

# ANNUAL REPORT 2025

CENTRE FOR POLICY DEVELOPMENT



## ABOUT CPD

The Centre for Policy Development (CPD) is an independent, not-for-profit policy institute with staff in Sydney, Melbourne, Canberra and Jakarta.

Our vision is a fair, sustainable society and wellbeing economy that serves current and future generations in Australia and Southeast Asia.

Our mission is to help create transformative systems change through practical solutions to complex policy challenges. We tackle the hard questions, working towards change that is systemic and long-term.

Through our work, we aim to contribute to governments that are coordinated, collaborative, and effective, with an eye to both the near and longer term. We strive to build a social services system that helps people and communities to thrive now and in the future, and drive shifts in policy making practice with a focus on wellbeing and sustainability rather than primarily economic growth.

CPD uses a distinctive Create-Connect-Convince method to influence government policy making.

We acknowledge and celebrate Australia's First Peoples.

More information about CPD is available at [cpd.org.au](https://cpd.org.au)

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In my first year as Chair of CPD's Board I have been struck by the quality and reach of the organisation's impact. I have been part of CPD for a number of years now, but seeing CPD's unique method in action from new angles never gets old. CPD is driving big, systemic reforms that deliver real outcomes for individuals, communities, and economies, and the organisation is even better positioned to deliver these impacts in 2025 than it was when I joined.

CPD does its work by asking the right questions of the right people, getting in the rooms where decisions are made, building common ground across diverse perspectives, and of course through rigorous research. This year these strengths have allowed CPD to engage in the national conversation at the moments that matter and play a pivotal role in shaping policy across the country.

The CPD team are always striving to find new ways to serve the needs of the many in challenging times: ensuring more children can access high-quality early education; helping communities share fairly in the benefits of an orderly transition even when transition seems unpopular; and protecting people forced to flee their homes across the region. The energy and commitment of our team and our partners to this work has impressed me year on year, and 2025 has been no different.

Sitting under all our work is the quiet hope that careful ideas, grounded in purpose and relationships, can move systems. This idea is profound, and our impact this year is proof that it is not just possible but vital. Our intent for the next year is to keep putting in the work alongside our supporters and stakeholders to make sure this pathway for change keeps delivering.

**Zoe Whitton**  
Chair



**Andrew Hudson**  
CEO



Over the past 12 months, political, economic and social contexts have changed dramatically, both in Australia and across our region. CPD's mission to advance fair and sustainable solutions to the most pressing challenges of our time has never felt more vital. I am immensely proud of the impact our team has delivered this year. Across every focus area, we've seen meaningful progress.

- » Our social services work helped secure landmark legislation in Australia entitling all children and families to three days of subsidised early education and care per week, and significant progress toward a truly universal early learning system.
- » On the net-zero transition, billions in public investment are now flowing into the green industries that will support a more sustainable, prosperous future for communities across Australia.
- » Our wellbeing work has contributed to a renewed national focus on prevention, with the Productivity Commission echoing our calls for government to invest earlier and address the root causes of issues.
- » And across Southeast Asia, our forced migration work helped policymakers develop new guidelines to protect children from being placed in immigration detention.

In all this, CPD has played a crucial role in ensuring policy decisions are fair, sustainable, and put the needs of people and the environment at the forefront.

This year also brought change within CPD. We implemented a new organisational strategy, welcomed Zoe Whitton as our new Board Chair, and supported a leadership transition with the departure of our Deputy CEO, Annabel Brown. Through it all, the team has continued to pursue ambitious, practical reform for current and future generations.

Thank you for the many ways you have supported our work. I look forward to all that CPD will achieve in the year ahead.

# IMPACT HIGHLIGHTS

## HOW WE'VE HELPED CREATE A FAIRER, MORE SUSTAINABLE FUTURE FOR AUSTRALIA AND THE REGION.



### Early learning reform stayed on track in a difficult year.

We cautioned against knee-jerk responses and refocused attention on the changes needed to ensure all families can access high-quality, affordable early education. The government stayed the course, legislating a universal three-day guarantee and examining system funding.



**Our work showed how early support can save money and improve lives.** The Productivity Commission endorsed this shift with a prevention framework shaped by CPD's proposals. Tasmania also adopted a wellbeing framework designed to guide policy around what matters most to people and the environment.



**We accelerated our net zero future.** Government commitments to green metals, critical minerals and green hydrogen are now shaping regional opportunities and jobs. We also helped shift thinking in Australia and Indonesia toward ensuring communities, especially those most affected by the net zero transition, share in its benefits.



**We drove progress on the rights of refugees.** By bringing together senior officials and experts across Southeast Asia, we showed that stronger rights for refugees benefit both refugees and local communities. Our advocacy also contributed ASEAN draft guidelines to keep children out of immigration detention and with their families.

# BY THE NUMBERS



10

LANDMARK REPORTS  
PUBLISHED



13

SUBMISSIONS TO  
GOVERNMENT



11

ROUNDTABLES AND  
FORUMS



1200+

NEWS & MEDIA  
MENTIONS



\$17 BILLION

INVESTMENT IN KEY  
REFORMS



## A BETTER START FOR CHILDREN AND STRONGER SUPPORT FOR FAMILIES AND COMMUNITIES

This year CPD made significant progress towards our vision of a government that is more connected to children, families and communities, and is focused on providing services that meet people's needs.

Our work on early education and care (ECEC) reform saw the Three-Day Guarantee become law, scrapping the activity test and giving all families access to three days of subsidised care a week, something CPD has long advocated for to support disadvantaged and vulnerable children. The government also committed to developing a national Early Education Service Delivery Price, a crucial step in understanding what it really costs to deliver high-quality care and designing a funding model that makes it affordable for every family. These are concrete steps toward the universal early education system Australia's children deserve.

When concerning reports of abuse in childcare services sparked national attention, CPD cautioned against knee-jerk responses and urged policymakers to stay focused on the big picture system reforms that will deliver safer, higher-quality early learning for every child. Our Early Childhood Development Council remained a trusted forum for Ministers seeking practical, system-wide solutions, and our submissions and media engagement helped steer the national conversation toward the reforms needed to keep children safe and support them to thrive.

Beyond early childhood, CPD is working to transform social service systems to better support children and families. For several years now we've been advocating for more collaborative commissioning—where agencies and service providers work

together to understand what different communities actually need, and then design and fund services around those needs. It helps avoid duplication, fill gaps, and make sure families get the right support at the right time.

We saw a significant win for this work with a Productivity Commission inquiry recommending governments embed collaborative commissioning—starting with healthcare—as a way to reduce fragmentation, foster innovation, improve care outcomes and generate savings.

These reforms reflect what CPD has long championed: systems designed with, and for, the people they serve—building dignity, opportunity, and lasting impact from the ground up.

*“CPD plays a unique and important role in shaping the big reforms needed to make Australia's social services work better for everyone. Their work on early childhood reform perfectly illustrates not just their impact, but the value of reshaping systems to work better for people.”*

**Fiona Hunt,**

WA Premier's Department



## NEW APPROACHES TO GOVERNMENT AND A BETTER FUTURE FOR PEOPLE AND THE ENVIRONMENT

We're working towards placing the wellbeing of people and the environment at the forefront of government decision-making. This year saw significant progress toward that systemic change.

We released *Embedding Progress*, a practical guide designed to help Australian governments and public servants turn wellbeing goals into real-world impact. This report advocates for moving beyond incremental changes and adopting a whole-of-government approach to transform culture, fiscal rules and all stages of policy development. We briefed decision makers from key departments including Prime Minister and Cabinet, Treasury and Finance on the report's recommendations, receiving strong praise for their detail and practicality.

We also released *Avoidable Costs* showing how billions in government spending on downstream services (or "failure demand") could be avoided by investing earlier and addressing root causes. We recommended creating Avoidable Cost Units inside government to help departments identify preventable spending and design policies that improve outcomes while saving money.

The Productivity Commission recommended a similar structure in its interim care economy report—a Prevention Framework Advisory Board that would provide expert advice and analysis of prevention programs. It also drew on CPD's Banking the Benefits report and backed our call to include "second-round fiscal effects" in the budget—capturing the real, long-term savings of preventative policy.

This year also saw major steps by state governments to put wellbeing at the centre of

*"Thank you for a truly impressive account of the reality of putting wellbeing approaches into effect in the complex and multi-headed beasts that are governments! As a long-term practitioner as well as from my vantage point in a wellbeing policy organisation, this is the most articulate and insightful analysis of the various issues that I've come across."*

**Sarah Davidson,**

CEO of Carnegie UK, on CPD's *Embedding Progress* report

policy. The Victorian Government's new Wellbeing Strategy and Tasmania's Wellbeing Framework both reflect CPD's recommendations for government to look beyond traditional economic indicators and better take into account the wellbeing of communities and the environment.

CPD's work was reflected in independent MP Dr Sophie Scamps' Wellbeing of Future Generations Bill, which proposes legislating a Commissioner for Future Generations to advocate for Australians' long-term interests, and a 'national conversation' to build a shared vision for the country's future.

We will continue to advocate for policies that put the needs of families, communities and the natural environment at the heart of our economic and policy thinking in Australia.



## PRODUCTIVITY WITH PURPOSE

This year as the federal Government began its second term, CPD saw a major opportunity to help shape Australia's economic agenda at a critical moment—when people are worried about rising costs, stretched services and an uncertain future.

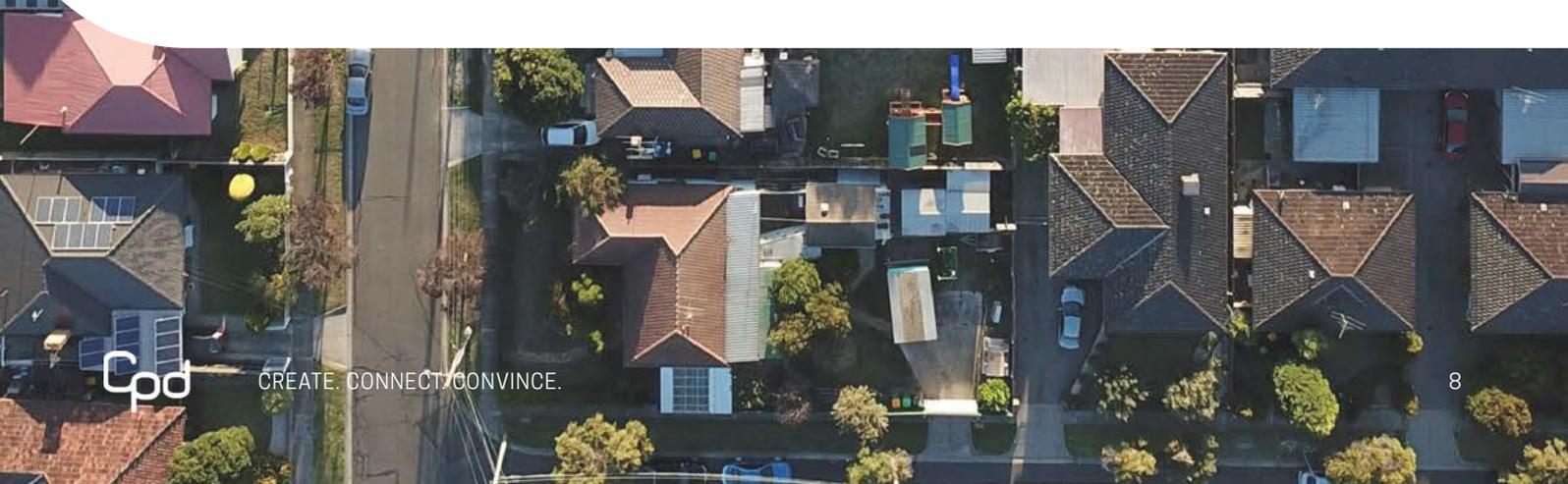
In 2024, CPD adopted a new organisational strategy that emphasises collaboration across our focus areas. Nowhere was this more visible than in our work on productivity. Drawing on expertise from across the organisation, we delivered practical recommendations to the Productivity Commission and the federal government ahead of its Economic Reform Roundtable.

Our report, *Productivity with Purpose*, set out to reframe the national productivity debate. It argued that productivity growth shouldn't be a goal for its own sake, it should be used as a tool—to lift living standards, reduce pressures on households, improve wellbeing, and accelerate the transition to net zero.

“Productivity with purpose” quickly became a unifying call across civil society in the lead-up to the roundtable, with many organisations adopting the framing.

Our influence was evident in the Productivity Commission's interim reports, which shaped the roundtable discussions. In the care economy, the Commission recognised the need for a greater focus on prevention and more collaborative approaches to commissioning social services—direct echoes of our recommendations. On the net zero transition, governments and experts widely supported streamlining environmental approvals for renewables and expanding the Safeguard Mechanism to drive deeper emissions reductions, both core proposals in our work.

This momentum matters. Economic reform can feel distant, but its impact is personal. It shapes whether people have time to care for their families, whether communities have the services they need, and whether Australia can create secure, meaningful jobs in a changing world. Our work is helping move the debate beyond abstract productivity numbers toward practical solutions that make life measurably better for people—greater opportunity, more time, and a sense of security about the future.





## PURPOSE OF GOVERNMENT PULSE

The *Purpose of Government Pulse* is CPD's annual survey tracking how Australians feel about government, democracy and the issues that matter most.

After nearly a decade of results, the 2025 findings showed a consistent theme. Australians want a fair go, a decent standard of living, and a government that focuses on people's wellbeing rather than short-term politics.

Most people still believe government should play an active role in providing essential services, although frustration is growing. Many feel shut out of big decisions, unsure their voices are heard, and increasingly doubtful that politicians are focused on delivering long-term solutions.

With a federal election approaching, this year's Pulse offered a timely picture of what Australians expect from their leaders. People want fairness, stability and more ambitious action on the challenges shaping daily life. At a moment when trust in democracy is under strain here and around the world, the findings showed that confidence in public institutions only grows when government puts people's wellbeing and long-term interests first.

## INVEST IN REAL CHANGE

This past year, we've helped put universal early childhood education firmly on the national agenda, contributed to landmark government support for Australia's emerging green industries, and shaped new wellbeing and prevention-focused approaches across several jurisdictions. We also helped strengthen regional cooperation to better protect children and families on the move. None of this progress would have been possible without the generosity and belief of our supporters.

We'd love your help to keep that momentum going. Your support enables us to develop strong, practical policy ideas, bring the right people together, and work closely with government to turn good thinking into real reform.

Our impact has never been greater—and with a tax-deductible donation today, you can help us take the next big steps toward lasting change.



**DONATE TODAY AT**

[cpd.org.au/support-us](https://cpd.org.au/support-us)



## A FASTER TRANSITION AND A FAIRER FUTURE

Our work towards a rapid energy transition that strengthens communities has made a real difference in Australia and Indonesia this year, helping ensure the shift to clean energy is fair and beneficial for all.

In Australia, the federal government made landmark moves to strengthen Australia's clean-industry future—backing locally made green metals, introducing new tax incentives for critical minerals and green hydrogen, and proposing a lower return target for the National Reconstruction Fund to unlock investment in earlier-stage, higher-reward projects. These moves were key recommendations in CPD's *Green Gold* and *Ideas to Industries* reports, and are crucial for helping Australia compete globally while creating jobs and opportunities at home.

We highlighted how the federal budget undervalues the rising costs of climate disasters in *Budgeting for Natural Disasters*. Accurately accounting for these costs would drive more investment in resilience and better support communities on the frontline. Our advice has already shaped a private member's bill from Independent MP Zali Steggall, informed the Climate Change Authority, and is now being explored by policymakers.

And in *Watt Benefits?* we showed how governments, developers and the energy sector can ensure communities share in the benefits of the energy transition rather than shoulder its costs. Our work has already influenced a major review of the National Electricity Market, and we continue to push for policies that put affected communities first.

In Indonesia we released *Powering Prosperity*, which provides a framework for making sure the shift to clean energy benefits households, workers and regional communities—rather than leaving them behind. The report stressed the importance of a national body to coordinate this, and after its release Indonesia's Ministry for National Development Planning (Bappenas) invited CPD

*"Your work serves as a bridge between Indonesia and Australia, connecting policy with practical implementation and helping steer the shift from today's industrial landscape toward a sustainable, green economy."*

**Faisol Riza,**

*Vice Minister of Industry for Indonesia.*

to join their Strategic Coordination Team. CPD's framework is also now being integrated into the national just transition framework.

CPD also led the formalisation of a new Indonesian coalition of NGOs working on the energy transition. This partnership collaborated informally during Indonesia's G20 and ASEAN leadership and now works together closely to support an Indonesian-led, whole-of-society transition. In November the partnership briefed Indonesian media on what progress had been made during the first year of President Prabowo's leadership, and where the opportunities for meaningful reform lie in the years ahead.

This year we helped put the needs of people and communities front and centre in the energy transition across Australia and Indonesia. We look forward to driving even more progress in the months ahead.

*"The roundtable was really useful – the NEM Review will be much better for it – another example of where CPD really does make a big difference."*

**Tim Nelson,**

*Chair of the NEM Review panel.*



## SAFER PATHWAYS AND STRONGER PROTECTION

In the past year, CPD has made meaningful progress in shaping regional and national policies to better protect people forced to flee conflict, persecution, and disaster—and to promote a more humane, coordinated approach to displacement across the Asia-Pacific.

2025 brought extraordinary upheaval to the global refugee system. Major humanitarian aid cuts from the US and other donors led to a significant shortfall in funding, placing millions of refugees across the world at risk and increasing the likelihood of dangerous sea journeys. Against this backdrop, CPD's *Asia Dialogue on Forced Migration* (ADFM) brought together senior officials and experts in Bangkok to consider how this crisis could be used to rethink outdated approaches and develop more sustainable, humane responses.

Thailand offered a powerful example of what that change can look like. This year, it committed to allowing long-term refugees living in camps along the Thai-Myanmar border to work legally—benefiting around 44,000 people and their families. Thailand also reformed its pathway to citizenship and permanent residency for people without legal status, improving the lives of 340,000 long-term residents and 140,000 of their children. This was the largest reduction in statelessness anywhere in the world this year. Through the ADFM, CPD helped ensure these developments were shared and evaluated by governments across Southeast Asia as practical lessons for strengthening protection and supporting communities.

CPD's *Alternatives to Child Detention* (ATD) Peer Learning Platform also delivered major progress. In February we convened governments from Australia, Indonesia, Malaysia, New Zealand and Thailand in Sydney to discuss lessons from Australia's move away from held immigration detention of children, and share progress made over the past year across the region. Then in November, ASEAN member states advanced draft regional guidelines to prevent children and families from being placed

*"As the world becomes increasingly polarised, initiatives like the ADFM are vitally important to bring governments and experts together to resolve our shared challenges and improve the lives of displaced people."*

### **MP Mercy Christy Barends,**

*Member of the Indonesian House of Representatives and Chair of ASEAN Parliamentarians for Human Rights.*

in immigration detention when they disembark in Southeast Asia. These guidelines reflect years of CPD work, convening and advocacy promoting humane, community-based approaches that keep children with their families and out of jail-like facilities. Discussions recognised the role of peer learning platforms like ours in supporting implementation within member states, to help ensure children and families seeking safety are treated with dignity, protected from harm, and supported to rebuild their lives in the region.

CPD will continue to work with officials, policymakers and experts from across the region to improve the lives of displaced people and families—because nobody should be put at risk simply for seeking safety.

## OUR SUPPORTERS

CPD is fortunate to be supported by a community of partners who share our vision for a fair, sustainable future for Australia and Southeast Asia. Support from philanthropic foundations, alongside the generosity of individuals and families, allows us to pursue thoughtful, lasting solutions to the challenges facing our region. We offer our sincere thanks to everyone who has backed this mission.

**ALF AND MEG  
STEEL FUND**

**Andrew C.C. Farran  
Foundation**



**Australian Government**  
**Department of Home Affairs**

**BOUNDLESS**



**CURLEW  
FUND**

**THE DIGGER AND  
SHIRLEY MARTIN  
ENVIRONMENT TRUST**

**FAIRER FUTURES FUND**

**THE HAMER SPROUT  
FUND**



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**McKinnon**



# STATEMENT OF COMPREHENSIVE INCOME

Centre for Policy Development Limited

For the year ended 30 June 2025

	2025	2024
<b>Revenue</b>	\$	\$
Donations and Grant income	3,500,811	3,515,394
Interest income	52,149	36,553
<b>Total revenue</b>	<b>3,552,959</b>	<b>3,551,947</b>
<b>Expenses</b>		
Finance costs	3,751	3,442
Program and activities costs	167,938	312,372
IT and Website costs	23,626	32,260
Occupancy costs	110,867	108,560
Depreciation costs	88,055	95,624
Employee and contractor costs	2,934,325	2,740,226
Administrative costs	56,332	45,340
Other expenses	205,167	172,641
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>3,590,060</b>	<b>3,510,465</b>
Surplus/(Deficit) before income tax	(37,101)	41,482
Income tax expenses	-	-
Surplus/(Deficit) after income tax attributable to members of company	(37,101)	41,482
Other comprehensive income/loss for the year, net of tax	-	-
<b>Total Comprehensive income/loss for the year attributable to members of the company</b>	<b>(37,101)</b>	<b>41,482</b>

# STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION

Centre for Policy Development Limited  
As at 30 June 2025

	2025	2024
<b>Assets</b>		
Current Assets		
Cash and Cash equivalents	1,513,926	1,445,063
Trade and other receivables	8,273	16,489
Other assets - prepayments	40,476	37,458
<b>Total Current Assets</b>	<b>1,562,676</b>	<b>1,499,010</b>
Non-Current Assets		
Property Plant and Equipment	10,459	5,685
Sydney and Melbourne office deposit	24,298	41,382
<b>Total Non-Current Assets</b>	<b>34,757</b>	<b>47,067</b>
<b>Total Assets</b>	<b>1,597,433</b>	<b>1,546,077</b>
<b>Liabilities</b>		
Current Liabilities		
Trade and Other Payables	246,352	269,369
Deferred Revenue	86,424	19,940
Employee Provisions	108,589	86,183
<b>Total Current Liabilities</b>	<b>441,365</b>	<b>375,492</b>
Non-Current Liabilities		
Employee Provisions	50,410	27,826
<b>Total Non-Current Liabilities</b>	<b>50,410</b>	<b>27,826</b>
<b>Total Liabilities</b>	<b>491,775</b>	<b>403,318</b>
<b>Net Assets</b>	<b>1,105,658</b>	<b>1,142,759</b>
<b>Equity</b>		
Retained Surplus	1,105,658	1,142,759
<b>Total Equity</b>	<b>1,105,658</b>	<b>1,142,759</b>



C E N T R E  
F O R P O L I C Y  
D E V E L O P M E N T



CREATE. CONNECT. CONVINCED.

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