



ANNUAL REPORT

2024-25

Acknowledgement of Country

The Australian Childcare Alliance Victoria would like to acknowledge the Traditional Custodians of the Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung and Bunurong Peoples land of the Kulin nation. For thousands of years the Kulin nation has worked synergistically with the land we now all call home. We pay our greatest respects and gratitude to the Elders both past and present who continue to protect, nurture, and support the spirit of the land, sea, and waterways. ACAV is committed to honouring this beautiful culture and extends our respect and compassion to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.



This commissioned artwork was created during the development of the ACA Victoria Reconciliation Action Plan

Bunurong Goyeep (Bunurong Feathers)

The unique Kaptify Art style is based on Cultural Ecology which is an integration of the Natural and Cultural Values of Bunurong Country. For this art piece we have considered our Bird Ecology. Bunurong Feathers - the art piece supplied is a repurposed frame with Bunurong Feathers being the prominent theme. The colour palette represents the colours of Bunurong Country and the colours of our Bird Ecology. We have applied patterns in colour combinations and contrasts that are derived from Bunurong Country. The Bird Feathers are symbolic and spiritually connected to Bunurong Cultural Practice. The Bird Feathers have been collected from places across the Bunurong Cultural Landscape.

Adam Magennis
Bunurong Artist



President's Report

This past year has been both challenging and inspiring for ACA Victoria. Our sector continues to navigate significant reforms, increased demands, and ongoing workforce pressures, and I want to acknowledge the extraordinary commitment our members have shown in meeting these challenges head-on.

Knowing how this year has brought continued challenges for our sector — from workforce pressures and increasing compliance demands to the ongoing responsibility of maintaining safe, nurturing, and inclusive environments for every child. We recognise the extraordinary effort this requires from educators, service leaders, and all early learning professionals, who continue to show unwavering commitment to children's wellbeing and development. Upholding the highest standards of child safety remains at the heart of our collective work, and ACA Victoria is deeply committed to supporting members in meeting these obligations with confidence and care. It is through your professionalism, compassion, and dedication that families can trust the early learning sector to provide environments where every child can thrive.

Our professional learning events once again shone as a highlight of the year. We were proud to deliver a successful Summit and an outstanding two-day Conference, each bringing together leaders, educators, and sector experts. These events were not just about professional growth, but also about creating space for connection, sharing ideas, and strengthening our collective voice. The positive energy and engagement we saw at these gatherings reinforced the value of being part of this strong community.

We have also continued to represent Victoria's unique perspectives and priorities at the national level. Through active engagement with the ACA National Board, we have ensured that the voices, challenges, and innovative ideas of Victorian members are heard and reflected in national advocacy. This collaboration is vital to ensuring policy discussions and sector-wide initiatives remain grounded in the real experiences of services across our state.

Thank you to every member who has engaged with us this year, whether by attending events, contributing to focus groups, or volunteering to represent ACA Victoria in different forums. Your willingness to share your experiences and perspectives strengthens our advocacy and ensures we are always reflecting the needs of those on the ground. I particularly appreciate the openness, collaboration, and generosity of spirit shown in our meetings and networks.

Behind the scenes, your ACA Victoria Board has been actively engaging with government, ministers, and sector stakeholders, making sure Victoria's voice is heard in advisory, reference, and focus groups. This representation is critical to shaping decisions that directly impact services, children, and families, and I am proud of the influence our Board continues to have at both a state and national level. This year, we farewelled Sarah Tullberg and Nicole Llewellyn as Board members, who stepped down during their terms. We thank them sincerely for their positive contributions and the dedication they brought to the Board. At the same time, we were pleased to welcome Max Bergh as a new member, adding fresh insights and experience to our team.

A heartfelt thank you to our ACA Victoria team, whose passion and dedication to their roles, our members, and the sector never waver. Their hard work, often behind the scenes, is what allows us to deliver the support, advocacy, and events that members rely on. Our Board and team remain strong, united, and deeply committed to ACA Victoria's mission. I could not do what I do without them, and I am grateful every day for their support, leadership, and vision.

As we reflect on the year gone by, I want to thank our members once again for your ongoing trust and engagement. Together, we are building resilience, strengthening our sector, and ensuring that early childhood education in Victoria continues to thrive.

Tonii Tran

General Manager's Report

This year has been another significant one for ACA Victoria, as we continued to support our members through a period of reform, workforce pressures, and evolving demands in the early childhood education sector.

Despite these challenges, our small but dedicated team remained focused on delivering strong advocacy, practical support, and opportunities for connection.

Our events calendar was a standout highlight. The ACA Victoria Summit and our two-day Conference provided invaluable platforms for professional learning, networking, and sector-wide conversations. These gatherings brought together leaders, educators, and experts to share knowledge, navigate reforms, and strengthen our collective voice. The enthusiasm and engagement at these events reaffirmed the vital role ACA Victoria plays in bringing the sector together.

Alongside our events, we supported members through the rollout of the Worker Retention Payment. ACA Victoria provided advice and resources until the establishment of the dedicated support group, ensuring that members had timely, clear guidance during the transition. This work highlighted our ability to step in quickly, support services through change, and then hand over seamlessly once additional structures were in place.

Child Safety has also remained a central focus of our advocacy and communication. With ongoing community concern and increased scrutiny on our sector, we worked to keep members informed, connected to resources, and supported in implementing safe, transparent practices that protect children and staff.

Member engagement has remained at the heart of everything we do. Our involvement with government and sector stakeholders also deepened this year. Through representation on advisory, reference, and working groups, ACA Victoria has ensured that the experiences of Victorian services are recognised in broader decision-making processes. This remains a critical part of our role and one we are proud to undertake.

I would like to express my sincere thanks to our members for your trust, feedback, and ongoing engagement. Your commitment inspires us every day and drives the work we do.

To Tonii Tran, our President, thank you for your leadership, guidance, and unwavering support of both our team and the sector. To our Board, thank you for your dedication, advocacy, and continued involvement in our events and initiatives.

Finally, to the ACA Victoria team, your energy, commitment, and collaborative spirit are at the heart of all that we achieve. It is your hard work that enables us to deliver the outcomes our members expect and deserve. I am deeply grateful for your efforts and proud of what we have accomplished together this year.

Sarah Matheson



National President's Report

As we reflect on the past financial year, it has been marked by significant developments and reforms, all of which called upon the Australian Childcare Alliance (ACA) to strongly advocate on behalf of our members, to help shape the future of our sector.

At the start of the financial year, the Albanese Government had just committed to a government-funded pay rise for early childhood educators. At the same time, we awaited the final recommendations from the Productivity Commission's review on how to effectively achieve universal access to Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC) services - a review to which the ACA had made a substantial contribution through our comprehensive, robust written and verbal submissions.

Following the release of these recommendations in August 2024, we were heartened that many of our suggestions were reflected in the final report. A few months later in December, the Federal Government announced new reforms that closely aligned with our recommendations - most notably, changes to the activity test that would enable all families to access three days of subsidised childcare from January 26, now referred to as the Three Day Guarantee.

Throughout the year, ACA maintained a strategic focus on holding the government accountable and ensuring that their policies would deliver practical, sustainable improvements for providers, children and families. Our advocacy efforts laid the groundwork for continued progress and positioned the early learning sector as an important part of the economic equation to get right for both sides of politics, in the lead up to the upcoming federal election.

With the federal election scheduled for May 2025, our efforts in the latter half of the financial year shifted toward an aggressive pre-election campaign. Our goal was to ensure that ECEC remained a priority on the political agenda, regardless of the election outcome.

Throughout the year, we concentrated our advocacy efforts on several key areas:

- **Workforce:** Implementation of the government-funded pay rise We worked tirelessly to ensure the new government-funded pay increase would be rolled out effectively, avoiding unintended negative consequences, with particular focus on the terms around the fee restraint measures.
- **Supply Side Funding Model:** We contributed heavily to ongoing discussions surrounding the proposed \$10 a day supply side funding model, advocating that the government should retain and improve demand-side funding for adequately served ECEC markets, apply a mixed model to under-served markets, and supply-side funding to unserved markets are reasonable. Our Comparing ECEC and Aged Care Funding Models Report produced by Dandolo Partners illustrated the need for caution if implementing a supply side model.
- **Further Funding and Support for Children with Disabilities:** We called for increased funding and more practical operating systems to better support children with disabilities, ensuring inclusive and quality care. Our submission to the Federal Government on Changes to the Disability Standards for Education 2005 set out our recommendations for structural and cultural change toward full inclusion.
- **Child Safety Regulations:** The strengthening child safety regulations remained a priority, aiming to enhance protections for all children in ECEC.

This financial year has demonstrated our sector's resilience amid ongoing workforce challenges, while strongly reaffirming the critical need for continuous advocacy to shape policies that support Australia's young children, their families and their early learning service providers. We thank all members and stakeholders for their ongoing support of ACA in our commitment to ensure a positive future for our sector.

Together, we look forward to building on these achievements in the year ahead.

Paul Mondo

Our Mission, Vision, Values

OUR MISSION

A voice and support for our members; driving success for the early learning community.

OUR VISION

Championing excellence in outcomes for the early learning community, leading to children's success in life.

OUR VALUES



To champion excellence



To lead with respect and integrity



To collaborate and innovate



To embrace diversity, equity and inclusion

Strengthening Professional Growth and Connection

This year, ACA Victoria continued to provide a strong program of professional development opportunities designed to equip our members with practical knowledge, fresh perspectives, and the confidence to navigate a rapidly changing sector.

We were fortunate to learn from leading experts including Kerrie O’Neil, Nicole Talarico, Catharine Hydon and Karen Glacey, each bringing unique insights that supported services in their daily practice and long-term planning. Adding to this, we trialled something new with an online webinar presented by Nick Hedges, offering members greater flexibility to connect and learn.

These sessions were not only about building professional skills, but also about strengthening our community. They created space for meaningful dialogue, peer support, and collaboration, reminders that in facing sector challenges, we are stronger together.

The positive engagement throughout the year reflects how highly our members value these opportunities, and reinforces ACA Victoria’s commitment to delivering relevant, high-quality professional learning that makes a real difference.



Major Events



2024 2 Day Conference Navigating Behaviour

23-24 August 2024
Pullman Melbourne on the Park

330 attendees 21 exhibitors

Sponsors: Guild, Childcare Super
Modern Teaching Aids, KinderM8,
Officeworks and Higgins

The Navigating Behaviour Conference 2024 gathered 330 early childhood professionals for two days of insight and connection. With inspiring keynotes, panel discussions, and practical sessions, participants explored new ways to understand and respond to children's behaviours. The Gala Dinner added a memorable opportunity for networking, celebration, and sector-wide collaboration.

“A really worthwhile conference, engaging speakers, practical insights, and great opportunities to connect with others in the sector.”

Conference attendees, August 2024



2025 Leadership Summit Working Well, Living Well

30 May 2025
Westpac on Collins

80 attendees

Sponsors: Guild, Childcare Super
Genesis Safety

The ACA Victoria Summit 2025 welcomed more than 80 leaders from across the sector to Westpac on Collins for a day of connection, learning, and inspiration. Themed 'Working Well. Living Well.', the event featured seven expert speakers who shared strategies to support staff retention, workplace well-being, and building sustainable, high-performing teams.

“The Summit was an incredible opportunity for professional growth, with engaging sessions that left me inspired as a leader.”

“The Summit created valuable networking opportunities and provided practical insights, particularly around staff retention and sector support.”

Summit attendees, May 2025.



Professional Development

Supporting Growth for Educators and Leaders

At ACA Victoria, we continue to prioritise high-quality professional development that meets the evolving needs of educators and leaders. This year, our workshops and events have provided practical insights, innovative strategies, and the latest sector updates, all delivered by experienced and respected experts. These opportunities not only strengthen skills but also foster collaboration, reflection, and professional confidence. Through our PD programs, we aim to support educators and leaders to navigate change, lead with impact, and create positive experiences for children, families, and their communities.

Professional Development Workshops

7 face to face professional development workshops

1 Hybrid professional development workshops

1 Online professional development workshops

1 Sold out

6 presenters

Strengthening Professional Growth and Connection

Our member events bring together educators and leaders to share insights, explore best practices, and build lasting connections.

This year, ACA Victoria continued to bring our members together through a diverse program of events designed to inform, support, and inspire. From interactive online member forums to networking Open door sessions and in-person gatherings such as the Member Meetings, each event focuses on addressing the real challenges and opportunities faced by educators and service leaders today. By listening to our members, we create experiences that offer practical insights, meaningful connections, and tools that can be applied immediately in the workplace.



Open Door Networking Series

Our Open Door events remain a standout in our calendar, giving members a unique chance to see high-quality practices in action. Hosted by 'Exceeding' rated services, these gatherings provide an intimate environment to share ideas, learn new approaches, and celebrate excellence in early childhood education.

Open door hosts

- Amiga Montessori Alamanda
- Starfish Early Learning Centre
- Aurora Early Education
- Monash Vale Early Learning Centre



Member Meetings

Our Member Meetings remained a key avenue of support, offering members timely updates and space to engage with the pressing issues facing the sector. With reforms and workforce pressures at the forefront, these sessions delivered practical insights while encouraging open dialogue and collaboration.

Guest speakers shared critical updates on government changes and sector priorities, while members valued the chance to discuss challenges directly impacting their services. Networking over lunch added further value, fostering stronger connections and peer support across our community.

What's On Your Mind

Our What's On Your Mind sessions continue to be a valued members-only forum, held online each month and chaired by rotating board members. These conversations create an open, supportive space for members to connect, exchange ideas, and work through sector challenges together.

With a balance of structure and informality, the sessions encourage real-time discussion on emerging issues, practical solutions, and shared experiences. Over the past year, they've become a trusted touchpoint for members to stay connected, informed, and heard.



70% of members value the networking opportunities offered at ACA Victoria events*
***percentage of respondents, 2024 Member Survey.**

Our Members

At the heart of ACA Victoria are our members, whose commitment empowers us to lead, represent, and strengthen the early childhood education and care sector.

Advocacy

The collective voice of our members drives our ability to influence policy and decision-making. By sharing their experiences and challenges, members give weight and authenticity to our advocacy, ensuring the sector's needs are heard and acted upon by government and key stakeholders.

Engagement

From surveys and consultations to attending events and engaging in projects, members play an active role in shaping the services and resources ACA Victoria delivers. Their involvement ensures we continue to respond effectively to evolving sector priorities.

Community

Our network thrives because members openly share their knowledge, successes, and lessons learned. This spirit of collaboration builds lasting relationships across the sector and reinforces the supportive community that ACA Victoria is proud to foster.

Growth

Through continued support and engagement, including attendance at events and utilisation of services, members provide the foundation for ACA Victoria's growth and innovation. This enables ACA Victoria to evolve and deliver long-term value to the sector.

We have engaged with members through:

- ✓ Social media engagement and polls
- ✓ Direct phone and email support
- ✓ Professional development events, workshops, and networking opportunities
- ✓ Centre visits and regional catch-ups
- ✓ Interactive online forums and peer discussions
- ✓ Timely sector updates, alerts, and resources

227 Approved Providers 620 Approved Services

“ACA Victoria really takes the time to check in with us, making sure we’re making the most of our membership and feel supported every step of the way.”

Key Member Benefits

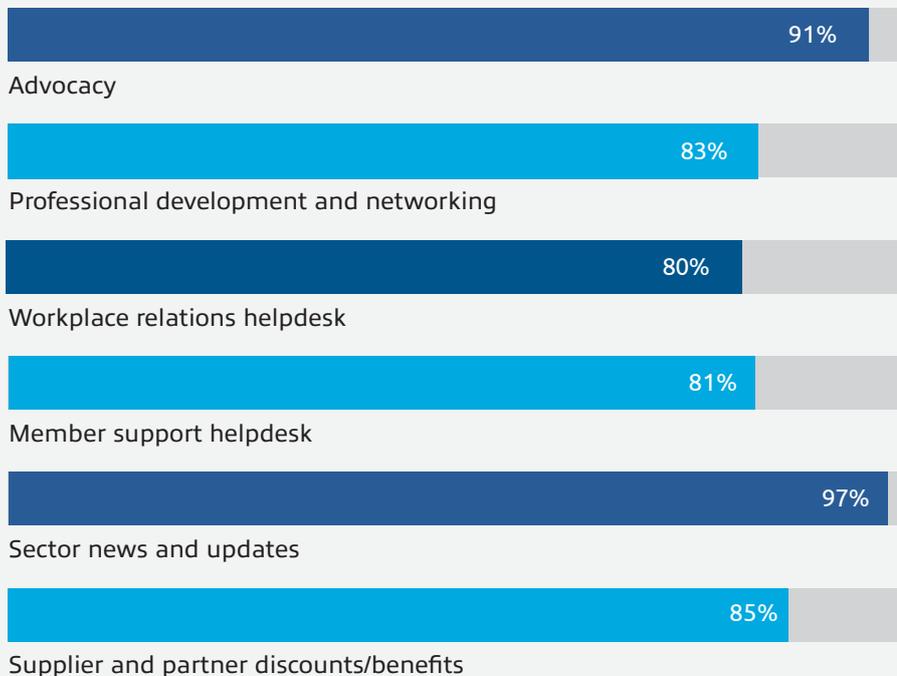
A standout benefit for ACA Victoria members is the dedicated phone advice line delivered with Australian Business Lawyers & Advisors (ABLA). Offering specialist workplace and industrial relations support, this service provides timely, practical guidance to help members navigate employment matters with confidence.

Annual Member Survey

Each year, ACA Victoria invites members to share their views through our annual survey, providing essential insights into their experiences and priorities. This feedback helps us understand what drives engagement, which services are most valued, and how we can better support our community. By listening to members, we can refine events, programs, and resources to meet evolving needs, ensuring ACA Victoria continues to deliver meaningful value and remains a trusted partner in the sector.

More than **91%** of members who completed the survey expressed satisfaction with our advocacy initiatives, while **97%** were pleased with the quality and relevance of our sector news and updates. These results reflect ACA Victoria's dedication to representing the sector strongly and keeping members informed with timely, meaningful information.

Member satisfaction with ACA Victoria benefits



“Every time we have contacted ACA Victoria they have been helpful, answered our enquiries or pointed us in the right direction to solve our enquiries.”*



329 calls to ABLA industrial relations support line

Most common support matters



Performance management



Personal/carer's leave



Wage rates



Termination notice



Award classification



Misconduct & Investigations

“ACA provides timely, detailed, and highly relevant information for Long Day Care services. Membership is excellent value, and ACA consistently goes above and beyond what most organisations offer. Your support with the new government-funded wages grant and MEA negotiations, including informative networking events have been especially valuable, thank you!”

2024 Member Feedback Survey comment.

* Satisfaction with member benefits, 2024 Member Survey respondents

Projects

ACA Victoria's involvement in state and federal government grant programs continues to be a key benefit for our members and the wider early childhood sector.

These projects provide crucial support to educators and services while generating data that highlights the sector's current challenges and opportunities. By analysing these insights, we can deliver evidence-based guidance and advocacy that helps shape informed government policies, ultimately contributing to the ongoing quality and sustainability of early childhood education.



BEST START, BEST LIFE

The Best Start, Best Life reforms continue to transform early learning across Victoria, from Three-Year-Old Kindergarten to Pre-Prep programs, along with workforce initiatives. At ACA Victoria, we are committed to ensuring the Department of Education understands the real-world impact of these reforms on long day care services.

This year, we invited members to share their experiences through our BSBL Reforms Member Survey, promoted via social media, eDMs, and our newsletter. The survey captured valuable insights into the challenges, priorities, and successes of services navigating the reforms, helping us advocate effectively on behalf of our members.

In addition, ACA Victoria hosted dedicated sessions with the Department of Education at both our conference and summit, providing attendees with practical guidance and building awareness of how to implement reforms successfully. These initiatives ensure that services are supported with up-to-date information, tools, and strategies, reinforcing ACA Victoria's role as a trusted partner in managing change and supporting high-quality early learning.

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Kinder Funding

Over the past year, ACA Victoria has helped services navigate kindergarten funding through practical guidance, policy support, and the introduction of self-paced eLearning modules. Designed for Approved Providers, Educational Leaders, ECTs, and Managers, these modules offer actionable insights on funding, inclusive program delivery, and teacher requirements. Developed with member input, they provide the tools and confidence services need to manage funding obligations and deliver high-quality kindergarten programs.

A graphic for eLearning Modules. On the left, a dark blue background contains the ACA Victoria logo and the text 'ACA brings to you eLearning Modules'. Below this, three light blue rounded rectangles contain the text 'Kinder Funding', 'Delivering a Kindergarten Program', and 'Teacher and Educator Requirements'. At the bottom, it says '2 more coming soon.....'. On the right, a photograph shows a woman smiling and pointing at a tablet held by a young child. A large, semi-transparent blue circle is overlaid on the right side of the photo, and several white lines radiate from the center of the photo towards the left.

Cyber Safety

In collaboration with the Australian Government's Act Now, Stay Secure campaign, ACA Victoria has taken steps to raise cyber security awareness across the early childhood sector. We created a dedicated webpage, shared practical tips in multiple regional languages, and promoted the campaign regularly through social media, newsletters, and eDMs. Focused on building baseline cyber security skills, the initiative encouraged members to adopt simple, effective practices such as multi-factor authentication, regular software updates, and strong, unique passphrases. These efforts aim to equip services and educators with the knowledge to protect themselves, their teams, and the children in their care from online risks.



Executive Board

The ACA Victoria Board remains central to our organisation’s strength, bringing together diverse expertise, leadership, and a shared commitment to advancing early childhood education and care.

Each Board member contributes their own perspective and skills, shaping our direction and ensuring we continue to meet the needs of services across the sector.

This year, we farewelled Sarah Tullberg and Nicole Llewellyn, who stepped down during their terms. We thank them sincerely for their positive contributions and the dedication they brought to the Board. At the same time, we were pleased to welcome Max Bergh as a new member, adding fresh insights and experience to our team.

We are grateful to all Board members for their continued guidance and commitment, which underpin ACA Victoria’s success and drive our mission forward.



Tonii Tran
President



Brooke Eerden
Vice President



Sam Rosenberg
Treasurer



Sally Orr
Secretary



Jennifer Kearney



Nick Moutzouris



Paul Mondo



Sarah Tullberg



Nicole Llewellyn



Max Bergh ”

Valued Partners and Suppliers

OUR PARTNERS

Partnerships are an essential part of ACA Victoria's work, enhancing the value we bring to members and the wider early learning sector. Our partners contribute expertise, resources, and industry knowledge that allow us to broaden member benefits, deliver impactful events, and strengthen our advocacy. These collaborations open doors to practical tools, innovative solutions, and trusted advice, helping services thrive in a changing landscape. With their support, ACA Victoria continues to stand as a strong and reliable voice for early childhood education and care.



OUR SUPPLIERS

Sector suppliers are an important part of how ACA Victoria supports members. By partnering with trusted organisations, we connect services with quality products, resources, and exclusive offers that add real value to their operations. These relationships ensure members have the tools they need to deliver high-quality early learning while building a supplier network committed to excellence in the sector.





Treasurer's Report

The operating surplus for the year increased from \$68668 in 2024 to \$148424 in the current year.

The major activity for the year was the ACA VIC conference in August 2024 which resulted in a profit of \$156567.

In addition, we conducted a Leader's Summit in May 2025 at the CBD offices of Westpac Bank which yielded a surplus of \$45942.

Our strong partnerships with sector stakeholders resulted in increased commission income from \$245595 in 2024 to \$305652 in the current year.

Even though Government Grant Income decreased from \$522945 in 2024 to \$274810 in 2025, this source of revenue continues to support our overall operating expense budget, and we will continue to pursue both state and federal government grants into the future.

Membership income remains solid and with selective member events planned for the 2026 financial year, coupled with ongoing sponsorship revenue and grant opportunities we believe ACAVIC can look forward to another strong financial outcome in the 2026 financial year.

A full year of reduced staffing levels resulted in annual wages decreasing from \$638997 last year to \$484156 in 2025.

Our Balance Sheet health has improved with our net asset position (assets minus liabilities) strengthening from \$81745 in 2024 to \$230169 at 30th June, 2025

Sam Rosenberg



Statement of Profit or Loss

For the Year Ended 30 June 2025

	2025	2024
	\$	\$
INCOME		
Conference Revenue	338,223	-
Grant Income	274,810	522,945
Member Subscriptions	252,083	241,159
Other Income	4,611	101,956
Professional Development	31,296	33,513
Event Revenue	99,522	267,186
Sponsorship Revenue	300,652	261,095
Total Revenue	1,301,197	1,427,854
EXPENDITURE		
Conference Expenses	181,656	590
Consultancy Expenses	349,410	332,550
Depreciation	18,540	20,331
Employee Benefits	484,156	638,997
Equipment Expenses	12,400	11,757
IT Expenses	18,556	28,880
Leadership Expenses	-	44,469
Meeting Expenses	10,728	7,833
Other Expenses	12,668	65,228
Project Expenses	-	11,509
Repairs and Maintenance Expenses	36,196	39,857
Summit Expenses	12,099	137,746
Travel Expenses	7,785	8,169
Utilities	8,579	11,270
Total Expenses	1,152,773	1,359,186
Total Surplus for Year	148,424	68,668



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