

One Trusted Source Many Options



ABOUT US

Ability Options are a not for profit organisation providing a wide range of services to people living and working in NSW, focusing on independence, empowerment, meaningful lifestyles and valued roles within community. We advocate for all people to be respected as citizens with unique skills, gifts and personal strengths to contribute. Ability Options are committed to a person-centred approach to service delivery, emphasising the individual's rights and opportunity for choice and self-determination.



Ability Options would like to acknowledge the traditional custodians of this land, the Aboriginal people, and pay our respects to the aboriginal elders past, present and future. Ability Options respect the significant contributions made by Aboriginal community organisations and groups, Aboriginal community members and Aboriginal employees.





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HISTORY

Number of Employees: 755

Services provided: Accommodation and Supported Living, Case Management, Clinical Services, Community Access, Employment - Jobactive and Disability Employment Services (DES). NDIS services including Early Intervention and Therapies, Individually Funded Services, Out of School Hours Care for Teenagers with Disability and School Leavers Employment Services (SLES). Over 750 NDIS participants were supported by Ability Options by end of FY 2015-16.

Geographical footprint: NSW wide plus Townsville in Queensland

People supported: 15,300+

Growth in annual turnover to: \$42,560,000

2010 – 2016

2000 – 2010

Growth in annual turnover to: \$5,715,000

1990 – 2000

Growth in annual turnover to: \$2,800,000

1980 – 1990

Number of Employees: 51

Services provided: Advocacy, Farm Services, Accommodation, Supported Employment/Day Program

Geographical footprint: Blacktown Local Government Areas (LGA), Hills LGA, Parramatta LGA

People supported: 66

Growth in annual turnover to: \$1,450,000

1976 – 1980

Established in 1976 as the Association for the Assistance and Accommodation of Intellectually and Socially Handicapped Persons (AAISH).

Incorporated as a registered charity in a joint venture with the Rotary Club of Guildford and The New South Wales Health Commission.

Initial purpose was to deinstitutionalise people with intellectual disabilities at Rydalmere Hospital and support them to live in the community by providing multi-tenant hostels.

Two community living groups initially:

- Pindarri Hostel in Merrylands (6 tenants)
- Kyewong in Harris Park (8 tenants).

Supported by a community educator and a community nurse.

Began to expand and develop services beyond community housing to include the ongoing development of the individual.

CHAIR'S REPORT

The past year exemplifies the challenges every not-for-profit organisation faces: how to survive and prosper in a commercial, yet heavily regulated and compliance driven environment.

This year has primarily been about investing for the future. We did produce a deficit for this financial year, which was in part due to our calculated investment in IT and property infrastructure, but which will generate good returns over the next three to five years.

Some contributing factors were out of our control, principally due to a slower volume of participants from the Commonwealth Government jobactive employment program.

The remainder of the deficit was due to industry changes in the Nursery business and our ongoing involvement in the Hunter NDIS trial site.

Recently we took the significant decision to wind back the Nursery business after a twenty one year involvement. Changes to the commercial viability of this business has meant job insecurity for our employees but we will do everything possible to secure them a safer future.

On the other hand, our service results were outstanding. We delivered beyond expectation in the employment space, as measured objectively by the Commonwealth Government's star ratings, remembering that we are the only newcomer in this highly contested national program.

We now measure accolades as well as brickbats from our Community and Lifestyle and Accommodation clients. Our person-centred assistance and support is second to none and we are attracting new NDIS participants through the skills of our marketing department, and the sincerity and track record of our service personnel.

We recognise one of our greatest risks is being able to attract, develop and retain great staff. Individual and corporate stakeholders are wanting us to be their service provider of choice,

however, they have higher expectations which we will need to fulfil.

The organisations Senior Leadership Team (SLT) is capable and united, well-led by our CEO Fred Van Steel. What is equally pleasing, is that the next line of managers are equally energetic and motivated and together with their staff are producing great results for their participants and the organisation.

It is also important to recognise the role played by staff in support departments. Finance and Corporate Services, Human Resources, Quality Assurance, Risk and Compliance, Information Technology, and Marketing and Communications. We depend on the quality of our corporate infrastructure where so much can go wrong, but gets so little acknowledgement when it goes right. I sincerely thank you all.

We have successfully integrated two small to medium organisations over the last eighteen months. These include Newcastle Temporary Care and Nambucca Valley disAbility Services Inc. and we are nearing an agreement with Kempsey Regional Support. These three organisations provide us with a substantial footprint on the Mid North Coast of NSW.

I want to thank the Board most sincerely for their wonderful, voluntary contribution throughout the year. I would like to also thank and acknowledge Trena Blair and Mark Clough, whom both resigned from the Board this year due to time pressures, after serving the organisation for well over two years. We are now recruiting for replacements based on what we perceive are the skills necessary to meet the challenges ahead.

In summary, 2016 has been a challenging year but we have navigated it by investing in our future, addressing key financial risks, concentrating on promoting and providing great service delivery and constantly surveying the environment for opportunities and threats.



Jon Isaacs BA [Hons]; FAICD
Chair

Jon brings to Ability Options over thirty years' senior executive and governance experience across private, public and not-for-profit organisations, including a successful career in the NSW Public Service and nine years as CEO of the Royal Blind Society (now Vision Australia).

Since its inception in 2003 he has chaired the \$1.2 billion NSW Government/private sector joint venture development at Rouse Hill Regional Centre in North West Sydney and currently chairs four Government Audit Committees. He has been an Executive Coach and Mentor with Stephenson Mansell Group for over 17 years and is a Trustee of the Walter and Eliza Hall Trust.

Jon was elected Chair of Ability Options at the Annual General Meeting in October 2014.

CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER'S REPORT

In the last few years the social, economic, political and market conditions confronting Ability Options and our entire sector have been undergoing a 'once in a life time' process of change. We anticipate these changes and challenges will continue for at least another three years. As a consequence this has required a very different strategic and management approach by the Board and Senior Leadership Team (SLT), one of fundamental realignment and restructure of our organisation.

We now operate in an open and competitive market, on a full commercial footing, with wafer thin margins, whilst having a total commitment to customer journey and experience in every aspect of our organisation. We span a geographic market that operates from Townsville in Queensland, throughout NSW and into the ACT, and provide supports to nearly 9,000 participants.

Each and every one of our participants, their families, circles of support and communities are on a journey. A journey at a personal and organisational level that is subject to constant volatility, uncertainty, complexity, and ambiguity, which reflects an unwavering commitment to inclusion at the core of our organisational values of respect, trust, integrity and courage.

Over the last year the Board and SLT have supported and lived this journey with targeted financial and resource investment into technology, market expansion, and a single-minded focus of moving our whole organisation to a customer centric and outcomes focused operation. This has taken courage and a willingness to leverage the financial strength of our balance sheet and cash reserves in the face of short-term losses for longer-term gains.

So what have we achieved? We started the year in the Hunter NDIS trial site where we have been since 2013 and completed a full integration of Newcastle Temporary Care, adding children's services and respite services for over 300 NDIS clients.

On the 1st July 2015 we kicked off our new jobactive contract and added 4,000 new clients to the Employment department. This included the launch of our innovative 'Energise' Model, the refurbishment and opening of 19 employment offices and new Customer Service Centre at Bella Vista. We reached a milestone of successfully placing our 3,000th jobactive candidate into permanent employment as well as placing 1,200 Disability Employment Service (DES) candidates with a new employment site in Blacktown.

By October 2015 we had achieved:

- ISO9001 accreditation in Employment
- Rolled out an on-line induction training (I-induct) to staff across the organisation
- The establishment of the Greg McIntyre 'Front Up' Arts & Culture program, and development of the first Hub at our Seven Hills office. In November 2016 we will officially launch the program
- Rolled out our Nepean Blue Mountains NDIS strategy
- Secured the Summer Foundation purpose built NDIS supported accommodation pilot in the Hunter for 10 NDIS residents
- Rolled out our five year ICT strategy to 2020 – further technology investment and upgrades
- Gained a \$75,000 community business partnership grant to build a commercial training kitchen at our Seven Hills site. The first candidates in our 'Recipe for Success' program are passing through the training facility and achieving TAFE Certification.



Fred J P Van Steel
Chief Executive Officer

Tertiary and postgraduate qualifications in finance, economics, marketing, business administration and management, as well as a number of instructor qualifications in the leisure and commercial maritime industries in Australia and the UK.

Fred joined Ability Options as CEO in August 2013 after holding positions as shareholder, managing director, CEO and executive management in finance and administration, operations, production, sales and marketing, IT and technology, and research and development, in disability, manufacturing, logistics and fast moving customer service organisations.

Fred also has experience with private equity firms on assignments with boards and CEOs working on strategy, restructures, recovery and market expansion throughout Australasia. At Ability Options, he is committed to establishing platforms for future innovation, ensuring that the organisation's focus is on proactively driving change, so we are always relevant and responsive to the evolving needs of the people who use our services.

By December 2015 we had:

- Established a relationship with Open Minds, a major mental health services provider and opened a joint office in Townsville, Queensland - the first QLD NDIS trial site
- Achieved Attendant Care Accreditation and secured a collaboration with Perpetual Insurance to assist up to 500 new clients
- Opened our Maitland office to cater for the third and last Hunter Region trial site roll-out.

By March 2016 we had:

- Established a second Customer Service Centre at Bella Vista, to cater for the growth in direct NDIS customer communications
- Upgraded our Penrith site to be a joint hub for Employment and Community and Lifestyles services.
- Secured the ParentsNext contract on the Central Coast to support young parents to return to work.

By June 2016 we rounded the year out by:

- Completing our integration of Nambucca Valley disAbility Services Inc. (NVdS) on the Mid North Coast as part of our Northern NSW expansion strategy
- Continued negotiations with Kempsey Regional Services that concluded with an integration plan for September 2016
- Commenced our White Ribbon accreditation program to stop violence against women at home and in the work place
- Held 17 NDIS Pre-Planning Café's across Greater Sydney attended by over 400 people
- Completed cultural awareness training for the majority of our staff and submitted our organisational Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP).

There have been so many other milestones and achievements, it's impossible to mention them all.

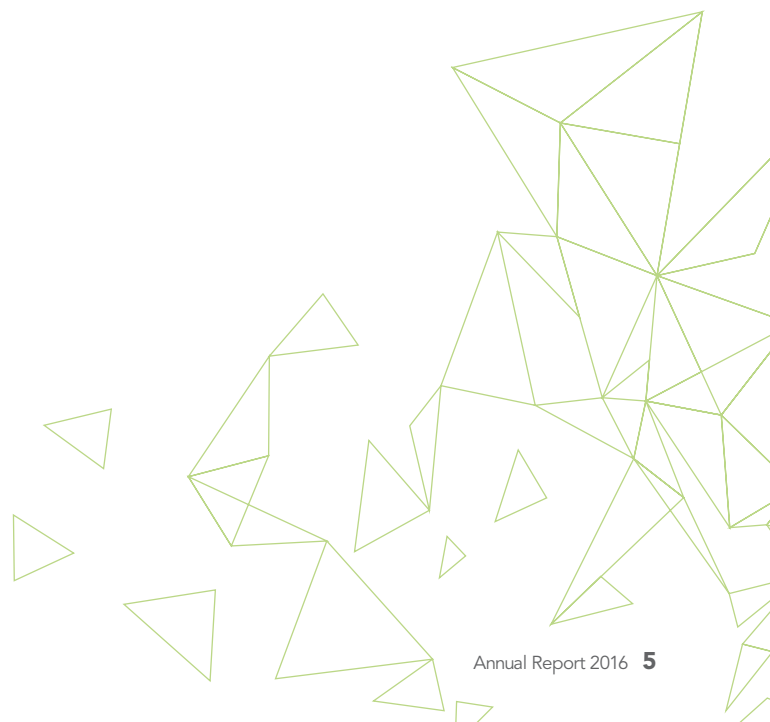
Whilst the last year has been a year of challenges and amazing growth, our investment on rebuilding has resulted in a consolidated loss this year of \$4.95M. At the conclusion of this financial year on 30 June 2016, Ability Options has grown over 36% to an annual revenue of \$42.6M. A Net Asset position of \$20.72M that includes a cash balance of \$12.97M, to continue to invest, operate and strengthen our organisational capacity to meet the market pressures confronting us.

This year's financial loss is unheard of in our 40 year history, and without a deep contextual perspective and an explanation of why, it is entirely understandable you might be concerned. I urge you not to be and to read on and see what we have been doing, the journey we are on, where we are headed and put this deficit into the context of the foundations and rebuilding work that the Board and SLT are undertaking, in the most challenging and demanding times our sector has ever faced.

In conclusion, I'd like to thank the Chair and the Board for their leadership, guidance, confidence and support throughout the year and the SLT for their unrelenting resilience and perseverance to hold the course in the face of ever mounting challenges. I'd like to thank our staff for tirelessly facing each day anew and doing what you do in supporting our participants in all manner of aspects of their lives and journeys, in every corner of our organisation. Lastly I want to thank our Patron, Professor Trevor Parmenter AM for living up to his promise – to keep the spirit of our founder Greg McIntyre alive in everything that Ability Options does.

I hope this 2016 Annual Report in some small way reflects the thousands of hours of tireless work of everyone across this amazing organisation that I am privileged to lead and grow.

Fred J P Van Steel
Chief Executive Officer.



STRATEGIC PLAN EVOLUTION

Embed the VUCA Prime

- Vision
- Understanding
- Clarity
- Agility

OPERATION ON VALUES

- Inclusion
- Respect
- Trust
- Courage
- Integrity

PHASE
03

S3 ADDITIONAL OBJECTIVES

SPEED – allocate necessary and suitable resources in a fluid and timely manner

SCALE – focus on what really matters to the people who use our services, with the right portfolio of strategic initiatives

SECURITY – detect the most important opportunities and threats early enough to proactively evolve to meet the needs of the changing delivery environment

PHASE
02

BUILD INDIVIDUAL EMPOWERMENT AND RESILIENCE

PHASE
01

S3 OBJECTIVES

SAFEGUARD – to reduce risk and achieve compliance

STRENGTHEN – to deliver on our mission of supporting and empowering

SHAPE – our position as a leading service provider

CONFRONT THE VUCA CHALLENGE

Operate in a world of

- Volatility
- Uncertainty
- Complexity
- Ambiguity

Confronting our clients, families, staff and the organisation.



PATRON'S MESSAGE

There has been much excitement in the media about the wonderful performances of our Paralympians in Rio de Janeiro, but there has been a questioning as to whether this community excitement transfers into more positive attitudes toward people with disability generally. There was a similar phenomenon in the context of the London Paralympic Games held in 2012. There were glowing reports in the world media on the remarkable achievements of athletes with disabilities and corporate sponsors were anxious to bask in the glow of those achievements. However, when questioned as to whether they would invite these athletes to become involved in sponsoring their products, as is the case with famous sports people without disabilities, there was an ominous silence. Apparently, they were not prepared to risk the possibility of the negative attitudes the general population still holds towards people with disabilities affecting their product image.

One of the aspirations of the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) is that, as people with disabilities gain more choices in how they want to live their lives, this will lead to their greater community inclusion in the workplace and in community activities generally. Where does this leave organisations such as Ability Options, as they adjust from a service orientation to an outcomes focus for the people they support? And how will they continue their broad support activities in the light of individualised budgets?

I believe the market orientation that is appearing to underpin many of

Australia's social service policies does not sit comfortably with the broad philosophy of community inclusion. People such as Greg McIntyre OAM saw in 1976 the poverty of the lives of people who were locked away in state and private institutions, and worked to build support agencies that would help to emancipate them into a welcoming community.

“The driving force that led families and concerned citizens to initiate organisations such as Ability Options was their desire that family members with disability would have a life close to the patterns of life as everyone else in the community.”

It was a privilege, therefore, to participate in a Strategic Planning Day (SPD) in March this year, with senior employees and Board Directors of Ability Options, where one of the focus points was specifically on the Vision of the organisation. It was resolved that at its core should be the “Journey of Inclusion”, within the context of the attributes of Trust, Resilience, Respect, Integrity and Courage. These are the qualities which go to the heart of the organisation; especially to its employees who deliver the supports to the hundreds of people with disabilities they serve. And yes, the free market system will enable those people to make a choice as to whom they will turn to for support in the future.



Professor Trevor R Parmenter AM

Patron

Professor Emeritus, Sydney Medical School; Honorary Professor in the Faculty of Education and Social Work, and Honorary Professor in the Faculty of Health Sciences at the University of Sydney; and Adjunct Professor in the School of Rural Medicine at the University of New England.

CORE VALUES FROM STRATEGIC PLANNING DAY MARCH 2016

The challenge for Ability Options will be two-fold. First, we will need to adopt new and flexible ways to respond to the support needs of people whose individualised budgets may not meet all their needs, both physical and psychological. Second, we will need to seek alternative financial means of supporting the building of community capacity that will be the crucial element in whether the NDIS does change the landscape for people with disabilities. The last thing we want is the phenomenon of "old wine in new bottles", where the bureaucracy still

determines the processes and outcomes for the most vulnerable people in our society. Community inclusion for people with disabilities will not come about solely through the mechanism of individualised budgets; it will rely upon the capacity of organisations such as Ability Options to continue its legacy of strong advocacy. This will become more apparent as more private for-profit providers enter the market, where the financial bottom line is their goal.

Integrity

- Do what we say we will do
- Being honest and transparent
- I accept accountability for the outcome

Respect

- Embrace diversity
- Honour every individual's journey, lived experience and values
- You will be heard



Courage

- Dare to be different
- Committed to your journey
- Take action

Trust

- Honesty in all that we do
- Deliver on our promises
- Value and understand your journey

2015-16 HIGHLIGHTS

JULY 2015

Olympus Solutions and jobactive contract commences
Major organisational wide ICT upgrade and expansion to empower staff with real time data
Nineteen new jobactive and DES offices go live "Energise Model"
Customer Service Centre goes live
Full integration of NTC
Expansion of Central Coast combined Employment and Community Lifestyles hub
Expansion of Campbelltown combined Employment and Community Lifestyles hub
ISO 9001: 2015 achieved in Employment

SEPTEMBER 2015

Introduction of I-Induct Electronic Induction Program
Preparation for NDIS rollout for children and adolescents in Nepean and Blue Mountains
"Greg McIntyre" Front Up development commences

OCTOBER 2015

Ability Awareness Day attracts almost 200 people
IRAP ICT Security project commences
Summer Foundation NDIS accommodation
Launch of 2015-2020 ICT Strategy to empower mobile workforce and 24/7 real time data
Community and Lifestyles restructure to geographic/regional model
ACT NDIS accreditation commenced
QLD NDIS accreditation commenced
QLD DSQ accreditation commenced
Seven Hills office upgrade kitchen training facility and cultural arts space

NOVEMBER 2015

Attendant Care Accreditation achieved
Collaboration with Open Minds Australia commences in Townsville QLD

FEBRUARY 2016

New Maitland office opens
Collaboration with Trapeze commences
New NDIS customer service triage centre at Bella Vista commences operation
Strategic Planning Day

MARCH 2016

Manly Sea Eagles sponsorship commences
Penrith employment hub upgrade completed and expanded with Community and Lifestyles

APRIL 2016

ParentsNext contract commences
White Ribbon accreditation commences

APRIL – JUNE 2016

17 Pre-Planning Cafés attended by over 470 people

JUNE 2016

80% of employees completed Pindarri. Cultural Awareness program.
Achievement of Stretch Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP)
Integration with Nambucca Valley disAbility Services Inc.



STRATEGIC



STRATEGIC PRIORITIES



The Senior Leadership Team and the Board have established eight overarching outcomes for the organisation that aligned with the Vision and Mission of Ability Options. These are illustrated above, along with the additional goal of diversified sustainable growth. These eight objectives combined, represent the Ability Options Strategic Plan for FY 2015 – 2020.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS



Jon Isaacs

BA [Hons]; FAICD
Chair

Jon brings to Ability Options significant experience in strategic planning and governance across private, public and not-for-profit organisations, including a successful career in the NSW Public Service and nine years as the CEO of the Royal Blind Society. Since its inception in 2003 he has chaired the \$1.2 billion NSW Government/private sector joint venture development at Rouse Hill in North West Sydney and currently chairs five NSW Government Audit Committees.

He has coached and mentored CEOs and senior executives from a wide range of organisations in sectors such as finance, legal, FMCG, construction/development, education, retail, regulation, human services and health. Jon was elected Chair at the Annual General Meeting held in October 2014.



Pearl Forrester

CPA; MBA; BEcon; GradDipCompSci;
GAICD

Deputy Chair

Pearl is a finance executive with experience in the not-for-profit human services sector, with roles over the last 10 years in aged care and disability organisations.

Pearl worked primarily in ASX-listed service oriented companies for over 20 years prior to moving into not-for-profit, mission-focused organisations to combine life and career goals.

Pearl is a former regional Board member for a large aged care provider and is a member of the Advisory Committee for the Trustees of Catholic Aged Care Sydney. She also holds a Cert IV in Training and Assessment.



David R Bamford, OAM

Non-Executive Director

David joined the Board in 2006 and has a wealth of community and corporate experience. Before retiring, David was a Senior Manager with NRMA, working with the company for 31 years. A Rotary member for 41 years, David is a former President of the Rotary Club of Blacktown City and has been recognised as a Paul Harris Fellow with three Sapphires.

David is Honorary Chairman of the Advisory Board for the Blacktown Traffic Offenders Program and a member of numerous local community and safety committees. In 2009, David received a Medal of the Order of Australia for his service to Rotary International and the community of Blacktown.



Michael Maxwell

GradDip AdEd (VET); MSocSci; GAICD
Non-Executive Director

Michael joined the Board in 2014. He has combined an extensive career in the social and community services sector with post-graduate qualifications in adult education and social science to work with disadvantaged communities in developing training and employment projects that have opened doorways of opportunity for those to whom they are so often closed.

At the core of Michael's work has been a passion and ability to create programs that promote social and financial inclusion and by which individuals who face complex and compound factors of social disadvantage are supported to live to their full potential in a safe, secure and appropriate environments.

Michael has worked with a range of social service organisations and is currently Principal at Social Traction and lectures at several tertiary institutions.



Mark Clough

BAppSc; DipEd; DipAppFin; FFin;
MAICD

Non-Executive Director

Mark is an accomplished investment, financial services and property professional, with extensive senior experience with firms such as AXA, Deutsche Bank, Challenger, ANZ and Lend Lease. Parallel with his career have been representative and advisory roles in the not-for-profit sector for government, sporting bodies, schools, community housing associations and scouts.

He has consistent personal and professional goals of problem solving, creating value and driving growth, innovation, sustainability and efficiency for projects and businesses within the context of social purpose and mission.



Trena Blair

BA (Ed); BEd; GradDipMgt; MAICD
Non-Executive Director

Trena brings to the Ability Options Board significant experience in strategy, leadership, marketing, cultural development and diversity. She is an accomplished international (Australian and USA) senior executive with 20 years experience working for ASX and NYSE listed organisations in financial services, education, travel and telecommunications industries. Trena is focused on creating successful strategies to drive business transformation.

Trena combines her corporate career with her passion for supporting not-for-profit organisations through volunteer work in the arts, education, welfare and diversity communities. She has worked with several Boards including EPOCH USA (End Physical Punishment for Children); Athena Collaborative Group USA (Supporting young women in financial services); AFTA (Australian Federation of Travel Agents); and inART (bespoke international art tours). Trena is also a volunteer educator at Sydney Story Factory and The Metropolitan Museum (New York).



Richard Mossie

BCom; FCPA
Non-Executive Director
and Treasurer

Richard joined the Ability Options Board in December 2000. He has extensive experience working in senior management and finance for a number of high profile organisations, including as Chief Internal Auditor with Coca-Cola Amatil Ltd before he retired in 1999.

Richard has also served as Treasurer for the Oatlands Golf Club, a role he retired from in 2008 after many years of service. As a Director and Treasurer of Ability Options, Richard is committed to using his knowledge and expertise to enhance services for people with disability.



Nola Buck

Non-Executive Director

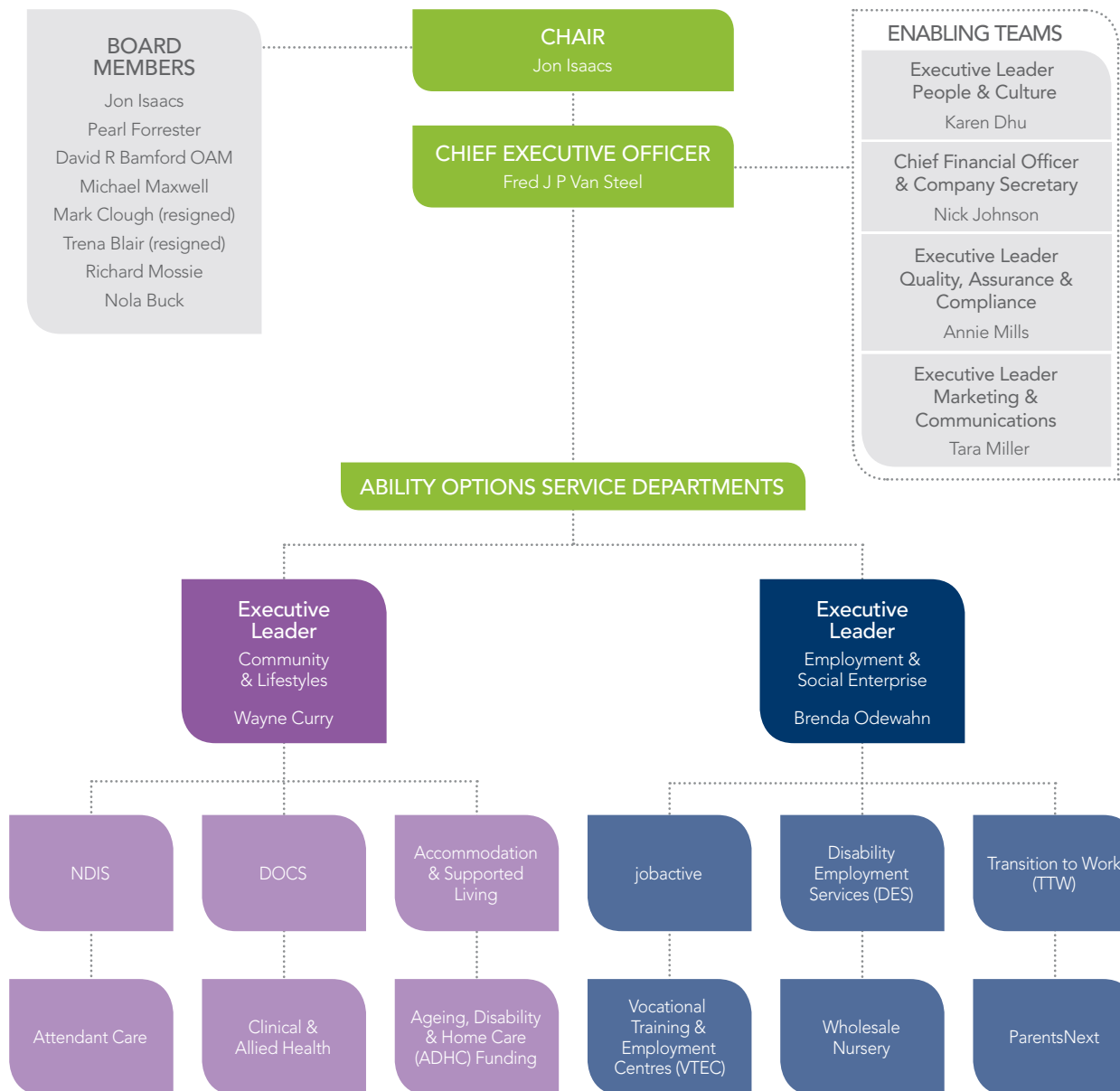
Nola has been a Board member since September 2002. Nola's commitment to the independence, worth and dignity of the service users of Ability Options was ignited when she supported them at their monthly client meetings.

Nola has been an advocate for people with disability for over twenty years and is a life member of both Polio NSW Inc. and People with Disability Australia Inc.

Having contracted poliomyelitis as an infant, Nola has a life-long experience of disability. Nola is married with four adult children and lives in western Sydney.



OUR STRUCTURE



COMMITTEES

AUDIT & RISK

Richard Mossie (Chair),
David Bamford, Michael Maxwell

Responsibilities:

- Monitoring organisational-wide risk management
- Internal audit process
- External audit
- Legislative/regulatory compliance
- Acknowledging contributions.

SERVICE & QUALITY

Michael Maxwell (Chair),
Nola Buck, Pearl Forrester

Responsibilities:

- Culture focused on empowering the individual
 - Employee quality and development
 - Experience of people using our services
- Clinical and service outcomes and governance.

MARKETING & FUNDRAISING

Trena Blair (Chair),
Mark Clough, David Bamford

Responsibilities:

- Not-for-profit marketplace differentiation
- Person-centred focus
- Fundraising as applied to enhancing experience for people using our services
- Community engagement
- Management of volunteer efforts, welcoming and acknowledging contributions.

FINANCE (PROJECTS)

Pearl Forrester (Chair),
Mark Clough, Nola Buck

Responsibilities:

- Getting the most out of our capital given our not-for-profit status
 - Asset management
 - Budget/forecast cycle
 - Finance policy.

REMUNERATION & NOMINATION

Jon Isaacs (Chair),
Pearl Forrester, Richard Mossie

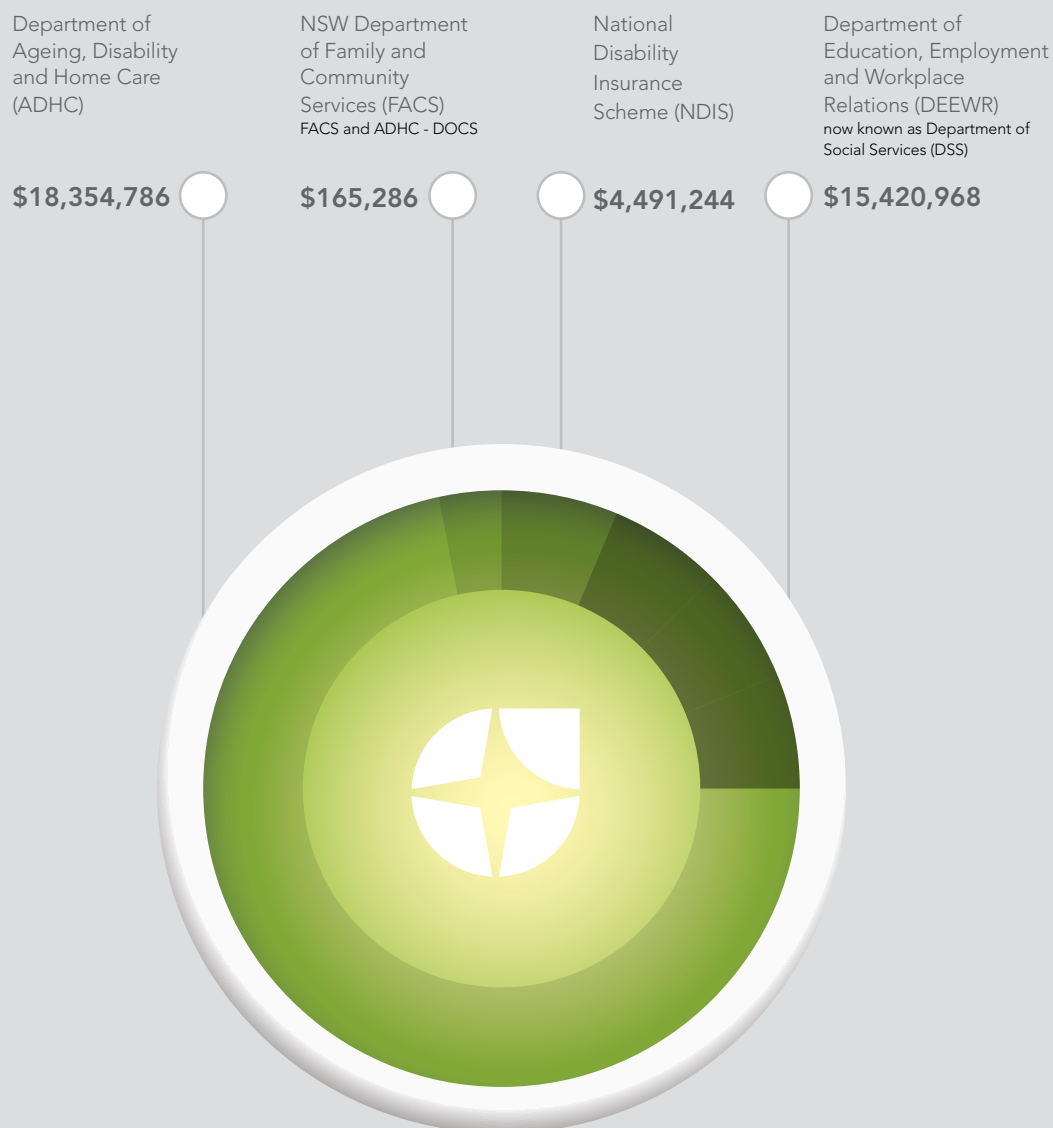
Responsibilities:

- Board and Senior Leadership Team succession
- CEO and Senior Leadership Team remuneration
- Remuneration policy
- Board structure, skills and governance.

To support the work of the Board, strengthen our governance, effectively manage risk and compliance and to ensure transparent reporting. The above committees operate at regular intervals throughout the year and work with management. Each Committee reports, with recommendations and findings to the Board and is also comprised of non-executive Directors and Management Representatives.



GOVERNMENT AND OTHER FUNDING



Ability Options are contracted to deliver a range of services on behalf of the Federal and NSW Governments. Funds are allocated to specific programs and service targets. Expenditure of funds is monitored in accordance with contractual obligations and outcomes as stated on the program contract or service details outlined by the funding body.

ABILITY AWARENESS DAY 2015

Ability Awareness Day is an initiative that recognises and celebrates peoples' achievements throughout the year and is a featured highlight of our social calendar every year.

This year, Ability Awareness Day was held at the Hard Rock Café in Darling Harbour, in conjunction with our Annual General Meeting. Almost 200 people came along and had the opportunity to ask questions to the Board, enjoy morning tea, a rock-n-roll burger and dance along with the live performances.

'Ability's Got Talent' was the theme for the event and we had a record number of performers, with 14 acts taking

to the stage, expressing themselves through musical instruments, song and dance.

NRL legend Nathan Hindmarsh generously donated his time to present the trophies to performers and have his photo taken with fans. There was an amazing didgeridoo performance by Jeremy Donovan, former CEO of Generation One, who had the crowd captivated with his ability to tell a story through music.

You can see for yourself that an exciting day was had by all with great performances and many smiles.





SERVICES

COMMUNITY & LIFESTYLES



INDIVIDUALISED FUNDING

Partnering with individuals and their families to ensure the people we work with are the drivers of change. We provide choice, control and flexibility to live life to the fullest.



CASE MANAGEMENT

Support for people with disability to live independently, to stay connected to the local community.



COMMUNITY ACTIVITIES

Offers a wide selection of activities and skills for life programs, support and training to assist people to learn new skills as well as make new friends.



DROP IN SUPPORT

Offers assistance with everyday tasks, develops skills to enable people to live as independently as possible and stay connected to their local community.



OUT OF SCHOOL HOURS CARE

Fun age-appropriate activities after school and during school holidays for teenagers with disability.



ATTENDANT CARE

Enables people with physical and/or neurological individual needs to manage their support, maximise their independence, make informed decisions and exert choice and control.

SERVICES SNAPSHOT



CONNECTING HEALTH

This Division provides support to individuals across the organisation. Our team of Psychologists and Therapists works with Accommodation & Supported Living residents, Community & Lifestyles and NDIS participants, young people on Transition to Work programs and provides vocational counselling within Ability Options Employment.



NDIS

Providing support to participants in the Hunter region since 2013 and services in Nepean and Blue Mountains for children and young people aged 0-18. Currently working directly with people across NSW and QLD to prepare for the rollout of the NDIS nationwide.



ACCOMMODATION & SUPPORTED LIVING

Accommodation and Supported Living choices for people with disability. Includes 24 hour group homes, leaving care support, emergency respite in north west Sydney and independent living on the Central Coast, Hunter and mid north coast regions.



WHOLESALE NURSERY

Our not-for-profit Nursery provides training and employment opportunities for people with disability. We grow hundreds of varieties of annuals, perennials and hedge lines for major retailers.



RESPIRE SERVICES

Quality, flexible support for children and adults with disability and their families in north west Sydney, Newcastle and mid north coast.



TRANSITION TO WORK

Two year program to assist school leavers with disability to successfully transition into the workforce or vocational education/ training. Under the NDIS this is now delivered as School Leavers Employment Support (SLES)



DES

A hands-on specialist service assisting people with disability, injury or long-term health conditions into work.



JOBACTIVE

We match the right people to the right jobs, delivering sustainable employment across nine sites in Sydney and the Central Coast.



VTEC

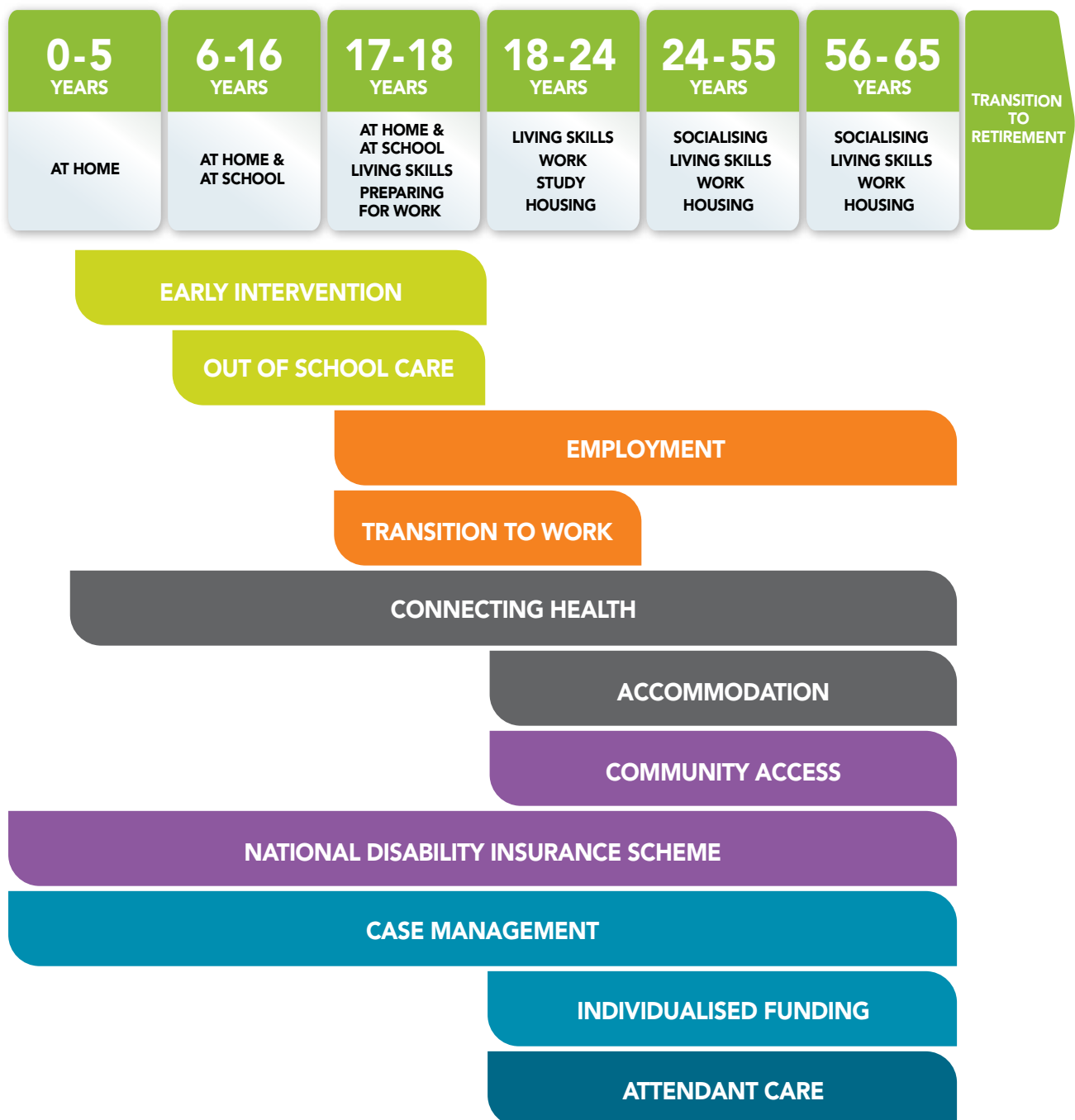
Our Vocational Training & Employment Centres connect Indigenous Australian job seekers with skills, qualifications, training and access to guaranteed jobs across Sydney.



SUPPORT FOR ALL AGES/ JOURNEY OF INCLUSION

Ability Options provide services across each different life stage. From early intervention to school leaver programs, employment and independent living and accommodation options. We aim to always provide choice, control and flexibility.

One Trusted Source – Many Options





HUNTER & NDIS SERVICES

As a result of being a trial site for the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) since 2013; our operation in the Hunter region has flourished over the past 12 months. We now employ over 250 people in the Hunter who support over 750 participants in Newcastle, Maitland, Lake Macquarie and Charlestown.

Our services include direct support, early intervention, case coordination, physiotherapy, speech pathology, occupational therapy, personal training and dietitian consultations.

THE SUMMER FOUNDATION DEMONSTRATION HOUSING PROJECT

In September 2015 we expressed interest in a new housing model for people living with disability. Subsequently, Ability Options were selected as the support provider for the two-year establishment and implementation phase of the project near Newcastle. This housing project is designed to be an alternative for young people currently living in nursing homes.

The Foundation purchased 10 apartments for people with disability, in a 110-unit private development. An additional apartment is provided for disability support workers.

Each apartment is a real-world example of how the right housing in the right location can increase a person's quality of life and independence, while reducing lifetime care costs. Clever communications and smart home technology ensure residents can enjoy their independence and privacy while still having access to 24-hour on-call support.

The Summer Foundation's long-term vision is that this model of integrated housing for people with disability, is accessible and well located, and be routinely included in all new medium and high-density residential developments throughout Australia. This would create the scale and range of housing options needed for both young people in nursing homes and for other people with disability who have the potential for more independent living.

NEWCASTLE TEMPORARY CARE

Since becoming integrated with Ability Options in May 2015, Newcastle Temporary Care has continued to provide respite services for young people with disability living in the Hunter region.

The organisation provides a number of services including:

- One-on-one flexible supports for children and young people with moderate to high support needs
- 'Host Family' support which takes place in a family environment within the homes of our dedicated volunteers
- 'Timeaway' support which offers a variety of overnight-stay options, including centre-based respite, overnight support for individuals and camps in various locations
- 'Laugh and Learn' which provides a range of group activities for children and young people with a variety of support needs
- School holiday care which provides opportunities for teenagers and primary school children to get together with like-minded friends and participate in a variety of activities and settings with the aim of enjoying life to the full.



Naomi McCorkell

General Manager – Community and Lifestyles, Northern NSW

Naomi's qualifications include an Associate Degree in Law, Bachelor of Social Science and Master of Social Science (Human Services Management).

Naomi has been with Ability Options since August 2013 heading up the Hunter and NDIS Services in NSW. Prior to her appointment she held senior roles in government and non-government organisations across the disability services sector.

The roles she has held in recent years have given her a sound understanding of the challenges and opportunities presented by the introduction of the NDIS.

Naomi's focus is to develop a sustainable business model to be implemented across Ability Options following the full rollout of the NDIS.

Naomi is passionate about all people having equal access to a good life and committed to supporting the disability services sector in this time of significant change.

REFINING OUR BUSINESS MODEL WITHIN CASE COORDINATION AND THERAPY SERVICES

Since the commencement of the NDIS trial, the Hunter has been designing and refining a new support model that boasts much more accountability to participants and their family networks. Our case coordination and therapy teams have continued to work closely with participants and their families to deliver high quality support services, ensuring participants and their families are driving these supports as much as possible.

This is an area where Ability Options have been praised by the NDIA, as each case coordinator and therapist is able to provide both participants and the agency with a run down of all supports provided and planned, fully accountable for the way in which a participants funds have been spent.

Our highly experienced and qualified teams also ensure that they are using every interaction as an opportunity to build the confidence of participants and their families, as well as their confidence and capacity to manage their own supports.

Our goal is for each participant to strive towards independently navigating their community's support networks over time.

HUMAN RESOURCES

The Hunter has been working closely with the People and Culture department to design more creative and innovative recruitment and retention strategies for increasing our workforce. Our support workers are our greatest asset and we have to continue to strive towards becoming an employer of choice, given the competitive nature of our industry.

“Supporting our workforce to understand their now elevated role in the support of people living with disability under the NDIS is a key focus.”

Participants are forming strong connections with each of their preferred support workers and together they can plan exactly how their supports will be delivered across the week.

We are known for our partnership approach to supporting people living with disability. This is something we want to maintain under the NDIS, encouraging the natural formation of connections between support workers and participants, rather than the organisation.



Andrew Warren

Manager – Business Development, Northern NSW

Andrew Warren acted in the General Manager role while Naomi McCorkell was on maternity leave. This also encompassed his Business Development role, where he successfully supported our integrations with Newcastle Temporary Care, Kempsey Regional Support and Nambucca Valley disAbility Services Inc.

Andrew commenced with Ability Options in 2014, having previously held senior executive, consulting, board and advisory roles for numerous non-government organisations. He also holds qualifications in Business and Community Services and has over 15 years' experience in the disability services sector.

Andrew has been integral to the success of our operations in the Hunter and Mid North Coast. Andrew also brings with him invaluable personal insight, having sustained a permanent disability early in his working life. He is now an NDIS participant himself, and is passionate and committed to supporting the sector in this time of significant change.

THE CENTRAL COAST TEAM

Our Central Coast team, supported by the Hunter is quickly growing a reputation for quality supports and community connections, following a decision to open an office on the Central Coast and employ a Manager to oversee these local supports. The Central Coast participants and our support team prepared for the rollout of the NDIS in their area, ensuring we could hit the ground running come 1st July 2016.

Ability Options commenced providing NDIS supports prior to the rollout as a result of our growing reputation within the region. We provide the only individualised supports in the area, mostly in supporting people to live more independently in their own communities.

MAITLAND OFFICE OPENS

We opened an office in Maitland in February 2016 and commenced case coordination and therapy supports in the surrounding areas. Ability Options have built a strong reputation in this area as a result of our responsive approach to partnering with families.

Growth has increased via our connections with the community and with government and non-government organisations.

FEATURE STORY

LOUISE

Louise is a vibrant young woman who loves dressing up, using makeup, and getting her hair done at the hairdressers, just like any other fashion-loving 20 year old. She also likes to go dancing with her friends, and going to the club with her family.

Louise was diagnosed with Moya Moya Syndrome, a rare neurological disorder that causes recurrent transient ischaemic attacks and strokes. Louise is supported by a close network of friends, family, and a formal support team to assist her to live a full and happy life.

Speech pathologist Kimberly Mulder has been working with Louise through Ability Options since February 2015, and prior to this through Ageing, Disability and Home Care.

"Louise communicates by talking and using her iPad when out and about. The Proloquo2Go app that she uses has given her the confidence to be more independent when meeting new people." said Kimberly.

Kimberly works with Louise to develop her communication program, and train Louise's support workers in using the Proloquo2Go app. In addition, Kimberly also provides assessment, intervention and education for her swallowing, and has developed a meal time management plan to support Louise to eat and drink safely.

Together with Kimberly, Louise continues to work on her goals, and be an active member of her community.



EMPLOYMENT

Ability Options Employment is a no-cost service that partners with employers to find the right employees and assist job seekers to find sustainable work. We provide employment services through both Disability Employment Services and the jobactive government initiative.

GOING MAINSTREAM THROUGH INTEGRATION WITH OLYMPUS SOLUTIONS

In July 2015 we commenced service delivery as the appointed sub-contractor, through Olympus Solutions a contract that saw us deliver jobactive services for the first time. jobactive is the Commonwealth Government initiative which replaces Job Services Australia. This new sub-contracting arrangement marks our move into mainstream employment services, including engaging clients with Work for the Dole.

The contract required us to open additional offices on the Northern Beaches and the Central Coast.

This contract has performed very well. We had our first official star ratings for the June 2016 milestone and were awarded 4 stars for the region and 5 stars at many sites, the highest rating in our region.

“Over the year we placed and continued to support approximately 2,500 people in jobs in the jobactive space.”

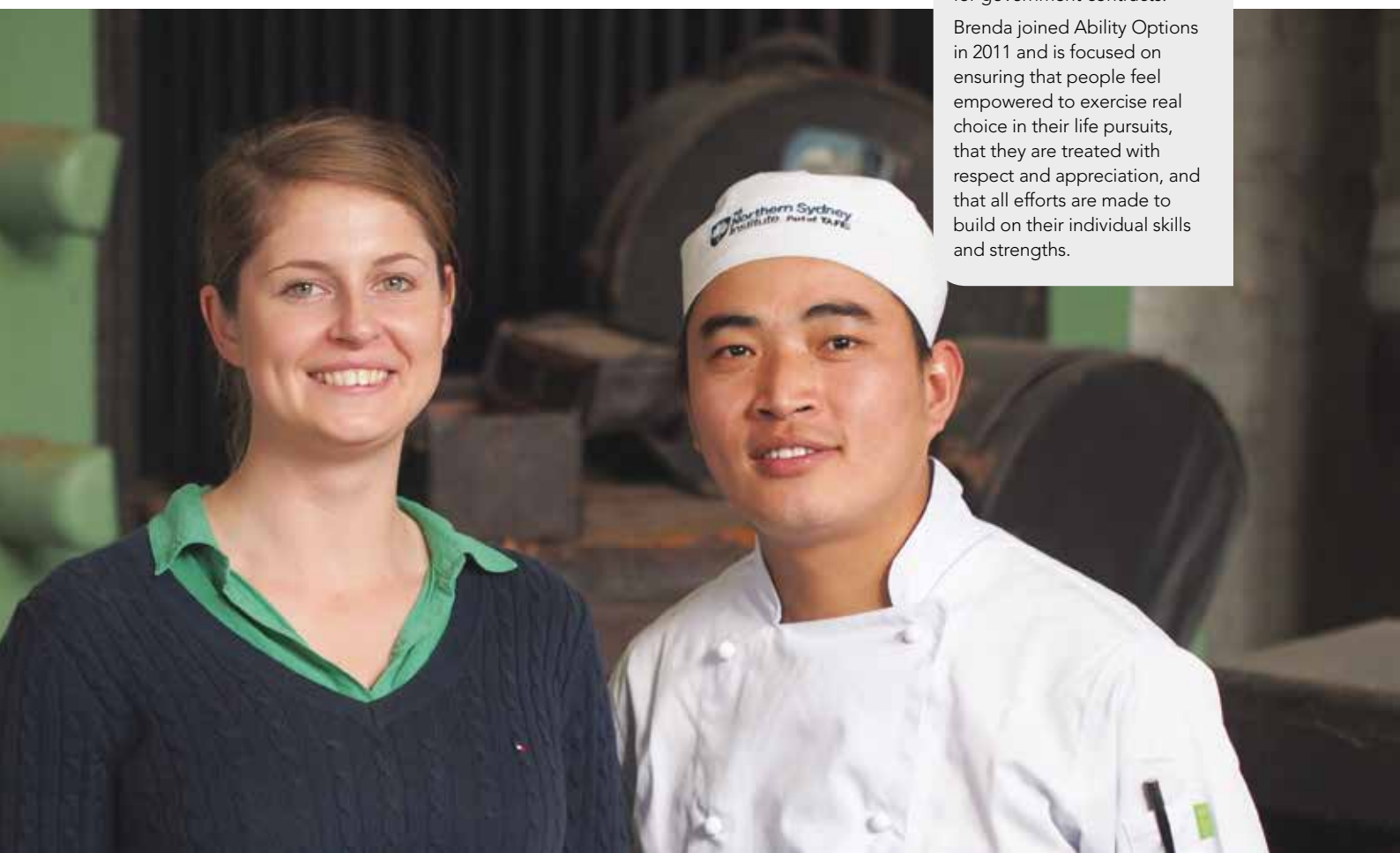


Brenda Odewahn

Executive Leader – Employment & Social Enterprise

Brenda has worked in employment services since 1997, commencing in Disability Open Employment and moving into other areas including Job Services Australia, Aboriginal employment programs and specialist programs working with people requiring support for mental health needs and ex-offenders. She has held various management positions and been involved in tendering for government contracts.

Brenda joined Ability Options in 2011 and is focused on ensuring that people feel empowered to exercise real choice in their life pursuits, that they are treated with respect and appreciation, and that all efforts are made to build on their individual skills and strengths.



OVER 1,000 PEOPLE WITH DISABILITY PLACED IN JOBS

In the disability employment space, we have continued to achieve high performance and we have held 4 and 5 star ratings at many locations. Approximately 1,000 people with disability have been placed and continuously supported in jobs over the last 12 months.

As a result of our high performance, in August last year we were granted a new contract from the Department of Social Services. To service the new contract, we opened an office in Blacktown. A 5 star rating was awarded to this office in June 2016.

OUR DES STAR RATINGS AT JUNE 2016



CONTRACT WITH VTEC EXTENDED

In the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employment area, based upon our performance, our contract with the Vocational Training and Employment Centre (VTEC) was extended in March 2016. We are one of around 25 providers of VTEC nationally.

HELPING PARENTS GET JOB READY THROUGH PARENTSNEXT

In April 2016 we became a ParentsNext provider after winning a competitive tender as the sub-contractor through Olympus Solutions. ParentsNext is a new government initiative delivered in the Wyong Local Government Area on the Central Coast.

The program works with parents whose children are approaching age six. It aims to help parents get ready for return-to-work activities. It includes education, training, work experience, resume preparation and interview preparation. It also assists parents with planning their childcare arrangements to facilitate their return to work.

By 30th July 2016 over 300 participants had commenced in the program.

TRANSITION TO WORK PROGRAM

The Transition to Work Program that was previously state funded, is moving to the National Disability Insurance Service.

We worked with approximately 70 school-leavers with disability who had finished year 12, enrolling them in a two-year program aiming to improve their capacity for success in the mainstream workplace. It involves access to tertiary education through TAFE plus a range of other activities including work experience, workplace health and safety and social interaction in the workplace with the aim of getting paid employment.

THE WHOLESALE PLANT NURSERY

This has been a tough space for us over the last 12 months due to industry instability in our customer markets nationally as the nursery market rationalises and consolidates. It led to us closing our Queensland nursery in May 2016. We have remained operational in NSW and continue to grow the customer base into independent nurseries and chain stores. An increased focus on sustainable, long term supported employment opportunities in social enterprises remain at the forefront of management's strategy work.

We support up to 19 employees in the nursery which is situated in St Clair. Two employees celebrated 20 years of employment during the year.

LOOKING AHEAD

Over the next 12 months, we look forward to submitting expressions of interest for mental health co-location for the NSW Department of Health working within the Individual Placement Support model. We will also commence our partnership with Castle Hill headspace, a youth mental health group. We intend to help their participants take part in activities to assist them to return to work.

We will also be working to continue to improve our profile with the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community and our engagement with employers. To this end we intend to run expos and job fairs to find quality placements for the people we support.

We will continue to pursue growth opportunities in the full range of employment pathways to deliver on our promise of 'One Trusted Source – Many Options' for employment outcomes.

FEATURE STORIES

21ST CENTURY SKILLS YOUTH PROGRAM – CLASS OF 2015

Ability Options 'Work Readiness Youth Program' is part of the 21st Century Skills Youth Program, focussing on work preparation. The program is designed to engage young people aged 15–24 in the Holroyd Local Government Area to prepare for and gain employment.

The Work Readiness Youth Program held its inaugural Presentation Day in December 2015 at Holroyd Council Chambers. The Mayor of Holroyd Council, Councillor Greg Cummings was the VIP guest. Cr Cummings spoke in front of an audience comprising participants, teachers and supportive employers, on local issues facing young people and the success of the program before presenting Certificates of Participation to the 45 graduates.

One of the graduates, Ngams, a local 19 year old woman from Merrylands, shows just how innovative and successful the program can be. Prior to commencing the program, Ngams had little or no support network.

Ngams seized every opportunity the program offered, including personal presentation, interview skills practice, and work experience, that she undertook with the Target store in Merrylands. Ngams has since been offered full time employment as a Customer Service Assistant with Target as she made such a great impression during her time with them.

'ENERGISE MODEL' – Q STATION

The Ability Options/Olympus Solutions 'Energise Model' is a unique operational model made up of six stages to help eligible job seekers find sustainable employment.

In the 'Skills Builder' phase of the model, we focus on the needs of local employers and what skills are required. By identifying training that may be helpful and drawing on our links with TAFE and apprenticeship centres, we assist people to explore various training options to develop their skills and motivation to succeed.

Using the 'Energise Model', Ability Options/Olympus Solutions recently identified people from a local Tibetan community who had registered with our

Brookvale employment office and were looking for work opportunities.

They faced various challenges, including some participants having limited English skills and no previous work experience in Australia.

We approached Manly Q Station, a retreat and conference centre at North Head, and arranged work experience for the group, so they could demonstrate their practical skills and enthusiasm.

The candidates really stepped up to the plate, so much so, Manly Q Station decided to switch from using an outsourced food preparation company and instead hired the Tibetan participants.

By April 2016, the candidates had commenced their new jobs with Manly Q Station and are thrilled to have the opportunity to use their skills and knowledge at this unique venue.

QUALITY STAFF AT NO COST TO JAKE'S BUSINESS

Jake from Formit Services in Fountainsdale is big on quality. It's what makes his business a success and by the end of 2015 he had employed six staff members with the assistance of Ability Options Employment.

Jake trusts that Ability Options will recommend quality candidates.

We approached Jake with Ken, a skilled candidate who had been out of the workforce for a while due to his responsibilities as a single father. Ken was keen to support his family with more than just part-time work but he also needed some flexibility from his employer.

Jake agreed to interview him, having confidence in our recommendation and assessment. 'I'm always happy to be flexible for the right candidate because I want my staff to be flexible for my business.'

After initial discussions and a few adjustments to Ken's childcare arrangements, he is now happily employed on a casual basis at Formit Services working 38 hours per week.

Jake credits Ability Options with 'prompt service and only ever introducing quality candidates that are ready to work hard'.



COMMUNITY & LIFESTYLES

Ability Options provide a wide and evolving selection of activities, supporting people with disability to learn new skills, make friends and to take part in their community. We focus on individual needs and goals to encourage people towards greater independence and to build social connections.

Ability Options are committed to the principles of the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS). We are known as a pioneer of the NDIS, a legacy forged by our extensive experience providing NDIS support in the Hunter and Nepean, Blue Mountains and Townsville trial sites.

Life since July 2013 has been focused on NDIS commitment to readiness. Over the past year, the Ability Options Community and Lifestyles department have focussed on transformational change in response to the rollout of the NDIS across the Hunter, Nepean, Blue Mountains and Greater Sydney areas.

We continue to adopt an 'Action Learning' approach to moving through each day, week and month. This approach comprises problem solving, reflection, action and evaluation. Every employee has contributed to our journey towards success.

Along the way, we've adopted a change management approach to business practices with a high level investment in customer service. Our commitment is to ensure that we continue to provide a continuity of supports for the participants and their circle of support. Ability Options staff are committed to walking alongside each participant as they phase over to the NDIS.

From our business practice perspective, the Community and Lifestyle's department's commitment is to

ensure that we increased Ability Options community and regional profile. This was achieved by the following key initiatives:

- A robust NDIS marketing strategy
- Implementation of the NDIS Customer Service Triage Centre
- Sector and mainstream community engagement
- Building referral pathways i.e. hospitals, schools and community forums as a touchpoint of engaging potential participants outside of Ability Options.

NDIS PRE-PLANNING CAFÉS – A RESOUNDING SUCCESS

To address peoples' questions and uncertainties about the NDIS and how it can work for them, we have held 17 Pre-planning Cafés to help people prepare and plan. Our ethos is: "The better you pre-plan, the better your plan will be."

The key objectives of the Pre-planning Cafés are to facilitate opportunities for individuals and their circle of support. By helping individuals to explore their life supports, we provide a comfortable and engaging environment where they can share their journey, strengthening individual choice, along with building capacity through goals-based funded supports.

This is facilitated by:

- Explaining how the NDIS works
- Providing tools to help individuals identify their goals and aspirations
- Providing a safe environment where participants can share their journey
- Working with the participant's circle of support
- Explaining and assisting individuals to prepare for the planning conversation.



Wayne Curry

Executive Leader – Community and Lifestyles

Wayne joined Ability Options in May 2015. His extensive experience in human services, leadership and management includes developing, managing and measuring the effectiveness and efficiency of service delivery in disability, emergency support and other community based services.

Wayne worked in the high support induction unit with young people aged 10–21 with very complex trauma based support needs.

In his current role, Wayne is heading up transformational change in supporting employees, participants and their families during the progressive implementation of the NDIS, ensuring the people we work with are empowered to exercise decision making, choice and control so they can live life to the fullest.



KEN JOHNSON TALKS ABOUT ATTENDING A PRE-PLANNING CAFÉ WITH HIS DAUGHTER, CATHERINE

"My daughter, Catherine has disability and over the past 12 months I have been trying to come to grips with the NDIS and how it will work. During this time, my wife and I attended numerous discussion groups run by agencies and providers. They were all informative but we could see most attendees, including ourselves, were confused about where to start.

There was a mountain of information available, both on web sites and written, but most of us can only absorb so much.

The job at hand seemed very challenging until I attended the NDIS Pre-planning Café presented by Sonia Pereira and her team. It was a light bulb moment for me. I could finally see how to tackle Catherine's 'Getting Ready Plan' so we can be prepared for our first meeting with the National Disability Insurance Agency planner.

The team at Ability Options offered ideas and suggestions on the way forward and helped us navigate through the Pre-planning process."

The Cafés have been a resounding success, assisting over 470 individuals and their families prepare for their NDIS planning meeting in a helpful and caring environment.

At one Café held at the Manly Leagues Club at Brookvale recently, we were delighted to co-present with Manly Sea Eagles CEO Joe Kelly and legend, Steve Menzies who talked about goal setting. Speaking openly and candidly, Steve explained how he believed that even in the NRL, preparation and planning were key to achieving goals.

Exit surveys completed by Café attendees have given very positive feedback with 99% success and participant confidence in their new-found knowledge about the NDIS.

“The aim of the Pre-planning Cafés is to encourage people to explore ideas about the types of support they need, and show them that we are walking beside them on their NDIS journey.”

DEVELOPING A CULTURE OF COLLABORATION

The rollout has created many opportunities for us to establish strong collaborations with other organisations, many through non-traditional pathways. In western Sydney, local providers such as hospitals, schools, neighbourhood centres and Legal Aid NSW, have come to us for advice on how we can work together.

One of our strongest collaborations is with Trapeze, an initiative of the NSW Department of Health, that assists teens with chronic health conditions to move into, and navigate the adult health system.

SEVEN HILLS COMMUNITY HUB UPGRADE COMPLETED IN JUNE

Ability Options previous head office site in Seven Hills has been transformed into a community hub providing a skills-for-life program for people we support. We were fortunate to obtain a community partnership grant in 2014 that we used to fit out the space as a training facility for people to learn cooking skills. It also has a sensory room and, using extra funding from Ability Options, we've turned it into a welcoming centre for our participants.

PENRITH EMPLOYMENT AND COMMUNITY SERVICES HUB UPGRADED IN FEBRUARY

A new open plan setting with a family therapy consulting room enhances the way we present ourselves to our participants at our Penrith hub.



'FRONT UP' COMMUNITY ARTS AND CULTURAL PROGRAM COMMENCES

In 2015 we decided to initiate a cultural, community and arts development program in memory of our founder, Greg McIntyre (OAM). We have now committed to a 10-year funding plan for 'Front Up', that will be led by leading arts and cultural professional consultants, Gaye Fleming and Edith Magnussen.

Front Up's Government Cultural and Art partners for 2016 are the Art Gallery of New South Wales and Accessible Arts.

The program aims to become the first disability-led community arts and cultural centre, located in the heart of Western Sydney. The program will offer participants access to a multi-layered level of professional arts, cultural education and services that link into existing NSW Government programs.

There will be three core 'Front Up' programs: Explore, Discover and Emerge.

These three programs aim to promote artistic vibrancy and social inclusion by inspiring interest in arts and culture while developing creative skill sets. 'Front Up' will incorporate visual arts, installations, drama, music and multimedia.

The Discover and Emerge programs will be directly linked with NSW Government's Cultural and Arts Access and education programs, working collaboratively with 'Front Up' professional artists and employees in 12 to 16 week programs.

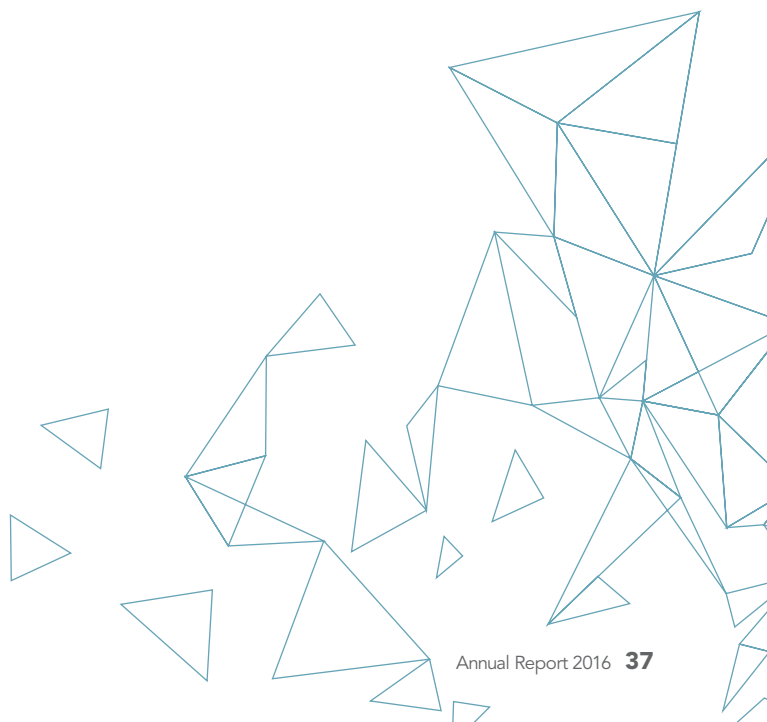
The expected outcomes for participants will be to build their confidence and self-esteem, which will in turn assist them to find pathways to access communities, further education, future employment, and volunteer opportunities.

In 2016–17, the 'Front Up' hub will continue to be developed at Seven Hills and become the Western Sydney space for cultural and art partners, education programs and collaborative projects.

The 'Front Up' hub will also have a theatre space, an open plan performance space, gallery and multimedia space, including audio and visual studios.

The official launch of 'Front Up' will be held at The Cutaway at Barangaroo Reserve on 15th November, 2016. It will include a visual and audio arts installation, 'I'm still here', produced and conceptualised by a group of practising and emerging artists collaborating in the 'Front Up' Emerge pilot program. The installation has been inspired by, and is in response to, three separate exhibitions introduced to the artists earlier this year in partnership with the Art Gallery of New South Wales.

On the 6th and 7th of December, 2016 the artists from the Emerge pilot program will address a live audience at the Art Gallery of New South Wales on the process and their response to these three exhibitions in celebration of the International Day of People with Disability.



A WHOLE OF LIFE APPROACH

Operationally, we have been tailoring our services to identify the gaps and opportunities offered by the NDIS. We are an approved provider, registered to provide all 15 NDIS supports in NSW, ACT and Queensland.

In early September 2015, the NDIS was rolled out for children and adolescents in the Nepean and Blue Mountains regions, giving us the opportunity to further extend into children's services. To compliment this, Ability Options are now a Medicare Approved provider engaging with direct referrals for therapy and early intervention supports from doctors and hospitals.

“We believe we have an ethical responsibility to get people ready for the NDIS.”

We continue to evolve with the new 'My First Plan' approach, which assists participants to begin their NDIS journey with their current plan, so they can build up their confidence and experience.



YOUR NDIS JOURNEY

PROVISION OF ATTENDANT CARE, AND LIFETIME CARE AND SUPPORT

In November 2015, we were formally accredited to work with people at home with a medical injury. We continue to actively promote this service in all our community engagement and collaborative activities.

Today Ability Options provide supports for well over 750 NDIS funded participants and 515 funded participants under the traditional state-funded service. Our employees will continue to work closely with participants and their circle of supports as they phase across to the NDIS. We are excited by the wonderful opportunities that will arise from NDIS funded supports.



ACCOMMODATION & SUPPORTED LIVING

Ability Options provide independent and supported living services for people with disability across a broad range of age groups. In addition to accommodation, we offer assistance with building and maintaining relationships and creating opportunities for people to realise their hopes, goals and dreams.

PREPARING FOR THE NDIS

The Accommodation and Supported Living departments responded with gusto to the call for National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) transition, embracing the opportunity to support people in establishing their individual ideas, wants and wishes for future supports and lifestyle choices.

A comprehensive pre-planning process was developed using Person Centred Thinking templates to document rich and detailed information that ensured a true and complete picture of each person's life. Pre-planning meetings were conducted with each person and their chosen supporters, in community settings where people felt comfortable. A collaborative approach to information gathering was used with the person and their family members in the driver's seat.

Linking each of the NDIS outcome areas to our pre-planning model provided people with the best opportunity to move into their NDIS meeting feeling confident and prepared.

BEST PRACTICE AND BEYOND

Last year, benchmarks were established surrounding quality and compliance within the Accommodation and Supported Living department with a view to exceeding best practice in service delivery. Demonstrating continued commitment to ensuring people are supported to live their best life possible whilst accessing exceptional quality service, has seen us streamline our processes and work towards bringing our policies and procedures to life. The team enjoy continued success in achieving and exceeding benchmarks, driven by a vision of unrivalled customer satisfaction.

“We are supporting a person's whole of life. It is our duty to achieve exceptional customer service and quality outcomes for every individual.”



Michelle Hodge

General Manager – Greater Sydney, Accommodation and Supported Living

Michelle has extensive experience in the disability sector both here and in New Zealand and joined Ability Options in March 2014.

Michelle is committed to raising the expectations of service delivery by ensuring a culture of true respect, inclusion, equity and enhanced opportunities for all people to live their best life possible.



FEATURE STORY

JO AND FISHER

Jo lives in a quiet house where she enjoys spending time with housemates and seeing her family members for quality time together. Jo has dementia and her supporters were finding that Jo was often not present in her day.

Being such a social person who loved to be out and about, employees tried to think creatively around what may assist Jo at this stage of her life. As a result, Jo recently became the proud owner of a therapy dog called Fisher. Fisher was aiming to be a guide dog but, fortunately for Jo and the people sharing the house, he was too much of a big sook and had far too much love to give to make the guide dog grade.

Through a thorough consultation process, and a trial period with another therapy dog named Bella, everyone agreed to give a therapy dog a go. As a result, Fisher moved in and everyone is in love. Residents are now lapping up cuddles and affection from Fisher as well as enjoying companionship and many laughs with his silly puppy antics. Jo feeds and looks after him and now spends more time out of bed. Jo's housemates help to take him for walks.

One of the residents put it perfectly in saying – 'Fisher makes us smile'.

CONNECTING HEALTH – ALLIED HEALTH SERVICES

Now that the NDIS has begun to roll out across Greater Sydney, we are in a unique position. We have been able to gain knowledge from our learnings in the Hunter region and earlier years of experience as a trial site for the initial NDIS rollout.

The therapy team has continued to grow over the last 12 months, both in the Sydney and Hunter regions.

Working under the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) has been very exciting. We have been able to provide a wide variety of therapeutic supports, and built our teams to have the flexibility to respond to a wide range of situations.

In Sydney our diverse team now includes psychologists, rehabilitation counsellors, behaviour specialists, an occupational therapist and a speech therapist. They have enabled us to work with a wide range of people because we can supply each individual with tailored and coordinated support across several fronts.

As a result, we are able to provide services using different methods that involve more than one discipline, including:

TRANS-DISCIPLINARY

This is an effective method of providing early intervention support for children. In these situations there is an allocated key worker who engages with the child and their support network. The key worker also coordinates with other allied health professionals involved, by also supporting the child and their support network, with the learned strategies provided by additional allied health professionals.

MULTI-DISCIPLINARY

This method of service provision involves engaging a variety of allied health professionals from more than one discipline to work with a person. By using this approach, the person is not limited to engaging only one type of therapeutic support. Allied health providers are able to collaborate with the person and each other to provide holistic support.

INTER-DISCIPLINARY

This method of service provision is similar to the multi-disciplinary method, but involves increased contact between the person and their allied health professionals.

We are assisting other teams in the organisation, by providing vocational counsellors who can help people overcome barriers that prevent them from gaining employment.

“I’ve realised that keeping busy and returning to work is an important way for many people to improve their mental health.”



Natasha Drozdoff

Manager – Therapy Services
Sydney

Natasha is a Registered Psychologist with over eight years of experience working in vocational rehabilitation, disability employment services, transition to work, mental health, supported accommodation, intelligence assessments and delivery of Medicare services, in both corporate and not-for-profit organisations.

Natasha has worked in a variety of settings including face-to-face counselling, private consultation, practical support and case management, group facilitating and training.

She specialises in areas that include pain management, behaviour intervention support, vocational counselling and anxiety/depression counselling. Natasha is a certified trainer as well as a WorkCover accredited practitioner.



FEATURE STORY

MATTHEW*

Matthew, aged 24 was referred for vocational counselling by his Employment Advisor after reporting depressive symptoms and low motivation to continue seeking employment.

Matthew commenced counselling at the Ryde site. He was feeling disheartened and negative about the future in the face of multiple employment rejections over three months. Along with depression, Matthew also had a fear of rejection which was causing a significant increase in anxiety when attending job interviews.

He used his vocational counselling sessions to explore exactly how his negative thoughts were affecting his success in gaining employment and how these thoughts could be restructured to ensure that he didn't take the rejection he experienced personally.

Working with his Vocational Counsellor, Matthew learned to better manage his mood and personal outlook towards gaining employment. He continued to use the jobactive services and, using his new skills, eventually succeeded in obtaining a suitable role.

**Name changed for privacy.*

WORKING WITH OUR ACCOMMODATION TEAMS

We also work alongside other teams within the organisation. We provide positive behaviour support strategies and other therapeutic provisions to our Accommodation and Supported Living department. Our input has included facilitating interactive communication groups to improve communication skills between individuals and providing equipment assessments and reviews for those requiring mobility aids.

HUNTER THERAPY TEAM

The Hunter Therapy team have experienced a great deal of growth, particularly over the last few months. A diverse team of Allied Health professionals, including speech pathologists, physiotherapists and occupational therapists provide targeted support to those under the NDIS. These supports include trans-disciplinary early intervention, developing and providing Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC) aids and mobility supports.

The Hunter Therapy team also offer 'Key Sign' workshops that have proved to be very engaging and interactive. New 'Eye Gaze' technology has also been incorporated, increasing the ability to communicate with non-verbal participants.

NEW FEE-FOR-SERVICE OFFERING GAINS MOMENTUM

In response to requests from other professions and organisations, we established a fee-for-service offering. In June 2016, one organisation approached us with a request to provide up to 229 occupational therapy assessments. These assessments are aimed to help their participants get the correct level of NDIS support and identify needs that may not have been recognised. We were advised that these participants could require a high degree of psychosocial and mobility support. The assessments are designed to capture and address these support requirements.

APPROVAL FOR MEDICARE SERVICES

Many of our participants have difficulty paying for their health care needs. In order to address this, Medicare bulk billing options are available for a variety of practical and financial reasons. Following the granting of Medicare approval for our services this year, we are now establishing a system where we can provide bulk billed services to our participants.

TRAINING PACKAGES

We are currently providing four training packages for support workers, parents and carers:

- Motivational interviewing
- Understanding mental illness
- Awkward talk
- Sensory integration.

FEATURE STORY

AARON*

Aaron, aged 26, was referred to us after letting his Employment Advisor know he was experiencing severe anxiety and frequent panic attacks. During his first vocational counselling session, Aaron made it clear that, despite using medication to reduce his symptoms, he would prefer to manage his anxiety without medication.

Aaron used his sessions to motivate himself to formulate realistic goals. One goal was to achieve job readiness within three months. Once his goals were set, and with continued phone and email support, he showed a marked increase in motivation towards gaining paid employment, particularly after he was advised he would soon be required to participate in a Work for the Dole program.

By encouraging him to set goals and increase accountability, Aaron was able to pursue employment opportunities and ultimately secure work. Since finding employment in a supportive environment, Aaron has shown reduced levels of anxiety.

**Name changed for privacy.*

FEATURE STORIES

YASMIN*

Yasmin, aged 27, expressed concern her pre-diagnosed anxiety and depression would get worse because of her continued unemployment. Her Employment Advisor referred her to our team for vocational counselling. She had worked in the past and felt her condition was easier to manage when she was working.

Tailoring the sessions to her needs, Yasmin and her vocational counsellor explored techniques of motivational interviewing and goal setting as well as setting functional routines to enhance her job search. Over time her self confidence noticeably increased and she secured part-time employment in a field that she had not initially felt she would be able to return to. After starting her new job, Yasmin continued to receive phone support from her vocational counsellor, finally reporting that her role was going well and that she was able to increase her working days to five per week.

SAM*

Sam is a single father of a nine year old boy. He was referred to us after explaining to his Employment Advisor he felt his son had to take top priority and he was concerned he could not meet his son's needs while being gainfully employed. With the help of his vocational counsellor, Sam increased his flexibility in thinking about the future, eventually being able to reconcile work and his son's wellbeing, understanding his own employment could ultimately offer his son a better lifestyle.

Working alongside the Olympus Solutions team, Sam's vocational counsellor identified a potential job vacancy that sounded appropriate to Sam's needs. After consulting with Sam's Employment Advisor and the Employer Liaison Consultant, Sam was interviewed and received an offer for the position.

Soon after this, Sam had to source a new position due to complications beyond his control. Once again using the jobactive services, Sam found a new job. He recently reported he was 'loving life' and the new job was going well.

**Name changed for privacy.*

ENABLING TEAMS



not violent
not silent

In support of
Australia's campaign to
stop violence against women
White Ribbon

QUALITY ASSURANCE, RISK, COMPLIANCE & PERSON CENTRED PRACTICE

The Quality Assurance, Risk and Compliance department support the organisation to deliver services compliant with our legislative and contractual requirements. We maintain the following accreditation:

- National Standards for Disability Services Certification
- Office of the Children’s Guardian statutory Out-of-Home Care and voluntary Out-of-Home Care Certification
- Community Housing Registration and compliance with the ADHC Quality Framework through Third Party Verification.

In the last year we also achieved accreditation with ISO 9001 for our jobactive services, against the Attendant Care Industry Standards (ACIS:2013) and we have started working towards ISO/IEC 27001 – Information Security Management accreditation.

The department has grown in the last year with the inclusion of a specialist Employment Auditor and a Complaints and Compliance Coordinator. The department is responsible for conducting internal audits, preparation and coordination of external audits, management of complaints, compliments and grievances, managing the Quality Manual and supporting all other departments to implement and understand Person-Centred values through their practice.

RIGOROUS INTERNAL AUDITING

Internal audits are conducted in accordance with the internal audit schedule contained within our Internal Audit Charter. These audits are conducted against funding requirements and relevant service standards. Internal audits cover all aspects of service delivery models, governance and back office functions.

“Our risk management framework incorporates a set of systems and processes that, when integrated, provide a cycle of continuous improvement.”

RISK MANAGEMENT

Critical to our risk management framework is ‘Tickit’, our Incident and Risk Management system, accessible via the Intranet. We use ‘Tickit’ to manage, track and report on complaints, compliments, incidents and hazards across the organisation.



Annie Mills

Executive Leader – Quality Assurance, Risk and Compliance

Annie has worked with Ability Options for over 4 years, during which time she has worked in research, business development and quality. Prior to this Annie worked in the university sector on a range of research projects, with her primary area of interest being the health of women and children.

Annie is committed to working with employees across the organisation to support the delivery of quality service, meeting our compliance requirements and monitoring safety.

She is the Ability Options representative as Partner Investigator on an Australian Research Council grant ‘Ageing in Place’ with the University of Sydney and University of New England. She is also on the Steering Committee of Uni 2 Beyond, a program that supports people with intellectual disability to experience university life. This program is run through the Centre for Disability Studies at the University of Sydney.

COMPLAINTS AND COMPLIMENTS

Training in the management of complaints, developed in conjunction with the NSW Ombudsman, has been rolled out across the organisation.

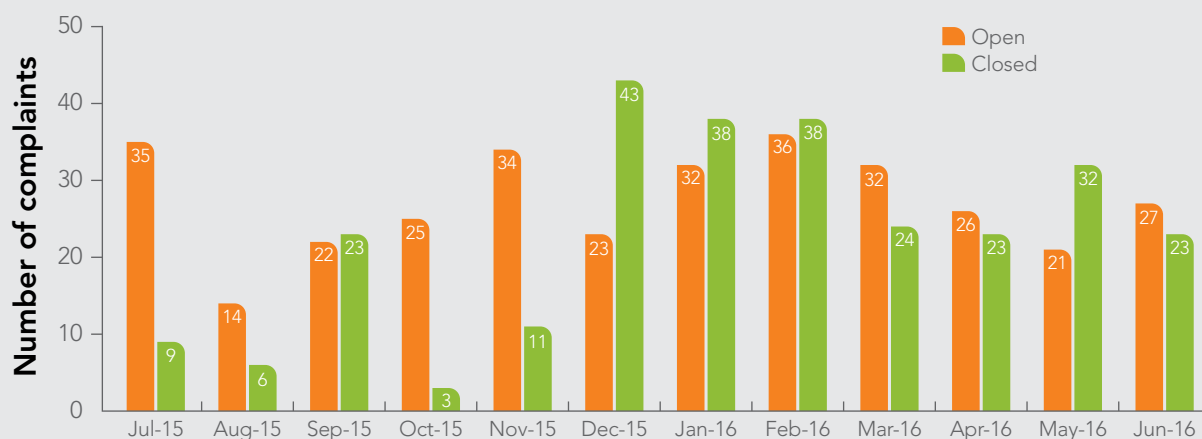
Complaints, compliments and grievances are reported through 'Tickit' and triaged by the Complaints and Compliance Coordinator, who tracks their progress and provides support as required to address identified issues.

We believe that identifying complaints provides opportunities for continuous improvement.

Prior to January 2016, complaints were recorded along with compliments. A new procedure and recording system in 'Tickit' has been set up enabling the reporting of all compliments and ensuring this feedback is provided to the relevant individual and department.

During the last year we received 103 compliments, with the highest numbers being recorded for the Hunter office, Employment and Accommodation Services.

Complaints opened and closed by month



PERSON-CENTRED PRACTICE

Ability Options are committed to creating a culture that focuses on respectful engagement, community inclusion and greater choice for people accessing our services. To this end, we have a Person-Centred Advisor working across the organisation to support all departments in their commitment to values-based practice and individualised customer service.

Opportunities are provided for training in person-centred thinking and approaches; as well as educational opportunities covering topics such as respectful language, team and individual planning and inclusive practice. In addition, a person-centred approach has been applied to National Disability Insurance Scheme pre-planning with Ability Options Accommodation and Supported Living participants.

Ability Options has been present in many person-centred forums and conferences throughout the year, showing a strong representation and demonstrated commitment.

SUPPORTING PEOPLE TO AGE IN PLACE

We are continuing our involvement as a partner organisation in an Australian Research Council Linkage grant 'Keeping my place in the community' in collaboration with the University of New England, the University of Sydney, Ascent Group, Endeavour Foundation and Uniting Care Ageing NSW/ACT. The aim of this project is to identify how best to support people with intellectual and developmental disabilities to age in place.

This is our second year of involvement with this project. Interim results will be presented at both national and international conferences later in 2016 and final reports are due June 2017.



PEOPLE & CULTURE

Over the past year the People and Culture department has facilitated an increase in employee numbers across the organisation as we have prepared for the introduction of the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS). This year we grew to 771 employees across Ability Options and Newcastle Temporary Care.

During the year, the payroll function moved from our department to Finance and Administration.

I-INDUCT ELECTRONIC INDUCTION PROGRAM

In September 2015 we launched a new electronic on-boarding system, called I-Induct. Managers can now put their request for induction of new or replacement employees through an online system which streamlines the induction process. The program enables Managers' requests for induction to be handled in a timely manner, with the time between a Manager's request and the availability of the induction program reduced to one day.

All new employees now undertake the I-Induct induction program. I-Induct has eleven modules; four for back office employees, seven for direct supporters and are greeted with a welcome video from our CEO.

Following feedback from Managers, the program has been adapted to more closely match their requirements and to reduce the time taken for employees to complete the induction.

All current employees will be rolled through the new induction process as time permits.

NEW RECRUITMENT STRATEGY USING ASSESSMENT CENTRES

We are now recruiting new employees via assessment centres. We invite a group of up to 12 candidates to a recruitment centre and run them through a standard testing process. The process takes half a day, that enables us to assess 24 potential candidates daily. We usually target sessions towards role types, but we often find people targeted for one type of position are more suitable for a different role.

“We're finding the I-Induct program to be a more efficient and streamlined way to on-board and commence induction of employees.”



Karen Dhu

Executive Leader – People and Culture

Karen has been with Ability Options for more than 20 years. During that time she has held both operational and administrative positions.

In her current role, Karen partners with members of the Senior Leadership Team providing advice and support on strategic and operational Human Resource matters.

Ability Options is dependent upon the quality, reputation and productivity of its staff. The People and Culture team is responsible for providing assistance and guidance to attract, retain and build a high performing workforce providing quality services across the organisation.



A frame from the I-Induct Induction Program

FEATURE STORIES

JASON EVANS

Area Manager jobactive

Jason is a fantastic example of Ability Options culture of internal development and professional growth, particularly in our Employment team. Jason commenced in September 2015 as the Concierge at Gosford. Jason came to us with an extensive background and skill set in employment services and was quickly promoted to operational support in November 2015. In this role he was able to prove his ability for driving high performance and supporting and coaching employees. Due to another internal promotion in May 2016, an Area Manager role within the jobactive team became vacant. Jason was one of the internal applicants for this role, and in his interview, he demonstrated a strong understanding of the jobactive contract, his people management skills and his passion for the industry. Jason's application was successful and he moved into this role in June 2016. In the space of three months, he has worked with People and Culture to bring his team's staffing to 100%, has made two internal promotions to Concierge and four of the five sites he manages have scored five stars in the June 2016 star ratings period.

HELEN COOK

Support Worker Community Access

Helen Cook originally engaged with Ability Options through one of our NDIS Pre-Planning Cafés. Helen's son is currently in Year 11, and as he has Autism, she is researching his options for support when he leaves school. His principal recommended that Helen attend

one of our pre-planning sessions to see what Ability Options could do for Ben. On the day, Helen connected with Pille Puvendi (Community Access Coordinator) who recognised her fantastic people skills and passion for supporting people with a disability. Pille recommended Helen apply for a role in our Community Access team and she has now been a member of the Community and Lifestyles team since May this year. Among her many successes, Helen has used her love of cooking to develop the "Kitchen Capers" program. She works with three participants on a weekly basis, teaching them how to cook and plan for healthy eating. She started by introducing recipes she is familiar with and is encouraging the participants to help her plan future lessons by suggesting foods they all enjoy.

LUKE STEPHEN

Concierge for Brookvale, recently appointed Case Coordinator – Individualised Funding.

Luke joined us in September 2015 as a Concierge for our Brookvale site. Prior to joining Ability Options, Luke worked as a Disability Service Coordinator for Family Resource and Network Support. Luke managed both 1:1 direct support and weekend social groups.

At the interview, Luke showed a great passion for working for a not-for-profit organisation and in particular working within the disability sector. As he also displayed great initiative and enthusiasm for his work, we felt he would make a great Concierge for our newly opened Brookvale Employment office.

Luke achieved great success at the

Brookvale site as we achieved a five star rating, which was well above some of our nearest competitors.

“The Brookvale site was in its infancy when I started the role. Our strategy to achieve a five star rating was to find our job seekers sustainable employment or education by reverse marketing organisations based on their wants and interests as well as previous work experience and education. The Energise model worked.”

In April 2016, an opportunity as a Case Coordinator opened within our individualised funding services team. During a conversation with our Manager, Customer Engagement at a NDIS Pre-Planning Café, Luke mentioned that he was still very interested in going back into disability services. With this in mind, we discussed the opportunity with Luke and soon realised he was the candidate we were looking for. He had great passion, enthusiasm, energy as well as the personal experience of the NDIS that allowed him to connect with families and understand their needs.

“My next stage with Ability Options as Case Coordinator is a great opportunity, I'm learning the role and finding my feet but the team, and the challenges of the role are brilliant. I look forward to being the face of Ability Options on the Northern Beaches and North Shore and promoting our NDIS services.”

RECONCILIATION ACTION PLAN

Ability Options has been partnering with Pindarri since June 2015. Bradlee Commins from Pindarri is working directly with Ability Options to increase the engagement, employment and retention of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, while ensuring that we have a holistic understanding of cultural protocols.

Ability Options has committed to breaking down cultural barriers and improving all aspects of the business through a Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP).

Over the past year, employment placements and retentions have increased considerably. This was evident in the Vocational Training and Employment Centres (VTEC) contract extension and the newly realised star ratings across jobactive.

Over 80% of Ability Options employees have participated and completed the Pindarri Cultural Awareness sessions. As a result, employees are personally more at ease and have a better understanding of building meaningful relationships with participants from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander backgrounds.

After a year of induction, training and ongoing cultural awareness roll out, Ability Options are in the final endorsement phase regarding their Reconciliation Action Plan and are very close to getting the official Reconciliation Australia endorsement. The organisation has shown extraordinary commitment in leading the way by completing a Stretch RAP. There are four levels of RAPs, and they all have very distinct targets.

– A Reflect RAP is for organisations just starting out on their reconciliation journey who need to build the foundations for relationships, respect and opportunities

- An Innovate RAP is for organisations that have developed relationships with their Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders and are ready to develop or implement programs for cultural learning, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employment and supplier diversity
- A Stretch RAP is for organisations ready to challenge themselves by setting targets for the actions outlined in their RAP. A Stretch RAP gives an organisation the opportunity to focus on tried and tested strategies and programs and set clear, measurable targets
- An Elevate RAP is for organisations with a long, successful history in the RAP Program; a current Stretch RAP and a willingness to significantly invest in reconciliation. Elevate RAP organisations are among an elite group of leaders driving reconciliation in their sector.

In partnership with Pindarri, Ability Options has also funded a Leadership and Management program targeting elite Aboriginal athletes and up-skilling them with a Diploma in Leadership and Management. This opportunity provided by Ability Options opens pathways for these young people to branch out and become leaders while in the spotlight and to promote the importance of living a better more meaningful lifestyle. This program was completed in August 2016 and had a 100% completion rate.

“Ability Options have revised and made changes to policies such as recruitment, diversity and inclusion. Reviews will continue across all internal policies to be completed in 2017.”

— Bradlee Commins, Pindarri.

‘Pindarri’ – meaning coming together.



WHITE RIBBON WORKPLACE ACCREDITATION

Following a recommendation from the Board Directors, Ability Options are currently seeking accreditation under the White Ribbon Workplace Accreditation program.

Intimate partner violence is the most common type of violence against women, affecting 30% of women worldwide. White Ribbon Australia believes all forms of violence are unacceptable and acknowledges that both men and women experience violence.

Addressing any issues of intimate partner violence in the workplace is important as violence can have a serious impact on an individual's health, safety, productivity and their capacity to do their work.

“Working towards accreditation will enable us to improve our ability to respond to incidents of violence against our employees or people accessing our services inside or outside of the workplace.”

1

RECOGNITION

The first Step '**Recognition**' has been achieved. This involved employees completing an online survey on their knowledge of intimate partner violence and how to respond to and support a colleague who may be experiencing violence at home. We sought a 30% response rate, and exceeded this with 45% (299) of Ability Options employees responding.

In addition to the initial awareness raised through the survey, a group of Ability Options employees joined with employees from Blacktown City Council to walk in the Blacktown Festival Parade under the banner of 'Joining communities to walk together against violence and towards peace in the home'.



2

ACCREDITATION

We have now commenced Step Two: '**Accreditation**' which is being led by a Project Team of volunteers with representation from across the organisation and the Board.

We will continue to engage with employees and the community to change the attitudes and behaviours that allow domestic violence to occur. This includes providing training to help us understand more about domestic violence and participating in White Ribbon awareness and fundraising activities, such as the Big Night In (29th July) and White Ribbon Day (25th November).



MARKETING & COMMUNICATIONS

This year the Marketing and Communications department has provided support for a wide range of services across the organisation to enhance and strengthen the Ability Options brand and build broader awareness of the organisation's complete service offering. Since starting in late February 2016 as Executive Leader for Marketing and Communications, my focus has very much been on restructuring and realigning the functions within the team to drive better efficiencies and overall performance.

DIGITAL, SOCIAL AND ONLINE MARKETING

We successfully secured an increase to the maximum level of a not-for-profit Google AdWords grant, after achieving specific metrics for three consecutive months. This was a great achievement and a timely outcome that allowed us to increase to our daily spend, which aligned well with the rollout-out of the new NDIS regions across NSW on 1st July. The grant has helped to drive more traffic to the website tripling the number of unique visitors this year. We also managed to capture several thousands of leads and enquiries for specific services like the NDIS, Transition to Work, jobactive and Disability Employment Services (DES).

We expanded and strengthened our online presence with further enhancements to www.abilityoptions.org.au with a refreshed look and feel, which also included the addition of various new customer videos, improved web enquiry forms, new functionality and a better customer experience. Further developments are underway this year to further enhance the site and customer experience, giving visitors the relevant information that meets their individual needs.

We achieved great results through our social media channels reaching a milestone number of 'Likes' on Facebook and engaging more followers on Twitter. This has been achieved by developing more relevant and engaging content and sharing the life changing stories of many of our participants and families. We are looking to enhance our presence further next year on other social channels such as LinkedIn and Instagram.

INTEGRATED MARKETING CAMPAIGNS

Employment

The marketing team played a positioning role in the design, branding and opening of seven new site offices across Sydney and the Central Coast after securing the jobactive contract in March 2015. We also assisted in the design, opening and fitout of the new Blacktown site for DES, relocated the Campbelltown site to a new central hub and refurbished several of our exciting sites with new vibrant branding, graphics, signage, and marketing materials.

The team developed and implemented a range of creative marketing campaigns for employment, which targeted employers across a range of core industries to ensure leads and jobs were secured and readily available for jobseekers in both the jobactive and DES programs. We developed a series of client and jobseeker promotional case studies and videos, which have also featured in the marketing campaigns and on our website.



Tara Miller

Executive Leader Marketing and Communications

Tara is a seasoned professional with over 25 years' experience who has developed a high level of expertise and captured the essence of innovation in a fast paced and competitive environment.

With strong interpersonal and leadership skills and commitment to excellence Tara has achieved great results working at a senior level for large global organisations such as Bupa, Hollister, Care UK and Red Cross. Tara has also owned and operated a successful marketing and communications consultancy.

Tara holds multiple qualifications in Marketing, Public Relations and Events Management and specialises in developing strategic marketing and communications plans that deliver ROI.

Tara enjoys developing and managing high performing teams and is dedicated to the role that marketing and communications plays in the growth of an organisation.

NDIS

From the Hunter and Nepean-Blue Mountains under 18's trial regions, we are now also supporting participants on the Central Coast, Northern Sydney, South Western Sydney, Western Sydney and Southern NSW. We actively commenced marketing in these five new regions early in 2016 with the launch of our NDIS Pre-Planning Cafés. This has been an important and successful strategy leading up to the 1st of July NDIS launch.

The purpose of the Cafés was to ensure that both new and existing participants understand their NDIS options, ensure they are fully prepared to transition, and have a defined plan detailing the supports they need to live their life their way when the NDIS goes live in their region. The feedback we received from the Café series was overwhelmingly positive achieving a high satisfaction rating of over 97% from people attending.



As part of the campaign we also engaged and worked closely with Hope 103.2 FM to promote the upcoming Cafés in Sydney, which involved an interview for Sonia Pereira, NDIS Customer Engagement Manager for Sydney who talked live on air about the challenges families are facing and what options are available under the new scheme.

In the Hunter region where we now have an established base of over 700 participants, we rolled-out a regional marketing campaign that had three phases. These included radio and television advertising, online display ads and Google TV. These campaigns were integral in developing a pipeline of further leads across the region and increasing our brand awareness.

Newcastle Temporary Care

Following the integration of Newcastle Temporary Care (NTC) in 2015 the team developed fresh new marketing materials with vibrant new photography and set-up a new co-branding architecture for NTC as a new member of the Ability Options community of organisations.

Other Integration Partners

We have recently announced the integration with Nambucca disAbility Services Inc. (NVdS) and are working with them to develop new marketing materials within our new co-branding architecture.



Family & Community Services

acs.nsw.gov.au

Family
Community
Service

Ability

SUPPORTING PEOPLE
WITH DISABILITIES
FOR OVER 40 YEARS

454

s.org.au

Insurance
Provider

PR, EVENTS AND SPONSORSHIP

Manly Warringah Sea Eagles

In February we announced our community partnership with Manly Warringah Sea Eagles NRL team for the 2016 season. This partnership provided opportunities to network with other corporate sponsors and partners and has offered valuable opportunities for player appearances to help Ability Options build awareness of our brand in Northern Sydney and beyond.

Our first Match Day was held in early March at Brookvale Oval and was a great success in helping us to build awareness of our services, build relationships and provide entertainment for many of our participants. The highlight of the evening was being given the opportunity to form a guard of honour for the players as they ran out onto the field which was televised live on Foxtel.

We also held a Community Day at the Manly Sea Eagle's training ground in Narrabeen, where a group of our participants had the opportunity to meet the first grade players, participate in some NRL drills with the squad team and have lunch with them, before watching the team train with lead coach Trent Barrett.



NDIS Countdown

On 22nd March, the Hon John Ajaka, Minister for Disability Services visited Ability Options to mark the 100-day countdown to the NDIS rollout across NSW. He met several people who we support, including participants Wayne and Grant, as well as Julie, an NDIS participant from the Hunter region.

The Minister spoke of the exciting transition to the NDIS, and the substantial role Ability Options has played in supporting people with disability and advocating for disability service reform in NSW.



Partnerships

Open Minds Australia and Ability Options formed a collaboration to bring disability, mental health and employment support services to the Townsville, Charters Towers and Palm Island regions of North Queensland. To celebrate the collaboration, we held an official opening at their new office. The Hon Coralee O'Rourke MP, Member for Mundingburra, Minister for Disability Services, Minister for Seniors and Minister Assisting the Premier on North Queensland was our special guest to officially open the new site.

The Summer Foundation seeks to provide concrete alternatives for young people living in residential aged care facilities. It is focused on people with significant support needs including access to 24-hour support as needed.

Ability Options has been selected as the support provider for the initial two-year establishment and implementation phase of the Summer Foundation Housing and Support Demonstration Project in the NSW Hunter NDIS trial site. The Marketing and Communications department has assisted with publicising the project where 10 participants living with disability will reside in the purpose built apartments.

White Ribbon

White Ribbon is the world's largest movement of men and boys working to end men's violence against women and girls, promote gender equality, healthy relationships and a new vision of masculinity. Ability Options has recently committed to achieving White Ribbon Workplace Accreditation. The team is helping to publicise the initiative internally and has helped to facilitate various events.

THE FOCUS FOR 2017

In this ever changing and competitive environment specialised marketing skills will be needed to address our growing needs and to maximise our performance. To market effectively to our diverse audiences we are planning to strengthen the team's abilities in specialised areas such as:

- Digital and social media management
- Communications
- Events
- Public Relations
- Fundraising

THE FUTURE: ENHANCING THE ABILITY OPTIONS BRAND

As well as strategically enhancing our skill set, the departments focus in the immediate future will be on building brand awareness through a more proactive and strategic approach.

We are in the process of refining our masterbrand architecture and guidelines, including the development of the 'Front Up' brand and other integrations. We are also in the process of developing consistent key messaging for our brand and for the different departments and services.

A new style guide titled, 'How we Talk' has been developed and is being rolled-out across the organisation.

"Our marketing offering needs to be able to adapt quickly to an every changing environment and government decisions while working within budgets and resource allocations."

We must be sufficiently agile to address issues associated with the NDIS roll-out as they arise."

— Tara Miller

FINANCE, INFORMATION COMMUNICATIONS TECHNOLOGY & ASSET MANAGEMENT

At Ability Options financial stewardship, information communications technology (ICT) and asset management services are provided by the Shared Services department.

Shared Services adopts a key principle of partnering with each department to ensure we provide relevant, timely and accurate information to enable the organisation to grow and prosper.

FINANCE

The Finance team maintains and manages all accounting and finance activity for the Ability Options community. This includes transactional accounting support, management, statutory and regulatory reporting, payroll, cash and treasury management as well as financial analysis.

During 2015–16, planning and work has commenced to ensure that we are prepared for the full rollout of the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS). In particular, the Finance Team has scrutinised and enhanced our accounting policies, processes and procedures. A new integrated accounting system, Microsoft Navision has been chosen to replace the existing financial system, integrating current disparate systems and introducing enhanced reporting functionality.

INFORMATION COMMUNICATIONS TECHNOLOGY

The strategy for 2016–2019 was endorsed by the Board in the second half of the financial year and articulates a clear strategy to:

- Deliver clients sustainable, high quality service excellence and care
- Help employees become productive and empowered, with continuously improved information access
- Integrate application architecture

- Achieve a scalable systems' environment
- Develop efficient and effective systems
- Provide a secure, reliable and cost-effective ICT base.

The ICT strategy defines our future systems architecture and sets out a program of works to enable the organisation to transform.

Various systems will be replaced or undertake transformational upgrades. Our aim is to achieve the most efficient and effective integrated systems, enabling the organisation to access up-to-date, reliable and relevant real time information.

During 2015–2016, work commenced to gain accreditation under the Information Security Registered Assessors Program (IRAP), as required under the Australian Government policies and guidelines for the jobactive contract. Ability Options and Olympus Solutions have commenced work to ensure the IRAP requirements can be met and compliance achieved.

ASSET MANAGEMENT

The Asset Management Team proactively manages all Ability Options property assets whether owned or leased. This involves regular maintenance assessments, supporting business operations and responding to unplanned incidents.

We pride ourselves on providing people with disability and their families with flexible accommodation and support solutions, especially as we fully transition to the NDIS. We are continuing to consolidate and grow our accommodation portfolio to meet the needs of current and future participants.



Nick Johnson

Chartered Accountant (CA), Chartered Secretary of Australia (CSA)
Chief Financial Officer

Nick joined Ability Options in February 2016, having previously spent over 25 years in various senior finance, shared services and transformational roles, across multiple industries. He has extensive experience in strategic planning, leadership, mergers and acquisitions, finance transformation and corporate governance.

Nick's previous roles include CFO and Company Secretary for an insurance services provider, Cemo Limited, Financial Controller for Credit Suisse in Australia and Tokyo, Executive General Manager Shared Services for Boral Limited, and Senior Director Asia Pacific Shared Services for Oracle Limited.

Nick has worked and lived in the UK, South Africa, Japan and Australia.

DIRECTORS' REPORT

ABILITY OPTIONS LIMITED AND ITS CONTROLLED ENTITIES 30 JUNE 2016 ANNUAL FINANCIAL REPORT

The Directors present their report together with the consolidated financial statements of the Group comprising Ability Options Limited (the Company) and its wholly owned subsidiaries (Newcastle Temporary Care Limited, Olympus Solutions Limited and Nambucca Valley disAbility Services Inc.) for the financial year ended 30 June 2016 and the auditor's report thereon.

The Group reported a net deficit of \$4,949,664 (2015: \$1,014,832 surplus) in the current financial year. During the year, the management undertook a number of key strategic initiatives consistent with the Group's Strategic Plan for 2015 - 2020. The financial performance of the Group was adversely impacted by certain events during the year that were outside the control of the Board and management. These material and significant events, as explained below, resulted in a reported net deficit of \$4,949,664 for the year:

- Deficit of \$3.80 million in Employment Services – Ability Options Limited, through its subsidiary, Olympus Solutions Limited, successfully tendered for jobactive which replaces Job Service Australia (JSA) effective 1 July 2015. During its first year of operations in delivering the jobactive contract, the department incurred initial operating losses largely driven by set up and operating costs in anticipation of larger volumes of job seekers (which did not materialise). The 33% lower job seeker volumes were attributed to adverse market conditions impacting participant referrals and a stronger compliance and competitive regime as Ability Options Limited successfully positioned itself in the market completing its first year of service delivery obligations under the jobactive contract.
- Deficit of \$1.40 million in NDIS (Hunter) – NDIS services offered in trial region, Hunter, reported a net deficit of \$1.40 million during the year. The deficit was largely attributed to a slower rollout of NDIS clients within the trial region resulting in higher costs incurred for a period of time while lower income was earned. The majority of these costs related to organisational infrastructure, communication and technology, staff resourcing and a site lease undertaken to ensure market readiness.
- Deficit of \$1.20 million in Wholesale Nursery – The Nursery reported a net deficit of \$1.20 million during the year. The deficit was a result of a significant reduction in customer orders, as one of the major suppliers, Masters, announced the slowdown of the roll out of its eastern seaboard stores. Sales to Masters accounted for a significant portion of annual turnover within the Nursery. In response to this, the Board accepted management's recommendation to close the sites in Queensland and maintain the operations of the original and founding site in New South Wales.
- Gain on integration \$1.70 million – A gain on acquisition of \$1.70 million was recognised in relation to integration of Nambucca Valley disAbility Services Inc. with Ability Options Limited.

During the year, the management took remedial actions and carefully aligned its cost base across all services to adjust for the shortfall in revenue while creating flexibility in its workforce that is now better structured to respond to upcoming challenges.

CONSOLIDATED STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION
ABILITY OPTIONS LIMITED AND ITS CONTROLLED ENTITIES
30 JUNE 2016 ANNUAL FINANCIAL REPORT

	NOTE	2016	2015
		\$	Restated*
		\$	\$
Current Assets			
Cash and cash equivalents	13	1,184,286	766,360
Trade and other receivables	6	347,130	348,227
Inventories	1 (O)	489,411	568,440
Prepayments and other assets	9	1,222,617	2,699,900
Financial assets	7	11,788,768	18,465,431
Total current assets		15,032,212	22,848,358
Non-Current Assets			
Property plant & equipment	8	14,559,901	11,469,069
Total non-current assets		14,559,901	11,469,069
Total Assets		29,592,113	34,317,427
Current Liabilities			
Trade and other payables	10	7,015,162	7,190,979
Provisions	11	1,515,989	1,293,239
Total current liabilities		8,531,151	8,484,218
Non-Current Liabilities			
Provisions	11	343,933	294,032
Total non-current liabilities		343,933	294,032
Total Liabilities		8,875,084	8,778,250
Net Assets		20,717,029	25,539,177
Accumulated surplus	15	17,299,427	22,249,091
Reserves	16	3,417,602	3,290,086
Total Accumulated Funds		20,717,029	25,539,177

*Refer to Note 3.

CONSOLIDATED STATEMENT OF PROFIT OR LOSS AND OTHER COMPREHENSIVE INCOME

ABILITY OPTIONS LIMITED AND ITS CONTROLLED ENTITIES 30 JUNE 2016 ANNUAL FINANCIAL REPORT

	<u>NOTE</u>	<u>2016</u>	<u>2015</u>
		\$	<i>Restated*</i> \$
Revenue from ordinary activities	2	42,568,391	31,218,225
Change in inventories held		(79,029)	260,264
Raw materials and consumables		(1,907,424)	(1,209,793)
Employee benefit expenses		(31,889,017)	(21,026,891)
Depreciation expenses	8	(1,719,983)	(964,624)
Client expenses		(2,659,572)	(1,548,617)
Communication expenses		(2,354,097)	(1,568,809)
Contracting and consulting		(2,393,431)	(1,117,271)
Occupancy and accommodation expenses		(2,073,954)	(1,050,976)
Gain on acquisition	21	1,727,602	1,410,136
Other expenses		(4,169,150)	(3,386,812)
Net (deficit) / surplus from ordinary activities	15	(4,949,664)	1,014,832
Other comprehensive income			
Net gain on revaluation of property, plant and equipment	16	127,516	-
Total other comprehensive income		127,516	-
Total comprehensive (loss) / income		(4,822,148)	1,014,832

*Refer to Note 3.

CONSOLIDATED STATEMENT OF CASH FLOWS
ABILITY OPTIONS LIMITED AND ITS CONTROLLED ENTITIES
30 JUNE 2016 ANNUAL FINANCIAL REPORT

	NOTE	2016 \$	2015 \$
Cash Flows from Operating Activities			
Receipts from operations		41,668,294	29,421,767
Payments to suppliers & employees		(47,545,188)	(31,069,946)
Interest income		430,618	689,352
Net cash used in operating activities	13	(5,446,276)	(958,827)
Cash Flows from Investing Activities			
Payments for property plant and equipment		(2,726,605)	(588,002)
Proceeds from the sale of assets		1,285,289	1,925,125
Proceeds from investments	21	628,855	-
Net cash (used in) / provided by investing activities		(812,461)	1,337,123
Net (decrease) / increase in cash held		(6,258,737)	378,296
Cash at beginning of the financial year		19,231,791	18,853,495
Cash at end of the financial year	13	12,973,054	19,231,791

DIRECTORS' DECLARATION

ABILITY OPTIONS LIMITED AND ITS CONTROLLED ENTITIES 30 JUNE 2016 ANNUAL FINANCIAL REPORT

The Directors of Ability Options Limited ('the Company') declare that:

1. The consolidated financial statements and notes, as set out in the following pages are in accordance with the *Australian Charities and Not-for-Profits Commission Act 2012*, including:
 - (a) complying with Australian Accounting Standards and the *Australian Charities and Not-for-Profits Commission Regulation 2013* ; and
 - (b) giving a true and fair view of the Group's financial position as at 30 June 2016 and of its performance, for the year ended on that date.
2. In the Directors' opinion there are reasonable grounds to believe that the Group will be able to pay its debts as and when they become due and payable.

This declaration is made in accordance with the resolution of the Board of Directors.

SIGNED and DATED at Bella Vista on 11 October 2016



Jonathan Isaacs – Chair and Director



Richard Mossie – Director



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AUDITOR'S INDEPENDENCE DECLARATION

As lead auditor for the audit of the consolidated financial report of Ability Options Limited for the year ended 30 June 2016, I declare that, to the best of my knowledge and belief, there have been no contraventions of the auditor independence requirements of the Australian professional accounting bodies.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads 'Rsm'.

RSM AUSTRALIA

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads 'C J Hume'.

C J HUME
Director

Sydney, New South Wales
Dated: 11 October 2016



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INDEPENDENT AUDITOR'S REPORT
TO THE MEMBERS OF
ABILITY OPTIONS LIMITED

We have audited the accompanying financial report of Ability Options Limited ("the registered entity"), which comprises the consolidated statement of financial position as at 30 June 2016, the consolidated statement of comprehensive income, consolidated statement of changes in equity and consolidated statement of cash flows for the year then ended, notes comprising a summary of significant accounting policies and other explanatory information and the directors' declaration.

Directors' Responsibility for the Financial Report

The directors of the registered entity are responsible for the preparation of the financial report that gives a true and fair view in accordance with Australian Accounting Standards and the *Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commissions Act 2012* (ACNC Act) and for such internal control as the directors determine is necessary to enable the preparation of the financial report that gives a true and fair view and is free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

Auditor's Responsibility

Our responsibility is to express an opinion on the financial report based on our audit. We conducted our audit in accordance with Australian Auditing Standards. Those standards require that we comply with relevant ethical requirements relating to audit engagements and plan and perform the audit to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial report is free from material misstatement.

An audit involves performing procedures to obtain audit evidence about the amounts and disclosures in the financial report. The procedures selected depend on the auditor's judgement, including the assessment of the risks of material misstatement of the financial report, whether due to fraud or error. In making those risk assessments, the auditor considers internal control relevant to the entity's preparation of the financial report that gives a true and fair view in order to design audit procedures that are appropriate in the circumstances, but not for the purpose of expressing an opinion on the effectiveness of the registered entity's internal control. An audit also includes evaluating the appropriateness of accounting policies used and the reasonableness of accounting estimates made by the directors, as well as evaluating the overall presentation of the financial report.

We believe that the audit evidence we have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our audit opinion.



Opinion

In our opinion the financial report of Ability Options Limited has been prepared in accordance with Division 60 of the *Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission Act 2012*, including:

- (i) giving a true and fair view of the registered entity's financial position as at 30 June 2016 and of its financial performance and cash flows for the year ended on that date; and
- (ii) complying with Australian Accounting Standards and Division 60 of the *Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission Regulation 2013*.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads 'Rsm'.

RSM AUSTRALIA

A handwritten signature in blue ink that appears to read 'C J Hume'.

C J HUME
Director

Sydney, New South Wales
Dated: 12 October 2016



HEAD OFFICE

Suite 1.14, 29-31 Lexington Drive
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Phone: 1300 422 454

EMPLOYMENT SERVICES

Bateau Bay

Shop 11, Cresthaven Shopping Centre
161-173 Cresthaven Ave
Bateau Bay NSW 2261

Baulkham Hills

14/35 Old Northern Road
Baulkham Hills NSW 2153

Blacktown

Suite 2/40 Third Avenue
Blacktown NSW 2148

Bowral

Suite 114, Gallery Level
Springetts Arcade
37 Wingecarribee Street
Bowral NSW 2576

Brookvale

Suite 102, Level 1, 696 Pittwater Rd
Brookvale NSW 2100

Camden

Shop 19, Camden Village Court
Camden NSW 2570

Campbelltown

37 Queen Street
Campbelltown NSW 2560

Chatswood

Suite 1A, Level 5, 2 Help Street
Chatswood NSW 2057

Gosford

Shop 1-2, 91-99 Mann Street
Gosford NSW 2250

Goulburn

16 Glebe Avenue
Goulburn NSW 2580

Hornsby

Suite 5, Level 3 20 George Street
Hornsby NSW 2077

Katoomba

29 Parke Street
Katoomba NSW 2780

Maitland

First Floor, 5 Ken Tubman Drive
Maitland NSW 232

Merrylands

Shop 2, 175 Pitt Street
Merrylands NSW 2160

Mount Drutt

Shop 11c, Zoe Place
Mt Drutt NSW 2770

Parramatta

Ground Floor, 15 - 17 Argyle Street
Parramatta NSW 2150

Penrith

3/30 Woodriff Street
Penrith NSW 2750

Quakers Hill

Quakers Hill Neighbourhood Centre
128 Farnham Rd
Quakers Hill NSW 2763

Riverstone

Riverstone Neighbourhood Centre
Sam Lane Community Complex
Park Street, Riverstone NSW 2765

Ryde

Suite 102-103, Level 1,
5-9 Devlin St, Ryde NSW 2112

Seven Hills

7-11 Rowley Street
Seven Hills NSW 2147

The Entrance

231-233 The Entrance Rd
The Entrance NSW 2261

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Shop 9, 188 - 192 George Street
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Wyang

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CONNECTING HEALTH

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WHOLESALE NURSERY – NSW

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