Regional
& Agribusiness Banking,
QLD/NT, Commonwealth
Bank



Jamin Smith
Partner & Brisbane Office
Head, Communications,
SEC Newgate Australia



Janine Walker AM
Chair, Metro South Hospital
and Health Board



Bruce Haeefe
Head of Strategic
Development, Amazon
Web Services



A. Prof. Ben Lyons
Director, Rural
Economics Centre
of Excellence



Clint O'Brien
Director, Olympics and
Paralympics & National
Geographic Lead,
Pride@KPMG, KPMG



Katarzyna Stapleton
Chief Executive Officer,
Queensland Rail



Mark Scott
Chief Executive Officer,
Hastings Deering

SOUTH AUSTRALIA



Justin Jamieson
Chairman of Partners,
South Australia
Chairman, KPMG



Philipp Dautel
Principal Manager,
Flinders University



Phil Hoffmann
Managing Director,
Phil Hoffman Travel



Jason Schoolmeester
Major Project
Commissioner, NT
Department of the Chief
Minister and Cabinet



Simon Burgess
General Manager,
National Wine Centre



Jayne Flaherty
Chief of Staff,
Flinders University



Sandy Pitcher
CEO, South Australian
Department of
Human Services



Sue Whitford
Director of People,
Safety & Culture,
Babcock



Kate Croser
CEO, South Australian
Film Corporation



Lauren Ganley
Head of First
Nations Strategy and
Engagement, Telstra



Kelly-Anne Saffin
CEO, Cross Border
Commissioner
- South Australia

VICTORIA / TASMANIA



Dr Pradeep Philip
Chairman and Lead
Partner, Deloitte



Phaedra Deckart
Chief Executive Officer,
Solstice Energy



David Donnelly
Partner,
Allens



Kelly Grigsby
Chief Executive Officer,
Municipal Association
of Victoria



John Levy
Deputy Chief Financial
Officer, CSL Limited



Lesley Mackay
General Manager,
The Smith Family



Stewart Macleod
Executive Manager,
Australia Post



Benjamin Parker
Chief of Staff,
HESTA



Riki Polygenis
Assistant Secretary, Fiscal
and Monetary Policy
Branch, Australian Treasury



Clinton Ridge
Head, Client Coverage,
Corporate Banking VIC/SA,
National Australia Bank



Lisa Stankiewicz
Head of Legal (Corporate
& Stakeholder),
Marinus Link



Andrew Wear
Principal and
Founder,
Econovation

WESTERN AUSTRALIA



Kate West
Chief Officer,
Business and
Markets, Asia Pacific



Vanessa Torres
Chief Technical
Officer, South32



Rebecca Brown
Director General, WA
Department of Jobs, Tourism,
Science and Innovation



Jodi Cant
Former Director General,
WA Department of
Finance



Jason Chan
Managing
Director,
Bankwest



Luis Da Rocha
General Manager, Strategy
and Policy, Department of
Industry, Tourism and Trade



Mark Glasson
Chief Executive Officer,
Anglicare WA



Tasman Graham
Managing Director,
Middle East & Africa,
SLR Consulting



Michelle Hoad
Managing Director,
North Metropolitan
TAFE



Luke Hutcheson
Senior Policy Officer,
Climate Change,
Department of Water and
Environmental Regulation



Rick Newnham
Head of Natural Gas and
Electricity, Kleenheat,
Wesfarmers



Amy Stanley
Chief Executive Officer,
HBF



Chris Sutherland
Chair, Fremantle Ports



Andy Wood
Asia Regional Leader,
Microsoft

CEDA LEAD MEMBERS



Thank you to our Lead Members during 2024-25 - part of our 400 strong member base.

HELP US DRIVE OUR **PROGRESS 2050 VISION**

Our Progress 2050 vision of creating prosperity for all Australians resonates strongly with many individuals and organisations.

During the year, CEDA appointed Annemarie Rolls as Director of Philanthropy to explore additional avenues to support and amplify the impact of our work, including Progress 2050.

This includes building philanthropic partnerships, giving those who share our vision for Australia the opportunity to contribute in a tangible way.

Contributions will support our independent research programs and public policy work.

You can support our transformative agenda in a variety of ways – through membership, a tax-deductible donation, corporate giving or a bequest.

Your efforts will also preserve our independence, which has made CEDA one of Australia's most trusted voices in national policy reform.

For more information or to make a donation, please contact Annemarie at ***Annemarie.Rolls@ceda.com.au***

THANK YOU

It takes time and resources to coordinate the program for which CEDA is so widely regarded.

We want to thank our sponsors and partners, whose support is essential to bringing our work to life and ensuring it is relevant and impactful.

FINANCIAL REPORT

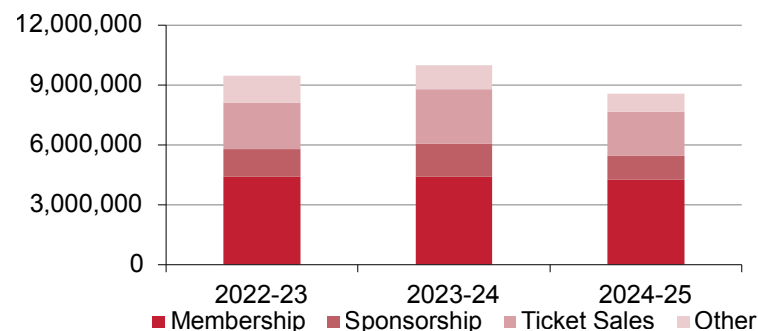
In the financial year ending 30 June 2025, CEDA continued to focus on building influence via research and advocacy, thought leadership and convening events that brought members and stakeholders together to address Australia's most pressing long term economic and social issues.

CEDA recorded a loss of \$2.6 million for the year, reflecting ongoing strategic investment in strengthening our influence to support long-term revenue growth. Investment reserves declined accordingly.

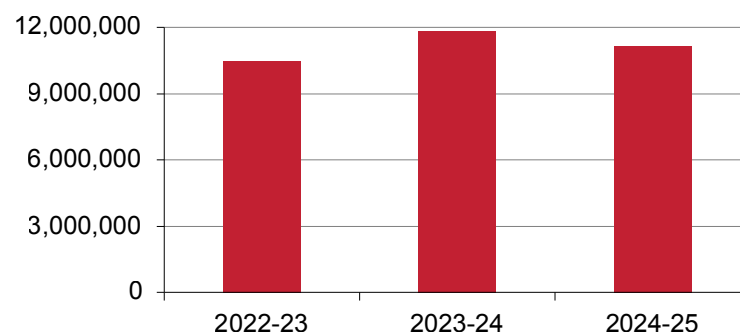
Total revenue for the year was \$8.6 million, compared with \$10 million in 2023–24. Membership income remained steady. With multiple elections (Federal and State) taking place over the year, and associated widespread ministerial changes around the country, event volume was down impacting revenue generation.

Total expenditure for the year decreased to \$11.1 million from \$11.9 million, reflecting cost savings from streamlined operations and event delivery volume.

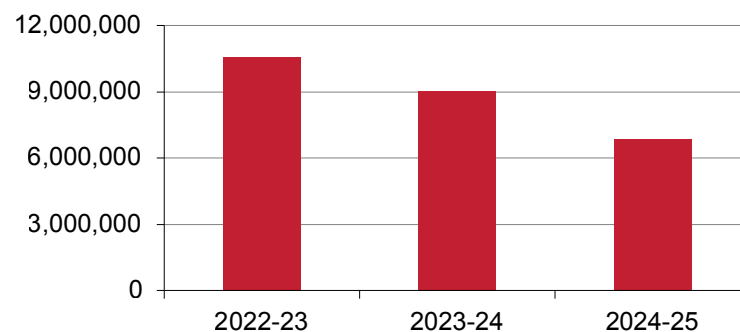
Stable membership income as electoral cycles impacted event volume



Expenses reduce as event delivery and operations streamlined



Reserves drawn down to support influence





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