



Capability Statement

**Empowering communities
through better care and
better health.**



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Sonder acknowledges Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as the First Peoples of Australia. We pay respect to them, their cultural and spiritual heritage, and to Elders past, present, and emerging. We acknowledge the ongoing impact of intergenerational trauma that has occurred since colonisation and commit to truth-telling as we walk alongside them toward reconciliation.



Sonder welcomes people from all cultures, faiths, backgrounds, and experiences, and celebrates all identities, genders, sexes, orientations and abilities. We embrace diverse voices in our decision-making to ensure we deliver inclusive services.

Sonder

headspace

Other



● — What we do

Sonder is a leading not-for-profit organisation with more than 30 years' experience delivering health and community services to South Australia's most vulnerable populations.

Each year, we support thousands of children, young people, and adults across metropolitan and regional South Australia. Our work spans six key domains – mental health, alcohol and other drugs, homelessness, Aboriginal health, employment, and community health – ensuring individuals receive the right support at the right time.



Mental health



Aboriginal health



Alcohol and other drugs



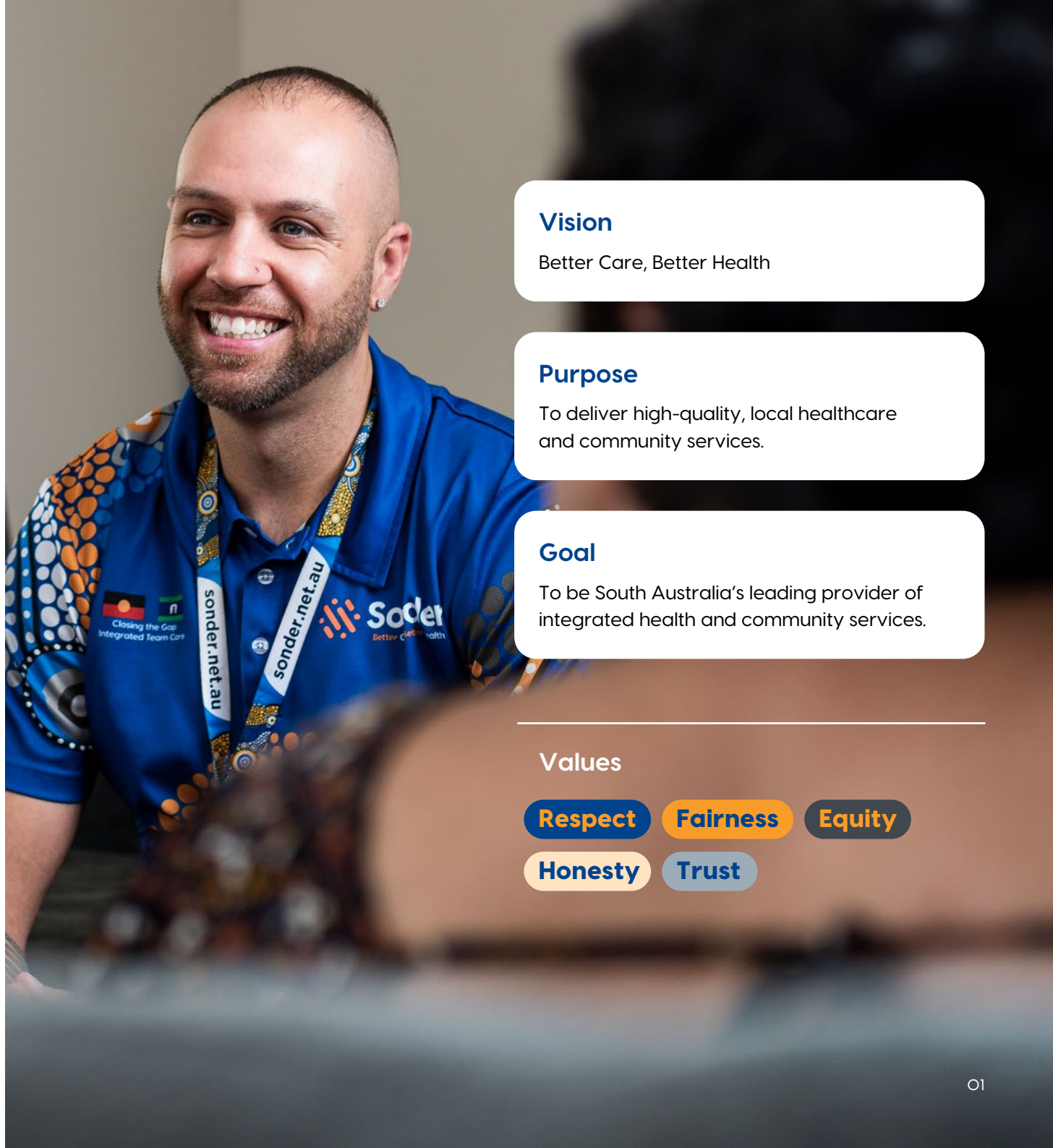
Employment



Homelessness



Community health



Vision

Better Care, Better Health

Purpose

To deliver high-quality, local healthcare and community services.

Goal

To be South Australia's leading provider of integrated health and community services.

Values

Respect

Fairness

Equity

Honesty

Trust

Sonder delivers a comprehensive range of integrated, high-quality services through federal and state-funded contracts.

With a multidisciplinary and holistic approach, we address diverse and complex community needs through innovative and culturally responsive care models.

Our services are designed to empower individuals to overcome challenges, achieve lasting health and wellbeing, and access tailored support when and where they need it.





Mental health

Sonder provides accessible mental health support for children, young people, and adults, from crisis intervention to ongoing therapy.

Key initiatives include:

- **Northern Adelaide Medicare Mental Health Centre:** Walk-in service offering immediate, and if needed, ongoing support.
- **Safe Haven:** Peer-led, non-clinical walk-in support for people in mental health distress.
- **headspace:** Lead agency for headspace Adelaide, Marion, Edinburgh North, and Onkaparinga, delivering youth-focused mental health services including the Early Psychosis program.
- **Solasta:** Social enterprise delivering fee-for-service psychological therapy, assessments, and counselling from Klemzig and Christies Beach.

Central to our approach is the inclusion of peer practitioners, who bring valuable lived experience of mental health recovery. Their insights foster deeper connections, provide hope, and empower clients to navigate their recovery journeys.



Alcohol and other drugs

We deliver evidence-based support for individuals experiencing challenges with alcohol and other drug use, with a focus on harm reduction, recovery, and improving overall wellbeing.

Key initiatives include:

- **In-Home Withdrawal Service:** Support to safely withdraw from substance use at home, with 83% of participants decreasing their substance use and 69% improving their wellbeing¹.
- **AIM and Partners Toward Wellbeing:** Integrated programs addressing both mental health and substance use.



Homelessness

As a proud member of the Toward Home Alliance, Sonder works alongside partner organisations to provide holistic support for people experiencing or at risk of homelessness.

Our mobile team of care coordinators, peer practitioners, and specialist outreach workers delivers wraparound care – addressing health needs, identifying mental health concerns, and connecting people to services that support long-term stability and secure housing.

We also deliver a range of allied health services at the Hutt St Centre, including mental health counselling, alcohol and/or other drugs counselling, occupational therapy, and diabetes education.

1. As at 30 June 2025



Aboriginal health

Sonder works in partnership with Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander communities to improve health and wellbeing through culturally safe, collaborative, and innovative programs.

Key initiatives include:

- **Closing the Gap Integrated Team Care:** Support to manage chronic health conditions, access culturally appropriate services, and navigate the healthcare system.
- **Aboriginal Social & Emotional Wellbeing Centre:** Culturally safe mental health services for people of all ages, delivered in partnership with the National Indigenous Network Initiative and OARS Community Transitions.
- **PACE:** Dietetics, exercise physiology, and diabetes care supporting the holistic wellbeing of clients from our Closing the Gap ITC program.
- **Partnerships:** Strong collaborations with Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisations, including Nunkuwarrin Yunti and the National Indigenous Network Initiative help to ensure our services are co-designed and culturally grounded.



Employment

We help young people achieve their work and study goals through the Work & Study program at headspace Edinburgh North and Onkaparinga. Our Employment Specialists work alongside clinicians to provide tailored, one-on-one support that builds skills, confidence, and independence.

As a specialist provider for Inclusive Employment Australia, we also support people with mental health challenges to prepare for, secure, and maintain meaningful employment, delivered in partnership with OARS Community Transitions and the Australian Refugee Association.



Community health

Sonder supports individuals to prevent and manage chronic health conditions, through care coordination, access to allied health services, and tailored nutrition and exercise programs.

Key initiatives include:

- **Healthy Habits:** Nutrition and exercise support to help individuals adopt and maintain healthy lifestyles.
- **Integrated Primary Care:** Coordinated access to allied health services such as physiotherapy, dietetics, diabetes education, and exercise physiology.
- **Play Our Way:** Support for sports clubs and other facilities to increase participation of women and girls.

● Our impact

**In 2024–25 alone,
Sonder supported almost
19,000 people through
over 130,000 occasions
of service.**

On average, we receive 1,250 referrals per month across all services.

94%



of clients report a positive experience.

76%



of clients would recommend Sonder to family and friends.

Vlad's story

Struggling with anxiety, depression, and low motivation, Vlad sought support from headspace Onkaparinga's Work & Study program.

When Vlad joined the program, he was shy, avoided eye contact, and found it hard to communicate. His anxiety limited him to staying home gaming and avoiding public transport.

With help from Ruth, Vlad's Employment Specialist at headspace, he set small goals, including managing public transport and improving his confidence.

Ruth helped Vlad create a resume, set up a SEEK profile, and practice interviews. She encouraged him to enrol in a TAFE retail course, helping him step out of his comfort zone.

Ruth connected Vlad with a manager at KFC, leading to a traineeship with 15 hours of work per week and a Certificate III in Retail. Vlad's determination impressed everyone, marking a major turning point.

Since starting work, Vlad's confidence has soared. He now navigates public transport independently, has moved in with friends, and is saving for his first car with support from financial counselling. His relationship with his mum has also strengthened.

"If I hadn't joined headspace, I'd still be gaming and miserable," Vlad shared. His mum proudly calls him a "changed kid," and Ruth is thrilled: "Employment has motivated him to become the best version of himself."

Vlad's transformation highlights the life-changing impact of dedicated support through the headspace Work & Study program.



● — Our workforce

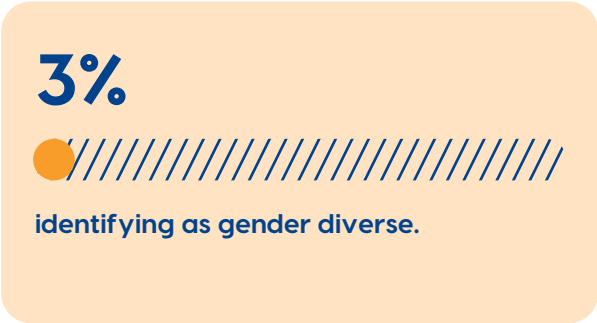
We are proud of our dedicated and multi-disciplinary workforce, whose commitment and expertise drive our ability to deliver exceptional services to the communities we serve.

With a strong emphasis on continuous professional development, we implement a robust annual training calendar and needs analysis to ensure our staff have the skills and knowledge to deliver high-quality, evidence-based care.



Sonder proudly celebrates diversity across all levels of the organisation

Our workforce includes²:



We are committed to fostering an inclusive and respectful work environment where every individual feels valued, supported, and empowered to thrive. This positive workplace culture is reflected in our staff engagement:



2. As at 30 June 2025

3. As at 30 June 2025

● Partnerships and collaborations

Working with other organisations allows us to amplify our ability to deliver impactful, integrated, innovative services that address the complex needs of our communities.

Our current partnerships span various sectors and include successful working relationships with hospitals, clinical mental health services, non-government services, universities, and private sector organisations.



Key collaborations:

- **Local Health Networks:** Partnerships with NALHN, CALHN, and SALHN ensure seamless and continuous care across the South Australian health system.
- **Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisations:** Our work with Nunkuwarrin Yunti, National Indigenous Network Initiative, and Moorundi ACCHS strengthens our ability to provide culturally safe and impactful services for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples.
- **Research and educational institutions:** Partnerships with the University of Adelaide, University of South Australia, Flinders University, Edith Cowan University, and SAHMRI drive research, innovation, and workforce development.
- **Stakeholder partnerships:** Through consortia, service level agreements, and memoranda of understanding, we share knowledge and expertise with organisations across our service areas, including Mission Australia, My Mirror, Uniting Communities, Workskil, SHINE SA, Lutheran Care, The Salvation Army, Aboriginal Family Support Services, Hutt St Centre, Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service, Carers SA, OARS Community Transitions, Australian Refugee Association, and many others.



Our collaborative efforts have resulted in:

- Enhanced referral pathways and improved continuity of care.
- Co-designed services tailored to meet diverse needs.
- Strengthened data and research.
- Expanded service reach.



Advisory groups

We value the voices of the people we support and actively involve them in shaping our services.

Through a range of advisory groups, we gather insights and feedback to ensure our services remain client-centred, culturally appropriate, and responsive to community needs.

Innovation drives our commitment to delivering high-quality, client-centred care.

We continuously invest in technology, adapt services to evolving community needs, engage in research translation activities, and implement innovative strategies to improve accessibility and achieve better outcomes for the individuals we support.



Enhanced systems for better care

We have invested in a single, integrated client management system that streamlines service delivery, improves collaboration across teams, and provides clients with a seamless, holistic care experience.

Adapting services to meet community needs

We have expanded support for Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander Peoples to include exercise physiology, diabetes education and nutrition services, providing a more holistic approach to managing chronic conditions and enhancing wellbeing.

Harnessing AI for better care

Sonder has introduced Heidi, an AI notes tool that records sessions (with client consent) and generates notes. This initiative reduces time spent on administration, enables more direct client care, and supports improved clinical quality.

Innovative demand management

To address increasing service demand at headspace Edinburgh North, we implemented innovative strategies which resulted in a 75% reduction in wait time for appointments:

- A **drop-in service one day a week** for immediate support.
- **Single session therapy model** to provide focused, solution-based interventions.
- A partnership with **My Mirror**, a telehealth psychology practice, offering bulk-billed psychology services to young people, ensuring accessible mental health support.

Lived experience leadership

Our Lived Experience Standards Group aligns practices with national Standards and Guidelines, embedding lived experience across the organisation to ensure services are shaped by those with firsthand knowledge of mental health challenges and recovery.

Investing in efficiency

Sonder has made strategic investments in advanced data, finance and human resource systems, reducing administrative expenses and lowering corporate overheads.

These efficiencies allow 85% of program funding to be allocated directly to service delivery, maximising the impact of every dollar spent.

Person-centred goals

In our Closing the Gap – Integrated Team Care program, clients now co-develop health goals that reflect their needs and preferences. This approach allows services to be tailored and adjusted, improving outcomes and client satisfaction.

Quality is embedded in every aspect of our work. We foster an environment of openness, fairness, and continuous improvement, ensuring services are safe, effective, and responsive to the needs of our diverse communities.

Through robust clinical governance and risk management systems, we ensure the care provided is evidence-based, client-centered, and focused on achieving the best outcomes for individuals and families.



Clinical Governance Service Framework

Sonder's Clinical Governance Service Framework guides the delivery of high-quality care across all services. Its principles ensure that care is:

1

Community-focused, holistic, and patient-centered.

3

Supported by clinical leadership and a culture of learning.

5

Strengthened by access to timely data and information.

7

Governed by strong organisational structures.

2

Delivered with a commitment to cultural safety.

4

Guided by evidence-based and sustainable practices.

6

Enhanced through partnerships and teamwork.

8

Driven by innovation in systems and practices.

Risk management

Sonder employs a comprehensive and integrated approach to risk management aligned with ISO 31000:2009 Risk Management – Principles and Guidelines.

Regular risk assessments inform strategic and operational planning, analysed by the Risk and Finance Committee of the Board and the Clinical Governance Committee.

Reporting of incidents, clinical governance concerns and risks by staff is managed through a central system. Such reporting ensures consistent and informed management, and compliance with funding and other regulatory bodies.

Clear escalation pathways exist to facilitate these processes, with regular reporting to teams and committees. Relevant and necessary reporting is mandatory between all Committees and groups.

Accreditation

Reflecting our commitment to high quality and safe services, Sonder maintains accreditation with the following standards:

- National Standards for Mental Health Services (transitioning to National Safety and Quality Mental Health Standards for Community Managed Organisations)
- ISO 9001:2015 Quality Management Systems.
- NDIS Practice Standards and a registered NDIS provider.

We are also compliant with the following standards, but have not sought formal accreditation:

- National Safety and Quality Health Service Standards (Aboriginal Health).

As part of our commitment to improvement, we are actively working towards compliance with:

- NGO Mental Health Lived Experience Workforce Standards and Guidelines.
- Rainbow Tick (LGBTQIA+ Inclusive and Safe Environments).
- National Standards for Disability Services.



Registered
NDIS Provider

● — Contact us

We welcome the opportunity to connect with you to discuss how Sonder can collaborate with your organisation.

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💻 sonder.net.au

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