



2018

ANNUAL REPORT

'One Trusted Source – Many Options'

ABOUT US

Assisting individuals to achieve their aspirations and inclusion in the community

Ability Options was started in 1976 by the late Greg McIntyre OAM and has been making a difference in people's lives ever since. We began as a union between the Rotary Club of Guildford and the NSW Health Commission, helping people with intellectual disabilities move out of large institutions and into their own homes.

Empowering and supporting individuals to live an independent life has been our aim from the start. We:

- assist people to live in their own homes
- provide valuable opportunities for inclusion in their local community
- offer work experience and employment opportunities, and
- support people via specialist allied health and National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) services.

Our support is personalised, helping individuals to achieve their short- and long-term goals. Our Mission is to make a difference in people's lives, offering life-changing solutions to enhance their everyday experiences. Most importantly, we help to build self-esteem and foster independence.

We are a passionate and dedicated organisation consisting of over 748 people working across 45 sites in North, South and Western Sydney and the Central Coast. We also operate in the Illawarra and Hunter Regions, and have community partners on the Mid North Coast and Northern Beaches. Our head office is in Bella Vista in Sydney.

Ability Options respectfully acknowledge the traditional custodians of the Country on which we live and work together, and is committed to building relations, respect and opportunities with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples.



The meaning of the logo

The Aboriginal design is the 'meeting place' symbol used by most Tribes for thousands of years. The designer's interpretation of the circle and the dots represent community gathering, cultural diversity, growth and expansion. The green symbols around the 'community' are the Aboriginal people that are connected with the community.





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White Ribbon Accreditation plaque event, The Entrance. Heather Scheibenstock (Ability Options Board Member), Auntie Jenni McEwan and Sergeant Dooley (White Ribbon Ambassador)

HISTORY

1976 –

We were established in 1976, by the late Greg McIntyre OAM and initially called the Assistance and Accommodation of Intellectually and Socially Handicapped Persons (AAISH), before becoming incorporated as a registered charity. The registration was a joint venture with the Rotary Club of Guildford and the New South Wales Health Commission.

Our purpose was to de-institutionalise people with intellectual disabilities at Rydalmere Hospital, supporting them to live in the community. There were two community living groups initially: Pindarri Hostel in Merrylands (six tenants) and Kyewong in Harris Park (eight tenants), with each group supported by a community educator and a community nurse.

The success of these groups and the positive life changes they provided for residents meant it wasn't long before we began to expand. We quickly went beyond community housing to include the ongoing development of the individual.



2018 –

Now, we provide a holistic service to our clients, prioritising individual needs. Our Employment Services work to find sustainable employment in line with each person's goals, skills and interests and our Disability Services support individuals with accommodation and respite as well as providing services that focus on opportunities for inclusion in participants local communities.

At every step, we offer opportunities for independent choice and valuable connection with the local community.

- People we support
(includes integrated entities): 14,506
- Number of employees (Ability Options only): 748
- Geographical footprint: Eastern NSW - Shellharbour to Nambucca



PATRON'S MESSAGE

The past year has seen difficult decisions made by the Board of Ability Options to meet the vicissitudes of the pricing model of the NDIS.

As I mentioned in my message last year, there remain some serious reservations about the way the NDIS and the Board of the NDIA are meeting the needs of people with disabilities.

It is salient that the area in which Ability Options continues to do well, both financially and concerning outcomes for people with disabilities and the unemployed generally, is its employment arm, which is not yet part of the NDIS funding model.

On the other hand, the population first served 42 years ago was people needing support to live and prosper in a community setting. This is the very group now providing serious financial challenges for the organisation, whose Mission it has always been to help these people to enjoy the best quality of life possible, irrespective of the level of support they need.

In a recent keynote address on the issues of human rights and disabilities, especially in the context of the NDIS, I emphasised two key problems facing the NDIS in attempting to conform with the Articles of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UN CRPD).

My first major concern is the lack of an effective mechanism to provide inter-sectorial collaboration between the apparent silos of State/Territory and National Government Departments which provide generic services to people with disabilities. Some State Governments are in the process of



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.

abdicating responsibility for their citizens with disabilities completely. I have yet to see any mechanism by which the NDIS is capable of ensuring people with disabilities can navigate the complexities of inter-sectorial bureaucracies.

My second concern is more philosophical and moral, relating to the acceptance by the community generally of mutual responsibility for its citizens with disabilities. The NDIS is touted as a significant breakthrough because it is an insurance-based scheme which brings the certainty of an entitlement policy. This claims to be a significant paradigm shift from a welfare-based approach. Insurance policies may bring certainty of funding, but they do not ensure people will care.

One critical way in which resources must be directed is towards building community capacity and the development of social capital. While disability policies in the western world are moving strongly toward supporting person-centred planning, individual choice and the allocation of support resources to individuals, rather than to service organisations, there is a danger that generic community resources and natural supports will not be sufficient for personal plans to be realised.

Despite the rhetoric, I sadly believe most current western, and to some extent, developing country, government policies, remain captured in the belief that the operation of market forces results in a more equitable society. It is a contestable position, and leaves the most vulnerable, including those with disabilities, dangerously exposed. Hopefully, we shall see a return to a situation where governments provide much-needed leadership to inspire their communities to a higher plane than self-indulgent materialism.

The quality of life and social inclusion of people with disabilities will, to a large extent, depend upon external socio-political-economic forces. Their level of acceptance as fellow human beings and citizens will also be influenced by the humanity and compassion of the general community. Those advocating for this population need to engage with the broader community in its journey towards a better quality of life and happiness. Thus far, we have been too focused on the needs of people with disabilities in isolation from those of the wider community. In other words, we have not been sufficiently strategic in our thinking, our policies or our actions.

CHAIR'S REPORT

A dedicated team working towards a sustainable future

The past year has been one of notable highlights and challenges for the organisation. Now, through the passion, hard work and strategic vision of every member of the Ability Options team, we can confidently embrace the year ahead. Despite a challenging environment, our employment services have achieved five-star ratings across the business, and we've done an outstanding job of providing people with valuable employment opportunities.

It has also been a year of exciting partnerships. We expanded our footprint by merging with existing agencies on the Mid North Coast and in the Hunter Region. The integration led to us winning a significant tender to transition the management of 41 group homes and six respite units from the State Government to the not-for-profit sector.

"Our primary objective in 2018-2019 is to maintain the high-quality and sustainable services expected by our clients."

Another influential partnership was formed with the NSW Aboriginal Land Council, boosting our ability to meet the employment needs of Aboriginal people. As part of this relationship, we were delighted to send two of our senior people, Brenda Odewahn and Annette Lamb, to the UN with the NSW Aboriginal Land Council delegation.

These achievements are a testament to the dedication of our team. While we fully support the National Disability Insurance



Jon Isaacs BA [Hons]; FAICD
Chair

Jon brings to Ability Options over 30 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 the 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.

Scheme, the new environment has forced us to make some serious financial and structural decisions to lay the foundation for a financially stable future.

This year also saw the resignation of CEO, Fred JP Van Steel, after five years with the organisation. We benefited hugely from Fred's strategic vision; he was responsible for instigating the successful Front

our clients. The changes have paved the way for all our efforts, energies and resources to go to the frontline, where they are needed the most.

One of our longest-serving Board members, Nola Buck, retires this year after 14 years serving the interests of clients. Nola brought perspective, honesty, principles and commitment that are a beacon for us all. We'll miss her insights and warmth.

We welcomed Mark Twomey as a new Board member this year. Mark brings a strong background in assisting vulnerable members of society as well as financial qualifications.

I thank all our Board members who voluntarily commit many hours of their time and expertise, not only deliberating at Board and sub-committee meetings, but also representing the organisation at public functions and visiting work locations.

The Board and management are building a strong partnership in leading the organisation through this challenging environment.

Up initiative, as well as the plan to expand further into NSW regions.

His replacement, Julia Squire, was selected from a competitive field to become our new CEO. She quickly put her imprint on the business by devising the restructure that has left us in a stable position for next year and beyond.

We are confident about 2018-2019. It will be a good year both financially and regarding service provision. Our primary objective is to maintain the high-quality and sustainable services expected by

CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER'S REPORT

The Ability Options Mission has never been more relevant than it is today

Much of the 2017-2018 financial year was led by my predecessor, Fred JP Van Steel, and I'd like to begin by recognising his leadership and efforts on behalf of Ability Options over the past five years. I'd also like to acknowledge our excellent volunteer Board, who continue to keep faith with our Mission and are inspirational in leading the Ability Options community.

The 2017-2018 year was one of considerable expansion for Ability Options. We completed integrations with partner providers from the Northern Beaches to the Mid North Coast, and new partnerships in the Hunter Region and Mid North Coast. The larger footprint allowed us to extend our service portfolio to provide Specialist Disability Services devolved from the NSW Government, and the successful awarding of a new employment contract for Disability Employment Services held with the Commonwealth Government.

As the National Disability Insurance Scheme has continued to roll out, we have reviewed our service portfolio and withdrawn from one-to-one provision in areas where we think other providers do it better. Our participants were carefully supported to alternate providers over many months, and our employees did a fabulous job

of making the transition as easy as possible for our participants.

As we continue to adjust to new funding models and evolve our services, we have reduced our costs and put a greater proportion of our revenue into direct service provision so that we can support more people with a disability. This includes providing assistance with employment opportunities, as well as helping more job seekers, parents returning to work, Indigenous community members, young people leaving school and others to find jobs. This has meant our workforce has been reduced in some areas of our business, and I'd like to recognise the efforts, achievements, and commitment to the Mission of all of those colleagues. They understood the

need for change, and we supported them into new opportunities wherever we could.

Looking forward, Ability Options has an excellent service and financial future underpinned by outstanding employees, loyal participants, supportive communities and sustained and sustainable partnerships. We have new opportunities to develop service offerings and partnerships that connect to our Mission and expertise. As we look to another 40 years of meeting our communities, we aim to continue our Mission to be a credible partner, a trusted provider and a great employer.

I am proud to be leading our Ability Options community to further success and to be building on our proud 42-year history.



Julia Squire
CEO

Julia Squire is a highly experienced CEO and leader with more than 30 years' management experience. Most of Julia's career has been spent managing public health services. Julia has also spent time in the commercial sector, supporting organisations with leadership development, executive and clinical leadership recruitment, strategy, and governance.

Julia has led organisations in every health sector as a provider, commissioner and system leader in policy roles. With a passion for quality, safety, engagement and sustainability Julia has ensured the services, organisations and systems she has worked in are person-centric. Julia is an experienced Board member, and has worked closely with communities, GPs, NGOs and the private sector to develop partnerships to create innovative and sustainable service models and funding arrangements.

"Ability Options will support people to achieve their aspirations and inclusion in the community."

2017–2018 HIGHLIGHTS

12,559 People supported through
employment services

1,498 People supported through
the NDIS

449 People supported through
integrated partners

148 Total residents supported through
group homes

13 Group homes
Sydney

14 Group homes
Hunter Valley

11 Group homes
Mid North Coast
(incl.NVdS)

5 Respite
Units

2 Respite
Units

45 Ability Options Community
Sites and Service Hubs

6,090 Ability Options
Facebook followers



Mark enjoying a day out in Nambucca

BOARD OF DIRECTORS



Jon Isaacs

BA [Hons]; FAICD

Chair

Jon was elected Chair at the Annual General Meeting held in 2014. 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.



Richard Mossie

BCom; FCPA

Non-Executive Director and Treasurer

Richard joined the Ability Options Board in 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 his retirement 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 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 20 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.



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 43 years, David is a former President of the Rotary Club of Blacktown City, and has been recognised as a Paul Harris Fellow with four 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.



Pearl Forrester

CPA; MBA; BEcon; GradDipCompSci; GAICD

Deputy Chair (until March 2018)

Pearl held a position on the board until March 2018. 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.



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, is currently Principal at Social Traction, and lectures at several tertiary institutions.



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, and community and stakeholder engagement, as well as a passion for driving positive outcomes in changing environments.



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.

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.



Sue Healy

Deputy Chair (from March 2018)

Sue joined the Board of Ability Options in February 2017. Sue is an experienced Non-Executive Director and has extensive business experience, including 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 regularly featured in the BRW fastest growing companies. 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 organisations such as CML Group, Ability Options, 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).



Mark Twomey

MDR; MPA; MAppFin; CAANZ; FFIA

Non-Executive Director

Mark joined the board in 2017. Mark has broad experience in business management, accounting, manufacturing and financial institutions. He has worked in senior roles within ANZ Bank, has run his own business. He is currently the Director of Corporate Services for Youth Off The Streets. In this role he is responsible, in collaboration with the CEO and Executive Team, for the future development and growth of the organisation.

Mark has significant experience in leading and managing finance, fundraising, human resources, information technology, operations and development strategies. He also has extensive experience in statutory compliance and corporate governance.

ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURE

PEOPLE WE SUPPORT



HV Disability Services
Ability Options
Homes
Newcastle Temporary Care
Summer Foundation
Support Co-ordination
Therapy
Respite

Sydney Accommodation and Independent Living
MNC Disability Services
Northern Beaches Interchange
Intake
Kempsey Regional Support
About Inclusion
Nambucca Valley disAbility Services

NDIS

Hunter Services

Sydney & Mid North Coast Services

ParentsNext

WorkReady

jobactive

DES

VTEC

DISABILITY SERVICES

EMPLOYMENT SERVICES

BOARD MEMBERS

Jon Isaacs
Richard Mossie
Nola Buck
David R Bamford OAM
Pearl Forrester
Michael Maxwell
Heather Scheibenstock
Patricia Biszewski
Sue Healy
Mark Twomey

CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER
Brenda Odewahn

CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER
Julia Squire

CHAIR
Jon Isaacs

CORPORATE SERVICES

Chief Financial Officer
Nick Johnson
Executive Leader
People & Culture
Sharn Chisholm
Executive Leader
Quality & Risk Assurance
Daniel Carbone

COMMITTEES

AUDIT & RISK

Richard Mossie (Chair),
David Bamford, Patricia Biszewski

Responsibilities:

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

SERVICE AND QUALITY

Michael Maxwell (Chair),
Nola Buck, Patricia Biszewski,
Heather Scheibenstock

Responsibilities:

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

FINANCE

Richard Mossie (Chair),
Nola Buck, Mark Twomey,
Pearl Forrester

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), Sue Healy,
Richard Mossie

Responsibilities:

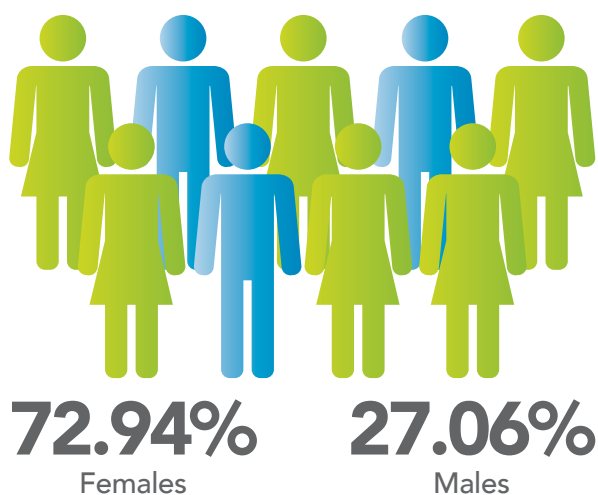
- Board & Executive Leadership Team succession
- CEO and Executive Leadership Team remuneration
- Remuneration policy
- Board structure, skills and governance.

ROLE

To support the work of the Board, strengthen 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.

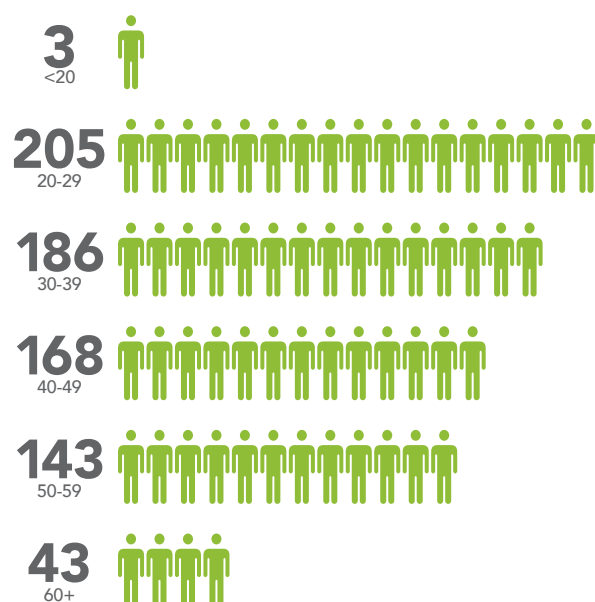
DIVERSITY PROFILE

Gender



This covers Ability Options, About Inclusion, Newcastle Temporary Care, Kempsey Regional Support and Nambucca Valley disAbility Services

Age Profile



Culture



4.33% of employees are of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander descent



Members of the VTEC Team hosting a cultural cruise onboard the Tribal Warrior to acknowledge Reconciliation Week.



Jeanie from the VTEC team (right)
with Alissia from Coles

SERVICES SNAPSHOT

The Ability Options Community supports people from 45 Sites and Community Hubs across Sydney, the Illawarra, Central Coast, and the Hunter and Mid North Coast Regions.

EMPLOYMENT SERVICES



DES

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



jobactive

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



VTEC

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



ParentsNext

ParentsNext providers work with eligible parents to help set education and employment goals, develop a pathway to achieve their goals and link them to services and activities in the local community.



WorkReady

WorkReady is a service that equips people with the skills, knowledge and experience to enter or re-enter the world of further training or work with confidence.



Members of the Ability Options community



DISABILITY SERVICES



Accommodation & Independent Supported Living

Accommodation and supported living choices for people with disability.



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.



Co-ordination of Supports

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



Community Activities

Offering 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 and connect with the community.



Lifetime Care and Support

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



Therapy Services

The team of Psychologists and Therapists works with Accommodation & Supported Living residents, NDIS participants and people in WorkReady, and provides vocational counselling within Olympus Solutions.



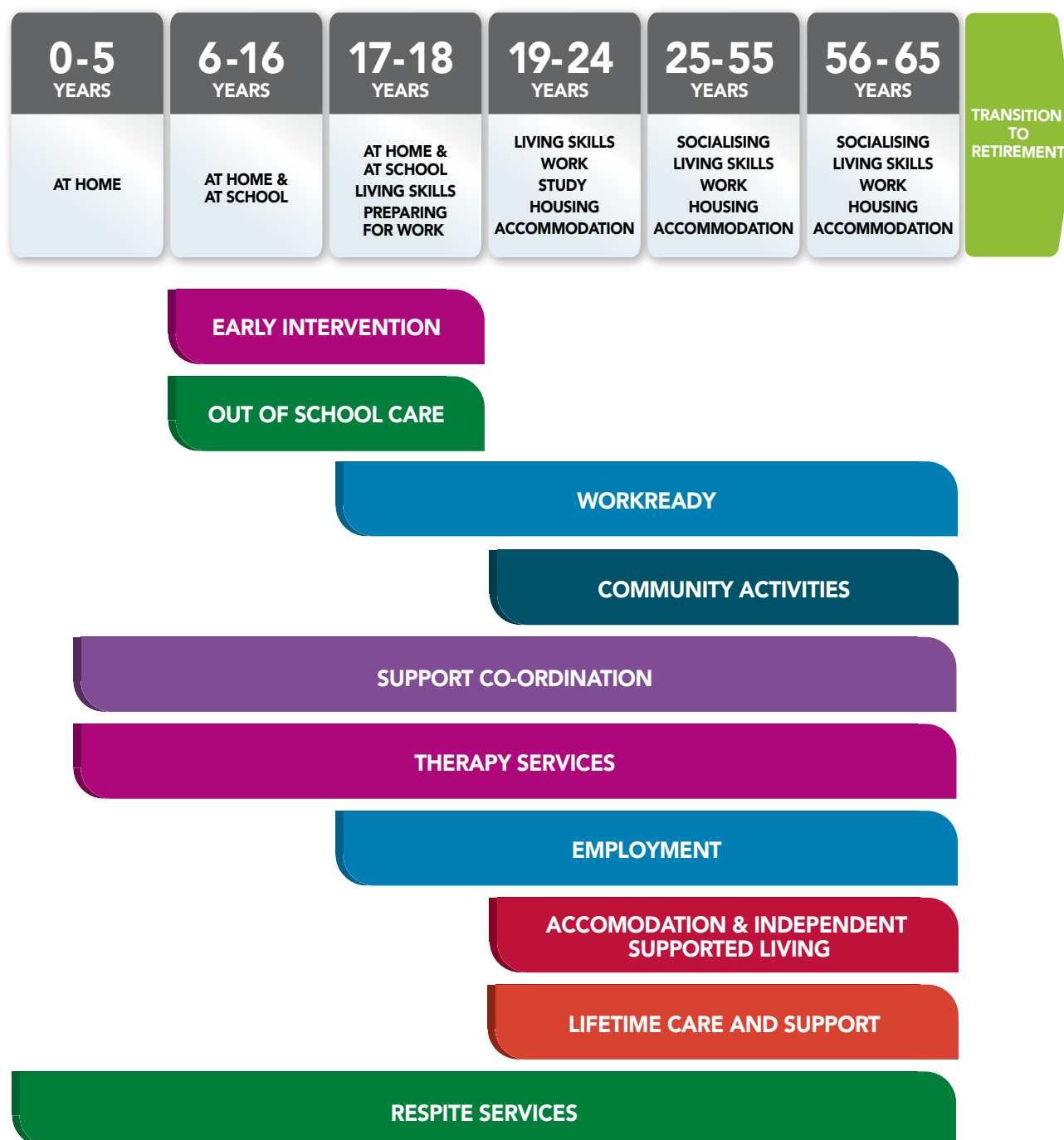
Front Up: Arts and Cultural Program

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

SUPPORT FOR ALL AGES – JOURNEY OF INCLUSION

Ability Options provide services across each 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'



A YEAR OF EXPANSION AND PARTNERSHIP

From an operations perspective, 2017-2018 has been a very busy year.

We've had significant growth across the business as a result of the devolution of FACS housing (NSW Government) across operations in the Mid-North Coast and Hunter Regions, and also won significant new business in disability employment to commence in the new financial year. Services for all our participants successfully met their accreditation requirements, and the Employment Division has maintained a high-performing five-star review rating. Ability Options has extended our reach from the Illawarra right through to the Hunter Region and across Greater Western, North Western and South Western Sydney, representing a considerable expansion over the past 12 months.

The integration of partner entities has expanded our accommodation and disability services and, while we exited one-to-one services in Sydney, those services continue to be offered and provided with great care and expertise in our regions. The transition to the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) continues, and our services are continually evolving to meet the challenge and the intent of the NDIS to offer choice to participants.

The transition of specialist disability services from the NSW Government to Ability Options was a huge piece of work in which participants, families, employees and partners worked closely together. In partnership with organisations in the Mid North Coast and Hunter Valley, Ability Options increased its

accommodation footprint and responsibilities considerably.

Our coordination of Support and Therapy Services continues to adapt to the new NDIS, environment while supporting our participants and their needs.

The Employment Division has delivered change and services throughout the year. In April, we successfully bid to increase the capacity of our ParentsNext program, which supports single or partnered parents who are reliant on welfare into work. The objective of the program is to help people to build their confidence and skills, so they are ready to find employment when their child reaches six years old (or sooner, depending on their circumstances). In May, we were successful in our application for a program called the National Panel of Assessors. This provides a range of independent assessment services to assist people with disability in the workplace. Our inclusion on this Panel allows us to advocate more effectively for the needs of our participants.



Brenda Odewahn

COO Ability Options and CEO Olympus Solutions

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 ex-offenders and people requiring support for mental health needs. She has held various management positions and been involved in tendering for government contracts.

Brenda joined Ability Options in 2011. Her focus is on ensuring 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.

Our WorkReady program has been another area of significant growth in the past 12 months. The program is often referred to as NDIS and its goal is to find employment outcomes for participants who have funding in their NDIS plan. We run a preparatory and capacity-building service for these people, working with employers to provide job opportunities.

Last year, we also developed our capability to meet the employment objectives of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, again expanding our geographical scope from the Hunter to the Illawarra Regions. We received an extension to our Vocational Training and Employment Centre (VTEC) contracts, which has directly led to a new partnership with the NSW Aboriginal Land Council. The partnership aims to support cultural competency across the sector for service delivery.

The Land Council partnership was also instrumental in another highlight: in April this year, two of our key team members visited the



Fairfield Employment site opening with Fairfield Mayor, Frank Carbone

United Nations. The trip involved a deep dive into Indigenous issues, furthering our conversation to develop policy across the board.

However, the important thing is to look at what growth means for people using our services. The good news is that we are now able to offer our services to a broader population rather than be limited by a small number of locations. Until this point we have stayed close to our heartland, but the expansion of the past year has given us new opportunities. We have been able to offer services to highly disadvantaged groups, achieving long-term and sustainable employment outcomes, and helping to break the welfare cycle. The number of good news stories in this report is a testament to the hard work and passion of everyone involved in the changes this year.

As for the future, in June I was appointed to the new role of Chief Operating Officer of the Ability Options Group, effective 1 July. I am looking forward to focussing on

the full scope of operations of Ability Options. An area for particular attention will be integrating our service offering and management across the combined areas of employment, accommodation and disability services, as these are our areas of greatest strength.

Other critical areas for the coming year will be the full integration of our integration partners across the Mid North Coast, the Hunter and the Northern Beaches area to bring their specific offerings into our service groups.

The NDIS will continue to be an area of priority in the coming year and beyond. Offering services in the NDIS arena where we believe we hold real strength was one of

the aims of the recent restructure in order to concentrate resources into success in those areas. This is why engaging partners is such a focus for us – they can offer services in different areas of the NDIS, encouraging a holistic service for participants.

The objective of the Operations Team in the coming year is to grow and develop services in which we perform well, extending them into our current community and offering them to the broader community. I'm excited to see the positive results of the tremendous hard work put in by the Ability Options team last year, and how the strategic changes will allow us to be more efficient and focused on our goals.

"The important thing is to look at what growth means for our clients. The good news is that we are now able to offer our services to a wider population, rather than being limited by a small number of locations."

WORKREADY HELPS HARRY FIND HIS DREAM JOB

As a successful WorkReady participant, Harry is a shining example of how the service meets the individual goals of participants.

Harry joined WorkReady in November 2017, with the aim of developing his skills and experience, as well as improving his confidence and independence. His long-term goal was to find and keep a job in the media industry. Harry's ideal career is to work as a media critic, and his dream is to host a YouTube channel devoted to critiquing videos and movies. With this brief in mind, WorkReady consultants worked with Harry to identify his employment and personal goals, before placing him in workshops relevant to his aims.

Harry's WorkReady consultants organised various work experience opportunities to determine his career pathway and the industries in which he enjoyed working. His first two work experience placements were as a store hand in a local bookstore and a general shop assistant at Woolworths, Bateau Bay. Harry enjoyed these opportunities and learnt about the importance of quality customer service. Following these placements, Harry's WorkReady consultant, Mike (with the assistance of his Ability Options colleagues), organised for Harry to complete work experience at a local media organisation.

Harry, with onsite support from Mike, immediately got involved with the day-to-day tasks of working in a media company. Harry has a keen eye for detail, and the company based his primary responsibilities on this strength. His duties included proofing content to ensure that subtitles matched the audio, as well as general proofing and quality control.

Harry thrived on this work experience, and the media company was very impressed with Harry's performance. It was working so well that Mike not only organised an



extension for Harry but also negotiated employment for him. He has now started working part-time and has been transferred to Ability Options Gosford Disability Employment Service (DES) to continue receiving support in his new workplace.

Congratulations, Harry, we wish you all the best and look forward to seeing where your employment journey takes you.

“WorkReady consultants worked with Harry to identify his employment and personal goals before placing him in workshops relevant to his aims.”

WorkReady

WorkReady equips people with the skills, knowledge and real-world experience to enter or re-enter work or further training with confidence.



A PATH TO FULL-TIME EMPLOYMENT AND A HIDDEN TALENT REVEALED

Thomas Sullivan, a 29-year-old Kamilaroi man from Walgett, has turned his life around over the past few years. Working with Ability Options VTEC consultants, he is now in full-time permanent employment, having gained further education and training through the program.

After graduating from high school, Thomas moved from Walgett to look for work. However, he returned home after the birth of his daughter. Shortly after she turned one, Thomas gained full custody of her and became a full-time dad. In 2014, Thomas again became a father, this time to a little boy.

Thomas moved to Sydney in 2016 with the intention of finding a better life for himself and his children. In 2017, he was contacted by a staff member from VTEC after his resume was sent through to them. Thomas talked to a consultant about finding warehouse work and help with gaining his forklift licence.

With the help of his consultant, Thomas was successful in gaining a warehouse position with a labour hire company. However, to stay in his job, he would need to apply for a forklift licence.

Thomas was apprehensive about the work involved to get a licence because of his reading and writing abilities. However, Thomas showed great determination, and with continuous study and help from his consultant, he gained his licence. Securing full-time employment meant a great deal to Thomas; with two kids in his care, he finally felt like he was stable.

Besides his family, Thomas' other passion is art. VTEC asked him if he would produce a piece of art for display at the Ability Options offices. Thomas agreed, and within a week had produced a beautiful artwork which is now also used on the



organisation's pull-up banners. Following this, Thomas has also produced stunning works on the 2018 NAIDOC week theme, and is currently working on a piece for Australia's Ambassador to the United Nations in New York City.

VTEC has continued to provide Thomas with mentoring and support during his time at work, helping him with additional study and negotiating for the time to obtain his forklift licence. Now, Thomas has moved on from the labour-hire company to a new permanent role with Supagas.

Thomas is happy with the mentoring and support he receives from VTEC. In return, he is doing what he loves most: producing beautiful pieces of artwork for the organisation.

"Securing full-time employment meant a great deal to Thomas; with two kids in his care, he finally felt like he was stable."

VTEC

The Vocational Training and Employment Centres (VTEC) initiative assists Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander job seekers in finding sustainable employment by matching the individual's skills and abilities with guaranteed jobs. It provides a supportive service for both the employer and the employee.



BACK IN THE SWING OF THINGS

On any given weekend, you might find Michael practising a new song or rapping. He is a lively young man who brings any party to life. After being away from the workforce for several years, Michael recently found work, something that he feels has given him a greater sense of confidence, independence, and the ability to further develop himself.

Michael was seeking an employer that would be inclusive, helpful, and offer a long-term role. He was proactive and worked closely with the Employment Liaison Consultants at Ability Options to discuss his goals and identify opportunities for himself. He also identified some areas where he could receive support to assist with his vision impairment.

With the efforts of Ability Options Employer Liaison Consultants, an Administrative Assistant position was negotiated for Michael at the Differently Abled People Association (DAPA) in Homebush.

He performed very well in the interview and was offered work experience for a number of weeks so that the organisation could determine his suitability for the role. At the end of the trial, Michael was offered a permanent position at DAPA. He was provided with fortnightly on-the-job support from Ability Options to help him settle into the role.

Due to Michael's vision impairment, Ability Options organised a workplace assessment through JobAccess that allowed Michael to receive workplace modifications in the form of assistive technology.

Michael has now hit the milestone of six months in the job, and "has been a helpful member of the team" according to Mr Yu from DAPA.



"It's definitely a big change, being back in the workforce after more than two years," Michael says. "It's great being back into the swing of things. It gives me the drive and motivation to get up each morning with a smile. I really enjoy working with the team here."

"It's great being back into the swing of things. It gives me the drive and motivation to get up each morning with a smile."

Disability Employment Service (DES)

Disability Employment Service (DES) assists people with disability, or an injury or health condition to find and keep a job.



BROOKE FINDS A FULFILLING CAREER

Brooke had been seeking a job opportunity for some time when she came across Olympus Solutions.

Initially, she wasn't too sure of what career path she wanted to take.

"When I first attended Olympus Solutions, I hadn't had much work experience, so I was a little unsure of myself and where I wanted to go with my career. I knew I wanted a job that involved interacting with people and helping in some way, but I just wasn't sure what that could be. Then my Consultant mentioned hairdressing and that seemed really interesting."

Brooke's Olympus Solutions Consultant, Nicolette, found her an internship opportunity in the hairdressing industry at Hairdo & Barbery. Nicolette then accompanied Brooke to her job interview and provided her with mentoring and support.

As the internship continued, Brooke began to really enjoy the role, especially the friendly interactions with customers.

The employer was very pleased with Brooke's progress as part of the PaTH internship and offered her an ongoing role as a trainee hairdresser. Brooke's employer said:

"What a wonderful opportunity for both Brooke and myself. The internship allowed Brooke to see if she wanted to become a hairdresser. She gained new skills and confidence in the industry, and it gave me the time to see if she was suited to my workplace, at no financial cost. It resulted in a happy ending all round."



"It's been a great experience. I've learnt a lot, I've gained paid employment, and I've found a career I feel passionate about."

jobactive

jobactive is a no-cost service that connects job seekers with employers. It is delivered by a network of jobactive providers in over 1700 locations across Australia, including Olympus Solutions, the Employment Division of Ability Options.

 **jobactive**
an Australian
Government Initiative

A YEAR OF MAJOR TRANSITION FOR DISABILITY SERVICES

Last financial year was one of change, expansion and new partnerships for Disability Services.

The team managed the transition of 41 group homes from the government-run Family and Community Services (FACS) to the not-for-profit sector. It was a significant project for the organisation which meant substantial growth both physically and geographically.

As part of the process, Ability Options became part of two consortia – Mid North Coast Disability Services (MNCDS) and Hunter Valley Disability Services (HVDS). We were the lead agency in these two consortia, managing the entire transition with myself as the project manager.

Our Accommodation Division grew with the transfer. We went from 15 group homes in Sydney to an additional 15 from the HVDS consortium and another 10 through our integrated MNCDS partners. These additional homes meant we more than doubled our Accommodation Division.

For participants, it has meant shifting to the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) model, leading to greater individualised funding for their accommodation services. As a consequence, our clients can now enjoy their choice of lifestyle, giving them greater independence. As an organisation, this is the best possible outcome: happy and confident clients.

For me personally, the growth of the past year has allowed me to experience other areas of the business. For Ability Options, having one General Manager for the region means we are able to pool resources more effectively with our partners in areas such as training and staff. It's a more streamlined approach to managing the region.

The year has been challenging, but incredibly rewarding. We've had a number of people moving through the organisation into more senior roles, showing that our team stepped up and did an outstanding job.

The most important part is making sure we can now continue to support people to achieve their goals. That's the exciting part for me: making a difference in people's lives.

Michelle Hodge
General Manager, Disability Services

“Our clients can now enjoy their choice of lifestyle, giving them greater independence. As an organisation, this is the best possible outcome: happy and confident clients.”

Mid North Coast and Hunter Valley Disability Services

Mid North Coast Disability Services (MNCDS) is a not-for-profit consortium group of five local, well-respected community organisations based on the Mid North Coast and includes Nambucca Valley disAbility Services, About Inclusion, Kempsey Regional Support, Booroongen Djugun, and Ability Options.

Hunter Valley Disability Services (HVDS) is the Hunter Region-based consortium of three of the region's most respected disability service providers: Ability Options, ConnectAbility Australia and Finding Yellow.

The members of HVDS and MNCDS have joined together to share services, infrastructure and values, and deliver a dynamic, person-driven, holistic service model to successfully support the ongoing delivery of Specialist Disability Services (SDS) from the NSW Department of Family and Community Service (FACS) in the Hunter and Mid North Coast Regions of NSW.





Enjoying morning Tea at Sea Breezes Repite Unit



Relaxing in the garden at Bonville Respite Unit

A RESILIENT AND COMMITTED TEAM

Last year was one of challenges and successes.

The greatest challenge we faced was the cessation of one-to-one supports and the transition of hundreds of participants and their families to other services. The change meant a restructuring of our business and saying goodbye to many hard-working and committed colleagues. However, the team showed remarkable resilience, becoming even stronger and more passionate in times of adversity.

A key success of last year was our partnership with Summer Housing and Summer Foundation. Working together, we demonstrated to the National Disability Insurance Agency that the Hunter Housing Demonstration Project model should be an option for young people who are at risk of being moved into residential aged care facilities. The alternative model has now paved the way for other housing developments across the country. As a result, we have been invited to tender for further developments with Summer Housing.

One of the main highlights of last year is seeing how the different facets of our organisation can work together closely to achieve holistic outcomes for our participants. One example is a participant who received coordination, therapy and work readiness supports and has now obtained paid employment through the Disability Employment Service. This demonstrates how the highly skilled teams across the organisation can meet individual needs.

Next year, I'm excited about Ability Options working closely with the Hunter Valley Disability Services residents, families and team members. Located in the Maitland office, we are identifying how we can expand our services in the region. Another key focus in the year ahead will be formalising our external partnerships to provide services outside the government-funded space as we enter the competitive open market.

Supporting people with disability to achieve their goals is what keeps us committed to the work we do, enabling people to live independent lives. It's something of which I am incredibly proud.

Our participants have confidence that their needs and wants are understood and respected by staff who are highly skilled and knowledgeable. Next year, this confidence becomes even more important, as participants will require ongoing support with their NDIS planning. We look forward to improving the experience for people even further.

Naomi McCorkell
General Manager, Disability Services – Hunter

“Supporting people with disability to achieve their goals is what keeps us committed to the work we do, enabling people to live independent lives.”



NEWCASTLE TEMPORARY CARE LAUNCH THEIR INDEPENDENCE DAY



This year saw the launch of an exciting new life skills program for young adults, as Newcastle Temporary Care started their Independence Day group. The joint initiative is an encouraging example of how working with the local community can produce excellent outcomes for young people.

Based at the Lake Macquarie PCYC (Police Citizens Youth Club), the Independence

Day program runs from the commercial kitchen facilities. In fact, the partnership between NTC and the PCYC was vital in receiving a grant to update the kitchen. The brand-new kitchen is used by the Independence Day participants to learn valuable life skills, helping them to become more confident in the kitchen, gain an understanding of the importance of safe food handling, and learn how to cook meals independently.

The kitchen meets modern compliance standards, with new cooking appliances, fridges, stainless steel benches, and the ability to be a flexible learning space. In total, the refurbishment cost \$62,500.

This partnership highlights the importance of community groups working together, and the arrangement has benefitted both organisations. The Independence Day group pays a nominal fee to the PCYC to use the kitchen to educate participants, and as part of the program, Independence Day uses the kitchen to cater for monthly PCYC team meetings. The group cooks up tasty treats such as pizza, pikelets, and banana and blueberry muffins.

Newcastle Temporary Care (NTC)

Newcastle Temporary Care is a community based, not-for-profit organisation offering quality respite and support for children and young people with disability. NTC Integrated into the Ability Options Community in May 2015.

The refurbished kitchen will also be used to host the weekly Free Friday program for about 50 children and young people who may not receive adequate nutrition at home.

The program participants take their role as caterers very seriously. Assisted by their support workers, the program participants are learning to move around the new kitchen facilities easily and use the new appliances with confidence.

Director of Newcastle Permanent Charitable Foundation, Jennifer Leslie, is proud of the initiative. "It's a great pleasure to support this grassroots project. It's a project that has delivered so much more than a new kitchen for PCYC Lake Macquarie; it has delivered hope and opportunity for our community," said Jennifer.

"The initiative is an example of how working with the local community can produce great outcomes for young people."



ELLA AND HER NORTHERN BEACHES INTERCHANGE FAMILY



We spoke to Northern Beaches Interchange (NBI) about how the program has helped Ella, who has been a participant since the age of four.

Ella is a happy and engaging teenager who has an intellectual disability and a sensory processing disorder. She loves movies, music, dancing and catching the ferry across Sydney Harbour. She is also very sociable, and one of her favourite things to do is catch up with friends and spend her free time with them.

Ella has been with NBI for 10 years, and she is a vital member of the family – she had her first introduction to the Host program before she turned four. Ella is an only child and does not have relatives living close by. Being involved with the program from an early age was a fantastic chance for her to experience what it's like to be a member of a family, and even to grow up with the same people. During the past year, she has also been able to build a lovely friendship with her one-to-one carer.

Ella enjoys the opportunity to attend as many activities as possible. She has joined the Saturday Club, Seagulls and TAG Holiday programs, which have been fantastic for

improving Ella's communication and social skills, helping her to build new friendships and become more confident.

In recent years, Ella has been able to attend supported camps with NBI, and she has loved the fun aspect of being in the great outdoors. The camps have given her the opportunity to learn how to be comfortable spending time away from home and in giving her a valuable sense of independence. Thanks to the clubs and camps, Ella has had the chance to take part in activities that other teenagers take for granted.

Ella has received fantastic support from NBI, and the hope for her future is that she continues to receive the same level of funding to be involved in the NBI programs. Ella is well on the road to becoming a confident adult and an active participant in her community with meaningful friendships.

Thanks to the clubs and camps, Ella has had the chance to take part in activities that other teenagers take for granted.

Northern Beaches Interchange (NBI)

NBI provides support to Northern Beaches families who are living with a disability. NBI integrated into the Ability Options Community in June 2017.



A NEW LIFE WITH SUPPORTED INDEPENDENT LIVING



We spoke to Supported Independent Living resident Kaylah Bulley about how the program has helped her transition to a more independent life.

"My name is Kaylah Bulley, and I am 24 years old. I love to sing, cook, swim and share stories.

Recently, with the support of my family, friends, and service providers, I moved into

Supported Independent Living. Moving out of home can be difficult, especially when you have an intellectual disability.

I've lived in Kempsey my whole life, so I wanted to stay in the area and be close to my family and friends. I have three brothers and one sister. With the support of a Kempsey Regional Support Co-ordinator, I was able to explore accommodation options before I made a decision.

When a vacancy arose in a Mid North Coast (MNC) Disability Services Ltd group home in Kempsey, I jumped at the opportunity, because it met all my requirements. I also knew many of the other residents already as we attend the same day program.

Before moving in, there was a lot of planning; I needed

identification, updated health plans, NDIS funding, and furnishings for my new home. Now, I'm living in my own room with an ensuite and couldn't be happier!

I'm free to choose when, where and how my supports are delivered, and I've become very good at letting others know what I want. People tell me they can see how confident I've become.

I can do most daily routines by myself, but sometimes I need to be reminded. I like to look good; wearing nice clothes and having my hair done is important to me. In my spare time, I enjoy working on my scrapbook and watching TV shows (especially The Chase).

My co-ordinator still helps me in planning my supports or when there's a change in my circumstances. Sometimes, I need assistance to make sure I have enough funding to maintain my quality of life."

"I've become very good at letting others know what I want. People tell me they can see how confident I've become."

Kempsey Regional Support (KRS)

KRS is a not-for-profit, community-based organisation offering a range of flexible support solutions to suit the needs of people with disability and their families/carers on the Mid North Coast. KRS integrated into the Ability Options Community in September 2016.



WELCOME TO THE TALK IT UP CLUB



Speaking in front of a large group of people can be a tough thing to do, and for people with a disability, it can be even more difficult. To combat this challenge, About Inclusion received funding to start a Toastmasters program, made possible by ILC funding through the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS).

Toastmasters is an international not-for-profit organisation dedicated to teaching public speaking and leadership skills. The partnership between Toastmasters Taree and About Inclusion focuses on developing the communication skills and self-esteem of people living with a disability.

About Inclusion call their Toastmasters course Talk It Up; an all-inclusive Club for people with a disability to practice their communication skills and build their self-confidence at their own pace in a safe, supportive environment.

Talk It Up is open to everyone and structured for all abilities. The Club is also open to carers, family members, support workers and friends. The emphasis is on encouragement, and all Toastmasters work together to follow the same path to personal development. At every

Talk It Up meeting, members have the opportunity to speak or take on an executive role in the Club.

For example, at the September meeting, Andrew Krotz (pictured), was presented with the trophy for Table Topics Champion. Andrew spoke impromptu for three minutes on the topic of 'favourite food', choosing to take the group on a journey to the beach for fresh prawns – making the entire Club hungry in the process!

Along with improving public speaking skills, Club members also enjoy the social atmosphere of meeting new people and improving their listening skills by hearing stories from others.

“Talk It Up is an all-inclusive Club for people with a disability to practice their communication skills in a safe, supportive environment.”

About Inclusion

About Inclusion provides flexible and adaptable disability support programs for individuals and respite for carers in the Manning Valley. AI integrated into the Ability Options Community in January 2017.



FROM VOLUNTEER TO FULL-TIME EMPLOYEE



Already a long-term participant with Nambucca Valley disAbility Service (NVdS), Michele Allso this year became a full-time employee of the organisation. After successfully completing her qualification in Business, Michele now performs vital office tasks for the NVdS team.

Michele began volunteering for NVdS around two years ago to supplement her activities at the disability employment service. Despite enjoying the work, Michele felt she was not progressing her abilities and was becoming disheartened. NVdS believed they could provide Michele with some activities that would challenge her further. She had taken an interest in office work, and NVdS provided the support needed to improve her skills in this area.

With NVdS assistance, Michele began a Certificate I in Business, and by early September last year, she had completed the course. A local employment service assisted NVdS to employ Michele, organising a work trial to determine an appropriate level of pay, and arranging a financial incentive for hiring her. The employment service also funded the assistive technology needed to help Michele read the text displayed on her computer screen.

Michele is delighted with her new role, saying, “I am very proud of myself for learning something I have never done before. I learnt a lot of new things, and I am so pleased and excited to have completed all the assessments in my Certificate I in Business. I had so much fun.”

Michele performs a variety of tasks at NVdS: answering the phones, photocopying, mail collection, office maintenance, binding, laminating, ensuring that both the front desk and outside signage are clean, and replenishing the supply of forms for employees to collect as needed.

Michele is a valued member of the team who fits in with the values and culture, even sharing their quirky sense of humour.

“I am very proud of myself for learning something I have never done before.”

Nambucca Valley disAbility Services

Nambucca Valley disAbility Services (NVdS) has been providing support to people with disabilities in the Nambucca Valley since 1989. Their service encourages and supports people to make informed choices about how they wish to achieve their goals and aspirations. They integrated into the Ability Options Community in June 2016.





Aboriginal dancers at the NSWALC and Olympus Solutions Launch Event

A LEADING VOICE FOR ABORIGINAL PROGRAMS AND STRATEGY

The past year has been one of significant highlights for Aboriginal Programs.

The Department has experienced significant growth, as well as the excitement of creating new partnerships that will allow us to extend our reach and reputation further.

In July 2017, we launched our Stretch Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP), a strategy for how the organisation will continue to work towards benefiting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. It's a plan not only for those who work at Ability Options but also how we can help the community, and Aboriginal businesses and organisations.

We also secured a follow-on contract for our Vocational Training and Employment Centre (VTEC) program, meaning we can continue to recruit, upskill and train community members ready for placement in sustainable employment opportunities. Through VTEC, 71 per cent of people placed in work are still employed after 26 weeks, an extremely high retention rate.

Our success has meant VTEC has doubled in size and now covers the entire Sydney region, from the Blue Mountains and the Southern Highlands down to Kiama and all of Sydney Metro, a significant increase in the number of communities we can service. In line with this growth, we've also increased the number of employees.

One of the key highlights of the year is entering into a formal partnership with the NSW Aboriginal Land Council. This partnership is allowing us to develop our services further, delivering them on a larger and more effective scale.

It was through this partnership that myself and Chief Operating Officer Brenda Odewahn were invited to attend as part of the Australian delegation to the United Nations Permanent Forum for Indigenous People in New York, where we presented our services and the new partnership to the Australian Ambassador and Permanent Representative to the UN, Gillian Bird PSM.

Internally, we commenced a Leadership Program for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff, offering training to achieve a Certificate IV in Management and Leadership. The training also includes cultural content, supporting participants who may not have a strong cultural identity to learn from their peers and grow through kinship. The program has shown commitment by the organisation to the professional development of our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff. As a result, 14 employees will graduate this year.



NSWALC and Olympus Solutions Ability Options Partnership launch Dr. Robert Lang (Chair Olympus Solutions) , Roy Ah See (Chair NSW ALC) The Hon. Nigel Scullion Minister for Indigenous Affairs

“The partnership with the NSW Aboriginal Land Council has had the effect of lifting the profile of Ability Options. We are now thought of as the leaders in the space, which has been an exciting shift for the organisation.”

We aim to secure sustainable long-term employment for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. The relationship each participant has with our team is a significant part of achieving their goals. Our team is dedicated and passionate, and each feels a personal connection to his or her work. They understand the work they do now is going to have long-term effects on the participants' families and their children. I'm proud of them every day.

Annette Lamb
General Manager, Aboriginal Programs and Strategy

SUPPORTING ARTISTIC TALENT WITH FRONT UP

Front Up is a state of the art, accessible, community based creative hub based in Western Sydney. It facilitates programs including Explore, Discover and Emerge.

Front Up programs aim to create sustainable employment and education opportunities for people with disability and mental health concerns in the arts and cultural community. Last year, Front Up was instrumental in furthering the careers, talent and self-esteem of our artists, and we hope to assist more participants to reach their potential in the future. We are excited to see what our artists will create this year.

The main highlight was the outcome of support from the Art Gallery of NSW (AGNSW). Artists from our Explore and Emerge programs were invited to the gallery to learn more about specific artworks and take part in discussions with the AGNSW educators. Inspired by these visits, Front Up artists created their own art in response to exhibits at the gallery. The work was subsequently exhibited in the Front Up HUB in Seven Hills – the first time the space had been used as a gallery. The exhibition was so successful the artists were invited to exhibit further work, at ArtSpace in Woolloomooloo.

2017-2018 also saw the launch of our Kids Explore program, designed for children with disabilities between two and seven years old, along with their guardians. The results were encouraging; parents commented on how the program helped their children to focus, a significant accomplishment for both guardian and child. The Ability

Options WorkReady team was part of the second Explore program aimed at youth, and this resulted in a powerful collaborative music video.

Next year, we will continue to support artists through a two-year creative program called 'Get out of the Garret', encouraging artists to leave the house and interact with fellow artists. As part of the program, we will be opening up the HUB for artists to use as a studio and exhibition space.

The difference Front Up can make to an artist is fantastic to see. The primary driver of the program is not just to educate artists, but also to increase their self-esteem. Many times, people come to us feeling depressed and isolated, and by the end of the program, they give us feedback about the positive impact the experience has had on their lives. Many artists have moved on to further employment and other opportunities as a result of this program.

Throughout the year, five of our artists were employed by the AGNSW to give workshops or talks, or to participate in panel discussions at the AGNSW. There is a real sense of accomplishment when we see a Front Up participant having the confidence to present to their peers and community about their art and art practice. These are the moments that motivate us.

"The main driver of the program is not just to educate artists, but also to increase their self-esteem."



WorkReady participants receiving Certificates from Mark Taylor MP, member for Seven Hills, for their work in the Explore Program

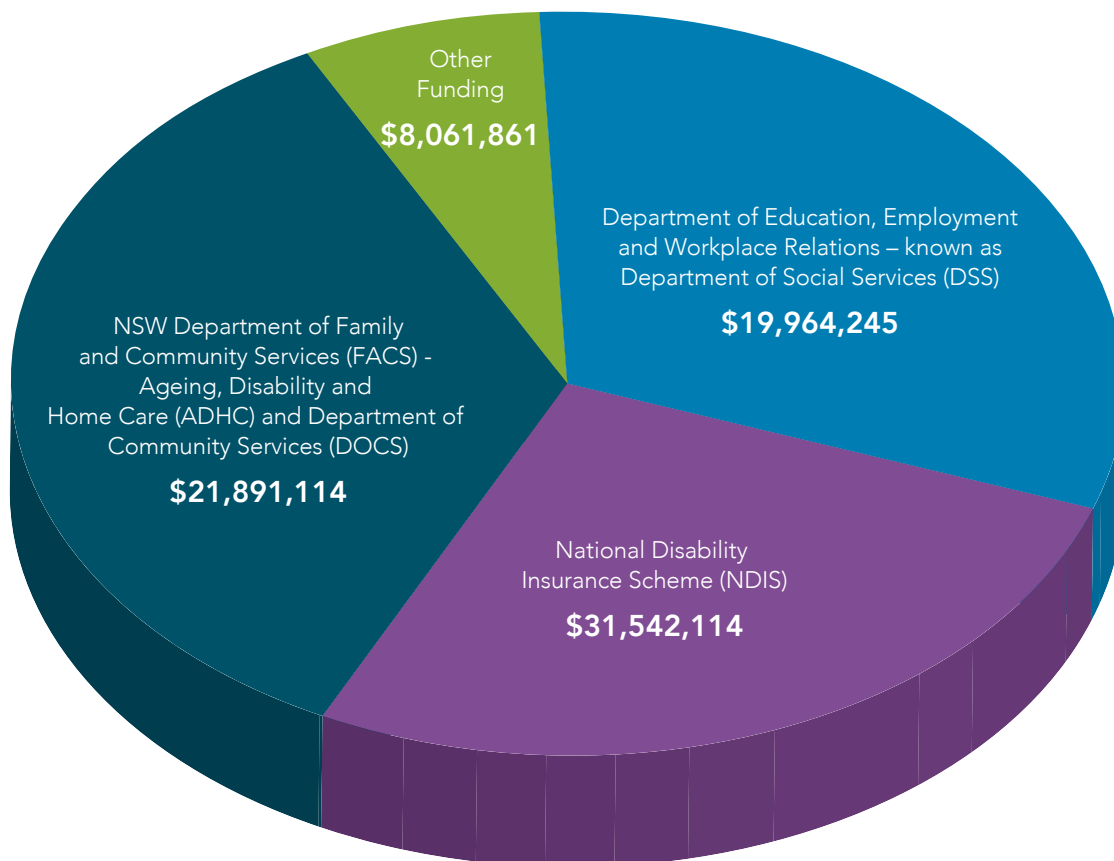


The Hon. Ray Williams, MP, Minister for Multiculturalism and Minister for Disability Services and Mark Taylor MP, Member for Seven Hills with Gaye Fleming from Front Up



Artwork created by WorkReady participants

GOVERNMENT AND OTHER FUNDING



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



Ability Options employees at Campbelltown TAFE undertaking the Aboriginal Leadership Program

DIRECTORS' REPORT

ABILITY OPTIONS LIMITED AND ITS CONTROLLED ENTITIES 30 JUNE 2018 ANNUAL FINANCIAL REPORT



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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 2018, 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.

Grant Thornton Audit Pty Ltd
Chartered Accountants

James Winter
Partner – Audit & Assurance

Sydney, 25 October 2018

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Directors' Declaration

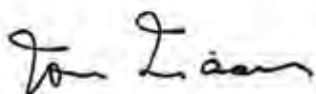
Annual Financial Report 30 June 2018 | Ability Options Limited and Its Controlled Entities

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

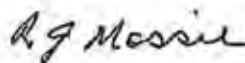
1. The consolidated financial statements and notes of Ability Options Limited, are in accordance with the requirements of the *Australian Charities and Not-for-Profits Commission Act 2012*, including:
 - (a) complying with Australian Accounting Standards - Reduced Disclosure Requirements and the *Australian 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 2018 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 25 October 2018



Jonathan Isaacs – Chair and Director



Richard Mossie – Director

Consolidated Statement of Profit or Loss and Other Comprehensive Income
Annual Financial Report 30 June 2018 | Ability Options Limited and Its Controlled Entities

For the year ended 30 June 2018

<i>in AUD</i>	NOTE	2018	2017
Income			
Revenue from ordinary activities	2	81,459,334	51,345,509
Interest Income		97,787	272,790
Total income		81,557,121	51,618,299
Costs and Expenses			
Change in inventories held		-	(489,411)
Raw materials and consumables		(511)	(281,129)
Employee benefit expenses		(64,529,092)	(40,973,596)
Depreciation expenses	5	(1,622,002)	(1,721,582)
Occupancy and accommodation expenses		(2,667,309)	(2,090,585)
Other expenses		(16,319,222)	(12,458,489)
Total expenses		(85,138,136)	(58,014,792)
(Loss) / gain on integration	15	-	1,729,628
Net deficit from ordinary activities		(3,581,015)	(4,666,865)
Other comprehensive income			
Actuarial gain/(loss) on defined benefit superannuation plans		(311,049)	-
Total other comprehensive income		(311,049)	-
Total comprehensive deficit		(3,892,064)	(4,666,865)

Consolidated Statement of Financial Position
Annual Financial Report 30 June 2018 | Ability Options Limited and Its Controlled Entities

As at 30 June 2018

in AUD

	NOTE	2018	2017
Current Assets			
Cash and cash equivalents	10	10,153,679	10,988,050
Trade and other receivables	4	2,671,041	1,799,962
Prepayments and other assets	6	1,495,228	2,056,212
Total current assets		14,319,948	14,844,224
Non-Current Assets			
Other receivables	6	126,789	126,789
Property, plant & equipment	5	15,026,422	13,812,606
Total non-current assets		15,153,211	13,939,395
Total Assets		29,473,159	28,783,619
Current Liabilities			
Trade and other payables	7	11,448,244	8,926,385
Provisions	8	4,492,061	3,143,937
Other liabilities		103,168	135,749
Total current liabilities		16,043,473	12,206,071
Non-Current Liabilities			
Provisions	8	1,557,349	741,183
Other liabilities		181,276	253,240
Total non-current liabilities		1,738,625	994,423
Total Liabilities		17,782,098	13,200,494
Net Assets		11,691,061	15,583,125
Accumulated funds	11	8,584,508	12,165,523
Reserves		3,106,553	3,417,602
Total Funds		11,691,061	15,583,125

Consolidated Statement of Cash Flows

Annual Financial Report 30 June 2018 | Ability Options Limited and Its Controlled Entities

For the year ended 30 June 2018

in AUD

	NOTE	2018	2017
Cash Flows from Operating Activities			
Receipts from operations		80,777,645	53,094,351
Payments to suppliers & employees		(80,529,830)	(57,630,058)
Interest income		97,787	272,790
Net cash from / (used in) operating activities	10	345,602	(4,262,917)
Cash Flows from Investing Activities			
Payments for property plant and equipment		(2,938,962)	(1,075,706)
Proceeds from the sale of assets		24,577	435,823
Contribution through integration	15	1,734,412	2,917,796
Net cash (used in) / provided by investing activities		(1,179,973)	2,277,913
Net decrease in cash held		(834,371)	(1,985,004)
Cash at beginning of the financial year		10,988,050	12,973,054
Cash at end of the financial year	10	10,153,679	10,988,050



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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 financial report of Ability Options Limited and its controlled entities (the "Registered Entity") which comprises the consolidated statement of financial position as at 30 June 2018, the consolidated statement of profit or loss and other 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 requirements of Division 60 of the Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission Act 2012, including:

- giving a true and fair view of the Registered Entity's financial position as at 30 June 2018 and of its financial performance for the year then ended; and
- complying with Australian Accounting Standards and Division 60 of the Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission Regulation 2013.

Basis for 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 Registered 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.

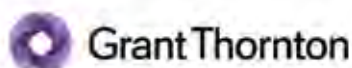
We believe that the audit evidence we have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinion.

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Responsibilities of the Responsible Entities for the financial report

The Responsible Entities of the Registered Entity are responsible for the preparation and fair presentation of the financial report in accordance with Australian Accounting Standards, the Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission Act 2012, the Charitable Fundraising Act 1991 and the Charitable Fundraising Regulation 2015, 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 Registered 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 Registered Entity or to cease operations, or have no realistic alternative but to do so.

Those charged with governance are responsible for overseeing the Registered 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 Registered 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 auditor's report. However, future events or conditions may cause the Registered 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 Registered Entity to express an opinion on the financial report. We are responsible for the direction, supervision, and performance of the Registered 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 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, 25 October 2018

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1300 422 454

EMPLOYMENT SERVICES

Auburn

3/62-72 Queen Street
Auburn NSW 2144

Bateau Bay

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

Baulkham Hills

14/35 Old Northern Road
Baulkham Hills NSW 2153

Blue Haven

Blue Haven Community Centre
Colorado Drive
Blue Haven NSW 2262

Blacktown

Suite 2/40 Third Avenue
Blacktown NSW 2148

Brookvale

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

Cabramatta

G04/263 Cabramatta Road
Cabramatta NSW 2166

Camden

Shop 19, Camden Village Court
Camden NSW 2570

Corrimal

Shop 3 and 5/ 183-191 Princes Highway
Corrimal NSW 2518

Campbelltown

Level 2, 101 Queen Street
Campbelltown NSW 2560

Charlestown

230 Pacific Highway
Charlestown NSW 2290

Chatswood

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

Fairfield

1-3 63/65 The Crescent
Fairfield NSW 2165

Gorokan

Louise House
126 Dudley Street
Gorokan NSW 2263

Gosford

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

Hornsby

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

Ingleburn

Unit 1/Level 2,
2 Oxford Street
Ingleburn NSW 2565

Katoomba

29 Parke Street
Katoomba NSW 2780

Liverpool

6/45-47 Scott Street
Liverpool NSW 2170
[Entry via 276 George Street]

Mayfield

169 Maitland Road
Mayfield NSW 2304

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

Suite 2, 95 Henry Street
Penrith NSW 2750

Quakers Hill

Quakers Hill Neighbourhood Centre
128 Farnham Road
Quakers Hill NSW 2763

Raymond Terrace

Shops 6/7 & 8, Terrace Shopping Village
Raymond Terrace NSW 2324

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

Shell Harbour

Corner of Burra Place & Commemoration
Place 1/12 College Ave
Shellharbour NSW 2529

The Entrance

231-233 The Entrance Road
The Entrance NSW 2261

Windsor

Shop 9, 188-192 George Street
Windsor NSW 2756

Wollongong

Corner of Burelli Street & Corrimal Street
Shop 11/51 Crown Street
Wollongong NSW 2500

Wyong

Suite 2, 30-32 Hely Street
Wyong NSW 2259

ACCOMMODATION & SUPPORTED LIVING

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DISABILITY SERVICES

224 Pacific Highway
Charlestown NSW 2290
02 4943 3411

Maitland

First Floor, 5 Ken Tubman Drive
Maitland NSW 2320

DISABILITY SERVICES

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

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 9651 8333

KEMPSEY REGIONAL SUPPORT

Argus Centre
72-74 Elbow Street
West Kempsey NSW 2440
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ABOUT INCLUSION

2/80 Wynter Street
Taree NSW 2430
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NORTHERN BEACHES INTERCHANGE

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Warriewood NSW 2012
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HV DISABILITY SERVICES

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Warabrook NSW
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