

# 2017 ANNUAL REPORT

One Trusted Source – Many Options

# ABOUT US

Ability Options has been making a difference in people's lives since the organisation was founded in 1976 as a union between Rotary Club of Guildford and the NSW Health Commission – enabling people with intellectual disability to move from large institutions into their own home.

Today we support people through in home and every day activities, in the community, with work experience, employment and specialist allied health. Our services support people with disabilities and those whose lives are changed as a result of accidents and unemployment.

We pride ourselves on delivering life-changing solutions that really work for the individual. This includes personalised support for people to achieve both short and long term goals to further enhance their life, supporting new experiences, fostering opportunities for community connections and greater independence.

Ability Options is a strong and vibrant organisation with over 950 people working with us across all of our departments. Our Head Office is based in Bella Vista in Sydney and we have 24 sites across North and Western Sydney and the Central Coast, as well sites in the Hunter Region, and community partners on the Mid North Coast, and Northern Beaches of Sydney.



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.





# CONTENTS

## **ABOUT US**

- 2 History
- 3 Chair's Report
- 4 Chief Executive Officer's Report
- 6 Patron's Message
- 8 2016–17 Highlights

## **STRATEGIC**

- 10 Strategic Priorities
- 13 The Ability Options Customer Experience (CX)  
Transformation Journey
- 16 Board of Directors
- 18 Our Structure
- 19 Committees
- 21 Government and Other Funding

## **SERVICES**

- 23 Services Snapshot
- 24 Support for all Ages / Journey of Inclusion
- 26 Ability Options 40th Anniversary
- 28 Ability Options Diversity Profile
- 31 Stretch Reconciliation Plan
- 32 Community & Lifestyles
- 36 Accommodation & Supported Independent Living
- 40 Community Integrations
- 44 Employment
- 48 Front Up

## **50 FINANCIALS**

# HISTORY

**Number of Employees:** 680 (Ability Options only)

**Services provided:** Accommodation and Supported Living, Clinical Services, Community Access, Employment – jobactive and Disability Employment Services (DES). NDIS services including Early Intervention and Therapies, Out of School Hours Care for Teenagers with Disability and School Leavers Employment Services (SLES). Over 1100 NDIS participants were supported by Ability Options and our integrated partners by end FYI 2016/17

**Geographical footprint:** NSW wide

**People supported:** 15,300+

**Growth in annual turnover to:** \$51,618,299

2010 – 2017

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

In our 41st year of operation, Ability Options has continued to face the rewards and challenges brought about by the biggest public policy change in recent history.

The NDIS represents a massive opportunity for people with disability to receive more tailored and person-centred support, which is something the Ability Options Board and I fully support.

However, a change as great as this presents major challenges for everyone involved. People with disability are busy trying to understand what the new system means for them, and how they can access it. While service providers are restructuring, reviewing and updating processes, and developing new ways of operating in the new free market.

The good news is Ability Options is responding and we are responding in a considered way. We are setting up the building blocks and expanding our business so that when the NDIS is fully operational we are ready and able to continue our proud tradition of supporting people with disability to live their lives.

The immediate result of all this work however, is our reported deficit for this financial year. The fact is, moving from block funding to individuals receiving funding is costing us a lot of money. This is a challenge faced by every disability service provider and we are working incredibly hard on a sustainable business model that will put us well ahead of others in the sector, by 2019.

Behind much of this planning and decision making sits our Board, who devote their time on a voluntary basis, sharing their expertise and knowledge so we can take Ability Options into the future.

Our Board has been refreshed this year with three new members, all with previous Board experience. Heather Scheibenstock, Patricia Biszewski and Sue Healy bring experience from the

gaming and hospitality, transport and logistics and recruitment sectors; and are now applying their knowledge to the disability sector.

We have a fantastic mix of knowledge from the government, not for profit and private sectors on the Board, which enables us to plan and approach challenges in innovative ways.

I'd like to extend my thanks to all those on our Board, including our CEO Fred JP Van Steel and his Senior Leadership Team, for their commitment and continued work. As well as to our Senior Leadership Team and employees in supporting units, whose dedication on a day to day basis makes Ability Options such a valuable and impressive organisation to be part of.

In response to the new NDIS environment we have been investing heavily in our Employment and Accommodation services. These service areas have shown great results this year, both for the people we support and our growth as a business.

My thanks to the Board of our wholly owned employment subsidiary Olympus Solutions, and its Chair Dr. Robert Lang for their continued hard work.

With all this focus on the future, it was a pleasure to reflect on our past this year too, when we celebrated our 40th Anniversary as an organisation. The NSW Governor, General David Hurley and his wife, Mrs Hurley joined us on the day.

It was also wonderful to see the family of our founder, Greg McIntyre so deeply involved. As an organisation we have held strongly to Greg's vision and values and this was an opportunity for his widow and extended family to see how Greg's legacy continues today.

All in all, this year has been about celebrating our past and preparing for our future. The hard work and financial challenges are simply part of the process that will secure our place in the sector for many years to come.



**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

This year, Ability Options proudly celebrated its 40-year anniversary. That's 40 years of supporting people with disability to achieve their goals, contribute and be included in the community. This is a milestone I'm very proud of.

On the day of our anniversary celebrations, a young lady by the name of Emily Dash, presented a poem she wrote called 'The Changemakers'. The poem was written as part of our new and very successful arts program, Front Up.

In her poem Emily wrote:

*"As a new world begins to take shape, we will not hesitate.*

*We will always keep our standards high, never compromise,*

*If we are challenged, we will rise to the occasion.*

*We will grow from our most stable foundations.*

*We will not shy away from raising expectations,*

*From creating ways for everyone to participate, in spite of limitations."*

This goes to the heart of all that we as an organisation have been working towards over the past year and the way in which we strive to conduct our business. Emily's words continue to inspire me every day.

Indeed, change has continued to be our greatest challenge and our greatest opportunity this year.

The three main areas of our business; accommodation, community and lifestyles and employment, have faced enormous change at both a government and social policy level. This has continued to stretch our organisation, our people and our systems so that we may maintain our commitment to the most important people; our participants, residents, families and communities in which they live.

From an employment perspective, there have been changes in policy and the way employment services are funded. In response, our employment team has been busy refining and expanding existing contracts and securing new ones.

They have been working on our Disability Employment Services, stabilising the JobActive contract that began in the last financial year, as well as other employment programs including Parentsnext, WorkReady and VTEC Indigenous programs, which are highlighted later in this report.

Our Accommodation and Supported Living services have seen enormous growth through new contracts and have been working hard preparing to support hundreds of new residents in 48 new homes and respite facilities transferred from FaCS NSW under the NIDS transition.

This has come as a result of the NSW government's decision to transfer its disability housing to non-government disability service providers in conjunction, with consortium partners in Mid North Coast Disability Services Ltd (MNCDS) and Hunter Valley Disability Services Ltd. (HVDS)

As the NDIS began its roll out across the country this year, and with transition sites in the Hunter Valley and Western Sydney now 'live' – Ability Options has continued our plan to expand; both in size, geographic coverage and the Support Services areas we cover.

We have been doing this by integrating with other organisations including Nambucca Valley Disability Services in Nambucca, Kempsey Regional Support in Kempsey, About Inclusion in Taree and Northern Beaches Interchange in Sydney.



**Fred J P Van Steel**

Chief Executive Officer

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 has 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 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.

We realise that the roll out of the NDIS not only presents challenges for us as an organisation, but equally for people participating in the scheme, as they try to navigate the new system and understand what it means for them.

Throughout the year, we have been running dozens of information sessions to support people in this journey and let them know what support services are available.

Alongside all this expansion, we have not forgotten the importance of development at a community and cultural level.

***“We have launched some exciting new community programs this year, including our major cultural and arts program, Front Up.”***

Front Up provides an opportunity for people with disability to express their artistic cultural and creative talents.

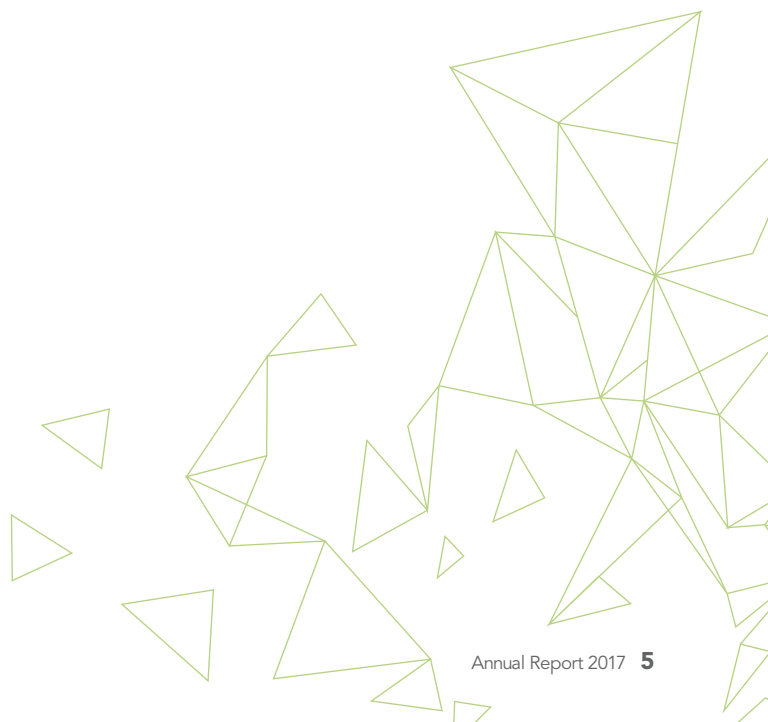
We also launched our first Reconciliation Action Plan. This strengthens our commitment to building greater understanding of Aboriginal culture, creating more opportunities for Aboriginal people through employment, and fostering relationships with Aboriginal organisations.

In a period of such major change, it is important for organisations to take their employees on the journey too. We have been working hard to ensure everyone is on board; that they understand and feel part of the process of change.

I'd like to pay my respects and thanks to everyone in our Employment, Accommodation, NDIS and Community Living services, as well as the hardworking Shared Services functions for their continued dedication and flexibility during this time of change and for taking this journey with us.

Repositioning an organisation of 40 years standing in this new and exciting economic and social environment however, has taken a toll on our finances in the short term. This year we report a deficit of \$4.6 million. For those who feel concerned by this, I encourage you to look to the future and trust in the longer-term vision we have for Ability Options, the commitment and guidance of our board, the courage and commitment of SLT and the resilience of the organisation and your colleagues. Our continued growth and reputation as a quality provider of disability services is a tribute to the courage, conviction and determination of our employees, Executive Team, the Board and integrated partners to our mission and values.

I am incredibly proud and motivated by all we have achieved this year and feel excited and positive about our future in this brave new world.



# PATRON'S MESSAGE

The National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) is truly the most significant social policy initiative we have witnessed in Australia since the introduction of Medicare in the early 1970s. Like the 1986 Disability Services Act, it attracted bi-partisan support in the Federal Parliament.

The principles of consumer choice and self-determination which underpin the NDIS are certainly not new from the perspective of people with disability, as they were the very keystones of the disability advocacy movements which emerged as far back as the 1960s.

The architects of the NDIS, however, to a large extent have been driven by an economic agenda which appears to fit comfortably with the market system principles of choice and self-determination. The language is the same, but underneath there are distinct differences in interpretation between the economic theorists and people with disabilities.

And as the recent Productivity Commission Report on NDIS costs highlights, there are some serious shortcomings in the way the Scheme has been implemented.

In my view, many of these shortcomings can be sheeted home to the very lack of understanding of disability and the needs of people with disabilities and their families by the officers who have been driving its introduction. They have not listened to the voices of people for whom the Scheme was devised, and they have essentially been driven by the principle of price.

This has enormous effects upon lives of people with disabilities and the organisations, such as Ability Options, which have traditionally supported them. To some extent we have fallen into the same trap as the de-institutionalisation movement.

We agreed institutions were not the right place for people with disabilities, but we did not carefully explore viable alternative options. Hence, some group homes became mini-institutions.

We often did not ask people where they would like to live nor with whom they would like to share.

The principle of choice is fine, provided there are choices to be had, and people need sensitive help in the choice-making process. Organisations such as Ability Options, which had their origins in families and supporters who wanted a better life for their child with a disability, have provided the bulk of disability support services for decades. However, I believe they are being sidelined to a large extent by the implementers of the NDIS.

I worry that insufficient attention has been given to the sustainability of the non- government support systems under the new individualised budgets approach. Many are having to dip into their reserves to continue their valuable services, but this cannot continue indefinitely. Ultimately, I fear that people with high complex and costly needs will find it difficult to find adequate supports to meet their needs.

Of course, agencies have needed to change from what sometimes can be overly paternalistic in their approach. My observation, however, is that the better ones have listened to the voices of the people they serve.

It would seem there is an underlining message in the current NDIS roll out that we need to dismantle an existing system of supports before we have planned and built an effective alternative system. Does this mean we have to wait until the market builds the new system? And in the meantime, where does that leave the people with disabilities and their families?

I worry that the market will build a system like the Aged Care industry where the quality of the lives of many older people is being ignored.

Ability Options does listen to the people it supports, and as this Annual Report highlights, the quality of their lives has been immeasurably improved as a result.



**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 LAUNCH

In May 2017, Ability Options launched our Core Values. These values were developed in consultation with a variety of representatives from across the Ability Options Community.

We established five core values that provide the foundation for all that we do; how we behave towards each other; and what we demonstrate to any person we engage with.

Our values reflect our mission in supporting people who need assistance to achieve their aspirations and experience

inclusion in the community and underpin our vision of service excellence.

These values now guide all our employees to make the right decision in whatever their role may be and we encourage staff to hold themselves accountable to these values and use them to enhance the experience for any person they engage with.



### INCLUSION

- Embracing diversity
- Supporting people to find a sense of belonging in their community and be given equal opportunities
- The opportunity to give your perspective and have your contribution acknowledged

### TRUST

- Deliver on our promises
- Honest and transparent in all that we do
- Encouraging people to feel empowered to make decisions

### COURAGE

- Reflect, learn and evolve
- Be brave and back yourself
- Take action, embrace change and build resilience

### INTEGRITY

- Doing what is right
- Being true to yourself
- Accept accountability for outcomes

### RESPECT

- Treating everybody with dignity
- Recognising abilities, qualities and achievements
- Regard for every individual's journey, lived experiences and values

# 2016-17 HIGHLIGHTS

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## UP UNTIL DECEMBER 2016

- Official Launch of Front Up at the Cutaway at Barangaroo
- Front Up Artists present at Art Gallery for International Day of people with disability.
- White Ribbon organisational wide accreditation process gets underway
- Nambucca Valley disAbility Services Integrates with Ability Options

## UP UNTIL JUNE 2017

- Ability Options celebrates 40 year anniversary at Parramatta Park in the presence of His Excellency General The Honourable David Hurley AC DSC (Ret'd) and Mrs Hurley
- Project completed in partnership with FACS – speech pathology support for ADHC group home residents – whole of house approach for communication support prior to the transition to the NGO sector.
- Following the news for the DES Star Ratings for June 30, 2017 – Ability Options holds all of its existing DES business at single ESS, single DMS or joint ESS/DMS sites for all existing contracts.
- Employment Division awarded the PaTH Youth jobs program
- Northern Beaches Interchange (NBI) integrates with Ability Options
- Kempsey Regional Support (KRS) Integrates with Ability Options
- About Inclusion integrates with Ability Options
- Ability Options expresses support for marriage equality in Australia
- HV Disability Services Limited is selected by FACS (the NSW Department of Family and Community Services) as the provider for the transfer of accommodation and supported living services across the Hunter Valley Region of NSW. HV Disability Services Limited is a not for profit consortium comprised of local, well respected community organisations ConnectAbility, Finding Yellow and Ability Options
- MNC Disability Services Limited is selected by FACS (the NSW Department of Family and Community Services) as the chosen provider for the transfer of accommodation and supported living services across the Mid North Coast Region of NSW. MNC Disability Services Limited is a not for profit consortium comprised of local, well respected community organisations, Nambucca Valley disAbility Services, Kempsey Regional Support, Booroongen Djugun, About Inclusion and Ability Options
- Ability Options' Stretch Reconciliation Plan (RAP) endorsed by Reconciliation Australia. Ability Options launches Stretch RAP with an event at Seven Hills
- Organisational-wide launch of Ability Options Core Values



# 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.





# THE ABILITY OPTIONS CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE (CX) TRANSFORMATION JOURNEY

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Along with the launch of our Core Values this organisational wide cultural change is to position and reinforce that the customer is at the centre of everything that we do and at it's core, Trust is everything. Personalisation and Integrity are the two most powerful determinants of a customer advocating for us and remaining loyal to repurchase and remain engaged.

Of these having integrity and constantly earning Trust is the starting point without which nothing else matters.

In the words of the poet and author Maya Angelou, "People will forget what you said. People will forget what you did. But people will never forget how you made them feel."

The six pillars signify and determine an organisations journey to positive customer experience, one that

Ability Options has already been on for a number of years. This commenced with the strategic beachhead of employment, the Energise Model, (the Apple Store site makeovers), the Community Hub concept, the introduction of a site concierge, investments in the customer service centre, web and social media strategy, major investment in quality assurance, compliance and TickIt incident response, pre-planning café's and the complete makeover of the HR and workforce strategy including leadership and development.

The overarching commencement of this journey was the establishment and commitment to our unique proposition of 'One Trusted Source – Many Options' that is now gathering pace across the organisation as we continue to roll out our change program.

## UNDERSTANDING THE SIX PILLARS OF CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE EXCELLENCE



# UNDERSTANDING THE SIX PILLARS OF CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE EXCELLENCE

**Rapid movers**  
the start of a transformative journey

**Managing expectation**  
The fuel of  
transformed brands



## INTEGRITY

### Being Trustworthy and engendering trust

Trust is the outcome of consistent organisational behavior that demonstrates trustworthiness. There are trust building events where organisations have the need to publicly react to a difficult situation, and trust building moments where individual actions by staff add up to create trust in the organisation as a whole. Behavioral economics teaches us that we trust people we like. The ability to build rapport is therefore critical in creating trust.



## RESOLUTION

### Turning a poor experience into a great one

Customer recovery is highly important. Even with the best practices and procedures things will be wrong. Great companies have a process that not only puts the customer back in the position they should have been in as rapidly as possible, but they also make the customer feel really good about the experience. A sincere apology and acting with urgency are two crucial elements of a successful resolution.



## EXPECTATIONS

### Managing, meeting and exceeding customer expectations

Customers have needs and they also have expectations about how these needs will be delivered. Customer satisfaction is the difference between expectation and actual delivery. Understanding, delivering and, if possible, – exceeding expectations is a key skill of great organisations. Some organisations are able to make statements of clear intent that set expectations (e.g. “never knowingly undersold”), others set the expectation accurately (“delivery in 48 hours”). And then delight the customer when they exceed it.

## Becoming customer champions



### TIME AND EFFORT

#### **Minimising customer effort and creating frictionless processes**

Customers are time poor and increasingly are looking for instant gratification.

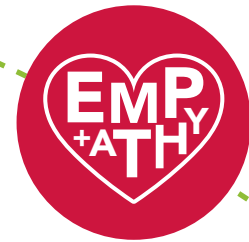
Removing unnecessary obstacles, impediments and bureaucracy to enable the customer to achieve their objectives quickly and easily have been shown to increase loyalty. Many companies are discovering how to use time as a source of competitive advantage.



### PERSONALISATION

#### **Using individualised attention to drive an emotional connection**

Personalisation involves demonstrating that you understand the customer's specific needs and circumstances and will adapt the experience accordingly. Use of name, individualized attention, knowledge of preferences and past interactions all add up to an experience that feels personal. It makes the customer feel important and valued and begins to build an emotional connection.



### EMPATHY

#### **Achieving an understanding of the customer's circumstances to drive deep rapport**

Empathy is the art of letting the customer know that you can genuinely understand what it is like to be in their shoes.

Empathy creating behaviours are key to establishing a strong relationship and involve the telling of personal stories that reflect back to the customer how you felt when in similar circumstances. Then going the extra step because you understand how they feel.

Original source; KPMG Nunwood

# 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.



## **Heather Scheibenstock**

Non-Executive Director

Heather joined the Ability Options Board in 2017 following an extensive and successful career spanning 20 years as a Senior Executive in the Hospitality industry. Heather became involved in community and fundraising in the not for profit sector in 2013 and as a strong believer in learning and development has continued her post graduate studies in business, leadership and corporate governance. An experienced non-executive director across a range of industries, Heather brings a wealth of knowledge in leadership, strategy implementation and development, community and stakeholder engagement as well as a passion for driving positive outcomes in changing environments.



### 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 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.



### Patricia Biszewski

MSc GAILD

Non-Executive Director

Patricia joined the Board in early 2017. She has had an extensive executive career in the maritime and logistics industry, driving and enabling business growth and organisational transformation through strategy, finance, information technology and human resources practices. She has worked in Africa, Denmark, USA, Singapore, Thailand and Australia. Patricia has a passion to use her experience to support those who are less advantaged. In this capacity, she has held non-executive directorships in organisations developing programs to empower socially marginalised women, children and communities in developing countries to become sustainably independent and organisations providing services to people living with transport barriers to enjoy enriched and independent lives.

Patricia holds an MSc from Imperial College London, and is a graduate and member of the Australian Institute of Company Directors.



### Sue Healy

BAppSc; DipEd; DipAppFin;  
FFin; MAICD

Non-Executive Director

Sue's extensive business experience, includes 17 years as the founder and Managing Director of a National Recruitment and Managed Solutions Business where the business won a number of awards, and was featured in the BRW fastest growing companies for five consecutive years. She has also held senior Executive Roles with Australia's two largest ASX listed Human Capital companies and lead Australia's largest outsourced contract in talent acquisition management for the Australian Defence Force.

She acts as a Non Executive Director and business advisor to organizations such as CML Group, Ccentric, Witt Kieffer/Ccentric (International). She has held board positions with industry bodies, state economic development boards and women & leadership boards. She is a Fellow and Life Member of the RCSA—(Recruitment and Consulting Services Association).

Sue joined the Board of Ability Options in February 2017.



### 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

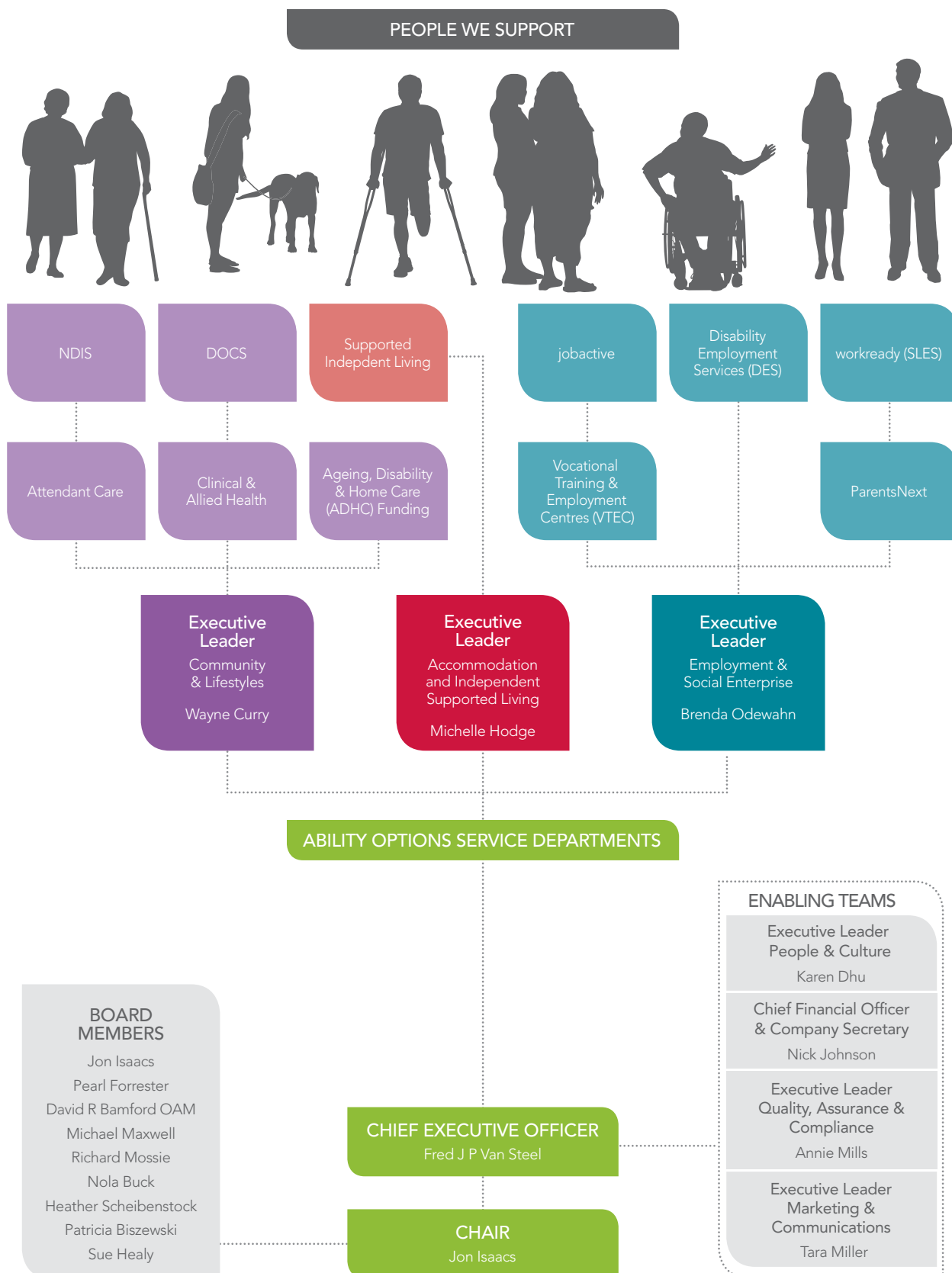
Non-Executive Director

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 AND CLINICAL GOVERNANCE

Michael Maxwell (Chair),  
Nola Buck, Patricia Biszewski

### 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

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),  
Richard Mossie, 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

NSW Department of Family and Community Services (FACS) FACS and ADHC - DOCS	National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS)	Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations now known as Department of Social Services (DSS)	Other Funding
<b>\$16,006,993</b>	<b>\$13,812,205</b>	<b>\$17,996,125</b>	<b>\$3,530,186</b>



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.

# SERVICES



## Community & Lifestyles



### Co-ordination of Supports

Supporting people with disability to find the right providers to meet their NDIS goals.



### 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.



### Direct Supports

Offers supports 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 in the Hunter.



### Lifetime Care and Support


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



### Front Up: Arts and Cultural Program

Front Up is a disability-led Arts and Cultural program offering participants access to multi-layered professional arts and cultural education.

# SERVICES SNAPSHOT



## NDIS

An experienced provider offering choice and control to participants with tailored supports through the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS).

**ndis** Official Provider




## Accommodation and Independent 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, Central Coast, Hunter and Mid North Coast.




## Therapy Services

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 SLES programs and provides vocational counselling within Ability Options Employment.



## Respite Services

Quality, flexible support for children and adults with disability and their families in North West Sydney, Hunter, Mid North Coast and Northern Beaches.



## Work Ready (SLES)

Two year program to assist school leavers with disability to successfully transition into the workforce or vocational education/training.


**workready!**  
Youth Training & Life Skills



## DES

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

**Disability™ Employment Services**  
AN AUSTRALIAN GOVERNMENT INITIATIVE



## Jobactive


We match the right people to the right jobs, delivering sustainable employment outcomes for jobseekers and employers.

**Youth Jobs PaTH**  
Prepare Them Hire

**ParentsNext**  
AN AUSTRALIAN GOVERNMENT INITIATIVE

**OLYMPUS SOLUTIONS**

**jobactive**  
an Australian Government Initiative



## VTEC

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

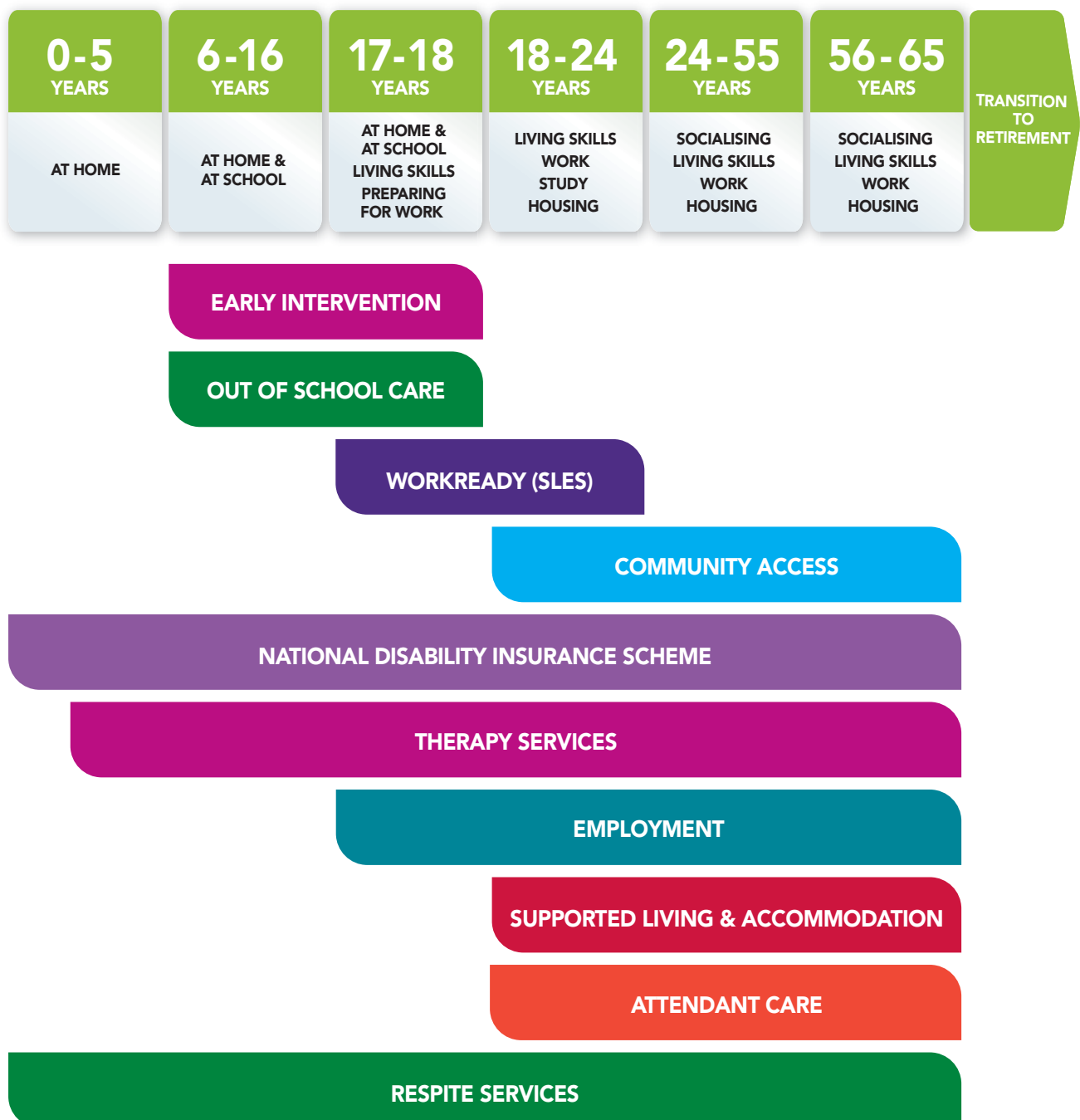
**Australian Government**

**VTEC**

# 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





# Ability Options 40th Anniversary



His Excellency General The Honourable David Hurley AC DSC (Ret'd)  
Governor of New South Wales with Front Up Artist, Emily Dash.

# The Changemakers

This is a tribute to the changemakers, of all persuasions.

You know who they are.

They chart their own course by the stars, blazing a trail for the rest of us

And steadfastly refusing to acquiesce

To the labels and situations that they cannot accept – even when everybody says

“There’s no place for dreamers like them”.

Yes, here’s to the dreamers, then –

The ones who will not simply bend to circumstance, who remain

Unafraid to make a few waves,

Brave enough to stand up and say

“How it is isn’t how it has to stay”.

They never see in black and white, and

They know when it’s time to embrace each shade of grey, with an open mind

And take a chance on the dawning of a different day.

This is how progress is made.

And while there are still battles left to fight,

What matters is hope, and the strength of those who stand by your side.

So today, as we turn the page,

Let’s honour and celebrate a forty year history that must not fade –

It’s a beacon leading to something more.

It’s people like you who unlock the doors

To homes being built and ideas being born,

And together, we will make things better than whatever came before.

As a new world begins to take shape, we will not hesitate.

We will always keep our standards high, never compromise,

If we are challenged, we will rise to the occasion.

We will grow from our most stable foundations.

We will not shy away from raising expectations,

From creating ways for everyone to participate, in spite of limitations.

We will provide validation, autonomy, communication,

Giving people the freedom to explore possibilities,

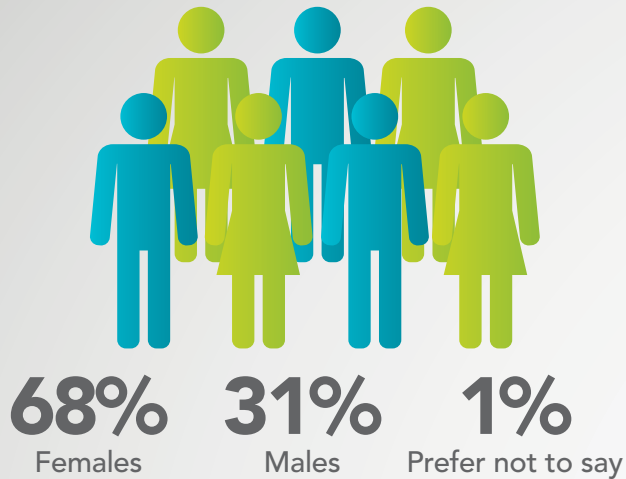
Learning to see difficulties as unique opportunities.

But above all, we will prioritise dignity...and recognise ability.

*Emily Dash – Artist, Front Up Emerge Program 2016*

# Ability Options Staff Diversity Profile

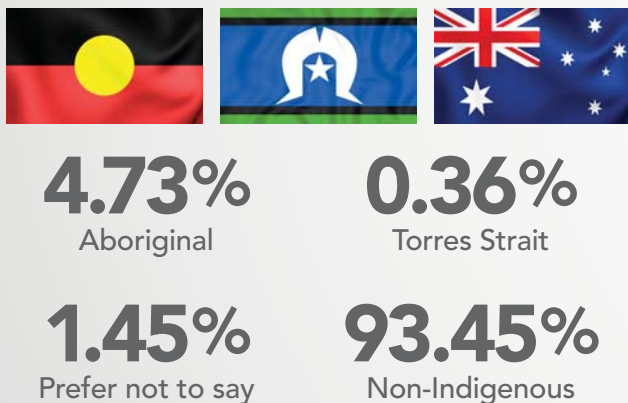
## Gender



## Age Profile



## Culture



## Language spoke at home

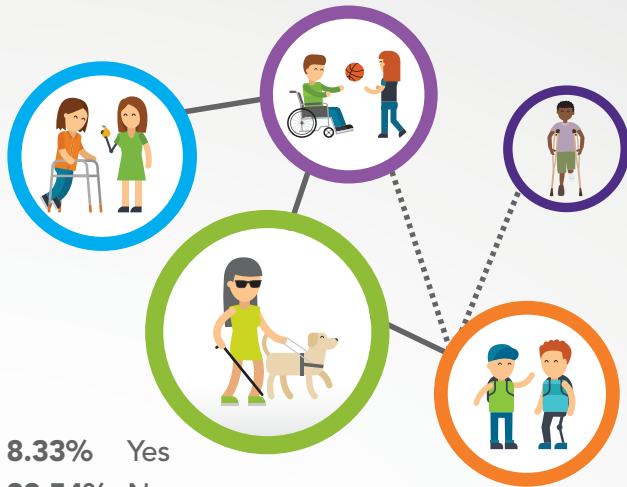
22.55%



of staff speak a language other than English at home



## Disability



## Parent/Caregiver – Person with a disability

18.18% Yes  
77.82% No



4% Prefer not to say

## Caregiver



47.64% Parent  
14.91% Caregiver  
35.27% Neither  
2.18% Prefer not to say

## Education level

7.27% Year 10  
10.55% Year 12  
45.45% Certificate or diploma  
24.73% Undergraduate Uni degree  
10.18% Post Graduate Uni degree  
1.82% No formal education completed



## Sexual Orientation

85.45% Hetrosexual  
2.55% Gay  
0.36% Lesbian

1.45% Bisexual  
7.64% Prefer Not To Say  
2.55% Prefer To Self Describe





# STRETCH RECONCILIATION PLAN

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***Ability Options has always worked to improve the lives of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in our community. As part of this commitment, we created and launched our first Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) this year. The plan outlines what we will be doing over the next three years to empower Aboriginal people.***

We have chosen to set our goals high in the plan, making extra commitments, over and above what would be part of a standard RAP. This is known as a Stretch RAP. The plan will be reviewed and updated in November 2019.

Before drafting the RAP, Ability Options worked closely with members of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community to understand their needs and what they would like to see included.

General Manager of Aboriginal Services, Annette Lamb says talking to the community was a key part of making sure the plan is relevant and can make a real difference in people's lives.

"Through this process we have committed to building greater respect and understanding of Aboriginal people and their culture, creating more opportunities for Aboriginal people through employment and changing the way we do things within our organisation to support these goals," says Annette.

The launch of the RAP was celebrated at an event in Seven Hills on June 23, 2017 where 100 attendees enjoyed a traditional Aboriginal smoking ceremony and bush tucker feast. An artwork by Aboriginal artist Jade Williams was also unveiled for future display in all Ability Options employment offices.

Annette says Ability Options has a true commitment to reconciliation and the RAP is a way of setting clear goals that can be measured to show our progress.

"Many of the goals set out in the plan are already well underway," says Annette. "We are on track to meet our goal of having 4-5% of Ability Options staff members who are of indigenous descent."

***“We have a number of indigenous focussed events coming up, including a screening of an Aboriginal film Zach’s Ceremony at Warralong Community in the Illawarra.”***

"Our employment offices and marketing materials are being restyled with an indigenous focus. We are also working with different parts of our business around how they can contribute to the objectives of the RAP. For example putting Aboriginal artwork in all of our group homes," she said.

One of the main messages Annette tries to convey in her work is that 'indigenous business is everybody's business'.

"I work with our teams to help them understand the way things work in the Aboriginal community, how they can connect the dots and make things happen for people, and how they can contribute personally to improving the lives of indigenous people."

"Also, by working closely with the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community we can create better outcomes for all Aboriginal people in the long term."

# COMMUNITY & LIFESTYLES

*The last financial year has been a demanding time for the Community and Lifestyles teams as we continue to respond to the challenge of ensuring a successful move to the NDIS for participants and our services. The teams have maintained their enthusiasm, passion and dedication while continuing to build on our experience as a pilot site in the Hunter and Nepean Blue Mountain regions.*

*Overall, we have achieved some fantastic results that will have long term benefits for our participants and the organisation as a whole and we are looking forward to the full rollout of the NDIS by 30th June 2019.*

## NDIS TRANSITION TEAMS

Throughout the year our NDIS transition team have been supporting our participants to make a smooth and successful move across to the NDIS. They have worked closely with participants, families and other stakeholders to make sure they understand the NDIS and how it may work for them. By the end of June 2017, 90% of Ability Options' participants successfully moved to the NDIS.

A major part of this effort was the coordination and support of two large institutions in the Hunter and Sydney regions. At Rydalmere and Westmead, the teams supported residents to move into community based homes set up with everything that they needed in their new environment.

Throughout this process both the Coordination of Support and Therapy teams did an exceptional job, earning themselves an excellent reputation in the sector.

## PRE PLANNING CAFES

Since their launch last year, our pre-planning cafes have continued to be an important source of information and support for people across new NDIS regions and regional/remote areas of NSW. The cafes provide a calm and supportive environment where participants can explore NDIS options and prepare for their planning meeting. Over this period we ran an additional 15 pre planning cafes across greater Sydney and the Mid North Coast, now engaging with over 800 people during the last 2 years.

## INTEGRATION PARTNERS

Ability Options have continued to broaden the range and reach of the services we provide by integrating with four new community partners. This year we began working with Nambucca Valley disability Services, Kempsey Regional Support and Northern Beaches Interchange. These integrations not only extend Ability Options' services to more participants, they also bring new ideas, opportunities and knowledge to our staff.

## PERPETUAL PARTNERSHIP

The exceptional work of the Community and Lifestyle team, who provide pre-planning and coordination support for our Perpetual Group clients, has continued to pay dividends this year. Due to overwhelming positive feedback from clients and Trust Managers, Ability Options have now been confirmed as a provider of choice. This is a national position on a selected panel for NDIS readiness activities for clients with a permanent and significant disability.



**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.



## FEATURE STORY

### LEISA COOK – NDIS

Budding author, Leisa Cook made publishing her first children's book one of her NDIS goals.

With a combination of Leisa's own dedication and hard work and with her support from Ability Options Leisa has achieved that goal and hopes to publish another book in the not too distant future.

The book, entitled Polly the Trolley, draws on Leisa's personal experience following her diagnosis of a neurological condition and her need to use a walker, much to the dismay of her young daughter.

"When I first went to hospital I came home with crutches," says Leisa.

"The second time I went to hospital I came home with a walker.

My daughter, who was eight at the time, blamed the walker for me being sick."

"I wrote the book as a way of explaining to her that it was not the walker's fault. I wanted her to know that a walker is not something to be feared, but rather a great and necessary piece of equipment."

Leisa's background as a childcare worker and mothercraft nurse has helped her write in a style that children can relate to.

She used self-publishing company Xlibris to publish the book, and took advantage of their in-house illustration service.

"I'm really happy with the way the book turned out," says Leisa. "My hope is that it ends up in all schools and libraries and that people going through a similar situation can use it to help their little ones understand," says Leisa.

Polly the Trolley is available through Xlibris as well as on Book Depository [www.bookdepository.com.au](http://www.bookdepository.com.au) and Amazon [www.amazon.com](http://www.amazon.com).

# FEATURE STORY

## ON ROUTE TO THE BOCCIA NATIONALS – CONNOR

I have been playing Boccia since 2010. The first time I went to play, I thought I'd just give it a go, but as I began playing, I realised how much fun this sport was and then I became more passionate and serious about it. To get to the nationals stage, I was playing almost every day. It was hard work, but I absolutely loved every minute of it.

I was invited to participate in the New Zealand 2017 Boccia Nationals from 14th October to 17th October 2017 in Wellington. My family was really proud of me, my mum had a beaming smile on her face when I told her I was accepted into the nationals.

I invited my Support Worker from Ability Options to support me on the trip.

The best part of the trip was being able to compete and meet other players. I still keep in touch with the players I met on my trip through social media. It has really widened my networks and given me a lot of confidence in myself.

I had a great time playing in the nationals and just missed out on making the semi-finals for the singles unfortunately, but excelled in the Pairs event with my teammate Phil.

Phil and I made a great team and we competed flawlessly not losing a single game and taking out the gold in the Boccia BC5 division!



After a lot of hard training and intense competition, a well-deserved break was in order and a few days of rest and relaxation, we enjoyed the lovely sights and attractions of Wellington before returning back to home in Penrith.

## DIRECT : SUPPORTS

Our Direct Support service has grown substantially this year with the addition of new participants.

This service, which provides a range of individualised support options for participants all over New South Wales, has worked alongside participants to achieve some fantastic outcomes.

It represents one of the most challenging NDIS Service Support areas to achieve sustainability while promoting flexibility, choice and control and individualised support options.

## HUNTER HOUSING DEMONSTRATION PROJECT

Now in its second year, the Hunter Housing Demonstration project in conjunction with the Summer Foundation has continued to provide an appropriate and supportive home environment for 10 young people who were formerly living in nursing homes. Being able to live in an environment where they can develop their confidence and capability, knowing they have 24 hour support should they need it, has ensured that participants have been able to achieve outstanding outcomes against their individual goals.

Since moving into the units, participants have achieved goals as diverse as simply “doing my own thing in my apartment” to working towards setting up a small business. And all this within 6 months of moving out of the nursing home.

## COORDINATION OF SUPPORTS

Coordination of Supports (COS) is a vital service which works to ensure that participants get the most out of their NDIS Plan. Over the past financial year the team have provided such a high standard of coordination of supports that they have once again been recognised as exceptional partners; supporting participants to exercise greater choice and control over their lives and their NDIS plans. This specialist team continue to be recognised by the NDIA, Local Area Coordinators and Trustee & Guardian for their responsive and quality supports.

The COS team has now expanded to provide supports to over 700 participants across New South Wales.

## COMMUNITY ACCESS

A recent revamp at our offices in Seven Hills has resulted in a vibrant and versatile space for programs that support participants to be involved in and connect with the local community. Program and participant numbers are continuing to grow and the team are looking forward to some exciting new community partnerships in the year ahead.

## OUR EXPANDING THERAPY TEAM

As the number of NDIS participants has continued to grow so have the ranks, expertise and activities of the Sydney and Hunter therapy teams.

Some highlights of this year have been:

- attending Personal Development training to increase their skills including – Autism Key Strategies for School and Home, Working with Anxious Clients, Cognitive Behaviour Therapy, Dementia specific training, Pressure care innovations and specialised assessment and risk management in support services.
- using training workshops as an innovative way to supplement revenue and provide specialist training options to the Hunter region
- working with the Ability Options employment division to provide one to one and group supports to jobseekers, as well as starting to implement Work and Development Orders services, which allow participants to repay state debts by attending counselling sessions
- sharing our knowledge and skills with students as they complete placements at Ability Options.

Our Psychologists, Behaviour Support Specialists, Speech and Occupational Therapists, Physiotherapists and Rehabilitation Counsellors have embraced this increase in demand and continue to work hard on improving and developing their specialist services.

## HOLIDAY GROUP PROGRAMS

The school holiday programs, run by our integrated partner Newcastle Temporary Care in the Hunter and Northern Beaches Interchange in Sydney have expanded significantly over the past year. Membership in these programs have more than doubled as they are now providing term-time as well as school holiday programs. Originally running a single session a week, they are now running four sessions with more in the pipeline.

# ACCOMMODATION & SUPPORTED INDEPENDENT LIVING

*Living in the place of their choice, either independently or with supports, is a priority for many NDIS participants. This year the Accommodation and Supported Living team have been working hard not only to further improve how we provide support, but also to expand our accommodation services to offer more options for participants to live where and how they choose.*

## ACCOMMODATION SERVICE GROWTH

Recognising a valuable growth opportunity, Accommodation and Supported Independent Living set up two consortiums in the Hunter and Mid North Coast regions. This put us in a strong position to tender for accommodation and supported living services that were being transferred into the private sector by the Department of Family and Community Services. We were successful in both tenders and have expanded our services to provide 48 additional homes across the region by the end of 2017. This brings the total of homes provided by Ability Options to 63.

The success of the tenders was due, in no small part, to the calibre of the organisations involved. Each consortium member brought a wealth of experience, established workforces and strong networks as well as in-depth working knowledge and experience of the new NDIS framework.

Gearing up to provide services for an additional 250 participants is a mammoth task and so we established

a specialist dedicated team to ensure the smooth transition of both regions. The team's key focus was to ensure continuity of service and clear communication with all residents, their families and carers.

## TRANSITION TO THE NDIS

Throughout the year Accommodation and Supported Independent Living have been supporting participants to transition across to the NDIS. By June this year all eligible participants across both the Hunter and Sydney regions had been successfully supported to move across.

A brand-new system requires new processes and the most challenging element of the NDIS so far has been the new quoting process. Accommodation and Supported Independent Living responded proactively by developing our own Supported Independent Living quoting process and tool. This means we are able to work with the NDIA to ensure that quotes can be processed as quickly as possible.

The transition from NSW FACS to Federal NDIS funding also saw the introduction of continuity of support for the over 65 year old participants. This has seen us establish early working relationships with the federal department of Health that manages this program.



**Michelle Hodge**

Executive Leader –  
Accommodation and Supported  
Independent 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.

## CONTINUED IMPROVEMENT IN OUR INTERNAL PROCESSES

A great deal of work has also been done to improve our internal processes.

One key improvement has been the adoption of a values based recruitment strategy for employees who provide support. This involves an assessment centre type approach, where prospective employees are evaluated on their personal skills as well as their formal qualifications. We look at a candidate's interaction with others and how they respond to certain activities. We use role plays to gauge behaviours that are consistent with our values.

Our aim is to ensure that employees are the best fit for participants, in terms of both skill sets and interests.

## FIRST CLASS RESULTS

A major highlight for Accommodation and Supported Independent Living this year was our successful accreditation against the new internal compliance audits. At the end of 2016, we achieved 100% across the board for our policies and processes. This outstanding achievement is the result of sheer dedication and hard work from the whole division.

**Member Sign the Implementation and Sales Agreement for SDS transfer Hunter Valley.**

David Carey – CEO ConnectAbility, Heather Scheibenstock – Ability Options Board Member, The Hon. Ray Williams, Minister for Multiculturalism and Disability Services, Dudley Johnson – HV Disability Services Board Member, Patricia Biszewski – Ability Options Board member



# FEATURE STORY

## ZACH'S DAY ON SET

Zach is a creative and naturally inquisitive person, who likes music and action films.

At a recent filming of Ability Options case studies, Zach was interviewed about his goals, his thoughts on living independently, and generally what he thought about the support he receives from Ability Options. He was really pleased to be interviewed and did a great deal of preparation.

The film crew arrived at Zach's house, set up all the gear and Zach did a wonderful interview. Once the interview was over, Zach showed a keen interest in the film making process, and was asking questions to the director, Natalie Van Den Dungen and crew about how it all worked. Natalie realised Zach's interest for film and invited Zach to come along to the next filming project she would be doing for us.

Zach was so interested in the process of film making that at his NDIS planning meeting he mentioned one of his goals was to learn more about film making.

The next opportunity to film came up and the Director, Natalie, requested Zach came along to be part of the crew to film Front Up Artist, Emily Dash recite her spoken word piece, "The Changemakers" at the FrontUp Art Space in Seven Hills. These kinds of

opportunities to work with an internationally renowned filmmaker don't come along very often, so Zach jumped at the chance to be part of Natalie's crew.

Filming day came and Zach was keen to get involved. Natalie explained some of the basics and introduced Zach to the camera, the sound gear and the clapper board (a board that is used to signify the start of each scene). He was focused, listened and soaked up the creative atmosphere.

Zach played a really important part in the filming, as Director's Assistant, assisting with setting up the lighting, moving around props and ensuring everyone was ready for filming. Zach was also in charge of writing on and starting each take with the clapper board.

"He was a crucial part of our team. I was really impressed with his willingness to learn and his commitment to the process, I will definitely be asking Zach to come along to the next shoot I do with Ability Options" said Natalie.

Zach said of the day, "I never get picked for anything, so felt really proud that I was chosen to help out with this, it was one of the best days I'd had for ages and made me even more interested in film making"



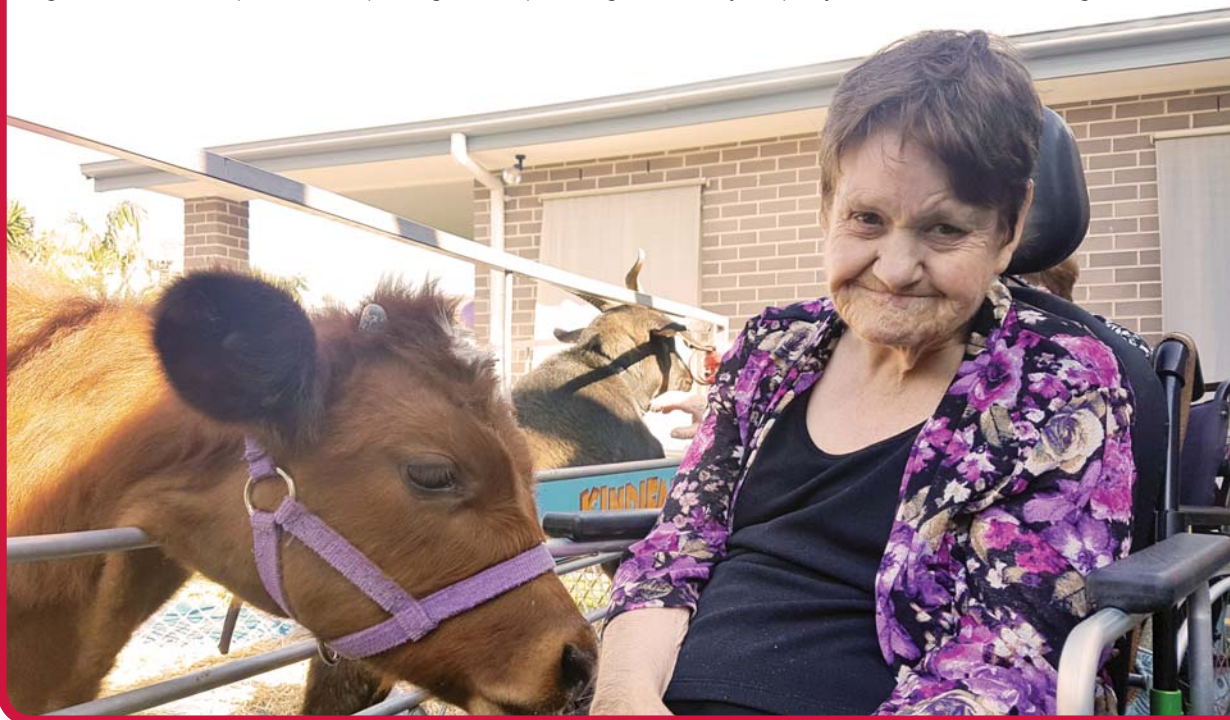
## FEATURE STORY

### PETTING ZOO – CAROL

Carol is well known among fellow residents and staff for her love of animals of all kinds. A surprise mobile petting zoo was organised for Carol to celebrate and she was delighted to share her birthday party with a calf, goats, sheep, chickens, rabbits and guinea pigs.

Mooshoo the calf proved to be Carol's favourite, and seeing Carol's smile as she talked, fed and pet the animals was wonderful.

The visit of her Sister Bev who came all the way from Newcastle was another surprise for Carol. Party hats, decorations, strawberry cheesecake birthday cakes, music and dancing provided plenty of joy and entertainment. Everyone had a wonderful time and thoroughly enjoyed Carol's party and her special cuddly guests. We are so pleased the petting zoo surprise organised for your party was met with such delight.



# COMMUNITY INTEGRATIONS



## JACOB AND BRAX – ABOUT INCLUSION

Like everyone else on the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS), Jacob had to choose how he wanted to spend his one-on-one support time.

Jacob decided cooking for himself was a skill he'd like to develop because one day he plans to leave home and he'll need to cook for himself.

So, every Thursday Jacob and his support worker Brax get-together to cook up a storm in the kitchen and do what teenagers do; eat dinner in front of the telly, watch a movie and have a chat.

Jacob attends the About Inclusion cottage on Thursday afternoons after school. The two guys go shopping for all the ingredients, Brax leads the way during meal preparation, they cook together and then they eat together.

Brax, who is a qualified chef, says they first developed a hit list of meals Jacob wanted to learn to cook, then began working their way through the menu.

"One of the first times we caught up, Jacob and I talked about all the foods he wanted to try," says Brax. "I went away and researched the recipes, came back with some simple how-to's and so far we've cooked honey soy chicken, hamburgers, sushi, quesadillas and kranskys."

"We have some good chats and that's all I'm going to say because the rest is between Jacob and me."

"The next step will be to cook everything again and Jacob will lead the way. So far, the big winner every Thursday night is Jacob's family, they love the leftovers!"

While essentially this is a story about two guys cooking and spending some time together, it's also a story about meeting the goals Jacob laid out in his NDIS plan.

Ability Options' integrated partner, About Inclusion, specialise in supporting people with intellectual and physical disabilities. They coordinate supports and assist participants to prepare and review their NDIS plans.



## AARON COCHRANE – KEMPSEY REGIONAL SUPPORT (KRS)

My name is Aaron Cochrane. I am a 32-year-old man who enjoys listening to music and being outdoors. In November 2016, I moved from Sydney to South West Rocks NSW with my mother Marcia, who is also my carer, and my family.

I am visually impaired and have an intellectual disability. I need assistance from others do everyday activities, so moving interstate was a big deal for me.

I started receiving NDIS funding in October 2016. Mum and I didn't really understand the NDIS and felt overwhelmed by the whole process. Kempsey Regional Support (KRS) was the third organisation we contacted in the area after moving. KRS was new to the NDIS, but wanted to assist us.

Moving towns was a stressful time for my family and me. Not only did I need to adjust to a new house and unfamiliar space, but I also needed new services and support staff. KRS was able to offer friendly and knowledgeable coordination staff and connected me with suitable support workers as quickly as possible. Later when the NDIS funding was reviewed, KRS helped advocate for more funding for programs that meet my daily support and therapy needs.

When I lived in Sydney, I attended a large day program service, five days a week. This was mostly

centre based support. At KRS, I am able to attend smaller more personalised group programs that focus on getting out into the community.

I really enjoy Out and About on Tuesdays, particularly spending time with new friends and the different social activities every week, such as dancing, going for walks or playing lawn bowls. Mum and I are happy with this program and its structure.

I started attending Leisure Link on Fridays, but the larger group wasn't for me. KRS quickly made changes to my program to suit my needs. I now receive one-to-one support to access my local community. Mum is delighted with the flexibility and how quickly KRS were able to make changes.

Now that I have settled into my program with KRS, I feel ready to start working towards my goal of becoming more independent and improving my communication, especially with my family.

Staff are working with me to increase my use of the probing cane. Once I am better at this, I can do more activities with less support. Mum is amazed by the progress I have made and was extra surprised to see photos of me dancing. Mum knew I liked music but had never seen me dance before.

Since I have been accessing Out and About and one-on-one support with KRS, I have become more social and interactive with my family.



## LIAMS STORY – NORTHERN BEACHES INTERCHANGE (NBI)

Our story has been one of changes and new experiences.

My son Liam is now 16 years old, a fun and happy teenager with an intellectual and developmental delay – which makes it hard for him to socialize and access community activities.

We started our journey with very little help and as a family we provided all his support with no government funding or assistance. However, with Liam getting older and then moving in with me full time in October last year, we were presented with the opportunity to apply for support from the NDIS, and received his plan in December 2016.

Since then we have had access to services from NBI, and a range of other services. This includes respite and therapy services which have ensured that Liam received the support that allows him to be a regular active

teenager. The NDIS has changed our lives. Liam now has a teenage social group, he attends the After School Club and the Saturday Teentastic Club – where he not only socializes with his peers and has new friendships but also learns daily life skills such as cooking, shopping, handling money, cleaning and travel training. Not to mention the support during the school holidays with NBI and the TAG group which is a highlight to Liam's social calendar during the holidays. We also access respite from NBI and PaCS – which includes camps and overnight stays at Jilliby house.

Overall, it's been an excellent journey which has enhanced Liam's life with new friendships and activities that he would not have experienced otherwise. As a result, Liam is confident and is enjoying his teenage years and looking forward to his future.

Our next challenge is the transition to the work force and adulthood; with a strong foundation and support from Liam's NDIS Plan the future looks brighter for Liam and our family.



## DAVIDS STORY – NAMBUCCA VALLEY DISABILITY SERVICES (NVdS)

As the baton carrying the Queens message approaches Australia on route to its final destination on the Gold Coast for the XXI Commonwealth Games Opening Ceremony on April 8, 2018, passionate sport fan, David's excitement builds.

David was nominated by his support worker to be one of the Queens Baton Relay bearers for the Macksville leg of the baton relay and on the day that the Baton bearers were announced he came into the Nambucca office with his dad and some friends and waited to hear the news.

Surrounded by friends and family, David learnt that his nomination was successful and that he amongst two other locals had been chosen to run the Baton around Macksville CBD before finishing at the Macksville Memorial Aquatic and Fitness Centre on February 2, 2018.

To say David is excited and proud would be an understatement "It will be very special to run in this – I've seen them do it on TV, I watched Cathy Freeman do it...I love sport especially cricket and I am training at the gym, getting ready for my leg of the run" said David.



# EMPLOYMENT

*This year the employment division enjoyed a period of exciting growth and consolidation. By providing engaging, fit for purpose programs for jobseekers and responding to employers' needs, we have been able to improve our overall business performance and maintain an outstanding reputation within the sector.*

*We are looking forward to the coming year when we will continue to build on this success and introduce new initiatives to improve the jobseeking experience for both participants and employers alike.*

## DISABILITY EMPLOYMENT SERVICE

Our Disability Employment Service has doubled in size this year after Ability Options took on additional businesses in the Central and outer Western Sydney areas. This growth has given a huge boost to our disability employment services and ensures we can continue to provide valuable support to people with disability who wish to prepare for, find and maintain ongoing work.

## JOBACTIVE

Due to the consistently high performance of our Jobactive employment service, Ability Options successfully finished the financial year securing a small additional market share for the service as well as maintaining our nationally benchmarked prestigious position as the highest possible 5-star provider.

## ENERGISE

One of the keys to this success is our use of the Energise Model, which supports the jobseeker from the start of the journey right through to ongoing in-job support.

Used across all our employment programs, Energise ensures that we address the specific needs of the current labour market by equipping jobseekers with the skills and qualifications that employers actually need.

This year we identified the huge growth in construction in the Greater Sydney area and developed a range of specific activities to provide jobseekers with skills that are relevant for this sector. This targeted approach provides jobseekers with more marketable skills and makes them highly attractive to future employers.

## INVESTING IN STAFF

Ability Options has continued to invest in our staff this year with an innovative program of training aimed at developing optimism, resilience and attitude in the workplace.

Alongside the rollout of our new Values program, the training was designed to further enhance employees' commitment and capacity to deliver the high standard of services our participants expect.



**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.



## FEATURE STORY

### ASHLEE

Ashlee was informed about the new PaTH program and was happy to participate as she realised that if she did well in the Internship, it would be likely she would gain the job and commence paid employment.

Olympus Solutions contacted Jenny's Kindy Gosford highlighting Ashlee's friendly personality and her strong desire to work in childcare and the employer was very pleased to offer Ashlee the Internship.

Ashlee needed support with the job application, interview skills, clothing for the interview and work. She has also been supported by Olympus Solutions Post Placement Support (PPS) team and mentors.

Corey from Jenny's Kindy Gosford, was very happy to participate in the Internship program as it gave her the ability to trial a candidate who they felt at the interview could suit the role and their business with the added bonus of being able to train Ashlee to meet the requirements of the role.

Corey also commented that the incentive payment of \$1000 gives the employer ample time to trial a candidate thoroughly and also assists with the cost of training and supervising Ashlee.

Jenny's Kindy Gosford has given great feedback, not only about Ashlee's work performance but also about the smooth process from listing the vacancy with Olympus Solutions through to interview and then Internship, which will all hopefully transpire into a placement for Ashlee in a career she is passionate about.

### PARENTSNEXT

Now in its second year, the ParentsNext program continues to make a real difference to parents in the Central Coast area who need support to prepare to return to work. Through a program of education, training, work experience, resume and interview preparation, ParentsNext supports parents to gain the skills and confidence they need to take that important step back into the workplace.

The program has now been rolled out across the Bateau Bay, Wyong and The Entrance areas of the Central Coast, including Lake Haven.

In June 2017, we ran our first operating expo which gave parents an opportunity to meet with and hear from community organisations, childcare specialists, employers and training organisations as well as other parents with young children.

We also held our first parent council meetings this year, where attendees are encouraged to get involved in leading the program and to provide input into the way it is delivered.

Next year, as a subcontractor of Olympus Solutions, Ability Options is planning to tender for more services in the national rollout. We will be looking for opportunities in areas where we already operate other services, but do not currently offer the ParentsNext program.

## YOUTH JOBSPATH

As a subcontractor to Olympus Solutions, Ability Options intends to play a significant part in improving the job prospects of longterm unemployed young people through a new initiative called Youth Jobs PaTH. Launched in April 2017, PaTH provides a program of training and internships which equip young people with the skills and experience they need to get a start in the industry of their choice. It also provides employers with a valuable opportunity to trial a young person to confirm that they are suitable for the job.

*“While it’s still early days for the program, there have already been several success stories with young people gaining ongoing employment in areas such as childcare, administration and hospitality.”*

## RECIPE FOR SUCCESS

It has been an amazing year for Recipe for Success, our skills builder programs that provide training and work experience for people looking to get into the hospitality, retail and customer service sectors.

More than 70% of the people who completed our programs moved into a job within weeks with those remaining generally finding employment within a few months.

The key to this success is the inclusion of prospective employers in the development of the curriculum. They tell us the skills they are looking for, then work with us to develop training for jobseekers to gain those skills. This ensures a good match between jobseekers and employers when employment opportunities arise.

We also work hard to make sure that jobseekers have a good understanding of what is involved in working in the hospitality and customer service sectors. This gives them a realistic expectation of the pros and cons of the job, for example night and weekend work. We have found that jobseekers are better equipped and committed to the job once they join the workforce.

## FEATURE STORY

### GABRIELLE @ ATURA HOTEL

I am employed as a Room Attendant by AHS Hospitality Group who hold a contract with the Atura Hotel and I’ve been working here since 2014.

I really enjoy the work as there is always lots of different kinds of work to do. Every day is different and I have responsibility for making sure each guest room looks clean and immaculate.



The Atura Hotel is growing and this gives me the opportunity to grow my skills as well. Through AHS, I have been given the opportunity to get my First Aid Certificate and I am now registered with the Hotel as a First Aid officer, which is a new skill and experience for me.

It’s nice to have the support offered by our supervisor Richard and my team, Richard organised for all the team to learn basic sign language so the team can communicate more easily. I know people find it hard to communicate with me so we would use pen and paper, but with the team learning basic signing, it’s been so much easier and I now feel more included.

I was recently awarded a service award from the Hotel, which was a nice surprise as I never thought of myself as someone who would receive an award. Winning the Service Award, made me proud and glad to work here.

I feel very supported by Ability Options they are a great organisation.

# FEATURE STORY

## KEVORK

Kevork resettled in Australia almost six months ago as a Syrian refugee. In Syria he had worked as a former and fitter machinist running a successful business specialising in the manufacturing of plastic molds and car parts.

With an abundance of skills and qualifications, Kevork was eager to find employment in his new home country. Numerous companies were approached by Olympus Solutions on his behalf and despite his efforts and qualifications, he found it difficult to find employment for quite some time.

Olympus Solutions contacted Bluey's Ute World and the manager Peter was willing to give Kevork an interview and subsequent work trial. Kevork was accompanied to his interview by his Employment Liaison Consultant from Olympus Solutions. Even though Kevork has limited English skills, which he is working on developing, Peter from Bluey's Ute World focused on his qualifications and eagerness to work and contribute to his new country.

Kevork has now been in employment for six weeks; Peter is furthering Kevork's knowledge of the Bluey's Ute World by introducing him to new parts of the business and requesting Kevork to obtain a forklift license, which has been organised by Olympus Solutions and funded by the employment fund.



## WORKREADY

Another significant area of growth this year has been our NDIS funded WorkReady program. Previously known as Transition to Work, WorkReady provides a range of support and training which is designed to prepare people with disability to move into open employment.

Over the last financial year we have continued to roll this program out across Sydney and up into the Hunter region. Last year we have successfully supported more than 50 people to move into workplaces such as childcare, hospitality and even a racecourse.

## VTEC INDIGENOUS EMPLOYMENT

As a part of the Vocational Training and Employment Centres initiative, Ability Options has continued to support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander job seekers to find sustainable employment.

The program has seen excellent results this year with over 70% of participants gaining long term employment. One particularly successful contract has been our work with The Menzies Group, a large national cleaning company employing over 4,000 staff across Australia.

The Ability Options VTEC team was brought in to work with the Menzies Group to fill the skills shortage in the Illawarra and the Sydney region and assist with the employment of local Aboriginal people. Ability Options VTEC led two Recruitment and Information sessions in Port Kembla which attracted 21 Aboriginal people and led to six confirmed placements within weeks of the sessions.

# FRONT UP

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***Art is an inclusive form of communication used all over the world. It can be a fantastic way for people with speech or physical limitations to express themselves and their individuality. It can also be a great way to connect people in the community.***

In recognition of this, Ability Options launched a unique community and arts development program this year, called Front Up.

Front Up consultant, Gaye Flemming says Front Up is a way for professional artists and emerging artists with disability to connect and show their artwork in public settings.

"Through Front Up, budding artists can learn and develop their skills, and benefit from the knowledge of those already working as paid artists," said Gaye.

***“In fact, two of the four professional artists leading Front Up have a disability, making Front Up the first arts program in Western Sydney lead by people with disability.”***

Following on from a successful grant submission to Crown Resorts Foundation and the Packer Family Foundation, Front Up was able to secure funding totalling \$160,000 to run its individual programs, Youth Explore, Kids Explore, Discover and Emerge.

As a base for the program, The Front Up Hub was opened in July 2016 at Ability Options' offices in Seven Hills, in memory of founder Mr Greg McIntyre (OAM).

Front Up was officially launched at 'The Cutaway' at Barangaroo on the 15th November 2016, with works from Emerge 2016 artists on display. The launch and exhibition entitled 'I'm still here' was attended by dignitaries and invited guests from the disability and arts sector.

"Front Up isn't just about developing art skills," says Gaye. "It has also been designed to help those involved find volunteer and employment opportunities in the future."

"As part of the program, five Front Up Emerge 2016 artists were invited to take part in a two-day Creative Leadership Program to be upskilled in the creative workshop process," she said.

"This included learning how to run their own creative programs, operational and administrative techniques, marketing and networking, WHS and risk assessment. These artists then went on to be employed or volunteer in individual programs run in 2017, Youth Explore and Discover."

Front Up has been so successful that Ability Options has committed to a 10-year funding plan, securing its place in our community well into the future.



# DIRECTORS' REPORT

## ABILITY OPTIONS LIMITED AND ITS CONTROLLED ENTITIES 30 JUNE 2017 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, Nambucca Valley Disability Services Inc., Kempsey Respite Services Inc., Manning Valley Respite Care Services Inc. and Northern Beaches Interchange Inc.) for the financial year ended 30 June 2017 and the auditor's report thereon.

The Group reported a net deficit of \$4,666,865 (2016: \$5,416,703 net deficit) in the current financial year. The financial performance of the Group was adversely impacted by certain events during the year including transition of majority of clients in the Community & Lifestyles division to National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS). These material and significant events, as explained below, resulted in a reported net deficit of \$4,666,865 for the year:

- Deficit of \$5.50 million in Community & Lifestyles division – During the year, the majority of our clients that were previously funded through Department of Family and Community Services (FACS) transitioned to NDIS. This resulted in a significant overhaul of the business model to ensure alignment with the NDIS model which is based on a fee for service concept. The loss reported during the year reflect initial operating losses incurred by the division and its investment in new systems and marketing campaigns, as the division aligned itself to the new funding model. The Board, in consultation with management, has reviewed the existing strategy that will complement the new landscape provided by NDIS to ensure a stronger positioning of the Group.
- Deficit of \$1.40 million in Wholesale Nursery – Ability Options closed its Wholesale Nursery operations after careful consideration of its long term financial sustainability. The decision was impacted by a loss of major contract with Masters in NSW and QLD. Masters discontinued their operations during the financial year. The loss includes provisions taken for impairment of assets and inventory.
- Surplus of \$0.70m in Employment Services – Employment division reported a surplus during the year as it delivered a strong performance under Disability Employment Services (DES) and Job Active (JA) contracts. This Division's performance has improved significantly from the prior year and Ability Options along with its subsidiary, Olympus Solutions Limited is now considered leaders within their respective regions. Government star ratings for both DES and JA were consistently high during the year. The Group, through its subsidiary, Olympus Solutions Limited, is now well placed for upcoming renewal of DES tender in 2018.
- Gain on integration \$1.73 million – A gain on acquisition of \$1.73 million was recognised in relation to integration of Kempsey Respite Services Inc., Manning Valley Respite Care Services Inc. and Northern Beaches Interchange Inc. with Ability Options Limited.

During the year, three entities integrated with Ability Options Limited. The three entities are Kempsey Respite Services Inc. (integrated on 5 September 2016), Manning Valley Respite Care Services Inc. (integrated on 2 January 2017) and Northern Beaches Interchange Inc. (integrated on 30 June 2017). All of the assets and liabilities were merged into the Group.

A gain on acquisition of \$1.73 million was recognised in the Consolidated Statement of Profit or Loss and Other Comprehensive Income. Since integration, Kempsey Respite Services Inc. reported a surplus of \$43,955 and Manning Valley Respite Care Services Inc. reported a deficit of \$294,161. The deficit in Manning Valley Respite Care Services Inc. resulted from costs incurred for transition of clients from FACS funding to NDIA funding. There is no other material impact on Consolidated Statement of Profit or Loss and Other Comprehensive Income.

**CONSOLIDATED STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION**  
**ABILITY OPTIONS LIMITED AND ITS CONTROLLED ENTITIES**  
**30 JUNE 2017 ANNUAL FINANCIAL REPORT**

	<b>NOTE</b>	<b>2017</b>	<b>2016</b>
		<b>\$</b>	<b>Restated*</b>
		<b>\$</b>	<b>\$</b>
<b>Current Assets</b>			
Cash and cash equivalents	10	10,988,050	12,973,054
Trade and other receivables	4	1,799,962	347,130
Inventories		-	489,411
Prepayments and other assets	6	2,056,212	1,658,114
<b>Total current assets</b>		<b>14,844,224</b>	<b>15,467,709</b>
<b>Non-Current Assets</b>			
Other receivables	6	126,789	-
Property, plant & equipment	5	13,812,606	14,559,901
<b>Total non-current assets</b>		<b>13,939,395</b>	<b>14,559,901</b>
<b>Total Assets</b>		<b>28,783,619</b>	<b>30,027,610</b>
<b>Current Liabilities</b>			
Trade and other payables	7	8,926,385	7,472,410
Provisions	8	3,143,937	1,789,130
Other liabilities	9	135,749	-
<b>Total current liabilities</b>		<b>12,206,071</b>	<b>9,261,540</b>
<b>Non-Current Liabilities</b>			
Provisions	8	741,183	516,080
Other liabilities	9	253,240	-
<b>Total non-current liabilities</b>		<b>994,423</b>	<b>516,080</b>
<b>Total Liabilities</b>		<b>13,200,494</b>	<b>9,777,620</b>
<b>Net Assets</b>		<b>15,583,125</b>	<b>20,249,990</b>
Accumulated funds	11	12,165,523	16,832,388
Reserves		3,417,602	3,417,602
<b>Total Funds</b>		<b>15,583,125</b>	<b>20,249,990</b>

\*Refer to Note 18

## CONSOLIDATED STATEMENT OF PROFIT OR LOSS AND OTHER COMPREHENSIVE INCOME

ABILITY OPTIONS LIMITED AND ITS CONTROLLED ENTITIES  
30 JUNE 2017 ANNUAL FINANCIAL REPORT

	NOTE	2017 \$	2016 Restated* \$
<b>Income</b>			
Revenue from ordinary activities	2	51,345,509	41,670,733
Interest Income		272,790	430,618
<b>Total income</b>		<b>51,618,299</b>	<b>42,101,351</b>
<b>Costs and Expenses</b>			
Change in inventories held		(489,411)	(79,029)
Raw materials and consumables		(281,129)	(1,907,424)
Employee benefit expenses		(40,973,596)	(31,889,017)
Depreciation expenses	5	(1,721,582)	(1,719,983)
Occupancy and accommodation expenses		(2,090,585)	(2,073,954)
Other expenses		(12,458,489)	(11,576,249)
<b>Total expenses</b>		<b>(58,014,792)</b>	<b>(49,245,656)</b>
Contribution on integration	15	1,729,628	1,727,602
<b>Net deficit from ordinary activities</b>		<b>(4,666,865)</b>	<b>(5,416,703)</b>
<b>Other comprehensive income</b>			
Net gain on revaluation of property, plant and equipment		-	127,516
<b>Total other comprehensive income</b>		<b>-</b>	<b>127,516</b>
<b>Total comprehensive deficit</b>		<b>(4,666,865)</b>	<b>(5,289,187)</b>

\*Refer to Note 18

**CONSOLIDATED STATEMENT OF CASH FLOWS**  
**ABILITY OPTIONS LIMITED AND ITS CONTROLLED ENTITIES**  
**30 JUNE 2017 ANNUAL FINANCIAL REPORT**

	<b>NOTE</b>	<b>2017</b> \$	<b>2016</b> \$
<b>Cash Flows from Operating Activities</b>			
Receipts from operations		53,094,351	41,668,294
Payments to suppliers & employees		(57,630,058)	(47,545,188)
Interest income		272,790	430,618
<b>Net cash used in operating activities</b>	10	<b>(4,262,917)</b>	<b>(5,446,276)</b>
<b>Cash Flows from Investing Activities</b>			
Payments for property plant and equipment		(1,075,706)	(2,726,605)
Proceeds from the sale of assets		435,823	1,285,289
Contribution through integration	15	2,917,796	628,855
<b>Net cash provided by / (used in) investing activities</b>		<b>2,277,913</b>	<b>(812,461)</b>
Net decrease in cash held		(1,985,004)	(6,258,737)
Cash at beginning of the financial year		12,973,054	19,231,791
<b>Cash at end of the financial year</b>	10	<b>10,988,050</b>	<b>12,973,054</b>

**DIRECTORS' DECLARATION**  
**ABILITY OPTIONS LIMITED AND ITS CONTROLLED ENTITIES**  
**30 JUNE 2017 ANNUAL FINANCIAL REPORT**

---

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

1. The consolidated financial statements and notes of Ability Options Limited, are in accordance with the requirements of the *Australian Charities and Not-for-Profits Commission Act 2012*, including:
  - (a) complying with Australian Accounting Standards - Reduced Disclosure Requirements and the *Australian Charities and Not-for-Profits Commission Regulation 2013* ;
  - (b) giving a true and fair view of the Group's financial position as at 30 June 2017 and of its performance, for the year ended on that date; and
2. In the Directors' opinion there are reasonable grounds to believe that the Group is 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 28 September 2017

  
Jonathan Isaacs – Chair and Director

  
Richard Mossie – Director



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### Auditor's Independence Declaration To the Responsible Entities of Ability Options Limited

In accordance with the requirements of section 60-40 of the Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission Act 2012, as lead auditor for the audit of Ability Options Limited for the year ended 30 June 2017, I declare that, to the best of my knowledge and belief, there have been no contraventions of any applicable code of professional conduct in relation to the audit.

A handwritten signature in dark ink that reads "Grant Thornton".

GRANT THORNTON AUDIT PTY LTD  
Chartered Accountants

A handwritten signature in dark ink that reads "James Winter".

James Winter  
Partner - Audit & Assurance

Sydney, 28 September 2017

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## Independent Auditor's Report To the Members of Ability Options Limited

### Report on the Audit of the Financial Report

#### Opinion

We have audited the accompanying financial report of Ability Options Limited and its controlled entities (the "Entity"), which comprises the consolidated statement of financial position as at 30 June 2017, and the consolidated statement of profit and loss and comprehensive income, consolidated statement of changes in funds and consolidated statement of cash flows for the year then ended, and notes to the financial statements, including a summary of significant accounting policies and the Responsible Entities' declaration.

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

- a) giving a true and fair view of the Entity's financial position as at 30 June 2017 and of its financial performance for the year then ended;
- b) complying with Australian Accounting Standards and Division 60 of the Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission Regulation 2013.

#### Basis for Auditor's Opinion

We conducted our audit in accordance with Australian Auditing Standards. Our responsibilities under those standards are further described in the *Auditor's Responsibilities for the Audit of the Financial Report* section of our report. We are independent of the Entity in accordance with the ethical requirements of the Accounting Professional and Ethical Standards Board's APES 110 *Code of Ethics for Professional Accountants* (the Code) that are relevant to our audit of the financial report in Australia. We have also fulfilled our other ethical responsibilities in accordance with the Code.

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

**Responsibilities of the Responsible Entities for the Financial Report**

The Responsible Entities of the Entity are responsible for the preparation and fair presentation of the financial report in accordance with Australian Accounting Standards and the ACNC Act, and for such internal control as the Responsible Entities determine is necessary to enable the preparation of the financial report that is free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

In preparing the financial report, the Responsible Entities are responsible for assessing the Entity's ability to continue as a going concern, disclosing, as applicable, matters related to going concern and using the going concern basis of accounting unless the Responsible Entities either intend to liquidate the Entity or to cease operations, or have no realistic alternative but to do so.

Those charged with governance are responsible for overseeing the Entity's financial reporting process.

**Auditor's Responsibilities for the Audit of the Financial Report**

Our objectives are to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial report as a whole is free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error, and to issue an auditor's report that includes our opinion. Reasonable assurance is a high level of assurance, but is not a guarantee that an audit conducted in accordance with the Australian Auditing Standards will always detect a material misstatement when it exists. Misstatements can arise from fraud or error and are considered material if, individually or in the aggregate, they could reasonably be expected to influence the economic decisions of users taken on the basis of this financial report.

As part of an audit in accordance with the Australian Auditing Standards, we exercise professional judgement and maintain professional scepticism throughout the audit. We also:

- Identify and assess the risks of material misstatement of the financial report, whether due to fraud or error, design and perform audit procedures responsive to those risks, and obtain audit evidence that is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinion. The risk of not detecting a material misstatement resulting from fraud is higher than for one resulting from error, as fraud may involve collusion, forgery, intentional omissions, misrepresentations, or the override of internal control.
- Obtain an understanding of internal control relevant to the audit 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 Entity's internal control.
- Evaluate the appropriateness of accounting policies used and the reasonableness of accounting estimates and related disclosures made by the Responsible Entities.



- Conclude on the appropriateness of the Responsible Entities' use of the going concern basis of accounting and, based on the audit evidence obtained, whether a material uncertainty exists related to events or conditions that may cast significant doubt on the Registered Entity's ability to continue as a going concern. If we conclude that a material uncertainty exists, we are required to draw attention in our auditor's report to the related disclosures in the financial report or, if such disclosures are inadequate, to modify our opinion. Our conclusions are based on the audit evidence obtained up to the date of our audit report. However, future events or conditions may cause the Entity to cease to continue as a going concern.
- Evaluate the overall presentation, structure and content of the financial report, including the disclosures, and whether the financial report represents the underlying transactions and events in a manner that achieves fair presentation.
- Obtain sufficient appropriate evidence regarding the financial information of the entities or business activities within the Entity to express an opinion on the financial report. We are responsible for the direction, supervision, and performance of the Entity audit. We remain solely responsible for our audit opinion.

We communicate with those charged with governance regarding, among other matters, the planned scope and timing of the audit and significant audit findings, including any significant deficiencies in internal control that we identify during our audit.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Grant Thornton".

GRANT THORNTON AUDIT PTY LTD  
Chartered Accountants

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "James Winter".

James Winter  
Partner - Audit & Assurance  
Sydney, 28 September 2017

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## EMPLOYMENT SERVICES

### Bateau Bay

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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 Road  
Brookvale NSW 2100

### Camden

Shop 19, Camden Village Court  
Camden NSW 2570

### Campbelltown

Level 2, 101 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

### Hornsby

Suite 5, Level 3, 20 George Street  
Hornsby NSW 2077

### Katoomba

29 Parke Street  
Katoomba NSW 2780

### Merrylands

Shop 2, 175 Pitt Street  
Merrylands NSW 2160

### Mount Druitt

Shop 11c, Zoe Place  
Mt Druitt NSW 2770

### Parramatta

33 Argyle Street  
Parramatta NSW 2150

### Penrith

3/30 Woodriff Street  
Penrith NSW 2750

### Quakers Hill

Quakers Hill Neighbourhood Centre  
128 Farnham Road  
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 Street Ryde NSW 2112

### Seven Hills

7-11 Rowley Street  
Seven Hills NSW 2147

### The Entrance

231-233 The Entrance Road  
The Entrance NSW 2261

### Windsor

Shop 9, 188-192 George Street  
Windsor NSW 2756

### Wyang

Suite 2, 30-32 Hely Street  
Wyang NSW 2259

## ACCOMMODATION & SUPPORTED LIVING

Suite 1.14, 29-31 Lexington Drive  
Bella Vista NSW 2153  
02 8884 9286

## HUNTER & NDIS SERVICES

224 Pacific Highway  
Charlestown NSW 2290  
02 4943 3411

### Maitland

First Floor, 5 Ken Tubman Drive  
Maitland NSW 2320

## COMMUNITY & LIFESTYLES

7-11 Rowley Street  
Seven Hills NSW 2147  
02 8811 1723

## CONNECTING HEALTH

Suite 1.14, 29-31 Lexington Drive  
Bella Vista NSW 2153  
02 8884 9254

A member of the Ability Options community

## NEWCASTLE TEMPORARY CARE

224 Pacific Highway  
Charlestown NSW 2290  
02 4918 4788

## NAMBUCCA VALLEY disABILITY SERVICES INC.

Shop 5A, 40 Bowra Street  
Nambucca Heads NSW 2448  
02 6568 9802

## KEMPSEY REGIONAL SUPPORT

Argus Centre  
72-74 Elbow Street  
West Kempsey NSW 2440  
02 6561 8300

## ABOUT INCLUSION

2/80 Wynter Street  
Taree NSW 2430  
02 6552 7374

## NORTHERN BEACHES INTERCHANGE

2 Jackson Road  
Warriewood NSW 2012  
02 9970 0500

Ability Options: 1300 422 454  
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