

AbilityOptions



2019

ANNUAL REPORT

LEADERSHIP · INCLUSION · TRUST · RESPECT · COURAGE

The Ability Options Community

Sydney & Illawarra



Hunter Valley & Central Coast



Mid North Coast



About Us

Established in 1976, by the late Greg McIntyre OAM, Ability Options aims to make a difference in people's lives by assisting them to achieve their goals and be included in the community.

We began as a partnership between the Rotary Club of Guildford and the NSW Health Commission, helping people with intellectual disabilities move out of large institutions into their own homes.

We now work to empower and support individuals to live an independent life by:

- » assisting them to live in their own homes
- » providing meaningful opportunities for inclusion in the local community
- » offering work experience and employment opportunities, and
- » connecting them to National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) services.

We offer personalised support, helping individuals to achieve their short and long-term goals by building their self-esteem and fostering independence.

We have over 1200 passionate and dedicated staff, working across 55 sites in North Sydney, 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 are committed to building relations, respect and opportunities with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples.



The meaning of our 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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Patron's Message

On 5 April 2019, Prime Minister Scott Morrison announced the establishment of the Royal Commission into Violence, Abuse, Neglect and Exploitation of People with Disability.

Submissions have been invited and hearings have now commenced. This initiative arose from the groundswell of complaints about the shortcomings in the way the Australian society generally, and governments especially, have failed their responsibilities toward people who are among the most vulnerable in our community.

But in this year's message I want to highlight how Ability Options since its inception over 40 years ago has been respecting and supporting people with disabilities to achieve their potential as full citizens of this country. In particular, I shall refer to the linchpin of its success in this venture- the quality and respect it has and must continue to have for its front-line staff. It is these staff who interact, often on a daily basis, with the people the organisation supports.

Those who attended the Star Employee Awards function held this year must have been struck by the excellence of the staff who received the awards under the various categories. However, not all had the benefit of seeing the full comments made by the nominees of the people who were successful. I was given a significant challenge in my selection of the Patron's award when presented with the array of comments made about the winners and

runners-up across all the award categories which included safety, courage, trust, integrity, respect and inclusion.

I would like to share just some of the comments made about Kim O'Reilly, a nominee for the "respect" award whom I chose to receive the Patron's Award: *All the families and participants have said how amazing Kim is and how she goes above and beyond for them. She has been known to just get in and help wherever she can even, if it's helping with cleaning the house and helping with washing and supporting a person no-one else can or isn't willing to do. Kim is beloved in our community for the heart she brings into the job, how much she cares for our families and participants and how far she is willing to go for them.*

I believe this epitomises the themes which ran throughout the comments made across all of the categories. As I said on the evening, I believe these were characteristics which the late Greg McIntyre, the founder of Ability Options would also have commented upon.

Respect for people with disabilities goes to the heart of the mission for any organisation and if this had been the case, we would not have needed a Royal Commission into Violence, Abuse, Neglect and Exploitation. It is Ability Options' value system including respect, trust and integrity, safety, courage and inclusion which underpins the actions of all its front-line staff.

Our challenge is to support them with the training necessary for them to deliver the best quality support service possible, as well as lobbying for greater recognition for the level of remuneration they deserve to deliver this quality service. This is a challenge the Royal Commission will undoubtedly need to address, as well as the National Disability Insurance Agency.



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.



Kim O'Reilly receiving Patrons Award

Chair's Report

The past year has seen significant successes in the organisation. The vision and leadership of the Board, Executive and wider organisation continues to be underpinned by a passion for our Mission.

The vision and leadership of the Board, Executive and wider organisation continues to be underpinned by a passion for our Mission. Whilst we continue to face challenges in an operating, regulatory and funding environment that is in the process of enormous change, we are in a good financial and operating position.

Ability Options has grown and developed in recent years. Our services have increased in size and reach. Turnover has trebled from about \$30M to almost \$100M in the last 5 years.

At the same time, we have reset our governance and operating models to meet the challenges of increased regulation, compliance and funder requirements. Confidence has grown and we are planning ahead for the long term.

This time last year I wrote my contribution to our Annual Report confident that Ability Options would succeed in delivering its operating plan and I'm delighted that we exceeded our intent. We have maintained the high quality and sustainable services clients expect. Our client numbers have grown again and we have expanded services steadily in both Disability and Employment.

The work undertaken to recognise and support the Ability Options workforce has been a highlight of the year and this work continues. The Board takes its responsibilities to employees and clients very seriously. We have led a focus on safety and engagement as well as

service growth, financial stewardship and governance. The Board got out and about several times this year making in excess of 40 visits to group homes and offices.

We had some refresh and change at Board level with Mark Twomey resigning to take up an Executive role in Ability Options and the Board welcomed three new Directors. Claire Cavanaugh is currently a Director for Northern Beaches Interchange and brings with her lived experience of disability. Owen Gilbert has a finance background with NRMA. They both bring expertise and commitment to the Ability Options Community. Rob Lang is the Chair of Olympus Solutions, the wholly owned subsidiary providing employment services and has now joined the Ability Options Board as well. Rob brings a wealth of governance and leadership experience to the organisation.

I will be concluding my term as Ability Options Chair this year, after 5 years. I am immensely proud of the organisation and the commitment of the Board, Executive and every member of the team to the Mission. I would like to thank everyone associated with Ability Options over the last 5 years, for their warmth, passion and support to the services, the Ability Options Community, and to me.



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

The Ability Options Community has had a very successful year, thanks largely to our outstanding staff and teams.

Our Mission to **“Support people who need assistance to achieve their aspirations and inclusion in the community”** remains at the heart of our daily work and our core achievement in our 43rd year.

We have ensured we can continue to meet our Mission in the long term by:

- » focusing on our workforce to ensure they are supported, engaged and happy
- » engaging more effectively with our participants, communities and partners
- » agreeing and implementing a three-year Strategic Service Plan
- » growing our services in both Employment and Disability
- » integrating our services to provide better opportunities for our participants and workforce
- » continuing to address and meet the needs of funders and registration bodies
- » delivering a positive financial position enabling us to invest in our people and services.

This Annual Report showcases our wonderful services. I am very proud of the work we do and the support we provide to our customers.

In addition to the strength of our services I would also like to recognise our amazing workforce. Day in, day out Ability Options’ teams work together to make a real difference, putting into practice our values of **inclusion, trust, courage, respect** and **leadership**.

Our Employee Engagement Survey completed last year led to four key themes within which actions were determined.

The themes were:

- » Leadership and Support
- » Communication
- » Recognition and Appreciation
- » Learning and Development

We know that the best services are provided by the most engaged workforces. Therefore, the key actions to engage our staff include:

- » launching an Employee Awards programme with monthly and annual awards
- » implementing a remuneration strategy
- » running leadership workshops and planning leadership development programmes
- » improving our recruitment processes.
- » implementing a new onboarding and induction process and learning platform
- » putting additional training in place to meet immediate needs.
- » improving communication arrangements
- » improving our employee benefits offer.
- » implementing Director and Management visits.

The Ability Options Workforce is truly outstanding. I’d like to thank and recognise my 1200 colleagues. As an employer our commitment to everyone who works for our Community is unwavering:

We will work to ensure you are safe, happy and supported at work, you can develop your careers, provide feedback and access the support and development you need.

In this way we will recruit, retain and develop the best people who will continue to provide the services needed by those who seek our support.



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, service planning, strategy and governance.

With a passion for quality, safety, engagement and sustainability Julia has ensured the services, organisations and systems she has worked in are person-centric.



2019 Star Awards – Working Group Employees



Board Thank-Yous



Jon Isaacs became Chair of Ability Options in 2014 and has steered Ability Options through a period of steep growth, change and competing demands to a sustainable and thriving future. Jon is a very experienced leader and Director and lives and breathes Ability Options' Mission and Values. He has brought a wealth of leadership, management and governance experience to our community and he leaves the organisation well placed to continue to grow and deliver in the long term. Jon is also Chair of the Remuneration and Nominations Committee and a Director of Olympus Solutions which he is also leaving. We want to recognise and thank Jon for his leadership over the last 5 years.



Ability Options says goodbye this year to its two highly experienced and committed Directors



Richard Mossie has been a Director since 2000. Richard has held the position of Treasurer and Director of Ability Options. Richard is currently Chair of the Finance Committee and sits on the Audit and Risk and Remuneration and Nomination Committees. Richard has also chaired the Audit and Risk Committee. Richard has brought a wealth of senior management and finance experience to Ability Options. We have benefitted enormously from Richard's advice, support and leadership during his tenure, particularly growing our services. Richard has been a highly committed Director supporting our organisation, Board and Committees in their roles of governance and decision making. Richard has always had our clients and employees at the front of his mind making sure we live to our values. We want to recognise and thank Richard for his unwavering and significant contribution. Richard – thank you for your 19 years of service to and leadership of Ability Options.



Welcome Dr. Robert Lang



Welcoming Ability Options new Chair – **Dr. Robert Lang**, Adjunct Professor University of Western Sydney. Rob is the Chair of Olympus Solutions – Ability Options' wholly owned subsidiary Employment Service. Rob has extensive experience as a Chair, Director and CEO in the public service. As Chair of Regional Development Australia – Sydney, he has a focus on job creation, a keen interest

in the potential of the Aerotropolis and the Central City to provide business growth & economic development opportunities and the goal of making Sydney a liveable city with more jobs closer to home. As Chair of Place Leaders Asia Pacific, he has experience in place making and place development, and bringing together the drivers for making great cities. Rob was appointed to the Ability Options Board earlier this year and takes the reins as Chair from November.





*Group Home Participants – 164 (included in People supported through NDIS)

Vision
"To inspire and lead communities, creating opportunity and services for people to participate fully in society"



Mission
"To support people who need assistance to achieve their aspirations and inclusion in the community"

Values
We have updated our five core values that underpin our position as a trusted provider of services, a great employer, a credible partner and a leader in our sectors. Our Values are important to our employees, organisation and those we serve. They are critical to our Vision and Mission, they embody our common purpose, and they encourage behaviours which enable us to meet our goals.

Trust we deliver on our promises, encourage feedback and work with **honesty** and **openness**

Respect we treat our participants, their families, communities, partners and each other with **dignity, appreciation** and **recognition**

Inclusion we **embrace, encourage** and support **diversity** in everything we do

Courage we act on our **values** ensuring they are central to everything we do

Leadership we are a sector and service leader by **innovating, improving** and **partnering** with others

Board of Directors as at 30 June 2019



Jon Isaacs BA (Hons); FAICD
Chair and Chair of Remuneration and Nominations Committee

Jon has 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 CEO of the Royal Blind Society.

He has been Chairperson for the 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.

Jon has coached and mentored CEOs and senior executives from a wide range of organisations in the finance, legal, FMCG, construction/development, education, retail, regulation, human services, and health sectors.



Dr. Robert Lang Ph.D., B.E.(Hons), B.Sc., FAICD, FIE (Aust)
Director and Chair-Elect

Dr. Robert Lang has spent 35 years in the public service, in a combination of state and local government. This includes change management, community engagement, strategic urban planning, urban development, transport infrastructure, place management, arts, tourism, and energy business roles.

He has been the CEO of Parramatta City Council, Sydney Harbour Foreshore Authority, and Pacific Power.

Dr. Lang has significant experience as a Board Director, serving on 18 Boards over the past 22 years, including not-for-profits, private companies, and government statutory authorities.

He has a longstanding interest in liveable cities, affordable housing, social inclusion, and the arts. He has postgraduate qualifications in Engineering, Information Technology, and Business Management. He is also a Fellow of the Australian Institute of Company Directors and a Fellow of the Institute of Engineers Australia



Sue Healy
Director and Deputy Chair

Sue has extensive business experience, including 17 years as the founder and Managing Director of a highly successful and award winning national recruitment and managed solutions business. She has held senior executive roles with Australia's two largest ASX listed human capital companies and acts as a non-executive director and business advisor for a number of organisations. Sue has been on the board of various industry bodies, as well as on state economic development and women in leadership boards.

She is a Fellow and Life Member of the RCSA – (Recruitment and Consulting Services Association).



Richard Mossie BCom; FCPA
Director, Treasurer and Chair of Finance Committee

Richard 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.

As a Director and Treasurer of Ability Options, Richard is committed to using his knowledge and expertise to enhance services for people with disabilities.



Heather Scheibenstock
Director and Chair of Service Quality Committee

Heather spent 20 years as a Senior Executive in the hospitality industry. She is a firm believer in learning and development and has continued her post-graduate studies in business, leadership and corporate governance. With experience as a non-executive director across a range of industries, Heather has a wealth of knowledge in leadership, strategy implementation and development, community and stakeholder engagement.



Patricia Biszewski MSc GAILD N
Director and Chair of Audit and Risk Committee

Patricia 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 as non-executive director, developing programs that empower socially marginalised women, children and communities to become sustainably independent.



Michael Maxwell GradDip AdEd (VET); MSocSci;GAICD
Director and Chair of Engagement Committee

Michael has combined a career in the social and community services sector with post-graduate qualifications in adult education and social science; using these skills to develop training and employment opportunities for people in disadvantaged communities.

He's passionate about promoting social and financial inclusion, of people experiencing social disadvantage and has worked with a range of social service organisations. He is currently Principal at Social Traction and lectures at several tertiary institutions.



David R Bamford
OAM Director

David has a wealth of community and corporate experience, including 31 years with NRMA. David has been a Rotary member for 43 years and was a former President of the Rotary Club of Blacktown City.

He 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 (OAM) for his service to Rotary International and the Community of Blacktown.



Claire Cavanaugh
Director

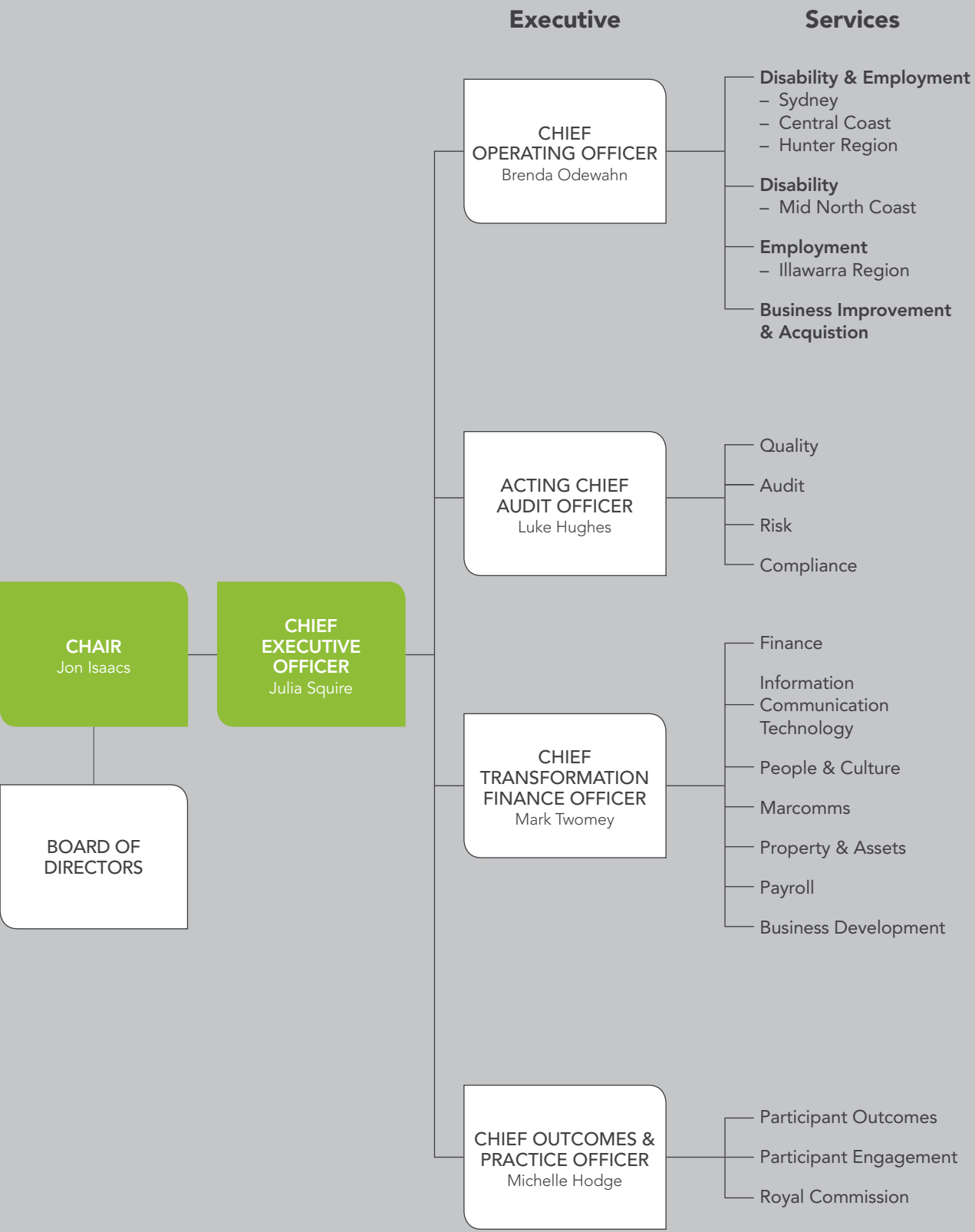
Claire has a broad range of business experience, through senior finance roles at Oracle Australia and Readers Digest, and more recently in running her family's medical practice.

She also has lived experience a keen interest in the disability sector; as the mother of 18 year old Eddie, who has epilepsy and severe intellectual disability. Claire cares for Eddie, manages his NDIS plan and advocates for his inclusion and proper care in school and leisure activities.



Board Director	Joined	Board Director	Joined
Richard Mossie	2000	Sue Healy	2017
David Bamford	2006	Patricia Biszewski	2017
Jon Isaacs	2014	Dr. Robert Lang	2019
Michael Maxwell	2014	Claire Cavanaugh	2019

Our Structure from July 2019



Committees 2019

Ability Options had five Committees to support the work of the Board in governing the organisation. Each Committee has oversight of specific parts of the business, reporting and making recommendations to the Board.



AUDIT & RISK

Patricia Biszewski (Chair),
Richard Mossie,
David Bamford

Oversight responsibilities include

- » External Audit
- » Risk Management
- » Internal Audit and Controls
- » Annual Financial Statements and Accounting Standards



SERVICE QUALITY

Heather Scheibenstock (Chair),
Michael Maxwell,
Patricia Biszewski

Oversight responsibilities include

- » Quality standards
- » Compliance with relevant legislation, regulation and other standards
- » A safety focused culture



FINANCE

Richard Mossie (Chair),
Heather Scheibenstock

Oversight responsibilities include

- » Financial Performance,
- » Capital Works Budget,
- » Investments,
- » Annual Budgeting Process



REMUNERATION & NOMINATION

Jon Isaacs (Chair),
Sue Healy, Richard Mossie

Oversight responsibilities include

- » Remuneration and Reward Strategies
- » Board Nominations



ENGAGEMENT COMMITTEE

Michael Maxwell (Chair),
Sue Healy

Oversight responsibilities include

- » Employee Engagement and Retention
- » Reputation Management and Stakeholder Mapping

Our Workforce – Diversity Profile

Gender

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

72.2%

Females - 837

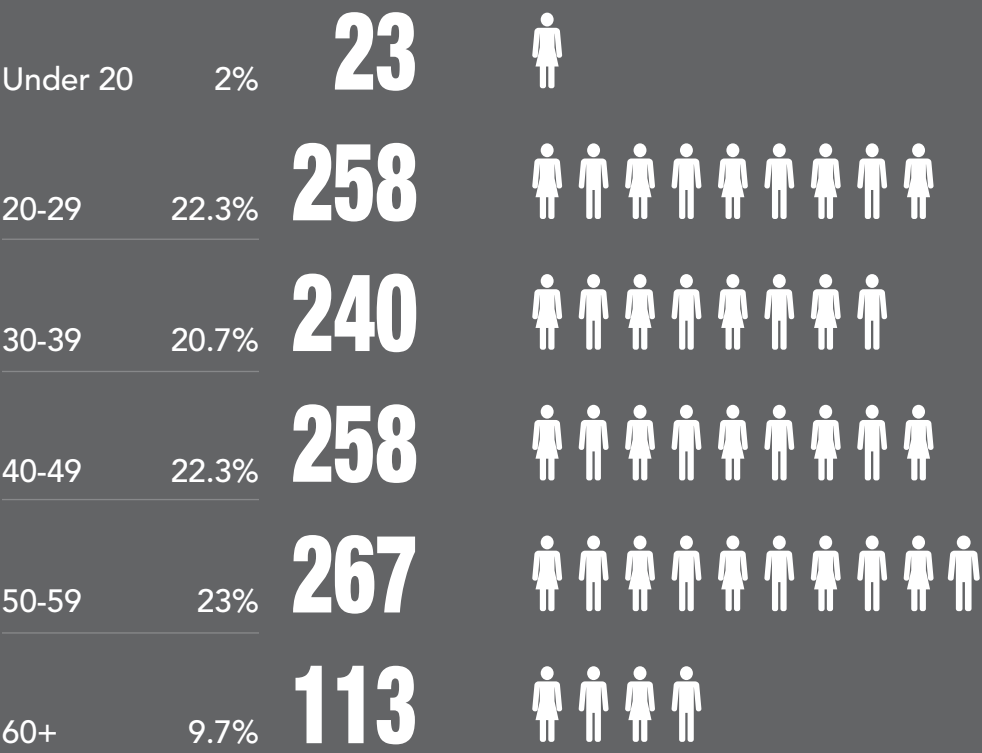


27.8%

Males - 322



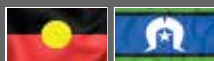
Age Profile



Culture

3.4%

of employees are of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander descent



Disability

1.6%

of employees identified as having a disability



76%

of employees agreed that their work place supports diversity and inclusion.



Services Snapshot

The Ability Options Community supports people from over 50 Sites and Community Hubs across Sydney, The Illawarra, Central Coast, the Hunter and Mid North Coast Regions.

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 jobseekers and employers.

VTEC

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

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

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 and connect with the community.

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.

Work Ready

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.

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.

Therapy Services

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

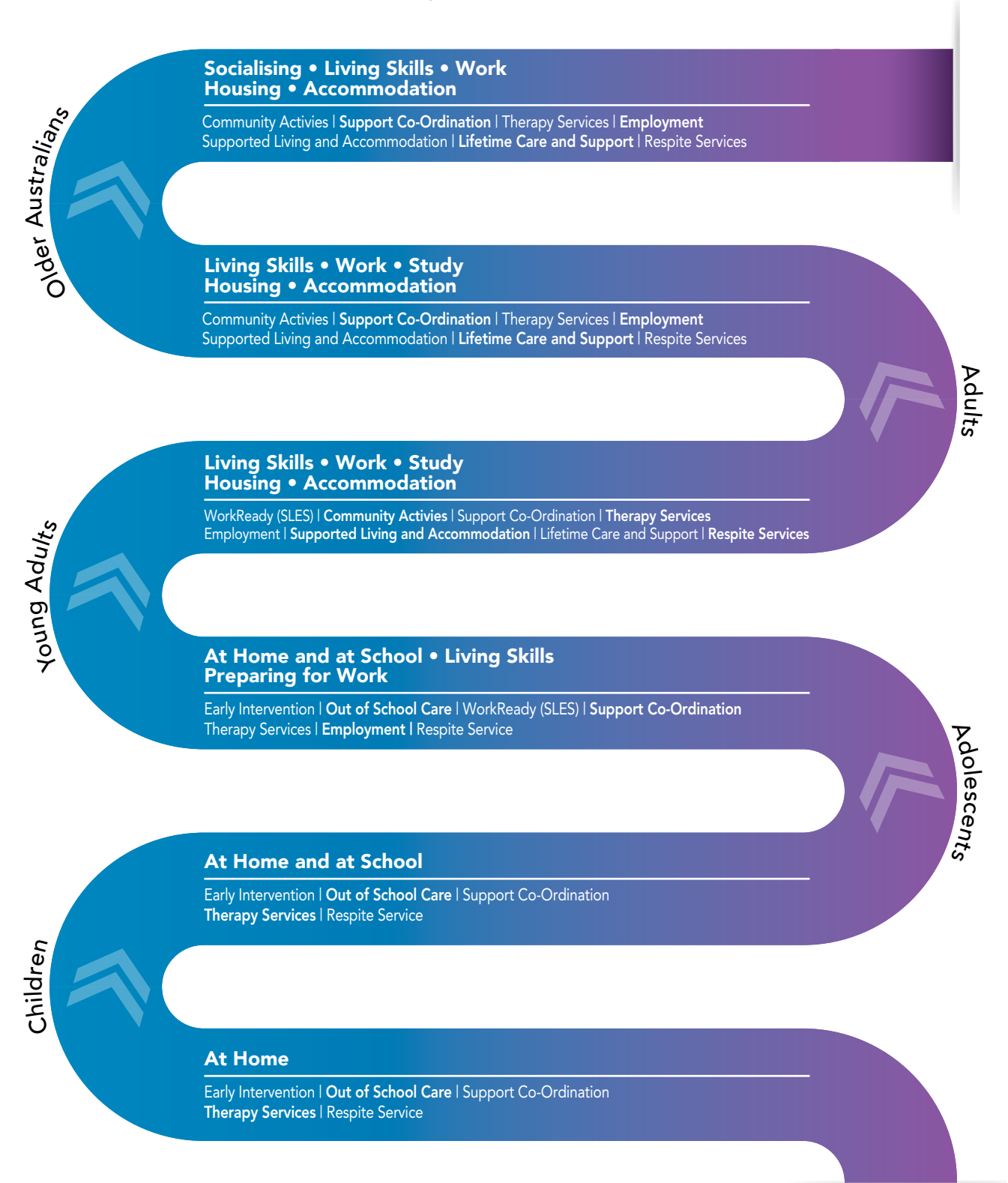
Front Up: Arts and Cultural Program

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 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.



Ability Options – Celebrating our Star Employees

On Friday 23 August, we held our inaugural **STAR Employee Awards** gala dinner at the Novotel, Sydney Olympic Park.

This night recognised and celebrated Ability Options employees who had been nominated by their peers in the monthly STAR Awards as well as the Values Awards nominations. It was a tremendous evening with people invited to attend from across the Ability Options Community to celebrate the achievements of the Finalists and the Winners!

CONGRATULATIONS

to all our Finalists and Award Winners for 2019.

Category	Finalists		Winner
Safety Award	· Lena Khoury	· Jarrod Williams	Jarrod Williams
Respect Award	· Ramesh Baniya · Anne O'Neil	· Kim O'Reilly	Anne O'Neil
Courage Award	· Karen Grant · Mya Cook	· Jodie Beugeling	Jodie Beugeling
Trust Award	· Wendy Steele · Kim Vella	· Rachel Vella	Kim and Rachel Vella
Integrity Award	· Ashlee Manton · Alyce Galea	· James Brummel	Alyce Galea
Inclusion Award	· Emma Ducat · Sharran Mansfield	· Brianna Bimson	Sharran Mansfield
Innovation	· Chad Hookey and the SCLO Team · Annette Lamb for the Aboriginal Leadership Program		Annette Lamb
Chair Award	· Mr. Mark Dent – Manager, Customer Service Centre · Kempsey Regional Support · The Entrance Employment Team · Customer Service Centre Team		Kempsey Regional Support
Patron's Award			Kim O'Reilly
Employee of the Year	· Rosalee Bullen · Nazhia Shar	· Betty Keys · Karen Grant	Betty Keys



» Consolidating, Streamlining and Growing

This year our staff have worked hard to consolidate our services and streamline our operations.

There are many common systems and policies across our disability, accommodation and employment services and we have been working to our strengths so we can perform better as a single operational network. Our priority has been to develop a much broader, more effective and holistic service for our participants across the whole of the organisation.

An important part of this strategy was the fuller integration of our existing partners; Kempsey Respite Services, Nambucca Valley, Newcastle Temporary Care and Northern Beaches Interchange and About Inclusion

Our focus for the coming year will be on the sustained consolidation of our services and improvement of outcomes for our participants. We will continue to build on past experience, implement change and build best practice. We will also look for opportunities to partner or integrate with more organisations of similar culture and philosophy to further extend the range of choice and opportunities for all our participants.

Disability services

Our supported independent living and accommodation services have gone through a period of significant growth with a footprint from Mid North Coast NSW down through the Hunter and Central Coast into Sydney.

We have also integrated our support co-ordination services in order to better connect participants into a network of appropriate services within the community.

Employment services

Our employment services have also grown over the last 12 months. From 1 July, we rolled out a new **Disability Employment Services** contract into the Hunter, the Central Coast and across Western Sydney and the Illawarra.

This area also benefitted from a significant new contract for **Parentsnext**, which supports single parents on welfare to gain work readiness skills to enter the workforce once their children reach school age. It was first rolled out in the Central Coast area in 2016 and now extends from the Hunter down to Sydney.

We've been working closely with the NDIA to develop our employment service **WorkReady**. This program provides a range of support and training to prepare people with disability to move into open employment. We are now recognised as one of the largest and most successful operators of this program in Australia.

As providers of the government's recruitment service program **Jobactive**, we have extended our influence with the successful acquisition of new business in the Sydney north and western region and in the Central Coast.

We continue to work closely with the NSW Aboriginal Land Council to support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander job seekers to find sustainable employment. This is part of the **Vocational Training and Employment Centres Initiative**.

Our work as part of the Government's **National Panel of Assessors** began in July. We now deliver assessment services that help participants in Disability Employment Services or Australian Disability Enterprises who are either looking for work or need assistance in the workplace.



Brenda Odewahn
Chief Operating Officer

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.



Accreditations

Regular accreditation is vital for protecting the interests of our participants and ensuring that our services are on track and sustainable. Over the last 12 months we have completed a range of accreditations including disability services, attendant care, voluntary out-of-home of care for young people and ISV9001. We are proud to say that our operations have continued to achieve a very high standard.

Partnerships

Successful partnerships enable us to access additional opportunities and support for our participants. This year we have formed relationships with organisations such as Headspace, the mental health service and local community health organisations. We work with them to gain referrals or to refer our participants for supports within their networks.

We have also established productive relationships with large employers such as Kmart and the NSW Government to place our participants into employment or organise work experience and trials.

We have rolled out a new **disability employment services** contract into the **Hunter**, the **Central Coast** and across **Western Sydney** and the **Illawarra**.

Thomas finds **his feet**

Financial independence is not the only benefit to having a job. Meaningful work offers an opportunity for social interaction and provides purpose in your day.

Ability Options' WorkReady participant Thomas is a shining example of this.

Two years after Thomas left school he fell into a downward spiral. He tried and lost a couple of jobs and 'bad things happened' says Thomas.

When his family discovered he was eligible for NDIS funding, Thomas entered our WorkReady program.

Thomas already knew he enjoyed the hospitality industry, so WorkReady provided Thomas with the

training he needed and supported him to find stable accommodation. He now lives in a group home run by Ability Options, with four other men.

Over time Thomas received career and life counselling, work experience, and eventually the opportunity for employment as a kitchen hand, three day a week.

Thomas now has a clear idea about the steps he needs to take reach his employment goals and hopes to become a bar tender in the future.

We are proud of the amazing progress Thomas has made and trust he has a bright future ahead!



Thomas is a **shining example of wraparound supports in action.**



Thien gets **active** in the **community**

By partnering with a community organisation and using a person-centred approach, Ability Options Coordination of Supports (CoS) staff have been able to make a huge difference in the life of participant, Thien.

Thien was living in a group home, but did not involve himself in house meetings and spent most of his day in his room.

The CoS team identified that Thien had a language barrier and drafted a plan to assist him with being heard and attending activities that meet his cultural and social needs.

Dennis Rodgers, Thien's support coordinator, worked with Maple Community Services to engage a Vietnamese speaking support worker to work with Thien twice a week. Since then, Thien has been able to get out and about and feel more connected to his culture and community.

"After Ability Options arranged a Vietnamese speaking support worker for me, it's been great!" said Thien.

"I've been able to visit the Buddhist temple, borrow Vietnamese movies from the library, and try the Beef Pho at a few local Vietnamese restaurants. I'm thrilled."

House Manager Nicole says this simple adjustment to Thien's supports has made a significant difference to his life.

"This has been an amazing outcome for Thien," says Nicole. "He's been able to attend and contribute to house meetings and regularly attend local activities that suit him and his cultural needs. We are so happy for him."

Thien looks forward to visits from Helena, his support worker, and she enjoys planning community participation activities that suit Thien.

"Thien loves watching Vietnamese movies. I take him to the library so he can borrow the ones he likes," says Nicole. "He's recently shown an interest in playing ping pong too, so that's the next activity I've planned for him."

>> Dylan joins the IT Crowd

Dylan joined the WorkReady Program at Olympus Solutions at the beginning of 2019. Right from the start he had but one goal – to be able to learn valuable skills and experience in the field of IT.

At the initial consultation, the WorkReady Team met with Dylan to better understand his goals and drafted a plan to build the soft skills required to work efficiently in a professional environment.

Dylan has worked closely with his WorkReady Consultant in tailored 1 on 1 sessions to build his skills in terms of confidence, interacting with others and being professional in the workplace.

Dylan has recently been given the opportunity to put these into practice in the workforce by commencing a Work Experience Placement with the IT department at the National Rugby League in Moore Park, working 2 hours every Thursday morning. Dylan's WorkReady Consultant also assisted with travel training Dylan and he now excels and is able to make his way on the train and bus to and from the NRL office independently from his home.

Since commencing Dylan has taken on a variety of tasks such as setting up new laptops, installing software, connecting to the networks, ensuring ink cartridges in printers are

topped up and finally organisation of the office storerooms. Dylan has excelled in all these tasks so much so that each week a new task is added to his list of jobs.

Great work Dylan! We can't wait to see you achieve more of your goals.

Quotes

Dylan: "I have enjoyed working as part of a team each week working with computers which is something I love"

Cintia Michel, Employer: "We have loved having Dylan work with us, we provided this opportunity as we heard about Dylan's passion for IT and willingness to learn. He has shown that by wanting to take on new tasks and learn more every week. Dylan has contributed to our team in setting up and repairing many of our computers"

Brad Napper, WorkReady Consultant: "Dylan has grown so much through his work experience journey, he can make his way to and from the NRL on his own now and it's been fantastic to see him work each Thursday morning doing something that he is passionate about. Thank you to the IT team at the NRL for giving Dylan such a wonderful opportunity to learn and be part of your team"



>> Employer Jimmy G's going Above and Beyond

AccessAbility Day is a government initiative that allows employers' to explore the possibility of employing people with disabilities by hosting them for a day. For the participant, it enables them to gain insights into a particular job or type of work.

As part of AccessAbility Day 2018, one of our participants, Alex, experienced a day in the life of a hospitality worker at Jimmy G's café in Tuggerah. Jimmy G's is a chain of restaurants on the Central Coast of NSW.

Both Alex and the team at Jimmy G's Tuggerah thoroughly enjoyed the AccessAbility Day experience. When asked about the value AccessAbility Day brought to the staff members of Jimmy G's,

Marlon, Operations Manager for Jimmy G's, stated, "It was a treasured experience. It helped the staff understand the importance of helping and teaching

skills to other members of the community and people with disabilities."

Post-AccessAbility Day, Alex obtained a six-week internship working at the Café, followed by paid employment.

Fast forward to 2019, and Jimmy G's has provided PaTH Internship opportunities to 22 of our participants from the Disability Employment Services (DES) and jobactive programs through a structured training program. 16 of the 22 participants' have been successful in gaining casual employment.

"Disabilities are of many types. Very often, we can help people with disabilities learn a skill or trade in the workplace. This becomes a rewarding experience for both the business and employees," says Marlon.



With Hunter Valley Disability Services (HVDS) now fully integrated into our operations, we have seen increasing collaboration across teams.

Our service provides participants with coordinated services and a more holistic approach to individualised care.

Despite significant change, our staff have worked seamlessly together to realise and achieve collective goals. We have seen more energised teams, more engaged staff and a stronger team culture.

This theme is best demonstrated by the experience of one participant whose elderly parents were no longer able to care for him at home. Ability Options Support Coordination and therapy teams worked closely with his HVDS Respite Service to build his independent living skills and identify long term accommodation that would meet his needs. He has since moved into an HVDS Group Home, and he and his parents are very happy.

Indeed, over the past 12 months we have built a reputation in the industry as a reliable source of information about the NDIS and what services and supports are available to meet individual needs across participants' entire life.

We have also been working on better communication and engagement with participants, families and staff by connecting with people, helping them to understand the NDIS and who they can go to for help or to provide feedback. Our team of speech pathologists has been developing a suite of Easy English materials making our information more accessible for all people, including those with intellectual disability.

We have also been developing our Partnerships Programs with local organisations. One example is partnering with the Dale School to help parents understand how they can best use their NDIS Plans. We held information sessions and 1:1 meetings, provided training and support and helped teaching staff understand how they can best support people with disability.

Naomi McCorkell
General Manager, Hunter Region



We have built a reputation in the industry as a reliable source of information about the NDIS and what services and supports are.



James fights for improvements at Aged Care Royal Commission

Following a vicious assault at a local football match in 2003, James was left with an acquired brain injury and was paralysed from the waist down. He spent the next 14 years in unsuitable accommodation and services, desperate to regain independence and control over his life. Now living independently in a home of his choice, James is fighting for the rights of other young people living in aged care facilities.

After James' injury the only options offered to him were a group home or entering an aged care facility. James and his family eventually chose Muswellbrook Aged Care Facility.

James says, "During my time there, I became so depressed. There was a lack of conversation and social interaction. There were no activities offered to me. I felt like I had completely lost my freedom".

In May 2009, he moved to Merriwa Multipurpose Service (MPS) operated by the same provider as Muswellbrook. While he was closer to friends and family, James was still depressed. Living with people at a very different life stage to him "felt like jail".

When James' story was featured in a TV story about alcohol-fuelled violence, it was a catalyst for a life changing event. His story was seen by a Care Coordinator at Younger People in Residential Care (YPIRAC) who supported him

to move out of aged care into supported independent living accommodation at Mount Hutton Villas.

James says, "While this was a massive improvement from an aged care facility, I still had no control over who cared for me and what care I received. I had to accept whoever the provider hired."

In early 2017, James finally found home. He moved into a Specialist Disability Accommodation (SDA) in Belmont, New South Wales, with the assistance of the Summer Foundation.

"I have support workers from Ability Options, who assist me with my daily care routine and support me when I go out to do things. I can also choose my own carers. I pay my bills. I have responsibilities and I am proud to manage them," says James.

Believing strongly that young people do not belong in Aged Care facilities, James decided to appear in front of the Royal Commission on Aged Care Quality and Safety to share his story. He was supported by teams from Ability Options and Summer Foundation to submit a statement and travel from Newcastle to Melbourne to present in person.

We congratulate James on his determination and his contribution to a better future for other young people with disability.

Mid North Coast

Our main focus in the Mid North Coast region this year has been the establishment of an overarching management team across Ability Options and our community partners.

This includes including Mid North Coast Disability Services (MNCDS).

Historically, each of the partners had their own management teams, with roles duplicated across the organisations. Now, we have established new management roles responsible for a particular service across all regions.

This approach has improved our operations and been more financially successful. It has ensured a more consistent approach, with each region receiving more support and being aligned to the broader Ability Options community. Being part of regional team meetings has given our partners, particularly MNCDS, a better understanding of other parts of our organisation.

We have also been working on improving our direct support area. Having a high number of remote direct support workers, operating remotely, increases our level of risk. To manage this, we established new leadership roles (team leaders and support managers) to provide guidance to staff and coordinate the roll out of additional training.

Another focus this year has been in the area of compliance. We have been working on restrictive practices; making sure our staff understand our obligations under the Restrictive Practices Framework, providing our frontline staff with additional training.

Our greatest challenge remains retaining our customer base amid growing competition in regional areas. We have had to adapt our marketing methods and services accordingly.

Looking to the next 12 months, we will continue to consolidate and build on the successful culture we have developed across the Ability Options Community. We will continue to invest in training and guidance for our frontline staff who are working remotely and ensure a person-centred approach that focusses on the best outcomes for the people we support.

Michelle Hodge
General Manager, Mid North Coast and Sydney



Our **greatest challenge** remains retaining our customer base amid **growing competition** in regional areas.



Fun-filled day of **laughs** for **family** and **friends**

Port Macquarie’s best organisations, groups and supporters came together on October 12 for a fun-filled morning of laughs, all in the name of mental health.

Mental Health Month showcased the services available to help support you and your friends and family members.

The Mid North Coast Cup was a chance for the community to engage with mental health providers during the important awareness-raising month.

A round robin football competition was held, hosted by Neami National – an organisation dedicated to improving mental health and wellbeing – in collaboration with other mental health providers on the Mid North Coast.



Scott takes up the **challenge**

Scott has taken up the challenge of archery at Taree’s PCYC. With support from an About Inclusion staff member and the local archery club has enabled Scott to achieve success in his goal of socialising and the sport of archery.

Wow look at Scott go – Bullseye!!!!

» Front Up steps 'into the light'

Front Up, our disability-led arts and cultural program supported by the Crown Resorts Foundation and Packer Family Foundation, offers participants the opportunity to develop their creativity, confidence and art practice. Whether just beginning their journey with art, or verging on professional, participants can take part in three core programs, Explore, Discover or Emerge.

Over the past year, Front Up artists have been involved in a range of events including an exhibition for Emerge artists called 'Into the Light' and showcases at the Art Gallery of

NSW (to launch our member-based program for emerging artists, GOG!), at Artspace (for the Ideas Platform) and the Royal Prince Alfred Hospital (for Mental Health Week).

We also announced our new Patron, Digby Webster. An accomplished artist, Digby has won a number of awards, exhibited works around Australia and overseas, and has been part of Front Up since 2016.

Edith Magnussen & Gaye Fleming
Community Culture and Arts Consultants



M. Sunflower blossoms with **Front Up**

Artist M. Sunflower says being part of Front Up has changed her life – taking her from a girl interested in art, to a professional artist connected to one of the most prestigious art galleries in Australia.

Before joining Front Up, Sunny thought her disability meant she would never be able to work again or follow her dream of being an artist.

Discovering the Front Up program gave her hope, as it is specifically for people with disability and works closely with the Art Gallery of NSW.

As an artist, M. Sunflower primarily works with mixed media and has a special interest in combining photography with video and painting to create installations.

Initially, Sunny says she battled physical difficulties getting to the program and significant anxiety around presenting herself in front of others. Three years later she will happily stand in front of a crowd doing live art, teaching workshops, interviewing artists and sitting on artist panels.

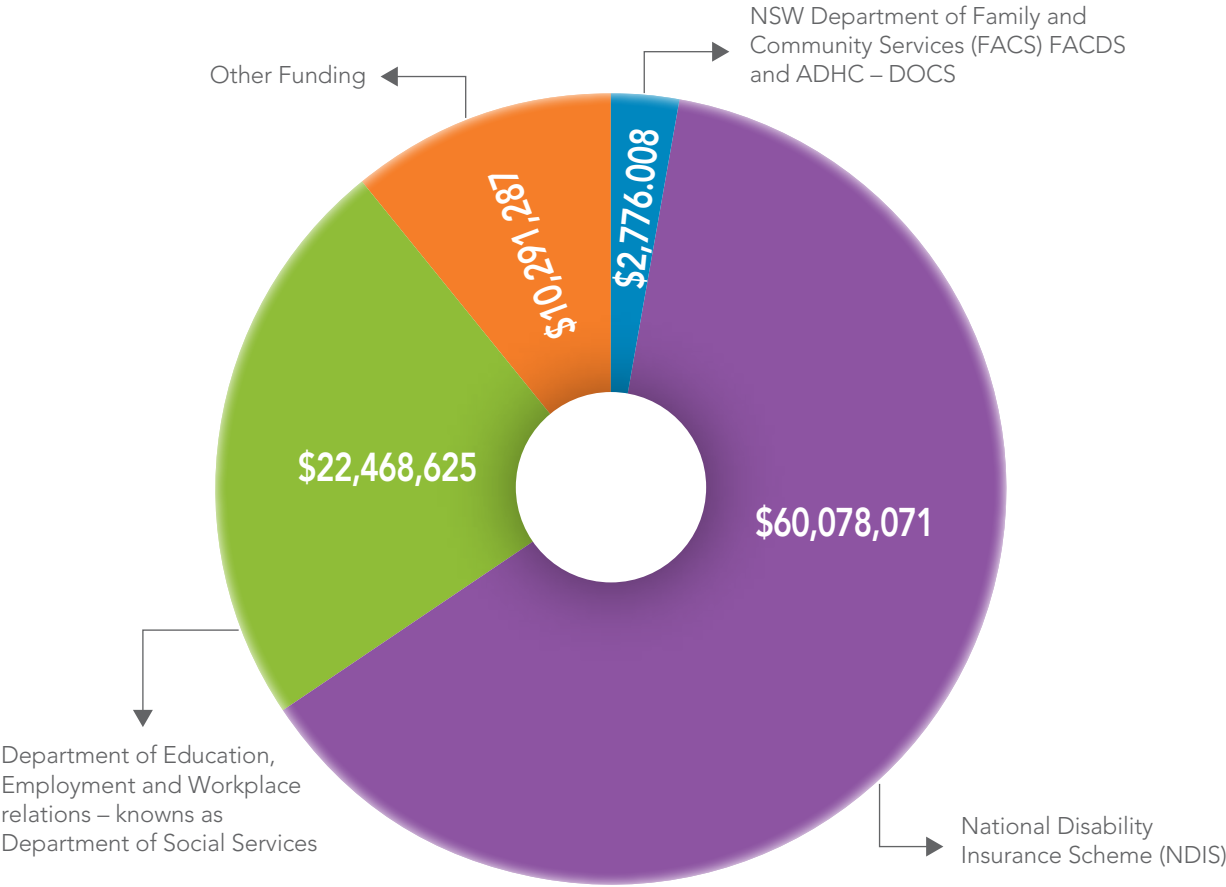
This year, Sunny has been employed two days a week as administrator of the new Get of the Garret! (GOG!) Program – the first job she's had in 11 years.

As for the future, M. Sunflower hopes to establish her own fashion line, do art residencies overseas and have her work exhibited in a well-known art gallery – all things she would never have believed she could do just three years ago!



>> 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.



>> Financial Snapshot

	2019	2018
Operating income	95,657,887	81,557,121
Other income	141,869	(311,049)
Expenses	(93,111,399)	(85,138,136)
Surplus/deficit	2,688,357	(3,892,064)
Total Assets	36,091,831	29,473,159
Total Liabilities	21,712,413	17,782,098
Total Funds	14,379,418	11,691,061

For the Year ended 30 June 2019 in AUD

Summary

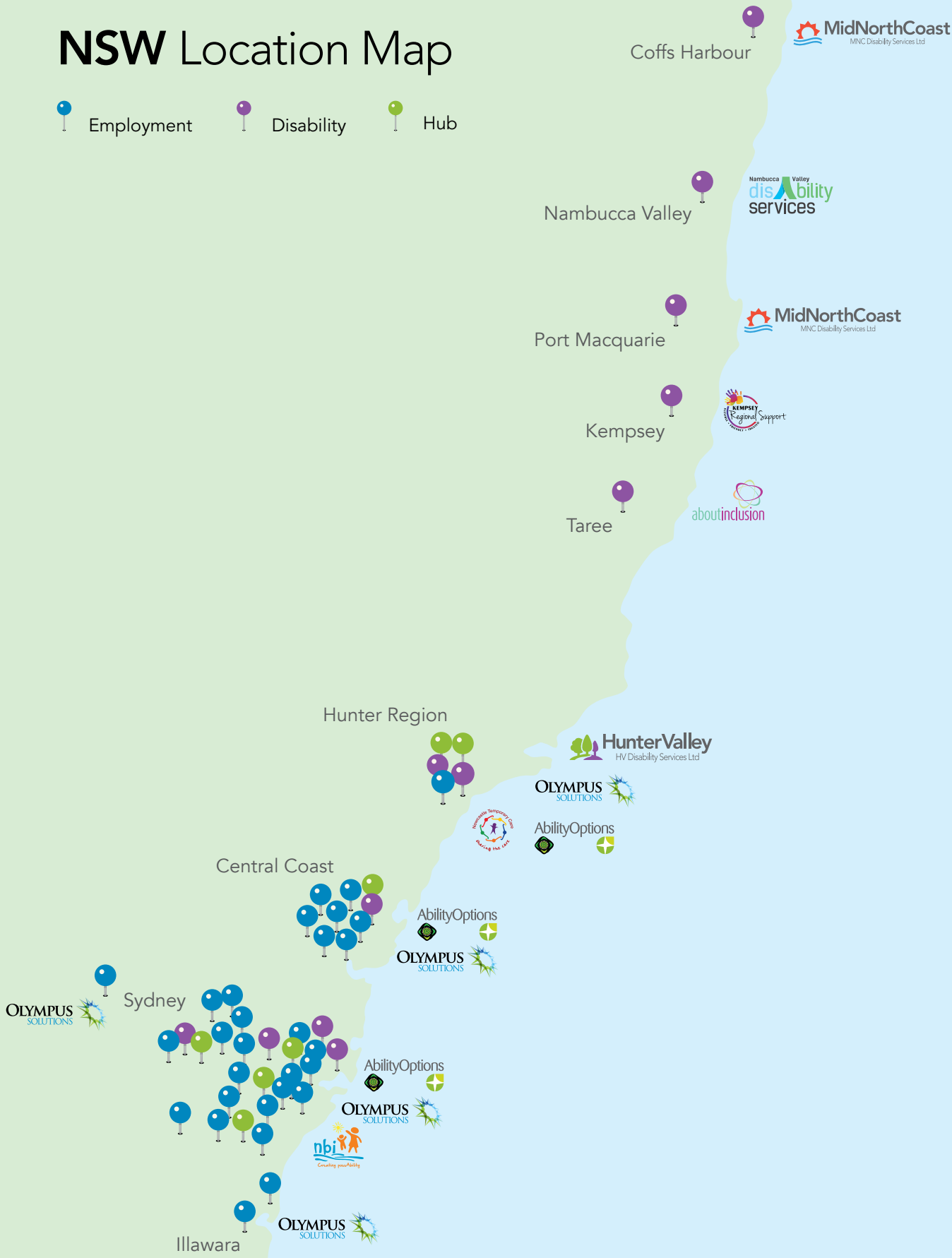
The Financial year saw a growth in revenue of 17%, largely from NDIS Services. Employee costs make-up the majority of our expenses which overall increased by 9% across the financial year. This resulted in our overall surplus of \$2.7m for the Financial Year. This is a substantial improvement on the previous years' deficit of \$3.9m.

The financial positon of the organisation is sound with total funds of \$14.4m.

Our full audited financial statements are available on our website abilityoptions.org.au

NSW Location Map

● Employment ● Disability ● Hub



HEAD OFFICE

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

Charmhaven

1/193-199 Pacific Highway
Charmhaven NSW 2263

Charlestown

230 Pacific Highway
Charlestown NSW 2290

Charlestown

244 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

Maitland

5 Ken Tubman Drive
Maitland NSW 2320

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

3/30 Woodriff 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

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

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 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

MNC DISABILITY SERVICES

Level 1, Suite 1, 17 Short Street
Port Macquarie NSW
02 6561 8388

HUNTER VALLEY DISABILITY SERVICES

First Floor
5 Ken Tubman Drive
Maitland NSW 2320
(02) 4918 4770

Leadership
Inclusion
Courage
Respect
Trust